City of Burlington Official Plan Review:
Indian Point Character Area Study

Vision Workshop
Summary Report

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Indian Road, looking north/west.
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1.0 Introduction

On Tuesday April 2, 2013 the first Public Workshop was held for the Indian Point Character Area Study as part of the Burlington Official Plan Review. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Provide a status/progress update on the study to date;
- Present and solicit input on the character area components of the Indian Point neighbourhood.

1.1 Workshop Outline

The workshop began with a drop-in session to allow for the participants to arrive, view display boards and meet the consultant team. A presentation was then made by Anne McIlroy and Matt Reid. Following the presentation, attendees were invited to participate in small round table discussions. Groups were asked to engage in discussions, and complete a worksheet, after which a member of each group presented the key findings from their discussion.

1.2 Who Came to the Workshop?

Approximately 24 people attended the workshop, including a mix of property owners in Indian Point and residents of Burlington. Members of the consultant team and City of Burlington staff were on hand to help facilitate the workshop and answer questions.

1.3 What was Presented?

The presentation addressed the following topics:

- What is neighbourhood character?
- What is a Character Area Study?
- Precedent Examples
- Character Area Components
- Next Steps

Turning Point software was used during the presentation to allow participants to vote on the importance of each character component.

Large, mature trees, landscaping and views of the Lake are important character components of Indian Point.
2.0 Workshop Exercise

In four small groups, and using a worksheet for guidance, participants were encouraged to discuss and respond to images of character area components in Indian Point.

The participants also commented on a map of the neighbourhood and were posed the following questions:

- What is your overall vision for the Indian Point neighbourhood?
- What are the distinguishing characteristics of the neighbourhood?
- What should new houses in the Indian Point neighbourhood look like?

(Please see appendix A for the worksheet).

2.1 Key Workshop Findings

A wide-range of feedback was generated from each of the four working groups, with many consistent recommendations for maintaining the character of the Indian Point 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 above recommendations will inform the final directions coming out of this study, and will be reflected in new and updated policies. Where required, the language will be changed and clarified to ensure consistent and easily implantable directions. A draft of the recommended directions will be presented back to the community for further input (and revisions) at a subsequent public workshop.
2.2 Turning Point Ranking Exercise

Turning Point, a technology that permits the polling of public opinion and details of meeting participants, was used during the presentation to allow participants to vote on the importance of each character component in Indian Point. The results of this exercise indicated that the following criteria can be considered as valid criteria for defining character, based on people’s opinion on their level of importance:

- Large Mature Trees
- The lakeside Context
- Privacy, and a Limited Street Enclave
- Private Landscaping

These criteria will be used as a starting point for further exploration and refinement throughout the character study process.

Through this exercise it was also discovered that the majority of participants in attendance live and own property in the neighbourhood, and/or have development interests in the neighbourhood. The majority of participants that live in the neighbourhood are either long time residents (more than 20 years) or have recently moved into the neighbourhood (living in Indian Point less than 5 years).

2.3 Group Discussion Questions

Exercise #1

In small discussion groups, participants were asked to consider a number of questions regarding the overall vision for the Indian Point neighbourhood. The findings for each question are summarized in the following section.

1. **What is your overall vision for the Indian Point neighbourhood?**
   - Careful, individual designs to enhance the existing streetscape.
   - New homes designed to be consistent with the current character, including high quality building materials.
   - Protection of City-owned and privately-owned trees.
   - City to maintain the gates and upgrade the streetlights.
   - Maintain the scale of existing single family homes.
   - Promote re-zoning of legally non-conforming dwellings.
   - Zoning of this neighbourhood should be updated to accurately reflect the current lot pattern.
   - Maintain the current streetscape.
2. What are the distinguishing characteristics of the Indian Point neighbourhood?

- Privacy
- Lakeside context, surrounded by water on a peninsula
- Historic gates and street lamps
- No through traffic (with the exception of those vehicles that use Mohawk Road as an entrance to the highway)
- Family- and child-friendly
- History and heritage of the neighbourhood
- Open greenspace with very few fences
- Large, mature trees and a consistent tree canopy
- Unique, individual character homes
- Varied, eclectic architectural styles
- Large properties

3. What should new houses in Indian Point look like?

- There should be only single detached houses in the neighbourhood.
- Mix of architectural styles using natural materials.
- Each dwelling should maintain individual styles and character features.
- The size and location of houses should maintain views of the Lake.
- The design of houses should be compatible with existing houses.

4. Additional Comments:

Please note that the following is a collection of all comments received, and does not necessarily represent a consensus.

- Indian Point is a unique area and is worth protecting. The area is an asset to the City of Burlington.
- Interest in freezing building permits and new development pending the outcome of the Official Plan Review/Character Area Study.
- The City should purchase land in Indian Point for use as a parkette.
- Lack of interest in heritage designation for the neighbourhood.
- The neighbourhood needs traffic management to prevent or discourage vehicles using Mohawk Road as an entrance to the highway.
Exercise #2
Participants were also asked to view and discuss images of character components in the Indian Point neighbourhood. The following section details the findings of this exercise. Please note that the following is a collection of all comments received, and does not necessarily represent a consensus.

Landmarks and Views:
- The light standards on the gates are not in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.

Limited Street Enclave:
- Maintain privacy and limited street access.

Mature Trees:
- Protection of trees is important, but some trees in the neighbourhood are approaching or past their life expectancy. If trees are causing safety issues, they should be replaced with trees that are of appropriate scale to property.
- Protect trees on private property.

Height and Scale of Houses

Cottage Character:
- The sight lines of houses across the street from the Lakefront houses should not be adversely affected or compromised through future development along the waterfront.

Large Scale Houses:
- There should be a mix of heights in the neighbourhood.
- The heights of homes, and additions to homes, should be in proportion to the trees and the lot size.
- New homes should maintain the architectural detailing (i.e. pitched roof) that are common in larger homes in Indian Point, to make sure they still blend in.

Landscaping, both in the private and public realm, contributes to the character of the Indian Point neighbourhood.
Private Landscaping:
- This is very important to maintain the unique character of each home.

Style of Architecture:
- Maintain the unique house designs.
- Maintain usage of natural building materials.

Spacious Lots:
- Not a critical character component.
- Houses should have a lot of space between them.

Wrap Up & Next Steps
A significant amount of valuable information and feedback was received during this workshop, and the key findings will be used to inform the recommendations going forward.

An interim report detailing the background work completed to-date and the findings of the public visioning workshop will be completed in April 2013. The second public meeting for the Indian Point Character Area Study will be on June 5, 2013. This meeting will present and solicit feedback on possible tools and recommendations for how to support and manage the character of the neighbourhood.
Appendix A - Group Worksheet

Character Area Study - Indian Point
Public Workshop April 2, 2013

Exercise #1: Establishing a Community Vision
With your group, please discuss your vision for Indian Point. Provide your comments in the spaces provided.

1. What is your overall vision for the Indian Point neighbourhood?

2. What are the distinguishing characteristics of the neighbourhood?

3. What should new houses in the Indian Point neighbourhood look like?

4. Please use the space below to provide additional comments:
Exercise #2: Character Components

Step 1: Review the images of character elements in the Indian Point neighborhood.

Step 2: Please elaborate on the elements of the character images below.

1. Spacious Lots

2. Style of Architecture

3. Private Landscaping

4. Height and Scale of Houses

5. Height and Scale of Houses

6. Mature Trees

7. Limited Street Enclave

8. Landmarks & Views

9. Lakeside Context