

Transit Rides Per Capita

Long-Term Target: Increase transit ridership to 62 rides per capita

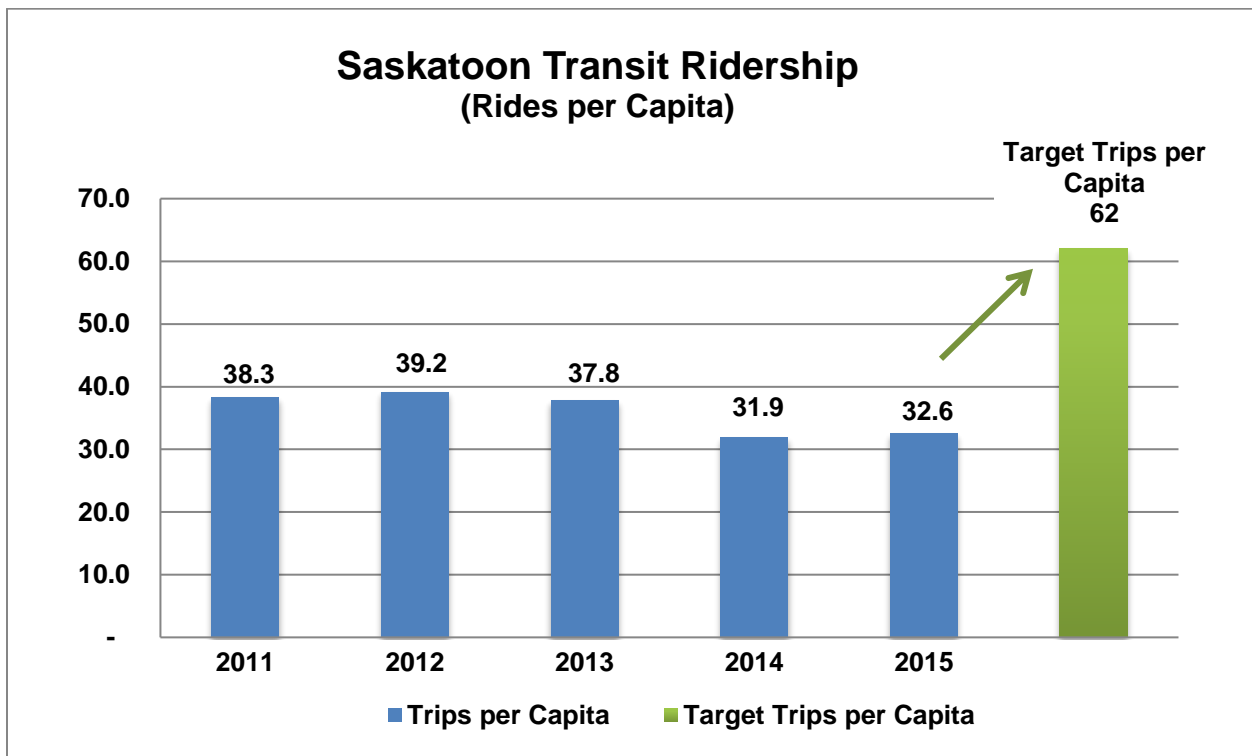
Description: The target measures our success in making our transit system a more efficient option for people to move around in Saskatoon. Achieving this target means that more people are using transit for their travel needs, thereby reducing road congestion. Higher transit use provides the movement of more people rather than more cars, particularly along key corridors.

Bus ridership will be measured using electronic pass swipes which includes transfers.

The transit target is consistent with the transit rides per capita target identified in the “*Growing Forward! Shaping Saskatoon*” strategy for a population in 30 to 40 years that is twice the size of Saskatoon’s current population.

How are we doing?

In 2015, based on electronic pass swipes, total bus ridership was 8.57 million or 32.6 rides per capita.



Source: City of Saskatoon Transit

How are other cities doing?

Cities use different methods of defining and estimating bus ridership which makes direct comparisons challenging. Bus ridership numbers are influenced by number of transfers required to get to a destination and allowable transfer times. Transit ridership recorded by electronic swipes is lower than the calculated ridership. Populations may also be defined and estimated differently (e.g. Municipal Population versus Service Area Population).

What do we need to do to achieve this target?

To significantly increase ridership, transit needs to be more convenient and reliable. Increased operating and capital investments will be needed to make transit a reliable and convenient transportation alternative. In addition to making improvements in scheduling, routing and service hours, investing in the following five key areas will attract new ridership through decreasing travel time and improving the transit experience:

1. Increase bus frequency:
 - Add more direct routes (16 current limited stop express service routes) to high congestion and high ridership areas.
 - Increase bus frequency on regular routes and offer new routes as the city grows.
2. Improve reliability and on-time performance:
 - Implement Intelligent Transit System (ITS) providing improved efficiency through more detailed route analysis. ITS will allow fleet resources to be appropriately focused on problematic areas so that schedules are more closely adhered to, ultimately increasing the reliability of the service.
 - Decrease average fleet age from 14 years to 9 years through the purchase of new buses. This will reduce downtime due to major maintenance requirements.
 - Decrease the bus/mechanic ratio from 15:1 to approximately 7:1 through hiring more mechanics.
3. Enhance comfort:
 - Provide cleaner buses and shelters to offer a more comfortable, enjoyable ride.
 - Convert high volume shelters to heated shelters.
 - Install shelters in more locations.
4. Improve customer service:
 - Provide more customer focused training to build customer-centered service skills.
 - Increase the quantity and quality of the information that customers receive. By dedicating staff to this area, Transit will be able to communicate up-to-date information through multiple communication channels (Transit's website, social media, and public service announcements).

5. Implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
 - Develop a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) plan to implement rapid transit corridors throughout Saskatoon, increasing frequency, reliability and commuting options.

What are the benefits of achieving the target?

- Fewer private vehicles on the road results in lower greenhouse gas emissions, a decrease in congestion, and a healthier environment.
- An easier commute means a higher quality of life for Saskatoon citizens.

What are the risks?

- The greatest barriers to encouraging new ridership are time, convenience and reliability. As congestion increases, the ability to commute by personal vehicle will become more difficult and public transportation will become a more attractive option. With funding allocations going to decrease congestion, Saskatoon Transit's current services will be a less attractive option than driving.
- A primary risk to achieving this target is insufficient funding invested to make transit a more attractive transportation option. Higher frequencies, newer buses and a more comfortable commute require increases in both capital and operating budgets.