

## **Sustainable Path Plan Review**

### **The Blue Mountains Future Story – Input from Agricultural Advisory Committee**

#### **Theme: Agriculture and Local Food**

**Action:** Implement policies that support and encourage farming

- Consider reduced municipal taxes to maintain agricultural land use and improve profitability
- Consider reduced municipal permit rates relating to agricultural use to 25% of the current rate
- Promote youth participation within the agricultural industry
- Establish start-up business fund for local farmers
- Partner with local employment agencies to provide subsidized wages for employees
- Support wineries in developing VQA status

**Action:** Preserve and Protect agricultural land from non-agricultural use

**Action:** Enhance the agricultural community's involvement within the municipal planning and operational process

- Establish a notification mechanism/policy that ensures the Agricultural Advisory Committee is notified and solicited for comment and input regarding planning, environmental, economic, and regulatory and policy initiatives (i.e. zoning by-law review, infrastructure planning, transportation etc)
- Improve infrastructure design, with consideration of the agricultural uses, to improve safety and accessibility
- Identify hot spots and corridors that inhibit accessibility and pose safety issues
- Ensure the agricultural community participates in the development of community brochures and marketing materials to advise visitors of agricultural needs (access, road use, etc)
- Take inventory of the current farming operations, with a particular focus on local food growers and markets

**Action:** Reduce regulatory and bureaucratic barriers to enhance the entrepreneurial opportunities for farmers

- Enable ancillary businesses to operate on farm properties without encroaching on farm productivity
- Promote local farm stands and small scale commercial/agricultural opportunities
- Undertake comprehensive review of applicable official plan policies and zoning by-laws and identify areas of inconsistency and modify these in an effort to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities to farmers
- Provide land use policies that add value to farming as a land use

**Action:** Promote environmentally sustainable farming practices

- Promote Environmental Farm Plans
- Enhance utilization of alternative pest management techniques
- Enhance biodiversity of farm operations by growing mixed crops at a human scale (less mechanized)
- Reduce non-renewable (fossil fuel based) inputs for farming operations
- Establish local seed bank partnership among farmers in the Georgian Bay area

**Action:** Enhance municipal support for local food

- Develop and implement a municipal local food policy
- Send resolution to Federation of Canadian Municipalities to lobby the implementation of a provincial local food policy
- Work with the agricultural community to lobby the federal government to enable local food labelling

**Action:** Promote local food production and consumption

- Connect agricultural operations with local food distribution outlets
- Promote the high quality and availability of local food in marketing and promotion materials and recognize efforts of local farmers with respect to fulfilling the stringent safety and regulatory requirements
- Investigate local and regional agricultural marketing opportunities
- Develop “buy-local” branding and marketing materials
- Permit the local agricultural sector to include fruits, nuts, vegetables, oils, herbs and value added food products derived from these
- Educate consumers on labelling certification
- Promote growing food and consuming local food at school
- Encourage farmers to participate in The Blue Mountains Library and Town’s Green Fair
- Sponsor farmers markets and other related activities that promote local farming and agriculture
- Develop signage for agricultural areas (for safety and promotion)

**Action:** Preserve our agricultural lifestyle

- Enhance agricultural tours and establish regional marketing initiatives
- Provide safety and promotional signage for agricultural areas
- Enhance Clarksburg Market and Fall Festival through improved participation, advertisement, communications, marketing and funding
- Partner with local organizations and regional education institutions to establish cooperative and apprenticeship programs
- Provide access to affordable high speed internet
- Explore opportunities for transition housing for new and retiring farmers