

HSR Next: Moving Hamilton Forward

Service Standards

HSR Next: Moving Hamilton Forward has been built upon enhancing the service standards for Hamiltonians. These service standards guide how transit will operate and helps establish metrics on which to monitor system efficiency.

Types of Conventional Bus Service

HSR Next operates four types of conventional transit routes:

- **Rapid Routes:** Rapid Routes enable hub-to-hub direct and fast trips with higher frequencies and limited stops. These routes form the BLAST^x rapid transit network.
- **Collector Routes:** Collector Routes provide hub-to-hub connectivity, although with higher coverage and more stops than Rapid Routes.
- **Local Routes:** Local Routes serve as feeders to hubs, Collector Routes, and Rapid Routes, as well as the LRT to provide increased first mile/last mile accessibility.
- **On-Demand Service:** On-Demand Service does not operate a fixed route or schedule and instead is a stop-to-stop service that dynamically adjusts its route as customers request to be picked up within a defined service area.

What's New: The current transit system operates express routes, fixed routes and two types of on-demand services. As HSR Next builds out, it defines route types that vary based on parameters like how frequently the bus comes along to how far apart bus stops are. Rather than holding all routes to the same standard, routes are measured relative to their type and standards can reflect their intended purpose.

Service Proximity and Connectivity

HSR Next provides several service proximity and connectivity targets to ensure nearby service is provided to residents. These measures represent how close people are to transit and where it can take them. Distances indicated are as-the-crow-flies and do not account for barriers impacting walk distances:

- **90% of all population and employment** within the urban transit area to be within 400m (about a 5-minute walk) of a bus stop or within an on-demand service area, which is the current standard that will be maintained.
- **95% of all population and employment** within the urban transit area is within 800m (about 10-minute walk) of any bus stop or within an on-demand service area, which is a new standard that will be introduced.
- **100% of routes** will provide a connection to a GO Train station by one or less transfers, which is a new standard that will be introduced.

What's New: **HSR Next** puts more importance on regional connections to GO Transit and reflects the unique impact of on-demand service on catchment.

Hours of Operation

HSR will operate conventional and on demand transit during the following hours, at a minimum:

	Fixed Route	On-Demand
Weekday	5:00am – 2:00am	5:00am – 2:00am
Saturday	5:00am – 2:00am	5:00am – 2:00am
Sunday	6:00am – 1:00am	6:00am – 12:00am

These hours of operation are set as a minimum standard, extend Sunday service by 1 hour and define operating hours for on-demand transit zones.

What’s New: Buses now operate until 1am on Sunday, an hour later.

Frequency of Service

HSR bus service is designed to operate on the following frequencies, as a minimum. This chart answers the question “how frequently does my bus come?”

	Frequency of Buses		
	Rapid	Collector	Local
Weekday Peak	10	15	20
Weekday Midday	15	20	20
Weekday Early Evening	15	20	30
Weekday Late Evening	20	30	30
Saturday AM	20	30	30
Saturday Day	15	20	30
Saturday Evening	20	30	30

**Peak periods are defined as 7:00am – 10:00am and 3:00pm – 8:00pm*

What’s New: Simply put, **HSR Next** provides more buses, more often, making it faster to get where you’re going. Current service standards are every 30 minutes and hourly in the evening, levels that are routinely exceeded by key routes. Moving to a route hierarchy improves service legibility for customers and ensures route performance can be measured against relevant standards (i.e., comparing a rapid route to 10-minute peak headways rather than 30-minutes in current standards).

Bus Stop Placement

Bus stops must be conveniently located for customers, but every bus stop impacts the efficiency of the overall route. Therefore, minimum distances between bus stops are subject to periodic review and have been established as:

	Rapid	Collector	Local
Average spacing	800m	300m	250m
Minimum spacing	500m	250m	150m
Maximum spacing	Major destinations*	500m	400m

**Major destinations may include post-secondary institutions, regional and local transit hubs, arenas and community centres, etc.*

What's New: Bus stop locations will be reviewed and located based spacing suited to the type of route it is. For example, Rapid Routes prioritize longer-distance travel across Hamilton – stops are spaced further apart and located at key destinations so the route can run faster and minimize stop times. Local routes, on the other hand, are designed to facilitate local travel within neighbourhoods with connections to Collector or Rapid routes along the way. As such, local access is prioritized over end-to-end speed.

Passenger Loads

How many people are on a bus are a measure of demand but also passenger comfort. Overcrowding may only occur along a portion of a route, therefore, crowding standards are applied as an average during peak and off-peak periods to assess the whole route. Crowding is assessed by the number of passengers on the bus compared to the number of seats on that size of vehicle.

	Rapid	Collector	Local	On-Demand
Peak	125%	150%	150%	100%
Off-Peak	100%	100%	100%	100%

What's New: The current network established passenger loads as 125% during peak. **HSR Next** sets out higher load counts across the network based on route type and expected time on the vehicle. Local routes, for example, are designed for short trips where standing may be acceptable; long-distance Rapid routes are designed around lighter loads with most passengers seated.

Service Utilization

The number of passengers using a service at a given time can provide insight into how the route is performing. This is typically measured as passengers per revenue vehicle hour. If these

minimum values are not achieved, measures may be taken to make the service more productive or efficient.

	Rapid		Collector		Local		On-Demand	
	Minimum	Target	Minimum	Target	Minimum	Target	Minimum	Target
Peak	50	60	35	45	15	30	5	7
Off-Peak	40	50	25	35	10	25	3	7

On-Time Performance

On-time performance is one of the greatest impacts to the customer experience and is directly tied to service reliability. The on-time performance standards are:

- Buses shall be no more than 1 minute early and no more than 5 minutes late to arrive at published time points, 90% of the time.
- A bus will never depart early from a terminal or hub.

What's New: We reduced running early from 2 minutes down to 1 minute to improve reliability for customers and established strict schedule adherence from terminals and hubs to help transfer connections.

Equity

Equity is a significant consideration under discussion within many aspects of transit planning and often difficult to quantify and monitor. As a starting point to provide more equity-based service development, Transit will consider the following:

- **Low Income Neighbourhood Productivity:** Census dissemination areas with more than 50% of its population below the low-income cut-off rate within the urban boundary to be subject to additional analysis if service utilization targets are not met. Service adjustments will be considered before service cuts.
- **Low Income Neighbourhood Accessibility:** Census dissemination areas with more than 30% of its population below the low-income cut-off rate within the urban boundary that are currently outside a 400m walk will be provided transit service, even if the population and employment density is not what is typically considered transit supportive.

What's New: The current service standards impose unilateral service standards. Since transit use varies by neighbourhood, we can now evaluate neighbourhoods on based on income as a metric before deciding if service should be reduced.