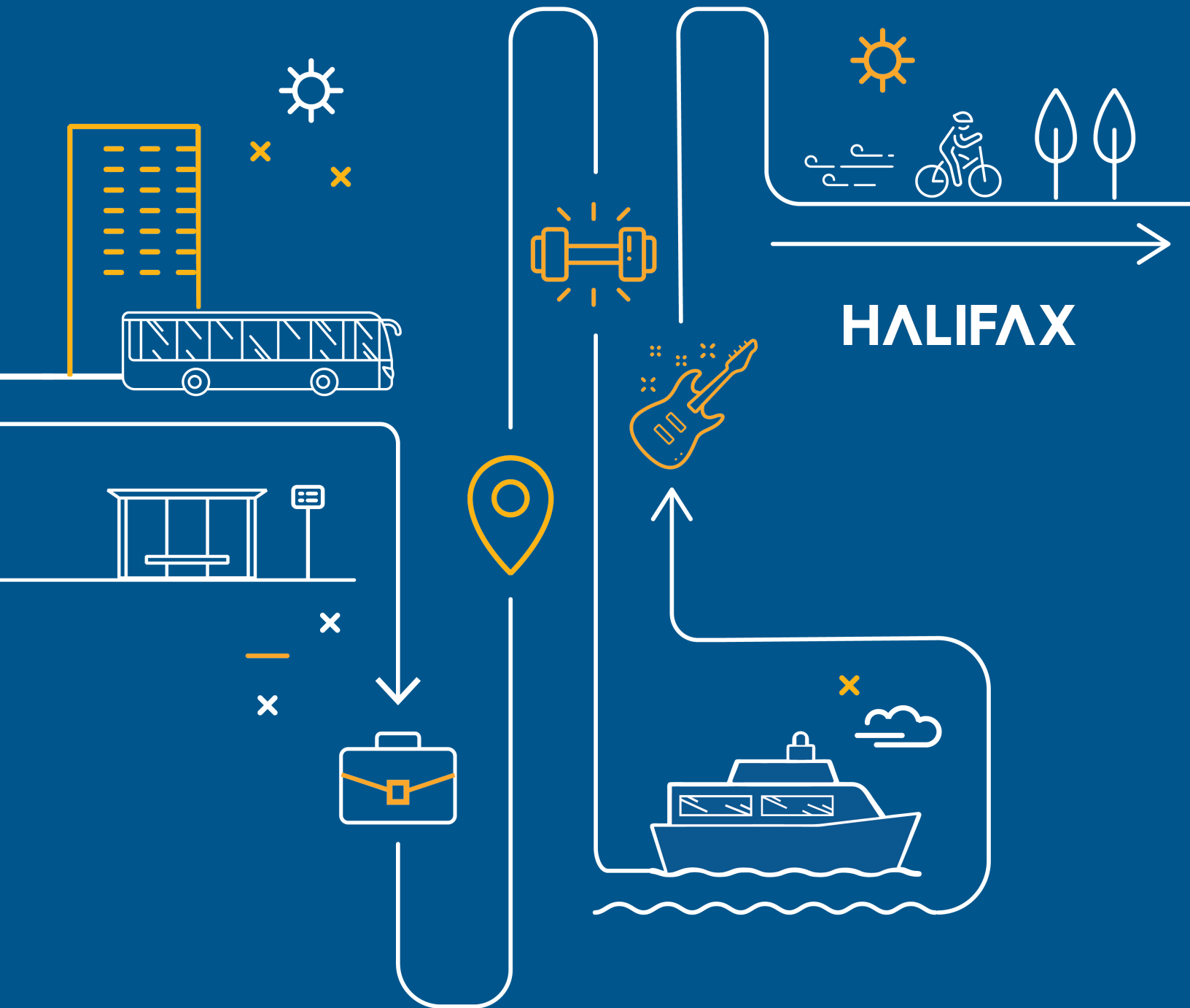


JANUARY 2026

CORE SERVICE PLAN

2025-2027





THE BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA

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HOLLIS ST

1330 HALIFAX

90 WEST BEDFORD
VIA LARRY UTECK

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MAKE THIS SUMMER
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Building a more responsive transit system for a growing Halifax

Halifax’s transit network has been developed collaboratively over time to respond to factors such as development, growth patterns and the distinctive natural features that shape our urban and suburban communities. The most recent redesign established a network that is built around different service types, each catering to distinct transit demands and needs.

Ongoing improvements in operational and planning approaches – building on previous plans such as the *Moving Forward Together Plan* (MFTP) – have made service delivery across the network more responsive. Guiding principles continue to inform the process of allocating resources and balancing competing needs and demands. Advancements and technological upgrades have resulted in an enhanced ability to track ridership trends and identify the new ways riders are moving on the network to meet their daily needs.

From ongoing analysis, it is clear that historical patterns only tell part of the story about how transit will be used in the future. High ridership growth trends in areas where transit usage was lower indicates a need to be as adaptive as possible. This also highlights the need for strategic investments to support growth across the transit service area to anticipate and respond to regional growth and shifting mobility trends. Investments to enhance the network brings us closer to meeting our vision and goals and providing reliable mobility options which reflect community needs.



A new way of planning allows for flexible service adjustments needed to keep pace with a changing region

2016



The recommendations implemented from the MFTP resulted in changes to both the transit network and the decision-making framework to most efficiently and impactfully allocate resources.

The Moving Forward Principles and guidelines provide a framework to balance resource

allocation between competing needs—prioritizing high demand services while maintaining consistent coverage across the network. The increased responsiveness enabled by the MFTP is tied closely to the use of key performance measures to ensure transit best serves communities across the system. Network updates and service changes – whether they were large or modest in scale – responded to shifts in travel patterns and changing settlement patterns.

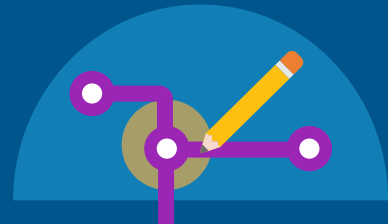
An adaptive and responsive approach to service planning is increasingly needed. Numerous changes in ridership demand, and new development and growth patterns have occurred since the introduction of Halifax Transit’s principles and guidelines a decade ago. Our commitment to keep pace with the evolving mobility needs within the region coupled with the efficient and sustainable use of available resources requires well-informed and adaptable planning frameworks.

An evaluation of Halifax’s existing transit planning processes has led to the establishment of the *Strategic Roadmap*. This shift away from a single multi-year plan to an ongoing planning process, where modules are prepared and adopted over the next three years, continues this commitment to evolving in response to changing community needs. This shift also aligns with the way transit is poised to transform through large scale initiatives like the *Rapid Transit Strategy*. The flexibility enabled by the *Strategic Roadmap* also supports a commitment to enhancing engagement and collaboration with customers and community partners.

The Moving Forward Principles guiding planning and investment decisions



1. Increase the proportion of resources allocated towards high ridership services



2. Build a simplified transfer-based system



3. Invest in service quality and reliability



4. Give transit increased priority in the transportation network

Service Types

The MFTP established service types with characteristics suited to the service provided:

- **Corridor Routes** form the backbone of the transit network by providing frequent service along high demand corridors 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** provide connections between neighbourhoods or communities to Corridor Routes at transit terminals. Most Local Routes provide all day service, typically at a lower level of frequency than Corridor Routes.
- **Ferries** provide a fast, convenient link across the harbour to destinations in the regional centre and beyond.
- **Express and Regional Express Routes** provide limited-stop service during rush hour on weekdays. These routes offer commuters streamlined transit service between residential communities and downtown. These routes also provide one-way service in the direction with the highest ridership, such as morning trips to downtown Halifax. Due to the regional importance of Route 320 Airport-Fall River it provides a higher level of service, operating bi-directionally throughout the service day, seven days/week
- **Rural Routes** provide service to those communities outside of the Urban Transit Service Boundary (UTSB) served by transit before the boundary was adopted.

Service Characteristics	Corridor Routes	Local Routes
Peak Headway (Peak Direction)	5-15 min	15-30 min
Off Peak Headway	10-30 min	30-60 min
Saturday Headway	15-30 min	30-60 min
Sunday Headway	15-30 min	30-60 min
Weekday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 1 a.m.	6 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Saturday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 12 a.m.	7 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Sunday Span of Service	6 a.m. to 12 a.m.	7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Technology permits greater adaptiveness in planning the transit network

Data is a key input in managing resources and addressing competing needs across the transit network. Technology has enabled an evolving approach to data collection and analyzing performance measures. A commitment to transparency is a critical element of reporting. Just as importantly, providing clear and understandable information to the public is also necessary to ensure effective collaboration when making network and service level adjustments.

How the Core Service Plan works within the Strategic Roadmap to make positive change

The *Strategic Roadmap* sets forth the overall vision, goals and principles designed to continually refine Halifax's transit network and deliver a system that meets the evolving needs of passengers. Together, these priorities form a comprehensive strategy to deliver a responsive, reliable, accessible and passenger-focused transit system that puts transit at the heart of regional mobility. The modules within the *Strategic Roadmap* will be prepared over the next three years.

The *Core Service Plan* – the first module in the *Strategic Roadmap* – focuses on timely network and service level adjustments to the conventional bus network over the next three years. The *Core Service Plan* makes recommendations that will further optimize transit service, making it responsive to shifting travel patterns and growth in ridership demand in areas where additional resources can deliver a high return on investment for Halifax.

Network changes and service adjustments included in the engagement for the Core Service Plan

As part of the *Core Service Plan*, a series of proposals were developed to respond to growing ridership demand, improve service reliability, and enable strategic investment to support transit network growth.

To inform these proposals, every route in the network was reviewed to determine where adjustments should be considered. This review examined performance measures, regional growth trends across Halifax, and service requests from both passengers and Operators, as well as how ridership patterns align with Halifax Transit's service standards and guidelines.

This analysis identified several key areas where strategic investment is warranted to support both recent growth and anticipated demand over the timeframe of the *Core Service Plan*.



Aligning routes, frequencies, and coverage with today's needs

The Core Service Plan focuses on short-term adjustments that respond to changes in the way riders rely on transit for their daily trips and recommends service level adjustments, route modifications and network changes to enhance transit coverage. These recommendations – aligned to the guiding principles outlined in the Strategic Roadmap – fall under the following broad investment categories aimed at responding to ridership demand, improving service reliability and adapting to shifts within our region.

These categories are:



Investing to increase service where ridership demand exceeds service levels



Investing in a more reliable network



Investing strategically to support growth

Due to sustained ridership growth, most routes across the network are performing at or above our guidelines. This means reallocating resources to support service level increases is not an easy alternative and additional resources are required. As a result, service increases over the course of the Core Service Plan 2025-27 are expected to be targeted on highest priority needs due to current constraints on bus and resource availability.

Throughout the network, there are a few routes where ridership demand is below the levels set by our guidelines. However, keeping these routes running is critical to both ensuring that passengers can make connections across the region and that there is consistent coverage across the transit network. In all cases, retaining service on lower performing routes aligns with the principle of investing in service reliability and supporting equity and connectivity across the region. Therefore, the Core Service Plan does not propose any reductions in services. Some modifications to low performing routes have been proposed, where analysis and feedback from engagement indicates changes may improve route performance or service quality and reliability.



Investing to increase service where ridership demand exceeds service levels

When there are routes that have ridership that regularly exceeds service levels, it is a strong indicator of high demand for additional trips. Corridor routes have high ridership across all time periods. When ridership demand increases for these routes – particularly during busy periods – trips can become overcrowded. Routes across the network are increasingly busy on weekends, with some trips experiencing significant growth in ridership demand. Adding more trips should reduce the chance of overloads and reduce overall travel times during busy periods on popular routes.

The following service increases are recommended:

- **Route 3 Crosstown.** This popular route needs more frequent service across a few time periods. Frequency should be increased during peak hours, Saturday, and Sunday evenings to meet demand and increase service quality.
- **Route 8 Sackville.** This route is overcrowded during the afternoon peak and has low levels of service compared to other corridor routes. Frequency should be increased across all periods.
- **Route 9A/B Greystone/Herring Cove.** This route frequently experiences overcrowding during the afternoon peak and has increased demand during weekends. Trips should be added during the afternoon peak, and frequency should be increased on weekends.
- **Route 21 Timberlea.** Ridership on Sunday trips has grown considerably and increased frequency is needed to address this higher demand.
- **Route 28 Bayers Lake.** Riders have reported issues with overcrowding on this route and have requested additional capacity. Additional frequency during the afternoon peak should be added to alleviate capacity issues, as well as increased service on weekends to make travel to Bayers Lake more convenient.
- **Route 56 Dartmouth Crossing.** Two additional trips during the afternoon should be added to address overloads.
- **Route 194 West Bedford Express.** Additional trips should be added to this route to accommodate increased demand and make the level of service on this route more consistent with other express routes.



Investing in a more reliable network

Longer travel times often result from factors such as a route's existing frequency, delays, scheduling and challenges with making timely transfers between different routes. Service and route adjustments can improve the overall experience of riding transit by reducing travel times and/or improving connections to other routes.

Ongoing investment in solutions that improve on-time performance is essential to maintaining service quality and reliability. Because the factors affecting on-time performance vary widely, greater adaptability in transit planning and operations is required to support timely adjustments. To enable this, it is recommended that a dedicated portion of the annual budget be allocated to service adjustments that help maintain schedule adherence.

The following investments in service are recommended to improve network reliability:

- **Route 5 Portland.** On Sundays this route has a very low level of service, which limits travel flexibility for riders despite being a key Corridor Route. Frequency should be increased on Sundays to improve travel options.
- **Route 24 Leiblin Park.** This route faces significant reliability and operational issues. Time should be added to the schedule to allow this route to operate more reliably. The route should also be extended to provide a more defined endpoint on the peninsula in a location with Operator facilities. Routing options should be explored for extending Route 24 in order to provide operators with facilities at the route terminus.
- **Route 56 Dartmouth Crossing.** This route has a segment along Countryview Drive where buses travel in the same direction but serve different destinations. The route should be modified to serve Finlay Drive to make the route easier for passengers to understand.
- **Route 91 Hemlock Ravine.** Infrequent service on Route 91 makes it difficult for riders to make connections to and from this route. Frequency should be increased during peak times and weekends to enable more convenient travel.
- **Route 93 Bedford Highway.** Public feedback has indicated that riders value this route. However, analysis has found that the northern section of this route is redundant with other travel options. Route 93 should be rerouted to terminate at the West Bedford Park & Ride and no longer serve the Cobequid Terminal.
- **Express Routes (Routes 123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194).** Riders, particularly health care workers, have indicated a desire for earlier and later trips on express routes that line up better with their work schedules. Later and earlier trips should be added to select express routes in the network to provide options for these travel patterns.
- **Route 165 Caldwell Express.** This route should be diverted to improve transit service to the Portland Estates neighbourhood.
- **Route 330 Tantallon-Sheldrake Lake.** Public feedback has indicated a preference for Route 330 to bypass the Sheldrake Lake Park & Ride on some trips. The two trip patterns should be designated as 330A and 330B to make these route options clear for riders.



NEW SERVICE: 24 HOUR SERVICE ON ROUTE 320 (FALL RIVER - AIRPORT)

Introducing 24-hour service for Route 320 Fall River-Airport! Many workers and travelers at Halifax Stanfield International Airport work or travel during the late night and early morning. Moving to 24-hour service will allow these workers and travelers to choose transit as an option. This requires an operational shift for Halifax Transit, and is a significant change that can provide greater flexibility in the future.





Investing strategically to support growth

Investments are critical to support the growth seen across the Halifax region. These changes will enhance service within communities experiencing growth and for new developments while addressing gaps in existing service areas where the network has not kept pace with change.

The following service changes are recommended to support growth across Halifax:

- **Route 21 Timberlea.** There are two route modifications that may be implemented in stages.
 - i. **Modify Route 21** to serve Hobson's Lake Drive in Bayers Lake, improving access to employment areas and more accessible pedestrian facilities.
 - ii. **Branch Route 21** into the 21A and 21B: 21A should retain the existing routing and 21B should serve the commercial area on Timberlea Village Parkway and Marketplace Lane once the extension is complete.
- **Route 95 Brookline.** A new route from the West Bedford Park & Ride to the Ragged Lake Transit Centre via Lacewood Terminal and Bayers Lake is recommended to provide service for new developments in West Bedford and improve coverage in Bayers Lake and Ragged Lake where demand is high.
- **Route 54 Montebello.** Serve new developments in Port Wallace by extending this route with service to begin after the road network tied to the new residential development is completed.
- **Route 55 Port Wallace.** Extend to serve new developments in Port Wallace, with service to begin after the road network tied to the new residential development is completed.
- **Route 192 Hemlock Ravine Express.** Extend to the West Bedford Park & Ride to improve service for commuters in the fast-growing West Bedford neighborhood.

Implementation timeline

The following is the proposed timeline for the changes outlined in the Core Service Plan. The changes proposed are subject to budget and resource availability. For each year, an Annual Service Plan with details on each route will be brought forward for approval by Regional Council. This timeline is illustrative in nature and may be different from what is presented to Regional Council.

Year 1

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Route 5 – Service Increase (Sunday)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 24 – Schedule Adjustment	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 165 – Modification	Service Quality & Reliability	–
Route 330 – Modification	Service Quality & Reliability	–

Year 2

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Route 3 – Service Increase	Addressing Demand	\$\$\$
Route 21 – Modifications (Stage 1 and 2) (Sunday) ●	Supporting Growth Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 28 – Service Increase ●	Addressing Demand	\$\$
Route 9A/B – Service Increase	Addressing Demand	\$\$\$
Route 56 – Additional Trips	Service Quality & Reliability	\$
Route 21 – Modification (Stage 1)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$
Route 56 – Modification	Service Quality & Reliability	–
Route 91 – Service Increase (Weekday)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$
Route 93 – Modification ●	Service Quality & Reliability	–
Route 95 – New Route ●●	Supporting Growth	\$\$\$
Route 192 – Extension ●	Supporting Growth	\$

● Changes associated with improving transit service to the Bayers Lake area.

● Changes associated with responding to growth in the West Bedford area.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE →

Year 2 (continued)

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Express Route 194 - Additional Trips ●	Addressing Demand	\$\$
Express Routes – Schedule Adjustments (123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194)	Service Quality & Reliability	–
Route 320 – 24 Hour Service	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$

● Changes associated with responding to growth in the West Bedford area.

Year 3

Recommendation	Category	Cost
Route 8 - Service Increase (all periods)	Addressing Demand	\$\$\$
Route 54 – Extension ●	Supporting Growth	\$\$
Route 55 – Extension ●	Supporting Growth	\$\$
Route 91 – Service Increase (Weekend)	Service Quality & Reliability	\$\$

● Changes associated with responding to development growth in the Port Wallace area should be implemented after development is completed.

Note About Costs:

- Low (\$): \$0 - \$99,999 per year
- Medium (\$\$): \$100,000 - \$499,999 per year
- High (\$\$\$): \$500,000 or more per year

Service increases

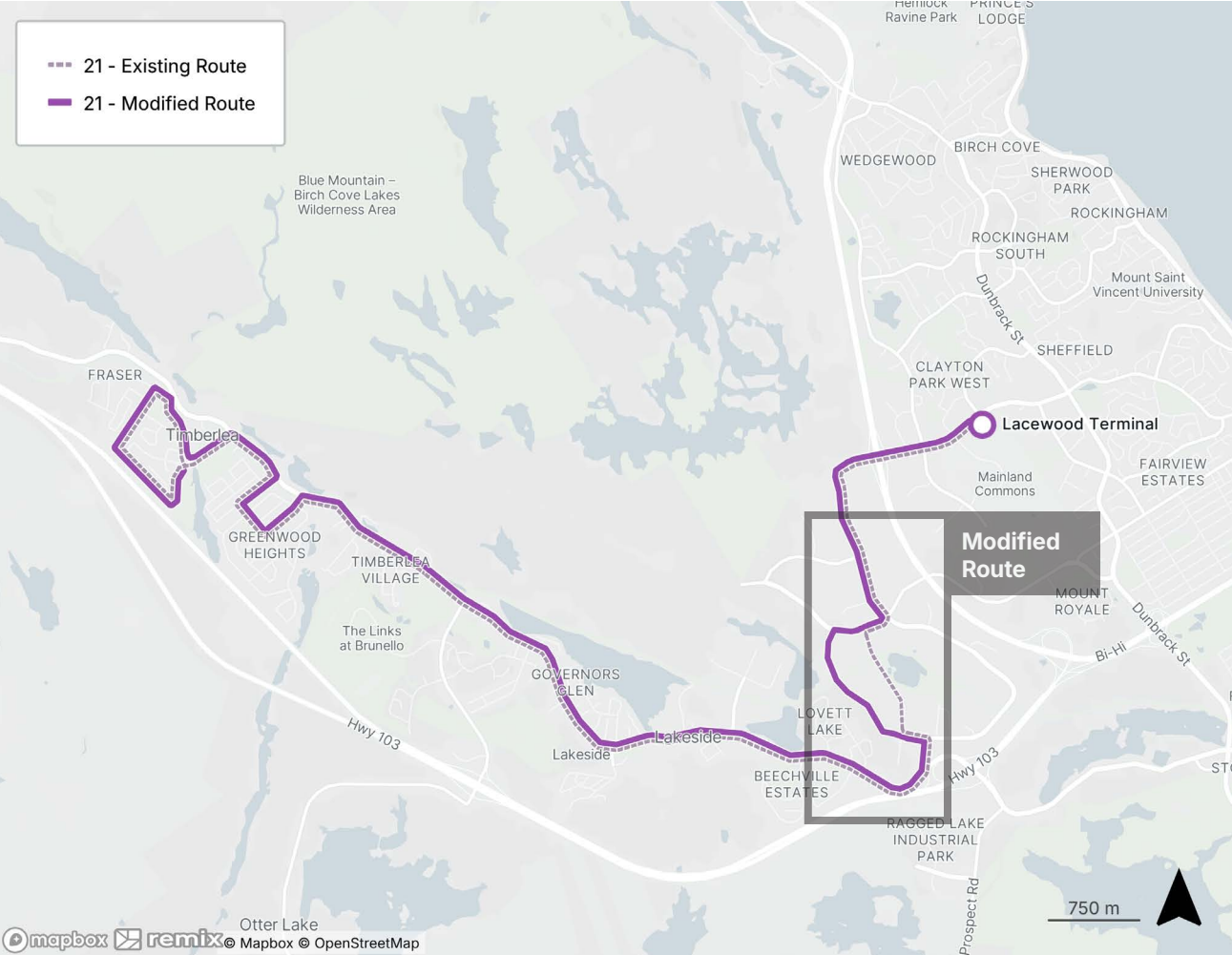
The following table provides detailed descriptions of the additional trips that are recommended as service increases.

Route	Proposal	Current
3 Crosstown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-minute frequency during morning & afternoon peak • 20-minute frequency on Saturdays • 20-minute frequency on Sunday evenings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-minute frequency during morning peaks • 20-minute frequency during afternoon peaks • 30-minute frequency on Saturdays
5 Portland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20-minute frequency on Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency on Sundays
8 Sackville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-minute frequency during morning & afternoon peak • 20-minute frequency during weekday evenings • 20-minute frequency on Saturdays and Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 15 minutes (morning & afternoon) • Every 30 minutes (weekday evenings) • Every 30 minutes (Saturday & Sunday)
9A/B Greystone/Herring Cove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the afternoon peak • 20-minute combined frequency on Saturdays and Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-minute frequency during the afternoon peak • 30-minute frequency on Saturdays and Sundays
21 Timberlea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency on Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60-minute frequency on Sundays
28 Bayers Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-minute frequency during the afternoon peak • 20-minute frequency on Saturdays • 30-minute frequency on Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency on weekdays • 30-minute frequency on Saturdays and Sundays
56 Dartmouth Crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the afternoon peak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 30 minutes (afternoon)
91 Hemlock Ravine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20-minute frequency during morning & afternoon peak • 30-minute frequency on Saturdays • 30-minute frequency on Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency during morning & afternoon peak • 60-minute frequency during midday and on weekends
194 West Bedford Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the morning & afternoon peak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four trips during the morning peak and four trips during the afternoon peak
Express Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the early evening or early morning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies based on route
320 – Airport-Fall River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional trips during the late night and early morning to provide 24-hour service on weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute frequency on weekdays • 60-minute frequency on Saturdays and Sundays

Route modifications

The following maps and descriptions provide additional detail for proposed routing changes.

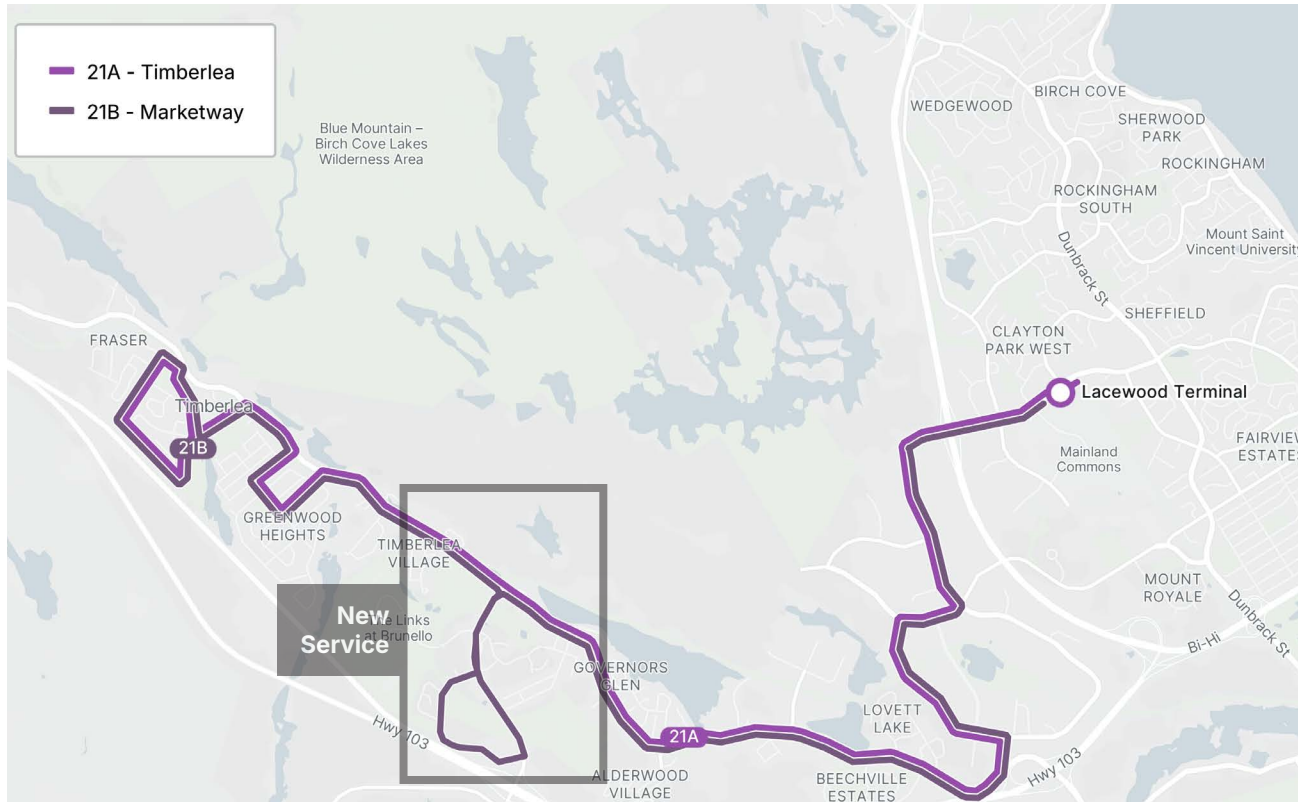
21 Timberlea (Stage 1)



Route 21 should no longer serve Horseshoe Lake Drive and should instead travel down Hobsons Lake Drive, which has new commercial and industrial development, and safer pedestrian infrastructure.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

21 Timberlea (Stage 2)



Route 21 should be split into two branches, 21A/B. Route 21A should retain the existing routing on St Margarets Bay Road. Route 21B should divert from St Margarets Bay Road at Timberlea Village Parkway to serve Marketway Lane and the new residential and commercial areas in this community.

Each trip should alternate between 21A and 21B providing 30-minute frequency on the combined corridor with an hourly frequency on each branch. This change should only be implemented once Marketway Lane is fully connected. During periods where the combined corridor frequency is hourly, only the 21B will run, ensuring hourly service to Marketway Lane.

24 Leiblin Park

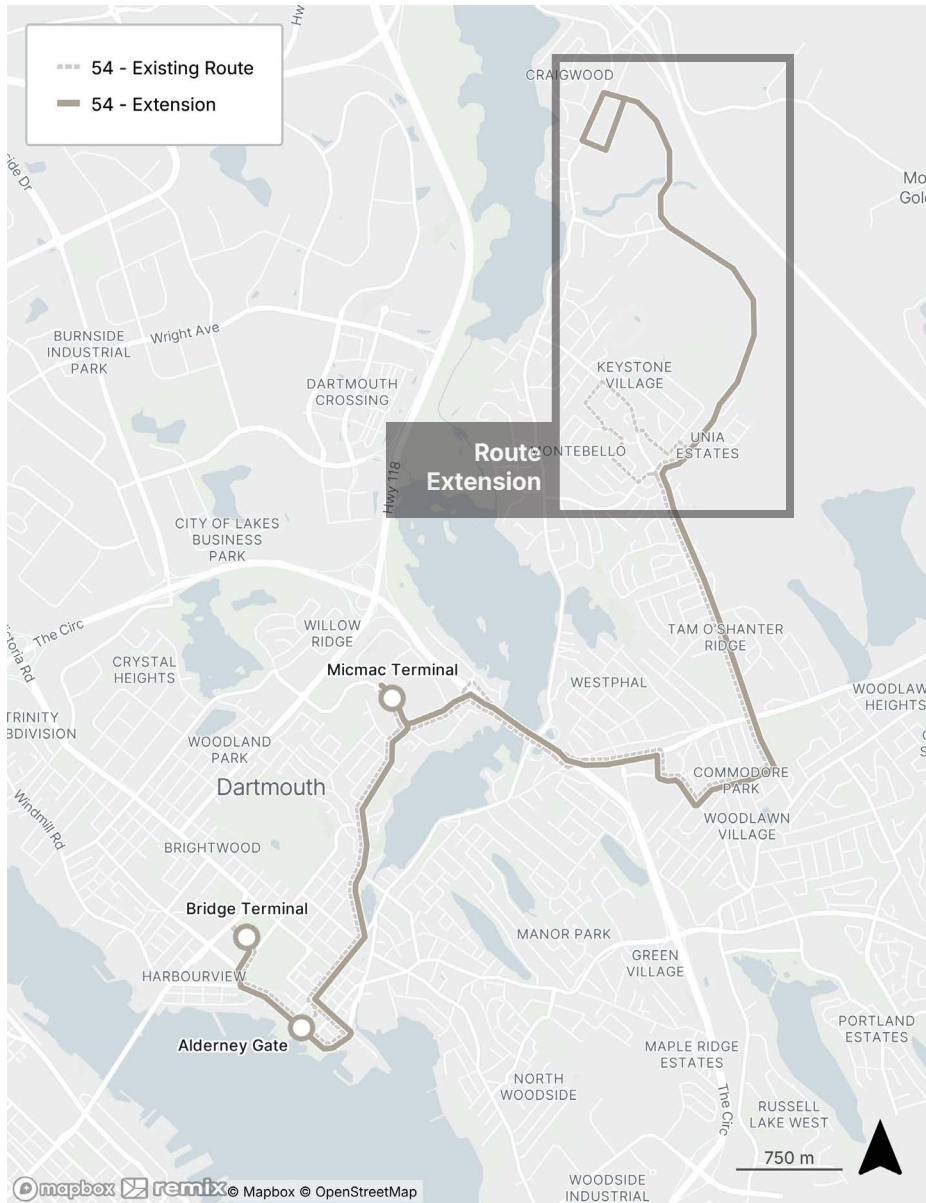


Route 24 is facing significant schedule adherence and operational issues. Additional runtime should be added to Route 24 schedule so it can operate reliably. This planned schedule adjustment will increase the planned travel time for riders but should result in more consistent operations and less cancelled trips. This change should benefit both riders and operators by providing a more reliable schedule.

Options should be explored for extending Route 24 to provide Operator facilities at the route terminus. Additional investigation into securing layover space to create a new route end point is required. Options considered included extending the route to Point Pleasant Park, to Scotia Square, or to connect to other transportation options at the rail and regional bus stations on Hollis Street. As these options would include additional infrastructure costs, they will continue to be explored and a recommendation will be brought forward as part of a future Annual Service Plan for final approval.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

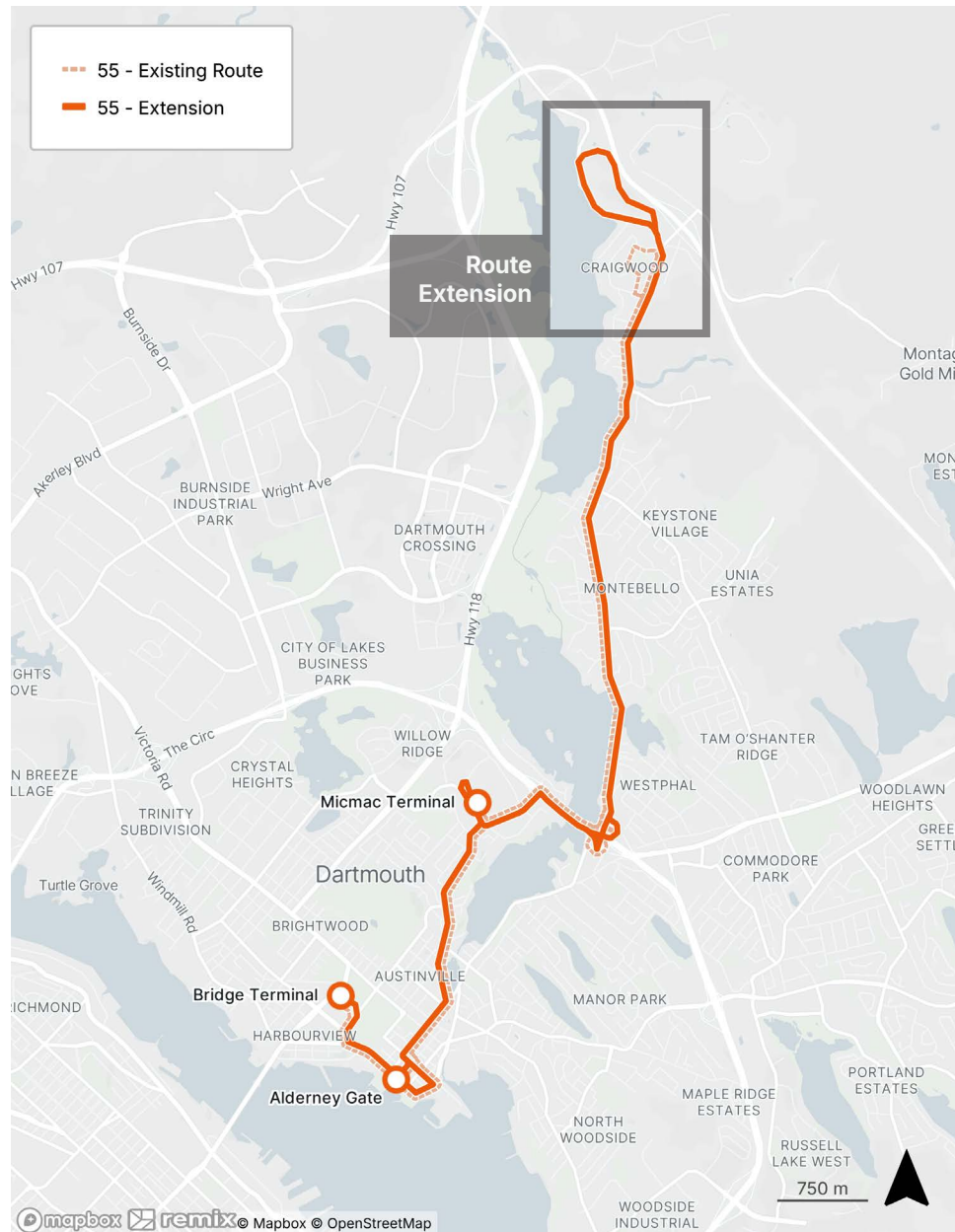
54 Montebello



Route 54 should be extended along Avenue du Portage to service planned development in Port Wallace. The one-way loop at the current end of the line should be removed. The proposed modification will mean the existing loop including Lexington Avenue, Breeze Drive, Columbo Drive, Appian Way, Colonna Place and Montebello Drive will no longer have bus stops for Route 54. This extension should only be implemented once the roads are in place.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

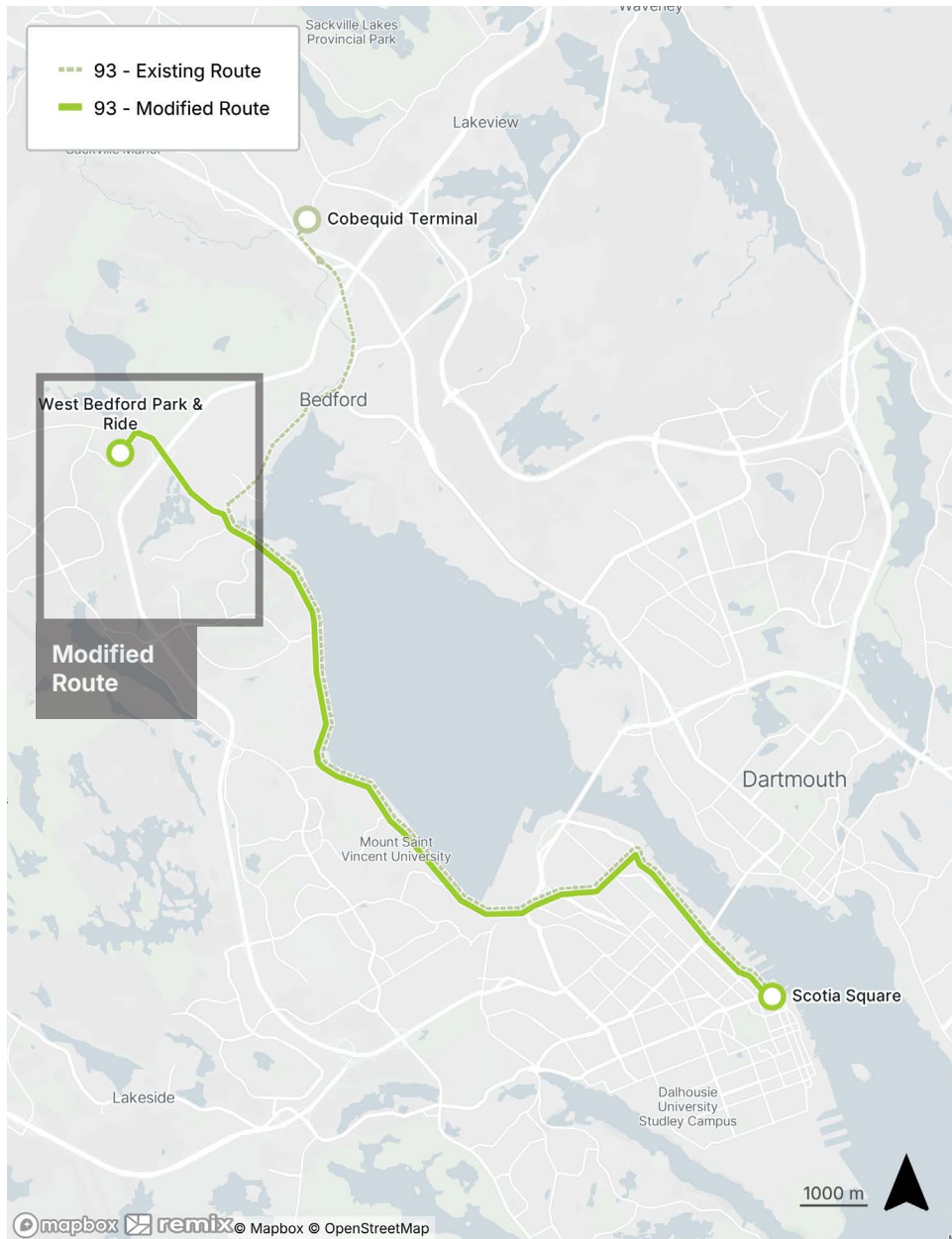
55 Port Wallace



Route 55 should be extended to service new development in Port Wallace. The current one-way loop at Charles Keating Drive and Craighburn Drive should be removed, and the extended route should turn around using the newly-constructed road and Waverley Road. The proposed modification will mean Charles Keating Drive and Craighburn Avenue will no longer have bus stops. This extension should only be implemented once roads are in place.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

93 Bedford Highway



Route 93 should be rerouted via Hammonds Plains Road to serve West Bedford Park & Ride. Service should no longer be provided on Bedford Highway north of Hammonds Plains Road or to Cobequid Terminal. This provides additional service and transfer options in the growing West Bedford community.

ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

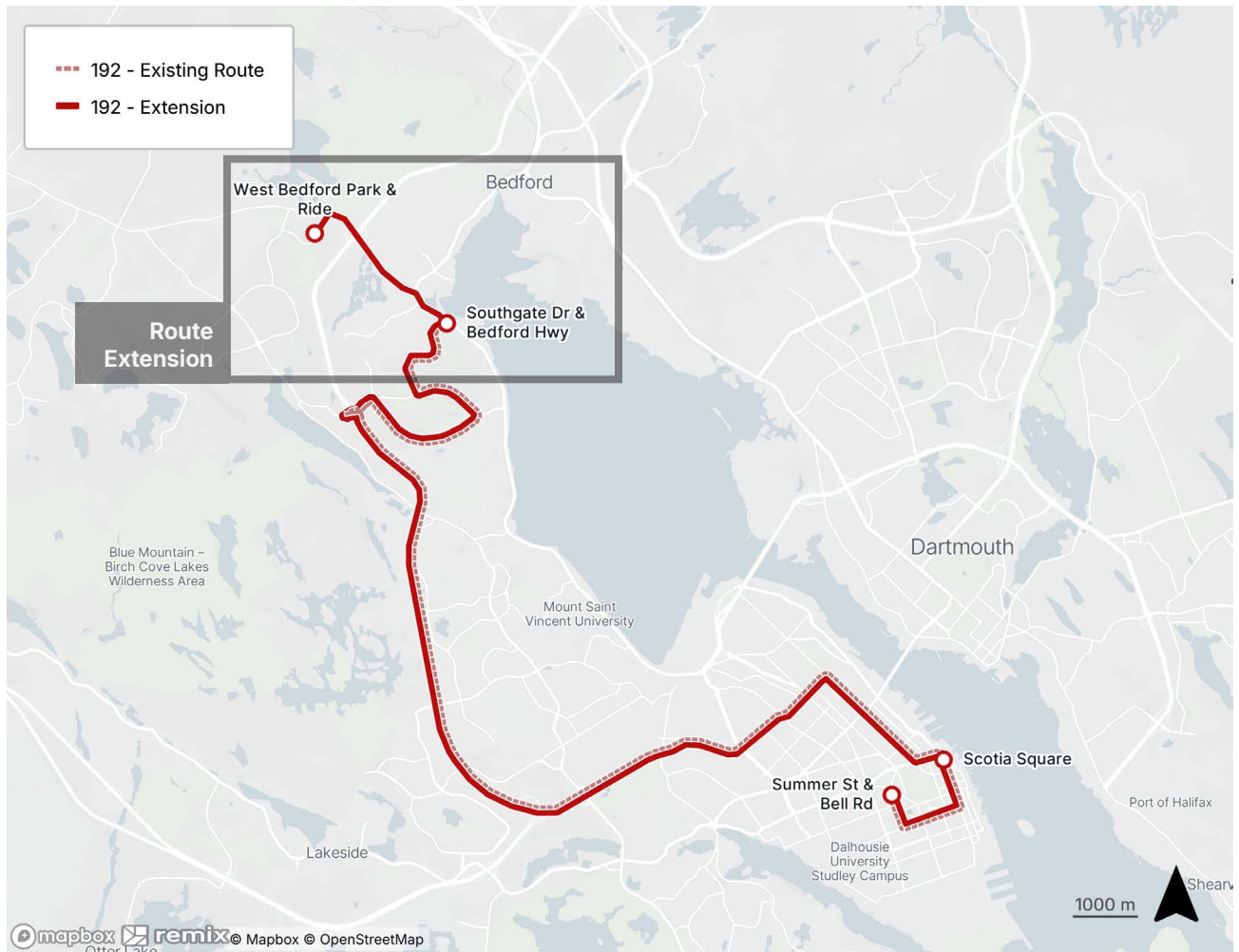
165 Caldwell Express



Route 165 should be rerouted to serve the Portland Estates neighborhood, via Portland Hills Drive, Portland Estates Boulevard West and Eisner Boulevard. This should fill in a gap in coverage left from the removal of Route 57 in 2024.

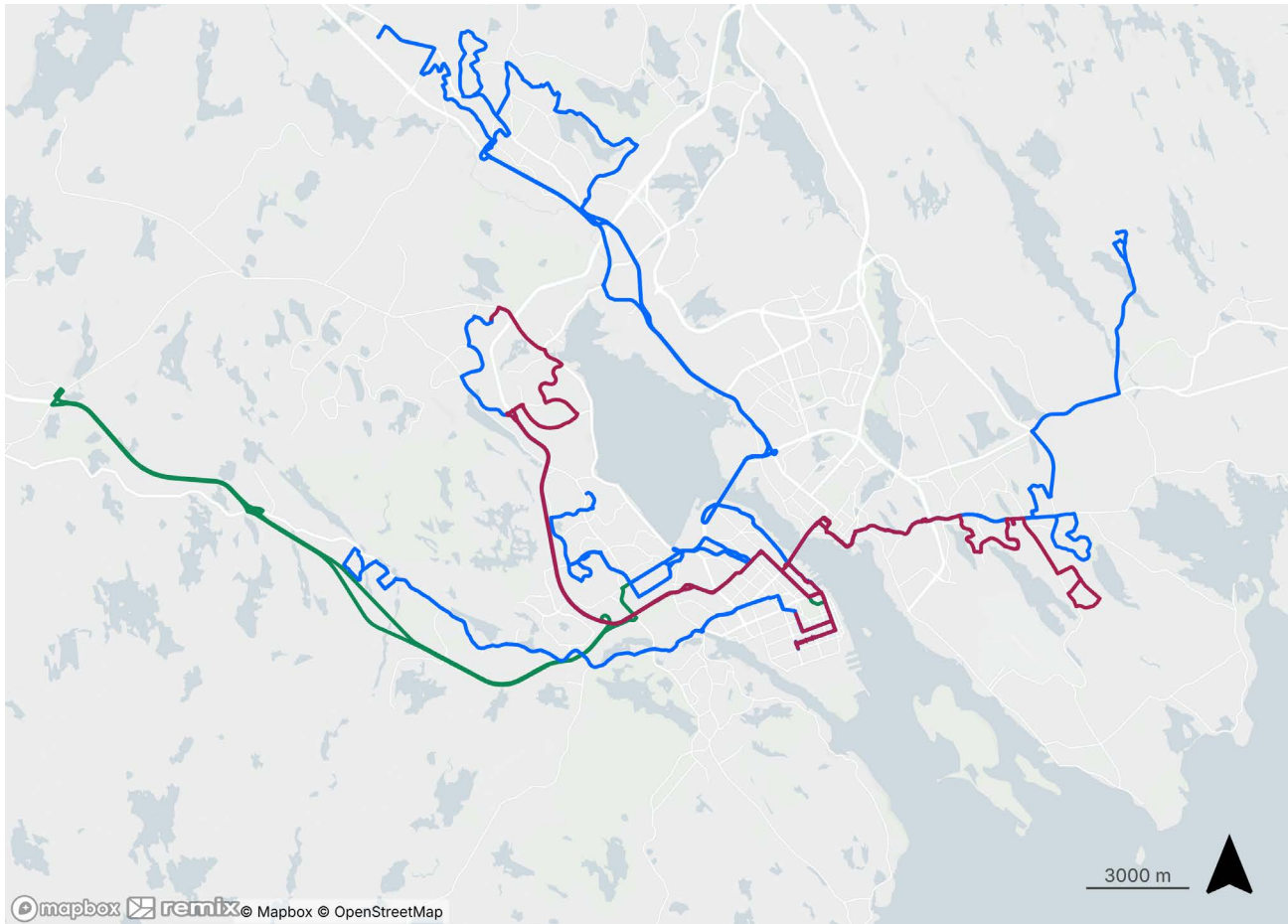
ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

192 Hemlock Ravine Express



Route 192 should be extended past Southgate Drive to West Bedford Park & Ride. This extension should provide additional travel options for commuters at the West Bedford Park & Ride.

Express Routes

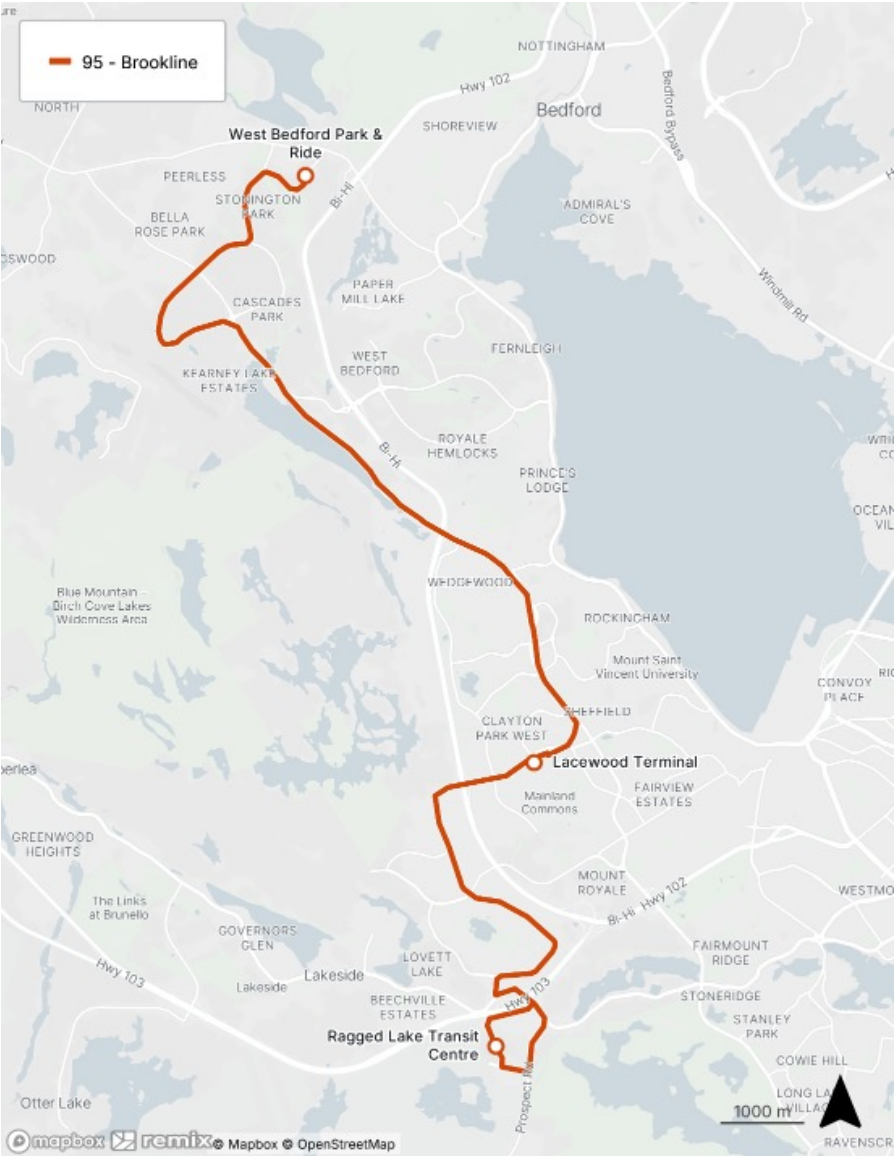


Express routes are being improved across the network through **Additional Service**, **Extensions & Modifications**, and **Service Pattern Changes**.

Route(s)	Improvement	Change
123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194	Additional Service	Additional trips in the evening and early morning to increase service span.
194	Additional Service	Additional trips during AM & PM peak to meet demand.
165	Extensions & Modifications	Reroute to serve Portland Estates to restore cancelled transit service.
192	Extensions & Modifications	Extend to West Bedford Park & Ride to increase travel options, coverage, and connectivity.
330	Service Pattern Changes	Bypass Sheldrake Lake Park & Ride on select trips to speed up travel times.

New Route

95 Brookline



Route 95 should be established to provide service to new developments in West Bedford and additional connections to Bayers Lake. Route 95 should enable riders from West Bedford to connect to Lacewood Terminal and is intended to provide a direct North-South off-peninsula connection. Additionally, Route 95 will provide extra travel options to and from Ragged Lake Industrial Park.

Route 95 would be designated as a Local Route and would have a 30-minute frequency on weekdays and 60-minute frequency during weekends. Frequency may be adjusted in the future as ridership develops.



Areas of potential future investment in the transit network

Many other system-wide and targeted improvements that would support demand, improve service reliability and/or support growth were explored during the development of this plan. However, the following investments exceed the potential level of resources expected in the life of the *Core Service Plan 2025-27* and as such are not included as recommendations. The following list captures the main concepts and service adjustments, based on internal analyses and service requests from passengers and community partners, that fall outside the scope of the *Core Service Plan 2025-27*.

Resource estimations for each item vary depending on routing and level of service.



Investing to increase service where ridership demand exceeds service levels

Item	Alignment with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
Frequent and consistent service on all Corridor Routes and ferry services. Increase frequencies to a minimum of 10 minutes during peak hours and 15 minutes during off-peak hours and weekends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves service reliability and improves wait times when transferring More inclusive and improved mobility options Expected high ridership return on investment Support transition to the Rapid Transit network 	<p>The Corridor Routes (Routes 1-10), combined with ferry service, could be considered as a precursor to the Rapid Transit network.</p> <p>Present service frequencies vary between routes and across the different time periods. The resources needed to update to this level of frequency would involve approximately an additional 90,000 - 300,000 service hours and an increase in fleet, Operators and ferry crews to staff this additional service.</p>	<p>\$10M – \$30M per year</p> <p>35 – 100 additional buses</p>



Investing in a more reliable network

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
<p>Update Saturday and Sunday schedules to be equivalent across the entire network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves service reliability and reduces travel times during these periods • More inclusive and improved mobility options • Responds to the ridership growth trends during these periods, particularly the increased reliance on transit on Sunday 	<p>This would improve service reliability, improve connections between transfers and reduce travel times for transit journeys taken on the weekends—which are significantly longer than in other periods.</p> <p>The service increases will require additional resources and investment to support the increase in service hours needed to update frequencies across the network. There are currently no, or limited, options to reallocate resources from existing service levels as greater ridership demand remains during peak periods.</p> <p>This network wide update would deliver greater impact than our current approach to adjusting frequencies based on existing resources.</p> <p>There is significant potential for high ridership return from this investment.</p>	<p>\$1.5M - \$2.5M per year</p>
<p>Operate on weekday schedules instead of Sunday schedules on holidays that have higher ridership potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves service reliability and reduces travel times during these periods • More inclusive and improved mobility options • Responds to the ridership trends during these periods 	<p>Many riders rely on transit to commute to work or for daily trips during holiday periods, such as Victoria Day, where service is currently low.</p> <p>Updating the level of service would respond to current ridership demand.</p>	<p>~\$1.7M per year</p>

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INVESTING IN A MORE RELIABLE NETWORK (CONTINUED)

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
<p>Additional service and routes to Burnside</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnside is an important employment destination: more transit options to this industrial park will improve service reliability • More inclusive and improved mobility options • Improves connections between communities and across the region 	<p>Burnside has seen a significant increase in boardings since 2018. However, the industrial park features developments that spread throughout an extended area, making it a challenge to adequately serve with conventional bus routes. Employees working in this location also have higher variability in working hours.</p> <p>Alternative service models may provide a higher level of service in this area and should be considered.</p>	<p>\$2M – \$10M per year</p>
<p>Direct connection between Spryfield to Bayers Lake via Dunbrack Street</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves network connectivity • Potential for more inclusive and improved mobility options 	<p>Existing land-use and population density means a direct connection along a section of Dunbrack Street south of Highway 102 is not suited to conventional bus service.</p> <p>This direct connection has been long requested by the community. However, due to existing alternatives which include indirect trips and transfers, the expected ridership potential is lower than in other potential crosstown connections, and so this route has not been recommended.</p> <p>Adding a direct transit link between these locations may be more feasible if alternative service models scale across the network and region.</p>	<p>\$1M – \$4M per year</p>

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INVESTING IN A MORE RELIABLE NETWORK (CONTINUED)

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
Improved connections between West Bedford, Bedford and Sackville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity Potential for more inclusive and improved mobility options 	<p>Improved connections would require implementing additional routes or extend existing routes. The link between West Bedford and Lacewood (proposed Route 95) has been deemed a higher priority based on ridership demand and community requests. This initiative may be more feasible in future network updates.</p>	<p>\$500K – \$3M per year</p>
Improved connections for the North End of Halifax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity Improves service reliability and reduces travel times during these periods 	<p>More direct connections linking the North End with off-peninsula communities including Burnside, Dartmouth and Clayton Park would reduce travel times and the number of transfers needed to reach these destinations.</p> <p>The limit on options and the resources required to implement additional service exceeds the resources available at this time. Implementing more direct connections between these locations may be more feasible in future network updates and / or with further development of the Young District.</p>	<p>\$1M – \$4.5M per year</p>
More limited stop services including terminal-to-terminal express services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces travel times and improves cross-regional connections 	<p>Some transit riders have reported challenges with long, multi-leg journeys between communities outside of Downtown Halifax. Limited-stop routes directly connecting terminals can speed up these trips.</p> <p>This type of service would require additional resources and would require well-timed transfers between routes.</p>	<p>\$3M – \$10M per year</p>





Investing strategically to support growth

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
<p>Provide transit service to the Lucasville community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity close to the existing network and a well served transit terminal More inclusive and improved mobility options High community demand for transit service 	<p>Provide a link between Lucasville and the nearby transit network. Residents – many of which use transit already – experience issues getting to and from the nearby Sackville Transit Terminal.</p> <p>There is potential for high ridership demand as members of this community have been advocating for transit for many years. This community has areas of population density viable for transit, particularly as a test case for an alternative transit service model.</p>	<p>New service models are under consideration for some locations as part of the Microtransit module. As this community falls outside of the transit service boundary, the addition of service is not within the scope of the Core Service Plan.</p>
<p>Provide transit service to the Fall River community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity close to existing transit routes More inclusive and improved mobility options 	<p>Fall River lies at a distance from the current stop on Regional Express Route 320. Issues with last-mile connections to this community include walking long distances to reach the nearest stops along roads without a sidewalk or paved shoulder.</p> <p>In addition to reviewing feedback through the engagement process, a change to the Route 320 to travel via the new road was considered. Modifying the existing service would significantly impact the service quality and the role this route plays as an important regional connector.</p> <p>The advocacy for transit service from community members in Fall River suggests strong feasibility for transit service, particularly as a test case for an alternative transit service model.</p>	<p>New service models are under consideration for some locations as part of the Microtransit module.</p> <p>Costing estimate for conventional service can add \$130K - \$230K per year to modify route 320.</p>

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INVESTING STRATEGICALLY TO SUPPORT GROWTH

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
Routes to serve areas of cultural and social significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved network connectivity, close to existing transit routes More inclusive and improved mobility options Responds to high community requests and supports greater community connectivity 	<p>Community members across Halifax have advocated for transit service to a range of locations in the region, including beaches on the Eastern Shore, heritage sites, places of worship and community centers. The level of interest and support is aligned with goals of increasing community connections and demonstrates the value of providing service to these areas. Areas we receive regular requests for service from, include Rainbow Haven, Africville, ISKCON Temple and the Nova Scotia Islamic Community Centre (NSICC).</p> <p>The use of an alternative transit service model to provide service to these locations may increase the feasibility of these proposals.</p>	<p>New service models are under consideration for some locations as part of the Microtransit module. Some of these locations are outside the urban transit boundary, while others are located within the existing service network, but their locations or other factors make providing service difficult.</p>
Increase frequencies on all local routes to a minimum of 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity, service reliability and reduces travel time during these periods More inclusive and improved mobility options Encourages transit use in suburban areas 	<p>Frequencies on local routes vary across the network, with some having hourly service and others with 30-minute frequency during peak.</p> <p>This network-wide update would deliver more impact than the current approach to adjusting frequencies based on existing resources but requires significant investment in extra service hours and vehicles.</p> <p>There is significant potential for high ridership returns from this investment.</p>	<p>\$7.3M – \$8M per year</p> <p>20 – 25 additional buses</p>

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INVESTING STRATEGICALLY TO SUPPORT GROWTH

Item	Alignments with goals	Considerations	Estimated resources
Eastern Passage to Portland Hills route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity Potential for more inclusive and improved mobility options 	<p>This direct connection has been long requested by the community. However, due to existing land-use and density along Caldwell Road makes a direct connection not suited to conventional bus service. Adding a direct transit link between these locations may be more feasible if alternative service models scale across the network and region.</p>	<p>\$775K – \$1.5M per year</p>
Extend Route 6A/B/C Woodside/ Eastern Passage/ Heritage Hills to Wrights Cove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a strong cross-town connection for Dartmouth and Eastern Passage residents and additional connections into Burnside 	<p>This change would require investment in extra service hours and vehicles. Increasing the level of service that will result from the Ocean Breeze and Shannon Park developments may be implemented once they are constructed.</p>	<p>\$600K – \$1M per year</p> <p>The resources required to implement this recommendation mean that it is currently out of scope of the Core Service Plan. As more funding becomes available, there may be opportunities to extend route 6A/B/C.</p>
Extend service on a Corridor Route to 24 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves network connectivity Potential for more inclusive and improved mobility options Enhances regional connectivity when paired with nighttime service on Route 320 	<p>Implementing a 24-hour night route would require additional resources.</p> <p>Minimal requests were received during public engagement on the potential for later night service in the dense urban areas. However, it can be expected that operating the Route 320 Airport/Fall River would result in requests for additional routes to operate to connect and allow transfers at the Bridge Terminal or Scotia Square. Providing overnight service on additional routes would exceed the resources limits anticipated in the short term, but several Corridor Routes would potentially be good candidates in the future, including the Route 1, 7, or 10.</p> <p>Further analysis is required before implementing this initiative.</p>	<p>\$320K – \$630K per year</p>

What's next?

The *Core Service Plan 2025-2027* makes recommendations aimed at improving the quality and reliability of transit across the region. The recommendations are expected to be implemented over a three-year timeframe. While the *Core Service Plan* is a short term plan that addresses specific routes and service levels over the next three years, other initiatives will be developed as part of the *Strategic Roadmap*.

As part of the *Strategic Roadmap*, several plans, reviews and guidelines are underway or planned. These initiatives will advance many of our guiding principles and improve transit service for riders.

Expanding Choice Through New Service Models. The *Microtransit Service Plan* – currently under development – will establish flexible solutions to complement the fixed-route network and provide alternatives for areas or times of day where traditional service may not be practical. The *Microtransit Service Plan* will outline recommendations to pilot innovative options to communities that are located close to transit hubs but do not have service.

Delivering Reliability People Can Count On. Service Reliability is a high priority for our customers and community partners. The *Service Reliability Review* will involve the breadth of data, performance trends and operational insights available to identify the major characteristics contributing to delays and slowdowns across the network. The *Service Reliability Review* will establish recommendations aimed at reducing travel times, improving schedule consistency and delivering on service reliability.

Customer Experience: Designing Transit Around People, Not Just Routes. Our work on customer experience will include a focus on accessibility and inclusion. Improvements will enhance the rider experience by addressing barriers to

mobility and ensuring that services are designed for all users, including those with diverse needs. Two modules fall under this theme – the *Accessible Transit Review* which is currently in the early stages of planning and the *Customer Experience* module which will establish passenger-focused standards that will apply across multiple areas of transit service delivery.

Redesigning the transit network to integrate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and higher-order corridors. An investment in rapid transit would create faster and more direct travel options and support long-term growth across the municipality. A network redesign will be prepared that determines how the existing transit network can be modified to be best aligned for the future in the the *Bus Rapid Transit Integration Service Plan*.

Behind the scenes, **Modernizing Infrastructure and Technology** will provide the foundation for dependable operations and real-time information. Upgrades to facilities, systems and digital tools will improve efficiency and enhance customer experience. Two *Strategic Roadmap* modules align with this theme – the *Transit Infrastructure Standards Development* and the *Technology Implementation Plan*.

Finally, **Enhancing Ferry Services** ensures system-wide consistency and integration. The *Ferry Service Operational Review*, within the *Strategic Roadmap*, is in the early stages of planning.



Appendix

Engaging on the Core Service Plan 2025-27

The following proposals were used in the engagement materials and events to get feedback from residents and passengers who rely on transit for their daily trips. The proposals are broken down by theme and cover: service adjustments to address ridership demand, low performing routes under consideration for reduced or cancelled service, network changes to support growth, and routes which may need to be rerouted due to changes in the road network.

Service adjustments to address ridership demand

Route performance, ridership demand and adherence to service standards are routinely tracked and reported on. Buses which consistently get too crowded and go into service overload is a key indicator that more frequent service is needed, particularly when analysis indicates high ridership is an ongoing trend. Increasing the number of trips on these routes during busy periods is given a higher priority than other areas where investments may be needed.

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

There are a lot of potential opportunities to increase service on routes or at certain periods to improve service quality and reliability. For example, widespread frequency increases during non-peak periods would respond to the shift in travel patterns we are seeing across the network.

Recognizing that we are constrained in the ability to implement widespread service increases coupled with our mandate to provide transit service with an efficient use of resources and meet financial and environmental sustainability goals, we prepared a priority list of routes with the greatest need for increased services. This list was shared during engagement to get feedback on how our evaluation aligned with the experience of our passengers.

The routes with the highest need for level of service increases included:

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

Low performing routes under consideration for reduced or cancelled service

Ideally, our analysis would identify resources underutilized within the transit system which can be reallocated to respond to ridership growth where needed. However, our network is operating at, or near capacity. Those routes with low ridership demand provide important coverage across the network and within the region. One exception, Route 93 Bedford Highway, was proposed for cancellation and tied to increasing frequency on Route 8. Route 93 has a limited-service run and is one of least used routes in the network. We outlined a proposal to cancel this route to get feedback from passengers.

Addressing ridership demand

Requests for more frequent service or 'more buses' garnered the largest number of responses when we engaged riders. Requests for increases were connected to the following factors:

1. Capacity and comfort on buses on certain routes during busy periods. These concerns were related to crowding and the need to stand on long routes, express services, or buses delayed by traffic.
2. Many comments connected increased frequency with reduced wait times and overall travel times, by:
 - a. Providing more options to make connections when transferring to other routes in the network
 - b. Reducing the impact on service delays
 - c. Reducing the number of overloads and service cancellations
3. The need to respond to shifting travel patterns by extending service spans on routes and express routes.

Lengthy travel times and issues with service reliability impact the confidence passengers have in taking trips on transit to reach destinations on time, particularly in the case of traveling to work, picking up children and attending medical appointments.



Service adjustments to address ridership demand

In reviewing our priority list many agreed with our assessment, however a few other routes increased in priority because of the feedback we received from engagement. The table below outlines our revised list of routes with the highest demand for service increases, when they are needed and why.

Route	Proposed change	Rationale
Route 3 Crosstown	More service during peak hours, Saturdays and Sunday evenings	To alleviate overcrowding on weekdays and increase service quality on Saturdays.
Route 5 Portland	More service on Sundays	Increase service quality and reliability.
Route 8 Sackville	More service during all periods	To alleviate overcrowding on weekdays and increase service reliability across all periods.
Route 9A/B Greystone/ Herring Cove	Additional trips during the afternoon peak, increased frequency on weekends	To alleviate overcrowding during the afternoon peak and service quality during weekends.
Route 21 Timberlea	Increased frequency on Sundays	Responds to high ridership demand on Sunday trips.
Route 28 Bayers Lake	Increased frequency during peak hours and weekends	To alleviate overcrowding and respond to high ridership demand.
Route 56 Dartmouth Crossing	Additional trips during the afternoon	Respond to concerns raised during engagement and ridership demand during the afternoon peak.
91 Hemlock Ravine	Increased frequency during peak hours & weekends	We heard riders experience long waits to connect from other services during the afternoon peak, increased frequency will improve service quality and respond to ridership growth in this community area.
194 West Bedford Express	Additional trips during AM & PM peak	Feedback and data analysis indicates high demand for Route 194.
Express routes (123, 137, 138, 161, 165, 182, 183, 185, 194)	Extended service span	Responds to shift in commuting patterns and aligns with health sector workers who rely on these services.
320 Airport-Fall River	Additional late-night trips to provide 24-hour service 7 days a week	Feedback and requests from partner organizations and passengers indicate that an extended service span will improve this regional connection for travelers and those working night / early morning shifts to commute to and from work.

Network changes to support growth

Based on recent and planned development and ridership demand growth, three areas were under consideration for revised routing to provide transit service to these locations.

The following is a summary of the materials and proposals shared during engagement for the Core Service Plan. For more information, see <https://engagehalifax.ca/core-service-plan>.

Bayers Lake had seen steady growth in development coupled with a high increase in boardings over the past few years. Minor adjustments had increased service to this community area, but it seemed time for a more robust review of the ways routes connected riders to destinations across the network.

West Bedford had a recent influx of residents living in new developments in the area, some with medium and high density. Recent upgrades in this area have resulted in a high ridership return on investment. With more development to be completed within the next two years, additional service would be needed to serve this expected increase in demand.

Similarly, **Port Wallace** has significant residential development, including an expansion of the road network, which is due to be completed within the next two years. The changes to the road network and additional population provided an opportunity to extend transit to this area. Each of these focus areas were ideal locations for strategic investments to keep pace with growth and new developments.

The **Bayers Lake Business Park** is a popular shopping and employment destination. It is also home to services such as the Bayers Lake Community Outpatient Centre. Different concepts proposed network changes to

improve transit to this community, including expanding service to Hobsons Lake Drive and the section of Chain Lake Drive currently without service. Proposals included a new route linking Lacewood Terminal to Ragged Lake—with an option for this to extend to the West Bedford community and terminate at the West Bedford Park & Ride—and modifications to **Route 21 Timberlea** and **Route 28 Bayers Lake**.

- Feedback indicated a preference for **Route 28** to keep its current routing to maintain existing connections to Bayers Lake Outpatient Centre.
- Feedback on **Route 21** and **Route Y** (the southern half of **Route 95**) indicated a preference for routing along the southern portion of Chain Lake Drive, indicating a strong demand to travel there. **Route Y** was ultimately selected to travel on this corridor, to create a more direct route.
- The resulting network ended up incorporating elements of both concept A and B.
- Feedback indicated a strong preference for a combined route linking West Bedford with Ragged Lake while serving Clayton Park and Bayers Lake. This combined route has been provisionally named **Route 95 Brookline**.



West Bedford is a rapidly growing community, with further growth expected as additional developments are planned. Different concepts proposed network changes to improve transit to the West Bedford and Clayton Park communities. Proposals included a new route linking West Bedford to Lacewood Terminal—with the new route—and modifications to **Route 192 Hemlock Ravine Express** or **Route 196 Basinview Express**.

- Feedback did not indicate a strong preference for either network concept. However, when asked about individual routes, there was a strong preference for the Concept A routing for Route X (the in-development name for the route). See route 95 on page 25.
- Feedback indicated support for extending Route 192 and diverting Route 196 to serve West Bedford Park & Ride. Ultimately, only the Route 192 extension was recommended, as other increase in service to West Bedford Park & Ride made the Route 196 modification unnecessary.

Port Wallace is a growing residential community, with plans to build 4,800 new housing units and expand the existing road network. Similarly, Port Wallace has significant residential development, including an expansion of the road network, which is currently under development. As part of a new residential development in the Port Wallace area, Avenue du Portage will be extended to connect with Waverley Road. Proposals to extend transit service to the Port Wallace community included extending **Route 54** along Avenue du Portage to Waverley Road and to loop around the new road network in this location and extend **Route 55** along Waverley Road to loop around the road network currently under construction.

- Public feedback was in favor of the modification to Route 56 and the extensions for Route 54 and Route 55.
- The main reason cited for being in favor of these changes was the ability to travel to and from new destinations.
- Riders also reported issues with overcrowding on Route 56 during the afternoon and requested more service capacity.

Route modifications to improve service quality and reliability

Route 24

Options were presented to the public for extending **Route 24** to travel into downtown to resolve operational issues and allow operators to access facilities at a transit terminal. After internal review, we found that the most critical elements to resolving operational issues and improve service reliability on **Route 24** is to add additional time to the schedule to allow it to perform on-time. An extension of the route is still under consideration as well.

Route 330

We asked the public about their preference for having select trips on Route 330 bypass Sheldrake Lake Park & Ride to increase travel times, as well as adding an extra stop along the 330's route. Feedback favored bypassing Sheldrake Lake on some trips. Feedback was more divided on whether to add additional stops on the route and where they should be added. No additional stops are recommended at this time.

Route 93

We proposed cancelling Route 93 in favor of increasing service on the Route 8, as the two routes serve similar destinations. Although many survey respondents were in favor of cancelling Route 93, frequent users of the route provided feedback about the route being extremely important for their commute to destinations along Bedford Highway. Instead of cancelling the route, we recommend rerouting Route 93 to terminate at the West Bedford Park & Ride to reduce the operating cost of the route while maintaining connections between downtown Halifax and the Bedford Highway.

Routes which may need to be rerouted due to changes in the road network

As part of our engagement, we asked the public for feedback on transit network concepts to modify the network for those routes which travel along Morris Street. Public feedback to the concepts was inconclusive but showed a preference for keeping the routes as similar to their current routing as possible. Concerns were raised about the impacts of network changes resulting in additional buses travelling through already-congested corridors.

The Morris Street conversion was put on hold by Regional Council, and we are no longer proposing any changes to transit routing on the street. Should Morris Street become a one-way in the future, we will explore changes to the routing at that time.