



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

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

October 14, 2025

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council
AUTHOR: Steve Zuppa, Junior Planner
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services
RE: A-9-25-Z – 72 Corey Avenue (The Corporation of the City
of Sault Ste. Marie)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to rezone 72 Corey Avenue from Parks and Recreation Zone (PR) to Gentle Density Residential Zone (R2). The property is City-owned and has been declared surplus. The City intends to rezone the property for residential uses prior to selling the land through the Access to Land Program.

PROPOSED CHANGE

The applicant is seeking Council approval to rezone 72 Corey Avenue from Parks and Recreation Zone (PR) to Gentle Density Residential Zone (R2).

Subject Property:

- Location: Situated on the north side of the Corey Avenue and Wiber Street intersection
- Approximate Size: 22 metres of frontage along Corey Avenue, with a depth of 41 metres and an area of 900 square metres
- Present Use: Vacant
- Owner: The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie

BACKGROUND

In 2021, the City received a request from the public to consider declaring the subject property surplus and offering it for sale. As part of this process, the request was circulated to relevant City departments and external agencies. No objections were received. Planning recommended that, prior to any sale, the City should apply to rezone the subject property to Single-Detached Residential to permit development that is consistent with the rest of the neighbourhood.

At the March 20, 2023, meeting, Council passed By-law 2023-25 to declare the property as surplus to the City's needs and authorize its disposition in accordance with the City's policy for the disposition of land.

On December 13, 2023, Council endorsed the Sault Ste. Marie Housing Action Plan 2023-2028 (HAP), which describes the City-led strategies and actions intended to facilitate an increase in housing supply and meet the provincially assigned housing target. Action 4 of the HAP calls for the City to encourage infill residential development within the Urban Settlement Area by developing a program to sell/grant surplus City-owned land with residential development potential, in some cases, at no or low cost to developers for the construction of housing.

To lay the groundwork for the Access to Land program, staff undertook an analysis to identify City-owned properties with residential development potential. Through this process, the subject property was identified as a strong candidate and was withheld from sale for potential inclusion in this program.

On September 2, 2025, Council approved the Access to Land program and passed By-law 2025-132, which declared the subject property as surplus to the City's needs and authorized its disposition. The by-law also repealed By-law 2023-25.

ANALYSIS

Conformity with Official Plan

The subject property is designated as Residential in Schedule C (Land Use Map) of the Official Plan. As such, no amendments to the Official Plan are required.

Currently, the property is zoned PR; however, it does not function as a formal, City-designated recreational space and has no planned recreational use. Therefore, the existing zoning designation is not appropriate. Rezoning the property to residential better conforms to the Official Plan. The application is supported by the following Residential policies:

- R.4 Small-scale intensification may be permitted in all residential areas unless adequate supporting infrastructure is not available or significant physical constraints exist.
- R.5: Small-scale residential intensification may include, but not be limited to, rooming, boarding, and lodging houses, apartments in houses, infill development, and redevelopment.

This proposed amendment encourages small-scale residential intensification through infill development that is compatible with the surrounding lands. There is adequate servicing infrastructure along Corey Avenue, and no physical constraints have been identified that will impact this development.

Furthermore, the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Housing Needs Assessment 2023-2025 identified a need for more freehold and rental housing to accommodate expected population growth in the City. The Housing Needs Assessment noted that housing

stock has not kept up with demand in recent years, contributing to housing supply and vacancy challenges.

Conformity with Provincial Planning Statement 2024

This proposed amendment will encourage small-scale residential development on vacant land located within a built-up and fully serviced urban area of the City. This is consistent with Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) 2024 policies that promote intensification and gentle density within urban areas, support the use of existing municipal infrastructure, and encourage housing options that meet the needs of current and future residents.

Therefore, this proposal is consistent with the PPS.

Conformity with Growth Plan for Northern Ontario 2011

This application does not conflict with the policies contained within the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario.

Sault Ste. Marie is defined as an economic and service hub, and as such, is intended to accommodate a significant portion of future population and employment growth in Northern Ontario. In order to accommodate this growth, sufficient housing must be available.

COMMENTS

The subject property is located on the northern edge of the Manitou Park residential neighbourhood. It is located along the north side of Corey Avenue where it intersects with Wiber Street. To its east, west, and south are single-detached residential uses. To the north is a naturalized area that serves as a buffer from the (currently vacant) heavy industrial zoned lands located approximately 220 metres further north. Establishing this buffer area was a recommendation of the 2001 Industrial Land Development Strategy, as it helps mitigate land use compatibility issues that may arise between industrial lands and sensitive uses such as residential.

The property was initially planned to accommodate the northerly extension of Wiber Street beyond Corey Avenue; however, this extension is no longer planned, as the area north is now considered more suitable to remain as a naturalized buffer rather than be developed for residential use, for reasons stated above.

The subject property is currently vacant and fenced off from the naturalized area to the north to limit access. It is important to note that the naturalized area is not a formal park and is not owned by the City; it is owned by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation. That said, nearby neighbours have informed staff that pedestrians sometimes use the property to access the natural area. Rezoning the subject property for future private residential development will not impact access to the naturalized area, as an alternative access point exists 180 metres to the west, at the stub end of Manitou Drive.

Furthermore, there is a formal City-designated park (Manitou Park) located approximately 360 metres south of the subject property. In July 2023, Council approved rezoning and a Draft Plan of Subdivision for the former Manitou Park Public School site. As part of this approval, a portion of the land will be transferred to the City, expanding the Manitou Park to 1.07 hectares in size. As such, the subject property is not needed as part of the City's parkland inventory, and rezoning for residential uses is considered appropriate.

The proposed Gentle Density Residential Zone (R2) is intended to be applied to the majority of the City's single-detached neighbourhoods. It allows for low-density homes and uses such as day care facilities, group homes, and places of worship. Given the size of the lot, it is unlikely that any use other than a gentle-density residential structure could be accommodated. A residential building similar in form and scale to those in the surrounding area could be constructed without requiring additional variances.

As such, this application will enable more effective land use in a manner consistent with the surrounding neighbourhood, and no negative impacts are anticipated.

CONSULTATION

Public notices were mailed to all neighbouring properties within 120m (400') of the subject property on September 19, 2025. The notice that was mailed to property owners is attached to this report. The notice was also advertised on the City website and in the Sault Star on September 16 and September 20, respectively.

Public Comments

In lieu of a formal neighbourhood meeting, Planning staff organized individual meetings with the abutting neighbouring property owners of 78 Corey Avenue (held on September 11) and 68 Corey Avenue (held on September 12). These neighbouring owners had initially expressed interest in acquiring the property to increase their landholdings for additional green space.

During the meetings, both neighbours expressed disappointment that the property was put in the Access to Land program. They believed they were the only parties that brought this parcel to the City's attention and felt that the City delayed too long in offering it for sale.

The Access to Land program was drafted in early 2023 by City staff in collaboration with the Affordable Housing Task Force. It was later included as an action in the City's Housing Action Plan, 2023-2028, and as an initiative in both the City's Housing Accelerator Fund applications. This program has been designed to leverage surplus municipal lands to increase the housing supply and encourage infill residential development.

As mentioned above, a preliminary analysis identified this property as having potential for residential development and as a strong candidate for the program.

Delays in implementing the program have also slowed the sale process of this property.

It is important to note that this program does not preclude the neighbours from submitting a proposal for the property. If their proposal does not include the construction of a new dwelling, it will receive a lower score than those that do propose a dwelling. One of the neighbours expressed a strong interest in bidding for the property to keep it as green space if it is rezoned and offered for sale through the Access to Land program.

Furthermore, the property is currently temporarily being used as a laydown yard for a PUC project on Corey Avenue. Neighbours questioned whether this would necessitate a Record of Site Condition (RSC) prior to residential construction. The Chief Building Official has confirmed that the temporary use as a laydown yard does not trigger an RSC requirement.

The neighbours also pointed out that other unopened roads within the Manitou Park neighbourhood are more suited for this program. These properties will be considered for a future round of the Access to Land program.

Application Circulation

As part of the application review, this proposal was circulated to City divisions and external agencies for detailed technical review and comment. Up to the drafting of this report, no concerns have been raised by any of the departments/agencies.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Approval of this application will not result in any incremental changes to municipal finances.

STRATEGIC PLAN / POLICY IMPACT

Maintaining existing infrastructure: The rezoning of this property will permit infill residential development on a fully serviced road within the city's urban area, thus promoting more efficient use of existing municipal infrastructure and services.

Approval of this application will allow for the sale of the property through the Access to Land program. The Access to Land evaluation scorecard will award additional points for accessibility and barrier-free unit design beyond the requirements of the Ontario Building Code. This supports the City's high-level goal of accessible and barrier-free infrastructure.

The scorecard will also award additional points for energy efficiency above and beyond the *Ontario Building Code*. This supports the City's GHG Reduction Plan.

SUMMARY

This application proposes to rezone the subject property from Parks and Recreation Zone (PR) to Gentle Density Residential Zone (R2) to permit the

construction of a residential structure. This City-owned surplus property is intended to be sold through the Access to Land program.

Although the lot is currently zoned PR, it does not function as a formal City-designated park. There is sufficient formal parkland within 360 metres of the subject property, and a recently approved Draft Plan of Subdivision will expand this park to 1.07 hectares in size. Furthermore, the subject property is not needed as a pedestrian access point to the Ministry of Transportation-owned lands to the north, as an existing access is located 180 metres to the west.

This application supports small-scale residential intensification that is compatible with the surrounding residential area and will utilize the existing municipal infrastructure along Corey Avenue.

Consultation with the immediate neighbouring property owners revealed disappointment that the property was withheld for sale from when it was originally declared surplus in 2023, as they had hoped to purchase the property to expand their green space; however, the property is well-suited for the Access to Land program, which encourages residential development on surplus municipal land. Thus, Planning staff recommend that Council approve this rezoning application.

RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Resolved that the report of the Junior Planner dated October 14, 2025 concerning A-9-25-Z – 72 Corey Avenue be received and that Council rezone the subject property from Parks and Recreation Zone (PR) to Gentle Density Residential Zone (R2).

And that the Legal Department be requested to prepare the necessary by-law(s) to effect the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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