

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2025

While it is cold and frosty outside, our thoughts are shifting slowly to a very exciting warmer “busy season” in 2025. Plans are well underway for many initiatives to encourage growth and prosperity in our community's busiest times, but also to extend our seasons earlier in the spring and later in the fall. Although it is early in the year, we are excited to share some of the exciting opportunities we have in store for our community in 2025.

Our Community Economic Development Strategy calls for us to strengthen Four-Season Tourism marketing, events and amenities to extend our busy season. The strategy indicates that the Township will work

with local artists, creators, tourism operators and supportive businesses to develop programming, activities, marketing, and dedicated strategies to transition Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls to being a true four-season destination.

This is something that is always top of mind when planning at the Township and it is something we are continually working to achieve. In 2025 we believe the following initiatives will help us to achieve this goal:

PARTNERSHIP MEDIA FAMILIARIZATION

We are working with our partners at Sunset Country and Destination Ontario to host a media influencer and family to our community in February to experience some of the winter outdoor experiences we have to offer.

HEART OF CANADA TOURING ROUTE

This project began in 2019. It is an auto/RV Touring route that connects Winnipeg to Thunder Bay via a figure 8 shaped loop that goes through several smaller Northwestern Ontario and Manitoba communities, including ours. Working with other communities, Destination Northern Ontario and Travel Manitoba we have developed a trip planner and have softly launched the route. We believe this route will increase travel to our community in the next few years in the Spring and Fall shoulder seasons. In 2025 the partner communities and organizations will be shifting to active promotion of the route with targeted advertisements.

In addition to this, The Rendez-Vous Canada (RVC) International Travel Trade Show is being held in Winnipeg in May 2025. RVC brings together tour operators from all over the world. Following the event, Destination Northern Ontario secured a guided familiarization for up to 8 international tour operators along the Heart of Canada Touring Route. This tour will be coming through and spending some time in Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls. It is exciting to have these international visitors come to our community, and we are hopeful that their experience will lead more many more. This relates to tactic 1 (leverage Heart of Canada Loop to draw visitor to the Community) of Goal 3.2 in our plan: Develop Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls into a Premier Multi-User Trails Destination.



FARMERS MARKET

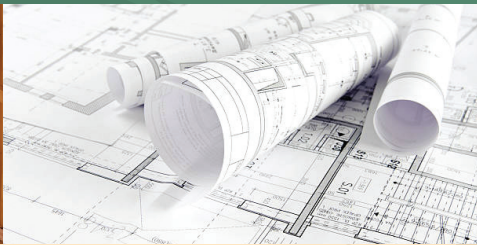
The first season of the Farmers Market in our community was a resounding success. For 2025 we are looking to continue the market starting in late June, through July and August, every second Tuesday. Due to many requests, we will be expanding the market into September, continuing every second Tuesday schedule, in 2025. The Farmer's Market completes Tactic 4 of goal 3.1 in our community economic development strategy: Strengthen Four-Season Tourism, Marketing and events and amenities.



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

All the work that takes place in the Township is governed by either legislation, or one of the planning/strategy documents that the Municipal Council has adopted. The timing of any of the projects depends on available funding (which is also awarded based on planning and strategy), priority as set by Council, and sometimes external factors. Council is working on revamping our existing strategic plan and we expect that the new plan will be available this spring. All of our plans and strategies can be found on our website.

Here are some of the current projects/initiatives that the Township is working on:



HOUSING

Goal 1.2 in our Community Economic Development Strategy is to support community growth and employee retention. Tactic 3 in this objective is to target housing development through Township land disposition, including: partnering with the KDSB and other housing developers on projects on Township lands, releasing Expressions of Interest (EOI) for residential development on Township Lands, and investigating land acquisition opportunities to support residential development. The current lack of a variety of available housing in our community is of great concern. It is one of the greatest challenges we face in our community. We are pleased that we have made significant progress on this objective and are excited that there will be new housing options coming to our community in the very near future.

The Township is currently working on the following housing projects:

- SN Seniors Housing in partnership with the KDSB. We have provided land through our transfer process to the KDSB for a 5 unit seniors housing build located next to the SN community Centre. The KDSB is securing funding, and we expect construction to start on this project in the very near future.
- Since 2022, the Township has issued 2 EOI'S for residential housing development on unused vacant

municipal land. We received a proposal for the property formally known as Pioneer Park and continue to work with the developer, Ayrie Developments to get this project shovel ready. We anticipate that construction on Phase I (6 units) of this project could begin in the Spring of 2025.

- In January 2025, we received a proposal regarding the second expression of interest for property located in Sioux Narrows on the west side of Highway 71 just south of Father Moss Road. Council is currently reviewing this proposal and we look forward to providing future updates to the Community.
- We have recently acquired the land near the new ambulance base off Airport Road in Nestor Falls. We have been waiting nearly 2 years for this transfer to take place. Now that we have title to the property, we will work with the KDSB to transfer the land to them to build a 5-10 unit affordable housing build.
- We are also working with the Ministry of Natural Resources to obtain a 15 hectare piece of crown land adjacent to the existing Father Moss Road property in Sioux Narrows. We expect this process to take 2-5 years. Once completed this land will be available for future housing development.

PIONEER PARK TAX REVENUE IMPACT FOR THE COMMUNITY

There have been questions raised by the public regarding the value of this development to the community compared to the value of the land. For the Community's information the future tax revenue potential of this development is considerable and necessary for our community to grow and prosper. It is important to note that MPAC has the final say over the assessment valuations of each property. However, given the location and the base price of these properties it is reasonable to expect returns in assessment value as follows:

Assuming a \$300,000 assessment on each property, the tax revenue generated for phase one of the development would be \$17,906.24, annually. The annual tax revenue generated for the entire development at this rate would be \$58,195.28.

Assuming a \$500,000 assessment of each property, the annual tax revenue generated for phase one of the development would be \$29,842.72. The annual tax revenue generated for the entire development at this rate would be \$96,998.84 (this amount nearly equates to a 1% increase in property tax revenue).



MUNICIPAL WEBSITE

We are in the process of completely redeveloping the Municipal Website. We are excited to share that it will be launching this spring. It will include easier access to municipal information, all the things to see and do in our community including an events calendar and a stand alone page for economic development and business related information. This helps us to achieve tactic 1 of goal 2.2 of our community economic development strategy: Develop Tools, resources and communications that strengthen the Township as a place for Growth and Investment.

CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

We continue to enhance community infrastructure, and development opportunities to support growth in our community (Goal 1.1) by working on several Capital Infrastructure Improvement Projects. Currently we are working on the following improvements:



Bridge Park Redevelopment: Targeting Completion June 2025

COST \$210,000.
NOHFC FUNDING \$180,000
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION \$5,000
MUNICIPAL \$25,000

We are currently working with our neighbouring First Nations communities and Elders groups to develop some regional history and cultural awareness panels to include as part of this project.



Highway Corridor Beautification Project: Targeting Completion June 2025

COST \$200,000
NOHFC FUNDING \$180,000
MUNICIPAL \$20,000

This project will include new signage and beautification elements in the area of Airport Road and Highway 71 in Nestor Falls, improvements at the NF info Centre and new Banners along the SN Highway Corridor.

SN Library Expansion and Relocation: Targeting Completion, Spring 2025

COST \$200,000
NOHFC FUNDING \$180,000
MUNICIPAL \$20,000

This project will see the expansion and relocation of the SN Library to its own space in the heart of Sioux Narrows-Town Centre. We look forward to sharing updates and plans for any changes to operation at the centre. This project will also see the creation of rentable office space, separate from the library, for visitors or seasonable residents who want to continue their vacation but have work obligations. We will be sharing more about this opportunity in the coming months.



Nestor Falls Bike and Hiking Trails, phase II: Targeting Completion June 2025

COST \$550,000
FEDNOR \$247,500
NOHFC FUNDING \$247,500
MUNICIPAL \$55,000

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The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.

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– Coretta Scott King

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over the past few months, the Municipality has reached out to engage with our community and local businesses on a tourism visitation strategy and Municipal Accommodation Tax research project. We have also had many conversations regarding housing development in our community. The Township greatly appreciates the many thoughtful ideas and opinions that have been shared. Respectful and positive community conversations are necessary to help our community grow and thrive, even though we don't always see things from the same perspective. The sharing of ideas and opinions in a productive way will help us move forward together.

We will have more to share about the Tourism Visitation Study in our next update in the spring.



MUNICIPAL ACCOMMODATION TAX

At their meeting in January Council reviewed the research project on the Municipal Accommodation Tax Research project. Goal 2.2 of the Community Economic Development Strategy is to Develop Tools, Resources, and Communications that Strengthen the Township as a place for Growth and Investment. In May 2024, the Township retained the services of Urban Systems to carry out research to fund economic and tourism development activities in the community. Specifically, research was focused on researching comparative Municipal Accommodation Tax and Business Improvement Area programs proposed under Tactic Three of the strategy.

These were challenging conversations in the community.

We experienced many viewpoints and significant reluctance from some local businesses. We learned through this research that the potential economic impact on our community could be \$234,000 annually.

The conclusion and recommendations of the research report are as follows:

Municipal Accommodation Taxes and Business Improvement Areas are established strategies that provide significant benefits in comparable communities through Ontario, Minnesota, and beyond. The funds raised are used to enhance marketing opportunities and improve and maintain municipal infrastructure that benefit visitors and residents alike. Although these are effective

tools in many communities, we heard through community consultations that there is no consensus within the community as to whether these strategies should be pursued.

In addition, we learned that revenues from Airbnbs and other short-term rentals represent a significant portion of overall MAT revenues and may not be realized. Given these factors, it may be prudent to continue discussions within the community on this topic and continue to work with Airbnb to ensure that short-term rentals operate legally and contribute to services within the municipality.

We will continue to monitor the situation and discuss any changes with the community as they arise.

GET IN TOUCH

The Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls has adopted a number of plans and strategies that help to move our community forward. All of these plans and strategies including the Community Economic Development Plan, Highway Corridor re-development plan and others can be found under the Town Hall (community profile) tab on our website: snnf.ca

For questions or further inquiries specific to Community Development please contact: **Heather Gropp, Community Development Officer at hgropp@snnf.ca**



*Sioux Narrows
Nestor Falls*