

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

### Servicing our Residents – Transportation

#### BACKGROUND:

- Protecting, maintaining and enhancing a functional transportation network throughout the Town is important in order to ensure the efficient movement of goods and people.
- The road network within the Town currently includes Provincial highways, District roads, Town roads as well as private roads, which includes both private rights of way and condominium roads.
- The Town maintains approximately 412km of road (both hard surfaced and gravel).
- A functional classification of roads within the Town, both existing and proposed, is delineated on Schedules C to the Official Plan according to their ultimate-desired function and level of service.
- The Official Plan identifies Arterial Roads as being able to carry large volumes of through-traffic. Collector Roads are intended to carry moderate volumes of traffic between Arterial and Local Roads. Local Roads are intended to carry low volumes of traffic and provide access to abutting properties.
- Arterial Roads have priority over Collector Roads and Local Roads, and Collector Roads have priority over local Roads in terms of access restrictions, road improvements, intersection improvements and maintenance. Existing arterial and collector roads in built-up areas may not necessarily be widened or direct access be eliminated or restricted, except where redevelopment may be taking place.
- District Roads are generally designated as arterial, rural collector and urban collector roads.
- Provincial Highways are not classified as arterial or collector roads. There are specific policies which apply to them.
- There is one rail corridor through Huntsville which travels from north to south through the urban centre of Huntsville and along Hunter's Bay, and through Utterson. This line is used to move goods, with no passenger service available currently.
- Climate change and more frequent severe weather events has and will continue to impact the frequency and extent of required repairs to the road network.
- The Town of Huntsville operates a municipal transit service in the urban settlement area.
- Water traffic for both recreation and for transportation purposes occurs from the numerous lakes and waterways into the urban settlement areas.
- There is one private aerodrome/landing strip operating at Deerhurst Resort.
- Active transportation was addressed in the Healthy Community series of background papers.

## POLICY CONTEXT:

### Provincial Policy Statement (2014):

- 1.6.7.1 *Transportation systems* should be provided which are safe, energy efficient, facilitate the movement of people and goods, and are appropriate to address projected needs.
- 1.6.7.2 Efficient use shall be made of existing and planned *infrastructure*, including through the use of *transportation demand management* strategies, where feasible.
- 1.6.7.3 As part of a *multimodal transportation system*, connectivity within and among *transportation systems* and modes should be maintained and, where possible, improved including connections which cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- 1.6.7.4 A land use pattern, density and mix of uses should be promoted that minimize the length and number of vehicle trips and support current and future use of transit and *active transportation*.
- 1.6.7.5 Transportation and land use considerations shall be integrated at all stages of the planning process.
- 1.6.8.1 Planning authorities shall plan for and protect corridors and rights-of-way for *infrastructure*, including transportation, transit and electricity generation facilities and transmission systems to meet current and projected needs.
- 1.6.8.2 *Major goods movement facilities and corridors* shall be protected for the long term.
- 1.6.8.3 Planning authorities shall not permit *development* in *planned corridors* that could preclude or negatively affect the use of the corridor for the purpose(s) for which it was identified.
- ◀ New *development* proposed on *adjacent lands* to existing or *planned corridors* and transportation facilities should be compatible with, and supportive of, the long-term purposes of the corridor and should be designed to avoid, mitigate or minimize negative impacts on and from the corridor and transportation facilities.
- 1.6.8.4 The preservation and reuse of abandoned corridors for purposes that maintain the corridor's integrity and continuous linear characteristics should be encouraged, wherever feasible.
- 1.6.8.5 When planning for corridors and rights-of-way for significant transportation, electricity transmission, and *infrastructure* facilities, consideration will be given to the significant resources in Section 2: Wise Use and Management of Resources.
- 1.6.9.1 Planning for land uses in the vicinity of *airports*, *rail facilities* and *marine facilities* shall be undertaken so that:
- a. their long-term operation and economic role is protected; and

- b. *airports, rail facilities and marine facilities and sensitive land uses* are appropriately designed, buffered and/or separated from each other, in accordance with policy 1.2.6.

**Current Muskoka Official Plan:**

- G.1 Provides policy to protect and maintain a functional transportation network throughout Muskoka.
- G.4-18 Responsibilities regarding maintenance, construction and development approvals for roads within District's purview.
- G.19-27 Provincial requirements for development proposed along a provincial highway.
- G.38, Identifies three classes of District Road, with lot frontage requirements for each
- G.41-43
- G.28-43 Conditions detailed regarding development adjacent to District Roads, including increased building setbacks, road widenings, increase frontages; all designed to improve or maintain the long term function of the road.
- G.56-60 Policies recognize Rail corridors, encourage development of passenger facilities in urban areas; relocation of corridors/yards where possible outside of urban centres; addresses noise/vibration/safety issues on abutting lands
- G.75-80 Water transportation – recognize that DMM has no jurisdiction however encourages areas to facilitate services for the boating public
- G.63-74 Air travel integral part of transportation system in Muskoka, compatibility issues identified, area municipalities encouraged to provide more details in local plans

**First Draft Muskoka Official Plan:**

- J Continues to provide policy to protect and maintain a functional transportation network throughout Muskoka.
- J1 Speaks to developing a transportation system to encourage unity within the District, satisfy local area transportation demands and protect transportation corridors. Accommodates various forms of transportation – trains, vehicles, air, public transit and active transportation.
- J2 Continues to identify classes of road – provincial highways, district roads, local area roads and private roads.
- J2.3 Policies identify minimum required road frontages for new lot creation, as well as identifying exceptional circumstances where development may be permitted.

- J2.4 Identifies that infrastructure and utilities, sidewalks, landscaping, paths and bicycle lanes area permitted where appropriate within District rights-of-way.
- J2.5 Speaks to the rail network, noting that improvements to at grade crossings shall be encouraged, as well as advocating for the return of passenger rail service
- J2.6 Notes that non-compatible development shall not be permitted adjacent to or on planned corridors
- J2.7 Airports and aerodromes are identified
- J2.8 Water transportation recognized as not within municipal jurisdiction, however encourages local municipalities to facilitate the provision of services for boating public
- J2.9 Public transit encouraged (feasibility of transit improved through increased densities)
- J2.10 Active Transportation
- J2.11 Noise & Vibration – minimize adverse impacts from noise to sensitive land uses – requirement for noise impact and vibration studies adjacent to highways and railways.

**Town Strategic Documents:**

**Strategic Plan**

Roads and Infrastructure

GOAL #1 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

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.

**Huntsville Official Plan:**

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.

10.2.1 Roads in the Town are classified by their jurisdiction, function and level of service into six categories, as shown on Schedule C:

- Provincial Highway 11;
- Arterial Roads (provincial, district, local);
- Rural Collector Roads (district, local);
- Urban Collector Roads (district, local);
- Local Roads, Year Round Maintenance; and
- Local Roads, Seasonal Maintenance.

10.2.1.2 Future Roads have been identified under a number of categories, as shown on Schedule C:

- Future Arterial Roads
- Future Collector Roads
- Future Service Roads (required as a result of MTO Highway 11 interchange construction)

10.2.1.3 Private roads are not part of the municipal road system; however they do provide a local access road function. Where known, private roads are shown on Schedule C.

10.2.1.4 The location of roadways and symbols shown on Schedule C are approximate. The actual road alignment and related construction shall be determined after more detailed study.

## **10.2.2 General Policies**

10.2.2.1 The Town encourages the development and integration of a road network that ensures safe, convenient and efficient movement of people and goods having regard for the natural and physical features of the Town.

10.2.2.2 The Town recognizes that the road network serves pedestrian and non-motorized vehicles in addition to vehicular traffic.

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 rights-of-way, including on Provincial or District rights-of-way.

10.2.2.4 Roads shall be built according to principles of good civic design, and shall incorporate tree planting, landscaping, sidewalks, bicycle paths, medians and boulevards, where appropriate. Where roads are being reconstructed, and where feasible, paved shoulders or trails shall be provided to allow for non-motorized vehicles.

10.2.2.5 In the Huntsville Urban Area, the reconstruction of existing roads and the construction of new roads shall include safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks or trails, curb ramps and pedestrian signals where warranted. On some low volume roads, pedestrian facilities may not be needed.

10.2.2.6 Heavy truck traffic may be restricted to designated truck routes to minimize the negative impact that this traffic will have on residential areas.

- 10.2.2.7 Entrances shall only be considered where adequate sight lines can be maintained and where approved by the applicable road authority. New entrances are discouraged on hills or curves and on lands of environmental significance such as wetlands and lands of environmental constraint, including flood plain.
- 10.2.2.8 Development will only be permitted on roads that have the capacity to accommodate the increased traffic generated by that development. Where appropriate, such roads shall be brought up to an acceptable standard as a condition of development approval.
- 10.2.2.9 Sensitive lighting of roadways is encouraged for new road development; retrofitting of old lighting is encouraged.

### **10.2.3 Provincial Highway 11**

- 10.2.3.1 Highway 11 is a divided multi-lane highway, designed to carry large volumes of traffic over long distances. No direct access from Highway 11 to abutting properties will be permitted.
- 10.2.3.2 Uses adjacent to Highway 11 should be appropriate and compatible with the existing function of the roads, and future plans for upgrading/widening the road. Noise Impact Assessments may be required for sensitive land uses (e.g. residential, institutional).
- 10.2.3.3 Development adjacent to Highway 11 shall be set back in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) or the Town, whichever is greater.
- 10.2.3.4 Existing and proposed interchanges along Provincial Highway 11 shall be protected in accordance with the policies and regulations of MTO. Existing and future Highway interchanges are shown on Schedule C.
- 10.2.3.5 Service roads are proposed in connection with the closing of certain intersections along Highway 11 and the construction of new controlled access interchanges. Such roads will be constructed to the standards set by MTO. In general, such roads shall be treated as Rural Collector Roads.
- 10.2.3.6 Every effort shall be made to preserve and protect the scenic amenity of the Highway #11 corridor. Retention of existing mature trees or planting of a new native species shall be encouraged in appropriate locations, and required as conditions of development approval.
- 10.2.3.7 The Town encourages the development of recreational trail crossings at highway interchanges to provide safe and convenient access across the Provincial Highway right-of-way.

### **10.2.4 Arterial Roads**

- 10.2.4.1 Arterial Roads provide for through traffic movements between activity areas and across the Town. They generally link Provincial Highways and other Arterial Roads, settlement areas and transportation corridors outside the Town. They provide service to commercial, industrial, residential and major recreational areas.

- 10.2.4.2 Development shall satisfy the applicable criteria of MTO and the District related to road entrances and frontage. Access to and building setbacks from arterial roads are subject to the policies and by-laws of MTO, the District of Muskoka, or the Town, depending on jurisdiction.
- 10.2.4.3 In addition to all the applicable municipal requirements, all development adjacent to provincial highways is also subject to the safety and geometric requirements and permits of the Ministry of Transportation.
- 10.2.4.4 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.
- 10.2.4.5 The Town will maintain and protect the traffic carrying capacity of arterial roads through measures such as:
- controlling strip development and multiple single user driveways;
  - minimizing the number and restricting the location of intersecting streets and driveways along arterial roads;
  - controlling driveway access through site plan control or 0.3 metre (1 foot) reserves;
  - prohibiting signs, vegetation, fences or structures which obstruct the visibility of traffic signs and devices or which constitute traffic hazards.
- 10.2.4.6 Access to arterial roads shall be limited to the extent that such access will not interfere with the primary function of moving through traffic.
- 10.2.4.7 Every effort shall be made to preserve and protect the scenic amenity of the Highway #60 corridor. Retention of existing mature trees or planting of a new native species shall be encouraged in appropriate locations, and required as conditions of development approval.
- 10.2.4.8 The minimum right-of-way width shall be 26 metres (85 feet), or the standard of the road authority.
- 10.2.4.9 The future arterial road shown connecting West and East Brown's Road shall be developed in accordance with an approved Class Environmental Assessment.

### **10.2.5 Rural or Urban Collector Roads**

- 10.2.5.1 These roads are designed to carry traffic between arterial and local roads, providing access to abutting properties and community facilities.
- 10.2.5.2 The policy is to ensure that local collector roads provide their intermediate and local traffic carrying function and at the same time discourage non-local/through traffic.
- 10.2.5.3 The minimum right-of-way width for Collector Roads shall be 26 metres (85 feet), unless a transportation study provides for a different width.

- 10.2.5.4 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.
- 10.2.5.5 Driveway entrances onto Rural Collector Roads shall not interfere with the through traffic function of the roadway.
- 10.2.5.6 Driveway entrances onto Urban Collector roads shall be designed to provide safe access.
- 10.2.5.7 Development shall satisfy the applicable criteria of the District related to road entrances and frontage. Access to and building setbacks from collector roads are subject to the policies and by-laws of the District of Muskoka, or the Town, depending on jurisdiction.
- 10.2.5.8 The specific alignment of new collector roads in the developing areas of the Huntsville Urban Area has not been shown on Schedule C. Such roads will be identified and developed as part of any Secondary Plan for such areas or as part of the subdivision approval process where no Secondary Plan is required, and as recommended in Transportation Studies that are approved by the Town.

#### **10.2.6 Local Roads – Year Round Maintenance**

- 10.2.6.1 These roads are designed to provide for local traffic movement and access to abutting properties. In the case of residential areas, these roads normally shall be designed with narrower width than collectors and should also be designed to discourage non-local traffic.
- 10.2.6.2 All roads not otherwise identified on Schedule C shall be considered Local Roads.
- 10.2.6.3 The minimum right-of-way width for Local Roads shall be 20 metres (66 feet), unless reduced right-of-way widths are considered by the Town to accomplish specific urban design objectives.
- 10.2.6.4 Where a Secondary Plan has been prepared which considers the suitability of alternative development standards, including road widths, reduced rights-of-way may be considered by the Town for specific developments.

#### **10.2.7 Local Roads – Seasonal Maintenance**

- 10.2.7.1 These roads provide a local access function, but are only maintained by the Town on a seasonal basis. They are usually constructed at a standard that precludes proper year round maintenance.
- 10.2.7.2 The year-round maintenance of seasonally maintained public roads is generally discouraged. However, the Town may provide year-round maintenance provided that the road is brought up to the appropriate municipal standard by the affected landowners and is assumed by Council.
- 10.2.7.3 Seasonally maintained municipal roads have been identified on Schedule C. An amendment to this Plan is not required if the Town expands year round maintenance to such roads.



## **10.2.8 Private Roads**

- 10.2.8.1 The assumption of private roads for public road purposes is generally discouraged. However, the Town may, at its sole discretion, assume any private road, provided:
- a) the road is brought up to an acceptable municipal standard;
  - b) a 20 metre (66 foot) right-of-way width is obtained; and
  - c) the costs of upgrading the road are borne by the affected property owners, or, where a number of landowners are involved, the Town may proceed by way of local improvement by-laws as a mechanism to cover costs.
- 10.2.8.2 An Amendment to this Plan is not required if the Town acquires and maintains a private road.

## **10.3 Road Widenings**

- 10.3.1 In the case of development or redevelopment of property abutting a Town road, the Town may require the dedication of land for road widening purposes, as authorized by the Planning Act, in any applications dealing with plans of subdivisions, consents or site plan approval. The dedication free of all charges and encumbrances to the appropriate authority of the following may be required:
- a) widening of the road allowance to Town standards along the abutting or immediately adjacent lot line or part thereof. 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).
  - b) dedication of sight triangles and turning lanes primarily at the intersection of public roads, to meet engineering standards or other road related by-laws of the Town or other applicable standards where such dedication would extend beyond the road allowance widths as stated in (a) above.
  - c) dedication of an area necessary to construct grade improvements, separations or road alignments where the proposed development requires such improvements respecting traffic volumes or hazards to the Town road onto which the proposed development abuts or is immediately adjacent to, which extends beyond the road allowance widths as stated above. Such dedication may only be to the requirements prescribed in the road related by-law of the Town or applicable Provincial requirements.
- 10.3.2 The construction, assumption and maintenance of roads shall be subject to the prescribed road related by-laws of the Town of and other applicable standards.
- 10.3.3 Nothing in this section shall limit the right of the Town to open, improve or maintain any roadway as part of its capital works program(s).

## **10.4 Municipal Transit**

10.4.1 The Town currently operates a limited municipal transit system. Over the next two decades, as the urban population increases, there may be a need to consider the establishment of a full municipal transit system.

10.4.2 The following considerations will be made in relation to new development:

- a) 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;
- b) site plans, particularly for retail commercial establishments, shall incorporate transit measures (e.g. room for shelters or seating areas at bus stops) in their designs, with future bus routes provided within the parking/driveway areas of the developments (i.e., at the entrance to the facility and not the road intersection);
- c) higher density of uses (apartments, commercial, senior citizen projects, institutional uses) shall be located along or adjacent to arterial and collector streets that may have transit service; and
- d) a compact urban form, strong downtown and grouping of development shall be promoted in order to facilitate transit use.

## **10.5 Railways**

10.5.1 The Town acknowledges the importance of rail infrastructure and recognizes its critical role in long-term economic growth and the efficient and effective movement of goods and people. The use of rail for the transport of goods is encouraged to ensure the continued viability and to protect the ultimate capacity of the rail facilities. Strategic infrastructure improvements such as targeted grade separations are encouraged where appropriate.

10.5.2 All proposed development adjacent to railways shall ensure that appropriate safety measures such as setbacks, berms and security fencing are provided, to the satisfaction of the Town and CN. Where applicable, the Town will ensure that sightline requirements of Transport Canada are addressed.

10.5.3 The Town may require noise studies for residential or other sensitive land uses located within 300 metres (1,000 feet) of the railway right-of-way, to be prepared to the satisfaction of the Town and CN.

10.5.4 The Town may require vibration studies for residential or other sensitive land uses located within 75 metres (246 feet) of the railway right-of-way, to be prepared to the satisfaction of the Town and CN.

- 10.5.5 New residential development may be permitted within 300 metres (1,000 feet) of a rail yard provided that applicable provincial policies and guidelines, including MOE noise assessment and land use compatibility guidelines, have been addressed and the Town and CN are satisfied that appropriate measures to mitigate any adverse effects have been undertaken and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the long term function of the rail yard.
- 10.5.6 The Town may require noise studies for residential or other sensitive land uses located within 1,000 metres (3,300 feet) of a rail yard, to be prepared as required, and to the satisfaction of the Town and CN, to support the feasibility of the development.
- 10.5.7 Implementation and maintenance of any required rail noise, vibration and safety impact mitigation measures, along with any required notices on title such as warning clauses and/or environmental easements, will be secured through appropriate legal mechanisms, to the satisfaction of the Town and CN.

## **10.6 Airports**

- 10.6.1 The Town encourages Transport Canada to consult with the Town prior to making decision on new airports in the Town.
- 11.9.1 Where a land use change or new residential lot creation is proposed that is likely to adversely affect existing uses or be adversely affected by existing uses, a feasibility study that assesses the impacts of odour, noise, vibration, particulate or other emissions may be required in accordance with provincial guidelines. Some uses (e.g., residential) may be sensitive to the odour, noise, vibration or other emissions associated with facilities such as highways, arterial roads, railway corridors, pits and quarries, various types of industries and sewage treatment facilities. The feasibility study shall include recommendations on how impacts can be mitigated. The approval of the development proposals shall be based upon the achievement of adequate separation distances between land uses and other mitigation recommendations.
- 11.9.2 Development adjacent to a railway corridor shall ensure that appropriate safety measures, such as setbacks, berms, and security fencing are provided to the satisfaction of the Town, in consultation with the appropriate railway company.
- 11.9.3 In order to minimize and alleviate, wherever feasible, the conflicts of the railway network with adjacent lands uses and with the road network, the Town will require that adequate visual and/or physical separation or other techniques be provided to screen or mitigate impact of a railway right-of-way from adjacent residential land uses, as determined by the Town in consultation with the Ministry of Environment and other concerned public agencies.

## **CONSIDERATIONS:**

- The Province has future plans for improvements to Highway 11 and 60, which must be considered in the review and revision of transportation policies.

- The District will be undertaking a Master Transportation Plan. This plan will also need be considered in the review and revision of transportation policies.
- Council’s Strategic Plan envisions the creation of a Roads and Transportation Master Plan. A goal of this should be to promote an integrated transportation network that permits the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within the Town. It should also ensure that from a capital planning perspective, road reconstruction projects incorporate environmental and active transportation 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:

- Ensure that policies enable and maintain an efficient and connected road system, linking identified rural and urban nodes and corridors, and that these corridors are suitable for different forms of transportation (including transit and active transportation).
- To reduce the automobile use of the road network and a corresponding need for frequent road improvements, the policies should promote transit, active transportation and rail use.
- Review existing “future” roads network, ensure the links are still viable (and required), and further examine notion of arterial/collector and local roads.
- As noted in the “Human Hazards” Background Policy Paper, to ensure that vital infrastructure such as Highways 11 and 60 or a rail corridor are protected, where sensitive land uses are proposed within close proximity of such infrastructure, if identified by the authority having jurisdiction, a study documenting noise and vibration impacts should be required.
- Review Hwy 11 interchanges (in consultation with MTO) to ensure information regarding access is accurate
- Policies should ensure that the extent, location and type of development has adequate access to municipal services, especially emergency services
- Review appropriateness of when private and condominium roads may be used in land use designations
- Maintain hierarchy of access in waterfront designation