



SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN is an incorporated not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.

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Member: Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

Member: Ontario Greenbelt Alliance

2016-10-12

Valerie Shuttleworth, MCIP, RPP Chief Planner
Planning & Economic Development, Corporate Services

Re: Georgina Official Plan Review, Region of York

Dear: Ms. Shuttleworth

It has come to our attention that the Region of York Council will be considering acceptance of the Town of Georgina's Official Plan October 12. Our organization has been intimately involved in the Georgina Official Plan Process in the municipality over the last few years and has made detailed and comprehensive written submissions, verbal submissions at planning workshops and at Georgina Council throughout the process.

Our organization is a fully federated member of the Ontario Nature, focused on education, research, conservation and nature appreciation in the South Lake Simcoe area, including members in Georgina, East Gwillimbury, Brock Township and beyond.

Shrinking the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan Area in the Town of Georgina Official Plan

One of our key issues of conservation and research in the Town of Georgina relevant to the Town of Georgina Official Plan and the Provincial Greenbelt (under review) is the current Pefferlaw Secondary Plan area. We have had serious concern about its current extent and have argued since the 2005 at the time of the establishment of the Provincial Greenbelt (detailed written submission to the Province) that it be shrunk.

In 2014/2015 we have made extensive written comment to the Province regarding the Greenbelt Review, and Town of Georgina Official Plan Review (O.P.) in the past year and a half (see comments Reports attached - SLSN Provincial Greenbelt Submission Comment Report, dated May 28, 2015) and the Georgina Municipal O.P. Comment Report, dated 2015-07-31. We have attended numerous Georgina. We seek to capture the potential opportunity of the two (Provincial and Municipal) processes working together to effect real and significant natural heritage conservation objectives.

It is a central mandate and motivation of our organization over 25 years in South Lake Simcoe to ensure actual planning actions to effect conservation of natural heritage lands and to strengthen core and corridor lands for wildlife consistent with the guidance of landscape ecology science. Consequently, we are extremely supportive of the current Provincial governments' priority of "Growing the Greenbelt" especially where important natural areas lands are in Secondary Plan areas as potentially developable, with minimal or no potential development, and not in the protected Greenbelt. **This is particularly distressing in light of the Town of Georgina Council Meeting (May 13, 2015) of the proposed report 2015 PROVINCIAL CO-ORDINATED LAND USE PLANNING REVIEW- Report No. PB-2015-0026, (For Georgina Council Consideration May 13, 2015) and later to York Region recommending that the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan area be "Shrunk" (thereby Growing the Protected Area of the Greenbelt in the Town of Georgina).**

We have serious concern with the September 15 Region of York Status Update Regional Staff Review and Comments on the Draft Provincial Plan Amendments to the Greenbelt in this regard. Recommendation # 36 Carried Forward and Adapted from May 2015 (Attachment 2) "Maintain the responsibility of refining the Greenbelt Plan natural heritage system boundary or include criteria for municipalities to utilize when undertaking a refinement of the boundary (Adapted from 2015 Recommendation No.33) ".

This recommendation is not specific enough for a landuse planning recommendation in our view and confuses the issue of the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan being an issue of direct relationship to the Provincial Greenbelt. We cannot support it.

It is our position that the Georgina Official Plan must specifically be amended to reflect the shrinking of the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan area now. Consequently, it is our recommendation that provision be made by Region of York Council to enable the formal shrinking of the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan area in the new Georgina Official Plan.

This makes excellent planning logic and sense, and is

1. Good Planning
2. In the Public and natural habitat and wildlife conservation interest
3. Consistent with the Province of Ontario focus of Growing the Greenbelt and managing growth in a controlled, planned and consistent manner. It is also the right time to recommend this important planning initiative as the Province considers final comments to the Provincial Greenbelt.
4. In the interest of the community of the Town of Georgina as per Report No. PB-2015-0026
5. Is a geographically defined and identified area that can be represented in an Official Plan

Other Provincial Greenbelt Initiative of Relevance to landuse and the Georgina Official Plan

Urban River Valley designation

On a broader Provincial planning context perspective we have concern that a Municipality has proceeded to approve an Official Plan, and a Region does not seem to be acting to make specific geographic landuse recommendations of place, before a Provincial Greenbelt Review initiative is completed, that is proceeding in tandem that should have implications for the design of that Official Plan.

We have felt the inclusion of the Greenbelt into the urban river areas of **Keswick, Sutton/Jackson's Point and Pefferlaw** must be a part of the new Greenbelt in 2016, same as rivers draining south off the Oak Ridges Moraine into communities in the south in Toronto and area (eg. Rouge, Humber etc.). In the recently released Greenbelt – Proposed Plan (2016) clear **River Valley Connections** at these urban locations for the **Maskinonge, Black and Pefferlaw Rivers**, important rivers draining north off the Oak Ridges Moraine into sensitive Lake Simcoe, are not designated.

We have serious concern with the September 15 Region of York Status Update Regional Staff Review and Comments on the Draft Provincial Plan Amendments to the Greenbelt in this regard. Recommendation # 32 Carried Forward and Adapted from May 2015 (Attachment 2).

“Revise proposed Greenbelt Plan policy 6.2.1 to subject both public and private lands to the policies of the Urban River Valley designation (new recommendation)”.

This Region of York recommendation does not address the issue of the Urban River Valley Designation issue detailed previously above, in the Town of Georgina. We contend that the formal inclusion of the Greenbelt into the urban river areas of Keswick, Sutton/Jackson’s Point and Pefferlaw must be a part of the new Greenbelt in 2016, the same as rivers draining south off the Oak Ridges Moraine into communities in the south in Toronto and area (eg. Rouge, Humber etc.- some 50 other rivers in the rest of the Greenbelt – Draft Greenbelt June 6, 2016 Mapped). In the recently released Greenbelt – Proposed Plan (2016) clear River Valley Connections at these urban locations for the Maskinonge, Black and Pefferlaw Rivers, important rivers draining north off the Oak Ridges Moraine into sensitive Lake Simcoe, are not designated.

We note that at the Town of Georgina Council Meeting Wednesday September 28, 2016 Council voted to make the above recommendation regarding recommending for the Province to consider implementing the Urban River Valley Designations in the Town of Georgina. We concur, and feel the Official Plan of the Town of Georgina must reflect this landuse designation, and that the Region of York Amend the Georgina Official Plan to show this. And, we also request the Region of York have a specific recommendation in their comments to the Province of Ontario in their final Greenbelt Review Comments that they also recommend this.

North Gwillimbury Forest

We are troubled about the much discussed **North Gwillimbury Forest issue** in the Town of Georgina and are very committed to conservation of all wetlands especially those that are Provincially Significant. Many of our members have been engaged and active in this local community and environmental issue. We note that Ontario Nature, Ducks Unlimited and the David Suzuki Foundation among many other organizations have submitted formally of the we need to protect the Paradise Beach-Island Grove Provincially Significant Wetland. We trust the Region of York Council. We believe Regional of York Council should take direct political action to conserve it now.

I am not available to be present at the upcoming meeting due to other previously arranged commitments in Peterborough and Algonquin Provincial Park. However I can be contacted the week of October 17th regarding these important planning matters.

Yours truly,

Paul Harpley

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Director, The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe Research Foundation, www.zephyrsociety.ca

Recipient: 1995 Canada 125 Medal – Rouge River Valley Conservation

Recipient: 2012 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement

Member, Public Advisory Committee, Federal Lake Simcoe/South-eastern Georgian Bay Clean-Up Fund
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Fellow International, The Explorers Club

Fellow, The Royal Canadian Geographical Society

Fellow, McLaughlin College, York University

c.c. Region of York Council members

Felix Whitton, Program Officer, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

Erin Shapero, Environmental Defence Canada

Joshua Wise, Ontario Nature

Rob Milne, The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe, Wilfrid Laurier University

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