



# The Corporation of the Town of Milton

---

Report To: Council

From: Kristene Scott, Commissioner, Corporate Services

Date: March 16, 2026

Report No: CORS-008-26

Subject: 2025 Transit Services Annual Report

**Recommendation:** THAT the 2025 Transit Services Annual Report be received.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- As recommended by the Five-Year Service Plan and Master Plan Update (CORS-021-24), Council approved two (2) service level changes in 2025 including:
  - Service on Sundays
  - Later Weekday Evening Service
- While 2025 total ridership (all services) surpassed one-million revenue passenger trips, ridership was influenced by Federal immigration policy changes that negatively affected post-secondary enrollment, partially offset by an increase in youth local/regional trip demand - including GO Transit connections. Staff will continue to assess ridership trends and align service with demand to maintain long-term sustainability.
- Comparing 2025 to 2024, annual ridership (revenue passenger trips) has:
  - Decreased by 10% on conventional (fixed-route) and OnDemand services; totalling 965,991 revenue passenger trips in 2025
  - Increased by 45% on specialized (door-to-door, paratransit) services; totalling 39,692 revenue passenger trips in 2025
- 2025 financial performance was guided by external factors, service-related impacts and consumer behaviour, including:
  - Annually adjusted contract costs
  - Higher contract costs to address increased demand of specialized services
  - Secondary school-related service additions/adjustments
  - Expansion of OnDemand service

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Increased fare media (ticket and pass) sales and mobile e-ticket adoption
  - Oversubscription/utilization of the Subsidized Passes for Low income Transit Affordability Program (SPLIT)
  - Financial contributions from Laurier and Conestoga post-secondary institutions
  - Higher than expected bus stop winter maintenance activities
- Milton Transit OnDemand continues to play a supportive and transitional role to achieve service efficiency and effectiveness, where currently applied.
  - The 2026 Transit Division Work Plan focuses on the following deliverables:
    - Phase 2 implementation of the Five-Year Service Plan and Master Plan Update, including:
      - Improved service and schedule reliability
      - Service growth to Boyne and Derry Green
      - Annualized service level changes adopted in 2025
    - Annual Transit Accessibility Plan
    - Transit Service Design Guidelines Update and Formalization
    - Procurement of new Transit Fleet (growth and replacement)
    - Further development of the Transit Maintenance Facility

## REPORT

### Background

A strategic theme to the Milton 2051 Vision, Milton Transit plays a key role to enable community mobility and support the development of an accessible, connected and sustainable transportation network for residents, visitors and individuals of all abilities. The transit system delivers a range services including conventional fixed-route, specialized door-to-door paratransit, and flexible OnDemand microtransit, providing access to employment areas, commercial centres, educational institutions, healthcare providers, social and recreational destinations. Integrated and fare-free connections with GO Transit, Brampton Transit, MiWay and Halton Hills Activan further broaden travel opportunities for customers, linking Milton to regional trip generators and attractors across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

## Background

The 2025 Transit Services Annual Report presents a detailed review of operational performance, service delivery outcomes, and key accomplishments for the reporting year. It also outlines anticipated priorities and initiatives for the year ahead. The report is organized into the following sections:

- 2025 System Performance (using indicators as outlined in Appendix 1)
- Ridership Composition
- OnDemand Service Update
- Steeles Avenue Service Update
- 2026 Transit Division Work Plan and Ridership Outlook

## Discussion

While annual ridership in 2025 continued to surpass one-million revenue passenger trips (all services combined), ridership on the conventional service was significantly affected by external policy factors influencing the post-secondary market. These ridership impacts were partially offset by an increase in youth and local/regional trip demand - including GO Transit connections. Additionally, strategic policy decisions and service expansion adopted by Council over the last few years were influential to support core ridership growth, stability and diversification. Examples include:

- Introduction of service level changes
  - Launch of service on Sundays (Sept 2025)
  - Extended later weekday evening service (Sept 2025)
- Adoption, expansion and transition of Alternative Service Deliveries (ASDs)
  - Launch of Milton Transit OnDemand (Sept 2021)
  - Additional capacity for school-related trips (Sept 2022, 2023)
  - Service expansion into Boyne and Derry Green (Sept 2022)
  - Service expansion into Mattamy National Cycling Centre (Sept 2023)
- Adjustment to GO Transit Fare Integration Program (Metrolinx initiative)
  - Elimination of co-fare for trips connecting with GO services (March 2022)

In alignment with recommendations from the Five-Year Service Plan and Master Plan Update (CORS-021-24), these initiatives have broadened the reach of transit to diversified markets.



**Discussion**

Staff will continue to assess ridership trends and align service with demand to maintain long-term sustainability.

**1. 2025 System Performance**

Table 1 provides a summary of 2025 conventional (includes OnDemand) and specialized service KPIs compared to 2024 annuals. Milton Transit delivered 83,585 service hours in 2025, representing a 21% growth in service compared to the previous year. This growth reflects several enhancements delivered throughout the year, including expanded weekday service, schedule reliability improvements, the introduction of service on Sundays, the expansion of fixed-route service in the Boyne area, and the Louis St. Laurent cross-town extension of Route 3 between the Mattamy National Cycling Centre and Milton GO Station.

**Table 1. KPIs - Conventional (includes OnDemand), Specialized Services, 2024-2025**

Indicator	2024	2025	% Change 2024-2025
<b>Conventional + OnDemand Services</b>			
<b>Amount of Service</b>			
• Contracted Service Hours	69,229	83,585	+21%
• Contracted Service Hours per Capita	0.48	0.57	+19%
<b>Ridership*</b>			
• Boardings	1,211,510	1,098,243	-9%
• Revenue Passenger Trips	1,072,922	965,991	-10%
<b>Service Utilization</b>			
• Boardings per Contracted Service Hour	17.5	13.1	-25%
• Revenue Passenger Trips per Contracted Service Hour	15.4	11.6	-25%
• Revenue Passenger Trips per Capita	7.5	6.5	-13%
<b>Specialized Services</b>			
<b>Ridership</b>			
• Revenue Passenger Trips	27,253	39,632	+45%
• Active Clients/Registrants	2,296	2,761	+20%

\*Boardings are all trips recorded, including transfers from one bus/route to another. Revenue Passenger Trips are fare-paying and linked trips, excluding transfers.

In 2025, Milton Transit recorded more than 965,000 conventional revenue passenger trips, representing a 10% decrease compared to 2024. Service utilization—an indicator of how

**Discussion**

effectively and consistently the system is used—showed a similar trend. The primary driver behind these reductions was the shift in Federal immigration policies implemented in 2024-2025, which resulted in a significant decrease in post-secondary student enrollment, particularly at the Conestoga College-Milton campuses. This change in the local demographic profile created a notable ridership gap, as post-secondary students comprised a major user group within the conventional transit system throughout 2024. The trend has also been observed in other Ontario jurisdictions with post-secondary institutions.

Despite these challenges, ridership data across other market segments demonstrated continued post-pandemic recovery and stabilization. Cross-boundary travel demand increased throughout 2025, supported by higher usage of Route 21, as well as supplementary connections with GO Transit services. Ridership growth was further supported by return-to-office policies from regional employers, increasing commuter activity within and beyond Milton. When isolating and adjusting for the decline in post-secondary ridership, overall 2025 conventional transit use remained 56% higher than 2023 levels, highlighting sustained year-over-year ridership in core travel markets and demonstrating the underlying resilience of the transit network (Appendix 2).

Conversely, specialized transit services experienced substantial growth in 2025. Specialized transit ridership increased by 45%, reaching 39,632 revenue passenger trips, or approximately 12,400 additional trips compared to the previous year. This growth reflects demographic changes among eligible clients, an increase in year-over-year active clients/registrants (+20% compared to 2024), increased overall trip-demand, and a higher number of trips taken per registered customer. Current service capacity on the specialized system continues to support the delivery of integrated OnDemand services in key areas of the community. Staff will continue to monitor capacity levels closely, particularly if specialized transit ridership continues to grow at a comparable rate through 2026.

Table 2 provides a summary of 2025 financial performance compared to 2024. The revenue/cost ratio increased by 4% in 2025 to 47%, while net expenditure increased by 10%.

**Table 2. Financial Performance (all services), 2024-2025**

Indicator	2024	2025	% Change 2024-2025
• Expenditure	\$11,303,118	\$12,938,956	+14%
• Revenue	\$5,085,126	\$6,074,852	+19%
• Net Expenditure	\$6,217,992	\$6,864,104	+10%
• Revenue/Cost Ratio	45%	47%	4%

## Discussion

Financial performance on Milton Transit Services in 2025 was driven by the following factors:

### External Impacts

- Federal immigration policy (capping) impact on conventional ridership
- Financial contributions from Laurier and Conestoga post-secondary institutions
- Developer revenues associated with subsidized transit pass agreements (e.g. revenue collected from developers to subsidize promotional monthly passes to residential purchasers/occupants)
- Oversubscription/utilization of the Subsidized Passes for Low income Transit (SPLIT) Affordability Program (103% increase in registrants compared to 2024)
- Annually adjusted contract costs
- Higher contract costs to increase capacity to support demand growth of specialized services
- Higher than expected bus stop winter maintenance activities

### Service Growth and Improvement

- Service growth initiated in September 2025
- Secondary school-related service additions/adjustments
- Expansion of OnDemand service

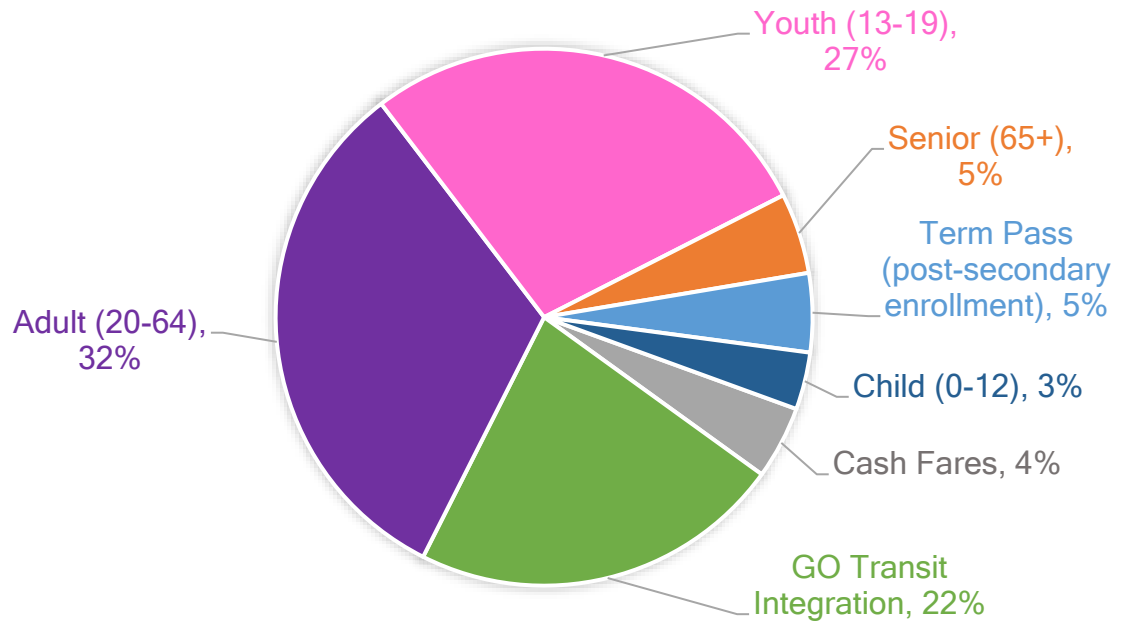
### Fare Revenue

- Fare increase, effective January 1, 2025
- Increased fare media (ticket and pass) sales
- High adoption rate (92%) for mobile e-ticketing (Token Transit)

## 2. Ridership Composition

The travel patterns and priorities for Milton Transit riders have shifted due in part to the continued existence of remote/hybrid working environments, broader labour force reach, as well as variable post-secondary enrollment in Milton. These transformational changes, coupled with community growth, has continued to diversify ridership composition. Figure 1 illustrates 2025 ridership percentage by method of fare payment classification.

**Discussion**



**Figure 1. 2025 Conventional Ridership by Method of Fare Payment Type - Concession (%)<sup>1</sup>**

Observations are summarized below:

- 96% of transit riders leverage concession-based, discounted products and/or programs to pay their fare compared to cash
- 35% of transit fares are classified as child, youth and/or post-secondary students
- 32% of transit fares are classified as adult
- While 22% of transit trips involve connections with GO Transit, the quantity of trip connections has increased
- Term Pass sales have been impacted by reduced post-secondary enrollment

### 3. OnDemand Service Update

In an effort to improve service productivity and efficiency, Milton Transit OnDemand was launched in 2021, replacing existing conventional route(s), or introducing new service in low demand, transitional areas. OnDemand service is currently provided in parts of Boyne, Derry Green and parts of the 401 Industrial Park using criteria defined in the Alternative Service

<sup>1</sup> Data excludes transfers – the 2025 system transfer rate is approximately 13% (e.g. percentage of all transit trips that include a transfer from one transit route to another transit route).

## Discussion

Delivery Strategy (COMS-005-21). In 2025, transitional service areas, including parts of Boyne, Derry Green and 401 Industrial Park, continue to be delivered by OnDemand. Staff continue to monitor service demand to evaluate productivity and identify appropriate future transitions to conventional fixed-route service.

### 4. Steeles Avenue Service Update

The 21 Steeles route is delivered under a shared funding model with the Town of Halton Hills. This route has been in operation since September 2022 serving the Milton GO Station, Lisgar GO Station and multiple stops in-between along Steeles Avenue and Winston Churchill Boulevard, including Toronto Premium Outlets and Amazon Fulfillment Centre YYZ3. The route also provides free transfers with MiWay and Brampton Transit along shared stops in Mississauga. In 2025, the Steeles route was expanded in alignment with Council-approved service level changes - with extended weekday evening service and Sunday service. Both initiatives were launched in September under the current funding model with the Town of Halton Hills.

Ridership on the 21 Steeles route maintained year-over-year ridership levels surpassing 190,000 boardings in 2025, representing less than a one-percent change compared to 2024. While initial uptake had been marginal upon route commencement in 2022, staff are observing month-to-month ridership stability throughout 2025 (Appendix 3). Other ridership insights include:

- Majority of trips originating and/or destined from/to the following locations:
  - Milton GO Station (22%)
  - Lisgar GO Station (34%)
  - Amazon Fulfillment Centre (22%)
  - Toronto Premium Outlets (16%)
- Evidence of reverse commuting into Milton from Mississauga and broader GTHA transit market
- Positive response with fare integration (free transfers between services). Greater than 61% of all trips include connections with other services/service providers.

### 5. 2026 Transit Division Work Plan

Table 3 summarizes Transit Division work plan initiatives for 2026 that align with the Five-Year Service Plan and Master Plan Update and the 2023-2027 Town Strategic Plan. Notwithstanding strategic initiatives, staff will be adapting some service in the short term to

**Discussion**

address post-secondary demand changes seen throughout 2025. These service adjustments will focus on realigning required capacity with updated post-secondary enrollment estimates. Staff will continue to monitor ridership trends within the post-secondary market to maintain sustainability in the longer term.

A significant project currently in progress is the Transit Maintenance Facility. The 2020 and 2021 Capital Budget approved land acquisition, design and construction commencement for a Transit Maintenance Facility. The Town was successful in acquiring funding through ICIP - Public Transit Stream to an upset allocation of \$7,187,583 in combined Federal and Provincial funding to support project costs. To date, the project has advanced through initial planning activities and is currently in the site development and environmental stages, including technical studies and preliminary coordination with internal and external stakeholders.

**Table 3. 2026 Work Plan Initiatives**

<b>Key Projects/Deliverables</b>	<b>Strategic Themes</b>	<b>Timing</b>
a. Phase 2 implementation of Five-Year Service Plan and Master Plan Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved service and schedule reliability</li> <li>• Service growth to Boyne and Derry Green</li> <li>• Annualized service level changes adopted in 2025</li> </ul>	Connected Transit and Mobility; Planned Community Growth	Q1-Q4
b. Annual Transit Accessibility Plan	Connected Transit and Mobility	Q2-Q3
c. Transit Service Design Guidelines Update and Formalization	Connected Transit and Mobility	Q3-Q4
d. Procurement of transit fleet: replacement and growth - place order	Connected Transit and Mobility; Planned Community Growth	Q1-Q2
e. Further development of the Transit Maintenance Facility - TRPAP process	Connected Transit and Mobility	On-going

Additionally, fare policy updates have been adopted effective January 1, 2026 (ES-036-25; Schedule L), including a fare adjustment on transit tickets and monthly passes.

## Discussion

### Summary

In 2025, Milton Transit delivered expanded and dependable service while advancing several foundational initiatives that position the system for long-term growth. Ridership patterns continued to evolve in response to shifting employment trends, post-secondary activity, regional travel behaviours, and demographic change. Despite these dynamics, Milton Transit remains on track to meet its objectives by providing safe, accessible, and sustainable mobility options for residents and visitors of all abilities.

### Financial Impact

The net cost of providing transit service in 2025 was \$6,864,104, which was unfavourable to budget by \$223,325.

Transit expenditures were greater than budget by \$478,148, which reflects higher contract costs associated with increased demand for specialized service, higher than expected utilization of the SPLIT low-income affordability program and increased cost of snow clearing at transit stops due to winter events.

The impact of increased expenses was partially offset by revenues exceeding budget by \$254,823. As a result of the decrease in conventional ridership caused by federal immigration policies, the Town experienced a reduction in fare media revenues as compared to budget. However, the recognition of developer revenues associated with subsidized transit pass agreements resulted in transit revenues exceeding budget overall.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony D'Alessandro  
Director, Transit Services

For questions, please contact:    Tony D'Alessandro, MCIP, RPP    Phone: Ext. 2548  
Director, Transit Services

### Attachments

Appendix 1. Key Performance Indicators Definitions



### Attachments

Appendix 2. 2023-2025 Month-to-Month Ridership

Appendix 3. 2024-2025 Month-to-Month Boardings - 21 Steeles Route

Approved by CAO  
Andrew M. Siltala  
Chief Administrative Officer

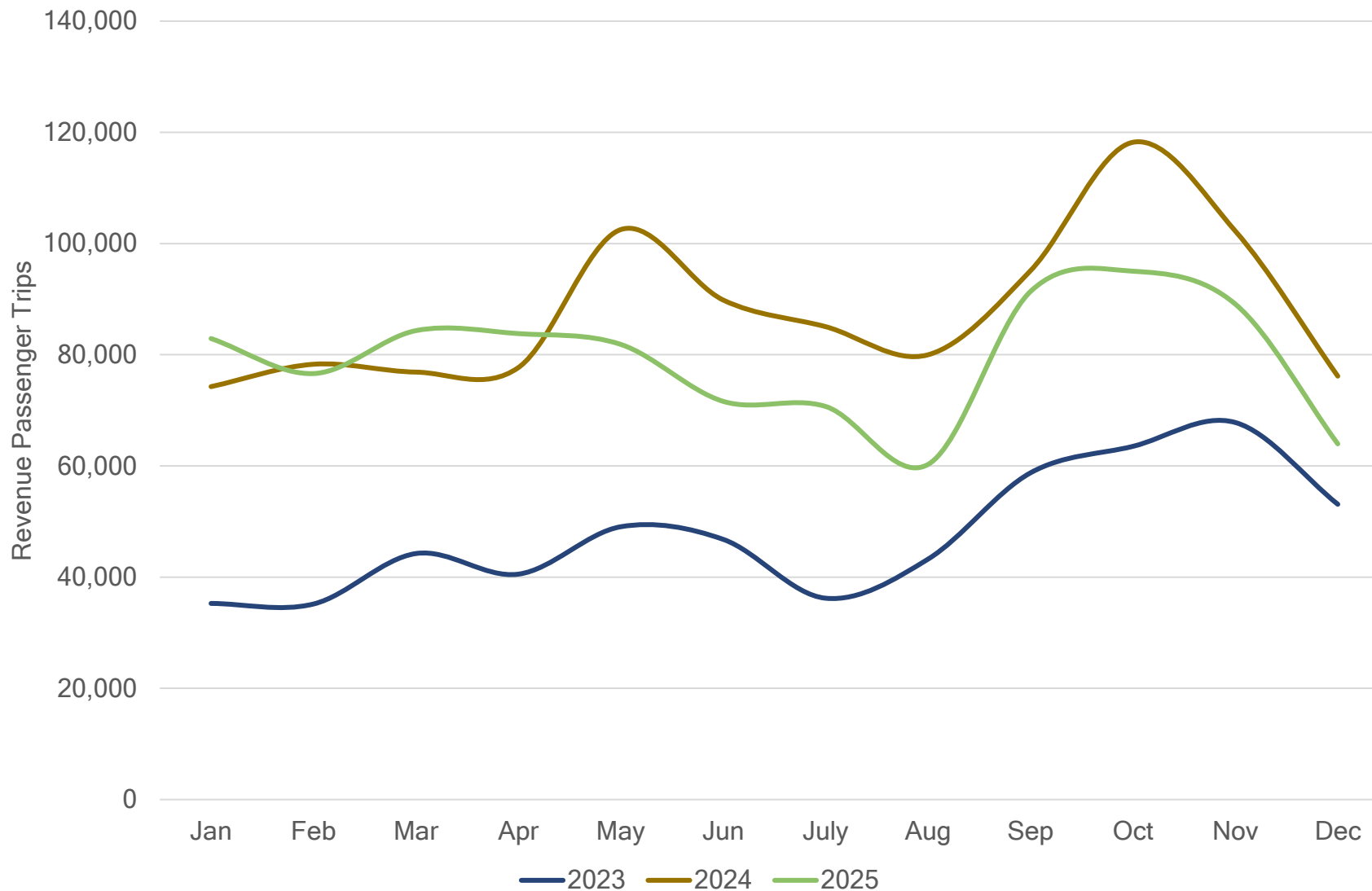
### Recognition of Traditional Lands

The Town of Milton resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee people. The Town of Milton shares this land and the responsibility for the water, food and resources. We stand as allies with the First Nations as stewards of these lands.

## Appendix 1. Key Performance Indicators Definitions

<p><b>Amount of Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contracted Service Hours<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Total amount of contracted revenue service hours operated</li></ul></li><li>• Contracted Service Hours per Capita<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Total amount of contracted revenue service hours operated per capita</li></ul></li></ul>
<p><b>Ridership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boardings<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ All trips recorded, including transfers</li></ul></li><li>• Revenue Passenger Trips<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Number of fare-paying trips recorded, less transfers</li></ul></li></ul>
<p><b>Service Utilization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boardings per Contracted Service Hour<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A measure of how well and often the service is used; all trips including transfers</li></ul></li><li>• Revenue Passenger Trips per Contracted Service Hour<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A measure of how well and often the service is used; fare-paying, linked-trips</li></ul></li><li>• Revenue Passenger Trips per Capita<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A measure of how well and often the service is used; fare-paying, linked-trips, as a function of population</li></ul></li></ul>
<p><b>Financial Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revenue/Cost Ratio<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ A measure of overall system cost recovery from external revenue sources; e.g. fares, advertising, Provincial Gas Tax contributions, etc.</li></ul></li></ul>

Appendix 2. 2023-2025 Month-to-Month Conventional Ridership  
(excludes OnDemand)



Appendix 3. 2024-2025 Month-to-Month Boardings  
21 Steeles Route

