

Image Route Guidelines and Detailed Streetscape Designs

December 2012





Looking east on Red River Road toward Lake Superior.

Table of Contents

Section 1: The Image Routes	1
1.1 What Are the Image Routes?	4
1.2 Why Focus on the Image Routes	4
1.3 Structure of Image Routes	4
Section 2: Enhancing the Image Routes	8
2.1 How can the Image Routes be Transformed?	10
2.2 Beautification	10
2.3 Creating a New Balance	11
2.4 Celebrating Thunder Bay	12
2.5 Expanding The Urban Forest	12
Section 3: Design Tools	14
3.0 Design Improvements	16
Section 4: Demonstration Plans	32
4.1 Opportunity Sites	33
4.2 Vickers Park (Arthur Street)	35
4.3 Bus Shelters (Image Route-Wide)	36
4.4 Memorial Avenue & High Street (Intersection Improvements)	38
4.5 Neebing McIntyre Floodway Bridge (May Memorial Gateway)	40
4.6 Algoma Street Improvements	41
4.7 Patterson Park (May Street)	43
4.8 St. Patrick's Square – Red River Ribbon (Red River Road)	44
4.9 Waverley Park (Red River Road)	45
4.10 Connaught Square (Red River Road and Algoma Street)	47
4.11 Red River Road (from Cumberland to Water Streets)	49
Section 5: Detailed Streetscape Designs	51
5.1 Arthur Street/the South Core	54
5.2 May/Memorial/Algoma Streets	86
5.3 Red River Road/the North Core	126

Section 1.0

The Image Routes





A blurred background image of a city street. The scene shows a wide sidewalk with a row of trees on the left. Pedestrians, including a man in a blue shirt and a woman with children, are walking. The image is slightly out of focus, emphasizing the text overlay.

**A COMMUNITY'S
IDENTITY CAN
BE IMMEDIATELY
UNDERSTOOD BY THE
QUALITY OF ONE'S
JOURNEY ALONG ITS
MAIN STREETS.**

1.1 What Are the Image Routes?

By definition, an Image Route is “a cohesive, consistent and themed streetscape linking together a series of adjacent districts” (The City of Thunder Bay Beautification Strategy, 2001). However, Image Routes are much more than this. They are: gateways into the City; the spine between the North and South Cores; links to the City’s natural and cultural history; and, places to live, work, and play. Quite simply, the Image Routes are the City’s most significant corridors, creating a continuous functional and cultural link throughout the City.

The three primary Image Routes include:

- **Arthur Street**, from the Thunder Bay Expressway to May Street;
- **May/Memorial/Algoma Streets**, from Arthur Street to Red River Road; and,
- **Red River Road**, from Water Street to the Thunder Bay Expressway.

The streets above are the focus of this report, but the key recommendations should inspire the evolution of other main streets throughout the City, including Waterloo Street / Balmoral Street, Junot Avenue / Golf Links Road, and Simpson Street / Fort William Road / Water Street / Cumberland Street / Hodder Avenue.

The design of the Image Routes should reflect the unique identity of each route, while reinforcing an overall system that links all of the City’s individual districts.

1.2 Why Focus on the Image Routes

The Image Routes have been identified by the City of Thunder Bay as corridors prioritized for improvements in both their appearance and functional role. Attractive tree-lined streets that balance vehicular traffic with space for pedestrians and bicyclists support sustainable development and build community pride. These main streets are the primary public spaces of the City. Designed and maintained successfully they will catalyse new investments in these corridors as great places to live, work and shop. These improvements in turn will enhance Thunder Bay’s ability to attract visitors and retain existing residents.

1.3 Structure of Image Routes

The Image Routes stretch for 13.5 kilometres across the City and include:

- **Major Arterials** - Arthur Street, May Street/Memorial Avenue (Pacific Avenue to John Street), and Red River Road.
- **Minor Arterials** - May Street (Arthur Street to Pacific Avenue), and Algoma Street (John Street to Red River Road).

A variety of conditions exist along these corridors, from the intimate, pedestrian-scaled development found along parts of May Street, to the sprawling auto-oriented uses found on Memorial Avenue.

The diagrams on the following pages outline the key elements that help to define the character of these corridors as they exist today, and will inform their evolution into true Image Routes.



1. Image Routes and Downtown Cores

The Image Routes are 13.5 kilometres of Major and Minor Arterials that stretch across the City of Thunder Bay, including Arthur Street, May/Memorial and Algoma Streets, and Red River Road. Where they intersect, the City's North and South Cores are formed.



2. Gateways

Gateways along the Image Routes exist at the Thunder Bay Expressway, and at the edge of the North and South Cores. Site design and built form should include landmarks, and should reinforce the significant role of these areas within the City.



5. Land use / Commercial

The majority of the commercial uses are at gateways, within the Cores, and along the May/Memorial/Algoma Street Corridor. Large-format, auto-oriented uses predominate at the gateways and between the Cores, with a smaller scale urban fabric of retail and mixed-use within the Cores.



6. Land use / Civic

Civic uses, including parks and municipal / provincial Buildings are generally located within the North and South Cores, but can also be found along the Image Routes. There are limited parks along the Image Routes with the exception of Arthur Street.



3. Primary Street Character

Broadly, three conditions exist along the Image Routes, including Commercial/Retail at the Thunder Bay Expressway, Residential leading up to the North and South Cores, and Mixed Use within the Cores.



4. Existing Right of Way

A range of right of way widths exist within the Image Routes, including narrower (20 metre) widths within the pedestrian-oriented North and South Cores, transitioning to wider widths (25-30 metres) as the commercial corridors (i.e. Arthur Street) approach the Thunder Bay Expressway.



7. Land use / Residential

Outside of the Cores, gateways and Memorial Avenue, the predominant use on the Image Routes is residential. This generally includes single family dwellings, and smaller apartment buildings.



8. Opportunity Sites

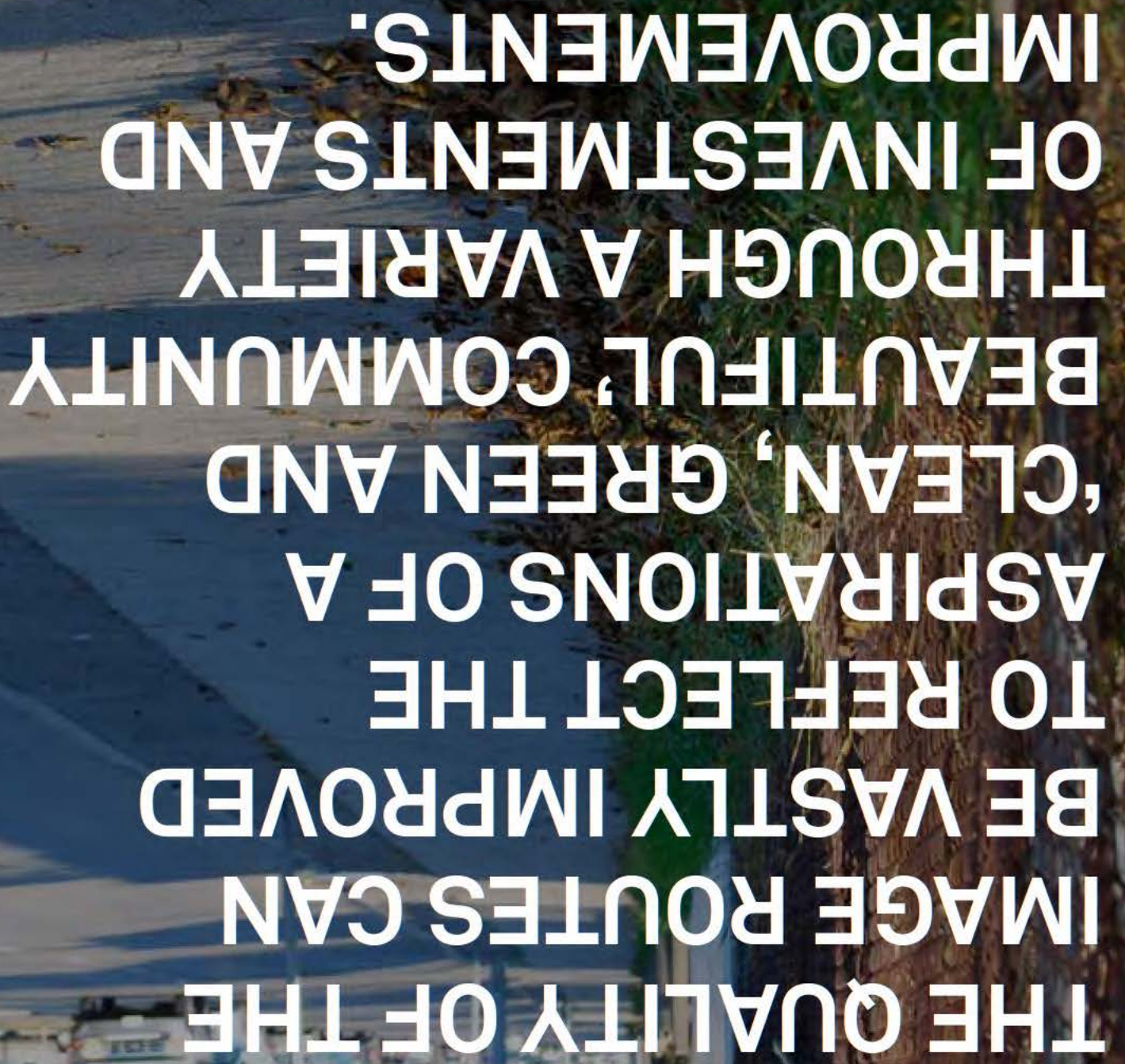
Throughout the Image Routes, a number of opportunity sites exist. This can include vacant or underutilized parcels, as well as smaller, leftover spaces (i.e. due to the road configuration) that could accommodate enhanced landscaping or pocket parks (please refer to Section 3.0 for Demonstration Plans for these sites).



Section 2.0

Enhancing the Image Routes





THE QUALITY OF THE
IMAGE ROUTES CAN
BE VASTLY IMPROVED
TO REFLECT THE
ASPIRATIONS OF A
'CLEAN, GREEN AND
BEAUTIFUL' COMMUNITY
THROUGH A VARIETY
OF INVESTMENTS AND
IMPROVEMENTS.

2.1 How can the Image Routes be Transformed?

The recommendations provided throughout this document outline the vision for the Image Routes, promoting a variety of improvements to make the Image Routes a more attractive corridor for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

The key recommendations aim to achieve three key objectives:

- Beautification
- Creating a New Balance
- Celebrating Thunder Bay
- The Urban Forest

Ultimately, it should be the goal of the City to apply the vision for the Image Routes throughout the city's main streets. However, it is recognized that the characteristics of the Image Routes vary significantly along their length, and that in some circumstances (e.g. narrow right-of-ways, existing stable businesses, snow storage concerns, etc.) practicalities may limit the complete application of these guidelines. In these cases, an alternative solution should be explored on a case-by-case basis that satisfies the intent of the vision.

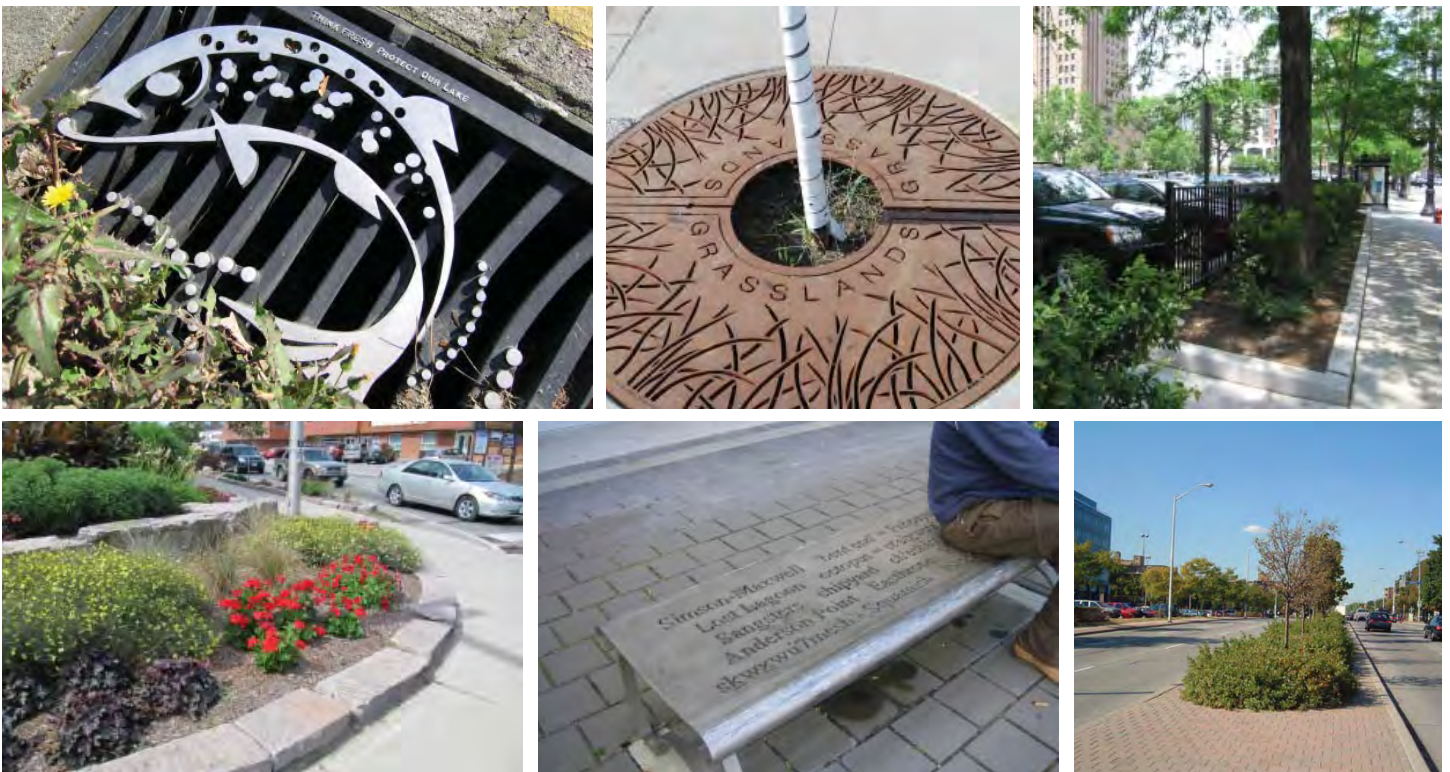
2.2 Beautification

The Image Routes are well-travelled corridors in the City, and are experienced daily by both residents and visitors. Their role is to both carry people (drivers, cyclists and pedestrians), and to project a positive image that reflects the values of the City.

Today, the Image Routes are uninspiring. For example, long stretches of Arthur Street and Memorial Avenue are dominated by commercial signage and large expanses of front-yard surface parking. There are limited street trees and/or landscaping to promote a welcoming environment.

The quality of the Image Routes can be vastly improved to reflect the aspirations of a 'clean, green and beautiful' community through investments and improvements including tree planting, landscaping, special pavement treatments sidewalk widening, public art, lighting and street furnishings.

A variety of design techniques are encouraged to beautify the Image Routes, including inlaid art, landscaping, etc.



2.3 Creating a New Balance

Streets are the most important public spaces in our cities. What we do with the space within the public right-of-way communicates the values of the City. The streetscape should integrate comfortable and safe pathways for pedestrians, transit and cyclists, as well as automobiles; provide shaded areas for seating and socializing; support environmental sustainability through an expanded tree-canopy; and, accommodate people of all ages and abilities. These types of streets characterize the cities that have a high quality of life.

As Thunder Bay has grown in the past century, more and more space within the right-of-way, particularly along the Image Routes, has been dedicated to automotive traffic. This expansion of automobile space has come at the expense of space for pedestrians and the other benefits of wide sidewalks and boulevards including; street trees, outdoor seating and 'spill-out' retail activity. The problem is compounded in areas where parking on adjacent private properties encroaches on the public right-of-way reinforcing the image of a vehicle and asphalt dominated streetscape.

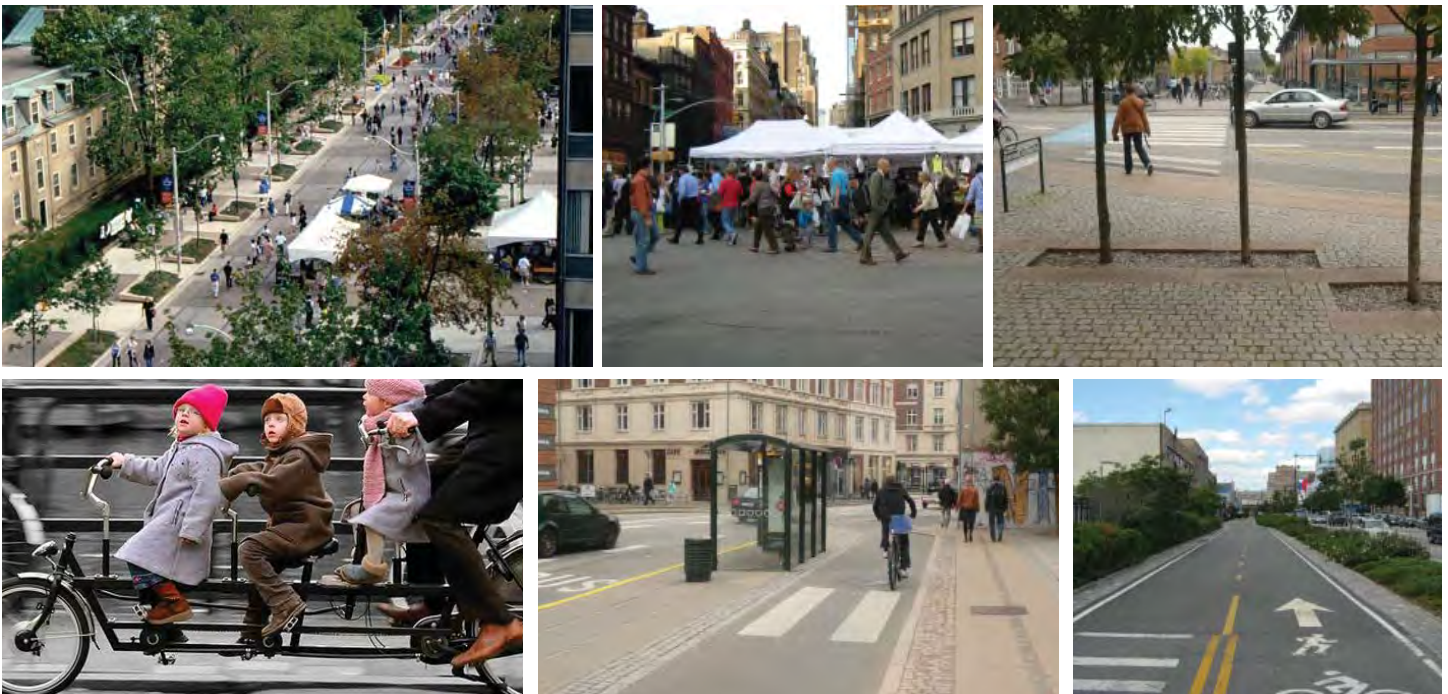
Complete Streets

A new balance based on the concept of 'Complete Streets' – providing space for all of the street's functions – is critical to improving the quality of the Image Routes. Complete Streets

are defined as "...roadways designed to ensure safe, attractive and comfortable access and travel for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transportation users of all ages and abilities".

Cycling

A key component of Complete Streets is to provide dedicated space for cycling as part of the streetscape design. Bicycles provide a non-polluting, cost-effective and healthy way to travel. Cities across North America are redesigning their roadways to provide for dedicated bicycle lanes in response to the increased demand for a healthy alternative to automotive use. With increasing costs associated with driving and broader demand for carbon-reduction those cities providing safe, continuous cycling networks are seeing a significant amount of person-trips shifting from automobile use to cycling. These cities are not limited to moderate climates. For instance winter temperatures in Minneapolis are colder than in any other major metropolitan area in the continental United States including Anchorage, Alaska. Despite its cold winters it is ranked the best biking city in the United States with 130 kilometres of on-street bikeways and 137 kilometres of off-street bikeways. In the spring, fall and summer 8,200 people ride to work with the number dropping to 4,000 in the winter. It is the recommendation of this document that a review of the Active Transportation Master Plan should be undertaken to consider prioritized bike travel on all image routes



As the Image Routes evolve, they should accommodate all modes of transportation, including walking, cycling and transit.

Walking

Similarly cities that provide safe, comfortable sidewalks are seeing increasing numbers of residents walking to work, schools and shops. An important characteristic in providing pedestrian comfort is the presence of trees in the boulevard that create separation between automobile traffic and the sidewalk, shade and an attractive environment.

2.4 Celebrating Thunder Bay

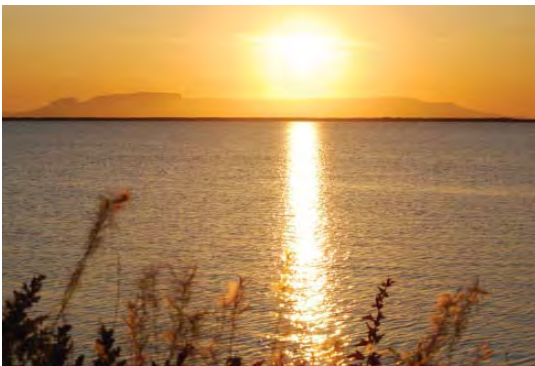
As great cities evolve, celebration of their character is forged through a variety of factors, including natural features, bustling industries, landmark buildings, exceptional views and vistas, and most importantly, local residents and visitors who leave an everlasting impression. In some cases, these factors persist throughout time, but more often than not, they change and evolve, leaving behind remnants to tell their story.

Thunder Bay's Image Routes should celebrate and reinforce the features that make Thunder Bay unique, including the breathtaking wilderness landscape (i.e. The Sleeping Giant, Mount McKay), its grand Lake Superior setting, the beautiful views afforded by the topology and the history of the community and its citizens.

The design of the streetscape and elements such as public art, signage and other installations should communicate both the community's values and its fascinating stories.

2.5 Expanding The Urban Forest

Perhaps the single most effective improvement that can be made to the Image Routes is to dramatically expand the presence of trees in the streetscape. One of Thunder Bay's great attributes is its role as a gateway to the vast woodlands of North-Western Ontario. Thunder Bay itself was carved from a dense forest on the north shore of Lake Superior – yet the character of the Image Routes today does not communicate this character. It is recommended that a priority in the transformation of the Image Routes be to '... bring back the forest' both through the integration of street trees wherever possible using construction techniques, and ongoing maintenance, that ensures that urban trees reach full maturity and remain healthy. Thunder Bay's Image Routes can be a central component of the Thunder Bay 'brand' - experienced on a daily basis by residents and visitors as a continuous route of tree-lined avenues. In this manner the Image Routes initiative dovetails with the city-wide urban forestry initiative contained in the Urban Forest Management Plan.



The design and evolution of the Image Routes should celebrate the features that make Thunder Bay unique, including significant natural heritage features, the historic industrial economy, varied topography, etc.



Design Tools



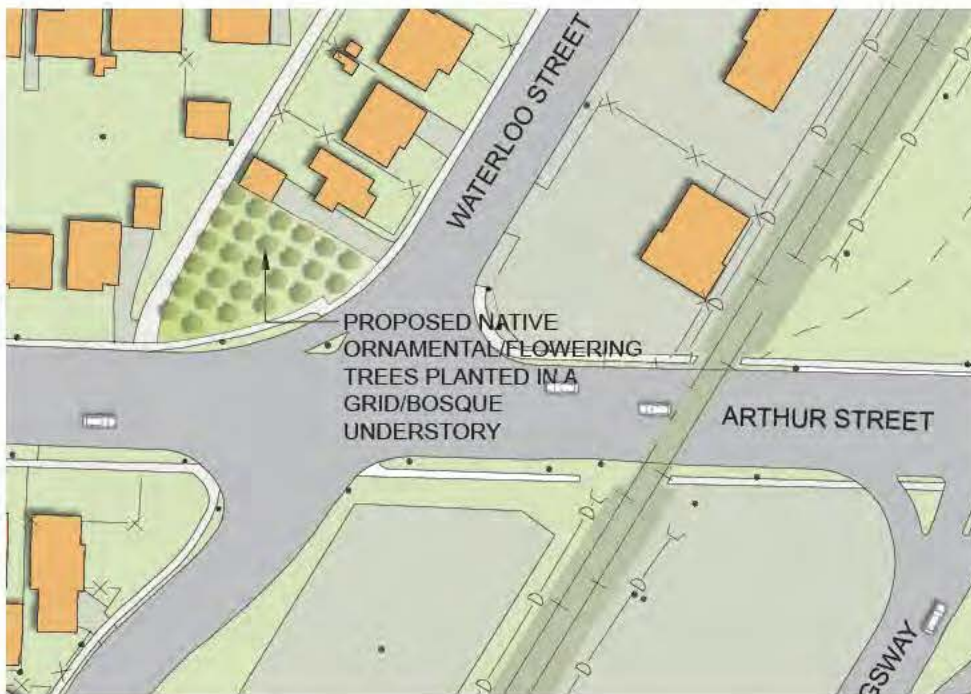
Demonstration Plans



4.1 Opportunity Sites

The City of Thunder Bay was originally carved from virgin forests on the north shore of Lake Superior. In response to this original character, a consolidated design approach that references this past is recommended for the City's 'left over spaces' (opportunity sites). This approach aims to restore small segments of the area's natural heritage and to expand on the existing urban green space network. The approach for these spaces is to replicate the native forest that once existed in the area. The intention is that opportunity sites will become synonymous with Thunder Bay's natural setting and will provide an interim character for vacant and underutilized lots. It is not the intention that these become active public open spaces but that they become naturalized urban forest pockets that reflect the heritage of Thunder Bay. A different naturalization design character is recommended for each of the image routes. The design and implementation of each potential opportunity site will need to be coordinated with the land owner and their vision for the property.

**Opportunity Sites include sites in transition, vacant lots, and large medians.*



Arthur Street

As the civic gateway into the City of Thunder Bay it is recommended that the trees be planted in a structured pattern such as a grid or circle pattern so that the landscape character is naturalized but the form of the site design is formal. The forest for each opportunity site should be of a single species selected from the recommended image route trees. A variety of trees should be used along the length of the street. The ground plane of the forest should have a mix of ground cover that is consistent with the character of Thunder Bay's actual forested areas.





May/Memorial/Algoma Streets

For May/Memorial/Algoma Streets, a more natural pattern of tree planting is recommended. This pattern should be more in keeping with a natural grove of trees and should also include the planting of trees over several seasons to ensure variety in tree size and species. The ground plane should have a naturalized character of plantings that are consistent with the selected mix of tree species.



Red River Road

The design of opportunity sites along Red River Road are intended to be more traditional in character with high branching deciduous trees and a mix of tree and plant species. The ground cover should be low and consistent with plantings that would be found in an traditional garden or park setting. A mulch bed can also be considered in smaller areas to assist with reduced maintenance.



4.2 Vickers Park (Arthur Street)

Parks edges along streets are a key place where two major elements of the public realm come together. The design and character of these areas should reflect the importance of the City's open space network. The sidewalk and tree planting in this area has been recently reconstructed, but if work is required in the future - in this area or in other similar park/open spaces - the design recommendations outlined in the following paragraph should be considered.

Our demonstration plan moves the sidewalk away from the street to accommodate a tree planted boulevard that buffers pedestrians from vehicle traffic. In addition, the plan shows a special banded paving treatment along the sidewalk that assists in creating a sense of entry into the park and recognizing the importance of the park in the streetscape design. Key design recommendations include:

- Move pedestrian travel areas away from the road and into the park
- Provide tree planting opportunities along the street
- Use special banding or changes in sidewalk material /colour to highlight park entrances and special street adjacencies



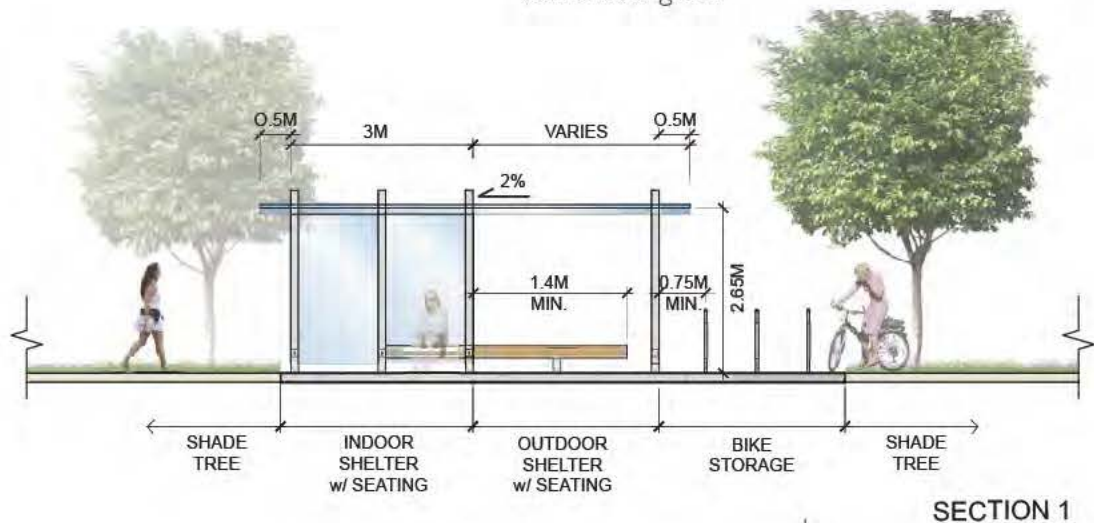
Vickers Park Demonstration Plan



4.3 Bus Shelters (Image Route-Wide)

Bus Shelter design should reflect the City's commitment to public transit as an important component of the City's circulation system. It is recommended that transit stops become an integral community location for messaging, bicycle parking, circulation and resting areas. The vision is that all transit users will have the choice to wait in areas sheltered either by trees or by weather protected structures. The design of bus stops will be required to consider the amenities necessary for transit riders as well as the larger surrounding community. It will also be essential that the design of the bus stop includes safe access and pedestrian circulation to the adjacent properties, businesses and shops that may be destination areas for transit riders. Key design recommendations include:

- Indoor and outdoor waiting areas
- Shade tree planting to provide shade and shelter while waiting for the bus
- New glazed shelters with community information panels
- Dedicated pedestrian trails to and from the bus stop through the surrounding parking lots (if applicable)
- Bicycle parking (where appropriate)
- Taller shelter elements to create a landmark character for bus stops and to provide future banner opportunities
- New garbage and recycling facilities
- Public art installations reflecting the three image route themes: people or events in the pursuit of freedom; a civic way; and the Dawson Trail. These can be actualized in a variety of ways such as an installation piece, an inlaid message in the waiting areas, or images etched within the bus shelter glass

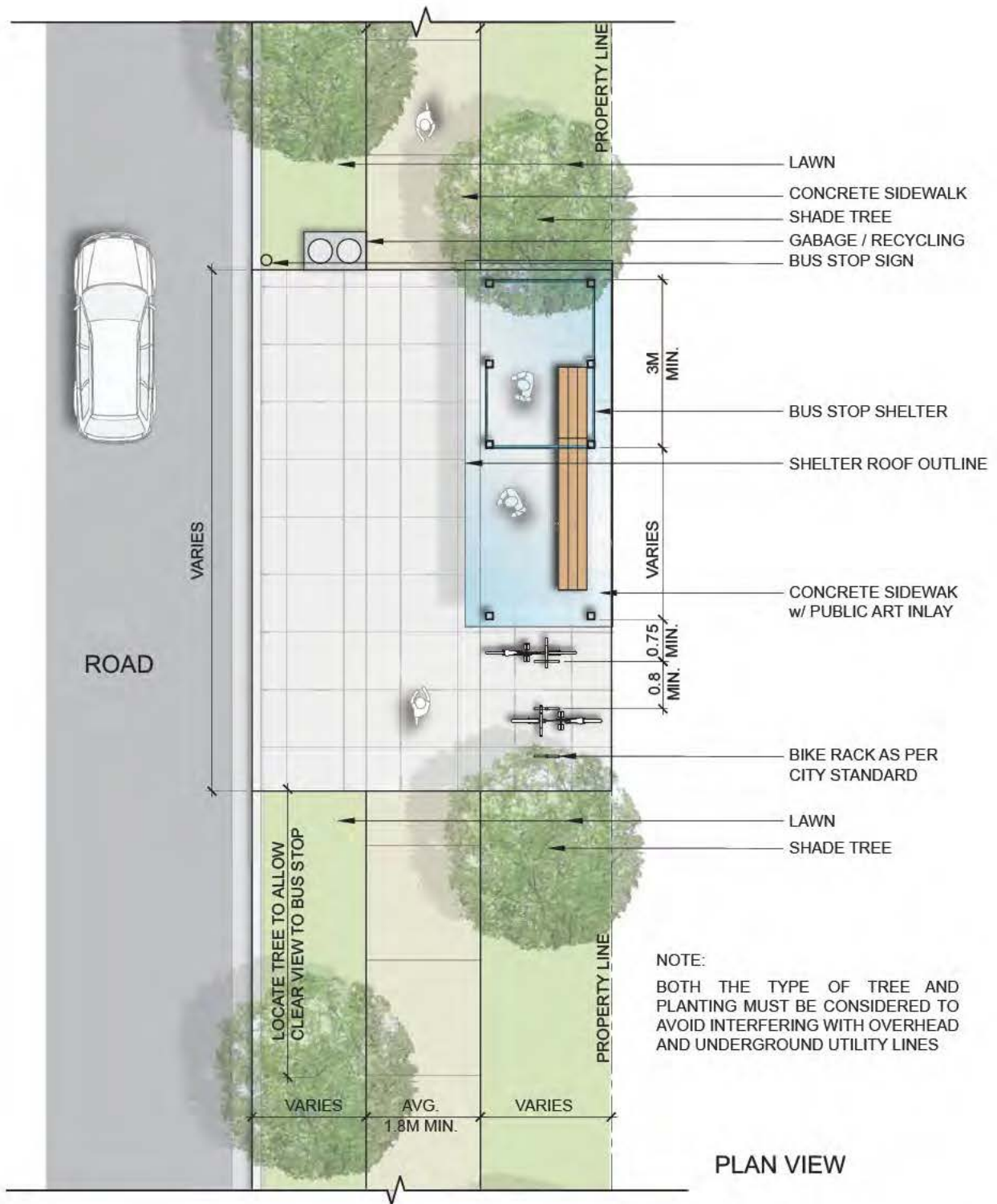


SECTION 1



SECTION 2

Illustrations (sections) showing a typical bus shelter along the Image Routes.



PLAN VIEW

Illustration (plan) showing a typical bus shelter along the Image Routes.

4.4 Memorial Avenue & High Street (Intersection Improvements)

Currently an information plaque on the history of Memorial Avenue is located on High Street just to the west of Memorial Avenue. It is recommended that the intersections of High Street and Memorial Avenue be redesigned to allow for a consolidated open space with a bus shelter and relocated commemorative plaque. Opportunities to reclaim some of the paved areas for reforestation should be considered. Key design recommendations include:

- A Traffic Study would be requirement prior to implementing this intersection improvement. The study would ensure that the level of service does not drop below existing City Engineering Standards.
- Move pedestrian travel areas away from Memorial Avenue and buffer them from the street with continuous tree planting
- Relocate the bus stop on the west side of the street to the reclaimed land area.
- Introduce a typical bus stop design as recommended in the landscape guidelines with bicycle parking, sheltered areas, community information posting and commemorative installations.
- Reconfigure High Street to meet Memorial Avenue at a 90 degree angle, eliminating the current yield lane to make a more pedestrian friendly area.
- Align the T-intersection with the access drive on the east side of Memorial Avenue.
- In this area, the Active Transportation Master Plan should be reinforced to facilitate access for cyclists or pedestrians traveling on Court Street to the Hillyard Lands and to safely cross Memorial Avenue. This connection can be a midblock connection as a road connection is not required.



*Memorial Avenue & High Street
- existing condition*

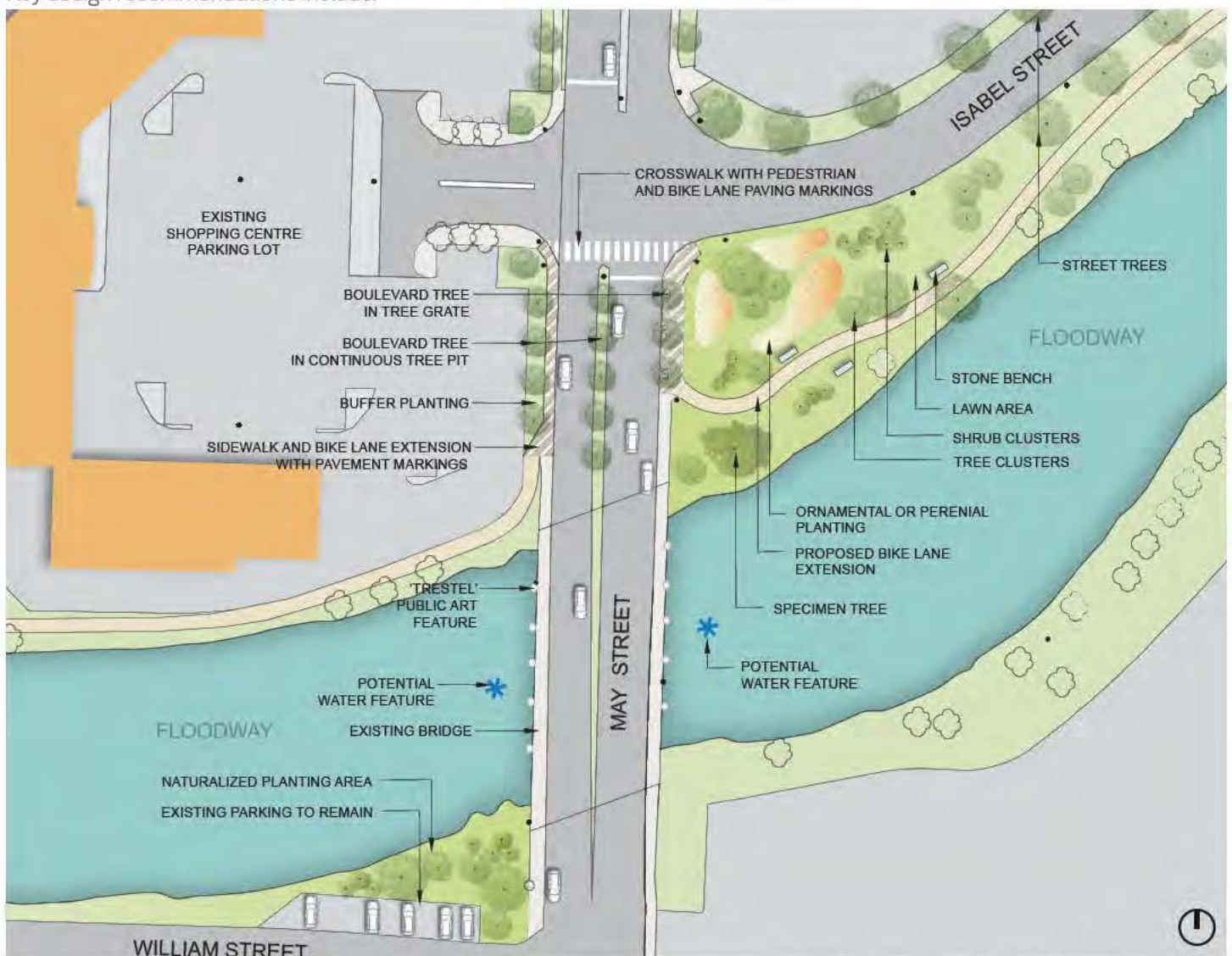


Memorial Avenue & High Street Demonstration Plan

4.5 Neebing McIntyre Floodway Bridge (May Memorial Gateway)

The areas surrounding the Neebing McIntyre Floodway Bridge on Memorial Avenue have the opportunity to establish a strong northern gateway into the South Core and bring back a natural planting condition on the northeast and the southwest corners. The demonstration plan looks to better integrate the termination of the cycling trail into the street design by bringing cyclists up to the signalized intersection. If possible in the future, a widening of the right-of-way to allow for a separate sidewalk and cycling lanes should be considered. This initiative is also an opportunity to partner with the adjacent land owners to develop natural planting. Key design recommendations include:

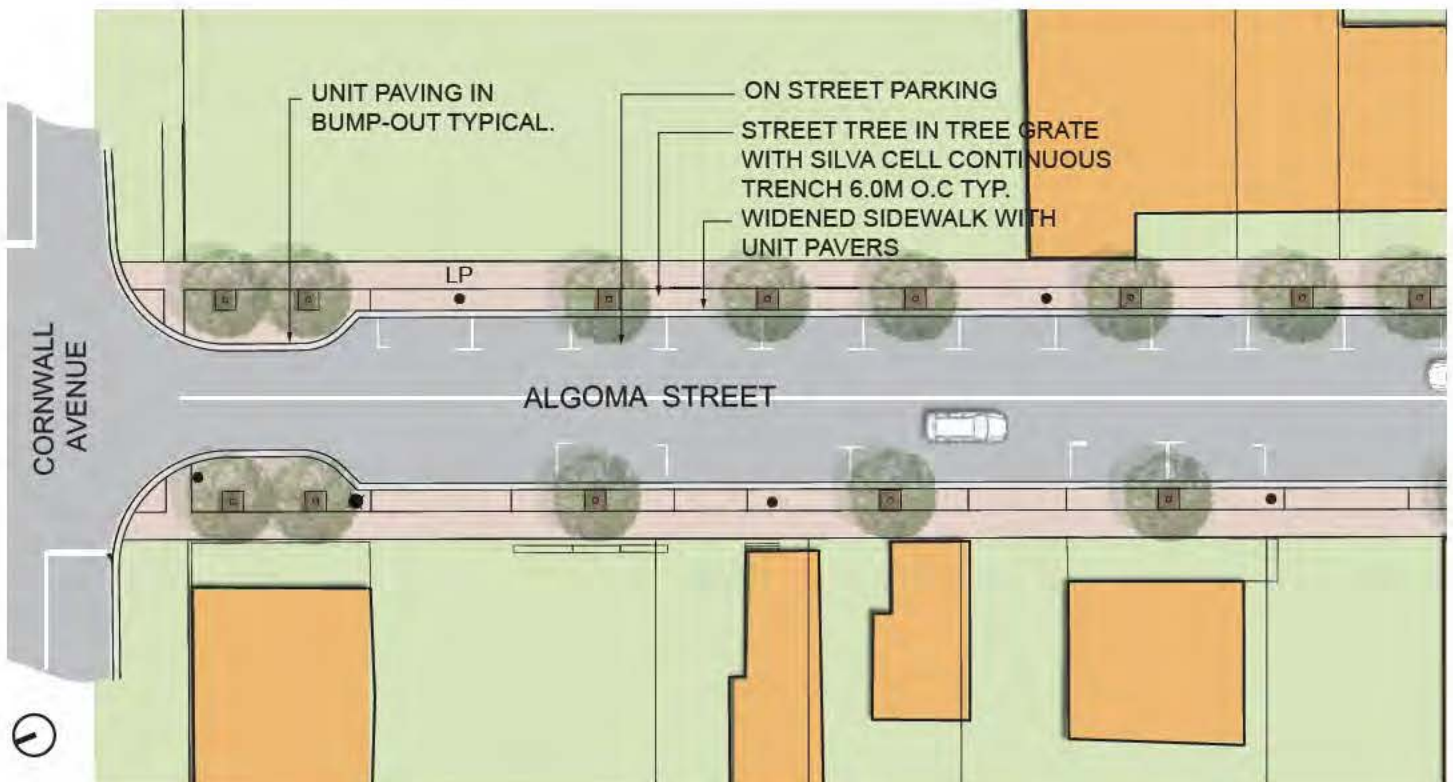
- Plant naturalized landscapes on both the northeast and southwest corners of the bridge
- Remove the existing parking lot from the northeast corner and replace with a grove of trees
- Reconfigure the bike path to end at the northern intersection
- Plant the existing median with small trees and shrubs
- Improve the existing bus stop on the northeast side of the bridge by integrating it with the adjacent open space
- Create a gateway feature with a rail trestle character that provides some visual height to the bridge and a visual gateway traveling along May and Memorial Streets



4.6 Algoma Street Improvements

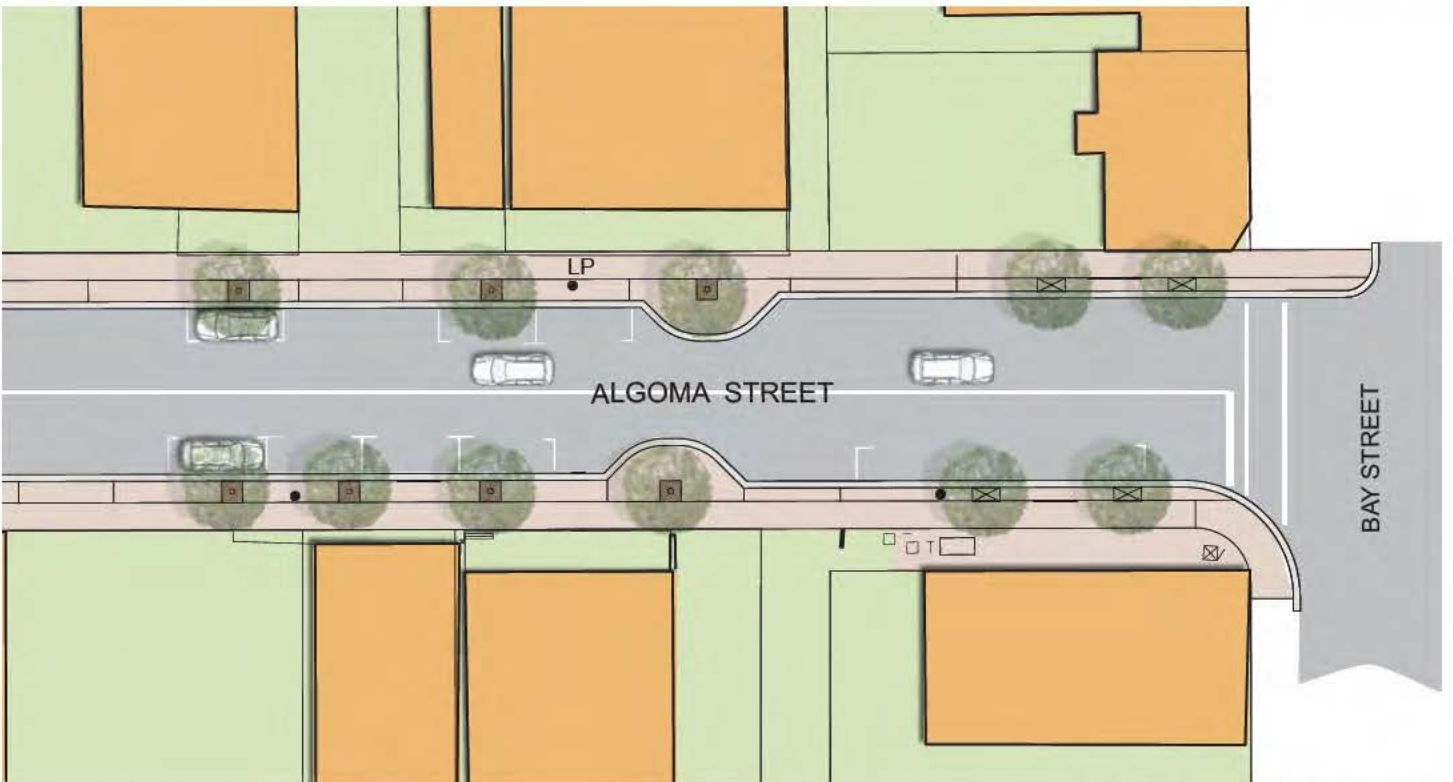
Algoma is an area in transition; it is currently increasing in popularity as a destination for living, shopping and eating. Streetscape improvements for this area should reflect this transition, and provide for widened sidewalks, on-street parking, bump-outs, and on-street tree planting. The vision is to create a streetscape that is a vibrant and active community destination. Key design recommendations include:

- Increase sidewalk widths
- Introduce continuous street furniture and bicycle parking
- Use accent paving along the boulevards
- Plant street trees continuously along the length of the street
- Narrow existing curb cuts wherever possible





Recommended character of Algoma Street after proposed improvements



Algoma Street Demonstration Plan

4.7 Patterson Park (May Street)

Patterson Park is a formal civic open space that may require additional programming opportunities to meet the needs of the local community. A key principle of this document is ensuring that all public spaces have a mix of programming to encourage ongoing use and activity.

Our demonstration plan moves the sidewalk away from May Street and widens the boulevard on the east side. The existing mature trees are preserved and pedestrians are brought into the park area. Additional shade trees are recommended in the open space areas directly adjacent to May Street. As a main gateway into the park, it is recommended that the existing formal fountain be extended toward the street with a no-pool water feature. The design is recommended to include eight water jets mounted in a direct drain concrete pad. The space is to be formal in design but allows for informal play and resting areas. The park area directly facing the western parking lot

is recommended for reinforced turf and electrical plug-ins to allow for markets and outdoor vendors. These vendors are anticipated to complement the existing downtown retail and should be coordinated with key season events. Key design recommendations include:

- Move pedestrian travel areas away from May Street and into the park
- Provide tree planting opportunities along the eastern side of the street
- Preserve the existing mature trees
- Provide new programming, including a no-pool water feature, seating and market stall areas
- Plant a grove of trees for shade and in keeping with the overall Image Route theme of reforestation of the city
- With the construction of the Court House to the south a new pedestrian connection will be provided and upgraded parking lot planting.



Patterson Park Demonstration Plan



4.8 St. Patrick's Square – Red River Ribbon (Red River Road)

St. Patrick's Square is a small open space at the north end of Waverley Park. It is triangular in shape and has a similar character to Waverley Park. It is recommended that this park not have a focus on public park uses but that it acts as a symbolic entrance to the Dawson Trail and a gateway to the Waverley Heritage Area. A public art installation is recommended that is representative of the trip from Prince Arthur's Landing to the Red River. A landscape feature is also recommended at the western portion of the park. Key design recommendations include:

- Move pedestrian travel areas away from the Red River Road and into the park
- Preserve the existing mature trees
- Fill the space with a landscape or built structure that represents the trip from Prince Arthur's Landing to the Red River

- A landscape feature at the western end of the park to highlight the grouping of parks that will follow



This illustration demonstrates a potential landmark feature at the west end of St. Patrick's Square.



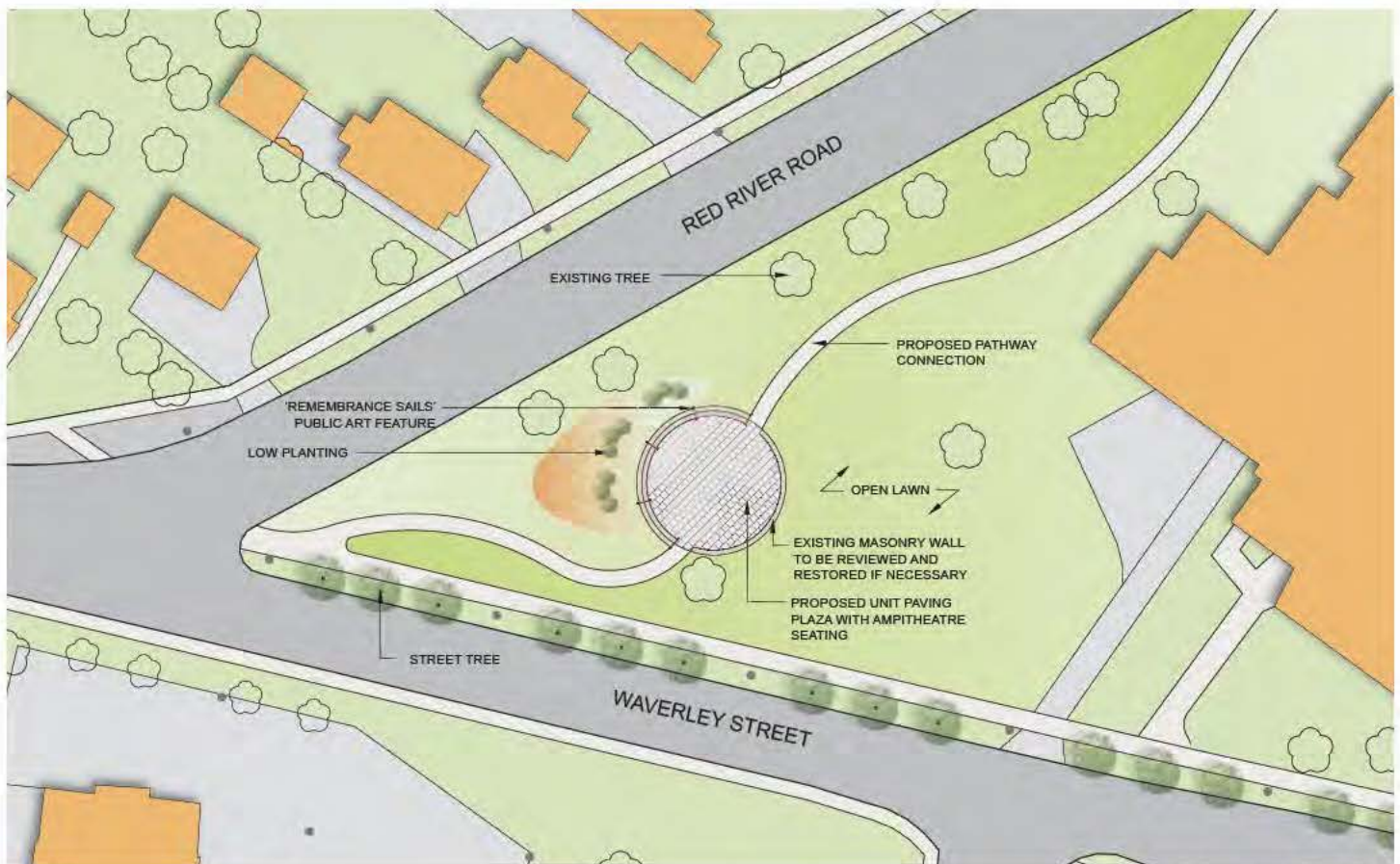
St. Patrick's Square Demonstration Plan



4.9 Waverley Park (Red River Road)

Waverley Park is part of the Waverley Park Heritage Conservation District and is an important open space landmark in the City. The focus of the demonstration plan is the existing lookout at the western portion of the park. The lookout is currently underutilized yet with minor alternation it can greatly enhance the most scenic entranceway into the city. Key design recommendations include:

- Move pedestrian travel areas away from the road and into the park by providing a sidewalk on the park side of Red River Road
- Trim back the existing foliage and shrubs to allow for a clear view to the Downtown and its heritage building context
- Introduce seating areas to enjoy the view
- Provide for gateway banners to highlight the entrance into the North Core





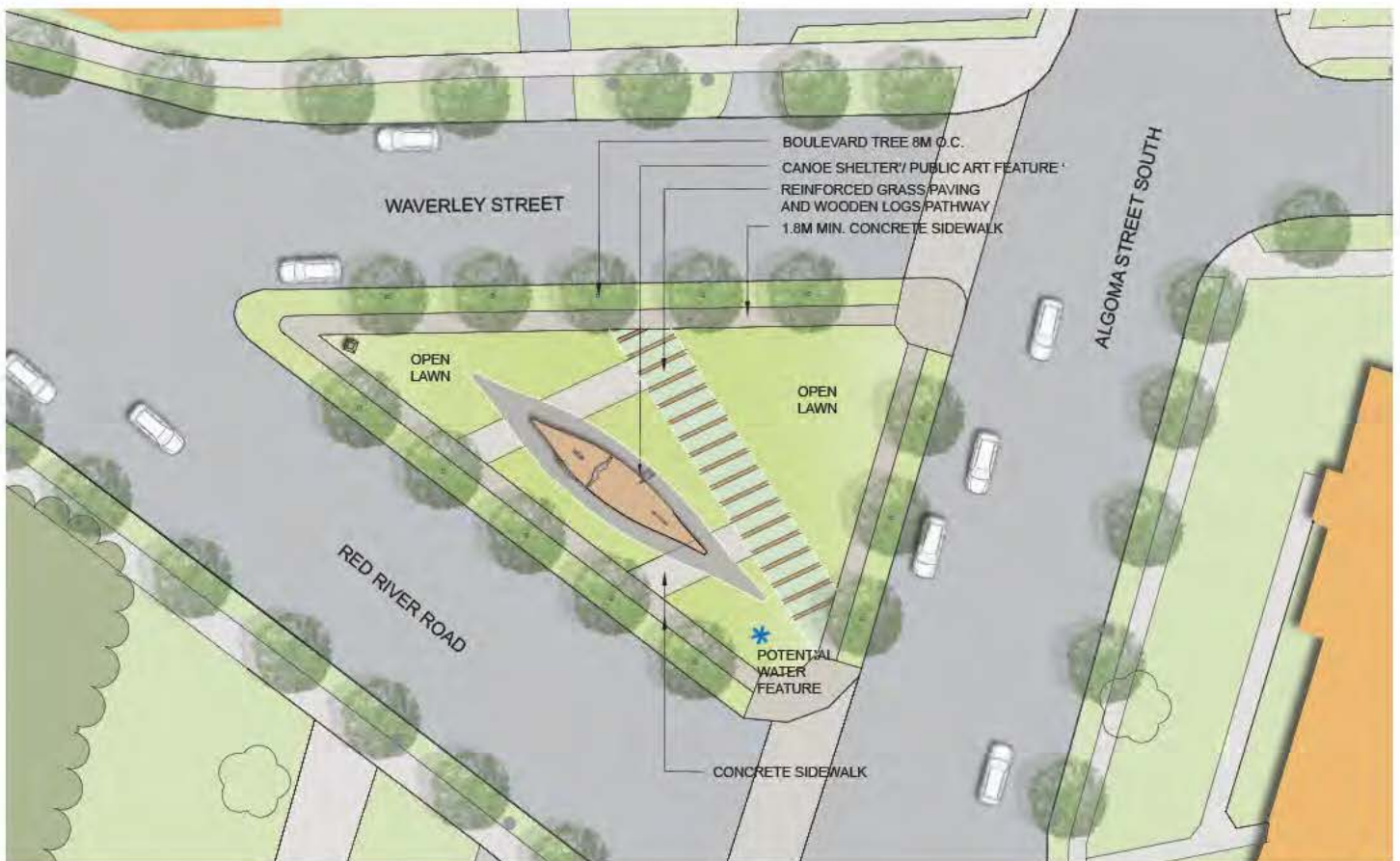
Renderings showing the proposed seating area to provide views to Downtown, Lake Superior and the Sleeping Giant.

4.10 Connaught Square (Red River Road and Algoma Street)

Connaught Square is a triangular open space located between three streets - Red River Road, Algoma Street and Waverley Street. The future character of this space is recommended to become a gateway site marking the entrance into the North Core as well as a visual representation of the Dawson Trail and the process of portaging up from the water's edge along Red River Road. This a significant departure from the existing character which currently acts as a visual extension of Waverley Park. It is recommended that the existing shelter be relocated to another park and that the stone structure be

retained in its existing location. Key design recommendations include:

- Move pedestrian travel areas away from the road and into the park
- Provide tree planting opportunities along the adjacent streets
- Introduce a plaza area including a public art piece that acts as a weather protection structure and an artifact that is representative of the Dawson Trail Portage
- Provide informal seating areas
- Redesign existing information and heritage panels to be more integrated with the landscape design



Connaught Square Demonstration Plan





Renderings showing the proposed redesign of Connaught Square, including a significant public art piece that provides additional weather protection.

4.11 Red River Road (from Cumberland to Water Streets)

Red River Road at Water Street will be the pedestrian gateway into Prince Arthur's Landing. In addition to the pedestrian crossing improvements at Water Street, there is an opportunity to improve the pedestrian character of the entire length of the street from Cumberland Street to Water Street. This would include a significantly widened boulevard on the north side of Red River Road to accommodate pedestrian traffic from the downtown to the waterfront and a minor widening to the south side to accommodate tree planting on both sides of the street. Additionally, bump-out are recommended to narrow crossing distances and to the areas at the corners.

- Increase sidewalk widths on the north and south side of Red River Road
- Introduce continuous street furniture and bicycle parking
- Use accent paving along the boulevards
- Plant street trees continuously along both sides of Red River Road
- Narrow existing curb cuts wherever possible
- Employ bump-outs to narrow crossing dimensions at intersections



Red River Road (east) Demonstration Plan

