

## **The Calgary Transit Customer Advisory Group Statement on RouteAhead**

The Calgary Transit Customer Advisory Group (CTCAG) is pleased with the progress of Calgary Transit as the economy and ridership recover from the recent recession. However, the CTCAG remains concerned about four key customer service priorities also identified by Calgary Transit within RouteAhead, and integration with environmental goals. Service priorities include Real Time accuracy, connectivity of passengers to information, safety and security, the integrity of the Low-Income Transit Pass, and lastly, of fleet maintenance and renewal.

With regard to Real Time and information connectivity, the CTCAG is pleased to see that Calgary Transit has recognized the need to improve Real Time accuracy across the C-Train and bus networks. This includes ensuring that the Real Time information on C-Train platforms and on all mobile applications, (e.g. Google Maps, Transit App, CT app etc) are both accurate and consistent, allowing for minimization of wait times. We wish to emphasize the importance of successfully upgrading Real Time service as it directly relates to the promises of being informative and reliable in the Calgary Transit Customer Commitment. In addition to currently available Real Time information, we would also like to see improved internet and cellular connectivity across the transit network. We note other transit organisations have collaborated with the private sector (e.g. Translink and Rogers for Skytrain cell-service) to install infrastructure upgrades to allow for improved connectivity at little to no cost. Underground connectivity will be particularly important as Calgary moves ahead with Green Line tunnelling.

The CTCAG also pleased to see security maintained to a high standard with additional funding for peace officers in the 2019 budget, the implementation of teletext for security concerns, and improvements to CCTV and station lighting during station renovation. We expect these implementation measures to improve the dispatch of Peace Officers to calls, while also improving the ability of passengers to safely report security concerns on transit. Despite these improvements, there continues to be passenger safety concerns on the LRT during evening and late-night trips, particularly amongst women. Though violent crime remains low on the Calgary Transit system, disorderly conduct remains high and discourages system use. To improve perception of safety, the CTCAG would like to see investment in novel interventions such as roving volunteer teams, or station attendants similar to what exists on other Canadian transit systems such as those in Toronto and Vancouver. The CTCAG would like these interventions to focus on areas identified as high-crime by Public Safety Enforcement, including Westbrook, Victoria Park, Marlborough, and 7thAve. It is critical the LRT be safe to improve evening and late-night ridership on the LRT of all populations, and especially for vulnerable groups. It is a social responsibility of Calgary Transit that the system is perceived as safe by all populations at all times of day.

Aligned with the social responsibilities of Calgary Transit, is commitment to the Low-Income Transit Pass (LITP). The CTCAG applauds council approval of the LITP in 2017. Our members acknowledge that the sliding scale has helped many low-income individuals access jobs, services, medical appointments, family, and friends, allowing them to be a part of the Calgary community. For some, LITP use may be temporary, however for others, chronic situations require ongoing use of the pass program. The CTCAG strongly requests continuous municipal or provincial funding external to Calgary Transit be provided for continuation of the

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LITP. Continuous funding eliminates uncertainty created by previous one-time funding, and allows Calgary Transit to operate the program without impacting service hours.

Importantly, the CTCAG wants Calgary Transit to ensure its fleet is in a state of good repair (for reasons of reliability, fuel efficiency, and energy efficiency). We note RouteAhead references a need to replace old vehicles and we are very concerned that 43 LRVs are approaching retirement age, and 23% of 12 metre buses are past retirement age. Though, we are hopeful the announcement by the former provincial government for LRV funding is honoured, as it will allow for the full phasing out of the oldest LRVs we remain concerned about the ability of Calgary Transit to maintain vehicles and infrastructure impacting the customer experience. We believe it is crucial a stable replacement budget be established, and a plan adhered to for orderly vehicle replacement and infrastructure renewal (versus reliance on one-time funding).

Lastly, as fiscal responsibility and climate change become top priorities for governments around the world, the CTCAG would like City Council to recognize the role of Calgary Transit as both an economically and environmentally responsible investment opportunity. In an age when the discussion about environmental or economic gain is often divisive, mass-transportation has the ability to support both efforts with the same dollars. Calgary Transit helps the City and its taxpayers maximize trips per vehicle on existing roadway infrastructure, while minimizing pressure to expand or reinvest in single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) infrastructure. At the same time, an efficient, highly used mass transit provider is a key means to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by replacing SOV trips with low-emissions, multi-rider transit trips. To ensure the sustainability of Calgary for younger generations - both economically and environmentally, mass transit must continue to be an area of focus for the City of Calgary's investment dollars. The Calgary Transit Customer Advisory Committee sees this unique opportunity to save money and protect the environment as proof these focus areas need not be in opposition to one another. With limited roadway space, we look to Council to mandate a sustainable division.

Despite customer concern within these domains, the CTCAG remains optimistic an improving economy will bring additional riders to the system and will provide ticket revenue necessary to enhance baseline service. However, council is responsible for providing Calgary Transit with appropriate resources and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Yeung', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Matthew Yeung,**

**Chair, and on behalf of the Calgary Transit Customer Advisory Group**

**June 10, 2019**