NORTH GWILLIMBURY FOREST ALLIANCE

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# Town of Georgina 2026 Municipal Election Questionnaire

## Protecting the Greenbelt

### *Background*

Ontario's Greenbelt protects farmland, communities, forests, wetlands and watersheds. It also preserves cultural heritage and supports recreation and tourism in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe.

### *Question #1*

Do you support keeping the current boundaries of the Greenbelt in the Town of Georgina?

### *Answer*

Yes _____X_____ No _____ Undecided _____

### *Additional Comments* *(please print)*

The Greenbelt boundaries in York-Simcoe should remain intact. There is also a strong case for adding protection where watershed science and local planning show that it is needed. Residents have seen how quickly protected land can become a bargaining chip when decisions are made behind closed doors. The long fight to protect the North Gwillimbury Forest is a local reminder that wetlands and woodlands do not come back once they are paved over.

For me, this is not only an environmental question. The Greenbelt protects farmland, drinking water, flood protection, wildlife habitat and the rural character that people value. It also protects Lake Simcoe, because what happens on the land eventually reaches the lake. Any future review should be public, evidence-based and carried out with municipalities, Indigenous communities, conservation authorities, farmers, landowners and residents at the table.

As part of Georgina council, I would oppose removals from the Greenbelt and advocate for additions where they would strengthen the Lake Simcoe watershed. These lands are part of our

quality of life and our responsibility to the next generation. I would treat that responsibility as something to be championed, not squandered.

This is not about opposing all growth. I support responsible residential and commercial development in appropriate locations, but not unfettered development that disregards agricultural land, natural heritage, infrastructure capacity or the cumulative effects on Lake Simcoe and its watershed. Georgina's Official Plan has enough land set aside for any needed residential, commercial and industrial growth. There is no need to develop within the Greenbelt,

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## *Question #2*

Do you support keeping the current environmental protection rules for the Greenbelt Plan as they apply to the Town of Georgina?

## *Answer*

Yes _____X_____ No _____ Undecided _____

## *Additional Comments* *(please print)*

Keeping the current rules is the minimum. They need to be enforced consistently, and they should be strengthened where the evidence shows that important wetlands, woodlands, shorelines, groundwater recharge areas or wildlife corridors are still vulnerable.

The recent provincial government has repeatedly weakened the laws and institutions that protect natural areas. The replacement of the Endangered Species Act with a narrower Species Conservation Act is especially troubling for a watershed that is home to dozens of species at risk.

I also oppose the province's plan to consolidate Ontario's conservation authorities. The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority has local science, local relationships and decades of knowledge specific to this watershed. Folding it into a much larger regional body risks diluting that expertise and moving decisions farther away from the people and municipalities affected by them. Common standards can be useful, but they should not come at the expense of local autonomy, watershed-based decision-making or public accountability.

Lately, our provincial government shows too little respect for environmental law, conservation authorities and the people who speak up for the environment. It may acknowledge climate change in a press release, but too often it governs as though the science can be ignored. That amounts to climate denial in practice, and York-Simcoe cannot afford it. I would take the opposite approach: listen to evidence, restore meaningful species-at-risk protections and make climate resilience part of every decision affecting the Greenbelt and Lake Simcoe.

## Opening Walking Trails in Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve

### *Background*

Thanks to Caroline Mulroney's leadership, in 2022, the Maple Lake Estates' forests, wetlands, meadows and farmlands in the Town of Georgina were transferred to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority to create the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve (LSCP).

### *Question #3*

Should some of the LSCP's existing walking trails be upgraded so that the public can have safe and environmentally appropriate access to its provincially significant wetlands and old growth forests?

### *Answer*

Yes _____X_____ No _____ Undecided _____

### *Additional Comments* *(please print)*

The preserve should be accessible to the public, but not at the expense of the wetlands and old-growth forest people are coming to see. Provincial funding should support a carefully designed trail system, including boardwalks where needed, safe access points, modest parking, clear wayfinding and accessible features.

The work should be led by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA), with input from Indigenous communities, naturalists, accessibility experts and local residents. Some areas may require seasonal closures or limits to protect nesting birds, sensitive habitat or wet conditions. Public access and conservation do not have to be in conflict when the planning is done properly.

The North Gwillimbury Forest was protected because local residents refused to give up. Opening appropriate trails would allow families, students and visitors to understand why that effort mattered. It would also support local recreation and tourism. Capital funding should be matched by ongoing money for maintenance, monitoring, habitat restoration and invasive-species control so the province does not build a trail and then walk away.

| Naomi Davison | *Naomi Davison* | September 10, 2026 |
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| Name (please print) | Signature | Date |

Please return your response by Tuesday, September 8, 2026, to:

Jack Gibbons

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