



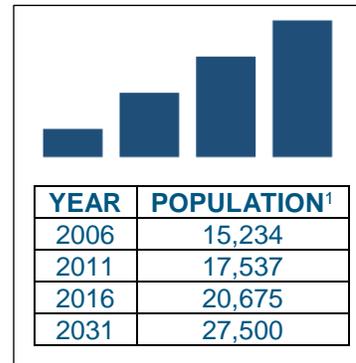
Official Plan Review

An Official Plan directs where and how to grow...

The preparation of a new Official Plan for Wasaga Beach is an opportunity to set new directions for planning and managing the continued growth of the community. By describing the community’s long-term vision and related goals and policies for directing land use and development, an Official Plan helps to promote positive community growth and improvement. An Official Plan is also a legal document and decision-making tool for Town Council. Under the *Planning Act*, all by-laws passed, and all public works undertaken by the Town must conform to the Official Plan.

In the year 2031, Wasaga Beach...

Forecasts of future population and employment have been set for Wasaga Beach by the Province and the County to the year 2031. The Town is required to use these forecasts for determining how much land can be designated for the development of new housing, businesses and other urban development.



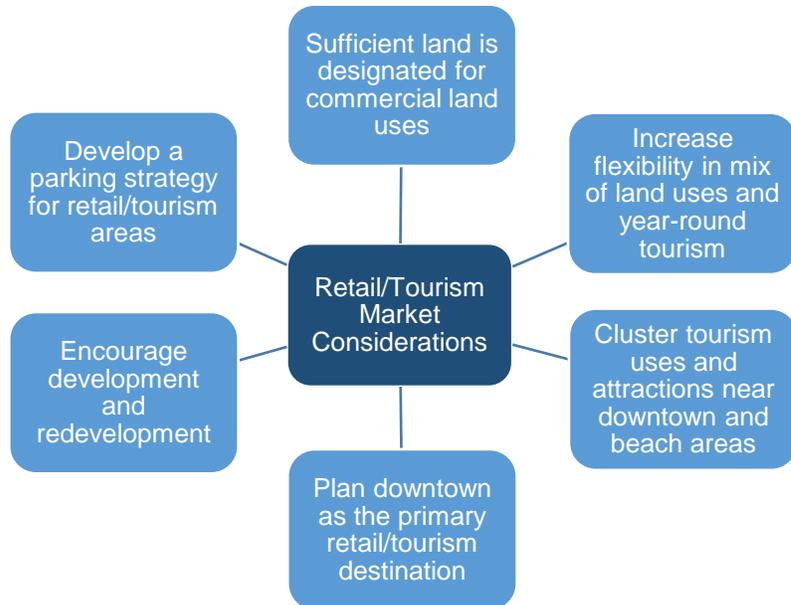
Over the past 25 year, Wasaga Beach has more than tripled in population.¹ Throughout this period of growth, tourism has been a significant economic driver for the Town. Although the role of tourism will remain important, it is expected that with ongoing population and employment growth expected to the year 2031 and beyond there may be a shift in the local economy resulting in a more completed and balanced community.

The new Official Plan will assist in renewing the community’s vision and help reshape the direction of future growth. As key areas for intensification and public and private investment, redevelopment will be focused in the Downtown area as well as in nodes and corridors, where appropriate.

Market opportunities...

Key factors influencing future commercial and tourism growth in Wasaga Beach have been identified and assessed through a market opportunities analysis.

The analysis provides important local context related to the Town’s retail and tourism markets. This information will assist in shaping policies for the new Official Plan and help plan for commercial development, tourism accommodation and recreation, and the overall mix of uses within nodes and corridors throughout Wasaga Beach.

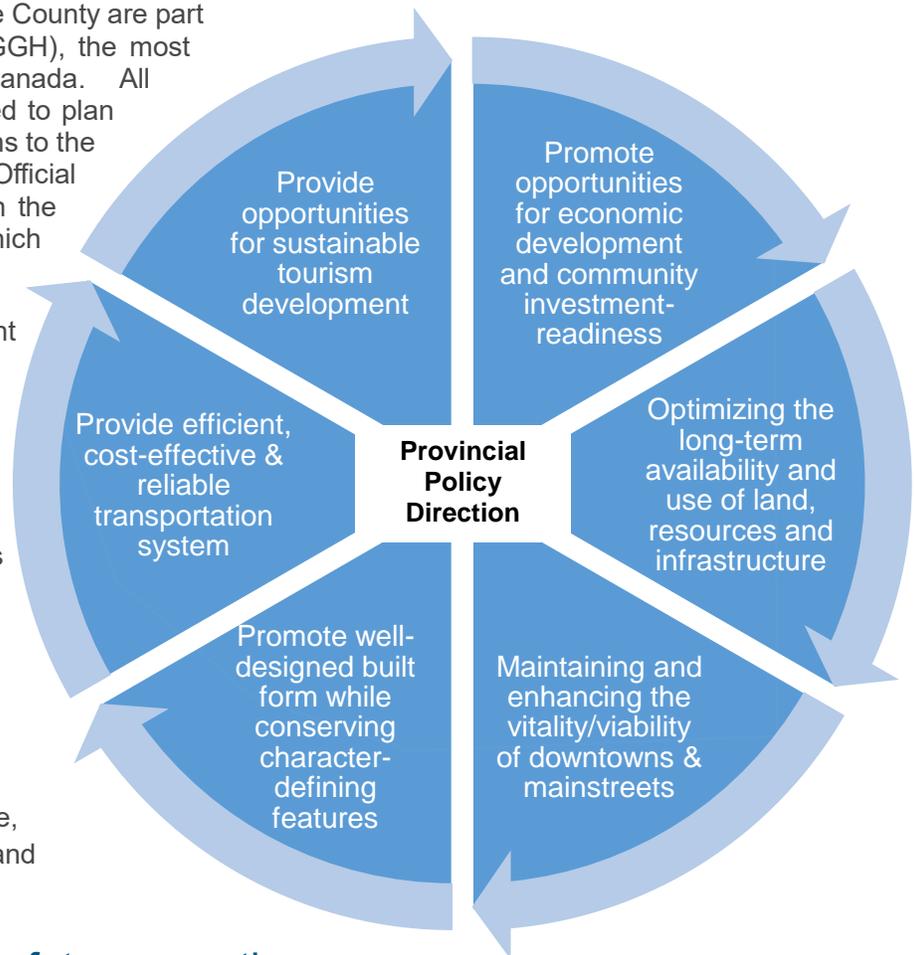


¹ Statistics Canada, 1991, 2006, 2011 and 2016 Census. 2031 Forecast from the County of Simcoe Official Plan, 2008.

Plans for Simcoe County and the Greater Golden Horseshoe...

Wasaga Beach and the rest of Simcoe County are part of the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), the most populated growth region in Canada. All municipalities in the GGH are required to plan for urban growth in a way that conforms to the Provincial Growth Plan. The Town's Official Plan is also required to conform with the Simcoe County Official Plan, which provides policies for:

- Directing most growth to settlement areas (including Wasaga Beach), where it can be serviced;
- Enabling and managing resource-based development, including tourism and recreation;
- Developing complete communities with diversified economies and revitalized downtowns and main streets;
- Protecting and enhancing the County's natural and cultural heritage;
- Efficiently using land, infrastructure, transportation and other facilities and services.



Providing enough land for future growth...

To determine if there is enough land designated and available to accommodate future commercial, tourism and other urban land uses, a land inventory has been compiled and mapped.

Commercial Land Inventory and Future Growth

Commercial land use designations are primarily located in and around the Downtown area and in the Town's main nodes. Several of these commercial areas have room for growth and development, particularly those areas at the west end of Wasaga Beach and near the Downtown.

Where possible, new commercial development – whether in the form of retail, office or civic/institutional uses – should be directed to the Downtown. Large-scale commercial uses that cannot be accommodated in the Downtown may be directed to other nodes and corridors such as the 45th Street and Mosley Street area, the Mosley Street and Highway 26 area, and River Road West. However, given the existing over-supply of large-scale retail uses in Wasaga Beach, this type of retail development should be limited so that near-term demand is not pulled away from any smaller scale retail development in the Downtown.

Increasing the flexibility of specific commercial areas should be considered to diversify the mix of uses in the community. In some areas commercial areas may seek to diversify the uses to include residential development that will support existing or new businesses. Some commercial areas could provide greater opportunity to add residential units, but this may not be appropriate everywhere.

Tourism Land Inventory and Future Growth

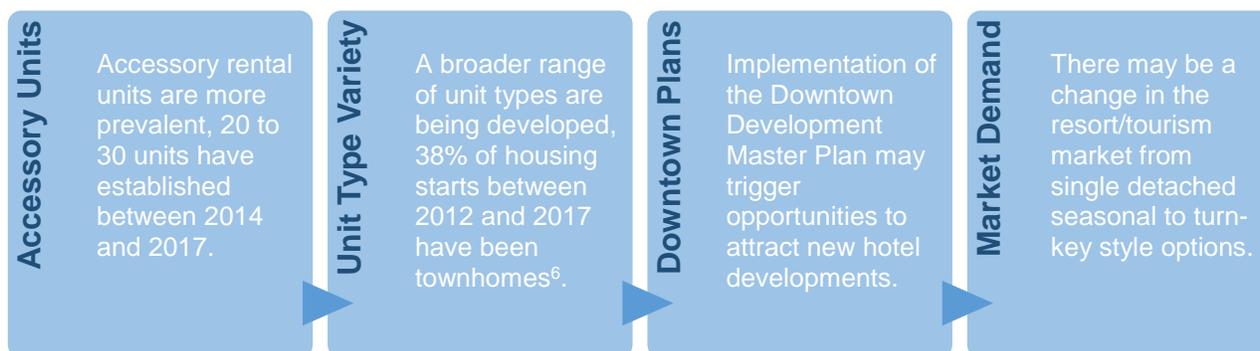
Tourism land use designations include both entertainment/recreation land uses as well as accommodations. They are primarily concentrated near the beach areas, as well as within and surrounding the designated Downtown area. As Wasaga Beach's tourism industry is primarily related to the beach, this is the most logical place for this type of designation. It is also logical to keep as many current and future tourist attractions as close together as possible for convenience of visitors and to minimize travel requirements to access key local destinations. This may warrant consideration for re-designation of lands designated for tourism uses that are located further from the Downtown and node areas to cluster tourism-supportive land uses and promote connectivity among them.

Like the commercial areas, opportunities remain in tourism-designated areas for future growth and development, particularly in and around the Downtown and in the main beach area where the Downtown Development Master Plan (DDMP) envisions significant redevelopment. To support the DDMP vision, new mixed-use residential development in the Downtown and beach area, including ground floor retail space, would likely be supportive of current and future tourism uses and help enhance the appeal of Wasaga Beach as both a destination and complete community.

In October 2018 it was announced that Wasaga Beach has been selected for a new casino and entertainment complex which will create new opportunities for year-round tourism. While a specific site location has not been identified, several alternative locations have been reviewed and considered by the Town as potential sites, including: Beach Areas 1 and 2 (Downtown); Mosley Street / Highway 26 or Beachwood Drive / Fairgrounds Road (west); or, the north side of River Road West at Theme Park Drive or between Theme Park Drive and Bells Park Road (east). The chosen location for the casino will impact the planned role and functions of the Town's tourism and commercial areas by adding a new regional attraction and destination with the opportunity to anchor other complementary and supportive entertainment, retail and service businesses. The new Official Plan policies and land use designations will reflect the results of the preferred location to be selected and should consider opportunities for other supportive uses and to enhance access and connectivity with other tourism and commercial uses and areas in Wasaga Beach to maximize local economic benefits.

Existing tourism accommodations in Wasaga Beach are primarily seasonal and include a range of low-rise hotels, motels, cabins and cottage courts, and campgrounds. The use of some tourism accommodations as residential housing (stays over 31 days) to supplement summer income in low demand/off peak periods and to fill a gap in the existing affordable housing stock² has been an issue in Wasaga Beach. There may be opportunities for conversion of some tourism accommodations to help fill the need for affordable housing, and there are related factors to be considered when formulating policy in the new Official Plan, such as the built form, health and safety standards, and the property characteristics and surrounding context. The policies and zoning for the Downtown provide for new tourism accommodations including multi-storey hotels and apartment hotels.

Trends that may affect Tourism Accommodation Conversion



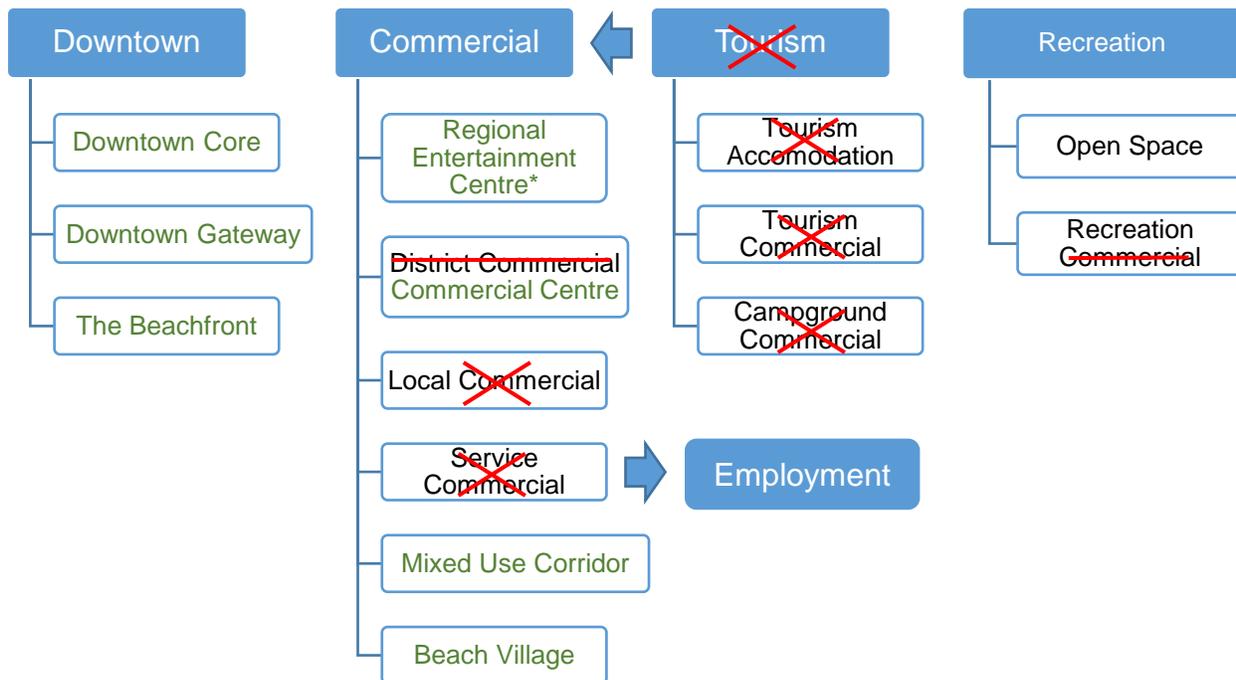
² Long-term Residential Use of Tourism Accommodation Establishments Discussion Paper, Town of Wasaga Beach, July 2013
Town of Wasaga Beach Official Plan Review
GSP Group Inc. | Curtis Planning Inc. | NBLC

Future Commercial Structure...

Permitted uses and policies within existing commercial and tourism land use designations allow for significant overlap and has resulted in a mixture of uses and designations that is difficult to follow and/or predict. A new commercial structure plan, land use designations and policy framework should be established in the new Official Plan to:

- Direct and align future commercial development and redevelopment based on the intended role and function of each area (e.g. the Downtown as the primary node, existing arterial commercial centres and gateways, and mixed-use pedestrian-oriented villages, etc.);
- Integrate tourism land uses within commercial, mixed use, recreation and open space areas and identify opportunities for resource-based and other tourism development that requires larger land areas outside of designated commercial and recreation areas;
- Build on the planning objectives, land use designations and policy directions of the recent amendment to the current Official Plan to implement the Downtown Development Master Plan (OPA 52);
- Reflect the potential site locations for the planned casino as a future Regional Entertainment Centre and destination for entertainment and supportive land uses.

Draft Commercial Structure and Land Use Designations



*Potential overlay designation and policies to reflect casino site selection as future regional entertainment complex / destination.

Key commercial and tourism directions for the new Official Plan...

The commercial/tourism policies of the new Official Plan for the Town of Wasaga Beach should:

- ▶ Establish a Commercial Structure Plan by consolidating tourism designations and uses into other commercial designations and restructuring the commercial designations to provide for a range and mix of commercial, tourism and recreation uses in strategic areas;
- ▶ Consider potential Regional Entertainment Centre overlay designation based on casino site selection and to plan for supportive uses as an entertainment complex and regional destination;
- ▶ Where appropriate, consider the re-designation of vacant tourism and commercial properties to residential to concentrate commercial, recreation, community service, high density residential and entertainment uses in the Downtown area and other nodes and corridors centralizing economic growth in support of complete communities;
- ▶ Consider phasing policies for the development of the nodes and corridors to prioritize development in the Downtown area and to enable more detailed planning of nodes and corridors through secondary plans;
- ▶ Encourage compact, mixed-use development in the Downtown to help support a greater range of uses, including year-round commercial and tourism developments;
- ▶ Broaden the range of permitted housing types and tenures throughout the community to alleviate the pressure on tourism accommodation properties being used for long-term housing. Where appropriate, allow for the conversion of tourism accommodation to residential, with appropriate policies and criteria, to help meet housing needs while also providing flexibility for tourism accommodation providers to reinvest in their properties;
- ▶ Reposition the Service Commercial designation to an Employment designation to address conformity with Provincial and County plans and policies and broaden the land use types permitted to support employment growth in various sectors;
- ▶ Establish policies to limit the expansion of certain recreational uses such as campground commercial lands and establish criteria that may permit the conversion of these lands to permit other uses that will support the tourism industry, where appropriate;
- ▶ Encourage new shops and restaurants to be concentrated in the Downtown, limit new large format retail/commercial development and promote year-round use by diversifying the permitted uses in commercial and recreation designations;
- ▶ Examine the location and size of vacant tourism lands and consider encouraging consolidation/re-designation for other land uses, where appropriate;
- ▶ Consider opportunities for resource-based or other land-extensive tourism and recreational uses through policy development for rural lands for uses that cannot be accommodated within downtown, commercial, recreational and open space designations.

Additional information and perspectives will be considered to fully round out the commercial and tourism directions that will ultimately come together to shape the policy framework for the new Official Plan, including transportation and servicing information, the location and implications of natural heritage and hazard lands and other more general policy requirements, as well as further community engagement.