

## Town of Huntsville Official Plan Review - POLICY BACKGROUND PAPER

### Healthy Community – Active Transportation

#### BACKGROUND:

- The Town's Unity Plan (2010) defines active transportation as *"Any form of human-powered transportation such as walking, jogging, running, cycling, in-line skating, skateboarding, non-mechanized wheelchairs, snowshoeing and skiing"*.
- The Transportation goal of the Unity Plan is that: The community will support, encourage and promote safe active transportation, such as walking and cycling, and will ensure that infrastructure to support these activities is convenient and accessible for all. Through these measures, Huntsville will act to lower dependency on automobiles and reduce their negative impacts.
- Following up on the direction of the Unity Plan, the Huntsville Active Transportation Strategy was completed in 2012 by the Ryerson Planners for Active Transportation group. This document expanded the Unity Plan definition for active transportation to include the following: *"Additional forms of active transportation, such as kayaking and canoeing, will be considered for this definition to avoid exclusion. It is also important to recognize that active transportation involves both recreation and purposeful travel"*.
- The Huntsville Active Transportation Strategy indicated that research shows how communities that support active transportation can improve the physical and mental health of its citizens. When the health of a community is improved there are subsequent cost savings in the healthcare sector and less lost productivity due to illness in the workforce.
- The Huntsville Active Transportation Strategy is a comprehensive document and in 2013 the Town retained a consultant to narrow the scope of some of the projects identified in that document.
- In 2014, the Town further retained the same consultant to prepare revisions to Official Plan policies to support of further development of the active transportation network envisioned in the Huntsville Active Transportation Strategy.
- As the Town was undertaking an update to its official plan, a decision was made to incorporate the intent of the policy revisions into the updated official plan rather than proceed with an amendment to the existing document.

#### POLICY CONTEXT:

##### **Provincial Policy Statement (2014):**

Part IV ...land use patterns promote a mix of housing, employment, parks and open spaces, and transportation choices that facilitate pedestrian mobility and other modes of travel.

- 1.5 Healthy, active communities should be promoted by:
- a) Planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, and facilitate pedestrian and non-motorized movement, including but not limited to, walking and cycling;"

- 1.6 A land use pattern, density and mix of uses should be promoted that minimize the length and number of vehicle trips and support development of viable choices and plans for public transit and other alternative transportation modes...”
- 1.8 promote the use of public transit and other alternative transportation modes in and between residential, employment and other areas where these exist or are to be developed

**Muskoka Official Plan (MOP):**

- B.1 h) Transportation options that are efficient, cost effective and provide alternatives to the personal vehicle will be promoted.
- C.11 Development should be designed in a manner which promotes active transportation and provides connections to adjacent neighbourhoods and other areas.
- C.36 Communities across Muskoka will be linked by roads and other active transportation infrastructure to facilitate access to employment, learning, recreation and other community services.
- D.4 c) An adequate transportation system including arterial and collector roads as well as pedestrian and cycling facilities is developed and maintained;
- G.46 Active transportation in Muskoka is defined as any human-powered mode of transportation, including purposeful and recreational travel. Active transportation infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, sidewalks, off-road trails, bike lanes, paved shoulders and signage.
- G.47 The development of a regional cycling network, based primarily on the existing District road network linking communities, tourism destinations and other amenities across Muskoka will be the focus of Muskoka’s active transportation efforts.
- G.48 The creation of programs and facilities that encourage walking and cycling throughout Muskoka will be encouraged.
- G.49 The incorporation of active transportation infrastructure will be considered when constructing new District roads, or when undertaking District road widenings and District road reconstruction. The provision of District of Muskoka active transportation infrastructure will be guided by the Muskoka Active Transportation Strategy.
- G.50 The District of Muskoka supports efforts of the Area Municipalities to complete local Active Transportation Strategies.
- G.51 Local Official Plans will ensure that long range transportation planning includes specific consideration of the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.
- G.52 When reviewing applications for substantial development in urban centres and communities, including plans of subdivision and condominium descriptions, the following matters will be addressed in order to promote active transportation in Muskoka:

- a) sidewalks or off-road trails should be provided to promote walking within the development and to surrounding areas, particularly where sidewalks exist in surrounding neighbourhoods; and
- b) roads should be wide enough to safely accommodate bicycles.

G.53 When reviewing applications for substantial development in the rural and waterfront areas, including plans of subdivision and condominium descriptions, active transportation infrastructure and facilities should be provided to public shorelines and open space areas, where feasible and appropriate.

G.54 Area Municipalities are encouraged to require active transportation infrastructure and facilities, such as sidewalks and bike racks, through the site plan control process.

**MOP Policy Directions Report:**

- 36 MOP should include a definition of healthy and complete community which includes:
  - Residents have choices and opportunities relating to a range of housing types, transportation modes, employment options, and recreation and leisure activities
  - Balances character and natural environment with economic development and growth
  - Efficiently manages the natural and social resources of the community to achieve optimal benefits for all residents.
- 37 MOP should contain policies that address the goals identified in the [Ryerson \(April 2016\) report](#) on healthy and complete communities.

**District of Muskoka AT Strategy (2010)**

Objectives include developing policies to promote planning decisions that incorporate AT components, as well as focussing on connections and loops region-wide

**Town Strategic Documents:**

<b>Strategic Plan</b>	Develop and implement a Roads and Transportation Master Plan to guide short term development, construction and maintenance schedules, and to inform long term capital planning.
<b>Roads and Infrastructure</b>	Objectives:
Goal 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Play a leadership role in the implementation of an Active Transportation Strategy that connects the entire region through sidewalks, trails and bike lanes.</li> </ul>
<b>Health Care and Wellness</b>	Create a comprehensive Community Services Master Plan that promotes long term strategies for healthy and active living in Huntsville.
Goal 2	
<b>Unity Plan</b>	Transportation: The community will support, encourage and promote safe active transportation, such as walking and cycling, and will ensure that infrastructure to support these activities is convenient and accessible for all. Through these measures,
Goal 4	

Huntsville will act to lower dependency on automobiles and reduce their negative impacts.

**Huntsville Official Plan:**

- 2.1.8 h) The Official Plan will improve and maintain the Town's communication and transportation infrastructure.
- 2.4.4.2 Huntsville will capitalize on its location along both the Trans Canada Trail and the Park to Park Trail.
- 2.4.6.1 The open space and recreational resources of the Town are integral components of the quality of life in Huntsville. The open space system in Huntsville will include a series of nodes and linkages. Linear corridors / trails will be developed to connect major features in the Town, and will enhance the development of the Trans Canada Trail and the Park-to-Park trail system, and/or other recreational trail systems. Similarly, portages are an integral linkage in linear water based corridors and should be preserved as points of public access to waterways.
- 2.4.8.6 The Town encourages the development and expansion of non-motorized corridors (e.g. paths, trails, sidewalks, bike lanes and portages) throughout the municipality.
- 4.2.1.1 Design guidelines should be used to ensure and enhance positive aspects of the character and community, including pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths
- 4.2.3.1 In new commercial and industrial areas, pedestrian linkages will be provided to abutting lands where appropriate
- 4.2.4.1 Subdivision design should contribute to cohesiveness of community, walking and bicycle trails linking development to other facilities in the community should be provided
- 4.3.11 Redevelopment of urban shoreline properties shall include a public walkway at or near the shoreline where practical and where there is possibility of linkage to a trail system
- 8.11.7 Where development is proposed along a narrow waterbody located along a river, the following policies shall apply:
  - b) Any shore road allowance shall be retained in public ownership and where practical, be used for recreational trail purposes
- 10.2.2.3 The Town will endeavour to provide an efficient system of pathways for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles in appropriate locations in the Town. The Town supports these facilities within multi-use road right-of-way, including Provincial or District rights-of-way.
- 10.2.2.4 Where roads are being reconstructed, and where feasible, paved shoulders or trails shall be provided to allow for non-motorized vehicles.

- 10.2.4 The town will encourage the possibility of developing bicycle and walking paths and multi-use non-motorized pathways in rights-of-way adjacent to arterial roads, where appropriate.
- 10.2.5 The Town will encourage the possibility of developing bicycle paths and multi-use non-motorized pathways in rights-of-way adjacent to collector roads, where appropriate.
- 10.3.1 ...The road allowance standards of any highway under the jurisdiction of the Town may be widened, as required, for such matters but not limited to, additional turning lanes, curve alignments, sidewalks, utilities and road cuts and embankment slopes, to a width of 26 metres (85 feet).
- 10.4.2 The following considerations will be made in relation to new development:  
Subdivision plans will be designed to provide all lots to be within an acceptable walking distance to potential transit services, and include the provision of public walkways, wherever necessitated, to provide convenient access to future bus routes
- 11.8.6 In order to enhance the potential for a network of linked multi-use recreational trails throughout the Town, all development applications will be reviewed and evaluated on the extent to which the creation, expansion and preservation of such a network can be accomplished as part of that development application, and whether it is appropriate to acquire such facilities as part of a parkland dedication.
- 11.8.7 Municipal road allowances which could become a link in a trail system will not be conveyed out of public ownership.

#### **CONSIDERATIONS:**

- A review of the 2014 consultant report with suggested policy revisions to support active transportation in the community has revealed that the existing infrastructure (roads) policies are automobile focused and do not reference or incorporate active transportation components. Where they do, the policies simply encourage rather than require the consideration of active transportation. Further, the suggested policy revisions also would ensure that land could be taken for active transportation purposes as a condition of development.
- Council's Strategic Plan envisions the creation of a Community Master Plan as well as a Roads and Transportation Master Plan. Presumably the Community Master Plan will consider and incorporate an Active Transportation network of routes throughout the Town which link to the regional routes identified by the District as well as the Trans Canada Trail and the Park to Park Trail. This will build on the work contained in the Huntsville Active Transportation Strategy and the active transportation network envisioned therein. The Roads and Transportation Master Plan should ensure that from a capital planning perspective, road reconstruction projects incorporate where feasible, active transportation components (paved shoulders, signage etc) where portions of the routes are located in Town Road corridors.
- The Town Official Plan can support the enhancement of an active transportation network by ensuring that policies enable land acquisition and/or construction of a portion of an identified route through the development approval process.

## **SUMMARY:**

A review of best practices from other municipalities across Muskoka has revealed that the following policy approaches may assist in addressing some of the considerations:

- To ensure that the active transportation network envisioned in the Huntsville Active Transportation Strategy and identified in a Community Master Plan is built out over time, the infrastructure and transportation policies must recognize the benefits and support the concept of active transportation and enable the acquisition of desirable lands through the development approvals and other processes for this purpose.