

# Victoria Regional Transit Commission



**DATE:** March 10, 2026

**PREPARED BY:** Jacob Burnley, Transit Planner

**SUBJECT:** Planning Update Report

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The spring and summer 2026 service changes introduce targeted schedule adjustments, cost-neutral routing updates, and seasonal service increases to improve reliability, support growing West Shore communities, and better connect with BC Ferries and tourism demand. BC Transit is also advancing the Victoria Regional Transit Plan, which outlines future rapid, express and frequent transit corridors, local service enhancements, and emerging OnDemand applications ahead of its anticipated July 2026 completion.

Attachment(s):

Appendix 1 – Fall 2025 Ridership Performance Report

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## PURPOSE

To provide the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (“the Commission”) with an update on transit service planning in the Victoria Region for **INFORMATION**.

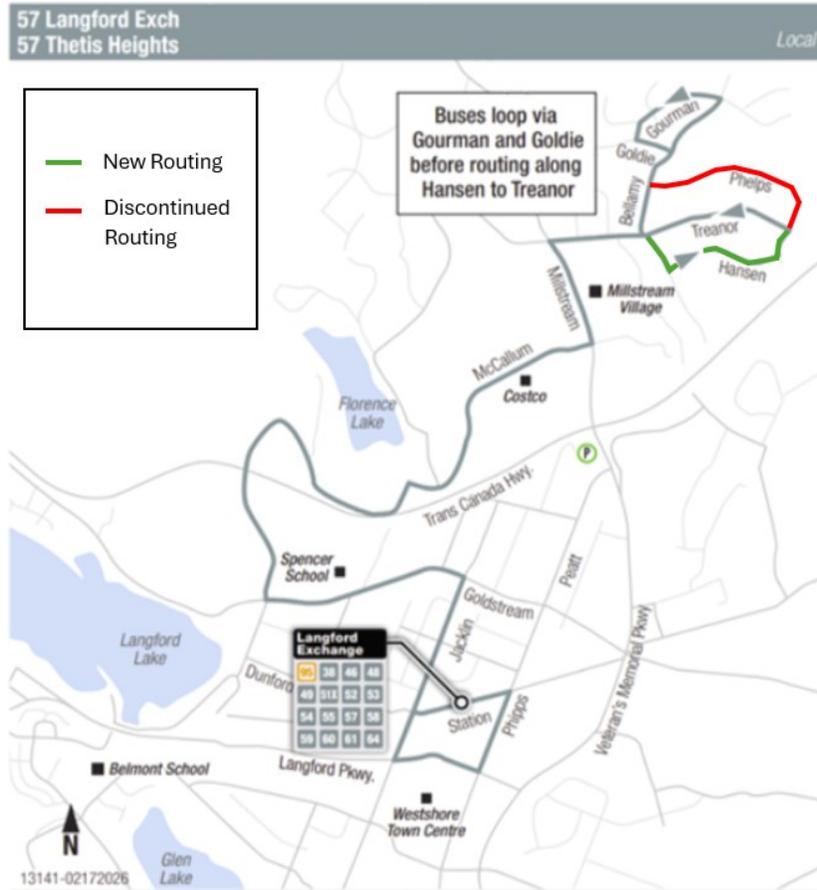
## TRANSIT SERVICE CHANGES

### Spring 2026 Service Change

Effective Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the spring service change includes the following changes.

- Minor schedule adjustments to improve service reliability on Routes 11, 27, 28, 32, 70, 71, 72, 75.
- Cost-neutral adjustment to Route 57 in the Thetis Heights area to operate via Hansen Ave instead of Phelps Ave, reflecting the approved 2022 West Shore Local Area Transit Plan and recent local development.
- Cost-neutral adjustment to select peak-period Route 58 trips to improve access to PEXSISEN Elementary, Centre Mountain Lellum Middle School, and emerging development along Constellation Avenue in Westhills, Langford.
- Service improvements to Route 70 (all days) and Route 72 (Sundays) to better align with spring BC Ferries service.
- Service improvements to Route 75 on weekdays (Keating Cross to Downtown) and weekends (Butchart Gardens) to accommodate commuter and tourism demand.
- Route 76 is seasonally discontinued for spring and summer.

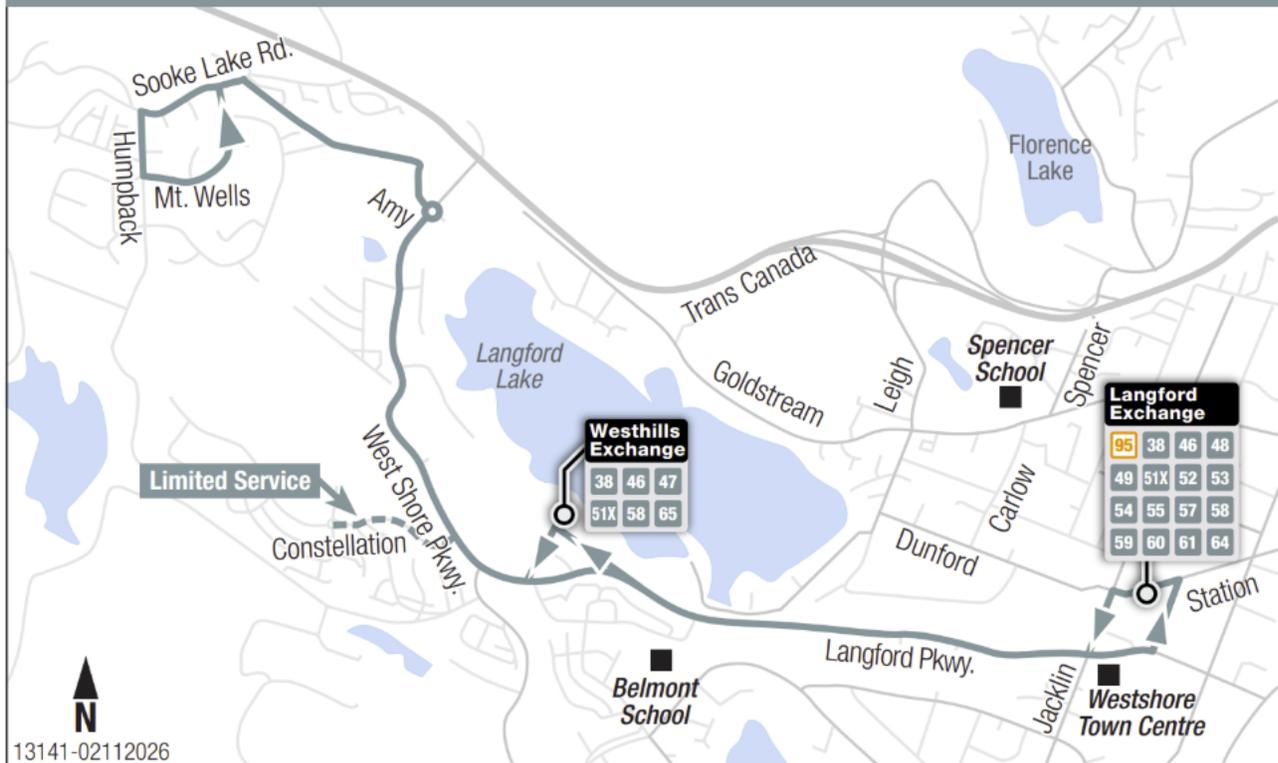
- o Service levels on routes serving post-secondary institutions adjusted to reflect reduced demand in the spring.



Map- Route 57 (Thetis Heights/ Langford Exch.)- Effective: April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026

58 Goldstream Mdws

Local



Map- Route 58 (Goldstream Meadows/ Langford Exch.)- Constellation Routing Extension Effective: April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Summer 2026 Service Change**

Effective Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the summer service change includes the following changes.

- Seasonal service level improvements on Routes 70/70X on weekends to better align with BC Ferries schedules and accommodate increased tourism demand.
- Seasonal service level improvements on Route 75 during afternoon periods, between Butchart Gardens/Keating Cross and Downtown, to support both tourism and commuter demand.
- Minor trip time adjustments on various routes to improve service reliability and provide better-timed connections.
- Seasonal removal of school-oriented trips on various routes, aligned with the K–12 summer break.
- Route 17 will be seasonally discontinued for the summer.

## TRANSIT SERVICE PLANNING INITIATIVES

### Victoria Regional Transit Plan (VRTP)

Beyond updating the 2011 Transit Future Plan, the Victoria Regional Transit Plan will be a key input into the development of an Integrated Regional Plan, which is required to secure funding for the Metro-Region Agreement funding stream of the new Canada Public Transit Fund.

BC Transit is now working with key stakeholders on refining draft content for the Victoria Regional Transit Plan.

Draft themes emerging from the VRTP process so far include the following:

- Rapid Transit
  - West Shore Higher-Order Transit Planning
    - The VRTP will identify the implementation of higher-order transit between the West Shore and Victoria within the 25-year plan horizon.
    - After the VRTP is completed, the next step will involve a study to revisit the Higher-Order Rapid Transit alignment in the West Shore between the 6-Mile Mobility Hub and Downtown Langford.
    - The work will reflect land-use changes and municipal policy updates including Official Community Plans (OCP) and Transportation Master Plans (TMP) across West Shore communities.
  - Plan will improve the minimum frequency for Rapid Transit to 10-minutes.
  - Beyond the Rapid Transit corridors identified in 2011, the plan will consider the extension of Rapid Transit to Jubilee and James Bay neighbourhoods along with emerging West Shore density nodes.
- Express Transit
  - The plan will provide clear guidelines for express service, including an express service overlay (supplementing high ridership frequent transit corridors) and regional express service.
  - The plan will outline the process for how regional express services can evolve into full Rapid Transit, with possible applications to McKenzie Ave, the Saanich Peninsula, and other possible future corridors.
- Frequent Transit
  - The 2050 planned frequent transit network map will be updated, with significant adjustments in the Westshore to reflect recent growth and OCP updates.
- Local Service (Standard & Basic Service)
  - Themes for local service design include:
    - Adjustments to stop spacing on major corridors to improve:
      - Ease of use,
      - Travel speed; and
      - Reliability.
    - Extended minimum service spans to improve early-morning and late-evening access.
- Digital OnDemand Service

- Public and stakeholder feedback regarding OnDemand service as a replacement for fixed routes has been mixed.
- OnDemand service is expected to be retained as a specialized tool for:
  - low-density areas;
  - new development areas; or
  - targeted mobility needs.
- Further public engagement will guide where and how OnDemand service is applied.

Next steps for the Victoria Regional Transit Plan include stakeholder review of the emerging draft plan including Local Government staff and Councils, First Nations, and key stakeholders. As planned, the VRTP is targeted for a July 2026 completion and approval.

### **Victoria International Airport (YYJ) Service Options**

BC Transit most recently presented service options to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission in Fall 2024, outlining improvement opportunities and associated trade-offs. With recent direction from the Commission, BC Transit sought public feedback around improved service opportunities (including a short-term cost-neutral routing option) to the Victoria International Airport (YYJ). Full details on engagement, background, and findings are included in the separate “Victoria Airport Service Options” report within this meeting’s report package.

### **Other Planning Work**

#### **Boots-On-The-Ground: Winter 2026 Service Change Engagement**

Over the first week of January, BC Transit staff facilitated a multi-day, in-person, campaign to support communications around changes to service effective January 5<sup>th</sup>. Planning, Scheduling, and Operational staff were present at key impacted locations (Langford, Colwood, Royal Oak, Uptown, and UVic) during high-traffic peak times to educate the public and answer questions regarding schedule changes, route alterations, and new services. Prior to the service change, communications were sent to University of Victoria, Camosun College and Royal Roads student societies to inform students of the change prior to the return to classes on January 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Referrals** – Referral-related work undertaken or proposed since the last Commission meeting includes:

- **Bus Stop Improvements** – BC Transit continues to work closely with Local Government Partners within the Victoria Region to coordinate improvements to stop configurations and layout to improve accessibility and customer experience.
- **Development Referral Process** – BC Transit receives and responds to development referrals from Local Governments considering rezoning and large-scale development proposals. BC Transit provides comment on opportunities for transit supportive development, improvements to transit supportive infrastructure such as bus stops and sidewalks and provides comments on the feasibility of future transit service to the proposed development.

Planning staff received approximately 18 development referrals between November 2025 and January 2026, providing feedback to five Local Governments.

**Service Monitoring**

- **Ridership Performance Report** – The Service Planning team regularly monitors service performance against the service standards and performance guidelines identified in the 2013/14 Service Review document. Regular performance monitoring allows for a better alignment between service levels and ongoing changes in demand and travel patterns. Appendix 1 provides information on ridership performance over the Fall 2025 service period from September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 to December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and provides information on historical ridership and service reliability trends up to December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

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Date: February 25, 2026

## Appendix 1 – Fall 2025 Ridership Performance Report

### 1.0 Introduction

This report compares system-level ridership performance for the Victoria Regional Transit System (VRTS) between 2024 and 2025. Further, this report provides more detailed ridership information at the route-level for the Fall 2025 service period, occurring between September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 and December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

With the beginning of the school year, a number of trips on several routes and school-oriented targeted services were reimplemented as part of the Fall Service Change.

Service levels for routes that serve post-secondary schools were also increased, and Route 17 Cedar Hill and Route 76 UVic/Swartz Bay were re-instituted for the school season. As done historically, seasonal reductions of service took place on the Routes 70 and 75.

### 1.1 Data

Ridership information is collected through Automated Passenger Counter (APC) units, which are in place on almost 100 per cent of the buses assigned to the Victoria Region's conventional fleet. This system counts the number of persons boarding and disembarking from a vehicle. If a person boards multiple buses in a single journey or on a specific day, this is reflected as multiple boardings. It also collects information on service reliability, comparing scheduled to actual departure times at timing points along the route.

Note that minor variations in previously reported ridership numbers (from past historical reports) are noted due to business logic change facilitated in Feb. 2026 via BC Transit Data Analysis.

### 1.2 External Factors

In addition to service changes, there are external factors that may affect transit ridership. Some of these include fare increases, changing fuel prices, changing community economics, land use changes and major interruptions, such as the ongoing impacts originating as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 2.0 Performance Trends

This report presents ridership performance information at the system and route-level.

### 2.1 System Level Performance Trends

For the purposes of this report, overall system ridership has been presented weekly from the beginning of 2023 to compare year-over-year ridership trends. Ridership within the VRTS over the Fall 2025 period saw a modest rise of two per cent in comparison to the previous Fall service period (2024).

Upon further investigation, this ridership reduction was identified as a general decline across most routes (both frequent and local services) in the Victoria Regional Transit System.

Of the existing Frequent and Rapid Transit Network, Route 95 noted slight-decline but stable and consistent ridership (-5%), Route 70 saw sustained ridership (1% growth), and other

services in this route class (including the 14, 15, 26, 31) saw no notable ridership changes (+/- 10%) when comparing Fall 2024 to Fall 2025. No other major ridership changes were noted amongst routes making up the local transit network.

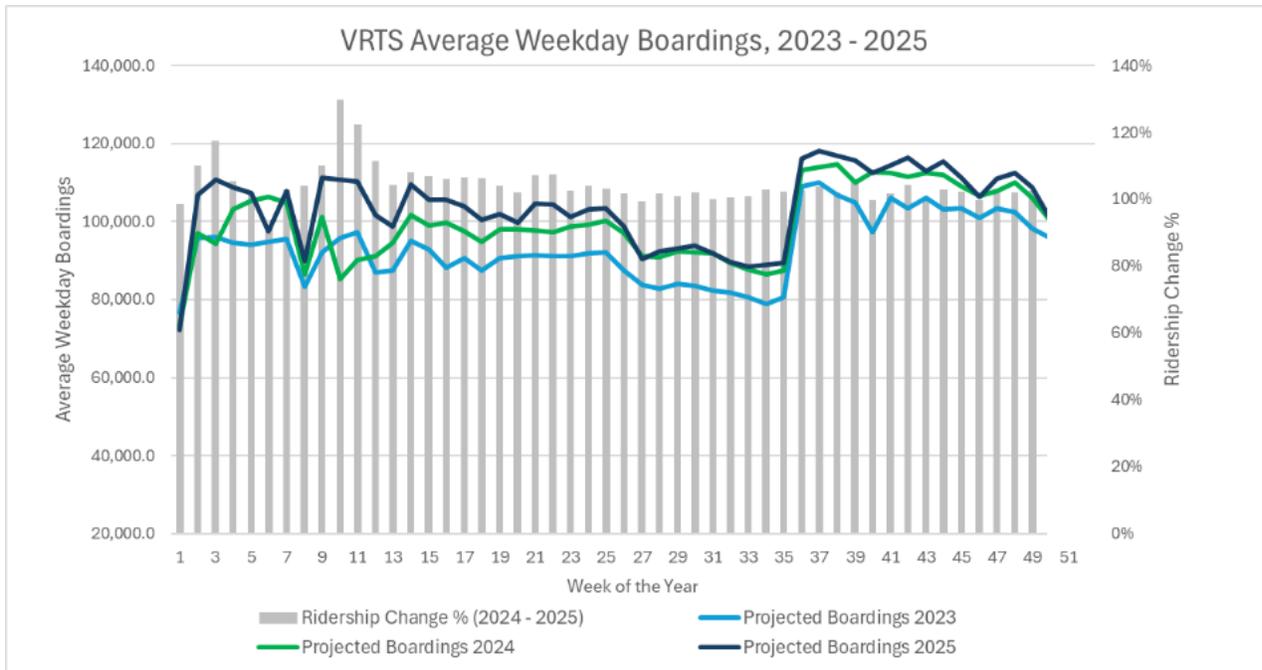


Figure 1: VRTS Average Weekday Boardings, 2023-2025.

Note: Reported ridership numbers may differ from previous reports due to the introduction of an improved data quality method that removes clearly inaccurate values.

## 2.2 Route Level Performance

For the purposes of this report, ridership has been aggregated and presented in five route-type categories for Fall 2025, including Rapid Transit, Frequent Transit, Local Transit (Ridership), Local Transit (Coverage) and Targeted Transit. These route-type categories were originally developed in the [2013/14 Service Review](#), and included associated performance targets.

The red line shown on the following graphs indicates the performance guideline for that route class. Routes exceeding or failing to meet the modified performance targets by +/-25 per cent have been flagged for monitoring and may be considered for future corrective action. Information on routes flagged for monitoring or corrective action are detailed below.

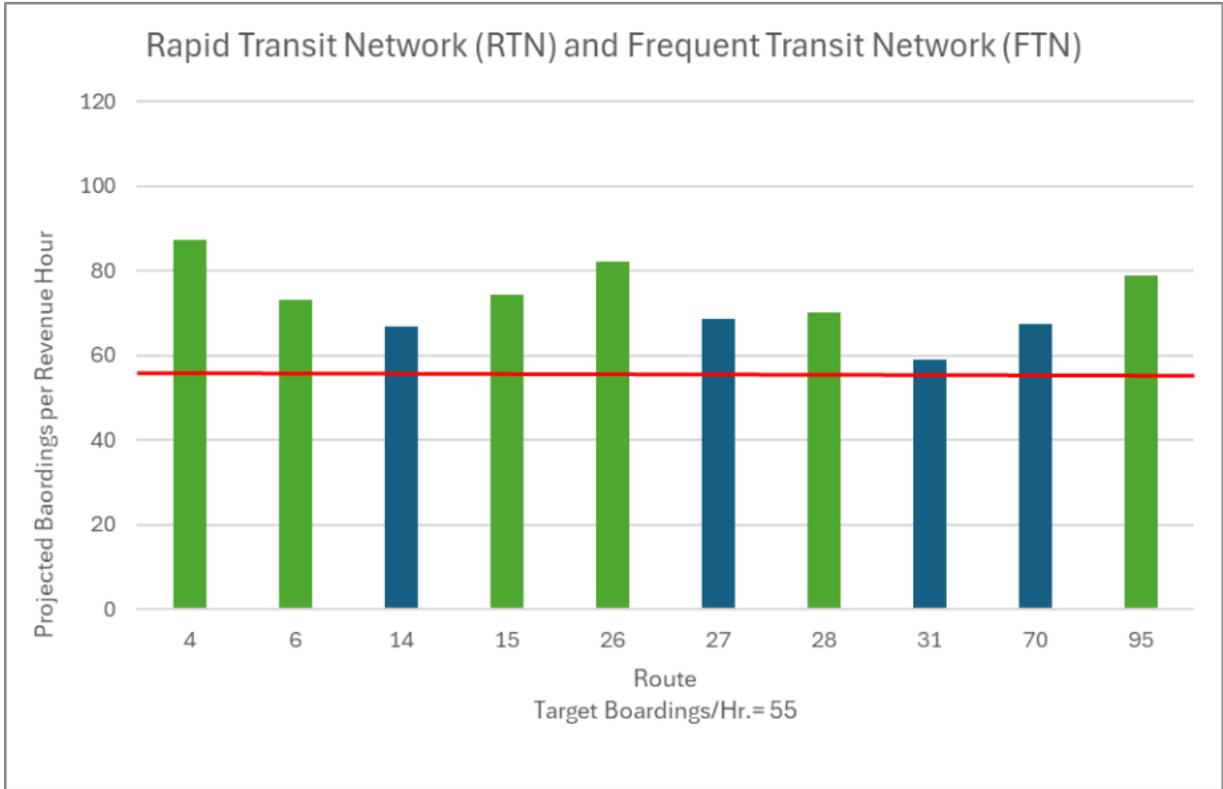


Figure 2: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for the Rapid Transit Network and Frequent Transit Network, Fall 2025 (Performance Guideline = 55); Exceeds target by 25%+, within 25% of target, below target by 25%+.



Figure 2: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for the Local Transit Network - Ridership, Fall 2025 (Performance Guideline = 40); Exceeds target by 25%+, within 25% of target, below target by 25%+.

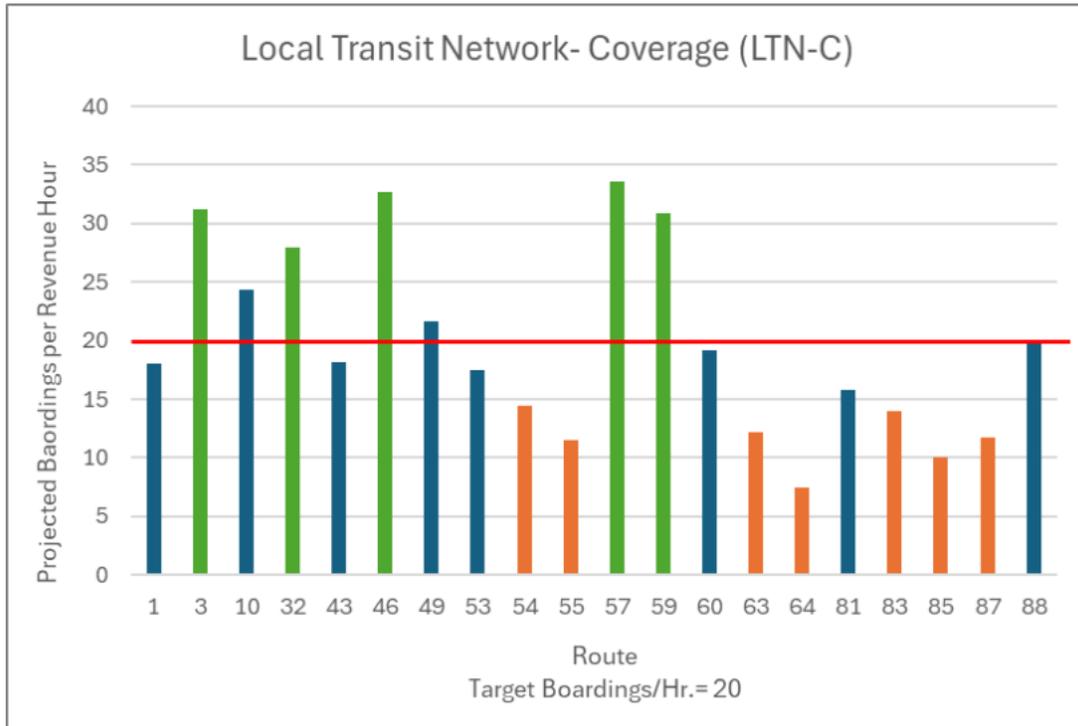


Figure 4: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for the Local Transit Network - Coverage, Fall 2025 (Performance Guideline = 20); Exceeds target by 25%+, within 25% of target, below target by 25%+.



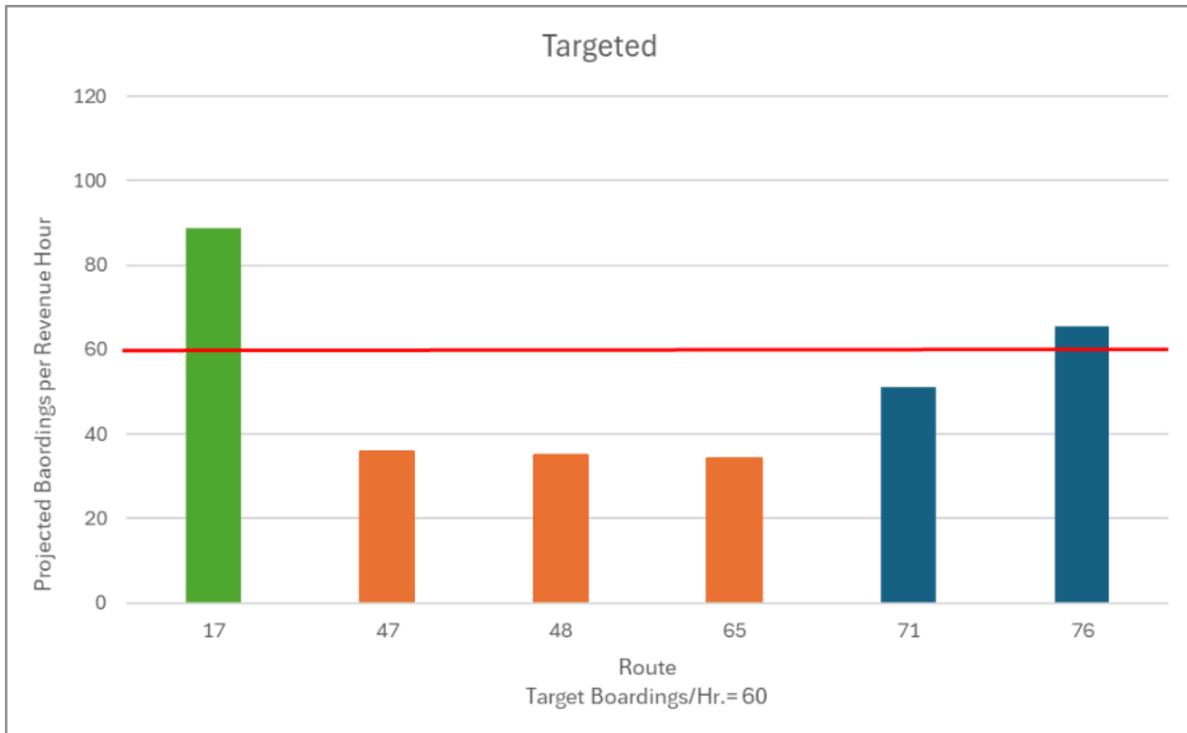


Figure 5: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for Targeted Transit, Summer 2025 (Performance Guideline = 60); Exceeds target by 25%+, within 25% of target, below target by 25%+.

## 2.2 Service Reliability

Service reliability is crucial for transit service as it ensures that vehicles and routes run on schedule, leading to increased customer satisfaction and ridership. A trip is considered on-time if it departs from a timing point between one minute early and three minutes late of the scheduled departure time.

During the Summer 2025 service period, system-wide on-time performance exceeded the target of 70 per cent, achieving 72 per cent. This improvement reflects BC Transit’s recent efforts to reduce the number of trips departing earlier than scheduled.

Routes 70/70X and 48 experienced some of the greatest challenges with service reliability. Both routes will be reviewed for rescheduling and runtime adjustments in Winter 2026 to address these issues.

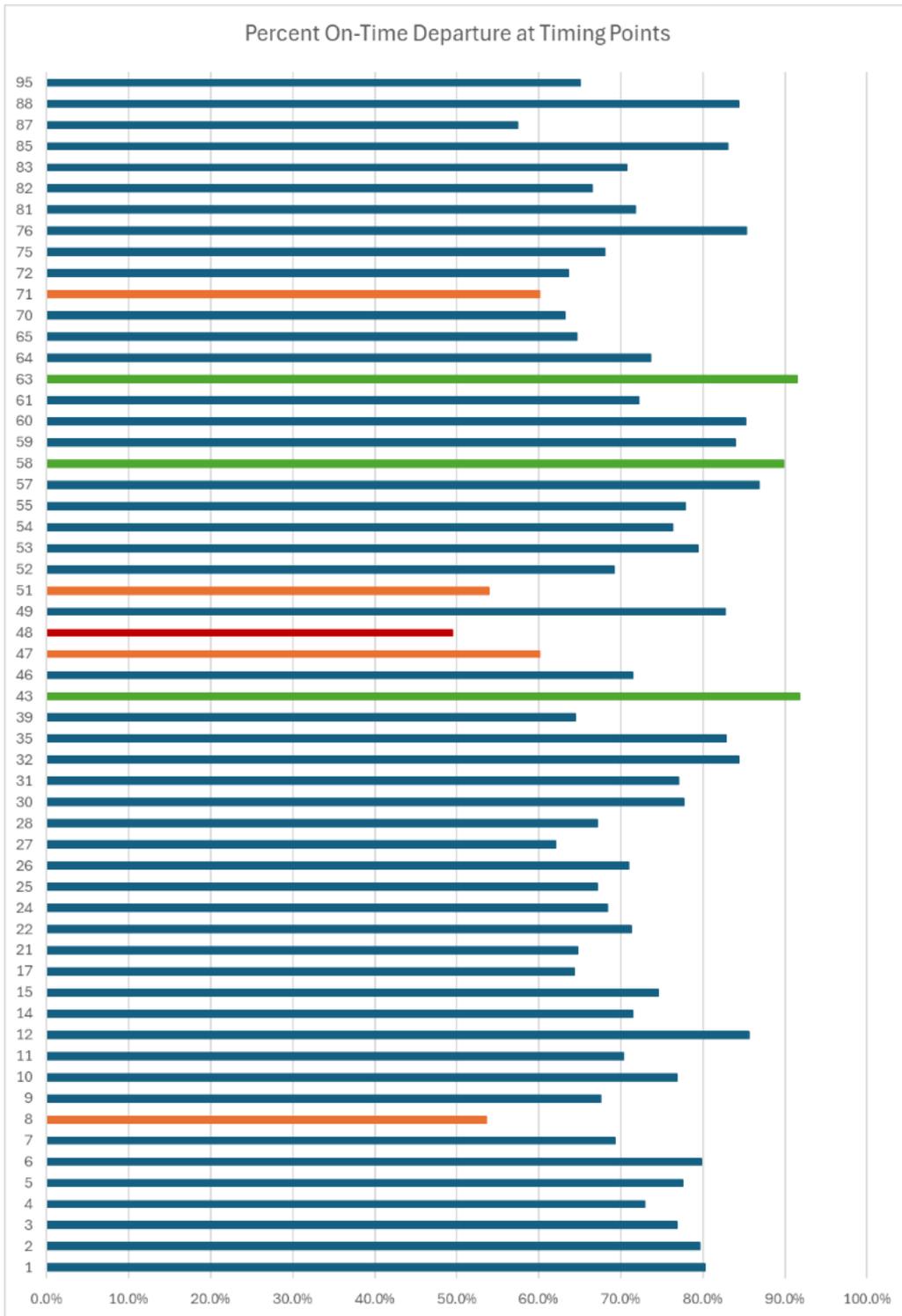


Figure 6: Per Cent On-Time Departures at Timing Points, Monday-Thursday Fall 2025 (-1, +3 minutes); 30%+ below target, 15-30% below target, within 15% of target, 15%+ above target