

Town of Georgina Official Plan Review

Hamlet Open House Events, January 22 and 27, 2014
Report



Date Prepared: February 26, 2014



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1.0 Introduction

The Hamlet Open House events were held as part of the Town of Georgina Official Plan Review to obtain input on the future of the Town's Hamlets. The Open House Sessions were conducted over two different days, one at the Udora Community Hall, on January 22, 2014; and the second at the Egypt Community Hall on January 27, 2014. The purpose of the Sessions was to discuss issues related to the six designated hamlets in the Town of Georgina Official Plan. At the Udora meeting, the Hamlets of Brownhill, Ravenshoe and Udora were discussed. In the second session, held at the Egypt Community Hall, the Hamlets of Virginia, Belhaven and Baldwin were discussed. In total, over 160 people attended the Open House Sessions. The high attendance can likely be attributed to participants receiving direct mail notice of the Open House, as well as a high level of interest from hamlet residents with respect to the future of their communities.

The purpose of the Open Houses was to receive comments on the individual character of each hamlet, as well as discuss the views of the participants with respect to future development in their communities. Each session was held from 7:00 p.m. to approximately 9:00 p.m. Participants were provided with an overview of the purpose of the Official Plan Review and role of upper tier planning policies. Then a series of group discussions were held as described below. A copy of the presentation provided to the groups is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

One of the key considerations in the Official Plan Review is to determine whether or not the existing boundaries of the Hamlets should be changed. Since the Official Plan Review is intended to implement the Greenbelt Plan, the following policies contained in Section 3.4.3 of the Greenbelt Plan need to be fully explored.

3.4.3 Hamlet Policies

For lands within Hamlets in the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

- 1. Hamlets, as identified in municipal official plans and within their approved boundaries as they existed on the date this Plan came into effect, continue to be governed by municipal official plans and related programs or initiatives and are not subject to the policies of this Plan, save for the external connections policies of section 3.2.5. This Plan permits infill and intensification of Hamlets subject to appropriate water and sewage services.***
- 2. Outside of specialty crop areas, minor rounding out of Hamlet boundaries at the time of municipal conformity is also permitted in keeping with the character of the Hamlet. This rounding out is only permitted subject to the infrastructure policies contained in section 4.2 of this Plan and municipal official plans***

2.0 Community Character

Policies regarding development of Hamlets in Provincial, Regional and Town of Georgina documents all refer to maintaining or preserving the character of the existing community. To assist in determining how such a policy should be applied at a local level, participants were asked to describe the character of their Hamlet. Participants were given the following basic framework for their description:

- Physical;
- Social;
- Demographic;
- Economic;
- Environmental; and,
- Unique Features

Participants were also encouraged to identify other characteristics of their Hamlet which should be included in their descriptions. The following sections describe how the participants defined the character of their Hamlets.



2.1 Baldwin


Physical

Natural settings
Significant forest
Wildlife
River
Pretty
Spacious
Large lot sizes
Septic systems/wells
Treed lots
No cable or high-speed internet
No gas lines/no sewers
Black River
Mill pond
Heritage buildings
Conservation areas



Demographic


Mixed – young families
Empty nesters
80% > 50

Environmental	<p>Family oriented Middle aged – established community Not conducive to elderly Aging demographic Stable environment</p>	
	<p>Negative – pollution air (noise) Wetlands – flood plain Hwy 48 – 404 traffic Wells Black River Conservation area Agricultural surrounding Chemicals at sod farms Concerns re surrounding areas (landfill) Hydro easement – designation Concerns for truck traffic LSCA's Wildlife</p>	
Social	<p>Golf course Lyndhurst trailer park Baldwin airport Hwy 48 Skydiving Caring community/multiple annual social gatherings/ strong sense of community/friendly/tight-knit community Must travel for youth events and recreation</p>	
Economic	<p>Harmony ranch Convenience store + gas station Daycare Gift shop Golf course Baldwin airport Tourism You have to drive everywhere Home businesses Agriculture Mechanic repair shop Antique shop Affluent community</p>	
Unique Features	<p>Heritage buildings Black River ponds/fresh water reserve for Lake Simcoe (Black River) Airport Conservation area Grist mill/grist mill falls/dam Parachute Close to golf courses</p>	

2.2 Belhaven


Physical Demographic	Small	
	Farming	
Environmental	Retired	
	Families	
	Wood lots	
Social	Wildlife	
	Hall	
	Small Town	
Economic	Recreation/ball diamond	
	Farming	
Unique Features	Small home business	
	Landscape/gardening	
Unique Features	Mixed lot sizes	
	House styles vary	

2.3 Brownhill


Physical	Heavy traffic on Ravenshoe Road	
	Wetlands – river	
	Forest	
	Farming	
	Redevelopment on 48 & Ravenshoe	
Demographic	Split hamlet between municipalities	
	Approximately 45 – 60 years of age	
	Long-time residents	
Environmental	Retirees	
	Railway trail – recreation	
	Black River	
	Regional forest – Zephr & Brownhill	
Social	Septic/well	
	It's a bigger area than mapped out	
	Historical site	
	Brownhill CRCC	
	Commuters	
Economic	Being a border hamlet to three Townships, we are sometimes forgotten	
	Car restoration	
	Tyson Trailers	
	T.J. Welding	
	Dog kennels	
	Brownhill Auto	
	Skilton Kitchens	
	Newmarket Equipment	

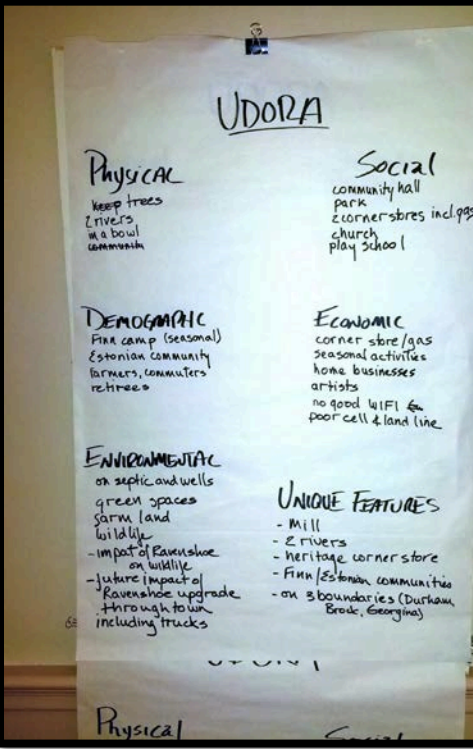
Unique Features	<p>Our park</p> <p>Historic corner</p> <p>Hiking trails</p> <p>Skiing</p>
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2.4 Ravenshoe

Physical	<p>Wooded</p> <p>Homes back on green space</p> <p>Ponds</p> <p>Creek through middle of Hamlet</p> <p>Split between E. Gwillimbury & Georgina</p> <p>Community lines roads</p>	
Demographic	Families	
Environmental	<p>PSW</p> <p>Septic and wells</p> <p>Wildlife</p>	
Social	<p>Church</p> <p>Group home</p> <p>Historical</p>	
Economic	Farming	
Unique Features	Property lines don't match boundary	

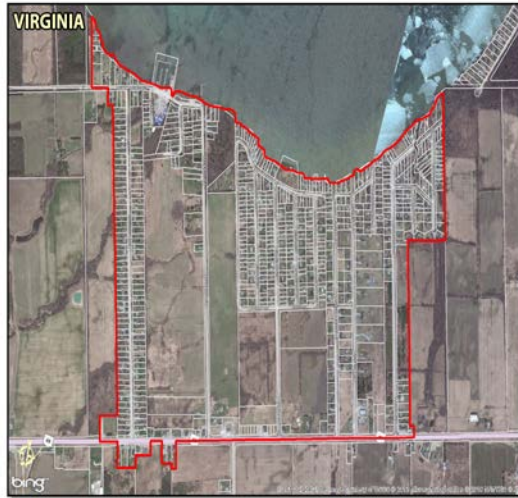
2.5 Udora

Physical	<p>Split between Durham and Georgina</p> <p>Unique forested subdivisions</p> <p>Natural terrain/beauty</p> <p>Trails</p> <p>Naturally protected by water + forest</p> <p>Trees/forested</p> <p>Two rivers in a bowl</p> <p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uxbridge Brook • Pefferlaw River <p>Surrounded by farmland</p> <p>Many un-assumed roads and lanes</p>	
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Demographic	<p>Long-standing residents New owners Seniors/strength Blend of seniors and young couples Commuter working families Finn camp (seasonal) Estonian camp was a large part of Udora Farmers, commuters Average income households</p>	 <p>The image shows a hand-drawn mind map titled 'UDORA' on a piece of paper. The central title is at the top. Six branches radiate from the center, each with a category name in all caps. The 'Physical' branch lists: keep trees, 2 rivers, no bowl community. The 'Social' branch lists: community hall, park, 2 corner stores incl gas, church, play school. The 'Demographic' branch lists: Finn camp (seasonal), Estonian community, farmers, commuters, retirees. The 'Economic' branch lists: corner store/gas, seasonal activities, home businesses, artists, no good wifi & poor cell & land line. The 'Environmental' branch lists: on septic and wells, green spaces, farm land, wildlife, - impact of Ravenshoe on wildlife, - future impact of Ravenshoe upgrade through town including trucks. The 'Unique Features' branch lists: - Mill, - 2 rivers, - heritage corner store, - Finn/Estonian communities, - on boundaries (Durham, Brock, Georgina). At the bottom of the paper, the words 'Physical' and 'Social' are written again, partially cut off.</p>
Environmental	<p>River/streams Forest/dense forestation Walking trails Road traffic/404 expansion/trucks etc. Environmentally protected land Unique species Sensitive wetlands Open space/green spaces Clean groundwater Septic and wells Farmland Impact of Ravenshoe on wildlife Future impact of Ravenshoe upgrade through Town including trucks Two rivers for fishing/watershed, fish habitat Shallow areas, but little proper drainage, high water table Many wildlife: deer, rabbits, coyotes, bears, turkeys</p>	
Social	<p>Historic village/perhaps historical development Community centre/the hall is the hub Active Lions Club/many Lion Club sponsored events Estonian community Small-town minded – not interested in change or development on a large scale Park Two corner stores including gas Church/1 United Church (in season) Play school Neighbourly but not intrusive</p>	
Economic	<p>Retirement Recreational Gas station/general store Seasonal activities Home businesses No good wifi/poor cell & landline Mostly a bedroom community, farming, self-employed artists</p>	

Unique Features	Cottages Architecture Large lots/space Proximity to Lake Simcoe Wetlands Recreation General store centre of community Post office Small local gas station Wildlife Historical Two rivers Heritage corner store Finn/Estonian communities On three boundaries (Durham, Brock, Georgina) Divided into South-Uxbridge + North-Georgina by Ravenshoe Rd. Historical feature – the Mill Church Pond
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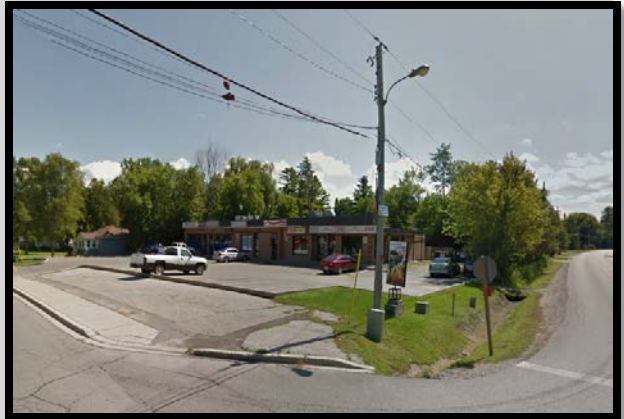
2.6 Virginia

Physical	Lakeshore marina + ferry (First Nation) Privately community run parks Beach front – private Fields Septic/wells All roads into beach communities branch off 48 – busy in summer Hard to get in and out of Lake Simcoe shoreline flat Mature Agricultural/surrounding farms Quiet Wildlife Mature lots Safe Flat-low lands + waterfront	
Demographic	Mixed ages/stages (retired, young families) Commuters Seasonal (1/4) with permanent (3/4) Fewer small children < 12 More teens Retirees increasing All ages Few minorities High taxes	

Environmental	<p>Wells + septic (no town water)/poor well water quantity and supply/poor septic/many homes + businesses have water issues (lack of; salt content)</p> <p>Flooding</p> <p>Ag. runoff from outside hamlet</p> <p>Wildlife</p> <p>Sunsets</p> <p>Swampy</p> <p>Older trees</p> <p>Lake major influence</p> <p>Low land/high water table</p> <p>Recreational + sporting</p> <p>Clear air</p> <p>No sidewalks</p> <p>High taxes</p> <p>Waterfront</p> <p>Agricultural/surrounding farms</p> <p>River through island view beach</p> <p>Ash trees</p> <p>Lake/protection act</p>
Social	<p>Community park activities/good community spirit/strong community</p> <p>Beach association</p> <p>Park</p> <p>Each beach community works together – Royal, Sunset Beach, Woodfield, Virginia Beach</p> <p>Safe</p> <p>Cottage life (fire, bbq, parties)</p> <p>Individual homeowner’s associations</p> <p>Rate-payers/waterfront access</p> <p>Community churches</p>
Economic	<p>A few local businesses</p> <p>A lot of people commuting</p> <p>Mid – low</p> <p>Lack of employment</p> <p>Lack of business opportunities</p> <p>Not much work/employment</p> <p>What’s there is seasonal</p> <p>Should consider road between Cronsberry & Haddon</p> <p>Hwy 48 crazy busy for residents to turn onto 48 especially on weekends</p> <p>Blue-collar</p> <p>Long travel to work</p> <p>Tourists – boating, ice + summer fishing</p> <p>Tourist make a mess</p> <p>Hadden Road + government dock/ferry & marina</p> <p>Small-family run businesses</p> <p>Island ferry</p>

Unique Features

Lake location businesses
Bedroom community
Ice fishing – local + private marina
Water access
Lot size
Ferry to island
Community parks along lakeshore
Great sunsets
Vast area
Wildlife (deer, fox, etc.)
Lake Simcoe
Big lots
Mature trees
No city lights
Individual homeowner associations
Beaches



Once each group completed their description, they were asked to report back to the other participants. Reporting back provided an opportunity for broader discussion among participants. Most discussion occurred between different groups representing the same hamlet. For example, in the Udora session, there were four separate groups, about 32 of the participants who were residents of the Udora area. Similarly, in the Egypt sessions, there were approximately six groups or 36 people representing Virginia. In most cases, a consensus on hamlet characteristics was reached. The discussion was also highly educational.



3.0 Opportunities and Constraints

Following a review of the characteristics of each hamlet, the groups were asked to describe what opportunities and constraints there were for development in the community. The following questions were posed to the participants:

What opportunities are there for improving the character of the community?

What constraints are there that may make it more difficult to implement the opportunities?

The following charts summarize the responses received from participants:

3.1 Baldwin

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business development for previous existing business Clean up environment Reductions in airport disruption of environment Traffic lights at corner of Smith and 48 on sensors or some system for traffic calming High speed internet, cable, gas Better define wetlands and conservation land – include hydro easement Prevent filling operations in surrounding areas Picnic area near Grist Mill or conservation 404 extension – better commuting – nearby Access to amenities – bus + stop Preserve existing character Extend conservation areas
Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxes go up Unresponsive Council – only concerned about economy Truck traffic from impending landfill Unwilling government testing officials Farm runoff Potential for flooding Volume of traffic on 48 Available land for community centre or youth centre Definition of planning act Amount of taxes already paid for amenities we get – how will we be able to receive additional amenities Go Bus doesn't stop Grand-fathered applications Existing assessments All utilities Superior legislation (bad and good)



3.2 Belhaven

Opportunities	Detour Sidewalks Manage traffic speed Enforce
Constraints	Current boundaries don't allow for expansion Current defined boundaries High tax – no amenities

3.3 Brownhill

Opportunities	Opportunity/redevelop the corner of Hwy 48 and Ravenshoe
Constraints	Minimum development due to our unique feature or wetlands! Redevelopment constraints - hydrology <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Groundwater – high table 2. Flooding – Black River 3. Increased Traffic!!! – Dangerous!!! Regional stormline Big dump trucks going to landfill on Smith Blvd. Already existing industry Existing dangerous corner – Townline & Ravenshoe residents are currently fighting for solar stop sign & repair or replacement or bridge structure due to heavy vehicles increased traffic Push for completion of 404 to Sutton so Hwy 48 is bypassed

3.4 Ravenshoe

Opportunities	Growth Commuters 404 – Ravenshoe – Ravencrest Roads currently do not support increase in traffic and high speeds Ravencrest narrow, posted at 60 km/h, increase in traffic and speed, currently dangerous Intersection – straighten to right angles for safer traffic Rezone unused commercial lot at Ravenshoe/Ravencrest to residential or productive commercial
Constraints	Large increase in traffic flow east on Ravenshoe then northeast on Ravencrest a major concern and vice versa in morning Septics next to PSW – can this handle more? Lot size similar to current Keeping in character

3.5 Udora

Opportunities	<p>Minor infill</p> <p>With good wifi we could get more small businesses</p> <p>Compatible with wetland</p> <p>Tourist + recreational activities by day</p> <p>With 404 corridor + new routes (Ravenshoe) more people may want to come here</p> <p>Provincial road funding is available – Georgina did not apply in November since their asset management plan was not complete. Hopefully they will have another opportunity</p> <p>Extreme traffic 404</p> <p>Udora is a gateway to many other areas that are booming</p> <p>Increase can come from existing building lots</p> <p>Impact of growth south of Ravenshoe on Udora – due to water flow turnoff</p> <p>High Speed internet availability</p> <p>Home offices cut down on cars</p> <p>Exploit infill opportunities with small-scale business</p> <p>Become even more self-sustaining</p> <p>Small agriculture ventures, market gardening</p> <p>Development for existing business</p> <p>Adventure camping, sports, canoe, kayak</p> <p>We have ability now to create + sustain these ideas</p> <p>LSPD public work issues public access</p>
Constraints	<p>Camp is on private property</p> <p>Not enough water for large development</p> <p>Recommend a little/minimal growth</p> <p>A lot of land is regulated by Greenbelt Regulation</p> <p>No infrastructure</p> <p>Very limited telecommunications</p> <p>Future development should conform to existing housing</p> <p>Lots of land close to water (swamps, rivers)</p> <p>Internet issues</p> <p>Triplex wiring – need to upgrade hydro lines</p> <p>Many environmental issues (Estonian camp had a flood during hurricane Hazel)</p> <p>Split community Uxbridge vs. Georgina</p> <p>Many segregated groups, no overall umbrella for communication</p> <p>Roads unattached culverts, too narrow and watershed issues visibility</p> <p>Little support for change</p> <p>Outdated Zoning By-laws, easements, private lanes</p> <p>Most people don't seem to want change here</p> <p>Lots of trucks (but few turnarounds etc.)</p> <p>Expand Udora's official boundary to protect it – main worry about growth</p> <p>Expansion all around will only reduce quality of life in Udora</p>



3.6 Virginia

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation centre Library Tim Hortons Traffic-calming on Hadden Islands down 48 Sustain agricultural/maintaining a rural setting Better control for public access (tourists) Hadden Clean up Sustain tree cover/wildlife Better relationship/connection between beach associations Bike trail to join three beach communities, maybe use easement in Sunset Beach Ball diamond or soccer field – shared access or jogging Politics Fees + factors Water (Town water) Restaurants/cafes Hydro infrastructure Lake water quality and Management of lake water Parking lot on Hadden We like our small, quiet community
Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal services lacking Available land (municipal)? Costs Disinterest Currently all 3 beach communities are separate Property standards By-laws enforcement to clean up properties High price of building permits Cost of pipe (taxes) Services Current management of the lake Location Fear water + sewer would spoil quiet nature – would rather stay with status quo



Similar to the first section of the Open House, each group reported back to the larger group to discuss the opportunities and constraints for development.

4.0 Future Development

At each Open House the groups were asked whether or not their community should grow; and if so, under what conditions. In the session for Udora, Ravenshoe and Brownhill, the groups did not have discussions regarding this matter since, during the Open House, the groups came to the conclusion that their communities should not grow to any significant amount.

In the Egypt workshop, there was more discussion related to the issue of growth. For example, in Baldwin the participants indicated that there were limited opportunities for growth, but identified some infilling and perhaps minor rounding out at the area of Smith Road and Highway 48. Baldwin participants also identified concerns related to opportunities for the impact of the existing airport on growth. In Belhaven, the three groups reported that either no growth or very limited growth should be considered. However, there was discussion on the need for limited growth in order to justify improvements to municipal services and amenities.

Perhaps the liveliest discussion related to growth came from groups representing Virginia. While a number of groups said absolutely no growth should occur, there were some groups who indicated that growth could occur provided that it was properly serviced with water, sewage and electricity. There is a recognized servicing constraint in Virginia, being the lack of available potable water from private wells. There was also an indication that there are constraints related to drainage in



the community which needed to be addressed. During the session, the participants representing Virginia were asked whether or not the boundaries of Virginia should be reduced to reflect the actual development constraints for the community. In general, residents said the boundaries should not be reduced but that there needs to be a clear policy in the Official Plan that development within those boundaries is extremely limited by servicing and environmental conditions including drainage.

5.0 Conclusion

Each session concluded with a discussion of broad issues with participants and then a review of the next steps to be followed in the Official Plan Review process. Those steps included:

- Preparation of this report;
- Workshop Number Two, Identifying Policy Directions; and,
- A report on policy directions for the Official Plan Review.

Participants were also advised that there would be further public engagement opportunities as the process continues.