

SECTION A – INTRODUCTION

1 Components and Title

- 1.1 The following text shall constitute the Official Plan for the Township of Muskoka Lakes.
- 1.2 Schedules A1, A2, A3, F, G1, G1A, G2, G2A, G2B, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, I1 to I8, J, J1, J1A, J1B, J2, K1 and K2 shall constitute part of the Official Plan for the Township of Muskoka Lakes.
- 1.3 The Appendices (A to F, 1 to 5), and Resort Village of Minett Appendices 1, 2(a) to (c) do not form part of the formal Official Plan but provides additional background information respecting the Plan.

2 Purpose and Effect of the Plan / Amendment

- 2.1 The purpose of the Official Plan is to provide detailed policies to govern development in the Township of Muskoka Lakes.
- 2.2 This Plan has been updated and consolidated in response to consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005, and conformity with the Official Plan of the District of Muskoka as required by Section 27 of the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13.
- 2.3 No public work shall be undertaken, or by-law passed for any purpose which does not conform with the Official Plan (Section 27 of the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13).
- 2.4 Where there is a conflict between the Official Plan of the District of Muskoka and this Official Plan, the Official Plan of the District of Muskoka prevails to the extent of such conflict. In all other respects this Official Plan remains in full force and effect (Section 27(4) of the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13).
- 2.5 The following Official Plan Amendments are hereby repealed:

Official Plan Amendment #1 (Port Sandfield); Official Plan Amendment #2 (Port Carling Boundary Extension); Official Plan Amendment #10 (Rural Policies); Official Plan Amendment #14, (Waterfront Contractors); Official Plan Amendment #19, (Community Policies); and Official Plan Amendment #25, (Waterfront Policies), Official Plan Amendment #33 (Waterfront Density).

3 Vision Statement

- 3.1 The Township of Muskoka Lakes will continue to grow and continue to change. The Official Plan recognizes and supports the Township of Muskoka Lakes as a

vibrant, prosperous community. Its lakes and rivers are preeminent resources that define the municipality and are vital to the Township's character and economy.

The Official Plan provides a balance among various competing factors, including economic, social and environmental factors.

Through its Official Plan, the Township of Muskoka Lakes endeavours to maintain a strong sense of community while embracing economic enhancement and growth opportunities that:

- Respect the environment;
- Maintain a high level of protection for our lakes;
- Nurture the protection and conservation of significant natural and cultural heritage features;
- Contribute to a year-round sustainable economy; and
- Enhance the quality of life of all citizens.

4 Location of Lands Affected

- 4.1 This Official Plan applies to the area within the corporate limits of the Township of Muskoka Lakes.
- 4.2 The Waterfront land use designation is textually described and is not identified in its entirety on a Schedule affixed hereto.
- 4.3 Areas directly affected by Section E of this Plan are illustrated on Schedule F.
- 4.4 Areas directly affected by Sections C, C1 and D of this Plan are illustrated on Schedules G1, G2, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, J1, J1A, J1B, K1 and K2.

5 Duration and Review

- 5.1 The Official Plan for the Township of Muskoka Lakes underwent a planning review in 2007-2009. The revised Official Plan is proposed for a planning period of twenty years. This Plan shall be subject to a continuing review in order to ensure that the policies of the Plan are practical and are being achieved.
- 5.2 A review of the Plan will be undertaken every five years in accordance with Section 26(1) of the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990 c.P.13.

6 Supporting Information

- 6.1 Information in support of policies in Section B are included in a background study entitled "Muskoka Lakes Waterfront Policies Background Study, November 1996." This has been further supplemented by additional

background reports “Waterfront Density, September, 2003”, “Waterfront Density Environmental Background Report, March 2004”, “The Corporation of the Township of Muskoka Lakes, Background Report, April 2007”, and “The Port Carling Growth Report of May 2008 and revised November 2008”. While these background studies are not part of the Amendment, they may be reviewed to assist in understanding the source and justification for certain policies.

- 6.2 Information in support of policies in Section C: Urban Centres and Section D: Communities is included in a background study entitled “Muskoka Lakes Community Policies, Background Report, September 1994” and “The Corporation of the Township of Muskoka Lakes, Background Reports, April 2007”.
- 6.3 Information in support of policies in Section E: Rural is included in a background study entitled “Muskoka Lakes Rural Policies, Background Report, December 1991” and “The Corporation of the Township of Muskoka Lakes, Background Reports, April 2007”.
- 6.4 More recent information in support of policies added into the Official Plan, as part of a major revision conducted in 2006-2008, are included in “The Corporation of the Township of Muskoka Lakes, Background Reports, April 2007”.

7 Background, Basis and Themes

- 7.1 The Township of Muskoka Lakes Official Plan strives to provide policies that strike an even balance between economic development and the protection of the environment.
- 7.2 The Waterfront setting consist of open space and low density residential land uses on mainland and island shorelines; interspersed with some commercial development, primarily resorts and marinas; amongst a predominantly forested landscape. Policies need to ensure that this character is protected and that the majority of shorelines remain in a natural state.
- 7.3 Excessive development activities have implications on vegetation removal along the shoreline, as well as water quality. Policies for buffering along the waterfront are imperative to ensure the natural heritage features are protected and the character respected.
- 7.4 Water quality in the lakes is of paramount concern. The District of Muskoka maintains a water quality model to monitor the health of the lakes. As the Township supports the Lake System Health Program, policies with respect to water quality have been included in this Plan.
- 7.5 Most of the development in the Township has continued to be in the Waterfront. Policies are required to ensure that development proceed only after careful

consideration of those qualities which contribute to the attraction of the waterfront and shared enjoyment of its lakes and rivers.

- 7.6 Increased development pressure in the form of numbers of buildings, size of buildings, and removal of vegetation can leave the natural and cultural landscape negatively impacted. Strict adherence to policies and by-law provisions which enunciate protection of shoreline areas is necessary.
- 7.7 There has been, in the recent past, development pressure in the rural area of the Township of Muskoka Lakes. Policies have been formulated to address possible strip development along Township roads changing the character of the rural area. Major residential development will not be permitted in the rural area.
- 7.8 In the rural area, there is a need for policy which allows for limited development in certain locations while protecting significant natural resources, habitat and character that is appropriately buffered from view.
- 7.9 The employment areas of the Township are imperative to the successful and sustained growth of the Township of Muskoka Lakes. Policies of this Plan will ensure protection of these areas.
- 7.10 This plan recognizes that there are two (2) Urban Centres: Port Carling, and Bala, one (1) Resort Village: Minett, and five (5) Communities: Milford Bay, Torrance, Glen Orchard, Foot's Bay, and Windermere. Opportunities for commercial, industrial, institutional, and a variety of housing forms exist within the urban centres and communities. All major residential development should be directed towards urban centres and communities. Policies are required to direct development to urban centres and communities where services are available. This growth may require the expansion of urban centres and/or community boundaries.
- 7.11 Policies are required to ensure that growth in downtown areas continues and flourishes.
- 7.12 A variety of housing opportunities should be available to Township residents. Policies for alternative forms of housing and affordable housing, such as an increase in densities for urban centres and communities, will ensure that options are available. It is anticipated that densities in the Community designation will be higher than in the Waterfront and Rural designations, but lower than the Urban Centres designation.
- 7.13 The investigation of alternative forms of housing and housing intensification is important for the growth of the Urban Centres and Communities and the provision of affordable housing. The greatest potential for affordable housing is in urban centres and locations that are removed from waterfront areas.

- 7.14 The Urban Centres and Communities in the Township each exhibit a unique character. Policies which acknowledge this character and provide the tools necessary to protect and enhance it are required.
- 7.15 The continued and enhanced viability of resorts, marinas, other commercial uses, and residential uses are recognized as important elements in the Township and Muskoka economy. Appropriate development/redevelopment of waterfront commercial properties needs to be realized and encouraged through policy. In response to the threat of the continued erosion of resort properties, policies referring to the redesignation and rezoning of these uses are necessary. It is important to protect the needs of the Township's residents by supporting these types of businesses and encouraging them to grow.

8 Interpretation

- 8.1 Boundaries between areas designated or illustrated on any Schedule to this Plan are approximate only. They are not intended to define the exact location or extent of such areas except when they coincide with roads, railroads, transmission corridors, watercourses or other easily recognizable physical features.
- 8.2 Where numbers or values are specified in this text, such quantities are intended as guidelines unless it is specifically indicated there will be strict compliance. Imperial measurements shall be used as the standard with metric equivalents for information purposes only.
- 8.3 Section G, Definitions, has been added to the Plan providing further explanations of common words and phrases. Not all words and phrases are defined in this Section, only those that were in need of an explanation.