

2022 - 2023 Budget Recommendation for Saskatoon Transit Service Increases

This information report will provide background for the 2022-2023 budget recommendation for Saskatoon Transit service increases, outlining the requirements for ongoing Transit operations in new and developing neighbourhoods, and for proposed new Community Transit service. These recommendations are supported by Saskatoon Transit's Proposed Service Standards, which were presented to the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation in an earlier report titled "Saskatoon Transit Proposed Service Standards" on June 7, 2021.

BACKGROUND

Since 2015, Saskatoon Transit has been developing and refining a set of Service Standards to better prepare for the introduction of new or expanded service and the prioritization of transit service hour recommendations.

The development of the proposed Service Standards has helped guide Saskatoon Transit toward the 2022-2023 budget submission. Saskatoon Transit prepared the business plan options based on critical service increases to new neighbourhoods along with commercial, tourism and educational program support to the community.

The four business plan options are:

1. North Kensington – Tier 1 Introductory Transit Service in 2022
2. Aspen Ridge - Tier 1 Introductory Transit Service in 2023
3. Route 1010 - Spadina – Community Transit Service in 2022
4. Wanuskewin Park – Community Transit Service in 2023

CURRENT STATUS

Saskatoon Transit's proposed Service Standards identify three tiers of service. Tier 1 Introductory service is provided when there is a road network to support transit vehicles, the completed transit route is in alignment with the Concept Plan, and the neighbourhood has at least 25% of its projected population. Examples of neighbourhoods with Tier 1 service include Route 22 City Centre/Confederation and Route 25 North Industrial.

Saskatoon Transit has identified two new and developing neighbourhoods that are recommended for Tier 1 Introductory service, 1) North Kensington, and 2) Aspen Ridge. These service hours would be AM and PM peak only, Monday to Friday, 0700 to 1000 and 1500 to 1800 hours. This level of service is equivalent to 1,560 service hours annually.

The proposed Service Standards also describe the various types of bus routes used by Saskatoon Transit. One of these types is a Community Bus route. An example of this includes transit service during Folkfest using Community Bus Routes, which are

designated routes that serve seasonal and/or community needs. They operate when required and maintain a minimum frequency of 60 minutes and vary as needed.

Saskatoon Transit has received inquiries/requests regarding future community service in two areas, 1) the area linking the Remai Art Gallery/Persephone Theatre along Spadina to the Nutrien Wonderhub, Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, and the Prairie Lily dock; and 2) Wanuskewin Park. Based on the feedback received, public and stakeholder interest in this type of seasonal community service to these two locations is strong.

Lastly, within the budget submission the proposed Saskatoon Transit Service Standards will be presented, as amended, for formal approval with the budget. More information has been added to the Community Transit Service area considering the additional requests for business plan options included here.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The proposed Service Standards help guide the level of service for the budget development and are also used to:

- develop new service increases;
- provide equitable transit services across the city;
- identify and capture efficiencies;
- optimize transit services;
- support the creation and use of baseline Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for measuring and reporting on service metrics and efficiency; and
- provide a baseline for funding.

Based on this information, Saskatoon Transit is including the following budget options for 2022-2023 consideration:

1. Tier 1 Transit Service be introduced into the neighbourhood of North Kensington in 2022. Kensington is currently at 61% buildout of single-family units and 16% multi-family for an overall buildout of 38%. Much of this growth has been in South Kensington, however, with the imminent completion of the connector road between North and South Kensington, the anticipated growth for the next two-to-three years will be in North Kensington. Saskatoon Transit will require \$167,239 annually in operating, based on 1,560 service hours, to increase service to North Kensington, this includes 1.33 FTE. In order to support this request an additional 0.58 of a transit bus will be required.
2. Tier 1 Introductory Service be introduced into the neighbourhood of Aspen Ridge in 2023. Aspen Ridge is a new neighbourhood situated north of the community of Evergreen. Aspen Ridge is currently at 18% buildout of single-family units, 0% buildout on multi-family for an overall buildout of 7%. Full buildout is projected for 2040. Saskatoon Transit cannot fully service Aspen Ridge now, due to incomplete road infrastructure and because of its current buildout percentage.

Saskatoon Transit anticipates exponential growth in Aspen Ridge in years to come. Based on 1,560 service hours required, the expected cost is \$167,239 annually, this includes 1.33 FTE. In order to support this request an additional 0.58 of a transit bus will be required.

3. The introduction of a seasonal community transit route in the downtown and along Spadina Avenue in 2022. This route will service businesses, tourism, employees, volunteers, special events and festivals throughout the downtown and along Spadina Avenue. Extensive engagement has taken place with primary, secondary, and tertiary stakeholders in the downtown and area in preparation for the implementation of Route 1010 Spadina. We expect this service to operate from mid-May to the end of September. This service would operate from 1000 to 2000 hours, up to 6 days a week, with 20-minute frequency. Based on 1,512 service hours required for this community service, the expected cost is \$162,093 annually, this includes 1.29 FTE. In order to support this request an additional 0.56 of a transit bus will be required.
4. The introduction of community transit service to Wanuskewin Park in 2023. This seasonal service will support schools, tourism, businesses, employees, visitors, and students travelling to and from Wanuskewin Park. In December 2020, this service was first developed and introduced as a temporary measure from December 2020 through January 2021, with the support of funding through the Saskatchewan Lotteries Community Grant program. Conversations were had with stakeholders including City departments, Wanuskewin Park, and several schools. This service would operate six hours per day, six days a week, from mid-May to the end of September. Based on 882 service hours required, the expected cost is \$94,550 annually, this includes 0.75 FTE. In order to support this request an additional 0.33 of a transit bus will be required.

As part of the 2022-2023 budget cycle, Saskatoon Transit is bringing forward this report and budget options, based on forecasted growth from Planning and Development, and the proposed Service Standards for new and/or increased service.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications for new service in 2022-2023 will be presented as part of the budget options package at the August 23, 2021 Governance and Priority Committee Meeting to be considered in the multi-year business plan and budget review.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social, or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

As part of the 2022-2023 budget cycle, Saskatoon Transit has provided this report for consideration in the 2022-2023 Multi-Year Business Planning and Budget deliberations.

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Report Approval

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