

Operational Services Briefing to

Infrastructure and Planning Committee

2024 May 15

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RouteAhead 2023 Annual Status Report

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

The purpose of this briefing is to provide an annual status report as to the implementation of the RouteAhead 30-year Strategic Plan for Calgary Transit. The Plan underwent a 10-year update, receiving Council approval in July 2023. It outlines 159 strategies to be advanced, and guides the operating and capital investments alongside work plan priorities of the Public Transit service line across multiple business units. A key priority defined within RouteAhead is a focus on improving public transit in key corridors so that they operate at least every 10 minutes for 15 hours a day, seven days a week. Doing so will make using transit faster, easier, and more convenient, and contribute to transit being a preferred mode of travel for more Calgarians.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

On 2023 July 4, Council directed Administration to return to Infrastructure and Planning Committee annually with a RouteAhead Annual Status Report, starting for the year 2023, including a report on the status of operating investments and short-term capital projects. The report for the 2023 year should be delivered by Q2 2024. Council further directed Administration that each annual report include an overview of all non-seasonal changes to bus routes that occurred in the previous year, including:

- a. For each bus route change, the total number of residents living within 400 metres of bus stops on the subject bus route(s), before and after the route change(s);
- b. A map showing the geographic areas of the city where the bus route change(s) occurred;
- c. A summary of expected and/or actual ridership changes associated with bus route changes; and,
- d. A summary of how the transit network design principles contained in RouteAhead Section 4.1 informed the bus route changes.

Report Executive Summary

This report provides an annual update on the status of Calgary's public transit service and the implementation of RouteAhead, The City's 30-year strategic plan for transit. It provides updates on operating investments, short-term capital projects, non-seasonal route changes, and other initiatives essential to advancing the state of public transit in Calgary. It also includes a high-level overview of all 159 strategies in RouteAhead and their current status, along with highlighting notable case studies which demonstrate how these strategies were progressed.

2023 marked a significant transition for public transit in Calgary. Strong ridership recovery throughout the year was supported by a focus on reinvesting in service levels. Ridership increased to 90 million annual trips (85 per cent of 2019 levels), while 2.6 million service hours were provided (90 per cent of 2019 levels). In 2024, ridership growth trends continue with monthly ridership now exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

Both fare and non-fare revenue also increased in 2023, with the revenue cost ratio increasing from 32 to 38 per cent. This contributes to a lower amount of tax support required to provide public transit in Calgary. Despite this, Calgary Transit remains an affordable transportation option for Calgarians, with the average trip costing customers \$1.42 in 2023. This is largely due to the continued trend towards subsidized fares and passes as increasing numbers of

customers have benefitted from expanded eligibility in the Low-Income Transit Pass and the introduction of new products such as the Weekend Group Day Pass. These subsidized fare products contribute to reducing cost as a barrier for more Calgarians and enabling them to live, work, and play in the city by transit.

With pandemic recovery largely complete the focus in public transit now shifts towards growth. Making public transit a more convenient and attractive transportation option for Calgarians will be key in supporting The City's economic, social, and environmental goals. Over the course of 2023, Calgary Transit and other Business Units undertook initiatives which progressed 93 of RouteAhead's 159 strategies (58 per cent). Customer experience improvements included considerable investment in public safety, improving integration between transit and cycling by installing bike racks on all standard (12m) buses and allowing bikes on CTrain at all times, and preparing to install 100 additional transit shelters across the network.

Council approval of the RouteAhead update in Fall 2023 calls for prioritizing investment into the Primary Transit Network to deliver fast, frequent, and reliable service across the city. Doing so will require sustained operational investments, including an additional 1 million service hours over the next 10 years into frequent service. Further investments will be required to support reliable Base Service in established areas, promote ridership growth in the Green Line corridor, and extend transit into new and developing communities. Calgary Transit currently achieves 62 per cent of the service levels necessary to achieve these goals. Six major non-seasonal route changes were implemented in 2023 to optimize the network, resulting in improvements to frequency, service span, connectivity, and coverage in 10 wards.

Major transit capital projects also marked important milestones in 2023. Green Line selected Bow Transit Connectors (BTC) as the Development Partner to deliver Phase 1 of the Green Line LRT Project and have progressed through a Development Phase to refine the project design, cost, schedule, and risk allocation. Progress has also continued on several early works projects, including extensive utility relocations in Beltline and Downtown. These are essential steps in preparation for the main construction of Green Line to begin in 2024.

Work has progressed on other rapid transit projects. Six projects were selected to advance design and state of readiness to make the next generation of rapid transit ready when funding opportunities arise. One project, the North Central Bus Rapid Transit project, is partly funded with construction on improvements expected to begin in Spring 2024.

Calgary Transit also advanced work on several projects to maintain, upgrade, or replace existing assets. More than 400 vehicles are in active procurement to replace existing fleet, including 180 community shuttles, up to 259 zero-emission electric buses, and 40 CTrain vehicles to allow the original U2 fleet to be fully retired. Renovations are also underway at the Haysboro Storage Facility to support reliable four-car CTrain service on Red Line into the future.

Looking forward to 2024, priorities will include maintaining momentum on ridership growth, improving safety and reliability of service, continued operational investments in new and existing areas, and advancing the next generation of major transit capital projects for Calgarians.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – RouteAhead 2023 Annual Status Report

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General Manager Doug Morgan concurs with the information in this Briefing.