

Transit peace officer engagement and transit operator input

As part of the Public Transit Safety Strategy, engagement with EMCS Transit Public Safety peace officers (Transit peace officers) and input from Calgary Transit operators was planned in support of the Transit Bylaw 4M81 review to improve transit operator and rider safety. Administration directly engaged with Transit peace officers in person as well as through an anonymous survey and by gathering input from transit operator 'Beyond the Drivers Seat' sessions. This provided the opportunity to engage and understand the lived experience of Transit peace officers and transit operators. Administration also heard from Transit riders who identified safety as a key factor when deciding to take transit.

Calgary Transit employs more than 2,500 operators. As part of their required training, 100 transit operators per week are attending 'Beyond the Drivers Seat' information and training sessions in 2024. To date, Administration heard from more than 800 operators through 'Beyond the Driver's Seat' sessions. Administration will continue to monitor input from the remaining operators in these sessions. Behaviours experienced by transit operators included harassment, open drug use, unpredictable behaviour and social disorder and these behaviours may also impact other Transit employees.

In addition, engagement took place with Transit peace officers, who serve a critical role in keeping transit safe every day. They are firsthand witnesses to behaviours and challenges on the transit system. Engagement conversations were held with Transit peace officers (inspectors, sergeants and frontline officers) in meetings and ride-alongs as well as with the Law Department Subject Matter Experts (SME). This engagement identified common problem behaviours on transit, understanding of tools in place to address the behaviours as well as potential gaps.

With this input, proposed amendments to the Transit Bylaw were identified. The proposed amendments were then circulated to Transit peace officers to validate the proposed amendments. An anonymous survey was emailed to ask if they agreed or disagreed with each of the recommendations and if they had any other feedback on the recommendations.

The following is a summary of the findings from the survey:

- 86 responses were received. This is a response rate of 61 per cent, which is a very strong response rate for a short survey window.
- Responses overall averaged 95 per cent agree / 5 per cent disagree with the six recommendations.
- Survey verbatim suggestions were also received on amendment wording. These were discussed with Law SMEs and incorporated wherever possible into the bylaw amendments.

Summary of proposed bylaw amendments:

Behaviour	Amendment	% agree	What we heard from Transit peace officers
Loitering and not using transit for its intended purpose;	Add definition of 'loitering'	94	<i>Would like to see loitering defined in the bylaw as mentioned.</i>
Using paid fare to disguise non destination use	Add an offence for non-destination use of transit is not excused by having paid fare	95	<i>The common explanation given is 'using transit for it's intended purpose' (E.g., to get from a to b, not to loiter and then produce a ticket and state they can therefore hang out on property).</i>
Using fake or altered passes	Add an offence that addresses altering or re-creating a valid transit pass for the purpose of forging.	94	<i>Leave at officers' discretion when dealing with minors.</i>
Claiming to be 12 years and under	Establish authority for peace officers to request proof of age, failure to provide will be deemed an offence	94	<i>Leave at officers' discretion when dealing with minors.</i>
Harassment, threatening, intimidating riders and staff	Add an offense for verbal harassment of operators, passengers and staff plus threats, intimidation Fine is double other offenses to show seriousness of harassment to operators, passengers and staff	100	<i>This would be used a lot and would be extremely beneficial. Especially, if there is a higher penalty.</i> <i>Think this would go a long way with the operators. They currently feel undervalued as the bylaw doesn't include them.</i>
Possessing weapons on transit	Add an offense for visible weapons on transit	99	<i>Much needed and excellent idea for lawful placement.</i> <i>I like this bylaw because batons, machetes, hatchets aren't prohibited weapons, this bylaw can give us lawful placement to stop and possibly seize those who are visibly carrying these weapons and making passengers feel uncomfortable.</i>
Having bikes on CTrains	Remove the existing time restrictions to allow bikes on CTrains at all times	88	<i>There is no need for time restrictions on bikes.</i> <i>It is counterproductive to our customer commitment and to travel.</i>