



**Economic Development Strategic Plan
Appendix 3: Community Benefits Assessment**

City of Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation

Final Report

February 2024

Appendix 3. Community Benefits Assessment

The prevailing share of the community benefits assessed are realized in the form of benefits to the municipality, local economy, local labor force and local businesses, with some spillover benefits tied to the local tourism industry.

Table 1. Return on Investment for Strategic Priority #1: Diversify Housing Development Options

Objectives	Actions	Benefits to Businesses		Labor Force Benefits			Municipal Benefits			Benefits to Local Economy				Tourism Benefits				
		Business Retention	Business Growth and Expansion	Local Job Creation	Increased Local Labor Pool	Local Youth Retention	Creation of a Diversified Labor Pool	New Business Registrations	Increased Building Permit Revenues	Increased Property Assessments	New Business Investment Attraction	New Commercial Construction	Increased Local Spending	Increased Local Procurement	Increased Economic Diversification	Environmental Sustainability	Increased Annual Tourism Visits	Increased Tourism Visits During Shoulder / Off-Season
Continue to support housing development projects.	Update the local housing market assessment to better understand the availability of housing options, existing housing stock and future demand to accommodate planned population growth.							x	x									
	Increase housing stock tailored to middle-income households by collaborating with developers, financial institutions and the City's Planning and Zoning Department to identify land development opportunities as well as barriers to increasing					x	x		x	x		x	x	x				

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	local inventory of middle-income housing.																	
	Increase the quality of low-income housing by developing incentives and redevelopment tools with key partners.					X	X			X		X	X					
	Monitor opportunities for planned subdivision development by continuing dialogue with private landowners and surplus parcels of City-owned land.						X		X									
	Ensure regulation and infrastructure are in place to support various housing development options, including mixed-use buildings by working with the City's Planning and Zoning Department.								X	X								

Table 2. Return on Investment for Strategic Priority #2: Revitalizing City’s Downtown

Objectives	Actions	Benefits to Businesses		Labor Force Benefits			Municipal Benefits				Benefits to Local Economy					Tourism Benefits				
		Business Retention	Business Growth and Expansion	Local Job Creation	Increased Local Labor Pool	Local Youth Retention	Creation of a Diversified Labor Pool	New Business Registrations	Increased Building Permit Revenues	Increased Property Assessments	New Business Investment Attraction	New Commercial Construction	Increased Local Spending	Increased Local Procurement	Increased Economic Diversification	Environmental Sustainability	Increased Annual Tourism Visits	Increased Tourism Visits During Shoulder / Off-Season	Increased Tourist Satisfaction	Increased Transient Traffic into the City
Increase the number of downtown businesses.	Develop incentives, programs and policies that encourage existing building owners to convert vacant building spaces into leasable commercial, residential and/or mixed-use spaces.		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Develop and execute a marketing strategy and outreach campaign to attract year-round business retailers, service providers and/or experience operators to the downtown.		X	X				X			X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Tie infrastructure development to create a "walkable" downtown.	Strengthen and expand the City's Façade Improvement Grant by developing new downtown funding programs which can be utilized as business retention, expansion and investment attraction tools.	X	X	X				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Identify, inventory and assess existing/missing infrastructure needed to improve the downtown experience of visitors, residents and businesses.	X	X			X					X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

Objectives	Actions	Benefits to Businesses		Labor Force Benefits			Municipal Benefits				Benefits to Local Economy				Tourism Benefits				
		Business Retention	Business Growth and Expansion	Local Job Creation	Increased Local Labor Pool	Local Youth Retention	Creation of a Diversified Labor Pool	New Business Registrations	Increased Building Permit Revenues	Increased Property Assessments	New Business Investment Attraction	New Commercial Construction	Increased Local Spending	Increased Local Procurement	Increased Economic Diversification	Environmental Sustainability	Increased Annual Tourism Visits	Increased Tourism Visits During Shoulder / Off-Season	Increased Tourist Satisfaction
	Develop a program focused on expanding/improving downtown signage, wayfinding, crosswalks and building improvements / preservation.	x										x	x		x	x	x	x	
	Develop and launch a “Downtown Beautification Initiative” focused on the Arts by increasing public art in the downtown.					x						x	x		x	x	x	x	
	Assess the feasibility of incorporating electric charging stations downtown by identifying the rightful location for electric charging stations and determining associated costs and sources of funding.										x	x	x		x	x	x	x	
	Explore opportunities to create more public spaces for residents and visitors downtown through the identification of potential locations and to assess the costs related to the construction of a new outdoor event space.					x					x	x	x		x	x	x	x	

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Attract more cultural and arts events and festivals to the downtown.	Preserve and promote existing historic buildings and cultural assets, including incentivizing downtown businesses to hire local artists / artisans for decorative murals, ironwork and other enhancements.	X				X					X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
	Inventory and promote the City's existing downtown facilities capable of hosting cultural events and festivals.					X				X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
	Develop and execute a marketing strategy and outreach campaign to attract operators of cultural events.															X	X	X	X

Table 3. Return on Investment for Strategic Priority #3: Attract and Retain Youth in the City

Objectives	Actions	Benefits to Businesses		Labor Force Benefits			Municipal Benefits				Benefits to Local Economy				Tourism Benefits				
		Business Retention	Business Growth and Expansion	Local Job Creation	Increased Local Labor Pool	Local Youth Retention	Creation of a Diversified Labor Pool	New Business Registrations	Increased Building Permit Revenues	Increased Property Assessments	New Business Investment Attraction	New Commercial Construction	Increased Local Spending	Increased Local Procurement	Increased Economic Diversification	Environmental Sustainability	Increased Annual Tourism Visits	Increased Tourism Visits During Shoulder / Off-Season	Increased Tourist Satisfaction
Strengthen the leisure, recreational and cultural offering to meet the needs of the City's youth.	Undertake a feasibility study to assess the demand for various indoor gathering spaces tailored to youth leisure and recreational experiences.					X						X	X			X	X	X	X
	Undertake a feasibility study to assess the demand for various outdoor gathering spaces tailored to youth leisure and recreational experiences.					X										X	X	X	X
	Promote and organize more activities targeting youth and families.					X						X				X	X	X	X
Increase the number of mental health services and resources available to children, youth and families.	Increase awareness of the importance of the local supports and resources available to children and youth to address mental health and substance abuse addictions.	X	X			X													
	Undertake a feasibility study to assess the demand to establish a local rehabilitation center that delivers mental health services to children, youth and families.					X													
	Develop and implement a marketing campaign to attract mental health professionals to support local youth.		X	X		X	X	X			X								

Objectives	Actions	Benefits to Businesses		Labor Force Benefits			Municipal Benefits				Benefits to Local Economy				Tourism Benefits					
		Business Retention	Business Growth and Expansion	Local Job Creation	Increased Local Labor Pool	Local Youth Retention	Creation of a Diversified Labor Pool	New Business Registrations	Increased Building Permit Revenues	Increased Property Assessments	New Business Investment Attraction	New Commercial Construction	Increased Local Spending	Increased Local Procurement	Increased Economic Diversification	Environmental Sustainability	Increased Annual Tourism Visits	Increased Tourism Visits During Shoulder / Off-Season	Increased Tourist Satisfaction	Increased Transient Traffic into the City
Increase promotion and awareness of the job and career opportunities in the City.	Collaborate with the local business community to understand job vacancies and required skillsets.	x	x	x		x	x													
	Promote existing career and entrepreneurship opportunities to local students.	x	x	x		x	x													
	Increase the level of collaboration between businesses and neighboring local post-secondary institutions to offer new internship / mentorship opportunities.	x	x	x		x	x													

Table 4. Return on Investment for Strategic Priority #4: Advance the Educational Ecosystem

Objectives	Actions	Benefits to Businesses		Labor Force Benefits			Municipal Benefits				Benefits to Local Economy				Tourism Benefits					
		Business Retention	Business Growth and Expansion	Local Job Creation	Increased Local Labor Pool	Local Youth Retention	Creation of a Diversified Labor Pool	New Business Registrations	Increased Building Permit Revenues	Increased Property Assessments	New Business Investment Attraction	New Commercial Construction	Increased Local Spending	Increased Local Procurement	Increased Economic Diversification	Environmental Sustainability	Increased Annual Tourism Visits	Increased Tourism Visits During Shoulder / Off-Season	Increased Tourist Satisfaction	Increased Transient Traffic into the City
Support LSSU in strengthening its relationship, outreach and engagement with the local community.	Establish a recurring schedule that brings together leaders from the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Sault Tribe and LSSU to increase collaboration, communication and partnership building.																			
	Establish a recurring schedule that brings together members of LSSU with Sault Area High School to reinforce the importance of higher education, the educational programs available at LSSU and how to start planning for it today.				x	x	x													
	Increase the number of community events that can be held at LSSU.					x						x								

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	Increase industry-academic collaboration between local businesses and LSSU to explore opportunities in continuous learning, trades training, research and development, testing and prototyping.	x	x	x		x	x					x	x	x	x				
	<p>Improve community awareness and recognition of the successes of LSSU to the local community.</p> <p>Opportunity to highlight LSSU programs, graduates, economic impact, volunteerism, type of research and development conducted, local contribution, etc.).</p>				x	x	x							x					

Table 5. Return on Investment for Strategic Priority #5: Increase Support of Local Businesses

Objectives	Actions	Benefits to Businesses		Labor Force Benefits			Municipal Benefits				Benefits to Local Economy				Tourism Benefits					
		Business Retention	Business Growth and Expansion	Local Job Creation	Increased Local Labor Pool	Local Youth Retention	Creation of a Diversified Labor Pool	New Business Registrations	Increased Building Permit Revenues	Increased Property Assessments	New Business Investment Attraction	New Commercial Construction	Increased Local Spending	Increased Local Procurement	Increased Economic Diversification	Environmental Sustainability	Increased Annual Tourism Visits	Increased Tourism Visits During Shoulder / Off-Season	Increased Tourist Satisfaction	Increased Transient Traffic into the City
Strengthen business retention and expansion efforts.	Formalize the EDC's business concierge program by establishing a defined business visitation schedule and providing regular updates on the key outcomes.	x	x							x				x						
	Provide assistance (where possible) to help business owners overcome obstacles to business growth.	x	x							x				x						
	Educate local business owners on the available county-wide, state and federal funding programs, resources and incentives.	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Table 6. Return on Investment for Strategic Priority #6: Enhance Tourism Development

Objectives	Actions	Benefits to Businesses		Labor Force Benefits			Municipal Benefits				Benefits to Local Economy					Tourism Benefits				
		Business Retention	Business Growth and Expansion	Local Job Creation	Increased Local Labor Pool	Local Youth Retention	Creation of a Diversified Labor Pool	New Business Registrations	Increased Building Permit Revenues	Increased Property Assessments	New Business Investment Attraction	New Commercial Construction	Increased Local Spending	Increased Local Procurement	Increased Economic Diversification	Environmental Sustainability	Increased Annual Tourism Visits	Increased Tourism Visits During Shoulder / Off-Season	Increased Tourist Satisfaction	Increased Transient Traffic into the City
Define the City's brand and tourism tagline.	Seek input from the local community to help influence and define the City's brand and tourism tagline.	x	x			x					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Refresh and optimize branding and city-wide messaging to ensure that all local government organizations and private-sector businesses involved in tourism development and promotion are aligned.	x	x			x					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Promote the new branding and tourism tagline through the development of marketing packages and promotional campaigns.	x	x			x					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Increase shoulder and off-season	Support the "OUT Housing Consortium" concept, related to parks and recreation activities.	x	x	x		x				x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

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tourism development.	Develop a series of year-round single/multi-day tourism packages for Ontarians through collaboration with tourism operators and strategic partners.	x	x							x		x		x		x	x	x	x
	Explore opportunities with local businesses to expand their tourism offering during shoulder/off-season periods through products and services development, supported by joint marketing and promotional efforts.	x	x	x		x				x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Increase the number of tourism visits to the City.	Support local tourism operators in the development and expansion of tourism-based programs and experiences through the identification of eligible funding programs / incentives while also providing guidance to ensure that programs and experiences comply with regulatory policies.	x	x	x		x			x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

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	Collaborate with tourism boards to develop various trending tourism packages and leverage their networks to expand marketing outreach of the City's tourism offering throughout Michigan and beyond.	x	x	x		x					x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Promote existing digital marketing channels, including the Sault Ste. Marie App to help tourists plan their next visit and navigate the city and points of interest.	x				x							x			x	x	x	x	x
	Undertake a feasibility study to establish more passenger air service options in collaboration with the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation.	x	x			x							x				x	x	x	x
	Increase the number of local restaurant options with emphasis on introducing more healthy fast-food eating establishments within the City.		x			x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

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	Continue to explore and monitor for waterfront development opportunities and ensure that regulations are in place to enable the City to quickly respond to qualified opportunities as they are identified.					X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X