

Good morning councillors. My name is Matthew Yeung, and I'm the chair of the Calgary Transit Customer Advisory Group. Today I would like to discuss one of the most important customer experience issues, which is the mere existence of the service.

To achieve Council's recommended budget reductions in 2019, Calgary Transit was forced to drastically slash service on many routes, with reductions hitting several mainline routes, including the LRT. Though LRT capacity was maintained, frequency was harmed. For transit users, frequency provides the freedom needed for transit users to access more jobs, services, and social connections. Improving frequency also makes transit car-competitive. With my car, I can leave my house at an infinite number of times per hour to get to school, get to work, or attend appointments. However, with transit, even at normal frequencies, I only have 6 trip options per hour. By cutting service to Calgarians further, both through service hour defunding, and defunding of maintenance, leading to breakdowns and reliability issues, transit is being made less free, and less useable. Ridership will then drop as the individuals who are able to do so, begin to turn to their cars.

This scenario is one that is familiar to Calgarians. Throughout 2014 and 2015, Calgary Transit identified low ridership throughout NW bus routes and subsequently cut service. As frequency decreased, fewer riders chose to use the bus. However, in 2016, Calgary Transit revamped bus routes in the NW, and added frequency to several mainline routes. During the recession of that year, NW ridership managed to increase while the remainder of the city lost ridership.]

The point of this anecdote is to illustrate that though cuts can be made to transit service, there is a point where mainline service must be cut, resulting in a loss of ridership, loss in revenue, further cuts, and therefore, further revenue losses. Calgary Transit is also unable to expand to cover existing demand, as evidenced by routes 8, 20, and MAX Orange, all of which are overcapacity, yet with no money to provide additional service, despite marketing as primary transit services. For MAX Orange, overloading also looks poor on the city as Calgarians have provided tax dollars to create capital investment in the route, but with Calgary Transit unable to support the service despite ridership demanding it.

Similarly, the 17th Ave Transitway has been noted to have made International Avenue a better location to do business, and it would be a shame for that investment to go to waste because the city cannot fund buses to use the transitway. City council must consider the impact of funding transit in relation to investors, including citizens, businesses in Calgary, and businesses looking to set up shop in Calgary. Funding tells investors Calgary is a 21st century city with sustainable, rapid, and affordable methods of getting people to and from businesses. Transit service is key to any 21st century city, and a reduction of transit service send a message to investors that Calgary may not be an appropriate city to develop. A loss of transit service may also lead to a loss of young individuals without the capital to purchase a car, also creating a less attractive business environment. Further, poor transit service provides an image to tourists of a city in decline. During the Grey Cup yesterday, trains and buses were packed delivering folks to and from McMahon Stadium. The extra service provided shows tourists that Calgary is serious about transit investment and becoming a modern city not dependent on the car.

However, methods exist to improve ridership. One of the frequently mentioned amenities within the group is wifi on LRT cars and buses. Enabling users to connect to the internet during their trips allows for transit users to convert commuting time to productive time. This is something that cannot be done through driving, improve competitiveness. By funding transit, the City of Calgary is demonstrating to other businesses that they are open for partnerships. Calgary Transit has been able to partner, in the

past, with Pattison to upgrade screens at LRT and BRT stations. These represent major improvements to the customer experience, and are at reduced cost to the City of Calgary due to the partnership with Pattison. In Vancouver, a similar exercise is occurring, with Shaw helping to bring wifi to every bus and train by 2020. The CTCAG highly recommends Calgary Transit and City of Calgary find similar public-private solutions to current customer service issues.

Based on the results in front of you, few citizens have indicated they want less investment in critical services like public transit, CPS, and CFD services. Of course, these are also the most expensive services operated by the city. However, in the case of transit, low-cost changes can be made to support both transit and revenue. Specifically, parking in high-activity areas can be made more expensive to both bring in more revenue while also encouraging individuals to use transit. This applies to areas like downtown, the university, business campuses, and hospitals, all of which support large populations arriving through a limited number of corridors. Additionally, bus-only lanes like those over Deerfoot and through Forest Lawn have proven highly effective at keeping buses on time and ahead of traffic, encouraging drivers to use the bus. Not every bus lane needs to be to the scale of the 17th Ave. transitway however. Low-cost improvements like converting parking lanes and shoulder lanes into bus-only lanes are cost-effective solutions to improving reliability, travel time, and ultimately, operating costs.

City councillors must also make hard choices about the unsustainable spread of Calgary Transit resources. The CTCAG believes cuts to Calgary Transit cannot be made across the board, particularly with regard to the primary transit network. New communities continue to create expensive, low-ridership corridors, particularly if road networks are poor. These communities should be asked to wait further for basic transit service, or be charged a temporary service levy, recognizing that their services are less sustainable initially, when compared to the remainder of the city.

Overall, Calgary Transit continues to be a key service in bringing people to more businesses and services, and is one of the most environmentally responsible transportation options within the city. ~~Though Calgary Transit has done a good job of communicating cuts to its customers, its services, ridership, and revenue generation are threatened by proposed budget cuts.~~ The CTCAG, and based on the survey, many Calgarians ask that Calgary Transit be spared from further cuts to return basic levels of transit service, at the very least, to the primary transit network. You will never be voted out for supporting transit investment.

