

Service Standards

Transit service standards are the measurable rules that set minimum expectations for how transit should operate. They are firm benchmarks that help ensure fairness, consistency, and accountability, while allowing flexibility to respond to changes in demand.

On-Time Performance (OTP)



Maintaining a high OTP is important to maintain reliability and trust of riders, efficiency within the transit network, positive rider experience, and operational cost savings.

Travel time plays a critical role in determining service quality. A rider's trip begins before boarding the vehicle and includes walking to the stop, waiting, and often transferring between routes. Delays at any point can extend the total trip time and create frustration. If a bus departs early, riders who arrive on time need to wait for the following trip and may miss their connections to other services, creating lengthy delays if the gaps between trips or services is significant. If the bus departs late, the trip becomes longer and less reliable. Over time, inconsistent service discourages regular use of transit.

TheRide defines its on-time performance goal as departures from timepoints within 0 minutes early and up to 5 minutes after the scheduled time, averaged over the entire network yearly. The standard that TheRide aims to achieve is 85%.

Service Frequency



The frequency of transit refers to how often the bus arrives, how often a bus passes a stop, or departs from a bus bay. High frequency services are expensive, so transit agencies must balance costs and the underlying demand for service. Ideally, service levels align with ridership.

Service frequency is critical to establish transit service as an attractive and viable travel mode and significantly influences transit ridership. Like span of service, frequency has a significant impact on operating costs. For example, improving a route from a 60-minute frequency to a 30 minute-frequency doubles the route's operating costs. Because operating high-frequency service is so expensive, frequency can vary throughout the day (i.e. peak and off-peak periods) to reflect existing or potential demand. Service frequencies are also set to ensure there are enough vehicles on the route to accommodate passenger volumes while not exceeding recommended loading standards (i.e. crowding).

These service frequencies set the minimum expectation for the frequency of bus service to ensure network compatibility. Consistent with the span of service expectations, transit operators are permitted to provide higher service frequencies. However, these additional trips are expected to meet the minimum productivity expectations for the category of service.

The minimum standards for frequency are included in Table 2. Routes may exceed these standards, but they are designed to be the minimum standards that the routes should meet. Note that not all local routes operate seven days a week and therefore the Saturday and/or Sunday standards would not apply.

Table 2: Minimum Frequency Standards

Frequent Routes					Local Routes				
Weekday AM/PM Peak (6am - 9am; 3pm - 6pm)	Weekday Midday (9am - 3pm)	Weekday Evening (6pm & later)	Sat/Sun Day (6am - 6pm)	Sat/Sun Evening (6pm & later)	Weekday AM/PM Peak (6am - 9am; 3pm - 6pm)	Weekday Midday (9am - 3pm)	Weekday Evening (6pm & later)	Sat/Sun Day (6am - 6pm)	Sat/Sun Evening (6pm & later)
15	30	60	30	60	30	30	60	30	60

Note: not all routes operate on all days. Frequency standards should apply to days when routes operate and will not imply that service should be added on days when routes aren't scheduled to operate. The minimum frequency standards do not apply to Limited-Service Routes.

Passenger Loading and Crowding



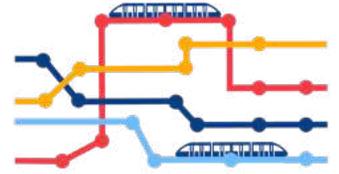
Passenger loading in transit refers to the number of passengers on the bus at any given time. Managing passenger loads is an important aspect of maintaining efficient, comfortable, and safe public transportation. Crowding is the first condition riders notice once they are on board. A service that routinely forces riders to stand—especially for long distances—feels unreliable even if it is on time. High passenger loads can affect service quality, while low loads may indicate inefficiency in resource use. Low loads are addressed in this document under Ridership Productivity & Thresholds.

Passenger loads can be expressed as ratios to reflect the number of people on the vehicle in proportion to the number of seats. A standard of 1.0, for example, sets a goal of ensuring every passenger has a seat. A standard of 1.2 allows for some standing passengers. If a bus route consistently exceeds the vehicle loading standards, additional capacity (more or larger buses) should be added to the route.

Transit providers can adjust services to keep the number of passengers on their vehicles at a comfortable level, always within the limits of safety. Transit operators maintain passenger loads within acceptable levels by matching capacity to demand. They can accomplish this by matching vehicle types with ridership levels (i.e. assign larger vehicles to higher ridership routes) by increasing (or decreasing) the frequency of service.

Passenger Loads Maximums: Trips will be flagged when load factors exceed 1.2 times seated capacity; additional vehicles will be dispatched if loads pass 1.5 times seated capacity.

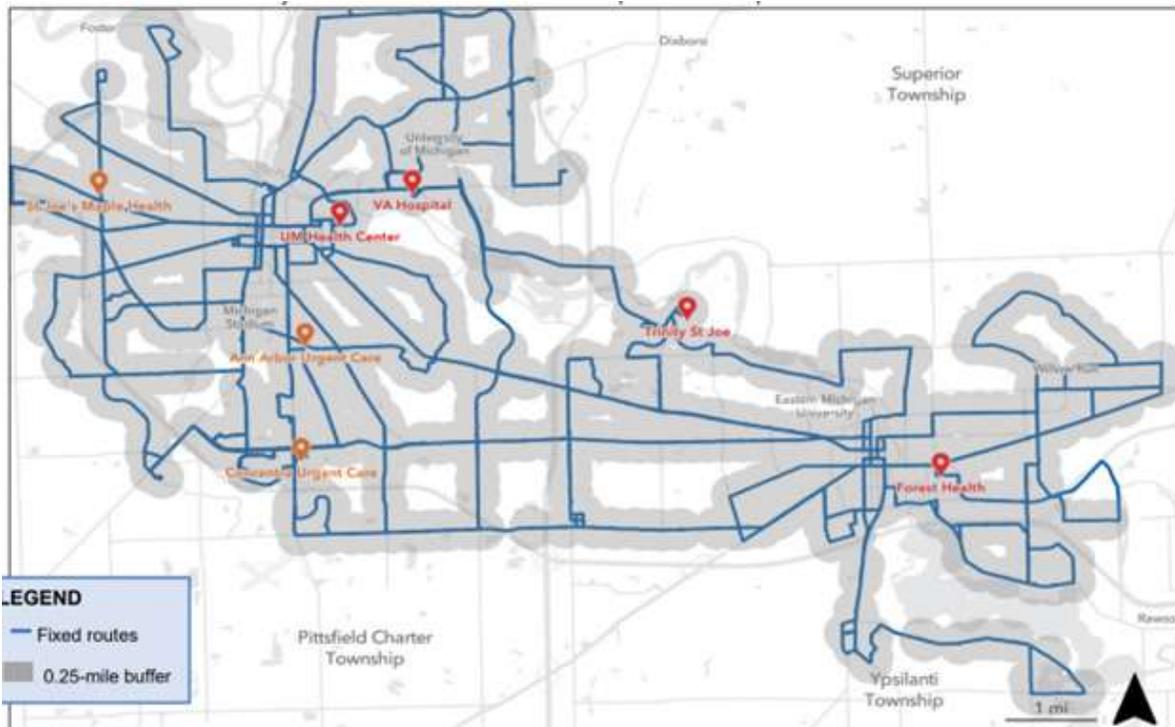
Service Availability & Coverage



Transit service availability refers to the extent to which public transportation services are accessible to people, in terms of the physical access (proximity to transit stops).

Fixed route service will be provided within 0.5 mile of 90% of the population of the fixed-route service area.

Figure 1: ¼ mile buffer around fixed route, hospitals, post offices, grocery stores



Vehicle Assignment



Vehicle assignment refers to the process by which TheRide determines which buses are used on which routes. While this may seem operational in nature, vehicle assignment has a significant impact on the rider experience. Newer vehicles tend to offer better reliability, accessibility, and amenities (such as USB ports or real-time information displays), and some agencies assign them strategically to higher-ridership or longer-distance routes to maximize rider benefit. Other agencies ensure consistency across routes through random or uniform fleet rotation. Assignment can also affect branding and fleet maintenance cycles, especially for services like BRT that use specialized vehicles.

TheRide assigns vehicles randomly from its single operating garage. Vehicle deployment does not vary by route or ridership level, and all vehicles are maintained under a uniform age policy.