

Bicycles on CTrains Survey Feedback

Background

On March 14, 2022, Calgary Transit launched its pilot to always allow bicycles on CTrains until August 31, 2022. With workers and students returning to offices and classrooms, the pilot was extended to March 31, 2023, to enable Calgary Transit to gather more feedback on the pilot project. The pilot was once again extended to December 2023 to enable Calgary Transit to gather further feedback from more customers, including cyclists.

In conjunction with the pilot, an online survey was provided for CTrain riders. They were asked to provide feedback on the pilot to inform whether the current restrictions for bikes on CTrains should stay, require changes, or be discontinued. This report summarizes the main concerns from the survey feedback and Calgary Transit responses to the feedback.

Survey respondent input

From the inception of the pilot until August 2023, a total of 1,956 people had looked at the survey, and 39% (759) of them completed and provided feedback on the Bikes on CTrains Pilot. Out of the 759 respondents, 43% identified as cyclists, 47% identified as non-cyclists, while 10% identified as “other”. Apart from the online survey, Calgary Transit also received feedback via the 311 system, totaling 27 individual customer service requests. The main concerns received from the survey respondents are:

- **Three-car trains:** One of the main concerns is the capacity of the three-cars trains to accommodate bikes during the peak hours. Riders requested the return of four-cars trains and increase train frequencies to alleviate the concerns of overcrowding. Currently, Calgary Transit is unable to operate all trains as four-car trains.
 - **How we are mitigating this:**
 - The upcoming expansion of Haysboro Transit Facility (a CTrain storage facility) to meet new requirements will increase Calgary Transit’s ability to provide four-car trains.
 - Calgary Transit is running four-car trains whenever possible. They are available for some trips on the Red Line.
 - Since September 2023 the Red Line and Blue Line are operating three-car trains more frequently, which provides similar capacity to less frequent four-car trains.
 - Calgary Transit is working hard to ensure more four-car trains can be put into operation, including the purchase of 16 additional CTrain cars.
- **Allocation and configuration of space onboard CTrain cars specifically for bikes:** Most of the comments were split between space and storage of bikes once onboard. There were concerns there is lack of space to maneuver the bike around people when getting on and off the train.
 - **How we are mitigating this:** There are three main types of CTrain cars in use in Calgary. Each type has different rules and designated areas for customers with bicycles to ride the train. Additional clarification can be provided for customers through a variety of communications media.

- **Boarding and disembarking:** Respondents raised concerns about boarding and disembarking the train when the cars are at capacity and that riders with bikes have a problem getting to the train door to disembark or getting onto the trains. Customers movements are also impeded by cyclists blocking the doors and the aisle.
 - **How we are mitigating this:** This is a concern which will not be easily addressed until Calgary Transit has more four-car trains on the system, or frequency is increased. An updated communication plan is recommended to educate customers of the updated rules and for customers with bicycles to board cars that can comfortably accommodate the rider and the bicycle.
- **Bike types and capacity:** There are concerns that more than two bikes are being brought on the train cars and that some of the bikes have trailers attached to them.
 - **How we are mitigating this:** The City will update the Transit Bylaw (4M81) to include the definitions of the type of bicycle and e-bike that are permitted onto Calgary Transit trains and emphasize that up to two bikes are permitted in each designated bike area on each CTrain car. Calgary Transit customers are allowed to bring a variety of mobility devices onto the CTrains at all times, including strollers and assistive devices, as this forms an important part of Calgarian's mobility choices.
- **Door bar obstruction:** One of the main concerns of cyclists getting on/off the trains with their bikes is the middle vertical bar at the doors of the original CTrain cars. The bar impedes the ease of cyclists bringing their bikes on/off the trains and many of the riders requested the removal of the middle bar.
 - **How we are mitigating this:** The bar at the doors of the original CTrains cannot be removed as this provides support for the switches for the opening of the train doors. When these original CTrains are replaced by newer trains this will address this concern.
- **Customers with bicycles using all doors for boarding:** This concern is the result of not all the train cars having the bike decal installed on the doors of the trains, especially with the newest trains. This resulted in riders using all the doors to board these trains.
 - **How we are mitigating this:** All CTrain cars now have bike decals installed to inform customers with bicycles which doors can be used for boarding on each train.
- **Desire for enforcement:** Desire for additional enforcement was a concern raised by some riders as to which door cyclists are supposed to bring their bikes onto the train and which areas they can stand inside the train with bicycles.
 - **How we are mitigating this:** Calgary Transit is aware that some riders are not abiding to the rules and regulations pertaining to bringing bikes onto the trains. Public Safety and Enforcement resources are currently focused on priority issues throughout the transit system. However, as outlined in Transit Safety Strategy (calgary.ca/TransitSafety), future improvements could enable quicker response to customer concerns.
- **Securing bikes:** Customers with bicycles must remain with their bikes when they are inside the trains. There are no locking mechanisms or hangers to secure bikes.

- **How we are mitigating this:** Securement in racks, hooks, or straps were the popular suggestions; however, at this time Calgary Transit will continue to require customers with bicycles to stay with their bicycle and hold on to it.

The main benefits received from the survey respondents are:

- **Supports first/last kilometre travel to connect to/from transit:** Customers are able to use transit for the longer part of their journey and use a bicycle to connect to/from transit at each end of their trip.
 - Aligns with work Calgary Transit has done to overcome the first/last kilometre barrier (the part of a trip that is getting to/from the transit station) such as adopting On Demand transit and the shared e-bike and e-scooter pilot project at select CTrain stations.
- **Supports customers in using transit more frequently and travelling farther:** Customers shared that they are using transit more frequently as they have easy access to the system using their bike. Some customers are able to travel to destinations farther away by using the CTrain and their bike.
 - Aligns with City of Calgary goals to provide Calgarians with additional mobility options and encourage the use of public transit.
- **Capacity on the system, even during peak periods:** Some customers are finding there is room on the CTrain cars that are at the end of the lines, or are travelling in the opposite direction of peak commuters (i.e., a CTrain that is travelling away from downtown during the morning peak period).
 - Not all customers are travelling to/through downtown with bicycles as many customers make trips between suburban CTrain stations.
- **A great option when experiencing mechanical difficulties or extreme weather:** Customers reported it is great to have this option when a bicycle breaks down/gets a flat tire, or during extreme weather conditions.
 - A survey respondent reported using the CTrain for part of their trip during summer heatwaves so they could avoid the uphill part of their journey.