It gives me great pleasure to present this issue of Plan Canada, which is a summary of the 2001 conference held last July in Ottawa by the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.

Based on the central theme of “A Spatial Odyssey,” the conference brought together hundreds of planners from across Canada and around the world. This issue of Plan Canada is meant as a testimony of the event. It also provides an opportunity to thank the many volunteers who worked tirelessly on the preparations, as well as the presenters who agreed to share their reflections on the conference’s various themes.

In addition to enjoying the marvelous surroundings of Canada’s capital, participants in the 2001 conference were able to attend various sessions, examine recent developments, and discuss current projects. Whether on foot or riding bicycles, taking boats or buses, heading out on field trips or attending the conference’s workshops, plenary sessions, and presentations, participants discovered the dynamism of planners and the new challenges of their daily practice.

The organizing committee worked non-stop to prepare this large meeting, and to offer opportunities to address the many subjects currently of interest to Canadian planners.

Special thanks go to program coordinators David Gordon and Marni Cappe, as well as to the seven theme coordinators and their devoted teams.

The following pages offer a near-complete synthesis of the various conference sessions and the themes they addressed. Each of the coordinators has written an introduction to the theme for which he or she was responsible. An article representing each theme, selected by the coordinator, accompanies the synthesis. (The exception here is the theme of “transforming planning practice.” For technical reasons, the article selected to represent this theme will appear in the December issue of Plan Canada.) The choices involved here were difficult, and our apologies go to those whose texts were not included.

Summing up an event this rich and comprehensive is a big challenge. We hope you enjoy this issue whether or not you were able to attend.