

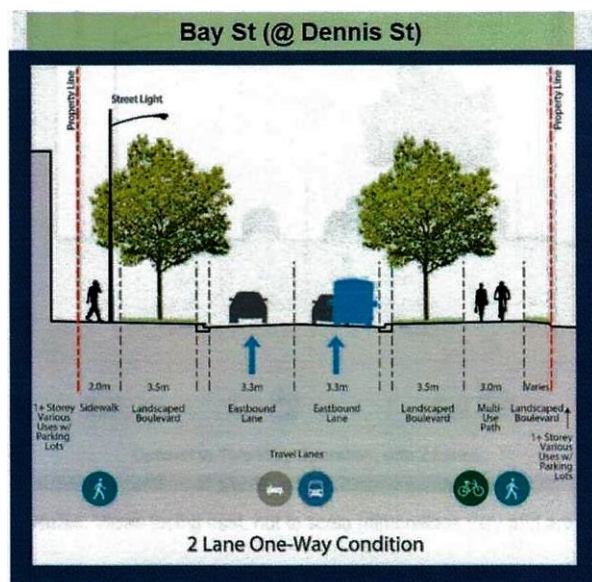


Outing Report – March 30, 2019
By the Sault Naturalists edited by Chuck Miller

A More Livable SSM (ON) Envisioning Bay Street MUP and Green Space



Downtown SSM is taking a step forward in livability at little cost by converting 4 lanes of traffic on Bay Street to 2 lanes, adding a separated multi-use path (MUP) south side of Bay St and green space. The Class B Environmental assessment is now complete and the next step is detailed design. Starting at the Ontario Tourism Centre – the Sault Naturalists took a walk down Bay Street and back on Queen Street – with detail design in mind.



Things to Think About from the EA

- complete streets / snow storage / transit / business visibility / confusion (visitors using international bridge) / attractions / utilities (electricity / natural gas / water / sewers)
- possibilities for cross walks, traffic light removal, (Bay & Spring) (Bay & East) (Queen & Spring)
- traffic speeds, traffic friction, green band at 40km/h vs 30km/h, disruption of green bands / wayfinding and signs, vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists
- bike racks, parking - 30 spaces if 2 way Queen St, public parking lots, wayfinding / events / and possible other investments presented in the EA. Parks, community centres, attractions, events

<http://saultstemarie.ca/Cityweb/media/Engineering-and-Planning/Engineering%20and%20Construction/Class%20EA/DowntownEA-Downtown-Traffic-Study-PFR.pdf>

Our Observations and Suggestions

- 1) With few exceptions Bay Street is an arterial road and offers a similar experience to walking along a freeway - observed human use of the existing sidewalks was minimal on this Saturday morning. The lack of items at human scale was alienating. It is currently a space for cars not people.



- 2) There are great attractions at the waterfront and Queen Street. To make this livable green space there will need to be added elements at a human scale and putting an emphasis on making connections to nearby attractions and Station Mall.
- 3) The power utility line along the north side of Bay Street will likely limit any opportunity to plant trees on the north side of the road.
- 4) The north side of Bay Street sidewalk is in good shape can it be saved?
- 5) Pedestrian confusion at Huron and Bay Street - one-way or two-way - traffic islands are useful to pedestrians if you can get to them.
- 6) The Multi Use Path (MUP) – proposed for the south side of Bay street should not dead end – should connect Hub Trail MUP at Library with Hub Trail MUP at Ontario Tourism Centre. In more general terms MUPs should extend across the city.
- 7) Try to save existing trees where possible – for example the existing trees in front of ACR station area along the south side of Bay Street.
- 8) Ontario Tourism Centre has some shade, picnic tables, benches, bike rack, bike repair station - things generally at a human scale. Bike racks need two points of contact to be effective – attached is what effective bike rack design looks like (photo from Sleeping Bear Dunes).



- 9) Keep all existing traffic lights (Bay & Spring) (Bay & East) (Queen & Spring) even if vehicle traffic does not warrant them - makes pedestrian crossing of street possible.
- 10) Queen Street is for shopping and pedestrian not just vehicle traffic. We favour 30 kilometers per hour on both Queen and Bay, with lights timed to provide a green window. This may keep motorists happy, keep traffic flowing smoothly but not too fast, this may be an effective way of enforcing a speed limit, save energy, air pollution and brakes and we are also motorists
- 11) Need to have clear connections with Bay Street and attractions for pedestrians (including Bay Street hotel guests) cyclists and vehicles. Need to know where to park cars from both Bay and Queen (free parking) streets; and from Bay Street people need to know that the downtown is on Queen Street. Signs and other human built features should have to same look, feel and placement.



12) Consider how traffic entering Canada from or to the north and east is routed. To go to the Tourist Bureau you must turn right off the bridge but what if you wish to go travel north in Canada the best direction is turn two lefts to Carmen's way to connect with Second Line. Not an easy task for visitors. To direct them to Bay St. at present is not a direct and easy route especially at the Pim Street intersection.

13) Need effective bicycle racks along Queen St and at Station Mall - with connector routes from Bay St MUP to Queen Street. Photo is of an ineffective bicycle rack.



14) The Station Mall parking lot is barren of trees - any chance the Mall could get on board with greening Bay St on their property?

15) The Hub Trail model of street lights and street trees between the Bush Plane Museum and the Library is desirable model for the rest of Bay Street.



16) Will these trees survive or are they too close to the street?

17) On Queen Street the Espositio Park side of the street is a better design than the Casino side for livable space.



- 18) If the Queen Street trees die - try again - if planting at sidewalk level as on Queen near Gore Street make the shrubs denser to attract bird nesting. Existing tree boxes on Queen Street are also used by people sitting. Tight "stocking" would provide song bird habitat of shelter and nesting space. A dense cover would also help the plants support each other making them far more resistant to winter damage. A dense stocking would also create a natural barrier that would direct pedestrians to appropriate walking locations as opposed to taking a short cut over the beds compacting soils. We would suggest plant types for consideration should be native only. Priority could be to those that provide berries. Consider plants in the dogwood family, elderberry, wild rose, stag-horn sumac, bearberry, nannyberry, and for conifers, globe cedar and perhaps yew (ground hemlock) for ground cover. If trees are incorporated, we suggest mountain ash.
- 19) Is a chimney swift sign desirable at the court house /office?
- 20) Clergue Park is close to many of the waterfront features and is a logical hub for tourists that could park and take a walk along Queen Street. Currently this park is used for the Rotary Fair but in time may move to The Mill Yard.
- 21) Clergue Park is a fantastic place for extending the skating trail as well as a diverse botanical garden in addition to a walking and sitting area, butterfly park and a nice water feature (fountain). We see a considerable "natural" opportunity to create habitat along the south side of Bay Street in Clergue Park. Presently this large field is all grass. Around the year 2000, Forestry staff and others from MNR in Bondar place took a grassed mound on the south-east corner of the Bondar building and created the "Millennium Forest". Native plants were removed from the MNR Arboretum on third line West, the sod was removed and plants that ranged from ground cover up to trees were planted and today is a great addition to that area. We think it would be wonderful if the city would consider reducing their grass cutting and creating one or two "islands of biodiversity" in the park. The areas could be built, perhaps building a small hill in the centre. They could be as small as 10 meters round or much larger. I think in addition to creating habitat they would be visually appealing through the seasons. Educational signage could follow and perhaps a dedicated new path that would lead people to the waterfront. (could also provide an extension to the skating trail). Love the city's current plan for Bay St. regarding Clergue Park (across from the library).
- 22) Question: What is happening with the Brewery Block parking lot in the future? It is just a short hop from this parking area to Queen St, the Hub Trail and on to Clergue Park.
- 23) Public access to the waterfront eastward - just east of the Art Gallery/Library is blocked by private development. The City should ensure the public has access to the waterfront in the former tank farm to the east this development. It certainly has much potential for a public/green space but contamination issues among other things may have to be resolved first.

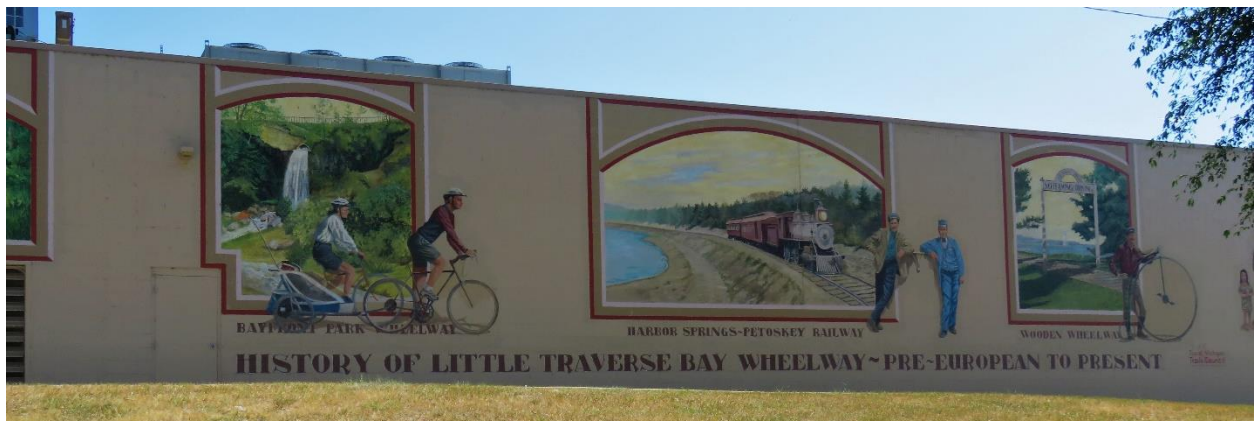
24) Nothing is more welcoming to people than some place to sit in a pleasant setting. We think there should be lots of benches along both Queen and Bay for folks to sit and watch the world go by and enjoy the shade, flowering plants and buzzing pollinators.

25) Desirable to have a water fountain at the little park by the library or on Queen by the Court House. Most cyclists have water bottles a few water bottle filling stations along MUPs would be desirable - could be indoor or outdoor but preferably outdoor.

26) A possible event could be to partner with the Museum on a transportation history of the downtown. Given the current popularity of cycling – there are currently exhibits on cycling history in New York, Ottawa and Peterborough. Photo taken at the St Joseph Island museum.



27) Consider a mural – wall in front of hotel. Photo taken in Petoskey of mural.



28) A possible event or sign could celebrate the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. Photo taken at Iron Bridge.



29) Queen Street is a livable street and welcomes humanity - bicycle access is currently by walking your bike.



18) Bicycle Pump Track & Bruce and Gore - changes are a step in a humanizing direction – toward complete streets.

