



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

**C O U N C I L   R E P O R T**

July 14, 2025

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council  
AUTHOR: Carl Rumiel, Director of Engineering  
DEPARTMENT: Public Works and Engineering Services  
RE: Five-Year Capital Transportation Program (2026–2030)

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**Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to present an updated five-year Capital Transportation Program.

**Background**

The yearly capital transportation budget is brought to Council for approval with the annual budget in the fall after a capital priorities assessment is completed. Council is not being asked to approve the 2026 capital roads budget today; however, it is necessary to procure engineering services to proceed with field data acquisition and begin design of 2026 capital road projects to ensure timely tenders in the new year.

Capital road improvements for the City of Sault Ste. Marie are carried out under various programs including capital road construction, infrastructure improvement programs, and the Connecting Links program. The capital transportation program prioritizes reconstruction of arterial and collector streets, which are critical to the City's movement of traffic while at the same time attempting to address some of the numerous needs of local residential streets as well as to make improvements to key areas of the community.

**Analysis**

Road sections are recommended for the Capital Transportation Program based primarily on pavement condition index scores, which are tabulated based on road condition in the Asset Management program. All road sections are evaluated and scored based on many factors, including, but not limited to, surface condition, structure, drainage, etc. Age and condition of water mains, sanitary and storm sewers, level of maintenance, and traffic volumes are also considered when selecting a road section for reconstruction. An attempt is made to keep the mix between arterials, collectors, and local streets balanced. In the 2026-2030 plan, there are significant improvements recommended through previous environmental assessments and continued improvements to the downtown, which affects the number of projects, particularly residential roads, that can be completed on a yearly basis.

This plan is presented based on two funding assumptions. The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Connecting Link fund is applied for on a yearly basis, and the assumed maximum allocation of \$3M is included in our yearly allocation to road resurfacing. The MTO announces this program annually in the spring. The second funding assumption is the Health and Safety Water Stream funding (HSWS). Staff have applied for a grant of approximately \$2.5M towards four stormwater management ponds recommended in the Peoples Road Drainage EA. Should the City be unsuccessful in either of these funding applications, the program will be amended by cancelling these projects until other funding can be identified.

One other funding source currently contributing to the program includes an added Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) allowance of \$2.5M. This funding source will be no longer available after 2026.

### **Bridges and Aqueducts**

Municipalities are legislated to perform detailed bridge inspections every two years, and the City follows that inspection frequency for major aqueducts as well. In past capital programs, considerable capital funds have been diverted to bridges and aqueducts. A professional structural engineer evaluates aqueducts and bridges every two years and makes recommendations for capital improvements, rehabilitation, and maintenance. The Herkimer Street bridge was recently closed due to structural defects observed during the bridge inspections. A detailed structural evaluation is currently underway to determine if the bridge can be reopened to traffic. Staff are also evaluating whether the bridge can be permanently closed without replacing it. If the bridge is to be reconstructed, a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment may be required. Staff will report back to Council with recommendations within the next few months regarding the Herkimer Street bridge.

### **Active Transportation – Hub Trail and Future Spokes**

In past capital programs, cycling lanes, segments of off-road trails, and paved shoulders have been constructed under capital road projects. The intention is to include the construction of active transportation components in tenders for capital projects if they are within the construction limits or in the near vicinity of a project. The Sackville Road, East Street, and Peoples Road projects all include significant active transportation connections with multi-use paths and cycling facilities being included.

### **Update – 2025 Program**

The following projects are currently underway:

- Queen Street Improvements – Elgin Street to East Street
- Peoples Road Phase 1 – Churchill Avenue to Penno Road
- Sackville Road Extension – Early works, filling the ravine

- East Street – Bay Street to Wellington Street East (*postponed*)
- Great Northern Road – Third Line East to Wigle Street
- 2025 Road Resurfacing and Miscellaneous Construction

Due to delays in design and tendering and increases in the construction estimate due to added streetscaping, the reconstruction of East Street has been cancelled for the 2025 construction season. An allocation from the 2026 recommended program has been added to increase the budget so that it can be completed in 2026.

### **Recommended 2026 Program**

The attached Five-Year Transportation Program represents the proposed 2026-2030 programs.

Program costs are based on preliminary estimates. Detailed road design may reveal additional expenditures or cost savings that are not possible to identify at this preliminary stage.

The proposed list of 2026 projects is as follows:

**Reconstruction of Peoples Road Phase 2 – Penno Road to Third Line:** As identified in the Peoples Road Drainage Environmental Assessment, this road section requires sanitary sewer upgrades to increase sewer capacity. While replacing the sanitary sewer, it is recommended that the entire road undergo reconstruction including storm sewer, watermain, road base, sidewalks and curb. Increasing the sanitary sewer capacity is a critical recommendation from the Peoples Road Drainage Environmental Assessment to alleviate the recurrence of basement flooding. Further, increased sewer capacity will open the potential for the development of lands north of Third Line, which are currently on hold due to the Peoples Road sewer being at capacity. This is the second phase of the Peoples Road improvements for which the City received a \$7.4M grant through the Housing Enabling Water Systems Fund.

**Sackville Road Extension – North Limit to Third Line:** The extension of Sackville Road from the current north limit to Third Line was the recommended preferred solution to address traffic capacity concerns in the Great Northern Road corridor between Second Line and Third Line. This was completed as a Schedule C Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) in 2012, but construction did not commence due to other priorities. In April of 2024, Council approved posting an addendum to the original Sackville Road EA document to confirm that the project met the current environmental regulations to ensure that the planning and mitigation measures are still valid. This review found that there are no changes to the proposed project conditions and that the recommended solution, the extension of Sackville Road, is still valid. This is the second phase of the Sackville Road Extension for which the City received a \$5.2M grant through the Housing Enabling Core Services Fund.

**East Street – Bay Street to Wellington Street:** This road section requires full replacement of underground services and road structure. This section of road also requires some traffic-related lane geometry improvements as well as extensive streetscaping improvements to meet the recommendations of a pedestrian corridor identified in the Waterfront Master Plan. This project was part of the approved 2025 program; however, it was deferred until 2026. The complete 2025 allocation of \$5.06M is being carried forward from 2025 to 2026 to complete this project.

**Great Northern Road – 500m north of Wigle to the City Limits:** This section of road is the City's next highest Connecting Link priority and will be the project that is applied for in the 2026 Connecting Link program application.

**Bridges and Aqueduct:** Continue with small sections of aqueduct replacement and other priorities recommended in the biennial bridge and aqueduct reports.

**Engineering 2027:** An allocation for 2027 engineering must be included in the 2026 budget to ensure engineering work starts early enough to meet spring tender schedules in the following year.

**Resurfacing – Various Roads:** An allocation is required in the 2026 capital roads budget for resurfacing. Arterial roads such as Wellington Street East and Bennett Boulevard are in need of a new asphalt surface. Roads are prioritized and annual programs are brought to Council for approval each spring.

**Traffic Signal Upgrades:** An allocation is required in the 2025 capital roads budget for replacement of aged traffic signal controllers.

### **2027–2030 Programs**

This program has prioritized larger projects, which have impacted the number of local residential roads that can be reconstructed. Staff will continue to look for funding opportunities at all levels of government to help narrow this funding gap.

The attached plan shows the potential 2027 through 2030 programs based on needs identified in the City's Asset Management Plans. The Engineering Division will update the five-year Capital Transportation Program annually, and individual programs will be recommended to Council for approval with the capital budgets.

Allowances for bridges and aqueducts are based on biennial inspections and the asset management plan. Inspections may alter the forecasts, and these allowances are reviewed annually.

Due to the complex nature of the Elgin Street Reconstruction/ Rehabilitation, staff recommends retaining a consulting engineer to do a preliminary design in 2025 so that it will be shovel-ready for 2027.

**Financial Implications**

The 5-year Capital Transportation Program is based upon the recommended priorities within the City’s Asset Management Plans. Funding availability will be assessed along with other corporate capital priorities and presented to Council with the 2026 Capital Budget. This report has no impact on the approved 2025 Capital Transportation Program. Funds for completion of design and contract administration, and for construction of 2026 projects will be brought to Council with the 2026 capital budget

**Strategic Plan / Policy Impact / Climate Impact**

Improvements to capital infrastructure including roads, storm and sanitary sewers, aqueducts, and bridges are linked to the infrastructure and quality of life components of the strategic plan.

**Recommendation**

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Resolved that the report of the Director of Engineering dated July 14, 2025 concerning 2026–2030 Five-Year Capital Transportation Program be received and that:

- Council approve the 2026–2030 programs in principle;
- That staff procure consulting engineering services for the Elgin Street Reconstruction/Rehabilitation; and
- That the resurfacing of Great Northern Road between 500m north of Wigle Street to the north city limit be the designated project for the City’s application to the 2026 Connecting Link Program.

Respectfully submitted,

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