



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

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

August 11, 2025

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council
AUTHOR: Emily Cormier, Sustainability Coordinator
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services
RE: Community Development Fund – Green Initiatives Program
Applications 2025 Q2 Intake

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of recommendations from the Environmental Sustainability Committee for the distribution of Community Development Fund (CDF) – Green Initiatives Program funds.

Background

The purpose of the Green Initiatives Program of the Community Development Fund (CDF) is to support green initiatives that result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), improve water quality/rehabilitation, increase energy efficiency, healthy and resilient ecosystems, including habitat restoration, active transportation, and waste reduction. The City of Sault Ste. Marie's Environmental Sustainability Committee (ESC) is responsible for making recommendations for the allocation of funds for eligible projects or programs that support the City's environmental plans and practices. Funding applications are reviewed by the ESC in accordance with the CDF – Green Initiatives Program guidelines and are accepted in four quarterly intakes throughout the year. Total remaining annual funds available for all projects under the CDF – Green Initiatives Program in 2025 is \$46,828. Eligible applicants include not-for-profit organizations, unincorporated organizations/collectives, local school or schools groups / committees, and City departments.

Analysis

At the ESC meeting on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, two projects received the following recommendations:

Resolved that the Environmental Sustainability Committee supports the request for funding from the CDF Green Initiatives Program for the Sault Ste. Marie Museum – Environmentalism Database & Consortium Project and recommends that Council approve \$11,800 in project funding.

Resolved that the Environmental Sustainability Committee supports the request for funding from the CDF Green Initiatives Program for Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Floating Wetland Project and recommends that Council approve \$9,002 in project funding.

1. Sault Ste. Marie Museum Environmentalism Database and Consortium Project

The Sault Ste. Marie Museum proposes to conduct a three-phase project to: A) develop a digital database that will document local environmental action, assets, and the history of environmental activity in Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma. This database will serve as a comprehensive resource and will also be the foundation for B) two interactive, portable exhibits designed for community outreach. The exhibits will feature digital screens, banner ups, and other display materials, and will be used to educate the public, particularly youth, about current and past environmental activity in the City and encourage involvement in ongoing environmental initiatives.

The project will be rolled out in phases, starting with the creation of the database and surveys to gather data on local environmental actions. The next phase will involve designing and building the interactive exhibits, followed by outreach to schools, colleges, and community organizations to display the exhibits at various public events. Both the database and exhibit development phases of the project will be used to bring the environmental organizations, businesses, and government departments together to determine the need and support for C) a new incorporated, not-for-profit consortium similar to ones in other cities in Ontario (e.g., Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Ottawa). A post-project evaluation will assess the environmental impact and community engagement achieved through the project.

2. Tourism Sault Ste. Marie – Floating Wetland Project

The St. Marys River is a vital natural asset in the heart of the Great Lakes, where Lake Superior flows into Lake Huron. As part of the City's Waterfront Masterplan, approved by Council in June 2025, maintaining the river's water quality is a top priority. One key initiative within the plan is the installation of a floating wetland, which Tourism Sault Ste. Marie (TourismSSM) aims to implement early in the waterfront redevelopment.

The river is crucial for local ecosystems, supporting biodiversity and holding cultural significance. Improving water quality will reduce harmful algae blooms caused by excess nutrients, which pose risks to aquatic life and human health. The floating wetland, measuring 2m x 2m, will be installed in the river channel next to City Hall to enhance water quality and strengthen ecosystems (see Figure 1 for the proposed location).



The wetland will be maintained year-round by TourismSSM, in partnership with the Sault Naturalists and Sault College’s School of Natural Environment, with tasks such as annual trimming and general upkeep. The system will remain in place through the winter months. An interpretive sign in English, French, and Anishinaabemowin will educate the public on the wetland's purpose and ecological value. The pilot project will be monitored monthly for plant health, structural integrity, and wildlife use. Observations will include water clarity, root growth, and interactions with aquatic species. Findings will guide potential expansion of the project to other areas of the river.

Financial Implications

The 2025 Community Development Fund – Green Initiatives Fund currently has an uncommitted balance of \$50,906 available to support the two projects in this report totaling \$20,812, leaving \$30,094 for the rest of the year.

Strategic Plan / Policy Impact / Climate Impact

The project recommendations support the sustainable growth value and quality of life and infrastructure focus areas of the Community Strategic Plan for 2024 – 2027 by encouraging sustainable options, enhancing green spaces, investing in recreation, and seeking opportunities to implement sustainable solutions.

In addition, the applications support actions in the Sault Ste. Marie Community GHG Reduction Plan: 2020 – 2030, including:

- Encouraging the preservation of natural areas
- Environmental Stewardship
- Energy Efficiency

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Community Development Fund – Green Initiatives Program Applications 2025
Q2 Intake
August 11, 2025
Page 4.

Resolved that the report of the Sustainability Coordinator dated August 11, 2025 concerning Community Development Fund – Green Initiatives Program Applications 2025 Q1 Intake be received and that the recommendations of the Environmental Sustainability Committee to support the two projects as follows be approved:

1. Sault Ste. Marie Museum – Environmentalism Database and Consortium Project \$11,800
2. Tourism Sault Ste. Marie – Floating Wetland Project \$9,002

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Cormier
Sustainability Coordinator
705.989.8748
e.cormier2@cityssm.on.ca