

**Operational Services Report to
Infrastructure and Planning Committee
2025 May 14**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED
IP2025-0381**

RouteAhead Annual Status Report 2024

PURPOSE

This report is the annual update on the progress of Calgary Transit's 30-year strategy, RouteAhead.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

On 2023 July 4, Council approved the updated RouteAhead plan and directed Administration to return every year with an Annual Status Report, including details on non-seasonal route changes.

On 2025 March 18, Council approved a Notice of Motion directing Administration to explore suggestions to improve the customer experience and Calgary Transit, and report back as part of the 2024 RouteAhead annual update.

Attachment 1 provides a comprehensive list of previous Council directions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Infrastructure and Planning Committee recommend that Council:

1. Approve a one-time investment of \$3 million in 2025 from the Fiscal Stability Reserve for Calgary Transit to respond to growth pressures; and
2. Direct Administration to prioritize the RouteAhead 10-Year Implementation Plan through the 2026 budget adjustments.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

General Manager Doug Morgan concurs with the content of this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Calgarians want a convenient and affordable way to connect to home, people, and places. RouteAhead is Calgary's 30-year plan, it empowers people to live and travel in Calgary with easy walking and wheeling access, fast travel times, seamless transfers, and more connections to key destinations.
- Transit is essential to building a world-class city. Convenient transit drives Calgary's economy by connecting people to jobs, customers to businesses and events, and Calgarians to everyday essentials. It benefits all Calgarians whether they use it or not.
- Today's transit service is falling behind on its ability to serve a growing city. Calgary Transit's budget has not kept pace with growth. The Primary Transit Network provides easy access to fast and convenient transit service, but only about 160,000 Calgarians live within 400 metres of this network today.
- RouteAhead delivers the transit experience Calgarians want. It envisions a transit system where half of future Calgarians, nearly one million people, live within five minutes of show-up-and-go transit service, connecting them to destinations across the city.
- Calgary requires sustained investment in transit to give more Calgarians access to a service where they wait less and travel faster to more places.

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DISCUSSION

Importance of transit for Calgarians

Transit is the backbone of Calgary's best future. As the city's population grows towards 2 million, more Calgarians will depend on transit to easily and safely get around the city. They expect quicker trips and easier access to transit so they can connect to everyday destinations, whether it's work, recreation, appointments, or social activities.

Transit drives Calgary's economic prosperity by supporting Calgary's downtown, venues, and events by connecting more people and visitors to Calgary to businesses, attractions and recreation. Investments in transit get people moving by connecting people to jobs, students to education and training, customers to local businesses, and visitors to their accommodations.

2024 Year in review

The 2024 RouteAhead Annual Status Report (Attachment 2) is a look back at the progress The City is making towards implementing RouteAhead.

Customer experience

Ridership climbed to over 101 million trips in 2024 highlighting growing demand for transit. This represents an increase of 12 per cent from approximately 90 million trips in 2023. Satisfaction scores from customers remained steady from 2023 to 2024 despite the challenges Calgary Transit faced.

A Notice of Motion in March 2025 underscored how much Calgarians value transit (Attachment 3). Customers want a transit system that is easier to use and navigate. While Calgary Transit is exploring some items brought forward in the Notice of Motion, others are not feasible with current funding.

Network planning

The Red and Blue Line CTrains now run at least every 10 minutes, 15 hours a day, seven days a week. Today, about 160,000 Calgarians, or 10 per cent, live within 400 m of this frequent transit service. Approximately 30 per cent of Calgary's jobs are also within 400 m, delivering a show-up-and-go experience, providing faster trips and a more seamless journey. Attachment 2 outlines a gap of 1 million service hours required to bring this level of service to 1 million Calgarians, representing roughly 50 per cent of the future population.

In 2024, Calgary Transit expanded On Demand service to 11 new communities, and saw ridership increase by over 9,000 weekly trips after reviewing and optimizing service in several parts of the city. However, a growing city means Calgary Transit is spreading resources thinly over a larger area, leading to infrequent local routes and overcrowding. While off-site levies are a financial tool used by The City to cover part of the costs of new buses in new communities, they do not fund operating expenses.

Financing transit

Transit requires sustainable investments to provide the level of service Calgarians expect to see in a prosperous and thriving city. Public transit is a priority for Council. To address this priority, one-time investments are recommended now, and Administration will bring forward recommendations to close the funding gap during budget deliberations in 2025 November. In

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addition, Calgary Transit is implementing efficiencies and exploring alternative tools to close the funding gap.

The City is also working with regional, provincial, and federal partners to access funding through the Canada Public Transit Fund and to ensure Calgary's transit plans connect to the province's Passenger Rail Master Plan. Continued advocacy to the provincial and federal governments for operating and capital funding is required to support improvements to transit service.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

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

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Transit connects people and provides access to the city. It serves all ages and abilities and supports social resilience and the Social Well-Being Policy principle of providing equitable service delivery by removing barriers to access and inclusion. RouteAhead improves the customer experience for all transit users by increasing access to transit and making it easier to use and understand.

Environmental

Transit reduces congestion and improves air quality. Better transit is critical to achieving The City's greenhouse gas reduction and environmental resilience goals. RouteAhead promotes transit as a leading service line in new community development, helping Calgarians build transit habits early.

Economic

A robust transit system elevates the city's reputation and Calgary's global position as a livable and economically competitive city. Transit creates opportunities to connect Calgarians to daily essentials, customers to businesses and events, and people to jobs. Linking transit and land-use promotes strategic development along key corridors. Strong transit reduces the need to use or own a vehicle, supporting a more affordable lifestyle for Calgarians.

Service and Financial Implications

Other: guidance for future service plans and budgets

Updates to the RouteAhead Implementation Plan (IP2023-0977) in Attachment 2 outline investments of \$15 million operating per year, \$45 million capital per year for new buses, and \$500 million capital for a new maintenance and storage facility. These investments will achieve 10-minute or better service on the Primary Transit Network 15 hours a day, seven days a week by 2034.

Additionally, a one-time investment of \$3 million is required in 2025 for Calgary Transit to respond to growth pressures (Recommendation 1). As part of Recommendation 2, future budget

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requests may include funding for revenue shortfalls, service improvements, transit advocacy efforts, and additional support services.

RISK

Calgary Transit has an approved plan with identified investment levels, but the 2025 budget does not include sufficient growth funding. Transit risks falling short of delivering fast, reliable, and well-connected service that Calgarians need and expect. Delaying investment will make it harder and more expensive to catch up later.

Without investment, there is an inability to close the service gap today and advance RouteAhead. This presents risks to achieving expectations set in Council's Strategic Direction, Downtown Strategy, Municipal Development Plan, and Calgary Transportation Plan.

If capital and operating funding does not increase, transit will be unable to meet the needs of a growing city. Calgarians' access to home, people, and places will decrease. Household transportation costs will increase without affordable transit providing value for money. Without convenient transit, road congestion and emissions will increase. Business, industry, and events will choose to locate in other cities with robust transit systems for easy access to employees and visitors. Buses and trains will get busier, more customers will be left behind, and more unplanned breakdowns will occur.

Without long-term sustainable investments, this city-building service will not be positioned to respond, grow, and improve to build a world-class city for current and future Calgarians.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. RouteAhead Annual Report 2024
3. Appendix: Response to Notice of Motion EC2025-0315 - From Riders, For Riders: A Motion to Improve Calgary Transit
4. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Stuart Dalgleish	Chief Operating Officer	Consult
Doug Morgan	Operational Services	Approve
Deb Hamilton	Planning and Development Services	Inform
Michael Thompson	Infrastructure Services	Inform
Sharon Fleming	Calgary Transit	Approve
Kathy Davies Murphy	City and Regional Planning	Inform

Authors: Amanda Bishop, City & Regional Planning, and Lisa Gani, Calgary Transit