

Candidates thoughts differ on photo radar/red-light cameras – Week 15 – Candidate Q&A

By **Content Team** - July 18, 2022 @ 10:14 am



Do you have a question you would like to be asked of your candidates in the week's leading up to the election? Let us know at newsroom@saultonline.com or in the comment section!

Our site is going into week fifteen of our question-and-answer feature in which SaultOnline poses a question from the community to those running for both Mayor and Councillor.

Our team garners questions from the community, at times from a specific member, and at other times from multiple constituents as posed over the last 48 months on our social media platforms and present them to those wanting to lead our community.



If the individual(s) want to be identified, we will identify the asker, otherwise, the queries are posed as general questions.

Currently, only those listed in [the City of Sault Ste. Marie website](#) as running for the respective positions as Mayor and Councillors are given these questions.

As always the question is put forward early in the week and an assigned deadline of Friday at noon is given for responses to be submitted. The responses are listed in the order in which they were received.

This weeks question is one of those that comes from a community at large-

This week's question comes from Andre Riopel:

1. Would you support having photo radar in Sault Ste. Marie?

SaultOnline will add a few other follow-ups for this question-

2. How do you propose slowing traffic down in our community/your ward?

3. Would you support dropping the speed limit in the downtown core from the current speed limit 30 km/h? this would be from Bay to Wellington, East Street to Gore Street.

4. Would you support red light cameras?

Again, the answers are placed in a first answered, first presented format.

Do the answers here match yours? Let us know in the comment section.

Mayoral Candidates –

Matthew Shoemaker-

1. Would you support having photo radar in Sault Ste. Marie?

No, I wouldn't support the widespread use of photo radar, but I would support it to make school zones or construction zones safer (or other limited uses where there's evidence it works). The information I've been able to find suggests that widespread use of photo radar is only effective at the outset, then speeds start to climb again, or people find ways around getting caught. Improved street design to slow traffic is a much more effective way of reducing speeds.

SaultOnline will add a few other follow-ups for this question-

2. How do you propose slowing traffic down in our community/your ward?

I believe road design is the best way to control speeds. We can't expect a road to be built as flat as a level and as straight as an arrow, then police our way to speed control. If we designed roads to control traffic speeds, it would free up police services to do more important work.

3. Would you support dropping the speed limit in the downtown core from the current speed limit 30 km/h? this would be from Bay to Wellington, East Street to Gore Street.

I would only support a 30km/h on Queen Street itself, but not on Bay or Albert or Wellington. Even on Queen, I'd much prefer 2 way traffic over a 30km/h speed limit, that would both slow vehicles down and make it easier for motorists to access Queenstown merchants regardless of where they are in our downtown core.

4. Would you support red light cameras?

Yes, running a red light has an incredibly high probability of causing serious injury. Red light cameras also have stronger evidence behind them as a road-safety tool.

Tobin Kern-

1. Would you support having photo radar in Sault Ste. Marie?

Many constituents have expressed concerns about speeding, especially parents. It's definitely an issue on people's minds. I would hesitate to suggest investing limited and precious resources in photo radar for several reasons, though. I would be in favour of employing existing radar equipment that posts people's speeds in trouble areas, which has been shown to reduce the overall speed of traffic. I'm also concerned that investing in photo radar doesn't address climate change, and the changing landscape of transportation, coming soon. I would prefer to see investment in public transit (to improve service and lower costs) to motivate more people to leave their cars at home, alleviate congestion and wear and tear on roads, provide fuel-expense relief, and reduce carbon emissions. I also believe that reducing traffic, along with speed reductions and traffic control modifications (see lower responses) will reduce speeding.

2. How do you propose slowing traffic down in our community/your ward?

Ideally, I would like to see traffic reduction initiatives in our community supported by the city and the private sector. We all have to do our part to address climate change, and reducing transportation emissions is a key part of that success. This could include paid time for using public transit or active transportation, reducing speed limits in key areas, and other traffic control modifications (read below #3). It could also include investment in our transportation future (read below #4).

3. Would you support dropping the speed limit in the downtown core from the current speed limit 30 km/h? this would be from Bay to Wellington, East Street to Gore Street.

I would support dropping the speed limit to 40 or 30km/h in the downtown, but it would have to come with some traffic control modifications to make it feasible, as the east/west arteries are already slowed by congestion. I would propose better synchronization of lights, and longer periods of east/west traffic flow through the arteries. Virtually all of the speeding downtown is east/west speeding, and likely comes from people trying to make lights in order to get from one side of town to the other in an efficient manner. Queen and Bay, and Wellington and Albert are arteries, and need to be treated as such.

4. Would you support red light cameras?

Again, I would rather see investment of precious resources that address climate change and

the changing transportation landscape that's coming, rather than invest in addressing today's traffic light violators. Using existing traffic lights infrastructure, the city of Toronto has put a longer pause in between the switches in traffic direction, to reduce collisions that occur during these transitions. I would rather see any investment go toward our transportation future, like in public transit improvements, a spring/summer/fall bikeshare program, or even pursuing autonomous electric rideshare programs.

Ozzie Grandinetti

Would you support having photo radar in Sault Ste. Marie?

1. Yes I support having photo radar, it will help reduce speeding and allow the police to have more time to deal with other policing issues rather than spending their resources monitoring traffic and speeding.

2. How do you propose slowing traffic down in our community/your ward?

To slow down traffic I would propose using photo radar, and radar speed displays so that people can be aware of their speed. In some neighbourhoods we may need to install speed bumps, but that is not effective in all areas.

3. Would you support dropping the speed limit in the downtown core from the current speed limit 30 km/h? this would be from Bay to Wellington, East Street to Gore Street.

Yes I support dropping the speed limit in the downtown core and in residential areas, this would help reduce accidents and encourage more pedestrian traffic. Residents can use the larger roadways with the higher speed limits if they need to get around town quicker.

4. Would you support red light cameras?

No, I would also support red light cameras, because red light cameras result in more crashes as drivers slam on their brakes at camera intersections to avoid tickets causing chain-reaction crashes from behind.

Donna Hilsinger – No Response Submitted

Ward 1 –

William McPhee-

1. Yes I would absolutely support having photo radar in the Sault. Far too often when driving around town I get passed by people who are clearly doing much more than the posted limit. Sometimes they pull into a turn lane to pass creating the potential for accidents.

2. I think that if we put photo radar in random areas like they do with the signs that show you your speed that would help deter people.

3. I don't think that the speed limit in the downtown core needs to be dropped. Currently that seems to be the one area that people consistently do less than the posted limit.

4. Red light cameras would be another good thing to help deter the bad habits that people in this city seem to have. Far too often I see that the left turn arrow goes green and people have to wait for 1-3 cars coming through the intersection on a red light and turning in front

of them. I think if the police attended accident scenes again and handed out tickets that people might start driving properly again.

Sandra Hollingsworth – No Response Submitted

Brent Derochie –

Would you support having photo radar in SSM?

Through my research, there are some areas that could benefit from photo radar, such as school zones and community safety zones.

I reflect on an excerpt from the Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) webpage that speaks to the provincial implementation of the use of ASE in municipalities. I recognize the need to control speeds in our community and this could be an option. As with anything new that we implement, it would be imperative to review the effectiveness for our community, the return-on-investment and of course, learn from other communities what implementation issues should be addressed. This could be tasked to the City's Public Works Department to review.

Excerpt from ASE webpage: "In May of 2017, Ontario's Highway Act was amended to introduce the use of Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) in municipalities to address ongoing issues with speeding in School Zones and Community Safety Zones. Operating speeds within school zones are typically lower than other road segments, however the risks are much higher. Speeding around schools put the lives of our most vulnerable people at unnecessary risk and ASE is designed to slow drivers down and keep our neighbourhoods safe. While traditional enforcement will still be used, ASE is a complimentary method that enables police officers to focus on other critical and time sensitive tasks."

2. How do you propose slowing traffic down in our community and/or your Ward?

I believe that we have plenty of signage and appropriate speed limits. The City should always be open to discuss problem areas. I would be interested in understanding where those hot spots are located. While the value of the fines and penalties are provincially legislated, there are some options to improve awareness and enhance enforcement. Some options would be to use the roadside electronic speed indicators to inform drivers how fast they are going. These could be set up in problem locations.

I want to confirm that I believe the most effective strategy is ensuring that we have a proper complement of police officers. A properly funded and supported force will allow an effective policing strategy, which includes traffic control, to do an exceptional job.

3. Would you support dropping the speed limit in the downtown core from the current speed limit of 30 kms/hour this would be from Bay to Wellington, East St. to Gore St.

Our city has staff responsible to plan for and determine appropriate speed limits. They make these decisions based on local statistics and information, then by applying provincially determined standards – all of which I am sure has scientific analysis behind it. To address

compliance, the role of City Council could be to initiate a public awareness campaign and ensure proper funding of the police for enforcement purposes.

4. Would you support red light cameras?

In certain areas, red light cameras could be useful. In 2004, Sault Ste. Marie proposed multiple locations throughout our city for red light cameras. At the time, Inspector Campbell reported that most people pay their fines, resulting in little added work to local law enforcement agencies. However, there have been indications from some communities that show using red light cameras may cause as many accidents as the cameras prevent, due to rear-end collisions.

Based on the Campbell Report, the acquisition and purchasing of the cameras would cost approximately \$150,000. Ongoing maintenance and usage would equate to approximately \$60,000 per year. This was based on a 2004 evaluation, which was 18 years ago.

A new review and report would be required before decisions could be made. That review should include updated costing, return on investment for the city and impact on the collision record.

Ward 2 –

Lisa Vezeau-Allen – No Response Submitted

Luke Dufour – No Response Submitted

Ward 3 –

Luis Moreno –

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Kurtis McDermid – No response submitted

Angela Caputo – No response submitted

Ward 4 –

Merek McLeod – No response submitted

Marchy Bruni – No response submitted.

Ward 5 –

Corey Gardi –

Issues around the speed at which personal and commercial vehicles traverse our streets, is one of the most common concerns brought forward to me by constituents in the West End. Over the course of the last few years, I have worked with city staff, the Ministry of Transportation and the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service to address these concerns throughout the West End. Specifically, on Goulais Ave., Wallace Terrace, 2nd Line West and Allens Side Road but also in residential areas such as Brookfield and Broadview Gardens. Despite these efforts, speeding continues to be an issue.

One initiative I was a part of was to lower the speed limit in all school zones which began last year, which should make it safer for families and students in the vicinity of our schools.

I would be supportive of the responsible use of photo radar in SS Marie along with cameras at intersections, I would hope both would go a long way to serve as a deterrent and to catch habitual speeders.

As a community, we have to continue to implement some of the traffic calming measures we have started to utilize, including the narrowing of some streets and enhanced pedestrian crossings. Many people have brought forward the idea of using speed bumps in different residential areas, I support this, and encourage city staff to consider the use of them in the West End/Ward 5, as they have on McGregor Ave. for several years.

I would be supportive of lowering the speed limit downtown, particularly on Queen Street to make it a safer and more inviting area for pedestrian traffic, I think businesses downtown could benefit from an initiative such as this as well. That said, I'm not sure what the best limit would be, but would strongly consider any informed recommendations.

More than anything though, we all have to do our part to quell speeding in the Sault, this includes all of us obeying speed limits, and I would strongly encourage commercial vehicles to do so as well. There are too many large, commercial vehicles travelling at excessive speeds in the West End and throughout our community. The rate at which many of them travel, poses a significant risk to the safety of fellow drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Matt Scott-

Photo radar is an interesting topic because there are studies supporting both sides of the argument surrounding their effectiveness. One thing that I get a bit weary of regarding photo radar is that these cameras are recording people in other vehicles who are just privately operating their vehicles. As far as I'm aware, photo radar cannot be used to issue demerit points on a driver so the only way they could deter people from speeding is by fines sent to the owner of a vehicle which, in my opinion, essentially makes speeding less of an issue for wealthier residents and may not address the root cause. I would be hesitant to spend taxpayer money on something that may not even work.

Slowing down traffic in the city and specifically ward 5 is something that I have championed in my time on city council. I brought forward a motion to implement school zones surrounding all schools in our city rather than a select few and I've personally met with staff many times to discuss speeding and how to reduce it. I think public education and an increase in proper enforcement would help to deter speeding as well as just an overall change of culture. Ultimately I consider speeding to be disrespectful to your fellow resident as it increases risks for accidents and injury.

Based on my many discussions with staff around speed limits, I have become very aware of the best practice guidelines that they follow when determining speed limits on our roads and I believe those to be well thought out and well researched. If those guidelines suggested a decrease to 30 km/h then I would entertain the reduction but if those same guidelines say that the current 50 km/h is the right mix between safety and efficient traffic flow then I will stick with those.

My thoughts on red light cameras are similar to photo radar with one small alteration, I would be interested in looking at how we can adopt a similar strategy to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan with their evening change of major intersections to flashing yields.

Martin Poirier –

1- Beforehand, it is important to note that law enforcement is not directly under the city council's powers. It is up to the police to enforce the law. Since 2 members of the Police Service Board are named by the municipality (out of 6), I can understand why the question is directed at the candidates.

Provided it is legal to do so and that it is estimated it will pay for itself during its planned lifetime, yes.

2- Education is to my sense the best tool to ensure people abide by the law. Specifically for speeding, being exposed the reasons behind the speed limits (chances of survival, accident risk, breaking distance, etc.) helps people understand why they should adopt the behaviour specified by the law. It speaks to our moral sense. That is best done through education, and well beyond what a municipal council can do.

There is nothing I specifically plan to do about speeding if I am elected councillor. It is up to the police to enforce the law.

As a citizen, I did raise my hand and talked directly to a policeman about specific dangerous behaviours in my neighbourhood. So have a lot of concerned citizens that have put up signs asking people to slow down.

In my present limited knowledge of the issue, I find the Police Service is doing its best to limit dangerous behaviours on the road.

If it is not the case, then it is up to the Police Service Board to follow up those issues and act.

On a final note, there can always be more enforcing, but it unfortunately boils down to a question of cost: how much are we willing to spend of our limited resources on policing? Needs are unlimited, but means are limited.

3- This is a question best answered with the insight of specialists in the field. There is also a prerequisite question to be answered: what is the safety situation now? Are there many accidents, how bad are they? Is the situation different from elsewhere in town?

My gut feeling is that it would not be a good idea to do it everywhere downtown, especially on Bay, Queen, Albert and Wellington. Many people commute through downtown daily for work. To slow down their commute to that point would anger a lot of them, and we do not need more anger around. It could also dissuade people from going downtown for shopping, something the businesses there do not need.

Could it start by 40 km/h? Perhaps.

4- Yes, if there are intersections with a high history of red light violations.

For all I know these are usually accompanied by signs, so I would advocate to use them only when necessary to prevent serious accidents: signs tend to distract people when they drive, and so might result in more accidents.

We always need to be careful not to be counterproductive in our actions.

Once again, consultation with people knowledgeable on the subject is key to making good decisions.

Dave Mornix – No response submitted.

The Bi-Weekly scorecard which would normally tally the ongoing responses received and would typically appear in this section has been discontinued. However, an overall score will be added to a summary write-up our team will do on each candidate based on responses received near the end of the Q&A sessions in late September.

Do you have a question you would like to be asked of your candidates in the weeks leading up to the election?

Let SaultOnline know and our staff will do their best to get answers for not just you, but the community as a whole.

Thank you for choosing us as your source of news in Sault Ste. Marie and the surrounding area.

Content Team

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