

Saskatoon Transit Service Standards

November 1, 2021



SASKATOON TRANSIT SERVICE STANDARDS

REFERENCE:

ADOPTED BY:

SUPERSEDES: **New**

PREPARED BY: **Saskatoon Transit, Planning Department**

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TITLE: **Saskatoon Transit Service Standards**

Policy Statement: Saskatoon Transit establishes Transit Service Standards as a guide for the level of transit services provided. The standards defined by this document are minimum thresholds and are based on concepts outlined in the Official Community Plan (OCP).

The purpose of this policy is to set service standards to establish and maintain a transit service that recognizes customer needs, equity and ensures the effective use of available resources.

The policy:

- Determines type of service, where/how it is delivered, and at what level.
- Measures and establishes minimum levels of service performance.
- Outlines certain service characteristics.
- Acts as a guideline for the implementation of new service including walking distances to transit and time of service.

Transit Service Standards and Planning Guidelines

Hours of Service

Fixed Route:

- Weekday Peaks: 7:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. & 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- Weekday Midday: 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Weekday Night: 6:30 p.m. to end of service.

- Saturday Morning: start of service (may vary by route) - 11:00 a.m.
- Saturday Midday: 11:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday Night: 6:30 p.m. to end of service.

- Sunday & Statutory Holidays: (may vary by route) 8:30 a.m. – end of service.

Access Transit:

- Weekday Service
- Saturday Service
- Sunday & Statutory Holiday Service

Types of Transit Service

Service Type	Service Characteristics
Frequent	15 minute or better frequency during peak hours
Basic	30 to 60 minute frequency on weekdays; may or may not operate throughout the entire day or 7 days per week
Peak Only	Service offered only in peak periods and only on weekdays
Special	Special services that perform unique purposes (e.g., Wanuskewin, downtown loop)
Extras	Added to the regular service on specific routes during AM and PM peak based on the passenger load to provide higher frequency for limited hours.
On Demand Transit (ODT)	Flexible routes from bus stop to bus stop during designated hours and within a designated service area. These schedules are dynamic and depend upon passenger requests. ODT compliments and supports other fixed routes and the overall network.

Types of Transit Routes

1. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Lines

These lines are for future BRT, currently designated as red, blue and green. These lines will include enhanced service features such as, dedicated running ways (a roadway only permitting bus travel), Traffic Signal Priority (TSP), enhanced platforms and shelters.

2. Main Lines

Also referred to as Arterial Street; a major thoroughfare, used primarily for through traffic rather than for access to adjacent land, that is characterized by high vehicular capacity, continuity of movement and High Frequency Corridors (HFC).

3. Cross-Town Routes

Typically, this is a transit service route that connects neighbourhoods and which does not enter the Central Business District (CBD).

4. Suburban Connector

These routes provide a localized, frequent service to the neighbourhood and connects riders to BRT lines or Main lines.

5. On Demand Transit Service.

On Demand Transit (ODT) allows passengers to use the transit service for a particular date and time by booking the trip in advance. ODT vehicles may be dispatched to pick up multiple passengers at several different locations before taking them to their destinations. ODT service is a more economical service for low-density populations such as new neighbourhoods because rides are only dispatched when needed and go from a single origin to a single destination. ODT does not operate on first come first serve basis.

6. Community Bus Routes.

Community Bus Routes are designated routes that serve to meet seasonal and/or community needs. They will operate when required. Minimum frequency is 60 minutes or may vary as needed. These routes require ongoing evaluations to determine their feasibility on an ongoing basis. (e.g., Folkfest, Exhibition Week service).

Walking Distances

Residential Areas

- Maximum **1,000 metres** in all time periods due to neighbourhood built form.
- Maintain **450 metre** maximum walking distance, where feasible and where warranted by development levels and demand for service.

Industrial Areas

- Maximum **1,000 metre** walking distance during peak periods, where feasible.

High-Frequency Corridor (HFC)

- Maximum **600 metre** walking distance along HFCs
(e.g., 8th Street, 22nd Street, Attridge Dr., Preston Ave. & College Dr.).

Frequency of Service

Residential

Time of Day	Frequency	
	Minimum	Maximum
Weekday a.m. Peaks	30 minutes	15 minutes
Weekday Midday		
Weekday p.m. Peaks		
Weekday Night	60 minutes	30 minutes
Saturday morning	60 minutes	30 minutes
Saturday midday	30 minutes	15 minutes
Saturday night	60 minutes	30 minutes
Sunday and Statutory Holidays	60 minutes	30 minutes

Industrial

Weekday	60 minutes	30 minutes
Weekday a.m. Peaks	30 minutes	15 minutes
Weekday Midday	30 minutes	30 minutes
Weekday p.m. Peaks	30 minutes	15 minutes
Weekday Night	60 minutes	30 minutes

High-Frequency Corridors

Weekday	15 minutes	10 minutes or less
Weekday a.m. Peaks	15 minutes	10 minutes or less
Weekday Midday	15 minutes	10 minutes
Weekday p.m. Peaks	15 minutes	10 minutes or less
Weekday Night	30 minutes	30 minutes
Community Bus Route	60 minutes max	

Route Performance Standards

To be used to “flag” individual bus routes for further review.

Low Ridership Thresholds

Regular Routes

- Weekday peak periods: *30 boardings per hour.*
- Weekday Midday and Early Evening, Saturday Midday and Sunday Midday: *Combined average of 15 boardings per hour.*
- Weekday Late Night, Saturday Morning and Night, Sunday Morning and Night: *Combined average of 15 boardings per hour.*
- First/last trips carrying 2 passengers or less
 - Future trigger for demand response service: flex or fixed route with limited stops.

Industrial Routes

- Weekday peak periods: *20 boardings per hour.*
- All other time periods: *2 boardings per hour*
 - Future trigger for demand response service: flex or fixed route with limited stops.

Community Bus Routes

- All time periods: *10 boardings per hour.*

Express, School, Extras and Customized Trips

- All time periods: *80% of seated capacity.*

High Ridership Thresholds

All Routes – Peak Periods

- Average boardings per hour more than 60.
- Individual trips greater than 55 at the peak point.
- More than 50 passengers at the peak point on consecutive trips.

All Route – Off-peak Periods

- Average boardings per hour more than 50.
- Individual trips greater than 55 at the peak point.
- More than 50 passengers at the peak point on consecutive trips.

On-Time Performance

- Departures from key timing points from 0 minutes before to 3 minutes after the scheduled departure time on 85% of trips. No vehicles will leave a timing point early.
- Arrival times at key timing points from 5 minutes early to 1 minute late on 90% of trips.

Introducing Service to New Development Areas & Existing Neighbourhoods

Three-Tier Transit Service Model

Transit will be introduced to a new neighbourhood once the built form is transit supportive (i.e., the bus can travel on a street network that allows it to get in and out of the neighbourhood). **A neighbourhood with an incomplete road network will not be considered for transit service introduction and Saskatoon Transit will not put in a budget request for that neighbourhood until the road network supports transit service.**

Tier 1 service can transition to Tier 2 and Tier 3 service based on population threshold numbers, ridership demand and number of boarding per hour in a neighbourhood (e.g., if Transit is consistently seeing a high percentage of full buses in a neighbourhood during peak hours). Service introduction, or movement from one tier to another, will require the recommended budget submissions are approved by Council. The intent of this additional service is to ensure neighbourhoods are connected and customers can navigate onto the main transit network. Connectivity between and inside neighbourhoods will allow transit to meet ridership goals and move towards a more sustainable future by increasing the modal split of those who use transit while supporting the Growth Plan to 500,000.

Tier 1 Service

Tier 1 service can be one of two possible options which will be introduced once the neighbourhood is populated to at least 25%. If warranted, a service may move from ODT to Regular service or from Regular to ODT, depending on demand:

- Tier 1 ODT Service: Introductory service to review service viability:
 - AM and PM peak only Monday to Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; or up to 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 - Service Hours breakdown is up to 12 hours x 5 days x 52 weeks.
 - Total Service hours required for Tier 1 service is up to 3,120 hours.
- Tier 1 Regular Service: Introductory service to review service viability:
 - AM and PM peak only Monday to Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 - Service Hours breakdown is 6 hours x 5 days x 52 weeks.
 - Total Service hours required for Tier 1 service is 1,560 hours.

Tier 2 Service

To be introduced if there is growth in transit ridership and demand warrants it. **Tier 2 service will be introduced once the neighbourhood is at approximately 50% population density:**

- Non-stop AM to PM Peak service Monday to Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Service Hours breakdown is 12 hours x 5 days x 52 weeks.
- Total Service hours required for Tier 2 service is 3,120 hours.

Tier 3 Service

Tier 3 Service: Full service is introduced once neighbourhood is 90% + developed and high ridership thresholds are being met. **If ridership is not increasing, Tier 3 service may be delayed until build-out reaches 100%:**

- Service starts at 6:00 a.m. and ends at 1:00 a.m. the next day from Monday to Sunday.
- Weekday Service Hours is 19 hours x 5 days x 52 weeks = 4,940 hours.
- Saturday Service Hours is 19 hours x 1 day x 52 weeks = 988 hours.
- Sunday Service Hours is 13 hours x 1 day x 52 weeks = 676 hours (Service starts at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 9:00 p.m.).
- Total Service hours required for Tier 3 service is 6,604 hours.

Implementation Periods & Service Monitoring

New service implementations shall be monitored throughout the implementation period and should achieve stage performance thresholds as follows:

- New services shall be maintained for a minimum of 1 year.
- Peak periods:
 - 50% of the recommended minimum performance level after 6 months;
 - 100% after 1 year.
- All other time periods and peak industrial service:
 - 50% of the recommended minimum performance level after 1 year;
 - 100% after 2 years.

Through the “three tier” process of introducing new levels of transit service, Saskatoon Transit will have the ability to introduce service in neighbourhoods in a timely manner and to reduce service in neighbourhoods when appropriate and/or required. New services that do not meet these thresholds will be reviewed for improvement measures and may be discontinued at the end of the implementation period if performance improvement prospects are not forecasted.