

November 7, 2023

**Attachment: Victoria Regional Transit System
Summer 2023 Ridership Performance Report**

1.0 Introduction

This report compares system-level ridership performance for the Victoria Regional Transit System between 2019 and 2023. Further, this report provides more detailed ridership information at the route-level for the summer 2023 period, occurring between July 3 and September 4, 2023.

1.1 Data

Ridership information is collected through Automated Passenger Counter (APC) units, which are in place on over 60 per cent of the buses assigned to the Victoria region's conventional fleet. This APC system counts the number of persons boarding and disembarking from a vehicle. If a person boards multiple buses in a single journey or in 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.

1.2 External Factors

In addition to service changes, there are a number of 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 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 purpose of this report, overall system ridership has been presented weekly from the beginning of 2019 to the present. As of March 12, 2020, when non-essential travel was discouraged, the transit system experienced a significant decline in ridership of about 75 per cent. During that time, BC Transit moved to enact measures that would support safe and reliable travel options – from the introduction of vinyl barriers to the phasing of physical distancing standards. Through the implementation of these measures and the reopening of the economy via the Province's Safe Restart Plan, BC Transit has since realized a gradual and steady return of ridership, recovering to 91 per cent by the end of August 2023, in comparison to the same week in 2019, as shown in Figure 1.

Ridership within the Victoria Regional Transit System has been growing rapidly since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, growing by almost 40 per cent within the last 2 years. The rapid return of ridership and vehicle congestion on roadways has brought significant pressures to the transit system in terms of growing passenger loads, passenger pass-ups, and service reliability challenges.

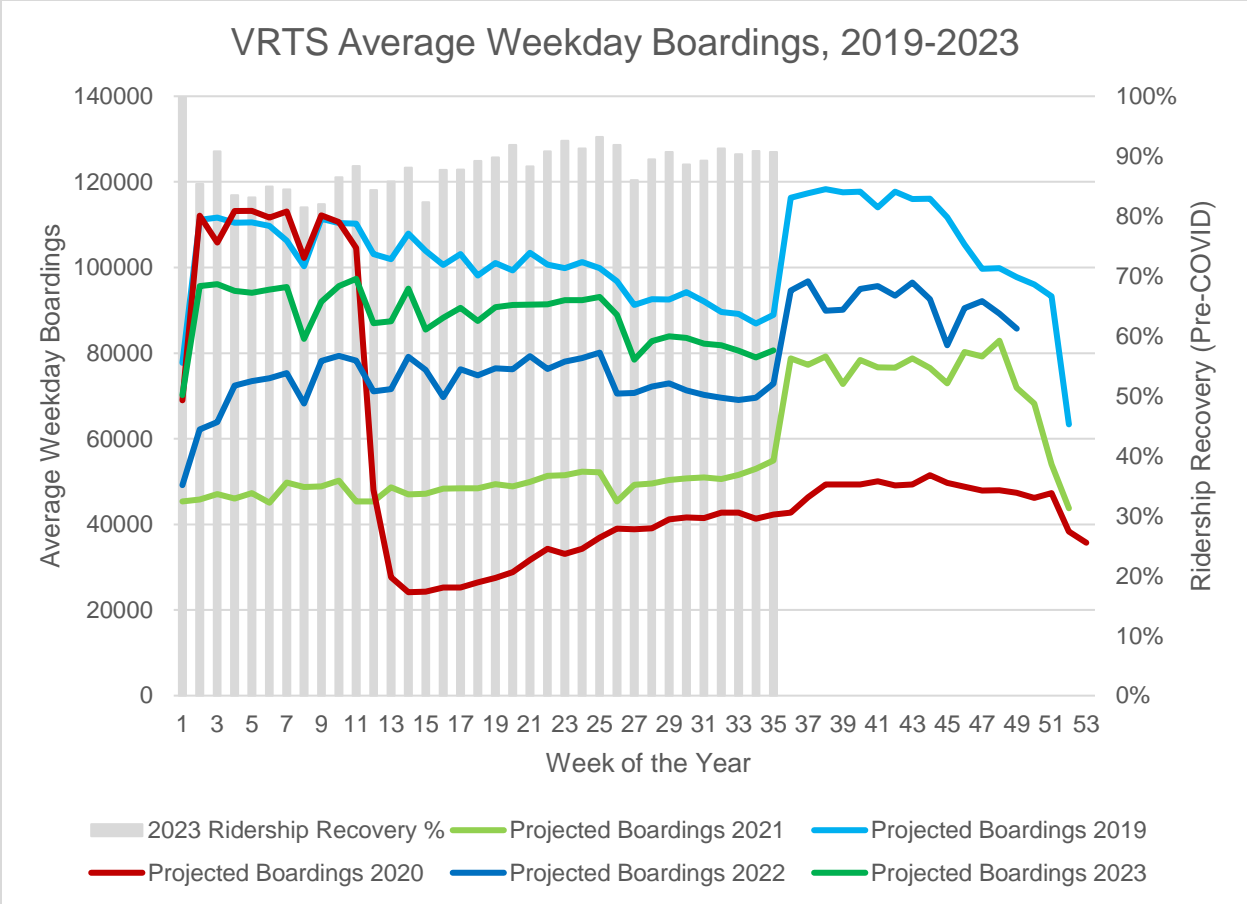


Figure 1: Victoria Average Weekday Boardings, 2019-2023.

2.2 Route Level Performance

For the purpose of this report, ridership has been aggregated and presented in five route-type categories for Summer 2023, 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% have been flagged for monitoring and may be considered for future corrective action.

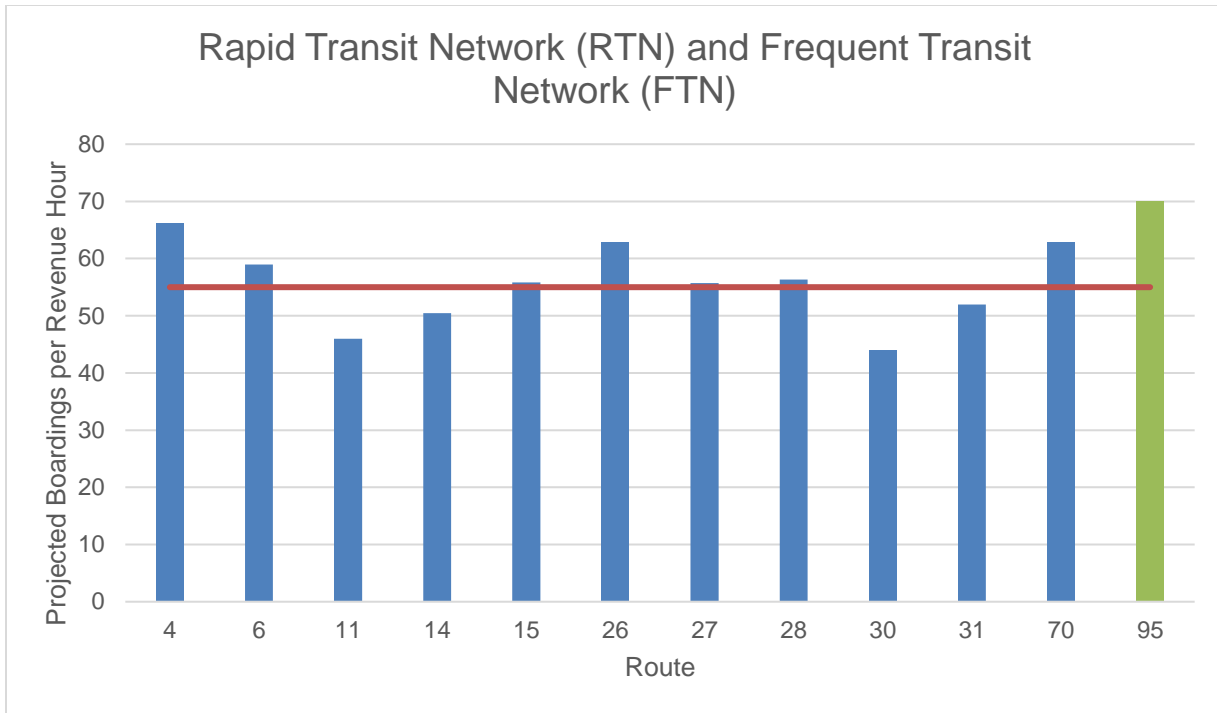


Figure 2: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for the Rapid Transit Network and Frequent Transit Network, Summer 2023 (Performance Guideline = 55)

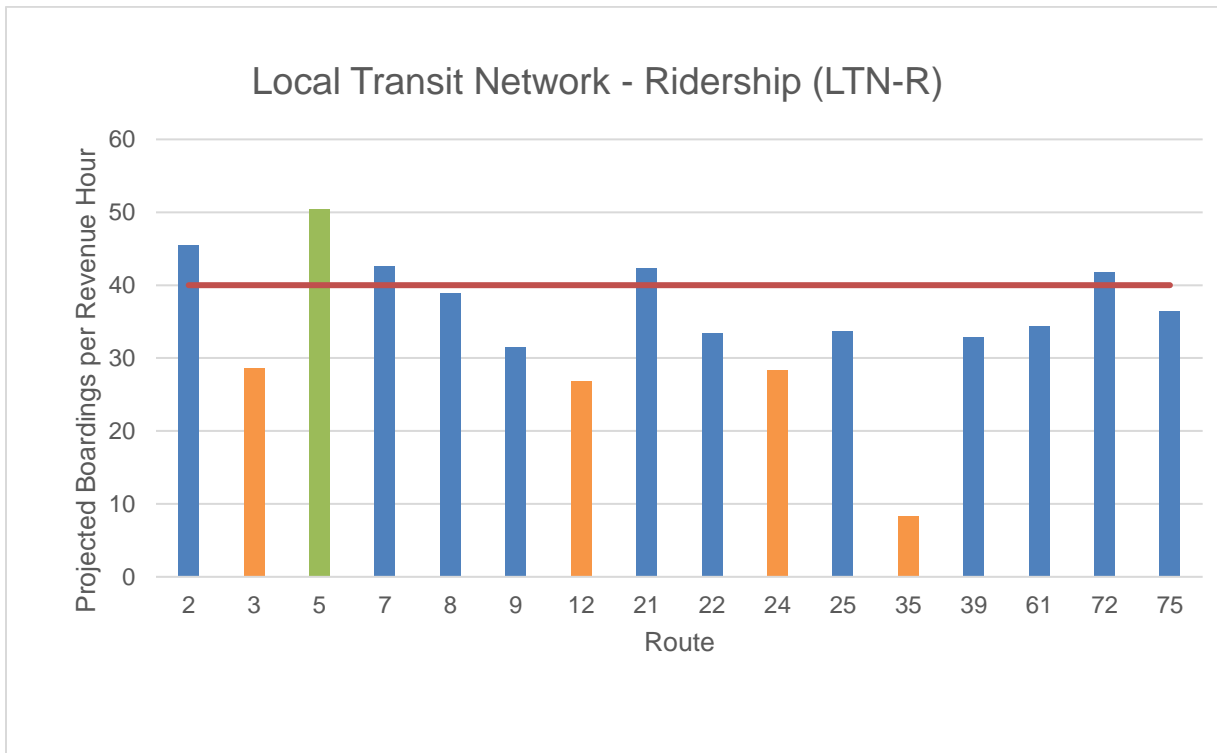


Figure 3: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for the Local Transit Network - Ridership, Summer 2023 (Performance Guideline = 40)

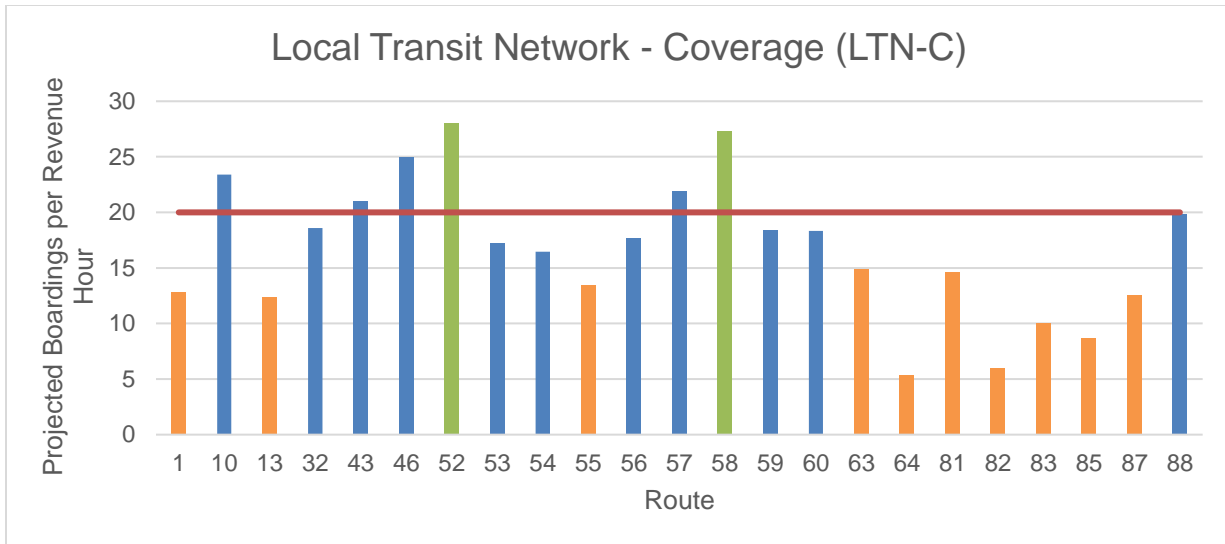


Figure 4: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for the Local Transit Network - Coverage, Summer 2023 (Performance Guideline = 20)

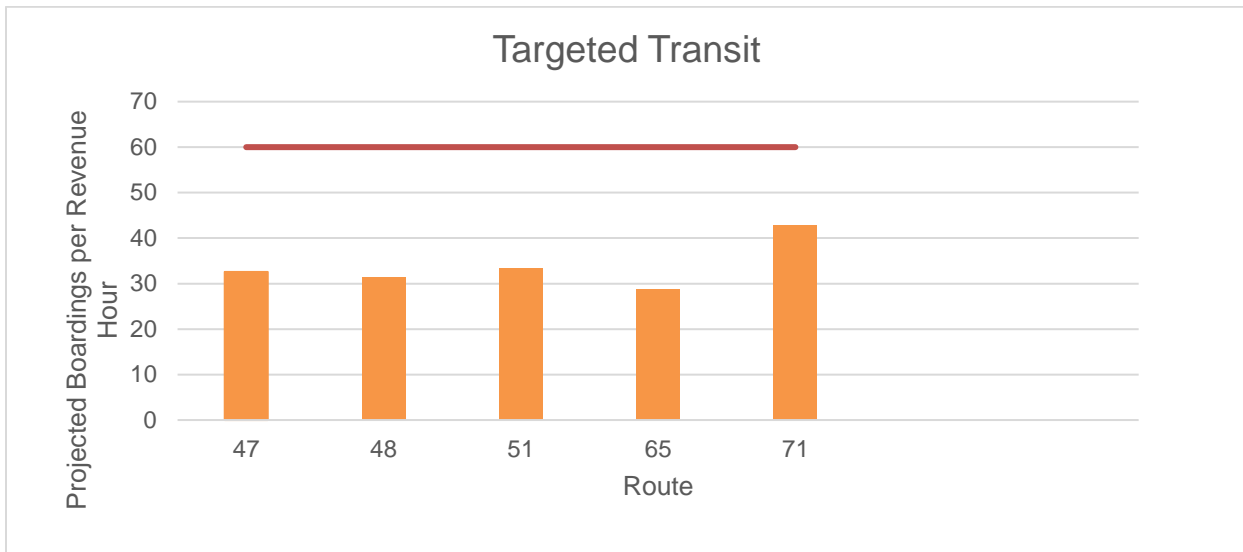


Figure 5: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for Targeted Transit, Summer 2023 (Performance Guideline = 60)

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 1 minute early and 3 minutes late of the scheduled departure time.

For the summer 2023 service period, system-level on-time performance fell slightly below the target of 70 per cent, coming in at 68 per cent (Figure 6). At the route level, Routes 2, 5, 10 and 70 had some of the most seasonally challenging service reliability challenges and will be reviewed for service reliability improvements for next summer’s schedule. Changes to Route 95 are being made for January 2024, and other underperforming routes including 8, 11, 27, 28, 46, 47, 48, and 65 will be monitored moving forward, and addressed as resources permit.

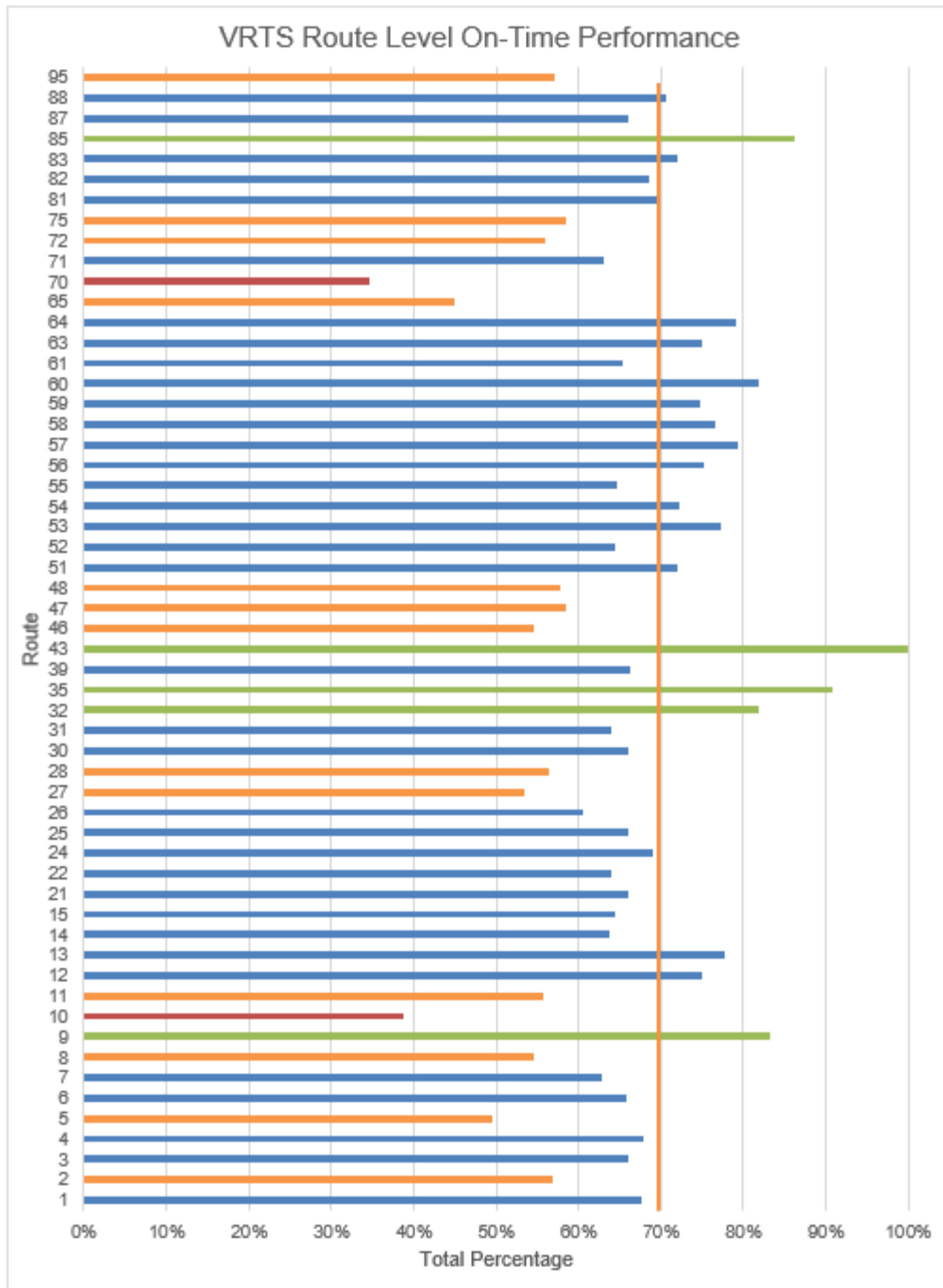


Figure 6: Per Cent On-Time Departures at Timing Points, Monday-Thursday Summer 2023 (-1, +3 minutes)