



District Municipality of Muskoka *Official Plan Review*

Muskoka Official Plan

- *“... a strategic document that addresses issues of a broad nature. It consists of a set of policies that will help guide the economic, environmental and community-building decisions ...*

Office Consolidation of the Official Plan of the Muskoka Planning Area

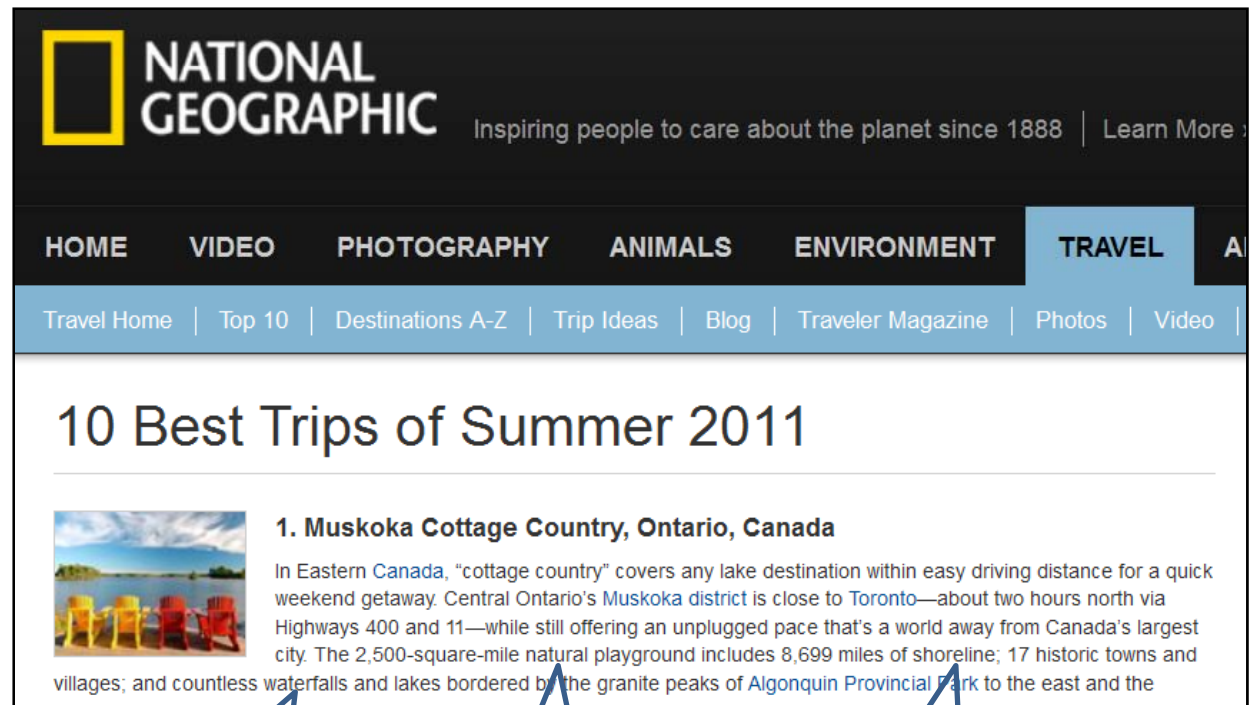
Consolidation
November 19, 2010

Prepared by
The District of Muskoka
Planning and Economic
Development Department



Muskoka is world-class

- National Geographic ranked Muskoka #1 in their “10 Best Trips of Summer 2011”
 - A world-wide ranking, included Patagonia in Argentina and the Azores in Portugal
 - Muskoka’s waterfalls and shorelines are specifically mentioned



The screenshot shows the National Geographic website's 'Travel' section. The header includes the National Geographic logo and the tagline 'Inspiring people to care about the planet since 1888'. The navigation menu includes 'HOME', 'VIDEO', 'PHOTOGRAPHY', 'ANIMALS', 'ENVIRONMENT', and 'TRAVEL'. Below the navigation, there are links for 'Travel Home', 'Top 10', 'Destinations A-Z', 'Trip Ideas', 'Blog', 'Traveler Magazine', 'Photos', and 'Video'. The main content area is titled '10 Best Trips of Summer 2011'. The first item is '1. Muskoka Cottage Country, Ontario, Canada', accompanied by a small image of colorful chairs on a lakeshore. The text below the image describes the area as a 'cottage country' with easy driving distance for a weekend getaway, mentioning its proximity to Toronto and the extensive shoreline and natural features of the region.

“waterfalls”

“natural”

“shoreline”

Publically-accessible shorelines and waterfalls

- Then Muskoka was included in their “*Best of the World 2012*”
 - Along with the fjords of Iceland and central Africa’s Virunga Volcanoes
 - Again, the waterfalls and shorelines are specifically mentioned



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Best of the World 2012

What places are calling your name for 2012? Whatever your mood, *Traveler* magazine has a recommendation for you—from the romantic hills of Croatia to the perfect beach in Thailand.



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Muskoka, Ontario

Essential Cottage Country

Just two hours by car from the busy, from powerhouse Toronto beats the heart of Ontario's cottage country, Muskoka. Families have gathered here for generations to revel in true wilderness. The 2,500-square-mile area includes 8,600 miles of shoreline, 17 historic towns and villages, and innumerable waterfalls and lakes (like Kahshe Lake, above) framed by the rugged Georgian Provincial Park to the east and the isles of Georgian Bay Islands National Park to the west.

There's plenty to do here but nothing you'd put on an agenda. Lounge with friends, barbecue everything, watch the night sky from the dock in the pitch black, play board games while listening to the rain. And run around barefoot all day.

“shoreline”

“waterfalls”

Development threats

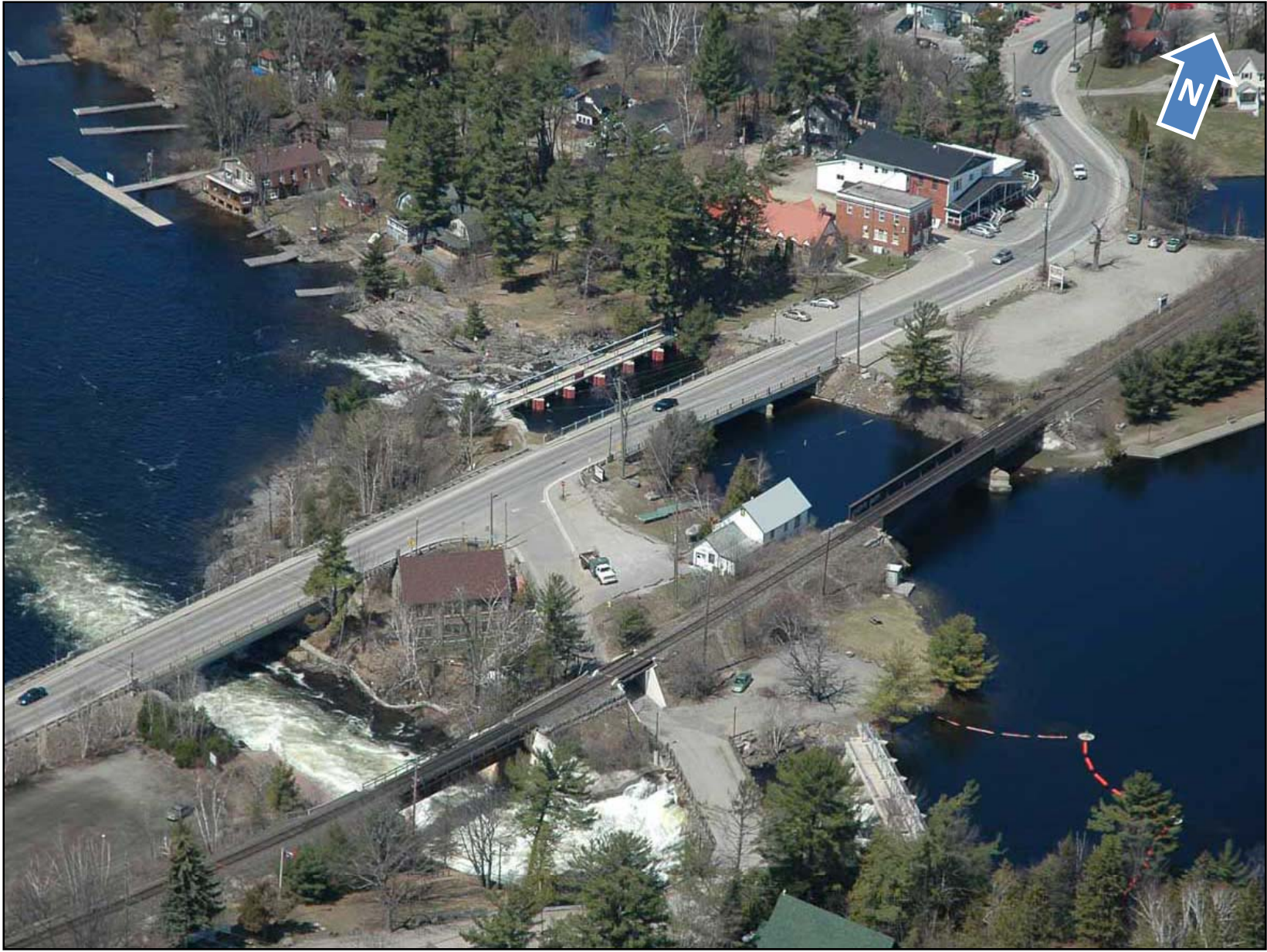
- While Muskoka has:
 - Much shoreline, but most is privately owned
 - Many waterfalls, but many are inaccessible
- Some development proposals threaten this non-renewable resource
 - For example, the proposed generating station at the Bala Falls would:
 - ▶ Make over 500' of the only publically-accessible shoreline in the area too dangerous to access
 - People come to Muskoka to touch the water (they can look at it on the Internet)
 - ▶ Take over 94% of the water from both falls
 - People won't come to see dry rocks where the falls used to be

Muskoka Official Plan

- Section F of the Muskoka Official Plan recognizes heritage, historical, and scenic value
 - But provides little guidance on appropriate use
- Muskoka's publically-accessible shorelines and waterfalls and the areas around them should be better protected
 - They are a non-renewable resource
- The District needs to be able to enforce this
 - We cannot depend on the province for such protection
- The Ontario Municipal Board recognizes and accepts Official Plans as good and current planning
 - Official Plans influence OMB decisions

Muskoka Official Plan

- Due to their economic importance, the Official Plan should identify as valuable resources to be maintained and protected **all** of Muskoka's:
 - Waterfalls
 - ▶ Adequate scenic flow of water over waterfalls throughout all seasons
 - ▶ Maintaining the natural beauty surrounding them
 - Publically-accessible shorelines
 - ▶ Ensuring this non-renewable resource is not lost to development
- Some development proposals may involve land under control of other levels of government
 - It is still useful to document local planning desires and intentions

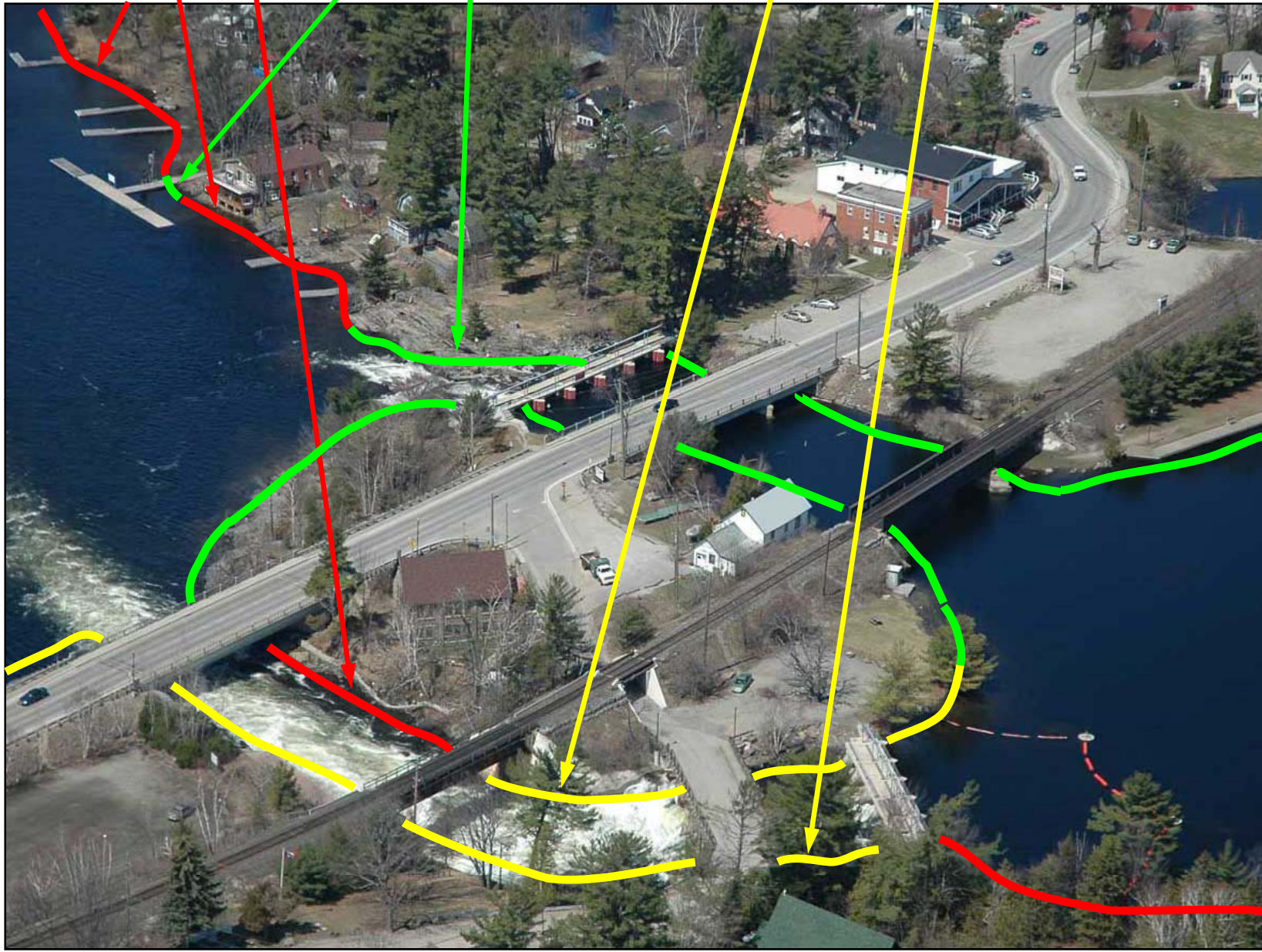


Bala Falls

Privately-owned shoreline

Publically-accessible shoreline

Too dangerous to access shorelines

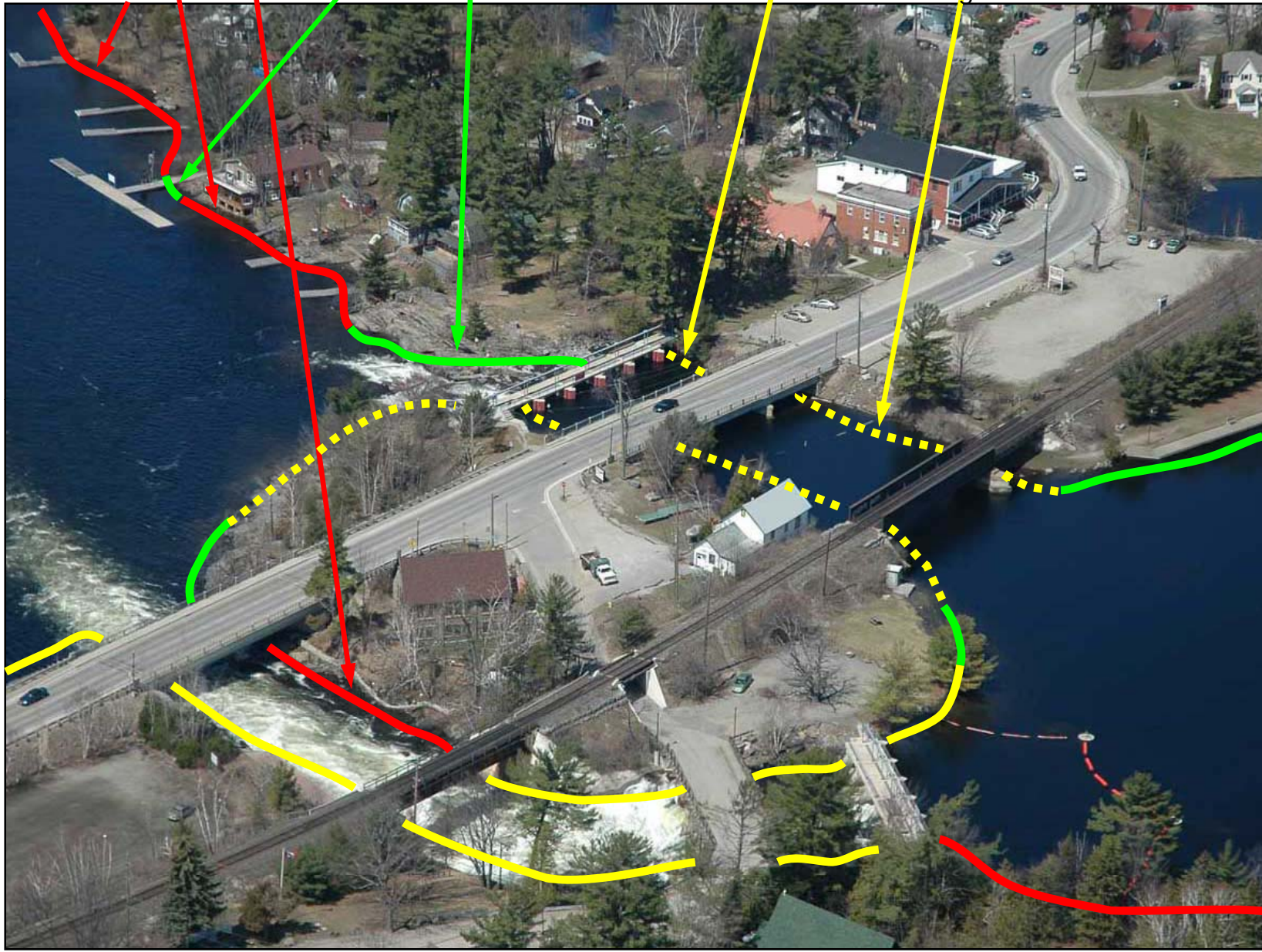


Developer would make 500' of publically-accessible shore line too dangerous to access

Privately-owned shoreline

Publically-accessible shoreline

Development would make publically-accessible shoreline too dangerous to access



Developer would make 500' of publically-accessible shore line too dangerous to access



People visit Muskoka to see the falls ...



... and to safely access the water

We need to ensure this is always possible