

# Muldrew Lakes Plan Community Engagement

## Question and Answer

*The following questions have been generated from the comments and questions received (primarily by email, on social media and at the Lake Plan Town Hall held in July 2022 and MLCA AGM) from the community in response to the draft Lake Plan update circulated in the 2022 Dock Drop.*

## Questions Related to Lake Planning Process

1) Is it appropriate for a lake association to submit applications for a lake management plan to the Town that includes proposed changes to official plans or zoning bylaws ? Is it the role and responsibility of the MLCA to engage in this process?

2) Has the MLCA made an effort to consult every property owner about the proposed lake plan? Will all residents and cottagers be consulted regardless of membership status with the MLCA?

3) What is the overall process for drafting and implementing the lake plan? How is everyone's input being considered?

4) Will there be a vote on each of the proposed policies?

5) How can we ensure our voices are heard with respect to feedback to the draft proposal?

6) What experts have the MLCA consulted on the development of the draft Plan?

7) Has the MLCA considered requiring that 51% of all landowners vote in favour of the Lake Plan before submitting the applications to the Town? How will the Town know whether the MLCA has performed adequate community consultation on the Lake Plan?

## Questions Related to Shoreline Development

8) Does the draft Lake Plan include a restriction on the creation of new lots (i.e., severances)?

9) Why does the draft Lake Plan not include any reference to Recreational Carrying Capacity as discussed in the Feasibility Report? The lake is at or over capacity already.

10) What is backlot development? Are the lands in the interior of the loop on Peninsula Road considered "backlots"?

11) Are the boathouse and boatport provisions new?

12) Has the MLCA considered a market impact assessment of the proposed Plan? How will the Plan affect property values?

13) Why did the MLCA choose 3,500 ft<sup>2</sup> as the proposed maximum square footage for dwellings on the lake?

14) Why is the MLCA proposing additional building restrictions? Aren't the Town's policies and provisions enough?

15) Are there other ways to mitigate impacts to shoreline health other than limiting the size of building footprints?

16) Could the MLCA introduce a set of "Guidelines" as opposed to enacting policy through the Gravenhurst Official Plan and Zoning By-law?

17) Why is it important to further limit the size of buildings within the 30-metre shoreline buffer area? Why can't we build back?

18) What was the intent of allowing cottages within 30 metres of the lake to expand by a certain square footage instead of just allowing a universal maximum square footage based on distance from the lake?

19) How do I know if the proposed maximum dwelling size will affect my property?

20) Why is the MLCA proposing a maximum dwelling size of 3,500 square feet (at or beyond 30 metres from the shoreline) instead of limits relative to lot area?

21) We object to using descriptions such as "modest and reasonable" to describe development since they are subjective. Can you explain why this terminology is being used?

22) Aren't unfavourable new builds already dealt with at the community level when the Town invites public comment?

23) Does shoreline development really increase the risk of toxic algae blooms?

24) Why does the draft Plan express community concern regarding "more permanently inhabited homes"?

25) Why are new buildings required to be 30 metres back from the shore?

26) Are severances prohibited in the proposed Lake Plan?

27) What is a Site Evaluation Report? When is it required?

# Questions related to Tree Cutting, Noise and Boating

[28\) Can the Lake Plan address other concerns such as noise or light pollution? What about large and damaging boat wakes?](#)

[29\) It seems there is a lack of enforcement when it comes to tree cutting. Is there anything we can do to strengthen this through the updated Lake Plan?](#)

## Questions related to the Lake Planning Process

- 1) Q: Is it appropriate for a lake association to submit applications for a lake management plan to the Town that includes proposed changes to official plans or zoning bylaws? Is it the role and responsibility of the MLCA to engage in this process?

A: The preparation of applications to the Town proposing amendments to the Gravenhurst Official Plan and the Zoning By-Laws falls well within the objectives of MLCA. The MLCA's Constitution provides that one of the MLCA's objectives is to "[a]ct in an advocacy role with various levels of government, agencies or other appropriate bodies to safeguard the interests of Association members."

The Town also encourages lake associations to create and update the lake plans. In fact, section D3 (k) of the Gravenhurst Official Plan states that one of the objectives for the Town is to "encourage and support the development of lake management plans that identify and protect unique social, cultural and ecological values of different lakes in the Town".

In 2009, MLCA completed a Lake Plan, which involved applying for several lake-specific policies to be incorporated into the Gravenhurst Official Plan and lake-specific bylaws to be incorporated into the Zoning Bylaw. The Lake Plan was meant to be a "living document" which would be reviewed and updated every five years.

At the 2017 Annual General Meeting, members of the MLCA voted to initiate a review and update of the Lake Plan. Since then, the MLCA has been undertaking the process of reviewing and updating the Lake Plan for Muldrew Lakes, which included a review and update of the lake-specific policies and provisions in the Gravenhurst Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

As an association that represents members of the Muldrew Lakes community to the District and local municipality, it is the role of the MLCA is to ensure that the

lake-specific policy in the Gravenhurst Official Plan and Zoning By-law is up-to-date, and reflects the current interests and concerns of the community.

- 2) Q: Has the MLCA made an effort to consult every property owner about the proposed lake plan? Will all residents and cottagers be consulted regardless of membership status with the MLCA?

A: The MLCA has been working hard to gather feedback from all property owners regardless of membership status with the MLCA and has engaged in various forms of community consultation over the last two years to solicit input and feedback from the larger community. The MLCA hired a reputable planning firm, EcoVue Consulting Services, to assist with community engagement, and ensure that the proposal reflects the interests of the community, and is consistent with approaches on lakes that are similar to ours while adhering to sound planning policies.

Since the project began, the MLCA has been maintaining a section of the MLCA website that is devoted to the lake plan with all relevant documents, resources, and links to surveys, town hall events, etc.

In 2020, the Lake Plan Survey was distributed electronically. The email list that the MLCA used included all contacts that have been gathered over the years, regardless of membership status at the time. A hard copy of the survey was available to anyone who could not complete it online. The MLCA received 188 responses to the survey.

In the fall of 2020, two Town Hall meetings were held online (via Zoom) to discuss the results of the survey and next steps. More than 50 people participated in these Town Hall sessions.

From the results of the survey and Town Hall sessions, EcoVue Consulting put together a report with recommendations for an update of the lake-specific policies in the Gravenhurst Official Plan and provisions in the Zoning By-law. This report was posted on the MLCA website and presented in-person at the 2021 MLCA AGM, where a vote was passed to contract EcoVue Consulting to conduct further community engagement, draft policy and bylaw amendments, and prepare the applications to be submitted to the Town.

A first draft of the policy and by-law amendments was distributed to every cottage, in person, in the 2022 dock drop, and a Lake Plan Town Hall was held to discuss and receive community input in July 2022. At the 2022 MLCA AGM, further feedback was gathered from the community. In addition, members of the community provided feedback to the MLCA by email and the Lake Plan Committee collected feedback that was posted on various social media sites regarding the first draft of the policy and by-law amendments.

The MLCA is currently analysing the feedback it collected and is planning to distribute a revised copy of the draft policy in the fall of 2022, with further consultation planned for both the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023. Throughout this phase, the

MLCA will continue to make best efforts to gather feedback from all property owners regardless of their membership status in the MLCA.

- 3) Q: What is the overall process for drafting and implementing the lake plan?  
How is everyone's input being considered?

A: The process that has been followed to date for drafting the updates to the lake-specific policy in the Official Plan and Zoning By-law is outlined in the above question (2).

Once the MLCA feels that the proposed amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law reflect the majority of voices who have participated in the planning process, applications for a Zoning By-law Amendment and Official Plan Amendment will be prepared and submitted to the Town of Gravenhurst.

The Town will undergo their own process of evaluating the applications, which is the same process they would go through for any Zoning or Official Plan amendment (i.e. if an individual landowner applied for a Zoning Amendment):

1. After the Town receives the applications, the applications are evaluated for completeness to ensure that the Town has all of the application materials and supporting documentation.
2. Town planning staff then evaluate the applications based on their conformity with the District of Muskoka Official Plan and the Town of Gravenhurst Official Plan, as well as their consistency with the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement. Town planning staff prepare a report to Council to summarise their findings and overall recommendation to approve, deny or defer the applications.
3. The Town will hold a public Open House for information purposes.
4. Following the Open House, the Town will hold a Statutory Public Meeting where Council listens to comments from the general public on the applications.
5. Council then makes a decision on the applications based on a combination of the recommendation made by Town planning staff and the comments from the general public.

- 4) Q: Will there be a vote on each of the proposed policies?

A: Once the MLCA has revised the draft policies and provisions based on the feedback received in the fall of 2022, an online survey will be prepared where community members can provide comments on each of the proposed policies. The MLCA will use this feedback to fine-tune a final draft to be presented in the spring of 2023.

- 5) Q: How can we ensure our voices are heard with respect to feedback to the draft proposal?

A: The MLCA has been welcoming all feedback throughout the lake planning process (2020-present) and we continue to welcome feedback at any time via email ([secretary@muldrewlakes.ca](mailto:secretary@muldrewlakes.ca)). Another great way to have your voice heard is by participating in the upcoming surveys and Town Hall events.

The Lake Plan Committee has collected and considered all comments received by email as well as at Town Halls and the AGM. It has also done its best to collect all comments posted on the community social media pages for consideration in its review. All comments received are being taken seriously and considered by the Lake Plan Committee.

- 6) Q: What experts have the MLCA consulted on the development of the draft Plan?

A: Early in the process, the MLCA membership approved the lake association to retain EcoVue Consulting Services to assist with updating the Lake Plan. EcoVue Consulting Services is a professional planning firm located in Peterborough, Ontario. The firm has extensive experience updating Official Plans and Zoning By-laws throughout a variety of Ontario municipalities, and has extensive experience, including ongoing projects, in the Muskokas.

- 7) Q: Has the MLCA considered requiring that 51% of all landowners vote in favour of the Lake Plan before submitting the applications to the Town? How will the Town know whether the MLCA has performed adequate community consultation on the Lake Plan?

A: The MLCA has considered this suggestion.

The MLCA cannot force all property owners to participate in the lake plan process – voicing one's opinion in community matters is voluntary. Further, the MLCA's Constitution provides that only Primary Members are entitled to vote at meetings of the MLCA. Therefore, MLCA cannot hold a vote of the general population of the lake.

The MLCA is committed to developing a lake plan that reflects the interests of the community. To that end, the MLCA has and will continue to ensure that every property owner has a chance to participate in the process and provide input.

It is for this reason that the MLCA Lake Plan Committee has recommended distributing a survey to solicit feedback on the proposed policies/bylaws. This survey would allow the MLCA to reach the maximum number of property owners, regardless

of membership, and would allow the MLCA to craft a Lake Plan that reflects the majority of those participating in the process.

## Questions Related to Shoreline Development

- 8) Q: Does the draft Lake Plan include a restriction on the creation of new lots (i.e., severances)?

A: No. A policy prohibiting severances was considered early in the process as a response to community concern regarding “overdevelopment” of the shoreline.

However, when EcoVue Consulting Services conducted a thorough analysis of how many lots could potentially be created, it was found that approximately 6 new lots can be created under the current provisions of the Zoning By-law. Since so few new lots can be created, an amendment is not warranted and will be removed in the updated Lake Plan, which will be distributed this Fall. The analysis did not include the Crown Lands located on the Muldrew Lakes since it is very unlikely these would be developed as cottage lots in the future.

- 9) Q: Why does the draft Lake Plan not include any reference to Recreational Carrying Capacity as discussed in the Feasibility Report? The lake is at or over capacity already.

A: Recreational Carrying Capacity (RCC) is a model that calculates approximately how many cottages or houses can be built on a lake based on the total amount of lake area available for recreational boating. It uses a standard ratio of 1.62 hectares of lake surface area for each shoreline dwelling to recreate. It can be used as a guideline, or to justify a hard cap on development on a lake. The Township of Seguin uses RCC as a tool to strictly limit shoreline lot creation (severances). If the RCC calculated for a given lake has been met, then no further lot creation is permitted, and the lake is said to be at capacity.

Since the Muldrew Lakes Community expressed concern regarding “overdevelopment” of the shoreline and recreational boating traffic in the survey, RCC was explored early on in the process as a policy tool for limiting any further lot creation (severances) on the Muldrew Lakes. EcoVue Consulting Services calculated the RCC for the Muldrew Lakes using the ratio of 1.6 hectares per dwelling and determined that the RCC for the Muldrew Lakes is 161 units (cottages/dwellings). At this time, there are approximately 395 units on the lake, with a number of potential additional units which could be built on vacant lots and/or lots that could be severed.

The calculated RCC does support an argument against further lot creation on the lakes, however, when EcoVue Consulting Services analysed how many lots could be created, it was found that only approximately 6 lots can be created by severance

application (not including Crown Lands), which does not warrant any change in policy.

10) Q: What is backlot development? Are the lands in the interior of the loop on Peninsula Road considered “backlots”?

A: A “backlot” is a lot that has another developed or developable lot between it and the lake. For example, a backlot could be created behind a shoreline lot by severing off the back portion of a waterfront lot with frontage on a public road.

Backlot development is currently discouraged in the Gravenhurst Official Plan, and prohibited on Peninsula Road in the Muldrew Lakes section of the current Gravenhurst Official Plan.

The lands located in the interior of the loop on Peninsula Road would not be considered “backlots” because they are not contiguous with the shoreline lots. Some of the lands within the loop are publicly owned (by the municipality) and others are privately owned. They are currently designated and/or zoned Open Space, which prohibits residential development of any kind. These land use designations and zones would be very difficult to change, and thus, residential development in the interior area of the loop is extremely unlikely.

11) Q: Are the boathouse and boatport provisions new?

A: No. For the most part, the boathouse provisions are not new and are currently a part of the Muldrew-specific section of the Gravenhurst Official Plan. However, some of these provisions were not able to be implemented by the Town because they were not carried through into the Zoning By-law (e.g., the provision limiting the width of boathouses). The proposed update to the lake-specific provisions includes:

- Housekeeping changes (ensuring terminology is consistent);
- Applying the current rules to both boathouses and boatports (instead of just boathouses);
- Introducing a new provision in the Zoning By-law to limit the projection of boathouses and boatports to 10 metres (due to the narrow nature of the lake); and
- Carrying all the current provisions in the Official Plan through into the Zoning By-law (so they can be implemented).

12) Q: Has the MLCA considered a market impact assessment of the proposed Plan? How will the Plan affect property values?

A: Prior to the Town Hall meeting held in July 2022, the MLCA had not considered a market impact assessment for the proposed revisions to the Lake Plan. After receiving feedback from some community members regarding effects to property values, the MLCA contacted several local real estate agents who stated that they did not expect the Lake Plan to have a negative effect on market value. One agent stated that the Lake Plan policies in effect on Kahshe Lake (which has a dwelling size limit of 4,000 sq. ft. and requires all development and redevelopment to be located at least 30 metres from the shoreline) have not had a negative impact on property values.

The MLCA expects that helping to ensure the shoreline is developed in a manner that maintains the natural beauty of the lake will maintain or increase property values over the long term.

13) Q: Why did the MLCA choose 3,500 ft<sup>2</sup> as the proposed maximum square footage for dwellings on the lake?

A: The current Muldrew-specific policies in the Gravenhurst Official Plan state that only “reasonable and modest” development and redevelopment will be permitted. These terms are subjective in nature and one of the main goals of the Lake Plan update was to quantify what “reasonable and modest” is, as defined by the Muldrew Lakes community.

In the survey distributed in the summer of 2020, one of the questions asked respondents to describe and/or quantify what they believe “reasonable and modest” to be. The majority of respondents described a total square footage between 2,000 and 4,000 square feet and many respondents also described a dwelling with 3 to 5 bedrooms. At the Town Halls following the survey that were held in 2020 by Zoom, 54% of participants were in support of implementing a maximum dwelling size of 3,000 square feet.

The MLCA chose 3,500 square feet as being on the upper end of what the majority of survey respondents were in favour of, in an effort to strike a balance from the feedback received, while still allowing for flexibility. The 3,500 square feet value is also what the cottager’s association on Three-Mile Lake has proposed for their lake. In several ways, Three-Mile Lake has many similarities to Muldrew and served as a guide in formulating the proposed limit.

14) Q: Why is the MLCA proposing additional building restrictions? Aren’t the Town’s policies and provisions enough?

A: As set out in question 1, the Gravenhurst Official Plan encourages and supports the development of lake plans that identify and protect the unique social, cultural and ecological values of different lakes in the Town. These lake plans are encouraged to

articulate lake specific principals and goals, and address issues such as shoreline development.

When the Town receives an application for a Zoning By-law Amendment or Minor Variance from a property owner they are required to circulate the proposal for comments to those within 120 metres of the Subject Lands, as well as any applicable agencies (e.g., the MLCA). The MLCA has observed increasing conflict within the community over the last several years in response to planning applications on the Muldrew Lakes. Therefore, the MLCA membership voted to move forward with an update of a Lake Plan that better articulates the lake-specific principals and goals surrounding shoreline development within the Gravenhurst Official Plan and Zoning By-law. The purpose of this update is to communicate these lake-specific principals and goals to property owners and prospective developers as well as to Town staff and Council. The overall goal is to decrease the amount of conflict arising from planning applications and ensure that development on the lakes aligns with the vision of the community into the future.

The proposed updates are a result of extensive community consultation over the past two years including a survey, three Town Hall events, communications through the dock drop and website, as well as three AGMs. The Lake Plan Committee has welcomed and encouraged feedback throughout this process by any means (in person, via email, social media, etc.).

15) Q: Are there other ways to mitigate impacts to shoreline health other than limiting the size of building footprints?

A: The MLCA acknowledges the impacts that impervious surfaces (buildings, roads and parking areas) have on the shoreline environment. Some of the main impacts include the removal of natural habitat for wildlife species and alteration of local hydrology (the way water moves across and through the landscape), including impacts to water quality through storm runoff. Limiting maximum dwelling size is an important method of limiting these impacts to water quality and the shoreline environment. It is important not to think of the impacts resulting from a single property, but the cumulative impacts to the lake from the hundreds of lots surrounding the lakes.

The MLCA is working with EcoVue Consulting Services to develop a set of Shoreline Design Guidelines with the main goal of supporting community members to protect shoreline health. The intent of developing the Shoreline Guidelines is to have an information package that is accessible to anyone on the lake interested in improving the health of the shoreline on their own property. It is also being proposed that the town must consider the Shoreline Design Guidelines when evaluating development applications, including applications for Site Plan approval.

16) Q: Could the MLCA introduce a set of “Guidelines” as opposed to enacting policy through the Gravenhurst Official Plan and Zoning By-law?

A: Yes, the MLCA could introduce a set of Guidelines as a community document, but there would be no way of implementing or enforcing the document. This would lead to a lack of certainty with regards to the outcomes of the community’s vision and values as communicated through the engagement process.

17) Q: Why is it important to further limit the size of buildings within the 30-metre shoreline buffer area? Why can’t we build back?

A: The MLCA is proposing a maximum dwelling size of 3,500 square feet at or beyond 30 metres from the shoreline . The MLCA is proposing further reductions in maximum dwelling size when closer than 30 metres (for both new builds and rebuilds) for the following reasons:

- a) The community has expressed concern regarding maintaining the visual character of the shoreline as predominantly natural.
- b) The community has expressed significant concern regarding the impacts of development to shoreline health and water quality. Please see question 15 for a description of the impacts of shoreline development to the shoreline environment and water quality.

In addition, limiting development within 30 metres from the shoreline is particularly important because preserving a natural (forested or vegetated) shoreline buffer between the lake and development is essential to the survival of the lake. The natural transition between the water (aquatic) and upland (terrestrial) ecosystems has been referred to in the scientific literature as the “ribbon of life” and further development should be limited. It is for this reason that a number of lakes either prohibit redevelopment within 30 m of the lake or restrict redevelopment of preexisting cottages within 30 m to the footprint of the currently existing dwelling.

- c) The results of the 2020 survey showed that 70% of survey respondents would like to see the size of rebuilds of existing structures within the 30 metres setback restricted.
- d) Many jurisdictions restrict the size of rebuilds/renovations within the required shoreline setback based on proximity to the shoreline (including the Town of Gravenhurst). The purpose or intent of these provisions is two-fold:
  - i) to limit the visual impacts of redevelopment; and
  - ii) to limit the environmental impacts of site alteration within the shoreline setback area.

Though the Town of Gravenhurst has a current provision restricting width based on proximity to the shoreline, the proposed lake-specific provisions are thought to be better suited to the Muldrew Lakes based on the feedback received through community consultation.

18) Q: What was the intent of allowing cottages within 30 metres of the lake to expand by a certain square footage instead of just allowing a universal maximum square footage based on distance from the lake?

A: Though implementing a universal maximum square footage based on proximity to the lake would be perceived as “fair” to property owners, the intent of allowing an expansion of a particular square footage (e.g., 100 square feet) was to limit impacts to visual character as well as the natural environment. For example, imagine there are two properties on the lake with old cottages within the setback. The first is 800 square feet and the second is 2,000 square feet. Both property owners want to expand their buildings to the greatest extent possible. If both are allowed to expand to 2,500 square feet, the impacts to the shoreline on the first property will be far greater than on the second property. Limiting each property owner to a 100 square foot expansion (for example), effectively controls any environmental impacts while also preserving the visual character of the shoreline. The Lake Plan Committee is currently working on revisions to these proposed policies in response to the feedback received.

As set out in question 17 above, in addition to the impacts of shoreline development to the shoreline environment and water quality set out at question 15, limiting development within 30 metres from the shoreline is particularly important because preserving a natural (forested or vegetated) shoreline buffer between the lake and development is essential to the survival of the lake. The natural transition between the water (aquatic) and upland (terrestrial) ecosystems has been referred to in the scientific literature as the “ribbon of life” and further development should be limited. It is for this reason that a number of lakes either prohibit redevelopment within 30 m of the lake or restrict redevelopment of preexisting cottages within 30 m to the footprint of the currently existing dwelling.

19) Q: How do I know if the proposed maximum dwelling size will affect my property?

A: The proposed maximum dwelling size will affect all properties located on the lakes. However, if your building plans have already been approved by the Town, or your cottage/house is already built, it will only affect you if you wish to expand in the future. For example, if your dwelling is 4,000 square feet and is located at 30 metres or more from the shoreline, you would not be permitted to expand unless you are approved for a minor variance or zoning by-law amendment.

20) Q: Why is the MLCA proposing a maximum dwelling size of 3,500 square feet (at or beyond 30 metres from the shoreline) instead of limits relative to lot area?

A: The intent of introducing an absolute maximum on dwelling size is in response to the concern expressed by community members regarding changes to lake character as well as the environmental impacts of large shoreline structures.

Limiting the size of dwellings based on lot area only serves to limit the overall density of buildings on a lake. This method does not address the visual or environmental impacts of building to the same extent as a maximum gross floor area. Additionally, imposing a universal maximum is fair to all property owners regardless of property size.

21) Q: We object to using descriptions such as “modest and reasonable” to describe development since they are subjective. Can you explain why this terminology is being used?

A: The terms “modest and reasonable” already exist in the current Official Plan policy to describe permitted development on the Muldrew Lakes. One of the main goals of updating the Lake Plan was to try to reduce the subjective nature of this policy.

The 2020 survey asked respondents to describe and if possible, quantify, what they feel is “modest and reasonable” development on the Muldrew Lakes. As a result of the feedback received on the survey and from the Town Hall events, the MLCA is proposing a cap of 3,500 square feet as representative of modest and reasonable for buildings located at or beyond the required 30 metre setback.

The terms “modest and reasonable” will still be used in the Official Plan policy because this policy document is meant to be guiding in nature. The actual provisions representing modest and reasonable development are proposed to be implemented through the Zoning By-law.

22) Q: Aren't unfavourable new builds already dealt with at the community level when the Town invites public comment?

A: It is true that the public can currently comment on applications whether they are in favour or against. However, at the end of the day, Planning Staff and Council largely base their decision on whether the application is in conformity with the intent of the Official Plan policies and corresponding Zoning By-laws. If the current Official Plan policies and Zoning By-laws do not reflect the vision and values of the Muldrew community, the lake-specific policies and bylaws should be amended so Planning Staff and Council can make decisions that reflect the interests of the community.

Official Plan policies and Zoning By-laws are meant to be revised and updated on a regular basis. The Town encourages individual lakes to implement lake-specific policy, and the only way for this to occur is for groups like lake associations to develop their own lake plan. Each lake is unique, much like each neighbourhood in a City is unique, and may require some lake-specific policies to protect unique social, cultural and environmental values.

23) Q: Does shoreline development really increase the risk of toxic algae blooms?

A: There is no one known cause of toxic algae blooms. We do know, however, that algae blooms are linked to warm water temperatures and high nutrient levels (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus). Septic systems have come a long way in recent years and, if maintained properly, usually do not contribute significant amounts of phosphorus to adjacent water bodies. Shoreline trees and vegetation provide an overall cooling effect to lakes by creating shade. In addition, a naturalised shoreline serves to prevent erosion/siltation and slow down/infiltrate warm water (e.g., storm runoff) moving toward the lake (which has a cooling effect), while also providing a means of natural filtration (removing pollutants, and excess nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrogen). With climate change and increasing development pressures, it is wise to take a precautionary approach by setting reasonable limits to development instead of waiting until it is too late.

24)Q: Why does the draft Plan express community concern regarding “more permanently inhabited homes”?

A: Some survey respondents indicated a concern with the increasing number of permanently inhabited homes being built. It is our understanding that these respondents are not concerned about the amount of time people are spending on the lake, but about the intensity of the development that is associated with a year-round home. These builds tend to be larger (with more bedrooms, bathrooms, etc.) and survey respondents are concerned about the change in character of the lake as well as the environmental impacts to the lake and shoreline environment (especially when re-builds are closer to the shoreline than 30 metres).

The Lake Planning Committee has updated the wording in that section of the proposed policy to better reflect the concerns of the community.

25)Q: Why are new buildings required to be 30 metres back from the shore?

A: New buildings have been required to be set back at least 30 metres from the shoreline for quite some time. This is the policy in the Gravenhurst Official Plan and there is an associated provision in the Gravenhurst Zoning By-law for the building

setback as well as leaving at least the first 20 metres from the shoreline in a completely naturalised state. These policies preserve a natural (forested or vegetated) shoreline buffer, which serves many important purposes and provides a natural transition between the water (aquatic) and upland (terrestrial) ecosystems. This transition has been referred to in the scientific literature as the “ribbon of life”, and is said to be essential to the survival of the lake. For more information on the importance of naturalised shoreline buffers please see the following resource from the District of Muskoka:

<https://muskoka.civicweb.net/document/4844/#:~:text=Shoreline%20buffers%20reference%20to%20forested,from%20various%20nearby%20land%20uses.>

26)Q: Are severances prohibited in the proposed Lake Plan?

A: No, severances are not prohibited in the proposed policy. Early in the planning process, the Lake Plan Committee looked at prohibiting further lot creation due to the concerns expressed by the community about “overdevelopment” of the shoreline as well as concerns that the recreational carrying capacity of the lake have been exceeded (ie. the lake feels overly congested at peak hours and poses safety risks for boaters, swimmers, etc.). However, an analysis completed by EcoVue Consulting found that very few lots can still be created under the current zoning provisions, and it was concluded that a policy change was likely not warranted.

27)Q: What is a Site Evaluation Report? When is it required?

A: A Site Evaluation Report is a background study that is required in support of certain types of development in the Gravenhurst Official Plan. It takes a holistic view and serves to ensure that a development proceeds in a way that is responsible - both in its impacts to the natural environment and by ensuring that all policies and provisions of the municipal policy documents are being met. Revisions to the lake plan propose requiring a Site Evaluation Report for any major development on the shoreline of the Muldrew Lakes.

The requirements for a Site Evaluation Report are found in Section I6.28 of the Official Plan and include the following:

- Location of building envelopes that meet setback requirements
- Adequate area, depth and suitability of soils for supporting a septic system
- The provision of appropriate access to the site
- The location of water access and all shoreline structures and pathways which limit erosion and slope instability
- Maintenance of vegetation on slope faces
- Construction mitigation measures and stormwater management techniques that address slope stability, soil erosion, surface drainage, groundwater infiltration and water quality

- Protection of significant wildlife habitat, significant wetlands, fisheries and other environmentally sensitive areas on or adjacent to the site
- All components of the development and its construction which have potential on-site or off-site impacts.

## Questions related to Tree Cutting, Noise and Boating

28)Q: Can the Lake Plan address other concerns such as noise or light pollution? What about large and damaging boat wakes?

A: The amendments the MLCA is proposing to the Gravenhurst Official Plan and Zoning By-law cannot address existing noise, light pollution or boat wakes.

The Gravenhurst Official Plan and Zoning By-law address light pollution with dark sky friendly lighting policies and provisions. These policies are triggered when new development is proposed.

The Town of Gravenhurst has a [noise by-law](#). Complaints can be submitted online and a by-law enforcement officer will follow-up. Town by-laws are distinct from the Zoning By-laws, which can only address how land is used by regulating things like the size or location of buildings.

At this time, the Lake Planning Committee is working at revising the policies and provisions in the municipal planning documents, however, the Muldrew Lakes Plan will be a larger document that addresses some of the issues that cannot be addressed through land use planning. The larger lake plan document will address stewardship issues such as maintaining septic systems, maintaining shoreline health, boating safety, low wake zones, courtesy (noise and lighting), etc.

29)Q: It seems there is a lack of enforcement when it comes to tree cutting. Is there anything we can do to strengthen this through the updated Lake Plan?

A: The Lake Plan can improve management of the shoreline buffer area by enforcing Site Plan Control for all major development on the lake. Site Plan Control is an optional tool under the *Planning Act* that municipalities can use to control certain matters on and around a site proposed for development such as: site access, walkways, lighting, landscaping, drainage, and exterior design. Site Plan Control ensures that a development proposal is well designed, fits in with surrounding uses, and minimises negative impact

A Site Plan Control application would require any property owner proposing development on their property to show that the shoreline buffer was being maintained or enhanced (with a planting plan), and this becomes a legal agreement between the

municipality and the property owner. This would therefore become a legal mechanism to limit tree cutting where properties are being developed.

In terms of tree-cutting on existing properties that are not under development, the Gravenhurst tree-cutting by-law is the only tool for enforcement. The Town recently made some changes to the application process and now requires applicants who wish to remove a tree to submit photographic evidence that a particular tree requires removal. More information on the Tree-cutting by-law can be found [here](#).

The larger Lake Plan document, which will include stewardship initiatives, can also address tree-cutting and serve as a tool for educating the community about what rules are in place, and why they are important. The MLCA will also work to improve knowledge sharing on the lake, to ensure that everyone is aware of the by-laws that are in place, and why a naturalised shoreline buffer is important to the health of the lake.