

# Preliminary Issues Report

## TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN

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ONTARIO, CANADA



## **Table of Contents**

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Introduction.....	2
Economic Development .....	4
Residential Development .....	10
Community Services .....	13
Environmental Protection.....	16
Transportation .....	19
Property Development .....	21
Land Use and Zoning.....	24
Summary of Questions for Consideration .....	27

# Introduction

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In July 2007, the Township of South Algonquin formally commenced the process of creating the Township's first-ever official plan. As defined by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

"An official plan describes your local or county or regional council's policies on how land in your community should be used. It is prepared with input from you and your fellow citizens and helps to ensure that future planning and development will meet the specific needs of your community. An official plan deals mainly with issues such as: where new housing, industry, offices and shops will go; what services like roads, watermains, sewers, parks and schools will be needed; and when and in what order parts of your community will grow.

Your municipality's official plan:

- lets the public know what the municipality's general land use planning policies are
- makes sure that growth is coordinated and meets your community needs
- helps all members of your community understand how their land can be used now and in the future
- helps decide where roads, watermains, sewers, garbage dumps, parks and other services will go
- provides a framework for setting local regulations and standards, like the size of lots and height of buildings
- provides a way to evaluate and settle conflicting land uses while meeting local, regional and provincial interests
- shows your council's commitment to the planned growth of your community"

The process of creating an official plan for the Township of South Algonquin is being spearheaded by Professor Chris Fullerton of Brock University and several of his current and former Geography students. However, the ultimate goal throughout this process will be to solicit and incorporate as much as possible the input of South Algonquin's permanent and seasonal residents, municipal leaders and staff, provincial government representatives, and other stakeholders who have an interest in the Township's future growth and development.

The purpose of this report is to initiate dialogue concerning various issues and concerns that, either directly or indirectly, will influence the creation of land use planning policies that will serve as means of achieving the Township's planning and development goals. Following the distribution of this document, the project group will embark on a series of research initiatives in cooperation with the stakeholders identified above. This will include

scheduling of public workshops, the distribution of a survey questionnaire, the solicitation of written submissions, and the identification of matters of provincial planning interests. This information, once collected and analyzed, will lead to the formulation of a draft official plan, which will then also be released for review by stakeholder groups. Subsequently, any revisions to the draft official plan that are deemed necessary will be incorporated into the document before a formal official plan is presented to the Township council for approval. It is important to note, however, that the official plan must also be approved by the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in order to ensure that it complies with all provincial planning legislation.

As you read through this preliminary report, we urge you to consider what it is you value about the Township of South Algonquin and what you would like to see the Township look like, as far as planning and development are concerned, in the next twenty years. We would also like to encourage you to take advantage of one or more of the opportunities that will be presented to you to provide your input into this very important planning process. Many of the activities where public input will be solicited will take place in the month of January 2008. Notice of these activities will be provided on the Township of South Algonquin's web site and through the local media.

## Economic Development

Of the several reasons a community has for pursuing economic prosperity, the most obvious would have to be the resulting employment.<sup>1</sup> Like in any municipality, the economy of South Algonquin is vital to the survival of the community. The strength of the economy is reflected in just about every aspect of the Township, and with it focused on just a few areas, extra care needs to be taken that these industries can be supported and given the opportunity to grow. In the Township there are really only two industries that can be considered developed, forestry and tourism.

Industry	Jobs	% of Jobs	Labour Force	% of Labour Force
Total Jobs	560	100%	515	100%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	65	11.6%	45	8.7%
Construction	25	4.5%	65	12.6%
Manufacturing	225	40.2%	95	18.4%
Wholesale Trade	10	1.8%	0	0.0%
Retail Trade	30	5.4%	40	7.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	10	1.8%	40	7.8%
Information and Cultural Industries	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Finance and Insurance	10	1.8%	10	1.9%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0	0.0%	10	1.9%
Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	15	2.7%	15	2.9%
Educational Services	10	1.8%	10	1.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	0	0.0%	15	2.9%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	110	19.6%	140	27.2%
Public Administration	50	8.9%	30	5.8%

**Jobs** - number of people employed by local industries; workers may or may not be residents of the municipality.

**Labour Force** - number of local residents employed in the sector, whether or not they work in the municipality.<sup>2</sup>

### Issue 1:Forestry

#### Major Concerns:

- By far, forestry is the largest employment sector in South Algonquin.
- There are two lumber mills in the Township, which employ approximately 285 people.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John M. Levy, *Contemporary Urban Planning*, 2003, p 219

<sup>2</sup> Rural Economic Development Data & Intelligence, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2007

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

- The majority of the lumber used by the two mills comes from Algonquin Provincial Park.
- There are many organizations and politicians across Canada that would like to see tree removal extremely limited or banned all together.
- The Ontario Parks Board has proposed expanding harvest protection zones from 22% of the park to 54%.<sup>4</sup>
- McRae Lumber Company Ltd. depends on Algonquin Park for 76% of their lumber, while Murray Brothers Lumber depends on 50%.
- Any restrictions on tree cutting will have a direct effect on the two largest employers and a more indirect effect on the entire local economy.
- It seems as though South Algonquin's economy is possibly just one election away from taking a heavy hit, as a provincial government has enough power to impose a large restriction on cutting.
- With the economy weighing so heavily on the forestry industry, it would be beneficial to have a strong secondary industry to rely on, should the Township face any such situation in the immediate or more distant future.



**What other municipalities have done:**

- Two examples of relevant land use planning policies are those found in the official plans of the Municipality of Whitestone and the Town of Kearney.
- The Municipality of Whitestone's policy states that:

“The resource sector provides a number of local businesses particularly in the timber and construction industries. Existing resource industries and new businesses will be encouraged in appropriate locations within the rural area and in isolated instances along the waterfront and in community areas. These industries are supported so long as they are carried out in a responsible environmental manner and so that no serious

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<sup>4</sup> Recommendations of the Ontario Parks Board, 2006

adverse impacts are created on any adjacent sensitive land uses.”<sup>5</sup>

- Similarly, the Town of Kearney has the following policy:

“Forest resource operations and management are permitted uses in the "Rural" and "Hazard Areas" designations and will follow sound forest management practice to ensure the sustainability of the economy and the environment for the various forest users. When considering a development proposal, Council will consult with the Ministry of Natural Resources when the resource may be negatively affected.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Planning Implications:**

- In creating the plan, it might be of benefit:
  - To identify other locations within the Township where sources of lumber may be available for harvesting.
  - To identify options and opportunities for economic diversification within the Township.
- In creating official plan policies related to the forestry industry, the Township will be required to respect the following provincial land use planning policies:
  - Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in
    - significant habitat of endangered species and threatened species
    - significant wildlife habitat
    - significant areas of natural and scientific interest<sup>7</sup>
  - Planning authorities shall protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water by implementing necessary restrictions on development and site alteration to protect all municipal drinking water supplies and designated vulnerable areas.<sup>8</sup>
  - Mineral mining operations and petroleum resource operations shall be protected from development and activities that would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use or which would be incompatible for reasons of public health, public safety or environmental impact.<sup>9</sup>

### **Issue 2: Tourism**

#### **Major Concerns:**

- Although a significant proportion of the dwellings in South Algonquin are cottages, there is potential for a greater tourist economy.

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<sup>5</sup> Municipality of Whitestone Official Plan 2003, 7.04

<sup>6</sup> 2006 Town of Kearney Official Plan, 7.2.1

<sup>7</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.1.3

<sup>8</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.2.1

<sup>9</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.4.2.1

- Because of its proximity to Algonquin Park and having Highway 60 as a main transportation route, there is a high volume of people that travel through the Township, especially in the summer.
- Despite this high number, tourism development in South Algonquin remains somewhat limited.
- It seems like there is ample opportunity for various service and retail businesses to capitalize on these tourism opportunities.
- There is also a possibility to attract more visitors to spend nights in South Algonquin.
- The existing tourism infrastructure takes advantage of the summer

- and its ideal conditions for camping and boating.
- In the winter, however, tourism activity is much more limited.
- Winter tourism activities include snowmobiling, dog-sledding, and cross-country skiing; however there is potential for these and other



- winter tourism activities to be expanded considerably for economic development purposes.
- Trail access has become an issue as snowmobilers have fought over the trails with ATV users.
- Studies have been done by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism to determine what type of visitors Northern Ontario attracts, and what they look for.
- For example: the Ministry of Tourism has found the following about tourists to Northern Ontario:
  - Majority reside in Ontario, particularly Toronto
  - Seek undiscovered and less built up destinations
  - Seek more solitude and isolation than other Canadian Travellers
  - Seek to be more physically challenged than other Canadian Travellers
  - Have a strong relationship with outdoor recreation activities, particularly camping and fresh water fishing
  - Value accessibility by car more than other modes of transportation
  - Are not traveling to be pampered or stay in luxury accommodation
  - Have higher incomes compared to other Canadian travellers

- Generally are slightly younger than other Canadian travellers
- Live mainly with a spouse or partner without young children
- A majority use the advice of friends and relatives as an important source of information for planning their trips.
- A majority of them made their travel decisions over the Internet (accommodation and air tickets)<sup>10</sup>
- There is reason to believe that, by encouraging tourism development in the Township, there is the potential to reap significant economic development benefits, especially if it is intended to attract a demographic that current businesses do not serve.

**What Other Municipalities Have Done:**

- Many municipalities have policies in place aimed at beautifying their settlement areas, particularly commercial districts, in order to make them more attractive to potential tourists.
- One means through which municipalities have aimed to do so has been through the declaration of certain sections as Community Improvement Areas, which allow for the municipality to seek public funding from both the provincial and federal governments to help improve the quality of buildings and surrounding infrastructure.
- In this regard, for example, the Township of Algonquin Highlands has enacted the following policies in its official plan:

“Community improvement areas may be defined by Council for the purpose of carrying out improvements. The following criteria are to be used as a basis for selecting areas:

- a) Condition of buildings;
- b) The status of municipal services such as, sidewalks, lighting, roads and parkland;
- c) The degree of non-conforming and incompatible land uses in the area; and,
- d) Areas where physical features such as shoreline areas present opportunities for municipal improvements which would encourage tourism and improved community recreational features.

Community Improvements may be undertaken by Council through any of the following:

- a) The designation of community improvement project areas;
- b) The preparation of community improvement plans,
- c) The acquisition of land by the Town;
- d) The creation, approval and enforcement of a property standards by-law;
- e) The use of public funds from local, provincial and federal funding programs;

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<sup>10</sup> Canadian Travellers Who Visited Northern Ontario, Ministry of Tourism, 2007

- f) The use of private donations; and,
- g) The encouragement of rehabilitation.

Within the Community Improvement Area Council may undertake a servicing options study to establish the need to consider alternate forms of sewage treatment and water supply to the private servicing presently being used if there is any indication that the present form of servicing is not sustainable in the long term.”<sup>11</sup>

- Some official plans also recognize the importance of a trail system, but do not do much to separate the use of different recreational vehicles.
- Most trails are made available for just about any form of transportation aside from cars.
- Other plans provide for the provision of extensive signage systems and possible links to other trails.
- The Municipality of Whitestone recognizes trails as being multi-use, as indicated in their plan:

“The Municipality supports the continued program of recreational trails in the region as important components of the areas recreational attractions, economy and transportation system. The Municipality will co-operate as far as possible to preserve and improve upon the existing system of trails.”<sup>12</sup>

#### **Planning Implications:**

- In creating the official plan, it might be of benefit:
  - To consider options for the creation of policies that would enable tourism development in the Township’s settlement and waterfront areas.
  - To develop policies regarding the trail system in the Township that reflect the many different potential uses of the trail system (e.g., ATVs, snowmobiling, hiking, cycling, and cross-country skiing).

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<sup>11</sup> Township of Algonquin Highlands Official Plan 2003, 6.3

<sup>12</sup> Municipality of Whitestone Official Plan 2003, 9.10.1

## Residential Development

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If there is one part of the plan that will affect all residents of South Algonquin, it is this one. One of the main objectives when building a residential area is to encourage social interaction, which will result in an attachment to the neighbourhood and a sense of belonging.<sup>13</sup> This section will help determine the future look of the Township and interaction within its communities. Because of its importance to the official plan, residential areas will demand a great deal of attention in regards to the creation of residential lots and what can be built upon them.

### Major Concerns:

- Adequate shelter is a fundamental human need and it is therefore important that the official plan provide for the accommodation of residents within a variety of housing types.
- Currently, 93.9% dwellings in the Township of South Algonquin are single-detached houses. While it can be assumed that this type of housing will remain popular into the foreseeable future, it is also important to note that the Township has a rapidly aging population; this suggests that the demand for smaller and alternative forms of housing, such as apartments and semi-detached dwellings, will grow in coming years.
- The 2006 Census of Canada also showed that the number of single parents in South Algonquin continues to rise, having increased by 23.1% between 2001 and 2006 alone.<sup>14</sup>
- These trends imply that the creation of the Township's official plan must involve thoughtful consideration of South Algonquin's socio-demographic composition and accordingly, what types of housing will be allowed, and where it will be located.
- Residential development policies must also be designed with the needs of seasonal residents in mind, as their needs may be much different than those of permanent residents.
- There are currently a very high number of seasonal dwellings in the Township (52.3% of all private dwellings in the Township)<sup>15</sup>: if further cottage development is to be encouraged, the resulting development patterns will have a significant impact on everything from South Algonquin's future appearance to the levels of demand for municipal services.

### What other municipalities have done:

- Some municipalities have sought the help of higher governments to assist with housing issues, an example being:

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<sup>13</sup> Hok-Lin Leung, *Land Use Planning Made Plain*, 1989, p 81

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada, 2001 and 2006 Census

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

“The Municipality of Whitestone supports the continued use of rehabilitation and subsidized housing programs sponsored by the Provincial or Federal Governments where applicable in the Municipality. If required under any such program, the Municipality will produce and implement a Property Standards by-law.”<sup>16</sup>

- Other municipalities also have standards of what kind of housing design is acceptable and this is achieved through zoning, property maintenance and occupancy standards.
- This can be a problem, however, if the standards are based on maintaining a certain character in the neighbourhood, rather than for the benefit of occupants.
- Many municipalities have allowed for high and medium density residential development, which is generally more affordable for families to live in.

#### **Planning Implications:**

- In preparing the official plan, it will be necessary:
  - To determine the housing needs of South Algonquin’s population, based on consideration of its socio-demographic characteristics.
  - To ensure that the residential development policies will permit all residents to have their housing needs met regardless of their socio-economic status.
  - To ensure that any non-residential activities that are permitted within or adjacent to residential areas are compatible and do not negatively affect residents’ quality of life.
- The creation of residential development policies must also adhere to the following provincial land use planning policies:
  - Planning authorities shall maintain at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 10 years through residential intensification.



<sup>16</sup> Municipality of Whitestone Official Plan 2003, 11.01.3

- Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range of housing types and densities to meet projected requirements of current and future residents of the regional market area by establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 1.4.1

## Community Services

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When planning for community services or facilities, there are two factors in relation to the delivery that are highly valued: the convenience to residents and the economics involved.<sup>18</sup> These factors can have a strong affect on the quality of living in a community. Planning with community services in mind could help determine the communal centre or centres of South Algonquin. This decision could then lead to a chain of policies that not only affect the location of community services, but also influence the location of future economic and residential development within the Township.

### Major Concerns:

- The two main centres of South Algonquin (Whitney and Madawaska) are still considered by many local residents to be separate communities, as they were before the Township's creation in 1998.
- Prior to amalgamation, each community developed its own amenities, such as schools, libraries and recreational centres.
- There is now pressure to share some of these facilities in the interest of achieving economic efficiency, but there is some reluctance to do so among residents where this could result in the need to travel further to access these services.
- Financially, it would be difficult for the Township and other agencies to divide amenities between the two settlement areas and still keep them of high quality.
- However, it is also important to respect the individuality and history of Whitney and Madawaska.
- Without a clear central location for the amenities, it will be a difficult matter of deciding where to place them.



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<sup>18</sup> Hok-Lin Leung, *Land Use Planning Made Plain*, 1989, p 110

- A conscious decision will need to be made to determine what way the Township wants to go in regards to this matter.
- Unfortunately, Whitney and Madawaska are at opposite ends of the Township, which would be inconvenient if residents from one town had to travel to the other for necessary amenities.
- Similarly, residents of the Township's rural areas may also be faced with longer travel distances as an outcome of the decisions made regarding this matter.
- There are no settlements in between the two communities and it is neither practical, nor encouraged, by the provincial government to begin a new settlement in an undeveloped rural area.
- Not much can be done by the plan to attract more services to South Algonquin; however, planning for community services must be done not only from the point of view of residents, but also that of individuals or firms who may want to bring a new service to the area.

**What other municipalities have done:**

- Some municipalities have decided to go with fewer numbers of amenities, but of higher quality than if they were distributed throughout the entire municipality. This decision leads to increased travel times, but easier management.
- As one example, the Township of Seguin's official plan contains the following policies:
  - “Community facilities include schools, clinics, libraries and community centres that are designed to meet the social and cultural needs of Township residents. It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that:
    - a) schools are maintained to adequately serve the surrounding neighbourhood and/or catchment area;
    - b) the Township continues to be well served by schools and community centres in appropriate locations;
    - d) adequate library services are provided to Township residents as determined by Council;
    - e) adequate emergency access is provided throughout the Township by police and fire stations and by police, fire and other emergency vehicles; and,
    - f) public access points to the water.
 In order to ensure that community services are provided in a manner that meets the needs of Township residents, servicing strategies that deal with service areas may be prepared to serve as a guide for the provision of services to the Township.”<sup>19</sup>

**Planning Implications:**

- In preparing the official plan it will be necessary:
  - To determine the preferred locations of community services for Township residents, with consideration for the economic

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<sup>19</sup> Township of Seguin Official Plan, 2006, B.16.1

efficiency and travel implications of these decisions, as well as their impacts on intra-community relations.

- In deciding how to address the issue of community service location, several aspects of the provincial policy statement must also be considered, especially the following three policies:
  - Infrastructure and public service facilities shall be provided in a coordinated, efficient and cost-effective manner to accommodate projected needs.
  - Planning for infrastructure and public service facilities shall be integrated with planning for growth so that these are available to meet current and projected needs.<sup>20</sup>
  - Infrastructure and public service facilities should be strategically located to support the effective and efficient delivery of emergency management services.<sup>21</sup>



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<sup>20</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 1.6.1

<sup>21</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 1.6.3

## Environmental Protection

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There is no way to determine to an exact degree what the environmental impacts of any particular development activity might be, but approximate ramifications can be foreseen. It is of great benefit to be able to predict these likely impacts.<sup>22</sup> Environmental concerns will demand a great amount of attention from the plan, as there are many forms of provincial legislation that need to be followed. If these rules and regulations are ignored, it can affect other policies and make it more difficult for them to be put into place. The environment has to be considered in just about every matter, including land use zoning and residential development, and will be prevalent in the final plan.

### Major Concerns:

- Although most of the tree removal by South Algonquin's mills takes place in Algonquin Provincial Park, a small amount of it is done within the Township.
- If logging becomes more limited, there will most likely be more tree removal in the Township.
- Tree removal is not a simple issue, either; there would need to be efforts made to ensure that it is sustainable and not a threat to any aspects of the environment.
- Waste management opportunities should also be considered as part of the planning process.
- For example, there is no recycling program in place within the Township, which in turn could lead to future concerns about the sizing and location of waste disposal sites.



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<sup>22</sup> Gerald Hodge, *Planning Canadian Communities*, 1998, p 215

### **What other municipalities have done:**

- Other municipalities have simply followed the environmental conditions set out by the provincial government, in regards to all planning policies.
- In regards to waste management, there are concerted efforts to protect the environment surrounding waste disposal sites, including limiting what land uses are allowed on adjacent lands.
- There are also prohibitions of residential and commercial uses in conjunction with waste management sites.
- A typical policy regarding waste management is present in the Township of Algonquin Highlands' official plan:

"All waste management sites operating in the Township, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be operated in a manner that safeguards the environment and protects nearby residents and sensitive land uses from undue impact. No residential use is permitted in conjunction with a licensed waste management site."<sup>23</sup>

### **Planning Implications:**

- With South Algonquin being primarily a rural community, the natural environment will inevitably affect a number of policies in the official plan.
- Most of the environmental policies will be set by the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources.
- The rules set out by the provincial government are very rigid and cannot be negotiated, so they will be unlike other sections of the plan where there is a great amount of flexibility.
- Environmental policies will affect almost every section of the plan and have to be respected.
- The following provincial policies are among those that the Township will be required to incorporate into its official plan:
  - Natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term.<sup>24</sup>
  - Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in
    - significant habitat of endangered species and threatened species
    - significant wildlife habitat
    - significant areas of natural and scientific interest<sup>25</sup>
  - Planning authorities shall protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water by implementing necessary restrictions on development and site alteration to protect all municipal drinking water supplies and designated vulnerable areas.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Township of Algonquin Highlands Official Plan, 2003, 5.6.2

<sup>24</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.1.1

<sup>25</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.1.3

<sup>26</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.2.1

- Mineral mining operations and petroleum resource operations shall be protected from development and activities that would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use or which would be incompatible for reasons of public health, public safety or environmental impact.<sup>27</sup>
- Mineral aggregate resources shall be protected for long-term use.<sup>28</sup>
- Extraction of resources shall be undertaken in a manner which minimizes social and environmental impacts.<sup>29</sup>
- Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.<sup>30</sup>



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<sup>27</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.4.2.1

<sup>28</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.5.1

<sup>29</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.5.2.2

<sup>30</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 2.6.1

## Transportation

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The management and expedition of traffic is as much of an issue as it ever has been, in terms of environmental impact as well as providing comfort for drivers and pedestrians.<sup>31</sup> The Township is no exception to this. Policies made here could determine how people get to South Algonquin, and also how residents get around. This is also an opportunity to affect the image of South Algonquin to outsiders. If a greater effort is made to identify and maintain the roads that visitors generally drive on, there could be an indirect effect on tourism. This could also lead to further development along the highway if desired. By improving alternative modes of transportation, such as walking or cycling, there could also be positive effects for residents, such as saving money on gas and better health.

### Major Concerns:

- Given the highly rural nature of the Township, the automobile is and will likely continue to be the primary mode of transportation for residents and visitors.
- Accordingly, it will be of paramount importance that the official plan identifies the current and proposed road network.
- The location and type of roadways to be provided will have a strong influence on development opportunities and constraints.
- The dominance of the automobile notwithstanding, there is also the potential to improve the pedestrian environments in Whitney and Madawaska for the benefit of local residents and visitors.
- For example, Highway 60 is a dangerous road to walk along, yet most businesses in these communities are located along this highway.
- Accordingly, the provision of sidewalks may be another matter for consideration as transportation-related official plan policies are created.



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<sup>31</sup> Hok-Lin Leung, *Land Use Planning Made Plain*, 1989, p 12

### What other municipalities have done:

- The Township of Seguin has divided roads into four categories, Provincial Highways, Arterial Roads, Local Roads and Private Roads.<sup>32</sup>
- Under each category are the Township's policies regarding if they build or maintain the roads, and what the requirements are.
- Other plans have implemented policies such as for the allowance of bicycle lanes and having sidewalks link residential areas with commercial.
- There are also policies that guide the sizes and locations of parking lots in an effort to allow more businesses and achieve a desired look in the town's core.

### Planning Implications:

- In preparing the official plan, it will be necessary:
  - To classify the Township's road network by function and with regard to future development.
  - To consider the desirability and feasibility of adding and expanding pedestrian infrastructure in the communities of Whitney and Madawaska.
- The Provincial Policy Statement will also require consideration of the following policies:
  - Transportation systems should be provided which are safe, energy efficient, facilitate the movement of people and goods, and are appropriate to address projected needs.<sup>33</sup>
  - Transportation and land use considerations shall be integrated at all stages of the planning process.<sup>34</sup>
  - Planning authorities shall plan for and protect corridors and rights-of-way for transportation, transit and infrastructure facilities to meet current and projected needs.<sup>35</sup>



<sup>32</sup> Seguin Township Official Plan 2006, Table E.1.2

<sup>33</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 1.6.5.1

<sup>34</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 1.6.5.5

<sup>35</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 1.6.6.1

## Property Development

More often than not, an individual land severance is harmless and has no effect on the surrounding areas; but these severances need to be viewed on the whole, as well as the effects of several.<sup>36</sup> This is one area of the plan that has little guidance from higher governments. Determining conditions for lot division can make a plan unique from others and gives an excellent opportunity to affect the appearance of the entire municipality, not just a certain section. Like the environmental policies, the land severance policies affect everything else in the plan and because of this, it is vital that the truly desired policies are implemented.

### Major Concerns:

- Because of the absence of a plan, matters dealing with the severance of land have to go through offices in Queen's Park, which causes many problems.
- One problem is that communication between applicants and those who review the applications is somewhat disconnected because of the relatively great distance between South Algonquin and Toronto.
- People are unable to meet face-to-face to discuss severance claims and the decisions are up to people who are unfamiliar with the area and cannot visit the site in person.
- The standards that currently guide the process of severing land in the Township are provincial and do not apply specifically to South Algonquin.
- This is one issue that needs an official plan in place, because there are some areas where federal and provincial standards are not appropriate as each municipality has its own unique intricacies.



<sup>36</sup> Gerald Hodge, Planning Canadian Communities, 1998, p , 269

### **What other municipalities have done:**

- Different municipalities have different standards for what sizes of property are acceptable and not impinging on neighbouring lands;
- There also tend to be uniform rules regarding minimums of lot frontages and accommodation for water and sewage disposal systems.
- An example of these two points would be from the plan for the Township of Algonquin Highlands:

“The lot should be reasonably well proportioned, of regular shape and dimension, and designed so as to preserve natural features and existing vegetation to the greatest extent possible and must be of sufficient size and configuration to be serviced by private on-site water and sewage disposal systems.”<sup>37</sup>

- Generally, most places will not approve a severance if the new property is subject to a natural hazard, has a negative impact on natural features and environmentally sensitive areas, or if it is near an industrial operation or areas identified as having mineral or aggregate resources.
- Some municipalities have capped the number of properties that can be severed, based on the original size.
- An example of this is a maximum of 4 lots per original 40 hectare lot.
- There are also concerns about whether or not rural properties should be allowed to use private roads, such as in the Township of Algonquin Highland’s plan:

“The lot must front on an existing year round publicly maintained Township road, unless it is located in the Waterfront designation, in which case the provisions of Section 5.2.3 shall apply.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Planning Implications:**

- This is an area of the plan that will require a great amount of time and detail.
- The way a municipality divides land often shapes the look of the area.
- In preparing the official plan it will be necessary:
  - To consider what will be the minimum and maximum allowable sizes for lots.
  - To decide how many lots can be created from one and if they can be placed along private roads.
- All of these decisions will have to be based upon the individual land use designation that has been assigned to the property in question.

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<sup>37</sup> Township of Algonquin Highlands Official Plan, 2003, 9.3.2.4

<sup>38</sup> Township of Algonquin Highlands Official Plan, 2003, 9.3.2.5

- In accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement, the Township of South Algonquin's official plan policies must also comply with the following statements:
  - The creation of lots must comply with the minimum distance separation formulae.<sup>39</sup>
  - Planning for sewage and water services shall allow lot creation only if there is confirmation of sufficient reserve sewage system capacity and reserve water system capacity.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 1.1.4.1

<sup>40</sup> 2005 Ontario Provincial Policy Statement, 1.6.4.1

## Land Use and Zoning

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Writing an official plan is rarely ever enough of an effort to achieve the desired results. There must be tools in place to help guide the plan's policies and ensure that they are implemented properly.<sup>41</sup> Like property development, land use and zoning will help determine the look of the Township. While the Township will have a significant degree of flexibility in the determination of land use designations and relevant zoning by-laws, this opportunity also comes with the responsibility of ensuring that decisions are made with consideration for the long-term impacts of these choices and their role in shaping the quality of life of Township residents. Thus, land use and zoning policies must be developed with serious consideration of the potential adverse effects that may ensue.

### Major Concerns:

- A large proportion of the Township's total land area (approximately 80%) is crown land. Official plans and zoning by-laws do not apply to these lands.
- For the remainder of the Township, however, there are no formal policies in place that regulate the nature of land use activities.
- Currently, residents can operate a business, a shop or just about anything they want because there is nothing to stop them.
- Without formal policies, people are also able to change the ways in which their land is used at their own free will.
- It is therefore of critical importance that land use and zoning policies be created that are sensitive to issues such as the compatibility of neighbouring activities, aesthetic and environmental impacts, and the future demand for municipal and community services.
- The development of land use and zoning policies will also necessitate consideration of future cottage and tourism development activity and their potential impacts on the rural character of the Township, such as noise pollution and loss of privacy.



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<sup>41</sup> Gerald Hodge, *Planning Canadian Communities*, 1998, p 241

### **What other municipalities have done:**

- Most plans have a statement that asserts the authority of the municipality in regards to zoning properties and adjacent lots, an example of this being from the Town of Kearney's plan:

“Land or lots which are unable to meet the minimum standards set out in this Plan which existed legally at the date of adoption of this document may be deemed to conform, unless otherwise restricted by the policies of the Plan. Such uses may be zoned in a special category or within the general zoning category conforming with the Plan, and in accordance with their present use and performance standards, provided that:

  - a) The zoning will not permit any significant change of use or zone provisions that will aggravate any situation detrimental to adjacent complying uses;
  - b) The uses to be recognized are zoned in such a way that any significant enlargement or expansion of the use must be by amendment to the Zoning By-Law;
  - c) They do not constitute a danger to surrounding uses and persons because of their hazardous nature or the traffic they create;
  - d) They do not pollute air and/or water to the extent of interfering with the ordinary quality of property;
  - e) They do not interfere with the desirable growth or enjoyment of the adjacent area, and
  - f) They do not result in negative impacts to natural heritage features.”<sup>42</sup>
  
- Other plans have declared any land outside of settlements and waterfronts to be rural.
- Although most waterfronts are adjacent to rural lands, it is important to separate them because land along water has a much higher value and is usually desired for a different purpose than most rural land.
- To prevent waterfront areas from becoming overdeveloped, some municipalities have set maximum sizes of buildings, such as not allowing a building to occupy more than 25% of the water frontage.
- There also tend to be greater restrictions on the number of buildings and their uses along water fronts to protect the local environment. The Municipality of Whitestone is mindful of the environment surrounding water, as one of their policies exhibits:

“No development will be permitted on the shoreline of area lakes that has the effect of altering the trophic status of the waterbody in accordance with the Ministry of the Environment surface water quality objectives.

The Ministry of the Environment will assess the effect of a development proposal on a particular waterbody, and development

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<sup>42</sup> Town of Kearney Official Plan, 2006, 11.3

will be limited to that level which results in no change to the trophic category of the lake."<sup>43</sup>

- Some municipalities allow for a small guest house, but most will not allow for a second dwelling.
- It is common for a plan to allow a second structure, such as a boathouse or dock, provided that it is not used for any habitation or business, although exceptions are some times made for Bed & Breakfasts.
- A more common and obvious by-law is to properly distance industrial areas from residential, as there are a number of things that can bother people living in the area, such as noise, vibrations, traffic, smoke and air quality.
- Another common by-law is that people cannot simply change the use of their land without the consideration of how it will affect adjacent and nearby lots.

**Planning Implications:**

- In creating the official plan, it will be necessary:
  - To identify specific land use categories.
  - To identify the locations where these designations will be applied.
  - To define the activities that will be allowed within each of these land use categories.
- It is also important to note that all land use and zoning policies adopted by the Township of South Algonquin must adhere to the Provincial Policy Statement.

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<sup>43</sup> Municipality of Whitestone Official Plan 2003, 16.02.4

# **Summary of Questions for Consideration**

## Economic Development

### Forestry

- Are there locations within the Township where sources of lumber may be available to harvest?
- What are the options and opportunities for economic diversification within the Township?

### Tourism

- What land use policies should be created to enable tourism development in the Township's settlement and waterfront areas?
- What policies should be developed regarding the trail system in the Township that reflect the many different potential uses of the trail system (e.g., ATVs, snowmobiling, hiking, cycling, and cross-country skiing)?

## Residential Development

- What are the housing needs of South Algonquin's population, given its socio-demographic characteristics?
- What residential development policies should be created to ensure that the residential development policies will permit all residents to have their housing needs met regardless of their socio-economic status?
- What non-residential activities should or should not be permitted within or adjacent to residential areas?

## Community Services

- What are the preferred locations of community services for Township residents?

## Transportation

- How adequate is the Township's current road network?
- Should any new roads be planned for development within the Township?
- Should the Township consider adding and expanding pedestrian infrastructure in the communities of Whitney and Madawaska?

## Property Development

- What should be the minimum and maximum allowable sizes for lots?
- How many lots can be subdivided from a single property?
- Can new lots be created along private roads?

## Land Use and Zoning

- How should the Township be divided as far as land use categories are concerned?
- Where should the different land use designations be applied?
- What activities should be allowed within each land use category?