



## Agenda

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| <b>2 p.m.</b>    | Open House                                    |
| <b>2:30 p.m.</b> | Official Plan Presentation<br>Question Period |
| <b>4 p.m.</b>    | Event concludes                               |



# OFFICIAL PLAN



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## Overview

- High level information on what an Official Plan is
- Context of planning for Simcoe County
- Distinction of an upper (county) and lower(local) tier plan
- County of Simcoe Official Plan timeline
- New and stronger visions within the Official Plan
- Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) process and status of approvals
- Answering submitted questions
- Q & A period



## Purpose of an Official Plan (OP)

- The County OP sets out high-level, regional-scale land-use policies and maps for how land will be used today and in the future, for housing, employment and transportation
- Local Official Plans go into greater detail regarding community planning including urban design, park locations, and local infrastructure
- All Official Plans must be aligned with provincial interests and comply with provincial policy and legislation
- Province of Ontario is responsible for approving the County Official Plan
- County is responsible for approving local Official Plans



## Ontario's Land Use Planning Framework



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## Timeline

- County began OP process in 2004
- Number of delays (stop Points) Provincial Policy changes, many directly affecting Simcoe County.
  - Intergovernmental Action Plan, Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, Growth Plan, and the Amendment #1
- County adopted OP in 2008. A year later, the County appealed as no decision had been made
- County OP modified in 2013 to include new Provincial Policy after public consultation
- OMB hearing began in March 2013





## New Stronger Visions for Official Plan

- The County of Simcoe's new Official Plan provides a strong vision for growth and sustainability to 2031.
- The OP is based on the principles of protecting the natural environment and agricultural lands, while building healthy communities with a variety of housing options.
- The Plan will also place an emphasis on increasing travel options for County residents while building and maintaining a strong economy.



## Highlights include:

### Greenlands designated areas increased

- The Official Plan increases the amount of Natural Heritage Areas lands protected from approximately 34% to 39% and places strict limits on development and permitted uses

### Agriculture lands better protected

- The Official Plan establishes a new specific Agriculture designation placing stronger emphasis on long-term protection of farmland for agricultural purposes



## Fixed Settlement Boundaries

- The Official Plan now establishes fixed boundaries for all Settlement Areas in the County. Any change to a Settlement Boundary will now require a higher level of study and public consultation. Changes to a Settlement Boundary will also require both a local and County Official Plan Amendment, which will entail Provincial approval.

## Density Targets Established

- The Official Plan now establishes density targets that will ensure a greater utilization of existing settlement areas through intensification and infilling so there is less demand on settlement area expansions. Greater densities will also provide an opportunities for a variety of housing types and transit, while utilizing infrastructure more efficiently.



## More options for Transportation

- The Official Plan establishes policy to encourage and study a variety of transportation options for County residents including transit, bikes lanes, and trails.

## Strong Economy

- The Official Plan establishes employment policies and areas to ensure a strong, prosperous, and diverse economy for the County.



## The Ontario Municipal Board Process

- The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) has jurisdiction to make the final decision when an Official Plan is appealed - can approve, change, or not approve any section of the OP
- The OMB process is now in the decision-making phase of the OP, with consultation process concluded
- The OMB has stated the hearing process is the public process
- The OMB establishes a hearing process through a Procedural Order, which all appellants, parties, and participants follow
- Given the complexity and number of parties involved, the hearing is broken into phases
- The OMB encourages resolution of issues and provides mediation assistance if required
- The OMB is tasked with upholding the public interest



## Status of Official Plan - Policies

- 352 of 489 policies are approved and 10 of 14 maps schedule have been approved

### Approved

- ✓ Growth, population, employment forecasts
- ✓ Settlements
- ✓ Waste management
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Lake Simcoe Protection Plan
- ✓ Strategic Employment Areas and Economic Districts
- ✓ Other provincial plans including Oak Ridges Moraine, Greenbelt, Niagara Escarpment

### Pending before the OMB

- Agricultural
- Rural
- Greenlands
- Infrastructure
- Resource conservation
- Parts of general development, implementation



## Status

### Have changes been made to OP Policies?

- Yes, through the proper OMB procedures and under strict terms
- Changes have been made to the endorsed policies for conformity with provincial policy, and to enhance clarity
- Changes do not alter the direction of the policy endorsed by County Council
- The OMB considers the proposed changes and makes decisions based on conformity with provincial policy



## OMB Approved

### Growth Management Population and Employment Forecasts

- ✔ The Adopted OP (2008) set broad growth structure; Province had a different vision (Vision Plan in 2009 and then Proposed Growth Plan Amendment 1 [GPA1] in 2010)
- ✔ GPA1 set specific policies to direct and manage growth within Simcoe Sub-area
- ✔ Province established Schedule 7 Population and Employment forecasts by local municipality

### Settlement Areas

- ✔ County Official Plan sets definitive settlement area boundaries
- ✔ All lands within settlement areas are designated Settlements in County OP and local Official Plans contain detailed designations including Environmental Protection
- ✔ Policies address intensification, density targets, phasing of development and expansion requirements, lands for urban and not-for-urban uses, urban form considerations, and direction to local municipalities for additional detail



## OMB Approved

### Transportation Policies

- ✓ The County's Transportation Master Plan was completed in 2008 as background to the Official Plan and updated in 2014 following the Environmental Assessment process (involving Public Information Centres)
- ✓ The Transportation policies provide a broad basis for road standards and right-of-way widths, trails and active transportation, provincial highways, and protecting corridors for future routes

### Waste Management Policies

- ✓ Policies address County, local municipal, and private waste disposal sites
- ✓ The policies were finalized with the assistance of provincial ministries (Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing) County, local municipalities, and other parties



## Pending OMB decision

### Agricultural Policies

- The policies must address Provincial Policy Statement 2014 consistency for on-farm diversified uses, agriculture-related uses, agri-tourism, etc.
- Policy section split from the Rural polices to ensure the protection of agricultural lands for agricultural purposes
- Policies are before the OMB as part of Phase 3 of the hearing, and have been the subject of experts meetings over the past three months – Reports are pending



## Pending OMB decision

### Rural Policies

- Rural policies address the appropriate permitted uses, such as resource-based recreational uses, limited residential, resource extraction, rural employment, and tourism
- The policies are before the Board as part of Phase 3 of the hearing, and have been the subject of experts meetings over the past two months – Reports are pending



## Pending OMB decision

### Infrastructure Policies

- The County is not responsible for sewer and water; however, the County has a duty to ensure demonstration of adequate and appropriate servicing for development proposals
- The County OP policies address the provincial servicing hierarchy, which prefers most development to occur on full services. Growth within the County is to be directed accordingly
- The policies are before the OMB as part of Phase 3 of the hearing. Policies were the subject of experts meetings over the past three months – reports are pending



## Pending OMB decision

### Greenland Policies

- When updating the natural heritage system in 2008, the County worked with the province, conservation authorities, and other stakeholders
- Policies have expanded the land area to approximately 39% of the County
- Greenlands is a land-use designation in the OP and sets out strict limitations on development and permitted uses
- The policies are before the OMB and will be dealt with in Phase 4 of the hearing



Submitted Questions

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## How will the County OP protect agricultural and rural lands and natural heritage areas?

- The County Official Plan now establishes a separate Agriculture designation to the Plan which did not previously exist and it provides for a higher level of protection of agriculture lands.
- Natural Heritage Areas lands protected from approximately 34% to 39% and places strict limits on development and permitted uses
- Density targets that will ensure a greater utilization of existing settlement areas through intensification and infilling so there is less demand on settlement area expansions.
- Fixed boundaries on Settlement Areas. Changes require to a local and County Official Plan Amendment, which will entail Provincial approval.

## How will the County OP contain urban sprawl?

- The Official Plan now establishes density targets that will ensure a greater utilization of existing settlement areas through intensification and infilling so there is less demand on settlement area expansions.
- The Official Plan now establishes fixed boundaries on Settlement Areas. Any changes to a Boundary require a higher level of study and public consultation. Changes require to a local and County Official Plan Amendment, which will entail Provincial approval.

**How were the growth forecasts and density & intensification targets established?**

- The Growth Plan is the Government of Ontario's vision for building stronger, prosperous communities by better managing growth in the region to 2031. The Growth Plan Amendment #1 established population forecasts and density targets for each municipality in the County.
- The Minister of Infrastructure consulted with each local municipality before setting the targets.

## How will growth and development be paced?

- The GPA#1 established population forecasts and density targets for each municipality in the County. Each municipality must plan for this growth until 2031.
- Local are required to undertake there own Growth Management studies to determined the pace and location of growth.
- The density targets that will ensure a greater utilization of existing settlement areas through intensification and infilling so there is less demand on settlement area expansions. Greater densities will also provide an opportunities for a variety of housing types and transit, while utilizing infrastructure more efficiently.

**Why were changes made to the “Significant Woodlands” and Provincially Significant Wetland policy?**

The terminology was changed to reflect the way it is defined in the Provincial Policy Statement.

**Will the County undertake more consultation before any more decisions are made by the OMB?**

- No the County will not be seeking further input. The consultation phase of the County Official Plan has concluded, and we are now in the decision making phase of the Plan with the OMB.
- The County did seek and received input on the OP during the consultation phases from all persons, groups, stakeholders and agencies

## Why did the County approve the Midhurst Secondary Plan?

- This question does not specifically relate to the County of Simcoe Official Plan. The Midhurst Secondary Plan (MSP) is approved by provincial regulation under the Growth Plan and has various OMB approvals. The County Official Plan is required to recognize conforming planning policy and designations.
- The MSP was a comprehensive plan for the entire settlement area the County OP recognizes existing approved settlement areas.

**What role did the County have in the “Special Rule” in the Growth Plan Transition Regulations?**

- The County of Simcoe had no role and in fact was not consulted in the creation of the “Special Rule”.

**How does the OMB fulfill the role of a public meeting and why can't Participants be allowed to comment on proposed changes?**

- The OMB is governed by its own legislation, controls its own process and holds public hearings, not public meetings.
- The hearing process does not function in the same manner as a Public Meeting in front of a Planning Committee or Council.
- The OMB provided an opportunity during the hearing process for Participants to provide their comments.
- All registered Participants who wanted to provide comments to the Board in this hearing have done so.



## Submitted Questions

- All questions that have been submitted have been directly answered by the County. There will be a Q & A sheet at the end of the meeting on the tables by the door that you may pick up.
- Other information; A timeline of the Official Plan process and a information pamphlet has also been prepared to help you understand the Official Plan process better.



Thank you for your interest in the County of Simcoe

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**Questions?**



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