



Core Service Plan 2025-27

HALIFAX
TRANSIT

Level of Service

Overview



Level of Service

What is level of service?

Level of service includes how frequently transit service operates on existing routes.

How does Halifax Transit determine which routes may need more frequency?

Halifax Transit analyses all routes across the network to determine if current frequencies meet service quality and reliability guidelines. This analysis reviews:

- Customer and Operator feedback
- Ridership data
- Passenger overload incidents (i.e., are unable to take on additional passengers)
- Baseline frequency for each service type (Corridor, Local, Express, Regional Express and Rural routes)

The level of service network analysis tracks incidents where demand exceeds service levels, including overcrowding and / or overload incidents. Routes where ridership numbers regularly seem to exceed the current level of service during busy periods indicate a high demand for additional service (see figure 1).

Demand for additional service	
	Not evident
	Very low demand
	Low demand
	Moderate demand
	High demand
Incidents where demand exceeds service levels	
	None recorded
	Rarely
	Occasionally
	Semi-regularly
	Regularly

Route	Demand for additional service	Incidents where demand exceeds service levels				
		Weekday Peak	Weekday Midday	Weekday Evening	Saturday	Sunday
1 - Spring Garden						
2 - Fairview						
3 - Crosstown						
4 - Universities						
5 - Portland						
6A - Woodside						
6B - Eastern Passage						
6C - Heritage Hills						
7A/B - Peninsula						
8 - Sackville						
9A - Greystone						
9B - Herring Cove						
10A - Bridge Terminal						
10B - Micmac Terminal						
10C - Westphal						
21 - Timberlea						
22 - Armdale						
24 - Leiblín Park						
25 - Governors Brook						
26 - Springvale						
28 - Bayers Lake						
29 - Barrington						
30A/B - Parkland (A) Dunbrack (B)						
39 - Flamingo						
50 - Dockyard						
51A - Windmill						
51B - Windmill						
53 - Highfield						
54 - Montebello						
55 - Port Wallace						
56 - Dartmouth Crossing						
58 - Woodlawn						
59 - Colby						
61 - North Preston						
62 - Grahams Grove						
63 - Mount Edward						
64 - Burnside						
65 - Caldwell						

Route	Demand for additional service	Incidents where demand exceeds service levels				
		Weekday Peak	Weekday Midday	Weekday Evening	Saturday	Sunday
67 - Baker						
68 - Cherry Brook						
72 - Portland Hills						
82 - First Lake						
83 - Springfield						
84 - Glendale						
85 - Millwood						
86 - Beaver Bank						
87 - Sackville-Dartmouth						
88 - Bedford Commons						
90 - Larry Uteck						
91 - Hemlock Ravine						
93 - Bedford Highway						
123 - Timberlea Express						
127 - Cowie Hill Express						
135 - Flamingo Express						
136 - Farnham Gate Express						
137 - Clayton Park Express						
138 - Parkland Express						
158 - Woodlawn Express						
159 - Colby Express						
161 - North Preston Express						
165 - Caldwell Express						
168A - Auburn Express						
168B - Cherry Brook Express						
182 - First Lake Express						
183 - Springfield Express						
185 - Millwood Express						
186 - Beaver Bank Express						
192 - Hemlock Ravine Express						
194 - West Bedford Express						
196 - Basinview Express						
320 - Airport - Fall River Regional Express						
330 - Tantallon-Sheldrake Lake Regional Express						
370 - Porters Lake Regional Express						
401 - Porters Lake						
415 - Purcells Cove						
433 - Tantallon						

Figure 1: Level of Service Network Analysis

Priority list of routes requiring more frequent service - Top 20

Halifax Transit’s ability to increase service frequency is dependent on available resources. To guide decisions on which routes more urgently need extra service, a priority list has been developed from our level of service network analysis (see figure 1).

Routes where ridership regularly exceeds service levels indicate a high demand for additional trips during busy periods. For example, routes with high ridership which regularly overload during busy periods, rank high on the priority list. Tracking when demand is high helps identify the periods where additional service may be needed. The Top 20 list (see figure 2) includes the routes that may need more trips to meet demand.

Main Trends: Corridor routes have high ridership across all time periods. When these routes overload, many passengers are impacted. Some weekend trips have seen large ridership increases, indicating more trips may be needed during busy periods. Additionally, other routes currently have a low level of service, particularly during off-peak weekday and weekend periods. Increasing frequency on these routes would improve service quality and reliability.

Proposed level of service increases

The following routes rank high on and under consideration for increased frequency of service:

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

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

Figure 2: Frequency Increase Priority - Top 20

Route 93 Bedford Highway - Proposed cancellation

Route 93 Bedford Highway offers morning and evening service for those travelling between Cobequid Terminal/Bedford Highway and downtown Halifax. Route 93 follows similar routing to Route 8 Sackville, except in peninsular Halifax, where it travels along Lady Hammond Road and Barrington Street (see figure 3). Route 93 is one of the least used services within the network. Whereas Route 8 has high ridership and more frequent service would improve service quality and reliability. Halifax Transit proposes cancelling Route 93 to increase service frequency on Route 8 during high demand periods.

Rationale: Route 8 experiences regular overloads on weekday services (see table below) indicating additional service is needed to meet demand. According to 2023/24 ridership data, riders tend to travel in identical patterns along both routes. Most travelers boarded and alighted at stops served by both routes, including Scotia Square, Cobequid Terminal and along the Bedford Highway. It is proposed that most of the impact from discontinuing Route 93 would be addressed by the increase in service frequency on Route 8. The table below provides key ridership data for Route 8 and Route 93 from 2024/2025 informing this proposed change.

	Route 93	Route 8
Passengers per service hour (AM Peak)	26	44
Passengers per service hour (PM Peak)	25	55
Avg passengers/weekday (Q3 2024/25)	546	4,361
Overloads in 2024	0	213

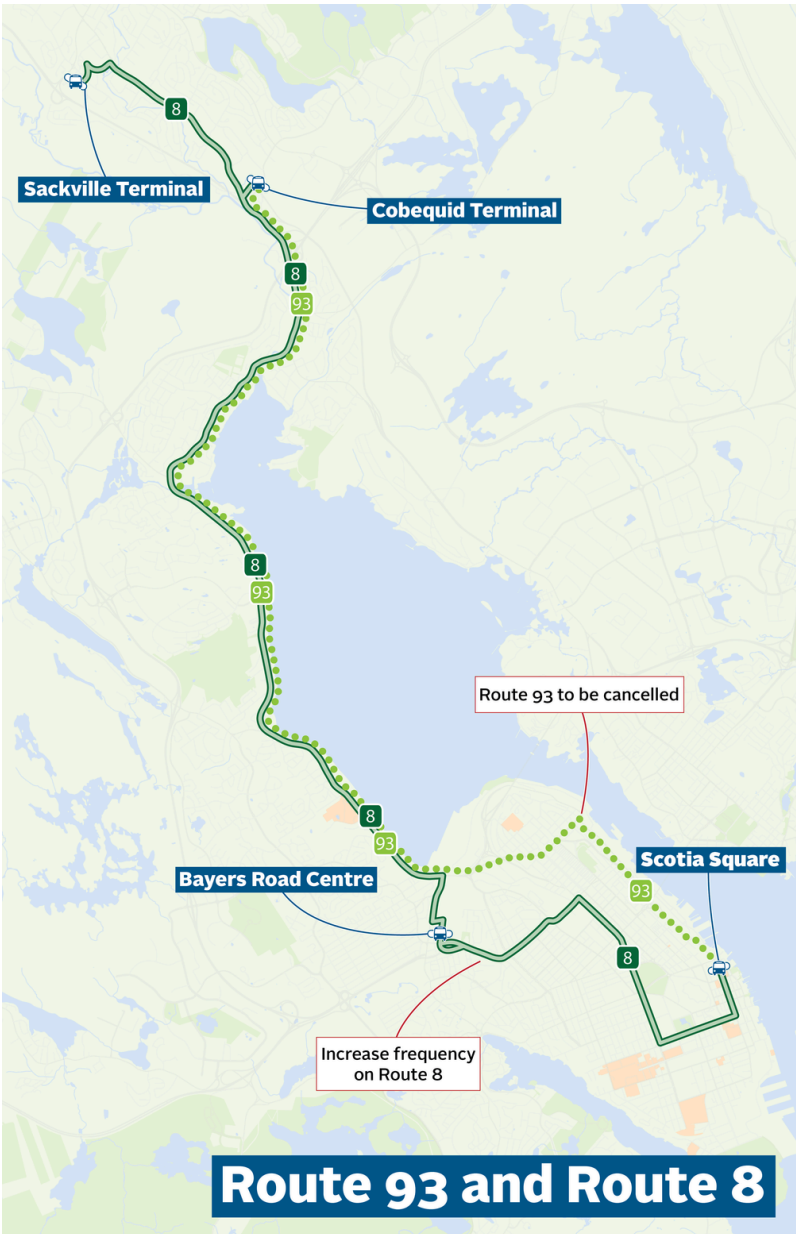


Figure 3: Route 8 Sackville and Route 93 Bedford Hwy, routing and key stops

Ridership Patterns



2018 to 2024

Halifax has seen an overall increase in transit ridership in recent years (see figure 4).

Although ridership was impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, ridership increased 15 per cent over the previous year in both 2022/23 and 2023/24. Some increases are due to network changes, including the implementation of the Corridor Routes, and due to ongoing adjustments to service frequency on popular routes.

New programs that reduce barriers to using transit* have contributed to some of the increased ridership. The recent rapid population growth in the region has also resulted in higher transit use. Many new residents rely on transit to get to work and for other daily trips, like shopping or accessing essential services, resulting in a shift in travel patterns across the network.

**Programs include the Affordable Access Transit Pass and the Student Transit Pass.*

Main trends:

Corridor routes, and other routes which serve communities with medium to high population density continue to see high ridership and steady increases, across all time periods. Some weekend trips are experiencing significant increases in ridership, especially on Sundays where some of the highest increases have occurred.

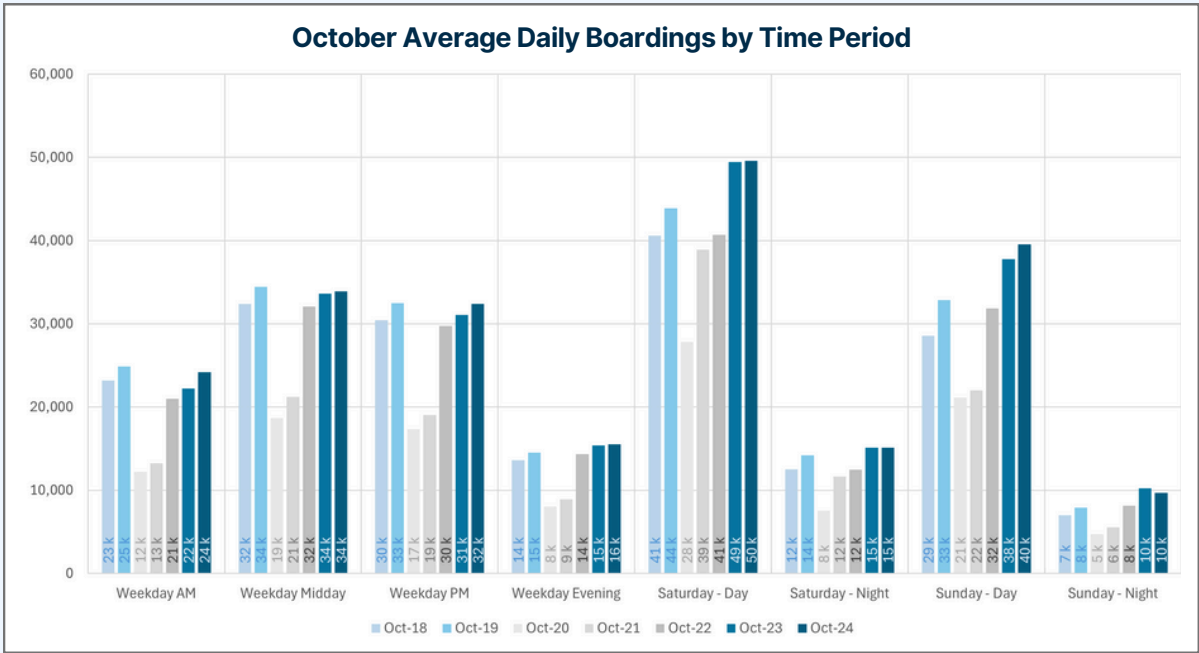


Figure 4: Average daily boardings for October, by year 2018 – 2024

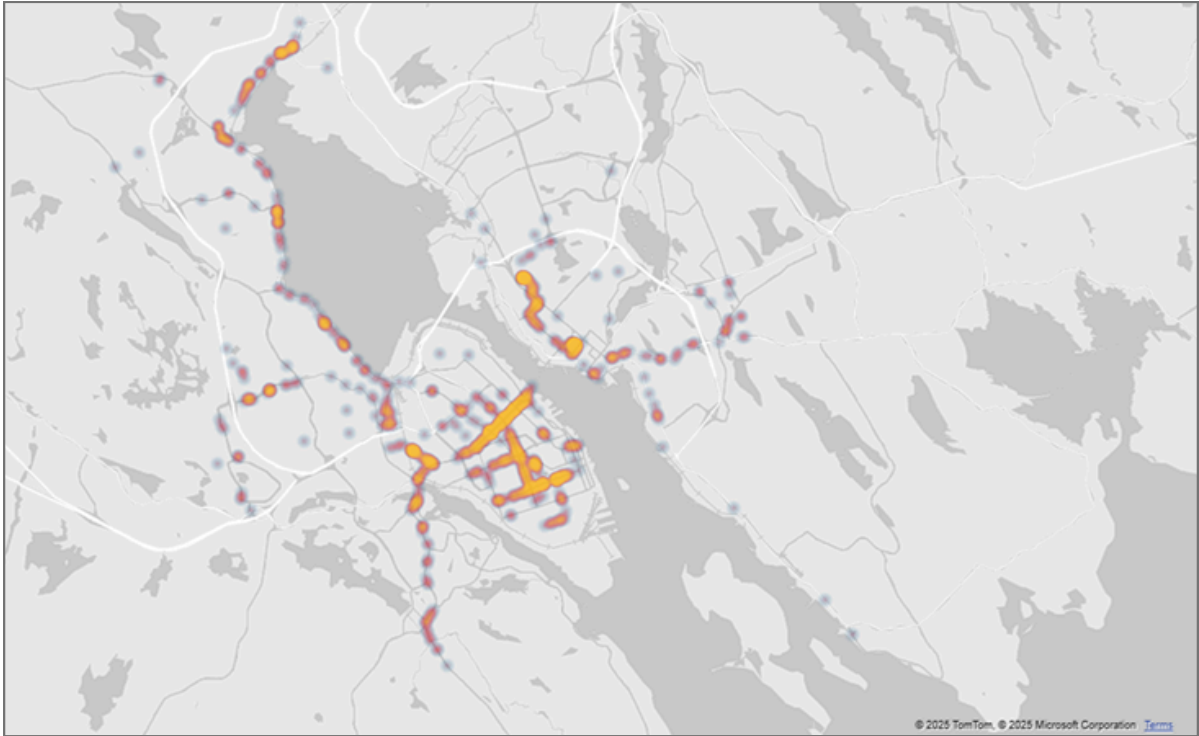


Figure 5: Location of Service Overload Incidents August 2023 – August 2024

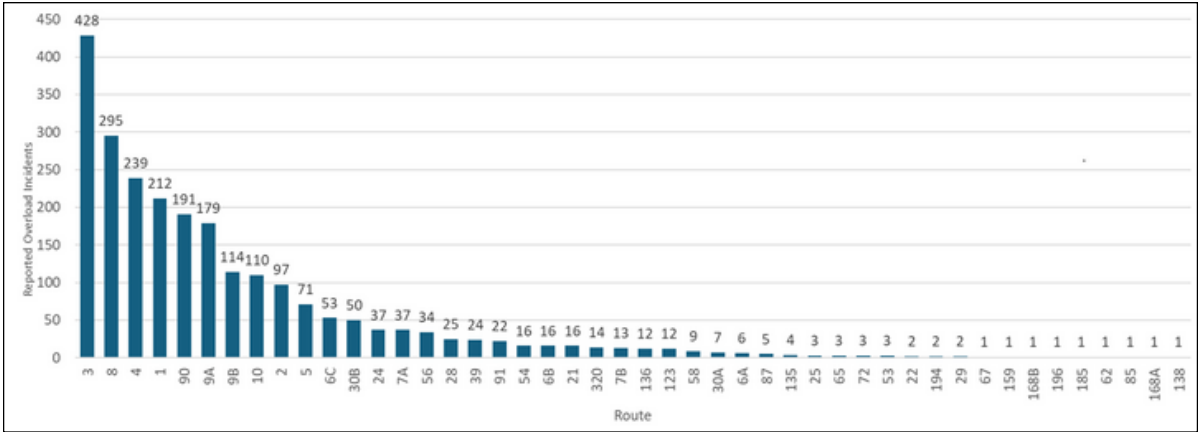


Figure 6: Reported Overload Incidents by Route August 2023 – August 2024

Service Overloads

Once a bus is full of passengers (seated and standing), the Operator can't pick up more passengers for the remainder of the route, or until passengers disembark. When overloads occur, passengers must wait until the next available bus. This significantly impacts riders and the service quality and reliability.

Increased service on popular routes will reduce the likelihood that buses will be overloaded. More buses also means greater frequency during high ridership periods, reducing the wait time for the next bus.

Routes	3	8	90	4	1	9A	9B
Overload instances	405	303	193	192	187	176	111

Figure 7: Top Routes Experiencing Overloads. August 2023 – August 2024

Level of Service Guidelines



Corridor Routes

Corridor Routes form the backbone of the transit network to provide frequent service along high demand routes 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

Most Local Routes provide all day service, but do not operate as frequently as Corridor Routes. They provide connections between neighbourhoods or communities to Corridor Routes at transit terminals.

Express Routes

Express Routes provide limited-stop service during rush hour on weekdays, offering commuters streamlined transit service between residential communities and downtown. These routes provide one-way service in the direction with the highest ridership, such as morning trips to downtown Halifax.

Corridor Routes	Average Frequency Range
Peak Headway (peak direction)	5 to 15 min
Off Peak Headway	10 to 30 min
Saturday Headway	15 to 30 min
Sunday Headway	15 to 30 min
Weekday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Saturday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 12 a.m.
Sunday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 12 a.m.

Figure 8: Level of Service Guidelines for Corridor Routes

Local Routes	Average Frequency Range
Peak Headway (peak direction)	15 to 30 min
Off Peak Headway	30 to 60 min
Saturday Headway	30 to 60 min
Sunday Headway	30 to 60 min
Weekday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Saturday Span of Service	7 a.m. to 12 a.m.
Sunday Span of Service	8 a.m. to 12 a.m.

Figure 9: Level of Service Guidelines for Local Routes

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