# REPORT

SIOUX LOOKOUT
Hub of the North

**MEETING TYPE: Regular Council Meeting**

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| **To:** | Council |
| **From:** | Yajvir Deswal, Engineering and Capital Projects Manager |
| **Date:** | June 18, 2025 |
| **Subject:** | Hillcrest Landscaping Project- NOHFC Phase II Funding Application |
| **Report No.:** | 2025-590 |

**TITLE:** Hillcrest Landscaping Project- NOHFC Phase II Funding Application

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Council authorizes staff to proceed with the submission of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) Phase 2 application to support the Hillcrest Hub Landscaping Project, with a total project budget of $810,235.00 (plus HST); and further

THAT Council approves the use of long-term debt to fund the municipal contribution of $310,235.00 (plus HST); and further

THAT the Municipality commit to covering any unanticipated cost overruns associated with the project.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the submission of the NOHFC Phase II Application for the Hillcrest Hub Landscaping Project and confirm the Municipality's financial commitment required to support the project.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Rural Enhancement Funding (REF) program is designed to support the infrastructure and community development priorities of rural municipalities with populations between 1,500 and 30,000. The program aims to strengthen community health, sustainability, and service delivery.

## Funding

Under this program, funding is provided as a conditional contribution and will not exceed:
Up to 75% of eligible costs, to a maximum of $500,000, for communities with populations greater than 1,500.

In July 2024, the Municipality submitted a Phase I application to NOHFC under the Rural Enhancement stream. An invitation to proceed to Phase II was received in November 2024. The project focuses on enhancing the Hillcrest Business Park with public realm improvements including landscaping, pedestrian seating, access gate, and signage.

An RFP was issued in January 2025 to obtain proposals for the landscaping and signage components. While no contract was awarded at the time, one of the proposals received included a comprehensive and well-defined scope of work, which was used to support the NOHFC Phase II application. A separate quote was also secured for the vehicle gate component. The project is anticipated to begin in Fall 2025 following the completion of ongoing site servicing and infrastructure work.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Hillcrest project will significantly improve the visual and functional quality of the commercial area.

It includes:

- Tree planting and hydroseeding
- A paved patio area with 4 picnic tables, 4 benches, and a central fire pit
- A pathway connecting the patio to public parking
- Two gateway signs, including one with digital display
- Installation of a vehicle gate at the eastern entrance

The project budget of $810,235.00 includes a 15% contingency. The NOHFC request is for $500,000.00, with the Municipality covering the remaining $310,235.00 through long-term debt financing.

**RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This project supports the following goals and priorities of the Municipality's 2020–2025 Strategic Plan:

**Strategic Priority: Community Innovation & Development**

- Provide infrastructure and housing to meet the needs of our community, now and as it grows
- Enable community growth through innovative, proactive planning.
- Strengthen and enhance Sioux Lookout's status as Hub of the North.

**Strategic Priority: Community Wellness**

- Maximize and enhance our natural assets and facilities to encourage physical activity.

**Strategic Priority: Operational Excellence**

- The financing approach aligns with the Municipality's long-term financial planning goals by leveraging external funding and responsibly managing debt obligations.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

- Total Project Cost: $810,235.00 (plus HST)
- NOHFC Contribution (requested): $500,000.00
- Municipal Share (long-term debt): $310,235.00

A 15% contingency is built into the budget to manage cost overruns. Any additional costs will be addressed through long-term debt, ensuring alignment with asset life and minimizing impact on current operations.

*Written By:*
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*Written By:*
Jennifer Esposito, Manager of Strategic Initiatives

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