

TOWNSHIP OF IGNACE COMMUNITY STRATEGY



Exploring
Our
Possibilities

2019-2024

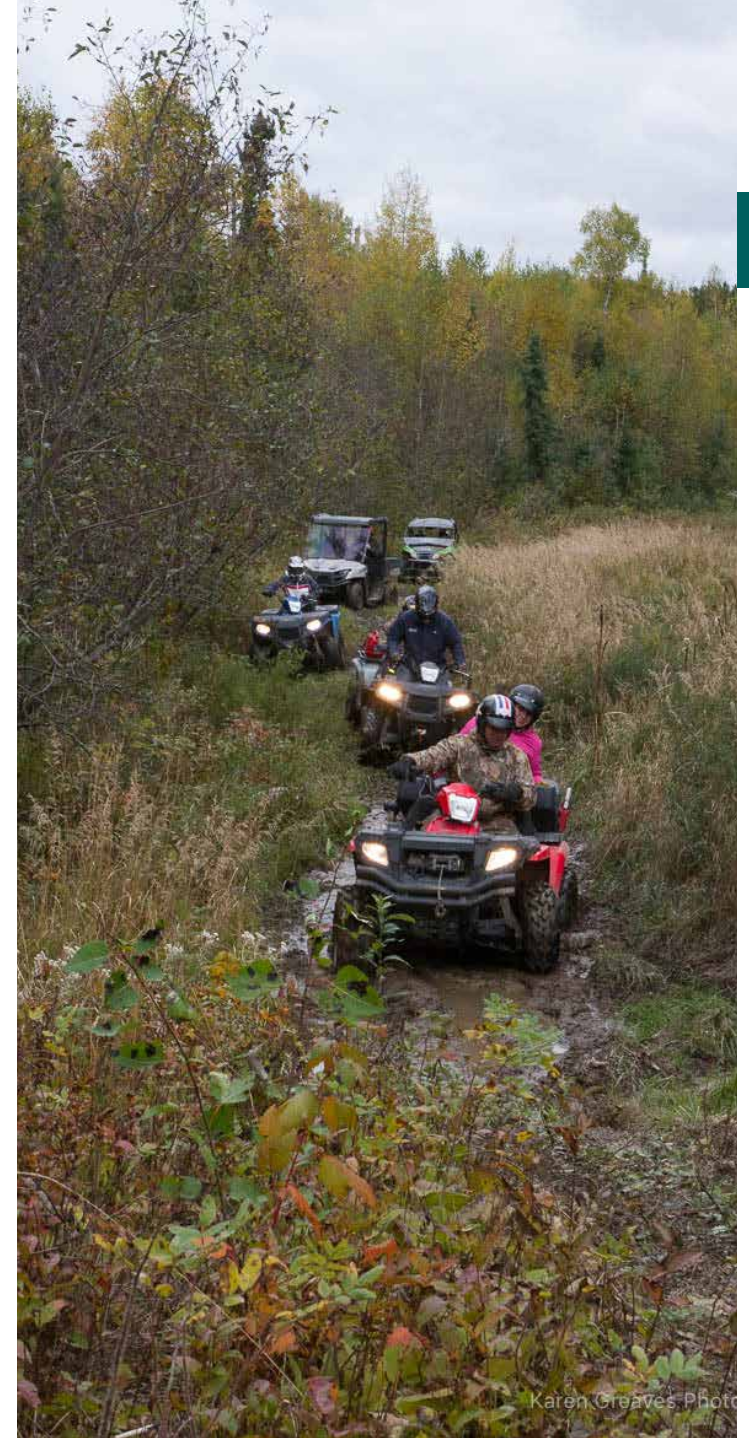
“Ignace has a lot to offer people – not so much in material things but more with a sense of place. We have a great and interesting history made up of people who became leaders, entrepreneurs, community activists and icons who became tailors of the unique community fabric of Ignace.”

Community Member – from the survey



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Karen Greaves Photo

INTRODUCTION

The Township of Ignace is a rural northwestern Ontario community, with a population of just under 1,300 people. Known as the eastern gateway to Ontario's Sunset Country, the community is located on the junction of the Trans-Canada Highway, and Highway 599 – Ontario's most northerly paved highway leading to Savant Lake, Pickle Lake and winter roads further north to many First Nations communities. Ignace is, 2½ hours west of Thunder Bay and 1½ hours east of Dryden.

The community sits on the shores of Agimak Lake and is surrounded by a pristine natural environment of forests, clean lakes, rivers and fresh air. Founded in 1879, the Township has historically had a successful economy, mostly based on forestry and mining industries.

The community is in a stage of transition. Having gone through difficult economic times and declining population, the Township of Ignace is now focused on strengthening its local economy through strategic approaches aimed at building the right capacity to accommodate the right type of investments as it positions itself for long term sustainable growth and development.

There are future opportunities on the horizon for Ignace including potentially significant projects such as: the 'Ring of Fire' development, and the long-term management of used nuclear fuel project through the Nuclear Waste Management Organization. Ignace should be able to capitalize on both of these initiatives as Highway 599 is being touted as the best access route to support the transport needs for said projects, and all traffic flow to and from would be required to travel through Ignace. Even if these opportunities do not materialize the community still needs to set in place actions to make Ignace a dynamic, thriving community.

Because of the need to be prepared for these strategic projects Ignace has taken a proactive approach to ensure that the community is ready for investment and is currently working through their Community Investment Readiness and Capacity Building Masterplan with the mission to prepare for its long-term future. Within this framework it was established that the community requires an Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. Upon further discussion it

was determined that there was a need for a 5-Year Township of Ignace Community Strategy that will build on previous studies and continue to provide a roadmap for sustainable growth and prosperity for the Township by focusing on four pillars: Community Development; Economic Development; Tourism Development; and, Marketing and Communications.

“The local people...
they can be the
ambassadors to the
community and help
with encouraging
development.”

Community Member
– from the survey



PURPOSE FOR A COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Strategic planning is a long-term, ongoing investment into a process that will ultimately make the Township of Ignace more attractive to residents, investors and tourists and ensure the viability and sustainability of the community. A **Community Strategy** sets priorities and directs the efforts of the municipality in order to help grow and sustain the community and its local economy.

This new 2019-2024 Township of Ignace Community Strategy builds on the achievements of the previous Strategic Plan and Marketing Plan while also providing new initiatives to move Ignace forward into the future.

The 2019-2024 Community Strategy:

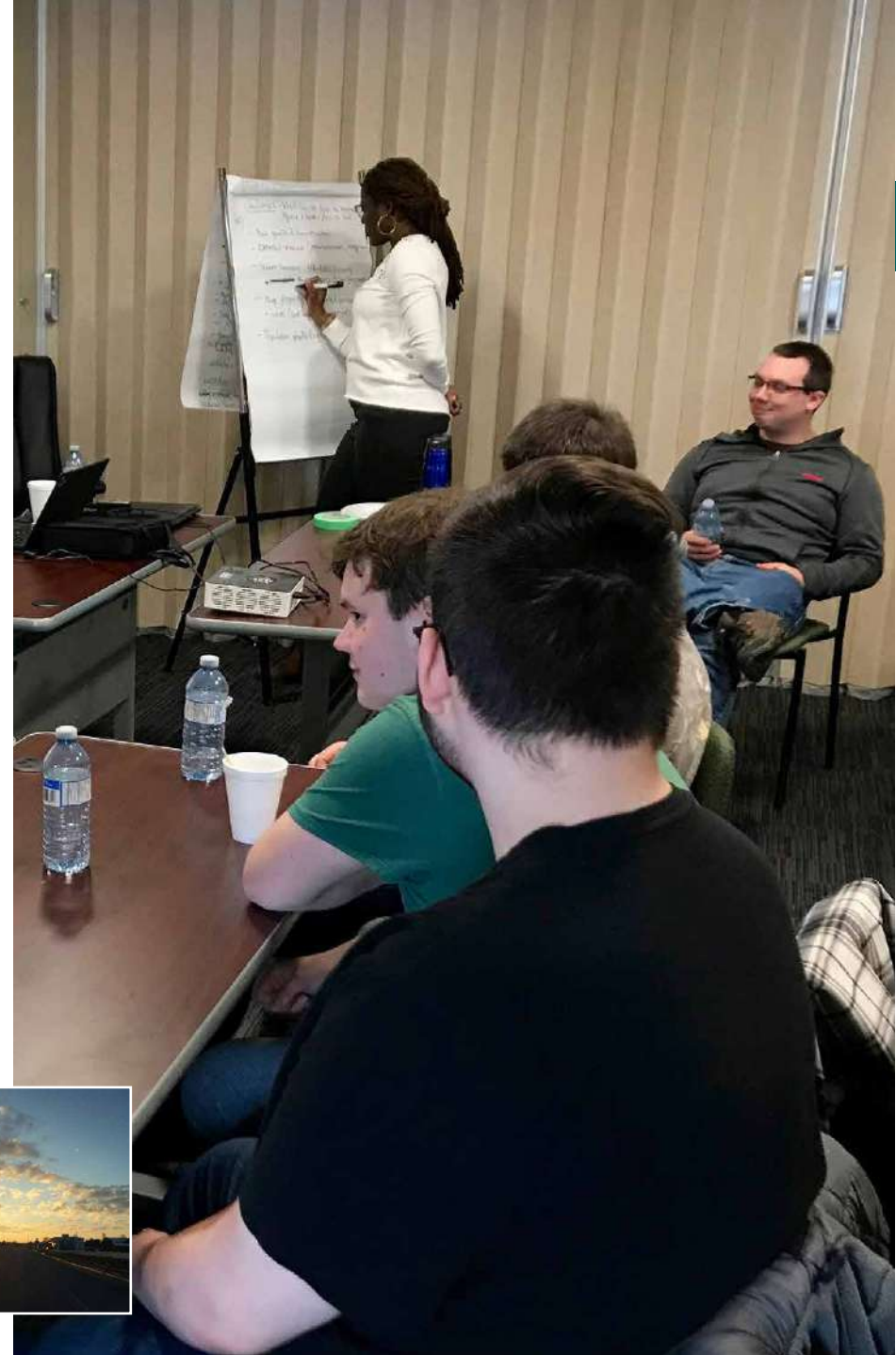
- Provides goals and outcomes for **community development** in the Township
 - by directing the Township to build a vibrant community that is a safe, caring and attractive place to live and do business
 - by creating a community where people have and embody a strong sense of pride
- Provides goals and outcomes for increasing **business investment** into the Township
 - through the creation and attraction of jobs
 - through the identification of new economic development investment opportunities
- Provides goals and outcomes for increasing **tourism investment**
 - through identification of existing regional assets and amenities sought by visitors and industry operators

“I want Ignace to grow but not too much. It needs to maintain its identity of a small but strong, caring, and resilient community.”

Community Member
– from the survey



- by acknowledging gaps in available tourism services
- by identifying opportunities for new tourism product and enhancements to existing tourism products
- Provides goals and outcomes for **marketing and communications**
 - through various digital (website, social media, etc.) and traditional (print) marketing options
 - through building relationships and partnerships



TOWNSHIP OF IGNACE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The recommendations and actions for the Township of Ignace Community Strategy are based on a comprehensive understanding of the community of Ignace, its economy, businesses and stakeholders, as well as the community's collective aspirations.

Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SCOAR™) was compiled after an extensive process which included:

Qualitative research including comprehensive document review; consultations (focus groups and a public open house; one-on-one interviews; working session, experiential tourism workshop and public open house; and online survey).

Quantitative research including an in-depth review of relevant local, regional and provincial reports, and a situational analysis consisting of a demographic analysis, labour force profiling and analysis, an economic base analysis, and economic trends analysis and forecasts.



To best explain the process, the themes are a result of the information collected through quantitative and qualitative analysis. Using the quantitative data from the Situational Analysis and the qualitative research from the stakeholder consultations (online survey, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and working session), document review and internal staff knowledge, the strengths, challenges and opportunities are consolidated. Based on the strengths, challenges and opportunities, strong aspirations came out of the process, which in turn produced the desired results. It is out of the results that the themes and strategic actions are developed.



“I would like to see Ignace thrive and to hopefully have enough jobs for people to live and play”

Community Member – from the survey

The SCOAR™ was used as the fundamental basis to determine the 4 pillars and the actions and derives directly from community stakeholder input.

As a result of extensive consultation and research, approximately 60 realistic and doable actions were established for the Township of Ignace to be undertaken over the next five years under the following 4 pillars: Community Development; Economic Development; Tourism Development; and, Marketing and Communications. The actions are the responsibility of various stakeholders in the Township of Ignace including the Township of Ignace economic development staff, other Ignace departments, and elected officials, as well as local organizations, businesses and residents.



CONSULTATION PROCESS

Approximately 235 stakeholders were consulted throughout this process. Extensive stakeholder consultations consisted of confidential one-on-one interviews, an online survey open to the public, six focus groups, a working session, an experiential tourism workshop and two community open houses.

Interviews & Community On-line Surveys

One-on-one interviews were undertaken with key community, business and tourism stakeholders including representation from regional organizations, provincial and federal government, Township of Ignace staff, Mayor and Council. Nine identical, open-ended questions were used to guide both the interviews and the online surveys. These questions probed into the major strengths and challenges of doing business in Ignace and looked forward to defining future opportunities, aspirations and results. Additionally, key questions specifically relating to regional tourism projects were posed to regional partners to identify key partnership opportunities for Ignace. Participants provided feedback on these questions.

Focus Groups and Open House

Focus groups were held at the NWMO Learn More Centre in Ignace on April 11, 2019, attended by stakeholders representing 6 key areas:

- Tourism
- Heritage, Arts and Culture
- Community
- Recreation
- Economic Development
- Township of Ignace (staff, Mayor and Council)



In addition, a public open house was held in the evening at the Ignace Silver Tops facility where the public was provided with the same nine open-ended questions to provide additional comments.



Working Session, Experiential Tourism Workshop and Open House

The Working Session and Experiential Tourism Workshop were held at the NWMO Learn More Centre in Ignace on May 14, 2019.

Key community stakeholders, including representation from the Mayor and Council, the business community, young people, education, regional and provincial support agencies, and Township of Ignace staff, attended the Working Session. The purpose of the session was to bring together economic development, community and business leaders to review the project findings to date, to get confirmation on the themes that were derived from the research, and to begin strategizing and crafting action items for each of those themes.

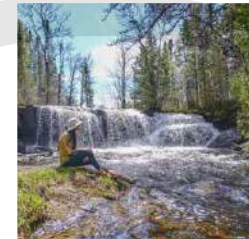
Community and Economic Development working groups guided the process by identifying actions that would address the challenges and opportunities under each of the four themes. The themes that were brought forward to the community and economic development Working Session and were validated included:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Becoming a Proud and United Community
- Building Trust Through Relationships

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Retaining and Supporting Existing Business
- Ensuring the Fundamental Building Blocks are in Place to Support Local Economic Development



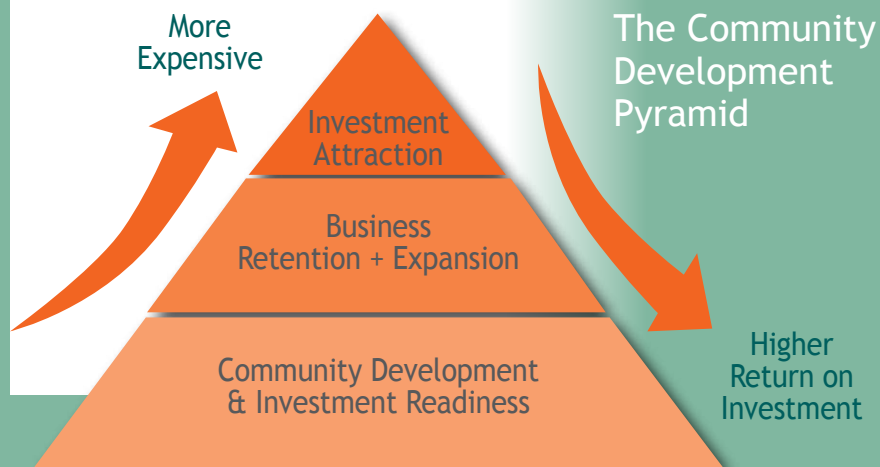
The Experiential Tourism Workshop was attended by a mix of tourism stakeholders including representation from hospitality, arts, heritage and culture and recreation sectors along with Township of Ignace staff. The purpose of the workshop was to educate participants on experiential tourism, trends and best practices, fundamental elements that make up a true experience, and to identify assets and potential new experiences that could be developed in Ignace.

Experiential Tourism Workshop participants guided the process by identifying assets and opportunities for the development of new tourism experiences based on existing assets.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

- Experiential Tourism Foundational Elements, Best Practices, Trends and Opportunities

A public open house was held on the evening of May 14th at the Ignace Silver Tops facility where the public was presented with the results from the earlier working session and were able to provide additional comments.



Source: OMAFRA

The role of Economic Development in a community is illustrated on the left. The section at the bottom signifies the foundation for growing your community. Then, make sure your existing businesses are thriving. Studies have proven that the majority of new jobs and growth in a community come from existing businesses expanding. Only when the lower two sections are in top shape will investment attraction efforts pay off.

NB: The arrows indicate that Investment Attraction is the highest-cost activity, compared to investing in making the community investment ready: beautification, relationship building, communicating clearly and having a first-rate online presence.

VISION AND VALUES

Ignace Community Vision

As Stated in the Township of Ignace Official Plan:

We want Ignace... “To be a safe, attractive and caring community that focuses on quality of life which is driven by a healthy diversified economy based on principles of sustainability.”

Ignace Values

The values identified by the residents of the Township of Ignace, as generated from the consultation process, are:

Community – We believe in a safe, peaceful, welcoming, supportive, and family oriented community.

Unity and Cooperation – We believe in working together, sharing ideas and collaborating for the betterment of the community.

Integrity – We believe in transparency, fairness, honesty and authenticity.

Resilience – We believe in remaining strong, moving forward and embracing challenges and opportunities.

Natural Environment – We believe in the importance of fresh air, clean lakes, and the beauty of the nature that surrounds us.



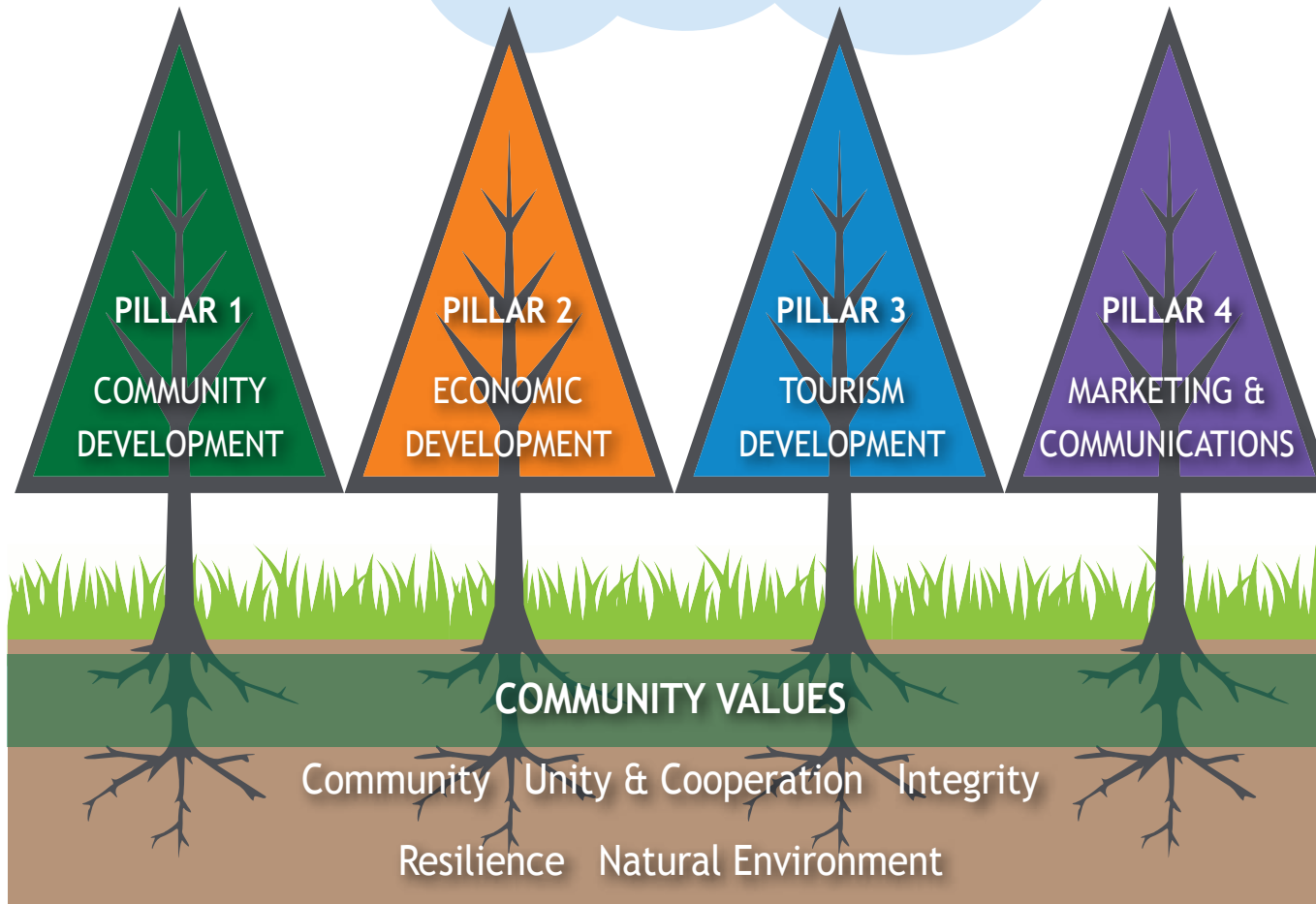
“... A safe place to raise children who will stay or come back to their hometown and open businesses and services that are year round and affordable.”

Community Member
– from the survey

STRATEGIC PILLARS

VISION

“To be a safe, attractive and caring community that focuses on quality of life which is driven by a healthy diversified economy based on principles of sustainability.”





Pillar 1: Community Development

What we heard

The people who live in Ignace and the businesses that invest in Ignace are very proud of their community, of its resilience, its natural beauty and its people. The Township wants to continue building a strong cohesive community with a growing population, while keeping that small town feeling, one that is united and works together to positively reflect the true meaning of community.

Why Community Development is a Key Priority

Community development, as defined by the United Nations, is “a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems”.

The most important ingredient to achieving success in Ignace is the ability to harness Ignace’s greatest asset – its people. In order to truly harness that asset, the people in Ignace need to become engaged in a conversation about the greatness of their community and to be united in their message, in order to take advantage of opportunities that arise. The ability to create positive community change is through building relationships and partnerships, being open and transparent, establishing trust, having mutual respect, welcoming diversity, and having open communication with strong leadership.



Goal:

- To be a proud, united and vibrant community that works together and celebrates success
- To build trust through relationships

Recommendations:

The Township of Ignace will work with partners to:

1. Clean up and beautify the community
2. Build trust through relationships for positive community change
3. Maintain relationships with Current Key Prospects
4. Build on Key Community assets to be ready for investments in the specific sectors of forestry, mining and commercial/retail



PILLAR 1: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOP 5 ACTIONS

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1. Use the new brand and create a themed signage program and implement the signage program along the Trans-Canada corridor between Thunder Bay and Dryden.
2. Continue to remove any derelict or abandoned buildings that are located within Ignace. Turn the properties into landscaped parkettes or erect building facades/ signage that demonstrate what this property would look like within the CIP guidelines.
3. Continue to enact and enforce property standards to ensure Ignace portrays itself with an image of heightened property ownership and pride.
4. Continue to support the existing community events (i.e. White Otter Days, Canada Day, etc.) and use the success of these annual events to make residents proud of their community and use it as an opportunity to market the community as a location of choice for potential new residents.
5. Continue to demonstrate to the NWMO that Ignace is the right choice for the Canada Geologic Repository and be ready for when Ignace could be the selected site.



Pillar 2: Economic Development

What we heard

As a small community at a distance from larger urban centres, Ignace strives to be more self-sufficient and limit their reliance on other communities. The community wants to keep local money and investment in Ignace in order to grow their economy so that it is sustainable and thriving. Residents want to focus on retaining local business first while attracting new business to fill the gaps in existing goods and services.

Why Economic Development is a Key Priority

The majority of business growth comes from existing businesses that already operate in the community. In order to help existing local businesses it is crucial to have a clear understanding of their needs, issues and opportunities to ensure they are able to keep or expand their business in the Township.

Successfully retaining and attracting businesses means having the appropriate information and assets available, and positive attitudes about the community for existing and potential businesses and entrepreneurs. It means having the right infrastructure in place required for local business success. The fundamental building blocks could include any or all of the following: available land and/or buildings for business to locate in; current community data; detailed list of community assets; comprehensive website; community support; partnerships in place; infrastructure; incentives; trained labour force; etc.



Goal:

- To retain and support existing businesses in Ignace
- To have the fundamental building blocks in place to help to attract new business and support existing business

Recommendations:

The Township of Ignace will work with partners to:

1. Maintain an economic development office with staff, resources and a deliberate focus on supporting existing business (business retention and expansion)
2. Actively provide support and increase communication between the Township and local businesses
3. Attract new businesses and investment to Ignace targeting sectors including forestry, mining, retail/commercial, and tourism
4. Support workforce development



PILLAR 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOP 5 ACTIONS

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1. Ensure there is sufficient funding in place to continue to support staffing and an economic development office that can undertake and implement the Community & Economic Development Strategic Plan.
2. Undertake a business visitation program and follow up on the items that come out of the business visitation program. Continue to work with the local businesses to best understand what is needed to help them remain viable and grow.
3. Simplify the application process, create a condensed 1-2 page overview of the CIP and communicate the CIP program to the business community. This may need to be as simple as sitting down with the business and walking them through the CIP application form.
4. Attract new businesses and investment to Ignace targeting sectors including forestry, mining, retail/commercial, and tourism.
5. Develop a 'shop local' program to support local businesses.



Pillar 3: Tourism Development

What we heard

The community cherishes the environment that they live in – one that is rooted in history, fresh air and pristine natural surroundings. Residents live in Ignace because they can ‘work in Ignace and play in the outdoors all in the same day’, and while they want to see tourism grow in the community, they also want to ensure that this growth is undertaken in a sustainable manner. Because of their passion for their community, the people of Ignace want to share it with others and invite them to participate in the many wonderful experiences that can be found in and around the community.

Why Tourism is a Key Priority

Tourism is a major economic driver in Northern Ontario with receipts ranking higher per capita than other regions in the province. This sector is the largest employer of young workers in Ontario, and Destination Northern Ontario’s research reveals that 40% of the workforce in the region. One in five businesses are tourism related. Northern Ontario welcomes 8.2 million visitors annually who spend 1.6 billion dollars, with 90% of these economic benefits staying in the region. In Canada, ‘tourists’ are defined as anyone who makes a same-day trip and travels more than 40 kilometers one-way from home.

Due to its location and unique assets, Ignace is well positioned to capitalize on regional efforts and successes to grow its tourism sector. To be successful, local efforts should focus on experiential tourism development and capacity building in order to attract day trippers, capitalize on the regional VFR* market and inspire return visits and/or extended stays. (*VFR = Visiting Friends & Relatives)



Goal:

- To have a greater number of tourism assets and experiences that help serve and retain residents and attract visitors to Ignace
- To increase visitation and spending in local businesses

Recommendations:

The Township of Ignace will work with partners to:

1. Establish an annual event
2. Enhance beach facilities and programming
3. Support and implement training for operators, frontline staff and residents
4. Support the development of new, and enhanced tourism businesses, experiences and packages



PILLAR 3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT TOP 5 ACTIONS

19

1. Invite tourism stakeholders, other municipal staff and council to a working session to undertake a community self-assessment via Tourism Excellence North's (TEN) training solutions. Refer tourism businesses and organizations to the TEN 'Fast Track to Success' program for personalized coaching.
2. Improve basic infrastructure at beaches for a better level of service and enhanced visitor experience.
3. Work with local operators and stakeholders to help develop new summer, fall and winter-based tourism experiences utilizing existing assets and capacity to engage residents, attract day trippers, people staying at Sand Bar provincial park and overnight visitors.
4. Work with PACE, the Northwest Business Center (NWBC), Crossroads and the IABA to position tourism as a viable business opportunity and help drive entrepreneurship and the development of new products within the sector.
5. Work with stakeholders to establish an annual Summer Beach Party as a means of celebrating the community, showcasing its water-based assets and activities, building community pride and attracting visitors to Ignace.



Pillar 4: Marketing and Communications

What we heard

Ignace residents are curious; they are eager to understand what is happening within their community, including what is occurring in local municipal government, local businesses, and the community at large. The residents of Ignace are also seeking opportunities to find out all the great things that are taking place in their community and how to get involved. Conversely, they want to spread the word about Ignace

and all that it has to offer.

Why Marketing and Communications is a Key Priority

When determining how to reach target audiences, it is often about how to put together the right mix of methods, including using Internet based as well as traditional communication tools, to get the “biggest bang for the marketing buck”. Mindful of the limited financial resources faced by the Township, there is a need to exercise as much marketing creativity as possible to help Ignace leverage as much marketing and communication success even with a modest budget allocation.

Communications involve creating dialogue between the Township of Ignace and its residents, local business and other levels of government.



Goal:

- For the Township of Ignace to effectively tell the community’s story and messages to current and prospective residents, businesses, tourists and other levels of government about the community’s assets and strengths

Recommendations:

The Township of Ignace will work with partners to:

1. Consolidate and enhance online presence
2. Continue to implement remaining actions in the Ignace Marketing Plan 2018



PILLAR 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS TOP 5 ACTIONS

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1. Review the Township of Ignace website and complete missing content ensuring the Ignace messaging is geared to attracting visitors.
2. Launch e-newsletter and e-blast program to keep businesses up to date, addressing local concerns and opportunities. Use these to communicate Ignace initiatives that affect and/or support local business community.
3. Modify existing Facebook page and update it often. As new content (new success stories?) gets added to the site, share this news via social media. Goal is to drive traffic to the website.
4. Apply to Destination Northern Ontario for funding to develop and implement wayfinding strategy.
5. Create better directional signage in and around the township directing residents and tourists to key attractions such as Agimak Lake, the beaches, Tower Hill, trails, Health Centre, etc., that are currently not well signed. This will also help to improve linkages to the lake and trails.

DEVELOPING THE ACTION PLAN

Upon completion of the working session, a draft set of strategic actions for community development, economic development, tourism development and marketing and communications was prepared and provided to the Township senior staff for review. In order to ensure that the actions aligned with the Township of Ignace mission and vision, a strategic planning session was held with the Township’s key economic development staff.

After reviewing the Action steps, McSweeney & Associates, Markey Consulting and TD Graham + Associates, along with the Township of Ignace senior staff were able to reflect collaboratively on the directions and actions and derive a set of agreed upon strategic actions that are doable and realistic for Township of Ignace over the next five years.

This plan outlines a series of recommended actions for implementation over the short to long term. The recommendations have been developed based on the outcomes of the consultation and survey process. Community input – combined with a Situational Analysis, SCOAR™ and Best Practice review process – has provided the foundation for the development of strategies and identifying actions to assist the Township of Ignace with the growth it is seeking. The research process led to the identification of initiatives that connect directly to the identified challenges, aspirations and opportunities of the community. With these action steps, Ignace is ready to Explore its Possibilities.



“We need to build up our town... a town that has more amenities...keep the taxes and water bills down to attract people to live here.”

Community Member
– from the survey



ACTION PLAN



“Start with what you’ve got and make it better. Then improve on it from there.”

Community Member – from the survey



PILLAR 1: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

25

1) Clean up and beautify the Township

- A) Continue to improve the visual image of the community and transform the Trans-Canada/Main Street corridor to create/enhance the feeling that one has arrived in a great community.
1. Create a visual image of what the Trans-Canada/Main Street corridor could be – work with the Ignace community and a landscape architect or urban designer/planner to conceptualize a vision for Ignace’s Main Street. Communicate this vision to the community to build and maintain commitment and excitement for the future.
 2. Investigate funding opportunities for beautification efforts including streetlights, curbs, benches, garbage containers, etc.
 3. Use the new brand and create a themed signage program and implement the signage program along the Trans-Canada corridor between Thunder Bay and Dryden.
 4. Continue to remove any derelict or abandoned buildings that are located within Ignace. Turn the properties into landscaped parkettes or erect building facades/signage that demonstrate what this property would look like within the CIP guidelines.
- B) Continue to undertake a community education campaign to encourage yard clean-up, removal of outside storage, and building maintenance to minimum standards.
1. Continue with the existing program of the annual community clean-up day and the Township’s general maintenance program. Include a garbage drive with ‘curb’ shopping and ‘clothesline’.
 2. Continue to enact and enforce property standards to ensure Ignace portrays itself with an image of heightened property ownership and pride.

PILLAR 1: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

1) Clean up and beautify the Township (*Continued*)

C) Continue to engage the community in a civic pride campaign to support the belief that the Township of Ignace is a great place to call home.

D) Develop a Community Beautification and Enhancement Committee with a focus on “Clean, Green and Beautiful”.

1. Explore manageable and low-cost projects such as: planting flowers, wildflowers and shrubs, vegetation control, pruning, community clean-up initiatives, community garden maintenance and enhancement, recycling initiatives, signage, murals, public art, banners and so on.
2. Source proposal funding for a long-term beautification strategy and capital funding for the implementation of initiative. Identify and prioritize projects that will enhance the Township’s image. The strategy should also encompass a heritage/cultural component.

2) Build trust through relationships for positive community change

A) Continue to support the existing community events (i.e. White Otter Days, Canada Day, etc.) and use the success of these annual events to make residents proud of their community and use it as an opportunity to market the community as a location of choice for potential new residents.

B) Continue supporting the Annual White Otter Hockey Tournament.

C) Continue celebrating the successes of Ignace residents.

1. Develop an ‘I’m from Ignace’ campaign to highlight both the people that live in Ignace that have stories to share and those that have left the community and their stories.

PILLAR 1: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

<p>2) Build trust through relationships for positive community change <i>(Continued)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Showcase these stories through various venues and ongoing communication campaigns. 3. Create initiatives and provide opportunities to showcase local talent (music, arts, etc.).
<p>3) Maintain relationships with Current Key Prospects</p>	<p>A) Continue to demonstrate to the NWMO that Ignace is the right choice for the Canada Geologic Repository and be ready for when Ignace could be the selected site.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to work closely with NWMO to continue building the momentum and continue demonstrating Ignace’s readiness and desire to be chosen as the Canada Geologic Repository when the announcement is made in 2023. 2. Continue engagement, education and dialogue with the community to demonstrate to the NWMO that the community understands the importance and value of the NWMO investment for the community. <p>B) Continue to maintain a constant dialogue with contacts at Noront and their project suppliers with regard to the Ring of Fire project. Ensure these contacts are included when promoting Ignace as being well positioned to serve the Ring of Fire project and any spin-off or supporting business and community development opportunities.</p>
<p>4) Build on Key Community Assets to be ready for investment in the specific sectors of forestry, mining, and commercial/retail.</p>	<p>A) Continue to work on and build community assets ensuring that all assets including the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre Hub, municipal airport, schools, arena, etc. are ready for increased population when investment occurs.</p>

PILLAR 1: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

4) Build on Key Community Assets to be ready for investment in the specific sectors of forestry, mining, and commercial/retail.
(Continued)

B) Analyse the current state of the Township’s infrastructure (sewer, water, broadband/fibre etc.) and undertake the necessary planning and updates required, in preparation for anticipated future development.

C) Continue to work towards providing more diversified housing options (seniors housing, detached/semi detached houses, multi-residential units etc.) for current and future residents.

D) Work with the youth, young families and service providers of the community (schools, business community, sports and entertainment, etc.) to identify priorities for an Ignace Youth Retention and Attraction Program.





“I have been in Ignace just two years, and find the people very welcoming. Now I own and manage a motel, and I am looking at other investments in the community.”

– AJ Patel, Co-owner of the Northwoods Motor Inn





PILLAR 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

30

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

1) Maintain an economic development office with staff and resources

A) Ensure there is sufficient funding in place to continue to support staffing and an economic development office, that will continue to undertake and implement various plans and strategies geared towards achieving a sustainable and diverse economy for Ignace in the future.

2) Actively provide support and increase communication between the Township and local businesses

A) Undertake a business visitation program and follow up on the items that come out of the business visitation program. Continue to work with the local businesses to best understand what is needed to help them remain viable and grow.

B) Revisit the viability of establishing an Economic Development Advisory Committee in the next 2-5 years. Given the community's current economic climate and landscape and the fundamental development initiatives being completed, the establishment of such a committee would better serve the community in the future. Once established, a Terms of Reference will be required, spelling out roles and responsibilities and reach out to appropriate people to participate.

C) Explore and implement opportunities for joint marketing between the business sector and the Township of Ignace.

D) Develop a 'shop local' program to support local businesses.

E) Encourage active participation in the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Incentives Program. Continue to engage with the business community, keeping them abreast of available incentives.

PILLAR 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

2) Actively provide support and increase communication between the Township and local businesses (*Continued*)

F) Work in partnership with local organizations and/or government offices to support/facilitate workshops that support business development (i.e. customer service training, etc.).

G) Explore the digital main street funding program that supports existing businesses and helps them to improve their adoption of technology. <https://digitalmainstreet.ca/ontario/>

3) Attract new businesses and investment to Ignace targeting sectors including forestry, mining, retail/commercial, and tourism

A) Continue focusing on developing the required physical infrastructure (i.e. highspeed broadband, entrepreneurship space, commercial/industrial space, etc.) and building a positive culture in the Township to ensure the community is an attractive location for new businesses.

B) Undertake an Investment Readiness Review Assessment to determine what needs to be completed to make Ignace ready for new investment.

C) Build from the results of the potential opportunities for Retail in the Business Gap Analysis and develop a retail attraction plan. Target new businesses that complement the nature of the retail district, build strong retail business organization, tourism and specialty niches, cultural and heritage attraction, downtown revitalization and aesthetics. Identify available properties for retail attraction.

D) Continue to undertake a land use analysis to determine if there is a need for additional shovel-ready land to provide adequate space for any new business or community ventures that want to invest in Ignace.

PILLAR 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

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RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

3) Attract new businesses and investment to Ignace targeting sectors including forestry, mining, retail/commercial, and tourism (*Continued*)

- E) Continue to strengthen the Township’s ability to support entrepreneurship by:
1. Educating the community on home-based business policies and provide an outline of requirements for residents that are interested in establishing a home-based business
 2. Supporting regional efforts in creating an incubator space for entrepreneurs in business and the arts and suggest that there be a pop up incubator space in Ignace on a more temporary basis.
 3. Partnering with the business support organizations (i.e. Patricia Area Community Endeavours Inc. (PACE), The Northwest Business Centre, Small Business Enterprise Centres) to develop a mentorship program which links successful Ignace entrepreneurs with new start-up entrepreneurs to provide guidance and direction.
-
- F) Initiate lead handling and tracking protocol and:
1. Utilize Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to facilitate tracking and handling of leads.
 2. Ensure information is shared across team members.

4) Support Workforce Development

- A) Partner with the Northwest Training and Adjustment Board to complete a workforce development strategy for Ignace.
-
- B) Work with regional groups/municipalities to determine initiatives they are undertaking to attract workforce and use their knowledge to develop an Ignace solution and/or link into their programs.

PILLAR 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

4) Support Workforce Development *(Continued)*

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

C) Engage Ignace and regional businesses and youth in a campaign to encourage local businesses to provide youth with job opportunities or co-op opportunities in an attempt to keep more youth in the community.





“There’s so much to do
in Ignace! I love showing
visitors the natural beauty
of this area.”

– Al Graver, Outdoorsman



PILLAR 3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

35

1) Support and implement training for operators, frontline staff and residents

A) Leverage all programs offered through Tourism Excellence North (TEN) as a means of improving the visitor experience at both the operator and community level.

1. Invite tourism stakeholders, other municipal staff and council to a working session to undertake a TEN **community self-assessment** <https://tourismexcellencenorth.ca/for-communities-destinations/> ; this can serve as an objective way to view the community from the visitors perspective, providing a benchmarking and goal setting opportunity. Undertake assessment again in 6-12 months.
2. Refer tourism businesses and organizations to the Tourism Excellence North (TEN) **Fast Track to Success** program <https://tourismexcellencenorth.ca/personalized-coaching/> for personalized coaching. The FTS program enables tourism operators to get hands on, expert advice on ways to improve their visitor's experience.

B) Work with IABA and Crossroads to offer community wide training for frontline staff (hospitality; grocery; gas stations; restaurants, etc.), municipal staff, council, community stakeholders, residents, students, etc. with the goal of increasing community pride, improving the visitor experience, encouraging longer stays and return visits and showcasing tourism as a viable career option.

1. Coordinate lunch & learn presentations and panels featuring local operators, municipal staff, club representatives (e.g. snowmobile club, golf course, etc.) to educate participants about activities, events, accommodations, food and beverage, etc. available in Ignace.

PILLAR 3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

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RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

1) Support and implement training for operators, frontline staff and residents
(Continued)

2. Coordinate facilitated or online Service Excellence training <https://www.otec.org/Training-Solutions-Overview/Service-Excellence-Series.aspx> through the Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC);); connect with DNO to access free customer service training modules through OTEC for travel information centres.
3. Develop an Ignace based Tourism Matters! campaign <http://www.kdca.ca/communications/tourism-matters/> to showcase the importance of tourism in the region and create awareness about exciting career opportunities in the tourism sector.

2) Enhance beach facilities and programming

- A) Improve basic infrastructure at beaches for a better level of service and enhanced visitor experience. **These will include but are not limited to seating, picnic tables, bike racks, signage, garbage and recycling receptacles.**
1. Create a visual image of what the beach could be – work with the Ignace community and a landscape architect to conceptualize a vision for Ignace’s beaches. Communicate this vision to the community to build and maintain commitment and excitement for the future.
 2. Identify potential funding sources for seating, picnic tables, bike racks, signage, garbage and recycling receptacles.
 3. Include beach signage as part of overall wayfinding strategy *(see Pillar 4: Marketing for details)*.

PILLAR 3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

2) Enhance beach facilities and programming
(Continued)

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

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B) Establish a watersport park and beach rental operation <https://justforthebeach.com/> to showcase Ignace's beaches, create job opportunities for local youth and provide a tangible and measurable tourism draw. The park can be owned and operated by the Township or managed in partnership with a contracted private sector operator.

1. Develop a business plan for the watersports park – work with a professional consultant to create a plan that includes details on operations, products and services, a detailed financial plan and marketing plan. The business plan should cover all potential components of the watersports park including the construction of washrooms, changerooms, concession stand, and rental facility as well as the purchase of rental items.
2. Investigate potential sources of funding for the purchase of watersport park features (see list below).
3. Based on business plan, draft RFP and issue contract for public/private partnership for park management.
4. Construct facilities and secure all watersport park amenities and features.
5. Ensure required beach enhancements are completed.
6. Create packages and implement marketing plan.
7. Host grand-opening in partnership with private sector partner – ensure significant media outreach.
8. Operate season 1 followed by performance review of contractor to assess competence and service levels.

PILLAR 3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

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RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

3) Establish an Annual Event

A) Work with stakeholders to establish an annual Summer Beach Party as a means of celebrating the community, showcasing its water-based assets and activities, building community pride and attracting visitors to Ignace. The event, which would be a new tourism experience, can also be positioned as the ultimate “homecoming” event and will provide a visible and tangible project to demonstrate the pro-active approach that the Township is taking to grow the economy.

1. Establish a Summer Beach Party (SBP) committee to undertake planning for the event.
2. Develop event promotional plan, including tactics and timelines (will be required for funding and to attract visitors).
3. Investigate and source funding to support the event including key capital costs such as staging and seating, event hosting costs such as entertainment, and marketing costs such as billboards and targeted social media.
4. Engage the community as a volunteer recruitment strategy, to assist with promotion, and attract attendees.
5. Create a media relations plan specific to the event.
6. Ensure any required beach enhancements have been completed.
7. Hold the event ensuring that influential individuals are invited to participate in various activities as a means of generating buzz. Township council, staff and committee members should be present and visible during the event.

PILLAR 3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

4) Support the development of new, and enhanced tourism businesses, experiences and packages

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

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A) Work with PACE, the Northwest Business Center (NWBC), Crossroads and the IABA to position tourism as a viable business opportunity and help drive entrepreneurship and the development of new products within the sector.

1. Develop a Tourism Business Start-up Program, including tourism specific training (build on existing entrepreneurship training and workshops provided by NWBC + Crossroads), a toolkit containing checklists, a “how to” cheat sheet, reference materials, sector stats and data, funding resources, glossary, business plan template, marketing templates, etc.
2. Utilize the Summer Company, Starter Company Plus and/or other entrepreneurship programs currently offered through the NWBC as a catalyst to promote tourism business start-ups.
3. Consider hosting a local “Make your Pitch” or “Win this Space” type of competitive event specific to tourism business development.
4. Develop a social media campaign targeting youth promoting tourism as a viable and appealing business opportunity; include videos (you-tube style) of people talking about the success and fun they have had operating in the tourism sector.

B) Work with local operators and stakeholders to help develop new summer, fall and winter-based tourism experiences utilizing existing assets and capacity to engage residents, attract day trippers, people staying at Sand Bar provincial park and overnight visitors.

1. Facilitate a planning session with various stakeholders from the tourism sector including hospitality, arts, culture and recreation to identify specific new, buyable experiences to develop over the short term.

PILLAR 3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

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RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

4) Support the development of new, and enhanced tourism businesses, experiences and packages *(Continued)*

2. Develop workflow/business plan identifying process, roles and responsibilities (e.g. promotion, sales, reservations, delivery, administration).
3. Consider developing online booking platform and calendar to facilitate reservations and sales. See Experience PEI <https://www.experiencepei.ca/calendar/> as an example.
4. Draft an MOU outlining roles, responsibilities and expectations of the Township and of the experience provider (e.g. use of township facilities, ED staff support for fulfilment/reservations booking, marketing, revenue sharing model).
5. Create experience schedule.
6. Work with operators and prospective experience providers to secure necessary resources to enhance existing business, and/or for new business start-up.
7. Develop and implement marketing plan to support promotion of new experiences.
8. Launch new experiences and booking platform.

C) Enhance and grow snowmobile tourism in Ignace as a means of attracting more visitors in the winter season. **Special consideration should be given to product development (trail enhancement and development, wayfinding and GPS mapping, land-use and land tenure agreements, development of a complete trail inventory for planning trips or tours) along with industry trends and best practices etc.**

1. Meet with the Ignace Otters Snowmobile Club to determine capacity for enhanced snowmobile tourism development in the area.

PILLAR 3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

4) Support the development of new, and enhanced tourism businesses, experiences and packages *(Continued)*

2. Facilitate session with Club and local operators to undertake the TEN self-assessment specific to snowmobiling (currently under development) and set opportunities for improvement.
3. Based on assessment outcomes, identify how to better cater to snowmobile tourists and position the community as a destination that welcomes snowmobilers. (See the **World’s Best Snowmobile Destination** project <http://snowmobilenorth.com/> that was developed in North-eastern Ontario for ideas and guidance on how to improve Ignace’s overall snowmobile product and better meet snowmobilers’ needs.)
4. Once improvements have been implemented, promote snowmobile friendly operators and the snowmobiling experience. Consider hosting a familiarization (FAM) tour for added visibility.

D) Further explore the potential of implementing a Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) to support improvements to tourism infrastructure, the development of new products/experiences and the implementation of the marketing plan.

1. Determine the actual revenue generation potential of implementing a MAT tax in Ignace by calculating the number of rooms, occupancy, and average daily rates x the anticipated percentage of the tax.
2. Speak to representative and collect presentations, sample agreements and reports from communities that have been successful in implementing the MAT to identify challenges and develop a “pitch” for Ignace.
3. Educate the local accommodation sector and council on the MAT tax.

Continued...

PILLAR 3: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

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RECOMMENDATION

4) Support the development of new, and enhanced tourism businesses, experiences and packages *(Continued)*

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

4. Determine which entity would administer the MAT tax (must be a separate entity from the municipality - may consider establishing a tourism committee of the IABA made up of various tourism stakeholders; for example: 'Destination Ignace').
5. Work with Destination Ignace* to develop an agreement on % collected at the accommodation level; % of the net revenue from the MAT to go to the municipality to be applied to various infrastructure investments which support tourism assets; and % to go to Destination Ignace for tourism development and promotion.
6. Implement the MAT.

*Utilizing 'Destination Ignace' as a brand for the purposes of this plan as it aligns with the region and province, however this would be determined by stakeholders.





“My husband and I retired here after working in Thunder Bay. Now my children and grandchildren are moving here. I love it!”

— Dawn St. Amand, Retiree



PILLAR 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS



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RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

1) Consolidate and enhance online presence

A) Review the Township of Ignace website and complete missing content ensuring the Ignace messaging is geared to attracting visitors.

B) Develop and promote tourism experiences on the Ignace website and via social media tools.

C) Ensure all communications from the Township employs user-friendly and casual language.

2) Focus on regional and VFR* market

A) Develop and implement concentrated marketing campaign focused on attracting day trippers from Dryden, Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout and Atikokan. (*VFR = Visiting Friends and Relatives)

3) Continue to implement all elements remaining in the Ignace Marketing Plan 2018 to promote business development and tourism investment

A) Create and use the Ignace branded Marketing Tools (Stationery, Township shirts and caps, mugs, vehicle signage, kit folder, quick facts, rack card, e-newsletter, trade show display, advertising – print/social media, maps, videos, testimonials, street banners, gateway signage, highway billboards, Township office signage).

B) Clarify key communication and marketing roles among staff and departments

1. Clarify roles and activities for Mayor, CAO and ED staff, so that each knows their role.
2. Everyone plays a role in telling the Ignace story. Create a script with key points – to keep ‘on message’.
3. Share information regularly with entire Ignace team.

PILLAR 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

3) Continue to implement all elements remaining in the Ignace Marketing Plan 2018 to promote business development and tourism investment (*Continued*)

C) Develop and maintain inventory of marketing materials.

1. Ensure that all content emphasizes the value proposition and main economic development messaging.
2. Keep videos and print materials up to date.

D) Maintain available land & properties inventory.

1. Create updated inventory of potential development sites in Ignace.
2. Add property descriptions to web page showing available properties.

E) Promote Ignace via social media.

1. Modify existing Facebook page and update it often. As new content (new success stories?) gets added to the site, share this news via social media. Goal is to drive traffic to the website.
2. Set up Twitter and LinkedIn accounts for the Township.
3. Look for opportunities to re-tweet good news stories in the community.
4. Launch and promote new videos using Google Ad Words. Track views and response. Adjust.

F) Communicate regularly with existing businesses.

PILLAR 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS

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RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

3) Continue to implement all elements remaining in the Ignace Marketing Plan 2018 to promote business development and tourism investment (*Continued*)

1. Continue to touch base with companies that are doing well and companies that need assistance.
2. Connect with local businesses to identify possible Success Stories to share via different media.
3. Partner with organizations promoting entrepreneurship as a viable economic force.

G) Communicate with business community at large.

1. Provide regular articles to the local/regional press regarding Ignace's Economic Development plans. Provide updates directly to the IABA.
2. Educate businesses and residents about the current state of economic development: the incentives that have been developed, the programs available to take advantage of.
3. Launch e-newsletter and e-blast program to keep businesses up to date, addressing local concerns and opportunities. Use these to communicate Ignace initiatives that affect and/or support local business community.

H) Continue to create a series of success stories in video and print.

1. Promote the successes of local businesses through case studies, press releases and inclusion in ED newsletter – and on website.
2. Gather ongoing testimonials to add to existing. Conduct formal outreach to secure these ongoing.

PILLAR 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

3) Continue to implement all elements remaining in the Ignace Marketing Plan 2018 to promote business development and tourism investment (*Continued*)

- I) Partner with business support organizations.
 - 1. Maintain close relationships with organizations promoting entrepreneurship as a viable economic force.
 - 2. Build relationships with area resources and networks, such as:
 - Patricia Area Community Endeavours Inc. <http://www.pace-cf.on.ca/>
 - The Northwest Business Centre <http://www.nwbiz.ca/>
 - Small Business Enterprise Centres <http://investnorthernontario.com/>
 - 3. Maintain constant dialogue with these contacts; these may be the first contact for new businesses & entrepreneurs.
- J) Support and participate in networking events.
 - 1. Continue to support networking events such as the Women’s Breakfast organized by PACE.
 - 2. Develop and maintain a reputation as a business-friendly community.
- K) Develop a customizable investor response package
 - 1. Use branded presentation folder; compile package of community information to respond to investment inquiries.
 - 2. Create investment template: a branded Word document that can easily be updated and customized for the prospect. Include applicable incentives and programs.

PILLAR 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS

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RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

3) Continue to implement all elements remaining in the Ignace Marketing Plan 2018 to promote business development and tourism investment (*Continued*)

3. Ensure this information can be easily saved and send as PDFs, as well.

L) Be responsive to new prospect inquiries.

1. Maintain a customizable investor response package.

2. Communicate Ignace business readiness by submitting stories to resource-oriented media such as: <https://www.northernontariobusiness.com/>

3. Maintain up-to-date pages on the website pertaining to resource-based industries.

4. Develop a value proposition for Ignace and include the transportation infrastructure, and other assets that are in place to support business attraction in the target sectors of forestry, mining, retail/commercial and tourism.

5. Maintain connections with realtors and landowners listing property in Ignace. Be very familiar with the characteristics of the properties available.

6. Consider offering prospects familiarization tours or open houses of the vacant land and buildings available.

M) Create a “Things to See & Do in Ignace”.

1. Identify the community’s assets. Promote this list on the website, plus have stand-alone handouts or maps for visitors to pick up at local establishments and the Township office.

2. Create a promotional map with Ignace’s main attractions.

PILLAR 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

3) Continue to implement all elements remaining in the Ignace Marketing Plan 2018 to promote business development and tourism investment (*Continued*)

3. Ensure all residents can explain to a visitor how to find their way around the Town.
4. Have residents and businesses understand that they are ambassadors for the Town. Consider a town-wide familiarization tour, so that everyone knows the Town’s features – and the value of tourism - and uses the same language to describe them.
5. Distribute map to all relevant locations including gas, dining, shopping and accommodation points.

O) Create better directional signage in and around the township directing residents and tourists to key attractions such as Agimak Lake, the beaches, Tower Hill, trails, Health Centre, etc., that are currently not well signed. This will also help to improve linkages to the lake and trails.

P) Take advantage of the current trend in points of historical interest by developing a series of interpretive plaques at key locations in the community.

Q) Join tourism associations (see Tourism Development)

1. Take advantage of their resources, including operator training.
2. Connect with groups such as:
 - <https://tourismexcellencenorth.ca/>
 - <https://tourismnorthernontario.com/>

PILLAR 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS

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RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

3) Continue to implement all elements remaining in the Ignace Marketing Plan 2018 to promote business development and tourism investment (*Continued*)

- <https://www.northernontario.travel/>
- <http://noto.ca/>
- <http://visitnorthwestontario.com/>

3. Ensure the Ignace description is up to date on these sites.

R) Develop tourism opportunities in Ignace (see Tourism Development).

1. Plan to attend Northern Ontario Tourism Summit:
<https://northernontariotourismsummit.ca/> The conference goal is: “To bring together tourism businesses, organizations and suppliers as well as all levels of Government to find solutions to challenges facing the industry.”

S) Consider advertising in select magazines and sites (see Tourism Development).

1. In partnership with local tourism businesses, investigate the value of advertising in select media. Examples include:
 - <http://www.thecottager.com/> (Winnipeg)
 - <https://visitsunsetcountry.com/> (Kenora)
2. Online advertising, plus Google Ad Words should be utilized.

PILLAR 4: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

EXISTING OR PROPOSED ACTIONS

3) Continue to implement all elements remaining in the Ignace Marketing Plan 2018 to promote business development and tourism investment *(Continued)*

T) Staying connected with strategic partners.

1. Build relationships with key strategic partners including business organizations and networks, government agencies, politicians and funders (who appreciate hearing of the community's successes). These groups and individuals may act as a funnel for market intelligence, plus bring qualified leads. While these people should be added to the Ignace e-newsletter mailing list, it is best to maintain a one-on-one personal relationship.

4) Continue to seek funding opportunities for tourism initiatives

U) Apply to Destination Northern Ontario for funding to develop and implement wayfinding strategy.





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