

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

### Natural & Human Hazards/Constraints – Narrow Waterbodies

#### BACKGROUND:

- Narrow Waterbodies are confined areas of lakes or watercourses and include bays, channels and rivers. The confined nature of narrow waterbodies results in a perception of increased density and less private recreational space for boating and swimming. This raises compatibility issues related to location of shoreline structures, visual impact, impact on views, noise, lighting, privacy and navigation.
- A river, bay or channel, although all narrow waterbodies, present slightly different issues which may require different approaches for resolution. The narrow waterbodies within the Urban Settlement Area or a community, such as that in Port Sydney, may need to be treated differently than those in the waterfront designation in order to retain community character.

#### POLICY CONTEXT:

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

- 1.1.5.4 Development that is compatible with the rural landscape and can be sustained by rural service levels should be promoted.

##### Current Muskoka Official Plan & Policy Directions Report:

- F.70 A Narrow Waterbody shall generally be defined as an area where:
- a) The minimum general distance from shoreline to shore line is less than 150 metres +/- (500 feet +/-) on a lake.
  - b) The minimum general distance from shoreline is less than 30 metres +/- (100 feet +/-) on a river.
- F.71 Where development is proposed on lots fronting on or immediately adjacent to narrow waterbodies, lot frontages shall be increased by up to a maximum width of 120 metres (400 feet) in consideration of the severity of the narrowness of the channel and upon having regard to the impact of the development on such matters as density, water quality, navigation, aesthetics, channel congestion and views amongst other matters. In addition, a variety of techniques may be used to further mitigate these concerns, such as, site evaluation reports, and increased building setbacks amongst others. Where increased frontages are required, it is anticipated that increases will be substantial to address the concerns noted in this policy.

##### Draft Muskoka Official Plan

- 14.4.1 h) In recognition of the many ways that Area Municipalities have planned for development and redevelopment within Waterfront Areas, it is not the intent of this Plan to be overly prescriptive. However, it is expected that each Area Municipal Official Plan will contain

detailed and appropriate policies on the following:

ix) Narrow waterbodies;

### **Town Strategic Documents:**

#### **Strategic Plan**

Natural Environment and Sustainability

Goal #1: Demonstrate the Town's commitment to protecting the quality and character of the natural environment.

Goal #2: Integrate sustainability principles into planning and development policies and processes.

#### **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:**

8.11.1 A narrow waterbody is defined as a navigable lake or river where:

a) The distance from shore to shore is 150 metres (500 feet) or less; and,

b) In the case of a bay in a lake, the length of the bay is also greater than 100 metres (330 feet).

8.11.2 Development will not be permitted on a narrow waterbody where a hazard to navigation would result, as confirmed by the authority having jurisdiction.

8.11.3 Where new lot creation is proposed on or adjacent to a narrow waterbody the shoreline lot frontage may be increased as follows:

a) Where the distance of the narrow waterbody from shore to shore is between 90 metres (295 feet) and 150 metres (500 feet), a minimum shoreline frontage of 90 metres (295 feet) will be required; and

b) Where the distance of the narrow waterbody from shore to shore is less than 90 metres (295 feet), a minimum shoreline frontage of 120 metres (393 feet) will be required.

c) Appropriate lot line configuration or greater lot frontages may be required to address the

constraints of a particular narrow waterway or to address other natural constraints.

- 8.11.4 In the case of an existing lot located adjacent to a narrow waterbody, a variety of other techniques, such as increasing building setbacks for primary buildings, limitations on the location and size of shoreline structures, retention of vegetation and night sky sensitive and safe lighting will be considered in order to address issues associated with specific narrow water bodies.
- 8.11.5 Where only a portion of a lot is located on a narrow waterbody, the requirements for narrow waterbodies may be applied to the whole property, unless the siting of development and other appropriate measures can be implemented to the satisfaction of the Town in order to properly address the issues associated with development on a narrow waterbody.
- 8.11.6 New marinas, waterfront landings or similar docking facilities should not be located on a narrow bay which is developed predominantly for residential use.
- 8.11.7 Where development is proposed along a narrow waterbody located along a river, the following policies shall apply:
- a) Development will be a backshore or cluster form of development, with no individual lot having direct or exclusive access to the shoreline, and will be subject to the provisions of Section 8.8.4 (cluster development policies).
  - b) Any shore road allowance shall be retained in public ownership and where practical, be used for recreational trail purposes;
  - c) Additional lands required to enhance the public usability of the shoreline shall be provided;
  - d) Where the features and facilities noted above are provided, lots shall not be required to have increased lot frontages as contemplated for lots on narrow waterbodies, and shall be subject to the provisions of this plan for cluster residential development.

#### **CONSIDERATIONS:**

- At present, the narrow waterbody policies only apply in the waterfront designation.
- Section 8.11.7 is contradictory in nature as subsection a) appears to only permit cluster development adjacent to rivers, and subsection d) appears to contemplate linear lot development.

#### **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:

- Include policies addressing narrow waterbodies in a natural constraints section so that they apply across the entire Town and include a requirement if necessary for the completion of a boating impact study.
- Updated narrow waterbody policies should also address the different character of the Urban Settlement Area and Communities.

Draft

Appendix "I"

Lake	Stillwater Flood Elevation (m)	2 Yr. Wave Run-up (m)	Regulatory Flood Elevation including Wave Run-Up (m)
Peninsula Lake	285.29	1.17	286.46
Mary Lake	281.74	1.21	282.95
Fairy Lake	285.29	1.24	286.53
Lake Vernon	286.68	0.80	287.48
Fox Lake	295.72	0.64	296.36
Lake of Bays	315.84	1.34	317.18
Skeleton Lake	281.22	1.51	282.73
Buck Lake	301.95	0.70	302.65
Devine Lake	101.31	0.48	101.79
Clearwater Lake	101.73	0.57	102.30