

Economic Development Strategy

for the Township of Nipigon



March 2019

Prepared by:





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1. INTRODUCTION

The Township of Nipigon is located on the north shore of Lake Superior. Located approximately 110 kilometers or a one-hour drive east of Thunder Bay along the Trans-Canada Highway, Nipigon boasts a desirable quality of life, a friendly community and a pristine natural setting.

Nipigon has a rich history and strong cultural roots dating back 4000 years. In the 1650's, Europeans came to Nipigon and in the 1800's the CP Railway was built through the Township.

Historically, Nipigon's industry consisted mainly of forestry and forestry-related activities. The logging and forestry industry, at its peak in the 1950s and '60s, employed 5,000 people. In 2006, Columbia Forest Products sold the mill and it was purchased by staff at the mill in order to continue its future. In February 2007 the last remaining mill, Nipigon Multiply Forest Products Mill, closed after a devastating fire, resulting in the loss of 150 jobs.

Due to the volatility of the forestry industry, the Township of Nipigon has realized that it can no longer rely on a single industry but needs to look to other sectors to develop economic opportunities to sustain it's community. As a result, there have been numerous studies recently completed to help provide direction for the future economy.

As well there have been significant investments made in and around the Township of Nipigon in the last decade including a \$5 million downtown revitalization project in 2009 which included a new municipal town hall and library complex; \$2.8 million invested in 2013 in Nipigon's waterfront; a \$106 million investment was made to build the Nipigon River Bridge on the Tran-Canada highway on the east edge of town, and a \$30 million investment has gone into a liquefied natural gas plant. Parks Canada has identified Nipigon as the administrative office location for the Lake Superior Marine Conservation Area with construction taking place for the new administrative building and interpretive centre over the next few years.





1.1. Purpose for the Economic Development Strategy

Nipigon is in an enviable position as a northern Ontario community due to the many investments that have recently been made in and around the community by the three levels of government (Municipal, Provincial and Federal) as well as limited, but important, private investment. Regionally, there is an increased number of organizations promoting and supporting tourism assets that are emerging as significant draws to Nipigon and area.

The Township of Nipigon has undergone a branding initiative as well as a visioning process and now has a fresh, contemporary brand with a new community vision and mission. There is an opportunity for Nipigon to capitalize on these investments and support its economy to grow in a sustainable manner that is in alignment with their new vision and mission and support their new branding.

Vision:

Nipigon will become a destination for travelers, regional focus for services, recreation and culture and a sustainable, healthy and complete community.

Mission:

- **Nipigon will be a prosperous and economically sustainable community.**
- **Nipigon will be a green, mindful and environmentally sustainable community.**
- **Nipigon will engage the community in being a healthy and socially sustainable community.**
- **Nipigon will be a creative and culturally sustainable community.**

Being strategic is imperative at this time and undertaking an economic development strategy now is key to the future of Nipigon's economy. Nipigon's population has been decreasing, housing availability is limited, and a population that is aging.

The 2019 Economic Development Strategy provides a roadmap for sustainable employment growth for the Township of Nipigon over the next five years.



2. PROCESS FOLLOWED

The process followed to create the Township of Nipigon Economic Development Strategy was comprised of a document review, statistical analysis and a thorough and comprehensive community consultation.

The study began with a document review, followed by an updated statistical analysis of the Township's economy and demographics that yielded a current situational analysis report, followed by a community tour of the Township of Nipigon. McSweeney & Associates developed Nipigon's Market Study, Needs/Gap Analysis and Community Profile in early 2018 and at that time substantial consultation also took place. Using the information acquired through previous research, as well as undertaking current research to establish any changes over the past year, provided the background for the Economic Development Strategy.

The Economic Development Strategy is based on a comprehensive understanding of the Township, its economy, businesses and stakeholders, as well as their collective aspirations.



The consultation process to prepare for the Economic Development Strategy included:

- A series of one-on-one interviews with businesses, elected officials and economic development stakeholders.
- A working session with businesses, elected officials and economic development stakeholders.



This process led to the creation of a set of detailed realistic and doable immediate, short and long-term action items for the next five years with an aim of:

- Supporting and retaining existing businesses and jobs in the Township.
- Encouraging greater investment and job growth in the Township.
- Attracting new businesses and industries to the Township.
- Helping the Township achieve long-term employment growth.
- Provide solutions to overcome any investment readiness or development challenges, and to maintain and improve the Township's overall competitive business environment.

3. TOWNSHIP OF NIPIGON'S TOP PRIORITY ACTIONS & TIMELINES

Experience indicates that presenting a small number of key strategic actions for communities to focus on is far more effective than an extensive list of items that seem impossible to implement. While the remainder of this strategy and the implementation plan will elaborate on these priorities, below are the **Top Priority Actions**, focused on providing initiatives which are necessary to be carried out first and are the foundational actions required to realise the Township of Nipigon's economic vision. These initiatives, some new and some already in process, are aimed at strengthening both the community and economy.

TOP PRIORITY ACTIONS	TIMING
<p>1. Clearly define roles and responsibilities of the Economic Development Officer and elected officials on development opportunities and all matters related to economic development.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>2. Establish a defined process to handle inquiries, roles and responsibilities and ensure Township staff are knowledgeable on zoning, building application process, etc.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>3. Complete the following actions to become investment ready:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update and keep current the asset inventory of available privately-owned and Township-owned serviced lands and buildings especially those that could be of interest to business; b. Undertake a land use analysis to determine if there is a need to develop serviced industrial land in the Township; c. Understand the business community by developing and implementing an ongoing business visitation program to help with Business Expansion and Retention (BR&E) of existing business. d. Continue improving and updating the existing business directory on the website. e. Keep Nipigon's Community Profile up to date on an annual basis. f. Add the Community Profile onto the economic development website/pages. g. Develop more detailed economic development web pages on Nipigon's website that provides current and accurate information that a site selector, business or investor requires to invest in the community. h. Apply for funding, if required, to accomplish actions above, as well as funding to provide guidance, coaching and/or direction for the Economic Development Officer on implementation. 	<p>Immediate</p>

TOP PRIORITY ACTIONS	TIMING
<p>4. Actively provide support and increase communication between the Township and local businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure open and continued lines of communication between the municipality and local businesses. b. Work with the local business community to understand what is needed to help them grow and remain viable. c. Ensure the Township is providing as much support as possible to the local businesses on an ongoing basis by being open to new ideas, opportunities, and collaborative ways to work together. 	Immediate
<p>5. Implement a summer pilot project for a coordinated program for extended business hours to capitalize on the tourists visiting Nipigon.</p>	Immediate
<p>6. Investigate and develop a business case for a Municipal Accommodations Tax. Use the funds collected for tourism related projects that benefit accommodations in Nipigon.</p>	Immediate
<p>7. Continue to implement the signage program along the Trans-Canada highway corridor and throughout the Township.</p>	Immediate
<p>8. Undertake a community education campaign to encourage yard clean-up, removal of outside storage, and building maintenance to minimum standards. Once that has been implemented, enact and enforce property standards to ensure Nipigon portrays itself with an image of heightened property ownership and pride.</p>	Immediate
<p>9. Continue to implement the Superior North Youth Arts and Culture Strategy.</p>	Immediate
<p>10. Hire an arts and culture coordinator through a funding program and develop programming at the Edge Arts Studio and Gallery.</p>	Immediate
<p>11. Undertake an Accommodations Study to determine the need for increased short-term accommodations in Nipigon.</p>	Immediate
<p>12. Develop and implement a marketing plan aimed at promoting Nipigon's competitive advantages for entrepreneurs and those professionals who service external markets.</p>	Immediate
<p>13. Continue to work with key partners to develop and implement a regional tourism program in an effort to attract visitors to the area throughout all 4 seasons.</p>	Immediate

TOP PRIORITY ACTIONS	TIMING
<p>14. Continue to actively explore and develop regional partnerships to increase the area's economic development. Partnerships can take many forms and can be with several different partners including: private sector investors; municipal, provincial or federal governments and agencies; and not-for-profits.</p>	Immediate
<p>15. Continue to engage and work cooperatively with the Superior North Community Futures Development Corporation on regional initiatives and opportunities.</p>	Immediate
<p>16. Continue to work with neighbouring communities (Red Rock, Dorion, Lake Helen, Red Rock Indian Band) to develop regional economic development initiatives.</p>	Immediate

Immediate = 2019-2020





4. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

4.1. Strategic Action Plan Consultation Process

Approximately 40 stakeholders were consulted throughout this process.

The consultations consisted of confidential one-on-one interviews, and a working session with targeted community leaders, elected officials, businesses and economic development stakeholders.

4.1.1. Interviews

One-on-one interviews were undertaken with economic development stakeholders including members of the Township staff, Regional partners, Mayor and Council, and key businesses. Five open-ended questions were used to guide the interviews. These questions probed into the major strengths and challenges of doing business in the Township and looked forward to help define future opportunities, aspirations and results. All participants provided feedback on these questions, contributing to the final strategy.

4.1.2. Working Session

The Working Session was held March 19, 2019 and was attended by approximately 20 participants including representation from the Mayor and Council, the business community, Township staff, strategic partners, the Economic Development Task Force and other key community stakeholders.

The purpose of the Working Session was to bring together economic development, community and business leaders to review the project findings from the SCOAR™ analysis, to get confirmation of the themes that were derived from the research, and to begin strategizing and crafting action items for each of those themes that emerged from the consultation process. Working groups identified actions that would address the challenges and opportunities under each theme.



The themes brought forward to the Working Session and validated were:

 <p>Arts, Culture, Heritage and Tourism</p>	 <p>Business Friendly and Ready for Investment</p>
 <p>Entrepreneurship and Small Business</p>	 <p>A Cohesive, Proud and Connected Community</p>

5. A SNAPSHOT OF NIPIGON

5.1. Executive Summary of the Updated Situational Analysis

The analysis is derived from Manifold SuperDemographics 2018 and Statistics Canada Census data.

5.2. Demographics

Census Population: 2006 to 2016, and beyond

- ◆ Nipigon's census population declined by 6.3% over the past two census periods (2006 to 2016)
- ◆ Nipigon's total population decreased due to a decline in the number of persons 60 and younger, meanwhile the population 60 and older grew.
- ◆ Nipigon still has approximately 59% of its population within the working age (15 to 64)



Age Profile for 2018

- ◆ Nipigon's population is slightly older than the province; it has a larger percentage of residents aged 65 years and older (25% of residents vs. 17.5% in Ontario).
- ◆ Average age in Nipigon is 45 years compared to 42 years in Ontario.
- ◆ Median age in Nipigon is 49 years compared to 42 years in Ontario.

Incomes: 2018 (based on 2017 incomes)¹

- ◆ Approximately 85% of the Nipigon population has an individual total income of \$49,000 or less
- ◆ **Median employment income** (\$22,497) in Nipigon is 57% lower than in the province (\$35,380).
- ◆ **Median family income** in Nipigon (\$78,461) is 28% lower than in the province (\$100,603).



¹ Please note that the 2018 Manifold data uses 2017 income data, as it is the most recent information available.

Highest Level of Education: 2018 (persons aged 24-65)

- ◆ Approximately 60% of residents have a post-secondary education (vs 65% in Ontario)
- ◆ The most common level of post-secondary education in Nipigon is College certificates/diplomas (attained by 27% of residents aged 25-64)
- ◆ The most common post-secondary field of study (by percentage of the population aged 15 years or older) was architecture, engineering and related technologies (16%), followed by health and related fields (8%).



Mobility: 2018

- ◆ The percentage of residents that moved to Nipigon over the previous 5 years (26%) was less than the percentage of "movers" in Ontario (39%).
- ◆ In the past five years, 14 % of people moving within Nipigon were "migrant movers": likely to be relocating from other parts of Ontario as opposed to moving from outside of the province or country.



Knowledge of Official Languages: 2018

- ◆ 94% of residents speak English only (compared to 86% - English only in Ontario)
- ◆ 5% of Nipigon residents identify as bilingual (English and French), which is slightly lower than the provincial level (11%).



5.3. Labour Force

Key Indicators: 2018

- ◆ The number of residents aged 15 years and over is 1,420,
- ◆ Nipigon has a labour force of 737 persons.
- ◆ Participation (52%) and employment (47%) rates in Nipigon are significantly lower than in the provincial figures (64% and 61%, respectively).
- ◆ As of 2018's third quarter, the unemployment rate in Nipigon (10.1%), was much higher than Ontario's (5.77%).



Labour Force by Occupation: 2018

Residents in Nipigon are primarily employed within the following major occupational groups:

- ◆ Sales and service occupations,
- ◆ Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations,
- ◆ Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services

Compared to Ontario, labour residing in Nipigon has a larger concentration (a larger percentage of residents are employed) within the following occupations:

- ◆ Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations
- ◆ Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services
- ◆ Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations

Labour Force by Industry: 2018

The largest industries by employment in Nipigon are within the following major industry groups:

- ◆ Health care and social assistance
- ◆ Retail trade
- ◆ Other services (except public administration)

Compared to Ontario, employed labour residing in Nipigon has a larger concentration within the following industries:

- ◆ Health care and social assistance
- ◆ Other services (except public administration)
- ◆ Utilities

Commuting Patterns (Labour Force Aged 15 Years and Over Having a Usual Place of Work): 2016

- ◆ Nipigon attracts workers from Thunder Bay (city and unorganized), as well as Greenstone (municipality).
- ◆ The local economy attracts workers from other communities to work primarily in the following local industries: public administration; accommodation and food services; and, health care and social assistance.
- ◆ Nipigon residents leave the municipality to work primarily in the following industries: other services (except public administration); mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; and, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting.

5.4 Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SCOAR™)



The following comprehensive SCOAR™ (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) Analysis was prepared by analyzing the current statistics and data, a document review, plus the feedback from elected officials, staff, community stakeholders, and residents engaged in the consultation.

The SCOAR™ is meant to provide an overview of initial observations of the Township of Nipigon.



- strategically located at the junction of Highway 11 and the Trans Canada Highway, 1 hour east of Thunder Bay. Everyone that travels across northern Ontario needs to travel through Nipigon on the northern shore of Lake Superior)
- readily accessible to unlimited nature for outdoor activities including rock climbing, ice climbing, snowmobiling, hiking, boating, birdwatching, biking, hunting, etc.
- quality of place - safe, family oriented and significant community amenities including a library, museum, sports facilities, hospital, OPP, volunteer fire department, schools, etc.
- the approved location for the new administration building for the Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area (providing well paid jobs)
- available industrial land with natural gas, water, and hydro
- Nipigon has undertaken a number of investments to improve the Township (i.e. waterfront improvements, arts studio/gallery, seniors' centre/entrepreneurship centre)
- long, rich history and strong cultural roots
- entrepreneurial spirit in the community
- regional centre servicing the area for healthcare, policing, social services, and commerce



- shortage of available buildings to locate a business
- limited amount of available serviced employment lands
- shortage of housing stock
- relatively remote - long distance to travel to get to Nipigon
- some people in the community are resistant to change
- a relatively easy 1-hour drive to Thunder Bay makes it difficult to attract and retain business in Nipigon
- winter is challenging due to weather, road conditions and minimal people travelling to Nipigon
- difficult to find and retain full time/part time skilled/unskilled employees
- residents appear to not want to work (48% participation rate)
- existing traveller's accommodations offer diverse standards with varying levels of customer service
- Township owns a small amount of land on the highway which makes it difficult to make improvements to this area (which is the face of Nipigon)
- aging population
- perceived higher commercial taxes than other municipalities in the north
- the population isn't large enough to support local businesses
- difficult to communicate to the local residents – not enough community engagement
- volunteer burnout
- limited activities for 10-17 year olds that are not sports or outdoor recreation related
- perceived lack of understanding of residents and elected officials of the value of tourism



- development of the vacant mill site
- the community, in general, can work better together to take a coordinated approach in an effort to support the community
- improved relationships between staff and elected officials and the business community
- the need to build awareness of what the community and region has to offer in terms of tourism assets, community assets, etc. and market this information
- capitalize on the year-round outdoor tourism opportunities in the region
- attract a brand name hotel/motel to Nipigon
- continue to revitalize the waterfront and bring more business into Nipigon
- improve image of Nipigon through landscaping, clean up, signage, etc. both on the highway and in the town
- potential benefit from the new East West Tie Transmission Project and the Nipigon Natural Gas Plant projects through jobs and investment

- elevate the customer experience in existing tourism assets (i.e. restaurants, accommodations, information centre)
- create development or a presence along the highway
- opportunity to work closely with Parks Canada and the new Marine Conservation Area





1. Continue building a quality of place to live, work and play that supports the current population and that attracts new residents into the community.
2. Building on the tourism industry in Nipigon with a strong four seasons tourism program.
3. Having a vibrant, vital downtown and waterfront that attracts people locally and from across the region.
4. Becoming investment ready.



1. Continue building a quality of place to live, work and play that supports the current population and that attracts new residents into the community.
 - will have an attractive and vibrant community that provides opportunities for employment, housing and a variety of recreation for all ages in Nipigon and surrounding area
 - will have a cohesive community with common goals and aspirations that everyone buys into and supports
2. Building on the tourism industry in Nipigon with a strong four seasons tourism program.
 - will have a strong 4-season tourism product including events, attractions and experiences
 - will have a brand name hotel/motel in Nipigon
 - will have a more diversified mix of businesses and support services to attract and keep tourists in the area for an extended stay
3. Having a vibrant, vital downtown and waterfront that attracts people locally and from across the region.
 - will have a fully functional and successful marina and campground that draws people to the waterfront and keeps them for an extended stay
 - will have a completed administration building/visitor centre for the Marine Conservation Area and support services
 - will have a more diversified mix of viable businesses in the downtown to attract people to the downtown
4. Becoming investment ready.
 - will have a reputation of being business friendly and investment ready
 - will have a formal process in place to handle inquiries

6. TOWNSHIP OF NIPIGON'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The following action areas have been derived through a rigorous process that included a thorough study of the Township's economic base analysis, a target sector review, a full consultation and stakeholder engagement exercise and the Township of Nipigon SCOATM. These strategic areas of focus, not weighted and in no particular order, are where the Township of Nipigon should centre their economic development resources.



Strategic Actions



6.1. Theme #1 – Arts, Culture, Heritage and Tourism

Tourism is a broad industry, based around the **attraction of people into a specific area**. The sector encompasses local and regional activities and attractions such as food, accommodations, retail, festivals, sporting activities, arts, culture and heritage. To best benefit from tourism, there needs to be a plan to ensure that it grows and develops based on the community's vision. **Tourism can be a major economic driver for Nipigon's economy.**

ARTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE

1. Continue to **implement the Superior North Youth Arts and Culture Strategy**.
2. **Hire an arts and culture coordinator** through a funding program and develop programming at the Edge Arts Studio and Gallery.



TOURISM

- 1. Investigate and develop a business case for a Municipal Accommodations Tax.** Use the funds collected for tourism related projects that benefit accommodations in Nipigon.
- 2. Undertake an Accommodations Study** to determine the need for increased short-term accommodations in Nipigon.
- 3. Continue to work with key partners to develop and implement a regional tourism program** in an effort to attract visitors to the area throughout all 4 seasons.
- 4. Research communities of similar size and scope to Nipigon, for inspiration and what makes them successful and use this knowledge to develop further assets to attract tourists to Nipigon** (i.e. Grand Marais, Minnesota and Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland).
- 5. Create an educational program and inform the local community** on current amenities and services related to the impact of arts, culture, heritage and tourism on the local economy.
- 6. Develop a realistic tourism related business visitation schedule, develop a database, and track visitations** to better understand Nipigon's tourism assets.
- 7. Continue to maintain web pages** providing information on all tourism assets in and around the Township of Nipigon.





6.2. Theme #2 – Business Friendly and Ready for Investment

Being business friendly is about having **good customer service, a streamlined process for development, and a knowledgeable council and staff and a supportive community** that are willing to do their utmost to make businesses welcome in the community.

Successfully retaining and attracting investment means being able to provide the appropriate information about the business climate and infrastructure for existing and potential investors. **Being 'investment ready' is understanding what a business needs to be successful.**

READY FOR INVESTMENT

1. Complete the **following actions to become investment ready:**
 - a. Update and keep current the asset inventory **of available privately-owned and Township-owned serviced lands and buildings** especially those that could be of interest to business;
 - b. **Undertake a land use analysis** to determine if there is a need to develop serviced industrial land in the Township;
 - c. Understand the business community by developing and implementing an ongoing **business visitation program to help with Business Expansion and Retention (BR&E)** of existing business.
 - d. Continue improving and **updating the existing business directory** on the website.
 - e. Keep **Nipigon's Community Profile up to date** on an annual basis.
 - f. Add the **Community Profile onto the economic development website/pages**.
 - g. Develop more **detailed economic development web pages** on Nipigon's website that provides current and accurate information that a site selector, business or investor requires to invest in the community.
 - h. **Apply for funding**, if required, to accomplish actions above, as well as funding to provide guidance, coaching and/or direction for the Economic Development Officer on implementation.

BUSINESS FRIENDLY

1. Clearly **define roles and responsibilities of the Economic Development Officer and elected officials** on development opportunities and all matters related to economic development.
2. Establish a **defined process to handle inquiries, roles and responsibilities and ensure Township staff are knowledgeable** on zoning, building application process, etc.





6.3. Theme #3 – Entrepreneurship and Small Business

Entrepreneurs create their own businesses. Having an environment that supports, encourages and promotes entrepreneurship is crucial to growing the economy. Nipigon's entrepreneurial spirit has allowed it to continue to push through economic downturns. A characteristic of the people of Nipigon is their **capacity for risk taking and ability to be innovative.**

SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES (BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION)

1. Actively provide **support and increase communication between the Township and local businesses.**
 - a. Ensure open and continued lines of **communication between the municipality and local businesses.**
 - b. Work with the local business community to understand what is **needed to help them grow and remain viable.**
 - c. Ensure the Township is providing as much **support as possible to the local businesses** on an ongoing basis by being open to new ideas, opportunities, and collaborative ways to work together.
2. Continue to explore and implement **opportunities for joint marketing** between the business community and the Township of Nipigon.
3. **Educate residents on the need to buy locally** and support their local economy in order to assist local businesses maintain or improve their market share.
4. Continue to support the North of Superior Chamber of Commerce on their events and **programs that celebrate business** (communicate business success stories, annual event, etc.).
5. Allocate municipal budget, apply for funding, and **hire an economic development intern.**



ATTRACT AND GROW NEW BUSINESSES

1. Develop and implement a **marketing plan aimed at promoting Nipigon's competitive advantages** for entrepreneurs and those professionals who service external markets.
2. Develop the Township's ability to **support entrepreneurship.**
 - a. Inform Township of Nipigon residents of the **benefits of entrepreneurship and the opportunities** that exist in the community.
 - b. **Continue with, expand and build on the success of the Bear Cave** young entrepreneur program.

- c. **Encourage the establishment of home-based businesses** as per the Official Plan by having updated land use bylaws and policies in place to support home-based businesses.
3. Take advantage of the certified community kitchen located in the Legion to provide a venue to **develop local, unique food inspired businesses**.
4. **Expand the existing farmers' market** as a venue to sell locally made products.
5. Develop the available space in the 175 Bell Street building **as an informal business incubator/entrepreneurship centre**.
6. Develop **marketing material to promote Nipigon** externally as a fully-serviced, affordable and technically advanced community with community assets (i.e. technological infrastructure, hospital, library, etc.), recreational activities (outdoor recreation, community centre, curling club, arena) and potential to attract younger professionals and families to the community. This will also entice local regional residents to start new businesses.
7. **Establish a business start-up checklist/process** for entrepreneurs and small business.



DEVELOP AND EXPAND ON REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. Continue to actively explore and **develop regional partnerships** to increase the area's economic development. Partnerships can take many forms and can be with several different partners including: Private sector investors; Municipal, provincial or federal governments and agencies; and Not-for-profits.
2. Continue to **engage and work cooperatively with the Superior North Community Futures Development Corporation** on regional initiatives and opportunities.
3. **Continue to work with neighbouring communities** (Red Rock, Dorion, Lake Helen, Red Rock Indian Band) to develop regional economic development initiatives.



6.4. Theme #4 – A Cohesive, Proud and Connected Community

A community that is physically connected will help **build a cohesive and integrated community and one that the residents hold proud**. The importance of engaging and connecting the entire community – from the Trans-Canada Highway Corridor to the waterfront, establishes a cohesive community - with downtown as the centre of the community acting as a public meeting space and commercial centre. Economically vibrant main streets are the heart and soul of the community, provide an identity for the area, and should be a point of pride in the community.

DEVELOP THE HIGHWAY CORRIDOR IN NIPIGON

1. Develop the Trans-Canada highway corridor into a **destination/stopping place** by providing businesses along the highway with information on Nipigon and the region.
2. Determine a new location and **relocate the existing entry sign** in a more prominent location, making it the eastern gateway sign into the Township of Nipigon.
3. Take steps to improve the interior (i.e. photos, etc.) of the **Visitor Information Centre**, and continue to ensure that it is **THE place to stop** on the Trans Canada highway corridor.
4. **Continue to implement the signage program** along the Trans-Canada highway corridor and throughout the Township.



CONNECT AND BEAUTIFY THE COMMUNITY

1. **Connect the Trans-Canada, downtown and waterfront with a well thought out, planned, designed and integrated streetscape** that includes Trans-Canada Highway, 1st Street, Railway Street, Cemetery Street/Front Street and Riverview Street.
2. Designate the entire Township of Nipigon (including the Trans-Canada highway, downtown and waterfront) with a **Community Improvement Plan (CIP)** and offer tax incentive programs to promote the private sector redevelopment efforts.
3. Continue to **beautify the Township of Nipigon** including the Trans-Canada, downtown and waterfront with flowers, benches, banners, landscaping, entryway signage, etc.
4. Undertake a community education campaign to encourage yard clean-up, removal of outside storage, and building maintenance to minimum standards. Once that has been implemented, **enact and enforce property standards** to ensure Nipigon portrays itself with an image of heightened property ownership and pride.

CONTINUE WITH THE REVITALIZATION OF DOWNTOWN NIPIGON

1. Encourage downtown businesses to **animate downtown** through on sidewalk displays and signage.
2. **Implement infrastructure improvements** including sidewalks, accessible parking, increased parking.
3. Continue to **provide locations and buildings** for new and expanded businesses to locate.
4. Implement a **summer pilot project for a coordinated program for extended business hours** to capitalize on the tourists visiting Nipigon.
5. **Create a plan to use the Main Street Revitalization money** received from the Province of Ontario and complete the improvements by deadline.

