

OPEN AGENDA

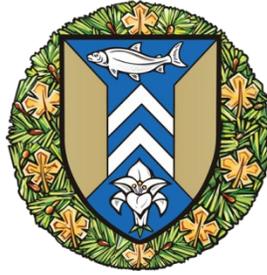
Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board Meeting

March 24, 2026 at 12:00

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

1. **Roll Call**
2. **Approval of Minutes**
Approval of minutes from February 24, 2025
3. **Declaration of Pecuniary Interests**
4. **Tourism Overview & Update** **12:05 – 12:15**
5. **Financial Update** **12:15 – 12:25**
 - a. Draft Financials 2024
6. **Tourism Development Fund Applications** **12:25 – 12:45**
 - a. Sault Surge- Touch Pad Replacement
 - b. Queen Street Cruise
 - c. Community Strong
 - d. Crank the Shield
7. **New Business** **13:10 – 13:20**
8. **Resolutions** **13:20 – 13:30**
 - a. Draft Financials 2024
 - b. Sault Surge- Touch Pad Replacement
 - c. Queen Street Cruise
 - d. Community Strong Race Weekend
 - e. Crank the Shield
9. **Next Meeting**
April 21, 2026
10. **Adjournment** **13:30**

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

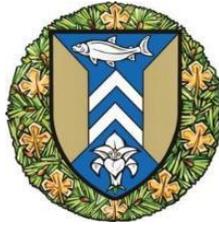
(iii) is a member of a body,

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).



Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board Minutes

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

12:00

OPEN

Committee Members Present

YES	B. Barber	YES	L. Foster
NO	G. Lacher	NO	M. Porco
NO	K. Walker	NO	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** **12:17**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 20, 2026**
Moved by: L. Foster
Second by: R. Walker
All in favour, Carried.
- 4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests**
Nil
- 5. Tourism Development Fund (TDF)** **12:20-12:25**
 - a. 2026 Regional Convention of the Jehovah's Witnesses**
 - The convention dates are set for July 3-5, 2026 at the GFL Memorial Gardens
 - A three-day national convention featuring presentations and videos focused on Scriptural teachings promotes positive daily living and strong community values. The event also generates a high number of room nights and contributes significant visitor spending to the local economy.
 - Staff recommendation is \$12,100 to be allocated to the cost of the GFL Memorial Gardens rental.
- 6. Tourism Overview and Update** **12:25-12:38**
 - Tourism Sault Ste. Marie hosted a booth for the third time at the Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show that saw an approximate attendance of 20,000. Geopolitics and travel trends have increased in-province and Northern Ontario travel interest.
 - T. Anderson spoke on stage at the "Best in Canada" session highlighting mountain bike trail development in Sault Ste. Marie.
 - Sault 200 trail race will be opening this year with new dates (September 12 start) and have added distances: 50 km, 100 mile and 200 mile plus a 15 km. Attendance is expected to increase.
 - Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) revenue closed the year at approximately \$2,000,000. With the additional 2% collected from September through December, the total revenue reached \$2,396,000. Approximately over \$300,000 from this year will be allocated directly to the waterfront.

- Northern Ontario Secondary Schools Athletics (NOSSA) wrestling, basketball and volleyball tournament were hosted in Sault Ste. Marie in February, with hockey taking place in March.
- City staff will explore opportunities to host Ontario Secondary School Athletics Association (OSSA) events in the future.
- Bon Soo Winter Carnival was successful overall. However, weather conditions negatively impacted attendance and resulted in several event cancellations. A debrief will be held with staff to review outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Ticket sales for Icefest-Ice Climbing Weekend are performing well and currently exceeding projections. More than 50 ice climbers have registered, indicating strong out-of-town participation. Organizers are also providing members with access to previously privatized climbing routes.
- Staff will attend Sport Event Congress in Toronto in March to meet provincial and national sport organizations.
- Rendez-vous Canada will take place in Ontario this May. This will give the City an opportunity to host familiarization (FAM) tours for delegates to Northern Ontario. One tour has been confirmed, and a second pre-approved delegate group is currently being coordinated in partnership with Destination Northern Ontario and Destination Canada.
- Northern Ontario Tourism Summit will be hosted in Sault Ste. Marie in November; local hotels and frontline staff are encouraged to participate for networking and learning.

7. Financial Update

12:38-12:38

- First quarter MAT installment was received from the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

8. New Business

- Nil

9. Resolutions

12:38-12:39

a. Tourism Development Fund – 2026 Regional Convention of the Jehovah’s Witnesses

Be it resolved that the Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board of Directors recommend a contribution of \$12,100 through the Tourism Development Fund- Conferences and Special Events Stream to support the Christian Congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses 2026 Conventions and that a report be submitted to City Council for consideration and approval.

Moved by: T. White

Seconded by: L. Foster

All in favour. Motion Carried.

b. Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

c. Adjournment

12:40

Moved by: L. Foster

Seconded by: T. White

All in favour, Carried.



Income Statement @ February 2026

	Jan 26	Feb 26	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
5205 · Ont Specific Grant Other	0.00	69,214.90	69,214.90
5206 · Infrastructure Canada Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00
5210 · City SSM Waterfront Detailed	80,000.00	0.00	80,000.00
5405 · Mat Revenue	236,506.27	0.00	236,506.27
5847 · Interest Income	356.36	1,543.01	1,899.37
5852 · Misc. Income	0.00	0.00	0.00
5861 · Advertising Revenue	0.00	1,550.00	1,550.00
5862 · Merchandise Revenue	176.65	0.00	176.65
5863 · Ontario Cup Mountain Bike Race	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Income	317,039.28	72,307.91	389,347.19
Gross Profit	317,039.28	72,307.91	389,347.19
Expense			
6111 · Office Expenses	321.74	531.98	853.72
6170 · Memberships&Subscriptions	2,764.80	493.72	3,258.52
6182 · Travel	443.00	5,426.41	5,869.41
6184 · Trade Shows/Conferences	1,507.13	1,220.58	2,727.71
6185 · Meal Allowances	0.00	0.00	0.00
6462 · Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00
6470 · Postal Service	13.11	113.12	126.23
6475 · Bookkeeping expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
6504 · Consulting Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00
6540 · Advertising	4,677.30	31,569.77	36,247.07
6544 · Promotions	311.80	3,594.06	3,905.86
6545 · Meetings	115.41	158.64	274.05
6632 · General Development	0.00	17,721.77	17,721.77
6633 · Tours	9,319.70	10,069.99	19,389.69
6634 · Events	189.29	30.51	219.80
6710 · Interest Penalty AR General	0.00		0.00
6720 · Bank Charges	88.74	124.20	212.94
99999 · Suspense	244.58	-229.38	15.20
Total Expense	19,996.60	70,825.37	90,821.97
Net Ordinary Income	297,042.68	1,482.54	298,525.22
Other Income/Expense			
Other Expense			
77000 · Exchange Gain or Loss	0.00		0.00
Total Other Expense	0.00		0.00
Net Other Income	0.00		0.00
Net Income	297,042.68	1,482.54	298,525.22



MARKETING & PROMOTION

Active Marketing Campaigns during February

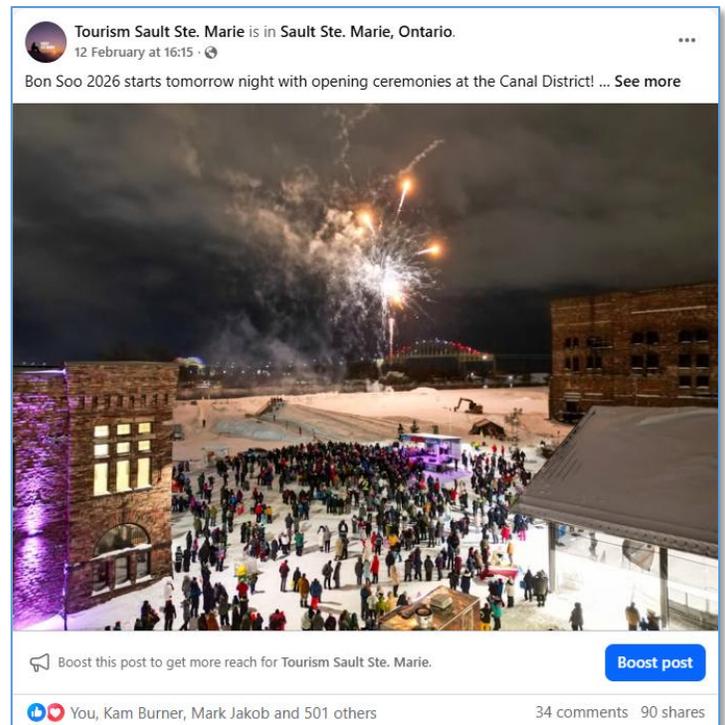
- Best Nordic Ski Escapes Magazine (Hiawatha and Stokely)
- Cross Country Skier Magazine Resort Guide.
- MyNorth Winter Vacation Guide
- Cavera digital marketing – pay per click, google search, paid social media ads for ‘Dec - Feb’ and SEO marketing.
- Laird Signs billboards x 4 between Sudbury and SSM + one north of SSM.
- FAM Tour with Caroline El Khoury.

Website (February)

- 34k users, (45k users in January)
- 50k page views (63k in January)
 - Ski – 22.2k (22.5k in January)
 - Home Page – 3.7k (2.7k in January)
 - Bon Soo Winter Carnival Blog – 2.4k (5.5k in January)
 - Agawa Train – 2.3k (2k in January)
 - Experience Winter – 2.1k (3.3k in January)
 - Activities and Attractions – 1.7k (2k in January)
 - Biking – 1.6k (2.5k in January)
 - Events – 1.5k (1.4k in January)
- Canada 24.6k (72%), US 7.6k (22%)
- Within Canada: Ontario 22k (89%), Quebec 1.9k (7%)
- By City: (GTA around 45%) Toronto 7.4k (30%), SSM 1.6k (7%)
- Within US: Michigan 3.8k (50%), Wisconsin 581 (8%)

Primary drivers

- **Paid Media:** 27.5k (35k in January)
- **Organic Search:** 5.2k (5.4k in January)
- **Referrals:** 3.2k (4.4k in January)
 - Bonsoo – 804 (207 in January)
 - Villagemedia – 604 (1.5 in January)
 - Searchmont – 314 (383 in January)
 - Northernontariotravel – 170 (78 in January)
 - Destination Ontario – 118 (106 in January)
 - Agawatrain – 112 (114 in January)
 - Saultstemarie – 93 (95 in January)
 - Welcometossm – 49 (86 in January)
 - Chatgtp – 47 (26 in January)
- **Offsite clicks:** 5.5k (6.1k in January)
 - Agawa Train – 592 (576 in January)
 - Searchmont – 168 (139 in January)
 - BonSoo – 161 (86 in January)
 - Saultlocktours – 123 (169 in January)
 - Hiawatha Highlands – 121 (128 in January)
 - WatertowerInn – 70 (83 in January)
 - Delta Hotel – 71





Instagram (February 2025)

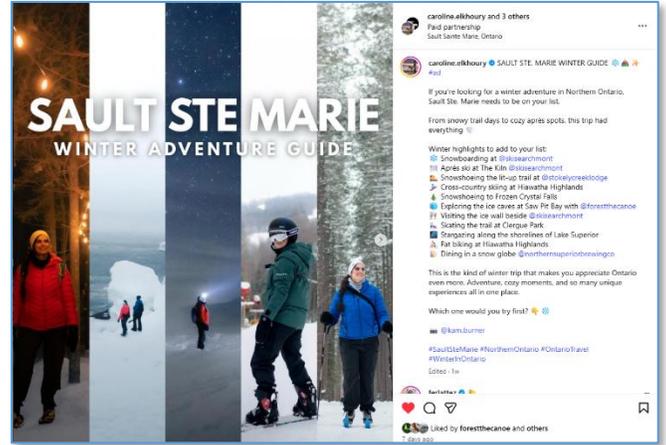
- 25,273k page followers (176 new followers in February)
- 143k accounted reached (195k in January)

Facebook (February 2025)

- 35.5k followers (113 new followers in February)
- 1m accounts reached (1.3m in January)

Newsletter (February 2025)

- Sent Feb 3, 2026 at 8:00am EST
 - 227 sends
 - 88 (42%) opens
 - 6 (3%) clicks
 - 17 (7%) bounces
 - 3 (1%) unsubscribes



GROUP TOURS

- Followed up on leads from the American Bus Association Marketplace
- Preparing for upcoming Rendezvous Marketplace that will take place in Toronto, May 2026

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

- Attended the “First Tapping”, a ceremonial event for the International Maple Syrup Conference that will be hosted in Sault Ste. Marie on October 20-24, 2026
- Tourism Sault Ste. Marie will be hosting a Chamber of Commerce Take 5 event on September 17th at the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre to promote hosting conferences, conventions or sports events in Sault Ste. Marie

SPORTS TOURISM

- Attended a large provincial sporting event in southern Ontario to gain insight for future hosting
- Preparing for one-on-one meetings with provincial and national sport organizations at Sport Event Congress

EVENTS

- Liaison for Bon Soo, Frozen Toe, Gathering at the Rapids, and Queen Street Cruise
- Participated in Outdoor Adventure Show on February 19-21, 2026

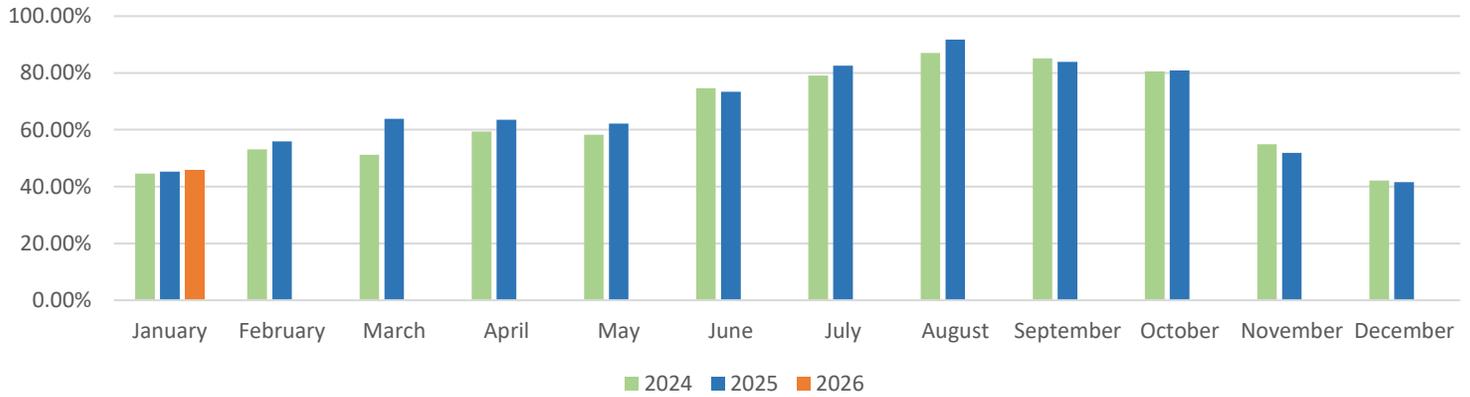
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATIONS

One Tourism Development Fund application was presented at the February 2026 Board meeting.

- 2026 Regional Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses - \$12,100



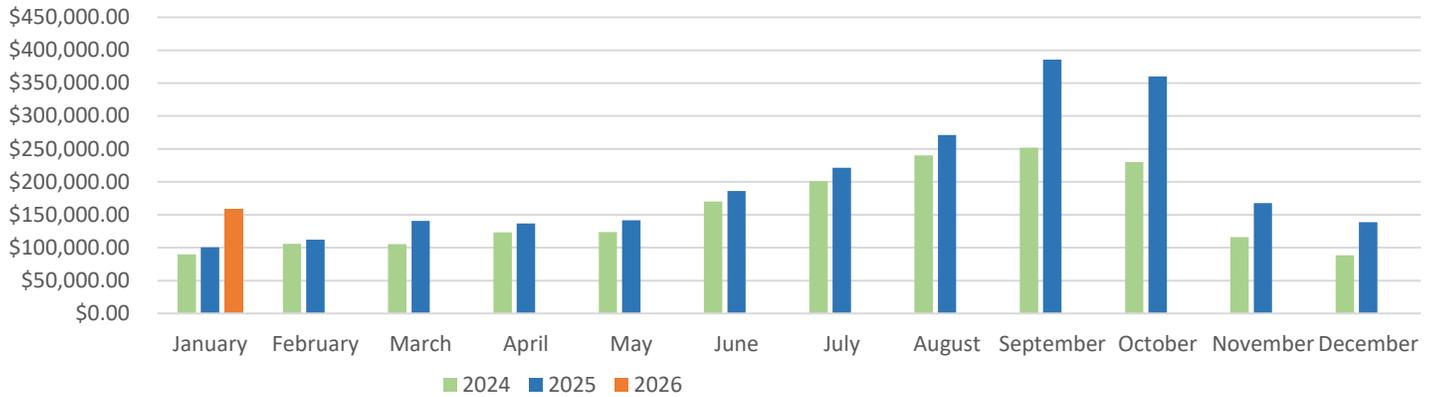
Occupancy Report Percentage



Year	2024	2025	2026			
January	44.6%	45.3%	45.6%			
February	53.1%	55.9%				
March	51.2%	63.6%				
April	59.4%	63.5%				
May	58.3%	62.2%				
June	74.6%	73.4%				
July	79.1%	82.6%				
August	87.1%	91.8%				
September	85.1%	83.9%				
October	80.5%	80.9%				
November	54.9%	51.9%				
December	42.1%	41.6%				



Municipal Accommodation Tax Collection



Year	2024	2025	2026			
January	\$89,650.05	\$100,423.75	\$158,767.79			
February	\$105,967.89	\$112,308.49				
March	\$105,505.22	\$140,876.75				
April	\$123,067.05	\$136,726.45				
May	\$123,901.89	\$141,605.97				
June	\$170,317.97	\$185,918.00				
July	\$201,082.17	\$221,447.28				
August	\$240,030.59	\$271,251.35				
September	\$251,857.75	\$385,879.44*				
October	\$229,975.04	\$359,919.41				
November	\$116,090.14	\$167,821.50				
December	\$88,211.20	\$138,765.18				
Total	\$1,845,656.96	\$2,396,110.10	\$158,767.79			

* \$384,875.33 (September 2025 started collection with 2% increase was applied for waterfront development)



Sault Surge Aquatic Team Colorado Pool Touch Pads

SAULT STE. MARIE TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATION

MARCH 2026

Background

- ▶ **Aims:** Provide competitive swim training for youth of all ages in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.
- ▶ **Mission:** Development of youth swimmers in a fun, caring and supportive environment.
- ▶ **Goal:** To teach fairness, respect along with good sportsmanship.
- ▶ **Belief:** Promoting swimming, both recreationally and competitive and to assist in achieving their potential.
- ▶ **Non-Profit Organization**



Connection to Tourism



- ▶ Current touchpads are over 20 years old, not reliable, on-going issues, fixed with duct tape!
- ▶ New **competition-grade** timing touch pads elevate the John Rhodes Community Centre pool as a regional competitive swim venue.
- ▶ SSAT hosts up to **3 regional swim meets annually**.
- ▶ Visiting clubs choose facilities with **professional, qualification-ready equipment**.

Partnerships with John Rhodes



Partnering with John Rhodes staff to:

- ▶ Enhance and modernize the pool space and equipment.
- ▶ Create a professional, safe, and welcoming environment for swimmers and spectators.
- ▶ Establish a competitive facility that attracts regional swim teams for annual meets.
- ▶ This upgrade supports repeat events, overnight stays, and enhanced visitor experiences.

The Ask of TDF

SSAT is upgrading to professional competition-grade timing touch pads that provide accurate, reliable race finishes and meet provincially sanctioned competition standards.

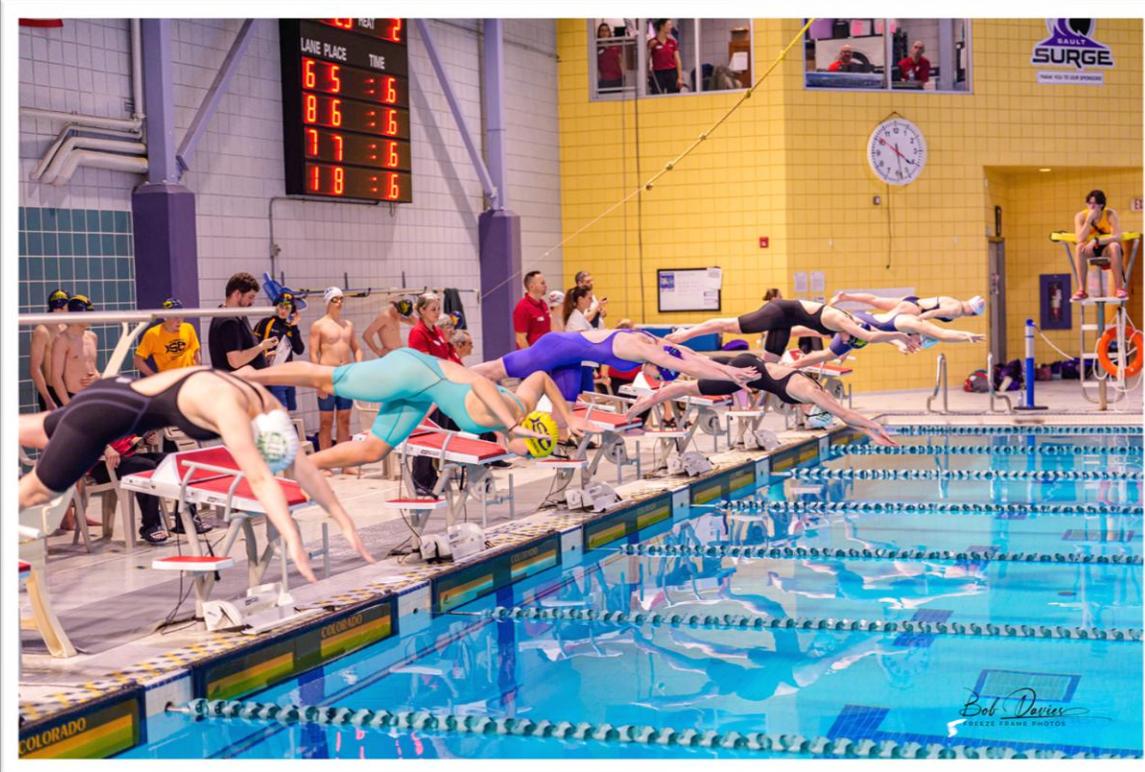
REQUEST: SSAT seeks additional funding for new competition timing touch pads that:

- ▶ Ensure accurate and fair race results
- ▶ Support provincially qualifying swim meets
- ▶ Reduce technical failures and on-deck repairs during competitions
- ▶ Integrate seamlessly with the existing scoreboard and timing system

The SSAT has fundraised > 50% of the costs of this system.



Specifics



New Competition Timing Touch Pads & Accessories for 8 lanes: \$35,505 (Includes touch pads, cables, harnesses, brackets, pump, meter, and taxes)

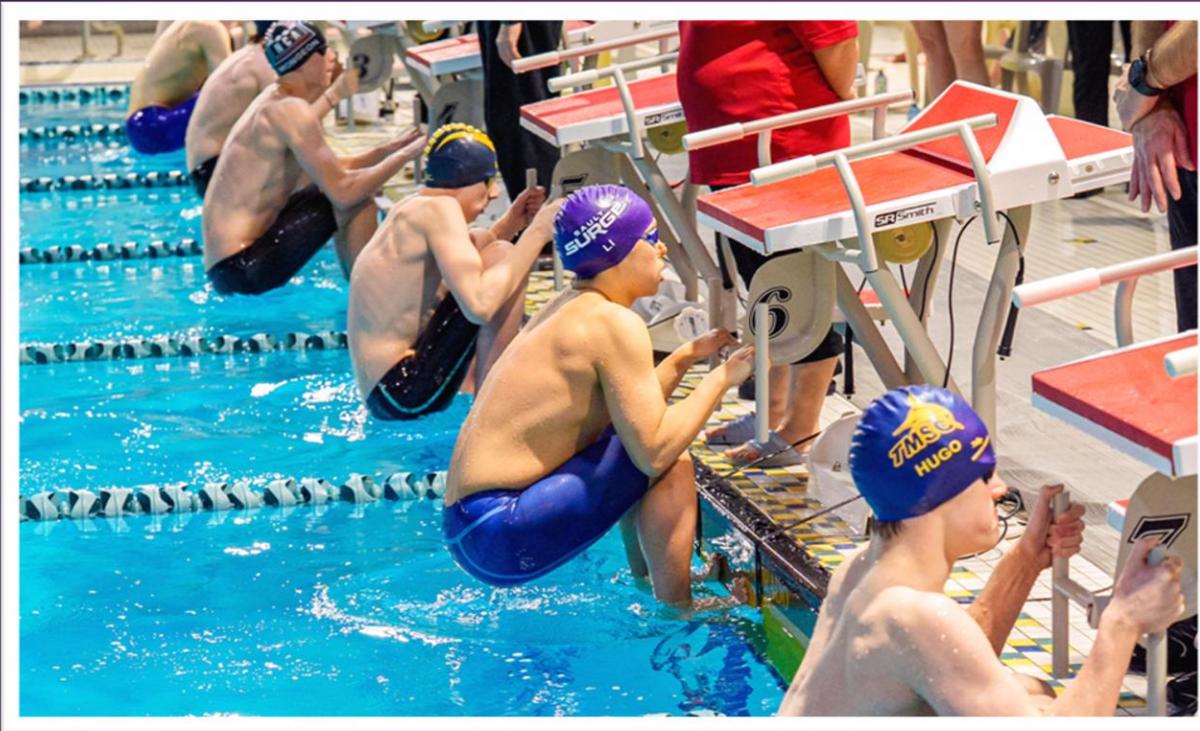
Quote from Team Aquatic Supplies (A Canadian owned and operated company)

- ▶ **Installation Costs: \$0**
- ▶ **Facility Preparation: Included**
- ▶ **Delivery: \$1,600**

Total Project Cost: \$35,505.73

- ▶ **Sault Ste. Marie Tourism Development Fund (Requested): \$15,505.73**
- ▶ **SSAT Fundraising Contribution: \$20,000** (raised through community fundraising over the past two years)

Questions?



TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATION SUMMARY

Name of the Event	Crank the Shield 2026
Event Date	August 21 – 23, 2026
Venue	Stokely
Submitted by:	Sean Ruppel
Reviewed by:	Stephanie Sears – March 4 2026
Ask:	\$5000
Recommendation:	\$5000

Overview of the Event

Crank the Shield – Event Summary

Crank the Shield is a bi-annual, three-day mountain bike stage race held in Sault Ste. Marie. Covering more than 140 kilometers, the race begins at Stokely Creek Lodge and travels through the Hiawatha Highlands Trail System and surrounding Algoma backcountry, showcasing the region’s expanding trail network and natural beauty.

Known as a challenging, endurance-focused event, Crank the Shield is geared toward experienced riders, with demanding terrain, technical sections, and significant elevation gain. The event is well-supported, offering aid stations, baggage transport, and a high-quality participant experience.

The race is expecting over 100 participants, *approximately 80% from outside the region*, including U.S. visitors. As a multi-day event, participants typically stay four nights or more, utilizing a combination of hotel stays on either end and camping on site throughout the race (families often stay in town at local hotels).

Crank the Shield plays an important role in promoting Sault Ste. Marie and the region as a premier mountain biking destination.

Previous TDF Applications

YEAR	AMOUNT Approved	Summary
2022	\$5000 Used for marketing, signage, trail preparation, venue fees and photos.	165 overall participants 125 from out of town
2024	\$6000 Used for marketing, signage and trail preparation,	200 overall participants 139 from out of town

Attendance Projections

Local	20
Regional	10
Ontario	80
Canada	
USA	20

Economic Impact

Number of People: 110 (local and regional)
Number of Days: 4 X \$175
Total Estimated Economic Impact:
110 x 4 x \$175= \$77,000
**included regional in number of people due to nature of the event.*

Budget Summary

Projected Expenditures:
\$63,630- includes marketing, aid stations, trail preparation, equipment/gear transportation, insurance and venue rental.

Projected Revenue (100 riders @ \$700 per rider):
\$70,000

NOHFC application pending

Scoring Matrix

Crank the Shield scores 61 on the evaluation matrix placing it in the recommended range of \$2500 to \$5000.

Staff Analysis

Crank the Shield is a high-value event to support due to its strong brand recognition within the mountain biking community and its alignment with Sault Ste. Marie's positioning as a premier outdoor destination. The event reinforces the City's reputation by showcasing the significant investment made in local trail infrastructure, culminating in a final-stage highlight of world-class singletrack within the Hiawatha Highlands Trail System.

Built around the rugged terrain of the Canadian Shield, Crank the Shield offers a unique, one-of-a-kind experience in Ontario that cannot be replicated. This distinct geography is a key differentiator that strengthens the event's appeal and marketability.

From a tourism perspective, the event delivers direct impact, with over 80% of participants traveling from outside the region, representing a key target market for return visitation. As a multi-day experience, it generates extended stays and positions Sault Ste. Marie as a must-visit destination for mountain biking enthusiasts.

Draft Resolution

Be it resolved that the Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board of Directors recommend a contribution of \$5000 through the Tourism Development Fund- Conferences and Special Events Stream to support Crank the Sheild to be hosted Aug 21-23, 2026 and that a report be submitted to City Council for consideration and approval.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND ASSESSMENT- SPORTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS STREAM

Event Name:	Crank The Shield SSM
Event Date:	August 21-23, 2026
Contact Person:	Sean Ruppel
Internal Review	March 3 2026
Board Review Date:	24-Mar-26

OUT OF TOWN PARTICIPANTS (Total of all visitors attending SPECIFICALLY for the event)	
Number of Participants	100
Number of Spectators	0
Total	100
Score up to 10 points	Total 1

VISITOR DAYS	
Number of Out of Town Visitors	110 regional +
Number of Nights they are Staying	4
Total Visitor Days (multiply together)	440
Score between 0-25 points	Total 4

LOCAL ATTENDANCE (includes all spectators and participants)	
Score between 1-10 points	20
	0

EVENT BUDGET	
Up to 10 points	5

READINESS/CAPACITY/ TIMELINE	
Score between 1- 10 points	10

SEASON (Peak, Shoulder, Low)	
Score between 2-15 points	2

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION	
Score between 1-5 points	3

MARKETING AND PROMOTION STRATEGY (for festivals and events)	
RECRUITMENT/ REGISTRATION STRATEGY (for conferences)	
Score between 1-10 points	6

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION	
Score between 1-5 points	5

ALIGNMENT WITH TSSM STRATEGIC PLAN (score all that apply)		Points
5 points- Event aligns with improvements/ activation of downtown/waterfront strategy		0
5 points- Event aligns with adventure/ outdoor recreation strategy		5
3 points- Event attracts international visitors (Including USA)		3
2 points- Event generates earned media exposure outside of Sault Ste. Marie		2
5 points- Event is annual and demonstrating growth		5
10 points- Event is homegrown and occurs annually		10
10 points- Event was secured through a competitive bid process		0
TOTAL POINTS		25

Points	Recommendation Range
85+	\$15,000 - \$20,000
76-85	\$10,000 - \$15,000
66-75	\$5,000 - \$10,000
56-65	\$2500- \$5000
36-55	\$ 1000-\$2500
<35	\$0

Evaluation Criteria

1 Point for Every 100 out of town Visitors to a Maximum of 10 points	10.00%
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1 Point for Every 100 Visitor Days to a Maximum of 25 Points	25.00%
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2 Point- 100-250 people 4 Points- 250- 500 people 6 Points- 500- 750 people	8 Points- 750-1000 people 10 Points- 1000 people +	10.00%
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Score between 1-10 considering these factors:	10.00%
1. Other sources of confirmed revenue 2. Balance between Revenue and Expenses 3. Financial Need	4. Funding Ask vs. Overall Budget 5. Cost Overrun Plan 6. Comprehensiveness of proposed budget
	7. Financial Sustainability

Score between 1-10 considering the these factors:	10.00%
1. Timeline (application submitted 90+ days in advance) 2. Event Plan (thoroughness)	3. Capacity 4. Data Tracking
	5. Growth plan

8 Points- February and March 5 Points- April 4 Points- May- June	2 Points- July to October 15 10 Points- October 15- November 15 Points- December and January	15.00%
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5- Event involves multiple partners (8+) in the recreation, hospitality, travel or entertainment business 3- Event involves some partners (5+) in the recreation, hospitality, travel or entertainment business 0- Event involves very few <5 or collaboration in the recreation, hospitality, travel or entertainment business	5.00%
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10-Excellent- clear plan to reach out of town markets 8- Very Good plan to reach out of town markets 6- Good plan to reach out of town markets	5- Average plan, largely focused on locals 3- Below Average, does not demonstrate attempt to reach out of town travellers 0- No plan provided	10.00%
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5- Project provides a clear plan on how event will be measured for success including tracking of out of town visitors 3- Project has a plan to track visitation but does not capture all details 0- Project does not, or is not, capable of tracking out of town visitors	5.00%
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Total points from above:	36
Total points from below:	25
Total:	61
Recommendation Range:	\$2500- \$5000
Recommended:	\$5,000

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATION SUMMARY

Name of the Event	Community Strong Race Weekend 2026
Event Date	June 20 & 21, 2026
Venue	Northern Superior Tap Room, boardwalk, downtown course
Submitted by:	Jessica Lopatka
Reviewed by:	Stephanie Sears - Feb 28 2026
Ask:	\$9000
Recommendation:	\$5000

Overview of the Event

The Community Strong Race Weekend is celebrating its 5th year, with the inaugural event in 2022. This event was started as a fundraiser for the Algoma Family Services (AFS) foundation and was designed not only to raise needed funds but also to raise awareness of physical and mental health needs in Sault Ste. Marie.

Over a 2-day race weekend, races will be held downtown Sault Ste. Marie, starting and ending at the Northern Superior/ Bushplane corner. The Community Strong Race Weekend will consist of a variety of races, including a marathon, half-marathon, 10km, 5km colour run, and kid's fun run. Notably, the marathon is a Boston Qualifier marathon and is known as the flattest, fastest, and most affordable race option in Ontario to qualify for Boston.

While the numbers for the marathon and half-marathon remain low, they *have* increased each year. The family colour run attracts the most participants and accounts for the fluctuation in overall numbers reported above (largely weather-dependent).

Saturday Events:

- 10 KM
- Colour Run
- Kid's Fun Run

Sunday Events:

- Marathon
- 1/2 Marathon

In 2026, the race weekend will not host the previously run Special Forces Challenge, and the organizing committee will be focusing solely on the race weekend.

Previous TDF Applications

YEAR	AMOUNT Approved	Summary
2025	\$4000	<i>Final report data</i> 69 from Ontario (outside of 40km)

	Used for radio and social media advertising	7 from another province 6 from USA Total tourists: 81 Total participants: 719
2024	\$5000 Funds used towards Village Media advertising and social media advertising.	Final report data 57 from Ontario (outside of 40km) 3 from another province 24 from USA Total tourists: 84 Total attendees: 907
2023	\$5000 Funds used for Village Media advertising and \$1000 towards the purchase of timing equipment	Final report data 30 from Ontario (outside of 40km) 6 from another province 3 from USA Total tourists: 39 Total attendees: 408

Attendance Projections

Local	623
Regional	50
Ontario	100
Canada	10
USA	8
International	4
Total	795

Economic Impact

$122 \times 2 \times \$175 = \$67,100$
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Budget Summary

Revenue \$ 67,000 (sponsorship, merch sales, registration fees, donations, TDF) Expenses \$30,900 (marketing, event supplies, insurance)

Scoring Matrix

The Community Strong Race Weekend scores 69 points on the evaluation matrix placing it in recommended range of \$5000- \$10,000.

Staff Analysis

The Community Strong Race Weekend aligns with one of Tourism Sault Ste. Marie’s priority sectors: sports tourism.

This event has an organizing committee with demonstrated experience and has made progress with branding, expanding the event (most notably with the Boston Marathon designation), and marketing.

Planning for 2026 has been underway for several months, and the organizing committee has been planning further in advance to ensure race objectives are met. They have also indicated plans to purchase expo booths at out-of-town races to raise awareness and attract participants from other cities.

Funds are requested to help offset the costs of marketing to continue boosting out-of-town participation and leveraging the notoriety of being a Boston Marathon Qualifier.

Draft Resolution

Be it resolved that the Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board of Directors recommend a contribution of \$5000 through the Tourism Development Fund- Conferences and Special Events Stream to support the Community Strong Race Weekend June 20-21, 2026 and that a report be submitted to City Council for consideration and approval.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND ASSESSMENT- SPORTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS STREAM

Event Name:	Community Strong Race Weekend 2026
Event Date:	June 20-21, 2026
Contact Person:	Jessica Lopatka
Internal Review:	Feb 27 2026 - Stephanie Sears
Board Review Date:	TBD

Weight

OUT OF TOWN PARTICIPANTS (Total of all visitors attending SPECIFICALLY for the event)	
Number of Participants	89
Number of Spectators	33
Total	122
Score up to 10 points	Total 1

Evaluation Criteria

1 Point for Every 100 out of town Visitors to a Maximum of 10 points	10.00%
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VISITOR DAYS	
Number of Out of Town Visitors	122
Number of Nights they are Staying	2
Total Visitor Days (multiply together)	244
Score between 0-25 points	Total 2

1 Point for Every 100 Visitor Days to a Maximum of 25 Points	25.00%
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LOCAL ATTENDANCE (includes all spectators and participants)	
Score between 1-10 points	773
	6

2 Point- 100-250 people	8 Points- 750-1000 people	10.00%
4 Points- 250- 500 people	10 Points- 1000 people +	
6 Points- 500- 750 people		

EVENT BUDGET	
Up to 10 points	6

Score between 1-10 considering these factors:	10.00%	
1. Other sources of confirmed revenue	4. Funding Ask vs. Overall Budget	7. Financial Sustainability
2. Balance between Revenue and Expenses	5. Cost Overrun Plan	
3. Financial Need	6. Comprehensiveness of proposed budget	

READINESS/CAPACITY/ TIMELINE	
Score between 1- 10 points	8

Score between 1-10 considering the these factors:	10.00%	
1. Timeline (application submitted 90+ days in advance)	3. Capacity	5. Growth plan
2. Event Plan (thoroughness)	4. Data Tracking	

SEASON (Peak, Shoulder, Low)	
Score between 2-15 points	4

8 Points- February and March	2 Points- July to October 15	15.00%
5 Points- April	10 Points- October 15- November	
4 Points- May- June	15 Points- December and January	

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION	
Score between 1-5 points	3

5- Event involves multiple partners (8+) in the recreation, hospitality, travel or entertainment business	5.00%
3- Event involves some partners (5+) in the recreation, hospitality, travel or entertainment business	
0- Event involves very few <5 or collaboration in the recreation, hospitality, travel or entertainment business	

MARKETING AND PROMOTION STRATEGY (for festivals and events)	
RECRUITMENT/ REGISTRATION STRATEGY (for conferences)	
Score between 1-10 points	8

10-Excellent- clear plan to reach out of town markets	5- Average plan, largely focused on locals	10.00%
8- Very Good plan to reach out of town markets	3- Below Average, does not demonstrate attempt to reach out of town travellers	
6- Good plan to reach out of town markets	0- No plan provided	

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION	
Score between 1-5 points	3

5- Project provides a clear plan on how event will be measured for success including tracking of out of town visitors	5.00%
3- Project has a plan to track visitation but does not capture all details	
0- Project does not, or is not, capable of tracking out of town visitors	

ALIGNMENT WITH TSSM STRATEGIC PLAN (score all that apply)		Points
5 points- Event aligns with improvements/ activation of downtown/waterfront strategy		5
5 points- Event aligns with adventure/ outdoor recreation strategy		5
3 points- Event attracts international visitors (Including USA)		3
2 points- Event generates earned media exposure outside of Sault Ste. Marie		0
5 points- Event is annual and demonstrating growth		5
10 points- Event is homegrown and occurs annually		10
10 points- Event was secured through a competitive bid process		0
TOTAL POINTS		28

Total points from above:	41
Total points from below:	28
Total:	69
Recommendation Range:	\$5000- \$10,000
Recommended:	\$5,000

Points	Recommendation Range
85+	\$15,000 - \$20,000
76-85	\$10,000 - \$15,000
66-75	\$5,000 - \$10,000
56-65	\$2500- \$5000
36-55	\$ 1000-\$2500
<35	\$0

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND APPLICATION SUMMARY

Name of the Event	Queen Street Cruise
Event Date	June 19-20, 2026
Venue	Roberta Bondar Park & Pavilion
Submitted by:	Gary Trembinski Jr
Reviewed by:	Stephanie Sears - March 5 2026
Ask:	\$10,000
Recommendation:	\$10,000

Overview of the Event

Since its official launch in 2016, the Queen Street Cruise has evolved from a local gathering into one of Sault Ste. Marie's premier summer festival, now second only to Rotaryfest in scale. The event was founded by Gary Trembinski Sr. and Joseph Bisceglia, inspired by the vision to bring a "Woodward Dream Cruise" experience to Northern Ontario. Designed as a "nostalgia trip," the Cruise recreates the peak of the 1960s and 70s when "cruising Queen" was a common social activity.

Over the past 10 years, the event has seen significant growth in both participation and community impact. While it began primarily as a classic car show, it has expanded its scope to include "anything on wheels," featuring everything from 1900s steam-powered vehicles and muscle cars to motorcycles, tractors, and modern electric vehicles. By 2024, the show reached a milestone of over 350 vehicles from across Ontario and Michigan, and the 2025 season broke all previous pre-registration records.

This growth has transformed the event into a multi-day festival and a tourism driver for the city, attracting thousands of spectators who contribute significantly to the local economy. The Cruise maintains a strong charitable focus, having raised vital funds for organizations such as the Sault Area Hospital Foundation.

The 2026 event, scheduled for June 19th and 20th, is set to be the most ambitious to date. The weekend will feature the traditional Friday "Parade of Cars" along the waterfront and the Saturday "Show n' Shine" at the Roberta Bondar Pavilion and Civic Centre north lot. To further elevate the festival atmosphere, the site will include a beer garden, food vendors, and live music on the boardwalk, with previous award winners featured under the tent. A strategic addition this year is the attendance of TV personality and social media influencer Christy Lee, who will be on-site to capture content and engage with guests to drive attendance for 2027.

Additionally, the event will once again leverage a partnership with Habitat for Humanity's "Touch-a-Truck" event to broaden its marketing reach. The 2026 Cruise will also serve as a milestone for the community as organizers and participants gather to honour the legacy and passing of the event's co-founder, Gary Trembinski Sr. in 2025.

Previous TDF Applications

YEAR	AMOUNT Approved	Summary
2022	\$5000	Funds used to purchase CTV ads and radio ads across Northern Ontario and Michigan.
2023	\$5000	Funds used to purchase CTV ads and radio ads across Northern Ontario and Michigan.
2024	\$5000	Funds used to purchase CTV ads and radio ads across Northern Ontario and Michigan.
2025	5000	Funds used to purchase CTV ads and radio ads across Northern Ontario and Michigan.

Attendance Projections

Local	7375
Regional	400
Ontario	50
Canada	
USA	60

Economic Impact

110 out of town visitors x 2 days x \$175
\$38,500

Budget Summary

Profit \$39,335 (includes registration & sponsorship)

Expenses \$31,430 (includes accounting fees, security, photography, sponsor recognition, signage, marketing, and entertainment)

For 2026, QSC is bringing in an influencer- Cristy Lee, at a cost of \$10,000 plus travel/accommodations. This application is to help support those costs with cross-promotion with Sault Ste. Marie.

Scoring Matrix

The Queen Street Cruise scores 81 points on the scoring matrix, placing it in the recommended range of \$10,000- \$15,000.

Staff Analysis

The Queen Street Cruise has steadily grown and evolved over the years, beginning as a small show on Queen Street and expanding into the GFL parking lot. It now spans the

waterfront, utilizing a broader footprint that includes the Pavilion, St. Mary's River Drive, and the Civic North parking lot. The event has become a well-established highlight in the community calendar, with strong anticipation each year. Continued growth in out-of-town participation has been demonstrated, and future efforts remain focused on expanding both key markets: show participants and spectators.

This year, the Queen Street Cruise is seeking additional financial support to help offset the cost of securing an influencer with a strong following in Michigan. Cristy Lee, known for co-hosting *All Girls Garage*, *Garage Squad*, and coverage of the Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Auction, has a significant reach within the car enthusiast community. Through collaborative marketing efforts, she will help promote both the Queen Street Cruise and Sault Ste. Marie. With over 500,000 Facebook followers, 300,000 Instagram followers, and 25,000 TikTok subscribers, her platforms offer valuable exposure to target audiences and support continued growth in visitation.

Tourism staff is recommending that the Tourism Board of Directors consider funding of \$10,000 to support the cost of Christy Lee's appearance at the event, with the intention that it will boost out-of-town interest in 2027.

Draft Resolution

Be it resolved that the Tourism Sault Ste. Marie Board of Directors recommend a contribution of \$10,000 through the Tourism Development Fund- Conferences and Special Events Stream to support the Queen Street Cruise to be hosted June 19-20, 2026 and that a report be submitted to City Council for consideration and approval.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FUND ASSESSMENT- SPORTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS STREAM

Event Name:	Queen Street Cruise 2026
Event Date:	June 19 - 20 2026
Contact Person:	Gary Trembinski Jr
Internal Review	March 5 2026
Board Review Date:	March 24 2026

OUT OF TOWN PARTICIPANTS (Total of all visitors attending SPECIFICALLY for the event)	
Number of Participants	160
Number of Spectators	350
Total	510
Score up to 10 points	Total 5

VISITOR DAYS	
Number of Out of Town Visitors	160
Number of Nights they are Staying	2
Total Visitor Days (multiply together)	320
Score between 0-25 points	3

LOCAL ATTENDANCE (includes all spectators and participants)	
Score between 1-10 points	7375
	10

EVENT BUDGET	
Up to 10 points	7

READINESS/CAPACITY/ TIMELINE	
Score between 1- 10 points	9

SEASON (Peak, Shoulder, Low)	
Score between 2-15 points	4

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION	
Score between 1-5 points	5

MARKETING AND PROMOTION STRATEGY (for festivals and events)	
RECRUITMENT/ REGISTRATION STRATEGY (for conferences)	
Score between 1-10 points	10

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION	
Score between 1-5 points	3

ALIGNMENT WITH TSSM STRATEGIC PLAN (score all that apply)		Points
5 points- Event aligns with improvements/ activation of downtown/waterfront strategy		5
5 points- Event aligns with adventure/ outdoor recreation strategy		0
3 points- Event attracts international visitors (Including USA)		3
2 points- Event generates earned media exposure outside of Sault Ste. Marie		2
5 points- Event is annual and demonstrating growth		5
10 points- Event is homegrown and occurs annually		10
10 points- Event was secured through a competitive bid process		0
TOTAL POINTS		25

Points	Recommendation Range
85+	\$15,000 - \$20,000
76-85	\$10,000 - \$15,000
66-75	\$5,000 - \$10,000
56-65	\$2500- \$5000
36-55	\$ 1000-\$2500
<35	\$0

Evaluation Criteria

1 Point for Every 100 out of town Visitors to a Maximum of 10 points	10.00%
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1 Point for Every 100 Visitor Days to a Maximum of 25 Points	25.00%
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2 Point- 100-250 people 4 Points- 250- 500 people 6 Points- 500- 750 people	8 Points- 750-1000 people 10 Points- 1000 people +	10.00%
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Score between 1-10 considering these factors: 1. Other sources of confirmed revenue 2. Balance between Revenue and Expenses 3. Financial Need	4. Funding Ask vs. Overall Budget 5. Cost Overrun Plan 6. Comprehensiveness of proposed budget	7. Financial Sustainability	10.00%
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Score between 1-10 considering the these factors: 1. Timeline (application submitted 90+ days in advance) 2. Event Plan (thoroughness)	3. Capacity 4. Data Tracking	5. Growth plan	10.00%
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8 Points- February and March 5 Points- April 4 Points- May- June	2 Points- July to October 15 10 Points- October 15- November 15 Points- December and January	15.00%
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5- Event involves multiple partners (8+) in the recreation, hospitality, travel or entertainment business 3- Event involves some partners (5+) in the recreation,hospitality, travel or entertainment business 0- Event involves very few <5 or collaboration in the recreation, hospitality, travel or entertainment business	5.00%
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10-Excellent- clear plan to reach out of town markets 8- Very Good plan to reach out of town markets 6- Good plan to reach out of town markets	5- Average plan, largely focused on locals 3- Below Average, does not demonstrate attempt to reach out of town travellers 0- No plan provided	10.00%
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5- Project provides a clear plan on how event will be measured for success including tracking of out of town visitors 3- Project has a plan to track visitation but does not capture all details 0- Project does not, or is not, capable of tracking out of town visitors	5.00%
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Total points from above:	56
Total points from below:	25
Total:	81
Recommendation Range:	\$10,000 - \$15,000
Recommended:	\$10,000