

Springwater Official Plan

Section 15 – Open Space Policies

15.1. Objectives

- 15.1.1. To provide a range of leisure activities for all ages and interest groups.
- 15.1.2. To preserve and improve the natural features of the Township.
- 15.1.3. To maintain and enhance scenic vistas.
- 15.1.4. To conserve beaches, wooded lands and other distinctive topographical features.

15.2. Policies

- 15.2.1. The Open Space classification of land shall mean that the use of land in the areas so designated shall generally be for active and passive recreational and conservation uses. Uses may include public and private parks, fairgrounds, arenas, community centres, playing fields, beaches, nature trails, picnic areas, nursery gardens, forestry, agricultural, public and institutional uses and accessory buildings and structures.
- 15.2.2. Lands designated as “Open Space” shall be kept substantially free of buildings except for structures of a recreational nature or buildings complimentary and accessory to a recreational activity.
- 15.2.3. Open space lands should be developed as they are acquired so that residents of the Municipality will be encouraged to use the open space areas.
- 15.2.4. Visual and physical means of access shall be provided, to the satisfaction of Council, to all recreational areas, open space, parks and public facilities. Where recreation or conservation projects are designed for public use, adequate automobile parking areas shall be established and access points to parking areas shall be designed in such a manner that they will minimize the danger of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- 15.2.5. Where any proposed park dedication is not in an area intended for park purposes it shall be the general policy of this Plan that a cash payment in lieu of the land shall be requested and such monies shall be applied to acquisition and/or development of park lands in accordance with the provisions of The Planning Act. In addition to the acquisition of parkland, the Township may obtain easements and/or enter into agreements with private landowners or public and private agencies for the use of lands for

park purposes. This type of arrangement may be particularly relevant to the location of pedestrian trails on lands designated Open Space or Environmental Protection.

15.2.6. Where any lands designated for Open Space are under private ownership, this Plan does not indicate that this land will necessarily remain as Open Space indefinitely nor shall it be construed as implying that Open Space areas are free and open to the general public or will be purchased by the Township. If proposals to develop any such lands that are in private ownership are made and the Township does not wish to purchase such lands in order to maintain the Open Space, then an application for re-designation of such lands for other purposes will be given due consideration by the Township.

15.2.7. All areas designated Open Space on Schedule “A” may be designated by by-law as Site Plan Control Areas. The policies of Section 29, Implementation, concerning Site Plan Control shall apply.

15.3. Greenways – Corridors and Pathways

15.3.1. The Township of Springwater contains significant existing natural greenways, historic paths, and trails situated along former rail line right-of-ways. These existing greenways and travel corridors include the Ganaraska Trail, Nine Mile Portage and the North Simcoe Rail Trail as well as numerous snowmobile trails.

15.3.2. Greenways are important because they promote active living and healthy lifestyles, allow access to open spaces for community residents living in settlement areas, encourage outdoor learning, preserve and protect natural features, and provide safe recreational transportation corridors. Greenways may be utilized for a variety of activities which could include walking/hiking, cycling, cross country skiing, nature studies and education, jogging, snowmobiling, and horseback riding.

15.3.3. It is the policy of this Plan to provide future generations with opportunities for linked outdoor recreation and to determine what greenways and other connections or corridors may be protected and maintained for future public use. In order to achieve this, the Township may cooperate with non-governmental organizations, interested local community and service groups, government bodies and/or agencies and determine their support, financial and otherwise, for the maintenance and continued development of a municipal wide greenways system. The Township may also participate in county and/or regional greenways initiatives and undertake corridor feasibility and/or opportunities for use studies.

15.4. Rails to Trails Policies

15.4.1. Certain lands deemed surplus to the needs of railway use have been acquired by the County, Township and private interests. In regard to these lands and similar lands which may be acquired in the future the following policies shall apply:

- a) It is a policy of the Township that the acquisition of surplus rail lands or other similar surplus utility corridors is of general recreational benefit to the residents of the Township. The use of these lands is intended to include passive recreational trails for walking, hiking, bicycle paths and similar uses together with winter activities including snowmobile trails. As these lands become available the Township should investigate the need for the appropriateness of acquiring such lands. The Township, as may be deemed advisable, may partner in the purchase of these lands with other government agencies or private sector groups and avail itself of any appropriate government programs which may assist in such acquisition.
- b) As may be required and deemed appropriate the Township may enter into or be party to right-of-way agreements, to facilitate any such trail system.
- c) The general intent of acquiring these lands is to provide for a recreational trail system for public use. In the development of these lands consideration should be given to minimize the potential danger involving road crossings and similar situations and to provide for the personal safety of users.
- d) Consideration should be given to the security of and protection of abutting properties and where deemed advisable, appropriate measures may be taken to protect these interests.
- e) It is recognized that such lands may pass through various land use designations. For the purpose of this Plan this land use is deemed to be a permitted use in any designation described in this Plan.

15.5. Special Urban Settlement Area Policies

15.5.1. Midhurst

15.5.1.1. The valley lands of Willow Creek along with any appropriate adjacent lands, shall be retained as a linear open space area. The valley's important natural features shall be preserved and protected. Low intensity recreational uses may be permitted where appropriate.

15.5.2. Snow Valley **[OPA #13 OMB approved Jan. 27/03]**

15.5.2.1. In addition to those uses included in Section 15.2.1, waste water treatment facilities or communal wastewater treatment systems may be located within lands designated as “Open Space” in accordance with Section 29.19.4.