

*MEDIA RELEASE*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MATAWA FIRST NATIONS MANAGEMENT PURCHASE FORMER DAWSON COURT HOME FOR THE AGED FOR RE-DEVELOPING AS A MATAWA TRAINING AND WELLNESS CENTRE**

**Thunder Bay, ON**– Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) are pleased to announce the finalization of the purchase of the former Dawson Court. MFNM began looking at the feasibility of ownership and viability in June of last year and concluded the purchase of the property on June 12, 2020. The currently unused building will be re-developed as a Matawa Training and Wellness Centre.

On the purchase, David-Paul Achneepineskum, MFNM CEO said, “We have been examining the feasibility of purchasing this property for over a year and are pleased to have purchased it and be in the position to make use of unused city infrastructure in the Current River Ward to re-develop into something that will add value, not only for our Matawa members—but the neighbourhood and city of Thunder Bay itself.”

MFNM is working with senior levels of government to obtain funding for the capital renovations to convert the property to an appropriate ‘like new’ facility. It is estimated that capital costs have been reduced \$8 million compared to constructing new. MFNM has held compliance with ISO certification since 2012 and is one of the few Indigenous organizations to be certified in Canada. For government, industry and business—this offers the confidence that organization is efficient, accountable and transparent in the development and implementation of business models.

The Centre is being strategically designed to bring 3 of MFNM’s expanding services together under one roof: Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services (KKETS), Matawa Health Co-operative and Awashishishewiigiihiwaywiin—MFNM’s Social Services department. The move to this facility will allow for the: expansion of training and wellness services; improvement to existing training, programming and clinical spaces; increased traditional healing and cultural spaces; improved partnership opportunities; and greater access to park land/greenpace. The project provides ‘win-win’ situations for both MFNM and the city of Thunder Bay while MFNM works on building a trained workforce and healthy families/community.

The facility will accommodate much needed trades training classrooms, safe and appropriate accommodations for adult students who come to the city for short-term training through KKETS, transitional housing units for families who are at risk of homelessness and a health services clinic to improve the delivery of primary care services to Matawa members in the region and locally. The Centre will add more value to the community rather than leaving a building vacant and is in line with an environmentally friendly approach by not taking away more green space.

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