

WHO:

City of Sault Ste. Marie

WHERE:

Sault Ste. Marie, ON

WHAT:

Eco-Flex's sidewalk rubber tiles were used by the city as a pilot on a sidewalk strip along Queen Street East.

WHEN:

May 2012

WHY:

Eco-Flex municipal rubber sidewalk products are environmentally sustainable solutions that provide all-season durability in high-traffic pedestrian and vehicular traffic.



City of Sault Ste. Marie: The Rubber Sidewalk Pilot

SITUATION

Prompted by the seasonal beatings of hot summer months, freezing winter temperatures and winds of Lake Superior, road and sidewalk repairs and safety reviews are a regular part of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's ongoing community maintenance and beautification efforts. But regular repairs also mean regular expenses that can add up to major costs in the long run, and it is becoming a growing priority for the city to find economical, yet environmentally sustainable solutions to maintain municipal properties on a regular basis.

SOLUTION

In May 2012, city council approved a pilot project to replace existing concrete sidewalks with a sustainable rubber sidewalk along Queen Street, between Pim and Church Streets. The location was selected based on adequate traffic volume to test its durability over a period of time.

The sidewalk was constructed using overlap-linking Eco-Flex rubber sidewalk tiles. Made from recycled scrap tires, the rubber sidewalk is set firmly in place but can easily be removed to re-level or re-grade the undersurface, or re-install the product, which may help reduce overall maintenance costs incurred by the city in the long term.

The durable recycled rubber construction of the Eco-Flex product also allows the city to better manage seasonal damage to its sidewalk property. Resistant to cracks or separations that commonly result from extreme heat and freezing temperatures, the rubber sidewalk also stays in place without warping or chipping through high impact use, such as frequent snow plowing, de-icing and high-traffic pedestrian and vehicular use.

"Innovative solutions, community safety and sustainable design are key factors for consideration when revitalizing our municipal properties," says Carl Rumieli, Design and Construction Manager from the City of Sault Ste. Marie. "The city and its pedestrians are looking forward to trying the Eco-Flex rubber sidewalk in this pilot project."

As an added benefit for pedestrians, a rubber sidewalk may add a level of comfort that concrete does not provide as a result of its rubber composition and higher shock absorption. Its slip-resistant quality also ensures improved safety.

The city will be monitoring the durability of the pilot rubber sidewalk through various weather conditions and heavy pedestrian use, comparing it to the traditional concrete sidewalk solution.



WHY RECYCLED TIRES

Eco-Flex is an Ontario Tire Stewardship (OTS)-registered Canadian product manufacturer that uses recycled tire materials in their products.

The rubber sidewalk tiles used in the pilot project by the City of Sault Ste. Marie incorporated the equivalent of 636 recycled passenger tires.

Through Ontario Tire Stewardship's demonstration project program, the City of Sault Ste. Marie received a grant to help offset the cost of the Eco-Flex product used in its pilot sidewalk project.

OTS is the organization that facilitates responsible tire recycling to ensure that the more than 12 million scrap tires produced in Ontario are diverted from hazardous landfills and burning facilities. Through its Used Tires Program and industry partners, OTS is actively involved in fostering new markets for innovative tire derived products. Since the program's inception, more than 40 million scrap tires have been recycled in Ontario.

"We're thrilled that Eco-Flex was approached to be a part of creating a greener city in Ontario," says Alan Champagne, Chief Executive Officer, Eco-Flex. "Our sidewalk tiles were specially engineered with recycled tire rubber to withstand extreme temperatures and high traffic use, making it a suitable choice to reduce maintenance considerations, while creating an aesthetically pleasing space."

In a survey conducted by OTS, 96% of Ontarians felt that cities should incorporate more sustainable solutions in shared community spaces.

"It's encouraging to see that municipalities are proactively responding to the growing consumer demand for green product implementations," said Andrew Horsman, Executive Director, Ontario Tire Stewardship. "Through our various programs, OTS is fostering the growth of markets for tire derived products and attracting new investment and manufacturers to the province."

About Eco-Flex

www.eco-flex.com



Eco-Flex is an industry leader in the recycling of Canadian passenger car tires and the manufacturing of high performance recycled rubber products which are sold throughout Canada and the world. Eco-Flex was branded by Champagne Edition Inc. in 1992. The company is based in a 35,000-foot manufacturing facility situated a short distance north of Edmonton, Alberta, as well as a facility in Acton, Ontario.

Eco-Flex uses the recycled rubber from six million scrap tires annually. To date, the company has been responsible for manufacturing rubber products from more than 50 million recycled passenger car tires.

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