

# Council to Move Ahead with Plaza Plans

By **Megan Pounder** - August 13, 2019



Council voted in favour of purchasing the land located at 535 Queen St. E, taking \$110,134 from the the Property Purchase Reserve Fund to continue revitalizing the downtown with the addition of a **plaza** during Monday evening's meeting.

This plan has been in the works since **Destination Development's Roger Brooks** visited the Sault in 2018, leaving a list of key recommendations to improve the city. One of those recommendations was to build a public plaza space within the downtown core that would be active 250 days of the year regardless of weather conditions.



"What Roger Brooks did is just confirm what we believe, which is that we needed some significant development in the heart of our downtown that bridged, that created a north-south corridor down to the water and created some activity right in the middle of our downtown," Mayor Provenzano said to council before their question period.



"And I think after a lot of work and a lot of effort and a lot of thought, we've come up with a really exciting project that's got some ambition and it's a matter of investing in ourselves and believing in ourselves. But I actually think there's very very little risk to it, and we've structured it in such a way that we're looking to do it within our current levee, so this wouldn't be in addition to the levee, but I think it really speaks loudly to our desire as a community to look forward and to be progressive and to grow and to invest in ourselves." Provenzano said, " And I think we're turning what is now just a parking lot that we own into an attractive space in the heart of our downtown that we could use for a number of generations to come and really enjoy. If you build it they will come; I mean you've seen the desire for activity in the downtown – you saw the reaction to the Soorasick Parks, I'm sure all of you have gotten a lot of comments about the marina, I know I have received a tremendous number of comments about the marina and how nice it looks and I think that's a really positive development."

And you're seeing the Downtown Association do great events and actually get really impressive responses to them. so I think that this just adds to that and gives us another piece of infrastructure that we can use as a community. So I'm excited at where we're at and I just want to thank the planning staff for working so hard on this and bringing what I think is a great project to council for your consideration."Provenzano said.



Tom Vair clarified questions from Couns. Shoemaker and Vezeau-Allen in regards to the Clergue Park Skating Trail and Roberta Bondar Pavilion (the plaza won't take away from either of those, rather the hopes are that it will open up more opportunities for events), and Couns. Bruni and Gardi about funding (part of it will come from the City's budget and part of it from fundraising/sponsorship), council voted in favour of going ahead with the purchase of the land.

"This is real city planning and i think it sets us up well for the future," Coun. Christian said.

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### **Megan Pounder**

Megan Pounder is an enthusiastic individual who's always striving to learn and grow. She's been a part of the SaultOnline team since May 2018. She has an Advanced Diploma in Journalism: Online, Broadcast and Print from Loyalist College. Along with her diploma, she has some freelance video journalism and social media experience. Growing up in Prince Edward County sparked her enthusiasm for all things nature. When she isn't reporting, you can find her reading, jamming out to music, or looking for new adventures.