

Town of Huntsville Official Plan Review - POLICY BACKGROUND PAPER

Servicing our Residents – Energy and Utilities

BACKGROUND:

- Energy use and conservation is a critical component of sustainable development as most of what we do in our communities requires the use of carbon-based energy and non-renewable resources (home heating, transportation, electricity). In Canada, close to 30% of the energy used can be attributed to heating and cooling buildings, while another 34% is used in the transportation sector.
- Moving to renewable energy sources and conservation efforts will help to build more resilient and economically sustainable communities. Municipal governments have a role to play in sustainability, and can affect Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions as a regulator, facilitator, partner, program deliverer and educator.
- The Green Energy and Economy Act (GEEA) was introduced in 2009 as part of the Province's long term energy plan to move away from carbon-based energy production. The intent of the GEEA is to foster and promote the development of renewable energy projects by removing barriers to the approval of renewable energy projects. Renewable energy projects are no longer subject to traditional land use planning instruments at the Municipal level (Site Plan, Official Plan and Zoning Bylaws).
- With the GEEA (2009) and associated Feed-In Tariff program, a significant number of green energy proposals have received provincial approval. There is growing concern with both the social and environmental impacts of both solar and wind projects.
- Connections to a wide range of both public and private utility networks, including facilities and corridors required for the transmission of electricity, gas and communication/ telecommunication services, sustain a high standard of living.
- There is recognized need for connectivity and broadband internet access in all rural communities.
- TransCanada Pipelines has a natural gas corridor that runs the length of Huntsville roughly parallel to Highway 11.

POLICY CONTEXT:

Provincial Policy Statement (2014):

1.6 Infrastructure

- 1.6.1 *Infrastructure*, electricity generation facilities and transmission and distribution systems, and *public service facilities* shall be provided in a coordinated, efficient and cost-effective manner that considers impacts from climate change while accommodating projected needs.

Planning for *infrastructure*, electricity generation facilities and transmission and distribution systems, and *public service facilities* shall be coordinated and integrated with land use planning so that they are:

- a. financially viable over their life cycle, which may be demonstrated through asset management planning; and
- b. available to meet current and projected needs.

1.6.2 Planning authorities should promote *green infrastructure* to complement *infrastructure*.

1.6.11.1 Planning authorities should provide opportunities for the development of energy supply including electricity generation facilities and transmission and distribution systems, to accommodate current and projected needs.

1.6.11.2 Planning authorities should promote *renewable energy systems* and *alternative energy systems*, where feasible, in accordance with *provincial and federal requirements*.

1.7 Long-Term Economic Prosperity

1.7.1 Long-term economic prosperity should be supported by:

- b. optimizing the long-term availability and use of land, resources, *infrastructure*, electricity generation facilities and transmission and distribution systems, and *public service facilities*;
- i. promoting energy conservation and providing opportunities for development of *renewable energy systems* and *alternative energy systems*, including district energy;
- k. encouraging efficient and coordinated communications and telecommunications infrastructure.

1.8 Energy Conservation, Air Quality and Climate Change

1.8.1 Planning authorities shall support energy conservation and efficiency.....

Current Muskoka Official Plan:

H.54 Where energy or communication facilities are proposed, they will minimize and avoid potentially adverse social, health, environmental, and aesthetic impacts and in particular the following issues should be addressed:

- a) Impact on aeronautical navigation;
- b) Distance from significant nearby structures or land uses to:
 - i) reduce "ghosting"
 - ii) reduce distortion of radiation patterns
 - iii) prevent malfunction of electronic devices and appliances
 - iv) provide long term build out capability.
- c) Retention of prominent views and vistas;

d) Impact on natural areas including provincially significant wetlands, heritage areas and significant habitat

H.55 New energy and communication facilities will be encouraged to locate in or along existing energy, communication or transportation corridors, subject to Policy H.54.

H.56 Existing energy and communication facilities and the development of new such facilities will be permitted within all strategic land use designations without the need for an Official Plan Amendment, provided that the development satisfies the provisions of the Environmental Assessment Act and other relevant statutes, and is carried out having regard for the provisions of this Plan.

H.57 Buffering or screening of generation and transmission facilities will be encouraged. Setbacks from sensitive land uses, such as residential, will be specifically encouraged.

H.58 Advertising on prominent energy or communication facilities will not be permitted.

First Draft Muskoka Official Plan:

B17 ENERGY, BROADBAND AND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

- a) New development within all designations shall be encouraged to accommodate the implementation of leading-edge communication technologies, including those required to deliver broadband services, in order to attract and maintain investment, facilitate research and development and knowledge-based initiatives, and support health services.
- b) Prior to approval of development, proponents of development or redevelopment, along with the District and Area Municipalities if appropriate, shall work with energy and/or communication providers early in the planning process to ensure that:
 - i) Adequate utility services and telecommunication networks are or will be established to serve the anticipated development;
 - ii) Utility services and telecommunication networks can be phased in as required; and,
 - iii) Utility services and telecommunication networks can be constructed, maintained, operated and installed in a manner that is cost effective, efficient and minimizes disruption.
- c) Construction of electricity, telephone, and other communication services shall be encouraged to locate in the road right-of-way, where possible.
- d) Where feasible, utilities and telecommunication infrastructure shall be located underground and shall be grouped into a single utility trench, wherever possible, to avoid unnecessary over digging and disruption of municipal rights-of-way. Interim above ground installations may be considered for roads on temporary alignments or constructed to an interim rural cross-section.

K4 TRANSCANADA PIPELINES

- a) TransCanada PipeLines Limited operates a high-pressure natural gas pipeline within its right-of-way, which crosses the District and is identified on Schedule _____ to this Plan.
- b) TransCanada is regulated by the National Energy Board, which, in addition to TransCanada, has a number of requirements regulating development in proximity to the pipelines. This includes approval requirements for activities on or within 30 metres of the right-of-way such as excavation, blasting and any movement of heavy equipment. New development can result in increasing the population density in the area that may result in TransCanada being required to replace its pipeline to comply with the CSA Code Z662 or its successor. Therefore, the District shall require early consultation with TransCanada or its designated representative for any development proposals within 200 metres of its facilities.
- c) No permanent building or structure may be located within 7 metres of the pipeline right-of-way. Accessory structures shall have a minimum setback of at least 3 metres from the limit of the right-of-way.
- d) In areas of more urban development, the development of TransCanada's right-of-way for passive parkland or open space purposes subject to TransCanada's easement rights is encouraged.

Town Strategic Documents:

Strategic Plan

Economic Development

GOAL #2: Work with local and regional partners to Expand access to high speed connectivity throughout Huntsville and market the service locally and to prospective businesses

Roads and Infrastructure

GOAL #2 Ensure Town infrastructure and service levels respond to the needs of a prosperous and progressive community

Unity Plan

Goal #2 Municipal Operations and Infrastructure: Huntsville will strive to be a model sustainable community , by reducing its impact on the environment, and planning for climate change adaptation by following best management practises in all municipal operations and infrastructure projects and leading by example.

Goal #3: Energy Conservation: Huntsville will be a leader in reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by promoting sustainable, innovative community-based energy initiatives.

Huntsville Official Plan:

2.4.8 Municipal Infrastructure

2.4.8.1 An extensive and efficient system of municipal infrastructure is critical to maintaining the quality of life in Huntsville. These include water supply, sanitary sewage disposal, roads, storm water, solid waste disposal and utilities.

10.7 Pipelines and other Utilities

10.7.1 The Town or other public utilities may use any land for the purpose of public service subject to the following criteria:

- Any building or structure shall be required to comply with the height, coverage and yard requirements prescribed in the Zoning By-law for the area;
- Satisfactory parking standards are maintained;
- Outside storage of goods, material or equipment shall only be permitted if otherwise permitted in the Zone in which the use is located; and
- Any building or structure in a residential area shall be designed and maintained in general harmony with the type permitted in any residential area.

10.7.2 TransCanada PipeLines Limited operates high pressure natural gas pipelines within its rights-of-way which cross through the Town and are identified on Schedule C to this Plan. Any development within 200 metres (656 feet) of the TransCanada's facilities may affect the safety and integrity of the pipelines.

10.7.3 TransCanada is regulated by the National Energy Board which, in addition to TransCanada, has a number of requirements regulating development in proximity to the pipelines. This includes approval requirements for activities on or within 30 metres (100 feet) of the right-of-way such as excavations, blasting and any movement of heavy equipment.

10.7.4 The Town shall require early consultation with TransCanada for any development proposals within 200 metres (656 feet) of its facilities.

10.7.5 All permanent structures and excavations shall be located at least 7 metres (23 feet) from the limits of TransCanada's right-of-way. Accessory structures and lots with side yards abutting the right-of-way shall have a minimum setback of at least 3 metres (10 feet) from the limit of the right-of-way.

10.7.6 In areas of urban development, the Town will encourage the development of TransCanada's right-of-way for passive parkland or open space purposes subject to TransCanada's easement rights.

11.4 Energy Conservation

11.4.1 The wise management and conservation of energy resources can be promoted by the Town through various activities. The Town will encourage the use of an orderly and compact development pattern that can minimize the need for automobile trips and encourage the establishment of a public transit system.

11.4.2 The Town may investigate ways in which the Zoning Bylaw, and subdivision and development standards can be modified to encourage energy conservation.

11.4.3 The use of alternative energy sources, and the use of landscaping and building orientation to reduce energy costs may be included in the design of new facilities in the Town.

11.4.4 The Town encourages the development of sensitive lighting as part of its design guidelines, and will implement this through the development approval process.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- There appears to be a trend of more extreme storm events as a result of climate change. There has been a corresponding increase in the number and duration of electrical hydro service interruptions, which is a significant hindrance to the success of local manufacturing businesses.
- To assist in reducing GHGs, the Town's Official Plan should recognize the need for and encourage the use of green energy. Policies should encourage local involvement in planning for renewable energy projects.
- Further, policies should also result in more transit and active transportation friendly development, thereby reducing the number and frequency of automobile trips.
- One of the objectives of the Strategic Plan is to conduct research to determine the feasibility of developing new and emerging business sectors in Huntsville i.e. reusable energy, four season tourism, green businesses.
- It is important that the siting of utility networks have regard for potential impacts on the surrounding area, including existing communities and the natural environment.
- The Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of connectivity and high speed internet for economic development.
- Although Industry Canada is the approval authority for telecommunication towers, Council has approved a telecommunications protocol, which has a focus on co-locating on existing sites instead of development of new towers and requires public consultation as part of any new telecommunication tower initiatives.

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:

- Consider an Official Plan policy that promotes and encourages the development of renewable energy sources and systems.
- Develop Official Plan policies to require larger scale renewable energy generation projects be designed and sited in consideration of the Town's significant natural and cultural heritage with specific attention to visual impact, noise, traffic and other land use compatibility matters.
- Identify and protect infrastructure corridors for long term servicing needs.
- Development within the urban area/communities should be located and designed to encourage transit use and thereby reducing automobile use. Further such development should be encouraged to accommodate the capability to implement leading-edge communication technologies, including those required to deliver broadband fibre optics services, in order to attract and maintain investment, facilitate research and development and knowledge-based initiatives, and support health services.
- Maintain existing policies regarding TransCanada Pipelines.