

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA

REPORT NO. DS-2025-0034

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
COUNCIL**

June 4, 2025

SUBJECT: Lake Drive Shoreline Action Plan – Beach Associations (File 05.268)

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That Council receive Report No. DS-2025-0034, prepared by the Planning Policy Division, Development Services Department, dated June 4, 2025, regarding the Lake Drive Shoreline Action Plan – Beach Associations;**
- 2. That in keeping with Policy Step #12 outlined in the Action Plan (See Attachment 2), Council direct staff to offer 10-year long-term lease agreements to existing Beach Associations within the Action Plan Area (see Attachment 1), with the option for renewal;**
- 3. That Council direct staff to offer long-term leases to Beach Associations at no cost and with no fees;**
- 4. That Council allocate funding from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve for staff to offer a subsidy to existing Beach Associations within the Action Plan Area for half of the initial costs associated with incorporating into not-for-profit organizations, up to a maximum of \$1,250.00 per association; and,**
- 5. That staff be directed to engage with Beach Associations to collaboratively develop a general lease agreement template suitable for long-term leases, and that staff be directed to report back to Council, following the consultation process.**

2. PURPOSE:

This report provides Council with an update on the outcomes of the engagement process conducted with Beach Associations within the Action Plan Area (see Attachment 1) respecting future land management options. Additionally, the report seeks direction for the management of Beach Association lands in the long term.

3. BACKGROUND:

In 2015, the Lake Drive Shoreline Jurisdiction Ad Hoc Committee was formed to address land ownership and jurisdiction issues along Lake Drive North and Lake Drive East. After extensive public consultation, Council approved a 14-step Lake Drive Shoreline Action Plan (Action Plan) in 2017, aimed at clarifying land titles, divesting surplus Town-owned lands, and establishing clear land use standards along the shoreline.

Implementation was delayed due to legal complexities and resource challenges during the pandemic. In [March 2022](#), Council directed staff to advance the Action Plan, explicitly excluding Beach Associations initially, with separate reporting intended for their specific considerations.

Throughout 2022 and early 2023, Council approved budgetary frameworks, set land valuation rates of Town-owned surplus shoreline, and established policies to manage divestiture costs and surveying services. In [September 2023](#), staff presented Council with options for managing Beach Associations operating on Town-owned lands and were asked to consult directly with Beach Associations and report back on preferred land management approaches and cost structures. Council also confirmed that Beach Associations must become incorporated not-for-profit entities before entering into formal agreements (leases or sales) with the Town.

In [November 2023](#), Council advanced surveying efforts by awarding a contract to IBW Surveyors, and setting survey costs per lakeside lot for eligible property owners. These steps have set the stage for effectively addressing Beach Association issues and formalizing land management practices along the Lake Drive shoreline.

4. ANALYSIS:

4.1. Beach Association Members Feedback

On [September 20, 2023](#), Council approved the initiation of an engagement process to gather feedback from Beach Association members on various land management options, and directed that staff report back to seek direction on options and a cost structure breakdown for Beach Associations following the consultation process.

The communications consultant retained for the Action Plan developed a Stakeholder Engagement Plan to guide consultation with Beach Associations. Objectives of engaging with Beach Association members included:

- To share details of the five (5) land management approaches set out in the September 20, 2023, Report to Council (i.e., long-term leases, selling of lands, creating a federation of Beach Associations, public parkland, and status quo).
- To gather feedback on each of approaches.
- To listen to concerns and address them where possible.
- To gather feedback on possible alternative approaches.
- To explain how feedback will inform the decision-making process.
- To explain next steps in the Action Plan process.

4.2. Methodology

Establishing Points of Contact

Staff estimate that 27 individual Beach Associations operate within the Action Plan Area. As most Associations are informal community groups, Town staff do not have contact information for each association. The first step in the engagement process was to establish points of contact with Beach Association members.

On October 31, 2023, staff mailed a letter to 1,764 residential addresses located within close proximity to the Action Plan Area in order to establish a point of contact with Beach Association members, request contact information, and invite members to participate in the engagement process. A copy of the letter was also sent by email to eligible property owners (property owners who own land directly across Lake Drive from the shoreline within the Action Plan Area) who had provided contact information through the earlier interest gauging process. Given the potential number of participants in the engagement process, Town staff hosted three (3) engagement sessions and details were included in the letter:

1. Virtual meeting, Thursday, December 7, 2023, 12 – 1 p.m.
2. Open house, Tuesday, December 12, 2023, 5 – 8 p.m. at De La Salle Chapel
3. Open house, Friday, December 15, 2023, 12 – 3 p.m. at De La Salle Chapel

Recipients registered for one of the sessions through an online link or by email. The letter also included a list of frequently asked questions and a link to the Action Plan webpage, georgina.ca/lakedriveplan.

Response to Letter

The October 31, 2023, letter yielded 180 responses, of which 133 identified themselves as members of Beach Associations representing 63% (17 out of 27) Associations within the Action Plan Area.

Engagement Sessions

Each engagement session was designed to achieve the objectives set out in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and structured as follows:

Virtual Session: A presentation was delivered by the communications consultant that included information about the Action Plan, the potential land management options, next steps in the Action Plan process, and a link directing participants to provide feedback through an online survey. A question-and-answer period followed the presentation with Town staff available to answer questions.

Open House Sessions: Poster boards displayed at the open house meetings included information about the Action Plan, the potential land management options, next steps in the Action Plan process, and a QR code directing participants to an

online survey. A paper handout summarizing information on the poster boards, and a paper version of the survey were also available. Each session was open for three hours with Town staff available to answer questions.

Engagement session participation was as follows:

Engagement session	Participants
Virtual meeting, December 7, 2023	45
Open House, December 12, 2023	38
Open House, December 15, 2023	37

Online Survey

An online survey was created to collect and review feedback from Beach Association members. The link to the survey was shared at the virtual meeting, at the open house sessions, and in a follow-up email to those who provided their email address following the October 31 letter. An additional follow-up email was sent in late December reminding members to respond to the online survey.

4.3. Summary of Feedback

The following feedback comes from the online and paper surveys available between December 7, 2023 and January 11, 2024. Town staff also received verbal feedback at the virtual and in-person consultation sessions.

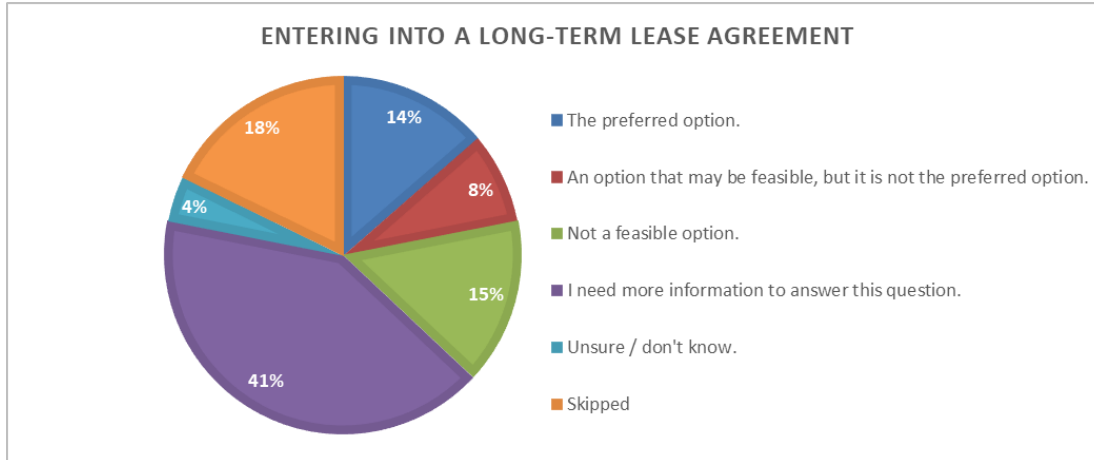
Town staff received 73 survey responses from Beach Association members representing 13 of the 27 Associations (48%) that are known to operate within the Action Plan Area.

Respondents were asked to select one of the following statements for each of the five (5) potential land management options:

- The preferred option.
- An option that may be feasible, but it is not the preferred option.
- Not a feasible option.
- I need more information to answer this question.
- Unsure / don't know.

Respondents were also prompted to submit comments on each land management option and provided an opportunity for general comments at the end of the survey.

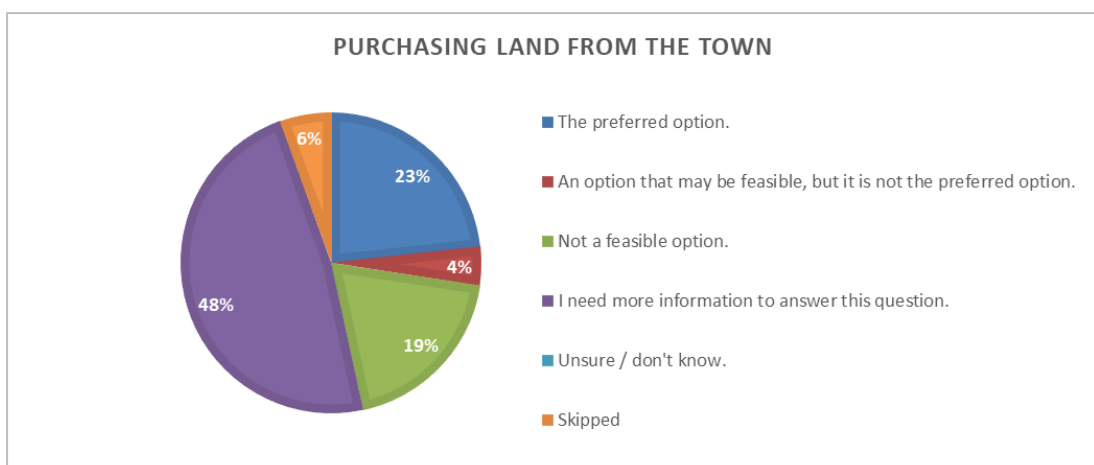
Long-term Lease Agreement



A large portion of respondents (**41%**) selected the option indicating that they **need more information** to answer this question with **14%** selecting long-term leases as their preferred option. Many respondents indicated in the comments section that they would need to understand the cost associated with long-term leases before determining if it would be the preferred option for their association. Other comments reflected concerns about the Town “taking back” land when the lease expired. Others indicated that they wanted more information on what is considered “long-term” (e.g., 5 years, 10 years) and posed questions around logistics such as who would be responsible for maintenance, etc.

15% of respondents indicated that entering into a long-term lease agreement was **not a feasible option**.

Purchasing Land from the Town

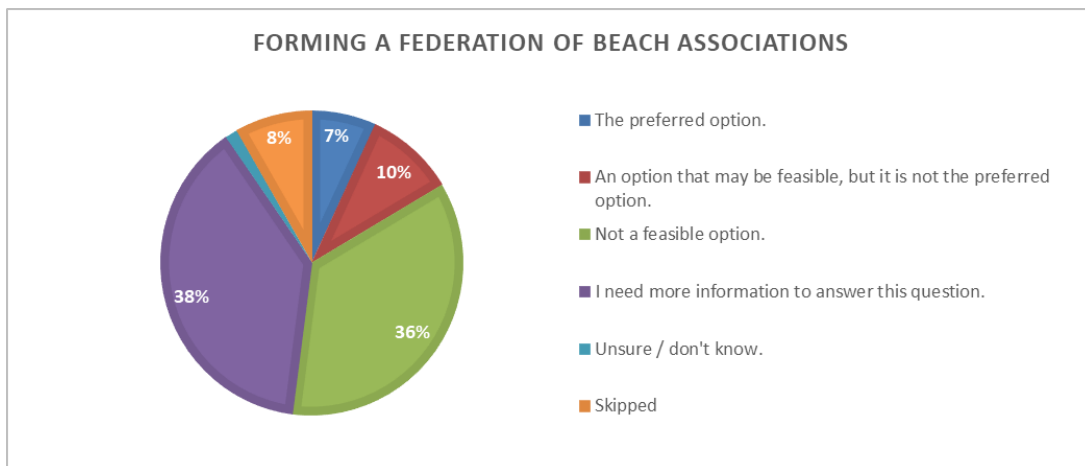


Similar to long-term lease agreements, a large portion of respondents (**48%**) indicated that they **need more information** to answer this question with **23%** selecting it as their **preferred option**. Comments on this question overwhelmingly reflected respondents’ desire to maintain exclusive use of shoreline land and continue to preserve, protect and maintain beach areas to ensure that Beach Association

members are able to enjoy them for years to come. Understandably, concerns about costs were also raised in the comments with many noting that Beach Associations are community groups that already pay membership fees.

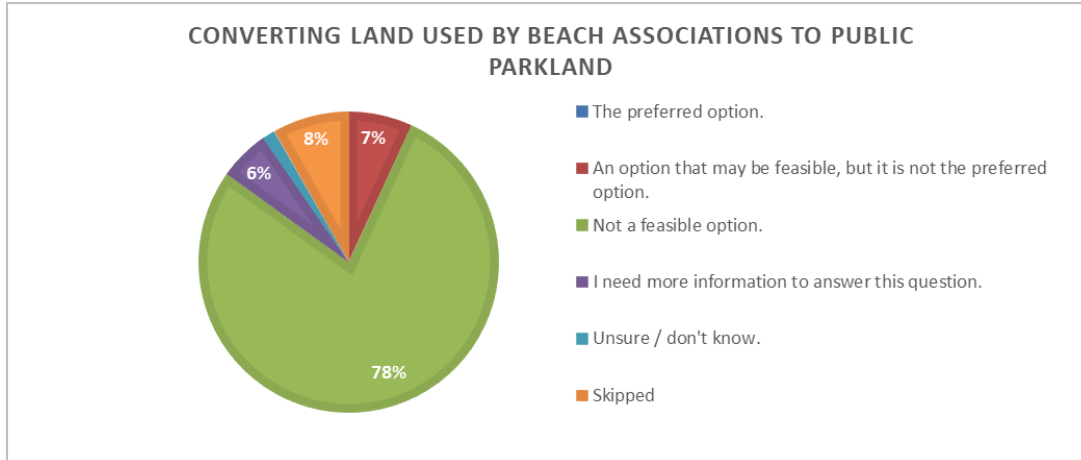
19% of respondents indicated that purchasing land would **not be a feasible option** for their association, citing concerns about cost and questions around logistics such as what would happen to a member's "investment" in Beach Association land if they were to sell their home?

Forming a Federation of Beach Associations



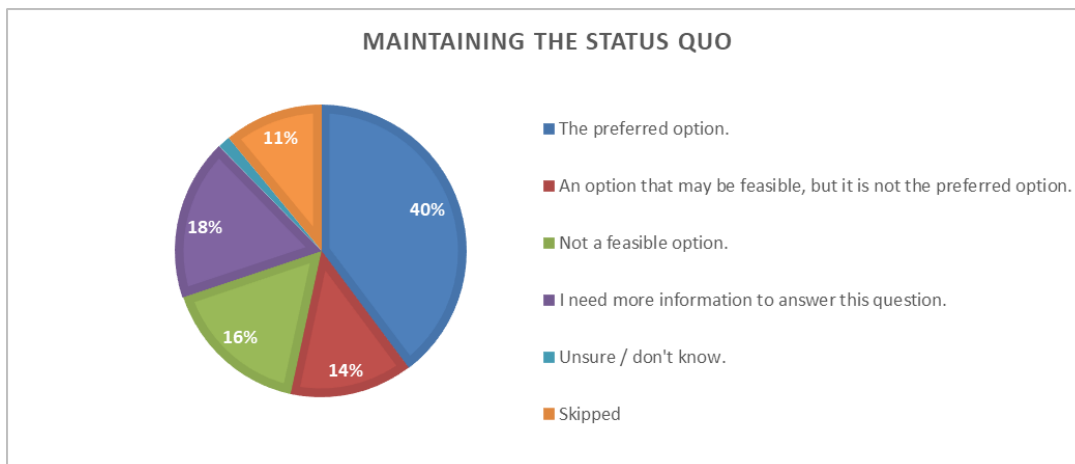
Most respondents indicated that either they need more information to answer this question (**38%**) or that forming a federation of Beach Associations was not a feasible option (**36%**). Only **7%** selected this as their **preferred option**. Many comments conveyed the uniqueness of each Beach Association and the unlikelihood that members of 27 associations would be able to come together to make broad decisions that impact all associations.

Converting Land Used by Beach Associations to Public Parkland



Overwhelmingly, the option to convert land used by Beach Associations to public parkland was the least popular option with **78%** indicating that it is **not a feasible option**. This question prompted several comments with respondents expressing a strong desire to maintain exclusive use of land used by Beach Associations and noting Associations' efforts to maintain and preserve this land. Many also indicated that converting land to parkland would be impractical due to the small size of beach areas, lack of available parking and disruption to local residents, and that it would be unfair to allow people who do not live in Georgina to access this shoreline land.

Maintaining the Status Quo



40% of respondents indicated that they would prefer to **maintain the status quo**. Reasoning cited included financial barriers to leasing or purchasing land and the perception that there is no need to disrupt the status quo. **16%** responded that maintaining the status quo is **not a feasible option**. Several comments expressed support for changes to the status quo, with association members noting that ownership is currently unclear, which can lead to disputes amongst neighbours and general uncertainty. Several respondents indicated a desire for the Town to clarify

ownership and clear up title issues for Beach Associations that operate within the Action Plan Area.

Key Themes

The key themes that emerged from comments provided through online and paper surveys, and in conversations with Town staff at the engagement sessions, are as follows:

Strong desire to maintain exclusive use: Members repeatedly indicated a strong desire to maintain exclusive use of land used by Beach Associations within the Action Plan Area. In many instances, members have enjoyed exclusive use of this land for decades and/or purchased property in the area with the intention of joining an association.

Concerns around cost and logistics related to maintaining exclusive access: Members expressed a desire to maintain exclusive access but have concerns about their ability to pay the cost to lease or purchase the land. Additional concerns were raised around the logistical and financial challenges of incorporating as a not-for-profit with many looking for guidance around this process.

Need to provide clarity on ownership: There is confusion around ownership of this land with some members indicating that they possess “deeded access” to the land. Unclear ownership can contribute to disputes amongst neighbours around who can access this shoreline land, with some claiming ownership and wishing to exclude residents who cannot prove they have the right to access shoreline land. Many respondents indicated that they are in favour of the Town taking steps to clear up title issues along Lake Drive.

Desire to maintain and preserve shoreline land: Many comments detailed the time, money and effort invested by Beach Associations in the maintenance and preservation of shoreline land, including shoreline restoration work, landscaping and beautification, and in the installation of structures such as docks.

Converting the land to public parkland is the least popular option: Most respondents indicated strong disapproval of the idea of converting land to public parkland, citing challenges with parking, access, and disruption to local residents who work to maintain and preserve this land.

4.4. Recommended Resolution

This report compares several shoreline-management options, guided by extensive feedback from the Beach Associations. Although many members first preferred leaving things as they are or buying the land outright, staff’s analysis shows that long-term leasing offers an appropriate balance for the following reasons:

- fits the Associations’ capacity and finances;

- clearly sets out each party's rights, duties, and liability; and,
- respects the Associations' long-standing, exclusive use of the waterfront areas.

Council has already resolved to require that any Beach Association wishing to lease Town land must first incorporate as not-for-profit entities. Incorporation gives the Association legal standing, provides for enforceable agreements, and ensures the shoreline is managed responsibly.

This approach provides a clear, sustainable framework for partnership between the Town and the Beach Associations without creating undue financial pressure.

4.5. Engagement Findings and Rationale for No-Cost Leasing

Consultation with the Beach Associations revealed a major concern with cost. Since lease terms and purchase prices were not available during the engagement period, many Associations hesitated to pick a clear preference. Initially, some leaned toward maintaining the status quo or purchasing the land, if affordable.

A long-term lease with no initial Town agreement fee and no annual fee removes the primary barrier identified through the consultation and gives all Associations, regardless of size or structure, a fair chance to lease their beach areas.

Leasing also responds to what many members asked for most: security of tenure and clear responsibilities. A lease guarantees exclusive use, while clearly setting out expectations for maintenance, liability, and dispute resolution. This clarity helps preserve the shoreline, protects existing investments, and supports responsible stewardship.

Residents also voiced concerns about changing the character of these areas. Many opposed converting them to public parkland, citing worries about traffic, parking, and community disruption. Leasing allows Beach Associations, those with a direct stake in day-to-day care, to continue managing the land while the Town retains ownership and general oversight.

Leasing is the most flexible approach. It maintains public ownership, lets Council revisit arrangements as needed or circumstances evolve, and supports consistent shoreline protection. Requiring incorporation ensures that each Association becomes a legal entity, creating a clear partner for the Town.

For all these reasons discussed above, Staff recommend entering into long-term, no-cost leases with each Beach Association rather than selling the land or leaving things as they are without formal agreements.

4.6. Proposed Framework for Shoreline Management Balancing Present Use with Future Flexibility

Staff's proposed leasing approach is meant to protect waterfront lands for the future while keeping things the same for now. Although there are no immediate plans to change how these lands are used, leasing preserves the option to adapt later without locking in permanent decisions.

Why These Properties Matter

Town-owned shoreline lands are valuable for their local community use and lake access. Leasing keeps them in public ownership, so their shared value and continued use are protected. This approach helps the Town meet current needs and still plan responsibly for the future.

Different from Parcels Across from Lake Drive Homes

Unlike the surplus Town-owned shoreline across from Lake Drive properties in the Action Plan Area, which are mostly used by individuals, the lands managed by Beach Associations are shared spaces maintained by the local members. That makes them different. Selling these communal lands would undermine their public value.

4.7. Aligning with the Waterfront Parks Master Plan

Leasing shoreline properties to Beach Associations supports the core goals of the Waterfront Parks Master Plan. While the plan focuses on developing and managing waterfront parks, the leasing approach helps achieve similar goals by promoting long-term care and access through the local community stewardship.

The Community Services Department team responsible for the Waterfront Parks Master Plan have been consulted on these recommendations and supports leasing the lands to the Beach Associations.

4.8. Decision-Making and Implementation Framework

Town staff's approach is designed to be transparent, inclusive, and based on community input.

Timeline and Preconditions

Formal lease agreements cannot proceed until the shoreline surveys are complete and property boundaries are confirmed. This is a necessary first step for managing the land and establishing clear title.

Another key step is the planning study, which will examine shoreline use, environmental considerations, and other potential issues through a separate consultation process. The findings will guide future zoning updates and help shape the long-term management approach. This study will also include statutory requirements for public notice and consultation under the Planning Act.

Importance of Continuous Engagement

Ongoing communication with Beach Associations during the process is essential to build trust and ensure the process reflects community needs. Staff are committed to keeping this dialogue open.

Transition Support for Beach Associations

If Council moves forward with the proposed leasing framework, it is necessary to acknowledge the need to support Beach Associations in transitioning to not-for-profit status. This transition is essential for aligning with the requirements of the new leasing agreements.

Facilitating Not-For-Profit Status Transition

To aid this transition, staff recommend that, if necessary, staff can explore various options in providing support, including educational workshops led by volunteer experts and step-by-step guides outlining the incorporation process. These resources would help Beach Associations understand the process and gain knowledge and tools needed to successfully transition to formalized legal status.

Providing Financial Support

Recognizing that financial constraints have been identified as a challenge and concern by several Beach Association members, staff recommend that Council consider subsidizing the initial costs of forming not-for-profit corporations in order to support implementation of the Action Plan. Specifically, it is recommended that the Town cover half of the costs of incorporation, up to a maximum of \$1,250.00 per association. This financial support is intended to ease the transition and help ensure that all Associations, regardless of their financial situation, are positioned to meet the leasing agreement requirements.

4.9. Developing Comprehensive Agreements

Staff recommend lease agreements with Beach Associations that provide a flexible framework, and address both current operational needs and potential future scenarios. This approach aims to achieve a fair and collaborative agreement between the Town and Beach Associations.

Collaborative Framework

The development of lease agreement templates will be the initial step, incorporating all necessary legal, operational, and liability clauses while allowing for some customization to suit the unique needs of each Beach Association. Staff intend to engage Beach Associations in a consultative process, presenting a draft agreement and integrating their feedback to ensure that the final documents reflect a joint effort.

Legal, Operational and Inclusive Considerations

The agreements will outline clear responsibilities for maintenance and operations, ensuring legal clarity and operational stability. Key to this process will be the inclusion of fair and reasonable lease terms, tailored to the capacities of each Association, and fostering inclusivity and fairness in membership practices.

Adaptability for Future Adjustments

To accommodate future changes in community needs, policy, or Beach Association operations, it is proposed to include review clauses in these agreements, allowing for modifications to keep them aligned with evolving circumstances. Any modifications to the lease terms would then require mutual consent from both the Town and the Beach Association involved.

4.10. Implementation Strategy

Staff propose the following roadmap for the implementation of lease agreements with Beach Associations. The intent is to support a smooth transition to the leasing model, should Council approve this direction, while addressing the legal, operational, and community aspects involved.

Agreement Templates

Staff propose to initiate the process by developing lease agreement templates that include all necessary legal, operational, and liability clauses. These templates would serve as a base for agreements with each Beach Association, allowing for flexible customization to reflect each Association's specific needs.

Communication and Engagement Plan

To keep all stakeholders informed and engaged, a comprehensive communication plan would be developed. This plan would outline information about the leasing process, and any updates will be communicated with Beach Associations, Council, and the broader community.

Monitoring, Compliance and Support

Regular monitoring and compliance checks would be conducted to ensure that all terms of the lease agreements are being met. Staff are also committed to providing ongoing support to Beach Associations to address any challenges that may arise and to help maintain compliance with the lease terms.

4.11. Options and Support for Beach Associations Regarding Shoreline Use Voluntary Participation in Lease Agreements

A lease agreement would secure exclusive use rights to the use of Town-owned land and would also enable legal and operational support from the Town staff, including the issuance of building permits and the ability to give consent for permit applications

with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF).

Alternatives for Non-Participating Associations

For Associations that choose not to enter into lease agreements, staff will report back to Council at a later date and after further consultation and implementation steps are underway. At that time, staff will evaluate whether any concerns need to be addressed and may bring forward recommendations on how the Town can protect its interests and ensure responsible shoreline management where no lease is in place.

Encouragement and Support for Informed Decision-Making

Staff would offer support and resources to help Beach Associations understand the benefits of entering into lease agreements. This initiative aims to align the Associations' activities with broader community objectives, ensuring the sustainable and inclusive use of shoreline areas.

4.12. Implementation Steps for Shoreline Leasing

If Council adopts the recommendations in this report, staff will undertake the following:

1. **Lease Template Creation:** Draft a clear, standard lease agreement outlining terms and obligations.
2. **Association Consultations and Communication:** Engage with each Beach Association to raise awareness of Council's decision, refine lease details and address concerns.
3. **Rollout Plan:** Develop a step-by-step plan for implementing lease agreements, including the support needed for a smooth transition.
4. **Performance Monitoring:** Establish a system to monitor the leasing approach's effectiveness, allowing for timely adjustments.
5. **Continuous Communication:** Keep Beach Associations and the community informed through regular updates.
6. **Beach Association Evaluations:** Schedule reviews to ensure the leasing approach remains aligned with Beach Association needs and Town goals.

These steps are intended to support a smooth and effective transition to a leasing model that benefits both the Town and the Beach Associations.

5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The decision to recommend leasing agreements for the management of shoreline properties closely aligns with the Town of Georgina's 2023-2027 Corporate Strategic Plan. This alignment is reflected in strategic priorities, which emphasize sustainable land management, and the strategic use of Town assets.

Sustainable Land Management and Strategic Asset Utilization: The leasing approach aligns with the Town’s approach to both sustainable land management and the strategic use of Town assets, as outlined in the Strategic Plan. By opting for leases, the Town would be ensuring responsible growth and the preservation of waterfront properties, supporting the plan’s emphasis on “Ensuring Balanced Growth” and helping to “Proactively manage infrastructure and assets”, while retaining the flexibility to respond to future needs without requiring permanent changes. This ensures the long-term sustainability and strategic adaptability of the Town’s assets.

Enhanced Communication and Engagement: The comprehensive consultation process that informed the leasing recommendation demonstrates the Strategic Plan’s emphasis on enhanced communication and engagement with the Beach Association community. It ensured that the views of Beach Association members and other stakeholders directly informed the shoreline management approach, aligning with the plan’s objective to “Enhance communication and engagement with the community – Supports and enables greater transparency and awareness about what the Town does/is doing”.

In summary, the leasing recommendation aligns with these key objectives of the 2023–2027 Strategic Plan. This approach not only addresses the immediate needs of the Beach Associations but also ensures that the management of these valuable shoreline properties aligns with the broader goals sustainable land management, and strategic asset stewardship outlined in the plan.

6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Should the recommendations contained in this report be adopted, no-cost leases would be offered to 27 Beach Associations, prioritizing long-standing community use and minimizing ongoing maintenance demands on the Town. This standardized approach is expected to have minimal financial impact on the Town and supports broader objectives related to local community access and sustainable shoreline management.

To support the transition of Beach Associations to incorporated not-for-profit status, a prerequisite for entering into lease agreements, staff recommend a subsidy of up to 50% of incorporation costs, to a maximum of \$1,250 per association. This would be funded from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve, with no impact on the approved project budget for the Action Plan.

If all 27 Associations accessed the full subsidy, the total cost would be \$33,750, drawn from the above-mentioned Reserve. This measure reflects the Town’s commitment to equitable access and community-led stewardship, while maintaining a responsible fiscal approach.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:

Although this matter is not subject to specific legislative notice requirements, this report provides a detailed summary of feedback from engagement with Beach Associations. Further to this, it is proposed to continue dialogue, focusing specifically on the development of long-term lease agreement templates. This additional consultation aims to refine the agreements to ensure they meet the Beach Associations' specific needs while aligning with how the Town plans to manage shoreline lands fairly and responsibly.

Notice of the June 4, 2025 Council meeting was emailed to all interested parties on May 28, 2025.

8. CONCLUSION:

This report outlines staff's proposed approach for shoreline Beach Association land management, shaped by ongoing engagement with Beach Association members. The recommendation to offer no-cost, long-term leases supports sustainable access while balancing the desire for exclusive use with the need for long-term flexibility. This approach aligns with Beach Association's goals and reflects a commitment to practical, transparent shoreline management.

APPROVALS

Prepared By:	Trevor Jacobs, CET, PMP Senior Project Manager, Corporate Projects
Reviewed By:	Alan Drozd, MCIP, RPP Manager of Planning Policy Michael Bigioni Director of Legislative Services, Town Solicitor
Recommended By:	Denis Beaulieu, MCIP, RPP Director of Development Services
Approved By:	Rob Wheeler, CPA, CA Deputy CAO and Town Treasurer

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Lake Drive Shoreline Action Plan Area Map
Attachment 2: Lake Drive Shoreline Action Plan, "Action Plan"