



Subject: *District Recreation Fund Application (Intake 1) for 2026*
To: Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee
Date Prepared: February 25, 2026
Prepared by: Jo Swinemer, Community Development Coordinator
Approved by: Alana Tapper, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture and Adam Clarkson, Director of Corporate Services

Summary

This report presents recommendations for the District Recreation Fund (DRF) for Executive Committee to review and recommend to Council.

The first DRF intake closed on January 31, 2026. There were 9 grant applications received across 6 districts with requested funds totaling \$160,274. The applications were reviewed by the Staff Grant Review Committee and evaluated against Council policy. All applications meet the policy criteria and have been included in this report.

Council may wish to approve funding from multiple districts where projects benefit facilities and users of facilities that service a large area of the municipality. This report notes under each project where other districts have contributed to previous years' projects.

Financial Impact Statement

The total available funding for DRF, including carryover and new allocations, for 2026-2027 is \$885,377. A full summary of balances by district is provided later in this report.

In addition, there is \$3875 remaining in the Gore area rate (District 11) and \$243,863 in the additional Mount Uniacke recreation area rate.

The requests for the first intake totaled \$160,274. Funding being recommended is \$150,941 based on Council policy.

Recommendation

That Council approve funding for the DRF grant applications based on discussion at Committee, pending confirmation of external funding or appropriate alternative and all supporting documents are received.

Recommended Motion

Move that Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee recommend that Council approve District Recreation Funding 2026-2027 (Intake 1) based on discussion at committee (motions will have details for Council).

Background

The District Recreation Funding Program offers annual funding opportunities to groups that provide benefit to the residents of East Hants and offer the development of programs, activities and infrastructure that encourage active and healthy lifestyles. The program has two intakes; January 31 and April 30 annually.

District Recreation Funding Program Objectives:

1. Support community-based organizations to maintain and enhance their recreation facilities.
2. Establish criteria which is equitable and consistently applied.
3. Maintain accountability when dispersing public recreation funds.
4. Support the vision and strategies of municipal strategic plans.

Organizations are first eligible for 50% of project costs (33% for CCRCE properties/projects). If a district's fund does not have sufficient funding to meet this threshold, the organization may then receive up to 50% of a district's available funds. In special circumstances, Council may contribute more than 50% of the total project cost or more than 50% of the funds not yet committed in the District Recreation Fund if:

- The applicant is the only organization maintaining a recreation facility in that district;
- There is evidence of significant community support demonstrated by written letters of support from the other eligible organizations;
- The project directly advances municipal plans; or,
- At the direction of Council.

Applications are reviewed for completeness, adherence to policies and evaluated against alignment with municipal recreation priorities and other applications received.

Staff evaluate the District Recreation Funds applications and make funding allocations based on policy. Council may wish to consider combining district funds to help accommodate the funding requests or adjust the allocation amount for a particular project.

2026/2027 District Recreation Funds Allocations:

Districts	Remaining Commitments (2025/2026)	Carryover: 2025/2026 Balances	2026/2027 Allocations	2026/2027 Available Funds
1 - Enfield Centre (Garden-Cole)	\$3,697	\$18,872	\$28,786	\$47,658
2 - Elmsdale (Mitchell)	\$1,200	\$40,823	\$26,928	\$67,751
3 - Nine Mile River-Belnan (Hebb)		\$46,316	\$30,668	\$76,984
4 - Shubenacadie-Indian Brook (MacPhee)		\$48,263	\$14,349	\$62,612
5 - Maitland-Noel Shore (Rhyno)		\$54,739	\$18,417	\$73,156
6 - North Lantz-Milford (Merriam)	\$200	\$22,559	\$22,949	\$45,508
7 - South Lantz (Tingley)	\$1,748	\$38,189	\$24,529	\$62,718
8 - Mount Uniacke-South Rawdon (Perry)		\$123,590	\$33,940	\$157,530
9 - South-East Uniacke (Moussa)		\$122,282	\$36,653	\$158,935
10 - Enfield-Grand Lake (Dixon)	\$1,000	\$18,964	\$36,293	\$55,257
11 - Rawdon-Kennetcook (Roulston)	\$1,000	\$58,307	\$18,961	\$77,268
Subtotal	\$8,845	\$592,904	\$292,473	\$885,377
Remaining Gore \$0.01 (Dist. 11)		\$3,875		\$3,875
Mount Uniacke Additional Rate		\$192,652	\$51,211	\$243,863
Total Available Funds				\$1,133,114

Discussion

The Staff Grant Committee reviewed all nine applications against Council's policy. The projects are outlined below by district with a brief description of the project, total cost, recommendation for funding based on policy and other relevant notes such as pending funding.

DRF Project Descriptions - Intake 1

District 2 - Elmsdale

Funding Available: \$ 67,751

East Hants Gymnastics & Trampoline Club

Project: Gym/Equipment Improvements & Program Enhancements

Description: The club is upgrading several smaller pieces of equipment including custom mat for the bars purchased last year, a tumbletrak, an air track, and spotting mats. These pieces enhance safety and functionality of the gym space to support athletes' development and help accommodate more participants. Application also includes heavy duty carpet shampooer and vacuum cleaner for a cleaner, safer gym while extending the life of the mats, floors and other surfaces.

Total Project: \$ 16,006

Requested DRF Funds: \$8,003

Application Status: Complete

DRF Policy Allocation: \$ 8,003 (1/2 project)

Notes:

- Pending Funding - Sport Fund (Sport NS)
- Members/users are from the corridor and beyond. Support came from Districts 1, 3, 7, 10 in 2025.

District 3 - Nine Mile River - Belnan

Funding Available: \$ 76,984

Nine Mile River Trails

Project: Hemlock Cathedral Trail Updates

Project Description: This 3.1 km trail has experienced significant wear over the years that has exposed rocks and roots. The improvements to this trail enhance safety and accessibility and prevent worsening erosion and exposure of roots.

Total Project: \$ 27,360

Requested DRF Funds: \$13,680

Application Status: Complete

DRF Policy Allocation: \$ 13,360 (1/2 project)

Notes:

- Pending Funding -NS Recreational Trail Expansion Grant & NMR Windmill Community Fund.
- In past years, Districts 1, 2, 7, & 10 have contributed to this group's projects.

District 6 - North Lantz - Milford

Funding Available: \$45,508

Milford Recreation Association

Project: Kitchen Upgrades

Project Description: Working toward a commercial kitchen, project includes fresh paint, including cabinets, which will also be locking, and a new beverage fridge. New supplies including kitchen items (pots, pans cutting boards, utensils etc.)

along with safety items such as an eye wash station. Application also includes kitchen upgrades hoped to encourage additional and regular rentals to help support the facility and grounds.

Total Project: \$ 17,925

Requested DRF Funds: \$8,692

Application Status: Complete

DRF Policy Allocation: \$ \$8,692 (1/2 project)

Notes:

- In previous years, Districts 2, 3 & 7 have contributed to this group's projects.
- Application did include provincial funding through Community Recreation Capital Grant, which is no longer available.

District 8 - Mount Uniacke - South Rawdon

Funding Available: \$ 157,530

Mount Uniacke Mustangs Fastball Association

Project: Mower Purchase

Description: The Association is planning to add a zero-turn mower as a second mower to allow for mowing the two fields and the grass areas around the field. The addition of a second machine will allow volunteers to work together to maintain fields more easily.

Total Project: \$ 10,533

Requested DRF Funds: \$8,553

Application Status: Complete

DRF Policy Allocation: \$ 5,267(1/2 project)

Shortfall: \$3,286

Notes:

- In past years, District 9 has contributed to this group's projects.

Uniacke & District Legion Branch 165

Project: Bingo Equipment

Description: Current equipment is nearing end of life cycle, and the group is planning to buy a new one. The legion hosts weekly bingo game that is well attended by the community, and it also hosts events for fundraisers such as Wish Givers.

Total Project: \$ 32,650

Requested DRF Funds: \$20,000

Application Status: Complete

DRF Policy Allocation: \$ 16,325 (1/2 project)

Shortfall: \$3,675

Notes:

- In past years, District 9 has contributed to this group's projects.

Uniacke District Home & School

Project: Playground Improvements, Phase 1

Description: This is first step in multi-phase redevelopment of the playgrounds at the school. This first phase includes addition of one accessible/inclusive stand-alone playground component, an inclusive swing, and the construction of an accessible (crusher dust) pathway to connect the play space.

Total Project: \$ 90,060

Requested DRF Funds: \$22,500
Application Status: Complete

DRF Policy Allocation: \$22,500 (Request is within the 1/3 project cost for CCRCE properties)

Notes:

- Pending Funding - Provincial Recreation Facilities Development Grant
- Under policy, CCRCE properties can receive a max of 33% of project cost.
- In past years, District 9 has contributed to this group's projects. Students from District 9 attend this school.

District 10 - Enfield Centre
Funding Available: \$ 55,257

EH Horne School Preservation Society

Project: Brick Work and Chimney Repair

Project Description: Repair exterior chimneys (liners and brick from roof up) and repointing of brickwork on south facing exterior wall, continuing along with phased approach. This phase includes specialized scaffolding which makes up more than half the cost of the project.

Total Project: \$ 58,572

Requested DRF Funds: \$21,536
Application Status: Complete

DRF Policy Allocation: \$ 21,536 (request within the 1/2 project cost)

Notes:

- In past years, Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, & 7 have contributed to this group's projects.

Shubenacadie Canal Commission, Lock 6 Park

Project: Marshland Boardwalk Rebuild

Project Description: In the July 2023 flood, the park's infrastructure was destroyed. In 2024, with EMO funding, the Woodland Boardwalk was reconstructed, and funding from CCTH was used to complete an assessment and plan for the Marshland Boardwalk. The 2026 project is the reconstruction of the Marshland Boardwalk and viewing platform using an improved climate-resistant plan.

Total Project: \$ 136,485

Requested DRF Funds: \$30,000
Application Status: Complete

DRF Policy Allocation: \$ 27,628 (1/2 of funding available in District 10)
Shortfall: \$2,372

Notes:

- In previous years, District 1 has contributed to this organization's projects
- Pending funding from both provincial and federal programs

District 11 - Rawdon-Kennetcook
Funding Available: \$ 77,268

Rawdon District Home & School

Project: Playground Improvements/Accessible Component

Project Description: The Home & School is planning to add an accessible component (universal carousel) to school playground, along with an asphalt pathway for access as the first part of a planned playground improvement for the school.

Total Project: \$ 81,930

Requested DRF Funds: \$27,310
Application Status: Complete

DRF Policy Allocation: \$ 27,310 (1/3 project)

Notes:

- Pending Funding - Provincial Recreation Facilities Development Grant
- Under policy, CCRCE properties can receive a max of 33% of project cost.
- Students from part of District 3 (Upper Nine Mile River) attend this school.
- Registry of Joint Stocks in process

Summary of allocations based on policy:

Applicant	District	DRF Amount Requested	Dist. Funds Available	Policy based recommendations
EH Gymnastics & Trampoline Club	2	\$8,003	\$67,751	\$8,003
Nine Mile River Trails	3	\$13,680	\$76,984	\$13,680
Milford Rec	6	\$8,692	\$45,508	\$8,692
Uniacke Home & School	8	\$22,500	\$157,530	\$22,500
Uniacke Legion	8	\$20,000	\$157,530	\$16,325
Uniacke Mustangs	8	\$8,553	\$157,530	\$5,267
EH Horne	10	\$21,536	\$55,257	\$21,536
Shubenacadie Canal Commission	10	\$30,000	\$55,257	\$27,628
Rawdon Home & School	11	\$27,310	\$77,268	\$27,310
Totals		\$160,274		\$150,941

Code of Conduct

With the Code of Conduct, Councillors who feel they have a conflict of interest should declare this conflict before any discussion takes places related to a motion of Council. District Recreation Fund applications will be broken out into separate motions to allow those Councillors with an identified conflict the opportunity to participate in discussions for other applications.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

District Recreation Fund Program provides capital funding to non-profit community groups who own and/or operate indoor and outdoor community facilities available to all residents to enjoy. These community groups contribute to a strong community and provide sustainable infrastructure.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The requests for the first intake totaled \$160,274. The amount brought forward through Council policy allocation is \$150,941. The available District Recreation Fund for 2026-2027 is \$885,377, broken down below by district.

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Alternatives

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