

# Section I: Rural

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## Rural Designation

The rural designation encompasses a large portion of the Township landmass. It is the hinterland outside of the communities and the waterfront area and includes the vast forested countryside characterized by a varied terrain, watercourses, ponds and wetlands. Many of the Township's important natural and environmentally sensitive areas are located within this designation.

This land presented native peoples and the first settlers with hunting and fishing opportunities, but for the most part did not support the farming activities that occurred with settlement elsewhere. Lumbering and tourism provided more viable economic activities and are still important to the Township.

The rural area supports resource management activities, such as forestry, aggregate extraction and land extensive businesses, which are important to the economy of the Township. The rural area also provides outdoor recreation opportunities for activities such as snowmobiling, skiing, hiking, nature interpretation and education, as well as more remote activities such as hunting, fishing and trapping. Settlement in the rural area remains relatively sparse today, offering residents a private and tranquil lifestyle, but fewer services than are available in the communities.

### Definition

- 1.1 The rural designation encompasses the hinterland beyond the boundaries of the community and waterfront designations, as well as land which is not subject to any other designation of this plan.

### Function

- 1.2 The rural designation acts as a resource, recreational, and low-density settlement area for small-scale development. In addition, this area acts as a conservation area for expansive undeveloped areas and significant natural, environmentally sensitive and wildlife habitat areas.

### Basis and Principles

- 1.3 Development in the rural area, other than resource related industry, recreation or other uses which require a remote location, will be directed to areas where:
- rural settlement exists;
  - public road access is available;
  - public services such as police, fire, ambulance, and school busing are available;

**Location of  
Growth**

- d) adequate private individual water and sewage services are feasible and will be viable over the long run; and
- e) land use conflicts with rural resource operations, rural businesses, or public facilities such as waste disposal sites or waste management systems, works yards or sewage lagoons will be prevented.

**Principles**

- 1.4 The following principles will apply to growth and development within the rural designation:
- a) the integrity of the rural environment and forested landscape will be maintained;
  - b) natural and cultural heritage and habitat will be preserved;
  - c) the character of the rural area and rural roads will be maintained;
  - d) rural aesthetics and scenic areas will be preserved;
  - e) natural vegetation will be retained;
  - f) development will be of a low density, small scale or rural related nature that distinguishes this area from the communities;
  - g) development within the rural fringe area surrounding a community will be restricted;
  - h) lot sizes will generally be larger than in other designations with less lot coverage and a smaller portion of the lot used for human activity;
  - i) land use conflicts will be prevented and impacts minimized;
  - j) private individual water and sewage services will be sustainable; and
  - k) service and infrastructure costs will be minimized.

**Service Limits**

- 1.5 The level of service expected within the rural designation will be less than that expected within a community designation.
- 1.6 The type of uses in the rural designation will be limited by the use of private individual water and sewage systems.

**Character**

- 1.7 The character of the rural area lies in its physical setting and topography, the form and density of settlement, as well as the land uses, resource management and recreational activities, which have occurred over time. The shape and features of the land present physical and visual characteristics that create local identity and interest and are important elements of the rural character.

**Physical Setting**

- 1.8 The rural setting in the Township of Lake of Bays is predominantly a natural, forested landscape typical of the Algonquin Highlands, with a varied topography comprised of hills and valleys, rock ridges, bedrock outcroppings, as well as small, isolated areas of cleared land related

to farm operations. Water resources exist in the form of streams, creeks, ponds and wetlands. The rural landscape provides an expansive and scenic open space with attractive vistas and panoramas.

I.9 Many significant natural, environmentally sensitive and wildlife habitat areas exist within this designation.

I.10 Settlement in the rural designation is characterized by extremely low density. Lots are generally large with development occupying a very small portion of the lot. Small lot frontages, areas, setbacks and coverage are not typical in the rural area. Development is generally serviced by private individual water and sewage systems and located in close proximity to existing transportation routes. Overall, the setting is natural, and built form does not dominate the landscape.

**Settlement**

I.11 Land use in the rural designation includes single detached dwellings located on large lots and rural businesses. Rural business generally include: land extensive or small scale businesses, businesses that relate to the rural area, or businesses that would not be appropriate in a community due to their character and function. Many home-based businesses are found in the rural area and include occupations such as artisans or home businesses with outdoor storage needs such as fuel wood operations or contractors.

**Land Use**

I.12 The rural designation is also the location of resource management activities, which contribute to the local economy, and include forestry, aggregate extraction and some minor farm activities.

I.13 Space expansive recreational uses are also located within the rural designation and include trails for snowmobiling, mountain biking, hiking, or Nordic skiing.

I.14 Large areas that are relatively remote and undeveloped exist within the rural designation and provide for conservation, resource and remote recreational activities such as hunting, trapping and fishing.

**Remote Areas**

I.15 Important public facilities such as landfill sites or sewage lagoons, which serve the greater community, are located in the rural designation.

**Public Facilities**

## **General Policy**

### **Preservation of Rural Character**

I.16 Rural character will be preserved by ensuring that the uses permitted are appropriate, maintaining a low density of development, and

through the conservation of the basic elements that contribute to the rural character in the location and design of development.

**Fringe Area**

- I.17 The rural character immediately adjacent to the boundaries of designated communities, particularly along road corridors, will be preserved by only permitting rural uses at rural lot standards within this fringe area. In addition, rural uses, which would create a conflict with uses, within or at the edge of the community, will not be permitted.

**Design Principles**

- I.18 In order to preserve rural character, the following design principles should be implemented for development in the rural designation as is appropriate for the use proposed:
- a) built form should not dominate the natural landscape and visual impact should be minimized;
  - b) rock faces, vistas and panoramas should be preserved;
  - c) roads should generally follow the contours of the land and fit into the landscape;
  - d) disturbance for the construction of roads and other services should be kept to a minimum;
  - e) disturbance on lots should be limited and minimized;
  - f) lot lines should follow existing features and terrain;
  - g) building envelopes and the associated activity area should be defined, and located in the most appropriate area on the property, with the remainder of the property generally remaining in its natural state;
  - h) building envelopes should be located away from prominent ridge lines and set back from rock faces or cuts to preserve skylines;
  - i) buildings should be located adjacent to tree lines rather than in open fields;
  - j) buildings and structures should fit into the natural landscape, be low profile and should not exceed the height of the tree canopy;
  - k) the maximum amount of vegetation should be retained on a lot;
  - l) vegetation should be maintained on ridge lines or adjacent to the top of rock faces or cuts;
  - m) development setbacks from road corridors should be sufficient to provide a buffer between the road and the development, and to address noise and visual impact;
  - n) vegetation between the primary building and the road corridor, particularly along the lot frontage, should be substantially retained;
  - o) where previously removed, the vegetation between the primary building and the road corridor should be restored; and
  - p) native species should be used for buffers or vegetation restoration.

- I.19 Rural design principles will be implemented through comprehensive and site specific zoning provisions, and through site plan control agreements or other municipal agreements.

**Site Plan Control**

**Access**

- I.20 All new development will front upon and be accessible from a year round maintained, public road which is in a condition appropriate for the use proposed, and can accommodate the additional traffic.
- I.21 Private road access may be permitted for forestry and aggregate extraction operations and for internal access within a vacant land condominium.
- I.22 Private road or other access may be permitted for remote tourist commercial uses, institutional accommodation and recreational facilities, provided that:
- a) public road access is not possible;
  - b) the access is appropriate for the type of use proposed; and
  - c) the zoning by-law indicates that public services will be limited.

**Public Road  
Frontage**

**Private Road  
Access**

**Water and Sewage Servicing**

- I.23 Development in the rural area will be serviced by private individual water and sewage systems, except as provided for in Section C.66 of this Plan.

**Private, Individual  
Systems**

**Land Use Policy**

**Permitted Uses**

- I.24 The following uses may be permitted within the rural designation:
- a) single detached residential dwellings;
  - b) small scale rural business;
  - c) tourist commercial uses related to the rural area;
  - d) hunt and fishing camps;
  - e) forestry;
  - f) aggregate extraction;
  - g) agriculture;
  - h) open space; or
  - i) conservation.

**Lot Requirements**

- Size & Dimension** 1.25 All lots will be of sufficient size and dimension, and possess terrain suitable to accommodate the use proposed. Amongst other matters, this should include consideration of the following:
- a) environmental concerns or development constraints;
  - b) provision of water supply and sewage disposal;
  - c) provision of access and a safe road entrance; and
  - d) provision of a sufficient area of level land to accommodate buildings and structures without substantial alteration of the natural landscape.
- Site Evaluation** 1.26 A site evaluation may be required by the Township to determine lot or site suitability, and to identify any necessary mitigation measures.
- Variety of Lot Sizes** 1.27 Lot sizes in the rural area will generally be greater than those in the other designations and a variety of lot sizes will be required to address rural character, the principles for rural growth and development, and the rural design principles. These matters will be addressed prior to the creation of a lot in the rural area.
- Minimum Lot Size** 1.28 Unless otherwise specified, new rural lots should be a minimum of 4 hectares (10 acres) in area with 152 metres (499 feet) of road frontage.

**Rural Residential**

- Definition** 1.29 Rural residential development is comprised of single detached dwellings located on large lots which front on existing year round maintained public roads.
- Home-Based Business** 1.30 In addition to the policy of Section C, outdoor storage may be permitted for a home-business on a rural residential lot, provided that it will be buffered from the roadway and there will be no negative impact on abutting properties.
- Location** 1.31 Rural residential development should be directed to areas where residential development exists or would be compatible, and should not be located in remote, undeveloped areas, or in close proximity to:
- a) primary or secondary aggregate deposits;
  - b) aggregate operations or other resource related industries or activities;
  - c) incompatible rural industries or businesses;
  - d) farm operations where a land use conflict would result;
  - e) incompatible public uses or facilities;
  - f) hazards or development constraints; or

g) heritage areas, wetlands, significant natural area or habitat, where the policies of Section D will not be satisfied.

I.32 The minimum requirements for a new rural residential lot will be 2 hectares (5 acres) in lot area with 152 metres (499 feet) of road frontage.

**Lot Creation**

**Estate Residential**

I.33 Estate residential development is a cluster of residential lots or units for single detached dwellings located on a new internal roadway in the rural area, and created by a plan of subdivision or vacant land condominium description.

**Definition**

I.34 Estate residential development will be directed to areas where residential development exists rather than be located in remote, undeveloped areas where services are difficult to provide, or where it will place a financial burden on the Township.

**Location**

I.35 Estate residential development should not be located in proximity to:

- a) primary or secondary aggregate deposits;
- b) aggregate operations or other resource related industries or activities;
- c) incompatible rural industries or businesses;
- d) farm operations where a land use conflict would result;
- e) incompatible public uses or facilities;
- f) roads which are extensively used by heavy traffic, or a road where there will be an adverse effect on traffic movement;
- g) hazards or development constraints; or
- h) heritage areas, wetlands, significant natural areas or habitat, where the policies of Section D will not be satisfied.

I.36 Estate residential development should be located in forested areas, with a varied terrain, rather than open fields.

I.37 Estate residential clusters should preserve the natural features of the site and retain substantial vegetation, so that a natural rather than a man-made character will be maintained.

**Landscape Conservation**

I.38 An estate residential cluster will have no more than 25 lots or units, and will be spatially separated from other rural estate developments or a designated community by at least two concession lots.

**Cluster Size**

I.39 Each estate residential cluster will include a variety of lot or unit sizes, which reflect the terrain and natural features of the site. The average lot or unit size will be 1.2 hectares (3 acres) with 90 metres (295 feet)

**Lot Size**

of road frontage, and the minimum lot or unit size will be 0.4 hectares (1 acre) in area with 60 metres (197 feet) of road frontage.

- Gross Density** 1.40 Estate residential clusters should incorporate substantial open space area, so that the gross density of development is not greater than 25 lots or units in 40 hectares (25 lots or units in 99 acres), or there is a ratio of 1 lot or unit for every 1.6 hectares (1 lot or unit for every 4 acres) of area.
- Hydrogeological Assessment** 1.41 Hydrogeological assessment will confirm that an adequate supply of potable water exists for an estate residential subdivision and that the subdivision will be sustainable over time.
- Buffer** 1.42 A natural vegetative buffer area should surround the perimeter of each estate residential cluster.
- Access and Road Design** 1.43 A condominium property or each of the lots in a plan of subdivision will front on and have access from a year round maintained, public road. Individual vacant land condominium units may be provided with private road access which forms part of the development and is constructed and maintained in a manner that will accommodate emergency services.
- 1.44 The internal road of an estate residential cluster should be looped, rather than including dead end roads.

### **Rural Business**

- Type** 1.45 Rural business includes commercial and industrial uses that are:
- a) rural resource related;
  - b) related to outdoor recreation;
  - c) space extensive and would not be appropriate in a community designation; or
  - d) functionally related to, or serve, the rural area.
- 1.46 Rural businesses may include uses such as sawmills, fuel wood operations, garden centres, private Nordic ski trails, contractors, boat storage, or hunt and fishing camps.
- Uses to be Directed to Communities** 1.47 Other commercial, industrial and institutional uses should be directed to the communities. In addition, highway commercial uses such as gas stations or vehicle sales and repair, fast food restaurants or small intense recreational establishments should be directed to the communities rather than being located on road corridors.
- Tourist Commercial** 1.48 Tourist commercial establishments, including resort commercial establishments, and institutional accommodation or centres may be permitted within the rural designation. However, such uses will

proceed by way of a zoning amendment in order to address specific location as well as development and access provisions.

- 1.49 Large-scale uses not normally found in the rural area, other than rural resource industries, will only be permitted by amendment to this Plan, in order to address specific location, assess potential impact, and provide specific policies to guide development.

**Large Scale**

- 1.50 Where private waste disposal sites or waste management facilities are being considered in the rural designation by amendment to this plan as required by Section E, such a use will not be located in close proximity to a heritage area, wetland, significant natural area or habitat. In addition, such a use will be situated on a large parcel and will be well separated and buffered from any public roadway and abutting uses.

**Private Waste Disposal**

**Agriculture**

Since minimal productive agricultural land exists within the Township of Lake of Bays, the preservation of agricultural land is not of provincial concern in the Township. However, the isolated farms and small pockets of farmland, contribute to the character and landscape of the rural area. Therefore, agricultural uses in the rural area should be retained and encouraged where they will not have a negative impact on the environment or abutting properties.

Alternate agricultural operations such as fish farms based on use of the natural landscape can be a positive economic generator, provided that they are undertaken in a manner, which will prevent negative environmental impact.

However, new forms of agriculture such as caged aqua-culture in a natural setting can result in environmental damage and the spread of disease to native species. Therefore, alternate agricultural uses such as game farms should only be permitted where there will not be a negative impact on native flora and fauna or water quality.

- 1.51 Agriculture is recognized as a traditional rural use, which contributes to the character and landscape of the rural designation. For the purpose of this Plan, agriculture is considered in a broad sense, and includes traditional agricultural uses as well as specialized or alternative operations such as maple sugar operations, hobby farms and kennels or game farms and aqua-culture.

**Role and Function**

- 1.52 The preservation of existing agricultural uses will be supported and sensitive uses should not be permitted adjacent to existing agricultural operations unless potential impacts can be mitigated.

**Existing Operations**

- 1.53 New agricultural operations will be encouraged in the rural area where:  
 a) they are on a parcel of land which is of sufficient size;  
 b) they will be compatible with the existing uses in the area;

**New Uses**

- c) environmentally sensitive areas and heritage areas will be protected;
- d) there will not be a negative impact on ground or surface water quality;
- e) they will not have a negative impact on native species; and
- f) there is a sufficient supply of water.

**Intensive Operations**

- 1.54 New intensive agricultural uses, such as feedlots, will proceed by amendment to this Plan.
- 1.55 New land uses and lots, and new or expanded livestock operations will comply with the Provincial minimum distance separation formulae.

**Lot Size**

- 1.56 Agricultural lots will be of sufficient size to:
  - a) accommodate the agricultural use proposed;
  - b) avoid negative impacts on the environment and in particular ground and surface water quality; and
  - c) ensure compatibility with adjacent uses.

**Setbacks**

- 1.57 Adequate setbacks and buffers will be maintained on agricultural properties:
  - a) along shorelines and watercourses to protect water quality; and
  - b) along property lines to ensure compatibility with abutting uses.

**Fish Farms & Aqua-Culture**

- 1.58 Commercial fish farms in a natural or man-made pond may be permitted, provided that an impact assessment confirms that there will be no negative environmental impact, and in particular, on natural fish habitat, fish species or on the immediate or down stream water quality. Caged aqua-culture operations located within natural watercourses or waterbodies will not be permitted.

**Rural Resource Industries**

**Aggregate & Forestry**

- 1.59 Aggregate extraction and forestry will be encouraged in the rural area with appropriate management techniques and regulations, and in accordance with the other policies of this Plan.