

OPEN AGENDA

Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board Meeting
January 21, 2025 at 12:00 noon

LIVE STREAM: www.youtube.com/c/SaultstemarieCa

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes from the December 17, 2024 meeting

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

4. Tourism Overview & Update

12:10 – 12:20

- a. Extension of Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board Applications

5. Financial Update

12:20 – 12:30

6. New Business

12:30 – 12:45

- a. Amendment to the Authorization for NOHFC Funding Resolution
- Hiawatha Highlands Connector & Wishart Park Enhancement Project
- b. Steel Speed Contract- Wishart Bridge Project

7. Tourism Funding

12:45 – 13:15

- a) Sault Cycling Club

8. Resolutions

13:15 – 13:30

- a. Amendment to the Authorization for NOHFC Funding- Hiawatha Highlands
Connector & Wishart Park Enhancement Project
- b. Sault Cycling Club- Tourism Development Fund

9. Next Meeting

January 21, 2025

10. Adjournment

13:30



Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board Minutes

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

15:00

OPEN

Committee Members Present

YES	B. Barber	YES	N. Brash
YES	L. Foster	NO	G. Lacher
YES	D. Marini	NO	M. Porco
YES	R. Walker	YES	T. White
YES	K. Wyer		

Staff Resources Present

NO	B. Lamming	YES	T. Anderson
YES	A. Kenopic	YES	T. Lucarelli (Scribe)

Guests

None

- 1. Meeting Called to Order** **15:05**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 26, 2024**
Mover: D. Marini
Seconder: T. White
All in favour, Carried.
- 4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests**
 - Nil
- 5. 2025 Board Meeting Dates** **15:06 – 15:07**
 - A list of dates for the 2025 board meetings has been distributed.
- 6. Tourism Overview and Update** **15:07 – 15:09**
 - City Council will select the new Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board of Directors in January 2025.
 - Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) collection for 2024 is trending towards \$1.8 million.
- 7. Financial Update** **15:09 – 15:12**
 - The financial update from Priddle-Luck was distributed to the board.
 - A discussion to how best present the funding commitments to be planned for 2025.
 - A request for proposal (RFP) for the 2024 tourism financial audit closes on Wednesday, December 18, 2025.
- 8. New Business**
 - a) Tourism Funding** **15:12 – 15:53**
Move into Closed
Resolved that this Committee proceed into closed session to discuss matters concerning confidential third-party information; Further be it resolved that should the said closed session be adjourned, the Committee may reconvene in open session to continue to discuss the same matter without the need for a further authorizing resolution.

Municipal Act section 239(2)(i) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information, supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of a person, group of persons, or organization.

Mover: T. White

Seconder: K. Wyer

Carried.

L. Foster joined the meeting

15:14

N. Brash joined the meeting

15:34

Return to Open

9. Resolutions

- None

10. Next Meeting

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

11. Adjournment

15:54

Moved by: N. Brash

Seconded by: T. White

All in favour, Carried.

The Corporation of the
City of Sault Ste. Marie



Declaration of Interest – Municipal Conflict of Interest Act

Meeting Date: _____

I, _____ declare a potential (deemed / direct /
indirect) pecuniary interest on Council Agenda No. _____

Item Title: _____

for the following reason:

Signature

Name

Municipal Conflict of Interest Act

Indirect pecuniary interest

2 For the purposes of this Act, a member has an indirect pecuniary interest in any matter in which the council or local board, as the case may be, is concerned, if,

(a) the member or his or her nominee,

(i) is a shareholder in, or a director or senior officer of, a corporation that does not offer its securities to the public,

(ii) has a controlling interest in or is a director or senior officer of, a corporation that offers its securities to the public, or

(iii) is a member of a body,

that has a pecuniary interest in the matter; or

(b) the member is a partner of a person or is in the employment of a person or body that has a pecuniary interest in the matter. R.S.O. 1990, c. M.50, s. 2.

Interest of certain persons deemed that of member

3 For the purposes of this Act, the pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, of a parent or the spouse or any child of the member shall, if known to the member, be deemed to be also the pecuniary interest of the member. R.S.O. 1990, c. M.50, s. 3; 1999, c. 6, s. 41 (2); 2005, c. 5, s. 45 (3).



MARKETING & PROMOTION

Active Marketing Campaigns during December

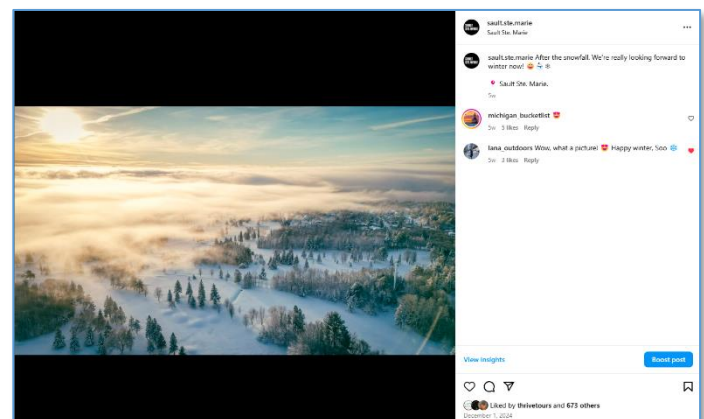
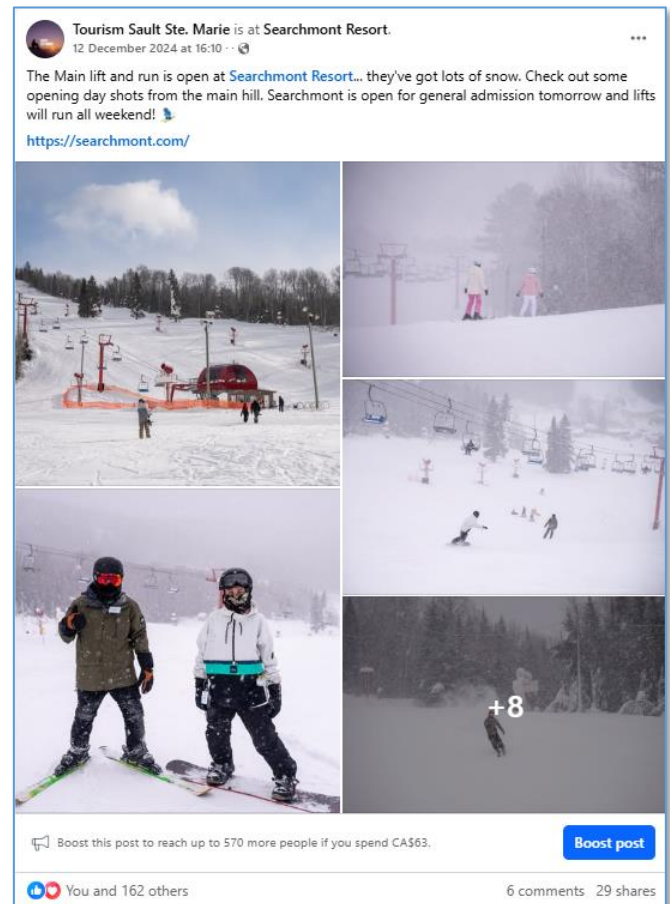
- Cavera digital marketing – pay per click, google search, paid social media ads for 'Nov & Dec' 'Events'
- Laird Signs billboards x 4 between Sudbury and SSM + one north of SSM.
- Cross Country Ski Magazine (Hiawatha and Stokely)
- My North Winter Vacation Guide Magazine

Website (December)

- 23k users, (23k users in November)
- 44k page views (38k in November)
- Canada 17k (73%), US 5.4k (21%)
- Within Canada: Ontario 13.6k (80%), Quebec 2.2k (13%)
- By City: (GTA around 30%) Toronto 4k (30%), SSM 1.3k (7%), Windsor 1k (6%)
- Within US: Michigan 2.5k (46%), Illinois 321 (6%)

Primary drivers

- **Paid Media:** 16.4k (13.1k in November)
- **Organic Search:** 4.6k (4.9k in November)
- **Organic Social media:** 842 (841 in November)
- **Referrals:** 1.5k (1.1k in November)
 - Searchmont 452 (219 in November)
 - Sootoday 344
 - BonSoo 166 (78 In November)
 - Saultstemarie 86 (131 in November)
 - Northernontariotravel 89 (110 in November)
 - Destination Ontario 48 (59 in November)
 - Agawa Train 36 (50 in November)
 - Sinistersports.ca 21
- **Offsite clicks:** 5.1k (5.3k in November)
 - AgawaTrain 496 (692 in November)
 - Searchmont 212 (164 in November)
 - Bushplane 210
 - Stokely Creek 97
 - SSM Trailblazers 87
 - Hiawatha Highlands 84
 - SooaxeThrowing 64
 - Upanddownlounge 63
 - Delta 58



Instagram (December, 2024)

- 21,445 page followers (40 new followers in December)
- 49k accounted reached (58k in November)



Facebook (December, 2024)

- 34.2k followers (10 new followers in December)
- 912k accounts reached (892k in November)

GROUP TOURS

- Staff registered for Rendezvous Canada, a Marketplace that features Group Tour Operators from around the world.
- Staff secured an appointment schedule for the American Bus Association Marketplace in February.
- Follow ups on marketplace meetings to secure conversions for 2025 season

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

- Sault Ste. Marie has won the bid to host the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) Annual Conference for May of 2028 (bid prepared and submitted by TSSM staff)

SPORTS TOURISM

- Staff submitted the bid package for the 2028 Ontario Winter Games, site selections by end of Q1
- Development of the Frozen Toe Fat Bike race in collaboration with Bon Soo Winter Carnival
- Supporting the Ringette Provincial A Championships March 13-16, 2025, estimated 45 out of town teams = 1500+ people
- Sports position vacant and posted as of Jan 6, 2025. Working to secure new staff.

EVENTS

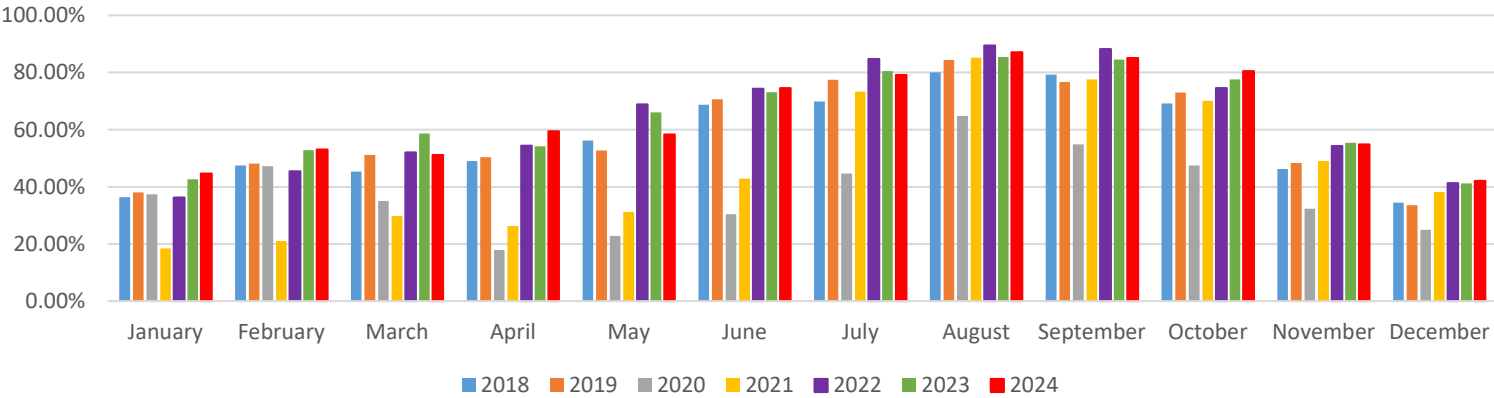
- Staff met with the 175th anniversary Robinson Huron Treaty signing group to discuss event location and Tourism Development Fund application.
- Staff are supporting Gathering at The Rapids PowWow and Bon Soo Winter Carnival for cross promotion.
- Staff have started a preliminary discussion to return the Parade of Paddles.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATIONS

Zero (0) Tourism Development applications were approved for recommendation at the December Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board meeting.



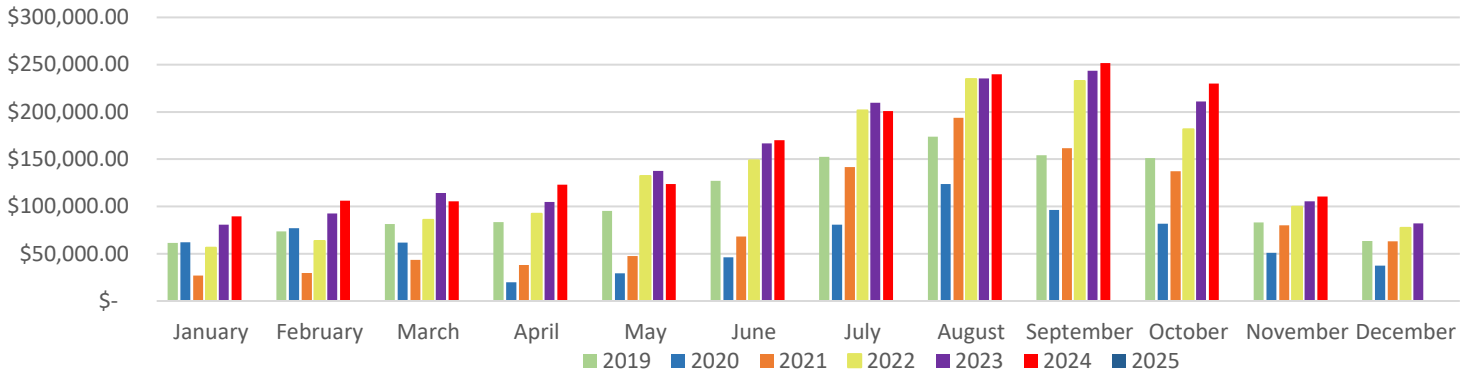
Occupancy Report Percentage



Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	36.4%	38.0%	37.4%	18.5%	36.2%	42.6%	44.6%
February	47.5%	48.1%	47.2%	21.0%	45.4%	52.8%	53.1%
March	45.3%	51.2%	35.0%	29.8%	52.0%	58.7%	51.2%
April	49.0%	50.4%	17.9%	26.3%	54.4%	54.2%	59.4%
May	56.2%	52.7%	22.8%	31.2%	68.9%	66.0%	58.3%
June	68.7%	70.6%	30.4%	42.9%	74.3%	73.1%	74.6%
July	69.9%	77.5%	44.7%	73.3%	84.8%	80.5%	79.1%
August	80.1%	84.4%	64.8%	85.2%	89.4%	85.4%	87.1%
September	79.3%	76.7%	54.8%	77.6%	88.2%	84.5%	85.1%
October	69.2%	73.0%	47.4%	70.1%	74.6%	77.6%	80.5%
November	46.2%	48.3%	32.3%	49.0%	54.3%	55.4%	54.9%
December	34.5%	33.6%	24.9%	38.2%	41.3%	41.2%	42.1%
Year	2025						
January							
February							
March							
April							
May							
June							
July							
August							
September							
October							
November							
December							



Municipal Accommodation Tax Collection



Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	\$ 61,402.77	\$ 64,208.56	\$26,828.55	\$56,396.18	\$80,655.72	\$89,650.05
February	\$ 73,525.06	\$ 77,030.47	\$29,513.74	\$63,642.86	\$92,555.42	\$105,967.89
March	\$ 81,314.31	\$ 61,777.73	\$43,484.40	\$85,984.43	\$114,238.43	\$105,505.22
April	\$ 83,529.32	\$ 19,975.27	\$37,975.04	\$ 92,129.11	\$104,900.11	\$123,067.05
May	\$ 95,421.32	\$ 29,273.55	\$47,705.95	\$132,331.95	\$137,716.33	\$123,901.89
June	\$127,202.00	\$ 46,100.00	\$68,191.40	\$148,947.49	\$166,686.98	\$170,184.73
July	\$152,541.57	\$ 80,779.28	\$141,698.08	\$201,761.44	\$209,842.90	\$200,849.67
August	\$173,804.29	\$123,601.95	\$193,741.49	\$234,917.71	\$235,394.73	\$239,800.98
September	\$154,367.41	\$ 96,304.68	\$161,796.26	\$232,840.92	\$243,431.26	\$251,857.75
October	\$151,211.55	\$ 81,808.25	\$137,386.81	\$181,749.16	\$211,223.28	\$229,975.04
November	\$83,086.94	\$ 50,936.13	\$80,212.95	\$99,833.60	\$105,359.99	\$110,496.31
December	\$63,379.61	\$ 37,395.67	\$63,006.74	\$77,354.50	\$82,192.25	
Total	\$1,300,786.15	\$769,191.54	\$1,031,541.41	\$1,607,889.35	\$1,785,365.26	\$1,751,256.58
Year	2025					
January						
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						
Total						



Income Statement @ December 2024 YTD Comparison

Revenue:	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	YTD
5405 MAT Revenue			189,661.50			215,278.50			215,278.50			215,278.50	835,497.00
5861 Advertising Revenue			34,200.00							1,061.95	1,956.20		37,218.15
5847 Interest Revenue	3,295.61	4,238.09	4,147.78	4,972.85	4,935.54	7,135.40	10,677.02	2,885.67	2,633.29	2,654.99	3,191.96	2,695.13	53,463.33
5862 Merchandise Revenue		43.07		1,440.32		1,299.71	1,104.03	1,779.35				522.05	6,188.53
5852 Misc. Income								188,417.66	104,328.92	7,808.53	-		300,555.11
Total	3,295.61	4,281.16	228,009.28	6,413.17	4,935.54	223,713.61	11,781.05	193,082.68	322,240.71	11,525.47	5,148.16	218,495.68	1,232,922.12
Expenses:													
6111 Office Expense	146.38		232.80	166.40	126.55	116.40	152.67	152.67	109.75	646.47	122.64	320.92	2,293.65
6170 Memberships and Subscriptions	25,009.90	524.82	41.88	603.55	36.27	36.27	492.20	8,099.89	5,000.00	36.27	72.64		39,953.69
6182 Travel	6,370.92	1,886.73			2,556.19	487.48	701.25	1,479.41		1,839.98	4,294.73	1,144.66	20,761.35
6184 Trade Shows/Conferences	5,244.67	20.79		5,250.00			4,605.87	5,555.05		1,499.53	204.20	5,315.00	27,695.11
6462 Insurance			1,682.83	1,338.12									3,020.95
6470 Postal Service			78.97		87.69	58.75	141.29	279.83	126.19	180.96		36.26	989.94
6475 Bookkeeping Expenses	961.44	1,212.65	1,195.31	987.43	987.43	883.49	883.49	815.93	706.79	769.16	831.52		10,234.64
6504 Consulting Fees									4,261.54				4,261.54
6540 Advertising	26,829.61	60,759.16	9,702.38	11,730.31	107,386.86	15,263.11	35,058.56	16,805.43	20,788.00	11,222.43	34,137.72	16,419.00	366,102.57
6544 Promotions	5,967.24	1,444.76	364.82	42,775.76	16,398.61	3,085.84	27,685.31	675.60	879.60	2,739.66	324.82	1,848.72	104,190.74
6545 Meetings	102.09	92.68	91.98	100.68	127.60	124.86		97.88		221.35	140.40		1,099.52
6632 General Development	2,141.16	106,417.70		449.81	110,049.49	1,317.63	309,912.74	39.48	75,893.17	42,443.42	80,096.71	249,431.01	978,192.32
6633 Tours		182.13			1,769.41	3,105.07		1,922.78	5,246.14	10,308.98		719.23	23,253.74
6634 Events		1,128.06	66.79		3,353.00	4,863.99	21,775.46	2,415.55	3,233.47	2,493.10	4,203.66		43,533.08
6710 Interest & Penalty								103.83		164.81			268.64
6720 Bank Charges	310.33	95.10	1,004.78	117.28	143.33	79.45	93.84	118.98	136.79		57.80	46.00	2,203.68
Total Expenses	73,083.74	173,764.58	14,462.54	63,519.34	243,022.43	29,422.34	401,502.68	38,562.31	116,381.44	74,566.12	124,486.84	275,280.80	1,628,055.16
Other Income													
5205 Ont Spec Grant Other				30,000.00	-	-	-			15,000.00			45,000.00
Other Expense													
7700 Exchange Gain or Loss				179.73	-	-	68.20	233.50	(197.50)		73.57		357.50
Net Income	(69,788.13)	(169,483.42)	213,546.74	(27,285.90)	(238,086.89)	194,291.27	(389,789.83)	154,286.87	206,056.77	(48,040.65)	(119,412.25)	(56,785.12)	(350,490.54)

A photograph of a snowy forest trail with three people riding fatbikes. The riders are wearing winter gear, including helmets and jackets. The trail is covered in deep snow, and the trees are bare, suggesting a winter setting. The lighting creates long shadows on the snow.

Purchase of Fatbike Trail Grooming Equipment

Sault Ste. Marie Tourism Development Fund Application

January, 2025

Background

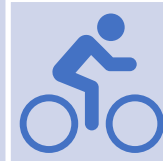
- With over 600 members, the Sault Cycling Club is one of Sault Ste. Marie's largest recreation clubs
- SCC promotes active transportation, active recreation, and cycling events in and around SSM at Hiawatha Highlands, Finn Hill, Voyageur Trail, Hub Trail
- Winter Fatbike Trail Grooming (Hiawatha Highlands)
 - Volunteer-driven, fee-free, accessible to the public
 - Approx. 45 volunteer hours/week
 - Limited by equipment
- Farmer Lake Trail System (1 snowmobile)
 - 13km are currently groomed. An expansion is planned for February of this year, which may add an additional 13 for a total of 26km on a sustainable basis with additional equipment. Further expansion of groomed network planned for winter 2025/2026.
- Red Pine Trail System (1 track sled)
 - 10km groomed last year
 - Expanded to 19km in 2025. However, it is a challenge to maintain grooming due to increased length. Expansion would benefit from additional grooming equipment. Potential to groom 25km on a sustainable basis with additional equipment (Wishart Park & south)
- Support for Events
 - Frozen Toe
 - Rock the Ridge
 - Global Fat Bike Day
 - Social Rides (Bikes & Brews, Root Ride)



Connection to Tourism



Fat biking offers significant tourism benefits by extending outdoor recreational opportunities into the off-season. It attracts individual travelers and groups seeking unique experiences, boosting local businesses such as accommodations, restaurants, and equipment rentals. Fat biking leverages existing trail networks, transforming them into year-round assets with minimal additional investment.



Events, such as the Frozen Toe Fat Bike Festival and The Beaver Freezer Marathon, attract visitors from outside the region; increasing overnight stays and fostering repeat visitation. Individual fat biking travelers also contribute to the local economy, often spending on equipment rentals, trail access fees, and dining.



Additionally, promoting winter fat biking strengthens Sault Ste. Marie's image as a four-season outdoor adventure hub, encouraging year-round tourism.



It aligns with TSSM's Strategic Plan by utilizing existing trails to host events and a focus on increasing winter visitation.

SSM as Winter Fatbike Destination

- Current, Sustainable Groomed Fatbike Trail Network (54km)
 - Hiawatha Highlands 14km
 - Crimson Ridge 20km
 - Farmer Lake 13km
 - Red Pine 19km
- Future Potential Fatbike Trail Network (> 80km)
 - Farmer Lake expandable to 26km on sustainable basis
 - Red Pine expandable to 25km (sustainable basis), and connection to Hub Trail
- Contingent on additional equipment
- Comparable to Marquette, MI



Current Challenges

Grooming Constraints

- Equipment Down-time (lack of redundancy)
 - Maintenance (scheduled in advance, can be managed)
 - Break-down (un-planned, impactful without backup)
- Time /Scheduling considerations
 - Grooming must occur shortly after weather events.
 - Not possible to groom in a timely manner due to the limitation of available equipment
 - Break-down (un-planned, impactful without backup)
- Impacts
 - Repairs can be time-consuming, depending on availability of parts
 - Break-down can undermine grooming efforts during heavy snow accumulation
 - Consistency & reliability of trail quality
 - Reputation of event quality and reliability
 - Impacts repeat visitors
 - Impacts tourism objectives
- Result: Lack of equipment during grooming window
 - Equipment-limited, not volunteer-limited



The Project - Purchase of Two TingerDog + Grooming Implements

Specifications

- Length: 58"
- Width: 24"
- Height: 33"
- Weight: 300lbs.
- Towing capacity: 1,000lbs.
- Motor: Honda, 13HP
- Fuel Autonomy: 5L/100km
- Fuel Tank Size: 6.6L
- Transmission: Comet 500 CVT
- Suspension: Trolley
- Brake: Installed
- Electric Starter: Installed
- Reverse: Installed



Project Overview

Timeline

Purchase/delivery of two TingerDogs c/w grooming implements by end January, 2025

Budget

Total price for both machines and grooming implements is \$20,400 (taxes and delivery included)

\$5,000 co-funding by Sault Cycling Club (\$15,400 funding being sought)

Goals

Establish the largest groomed fat bike trail network in Ontario by increasing the scope of the groomed fatbike trail system

Increase trail system quality and reliability by providing redundancy in grooming equipment

Increase event reputation and reliability by providing redundancy in grooming equipment

Increase volunteer sustainability by spreading around grooming responsibilities more broadly through the volunteer base

Flexibility and Reliability

Adjustable grooming implements will accommodate the standard widths of both the Farmer Lake and Red Pine trail systems

TingerDog will have a Honda engine, which is widely known as being the most reliable small engine available

TingerDog is designed to better accommodate deep snow than existing SnowDog

Sustainability

The Cycling Club generates sufficient funds through the sale of memberships, Trail Supporter Tags and donations to cover operating and maintenance costs on a go-forward basis once the additional equipment is secured

Indoor storage for the new TingerDogs has been identified

Partnerships

- 25% co-funding for this project provided by Sault Cycling Club
- Partnerships:
 - Tourism Sault Ste. Marie
 - Hiawatha Highlands
 - Kinsmen Club of Sault Ste. Marie
 - Sault Ste. Marie Regional Conservation Authority
 - Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
 - Tarantorus Fish Culture Station
 - Root River Golf Course
 - Red Pine Tours
 - Frozen Toe Fat Bike Festival
 - Global Fat Bike Day



The Ask

\$15,400 is being sought for the purchase of two TigerDogs and grooming implements in order to expand the groomed fat bike trail network maintained by the Sault Cycling Club, and to provide for continued operation in case of equipment break-down.

Co-funding of \$5,000 to be provided by the Sault Cycling Club, which also commits to covering the ongoing operating and maintenance costs for the new equipment, as well as arranging for inside storage during both the active and off-season months

Together, this will cover the \$20,400 purchase cost (including taxes and delivery) as well as the ongoing costs to operate and maintain the equipment





Measurable Results

- Project success will be measured through the following metrics:
 - Increase in kilometers of groomed fat bike trail available for public use that is maintained by the Sault Cycling Club
 - Elimination of periods of where trail is not maintained due to equipment breakdown
 - Increased volunteer sustainability through diversification of the base of volunteer groomers
 - Growth of participation in fat bike events (Frozen Toe Festival, and club events) through increase in event reputation for quality and reliability
 - Growth in Fat Bike community, as evidenced by increase in Sault Cycling Club membership and Trail Supporter Tag sales

Next Steps



Proposal for provision and shipping of TigerDog plus grooming implements (ex St-Tite, QC) has been obtained



Once funding for this project has been approved, the Sault Cycling Club will immediately place an order the equipment in anticipation of reimbursement from the grant



Delivery is expected within 1-2 weeks of order. This will enable the new equipment to be placed into service during the 2024/2025 season



Thank you

