

City and Tourism Sault Ste. Marie  
**Waterfront Design Plan**





---

## Acknowledgments

**This Plan has been developed in conjunction with O2 and the following City Staff and Community Stakeholders:**

### **City Staff Member**

Travis Anderson, Director, Tourism & Community Development  
Alana Kenopic, Manager, Tourism  
Richard Jones, Marketing Specialist, Tourism & Community Development  
Peter Tonazzo, Director, Planning  
Salvatore Marchese, Planner, Planning  
Tom Vair, CAO, City of Sault Ste. Marie  
Brent Lamming, Deputy CAO, Community Development and Enterprise Services  
Emily Cormier, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator, Community Development and Enterprise Services  
Lisa Vezeau-Allen, City Councilor, City Council  
Rick Van Stevern, Director, Economic Development  
Travis Reid, Manager, Parks

### **Key Stakeholders**

Beverley Barber, Chair of the Board, Tourism Sault Ste. Marie  
Nick Brash, General Manager, Holiday Inn Express  
Carly Wetzl, Visitor Experience Manager National Historic Sites- Canal  
Elia Marini, **Product Development Officer National Historic Sites- Canal**  
Brad Robinson, Thrive Tours, Indigenous Tours  
Amanda Cora, Thrive Tours, Indigenous Tours  
Joanie McGuffin, Melis Tours, Indigenous Tours  
Jasmina Jovanovic, Executive Director, Art Gallery of Algoma  
Mark Lepore, Board Member, Art Gallery of Algoma  
Kevin Rusnell, Owner, Peace Restaurant & Digital Intelligence Group  
Nicholas Luck, Executive Director, Downtown Association BIA  
Don Marini, General Manager, Microtel  
Tony Porco, Owner, Canal District  
David Ellis, Owner, David Ellis Architect / Station Mall Consultant  
Simon Lu, Owner, Station Mall  
Stephanie Hopkin, Senior Coordinator, Product Development Destination Northern Ontario  
Clyde Healy, Monument Committee, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 25  
Diane Morrell, Accessibility Coordinator, City SSM Planning Department

## Scope of Work Boundary

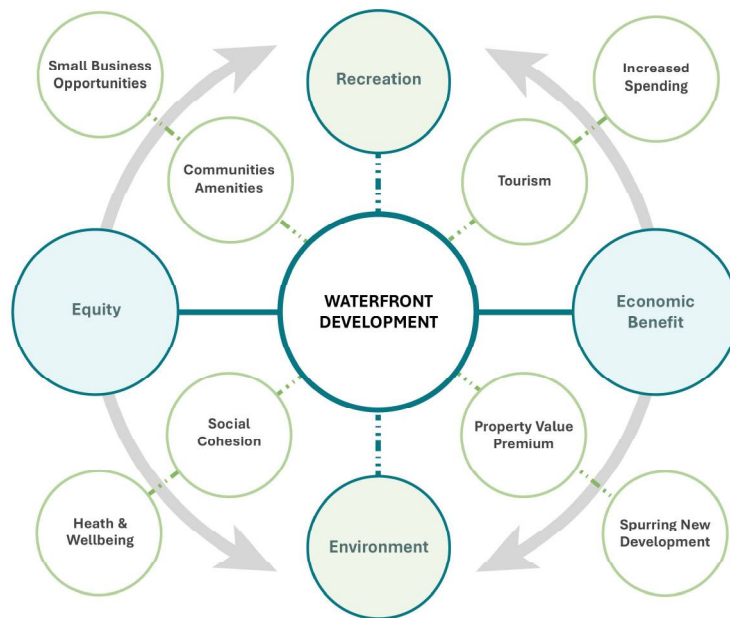


## Realizing Returns on Waterfront Investment

PART OF WHAT MAKES SAULT STE. MARIE SPECIAL IS THAT IT IS A WATERFRONT CITY. ACCESS TO THE SHORES OF THE ST. MARYS RIVER SHOULD BE FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE.

This means places to experience calming views of water and nature, places to launch a boat, places to bike and run and explore. It also means public spaces and parks that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities, and a safe, welcoming environment for tourism and investment. Waterfront development should also bring economic opportunities, from new jobs to partnerships.

Helping the waterfront meet its potential means protecting and expanding access to the water. If you walk along the waterfront in the future, you will see it bustling with energy. This is what happens as the city starts to reorient itself towards the water. Green spaces, commercial opportunities, public art, playgrounds, cycling and a simple walk along the water are just some of the ways these areas can come to life.



Revitalized Waterfronts **INCREASE** Visitation by

**+30%**

An **INCREASE** in waterfront activity **GENERATES MORE SPENDING**



**Boomers & Millenials**

\*\* **PREFER** \*\*

Living near a walkable waterfront

Every \$ spent on Infrastructure =

**5.4x** **Return on Investment**

## Public Outreach

What does it mean to create a partnership between the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the entire community? In its mission to transform the future of its Waterfront, the waterfront design program has committed to innovative and robust public engagement – seeking input from many voices, inviting open and direct dialog, and encouraging participation throughout the design process. This level of community engagement is what is needed to fulfill a principle goal of creating a Waterfront for All.

### MOBILIZING COMMUNITY INTEREST

To engage the community, we must reach them. The Design Team has used a variety of methods to pique interest in the possibilities for the waterfront and convert that interest into active participation. A full communications plan was developed which included:

Webpage content to include project information, timeline, engagement opportunities, link to a survey and interactive map for a new website launched in early December (<https://saultstemarie.ca/waterfront/>);

Outreach emails and email notices to broad stakeholder list with brief project description, link to webpage, call to action and poster PDF;

Council notice to all City Council including invites to participate in workshops and interviews;

Pop-Up Boards for events at City Hall, the Soo Market and Plaza, Station Mall, and the John Rhodes Community Centre;

Outdoor posters throughout the City and distributed to local businesses, stakeholders and posted in key City facilities;

Postcards distributed at pop-ups and design workshops, and distributed to local businesses, stakeholders, and placed in key City facilities;

Social media posts and ads on City social media platforms;

Radio advertisements; and

Newspaper ads and articles (<https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/city-wants-you-to-float-ideas-for-new-waterfront-vision-7976665>)



**SAULT STE. MARIE**  
**WATERFRONT DESIGN PLAN**

**GET INVOLVED!**

**SURVEY**  
Complete the visioning survey before January 5<sup>th</sup>.

**INTERACTIVE MAPPING TOOL**  
Share your favourite memories and your vision for the waterfront!

**PROJECT TIMELINE**

Phase 1: **Creating the Vision**  
Dec 2023 – Jan 2024

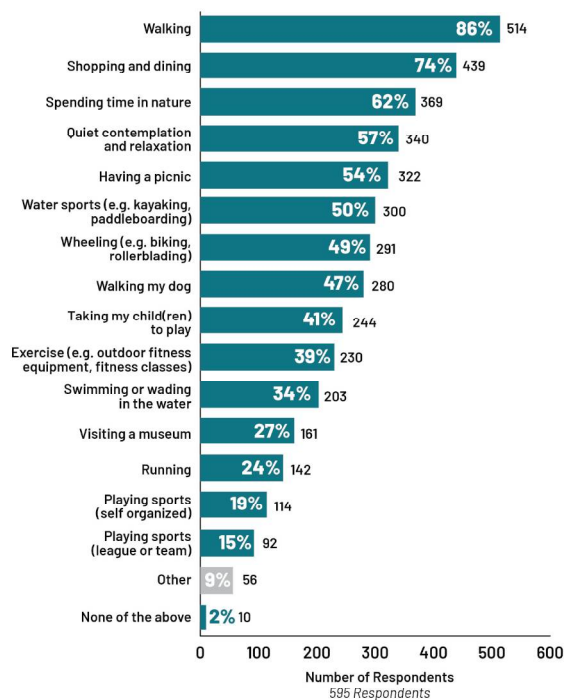
Phase 2: **Design Concepts**  
Jan – Mar 2024

Phase 3: **Final Waterfront Design Plan**  
Mar 2024



## Activities

Which of the following activities would you like to participate in when you visit Sault Ste. Marie's Waterfront?



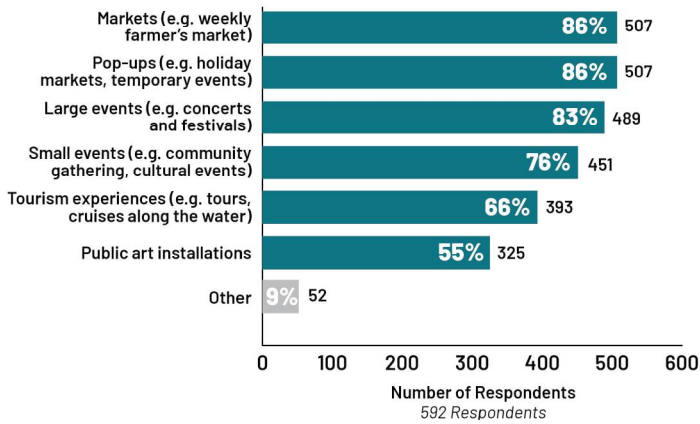
Some activities that people wish to participate in are not common at Sault Ste. Marie's current waterfront. **Shopping and dining** was requested by 74% of respondents, but is not currently a feature of the waterfront.

Respondents would like to do more of the following activities:

- + **Spend time in nature:** 35% currently do this, 62% would like to.
- + **Quiet contemplation and relaxation:** 37% currently do this, 57% would like to.
- + **Have a picnic:** 16% currently do this, 54% would like to.
- + **Water sports:** 13% currently do this, 50% would like to.
- + **Wheeling:** 29% currently do this, 49% would like to.

## Events and Programming

Which of the following **events and programming** would you like to participate in when you visit Sault Ste. Marie's Waterfront?



- Respondents would like to attend a variety of events and programming along the waterfront, including markets (86%), pop-ups (86%) and large events (83%).
- Although other response options were selected less frequently, more than 50% of respondents would like to participate in any of these event and programming types along the Sault Ste. Marie waterfront.

## Public Realm Design Components

Ultimately, the goal of the public realm design is to create a powerful, world-class identity for the Sault Ste. Marie Waterfront that celebrates the St. Marys riverfront and provides the public with access to the water's edge. At the heart of the design is a vibrant, robust and engaging public realm that becomes a new "living room" for the city, overlooking St. Marys River, the rapids, sea planes and freighters, and beyond to Michigan. The core project area, stretching from the Canal District to the former hospital lands, will have a continuous waterfront promenade that is supported by a series of destinations distributed along the promenade.

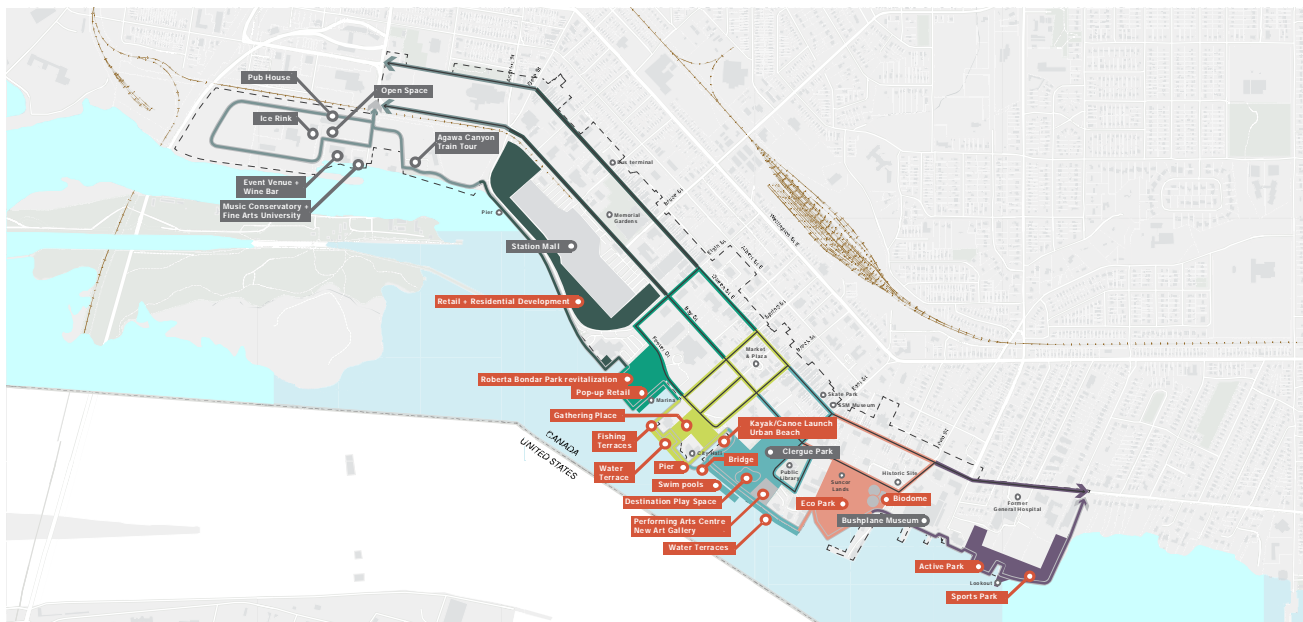
### Street Improvements

A critical aspect of the Master Plan includes the physical and programmatic improvements for achieving upgraded organization and connections of streets between Queen Street and the Waterfront, in order to form a coherent, prosperous, pedestrian-friendly and attractive Waterfront District.



### The Destinations

Along the water's edge promenade are a series of programmed destinations that define and create both anchor destinations that are supported by a wide range of potential flexible or event programs. The destinations along the waterfront provide spaces for gathering, displays and installations, active play and recreation, education and discovery, passive and informal activities, and viewing and touching the water. New and enhanced destinations link and connect to existing destinations to create better synergies, revitalize the waterfront and bring new life to the waterfront.



## Big Ideas



**CONTINUOUS WATERFRONT PROMENADE**  
CONNECTING AND LINKING THE WATERFRONT



**SWIMMING**  
A UNIQUE RIVERSIDE DESTINATION



**DESTINATION PLAY SPACE**  
ENGAGE, EDUCATE AND EXCITE



**CANTILEVERED OUTLOOKS & MARSHES**  
POINTS OF OBSERVATION AND HABITAT



**TOUCH THE WATER**  
POINTS OF RIVER ACCESS



**RETAIL ACTIVATION**  
PLACES TO SHOP, EAT, DRINK AND GATHER





To complement the street improvements, the following key upgrade strategies are recommended:

- Upgrades to the north-south streets that connect Queen Street and the Waterfront to make the streets more appealing for the pedestrian and cyclist, and to complement the commercial success of the area;
- Spring Street, Foster Drive and East Street transformed into “Woonerfs” (shared streets);
- Elgin Street and Brock Street transformed into “Complete Streets”

The suite of upgrades suggested for the identified streets complements the growing requirements for enhanced retail opportunities along Shared Streets, the growing need for a connected bicycle network, as well as a streetscape more focused on pedestrian experience.





## Waterfront Seasonality - Summer Festival

- Rotary Fest in Clergue Park
- Expansion of Festivals into Streetscapes (Festival Road, Foster Dr, Brock St, Spring St)
- Expansion of Festivals into the Cultural District (and connected to The Plaza)
- Expansion of Festivals into Bondar (connecting with new retail area and the Pavilion)



## Waterfront Seasonality - Winter Activity

- Skating Loop in Clergue Park
- Winter Huts, Ice Sculptures, Winter Installations within Clergue Park
- Shipping container retail site at Bondar Pavilion open with warming stations and fire pits











Phase 1 Concept Plan







