



**The Corporation of the
City of Sault Ste. Marie**

C O U N C I L R E P O R T

April 29, 2025

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council
AUTHOR: Virginia McLeod, Manager of Recreation and Culture
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services
RE: Community Garden Relocation to Esposito Park

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request Council approval to move the Etienne Brule Community Garden to City property at Esposito Park and enter into an agreement with Save Our Young Adults to manage the Community Garden.

Background

In 2015, the Canal District Community Garden opened at the Etienne Brule site, a new Hub Trail spoke was added, and an urban orchard was planted. An agreement was developed with the Algoma District School Board (ADSB). The City took responsibility for maintaining the above community assets as well as the playground and basketball courts.

The Community Garden is located on ADSB property and consists of 22 individual 4-foot by 8-foot raised garden beds separated by pathways and surrounded by a fence. The existing beds, which are now 10 years old, must be replaced.

The previous agreement was between the City of Sault Ste. Marie, ADSB, and Sault Ste. Marie Police Services (SSMPS). Save Our Young Adults (SOYA) has stepped forward to run the community garden, and a new agreement is required.

Analysis

City staff have met to review options for relocating the garden to City-owned property and recommend that it be situated at the east end of Esposito Park. The recommendation was circulated to City Departments for additional comments. No concerns were raised during the circulation. Staff recommend entering into an agreement with SOYA to operate the Community Garden.

The proposed location is 85m from the current location (diagram attached) and will be easily accessible by individuals caring for the garden beds. The Esposito Rink Shack provides access to water and winter storage for garden-related items. In addition, a portable washroom is located on-site.

SOYA intends to partner with Clean North, which is involved with several community garden projects and will provide expertise in community gardening. To support operating and maintaining the garden, SOYA has many volunteers and skilled community partners to assist. SOYA applied to the Environmental Sustainability Committee for funds to rebuild the 22 garden beds, which have reached the end of their lifespan, build a perimeter fence to protect the garden beds, and purchase tools and amenities for the garden. The Environmental Sustainability Committee is recommending a grant in the amount of \$13,492.

The project will provide valuable educational opportunities, teaching community members about sustainable gardening practices, healthy eating, and the importance of environmental stewardship. Many residents, particularly those who may not have had the chance to learn about gardening, will gain hands-on experience and knowledge that can be applied in their own lives. Additionally, the garden will help address food insecurity by providing access to fresh, locally grown produce and offering healthier food options to those who may not have easy access.

Moreover, the garden has the potential to improve safety in the area by increasing foot traffic and encouraging positive, community-driven activity. The presence of more people in the neighbourhood can deter crime and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among residents.

Financial Implications

The water supply to support the community garden will be approximately \$1,000 annually and will be absorbed within the Parks Maintenance budget.

The funding source to relocate the garden is recommended to come from the CDF-Green Initiatives reserve and can be accommodated from the uncommitted balance.

Strategic Plan / Policy Impact / Climate Impact

This item supports the Corporate Strategic Plans Focus Area:

- Infrastructure: Environment – Seek opportunities to implement sustainable solutions.
- Service Delivery: Build collaborative relationships to enhance service delivery options.

The project is expected to have a positive impact on both the local environment and community. The project promotes biodiversity, increasing local food production, and reducing carbon emissions through sustainable gardening practices.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Community Garden Relocation to Esposito Park

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The relevant By-law 2025-70 is listed under item 12 of the Agenda and will be read with all by-laws under that item.

Respectfully submitted,

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Manager of Recreation and Culture

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