



Overview of TTC Service Standards

Date: September 4, 2025

To: Strategic Planning Committee

From: Chief Strategy & Customer Experience Officer

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Strategic Planning Committee:

1. Endorse the proposed workplan to undertake a review of TTC Service Standards, which includes the following tasks:
 - a. Background review
 - b. Review of existing standards
 - c. Public and Stakeholder consultation
 - d. Revised Service Standard development
 - e. Final report to TTC Board

Summary

This report provides an overview of the TTC's service standards along with a proposed approach to review and update the standards. The purpose of the service standards is to ensure public transit is accessible, efficient, and cost effective. These standards guide all aspects of service planning through network design standards, quality of service standards and performance targets.

TTC Service Standards document can be reviewed [here](#).

Background and Analysis

The TTC strives to make public transit the simplest, fastest and most cost-efficient way to move around in Toronto. The Board-approved service standards lay out a framework for achieving these goals and are applied at every level of service planning the TTC undertakes. The TTC has two major objectives in planning transit service:

1. To maximize mobility within the City of Toronto by ensuring that public transit is provided in the right places, at the right times, to satisfy the changing travel needs within the community.
2. To ensure that all transit services operated by the TTC are as efficient and cost-effective as possible and, therefore, affordable to both TTC customers and citizens.

The service standards provide a systematic and objective means of planning, monitoring, adjusting and evaluating conventional transit services throughout the City of Toronto. The standards are:

- grounded in business logic and principles;
- transparent, quantifiable and reproducible; and
- applied consistently, fairly and equally.

Discussion

The service standards include standards and targets to plan, monitor, adjust, and evaluate transit service. They are generally divided into three broad categories discussed below:

Network design standards

Network design standards are system-wide standards that apply to the transit network, and include:

- Key principles of system structure and design: Establishes system-wide principles that are critical in building an effective and efficient transit network. *Example standard - surface routes will conform or be oriented to the grid system of major arterial roads.*
- Coverage and access: Addresses the accessibility of transit from a city-wide, network level by targeting a maximum walking distance that a customer will have to travel to reach a transit station or stop. *Example standard - 90% of Toronto's population and employment is within 400 metres of the All-Day, Every-Day network during regular daytime and evening hours.*
- Surface stop spacing: Establishes stop spacing guidelines for surface routes to strike a balance between the competing objectives of passenger convenience, operating efficiency, safety and community impacts. *Example standard - the stop spacing range for streetcars is 300 – 400 metres.*

Quality of service standards

The quality-of-service standards set out specific criteria for the quality of service that customers can expect and includes:

- Span of service and service levels: Determines the operating hours and frequency of transit service for customers. The span of service and service levels vary for each service classification. *Example standard - during the morning peak period on weekdays, the minimum service level for local bus routes is every 30 minutes or better.*
- Vehicle crowding: Determines the appropriate level of service based on the maximum load point, in the busiest direction, along a route during the busiest 60 minutes of each period of service. *Example standard - during off-peak periods, bus service levels are based on the vehicle crowding standards of 35 and 46 people for 12-metre and 18-metre buses, respectively.*

- Service reliability: Standards focused on on-time performance and reliability of transit service to provide customers with a predictable and consistent travel experience. *Example standard - surface transit vehicles must leave their origin timepoint between 1 minute early and 5 minutes late to be considered as having an on-time departure.*

Performance targets

The service standards establish performance targets to set desired and achievable goals for transit services. The overall effectiveness and efficiency of transit service are guided by:

- Service productivity: Performance targets that measure the effectiveness of the TTC's resources for each service classification and operating period. *Example target - during peak periods, streetcar routes should target, as a minimum, an average of 50 boardings per revenue service hour.*
- Economic performance: Measures that look to ensure all transit services operated by the TTC are as efficient and cost-effective as possible and, for that reason, affordable to both TTC customers and citizens. *Example target - net cost per passenger per route, which reflects the amount of subsidy the TTC requires per boarding passengers, over and above fare revenue collected, to operate a given route.*

In addition to the above standards and targets, the service standards specify the procedure for changing service levels, routing alignments and when new services are warranted.

TTC Service Standards document can be reviewed [here](#).

Workplan

As directed by the Strategic Planning Committee in July 2025, the TTC will undertake a comprehensive review of the existing service standards and propose updates to ensure the standards reflect the current operating environment, customer needs and expectations, and current transit industry trends.

The work plan is organized into the following tasks:

1. **Background Review:** review existing conditions, peer systems and industry research papers to identify current trends and industry practices.
2. **Review Existing Standards:** benchmark where the system currently is meeting standards, where improvement is required, and if the standards align with the latest strategic goals for both the TTC and the City of Toronto.
3. **Public and Stakeholder Consultation:** hold focus group sessions with operators, supervisors, customer service staff, and the TTC's Planning Advisory Group.
4. **Service Standard Update Development:** develop revised service standards and targets, identify the resource implications, and prepare a monitoring plan.
5. **Reporting:** present the revised service standards to the Board for approval.

The project is scheduled to begin in Q4 2025 with a report back in Q4 2026.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Matters

The TTC's service standards are designed not only to ensure operational efficiency and reliability, but also to reflect our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The service standards include coverage and access standards that address the physical accessibility of transit. This includes setting target walking distances to transit stops and stations, which helps ensure that all residents—particularly seniors, persons with disabilities, and equity-deserving communities—can reach transit services safely and conveniently. TTC staff also maintain regular communication with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT) Communications Subcommittee to identify and implement improvements that enhance accessibility across the network.

Innovation and Sustainability Considerations

Service standards complement the TTC's Innovation and Sustainability Strategy, approved by the Board in September 2024, by ensuring transit service is planned and delivered in a way that supports environmental goals, operational efficiency and responsiveness. The service standards provide a data-driven framework for continuously monitoring and adjusting service to match demand, improve access and support ridership growth, which are essential in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Corporate Plan Alignment

The TTC Service Standards anchor the 5-Year Service and Customer Experience Action Plan (2024-2028) (Action 2.1.1), which provides the foundation for further exploration of ridership growth.

Financial Impact

This report has no direct financial impacts.

The Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Contact

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Attachments

Attachment 1 – Decision History

Attachment 1 – Decision History

July 10, 2025: Framework for Ridership Growth. The Strategic Planning Committee directed TTC staff to conduct a comprehensive review of TTC Service Standards, with extensive consultation with TTC's Planning Advisory Group and customers to begin in 2026. Decision: [2025.TTS1.3](#)