

## RouteAhead 10-Year Update

Report Back: What We Heard  
October 2022

### Project overview

The City of Calgary created *RouteAhead* in 2012 as a 30-year plan to guide planning for public transit infrastructure projects and investments. Its goals are to improve transit service and the customer experience, and to ensure development throughout the city consistently prioritizes access to safe, reliable public transportation.

*RouteAhead* was developed through extensive consultation with Calgarians, identifying their priorities and values to inform every part of the plan. Knowing that priorities change over time, *RouteAhead* built in a schedule to refresh the plan every ten years to ensure it still meets the changing needs of Calgarians and stays up-to-date with technological advancements, social needs, and priorities, while reporting on past accomplishments. This engagement is part of the refresh to ensure the *RouteAhead* plan is moving in the right direction for the next 30 years.

### Engagement overview

Engagement took place between August 22, 2022, and September 23, 2022. Public engagement was done online, with the option of downloading printable project information and survey questions. Printed copies were also available at Fair Entry kiosks.

The opportunity to participate in the project was promoted widely using community newsletters, social media, bold signs, at the city hall cashiers and customer service desks, and at Fair Entry locations on the third floor of the Municipal Building and Village Square Branch of the Calgary Public Library.

Two pages were created on the Engage Portal for this project: one for individual Calgarians, transit users and visitors; and one for groups, organizations, nonprofits and businesses.

The home page for the project also included a “sticky note” activity that invited participants to post a virtual sticky note about *What is Calgary Transit currently doing well that we should continue?* and *What could Calgary Transit do to improve the customer experience?*

There were 7,325 visits to the Engage Portal for this project and more than 2,500 contributions were made:

- Questions for Calgarians: 1,996 participants (online, paper and email);
- Organizations and Business: 17 participants; and
- On the Engage page for the project, visitors added 522 “sticky notes” to the page.





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### Next Steps

A Council Committee report with key proposed changes to RouteAhead, including updated directions/actions and an updated transit infrastructure prioritization list will be presented in Q4 2022. The final updated RouteAhead plan is expected in Q2 2023 and will be available for public review before being presented to Council for final approval.

### What we asked

#### Section 1: Public Transportation Use

1. Are you a current transit customer?
2. How often do you take transit?
  - Daily
  - A few times a week
  - A few times a month
  - A few times a year
  - Never or hardly ever
3. If you currently do not use transit or do not use it often, what would make you more likely to take public transit or take public transit more often?

#### Section 2: Values and Priorities

4. What do you personally value in a public transit system? Please rank the following values from 1 to 10.
  - Frequency - Schedule buses to arrive at stops more often
  - Network design - Ensure transit runs to major destinations and where people need to go, in all areas of the city
  - Fares - Keep fares affordable for everyone
  - Amenities - Ensure vehicles, stops and stations are comfortable for everyone (for example, more shelters, air conditioning on vehicles, comfortable seating, washrooms)
  - Reliability - Ensure vehicles arrive on time
  - Safety - Feeling safe, secure while getting to, waiting for, and riding on transit
  - Information - Getting the correct information you need, when you need it
  - Accessibility - Getting to your stop or station, and ride, transfer, and board and exit easily
  - Environment - Transit vehicles are low emissions, transit contributes to a more environmentally friendly Calgary
  - Hours of operation - Transit service ends later at night and/or starts earlier in the morning

Is there anything else we should consider?



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5. Thinking about Calgary Transit over the long term, what should be the top priority for the next 5, 10 and 30 years?

Priorities	5 Years	10 Years	30 Years
<b>Frequency</b> - Schedule buses to arrive at stops more often, run for longer hours			
<b>Network design</b> - Ensure transit runs to major destinations and where people need to go, in all areas of the city			
<b>Fares</b> - Keep fares affordable for everyone			
<b>Amenities</b> - Ensure vehicles, stops and stations are comfortable for everyone (for example, more shelters, air conditioning on vehicles, comfortable seating, washrooms)			
<b>Reliability</b> - Ensure vehicles arrive on time			
<b>Safety</b> - Feeling safe, secure while getting to, waiting for and riding on transit			
<b>Information</b> - Getting the correct information you need, when you need it			
<b>Accessibility</b> - I can get to my stop or station, ride, transfer, and board and exit easily			
<b>Environment</b> - Transit vehicles are low emissions, transit contributes to a more environmentally friendly Calgary			
<b>Transit Right-of-Way</b> - Buses and trains receive priority on streets and at intersections to make transit travel times faster			

## What we heard

Response to the engagement showed a personal investment in Calgary Transit as an important part of participants' current routine. Most participants are regular public transit users (93%) and take Calgary Transit either daily or a few days a week (81%). The most common reasons for not taking transit more often are safety and it being faster to drive. Their top personal priorities for Calgary Transit are having buses and trains come frequently and reliably and feeling safe. Their top priorities for the next 5 years are frequency and safety, for the next 10 years it is network design, and for the next 30 years it is network design and taking care of the environment.

The most common themes arising in the respondent's comments involved:

- social disorder around LRT stations;



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- needing more stops that are accessible;
- schedule changes such as frequency and earlier/later hours of operation; and
- long waits to make connections, especially if the location makes them uncomfortable.

Some described concerns that specific communities, like industrial areas or parts of the northeast were getting less service than others and it being difficult for people without a car to get to work.

Similarly, comments from people representing businesses and organizations showed concern for the accessibility and safety of their members and customers in going to and from their location.

Although many of the comments overall suggest improvements, there was also praise for the transit app, Max lines, and recent fare promotions as having been helpful in being able to use transit to get where they need to go.

Thinking about the future, people asked for cross-town routes that don't require going downtown and for more communities to be connected to the LRT. There were some concerns that older communities may lose neighbourhood routes as a tradeoff for bus service in newer communities, making it more difficult to get to local amenities and shops.

Of the people who chose to share personal information about themselves, the largest single community where they live is the Beltline but a majority live outside of downtown. Respondents from more than 200 communities took part in the survey, with most reporting they are under 45 years of age and have a household income of less than \$75,000.

Verbatim comments are provided in the appendices on [engage.calgary.ca/routeahead](https://engage.calgary.ca/routeahead):

- **Appendix A** Questions for Calgarians: comments from everyday Calgarians, transit users and visitors
- **Appendix B** Questions for Organizations and Businesses: comments from representatives for organizations (including members or clients), nonprofits, and businesses and their customers
- **Appendix C** The Hub: What is Calgary Transit currently doing well?
- **Appendix D** The Hub: What could Calgary Transit do to improve the customer experience?

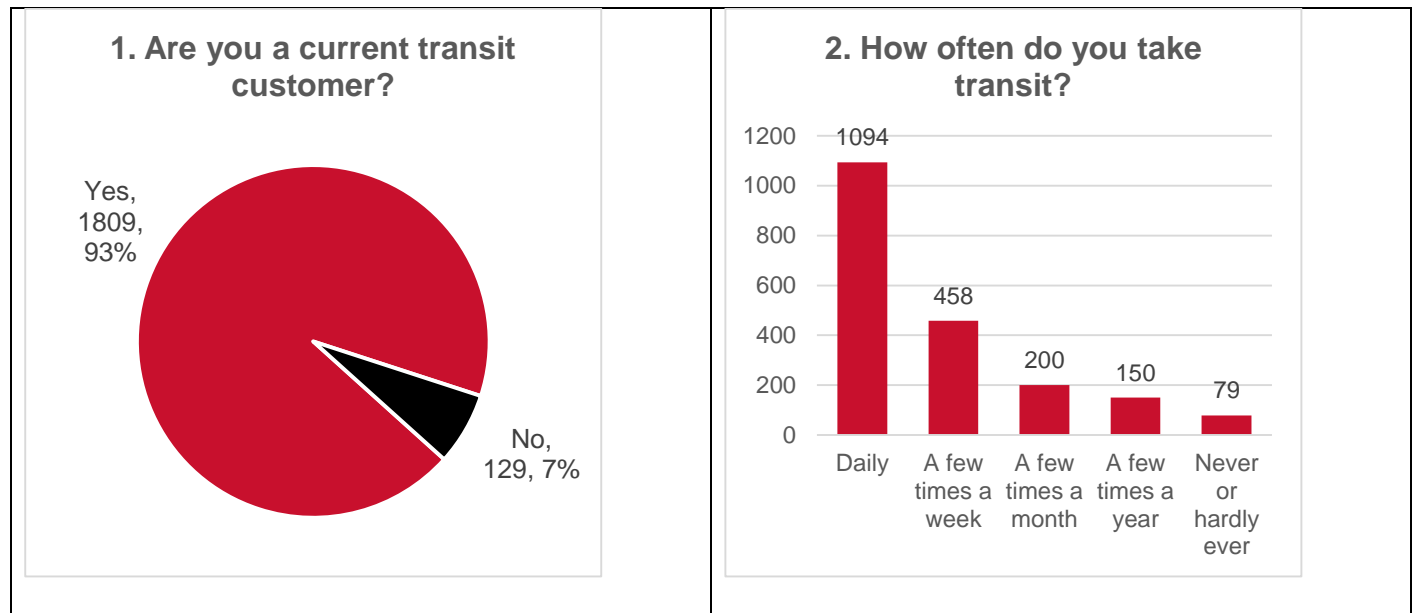
Any personal identifying information, comments or portions of comments that contained profanity, or that are not in compliance with The [City's Respectful Workplace Policy](#) or [Online Tool Moderation Practice](#), have been edited with removed words indicated as "[removed]". No other edits have been made.

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### Summary of input

#### Questions for Calgarians



### 3. If you currently do not use transit or do not use it often, what would make you more likely to take public transit or take public transit more often?

Theme	Sample Comments – What would it take?
<p>If it felt clean and safe</p> <p><i>Feeling safe in general</i></p>	<p>Safety was the most common theme for reasons for not taking transit, or taking it less often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Address safety and the perception that transit hubs are unsafe because of social disorder incidents</li> <li>– I *want* to be able to use transit, but the conditions are so unsafe and unsanitary that i can't.</li> <li>– If I felt safe on the train. As a woman I don't feel comfortable so I drive.</li> <li>– I used to take transit a few times a week. Now it is unsafe due to drugs, so I drive and/or carpool.</li> <li>– A little more safe. More cameras, more for deterring. Need to feel confident in safety.</li> </ul>



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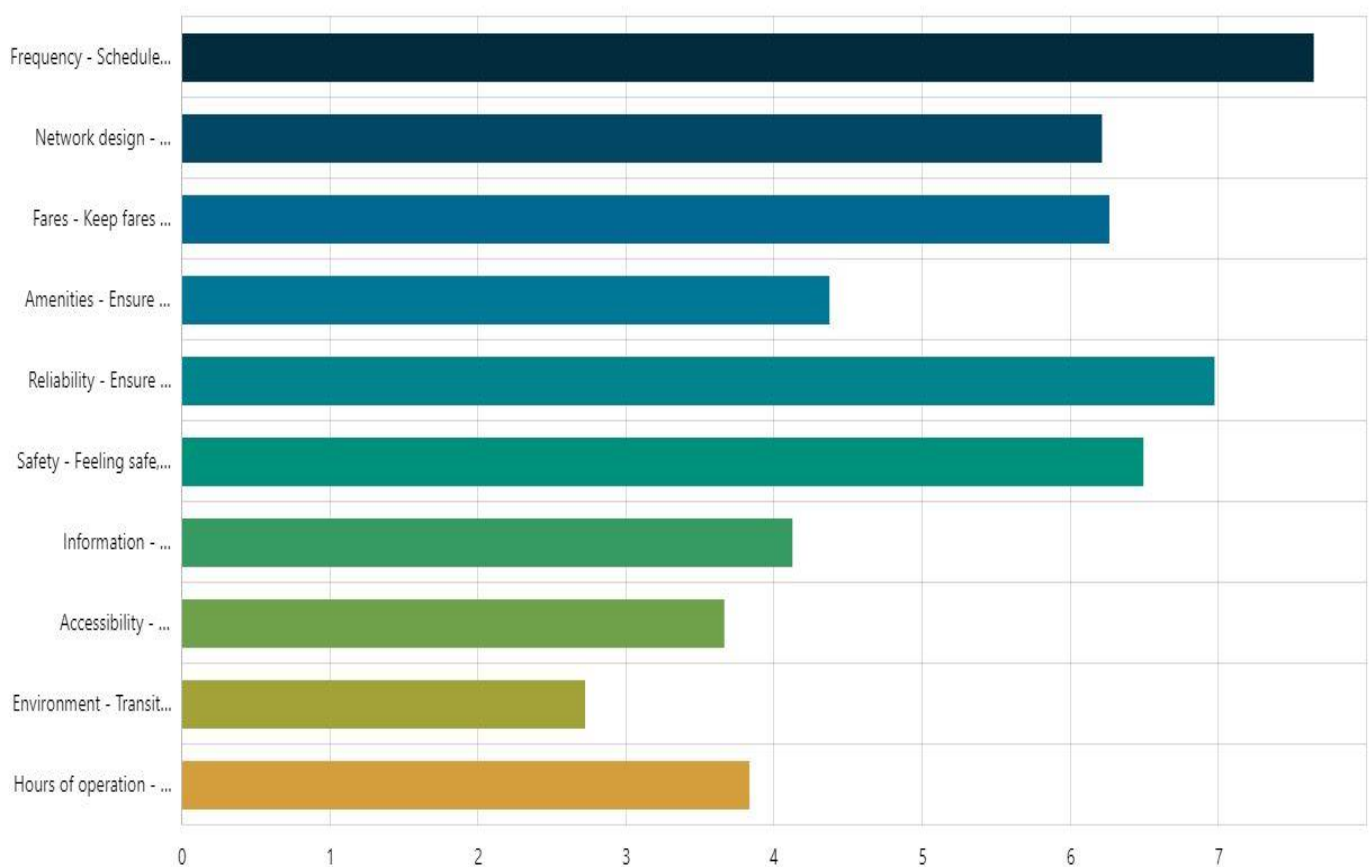
<p><i>Feeling safe on trains, platforms</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The C-Train system often does not feel safe, which is a big reason why I typically avoid taking it.</li> <li>– I started paying for parking because I don't feel safe on the train</li> <li>– The train/platform are no longer safe. I drive from shawnessy to Banfftrail twice a day.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Feeling safe using transit at night</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– I don't feel safe taking transit at night. And transit is often late or early compared to schedule</li> <li>– safety during evenings, especially Friday and Saturday nights.</li> <li>– Better lighting at stops</li> </ul>
<p><i>Other notable safety comments</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Covid under control in community, covid measures on transit</li> <li>– Safety and turnstiles at every station to avoid people that haven't paid to not board the trains.</li> </ul>
<p>If it took less time overall to get to their destination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The train is great but if you have to take a bus the time can get very long. I just drive instead.</li> <li>– Having more frequent bus routes, especially during busy times. 20 min drive vs 50 minutes on bus</li> <li>– Higher frequency and shorter routes to services (libraries, shopping centers, Ctrain, downtown)</li> <li>– Convenient route from my home to my place of work comparable to driving or taking no more than 40min</li> <li>– Generally, I can get places faster and cheaper by car (and often by bike) compared to transit</li> </ul>
<p>If they could depend on it to get them to their destination, less waiting, better coordination at connection points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– less transfers, less wait time between missed busses (30-45 minutes is unacceptable)</li> <li>– In one month the bus never made it on time, forcing me to be late for work.</li> <li>– Better timing, ie. Fewer 30 min waits between busses, transfers more seamless</li> <li>– For the bus to actually show up when it is supposed to. It's too unreliable to take regularly.</li> <li>– FREQUENCY. Waiting half an hour or more for a bus during cold temperatures is unacceptable.</li> <li>– Bus in my area only runs morning and late afternoon. It does not run all day.</li> <li>– Increased frequency and late night (1-4am) services</li> </ul>

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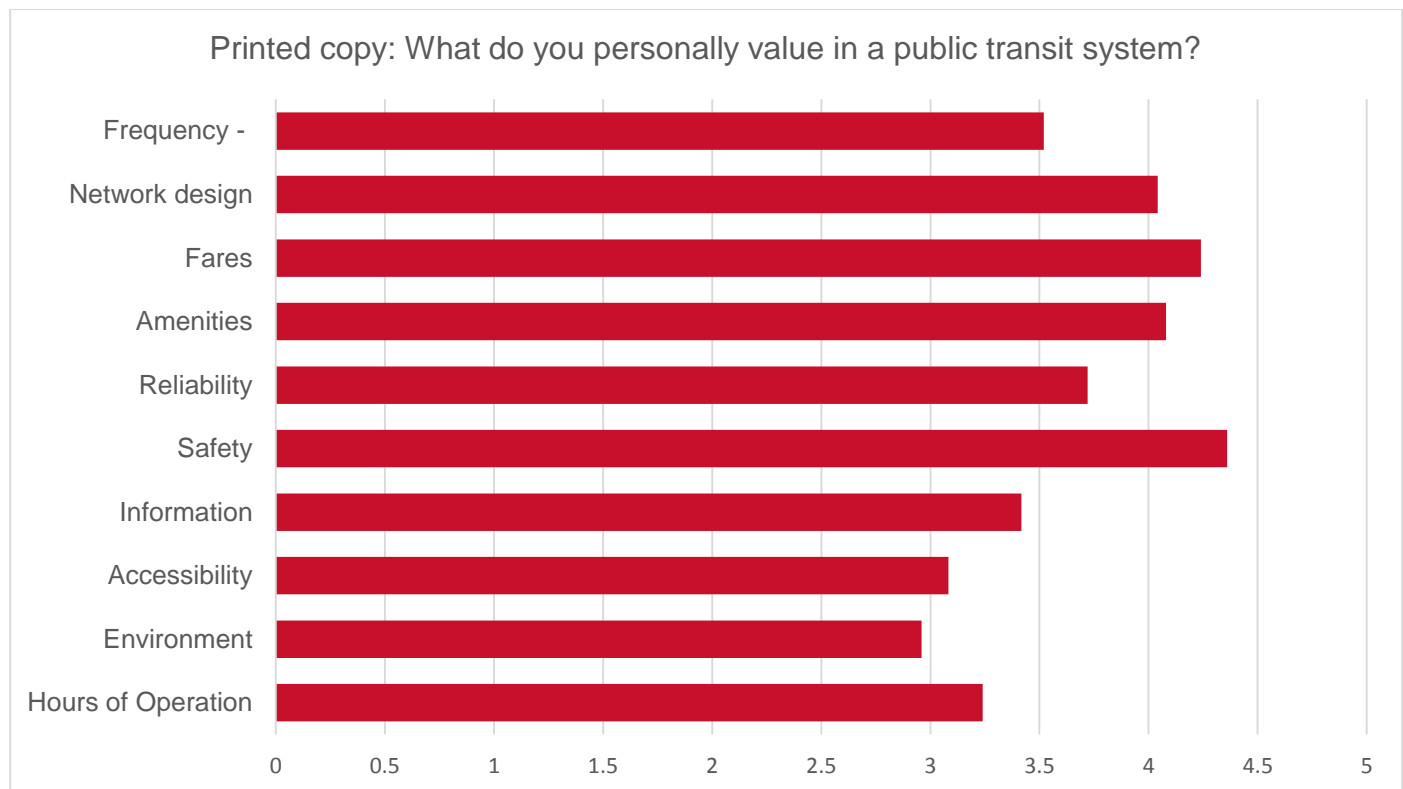
4. What do you personally value in a public transit system? Please rank the following values from 1 to 10.



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Due to a slight design difference, input that came from the paper version of the questions, such as the ones provided by Fair Entry, has been put in a separate chart:



### Is there anything else we should consider?

Theme	Sample Comments – What would it take?
If service was available all day, or if there was a later/earlier start to operations	<p>Although “Hours of Operation” was an item in the ranking question above, many participants used this an opportunity to share more about their reason for choosing this as a priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Far NE Calgary is underserved by reliable transit. A bus route that runs only 3 hrs is sub-standard.</li> <li>– More frequency specially the area I’m living bus service is only mornings until 9 then 3pm to 7pm</li> <li>– Please make trains run until 2am every day. To Avoid \$40 uber charges.</li> </ul>



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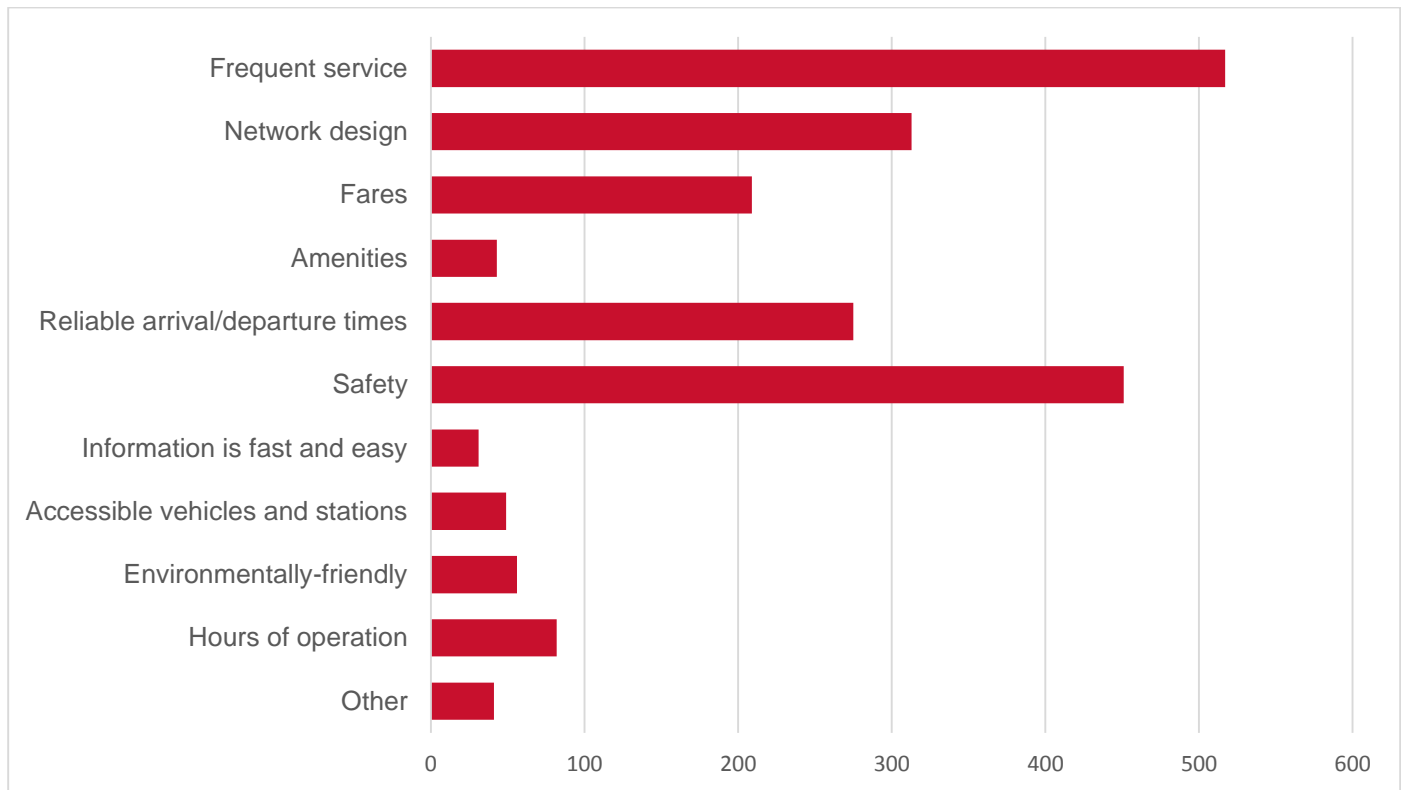
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– People still work on the weekends and we shouldn't have to suffer an even longer commute.</li> <li>– I think 24/7 train service would be great.</li> </ul>
If service met needs in specific areas of the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Servicing low income neighborhoods first not last</li> <li>– The deep southwest (evergreen, bridlewood, alpine park) needs a new or improved transit method</li> <li>– Don't take away the service from older areas of the City for new communities just to do so.</li> <li>– Improved frequency specially in areas served exclusively by bus in SE</li> <li>– There should be more focus on destinations that are not downtown. eg hospitals and moving E-W</li> <li>– Routes need better access in the newer area further out where LRT is harder to get to</li> </ul>
If the areas around the stops and shelters were better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Access to train stations cleared of snow/ice in winter. More shelters at bus loops for bad weather.</li> <li>– Bus stops should be looked after more. Often they are dirty and full of litter</li> <li>– Please start monitoring ice removal at stops so people don't have to take a flying leap off the bus</li> <li>– It would be nice to have a shelter for all bus stops, but I don't know how much that would cost</li> <li>– Stops with no benches either need more frequent busses or for a bench to be installed!</li> <li>– Sidewalk on places that has high foot traffic like Foothills Industrial for example</li> </ul>

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### 5. Which one should Calgary Transit prioritize in the next 5 years?



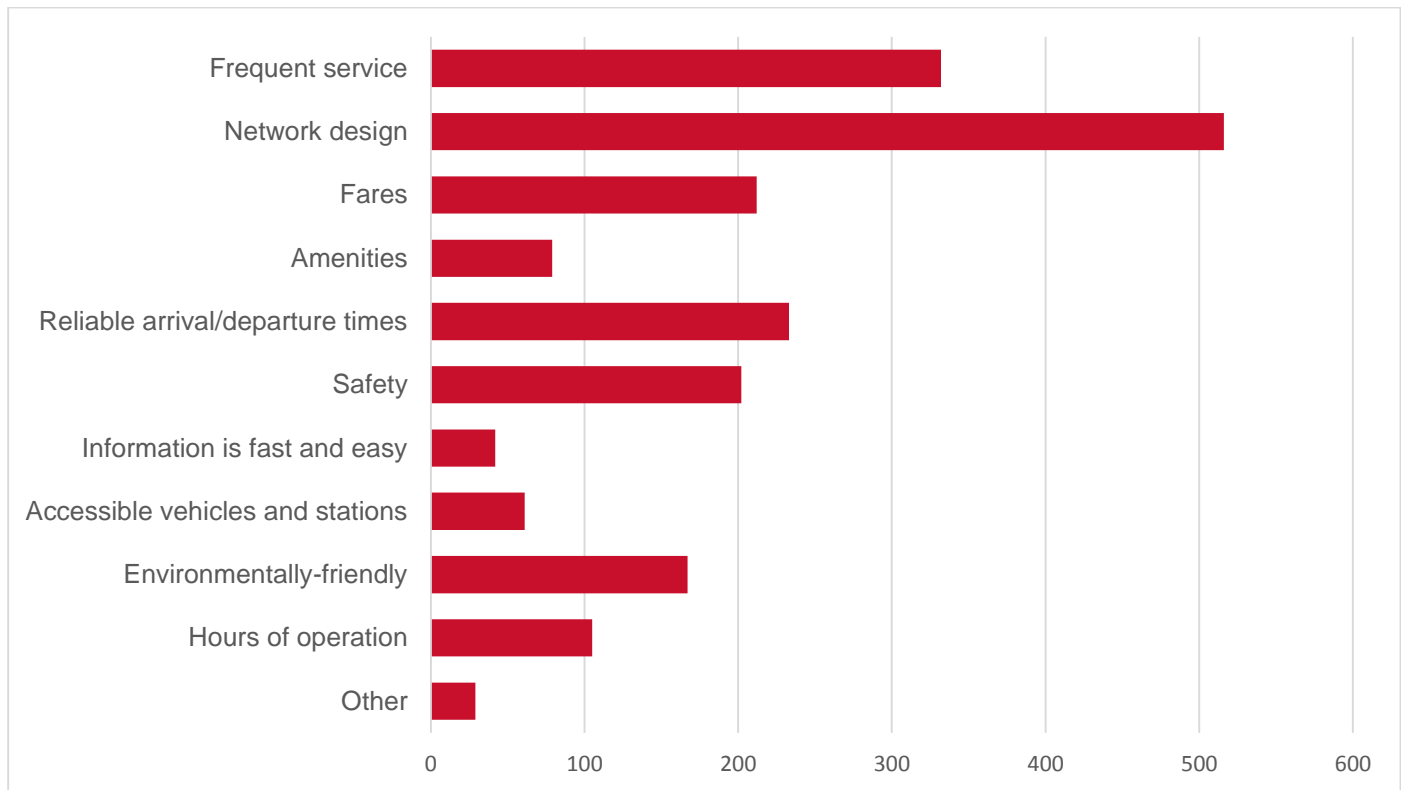
#### Other:

Theme	Sample Comments – What to prioritize?
Greenline, more train lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The green line and bigger trains on all lines</li> <li>– Connections to communities from ctrains</li> </ul>
Integration of transit with active travel modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Access to combined transport modes - bike accessibility on buses, trains, and secure locked bike parking at hubs</li> <li>– Integrating them with the neighbourhood and making it easier to get to a transit stop by cycling, walking or wheeling.</li> </ul>

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### 6. Which one should Calgary Transit prioritize in the next 10 years?



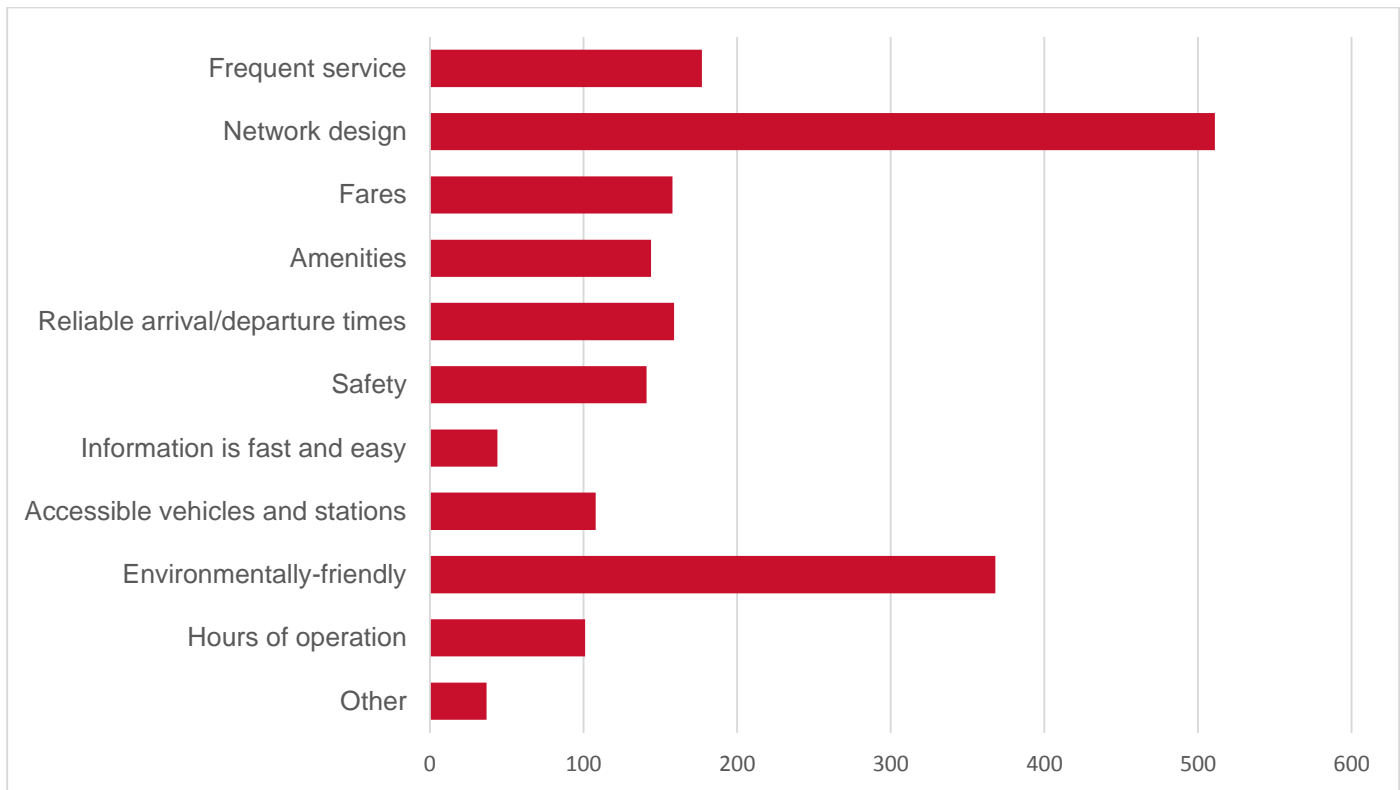
#### Other:

Few participants contributed additional priorities here, so no themes emerged but there a few mentions of preference for the Greenline to be underground or at grade, and more on-demand service. All comments are in Appendix A.

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### 7. Which one should Calgary Transit prioritize in the next 30 years?



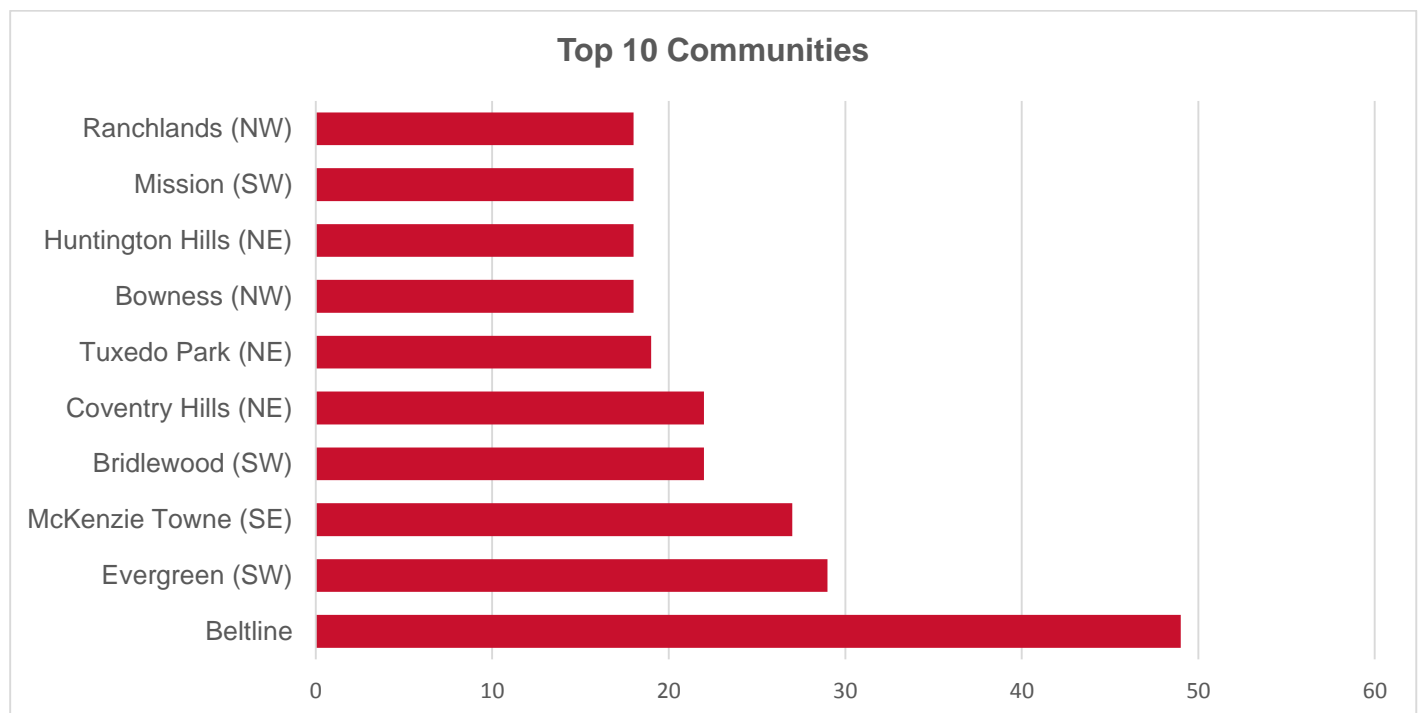
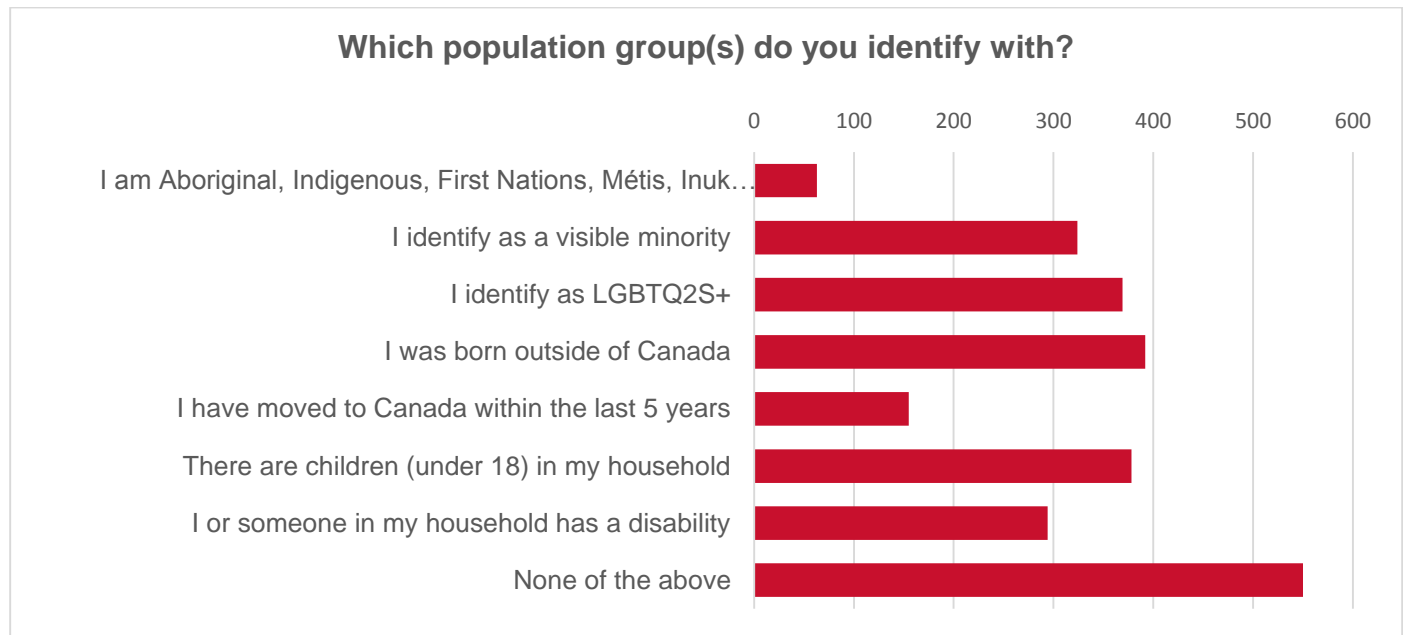
#### Other:

As with the question above, only a few participants contributed additional priorities. No major themes emerged but there were a few mentions of more train lines, incorporating future technologies, and reducing need or desirability of car ownership. All comments are in Appendix A.

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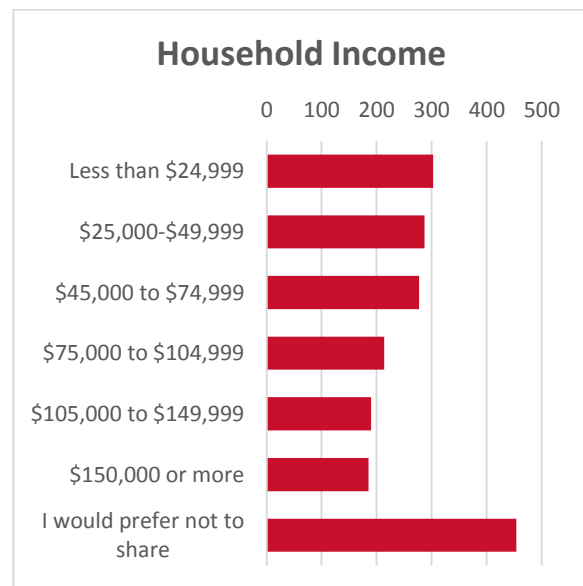
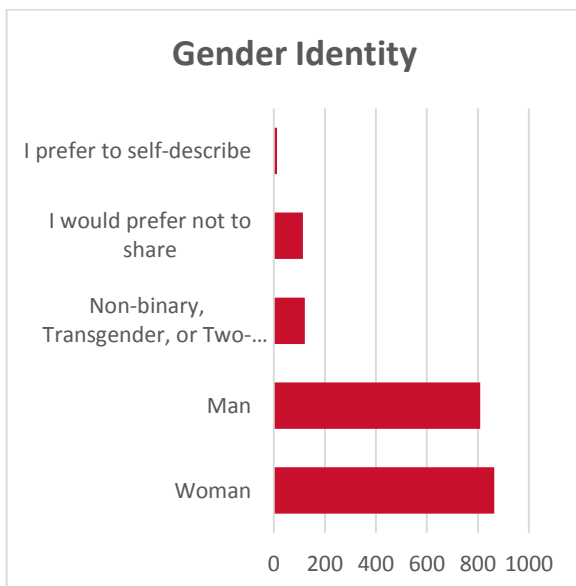
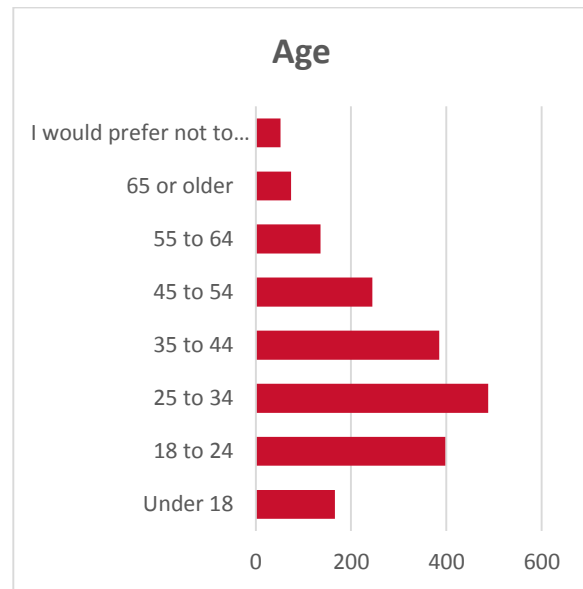
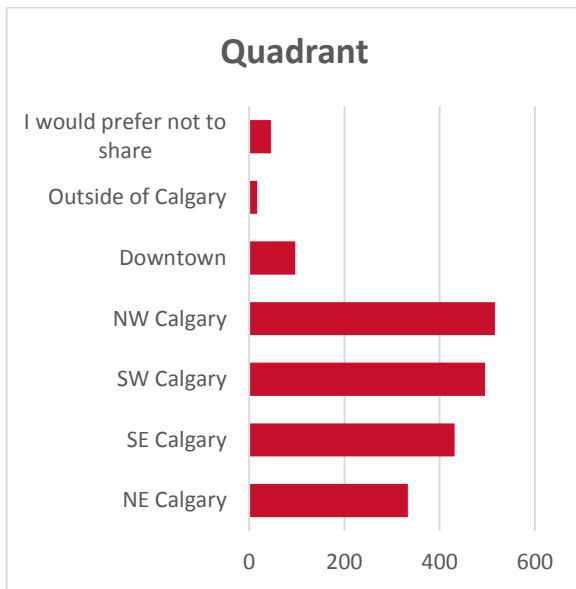
### Information about participants in Questions for Calgarians



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A complete list of the communities is in Appendix E on [engage.calgary.ca/routeahead](https://engage.calgary.ca/routeahead).



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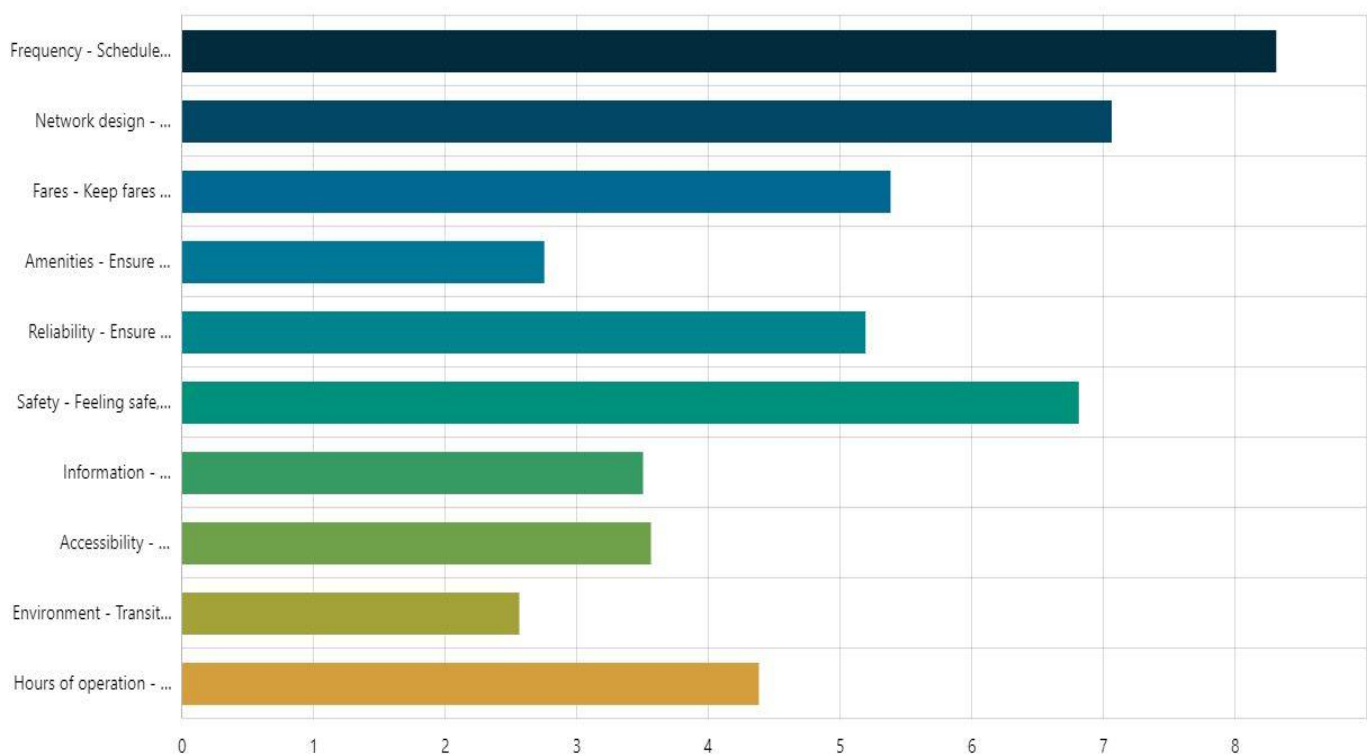
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### Questions for Organizations and Businesses

How would you categorize your organization or business? (E.g., community association, retail business, BIA/BRZ, advocacy group, warehouse, etc.)

- Community association (2)
- New Media and Social Justice group
- University. (Mount Royal University)
- Business
- Non Profit
- Public Transport
- School
- Bicycle education service
- Community
- West Hills restaurants
- Consulting Business
- Community group
- development

1. What elements of transit service are important to your organization/business? Please rank the following values from 1 to 10.





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### **2. What could Calgary Transit prioritize in the future to better serve the needs of your organization/customers?**

- Safety, especially at night, and cleanliness
- Route cuts or frequency reductions that haven't been restored
- More school-related busses during business times
- More evening, weekend and holiday service
- Focus on local routes and nodes

### **3. Can you share what Calgary Transit is currently doing well in providing transit service to your organization/clients/demographic group?**

- New safety measures (e.g., security guards at some stations)
- Good routes and connecting communities to BRT and LRT
- Wheelchair access has improved
- Smartphone app

### **4. What are some barriers you/your customers/your agency face(s) with Calgary Transit?**

- Not sure how to communicate concern, praise to CT and difficulty finding information
- Not feeling safe, especially at night
- Long waits for buses and trains
- Routes that don't go where they need them, or when

### **5. What could we do in the future to reduce those barriers?**

- Make waiting more comfortable e.g., benches, warm shelters, lighting, evening security
- Regular opportunities to provide feedback especially for students
- Routes and on-demand that runs later at night, and more local routes
- Shorter wait times when asking for information

All verbatim comments from organizations and businesses are in Appendix B.





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### The Hub: sticky note activity

The main Engage Portal page for the project encouraged people to leave “sticky notes” for the project team about what Calgary Transit is currently doing well and what to improve. As in other parts of the engagement, the most common theme was social disorder. All comments have been provided unedited to the project team for their review.

#### What is Calgary Transit currently doing well that we should continue?

Overall, more than half of the 251 notes in this section expressed concerns, frustrations, and requests for changes rather than saying positive things people currently experienced.



Themes	Sample comments
Safety  <i>Most common theme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Please come up with a humane solution to security issues on train platforms. All are unsafe and unsanitary to the average rider</li> <li>– Kids used to take transit before they could drive. Now to do so puts them in the path if violent addicts, drug use and filth. Not safe or ok</li> </ul>
Apps  <i>Ease of payment and ETAs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Transit App &amp; MyFare are great. More payment options (tap for debit/credit on buses) would add convenience for occasional riders.</li> <li>– I like how when we buy bus tickets on “my fare” it doesn’t immediately activate, if we buy a year pass I don’t want to activate every time</li> <li>– I liked the app that told you exactly when the bus arrived and what stops you have left before arriving at destination.</li> </ul>
Specific routes  <i>Routes and stops</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Glad for the route 22, just wish it would stop off at Signal Hill, where the Superstore is, too.</li> <li>– Love having a tracking app, love having options with different buses in my area going to different train stations (love the 153 route)</li> <li>– I love the bus shelters and live schedules at MAX Stops. We should upgrade more bus routes to have this kind of infrastructure!</li> <li>– The current C-Trains are on a decent schedule and have decent accessibility. (However should be extended outwards after somerset)</li> </ul>
Cost of trip  <i>Promotions and special fares</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– LOVE August &amp; Sept. 1/2 off monthly price. Do it again but for more months throughout the year. Also, let riders decide which months work.</li> <li>– Discounted buspasses was AWESOME. Maybe consider extending to May thru Sept. Or at least half price on weekends. Entice use.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buses that are normally on time. Your plan a trip feature is awesome. Love the new buses. Seniors Fair Pay Program for bus passes is great.</li> </ul>	
<b>Kudos</b>  <i>Praise of a specific activity or service</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing for bikes on trains at all hours. Multi-modal transport during rush-hour is a game changer and expands the range of users. Thanks!</li> <li>The messages on buses bring small joys are sometimes informative (like when bus is not in service for specific day)</li> <li>Large way finding signs at bus loops and hubs are helpful when transferring, Please keep installing these.</li> </ul>	<p>17 September, 2022 <b>Mark S</b> says:</p> <p><i>"Friendly drivers who communicate with passengers. Make information readily available and accurate when there are problems."</i></p>

### What could Calgary Transit do to improve the customer experience?

A total of 271 sticky notes were added for this section.

Themes	Sample comments – What can we improve?	
<b>Frequency</b>  <i>Apart from safety concerns, hopes for more frequent busses and trains was the most common theme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize frequency! Our core bus network, like the MAX routes, should have headways between 5 and 10 minutes all day.</li> <li>Trains more often. Waiting 20 mins and then another 20 to switch. 40 mins waiting. Unacceptable for a big city. Good way to get mugged</li> <li>24/7 service. I know off-peak hours can't justify the same frequency, but some people work odd shifts and rely on transit for transport.</li> <li>Higher frequency on bus routes. Every 20-30 minutes is far too long. People who can't drive need to get places too.</li> <li>Train feeder buses have poor frequency. My bus used to run every 15 minutes but now it only runs every 30. Huge hassle if I miss the bus.</li> </ul>	<p>23 August, 2022 <b>IH</b> says:</p> <p><i>"Please provide better frequency to MAX routes, and other popular bus routes"</i></p> <p>23 September, 2022 <b>J-train</b> says:</p> <p><i>"Frequency increase during rush hours. Security to deal with the daily harassments by non-fare paying individuals. Seat comfort."</i></p>



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<p>Specific routes</p> <p><i>Hopes for route changes and extensions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Help get from downtown evening 2 Deep South, only Cab/drive/DUI late at night. We need night buss from DT heading to communities.</li> <li>– Have better service to outlying communities and cross town. It shouldn't take 1 1/2 hrs to get from Ogden to bowness</li> <li>– Increase frequency 158 during peak hours - also I've been turned away several times from the 20 and 304 trying to get to and from MRU</li> <li>– Extend the last trip for route 15 or 52 to 1am please. You could help a lot those who doesnt have a car especially this coming winter.</li> <li>– Max Purple BRT should have greater signal priority along the transitway at major intersections (19, 26 and 28 Street SE) similar to LRT.</li> </ul>
<p>Accessibility</p> <p><i>Concerns that the need for accessibility wasn't a priority and that it should be addressed:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There is a bus stop I noticed on Madigan Drive that is completely inaccessible by wheelchair. This should be fixed.</li> <li>– More frequency on route especially on weekend and more large busses the shuttles can barley fit 1 stroller</li> <li>– More specific instructions on stop closures,especially downtown, from an autistic person. Pictures</li> </ul> <div> <p>19 September, 2022</p> <p><b>ConcernedTransitUser</b> says:</p> <p><i>"You cancelled many routes entirely forcing many including seniors into isolation. Restore routes taken away entirely by you. "</i></p> </div>
<p>Physical comfort</p> <p><i>Hopes that the comfort of passengers will be considered</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Seats are a little uncomfortable on the c trains- very easy to keep clean tho but maybe a mix between cleanliness and comfortable is good</li> <li>– Buy shuttles that ride better. The shuttles currently will throw your back out and are like riding in a wagon down a dirt road</li> </ul> <div> <p>18 September, 2022</p> <p><b>Concerned citizen</b> says:</p> <p><i>"More frequent buses and scrap the arbocs. They hurt my back and made me get car sick. "</i></p> </div>