

Staff Report

Report To: Operations Committee
Report From: Heidi Jennen, Supervisor of Environmental Services
Meeting Date: December 18, 2025
Report Code: OP-25-044
Subject: Minor Timing Changes for Owen Sound Transit

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report OP-25-044 respecting minor timing changes for Owen Sound Transit, the Operations Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- Owen Sound Transit often faces delays weekday afternoons due to weather, construction detours, heavier midday traffic, and school dismissals, making it more challenging to keep up with the 30-minute schedule.
- To help with on-time performance, the Transit Contractor and Staff suggest a temporary change that adds two longer (45-minute) trips in the early and mid-afternoon.
- The new schedule would start on February 1 and run as a six-month pilot. During this time, Staff will update system data and check if the changes lead to better reliability.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by considering climate adaptation in the development of the City's strategies, plans and policies.

Previous Report/Authority:

[November 2024 - Staff Memo: Bus Stop and Route Change from East Bayshore Route to Crosstown Route](#)

Background:

City Staff and the Transit Contractor continue to explore opportunities to improve Owen Sound Transit (OST) on-time performance. In early 2025, the hospital stop moved from the East Bayshore Route to the Crosstown route. This change helped relieve schedule pressures on the East Bayshore route. Although recent changes have improved reliability, maintaining the 30-minute service interval remains challenging on weekday afternoons.

Over the last year, construction detours and bad weather have also affected the schedule's consistency.

Analysis:

Despite earlier improvements, the Contractor's performance tracking shows recurring delays, particularly during peak weekday afternoon hours. While morning service generally stays on a 30-minute schedule, the buses experience the most significant delays during the midday and early afternoon periods, most notably around the lunch hour, and at 3:00 p.m. when schools dismiss students. These delays have, at times, resulted in missed half-hour runs.

In response, the Contractor reviewed recent timing data and identified an opportunity to test targeted schedule changes during busy weekday afternoons. Instead of keeping a continuous 30-minute loop throughout the day, the Contractor is suggesting two 45-minute runs: one from 12:30 p.m. to 1:15 p.m., followed by regular 30-minute service at 15 and 45 minutes past the hour until 3:15 p.m. At 3:15 p.m., a second 45-minute run would happen. Service would then go back to the usual 30-minute schedule starting at 4:00 p.m.

By implementing these two slightly longer runs, it is hoped that the runs can consistently arrive and depart the terminal on time, improving overall system reliability.

These changes will not start until February 1, 2026, since staff and the Traffic Contractor need time to update the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data, which provides the timing and mapping information for the Transit App. Due to the amount of work involved, staff are recommending this change as a six-month trial.

Financial Implications:

None.

Communication Strategy:

- Media Release and social media posts
- Signage posted at Transit Terminal and on buses
- Route timing will be updated on the GTFS data which is then updated in the Transit App
- Wording updated on the OST [webpage](#)

Consultation:

Voyago Operations Supervisor and Operations Manager

Attachments:

None.

Recommended by:

Heidi Jennen, Supervisor of Environmental Services
Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works and Engineering

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Heidi Jennen, Supervisor of Environmental Services at hjennen@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 Ext 3223.