



Town of Huntsville
Municipal Information Guide &
Resource for the 2026 Municipal Election



**Huntsville Town Council:
Information Guide for the 2026 Municipal Election**

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Huntsville Town Council Information: Municipal Information Guide & Information Resources for the 2026 Municipal Election

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this guidebook is to:

- provide residents and visitors with an understanding of municipal operations, and the roles and responsibilities of the municipality;
- provide elected officials, departments and members of the public with information on the variety of services of the municipality; and

When community members understand the municipality's roles and services, they are more likely to engage meaningfully and help shape a community that thrives as a place to live, work and play.

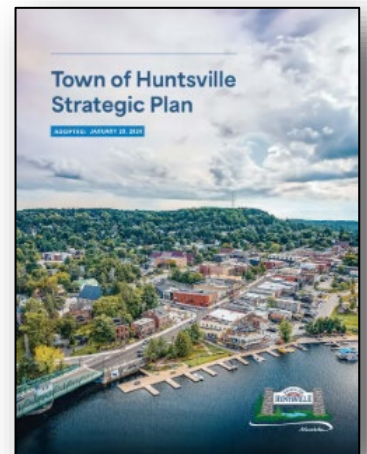


TOWN OF HUNTSVILLE - COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Town of Huntsville is located within the District of Muskoka. Huntsville is a vibrant community enriched with arts, culture, heritage, recreation and a stunning natural environment. The Town is home to a variety of community events, festivals and activities all year long making Huntsville a four season destination.

TOWN OF HUNTSVILLE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan was adopted by Council in January 2024. It establishes the community's highest priorities and a collective vision for the future. It outlines the Town's vision, mission, and values, strategic priorities (pillars), and foundational statement which guides Council and Town Staff in the development of budgets, operational plans and how we serve residents on a day-to-day basis. More information about the Strategic Plan and a copy of the Plan is available on the Town's website huntsville.ca/council-administration/plans-reports-and-studies/strategic-plan/.



GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITY

The Town of Huntsville operates within the two-tier local government system - the District Municipality of Muskoka being the upper-tier municipality and Huntsville being the lower-tier municipality. The Town functions under the authority of various Acts, but most notably the *Municipal Act, 2001*. This Act allows 'A lower-tier municipality and an upper-tier municipality to provide any service or thing that the municipality considers necessary or desirable for the public' (*Municipal Act, Section 11*)



Huntsville is provided with the authority to pass by-laws respecting the following matters:

- Governance structure of the municipality and its local boards
- Accountability and transparency of the municipality and its operations and of its local boards and their operations
- Financial management of the municipality and its local boards
- Public assets of the municipality acquired for the purpose of exercising its authority
- Economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality
- Health, safety and well-being of persons
- Services and things that the municipality is authorized to provide
- Protection of persons and property

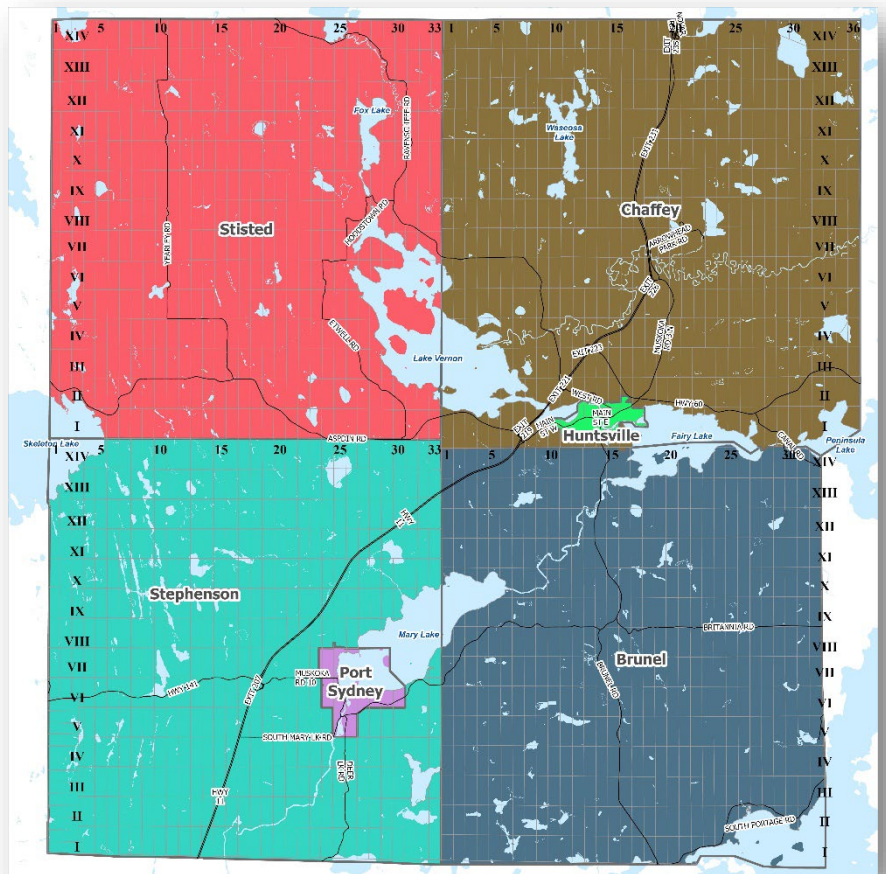
The municipality may also pass by-laws respecting matters within the following spheres of jurisdiction unless the upper-tier has assumed responsibility (*) or there may be a shared responsibility:

- Highways (including parking and traffic on roads within its geographical jurisdiction)
- Transportation systems
- Waste management*
- Public utilities (water, sewer)*
- Culture, parks, recreation and heritage
- Drainage and flood control (except storm sewers)
- Structures (fences and signs)
- Parking
- Animals
- Economic development services
- Business licensing

STRUCTURE

The Town is comprised of nine elected members of Council – the Mayor and three District and Town Councillors are elected at large and five Councillors are elected by Ward (2 Councillors are elected for Wards One and Two combined, and 2 Councillors are elected for Wards Three, Four and Five combined).

- **Ward One –**
Huntsville Ward
- **Ward Two –**
Chaffey Ward
- **Ward Three –**
Stisted Ward
- **Ward Four –**
Stephenson Ward
- **Ward Five –**
Port Sydney Ward
- **Ward Six –**
Brunel Ward



ROLE OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Role of the Mayor

The Mayor is the head of Council who is elected by all eligible electors. The duties of the Mayor are specified within the *Municipal Act* as well as other honorary duties:

- Is the Chief Executive Officer of the municipality (highest-ranking)
- Is the liaison and advocate for the Town with senior levels of government
- Determines the Committee structure of Council which is then adopted by Council
- Selects Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees for adoption by Council
- Attends and participates in many special events and public functions. Examples include official opening ceremonies, presentation of commemorative certificates etc.
- Hosts visiting dignitaries, such as government officials, special visitors and business/community leaders
- Speaks to a variety of groups and individuals about the Town of Huntsville
- Carries out the duties of the Mayor at Council

STRONG MAYOR POWERS

Effective May 1, 2025, the Mayor of the Town of Huntsville is granted additional Mayoral Powers and Duties under the Municipal Act, also known as Strong Mayor Powers. It is to provide for the implementation of key shared municipal-provincial priorities such as housing, transit, and infrastructure. The Mayor, as head of Council, has special powers and duties under Part VI.1 of the Municipal Act which fall into three broad categories:

- Legislative Powers – to veto by-laws, the requirement for council to consider a matter.
- Budget Duties – duty and responsibility to present a budget to council and to approve the budget.
- Administrative Powers:
 - To appoint or remove a Chief Administrative Officer;
 - To establish committees;
 - To change the organizational structure; and
 - Authority over employment matters.

The Mayor's special powers and duties under Part VI.1 of the Municipal Act are generally exercised through mayoral decisions. All mayoral decisions are required to be issued in writing and made public. Mayoral decisions are posted publicly on huntsville.ca/council-administration/engage-with-council/mayor-powers-and-decisions/.

DEPUTY MAYOR

It is prudent to establish the duties of the Deputy Mayor in the absence of the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor is chosen by the Mayor from the elected members of Council and appointed by By-law.

The Deputy Mayor cannot use Strong Mayor Powers in the absence of the Mayor.

WARD AND DISTRICT & TOWN COUNCILLORS

Ward

Based on the geographic nature of Huntsville, the Town is divided into 6 wards. Ward Councillors are elected by their ward constituents and represent the interests of the diverse areas. Although elected by wards, the role of all members includes:

- Consider the well-being and interest of the municipality
- Determine policy needs
- Determine services to be provided
- Ensure that administration practices and procedures are in place to implement the decisions of Council
- Maintain the financial integrity of the Town, providing stewardship of the public assets of the community

- Foster the current and future economic, social and environmental well being of the community
- Carry out the duties of Council as legislated by the province

District of Muskoka

Information throughout this guide regarding the District of Muskoka is provided by the District. For more information visit their website at: www.muskoka.on.ca.

As the Town of Huntsville is a member municipality of the District of Muskoka, Huntsville is entitled to provide four elected officials (including the Mayor) elected by the whole to sit at the District level as well as at the Huntsville Council.

DISTRICT OF MUSKOKA MEETING SCHEDULE

Muskoka District Council meets the third Monday of the month at 1:00 p.m. Committee meetings follow within the same week. There are also various ad hoc and special committees established from time-to-time as the need arises.

COMMITTEES

Members of Council sit on various Town committees and boards which each serve a different purpose. In addition, ad hoc committees and working groups may be established as directed by Council.

The current Committee Structure together with a sample meeting calendar are attached as appendix “A”. The structure will be considered and determined by the Mayor at the beginning of the new term of council. Changes to the structure may be made at the Mayor and Councils discretion. Committee commitments from members of Council may be expanded or reduced.

PROCEDURES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members of Council only have ONE vote. No one member of Council can make a decision separate from the group.

In accordance with Section 243 of the *Municipal Act*, all members of Council, regardless of their role on Council, have one vote on all issues. No one member of Council can make a decision separate from the group. It takes a majority of Council to direct actions to be taken or not to be taken.

The Mayor sets the Council and Committee Calendar at the beginning of each term. Unless otherwise specified, all meetings occur in the Council Chambers within Town Hall. Communication of meetings occurs through the municipal website (www.huntsville.ca). All agendas and minutes and associated documents (i.e. staff reports, by-laws, presentations etc.) are posted to the Town website for public access and viewing.

Council business is conducted formally and follows structured agenda to ensure accountability and transparency. The order of business for a regular meeting of Council is set out in the Procedure By-law.

All meetings are open to the public and the public is encouraged to attend and take part in their municipal government. As per Section 239 (2) of the *Municipal Act* there are a number of topics that may be exempted from open session and are therefore discussed during the closed session section of meetings.

Meetings are livestreamed to the Town website and Youtube when available.

Further details on the procedures of Council and Committees and rules of debate and motions can be found within the Procedural By-law. A copy can be obtained on the municipal website ([Procedural By-law](#)) or at the municipal office, upon request.



MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

A municipality is a corporation – a legal entity set up with jurisdiction over a defined geographic area, and limited by those powers provided by the provincial government. A municipality's key political role is to identify and respond to the needs and wishes of local citizens.

Town Council listens to the concerns and ideas of the residents, considers what is best for the whole of the municipality and then determines a core 'vision' and direction from which decisions are made.

Staff provides Council with professional advice on policy development and guidance in accordance with legislation, research and subject matter or operational expertise and experience.

WHAT IS COUNCIL'S ROLE AND COMMITMENT?

Council's role and commitment in the municipality involves both legal responsibilities and time/ethical obligations. Key commitments and responsibilities include:

- Representing the Public
- Policy and Decision-Making
- Time Commitment
- Financial Stewardship
- Decision-Making and Governance
- Ensuring Accountability and Transparency
- Community Leadership

Council determines policies and spending priorities aimed at community-building and the efficient, effective and accountable delivery of municipal services and they provide staff with the direction,

resources and tools needed to implement this direction. It is then the responsibility of Town staff to take actions on decisions made by Council and ensure that the services and programs meet those directed by Council.

ROLE OF STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A [comprehensive organizational chart](#) can be downloaded from the Town's website.

All Departments have a lead Director who oversee the duties and responsibilities of the Division. The Directors report directly to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) who oversees the administration of the organization as a whole. The CAO acquires her direction from the decisions of Council.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Municipal services stretch across a wide spectrum of responsibilities. Services provided within the different Divisions have a separate impact on the quality of life within the community.

Municipal Service Areas – Responsibilities and Staff Support

<u>Corporate Services</u>	<u>Development Services</u>	<u>Community Services</u>	<u>Operations and Protective Services</u>
Areas of Responsibilities: • Budget • Clerks & Governance • Communication & Marketing • Corporate Information • Customer Service • Economic Development • Finance • Information Technology • Insurance • Human Resources • Office of the CAO • Records Management	Areas of Responsibilities: • Appeals Committee • Building • By-law • Built Heritage • Housing • Planning • Property Standards • Short-Term Rentals	Areas of Responsibilities: • Algonquin Theatre • Arts • Culture • Facilities • Heritage (excluding built heritage) • Leisure • Recreation • Sales & Customer Service	Areas of Responsibilities: • Bridges • Cemeteries • Fire • Parks & Trails • Roads • Sidewalks • Transit • Storm Sewer

Staff Support: • Chief Administrative Officer • Director of Financial Services / Treasurer • Director of Legislative Services / Clerk • Director of Corporate and Community Strategy • Manager of Human Resources	Staff Support: • Director of Development Services	Staff Support: • Director of Community Services	Staff Support: • Director of Operations • Fire Chief

Corporate Services Division

Chief Administrative Officer

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) provides leadership to all Town employees who serve the residents, businesses and visitors of Huntsville. The CAO reports directly to Council and is responsible for overseeing the municipal operations to ensure that Council's priorities and strategic objectives are achieved.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department provides expertise and assistance to the Town, its elected officials, managers and employees in recruitment and selection, employee orientation, benefits and pension administration, payroll administration, disability management, training and development, employee and labour relations, health, safety and wellness, and employee policy development.

Finance

The Finance Department is responsible for the handling of the financial affairs of the Corporation. This includes: collecting of amounts owing to the Town, payment of expenses, providing property tax advice and ensuring property taxes are paid, maintaining accurate information, Coordinating capital and operating budgets; Providing timely reporting; Providing financial guidance for committee reports and management; and Providing risk management guidance for committee reports and management.

Legislative Services

Clerks: The Clerk's Department, provides administrative support to Council and the various committees to ensure all action taken by Council are recorded, communicated and managed. Beyond Council support, the team also maintains the corporate records including minutes, by-laws, resolutions and legal documents, vital statistics including civil marriage ceremonies, freedom of information requests, and accessibility program including the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Clerk, or designate, is legislated to perform specific tasks as set out by the *Municipal Act*. One of the biggest tasks is to oversee the municipal election in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act* which occurs once every four years.

Legal and Agreements: The Legal and Agreements Department is responsible for providing the review, coordination and/or maintenance of contracts and agreements to ensure compliance with Council direction, policies and procedures, as well as conducting the research and drafting of policies, and staff reports. The Legal and Agreements Coordinator works with staff across the Corporation to processes land transactions such as acquisitions, dispositions, closings, occupancies, and leases.

IT: The IT department oversees the corporation's information technology as well as the protection of data and ongoing improvements and updates to hardware, software and changing technology.

Data Driven Services: The Data Driven Services Department is responsible for the town's extensive GIS (geographic information system) program, including many interactive web maps, creating and managing the new Open Data Portal, data collection standards and data dissemination for citizens, Council and Staff. The department also administers the 911 Civic Addressing Program for the municipality.

Corporate and Community Strategy Division:

Marketing and Communications: The Marketing and Communications department oversees the corporation's communication and advertising needs to increase internal and external transparency, evoking civic pride and promoting the corporate identity and image across all assets.

Economic Development: The Economic Development Department provides a range of services to promote and support economic development (job creation, investment attraction, business retention, event support). Through this mandate, the department acts as the primary point of contact for entrepreneurs, businesses and community groups interested in operating within the Town

Operations Division:

Roads/Fleet Department: The Roads and Fleet Department is responsible for the maintenance and construction programs for municipal maintained roads and sidewalks within the Town. During the winter months, this department oversees the clearing of snow and ice on road and walkways. In the summer months, this department conducts construction. Other services include, streetlights, drainage, and liaison with the District of Muskoka for various joint public works services.

Parks and Cemeteries: The Parks and Cemeteries Department is responsible for cemeteries, parks and trails within the Town of Huntsville. Using a combination of full-time and seasonal staff the department creates and maintains outdoor spaces that our community and tourists use as well as enhance the quality of life for all that visit them

Huntsville Fire Department:

The Huntsville Fire Department consists of full time administration staff and part-time firefighters. The Department provides fire suppression, fire prevention and other emergency services to Huntsville and surrounding areas. Huntsville also provides administration services to Lake of Bays Fire Department. Other responsibilities include public education programs, fire code inspections and enforcement as well as many volunteer activities within the community. The focus of the Department is community safety through education and prevention.



On July 28, 2025, following the direction of the Lake of Bays Council, the Township of Lake of Bays provided the Town of Huntsville with notice of their decision to conclude the shared Fire Department Administration Service Agreement. This decision reflected an understanding that the two communities are diverging in their fire service needs, and initiated an 18-month transition period during which time both municipalities are preparing to operate independent fire departments tailored to their community.

Community Services

Algonquin Theatre: Algonquin Theatre is part of the Huntsville Civic Centre, in the heart of downtown Huntsville and has been host to a wide variety of plays, musical performances, meetings, videos, presentations and school groups. The theatre has offered outstanding performances from comedians to orchestras, from elementary school plays to musicians of international acclaim.



Recreation Culture and Heritage Services: The Community Services' goal includes a commitment to ensuring services and initiatives that encourage healthy active community and enhance quality of life for residents are provided. Community Services is committed to enhancing the quality of life for the community by ensuring age-friendly, accessible and inclusive recreation and leisure opportunities for all residents, by providing a range of social, cultural and recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities. The Town of Huntsville is also actively working to be recognized as a leading creative community in Ontario by supporting a wide range of

arts, culture and heritage growth and development opportunities – and experiences. Current programming can be found on the Town’s website: [Recreation & Culture | Town of Huntsville](#)



Facilities, Sales and Customer Service (CSC): Is responsible for the main customer service desk located in the Canada Summit Centre. The Customer Service Team looks after the pool and the arenas’ customers ensuring payments and inquiries are handled for all activities, memberships, drop in classes, day camp, PA days camp, adult programs and youth programs. Customer Service also sells bus passes and take payments for Bylaw infractions. The Customer Service team also manages the recreation booking software, Perfect Mind. In addition the

Sales and Customer Service team is responsible for booking all town facilities

Special Event Advisory Team (S.E.A.T.): The Sales and Customer Service Team is also responsible for the lead on the S.E.A.T. team that oversees all events hosted in a town facility. This includes all outdoor events and festivals and includes road closures. This team works closely with the various stakeholders to ensure events are approved and managed in a safe and responsible manner. The S.E.A.T. teams stakeholders are: Fire Department, OPP, EMS, Public Works, Parks, Bylaw, District of Muskoka, MTO and Lake of Bays Township.

Development Services

Building Services: The goal of the Building division is to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the buildings and occupied structures within the Town. This department administers building permits and conducts inspections for new construction, demolition, renovations, change of use of buildings and sewage disposal systems. Standards of building construction, requirements for applications, proper drawings and inspections are set by the Ontario Building Code Act with the accompanying Act providing authority for the inspectors.

By-law Services: The By-law division promotes safe and healthy communities for all residents and visitors through the administration and enforcement of municipal by-laws. All residents are encouraged to be responsible and respectful of their neighbours and fellow community members. While enforcing municipal by-laws, this department also assists other departments including, special events, fire, planning, building and other public sector agencies such as the OPP and the OSPCA.

Planning: The Planning Department is responsible for the review, development and implementation of land use policies and by-laws including the Town’s Official Plan. This department reviews land development applications including official plan amendments, plans of subdivisions, condominium descriptions, [community planning permits](#), community planning permit by-law amendments, consents, and deeming by-laws. The department advises and promotes the development of communities which are sustainable and enhance the quality of life for the entire Town.

Climate Action Strategy: The Climate Action Strategist supports the coordination, implementation, and execution of projects within action item timelines and provides support with respect to Council's commitment toward climate adaptation and mitigation plans. The Huntsville Town Council declared a climate emergency on June 28, 2021, and has been working with the District of Muskoka and Area Municipalities to meet the Federal emission targets of at least 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. [Climate Change and Adaptation Plan | Town of Huntsville](#)

Huntsville Public Library



Huntsville Public Library is a vital centre to collaborate, connect and explore the world in which we live. The Library Board and Staff seek to provide accessible services, programs, collections and spaces designed to inspire and enrich the community of users of all ages. While the Town funds the majority of the costs of library services, it operates under the jurisdiction of the Public Libraries Act and has a Board of Directors appointed by Council. One member of Council also sits on this Board.

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

The Town owns and operates a number of types of facilities including:



Canada Summit Centre: Is a year-round multipurpose venue including the Don Lough arena with an Olympic sized ice surface, a capacity of 2200 with accessible seating and standing room and an indoor walking track that is open to the public free of charge. The Canada Summit Centre also features a second arena, the Jack Bionda arena with a maximum capacity of 1000 people including standing room and accessible seating. The Centennial Pool is also located in the Canada Summit

Centre that features 3 pools; the large 25 metre 6 lanes pool, a small pool with gradual levels and a spa pool/hot tub.

Active Living Centre: Is adjacent to the Canada Summit Centre and has over 14,000 square feet of unique space for special events and functions. This location offers numerous opportunities for meetings, conference, team building, banquets, seminars, weddings, receptions, celebrations of life and more.

Aspdin Community, Port Sydney and Utterson/Stephenson Halls: are available for meetings, weddings, receptions, dances, programs, classes, meetings and community events.

Athletic Fields & Town Parks: Huntsville's outstanding green space, waterfront parks, trails and playgrounds offer ideal locations throughout town for quiet relaxation and events. All parks and sports fields are managed by the Sales and Customer Service team. This includes Conroy Park, McCulley Robertson Park and more than 40 Town parks that include River Mill Park, Avery Beach, Hutcheson Beach, Indian Landing and Port Sydney Beach.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

To assist with decision making, Council must also consider governing laws, municipal policies and municipal by-laws. Some of the applicable guiding documents include:

- [Municipal Act](#)
- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
- [Community Planning Permit By-law](#)
- [Municipal Conflict of Interest Act](#)
- [Planning Act](#)
- [Building Code Act](#)
- [Fire Protection and Prevention Act](#)
- [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#)