



The Corporation of the  
City of Sault Ste. Marie

## COUNCIL REPORT

October 14, 2025

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council  
AUTHOR: Dan Perri, Director of Public Works  
Nicole Maione, Director of Community Services  
DEPARTMENT: Public Works and Engineering Services  
RE: Hard Surface Courts

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to address a Council resolution from September 22, 2025, which reads:

*Whereas pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in Sault Ste. Marie, with participation numbers increasing each year with approximately 200 registered members of the Soo Pickleball Association in 2021, doubling to 416 in 2022, with much of this growth likely attributable to the City's decision to construct Elliot Park; and*

*Whereas participation has continued to increase each year, with 2025 figures showing 925 players registered through a court-booking app, not including the many additional residents who play but are not formally registered; and*

*Whereas demand for courts is outpacing supply, creating long wait times at outdoor facilities and capacity issues indoors; and Whereas it is the responsibility of a municipality to offer free, affordable space for physical activity for all residents; and*

*Whereas preventative repairs are less costly than full reconstruction if "nonessential" services such as the Snowdon Park courts are maintained and invested in; and*

*Whereas the Snowdon Park tennis and pickleball courts serve as a true community hub, used daily by constituents of all ages from across the City; and*

*Whereas outdoor recreation facilities such as tennis and pickleball courts are an important part of community health, wellness, and active living,*

*aligning with the objectives outlined in the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan; and*

*Whereas investment in safe and modern recreation facilities also brings broader economic and social benefits, including opportunities to host tournaments, attract visitors, promote active living for seniors, support youth engagement, and reduce long-term health care costs through preventative wellness; and*

*Whereas access to safe and properly designed courts will help meet the growing demand for pickleball while maintaining tennis opportunities, ensuring that residents of all ages have access to inclusive and sustainable recreation options; and*

*Whereas constituents have expressed a willingness to work with the City and are prepared to assist through fundraising or individual donations if project costs exceed any budgeted amount. Once the project is complete they will discuss with City staff the Adopt-a-Park program to support ongoing costs related to the facility;*

*Now Therefore Be It Resolved that City Council request that staff include the cost to upgrade Snowdon Park, including the courts and resurfacing in the 2026 preliminary budget.*

### **Background**

The City operates and maintains 18 hard surface courts throughout the community. The location, court type, and year of construction/rehabilitation are summarized in the table below.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Court Type</b>	<b>Year of Construction</b>
Snowdon Park	Tennis/Pickleball	1968
Wilcox Park	Multisport	1968
Penhorwood Park	Tennis/Pickleball	1983
Boston Park	Tennis	1996
Birchwood Park	Tennis	1996
LaSalle Park	Tennis	1996
North Street Park	Tennis	1996
Sutton Park	Tennis	1996
Peter G. Manzo Park	Tennis	1998
Green Acres	Basketball	1998
Captain Nicola Goddard Park	Basketball	1998
Lennox Park	Basketball	1998
Munroe Park	Basketball	1998
St. Patrick Park	Basketball	1998
William Merrifield Park	Tennis	2017
Elliott Sports Complex	Pickleball	2022

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Anna Marinelli Park	Basketball	2022
Kiwanis Park	Basketball	2023

The typical useful service life of a hard surface court is 20 years. Staff provide routine maintenance, such as crack filling, line painting, and minor repairs to these courts; however, larger cost items, such as resurfacing or fence rehabilitation, cannot be accommodated within the current Parks Operations budget.

### **Analysis**

The cost to rehabilitate a hard surface court ranges from \$30,000 for a smaller basketball court without fencing to upwards of \$150,000 for a double pickleball/tennis court with fencing. Staff will prioritize which courts are resurfaced based on the year of construction or last rehabilitation, the results of court inspections, and the estimated cost of resurfacing.

There are currently fourteen hard surface courts that have reached or exceeded their useful life in 2025. To ensure that the backlog of court rehabilitation is kept to a minimum and that playability and safety of the courts are maintained, it is recommended that the Parks Operating budget be increased by \$75,000 per year to fund the rehabilitation of these courts. This funding level would allow for the rehabilitation of two to three basketball courts, one single pickleball/tennis court, or half of a double pickleball/tennis court per year.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan, F33, supports this request as it states the City shall provide equitable support for operational increases to address improvements to the remaining courts once a basic level of service has been established. This commitment ensures the ongoing use of public facilities by residents of all ages, fostering inclusive access and promoting a healthy, active lifestyle throughout the community.

Any additional funds raised by community members through the Adopt a Park program or grant funding, if available, will be used to supplement the yearly spend on hard surface court rehabilitations.

### **Financial Implications**

If approved, an increase in operational costs will directly impact the 2026 operating budget by \$75,000 per year.

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

This report is linked to the Infrastructure and Quality of Life focus areas of the Corporate Strategic Plan.

### **Recommendation**

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Resolved that the report of the Director of Public Works and the Director of Community Services dated October 14, 2025 concerning Hard Surface Courts be

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received and that Council direct staff to refer operating cost increases to the 2026 budget.

Respectfully submitted,

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