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Cover page: Large street trees along Indian Road (Credit - City of Burlington).

Opposite Page: Private landscaping and large trees on Iroquois Road (Credit - City of Burlington).
Introduction & Context

The Character Area Study for Indian Point identifies the characteristics of the neighbourhood, with emphasis on the qualities that make it distinct from other neighbourhoods in the City of Burlington. The study results in recommendations for new and refined policies and tools for the City to support the character of Indian Point in response to development pressures. The Character Area Study will provide considerations for managing development change in Indian Point to ensure new development maintains the characteristics most valued by the community and that the distinctiveness of the neighbourhood is protected and enhanced.

1.1 Study Purpose

The purpose of the Character Area Study for Indian Point is to:

» Identify the area characteristics of Indian Point, with specific emphasis on what makes this area distinct within the City of Burlington.

» Review the merit of establishing defined “Character Areas” in the City’s Official Plan in recognition of the identified area characteristics of Indian Point.

» Obtain direction to improve the management of neighbourhood character issues associated with the redevelopment within Indian Point.

1.2 What is a Character Area Study?

Neighbourhood character refers to the ‘look and feel’ of an area. Character areas are areas of a community that have achieved a distinct, recognizable, character that is different from neighbouring areas. A Character Area Study considers the public and private realm components that define the area, including topography, age and style of housing, built environment, land use patterns, landscaping, street patterns, open space, and streetscapes.

The character of a neighbourhood goes beyond a categorization of private and public realm components. The character of the houses and the individual properties in a neighbourhood cannot be viewed in isolation from the character of the street and the context in which they are located. Therefore, a Character Area Study identifies a combination of components that collectively give a neighbourhood its character, quality, and sense of place.

Opposite Page: Looking north on Algonquin Road (Credit - Brook McIlroy).
Map 1: Illustrating the key characteristics of Indian Point.

7-12% Lot Coverage  1 Storey
13-18% Lot Coverage  1 1/2 Storeys  Street Tree Canopy
19-29% Lot Coverage  2 Storeys  Access Points
30-36% Lot Coverage  2 1/2 Storeys  Views of Street Vistas

Municipally Registered Heritage Houses
Landmarks (Stone Gates)
Views of the Lake
1.3 Indian Point Neighbourhood

The Indian Point neighbourhood is located directly south-west of the Queen Elizabeth Highway in the City of Burlington. Fifteen acres in size, it is a small twenty-seven home neighbourhood situated on Burlington’s only established peninsula on the north shore of Lake Ontario. The neighbourhood is made up of four roads. Indian Road runs east-west for the length of the 200m peninsula and is broken up at approximately 50m intervals by Mohawk Road, Algonquin Road and Iroquois Road. This limited street network has a primary access and exit point off of North Shore Boulevard East, with a second exit off of Mohawk Road, resulting in a quiet and private enclave.

1.4 History of Neighbourhood

Formerly a First Nations encampment, the Indian Point neighbourhood is now a mature residential neighbourhood and one of the oldest in the City of Burlington. The first development in the neighbourhood was by Alfred Brigham Coleman who in 1902 built a 4-storey resort named the Brant Hotel. Located adjacent to the former home of Chief Joseph Brant (a famous Mohawk leader whose land established the village of Burlington), the hotel was a summer resort attraction which was rented to many wealthy Canadians and Americans. Coleman also built five large rental cottages along the Burlington Bay at the turn of the century, some of which still remain. In 1929, the same year that Indian Point’s distinctive gates were designed and built, Coleman registered Plan 236, the Indian Point Survey, which marked the beginning of the transformation of the summer resort into the planned residential neighbourhood that exists today (Adapted from Heritage Burlington Records and Burlington Historical Society, 2011).
Best Practice Review

A detailed review of best practices for protecting and enhancing the character of unique neighbourhoods was undertaken. This review considered local, Canadian, and international precedents at a variety of scales, from neighbourhood-specific studies to broader city-wide policies. Strategies range from research techniques and design guidelines to zoning and policy amendments, and include a variety of approaches that are applicable to Indian Point. A selection of precedents are described in greater detail below.

2.1 Baby Point, Toronto

Baby Point is a residential neighbourhood in Toronto, located on the Humber River to the northwest of Bloor West Village. The neighbourhood, a quaint enclave, is situated on a ‘point’ overlooking the Humber River and is surrounded by ravines and parkland. It is characterized by a mix of dwellings with larger homes backing onto the ravine and smaller dwellings near the Jane Street entrance.

A defining feature of Baby Point is the varied and organic location of the dwellings on their property, and in relation to adjacent dwellings.

Currently, changes to the zoning bylaw are under consideration to permit a unique approach to zoning for the area that would help to preserve the organic layout of the neighbourhood. The amendment would establish minimum front and side yard setbacks as they exist on the date the amendment is enacted, requiring new builds to maintain the existing relationship of dwelling to property size and the relationship between adjacent properties.

Additions to existing dwellings would be limited to the rear yard (to maintain front and side yard setbacks), but are otherwise only restricted by coverage requirements, maximizing flexibility for property owners looking to expand the size of their dwelling.

Lessons Learned

Through consultation with the community, it was determined that the approach proposed for Baby Point is too prescriptive for Indian Point. However, at the highest level, this approach demonstrates the need for specific zoning within character areas that reflects the on-the-ground context. This helped to inform the zoning amendments outlined in Recommendations # 3 and 4.
2.2 Wychwood Park, Toronto

While Ontario has many Heritage Conservation Districts, Toronto’s Wychwood Park is the province’s first residential zone to be granted heritage status. Wychwood Park is located north of Downtown Toronto, to the northwest of Davenport Road and Bathurst Street. Wychwood Park is designated a Heritage Conservation District under the Ontario Heritage Act. This designation recognizes not only the dwellings (all are listed on the City’s heritage register), but also the landscape, the street arrangement, etc. Any alteration, addition, or demolition of a property within Wychwood Park requires a permit from the City, which is subject to the plan for the neighbourhood.

The plan provides a detailed description of the neighbourhood, identifying the key elements that define the character, including a park-like ambiance, large native trees, relationship between trees and dwellings, open spaces around dwellings, etc. Detailed guidelines are provided to ensure that new dwellings, additions, or alterations are consistent with these elements.

Lessons Learned

While Heritage Conservation Districts can be controversial, and are often criticized for limiting the evolution of a neighbourhood, elements from Wychwood Park can be applied to Indian Point without adopting a Heritage Conservation District. The guidelines that support the Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District are rooted in a strong understanding and description of the character and history of the neighbourhood. Recognizing the value of a strong character statement has been applied in the recommendations of this study (see Recommendation # 2).

2.3 Mississauga, Ontario

Mississauga Plan, the City’s Official Plan, provides strong policies for neighbourhood protection at the highest level of planning policy. On Schedule 9: Character Areas, the plan recognizes a number of areas in the City that are unique and require an additional level of consideration.

General policies related to these areas are provided throughout the plan, and Local Area Plans provide more detailed directions and policies for the Downtown Core, Port Credit, Lakeview, and Southdown.

Within the Local Area Plans, each plan area is divided into unique precincts. The character of each precinct is defined, and specific policies are provided to support the elements that define the character.

Lessons learned

Mississauga’s approach to character planning further supports the importance of a strong character statement for each unique area. More importantly, Mississauga demonstrates a comprehensive approach to character planning where broad directions (i.e. Mississauga Plan) are supported by area-specific directions (i.e. Local Area Plans). This approach is reflected in the recommendations for Indian Point, where a character statement and policies in the Official Plan (see Recommendation # 1 and 2) support changes to the zoning bylaw (see Recommendations # 3 and 4).
2.4 Oakville, Ontario

The Town of Oakville’s Design Guidelines for Stable Residential Communities provide detailed directions for new detached dwellings (infill and/or rebuilds) and large additions within stable residential areas.

The guidelines build on the broad policies of the Liveable Oakville Plan (the Town’s Official Plan), which call for compatible infill. By providing detailed directions related to height, scale, transitions between properties, rear yard privacy, etc. the guidelines limit the ambiguity of a broad term such as compatibility. The guidelines provide neighbourhood residents with a sense of comfort about future development, provide developers with a clear understanding of Council’s vision for compatible infill, and assist Town staff in evaluating proposals.

**Lessons Learned**

Through consultation with the community, it was determined that property owners in Indian Point are invested in high quality built form without the requirement of detailed design guidelines. However, like Mississauga’s Local Area Plans, Oakville’s approach demonstrates a comprehensive approach to character planning where broad directions (i.e. Liveable Oakville Plan) are supported by area-specific directions (i.e. Urban Design Guidelines). This approach is reflected in the recommendations for Indian Point, where a character statement and policies in the Official Plan (see Recommendation #1 and 2) support changes to the zoning bylaw (see Recommendations #3 and 4).

2.5 Vancouver, Canada

The City of Vancouver protects important neighbourhoods through the preparation of Community Plans, including plans for Marpole, Mount Pleasant, West End, and Norquay Village. Within these larger areas, the plans recognize a number of unique sub-neighbourhoods that have their own character and identity.

Through the creation of a Local Area Profile, Community Plans start by identifying the key elements that define each neighbourhood. This includes a statement of the neighbourhood’s character, as well as a list of the public and private realm elements that support this character. In addition, the Local Area Profiles address the threats that potentially undermine this character.

The Community Plans are supported by policies that are specific to each neighbourhood.

**Lessons Learned**

Vancouver’s Community Plans reinforce many lessons learned through other precedents, including the value of a strong character statement and area-specific policies. They are unique in that identifying the potential threats to the character results in directions that specifically aim to mitigate these concerns, rather than simply preserving the existing elements. A similar approach was used in Indian Point, where the threats to character elements were identified (see Section 3.3) and used to inform the final recommendations.
2.6 Victoria, Australia

In Victoria, ResCode is a design code (bylaw) that applies to all residential development and makes neighbourhood character the primary criterion for assessing residential development applications in the City. ResCode requires a detailed site analysis for every development proposal to identify the character of the neighbourhood and to demonstrate how the proposed development meets or enhances this character.

To facilitate the retention of neighbourhood character, ResCode provides detailed requirements related to dwelling position, setbacks, height, roof pitch, etc. These are not guidelines, but are mandatory requirements that must be met by all new development.

Lessons Learned
ResCode exemplifies how specific elements of zoning can be used to ensure that the character of an area is protected. While the requirements of ResCode go beyond the recommendations of this report, it demonstrates that zoning amendments are one of the most impactful ways to protect the character of a neighbourhood, as all future development is required to adhere to the requirements. This was recognized in developing Recommendations # 3 and 4.

2.7 Cairns, Australia

To protect the character of unique neighbourhoods in Cairns, the City utilizes many of the same elements that have been discussed in previous precedents. Twenty-three unique cultural heritage precincts have been identified throughout the City, and a character statement and detailed design guidelines have been provided for each. Similar to Vancouver, Cairns also identifies the threats to neighbourhood character and uses this to create guidelines that address issues such as contemporary infill, large dwelling additions, etc.

Where Cairns’ approach is unique is in the appointment of a Regional Urban Design Board. This is a board comprised of the Mayor, the GM of Planning and Environment, and eight industry professionals. The board is called upon, on an as-needed basis, to provide design advice. While the board is involved in a variety of planning contexts, this approach has proven particularly useful in assisting with issues of neighbourhood character.

Lessons Learned
The approach to character protection in Cairns solidifies the lessons learned through previous precedents. In addition, given the contention and ambiguity that is inherent in matters of neighbourhood character, the Regional Urban Design Board approach might be relevant in specific instances in Indian Point where additional guidance is required (i.e. severance applications).
In the City of Boroondara, a Neighbourhood Character Study has identified seventy-five unique precincts within the City. To ensure that the character of these precincts is protected as new development occurs, a simple and easily-distributable brochure has been prepared for each area outlining the character, the elements that define this character, and the potential threats to this character (new houses dominating the streetscape, lack of vegetation, loss of large trees, period reproduction styles, etc.). This description of the area is an integral component during the evaluation of development applications within each neighbourhood.

In addition, the City has used the findings of the Neighbourhood Character Study and is currently in the process of implementing new designations within the zoning that address high level character components, while requiring applicants to provide a response to the Neighbourhood Character Study.

Lessons Learned
The creation of additional zoning regulations is one method of how a City can implement the key findings following a study of neighbourhood character. However, another method is to require applicants to report a response to the Neighbourhood Character Study. A similar approach is recommended in this report, where a character statement and policies in the Official Plan (see Recommendation # 1 and 2) support changes to the zoning bylaw (see Recommendations # 3 and 4).
Consultation Overview

A four-part consultation program was used to engage the Indian Point community, and to develop the final recommendations through a collaborative and iterative process. The workshops generated significant interest, with a significant portion of each session allocated as a question and answer period, to expand on and refine the recommended policies and tools. Ultimately, through consultation with the neighbourhood, it was determined that a less stringent approach to character protection is preferred, focusing on a few key recommendations. An overview of each session is provided below.

Workshop # 1 - Visioning

On April 2nd, 2013, the first public meeting was held, with approximately 25 people in attendance. The objectives of this meeting were to introduce the study to the community, gather input about the elements that define Indian Point’s character, and develop a preliminary Character Area Statement for Indian Point.

The meeting began with a drop-in session, where participants were encouraged to review display boards and interact with the consultant team. A presentation by the consultant team outlined the findings of the background research. Turning Point, a polling technology, was used to elicit feedback throughout the presentation, and distilled the following information:

» The majority of attendees live and own property in the neighbourhood and/or have development interest in the neighbourhood;

» The majority of residents are either long-term (greater than 20 years) or recent (less than 5 years) residents;

» Key features of the neighbourhood include large mature trees, the lakeside context, privacy, and, private landscaping.

In smaller groups, participants engaged in in-depth discussions using a large map and worksheet for guidance. The meeting concluded with each group sharing their top discussion points with the plenary group.

A wide range of feedback was generated from each of the working groups, with many consistent recommendations for maintaining the character of the Roseland neighbourhood including:

» Ensure that privately and publicly owned trees in the neighbourhood are protected to maintain the tree canopy.
Where trees are approaching the end of their life expectancy, they should be replaced with trees of equivalent size, in proportion to the property and house size.

Maintain the privacy of the neighbourhood. The Lakeside context, historic gates and limited street access to the neighbourhood all help to ensure this privacy.

Ensure new development and additions to existing houses are complementary in character, size and scale to others in Indian Point.

Maintain the organic lot patterns with a variety of lot shapes and sizes.

Ensure the scale of houses is proportionate to the size of the lot to reinforce the feeling of the spacious lots.

Support and encourage the eclectic and varied architectural styles of houses in the neighbourhood.

The landscape design and maintenance of privately owned properties in Indian Point should be of a consistently high standard.

Ensure future development does not impact views of the Lake.

The key findings of this session assisted the study team in understanding what elements of the neighbourhood character are important to attendees as well as the community’s general concerns.
Workshop # 2 - Potential Tools
On June 5th, 2013, the second public meeting was held, with approximately 10 people in attendance. Building on the findings of the first workshop, the objective of the second workshop was to introduce all of the potential policy and process tools that are available to protect Indian Point’s identified character elements.

The meeting was initially designed to ‘workshop’ through various planning approaches to manage neighbourhood change. However, the meeting generally followed a group discussion format, corresponding with the consultant presentation. As each tool was discussed in great detail, and a large amount of time was dedicated to a broader discussion of the pros and cons of the study process, there was insufficient time to address all of the potential tools.

Of the tools and policy amendments discussed, there was a general consensus that the level of intervention described may be too prescriptive and may be detrimental to property values in the neighbourhood. Instead, as the discussion evolved, it was recognized that severances are the greatest threat in Indian Point. As only a few properties had the potential to sever, it was noted that focusing on a few key elements (i.e. minimum frontage) may be sufficient, and that the remaining elements can be protected through ownership and investment of the community, without additional policies.

The above sentiment led to a shift in the project approach, to a more context-specific management of development as the recommended policies and tools were selected for subsequent discussion. This approach, called ‘Legacy Zoning,’ establishes front and side yard setbacks on a site-by-site basis based on the location of the existing dwelling on the date the bylaw is enacted. This approach ensures new development maintains the existing relationship between dwellings as additions/rebuilds occur.

Working Committee Meeting
On December 11th, 2013, a meeting was held with the project Working Committee, a smaller group comprised of members of the community. The objective of this meeting was to discuss the Legacy Zoning approach and other draft recommendations in greater detail prior to the final public workshop.

The smaller group atmosphere allowed detailed discussions of each of the proposed recommendations, and it was generally felt that the Legacy Zoning approach was still too prescriptive for the neighbourhood.

Key discussion points included:
» Legacy Zoning may negatively impact property values if too prescriptive;
» A revised maximum lot coverage and minimum lot width may be a better approach to limit severance potential;
» The lot frontage requirements of the previous R2.0 zoning (21.3m) were more neighbourhood-specific;
» A careful balance is required to protect both private property rights and the greater public interest. The study will address both existing and future residents of Indian Point; and,
» A hold should be put on new development/severance applications prior to the completion of this study.

Following this meeting, the recommendations were once again shifted to be less restrictive, and to focus more on refining the existing policies, rather than introducing a new approach.
Workshop # 3 - Recommendations

The final public workshop was held on January 29th, 2014, with approximately 20 people in attendance. The objective of this workshop was to present and obtain feedback on the draft final recommendations.

Participants were in favour of the overall vision for Indian Point, and the elements that should be protected. However, a consensus was still not reached on the best method to protect these elements with some attendees in favour of the recommendations and others opposed.

In general, it was felt that it is difficult to understand how the draft directions and policy amendments would apply at each property.

All feedback received was taken into consideration. Without a consensus, the final recommendations presented in Section 6 of this report reflect the consultant’s professional opinion on how to best protect the character within Indian Point.
Character Elements

The Indian Point neighbourhood has a special character that has developed incrementally since the earliest cottages built in the early 20th century. This character is the result of a number of public and private character elements which collectively create a neighbourhood unlike any other in Burlington, making it a distinct and desirable place to live in the city. The following section outlines each of these character elements which have been established as a result of detailed site visits and neighbourhood mapping analysis, precedent review and the feedback gained from the public visioning workshop.

3.1 Private Realm

Spacious Properties
As a peninsula, the Indian Point neighbourhood has a spacious character that is generally reinforced by the following characteristics:

» Throughout the neighbourhood, properties generally have a low lot coverage, with most properties at less than 18%. This generally results in a large amount of open space in the front, side and rear yard, as well as large separation distances between dwellings.

» On the south side of Indian Road (east of Mohawk Road), properties are generally wide (an average of 39.4m) and shallow. While the bungalow-style dwellings are wide and shallow to conform to the lot, the significant width of the lots provides a large separation distance (9-19m) between dwellings, providing clear views through to the water.

» The single-storey height of the bungalow-style dwellings permits views to the water from the higher elevations on Algonquin Road and Iroquois Road.

» Dwellings to the west of Mohawk Road, and on the north side of Indian Road (east of Mohawk Road) are generally 1.5 to 2.5-storeys, and include a mix of original dwellings and new buildings. These dwellings are generally set back significantly from Indian Road (the primary street in the neighbourhood) with access provided from Mohawk Road, Algonquin Road, and Iroquois Road. From Indian Road, this creates the impression that these dwellings are nestled into the landscape.

These spacious properties, with random and irregular dwelling siting, are a key element in defining the character of Indian Point. The large lots offset the size of the (often) large dwellings, and provide space for attractive private landscaping, and a large, mature tree canopy.
Organic Lot Pattern
The varied size and shape of lots in Indian Point can be attributed to the original resort development patterns of the early 1900s, and to the redevelopment of the area prior to the implementation of the City’s zoning bylaw. This organic nature is particularly evident where existing houses overlap the municipal property lines. The unique arrangement and orientation of the lots has afforded the opportunity to locate dwellings on site in a manner that capitalizes on the varied topography and creates a strong visual impact at corner sites and at the end of terminating streets.

Dwelling Style and Scale
The Indian Point neighbourhood is a collection of architecturally distinct houses, many of which were built in the 1920s and 1930s. There is a mix of historic and modern architecture in the neighbourhood, a product of decades of evolving architectural designs. Key styles represented in the neighbourhood include:

» Single-storey dwellings along the south side of Indian Road (east of Mohawk Road).

» A mix of styles in the remaining neighbourhood, including the Canadian interpretation of the English Arts and Crafts movement, Neo-Tudor, ranch-style bungalows, and modern dwellings.

Despite this variety of architectural styles, the dwellings are compatible with each other for a number of reasons, including:

» The houses are generally 1 to 2-storeys, with consistent heights within each block;

» Pitched roofs, representing the applicable dwellings style (i.e. Neo-Tudor dwellings have a steep pitch, with significant articulation in the roofline, while bungalows have a standard pitch with minimal variation);

» Use of high-quality, natural materials, including wood, brick, stone, and stucco, that reinforce a strong connection to their natural setting along the water;

» Facade articulation that is consistent with the applicable style. For example, the Arts and Crafts and Neo-Tudor style dwellings have a significant amount of vertical and horizontal articulation, including dormers, bay windows, recesses and projections, column elements, continuous banding, large chimneys, enhanced cornice detailing, front porches, etc. On the other hand, the bungalows have a simpler articulation, including the use of doors, windows, shutters, minor recesses and/or projections to define the primary facade.

In the absence of a consistent style, it is this strong attention to detail and high-quality materials, combined with the spaciousness of the properties (as described previously), that allow the various architectural styles to coexist in close proximity.

Private Landscaping
Private landscaping and gardens are well-established in Indian Point and are prominent features of most front and rear yards. These gardens generally consist of shrubs, lawn, canopy trees, and flower plantings. The overall design and maintenance of the privately owned properties in Indian Point are of a high standard and help to give each property a distinct character. The landscaping also promotes privacy for residents without requiring fencing, further strengthening the porous qualities of the neighbourhood.
3.2 Public Realm

Large, Mature Trees
Among the defining features of the Indian Point neighbourhood are the large, mature trees that line the streets and frame properties. The trees are well established and vary in type, including pine and maple species. The resulting tree canopy in the neighbourhood is vast, and creates a sense of enclosure along the streets. These trees, both private and public, provide privacy for residents and shaded streetscapes. Their maturity signifies the neighbourhood's age and history. Houses in Indian Point are generally well-proportioned with the trees, which contributes to the balance and rhythm within the neighbourhood.

Private Enclave
The Indian Point neighbourhood is a private enclave, removed both visually and physically from the rest of Burlington through its position on a peninsula, the limited entrance and exit points, the dense tree cover, and the historic gates. The singular access point to Indian Point is from North Shore Boulevard East, and all four roads that make up the neighbourhood are dead ends (with the exception of Mohawk Road which is a one-way exit) which results in a street network that is used primarily by those who live in or are visiting the neighbourhood.

Lack of Sidewalks
There are no sidewalks in Indian Point, which is a remnant of the original neighbourhood design. This helps to reinforce the historic character of the neighbourhood, and represents an atypical urban standard despite being an urban neighbourhood, while also supporting a comfortable and informal pedestrian environment.

Landmarks
The distinctive and historic Indian Point stone gates signify arrival into the neighbourhood and represent the neighbourhood’s early history and unique location in the City. The gates were built in the Craftsman-Style and combine fieldstones of variable colour, size and shape. Located at the entrance to the neighbourhood from North Shore Boulevard East and the exit off of Mohawk Road, the gates reflect and complement the architectural interest of the houses within the neighbourhood.

The light standards in Indian Point are also distinctive markers of the cultural significance and early history of the neighbourhood. Key features of the lights include:
- Traditional lantern design on a coloured (black), precast concrete pole;
- Powder-coated metal arm in a black finish;
- A gooseneck-style arm; and,
- A decorative scroll support-arm with a double bend.

On private properties, a wide variety of lighting complements the high-quality architecture and landscape design.

In 1996, Burlington City Council approved By-law 72-1996, designating the Indian Point gates and streetlamps as having historical and architectural value and interest pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act.

Views
The neighbourhood’s location on the north shore of Lake Ontario provides over half of the properties with water views and/or access (see Map 1, Page 2). The existing road network, topography and housing stock have resulted in smaller cottage-style homes being located along the lake, which allows for views of the water from the homes that are located on the gently sloping hill on the east side of Indian Road. Along with views of the water are terminus views along Indian Road. The large trees, well set back homes and sloping topography, create sightlines when entering and exiting the neighbourhood that are distinct to the Indian Point neighbourhood.

Opposite Page:
The photos demonstrate some of the private realm elements that characterize Indian Point (Credits - Google).
3.3 Threats to Character Elements

In the previous sections, the public and private realm elements that define Indian Point’s character were presented, building on the findings of the initial consultation with the community. During this consultation, the elements that have/may threaten this character were also identified and are outlined below.

Inappropriate Severances

Spacious properties are a defining characteristic of Indian Point (see Section 3.1) and are responsible for many of the elements that define the character of the neighbourhood, including large setbacks, extensive separation distances between dwellings, and views between properties.

As demonstrated at recent Ontario Municipal Board hearings, the 18m minimum lot width requirement of the existing R2.1 zoning permits wider properties in the neighbourhood to sever into two properties. The resulting properties are not able to maintain the same large setbacks and separation distances that previously characterized the property.

Uniform Dwelling Location

The existing zoning requires an 11m minimum front yard setback for all properties in Indian Point. During redevelopment, a new dwelling would typically be located on a property at the minimum front yard setback line. If all the neighbours in a block were to follow suit, the varied front yard setbacks, including the large front yards that define the neighbourhood, would be lost. The uniform requirements for side yard setbacks (10% of lot width, with a 3m minimum on one side) could have a similar impact, standardizing the location of dwellings in relation to each other.

While this was recognized as a potential threat, residents generally felt that if measures were implemented to eliminate severances, landowners would not require further measures to locate dwellings on site in a manner that is consistent with the character of the neighbourhood.

Loss of Views

The key views in Indian Point, which include views to Lake Ontario, unique views toward a dwelling at the terminus of some streets, and general visibility between properties are directly related to the large separation distances between dwellings, and by dwellings that are positioned to frame and highlight these views.

Where properties are permitted to sever under the current zoning, it would result in smaller properties which would allow less freedom in locating dwellings on site, and therefore, reduced separation distances between dwellings and the adoption of more standard urban style built form and siting. On the south side of Indian Road, this would directly impact the large views to the lake that currently exist between dwellings. In the remainder of the neighbourhood, this could greatly reduce visibility between properties.

Loss of Trees

Indian Point’s extensive tree canopy is a defining characteristic of the neighbourhood. While there is no immediate threat of large-scale loss of this canopy due to redevelopment, it can be expected that a number of trees on both public and private property are approaching the end of their life expectancy. The City already has policies in place that address the protection and replacement of trees in the public realm, but no policies/incentives exist for the protection of trees on private property, or to encourage the planting of new trees.
Cut-Through Traffic
Community members have reported an increase of traffic in the neighbourhood as a result of vehicles entering the neighbourhood off of North Shore Boulevard East and using Mohawk Road to bypass the traffic lights at the highway off-ramp. This type of cut-through traffic should be discouraged to maintain the privacy and safety of the neighbourhood.

Loss of Landscaping
The spacious lots that currently exist in Indian Point can accommodate high quality and expansive landscaping. This landscaping provides privacy, contributes to the unique individual character of each property, and enhances the overall aesthetic of the neighbourhood. Reduced lot sizes as a result of inappropriate severances may not provide a similar amount of open space and may not provide the opportunity for adequate outdoor amenity space that presently contributes to the character of the neighbourhood.

Inconsistent Street Lamps
Community members have described the street lamps that are a part of the stone gates as not fitting with the character of the neighbourhood. It is important to ensure the character of the distinctive and historically significant street lamps is consistent throughout the neighbourhood.

Top (Inappropriate New Dwelling): The image represents a new dwelling that would not be appropriate in Indian Point. While the property is well-landscaped and the building appropriately set, the use of non-natural materials, and a lack of distinction between the two storeys (material changes at the roof peaks are used for decoration only), is inconsistent with the character of Indian Point.

Bottom (Appropriate New Dwelling): The bottom image demonstrates a building that is well located on the property to accommodate significant landscaping. The dwelling utilizes natural materials and has as a clear distinction between the first and second-storeys (consistent with the style of building), minimizing the perceived bulk of the massing.
Character Area Statement

Indian Point is a distinct historic neighbourhood characterized by its lakeside context, large, mature tree canopy, spacious properties with houses that are proportionate to their lot size, architectural authenticity, and walkable streets. New development should protect and enhance these character elements.

The character area statement for Indian Point builds on the character elements, summarizing the qualities that make the neighbourhood distinct from others in the City of Burlington. This statement describes the most important character components in the neighbourhood, and provides direction on how the residents of Indian Point would like the neighbourhood to evolve. This statement reflects and builds on the vision statements that community members developed during the community visioning workshop.

Key Terms:

*Historic Neighbourhood* - The history of Indian Point is reinforced through the original housing stock, the historic gates and light posts, a lack of sidewalks, and large, mature trees.

*Lakeside Context* - In various locations throughout Indian Point, views to the lake are afforded by the topography and the spacing between dwellings.

*Mature Tree Canopy* - Many of the trees in Indian Point are close to a century old. Their expansive canopy provides continuous shade on the street, while providing a buffer between public and private space.

*Walkable Streets* - Streets in Indian Point are generally wide. They are safe and well lit, with limited traffic due to a lack of through streets.
To protect and preserve the character of Indian Point, five recommendations have been provided, including Official Plan Amendments, Zoning Bylaw Amendments, and new planning tools. On their own, each of these recommendations protects specific (or multiple) elements of Indian Point’s character. Together, they provide a complementary framework across various levels of policy to ensure that future development will strengthen the overall character of the neighbourhood.

Each of the five recommendations are described in greater detail in the sections that follow, including their impact on the neighbourhood. Where appropriate, typical blocks have been selected to demonstrate how these recommendations will apply on the ground. These examples do not represent an exhaustive list of all possible applications, but demonstrate many of the property characteristics in Indian Point.
Recommendation # 1
Create a “Residential – Character Area” designation in the City’s Official Plan

Description
In the current Official Plan, Indian Point is designated Low-Density Residential, and is subject to the same policies that apply to all neighborhoods in the City. These policies are broad, and do not recognize the unique characteristics of neighborhoods such as Indian Point (i.e. the policies permit 25 units/hectare, while Indian Point has approximately 4.5 units/hectare). Creating a Residential - Character Area designation in the Official Plan will guide the development of unique neighbourhoods, by providing:

» Introductory text that describes what a character area is and why it should be protected.

» General policies that apply to all character areas, including policies that will encourage the protection of the urban tree canopy.

» Enabling policies that will allow for context-specific zoning for character areas (see Recommendation # 3 and 4).

» Neighbourhood specific policies that build on the general policies and address the context-specific characteristics of the neighbourhood, including public and private realm elements.

This new designation should be included on Schedule B: Comprehensive Land Use Plan, identifying Indian Point as a Residential - Character Area.

Neighbourhood Impact
» Creating a Residential - Character Area designation identifies, at the highest level of municipal policy, that the City recognizes that Indian Point is distinct and should be considered independent of the general residential policies.

» Providing neighbourhood-specific policies, including additional criteria for severance and minor variation applications, further reinforces Indian Point as a neighbourhood that should be protected from development that is inconsistent with the vision of the neighbourhood.

» The neighbourhood-specific policies will inform and support changes to the zoning bylaw (see Recommendations # 3 and 4).

» New development applications will be required to demonstrate that they conform to the Residential - Character Area policies, and the neighbourhood-specific policies.

Sample policies are provided on the following page.
Sample Indian Point-Specific Official Plan Policies

1. Only **single-detached dwellings** shall be permitted.

2. Dwellings on corner lots should create a strong **connection to both streetscapes** through a similar level of treatment (i.e. vertical and horizontal articulation, material quality, windows) on both streets.

3. Applicants of **Consent to Sever** or **Minor Variance** applications shall demonstrate that new development will maintain the character of Indian Point using the following criteria:
   a) spacious properties that are consistent with the predominant characteristics on either the north or south side of Indian Road, including:
      - low lot coverage;
      - open space between adjacent dwellings;
      - large, front-yard setbacks on the north side of Indian Road, and/or
      - low, single-storey housing forms on the south side of Indian Road.
   b) preservation of mature trees;
   c) maintain the existing topography;
   d) a dwelling height that ranges between 1 to 2-storeys and is consistent with adjacent dwellings in the block;
   e) architectural authenticity that reflects the intended style and period of the proposed dwelling.
   f) views to the Lake should be protected and maximized. Where possible, views should generally align with Algonquin Road and Mohawk Road.

4. Any new development should maintain an **ample separation distance** between dwellings.

5. Dwellings should be located on their lots to create a **large front yard setback**. **Setbacks should vary** between properties.

6. A **variety of architectural styles** shall be permitted to support the varied and organic character of the existing neighbourhood. **High quality materials** (i.e. brick, wood, stone) shall be used to reflect and reinforce existing dwellings.

7. **Tree protection measures** should be implemented during any new development.
Recommendation # 2
Describe the vision for Indian Point within the new Residential - Character Area designation

**Description**
Once a new Residential - Character Area designation is established in the Official Plan, and Indian Point has been identified as a character area on Schedule B, a detailed vision statement should be provided within the Indian Point-specific policies. This statement should outline the elements that define Indian Point’s character (see Section 3), including public and private realm features.

**Neighbourhood Impact**
> Providing a vision statement within the Indian Point-specific section of the Official Plan identifies, at the highest level of municipal policy, the public and private realm elements that contribute to Indian Point’s character and should be protected and enhanced through future development.

> The vision statement will inform and support changes to the zoning bylaw (see Recommendations # 3 and 4).

> The vision statement will be used, in conjunction with Official Plan policies and neighbourhood-specific zoning, to evaluate development applications during the Site Plan, Minor Variance or Consent processes and to ensure that proposals are consistent with the character of the neighbourhood.
Sample character statement (from Section 5):
Indian Point is a distinct historic neighbourhood characterized by its lakeside context, large, mature tree canopy, spacious properties with houses that are proportionate to their lot size, a variety of architecture, and walkable streets. New development should protect and enhance these character elements.
Recommendation # 3
Amend the minimum lot width to reflect the previous “R-2” Zoning (21.3m)

Description
As outlined in Section 3.1, the lots in Indian Point generally have a very large width compared to a typical residential lot in Burlington. These large widths create the potential to sever lots into two smaller properties with a width of 18m (the minimum lot width in the existing R2.1 zoning bylaw) or less (if approved by the Committee of Adjustments). The resulting lots would be inconsistent with the existing pattern of wide, spacious lots.

The “R-2” District zoning policies of By-law 1642 that applied to Indian Point prior to the enactment of By-law 2020 were more relevant to the larger lots that exist in Indian Point, requiring a minimum lot width of 21.3m. It is recommended that the existing bylaw be amended to increase the minimum lot width requirements to match the 21.3m of the previous zoning bylaw.

Neighbourhood Impacts
» Where properties are large enough to sever under the new lot width requirements, the resulting 21.3m frontage would provide larger side yard setbacks (compared to an 18m frontage) as a result of the existing side yard setback requirements of 10% of the total lot width.

» Once severed, the two new properties would be subject to all other requirements of the existing zoning bylaw, including front, side and rear yard setbacks. The total lot coverage would be subject to the reduced requirements outlined in this report (see Recommendation # 4).

» An increased minimum lot width of 21.3m would require a lot frontage of 42.6m in order to facilitate a severance. This would reduce the total number of properties in the neighbourhood that are capable of severing as very few properties have a lot width greater than 42.6m. It would also limit the potential to obtain a minor variance to sever where the resulting properties are close to the 18m minimum.
How This Recommendation Applies On the Ground:

» The lot width on the above properties range from 30-52m.

» Under the current zoning, Properties A and B would be able to sever and still maintain the minimum 18m lot width requirements.

» Under the proposed zoning, Property B would not be able to sever without a minor variance because the resulting width (20m) would be less than the required minimum (21.3m).

» At 60m, Property C could sever into two smaller 30m properties (shown in red) under both the existing and the proposed zoning.

» At 32m, Property D does not have sufficient width to sever under either minimum width requirements.
Recommendation # 4
Reduce the maximum lot coverage prescribed in the current zoning to 25%

Description
The current zoning in Indian Point allows up to 40% coverage for a 1-storey dwelling and 35% coverage for a 2-storey dwelling. This is significantly larger than the coverage of most dwellings in the neighbourhood (approximately 17%), and it is recommended that this maximum coverage be reduced to 25%. This reduced coverage will protect the generous dwelling-to-lot-size ratio that currently exists in the neighbourhood, while providing flexibility and opportunities for additions and redevelopment.

The overall size of additions or new dwellings would continue to be determined by the existing zoning bylaw.

Neighbourhood Impacts
» With a reduced maximum lot coverage, property owners would be able to provide an addition to the front, rear or side of their dwelling provided all other minimum setbacks in the zoning are achieved.

» A number of dwellings in the neighbourhood have a coverage that is less than 25%, allowing the potential for additions or rebuilds that are significantly larger than the original dwelling. However, a number of properties in the neighbourhood have a coverage of 25% or greater, which would mean new dwellings at this coverage would not be significantly out of place. In discussions with the community, the height and scale of dwellings was determined to be less of a concern than their relation to the lot size; the height and scale would still be protected through reduced coverage requirements.

» Existing properties with a low lot coverage (i.e. 7-12%) are generally characterized by large dwellings on exceptionally large lots. While it would be possible in some instances for these dwellings to more than double in size, it is unlikely given their existing footprint, local market conditions, financial feasibility, etc.
How This Recommendation Applies On the Ground:

» The above properties range from 13-25% lot coverage.

» Under the revised lot coverage requirements, all properties would be permitted a maximum coverage of 25%.

» Property A could build an addition up to 12% of the total property area. This addition would likely be limited to the larger side yard (15m) or the rear yard (20m), as the front yard (9m) and interior side yard (4m) are close to the maximum permitted in the existing zoning bylaw.

» Property B could have an addition up to 8% of the total property area. This addition would be limited to the rear yard (29m) as the front and side yards are at the maximum permitted in the zoning bylaw.

» As a new build, a dwelling on property C could have up to 25% lot coverage provided all other zoning requirements are met.

» Properties D and E would be unable to add an addition without applying for a minor variance because they are already at the maximum lot coverage permitted (40% lot coverage for a 1-storey dwelling and 35% lot coverage for a 2-storey dwelling including accessory buildings).
Recommendation # 5
Provide incentives for new private trees

Description
The large mature trees on both public and private property play a substantial role in defining the character of Indian Point. They provide shaded sidewalks and reduce the urban heat island effect, allowing for a comfortable place to stroll; they augment private landscaping, creating attractive front and side yards; and, they provide a buffer between the public and private realm, helping to reinforce Indian Point as a private enclave.

The City currently has measures in place to protect and preserve trees in the public realm. Additional opportunities should be implemented to encourage the protection of existing trees and the planting of new trees on private property.

Potential opportunities include:

» As part of a larger City-wide initiative, the City could explore opportunities to partially or fully subsidize new trees on private property. An additional study may be required to determine the specific details of such a program (i.e. subsidy amounts, priority areas, tree species, etc.).

» A Full Circle Tree Initiative, similar to a program used in Oakville, where participants are given the opportunity to be involved in various stages of tree growth, from planting to nursing to relocation. Once ready, trees can be replanted throughout the Indian Point neighbourhood. This provides an opportunity for interested parties to be directly involved in enhancing the urban tree canopy.

» The City could provide information pamphlets to help educate residents about the importance of the urban tree canopy, and to encourage the planting of new private trees. Considerations could include: why new trees are important; how to plant and maintain trees; what trees are appropriate, etc.

Neighbourhood Impacts
» Encouraging new trees on private property will help to enhance the City’s overall tree canopy, helping to clean the air, reduce greenhouse gases, and conserve energy.

» Property values are regularly shown to be higher in neighbourhoods with a strong tree canopy.

» Initiatives such as the Full Circle Tree Initiative provide an educational opportunity for local youth (and adults), and encourage a sense of ownership in the neighbourhood.

» Local tree preservation initiatives could be overseen by a Community Association, providing opportunities for increased involvement in the evolution of the neighbourhood.
Large private trees in the rear yard of a dwelling in Indian Point (Credit - Google).
Implementation/Next Steps

This report provides a character statement for Indian Point, while outlining a series of Official Plan amendments, zoning amendments, and new planning tools that will help to protect and enhance this character as the neighbourhood evolves. Given the scope of the study, the final recommendations are high level, and a number of additional steps should be undertaken prior to full implementation to ensure the directions of this study are applied successfully. The key next steps are outlined below.

Finalize Indian Point-Specific Policies
The City of Burlington Official Plan Review is scheduled for completion by late 2015. Subject to approval by Council, this update will include a number of the elements outlined in this report, including a definition of neighborhood character (see Section 1.2), a detailed character statement for Indian Point (see Recommendation # 2), and character area policies, including general policies and Indian Point-specific policies.

In Recommendation # 1, sample Indian Point-specific policies are provided. These policies may be inserted directly into the updated Official Plan, however, it is recommended that they be reviewed and refined, including further consultation with the neighbourhood as required. These policies are the foundation for many of the other recommendations, and it is important that they are strongly supported by the City and the neighbourhood alike.

Opposite Page: Large front yard trees and significant landscaping on a property on Mohawk Road (Credit - City of Burlington).
Test Lot-by-Lot Application
Recommendations # 3 and 4 outline a high level approach to zoning that aims to increase the required minimum lot width and reduce the overall maximum lot coverage in order to generally maintain the dwelling-to-lot-size relationship that currently exists in the neighbourhood. The approach has been tested on a variety of properties, and should form the basis for future amendments to the zoning bylaw. However, given the variation in lot shapes and sizes within Indian Point, and the large number of possible configurations that could result from the revised zoning, it is recommended that a follow-up exercise be undertaken to illustrate all possible building envelopes that result from the revised zoning, and a sufficient number of potential development options. This exercise will help to determine:

» Which lots in the neighbourhood could potentially sever, and what the building envelope would look like on the resulting properties.

» The potential relationship between properties if owners were to maximize the development potential of their lot.

» How the full build out of a lot would impact views to Lake Ontario, particularly along Indian Road.

As required, and through further consultation with the community and the Working Committee, the findings of this exercise could be used to develop additional policies to protect the character of the neighbourhood.

Ongoing Working Committee Meetings
As part of this study, Working Committee meetings were held with a smaller group of community members, allowing specific items to be discussed in greater detail. The Working Committee approach should continue to be applied during the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Specifically, the Working Committee could be engaged at the following milestones:

» Lot-by-Lot Application - Once the lot-by-lot application of the new zoning policies has been illustrated, if it is determined that additional policies are required, workshop sessions with the Working Committee could be held to determine an appropriate approach.

» Ongoing Review - Outlined further in the next section, the Working Committee should be involved in ongoing review and monitoring once the recommendations of this report are implemented.
Ongoing Review and Monitoring

The recommendations of this report will result in a change in the way the City evaluates development within Indian Point. As a less restrictive approach than the one proposed in Roseland (the City’s other identified Character Area to date), the results will be a learning experience for both the City and the residents. Considering this, the recommendations should not be viewed as a static solution, or the final approach to protecting the character of Indian Point.

Should the directions be implemented by Council, in whole or in part, they should be reviewed on a regular basis (i.e. every 2 years) to ensure that new dwellings, and/or additions to existing dwellings, are meeting the intent of the directions. Where it is determined that a specific recommendation, or a component of a recommendation is not having the desired effect, further amendments should be considered. Likewise, if concerns are identified that were not addressed in this study, or if new concerns arise that did not exist during this study, a review process should allow for the exploration of new policies and tools. This will help to ensure that there is a dynamic approach to character protection that can respond to a changing context.

Where new policies and tools are considered, they should be established through further discussions with the community and the Working Committee.