

Downtown Trolley Not Derailed, Just Delayed Council Told

By **Craig Huckerby** - May 24, 2022 @ 5:42 pm



Postcard image of the downtown trolley operated by Algoma Steel until 1942

The downtown trolley idea hasn't derailed, that's the message council heard Tuesday.

The idea surfaced back in 2003. Since then not much has been done on the idea until May 2019 when a report to council was requested. The idea was to make the trolley part of a downtown experience for tourists and residents alike.



The Downtown Trolley would be a motorized bus with the exterior designed to look like an old-fashioned streetcar – something similar to the streetcar that helped move Algoma Steel employees from East street to the Steel Plant gate at the end of Queen Street West from 1903 to 1942. At the time Algoma Steel operated the transit for the city.

The novel idea would see the trolley allow tourists, Agawa Canyon passengers, cruise ship passengers and others more time at various attractions instead of spending time getting to those attractions.

One of the hold-backs on the idea at present, is the exact route for the trolley said Tom Vair, Deputy CAO, Community Development and Enterprise Services told council.

Vair said the trolley working group has met on several occasions to determine and define a potential route for the trolley along with identifying potential funding partners and examine different business cases as in City operated or private sector. The group also needs to determine fees versus free service and the overall potential costs.

"So it's ready to go" councillor Matt Shoemaker asked Vair. Shoemaker was seeking assurances that the idea is still on track. Shoemaker sat on the working group along with members from Parks Canada, the Downtown Association, Art Gallery of Algoma, Bushplane Museum, Chamber of Commerce, Sault Ste. Marie Museum and staff from Tourism and Community Development, Transit, Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site and Community Services.

Vair said a final report will come before council , most likely by the summer of 2023 to approve the plan. Meaning the current council will not decide the fate of the downtown trolley idea.

Craig Huckerby

Craig Huckerby is a seasoned broadcast and media professional with over 38 years in local media. Starting in television, Craig became known as "the weather guy" on local television before pioneering internet media in the Sault. Craig is credited for bringing local television back to the Sault via the internet in 2003 with LTVNEWS.COM and was instrumental in launching SooNews.ca and Local2.ca. Craig is happy to be part of the Sault's newest media team of ONNtv and SaultOnline.com

