

# Millroy: “Notice What?”

By **Doug Millroy** - September 21, 2021

**dougMILLROY**

I don't know how I missed it all these years.

I was asked this question by a passerby in Station Mall:

“With all your ramblings about the reworked pattern for traffic from East and Albert Streets leading to Wellington, have you ever taken a look at where traffic from Bay Street runs up Pim Street to Queen?”

I said I travel that route almost daily.

“And you never noticed?”

"Notice what?"

"It is exactly what was once the pattern at East and Albert leading to Wellington," he said before walking on.

All I had ever noticed about this route was that with the completion of the reconstruction of Bay Street, the new marking dividing the lanes on Pim Street shortchanged the left lane in width

But going home this day I checked out what I had been told and found it hard to believe that all these years I could have missed what was pointed out to me and also that someone, anyone, hadn't pointed it out to me much earlier.

The traffic configuration at Pim and Queen is exactly what was in play at East and Wellington Streets before the line painters from Guelph made an unsolicited change and the top echelon in traffic decisions with the city decided that, rather than have it corrected, they would go along with it.

To refresh the memory of anyone who hadn't followed the controversy that began in 2015, for 50 or so years previous traffic in the left lane coming off Albert Street turned north on East Street where there was an easy split that allowed it to go either east or west on Wellington.

Traffic in the right lane on Albert could turn south on East Street or turn left to carry on up East Street to Wellington Street East.

That is exactly what is in play at Pim and Queen now.

Two lanes of traffic from Bay Street turn left onto Pim; both lanes carry on to Queen Street East but traffic in the left lane also can make a left turn to travel west on Queen.

What could be simpler?

Certainly not the mess the linepainters from Guelph gave us at East and Albert leading to Wellington.

I actually find it sad that I travelled the Bay Street route to Pim and Queen so many times and never noticed that it was a replica of what we once had at East and Albert leading to Wellington.

But what I find even sadder is that the talking heads at Public Works and Engineering Services, the department which oversees traffic patterns in the city, had to know it all along and allowed the botched configuration at East and Albert leading to Wellington to stand.

**WITH THREE EXCEPTIONS**, the 6-5 vote by council last week to provide \$230,000 to allow electrical servicing to proceed on the proposed downtown plaza, even though financing for the project is a long way from being in place, saw the New Guard going up against the Old Guard.

The New Guard won.

Voting to surge ahead were first-term Councillors Corey Gardi, Lisa Vezeau-Allen, Donna Hilsinger and Luke Dufour. They were joined by Coun. Sandra Hollingsworth and Mayor Christian Provenzano, who cast the deciding vote.

Veteran Councillors Matthew Shoemaker, Rick Niro, Marchy Bruni and Paul Christian were joined by first-termer Matthew Scott in voting for a delay.

A story on saultonline said the delay was going to be only until Sept. 27, when a full report was to be before council for approval. The story said Tom Vair, Deputy CAO, Community Development and Enterprise Services, had indicated a delay wouldn't put the overall project behind.

Actually, that's too bad. Since the project is \$1.4 million short in its financing, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation refusing to cough up the \$2 million the city was asking of it, I believe everything should be put on hold until all funding is in place.

As it stands, if it goes ahead without this funding, we taxpayers are going to be on the hook for about \$7 million when it only should have been about \$5 million.

However, I don't think this is going to stop some members of council, enough of them actually, from forcing this project through no matter the pitfalls.

Considering there appears to be so much opposition to the plaza, I would have preferred seeing it put on the ballot for the city election next year in the form of a plebiscite. Other than that, I suppose we will just have to take a run at those councillors who are pushing it on us.

**CITY COUNCIL** is inserting itself into the problem of speeding that seems to have been growing in this city over the past while.

Ward 3 Coun. Donna Hilsinger presented council with a motion calling for strategies that include reducing speed limits, implementing automated speed enforcement, improving road design and improving public transportation options as well as playing host to public engagement campaigns.

It is something we can all support, as most of us have noticed a decided uptick of speeding over the past year or two and nothing seems to have been done about it.

But Sue Pringle, a resident of the former Diplomat Motel property now owned by North 44, would like to see the plan stretched out a bit. She would like it to include better policing of extreme noise as well.

She says at times she can't sleep because of the loud noise of motorcycles that tour the downtown, going round and round, revving needlessly when they stop at the lights on Pim. As well, she said the bass from a stereo in one vehicle was so strong it knocked a mirror off the wall.

Pringle says she has called police but "they are no help whatsoever."

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### **Doug Millroy**

After 61 years in the news business, 41 of them associated with The Sault Star as editor, Doug continues to share his passion for writing as a columnist since retirement.