

2016

# Transit Report Card of Major Canadian Regions



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### **About the Author:**

Nathan has been writing, researching, and talking about issues that affect the livability of Metro Vancouver, with a focus on the South of Fraser, for over 8 years. He has been featured in local, regional, and national media.

In 2008, Nathan co-founded South Fraser OnTrax –a sustainable transportation advocacy organization– and the Greater Langley Cycling Coalition in 2009. He was recently elected to City of Langley Council earlier this year.

Nathan previously published his research on land use and the ALR in his report, “Decade of Exclusions? A Snapshot of the Agricultural Land Reserve from 2000-2009 in the South of Fraser” (2010).

He also co-authored “Leap Ahead: A transit plan for Metro Vancouver” with Paul Hillsdon in 2013. This plan was a precursor to the Mayors’ Council on Regional Transportation Transit Plan for Metro Vancouver. He also authored last year’s Transit Report Card.

Nathan has served on various municipal committees including the Abbotsford Inter-regional Transportation Select Committee and City of Langley Parks and Environment Advisory Committee.

Nathan would like to recognize Paul Hillsdon who provided the original concept of this report, and provided research early on in the process.

More information is available on the South Fraser Blog. (<http://www.southfraser.net/>)

# Introduction

Transit plays a vital role in keeping Canada's big cities moving, driving economic growth and prosperity. Taking transit also makes people happier, healthier, and is good for the environment.

Considering the importance of transit service in our major regions, a better understanding of transit service performance is critical. This is why the Transit Report Card of Major Canadian Regions was first released last year (2015).

Prior to the previous year's report card, easily accessible information about the performance of major transit agencies was hard to come by.

Similar to last year, this year's report card will evaluate major regions and compare them against each other. There are some new features in this year's report card as well.

A new metric that quantifies the operating cost per passenger trip has been added to provide further insight into transit agency efficiencies.

While Metro Vancouver has the highest operating cost per hour for transit service delivered of any major region, it actually has a lower operating cost per passenger trip than agencies in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

Overall, Montreal stood out as the region with the best performing transit agencies in Canada. Its grade improved from A++ to A+++.

Metro Vancouver again came in second place, and was the only other region to receive an A grade. All other regions received B grades.

A new section has been added to the report card that evaluates year-over-year transit performance trends at a national level. While operating costs slightly increased and passenger trips slightly decreased, the overall efficiency of Canada's major transit agencies improved.

Transit service in Canada's major regions continues to perform well even though service hours are not keeping pace with population growth. Increased investment in both new transit infrastructure as well as funding to operate new transit service is required to ensure that the majority of Canadians can keep moving.

With a new federal government, there is a renewed desire to invest in transit infrastructure. While this funding will need to be matched by other orders of government, it has sent a signal that high-quality transit service is a critical piece of our nation's infrastructure.

#### Reference:

Measuring Success: The Economic Impact of Transit Investment in Canada ([http://cutaactu.ca/sites/default/files/issue\\_paper\\_35e.pdf](http://cutaactu.ca/sites/default/files/issue_paper_35e.pdf))  
Commuting for happiness (<http://thehappy.city.com/commuting-happiness/>)

#### Transit Agencies Reviewed:

##### Greater Calgary

Airdrie Transit  
Calgary Transit

##### Greater Edmonton

Edmonton Transit System  
Leduc Transit  
St. Albert Transit  
Strathcona County Transit

##### Greater Toronto & Hamilton

Brampton Transit  
Burlington Transit  
Durham Region Transit  
GO Transit  
Hamilton Street Railway  
Milton Transit  
MiWay  
Oakville Transit  
Toronto Transit Commission  
York Region Transit/Viva

##### Metro Vancouver

TransLink

##### Greater Montreal

Agence métropolitaine de transport  
Réseau de transport de Longueuil  
Société de transport de Laval  
Société de transport de Montréal

##### National Capital Region

OC Transpo  
Société de transport de l'Outaouais

# Understanding the Report

Indicators and Letter Grades

## Revenue Kilometres per Service Hour:

An indication of the distance transit goes for every hour of service delivered. A higher number indicates that transit service operates at a faster speed, over a larger service area, or both.

## Farebox Recovery:

An indication of what portions of direct operating expenses are covered by transit-users' fares, and what portions of direct operating expenses are covered by taxation. A higher percentage means that a higher portion of direct operating expenses are covered by transit users' fares. The remainder of funding from transit comes from taxation. Direct operating expenses includes the cost to operate transit service, but does not include the cost of assets such as buses, trains, and railway tracks.

## Operating Cost per Service Hour:

An indication of how much money it costs to run transit service per hour. This indicator does not include the cost of purchasing new infrastructure such as buses, replacing aging infrastructure, or transit service expansion. Labour, vehicle fuel, and vehicle maintenance costs play a large roll in this indicator, as does the cost of fuel.

## Operating Cost per Passenger Trip:

An indication of the efficiency of the transit network. Generally, the more passengers that use transit for each hour of service provided will result in a more efficient system. The indicator also take into account how much it cost to provide each hour of service.

**Regional Report**

# Understanding the Report

Indicators and Letter Grades

## Passenger Trips per Capita:

An indication of the amount of transit use in a region. A higher number means that more people use transit in a region, and use transit more frequently. While how communities are designed (people-centric or auto-centric) will impact Passenger Trips per Capita, the amount of transit service provided -Service Hours per Capita- will have a greater impact on Passenger Trips per Capita.

## Passenger Trips per Service Hour :

An indication of the productivity of the transit network. More passenger trips per service hour means that transit service is being provided in areas where there is demand. Lower passenger trips per service hour means that transit service is being provided where the demand is lower. For example, running a bus every 15 minutes along suburban routes in regions like Edmonton will yield a lower Passenger Trips per Service Hour metric, than running a bus every 15 minutes in accessible communities as on Montreal Island. Passenger Trips per Service Hour is a good indicator if a region's land-use aligns with the transit services provided. Passenger Trips per Service Hour are influenced by Service Hours per Capita. The more service hours delivered per capita will increase passenger trips per service hour.

## Passenger Trip Intensity:

An indicator of the productivity of a transit system that is adjusted for the Service Hours per Capita. Regions with a higher score have transit systems that align more closely with transit service demand than systems with a lower score.

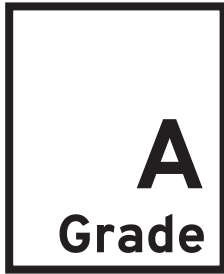
**Regional Report**

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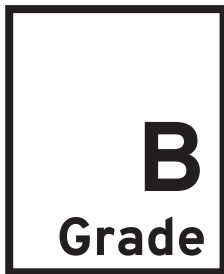
# Understanding the Report

Indicators and Letter Grades

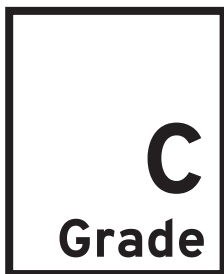
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Better than expected when compared to other regions in this report.



Comparable to other regions in this report.



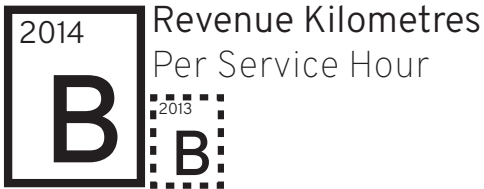
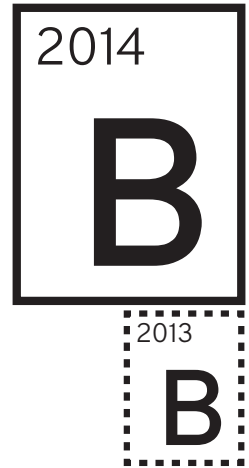
Lower than expected when compared to other regions in this report.



Every region starts with a “B” score. For each “A” received for an indicator, 1 is added, for each “C” received 1 is subtracted. If a region scores a +1, an “A” is awarded for the overall grade. If a region scores a -1, a “C” is awarded for the overall grade. If a region scores +/- 1, a plus or minus is added to the “A” or “C” received.



# Greater Calgary



## Comments:

Compared to 2013, there was a slight increase in revenue kilometres per service hour. While there was a slight reduction in passenger trips per capita and service hours per capita, this actually resulted in a slight improvement in passenger trip intensity, indicating that transit service efficiency in the Calgary area improved throughout the course of 2014.

# Greater Edmonton

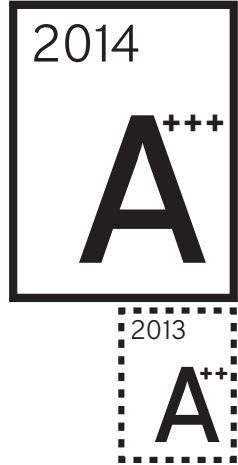


## Comments:

In last year's report card, transit service in the Edmonton area received a "C" for revenue kilometres per service hour in 2013. Due to updated data, this score was change to a "B" in this year's report card. In 2014, transit service in Edmonton maintained that "B" grade as several new transit routes were introduced. The operating cost per passenger trip was lower in 2014 compared to 2013 even though there was a slight reduction in service hours and passenger trips per capita. Transit service in the Edmonton area was more efficient in 2014. Farebox recovery in the Edmonton area was 44%, the lowest of any major region in Canada. This year, transit service providers in Edmonton received a "C" for farebox recovery.



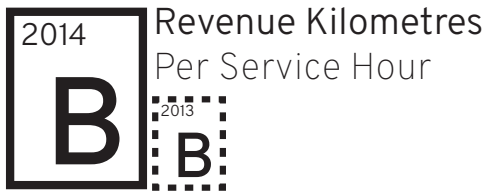
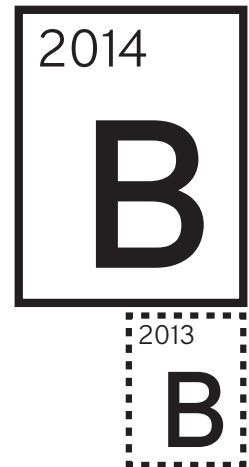
# Greater Montreal



## Comments:

Transit service in the Montreal region received the highest overall grade of the major regions in Canada. Compared to 2013, operating cost per service hour improved from a “C” to a “B”. This is because operating costs per service hour also increased in other major regions as well. Greater Montreal has the lowest operating cost per passenger trip, and the highest passenger trips per capita, of any major region in Canada. Transit service providers in the Montreal region are leaders in Canada.

# GTHA - Toronto/Hamilton



## Comments:

There was a slight decrease in efficiency for transit service provided in the GTHA as passenger trip intensity decreased. Passenger trips per service hour and service hours per capita increased due to investment in transit service. Interestingly, transit in the GTHA has the lowest passenger trip intensity of any of the region included in this report card; transit service and demand do not necessarily line up. Transit service in the GTHA has the highest farebox recovery rate compared to any other major region in the country, though it dropped from 67% to 65% between 2013 and 2014.

# Metro Vancouver

2014

A

2013

A

2014

A

Revenue Kilometres  
Per Service Hour

2013

A

2014

B

Passenger Trips  
Per Capita

2013

B

2014

C

Operating Cost  
Per Service Hour

2013

C

2014

A

Passenger Trip  
Intensity

2013

A

2014

B

Operating Cost  
Per Trip

2013

B

2014

B

Farbox  
Recovery

2013

B

2014

B

Passenger Trips  
Per Service Hour

2013

B

2014

B

Service Hours  
Per Capita

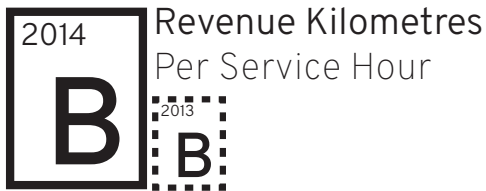
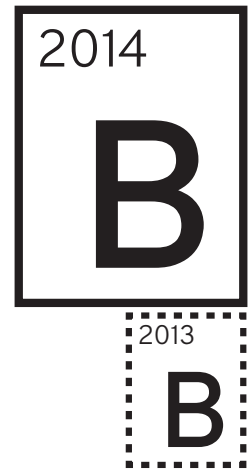
2013

B

**Comments:**

Metro Vancouver has the highest passenger trip intensity score of all major regions in Canada. Metro Vancouver has gone through an extensive, multi-year transit efficiency program, and this is reflected in the results of this report card. Metro Vancouver has the highest operating cost per capita of the regions included in this report card, but because of its efficient transit service delivery, the operating cost per passenger trip is in line with other major regions. There was a slight decrease in passenger trip intensity in 2014 compared to 2013.

# National Capital Region

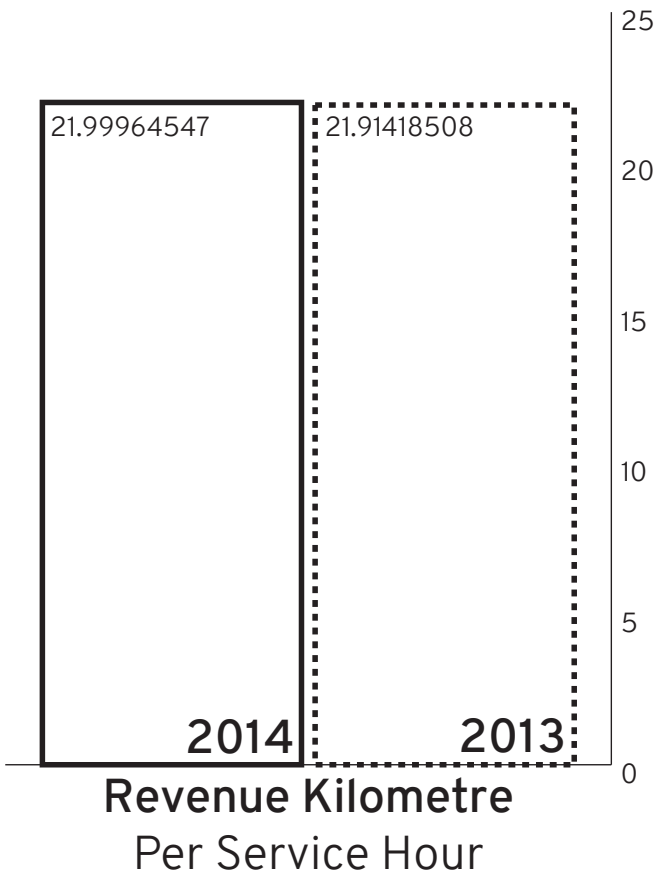


## Comments:

Transit service scores for the Ottawa-Gatineau region placed it in the middle of major regions in Canada. There was a drop in passenger trip intensity due to a drop in passenger trips per capita in 2014. There was also a slight drop in revenue kilometres per service hour even though there were several new transit routes introduced.

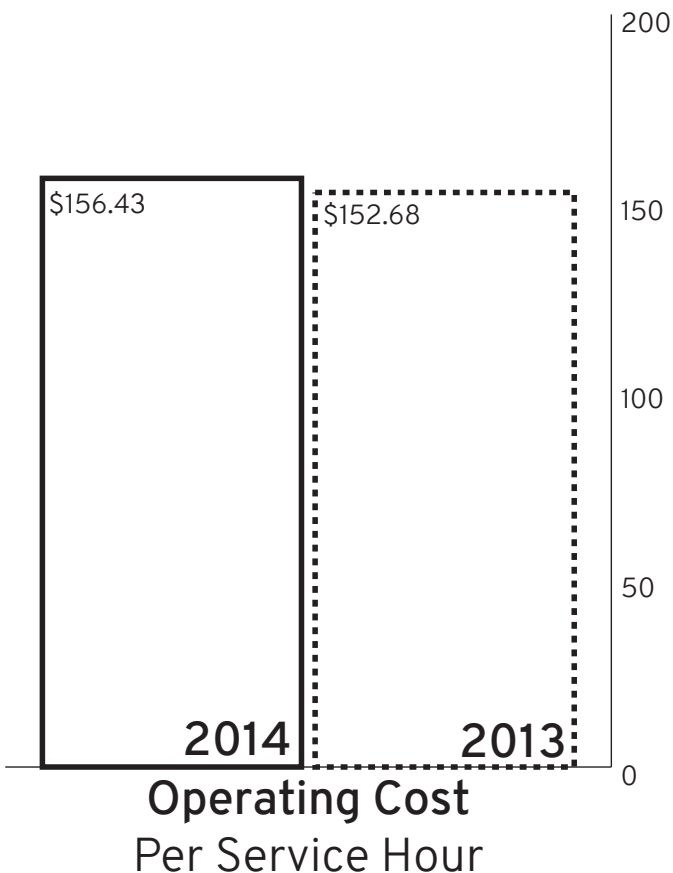
# National Report

Year over Year Changes



### Comments:

This metric was stable nationally, indicating that congestion levels on streets where transit service operates remained the same. It also indicates that there were no significant projects that improved the speed or reliability of transit service nationally.



### Comments:

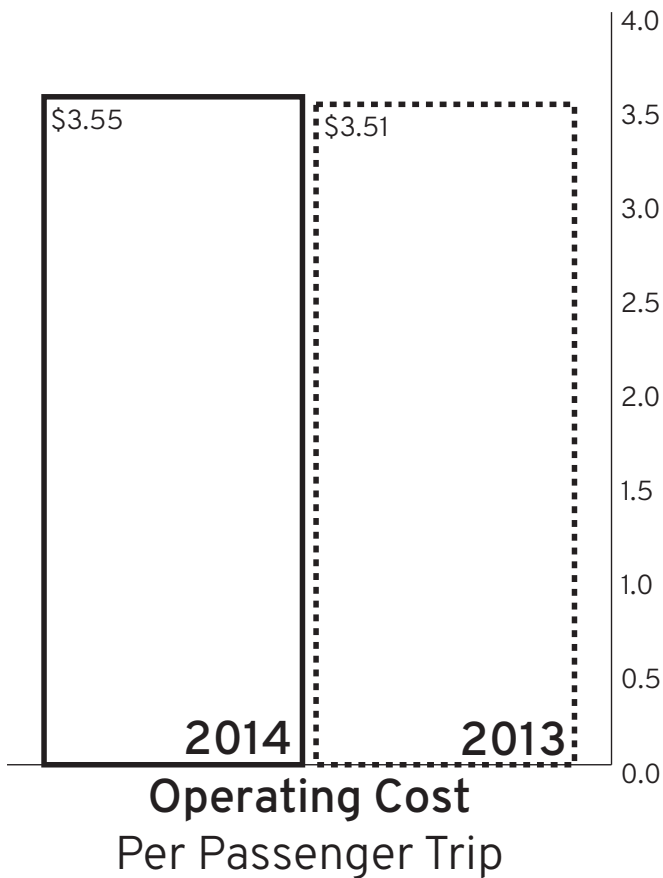
Nationally, operating cost per service hour rose around the rate of inflation, as expected. Labour costs which generally rise faster than the rate of inflation, were offset by lower fuel costs.

### Reference:

<http://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

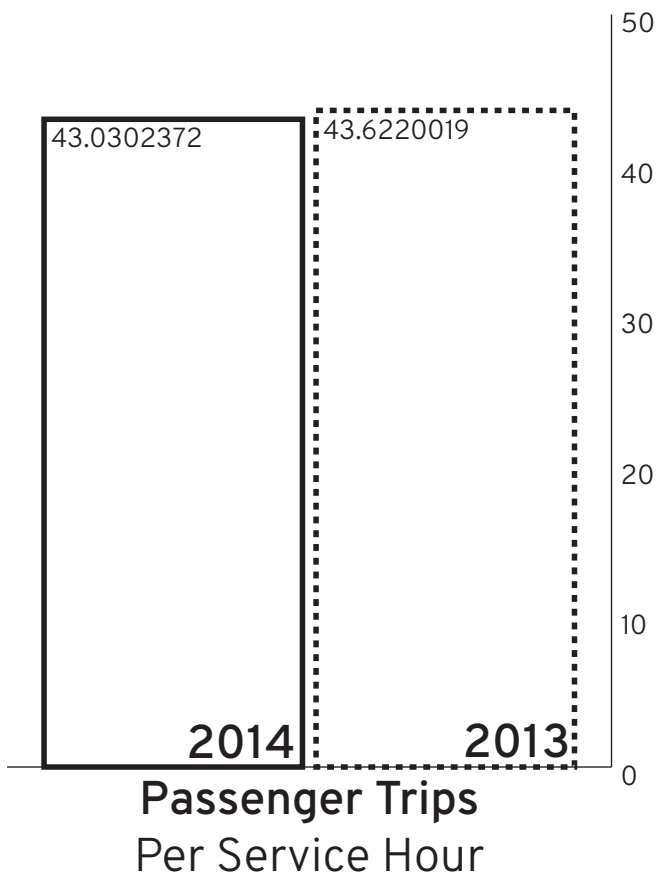
# National Report

Year over Year Changes



**Comments:**

Nationally, there was a slight increase in this metric, indicating that new passenger trips partially offset the inflationary pressure on transit delivery service costs.

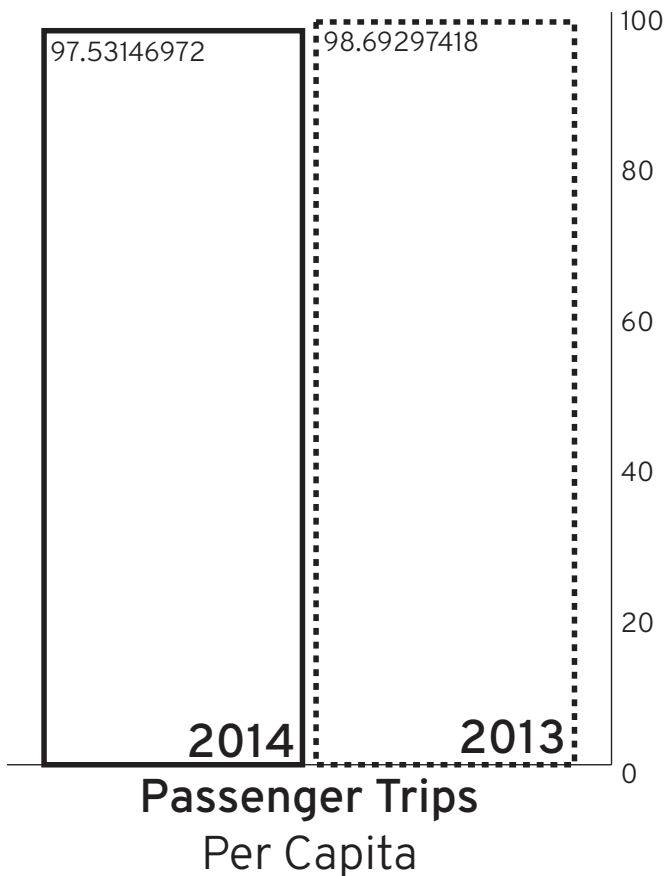


**Comments:**

There was a slight decrease in passenger trips per service hour nationally. This indicates a mismatch between transit service provided—time-of-day and locations serviced—and transit service demand.

# National Report

Year over Year Changes

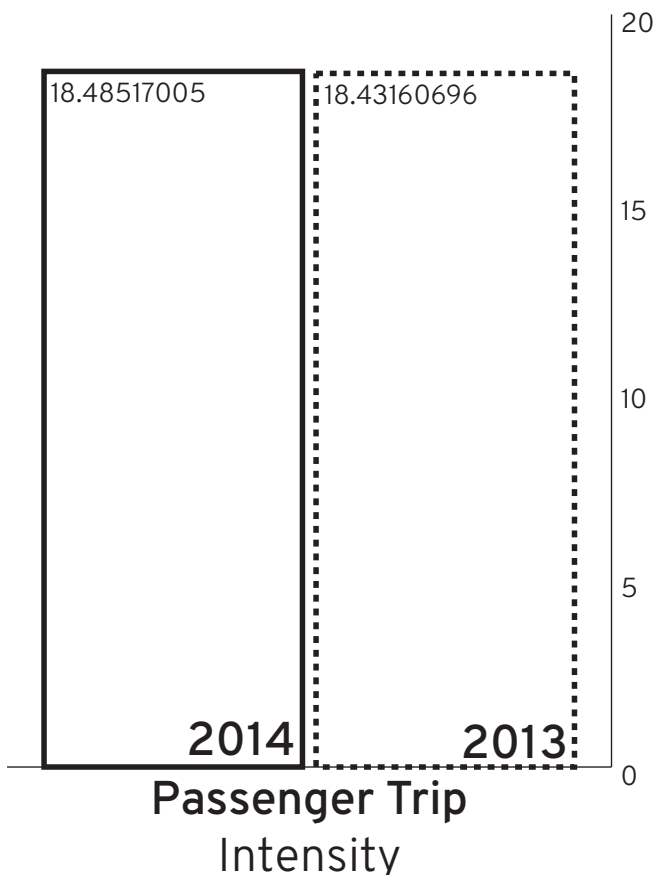


### Comments:

Nationally, people took fewer transit trips per capita. While this metric is linked with service hours per capita—providing more transit service results in more people taking transit—the rate of unemployment also influences the number of people taking transit as a significant amount of transit trips are for getting to and from work. There was a rise in unemployment in many major Canadian regions such as in Edmonton and Calgary in 2014.

### Reference:

Statistics Canada: Table 282-0135

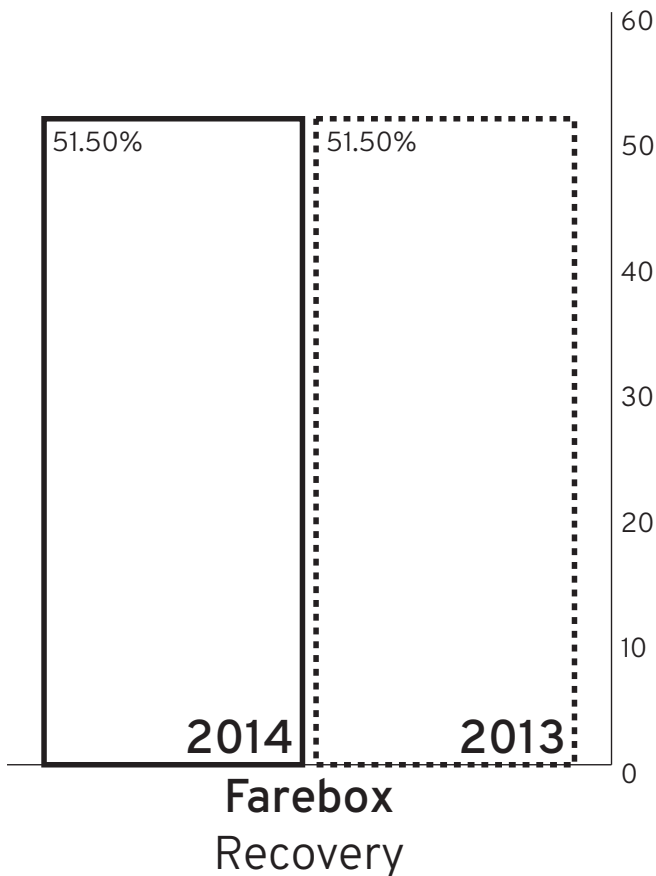


### Comments:

Transit agencies that service Canada's major regions saw a slight increase in passenger trip intensity. This indicates that the productivity and efficiency of Canada's transit agencies have remained unchanged.

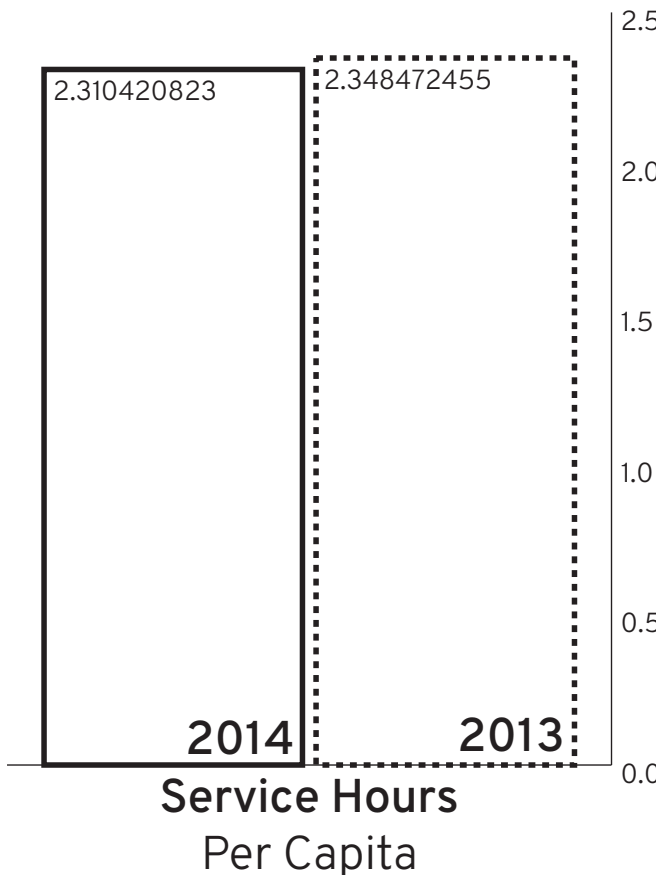
# National Report

Year over Year Changes



**Comments:**

The percentage of transit revenue collected from direct user fees has remained unchanged in Canada. Direct user fees collected have kept pace with the operating cost per trip to provide transit service.



**Comments:**

Service hours per capita has remained unchanged nationally. This means that new transit service hours provided have kept pace with population growth, but the percentage of total trip taken by transit (as opposed to walking, cycling, or driving) nationally has remained unchanged.



# Transit Report Card Detailed Indicators

	<i>Revenue Kilometres Per Service Hour</i>	<i>Operating Cost Per Service Hour</i>	<i>Operating Cost Per Trip</i>	<i>Passenger Trips Per Service Hour</i>	<i>Passenger Trips Per Capita</i>	<i>Passenger Trip Intensity</i>	<i>Farebox Recovery</i>	<i>Service Hours Per Capita</i>
<b><i>The Regions</i></b>								
<i>Greater Calgary: 2014</i>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>\$147.08</b>	<b>\$3.36</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>88.4</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<i>2013</i>	21.9	\$146.17	\$3.34	43.8	89.8	21.4	52%	2.1
<i>Greater Edmonton: 2014</i>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>\$130.89</b>	<b>\$3.39</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>86.6</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<i>2013</i>	21.6 <sup>†</sup>	\$129.04	\$3.42	37.7	88.2	16.1	44%	2.3
<i>Greater Montreal: 2014</i>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>\$173.31</b>	<b>\$2.97</b>	<b>58.4</b>	<b>177.8</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<i>2013</i>	22.1	\$170.14	\$2.98	57.1	176.7	18.4	50%	3.1
<i>Toronto &amp; Hamilton: 2014</i>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>\$155.66</b>	<b>\$3.96</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>108.4</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<i>2013</i>	21.8	\$148.54	\$3.75	39.6	105.7	14.8	67%	2.7
<i>Metro Vancouver: 2014</i>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>\$181.47</b>	<b>\$3.86</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>94.3</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<i>2013</i>	24.9	\$176.82	\$3.73	47.2	94.9	23.5	57%	2.0
<i>National Capital: 2014</i>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>\$157.19</b>	<b>\$3.72</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>100.8</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<i>2013</i>	21.9	\$156.82	\$3.61	43.5	102.5	18.4	51%	2.4
<b><i>Analysis</i></b>								
<i>Median: 2014</i>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>\$156.43</b>	<b>\$3.55</b>	<b>43.0</b>	<b>97.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>51.5%</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<i>2013</i>	21.9	\$152.68	\$3.51	43.6	98.7	18.4	51.5%	2.3
<i>Standard Deviation: 2014</i>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>\$138.29</b>	<b>\$3.18</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>63.0</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>44.6%</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<i>Low Value 2013</i>	20.6 <sup>†</sup>	\$135.50	\$3.22	36.7	65.1	15.2	43.7%	1.9
<i>Standard Deviation: 2014</i>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>\$174.56</b>	<b>\$3.92</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>132.0</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>58.4%</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<i>High Value 2013</i>	23.2 <sup>†</sup>	\$169.97	\$3.81	50.5	132.3	21.7	59.3%	2.8

**Note on the Data:** Standard deviation of 1σ used, and is based on the region's sample group. Standard deviation used in this analysis shows the normal range of value. Value out of 1σ shows better (or worse) than typical performance. All public transit agencies that serve each region are included in this table.

<sup>†</sup> These values reflect the updated data in the *Canada Transit Fact Book – 2014 Operating Data*. The Greater Edmonton value would be 20.4 based on data in the *Canada Transit Fact Book – 2013 Operating Data*.