



January 07, 2016

Carrie Sykes
Clerk, Township of Lake of Bays
VIA EMAIL: Csykes@lakeofbays.on.ca

Re: Proposed OP Amendment to reduce the size of new rural residential lots

The Lake of Bays Association (LOBA) is strongly opposed to the proposed Official Plan revision to reduce the size of new rural residential lots from the current standard of 2 hectares (5 acres) to 0.8 hectares (2 acres), and request that this letter be circulated to members of Council prior to the public meeting scheduled for January 12, 2016.

This proposed revision, in combination with the reduction of the size of waterfront back lots already initiated by council, has the potential of completely fragmenting the natural forest areas of the entire eastern portion of the District of Muskoka and destroying the attractiveness of Muskoka as a major provincial resource for tourism and cottage tourism for no valid reason. The risks associated with essentially doubling the density of rural development far outweigh any possible benefit to any sector of Muskoka or Ontario society.

Given the importance of the preservation of the natural environment to the overall economic success of Muskoka, there should not be an objective to set the bar at the lowest possible standard here. The current development standards in the Township of Lake of Bays are what give Lake of Bays its distinct character. The objective should be to strengthen and improve on the Township's ability to preserve the rural forested areas and ambience and set an example for the rest of the District of Muskoka to emulate.

There has been no information provided that demonstrates the demand for smaller lots, or that the proposed reduction in size of rural lots will make housing more affordable in Muskoka. In fact, no definition for what is considered to be affordable in terms of rural residential development has been described. Council has not provided the public with any analysis to support this proposal.

The reduction in rural lot size as proposed will facilitate scattered linear development along all roads throughout the entire township. This pattern of growth is not consistent with the goal and objectives of our Official Plan (B.1, B.2), provincial policy or nationally-set goals for the preservation of forest cover to help offset the impact of climate change. Any additional lot creation that is perceived as necessary for affordability should be aggregated near existing or new settlement areas where overall forest destruction can be minimized and populations can be conveniently and properly serviced with community and commercial services. Alternative, sustainable planning solutions for the creation of affordable lots have not even been considered by council.

The Lake of Bays Association strongly supports the recommendation of the township's planning department and Tunnoch Consulting Ltd. to maintain the current standard of lot size for new rural residential lots.

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We are extremely disappointed that council voted to reduce the size of waterfront back lots against the recommendation of planning staff, Tunnoch Consulting Ltd. and the majority of letters council received from the public. Now, the late introduction of this amendment at the conclusion of the OP Review process falls short of a genuine attempt at public consultation, and the call for public input over the Christmas holiday season cannot be expected to provide a reasonable opportunity for public engagement on a matter of this importance.

The Lake of Bays Association Board of Directors is elected by our 1,300 members to represent their views and interests. Our members include a broad spectrum of people from all walks of life, including permanent and part-time residents, retired people, business people (including local businesses), professionals, teachers, civil servants, and many others. Our common ground is that we believe that the natural environment is our community's greatest asset for enjoyment and economic opportunity.

Yours truly,



Ian Beverley
President, Lake of Bays Association

c.c. Lake of Bays Association members and
Lake of Bays Association Board of Directors (listed below);

Andy Barnett
Pat Birnie
Bob Breithaupt
Jane Dupéré
Fraser Govan
Joseé Hammill
Caroline Konarzewski
Bruce MacLellan
Jim Metcalfe
Barry Morrison
Mary Ann Peden
Maureen Richardson
Linda Robinson
Brian Simpson
Marcia Watt
Ian White
Gloria Woodside