

Municipality of French River



Community Visioning Plan 2024 – 2028



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Introduction

We want to thank the over 400 residents, business owners and other stakeholders who completed our survey, participated in visioning sessions and attended public meetings to assist in developing this Community Visioning Plan. Thank you for your time, wisdom, and unwavering belief in French River's potential. Together, we will embrace our future and continue to make our municipality a place we are all proud to call home.



Our History

French River has a rich history of Indigenous heritage, European exploration, fur trade, and the enduring natural beauty of this remarkable region.

Long before European contact, the area was inhabited by Indigenous peoples, including the Anishinaabe who traversed its waterways for centuries. The French River itself served as a vital trade route and was named "Petite Rivière des Français" by French explorers Samuel de Champlain and Étienne Brûlé in the early 17th century.

The fur trade era left an indelible mark on French River's history, as the region became a hub for the exchange of beaver pelts between Indigenous peoples and European traders. The French River played a pivotal role in this trade network, connecting the Great Lakes to the interior of North America.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, French River continued to be an important transportation route, especially during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The picturesque landscape attracted artists and adventurers, further cementing its reputation as a natural wonder.

In 1999, French River became a single-tier Municipality through the merger of the Townships of Cosby, Mason and Martland with the surrounding unincorporated portions of the Unorganized North Sudbury District. The Municipality is located on Highway 400/69 south of Sudbury and spans a region that includes numerous lakes and rivers, including the French River itself.

French River has evolved into a vibrant community that values our pristine environment, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the preservation of our historical legacy.



Our Future

The Municipality of French River is much more than just a place on the map; it's a community, a way of life, and a testament to the enduring spirit of our residents. This Strategic Visioning Plan will be the compass that will navigate us through this term of Council and years to come.

As we embark on this journey together, we look back with gratitude for the rich history and natural wonders that have shaped our identity. But we also cast our gaze forward, driven by a commitment to preserving what we hold dear and seizing the promise of what lies ahead. This plan is more than just a collection of strategies; it's a declaration of our shared values, a testament to our resilience, and a blueprint for our aspirations.

In these pages, you will find the essence of our community—a commitment to sustainable growth, a pledge to support every resident, and a dedication to preserving our unique natural heritage. Each section represents the collective effort of residents, business owners, community partners, and community leaders who came together to envision a future where French River continues to thrive.

This Strategic Visioning Plan is not an endpoint but a beginning—an invitation to roll up our sleeves and transform our shared vision into reality. It's a reminder that, united, we have the power to shape the future of our municipality and ensure it remains a place we are proud to call home. Together, let's embrace our future and take the first steps toward the realization of our strategic vision for French River.



Vision

A vibrant and prosperous future, nurtured by our tradition, beauty, and the quality of our people.

Mission

Creating a thriving and engaged community by achieving the right balance between growth and preservation.



Our Priorities

Our 2024-2033 Community Visioning Plan will extend beyond the current Council's term and go beyond the service excellence expected for day-to-day programs to shine a spotlight on four strategic priority areas critical to making our community better now and for future generations.

This plan is just the starting point. We encourage residents to be involved in helping shape the tactics each year through our operational plan development, project engagement and the annual budget deliberations. The members of French River Council are committed to addressing this plan's critical topics, and we look forward to working with residents, businesses and organizations in our community to keep us on track.

Growth, Development and Infrastructure



A municipality's growth, development, and infrastructure are vital pillars supporting its prosperity, livability, and sustainability.



Make greater investments in regular road maintenance and improvements to ensure a safe and efficient road network



Optimize waste management practices to minimize environmental impact and promote sustainability



Continue to simplify and streamline the planning and development processes while maintaining compliance with regulations



Community Wellbeing



Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, health, and cultural conditions essential for individuals and communities to flourish and fulfil their potential.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive seniors' housing initiative to address the growing needs of our aging population and promote independent living
- Encourage local school boards and other agencies to provide bilingual and English-language childcare services and an English-language secondary school
- Support community partners to implement a robust healthcare and social services professional recruitment program to address critical shortages and provide access to quality care in our community



Community Engagement and Safety



Community engagement and safety nurture residents' sense of belonging, trust, and security and foster a united approach to building a better future together.



Engage in proactive advocacy efforts to retain and secure the continued presence of the local Ontario Provincial Police detachment



In collaboration with the OPP, Municipal Law Enforcement Officers, fire services, and other community partners, promote community safety events and the provision of public education on emerging issues and safety practices for the prevention of crime



Establish a targeted volunteer recruitment program to attract and engage community members in various initiatives and enable them to organize and manage community activities and events





Climate and Environmental Impacts

Climate and environmental impacts will shape our resilience, sustainability, and long-term well-being, influencing everything from infrastructure planning to the quality of life for our residents.



Continuously adapt to climate change, including consideration of “Go Green” initiatives, when reviewing infrastructure upgrades



Monitor the potential risks and vulnerabilities posed by changing environmental conditions and respond with appropriate adaptation strategies



Investigate strategies to reduce our environmental impact

Implementation and Reporting

This Strategic Visioning Plan will be integrated into all Municipal activities and through the development of an annual operational plan that will identify projects and initiatives that align with and support the four chosen Strategic Priorities and are consistent with our Mission and Vision Statements.

The Municipality's Senior Management Team will be responsible for developing the operational plan each year and bringing it to Council for approval. It will form the basis for regular reports to Council, and the public, on the progress that is being achieved.

Living Document

This Strategic Visioning Plan will be a living document that will evolve over time to respond as new challenges emerge, unexpected opportunities arise, and the needs and preferences of stakeholders shift.

A living document acknowledges that the journey toward a long-term vision is not a linear path, but a continuous process of assessment, adjustment, and improvement. By evolving over time, our plan will remain a relevant and powerful guide, ensuring that our community can navigate the ever-changing landscape and continue to progress toward our desired future.