

SAULT STE. MARIE

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## Council's bus terminal decision 'disappointing'

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The Huron Street bus barns are 'technically' in the canal district and 'definitely' not in the downtown, writes Fred Haavisto.

Council's 7-4 decision to move the city bus terminal to Huron Street was disappointing.

There should have been more debate on alternate locations as expressed by some of the councillors. The Huron Street bus barns are technically in the canal district and definitely not in the downtown.

Personally, I thought the suggestion made some weeks back by Coun. Matthew Shoemaker was deserving of serious consideration.

He had suggested that rather than refurbishing or rebuilding on the current site or moving the terminal to Huron Street, that transit take over the vacated Algoma Central Agawa Canyon Tour Train depot in the northwest corner of Station Mall grounds.

The existing structure already had most, if not all, of the facilities and access requirements needed. There would be more than ample parking for buses and cars considering that the tour train depot had been able to handle upwards of 800 passengers for an outing.

Having the city bus terminal here would likely appease many of the Queen Street businesses who were against the relocation to Huron Street, and would definitely bring more shoppers and tourists to Station Mall.

Considering the current state of occupancy at Station Mall, I would think that Algoma Central Properties would be willing to sever a piece of its northwest parking lot and the depot structure and sell it to the city. The city has been known to buy properties, some at exorbitant prices.

There has been talk about the necessity for significant renovations to the existing city police service building. There has also been talk about relocating the police headquarters to a downtown site. The current bus terminal site, owned by the city, might be the most appropriate location for a new modern Sault Ste. Marie Police Service home.

Four of our councillors saw problems and escalating costs with rebuilding a bus terminal on the current site and with the move to the Huron Street bus barns.

It is too bad that seven of the councillors were not looking outside of the original box. Alternatives should have been considered.

Fred Haavisto

Sault Ste. Marie