



Municipality of Neebing
Strategic Plan 2020-2024
June 2021



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Note: This document is presented a text-only version suitable for screen readers. An accessible version with tables and graphics is available on the Neebing website.



Introduction

The Municipality of Neebing Strategic Plan fits within a framework and context of existing plans. The Strategic Plan captures the vision and direction specific to the Municipality, and reflects the strategies it will employ to support a sustainable environment in which its citizens and businesses can thrive. The Strategic Plan is a key document that provides direction for organizational planning work. The Municipality's Asset Management Plan, Capital Plan, Budget and Operational plans all link back to the Strategic Plan.

Council and staff have worked together to define the mission, vision, values, strategic themes and objectives for Neebing. We have collaboratively requested and listened to input from Neebing citizens, and business and community leaders through public consultations. We have coupled this input with statistical data and worked closely together to develop this road-map for the next four years.

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a 'fluid' document that provides clear direction and establishes the foundation for organizational and operational decisions but is also regularly reviewed and enhanced based on internal and external changes.

High level Municipal Plans

- Strategic Plan
- Official plan- Zoning bylaw.

Other Plans

- Emergency Plan
- Economic Development Plan
- Fire Department Strategic Plan
- Asset Management Plan



The Environment for Planning

The Municipality of Neebing is composed of five townships spread out over 88,000 hectares. The population density is very low as compared to Southern Ontario.

The majority of taxable assessment in Neebing is residential (89.5%), followed by government properties (3.9%) and farmlands (3.4%). Properties with roll numbers that are exempt from taxation make up 2.4% of the total assessment, as well as large tracts of crown land that are unassessed. Commercial and industrial properties make up 0.8%, and managed forest account for 0.1% of the total assessment (*MPAC, 2021*).

Like many Northwestern Ontario communities, Neebing is experiencing minimal population growth (3.5% from 2011 to 2016) (*Statistics Canada, 2019*). The population is somewhat older than in Ontario as a whole, with a median age of 48. However, like the rest of Canada, Neebing is faced with the realities of an aging baby boomer population, which include a diminishing workforce, requirements for appropriate housing, transportation options, and additional health and social services. Retention of the community's youth post high school continues to be a challenge.

The Indigenous population in Neebing is low; however, there is an opportunity for partnerships with the neighbouring bands in Fort William First Nation and Grand Portage.

Neebing's population is generally well-educated, with an above-average number of citizens possessing apprenticeship and college qualifications (*Statistics Canada, 2019*). Post-secondary education is available outside the community through Confederation College and Lakehead University located in the City of Thunder Bay.

Neebing residents have a higher rate of unemployment and higher median household income compared to Ontario as a whole, however there is a large gap between households with high income (130 >\$150,000) and those households with low incomes (115 <\$40,000) (*Statistics Canada, 2019*).

Small businesses account for most of Neebing's employers, with 90.4% percent of businesses in the community having fewer than five employees. According to the Northern Policy Institute (2017), Neebing has a larger proportion of employers in animal production and aquaculture, and in the specialty trade contractor industry. Many of Neebing's residents commute into Thunder Bay for work.



Mission, Vision and Values

A Mission Statement describes why we exist and why it's important. A Vision Statement describes where we want to be in the future, it connects the mission statement, to the values, and goals.

Mission

The Municipality of Neebing provides governance that delivers quality public service with an emphasis on neighbourhood livability, responsible planning, and management of the natural environment.

Vision

Neebing strives to be a vibrant rural municipality that enriches the quality of life for its citizens, nurtures its economy, and continues to build on community pride making it a healthy place to live, work, and play.



Values

At the Municipality of Neebing we value:

Accountability:

financial responsibility, transparency, trust, competence, professionalism, integrity, fairness, impartiality, determination

Stewardship:

planning, environment, teamwork making a difference, partnership, efficiency, commitment, innovation, economy vision, knowledge

Lifestyle:

nature, outdoors, imagination, recreation, opportunity, adventure, humour, people, diversity

Social Responsibility:

caring compassion, family, commitment, accessibility, patience, partnership, service, listening, volunteering, health, decisiveness, supportive



Current State Summary

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths and Weaknesses are internal to the municipality and provide both a foundation for growth and targeted areas for improvement.

Strengths

- Natural beauty
- Lots of land
- Close to U.S. border
- Good transportation network
- Tourism – parks, tourism associations
- Empty lots for development
- Municipality is in good financial state
- Friendly people
- Low crime rate
- No expensive municipal infrastructure (water/sewer treatment)

Weaknesses

- No “downtown” or community hub
- Limited Commercial Development
- Too close to Thunder Bay
- Limited internet services
- No water or sewer services to support business.
- Tax base is not diverse.
- Lack of volunteers
- Exempt Assessments
- Landfill site capacity and costs
- Difficulties meeting gov’t expectations
- Outdated website



Opportunities and Risks

Opportunities and Risks are external to the municipality. While beyond its control, the municipality can recognize and capitalize on opportunities or take action to reduce exposure to risks.

Opportunities

- Partnerships
- Tourist Center
- Provincial Parks
- Agriculture
- Communication Plan
- Forestry and Mining
- Sommerhjem Series
- Local artists
- Potential medical clinic

Threats

- Government over-regulation
- General resistance to change (NIMBY)
- Lack of grants
- CLTIP
- Aging equipment and buildings
- Landfill situation
- Communication deficiencies



Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the *strategic* areas chosen to bring about a desired future – the high-level categories to achieve our vision.

Municipal Infrastructure

Municipal infrastructure is maintained to optimize its lifecycle and replaced as necessary

Tourism

Neebing is a known and popular tourist destination

Attracting Economic Development

Expand business capacity in Neebing

Health

Neebing has health and related services available to support aging in place

Community and Recreation

Neebing is a community of neighbourhoods where people work together in support of recreation activities, facilities and healthy lifestyles

Governance and Administration

Neebing is managed by the right number of people with the right skills and the right resources



Strategic Directions and Objectives

Objectives, and the activities within the objectives, provide clear measurable steps to move forward within each strategic direction theme.

Municipal Infrastructure

Objective: Municipal Infrastructure is maintained to optimize *its* life cycle and replaced as necessary

Activities

1. Implement asset management plan priorities as needed affordable - 2021
2. Develop and implement the Road Maintenance Plan (bridges, culverts, ditching, gravel, chip seal, grading, etc.) - 2021
3. Extend the life of the landfill sites through: viable alternatives; new waste techniques; increased recycling/diversion efforts - 2023
4. Complete the applications for the expansion approvals for both Scoble and Sandhill landfills - 2022
5. Seek funding to support a new fire hall addition - 2021
6. Finalize the Fire Department Strategic Plan - 2022
7. Optimize municipal landholdings - 2023
8. Renovate the municipal office complex to support long-term use - 2022



Tourism

Objective: Neebing is known and popular as a tourism destination

Activities

1. Put Neebing's amenities (trails, boat launches, parks and other attractions) on an app and make information about them readily available - 2024
2. Encourage, partner with, and/or leverage initiatives by others that make use of Neebing's natural advantages (i.e., Path of the Paddle, Ontario Parks, the dark skies initiative, the Nature Conservancy, the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, etc.) - 2023
3. Participate in and become popular for geo-caching - 2023
4. Encourage the development of recreational opportunities such as camping, snowmobiling, cycling, etc. – 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
5. Work with the Province to improve the use and utility of the tourist information center at the border - 2022



Attracting Economic Development

Objective: Expand business capacity in Neebing

Activities

1. Focus attention on business development and growth of existing businesses- 2020
2. Continue efforts to attract new business – All Years
3. Maintain and support the Neebing Economic Development Advisory Committee - 2021
4. Support rural day care - 2022
5. Promote Neebing as a place to live and work through the development of local businesses – All Years



Health

Objective: Neebing has health and related services to support aging in place

Activities

1. Explore the opportunities for supportive living for seniors such as independent living and/or assisted living facilities and businesses - 2024
2. Encourage the establishment of health-related businesses and services -2023
3. Continue to develop and enhance emergency health systems - 2024



Community and Recreation

Objective: Neebing is a community of neighbourhoods where people work together in support of recreation activities, facilities and healthy living

Activities

1. Develop parks appropriately in communities within the Municipality (i.e., Alf Olsen Center area) - 2020
2. Develop the open-air arena at Alf Olsen Memorial Park - 2021
3. Name, maintain, and promote parks and other amenities - 2020
4. Expand the Sturgeon Bay Boat Launch facility - 2023
5. Increase utilization at Blake Hall - 2022
6. Develop a covered open-air arena at Blake Hall - 2023
7. Develop a solution for parking issues at West Oliver Lake - 2021
8. Encourage the development of camping facilities - 2024



Governance and Administration

Objective: Neebing is managed by the right number of people with the right skills and the right resources.

Activities

1. Reduce the size of Council from 7 to 5 members- 2021
2. Optimize the number and skill sets of staff – All Years
3. Develop a succession plan - 2023
4. Plan for the continued existence of an Economic Development Officer position after internship funding expires - 2022
5. Continue to develop electronic communication and supporting infrastructure - 2020
6. Adopt an attitude that supports asset management planning and analysis, including linking long term planning documents with asset management to sustainably manage our assets and resources - 2021



Performance Measures

Performance measures provide a means of evaluating progress, understanding where adjustments in strategy may be required, and reporting to the public. The following set of performance measures will form the basis of future reporting for the Municipality of Neebing.

Measure

Active stakeholder partnerships

- All Strategic Themes

Federal and provincial commitments

- All Strategic Themes

Growth in Population

- Municipal Infrastructure, Attracting Economic Development, Health, Community and Recreation, Governance and Administration

Business growth and diversification

- Municipal Infrastructure, Attracting Economic Development

Visitors, Perception

- Tourism, Community and Recreation

Recreational opportunities, programs and participation

- Tourism, Community and Recreation

Neebing has active community volunteers

- Tourism' Attracting Economic Development' Health, Community and Recreation, Governance and Administration



Seniors/affordable housing units

- Health

Services for Seniors

- Attracting Economic Development, Health, Community and Recreation

Municipal revenues and financial stability

- Municipal Infrastructure, Attracting Economic Development, Governance and Administration

Municipal planning documents (Fin, Strat, Asset, Fire, Ec Dev etc) are in alignment

- Municipal Infrastructure, Governance and Administration

Number of complaints are reduced

- Municipal Infrastructure, Governance and Administration

Compliant with Asset Management Policy and legislation

- Compliant with Asset Management Policy and legislation



Implementation

Work began on this strategic plan in 2019 and the plan was due for completion in early 2020. However, the COVID Pandemic delayed the plan's completion until the Spring of 2021. The effective range for this plan is the five-year period from 2020-2024.

While the objectives were already being moved forward prior to finalizing the plan, the results of this Strategic Plan will be formally communicated to staff by the Clerk-Treasurer, and it will be used by Council to provide direction for their decision-making.

Progress advancing this plan will be reviewed annually beginning in 2022 by Council. The annual review should also include reviewing the plan to ensure it remains valid, and updating strategies and objectives to support the vision and strategic directions. Progress advancing this plan will be communicated to the community in an annual "Report to the Community".

Elections in Neebing are held every four years. It is recommended that the next Council begin work on the plan in late 2023, and be ready to implement a renewed plan in late 2024.



References

MPAC. (2021). *Neebing Assessment Change Summary*. Neebing: Municipal Property Assessment Corporation.

Northern Policy Institute. (2017). *Community Labour Market Report*. Thunder Bay: Northern Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/upload/documents/publications/clmr-series/clmr-neebling-en-17.03.09.pdf>

Statistics Canada. (2019, 08 09). *Census Profile 2016 Neebing*. Retrieved from Statistics Canada: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3558001&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&SearchText=Neebing&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=3558001&TABID=1&type=0>

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