

Muskoka Regional Centre

Opportunities Assessment & Optimal Use Study

Community Update

Volume 1, Issue 1

June 2013

Muskoka Regional Centre Opportunity Study Commences

Infrastructure Ontario, an agency of the Province of Ontario responsible for managing the Muskoka Regional Centre, has retained the services of MHBC Planning to complete an Opportunities Assessment & Optimal Use Study of the Muskoka Regional Centre property in Gravenhurst. Members of the Consulting Team include: Kris Menzies, Partner with MHBC, Jamie Robinson, MHBC Associate (land use planning, site design and landscape architecture), Cole Engineering (engineering and transportation), Tarandus Associates (natural environment), Altus Group (economics), and Karen Wianeki, Planning Solutions Inc. (community engagement and meeting facilitation.)

The first Community Meeting was held on Saturday, June 8th from 10:00 – 12:00 noon. More than 100 residents attended the session to learn about the scope of the study and to offer their comments about the process moving forward. Thank you to everyone who took the time to attend – it was an excellent session!

The Opportunity Study will focus on identifying a series of options for the future use of the Muskoka Regional Centre. The study will not be completed by the Consulting Team in isolation...it will be developed in consultation with the community. This was the first Public Meeting. A number of additional opportunities for community engagement are being planned. The Consulting Team will be submitting its recommendations Report to Infrastructure Ontario at the end of the calendar year and will be presenting some **preliminary concepts** to the community for review and comment in the Fall...please stay tuned.

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Thank You to All Who Attended the First Public Meeting!

We would like to extend thanks to all who attended the first meeting and to those who have taken the time to share ideas and perspectives. We understand how important this property is to the Town and to the District, and we are looking forward to working with you as the Opportunity Study advances.

Background & Points of Clarification

A number of questions were raised about the study, the role of the Steering Committee and the need for a process that is transparent, objective, inclusive and engaging. The following points of clarification are offered:

What is an Opportunities Assessment & Optimal Use Study?

It is a study that considers the possible future use(s) for the property.

When will the study be completed?

MHBC Planning will be submitting a recommendations Report to Infrastructure Ontario by December 2013.

Who owns the property? Who manages the property?

The property is owned by the Province and managed by Infrastructure Ontario, an agency of the Provincial Government.

Is the property for sale? The property is not currently for sale.

What is the role of the Steering Committee? The Steering Committee is responsible for overseeing the Opportunities Assessment & Optimal Use Study. The Steering Committee will provide advice and guidance to the Consulting Team regarding community engagement and process. **The Steering Committee is NOT developing recommendations for submission to Infrastructure Ontario.** The Study is an independent study being completed by MHBC Planning. MHBC Planning is responsible for developing recommendations and submitting those recommendations to Infrastructure Ontario for consideration.

First Community Meeting – Key Outcomes

What Did You Tell Us?

We learned a great deal from those who attended the first Community Meeting. This is an important property and the future of the Muskoka Regional Centre is an issue that is top of mind for many of you. Some questions were raised about the timing of the Opportunity Study and why Infrastructure Ontario is embarking on a study at this time...after all, the property has been sitting for many years. It was also suggested that Infrastructure Ontario needs to be in attendance at the next meeting.

The first Community meeting produced a number of important results and allowed a number of important perspectives and thoughts to be shared. It demonstrated that the Muskoka Regional Centre property is important for the Town of Gravenhurst but also for the Region as a whole. There were many comments and concerns. The following captures the key learnings that emerged from the meeting:

1. There is a need to honour existing policies to protect the shoreline and public ownership that are already articulated in the Gravenhurst Official Plan.
2. Public representation on the Steering Committee is needed.
3. Project timing may be problematic to allow some groups to mobilize and be able to participate effectively.
4. Connecting with Muskoka Conservancy and Places to Worship in Gravenhurst is vital.
5. Focus on the heritage (built and cultural) aspects. A heritage representative should be on the Steering Committee.
6. Consider long term opportunities for local employment.
7. Water quality in the Bay is critical.
8. Consider keeping the K-9 Training Facility operating at the site.
9. Need to follow up with Infrastructure Ontario to obtain answers to the following:
 - Why is the study being done now?
 - Who will be responsible for demolition and clean-up?
 - Will IO commit to following due process as prescribed by The Planning to ensure the public has an option to exercise its right to appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board?
 - What is the long term intent of the Province and IO with respect to this property?
10. There are a number of critical design 'must have's' that need to be taken into account when any future use is being considered. These include: the health of the Bay; aesthetics and the importance of continuing to promote tourism; and employment – decent, ongoing, sustained and good paying employment.
11. No windmills.
12. Design a public process that is open, transparent, inclusive, responsible and engaging.

Mark Your Calendars...
July 27, 2013 – Dock of the Bay,
1110 Bay Street, Gravenhurst

Second Community Session -Design Workshop-

A Community Design Charrette is being planned for July 27th, 2013. This design workshop will allow members of the community to meet with the Consulting Team and provide feedback on some preliminary design concepts for the Muskoka Regional Centre. This will be a 'hands-on working session' and participants will have a chance to 'roll up their sleeves' and share their design ideas for the future of the Muskoka Regional Centre site. Everyone is welcome - We hope you can join us!

Can't Make the Second Meeting in July? We still want to hear from you!

If you have specific ideas about the future of the Muskoka Regional Centre site but you cannot attend the Design Workshop on July 27th from 9:00 – 1:00, please share your thoughts by completing our electronic survey...available at the following web address:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7HKS399>

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

*I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS...
WHO CAN I CONTACT?*

If you are looking for more information about the Muskoka Regional Centre Opportunities Study, we invite you to contact us. You can reach Renato Romanin at the Town of Gravenhurst (705) 687-2230 x 271 or the Consulting Team through Jamie Robinson at (705) 728-0045 x 222 or Karen Wianecki at (905) 428-6113 or by email at

karen.wianecki@sympatico.ca.

**MUSKOKA REGIONAL CENTRE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FIRST COMMUNITY MEETING – PROJECT KICKOFF

PLACE: CENTENNIAL CENTRE
DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 8TH, 2013
TIME: 10:00 – 12:00

SECOND COMMUNITY MEETING – DESIGN WORKSHOP

PLACE: DOCK OF THE BAY, 1110 BAY STREET, GRAVENHURST
DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 27TH, 2013
TIME: 9:00 – 1:00 WORKING SESSION

THIRD COMMUNITY MEETING

PLACE: TO BE DETERMINED
DATE: TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMUNITY AT THE
SECOND MEETING ON JULY 27TH, 2013
TIME: 9:00 – 12:00



**All information, studies and
upcoming public meeting
notices will be posted to the
Town of Gravenhurst
website:**

www.gravenhurst.ca

Please check the site regularly as updates will be
posted on an ongoing basis.

***Come Work With Us...
Share Your Ideas for the Muskoka
Regional Centre.***

***When We Work Together Great
Things Are Possible.***
