



Community Analysis and Planning

Policy Number: 17-52

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Definitions

Accreditation: Achievement of conditions set by the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council.

HPL | Library: Huntsville Public Library

SOLS: Southern Ontario Library Services

Town | Municipality: Town of Huntsville

Community Analysis

Community Analysis consists of the following parts

1. Community information on the Town of Huntsville
2. Implications for planning from the community information
3. Periodic Surveys on Library Services
4. Implications for planning from the survey
5. Planning using the results from the above.

Community Information

Following is a range of community-related information as it relates to Huntsville, Ontario, 2017 to date. Some data listed is from the 2011 Census. The 2016 Census timeline for release of information throughout 2017 will result in the amendment of some data.

Information was collected under the headings and using the suggested questions in ***Creating the Future You've Imagined: A Guide to Essential Planning***, Appendix 10. SOLS, 2007.

Town Slogan: *Touch the Past, Embrace the Future*

Town History

- Huntsville was established as an agricultural community in 1869 by Captain George Hunt

- The railway arrived and the Village of Huntsville was incorporated in 1886
- The locks on Brunel Road were constructed in 1877
- The Town of Huntsville was incorporated as a Town in 1901
- The Town of Huntsville was incorporated into the District Municipality of Muskoka in 1971

Location

- Located 215 km from Toronto, 130 km from North Bay and 350 km from Ottawa
- Huntsville is the Gateway Community to Algonquin Provincial Park
- Arrowhead Provincial Park is entirely located within the boundaries of the Town of Huntsville

Social and Economic Factors

Demographics:

- Largest of the 6 municipalities within the District of Muskoka
- Population (2016) is 19,816 full time residents. The population grew 4% over the last five years that is slightly less than the Ontario average of 4.6%.
- Seasonal population is about 7,000, less than most of the other municipalities in the District of Muskoka.
- Municipality covers 710 square kilometres (sq. km.) resulting in a population density of 27.9 sq. km.
- Forecasted population in 2031 is as follows (annual growth rate 2011-2041 appears in brackets: permanent 24,500 (0.9%); seasonal 6,700 (0.4%); total 31,200 (0.8%); total households 11,915 (1.1%); total employment 12,000 (0.8%). Source: Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. 2013
- Average age of the population:
 - 14 Year of Age or Less: 14.4% | Provincial average is 16.4%
 - 15 to 64 Years: 63.6 % | Provincial average is 66.8%
 - 65 to 84 Years: 22.0% | Provincial average is 16.7%
 - 85 Years and More: 3.3% | Provincial average is 2.2%

Thus Huntsville has fewer than average young people and greater than average old people.

- Most expensive place in terms of house affordability when compared to other similar communities (2011 Census)
- Homogeneous community, less than 1.5% is visible minority (2011 Census)

Education:

- 56.1% of Huntsville's working age population have post-secondary qualifications, which is significantly higher than similar communities and the provincial average (2011 Census)
- Educational facilities include: adult community learning centre, seven elementary schools (6 public and 1 catholic), one high school, two independent K-8 schools (Tawingo College, Montessori)

Economic/Employment: (2011 Census)

- Average household income is \$74,000, 10% below national average
- Average employment income in Huntsville is \$32,000, \$10,000 below provincial average and equal to similar communities
- 62.1% of all income is derived from employment (6.2% through self-employment, 29.3% from pensions and investments, higher than the provincial standard). Huntsville is wealthier than its employment profile suggests
- 50% of jobs in Huntsville are in sales and service, trades and transportation
- Overall job totals have remained relatively stable because of increased employment in services including healthcare and education. Employment in manufacturing was 9% in 2011 (22% in 2001), number of manufacturing firms has increased from 51 to 67, 300 more businesses in 2011 than in 2001, but a large turnover (large firms have closed, trade issues, satellite firms, increased in smaller firms)
- Sales revenue from arts and culture businesses and organizations generated 5.1 M in 2011, but is leveling off, 235 arts and culture professional and technical workers residing in Huntsville(2006)
- Three distinct elements of geography of businesses 1) town 2) rural 3) highway
- Huntsville exists on the economic and cultural border between central Ontario closely tied to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Northern Ontario resulting in at least two distinct lifestyles coexisting in one municipality. The large seasonal population adds a possible third lifestyle. According to the *Regional Report on Well Being in Ontario, The Northern Region*, which includes Muskoka for this purpose, has an older population, one of the lowest after tax median incomes, and the lowest level of employment. On the other hand, communities have a higher sense of belonging and a greater proportion of the population that volunteer.

Lifestyles and Interests

- Located on Fairy Lake, hilly, vibrant downtown, four exits from highway 11, highway 60 by passes the town
- Numerous and various programs available for adults, youth, children and families at various venues, indoors and outdoors – year long, special programs at March break, PD days, Family Day, Canada Day, Earth Week, Culture Days, and Public Library Week.
- Numerous and various volunteer opportunities are available; e.g. Day camps, aquatics, library, theatre
- Indoor facilities offer space for programs and public gatherings; e.g. Summit Centre, Active Living Centre
- Outdoor facilities offer space for public gatherings e.g. River Mill Park, Conroy Park, beaches
- Blend of year round residents, regular ‘visitors’ ie. Summer, weekend, winter, and special occasional ie. Paddle festivals, theatre, girls’ weekend
- Can be a stopover for people en route to Algonquin Park, Ottawa
- Shopping includes 1) vibrant downtown – free parking – maintained by business association, independent stores and services 2) shopping plaza anchored by Winners and Metro and 3) box stores area anchored by Walmart and Independent
- Visitors to Algonquin Park and ‘en routers’ often use Hwy 60 and bypass downtown Huntsville
- Most summer weekends have special events ie. Firefly festival, antique cars, Nuit Blanche
- Fall/winter weekends include annual studio tours, girlfriends getaway, comedy festivals – event tourism is an important component to the town
- Algonquin Outfitters sponsor popular Banff film festival and paddling film festivals
- Library and movie theatre offer Reel films monthly
- Huntsville Public Library has 10,076 active cardholder, 97.6% of which are residents of the Town of Huntsville. Source: statistical review January 2017
- Arenas offer venue for special events and hockey games and tournaments

Groups and Affiliations

- Churches of the community.
- Special interest groups ie. PROBUS, lake associations
- Chamber of Commerce
- BIA

- Community Living Huntsville
- Service groups i.e. Rotary, Lions, Legion
- Table Soup Kitchen Foundation

Agencies and Services

- Medical services include doctors, dentists, & regional hospital
- Youth services
- Nursing homes, retirement homes
- Non for profit i.e. Community Living
- Court services
- Huntsville transit, local service. Huntsville is the only municipality in Muskoka to offer local transit service.
- Local and regional bus service
- Muskoka airport offers daily service to Toronto, Pearson International Airport 2 ½-hour drive.
- Represented in government by mayor and town local town council, regional council, provincial and federal members of parliament (Muskoka/Parry Sound)
- Huntsville's sphere of influence for economic, social and cultural activities includes all of Muskoka and also north of Huntsville into Almaguin, and east through to Algonquin Park

Changes Occurring

Latest plans listed on town website includes Unity Plan, Community Impact Plan, Official Plan, Cultural Plan, Marketing the Community.

The *Town of Huntsville Strategic Plan – 2017 and Beyond (2017)* has a vision for a vibrant, inclusive, and health community that inspires innovation and growth, celebrates the arts, culture and heritage, promotes recreation while developing a resilient economy founded on social caring and environmental stewardship. It identifies the following priority areas: Economic Development, Health Care & Wellness, Natural Environment and Sustainability, Roads and Infrastructure, Financial Management and Governance, and Communications.

UNITY Plan (2010) goals include: environmental protection, municipal operations and infrastructure, energy conservation, transportation, land use planning, social well-being, education, public health and health care, healthy active community, arts, culture and heritage, economic development, affordable housing.

Town of Huntsville Cultural Strategy (2010) SWOT strategic implications: Strengths: create strong strategic plan that builds on UNITY plan, continue to work with community groups to provide excellent facilities and programs, make good use Waterloo Summit

Centre for Environment, promote 'arts and culture' brand: Weaknesses: involve youth in on-going cultural planning, upgrade and refurbish facilities Library, MHP, Algonquin Theater: Opportunities: investigate need for public art gallery, refurbishment plan for library, focused marketing approaches and develop a plan, show and promote arts, culture and heritage as another economic engine for the town: Threats: build support tools of sustainability for arts, culture and heritage organizations

Huntsville's Economic Development Strategy: Focus on Arts and Culture (2013) key findings: 5.1 million direct revenue generated by arts and culture companies and organizations, 235 arts and cultural professionals working in Huntsville, Huntsville has experienced lower growth in arts and culture than similar Ontario communities

A Tapestry of Place (2013): a place-based cultural tourism strategy for Huntsville/Lake of Bays (2013) focuses on cultural tourism and offers these suggestions: 1) appeal to older retired group, 2) retain younger group, 3) become more multicultural – people moving up from Toronto, 4) provide college and university satellite programs and encourage growth in employment which would attract post-secondary graduates, 5) cater to retired group and provide arts and culture activities they want, 6) provide mentorship and entrepreneurship programs and opportunities for young people, 7) support small business, encourage retail businesses, balance three geographical business areas, keep town vibrant

Community Assets

- an 'Inclusive Community'
- a 'True Sport' community
- Regional shopping centre
- Public Library and Annex
- Algonquin Theatre
- Huntsville Festival of the Arts
- Canada Summit Centre
- Regional hospital
- Muskoka Heritage Place
- Parks such as McCauley Robertson and Conroy Park
- Hidden Valley Highlands skiing
- Curling rink
- 52 km of Trans Canada trail and numerous parks, over 65 km of boating
- resort accommodation for over 1000
- world class golf
- shopping and dining
- regional and local transit bus, airport service to international airport, 20 minutes from regional airport, linked to Toronto with major highways

- various service groups, various groups and organizations serving seniors, children and youth
- community halls
- arts, culture and heritage groups
- Group of Seven murals
- sporting groups and organizations
- specialized organizations such as YM/YWCA, nature clubs and lake councils
- public art exhibits, outdoor murals
- Arrowhead Provincial Park, gateway to Algonquin Park

Town of Huntsville Website

Provides useful information about:

- Visiting: ex. Arts, culture and heritage, calendar, events, places to stay and eat, things to do, transit schedule
- Living: ex. Accessibility, community directory, education, employment resources, services such as fire, police and ambulance, garbage and recycling, health services, places of worship
- Doing Business: ex. Advertising opportunities, bids and tenders, business directory, economic development, demographic and statistics, partner links
- Town Hall: ex. Customer service, elections, information and connections with mayor, town councils, boards and committees, budgets, forms, maps, town plans and studies
- Direct links to the Huntsville Public Library, Algonquin Theatre and Museum (Muskoka Heritage Place)

Community Analysis Implications for Planning

Social and Economic Factors:

- Aging population with increasing time and decreasing mobility to access library facilities and services.
- Large municipal area with low population density.
- Relatively high property values (especially lakefront) couples with lower than average incomes.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Scarcity of post secondary educational opportunities.
- Three distinct lifestyle groups within the municipality creating three distinct library models to follow (GTA, Cottage Country, and Northern Ontario).

Lifestyles and Interests:

- Competition/collaboration with other programs available at various venues, in town and close by
- Competition/collaboration with other programs that require volunteers
- Competition/collaboration with other programs that provide rental space
- Include seasonal residents/tourists at high times and for special community events

Groups and Affiliations:

- Collaborate with groups – Chamber of Commerce, PROBUS, Rotary, BIA, YMCA, and Community Living in Huntsville.
- Agencies and Services
- Collaborate with variety of community services – nursing and retirement homes, court services, youth services

Changes Occurring:

- Have a place 'at the table' in problem solving and decision making planning e.g. recent studies and reports on cultural strategy, tapestry of place, town planning

Community Assets:

- Be part of the community profile – Accredited library, programs available
- Continue to maintain library website and image/link on town website

LIBRARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Ongoing review and development of Library spaces in the community: physical, virtual and mobile.
- Annual connection with users and non-users to determine their information, entertainment, and technical needs and interests.
- Use the Huntsville Public Library Strategic Plan 2017-20, Community Analysis, and survey information as well as the Town of Huntsville Strategic Plan – 2017 and Beyond and other working plans to plan.
- Develop training plans for all Library staff to ensure they have the skills (public service, research, information, and technical) to meet the needs of users.

Library 2017-2020 Strategic Plan

Accordingly, the Library 2017-2020 Strategic Plan has a vision of being a vital centre to collaborate, connect and explore the world in which we live. To do this the Library

will seek to provide accessible programs, collections, services and spaces designed to inspire and enrich the community in the following ways:

1. Refreshing and renovating physical, virtual and mobile spaces to current and future needs.
2. Increasing the Library's presence and profile in the community.
3. Connecting and guiding users to community opportunities.
4. Increasing access and outreach.
5. Advocating and collaborating with partners.
6. Preserving the Library's strengths and organizational capacity.

Related Documents

2017-2020 Library Strategic Plan

Regional Report on Well Being in Ontario, The Northern Region

Town of Huntsville Strategic Plan – 2017 and Beyond

Creating the Future You've Imagined: A Guide to Essential Planning, Appendix 10. SOLS, 2007.

History

Approved by the Board June 12, 2017 | Motion: 17-52

Supersedes the policy approved by the Board June 9, 2014 | Motion: 14-47