



Dear Ms. Slomke and Ms. Lawson,

In response to your request in the Fort Frances Times, May 27, 2015, we have put together a few ideas that we believe are worth consideration.

We believe that in order to create community, our town needs to:

1. strive to **stop the tourists** who travel through our town by offering them reasons to want to be here
2. entice and **welcome the people of the district** to make Fort Frances their "go to" place for Arts, entertainment and shopping
3. create an atmosphere where **local people are proud of our town** and want to "staycation" and invite others to share what we have

We would like to see Fort Frances redefined and redeveloped into the **premier tourist destination** it once was. We are located at the centre of the continent, on the dividing line between the Canadian Shield and the Prairies, and we need to use this to our best advantage.

Reconstructing a fort in Fort Frances would make us a tourist destination. This was the historic meeting place for the trade routes between the east and west. It was where the Europeans, Metis and First Nations came together in friendship and co-operation. It could once again be a place that fosters people coming together. In recent history, Pithers Point has become a bone of contention between the First Nations people and the town. We could turn that around by working to develop co-operation between First Nations, Metis and town's people to provide a new meeting place. Funding for this could come from 3 levels of government. An **interpretative centre** would provide a place to teach about our rich and varied history from the ancient First Nations, the Fur Trade, pulp and paper industry, farming, tourism, burling(log rolling); we have world class log rollers who live here. We have so much to be proud of and to share!

A **Water Park** at Pithers Point, or at the Shevlin wood yard is a natural fit by drawing on the lake/river water and the beautiful surroundings.

We need to get past the notion that we are and always will be a paper mill town. **Our mill could possibly be retrofitted for the production of other products.** Hemp is a crop that grows well in our area and produces a variety of products such as fabric, rope, paper and food products. With the cheapest electricity in the province, an ample supply of water, and a location central to the continent, the mill could be a prime location to produce and distribute medical marihuana.

If the mill could not be repurposed, the beauty of the location at the waterfall/dam would be a prime property to be developed as a conference centre, condominiums, or graduated housing for seniors.

Our **tourist information centre** has suffered because of the relocation of the customs office, as well as the cuts in government funding. We are pleased that the town has taken it over and is attempting to provide the service. There is a need for better **signage** to capture the attention of tourists and to direct them to the centre. The space could house mini displays from the museum and art gallery in order to interest visitors in going to see these attractions. **We need to give the tourists a reason to stop.**

The old mill parking lot, north of and adjoined to the Tourist Information Centre could be opened up for **tourist parking**. This gets them onto our main street and within walking distance of many of our merchants. Also, we could offer free bottles of water with our town logo on them to those waiting in line to cross back to the USA. This would have them leaving Canada with a good last impression of Fort Frances and may encourage them to return and visit with us.

Provincial and Federal funding may be available to erect **signage** along the highway from the east that would promote and inform travelers about our historic waterways: the Noden Causeway, Rainy Lake, historic Boundary Waters, the fur trade route, and Pithers Point. Rock cairns located on the route, in strategic places would create interesting stops for people to learn about our area. We are located where the Canadian Shield meets the Prairies. To our west, there are also points of interest, such as the experimental agriculture farm and the Manitou Mounds. What benefits the district will benefit Fort Frances.

Health Care has to be a focus for our town if we are to interest newcomers. Health Care is key to any development that will bring new residents and keep our seniors here long into retirement. A **graduated housing development for seniors** is crucial. The baby-boomers are quickly moving into retirement and will soon be the largest demographic in our society. With dollars to spend, they continue to be consumers. We need to be ready to meet their needs.

Hospitality must become a focus for all of our citizens. We need to make the people of our district welcome. They are an important part of the customer base for our merchants and facilities such as the sportsplex, library and museum.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our ideas.

Sincerely,
Eric and Caren Fagerdahl