

Proposed Growth Plan for

# NORTHERN ONTARIO



*Sault Ste. Marie*  
**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION**

## SSMEDC Response

January 2010



## **SSMEDC Response - Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario**

The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation (SSMEDC) is working with its Destiny Sault Ste. Marie Steering Committee Partners (City of Sault Ste. Marie, Community Development Corporation for Sault Ste. Marie and Area, Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre, and the Sault Ste. Marie Chamber of Commerce), along with other community organizations and individuals, to provide a response to the Proposed Northern Ontario Growth Plan from the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure and Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. The goal of the response is to support the Province in strengthening its Plans of Actions while showcasing where the Growth Plan can align with Sault Ste. Marie priorities.

SSMEDC and City staff have met to discuss moving forward on appropriate submissions to the Province that will complement and reinforce the priorities for Sault Ste. Marie and to enhance this Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. The City of Sault Ste. Marie has prepared a high-end report, which will be provided to City Council for its consideration and approval. SSMEDC's CEO has had the opportunity to provide input as well and is incorporating the City input into SSMEDC's detailed response to the Province. This document will be forwarded to the SSMEDC Board of Directors for its review and consideration and will also be forwarded to the Destiny SSM partners for final review and consideration.

The SSMEDC has used the Growth Plan Survey Template for our detailed response.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Vision for Northern Ontario

It is the year 2036 and there's a new Northern Ontario.

Northern Ontario has a skilled, educated and healthy population that is supported by world-class resources, leading edge technology and modern infrastructure. Companies scan the world for opportunities to create jobs, attract investment and serve global markets.

Communities are connected to each other and the world, offering dynamic and welcoming environments that are attractive to newcomers. Municipalities, Aboriginal communities, governments and industry work together to achieve shared economic, environmental and community goals.

### **Do you share this vision for Northern Ontario? What do you agree with? What would you change?**

The SSMEDC agrees with the above statements for Northern Ontario if this was a Quality of Life Strategy for Northern Ontario. However, since this is a Growth Plan, the SSMEDC suggests strengthening the language for the two vision statements and a third statement that would focus on growth in Northern Ontario.

The suggested revisions for the Vision Statements are as follows:

“Northern Ontario has a growing, skilled, educated, culturally diverse, and healthy population that is supported by world-class resources, leading edge technology and modern infrastructure and is resilient and progressive in the global economy.”

It is important that Northern Ontario stakeholders (both public and private) that influence our economy be resilient to negative challenges and continue to be progressive in anticipating change to create new opportunities.

“Communities are connected to each other and the world, offering dynamic and welcoming environments that are attractive to newcomers. Municipalities, First Nation and Aboriginal communities, governments and industry have the economic development resources to work together to achieve shared economic, environmental and community goals that will lead to overall economic growth for Northern Ontario.”

In order to be successful in shared economic, environmental and community goals, all stakeholders, in order to work together, require the necessary resources to ensure capacity and capabilities to be successful.

The suggested additional vision statement to be added:

“Northern Ontario and its communities will be: progressive and investment ready; effective in reaching out to target global opportunities for investment & trade; and an attractive home for new investments both private and public.”

It is very critical that Northern Ontario has a specific vision for investment readiness and attraction. In order for economic growth to take place in Northern Ontario, economic events (investments) need to be generated to ensure success.

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### **Who needs to be involved in order for this vision to be achieved?**

The SSMEDC understands the need to be consultative on Growth Plans in Northern Ontario, but it also knows that when you move to implementation of such a plan, you need the right stakeholders and drivers to ensure end results are achieved and key performance indicators met. The following is a broad listing of who should be involved in driving a Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, however, the Province needs to ensure they are strategic in identifying who will take the lead, who will be engaged as supporters and partners, who needs to be consulted and what control this group has, and those that need to know.

The SSMEDC suggests the following starting list of who needs to be engaged in the Growth Plan, though there are some that are missing:

- Province (Ministries and Crown Agencies – MNDMF, MEDT, MRI, OMAFRA, MNR, SERVICE ONTARIO, MOE, etc.)
- Federal Government (Departments and Agencies - Industry Canada including FedNor, DFAIT, Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada, FedDev, Immigration, Service Canada, Export Development Corporation, Sustainable Development Technology Corporation, CANMET, etc.)
- Municipalities (Mayors, Councils, CAOs, Planners, Finance, etc).
- First Nations, Metis Nations of Ontario
- Economic Development Organizations, Boards and Staff, Enterprise Centres, Innovation Centres and Networks, Community Futures Development Corporations, First Nations Economic Development agencies
- Destiny Sault Ste. Marie
- Northern Ontario Associations and Networks
- Youth Associations

- School Boards, Universities and Colleges
- Chambers of Commerce
- Arts and Cultural Associations
- Private Sector – Multinationals
- Private Sector – Northern Ontario owned major employers
- Private Sector consortiums
- Private Sector support service firms (e.g., Accounting, legal, engineering, architectural)

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### **What are the priorities for the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario in your community?**

Sault Ste. Marie has prioritized its economic diversification strategies through Destiny Sault Ste. Marie ([www.destinyssm.com](http://www.destinyssm.com)). Destiny Sault Ste. Marie has identified its top seven strategies for the community. These have very specific alignments to the proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario and it would be our intention to ensure Sault Ste. Marie is aligned with the Province on shared economic development priorities for our community and region.

The SSMEDC has focused on where the Destiny SSM seven strategic priorities have aligned with the proposed Growth Plan:

#### Global Transportation and Infrastructure Strategy

1. Financial support from Province and Federal governments to support the CP-owned Webbwood short line – operated by Huron Central Railway – to ensure rail infrastructure improvements to Sudbury and Global Markets (\$33 million being requested to support Sault Ste. Marie’s application for infrastructure) and major industrial employers, including Essar Steel Algoma and Domtar. Presently, this is Destiny’s top infrastructure priority and applications have been submitted.

2. Sault Ste. Marie Private and Public Export Dock Development – Expansion of private sector export dock capacity in partnership with private sector (Essar Steel Algoma) and the establishment of a new non-profit export dock that would support broad private sector shipping opportunities to global markets. Essar Steel Algoma has made announcements on its plans to expand in Sault Ste. Marie, and this will depend upon the necessary infrastructure, such as transportation and energy. Again, Federal and Provincial governments can provide financial support for port infrastructure, which would support significant private sector investment expansion.

3. Sault Ste. Marie Industrial Lands to Support Industry Investment – Sault Ste. Marie is close to full commitments for the majority of its present serviced

industrial land, which was set aside and put in place in the early part of the decade. The City is moving forward on implementing its Industrial Land Strategy by securing further land and implementing the necessary servicing to support new investment attraction. The City would look to lead this initiative with Federal and Provincial aid.

4. Sault Ste. Marie Multimodal Hub – Sault Ste. Marie has completed a feasibility study and costing on establishing a multimodal facility in the community, which would have the capacity to handle containers by truck, rail, and port to connect with U.S. and Canadian markets. Containerization will be a required mechanism for transporting products in Sault Ste. Marie, and the North needs to support future infrastructure to enable this mechanism of transportation.

### Tourism Strategy

1. Grow and Expand Tourism Attractions - Agawa Canyon Tour Train Revitalization Project is presently underway, and the NOHFC has supported this project in collaboration with the SSMEDC and CN Rail. SSMEDC has applied to the Federal government for additional funds to complete the tourism entertainment elements, with the goal of enhancing the visitor experience.

2. Tourism Gateway Project - Continue efforts to support the development of a major tourism destination attraction for Sault Ste. Marie as a Canada/U.S. border entry point.

3. Ensure sustainability and provide Provincial programs to support existing tourism attractions, including, but not limited to, Searchmont Ski Resort and the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre.

4. Continued programs to support community and corridor tourism infrastructure development, such as waterfront development, trails, tourism information centres, roadside amenities, entrance ways and downtown improvements. Sault Ste. Marie is moving forward on infrastructure programs that will support the continued expansion of its tourism waterfront. As well, Sault Ste. Marie continues to develop its downtown area by delivering the Community Incentive Program (from the Province) to support increased business and residential growth in the downtown core.

5. Develop the eco and adventure tourism sector. The Province could be instrumental in developing a new NOHFC program that would provide support, specifically to help develop this sector in Northern Ontario. Tree Top Adventures, just north of Sault Ste. Marie, is a good example of a new business that could be supported to grow. Providing programs to support the business' product development, marketing and human resources would help expand its capacity and increase its ability to attract more visitors.

## Science & Technology

1. Long-term commitment and support for science, technology and innovation centres (e.g., Ontario Forest Research Institute, Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre, Invasive Species Centre, Algoma University Biosciences Convergence Centre, Sault College Energy Technology Centre etc.). Destiny Sault Ste. Marie has identified a number of projects that will support the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. Partnering with the Province to access capital and program funds will be critical for the long-term success of these centres in the Sault.
2. Establish Sault Ste. Marie as a Centre for Health Infomatics by supporting the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre, the Group Health Centre, Sault Area Hospital, Sault College, Northern Ontario School of Medicine and Algoma University in implementing a number of projects: the Northern Ontario Clinical Research Network, the Health Infomatics Research Institute, and to establish the Provincial Health Medical Record System and Back Office Support Service Centre in Sault Ste. Marie.
3. To Grow Sault Ste. Marie's information, technology, and knowledge-based sectors through specific niche opportunities: Digital media and Games – Algoma Games for Health Centre, a project of Algoma University and the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre.

## Renewable Energy

1. St. Marys Paper Biomass Cogeneration Plan – Province to support expediting an agreement between the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) and St. Marys Paper. This initiative would support the company's long-term viability and competitiveness. The United States has implemented energy incentives and rebates to support its pulp and paper industry, and this positions the jurisdiction to be even more competitive.
2. Renewable Energy Projects – Sault Ste. Marie has established itself as the Alternative Energy Capital in North America, not only bragging about its wind energy projects, but new initiatives that are being developed in solar, municipal waste to energy, and bio-fuel production.
3. Generating New Business to Support Renewable Energy Technologies – Expanded NOHFC programs to support equity financing for innovation, commercialization and infrastructure to support renewable energy products for export, such as hydro, solar, wind hydrogen and bio-fuel. This would support Destiny SSM's intent to increase investment levels for the advanced manufacturing requirements for new business opportunities in the Sault.

4. Energy Competitive Advantage and Electrical Transmission Infrastructure – In the proposed Growth Strategy, the Province has identified the need to support transmission capacity in Northern Ontario in order to generate new energy projects supporting Ontario’s demand for energy. This is required to support Destiny SSM’s Renewable Energy Strategy, as Sault Ste. Marie has intentions to increase its renewable energy production and needs the transmission capacity, not only from Sault Ste. Marie to outside markets but also within our own City limits. The SSMEDC is in an application process with NOHFC on developing an energy/bandwidth infrastructure corridor to support a new area for Green energy production and industrial investment.

5. Developing Education and Training Centres that will support skills and labour pool development for the renewable energy sector. Sault College has developed a Technology Centre, in partnership with Brookfield Power and government agencies, to support skills training and research. Increasing the capacity of this centre into the areas of solar, municipal waste to energy, and bio-fuel technology is critical to support future skills requirement in the renewable energy sector.

#### Manufacturing Transformation and Advanced Technology

1. This is a new initiative for Sault Ste. Marie and it is Destiny’s intent to examine the state of manufacturing in the city. Its intent is to also look at worldwide trends on where new opportunities are for creating a sector that would be resilient to global competition while also being niche focused and would produce profitable products that could be created using advanced manufacturing or unique technology. Destiny SSM, through the SSMEDC, will be carrying out a study on its existing manufacturing sector and identifying opportunities to transform this sector into a more diversified, niche-market, and globally resilient engine.

2. Value-Added Wood Opportunities – sustain and enhance forest product manufacturing with existing and new companies (e.g., Medium Density Fibre Board expansion, Dry Kiln, Engineered Wood Products, Flooring, housing components, etc.).

3. Support industry expansion and new business opportunities that will manufacture and assemble new products, such as bio refinery units, medical devices, recycling technology, gasification plant equipment, resin technology and solar panel assembly.

4. Value-Added Steel – Work with major steel industry companies – Essar Global and Tenaris – on increasing steel production in existing products and to attract new valued-added steel opportunities that would use these products. This may include wind towers, large diameter pipe, galvanizing and OEM parts.

## Immigration and Labour Development

1. Employee Recruitment – directly support employers in finding skilled labour and talent through Team Sault Ste. Marie, a consortium of employment agencies, economic development organizations, unions and human resource experts.
2. Labour Market Development – determine gaps (labour needs assessment) in the workforce and determine the best course on training development working in partnership. This is presently being championed by the Algoma Workforce Investment Committee (AWIC).
3. Attraction of Immigrants and Newcomers - The City of Sault Ste. Marie is taking the lead on a local immigration program strategy to enhance the Sault's capacity to welcome and attract new immigrants and newcomers to the community. This is an important strategy for Sault Ste. Marie that will increase its labour pool and population base. The Sault's demography is aging and immigration is critical for population growth and sustainability.

## Post Secondary Institute Economic Development

1. Post-Secondary Infrastructure – To support new and expanded facilities at Sault College and Algoma University to help their capacity to double student population base. Several infrastructure projects are underway as a result of strong support from the City, Provincial and Federal governments. Both institutions have long-term plans to continue their expansions with future projects. For instance, Sault College has a planned Stage 2 new campus completion, while Algoma University has plans for a new Royal Conservancy of Music Performing Arts Centre.
2. Post-Secondary Program Expansions – To develop and increase college and university programs that will support future labour force and professional development in Sault Ste. Marie, such as joint university and college programs, expansion of university honours programs, biosciences and college programs for renewable energy.
3. Student Recruitment – To promote and attract new students from external markets – including First Nations, Southern and Northern Ontario, and national and international markets – that would increase student populations significantly for our post secondary institutes.

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## Should there be other priorities for the Growth Plan for all of Northern Ontario than those proposed in the Growth Plan document?

Yes, the SSMEDC has identified several other priorities that should be considered and put into the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. The following is not in any particular order or priority.

Sault Ste. Marie would like to ensure that the Northern Ontario *steel industry* is recognized as a significant economic engine in the region, along with mining, forestry and tourism. The Province should provide strategic support to Essar Steel Algoma and Tenaris, as they would like to expand their production capability through strategic investments and infrastructure support from the senior levels of government. These are identified within Destiny SSM's Global Transportation and Infrastructure Strategy (e.g., port and rail), and the City of Sault Ste. Marie has moved forward on an immediate rail infrastructure application to the Federal and Provincial government.

Increase *post-secondary* student enrollments for Northern Ontario colleges and universities by developing Ontario policies that will support student enrollment to Northern institutes. Targets and incentives should be established to double or triple the post-secondary student enrollments to be distributed equally across Northern Ontario's institutes over the next 25 years. Provincial programs to support Northern student recruitment and directing Southern Ontario post-secondary education student demands northwards would be extremely helpful in building the student populations in the Northern post-secondary institutes. As well, distance education should be driven through a strategy that would support regional and remote post-secondary satellite campuses. This would ensure students living in rural and remote communities would have face-to-face access to post secondary faculty and academia. Whether they live in Fort Albany or in Kenora, students would have access to a community post-secondary centre. These centres could provide access to all of the post-secondary institute programs across Northern Ontario.

For *tourism*, there has been strong input from the tourism industry in Sault Ste. Marie to strengthen this component by ensuring a number of initiatives are clearly demonstrated in the Plan for Action: Access to capital programs, marketing, and incentives to motivate and inspire the private sector to increase its tourism investment and development, especially in product development, including eco and adventure tourism. As well, there's a focus on bringing back corridor infrastructure programs that support our community entranceways, highways, waterfronts and trails, all of which are instrumental in increasing tourism visitation to Northern Ontario. This should be supported by a strong visible Provincial team of tourism consultants that can specifically promote and market these programs to the tourism sector.

*Attraction of talent* and innovators will be critical in the future of Northern Ontario's economy. Communities continue their efforts to attract physicians, but it is also necessary to address the attraction of other professionals, whether it is a specialist engineer or an environmental lawyer. The Growth Plan needs to ensure we have a Plan of Action to reach out to find and source talent, not only based on the needs of the North but also on where we want to go in the future.

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**Can you suggest promising projects or initiatives that could be supported through the Plan?**

The SSMEDC has compiled a list of promising projects and initiatives that could be supported through the Growth Plan. There may be some duplication to some of the projects that were identified in the Strategic Priorities earlier on in this document, but it is worthwhile to repeat these projects. It is important that many of these initiatives would directly have an economic impact on Northern Ontario.

- *CP Rail Web wood Division Rail infrastructure upgrade* between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury to support industry expansion and retention, particularly at Essar Steel Algoma and Domtar. This is Sault Ste. Marie's top priority at present time and can be acted upon immediately in partnership with the Federal government.
- *Private and Public Deep Water Port Development* to be located west of Essar Steel Algoma. This will support expansion of Essar Steel Algoma, Tenaris Group, and provide other private sector access to shipping on the Great Lakes.
- Sault Ste. Marie *Multimodal Centre* (rail, road, air, and port) that would support future demand for containerization from the mid U.S. and Northern Ontario.
- *City Industrial Park and Land Development* that will provide increased industrial lands for private sector investment and development.
- *St. Marys Paper Cogeneration Plant*
- *Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre* (Sustainability Plan and Provincial Operating Fund Agreement)
- Sault Ste. Marie *Tourism Gateway Project* – Regional Destination Tourism Attraction
- *Sault College Stage 2 Campus Construction*
- *Northern Ontario Clinical Research Network*
- *Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre* (Geomatics and Health Informatics Centre)
- *Algoma University Bio-Science Convergence Centre*
- Establish a Lead agency in Algoma District that would coordinate *Labour and Skills Development Strategies* in partnership with Employment Ontario
- Northern Ontario *Immigration Web Portal*

- Establish a *Wood value park* that would support engineered wood products, remanufacturing and dry kiln centre in Sault Ste. Marie
- *Eco-tourism business development* – develop an NOHFC Tourism program that would provide a grant for new and existing eco adventure tourism businesses in Northern Ontario. This program would support eligible costs in marketing, product development, and human resource expansion and training.
- *Waterfront and Trail Development* for Northern Ontario – re-establish a Northern Ontario program that will support upgrading and new infrastructure to support waterfront, trail and highway tourism development (e.g., roadside info/washroom centres – Michigan model)
- Provincial Government *Back Office and Contact Centre Support Services* - As a result of the new digital economy, the Province could diversify and relocate many of its government back office and contact centre support services to Northern Ontario. Sault Ste. Marie would like to work with the Province of find a solution for the E-Health initiative (Ontario Electronic Medical Management and Record Centre in Sault Ste. Marie). Working on the successful Group Health Centre medical record model and the ability of the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre informatics expertise, Sault Ste. Marie believes it can be a solution and location that will support Ontario's network for medical health record management.

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### **Guiding Principles**

Delivering this vision will involve the combined effort of governments and diverse partners across Northern Ontario, focused on six key principles:

1. Creating a highly productive region, with a diverse, globally competitive economy that offers a range of career opportunities for all residents.
2. Developing a highly educated and skilled workforce to support an evolving knowledge-based economy and excellence in the trades.
3. Partnering with Aboriginal peoples to increase educational and employment opportunities.
4. Delivering a complete network of transportation, energy, communications, social and learning infrastructure, to support strong, vibrant communities.
5. Demonstrating leadership in sustainable growth and environmental management.
6. Establishing innovative partnerships to maximize resources and ensure the Growth Plan achieves its ambitious vision and is fiscally sustainable.

**Do you agree with these guiding principles? Which principles do you particularly support? What would you change?**

Yes, we support all of the principles. The SSMEDC has some suggested changes that would strengthen the principles in the areas of increasing economic wealth, ensuring a competitive environment that will be resilient to negative global impacts, and to ensure that Northern Ontario stakeholders have the resources to implement this strategy.

Suggested change to 1

Creating a highly-productive region, with a diverse, globally competitive and resilient economy that offers a range of career opportunities for all residents and newcomers.

Suggested change to 4

Delivering a competitively-priced and complete network of transportation, energy, communications, social and learning infrastructure to support rural and urban communities.

The SSMEDC has two suggested new guiding principles:

1. Strengthen economic development partnership efforts that will increase community wealth (increased income), net job creation, and will retain and attract newcomers.
2. Ensure Northern Ontario's natural resources – minerals, forests and water – are not exported in their lowest values but will be exported as close to its end product that generates the most value and wealth for the region's economy. For example, round logs and copper plate would not be allowed to be exported but would be exported in value added products, such as furniture, specific paper products and copper tubing.

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• **General Comments on the Proposed Growth Plan** 

**What are your general comments on the Proposed Plan? What do you like? What would you like to change? What do you feel are the priorities for implementation?**

SSMEDC is generally positive about the Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. The Plan does recognize many of the ingredients required for positive economic development and growth: infrastructure, education and training,

economic sector development, innovation, community development, and promoting harmony and wealth sharing with our First Nations and Aboriginal peoples.

SSMEDC would like to see stronger statements supporting targeted growth benchmarks as to where we would like to be in five, 10, 20 and 25 years. As well, the Plan for Actions needs to tie back to those fundamental challenges that the North has to overcome to be successful in economic development and growth.

SSMEDC, from its experiences, knows that one must engage the key stakeholders and partners in the final formulation of the implementation plan to ensure the right leaders and the necessary resources are available to deliver on the implementation plan.

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## Chapter 2: Building Towards a New Economy

Over the next 25 years, the North is positioned to become a knowledge-based economy, building on its traditional strengths and expanding in the areas of innovation and collaboration. This Chapter in the Plan outlines the Ontario Government's proposed Plan of Action to stimulate investment, innovation and employment for the various sectors in the North.

### Mining

#### **Plan of Action**

1. Through the Ontario Mineral Industry Cluster Council and other opportunities, strengthen Ontario's position as a leading global mining jurisdiction, maintain the competitive edge in Ontario operations and grow the northern mining cluster.
2. Invest in research and innovation (e.g., deep mining techniques, exploration and environmental technologies, mine closure and rehabilitation processes) to improve efficiency of Ontario operations. Implement "green" mining initiatives to improve energy efficiency and tailings management.
3. Link potential mine development with regional infrastructure planning.
4. Continue incentives to stimulate exploration investment in Ontario.
5. Undertake and maintain an inventory of mining supply and service companies in the North and implement an export strategy to expand into new domestic and international markets.
6. Amendments to the Ontario Mining Act will ensure environmentally sustainable mineral development stewardship, support Aboriginal participation in the mineral sector and increase timeliness and clarity in the regulatory processes (e.g., permitting), supported by a "one-window" approach for approvals.
7. Increase geoscience mapping to speed discovery of new mineral deposits.
8. Develop initiatives that increase public understanding of current exploration and mining practices, environmental impacts and the importance of minerals and metals to daily lives.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for the mineral industry. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC is supportive of the actions to support mining and mineral exploration. SSMEDC particularly supports continued incentives to stimulate exploration investment as the Algoma region has potential for mineral discovery. However, because of predominately private land ownership, exploration has not been as robust as other crown land mineral belts.

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**What is missing? What should be changed?**

SSMEDC suggests increased support for research and development on using different mineral products in conjunction with steel to create new products for the marketplace.

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**Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry
  - Mining Communities, both urban and rural areas
  - Economic Development organizations
  - Mining Companies
  - Exploration Companies
  - Prospectors and Developers
  - Canadian Institute of Mining Professionals
  - First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
  - Mining and Industrial Supply Companies
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**Plan of Action**

1. Introduce a proposed new forest tenure and pricing system to provide more equitable access to forest resources for innovation and growth in forestry, bioeconomy and other forest-based industries. Examine opportunities to reduce regulatory burden and increase the availability of forest resource information.
2. Create a Forestry Cluster Council to support collaboration among industry, labour, communities, Aboriginal peoples, researchers, the education sector, other forestry organizations and government to contribute to strengthening and diversifying the industry.
3. Focus business supports on knowledge-intensive, value-added products and new markets, including forestry equipment, and supply and services. Increase use of innovative technologies to improve efficiency and product quality.
4. Pursue innovations to advance forest health, regeneration and new products.
  - a) Advance research and commercialization expertise in forest health; properties, use and regeneration of Ontario tree species; and climate change adaptation.
  - b) Work with industry to advance innovative uses of forestry biomass for bioeconomy markets.
  - c) Adopt innovations in the replanting and regeneration of Ontario's forests as part of a Crown forest renewal strategy.
5. Recognize wood as a renewable resource and increase its use in construction.
  - a) Showcase the use of wood in public building projects.
  - b) Market Ontario's high quality of wood and sustainable forest management practices through a "green" branding strategy and export initiatives linked to national and provincial trade initiatives.
  - c) Amend building codes and construction standards to allow for the use of wood in mid-rise construction.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for forestry. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC is concerned that not enough is being done at present time to ensure our existing forestry industry sector can survive. Presently, most of the major pulp paper and saw mills are either closed; employees have been laid off, or are on the verge of closing. The Province needs to revitalize these centres, work with the communities and private sector to make the best effort to get these plants back into production. The cost of closure for single-industry Northern communities is especially devastating.

In the proposed plan, the SSMEDC is supportive of a new forest tenure and pricing system that will ensure the sustainable management of our forests and see the trees going to the best use and to the most economic impact in supporting our local forestry communities, First Nations, and cities. This tenure system would take the responsibility of the sustainable forest license away from the private sector and would put it into a system that could enter into long-term contracts with the right business partners that would maximize the economic benefits for the region. As well, the SSMEDC appreciates the business supports for value-added forestry opportunities.

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**What is missing? What should be changed?**

SSMEDC believes several major issues are missing from this important economic sector plan. The forestry sector needs to see short and long-term cost reductions in their price of doing business in Northern Ontario to remain competitive with U.S. jurisdictions. One of the critical areas is the price of power and programs need to be put in place to ensure profitability of these mills. In Sault Ste. Marie, coming to a favourable agreement between St. Marys Paper and the Province could assist the company's competitiveness with the U.S. and other non-Ontario jurisdictions.

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**Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
- Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Natural Resources
- Ontario Forest Research and Innovation
- Natural Resources Canada - Canadian Forest Services
- Industry Canada and FedNor
- Major Forestry Companies
- Locally Owned Forestry Companies

- Forest Support Business (e.g., Harvesting, Reforestation, etc.)
  - Forest Industry Supply Companies
  - Forest Communities (Rural and City)
  - Economic Development Organizations
  - First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
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### **Plan of Action**

1. The Province, working with the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) and Hydro One, will invest substantially to upgrade the transmission network and increase capacity for the development of renewable energy projects across Northern Ontario. \$2.3 billion in province-wide investment is already committed over the next three years, nearly half of which will be spent on projects which are in Northern Ontario or which help better integrate the northern grid with the remainder of the provincial system.
  - a) Projects will include the development of an east-west tie and improved north-south flow capacity, which will help resolve the 'Orange and Yellow Zone' designations that currently restrict grid connection in some areas.
2. Continue to implement the Green Energy Act tools to stimulate increased investment in the development of renewable energy by businesses and communities.
  - a) A new provincial feed-in tariff pricing system to provide guaranteed prices for power produced from renewable sources and to encourage the participation of a wider range of generators, including Aboriginal communities, co-ops as well as commercial developers.
  - b) Accelerated timeline guarantees will apply to major approvals processes to help reduce start-up costs.
  - c) Establishment of a Renewable Energy Facilitation Office (REFO) to help guide potential proponents through the necessary approvals processes.
  - d) Providing municipal support for associated infrastructure costs through the Municipal Renewable Energy Program.
  - e) Providing financial support in the form of grants to community groups to assist with developmental costs through the Community Energy Partnerships Program.
  - f) The domestic content requirements that are part of the feed-in tariff program will help to stimulate manufacturing and jobs, ultimately helping to establish Ontario as a home base for renewable energy investment and manufacturing.

3. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal communities to become involved in renewable energy development through new provincial policies and programs designed to build business capacity and facilitate economic partnerships.

a) The \$250 million Aboriginal Loan Guarantee Program will support Aboriginal participation in new renewable energy and transmission projects by guaranteeing up to 75 per cent of an Aboriginal community's equity share in a project. This will help to secure financing and lower their borrowing costs.

b) The Aboriginal price adder under the feed-in tariff pricing system will increase the return on investment for renewable energy projects with Aboriginal participation.

c) The Aboriginal Energy Partnerships Program will help to maximize participation of Aboriginal partners in renewable energy projects and build capacity at the community level through three streams: community energy plans to identify local energy needs and opportunities; feasibility studies, business case development and other soft project costs; and an Aboriginal Renewable Energy Network to assist communities in sharing knowledge and best practices.

4. Hydro One and the Ontario Power Authority will work together with remote off-grid communities and the Government of Canada to identify opportunities and assess the feasibility of alternative long-term solutions to diesel-generated power.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for green energy. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

This plan is positive as there is considerable potential for new electrical generation in Northern Ontario.

Sault Ste. Marie is supportive of the feed-in-tariff program that will support manufacturing jobs in Ontario. SSMEDC would hope that the NOHFC programs would be applicable to drive those manufacturing jobs into Northern Ontario centres like Sault Ste. Marie.

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**What is missing? What should be changed?**

There should be mention of the Great Lakes Power grid (owned by Brookfield Power) as one of the largest privately-held power generation and distribution systems in the Province. Partnerships should be developed with Brookfield

Power to ensure connectivity between west and east and also support Brookfield's potential for future power generation from both hydro and wind resources.

Secondly, it is important that the Province puts programs in place that will support our major industries in Northern Ontario with competitive energy pricing. It will be difficult in the future for new investment in industry if competitive electrical rates are more lucrative in neighbouring jurisdictions, such as Manitoba, Quebec and the U.S. Competitive energy pricing is critical for future industrial development in Northern Ontario. Power generated in Northern Ontario from hydro facilities should be first used to support industrial energy clusters in Northern Ontario, for not only existing industry like Essar, Xstrada and Vale Inco, but new investment potential to attract high energy users at competitive rates. Future investment from firms that are high energy users – whether they are looking to expand blast furnaces, paper machines, engineered wood technology or custom milling – should be target opportunities for Northern Ontario because of our low cost hydro power and our natural resources.

The Northern Ontario Growth Strategy should focus on how it will develop cost competitive centres in Northern Ontario that would drive new investment to the North that require high energy demand businesses, including metallurgical sites, steel and value-added steel manufacturing, and data centres. The Province should look at strategies of generating new energy in Northern Ontario, such as competitive pricing and infrastructure, which would support energy projects and create Northern business centres for high energy users.

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### **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Energy & Infrastructure
- Ontario Power Authority
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
- Ontario Hydro
- Northern Public Utilities
- Brookfield Power
- Major Power Users
- First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
- Rural communities and Cities

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## Bioeconomy

### Plan of Action

1. Through the Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bioeconomy, develop and implement a Northern Ontario Bioeconomy Plan aligned with Provincial bioeconomy initiatives and a bioproduct market analysis and development strategy including related manufacturing activities.

### **Please comment on the Plan of Action for the bioeconomy. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC supports this action but suggests that all of the Innovation Centres, including CRIBE, be part of the team to develop the Northern Ontario Bioeconomy Plan. Sault Ste. Marie's Science Enterprise Algoma, now a part of the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre, has been engaged in bioeconomy activities for some time now. As well, the Innovations Initiative Ontario North (IION), which is our Northern Ontario Regional Innovation Network, should be a partner on this strategy development.

Secondly, that the Province continues to ensure the best end use of our wood fibre is maintained for those wood industries competing in today's marketplace (e.g., Flakeboard Medium Density Fibre Board and Melamine Plant) and that diversion of this fibre stream whether through speculative pricing increase or wrongful direction to a biofuel product is deterred.

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### **What is missing? What should be changed?**

A key guiding principle for developing the bioeconomy in Northern Ontario is that bioproducts that would come from our resources should receive the highest value added before any of the resource is allowed to be exported.

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### **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines & Forestry
- Ministry of Natural Resources
- Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio-Economy (CRIBE)
- Science Enterprise Algoma (now converged with Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre)
- Northern Ontario Technology Centres
- Economic Development Organizations
- Post Secondary Institutes

- Rural communities and Northern Cities
- First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
- Stakeholders in the Biomass Resource (e.g., forestry, harvesting, etc.)
- Bio-fuel private sector (e.g., SITTM Technologies in Sault Ste. Marie)

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## **Agriculture and Aquaculture**

### **Plan of Action**

1. Increase farm production, freshwater aquaculture and value-added processing in Northern Ontario to respond to markets through initiatives for new farmers, export strategies for niche products and more flexible capital support. Increase participation of northern operations in business support programs such as the Canada-Ontario Growing Forward program.
2. Create district agricultural development plans identifying land improvement needs, regional storage and processing infrastructure, new markets, and research and training priorities with intergovernmental funding to support implementation. Collaborate with governments, communities and industry to increase access to competitive technologies and infrastructure.
3. Increase local markets through buy-local initiatives and public procurement.
4. Streamline regulations to facilitate farm start-ups while maintaining high food safety standards.
5. Work with industry and the federal government to expand agriculture and aquaculture research in the North to focus on sustainable food production and processing tailored to the region's environment and climate. Strengthen research, education and industry networks to speed adoption of innovative science and technology.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for agriculture and aquaculture. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

This is a positive step in supporting the agricultural sector in Northern Ontario. The approach to create district agricultural development plans is solid and will support such initiatives as buy-local and would see increased farm production and value-added processing.

### **What is missing? What should be changed?**

There needs to be increased incentives to support new farmers (entrepreneurial and training), farm expansion and equipment, and marketing support.

As well, for those small abattoirs (meat processing plants), the need to support the cost of Federal and Provincial food safety and inspection requirements through special programs for smaller types of operations will help them expand to new markets. This will support the ability to export food (safety inspections and certification) to U.S. markets.

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### **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry
- Rural communities and Cities
- Economic and Community Development Organizations
- First Nation and Aboriginal communities
- Ontario Farming Association
- Co-operatives
- Local and Regional Farmers
- Grocery Chains

**Plan of Action**

1. Establish a regional tourism approach in the North and work with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation to implement a comprehensive northern tourism development strategy focused on high growth areas and linked to provincial and national marketing campaigns. Promote northern tourism strengths such as nature-tourism and Aboriginal tourism as part of provincial tourism efforts.
2. Facilitate partnerships that strengthen Northern Ontario's tourism experience by focusing on meeting consumer expectations on a global basis.
  - a) Create new, flexible and high quality products for domestic and international visitors (e.g., all-inclusive, inbound charter vacations).
  - b) Increase tourism research and information available to industry and communities for product development and investment attraction.
  - c) Strengthen collaboration with the postsecondary sector to deliver skills development in e-business, marketing, customer service and hospitality.
3. Invest in strategic public infrastructure to improve the competitiveness of the tourism industry and enhance the visitor experience.
4. Accelerate partnerships among digital media/cultural industries and post secondary sectors to develop a skilled workforce and attract investment in digital media and film/television productions.
5. Encourage regions and communities to undertake cultural planning linked to tourism, economic development and land use planning.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for tourism and cultural industries. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

Tourism Sault Ste. Marie (TSSM), a division of the SSMEDC, is very particular about this economic sector, and if it would have its way, it should engage a much larger role in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan. SSMEDC, through Tourism SSM, will be a significant stakeholder in supporting this area of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario.

SSMEDC and TSSM support the need to develop and implement a tourism product and infrastructure development strategy for Northern Ontario. The North needs to deal with an aging and faltering tourist attraction base that requires an

injection of capital to keep it relevant. This should be done in a strategic fashion, not in a piecemeal basis. Also, SSMEDC/TSSM agrees with the need to invest in strategic public infrastructure. Providing the best way to link public infrastructure is with private sector developments to enhance tourism in the north.

SSMEDC/TSSM supports the plans to facilitate partnerships to strengthen Northern Ontario's tourism experience. If the intent is to broaden the product offerings to attract new market segments to the north from traditional and investment markets, this is critical to regain tourism visitation.

SSMEDC/TSSM is not sure if OTMPC is the correct vehicle to facilitate this process as their main focus is marketing. Facilitating such a strategy could be done through a joint initiative of the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry and the Ministry of Tourism. OTMPC would be one of the major stakeholders on a Northern Ontario steering committee or Northern Ontario Tourism Council.

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### **What is missing? What should be changed?**

The overall Plan of action is very broad and reiterates many actions from the past. More specifics will be required in the implementation plan and specific targets and direction are required for moving the tourism industry forward in the north. Tourism is one of the largest industries in Ontario and gets little recognition compared to industries such as mining and forestry.

What is missing is the *access to capital programs and incentives* for motivating private sector tourism investment and development. This is critical for advancing the tourism industry in the north and creating a larger critical mass of offerings that will attract more tourists. In the robust tourism years of the 1980's into the early 90's there were a number of Provincial sources available for private operators to tap into that helped them diversify their product offerings, helped in marketing initiatives and provided incentive to upgrade their businesses. In the past, these programs included: TRIP, Destinations North, NORFUND and NORDEV, all of which spurred on significant tourism development in the north, with positive results in terms of job creation, increased tax base and job creation

Further, there should be similar funding programs that the public sector could access to enhance their own tourism infrastructure.

Also, what is required to support the above programs is a team of dedicated "*Provincial Tourism Consultants*" across the north that could work with private sector businesses as well as municipalities to better deliver these programs and ensure they are meeting the needs of the tourism industry. They could again be

an important liaison with the tourism industry and provide great intelligence back to the government for formulating policy.

The Province needs to recognize the significant opportunity for growth in the north for *sports tourism and meetings/conventions*. Many of the major cities have private sector developers investing tens of millions in new and upgraded accommodation facilities and in some cases like Sault Ste. Marie there has been a municipal investment in a sports/entertainment/convention centre (Essar Centre) which has driven hundreds of thousands of visitors and tens of millions of dollars into the community and region. Incentives to capture these types of offerings are critical to attract new tourists to our Northern cities.

There needs to be a way for these Northern communities to overcome the issue of distance from market to bring in these sports tournaments and conventions. The links to nature and the outdoors, combined with the first class and state of the art facilities, are compelling reasons for groups to hold functions in the north. However, *cost prohibitive airfares* are an impediment in growing this important market segment. This is a MAJOR opportunity for the North and should be given serious consideration for advancement.

In addition, consideration should be given to the operation of passenger rail access throughout the north; and from the north to Southern Ontario entraceways from Europe through Toronto. This provides alternative transportation and further connects northern and southern Ontario.

SSMEDC suggests change to the “regional” approach identified should also consider a “*Gateway approach*” to work with key border crossing cities and regions to rebuild the important U.S. market that has deteriorated significantly over the past several years. SSMEDC requests that the Growth Plan would recognize the City of Sault Ste. Marie as an important Gateway Designation for Ontario. Recognition should be given to traditional travel patterns from the U.S. into Ontario and consideration should be given to first developing “travel generating” attractions in these areas so as to provide compelling reasons for travel. Further marketing partnerships should be developed to address key markets in a tactical fashion, so that cities like Sault Ste. Marie could be linked with OTMPC, and perhaps the CTC to direct marketing initiatives to U.S. markets such as Michigan, Ohio, Illinois and Wisconsin. It is critical to recognize the difficulty in simply approaching marketing on a Pan-Northern basis, as the markets are different and the product offerings are different as one moves across Northern Ontario.

In order for funding programs to be developed to work with private and public sector tourism partners, the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forests need to come to grips with who is leading the charge and to put back into place the Northern tourism consultants that have been missing for over a decade now. These funding programs need to be

flexible depending upon the venture and the degree of risk. These programs need not be only “grants” but could be combinations of forgivable contributions, repayable loans with low interest rates, or loan guarantees to support developers in accessing capital from traditional lending sources with confidence.

Municipal tourism offices and private sector partners need to work collectively to help develop the tourism product and infrastructure strategy identified, with assistance from the Provincial government. A Northern “Tourism Council” needs to be considered, not for marketing purposes (that is the OTMPC Northern Committee) but for Northern Ontario tourism strategy purposes. Rather one that can make high level recommendations back to the Provincial leaders as to opportunities that could be identified to move the tourism industry forward in the North.

An increase to funding programs that support cultural offerings such as visual and performing arts.

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**Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Tourism
  - Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry
  - Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation
  - Ministry of Transportation
  - Industry Canada and FedNor
  - Canadian Tourism Commission
  - City Tourism and Economic Development Organizations
  - Rural Economic Development and Tourism agencies
  - First Nation and Aboriginal Communities
  - Travel and Sector Associations
  - Private Sector Tourism Operators
  - Public Sector Tourism Operators
  - Non profit Sector Tourism Operators
  - Northern Ontario Tourism Outfitters Association
  - Accommodation Industry
  - Food and Hospitality Industry
  - Transportation Industry partners (e.g., Air Canada Jazz, etc.)
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## Attracting Investment and Business Growth

### **Plan of Action**

1. Develop and implement a Northern Investment Strategy with comprehensive competitive intelligence for each market region, new market action plans for key industries and marketing strategies for niche products and services. This will include an emphasis on early involvement and rapid response for investment decisions.

a) Align provincial investment programs with Growth Plan priorities.

b) Engage business, community, scientific and Aboriginal leadership in economic development strategies through existing and new industry clusters and by restructuring the Northern Development Councils as technical working groups.

c) Focus on existing industry issues, business retention and time-sensitive opportunities for key growth industries.

d) Create business development, export, and labour market strategies for emerging sectors with strong growth potential and competitive advantages. Support partnerships among municipalities, Aboriginal communities and businesses to advance these strategies.

e) Strengthen relationships in key markets. Expand inbound and outbound trade missions and showcase northern investment opportunities.

f) Work with industry, labour, professional associations and communities to identify strategies to attract highly skilled workers for labour shortages.

2. Increase business support to sectors with significant competitive advantages and growth potential and to firms aggressively pursuing market expansion, research and development, and introduction of innovative technologies.

3. Increase public procurement opportunities through local procurement approaches.

4. Expand the role of Small Business Enterprise Centres to increase training and mentoring in business management and entrepreneurship, and to strengthen their networks among industry, economic development organizations, Aboriginal enterprises, and the research and education sectors.

5. Strengthen access to venture capital and angel investment through an expanded business angel network linked to northern research and innovation centres and with new mechanisms supporting co-investment and syndication.

6. Increase flexibility of business support programs to meet sectoral needs (e.g., access to capital for tourism) and examine alternatives to equity positions for Aboriginal enterprises.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for attracting investment and business growth. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC and Development Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the SSMEDC, has a biased opinion that this is the most important component of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan that will make a difference in whether Northern Ontario will succeed in economic growth and prosperity over the next 25 years.

SSMEDC is supportive of a Northern Investment Strategy and believes that this Plan of Action should be an ongoing activity as we have seen emerging economic sectors happening much more rapidly than carrying out studies to go after this sector. SSMEDC believes that an internal professional team can be created within the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry that can carry out this mandate working with the critical stakeholders in Northern Ontario, including Ontario's North Economic Development Corporation, Community EDOs and Technology Centres.

Early involvement and rapid response for investment decisions are critical. SSMEDC even suggests that Investment Attraction and Marketing staff for the Province or the City Economic Development Agencies would have the ability to speak confidently on incentive expectations with proponents with set conditions to meet Provincial criteria and due diligence (e.g., Northern Ontario Heritage Board approval) by the Province.

SSMEDC supports the emphasis on business retention, and if we had a perfect world, a Northern Ontario team of three levels of government could have tackled the forestry challenge possibly with some foresight that could have put measures in place before the companies were forced to close their shops. Having an identifiable "go-to" team of specialists in the Province to deal with the most sensitive business retention issues would be extremely helpful for those industry and communities dealing with high stress and threat matters.

SSMEDC is excited about the Plan for Action to strengthen relationships in key markets. With the right resources and partnership between the Province, FedNor, and the City Economic Development Offices, the North should be showcasing Northern investment opportunities to hundreds of tradeshow and conferences, and should receive millions of viewer impressions about the investment, trade and tourism opportunities in Northern Ontario.

SSMEDC interprets the Plan for Action to increase business support to sectors with significant competitive advantages and growth potential and to firms aggressively pursuing market expansion, research and development, and introduction of innovative technologies as the Provincial initiative for incentive or business programs through the various government funding agencies. Increase, if it pertains to increasing the limits and the funding available is the critical elements that the SSMEDC is supportive of.

SSMEDC is supportive of increasing public procurement opportunities at the local level. This was extremely successful in the Sault with the Ontario Lottery Corporation tender process involved a local procurement component for its ticket printing. SSMEDC would endorse further Provincial actions in this area.

Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie, the small business division of the SSMEDC, fully endorses this Plan of Action and is presently strengthening the integration of this program with the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation. This will make it a very strong Provincial and Municipal partnership servicing the Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma region. Any effort that the Province can do to shore up the resources for these centres in the North is excellent. This may include daily updates on government programs, library resources, financial programs to support technology and outreach programs, Northern Ontario speaker series in partnership with ONEDC to inspire entrepreneurship, and economic sector development.

SSMEDC is supportive of the Province playing a role in developing a culture for venture and angel investment in Northern Ontario. The network idea has been attempted by FedNor with some mixed results; possibly entering into a partnership with the suggested partners may increase the profile of such a network in Northern Ontario.

On the final Plan for Action, the SSMEDC understands that flexibility is critical for business support programs to work with private sector needs. Private sector needs have to be precedent when it comes to leveraging business support programs as long as the principles, criteria and due diligence standards are adhered to.

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### **What is missing? What should be changed?**

SSMEDC suggests the following missing items and changes should be considered in the Plan of Action:

1. This section needs to move towards more action items and implementation of investment attraction, trade and marketing. It presently consists of actions focusing on developing plans, strategies, engaging with targeted stakeholders, and creating mechanisms for alignment and business support tools. These are

all good, but we need a higher action plan to put teams of Northerners into the international marketplace to get on the radar screens. There is no mention on creating a public relations and networking platform for external outreach new markets, industry sectors, and just approaching individual companies and entrepreneurs to entice them to consider visiting Northern Ontario to look at their next business development opportunity.

2. There needs to be an emphasis for developing a partnership approach to implementing the investment marketing strategies. A team approach between the Province, Federal, and City Economic Development Agencies in reaching out to external markets – U.S., Europe, Asia and elsewhere – and industry sectors to attract new investment, joint ventures and strategic alliances is what is required. SSMEDEC was supportive of the Go North initiative; however, economic development colleagues were not engaged as partners when this very important initiative was established. In SSMEDEC's opinion, this is where the \$19-million Go North strategy dropped the ball. The Ontario's North Economic Development Corporation, a partnership of the Northern City Economic Development Agencies, would love the opportunity to have \$19 million in capital to do external outreach to secure new investment to Northern Ontario.

3. Through these consultations, the use of a set of Northern Ontario tax incentives specific to Northern Ontario, clearly giving Northern Ontario a very strong position in enticing new investment was suggested. It has not shown up in the proposed Growth Plan at all. Is this the position of the Provincial government to not open this opportunity to Northern Ontario because this needs to be publically stated so we don't waste our time on this matter? However, if the Province is open to suggestion, Northern Ontario is very similar to other jurisdictions that were studied by the Province on best practices had tax incentives as part of the economic development strategies that successfully attracted new investment. Ireland was a good best case as the Celtic Tiger grew as a result of a 10-year strategy that melded post-secondary educational incentives (free tuition for Irish Youth), significant corporate tax reductions from 10 per cent to 30+ per cent, an infusion of European infrastructure funding (\$billions per year), and an aggressive Irish Investment Attraction Team that targeted the U.S. to bring home Irish descendents along with their Fortune 500 company. Northern Ontario needs these types of "bold actions" to make a difference. Otherwise we will be discussing the same challenges that we have today as we did 20 years ago. Remember Northern Development Councils had youth retention issues in the 1980s.

4. Inspiring venture capital and Angel investment does take a program that would match this investment or provide an incentive for people with money to look at becoming active in this arena. There have been similar programs in the past that have had mixed results. If the Province is interested in establishing a "Community model" for leveraging Angel Investment, the SSMEDEC and SSM Innovation Centre would be prepared to lead this initiative. Setting up an Angel

Investment Fund of \$2 million, with a matching \$2 million forgivable contribution (flowed based upon business deal) from NOHFC, would be an interesting pilot. The Sault has interested Angel Investors that would participate in this pilot.

5. The Growth Plan, whether it is done through the top level strategy or through the implementation, needs to address increasing its financial and human resource capital to deliver on the Northern Ontario Growth Plan. SSMEDC believes that City, Rural, and First Nations communities would embrace an NOHFC program that would provide financial resources on a fair and reasonable partnership that would support economic development resources to support investment attraction and stimulate business growth. For Rural and First Nations communities, a program similar to the Municipal Economic Development Agency program should be brought back to support individual municipalities on accessing professional economic development staffing to support their community economic development priorities and community preparedness for either new investment or in some cases business retention. For the larger urban centres, an investment and marketing program that would increase the City's ability to reach out to foreign markets and target economic sectors will pay dividends. Over the past two investment attraction campaigns the SSMEDC in partnership with the City, Community partners, FedNor, and NOHFC got on the right radar screen and secure new plants to the Sault.

6. Ontario's North Economic Development Corporation is a partnership of the Northern Cities and has membership from the Northwestern Ontario Development Network. This group has recently launched its new website, Invest North, which showcased Northern Ontario, the five Cities and several industrial sectors that the North is looking to attract. This group is prepared and willing to work with FedNor and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry to undertake a major Northern Ontario Investment Attraction Campaign. This will support the individual Cities on their own target specific programs but will provide greater resources to cover more trade shows, conferences, marketing opportunities, familiarization tours (e.g., government investment and trade representatives, private sector and media), and specific niche and corporate approaches.

7. SSMEDC would finally like to suggest for this section, a very bold step to enhance investment attraction and business growth in Northern Ontario. It focuses on one of Northern Ontario's greatest assets for economic development – the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation. In the opinion of the SSMEDC, this agency is owned by the North as it is governed by Northern Ontario representatives. It is supported by the Province with confidence by both the political and bureaucracy and is slated to grow to \$100-million budget per annum. NOHFC is appreciated by the private sector, communities, First Nations, post-secondary institutes, economic development agencies, and others for the good work it has supported. It has a reputation on making a difference in the Northern Ontario economy. SSMEDC suggests that the Province of Ontario

boost the NOHFC budget to \$250 million per year to accelerate, entice and inspire new investment attraction and business growth that would be a much greater levels than anything that has ever been done in the past. This would give NOHFC unbelievable tools to partner with many of the Northern stakeholders to implement creative solutions that would see a net increase in business growth and job creation in Northern Ontario. It would not be simply a “keep up measure” to maintain the shrinking number of jobs in the resource sectors.

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**Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
  - Ministry of Economic Development
  - Ministry of Research & Innovation
  - Industry Canada and FedNor
  - Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
  - Cities and Rural Communities
  - First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
  - Economic Development Organizations
  - Northern Ontario Colleges and Universities
  - Northern Ontario Technology and Research Centres
  - Private Sector Associations and Consortiums
  - Private Sector (Major Employers)
  - Business Support Services (e.g., infrastructure, utilities, transportation, industrial supply, etc.)
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## Chapter 3: Investing in People and Progress

Northern Ontario's most important resource is its people. Accessible health care and education are important building blocks and will build capacity for an adaptive and knowledge-based economy.

### Health

#### **Plan of Action**

1. Support initiatives to attract professionals to deliver services to populations who face accessibility barriers, including remote, Aboriginal and Francophone communities (e.g., Ontario's Underserved Area Program, Health Career Promotion Program to train French-speaking professionals - *Carrières en santé*).
2. Build and retain a highly skilled sector by promoting health as a career opportunity, through participation in local training programs (e.g., Grow Your Own Nurse Practitioner) and expanded roles for health professionals (e.g., Physician Assistant).
3. Retain health professionals through continued support of professional development opportunities, (e.g., Allied Health Professional Development Fund, Nursing Education Initiative and education programs for northern physicians).
4. Continue to foster partnerships among key players such as the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, the Local Health Integration Networks, Aboriginal organizations, research centres and local service providers in order to build a more collaborative approach to innovative service delivery.
5. Strengthen the capacity of the North's broadband infrastructure network and prioritize investments in systems that reduce travel needs for care (e.g., Ornge Transport System, Telemedicine, e-Prescribing).
6. Support the development of local entrepreneurial skills and expertise through increased procurement of emerging innovations, particularly electronic delivery systems (e.g., Picture Archival System, Digital Diagnostics, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) initiative).

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for health. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC is supportive of the six components for the Plan for Action. The SSMEDC understands the importance of this component to support our population base and have the most important quality of life ingredient (health care) to attract future Northern citizens.

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**What is missing? What should be changed?**

The Health Sector Plan of Action has received input that it is “light” in substance and ultimately further detail is required in the implementation of this part of the Growth Strategy to be effective and make a difference. Without strong health care services in Northern Ontario our ability to attract new investment and people will be hampered.

A suggestion is to look at setting up a pilot project where a new healthcare management system would support medium to high risk patients with access to a family physician and specialty network and healthy individuals and families can receive services from Nurse Practitioners with Physician oversight and support.

A suggestion to establish a Family Health Centre pilot comprised of multi-disciplinary health professionals including a social worker, nurse practitioner, doctor, pharmacist and dentist will serve as preventative health practice and will alleviate pressures off the hospital.

Establish Northern programs that support pre-screening and medicals to use for health prevention such as Diabetes, Cancer, other diseases, etc. that are particularly high in Northern Ontario.

Clinical Research and Health Informatics should be increased to support northern applications for our specific medical challenges (e.g., cancer, diabetes, vascular intervention, etc.).

In order to attract Physicians and Specialists, we need to put in place the “new” infrastructure (e.g., space, equipment, technology, bandwidth, etc.) that will support the innovation and technology to support new medical ways of patient care. This is one of the reasons we lose out to larger centres because the larger centres have the ability to finance new technologies that attract physicians and specialists.

Northern Ontario (Province – Ministry of Health) needs to engage in ensuring the expediting of foreign trained and educated physicians (certification) to Northern Ontario.

Sault Ste. Marie should be a Centre of Excellence in Clinical Healthcare and to establish the Ministry of Health Support Services Centre to facilitate the Ontario Medical Record platform, the coordination of medical warehousing, e-health, medication monitoring synchronization between pharmacies, clinics, and hospitals, public health immunization coordination (e.g., data, scheduling, Web and Call Centre appointment system, etc.). This initiative would be supported by the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre, Group Health Centre, Sault College (e.g., technical course development and Nursing program), and Algoma University (e.g., Computer Science and I.T. programs).

Border cities have the advantage of accessing health provider partnerships, however, at this time, OHIP is not set up to compensate. Presently, patients must travel hundreds of miles to stay within Ontario, when in fact, the care they require could be obtained stateside within an hour or two. This speaks to the issue of keeping the patient close to their support base and especially the elderly or lower income persons who cannot always follow their loved one. There is a direct correlation to the cost vs. recovery time when the families can be with the patient who has to travel for care.

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### **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Health
  - City of Sault Ste. Marie
  - Group Health Centre
  - Academy of Medicine
  - Ontario Medical Association
  - Sault College
  - Algoma University
  - Northern Ontario School of Medicine
  - Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre
  - North east and west Local Health Information Networks
  - Destiny Sault Ste. Marie
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## Education

### Plan of Action

1. Work collaboratively with postsecondary facilities and distance education providers to provide education programs tailored to northern industry and business needs.
  - a) Increase the accessibility of these programs through e-learning and distance education providers.
  - b) Explore ways to address specific Aboriginal and Francophone accessibility needs.
2. Invest in infrastructure to support distributive education and e-learning and a greater level of collaboration among the region's education providers.
3. Support the use of active and surplus school facilities for community programs and needs.
4. Encourage northern communities and local school boards to work together to increase student achievement (particularly among Aboriginal and Francophone populations), prepare northern youth for postsecondary education and training, and lay the groundwork for careers in fields that have strong growth potential in the North.
  - a) Promote key areas of sustainable career development potential.
  - b) Allow for locally produced courses and skills development opportunities to meet specific educational goals in the North.
  - c) Work with community organizations to expand literacy supports.
5. Strengthen collaboration among postsecondary facilities and industry to adapt apprenticeships, co-op programs and skills development initiatives to prepare students for market-relevant and emerging employment opportunities.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for education. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC is supportive of the Plan of Action for the Education component.

Ensuring that education programs are tailored to northern industry and business needs, present and future are critical to keep our young people employed in the new jobs to be created in Northern Ontario.

SSMEDC is supportive of distance education with new technology but should be balanced with face to face academia and instruction. Combining a strategy of distance education with the post secondary institutes along with a satellite campus structure in rural and northern remote communities would be the best “hybrid” to graduate our future post secondary students. Also it would support youth to remain in their own communities if they so choose.

SSMEDC is supportive of locally produced courses as niche program development should be reflect Northern Ontario resources and needs in order to increase our skills and productive competitiveness.

SSMEDC is supportive of promoting key areas of sustainable career development potential and this could be done through industry co-op placement, job shadowing, and could lead into the various internship programs that would create direct employment upon graduation.

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### **What is missing? What should be changed?**

We need to support the establishment of an Aboriginal University and College in Northern Ontario. This should be done in collaboration with the post secondary institutes.

We need to invest in greater post secondary impact in order to be more equitable with Southern Ontario literacy levels.

Increased collaboration between College and Universities to develop joint degree and diploma programs. For example in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma University and Sault College have jointly developed the Aviation Business Degree program. Further collaboration between our Northern Colleges and Universities can help create institutes with expertise that can be tapped into by all the institutes versus trying to compete with each other over the same programs and faculty.

Provide incentives for private sector to work with post secondary institutes on labour development opportunities and skills training for new and existing workers that will create a multi skilled workforce that can adapt to technology and global changes.

Provide incentives that will direct post-secondary education student demands from Southern Ontario to Northern Ontario colleges and universities. These incentives will be extremely supportive in building the student population in Northern post-secondary institutes.

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**Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities
  - Ministry of Education
  - Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
  - Post Secondary Institutes (Universities and Colleges)
  - Shingwauk Education Trust
  - Cities and Rural Communities
  - First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
  - Private Sector
  - Algoma Working Industry Committee
  - Team Sault Ste. Marie
  - Destiny Sault Ste. Marie
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## **Research and Innovation**

### **Plan of Action**

1. Establish a Northern Research and Policy Institute in partnership with universities, colleges, Aboriginal organizations and industry to focus on northern research priorities. This will provide linkages to national and international research initiatives in areas of innovation and emerging sectors, such as green energy, health and education.
2. Strengthen collaboration across the province among innovation centres, postsecondary facilities and industry to support research that advances innovation in key sectors, such as mining, forestry, energy, agriculture and bioeconomy.
3. Expand the role of Northern Innovation Centres, incorporating commercialization supports and collaborative partnerships into their mandates, ensuring their full integration into the proposed Ontario Commercialization Network. This could fulfill the role of an information utility network connecting all areas of the various northern research communities to a central shared bank of data through Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
4. Link the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto with a Northern Discovery Network to provide opportunities for increased mentorships, online and video-conference training, and placements.

### **Please comment on the Plan of Action for research and innovation. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSSMEDC supports all of the initiatives under this Plan for Action.

In particular, SSMEDC supports expanding the resources for the Northern Ontario Innovation Centres. It was always the intent of the Ontario's North Economic Development Corporation and Innovation Initiatives Ontario North (IION) to support the existing Technology Centres in Northern Ontario. Increasing their capacity in working with our post secondary institutes and the Ontario Commercialization Network will enhance new opportunities for Northern Ontario.

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### **What is missing? What should be changed?**

SSMEDC is more supportive of establishing a Northern Research and Policy Network amongst the Northern Universities versus an Institute which suggests a single location in Northern Ontario. As well if this network is to engage in

research and policy development for Northern Ontario, it should include partnerships with communities and economic development organizations.

SSMEDC suggests that there is a need to establish increased programs to support research, development and commercialization in Northern Ontario that can be used on top of the existing provincial and federal programs. This will increase the attractiveness of Northern Ontario for research in development especially working with our Research and Technology Centres in the North. Sault Ste. Marie has two major federal and provincial research institutes (Ontario Forest Research Institute, and the NRCan Canadian Forestry Services) but has not had the ability to secure private sector investment in these areas of research and development. Increased funding programs through the NOHFC for enhancing the existing programs would be an incentive.

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### **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Research and Innovation
  - Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
  - Ontario Forest Research Institute
  - Natural Resources Canada (Canadian Forestry Services)
  - Ocean and Fisheries
  - Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre
  - Algoma University
  - Sault College
  - First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
  - City and Rural Communities
  - Economic Development Organizations
  - Destiny Sault Ste. Marie
-

## Chapter 4: Forging a New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples

Increasing Aboriginal peoples' access to education and employment opportunities and building a new relationship among communities is vital for the North's future. Actions focus on working with Aboriginal peoples to create sustainable employment through increased partnerships, capacity-building and helping to increase Aboriginal students' educational attainment levels.

### **Aboriginal Economic Development**

#### **Plan of Action**

1. Increase economic development capacity of Aboriginal organizations.
  - a) Provide operational support for Aboriginal regional economic development agencies to increase outreach and training, and support strategic planning.
  - b) Facilitate training for Aboriginal economic development organizations and communities to participate in regional economic, infrastructure and labour market planning.
2. Create business opportunities for Aboriginal enterprises.
  - a) Increase opportunities for Aboriginal businesses through a provincial procurement strategy.
  - b) Encourage partnerships among municipalities and Aboriginal communities to meet local and regional business and labour market needs.
  - c) Create employment, training and business opportunities for Aboriginal enterprises in public infrastructure projects including winter roads, all-season roads and the Aboriginal Energy Partnerships program.
3. Expand opportunities for Aboriginal peoples to participate in local labour markets.
  - a) Increase Ontario internships, work exchange and summer experience opportunities and awareness of these programs in Aboriginal communities.
  - b) Continue to increase access to education and skills training in remote communities.
  - c) Work with Aboriginal communities to develop economic opportunities close to home while also working to provide supports for those people who relocate from remote First Nations to urban or rural communities.

4. Develop new approaches and mechanisms to build economic partnerships.
  - a) Develop alternative mechanisms (including working capital and micro capital) for Aboriginal enterprises to attain collateral and equity positions.
  - b) Work with the federal government and Aboriginal communities and municipalities to settle outstanding land claims to facilitate social and economic development.
  - c) Ensure eligibility within government programs for various forms of Aboriginal enterprises, including social enterprises and cooperatives.
5. In partnership with Aboriginal peoples and the federal government, examine capital programs to address immediate critical needs and develop a long-term investment plan for regional infrastructure (e.g., all-season roads) that maximizes benefits, employment and economic opportunities for Aboriginal peoples.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for Aboriginal economic development. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC supports this Plan of Action for forging a new relationship with Aboriginal Peoples. In particular it supports the provision of resources to support First Nation and Aboriginal Communities to access economic development resources to increase their capacity to participate in meaning full economic development partnerships. With increased economic development resources, First Nations communities could participate at a higher level in the various government programs such as the First Nations Forestry Program.

SSMEDC is also supportive of the Province's efforts to work with the federal government and First Nation and Aboriginal Communities to settle outstanding land claims and to ensure that First Nation consultation and resolution are mutually satisfied between the First Nation community and the senior levels of government.

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**What is missing? What should be changed?**

SSMEDC encourages the Province to work with the federal government on increasing economic development support funding for First Nation and Aboriginal communities. Present resources for economic development resources are lacking and prevent many First Nation communities to take advantage of economic opportunities in a timely fashion.

There is a need for a more coordinated effort between senior governments, First Nations, and associated Aboriginal agencies, adequately address the needs required to work in partnership with rural communities, Cities, and the private sector. For example, the First Nations Forestry Programs do not have enough resources to increase the capacity of communities to take advantage of full forest management to economic development opportunities.

SSMEDC would encourage the introduction of economic development and cultural exchange events where First Nations, Aboriginal Communities, Communities, Private Sector can exchange experiences, outline needs, forge strategies, and resolve issues and expectations in a manner that would benefit all the stakeholders involved.

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### **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
  - Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
  - Ministry of Forestry
  - Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure
  - Department of Indian Affairs
  - Industry Canada and FedNor
  - Natural Resources Canada -- Canadian Forestry Services
  - First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
  - Aboriginal Economic Development Agencies
  - Rural Communities and Cities
  - Economic Development Organizations
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Private Sector
-

## **Aboriginal Education and Skills Development**

### **Plan of Action**

1. Continue implementation of Ontario's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy framework to reduce gaps in student achievement.
2. Increase access to distributed learning and e-learning infrastructure for remote locations.
3. Increase the number of Aboriginal teachers in the provincial school system and professional development resources focused on Aboriginal students' needs.
4. Work with Aboriginal education representatives and communities and the federal government to develop harmonized standards and measurement tools for on-reserve and off-reserve schools to facilitate successful transition of students into provincial education and training activities.
5. Encourage and support partnerships among Aboriginal communities, postsecondary institutions, skills training providers and industry to respond to labour markets by providing appropriate education and training programs for Aboriginal peoples and removing barriers to access to these programs.

### **Please comment on the Plan of Action for Aboriginal education and skills development. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC is supportive of this Plan of Action. Particularly the SSMEDC supports partnerships that will enable First Nation and Aboriginal Youth to enter the labour market easier. One such special employment program is the Natural Resource First Nation Youth Employment Program (Northwestern Ontario). This provides Aboriginal youth with the experience of the natural resource industry. This program could be expanded to Northeastern Ontario.

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### **What is missing? What should be changed?**

First Nation and Aboriginal Communities need assistance in motivating and facilitating First Nation and Aboriginal Youth to appropriate Secondary and Post Secondary Institute programs in a combination of providing residence and transportation, or through distance education via satellite education campuses and e-learning. Youth need increased financial resources for tuition, travel and residence to support their ability to attain post secondary institutions.

Increase First Nation and Aboriginal Student Scholarships should be created to ease the financial burden of attending Post Secondary Institutes.

Support special educational initiatives such as the Shingwauk Education Trust being developed in Sault Ste. Marie.

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**Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities
  - Ministry of Education
  - First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
  - Secondary Schools
  - Post Secondary Schools – Colleges and Universities
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## Chapter 5: Connecting and Strengthening Northern Communities

Communities play a key role in achieving a healthy, prosperous future for Northern Ontario. Connecting these communities to each other and to the world will be a critical factor for the North's long-term success. Actions are directed at improved collaboration through regional economic planning and service delivery mechanisms, supporting a comprehensive infrastructure network of transportation, energy, communications, and promoting urban revitalization and a high quality of place in the North.

### Regional Economic Planning

#### **Plan of Action**

1. Establish regional economic zones in Northern Ontario as an inclusive, collaborative mechanism for long-term economic development, labour market, infrastructure, land-use, cultural and population planning, which will:
  - a) Engage urban, rural and Aboriginal communities, business, labour, economic development organizations, research and education sectors, service delivery organizations and other non-government organizations.
  - b) Reflect sector/corridor initiatives and the interconnection of urban, rural and Aboriginal communities in a regional plan that is comprised of:
    - An economic plan identifying key regional sectors, niche products, cultural planning and trade and export opportunities,
    - A regional capital plan identifying strategic community, transportation, information and communications technology, education, research and health infrastructure,
    - A service investment plan for key regional services and amenities,
    - A labour market development plan that attracts, retains and develops highly qualified personnel with market-relevant skills, supports participation of underrepresented groups and creates education and training strategies to meet anticipated workforce needs.
  - c) Develop implementation plans that coordinate collective actions and leverage investments through partnerships of the public and private sectors.
  - d) base capital investments and operational funding on an accountability framework, including a service level agreement, performance measures and regular monitoring and evaluation.

- e) Proceed with implementation of regional economic zones within a year. Establish a technical advisory group to examine approaches of other jurisdictions and provide input on proposed principles/models for regional economic zones in the North. Begin regional economic planning pilots among interested communities.
2. Invest in Geographic Information System community information networks to provide an inventory of regional assets and community/economic data.
3. Introduce a leadership development program for northern community and business leaders (especially youth) to support new planning approaches.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for regional economic planning. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

This Plan of Action is a very important one as Communities are drivers in economic development and their collective efforts whether as a single partner or in a partnership with other community partners, will make a difference for the Northern Ontario Growth Plan. Putting in place programs that would build collaborative partnerships between communities would enhance regional economic development opportunities.

SSMEDC is supportive of ensuring there is continued long term planning to address the identified components that will support Northern Ontario's growth.

SSMEDC supports engagement of the various players to participate in strategic planning input. This has worked well for Sault Ste. Marie in a number of broad based community consultations such as RAPIDS, and the Building and Extraordinary Community plans.

SSMEDC supports sector and corridor initiatives that would interconnect urban, rural, and Aboriginal Communities in opportunities for economic development.

Building labour market development plans, along with appropriate allocation of resources to support implementation would be highly supported by the SSMEDC, Destiny Sault Ste. Marie, and Team Sault Ste. Marie. This Provincial support is needed in Sault Ste. Marie in order to support efforts of our industry, post secondary institutes, unions, and community partners working on the Algoma Working Industry Committee (AWIC).

SSMEDC is supportive of the Community Information Network (GIS) as this will ensure that current and relevant information for communities and regions in Northern Ontario is captured. Statistics Canada does not provide current information on communities under 100,000 population and only Thunder Bay and Sudbury have access to this intelligence. Sault Ste. Marie like many other northern communities would appreciate current data and information to not only track our efforts but to be used for investment attraction decisions.

SSMEDC is very supportive on the development of a leadership program especially for Northern youth so that they can develop the confidence and skills required to participate in planning our destiny for Northern Ontario.

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### **What is missing? What should be changed?**

SSMEDC is concerned about the Province's intent to set up regional economic zones if it will mean a new tier of bureaucracy. SSMEDC finds that the existing relationship the Province has with the entities it serves (e.g., Cities, rural municipalities, unorganized territories, economic development organizations, First Nations, Post secondary Institutes, etc.) is most appropriate. If the intent is to organize these relationships through regional economic zones and technical advisory groups, this will be extremely difficult and will have many conflicts. Communities have their priorities and if they are not the priorities of the regional economic zone there will be conflict.

SSMEDC does recognize that there may be specific areas where it makes sense to have regional or corridor plans that would address areas of commonality and connectivity such as transportation, broad band and cellular telecommunications, tourism corridor forestry cluster, transportation, and other economic development opportunities. The Province can be instrumental in supporting "*regional partnership consortiums*" to help design and deliver regional opportunities (specific tasks) that will benefit all the stakeholders involved.

One of the items missing and is critical for this Chapter is the need to ensure stakeholders have the necessary economic development resources to participate and be a driver in ensuring the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario is successful. SSMEDC does not want to be selfish, but financial resources are required for rural communities, First Nations and Aboriginal Communities to acquire the expertise they deem necessary to be engaged in the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. The Province should create an *Economic Development Partnership Operating Program* (similar model to the former 1980/90 Municipal Economic Development Agency program) for communities (e.g., rural communities, First Nations and Aboriginal Communities) to access. The Province would develop, based upon the final Northern Ontario Growth Plan, the program criteria/application, accountability/measurement reporting, and legal agreements. This program would have annual reviews but agreements would be for a reasonable period of time (five years). This would provide the human and financial resources to those communities that would otherwise not be able to participate in "connecting" or "strengthening" their community. This new program could be delivered through the NOHFC.

Recognize and support the efforts of those communities (e.g., Cities and rural communities) that have well established economic development strategies and

implementation teams (e.g., Destiny Sault Ste. Marie). These champion communities will be the applicants to those Growth Plan strategies that will assist in Northern Ontario's economic growth. Putting in place a strategic planning program that would enable communities to keep current on economic development strategies, implementation, and tracking (Growth Plan Tracking System) would enhance the Province's ability to track efforts by community partners in delivering on their respective Growth Plan responsibilities.

The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation understands the importance of accountability and delivering upon Key Performance Indicators. SSMEDC has an accountability framework with the City of Sault Ste. Marie established to ensure City funds are being utilized to deliver on a number of economic development key performance indicators, three of the most important being job creation, property tax revenue, and economic development and diversification priorities for the City. The Province has identified that "base capital investments and operational funding should be carried out upon an accountability framework, including a service level agreement, performance measures and regular monitoring and evaluation". SSMEDC recommends we need key performance measures for any money being spent in the Growth Plan to ensure that it will make a difference. It might be a good time to explore and develop a *Northern Ontario Growth Plan Economic Impact Model* that might be appropriate to assist in decision making on funding critical projects for the Growth Plan. But this needs to be tempered with an understanding of where government funds would best be spent to ensure community priorities are being completed.

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### **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
- Industry Canada and FedNor
- Cities and Rural Communities
- First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
- Economic Development Organizations
- Small Business Enterprise Centres

## **Regional Service Delivery**

### **Plan of Action**

1. Initiate a review of northern service delivery to enhance planning, service delivery, and administrative effectiveness in incorporated and unincorporated areas:

a) Establish and work with a review team (with representation from northern municipalities, unincorporated areas, Aboriginal communities, and service delivery organizations) to examine service delivery mechanisms in the North and other jurisdictions; identify potential options and guiding principles; and prepare a plan for gaining broad northern input on proposed options.

b) Map the existing administration and delivery of public services (e.g., transportation systems, water supply and distribution, waste management, fire protection, emergency services, social services) in Northern Ontario.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for regional service delivery. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC believes this section on Regional Service Delivery should be an ongoing activity that is carried out by the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. SSMEDC suggests that this should not be part of the Northern Ontario Growth Strategy but is a regular service that the Province provides to the communities and citizens of Northern Ontario. It does not add value to a Northern Ontario Growth Strategy.

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**What is missing? What should be changed?**

No comments.

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**Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

No comments.

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## **Transportation**

### **Plan of Action**

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive inter- and multi-modal transportation plan with identified priorities and intergovernmental funding for an integrated air, rail, marine and road network serving the North and linking to global trade corridors.
  - a) Include an innovation adoption strategy, job creation initiatives, and a corridors/connections strategy that realizes Northern Ontario's potential as a continental and trans-polar gateway for the global supply chain.
  - b) Continue investments in major northern highways including four-laning and passing lanes in priority area.
  - c) Increase use of waterways and ports for environmentally-responsible and efficient freight transportation and tourism development.
  - d) Invest in long-term strategic regional infrastructure and services, including northern airports, aviation service centres, short-line rail, ports and multi-modal freight facilities.
  - e) Improve access for Far North communities by expanding and realigning winter roads and developing permanent roads.

### **Please comment on the Plan of Action for transportation. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC is very supportive of this section as Sault Ste. Marie recognizes the importance of a competitively priced and strong transportation network to connect its industry and business community to world markets. Sault Ste. Marie has carried out a number of transportation studies to identify its priorities and has a well established Global Transportation Infrastructure Committee which engages the three levels of government, industry, transportation providers and economic development partners. This is a model that can be duplicated in other major centres as well as for pan Northern Transportation initiatives.

Sault Ste. Marie has identified an urgent transportation priority to upgrade and maintain the long-term viability of the CP Webbwood Rail division which is presently operated by Huron Central Railway. This rail transportation infrastructure is critical for several major industry partners (e.g., Essar Steel Algoma, Domtar, etc.) to get their products to market in a competitive manner.

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## **Will the transportation action plan connect and strengthen Northern communities?**

Yes, if the Province in collaboration with the private sector and Federal government invest adequate funds in the necessary infrastructure funding to support maintaining viable transportation networks.

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## **What is missing? What should be changed?**

The Province should continue its efforts to support passenger rail service besides the freight. If possible, other service areas such as between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury should be investigated for additional passenger rail service (e.g., bus car service) to support quality of life attributes.

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## **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Transportation
- Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure
- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
- Ministry of Economic Development
- Ministry of Finance
- Transport Canada
- Industry Canada and FedNor
- Cities and Rural Communities
- Major Industry (e.g., Essar Steel, Domtar, etc.)
- Economic Development Organizations
- Northern Ontario Airports
- Air Carriers (Air Canada, Porter, Bearskin, etc.)
- Rail Industry CP, CN, Huron Central, ONTC
- Trucking Industry (e.g., Provincial, Manitoulin, etc.)
- Port Authorities
- Private Dock Operators
- Shipping and Barge Operators (e.g., ACC, Purvis Marine)

**Plan of Action**

1. Expand broadband service to unserved and underserved areas as part of a federal-provincial ICT resources infrastructure plan to invest in next generation technologies, including ultra speed connectivity. Maximize investments and the reach of network expansions through public and private sector collaboration.
2. Enhance existing fibre corridors to establish high-access capacity points, north-south fibre interconnection and improved “last mile” capabilities, connecting homes and businesses.
3. Expand community networks – public Internet portals in schools, libraries and community centres – to broaden access to advanced web technologies.
4. Develop a post-connectivity strategy and new public-private partnerships to support access and usage of high-speed broadband and telecommunications technology. Include a state-of-the-network report with information on current capacity, future plans and market analysis/strategies for specialized ICT services.
5. Fully integrate Web 2.0 technologies to improve delivery of government services and prepare for next-generation technologies. Maximize use of technology through e-health, distance education and online learning initiatives.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for information and communication technology. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC supports this Plan of Action as there continues to be areas where broadband and cellular services are not connected. As Northern Ontario continues to grow into new industrial sectors such as digital media and gaming, advanced manufacturing, alternative energy projects, the need to strong I.T. services is required to maintain competitive advantages with other jurisdictions.

SSMEDC is supportive of fully integrating Web 2.0 technologies especially when it comes to providing government services. SSMEDC through its Enterprise Centre SSM is looking to increase its capabilities to provide on-line webinars and client servicing to reach out to remote areas on a daily basis.

## **What is missing? What should be changed?**

The Province should support the continued operations of the Broadband Networks such as AdNet. There was significant funding for capital projects, however, the organizations that helped set up the regional broadband networks did not have the ability to lever operational dollars to continue providing the service to the communities to complete the final gaps. This resource will be required in the future to support the Province on the delivery of this Plan of Action.

SSMEDC also sees the need to ensure there is IT knowledge sharing, training, and connectivity standards maintained across the North. Whether it is simply ensuring that all Northern Ontario video conferencing and e-learning centres (post secondary institutes) are working from the same platforms so that they can interact with each other or that are digital imaging systems are compatible within our hospitals and Health Centres.

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## **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry
  - Line Ministries (e.g., Health, MCTU, etc.) that deliver services in Northern Ontario
  - Industry Canada and FedNor
  - Information Technology Managers
  - Cities and Municipalities
  - First Nations and Aboriginal Communities
  - Post Secondary Institutes
  - School Boards
  - Libraries
  - Hospitals
  - Technology and Research Centres
  - I.T. Businesses
  - Telecommunication companies
-

## Quality of Place

### Plan of Action

1. Encourage incorporation of quality of place principles to local planning, including downtown revitalization, brownfield remediation, promotion of parks, public open spaces, trails, and cultural amenities and preservation of heritage sites.
2. Research and develop alternative infrastructure solutions for small rural communities (e.g., water and wastewater treatment).
3. Encourage the use of existing tools (e.g., Planning Act and Municipal Act provisions) to support urban and rural planning objectives of the Growth Plan.
4. Consider the distinct circumstances of northern and rural communities in the next five-year review of the Provincial Policy Statement.

### **Please comment on the Plan of Action for quality of place. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

SSMEDC supports the Province to look at ensuring the Northern Ontario Growth Plan and the North's distinct circumstances are considered and measures adapted for the Provincial Policy Statement.

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### **What is missing? What should be changed?**

The Province needs to implement in its Plan of Action, financial resources for communities to take advantage of ensuring pristine and quality of life standards in their planning and development initiatives. There was been a long period of time where infrastructure dollars were available for parks and heritage sites. Recent infrastructure programs have been very helpful for downtown revitalization, waterfront and hub trail development. A Northern Ontario Quality of Life Program could be developed for communities to access provincial funding to support quality of life projects.

The proposed Plan of Action proposes to use existing tools (e.g., Planning Act and Municipal Act provisions) to support urban and rural planning objectives of the Growth Plan. SSMEDC is aware that one of Sault Ste. Marie's projects for the future is the capital expansion of Searchmont Resort. This resort is presently located in an unorganized area, and if it wishes to expand the real estate opportunities around the downhill ski operation to drive new revenues it is restricted to do so because of the lack of a governing municipal body that can underwrite an expanded sewer water service. Present Provincial standards

won't allow the Resort to connect other users to their system because of the liability if the resort should go into closure.

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**Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Municipal Affairs
  - Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry
  - Cities and Rural Municipalities
  - Unorganized Territories
  - Planning Boards
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## Chapter 6: Environmental Stewardship

Northerners depend on the continued health of their natural environment for employment, recreation and quality of community life. The government is implementing many key policies to promote environment stewardship, such as Far North land use planning, Endangered Species legislation, Great Lakes Protection and a Climate Change Action Plan.

### Environmental Stewardship

#### Plan of Action

1. Growth Plan development strategies undertaken by regions, communities and sectors will take into account environmental impacts and ecological values of Northern Ontario's land and natural resources to achieve a balance of social, environmental and economic objectives, consistent with legislative directions.
2. Measures to protect and preserve air and water quality, support green energy development and adapt to climate change will be included in regional economic, infrastructure and transportation planning.
3. Through the Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Research, develop northern climate monitoring and research tools and adaptation strategies for use by communities and sectors to adapt to climate change.
4. Focus economic development efforts and industry support programs on encouraging the development and use of green technologies.
5. Ensure public buildings and infrastructure projects demonstrate leadership in green buildings and water and energy conservation.
6. Increase support for source water protection and drinking water quality initiatives (e.g., infrastructure for waste management, and water and wastewater treatment).
7. As part of the Open for Business initiative, ensure environmental approvals are harmonized with federal requirements and establish clear accountabilities for environmental protection.

**Please comment on the Plan of Action for environmental stewardship. Which action items do you particularly support and why?**

The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation supports this Plan of Action.

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## **What is missing? What should be changed?**

Although the SSMEDC is not familiar with the Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Research, it is familiar with some of the work that is taking place in Sault Ste. Marie relating to the Ontario Forest Research Institute and the Natural Resources Canada Canadian Forestry Services Centre. Just north of the Sault is Turkey Lake, which is one of Canada's longest standing climatic records inventory, and we suggest that the OCCIAR could work and collaborate with our institutes in Sault Ste. Marie on this most important area. One of the greatest impacts from Climatic Change in Northern Ontario will be the impacts on our forests and waterways and in the Sault; we have very strong expertise in the forestry and with Ocean and Fisheries.

Finally, with the onset of Climatic Change, Invasive Species will become a major concern for Northern Ontario and to ensure the stewardship of our environment, the control of invasive species will be critical. In collaboration, the Provincial, Federal, and Municipal governments collaborated on a newly formed Invasive Species Centre that is in startup mode. This organization along with Algoma University and the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre would be important partners on the Climatic Change issue for Northern Ontario. The SSMEDC has the capability of developing the GIS capabilities to map Climatic Change events across Northern Ontario.

Recently there have been changes between the Province of Ontario and Municipalities on environmental approvals. This is an area of concern for future approvals on business development in communities in the North. More importantly municipalities were able to provide approvals in respectable time frames; this is a concern the SSMEDC has when this goes back to Ministry of Environment.

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## **Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Environment
  - Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, and Forestry
  - Ministry of Natural Resources (Ontario Forest Research Institute)
  - Natural Resources Canada (Canadian Forestry Services)
  - Ocean & Fisheries
  - Invasive Species Centre
  - Algoma University
  - Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Geomatics Centre
-

## Chapter 7: Implementation

The strategies of the Growth Plan are complementary and interconnected with a series of short, medium and long-term actions. Some strategies will be implemented in the near future to lay the foundation for longer-term directions. Others will be implemented over the course of several years. While the Growth Plan is a Province of Ontario document, implementation of the strategies will be a collective effort, involving all communities and all sectors of Northern Ontario. It will require a coordination of efforts from provincial, municipal and federal governments, Aboriginal communities and organizations, business and labour, the research and education sectors, and individuals.

### Plan Implementation

The strategies of the Growth Plan are complementary and interconnected with a series of short, medium and long-term actions. Some strategies will be implemented in the near future to lay the foundation for longer-term directions. Others will be implemented over the course of several years.

While the Growth Plan is a Province of Ontario document, implementation of the strategies will be a collective effort, involving all communities and all sectors of Northern Ontario. It will require a coordination of efforts from provincial, municipal and federal governments, Aboriginal communities and organizations, business and labour, the research and education sectors, and individuals.

### **What are the top priorities for implementation?**

#### **Considerations**

Before we look at top priorities for implementation for the Growth Plan, the SSMEDC has identified the matters that should be considered:

1. Ensure that priority and critical economic development projects that are in progress are not held up by the planning process to finalize the Growth Plan priorities and implementation. In particular the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the SSMEDC recognize the following immediate priorities that need to be addressed:

- a) Securing provincial and federal infrastructure funding to ensure the long-term viability of the CP Webbwood Rail Division operated by Huron Central Railway.
- b) Continued support to advocate on behalf of the SSMEDC to FedNor on support for the ACR Tour Train Revitalization project to complete the tourism product development on the NOHFC financially supported tourism rail cars.

c) St. Marys Cogeneration Plant – working to an agreement that will support St. Marys Paper long term economic viability.

2. Add a Plan of Action for the Steel Industry to Chapter 2 Building Towards a New Economy. This would support continued growth of Essar Steel and Tenaris for Northern Ontario. For the Plan of Action the SSMEDC has the following suggestions:

- a) Develop and support critical infrastructure (e.g., rail, port, and serviced industrial land) that will support new and existing steel industry expansion, growth, and competitiveness.
- b) Work with industry to advance innovative uses of steel in creating new products for the market place.
- c) Pursue new business investment opportunities from a value added steel strategy that would support new investment and expansion.
- d) Adopt environmental innovations to support and accelerate pollution abatement issues.
- e) Focus business supports on reducing business costs (e.g., energy, equipment technology, etc.) to ensure competitiveness with other competing markets.
- f) Increase support for research and commercialization opportunities with the possibility of establishing a steel research and testing facility.

**Who needs to be involved in order for these actions to be successful?**

- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry
- Ministry of Economic Development
- Ministry of Research and Innovation
- Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure
- City of Sault Ste. Marie
- Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation
- Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre
- Sault College and Algoma University
- Brookfield Power
- Essar Steel Algoma
- Tenaris Group

3. SSMEDC is supportive of developing stronger and better relationships with our First Nation and Aboriginal Communities but is concerned that to resolve First Nation economic expectations on treaties signed by senior levels of government through a consultation process that engages others such as neighbouring communities and private sector would delay, put at risk good economic development projects, or deter future investors who are looking for a stable and consistent legislative jurisdiction to do business. The SSMEDC advocates the Province and Federal government need to take the lead role in addressing First Nation treaty matters and issues. In the meantime, the SSMEDC will continue to forge and create partnerships with our First Nations neighbours that bring mutually beneficial economic and tourism development opportunities to our respective communities.

4. SSMEDC suggests the Province should clarify its intent on establishing the regional economic zones as the SSMEDC believes the Province should maintain its priority relationships with Cities, Rural and First Nation Communities first and then develop project specific regional initiatives in collaboration with the regional partners on specific task forces.

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In regards to implementation of the Growth Plan, once the Plan of Action has been finalized and without getting into picking and choosing which of the 117 Action Items are to be prioritized, the SSMEDC suggests the following:

1. Review the critical issues and challenges that were identified in the Background document and put priority to these
2. Align these with the final Strategic “Pillars” and the Plans of Actions
3. Establish quantifiable Key Performance Indicators or End Outcomes (short, medium, and long term) that Northerners would like to achieve from the Plan of Action
4. Set up the Provincial Management (e.g., Political and Ministry Staff) Governance and Structure
5. Assess and Determine Provincial Resources: Political, Staffing, and Financial Resources for start up, operations, Line Ministry Budgets for Northern Ontario, New Capital to support Growth Plan Partner Initiatives (possibly use NOHFC with a broader mandate)
6. Complete the Implementation Framework (Interactive Project Management System with Gant Function) with clearly defined Provincial Actions and Line Ministry Responsibilities as well as the Growth Plan Partner Initiatives Program that would support “Champion Proponents” (e.g., applicants from communities,

First Nations, Post Secondary, private sector, etc.) that would drive and support Growth Mandate Plans of Action

7. Develop a Northern Ontario Technical Advisory Committee that would provide strategic advice, constructive criticism, and solution finding capabilities to support the Province, and align this Committee with the Northern Research and Policy Network team (measurement group)

8. Implement, Test, Monitor, Research and Measure, and Report

9. Public Relation Strategy to support Northern Growth Plan with Web site, Newsletters, Publications, Announcements, and Success stories.

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### **How would you like to be engaged with the Plan's implementation?**

The SSMEDC understands the importance of ensuring that our community economic diversification strategy is well aligned with policy and strategies of senior levels of government. As well having shared economic development vision, principles, and plans efforts carried out at the local level will support the end results at the senior levels of government as well. With this in mind, the SSMEDC is prepared to support the Growth Plan in the following manner:

1. SSMEDC would be prepared to be a champion, partner, applicant, participant, strategic advisor, creator, constructive critic, and advocate for the Growth Plan.
2. The SSMEDC is working on its 2010 to 2012 strategy and will be identifying key areas that it plans to be proactive in our local Destiny Sault Ste. Marie (Economic Diversification Strategy) as well as the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario.
3. The SSMEDC through its CEO, Board, and Staff team is prepared to partner and provide support on the various technical or advisory committees required either for oversight or specific project based initiatives, either at the local, regional, or pan Northern Ontario level.

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### **Other feedback or advice on improving the Proposed Plan before it is finalized**

As part of the preliminary research for the proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, other jurisdictions were investigated on their best practices at what worked for successful economic transformation. The SSMEDC had the opportunity to understand the Irish model (The Celtic Tiger) as Sault Ste. Marie

developed a relationship with County Lough in Ireland and Newry Mourne in the Republic of Ireland. The SSMEDC even did staff exchanges with the Newry Mourne Enterprise.

The Irish strategy to transform their jurisdiction did not happen overnight but they did over time. They started out with 4 pillars (economic development) and then introduced a fifth pillar (social capital development) that led to Ireland becoming a great place for business investment (known as the Celtic Tiger). Those pillars were: Investing in their People (education – free post secondary tuition and investment); Reduction of Corporate Taxes (30% to 10%) along with progressive enterprise and entrepreneurial programs; EU funding was provided (\$2 Billion) for public infrastructure projects; and an International Investment Attraction Campaign that targeted patriot Irish citizens working in Corporate U.S.A. (Do Business in Ireland) was carried out. Later on a strategy was put in place which stimulated the development of social capital. All of these ingredients created the success of the Celtic Tiger. They received considerable profile throughout the 90s.

Later on the I.T. and dot com industry crashed affecting many of the new investments in Ireland that laid off or shutdown. The government had to reintroduce tuition fees, increase corporate taxes, and reduced their investment attraction programs to save money. Along with other emerging and competing markets such as India, Ireland has lost some of the profile (Celtic Tiger) that it had achieved, but they are much better off than where they were in the 1970s and 80s with double digit unemployment levels. Therefore it is important to ensure we have a “resilient” and diversified approach to our Growth Plan. Northern Ontario will adapt to economic sector and global downturns in the future.

If you consider the proposed Growth Strategy, we have the “pillars” to tackle the major issues affecting Northern Ontario’s economy. The tools or stimulus for these “pillars” will be critical (e.g., financial capital, post secondary institute based on a northern funding model, stronger and more business incentive programs, long term capital infrastructure and project funding programs, etc.)

The challenge to the Province and to all of us as Northerners, our Growth Plan must aim for success in economic transformation/growth, wealth (new income to Northern Ontario communities and First Nations), quality of life (e.g., healthcare, environmental stewardship, etc.), and attract newcomers (immigration) to Northern Ontario that will see population stability and growth versus stagnation and decline. And this will take us 10 years or more to achieve but we must commit to do this.

5. The Province should complete its commitment in 2010 to have NOHFC’s annual budget put to \$100 million. NOHFC could initiative planning to anticipate some of the top priority projects where it might be the lead instrument to support

Northern Ontario stakeholders (public, non-profit, private, private/public) in new opportunities as a result of the Growth Plan.

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**Feedback provided by:**

*The Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation is a non-profit organization, funded by public and private partners, whose goal is to be the community's leader in supporting and promoting an environment that generates sustainable employment in a healthy, growing and diversified economy.*

Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation

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Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, January 11, 2010

Agenda Item 5.4 – SSMEDC's Response to Northern Growth Plan

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Moved by: M. Bruno  
Seconded by: A. Giommi

Whereas the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation (SSMEDC) expresses its gratitude to the Province of Ontario – specifically the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure and Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry – for the opportunity to provide comment on the Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, Fall 2009; and

Whereas this plan was built on wide-ranging dialogues, which took place across Northern Ontario over the past three years, with SSMEDC CEO Bruce Strapp serving as the Chair of the Northeast Development Council and as a member on the Growth Plan Technical and Advisory Committee that provided strategic advice to the Provincial team; and

Whereas SSMEDC worked with Destiny Sault Ste. Marie, along with other community organizations and individuals, and invited participants to an event to provide additional input to the SSMEDC draft response document;

Be it resolved to accept and approve the CEO's prepared response to the Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, dated January 11, 2010 and that it be submitted to the appropriate Ministry with the support of the SSMEDC Board of Directors. CARRIED.