

NORTHERN WATERS

Downtown Revitalization Programs

ADMN4607 A & B

To: Dr. Jody Rebek

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March 6th, 2022

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Team Code



Northern Waters Consultants is a corporate strategy consulting firm based in Sault Ste. Marie focused on the use of academic research, industry practises, and diverse perspectives to develop innovative solutions for our clients. At Northern Waters Consulting we strive to develop strategic solutions to municipal problems and use business analysis tools, such as retrenchment, that contribute to the revitalization of Sault Ste. Marie and other rural communities. At Northern Waters Consulting we understand that a city is more than just the sum of all its businesses; we are committed to developing economic and social programs in conjunction with business leaders to effectively and efficiently redevelop communities that have faced economic stagnation and with the assistance of Northern Waters Consulting we can identify and revitalize the areas of Northern Ontario that make this truly a great place to live.

Our Mission - Working towards a better future for Sault Ste. Marie's Downtown

Code of Ethics¹ - Northern Waters is dedicated to following the code of ethics outlined in the Classroom Agreement for ADMN4607.

¹ Northern Waters agrees that any violation of the code of ethics and/or more than 50% absences from group meetings will result in a team meeting involving all members and Jody Rebek to initially resolve the issue before taking further actions.

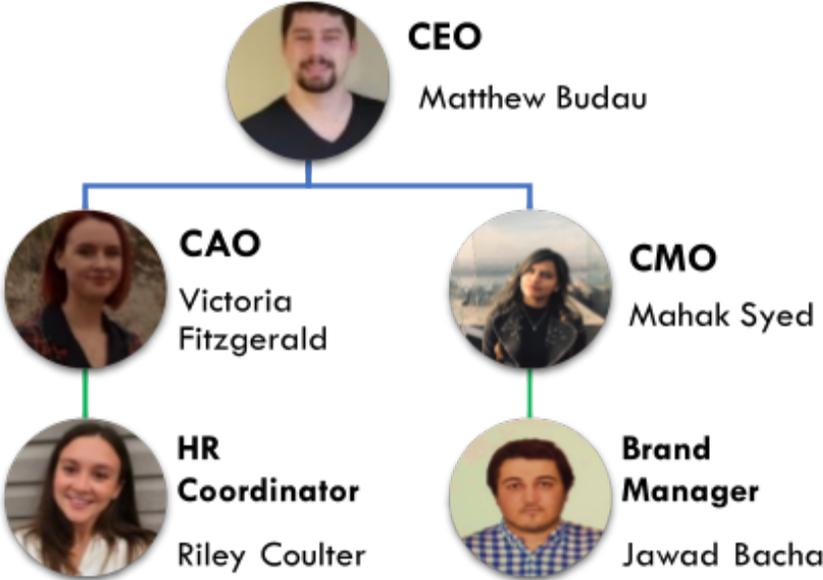


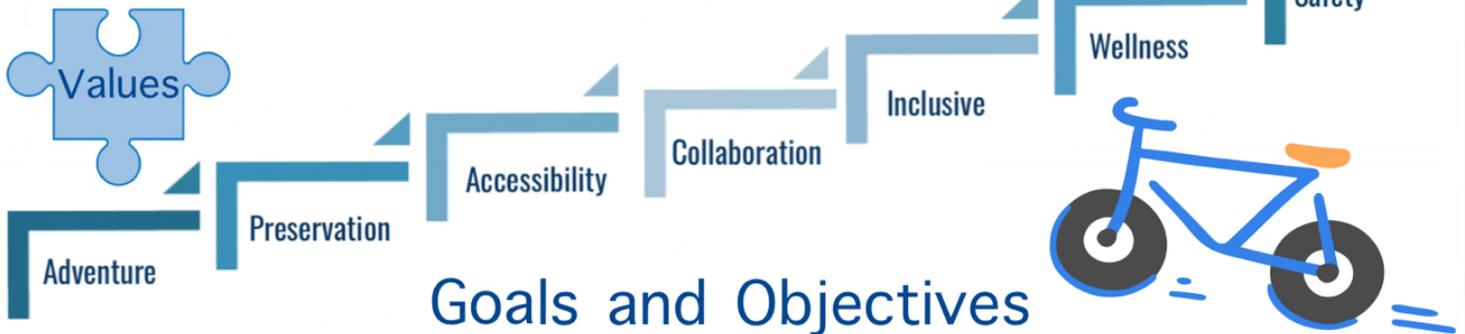
Figure 1 Org. Chart

Strategic Map

The Place To Be -2023 Vision

Grow Downtown SSM to be recognized as a vibrant, welcoming and safe place that revitalizes businesses, boosts residential living, preserves the historical and cultural communities of SSM, while providing unique experiences and collaborative excitement.

Mission Statement



Goal #1

Green Beauty

Modernize and improve the aesthetics of the downtown with as many eco-friendly options as possible.

Goal #2

Downtown Communities

Increase residential density by continuing the initiatives that are right now being implemented by the Downtown Association

Goal #3

The WOW Factor

Embrace the Downtown Spirit by growing the selection of events and recreation that will draw residents and tourists to Downtown SSM

Goal #1

Implement 3 bikeshare stations in SSM downtown by 2024

Decrease littering in the downtown area by 10% by mid 2024

Improve Beautification of at least 20% of the downtown area by 2026.

Sault Ste. Marie will develop an ideal mix of businesses in each district by 2025 to support increased downtown residency goals

Goal #2

By 2028 increase residential living downtown by 25%

Bring in 25 retail stores with operating hours till at least 10pm by the end of year 2025

Sault Ste. Marie downtown will have at least 1 full-service grocery store and 2 convenience stores with extended late-night hours by 2025

Goal #3

Develop a new Street Party event for either winter or summer within the year 2025

Provide an event at the Pavilion every month by May 2024

Produce a popup Waterfront Market by Summer 2024.

Executive Report

To: Tom Vair, Sault Ste. Marie Deputy CAO, Taylor Jaehrling, CityStudio, and Dr. Jody Rebek

From: Northern Waters

Date: March 2nd, 2022

RE: Development of programs containing multiple projects, and pilot projects, for the purpose of revitalizing the downtown of Sault Ste. Marie in a way that best shows its character, history, and safe place within the community.

Case Brief

Analysis of Downtown Sault Ste. Marie, as included in appendices 4 through 9 indicate that the city has abundant resources and breathtaking views of the Saint Mary's River yet has struggled with several issues. Issues impacting the Downtown that were identified include a perception that the area is unsafe, lack of economic activity, declining residency, and severe impacts due to public health measures intended to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Negative perception of the area coupled with limitations to business operations due to public health measures has led to a significant decrease in foot traffic to the area which is causing a significant decline which has caused a vicious cycle of economic downturn. The lack of foot traffic and low discretionary spending capacity of current area residents has led to many stores in the area operating at reduced hours and many not being open after 5pm or on weekends.

Northern Waters has been instructed to create a high-level innovative city revitalization strategy that will spark more tourism and business growth in the area. There are two key attitudes that Sault Ste. Marie municipal government can take action to address this. The options we have analyzed are either direct investment by the City of Sault Ste. Marie with continued ownership of assets in the area, such as directly renovating homes or providing services, or through incentive programs designed to reduce business risk and drive private investment in the area. Northern Waters proposes the development of one major program and three main strategic support programs to address critical failures in the current Downtown that are contributing to the economic decline.

The most significant program is the development of Downtown Districts, which, over a projected period of 8 to 10 years will develop and rebuild the streets of Downtown into something its residents are not only proud of but have held a key part in making. We suggest completing this through collaborative programs with CityStudio or volunteering at one of the Exciting Events discussed in further detail below. Additionally, attracting new business owners and residents to the area is critical. Business owners and soon to be entrepreneurs have also been considered through the Incite Buy-in programs that will provide funding from the City and relevant provincial and federal government programs to reduce risk of investment and attract new residents and business operators to the area.

Program Overview



Northern Waters Downtown revitalization program proposal has been built as a multitier process. Beginning with the Downtown Districts that will successfully implement its steps based off of the mission statement, the outer ring in Figure 2 are made up of three support programs consisting of eco streetscape, incite buy-in and exciting events all of which are directly related to the individual goal statements illustrated above in the Strategic Map. Figure 2 is further explained by the individual project descriptions below.

Downtown Districts

This program will be multiphasic incorporating two key phases. Phase 2 is the creation of incentive programs that will attract businesses determined in the first phase, ending with the successful completion of business mixes for each district. The incentives are built to attract businesses in underserved sectors. Phase 3 will be maintenance of the ideal business mix and retraction of grant programs.

Phase 1

During the first phase of the project the Downtown Association will be tasked with determining the current inventory of businesses in Downtown, their functions, and operating hours. Following this City staff will organize focus groups and community input sessions combined with research related to other recently revitalized areas to determine the ideal business mix and operating hours. This will be completed by no later than December 2023 in preparation for implementation of targeted grant incentives.

Phase 2

Phase 2 will involve the creation of targeted business incentive programs geared towards attracting the desired businesses. A comprehensive report will be created by city staff outlining the current composition of businesses in each district and compared with the ideal business mix.

- Incentive programs will be established that focus on several key criteria:
 - Establishment of a new business in Downtown
 - The type of business that will be conducted

- The district the proposed business will be located in
- Use of existing space that has been vacant for an extended period (longer than 6 months)
- Incentives will be structured in such a way that a business that fills a vacant need within an area is:
 - Most likely to receive approval of their request for financial support
 - Prioritized and expedited consideration of the application
 - Greatest financial benefit compared to businesses that are overrepresented in the district compared to the ideal mix suggested

Phase two grants will provide financial assistance through matching of funds supplied by private owners up to \$50,000 for building renovations to repurpose previously vacant real estate, reduced taxes for a specified period of up to 5 years from the date of acquisition, and support from Economic Development Corporation staff to locate and apply for additional government funding.

Eco-Streetscape

Downtown Sault Ste. Marie is shifting towards an eco-friendly environment. The eco-streetscape program will help with the transition of making downtown green. This program will implement a clean street project, a pathway lighting project, and an e-bike share pilot. These additions will improve the overall aesthetic of downtown in an environmentally friendly way. With these additions being implemented in the next couple of years, downtown has high hopes for the eco-streetscape program and its way of creating a greener downtown. Additionally, this program will provide key support mechanisms that will assist with other programs, such as the addition of lighting which will expand usable hours for downtown residents and businesses, and the installation of bicycles, which will provide unique transportation and leisure options for tourists and residents alike while maintaining the strategic focus on ecological sustainability.

Clean Street

A city plan to initiate a greener city, the first step towards this program is placing a garbage can at every street end in the Downtown.

On one hand we would see an increase in visitor traffic and more people visiting downtown, however along with that there would also be an increase in littering in the area on top of the littering issue that is already present in the Downtown area. As David Helwig mentions in his article, with winter coming soon, face masks littering the streets and rapidly escalating concerns about downtown safety, the issue of trash removal is becoming a major issue between the city and Queen Street businesses. (Helwig, D., 2021). “A trip by some homes in the city would make you wonder if the dump was located in their front yard, or if property standards were just slipping in Sault Ste. Marie in general”, Dan writes in his article. (Gray, D., 2021). Many of the downtown residents have also complained regarding this very issue, a local resident on the corner of Albert

Street, East and Tancred, who has been dealing with the City for a mess in a yard on that corner for going on a year, and sometimes it's better, but right now it seems to be really bad, she told Sault Online. (Gray, D., 2021). Hence one of the first projects we recommend for addressing this objective would be to place garbage cans at every other block in downtown. This would give the businesses and residents of the area more space to throw their garbage without making the area itself look untidy.

Recommended project for road safety to fix the potholes on Queen and Bay Street, to increase safety and appearance of the downtown. Issue to address would be regarding the potholes and street safety on the streets of Downtown, particularly Queen and Bay Street since that is the main route for going in and out of the Downtown area. Especially during harsh seasons such as winter/severe rain conditions, the downtown streets/roads can be a potential hazard. Sault Ste. Marie's mayor addressed the road conditions on Soo Today mentioning that bad road conditions must be addressed (Taylor, 2021). Hence the recommended project for this issue would be to fix the potholes on Queen and Bay Street

Pathway Lighting

City staff will examine the Downtown streetscape at night and with the support of lighting experts and local artists will develop artistic lighting solutions that will provide light to the downtown streets to improve visibility and safety. This will include collaborations with local groups such as Algoma University to partner with Fine Arts students to highlight local expertise and focus on local talent. This will also include a review of current lamp post placement and technology to determine if energy efficiencies are available.

One of the first projects for this objective would be to make the streets look more aesthetic by putting up more lampposts on the pathways, not only would that make the streets look better, but it would also make the visitors and residents feel more comfortable for walking/going out during the evening time. Additionally, adding shrubbery and hanging baskets along the pathway would also make the streets look better.

E-Bike Share

Northern Waters is looking to implement 3 e-bike stations in SSMs downtown area by 2024. A 6-month pilot program that is a green, low-cost commuting option will bring residents and tourists into downtown.

The e-bikeshare program will have 10 e-bikes at each of the three stations and will act as a 24/7 service for commuting through downtown. Additional lighting will be added to the downtown to ensure biking/walking paths are safe and usable 24/7. This will also include a review of current lamp post placement and technology to determine if energy efficiencies are available.

Incite Buy-In

One of the most significant factors that investors analyze when determining where to invest is the projected return on investment and associated risk. To incite investment in downtown requires reducing the current perceived risk to either residents or potential business investors. To do this, we have developed a program to reduce financial risk and incentivise investment in both new residential opportunities and both retail and professional businesses. This is done by providing funds directly to investors in a matching basis to reduce the barriers to entry in the downtown market and will focus on areas that are specifically noted as being underserved. Additionally, support for Downtown merchants to offset the high labour costs, which are often seen as a reason that businesses do not operate during late nights, Sault Ste. Marie will create a downtown where people want to be. Direct supports will be considered over a period of approximately 4 years between 2024 and 2027. These supports will be reduced after the initial period ends and will be re-established in limited capacities during future periods as required to meet the specified goals.

Residency Support Project

The suggested program will be established in 2024 and will continue until an ideal number of food retailers are established in Downtown and will provide reduced city taxes for a period of 5 years from the establishment of an approved retailer whose primary product is food or food items such.

To increase residential occupancy in Downtown will require two key changes: an increase in available residential units and creation of supporting infrastructure. A key piece of this supporting infrastructure that is not yet present are grocery stores and locations that support residents to purchase food within Downtown outside of a restaurant. Rhone (2018) showed that the largest increase in new food retailers in the United States between 2009 and 2015 has been in convenience stores as shoppers shift their buying behaviour. Additionally, there has been a decreasing trend in which consumers are typically spending less per transaction and increasing the number of transactions conducted weekly at grocery stores (*Supermarket Facts, n.d.*).

To incentivize the creation of multiple food vendors in Downtown Sault Ste. Marie staff will develop tax incentive programs targeting key aspects of business start up that are noted as significant challenges. Similar to current grants used to incentivize retail outlets, Sault Ste. Marie staff will establish a grant program that will provide reduced city taxes for a period of 5 years from the establishment of an approved retailer whose primary product is food or food items such. This incentive will be specific to retailers that sell 50% or more of food as non-prepared food items or traditional groceries, excluding restaurants. This exclusion will not apply to grocery or convenience stores that sell prepared food if it constitutes less than 50% of goods sold. The suggested program will

be established in 2024 and will continue until an ideal number of food retailers are established in Downtown.

Additionally, the city will continue the current grant program that provides funding matches for businesses conducting renovation of exteriors. This program will be applicable to both current tenants or owners of downtown spaces as well as new owners and occupancy.

Another project would be to make the stores/buildings of the area more appealing. With increased foot traffic, the storefronts and buildings need to look inviting and clean to the residents and visitors. Hence in order to achieve that some of the recommended activities would be the restoration of exterior storefronts, fixing up damaged windows/doors, improving the exterior lighting to make it look better

Wage Support Program

A wage support program that will contribute 25% of wages paid to employees of retail businesses in Downtown when operating between 5pm and 10pm. This incentive program will be available to retail vendors that are not restaurants or bars and will provide up to \$22 per employee to a maximum of 2 employees per applicable business per working day. The total budget of the wage incentive program will be \$410,000 per year.

To incentivize retail sales and availability in Downtown, Sault Ste. Marie will develop a wage support program that will contribute 25% of wages paid to employees of retail businesses in Downtown when operating between 5pm and 10pm. This incentive program will be available to retail vendors that are not restaurants or bars and will provide up to \$22 per employee to a maximum of 2 employees per applicable business per working day. The total budget of the wage incentive program will be \$410,000 per year. This incentive will offset recent increases in the Ontario minimum wage and provide and provide 25 businesses with wage assistance for eligible employees and offset the operating costs to incentivize later openings of businesses on Queen Street and the surrounding areas. This incentive will only be available to retail businesses operating in the areas prescribed as Downtown by the City.

Exciting Events

Sault Ste. Maire is excited to bring more events to the downtown to draw in attention and attraction to the area. The Exciting Events program will implement a street party project and a community events project. These projects will ignite a sense of pride and feeling of connection to the community, as well as invite more people to the downtown area so that small businesses can grow by interacting one on one with local residents and tourists. Downtown is currently lacking excitement, therefore the area will likely benefit significantly from this program and its associated projects.

Street Party

Projects that will create a Summer and Winter festival that will attract people to the downtown. Creation of these themes will be pitched by Arts/CESD students, through a new Citystudio collaboration.

- Two CityStudio programs created for both Sault College and Algoma University
- Tasked with creating events to be presented in class with key stakeholders and CityStudio representatives. The college specifically already has an events planning course that could be utilized best with this program, as they are tasked with creating and running an actual event as part of their course curriculum.
- Ideas that are chosen will run as a singular annual event for 3 consecutive years, data collection and feedback will determine the continuation of the Street Party Project

Community Events

Creation of a business investment program that will involve buy -in from restaurants and the Hotels downtown to support events at the Pavilion, events such as Sports or Movie Watching, and community small activities. At these events the proposed shipping crates can be used by vendors to promote their already existing business or entrepreneurs looking to kick start their customer basis.

One of the first projects recommended for this objective is to utilize the Pavilion for bi-weekly events such as outdoor movie nights, where residents and tourists would be able to enjoy a movie from the comfort of their cars and/or from the seating area provided. This would be an event with no fees whatsoever, and food/drinks would be available at the pavilion itself for visitors to purchase.

Another recommendation would be to host outdoor programs at the pavilion during special sports games where people are able to come together and watch a basketball/hockey/soccer match together.

- Events like outdoor sports such as lawn bowling etc. should be conducted to attract the attention of the local people and create an engaging atmosphere.

Additionally, the popup waterfront market is projected to be a mobile retail market that encourages local businesses to come together and activate SSMs downtown waterfront. The popup waterfront market would be located in the Station Mall parking lot (Sears). Half of the space would be used for parking while the other half would be used for the vendors. OR rent out the inside space of Sears.

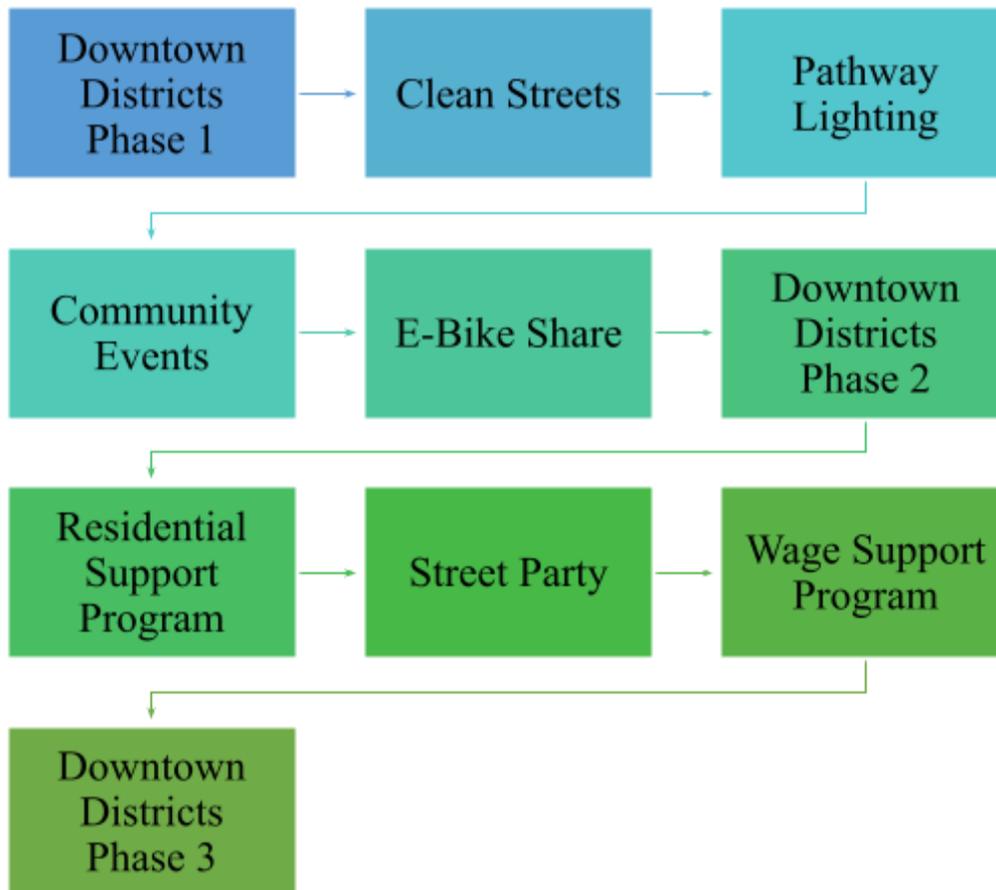
- **Popup Waterfront Market:** The popup waterfront market is projected to be a mobile retail market that encourages local businesses to come together and activate SSMs downtown waterfront. The popup waterfront market would be

located in the Station Mall parking lot (Sears). Half of the space would be used for parking while the other half would be used for the vendors.

OR the city to rent out the sears building and convert it into a space for vendor

- To entice vendors to join the popup waterfront market, marketing the vast amount of space, location, and low cost is crucial. With these assets vendors from the Mill Market will likely join the new waterfront market.
- In the article “New Mill Market could cost taxpayers million” on SaultOnline Caldwell admits “A number of vendors have expressed the view that they would prefer to stay at the current location, citing customer familiarity, ease of parking and setup, and other considerations,” admits Caldwell.
- Create incentives for vendors to join the popup waterfront markets

Implementation Timeline



Key Program and Project Information

Districts Program

Activities Needed to Accomplish Plan:

- An updated inventory of the businesses currently operating in the downtown area, and survey of all the major landmark locations
- Meetings with city council and the downtown association to discuss the creation of an ideal business mix
- Develop grant incentive programs to encourage development of desired businesses in each district
- Identifiable themes for district locations
- Unified signage in each district and throughout the downtown

Budget – Cost of Program Implementation:

The cost of the inventory of businesses and administration of the program will be minimal. Grant incentive programs will have a minimal upfront cost and will be provided through tax incentives or other services provided in-kind by the City to incentivize desired business growth within each district.

Procedure – Sequence of Steps

Short Term (Approximately September 1st, 2022 – August 31st, 2023) - Phase 1

- The City Planning department, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, will conduct an inventory survey of downtown to determine all currently operating businesses, vacant commercial space, and vacant land that is currently zoned for commercial or mixed residential commercial use. This data will be categorized by the type of business to determine the total service offerings for Downtown.
- The City Planning department, in collaboration with the Community Development and Enterprise Services department will determine all major landmarks in Downtown that can be used to anchor each district with a unique major cultural site that will be the identifiable cornerstone of each district. Additionally, this will include a review of current streets to determine feasible boundaries for each district considering current streets and any currently planned changes to Downtown streets.

Medium Term (Approximately September 1st, 2023 – December 31st, 2025) - Phase 2

- The City will conduct public consultations with residents of Sault Ste. Marie with additional sessions targeted to business owners and separately for downtown stakeholders, such as business owners, and residents. These consultations will be used to collect data on the ideal mix of downtown businesses as desired by residents of Sault Ste. Marie. Specifically, data is required on what types of businesses will drive increased residency and tourism in the area.

- o Consultations with business owners will additionally focus on what factors business owners and investors desire to encourage future business investment in downtown.

Long Term (Approximately January 1st, 2026 – March 31st, 2028) - Phase 3

- The review by City Council, Downtown Association and any other key stakeholders that may be given a role during the time of phase 1 and/or 2, on the overall business development in the downtown compared to the ideal business mix proposed in Phase 1. Applicable revision of any necessary programs provided by the city and/or Downtown Association.
- Resources and materials sourced from the determination of more incentive programs to add more businesses, if necessary to any specific district(s). The same will be considered for all grants and other programs that will be offered in order to sustain the appearance and safety of the downtown districts.

Control and Feedback

Due to the length of each phase and the exponential possibility for projects determined, implemented and reviewed for revision within it, there will be specific controls for each project when they have been determined. Similar to how the following projects below have outlined the control measures and feedback for each individual project.

Implementation of Program

Program Name: Downtown Districts					
Program Goals – achieve the mission statement and the 3 goals approved by the City					
Objectives					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sault Ste. Marie will develop an ideal mix of businesses in each district by 2025 to support increased downtown residency goals - Improve the beautification of at least 20% of the downtown area by 2026 					
Start Date: September 1 st 2022					
End Date: Approximately 2030					
Phase	Task	Time Frame	Responsibility	Budget	Status
1	Public consultations with sault business owners	09/1/2022 – 12/1/2022	Downtown Association		Weekly
1	Determine application information and material needed	11/1/2022 – 12/1/2022	Downtown Association and City Planning Committee	TBD	Bi-weekly
1	Determine ideal composition of businesses for downtown SSM	11/1/2022 – 12/31/2022	City Planning		Weekly
1	Surveying landmarks and vacant properties	11/1/2022 – 12/31/2022	CESD volunteers/ CityStudio collaboration		Monthly
1	Research for funding and grant programs to provide as incentive	12/1/2022 – 03/31/2023	City Planning and Finance Department	TBD	Weekly

1	Develop grant incentive programs	04/1/2023 – 06/30/2023	Finance Department	TBD	Bi-weekly
1	Determination of district theming and connections to city landmarks	04/1/2023 – 06/30/2023	Downtown Association and City Planning		Bi-weekly
1	Creation of themes and districts	07/1/2023 – 09/1/2023	TBD	TBD	End of phase 1
2	Review of district boundaries	09/1/2023 – 10/31/2023	The city planning department		Monthly
2	Public consultations with sault residents	09/1/2023 – 12/31/2023	Downtown Association		Weekly
2	Development of unified signage	12/1/2023 – 03/31/2024	City marketing department	TBD	Bi-weekly
2	Creation of signage for each district	04/1/2024 – 07/1/2024	City Marketing department and collaboration with CityStudio	TBD	Monthly
2	Selection of signage and implementation. Take down any old signage that may still be left.	07/1/2024 – 08/31/2024	City Planning, Downton Association and key Stakeholders	TBD	Monthly
2	Surveying for purposes of finding out what districts and businesses bring in more tourism	09/1/2024 – 12/31/2024	City Tourism and Events department	TBD	Bi-weekly
2	Business consultations with key stakeholders	01/1/2025 – 02/28/2025	City Finance department		Monthly
2	Incentive programs created to drive more tourism business development	Planning 03/1/2025 – 06/30/2025 Running from 07/1/2025 – 12/31/2026	City Finance department	TBD	Bi-weekly
2	Ending of all previous incentive and grant programs from phase 1	12/31/2025	Relevant city departments		End of phase 2
3	Data collection on stats from the districts program	08/1/2026 – 12/31/2026	All relative city departments		Weekly
3	Review summary on the success of the districts program and determine the next steps towards maintenance	01/1/2027 – 02/1/2027	All relevant city departments		Monthly
3	Revision of all relevant grant and incentive programs	09/1/2027 – 12/31/2027	City finance department		Yearly
3	Sourcing of the appropriate materials and resources necessary for the maintenance of the districts	01/1/2028 – 03/31/2028	Relevant city departments, downtown associations and any CityStudio programs		Monthly
	Total	72 Months			

* This total is only a place holder and not relevant to the actual total of months it would take to implement such a program. Due to its length of phases being over a year it will be given a margin of error for each phase of 1-2 years for any delays and or restrictions due to covid.

Eco-Streetscape

- **Clean Streets**
- **Pathway Lighting**
- **E-Bike Share**

Clean Streets

A city plan to initiate a greener city, the first step towards this program is placing a garbage can at every street end in the Downtown.

Activities Needed to Accomplish Plan:

- Painting lines/adding paths for bike trails (extensions on the hub trail)
- Dedicated painted lane for bikers
- CityStudio program with Algoma's environmental science department

Budget – Cost of Program Implementation:

The costs associated with this program would be minimal since the amounts that would be dedicated to scientific research and development are tax incentives which are an additional 20% refund if the money was donated by a CCPC.

Procedure – Sequence of Steps

Short Term (September 30th, 2022 – December 31st, 2022)

- Data collection on littering in the area by city council
- Beginning of new CityStudio programs with the college and university to decide which options are best for decreasing the littering in the downtown
- Fixing any damaged roads before winter starts

Medium Term (January 1st, 2023 – January 30th, 2024)

- Introduce a new plan to the city council and any other municipality stakeholders to increase the number of garbage can on each street
- Implement the agreed upon plan from stakeholder meeting
- Begin to collect data on the new bike share program

Long Term (February 1st, 2024 – March 31st, 2024)

- Determine from the success of the bike share program what are the next steps to proceed
- Start researching for the Downtown Districts of any new and exciting eco-friendly projects that could help bring more people to the community gardens down by the river

Control and Feedback

To be determined by the relevant City Council Departments based on previous projects.

Pathway Lighting

City staff will examine the Downtown streetscape at night and with the support of lighting experts and local artists will develop artistic lighting solutions that will provide light to the downtown streets to improve visibility and safety. This will include collaborations with local groups such as Algoma University to partner with Fine Arts students to highlight local expertise and focus on local talent. This will also include a review of current lamp post placement and technology to determine if energy efficiencies are available.

Activities Needed to Accomplish Plan:

- Adding lamps long bike paths to ensure 24/7 service

Budget – Cost of Program Implementation:

To be determined from CityStudio Projects

Procedure – Sequence of Steps

Short Term (September 30th, 2022 – December 31st, 2023)

- CityStudio programs begins and ends with the project showcase that will be the idea that is pitched to the city council of what creative and eco lighting programs that could be implemented downtown

Medium Term (January 1st, 2024 – October 31st, 2024)

- City council departments and Downtown Association will work together on finding lighting programs that are eco friendly and a list of local artists whose work will be used as a form of light in dark areas of the city such as cut off paths or alleys.

Long Term (November 1st, 2024 – December 31st, 2025)

- Gathering of resources and installation companies for any and all new forms of eco-friendly lighting that will increase the nightlife presence and provide safety for those walking alone

Control and Feedback

CityStudio will choose which projects to have presented at the project showcase, this decision will also include the course professor and stakeholders present at the presentations. These will then be determined by the downtown association and city council as to which projects presented are feasible with the city's budget and which ideas are to be tabled following the success of the first lighting program.

E-Bike Share

A 6-month pilot program to encourage a more green streetscape. This will be an accessible form of transportation for residents and tourists into downtown. The program will start with 3 bike share locations, each equipped with 10 bikes.

Activities Needed to Accomplish Plan:

- Purchasing e-bikes from a bike share manufacturer
- Building docking stations and kiosks around the downtown
- Creating an app for the bikeshare program (this will include purchasing passes, depreciation, wear and tare, reporting problems, and call for service button)
- Staffing employees for the program

Budget - Cost of Program Implementation:

In order to successfully implement an e-bike share program the budget for this project must consider the cost of stations and kiosks, e-bikes, installation, and other miscellaneous capital expenses. Starting an e-bike share program requires substantial capital (Beitsch, 2016). Each

bike could cost up to \$5000 (Beitsch, 2016). Typically, this cost includes the docking stations and kiosks (Beitsch, 2016).

Different costs to be considered in bicycle infrastructure measures include:

Accessory and support features

- Signage
- Bicycle stations and kiosks
- Bicycle fix-it station

Procedure - Sequence of Steps

Short Term (April 15th, 2023 – August 31st, 2023)

- Research of bike share options within the budget for the year given by the City
- Determination of the best 3 locations that would help residents and tourists travel downtown
- Acquire a permit

Medium Term (September 1st, 2023 – March 31st, 2024)

- Purchase of bikes and equipment
- Contact installation companies to start building the bike stations at the 3 determined locations
- Determination of repair sites and what essential tools that the city needs to at least provide

Long Term (April 1st, 2024 – October 1st, 2024)

- Bike share program begins and runs from April 2024 to October 1st, 2024, weather permitting
- Data collection will commence during the first months of the pilot and after it had=s finished running
- Determination of the success of the program and what steps will come next, adding more lanes, lighted paths for nights, determination of t=how many more stations and bikes to be added over the next few years.

Control and Feedback

In 2025 determine if the bikeshare program was successful in the downtown area. Determine through obtaining feedback from residents, business owners of the downtown area, and tourists. If positive feedback is gathered, plan for an expansion of stations around the city i.e Bellevue Park, Fort Creek, Algoma University, Soo College, and busy on and off points on the hub trail. Additional lighting will need to be added through the expanded areas to make bike paths safe and usable 24/7.

Implementation of Program

Program Name: Eco Streetscape
Strategic Goal 1 – Green Beauty

Modernize and improve the aesthetics of the downtown with as many eco-friendly options as possible.

Individual Projects and Objectives

Project 1 Clean Street

- Decrease littering in the downtown area by 10% and improve Queen and Bay street's condition by mid 2024.
- Improve the beautification of at least 10% of the downtown area by 2026

Project 2 Pathway Lighting

- Improve the beautification of at least 10% of the downtown area by 2026

Project 3 E-Bike Share

- Implement 3 bikeshare stations in SSMs downtown by 2024

Start Date: September 30th 2022

End Date: January 1st, 2026

Project	Task	Time Frame	Responsibility	Budget	Status
1	Repairing the potholes on any of the streets downtown	09/30/2022 – 03/1/2023	City Council	TBD based on the damage done in each year	Daily
2	Finding new innovative and eco friendly lighting options and ways to decrease littering	09/30/2022 – 09/30/2023	CityStudio Program	-	Bi-weekly
3	Obtain a policy and permit for the bike share piolet program	04/15/2023 – 07/15/2023	City council and any other relevant departments		Weekly
3	Develop timeline for bikes to be bought and implemented	07/15/2023 – 09/30/2024	TBD	\$5,000/bike	Daily
1&2	Review of the pathway lighting findings and littering data	09/1/2023 – 12/31/2023	Downtown Association and relevant city departments, CityStudio	-	Bi-weekly
3	Obtain equipment, installation company, and marketing for e-bike share	09/1/2023 – 12/31/2023	City council	TBD	Weekly
3	App creation	09/1/2023 - 12/31/2023	Assigned to the appropriate city department or outsourced to another company	TBD	Bi-weekly
1&2	Decision on best CityStudio project to implement	09/1/2023 - 12/31/2023	Downtown Association and City Planning department		Daily
1	Installation of trash can options on Queen and Bay Street	02/1/2024 – 03/31/2024	TBD	TBD	Daily
2	Finding of artists and current unlit pathways to be used at night by walkers or bikers	02/15/2024 – 03/31/2024	City planning department	-	Daily
2	Add lighting along pathways for bikes and walkers	01/1/2024 – 05/1/2024	TBD	TBD	Daily

3	Launch of the e-bike share program	04/1/2024	Installation company and city council	-	Daily
2	Determine the success of the 6-month e-bike share pilot	04/1/2024 – 10/31/2024	Relevant city and downtown association departments	-	Bi-weekly
2	Adding more bike lanes and pathways for multiuse in the downtown	11/1/2024 – 12/31/2025	TBD	TBD	Weekly
	Total	40 months			

Incite Buy-In

- **Residential Support Program**
- **Wage Support Program**

Residential Support Program

City staff will coordinate a program to incentivize new affordable rental housing Downtown. The suggested program will be established in 2024 and will continue until an ideal number of food retailers are established in Downtown and will provide reduced city taxes for a period of 5 years from the establishment of an approved retailer whose primary product is food or food items such.

Activities Needed to Accomplish Plan:

- Develop a grant program to incentivize renovation of currently available housing units in Downtown
- Implement an incentive program to encourage development of food options for downtown residents

Budget – Cost of Program Implementation:

The total cost of the program is divided into the cost of the residential improvements and the separate cost of the food option support grants. The total cost is divided as follows:

Residential Improvement Plan: \$20,000 per grant for 100 total available grants over a 5-year period. Total grant cost: \$2,000,000

Food Option Support Plan: One grant of \$25,000 for a large full-service grocer; two grants of \$10,000 each for convenience stores offering substantial food options. Total grant cost: \$45,000

Procedure – Sequence of Steps

Short Term (January 1st, 2024 – December 30th, 2024)

- Determine current inventory of available housing and the current designation (i.e. multi unit rentals, single unit rentals, single unit occupied by owner, multi unit buildings with individually owned units)
- Examine potential sites for development of supermarkets and convenience stores and create a list of preferred sites for these types
- Design selection criteria for suggested grant and incentive programs
- Begin marketing of the grant and incentive programs to potential investors

Medium Term (December 31st, 2024 – December 31st, 2026)

- Accept applications for both grant incentive programs (closure of applications if maximum number of approved applications received)
- Disperse funding to accepted applicants on a rolling basis until optimal number of businesses is reached
- Evaluation of change in value to residents and business spaces using data provided by city building inspections and Municipal Property Assessment Corporation data

Long Term (January 1st, 2027 – April 30th, 2027)

- Revaluation of program requirements pending results of previous applications to determine:

- o Number of successful renovations
- o Number of new rental units created or occupied
- o Number of food options identified in Downtown
- o Return on investment determined by the increased tax collection from the businesses and residential properties

OR

- Conclusion of the grant program and discontinuation of future grant applications when the program has met the required goals

Control and Feedback

Control Measures

Key control measures will be divided based on the three different strategic control mechanisms, input controls, output controls, and behavioural controls.

Input controls:

Input controls will be developed by the City Planning department with support from the City Legal department to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Additionally, application requirements will be developed to incentivize local resident investment and affordable housing in the area. Suggested input controls for the residential improvement grant include:

- A requirement that the home be within the borders of downtown
- Funds will be provided on a matching basis based on cash investment
- Residents may not own more than a specified number of residential properties in Sault Ste. Marie and a second, lower specified amount in downtown
- An applicant may not receive more than one residential improvement grant

Suggested input controls for the food option grants include:

- The store must operate within Downtown
- The grocery store must comprise a minimum retail space but not exceed a specified maximum retail space measured in square feet.
- Convenience stores must be located no closer than a given distance from each other.

Output controls:

There are two key output control measures that are to be designed into the application process. Key output controls include the totally budgetary spend for each part of the grant process and total number of grants received. Because the grants will be issued on a matching basis for funds provided by the homeowner the primary control will be on the budgetary restrictions rather than on the total number of grants disbursed. If the desired number of new residents is achieved before the total budget is dispersed the program will be discontinued and budgeted funds reallocated to other downtown improvement programs. Specific examples of proposed controls are:

- A maximum number of 100 residential improvement grants will be provided between 2024 and 2027

- A maximum of one grant will be provided to a grocery store operator and two grants to operators of a convenience store.

Behavioural Controls:

Behavioural controls, separate from the input controls, will focus on ensuring that renovated homes are retained as affordable housing for the residents of the area. Additionally, behaviour controls will ensure that the housing and food options that are created using grant funding provided by this program meet the needs of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, and specifically, downtown revitalization. Suggested behavioural controls for the residential improvement program include:

- Requirements to demonstrate residency of a property purchased or renovated through grant funding by a specified date after close of the sale
- Requirement for renovations to be inspected by City building inspectors to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and safety standards
- Policies or directives requiring that a residence purchased using grant funding cannot be converted from owner-occupied to rental accommodation for a specified period after occupancy
- Policies requiring rent control increases for properties that are currently occupied by rental tenants and a requirement that current tenants receive first right of refusal for residences that are purchased for the purpose of renovation and rental

Behavioural controls suggested for food option improvement plan grant recipients include:

- A requirement that an operator receiving funding provide access to fresh produce, non-perishable goods, and prepared food options

For Feasible Alternatives – Appendix 2

Wage Support Program

A wage support program that will contribute 25% of wages paid to employees of retail businesses in Downtown when operating between 5pm and 10pm. This incentive program will be available to retail vendors that are not restaurants or bars and will provide up to \$22 per employee to a maximum of 2 employees per applicable business per working day. The total budget of the wage incentive program will be \$410,000 per year.

Activities Needed to Accomplish Plan:

- Downtown Associations or City agreement to provide such a support program for eligible businesses
- Government Grants

Budget – Cost of Program Implementation:

- \$410,000 per year which will be used to provide up to \$22 per employee, with a maximum of 2 employees per eligible businesses

Procedure – Sequence of Steps

Short Term (January 1st, 2025 – April 1st, 2025)

- Proper research on government funding options, limits, and eligibility regarding to the use of funding
- Develop a wage support program that will contribute 25% of wages for Downtown business upon agreeing to open past 5pm up to 10pm

Medium Term (April 2nd, 2025 – December 31st, 2025)

- Incentivise small business owners in the street buildings of downtown to open their businesses past 5pm, when at that point certain businesses will be eligible to apply for a limited wage support program
- Program will be available between the first week to month of extended hours available up to a 3-month consecutive period

Long Term (January 1st, 2026 – January 1st, 2027)

- Renewal of the program will be decided based on a significant amount of increase in after 5 consumer shopping and will be continued for another year but only to new businesses applying for the supplement wage support program.

Control and Feedback

Businesses that on a yearly basis make below or within a certain level of income based on considerable wage expenses will be eligible for the program. Types of businesses and minimum wage standards will be used to determine the appropriate amount per employee given to that particular business. Any misuse of the program will result in the ineligibility for such business to receive support from this program in the future and revised plans of the program unless proven otherwise.

For businesses ineligible due to their higher amount of income will be provided with either another city incentive program, such as the one above, or other programs currently running through the Downtown association at this time.

For best use of both programs and any others provided by either the City or Downtown Association should be mentioned to the stakeholders upon the first meeting with any of the financial advisors or finance team members in either of the groups.

Success will be based firstly on the number of businesses that extended their hours, compared to those who used the program and are continuing extended hours. As well as any new businesses locating to the area based on possible rises in consumer population of Queen and Bay Street during the hours of 5pm-10pm.

Implementation of Program

Program Name: Incite Buy-In
Strategic Goal 2 - Downtown Communities

Increase residential density by continuing the initiatives that are right now being implemented by the Downtown Association

Individual Projects and Objectives

Project 1 Residential Support Program

- By 2028 increase residential living downtown by 25%
- Sault Ste. Marie downtown will have at least 1 full-service grocery store and 2 convenience stores with extended late-night hours by 2025

Project 2 Wage Support Program

- Bring in 25 retail stores with operating hours till at least 10pm by 2025

Start Date: January 2024

End Date: December 2027

Project	Task	Time Frame	Responsibility	Budget	Status
1	Determine currently available stock of available rental housing, vacant spaces, spaces suitable to be converted to rental housing.	01/1/2024 – 03/1/2024	City Planning Department; support provided by building inspectors		Yearly
1	Determine eligibility criteria for renovation support grant applications	03/1/2024 – 04/30/2024	City Planning Department with support from City Legal Department		Revised yearly
1	Develop application materials required to accept application and determine eligibility and funding amounts.	05/1/2024 – 07/1/2024	City Legal Department; Support from City Building Department		Revised yearly
1	Begin marketing of residential rental renovation grant program to attract eligible applicants	07/1/2024			Bi-weekly
1	Begin accepting applications for residential rental renovation grants	07/1/2024			Daily
1	Disbursement of funding to the first round of successful applicants to the residential rental renovation support programs	12/31/2024 – 01/1/2027			Monthly
2	Research and development of government funding for wage support programs	01/1/2025 – 04/1/2025	City finance department		
2	Starting of wage program for small businesses to expand their hours	04/2/2025 – 12/31/2025	City finance department	\$410,000	Yearly

2	Market towards owners not claiming this benefit in order to open more businesses in the downtown area and expand the 9-5 perception of shopping	04/15/2025 – 09/15/2025	Relevant city departments		Bi-weekly
2	Review of the success of the wage support program	09/16/2025 – 12/31/2025	City planning and finance departments as well as the Downtown Association relevant departments		Monthly
2	Renewal of wage support program for 1 more year if it is still needed or any amount has been unclaimed from year 1 of the program	01/1/2026 – 01/1/2027	City finance department	\$410,000	Yearly
1	Evaluate tax implications of grant program using data provided from the building permit process	01/1/2027 – 04/30/2027	City Finance Department, City Building Department, City Tax Collector		Monthly
Total		40 Months			

Exciting Events

- Community Events
- Street Party

Community Events

The creation of a Waterfront Market, and movie nights at the Bondar Pavilion. These two new exciting events are meant to ignite a sense of pride and feeling of connection to the community through a pop up market made up of local small business vendors and a movie night that will welcome all families, young adults, and many others to come out to the pavilion and watch a movie projected on a large screen selected from an appropriate list approved by a residents committee and city departments.

The Pavilion - Using the pavilion for recurring events every 2 weeks starting May 2024.

Waterfront Market: 16 businesses to join the waterfront market every second weekend by summer 2024 (Friday - Sunday 1pm - 7pm)

Activities needed to accomplish plans:

- Shipping crates purchased and set up for long term to be used by the waterfront market
- Either projector equipment and films to be operated by a city volunteer OR, a deal made by the city with a film projector company that will operate movie night events for sault residents, some seating chairs provided by the city, the rest are to be brought by residents
- Approved use of the pavilion at night and security for the event

Budget

Waterfront pop up market, some of the costs that would need to be considered include:

- Mobile retail locations (proposed shipping container retail outlets)

In order to implement the events program at the Pavilion, some of the costs that would need to be considered include:

- Outdoor projectors
- Chairs/seating arrangements
- Lawn bowling balls
- Brochures/Pamphlets
- Security and volunteers whose time are given in kind

Procedure – Sequence of Steps

Short Term (September 1st, 2023 – October 31st, 2023)

- To begin with, surveys would be conducted with the local residents, on what type of events they would like to attend. They will be given all different event options such as Movie nights, game nights, community activities, and they would be asked to rate their level of interest in each event.
 - They would also be given different days/times of the week so they can put their preferences as to when it would be convenient for them to attend these events.
- Contacting the local businesses and offering incentives to join this project and providing them with the space, details, time, and possible volunteers to run stands if needed.

Medium Term (November 1st, 2023 – March 31st, 2024)

- Purchasing of all the equipment.
- Creating marketing campaigns with the details of the events, i.e., what days/times of the week it would be held, etc.
- Creating posters/flyers/brochures with the information and distributing them to all the businesses to hand them out to customers.
- Creating social media campaigns and making advertisements on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, etc.
- Setting up the allocated parking space with shipping crates for the vendors
- Contacting local newspapers and local news platforms such as Soo Today, Sault Online for advertisements for the events.
- This data collected from short-term would then be used to set up the days/times of the week for the recurring Movie nights/activities, to start in May 2024.

Long Term (April 15th, 2024 – September 1st, 2024)

- Movie night setting up the outdoor projectors, seating areas and distributing enough space for the seating arrangements as well as leaving space for people who wish to watch the movies/games in their vehicles.
- Setting up space for shipping crates for mini business pop-ups for use at the Pavilion

Control and Feedback:

Track attendance on which events/days/times people attend more and review this data monthly.

Street Party

This is to be a pilot program for an event that will occur annually over a 3-year trial period. The purpose of this event is to invite more people to the downtown area so that small businesses can grow by interacting one on one with their customer base similar to how Moonlight Madness's success brings to the local economy during the winter months.

Activities Needed to Accomplish Plan:

- Development of an ideal theme that attracts families, students, and downtown residents in a way that entices more consumers to frequent the area
- Successful line of both loyal and starting businesses from the Community Events Program to have stalls at the new event

Budget – Cost of Program Implementation:

- (Current budget for moonlight madness can be used in place)
- Donations from the communities and school programs in kind, can be in the form of volunteering or providing materials for decoration of the streets

Procedure – Sequence of Steps*Short Term (April 1st, 2024 – April 1st, 2025)*

- Apply a CityStudio project to Algoma CESD and Art's program to create and pitch possible themes for an event similar to Moonlight Madness, suggestions Appendix 3
- Propose festival activities to all businesses in the downtown area.
- Creation and development of theme by the Downtown Association, based off of ideas pitched through CityStudio.
- Decision regarding the date and season of the event, to be held with the current businesses located downtown

Medium Term (May 1st, 2025 – August 1st, 2025)

- Campaigning on social media will be provided by a team selected by the Downtown Association, and it is up to the individual businesses to decide how they would like to promote the event
- If needed there will be a 1-month period where businesses can enlist the help of the City in promoting their business for the event

Long Term (August 2nd, 2025 – December 31st, 2028)

- Materials, list of business, and possible spaces will need to be rented for any indoor activities (the use of indoor spaces depends on the theme and Covid-19 regulations)
- The first trial of the new Street Party to gain key information from observations during the event
- Decisions to be made for the continuation of this project a month after the 3rd Annual event

Control and Feedback

Mainly observational findings during the event by surveying and gathering data on the trends, if any, over the 3-year period.

Implementation of Program

Program Name: Exciting Events
Strategic Goal 3 – The WOW Factor Embrace the downtown spirit by growing the selection of events and recreation that will draw tourists and residents into SSMs downtown.
Individual Projects and Objectives Project 1 Community Events (waterfront/pavilion) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide an event at the Pavilion every month by May 2024* - Produce a popup Waterfront Market by Summer 2024.* *Every second weekend (Friday - Sunday 1pm - 7pm) at least 16 vendors. Project 2 Street Party <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a new Street Party event for either winter or summer within the year 2025

Start Date: March 1st 2023

End Date: September 1st 2028

Project	Task	Time Frame	Responsibility	Budget	Status
1	Data collection for what community events residents of the area wish to have	03/1/2023 – 06/30/2023	CityStudio through a collaborative program with Sault College		Weekly
1	Create a list of small local business both with and without a storefront	04/1/2023 – 06/30/2023	Downtown Association		Weekly
1	Contact local business to operate the Waterfront Market	07/1/2023 – 10/1/2023	City planning committee		Daily
1	Purchase of crates and any other necessary equipment to be set up in the old Sears parking lot	03/1/2023 – 11/1/2023	City planning committee and other relevant personnel	TBD	Daily
1	Marketing campaigns to reach residents of the area on all platforms and medias	11/1/2023	Personnel will be assigned or hired through the Downtown Association and/or City Council	TBD	Bi-weekly
1	Begin petitioning businesses to set up stales at the Pavilion movie night	11/1/2023 – 02/28/2024	Downtown Association		Daily
1	Begin trials of the Waterfront Market	11/1/2023 – 03/31/2024	Volunteers and business owners	In kind	Bi-weekly
1	Collect data and feedback	11/1/2023 – 03/31/2024	Downtown Association		Bi-weekly

1	Purchase of resources for movie nights	01/1/2024 – 03/31/2024	City council	TBD	Daily
2	Creation of CityStudio program with Algoma CESD and Art's program, and Sault College events planning	04/1/2024 – 07/1/2024	CityStudio and Downtown Association		Monthly
1	Movie nights at the pavilion	04/15/2024 – 09/30/2024	Volunteers and security	In kind	Monthly
1	Add a permanent shipping crate outside of the bondar pavilion for food services to use at the events	05/31/2024 – 09/1/2024	TBD	TBD	Monthly
2	Project Showcase	04/1/2025	CityStudio	-	Daily
2	Business meetings with local vendors and storefronts to participate in the new Street Party event	05/1/2025 – 08/1/2025	Sault College Events Planning Course	-	Daily
2	Data collection on the new Street Party Event	01/1/2025 – 12/31/2028*	Sault College and City planning department	-	Yearly
2	Decisions to continue or end the Street Party Event	01/1/2028 – 12/31/2028*	City planning department	-	Yearly
	Total	70 Months			

*the timeframe for this is so broad as to ensure it includes all data no matter if the street party event occurs in the first month of the year or the last.

Conclusion

Downtown Sault Ste. Marie has many strengths and has faced many severe deficits in recent years but can, with careful planning and intervention, become the destination that municipal administration envisions it to be. The plan presented by Northern Waters addresses many of the factors that have caused the economic stagnation and also aims to alleviate weaknesses related to the perception of the area harboured by Sault Ste. Marie residents. The core of this plan is the development of districts in downtown which will provide new imagery and themes to locals while simultaneously allowing for greater coordination of resources by municipal staff.

To make the districts that Northern Waters envisions successful, municipal government will require significant investment into the area over a period of at least 10 years. This investment will revitalize City owned parts of Downtown such as the street while also providing additional safety and security to the businesses through increased lighting. Additionally, by increasing the number of trash receptacles it is expected that there will be a significantly reduced amount of trash in the area. This will make Downtown not only a visibly more appealing place, but also a safer place for all to be.

In addition to addressing the physical safety of the area, Northern Waters expects that the events proposed will draw tourists from across not only Northern Ontario, but potentially all of Canada as well as internationally. With a close connection to its sister city in Sault Ste. Marie Michigan, Sault Ste. Marie Ontario can become a hub for tourists from all directions. It is expected that by increasing the number of event offerings that Downtown will grow naturally as foot traffic increases along with a growth in residency.

Through these measures, we expect that the residency and economic activity will grow naturally, but to accelerate this process to meet the goals established by City administration will require additional intervention. Throughout many discussions regarding this plan members of Northern Waters have heard from residents and business operators alike that there are many great aspects if the other was present that they would invest or move to the area. This led us to the set of programs that we identify as “incite buy-in”. In short, we believe that with a small financial incentive we will spark a large number of residents and business owners to consider Downtown locations when they had not done so previously. After initial success we believe that the inertia of many business owners and residents moving to the area will allow the growth to be retained long term.

With the right type of events, specific renovations to the streetscape, and an increased number of residents and businesses operating, Downtown Sault Ste. Marie truly can become the place to be.

APPENDIX 1

2016 Revitalization Overview

Demographics (based on the 2016 Census Profile)

Total Population: 73,368

Largest Group: Ages 15 to 64 (63.5%)

Average Age: 44

Population Percentage Change: -2.4% (1,773 population loss)

<u>Vision</u>	<u>Objectives</u>
<p>More than a main street - a ‘true’ neighbourhood</p> <p>An authentic place</p> <p>A ‘24/7’ neighbourhood</p> <p>Entertainment and cultural centre of the city</p> <p>Marketplace shopping experience</p> <p>Well-Connected place</p> <p>Safe place</p>	<p>Preserve downtown as commercial, administrative & cultural core</p> <p>Develop a vibrant residential neighbourhood</p> <p>Ensure strong, cohesive leadership and collaborative action</p> <p>Facilitate beautiful streets and open spaces</p> <p>Encourage active use of downtown spaces</p> <p>Improve mobility and linkages</p>
<p><u>Goal:</u> Eliminate systemic challenges, endeavoring to establish long-term positive impacts.</p>	
<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <p>Big Box Stores</p> <p>Relocation of Employment Centres</p> <p>Vacancies</p> <p>Establishing a Resilient neighbourhood</p> <p>Sustainable prosperity</p>	

Source: (Sault Ste. Marie, 2016)

Appendix 2

Residential Support Program

Feasible Alternatives

A feasible alternative examined to providing grant funding to renovate homes is the model used by the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) Rehabbed & Ready program. This program is administered by the DLBA as a Public Authority whose mission is to “return the city's blighted and vacant properties to productive use.” (Detroit Land Bank Authority, n.d.) The DLBA does this through a combination of auction of foreclosed homes in as-is condition, or through targeted renovations of homes that are then resold at a profit with revenues received from sales of homes used to fund the program continuation.

This can be done in Sault Ste. Marie through the renovation of homes in downtown that are foreclosed by the City of Sault Ste. Marie for delinquency on municipal taxes and renovation using local developers to provide labour.

Additionally, support can be provided by way of direct to purchaser interest-free loans. This would be very similar to the cash grant incentives proposed, but would result in a more neutral cost in the long run due to nature of the incentive. The key cost associated with an interest-free loan would be the administration required in the repayment of the loan and the loss of the value of the funds over time.

Appendix 3 – Street Party Themes

- Summer - Will shut down Queen St. from March St. to Dennis St.
 - Bike festival, roller blading, scabbard, longboarding
 - could be a racing event to fundraise for other city events or non-for profit charities
 - Geek fests (sponsors would be the “Games Nook II”, “Vintage Games ‘n Junque”, ”The Rad Zone” and out of town businesses would be allowed to participate as well but would first have to go through the City Planning team and/or the businesses running the event
- Winter -Will shut down Queen St. from March St. to Dennis St.
 - More Christmas or shopping wise, what about an ice festival to promote the skating downtown, and can have themed vendors like people who make maple syrup candy on ice/snow, ice making competitions, snow man competitions, snow play fun zone for younger kinds that can be supervised by volunteers and possible hosted/sponsored by police or fireman forces.
 - Walkable Winter Wonderland: The Walkable Winter Wonderland is projected to be a new winter festival that brings the community together to embrace downtown. Every Friday from the third week of November to the third week of January a new activity will take place. These may include Santa Claus Parade, Storefront Decoration competition (vote and viewing), Moonlight Madness, Christmas carols and tree lighting, bands and markets, and road hockey tournament (youth and adults).

Appendix 4

STEEPLE/PESTLE Analysis

Forces Impacting the External Environment	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Social/Cultural <i>(High Priority)</i></p>	<p>Individuals are starting to feel more comfortable returning to larger gatherings - craving social interaction and looking to enjoy public activities and events. The city and country are in a period of transition as citizens look towards returning to a state of normalcy. During the lockdown, many people spent substantial time exercising and enjoying the outdoors (to supplement one’s mental and physical health) (Howes, 2021). The downtown boasts a beautiful natural playground with scenic views and accessible trails for bicyclists, runners etc. to utilize.</p> <p>Additionally, there are several economic development initiatives available in Sault Ste. Marie. These include programs such as the regional relief and recovery community Development Fund. A further link to the application guide is included below.</p>	<p>A portion of the population (i.e. unvaccinated, high-risk, elderly) will be hesitant to return to public settings, deterring them from visiting a busier downtown area. The increase in vaccinations will likely reduce this, however there will continue to be a risk for a significant portion of the population.</p> <p>In a ranking of the relative safety of communities in Canada Sault Saint Marie is ranked rather poorly, listed as 211th out of 415 total surveyed communities (Gray 2021). Further the Sault Ste. Marie police have reported a significant increase in breaking enter cases throughout 2020 with the most significant increase being reported in the breaking enter of businesses with a 26.6% increase over 2019 reported values (Sault Ste. Marie Police Services, 2021). The increase crimes is not categorized by district however represents a significant increase in risk for businesses and business owners in Sault Saint Marie. There are mitigation measures in place, such as the Downtown Association stating, “The association has hired private security to patrol the downtown at night,</p>

		<p>while the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service has stepped up daytime patrols. However, some association members say it hasn't been enough.” (Mcdonald, 2021).</p>
<p>Technological <i>(Medium Priority)</i></p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how consumers shop and expanded what people are willing to purchase online to now include categories of goods that they previously would not have. Charm et al. (2020) shows an increase of between 15 and 30% of buyers now willing to shop online across all categories of consumer goods. Further, consumers who have transitioned to making purchases online indicate they will continue to do so after a return to previous activities in a pre pandemic state. This offers significant opportunities for small businesses to make sales to previously unavailable markets.</p> <p>Additionally, these changes appear to have taken place across demographics with many seniors and older adults increasing their use of technology as well</p>	<p>The tremendous increase in online shopping rates during the pandemic. Government restrictions & closures have greatly impacted local small businesses. As restrictions ease, some customers will continue to shop online (for convenience and selection) from their own homes instead of visiting bricks and mortar storefronts. Older customers may opt to shop online due to ongoing health and safety concerns. According to Aston, Vipond, Virgin, & Youssef (2020) on StatsCan, “From February to May 2020, total retail sales fell 17.9%. However, retail e-commerce sales nearly doubled (+99.3%), with some retailers relying more on this method of sale”.</p> <p>The majority of small businesses currently accept online payments or utilize e-commerce in some capacity, however many only started doing so due to the COVID 19 pandemic (PayPal, 2020). Businesses that fail to adapt to an online environment risk a loss of customers or stagnation in the market. Further assistance is needed to ensure the enhancement of current businesses with e-commerce capabilities to ensure they are able to compete in a modern digital marketplace.</p>

<p>Economical <i>(Medium Priority)</i></p>	<p>The Bank of Canada has indicated that the disposable income of Canadians rose by \$1800 in 2020. It is suggested that this increase was due to the overall decrease in spending by many Canadians coupled with the government assistance programs such as CERB. Additionally, the Bank of Canada notes that the increase in disposable income and decrease in spending resulted in a significant increase to the total value of personal bank deposits. Although spending is not projected to rise meteorically, there is an expected increase in spending as the rate of savings per household declines through 2023 (Schembri, 2021). There is also a significant shift to online shopping that provides downtown businesses with a much wider market with additional opportunities for further sales.</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie has demonstrated a significant increase in the price of single-family homes throughout 2021 with the unusually high prices expected to remain through at least 2022 (Canadian Real Estate Association, 2021). This increase in prices may lead to an increase in both the purchase price of homes and also the cost of rentals as landlords experience increased operational costs. This is a significant threat to the attraction of businesses or business owners from other cities both in Canada and internationally. Additionally, the current inflation that is caused by COVID-19 related measures as well as global supply chain issues has drastically increased the cost of living. This increased cost may cause a decrease in discretionary spending as the costs of required goods and services rises.</p>
<p>Environmental <i>(Low Priority)</i></p>	<p>The Sault Ste. Marie waterfront offers a unique physical feature that can be used in attraction of visitors and potential businesses from dense urban areas without major environmental features.</p> <p>The Downtown Association is examining beautification and accessibility strategies such as grants to assist businesses with the development of temporary and permanent patios (Downtown Association, 2021).</p> <p>These factors can also be combined with the Canada’s Green Infrastructure Program. This program would help with</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie has a relatively cold climate with a yearly average temperature of 4.7°C with the monthly average temperature below freezing for 4 months of the year (Canada, 2021a). Additionally, Sault Ste. Marie has recorded an average of 320.7cm of snowfall with snow recorded over a period of as many as 9 months yearly with significant snowfall in at least 6 months yearly (Canada, 2021a). This is in contrast to major centers of commerce in Ontario such as Toronto which has an average of 8.2°C and a yearly snowfall of 108.5cm over no more</p>

	<p>research and development, deployment, and new technology to help in Canada’s fight against climate change (Government of Canada, 2021).</p>	<p>than 6 months (Canada, 2021b). This limits construction opportunities and decreases opportunities for traversing downtown on foot.</p>
<p>Political (High Priority)</p>	<p>The municipal government in Sault Ste. Marie is strongly committed to the revitalization of downtown. This commitment includes many grants including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An incentive that rebates the cost of commercial taxes starting at 100% of tax costs and declining over a specified period. This program is available to projects or businesses with an investment of over \$500,000 • Façade Improvement Grant – a one time grant that is awarded to businesses on a matched basis up to \$20,000 for improvements to the exterior of buildings in downtown. • Building Activation Grant – a grant of up to \$20,000 for businesses that are utilizing currently vacant properties or buildings in downtown. • Upper Floor Residential Conversion Grant – a grant that matches the contributions of a business, up to \$20,000, to assist business owners in converting spaces above downtown businesses to residential apartments or condominiums. • Patio Conversion Grant – a grant given on a matched basis to assist restaurants in the establishment of a patio to offer outdoor food and beverage service. 	<p>In the short term, COVID 19 restrictions pose significant risk to small businesses. The recently implemented proof of vaccination system (i.e. the “vaccine passport”) requires proof of full vaccination to enter many businesses. Currently Algoma has a vaccination rate slightly above the provincial average, however 12.7% of eligible adults are not currently vaccinated, which would exclude them from in-person service at many businesses in downtown (Algoma Public Health, 2021). Additionally, negative responses to the implementation of the proof of vaccination program may lead to some potential customers avoiding in person shopping rather than disclose vaccination status at businesses that require disclosure.</p>

	<p>(Turco, n.d.) There is provincial government support for municipal revitalization activities as well as specific grants targeted to downtowns or main streets (Main Street Revitalization, 2021).</p>	
<p>Legal (Low Priority)</p>	<p>The downtown of Sault Ste. Marie is primarily designated as a commercial zone but is surrounded by low to medium density residential areas in a reasonable radius that offers walkable areas to almost all downtown businesses (Sault Ste. Marie, n.d. b). Current zoning laws suggest a relatively large residential area in close proximity to the prime commercial and retail area of Sault Ste. Marie increasing the number of potential shoppers for downtown businesses.</p>	<p>Sault Ste. Marie has a total of 38 designated historical monuments or buildings which are concentrated mainly around downtown (Sault Ste. Marie, n.d.). Preservation of historical monuments poses limits to the design and renovation of current downtown buildings. Additionally, the preservation of historical monuments limits planning activities such as road design, creation of open spaces such as the downtown plaza, or for the creation of a unified brand.</p> <p>There are strict laws governing historic sites in the Downtown core that make renovation or repurposing many of the sites in Downtown.</p> <p>Public health laws related to COVID-19 also significantly reduce foot traffic and increase associated business risk.</p>

Appendix 5
SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The downtown of Sault Ste. Marie is easy to navigate through with walkable and easily accessible historical buildings, stores, and dining. There are many events and festivals hosted in Sault Ste. Marie with a great number being in the downtown core. It is also aesthetically pleasing, especially during festive events, the downtown area offers events such as the Moonlight Magic, etc., that attract many local residents. (City of Sault Ste. Marie, 2020). • Sault Ste. Marie is located on a unique waterfront that provides opportunities for events designed to highlight the natural beauty of the area and promote nature tourism given proximity to the new Agawa Canyon Tour train station. • Downtown SSM also has many diversified businesses, comprising many different cultures. Restaurants such as Lychee Thai, Tandoori Gardan, Georgi’s Shawarma, etc. are some of the dine-in places that offer authentic international cuisines. As said by the owner of Georgie’s Shawarma on Soo Today, “Food gets people closer together” and that is one of the strengths of having diversified businesses, it attracts and brings together local residents and foreign visitors. (Soo Today, 2020). The downtown community has four pillars, i.e. Cultural Vitality, Economic Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A weakness in the downtown area concerns low foot traffic in the downtown businesses due to increased e-commerce. Since the Covid pandemic, many people have switched to shopping online. Many of the businesses that are located in the downtown core do not offer any online shopping or e-commerce abilities. This reduces their visibility for consumers outside of the downtown area. • There is a perception that crime rates and homelessness have increased in the downtown area (Gray, 2021). Crime has been a major concern in the downtown area, for businesses and residents. “The Sault Ste. Marie Downtown Association is exploring other means of protecting businesses from crime”, says Mike in his article on CTV News (McDonald, 2021). If the crime rates are high in an area, then there will be a significant decrease in foot traffic as families and residents will refrain from visiting, which harms the community. According to McDonald (2021), the Sault Ste. Marie police services have hired private security to patrol the downtown at night, but some members of the downtown association members say that it is not enough. According to Brian’s article on Sault Star, he writes Chief Hugh Stevenson’s statement in his article regarding the break-ins and burglaries;

<p>& Diversity, Environmental Sustainability and Social Equity, and having different cultural businesses adheres to those four pillars. (City of Sault Ste. Marie, n.d.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various tourist attractions, amenities and entertainment activities are only present in downtown SSM, giving it the niche attraction location of SSM. . On the To-Do Canada tourism website under the “best things to do in SSM”, some of the top activities listed are watching the boats by the Sault Ste. Marie Canal which is a National Historic Site that is located downtown, the waterfront boardwalk activities, the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, the Ermatinger Old Stone House which is one of the oldest buildings in SSM, Mill Market and many more are just some of the attractions present downtown. (To Do Canada, 2020). These attract local and foreign visitors, James Hopkin mentions in his article about executive director Dan Ingram telling SooToday how the heritage museum benefits from Americans that visit the Sault on cruise ships, “along with additional U.S. visitors coming in from Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota” (Hopkin, 2021). 	<p>“We know where they're occurring in the downtown core.” (Kelly, 2020).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another weakness would be concerning the infrastructure in downtown Sault Ste. Marie. Some of the roads are not in the best conditions and especially during harsh winter and/or severe rain, it can be a potential hazard. Sault Ste. Marie’s mayor addressed the road conditions on Soo Today mentioning that bad road conditions must be addressed (Taylor, 2021).
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Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During a survey of businesses currently operating in the downtown core, substantiated by a list of current operating businesses provided by the City administrators, there were several vacant areas noted. Vacant areas included current buildings that could be repurposed as well as empty lots that are potential sites for new purpose-built construction. ● Being a border city to Sault Ste. Marie Michigan gives us the advantage and opportunity to attract visitors from the United States. Visitors from the States use the international bridge to drive across and many visitors also visit SSM on cruise ships from other American cities too for local tourist attractions such as the Canadian Bushplane Museum ● Many grants are available through the federal and provincial governments for revitalization projects such as this. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' Downtown Revitalization Program is a four-point approach to support economic development efforts of rural communities, based on the US National Main Street Center Approach. (Huether, 2015). The Ontario government also put forth funding for municipalities' main street areas (Main Street Revitalization, 2021). Having funding from the government is an opportunity to achieve our goals and objectives within the proper time frame that we put forth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bus service in Sault Ste. Marie has been noted as unreliable or difficult to navigate for many years (Root, 2017) and taxi services are currently limited. Ridesharing services such as Uber are highly regulated to such an extent that many will not operate in Sault Ste. Marie. More accessible transit services are required to take advantage of the number of downtown businesses ● COVID-19 restrictions and public health measures have caused significant decreases to foot traffic in downtown and subsequently in business revenues. Additionally, restrictions are highly variable and unpredictable and are dependent on the state of viral transmission. This makes the current outlook difficult to predict and is determined regionally. ● Sault Ste. Marie Ontario is in relatively close proximity to the American border and shares the border with Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Although Sault Ste. Marie Michigan is much smaller; it provides an additional option for Canadian shoppers and may split the market. ● Another potential threat would concern Sault Ste. Marie's opioid/drug crisis and health and safety concerns about Covid restrictions. Over the years, the drug usage in the Algoma Region, specifically in Sault Ste. Marie has risen, and the issue stands as a health and safety concern for residents and visitors. As mentioned in an article by Peter, the Algoma region saw 53 opioid

	<p>deaths in 2020. (Chow, 2021). The mayor of Sault Ste. Marie, Christian Provenzano said on CTV News talked about the ongoing drug overdose problem and calls on the province to step up with funding to help SSM to overcome the overdose deaths, especially those related to opioids. (McDonald, 2021).</p>
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SO Strategies

- The vacant real estate accompanied with the central location of the downtown area could attract businesses to begin operations in this setting. The central location of downtown SSM is also advantageous as it joins both the east & west ends of the city, with easier and more affordable transportation like U Ride gives the population opportunities to travel to the downtown area
- The Roberta Bondar Pavilion provides an event space which can be marketed by the City of Sault Ste. Marie for further festivals and events while also being used as a source of revenue to further promotional activities.

WO Strategies

- Many locations in or around downtown are currently vacant. This includes both current buildings and vacant land allowing for new construction in limited areas. Although professional services currently make up a large contingent of downtown businesses, they offer the opportunity to have high wage employees concentrated to the area. By attracting additional professional services firms downtown will increase traffic of residents with additional disposable income.
- Sault Ste. Marie currently hosts many events or multi-day festivals that can attract local residents to the downtown area and also provide a draw for tourists. By increasing the number of festivals and making them in multiple areas of the downtown, such as Queen Street, Bay Street and Clergue park, downtown can be transformed into the social space of Sault Ste. Marie. By varying location it will be ensured that the impact on businesses that rely on car traffic is lessened.

ST Strategies

- Relief of COVID 19 restrictions may lead to a decrease in business if there are not additional factors to draw American shoppers to Sault Ste. Marie. The hosting of festivals or special events will provide the draw required to attract shoppers from the United States and keep Canadian shoppers in Canada.

- COVID-19 restrictions are highly variable dependant on case counts in the Algoma region. A key measure that are considered as a COVID 19 measure includes limiting the number of people who are able to gather, including shopping. The ability for public health officials to impose capacity limits requires businesses which may impact greatly on retail outlets or professional services.

WT Strategies

- As COVID-19 measures and border restrictions are lessened Canadian shoppers will have access to American goods again. This provides a disadvantage to Canadian retailers who will again need to compete with American merchants. This is a net loss in potential business as the Northern Michigan market provides fewer shoppers into Canada than we provide to the American merchants.
- Sault Ste Marie is positioned well geographically to allow for international travel and tourism from Northern Michigan and offers one of the only land borders with the United States in a reasonable radius. Although geographically exposed and ideal, many of the businesses are not marketed well enough to make downtown Sault Ste. Marie a shopping destination. A unique marketing strategy and opening of the border will provide increased opportunities for downtown merchants.

Appendix 6
SFAS Analysis

Key Strategic Factors Top 10 EFAS/IFAS	Weighting 1=high 0= low Impact on Strategic Position	Rating 5=great 0=poor Response	Weighted Score	Duration S=<1year I= 1-3 years L=>3 years	Comments
Opportunities					
1. An increased desire for events, like the annual RotaryFest. Baraniuk (2020) explains that varying the demographic, social distancing and lockdowns have made people crave the need to have social interaction and gather to enjoy events and each other's company.	0.05	3	0.15	I	As COVID-19 continues, people have continued to follow public health measures to reduce the transmission risk. Restrictions are being reduced and people want to have a sense of normalcy to gather for events, which the downtown must take advantage of.
2. Having access to the United States citizens to come across the border to spend their time and money.	0.1	2	0.2	L	Amenities to be used such as the hub trail, Sault College Waterfront activities, Pavilion, museums, and art galleries will bring this tourism. (At this moment it may be less than it could be due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)
Threats					
1. The Great Northern Rd and Trunk Rd corridors hold spots for many popular restaurants and retail spaces - more traffic and more development	0.2	4	0.8	L	With developments in other parts of the city, investors and business owners alike are looking to pursue operations where there would be the most traffic. This takes away from the potential downtown businesses or any chain stores or restaurants not thinking about the downtown as a

					potential start-up to make the most revenues from a location.
2. Public health and safety concerns regarding, first, COVID-19 restrictions and vaccination passports to enter certain establishments. Second, the Sault's opioid/drug crisis (increased crime, poverty, and drug usage rates downtown, presence of methadone clinics) (White, 2021).	0.15	4.5	0.675	L	There will be some hesitancy among the high-risk elders coming back to a sense of normalcy, especially from attending busy events. There is also heightened alert for downtown visitors, especially locals, who will be influenced by the media and the issues in the downtown area.
3. Being a border city offers the option for citizens of Sault Ste. Marie and surrounding areas, who could utilize our downtown, to spend time and money elsewhere in the U.S.A.	0.05	2	0.1	L	Sault Ste. Marie Michigan offers a wide variety of different stores and restaurants that may entice Saultites to spend money and utilize their facilities instead of Sault Ontario's. This could decrease the willing population to go out to shop, eat, etc., and spend their money in a whole other economy.
Weaknesses					
1. Increased crime and drug usage in the downtown area.	0.1	1.5	0.15	I	The increased drug and opioid usage in the downtown area have had a negative effect on the community and have a significant decrease in traffic as families are reducing their visits. "We do a little bit of training on recognizing an opioid overdose," said Allison McFarlane, a public health nurse with Algoma Public Health. (McDonald, 2021).

<p>2. E-commerce has reduced the number of shops, restaurants, and other services resulting in low foot traffic downtown.</p>	0.1	2.5	0.25	I	<p>59 percent of Canadians have boosted their online shopping habits compared to before the pandemic and the grocery sector has seen a significant increase”. (Toneguzzi, 2021). The variety of stores has decreased due to the pressures of e-commerce growth over the past 20 months. The mall and shops along Queen St have reduced inventory or have shut their doors completely, resulting in fewer options for residents to enjoy.</p>
Strengths					
<p>1. Amenities, tourist attractions and entertainment facilities downtown that attract people of all ages.</p>	0.15	1.5	0.225	S	<p>There are amenities such as the Hub Trail, waterfront activities, museums, art galleries and other tourist attractions to excite local and foreign visitors. The local bars and greyhound games are a popular place for younger people.</p>
<p>2. Various types of cultural businesses downtown, great in terms of diversity.</p>	0.05	4	0.2	L	<p>There are many different types of diversified restaurants, shops, and small businesses downtown that attract people from all cultures. This is a positive aspect following the four pillars of the downtown community, i.e. Cultural Vitality, Economic Growth & Diversity, Environmental Sustainability and Social</p>

					Equity. (City of Sault Ste. Marie, n.d.)
3. Downtown SSM has an aesthetically pleasing downtown, for example, the walkable and easily accessible historical buildings that line Queen St and the waterfront.	0.05	3	0.15	I	It has been a common topic of conversation and circulates through word of mouth that the population of Sault Ste. Marie wants to take control of the natural competitive advantages we are offered, for example, our downtown and the natural beauty.
Total Score	1		2.9		

Appendix 7

External Factor Analysis

<i>External Factor</i>	<i>Weight</i> 1-high 0-low	<i>Rating</i> 5-great 0-poor	<i>Weighted</i> <i>Score</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<u>Opportunities:</u>				
1. An increased desire for events, like the annual RotaryFest. People are craving chances to get outside and gather in larger crowds. The city is in a period of transition as citizens look towards returning to a state of normalcy. Baraniuk (2020) explains that varying the demographic, social distancing and lockdowns have made people crave the need to have social interaction and gather to enjoy events and each other's company.	0.2	3.0	0.6	As COVID-19 continues, people have continued to follow public health measures to reduce the transmission risk. Restrictions are being reduced and people want to have a sense of normalcy to gather for events, which the downtown must take advantage of.
2. Having access to the United States citizens to come across the border to spend their time and money.	0.1	2.0	0.2	Amenities to be used such as the hub trail, Sault College Waterfront activities, Pavilion, museums, and art galleries will bring this tourism. (At this moment it may

				be less than it could be due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)
3. Encourage the correct mix of businesses to be downtown, for example, grocery, clothing, hotel, food, farmers markets through more relaxed rules on commercial spaces.	0.15	1.5	0.225	Ensuring there is a proper mix of businesses downtown will ensure there is something for everyone to enjoy. The economic health of downtown revolves around a solid balance of retail, office, entertainment, restaurant, and residential uses more prevalent now as online sales challenge brick-and-mortar (Burayidi, 2018, p.21. The stakeholders along with the council should aid with a smooth process, from the beginning (approval) to end (opening) any businesses wanting to add their products/services downtown.
4. There are grants and available funding through the federal and provincial governments for different projects like the CityStudio Downtown Revitalization. The Ontario government is putting forth 26 million dollars, providing funds for municipalities’ main street areas (Main Street Revitalization, 2021).	0.1	4.0	0.4	This allows the City of Sault Ste. Marie to imagine a highly achievable strategy for the betterment of the downtown. It also allows the Sault to continue a budget within the city and allow this ‘betterment’ to come sooner than later. Pursuing a strategy that may not have been affordable to the city within a reasonable amount of time.
Threats:				

1. The Great Northern Rd and Trunk Rd corridors hold spots for many popular restaurants and retail spaces - more traffic and more development, like the newly renovated Wellington Square Mall (Shoppes on the TransCanada)	0.15	4.0	0.6	With developments in other parts of the city, investors and business owners alike are looking to pursue operations where there would be the most traffic. This takes away from the potential downtown businesses or any chain stores or restaurants not thinking about the downtown as a potential start-up to make the most revenues from a location.
2. Public health and safety concerns regarding, first, COVID-19 restrictions and vaccination passports to enter certain establishments. Second, the Sault's opioid/drug crisis (increased crime, poverty, and drug usage rates downtown, presence of methadone clinics) (White, 2021).	0.1	4.5	0.45	There will be some hesitancy among the high-risk elders coming back to a sense of normalcy, especially from attending busy events, like RotaryFest, in the downtown area. There is also heightened alert for downtown visitors, especially locals, who will be influenced by the media and the issues in the downtown area.
3. Being a border city offers the option for citizens of Sault Ste. Marie and surrounding areas, who could utilize our downtown, to spend time and money elsewhere in the U.S.A.	0.15	2.0	0.3	Sault Ste. Marie Michigan offers a wide variety of different stores and restaurants that may entice Saultites to spend money and utilize their facilities instead of Sault Ontario's. This could decrease the willing population to go out to shop, eat, etc., and spend their money in a whole other economy.

<p>4. The increased online usage for shopping, curbside, and delivery. According to Aston, Vipond, Virgin, & Youssef (2020), From February to May 2020, total retail sales fell 17.9% but e-commerce nearly doubled 99.3%.</p>	0.05	3.0	0.15	<p>A survey conducted by PayPal Canada revealed that Canadians increased their monthly online shopping spending by more than \$2 billion compared to pre-pandemic (Toneguzzi, 2021). Even after COVID-19 restrictions are completely lifted, there is a portion of the population who feel more comfortable shopping online for more selection and convenience. With Northern Ontario's harsh winter weather patterns, this will become even more prevalent as the convenience of not leaving the car or house to grab needs and wants has increased through e-commerce.</p>
TOTAL	1		2.925	

Appendix 8

Internal Factors Analysis

<i>Internal Factor</i>	<i>Weight</i> 1-high 0-low	<i>Rating</i> 5-great 0-poor	<i>Weighted</i> <i>Score</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<u>Strengths:</u>				
1. Amenities, tourist attractions and entertainment facilities downtown that attract people of all ages.	0.15	1.5	0.275	There are amenities such as hub trail, Waterfront activities, museums (Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre), art galleries and other tourist attractions such as the Ermatinger Old Stone House which is one of the oldest buildings in Sault Ste. Marie (Corp of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, n.d.) attracts local and foreign visitors. The local bars and greyhound games are a popular place for younger people.
2. Various types of cultural businesses downtown, great in terms of diversity.	0.2	4.0	0.5	There are many different types of diversified restaurants, shops, and small businesses downtown that attract people from all cultures. This is a positive aspect following the four pillars of the downtown community, i.e. Cultural Vitality, Economic Growth & Diversity, Environmental Sustainability and Social Equity. (City of Sault Ste. Marie, n.d.)

3. Downtown SSM has an aesthetically pleasing downtown, for example, the walkable and easily accessible historical buildings that line Queen St and the waterfront.	0.05	3	0.15	It has been a common topic of conversation and circulates through word of mouth that the population of Sault Ste. Marie wants to take control of the natural competitive advantages we are offered. Moonlight Magic and the Christmas Tree lighting draws crowds of up to 5000 people which incentivize citizens to come out and enjoy the local businesses and natural beauty (City of Sault Ste. Marie, 2020).
4. Convenient public transportation that is available throughout the week.	0.15	4	0.6	The Sault Ste. Marie bus transit service is available 7 days a week and is easily accessible to the public. People are also able to plan their trips ahead of time using Google maps, which makes it even more convenient for the residents. (Corp of the City of SSM, Transit, n.d).
Weaknesses:				
1. Increased crime and drug usage in the downtown area. The Sault Ste. Marie & Area Drug Strategy is bringing awareness to drug addiction and working to eliminate the stigma surrounding it (McDonald, 2021).	0.2	1.5	0.2	The increased drug and opioid usage in the downtown area have had a negative effect on the community and have a significant decrease in traffic as families are reducing their visits. "We do a little bit of training on recognizing an opioid overdose," said Allison McFarlane, a public health nurse with Algoma Public Health. (McDonald, 2021).

2. E-commerce has reduced the number of shops, restaurants, and other services resulting in low foot traffic downtown.	0.15	2.5	0.475	“59 percent of Canadians have boosted their online shopping habits compared to before the pandemic and the grocery sector, in particular, has seen a significant increase”. (Toneguzzi, 2021). The variety of stores has decreased due to the pressures of e-commerce growth over the past 20 months. The mall and shops along Queen St have reduced inventory or have shut their doors completely, resulting in fewer options for residents to enjoy.
3. Infrastructure of the downtown area (roads, buildings etc.) are not in the greatest conditions	0.1	3	0.4	Few of the buildings’ infrastructure and roads downtown have been deteriorating and it can become hazardous (especially the roads) during winter. Darren discusses in his article on SooToday regarding Sault Ste. Marie’s mayor who addressed the road conditions of SSM, “It’s a need I will support...the reality is that we have a lot of old roads really getting beaten up by the freeze and thaw cycle we’re seeing now,” Provenzano said” (Taylor, 2021).
TOTAL	1		2.6	

Appendix 9
VRIO Analysis

Value: Does it provide customer value and competitive advantage?

Rareness: Do no other competitors possess it?

Imitability: Is it costly for others to imitate?

Organization: Is the strategy organized to exploit the resource?

Resource or capability	Value	Rarity	Imitability	Organization	Competitive advantage
Ability to attract our designated target market and foreign visitors	YES	YES	NO	YES	An overall relation between attraction and retention, i.e., when the community's ability to attract newcomers increases, so does its ability to retain newcomers. With Sault Ste. Marie being in a unique spot among communities with low immigration rates, SSM has the highest retention rate. (Corp of the city of Sault Ste. Marie, 2019)
Increase and have the ability to retain the population and workforce in the downtown.	YES	NO	YES	YES	Currently, the organization of the downtown area has all the resources to become a very lucrative and high atmosphere location. With the waterfront, vacant buildings and already well-established core businesses in the area, implementing a marketing strategy that entices business owners to make the move.
Increase of community events and street parties in the downtown.	YES	YES	NO	YES	With the hopes of more residents and workers shifting towards downtown, events and parties will draw in great attraction.

Ability to maintain a diversified and inclusive community.	YES	YES	NO	YES	There are many different types of diversified restaurants, shops, and small businesses downtown that attract people from all cultures.
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