

Paul Broy

SAJECKI, Ed

City's chief planner set to retire

Ed Sajecki will be leaving his post in February

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Never one to boast or brag, Mississauga's chief planner, who has been integral to the city's unprecedented redevelopment, is leaving his post.

A senior bureaucrat with a no-nonsense approach to land use planning, Ed Sajecki will be retiring from the senior leadership team in February after an illustrious 14-year career with the city.

A civil engineer and professional planner by trade, Sajecki is retiring in the midst of a remarkable transformation in Mississauga. Once a bland suburb, the city is quickly becoming a bustling metropolis with a vibrant culture, thriving business community and its own distinct skyline.

Although he won't take the credit, Sajecki has a lot to do with the transformation.

"Ed always tried to create a win/win for both the residents and businesses of Mississauga and the developers who have chosen to invest so significantly in our growth," said city manager Janice Baker. "Ed loves Mississauga, and has been a passionate advocate on its behalf."

Recalling one of his first days with the city, Sajecki received a call from former mayor Hazel McCallion's office requesting the two spend a day driving around the city, discussing future redevelopment.

One of the first areas in need of reshaping was the downtown.

"Remember saying, why am I driving around the downtown? I should be walking."

Sajecki sought to transform the core, making it more pedestrian-friendly and human-scaled, infused with green space, public art and cultural gathering spaces.

The \$40 million redevelopment of Celebration Square, a major land deal to bring Sheridan College to the city centre and the redevelopment of Square One Shopping Centre were key milestones in this process.

Sajecki calls it "selective ur-



ban acupuncture", whereby a few strategic moves lead to a complete reshaping of the area.

Coupled with the \$1.4 billion Hurontario Light Rail Transit system, Mississauga is well on its way to shedding its suburban past, he noted.

"Cities go through cycles and they're always reinventing themselves. and we've really just become in terms of this next chapter."

The largest redevelopment project is underway a few blocks away from Sajecki's home in south Mississauga - the waterfront. He could barely contain himself as he detailed the redevelopment of the former Lakeview Generating Station lands, which will be transformed into a sustainable, mixed-use commu-

nity expected to house up to 20,000 residents.

The Lakeview Waterfront Connection will complement the redevelopment with a 1.5 kilometre ecologically functional shoreline.

Plans also include the redevelopment of the Imperial Oil lands and the Canada Lands marina in Port Credit.

"It's a magnificent waterfront that has not been spoiled. The future is ours to really seize the opportunities and develop the area in a very sustainable way," he said.

Sajecki attributes some of the redevelopment successes in Mississauga with his time spent at the Province. Prior to joining the city, he served as Assistant Deputy Minister with the Ministry of



Rob Bentema/Metroland

Ed Sajecki, Commissioner, Planning and Building for the City of Mississauga, is calling it a career. After 14 years of playing an integral role in planning the city's unprecedented past and future redevelopment, he is retiring.

infrastructure and land use planning," noted Sajecki.

Asked what project he was most proud to be a part of, the planning commissioner steered away from the brick and mortar in his response.

"It all starts with my staff and my colleagues. I've just seen them work so well as a team, working with council, working with the city manager. I'm just really proud of how this department runs," he noted.

Acknowledging there is never a great time to retire, Sajecki said he is proud to have helped lay the foundation for the next chapter of Mississauga's development.

"I love what I do and I am absolutely going to miss it."

"On behalf of the City of Mississauga, Members of Council and our team of professional staff, we wish Commissioner Ed Sajecki all the very best as he begins this exciting new chapter of his life," said Mayor Bonnie Crombie.

A father of four children and grandfather to three, Sajecki said he plans to "take a deep breath" and look for opportunities to advance the city's social service network.

"I've done a lot of bricks and mortar stuff. I'd like to get into the human side."