

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

### Growing Community – Waterfront Designation

#### BACKGROUND:

- The Waterfront designation applies to areas around the lakes or along the significant rivers in the Town outside of Urban Settlement Areas or Communities. These areas are composed of low-density residential development interspersed with resort commercial uses, private or religious camps and marinas that have developed due to the excellent recreational opportunities and aesthetic values offered by these waterbodies.
- Historically, visitors came to stay at lakeside resorts like Grandview and Deerhurst and others in the Township of Lake of Bays. Over time, due in part to the range of services and goods available in the growing Town core and as travel became easier with the automobile, cottage or second home development grew along the shorelines. Although many residences in the waterfront are now used on a year round basis, this area is still predominantly seasonal in nature.
- The shoreline area and water resources, which have attracted settlement, possess physically and environmentally sensitive areas and qualities such as water quality, wetlands, natural heritage and habitat areas which must be preserved and protected to protect the character of this area. (For further details on these areas and values, please refer to the Sustainable Natural Environment policy background papers).
- Constraints such as steep slopes and narrow waterbodies impose limitations on development in the waterfront area for safety, aesthetic or environmental reasons. (For further details on these limitations, please refer to the Natural Hazards policy background papers).
- The application of the waterfront designation must be flexible in order to respond to the varied terrain and development conditions within the Town. Generally, land that is on the shoreline or which physically or visually relates to the waterfront is included within this designation. The waterfront designation also includes commercial uses such as resorts or marinas, which have a functional relationship with the waterfront.
- The boundary between the waterfront and rural area must be specifically defined on an area and property basis, and therefore the waterfront designation is best defined through a Zoning By-law or a Community Planning By-law.

#### POLICY CONTEXT:

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

- 1.1.4 Rural areas are important to the economic success of the Province and our quality of life. Rural areas are a system of lands that may include rural settlement areas, rural lands, prime agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas, and other resource areas. Rural areas and urban areas are interdependent in terms of markets, resources and amenities. It is important to leverage rural assets and amenities and protect the environment as a foundation for a sustainable economy.

Ontario's rural areas have diverse population levels, natural resources, geographies and physical characteristics, and economies. Across rural Ontario, local circumstances vary by region. For example, northern Ontario's natural environment and vast geography offer different opportunities than the predominately agricultural areas of southern regions of the Province.

1.1.4.1 Healthy, integrated and viable rural areas should be supported by:

- a) building upon rural character, and leveraging rural amenities and assets;
- b) promoting regeneration, including the redevelopment of brownfield sites;
- c) accommodating an appropriate range and mix of housing in rural settlement areas;
- d) encouraging the conservation and redevelopment of existing rural housing stock on rural lands;
- e) using rural infrastructure and public service facilities efficiently;
- f) promoting diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities through goods and services, including value-added products and the sustainable management or use of resources;
- g) providing opportunities for sustainable and diversified tourism, including leveraging historical, cultural, and natural assets;
- h) conserving biodiversity and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature; and
- i) providing opportunities for economic activities in prime agricultural areas, in accordance with policy 2.3.

1.1.5.1 When directing development on rural lands, a planning authority shall apply the relevant policies of Section 1: Building Strong Healthy Communities, as well as the policies of Section 2: Wise Use and Management of Resources and Section 3: Protecting Public Health and Safety.

1.1.5.2 On rural lands located in municipalities, permitted uses are:

- b) resource-based recreational uses (including recreational dwellings);
- c) limited residential development;
- d) home occupations and home industries;

1.1.5.3 Recreational, tourism and other economic opportunities should be promoted.

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

1.5.1. Encourages the provision of public access to shorelines and natural areas

**Current Muskoka Official Plan:**

Back-ground 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.

- a) Lands which physically or functionally relate to the Waterfront designation, although extending beyond 150 metres (500 feet) from the waterbody, will be deemed to be

- within the Waterfront designation.
- b) Lands which do not physically or functionally relate to the Waterfront designation, although within 150 metres (500 feet) of the waterbody will be deemed not to be within the Waterfront designation.
- c) Lands, which form the bed of any waterbody defined above, will generally be considered as part of the Waterfront designation. The Waterfront designation will not extend within any limit of any other designation.

- 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 (i.e. resorts, camps, restaurants and attractions);
  - c) Industrial development that services the waterfront community (i.e. contractors yards, boat repair and accessories);
  - d) Open space uses; and
  - e) Waterfront landings.
- D.18 The Waterfront is a major recreation resource area that should be made accessible to both public and private users.
- 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.20 The maintenance of the shoreline of lakes and rivers is key to preserving the quality of the natural and cultural heritage of Muskoka within the Waterfront designation. Tree cover, vegetation and other natural features are encouraged to be retained to uphold the visual and environmental integrity of the Waterfront. Where development is proposed, a natural, substantially undisturbed buffer is recommended at the water's edge to generally meet a target of 8 metres (26 feet) in width for three-quarters of the water frontage.
- D.21 Increased boating density on many lakes is a significant issue. Discussions with senior levels of government should be undertaken to address issues of congestion, speed and use.
- D.22 Although municipalities do not presently have jurisdiction over surface water usage, this is an issue directly related to land use planning. Therefore, as a statement of policy, floating dwellings or similar structures, supported by a barge type hull capable of remaining in the water year round and are substantially unpowered and which are used for either residential or commercial purposes, will not be permitted on waterbodies within Muskoka.

- D.23 Single unit residential development with significant natural vegetation is envisioned for the Waterfront designation. The traditional form of residential development along the shoreline is linear with some backlot development in limited locations. Cluster development, where it is undertaken in an appropriate manner will also be permitted and can maintain the natural appearance of the shoreline. It can also maintain an open shoreline and focus communal docking outside of sensitive areas which will protect sensitive shoreline areas.
- D.24 The forms of residential development, which are permitted within the Waterfront designation, include shoreline development, back lot development and cluster development.
- D.25 Shoreline development consists of single unit dwellings and accessory buildings and structures located on individual lots which are situated in a linear fashion along the shoreline.
- Back lot development consists of single unit dwellings on individual lots which are physically separated from the shoreline by a legally conveyable parcel of patent land which has development potential. Back lots are usually located in a linear fashion along a road which generally runs parallel to the shoreline, but back lots may also be located on a road which runs perpendicular to the shore.
- D.26 Cluster development consists of a group of single unit dwellings, each located on an individual lot or unit on a vacant land condominium, which are set back from the shoreline, with the shoreline area being maintained as communal open space. Cluster development is not permitted behind a shoreline residential 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).
- D.28 New residential back lots will have substantially increased lot sizes with respect to frontage and area on a publicly open and maintained road.
- D.29 New residential cluster development will proceed by way of a comprehensive planning process that will address:
- a) Number of lots or units and siting of the cluster;
  - b) Lot or unit sizes, with the minimum lot size being 0.4 hectares (1 acre) and a minimum road frontage of 60 metres (197 feet);
  - c) The suitability of the site for the development;
  - d) Impact on water quality;
  - e) The natural features of the site to ensure that substantial natural vegetation is preserved;
  - f) The provision of open space areas;
  - g) Servicing issues associated with private individual services;
  - h) Access provisions on a year round publicly maintained road;
  - i) The ratio of lots to water frontage; and

j) The use, ownership and design of the waterfront area.

D.30 New cluster developments on one lot or which involves multiple family units will not be permitted.

**Muskoka Official Plan Policy Directions Report:**

15 MOP should include policies that permit, encourage and support the establishment of small scale home businesses and enhanced communication networks and the collection of knowledge and sharing of information in a variety of settings in Urban centres, Communities, Waterfront and Rural areas.

21 MOP should permit following additional uses in the Rural and Waterfront designations (subject to area municipal policies controlling location and scale):

- B&B – max 10 rooms
- Home industries
- Small scale conference or learning centres
- Art galleries/exhibition space
- Small scale restaurant and entertainment venues

22 MOP should contain the following objectives for resort development:

- Ensure existing and new resorts have a commercial component
- Ensure that appropriate guarantees are in place for privately serviced resort development so that the District is not financially responsible for such services
- Limit resort conversions to residential uses
- Ensure appropriate locations of resorts so impacts are minimal.

23 Resort policies in the MOP should be broad and strategic and allow for area municipalities to tailor policies to recognize local circumstances.

24 Resort definition should be broad enough to distinguish it from other accommodation types and provide flexibility to respond to evolving trends.

25 MOP should contain policies that require 50% of the resort units in any designation to be available to the travelling public.

26 MOP should include policy that requires the first phase of any new mixed resort/residential development in any designation to be in the form of accommodation units available to the general public.

27 Continue to require resorts to offer amenities that are available to the general public, but their scale, amount and nature will be determined by the area municipality.

28 MOP should not contain a requirement for new resorts to proceed by way of area municipal official Plan amendment if it is on full municipal services or 100% accommodation units.

Discretion to proceed by official plan amendment would rest with area municipality.

- 29 MOP to continue to contain financial reserve requirements for privately serviced resort development.
- 30 MOP to retain policies that support the retention of resort lands on lakefront lands. Less onerous tests for smaller holdings and provide for consideration of viability of resort, alternate permitted uses to determine if resort can or should be retained.

**First Draft – Muskoka Official Plan**

- 14.3 Permitted uses within the Waterfront Area designation are limited to low density and single detached permanent residential and recreational dwellings, tourist commercial uses, industrial and commercial uses that are appropriate and necessary in the Waterfront Area, open space uses and waterfront landing areas
- 14.4.1 a) The Waterfront is a major recreation resource area that should be made accessible to both public and private users.
- b) Within the Waterfront Area designation, natural form and function shall dominate.
- c) The maintenance of the shoreline of lakes and rivers is key to preserving the quality of the natural and cultural heritage of Muskoka within the Waterfront Area designation. Tree cover, vegetation and other natural features are encouraged to be retained to uphold the visual and environmental integrity of the Waterfront.
- d) Natural landscape features such as watercourses, significant heights of land, rock faces or cliffs, waterfalls, rapids, beaches, vistas, panoramas, landmarks, and other similar features shall be conserved to the extent feasible. New development shall generally be located and designed to protect these characteristic features unless the development serves a greater long-term public interest.
- e) In order to ensure compatibility with existing development, new development should generally have a physical character similar to or compatible with existing development in terms of density, lot sizes, maximum building heights, and minimum setbacks.
- f) The maintenance of public accesses to the shoreline is encouraged to allow for the use and enjoyment of the District's waterbodies to those who not own shoreline properties. The provision of new public accesses to the shoreline shall be considered where appropriate.
- g) Individual lake plans and lake stewardship programs will be encouraged as a method to identify important values, features and individual lake character. In addition, these programs can be used to monitor water quality, social carrying capacity and general lake management and may be incorporated into Area Municipal Official Plans.

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:

- i) The character of various waterfront areas and how each area should be planned;
- ii) Waterfront landings and waterfront access points;
- iii) Boat impact assessments;
- iv) Private on-site individual water and sewage servicing and storm water management requirements;
- v) Public access to lakes and rivers;
- vi) Island development;
- viii) Sleeping cabins;
- ix) Boathouses and docks;
- x) Narrow waterbodies;
- xi) Slopes; and
- xii) Social carrying capacity.

- 14.4.2
- a) The forms of residential development, which are permitted within the Waterfront Area designation, include linear shoreline development, back lot development and cluster development. Multiple-unit residential development may only be permitted in association with a resort in accordance with the policies of this Plan.
  - b) Shoreline development consists of single unit dwellings and accessory buildings and structures located on individual lots (i.e. one dwelling per lot) that are located in a linear fashion along the shoreline.
  - c) New residential shoreline lots will have a minimum lot area of 0.4 hectares and a minimum water frontage of 60 metres.
  - d) Back lot development consists of single unit dwellings on individual lots that are physically separated from the shoreline by lots that have direct frontage on the shoreline. Back lots are usually located in a linear fashion along a road which generally runs parallel to the shoreline and which separates back lot development from shoreline development, but back lots may also be located on a road which runs perpendicular to the shore.
  - e) New residential back lots will have substantially increased lot sizes with respect to frontage and area compared to shoreline lots and shall front on a publicly owned and maintained road.
  - f) Cluster development consists of a group of single unit dwellings, each located on an individual lot or unit on a vacant land condominium, which are set back a minimum of 20 metres from the shoreline, with the shoreline area being maintained as communal open space. Cluster development is not permitted behind a shoreline residential development since it is required to have reasonable frontage on the water that corresponds to the

number of dwellings. Area Municipal Official Plans shall contain appropriate policies on cluster development to develop an appropriate lot/unit to shoreline ratio with the minimum lot size being no less than 0.4 hectares to ensure that proposed cluster development is compatible with adjacent development and satisfies all other relevant policies in this Plan. Cluster development that extends into the Rural Area designation will require an amendment to this Plan.

- g) Each Area Municipality shall establish policies in their Official Plans that establish a variety of lot sizes and frontages that are reflective of environmental constraints. In particular, shoreline lots should be of sufficient size to accommodate the use proposed, and be able to support the construction of a dock. In addition, shoreline lots should be sized and designed to recognize environmental, man-made or other influences including soil, terrain, water quality, and fish habitat and waterbody constraints among others.
- h) Except where special policy areas exist in Area Municipal Official Plans, new family compounds in the Waterfront designation (i.e. more than one dwelling on a lot) will only be permitted through an Area Official Plan amendment and where it is demonstrated that the dwellings are located in a manner which facilitates a future land division in accordance with the policies of this Plan and where each dwelling is serviced by private individual on-site sewer services and private individual on-site water services.

D 6.1 It is the objective of this Plan to:

- a) Recognize resorts as a vital component of the tourism industry which provides an historic link to the origins of tourism in Muskoka;
- b) Support resort development and redevelopment in all designations through flexible policies which accommodate changing market demands;
- c) Ensure that existing and new resorts have a commercial component, so that travellers and vacationers continue to visit the District and contribute to the local economy;
- d) Ensure that appropriate guarantees are in place to ensure that the District does not become responsible for water and wastewater servicing at resorts with a residential component that are not on **municipal sewage services** and **municipal water services**;**
- e) Limit the conversion of existing resorts to alternative non-resort uses in support of the first goal; and
- f) Ensure that new resorts are appropriately located and developed in a manner that minimizes impacts on the environment and water quality and is compatible with the character and nature of adjacent development.

- D6.2
- a) The policies of this section of the Plan are intended to apply to resorts, which are considered to be commercial enterprises and distinct from residential developments (seasonal or permanent) and other types of roofed commercial accommodation establishments such as hotels, motels and bed and breakfast operations.
  - b) In this regard, and for the purposes of this Plan, resorts are defined as commercial establishments that:
    - i) Provide roofed accommodations with a range of services, facilities and amenities within a vacation-oriented setting;
    - ii) Provide access to a significant natural or human-made tourism asset; and,

iii) Emphasize a leisure experience.

- D6.3 a) This Plan recognizes that each resort is intrinsically different, based on:
- i) The number of guest rooms and/or units;
  - ii) Whether the resort is open only for the summer months or year round;
  - iii) The nature of the management of the resort, which ranges from small family run resorts that have been open for many years to larger scale resorts that are managed and/or operated by entities that manage multiple properties;
  - iv) The nature and scale of the on-site amenities that are available to resort occupants and guests and whether these on-site amenities are available to the general public;
  - v) Whether the resort is managed by personnel on-site or remotely;
  - vi) Whether the resort provides other amenities such as golf and convention/banquet facilities that are open and available for the general public; and,
  - vii) The physical location and nature of the experiences offered by the resort, which may include rest and relaxation, eco-tourism/educational and event oriented.
- b) As long as a resort (existing or proposed) is or can be defined as a resort in accordance with Section D6.2 b) of this Plan, a variety of policy and regulatory approaches that take into account the many ways in which a resort functions can be considered when a new resort is proposed or an existing resort is proposed to redevelop or expand.
- D6.4 a) In order for a resort to benefit from the enhanced density permissions that may not be available to residential developments (e.g. increased density), it is a principle of this Plan that a minimum of 50% of the guest rooms and/or units in a resort in any land use designation generate a turnover of occupants (i.e. owners, renters, transient visitors) through mandatory daily or weekly rentals, rental pools/programs, exchanges, timesharing or fractionalized ownerships, or some other similar means. The actual percentage will be determined on a site specific basis in accordance with Section D6.4 d) but it is recognized that there shall be a reasonable minimum number of units available for turnover to ensure a core commercial component.
- b) In addition to the above, where a mix of uses is proposed, it is the goal of this Plan that a minimum of 50% of the guest rooms and/or units in the first phase of a resort in any land use designation generates a turnover of occupants. It is also expected that key resort amenities be developed in the first phase in support of the commercial enterprise. Subsequent phases shall also contain a mix of uses where possible.
- c) For those resorts that front on a lake or river, the preferred location for the majority of the guest rooms and/or units that generate a turnover of occupants and resort amenities shall be adjacent to the shoreline in a cluster form, setback behind a communal waterfront area. Any proposed resort-related residential units shall generally not be located adjacent to the shoreline and should be separated from the shoreline by the guest rooms and/or units that generate a turnover of occupants and resort amenities.
- d) The actual number of guest rooms and/or units in resort that generate a turnover of occupants as a percentage of the total number of units shall be determined on a case-by-case basis. As a general principle, larger resorts should have a higher percentage of guest

rooms and/or units that generate a turnover of occupants since many on-site amenities depend on this turnover to be economically viable. The location of the resort, type of management proposed, servicing arrangement, and scale and type of amenities will also be considered.

- e) Where a mix of uses is proposed on a resort property outside of an Urban Centre, a planning analysis will be required through a comprehensive planning process (i.e. Area Municipal Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law Amendment) to determine the appropriate percentage mix and servicing, among other matters.
  - f) To provide leisure experience, a variety of amenities and services shall be available on-site or in close proximity to resorts. Such amenities and services must be available to unit owners, guests and visitors and are encouraged to be available to the general public where appropriate.
  - g) Given technological advances, on-site resort management may not be required. However, in general, some type of in-person management should be available, whether on-site, on a neighbouring property or within reasonable driving distance, in order to respond to complaints, deal with emergencies, and assist guests and visitors. The appropriate management arrangement will depend on the scale, location, on-site amenities, and desired experience of a resort.
  - h) To ensure a continued contribution to the local and regional economy, proponents shall demonstrate an ability for the resort to generate a revenue stream that sustains the commercial component of the resort such that it is viable, provides employment opportunities and sustains the provision of other goods and services by third parties in the area, all of which is intended to have a positive economic impact. Nothing in this policy is intended to require the provision of confidential financial information to the District, but rather the intent is that the positive economic impact in all areas shall be demonstrated.
  - i) Area Municipalities are encouraged to develop context-specific resort criteria building on the requirements of this Plan, potentially including a percentage of lands required for amenities and other common areas. Nothing in the Plan is intended to limit the ability of an Area Municipality in developing more restrictive or rigorous criteria either overall or on a site-specific basis as appropriate to ensure that resorts remain primarily as commercial operations.
- D6.5
- a) Resorts within an Urban Centre shall be serviced by **municipal water services** and **municipal sewer services**.
  - b) Resorts that are outside of an Urban Centre may be serviced by **private communal sewage services** and **private communal water services** or **private individual on-site sewage services** and **private individual on-site water services**.
  - c) Where **private communal services** are proposed, the proposal shall proceed by condominium description and the District will require as a condition of approval, the establishment of a reserve fund or other type of satisfactory financial guarantee to protect District interests and an enforceable agreement registered on title against each unit.
  - d) **Private communal services** shall be designed, operated and maintained in accordance with Provincial and/or District requirements and associated legislation, including annual reporting on the state of the works and financial securities.

- D6.6 Where a new resort in any designation is proposed, the following matters will be addressed to the satisfaction of the District and the Area Municipality through a comprehensive planning process (i.e. Area Municipal Official Plan and/or Zoning Bylaw Amendment):
- a) Scale, size and density of development;
  - b) Compatibility with surrounding uses;
  - c) Site characteristics;
  - d) Impact on water quality and shoreline protection;
  - e) Preservation of the natural and cultural environments, including impacts on identified natural or cultural features on or adjacent to the site;
  - f) Servicing arrangements; and
  - g) Access.
- D6.7
- a) It is a goal of this Plan to retain existing resorts wherever possible. However, it is recognized that there may be a desire to convert existing resorts to an alternative use for one or a combination of the reasons below:
    - i) There is limited interest to continue operating the resort and the prospects of new ownership and/or management are limited;
    - ii) Increasing regulatory requirements have had, or are likely to have, an impact on the ability of the resort to be viable;
    - iii) Significant enhancements to the resort are required to compete in the marketplace; and/or,
    - iv) Occupancy levels have been declining.
  - b) In a circumstance where an alternative use is proposed, the resort owner shall demonstrate that:
    - i) The existing use of the property as a resort is no longer viable as a commercial enterprise, with detailed reasons provided;
    - ii) The other uses that may be permitted as-of-right on the resort property are either not viable as a commercial enterprise and/or are not feasible from a technical perspective and/or not appropriate on the lands from a land use planning perspective;
    - iii) The enhancements required to make the resort commercially viable and/or which are required to ensure that the resort complies with all current regulations are not practical and/or are not feasible; and
    - iv) That the loss of the commercial land base will not negatively impact the critical mass of tourism infrastructure in the Area Municipality.
  - c) In addition to the above, it shall also be demonstrated that the proposed alternative use:
    - i) Is appropriate for the site;
    - ii) Is generally compatible with the scale and density of adjacent development;
    - iii) Is less impactful on adjacent land uses and the environment than the resort;
    - iv) and,
    - v) Will include, as a component of the redevelopment, enhancements to the natural heritage features and functions on the site and in the immediate area.
  - d) It is recognized that in some cases, resort properties are used as access points to other properties on a lake. In cases such as these, consideration shall be given to ensuring that these arrangements remain in place, if feasible. Any application for conversion will

generally require the provision of public access to the shoreline in some form, except where site conditions render such access unfeasible or where sufficient public access to the waterbody is deemed to exist in other locations.

- e) The District and/or Area Municipalities may identify resort commercial properties that are particularly important to the tourism inventory due to size, heritage value, public water access, limited tourist commercial land base in the area, or other reasons. Where such properties are identified, a third party land and business case assessment must be provided to meet the requirements above and may be peer reviewed.
- f) Should conversion to residential uses be proposed, such uses will generally not be reflective of the density afforded to resort commercial accommodations.
- D7 a) It is recognized that there are many other forms of accommodation and tourism supportive uses in the District and that a variety of accommodation types and other uses is desirable to continue attracting visitors to the District. In this regard, the following types of accommodation and tourism supportive uses shall also be permitted subject to Area Municipal policies that control their scale and location:
  - i) Hotels and motels;
  - ii) ii) Tent and trailer parks and campgrounds that are occupied on a seasonal basis only;
  - iii) Bed and breakfast establishments or rural inns that accommodate up to 10 rooms;
  - iv) Institutional camps and retreats;
  - v) Marinas;
  - vi) Attractions; and
  - vii) Other tourism supportive uses
- b) The tourism sector will be strengthened, enhanced, expanded and diversified by encouraging the upgrading and expansion of existing facilities or operations and the establishment of new uses. Growth and development in this sector will be based on the following principles:
  - i) Existing facilities should rejuvenate and expand their operations;
  - ii) Large land holdings, particularly those with water frontage will be encouraged to be maintained and redeveloped as appropriate and conversion to non-tourism uses will be discouraged;
  - iii) Facilities and services that support tourist commercial operations will be encouraged; and
  - iv) The quality of the cultural and natural heritage of Muskoka will be preserved.
- c) Efforts to make commercial tourism year round will be supported. The development of new attractions, facilities, services and events that enhance and complement the existing tourism base will be encouraged.

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

and Sustainability	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 The Waterfront section contains policies that address:
- Definition and function;
  - Character and Development principles;
  - Design Principles;
  - Access;
  - Services;
  - Permitted Uses;
  - Lot Sizes;
  - Residential Development Form (linear, backlot, cluster, family compound);
  - Commercial Development Form (tourist commercial, institutional camps, marinas, Existing contractor’s yard access, existing tent and trailer parks);
  - Special Policy Area policies; and
  - Lake Plans.

As these policies are extensive, rather than list them, they are provided through the following link to the [Official Plan](#).

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

- The Draft Muskoka Official Plan (May 2017) also projects a 2036 seasonal population of 6,700, an increase of 500 between 2016 and 2036. This growth will split between the Waterfront and the Hidden Valley Settlement Area. Given the physical nature of the Waterfront area and the intent of the related policies, low density growth will continue in this area.
- The draft MOP identifies commercial uses in the Economic Development Section, rather than in the Waterfront section. This means that these policies apply to all land use designations.
- The draft MOP provides Area Municipalities with the flexibility to establish to develop context-specific resort criteria building on the requirements of this Plan, potentially including a percentage of lands required for amenities and other common areas.

The draft MOP provides Area Municipalities with the flexibility to establish a mix of uses on a resort property outside of an Urban Centre through a zoning by-law or official plan amendment process. The purpose of the amendment would be to determine the appropriate percentage mix and servicing, among other matters.

- The draft MOP requires Area Municipalities to permit the following uses in the Waterfront:
  - i) Hotels and motels;
  - ii) Tent and trailer parks and campgrounds that are occupied on a seasonal basis only;
  - ii) Bed and breakfast establishments or rural inns that accommodate up to 10 rooms;
  - iv) Institutional camps and retreats;
  - v) Marinas;
  - vi) Attractions; and
  - vii) Other tourism supportive uses.
- The draft MOP does not permit secondary suites in the Waterfront.
- The draft MOP will require the Town Official Plan to include policies that address:
  - i) character of various waterfront areas and how each area should be planned;
  - ii) Waterfront landings and waterfront access points;
  - iii) Boat impact assessments;
  - iv) Private on-site individual water and sewage servicing and storm water management requirements;
  - v) Public access to lakes and rivers;
  - vi) Island development;
  - vii) Sleeping cabins;
  - viii) Boathouses and docks;
  - ix) Narrow waterbodies;
  - x) Slopes; and
  - xi) Social carrying capacity.
- The draft MOP also requires Area Municipal official plans to include policies that establish a variety of lot sizes and frontages that are reflective of environmental constraints.
- The Town official plan contains no policies to guide the development or redevelopment of islands.
- The policies addressing waterfront landings and access points is addressed as Contractor's Access in Section 8.9.4 (Marinas).
- Section 8.2 (Character and Development principles) provides a brief description of the physical character of this area and includes development principles policies which mimic policies in other sections (ie residential cluster and tourist commercial policies).
- Section 8.8.5 (Residential Compounds) permits additional dwellings subject to the Cluster Development policies of Section 8.8.4.2. Many of the requirements of Section 8.8.4.2 could likely not be met by most of

these situations. The Draft MOP indicates that new family compounds will only be permitted through an Area Municipal Official Plan amendment and where it is demonstrated that the dwellings are located in a manner which facilitates a future land division in accordance with the policies of this Plan and where each dwelling is serviced by private individual on-site sewer services and private individual on-site water services.

- New tent and trailer parks are currently not permitted by the Town Official Plan.
- A number of the site specific developments permitted by the Special Policy Area policies have proceeded and are zoned.
- Some of the Lake Plan policies are difficult to implement through a planning instrument.
- To ensure a similar character is maintained on lakes where jurisdiction is shared with the Township of Lake of Bays, consistent standards should be applied.

#### **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:

- The draft MOP identifies that new proposed resorts, or where a mix of residential and commercial uses is being proposed on a resort, must go through a comprehensive planning process (ZBA or OPA). To encourage economic development, the tests to guide the establishment of new resorts development should be contained in the Town official plan, with a requirement that these uses be established by way of rezoning.
- New policy to permit and guide the establishment of hotels and motels, tent and trailer parks and campgrounds that are occupied on a seasonal basis only, bed and breakfast establishments or rural inns that accommodate up to 10 rooms, retreats, attractions; and other tourism supportive uses will be required.
- Further clarification will be required respecting the intent behind addressing social carrying capacity.
- Policies to guide the development or redevelopment of islands are required.
- Policies addressing waterfront landings and access points are required.
- Clarification between the character and development policies is required.
- Clarification of the residential compound policies is required.
- Where development has proceeded, the Special Policy Area policies should be thoroughly reviewed to determine if they are still needed.

- The Lake Plan policies should be reviewed to ensure that those policies which can be implemented through a planning instrument are retained.
- In order to harmonize applicable policies and regulations on waterbodies with shared jurisdiction, adjacent municipal official plan approaches/policies should be reviewed to ensure a consistent approach. This could include shoreline activity area approaches, keeping policies that require one storey boathouses with no living quarters, a categorization of large, medium and small lakes, types of permitted accessory shoreline structures, etc.

**Additional Considerations:**

Upon review by the Official Plan Working Group and Planning Committee, the following item was identified as requiring further consideration:

- Classify lakes by size to recognize their different character. This could then provide a basis for lot sizes and permitted uses.