

Town of Huntsville Official Plan Review - POLICY BACKGROUND PAPER

A Growing Community – Growth Management

BACKGROUND:

- The Province sets out its vision for the land use planning system through the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and requires that growth be focused in settlement areas and away from significant or sensitive resources and areas which may pose a risk to public health and safety. It also identifies that the District of Muskoka is responsible for the identification, coordination and allocation of population, housing and employment projections for the area municipalities.
- The current District of Muskoka Official Plan (MOP) contains a settlement pattern which includes Urban Centre and Community settlement areas. Urban Centres are to be the focus of permanent growth and development as they have full municipal water and sewer services infrastructure. Communities are smaller, historical settlement nodes which have less density due to the fact that development has occurred on the basis of private individual water and sewage disposal systems. This and physical influences has resulted in Communities having a different character than Urban Centres. The Rural Area contains more space extensive resource based industrial uses and limited residential development. The Waterfront Area contains resort commercial uses and is the focus of seasonal growth. The Town's Official Plan contains a similar land use pattern.
- Growth in the Town of Huntsville is influenced by population and economic trends in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) and consequently experiences considerable growth pressures while at the same time sharing the rugged landscape and certain socio-economic issues associated with more northern municipalities.
- Forecasting population growth in the Town involves a review and an understanding of its permanent and seasonal growth potential.
- The District completed a Phase 1 Growth Strategy in 2008. This document contains District wide population, housing and employment projections. These projections were broken down and allocated to each of the Area Municipalities through the Phase 2 Growth Strategy which was completed in 2009. Both documents were updated in 2013. The forecast period of the updated documents is from 2011 to 2041.
- With a 2016 permanent population of just under 20,000, the Town of Huntsville is the District's most populated municipality from a year round perspective. In contrast, Huntsville has the smallest seasonal population base relative to the other Area Municipalities in Muskoka District, estimated at 6,833 in 2012. The majority of seasonal growth occurs in the District's Waterfront designation.
- The Town's Official Plan addresses sustainable growth by identifying designations and outlining policies for appropriate growth in each area. Currently, an overall framework for growth across the Town, as required by the 2014 PPS and the proposed updates to the Muskoka Official Plan, is lacking.
- In addition to this Policy Background Paper on Growth, this topic will also be addressed through a series of separate Policy Background Papers that will include a closer examination of the following designations and topics:
 - Urban Centres

- Communities
- Rural Area
 - Estate Residential Development
- Waterfront Area
 - Second Units in Waterfront
 - Waterfront Cluster Development

POLICY CONTEXT:

Provincial Policy Statement (2014):

- 1.1.2 Sufficient land to accommodate a range and mix of uses for up to 20 years shall be made available, including through intensification and redevelopment in settlement areas.
- 1.1.3.1 Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development, and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.
- 1.1.3.3 Planning authorities shall identify appropriate locations and promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment
- 1.1.3.6 New development taking place in designated growth areas should occur adjacent to the existing built-up area and shall have a compact form, mix of uses and densities that allow for the efficient use of land, infrastructure and public service facilities.
- 1.1.4.1 Healthy, integrated and viable rural areas should be supported by promoting regeneration, accommodating an appropriate range and mix of housing in rural settlement areas, using rural infrastructure efficiently, and promoting diversification of the economic base and employment.
- 1.1.4.2 In rural areas, rural settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.
- 1.1.5.2 On rural lands located in municipalities, limited residential development is permitted.

Current Muskoka Official Plan:

- C.1 Growth, by way of development and redevelopment, in all major segments of the economy will be encouraged and accommodated in the context of the goal, objectives and principles of this Plan.
- C.2 The growth permitted by the Plan will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the carrying capacity of the natural environment is not significantly affected in the adverse and the development pattern as identified in the Plan is achieved in a fiscally and socially sound manner.

- C.4 Appropriate growth will be accommodated within all land use designations subject to the following criteria:
- a) The quality of the landscape and natural environment will be protected;
 - b) A large portion of the Muskoka land base will be preserved in a forested state; and
 - c) Growth is consistent with the growth strategy for the area.
- C.17 Sufficient land and services should be made available to provide for future growth. In this regard,
- a) Socio-economic and demographic data will be maintained;
 - b) Employment forecasts will be developed on a regular basis and area municipalities will be encouraged to maintain an adequate supply of zoned and serviced employment lands; and
 - c) The integrity of lands for commercial or industrial purposes will be maintained by prohibiting the intrusion of incompatible uses.
- C.18 Major employers, other than tourism and resource related industries, should locate in Urban Centres consistent with the capability of the community to accommodate the use. Locations outside Urban Centres may be considered for uses where the location relates to the character or special needs of the business.
- D.1 Growth that requires a range of urban services will be directed to Urban Centres as identified on Schedule A.
- D.2 The Area Municipalities will be encouraged to develop growth management strategies that support the existing built form of communities and preserve the character of the rural and waterfront areas. These strategies should identify the logical, efficient and continuous progression of development based, among other things, on efficient provision of water, sewer, roads, schools and other human services.
- Urban Centres – Preamble Excerpt**
- Urban Centres are rural, urban and waterfront service centres. Each Urban Centre is different in terms of scale and function which will be detailed through local policy. Urban Centres are expected to grow in population and physical size as the works necessary to support such growth are made available. Local policy should support identified Urban Centres and encourage most urban forms of development to locate appropriately. All Urban Centres are serviced with both public sewer and water facilities and expansions to those systems will be undertaken based on need and subject to the necessary environmental approvals.
- D.3 The following communities are designated as Urban Centres:
Huntsville (urban area)
Hidden Valley (Huntsville)
- D.5 Substantial development will proceed on the basis of municipal sewer and water facilities. Where municipal sewer and water services are not yet available within the Urban Centre, only infilling of a minor nature will be permitted except where more detailed policy provides

otherwise and under such servicing conditions as deemed necessary, and subject to criteria.

- D.6 An expansion to the boundaries of an Urban Centre will proceed by Local Official Plan amendment and will be considered based on a growth management study that assesses the need of the community.
- H.6 Within Urban Centres, connection to municipal water supply and sanitary sewage disposal service will be compulsory and prerequisite for all development except in the following limited instances. Development may be exempt from connection to such works where, among other matters:
- a) The development represents limited infilling in an established built area or is an existing lot of record where such service is not currently available and where no present or immediately foreseeable water or sanitary problem would be further compounded; or
 - b) A specific capital funding reserve has been approved to provide public service on the subject land or area, but the works are not scheduled for construction; or
 - c) The development is a singular low intensity permitted use on a large lot in an undeveloped area and services are not immediately available; or
 - d) Approved servicing schedules provide for an exemption.

Communities – Preamble Excerpt

Communities are small development nodes that generally function as service centres for the immediate rural and waterfront areas. They are expected to grow more slowly and at a density that can be serviced with private individual services. The scale and function of individual Communities will be determined by the Area Municipality and are expected to accommodate a variety of land uses.

- D.8 The following have been identified as Communities:
The Locks (Huntsville)
Utterson (Huntsville)
Port Sydney (Huntsville)
Novar (Huntsville)
- D.10 Development will proceed on the basis of individual services and at a density that will avoid future servicing problems. Private communal services may be considered for resort development where technically feasible based on the proposed use and scale.
- D.11 Small scale multiple unit residential development may be permitted in locations where it can be adequately serviced based on recommendations from a hydrogeological study and provided the units remain in one ownership.
- D.12 Only infilling of a minor nature will be permitted except where more detailed policy provides otherwise and under such servicing conditions as deemed necessary, subject to the following:
a) the uses are restricted to those of a non-toxic, low effluent producing nature; b) a private waste disposal system can be accommodated on the lot to the satisfaction of the authority

having jurisdiction; and c) The development is consistent with future growth strategies.

- D.13 An expansion to the boundaries of a Community will proceed by Local Official Plan amendment and will be considered based on a growth management study that addresses the needs of the Community and in particular the following issues will be addressed:
- a) The need for expansion to accommodate the demographic characteristics and population and employment forecasts;
 - b) The need for expansion relative to the availability of other developable land within the Community;
 - c) The ability of the hydrogeology of the area to assimilate additional private services;
 - d) The impact of the expansion on surface water quality;
 - e) The accommodation of municipal services if a problem arises;
 - f) The compatibility with the surrounding rural and waterfront communities;
 - g) The impact on the cultural and natural heritage of the area;
 - h) The impact on natural shorelines including recognition of appropriate setbacks of development from the water;
 - i) The development of non-hazardous areas;
 - j) The expansion of the community in a compact manner, unless soil, servicing or other physical features prevent it; and
 - k) The impact on the delivery of police and emergency services.

New Communities - Preamble

It is anticipated that proposals for New Communities will be received in the coming years. A New Community, sometimes referred to as a lifestyle community, provides an alternative lifestyle opportunity, and is generally marketed to a specific age group. The form of these proposals generally includes a large residential component with accessory recreational and community based facilities but does not include a substantial commercial or industrial base. Over time, these New Communities will become part of the settlement pattern of Muskoka and require the same type of hard and soft services available to other residents of Muskoka. Where a New Community is proposed, the general principles and policies applicable to guide Community Building will apply.

- D.14 Where a New Community is proposed it will be subject to the policies of this Plan and in particular to the Community Building section and will meet the following criteria:
- a) Have a minimum of 300 lots/units;
 - b) Be serviced with a municipal water and sewage system; and
 - c) Be consistent with future growth strategies for Muskoka.
- D.15 A New Community will proceed by amendment to this Plan which will provide site specific development policy. The amendment will:
- a) Define the primary function and focus of the Community;
 - b) Identify the principle components of the Community;
 - c) Establish the phasing of the development, and require that major recreational amenities be included in the first phase; and
 - d) Provide for municipal services.

Waterfront – Preamble

The Waterfront designation generally includes those lands extending inland 150 metres (500 feet) from any standing Waterbody greater than 8 hectares (20 acres) in area or any substantive river or other waterbody identified in this plan or local official plan except as further provided herein.

- D.17 The Waterfront is a sensitive area and as such permitted uses are limited to:
- a) Single unit residential dwellings;
 - b) Tourist Commercial and other commercial uses that relate to the waterfront area (ie. resorts, camps, restaurants and attractions);
 - c) Industrial development that services the waterfront community (ie. contractors yards, boat repair and accessories);
 - d) Open space uses; and e) Waterfront landings.
- D.19 The Area Municipalities will establish a variety of lot sizes and frontages reflective of environmental constraints. In particular, waterfront lots should be of sufficient size to accommodate the use proposed, related structural requirements and private individual services. In addition, waterfront lots should be sized and designed to recognize environmental, man-made or other influences including soil, terrain, water quality, fish habitat and waterbody constraints among others.
- D.23 The forms of residential development, which are permitted within the Waterfront designation, include shoreline development, back lot development and cluster development.
- D.27 New residential shoreline lots will have a minimum lot area of 0.4 hectares (1 acre) and a minimum water frontage of 60 metres (197 feet).

Rural – Preamble Excerpt

The Rural designation is identified as those lands in the District not directly identified as being subject to any other strategic land use designation specified in this Plan. The rural area is a community generally comprised of a mix of resource related activities, single unit residential and other small scale or space extensive developments. The character of the community is for the most part an expansive, aesthetically pleasing, and predominantly open landscape with large tracts of land remaining in a natural state. Uncontrolled development and lot creation in the rural area can result in fragmentation of significant natural habitat, sterilization of resources and strip or ribbon development, which can detract from the rural character of the area. Policies in this section of the Plan are designed to ensure that rural development does not undermine the rural function and character of Muskoka.

- D.31 Permitted uses in the Rural designation include resource management, wildlife management, recreation and low density development areas within Muskoka.
- D.32 Rural lots should be of sufficient size to accommodate the use proposed, related structural requirements and private individual services. In addition, rural lots should be sized and

designed where appropriate to facilitate resource management practices or environmental, manmade or other influences, including soil, terrain and water quality constraints, among others.

- D.33 The Area Municipalities will establish a variety of lot sizes and frontages reflective of the rural environment. Rural residential lots will be encouraged to be one hectare (2.5 acres) in area. Larger lot sizes should be developed for hinterland or resource areas and where five (5) or more lots are proposed that are smaller than one hectare (2.5 acres) a study that has demonstrated that the hydrogeology of the area is suitable to sustain the proposed private systems will be required. The minimum lot size will be no less than .4 hectares (1 acre).
- D.34 Rural residential development will consist of single unit dwellings and accessory buildings and structures located on individual lots and be encouraged to locate:
- a) in proximity to existing rural residential uses in order to create a sense of community;
 - b) in areas that do not preclude the use or exploitation of resource values;
 - c) in areas that do not have a significant detrimental effect on the natural or cultural systems of Muskoka;
 - d) in areas that optimize the demand on public services such as fire, police and home care;
 - e) in areas that have reasonable access to community facilities such as schools, and recreation centres;
 - f) in areas accessible by year round roads; and g) in areas that do not consist of hazard lands.
- D.32 Industrial, commercial and institutional uses that require urban services will be directed to Urban Centres. Some large-scale industrial, commercial and institutional uses may be permitted in the Rural designation subject to the following:
- a) the proposed use is resource based or cannot be accommodated in an Urban Centre or Community and does not require urban services;
 - b) the proposed use is non-toxic, low effluent producing and can be serviced with individual water and sewage services and the use conforms to the other servicing policies of this plan;
 - c) the proposed use does not negatively impact the natural and cultural heritage of the area; and
 - d) the proposed use is compatible with surrounding uses.
- D.38 Certain forms of development in the Rural Designation immediately surrounding Urban Centres should be severely restricted. This will help create a sense of community for the Urban Centre, reduce potential land use conflicts between rural and urban type uses, and facilitate the orderly and proper extension of the urban community in the future.

Muskoka Official Plan Policy Directions Report:

- #2 The MOP should include policies that require the local municipalities to identify the extent of the built up area in each of the Urban Centres in consultation with the District where intensification and redevelopment will be directed.

- #3 The MOP should identify the extent of the urban service area in each of the Urban Centres and include policies that require the optimization of existing services before considering the extension of services as a first principle.
- #4 The MOP should include policies that establish the District's commitment to monitor permanent and seasonal population growth, demographic composition, and development activity in partnership with the Area Municipalities on a regular basis.
- #6 The MOP should include a policy that indicates that firstly, Urban Centres then secondly, rural settlement areas should be the focus of growth and development.
- #7 The MOP should establish the boundaries of each settlement area (Urban Centres and Communities) on the schedules to the Official Plan.
- #8 The MOP should include policies that require that 70% of new permanent housing growth in the District be directed to the Urban Centres and that the Urban Centre target for Huntsville be 60%.
- #9 The MOP should include policies that require the local municipality to determine how much growth is to occur within individual rural settlement areas, in a manner that is consistent with the PPS 2014.
- #10 The MOP should include policies that indicate that permanent residential development on rural lands should be limited in relation to the amount of permanent residential development occurring within settlement areas.
- #11 The MOP should establish a minimum intensification target of 25% District wide, with each Area Municipality developing specific criteria for Urban Centres through the preparation of intensification strategies in consultation with the District.
- #12 The MOP should include policies that require each local municipality develop an intensification strategy that sets out how the intensification target is to be implemented.
- #29 The MOP should establish a minimum density target for new development in the designated growth area of each of the Urban Centres in consultation with the Area Municipalities.
- #30 The MOP should establish housing mix targets for new development in the designated growth area of each of the Urban Centres as outlined below and in accordance with the District of Muskoka Growth Strategy:
Huntsville: Low - 60%, Medium - 25%, High - 15%

First Draft - Muskoka Official Plan:

- B2a) The settlement areas in the District are the focus of growth in the District and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.

- B2b) There are two types of settlement areas in the District - Urban Centres where municipal sewage services and municipal water services are provided and Community Areas, where municipal sewage services and municipal water services are not provided.
- B6 It is a policy of this Plan that a target of 70% of new dwellings occupied on a permanent basis be directed to the Urban Centres in accordance with the 2013 Growth Strategy Phase 2 report dated January 10, 2014 as shown on Table 4.
Huntsville – 60%
District Total – 70%
- B9 Although no settlement area boundary expansions are anticipated during the life cycle of this Plan, should an expansion to an Urban Centre or Community Area be proposed, it can only occur as part of a comprehensive review as set out in the Provincial Policy Statement in effect. An Amendment to this Plan will be required for an expansion to an Urban Centre or a Community Area.
- B10a) The minimum District-wide intensification target is 25% within the built-up area of Urban Centres.
- B10b) The built-up area will be defined by the Area Municipalities in consultation with the District and will be included on Schedules to the Area Municipal Official Plans.
- B10c) Each Area Municipality shall prepare an intensification plan to identify appropriate locations within each Urban Centre and promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment.
- B11 New Development in Designated Growth Areas
- a) The new development area will generally serve as a logical extension to the existing built up area, is compact and makes efficient use of land;
 - b) The scale and location of the proposed development will be in conformity with Section B13 of this Plan, as applicable;
 - c) A range of housing choices will be provided, subject to servicing constraints;
 - d) The amount of growth in new development areas is in accordance with an overall growth management strategy that promotes opportunities for intensification and redevelopment in accordance with Section B9 of this Plan; and,
 - e) All of the other infrastructure and public service facilities required to service the new development area is available or to be provided, with such infrastructure and public service facilities being used as efficiently as possible.

- B15
- a) It is the intent of this Plan to encourage the timely provision of infrastructure as urban development occurs. On this basis, the identification of infrastructure upgrades and service delivery requirements should be carried out early in the planning process in new development areas.
 - b) This long range planning should take the full build out of the Urban Centres or Community Areas into account and attempt to rationalize how long it will take for the area to be developed.
 - c) External factors should also be considered, most notably the capacity of water and sewer infrastructure and of transportation systems located within, adjacent to and in the vicinity of the development area as well as the proximity to the built-up area. In addition, population and employment forecasts should also be considered.
- C3
- a) In order to encourage the efficient use of land and infrastructure and to support environmentally and fiscally sustainable communities that are economically vibrant, liveable, healthy and safe, the minimum average density for new development outside of the built up area in the Urban Centres shall be 17 units per net hectare. This policy only applies to lands that are not within an existing draft approved or registered Plan of Subdivision/Condominium.
 - b) In order to achieve the above, the planned housing mix as per Section C4 of the Plan shall support the development of a range of housing types and tenures.
 - c) It is recognized that achieving this density on a site-specific basis may potentially be difficult given terrain or environmental constraints, and as a consequence, this policy is intended to be a target to be achieved wherever possible. This average density would provide for the development of lots that have an average frontage of approximately 15 metres.
- C4 The housing mix targets for new development in the designated growth area of Huntsville is:
Low - 60%, Medium - 25%, High - 10%

Town Strategic Documents:

Strategic Plan Vision	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.
Unity Plan - Vision	Huntsville is a vibrant, welcoming and healthy place in which to live and play as we foster innovation, celebrate arts, culture heritage, and recreation, develop a strong and resilient economy and follow an ethic of social caring and environmental stewardship.
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

- 1.2.2 a) The Plan is intended to adopt growth management policies to guide sustainable growth and development, conservation and preservation initiatives in the Town over the next twenty years.
- 2.1.4 Growth and change will occur in a manner that respects and honours the Town's rich and diverse heritage, and preserves and protects those features that have helped shape the Town. Chief among these is the protection and enhancement of the Town's unique natural environment.
- 2.1.8 e) The Official Plan will direct growth and settlement to appropriate locations.
- 2.4.7.2 The Town will explore a variety of means to increase the supply of affordable rental and ownership housing, including encouraging residential conversions, development or disposal of appropriate Town owned or other public lands, intensification in the downtown core, and lower cost home ownership opportunities, and providing for an appropriate inventory of lots available for development.
- 2.4.8.2 Development will be located where an appropriate level of municipal infrastructure exists or can be made efficiently available, and will occur at a density or intensity that is supportable by the municipal infrastructure.
- 2.4.8.3 Intensive uses requiring municipal sewer and water services shall be directed to the fully serviced areas of the Town.
- 2.5.4 The Town's growth strategy will have the following characteristics:
- a) The majority of intensive residential, commercial, institutional and industrial growth will be directed to the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area where full urban services are required and available;
 - b) Only low density residential growth will be permitted outside of the Huntsville Urban and Hidden Valley Settlement Areas;
 - c) Commercial and industrial growth, geared primarily to the resource sector of the economy, will continue to be located in the Rural area where site specific characteristics are justified and where the uses are or can be made compatible with existing development in the area;
 - d) Hidden Valley will continue to develop as a resort commercial and recreational residential destination; and
 - e) Expansion of historic settlements will be limited due to a lack of municipal sewer and water services.
- 4.1.2 The Huntsville Urban Settlement Area contains sufficient lands within its boundaries to accommodate projected population and household growth beyond the next 20 years, over and above what would be considered on the basis of current trends analysis, in order to anticipate changing demographic and lifestyle characteristics of the population.

- 4.4.4 Residential intensification and infilling will be encouraged within existing residential neighbourhoods as a means of increasing the amount of available housing stock. Intensification initiatives may include the provision of accessory units and the use of innovative lot configurations that would allow additional lots to be created in established areas.
- 4.5.1.9 In the Residential designation, development shall not exceed the following gross densities:
- a) twenty units per gross hectare (8/acre) for low density development (primarily single detached);
 - b) forty units per gross hectare (16/acre) for medium density multiple unit development (semi-detached, row or town housing);
 - c) sixty units per gross hectare (24/acre) for high density multiple unit development (apartments, stacked housing).
- 4.5.2 Residential – Multiple Designation - Notwithstanding the density provisions of Section 4.5.1.9, the minimum density of development in the Residential – Multiple Designation shall be 30 units per gross hectare (12 units per acre).
- 4.10.1.4 Mixed Use Areas, Multiple Residential - Multiple unit residential development shall be subject to the following policies:
- a) the development shall be compact in nature and may be mixed with linked open space areas and recreational uses;
 - b) the maximum permitted density for multiple family residential development shall not exceed 60 units per gross hectare (24/gross acre). The actual density of development shall be established in an implementing Zoning By-law.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- The Draft Muskoka Official Plan (May 2017) identifies a 2036 permanent population of 24,400, an increase of 4,800 persons from 2016 to 2036 (Table 1, Section B3). This population projection appears to be consistent with and based upon the 2013 Growth Strategy Phase 2 Report projections for permanent population, exclusive of the net census undercount of approximately 4.6%.
- The District Growth Strategy (2013 Phase 2 Update) indicates that nine percent (9%) of the permanent housing growth forecast will be from the conversion of existing seasonal units to permanent households.
- The District Growth Strategy (2013 Phase 2 Update) indicates that forty five percent (45%) of all new permanent growth (2705 units) is forecast to develop on full municipal services.
- According to the District Growth Strategy (2013 Phase 2 Update), an annual average of 110 new permanent housing units are projected to be developed, and an average of 8 new seasonal housing units are projected to be developed per year.

- The Draft Muskoka Official Plan (May 2017) projects a total of 2,230 new permanent dwellings being constructed between 2016-2036. This consists of:
 - 1,610 single/semi-detached dwellings (72% of growth);
 - 330 multiple dwelling units (15%); and
 - 290 apartment dwelling units (13%).
- The Draft Muskoka Official Plan (May 2017) indicates growth in employment from 10,160 in 2016 to 12,370 in 2036, representing an increase of 2,210 jobs.
- The District's Phase 1 Growth Strategy indicates that the District's permanent population is aging more rapidly than the Province of Ontario as a whole. From 2006 to 2031, the percentage of the Muskoka population aged 55+ will increase from 32% to 43%. Comparatively, the 55+ population for the Province of Ontario will increase at a slightly more gradual rate from 24% to 34% during this same time period.
- Historically, housing demand in Muskoka has been dominated by low-density housing forms across all Area Municipalities. However, the District Growth Strategy (2013 Phase 2 Update) indicates that the Town's Urban Centre experienced a steady shift from low-density housing to medium and high-density housing forms.
- A lands needs analysis of the Town was completed by WSP (formerly MMM Group Limited) and concluded that a sufficient amount of land exists within each of the settlement areas' boundaries and in the waterfront to accommodate the forecasted residential and non-residential growth for these areas. In addition, some of the designated Urban Settlement Area lands currently include space extensive open space (golf courses) and industrial (pits and quarries) uses.
- Through its [Preliminary Policy Directions Report](#) to update the Muskoka Official Plan (MOP), the District is responding to PPS growth related requirements respecting permanent growth. Urban Centre boundaries are currently identified within Area Municipal Official Plans. The Preliminary Directions Report and Draft MOP policies include a recommendation that Settlement Area boundaries, together with an urban services boundary and a requirement to include a designated growth area density mix target (60% low, 25% medium and 15% high density) be included in the MOP, which has implications on the Town when implementing this policy locally. While these percentages appear to be reasonable, further discussions and analysis are needed to determine how this is applied within the context of the Town of Huntsville.
- An additional Preliminary Directions Report recommendation notes that the MOP should include a minimum target for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households in accordance with Section 1.4.3 a) of the PPS 2014. An understanding of existing affordable housing starts is important to understanding what has been achieved to date, to understand how a new target would be monitored and implemented.
- Further recommendations in the District's [Preliminary Policy Directions Report](#), which are further emphasized in the District's Draft OP policies, will impact the Town's official plan policy by requiring:

- Identification of the extent of the Built Up Area within Huntsville’s Urban Settlement Area, which will require a detailed analysis of the extent of existing subdivision approvals versus other subdivisions that have been inactive for some time.
- That firstly Urban Settlement Areas, then secondly Rural Settlement Areas, should be the focus of growth and development. Notwithstanding this, an exercise is needed to determine the ability and extent of rounding out in existing Rural Settlement Areas.
- That a target of 60% of new permanent housing growth be directed to the Urban Settlement Area. What is key to this discussion is whether this is possible given the availability of land outside of the “Urban Settlement Area” and determining where these boundaries lie.
- A minimum intensification target of 25% within the Built Up Area of the Town’s Urban Settlement Area, which may be further refined through the preparation of an Intensification Study.
- A minimum average density of 17 units per net hectare for new development outside of the Built Up Area in the Urban Settlement Area. This will need to be analyzed to determine how this may be implemented and what this may entail for new greenfield developments.
- Understanding the relationship between the Town’s Urban Settlement Area, where municipal sewage services and municipal water services are provided and Rural Settlement Areas, where municipal sewage services and municipal water services are not provided, and how growth may be accommodated in these locations. This is further emphasized, and should be closely coordinated with, the discussion on the establishment and assignment of Built Up Area and how it relates, where applicable, to existing service limit boundaries.
- An analysis regarding the available area and how much growth is to occur within Rural Settlement Areas is needed to determine an appropriate boundary to guide the rounding out of existing settlements in a manner that is consistent with the PPS, including Sections 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and the MOP.

The Draft Muskoka Official Plan (May 2017) also identifies a 2036 seasonal population of 6,700, an increase of 500 between 2016 and 2036.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS:

- As noted above, there is a provincial requirement for the District to allocate population, housing and employment projections to lower tier municipalities, and to identify areas where growth is to be directed and targets for intensification and redevelopment.
- The draft MOP outlines growth projections for permanent and seasonal population, dwellings and employment, which are intended as estimates for planning purposes rather than targets and will be updated as new information becomes available.
- The MOP will also contain Urban Settlement Area and servicing boundaries, as well as Rural Settlement Area boundaries. To ensure conformity with the MOP, these projections, proposed settlement area

pattern, Urban Settlement Area and built up area boundaries, as well as Rural Settlement Area boundaries, will need to be considered and integrated into the Town Official Plan.

- The Urban Settlement Area is intended as the primary focus of permanent growth, followed by Rural Settlement Areas and then on a more limited basis, the Rural and Waterfront Areas. The settlement pattern approach will need to consider the amount of growth directed to each of the designations and locations as well as identify and rationalize Rural Settlement Area boundaries.
- Hidden Valley and the Waterfront area will be the primary focus of seasonal growth. Specific policies are examined in more detail in other Policy Background Papers (Urban Centres, Communities, Rural and Waterfront Areas).
- Generally, within the Urban Settlement Area and Rural Settlement Areas, growth is envisioned to occur within the built up areas which contain existing development as well as municipal services in the Urban Settlement Area. This growth is envisioned to take the form of secondary suites, infill lot creation, re-development of existing and underutilized lots.
- Growth in designated growth areas of Urban Settlement Area and Rural Settlement Areas is envisioned to represent logical extensions of the built up area, be compact and servicable, make efficient use of land, and provide a range of housing choices. The ability to permit growth and intensification in these areas may be limited by servicing and topographical constraints. The District of Muskoka is creating a servicing model to better identify areas of opportunity and constraint for growth within the Urban Settlement Area. This will be reflected in the servicing boundary mapping that will be included in the MOP. This information should be reviewed with a view to properly evaluating the current location of Urban Settlement Area boundaries together with existing developments.
- As the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area contains sufficient land to accommodate the majority of forecasted permanent growth, expansions to its boundary are not contemplated in the draft MOP. The lands needs analysis of the Town completed by WSP (formerly MMM Group Limited) similarly indicates that a sufficient amount of land exists within the urban settlement area boundary and in Hidden Valley to accommodate the forecasted growth for these areas.
- While the Town does have sufficient land supply to accommodate growth to 2031, there are parcels of land that have remained vacant notwithstanding the development approvals received. A policy should be included in the Town's Official Plan that identifies a strategy for managing these parcels of land, which may include, but not be limited to: the addition of development expiration dates (also known as sunset clauses), performance based criteria, and/or provide the option that Council may remove approvals or recommend that the District withdraw approval if an existing development does not proceed in a timely manner.
- Where an expansion beyond the current boundary and extent of developable land therein is proposed to be increased, policy requiring that these situations be addressed as part of a Comprehensive Review will need to be included in the Town Official Plan.
- However, as the Town is currently undertaking a review of its official plan, the current boundary location should be reviewed to ensure that designated growth areas therein are relatively easily developable in the

near term (i.e. can be serviced in the future, do not contain natural heritage features that would preclude development). Where this is not the case, consideration should be given to the removal of these lands and if appropriate, their replacement with other more immediately developable lands. Some of the lands that currently include space extensive open space (golf courses) and industrial (pits and quarries) uses and may warrant exclusion.

- Note that there are several specific targets and recommendations regarding growth and intensification that are applicable specifically to the Urban Settlement Area and Rural Settlement Areas. These are discussed in the applicable separate Policy Background Papers.