

Town of Georgina Official Plan Review

Workshop #2, March 24, 2014
Report



Date Prepared: April 16, 2014

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The second Public Workshop on the Town of Georgina Official Plan Review was conducted on March 24, 2014 at the Recreational Outdoor Campus (ROC) Facility in the Town of Georgina. The meeting was held from 7:00 pm to 9:15 pm and was attended by approximately 65 participants.

The second workshop had three main purposes:

- To provide participants with an overview of the Official Plan review process, background research conducted thus far, and public input received to date;
- To review and receive input on the current and proposed Official Plan Vision, Guiding Principles and Objectives in groups; and,
- To discuss and provide input on specific policy directions to implement the Vision, Guiding Principles and Objectives.

Participants were organized into groups based on the six major theme areas which were identified in the first workshop, which are:

1. Lake Simcoe and its Tributaries
2. Natural Environment
3. Growth Management
4. Rural and Agricultural Areas
5. Healthy Communities and Sustainability
6. Economic Development



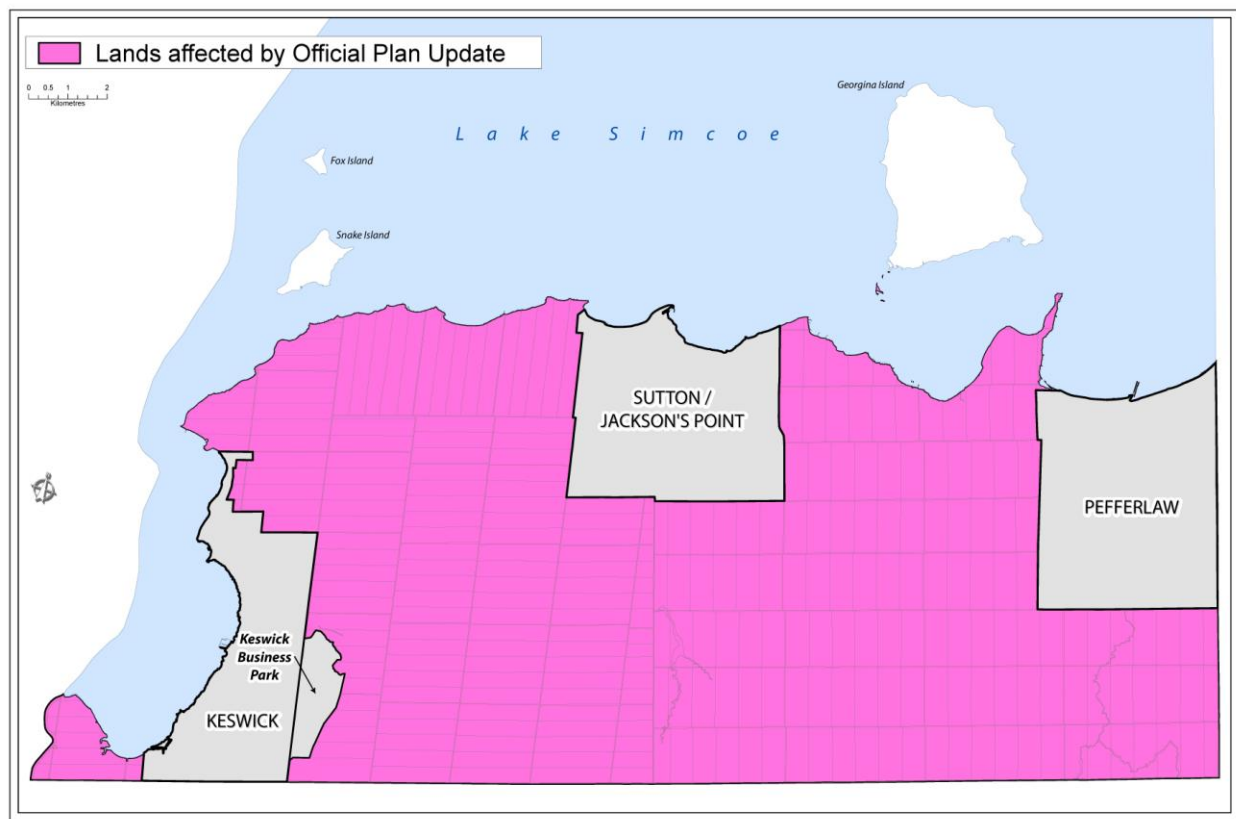
2.0 BACKGROUND

The Official Plan for the Town of Georgina was originally approved on October 17, 2002, and deemed to come into force on November 8, 2002. The Planning Act requires that the Official Plan be reviewed every five years. This Official Plan Review is the mandated five-year Official Plan Review.

The lands subject to the Official Plan Review are shown in **Figure 1**. Lands covered by the Keswick Secondary Plan, the Keswick Business Park Secondary Plan, the Sutton/Jackson's Point Secondary Plan and the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan are not included as part of this Official Plan Review. The lands that are included in the Review are primarily Agricultural, Rural, Environmentally Protected and designated Lakeshore Residential Areas. The hamlets in the Town are also included in the Review. The hamlets are:

- Virginia
- Udora
- Ravenshoe
- Baldwin
- Belhaven
- Brownhill

Figure 1: Lands Subject to Official Plan Update



3.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

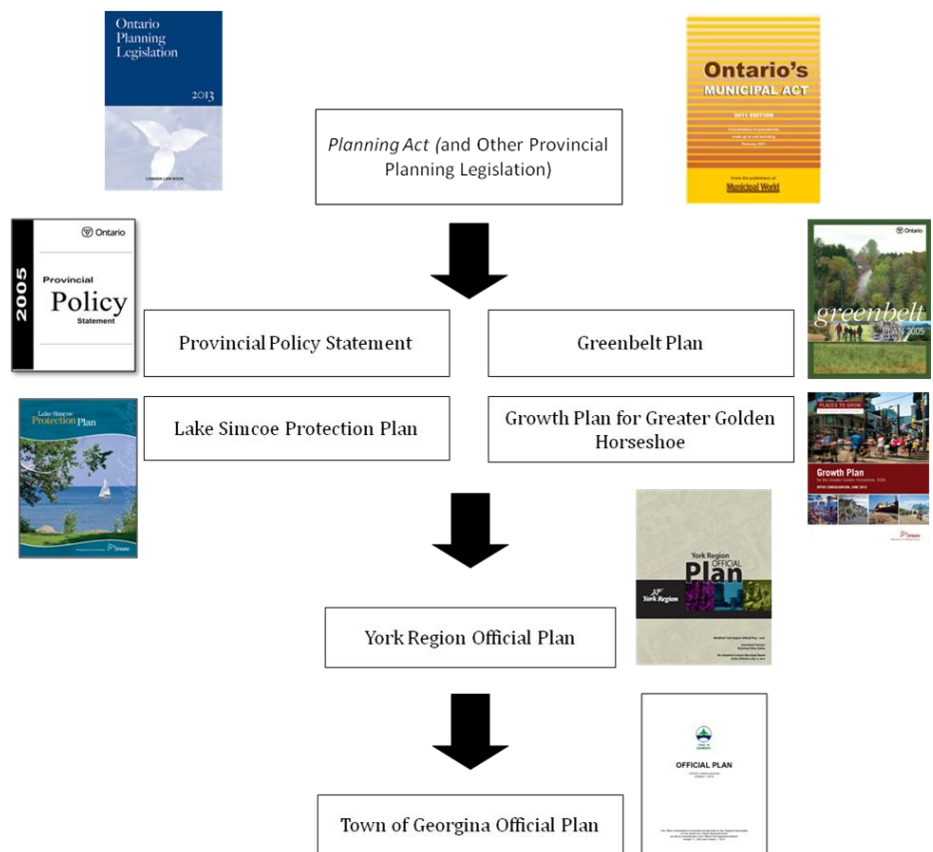
The planning system in Ontario is based on a hierarchy depicted in **Figure 2**. The Province of Ontario sets Provincial Policy which then must be implemented at a Regional level and finally the local level. The Planning Act mandates that Local Official Plans:

- Be consistent with Provincial Policy Statements;
- Conform to Provincial Plans;
- Comply with Regional Official Plans; and,
- Have regard to matters of provincial interest.

Provincial Policies in the Town of Georgina includes the Provincial Policy Statement, the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan. In addition, the Town of Georgina is subject to the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan which is a Provincially legislated plan for ensuring the maintenance and improvement of water quality and environmental conditions surrounding Lake Simcoe.

In 2010, the Region of York adopted a new Official Plan. Portions of that Plan remain before the Ontario Municipal Board; however, the vast majority of the Plan has been approved. Since the Town of Georgina Official Plan must comply with the Regional Official Plan, it is necessary to examine the Regional Plan and determine what changes to the current planning policies and mapping in Georgina are required.

Figure 2: Diagram of Ontario's Planning Hierarchy

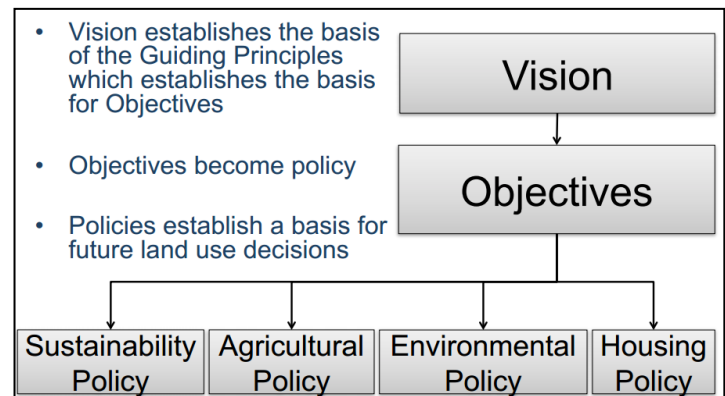


4.0 OFFICIAL PLAN STRUCTURE

The current Georgina Official Plan is organized generally as follows:

- Guiding Principles and Objectives, which include:
 - Natural Environment
 - Lake Simcoe and its Tributaries
 - Growth Management
 - Rural and Agricultural Areas
 - Healthy Communities
 - Economic Development and Financial Sustainability
- Land Use Policies, including:
 - Greenlands System
 - Environmental Protection
 - Parkland
 - Aquifer and Recharge
 - Agricultural Protection
 - Rural
 - Aggregate Resource Priority Area and Peat Extraction
 - Rural Industrial and Rural Commercial
 - Commercial Recreation
 - Estate Residential
 - Resort Recreation
 - Hamlet Areas
 - Lakeshore Residential
 - Serviced Lakeshore Residential
 - Secondary Plans
 - Urban Residential
 - Business Park Study Area
- Healthy Communities, including:
 - Housing, Recreation and Open Space
 - Education and Community Facilities
 - Fire and Emergency Services
 - Community Improvement Areas
 - Heritage Conservation and Archaeological Preservation
 - Community Design
- Servicing and Infrastructure
- Development Review
- Implementation
- Interpretation
- Secondary Plans, including:
 - Keswick
 - Sutton / Jackson's Point
 - Pefferlaw
 - Keswick Business Park

Figure 3: Example Structure of an Official Plan



5.0 IMPLEMENTING GEORGINA'S VISION

5.1 GEORGINA'S VISION

There is currently no Vision Statement within the Official Plan for the Town of Georgina that describes the Town 20 years from now. The Vision forms the foundation of Guiding Principles and Objectives, as well as policies that will be developed in the Plan. The first Public Workshop, held in November 2013 resulted in a number of potential Vision Statements being identified by participants, with the following Vision being identified as the most preferred:

"To become a well-balanced and vibrant community that preserves and protects our natural environment and rural character while providing for growth and economic development in a sustainable manner."

This Vision should be placed at the beginning of the Guiding Principles and Objectives Section of the Official Plan. The present Basis of the Plan included statements related to quality of life and a responsibility for stewardship. While the concept of sustainability captures these concepts, given the comments received from the public it seems appropriate to include the 'quality of life' component to the Vision statement. It is therefore suggested that the Vision Statement in the Plan be stated as follows:

"To become a well-balanced and vibrant community that preserves and protects our natural environment and rural character, while providing for a high quality of life, growth and economic development in a sustainable manner."

5.2 GEORGINA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles are integral in implementing the Town's Vision. The current Official Plan contains Guiding Principles for each of the six theme areas of the Official Plan Review. The Guiding Principles continue to be relevant today. However, in order to ensure these Guiding Principles are still appropriate given the preferred Vision Statement from Workshop #1, feedback on the applicability of these Guiding Principles was requested during the group session.

These Principles are outlined below.

Lake Simcoe and its Tributaries

To recognize that Lake Simcoe is essential to both to the physical health of Georgina's citizens and to the economic prosperity of the Town and therefore work to ensure the restoration of Lake Simcoe and its tributaries.

Natural Environment

To preserve, protect, enhance and support the significant features, functions, attributes and interconnections of the natural environment in order to maintain a sustainable ecosystem, not only to provide a healthy environment, but also as an important component of the Town's economic and community health; and to preserve the visual landscape in Georgina, for current and future generations.

Growth Management

To recognize that the majority of the projected growth within the Town will be in the urban serviced community of Keswick and, to a more limited degree, in Sutton/Jackson's Point, in accordance with the Keswick and Sutton/Jackson's Point Secondary Plans.

To permit limited growth on private services in Pefferlaw in accordance with the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan and to allow limited development on private services in the Hamlets, Lakeshore Residential Areas, and Rural areas as infilling and on existing lots of record, where deemed appropriate. Limited development will also be permitted within the Serviced Lakeshore Residential Area designation.

To preserve and protect a permanent rural area that retains the scenic character and quality of life attributes that are intrinsic to the Georgina countryside.

Rural and Agricultural Areas

To preserve, protect and support a permanent, healthy, sustainable rural/agricultural area and agricultural industry in the Town of Georgina, not only for the production of food and other products but also as an important component of the Town's economic base, a source of employment and a basis for Georgina's rural community and way of life.

Healthy Communities and Sustainability

To improve the health and well being of the people who live and work in Georgina, the development of strong urban and rural communities and the provision of a variety of opportunities for housing, employment, learning, social activity, culture and recreation, while protecting the natural environment.

Economic Development

To promote the development of the Town's economic potential by ensuring the continuing expansion of economic opportunities and diversification of the economic base, in accordance with the policies of this Plan.

Overall, feedback on the Guiding Principles was very positive and support was given to continuing them. However, as a result of a review of these Guiding Principles following the workshop it is now proposed that the second Principle under Growth Management be further refined to address the appropriate provision of development and servicing within the Town broadly, with more detailed policies addressing



such development and servicing implementation to be added within the Plan.

5.3 GEORGINA'S OBJECTIVES

Objectives provide the basis for the policies that are to be included in the Official Plan. Objectives describe what the Town wishes to achieve in order to implement the Vision and Guiding Principles. The Objectives were also provided to each group at the Workshop, with the aim of receiving feedback on the applicability of the Objectives as they relate to the Vision and Guiding Principles outlined earlier. Many of these Objectives are the same or similar to Objectives found in Georgina's current Official Plan, however, a number of new Objectives have been proposed to ensure a solid foundation for new policy directions within the Plan. This includes a new set of Objectives regarding Sustainability. Furthermore, it may be appropriate to revise some of the existing Objectives to bring them in line with current requirements and to reflect comments received at the Workshop. The existing Objectives are indicated below, and the newly proposed Objectives are noted in red text.

Lake Simcoe and its Tributaries

- *To ensure that new development and activities along the Lake Simcoe shoreline and its tributaries shall protect, restore and naturalize the shoreline and tributary systems.*
- *To ensure that new development and activities adjacent to or in proximity to Lake Simcoe shall be compatible with existing development in terms of the use, scale and intensity of development. All development in the Town will be encouraged to improve surface water quality through appropriate storm water management.*
- *To promote the establishment of a natural vegetation buffer along the Lake Simcoe shoreline and its tributaries to maintain cold water temperatures, reduce erosion and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.*
- *To continue to pursue a program of securing additional lakefront lands through ownership and/or easements to increase the opportunities for public access to the Lake Simcoe waterfront and naturalization of the shoreline.*
- ***To protect, improve or restore the elements that contribute to the ecological health of the Lake Simcoe watershed, including, water quality, hydrology, key natural heritage features and their functions, and key hydrologic features and their functions.***

Natural Environment

- *To utilize an ecosystem approach to planning to ensure that environmental matters are balanced with economic and social considerations in the decision making process.*
- *To recognize and establish a permanent Greenlands System in the Official Plan.*
- *To promote the restoration and/or regeneration of natural areas that have been degraded.*
- *To prevent the pollution of land, air and water resources of the Town.*

- *To ensure the conservation, preservation and maintenance of trees and tree-covered lands as a natural resource, essential to the preservation of wildlife habitat, water conservation, complementary outdoor recreational activities and a sustainable natural environment that is important to human health.*

Growth Management

- *To plan for the Town to grow to a population of approximately 70,300 by 2031.*
- *To plan for the accommodation of approximately 21,200 jobs by 2031.*
- *To ensure that all growth is well managed, well designed and sustainable.*
- *To ensure that future development:*
 - (a) *employs an ecosystem approach;*
 - (b) *complements and reflects the desirable characteristics of the adjacent community;*
 - (c) *respects and integrates with the natural features of the surrounding area in an environmentally acceptable and sustainable manner;*
 - (d) *is integrated into the broad social vision of Georgina as a mixed community that embraces all people;*
 - (e) *has a community and neighbourhood focus and vision that encompasses social goals, recreational activities and appropriate commercial activities;*
 - (f) *is focussed on building distinctive housing forms and innovative housing arrangements that foster neighbourhoods and communities;*
 - (g) *is built in a timely and orderly manner and that all public and private service infrastructure is efficiently planned and installed in the municipal right-of-way.*
- *To ensure that appropriate economic development is an important component of the future growth of Georgina.*
- *To require new development in the centres of Keswick and Sutton/Jackson's Point to be serviced with municipal water and sewer systems. Development outside of the municipally serviced areas is to be on private or communal systems in accordance with policies of this Plan. Full services may be provided in the Willow Beach and surrounding Serviced Lakeshore Residential Area as shown on Schedule J.*

Rural and Agricultural Areas

- *To protect the high capability agricultural land base from urban encroachment and land use conflicts and to recognize the agricultural industry and its associated services as an important economic activity.*
- *To support sustainable farming practices that will protect the long-term productivity of agricultural lands and minimize impacts on the environment.*
- *To provide for topsoil and peat protection within the Town.*

- *To support a balanced approach with respect to Georgina's mineral aggregate resource areas in order to minimize environmental and social impacts while recognizing the importance of aggregate resources to economic development.*
- ***To consider and respect the character of the rural and agricultural landscape.***
- ***To provide opportunities to diversify the rural economy by supporting agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, on-farm diversified uses and the market place for agriculturally related goods and products.***

Healthy Communities and Sustainability

- *To promote and encourage the provision of an adequate supply, mix and range of housing types and tenures that will satisfy the needs of Georgina's current and future population.*
- *To ensure that growth in the Lakeshore Residential and Hamlet Areas is in keeping with their existing low density, single detached residential character.*
- *To ensure the provision of places, facilities and other opportunities for passive and active recreation that will satisfy the needs of Georgina's current and future population.*
- *To ensure that the implementation of this Plan is coordinated with the appropriate agencies to provide adequate community facilities and social/emergency services.*
- *To recognize, conserve and promote cultural heritage resources and archaeological sites and to perpetuate their value and benefit to the community.*
- *To promote and support excellence in community design and building architecture.*
- ***To support healthy lifestyles and sustainable communities where people can live, work and play in their community.***
- ***To consider the impact on the social, environmental and economic well being of the Town in all land use decisions.***
- ***To support green energy and value added agricultural industries.***

Economic Development

- *To focus the location of the majority of new business and job creation in the employment lands within the Secondary Plan Areas.*
- *To continue to support and enhance the resource based industries of agriculture, forestry, tourism and aggregate production, in a manner that is compatible with the rural and scenic character of the Georgina countryside, and complies with sound environmental principles.*
- *To maintain the financial stability and integrity of the Town by managing its financial resources and by undertaking its public works and other development decision making in a fiscally responsible and prudent manner.*

- *To recognize the importance of tourism to the local economy.*
- *To ensure that there are sufficient Employment Lands designated to provide a wide range of employment opportunities.*

While there was clear support for the vast majority of the Objectives, as a result of a review following the Workshop it is now proposed that the final objective under Growth Management be removed and implemented via more specific servicing policies within the plan. Also, as previously noted, it may be appropriate to revise some of the existing Objectives in order to bring them more in line with current requirements and to reflect comments received at the Workshop. For example, the objective that speaks to “All development in the Town will be encouraged to improve surface water quality through appropriate storm water management” will require stronger language to ensure that it is improved, rather than only encouraging improvement.

These Objectives, as stated previously, are important foundations for determining what policies are needed to guide growth and development within Georgina. At this Workshop, discussion and input regarding the direction of policy to implement the Objectives occurred and is outlined in Section 6.0 of this report.

6.0 POLICY DIRECTIONS INPUT

Policies are the tool used to ensure land use growth and development within the Town is conducted in such a manner which upholds the overall Vision, Guiding Principles, and Objectives of the Official Plan.

6.1 POLICY DIRECTIONS

Numerous policy directions have been identified for many of the theme areas within the Official Plan, and were presented to the Workshop participants. These policy directions are based on direction found within Regional and Provincial planning documents, and preliminary discussions during Workshop #1. These directions (as outlined below) were used as a basis to help guide discussion at the Workshop group sessions. It is also clear that many of these directions could apply to more than one theme area (for example, sustainability policies would also directly apply to the Lake Simcoe and its Tributaries theme.)

Natural Environment

- Simplify the current Official Plan policies
- Establish a Greenlands System that implements the Greenbelt Plan and Regional Official Plan, and which also reflects the required Study Areas around Key Natural Heritage features and Linkages between features
- Create a single Environmental Protection designation that consists of:
 - Key Natural Heritage features
 - Key Hydrologic features
 - Associated vegetative buffers

Growth Management

- Direct Population and Employment Growth primarily to Keswick and Sutton/Jackson's Point, with limited growth projected to occur within the balance of the Town
- Conversion of Employment Lands to require comprehensive review
- Municipal approval for all Settlement Areas expansions
- Lakeshore Residential Areas to be identified as 'built up' areas but not settlement areas, to facilitate limited growth and more environmental protection
- Support for minor infill and minor rounding out in some Hamlet communities
- Specific policies for Virginia to recognize expansive land area but limited development potential
- Limited infill development subject to sustainable servicing

Rural and Agricultural Areas

- Mapping to reflect Regional Official Plan Rural and Agricultural lands.
- Farm retirement lots to be discontinued
- Existing Rural Commercial and Rural Industrial uses to be reviewed
- Support for farm related economic activities and value added products
- Identify area south of Cook's Bay as a Specialty Crop Area and recognize flood hazard

Healthy Communities and Sustainability

- Plan for complete communities where people can live, work and play.
- Provide for alternatives to the automobile including transit, cycling and trails.
- Promote low impact design for new development.
- Encourage energy efficient buildings.
- Plan for sustainable infrastructure.
- Protect source water.
- Promote local sourcing of goods and services.
- Consider impacts of development on climate.
- Include target for affordable housing and general policies for Special Needs Housing
- Reflect Trails and Active Transportation Master Plan Study
- Include policies on First Nation consultation
- Include detailed policies on required studies
- Refer to low impact design, light trespass and minimizing climate change in relation to community design
- Ensure sustainability is considered in all decisions regarding land use and public works

Other Policy Directions

- Show desire to extend Hwy 404 to Glenwoods Avenue
- Show 404 Extension beyond Glenwoods Avenue as a 'Protected Corridor'
- Show trails on a separate Schedule to the Plan

6.2 POLICY INPUT

In order to seek input on potential policy directions for the Official Plan, participants were divided into groups. Each group was based on the interests expressed during the visioning exercise from Workshop #1 and the Objectives of the current Official Plan. The groups were then provided with copies of the Vision, Guiding Principles, and current and proposed Objectives in the Official Plan, and a list of potential policy areas that may be used to support the Objectives. From this, the participants were asked to provide feedback on potential policy directions or concepts which would help to support the Vision, Guiding Principles, and Objectives within the Plan.

The following is a summary of the responses from each group.

Lake Simcoe and its Tributaries

- Support for increased access to Lake Simcoe for Georgina residents
- Too many people coming from outside the Town to use beaches
- Policy support to protect the lake from industrial uses
- Strong policy framework for marina's, to protect the lake from pollution/garbage
- Protection of lake tributaries should include Jackson's Point and Pefferlaw
- Limit development in proximity to the lake, while promoting interior growth
- Support for well maintained parks along shoreline
- Desire for more funding for septic inspections

Natural Environment

- Support for the Greenlands System and the resulting linking of greenland areas that are not yet connected
- Site alteration by-law should link to environmental protection policies
- Desire for policy requiring that all fill come from within Georgina
- Lake Simcoe should be protected from sewage contamination

Growth Management

- Desire for population-related jobs in retail and service areas
- Support for urban design rules regarding low-impact design
- Importance of tourism highlighted
- No development in Pefferlaw
- More recreation in Keswick
- Unsure if the goal of 1 new job for every 2 new residents is attainable
- Instead of having to commute to Toronto for work, residents would love to live, work, and play in Georgina
- Increased voice for those on outskirts of community
- Support for the Hamlet Boundary for Udora
- Need to encourage home businesses, small markets, cafés and recreation
- Concerns regarding traffic impacts of Highway 404 extension
- Connections between the Official Plan and the Recreation Study should be made

Rural and Agricultural Areas

- Support for the boundaries of the Rural area
- Desire policies to support and promote agricultural and rural businesses
- Want an implementation strategy for providing 1 job for every 2 new residents
- Increase support for farmers markets to bring people in from outside the municipality
- Want jobs before housing
- Need a process to encourage more agricultural industries

Healthy Communities and Sustainability

- Strong support for more trails and access to trails
- More recreational facilities needed
- Must embrace green energy
- Need policies to support different types of seniors housing

Economic Development

- Official Plan policies should accommodate desired employment
- Business Park boundaries should be expanded to Ravenshoe Road
- Business Park could be a gateway for those entering Georgina from Highway 404
- Action plan needed for growth and development
- Build connections with local business growth organizations/consultants
- Liaise with provincial and federal governments to create growth opportunities
- Support for more commercial businesses, office buildings, doctors offices
- Hospital should be encouraged to locate in Georgina

- Should objectives speak to supporting forestry industry when Georgina has none

Other Suggestions

- Need to encourage the construction of middle-income housing
- Must consider light pollution when developing the Town
- Septic systems in poor shape in some areas

Each group was asked to report back to the participants. The above priorities and concepts which were the result of lively discussions at each topic table will be used to assist in the formulation of Official Plan policies. These policies will implement the Vision, Guiding Principles and Objectives which resulted from the first Workshop.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

Following the group discussion, the facilitators provided participants with an overview of the Next Steps involved in this project. They include:

- The completion of a ***Planning Directions Report***, which will provide a foundation for updating policies within Georgina's Official Plan based on direction found within Regional and Provincial planning documents, and on comments received at the Public Workshops and Open Houses.
- **Open House Under Section 17(16) of the Planning Act**
During this workshop there will be an opportunity to review and discuss the proposed policy and mapping changes that will be included in the Official Plan Review.
- **Public Meeting Under Section 17(15) of the Planning Act**
This is a statutory public meeting of Council in which the public can address Council with respect to the proposed changes in the Draft Official Plan.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Jim Dymant advised all of the participants that staff and the consultants encourage those in attendance to call or email them with any additional questions or comments.

The meeting concluded at approximately 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted;



Jim Dymant BES, MCIP, RPP



Kevin Jarus, H.BA, M.PI