REPORT

MEETING TYPE: Regular Council Meeting

To:	Council
From:	Jody Brinkman, Manager of Development Services
Date:	June 18, 2025
Subject:	Adopt a Block Program
Report No.:	2025-587

TITLE: Adopt a Block Program

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council direct staff to initiate in collaboration with the Environment Committee an "Adopt the Block" program in Sioux Lookout.

PURPOSE:

To develop an Adopt the Block program in support of the Environment Committee Litter Strategy.

BACKGROUND:

The Environment Committee has been working on a Litter Strategy to look at different methods to help reduce the amount of litter around Sioux Lookout. A Sub-Committee of the Environment Committee has been created to develop this strategy. The Adopt a Block program would enlist community members, businesses and organizations to adopt certain areas of the community and would then be responsible for keeping their area free of litter. Signage could be posted in these areas identifying the community members, businesses and organizations doing their part in keeping Sioux Lookout free of litter.

This program has had success in Kenora over the last eight years and in different locations along the highway corridor similar type initiatives are taking place. The Environment Committee will invite local businesses and organizations to adopt a block in Sioux Lookout and commit to keeping it clean throughout the year.

Recognition can be provided by road signage, window cling stickers and social media, increasing civic pride and encouraging more ownership of their surroundings.

DISCUSSION:

The Environment Committee in collaboration with the Municipality will promote the Adopt a Block program in an effort to entice community members, businesses and organization to take advantage of this opportunity. An application/sign-up process will be developed. Areas that have been adopted will be recorded and mapping will be produced to clearly show all "blocks" that are available and the ones that are adopted. As well, road signage can be installed in the areas adopted by community members, businesses, etc. This will provide recognition to those helping to keep the community clean and to better identify the areas being taken care of. A window cling sticker can be provided to the different businesses and organizations that adopt a block.

The Environment Committee is requesting that the Municipality purchase 25 garbage pickers. The garbage pickers will be loaned out to the businesses, organizations or members of the public who have adopted an area of town for the purpose of cleaning up any litter found. Once the cleanup is completed the garbage picker will be returned and the garbage placed in a visible location for Municipal staff to pick up and bring to the landfill free of charge. The garbage bags will be labeled or have a sticker adhered to the bag for easy identification when Municipal staff pick them up. Staff will need to confirm that the garbage isn't hazardous or household waste. The Environment Committee has reached out to different organizations to see if they are willing to store and hand out the garbage pickers and garbage bags, this would only be considered if Public Works doesn't have the resources to handle the potential additional responsibilities involved.

Currently the Public Works Department runs the Pitch In Program, this is year round and provides clear garbage bags and gloves to members of the public who pick up litter around town. The person or group cleaning up notifies Public Works when they are done and where the garbage bag is located. Public Work's staff then go pick up the bag, confirm it's contents and bring to the landfill, the bags are weighed separately from normal garbage and recorded. Public Works currently has a budget of $1,000 for the purchase of the clear garbage bags and gloves, on average they distribute 400 to 500 bags a year. The introduction of the Adopt a Block program will not result in a new responsibility for Public Works staff but could increase the work load and costs they currently deal with in the Pitch in Program. Spring is typically the busy time for this program.

The Adopt a Block program will help formalize the process and promote keeping Sioux Lookout cleaner, those looking for recognition will receive it - deservedly so. This may open the doors to getting more businesses and organizations involved in the clean up, create a more structured approach and in signing up the obligation is now there to keep your adopted area clean. It is clear from the 400 to 500 bags being distributed now that several members of the public are doing their part to keep the litter off the streets and boulevards and they deserve a ton of credit. Members of the public who still want to continue cleaning up as they have in years past can continue to do so without the need to sign up.

Implementing this program could help lessen their load and open up opportunities for other areas of the town to be monitored and cleaned regularly.

If approved the anticipated initial costs to get the program started will be as follows:

Clear Garbage Bags - $150, if needed
400 labels/stickers for the garbage bags - $250
Window stickers/clings - $250

Road Signs and Posts - $500
25 Garbage Pickers - $1,875
Advertising/Miscellaneous - $1,000

Total - $4,025

Initially the purchases could be limited to the garbage pickers and advertising for a total of $2,875, with a plan to budget for the remaining items the following year. If the program appears to be successful.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN:

Community Development

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Environment Committee has $2,500 within their budget to support initiatives. If Council approves the request, the Environment Committee will be over budget in their 2025 allocation by $1,525.

If Council approves this initiative, the Environment Committee will need to determine how this project is rolled out.

Written By:
Jody Brinkman, Development Services Manager

Approved By:
Brian P. MacKinnon, CAO/Municipal Clerk