

Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls **COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

- WINTER 2023 -



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, the Highway Corridor re-development plan and others can be found under the Town Hall (community profile) tab on our website.

www.snnf.ca

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

The Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls is welcoming 2023 with optimism. We are excited to continue our path forward and realize many of the projects that we have been working on over the past months. We hope to see a return to a “more normal” year for our community in terms of visitors. Since October 2022, travel trends and visitor statistics at the regional and provincial levels have been moving in a favorable direction. We are hopeful that this data combined with our marketing efforts over the past 2 years to attract both new and repeat visitors to Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, will result in a more regular summer season for local businesses. At the same time, we continue to invest in and work towards a more sustainable, and diversified tourism industry in our community, including increased year- round opportunities for visitors and businesses alike.

Economic Development Strategic Plan Progress

In 2022 the Township worked diligently on making advances in the following areas of our community economic development strategy:

- Enhance community infrastructure and development opportunities to support growth.
- Facilitate housing development to support community growth and employee recruitment and retention.
- Strengthen four season tourism marketing, events and amenities.
- Partner and collaborate with First Nations mutual tourism and economic development priorities.

In 2023 we will continue to work on these objectives with increased focus on:

- Facilitating housing development to support community growth and employee recruitment and retention.
- Support the growth retention and establishment of businesses in the community
- Develop Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls into a premier multi-user trails destination.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Trails Development

We are excited to share that enhancements and improvements to our community trails systems will commence in 2023. Through a Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation program, we have received funding for a Trail Development Coordinator position at the Township. In 2023 this new position will allow us to make some of the following enhancements to our existing trail system:

- improved mapping and wayfinding of all trails
- improved signage
- development of a digital trail presence for the municipal website and social media feeds

It will also allow for the exploration of, and possible creation of new community trails.

NOHFC Funding: \$35,000

Bike Trails Development

Construction of Phase I of the Bike Trails Development Project will commence in May 2023 in the area of Bass Lake Park and Red Pine Trails in Nestor Falls. The first phase will include a combination of stacked loop, connector, and flow trails in the area with technical skill building components built in.

We will continue to seek and apply for additional funding opportunities for this project as appropriate.

Cost: \$200,000

Funding: NOHFC \$180,000 (90%) Municipal \$20,000 (10%)

Nestor Falls Community Centre Upgrades

This project has been slightly delayed in order to accommodate user groups and a number of events planned for the Centre this winter. Construction will start in the Spring, after the Winter Carnival and is expected to be complete by the Fall/Winter of 2023.

Cost: \$200,000

Funding NOHFC \$180,000 (90%) Municipal \$20,000 (10%)

Northern Ontario Sport Fishing Centre Grounds

Construction began on this project in Fall 2022. During the initial phase of construction, we saw the creation of an accessible pathway and the groundwork has been completed for the new playground installation in the spring. This project will continue and be completed by the Spring of 2023.

Cost: \$645,000

Funding: NOHFC \$316,000 (49%), Fed Nor \$193,000 (30%) Municipality \$135,450 (21%)



Four Season Multi-Use Recreation Facility

Phase I of this project was substantially completed on November 29, 2022. In the spring 2023 Pickle Ball Court Lines, and basket ball nets will be installed. This project was challenging. The greatest concern we had in regards to the old structure was its uneven surface. The asphalt was so severely cracked that it rendered the facility inoperable for most in the Spring, Summer and Falls months. Therefore, when the new facility was being designed, the Township chose to invest in a large reinforced concrete pad. This surface is significantly less likely to shift or crack than a traditional asphalt surface, making it more durable and a much more useable and longer lasting facility than other options. The cost of the ground work and reinforced concrete came at a significant cost (due to fluctuations in material and labour costs caused by the pandemic and worldwide labour shortage), but will ensure the longevity and usability of this valuable community infrastructure well into the future.



We are pleased to share that we have been successful in securing all funding for Phase II of this project. Phase II will see the installation of a covering structure over the existing concrete pad. The existing pad has already been designed and engineered specifically to support this cover. We have been meeting with the project team, and expect that work to resume on the project in May 2023.



Phase 1 Cost: \$1,003,000

Funding: Federal (\$401,003) (40%), Provincial \$334,000 (33.3%), Municipal (\$267,000 (26.7%))

Phase 2 Cost: \$1,400,000

Funding: Fed Nor \$630,000 (45%), NOHFC \$630,000 (45%) Municipal \$140,000 (10%)

2023 SIOUX NARROWS-NESTOR FALLS MARKETING

In 2023 the Township will continue to invest in the Lake of the Woods Marketing Partnership with the City Kenora and provincial partners. We will be advertising into key US markets as well as western Canadian markets that show promise for increased visitation to our community.

In January 2023, we are excited to participate in a winter tourism media familiarization tour of Lake of the Woods region. This trip will result in excellent exposure and promotion of the best winter activities that Lake of the Woods has to offer, including snowmobiling and ice fishing.

Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls Visitor Data



In November 2022 the Township offered workshops on digital marketing for local businesses. These workshops were based on data we have acquired regarding visitor trends specific to our community. This information was well received and we wanted to take this opportunity to share it with the community.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM OUR VISITOR DATA RESEARCH INCLUDE:

- Visitors to the Township in 2022 have not fully recovered to 2019 pre-pandemic visitor rates. The visitor rates were approximately 30-40% below 2019 visitor rates.
- In 2019 visitors from Ontario accounted for 25% of total visitation to our community. In 2022, visitors from Ontario accounted for 46% of total visitation to our community.
- There was a notable increase in visitors from around the Northwest, and visitors from Kenora doubled during this period.
- Visitors from Manitoba remained relatively stable accounting for 15% of visitors to the community in 2019, and 16% of visitors to the community in 2022. This stability is likely due to the fact that this data is capturing cottagers and summer residents.
- We have also seen increases in visitors from Western Canada, and Quebec.

The data showed that US visitors to the Township in 2022 declined substantially from 2019 levels. Minnesota (-58%) Illinois (-63%) Wisconsin (-56%) Iowa (-52%)

These declines are staggering, but not unexpected. We do anticipate seeing them rebound beginning in 2023.

The reason for optimism here is that while these numbers show dramatic decreases, the overall decrease in visitation to our community was significantly less (30-40%) which means that there has been an increase in domestic visitors, which we expect to see continue. The data also pointed to the fact that visitors from both Canada and the US are coming to our community earlier in 2022 compared with 2019 and staying later, which evidences a lengthening of our prime tourism season.



*Sioux Narrows
Nestor Falls*