



Date: 2026-07-22

To: Township of Lake of Bays Mayor and Councillors
Geoff Carleton, Township of Lake of Bays CAO
Carrie Sykes, Township of Lake of Bays Clerk

Re: **Draft Official Plan: Council (Planning Matters) June 30 Meeting – Motion to Change Setbacks**

The Lake of Bays Association (LOBA) is concerned about the limited discussion leading up to Township Council's recent motion at the June 30 Council (Planning Matters) meeting to change the waterfront property setback provisions in the draft Township Official Plan (OP) from 30 to 20 metres. More discussion is warranted.

LOBA represents more than 1,200 waterfront property owner families around Lake of Bays. We advocate for a balanced approach to shoreline development that protects the natural shoreline.

LOBA has supported the 30-metre setback initially proposed in the draft OP because it is better environmental protection, and on the understanding that the proposed policy framework still allows owners of non-complying properties to redevelop those properties in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the plan. This is the approach that was being taken by the Township in the draft OP, per the April 28 Staff Report on the New Official Plan – Revised Version.

Leading up to the June 30 meeting, the Staff Report recommended deferring consideration of the draft OP pending further work on revisions and implications. As a result, LOBA understood that the next substantive discussion of the draft OP would occur at an August 2026 Planning Matters meeting.

Instead, at the June 30 meeting, after two delegations spoke against the 30-metre setback, Council passed a motion that the setback be changed to 20 metres based on the Councillors' concern that a 30-metre setback could infringe on the rights of owners of non-complying properties.

This change in direction was made without a full discussion of all the issues, and without hearing all perspectives.

There was no reference to the environmental protection advantages of a 30-metre setback, and no discussion of the reasons for the District draft OP having a 30-metre setback.

There was no discussion of the draft OP provisions that specifically address the rights of non-complying property owners. The draft OP, even with the setback at 30 metres, would address the rights of non-complying property owners as follows:

- Permitting redevelopment of an existing lot with a natural vegetative buffer of 20 metres in depth “providing that the existing conditions are not worsened” (OP Sec. 3.6.2.3 p));
- Making the 30-metre building setback subject to an exception for a minor addition to an existing building (OP Sec 4.1.1 c) vii)); and
- Allowing a non-complying building to be enlarged, repaired or renovated provided there is no further increase to the extent of non-compliance, through a by-law amendment or the issuance of a Community Planning Permit.

We understand that, when considering such a bylaw amendment and/or the issuance of a Community Planning Permit, the Township will continue to evaluate applications according to the policies found in Section 2.13 of the Community Planning Bylaw, as amended.

The net effect is that respectful redevelopment of non-complying properties will continue to be permitted in a manner that is consistent with OP policies. We ask the Township to confirm that our understanding is correct.

There is one other aspect of the new setbacks that warrants further attention. With the vegetation buffer and the building setback set at the same distance, there are concerns about how construction can be managed and whether there is adequate room for Fire Smart Guidelines to be followed. We request further explanation of how these issues can be resolved.

The setback issue warrants a complete discussion by Council. We request that, at the next Council (Planning Matters) meeting on the draft OP, there be a further opportunity to delegate about, and debate, the setback issue.

Thank you for your attention.

Respectfully,

Paul Gleeson
President

Tim Hadwen
Chair, Planning, Development and Government Relations Committee

Copies: LOBA Planning, Development & Government Relations Committee
LOBA Board of Directors