



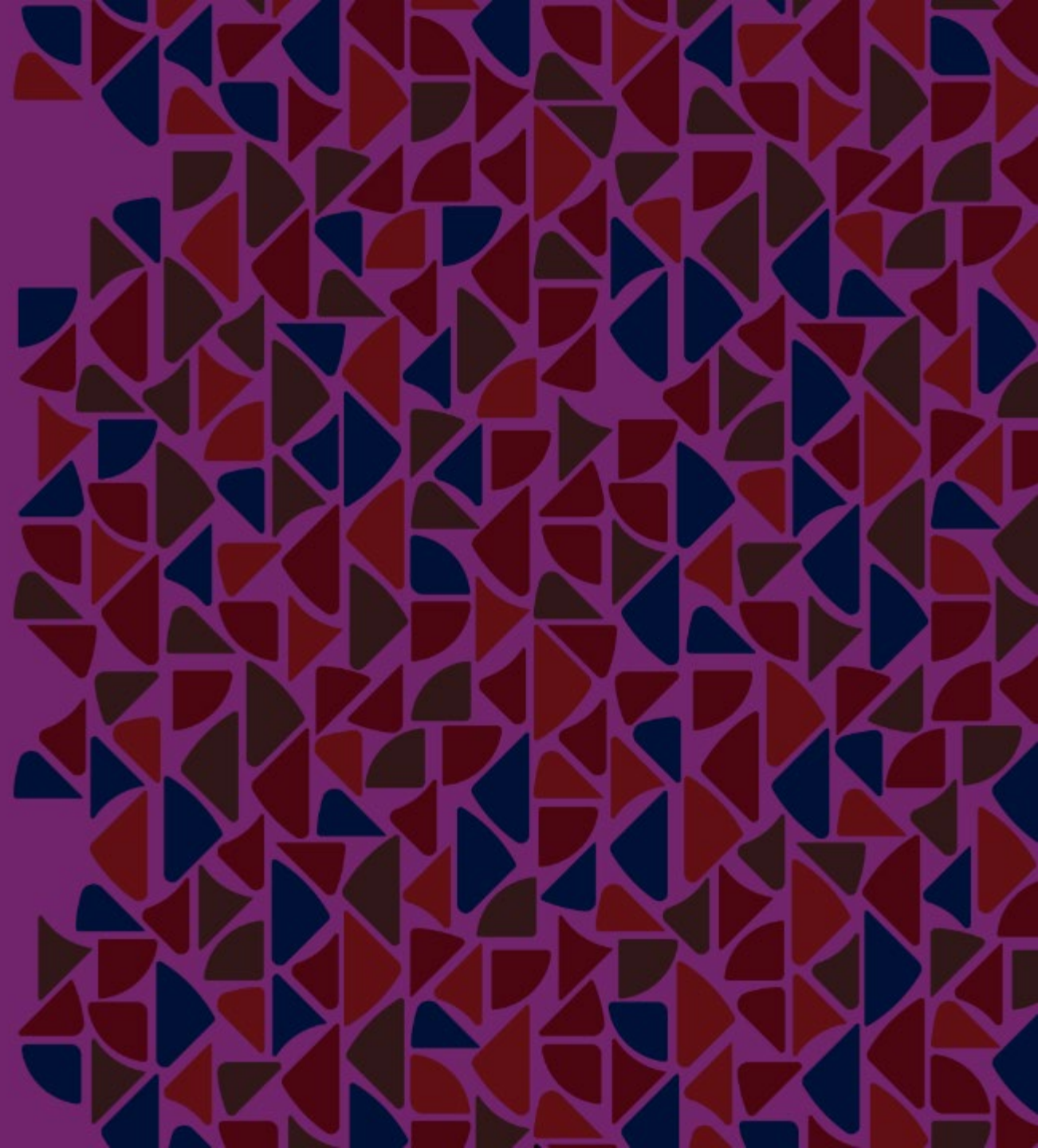
**SAULT
STE. MARIE**



Comprehensive Review of the Conventional Transit Operation

Council Presentation

November 3, 2025





Project Purpose

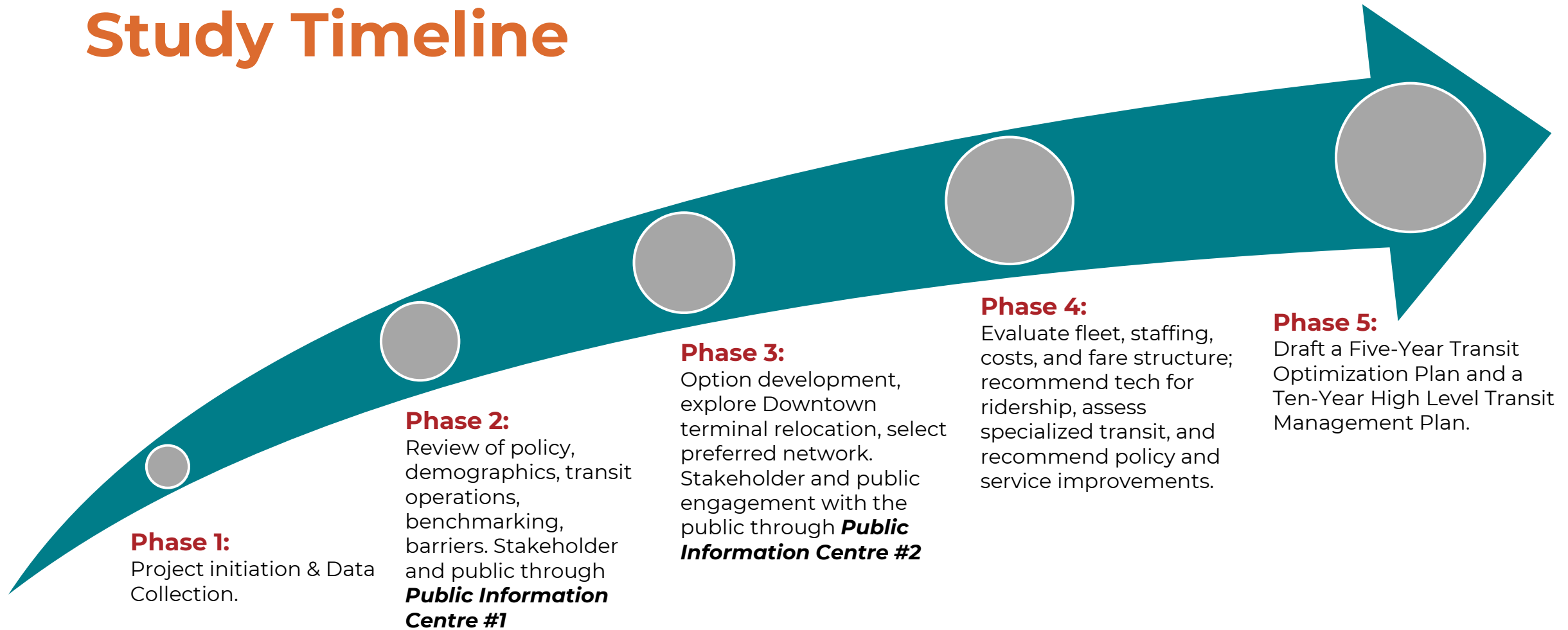
The project provides a comprehensive review and strategic plan for Sault Transit over the coming 5 and 10 years.

The Plan:

- Reviews the current service design of the City's transit network;
- Examines the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing bus routes and OnDemand system while considering changing ridership demographics;
- Evaluates 111 Huron Street as the proposed location for a relocated transit terminal;
- Provides recommendations to optimize service while continuing to provide safe and efficient transit services to the City;
- Considers innovative service delivery models; and,
- Reviews the City's Parabus services and ensure that the service provided meets the needs of the community.

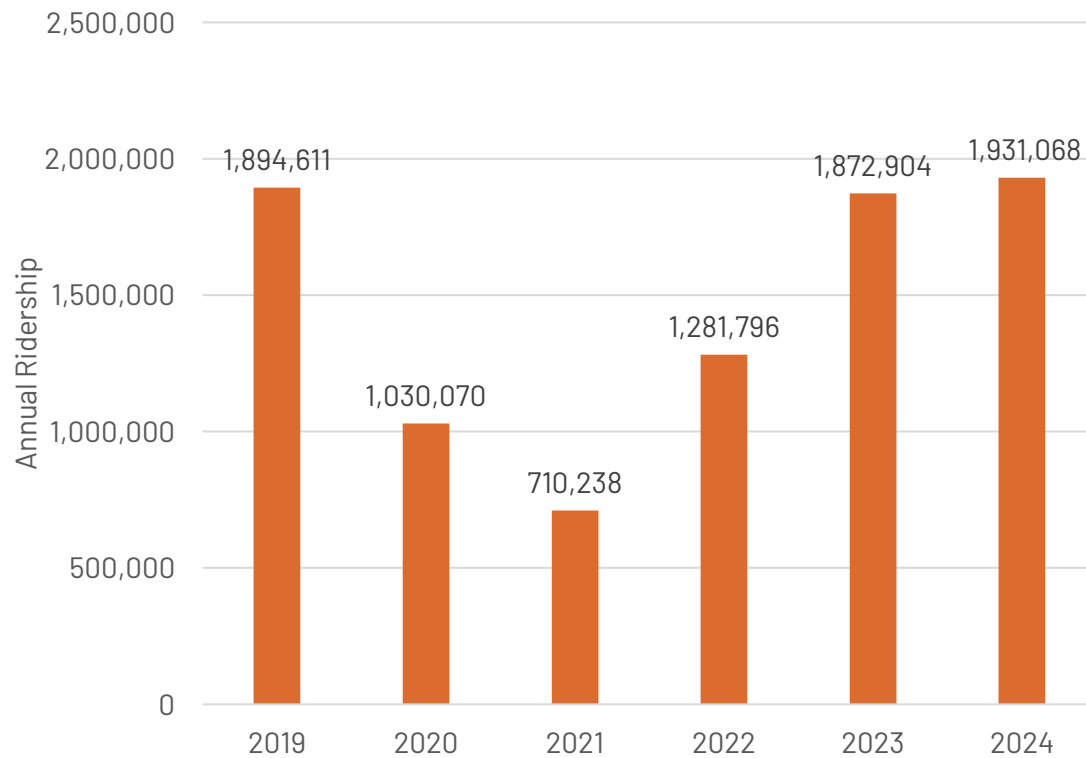


Study Timeline



Sault Transit Today

Total Conventional Regular Service Linked Trips



CONVENTIONAL SERVICE:

- Record 1.9M linked trips in 2024
- 82,500 service hours annually
- 23 passenger trips per revenue service hour

PARABUS SERVICE:

- 40,900 trips in 2023
- 19,000 service hours annually
- 1.6 passenger trips per revenue service hour

TRANSIT FLEET:

- 28 coach buses
- 3 community buses
- 10 parabuses



Summary of Existing Conditions

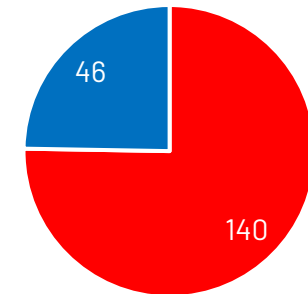
- SSM Transit routes are designed to maximize coverage and converge at the Dennis Street terminal
- Routes can be circuitous, resulting in indirect travel outside of the core
- On-time performance issues are noted on several routes
- 30-minute systemwide daytime service (60-minute evening and weekend service) everywhere regardless of demand
- Service gap noted at 6pm with switch to evening schedule
- Weekend evening on-demand to be reviewed to meet current passenger and ridership trends



What We Heard:

- Public open house, rider and community survey (completed by 375 people)
- General feedback:
 - Transit should not only be a means for point-to-point transportation but should support an equitable, affordable, and sustainable community.
 - The City should provide easy, accessible, and affordable public transit that allows for citizens to choose to take transit and rely less on private vehicles.
- Key Priorities:
 1. Improve frequency and reliability
 2. Improve route directness
 3. Remove weekend OnDemand transit
 4. Improve paratransit booking experience
 5. Address the 6 pm service gap

Route Optimization - How has your experience been with Sault Transit's on-demand service?



- Predominantly Negative Experience
- Predominantly Positive Experience



Option Development and Evaluation

Small Modifications:

Option 1: Do minimal

- Minor Adjustments Only
- Maintain current system integrity & servicing

Route Redesign:

Option 2: Sault Loops

- Redesign system based on two-way loops
- Maintain current servicing parameters

Option 3: Sault Spine

- Redesign system around a central transit spine
- Requires increased investment to maintain coverage



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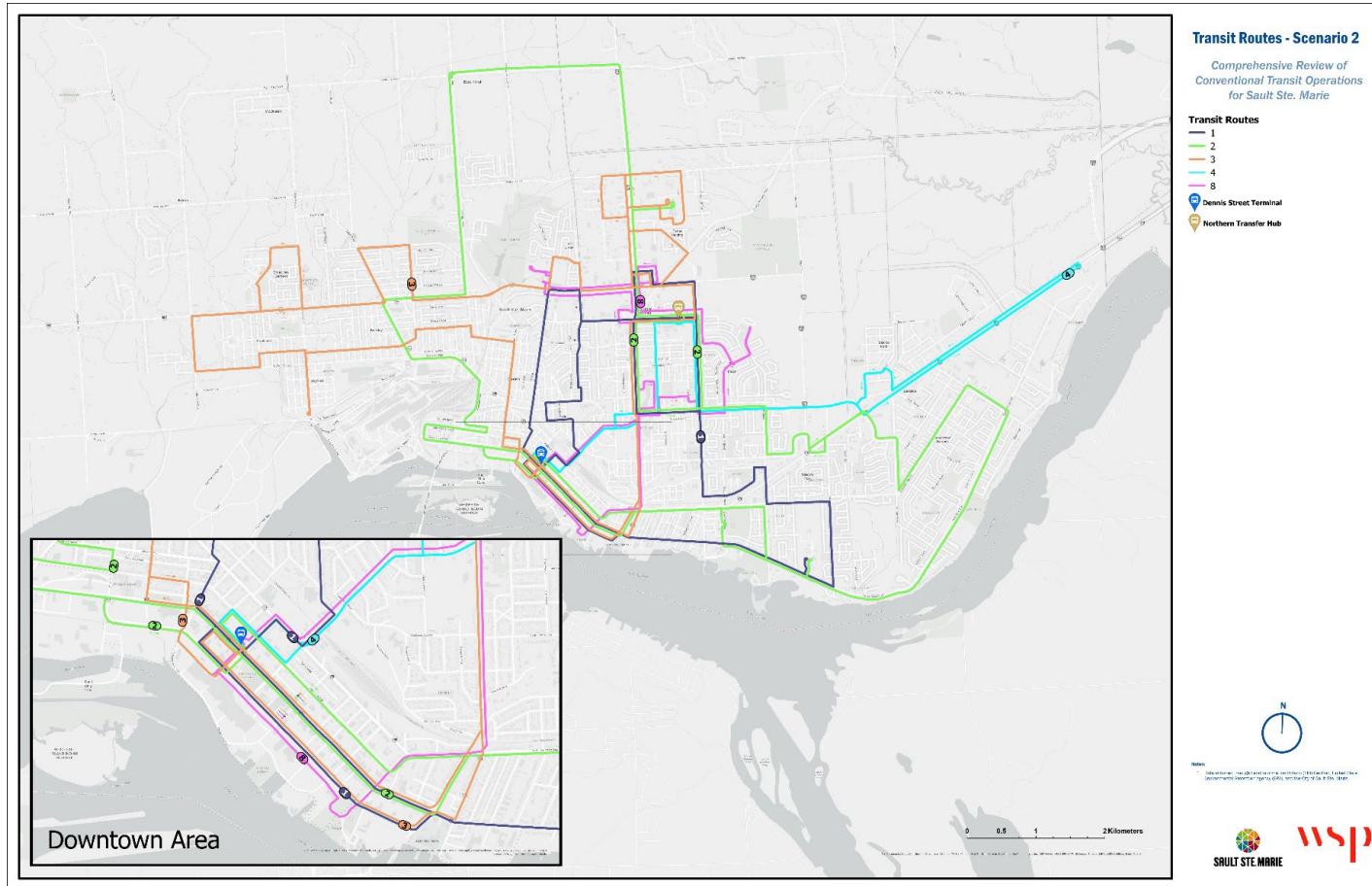
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Technically superior
Cost neutral
72% public support
61% operator preference



Proposed Network: Sault Loops



- 4 two-directional loops + existing Community Bus route
- Route frequency 30 min daytime / 60 min evening and weekends
- Departure time offsets allow for 15 minute daytime frequencies between major destinations and improve redundancy
- Routes and schedules adjusted to improve on-time performance and reduce the 6 pm service gap
- Replace weekend evening OnDemand with hourly fixed-route service

Summary of Service Changes

Item	Annual Service Hour Implications	Annual Operating Cost Implications	Peak Vehicle Implications
Route Realignments	-800	-\$103,000	-
Daytime Schedule Offsets	-	-	-
Address Daytime-to-Evening Service Gap	900	\$118,000	-
Replace Weekend Evening OnDemand with Fixed-Route Service	-	-	-
Expand Home-to-Hub Taxi-Subsidized Service to Pawating Place and P-Patch	-	\$18,000	-
Reduce Sunday Evening service	-500	-\$67,000	-
Summary – All Changes	-400	-\$31,000	-

- Modifications result in net reduction of 400 annual service hours and a savings of \$31,000
- No growth in service hours anticipated over next 10 years



Terminal Relocation



111 Huron Street terminal concept
(Tulloch Engineering, 2021)

- Existing Dennis Street terminal is at the end of its lifecycle
- City has **already approved** relocating the terminal to 111 Huron Street, 900m west of Dennis Street
- Public feedback conducted during this study noted preferences were split, with 49% of respondents wanting the terminal to remain at Dennis Street and 51% favouring relocation or expressing no preference
- This study recommends relocating the terminal, in line with past Council decisions. Benefits of relocation include:
 - Reduction in site constraints, which enable more comfortable waiting and amenity space and the achievement of AODA standards
 - Improved exchange operations and functionality
 - Reduced overall operating costs
- Concerns around relocation, principally convenient access to Downtown services, are mitigated by implementing the proposed Sault Loops network, which provides coverage along Queen and Bay Streets at 15 minute / 30 minute frequencies (day / evening-weekend) with 4 of 5 routes travelling directly through Downtown



Next Steps

- Implementation of Soo Loops – Summer 2026
 - Installation of new bus stops
 - Robust training and public education campaign
 - Return to fixed routes for weekend evening service (Sault Loops)
 - Implement 'Home to Hub' service for Pawating evenings and weekends
- Explore improvements to the Parabus system
- Projected 10-year Plan
 - Vehicle replacement
 - Sidewalk network enhancements
 - Review of fare structure
 - Downtown terminal relocation





Thank you

Questions