

Meeting Date: July 15, 2024
Department: Community Services
Report No.: CS-2024-26
Submitted by: Robert Lilbourne, Director of Community Services
Approved by: Trisha McKibbin, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Commercial Autonomous Mower Cost Sharing Proposal

RECOMMENDATION: THAT: Council receive report CS-2024-26 Commercial Autonomous Mower Cost Sharing Proposal for information, and further;
THAT: Council direct staff to utilize Progress through Partnership (PTP) program funds to a maximum of \$20,000.00, matching the funds from the Strathroy United Football Club (SUFC), for the purchase of a Commercial Autonomous Mower.

BACKGROUND:

Staff presented report [CS-2024-25 Commercial Autonomous Mower](#) on July 2, 2024, and the following direction was given:

Moved By: John Brennan
Seconded by: Frank Kennes

THAT: Council receive report CS-2024-25 Commercial Autonomous Mower for information.

Result: Carried

Moved By: John Brennan
Seconded by: Frank Kennes

THAT: Council direct staff to work with the Strathroy United Soccer Club to develop a cost-sharing proposal for the capital purchase of a Commercial Autonomous Mower.

Result: Carried

COMMENTS:

As directed by Council, staff have been in communication with the Strathroy United Football Club (SUFC) regarding a cost-sharing proposal for purchasing a Commercial Autonomous Mower. As mentioned in the previous report, SUFC is "extremely happy, as are our out-of-town visitors." They noted that "this mower has improved the quality of the playing surface by keeping the grass at the same height, rain or shine, reducing the potential for injuries and enhancing the quality of the game."

In an e-mail, the club also praised the department for "thinking outside the box to improve the overall user experience" and mentioned that they "will be discussing with the executive how we can contribute financially to help purchase this mower to ensure it remains."

By integrating autonomous mowers, soccer field maintenance can become more efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly, ultimately enhancing the playing surface quality for athletes and freeing up valuable staff time for other important tasks.

The adoption of autonomous mowers offers a viable, cost-saving, and efficient alternative to traditional gasoline mowers. Despite the higher initial investment, the long-term savings in labor and energy, combined with environmental benefits, make this technology a worthwhile investment for the Community Services Department. The trial process has proven to be very successful and has been graciously received by SUFC to the extent their executive has approved a maximum spend of \$20,000.00 matching any funds provided by the PTP program from the Municipality.

CONSULTATION:

Director of Finance/Treasurer
Supervisor of Parks and Recreational Facilities
Strathroy United Football Club

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The SUFC executive board has approved a cost-sharing proposal with the Municipality for up to \$20,000.00, matching the funds provided by the municipality. The municipal matching funds of \$20,000.00 would come from the PTP program, which will have zero impact on taxation or reserve fund depletion. If the maximum amount of funds is required, it will leave a balance of \$20,000.00 available for any new projects that may develop over the next five months.

One (1) Echo TM2000 Robotic Turf Mower	\$29,500.00
One (1) Echo Model ESO600035 Base Station	\$3,200.00
One (1) Echo CGSL21AF1 2 Zoning Charging Station	\$3,500.00
One (1) Installation	\$500.00
Misc. Expense Fence and Hydro Work	Approx. \$3,300.00
Approximate Total	\$40,000.00

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO THE RECOMMENDATION:

1. Council to provide alternate direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

Local Infrastructure and Capital Investment: Households and businesses in Strathroy-Caradoc will be supported by reliable, financially responsible, and well-maintained infrastructure networks.

Community Well-being and Quality of Life: Residents of all ages in Strathroy-Caradoc will have access to community amenities and activities that are accessible and support active lifestyles and wellbeing.

Municipal Customer Service: The Municipality offers seamless, responsive service and an exceptional experience for every customer.

ATTACHMENTS:

N/A