

How the City Uses Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) Funds

The Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT), under Provincial Regulation 435/17 and City of Thunder Bay By-law 74/2018, applies to all temporary stays under 30 days. This includes stays in a hotel, motel, lodge, inn, hostel, bed and breakfast, dwelling unit, and other places transient accommodation is provided operating within Thunder Bay. 50% of the net revenue from the Municipal Accommodation Tax goes to Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) for tourism promotion and development, administered through the Tourism Investment Committee (TIC). The other 50% of the net revenue is retained by the City, earmarked for infrastructure projects and programs that promote tourism and benefit both residents and visitors.

How The City Uses MAT Funds to Promote Tourism, and to Benefit Residents and Visitors

Projects Funded by MAT to end of 2024	Amount \$
Multi-Use Indoor Turf Facility (Committed)	5,418,000
Event, Program, & Event Services Operating	1,042,200
Festival Area Renewal (Parks Renewal Program)	570,000
Conservatory Greenhouse Renewal	130,000
Cruise Line Dock	100,000
LED Scoreboard	55,200
Amusement Rides	50,000
Fort William Gardens Curtains	16,100
Event Equipment Renewal	25,000
Wayfinding Signs	14,200
North Shore Steelhead Fish Ladder	12,000
Projects to be Determined	655,600
Total MAT Funds to end of 2024	\$8,088,300



Conservatory Greenhouse Renewal

The Conservatory Greenhouse Renewal project is a major step forward in sustainability, efficiency, and community engagement.

Highlights include:

- Expansion of Greenhouse Facilities: Increasing from 8,500 to 10,250 ft² to meet growing needs.
- 3-Zone Greenhouse: A high-performance, 5-wall polycarbonate structure with environmentally controlled zones for optimal year-round cultivation.
- New Headhouse & Workshop: Designed for operational efficiency and improved workflow.
- Studio & Gallery Addition: Featuring two new fully accessible washrooms.
- Cold Frame Expansion: Growing from 1,290 ft² to 2,880 ft².

This transformation is guided by a forward-thinking design strategy that prioritizes new technology, automation, efficient space planning, and flexibility for future growth.

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City Events and Event Services

The City's signature events (like SnowDay on the Waterfront, Canada Day on the Waterfront, and Live on the Waterfront) have an estimated economic impact of \$0.4M—\$2.2M per event, tourists making up around 15% of attendees. MAT funding supports overall event hosting costs such as staffing and advertising, and significantly offsets the net cost of delivery. These events showcase local and touring performers, vendors, artisans, community groups, and service providers.

MAT funds also support not-for-profit groups in hosting community events: Event Services provides assistance to more than 145 events each year, enhancing Thunder Bay's sport and cultural landscape with high-quality, safe events.



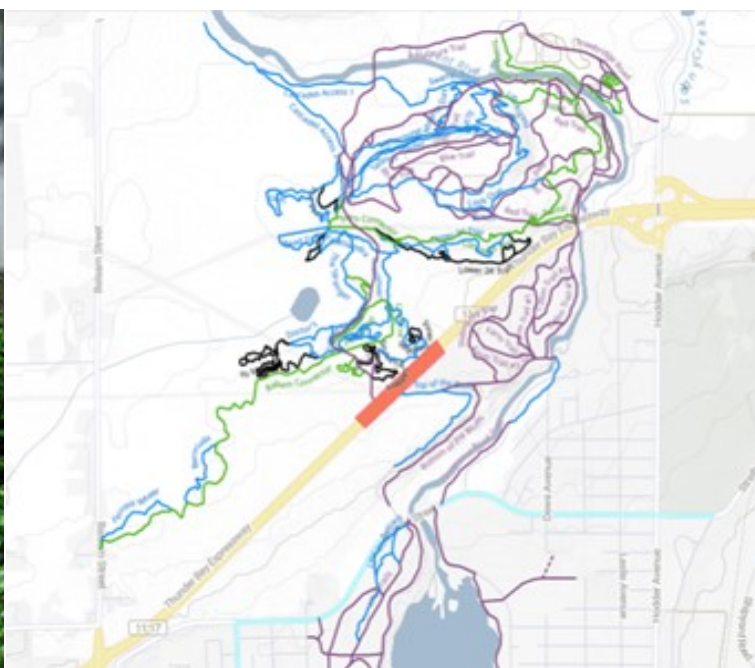
Festival Area Renewal

Thunder Bay's Marina Park festival area is undergoing a \$5 million renewal project as part of the larger waterfront master plan. The project aims to increase the area's capacity to host larger events, improve infrastructure, and enhance the overall experience for both performers and attendees. The main stage will be relocated, and a secondary stage area will be added, along with improved amenities like accessible washrooms and upgraded backstage infrastructure.

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Multi-Use Indoor Turf Facility (Committed)

Council has directed administration to allocate a portion of the MAT Reserve Fund to the proposed Multi-Use Indoor Turf Facility. It is anticipated that this facility could benefit over 6,000 users who participate in a variety of turf sports in the city, like soccer, football, ultimate frisbee, field lacrosse, cricket, and baseball.



The Trowbridge trails construction project has received over \$1.5 million of funding from Fed-Nor, NOHFC, Thunder Bay CEDC, and the City of Thunder Bay Parks and Opens Spaces to construct trails and elements in the Trowbridge Forest Masterplan.

Upgrades include:

1. A bike skills park with jump lines and a pump track.
2. A new nature themed playground.
3. A new timber framed shade structure for seating, picnics, small events and as an events hub for Black Sheep Mountain Bike events and competitions.
4. 10km+ of multi-use singletrack including the popular lookout trail, downhill bike-only gravity trails, uphill climbing trail and connector to Balsam Street among others.
5. A new trailhead and parking area at Balsam Street, a shade structure and new playground at Kinsmen Park. These improvements have resulted in an overall increase in mountain biking/hiking and trail running in the park by a wide variety of users, as well as increased family activity in Kinsmen Park.

In addition to benefiting the local population, the improvements have also facilitated the hosting of large national caliber events such as the XCM Canadian Championships in both 2024 and 2025 and the Xterra Triathlon in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

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Event Equipment Renewal

The City's event equipment inventory is essential to the successful hosting of City and community events. Equipment includes items such as stage and production equipment, A/V equipment, venue equipment (ie. tents and signs), program equipment (ie. games and snowshoes), and safety equipment (ie. road and crowd control barriers and radios). MAT funds help to keep this equipment available as these items must be replaced regularly to meet the needs of event hosts. Most of these items can be borrowed by community event organizers, many free of charge.



Canada Games Complex LED Scoreboard

The Canada Games Complex received funding from MAT for a new Scoreboard and Timing System located in the pool area. This project increased our ability to host events (like swim and dive meets) and multi-sport games. Spectators are now able to view live scores/times during an event, and the scoreboard is available for ongoing promotions.

Fort William Gardens Event Infrastructure

MAT funding was used in 2024 to replace event-hosting infrastructure at the Fort William Gardens, specifically the event curtains. These curtains are required for the stage, tunnels, and hallways to provide backdrop, privacy, and security during events at Fort William Gardens.

North Shore Steelhead Fish Ladder

In 2023, the MAT tax supported a partner project between the City and the North Shore Steelhead Association to make improvements to the fish ladder located in the Boulevard Dam fishway on the Current River. The improvements allow fish to successfully migrate upstream of the fish ladder. A fish counter was also installed to collect data on fish migration. The hope is that this work will help establish a self sustaining steelhead run on the Current River. Steelhead fishing is a known tourism draw to the area and also is a past-time enjoyed by many residents.



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Amusement Rides

Chippewa and Centennial Parks are destinations for residents and visitors to the city. At Chippewa, MAT funds were used to restore seats on the Tilt-a-Whirl, paint and clear coat Carousel horses, and new panels for the Carousel. At Centennial Park, funds were used to perform track maintenance for the Muskeg Express.

Cruise Ship Docks

MAT was used to fund assessments and designs required for improvements to the Pool 6 Cruise Ship Terminal. Assessments included a bathymetric study, bollard testing and structural inspection which informed design work to make the dock safe and functional. With this investment, the City of Thunder Bay has hosted:

- 2022— two cruise ships, with eight dockings
- 2023—four cruise ships, with 14 dockings, plus one guest vessel for a public event
- 2024—five cruise ships with 17 dockings

Each of these visits has seen between 200 and 400 passengers visit the City. This also leads to many people visiting the city before or after their cruise.

