

December 9, 2020

Mayor and Members of Council:

Please accept this letter as a request for assistance in developing Fort Frances into a destination for winter recreational activities. Kindly review our overall mission followed by a specific request to amend local by-laws.

In a year where tourism has been mostly obsolete, we believe there is opportunity to lay some ground work in establishing our community as a popular winter destination featuring various recreational activities. We believe our residents would appreciate improved access to healthy, family-friendly recreational activities such as snowmobiling, ice fishing and cross-country skiing. Local businesses and employees within our district can benefit from welcoming more tourists here during the slower winter season.

Many local snowmobile riders will not have the option to ride the popular US trails this winter and as a result the local trail permits have sold very well. This gives us an opportunity to showcase our offerings to locals. Based on feedback, some of the amenities the US trail system has to offer is the low cost of trail passes, well-groomed trails, and great accessibility to restaurants to stop for a break or a bite to eat.

Although we have no ability to influence the provincially regulated prices of trail permits in our district, we would like to explore some amendments to our bylaws that would allow more freedom to drive within town to access needed and wanted amenities and services. Connecting our beautiful trails to our local economy is a key step in establishing Fort Frances as a snowmobiling destination and would give more options for riders to dine, shop, visit and plan a vacation (or 'staycation') based around their snowmobiling hobby.

We have gained support with other local stakeholders in which we will continue to build on this initiative. The Borderland Snowmobile Club, Go Local Fort Frances, RRFDC, MAT Committee, and many businesses have offered support. New signage on trails, a winter tourism focused website, and digital marketing campaign are being explored and will likely to go live in January. Expansion to ice-fishing and cross-country skiing experiences are offerings to follow on this winter tourism initiative.

We seek support from the Town in this initiative and their guidance in improving access in a safe manner through consultation with the necessary parties. Thank you for considering our request to amend local bylaws to improve access within town. We believe this improved experience will keep local riders local and draw regional riders to our town.

Thank you,

Sarah Noonan – La Place Rendez-Vous, Dale Fortes – Boston Pizza