



EAST FERRIS

Economic Development Strategy and Facilities Master Plan 2013



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With support from:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipality of East Ferris is a rural, residential community located 20 kilometers east of the City of North Bay. The Municipality has experienced steady growth over the past five decades and currently has a population of over 4,800. This growth has contributed to the evolution of the municipality from a township with a rural setting to a semi-urban community with the Hamlets of Astorville, Corbeil and Derland as centres. This continued growth is a true reflection of the residents, the community spirit, and the many benefits associated with living in East Ferris. The Municipality's bilingual history and traditions are deeply rooted in the annual activities, events and community development initiatives. The Municipality of East Ferris is working to further develop the community's economic foundation through the initiation of several new projects to support the growth and development of the community.

With the goal of exploring opportunities that will contribute to continued growth and community development, while fostering local and regional partnerships in an effort to become a more sustainable community in the future, the Municipality retained Karen Jones Consulting and Saad Consulting to embark on the process of developing an Economic Development Strategy and Facilities Master Plan.

Karen Jones of Karen Jones Consulting Inc. acted as the lead in the creation of the Economic Development Strategy, focusing efforts toward developing a strong understanding of the needs and opportunities in East Ferris. The purpose of the Economic Development Strategy is to lead the Municipality into the future.

Dave Saad of Saad Consulting led the development of the Master Facilities Plan which examined the current state and use of the Municipality's facilities in order to address any opportunities and to determine how to best develop and use resources to remain successful in the future.

An analysis of information obtained through consultations, interviews and meetings with the public, Municipal Staff, Council and other key stakeholders led to the identification of key priority areas.

The following document outlines recommendations, action plans, and timelines as they relate to the identified priorities for economic development, recreation, programs, facilities and administration for The Municipality of East Ferris.



METHODOLOGY

East Ferris is a progressive, adaptive and well-balanced community with an entrepreneurial approach that positively impacts the overall quality of life.

In February 2013, The Municipality of East Ferris issued a Request for Proposal seeking assistance in the development of an Economic Development Strategy and Facilities Master Plan. The purpose of this initiative was to develop a strong understanding of the economic development needs and opportunities that exist in East Ferris in order to create a comprehensive Economic Development strategy to support sustainable growth. The project was also intended to consider current municipal facilities and usage and identify opportunities and needs while developing a Facilities Master Plan to ensure optimized utilization and successful resource development for the future.

With a track record of measurable growth over the last five years, East Ferris is well positioned as a year-round recreation destination with an increasing number of home-based businesses and industries, low cost of living, and high-quality way of life. To capitalize on this growth, The Municipality has embarked on the development of a formalized Economic Development Strategy in concert with a Facilities Master Plan. Based on input and direction during this initiative, the following vision statement was developed to guide the process: *East Ferris is a progressive, adaptive and well-balanced community with an entrepreneurial approach that positively impacts the overall quality of life.* The recommendations identified in both the Economic Development section and the Facilities Master Plan section of this document have been established with this vision in mind. Throughout this document, short, medium and long-term recommendations have been made to guide the direction of suggested actions. The following timelines are associated with each recommendation:

Short-term: Within two years;

Medium-term: Two years to five years; and

Long-term: Five years and beyond.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In preparation for the development of the Economic Development Strategy, the Municipality conducted an asset inventory, a gap analysis and prepared a community profile. With the completion of this strategy and the implementation of identified recommendations, the goal for East Ferris is to create an entrepreneurial community committed to:

- Strengthening existing local businesses and non-profit organizations;
- Increasing opportunities for business retention and attraction;
- Establishing regional partnerships;
- Increasing community collaboration and involvement;
- Fostering arts, culture and heritage;
- Building a stronger more sustainable community; and
- Identifying investment needs.

The Economic Development Strategy included a review of five identified priority areas: telecommunications, infrastructure and services, business support services, communications and transportation. These priority areas have been established through information collected from community members during an asset inventory and gap analysis process. The data was used to understand key concerns and, along with input obtained through further community consultations, business interviews, involvement from the Economic Development Working Group, Council and staff, led to the development of recommendations to address key priorities.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

The Facilities Master Plan component of the study was to review three basic areas:

1. Facilities
2. Programs and Services
3. Administration

The intent of the study was to assess municipal facilities, best practices and identify existing programs and services gaps. The study was to investigate opportunities to develop new partnerships and to increase community collaboration and involvement.

The review involved six components:

1. Public meetings and one-on-one interviews
2. Staff interviews
3. Council focus meeting
4. Interviews with key community stakeholders
5. Site visits to municipal facilities
6. Online survey

The information collected through the review was analyzed and compiled to create recommendations for The Municipality of East Ferris within the areas of Business and Economic Development and Facilities and Recreation.

The recommendations identified in this document are potential strategies that can be implemented over the next five years to foster growth and enhancement in the areas of parks, recreation and business. The plan is divided into two sections entitled:

- Business and Economic Development
- Facilities and Recreation



MUNICIPALITY OF EAST FERRIS

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY

The Municipality of East Ferris is known as a warm, friendly community surrounded by stunning landscapes that house the beautiful shores of Trout Lake and Lake Nosbonsing. Situated in the District of Nipissing in Northern Ontario, the community is located 20 kilometers east of the City of North Bay. East Ferris is in close proximity to transportation centres, health care facilities, employment opportunities, educational institutions and other urban amenities. With a growing population of over 4,800 people and a track record of measurable growth over the last five years, East Ferris is well-positioned as a year-round recreation destination with an increasing number of home-based businesses and industries, low cost of living, and high-quality way of life. This growth has contributed to the evolution of the Municipality from a township with a rural setting to a semi-urban community with the Hamlets of Astorville, Corbeil and Derland as centres.

The population of East Ferris has grown from 4,431 in the 2006 census to 4,766 in the 2011 census, representing approximately 7.5% growth over 5 years. Statistics indicate that the 55 and over demographic experienced the greatest growth from 1,100 in 2006 to 1,465 in 2011, an increase of 365. The teens 15-19 demographic experienced a decrease from 315 to 285, a drop of 30. At the other end of the spectrum, youth from 0 – 14 saw a reduction in numbers by 40 going from 715 in 2006 to 675 in 2011. With seniors experiencing the largest single growth rate from 2006 to 2011, it is anticipated that this trend will continue over the next five years at a similar rate. An estimated 3.5% increase over the next 5 years would cause the number of seniors to grow from 1,465 in 2011 to 1,569 in 2023.

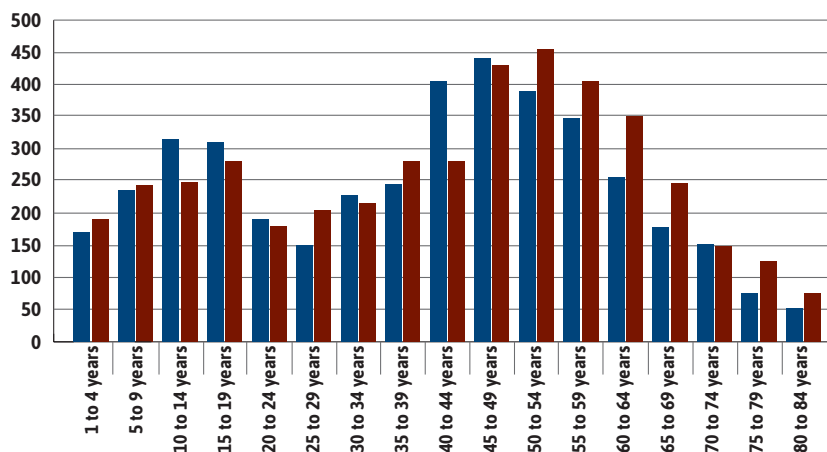
Projections over the next 10 years indicate that the population of East Ferris will show an increase to just under 5,500 in the year 2023. The mature adult population currently represents the largest segment of the population and, considering the general lifestyle afforded by the Municipality, citizens in this age category will most likely remain as residents.

East Ferris is comparable to the rest of the Province with regard to the average individual income of the area. In 2006, the average salary within the Municipality was \$38,994 as compared to the provincial average of \$44,748 for municipalities. Relative to low income after taxes, East Ferris compares relatively lower than the provincial 11.1% average at 4.6%.

Income can be a barrier to participation in recreational activities, therefore it is important to take this into consideration in relation to municipal user fees. There will need to be a balance between revenue generation and the ability of the resident to pay. Conversely, quality of life issues and opportunities need to be viewed as an investment in the future of the Municipality and its residents rather than a straight expenditure.

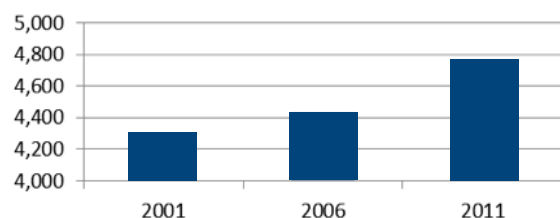
POPULATION AND FAMILIES

Change in Population by Age Group - ■ 2006 ■ 2011



	2006	2011	% Change
TOTAL	4,431	4,766	8%
0 to 4 years	170	195	15%
5 to 9 years	225	235	4%
10 to 14 years	320	245	-23%
15 to 19 years	315	285	-10%
20 to 24 years	195	190	-3%
25 to 29 years	150	205	37%
30 to 34 years	230	215	-7%
35 to 39 years	245	285	-16%
40 to 44 years	405	285	-30%
45 to 49 years	440	430	-2%
50 to 54 years	395	460	16%
55 to 59 years	350	410	17%
60 to 64 years	260	355	37%
65 to 69 years	180	245	36%
70 to 74 years	155	150	-3%
75 to 79 years	75	125	37%
80 to 84 years	55	80	45%
85 years and over	25	100	300%

Total Population Change 2001 - 2011



East Ferris	2001	2006	2011
	4,291	4,431	4,766

Table and Chart SOURCES: Statistics Canada.

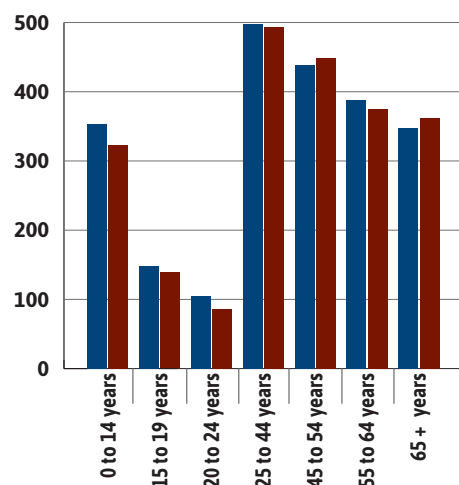
Statistic Canada. 2011 Community Profiles. 2011 Census.

Statistic Canada. 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census.

Statistic Canada. 2001 Community Profiles. 2001 Census

*Population counts reflect Statistic Canada amended total population counts for 2011 & 2006

Population by Gender and Age Range 2011 - ■ Male ■ Female



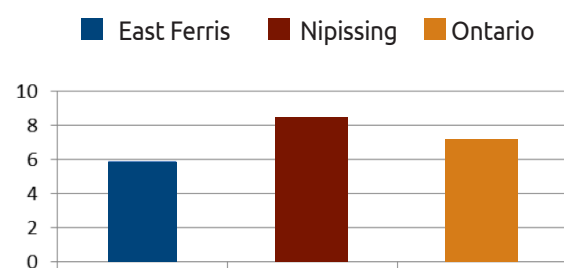
Age Range	Male	% of Total	Female	% of Total
0 to 14	355	8%	325	7%
15 to 19	150	3%	140	3%
20 to 24	105	2%	85	2%
25 to 44	500	11%	495	11%
45 to 54	440	10%	450	10%
55 to 64	390	9%	375	8%
65+	350	8%	365	8%
TOTALS	2290	51%	2235	49%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2011 Community Profiles. 2011 Census

*Population counts do not reflect Statistic Canada amended total population counts for 2011.

LABOUR FORCE

Labour Force, Participation and Unemployment Rates 2006



	East Ferris	Nipissing	Ontario
Labour Force	2,210	41,875	6,587,575
Participation rate (%)	64.6	60.1	67.1
Unemployment rate (%)	5.9	8.3	6.4

Source: The Labour Market Group
http://data.cid-bdc.ca/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_CSD_CODE=3548034

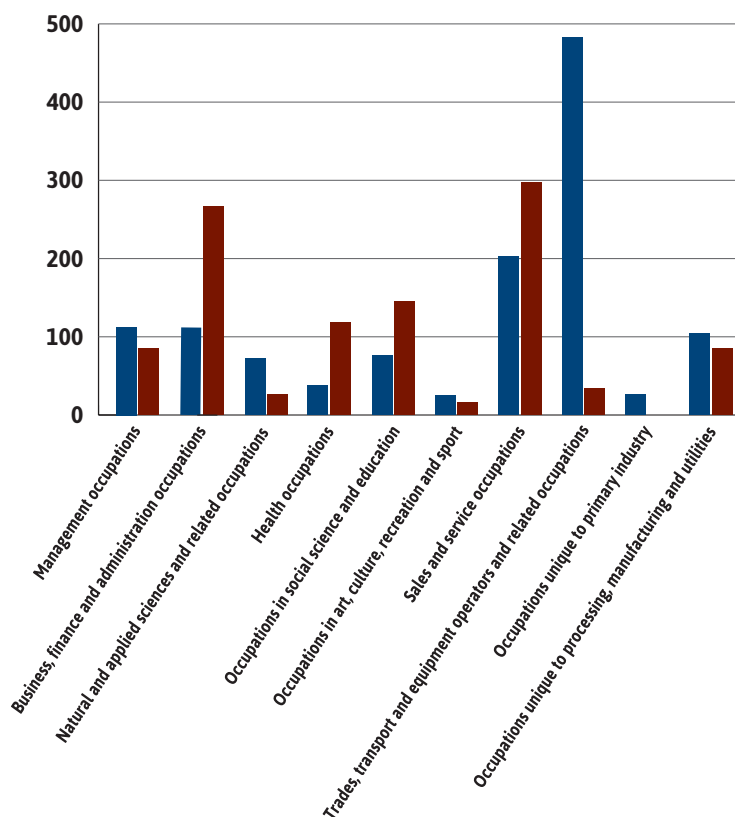
Labour Force by Industry 2006

	East Ferris, Township			Nipissing (CD)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total experienced labour force 15 years and over	2,185	1,185	995	41,085	21,195	19,885
Agriculture and other resource-based industries	75	65	10	1,665	1,355	310
Construction	205	190	20	2,605	2,385	220
Manufacturing	175	130	45	2,960	2,380	575
Wholesale trade	120	95	25	1,270	970	295
Retail trade	295	125	170	5,425	2,260	3,165
Finance and real estate	80	45	35	1,695	770	925
Health care and social services	270	35	235	5,335	1,070	4,265
Educational services	190	65	125	3,345	1,085	2,260
Business services	320	165	155	7,165	4,395	2,765
Other services	440	265	175	9,625	4,520	5,105

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population
 Statistics Canada. 2007. East Ferris, Ontario (Code3548034) (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed February 16, 2013).



Labour Force by Occupation 2006 - ■ Male ■ Female

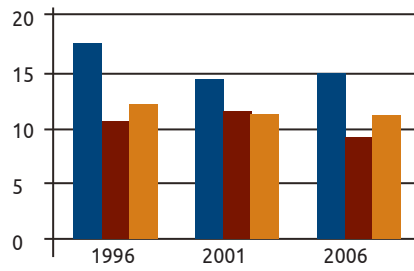


East Ferris has a diverse mix of businesses that fall into a variety of sectors including tourism, manufacturing, construction, healthcare, professional services, retail, transportation, agriculture, and recreation. Businesses operating in East Ferris are typically classified as small business. With reduced overhead costs compared to that of urban centres, many of East Ferris' businesses are able to offer competitive prices, diverse products, and attract customers on a global level.

Labour Force by Occupation	Total	%
Total experienced labour force 15 years and over	2,185	100%
Management occupations	190	9%
Business, finance and administration occupations	375	18%
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	95	1%
Health occupations	150	7%
Occupations in social science, education, government service and religion	225	10%
Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	45	2%
Sales and service occupations	490	22%
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	510	23%
Occupations unique to primary industry	25	1%
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	75	3%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population
 Statistics Canada. 2007. East Ferris, Ontario (Code3548034) (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007.
<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed February 16, 2013).

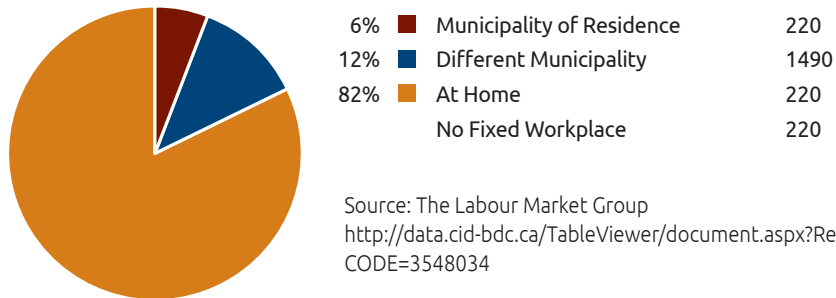
Self-Employment 1996 - 2006



	1996	2001	2006
East Ferris	17.6	14.4	15.1
Nipissing	10.5	11.5	9.5
Ontario	12.1	11.4	11

Source: The Labour Market Group
http://data.cid-bdc.ca/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=127&IF_Language=eng&BR_CSD_CODE=3548034

Employment by Place of Work 2006

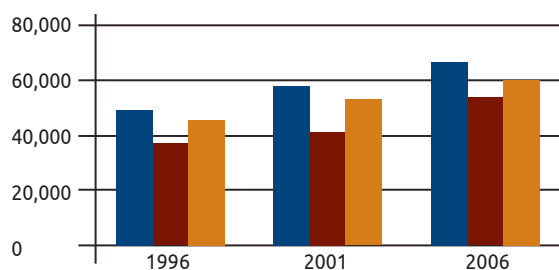


Source: The Labour Market Group
http://data.cid-bdc.ca/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=127&IF_Language=eng&BR_CSD_CODE=3548034



INCOME

Median Household Income (\$), 1996 - 2006



	1996	2001	2006	% Change
East Ferris	49,168	57,981	66,602	26.2
Nipissing	36,588	40,162	46,788	21.8
Ontario	45,155	53,626	60,455	25.3

Source: The Labour Market Group
http://data.cid-bdc.ca/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=109&IF_Language=eng&BR_CSD_CODE=3548034

Individual Home

Individuals 15 years and older with income	2,435
Median Income	28,242
Median income after taxes	25,043
Earnings as a total % of income	74.9
Government transfers as % of total income	10.70
Other income as a % of total income	14.50

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population. Statistics Canada. 2007. East Ferris, Ontario (Code3548034) (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed February 18, 2013).

Family Home

Total number of census families	1315
Median income - All census families	67,964
Median after-tax income - All census families (\$)	59,369

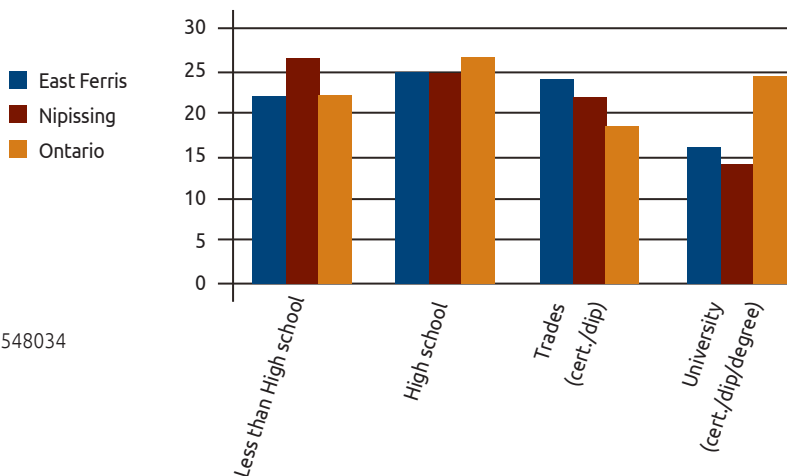
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population. Statistics Canada. 2007. East Ferris, Ontario (Code3548034) (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed February 18, 2013).



EDUCATION

Percent of Population (15 Years and Over) by Level of Education, 2006

Less than High school	22
High school	25
Trades (cert./dip)	12
College (cert./dip)	25
University (cert./dip/degree)	16

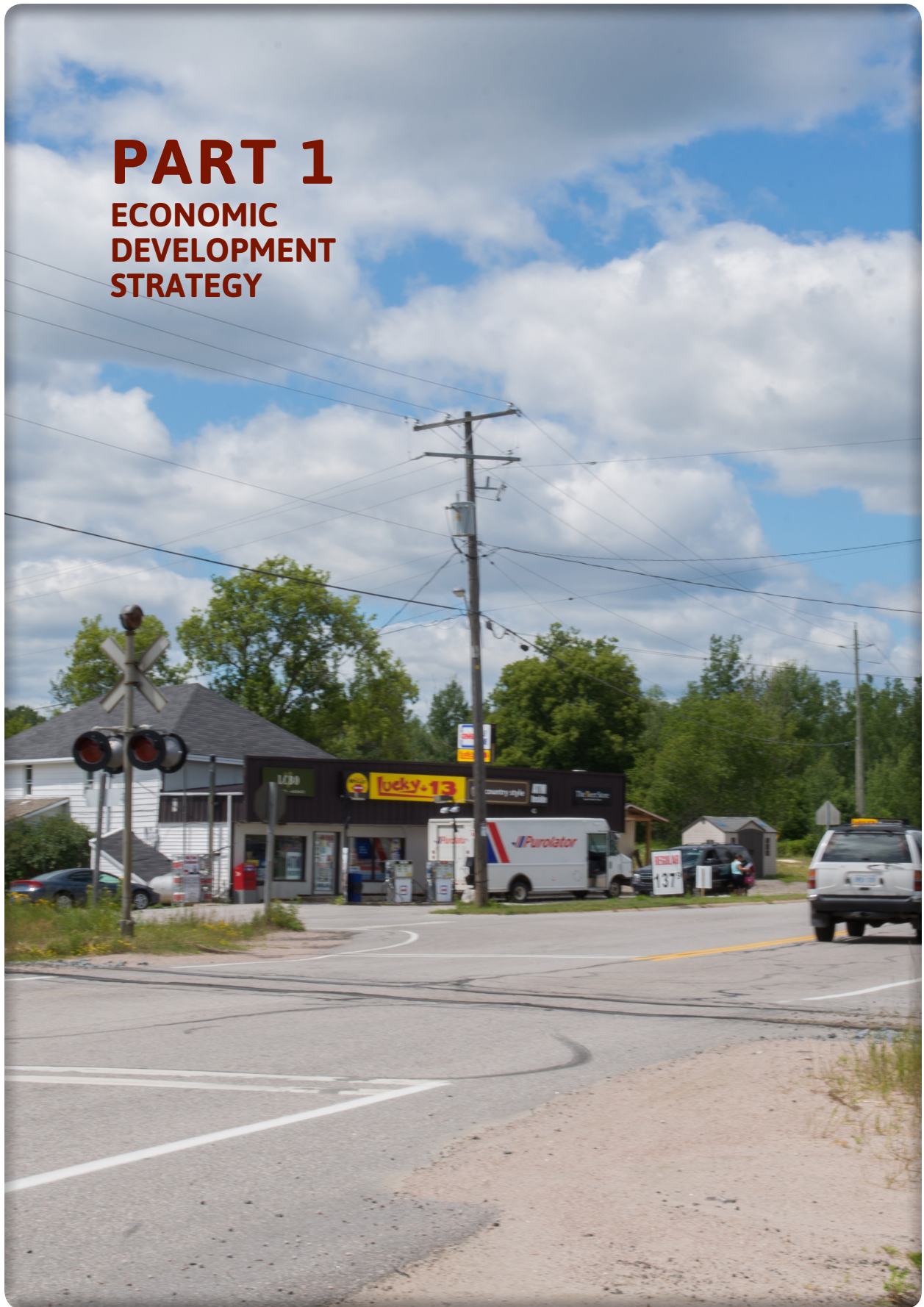


Source: The Labour Market Group
http://data.cid-bdc.ca/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=111&IF_Language=eng&BR_CSD_CODE=3548034



PART 1

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



BACKGROUND

The Municipality of East Ferris recognizes the importance of developing formalized strategies to support the growth and development of the area. Ongoing feedback from local businesses has identified a need for more assistance at the municipal level in order to cultivate an environment for entrepreneurship and small business development.

An Economic Development Funders Forum, combined with the results from the Ontario Investment Readiness Test for Northern Communities, identified the need for more involvement at the municipal level as a means of assisting existing East Ferris businesses. To continue to move the community forward in a sustainable and compatible manner, the Municipality has committed to playing a lead role in developing strategies to achieve balanced growth.

In efforts to build an economic development strategy, The Municipality of East Ferris embarked on the development of an Asset Inventory, Gap Analysis, and Community Profile. The objective of the project was to identify key economic drivers and demographics that are important to residents and investors alike, including geographic location and boundaries, climate, transportation access and hubs, ethno-culture, population and families, labour force and income levels, housing, education, employers, health care services, recreation facilities, utilities and telecommunications, accommodations, landfill services, business/industry, non-profit organizations, industrial/commercial buildings, key sectors, etc. Through this process, gaps and strengths were identified that have been transformed into opportunities for growth and new partnerships. As such, five key priority areas have been developed with short, medium and long-term recommendations within each.



SWOT ANALYSIS

Based on the information collected during the consultation and research process, the following assessment relative to East Ferris' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was established.



STRENGTHS

- Competitive residential and business tax rates
- Municipal support from staff and council
- Natural vistas and lakes
- Success stories
- Friendly and supportive community
- Proximity to larger urban centres and key sectors
- Growth in residential development
- Quality of Life
- Growing number of building permits
- Ability to live and work from same parcel of land
- Local business support –business to business
- Business operating in region demonstrate strong support for community

OPPORTUNITIES

- Green space development
- Recreational areas
- Industry attraction and expansion from home base to commercial
- Increased employment through business growth
- Long term planning needs (central hub concept)
- Planning for balanced residential, commercial, industrial growth
- Capitalize on amenities for increased population/attraction strategies
- Integrate social media into communication strategy
- Residential development
- Purchase land as part of long-term growth
- Development of communication strategy with integration of social media and traditional tactics
- Improve signage and wayfinding
- Development of municipal website with online business directory
- Provide cost-effective municipal space to host meetings and events with online booking capabilities
- Access to business support services without having to leave community (succession planning, seminars, resources about building code requirements/contractor expectations, funding application support
- Networking events for businesses

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of regional business draw (destination development)
- Under-utilized natural tourism assets and land
- Lack of awareness about businesses in community
- Limited signage- increase/update signage (directional and wayfinding)
- Lack of awareness about resources
- Limited communications/awareness about services
- Lack of participation at events/Council, budget meetings, etc.
- Lack of transportation to North Bay
- Municipal website (layout and functionality)
- Lack of regional partnerships for economic, business, tourism initiatives
- Limited succession planning support existing businesses
- Lack of economic development strategy
- Size of community can be a disadvantage at times
- High expectations for businesses due to size of community
- Lack of services and reliable technology (utilities, natural gas, internet, cellular service)
- Lack of central core or hub
- Cost of traveling to North Bay often exceeds savings from competitive tax rate
- Hydro challenges and capacity load prevents new development
- Growth is prevented due to high costs associated with environmental studies
- Rental costs for meeting space is cost prohibitive for small business

THREATS

- Business closures
- Government processes/barriers for sub-dividing lots, environmental, etc.
- Youth-out migration



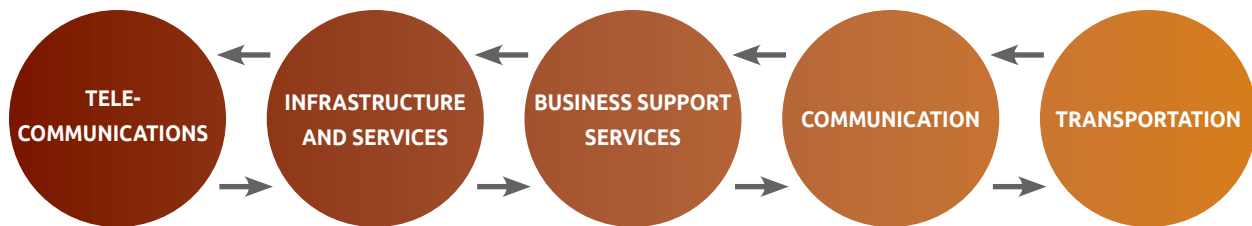
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

In addition to the SWOT analysis, additional information was collected to further understand the needs of businesses. Feedback was collected from community consultations and one-on-one interviews with local business owners. The following provides a summary of identified issues and concerns.

- Limited access to industrial land
- Difficulty with funding support to complete applications
- Lack of Internet and cellular access
- Lack of “shared” office space to host clients/staff
- Limited awareness about businesses, products and services offered in area
- Lack of support about small business on website
- Health and Safety Act concerns with business expansion
- Lack of property inventory database
- Lack of awareness about available funding and programs
- Difficulty to get people to participate and provide information
- Lack of formalized strategy to develop partnerships with operators and businesses when other events are going on in the region to encourage spin off (Bonfield, North Bay, etc.)
- Concerns with succession planning
- Lack of regional business draw, infrastructure, tourism, food and beverage services
- More residents needed to support growth and keep businesses open
- Businesses often stay under radar due to perception of red tape/regulations
- Lack of transportation services (Difficult for younger staff to get to work)
- Difficulty working within ratio of journeymen to apprentices
- Difficulty to find Architectural Technologists
- Programs at post-secondary level do not match available jobs in market
- Skill development doesn’t occur early enough at school
- Lack of trained trades people to support sectors

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Based on the information collected and the feedback received during the community consultation process, five strategic priorities have been identified. These include Telecommunications, Infrastructure and Services, Business Support Services, Communication and Transportation. With a commitment to economic development, The Municipality of East Ferris is dedicated to implementing recommendations to achieve the strategic priorities identified.



TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunications continues to be identified as a significant area of concern as certain pockets of East Ferris are without cellular coverage and high-speed internet. This gap makes it difficult for businesses to operate efficiently and poses a challenge when attracting residents, home-based business and industry. While certain telecommunication companies have installed new cellular towers recently, the challenge is still apparent. High-speed internet is not available in all areas of the municipality and residents/businesses must rely on costly satellite services as an alternative. These connectivity issues must continue to be addressed, as technology is a large barrier for balanced growth in East Ferris.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Overall, East Ferris has well-maintained infrastructure. With paved roads in solid condition throughout the community, dedicated crews committed to maintaining the area in all weather conditions and ongoing development, the community is in a positive position. However, a lack of available services often detracts from the appeal of operating a business in East Ferris. Due to the expense associated with hydro consumption and septic systems, businesses often find it cost prohibitive. Although competitive municipal tax rates offer strong appeal to businesses looking to re-locate, the additional costs associated with a lack of services can act as a deterrent.

BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

Currently, business support services are under-utilized by East Ferris businesses and organizations. Local businesses are unaware of the available services in place to support growth and development. A false perception exists among home-based industry, as it is perceived that being under the radar is the best way to reduce red tape. Changing this mindset and encouraging businesses to work collaboratively is important. Conversely, those home-based businesses and industries actively promoting their services and looking for opportunities to grow within the community find it difficult with a lack of cost-effective, centralized meeting space to conduct business. As a result, East Ferris entrepreneurs are required to leave the community and utilize meeting space in North Bay.

COMMUNICATION

Communication continues to be an ongoing challenge as it relates to business development. A disconnect exists within the business community as many entrepreneurs are unaware of the services available locally. Current communication channels utilized by The Municipality of East Ferris are limiting and do not reach all businesses in the community. As a result, a general lack of awareness and engagement exists within the business community.

TRANSPORTATION

With the area's vast geographic landscape, transportation is an ongoing challenge causing difficulties for businesses. For example, hiring youth often poses a challenge, as it is difficult for them to get to work without a transit system in place. The large geography prevents accessibility by foot or bicycle to businesses located throughout the area. Furthermore, as a result of the geographic size of the community, businesses often find it more convenient to travel to North Bay then seek the services in East Ferris.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Vision:
East Ferris is a progressive, adaptive and well-balanced community with an entrepreneurial approach that positively impacts the overall quality of life.

Cultivating an environment that encourages business growth, The Municipality of East Ferris is committed to working with businesses in efforts to foster development. With the vision top of mind, *“East Ferris is a progressive, adaptive and well-balanced community with an entrepreneurial approach that positively impacts the overall quality of life”*, a variety of recommendations have been established. Through the implementation of the recommendations identified below, an opportunity to create a vibrant, creative entrepreneurial community exists. To combat the recognized challenges within each of the five strategic priority areas, the following recommendations have been identified for implementation over the short, medium and long-term.

DEVELOPING A CONNECTION

To ensure balanced and sustainable growth, the Municipality of East Ferris must ensure that the community has a sense of connection and understanding with the overall image and identity. To accomplish this, the following is recommended.

Recommendation: Develop a Marketing Strategy

The Municipality of East Ferris would benefit from a marketing strategy that “tells the community’s story” in terms of what the municipality is and how it should be perceived. While the Municipality currently has a corporate logo that serves as a coat of arms, it does not accurately represent the brand, image and identity of the community. Utilizing the multitude of natural assets and amenities East Ferris has to offer, a strong brand that clearly positions the community as a destination of choice is essential. A component of the marketing strategy process should be a branding exercise to showcase the unique aspects of the community and create a sense of pride for residents and businesses alike.

A wayfinding signage program is recommended as part of the marketing strategy. Entrance and directional signage that is consistent with the overall community identity could be installed. This would include installing welcome signs at each entrance point into the community, with directional signage throughout the community. With three core hubs within the area– Corbeil, Astorville and Derland– additional signage may be incorporated to draw attention to these cluster areas. Furthermore, East Ferris has a multitude of municipally owned park properties that are maintained and made available to the public including beach areas, boat launching ramps, trails, passive green space, multi-use park areas and community centres. To maximize awareness about the available services/amenities, increased signage within these areas is also required. The signs should promote the amenities as municipally owned and open to the public for their use.

It is recommended that the Municipality work with a professional firm to develop a marketing strategy and wayfinding program that includes the development of a brand, image and identity. A marketing strategy would provide the impetus to:

- Brand the community by establishing and adhering to consistent communication objectives;
- Create a municipal wayfinding signage program that unites the community and tells a story;
- Build a newcomer program that speaks to the municipality’s strengths; and
- Provide consistency in how the Municipality delivers its key messaging.

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
<p>Prepare a Request for Proposal to enter into an agreement with a firm to lead a process that will create a brand, image and identity for the municipality.</p> <p>Proceed with the implementation of a program that would create a wayfinding signage program and a corporate marketing package.</p>	<p>Budget consideration.</p> <p>Staff resource to oversee implementation.</p>	<p>Medium term.</p>

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: Dedicate an individual for Economic Development initiatives.

To accomplish the identified recommendations, The Municipality of East Ferris is in need of a dedicated Economic Development Officer to manage and implement the activities required to create an entrepreneurial community. Due to staffing capacity, it is difficult for existing staff members to take on the tasks required to support existing business growth and cultivate new growth. As such, an Economic Development lead is recommended. This position may be in the form of a retainer contract position or a full-time staff member, based on staff direction and available budget.

Recommendation: Establish an Economic Development Business Team.

An Economic Development Business Team should be established to move forward with the activities that have been identified for growth. Building on the efforts made by the Economic Development Working Group during the strategy development phase, this team would be responsible for working with municipal staff to move key strategic objectives forward. The overall direction for the priorities would be driven by staff and Council, but would be based on recommendations and needs identified by the Business Team. It is recommended that the Team be comprised of representatives from the following areas:

- Businesses representing a variety of sectors (construction, tourism, mining, manufacturing, retail, arts/culture, etc.)
- Non-profit organizations (arts, culture, heritage, etc.)
- Provincial and Federal Government Liaison
- Council Liaison
- Municipal Staff Member(s) (Economic Development Officer-if applicable)

Following the development of this team, smaller task force groups (sub-committees) may be created on a per project basis. These task force groups would only be created for special projects and would exist for the duration of the project. The groups would be responsible for carrying out a specific task/project and would dissolve following completion of the project. The task force would be an extension of the Business Team with priorities, direction and approval from staff and Council.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations tie to one of the five strategic priority areas and are outlined as follows.

TELECOMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: Develop a progress map to visually illustrate recent advancements.

As telecommunication companies have made strides to upgrade the available cellular and high-speed services in the East Ferris area, certain parts of the region have seen improvement. Unfortunately, pockets of the community are still without efficient coverage and additional work is required. By developing a progress map, East Ferris residents and businesses could easily understand what developments have occurred and where. Information could also be available to provide upcoming installations and future plans for improving coverage.

Recommendation: Advocate needs to government regarding cell and internet barriers.

Ongoing discussion is required to advocate the community's business needs to government officials and organizations. Strategies should be developed to address the limited service in the area, as this is a priority to the future success of business. While local efforts have been made to reduce the telecommunication barrier, increased communication and advocacy is required from a business perspective. With increased involvement from local business, organizations and government officials dedicated to supporting telecommunication connectivity, additional evidence to make a stronger business case will be available. In the meantime, new partnerships may be examined with neighbouring rural communities to identify possible solutions over the long-term.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: Assess opportunities for alternative service options.

To identify methods to reduce costs for businesses, an assessment of alternate options for services is required. Discussions with natural gas and renewable energy companies to identify possible options should occur. Based on the information collected, a cost/benefit analysis should be undertaken to determine the viability of implementing new service options. Ongoing discussion with existing businesses should occur to fully understand needs and identify potential private/public partnership solutions.

Recommendation: Develop central hub/area – “Main Street Development”.

A review of options should be undertaken to determine the cost effectiveness of creating centralized hubs or clusters of businesses in Astorville and/or Corbeil. Through incentive programs such as Community Improvement Plans, public/private sector partnerships may be encouraged to stimulate investment. Creating incentives for mixed-use development such as retail, office, studio space and residential may enhance existing pockets of commercial activity. This development coupled with signage and façade enhancements will create destination areas. Furthermore, the addition of businesses that foster community interaction, such as food & beverage establishments will contribute to the entrepreneurial community feel.

BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: Develop a Business Retention + Expansion Program

To effectively develop programs/services that meet the needs of business, a Business Retention + Expansion Program is recommended. Through this initiative, businesses will have an opportunity to contribute to a confidential survey focused on labour market issues, business development, operations, future growth and potential issues/concerns. This process is an effective way to collect data from the business community and analyze key trends before implementing actions. Additionally, the Business Retention + Expansion program allows businesses a safe and confidential forum to share critical issues requiring immediate support resulting in the ability to mitigate an issue or foster new growth.

Recommendation: Encourage people to live and buy locally.

East Ferris has a variety of businesses with service offerings that could benefit the local residential and business community. By increasing awareness about the types of products and services available in the region, residents may be more inclined to support their local community. In addition, encouraging residents to utilize the local parks, libraries, facilities and recreation activities, a stronger community vibe will emerge. The following tactics may be implemented to encourage residents/businesses to shop local:

- Website– dedicate a section of the new municipal website to promote local service and products through business spotlights, featured products and the updated business directory.
- E-mail Blasts– distribute monthly emails about supporting local business while showcasing businesses, services and successes.
- Insight- incorporate local business information in East Ferris' newsletter.
- Business Directory– expand and distribute the business directory to all residents through direct mail out and ensure copies are disbursed throughout community for pick up at central locations.

Recommendation: Develop formalized partnership with the Small Business Enterprise Centre- The Business Centre Nipissing Parry Sound and the Regional Innovation Centre- IION to offer business support services in a satellite location within community.

Due to their commitment to regional partnerships, The Business Centre Nipissing Parry Sound and IION should be approached about formalizing a program to service the East Ferris community. With the capacity to offer business support and innovation/technology services, a new partnership could be established that provides monthly business counselling services on a drop-in basis to Corbeil and Astorville locations. This service could be provided to residents and businesses in the community looking for one-on-one business consulting support. Furthermore, partnerships between The Municipality and the organizations could result in seminar series and events related to topics such as succession planning, funding opportunities and the expansion of existing programs such as mentorship and youth entrepreneurship.

Recommendation: Assess opportunity for co-operative office space to share resources.

An opportunity exists to develop shared office/meeting space for businesses through public and/or private sector partnerships. Based on the needs of the business community, discussions around a facility that provides co-operative office space, incubators or rental space should occur. The discussions could be led by the Municipality but handed off to a non-profit organization or private sector business for implementation. The development of a facility could cater to a wide variety of business needs and contribute to the creation of a hub/"Main Street" entrepreneurial feel. Furthermore, the potential for spin-off development with neighbouring food and beverage services and other complementary businesses exists.

Recommendation: Develop a recruitment/attraction strategy for qualified investors.

The Municipality of East Ferris should establish a formalized process for handling client requests with respect to new business development, including the start-up of home-based industry. This process should include one-on-one meetings with prospects and new clients to offer the necessary support to establish a business. Time should be spent with clients on an as needed basis to provide funding application support, guided tours of the region and available sites, review of the municipality's services, resources and permitted uses, meet-and-greets with existing businesses and council members, etc. To support this process, the existing land/property database should continue to be updated to ensure available properties with site specifications are available at all times. For consistency purposes, one staff member should lead this process and involve colleagues in each department when necessary.

Recommendation: Identify tourism opportunities, new products and existing gaps and develop programs/services to cater to this need.

With the recent creation of the Regional Tourism Organizations in Ontario, it is recommended that The Municipality of East Ferris work in partnership to create opportunities for growth. The Northeastern Ontario Tourism Organization (13A) is the lead organization for tourism activities in the area and could serve as a valued partner to market and develop the region. While East Ferris does not have a diversified tourism sector, an opportunity exists to examine natural assets and determine strategies to develop new products over the long-term. For example, cycling enthusiasts may be interested in mapping out bike routes that can be promoted throughout Ontario. By capitalizing on the natural amenities available in the region and developing sustainable packages/products, the local economy will gradually see the spin off affects which will stimulate new development.

Recommendation: Foster Realtor/Property Developer Relationships.

Establishing formalized relationships with Realtors and Property Developers is an ideal way to gauge development and understand market trends. Regular meetings with the real estate agents and property developers in the area will ensure that municipal staff has an understanding about the needs and interests of those purchasing property in East Ferris from a private sector perspective. Based on the insight gathered through regular meetings, new initiatives may be developed and business related information could be disseminated through affiliated networks. Open communication is encouraged to support the maintenance of the commercial/industrial property database. Regular meetings to share information and good news stories will create this opportunity.

Recommendation: Host business events to support the Entrepreneurial Community.

Through support and assistance from municipal staff and volunteers, annual events such as Funding Forums, Open Houses and Business Tradeshows will benefit the business and non-profit community. Business-focused events are an effective way to unite community, promote business-to-business opportunities, foster networking, increase awareness, encourage collaboration and assist with the development of a stronger and sustainable local economy.

Recommendation: Develop Youth Retention Strategy.

As youth retention continues to be an ongoing challenge, increased awareness about incentive programs to hire youth should be promoted. In addition to creating opportunities for youth employment, youth entrepreneurship should be encouraged. A lead role from the municipality would allow for existing programs and services to receive added exposure and create an opportunity to streamline services to provide added value to East Ferris youth. Placing an emphasis on youth retention and attraction is an important aspect of growing a sustainable community over the long-term.

Recommendation: Develop an Arts, Culture, Heritage Strategy.

Arts, Culture and Heritage plays an important role in an Entrepreneurial community. A formalized strategy that caters to the needs of the non-profit organizations and businesses within this sector should be established. This strategy will outline priorities, programs and services to help strengthen existing businesses while creating opportunities to develop regional partnerships.



COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: Establish buy-in from Council and staff to create an entrepreneurial community with a focus on small business and home-based industry.

The corporate culture must reflect a business-friendly environment. To create this environment, staff and council are encouraged to continue making decisions that incorporate this mindset. This way of thinking can be formalized through the adoption of a corporate vision/mission and can also be created by ensuring small business development opportunities are at top of mind. This mindset is particularly important when updating the Official Plan, preparing annual business plans, assessing opportunities for growth and strategic planning. As these elements are developed and changed, information should be disseminated to the business community to demonstrate the significance.

Recommendation: Develop a Communications Plan.

Communication challenges continue to pose a barrier for community engagement and awareness. Despite numerous attempts to disseminate information about important events, details do not always reach those it needs to. In efforts to improve communication, a plan is required that can be tailored to specific situations. The development and implementation of a communications plan would serve as a beneficial way to organize a variety of communication tactics and ensure key messages are being delivered to a wide audience in a variety of methods. The tactics outlined in the plan should be incorporated with the marketing strategy and include signage (wayfinding), digital strategies and online presence, direct mail and traditional advertising. The communication tactics should be internally and externally focused to ensure that staff, Council, stakeholders and the community at large are aware and engaged. Through the development and execution of a tactical-based plan that has been well thought out, engagement levels may gradually increase. This increase may noticeably rise with the number of participants at meetings and volunteers involved with activities.

Recommendation: Develop and showcase success stories.

The East Ferris community has a number of business success stories and positive news about residents who have re-located back to the community. Through success story spotlights appearing on the website, in the Insight and PR stories covered by print, radio and television, these successes will gradually spread. In order to showcase the good news stories, requests for this information must be collected. A variety of unique tactics may be implemented including Good News Story contests, promotional campaigns, media events and public recognition to celebrate the people living and working in East Ferris

Recommendation: Develop resources that communicate The Municipality of East Ferris' commitment to supporting home-based business.

It is important that information about available support services is disseminated to the community in order to build relationships and improve communications with home-based business and industry. Resources and materials should be delivered to residents detailing the support services available for home-based business. Working in partnership with regional organizations, one-on-one consultations and assistance can be provided to support this process. As the news continues to spread about fostering an entrepreneurial community, the number of businesses opening may increase. Furthermore, existing businesses may be inclined to reach out for support rather than looking for ways to go unnoticed.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: Survey community residents.

A survey should be undertaken to further understand the challenges associated with transportation in East Ferris. This consultation will determine key identifiers such as the severity of the transportation issues, the demographics of those individuals with concerns, the number of businesses affected due to transportation limitations, etc. Based on an analysis of the survey results, a decision can then be made to determine if further action is required.

Recommendation: Discuss challenges and potential solutions with local transportation companies.

Consultation with transportation companies should occur to further understand previous programs implemented and the associated costs with potential solutions. Based on the information collected regarding the community needs, coupled with the insight gathered through these meetings, a decision on how to best proceed can be determined. Potential programs for consideration include shuttle services, carpool programs and centralized drop-off/pick up locations for taxi companies.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following provides an overview of the recommendations identified based on each Strategic Priority. Due to current staff capacity and limited budget, implementing the following recommendations may be difficult. To address this, the recommendation to dedicate an individual to economic development initiatives should be considered. With the addition of an Economic Development role, the duties and responsibilities outlined below can form the basis for the work plan.

The timeframe associated with each priority is as follows:

Short-term: Within two years;

Medium-term: Two years to five years; and

Long-term: Five years and beyond.

Strategic Priority	Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
General	Prepare a Request for Proposal to enter into an agreement with a firm to lead a process that will create a brand, image and identity for the municipality. Proceed with the implementation of a program that would create wayfinding signage program and corporate marketing package.	Budget consideration. Staff resource to oversee implementation.	Medium term
General	Dedicate an individual for Economic Development initiatives.	Economic Development Budget.	Short Term
General	Establish an Economic Development Business Team.	Staff time to coordinate.	Short term
Telecommunications	Develop a progress map to visually illustrate recent advancements.	Staff time to coordinate. Small budget for visual design, if desired.	Short term
Telecommunications	Advocate needs to government regarding cell and internet barriers.	Staff and Council with involvement from business community. Regional municipal partners.	Medium term
Infrastructure and Services	Asses opportunities for alternate service options.	Staff time to manage project. Capital budget for new programs/services implemented as a result.	Medium term
Infrastructure and Services	Develop central hub/area – “Main Street Development”. Develop a Business Retention + Expansion Program.	Staff time to research, review and consult with public/private sector. Staff time to create funding application.	Long term Short term*

Strategic Priority	Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Business Support Services	Develop a Business Retention + Expansion Program.	Staff time to create funding application. Staff or consultant time to manage and run project. Budget contribution may be required to satisfy portion of funding terms.	Short term* *To begin funding application process Long term* *To implement project
Business Support Services	Encourage people to live and buy locally by increasing awareness about available products/ services.	Staff time to collect and distribute information to community.	Short term* *ongoing basis
Business Support Services	Develop a formalized partnership with the SBEC and RIC to offer satellite services in community.	Staff time to formalize partnership and handle logistics.	Short term
Business Support Services	Assess opportunity for co-operative office space to share resources.	Staff time to review opportunities and best practice models for consideration. Staff or consultant time to carry out needs assessment with property developers and businesses. Recommendation report to be developed.	Medium term
Business Support Services	Develop a recruitment /attraction strategy for qualified investors.	Staff lead to manage processes and develop client care strategies.	Short term
Business Support Services	Identify tourism opportunities, new products/ gaps and develop programs to address this need.	Staff lead to develop relationship with the Northeastern Ontario Tourism Organization and determine opportunities for partnerships. Staff or consultant time to review natural amenities (bike routes, snowmobiling trails, etc.) and promote available services.	Short term
Business Support Services	Foster Realtor/Property Developer Relationships.	Staff time to work with realtors/property developers to maintain formalized open lines of communication.	Medium term

Strategic Priority	Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Business Support Services	Host business events to support Entrepreneurial Community.	Staff time to access funding, plan and host business event.	Short term
Business Support Services	Develop Youth Retention Strategy.	Staff/consultant time to develop strategy with a focus on business and employment opportunities within region for community youth.	Long term
Business Support Services	Develop an Arts, Culture, Heritage Action Plan.	Staff/consultant time to develop plan with emphasis on partnerships and initiatives.	Medium term
Communication	Establish buy-in from Council and staff to create an entrepreneurial community with a focus on small business and home-based industry.	Facilitated staff and Council brainstorming session(s) to encourage discussions and actions.	Short term
Communication	Develop a Communications Plan.	Staff resource to oversee implementation.	Medium term
Communication	Develop and showcase success stories.	Staff time to develop and promote utilizing various communication channels.	Short term
Communication	Develop resources that communicate commitment to home-based business.	Staff resource to oversee implementation.	Medium term
Transportation	Survey community residents.	Staff time to coordinate. To minimize resources it is recommended that transportation survey questions are incorporated with the BR+E survey.	Long term
Transportation	Discuss challenges and potential solutions with local transportation companies.	Staff to utilize expertise to further understand mobility challenges/concerns within the area. Implement required action steps.	Long term

MEASURING PROGRESS

Monitoring the overall health of the economy and measuring against specific actions is key to fostering growth. An economic report should be issued annually to report on changes, progress and successes as it relates to economic development initiatives. An updated economic development strategy with recommendations for growth should be completed every five years. This report should include a status report for each priority area in the previous plan. New strategic priorities may be added based on market demands and developments.

Overall indicators of success include:

When measuring progress, the following areas can be quantified to determine progress:

- Total employment/businesses – new jobs
- Average income
- Unemployment rate
- Building permits
- Tax assessment base - residential, commercial, industrial

The health of the local economy is fundamental to the success of local businesses and residents. The ability to develop strategies that help businesses thrive is critical in creating an entrepreneurial community. Identifying and developing sustainable funding sources, and investing in activities such as a Business Retention + Expansion Program, investment attraction, strategic partnerships and marketing, will make significant impact on the overall health of the community. As economic development priorities continue to emerge, The Municipality of East Ferris will be committed to creating a vision for future economic growth that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.



PART 2

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN



BACKGROUND

The role of the Municipality in the delivery of parks and recreation programs needs to take a customized approach that considers the community needs, the capacity to deliver programs and the capacity of residents to support programs and services. As is the case with most municipalities, East Ferris has opportunities and barriers to attaining a level of success in terms of recreation programs and services.

The geography of East Ferris is both a deterrent and an opportunity in terms of service to its residents. People move to the area in part due to the peace and tranquility and the vastness the municipality affords. At the same time, East Ferris does not have what could be considered a “hub” or central core where programs and services would have a certain number of “walk to” participants.

A number of avenues were used to gather information for this study, leading to the understanding of opportunities and barriers that exist as they relate to parks and recreation. Although attendance at public meetings was low, meetings with local organizations and discussions with staff and Council proved to be very informative in providing knowledge and reinforcing the identification of issues and opportunities that have been presented.

A visioning exercise was facilitated with Council that identified the guiding principles and a vision of the municipality from a parks, facilities and program perspective over the next 5-10 years.

The Municipality identified key objectives within the RFP that will serve as a guide as it works towards operationalizing its vision statement:

1. Maximize the use of volunteers in all aspects of planning and implementation of programs and services;
2. Create a greater awareness as to what programs and services are available;
3. Promote the importance of a healthy active lifestyle for all of its residents;
4. Take advantage of the many opportunities that the natural environment affords while at the same time showing great respect for nature;
5. Provide the necessary resources to ensure continuity of service and to maintain a standard that is sustainable; and
6. Create and work with partners from all sectors to avoid duplication of service and to maximize opportunities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles are core statements that define important elements in setting the vision for the Municipality and work in determining priorities as the Municipality moves toward achieving its full potential.

HEALTHY AND ACTIVE COMMUNITY

A concentrated effort will be placed on promoting and providing activities that promote physical activity, social interaction and skill development for all target markets within the municipality.

INCLUSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

In order to offer programs and services based on community input, a process will be developed that allows for interaction amongst staff, volunteers and citizens to determine community needs and the ability of the municipality to work cooperatively with its citizens to offer efficient and effective recreational opportunities.

MAXIMIZE USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES

Maintain an infrastructure that will meet the needs of the citizens and will create opportunities to maximize the use of facilities that contribute to the health and well-being of citizens in a manner that is fiscally responsible and driven by a high level of customer service.

USE AND NON-ABUSE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Manage and maintain the many natural areas within the municipality by respecting the natural environment while at the same time offering a wide variety of programs and services that will allow individuals and families to enjoy the amenities offered by the natural environment.

MAXIMIZE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND AWARENESS

Continue to work with key stakeholders, local expertise and volunteers within the municipality to ensure that programs and services are adapting to the needs of the citizens in an efficient and effective manner and develop a communications strategy that provides a high level of awareness as to what services and programs are available.



A VISION FOR PARKS, RECREATION AND FACILITIES

A vision statement speaks to the preferred future that the Municipality would like to strive towards. An article in the Harvard Business Review talked about the role that the mission, vision and guiding principles play in directing the future of a business or an organization. The article stated that “corporations enjoying enduring success have core values and a core purpose that remain fixed while their operational strategies and practices endlessly adapt to a changing world”. The municipal mission, vision, and guiding principles, along with continual efforts to direct and re-direct methods of doing business, will determine how the Municipality will proceed in moving toward the future. A vision statement has been crafted to serve as a guide as the Municipality moves forward:

East Ferris is a progressive and adaptive community that offers a desirable life style through the provision of quality parks, facilities and programs.



PARKS AND FACILITIES OVERVIEW

The Municipality has numerous parks and facilities spread throughout the community. The Municipality has made a strong effort to ensure that there are areas available to all of its residents, but the fact is that due to the geography of the area, walk-to-park-areas are limited. To a certain extent, there is a need for the number of areas due to the fact that the Municipality is so spread out. Conversely, the ability to maintain such a vast area with limited staff is a burden upon the Municipality.

RECREATION SITES AND FACILITIES

The following list outlines the parks and facilities located throughout East Ferris:

1. Bill Vrebosch Park – Corbeil:
 - Two tennis courts
 - Soccer Pitch
 - Gazebo
 - Outdoor paved surface with boards
 - Basketball courts
 - Ball hockey
 - Ice hockey
 - Shuffleboard
 - Children's Park/Playground
 - Beach Volleyball Courts
 - Washrooms
 - NBMCA Corbeil Trail
2. Trout Lake Access Points:
 - Dugas Road – Trout Lake access
 - MacPherson Drive Park
 - Boat Launching
 - Picnic Area
 - Washroom
 - Centennial Crescent
3. Lake Nosbonsing Access Points:
 - Quae Quae Park
 - Waukegan Park
 - Corbeil Road/Big Moose Road
 - Big Moose Government Dock
 - Beach area
 - Boat Launch
 - Playground
 - Washrooms
4. East Ferris Community Centre Park:
 - Baseball field
 - Tennis Court
 - Playground apparatus
 - Arena
 - Curling Rink
 - Banquet Hall
 - Boardroom
 - Rental space for private sector
5. Public Library
6. Fitness Centre
7. Cenotaph Memorial Park
8. Corbeil Hall

In addition to these municipally owned facilities, there are two schools in the community, the Four Seasons Senior Club and the Anglers and Hunters Club .

LAKE ACCESS AREAS

The number of lake access ramp areas within the municipality would appear at first glance to be excessive for a municipality of the size of East Ferris. However with two lakes within the municipal limits and without any current method of quantitatively measuring the use of these facilities it would be difficult to determine the actual use these areas receive. They are spread throughout the municipality and have been in existence for some time.

Trout Lake Access Points

1. Dugas Road – this is a non-maintained area and the lake access area has no enhancements. As it abuts onto private property and there is direct access to the private property, it would be recommended that some sort of barrier, whether foliage or fencing be erected to discourage users to access the neighbouring property.
2. MacPherson Drive Park – a multi-use park with a well maintained, properly constructed boat launch area, picnic areas and washrooms.
3. Centennial Crescent Park – Passive park area with water area. Similar to Dugas Road Park, there is direct access to private property abutting onto the park area that should be cordoned off thus restricting direct access to private property.

Lake Nosbonsing Access Points

1. Quae Quae Park – low maintenance area with main service being grass cutting. Portion of property has been perceived and used as private property with trailers located on the property. It is understood that the municipality is attempting to remove all non-municipal structures from the property. It is a large parcel of property that is adjacent to the rail line. Unless demand for upgrading is made and there is a long-term sustainability plan, it is recommended that the area remain as a passive park area.
2. Waukegan Park – another area that requires low maintenance with only grass cutting taking place.
3. Corbeil Road/Big Moose Road – this is a small passive area with lake access that is not maintained.
4. Big Moose Government Dock – multi use park area with well-maintained boat launching area, swim area, play apparatus, gazebo and washrooms. This park is a destination park for the municipality.

While some park areas are considered passive with little maintenance being carried out, regular checks of the areas are required along with garbage pickup. The time required to do the maintenance and to inspect the park areas on a regular basis is a very time consuming function that the maintenance section is responsible for. Regardless of the standard of maintenance carried out on these properties, it appears that there is validity in maintaining the current maintenance program until such time as:

- a) They are deemed underutilized
- b) They are too costly in terms of manpower and time to maintain
- c) The Municipality deems the property surplus and opens up the property for sale

Waterfront property has much value and option C should only be considered as a last resort.

BALL DIAMOND

The ball diamond located adjacent to the East Ferris Community Centre has deteriorated to the point that it can't really be referred to as a baseball field. The infield is overgrown and from years of dragging there is a build-up of sand on the grass line between the infield and outfield. The fencing is not in good shape and the outfield is quite rough. Basically it is an open field and should not be booked out as an athletic facility.

TENNIS COURTS

There are tennis courts located in two areas within the municipality. The courts located in Vrebosch Park are of good quality and used by the general public. The single court located adjacent to the East Ferris Community Centre is in need of repair. If it is to be used and promoted as a municipal facility, there is a need to re-surface the court and fix the fencing. If re-surfacing does take place, it would be recommended that the surface run to the fence line thus eliminating maintenance on a small parcel of grass surrounding the court.

FITNESS CENTRE

This is a well-used facility with potential to grow its membership. The turnkey operation seems to work well. It is recommended that some minor changes be made to the interior such as fixed wall mounted benches in the change rooms and a privacy curtain be installed at the entrance to the women's change area. It would be recommended that the operators of the facility develop a reserve fund to offset costs of replacing equipment over the long term. Fitness classes have been offered in the past along with programs such as Zumba and Karate. While space is limited for classes in the fitness facility, utilization of the upstairs room in the Community Centre could enhance the overall fitness program in the community and could expand to programs such as seniors low impact programs and mom and me programs.

SOCCER FIELD

This is an excellent facility with potential to grow programs. Better coordination of programs is required and investigation into programs such as Ultimate Frisbee should be looked into.

PLAYGROUND AREAS

There are two main playground areas located in Vrebosch Park and adjacent to the East Ferris Community Centre. They both would be considered as drive to park areas as there are no real residential areas in close proximity to these two facilities. Concern was expressed during a public meeting as to the lack of neighbourhood park areas. While the municipality does own a number of parcels of parkland throughout the community, it would be impractical at this time to recommend expansion of the number of play areas. The vast expanse of the municipality would still require a certain amount of drive to use, but of more significance is the fact that the capital outlay for the equipment would be substantial and the ongoing supervision, maintenance and upkeep of the equipment and the grounds would be impractical. The reality is that with the many amenities the municipality affords its residence, neighbourhood park areas with multi use options is not a service that the municipality can offer.

Action Items

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
BOAT LAUNCHING RAMPS Determine the amount of use each area receives in order to develop a long term plan for all areas. Enter into discussions with abutting property owners to determine a suitable method of restricting access to their property.	Staff resources Finances to meet requirements.	Medium term Short term
BALL DIAMOND Remove this facility from user fee policy and do not issue permits for its use.	Determine the long term use of the property. Determine the community need for an upgraded facility.	Short term
TENNIS COURTS Determine if there is a long term need for the single court at the Community Centre and if such demand exists, resurface this court.	Decision to be made on the long term use of this property.	Short term
FITNESS CENTRE Introduce pilot fitness programs for current and potential users and utilize the upstairs hall in the arena. Greater promotion of healthy active living programs for all sectors.	Staff resources	Short term
SOCCER FIELD As a pilot program, introduce alternative use programs such as Ultimate Frisbee and Touch Football.	Staff resources Instruction programs to prepare volunteers.	Medium term
PLAYGROUND AREAS Promote existing areas and do not proceed with upgrades of apparatus in existing park areas.	Marketing Plan	Medium term

CURLING CLUB

Although the curling club is operated totally by an external organization, it is a municipal facility that was reviewed. The Curling Club lost momentum and membership during the renovations to the arena. Members went to Powassan and many of them did not return. The club has potential and the municipality has served as a lifeline for the club in terms of financial assistance. It is felt that the club has the potential to be a viable operation and meet the needs of long term and potential new members. There are a number of issues that if addressed would serve the long-term sustainability of the club quite well.

Action Items

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
CURLING CLUB The Club needs to establish its annual plan in terms of instruction, league play, special events, youth programs and any other programs that they deem appropriate. They need to establish their fees and start to grow the Club. It would be recommended that the Club focus on increasing volume of use rather than on the dollar aspect as they move forward this year.	Assistance in establishing an annual plan. Promotional campaign	Short term
The Club is in dire need of additional volunteers. As mentioned in the recommendation regarding volunteerism, roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined and a campaign initiated to get more citizens involved in the Club.	Volunteer requirement campaign. Access to municipal calendar and brochure.	Short term
There has not been a concentrated effort in the past few years to offer instructional programs. There are human resources living within the community that, if approached, might be willing to assist in this area.	Seek out expertise in the community and at the Granite Club in North Bay to determine what assistance might be available.	Short term
The Club has a very usable social area that if promoted, could meet community needs as well as serve as a revenue source for the Club.	Access to municipal calendar and brochure.	Short term

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Throughout this report partnerships and relationships are mentioned as a means of moving forward by maximizing all resources that are available. Another point that has been made throughout is the fact that East Ferris is spread out and the geography of the area does not lend itself well to an area that could be designated as a hub for the municipality. If the property adjacent to the East Ferris Community Centre were to be considered as an option as the new location for St. Thomas school, it would lend itself tremendously to the creation of a healthy active living hub for the community. The existing amenities including the fitness centre, the library, the community centre and the play apparatus combined with a new school would in essence provide one stop shopping for recreational pursuits for all ages for families as well as individuals. There is a trend today in the development of schools to work towards partnerships where the new facility becomes more than an education institution and it is viewed more as a community based educational institution. Through the creation of a joint use agreement between the school board and the municipality, a number of new and exciting options could emerge. As has been recommended in this report, the opportunity exists for East Ferris to grow and expand its recreational programs and services. This report does recommend that the municipality engage a staff person to evaluate community needs, coordinate the planning of activities and to create performance measures to determine both qualitative and quantitative results. The potential that the new school adjacent to the existing amenities offers opens up a whole new number of opportunities with the citizens being the benefactors that would require concentrated staff time. Use of the facility by the school could see a number of programs and services become available.

The Community Centre is an underutilized facility. Daytime use is virtually non-existent in the winter. Use of the ice surface for daytime skating, utilization of the upstairs room for arts programs and fitness programs freeing up the school gymnasium for sport related activities could be coordinated, use of school facilities and arena facilities where parents could interact in active and passive activities that might not be offered within the confines of the school could be investigated. Post school programs that have experienced a high level of success in many areas could be offered in partnership with the municipality. In fact, many community based programs that require coordination above and beyond what teachers can currently offer could be coordinated by the municipal Recreation Coordinator as part of a joint use agreement. Standards for operation of programs exist within the school system and these existing standards could serve as the benchmark for the development of community/education based programs and services.

Inactivity, obesity, bullying, misuse of drugs and alcohol and many other physical, social and emotional issues face youth, teens and families. The education system has a captive audience that can be influenced through the creation of programs and activities that are designed to address the issues above. Big picture thinking would see youth councils developed within the elementary system that could grow into leadership development programs as the youth become teens and move on to high school. Reaching them at a young age and introducing them to programs and services and creating the opportunity for them to set out their own direction through peer to peer programs has unlimited potential. The demographics of the area show a decline in the numbers of youth and teens in the municipality. At the same time the municipality has the desire to grow the community as a positive place to work, play and raise a family.

It is highly recommended that talks between the school board and the municipality continue and that every effort is made to create a healthy active living hub on the property adjacent to the East Ferris Community Centre.

As part of the discussions, potential plans for the use of the existing property where the school is currently located should be part of the discussions as there could be a need for outdoor recreational fields at a later date.

Action Items

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Continue to discuss the possibility of re-locating St. Thomas school to the property adjacent to East Ferris Community Centre.	Staff resources	Short term
Encourage the school board to host community information opportunities to determine community needs in the way of programs and services.	Staff resources Outside facilitator to oversee the gathering of the data.	Short term
Develop a joint use agreement that is mutually beneficial to both parties.	Staff resources	Medium term
Develop an action plan with regard to program development taking into consideration the educational commitments as a priority.	Outside facilitator to develop the action plan for program development.	Medium term



RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a limited number of organized recreation programs that are offered within the community:

1. The Fitness Centre is a pass key operation that offers citizens the opportunity to participate in physical activity. In the past, fitness classes have been offered, but at the current time there are no classes
2. The part-time coordinator oversees a soccer program for youth
3. The Winter Carnival is an annual event with a rich history within the community
4. The two Senior's Clubs oversee the programming for the seniors in the community as well as participation by seniors outside the community
5. Volunteer organizations offer a variety of leisure opportunities including:
 - Wasi Cross Country Ski Club
 - Nosbonsing Curling Club
 - Nosbonsing and Area Anglers and Hunters
 - East Nipissing Hockey Groups – men's, women's and youth
 - Beach Volleyball
 - East Ferris Broomball

RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation: Create and implement a process to develop recreation programs and services.

There is an apparent lack of diversified recreation programs available within the community. Issues such as transportation and distance to travel were presented during the public consultation process; however, the overriding factor with regard to the lack of programs and services appears to stem from a lack of leadership, coordination and awareness. Information gathered also identified that the perceptions exist that residents who want to participate in programs have to travel to other communities. While this may be true to a certain extent, there are sufficient facilities within the boundaries of the Municipality that have the potential to offer a wide variety of programs. This presents an opportunity to explore, identify and further develop recreational programming within the municipality. It is also important to note that new programming needs a nurturing period to allow for awareness and fine tuning of the programs.

While population figures reflect that current as well as future growth will be in the target market area of older adults, there are young families in the Municipality that require "made in East Ferris" programs. It also needs to be investigated as to how all sectors might wish to utilize the facilities that exist within the community to a greater degree. At the same time, there are two very robust older adults groups in the community providing activities for their target market. As one looks towards healthy active living, programs such as low impact fitness, seniors skating and aerobic programs as identified by resident input could be offered as pilot programs to determine the level of interest. Discussions with representatives of the two organizations should take place to determine future program opportunities.

Another key target market is the teenaged population. Many teens relate to and utilize programs in North Bay, as that is where their friends reside. The teen population in any community faces many challenges such as peer pressure, low self-esteem, bullying and harassment. Teens have also proven to be valuable resources in terms of coaching, leadership roles and peer mentoring. As will be mentioned throughout this report, East

Ferris has numerous facilities that could be better utilized and the teen target market needs to be explored to determine wants and needs.

East Ferris is also home to a number of artisans with some very special skills. Currently, it appears that this community group has not been approached to offer introductory programs based upon their specific skill level, which provides another opportunity for further exploration and development.

Action Items

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Prepare, implement & evaluate information gathered as a result of gap analysis.	Dedicated staff	Short term
Identify pilot programs that can be introduced to engage the community in participation as outlined above.	Research to be carried out as to what programs could meet the data gathered in the gap analysis.	Medium term
Establish a Youth Council to assist in setting the programs that youth would like to see offered and to identify their role.	Staff to oversee and coordinate the programs.	Medium term
Identify local artisan who could provide instruction in offering Arts and Cultural programs.	Quantitative and qualitative data gathered on all programs to determine strengths and weaknesses.	Medium term
Develop an assessment tool that measures the success of these programs and determines how the programs can grow and develop.	Make recommendations as to future programs to be offered.	Medium term

Recommendation: Develop a four-season sport program that initiates and incorporates skill development for participants, coaches and officials and provides training for volunteers.

In order to increase the physical activity and health for all segments of the community, a sport development program should be initiated. Two organizations currently offer programming geared toward the increasing older adult population, leaving the opportunity to primarily focus on sport programming geared toward the youth and teen market.

It is a proven fact that physical activity can lead to improved cardiovascular and respiratory functions, can be viewed as a tool towards positive social interaction, may develop leadership skill sets and can develop a pattern of healthy active living that will last a lifetime. There is little opportunity present in the education system that offers physical activity. Additionally, families wishing to participate in a variety of recreational programs, for the most part, travel to North Bay. Local programs and services would allow citizens to coordinate and participate in local programs and would allow for increased use of the facilities located within the Municipality.

There limited sport programs offered within the Municipality, although there are families that do participate in a municipally lead soccer program and there are a number of tennis enthusiasts who make use of the tennis courts located in Vrebosch Park. A minor hockey program has existed for many years, but aside from those activities, there is a deficiency in sport programs being coordinated within the community.

While the programs outlined above do exist, there has been very little emphasis on programs that focus on skill development, coaching and officiating development and volunteer recruitment and training.

Skill Development– There are 86 Provincial Sport Governing bodies in the Province of Ontario. The vast majority of them are linked into a program referred to as Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD). All of these LTAD programs are designed to provide training opportunities and skill development “from playground to podium”. The LTAD program provides many opportunities for municipalities to provide skill development and to introduce new sports to youth and teens. At the same time, sports such as baseball, soccer, tennis, curling, ultimate frisbee and lacrosse (offered in the past) exist in North Bay and there is a level of expertise that could be utilized to provide instruction at the grass roots level. Equipment grants are available through the Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Culture for programs that are organized and have a proven need.

Coaching and Officiating – Volunteer coaches and officials expressed concern during the consultations about a fear of the unknown. They all want to do a good job at what they do, but when they are thrust into a volunteer coaching or officiating position with no training, it creates an unfair situation for them and for the participants. Overseeing programs for youth and teens is an important task and if not done properly, the activity becomes boring and participants lose interest in participating. Setting a target for the development of a solid grassroots program built around skill development for both participants and coaches will serve to enhance the skillset of the participants, allow coaches to gain valuable skill development tools and allow officials to gain enough of an understanding of the sport to make a positive contribution.

There are two approaches to growing skill development programs for participants as well as coaches and officials. Coordinating programs within East Ferris for those interested in the program is one approach. A second opportunity exists in term of working with programs in North Bay already offering such training programs and coordinate with them to train East Ferris residents. This would reduce costs and would work towards relationship building with programs in surrounding areas.

The Municipality should also give serious consideration to the development of a zero tolerance policy with regard to bullying, harassment and fair play. Such a policy should be developed by Council and should be posted at all facilities. As part of the training programs for those involved in programs, information should be made available at the time of registration with regard to the policies regarding bullying, harassment and fair play.

Action Items

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Work with the schools to introduce sport skill development programs as part of their physical activity programs.	Dedicated staff to coordinate programs.	Short term
Host a community sports fair to introduce the new sport program, recruit volunteers and to take registrations.	Dedicated staff and volunteers.	Medium term

Action Items

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Initiate a series of pilot programs to introduce sport programs that align to the facilities that are available. Initially, a single program should be introduced each season so that new programs are not competing against each other.	Dedicated staff to coordinate programs, recruit volunteers and to promote the programs.	Medium term
Develop an assessment tool that measures the success of these programs and determines how the programs can grow and develop.	Dedicated staff to development and implement	Short term
Develop a volunteer manual and recruitment plan that will outline the expectations of your volunteers and the resources you will make available to them.	Dedicated staff	Medium term
Meet with representatives of various sport programs in surrounding communities to determine what opportunities and resources are available.	Dedicated staff	Short term
Meet with representatives of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to determine what assistance is available.	Dedicated staff	Short term

Recommendation: Create a Regional Recreation Council to determine methods by which collaboration, cooperation and partnership may maximize human and financial resources and facility use as well as avoid duplication of services.

There are a number of municipalities in the area in need of programs, services and access to facilities. Some of these municipalities have existing dedicated staff resources, some have facilities and all are looking to maximize the financial resources that they have available. Although it is an assumption, all municipalities view healthy active living as a desirable deliverable for their residents. A reality is that not a lot of these municipalities have the volume of residents within certain age demographics to effectively offer programs and services.

Dialogue should centre on existing programs and their success rate, facility use and how facility use can be enhanced, new programs that could be introduced and the opportunities and barriers that need to be addressed. At the very least, discussion can be merely a networking exercise to discuss best practices within neighbouring municipalities.

Action Items

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Initiate dialogue with surrounding communities with regard to more cooperation and collaboration regarding recreation services and facility use.	Staff resource	Medium term
Identify and work towards opportunities for regional recreation events.	Staff resource	Medium term

Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive recreation communications strategy that will provide for one-stop shopping with regard to all aspects of the programs, services and facilities that are available to citizens.

A reoccurring theme throughout the consultative process was that citizens were not aware of programs and opportunities that are available, where certain facilities and park areas were located and where they could gain information. The Municipality initiated a calendar program that identified certain programs, but an opportunity exists to not only provide more information, but also provide a promotional opportunity for private business through advertising which could offset the cost of a hard copy document.

It would be recommended that such a document could be compiled twice a year based on a fall/winter and spring/ summer format providing there is sufficient information. While the primary focus would be on recreation and parks programs and services, the booklet could be a guide to all municipal services. It would also be recommended that all of the information be posted on the municipal website and updated accordingly. Online registration, social media and direct contact information for staff or volunteer contacts should be considered.

Action Items

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Work with all community organizations to gather contact data for their organization. Identify all community services to be included in a communications document. Contact local businesses and inform them of an opportunity to promote their business with a price structure that will be developed. Explore feasibility, costs and ability to provide online registration and payment for programs on Municipal website.	Staff Coordination Media agency to do layout.	Medium term
Have webmaster upload all data to the municipal website and have it maintained.		

Recommendation – Develop a volunteer program that will identify and specify community volunteer roles and responsibilities and ensure that support is made available for community volunteers in the areas of training and community support.

From the input received, volunteerism is alive and well in East Ferris. Comments indicate that if volunteers are required, then they are available. East Ferris is a growing community. New people are moving into the area. Long-time residents have made themselves available on a regular basis for some time. Volunteerism is on the decline in many areas for a number of reasons. Liability and burn out appear to be the top two reasons relating to a reduction in volunteers. Liability and risk management unfortunately have become a way of life and long-time volunteers are tired due to the fact that there does not appear to be any succession planning.

Volunteerism is directly linked to many of the recommendations in this report. If programs are to grow and develop, then volunteerism needs to grow and to become a little more sophisticated. Key questions that need to be answered include

1. What are the volunteer opportunities and expectations?
2. What training will be made available?
3. Are volunteers covered with regard to liability?
4. Do they require a police check and if so, what is the cost?

When programs are developed, then expectations for the position need to be clear. Identify what is expected of the volunteer and then provide the training as part of the recruitment package. Liability can be covered in a number of methods. By registering with a Provincial Sports Organization, insurance coverage is available for participants as well as volunteer coaches and officials.

Volunteer Boards can buy direct insurance, which is quite costly or the Municipality can introduce a program whereby organizations must meet a certain set of criteria and if done properly and maintained, then the Municipality can make their insurance available to the organization for an affordable fee.

A program similar to the Oakville CORE program should be considered. It identifies certain criteria that an organization must meet as well as outlining the benefits that can be afforded to the organization. The benefit is that it forces an organization to develop a structure with operating guidelines and it identifies what services can be made available by the Municipality. A program such as this one creates a partnership amongst volunteer based organizations and the Municipality identifies volunteer roles and responsibilities and provides municipal based support for organizations.

Municipalities are in a situation to maximize both the roles and responsibilities for volunteers and to create situations that will be mutually beneficial to both the volunteer as well as the municipality. Two ideas were presented that received positive feedback.

1. Adopt A Park – this is a program whereby a neighbourhood would assume responsibility for a park within their neighbourhood. The program could range from simply assuming responsibility for basic maintenance to a major fundraising campaign to upgrade the facility. There are pros and cons to such a program in that major development in many cases is a generational program in that as the ages of the children in the area outgrow neighbourhood programs, the responsibility for maintaining the property also diminishes. On the plus side which merits consideration, would be an adopt a park maintenance program that addresses the issue relating to the distance between the parks that the municipality are currently responsible for. This issue is addressed within the facilities section, but in order to have a park area in proximity to various neighbourhoods, a volunteer adoption program could be considered.

2. Community Gardens – The core demographic of East Ferris is aging. Community gardens make use of municipal property to create an area whereby citizens without property to develop a garden take advantage of a municipal program. Discussion took place with regard to the property where the Cenotaph is located and its proximity to the Seniors Villa; housing for older adults. There is property available to establish a community garden as part of that property. The property is in close proximity to the Cenotaph and it would be a nice link to a community facility. If deemed appropriate discussion should take place with representatives of the Villa to determine the validity of such a program.

Community organizations, regardless as to the demographic they are serving, are considered an extension of what should be offered within a municipality. If the municipality determines that it wants to move forward with an increase in sport and recreation programs, then it would be recommended that a training workshop with regard to governance and board operations take place. This would provide confidence for volunteers as well as creating an understanding of what is expected of them. Working with volunteers over a long period of time could develop roles and responsibilities for organizations and make volunteerism more efficient.

Action Items

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Identify volunteer opportunities and the expectations that go along with the opportunities.	Staff resources	Medium term
Municipality to identify support mechanisms that can be provided to create a partnership between the municipality and its volunteer organizations.	Council to approve a Volunteer Development and Support Policy.	Medium term
Continue to recognize volunteers and to take advantage of Provincial Volunteer Recognition program.	Staff resource	Medium term



Recommendation: Research, develop and implement a user fee model while developing and establishing user fee policies for facility and programs.

The municipality has a number of fees as part of its user fee policy. A review of user fees has identified inconsistency with the rentals for the municipal halls and drastic fee differences. Developing and implementing a user fee model that considers facility needs and user impact will help create consistency.

There are three models that can be considered in setting user fees:

1. Cost Based Approach – this is a standardized formula that is applied to all publicly supplied services and facilities regardless of the costs or rate of recovery. A standardized formula is applied to all charges
2. Market Based Approach - This approach is based on developing an understanding as to what you feel the market can bear or what competing agencies may charge and set fees accordingly
3. Benefits Based Approach or Value based Approach – Through a consultative process, the public value of a facility or program is taken into consideration. For example, many communities feel that youth programs have more value in terms of development of skill sets and thus fees are set accordingly. Typically in this system, a higher rate of subsidy is justified based on the public benefit from the service

In order to properly position the municipality with regard to fees and charges, a go-forward process needs to be developed. The municipality should have a consistent method of determining true costs for programs and services and for use of facilities. Three components need to be taken into consideration:

1. Operating Costs
2. Administration Costs
3. Amortization Costs

As part of any review, the municipality needs to determine what it deems as fixed costs versus program costs. For example, if a program did not exist, would full-time staff not be in place? On the other hand, without a program, there would be no need for an instructor or part-time staff.

An exercise such as this requires concentrated time and engagement of as many users as possible. A philosophical approach needs to be taken from the perspective of what does the municipality feel it needs to recover.

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Proceed with a comprehensive review and development of a updated user fees policy .	Development of a terms of reference for moving forward and develop a steering committee to oversee the project. Securing an outside agency to carry out the review.	Medium term
Engage a facilitator to oversee the process and bring forth recommendations.	Funds allocated to hire a facilitator.	Medium term
Adopt an implementation process that allows for gradual implementation over a three year timeframe.	Have a plan in place that allows for a smooth transition from current timeframe to future.	Long term

STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon reviewing staffing for East Ferris, two components come into play. With the compliment of 4 full time staff, 3 summer students and a Facilities Supervisor, it is a huge undertaking to maintain all existing parks and facilities.

Managing existing facilities effectively and efficiently is a challenge and if the municipality is to enhance the programs and services made available to its residents increasing its staff compliment is a necessity.

The current job description for the position of Facilities Supervisor contains many duties related to a Facilities Manager. If the municipality moves forward with a Facilities Manager and replaces the current position with a Foreman's position, then it would be necessary to re-write the job description for the Foreman to better reflect the day to day functions for that position. The newly created job description for the Facilities Manager reflects the functions associated with that position.

Recommendation: Fill a Facilities Manager Position.

There is a sense of urgency within the Municipality to address a serious operational issue within the Recreational Facilities section. As a result of the work completed and interviews that have been carried out, there is a need to re-structure the facilities section in terms of supervision of the work and manpower. With the imminent start up of the arena, there is an urgent need to address the complete operation in order to have a system in place that will allow for the smooth addition of this key function along with the other functions that need to be carried out.

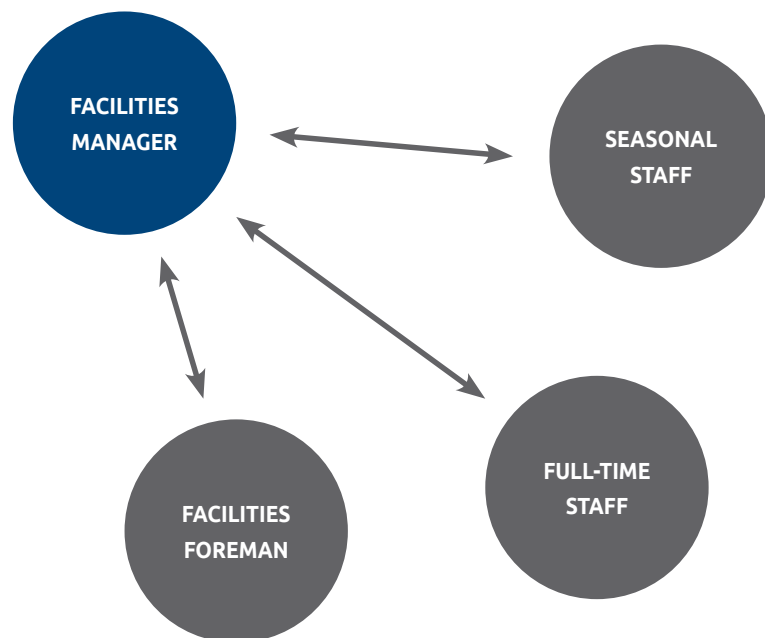
The Facilities Section is focused on being maintained rather than being managed. The workforce and the Supervisory position are all part of your collective agreement within the union. Such a situation severely undermines the ability of a Supervisor to properly administer this section, provide the necessary time required to develop work action plans and to be able to view the workings of the section from an arm's length perspective. As a result of these issues, a lot of the work that should be carried out by a Management person falls to the desk of the CAO. Within normal operating procedures, there is a need for a person, answering to the CAO, with the responsibility of administering the section and bringing forth recommendations for consideration by the CAO. That level is missing based on the structure that is currently in place.

One of the greatest assets of East Ferris is also one of its greatest challenges. The municipal boundaries stretch far and wide with parks and facilities spread throughout. The time to properly assess the needs of those parks and facilities, to plan and evaluate and to properly manage staff time is missing from the current structure. The urgency mentioned earlier relates to the fact that the management of the parks and facilities will be compounded in the not too distant future with the installation of the ice at the Community Centre which only adds to the tasks the current supervisor is responsible for. This is in no way a criticism of the person in the current supervisory position so much as an issue with the structure and mode of operation. This additional work, along with the responsibilities associated with winter maintenance create a situation that has proven to be difficult to manage.

The growth that the municipality has experienced, with the vastness of the geography that the staff is responsible for, with the facilities that they are expected to maintain and the need for all of this to be "managed" versus being "maintained", there is a need for a Facilities Manager position to be created.

It is recommended that the current positions identified within the collective agreement be maintained, the Facilities Supervisor position be renamed a Foreman position and that consideration be given to the creation of a management position referred to as a Facilities Manager.

In summary, there is a need for a new position to provide leadership, planning and management of the work force to ensure a more efficient and effective operation. The current job description for the Facilities Manager outlines many of the duties that should be carried out by a Facilities Manager, but the structure and lack of a decision-making management role is counterproductive due to the time required to manage the operation on a day to day basis. The Foreman, allowing the Facilities Manager to carry out the responsibilities that have been defined for that position, would handle this function. Currently there is an effort to carry out both of these functions by one person with the CAO assuming much of the responsibility for the actual managing of the section. This is not the best use of the CAO's time and it is too much to expect the current Supervisor to be able to manage and to maintain.



Recommendation: Create a Recreation Coordinator position.

The Municipality currently has a part-time Recreation Coordinator with limited time to grow and develop recreation programs and services. There are limited programs and services offered within the Municipality despite having numerous facilities that could be utilized in a more efficient manner. Currently, the Municipality oversees a youth soccer program and if more programs are to be offered, then they fall to the volunteers who are limited. A major issue that presented itself throughout this study was the fact that not a lot of people are aware of what is available from both a program perspective as well as a facilities perspective.

Opportunities abound and are outlined in the recommendations presented in this study. They include in no particular order:

- a) That a comprehensive gap analysis be carried out to identify pilot programs that could be introduced to the community that speak to the recommendations mentioned in this report
- b) That a four-season sport development program be initiated to determine community need, incorporate skill development for participants, coaches and officials and provide training for volunteers
- c) Initiate discussions with surrounding municipalities to determine methods by which collaboration and cooperation may maximize human and financial resources and facility use as well as avoid duplication of services
- d) That a volunteer development program be developed that will identify community volunteer roles and responsibilities and ensure that support is made available for community volunteers in the areas of training and community support

There appears to be community support to move forward with these recommendations; however, it is not practical to expect these recommendations to be enacted upon without adding a Recreation Coordinator position. At the same time, it would not be prudent for the municipality to hire a full time Recreation Coordinator until such time as there is a proven need and support for an enhanced recreation program. It would be recommended that the municipality proceed with the hiring of a Recreation Coordinator on a contract basis for the duration of 2 years. Two years would be required to allow for programs to be tested over two seasons and thus provide a solid base for evaluation to take place.

Further, it is recommended that the Municipality use this report as support for making application to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to secure funding to support the hiring of a full time Recreation Coordinator on an interim two year basis.

With regard to the recommendation relating to collaboration and cooperation, this would only serve to enhance any new programs and services that could be provided. It would not be reasonable to expect existing staff in neighbouring communities to assume responsibility for growing and developing an enhanced recreation program. There is a lot of work to be initiated in order to increase the number of programs and services that are currently available. A caution is presented that there is a need to put a lot of pieces in place before results will be realized. Aligned directly to this point, is the need to improve the communications within the municipality. Awareness and education as to what is available and the benefits of participation will be an integral part of the development of a community recreation program plan.

It is recommended that the municipality enter into an agreement with an Agency of Record to develop a marketing strategy for the Municipality. A staff resource will have to assume responsibility for this function and it would be practical for the Recreation Coordinator to assume this responsibility. Coordination with all municipal departments will create a document that will well serve all citizens.

The role and responsibilities of the existing Parks and Recreation Committee will change with the addition of a Recreation Coordinator. New programs such as this require community champions to take a lead role to support and promote programs such as this. The existing committee has served as strong advocates for existing services and that role will need to be re-examined and expanded with the expansion of the recreation program.

Consideration should be given to engaging a mentor if the Recreation Coordinator does not bring a lot of experience. The recommendations will require extensive concentrated work time and it would be beneficial for the successful applicant to have a mentor to serve as a sounding board.

As the municipality looks to the future in term of enhancing the overall quality of life for its citizens, then it cannot be done with existing staff or with volunteers. Through the addition of a Recreation Coordinator the municipality will be investing in the healthy active living opportunities for all citizens.

As stated in the preamble, the municipality is not facing any major issues, however if the municipality wishes to increase its sport and recreation programs, it will require a Recreation Coordinator to oversee implementation of the recommendations contained in this study.

Recommendation- Parks and Recreation Committee

It is recommended that based on the direction that the municipality takes with regard to the adoption of the recommendations in this report, that a review of the mandate, roles and responsibilities and make-up of the Parks and Recreation Committee take place.

The current mandate and make-up of the committee has existed for some time and appears to be working well. There are a number of recommendations in this report that, if adopted, will change the direction of recreation programs and services in the community. As such, the timing would be appropriate to revisit the existing mandate of the committee and determine if it would be beneficial to involve more lay people along with representation from Council. In this way, the direction that the municipality wishes to go towards would be based on both internal and external input into the operation of the committee. From a volunteer perspective, it would be advantageous to have a lead role responsibility for a non-elected official as the municipality moves forward with planning and a new direction.

Action Item	Resources Required	Timeframe
Determine the direction that the municipality wishes to adopt in terms of the recommendations.	Facilitated meeting with existing committee.	Short term
Based on the direction established, determine what leadership is needed to effectively and efficiently move forward.	Staff and committee involvement.	Short term
Identify key community leaders with a vested interest and leadership capabilities to become involved in the new committee.	Existing committee and staff.	Short term



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