

## Public Transit Safety Strategy

### PURPOSE

To have a vibrant city, Calgary needs a safe, efficient, and welcoming transit system that people want to use. We've heard Council and Calgarians' concerns and are addressing the number of safety incidents on public transit through the proposed Public Transit Safety Strategy.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

On 2023 June 6, Council directed Administration (IP2023-0368) to develop a comprehensive multi-disciplinary strategy that addresses incidents and perceptions of safety on and around transit (Attachment 1).

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Community Development Committee recommend that Council:

1. Approve the Public Transit Safety Strategy as outlined in Attachment 2.
2. Direct Administration to review the Transit Bylaw 4M81 to consider amendments to improve staff safety and report back in Q3 of 2024.

### CITY MANAGER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

This Public Transit Safety Strategy is essential in our commitment to keeping Calgarians safe while riding our transit system. GM Black and GM Morgan are confident the Strategy will bring together experts across disciplines to collaboratively address safety concerns.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **Addressing social disorder on public transit is a high priority for The City of Calgary.**  
The Public Transit Safety Strategy has specific actions to address harm, social disorder, and crime on and around transit. Calgarians will see an increase in visibility of response teams and transit ambassadors, providing a sense of confidence and security. Riders can expect welcoming environments through enhanced cleaning, improved infrastructure design and new community programming. Through modernizing communication and technology systems all Calgarians will benefit from improved response time targets that place a uniformed officer at the call for service
- **People come first. The City of Calgary is taking a compassion-first approach to addressing social disorder on public transit.**  
The proposed Public Transit Safety Strategy prioritizes the well-being, safety and security of riders and employees. Through a people-first approach, Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities on and around the transit system will be connected to supportive resources. The strategy is committed to ensuring transit is used for its intended purpose of getting Calgarians where they need to be.
- **At its core, the Strategy recommends an enhanced staff model and associated infrastructure.**  
The multi-disciplinary model uses an integrated response to situations that arise on transit. Hubs located in three prominent, high-risk locations along the LRT line

## Public Transit Safety Strategy

(Westbrook, Downtown and Whitehorn) will deploy an integrated team of uniformed officers. Calgary Police Officers, Transit Peace Officers, Security Guards and Community Outreach Teams will work together to respond to situations or incidents within these areas and on transit.

The City of Calgary is the first municipality in Canada to implement several of the recommendations in the Canadian Urban Transit Association's (CUTA) *2023 Prioritizing Safety on Public Transit*, specifically adopting the multidisciplinary model.

- **The City of Calgary has seen early success in measures taken to improve safety.** In July 2022, Administration approved \$5.9M in emergency funding to improve safety on Calgary's transit system. This funding went toward additional peace officers, security guards and technology improvements. In June 2023, Council approved \$8.7M in one-time operating funding for peace officers and community outreach workers, enhanced cleaning, infrastructure improvements and partner patrols. The increased resourcing has improved perceptions of safety on and around the transit system.
- **Public safety reaches beyond transit.** The City is collaborating with numerous partners, social agencies, boards, committees and commissions to explore new approaches to prevention and intervention within the community – to connect people experiencing vulnerabilities with the resources they need. Some of our partners include Calgary Police Service, Calgary Alpha House Society, Calgary Drop-in Centre and the Calgary Homeless Foundation.

## DISCUSSION

The Public Transit Safety Strategy outlines five focus areas to help address crime and social disorder on and around public transit:

- **Focus Area 1: Integrated Response** connects and coordinates multi-disciplinary services and systems. The district model places Transit Peace Officers equitably across the city and increases the uniformed presence on transit. Using an integrated response Calgary Police Service will target criminal activity, Transit Peace Offices will proactively patrol to prevent crime and disorder, and Security will monitor and report criminal activity. Community Outreach Teams will connect vulnerable persons with supports and conduct welfare checks.
- **Focus Area 2: Connecting to Community Resources** establishes a community partnership model to connect people experiencing vulnerabilities with the resources they need and explores new approaches to prevention and intervention. It reinforces transit's primary focus of getting people where they need to be and provides alternatives to using transit as shelter.
- **Focus Area 3: Staff Well-being** includes comprehensive training for frontline staff to address safety and to safeguard their mental health and physical well-being. An update to the Transit Bylaw will consider provisions that specifically address the protection of frontline staff which in turn supports transit riders.
- **Focus Area 4: Systems Modernization** will provide up-to-date technology and communication systems that enable a district model and improve information sharing. Technology enhancements will improve Light Rail Transit (LRT) platform monitoring, proactive resource dispatching, and response times to transit incidents.

## Public Transit Safety Strategy

---

- **Focus Area 5: Station Infrastructure** focuses on clean stations that are designed to discourage negative behaviours, and investments in community programming to create a positive experience for riders. Having well-maintained infrastructure creates transit stations that are functional with opportunities for community activation.

Administration conducted a thorough safety review of Calgary's public transit system and considered CUTA recommendations on urban transportation investment and advocacy. CUTA's transit safety recommendations were developed through a national task force with representation of Canada's largest transit agencies including Calgary Transit. The Strategy aligns with the recommendations within the CUTA report and will work closely with peers and partners to establish shared responsibility and accountability.

### EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required        |

Numerous social-serving agencies, boards, committees, and commissions were consulted to ensure a multi-lens and cross-sector perspective. Previous engagement conducted through the *Assessing a Closed System Study* and *RouteAhead, Calgary Transit's 30-Year Strategic Plan*, provided insights into public perception and prioritization of safety on and around transit. Key partners include Calgary Alpha House Society, Calgary Drop-In Centre, Calgary Homeless Foundation, and the 15 Business Improvement Associations.

### IMPLICATIONS

#### Social

Like many other large North American cities, Calgary is facing increasing mental health and addiction struggles, homelessness, social disorder, affordable housing shortages and crime. Addressing these broad social and societal concerns is complex, especially on our transit system where people may seek to escape these vulnerabilities, like sheltering from extreme weather. This strategy is one of the ways The City will help meet these challenges with compassion for those who need help, and enforcement when required. The Strategy prioritizes resources through a new integrated model that connects vulnerable people to the help they need, while ensuring the City's transit system is a safe means of transportation for Calgarians.

#### Environmental

Calgary Transit is an efficient and climate-friendly option to move Calgarians and our visitors to every quadrant of our city every day. We want people to choose Calgary Transit as a main mode of transportation, which will help The City meet the goals in our Pathways to 2050 Climate Strategy. To do that, people need to feel safe on our transit system. The Public Transit Safety Strategy proposes short-term actions that will provide immediate results and provides a long-term road map for decreasing the number of incidents on the system so people will feel, and be safe, while using our system.

## **Public Transit Safety Strategy**

---

### **Economic**

Calgary is one of the most liveable cities in the world because of the thriving community we have created and continue to create. A safe and reliable transit system is critical to ensuring Calgary continues to thrive, including activating downtown as part of The City's Downtown Strategy and #ExploreDowntownYYC, which encourages people to explore downtown, experience our city and discover the many ways they can build a meaningful life here. The proposed Public Transit Safety Strategy addresses the safety concerns we have been hearing so our transit system can help people get started on this journey.

### **Other: New operating funding request**

\$15 Million

An operational budget request for \$15 Million to implement the Public Transit Safety Strategy will come forward as part of the 2023 November budget adjustment process.

### **RISK**

Addressing crime and social disorder on public transit cannot be solved by The City alone. It is a shared responsibility between government partners, law enforcement, social sector agencies and riders. The proposed Public Transit Safety Strategy depends on everyone coming together to address the root causes of social disorder, which include mental health and addiction, homelessness, social disorder, affordable housing shortages and crime, to name a few.

The City has strong partnerships and collaborative relationships with numerous social-serving agencies, boards, committees, and commissions. While we continue to work with our partners to address the root causes of social disorder, the Public Transit Safety Strategy proposes specific actions The City can take to improve safety in and around transit in the short-term and a long-term road map the decrease the number of incidents on transit. These allows The City to quickly adapt and respond to changing societal trends, but it does not solve the social disorder plaguing our city.

Improving transit safety depends on the willingness to invest in this Strategy. The request for new operational funding will open opportunities to invest in the getting our Transit Peace Officers the specialized skills and training they need to not just respond to the incidents that occur, but to recognize certain social situations and address them appropriately, with competence and confidence. Without Council's support and approval of this funding request, the investment and timelines needed to hire and train the highly skilled Officers we need to make the integrated model successful will be impacted. Currently, it takes approximately eight months to recruit, train and deploy officers. With the requested investment, we can manage these long hiring timelines by piloting the fast-track training program outlined in the Strategy.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Previous Council Direction, Background
2. Public Transit Safety Strategy
3. Public Transit Safety Strategy Roadmap
4. Presentation

## **Public Transit Safety Strategy**

---

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Katie Black	Community Services	Approve
Doug Morgan	Operational Services	Approve
Sharon Fleming	Calgary Transit	Approve
Iain Bushell	Emergency Management & Community Safety	Approve
Chad Tawfik	Calgary Police Service	Consult
Mike Tillotson	Corporate Security	Consult
Jill Floen	City Solicitor	Consult
Carla Male	Corporate Planning and Financial Services	Consult

Author: Zoë Flowers-Reitsma, Emergency Management & Community Safety