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Town of Huntsville ~ Parks Master Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The all-encompassing goal of this parks master planning process is to set policy that will guide the responsible and orderly development and use of municipal parkland within the physical boundaries of the Corporation of the Town of Huntsville, for the benefit of the community now and into the future.

Huntsville recognizes the importance of providing a high quality of life for its residents and visitors. Both economic and environmental health must be balanced to create a community that can grow responsibly while providing for the needs of its residents. Expectations for the planning, development and ongoing maintenance of a variety of types of public green spaces are also ever increasing.



Fairy Lake from Lion's Lookout



McCulley Robertson Sports Complex

This Executive Summary encapsulates the policy direction and plan implementation as further detailed in the body of the Town of Huntsville, Parks Master Plan document. The policies are the result of a year long public planning exercise involving the Town's Parks & Trails Advisory Committee, and an ad hoc email working group, a number of whom bring direct parks' experience and expertise to this exercise and some of whom have been directly involved in the Town's Official Plan review as well. Plenty of opportunity has been provided for public input with cooperation from the local media and the Town's website. The Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities as well as a number of private interest groups and individuals provided invaluable suggestions and opinions on the plan's proposed policies.

Some of the policies are a direct result of the Official Plan review and Strategic Economic Development Plan, others reflect existing longstanding direction, and the remaining policies are new ideas that have been discussed at length during this process.

The Implementation and Review section of the plan identifies additional work that needs to be done, some on an ongoing basis, all allowing for periodic review.



Parks Master Plan Policies and Implementation Sections 5.0 & 6.0

This section of the Executive Summary provides a condensed list of the policies identical to those found in the body of the plan. This allows the Executive Summary to act as a standalone document that can more easily be distributed publicly. The body of the plan then takes Section 5.0 and addresses each policy statement briefly expounding on the reasoning that led to its creation in order to provide a better understanding of why it has been included.

Parks Master Plan Section 5.0 Municipal Parkland Policies

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 To preserve Huntsville's heritage and protect our natural environment, while developing a modern, vibrant and competitive community.
- 5.1.2 To foster an environment that encourages and enhances recreational and cultural growth.
- 5.1.3 Lakes, rivers and Crown lands are public resources that provide year round leisure and recreational opportunities to both residents and visitors and enhance quality of life.
- 5.1.4 Improved access to water as a public resource is a high priority.
- 5.1.5 A database inventory of Town-owned parkland shall be maintained within the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS).
- 5.1.6 Parkland information on the amenities of each piece of developed parkland shall be made available on the Town's GIS and website, ensuring an accessible format option, and updated as required.
- 5.1.7 Parkland shall be accurately identified both by survey and on the ground as resources permit. Until such a time as this is accomplished, a disclaimer shall be given whenever disseminating information about its location, particularly in relation to water access points.
- 5.1.8 Accessibility shall be identified as a key factor to be considered in every stage of the parkland process.
- 5.1.9 Acquisition and development priorities on waterfront should be linked to lake capacity guidelines, as set by the District Municipality of Muskoka.



View of Town Dock



Huntsville from Lion's Lookout

5.2 Acquisition

- 5.2.1 The Town shall undertake initiatives to increase the amount of land that is in public ownership for conservation purposes.
- 5.2.2 Identification of the best examples of the range of characteristic ecosystems and unique life and earth science features, present in the Town on public and private lands, should be completed in order to consider these features during acquisition.
- 5.2.3 Road allowances leading to water shall be retained in public ownership whether or not they have potential for access to the water, and shall remain as part of the open space/non development land base around the lake, except where alternate access is provided by an applicant to the satisfaction of the Town.
- 5.2.4 Existing portages shall be protected from encroachment by other land uses, and may be acquired by the Town or secured through a land trust or conservation easement.
- 5.2.5 In order to increase the amount of public parkland or conservation lands around a lake, the Town will acquire waterfront land where appropriate as the parkland dedication rather than requiring a cash-in-lieu contribution through the consent and subdivision approval process. This would be particularly applicable where the property is located immediately adjacent to an existing public access to water, such as a road allowance. As an alternative to this requirement, particularly in more remote areas or where limited parcels would be created, consideration may be given by the Town to taking a cash-in-lieu contribution and/or a lakefront conservation easement.
- 5.2.6 Accessibility considerations of both the terrain and the location of parkland being considered for acquisition shall be addressed in the decision-making process.



Surveying the Trans Canada Trail at KWH



Port Sydney public dock

5.3 Use

- 5.3.1 A balance shall be maintained between recreational uses, both passive and active, and preservation of natural features, particularly in the waterfront.
- 5.3.2 Active unorganized play spaces with safe, child friendly play structures, containing accessible components in their designs, will be located and maintained in the urban core parks.

- 5.3.3 Where a neighbourhood or other interest group want to develop a play structure in their neighbourhood park or in a specific community park, they must do so in a safe manner with the approval of the Town.
- 5.3.4 While on public parkland people shall have regard for others, exercise appropriate public behaviour, and have respect for the property itself.
- 5.3.5 With respect to event usage of public parkland, differentiation shall be made between commercial, private and community uses in the User Fee By-law (local fundraisers, community festivals...).
- 5.3.6 An analysis of the ongoing costs of providing a park for event usage shall be undertaken, including the cost of wear and tear, and increased levels of maintenance services.
- 5.3.7 Additional signage and professional marketing materials, meeting accessibility guidelines, need to be developed for event parks.



Dragon Boat Festival at Avery Beach Park

- 5.3.8 Pets in parkland shall be restrained or under other physical control of the owner or handler, except as otherwise exempted by by-law.
- 5.3.9 Pet owners or handlers shall be responsible for cleaning up after their pets.
- 5.3.10 Dogs shall have restricted access to beaches and water access points as designated specifically in the Parkland By-law. These areas shall be appropriately signed.
- 5.3.11 Dogs shall be allowed in parkland not specifically signed to restrict their access, subject to 5.3.8 – 5.3.10.
- 5.3.12 An opportunity for a dock lease, as further detailed in the Town's Dock Policy, shall be offered to property owners, with existing docks, that are immediately adjacent a public road that runs between their property and the water where there is no intervening private land, for a set yearly amount, at locations approved by the Town. The location may not necessarily be immediately in front of the leaseholder's property. The fee associated with the lease will be set in the Town's User Fee By-law and amended from time to time.
- 5.3.13 Where private docks currently exist on public lands and the existing dock owners do not want to exercise the lease option, notice shall be given either to remove the dock or have the Town take over the responsibility for it.
- 5.3.14 Owners with a legal dock lease, in good standing, shall have exclusive use of their dock and sign it appropriately.

- 5.3.15 In situations where public access to the water is affected by private dock leases a specific public access point will be designated and signed appropriately in the area, if the demand for it exists and it is safe to do so.
- 5.3.16 Communication shall occur between internal Town departments at the application stage notifying other departments when development applications such as entrance or driveway permits abut an existing trail system.
- 5.3.17 The Town's GIS shall be used to identify compatibility issues resulting from mixed uses on or adjacent to municipal parkland.

5.4 Development

- 5.4.1 Continued development of our trails, parks and waterfront is an important component of our strategic vision.
- 5.4.2 Priorities shall be established for the development of acquired parkland and reviewed on an annual basis as part of the annual budget process.
- 5.4.3 A written parkland development plan shall be prepared and approved prior to proceeding with the development of a specific parkland parcel(s).
- 5.4.4 Each parkland development plan shall include the following components:
- a needs analysis/statement;
 - assessment of compatibility with adjacent existing or zoned uses;
 - topography/landscape;
 - soils (or lack thereof);
 - services and location of same;
 - shoreline characteristics, including water depth, etc... as applicable;
 - a site plan involving an inclusive range of users (e.g. representation from AACPD and other affected users) and universal design and signage where possible;
 - a landscape plan encouraging the use of native plants and maintenance of shoreline vegetation where possible;
 - dark sky friendly lighting, except as exempted by the current Town of Huntsville Dark Sky Friendly Guidelines relating specifically to sports' fields;
 - a capital budget; and,
 - an operating / long term maintenance budget.



- 5.4.5 Special regard shall be given to the use of low maintenance materials in the design and development of parkland.
- 5.4.6 Accessibility considerations will be addressed in the development of new water access points, which will occur in conjunction with the assessment of overall parkland development priorities.
- 5.4.7 The ease of accessibility of parkland shall be identified on maps, the website, pamphlets and signage with a suitable logo.
- 5.4.8 Signage shall be designed, located and erected in a manner that facilitates interpretation by parkland users. In accessible parkland areas, signage shall be designed, located and erected in a manner that facilitates interpretation for those with disabilities.
- 5.4.9 In accessible parkland areas, benches and other parkland structures, trail surface materials and parking options shall be designed and located as to more easily accommodate those with physical mobility difficulties (e.g. increased frequency of resting places, arms on benches and bench height minimums of 17", use of granite tailings as opposed to wood chips or loose stone). Less accessible designs and locations may be offered as alternatives to the accessible situations.
- 5.4.10 Volunteers are encouraged to come forward and assist with the planning, development and ongoing maintenance of parkland.
- 5.4.11 Municipal docks shall be constructed barrier free in physically accessible locations where physically and financially feasible and if already built be made entirely accessible if significantly renovated, again if physically and financially feasible. It is recognized that in some locations, this will not be a realistic objective.



Town Dock from historic Swing Bridge



Floating trail on Hunter's Bay



5.5 Maintenance Priorities and Level of Service

- 5.5.1 Formal service standards guidelines for the maintenance of parkland shall be established.
- 5.5.2 Future ongoing maintenance of developed trails and waterfront parkland is a priority.
- 5.5.3 A higher level of maintenance and service shall be maintained in the urban and community waterfront parkland areas than in rural parkland.
- 5.5.4 Site contractual service provision shall be explored as a cost-effective option for maintenance.
- 5.5.5 No form of pesticide shall be used in the maintenance and operation of parkland, without consent of Council.



Parks Master Plan Section 6.0 Implementation and Review

This Plan represents the end of a process and the beginning of a number of steps required for its implementation. The Plan itself provides clear policy direction to assist decision-making by various committees, staff and Council.

The additional associated policies and by-laws discussed in this section need to either be completed or, reviewed and amended, to reflect any policy change that has occurred as a result of this public planning process. As such they will always remain stand-alone policies to allow for review and updating on a more frequent basis than the process required to revisit and amend the entire Parks Master Plan. The Plan itself should be updated every five years, on a schedule similar to the Official Plan review, in order to stay in line with broader-based community direction should it change substantially for any reason.

6.1 Parkland By-law

A by-law dealing with the specific “does and don’ts” respecting municipal parkland needs to be passed as the main implementation tool falling out of this master plan process, similar to how the Zoning By-law implements the land use policies of the Official Plan as a development control tool.

The option exists for the following policies 6.2 – 6.4 to be contained within this by-law, as they relate specifically to parkland. If this course of action is taken then the appropriate repeals and amendments to the documents that pre-date this by-law must also follow suit.

6.2 Amendment to Animal Control By-law 2000-40, as amended

A further amendment to the existing Animal Control By-law is necessary to reflect the need to establish specific and clear direction on where dogs are allowed as well as where they are not.

Emphasis also needs to be made regarding the responsibilities of pet owners and what exact behaviour is expected when they take their pets onto municipal parkland



Kelly playing ball



6.3 Parkland Event Usage

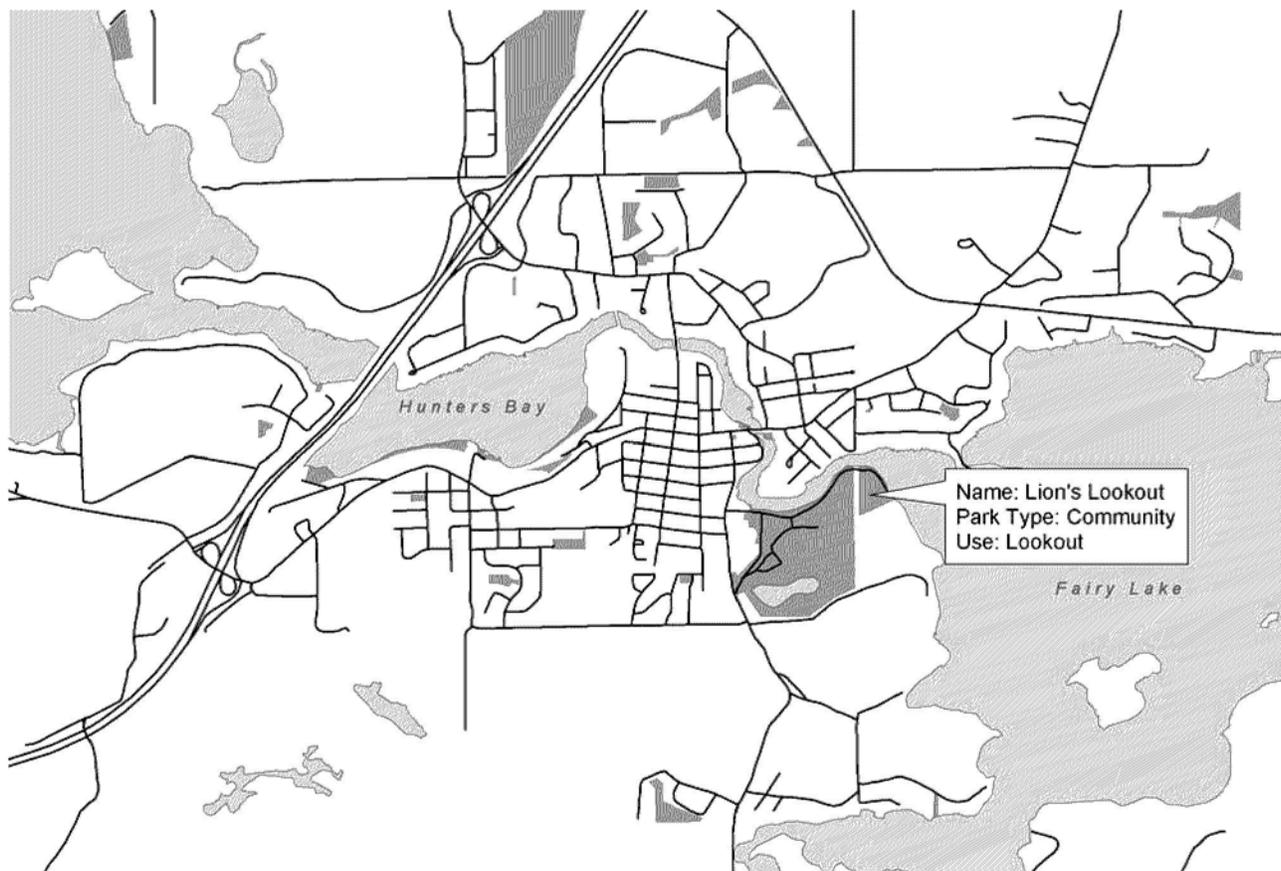
This policy needs to be updated as the existing policy is put to the test over the next few years. The Committee responsible for parkland also needs to recommend the associated fee for the different types of events and review it annually.

6.4 Docks Policy

This specific policy has recently been amended to reflect the policies in this Master Plan.

6.5 Parks Inventory and GIS

The municipal parkland inventory is married to the Town's GIS in order for parkland information to be available to all internal and external clients as required. An information page(s) for each developed piece of parkland should be viewable on the Town's website (www.huntsville.ca) by clicking on a map or typing in the name of the parkland (e.g. Trans Canada Trail, Skeleton Lake...). This inventory database will be updated on a regular basis through cooperation between the Parks & GIS Departments.



Example of Geographic Information System at work



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Goals and Objectives

The all-encompassing goal of this master planning process is to set policy that will guide the responsible and orderly development and use of municipal parkland within the physical boundaries of the Corporation of the Town of Huntsville, for the benefit of the community now and into the future.

Huntsville recognizes the importance of providing a high quality of life for its residents and visitors. Both economic and environmental health must be balanced to create a community that can grow responsibly while providing for the needs of its residents. Expectations for the planning, development and ongoing maintenance of a variety of types of public green spaces are also ever increasing.

Huntsville's Strategic Economic Development Plan, developed by Council with assistance from a number of volunteer committees in 2002, sets a strategic community-wide vision for trails, parks & waterfront development with particular emphasis on the downtown urban core of Huntsville. The Huntsville Official Plan provides broad brush land use policy direction for private and municipal lands within the municipality. The community-based objectives laid out in these two documents set the stage for the establishment of the more specific policies laid out in this Parks Master Plan. The policies will assist present and future councils and committees with their decision-making process as it applies to municipal parkland issues as they arise.



Parkland: Community and individual enjoyment



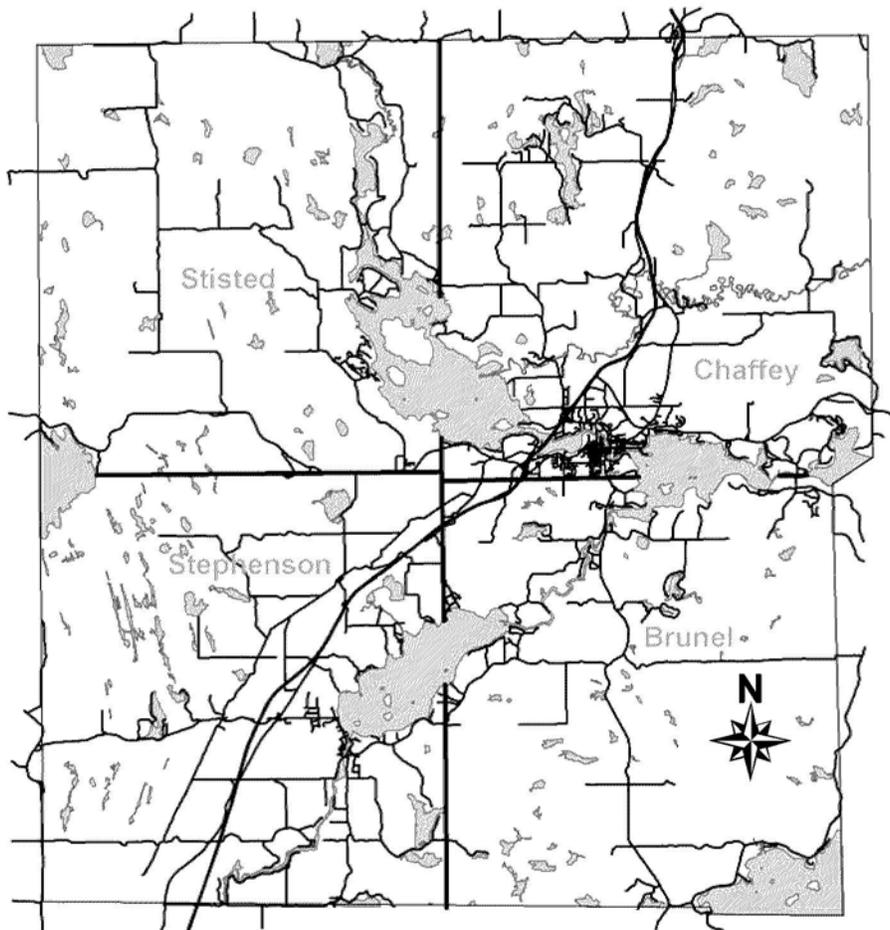


2.0 Context

2.1 Overview of the Town of Huntsville

Huntsville is a thriving municipality of approximately 18,000 permanent residents covering an area of close to 70,000 hectares. It is made up of the geographic townships of Brunel, Chaffey, Stephenson and Stisted. These townships, encompassing the more urban communities of Huntsville, Port Sydney, Utterson, and the south end of Novar, amalgamated into the current structure in 1971. The historic community nodes are surrounded by large rural areas of forest, wetlands and around 144 lakes, as well as Hidden Valley, a newer resort community. With Arrowhead Provincial Park falling within the municipal boundary and world-famous Algonquin Provincial Park close by, Huntsville is well known as a nature, recreation and resort destination.

It also remains the fastest growing community in Muskoka, resulting in an associated increase in the expectations for the planning, development and ongoing maintenance of a variety of types of public green spaces most often referred to generally as parkland.



Town of Huntsville, showing the four geographic townships with Hwy 11 intersecting it from southwest to northeast



The following excerpts describing Huntsville's natural environment are taken directly from the Official Plan Issue Paper entitled, "Open Space and Recreation"

"The natural vegetative cover for most of the Huntsville area is forest. Where present, it improves the microclimate and exercises a major balancing effect upon the water quality, diminishing erosion, sedimentation, flood and drought. The scenic role and recreational potential of woodlands is apparent, as is their provision of a habitat for game. In addition, the forest is a low-maintenance, self-perpetuating landscape. Forests can be employed for timber production, water management, wildlife habitats, as airsheds, recreation or for any combination of these uses."

"Open waters and rivers also characterize the natural spaces of Huntsville. There are many recreational opportunities on the waters, and canoeing and kayaking and other self-propelled boating activities are especially popular on the longer rivers including the Muskoka and the Big East. In particular, the Big East River Environmental Area is a significant open space feature and is also now a water-based provincial park."

2.2 Trends and Benefits

Demographic trends indicate that the general population is much more conscious of their health than previous generations. The decrease in the number of adult smokers; the increase in the number of participants in health and fitness clubs, of lap swimming, of cross-country skiing, in sports clubs, in events like the popular Muskoka Triathlon, etc.; the increase in the number of people out walking and running in the streets for their recreation; are all clear indicators that people are getting serious about their health and fitness.

Exercise is cited as a preventative measure for almost every known life-threatening disease. People are retiring earlier and living longer and, therefore, have much more time to devote to recreational activities. Many of these people are retiring to Muskoka for quality of life reasons.

This growth in the aging population results in an associated growth in the popularity of lower impact activities like walking, cross-country skiing, hiking, etc., as compared to competitive sports. Walking has become among the top 3 recreational activities in Canada and is often the exercise recommended in medical journals, fitness magazines and so on for all people wishing to enhance their health.

As a result of these trends and considering the fact that many rural roads and urban streets were not designed with sidewalks, people have been forced to walk on the streets and roadways around their homes. The need for new trail and park development has become clear as these trends have grown more apparent. As well, it is indicative of a greater need for the use of universal design during the development planning stages.

Feedback during the planning process has also revealed concerns about the quality of the active unorganized play spaces for younger children and youth in this growing community

with associated up-to-date equipment. With the focus of demographic trends being placed on active living and recent concerns being raised over obesity in children, it is important not to neglect these important sectors of the population. Recent initiatives brought forward by parents and community groups for a youth park development and an upgrade of playground structures reinforce and clarify the needs in this area of parkland development.

By providing active living opportunities and areas for all ages, the Town is contributing to a healthy lifestyle that will pay benefits in a healthier, fitter population; lower incidence of disease and subsequently decreased medical costs; decreased automobile traffic and parking problems; and, an increase in the number of amenities for residents and tourists alike.



Dual Action Sport's Camp fun in the park and offshore

Economically, a well established trails and park system is much more attractive to tourists who are seeking this quality of life in the places in which they vacation. Vacation planners are reporting an increase in the demand for active vacation opportunities as compared to more passive, lying-on-the-beach vacations. This should result in a longer tourist season, as these activities are still very popular during the traditional tourist shoulder season particularly with Huntsville's fall colors. An increase in the number of amenities in the area should make the area even more attractive to new target populations and also result in longer stays per visit. This results in increased demand for existing services; demands for new services; increased opportunities for entrepreneurial activities; increased employment opportunities (both direct and indirect); increased attractiveness of the community for both individuals and industries seeking a community in which to locate; and increased property values.

2.3 Definition of Parkland

For the purposes of this plan, "parkland" is defined as:

- a) Municipally-owned land, generally used for open space or outdoor recreational purposes, exclusive of lands being managed for a specifically different public use under the Town's or another's jurisdiction (i.e. – recreational or other municipal facilities (buildings), roads, highways, boulevards, utility corridors, Crown land, Provincial Parks)



- b) Public trails (a form of linear parks) including public trails over private lands by legal easement/right-of-way for such purpose
- c) Land dedicated to the municipality for use as parkland, whether by donation or through the Planning Act (parkland dedication) but not necessarily zoned or developed as parkland at present.
- d) Unopened Road allowances leading to water
- e) Road / Shore road allowances where a traveled municipal road runs within it and provides public access to the water

2.4 Parameters of the Parks Master Plan

The Parks Master Plan is a land use plan used as a guide for the ongoing acquisition, development, use, disposition and maintenance of municipal parkland. It is confined to municipal parkland, as defined for the purposes of this plan in Section 2.3, within the geographic municipal boundaries of the Town of Huntsville.

The Plan sets out criteria for prioritizing the expenditure of development dollars on new and existing parkland, general maintenance standards for each category, and the process for the plans ongoing monitoring and review.

It identifies and addresses specific, important community parkland issues and options arising from the:

- Huntsville Official Plan
- Huntsville Strategic Economic Development Plan, and
- the Parks Master Plan process

Associated with the Plan is an evolving inventory of municipal parkland with associated mapping, including inventory sheets for each parkland location, denoting critical features, (i.e. assessment roll number, civic address, zoning, key map, digital photo(s), locally/provincially significant features, including natural and built, and so on).

The Plan does not include detailed natural or built heritage inventories or development plans for specific parks/parkland.

2.5 Parkland Classifications

For the purpose of this plan, municipal parkland is classified first by the significance of the parkland and then secondly by the specific type of parkland based on use. Continuing the descending order of National and Provincial classifications, parks at the municipal level can then be divided into the following categories:

- 2.5.1 Community Parks** are generally larger blocks of parkland that experience a broader community-wide use on a regular basis. In other words, their primary use is not necessarily by those who reside in the immediate neighborhood of the park. As a result they require amenities such as parking and often washroom



facilities in order to accommodate their users. They can include sports fields, vistas, trails, playgrounds, beaches, boat launches, cultural and heritage spaces, squares, etc... Some of the larger Community Parks are sub-divided into smaller nodes linked by linear parkland (trails) or internal roads. Grouping in this manner allows for a more comprehensive and cohesive management plan to be prepared for each large block.

2.5.2 Neighborhood Parks are generally smaller in nature and are used primarily by residents in the immediate area surrounding the park. They are extremely important when considering draft plans of subdivision and internal linear linkages. Not being restricted in their use, parking should still be planned where possible. Neighbourhood volunteers are encouraged to become active partners in the development and ongoing maintenance of their parkland.

2.5.3 Naturalized Areas are areas that are to be kept in a natural state (Naturalized Parkland (NP) Storm Water Management (SWM) or Environmentally Protected (EP)). They may or may not be accessible to the public for recreational purposes and are often combined with storm water management areas, or environmentally protected species areas, such as a grove of protected trees. These areas may receive minimal maintenance, usually risk management based.

2.5.4 Other municipal parkland may include but not be limited to, lands that are:

- currently undesignated as community or neighborhood parkland;
- in draft plan stage, which means they are zoned but not yet legally created through a registered plan;
- lots or blocks on a registered plan but have not yet been transferred into municipal ownership.

3.0 Background

3.1 Overview of the History of Parkland Planning

A Master Plan for Parks and Recreation was originally undertaken by consultants Marshall, Macklin and Monaghan in 1981. As a result of this exercise, a complete inventory of the Town's municipal lands was carried out and certain of those lands were declared surplus and sold by public auction.

The Plan at that time recognized that this vacant land was one of the Town's "greatest resources". It also commented, "The present lack of a downtown public park suited to a variety of activities and users is seen as a fairly serious deficiency". A Land Surplus Committee was created by Council to review the land inventory and particular interest was shown through the public review process to improving current waterfront access and creating more. According to the Land Surplus Committee Report to Council, dated April 26, 1982, "the Planning Committee had considerable discussion about the sale, or non-sale, of any property on waterfront." The Land Surplus Committee, however, felt that "adequate lake access is provided in the town for the coming years and the lakeshore listed" (at their



recommendation) “should be sold.” “It seems improper to put a moratorium on the sale of all lakeshore property. Some properties would serve the community better if they were in private hands”. The consultants, after undertaking a quick appraisal of the surplus lands commented, “It can be readily seen that municipal funds raised through the sale of municipal lands could go a long way towards financing desired recreational and cultural facilities and programs.”

In 1986 the Town undertook a comprehensive Official Land Use Plan (OP) for the Town, subsequently implemented by an updated Zoning By-law. These documents outline the land uses permitted on parkland or Open Space as it is officially referred to. The policies have recently been reviewed and a newly updated, amended Official Plan is now in its final draft stages. The OP policies, as proposed, are reflected in this master plan.

The Lakefront Planning Strategy completed in 1991 by M.M.Dillon, identified the importance of the acquisition of urban core waterfront lands on Hunter’s Bay. As a result of this study and the support of Council, an emphasis was placed on the acquisition of these waterfront lands, or public easements over them, which has enabled the construction of the Trans Canada Trail – Hunter’s Bay section with the associated park nodes of Avery Beach & Boat Launch, KWH parkette and Orchard Park.

In 1996, a Huntsville High School class presented a Parks Planning Review to the Town’s Culture, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. This exercise led to a more comprehensive Parks Planning Report presented by the Board to Council in April 1997. The report included specific recommendations surrounding “the development of waterfront parks, linear park systems and neighbourhood/community parks as priorities in the area of parkland development and acquisition.” Through this report, recommendations for consideration during the Official Plan review process were made on policies respecting the “development criteria and review process” and “Future Parkland Dedication criteria and process”, surplus lands review.

Shortly thereafter, a draft Parks By-law was proposed but never ratified, in order to provide direction to staff with respect to enforcement regarding park usage. A new Parks By-law shall be developed and approved based on the policies of this Master Plan.



Huntsville portion of the Trans Canada Trail



3.2 Municipal Parkland Inventory and Geographic Information System (GIS)

There are presently 69 parcels or combination of parcels of municipally owned land designated Open Space (O1) within the Town's boundaries. Approximately half have been developed as parks while the rest remain undeveloped at this time. There are also a number of public trail easements and numerous road allowances that lead to water providing public access. Some of these are traditional access points while others have remained inaccessible either due to topographic constraints or by being land or water locked. The majority have never been surveyed and are occasionally the cause of trespass issues with adjacent landowners as back lot neighbours attempt to access the water. The road allowances that lead to water are generally not separately delineated from the rest of the road allowance, traveled or not.

For the purpose of the inventory, parkland is further divided into the categories listed below following from Section 2.4, Parkland Classifications.

- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Naturalized Areas (Naturalized Parkland (NP) Storm Water Management (SWM) or Environmentally Protected (EP))
- Beds and Boulevards (not associated with a specific park but Town-owned and maintained)
- Other (Currently Undeveloped / Currently Undesignated / Draft Plans / Not Yet Conveyed)

Beds and boulevards that are not part of an existing parkland parcel are included in this inventory as they are developed. They are often situated on a sidewalk, boulevard, or adjacent a municipal building or parking lot. In order to assign the responsibility of the ongoing maintenance of these landscaped areas, it is important that they are identified, tracked and included in any area maintenance plan.



Town Hall beds



Centennial Park



In the early '90s, the Town's Planning Department initiated digital mapping of all the land use zoning maps forming the basis for a Geographic Information System (GIS). As a result of the growth of the associated database information system, that can be linked digitally to mapping, one can easily locate all municipally-owned parcels of land that are specifically zoned Open Space (O1) for example.

Information stored in separate databases can be linked to specific properties by a common tag. Huntsville uses the unique parcel attribute of the property assessment roll number to accomplish this link. Once the data regarding any number of property-related matters is entered into a set of databases, it can be readily accessed in a variety of templates created internally by the GIS Department. Very specific information can be mapped or printed and various levels of security can be applied as control measures.

For the purposes of this plan, an up-to-date inventory has been produced and templates created that allow internal and external access to parkland information. In other words, it will allow the public to point and click on a computer map location and have the parkland information appear in a user-friendly format or conversely, it will allow you to locate specific types of parkland on a map, water access points being one example.

Because the inventory is a constantly evolving entity of an internal database system, it is not contained within the plan itself. It exists as background information and ancillary documents can easily be created as required for public information or staff planning purposes. This allows the associated databases to be updated as new information becomes available.



Skeleton Lake Beach



3.3 Existing Policies and Principles Affecting Municipal Parkland

3.3.1 Strategic Economic Development Plan

The Council of the Town of Huntsville, with assistance from numerous volunteers, worked to create a strategic vision for the Town in 2002. Pertinent excerpts from the Town's Strategic Vision as they relate to parkland are:

- “to touch the past and embrace the future;
- to preserve our heritage and protect our natural environment, while developing a modern, vibrant and competitive community; and,
- to foster an environment that encourages and enhances recreational and cultural growth.”

Section 8.1.1 of the Strategic Plan, entitled Trails, Parks and Waterfront Development, sets out specific priorities for parkland development with respect to the Trans Canada Trail and Huntsville's urban core, specifically the waterfront.



Concept drawing of future walking bridge to Centennial Centre

“Continued development of our trails, parks and waterfront is an important part of our Strategic Plan. We will partner with Trans Canada Trails over the next few years to complete 52 kilometres of trails through Huntsville. We will enhance our Town Dock area and we will work toward establishing a Park with a connecting bridge on property adjacent to the Main Street Bridge, currently used as a Treatment Plant.”



New trail development, acquisition of more parkland, improved access to the water in the downtown, and future ongoing maintenance of trails and waterfront are all identified as important priorities.

Particular points of interest relate to:

- the inclusion of a long term maintenance plan and budget being approved at the parkland development stage; and,
- the need for an increased level of maintenance in the downtown core waterfront and parkland areas.

3.3.2 Huntsville Official Plan

In the Town of Huntsville, the provision, preservation and management of Open Space and recreational opportunities is intrinsically tied to its economic health. However, it is equally important to recognize the additional aesthetic and environmental benefits that result from Open Space networks.

Proposed Official Plan policies resulting from the recent Official Plan review speak to the importance of parkland through the following general principles:

- Lakes and rivers are public resources that provide year round leisure and recreational opportunities to both residents and visitors
- Quality of life is enhanced by access to lakes and rivers
- There needs to be a balance between recreational use and preservation of natural features
- Increase the amount of land that is in public ownership for conservation purposes
- Maintain areas of natural open space, developed parkland, public or private access points to the water and environmental features (wetlands) throughout the Waterfront designation
- Open space and conservation uses are encouraged throughout the Waterfront for passive and active recreation and conservation purposes.
- Road allowances leading to water shall be retained in public ownership whether or not they have potential for access to the water, and shall remain as part of the open space/non development land base around the lake, except where alternate access is provided by an applicant to the satisfaction of the Town.
- Existing portages shall be protected from encroachment by other land uses, and may be acquired by the Town or through a land trust or conservation easement.
- In order to increase the amount of public or conservation lakefront lands around the lake, the Town will acquire lakefront land where appropriate as the parkland dedication rather than requiring a cash-in-lieu contribution. As an alternative to this requirement, particularly in more remote areas or where limited parcels would be created, consideration may be given by the Town to taking a cash-in-lieu contribution and/or a lake front conservation easement.



3.3.3 Stand-Alone Policies

A number of stand-alone policies currently exist that relate to the use of and associated with parkland. They require review in the context of the resultant new policies entrenched in this Parks Master Plan and may subsequently require amendment through associated amended or new by-laws. These include but are not limited to: Docks Policy; Animal Control By-law, Rights Respecting Access and Use of Municipal Buildings/Property, Parkland Dedication policy.

4.0 Identification of Issues and Consideration of Policy Options

The issues and draft policy options outlined in the Issues & Options paper were the result of the written and verbal comments received from the general public, the Master Plan working group, staff and Council, the Official Plan review and the Strategic Plan. Comments from the public were acquired as a result of the first Master Plan open house on July 21, 2004, by mail and, by email based on information provided on the Town of Huntsville web site.

Once the paper was approved by the Parks & Trails Advisory Committee and Council for public review and distributed, a number of comments were received regarding the various options that had been put forward. These comments have assisted Committee in the drafting of the parkland policies that make up the substance of this plan.

5.0 Municipal Parkland Policies

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 To preserve Huntsville's heritage and protect our natural environment, while developing a modern, vibrant and competitive community.** "Touch the past...Embrace the future" is the message the Town's "Welcome to Huntsville" signage impresses on the passers by, resident and visitor alike. It is also on the front cover of the Strategic Economic Development Plan. The attempt to achieve and maintain a balance between preservation and innovation will remain a constant challenge for all future councils.
- 5.1.2 To foster an environment that encourages and enhances recreational and cultural growth.** Fostering an environment involves the need for education and responsible decision-making in the strategic planning processes. This is evident in the Town's recent completion of 52 km of Trans Canada Trail comprising some of its most visible and historic waterfront as well as it's attention to public input in the creation of additional waterfront parkland in the downtown core.
- 5.1.3 Lakes, rivers and Crown lands are public resources that provide year round leisure and recreational opportunities to both residents and visitors and enhance quality of life.** There is a finite number of developable waterfront properties and therefore, a limited number of people who can actually enjoy private



ownership of water frontage. Waterfront property owners naturally feel an added responsibility for “their” lake and have shown this through the Lakes Council that has been formed for lake planning purposes, but as most realize, this does not include ownership of the lake itself. It is important that people are cognizant of the fact that lakes and rivers, except in a very few instances are public resources and all users should be free to enjoy them responsibly.



Fairy Lake vista from Lion's Lookout

- 5.1.4 Improved access to water as a public resource is a high priority.** The rate of growth of non-waterfront populations with an abundance of attractive water-based recreational opportunities close by, results in increased pressures for access to this public resource. These accesses must be clearly defined both on paper and on the ground. Because of the associated budget required, this process of surveying and mapping will take place as funds are available. Issues that currently exist must be examined and rectified.
- 5.1.5 A database inventory of Town-owned parkland shall be maintained within the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS)** The development of a user friendly database of parkland property information is an important tool as an effective and consistent base of information for internal use in park development and maintenance plans.
- 5.1.6 Parkland information on the amenities of each piece of developed parkland shall be made available on the Town's GIS and website, ensuring an accessible format option, and updated as required.** Once a piece of parkland is developed its existence needs to be communicated to the appropriate market. Allowing the public access to park information on the Town's website will be beneficial from a tourism standpoint as well as serve as a communication tool for the resident population.
- 5.1.7 Parkland shall be accurately identified both by survey and on the ground as resources permit. Until such a time as this is accomplished, a disclaimer shall be given whenever disseminating information about its location, particularly in relation to water access points.** Negligence in accurately identifying these accesses on the ground has a tendency to result in trespass issues over private land.

- 5.1.8 Accessibility shall be identified as a key factor to be considered in every stage of the parkland process.** Taking into consideration accessibility is not saying that all parkland will be accessible, particularly with the constraints that exist in Huntsville's hilly Canadian Shield topography. The important message here is that it shall be a factor to be considered at each stage.
- 5.1.9 Acquisition and development priorities on waterfront should be linked to lake capacity guidelines, as set by the District Municipality of Muskoka.** New lot creation and in turn new development, has been limited on certain lakes due to the water quality models primarily based on phosphorus loading, with the main contributor being septic systems. As the impact from more effectively engineered septic systems decreases, other factors take on more critical roles in determining what the capacity or sustainability of a lake might be including increased boat traffic from a public parkland access point, for example. These factors are addressed in the lake capacity guidelines.

5.2 Acquisition

- 5.2.1 The Town shall undertake initiatives to increase the amount of land that is in public ownership for conservation purposes.** The only sure way to protect public resources is for the public to maintain ownership of the land base. In the not-so-recent past, the Town sold a number of waterfront and other lands it had acquired in various ways. In hindsight and with our present policies, transactions such as these will not take place in the future.
- 5.2.2 Identification of the best examples of the range of characteristic ecosystems and unique life and earth science features present in the Town on public and private lands should be completed in order to consider these features during acquisition.** There are significant neighbourhood and community features that warrant preservation, such as wetland habitats, wildlife corridors and vistas. Early identification can facilitate taking these into consideration for parkland dedication or acquisition.



Cann Lake at Muskoka Heritage Place



Water access point



- 5.2.3 Road allowances leading to water shall be retained in public ownership whether or not they have potential for access to the water, and shall remain as part of the open space/non development land base around the lake, except where alternate access is provided by an applicant to the satisfaction of the Town.** On rare occasions it may not make any sense at all to keep a road allowance leading to water. It is important that this policy allows for this limited flexibility.
- 5.2.4 Existing portages shall be protected from encroachment by other land uses, and may be acquired by the Town or secured through a land trust or conservation easement.** For the most part this has already occurred in a number of occasions during development planning processes and this practice should continue.
- 5.2.5 In order to increase the amount of public parkland or conservation lands around a lake, the Town will acquire waterfront land where appropriate, as the parkland dedication, rather than requiring a cash-in-lieu contribution through the consent and subdivision approval process. This would be particularly applicable where the property is located immediately adjacent to an existing public access to water, such as a road allowance. As an alternative to this requirement, particularly in more remote areas or where limited parcels would be created, consideration may be given by the Town to taking a cash-in-lieu contribution and/or a lakefront conservation easement.** Although a lakefront conservation easement would not necessarily provide public use of these lands it would assist the greater good by ensuring the Town had the ability to have some enforceable control over the ongoing protection of the shoreline.
- 5.2.6 Accessibility considerations of both the terrain and the location of parkland being considered for acquisition shall be addressed in the decision-making process.** The Canadian Shield topography of our area, the need to conserve some of our more extreme landscapes and the desire for more challenging terrain for some public sector's use and enjoyment means that there will always be a variety of types of lands that are acquired by the municipality for public use. This policy again speaks to the importance of being mindful that everyone should be able to enjoy as many of the public amenities as possible and this will only happen if consideration for accessibility is always made part of the decision-making process.

5.3 Use

- 5.3.1 A balance shall be maintained between recreational uses, both passive and active, and preservation of natural features, particularly in the waterfront.** It is important to remember that the preservation of natural features such as wetlands, deer wintering areas and unique aesthetic features should be in balance with the more intensive recreational uses such as active play space, trails and waterfront beaches.
- 5.3.2 Active unorganized play spaces with safe, child friendly play structures, containing accessible components in their designs, will be located and maintained in the urban core parks.** Play structures that used to be economical to build and provide have grown very expensive with the more recent requirements of CSA approval and risk management standards. As such, they are often the victims

of budget cuts and require appropriate long range planning in order to make them an ongoing reality.



Meadowpark



Irene Street Park

- 5.3.3 Where a neighbourhood or other interest group want to develop a play structure in their neighbourhood park or in a specific community park, they must do so in a safe manner with the approval of the Town.** Neighbourhood, youth, or young parent's groups, and not-for-profit organizations working together with the Town, often instigate fundraising initiatives to assist with specific features of parkland development.
- 5.3.4 While on public parkland people shall have regard for others, exercise appropriate public behaviour, and have respect for the property itself.** The right to access or use public buildings/property requires the person(s) involved to:
- Have a legitimate purpose for wishing to access/use the building/property.
 - Have regard for others when accessing/using the building/property by exercising appropriate public behaviour
 - Have regard for the rights of children who may wish to access / use the building/property, and,
 - Have respect for the building/property itself.
- Persons unwilling to follow this policy will first be asked to leave the building/property. Failing compliance with this request more severe actions shall be taken. The community has a responsibility to clarify expectations, educate and train as required.
- 5.3.5 With respect to event usage of public parkland, differentiation shall be made between commercial, private and community uses in the User Fee By-law (local fundraisers, community festivals...).** The majority of parkland maintenance dollars come from general taxation. The implementation of a fee structure for event usage is necessary, with similar differentiations made between commercial, non-resident, not-for-profit, etc...as is found with the recreational facility rental fees.
- 5.3.6 An analysis of the ongoing costs of providing a park for event usage shall be undertaken, including the cost of wear and tear, and increased levels of maintenance services.** The number of public festivals and fundraisers continues to grow in Huntsville. Although very positive effects are felt by the community overall, currently few or none of the profits are budgeted back into dealing with the physical wear and tear that the events have on the parkland itself.



- 5.3.7 Additional signage and professional marketing materials, meeting accessibility guidelines, need to be developed for event parks.** Large community parks that are more frequently used for events should have consistent signage developed and either mounted or ready to mount prior to and during the event notifying the general public of the event and the Town's expectations. Pamphlets, trail maps and online information should be made available to the public at major facilities and through the Town's Economic Development Department and the local Chamber of Commerce.
- 5.3.8 Pets in parkland shall be restrained or under other physical control of the owner or handler, except as otherwise exempted by by-law.** Ultimately pet owners are the ones responsible for conforming to pet policies. Dogs, for example, come in a lot of different shapes, sizes and temperaments. Dogs need to be walked for their own health and that of their owner. However, a couple of dogs let loose at a child's soccer or baseball game, or simply allowed to run at large without being under the control of their owner, when other dogs, people and possibly wildlife are about, is not being a responsible dog owner.
- 5.3.9 Pet owners or handlers shall be responsible for cleaning up after their pets.** Leaving a pet's excrement on the playing field, trail or beach when on an evening outing, introduces undesirable aesthetic and health and safety issues for the rest of the public using the parkland space, particularly children. We can't control the habits of wild animals but we can contribute by picking up after our pets.
- 5.3.10 Dogs shall have restricted access to beaches and water access points as designated specifically in the Parkland By-law. These areas shall be appropriately signed.** It is important for owners to recognize that health issues exist particularly on a beach where children are playing and pets are relieving themselves at will.
- 5.3.11 Dogs shall be allowed in parkland not specifically signed to restrict their access, subject to 5.3.8 – 5.3.10.** This policy recognizes that dog owners should have access to water for their pet. Many breeds were raised specifically for retrieval activities involving water.
- 5.3.12 An opportunity for a dock lease, as further detailed in the Town's Dock Policy shall be offered to property owners that are immediately adjacent a public road that runs between their property and the water where there is no intervening private land, for a set yearly amount, at locations approved by the Town. The location may not necessarily be immediately in front of the leaseholder's property. The fee associated with the lease will be set in the Town's User Fee By-law and amended from time to time.** Historically, property owners have built docks across the road from their homes on the road or shore road allowances. Policies have been introduced by various councils allowing and disallowing any further permission for such docks. This however, creates inequities throughout the municipality and even between adjacent property owners as these dock licences do not transfer when the property is sold. After new owners are in place, docks are either maintained without a licence or left in disrepair creating additional liabilities for the Town.
- 5.3.13 Where private docks currently exist on public lands and the existing dock owners do not want to exercise the lease option, notice shall be given either to**



remove the dock or have the Town take over the responsibility for it. This policy allows for some choice by the owner as to whether or not they want to enter into a yearly lease situation with the Town, as there will be a fee attached to it.

- 5.3.14 Owners with a legal dock lease, in good standing, shall have exclusive use of their dock and sign it appropriately.** Dock owners, even those with legal licences to have docks, were finding it increasingly difficult or impossible to get insurance, as they could not restrict the usage of the dock by the general public.
- 5.3.15 In situations where public access to the water is affected by private dock leases a specific public access point will be designated and signed appropriately in the area, if the demand for it exists and it is safe to do so.** By charging annual lease fees for docks, the development and maintenance of a public access point if it is warranted can then be subsidized. It is not always possible to provide a municipal dock at every access point due to the depth of the water, the nature of the shoreline and the additional associated costs. The expenditure for new docks has to be approved as part of the annual capital budget process.
- 5.3.16 Communication shall occur between internal Town departments at the application stage notifying other departments when development applications such as entrance or driveway permits about an existing trail system.** Opportunities or conflicts can easily result where communication is poor or non-existent.
- 5.3.17 The Town's GIS shall be used to identify compatibility issues resulting from mixed uses on or adjacent to municipal parkland.** The amount of information on individual pieces of property that the GIS can manipulate is astonishing and has created a new opportunity for yellow flagging potentially incompatible situations at the development application stage.

5.4 Development

- 5.4.1 Continued development of our trails, parks and waterfront is an important component of our strategic vision.** In order for money to be budgeted to continue the work that has made huge strides forward in the past decade or so, the desire to continue with parkland development has to be stated clearly in all strategic planning documents.
- 5.4.2 Priorities shall be established for the development of acquired parkland and reviewed on an annual basis as part of the annual budget process.** In order to plan and budget responsibly, priorities must be established in any process involving the expenditure of public funds. There will never be enough to do it all at once and a lack of prioritizing results in haphazard reactionary spending.
- 5.4.3 A written parkland development plan shall be prepared and approved prior to proceeding with the development of a specific parkland parcel.** By doing this the development, operation and maintenance details will be dealt with and new projects won't be started and not completed or, built and then not maintained.
- 5.4.4 Each parkland development plan shall include the following components:**
- **a needs analysis/statement;**
 - **assessment of compatibility with adjacent existing or zoned uses;**
 - **topography/landscape;**



- **soils (or lack thereof);**
- **services and location of same;**
- **shoreline characteristics, including water depth, etc... as applicable;**
- **a site plan involving an inclusive range of users(e.g. representation from AACPD and other affected users) and universal design and signage where feasible;**
- **a landscape plan encouraging the use of native plants and maintenance of shoreline vegetation where possible;**
- **dark sky friendly lighting, except as exempted by the current Town of Huntsville Dark Sky Friendly Guidelines relating specifically to sports' fields;**
- **a capital budget; and,**
- **an operating / long term maintenance budget.**

Most of these plans can be completed in-house by staff working together with the Parks & Trails Advisory Committee calling on specific professionals as required and budgeted for.

- 5.4.5 Special regard shall be given to the use of low maintenance materials in the design and development of parkland.** The aesthetics of any parkland development should not be severely comprised in order to maximize on low maintenance materials. A balance between the two should be the goal. The associated costs of different levels of maintenance should be taken into consideration in any parkland development plan.
- 5.4.6 Accessibility considerations will be addressed in the development of new water access points, which will occur in conjunction with the assessment of overall parkland development priorities.** Access to the water for a person with a disability can be a challenge, particularly where there are steeper slopes or soft sand. Again, the goal is to offer opportunities or alternatives where feasible in an attempt to mitigate access issues.
- 5.4.7 The ease of accessibility of parkland shall be identified on maps, the website, pamphlets and signage with a suitable logo.** Guidelines, based on those that currently exist elsewhere, shall be developed and implemented. Similar symbols that are currently used to designate levels of terrain difficulty in sports such as skiing, can easily be introduced on trail head signs or added to existing signposts and should be consistent throughout the municipality. Using slightly raised circle, square and diamond shapes, for example, allows for those with visibility issues to determine the level of difficulty of the parkland they are entering onto.
- 5.4.8 Signage shall be designed, located and erected in a manner that facilitates interpretation by parkland users. In accessible parkland areas, signage shall be designed, located and erected in a manner that facilitates interpretation for those with disabilities.** Mobility issues and visual impairments may make reading signage difficult to impossible. The design (e.g. vertical vs. horizontal, font size...), location and mounting height of signage can go a long way to make it more legible for everyone.
- 5.4.9 In accessible parkland areas, benches and other parkland structures, trail surface materials and parking options shall be designed and located as to more easily accommodate those with physical mobility difficulties (e.g.**

increased frequency of resting places, arms on benches and bench height minimums of 17", use of granite tailings as opposed to wood chips or loose stone). Less accessible designs and locations may be offered as alternatives to the accessible situations. As always, with the extremes in local topography, it will not always be possible to accommodate structures whether for viewing, or resting in easily accessible locations. However, there are many instances where alternatives can be offered. Often, it is merely a matter of thinking about ease of access during the design phase.

- 5.4.10 Volunteers are encouraged to come forward and assist with the planning, development and ongoing maintenance of parkland.** An adopt-a-park policy exists that outlines the process for the general public to become involved in creating and maintaining specific parks or trails. Budget and prioritization put constraints on what and how much can be accomplished on an annual basis



Volunteers working together



- 5.4.11 Municipal docks shall be constructed barrier free in physically accessible locations where physically and financially feasible and if already built be made entirely accessible if significantly renovated, again if physically and financially feasible. It is recognized that some locations, this will not be a realistic objective.** "Where possible" means that every best effort will be made to take accessibility into consideration in the design and construction phases.

5.5 Maintenance Priorities and Level of Service

- 5.5.1 Formal service standards guidelines for the maintenance of parkland shall be established.** Establishing these guidelines, similar to existing road maintenance standards, will assist council at budget time and staff in both planning and the field, in an understanding of a consistent set of parkland maintenance standards and expectations.
- 5.5.2 Future ongoing maintenance of developed trails and waterfront parkland is a priority.** Once parkland has been acquired and particularly after dollars have been



expended on its development, it is crucial that levels of service and ongoing maintenance schedules are established, budgeted for and carried out.

- 5.5.3 A higher level of maintenance and service will be maintained in the urban and community waterfront parkland areas than in rural parkland.** It is not only important from an aesthetic viewpoint but also from an economic standpoint. Parks and trails, particularly in the urban core and the larger waterfront parks, are more highly used and visible to a larger majority of residents and tourists alike. Large events, for example, capture media attention. As a progressive community intent on marketing ourselves to the world, a significant amount of attention needs to be paid to the long term maintenance of our parkland venues.



Kent Park downtown Huntsville

- 5.5.4 Site contractual maintenance and service provision shall be explored as a cost-effective option for maintenance.** Contracting out for specialized services such as major tree removal, irrigation, and heavy equipment work, is a fiscally responsible practice. Contracting out general maintenance or opening and closing of public facilities is not always the most effective but should be explored nonetheless. Municipal contractors must carry their own insurance policies. In the past few years this has often hampered the process of contracting maintenance which can be a fulltime seasonal responsibility. Care must also be taken to ensure the quality and level of service is consistently maintained.
- 5.5.5 No form of pesticide shall be used in the maintenance and operation of parkland, without consent of Council.** This policy is a choice Huntsville has made in an effort to protect the environmental health and safety of any individual using the municipal parkland.



6.0 Implementation and Review

This Plan represents the end of a process and the beginning of a number of steps required for its implementation. The plan itself provides clear policy direction to assist decision-making by various committees, staff and Council.

The additional associated policies and by-laws discussed in this section need to either be completed or, reviewed and amended, to reflect any policy change that has occurred as a result of this public planning process. As such they will always remain stand-alone policies to allow for review and updating on a more frequent basis than the process required to revisit and amend the entire Parks Master Plan. The Plan itself should be updated every five years, on a schedule similar to the Official Plan review, in order to stay in line with broader-based community direction should it change substantially for any reason.

6.1 Parkland By-law

A by-law dealing with the specific “does and don’ts” respecting municipal parkland needs to be passed as the main implementation tool falling out of this Parks Master Plan, similar to how the Zoning By-law implements the land use policies of the Official Plan as a development control tool.

The option exists for the following policies 6.2 – 6.4 to also be contained within this by-law eliminating the need for separate stand-alone policies. If this course of action is taken then the appropriate repeals and amendments to the documents that pre-date this by-law must also follow suit.

6.2 Amendment to Animal Control By-law 2000-40, as amended

A further amendment to the existing Animal Control By-law is necessary to reflect the need to establish specific and clear direction on where dogs are allowed as well as where they are not.

Emphasis also needs to be made regarding the responsibilities of pet owners and what exact behaviour is expected when they take their pets onto municipal parkland

6.3 Parkland Event Usage

This policy needs to be updated as the existing policy is put to the test over the next few years. The Committee responsible for parkland also needs to recommend the associated fee for the different types of events and review it annually.

6.4 Docks Policy

This specific policy has recently been amended to reflect the policies in this Master Plan.



6.5 Parks Inventory and GIS

The municipal parkland inventory is married to the Town's GIS in order for parkland information to be available to all internal and external clients as required. An information page(s) for each developed piece of parkland should be viewable on the Town's website (www.huntsville.ca) by clicking on a map or typing in the name of the parkland (e.g. Trans Canada Trail, Skeleton Lake...). This inventory database will be updated on a regular basis through cooperation between the Parks & GIS Departments.



Huntsville's natural beauty for all to enjoy ~ Fairy Lake



Glossary

For the purposes of this plan the following definitions apply.

Accessibility – As defined by the Ontario Disabilities Act.

Accessibility Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (AACPD) - A committee of the Town of Huntsville, appointed by Council for the same term as Council, and as legislated by the Ontario Disabilities Act. Its' purpose is to advise Council on matters specifically relating to disability issues within the municipality.

Cash-in-lieu – Cash-in-lieu means that money is given in place of something else, specifically parkland for the purposes of this plan. For example, when new lots are created, either by subdivision or individual severance, it is legislated through the provincial Planning Act, that a certain amount of the property is to be given to the municipality and dedicated for parkland purposes. Since this is not always desirable, an option is given to the municipality so that they can either take a certain amount of land or take money in the amount that the land would be worth instead. This allows a municipality to accumulate funds in a special reserve account to be used for parkland purposes, either to acquire land or develop existing parkland.

Concessions (when referring to township lots and concessions) – Each geographic township in Huntsville (Brunel, Chaffey, Stephenson and Stisted) is made up of a grid of approximately 13 or 14 rows, each containing around 32, 100 acre rectangular lots, numbered from west to east. These rows of lots are called concessions and are numbered from south to north.

Crown Land – Public lands that are under the jurisdiction of either the provincial or federal governments.

Easement – An easement is an agreement on the title of a property that gives specified rights on the land to which the easement is over, to those other than the owners of the land. It does not imply a transfer of ownership.

Geographic Information System (GIS) – A GIS is a database system that ties maps to databases full of related information. GIS are visually interactive and extremely user friendly allowing manipulation of the data for many different purposes from providing public information on parkland amenities to tracking building permit inspections.

Lakefront conservation easement – This type of easement could be placed on the title of a waterfront property along all or a portion of the shoreline, either with the consent of the property owner or at the time of new lot creation. Easements would be property specific in that some cases they may simply restrict the cutting of vegetation or in others may permit public access over them.



Right-of-Way (ROW) – A ROW is an easement that specifically refers to the right for specified others to cross over a specific portion of a piece of private property. It does not imply a transfer of ownership.

Road Allowance – A road allowance is generally a 66' wide strip of land retained in municipal, or other government level ownership, thereby preserving and providing lands for the construction of public roads and general access. In Huntsville these 66' strips were surveyed at the time when the original 100 acre grid lot system was created. They travel east west between every other concession and north south after every fifth 100 acre lot. No regard was given to topography at the time of survey, therefore, some travel over cliffs while others provide public access to water by leading directly into and back out of lakes and rivers.

Shore Road Allowance – Shore road allowances are 66' road allowances that were surveyed around the majority of lakes in Huntsville except in the geographic township of Chaffey. Since water levels have changed in many cases since the surveys were completed the shore road allowances may be partially under water. By agreement, the lands under water are considered Crown land while the portion above water is considered municipal. Over time, the municipality has agreed to close many of the shore road allowances in front of various waterfront properties at the owner's request. Closing the allowance and allowing the private property owner to add it to their property means that the public no longer has any right over it or any liabilities associated with it.

Topography – Topography involves the elevation features of the landscape itself. Topographic maps are landscape maps showing lakes, rivers, marshes, etc... and therefore, contain contour lines (lines joining points of continuous same elevations) and other elevation markings that enable the reader to create a mental 3-dimensional picture of the landscape.

User Fee By-law – In order for a municipality to charge fees a User Fee By-law must be passed containing a fee schedule for all fees being charged. Under new legislation, the amount of the fee must be justified either by legislation or through a fee justification exercise relating the fee to the cost of providing the related service.



Information Sources

1. A Master Plan for Parks and Recreation - Marshall, Macklin and Monaghan for the Town of Huntsville – 1981
2. Huntsville Animal Control By-law
3. Huntsville By-law 91-121 regarding Parkland dedication
4. Huntsville Docks Policy – 2005
5. Huntsville Official Plan – draft policies – 2005
6. Huntsville Official Plan Issues and Options Paper – Open Space & Recreation – 2004
7. Huntsville Phase 2 Application to NOHFC for Trans Canada Trail Funding – 2001
8. Huntsville Rights of Access and Use Policy for Public property and buildings – 2002
9. Huntsville Strategic Economic Development Plan - 2002
10. Land Surplus Committee Report to Town of Huntsville Council - 1982
11. The Lakefront Planning Strategy - M.M.Dillon for the Town of Huntsville – 1991
12. Parks Planning Report presented by the Board to Town of Huntsville Council – 1997

Acknowledgements

Email Working Group:

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- *Staff: Walter Schmid, Brian Crozier, Terry Sararas, Libby Boucher, Sara Brown, Chris Madej, Mark Flynn, Brad Polischuk*

Photographers:

- Don McCormick
- Heather Douglas
- Joy McKay
- Gillian Brunette

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Colleen Hannigan, MCIP, RPP
Municipal Consultant