

DRAFT SolTrans Service Standards and Policies

Introduction

The SolTrans Board of Directors has adopted a mission statement that emphasizes the agency's commitment to delivering "safe, reliable, and efficient transportation services that link people, jobs, and communities." In support of this mission statement, SolTrans' 2013 Approved and 2016 Draft Short Range Transit Plans (SRTP) put forth goals to guide agency actions. In the Draft 2016 SRTP, two of the four goals place a strong emphasis on ensuring the agency provides services in a safe, reliable, and effective manner by satisfying the needs of the customers and the community. The Board, moreover, has placed emphasis on building the system's core ridership.

In addition, Federal Title VI regulations require the establishment of specific standards and policies across SolTrans' services to ensure access to services throughout the service area, and to ensure that the design and operational practices do not result in discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Service standards are quantitative statements while service policies address areas that may not allow for quantitative statements.

These Service Standards and Policies are divided into three sections:

- The **Service Design Guidelines** section further develops the Goals Statements currently adopted by the Board and provides a high-level overview of the agency's philosophies where near- and long-term service planning are concerned, including coverage standards and service-type based schedule standards.
- The **Service Standards** section details specific design standards for transit service, including route spacing, headway and span-of-service requirements, stop spacing, and stop placement.
- The **Service Policies** section details the additional service-related elements required by Title VI such as stop design guidelines in relation to the community, stop amenities, and vehicle assignments. This section also addresses related items that are not necessarily required by Title VI, but reflect the equitable allocation of other resources such as public information.

Service Design Guidelines

Guideline A: Match Service Levels to Demand

Given SolTrans' limited financial resources, it is not possible to serve every requested transit trip. Services should operate in areas that correspond to actual demand. High-frequency express services will operate in intercity freeway corridors. Local-fixed routes will focus on connecting denser residential areas with commercial and institutional hubs, employment centers, and other major destinations. Areas where local fixed-route demand is inadequate to support existing service levels will be considered for alternative service models such as flex-route or dial-a-ride.

Guideline B: Maximize Operating Efficiency without negatively impacting service quality

Service design, in particular scheduling, can have a large impact on the efficiency of transit operations. At the same time, an increase in efficiency can come at the expense of service quality, especially reliability. In the extreme, the most efficient schedule provides no time at the end of a trip beyond that required by operator contracts; however, such schedule is likely to result in very unreliable service as there is no ability of the system to recover from service delays. SolTrans will balance efficiency and quality by developing schedules that are efficient but also only rarely encounter such overlapping delays.

Guideline C: Utilize a Diversity of Service Models

In a service area as diverse in physical and human geography as Vallejo and Benicia, no one service provision method can meet all needs or even a desirable subset of needs. While the largest number of SolTrans' customers will be served by fixed-route local and commuter routes, SolTrans will meet the needs of unique populations and/or subareas with alternative service models.

SolTrans is and will continue to be the provider of Federally-mandated ADA Complementary Paratransit service. In addition, SolTrans provides "ADA Plus" service on a limited basis to provide trips to the ADA-certified community that exceed the Federal requirements, principally by crossing into the service area of neighboring transit agencies to allow connecting trips.

For customers in areas without the minimum demand to support fixed-route local services, SolTrans may offer General Public Dial-a-Ride and/or Flexible Route services. These services allow for increased coverage of the community by putting bus service only where and when it is actually requested. For situations where even these service models cannot be used efficiently, SolTrans will also participate in subsidized programs for taxi and rideshare services, such as local and intercity taxi scrip programs.

In addition, SolTrans will continually seek out new service models and implement those that can complement, enhance, or more effectively replace existing services. In doing so, SolTrans will also need to ensure that technology, disability, or economic status does not become a greater barrier to transit system use.

Guideline D: Continuously monitor and evaluate service planning and delivery

Matching of service levels to demand and balancing efficiency with reliability require monitoring and evaluation of service designs, schedules, and operational delivery. SolTrans will use a full range of tools including traditional street observations as well as technology-aided data collection to continuously record and review service performance. Among the elements to be regularly reviewed include trip-level ridership, on-time performance (measured on the vehicle trip level for fixed-route and passenger trip level for demand response), overall ridership patterns by day of week and time of day, and use of special vehicle equipment such as accessibility elements and bicycle racks.

Guideline E: Leverage Technology Enhancements to Maximize Customer Experience

The customer experience stretches from the initial research into service availability to the final delivery of a customer's individual trip. At every stage, technology will be used to enhance the experience. Specific to service design and performance, customers will be provided the opportunity to receive route and schedule information in real time through a variety of electronic devices. In addition, SolTrans operations and customer service personnel will use technology enhancements to provide this information to customers unable to access it themselves.

Guideline F: Coordinate with Land Use and Development Processes throughout the area

Processes outside of SolTrans' control can greatly influence the design and performance of SolTrans' services. In particular the long-term planning processes for Vallejo and Benicia can help determine the success or failure of transit services. SolTrans Staff will keep abreast of development processes in its communities. In addition, Staff will serve as a resource to the communities in the evaluation of land use and development projects and plans.

Service Standards

Standards A-1 through A-4 are the minimum practices required for Federal compliance. Standards B-1 through B-5 are additional standards developed through the 2016 SRTP process and other best practices.

Standard A-1: Maximum Vehicle Load

Service Type	Maximum Average Trip Boardings as a percent of seated load, Peak Period	Maximum Average Trip Boardings as a percent of seated load, Off-Peak
Fixed-Route Local	125%	100%
Fixed-Route Express	100%	75%
Service Type	Maximum Actual Load on all trips as a percent of seated load	
General Public Dial-a-Ride	100%	
ADA Complementary Paratransit (Local)	100%	
ADA-Plus Paratransit (Regional)	100%	

Seated loads are defined on a vehicle-type basis: Commuter coach: 57; 40-foot transit bus: 36; Paratransit and dial-a-ride: varies.

Standard A-2: Policy Headways (Minimum Route Frequency)

Scheduled Fixed-route service headways shall not exceed 30 minutes during peak times and 60 minutes during off-peak time.

Standard A-3: On-time Performance

Service Type	Minimum Percent of Trips Operated On Time	On-Time Window Definition
Fixed Route Local	90%	0 minutes early to 5 minutes late
Fixed Route Express	94%	Up to 5 minutes late (Can arrive at final destination early)
General Public Dial-a-Ride	90%	0 minutes early to 15 minutes late
ADA Complementary Paratransit (Local)	90%	0 minutes early to 15 minutes late
ADA-Plus Paratransit (Regional)	90%	0 minutes early to 15 minutes late

Fixed-route on-time to be measured at final destination of trip using CAD/AVL data. Paratransit on-time to be measured relative to scheduled pickup time for each passenger.

Standard A-4: Spatial Availability of Services

In areas where General Public Dial-a-Ride service is not provided, at least 80% of residents should be within ½ mile of a bus stop on the local fixed-route bus system.

Standard B-1: Service Effectiveness (Boardings per Unit of Service)

Service Type	Boardings per Vehicle Revenue Mile	Boardings per Vehicle Revenue Hour
Fixed Route Local	1.0	12.0
Fixed Route Express	1.0	25.0
General Public Dial-a-Ride	1.0	2.0
ADA Complementary Paratransit (Local)	1.0	2.0
ADA-Plus Paratransit (Regional)	0.5	2.0

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Standard B-2: Missed Trips

Service Type	Maximum Percent of Trips Missed	Missed Trip Definition
Fixed-Route Local	1%	Trip is missed if started later than 15 minutes late or not operated at all.
Fixed-Route Express	1%	Trip is missed if started later than 15 minutes or more than 1 scheduled headway late, or not operated at all.
General Public Dial-a-Ride	1%	Trip is missed if passenger is picked up later than 30 minutes late, or not at all.
ADA Complementary Paratransit (Local)	1%	Trip is missed if passenger is picked up later than 30 minutes late, or not at all.
ADA-Plus Paratransit (Regional)	1%	Trip is missed if passenger is picked up later than 30 minutes late, or not at all.

Standard B-3: Demand-Response Trip Reservations Achieved

Service Type	Percent of Reservations Booked within 60 Minutes of Requested Time
General Public Dial-a-Ride	100%
ADA Complementary Paratransit	100%
ADA Plus (Regional)	N/A (Times are defined by schedule)

Standard B-4: Demand-Response Trip Denials

Service Type	Maximum Percent of Trip Requests Denied by Capacity Constraints	Maximum Percent of Trip Requests Refused By Customer But Within 60 Minute Window
General Public Dial-a-Ride	2%	5%
ADA Complementary Paratransit	0%	3%
ADA Plus (Regional)	0%	3%

Standard B-5: Internal Service Connectivity

Fixed-route transfer times at major connection points shall be scheduled to not exceed 5 minutes under normal operating conditions.

Service Policies

Policy A: Distribution of Vehicle Assignments

There shall be an even distribution from day to day and week to week of vehicle subtypes within each vehicle type across all routes and blocks, such that a particular model or age of bus does not appear consistently more than any other. “Vehicle type” shall mean commuter coach, transit bus, or small bus (used primarily for Paratransit and Dial-a-Ride). “Vehicle subtype” shall refer to vehicles belonging to the same original vehicle order and separated in age by two years or less. Exception shall be made where a vehicle subtype has unusual restrictions on deployment (e.g. electric-battery buses).

Policy B: Distribution of Bus Shelters

A continuous list of potential bus shelter locations shall be maintained and potential locations added upon the request of a single customer. Staff shall periodically review the list and rank the requests in descending order of ridership. Locations will be reviewed for practical considerations and those locations with major restrictions (such as right-of-way/property ownership) removed. Of the remaining locations, staff shall refine the list of shelter locations benefit the largest number of people within the available funds for purchase and installation.

Policy C: Distribution of Dynamic Information Displays

Dynamic Information Displays such as electronic signage, and especially electronic signage providing real-time information, shall be installed at SolTrans facilities based on these priorities from highest to lowest:

1. Off-street transit centers, currently including Sereno Transit Center, Vallejo Transit Center, and Curtola Park & Ride Hub;
2. On-street stops served by multiple bus routes. The more routes stop at a stop, the higher the priority for providing this information.

In addition, SolTrans will provide information to regional partners for displays at major facilities used by SolTrans routes (including Fairfield Transportation Center; Solano Mall; Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, and El Cerrito del Norte BART stations, and Diablo Valley College). Installation of SolTrans electronic signage at these non-SolTrans facilities is not within SolTrans’ current authority or responsibility.

Policy D: Distribution of Static Information Displays

Static Information, including bus stop signs and printed bus schedule displays, shall be provided according to the following priorities:

1. Off-street transit centers within SolTrans’ service territory (Vallejo and Benicia), currently including Sereno Transit Center, Vallejo Transit Center, and Curtola Park & Ride Hub;
2. On-street stops served by multiple bus routes. The more routes stop at a stop, the higher the priority for providing static information;
3. On-street bus stops serving a single route.

Policy E: Requests for New Service

Consistent with the Customer Focus and Community/Environment measures in the SRTP, maintain awareness of demographics of ridership and note impact on demographics of any new service designs.

Policy F: Coordination with Other Services

Consistent with the Coordination measures in the SRTP, work within the larger community of Bay Area transit operators to maximize travel opportunities through coordination of service designs and schedules at regional transit centers. Regularly review schedules of other operators to identify key “near misses” in schedules that might be addressed. Participate with other operators to identify missing transit links and develop solutions for bridging gaps.