

**Transportation Report to
Community Development Committee
2022 May 27**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CD2022-0675
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Calgary Transit Recovery Strategy

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Community Development Committee recommend that Council receive this Report for the Corporate Record.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Calgary Transit has developed a recovery strategy focusing on increasing service, public safety, and improving the customer experience on transit as it builds back better and safer after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? To increase ridership, Calgary Transit wants to build back a better and safer public transit system.
- Why does it matter? Improvements to the customer experience is a crucial part of citizen's desire to take transit which is critical to the sustainability of system.
- To build ridership, Calgary Transit's recovery strategy is divided into four pillars: service recovery, service investments, safety investments, and customer experience investments.
- Key investments include increasing service frequency, introducing on-demand service in new communities, continued investments in public safety, and discounted monthly passes in August and September.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city that moves
- Supporting information is included in Attachments 1 to 3.

DISCUSSION

With the loosening of pandemic restrictions, Calgary Transit has been focusing on restoring transit service, and looking to implement new and innovative ideas to increase ridership. Calgary Transit has created a recovery strategy that will be a focus for 2022-2023 and is divided into the following pillars:

- Service recovery
- Service investments
- Safety investments
- Customer experience investments

Attachment 1 provides a high-level description of initiatives that will be undertaken in these pillars. The recovery strategy provides a roadmap for Calgary Transit to action immediately to continue to grow ridership.

Service Recovery

Service recovery will focus on building back better transit to meet current customer demands. Calgary Transit's current ridership is approximately 59 per cent of pre-COVID levels with approximately 85 per cent of pre-covid service. It is anticipated that ridership will continue to grow throughout the summer months to approximately 65 to 70 per cent of pre-covid levels by the fall.

To accommodate the growing ridership, Calgary Transit will increase service to 90 per cent pre-COVID levels in September and will be hiring an approximant additional 300 operators by the

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end of 2022. This is in addition every operator who was laid-off in 2020 being provided the opportunity to return in 2021.

To support the service increase, investments will be made to improving light rail vehicle (LRV) reliability to support the availability of LRVs for service. However, with the aging LRV fleet, full four-car train service cannot be guaranteed.

Calgary Transit will continue to monitor ridership and customer demand for service and adjust as necessary to ensure service is meeting customer needs (see Attachment 2 for ridership trends and projections, and the demand for transit service by various rider groups).

Service Investments

To build back better to maintain existing ridership and attracting new, Calgary Transit will be focusing on using innovative solutions to drive more existing and new service into communities. Calgary Transit's investment in new service will include:

- Introducing On Demand service in four to six new communities. This service will not replace existing service but provide service to new communities that currently do not have transit service. Review, assessment, and planning will take place in 2022 and service will be introduced in 2023.
- Installing floating bus stops to provide customers fully-accessible transit service without having to temporarily move bus stops to facilitate temporary patios.
- Investing in Calgary Transit's data gathering and storage to be able to make data driven service decisions to ensure any adjustments to service would benefit customers.

Safety Investments

Customer perception of safety on the transit system will play an important role in influencing whether customers will return to using transit as things reopen. Calgary Transit is committed to providing a safe and clean system for all Calgarians. To build on that commitment, Calgary Transit will be:

- Recruiting of new Transit Security Guards who will provide highly trained uniformed presence on the transit system and providing customer service and support to Peace Officers to help improve customer safety.
- Upgrading lighting at some stations and Park and Ride lots to help improve visibility and safety during the later hours. Customer concerns around dimly lit stations was identified through the customer research program, especially amongst the female demographic.
- Upgrading current CCTV monitoring system to include new features to help detect incidents automatically and alert security agents to improve dispatch times.
- Hiring a third-party consultant to investigate the feasibility of implementing a closed system, which includes highlighting impacts to the customer experience, accessibility, and neighbouring communities.

Customer Experience Investments

With the dramatic reduction of ridership due the pandemic, Calgary Transit is focusing on improving the customer experience to welcome back customers and attract new riders through incentives and marketing strategies. To achieve this Calgary Transit will be:

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- Partnering with Arts and Culture, Recreation, and Festival & Events to bundle transit fares into admission prices when possible.
- Introducing new Calgary Transit ambassadors on the system to engage with customers, answer questions, and provide service information.
- Offering half price monthly passes during the month of August and September as an incentive to take transit. August's promotion will focused on encouraging customers to buy a monthly pass to explore the city and attend local events. September's promotion will be focused on using transit to return to the workplace and school.
- Encouraging multimodal travel options by equipping the remaining 47 per cent of 40- and 60-foot buses with bike racks. This means every bus, except for shuttle buses, will have bike racks. In addition, the pilot allowing bikes on the CTrain without time restrictions will run from May 16 to August 31, 2022.
- Partnering with local companies to activate stations to provide an enhanced customer experience. Utilizing traditional and social media to generate excitement about the transit experience.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- ☐ Public Engagement was undertaken
- ☐ Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- ☐ Public/Stakeholders were informed
- ☒ Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

Since the height of the pandemic, customer reports have increased regarding their perception of safety on the transit system. Calgary Transit receives feedback from customers through various touch points including social media, the call centre, 3-1-1, and in person interactions. Calgary Transit's ongoing customer research program also provides an opportunity for customers to provide feedback on all Calgary Transit services through surveys done in-person or on the phone. Results of the surveys help Calgary Transit determine customer priorities and what areas can be improved. Key findings from the surveys will be shared in the RouteAhead 10-year report later in 2022.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Taking transit is more than just going from point a to b. Transit plays an important role in connecting customers with the people and places that they care about. Calgary Transit is committed to strengthening Calgary's community and are proud to be part of making a difference in Calgary.

The pandemic has resulted in a significant decrease in ridership and an increase in social disorder on the transit system. While progress has been made, social disorder is a complex issue and is not limited to Calgary Transit (Attachment 3). Calgary Transit has been working closely with Community Standards and local support agencies to ensure Calgary Transit is taking a compassionate approach to provide support to the population experiencing vulnerabilities while ensuring the transit system is safe for customers

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Environmental

Public transit provides an alternative form of transportation that is environmentally friendly. Transit contributes to a significant reduction in greenhouse gases (GHG) and will help The City meet the Council approved GHG reduction strategy of 15 Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e) by 2050. A 25 per cent expansion of transit use contributes 2.1 MTCO₂e to the reduction of GHG. Continuing to promote high-quality transit helps shift Calgarians out of single occupancy vehicles into lower or no emissions modes. The City of Calgary uses a wind power contract for the CTrain, enabling zero-emissions door-to-door travel in Calgary for CTrain customers. A single bus can carry as many people as 41 cars: with emissions per passenger-kilometre close to one quarter the level of cars.

Making transit a more convenient transportation choice by improving the customer experience through increased service frequency and incorporating multimodal connections (bikes on CTrain and buses) will help to attract more customers.

Service and Financial Implications

Other: Tax-Supported, Federal, and Provincial funding.

The service recovery program is funded from operational savings that are being re-invested into the recovery program as well as assistance from multiple levels of government.

Funding for the initiatives may be adjusted as ridership and revenue fluctuate.

RISK

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Calgary Transit saw an increase in social disorder concerns, due to reduced ridership, the closure of other public facilities, and the continuing opioid epidemic. As The City now moves into a recovery phase, there remains a public perception that travel using Calgary Transit and the levels of security on-board vehicles or around stations is generally unsafe. Failure of The City to act in a sustainable and visible manner will have severe impacts on ridership and revenues, along with long term negative reputational impact on Calgary Transit.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Calgary Transit Recovery Strategy
2. Supporting Information on Ridership Trends
3. Safety and Security Metrics

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Doug Morgan	Operational Services	Approve
Katie Black	Community Services	Consult

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Carla Male	Corporate Planning & Financial Services	Inform
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