
Public Consultation Summary Report

Official Plan Review and Update
Township of Ramara



December 4, 2017



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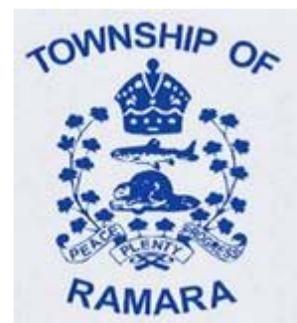




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1.0 Introduction

The Township of Ramara is currently undertaking a comprehensive update to the Township's Official Plan, as required under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*. As part of that process, the Project Team held public consultation sessions at the Ramara Centre on November 20, 2017. The consultation program consisted of two separate sessions:

1. **Stakeholders Meeting** – This meeting took place from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm and was attended by representatives of various agencies, organizations, business associations and other groups from the community. The Stakeholder Meeting was invite-only, as it provided an opportunity for community representatives to discuss specific issues that are of particular concern to the people they represent. This session was a “roundtable”-style discussion, where the Project Team introduced various topics related to land use planning that are of great importance within the Township of Ramara.
2. **Community Roundtable** – This event took place from 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm and was open to all members of the public. The session was originally intended to be conducted in a “breakout”-style format, where attendees would form small groups to discuss the topics of their choice. However, due to low attendance numbers, the session was instead conducted like the Stakeholders Meeting, where all attendees took part in a single, “roundtable” discussion. As with the Stakeholders Meeting, the Project Team introduced land use planning topics that were discussed among attendees.

In addition to open discussions, attendees of both sessions were encouraged to fill out comment forms that included a short survey and space for questions and comments (**Appendix A**). As described below, the survey on the comment form provided the Project Team with an understanding of the topics that are of most concern to those that attended the sessions.

2.0 Stakeholders Meeting – Summary

The Stakeholders Meeting commenced at 9:30 am and was attended by the following 14 representatives:

- Holly Spacek – Simcoe County District School Board

- Kevin Kehl – Walker Aggregates
- Ryan Wall – Walker Aggregates
- Beryl Bertrand – Brechin and Beyond
- Alison Rae – Brechin and Beyond, Brechin Community Centre Board and Action CIND
- Marilyn Muehlegg – Brechin and Beyond
- Steve George – Fowler Construction
- Anita Cook – North Mara Beach Residents
- Ariana Cancelli – Canadian Urban Institute
- Roger Selman – Century 21 Lakeside Cove
- Lori Hunter – Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
- Bob Schickendanz – Simcoe County Home Builders Association
- Gary Bell – Skelton Brumwell and Associates Inc.
- Janki Bhavsar – Lafarge Canada Inc.

The Project Team provided a presentation that explained the Official Plan Update process and proposed timeline. After the introductions and background information, the meeting moved into the discussion. The project team had predetermined six (6) key areas of the Official Plan to discuss. The key points from the discussion of each topic are listed below:

1. Growth and Settlements

- There are limitations for growth due to servicing constraints, particularly in settlement areas where there are no municipal services provided (i.e. Atherley-Uptergrove).
- The Township must encourage the establishment of new businesses and economic development.
- Provide more streetscaping policies for the Highway 12 corridor to help improve the appearance of Brechin's main street and encourage travellers to stop on their way through town.
- Promote active transportation through Official Plan policy – cycling, walking, trail networks.
- Explore possible density target alternatives for the Township's settlement areas that are more in keeping with the character of the existing built form (current targets would require higher densities that are more common in larger urban centres).

2. Recreation and Healthy Communities

- The Township should promote all means of active transportation and encourage the improvement of connecting links.
- Encourage improvements of trail infrastructure for use during all four seasons – particularly connections to Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching.
- Include active transportation and recreational features on a Schedule (map) in the Official Plan – perhaps the transportation schedule.
- Policies should be included in the Official Plan that direct the Township to provide greater public access to Lake Simcoe, where possible.
- Promote opportunities for canoeing and kayaking and other recreation activities within the Township.
- Ensuring new recreation facilities are placed in appropriate, accessible locations.
- Improve signage for trails and parks.
- Improve opportunities for aging in place and age friendly communities.
- Promote better communication between the Township and its residents.

3. Natural Heritage Systems

- Include policies requiring or encouraging Low Impact Development (LID) design for stormwater management;
- Encourage enjoyment of natural heritage features through passive recreation activities;
- Issues with membership with Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority

4. Agricultural Systems

- Create policies that promote agricultural-related industries;
- Create policies that encourage the establishment of Farmer's Markets and farm-to-table opportunities;
- Create policies that permit new and innovative farming techniques, technologies and uses;
- Allow for the utilization of existing land for sale of farm products – On-Farm Diversified Uses

5. Aggregate Resources

- Policies to support rehabilitation strategy – support for adjacent land uses and integration with surrounding landscape;
- Provide policies that allow for tourism opportunities related to aggregate operations and rehabilitated aggregate sites (including tours of quarries and open houses).

Discussion related to the topic of **Shoreline Areas** did not take place as the allotted time for the session had run out.

3.0 Community Roundtable – Summary

The Community Roundtable commenced at 1:30 pm and was attended by approximately 13 people, including Deputy Mayor John O'Donnell and Ward 5 Councillor Kal Johnson. As discussed above, the Roundtable session followed the same format as the Stakeholders Meeting due to lower than anticipated attendance numbers. However, rather than a topic-by-topic conversation, the Project Team opened the floor to a general discussion that did not necessarily focus on the six (6) primary topics discussed at the Stakeholder Meeting. The key points from the Community Roundtable are listed below:

- Provide additional policies that encourage the redevelopment of and improvement of the Brechin Settlement Area (Community Improvement Plans).
- Provide opportunities for population growth in order to maintain and grow businesses.
- Lake Simcoe is an asset that should be utilized.
- Provide and encourage opportunities for aging in place.
- Encourage the establishment of additional services in the Township, including medical services, so that people may age in place.
- Promote the expansion of water/sewer services to Atherley.
- The Township should encourage growth in settlement areas other than Brechin and Lagoon City – Bayshore Village and Atherley-Uptergrove should also be the focus of growth.
- Promote the Township as a rural escape from Orillia and other nearby urban centres.
- County Report regarding provision of county wide water/sewer services.
- Include policies that promote local businesses within the Township and provide more diversified uses to serve the residents.

- Include policies that promote tourist commercial areas and encourage a network of tourist attractions.
- Include policies that recognize the importance of the two Provincial Parks in the Township and the Trent Severn Waterway.
- Incorporate policies into the Official Plan that promote rural economic development policies
- Township should maintain Rural land use designation.
- Official Plan policies should encourage and promote affordable housing as there is a need for it in the Township.
- Move ahead with the development of the Rama Road Corridor.



Community Roundtable (Photo: Patrick Bales, Orillia Packet & Times)

4.0 Comment Forms Summary

The Project Team received several comment forms with various suggestions to consider. The following is a brief summary of the comments received:

- Aggregate resources should be protected under the policies of the Official Plan.

- Enhanced rehabilitation of aggregate sites should be encouraged.
- Encourage the development of the Rama Road Corridor from Atherley to Casino Rama.
- Include policies regarding short-term rental properties.

4.1 Survey

As mentioned, the Comment Forms included a short survey that asked attendees to rank each Official Plan topic in order of importance. The average ranking for each topic is as follows:

Topic	Importance (0 (not) to 5 (very))
Growth and Settlement	5
Shoreline Areas	4.7
Recreation and Healthy Communities	4.7
Natural Heritage Systems	3.8
Agricultural Systems	3.6
Aggregate Resources	3.4

The survey indicates that, generally, attendees regard the settlement areas of the Township as the most important Official Plan topic. These survey results are not surprising when considering that the majority of the discussions at both the stakeholder meeting and the community roundtable focused on growing and maintaining viable settlement areas.

5.0 Reflections and Next Steps

The public consultation sessions provided the Project Team with useful information moving forward. Overall, attendees at the sessions were quite interested in how to grow the Township in a sustainable and positive way. The residents and stakeholders were also interested in recognizing and leveraging existing tourist attractions, recreational assets and businesses/industry as a way of attracting visitors and permanent residents to the Township. All attendees were concerned with how to encourage growth in the employment sector so that young families can stay in the community. That said, all attendees were optimistic about the future and all agreed that the Township had many things to offer.

As noted at the meetings, the Official Plan is not a panacea for the Township, nor is it the only planning document that guides decisions of Council. However, there are policies that can be incorporated into the new Official Plan that reflect the comments and ideas that were provided by residents and stakeholder at the sessions. The Township's Official Plan should provide Council and members of the community with a road map for growth that is clear and representative of the community's goals.

The Project Team will now complete a Policy Directions Report that will summarize all of the ideas and comments received to date, as well as incorporate the requirements of the relevant land use planning documents (e.g. Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan, etc.) that were discussed in the Background Report. The Policy Directions Report will provide the Project Team with the guidance for how the new Official Plan will be drafted. This Report will describe how certain policies should be written, as well as the provide a general direction of how the Official Plan will guide future land use planning within the Township.

Respectfully Submitted,

ECOVUE CONSULTING SERVICES INC.



J. Kent Randall B.E.S. MCIP RPP
Senior Planner



Appendix A

Comment Form Sample



Stakeholder Meeting
 November 20, 2017 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
 Ramara Centre – 5482 Highway 12
 Ramara, ON L3V 8J2



The Township of Ramara and EcoVue Consulting appreciate your comments and input concerning the Official Plan Update and Review.

Using a scale of 0 = Not Important to 5 = Very Important, please rank the following:

	Not Important 0	1	2	3	4	Very Important 5	No Opinion
Growth and Settlement							
Recreation and Healthy Communities							
Natural Heritage Systems							
Agriculture Systems							
Aggregate Resources							
Shoreline Areas							

Please provide any questions or comments you may have in the space below *(please feel free to use the back of this sheet if necessary)*.

Please provide your contact information below so that we may answer your question:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Appendix B

Presentation Slideshow



OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE

PLANNING ACT SECTION 26

Stakeholders Meeting
November 20, 2017

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TODAY'S AGENDA

- Introduction
- Presentation – Kent Randall, EcoVue Consulting Services Inc.
- Further Discussions
- Closing Remarks

PROJECT TEAM

EcoVue Consulting Services Inc	Township of Ramara
Heather Sadler, Principal Planner	Dave Wellman, Manager of Building & Planning Services, Chief Building Official
Kent Randall, Senior Planner	Deb McCabe, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Nolan Drumm, Planner	
Ashlyn Kennedy, Junior Planner	

BACKGROUND

- *Planning Act* section 26 requires municipalities to update their Official Plans every five years to ensure that it:
 - Conforms with provincial plans (e.g. Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe)
 - Has regard for matters of provincial interest
 - Is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement 2014

PURPOSE

- The Stakeholders Meeting is the opportunity for the development industry, local agencies and community organizations to discuss their:
 - Goals and aspirations for the Township
 - How these goals can be achieved
 - Current obstacles and challenges

OFFICIAL PLANS

- Contain policy framework and long-term vision to guide land-use and development in the Township
- Include policies and maps that provide direction on land use
- Township's key land use policy tool to demonstrate conformity and alignment with Provincial and County policies

PLANNING HIERARCHY



PROJECT SCHEDULE

Start Up and Consultations

- Initial Consultation Meetings
- Special Meeting of Council

Background Studies and Identification of Issues

- Consultations / Public Open House
- Prepare Background Reports and Circulate to Commenting Bodies

Proposed Policy Directions

- Consultations / Community Roundtable
- Stakeholder Workshop
- Policy Directions Report

Draft Official Plan

- Prepare Draft Official Plan
- Public Open House
- Submit to County and Province for Comment

Final Official Plan

- Statutory Public Meeting
- Presentation to Council for Adoption
- Submit Official Plan Amendment to County

DISCUSSION AREAS

- The following policy areas will be discussed during this session:
 - Growth and Settlements
 - Recreation and Healthy Communities
 - Natural Heritage Systems
 - Agricultural Systems
 - Aggregate Resources
 - Shoreline Areas

GROWTH AND SETTLEMENTS

CURRENT GOAL:

“To accommodate and manage projected 25 year long-term growth and investment opportunities and to establish and designate types of settlement areas with a diversity of uses, activities, experiences and opportunities.”

GROWTH AND SETTLEMENTS

CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- *“Increase the number and variety of housing, employment, educational, cultural, recreational and other opportunities and experiences within the settlement areas.”*
- *“Encourage growth of residential, business and tourism related uses.”*

RECREATION & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

CURRENT GOAL:

“To ensure that sufficient land is provided for recreational purposes as development takes place, by maximizing the recreational facilities already existing and by providing the necessary facilities to meet the future needs of the permanent and seasonal residents and tourists of the Township.”

RECREATION & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- *“Provide opportunities for both active and passive recreational activities throughout the Township.”*
- *“Recreation activities should be consistent with the objective of protecting and conserving natural heritage resources.”*

NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEMS

CURRENT GOAL:

“To protect, conserve and enhance natural area features and functions, incorporate good community planning and design to prevent the contamination of air, water and land resources, and to protect and preserve the unique physical attributes of landforms.”

NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEMS

CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- *“Protect, conserve and enhance the natural area features and ecological functions within the Township including provincially significant features, the County Greenlands System, and locally significant features.”*
- *“Direct growth to settlement areas where it will have the least impact on natural area features and functions.”*

AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS

CURRENT GOAL:

“To protect and preserve productive agricultural land to the greatest extent possible and recognize the essentially rural nature of the Township.”

AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS

CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- *“Preserve prime agricultural areas for agricultural and farm-related uses.”*
- *“Provide for on-farm businesses that supplement farm income.”*
- *“Limit the creation of severed lots and lots for retiring farmers.”*

AGGREGATE RESOURCES

CURRENT GOAL:

“To identify significant mineral aggregate resources capable of extraction and support the production of aggregate materials as part of the economic development of the Township.”

AGGREGATE RESOURCES

CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- *“Ensure adequate and safe access and haul routes associated with mineral aggregate resource operations.”*
- *“Licensed mineral aggregate operations and future expansions and mineral aggregate resource areas shall be protected by appropriate setbacks from the impact of incompatible land uses.”*

SHORELINE AREAS

CURRENT OBJECTIVE:

“Recognize the importance of shoreline residential areas along lakes and rivers not associated with settlement areas for both seasonal and year round occupancies, and endeavor to maintain the character of shoreline residential communities.”

SHORELINE AREAS

CURRENT POLICIES:

- *“Existing designated Shoreline Residential Areas may continue to exist and infilling may be permitted on partial or individual water supply and wastewater treatment services.”*
- *“New and outward expansion of existing designated Shoreline Residential Areas are not permitted.”*

FURTHER DISCUSSION



Photo Source: <http://www.wisegeek.org/what-is-an-open-forum.htm>

How To REACH Us

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