

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

### Healthy Community – Cultural Heritage

#### BACKGROUND:

- Cultural Heritage Resources can include known archaeological sites or areas of archaeological potential, built heritage resources (e.g. buildings, structures or monuments), cultural heritage landscapes, significant landscapes and scenic vistas, roads, trails, portages, geological and biological features.
- Huntsville's cultural history dates back thousands of years to when the First Nations occupied, hunted or travelled through the area.
- The Town is rich in built heritage resources including the iconic Town Hall, the Hart House and numerous other designated buildings in its downtown core, the Lion's Lookout, the Locks, the Dyer Memorial amongst others.
- The Town's cultural heritage resources are an important link to our past, play a key role in Muskoka's identity and contribute to its economic prosperity by enriching the cultural experience for both residents and visitors.
- There is a need to update official plan policies to recognize the importance of identifying, preserving and protecting our cultural heritage to ensure that this valuable resource, inherited from the past, is protected as a legacy to pass onto the future.

#### POLICY CONTEXT:

##### Ontario Heritage Act

- Determines priorities, policies and programs for the conservation of archaeological resources determined to have cultural heritage value.
- Prohibits anyone from disturbing or otherwise altering an archaeological site, whether on land or in water, without an archaeological license from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) [48.1].
- Provides standards and guidelines for the conservation of property of cultural heritage value or interest, including the designation of properties by municipalities [Part IV] and the designation of heritage conservation districts [Part V].

##### Ontario Cemeteries Act

- This act governs the administration procedures when a burial site is discovered. The act prohibits disturbance of burial sites or artifacts sites associated with human remains [68] and requires that notice be given to the appropriate parties of any burial site declared to be an Aboriginal cemetery [71-72].

**Provincial Policy Statement (2014):**

- Part IV Recognizes that the Province’s cultural heritage and archaeological resources provide important environmental, economic and social benefits.
- Part IV Reflects Ontario’s diversity, including the histories and cultures of Aboriginal peoples and recognizes the importance of consulting with these communities on matters that may affect their rights and interests.
- 1.2.2 Encourages planning authorities to coordinate planning matters with Aboriginal communities.
- 1.7.1.d Recognizes the link between a sense of place, cultural planning, and conservation of features that help define character, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes, and long term economic prosperity.
- 2.6.3 Development is prohibited on adjacent lands to protected heritage property except where the proposed development has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the heritage attributes will be conserved.
- 2.6.5 Newly added policies in the PPS are more closely aligned with the Ontario Heritage Act in relation to conservation of resources of archaeological value and also require planning authorities to consider the interests of Aboriginal communities in conserving these resources.
- 4.3 Recognizes that implementation of the PPS shall be consistent with the recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights in the Constitution Act, 1982.

**Muskoka Official Plan (MOP):**

- B.2 To protect the quality of the cultural and natural environments of Muskoka....
- B.7 To conserve and build upon the cultural heritage and traditions of Muskoka
- F.96 Generally defines Significant Heritage Areas as those areas of Muskoka exhibiting historic, geologic, archaeological, scenic or other heritage value on a local, district, provincial or federal scale.
- F.97 Requires that areas possessing such values be generally protected from incompatible uses or activities.
- F.98 Schedule G and Appendix G identify some significant heritage areas. It is acknowledged that other such areas have not yet been inventoried and that the District shall endeavor to identify and qualify other such areas [Schedule G, Appendix G]
- F.99 Appendix I provides general criteria for further evaluation and identification of significant  
Appendix I Heritage Areas.

- F.107 Requires that applications for development shall have regard for maintaining or improving scenic vistas.
- F.110 Requires that development adjacent to or on significant archaeological sites be reviewed in consultation with the Ministry of Culture and Communications (now the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) to minimize impact.
- F.111 Provides a limited number of development controls for proposals adjacent to or on significant archaeological sites including increased lot sizes, location of buildings and structures, restriction of the removal of vegetation or artifacts and parkland dedication.

**MOP Policy Directions Report:**

- 31 Expand the archeological policies in the MOP and require an update of the 1994 Archaeological Potential Model to assist with the review of development applications.
- 32 The MOP should include a policy that requires consideration of the updated Archaeological Potential Model when new lots are proposed in areas of development potential.
- 33 MOP should include/encourage the development of educational programs/materials regarding Aboriginal and cultural heritage in Muskoka in order to heighten the awareness of these resources to assist with their protection.

**Town Strategic Documents:**

- Strategic Plan** A vibrant, inclusive, healthy community which inspires innovation and growth, celebrates the arts, culture, and heritage, promotes recreation while developing a resilient economy founded on social caring and environmental stewardship.
- Vision**
- Goal 2** Ensure planning policies and approvals consider the unique geographic features and character of the community.
- Unity Plan**
- Goal 5** Land Use Planning: Huntsville will become a model of sustainable community development, by incorporating the principles of smart growth, sustainable design and green buildings into all land use planning decisions. This will include a commitment to the protection and maintenance of Huntsville’s rural small town character and vibrant downtown, both of which are valued by the community.

**Huntsville Official Plan:**

- 2.1.3 Official Plan intended to bring balance to competing economic, social and environmental factors and introduces sustainability principles which should be reflected in development and redevelopment. These principles include building upon the positive characteristics of the community including cultural and human and cultural values.
- 2.1.4 Growth and change will respect and honour the Town’s rich and diverse heritage, and

preserve and protect features that helped shape the Town.

- 2.1.7 Council recognizes the importance of cultural heritage resources. Council will encourage the identification, restoration, protection, maintenance and enhancement of cultural heritage resources. Cultural heritage resources include, but are not restricted to archaeological sites, buildings and structural remains of historical and archaeological value, and human made structures, heritage conservation districts or landscapes of identified historic or scenic interest.
- 2.1.8 d) The Official Plan will protect those features of the natural or cultural environment that are identified as important to the Town and its residents, the District and the Province.
- 2.2.2 b) c) The distinctive character of Huntsville is influenced by and reflected in a variety of features: It is influenced by its history – as a crossroads, a logging/lumber centre and a tourist destination with its tourist camps and lodges, and its role as a working town. It's reflected in its historic settlements, Port Sydney, Utterson, Novar, Hidden Valley and in Huntsville's historic Downtown core.
- 2.4.5.1 The downtown core of Huntsville is recognized as a key cultural and heritage feature. The core includes a traditional downtown and an extensive relationship to the waterfront/shoreline.... Redevelopment will support the heritage integrity of the core.
- 2.4.5.2 The Town's cultural heritage goes beyond its historic downtown commercial core and includes buildings and areas that are of historic and architectural interest. The Town will identify its cultural heritage resources and strive to conserve those resources that are of a local and regional significance.
- 2.4.5.3 Cultural heritage resources in the municipality shall be managed in a manner which perpetuates their functional use while maintaining their heritage value and benefit to the community.
- 2.4.5.4 In order to achieve this goal, Council will:
- i) Will limit the demolition, destruction or inappropriate alteration of cultural heritage resources within its legislative mandate;
  - ii) May encourage development adjacent to cultural heritage resources to be of an appropriate scale and character;
  - iii) Will encourage and foster public awareness, participation and involvement in the conservation of cultural heritage resources;
  - iv) Will facilitate research into cultural heritage of the Town and identify methods for its preservation, conservation and enhancement.
- 2.4.5.5 Important waterways include the Big East River which is designated as a Heritage Waterway, the Muskoka River and numerous lakes.
- 2.4.5.6 Significant archaeological resources contribute to the character of the Town and need to be identified, evaluated and conserved.

- 2.4.5.7 Cultural heritage identification and conservation will be accomplished through public and private stewardship and partnering with heritage and other interested organizations in the community.
- 2.4.5.8 Historic portages are part of the Town’s cultural heritage and need to be identified and conserved.
- 4.1.7 The heritage traditions of the urban settlement area will be preserved.
- 4.2.1.1 Design guidelines shall be used to “preserve cultural heritage features and scenic values” (repeated in Hidden Valley 5.7.1)
- 4.2.2.1 In the Central Business District, the preservation and re-use of historic buildings and features is encouraged
- 4.2.2.3 Town Hall, the Clock Tower and Swing Bridge are important landmarks whose views should not be compromised by redevelopment of the surrounding area.
- 4.5.1.12 Character preservation in older established well maintained residential areas shall be encouraged by the upkeep of older dwellings and the retention of older architecturally interesting or historically significant buildings.
- 4.6.2.5 CBD streetscapes shall preserve or enhance the appearance of the area as a heritage area
- 11.3 This section outlines specific policies to protect built heritage, areas of scenic value and identifies an appendix containing a list of heritage resources.
- 12.2.6 CIP provides framework for financial incentives for heritage buildings
- 13.3.5 For secondary plans, heritage and archaeological resource assessments may be required.
- 13.14 Cultural heritage resources impact assessments may be required to determine impact of development and identify mitigation measures
- 13.18 Indicates that an archaeological assessment may be required as a condition of development when areas of moderate to very high potential would be affected.

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

- One aspect identified is Aboriginal culture and history, as reflected in the archaeological record for the area. The archaeological record of an area is considered to be a finite and non-renewable resource which faces a number of threats. Landscape changes due to growth and development and related threats such as increased stormwater run-off due to adjacent development or hydrological fluctuations due to climate change, all result in a destruction of irreplaceable archaeological data.

- To address this issue, the Province encourages municipalities to develop and maintain archaeological management plans to identify areas of potential and archaeologically sensitive areas. In this regard, the District of Muskoka has a Master Plan of Archaeological Resources, dated February, 1994. The Preliminary Directions Report for the update of the MOP, indicates that this Master Plan should be updated. An updated Master Plan will assist the area municipalities with better information as to when an archaeological impact assessment should be required through its' development review function.
- The identification and conservation of cultural heritage, traditions and is an essential component of place making and a valuable resource for social and economic development which should be recognized and promoted through policy. The protection and recognition of cultural heritage resources also instills a greater sense of pride and community awareness and in turn results in further efforts to conserve cultural heritage resources.
- Currently, a number of the Town's Official Plan policies respecting cultural resource protection are in conflict, as some of them encourage protection of heritage resources and others require the protection of important identified resources.
- The District undertook an Aboriginal Engagement Program undertaken during the Muskoka Visioning Initiative and identified that there was a strong desire from the First Nations and Metis communities to not only be consulted, but actively participate in cultural and environmental heritage policy development for the District of Muskoka. They developed a list of First Nations contacts list which could be used by the Town to seed feedback on updated heritage policies.

#### **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:

- Continue to recognize the important role that Town's cultural heritage plays in establishing our identity and sense of place and also as a valuable resource for social, environmental and economic development.
- Update policies which identify, recognize, preserve and protect these cultural heritage resources and ensure appropriate management of adjacent lands.
- At present, the Town's Official Plan indicates that an archaeological assessment may be required as a condition of development. The Official Plan will need to be updated to reflect the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement and recognize the importance of consulting with Aboriginal communities on planning matters that may affect their rights and interests.
- Update the register of cultural heritage resources including heritage properties, monuments, buildings, structures, districts, areas and corridors.

- A draft of the new/updated Town Official Plan should be circulated to Aboriginal communities to ensure that their interests, including cultural heritage, are properly and respectfully identified, conserved and appropriately recognized.

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