



PICKLE LAKE NEEDS AND GAP ANALYSIS



Valuable contributions made by:

Various Pickle Lake residents, service providers and business owners

Mayor and Council of Pickle Lake

Pickle Lake Municipal Staff

Pickle Lake Economic Development Committee

Recreation Committee of Pickle Lake

Prepared by:



With special thanks to funding partner:



March 2018

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1 The Framework for Needs and Gap Analysis

CE Strategies has been engaged to prepare a Needs and Gap Analysis by the Township of Pickle Lake. The analysis will be focused on areas identified by the Township for potential economic development. With attention to strengths and opportunities available to the Township of Pickle Lake, a needs and gap analysis model was used to categorize, as well as prioritize, issues potentially impeding economic development in the key sectors identified. The model was used to demonstrate specific gaps to further develop actionable steps to support economic development.

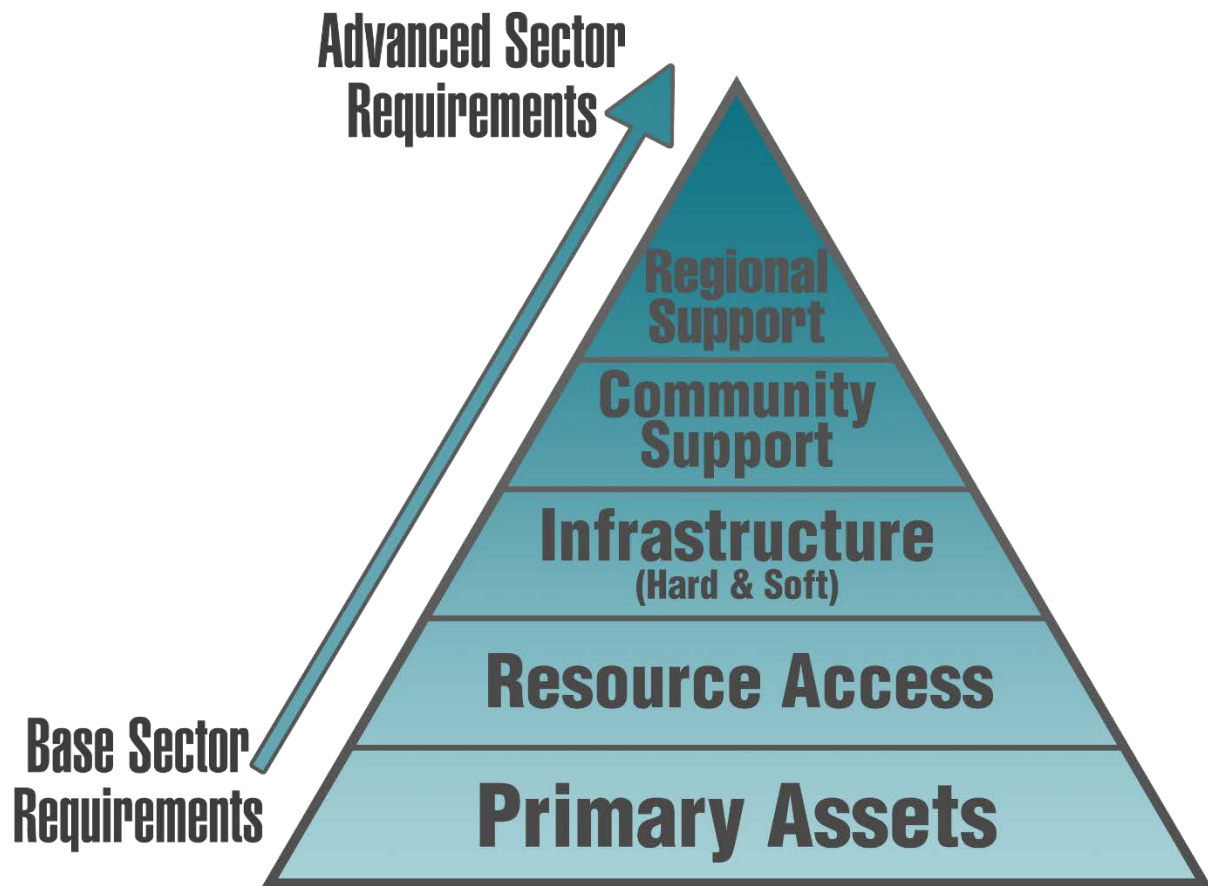
Main sectors:

1. Retail/Commercial
2. Services
3. Tourism, Culture and Recreation

The model is based on a ground-up approach to investment readiness that considers the specific context of the municipality, and the realities of the various target sectors within a specific landscape (i.e. geography, demographics, infrastructure, and experience/history). This analysis will allow for systematic and informed planning, as well as the logical prioritization of actions. Identifying gaps and addressing these in ascending order, from the base up, will bolster a solid foundation from which to develop and grow (from primary assets to regional support).

The Needs and Gap Analysis was developed in consultation with community members, decision-makers, and municipal stakeholders through committee meetings, key informant interviews (N=6), and surveys (N=47). Secondary research was conducted to better paint a picture of the landscape of the community, including Statistics Canada data, Pickle Lake's asset inventory and community profile, Ontario Ministry of Transportation traffic volumes data, information available on the Pickle Lake website and marketing materials.

Needs and Gap Analysis Model



Model Building Blocks Explained

Block 1: Primary Assets

Primary assets, or base resources, are the backbone of the sectors targeted for development and growth. These assets or resources can take the form of natural geography, local expertise or skills, natural resources, and the like.

The main sectors Pickle Lake is looking to expand upon will require the following base resources for future development to be built upon:

1. Retail/Commercial: Sufficient land, primary and secondary market demand, as well as human and financial capital to develop new, or take over existing, business.
2. Services: Strong market demand, service providers, and partnership building with surrounding communities.
3. Tourism, Culture and Recreation: Geographic location to attract visitors, festivals/events, individuals and/or groups with cultural/historical knowledge and the ability to engage the market.

Block 2: Resource Access

Developing economic sectors only makes sense if there is reasonable access to the required base resources or primary assets. Depending on the sector and geographic location, various forms of access are necessary for economic growth, such as:

- Financial access to bank loans
- Zoning for building and approvals process for land use
- Training opportunities
- Physical access including roads and airways

Block 3: Infrastructure (Hard and Soft)

Based on the needs and context of each sector, as well as the community supporting the development of each sector, the required infrastructure can vary widely. The success of economic development initiatives such as attracting, developing, and retaining certain sectors, is tied to a community's ability to provide basic infrastructure.

Hard versus soft infrastructure:

- Hard Infrastructure (services)
 - Vacant commercial/retail space
 - Residential housing
 - Built environment factors related to designated commercial space (e.g. roadways, sidewalks, visual)
 - Available land to build on or use
 - Water, hydro, sewage, and waste disposal
 - Roads, air access

- Soft Infrastructure (services)
 - Health care and social services
 - Child care
 - Education and training
 - Viable tax rates
 - Financial institutions

Block 4: Community Support

In many cases, the receptivity of a community is paramount in attracting new investment and maintaining or expanding current business. In a small municipality such as Pickle Lake, community support can certainly make or break an opportunity for economic development.

Community support factors to focus on may include:

- Willingness to accept new sector, business, and/or initiatives
- Political support and prioritization of economic growth
- Municipal investment in and focus on economic development

Block 5: Regional Support

Partnerships with other communities and regional planning are key factors in any municipality's economic well-being. With Pickle Lake being a very small and remote community, in terms of population size and geography, the need for building partnerships with surrounding First Nation communities is clear. By working with surrounding communities and engaging in regional planning, resources can be shared, larger secondary markets can be tapped into, and collaboration may lead to additional funding sources for economic development.

Regional support may be demonstrated through:

- Sharing resources such as volunteers, infrastructure, funding envelopes, knowledge and experience
- Regional marketing and promotional campaigns
- Partnerships
- Regional lobbying
- Regional, Provincial and Federal political support where necessary
- Regional planning and strategizing efforts

2 Summary of Pickle Lake's Needs/Gaps

Retail/Commercial

- More retail and commercial space is necessary to support a retail and commercial market to serve the large secondary market made up of surrounding communities and passerby traffic on highway 599
- Succession planning is needed where business owners are approaching retirement and have no one to take over their business. A procedure should be in place to assist business owners with their exit strategy – finding interested parties and assisting with the navigation of financing opportunities
- An additional road leading into/out of Pickle Lake could make retail and commercial business more accessible from the airport and the south end of town
- The high-cost of building in Pickle Lake could be offset by promoting local skilled trades training and community pooling of construction material orders to save on delivery fees
- A focus on supporting and investing in local food strategies could provide more affordable and healthier food options for the local community, while creating opportunity of new business and economic growth (green houses, etc.)
- Targeted marketing should be invested in to better attract secondary market of surrounding First Nation communities



Aerial view of Municipality of Pickle Lake

Services (skilled trades, health care, addictions, personal care)

- Partnership building with surrounding First Nation communities would provide opportunity for pooling resources, and strategically planning for better mental health and addictions service delivery
- Expanding upon the limited opportunities for training and skill development within the community could support local service offerings in terms of child care (babysitting courses), aesthetics, hair dressing, etc.
- Based on the projected costs of regular medevac “non-emergency” service calls (somewhere around 3-4 per week according to residents and municipal office administrators), it stands to reason that the recruitment of a nurse practitioner could make sense. A nurse practitioner could attend to some more serious health issues/concerns, write certain prescriptions, and operate within the supervision of the visiting physician.



Pickle Lake Health Clinic Building

Tourism, Culture and Recreation

- A major marketing campaign with long-term vision should be focused around eco-tourism, festivals and the historic mining background of Pickle Lake
 - Municipal logo is being revisited and a general rebranding strategy is necessary (professionally driven and community driven would be ideal)
 - Winter activities such as ice-fishing, snowmobiling, hockey and curling tournaments, and networking events, can be better showcased, and/or developed, to bring in tourists and members of nearby communities during the “off-season”



Pickle Lake Soap Box Derby

- The historic nature of mining in Pickle Lake is an opportunity for tourism as family members of miners past become more interested in connecting with their heritage and seeing where their grandparents settled and worked to provide for their families. Signage and historical markers could be used to support this avenue of marketing tourism.



Mining crew (Pickle Lake)

3 Sector Specific Analysis

3.1 Retail/Commercial

Level in Model	Strengths	Needs/Gaps
Primary Assets (Base Resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong demand in primary market (Pickle Lake) • Large secondary market (communities North of Pickle Lake), tourists and out-of-town workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited ability to attract high volume passerby traffic into town for supplies and accommodation
Resource Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume of traffic passing by Pickle Lake on highway 599 could support greater retail/commercial presence (SADT 530 vehicles in 2016; WADT 420 vehicles in 2016) • Airport (regular flights to Pickle Lake from Winnipeg and Thunder Bay) • Regional projects to the north of Pickle Lake are on the horizon, (increasing volume of traffic passing by and in need of supplies and/or accommodation) • (New Northern hydro line project; Ring of Fire; All season road access to Northern First Nation communities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When flying into Pickle Lake airport, potential customers have no easy access into the town • One road leads in and out of Pickle Lake (limited to one access point)
Infrastructure (Hard and Soft)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard services are available in potential retail and commercial areas • There is a desire in the retail market to take over established businesses that are closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retailers are retiring with no one equipped to take over their businesses (difficulty securing small business loans) • Entrepreneurs have trouble securing funding through major banks due to the limited population size and remote location of the community (based on postal code) • Lack of building structures to accommodate new business retail/commercial activity

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost of building in Pickle Lake (non-local supplies and trades people) • Current businesses providing sole supply of certain goods are closing (due to retirement, fires, etc.) with no one to take over (financing is an issue) • No local financial institutions • Lack of sidewalks and curb appeal
Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong desire from within the community to be self-sufficient, shopping locally • Residential shipping to Pickle Lake is expensive which provides a strong motivation for supporting local retailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pricing of non-processed foods is often inaccessible for residents • Shoppers often find the local options frustrating due to lack of variety and/or freshness
Regional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large secondary market comprised of First Nations communities North of Pickle Lake (accessible by winter roads, and flight) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears to be a lack of marketing and concerted effort to target retail and commercial services to First Nations communities and those passing by on highway 599

4.2 Services

Level in Model	Strengths	Needs/Gaps
Primary Assets (Base Resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pickle Lake's population in 2016 was 388 • On average, close to 500 vehicles pass by Pickle Lake on highway 599 (2016 data) • First Nation communities north of Pickle Lake (secondary market) • Strong market demand for medical and mental health services within primary and secondary markets (Pickle Lake and surrounding First Nation communities) • High demand for skilled trades within Pickle Lake and surrounding First Nation communities (home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited service providers for physical and mental health • Lack of partnership building with secondary market First Nation communities to pool resources and strategically plan for better service delivery

	renovations and maintenance; construction; electrical; vehicle and marine mechanics)	
Resource Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter roads • Air travel • Highway 599 feeds off the Trans-Canada highway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No active transportation plan • Limited training opportunities • Limited access to financial institutions and business financing
Infrastructure (Hard and Soft)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pickle Lake Health Clinic building (emergency treatment room, dental office and equipment space, fitness centre, mental health and addiction services office space) • Visiting health, mental health and addiction services workers from the Northwestern Health Unit and Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre. • Regularly visiting physician 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High building costs • Non-existent vacant office space • Lack of child care negatively impacts care giver ability to engage in the use and provision of services {e.g. unemployment rate for females in 2016 was 21.1% (0% for males) in Pickle Lake, compared with the provincial average of 7.4% (7.5% for males)}
Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pickle Lake Health Care Committee focusing on health care service recruitment and retention • Strong desire from within the community to be self-sufficient, having access to local services without diverting funds to travelling service providers • Strong desire from community members to have access to basic services (mechanics, electricians, hair dressers, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerted marketing and promotional efforts
Regional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small provincially funded economic development projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional partnerships and sharing of resources

4.3 Culture, Tourism and Recreation

Level in Model	Strengths	Needs/Gaps
Primary Assets (Base Resources)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrounded by pristine lakes and wilderness (fishing, hunting, back country tripping) • Historical mining areas in the vicinity • First Nation communities in the area (potential cultural experiences and events) • Fishing derbies (Ice-Worm) • Black Fly festival • Hockey and curling tournaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of focus on eco-tourism
Resource Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter roads • Air travel • Highway 599 feeds off the Trans-Canada highway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low accessibility in terms of having one way in and out of Pickle Lake • Tapping into festival grants
Infrastructure (Hard and Soft)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arena (hockey, skating and curling) • Skilled local outfitters (eco-tourism) • Bowling lanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor signage to divert traffic from highway 599 • No signage focused on eco-tourism • Arena often used to house heavy equipment • Active transportation plan
Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed volunteer base • Strong desire for access to greater social event opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited number of committee volunteers due to the same people being involved in everything (burnout) • Lack of childcare in Pickle Lake effects parents' ability to engage in certain events/activities
Regional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding available for hosting cultural events • Various outfitters in the area are working to bring tourists into the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of partnership with local outfitters to build on the financial benefits of eco-tourism • Limited partnership with local First Nation communities

4 Conclusion

The Municipality of Pickle Lake is well-situated to experience economic growth in the retail/commercial, services, culture, tourism and recreation sectors. Given the beautiful landscape in which Pickle Lake is situated, the high volume of traffic passing by on any given day, as well as the warm and welcoming spirit of community members, there is no doubt about the rich opportunity available for economic growth. The above needs and gap analysis will feed into a sector analysis, marketing plan, and five-to-ten-year strategic plan for the Municipality of Pickle Lake. Acting on these operationalized plans will surely support success in the target areas for future development.