



COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

# IGNACE AREA TOURISM

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### NORTHWEST COMMUNITY STUDIES

Urban Systems Ltd, September 2022



ECONOMICS AND FINANCE



## 1. Study Objectives

This study identifies potential changes and provides options for the Centre of Expertise (COE) and future tourism growth and diversification in the Ignace Area that could be supported by or result from the APM project.

**Key Planning Assumptions:** Project configuration regarding off-site facilities; labour force requirements and occupational type; and planning assumptions regarding on- and off-site facilities, including residency scenarios.

### Ignace Tourism Aspirations

- Support the growth of tourism through community enhancements.
- Tourism is an important activity as it offers opportunities to use the natural environment sustainably while supporting economic development.

### Other Communities in the Local Study Area (LSA) Tourism Aspirations

- Dryden: Strengthening local and regional tourism which entails strengthening local tourism product, advancing marketing efforts, networking regional tourism offerings, and advance local sports tourism
- Sioux Lookout: To be established as a premier tourism destination through the enhancement of the downtown area as well as the development of the heritage eco-tourism and Indigenous tourism sectors.



## 2. Key Findings

### **Baseline (historical perspective)**

- Fishing dominates the tourism sector, with hunting coming in at second.
- The fishing and hunting industries in the area rely heavily on American visitors.
- American visitors had the largest share of spending (43% or \$234M), followed by visitors from Ontario (32% or \$175M), visitors from elsewhere in Canada (22% or \$120M), and visitors from overseas (4.5% or \$25M).
- Based on the 2016 census data (most recent), roughly 24% of employed people in Kenora District were involved in the tourism industry, while almost 28% of employed people in Ignace were involved in the tourism.
- Ignace has land use policy frameworks, natural and cultural assets, and attractions in place to support tourism development.

### **Forecast without the Project:**

- The implementation of the Township of Ignace Community Strategy, 2019-2024 that aims to strengthen the area's tourism industry by engaging in training for tourism stakeholders; improving the use of underutilized assets; supporting the development of new and enhanced tourism businesses, experiences, and packages.
- Growing interest by travelers in Indigenous tourism and experiential tourism products and services that directly benefit communities.

### **Forecast with the Project:**

- An increase in population, (1765 during the pre-construction, 1850 during the construction and 2260 during the operations period).
- The development of the COE as a major tourist attraction, and an opportunity to be a hub of activity and catalyst with a variety of features that would draw a diversity of people to the Ignace Area throughout the APM project.
- A potential increase in the demand for tourism goods and services, tourism employment and spin-off businesses brought about by an increase in visiting numbers and spending in the Ignace Area.



### 3. Next Steps

- Design and promote the COE as a multi-use facility that serve the needs of the community and surrounding areas and Canadians along with visitors, researchers and workers from abroad to visit the Ignace area, learn about the project and experience Indigenous culture.
- Develop a comprehensive public relations, communication, and education strategy and /or campaign to steer the narrative towards fact-based, positive, and educative messaging about the APM project, particularly in the face of strident perceptions of negative impact on the natural environment and thus, tourism.
- Explore options for regional partnerships (e.g., working with neighbouring First Nations communities) and additional tourism opportunities for families and youth.
- Look at the potential in improving the use of underutilized assets (e.g., Agimak Lake, West Beach, and White Otter Castle) and options to expand tourism market service offerings.