



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Item No. 15.4.1
Halifax Regional Council
February 24, 2026

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Councillor Kathryn Morse, Chair, Transportation Standing Committee

DATE: February 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Core Service Plan

ORIGIN

February 9, 2026 meeting of Transportation Standing Committee, Item 13.1.1.

RECOMMENDATION

The Transportation Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council:

1. approve the *Strategic Roadmap* as a planning framework to guide the growth and development of public transit services in the short term;
2. approve the *Core Service Plan*; and
3. direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare for the implementation of proposed network and service changes outlined as recommendations within the *Core Service Plan*, subject to budget and resource availability.

BACKGROUND

Transportation Standing Committee received a staff recommendation report dated February 3, 2026 and presentation to consider Halifax Transit's *Strategic Roadmap* and *Core Service Plan*.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated February 3, 2026.

DISCUSSION

Transportation Standing Committee considered the staff report dated February 3, 2026 and approved the recommendation to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated February 3, 2026.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated February 3, 2026.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings of the Transportation Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated February 3, 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated February 3, 2026.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives are outlined in the attached staff report dated February 3, 2026.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated February 3, 2026.

Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of Council*, Schedule 7:

Oversight and Input into Transit's Strategic Plan and Direction

6. The Transportation Standing Committee shall:

- (a) review and oversee policy direction and long term funding approach to promote and encourage Transit alternatives as outlined in the Regional Plan;
- (b) review and oversee specific strategic planning directions related to Transit Services coming from the Regional Plan such as the five year strategic plan, Accessibility Plan and the Ferry Plan; and
- (c) promote and enable positive communication between communities, ridership, and the Council and Transit services to enable and support the Regional Transit service to the communities of the municipality.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Staff recommendation report dated February 3, 2026.

Report Prepared by: Krista Vining, Team Lead, Legislative Assistants, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.223.1046

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Item No. 13.1.1
Transportation Standing Committee
February 9, 2026

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

FROM: Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 3, 2026

SUBJECT: Core Service Plan

ORIGIN

February 11, 2025 Halifax Regional Council Information Item (21.7) – Memorandum from the Chief Administrative Officer dated January 16, 2025, re: Update on the Moving Forward Together Plan.; and

The July 25, 2024 Transportation Standing Committee motion:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Purdy

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to provide a staff report regarding potential re-routing of the 320 to stop in the core of Fall River on Highway 2 near the Fall River Road intersection using a new route via the soon to open Aerotech connector and Highway 102 Exit 14.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Strategic Roadmap* introduces a more adaptive approach to transit planning, replacing the traditional multi-year process with a model that responds to evolving regional transportation needs. The *Strategic Roadmap* will include plans, guidelines, strategies and reviews to be undertaken by Halifax Transit over the next three years. Each module within the roadmap will address key priorities, including accessibility, new service models such as on demand or microtransit and the integration of the conventional bus network with the Rapid Transit network. Adopting a modular approach to strategic planning provides the flexibility to adjust priorities as circumstances change and also enables a more ongoing approach to engagement and collaboration which combined ensures strong alignment with the broader initiatives and emerging opportunities for the Halifax region.

The first module, the *Core Service Plan*, focuses on short-term route and service-level adjustments to better meet current demand while anticipating future needs. Aligned with the overarching framework of the *Strategic Roadmap*, the *Core Service Plan* identifies areas for immediate investment. Recommendations outlined in the *Core Service Plan* fall within the following categories:

- Increase service where ridership demand exceeds current service levels
- Investing in a more reliable network
- Investing strategically to support growth

Currently, most transit service across the network is performing at or above ridership guidelines. Therefore, options to reallocate resources to support service level increases are limited and additional resources are required. Investments over the life of the *Core Service Plan* are targeted to those of the highest priority due to current constraints on bus supply and resources.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council:

1. approve the *Strategic Roadmap*, that is attached to this report, as a planning framework to guide the growth and development of public transit services in the short term;
2. approve the *Core Service Plan* that is attached to this report; and,
3. direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare for the implementation of proposed network and service changes outlined as recommendations within the *Core Service Plan*, subject to future budget and resource availability.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with *Regional Municipal Planning Strategy* policy, transit service plans are prepared at regular intervals. This service planning activity involves public and stakeholder input and guides investment and decision making for delivering transit service that responds to the evolving needs of the municipality. Upon endorsement by Regional Council, this service plan is operationalized through Annual Service Plans which identify the planned implementation of recommendations for the upcoming year.

The last transit service plan for Halifax Transit was the *Moving Forward Together Plan* (MFTP). This plan was endorsed by Regional Council in 2016 and included widespread changes to transit routes and service levels. These comprehensive changes included a network restructure, extended service hours and more consistent and reliable schedules for routes across the network aimed to make transit a more attractive mobility option. These service adjustments resulted in significant ridership increases between 2016 and 2020, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally intended to be completed in five years, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent resource constraints impacted implementation timelines for the MFTP. The service changes completed in 2024/25 represented the last year of service changes under this plan.

A *Strategic Roadmap* has been created to establish the framework for transit service planning over the next three years, as well as a *Core Service Plan* which proposes short term route and service level changes. An outstanding request regarding the potential re-routing of the Route 320 in Fall River was also explored in conjunction with the preparation of the *Core Service Plan* and is included in this report.

DISCUSSION

Transit service planning is reliant on broader strategic plans for direction. Specifically, the Regional Plan, Regional Council's Strategic Plan, the Regional Transportation Plan (Link Nova Scotia), the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP), and the Rapid Transit Strategy all help to shape transit in the region and integrate the transportation network with land use. Transit service plans work within the scope of these broader strategic plans to optimize the route network, service levels, and address growth pressures. The interrelationship between the relevant strategic plans results in a transit network which aligns with regional priorities.

Revised Approach to Transit Service Planning – Building a Strategic Roadmap

The *Strategic Roadmap* introduces a more adaptive approach to transit planning, replacing the traditional multi-year process with a model that responds to evolving regional transportation needs. The *Strategic Roadmap* will include plans, guidelines, strategies and reviews to be undertaken by Halifax Transit over the next three years. Each module within the roadmap will address key priorities, including accessibility, ferry service, new service models such as microtransit and the integration of the conventional bus network with the Rapid Transit network. Adopting a modular approach to strategic planning provides the flexibility to adjust priorities as circumstances change and also enables a more ongoing approach to engagement and collaboration which combined ensures strong alignment with the broader initiatives and emerging opportunities for the Halifax region.

The *Strategic Roadmap* itself is a document that is intended to provide context and direction to support the creation of a unified series of modules. It explores the policy framework for decision making and includes references to guiding documents. There is a focus on articulating how Halifax Transit's mission statement, can be applied in the form of three regional mobility goals, and how these relate to the Moving Forward Principles for service planning.

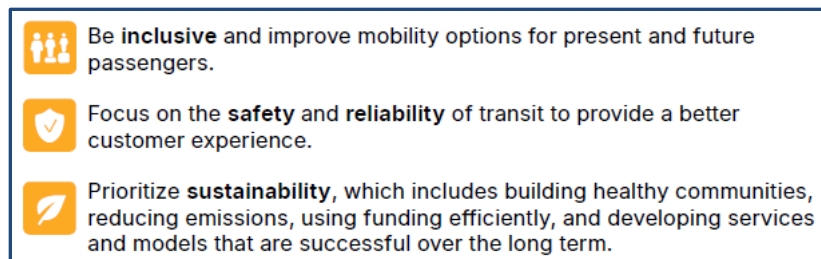


Figure 1: Regional mobility goals found on page 10 of the Strategic Roadmap

A large portion of the *Strategic Roadmap* is dedicated to using data and analysis to describe the issues and opportunities that are impacting the transit system that should be taken into consideration when planning for the future. Some of these include:

- Many communities throughout the region have experienced population growth and increased density
- The implementation of route changes and greater uniformity to service levels throughout the network has supported a growth in ridership demand across the network
- Some of the highest increases in ridership are in locations where transit ridership was previously low, including business parks and developing communities
- Demand during non-peak periods is increasing, including during evenings and on weekends, where the highest relative growth has occurred
- Ridership has increased on weekdays, with Tuesdays and Thursdays having the highest ridership
- Peak travel periods are expanding, with more passengers travelling earlier and later on weekdays
- Traffic congestion is impacting transit travel times
- Ferry ridership continues to increase
- Despite earlier increases in service hours for Access-A-Bus, longer travel times due to traffic congestion has resulted in less trips fulfilled in 2025 compared to 2018.

The *Strategic Roadmap* also introduces new concepts such as transit propensity (the measure of how likely the residents in a neighbourhood will rely on public transit) and a quantified summary of feedback into a matrix to highlight the relative desire for improved connections between communities. Additional information about the public engagement strategy and feedback collected, including methodology and themes is also contained in an appendix to the document.

Looking to next steps, the *Strategic Roadmap* includes a list of modules that are anticipated to be completed in the next three years. Of these, the *Core Service Plan* was developed as the first module. A *Microtransit Plan*, *Ferry Service Review*, *Service Reliability Review*, *Safety Plan* and *Accessible Services Review* have all been initiated and are in various stages of completion.

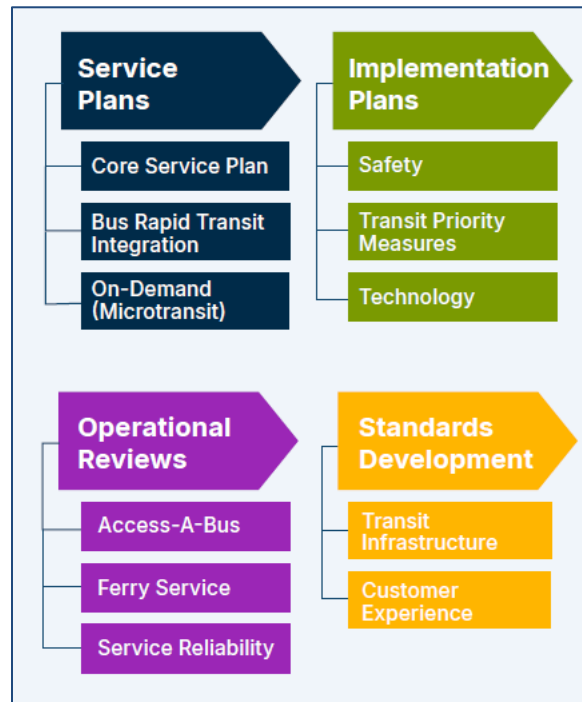


Figure 2: Potential modules to be completed as shown on page 17 of the *Strategic Roadmap*

Core Service Plan

The first module, the *Core Service Plan*, focuses on short-term route and service-level adjustments to better meet current demand while anticipating future needs. Aligned with the overarching policy framework in transportation planning and regional development, the *Core Service Plan* identifies areas for immediate investment. Recommendations outlined in the *Core Service Plan* fall within the following categories:



Figure 3: Categories of recommended service changes as shown on page 8 of the *Core Service Plan*

Across these three categories, a total of 21 changes are proposed, impacting 25 routes which represent 37% of routes across the network. The recommendations range from adding a few additional trips at key times, increased frequency, changes to routing, the introduction of one brand new transit route, and the launch of 24-hour transit service for the first time in Halifax on the Route 320 Airport/Fall River.

The *Core Service Plan* includes descriptions of the proposed changes, as well as maps where applicable. The following briefly summarizes the recommendations:

Investments to address ridership demand

- Increased frequency on the Route 3 Crosstown, Route 5 Portland, Route 8 Sackville, Route 9A/B Greystone/Herring Cove, Route 21 Timberlea, Route 28 Bayers Lake, and Route 91 Hemlock Ravine

Investments in service quality and reliability

- Additional trips at key times on the Route 56 Dartmouth Crossing and Route 194 West Bedford Express
- Rescheduling and routing changes to the Route 24 Leibling Park
- Routing changes for the Route 21 Timberlea, Route 54 Montebello, Route 55 Port Wallace, Route 56 Dartmouth Crossing, Route 93 Bedford Highway, Route 165 Caldwell Express and Route 192 Hemlock Ravine Express, to address challenges, or better serve communities
- A scheduling shift to include earlier and later trips outside of the typical peak periods on select Express routes to better accommodate commuter schedules, particularly health care workers who start and/or end their shifts in the early morning or the evening period. (Routes 123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194)
- Changes to the Route 330 to revert to historic trip patterns that only serviced Sheldrake Lake Park & Ride on select trips

Strategic investments supporting growth

- The introduction of 24-hour service on the Route 320 Airport/Fall River to better serve workers and travellers to this regional destination
- The introduction of a new Route 95 Brookline to connect West Bedford, Clayton Park, Bayers Lake, and the Ragged Lake Industrial Park

In addition to these service changes, there were many other requests for new or increased services that are not included within the Core Service Plan recommendations. These are included in the current plan for consideration as areas of potential future investment in the transit network and primarily include more frequency on existing routes during different time periods, or new connections within or between communities. Generally, these reflect a desire for increased access to public transit and higher levels of service but were either outside the scope of the Core Service Plan or exceeded the potential level of resources anticipated to be available in the short or medium term.

Regional Express Route 320 Airport/Fall River

The Route 320 Airport/Fall River provides a connection between downtown Halifax, Dartmouth, Fall River, and the Halifax Stanfield International Airport. The route is an important regional connection, linking opportunities for employment and travel with Halifax's population and businesses in a cost-effective way.

Due to the nature of air travel, and therefore the industries associated with the airport facilities, this route was introduced in 2012 with a wide span of service, starting at 4:40 am and ending at 1:03 am. The route is generally well-liked by passengers, and regular positive feedback is received about the availability of transit as a cost-effective option. However, there are regular requests to continue service either earlier, or later, to accommodate late night/early morning flights, as well as employees travelling to and from work during the overnight period. As a key partner in the existing service delivery, Halifax Stanfield Airport originally made this request to extend service into the overnight period, recognizing the benefit to both staff and travelers.

Halifax Transit currently operates service over 22 hours a day, with a short period overnight with no services running. A shift to 24-hour conventional transit service will require a restructuring of operational processes, staff levels and shifts, and adjustments in technology, which is challenging and will require long lead times, but at this time, the necessary changes are considered achievable in the medium term. Introducing overnight service on the Route 320 Airport/Fall River, which operates hourly in the late night, will only result in four additional round trips, and therefore allows for this transition in a measured way, potentially laying the groundwork for additional late-night routes in the future.

The potential re-routing of the Route 320 in Fall River was also explored in conjunction with the preparation of the *Core Service Plan*. The Route 320 has only a single connection in Fall River, at a Park & Ride in close proximity to Highway 118. This allows the route to divert from the highway and connects the community in an expedient way, maintaining a direct route with a competitive travel time. However, this Park & Ride is a significant distance from most homes and businesses in Fall River and roads connecting the community are without sidewalks or paved shoulders. Community members have been advocating for this route to detour to serve the main commercial centre in Fall River for many years.

The recent opening of a new road connection, the Aerotech Connector, provides a potential opportunity to detour the Route 320 to serve the commercial centre of Fall River on the way to and from the airport. In July 2024, the Transportation Standing Committee passed a motion to evaluate the potential to modify the existing routing to travel along Trunk 2, serve the Fall River commercial centre then use the Aerotech Connector to connect back to the highway (see Figure 4).

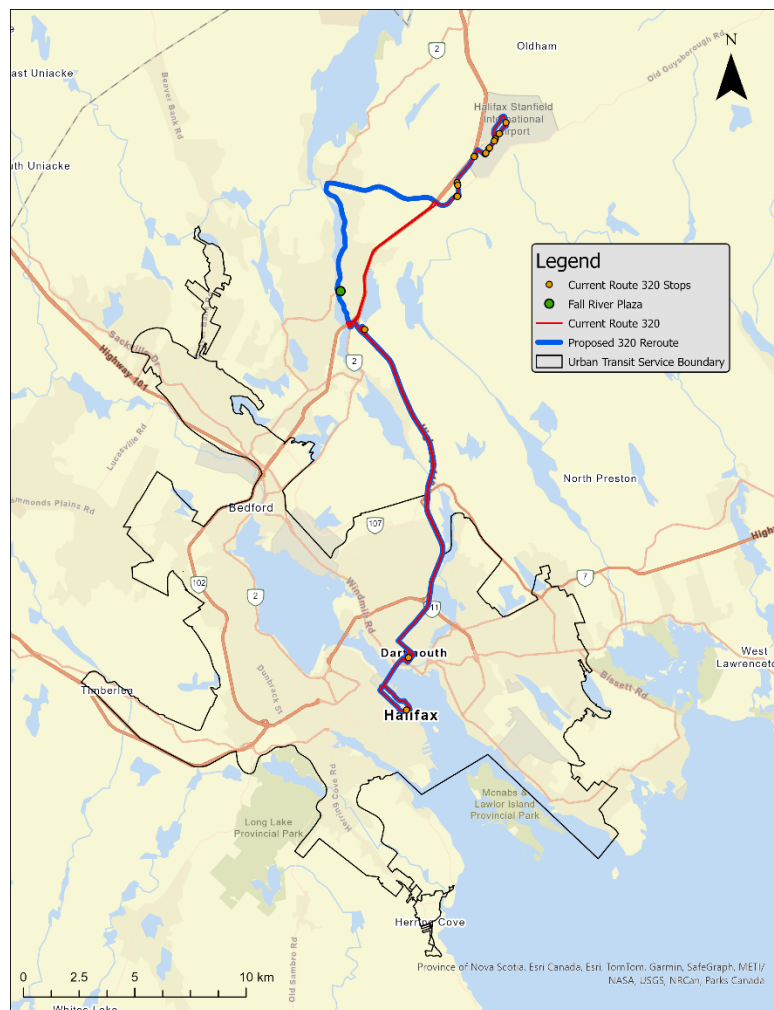


Figure 4: Route 320 Airport/Fall River as it currently exists, and the evaluated detour

In evaluating this proposed modification, it was determined that this detour would result in modest overall increase in ridership for travel either within the community or to the Park & Ride. Fall River features a dispersed settlement pattern which means many residents would still need to travel a significant distance to reach the nearest bus stop. The lack of pedestrian infrastructure combined with the long distances to walk to the nearest stop would result in a low to moderate increase in ridership demand by making this detour.

However, there are potentially significant drawbacks from detouring Route 320 into the Fall River commercial centre. This route is a Regional Express route, and the service is intended to be as direct as possible to reduce travel times. The detour would increase the overall trip time by an estimated ten minutes in each direction on each trip, adding approximately \$600,000 annually in additional costs. The current trip from Scotia Square to the airport takes, on average, approximately one hour. Factoring in the additional time required to make the detour, and the increased potential for delays, would make the trip even less competitive with other modes of travel, resulting in a less reliable and attractive service to existing and potential future passengers.

The Route 320 Airport/Fall River currently has approximately 450 daily passengers (920 daily boardings). Of those, the bulk of weekly passengers are travelling to/from the airport or nearby industrial park (80%), with only 14% travelling to/from Fall River. When factoring the potential volume of passengers impacted, the negative impacts to existing riders who are destined to the airport, including extended travel times and inconvenience, exceeds the potential benefits to new passengers. Therefore, this proposed detour does not meet the best-practice conditions required to recommend modifying an existing route to serve additional passengers. Based on these considerations, including the impact to passengers, the cost, the potential benefit, and the intended express nature of this route, a modification to the route is not recommended as part of the *Core Service Plan*.

Alternative service delivery models may be more suited to expanding transit coverage to Fall River. On demand or microtransit models have the potential to provide better transit service to the Fall River community than operating fixed route service which has limitations. A microtransit service model would potentially allow more flexibility with travel times, whereas fixed route would be hourly, and could reduce or eliminate the walking distance to bus stops. As such, further consideration will be given in the upcoming *Microtransit Service Plan*.

Considerations to extend to 24-hour service on Route 320 Airport-Fall River is within scope of the *Core Service Plan* and is recommended for implementation in year two of this plan.

Implementation Timeline

The *Core Service Plan* is intended to be a short-term service plan, with implementation occurring over three years. This would allow for investments which address demand and improve service reliability, prior to the development of new service plan in 2028 that would potentially include network changes to prepare for the Rapid Transit network, including the Mill Cove Ferry and BRT.

Currently, most transit routes across the network are performing at or above ridership guidelines. Therefore, options to reallocate resources to implement the recommendations of this plan are limited. The table below includes a list of the existing bus routes with the lowest overall performance the estimated costs of operating these services and revenues from passengers travelling on these routes. There may be some future potential to reduce service in low ridership areas and replace trips with microtransit options, however, it would be premature to eliminate transit in communities without first testing and evaluating microtransit in the region. Additionally, service reductions or eliminations are not advised without consultation with the communities impacted. Service reductions or removal of any of the routes shown below would be considered high impact. As such, additional resources are required to make the changes proposed in this plan. Investments over the life of the *Core Service Plan* are targeted to those of the highest priority due to current constraints on bus supply and resources.

Should Regional Council decide to eliminate all routes in the table below, the combined savings would result in a total of \$4.5M in operating cost savings, which could fund approximately half of the service increases recommended in the *Core Service Plan*.

Route	Ridership Performance	Annual Boardings	Approximate Annual Cost	Approximate Annual Revenue	Description
26 Springvale	Meets guidelines	8,800	\$70,000	\$11,000	This short route connects the Springvale community to the Mumford Terminal. Recent scheduling changes resulted in a ridership increase among students, resulting in the route meeting guidelines on most school days.
58/158 Woodlawn	Meets guidelines	111,000	\$1,000,000	\$133,000	Operates as express service during peak hours; helping to reduce congestion on the busy Portland Street corridor; provides service during off peak hours to a relatively dense suburban neighbourhood.
65/165 Caldwell	Meets guidelines	113,000	\$805,000	\$135,000	Operates as express service during peak hours; helping to reduce congestion on the busy Portland Street corridor; a change is proposed in the <i>Core Service Plan</i> that is expected to increase peak ridership.
192 Hemlock Ravine Express	Slightly below guidelines	59,000	\$520,000	\$71,000	This route is in the growing community of West Bedford; this has been newly introduced and ridership is expected to increase.
196 Basinview Express	Below guidelines	29,000	\$400,000	\$34,000	This route is in the growing community of West Bedford; trips were recently added and ridership uptake is expected.
370 Porters Lake	Consistently well below guidelines	26,000	\$710,000	\$31,000	Provides a relatively fast and affordable option from the Porters Lake Park & Ride to downtown areas during weekday peak periods.
401 Porters Lake	Consistently well below guidelines	42,000	\$575,000	\$50,000	These rural routes largely represent the only transit service available in their communities are not recommended for reductions. There may be the potential to replace these with microtransit service in the future, but doing so before a transition plan is in place would leave residents who have relied on transit for many years with no options.
415 Purcells Cove	Consistently well below guidelines	16,000	\$245,000	\$20,000	
433 Tantallon	Consistently well below guidelines	26,000	\$255,000	\$32,000	

Figure 5: Existing Halifax Transit bus routes with the lowest overall performance

The table below illustrates a potential implementation schedule. It is subject to budget and resource availability, and implementation details for each fiscal year will be brought forward as an Annual Service Plan for Regional Council's consideration. Some deviations from this plan are expected, as there are external dependencies such as the completion of road network connections that may shift priorities from year to year.

Year 1

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Route 5 - Service Increase (Sunday)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 24 – Schedule Adjustment	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 165 - Modification	Service Quality & Reliability	-
Route 330 - Modification	Service Quality & Reliability	-

Year 2

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Route 3 - Service Increase	Addressing Demand	\$\$\$
Route 21 – Modifications (Stage 1 and 2) (Sunday) ●	Supporting Growth Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$\$
Route 28 – Service Increase ●	Addressing Demand	\$\$
Route 9A/B – Service Increase	Addressing Demand	\$\$\$
Route 56 – Additional Trips	Service Quality & Reliability	\$
Route 21 – Modification (Stage 1)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$
Route 56 – Modification	Service Quality & Reliability	-
Route 91 – Service Increase (Weekday)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 93 – Modification ●	Service Quality & Reliability	-
Route 95 – New Route ●●	Supporting Growth	\$\$\$
Route 192 – Extension ●	Supporting Growth	\$

- Changes associated with improving transit service to the Bayers Lake area.
- Changes associated with responding to growth in the West Bedford area.

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Year 2 (continued)

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Express Route 194 ●	Addressing Demand	\$\$
Express Routes – Additional Trips (123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 320 – 24 Hour Service	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$

● Changes associated with responding to growth in the West Bedford area.

Year 3

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Route 8 - Service Increase (all periods)	Addressing Demand	\$\$
Route 54 – Extension ●	Supporting Growth	\$\$
Route 55 – Extension ●	Supporting Growth	\$\$
Route 91 – Service Increase (Weekend)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$

● Changes associated with responding to development growth in the Port Wallace area should be implemented after development is completed.

Note About Costs:

Low (\$): \$0 - \$99,999 per year
 Medium (\$\$): \$100,000 - \$499,999 per year
 High (\$\$\$): \$500,000 or more per year

Generally, the changes proposed will require additional transit operating funding, and the purchase of additional buses to deliver the service. It is anticipated that the vehicles purchased will be a combination of diesel articulated buses (60') and standard electric buses (40'), depending on market availability and the potential for external funding sources for zero emission buses. As no buses have been acquired to date and are not planned in year one at this time, this means that the majority of the changes are only possible in years two and three of the plan, at the earliest. Reductions in available capital or operating funding in years two or three would result in the reduction of scope, or the extension of the timeline for plan completion.

Some of the changes also require the installation of new bus stops, particularly for Routes 21, 54, 55, 56, 95 and 165. The most challenging of these is expected to be the Route 95, specifically on the portion of Chain Lake Drive in Bayers Lake that does not currently have transit service. This segment of Chain Lake Drive has no existing sidewalks, which are a key requirement in meeting stop accessibility standards, aimed to reduce barriers accessing the stop and when boarding or alighting the bus. As such, it is likely that a reduced number of bus stops will be created due to cost, and that a significant amount of funding will be required to design and construct sidewalk to create bus stops near the Value Village on Chain Lake Drive, which feedback indicates is a frequent destination of transit passengers. If this route is approved as part of the *Core Service Plan*, design work will be undertaken, and a future capital budget will be increased to accommodate these bus stop installations.

For the upcoming 2026/27 financial year, approval of the *Core Service Plan* would allow the implementation of some of the proposed changes that are cost neutral, as well as a limited number of changes that can be accomplished with existing resources. Any additional changes would only be possible if increased funding was made available.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The approval of the *Strategic Roadmap* and *Core Service Plan* have no immediate financial impacts. However, they convey the intent to increase investment in transit service and adopting the plan as the guiding framework for medium to long-term transit improvements introduces significant unfunded operating and capital pressures that cannot be accommodated within the current budgets.

These figures are not accounted for in the existing 10-year capital plan. Adding new amounts into the existing plan will result in the requirement to prioritize the existing plan.

Overall, the *Core Service Plan* recommendations are anticipated to require the acquisition of 30 new buses at an estimated cost of \$53 million, along with approximately \$10.2 million in additional annual operating costs once fully implemented. These costs are expected to be phased in as service changes roll out. Because the proposed changes would launch mid-year, full annualized costs would not be realized until the following fiscal year. Based on the three-year implementation schedule of 20 buses introduced halfway through Year 2 and the remaining 10 halfway through Year 3, the resulting capital and operating costs are estimated in the table below:

		Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30
	Additional Buses	-	20	10	-
		-			
Capital	Bus Cost*	-	\$35M	\$18M	-
	Total Unbudgeted Capital Pressure	-	\$35M	\$18M	-
		-			
Operating	Cumulative Bus Operating Costs	-	\$3.4M	\$8.5M	\$10.2M
	Addl' Fare Revenue	-	(\$0.6M)	(\$1.5M)	(\$1.8M)
	Addl' Local Transit Tax Revenue	-	(\$370K)	(\$380K)	(\$380K)
	Total Unbudgeted Operating Pressure	-	\$2.43M	\$6.62M	\$8.02M
		-			
Total Annual Pressure		-	\$37.4M	\$24.6M	\$8.0M
Average Tax Bill Increase **		-	\$9.07	\$24.72	\$29.94

**The capital costs associated with the bus purchases and necessary infrastructure upgrades are estimated at \$53M. There may be future potential opportunities for cost sharing of electric buses, which could be expected to reduce this cost to the municipality by up to \$15M. Operating costs presented above do not include debt servicing costs which are estimated to be an additional \$6.3M at the high-end with no cost share.*

** No additional budget implications are expected for 2026-27, any service changes will be managed with existing Capital and operating budgets.

With additional buses coming online, additional fare revenues are estimated at 18% of new operating costs. There would also be offsetting local transit tax revenues as routes are extended estimated to be \$380K annually by the end of Year 3 if all the proposed extensions and additions in this plan were implemented.

These service enhancements will require additional tax revenue and/or adjustments to other municipal service levels. Based on the information available at the time of writing this report, the estimated increase to the average residential tax bill for 2027/28 could exceed 9%, before including any of the costs outlined above.

RISK CONSIDERATION

A risk assessment was completed. When evaluated, the risks were considered low. To reach this conclusion, risk related to service delivery, financial resources, and public perception were considered.

The risk of proceeding includes additional financial pressure as the transit service increases. Not proceeding with the recommendation poses a risk to Halifax Transit's ability to meet present and future ridership demand and/or meet service quality and reliability standards. Declines in service reliability risks impacting regional connectivity, economic growth and traffic congestion. Residents and communities that rely on transit for their essential daily travel to employment, education, and accessing health, or other services, have a higher risk of negative impacts arising from a decline in transit service quality and reliability.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As outlined in the Discussion section above, public consultation on the draft *Strategic Roadmap* and *Core Service Plan* was designed to gather feedback and insight from a broad and diverse range of passengers, partner groups and residents interested in contributing to service improvements and refining recommendations within the plan.

Engagement Overview

Halifax Transit initiated a comprehensive engagement program that began in the spring of 2025 and ended in October 2025. Individual meetings were held with Councillors to kick off the engagement and integrate initial community perspectives into the material that was brought to residents for engagement. Draft materials for the *Strategic Roadmap* and the *Core Service Plan* were released for public consultation in August. Engagement materials included the context and rationale for adopting a more agile planning approach, preliminary scope for the proposed modules within the roadmap and the service adjustments prioritized within the *Core Service Plan*.

Internal stakeholders, including Operators and leadership teams, gave feedback by participating at in-person events (lobby events and focus groups), by email and/or via the survey prepared for Operators and transit staff, which was available in digital format on-line and on paper.

The public engagement strategy developed by Halifax Transit aimed to reach as broad an audience as possible to share plan proposals and ensure passengers and residents had the opportunity to provide feedback on transit service in the region, and on routes of most importance to them. The engagement strategy included the following elements to ensure we reached this diverse population:

- Use of multiple formats to engage passengers and residents. Public input was gathered through an online survey, pop-up sessions at major terminals, bus engagement trips, other community locations and targeted consultations with residents, businesses, students and special interest groups. Additionally, for those who preferred to share feedback directly to staff, an email address was made available and promoted within the marketing strategy.
- In-person engagement events designed to connect with those most likely to have feedback useful to improve on transit services in the region. Holding pop-up engagements across the network during all weekday and weekend service periods ensured the engagement connected with passengers who rely on transit for their daily trips.
- Adopting a clear and direct approach when developing information shared and developing questions to elicit feedback. A series of visualizations, maps and graphics were developed to aid comprehension of concepts and considerations within the planning process.
- An accessible and inclusive approach to survey design aimed to reduce barriers to participate and increase response numbers. The survey was designed to enable respondents to engage to the extent they wished with a comprehensive range of accessibility features.
- Broad ranging marketing strategy which included communications shared on radio, social media, Councillor networks, advertising on bus shelters and terminals, and across the transit fleet.
- A responsive approach within the engagement plan which included monitoring response rates and marketing activity to ensure fulsome engagement across different communities. By identifying lower response rates by some groups and community areas we added additional events to drive up participation where response numbers seemed lower than we expected.

A Core Service Plan 2025-27 online project page shared access to the digital survey and draft sections of plan. Documentation provided an overview of the planning context along with fact sheets for each of the focus areas. For more information go to: [Engagehalifax.ca/core-service-plan](https://engagehalifax.ca/core-service-plan).

In-person engagement: In total 31 engagement events were held. Most were in-person pop-up events held across the network at terminals, Park & Ride facilities, and bus and ferry engagement trips. Additional events were scheduled on routes and in community areas where modifications and adjustments were proposed and where response numbers seemed lower than expected. Open house events and focus groups were held to solicit targeted feedback from residents, businesses, students and special interest groups. The partner engagement events had attendees from associations, groups and organizations representing the following sectors:

- Business development associations
- Accessibility and inclusion support providers and advocacy groups
- Local universities and post-secondary colleges
- Healthcare
- Immigration Support Services
- Province of Nova Scotia
- Transit and transportation advocacy groups

Public Survey: Responses were predominantly provided within the digital survey, with a small number (eight) of paper surveys completed. Survey respondents tended to be reliant on transit services with 67 percent reporting they travel on the bus, ferry or Access-A-Bus three or more days each week. Within that range twenty-nine percent of passengers indicated they travel on transit services most, or every day, of the week. The largest numbers of respondents fell within the 25-54 age group (65 percent) and were fully employed (80 percent). The remainder include older (seven percent) and younger (14 percent) age groups, students (16 percent) and retired respondents (8 percent). An expanded “*What we heard report*” includes a breakdown of responses and demographic information.

Feedback Summary

We had strong responses across all engagement channels from residents who live throughout the Halifax region. The project website received over 9,000 unique visits throughout the engagement period. In-person and partner engagement events allowed us to connect with 6,814 people across the transit network. The survey received a total of 5,673 responses with answers to 39 closed-ended questions. Over 7,400 comments were provided in response to open-ended questions. A total of 45 emails were received, a significant percentage of which expanded on feedback provided by residents who had already completed the survey online.

Feedback on Existing Services: Requests for more frequent service garnered the largest number of responses when we engaged riders. Often these requests were connected to the following:

1. Capacity and comfort on buses on certain routes during busy periods. These concerns were related to crowding and the need to stand on long routes for prolonged time, express services or buses delayed by traffic.
2. Many comments connected increased frequency with reduced wait times and overall travel times, by:
 - a. providing more options when making connections and transferring between routes in the network.
 - b. reducing the impact of service delays.
 - c. reducing the number of overloads and service cancellations.
3. The need to respond to shifting travel patterns by extending service spans on routes and express routes.

Feedback on priority areas: Service reliability, improving regional connections through expanding the service area and implementing a Rapid Transit network along with requests to upgrade transit infrastructure were the areas of highest priority for passengers and residents. *Attachment A* includes a summary of the six main themes most often heard through the public engagement.

Feedback on key focus areas: Concepts and proposals shared to improve transit service to the Bayers Lake, West Bedford and Port Wallace community areas had community support with feedback informing the final recommendations outlined in the *Core Service Plan 2025-27 (Attachment B)*.

Transit infrastructure: Requests to upgrade infrastructure including bus shelters, seating and at terminals was a high priority most often tied to improving passenger comfort, safety and to simplify the process of navigating the transit network. An expanded “*What We Heard*” report includes a detailed list of infrastructure upgrade requests received from passengers, residents and partner organizations.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that modules within the *Strategic Roadmap* and the *Core Service Plan* will increase transit ridership, potentially reducing private vehicle usage. This would result in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and associated with positive environmental implications.

ALTERNATIVES

1. The Transportation Standing Committee could choose not to approve the *Strategic Roadmap* and/or the *Core Service Plan*.
2. The Transportation Standing Committee could request modifications to the *Strategic Roadmap* and/or the *Core Service Plan*.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 69 of the *Halifax Regional Municipality* Charter provides that:

- 69 (1) The Municipality may provide a public transportation service by
- (a) the purchase of vehicles or vessels and operation of the service.
 - (b) providing financial assistance to a person who will undertake to provide the service; or
 - (c) a combination of these methods.

Policy T-5 of the 2014 *Regional Municipal Planning Strategy* provides that:

- T-5 Transit Service Plans shall be prepared at regular intervals for consideration by HRM. These plans will be developed in consultation with the public and other stakeholders and, upon adoption by HRM, shall provide guidance for investment in transit services.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Strategic Roadmap
Attachment B: Core Service Plan

Report Prepared by: Paul Maher, Project Manager, Transit Planning, Halifax Transit 902.497.1828

JANUARY 2026

Strategic Roadmap

2025-2028

HALIFAX





HALIFAX TRANSIT



PLEASE KEEP OFF STAIRS
UNTIL BOAT IS DOCKED

78 CHILD
LIFE JACKETS

87 ADULT
LIFE JACKETS

CONTENTS

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About this plan

Halifax Transit’s Strategic Roadmap sets the stage for the work we will undertake between 2025 and 2028 to improve the efficiency, attractiveness, and quality of service of transit for years to come.

This Strategic Roadmap outlines a plan to deliver on multiple, interrelated projects to improve transit for passengers. It outlines how 11 different modules that include service reviews, the development of new guidelines and standards, and analyses will come together to build a transit system that adapts to changing population and employment, enables opportunities for ongoing public engagement on issues that matter to passengers and is set up to facilitate continuous improvement to transit services.

The Strategic Roadmap lays out the foundation of this new approach, how it builds on the plans and policies that are important to Halifax and explores the pressures, trends and patterns that have necessitated a new way of planning the transit system.



Introduction

Halifax’s transit system is evolving. Halifax’s population has experienced significant growth, and there is development throughout the region. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and ferry service expansions are planned for the next decade, and a new *Provincial Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* has been released to guide the direction of the regional transportation network for the decades to come.

This Strategic Roadmap is made up of a series of modules that address how we plan and deliver transit in Halifax. Together, these plans, reviews and standards form the Strategic Roadmap – a document that outlines how Halifax Transit will respond to the momentous changes happening across the region. With the Strategic Roadmap as a guide, we will deliver a transit system that provides passengers with a high-quality, accessible and reliable transit service.

Why develop a Strategic Roadmap?

Our region is changing, and our approach to strategic planning must adapt in response.

In 2016, Halifax Transit released the *Moving Forward Together Plan* (MFTP). The MFTP was a comprehensive plan that established a structured approach to network and route design that prioritized transparent decision-making, collaboration, and the use of performance measures to guide increased adaptability in service planning. In 2017, Regional Council endorsed the *Integrated Mobility Plan* (IMP). The IMP put forward a vision for how to create connected, healthy, affordable and sustainable travel options while moving both passenger and goods.

The years that followed the release of the MFTP saw rapid population growth, resulting in ridership increases across all times of day, and more passengers throughout all of Halifax. In 2020, COVID-19 began to impact mobility patterns, but that year also saw the release of the *Rapid Transit Strategy* (RTS). The Rapid Transit Strategy outlined a vision for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and expanded ferry service to serve as the spine of a fast, frequent, and reliable transportation system.

Halifax's changing context – population growth, accelerated development throughout the region, higher ridership, increased priority on equity and accessibility and a blueprint for both a future Rapid Transit network and a regional network – requires a new approach to evolving and growing our transit system. To meet these challenges, the Strategic Roadmap brings forward a new approach for transit planning in Halifax that is increasingly collaborative. The collaborative approach initiated in the preparation of the MFTP is expected to evolve into an ongoing practice of engaging and gathering feedback to develop the Strategic Roadmap.

Plans that inform the Strategic Roadmap ↓

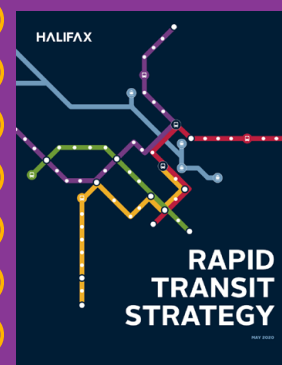
2016



2017



2020



What's new about this approach to transit and service planning?

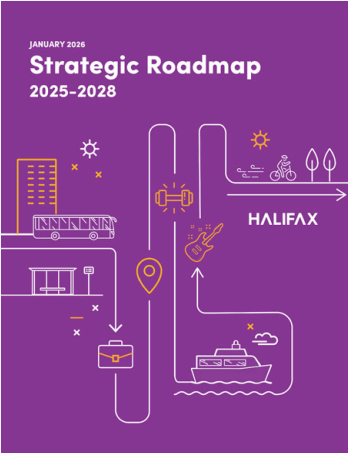
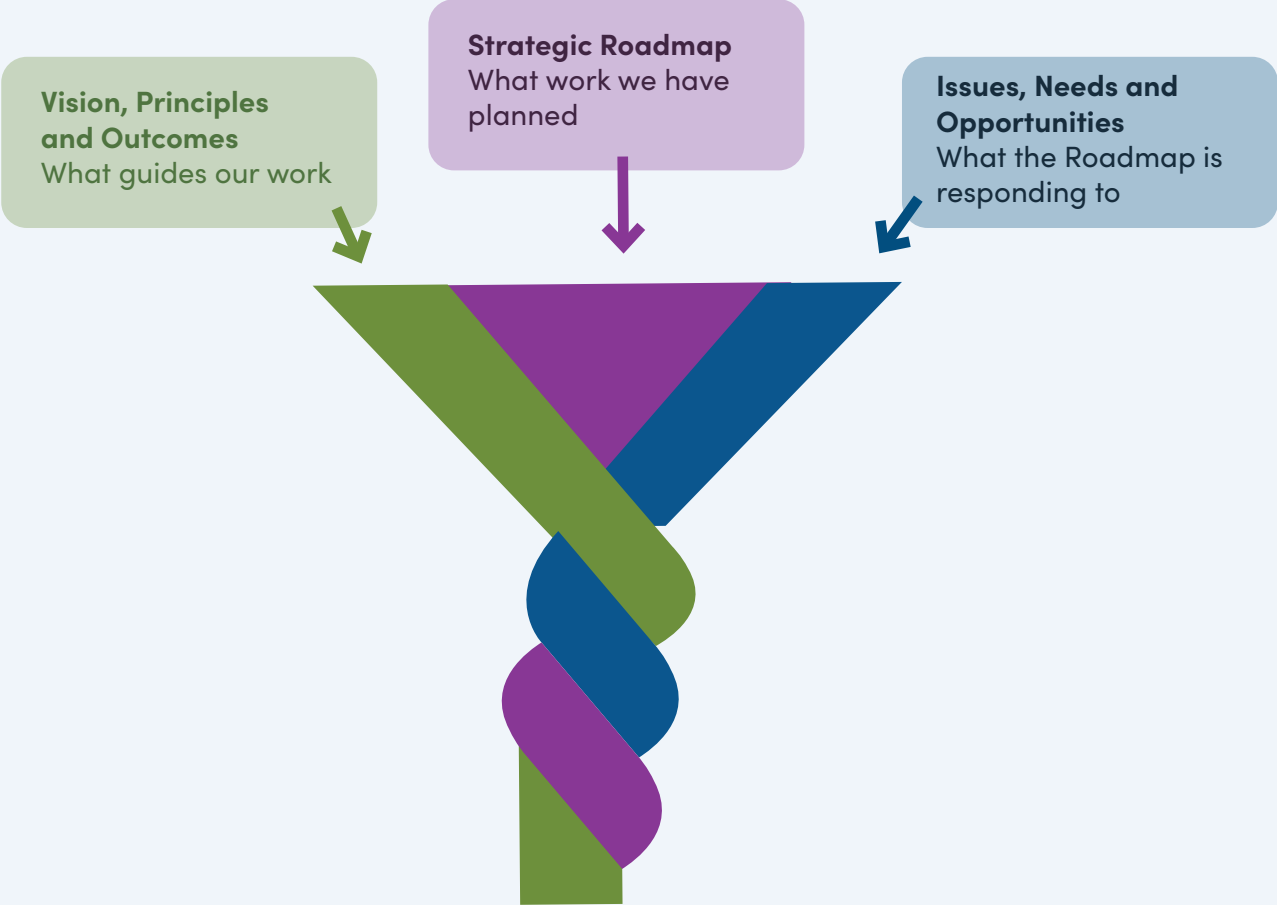
The Strategic Roadmap replaces a conventional multi-year planning process with an adaptive, responsive model that allows the municipality's transit service to be adjusted in steps with regional growth and innovative, emerging solutions and approaches. The Strategic Roadmap is meant to be **adaptive to change, enabling ongoing public engagement and facilitating continuous improvement** to service.



The Strategic Roadmap will include plans, guidelines and reviews that will be undertaken by Halifax Transit over the next three years to foster a transit system that responds to Halifax's growth and ridership needs. Each of these deliverables will be a module that together will make up the Strategic Roadmap. The Strategic Roadmap will cover a range of topics, including Access-A-Bus, ferry service, BRT, conventional bus services, new service models and regional connections. The benefit of this new approach is that it allows for flexibility in how we prioritize the delivery of new modules that address emerging issues or align with Halifax's other initiatives: as the region's context changes, there are opportunities to adjust how the Strategic Roadmap unfolds.

What does this document cover?

Weaving together the Plan







Section A

**Vision,
Principles and
Outcomes**

Guiding principles

Halifax is rapidly changing—and transportation across the region needs to adapt with these changes. Halifax's transit system plays a vital role in connecting people to jobs, schools, services, and the places that allow communities to thrive. To keep up with changes and deliver the service residents need, a clear vision and strong guiding principles are needed.

The Strategic Roadmap is guided by Halifax Transit's mission statement, regional mobility goals, and principles that act as the foundation for daily transit operations, the approach to service and network planning and the delivery of initiatives outlined in this document.

The Strategic Roadmap is supported by three regional mobility goals that build on our Mission Statement. These goals will direct Halifax Transit and the work done through the Strategic Roadmap to:



Be **inclusive** and improve mobility options for present and future passengers.



Focus on the **safety** and **reliability** of transit to provide a better customer experience.



Prioritize **sustainability**, which includes building healthy communities, reducing emissions, using funding efficiently, and developing services and models that are successful over the long term.

By working toward these goals, transit's role can be strengthened by fostering greater connectivity, equity, resilience and sustainability within Halifax's communities.



Halifax Transit Mission Statement: "Working together to provide a safe, reliable and sustainable transit system for all."

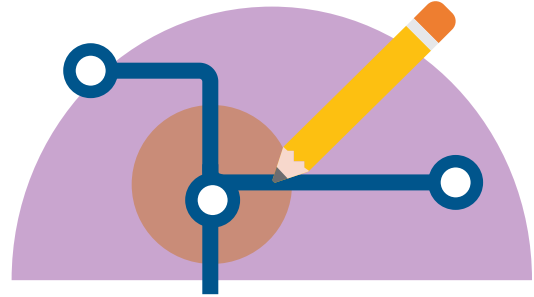


The **Moving Forward Principles** have been providing guidance on how to plan and deliver transit services since 2015. These principles help focus resources, ensure transit services are efficient and recognize the need for ongoing improvements in service.

Moving Forward Principles



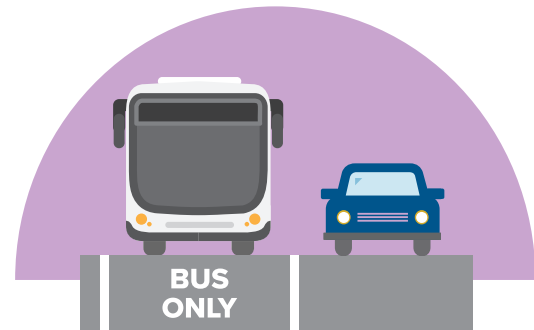
1. Increase the proportion of resources allocated towards high ridership services



2. Build a simplified transfer-based system



3. Invest in service quality and reliability



4. Give transit increased priority in the transportation network



2017

The Moving Forward Together Plan (MFTP) was a comprehensive plan that included a network redesign which resulted in the restructuring of Halifax’s transit network to improve service frequency, extending service hours and enhancing reliability to make transit a more attractive mobility option. The MFTP resulted in changes across the entire transit network with more uniform service hours in a day and more service hours on evening and weekends. We are now seeing a return on this investment with high ridership growth during evening and weekend. Released in 2016, the final changes outlined in the MFTP were completed in 2024, providing an opportunity for a new approach to transit planning.

Seizing Opportunities

Our Mission Statement, regional mobility goals, and the Moving Forward Principles guide the work we do. With this direction, the following opportunity areas will be considered when working on all the modules of the Strategic Roadmap. These include:



Applying an equity lens to transit planning. This lens adds an intentional focus on route modifications and service adjustments that reflect community needs. An equity lens can also guide engagement strategies, resulting in planning decisions informed by feedback from the residents that are the most reliant on transit.



Advancing sustainability goals. Halifax Transit can advance the municipality's goals to decarbonize transportation as outlined in HaliFACT by continuing to build a transit system that reduces reliance on private vehicles, lowering traffic congestion and cutting carbon emissions. Advancing sustainability is also about ensuring that the transit system grows in a way that is financially responsible and transparent.

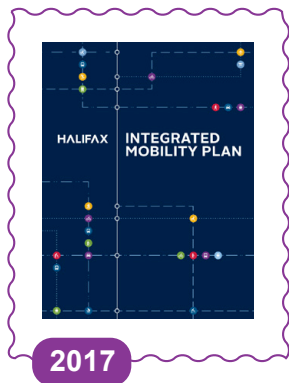


Providing viable, high-quality mobility alternatives. Providing residents with integrated mobility options makes it easier for them to move around, increases the connectivity between communities and provides more choices to complete day-to-day trips. Integrated mobility also reduces the time and money residents invest in transportation, helping to make living in Halifax more affordable.

Working within a unified policy framework

The Strategic Roadmap is aligned with the broader framework of plans and programs that shape regional growth. The key themes and actions from these initiatives are designed to support the development of well-functioning communities that are connected, prosperous, healthy, vibrant and sustainable.

Healthy and connected communities. Endorsed by Regional Council in 2017, the *Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP)* aims to create connected, healthy, affordable and sustainable travel options in the following ways:



- Prioritizing the movement of people over vehicles and increasing the share of efficient and sustainable transportation modes for daily trips (see mode share targets).
- Ensuring that transportation options are accessible to all residents.
- Creating links between people and communities and strengthening connections within the community.
- Rethinking and redesigning the transportation system by adapting to modern needs and preferences.

The IMP articulated a suite of actions aimed at strengthening the relationship between transportation and land use decisions aligned with regional sustainability goals.

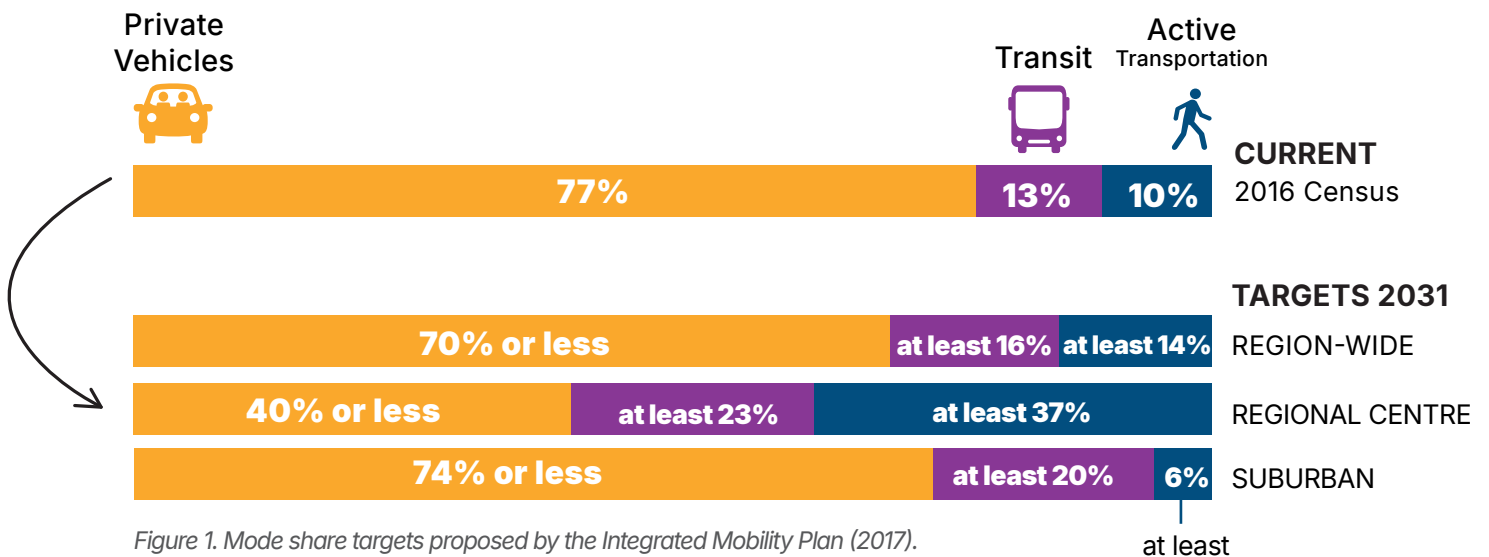


Figure 1. Mode share targets proposed by the Integrated Mobility Plan (2017).



Implementing a rapid transit network.

With the vision to provide faster, better-connected and more frequent transit, the Rapid Transit Strategy builds on the pillars and principles of the IMP by proposing new ferry and bus services. Rapid Transit is most efficient

and reliable when it serves areas in the region where many people live and work. Rapid Transit options make it easier for residents to shift from driving their car to taking the bus or ferry when they are located in areas where there are lots of existing and potential riders, when the service comes frequently enough for passengers to not worry about the time the bus comes and when transit service gets people to their destinations on time.

Work is already underway to expand existing ferry services by developing a rapid ferry link

between Mill Cove (Bedford) and downtown Halifax.

Additional links are proposed at Larry Uteck Drive along the Bedford Highway and at Shannon Park, where new development is expected to occur. The travel times are expected to be competitive with other travel modes, provided by fast and electric ferries, making the service an attractive option for residents and visitors.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is an enhanced form of bus service that provides a fast, reliable and convenient way to travel. BRT runs at high frequency during all time periods and typically incorporates extensive transit priority measures (e.g. bus lanes, signal priority) that allow buses to avoid slow downs in the road network due to traffic congestion. The BRT network for Halifax features four interconnecting lines, strategically planned to allow passengers to reach major destinations throughout the region easily, in most cases with one transfer or less.

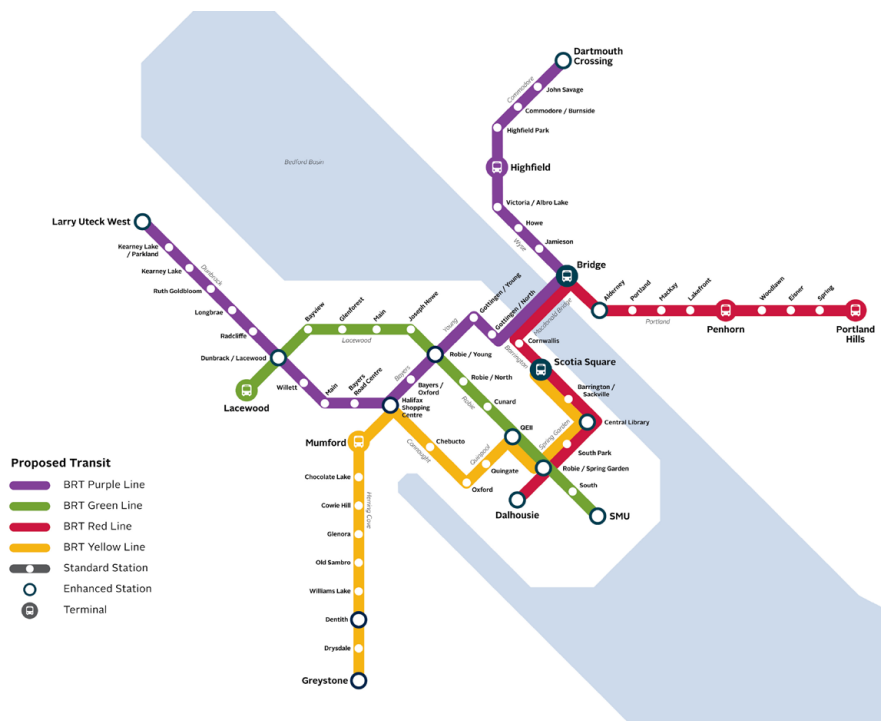
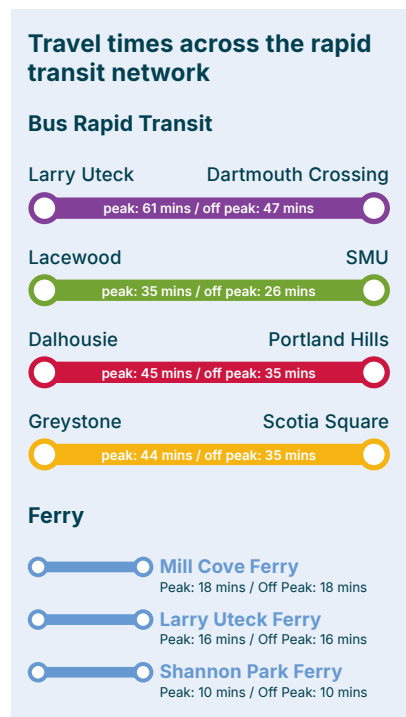


Figure 2. The proposed Rapid Transit network with expected travel times between key destinations (based on the Rapid Transit Strategy).

Aligning Regional Growth and Development. Halifax has experienced unprecedented population growth since 2016, placing additional pressures on the availability of housing throughout the region. There is pressure to increase residential housing supply in the short and medium term. In Halifax, there has been an emphasis on directing this growth within a walkshed of the proposed Rapid Transit Network and connected to high frequency transit corridors.

2026-2030 Strategic Plan. The [2026 - 2030 Strategic Plan](#) lays out the vision, mission and values for Halifax Regional Municipality. This plan connects the municipality's vision to actions and outlines indicators to measure progress in priority areas.

Three Council priorities: **Enabling Prosperity, Strengthening Communities and Moving Better**, and two Administrative Priorities: **Responsible Administration** and **Our People** guide how transit services are planned and designed. Some of the goals that provide specific directions to transit include:

EP-01: Increase regional growth in strategic areas that are well-served by existing or planned services, utilities and infrastructure.

MB-01: Manage traffic congestion and improve the efficiency of the transportation network.

MB-02: Improve the reliability of public transit.

MB-03: Improve access to sustainable transportation modes.

MB-04: Improve safety of transportation modes.

MB-05: Public transit resources and service standards align and grow with the municipality.

MB-06: Improve connectivity between and within communities.

MB-07: Develop and enhance the transportation network and infrastructure assets to meet defined service levels.

RA-03: Reach net-zero municipal operations by 2030.

RA-03: Continuously improve municipal services and programs for quality, efficiency and cost effectiveness while supporting an accessible and user-friendly experience.

The Strategic Plan notes that implementing effective change within the strategic planning period will require significant resources to fulfill most of these goals.

Regional and rural transit. Link Nova Scotia's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) sets a long-term vision for a safe, efficient and sustainable transportation system across Halifax and surrounding communities, to ensure access to healthcare, employment and education. The intent is to strengthen regional connectivity through a broad range of initiatives. Some of the key initiatives outlined in the RTP include inter-municipal transit service, supporting first mile/last mile connections to rapid and inter-municipal transit, on-demand transit to fill gaps in rural and suburban communities and sustainable funding models and partnerships for community transportation services. These actions align with recommendations set forth in the municipality's Strategic Plan.

Halifax's road network already experiences high volumes of traffic throughout the region. Future transportation choices provided to residents will need to be more efficient and provide an attractive and enjoyable experience to be considered viable alternatives to single occupant vehicle trips. Encouraging transit-oriented development (TOD), implementing transit priority corridors and improving customer experience are key to the success of these future programs and plans. Improving the transit network and expanding service models increases mobility options throughout the region ensuring sustainable growth for Halifax's communities.

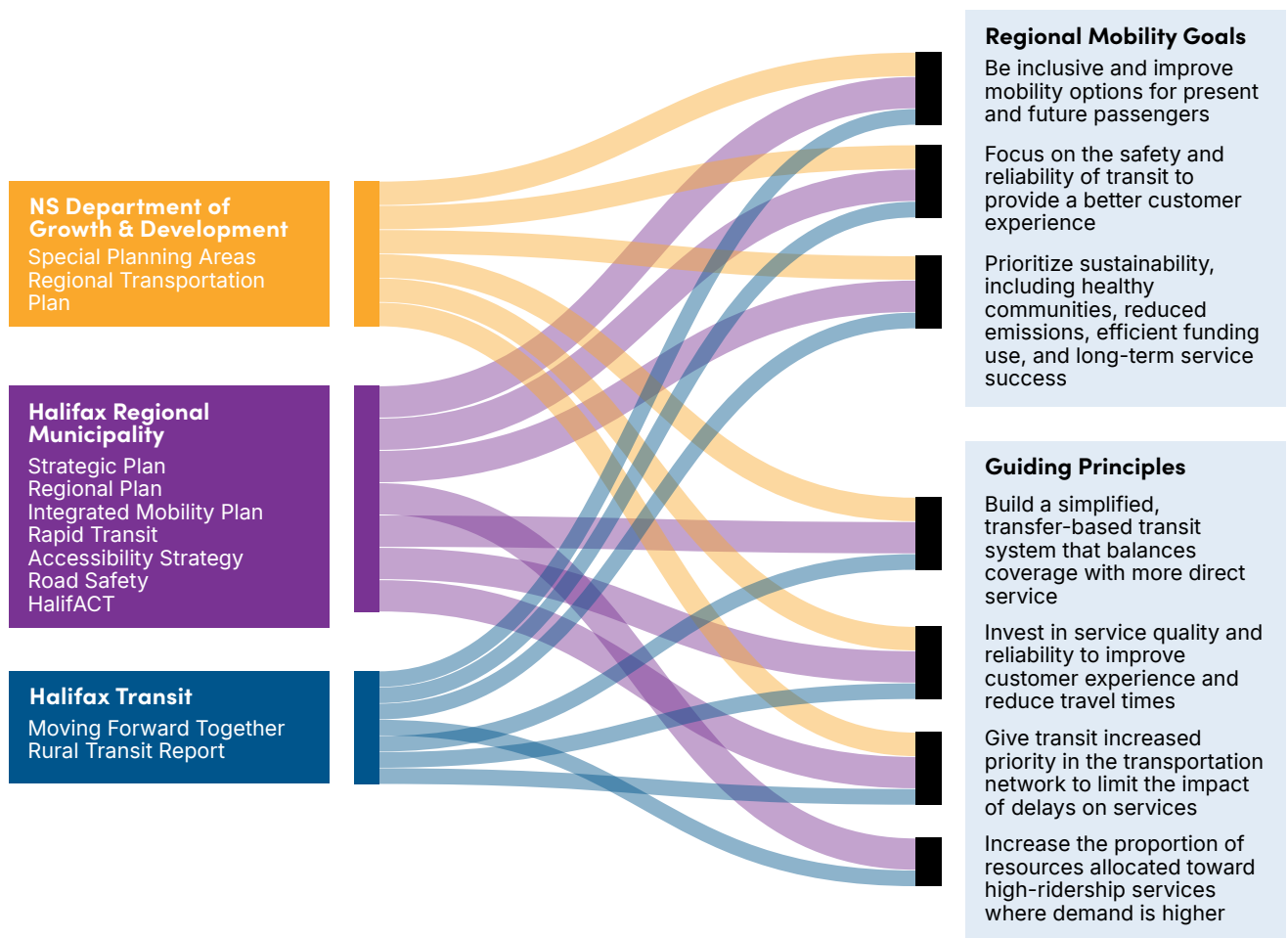


Figure 3. The graphic above details the overall alignment and actions across the plans and programs which inform and guide the Strategic Roadmap.

Planning for Change

To keep pace with Halifax’s growth and evolving mobility needs, Halifax Transit is adopting a more responsive planning approach. Instead of a single long-term plan, the Strategic Roadmap introduces a flexible framework that adapts to change, enables ongoing public engagement and ensures continuous improvement.

This Strategic Roadmap replaces traditional longer-term implementation timeframes with an adaptive model that supports timely adjustments and aligns with regional growth and emerging priorities.

Modules within the Strategic Roadmap include service and implementation plans, reviews of our existing services and the development of detailed standards for key topics. While these modules will be developed on their own timelines, many will overlap and will be progressing at the same time. Many of the Strategic Roadmap’s modules will provide an opportunity for Halifax Transit to engage with and hear from passengers on what matters most to them, resulting in frequent check-ins with the community.

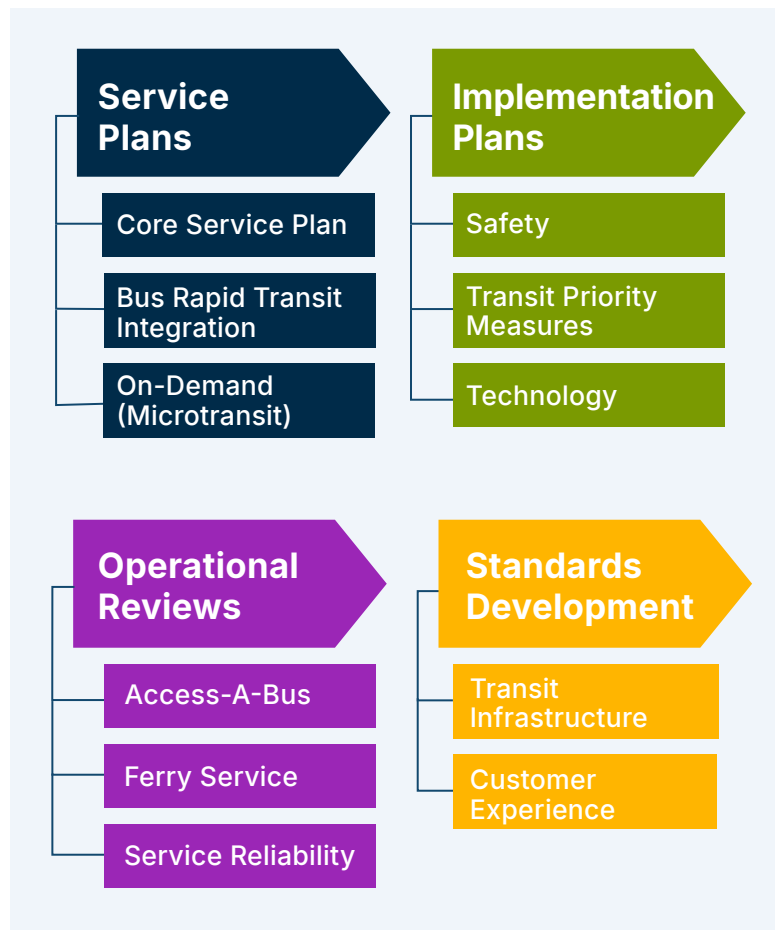
Service Plans

Core Service Plan (2025-2028)

A short-term service plan that outlines route changes and service level adjustments based on analysis of network performance and ridership. The plan proposes route modifications and service level adjustments to improve connectivity, respond to evolving travel demand and anticipate future need. The Core Service Plan will be released in early 2026.

Bus Rapid Transit Integration

A service plan that outlines network and route changes required to align the existing network with the proposed Bus Rapid Transit network.



On-Demand (Microtransit)

Microtransit can offer a transit option in communities or for trips where development patterns or geographic characteristics make conventional fixed route transit service less viable. This plan will identify the role of on-demand transit services in the region and develop a proposal for implementation.



On-Demand Transit (Microtransit): When people think of public transit, they typically imagine what is called fixed-route service: buses, ferries, rail or subway systems where the route and schedule is predetermined.

On-demand transit – also called microtransit – is one way that transit agencies can provide flexible transportation services to areas where there are lower concentrations of people or jobs that still have a demand for transit service. It typically relies on technology to communicate with passengers and transport them as the need arises. Microtransit can be an appropriate service model in areas that are rural, or otherwise have low population densities, because demand is typically unpredictable and the built form (i.e., the physical characteristics and configuration of buildings and their relationship to streets and open spaces) discourages walking the distances that would be necessary for most people to reach conventional bus stops. These factors make microtransit an appealing option for transporting travellers between low density areas and conventional transit hubs.

Operational Reviews

Access-A-Bus Review

A review of accessible transit to optimize service and prepare for growth.

Ferry Service Review

A review of the ferry service's operational structure/model, policies and procedures.

Service Reliability Review

A review that will analyze Halifax Transit's service reliability data and identify challenges, barriers and potential opportunities for improvement.

Implementation Plans

Safety

This plan will outline a Transit Safety Program, including defining goals, resources, and objectives of the program.

Transit Priority Measures

Transit priority corridors on routes with high ridership can result in reduced travel times and more reliable service. This plan will incorporate findings and recommendations from the Service Reliability Review. The Review will include an implementation plan that will aim to optimize conditions in the road network to improve reliability for buses throughout the transit system.

Technology

This plan will review and consider transit technologies for their potential to expand functionality and services.

Standards Development

Transit Infrastructure

A set of guidelines and standards that will include a review of existing bus stops and terminals to consider expansion, upgrades, and renewal, incorporating accessibility and sustainability.

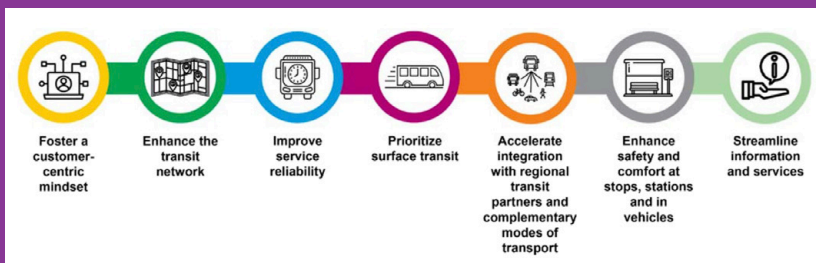


Customer Experience

A set of guidelines, policies and standards that will determine what passengers can expect when planning their transit trips, riding the bus, ferries and Access-A-Bus, and navigating through terminals, stations, and stops across the network. This module touches on both physical standards that improve the customer experience (e.g. where to purchase tickets, where to find maps at stations and stops) and standards for customer expectations (e.g., how passengers can contact Halifax Transit and how quickly they will hear back). The purpose of these standards is to increase the quality and reliability of service and improve passenger trust and confidence in transit.

Customer Experience: A focus on improving customer experience is often a low-cost, high-impact way that transit agencies across North America can ensure transit service embodies values that matter the most to passengers: safety, comfort, equity, and reliability.

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and Vancouver's TransLink both have Customer Experience Action Plans that identify the goals and actions aimed to improve the customer journey from start to end when making trips on transit.

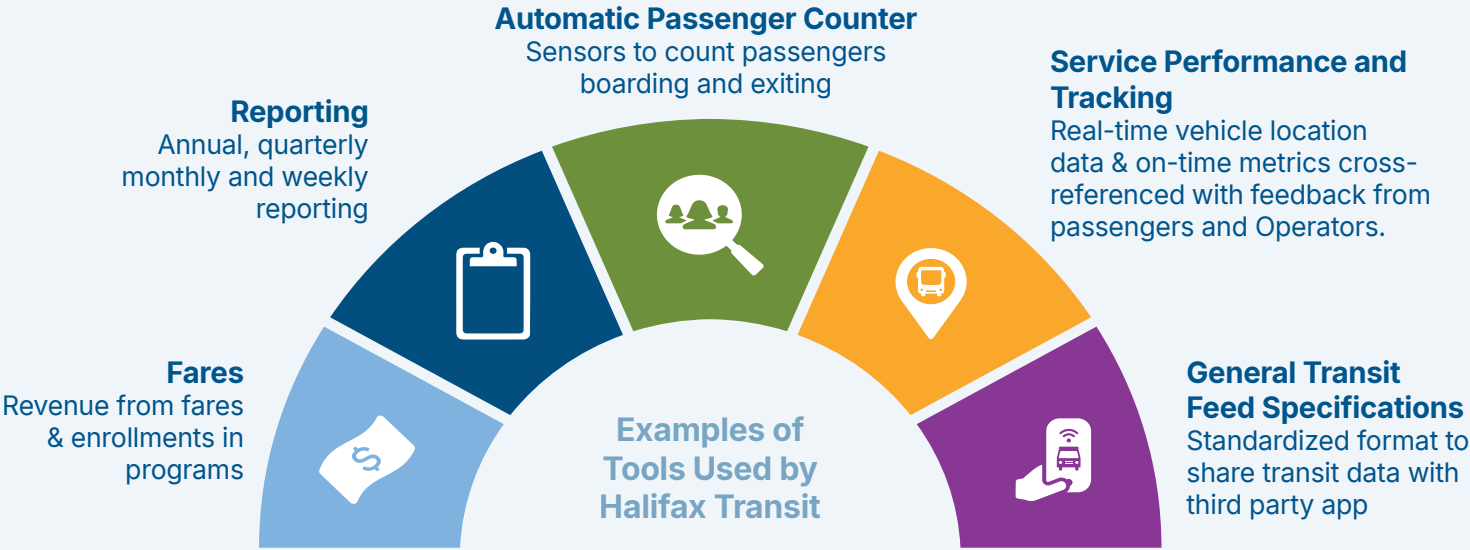


** Graphic from the TTC Customer Experience Action Plan*

Measuring what matters

Halifax Transit is committed to making informed, evidence-based decisions that improve the quality and reliability of transit services. To achieve this, data is continuously collected to support the ongoing analysis of key performance indicators (KPIs) in line with approved standards. These insights guide strategic planning, operational adjustments, program development and community engagement

The graphic below shows the range of tools and methods that Halifax Transit uses to track the performance of the transit network



In the last ten years, Halifax Transit has completely transformed how data is collected and analyzed. For example, there was a transition from performing manual passenger counts to having a continuous flow of data from automated passenger counters on every conventional bus. The Strategic Roadmap is an opportunity to think about how technology can improve how to measure, analyze and respond to ridership trends and needs, and how that information is shared.

Performance data is shared through quarterly and annual reports, which are publicly available to customers, councillors, partners, and residents. This ensures everyone has ongoing access and can review trends or emerging issues.

Did you know?

There's been a recent update to the format of Halifax Transit's quarterly performance reports to make them more user-friendly and easier to understand. These reports are presented to the Transportation Standing Committee and once approved, published on the municipal website for public access.



Data in Action: Route 90 – Larry Uteck

In 2023, Route 90 was one of the busiest local routes, experiencing high ridership and frequent overloads during peak times. By monitoring ridership trends, Halifax Transit identified the best times to add extra trips. Since implementing these changes, overloads on Route 90 have decreased by 73 percent since 2023/2024 and improving the experience for passengers.





FOG SIGNAL SOUNDS IN REDUCED VISIBILITY

DO NOT LEAN OVER GUARDRAIL



Section B

**What issues, needs
and opportunities
are influencing our
transit system**

The region is experiencing steady growth across urban, suburban, and rural communities

Population growth in established communities increases overall density—the number of people living within a defined area. Higher-density areas tend to rely more on transit for daily trips.

Halifax has experienced significant population growth in recent years. Since 2016, the population has increased by approximately 22 percent. Current projections estimate that the population will reach 1 million by 2050, highlighting the need for proactive planning to ensure all residents live within a healthy and connected community.

Residents are settling primarily throughout the regional centre and the suburban areas. Where residents choose to live is driven by many factors that include housing availability and affordability pressures.

Those areas with the highest growth include:

- Halifax Peninsula and downtown Dartmouth
- Dartmouth North
- Clayton Park
- West Bedford
- Lower Sackville

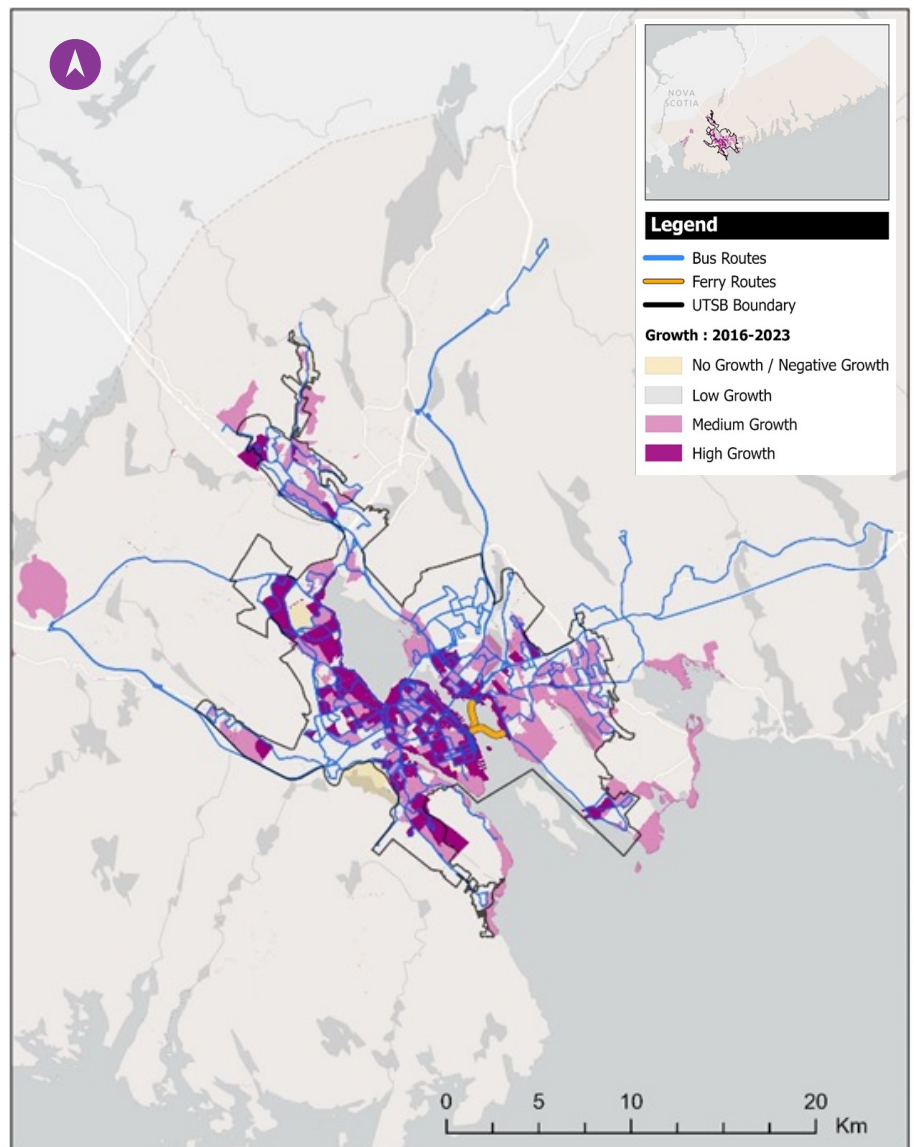


Figure 4. Map of highest growth in population density. Areas with high growth are concentrated within the Urban Transit Service Boundary (UTSB).

Where is future growth expected to occur?

Planning for growth is a key part of how the municipality is thinking about the future of the region: both where investments should be allocated and how to plan for future transit service and expansions.

A variety of different planning approaches have identified opportunities for residential development and re-development in existing communities, including special planning areas and suburban growth opportunity sites. Many of these locations are close to existing transit service and close to the proposed Rapid Transit network and are prioritized for transit-oriented development (TOD).

In complete communities, connectivity elevates the attractiveness of using transit as a convenient option for daily trips. There is increasing pressure to expand the transit network to service new development, including communities that are redeveloping, special planning areas, and areas where growth is being encouraged through municipal policies.

The Halifax Regional Municipality has designated 12 sites as Future Growth Nodes, which are areas where significant residential and commercial development is expected. Some of these include: the Halifax Shopping Centre Lands, the Mic Mac Mall Lands, the Young Street Lands and the Penhorn Lands.

Evolving the transit system to support this growth will require different approaches. Building towards the implementation of the Rapid Transit network and increasing the frequency and reliability of existing services will address the ridership demand from developments within the service area. Investigating the feasibility of alternative service models will strengthen mobility connections to surrounding areas. Strategic investments to grow the transit network will increase regional connectivity.



People are moving into neighbourhoods across the region

High-growth is distributed across the region, with many new developments featuring medium to high densities, resulting in very high growth in ridership demand in those areas.

These developments are often located within established neighborhoods already served by transit. Locations where density has increased (as shown in Figure 6) are closely linked to higher ridership on transit serving these communities.

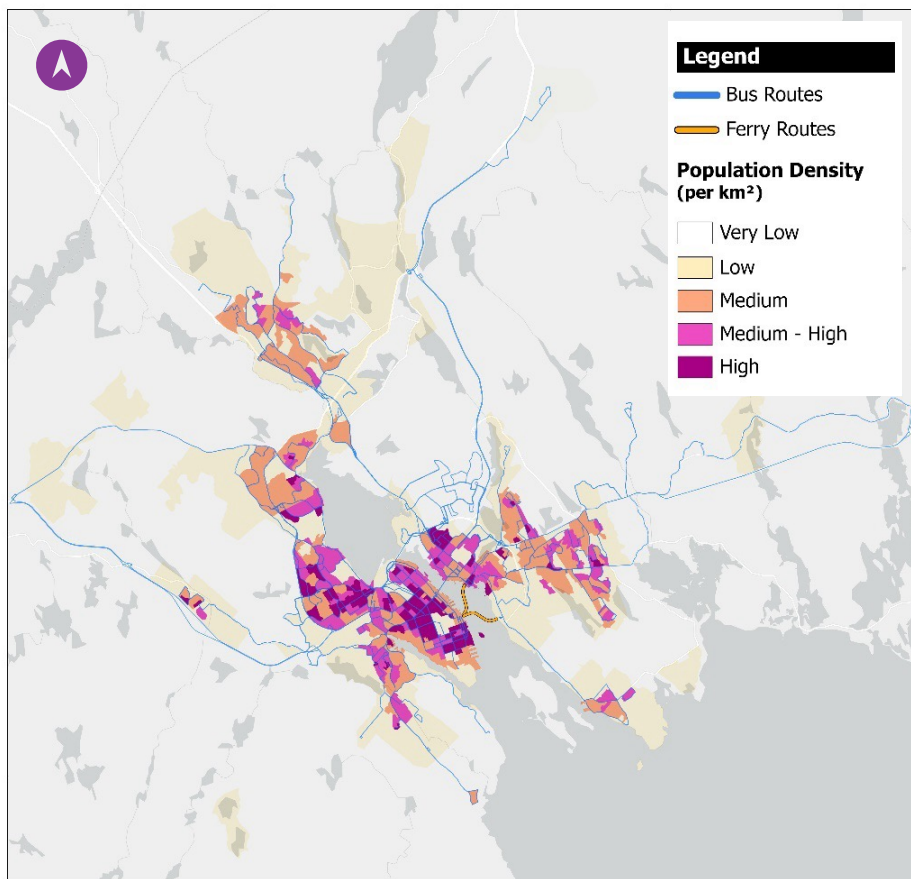


Figure 5. Population Density (Based on Census 2023 estimates). Residents who live in communities with high population density are less likely to use a car and more likely to rely on transit for their daily trips. Transit serving these locations attracts higher ridership and typically requires more frequent service.

Higher ridership can improve operational efficiency, but it also brings challenges. Many buses are becoming overcrowded, and more frequent service is needed to meet growing demand. Continuous monitoring and analysis are essential to allocate resources effectively and maintain service quality and reliability as ridership increases across the network.

At the same time, it's important to recognize that only a portion of residents rely on transit for daily travel. A significant share continues to use private vehicles, which adds strain to the road network. Rising congestion not only impacts travel times but also affects transit reliability, requiring additional resources and strategies to address these pressures.

Affordability and job location are reshaping where passengers are travelling

Ridership is growing across the entire service area – also known as the Urban Transit Service Boundary – with some of the highest increases in places where transit ridership was previously low.

A significant proportion of new residents in suburban communities rely on transit for daily trips. Retail districts and industrial parks have seen substantial increases in boardings, including Bayers Lake (64 percent increase since 2018) and Burnside Industrial Park (73.2 percent increase since 2018). This indicates that more passengers are using transit to commute to work and access shopping and services in these areas.

While ridership in some high-growth communities may remain lower compared to established parts of the network—such as the Halifax peninsula—additional resources are still needed to maintain service quality as demand rises.

West Bedford demonstrates the benefits of strategic investment. A Park & Ride was built on Innovation Drive in 2022, alongside service changes that extended routes and added express options. These improvements resulted in a 492 percent increase in boardings since 2018, showing that major ridership growth is possible when resources are allocated to expanding communities.

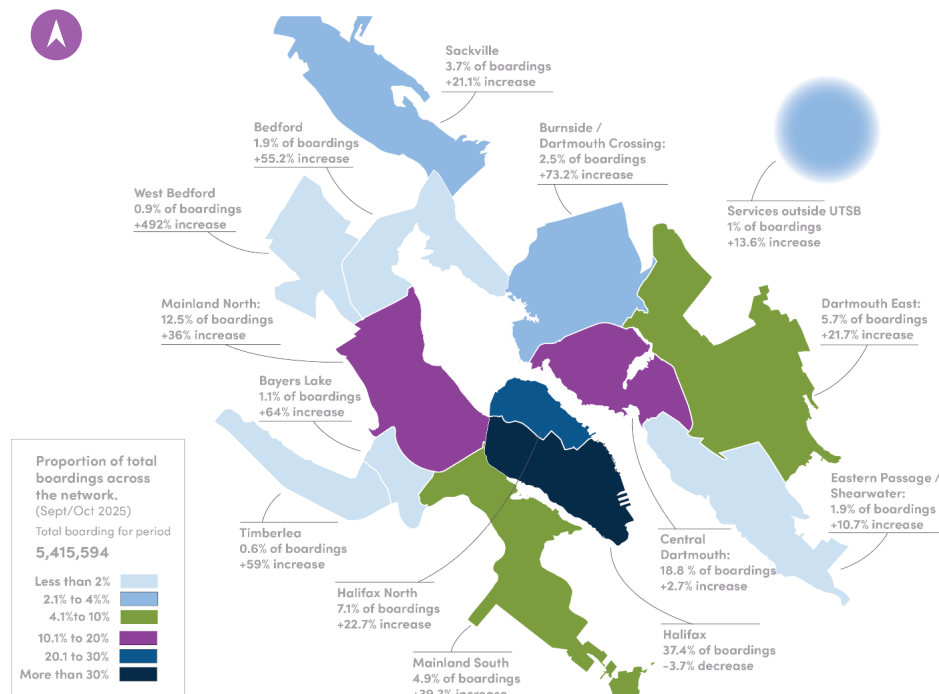


Figure 6. The total boardings (during September/October) have shifted in the years from 2018 to 2025. Trends (percentage increases and decreases) identify the communities more passengers are travelling to and from across this period. The colour range indicates the total boardings within that community compared to the overall number modest decrease in total boardings in 2025 compared to 2018, however the highest proportion of boardings occur in this community. While Burnside/Dartmouth Crossing has an increase of 73.2 percent yet a low proportion (2.5 percent) of total boardings in 2025.

Increased demand for rural transit

In rural communities, there has been increased demand for transit services (boarding on existing routes has increased by 13.6 percent since 2018). Rural communities are home many types of residents including those with limited vehicle access, people with disabilities, seniors, young people and low income residents. For these residents, barriers to mobility that result from limited transit and car dependence may be more pronounced when compared to urban and suburban areas.

Rural areas have also seen increased growth, with residents and businesses being attracted to live and operate there to be closer to nature, have more space and live in a quieter environment. This has resulted in increased demand for travel to and from key destinations in rural areas.

It is difficult to provide conventional transit service to rural communities due to long distances, dispersed land use and settlement patterns and disconnected road networks. Transit service in rural communities faces challenges of low service levels, lack of attractive travel times, high per-rider cost and lack of trip generators. Currently, Halifax Transit cannot allocate additional resources outside of the urban transit service boundary with the exception of regional express services. Rural services in Halifax include limited-service rural commuter routes in and the rural transit service providers that Halifax has partnered with: East Hants & Area Community Rider, MusGo Rider and BayRides. All these services have limits with coverage, service span, last-mile connectivity and service availability.

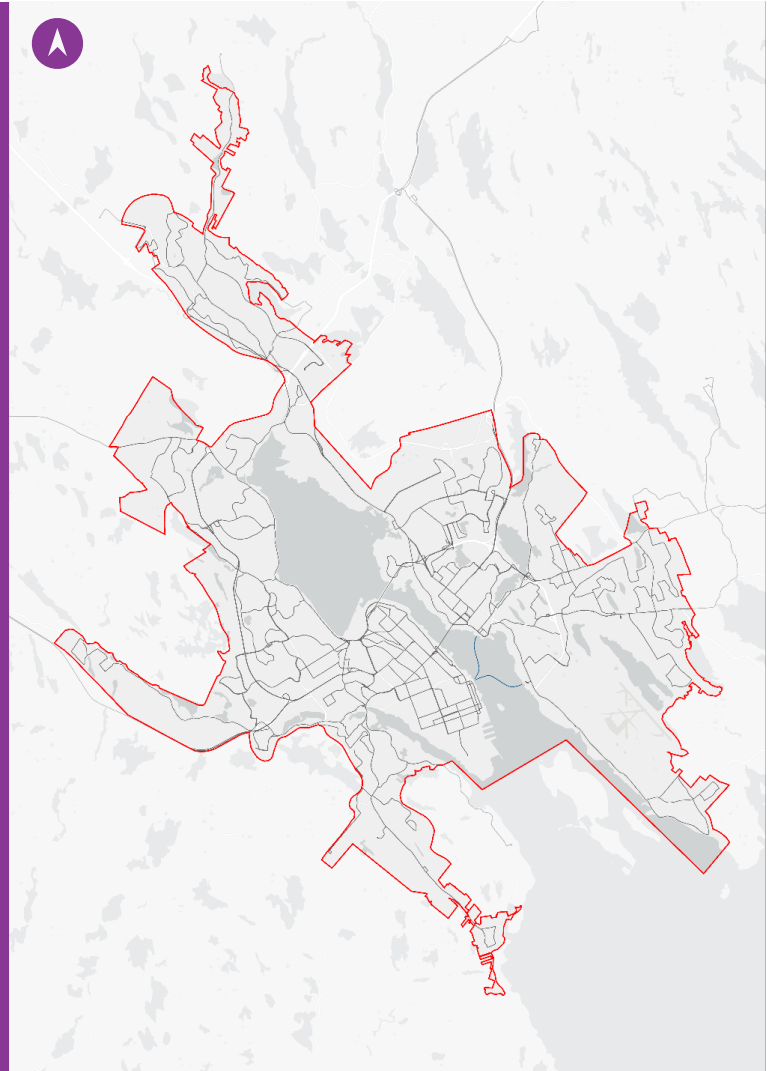


Figure 7. Map of the Urban Transit Service Boundary (UTSB). In 2014 Regional Council endorsed policy focusing all new conventional transit service to occur within this service area.

Growth is outpacing transit capacity across the network

There are many areas where significant growth is happening faster than the pace at which transit service can be increased or expanded. Intentional and strategic transit planning can help growth and planning to happen in coordination with each other to prioritize the areas of highest need.

Engaging Communities on the Strategic Roadmap

Public engagement on the Strategic Roadmap and Core Service Plan from August to October 2025. Halifax Transit connected with over 5,000 passengers at in person events across the network and received over 7,000 written responses across communities in the region.



Intentional and strategic transit planning can help growth and planning to happen in coordination with each other to prioritize the areas of highest need.

- **West Bedford** is a rapidly growing community area with substantial planned development, including two Provincial Special Planning Areas that are expected to deliver approximately 3,800 housing units. Despite its growth trajectory, the community currently has limited transit service, creating challenges for mobility and accessibility.
- **Bayers Lake** is a business park district, a popular shopping destination, and an employment centre. It is also home to services such as the Bayers Lake Community Outpatient Centre and both provincial and federal government offices and services. This area does not have full transit coverage, and key destinations along Hobson's Lake Drive and the southern portion of Chain Lake Drive are not well serviced by transit, with no accessible connections to existing service.
- **Port Wallace** is a growing residential community, with plans to build 4,800 new housing units and expand the existing road network. Construction of the new roads is expected to be complete within the next three years. As part of a new residential development in the Port Wallace area, Avenue du Portage will be extended to connect with Waverley Road.

Ridership returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2023/2024, and growth is still happening across the network

The ridership decreases experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic were generally not as extreme or long lasting for Halifax Transit as other regions across the country. Following several years of rapid recovery, network wide ridership returned to more typical levels aligned with year over year increases in 2023/24. Growth in ridership continues, although these increases vary across service levels and time periods.

Ridership increases are occurring throughout the network, including on high demand routes and in new areas where population growth and recent development has been concentrated.

There are multiple factors that have resulted in ridership growth. Regional population increases have contributed to the increasing role of transit for diverse daily trips (specifically, trips other than commuting to and from work) and an overall shift in travel patterns. Modifications to the transit network, schedule adjustments and service increases have also contributed to ridership growth.

The expansion of programs aimed to reduce barriers to riding transit – including the Affordable Access Transit pass, the EPass Program, and the Student Transit Pass Pilot – have also contributed to ridership growth and a shift in transit travel patterns.



Service adjustments and network changes impact ridership growth

The network redesign implemented as part of the MFTP resulted in restructuring and clarifying service types. Corridor routes were introduced which provided more direct and more frequent service between key destinations. Express routes, which connected suburban communities with downtown employment locations, providing limited stops service in peak commuting periods, were renumbered for clarity and modified to better meet the needs of commuters. Both have seen substantial growth in ridership and demand in recent years.

In accordance with ridership guidelines, all services across the network are routinely analyzed to identify where service increases are warranted to maintain service quality and reliability standards. Tracking route performance and allocating greater resources to high demand services has resulted in higher returns on investment.

Notable ridership increases

After year-over-year increases, Route 3 Crosstown was the most used route in the network in the summer of 2024. The average weekday daily boardings on this route have increased by 12.6 percent between spring 2023 and spring 2025.

As part of the MFTP network redesign changes, the Route 9A/B Herring Cove was restructured and received a 12 percent service increase. The network changes and additional frequency supported a growth in ridership of over 40 percent, rising to an average weekday boardings of 7,165 (spring 2025).

In November 2024, service increases were scheduled on two high demand routes, and spring 2025 figures reflect the high ridership returns from this investment:

- Increased frequency on Route 10 A/B/C Dalhousie resulted in 45 percent increase of average weekday boardings from the previous year.
- Increased frequency on Route 90 Larry Uteck resulted in a 25 percent increase of average weekday boardings from the previous year.

Demand during non-peak periods is increasing

Currently, ridership is increasing across all periods, with the largest relative increases in off-peak periods.

This means that we are gradually seeing less of a distinction between peak and busy off-peak periods throughout the network. Ridership, in terms of passengers per service hour, can be just as high on evenings and weekends, as it is during weekday peak periods.

More service is provided during weekday peak periods, resulting more trips to cater to the higher demand. During non-peak periods there are typically less trips and less frequent service. As a result, an increase in the number of passengers during non-peak periods, particularly on busy routes, can exceed the service capacity. In the case of a bus overloading, the passenger may have a longer wait for the next bus due to the less frequent service during non-peak periods.

Ridership guidelines help track capacities available to meet demand across all routes. Higher passenger per hour numbers typically indicate the need for additional service to ensure that high ridership demand is met. A common approach is often to find the resources needed to increase service on high demand routes by reallocating resources away from routes with low ridership. The increase in ridership across all bus routes throughout the week limits the efficacy of this approach and adds more pressure on the overall capacity within the network.

Performance is measured differently for ferry services. Ridership is still measured as passengers per hour; however, ferries have a much higher capacity for taking passengers each trip, meaning they are unlikely overload under regular conditions.

Monitoring trends

One of the key methods for monitoring ridership trends is by tracking boardings against ridership guidelines over time. Ridership guidelines set thresholds to identify routes which are performing well and those which have lower ridership than expected. Ridership metrics are based on the number of passengers served for each hour a bus provides service. This performance measure enables the ridership on all routes in the network to be compared to each other across all periods.

Varying ridership guidelines across service periods maintains the balance between prioritizing high-demand trips with the need to provide consistent and reliable service throughout the week. In general, routes are expected to have more riders during the weekday morning and afternoon peak periods. Lower guidelines for weekday non-peak and weekends ensure reliable service across all periods.

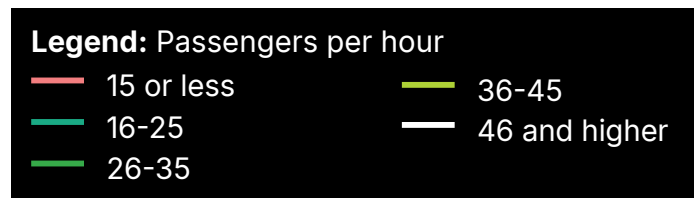
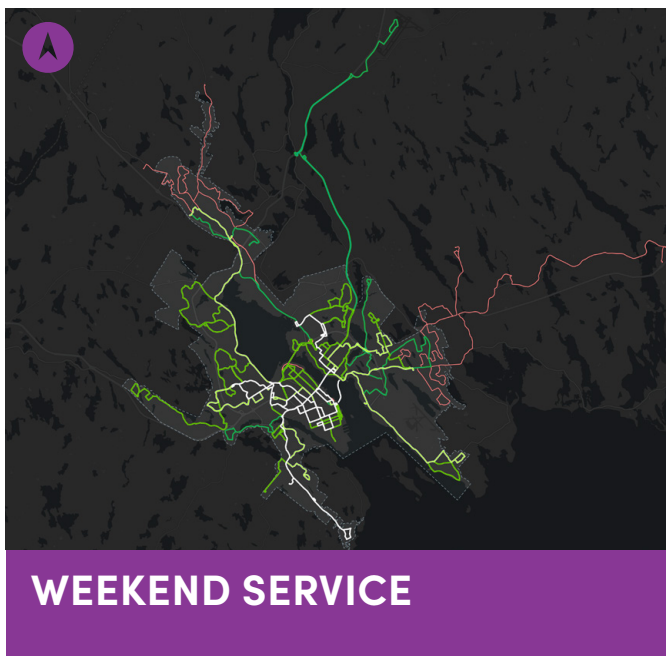
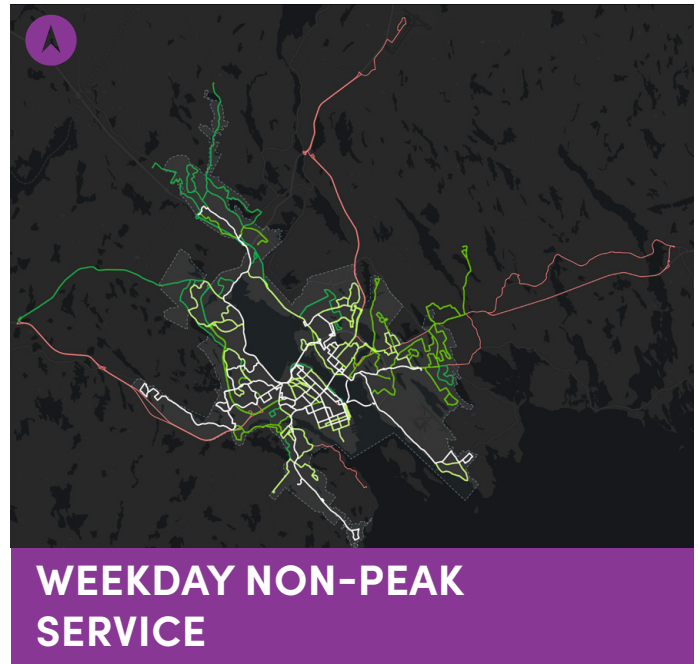
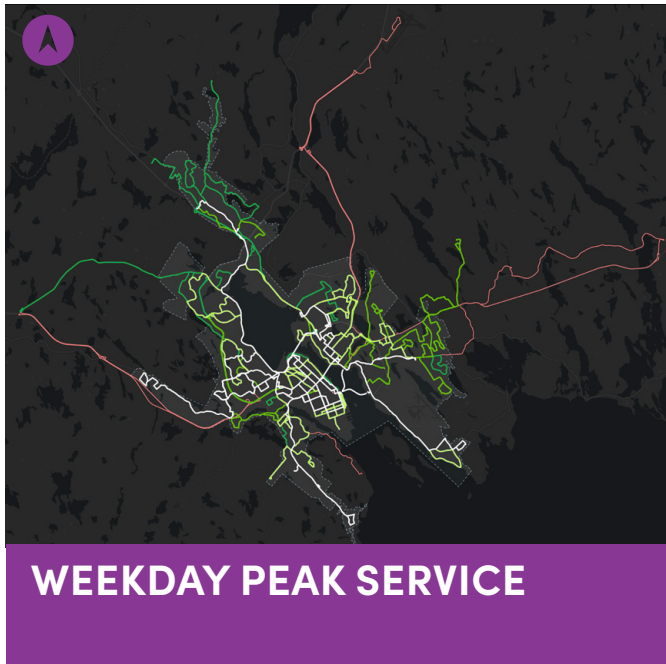


Figure 8. Spatial Analysis: Route performance, as measured by passengers per hour,* of service across the network by different periods. Many routes in the network have high and very high performance across peak and non-peak periods. There are many examples of route performance exceeding the standard ridership guidelines by two times or more. Lower performing routes provide critical coverage to key destinations throughout the region.

*In this analysis, performance for Express and Regional Express routes has been converted to passengers per hour from passengers per trip—the typical performance measure used for these services.

Congestion is impacting transit travel times and the performance of buses

Year-over-year trends for network wide on-time performance prior to 2020/21 ranged between 77 percent to 79 percent, falling just below the overall target of 85 percent. Since 2023, on-time performance has been declining despite additional running time being added to many routes.

The single greatest impact on network on-time performance is the ability for buses to travel unimpeded on their routes within the road network. Busy roads and navigating complex intersections with a high volume of vehicles are the major contributors to service delays. Typically, on-time performance is lower during peak weekday periods. More recently delays due to traffic volumes are being observed across many weekday and weekend periods.

Adjusting route schedules during times where traffic volumes are high results in some improvements to overall on-time performance shortfalls. However, the schedule adjustments implemented in recent years have only slowed this downward trend while also increasing passenger travel time.

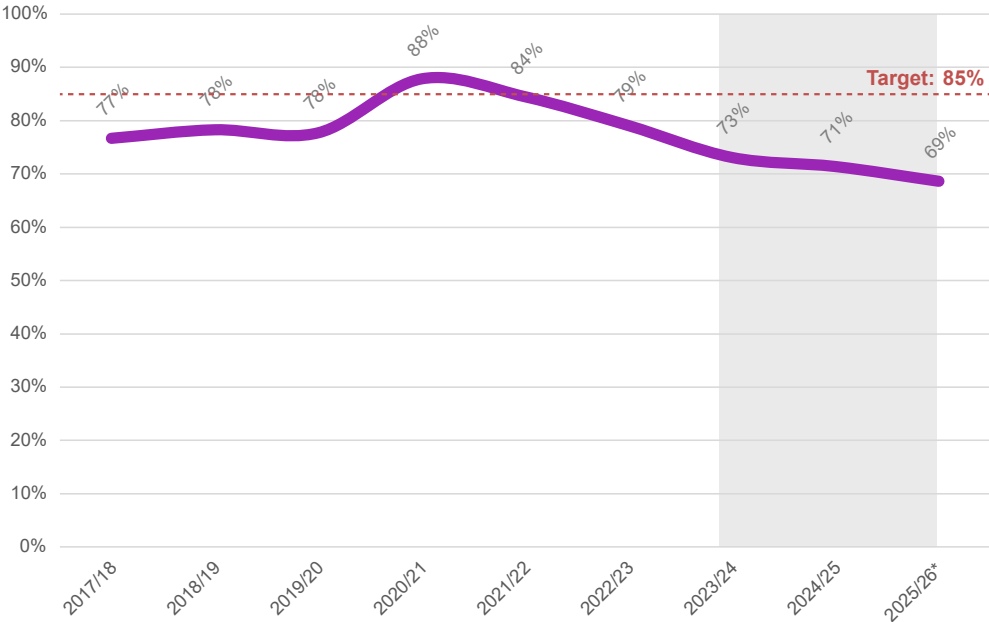


Figure 9. Conventional bus service on-time performance from the 2017/18 fiscal year to present. Performance for 2025/26* is measured counted up to December 2025.

Greater improvements in on-time performance may be achieved through changes to the road network – such as implementing transit priority measures (reserved transit lanes, queue jump lanes, on-street parking restrictions, among other measures) – that allow buses to travel more freely through busy roads and intersections.

Unlike bus routes, ferry routes are rarely impacted by harbour congestion and can run on-time with very few exceptions. Overall, ferry trips experience 100 percent on-time performance. On-time performance for Access-A-Bus services is measured within a 30-minute window, and pick-ups outside that window are recorded as late.



How Halifax Transit measures on-time performance

Halifax Transit uses key stops along each route known as timepoints to determine if buses are on schedule. If a bus arrives at a timepoint less than one minute early, it is considered on-time. Arrivals more than 3 minutes after the scheduled time are considered late.

These results are tracked and reported. Routes that are often late may need schedule or routing adjustments, though this can be challenging due to varying traffic conditions.

Many cities use either 3 minutes or 5 minutes as a standard for lateness. Three minutes better reflects passengers' expectations for on-time service, and highlights challenges sooner, but is harder to meet.



Arrivals more than 3 minutes after the scheduled time are considered late.

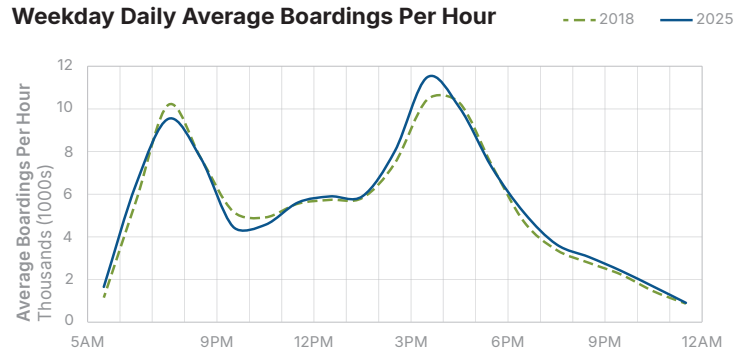
Halifax’s peak travel periods are expanding, with passengers traveling earlier in the morning, earlier in the afternoons and later in the evenings

Comparing the daily average boardings on **conventional bus services** by hour between 2018 and 2024 indicates a trend toward earlier commuting hours. While average weekday boardings are slightly higher in 2025 than 2018 (2.6 percent increase), earlier and later peak periods are seeing increases in the number of boardings, while traditionally busier periods are more stable or experiencing a slight decrease in boardings.

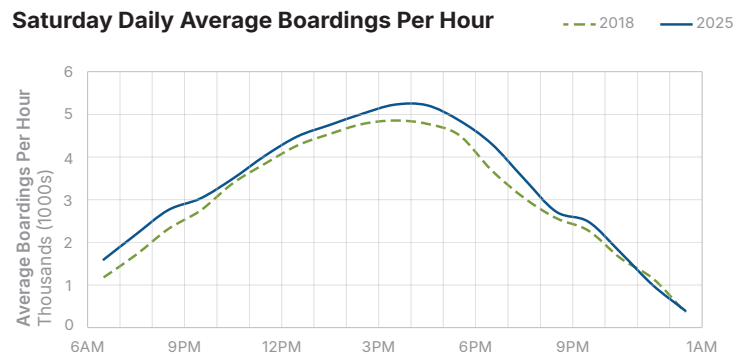
Weekday Boardings Trends:

- Early morning increases:** The most significant increase occurred between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., with ridership rising by 44 percent. The next highest increase of 14 percent was observed between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- Afternoon and evening increases:** Ridership between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. grew by 10 percent, while evening ridership increased 9.4 percent to an average of 16,000 boardings and alightings between 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.
- Mid-morning decline:** While still busy, average boardings between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. from 2018 to 2024 decreased by 10 percent.

Weekday Daily Average Boardings Per Hour



Saturday Daily Average Boardings Per Hour



Sunday Daily Average Boardings Per Hour

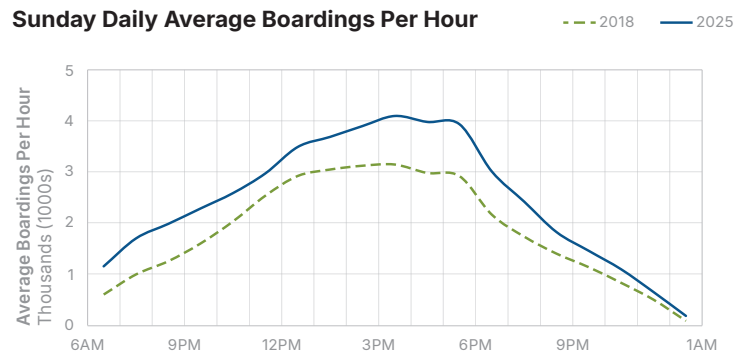


Figure 10. Average boardings per hour for weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Ridership is increasing across most weekdays

The busiest days have shifted with a modest overall increase between 2018 and 2025. Mondays are more popular than in previous years with a 104,000 daily average boardings.

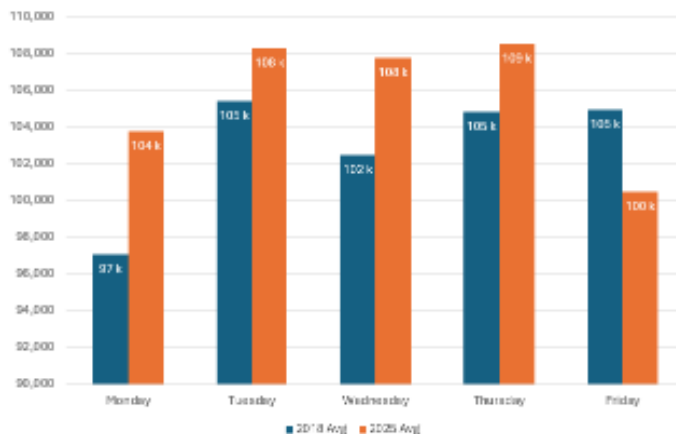


Figure 11. Average daily boardings for each weekday, 2018/2025 comparison.

This change to boardings on Monday represents an increase of approximately 7,000 boardings on average when compared to 2018. Fridays are less busy than in previous years.

While these increases may be modest in relation to the overall number of boardings, the impact can be seen in the degree of overloads which occur on those busier days. Based on 2018 reported overloads, trips on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays have a three-fold increase of overload incidents. This indicates the ridership increases are occurring on services already nearing capacity.

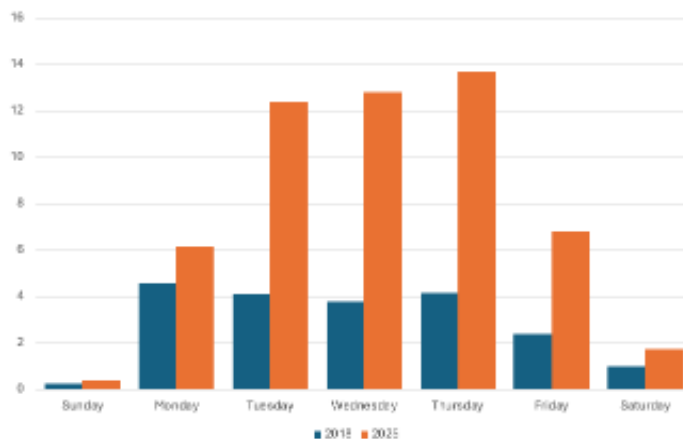


Figure 12. Average daily overloads, 2018/2025 comparison.

Ferry ridership continues to increase on both weekdays and weekends

Since 2018 ferry ridership has increased across all periods with the highest increases on weekends.

Ridership on Saturdays have increased by 37 percent and is now comparable with ridership on weekday services. Ridership on Sundays has increased by 22 percent but remains lower than other periods. This trend is significant in that the only ferry running on weekends is the Alderney to Halifax service. The Woodside ferry service only operates on weekdays, and many passengers reach the ferry by car, parking on-site at the Park & Ride facility. Demand for use of the Woodside Park & Ride exceeds capacity (500 spaces), which has impacted on ridership growth on this service. Efforts to attract customers to the ferry via conventional bus service have seen limited success despite several routing and service delivery models being implemented in the past.

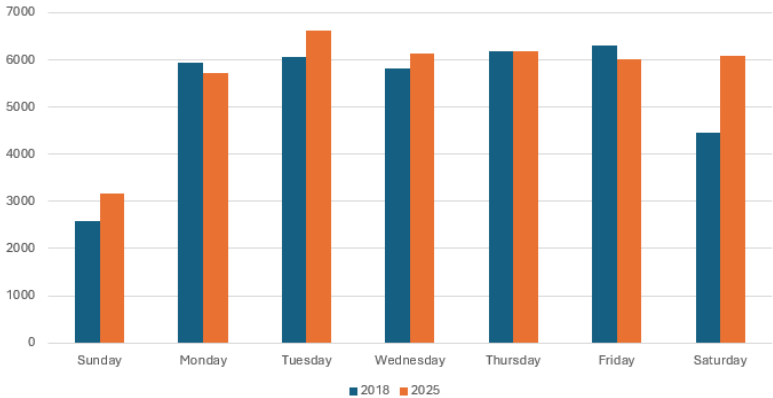


Figure 13. Average daily boarding on ferry services, 2018/2025

Cancelled ferry trips

Ferry service cancellations, or Loss of Service (LOS), are most often caused by removing a vessel from service for maintenance or due to staff availability. Several periods have seen an increase in trip cancellations impacts on service reliability, which is typically very high due (around 100% percent). Improvements have been made to reduce the number of trip cancellations in the past two years. A Ferry Service Review is currently underway.

	Scheduled trips	Missed trips	LOS
2022/23	59440	1699	2.9%
2023/24	59304	2686	4.5%
2024/25	59374	605	1.0%
2025/26	39558	118	0.3%

Table 1. Ferry Loss of Service April 2021 - November

Barriers to Access: Walkability, Car Dependence, and Income Disparities



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One in six adults worldwide will experience a disability or impairment in their lifetime. In Nova Scotia, approximately 37.9 percent of people over the age of 15 reported having one or more disabilities.

.....

Halifax Transit is committed to creating a network that enables all passengers to participate in public life—whether commuting, visiting loved ones, accessing services or running errands. Below are examples of recent improvements.

Fleet: All buses and ferry vessels are considered accessible, as they can accommodate mobility devices, and for buses, the ramp can be lower to allow for ease of access. Other accessibility features exist for certain vehicle types, such as lifts for mobility devices on Access-A-Bus vehicles, and seating designated to service animals on electric buses.

Technology: A range of technologies exists that have a positive impact on passengers, including stop announcements on conventional buses that assist with orientation and confidence in reaching your destination, and information systems that provide trip planning and real time information. Digital fare payment processes were implemented in 2024 via the HFXGO Transit Passes app, which has simplified the way customers can pay for their tickets. Expanded functionality will soon mean that passengers can use personal banking credentials to buy their fares, making the process more convenient and user friendly.

Transit infrastructure: Accessibility features are integrated across terminals and bus stops, including elevators, information boards, and announcements. Upgrading bus stops to meet standards is a priority. Of 2386 stops, 95 percent allow ramps to be deployed, and 75 percent are fully accessible by sidewalk. Enhancements like braille signage and tactile indicators are being added to assist passengers with visual disabilities.

Programs: Halifax Transit offers programs to reduce barriers and transportation costs, including:

- Affordable Access Transit Pass Program
- SmartTrip Program
- Discounted Transit Fares Programs, such as the Non-profit Organizations and Registered Charities Transit Fares Program
- Student Pass Pilot Program
- EPass Program

For more information on these programs visit the [Transit Programs and Services](#) webpage.

Access-A-Bus services reduce barriers to accessing transit

Access-A-Bus is a shared ride, door-to-door, transit service for passengers who are unable to use the conventional transit system due to physical or cognitive disabilities.



Access-A-Bus supports travel to work, school, medical appointments and passengers' social, personal, and recreational activities.

Access-A-Bus provides riders with individual trips. This means that providing Access-A-Bus trips requires greater resources per passenger when compared to conventional transit services. It also means that capacity has much greater impact on service quality and reliability. The number of resources available to operate Access-A-Bus services has slightly increased between 2018 and 2025. This includes the size of the Access-A-Bus fleet growing by 6 vehicles to a total of 47 and the addition of more operators, which

has resulted in a modest increase in service provided to passengers.

While the resources available to Access-A-Bus have increased slightly over the last 7 years, an increase in travel times while serving clients has reduced the capacity to provide service to those who need it. Evidence of this can be seen in the reduction in the number of trips performed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, two of the busiest days within the road network.

A significant trend in the reservation process is impacting the ability to meet Grade of Service Performance (GOS) standards. Many calls to make trip appointments occur each morning when reservation lines open. This volume makes it hard to answer each call within the time set by our quality standards and increases barriers for passengers to access service.

As part of the Strategic Roadmap, an Accessibility Review has been initiated to evaluate, enhance and right-size how the municipality operates Access-A-Bus.

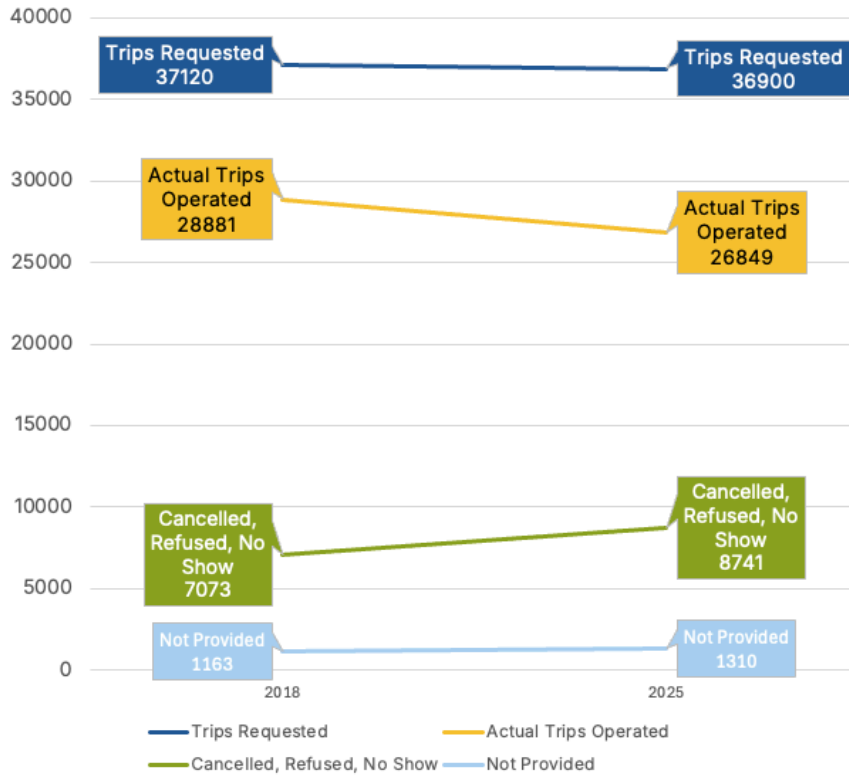


Figure 14. Access-A-Bus trip details, demonstrating number of trips fulfilled vs total number of requested trips, 2018/2025.

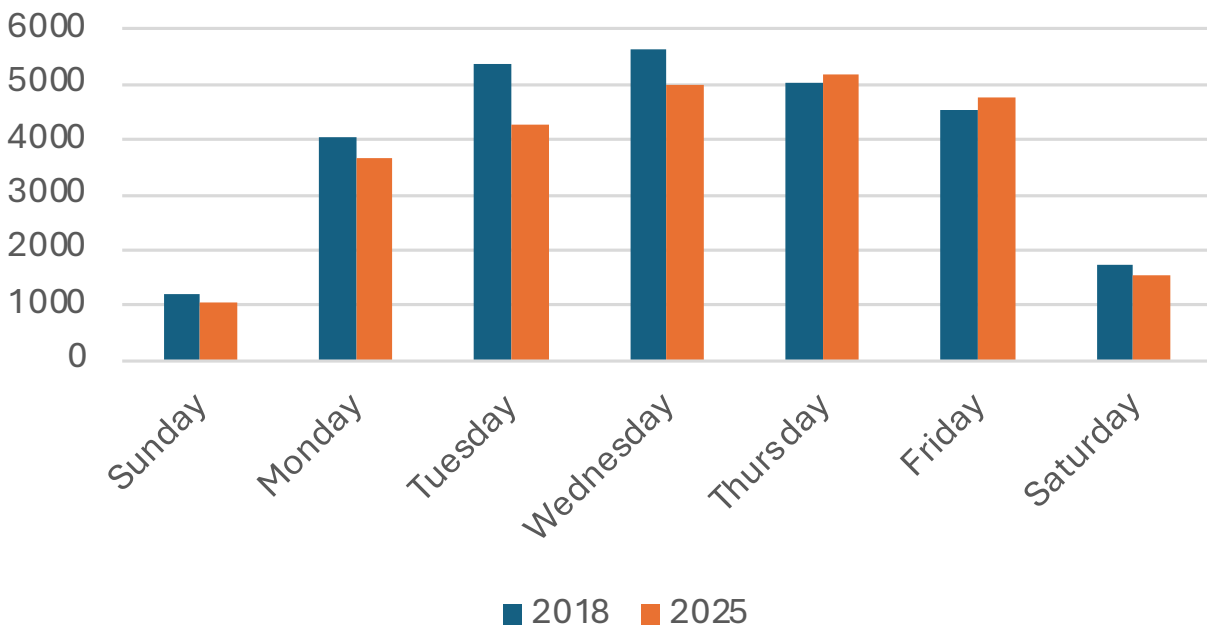


Figure 15. Total number of Access-A-Bus trips provided in September & October, 2018/2025 comparison.

Some neighbourhoods are more likely than others to rely on transit to get around

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Certain demographic groups tend to rely more on transit for their daily trips.

.....

These groups include newcomers, those unable to drive, people without access to a car and low-income household. Identifying neighbourhoods where these demographics are concentrated indicates where transit is more likely to be relied upon by residents for their daily trips.

Adopting an equity lens within transit planning includes paying attention to those communities within the service area which are more likely to need or rely on transit for daily trips and commuting for work. Given the reliance on transit service, there is a likelihood that improvements to these communities will also bring about ridership increases.

An equity approach to transit planning includes ensuring that transit options are adapted to key communities in need.



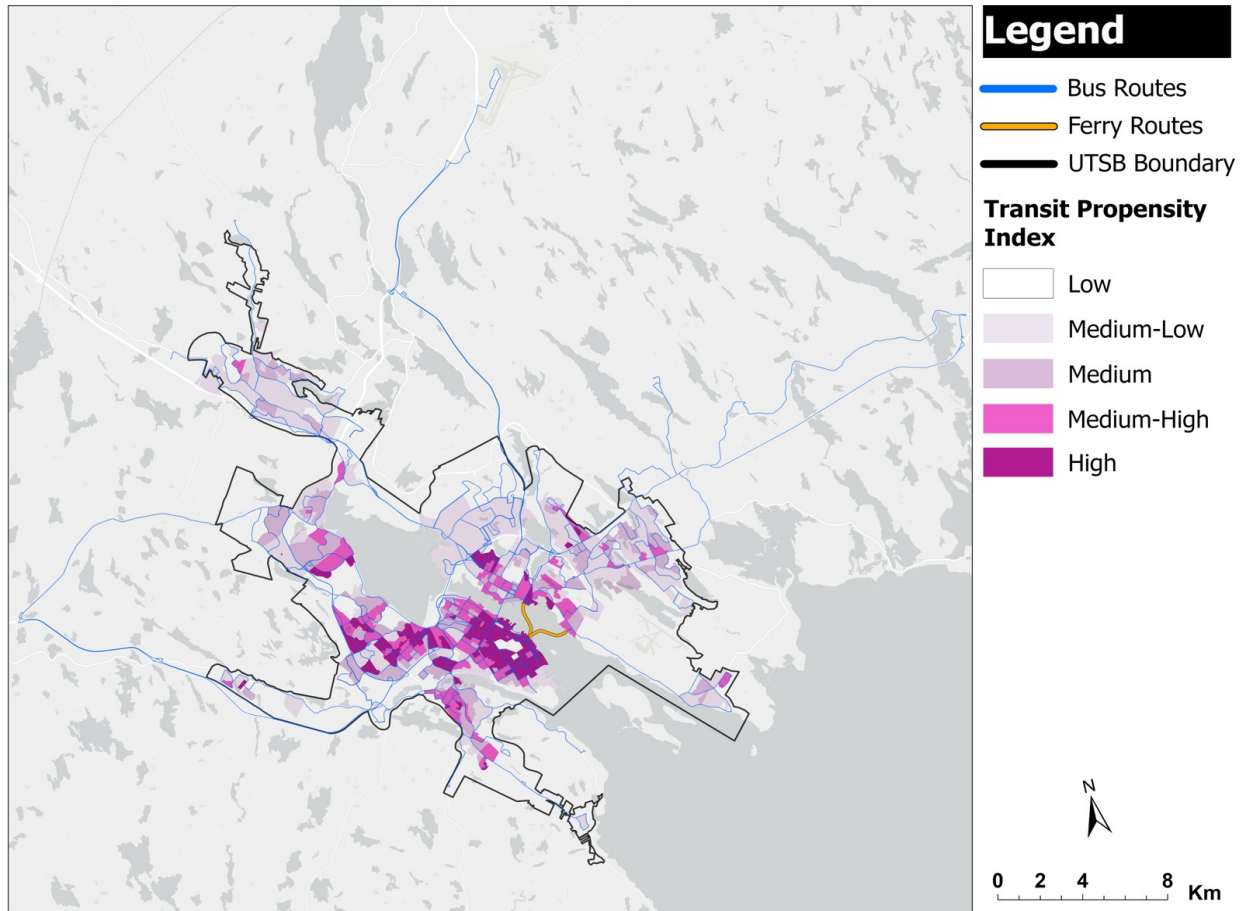


Figure 16. Transit propensity index map, indicating how likely to use transit a population is in an area. Transit propensity is derived from factors including population density, car ownership, income, age, and newcomer status.

What is transit propensity?

Transit propensity is a measure of how likely residents are to use public transit. Someone's likelihood to need to use transit is often dependent on multiple factors, including where they live, how walkable their community is, where they work, their age, gender, ethnicity and their income.

Measuring transit propensity is one way that we can identify where to allocate services to make sure residents who are most likely to use transit have reliable access to jobs, services, and leisure.

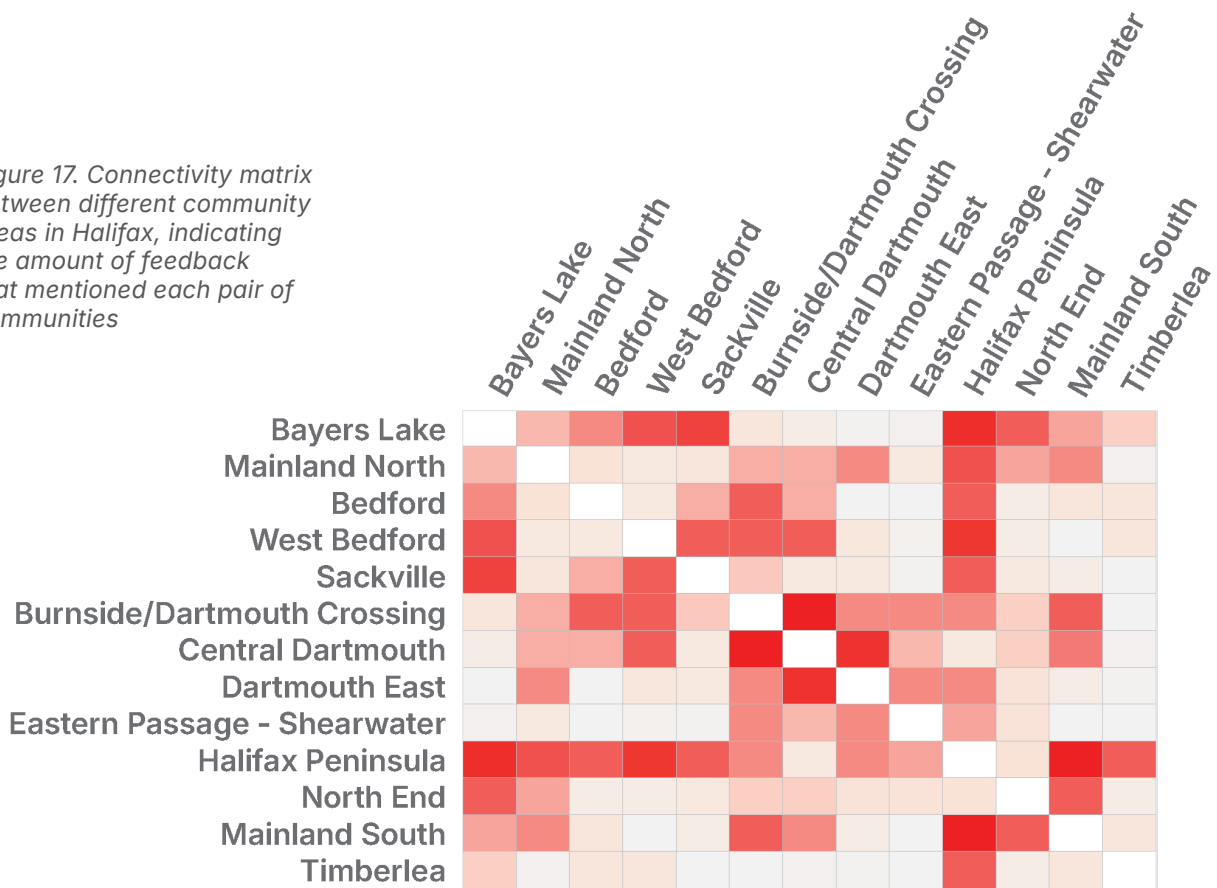
Transit connects communities differently across the Halifax region

In engaging residents and passengers on the Strategic Roadmap, we heard that there are an increasing number of passengers that are using transit to travel across the network in new ways. These trips can often result in a higher likelihood of transferring to another bus route, longer wait times and longer overall travel times.

The connectivity matrix below represents the frequency of feedback concerns for passengers travelling between community areas. Included within the range of feedback captured by the matrix are the following concerns:

- travel times,
- issues with the number of transfers needed and
- the desire for more direct and reliable services between two locations.

Figure 17. Connectivity matrix between different community areas in Halifax, indicating the amount of feedback that mentioned each pair of communities



Volume of comments/concerns to travel via transit between communities



Low

High

Evolving our approach to adaptive service planning

The need to adjust transit services in response to changing travel patterns and growth in our region is more critical now than it has ever been. When allocating resources, it is important to establish the right balance between maintaining consistent and reliable coverage across the network while allocating resources to maintain quality standards on high demand services. Strategic investments in growth also need to occur, particularly in support of regional mobility goals and incentivizing more passengers to make the switch from single-occupancy vehicles to riding transit.

Ongoing efforts to evolve our approach to service planning and operations will occur in the following ways:

Ongoing review of service and delivery models: Revising existing models can increase efficiencies and make the transit system adaptive to change. Opportunities to implement new services models may expand the transit network's coverage and improve passenger experience.

Optimization of transit service planning and delivery: Regular adjustments to routes and frequency of trips are needed to adapt to growth in demand without impacting the consistency of routes elsewhere in the system.

Data-Driven Decision Making: Leveraging demographic and ridership data is critical when allocating resources across the network, to prioritize improvements and to anticipate future needs.

Infrastructure Investment: Enhancing transit facilities and transit priority within the road network is needed to support sustainable growth and reduce travel times for transit users.

What do the next three years look like?

The *Strategic Roadmap* sets the stage for the planning, development and implementation of multiple plans, reviews and a new, responsive and adaptable approach to planning for the future transit network.

The work ahead of us will aim to deliver on a transit system that meets both current and future rider needs, makes transit more a reliable and attractive alternative to driving a car and helps build prosperous, healthy and connected communities.

The first part of the *Strategic Roadmap* that will be released in 2026 is the *Core Service Plan*. The *Core Service Plan* will outline the changes to existing routes to improve the reliability and efficiency of the network, while responding to what we heard from passengers throughout engagement sessions and surveys in 2025.

Appendix: Engaging on the Strategic Roadmap and Core Service Plan 2025-27

Preparing the Strategic Roadmap and Core Service Plan involved sharing the context and rationale for a more agile planning approach – such as explaining why we're shifting from a five-year to three-year model – and involved seeking feedback on the service adjustments that were part of the Core Service Plan.

Halifax Transit initiated a comprehensive engagement program that began in the spring of 2025 and ended in October 2025. Individual meetings were held with Councillors to kick off the engagement and integrate initial community perspectives into the material that was brought to residents for engagement. Public input was gathered through an online survey, pop-up sessions at major terminals, bus engagement trips and targeted consultations with residents, businesses, students and special interest groups. Internal stakeholders, including Operators and leadership teams, gave feedback by participating at in-person events (lobby events and focus groups), by email and/or via the survey prepared for Operators and

transit staff, which was available in digital format on-line and on paper.

Most responses were provided in the digital survey, with a small number (eight) of paper surveys completed. Respondents tended to be reliant on transit services with 67 percent travelling on the bus, ferry or Access-A-Bus more than three days each week. Twenty-eight percent of passengers who responded to the survey travel on transit services most days or every day of the week. The largest numbers of respondents fell within the 25-54 age group (65 percent) and were fully employed (80 percent). The remainder include older (seven percent) and younger (14 percent) age groups, students (16 percent) and retired respondents (8 percent). An expanded "What We Heard Report" includes a breakdown of responses and demographic information.

The partner engagement events had attendees from associations, groups and organizations representing the following sectors:

- Business development associations
- Accessibility and inclusion support providers and advocacy groups
- Local universities and post-secondary colleges
- Healthcare
- Immigration Support Services
- Province of Nova Scotia
- Transit and transportation advocacy groups

A **Core Service Plan** online project page shared access to the digital survey and documentation which provided an overview of the planning context along with fact sheets for each of the focus areas. For more information go to: [Engagehalifax.ca/core-service-plan](https://engagehalifax.ca/core-service-plan)

Who did we engage?



We received feedback from passengers and residents across the Halifax Region.

We had strong responses across all engagement channels from residents who live throughout the Halifax region. The project website received over 9,000 unique visits throughout the engagement period. In-person and partner engagement events allowed us to connect with 6,814 people across the transit network. Pop-up events were organized at terminals, Park & Ride facilities and on bus and ferry services during high ridership periods.

Transit staff were present to answer questions about the plan and encourage passengers to provide feedback directly or in the survey. The survey received a total of 5,673 responses with answers to 39 close-ended questions. Over 7,400 comments were provided in response to open-ended questions.

Most feedback came from communities within the transit service area, with a lower number of responses from rural areas. The highest proportion of feedback was provided by those living in

Central Dartmouth, Clayton Park and on the Halifax peninsula. The communities of Dartmouth East, Halifax North and Spryfield also provided a high proportion of the overall feedback. The remaining responses were split between Bayers Lake, Bedford/West Bedford, Burnside and Dartmouth Crossing, Eastern Passage, Sackville, Tantallon and Bechville.

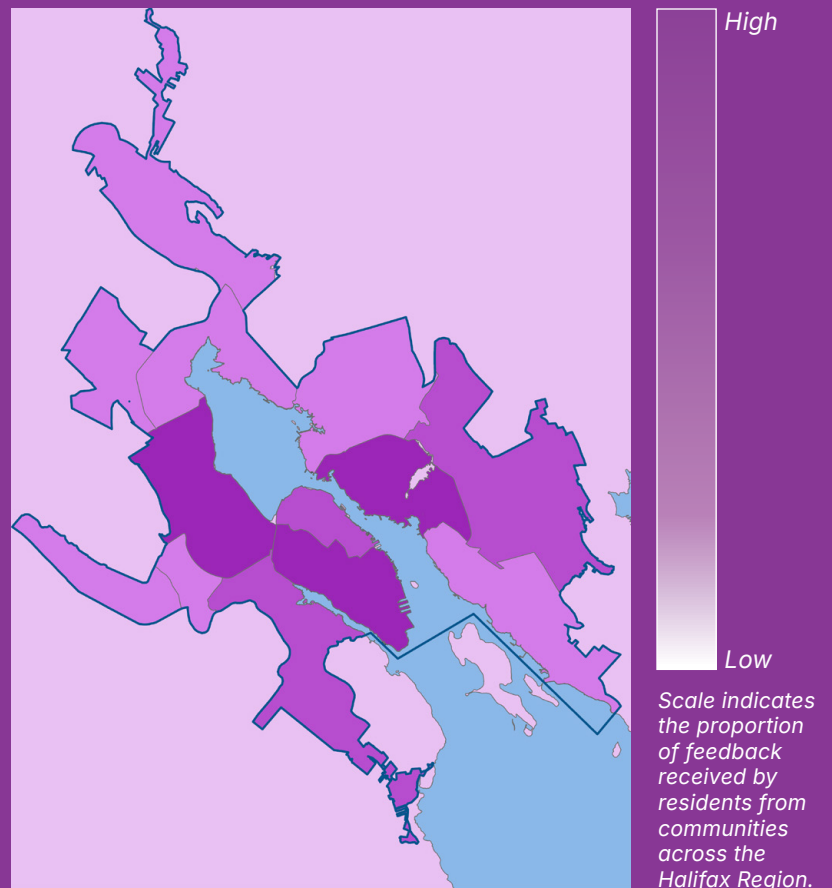


Figure 18. Map of the proportion of feedback received during engagement.

Engagement approach

We asked residents to provide us with feedback on how they felt about the transit network in Halifax and identify the topics of highest interest to them. This was done to ensure that our transit system evolves with the region’s growth and keeps up with the needs of our diverse communities.

Our engagement process introduced passengers to the **Strategic Roadmap**, an ongoing strategic planning process that involves:

- Analyzing the factors that impact service reliability.
- Identifying opportunities for On-Demand / Microtransit services in the region.
- Planning for the integration of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) within the current network.
- Developing standards to guide upgrades and the expansion of transit infrastructure.
- Developing customer experience standards.
- Reviews of accessibility and of ferry services.
- We also asked residents about changes they would like to see that fall under the scope of the Core Service Plan 2025-27.

The **Core Service Plan 2025-27** – the first module of the Roadmap – outlines efficient and targeted improvements to our transit routes, ensuring we meet the immediate needs of passengers while responding to the demand seen across the transit system.

Sections	Response numbers
Feedback on specific routes	
Requests for more frequency	3,028
Other feedback	3,027
Focus areas	
Bayers Lake	264
West Bedford	163
Halifax	458
Dartmouth & Port Wallace	202
Other topic areas	
Route 93 Bedford highway	84
Regional Express Route 330 Tantallon-Sheldrake Lake	136
Feedback on Strategic Roadmap priorities and on transit in the region	1,678
Overall total	7226

Table 2. Survey response rates across the different topic areas which outlined proposals tied to the Strategic Roadmap and Core Service Plan 2025-27.

Major themes

We heard that service reliability followed by planning for a rapid transit network and transit infrastructure were high priorities for passengers and residents.

Passengers and residents were asked to rank which modules within the Strategic Roadmap were the highest priority for them. Often the feedback we received was tied to specific mobility needs or issues faced when riding on, or relying on, transit for their daily trips. We have identified the following significant themes which arose during engagement.

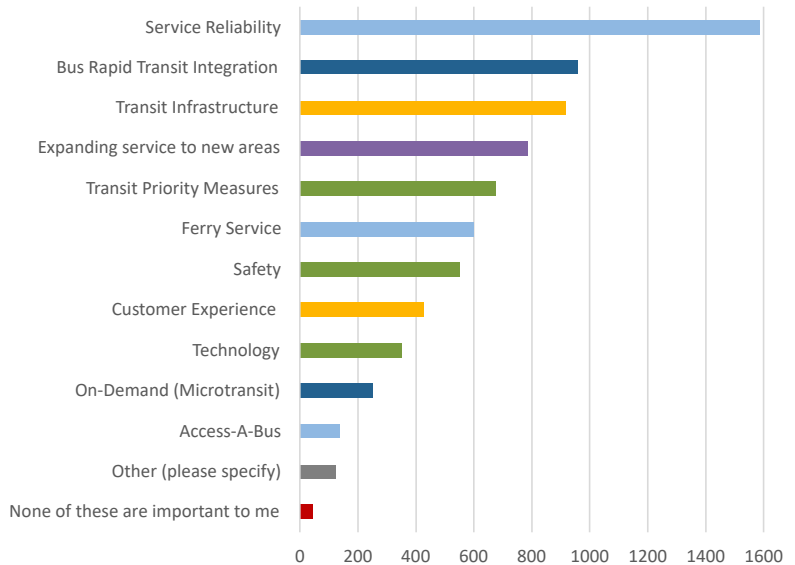


Figure 18. Strategic Roadmap modules ranked in order of importance based on responses shared in the public survey.

Improve existing service

Requests for more buses and increases in the frequency of service garnered the largest number of mentions. This strong demand for more frequent service and extended spans – almost one in four responses (23 percent) – is tied to multiple factors. These include crowded trips in busy periods, shifting travel patterns and need for easier and timely transfers across routes. The second most frequently mentioned topic was related to the lack of reliability and delays in bus service (21 percent).

Actions

Some of the requests and feedback received about existing service are considered by the Core Service Plan, including:

- Increasing service frequency and span.
- Addressing service reliability issues that can be mitigated through scheduling changes.
- Addressing requests for modifications to existing routes or new routes with the transit service area.

There are some service reliability requests and issues that cannot be considered in the Core Service Plan. These may be studied or found to be in the scope of the Service Reliability Review, which is discussed below.

Improve the reliability of transit

Service reliability was the highest priority area for most respondents. We received feedback on the ways scheduling, service delays, and cancellations impact travel times and on the ability to efficiently transfer between routes. Travel time concerns were often tied to whether passengers can reasonably use transit to reach their destination or if they need to use an alternative mode. Problems with reliability often resulted in passengers needing to leave “much earlier to arrive on time” at their destination, or in trips that end up “making their workday longer”. Delays can lead to ‘bunched’ services with buses all arriving at the same time, leaving an extended period where there is no service or where a rider has a harder time making transfers. Issues with reliability are also connected to real-time updates on route schedules, delays and cancellations that leave passengers uncertain of the best ways to navigate the network.

A significant number of responses (over 125 comments) spoke to the need for increased priority for transit within the road network to reduce issues with on-time performance. Suggestions included sharing data to advocate for increasing the number of transit priority measures across the network and seeking opportunities for short-term improvements alongside larger (longer-term) solutions.

Actions

Requests and feedback within scope will be addressed in the Service Reliability Review, including:

- Identifying the corridors and route segments that are most affected by delays in travel time and using this information to advocate for increased transit priority measures across the network.
- Exploring how to implement short-term solutions while planning and developing longer term ones.
- Identifying and resolving issues with scheduling and the ability to make transfers between services.

Modernize transit infrastructure and technology

Passengers are looking for infrastructure upgrades on routes including bus shelters, seating and lighting—alongside thoughtful terminal and stop design—to improve the comfort and safety of transit and to improve the process of transferring across the network. Feedback highlighted challenges at busy bus stops due to passenger and bus volumes, which can result in passengers not boarding the bus before it departs. Terminals and stops need to support accessibility and upgrades should improve pedestrian connectivity and safety.

Suggestions for technological upgrades include improving the reliability of real-time information, accurate passenger information systems and transparent communication about service status. Respondents also requested expanded fare payment options to improve flexibility and affordability.

Actions

Requests and feedback within scope will be considered in the Transit Infrastructure Review, including:

- Developing passenger centered accessibility and sustainability standards for infrastructure upgrades and new construction, including terminals and bus stops. These standards would cover:
 - » Accessibility, wayfinding and passenger information systems.
 - » Enhanced stops catering to high volumes of boardings, alighting's and transfers.
- Improving cycling, pedestrian and micro-mobility connectivity and infrastructure.

Requests and feedback within scope will be considered in the Technology Roadmap, including:

- Expanding fare payment options, including tapping credit or debit cards.
- Expanding and enhancing passenger information systems across the transit system.
- Seeking opportunities to use technology to communicate real-time service updates.

Increase regional connectivity and expand the transit system

Residents asked for expanded transit options including expanding transit coverage for areas that are close to transit routes but outside the existing service boundary and reducing travel times between destinations. Suggestions on expanding service options included connecting communities close to existing services but too far to walk to the bus stop, increasing coverage and more off-peak flexibility.

Suggestions to reduce travel times and improve the attractiveness of transit for daily trips included terminal to terminal shuttles and more express services. Many requests were tied to a need to be able to travel across more flexibly and efficiently to destinations within the Halifax region.

Actions

Requests and feedback within scope will be considered in the Microtransit Implementation Plan including:

- Transit service in communities outside of the conventional transit service area, including suburban or rural communities.
- Transit service in suburban communities that are difficult to serve with conventional transit due to population characteristics, road network or built form.
- Transit service to key destinations or important cultural sites that are difficult to serve with conventional transit service.

Requests and feedback within scope will be considered in the Bus Rapid Transit Integration Strategy including:

- Redesigning local transit networks to feed into the Rapid Transit network.
- Optimizing connections and transfers to/from the Rapid Transit network.
- Seeking opportunities for using re-allocated services to provide additional coverage and connections.

Improve accessibility, inclusion and the passenger experience on transit

Many passengers feel confused or overwhelmed by the transit system and the range of travel options available. Feedback highlighted the importance of improving cleanliness, safety, comfort and amenities offered on buses and at terminals to enhance the overall experience of using transit. Feedback on Access-A-Bus services highlighted reliability concerns, limitations to travel times and issues with the process of reserving trips. Members from equity-deserving groups tend to have higher safety concerns when taking transit; these concerns are heightened when waiting for services at night or on certain routes. Issues cited included harassment, behaviors from other passengers and waiting for transit when there is poor lighting.

Concerns were also raised about standing on crowded buses when travelling during periods of heavy traffic, as the impacts from frequent acceleration can lead to discomfort and the increased risk for injury.

Actions

Requests and feedback within scope will be considered in the Customer Experience Review, including:

- Developing communications standards and processes that are passenger-focused and support trip planning.
- Improving transparency in the sharing and distribution of information for passengers before, during, and after their transit trips.
- Improving wayfinding, signage and the physical design of stops, stations, and terminals.

Requests and feedback within scope will be considered in the Accessibility Review, including:

- Reducing barriers to access and prioritizing accessibility for equity-deserving groups and communities to ensure that transit is inclusive, reliable and responsive to the needs of all passengers.
- Improving the process for reserving and scheduling Access-A-Bus.

Requests and feedback within scope will be considered in the Transit Safety Program, including:

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive Halifax Transit Safety Program, in collaboration with internal and external partners.
- Addressing areas such as passenger and employee safety, passenger experience, efficient transit operations related to safety and the protection of transit property.

Enhance Ferry Services

Passengers highlighted the importance of expanding ferry services to new areas such as Larry Uteck and Bedford (Mill Cove) and increasing frequency on existing ferry routes in the future. Many participants noted that an expanded ferry service could ease the pressure on both harbour bridges and major corridors such as the Bedford Highway.

Passengers who ride the Woodside Ferry, or would like to, requested better integration between routes and bus schedules with ferry services. Issues of concern include misalignment between trips with buses often leaving before passengers can make their connections leading to longer travel times. This was a particular concern at Woodside Ferry Terminal, where demand for parking is above capacity. Requests also included new or more frequent service during evenings, weekends and holidays, particularly for the Halifax-Woodside routes, which currently does not operate at those times.

Actions

Requests and feedback within scope will be considered in the Ferry Service Review, including

- Improving the resiliency of the system by reducing the impact of factors – staff levels and fleet maintenance - that lead to service cancellations.



Our commitment to engagement

Our commitment to collaboration continues; some modules within the Roadmap will include more focused engagement to ensure the proposals and recommendations are aligned with community needs.

The public engagement for the **Strategic Roadmap** and **Core Service Plan** help us deliver equitable, safe, reliable and efficient transit services across the system. Gathering diverse perspectives through emails, the survey, in-person events across the network, and targeted consultations helps identify those priorities which are most important to passengers and residents.



JANUARY 2026

CORE SERVICE PLAN

2025-2027





THE BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA

PRINCE ST
HOLLIS ST

1330 HALIFAX

90 WEST BEDFORD
VIA LARRY UTECK

90 WEST BEDFORD
VIA LARRY UTECK

24

1330 HALIFAX

1709
HOLLIS ST

THE BANK
NOVA S

MAKE THIS SUMMER
A WHOPPER



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Building a more responsive transit system for a growing Halifax

Halifax’s transit network has been developed collaboratively over time to respond to factors such as development, growth patterns and the distinctive natural features that shape our urban and suburban communities. The most recent redesign established a network that is built around different service types, each catering to distinct transit demands and needs.

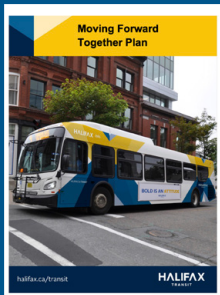
Ongoing improvements in operational and planning approaches – building on previous plans such as the Moving Forward Together Plan (MFTP) – have made service delivery across the network more responsive. Guiding principles continue to inform the process of allocating resources and balancing competing needs and demands. Advancements and technological upgrades have resulted in an enhanced ability to track ridership trends and identify the new ways riders are moving on the network to meet their daily needs.

From ongoing analysis, it is clear that historical patterns only tell part of the story about how transit will be used in the future. High ridership growth trends in areas where transit usage was lower indicates a need to be as adaptive as possible. This also highlights the need for strategic investments to support growth across the transit service area to anticipate and respond to regional growth and shifting mobility trends. Investments to enhance the network brings us closer to meeting our vision and goals and providing reliable mobility options which reflect community needs.



A new way of planning allows for flexible service adjustments needed to keep pace with a changing region

2016



The recommendations implemented from the MFTP resulted in changes to both the transit network and the decision-making framework to most efficiently and impactfully allocate resources.

The Moving Forward Principles and guidelines provide a framework to balance resource

allocation between competing needs—prioritizing high demand services while maintaining consistent coverage across the network. The increased responsiveness enabled by the MFTP is tied closely to the use of key performance measures to ensure transit best serves communities across the system. Network updates and service changes – whether they were large or modest in scale – responded to shifts in travel patterns and changing settlement patterns.

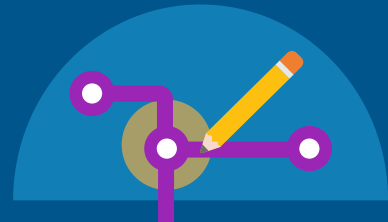
An adaptive and responsive approach to service planning is increasingly needed. Numerous changes in ridership demand, and new development and growth patterns have occurred since the introduction of Halifax Transit’s principles and guidelines a decade ago. Our commitment to keep pace with the evolving mobility needs within the region coupled with the efficient and sustainable use of available resources requires well-informed and adaptable planning frameworks.

An evaluation of Halifax’s existing transit planning processes has led to the establishment of the Strategic Roadmap. This shift away from a single multi-year plan to an ongoing planning process, where modules are prepared and adopted over the next three years, continues this commitment to evolving in response to changing community needs. This shift also aligns with the way transit is poised to transform through large scale initiatives like the Rapid Transit Strategy. The flexibility enabled by the Strategic Roadmap also supports a commitment to enhancing engagement and collaboration with customers and community partners.

The Moving Forward Principles guiding planning and investment decisions



1. Increase the proportion of resources allocated towards high ridership services



2. Build a simplified transfer-based system



3. Invest in service quality and reliability



4. Give transit increased priority in the transportation network

Service Types

- **Corridor Routes** form the backbone of the transit network by providing frequent service along high demand corridors and connections from residential neighbourhoods to regional destinations like shopping, employment, schools and services. These routes offer consistent service seven days a week from early morning to late evening.
- **Local Routes** provide connections between neighbourhoods or communities to Corridor Routes at transit terminals. Most Local Routes provide all day service, typically at a lower level of frequency than Corridor Routes.
- **Ferries** provide a fast, convenient link across the harbour to destinations in the regional centre and beyond.
- **Express and Regional Express Routes** provide limited-stop service during rush hour on weekdays. These routes offer commuters streamlined transit service between residential communities and downtown. These routes also provide one-way service in the direction with the highest ridership, such as morning trips to downtown Halifax. Due to the regional importance of Route 320 Airport-Fall River it provides a higher level of service, operating bi-directionally throughout the service day, seven days/week
- **Rural Routes** provide service to those communities outside of the Urban Transit Service Boundary (UTSB) served by transit before the boundary was adopted.

Service Characteristics	Corridor Routes	Local Routes
Peak Headway (Peak Direction)	5-15 min	15-30 min
Off Peak Headway	10-30 min	30-60 min
Saturday Headway	15-30 min	30-60 min
Sunday Headway	15-30 min	30-60 min
Weekday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 1 a.m.	6 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Saturday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 12 a.m.	7 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Sunday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 12 a.m.	7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Technology permits greater adaptiveness in planning the transit network

Data is a key input in managing resources and addressing competing needs across the transit network. Technology has enabled an evolving approach to data collection and analyzing performance measures. A commitment to transparency is a critical element of reporting. Just as importantly, providing clear and understandable information to the public is also necessary to ensure effective collaboration when making network and service level adjustments.

How the Core Service Plan works within the Strategic Roadmap to make positive change

The *Strategic Roadmap* sets forth the overall vision, goals and principles designed to continually refine Halifax's transit network and deliver a system that meets the evolving needs of passengers. Together, these priorities form a comprehensive strategy to deliver a responsive, reliable, accessible and passenger-focused transit system that puts transit at the heart of regional mobility. The modules within the Strategic Roadmap will be prepared over the next three years.

The *Core Service Plan* – the first module in the Strategic Roadmap – focuses on timely network and service level adjustments to the conventional bus network over the next three years. The *Core Service Plan* makes recommendations that will further optimize transit service, making it responsive to shifting travel patterns and growth in ridership demand in areas where additional resources can deliver a high return on investment for Halifax.

Network changes and service adjustments included in the engagement for the Core Service Plan

As part of the *Core Service Plan*, a series of proposals were developed to respond to growing ridership demand, improve service reliability, and enable strategic investment to support transit network growth.

To inform these proposals, every route in the network was reviewed to determine where adjustments should be considered. This review examined performance measures, regional growth trends across Halifax, and service requests from both passengers and Operators, as well as how ridership patterns align with Halifax Transit's service standards and guidelines.

This analysis identified several key areas where strategic investment is warranted to support both recent growth and anticipated demand over the timeframe of the *Core Service Plan*.



Aligning routes, frequencies, and coverage with today's needs

The Core Service Plan focuses on short-term adjustments that respond to changes in the way riders rely on transit for their daily trips and recommends service level adjustments, route modifications and network changes to enhance transit coverage. These recommendations – aligned to the guiding principles outlined in the Strategic Roadmap – fall under the following broad investment categories aimed at responding to ridership demand, improving service reliability and adapting to shifts within our region.

These categories are:



Investing to increase service where ridership demand exceeds service levels



Investing in a more reliable network



Investing strategically to support growth

Due to sustained ridership growth, most routes across the network are performing at or above our guidelines. This means reallocating resources to support service level increases is not an easy alternative and additional resources are required. As a result, service increases over the course of the Core Service Plan 2025–27 are expected to be targeted on highest priority needs due to current constraints on bus and resource availability.

Throughout the network, there are a few routes where ridership demand is below the levels set by our guidelines. However, keeping these routes running is critical to both ensuring that passengers can make connections across the region and that there is consistent coverage across the transit network. In all cases, retaining service on lower performing routes aligns with the principle of investing in service reliability and supporting equity and connectivity across the region. Therefore, the Core Service Plan does not propose any reductions in services. Some modifications to low performing routes have been proposed, where analysis and feedback from engagement indicates changes may improve route performance or service quality and reliability.



Investing to increase service where ridership demand exceeds service levels

When there are routes that have ridership that regularly exceeds service levels, it is a strong indicator of high demand for additional trips. Corridor routes have high ridership across all time periods. When ridership demand increases for these routes – particularly during busy periods – trips can become overcrowded. Routes across the network are increasingly busy on weekends, with some trips experiencing significant growth in ridership demand. Adding more trips should reduce the chance of overloads and reduce overall travel times during busy periods on popular routes.

The following service increases are recommended:

- **Route 3 – Crosstown.** This popular route needs more frequent service across a few time periods. Frequency should be increased during peak hours, Saturday, and Sunday evenings to meet demand and increase service quality.
- **Route 8 – Sackville.** This route is overcrowded during the afternoon peak and has low levels of service compared to other corridor routes. Frequency should be increased across all periods.
- **Route 9A/B – Greystone/Herring Cove.** This route frequently experiences overcrowding during the afternoon peak and has increased demand during weekends. Trips should be added during the afternoon peak, and frequency should be increased on weekends.
- **Route 21 – Timberlea.** Ridership on Sunday trips has grown considerably and increased frequency is needed to address this higher demand.
- **Route 28 – Bayers Lake.** Riders have reported issues with overcrowding on this route and have requested additional capacity. Additional frequency during the afternoon peak should be added to alleviate capacity issues, as well as increased service on weekends to make travel to Bayers Lake more convenient.
- **Route 56 – Dartmouth Crossing.** Two additional trips during the afternoon should be added to address overloads.
- **Route 194 – West Bedford Express.** Additional trips should be added to this route to accommodate increased demand and make the level of service on this route more consistent with other express routes.



Investing in a more reliable network

Longer travel times often result from factors such as a route's existing frequency, delays, scheduling and challenges with making timely transfers between different routes. Service and route adjustments can improve the overall experience of riding transit by reducing travel times and/or improving connections to other routes.

Ongoing investment in solutions that improve on-time performance is essential to maintaining service quality and reliability. Because the factors affecting on-time performance vary widely, greater adaptability in transit planning and operations is required to support timely adjustments. To enable this, it is recommended that a dedicated portion of the annual budget be allocated to service adjustments that help maintain schedule adherence.

The following investments in service are recommended to improve network reliability:

- **Route 5 – Portland.** On Sundays this route has a very low level of service, which limits travel flexibility for riders despite being a key Corridor Route. Frequency should be increased on Sundays to improve travel options.
- **Route 24 – Leiblin Park.** This route faces significant reliability and operational issues. Time should be added to the schedule to allow this route to operate more reliably. The route should also be extended to provide a more defined endpoint on the peninsula in a location with Operator facilities. Routing options should be explored for extending Route 24 in order to provide operators with facilities at the route terminus.
- **Route 56 – Dartmouth Crossing.** This route has a segment along Countryview Drive where buses travel in the same direction but serve different destinations. The route should be modified to serve Finlay Drive to make the route easier for passengers to understand.
- **Route 91 – Hemlock Ravine.** Infrequent service on Route 91 makes it difficult for riders to make connections to and from this route. Frequency should be increased during peak times and weekends to enable more convenient travel.
- **Route 93 – Bedford Highway.** Public feedback has indicated that riders value this route. However, analysis has found that the northern section of this route is redundant with other travel options. Route 93 should be rerouted to terminate at the West Bedford Park & Ride and no longer serve the Cobequid Terminal.
- **Express Routes (Routes 123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194).** Riders, particularly health care workers, have indicated a desire for earlier and later trips on express routes that line up better with their work schedules. Later and earlier trips should be added to select express routes in the network to provide options for these travel patterns.
- **Route 165 – Caldwell Express.** This route should be diverted to improve transit service to the Portland Estates neighbourhood.
- **Route 330 - Tantallon-Sheldrake Lake.** Public feedback has indicated a preference for Route 330 to bypass the Sheldrake Lake Park & Ride on some trips. The two trip patterns should be designated as 330A and 330B to make these route options clear for riders.



NEW SERVICE: 24 HOUR SERVICE ON ROUTE 320 (FALL RIVER - AIRPORT)

Introducing 24-hour service for Route 320 Fall River-Airport! Many workers and travelers at Halifax Stanfield International Airport work or travel during the late night and early morning. Moving to 24-hour service will allow these workers and travelers to choose transit as an option. This requires an operational shift for Halifax Transit, and is a significant change that can provide greater flexibility in the future.





Investing strategically to support growth

Investments are critical to support the growth seen across the Halifax region. These changes will enhance service within communities experiencing growth and for new developments while addressing gaps in existing service areas where the network has not kept pace with change.

The following service changes are recommended to support growth across Halifax:

- **Route 21 – Timberlea.** There are two route modifications that may be implemented in stages.
 - i. **Modify Route 21** to serve Hobson's Lake Drive in Bayers Lake, improving access to employment areas and more accessible pedestrian facilities.
 - ii. **Branch Route 21** into the 21A and 21B: 21A should retain the existing routing and 21B should serve the commercial area on Timberlea Village Parkway and Marketplace Lane once the extension is complete.
- **Route 95 – Brookline.** A new route from the West Bedford Park & Ride to the Ragged Lake Transit Centre via Lacewood Terminal and Bayers Lake is recommended to provide service for new developments in West Bedford and improve coverage in Bayers Lake and Ragged Lake where demand is high.
- **Route 54 – Montebello.** Serve new developments in Port Wallace by extending this route with service to begin after the road network tied to the new residential development is completed.
- **Route 55 – Port Wallace.** Extend to serve new developments in Port Wallace, with service to begin after the road network tied to the new residential development is completed.
- **Route 192 – Hemlock Ravine Express.** Extend to the West Bedford Park & Ride to improve service for commuters in the fast-growing West Bedford neighborhood.

Implementation timeline

The following is the proposed timeline for the changes outlined in the Core Service Plan. The changes proposed are subject to budget and resource availability. For each year, an Annual Service Plan with details on each route will be brought forward for approval by Regional Council. This timeline is illustrative in nature and may be different from what is presented to Regional Council.

Year 1

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Route 5 - Service Increase (Sunday)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 24 – Schedule Adjustment	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 165 - Modification	Service Quality & Reliability	-
Route 330 - Modification	Service Quality & Reliability	-

Year 2

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Route 3 - Service Increase	Addressing Demand	\$\$\$
Route 21 – Modifications (Stage 1 and 2) (Sunday) ●	Supporting Growth Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$\$
Route 28 – Service Increase ●	Addressing Demand	\$\$
Route 9A/B – Service Increase	Addressing Demand	\$\$\$
Route 56 – Additional Trips	Service Quality & Reliability	\$
Route 21 – Modification (Stage 1)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$
Route 56 – Modification	Service Quality & Reliability	-
Route 91 – Service Increase (Weekday)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 93 – Modification ●	Service Quality & Reliability	-
Route 95 – New Route ●●	Supporting Growth	\$\$\$
Route 192 – Extension ●	Supporting Growth	\$

● Changes associated with improving transit service to the Bayers Lake area.

● Changes associated with responding to growth in the West Bedford area.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE →

Year 2 (continued)

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Express Route 194 ●	Addressing Demand	\$\$
Express Routes – Additional Trips (123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 320 – 24 Hour Service	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$

● Changes associated with responding to growth in the West Bedford area.

Year 3

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Route 8 - Service Increase (all periods)	Addressing Demand	\$\$
Route 54 – Extension ●	Supporting Growth	\$\$
Route 55 – Extension ●	Supporting Growth	\$\$
Route 91 – Service Increase (Weekend)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$

● Changes associated with responding to development growth in the Port Wallace area should be implemented after development is completed.

Note About Costs:

- Low (\$): \$0 - \$99,999 per year
- Medium (\$\$): \$100,000 - \$499,999 per year
- High (\$\$\$): \$500,000 or more per year

Service increases

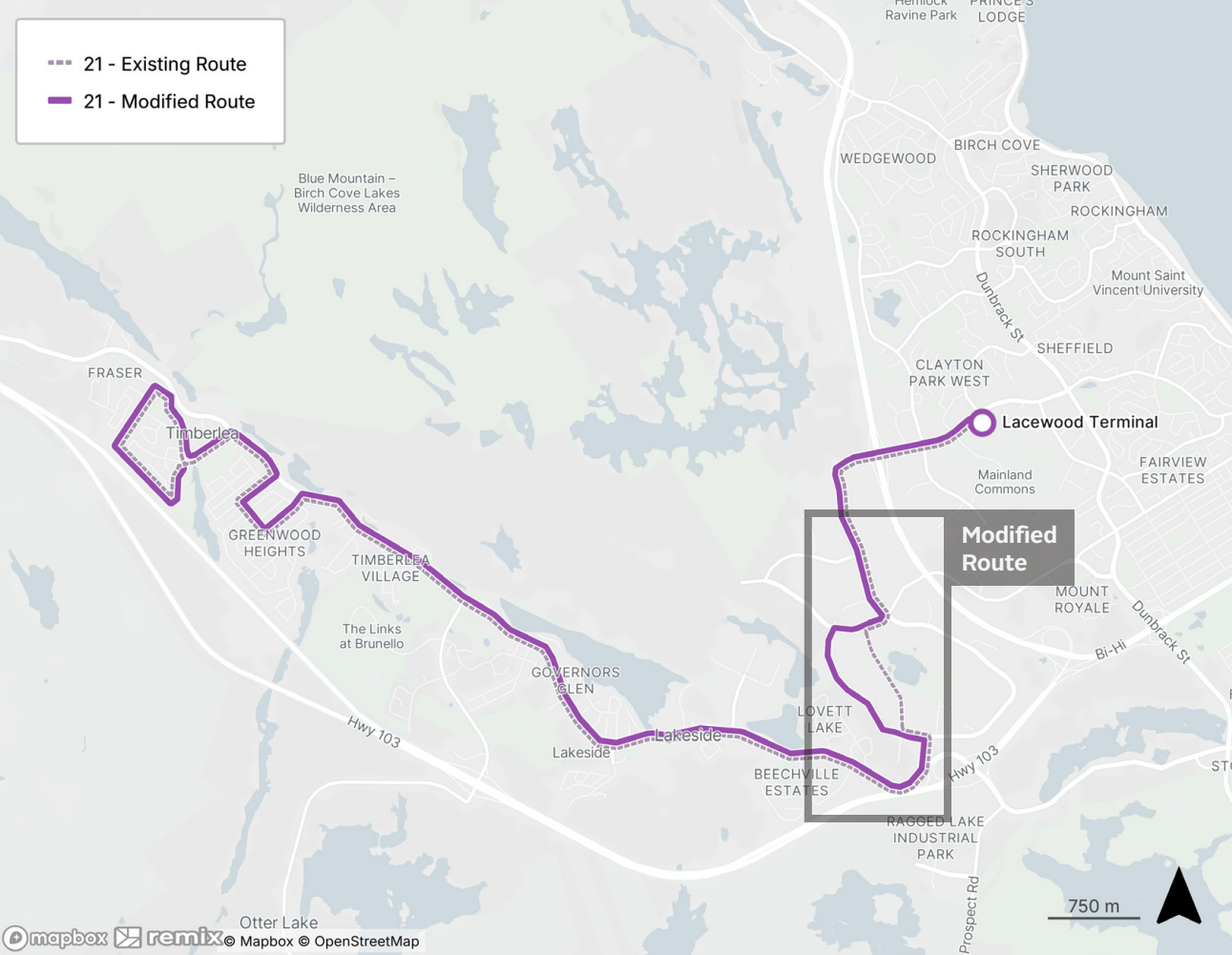
The following table provides detailed descriptions of the additional trips that are recommended as service increases.

Route	Proposal	Current
3 – Crosstown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-minute frequency during morning & afternoon peak • 20-minute frequency on Saturdays • 20-minute frequency on Sunday evenings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-minute frequency during morning peaks • 20-minute frequency during afternoon peaks • 30-minute frequency on Saturdays
5 – Portland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20-minute frequency on Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency on Sundays
8 – Sackville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-minute frequency during morning & afternoon peak • 20-minute frequency during weekday evenings • 20-minute frequency on Saturdays and Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 15 minutes (morning & afternoon) • Every 30 minutes (weekday evenings) • Every 30 minutes (Saturday & Sunday)
9A/B – Greystone/Herring Cove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the afternoon peak • 20-minute combined frequency on Saturdays and Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-minute frequency during the afternoon peak • 30-minute frequency on Saturdays and Sundays
21 – Timberlea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency on Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60-minute frequency on Sundays
28 – Bayers Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-minute frequency during the afternoon peak • 20-minute frequency on Saturdays • 30-minute frequency on Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency on weekdays • 30-minute frequency on Saturdays and Sundays
56 – Dartmouth Crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the afternoon peak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 30 minutes (afternoon)
91 – Hemlock Ravine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20-minute frequency during morning & afternoon peak • 30-minute frequency on Saturdays • 30-minute frequency on Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency during morning & afternoon peak
194 – West Bedford Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the morning & afternoon peak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four trips during the morning peak and four trips during the afternoon peak
Express Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the early evening or early morning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies based on route
320 – Airport-Fall River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the late night and early morning to provide 24-hour service on weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency on weekdays • 60-minute frequency on Saturdays and Sundays

Route modifications

The following maps and descriptions provide additional detail for proposed routing changes.

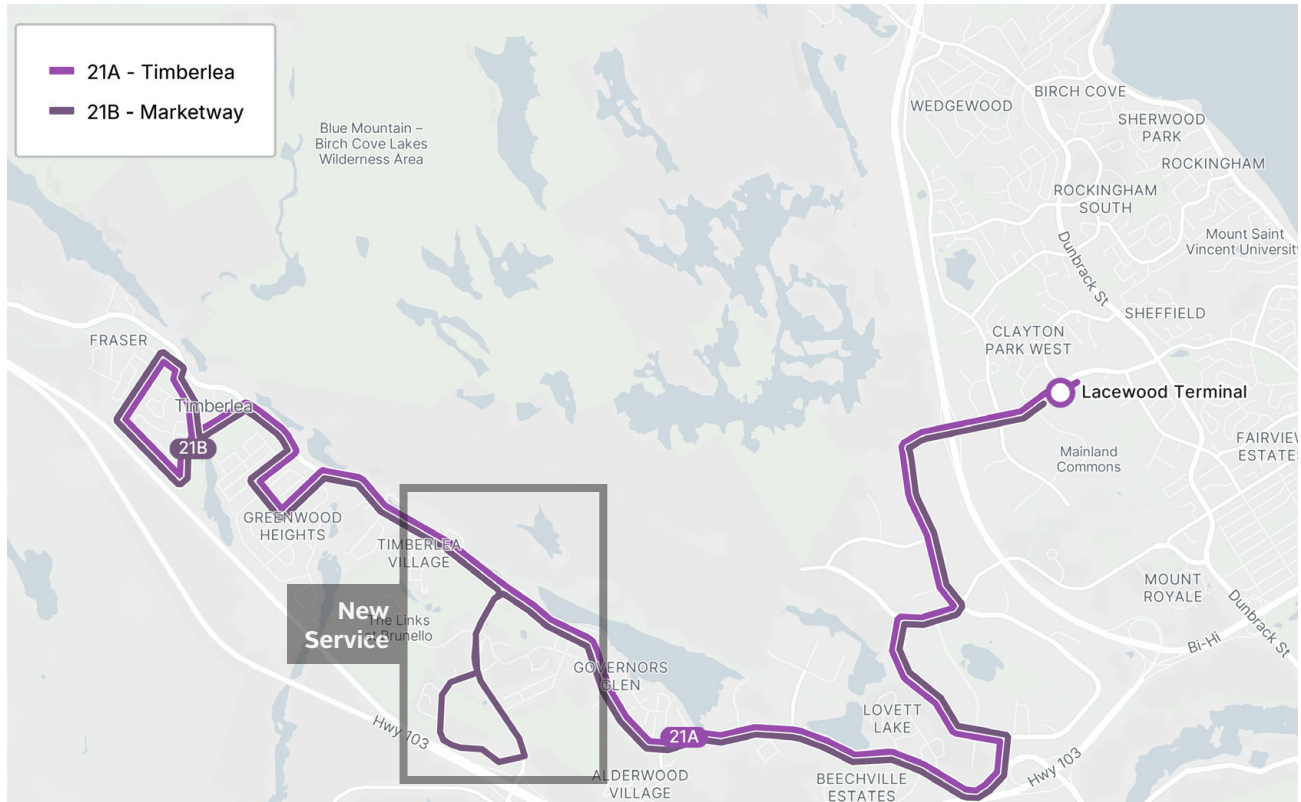
21 – Timberlea (Stage 1)



Route 21 should no longer serve Horseshoe Lake Drive and should instead travel down Hobsons Lake Drive, which has new commercial and industrial development, and safer pedestrian infrastructure.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

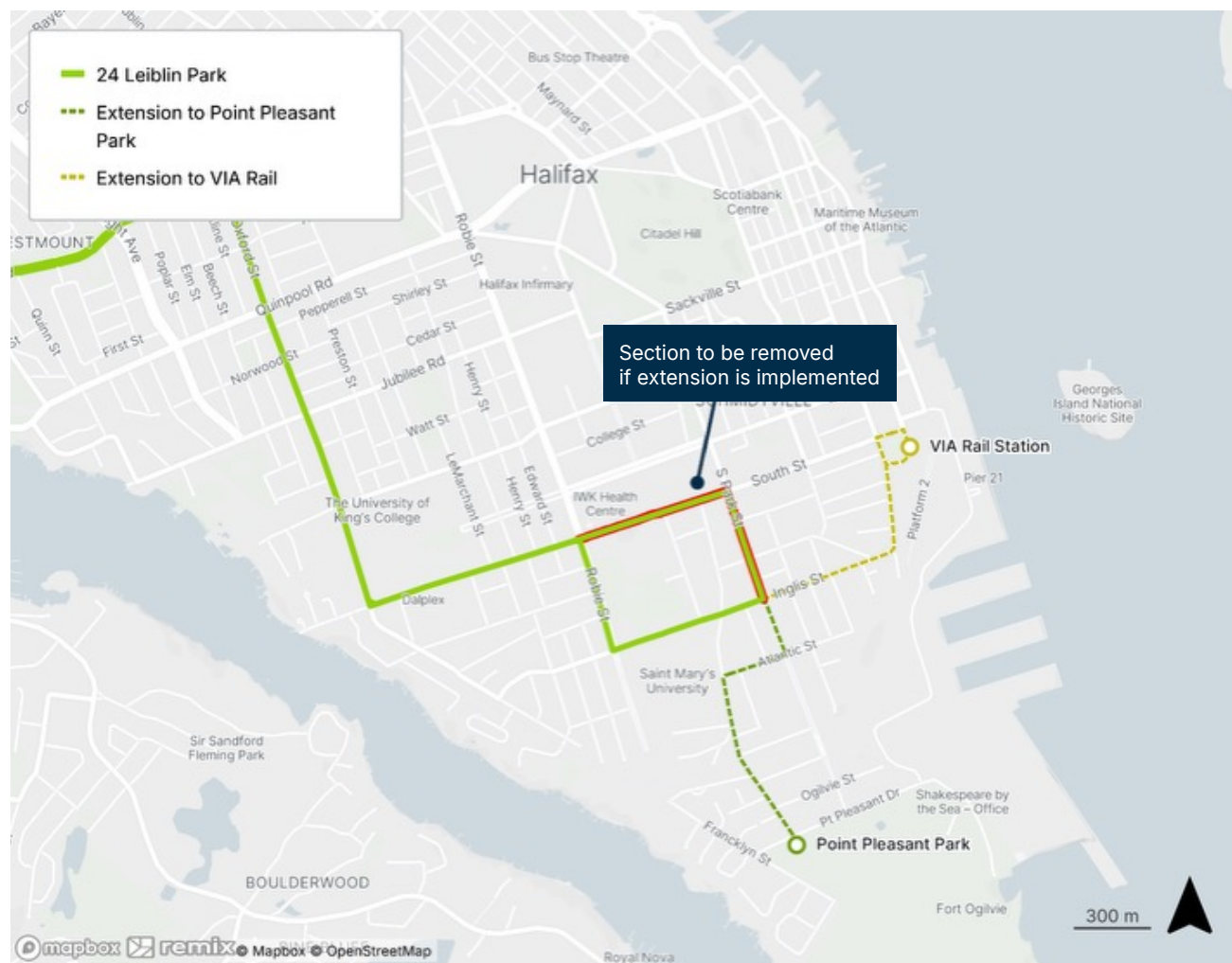
21 – Timberlea (Stage 2)



Route 21 should be split into two branches, 21A/B. Route 21A should retain the existing routing on St Margarets Bay Road. Route 21B should divert from St Margarets Bay Road at Timberlea Village Parkway to serve Marketway Lane and the new residential and commercial areas in this community.

Each trip should alternate between 21A and 21B providing 30-minute frequency on the combined corridor with an hourly frequency on each branch. This change should only be implemented once Marketway Lane is fully connected. During periods where the combined corridor frequency is hourly, only the 21B will run, ensuring hourly service to Marketway Lane.

24 – Leiblin Park

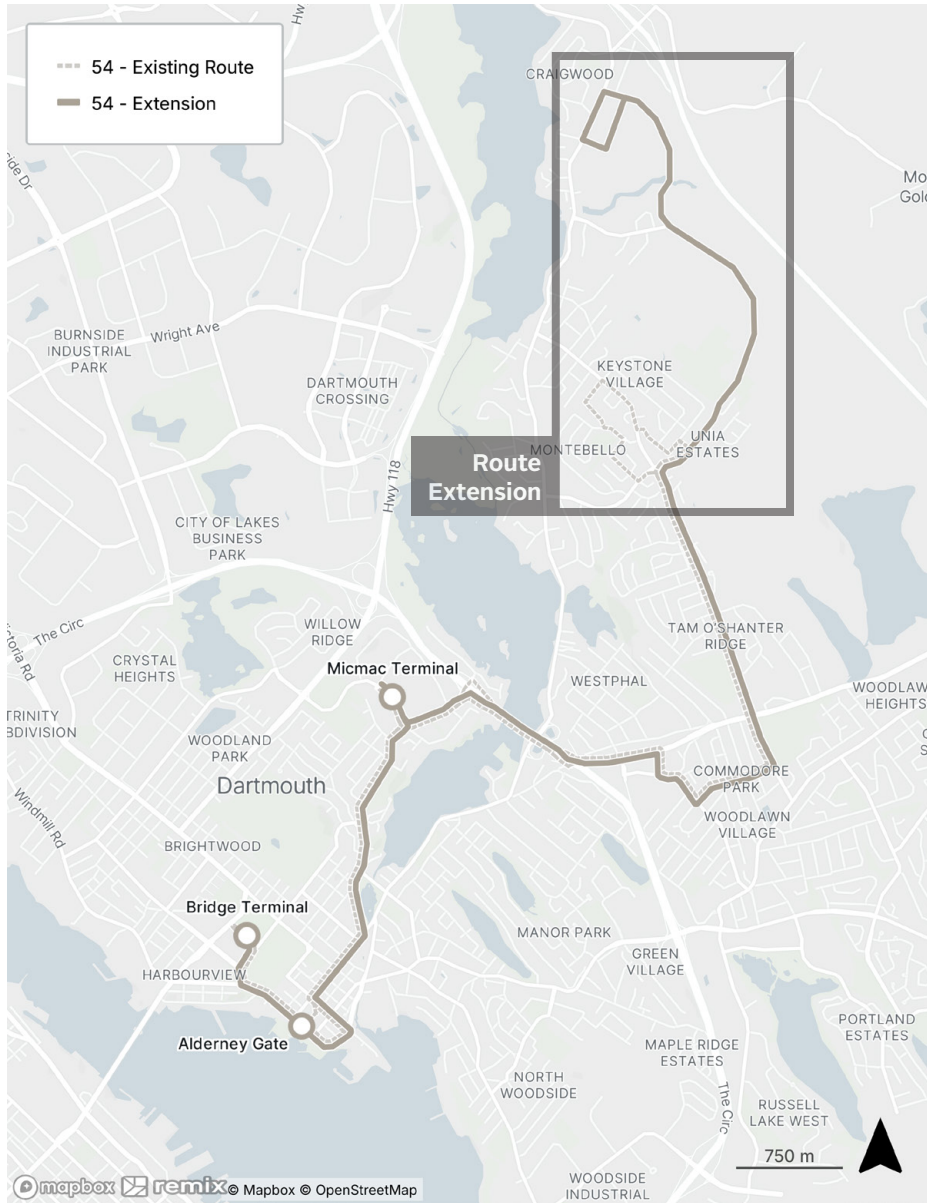


Route 24 is facing significant schedule adherence and operational issues. Additional runtime should be added to Route 24 schedule so it can operate reliably. This planned schedule adjustment will increase the planned travel time for riders but should result in more consistent operations and less cancelled trips. This change should benefit both riders and operators by providing a more reliable schedule.

Options should be explored for extending Route 24 to provide Operator facilities at the route terminus. Additional investigation into securing layover space to create a new route end point is required. Options considered included extending the route to Point Pleasant Park, to Scotia Square, or to connect to other transportation options at the rail and regional bus stations on Hollis Street. As these options would include additional infrastructure costs, they will continue to be explored and a recommendation will be brought forward as part of a future Annual Service Plan for final approval.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

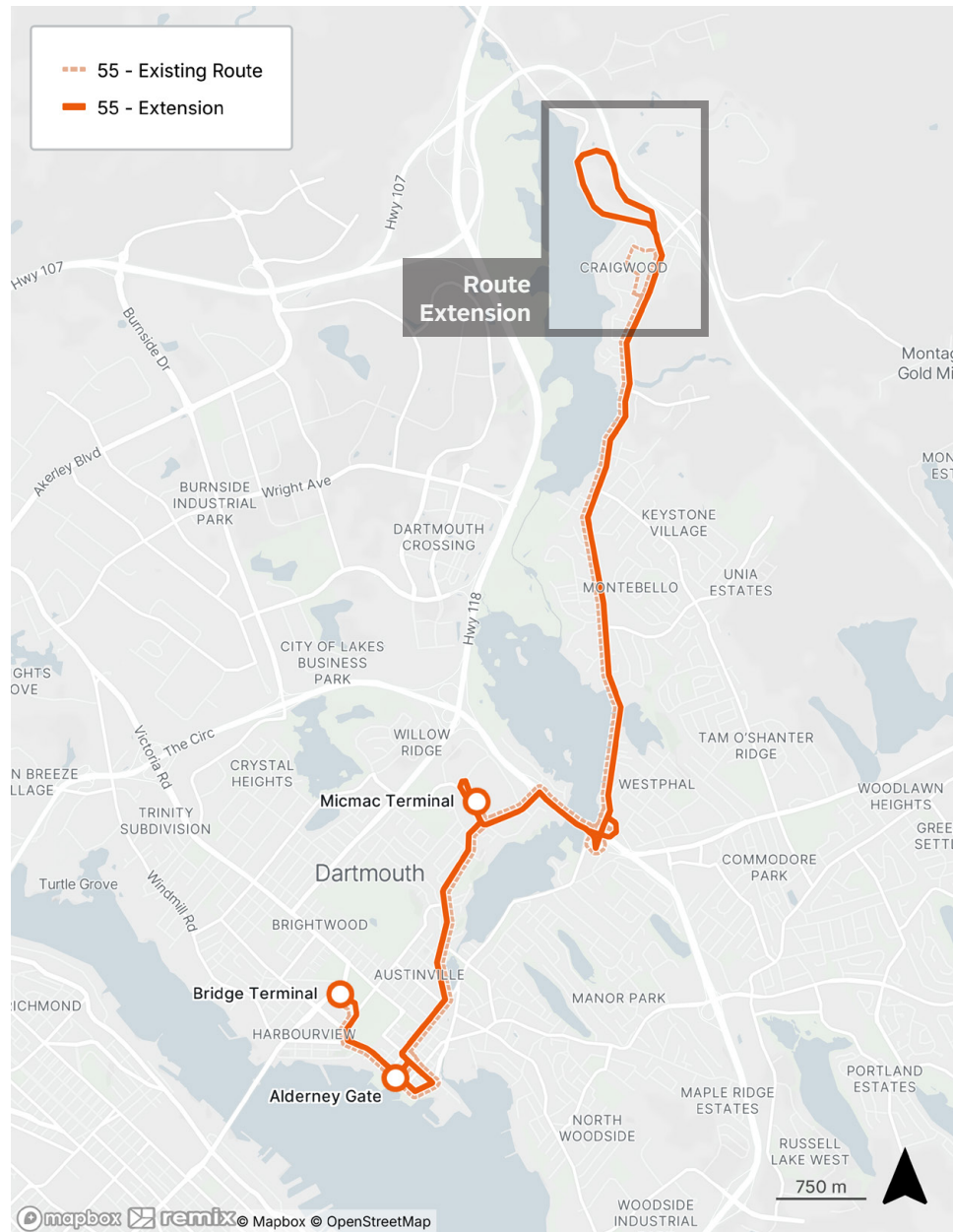
54 – Montebello



Route 54 should be extended along Avenue du Portage to service planned development in Port Wallace. The one-way loop at the current end of the line should be removed. The proposed modification will mean the existing loop including Lexington Avenue, Breeze Drive, Columbo Drive, Appian Way, Colonna Place and Montebello Drive will no longer have bus stops for Route 54. This extension should only be implemented once the roads are in place.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

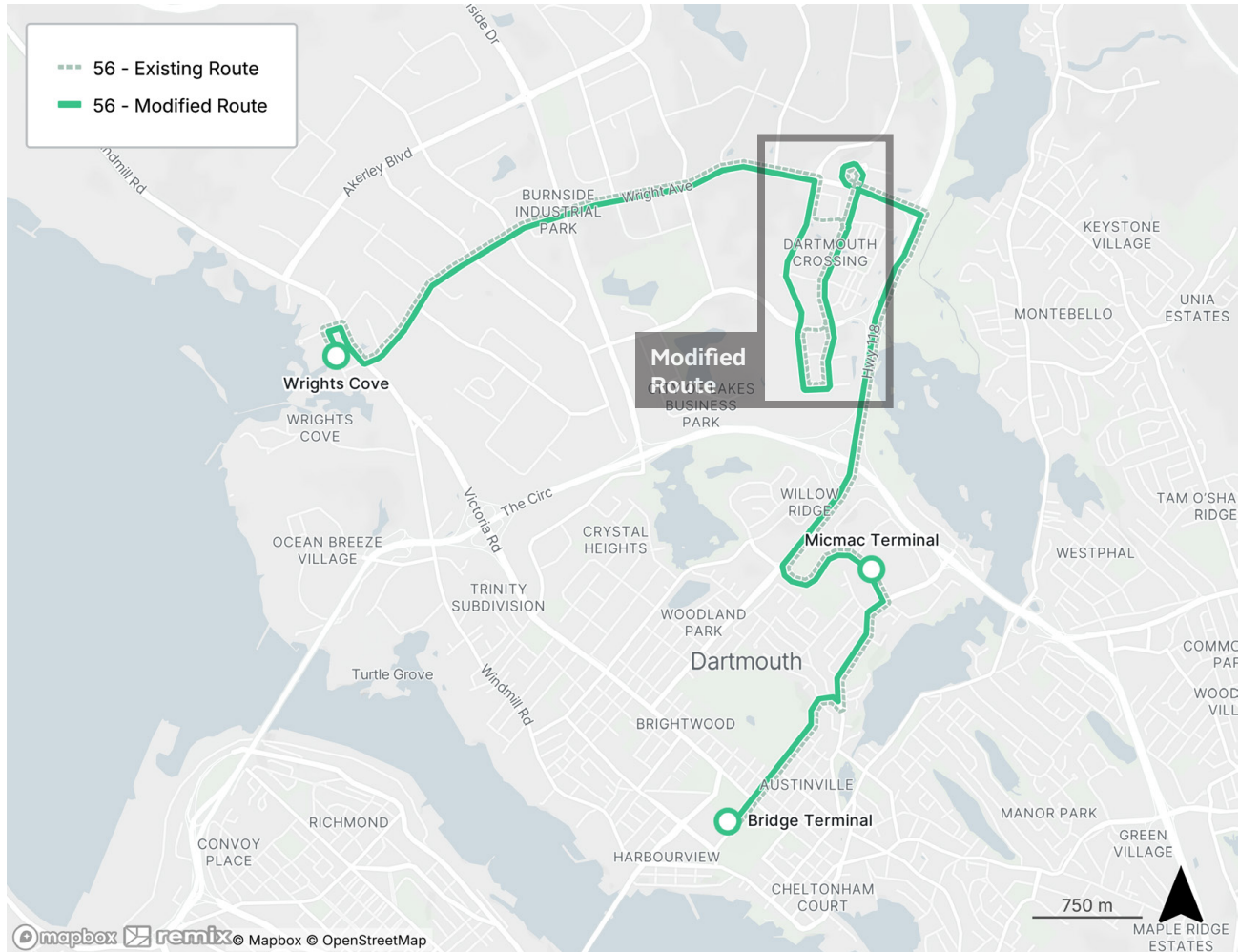
55 – Port Wallace



Route 55 should be extended to service new development in Port Wallace. The current one-way loop at Charles Keating Drive and Craigburn Drive should be removed, and the extended route should turn around using the newly-constructed road and Waverly Road. The proposed modification will mean Charles Keating Drive and Craigburn Avenue will no longer have bus stops. This extension should only be implemented once roads are in place.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

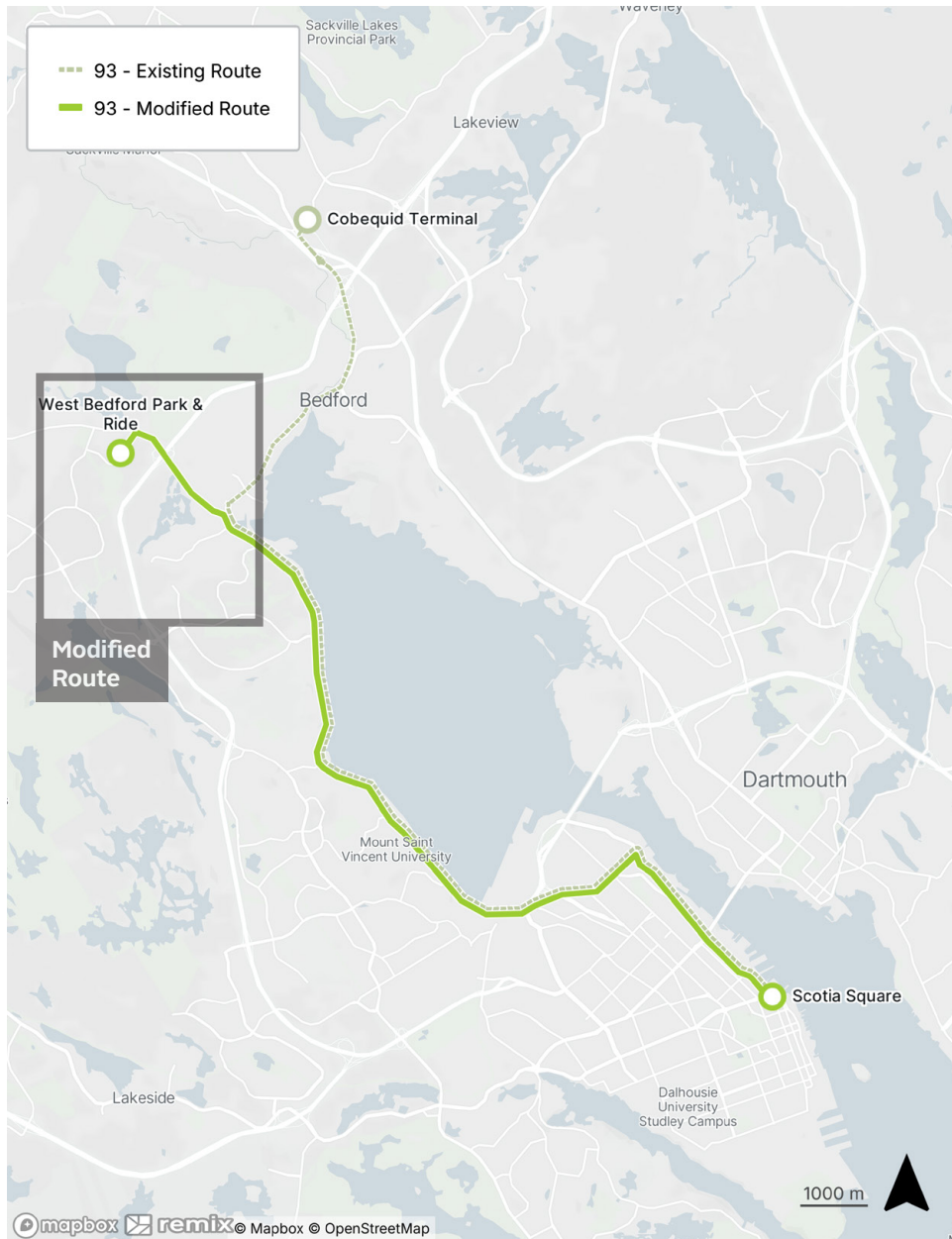
56 – Dartmouth Crossing



Route 56 should be rerouted to serve the entire length of Finlay Drive. This should remove a confusing segment of routing along Countryview Drive, where buses travelling in the same direction have different destinations and riders must pay close attention to the destination signs to avoid travelling to the wrong destination.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

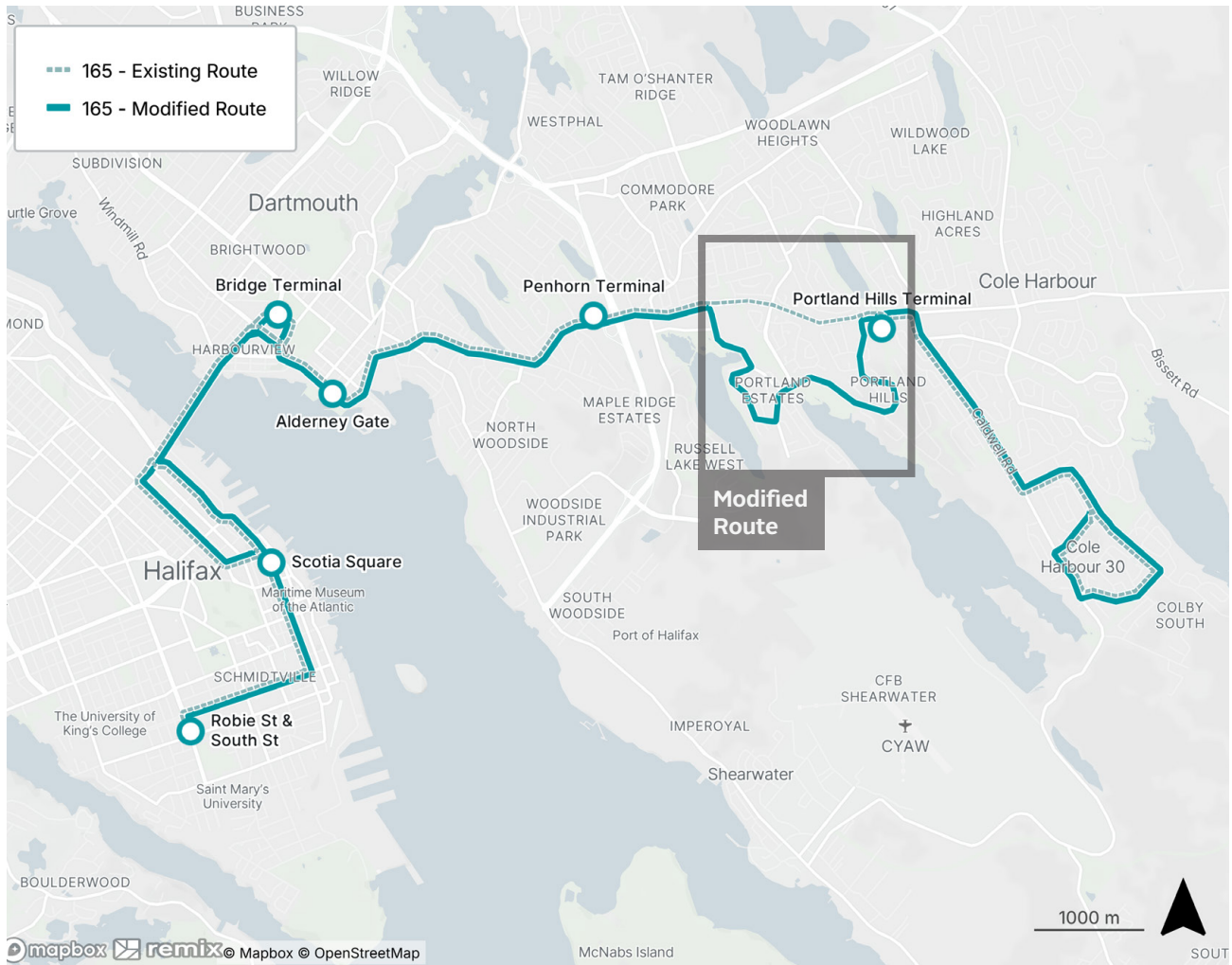
93 – Bedford Highway



Route 93 should be rerouted via Hammonds Plains Road to serve West Bedford Park & Ride. Service should no longer be provided on Bedford Highway north of Hammonds Plains Road or to Cobequid Terminal. This provides additional service and transfer options in the growing West Bedford community.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

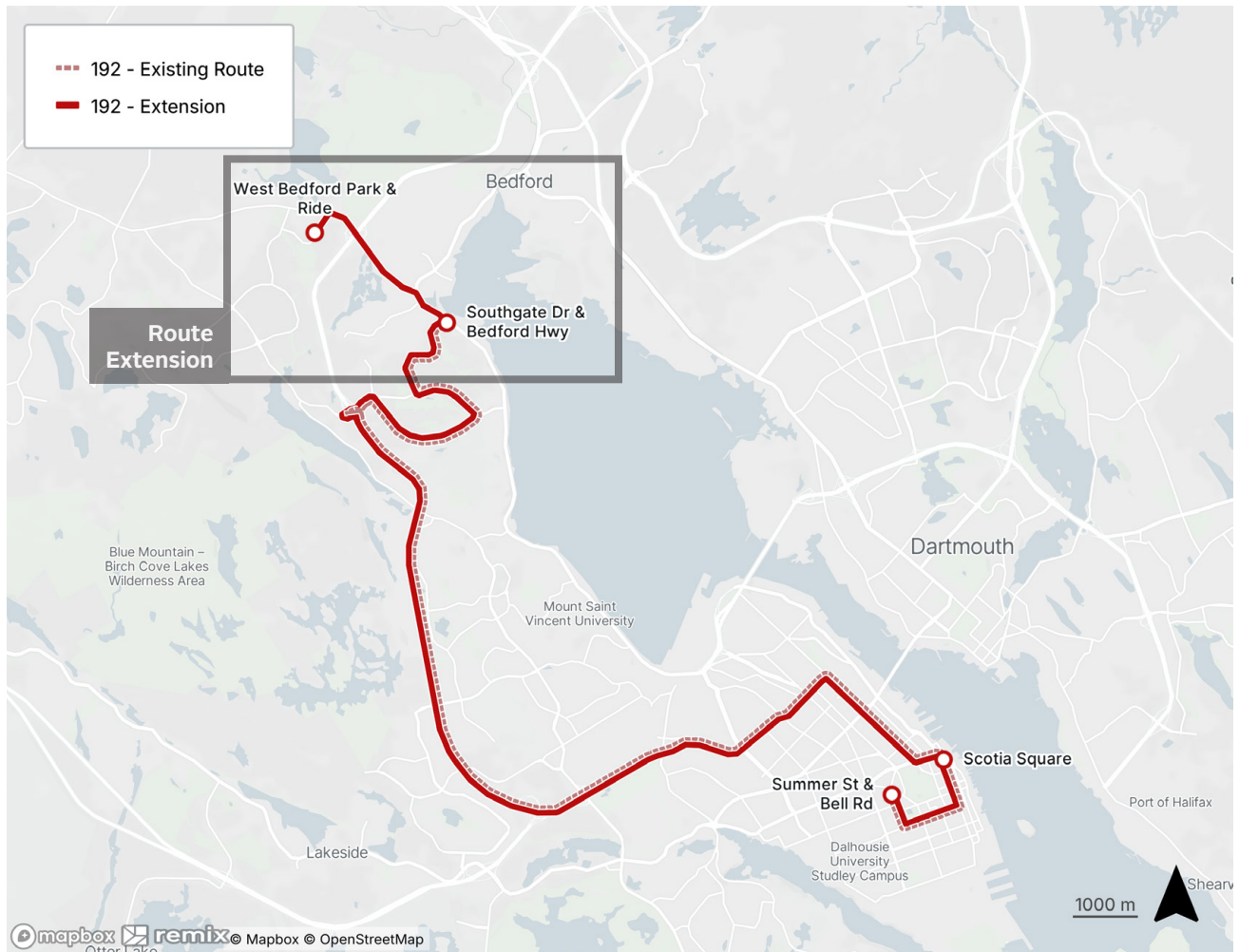
165 – Caldwell Express



Route 165 should be rerouted to serve the Portland Estates neighborhood, via Portland Hills Drive, Portland Estates Boulevard West and Eisner Boulevard. This should fill in a gap in coverage left from the removal of Route 57 in 2024.

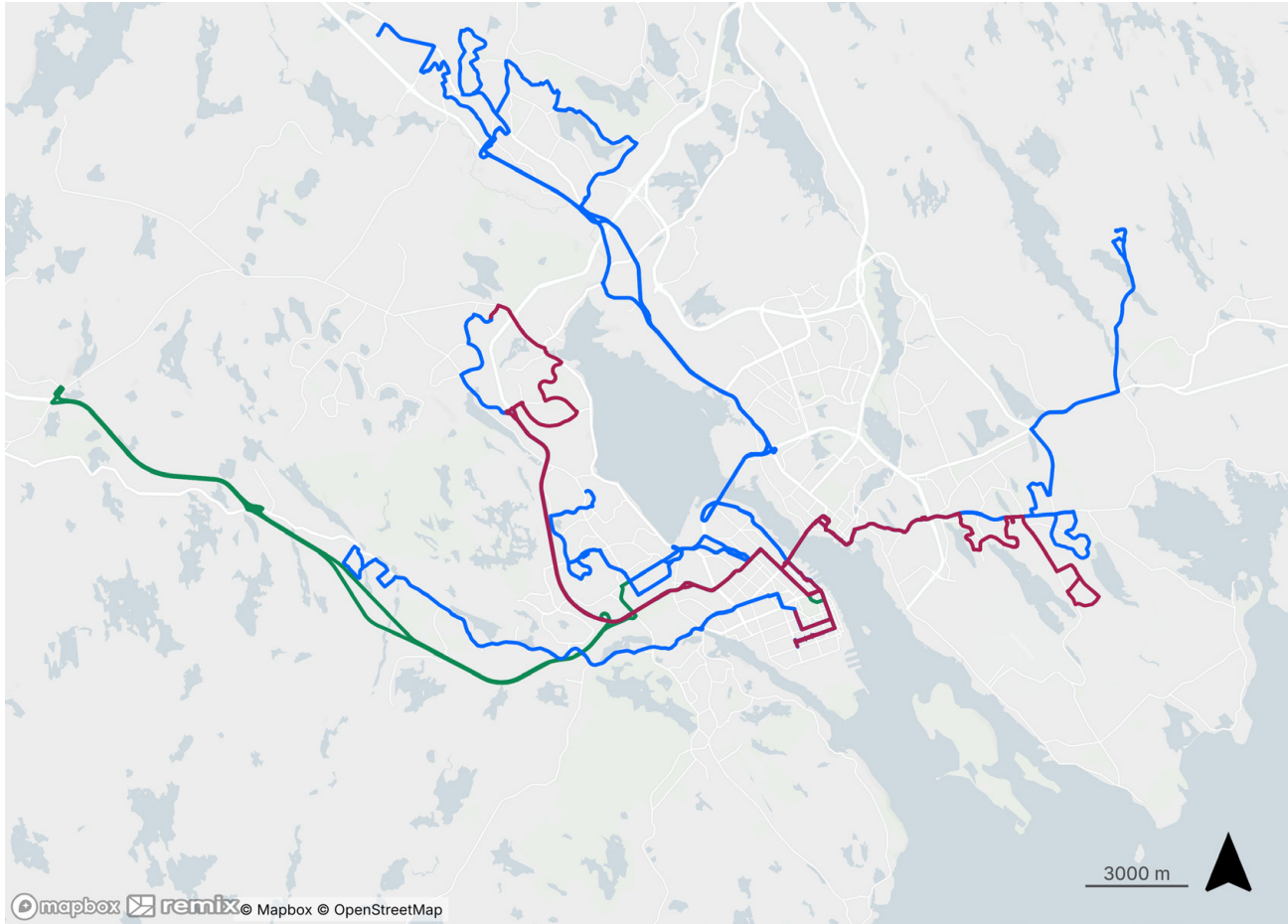
ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

192 – Hemlock Ravine Express



Route 192 should be extended past Southgate Drive to West Bedford Park & Ride. This extension should provide additional travel options for commuters at the West Bedford Park & Ride.

Express Routes

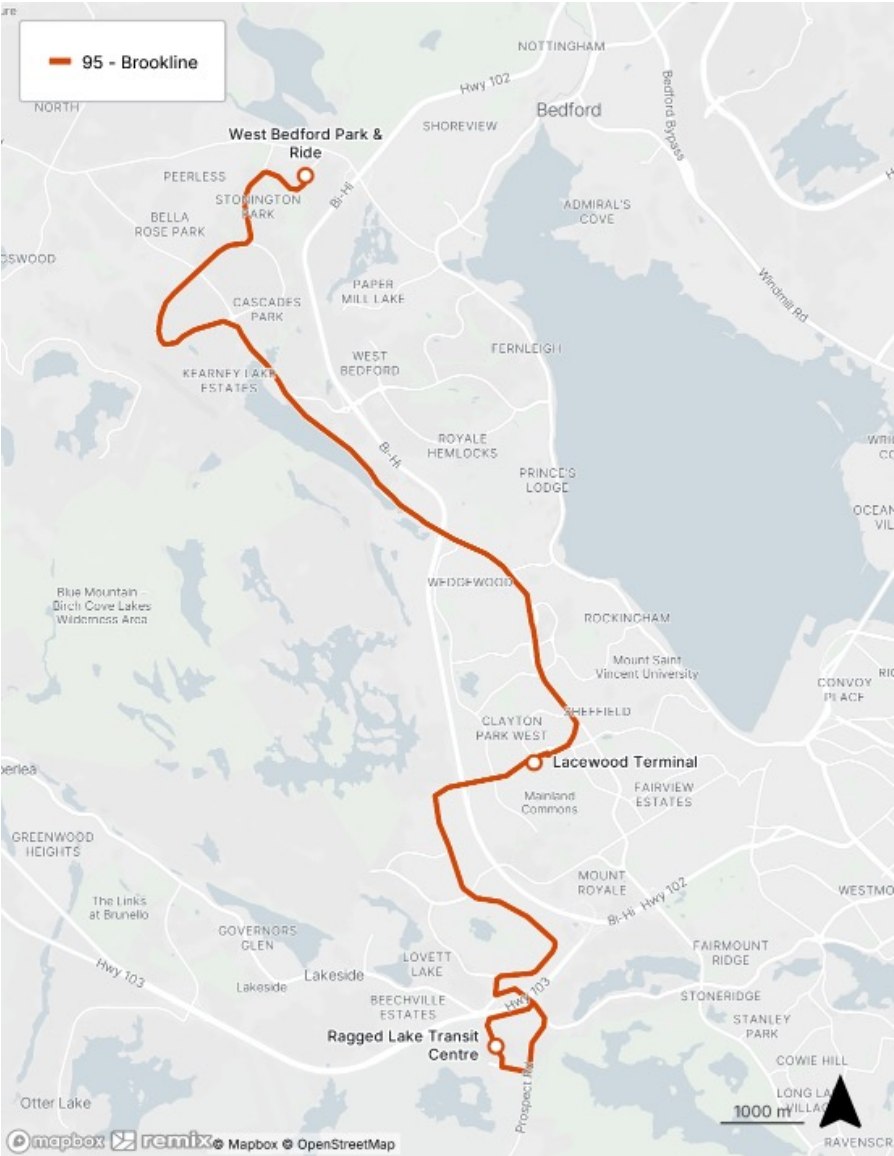


Express routes are being improved across the network through **Additional Service**, **Extensions & Modifications**, and **Service Pattern Changes**.

Route(s)	Improvement	Change
123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194	Additional Service	Additional trips in the evening and early morning to increase service span.
194	Additional Service	Additional trips during AM & PM peak to meet demand.
165	Extensions & Modifications	Reroute to serve Portland Estates to restore cancelled transit service.
192	Extensions & Modifications	Extend to West Bedford Park & Ride to increase travel options, coverage, and connectivity.
330	Service Pattern Changes	Bypass Sheldrake Lake Park & Ride on select trips to speed up travel times.

New Route

95 – Brookline



Route 95 should be established to provide service to new developments in West Bedford and additional connections to Bayers Lake. Route 95 should enable riders from West Bedford to connect to Lacewood Terminal and is intended to provide a direct North-South off-peninsula connection. Additionally, Route 95 will provide extra travel options to and from Ragged Lake Industrial Park.

Route 95 would be designated as a Local Route and would have a 30-minute frequency on weekdays and 60-minute frequency during weekends. Frequency may be adjusted in the future as ridership develops.



Areas of potential future investment in the transit network

Many other system-wide and targeted improvements that would support demand, improve service reliability and/or support growth were explored during the development of this plan. However, the following investments exceed the potential level of resources expected in the life of the Core Service Plan 2025-27 and as such are not included as recommendations. The following list captures the main concepts and service adjustments, based on internal analyses and service requests from passengers and community partners, that fall outside the scope of the Core Service Plan 2025-27.

Resource estimations for each item vary depending on routing and level of service.



Investing to increase service where ridership demand exceeds service levels

Item	Alignment with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
Frequent and consistent service on all Corridor Routes and ferry services. Increase frequencies to a minimum of 10 minutes during peak hours and 15 minutes during off-peak hours and weekends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves service reliability and improves wait times when transferring More inclusive and improved mobility options Expected high ridership return on investment Support transition to the Rapid Transit network 	<p>The Corridor Routes (Routes 1-10), combined with ferry service, could be considered as a precursor to the Rapid Transit network.</p> <p>Present service frequencies vary between routes and across the different time periods. The resources needed to update to this level of frequency would involve approximately an additional 90,000 - 300,000 service hours and an increase in fleet, Operators and ferry crews to staff this additional service.</p>	<p>\$10M - \$30M per year</p> <p>35 - 100 additional buses</p>



Investing in a more reliable network

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
<p>Update Saturday and Sunday schedules to be equivalent across the entire network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves service reliability and reduces travel times during these periods • More inclusive and improved mobility options • Responds to the ridership growth trends during these periods, particularly the increased reliance on transit on Sunday 	<p>This would improve service reliability, improve connections between transfers and reduce travel times for transit journeys taken on the weekends—which are significantly longer than in other periods.</p> <p>The service increases will require additional resources and investment to support the increase in service hours needed to update frequencies across the network. There are currently no, or limited, options to reallocate resources from existing service levels as greater ridership demand remains during peak periods.</p> <p>This network wide update would deliver greater impact than our current approach to adjusting frequencies based on existing resources.</p> <p>There is significant potential for high ridership return from this investment.</p>	<p>\$1.5M - \$2.5M per year</p>
<p>Operate on weekday schedules instead of Sunday schedules on holidays that have higher ridership potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves service reliability and reduces travel times during these periods • More inclusive and improved mobility options • Responds to the ridership trends during these periods 	<p>Many riders rely on transit to commute to work or for daily trips during holiday periods, such as Victoria Day, where service is currently low.</p> <p>Updating the level of service would respond to current ridership demand.</p>	<p>~\$1.7M per year</p>

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INVESTING IN A MORE RELIABLE NETWORK (CONTINUED)

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
<p>Additional service and routes to Burnside</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnside is an important employment destination: more transit options to this industrial park will improve service reliability • More inclusive and improved mobility options • Improves connections between communities and across the region 	<p>Burnside has seen a significant increase in boardings since 2018. However, the industrial park features developments that spread throughout an extended area, making it a challenge to adequately serve with conventional bus routes. Employees working in this location also have higher variability in working hours.</p> <p>Alternative service models may provide a higher level of service in this area and should be considered.</p>	<p>\$2M - \$10M per year</p>
<p>Direct connection between Spryfield to Bayers Lake via Dunbrack Street</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves network connectivity • Potential for more inclusive and improved mobility options 	<p>Existing land-use and population density means a direct connection along a section of Dunbrack Street south of Highway 102 is not suited to conventional bus service.</p> <p>This direct connection has been long requested by the community. However, due to existing alternatives which include indirect trips and transfers, the expected ridership potential is lower than in other potential crosstown connections, and so this route has not been recommended.</p> <p>Adding a direct transit link between these locations may be more feasible if alternative service models scale across the network and region.</p>	<p>\$1M - \$4M per year</p>

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INVESTING IN A MORE RELIABLE NETWORK (CONTINUED)

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
Improved connections between West Bedford, Bedford and Sackville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity Potential for more inclusive and improved mobility options 	<p>Improved connections would require implementing additional routes or extend existing routes. The link between West Bedford and Lacewood (proposed Route 95) has been deemed a higher priority based on ridership demand and community requests. This initiative may be more feasible in future network updates.</p>	<p>\$500K - \$3M per year</p>
Improved connections for the North End of Halifax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity Improves service reliability and reduces travel times during these periods 	<p>More direct connections linking the North End with off-peninsula communities including Burnside, Dartmouth and Clayton Park would reduce travel times and the number of transfers needed to reach these destinations.</p> <p>The limit on options and the resources required to implement additional service exceeds the resources available at this time. Implementing more direct connections between these locations may be more feasible in future network updates and / or with further development of the Young District.</p>	<p>\$1M - \$4.5M per year</p>
More limited stop services including terminal-to-terminal express services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces travel times and improves cross-regional connections 	<p>Some transit riders have reported challenges with long, multi-leg journeys between communities outside of Downtown Halifax. Limited-stop routes directly connecting terminals can speed up these trips.</p> <p>This type of service would require additional resources and would require well-timed transfers between routes.</p>	<p>\$3M - \$10M per year</p>





Investing strategically to support growth

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
Provide transit service to the Lucasville community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity close to the existing network and a well served transit terminal More inclusive and improved mobility options High community demand for transit service 	<p>Provide a link between Lucasville and the nearby transit network. Residents – many of which use transit already – experience issues getting to and from the nearby Sackville Transit Terminal.</p> <p>There is potential for high ridership demand as members of this community have been advocating for transit for many years. This community has areas of population density viable for transit, particularly as a test case for an alternative transit service model.</p>	<p>New service models are under consideration for some locations as part of the Microtransit module. As this community falls outside of the transit service boundary, the addition of service is not within the scope of the Core Service Plan.</p>
Provide transit service to the Fall River community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity close to existing transit routes More inclusive and improved mobility options 	<p>Fall River lies at a distance from the current stop on Regional Express Route 320. Issues with last-mile connections to this community include walking long distances to reach the nearest stops along roads without a sidewalk or paved shoulder.</p> <p>In addition to reviewing feedback through the engagement process, a change to the Route 320 to travel via the new road was considered. Modifying the existing service would significantly impact the service quality and the role this route plays as an important regional connector.</p> <p>The advocacy for transit service from community members in Fall River suggests strong feasibility for transit service, particularly as a test case for an alternative transit service model.</p>	<p>New service models are under consideration for some locations as part of the Microtransit module.</p> <p>Costing estimate for conventional service can add \$130K - \$230K per year to modify route 320.</p>

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INVESTING STRATEGICALLY TO SUPPORT GROWTH

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
Routes to serve areas of cultural and social significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved network connectivity, close to existing transit routes More inclusive and improved mobility options Responds to high community requests and supports greater community connectivity 	<p>Community members across Halifax have advocated for transit service to a range of locations in the region, including beaches on the Eastern Shore, heritage sites, places of worship and community centers. The level of interest and support is aligned with goals of increasing community connections and demonstrates the value of providing service to these areas. Areas we receive regular requests for service from, include Rainbow Haven, Africville, ISKCON Temple and the Nova Scotia Islamic Community Centre (NSICC).</p> <p>The use of an alternative transit service model to provide service to these locations may increase the feasibility of these proposals.</p>	<p>New service models are under consideration for some locations as part of the Microtransit module. Some of these locations are outside the urban transit boundary, while others are located within the existing service network, but their locations or other factors make providing service difficult.</p>
Increase frequencies on all local routes to a minimum of 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity, service reliability and reduces travel time during these periods More inclusive and improved mobility options Encourages transit use in suburban areas 	<p>Frequencies on local routes vary across the network, with some having hourly service and others with 30-minute frequency during peak.</p> <p>This network-wide update would deliver more impact than the current approach to adjusting frequencies based on existing resources but requires significant investment in extra service hours and vehicles.</p> <p>There is significant potential for high ridership returns from this investment.</p>	<p>\$7.3M - \$8M per year</p> <p>20 - 25 additional buses</p>

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INVESTING STRATEGICALLY TO SUPPORT GROWTH

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
<p>Eastern Passage to Portland Hills route</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity Potential for more inclusive and improved mobility options 	<p>This direct connection has been long requested by the community. However, due to existing land-use and density along Caldwell Road makes a direct connection not suited to conventional bus service. Adding a direct transit link between these locations may be more feasible if alternative service models scale across the network and region.</p>	<p>\$775K - \$1.5M per year</p>
<p>Extend Route 6A/B/C Woodside/ Eastern Passage/ Heritage Hills to Wrights Cove</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a strong cross-town connection for Dartmouth and Eastern Passage residents and additional connections into Burnside 	<p>This change would require investment in extra service hours and vehicles. Increasing the level of service that will result from the Ocean Breeze and Shannon Park developments may be implemented once they are constructed.</p>	<p>\$600K - \$1M per year</p> <p>The resources required to implement this recommendation mean that it is currently out of scope of the Core Service Plan. As more funding becomes available, there may be opportunities to extend route 6A/B/C.</p>
<p>Extend service on a Corridor Route to 24 hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity Potential for more inclusive and improved mobility options Enhances regional connectivity when paired with nighttime service on Route 320 	<p>Implementing a 24-hour night route would require additional resources.</p> <p>Minimal requests were received during public engagement on the potential for later night service in the dense urban areas. However, it can be expected that operating the Route 320 Airport/Fall River would result in requests for additional routes to operate to connect and allow transfers at the Bridge Terminal or Scotia Square. Providing overnight service on additional routes would exceed the resources limits anticipated in the short term, but several Corridor Routes would potentially be good candidates in the future, including the Route 1, 7, or 10.</p> <p>Further analysis is required before implementing this initiative.</p>	<p>\$320K - \$630K per year</p>

What's next?

The Core Service Plan 2025-2027 makes recommendations aimed at improving the quality and reliability of transit across the region. The recommendations are expected to be implemented over a three-year timeframe. While the Core Service Plan is a short term plan that addresses specific routes and service levels over the next three years, other initiatives will be developed as part of the Strategic Roadmap.

As part of the Strategic Roadmap, several plans, reviews and guidelines are underway or planned. These initiatives will advance many of our guiding principles and improve transit service for riders.

Expanding Choice Through New Service Models. The **Microtransit Plan** – currently under development – will establish flexible solutions to complement the fixed-route network and provide alternatives for areas or times of day where traditional service may not be practical. The **Microtransit Plan** will outline recommendations to pilot innovative options to communities that are located close to transit hubs but do not have service.

Delivering Reliability People Can Count On. Service Reliability is a high priority for our customers and community partners. The **Service Reliability Review** will involve the breadth of data, performance trends and operational insights available to identify the major characteristics contributing to delays and slowdowns across the network. The **Service Reliability Review** will establish recommendations aimed at reducing travel times, improving schedule consistency and delivering on service reliability.

Customer Experience: Designing Transit Around People, Not Just Routes. Our work on customer experience will include a focus on accessibility and inclusion. Improvements will enhance the rider experience by addressing barriers to

mobility and ensuring that services are designed for all users, including those with diverse needs. Two modules fall under this theme – the **Accessible Transit Review** which is currently in the early stages of planning and the **Customer Experience** module which will establish passenger-focused standards that will apply across multiple areas of transit service delivery.

Redesigning the transit network to integrate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and higher-order corridors. An investment in rapid transit would create faster and more direct travel options and support long-term growth across the municipality. A network redesign will be prepared that determines how the existing transit network can be modified to be best aligned for the future in the the **Bus Rapid Transit Integration** service plan.

Behind the scenes, **Modernizing Infrastructure and Technology** will provide the foundation for dependable operations and real-time information. Upgrades to facilities, systems and digital tools will improve efficiency and enhance customer experience. Two **Strategic Roadmap** modules align with this theme – the **Transit Infrastructure Standards Development** and the **Technology Implementation Plan**.

Finally, **Enhancing Ferry Services** ensures system-wide consistency and integration. The **Ferry Service Operational Review**, within the **Strategic Roadmap**, is in the early stages of planning.

Appendix

Engaging on the Core Service Plan 2025-27

The following proposals were used in the engagement materials and events to get feedback from residents and passengers who rely on transit for their daily trips. The proposals are broken down by theme and cover: service adjustments to address ridership demand, low performing routes under consideration for reduced or cancelled service, network changes to support growth, and routes which may need to be rerouted due to changes in the road network.

Service adjustments to address ridership demand

Route performance, ridership demand and adherence to service standards are routinely tracked and reported on. Buses which consistently get too crowded and go into service overload is a key indicator that more frequent service is needed, particularly when analysis indicates high ridership is an ongoing trend. Increasing the number of trips on these routes during busy periods is given a higher priority than other areas where investments may be needed.

Route	Period/s where more service may be required	Priority
3 Crosstown	Multiple	High
8 Sackville	Weekday	High
9A/B Greystone (A), Herring Cove (B)	Weekend	High
21 Timberlea	Sunday	High
1 Spring Garden	Weekend	Medium
2 Fairview	Weekend	Medium
4 Universities	Weekend	Medium
28 Bayers Lake	Weekend	Medium
72 Portland Hills	Weekend	Medium
88 Bedford Commons	Weekend	Medium
90 West Bedford	Weekend	Medium
91 Hemlock Ravine	Weekday	Medium
194 West Bedford Express	Weekday	Medium
5 Portland	Weekend	Moderate
24 Leiblin Park	Weekend	Moderate
39 Flamingo	Weekday	Moderate
30A/B Parkland (A), Dunbrack (B)	Sunday	Moderate
53 Highfield	Sunday	Moderate
123 Timberlea Express	Weekday	Moderate
320 Airport - Fall River Regional Express	Weekday	Moderate

There are a lot of potential opportunities to increase service on routes or at certain periods to improve service quality and reliability. For example, widespread frequency increases during non-peak periods would respond to the shift in travel patterns we are seeing across the network.

Recognizing that we are constrained in the ability to implement widespread service increases coupled with our mandate to provide transit service with an efficient use of resources and meet financial and environmental sustainability goals, we prepared a priority list of routes with the greatest need for increased services. This list was shared during engagement to get feedback on how our evaluation aligned with the experience of our passengers.

The routes with the highest need for level of service increases included:

- Route 3 – Crosstown
- Route 8 – Sackville
- Route 9A/B – Greystone (A) / Herring Cove (B)
- Route 21 – Timberlea



Low performing routes under consideration for reduced or cancelled service

Ideally, our analysis would identify resources underutilized within the transit system which can be reallocated to respond to ridership growth where needed. However, our network is operating at, or near capacity. Those routes with low ridership demand provide important coverage across the network and within the region. One exception, Route 93 Bedford Highway, was proposed for cancellation and tied to increasing frequency on Route 8. Route 93 has a limited-service run and is one of least used routes in the network. We outlined a proposal to cancel this route to get feedback from passengers.

Addressing ridership demand

Requests for more frequent service or 'more buses' garnered the largest number of responses when we engaged riders. Requests for increases were connected to the following factors:

1. Capacity and comfort on buses on certain routes during busy periods. These concerns were related to crowding and the need to stand on long routes, express services, or buses delayed by traffic.
2. Many comments connected increased frequency with reduced wait times and overall travel times, by:
 - a. Providing more options to make connections when transferring to other routes in the network
 - b. Reducing the impact on service delays
 - c. Reducing the number of overloads and service cancellations
3. The need to respond to shifting travel patterns by extending service spans on routes and express routes.

Lengthy travel times and issues with service reliability impact the confidence passengers have in taking trips on transit to reach destinations on time, particularly in the case of traveling to work, picking up children and attending medical appointments.



Service adjustments to address ridership demand

In reviewing our priority list many agreed with our assessment, however a few other routes increased in priority because of the feedback we received from engagement. The table below outlines our revised list of routes with the highest demand for service increases, when they are needed and why.

Route	Proposed change	Rationale
Route 3 – Crosstown	More service during peak hours, Saturdays and Sunday evenings	To alleviate overcrowding on weekdays and increase service quality on Saturdays.
Route 5 – Portland	More service on Sundays	Increase service quality and reliability.
Route 8 - Sackville	More service during all periods	To alleviate overcrowding on weekdays and increase service reliability across all periods.
Route 9A/B – Greystone/Herring Cove	Additional trips during the afternoon peak, increased frequency on weekends	To alleviate overcrowding during the afternoon peak and service quality during weekends.
Route 21 - Timberlea	Increased frequency on Sundays	Responds to high ridership demand on Sunday trips.
Route 28 – Bayers Lake	Increased frequency during peak hours and weekends	To alleviate overcrowding and respond to high ridership demand.
Route 56 – Dartmouth Crossing	Additional trips during the afternoon	Respond to concerns raised during engagement and ridership demand during the afternoon peak.
91 – Hemlock Ravine	Increased frequency during peak hours & weekends	We heard riders experience long waits to connect from other services during the afternoon peak, increased frequency will improve service quality and respond to ridership growth in this community area.
194 – West Bedford Express	Additional trips during AM & PM peak	Feedback and data analysis indicates high demand for Route 194.
Express routes (123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194)	Extended service span	Responds to shift in commuting patterns and aligns with health sector workers who rely on these services.
320 – Airport-Fall River	Additional late-night trips to provide 24-hour service 7 days a week	Feedback and requests from partner organizations and passengers indicate that an extended service span will improve this regional connection for travelers and those working night / early morning shifts to commute to and from work.

Network changes to support growth

Based on recent and planned development and ridership demand growth, three areas were under consideration for revised routing to provide transit service to these locations.

The following is a summary of the materials and proposals shared during engagement for the Core Service Plan. For more information, see <https://engagehalifax.ca/core-service-plan>.

Bayers Lake had seen steady growth in development coupled with a high increase in boardings over the past few years. Minor adjustments had increased service to this community area, but it seemed time for a more robust review of the ways routes connected riders to destinations across the network.

West Bedford had a recent influx of residents living in new developments in the area, some with medium and high density. Recent upgrades in this area have resulted in a high ridership return on investment. With more development to be completed within the next two years, additional service would be needed to serve this expected increase in demand.

Similarly, **Port Wallace** has significant residential development, including an expansion of the road network, which is due to be completed within the next two years. The changes to the road network and additional population provided an opportunity to extend transit to this area. Each of these focus areas were ideal locations for strategic investments to keep pace with growth and new developments.

The **Bayers Lake Business Park** is a popular shopping and employment destination. It is also home to services such as the Bayers Lake Community Outpatient Centre. Different concepts proposed network changes to

improve transit to this community, including expanding service to Hobsons Lake Drive and the section of Chain Lake Drive currently without service. Proposals included a new route linking Lacewood Terminal to Ragged Lake—with an option for this to extend to the West Bedford community and terminate at the West Bedford Park & Ride—and modifications to Route 21 Timberlea and Route 28 Bayers Lake.

- Feedback indicated a preference for Route 28 to keep its current routing to maintain existing connections to Bayers Lake Outpatient Centre.
- Feedback on Route 21 and Route Y (the southern half of Route 95) indicated a preference for routing along the southern portion of Chain Lake Drive, indicating a strong demand to travel there. Route Y was ultimately selected to travel on this corridor, to create a more direct route.
- The resulting network ended up incorporating elements of both concept A and B.
- Feedback indicated a strong preference for a combined route linking West Bedford with Ragged Lake while serving Clayton Park and Bayers Lake. This combined route has been provisionally named Route 95 Brookline.



West Bedford is a rapidly growing community, with further growth expected as additional developments are planned. Different concepts proposed network changes to improve transit to the West Bedford and Clayton Park communities. Proposals included a new route linking West Bedford to Lacewood Terminal—with the new route—and modifications to Route 192 Hemlock Ravine Express or Route 196 Basinview Express.

Port Wallace is a growing residential community, with plans to build 4,800 new housing units and expand the existing road network. Similarly, Port Wallace has significant residential development, including an expansion of the road network, which is currently under development. As part of a new residential development in the Port Wallace area, Avenue du Portage will be extended to connect with Waverley Road. Proposals to extend transit service to the Port Wallace community included extending **Route 54** along Avenue du Portage to Waverley Road and to loop around the new road network in this location and extend **Route 55** along Waverley Road to loop around the road network currently under construction.

- Feedback did not indicate a strong preference for either network concept. However, when asked about individual routes, there was a strong preference for the Concept A routing for Route X (the in-development name for the route). See route 95 on page 25.
- Feedback indicated support for extending Route 192 and diverting Route 196 to serve West Bedford Park & Ride. Ultimately, only the Route 192 extension was recommended, as other increase in service to West Bedford Park & Ride made the Route 196 modification unnecessary.

- Public feedback was in favor of the modification to Route 56 and the extensions for Route 54 and Route 55.
- The main reason cited for being in favor of these changes was the ability to travel to and from new destinations.
- Riders also reported issues with overcrowding on Route 56 during the afternoon and requested more service capacity.

Route modifications to improve service quality and reliability

Route 24

Options were presented to the public for extending Route 24 to travel into downtown to resolve operational issues and allow operators to access facilities at a transit terminal. After internal review, we found that the most critical elements to resolving the Route 24's Operational issues is to add additional time to the schedule to allow it to perform on-time. An extension of the route is still under consideration as well.

Route 330

We asked the public about their preference for having select trips on Route 330 bypass Shel Drake Lake Park & Ride to increase travel times, as well as adding an extra stop along the 330's route. Feedback favored bypassing Shel Drake Lake on some trips. Feedback was more divided on whether to add additional stops on the route and where they should be added. No additional stops are recommended at this time. Feedback was more divided on whether to add additional stops on the route and where they should be added. No additional stops are recommended at this time.

Route 93

We proposed cancelling Route 93 in favor of increasing service on the Route 8, as the two routes serve similar destinations. Although many survey respondents were in favor of cancelling Route 93, frequent users of the route provided feedback about the route being extremely important for their commute to destinations along Bedford Highway. Instead of cancelling the route, we recommend rerouting Route 93 to terminate at the West Bedford Park & Ride to reduce the operating cost of the route while maintaining connections between downtown Halifax and the Bedford Highway.

Routes which may need to be rerouted due to changes in the road network

As part of our engagement, we asked the public for feedback on transit network concepts to adapt the network to this change. Public feedback to the concepts was inconclusive but showed a preference for keeping the routes as similar to their current routing as possible. Concerns were raised about the impacts of network changes resulting in additional buses travelling through already-congested corridors.

The Morris Street conversion was put on hold by City Council, and we are no longer proposing any changes to transit routing on the street. Should Morris Street in downtown Halifax become a one-way in the future, we will explore changes to the routing at that time.