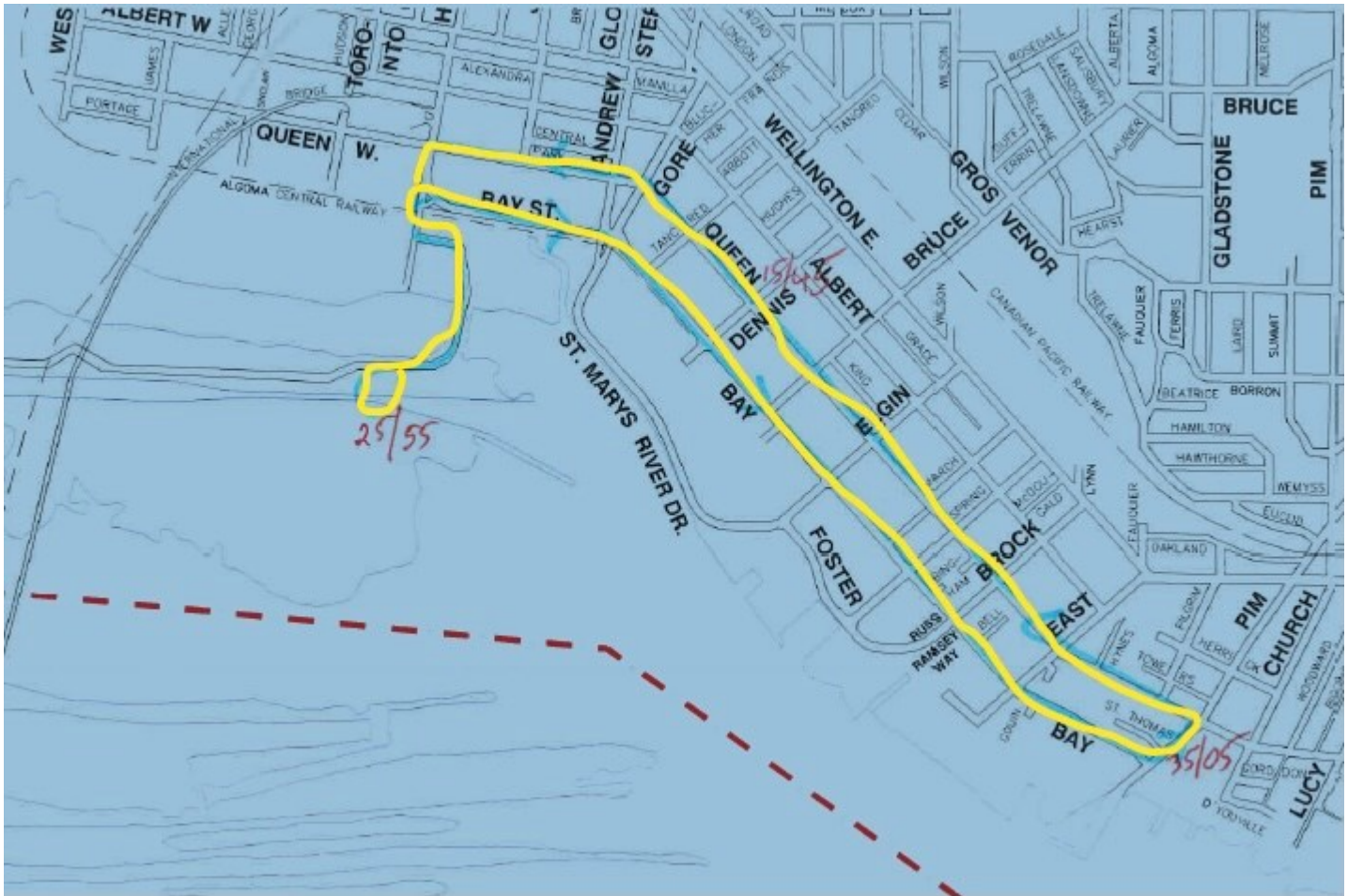


# Proposed 30-minute downtown trolley route unveiled

Aug 17, 2021 10:11 PM By: [David Helwig](#)



*This draft map, prepared by Sault Transit, shows a proposed route for the downtown trolley | Sault Transit*

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City officials are planning to issue a request for information next week aimed at gauging private-sector interest in a seasonal trolley running a 30-minute loop linking major downtown attractions and businesses.

After years of chin-wagging about the idea, the city is finally getting serious about a downtown shuttle service following months of advocacy by Ward 3 Coun. Matthew Shoemaker.

Shoemaker says a motorized bus with exterior designed to look like an old-fashioned streetcar would allow tourists, Agawa Canyon Tour Train passengers, cruise ship visitors and others to spend more time at local attractions instead trying to traverse the Sault's lengthy waterfront area.

Tom Vair, the city's deputy chief administrative officer for community development and enterprise services, says it would cost about \$611,000 to lease a trolley for a pilot project, or \$724,000 to buy one.

The cost of an autonomous trolley service could exceed \$1 million, Vair told a meeting of the Downtown Association last week.

Suggestions for funding the trolley include:

- charging trolley passengers the same \$3-a-ride fare charged on Sault Transit buses
- a \$5 daily trolley pass
- a hop-on, hop-off free trolley service
- seeking contributions from Parks Canada, Casino Sault Ste. Marie, FEDNOR, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. and from the city's own tourism funds

Based on \$3 fares and projected ridership of 18,750 passengers, 2021 revenues from the trolley are estimated to be more than \$56,000.

Trolleys ran [up and down Queen Street](#) from 1902 until 1941.

The trolley barn on Huron Street burned in 1942, bringing Sault Ste. Marie's trolley era to a close.

Last week, Vair unveiled a draft route map prepared by Sault Transit, servicing Sault Ste. Marie Canal National Historic Site, Sault Ste. Marie Museum, Art Gallery of Algoma, Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Site, Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre and Queen Street businesses.

Results from the soon-to-be-issued request for information will be brought back to City Council.

If councillors agree at that point, a request for proposals will be issued for a two-year pilot project.

In other Sault Transit news, City Council decided at its August meeting to refer a request for a weekend "adventure bus" servicing Hiawatha Highlands, to its upcoming budget deliberations.

Mayor Provenzano emphasized that the Hiawatha bus has not yet been approved by City Council.

If approved during budget consultations, the new route would start on Sunday, Jan. 2 and run until June 19, including on statutory holidays when Sault Transit operates.

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