

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the START Bus Winter Shuttle to JAC Airport

1. Why does the airport service only operate in winter?

A: Winter demand patterns are more concentrated and predictable. In the summer months, the drive market is dominant as visitors arrive by personal vehicle and rent cars to explore the region vs. accessing one of our local ski areas. Staff are always exploring ridership data and demand, so evaluating the potential for a summer airport service will continue to remain on our collective radar.

2. How was the shuttle route selected, and why can't there be a stop at Stilson or Teton Village?

Selecting a condensed service area (designed to operate on a 60-minute cycle) gave the study the best chance of collecting attainable performance metrics while providing riders easy connections to other routes in the START network. All of START's drivers and fleet vehicles were in use with the addition of the Pilot Study, which is why the service area could not be expanded to other locations like Stilson or Teton Village.

The Stilson Transit Center is expected to be completed by January 2027; START will continue to collect data and adjust the route network and frequencies to ensure we continue to provide service that meets the needs of our community. As we proceed with other planning studies, we will use ridership and other demand data to evaluate services to Stilson or Teton Village.

3. Q: Can the transfer to the separate Village route be free for paying airport riders?

A: START will be conducting a comprehensive fare study in early 2025, and the cost of transfers for all routes will be evaluated through that holistic study.

4. Q: I need to take the 5:00 am shuttle for my flight out, but the parking lots don't allow parking from 2:00 - 7:00 am. Can I park there for 2 hours without getting a ticket before my friend comes to get my car?

A: At present, cars can be parked in the Millward/Simpson parking garage for up to 48 hours at a time. Town staff are currently evaluating parking supply and demand to understand where there may be opportunities to improve short-term (less than 8 hours) and long-term (8 or more hours) parking supply and management. We do not yet have a recommendation for managing on-street parking and surface parking lots, so we anticipate the existing restrictions will remain in place for winter 2024-2025. However, staff are evaluating changes to how the parking garage at Milward/Simpson is managed to improve turnover and meet the objectives of this garage.

Current winter parking restrictions are in effect to allow Town Public Works crews time to clear snow from streets and off-street parking lots before workers begin to arrive around 7 am. The Town Public Works department does not have sufficient staff capacity to ensure

any particular prioritization of locations. Following heavy storms, it is not unusual for street crews to need an entire workday to clear snow.

This winter's service will be 'Pilot Year 2,' and the budget includes funding to operate the START shuttle to and from downtown to JAC. The budget does not include funds to implement changes to winter 2024-2025 parking management.

5. **Q: The Millward/Simpson parking garage is often full. Can some of these spots be saved for airport shuttle riders? Can riders park longer than 48 hours with an airport shuttle ticket?**

A: Staff are evaluating changes to how the parking garage at Milward/Simpson is managed to improve turnover and meet the objectives of this garage.

6. **Q: Can the airport bus stop be moved closer to the baggage claim?**

A: The safety of riders, bus drivers, and airport users, traffic flow patterns including, curb congestion & potential challenges, as well as typical driver behaviors, driver/bus dwell times, and the level of visibility of the bus stop from inside and outside the facility, were the main areas of focus as several areas were considered by both the Airport and START for either a pick-up and/or a drop-off location for the shuttle bus. The drop-off location, which ultimately became the sole bus stop for pick-up and drop-off was selected because the northern curb area is the least congested curbside access area that the coach bus could easily maneuver in and out of with a direct line of site of other vehicles and pedestrians. This section of the curb is shoveled regularly, well lit, and provides direct curb access for riders getting on and off the bus. Having one designated bus stop also reduced driver dwell times, the need for the bus to enter and exit traffic congestion during peak times, and arriving to a location, like the curb area in front of the baggage claim exit that would often be occupied by other vehicles despite signage, potentially creating traffic jams and other safety and service challenges. JAC has a designated bus parking marked along the exterior fence of the short-term parking lot. However, if used by the shuttle it lacks a maintained curb and is not as brightly lit as the northern site. Foot traffic enroute to this location will potentially have wait for vehicles entering the short-term lot before reaching the bus. This area is still allocated for other buses and coaches, delivery trucks, and other large vehicles that require additional space to park while actively loading and unloading passengers or supplies.

Was a reservation system considered?

A: Staff extensively discussed this possibility. Due to possible flight delays or other changes in plans, staff felt it would be difficult to implement (e.g. if someone's flight was late, how would they change their reservation to free up the seat they reserved?). We understand the ability to make a reservation may give some travelers peace of mind knowing their seat will be secured. If a bus is near capacity the START driver notifies dispatch to send an extra bus. However, at no time during the Winter 2023/2024 Season did an airport shuttle reach capacity. START typically has drivers and vehicles available to respond to mechanical or service needs as needed. As START continues to develop mobile fare payment capabilities, staff will continue to look for opportunities that may work to address this concern.

7. **Q: I arrived just after a bus left and didn't want to wait 58 minutes for the next one. Can there be more frequent service during busy times?**

A: Assuming sufficient drivers can be hired, staff will use ridership data and driver/fleet availability to finalize the winter 2024-2025 schedule.

8. **Q: Will the bus wait for my plane if it arrives late at night?**

A: In order to stay on schedule, drivers cannot wait for delayed aircraft arrivals. However, drivers may exercise professional judgment and safety precautions under unique circumstances.