



Bruce Trail CONSERVANCY

August 6, 2025

Township of Georgian Bluffs
177964 Grey Road 18,
Owen Sound, ON N4K 5N5

Attention: Michael Benner, Planner

RE: Application for consent to sever and conserve land from property described as TOWN PLOT BROOKE, PARK LOT 4142; FORMER TOWNSHIP OF SARAWAK; (municipally known as 216 Park Street), Township of Georgian Bluffs, County of Grey

We respectfully submit this Planning Justification Report in support of a consent application to sever land for conservation purpose and to secure a section of the Bruce Trail Optimum Route corridor.

Proposed Development

The subject land comprises ± 4.04 hectares (10 acres) located on Park Street at 19th Street West, in the Township of Georgian Bluffs outside of Owen Sound. The property is designated Escarpment Natural and Escarpment Protection in the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP).

Susan and Jeffrey Breen are the owners of the subject land. The purpose and effect of our application is to support the severance of vacant land that the owner is selling to the BTC to conserve it for the Bruce Trail corridor (consent sketch attached). The subject property is improved with a house and garage, which the owner proposes to retain.

The proposed severance is as follows:

- **Conservation Lot to be severed and conveyed to BTC:** ± 1.98 hectares (4.9 acres) to be preserved and protected as part of the Bruce Trail conservation corridor. Approximately 204 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route crosses the property, thereby securing public access to the Niagara Escarpment and protecting and enhancing habitat for species at risk.
- **Lot to be retained by owners:** ± 2.02 hectares (5.0 acres) developed with a house and garage, with no change in use proposed as part of this application.

This proposal ensures we maintain the existing community and open landscape character of the Escarpment, as well as preserve existing natural heritage, agricultural and hydrologic features and functions as well as the Bruce Trail corridor.

The proposed severance requires approval of a consent application by the Municipality's Committee of Adjustment.

Niagara Escarpment Plan

This application is consistent with the Lot Creation policies under of the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), including policies under Parts 1.3.4, 1.4.4 and 2.4.12 that permit a severance for conservation and Bruce

Trail purposes, which is also consistent with policies under Part 3 (Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System). BTC is a recognized *public body* within the NEP, and is able to sever land for conservation and Bruce Trail purposes. In this instance, approximately 204 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route will be secured.

NEC staff have had an opportunity to review the proposal and have confirmed that it is consistent with the NEP. The NEC does not consider this type of severance to constitute development under the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act. Thus, it is not subject to a permit from the NEC.

County Official Plan

This proposal is consistent with Grey County Official Plan (COP), which in turn must be consistent with the Niagara Escarpment Plan in that it supports the severance of lands by a public body containing natural features and the Bruce Trail (s. 6.). Securing the Bruce Trail supports Healthy Environments COP policies by providing active transportation infrastructure (s.1). Securing the Bruce Trail also supports the Parks and Open Space policies (s. 7.12) and is referenced in the Meaford Recreation & Culture Strategic Master Plan under section 9.4.10 Trail stating the following: *Other major components of the local and regional trail network include the Georgian Trail and Bruce Trail and offer prime hiking and trekking experience for residents and visitors alike.*

Township of Georgian Bluffs Official Plan

This proposal is consistent with the Township of Georgian Bluffs Official Plan (OP), specifically Section 5.5 (D) *Land Division Policies*. Under this policy statement, conservation lot proposals “for the purposes of secure lands containing sensitive or significant natural features and/or the Bruce Trail by a public agency or an approved conservation organization, shall be permitted within all designations of this Plan”. The proposed severance will not create a new building lot.

Note that our application does not include information pertaining to Minimum Distance Separation (MDS). We believe that MDS should not apply since no development is being proposed. BTC has recently confirmed this with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) when applying for conservation severances (consent) in other rural municipalities. Confirmation of this inapplicability can be provided upon request.

Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024)

This proposal is consistent with the PPS 2024, which promotes the importance of building healthy, active, and inclusive communities that provide for a full range of publicly accessible natural settings for recreation, including trails and linkages (s. 3.9.1(b)). The PPS also states that “natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term” (s. 4.1.1).

Background

The Bruce Trail is Canada’s oldest and longest footpath. It was founded in the early 1960s as a way of raising awareness for the need to protect the Niagara Escarpment. Today, the Bruce Trail stretches 895 kilometres from Queenston on the Niagara River to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. Including side trails, it is more than 1,300 kilometres long, and it is recognized as one of Canada’s premier natural recreational opportunities and one of the world’s great hiking trails. It forms an integral part of the Southern Ontario landscape, allowing people to explore the beautiful Niagara Escarpment, and become more aware of the need for its preservation.

Over the past 50 years, the Bruce Trail and the work of the Bruce Trail Conservancy has brought about expansive and lasting benefits for the people of Ontario. The Bruce Trail Conservancy has been responsible for conserving more than 16,000 acres and to date has secured 72 percent of the Bruce Trail's Optimum Route. The work continues, however, to secure the remaining links within the NEPOSS consisting of over 163 parks and open spaces, the majority of which are connected by the Bruce Trail. Preserving this property will add a further 1.98 hectares to NEPOSS and secure 204 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route.

We thank you for your consideration of this matter and look forward to hearing from you soon. You can reach me at joel.swagerman@brucetrail.org you have any questions or require any further information.

Best regards,



Joel Swagerman, MCIP, RPP
Land Securement Planner
Bruce Trail Conservancy

Consent sketch

