



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

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

February 23, 2026

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council
AUTHOR: Virginia McLeod, Manager of Recreation and Culture
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services
RE: Outdoor Recreation and Parks Improvements – NOHFC
Contribution Agreement

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to enter into a contribution agreement with the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) regarding outdoor recreation and parks improvement projects taking place at various municipal locations.

Background

To leverage NOHFC funding several outdoor recreation and parks projects were bundled into one application. Funding to support the projects had been allocated through capital budgets, donations and Enabling Accessibility Funding. To move forward with the projects identified below additional funding was required. The NOHFC grant application included the following projects.

1. Two playgrounds Wilcox Park and Manitou Park need to be fully replaced, with new equipment, accessible play features, seating, surfacing (a mix of wood fibre and rubber), and a paved path. At Wilcox Park, the former tennis courts will be converted into a multisport court;
2. Creation of a new dog park;
3. Installation of solar lighting at the Strathclair dog park to extend safe operating hours;
4. Strathclair Complex: New poles and energy-efficient lighting for one ball diamond, upgrade batter boxes, and add some solar lighting in the parking lot;
5. Manzo Pool: new windows installed;
6. Washroom upgrades at Greco Pool, including accessible washrooms, partitions, and upgrades to the changerooms;
7. Manzo Park: development of an inclusive playground with new equipment, accessible play features and sensory components, rubber surfacing, paved paths and supporting amenities will be added; and
8. Repairs to the seams of the tent membrane at Bondar Park. Flooring in both marina buildings (Bondar and Bellevue).

Analysis

Staff applied to the Community Enhancement Program stream of the NOHFC. In December 2025, staff received confirmation that the application was approved and that the NOHFC will contribute up to \$858,080 of total eligible project costs. Eligible cost categories include construction, equipment purchases, engineering and contingency.

At the time of the original budget request in 2023 and when the phase one application was submitted in May of 2025, North Street ball diamond was scheduled to have the old lights removed and receive new lighting. Work is proceeding with removing the old lighting. Public Works and Engineering staff along with Community Services Staff reviewed the project and are recommending that the lights be installed at Strathclair Park. Staff are requesting that the remaining funds after the lighting at North Street Park is removed be reallocated to the installation of ball field lighting at Strathclair. The relocation will improve operational efficiencies and better support tournaments.

The conditional contribution agreement is required to access this funding is referenced elsewhere on the agenda.

Financial Implications

The total budget for the outdoor recreation and park projects identified in the NOHFC grant was \$1,716,160. NOHFC is providing \$858,080 towards the projects with the City's share being \$858,080.

The 2023 capital budget allocated \$210,000 to replace eight high bay lights at North Street Baseball Field. Staff are requesting that the remaining funds after the poles are removed be reallocated to install new high bay lighting at a Strathclair ball diamond.

Strategic Plan / Policy Impact / Climate Impact

Strategic Plan

- Focus Area 1: Community Development – Social Equity: Support fair access and opportunities for everyone. High-level goal: Commit to supporting the full participation of user groups of all abilities.
- Focus Area 2: Quality of Life – Work Life Balance: Maintain an affordable community with exceptional four-season recreational opportunities. High-level goal: Promote Sault Ste. Marie as a municipality of choice and invest in recreational infrastructure.
- Focus Area 3: Infrastructure – Future Assets: Strategically build and acquire infrastructure to support the growing community. High-Level Goal: Ensure community parks, green spaces and recreational needs are met.

Climate Impact

The solar lighting projects support the City's Corporate Strategic Plan Commitment of increasing sustainable infrastructure and reducing emissions. Solar lighting will increase reliance on renewable energy sources and reduce the City's carbon footprint. This aligns with actions under the Sault Ste. Marie Community GHG

Reduction Plan 2020-2030, specifically in areas of Corporate Energy. Investing in solar technology also supports the City's long-term goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The new energy-efficient lighting at the ball diamond also improves operational efficiency and reduces carbon footprint.

The installation of new windows at Manzo Pool will improve the energy efficiency of the building, and the new washrooms at Greco Pool will replace seven toilets with five-gallon toilet tanks with new, water-efficient model that offers significant benefits, primarily in water conservation and cost savings.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Resolved that the report of the Manager of Recreation and Culture dated February 23, 2026 concerning the Outdoor Recreation and Parks Improvements – NOHFC Contribution Agreement be received and that the remaining funding from the North Street Park lighting be reallocated to Strathclair Park.

The relevant By-law 2026-24 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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