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Phase 1 Discussion Paper

Policy Gap Analysis



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ABSTRACT

Since the time of preparation and approval of the current Town of Innisfil Official Plan, a number of new policies, at the Provincial level and County level, have come into place. The Town's Transportation Master Plan has also been released since that time, which provides guidance on required improvements to the Town's transportation network to accommodate a growing population. This paper discusses the new policies of the Provincial Policy Statement 2014, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, the County of Simcoe Official Plan, as well as the Town's Transportation Master Plan.

Through the Town's "Our Place" Official Plan Review process, the Town's existing Official Plan must be updated to be consistent with these policies. This paper sets out the framework for the required policy-related updates.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Innisfil is undertaking a comprehensive update to its Official Plan, called “Our Place”. “Our Place” will be a visionary Official Plan document, expanding on the existing policies in place today and integrating and embedding the principles of Place Making, as identified by the people of Innisfil.

The 2006 Official Plan implemented a number of new provincial policy initiatives from the new 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), the Greenbelt Plan 2005, Bill 51, and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006.

Since the approval of the Official Plan, a number of policy documents have been updated or created implementing new policies that must be reflected in the Town’s Updated Official Plan:

- ∞ Provincial Policy Statement, 2014;
- ∞ The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan;
- ∞ Amendments #1 and #2 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe;
- ∞ Simcoe County Official Plan; and
- ∞ Town of Innisfil Transportation Master Plan.

This discussion paper provides an overview of these new policies and indicates where changes are required through the “Our Place” Official Plan Update to implement these policies including:

- ∞ New and expanded policies in the Provincial Policy Statement 2014 address matters related to healthy communities, rural and agricultural areas, economy and employment, infrastructure, climate change, natural heritage and mineral aggregate resources. While these policy categories are already addressed to some extent in the existing Official Plan, changes will be required to implement these policies.
- ∞ The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan sets out policies to protect Key Natural Heritage and Key Hydrologic Features in the Lake Simcoe watershed as well as policies related to development near the Lake Simcoe shoreline.
- ∞ While the existing Official Plan conforms to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan has been enacted since the approval of the current Official Plan. As a result, the

Official Plan Update must include growth projections for Innisfil, as outlined in Schedule 7 of the Growth Plan. The Official Plan must also identify Alcona as a Primary Settlement Area, and Innisfil Heights as a Strategic Settlement Employment Area.

- ∞ The County Official Plan, in addition to having updated Growth Plan population and employment allocations for Innisfil, contains policies on settlement areas and settlement area hierarchy that must be implemented.
- ∞ The Transportation Master Plan makes a number of recommendations, including proposed active transportation connections, potential future transit opportunities, the recognition of a future GO Station as well as road and intersection improvements. While the Official Plan currently addresses these matters, specific reference should be made to some of the recommended or planned improvements to the transportation network.

Lastly, in line with the Town's Inspiring Innisfil 2020 Strategy, the Town has expressed interest in instituting an interim made-in-Innisfil approach to providing for greater development controls within shoreline areas adjacent to Lake Simcoe. This discussion paper also examines development permit systems, as well as the steps required for implementation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

The Town of Innisfil is undertaking a comprehensive update to its Official Plan, called “Our Place”. “Our Place” will be a visionary Official Plan document, expanding on the existing policies in place today and integrating and embedding the principles of Place Making, as identified by the people of Innisfil.

Stage One of the “Our Place” study process involves an extensive public consultation component as well as the preparation of a number of discussion papers to inform the Official Plan Update process. This discussion paper examines the existing policy framework in Innisfil and identifies gaps between this framework and the existing Innisfil Official Plan.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The existing Town of Innisfil Official Plan was adopted by Town Council in July of 2006, and was subsequently approved by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in 2009, 2010 and 2011. There are still a few outstanding site specific appeals of the Official Plan, but for the most part, it is in full effect.

The 2006 Official Plan implemented a number of new provincial policy initiatives from the new 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), the Greenbelt Plan 2005, Bill 51, and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006.

Since the approval of the Official Plan, a number of policy documents have been updated or created, implementing new policies that must be reflected in the Town’s Updated Official Plan. The province is responsible for most of these policy initiatives, including an updated Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) in 2014, the newly created Lake Simcoe Protection Plan as well as two amendments to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. In addition to new provincial policy, the County has updated its Official Plan, and the Town has created a Transportation Master Plan that must also be reflected in the Official Plan.

This discussion paper looks at the changes brought about by these documents, and the updates that will be required to the Town’s Official Plan to implement these policies.

2 POLICY REVIEW

2.1 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (PPS) 2014

At the time of approval of the current Innisfil Official Plan, the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2005) was in effect.

The Provincial Policy Statement 2014 (PPS 2014) came into effect on April 30th, 2014 and replaces the previous Provincial Policy Statement 2005. In general, the PPS provides direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development in Ontario and sets a policy foundation for regulating land use and development, while protecting resources, public health and safety, and the built and natural environment.

Changes to the PPS involve modifications to existing policies, as well as the inclusion of some new policy areas. These policy areas and key changes or additions to policy are summarized in this section.

2.1.1 Healthy Communities

This policy area highlights the necessity for coordination between municipalities in the promotion of transportation options, connectivity and infrastructure. Policies highlight emergency management and the health of communities as significant, and encourage a more integrated approach to planning infrastructure that recognizes the connection of community design to health, aging and access to public facilities.

More specifically, the key additional or expanded policies include the promotion of “active” transportation, and its integration with other modes of transportation, as well as considering active transportation in transit-supportive development (policies 1.1.3.2, 1.2.1, 1.5.1 and 1.6.7). Other policies related to healthy communities include the coordination and co-location of public facilities, including libraries, schools and recreation centres, and recognizing institutional uses as important elements healthy communities (policies 1.1.1 and 1.6.5).

Policy Gaps

Section 2.1 of the Official Plan specifically states that Innisfil will be a “healthy, liveable and safe community”. Section 5 of the Official Plan, the

Urban Design section, contains many policies that speak to healthy communities, including promoting connectivity between communities and the location of community and institutional uses within the Core Commercial Areas or Downtowns. In addition, transportation and transit policies are contained in Section 8 of the Official Plan, including cycling and pedestrian trail policies. The Healthy Communities Discussion Paper provides additional detail related to new PPS policies on Healthy Communities, and how these policies can serve as a basis for updating and strengthening the policies of the Official Plan.

2.1.2 Rural and Agricultural Policies

The updated 2014 PPS offers additional direction in regards to planning, growth and use of Rural and Agricultural areas in the Province.

More specifically, there is a new policy section for rural areas, promoting support for healthy, integrated and viable rural areas (section 1.1.4). Section 1.1.5 further identifies the types of uses that can occur on rural lands within communities. The policies of this section and 2.2.3 support a “diversified rural economy” by promoting agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, on-farm diversified uses and normal farm practices in agricultural areas.

Policy Gaps

The rural policies in the Town’s Official Plan must be updated to reflect the new policies of the PPS. As noted above, the PPS permits agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses in rural areas. Agriculture-related uses are defined as farm-related commercial and industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations. On-farm diversified uses are secondary uses to the primary agricultural use of a property, which can include agri-tourism uses and uses that produce value-added agricultural products.

The Town’s Official Plan should be updated to to permit the range of agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. The critical issue, however, will be defining an appropriate range of agricultural related uses that are appropriate in the agricultural designation and which provide services to the agricultural community without being interpreted to permit a broader range of uses that are more appropriate located in the settlement areas.

In the Rural Area designation, the PPS permits even a broader range of uses including:

- a) the management or use of resources;

- b) resource-based recreational uses (including recreational dwellings);
- c) limited residential development;
- d) home occupations and home industries;
- e) cemeteries; and
- f) other rural land uses.

In addition the PPS indicates that recreational, tourism and other economic opportunities should be promoted in rural areas.

However, the PPS also provides some limitation to such rural uses. These include:

- ∞ Development is to be compatible with the rural landscape and can be sustained by rural service levels;
- ∞ Development should avoid the need for unjustified or uneconomical expansion to infrastructure;
- ∞ Agricultural and resource-related uses should be protected and non-related development directed to areas that will minimize constraints on these uses; and lastly,
- ∞ Settlement areas are to be the focus of growth.

Policy Gaps

The list of permitted uses for Rural Areas in the PPS includes “other rural land uses”. A range of permitted uses that fits into this category will have to be clearly identified in the Town’s Official Plan. The option exists for the Town to promote a broad range of rural land uses within the Rural Area designation, or alternatively, the Town could provide a strict limit to the range of uses, ensuring rural uses are closely related to the agricultural industry. The directions paper should consider criteria for what constitutes an appropriate range of uses including consideration of size or scale and ensuring the Town’s Rural Area character is maintained.

The PPS also permits “limited residential development” as well as “resource based recreational uses”, which includes recreational dwellings. What constitutes limited residential development and what constitutes resource based recreational uses must be given careful consideration both in terms of scale and location. The Town’s built shoreline areas are a logical location for additional resource based recreation uses and continued permission for limited residential use but considerations of scale, intensity, effects on the Lake Simcoe and maintaining the resort-residential character are key considerations which need to be further explored..

The PPS also now requires that municipalities designate prime agricultural areas, and the policies also call for the further protection of agricultural uses from impacts of non-farm development (policies 1.1.4.1, 1.1.5.8 and 2.3). The policies also provide additional flexibility for larger agricultural-related uses that service the broader farming community, including new definitions for on-farm diversified uses and agriculture-related uses.

Policy Gaps

Section 3.2 of the current Official Plan contains comprehensive policies applicable to the Town's Specialty Crop, Agricultural and Rural Areas. The policies largely address lot size requirements, permitted uses and compatibility of uses within these areas. These policies will be required to be updated through the Official Plan Update, based on the new PPS policies. Specific policy references and options on how to reflect updated PPS policies in the Official Plan are addressed to a greater level of detail in the State of Agriculture Discussion Paper.

2.1.3 Economy and Employment

Policies relating to the economy and the protection of employment lands in the 2014 PPS have been expanded. The Province recognizes that good planning and design have an impact on economic development. As a result, there is a clear policy stance to support investing in infrastructure such as communications, energy and transportation.

Specifically, the policies call for strengthening the protection of corridors for goods movement, as well as protecting employment areas in close proximity to these corridors and facilities for goods movement (policies 1.3.2.3 and 1.6.8). For the long-term, the PPS provides clear support for planning for employment areas in the long-term (policy 1.3.2.4). The policies call for the recognition of the importance of communication, energy, and goods movement infrastructure as an important component of a strong economy (policy 1.7.1). There is also an emphasis on promoting place-making and mixed-use areas to support economic development (policies 1.3.1 and 1.7.1).

Policy Gaps

Section 2.11 of the current Official Plan contains the goals, objectives and policies on Economic Development in Innisfil. In particular, the Official Plan recognizes the function of Innisfil Heights as the Town's primary location for employment lands, and sets out policies recognizing the importance of providing for a fully serviced employment area along Highway 400. As

discussed in further detail in the section of this Discussion Paper that addresses the Growth Plan, the Province has recognized Innisfil Heights as a Strategic Settlement Employment Area. This recognition reinforces the updated policy direction in the PPS, which should be emphasized in the Town's Official Plan.

The Employment Area policies in Section 3.5 of the Official Plan contain the detail of permitted uses within the Business Park, General Industrial, Light Industrial Service and Rural Industrial designations. As the updated PPS policies emphasize the importance of place-making to support economic development, the land use designation policies of the Official must be updated to ensure the appropriate integration of mixed-use areas in Innisfil Heights, to reinforce the area with a stronger identity as its own "place" within Innisfil.

2.1.4 Infrastructure

In general, additional and expanded policies of the PPS address the protection of provincially planned transportation corridors and promote land use compatibility for adjacent lands, the adaptive reuse of infrastructure and long term planning for the life cycle of infrastructure facilities. The policies now no longer include the five-lot limit for development on private servicing and allow for development where it can be demonstrated that development will not negatively impact surface and ground water (policies 1.6.6.4 and 1.6.6.5).

Specific policy changes include supporting the adaptive re-use of infrastructure and requiring the consideration of life-cycle costs of infrastructure in making planning decisions (policies 1.6.1 and 1.6.3). In support of this policy, planning authorities can now plan for infrastructure and public service facilities beyond a 20-year planning horizon (policies 1.6.1 and 1.6.3).

Policy Gaps

The current Official Plan contains policies on providing for efficient development and land use patterns which minimize land consumption, as well as providing for compact development and the efficient use of existing infrastructure. The Growth Management objectives and policies in Section 2.3 of the Official Plan include ensuring that infrastructure is planned and provided for in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The Official Plan Update must be augmented to include policies related to infrastructure improvements and the specifically reference requirements for considering life-cycle costs of that infrastructure in making planning decisions. The Official Plan should also indicate that infrastructure planning could consider

potential infrastructure needs beyond the 20-year planning horizon of the Official Plan.

2.1.5 Climate Change

The 2014 PPS includes policies related to climate change. In general, the policies encourage green infrastructure and require that planning for the future take into consideration the potential of increased storm events linked to climate change.

For example, as seen in recent years, there have been increased instances of severe weather causing flash flooding across the province and across the country. Policy section 1.8 of the 2014 PPS contains policies that require planning authorities to support energy conservation and efficiency, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change adaptation through land use and development patterns. Other policies of the 2014 PPS encourage green infrastructure, and the strengthening of stormwater management requirements for developments (policies 1.6.2 and 1.6.6.7).

Policy Gaps

The current Official Plan does not contain any policies or references specifically relating to climate change. With that said, there are existing policies in the Official Plan that address the factors caused by climate change, such as flooding and stormwater management.

Policy section 3.7 on Hazard Lands contains policies applicable to lands that are susceptible to flood hazard, erosion hazard, hazardous sites or steep slopes. Policy section 7.2 on Drainage and Stormwater contains policies requiring stormwater management practices to be applied to new developments to reduce downstream flooding. These sections should be augmented to specifically address the 2014 PPS policies on climate change.

Regarding green infrastructure, there are currently no policies in the existing Official Plan that explicitly address this term. The PPS defines green infrastructure as *“natural and human-made elements that provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes. Green infrastructure can include components such as natural heritage features and systems, parklands, stormwater management systems, street trees, urban forests, natural channels, permeable surfaces, and green roofs”*. The Official could be updated to integrate the term “green infrastructure” throughout, particularly in the Urban Design section and the recommended new section on Healthy

Communities, as recommended in the Healthy Communities Discussion Paper.

2.1.6 Natural Heritage and Mineral Aggregate Resources

The policies of the 2014 PPS augment environmental policies in the 2005 PPS pertaining to natural heritage areas, the protection of significant woodlands and valley lands in southern Ontario, and costal wetlands. The policies support the consideration of cumulative impacts and consideration of environmental lake capacity.

Specifically, regarding natural heritage, policy 2.1.3 requires that natural heritage systems in Southern Ontario be identified. Further, planning authorities are required to protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water, and part of this includes the identification of water resources systems, including the identification of shoreline areas.

With regards to mineral aggregate resources, the 2014 PPS requires the identification of mineral aggregate areas where information is available. The policies also support the conservation of resources and comprehensive rehabilitation planning. The policies require the identification of mineral, petroleum, and mineral aggregate resources, as well as supporting the conservation of mineral aggregate resources and comprehensive rehabilitation planning (policies 2.4.2, 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.3).

Policy Gaps

The current Official Plan does identify a Natural Heritage System for Innisfil. As noted in the Natural Heritage Discussion Paper, the 2014 PPS definition for Natural Heritage System now also includes “working landscapes”, which is interpreted to mean agricultural land that can be included in a NHS owing to the ecological function it provides, but it does not mean that it needs to be naturalized. In addition, the NHS that is currently illustrated in the Official Plan is based on old information from the County. The Natural Heritage Discussion Paper discusses options for updating and delineating the NHS in the Official Plan.

The current Official Plan contains policies on extractive industrial areas and aggregate resources (Section 3.8). These lands are identified on Schedule B of the Official Plan, identified as “Extractive Industrial Area”. The 2014 PPS requires Official Plans to also identify petroleum resources. According to available data, it is not believed that there are any petroleum resources in Innisfil. However, this will be confirmed. The Official Plan already requires

a rehabilitation plan to be submitted in support of applications to designate or zone additional lands as Extractive Industrial.

2.1.7 Water

Section 2.2 of the PPS deals with the protection, improvement and restoration of water quality and quantity. The policies provide direction to all planning authorities to restrict development and site alteration in or near vulnerable surface and ground water features so that these features and their related hydrologic functions will be protected, improved or restored. These policies stem from The Clean Water Act, 2006, which prescribes the development of source water protection plans as the central component in a multi-barrier approach to protecting Ontario's existing and future drinking water sources.

As noted in Town of Innisfil Staff Report DSR-060-14, Innisfil falls within the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region. In accordance with the Clean Water Act, the Town must comply with the Source Protection Plan that is adopted for the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region.

Policy Gaps

These policies are not entirely reflected in the Town's current OP. As such, the Town is currently working on an Official Plan amendment, separate from the Our Place Official Plan Update process, to implement the direction of the PPS. The results of that amendment will need to be incorporated into the Our Place Official Plan.

2.2 LAKE SIMCOE PROTECTION PLAN

The Lake Simcoe Protection Act was passed by the Ontario Legislature in December 2008. The Act required the development of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, which came into effect on June 2, 2009. The Plan sets a new standard for environmental protection through the development of policies and targets for Lake Simcoe and its watershed. Within the Plan, immediate action is promoted to address environmental threats such as phosphorous, as well as new and emerging environmental stresses such as invasive species and climate change. Authority is provided in the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, to prescribe areas outside of the watershed boundary for the purpose of applying future policies, however at present outside areas have not been prescribed.

The objectives of the Plan are set out in the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008 and are translated into key principles which each of the main themes of the plan address. The Plan consists of targets, indicators and policies that address

aquatic life, water quality, shorelines and natural heritage, other threats and activities and implementation. The Plan also serves to further the Province's interest and direction with regards to protecting the ecological health and environmental sustainability of the Lake Simcoe watershed.

Four different policy categories are used to achieve this goal. These include "Designated Policies" as well as "Have Regard To" policies, which affect how decisions are made under specific statutes. Additional policy themes include "monitoring by public bodies" and "strategic action" that public bodies should take to meet the objectives of the plan.

Section 6 of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan sets out policies to protect Key Natural Heritage and Key Hydrologic Features in the Lake Simcoe watershed. The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan places restrictions on development and site alteration within Key Natural Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features, including related minimum 30 m vegetation protection zones or buffers. The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan sets out specific criteria for identifying Key Natural Heritage and Key Hydrologic Features, such as woodlands and wetlands. This criteria in the Official Plan will have to be updated to reflect the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan criteria, at least within the geographic area covered by the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan. However, consideration could be given to applying the same criteria to the entire Town.

Policies are also included in the Plan that speak to when an environmental study is required. The Plan also provides policies that require the establishment and maintenance of natural self-sustaining vegetation for development or site alteration proposed within 120 metres of the Lake Simcoe shoreline and it restricts development of shoreline and riparian areas.

The Natural Heritage Discussion Paper, prepared by North-South Environmental Inc., provides a more detailed overview of the policies of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan that must be included within the Town's Official Plan, and provides options for inclusion of these policies.

Policy Gaps

Policies pertaining to the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan must be included in the updated Official Plan for Innisfil. The Lake Simcoe Protection Act (2008) requires that municipalities bring their official plans into conformity with the applicable "designated policies" at their five-year official plan review, which is now.

Chapter 4 of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan deals with Water Quality. Of pertinence to Innisfil is policy 4.15-DP, which deals with on-site and subsurface sewage treatment, or in other words, septic systems. The policy generally prohibits new on-site sewage systems or subsurface sewage systems within 100 metres of the Lake Simcoe shoreline, and any permanent streams that feed into Lake Simcoe, unless the lands were already zoned to permit development prior to the date that the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan came into effect.

Within Innisfil, there are many properties along the Lake Simcoe shoreline, or along streams feeding into Lake Simcoe, that are currently vacant and would permit residential development. In addition, many of the larger properties could potentially be severed, as long as minimum lot size is maintained, and new septic systems introduced. The Town may therefore be faced with increasing development pressures, due to the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan policies now in place as well as the increasing costs of lakefront property, in proximity to the Lake Simcoe Shoreline. In some cases, this may lead to undesirable development and a change in character in shoreline areas. This issue should be addressed in the Official Plan, emphasizing the importance and desire to maintain the character of the Town's shoreline areas, and re-enforcing the intent of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan to minimize the amount of new development in shoreline areas to protect water quality.

The policies of Chapter 6 of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan on shorelines and natural heritage consist of the majority of the policies that will need to be reflected in the Official Plan Update.

- ∞ Policies 6.1 to 6.7 are applicable to the Lake Simcoe Shoreline. For the most part, development and site alteration outside of existing settlement areas is not permitted, except for certain permitted uses as well as existing uses. Policy 6.5 pertains to proposals for development or site alteration that is outside of settlement areas, and within 240 metres of Lake Simcoe. The policy requires demonstration that development or site alteration will maintain, enhance or restore functional wildlife movement corridors between key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features to other like features. In terms of existing uses, policy 6.45 contains additional criteria that must be met where development or site alteration is proposed. For instance, it must be demonstrated that expansions to existing buildings must not occur within key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features and any minimum vegetation protection zone unless there are no alternatives.

- ∞ Within “shoreline built-up areas”, which are areas outside of settlement areas where there are concentrations of existing residential development and lands are zoned to permit residential development, there is a minimum required vegetation protection zone of 30 metres from the Lake Simcoe shoreline. Development and site alteration is permitted in these areas, but must be accompanied by a natural heritage evaluation that demonstrates there will be no adverse affects of key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, Lake Simcoe and its associated vegetation protection zone.
- ∞ Policies 6.8 to 6.15 are applicable to streams leading to Lake Simcoe, as well as Lake Simcoe itself. These policies call for the protection of the lake and streams from development and site alteration. There are also policies encouraging public bodies to actively re-naturalize public areas adjacent to shorelines and streams, as well as implementing stewardship, education and outreach policies.
- ∞ Policies 6.20 to 6.31 address requirements for key natural heritage and key hydrologic features. As noted above, the Official Plan must be updated to reflect these requirements.
- ∞ The remaining policies of Chapter 6 address matters such as groundwater recharge and mineral aggregate operations. These policies must be used to augment existing policies in the Innisfil Official Plan pertaining to these matters.

As noted in the Natural Heritage Discussion Paper, section 3.13 of Simcoe County’s updated official plan includes policies to implement the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, and can be looked to for guidance on this matter. The Natural Heritage Discussion Paper also contains policy options for how these policies should be implemented within the Updated Official Plan, particularly relating to woodlots and wetlands.

2.3 GROWTH PLAN FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, released by the Province on June 16, 2006, is a plan to manage growth in the Region. The plan allocates population and employment targets to upper-tier and single-tier municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, such as Simcoe County. In addition to these growth allocations, the plan generally contains policies that promote the creation of complete communities (where people can live, work and play), direct growth to built-up areas, provide for a range of dwelling types including affordable housing, and promote multi-modal transportation options. The Official

Plan was modified to address the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006.

Since the time of approval of the current Official Plan for Innisfil, there have been two amendments to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

On January 19, 2012 the Minister of Infrastructure released Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe [2006]. This Amendment brought forward a new section pertaining directly to Simcoe County, or the “Simcoe Sub-area” as it is referred to. Key policy changes included the growth forecasts for Simcoe County municipalities, the identification of Primary Settlement Areas within the County (including Alcona, Innisfil’s only Primary Settlement Area), as well as the identification of four (4) Strategic Settlement Employment Areas within the County, one of which is the Innisfil Heights Strategic Settlement Employment Area in Innisfil.

Amendment 2 to the Growth Plan updates and extends the Growth Plan’s vision, policies and population and employment forecasts to 2041 to help communities across the region better plan for growth and development in a sustainable way. The Amendment ensures an appropriate timeframe for infrastructure and long-term planning and includes additional information concerning a new methodology for measuring and forecasting employment, the implementation of forecasts on Schedule 3 and provides more specific direction in regards to transition. Upper and single-tier municipalities, going forward, must update their population forecasts according to the forecasts detailed in Amendment 2. At this time, the Town of Innisfil cannot account for these updated population and employment forecasts until such a time that the County updates their Official Plan to reflect the 2041 targets.

Policy Gaps

For the time being, Simcoe County has not yet initiated its next Official Plan Review to update its population and employments forecasts to the year 2041. As the Innisfil Official Plan must be in conformity to the County’s Official Plan, the Town’s Official Plan must still plan to the year 2031 in terms of population and employment forecasts.

The current Official Plan’s planning horizon extends to the year 2026. The population forecast for 2026 is 55,500 persons and the employment forecast is for 27,750 jobs. The Updated Official Plan must be revised to reflect current population and employment allocations to the year 2031, which are 56,000 people, and 13,100 jobs (as per Schedule 7 of the Growth Plan and Table 1 in the Simcoe County Official Plan).

The Town's existing Official Plan contains many of the policies implemented through the Growth Plan, prior to Amendments 1 and 2. However, Amendment #1 for the Simcoe Sub-area brought forth a number of new policies that must be incorporated into the Town's Official Plan, including the identification of Alcona as a Primary Settlement Area, as well as the identification of the Innisfil Heights as a Strategic Settlement Employment Area.

Regarding the Innisfil Heights Strategic Settlement Employment Area, the province has released detailed policies regarding permitted uses, employment-supportive uses, and lot sizes permitted in the area. These policies must be included within the Town's Updated Official Plan, but will be addressed through the separate Secondary Plan process for Innisfil Heights that is currently underway.

2.4 SIMCOE COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

The Official Plan was adopted by the County of Simcoe Council on November 25, 2008, and is under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. County Council endorsed this updated version on January 22, 2013, which is currently before the OMB for approval. The County of Simcoe is expecting continued strong population growth to the year 2031 in accordance with the projections of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006.

The updated Plan focuses on population and employment with an emphasis on growth management. Key themes include direction of growth and development to settlements that can be effectively serviced, with a particular emphasis on primary settlement areas guided by targets that result in development densities that achieve compact communities that are transit supportive and facilitate pedestrian and cycling opportunities. Alcona has been identified as a primary settlement area within Innisfil. In addition, the growth of settlements and their relation to the wider territory in regards to resource management, agriculture, forestry, aggregates, tourism and recreation is addressed. The impact of growth on natural heritage and cultural resources is identified and the necessity of development to promote higher density compact form with a range of housing options, and diversified economic growth in contrast to scattered patterns of settlement is promoted. With respect to economic and employment Growth, the Simcoe County Official Plan recognizes Innisfil Heights as a Strategic Settlement Employment Area.

As noted above, for Innisfil, a population target of 56,000 people and an employment target of 13,100 jobs has been set by the Province (through Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan), and has been carried through to the Simcoe County Official Plan.

Section 4.3 of the Simcoe OP addresses affordable housing. Policies pertaining specifically to affordable housing are new to the Simcoe OP. These policies encourage local municipalities to support the provision of affordable housing through Official Plan policy and Zoning By-laws. In support of affordable housing, the Simcoe OP also supports local municipalities passing by-laws under Section 37 of the Planning Act, which would allow for additional height and density in exchange for the provision of affordable housing. The County now also has a minimum target of 10% of all new housing units created each year to be affordable housing units.

Section 4.9 of the Simcoe OP deals with Waste Management in the County. There are new policies regarding waste disposal sites, referred to as D-4 Assessment Areas, that must be taken into consideration in the Official Plan review.

Policy Gaps

As noted in the section above on the Growth Plan, the population and employment targets set out in Table 1 of the Simcoe County Official Plan (Simcoe OP), as well as the planning horizon to the year 2031, will need to be updated in the updated Official Plan. In addition, policy 3.5.23 establishes a minimum density target for designated greenfield areas within the Town, as well as a minimum intensification target. For Innisfil, the minimum density target for the designated greenfield area is 32 persons and jobs per hectare, and the intensification target is 33%. This will need to be outlined in the Town's updated Official Plan. Policy 3.2.3 of the Simcoe OP requires a significant portion of the forecast population and employment growth to be directed to primary settlement areas. As noted above, Alcona has been identified as a primary settlement area, and this must be reflected in the updated Official Plan. Further, as noted above, Innisfil Heights has been identified as a "Strategic Settlement Employment Area", which will have to be reflected in the updated Official Plan. Section 3.9 of the Simcoe OP further identifies that all lands within strategic settlement employment areas are considered to be within the designated greenfield area (DGA). This is important to note when calculating densities in the DGA. The Simcoe OP also distinguishes between "lands for urban uses", and "lands not for urban uses". Both of these terms refer to lands within settlement areas, however "lands not for urban uses" refers to lands currently

designated for rural or agricultural purposes. Across the County as a whole, an additional 20,000 people may be allocated, over and above the Growth Plan population allocations, to “lands not for urban uses” where an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment is approved. This is outlined in further detail in the Land Budget and Municipal Comprehensive Review Discussion Paper.

Policies 3.2.13 and 3.2.14 of the Simcoe OP require phasing policies to be implemented in local official plans to ensure logical and orderly progression of development within settlement areas, including the availability of servicing capacity and transportation infrastructure. These policies must be implemented in the Town’s Official Plan. Phasing is addressed in further detail in the Land Budget and Municipal Comprehensive Review Discussion Paper.

The Simcoe OP also contains a number of infrastructure related policies, including stormwater management, transportation, railways and pipelines that should be incorporated into the Official Plan. For instance, policy 3.3.17 encourages local municipalities to establish stormwater management policies, including a list of specific study requirements for stormwater management reports. The existing Innisfil Official Plan does contain such policies, however these should be updated to reflect the requirements in the Simcoe OP.

Section 3.5 of the Simcoe OP contains specific policies on settlement areas, and the requirement for municipalities to identify a hierarchy of settlement areas in their Official Plans. Given that there are many settlement areas in Innisfil, including Alcona as a Primary Settlement Area, this will be necessary in Innisfil. This is discussed in further detail in the Small Settlements Discussion Paper.

The agricultural and rural policies of Section 3.6 and 3.7 of the Simcoe OP, although currently largely still under appeal, reflect the policy framework of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014, and those policies have been addressed earlier in this discussion paper, as well as in the State of Agriculture Discussion Paper.

Section 4.5 of the Simcoe OP contains some additional policies on resource conservation. While currently addressed in the Innisfil Official Plan, local municipalities are now required to map source water protection areas, as well as areas of high aquifer vulnerability. These matters will have to be addressed through the update to the Innisfil Official Plan.

As noted earlier, the Simcoe OP contains policies that specifically address affordable housing. The Town's OP should be updated to reflect the importance of providing for affordable housing, and appropriate policies should be put into place to promote the County's affordable housing target and for the provision of affordable housing units through intensification, such as second suites, and Section 37 density bonusing.

Also noted earlier, there are additional policies in the Simcoe OP dealing with waste disposal sites, also referred to as D-4 Assessment Areas. The Innisfil Official Plan identifies a number of former landfill sites, however some of these sites do not warrant the title of a former landfill site. Policy 4.9.13 of the Simcoe OP states that local official plans, including the Innisfil OP, can be altered to remove D-4 Assessment Areas, where an Assessment Area Environmental Study is prepared, or alternatively, where current information exists to show that the area does not warrant being identified as a D-4 Assessment Area. This may be done through an Official Plan Amendment, or through an Official Plan Update. Therefore, depending on available information, it may be possible to eliminate some former landfill sites from Official Plan schedules through this Official Plan Update.

Section 4.10 of the Simcoe OP contains policies applicable to local municipal official plans, such as the Innisfil Official Plan. These matters have been largely addressed in this section of the Discussion Paper, as well as in the previous Official Plan Review for the Town. However, this section will be used as a guide to ensure everything is updated accordingly.

2.5 TOWN OF INNISFIL TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The Town of Innisfil has completed a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Study to address existing and future transportation issues in Innisfil. The study identifies improvements to the existing transportation system over the next 20 years.

The TMP identifies the infrastructure and policies needed to support growth in the Town to the year 2031 and provides a balanced transportation network that improves choices for residents in the community with a focus on cycling, walking facilities and transit. Short term, medium term, and long term improvements have been identified to achieve the recommended plan as part of this balanced strategy.

Policy Gaps

The Transportation Master Plan makes a number of recommendations, including proposed active transportation connections, potential future transit opportunities, the recognition of a future GO Station as well as road and intersection improvements. While the Official Plan currently addresses these matters, specific reference can be made to some of the recommended or planned improvements to the transportation network:

- ∞ Exhibit E of the Transportation Master Plan illustrates recommended revisions to Schedule C of the Official Plan. Schedule C shows the Town's planned transportation Network. A number of revisions are recommended, with some of the more notable revisions including:
 - The relocation of the Potential Future GO Station / Stop from the 5th Line to the 6th Line;
 - The relocation of the Potential Future Interchange at Highway 400 from the 5th Line to the 6th Line;
 - Improvements to specific intersections, particularly along Yonge Street;
 - Road improvements to facilitate improved linkages between Friday Harbour, Sandy Cove, Alcona and Lefroy – Belle Ewart to Yonge Street; and
 - A recommended by-pass either to the north or south of Cookstown.
- ∞ The realignment of 20th Sideroad is also recommended at the intersection of Innisfil Beach Road, on the west side of Alcona.
- ∞ Conceptual short-term and long-term local transit networks are recommended for Innisfil.
- ∞ A number of improvements to the active transportation network are also recommended. These are discussed in detail in the Healthy Communities Discussion Paper.

3 DEVELOPMENT PERMIT SYSTEM

With an increased emphasis and importance on the protection of Lake Simcoe, there has been interest in the creation of a Lake Simcoe wide development permit system. In line with the Town's Inspiring Innisfil 2020 Strategy, the Town has expressed interest in instituting an interim made-in-Innisfil approach to providing for greater development controls within shoreline areas adjacent to Lake Simcoe. This was specifically outlined in the Terms of Reference for the creation of "Our Place". This section of the report examines the option of introducing a development permit system in the shoreline area.

3.1 WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENT PERMIT SYSTEM?

The Development Permit System [DPS] is an optional approval system that combines zoning, site plan and minor variance into one application within the approval process. The DPS is allowed by Ontario Regulation 608/06 [Development Permits], which sets the minimum requirements of the system and also enables customization. Facilitated through policies in the Official Plan [OP], a Development Permit Bylaw and Development Application, the system is a tool that helps protect the environment, public health and safety, as well as promote responsible development in facilitating the vision of the municipality.

The DPS is a front-end system that engages the public in producing a vision for a specified area early in the process through mandatory public consultation activities. Once established in the Official Plan, only the applicant has the right to appeal to the OMB on a decision that conforms to the framework set out in the Official Plan and Development Permit Bylaw.

In general, the DPS incorporates faster review times [45 days] through a streamlining of the process and through delegation of decision making on development permits to either a municipal employee or to a committee appointed by Council.

The system incorporates a high degree of flexibility, which allows the municipality to request additional information regarding an application before the 45-day decision timeline begins. Both minimum and maximum development standards are identified by the Development Permit By-law, allowing for the establishment of a specified range of variation, which avoids the need for minor variances.

Compatibility of development, community design, as well as the promotion of environmental protection is achieved through this process. A broader definition of 'development' within the DPS allows for a municipality to expand the types of activities that could require a development permit before activities are undertaken. In regards to environmentally sensitive areas, municipalities have a greater range of options in dealing with environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas including those lands described in section 34 of the Planning Act (such as marshy or flood prone lands and contaminated lands). In addition, the municipality has the ability to include conditions to be imposed prior to, during, or in an ongoing manner of a development permit. This could include environmental monitoring deemed necessary for the protection of the natural environment, public health and safety.

Ultimately the DPS benefits the municipality and community in setting up a clear vision for future development, but also provides a level of certainty to applicants through a one step process for planning approvals. At the individual level, landowners reduce the potential of duplication within the process and the need for amendments to the bylaw.

3.2 IMPLEMENTING A DEVELOPMENT PERMIT SYSTEM

The DPS system includes three components: a policy basis in the Official Plan, a Development Permit Bylaw, and a Development Permit, to be issued as planning approval.

Establishing the foundation for the DPS through the Official Plan involves the identification of the area, the development of a vision for the area through community consultation, and a framework explaining how the system is to be used. Policies should provide direction on the key features of the DPS supported by consultation in the form of a public open house, as well as a public meeting to receive input. The DPS OPA is adopted in a manner similar to other OPAs. At this time, any party that has participated is able to appeal the to the OMB.

The process for developing the Development Permit Bylaw may be done alongside or after the development of the DSP OPA. A Development Permit Bylaw provides a list of permitted as well as discretionary use and standards necessary to begin issuing development permits in the DPS area. This process is similar to that of zoning bylaws in which Council can pass the contents of the bylaw as long as it meets the prescribed requirements. Generally, the bylaw provides certainty to the conditions for development through permitted uses and minimum and maximum standards in accordance with achieving the vision set out in the OP. During the process, community consultation requires an open

house and at least one public meeting to receive comments. Similar to the OP, anyone who has participated in the planning process may appeal to the OMB.

The last stage in developing a DPS is the creation of the Development Application. This application allows for a new structure to be built, the modification of an existing structure or an improvement to land within the development permit area. Regularity information is set out in *Schedule 1 of the Development Permits Regulation*, however municipalities may also change application information requirements to suit their needs. In addition, a municipality can choose to exempt a development or land use from this requirement.

The process for adopting a DPS into the Official Plan and for establishing a Development Permit Bylaw is similar to adopting other OPAs and passing zoning bylaws. The following section outlines the content requirements as prescribed by the Ontario Government [Development Permit System: A Handbook for Municipal Implementation].

Within the official plan DPS policies *must* include:

- Identification of the DPS area
- The scope of delegation of authority and limitations
- The goals, objectives, policies of the municipality
- The types of conditions that may be included in development permit bylaw
- The types of criteria that may be included in the development permit by law for evaluating discretionary uses/ variations.

Within the Official Plan DPS policies *may* include:

- Identification of additional information and material requirements for development permit application.
- Exempt any class of development/use of land from the complete information and material requirements.
- Policies related to the provision of specified facilities, services, or matters in exchange for a specified density/ height of development, or increase in density/height.

Within the development permit bylaw policies *must* include:

- The DPS area within the area covered by the official plan.
- Set out and define permitted uses
- Set out minimum and maximum development standards
- Describe any internal review procedures for decisions on development permit applications.
- Describe notification procedures for decision on development permit applications

- Describe the process for amending development permits, development permit agreements and pre-existing site plan agreements.
- Outline any conditions of approval
- Set out scope of delegated authority, including any limitations
- Exempt placement of a portable classroom existing on January 1, 2007 from the requirement for a development permit.

Development permit bylaw *may*:

- Prohibit development/change in use without development permit
- Set out and define classes of development
- Set out possible range of variation from development standards
- Set out a list of classes or uses that may be permitted if criteria in the official plan and bylaw have been met
- Exempt any class of development/use of land from requirement for a development permit
- Set out criteria that shall be use in making decisions regarding development permits

3.3 BEST PRACTICES REVIEW

The DPS system is a flexible process that applies to both urban and rural scenarios. Of the municipalities that have implemented the DPS process the Township of Lake of Bays has implemented a DPS in the protection of their shoreline. In this case, the DPS offered the tools to implement the environmental policies of the OP in regards to site alteration and vegetation removal. The Development Permit Bylaw allowed for the opportunity to clarify the development requirements and the review process. The town has four types of development permits:

- ∞ two permits that are approved by staff in which the proposal complies with the standards; and
- ∞ two permits that are approved by Council where staff variation is required to one or more standards.

3.4 CONSIDERATIONS FOR INNISFIL

Similar to the experience of the Township of Lake of Bays, The Town of Innisfil can consider also consider the implementation of a development permit system for its shoreline area. The first steps are to set out the framework for the implementation of a Development Permit System in the Town's Official Plan, as set out in this section.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The 2006 Official Plan created a strong policy base, which ensured conformity with the Growth Plan and consistency with the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement. The focus at the time was on Growth Management and managing the significant number of competing interests for growth in the Town. The parameters for growth have now largely been addressed through Growth Plan Amendments 1 and 2 and the County Official Plan. The 2006 Town Official Plan also set out strategic policies in Section 2 for managing growth. The other key vision in 2006 was to promote a community of communities. That focus has now changed through Inspiring Innisfil 2020 to a focus on Innisfil as one community.

As noted throughout this discussion paper, there have been a number of policy documents released since the time of approval of the current Official Plan and a number of updates will be required to the Official Plan to implement the policies that have come into effect from these documents. The existing Plan provides a structured framework that can effectively be updated accordingly.

REFERENCES

PPS 2014

Provincial Policy Statement 2014: Key Changes by Policy Area
<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=10470>

Growth Plan Amendments

https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=371&Itemid=14
https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=398&Itemid=14

Simcoe County Official Plan

Understanding the County of Simcoe Official Plan. April 20, 2015

Lake Simcoe Protection Plan

Lake Simcoe Protection Plan. July 2009
Ministers Annual Report on lake Simcoe 2011-2012

Development Permit System

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/page4755.aspx>

Development Permit System: A Handbook for Municipal Implementation

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page5911.aspx>

Township of Lake of Bays

<http://www.lakeofbays.on.ca/>