



Calgary

City Auditor's Office

Public Transit Safety Strategy Audit

May 23, 2025



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Audit Objective

The objective of this audit was to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of The City's Public Transit Safety Strategy (Strategy).

Why it Matters

The City of Calgary (The City) is implementing the Strategy to ensure a safe and secure transit environment for passengers and employees. Effective program management of the Strategy is important to support The City in providing a safe, reliable, and welcoming transit system that people want to use.

The Strategy is being implemented as a program, and effective program management is required to support a timely and effective implementation.

What We Concluded

The City has established several program management practices which supported the initial implementation of three initiatives within the Strategy. To better support future effective program management for the Strategy and implementation of further initiatives, improvements are needed to processes related to communication, change management, risk and issue management, and schedule management.

Key structures and processes have been established to support effective program management for the Strategy in line with good practice:

- A Program Charter was developed and signed by Executive Sponsors, identifying the governance structure and an escalation process for decision-making.
- A Program Risk Register was established, assigning inherent likelihood and impact ratings, and identifying the risk owner and treatments.
- Program presentations were generally distributed to key internal partners as noted in the Program Charter.
- The Program Charter included a baseline schedule. There was also a program schedule to track progress.
- Performance measures were identified in the Strategy, with data available or obtainable to support these measures as the Strategy progresses.
- Documentation was obtained to evidence three key initiatives being completed (Transit Peace Officer expansion, south district expansion, and Transit Bylaw amendments) to support the reasonability of current and future output for the measures of success.

However, improvements to structures and processes are needed to better support effective program management for the Strategy and future implementation of remaining initiatives within the Strategy. Key improvements include standardizing program status updates to support completeness and consistency, formalizing the program change management process, implement ongoing monitoring and assessment of program risks and issues, and aligning the progress schedule with the baseline schedule. We raised four recommendations to support effective program management for the Strategy. Emergency Management & Community Safety has agreed with our recommendations with plans to implement by December 31, 2025.

Background

Transit's primary function is to provide a safe, reliable, and welcoming transit system for destination riders. During the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions led to a shift in usership between regular riders and vulnerable Calgarians. As riders returned to their place of work, transit safety remained a concern.¹

In June 2023, Calgary City Council directed Administration to present a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary transit safety strategy by Q3 2023. This strategy would outline the requirements for an integrated customer and safety service delivery model involving Transit, Emergency Management & Community Safety, Corporate Security, Calgary Police Service and Community Partners.

In October 2023, Council approved the Strategy to ensure a safe, reliable, and welcoming transit system for Calgarians. The Strategy identifies five areas of focus to improve transit safety. Measures of success were established, and a roadmap of the Strategy was provided to Council (see Appendix).²

Perceptions of transit safety have improved since the Strategy was approved in October 2023. According to the 2024 Fall Survey of Calgarians, 61% of respondents believe The City is taking sufficient steps to ensure Calgary Transit is a safe travel option, up from 57% in fall 2023. Additionally, 50% of respondents feel safe riding a Calgary Transit bus alone at night, an improvement from 46% in fall 2023. Similarly, 39% feel safe riding the CTrain alone at night, up from 34% in fall 2023.³

The Strategy is being implemented as a program with scheduled implementation date of December 31, 2025. The Project Management Institute (PMI) defines a program as "related projects, subsidiary programs, and program activities managed in a coordinated manner to obtain benefits not available from managing them individually." Programs are typically large, complex, lengthy, and less well-defined than projects, requiring proactive management of uncertainty due to environmental changes.

The City's Corporate Project Management Centre (CPMC) supports City business units in consistently applying best practices in program management. The Program Management Practices document (June 2023) provides basic program management information and practices based on PMI's The Standard for Program Management.⁴

Programs can be viewed from a life cycle perspective, typically including some variation of program definition, delivery, and closure.

¹ Transit Public Safety. Retrieved from The City of Calgary website:

<https://www.calgary.ca/content/dam/transit/safety/2023/Transit-Public-Safety-Annual-Report.pdf>.

² Public Transit Safety Strategy: Background and Previous Council Direction. Retrieved from The City of Calgary website:

<https://pub-calgary.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=261245>

³ 2024 Fall Survey of Calgarians. Retrieved from the City of Calgary website:

<https://www.calgary.ca/content/dam/www/research-and-data/survey-calgarians/2024-fall-survey-of-calgarians.pdf>

⁴ Corporate Project Management Centre: Program Management Practices. Retrieved from The City of Calgary website:

<https://mycity.calgary.ca/content/dam/mycity/deputy-cmo/cai/program-management-practices.pdf>

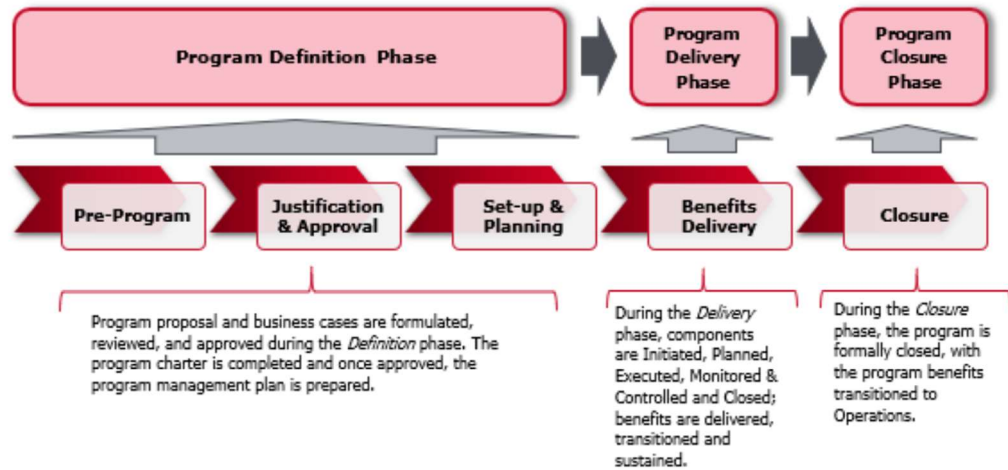


Figure 1 – The City of Calgary’s Corporate Project Management Centre – Program Management Practices.

Scope & Approach

The scope of this audit focused on the Emergency Management & Community Safety program delivery management activities related to the Strategy.

We reviewed the design and operating effectiveness of the program management processes and controls that mitigate risks impacting the remaining delivery of the Strategy, including processes to:

- Ensure requests go through a formal change process;
- Ensure completeness and communication of progress reporting;
- Ensure monitoring and ongoing assessments of risks and issues;
- Manage progress schedule to ensure completeness and alignment with the baseline schedule; and
- Obtain and validate performance measures data.

We additionally verified three key initiatives to support the reasonability of the current and future output for measures of success to independently confirm the current state of the program delivery.

This audit did not include any assessment of the effectiveness of social services support provided by external organizations.

Our audit approach included a review of program management documents and interviews with key personnel in the Emergency Management & Community Safety team.

We referenced The City’s Program Management Practices Guide, and the PMI’s The Standard for Program Management as standards of good practice.

Results

The Emergency Management & Community Safety program management practices have generally supported the effective implementation of the Strategy. To further enhance the effectiveness of the program, improvements are needed in processes and controls related to program progress communication, program change management, risk and issue management, and program schedule management.

Results of our audit work for each group of processes we evaluated for the program are outlined below.

Communication and Governance

We reviewed the communication and governance structure of the program by obtaining and reviewing key presentations from Q4 2024 and the Program Charter, and concluded that the processes were generally effective and largely was inline with the CPMC's Program Management Practices guide since:

- The Program Charter was approved by the Executive Sponsors and documented the reporting structure, and committees for the Strategy.
- The Program Charter identified the Executive Sponsors, Program Sponsor, and Program Manager, and their roles and responsibilities.
- The Program Charter outlined the decision-making process to guide escalation for the program.

Program presentations also provided benefit realization information and were generally distributed to key internal partners, as per the Program Charter. While the communication and governance processes were generally effective, we identified an area for improvement in program progress reporting. The reports presented to various audiences were inconsistent and incomplete, making it difficult for internal partners to effectively track the program's status and support informed decision-making (Recommendation 2). Incomplete and inconsistent communication increases the risk of program leadership not having the necessary information to make informed choices to support the achievement of objectives.

Change Management

Our review identified the need to develop a structured change management process to assess proposed changes, their risks and benefits. Proactively managing change can prevent risks and issues from escalating and impacting the Strategy's objectives and delivery of benefits.

We noted two program changes that had occurred subsequent to the development of the Program Charter:

- Governance and reporting structure: The Executive and Steering committees were collapsed and now report to the Community and Safety Wellbeing committee.
- Program schedule: The south district office was implemented ahead of the planned schedule.

Both changes were communicated to program leadership through the Community Safety and Wellbeing committee. However, there was no program change log, and both changes were not assessed, approved, and formally communicated, indicating that a formal change management process was not in place (Recommendation 1).

Risk and Issue Management

Based on our review, we determined that the risk and issue management for the Strategy requires improvement. While the Program Charter identifies program risks and the Program Risk Register was established, assigning inherent likelihood and impact ratings, and identifying the risk owner and treatments, there are opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of these practices. To further strengthen risk and issue management, we identified the need for ongoing monitoring and assessment of risks. Continuous oversight is essential to ensure that risks are proactively managed and mitigated. Additionally, the establishment of a formal Issue Register is necessary to track and address issues as they arise (Recommendation 3). Without ongoing monitoring of risks and an Issue Register, risks may be unmitigated, impacting the realization of benefits and enhancement of opportunities.

Schedule Management

We reviewed the schedule management process by selecting a sample of five initiatives from the baseline schedule and then comparing the initiative in the tracking schedule. We identified areas for improvement to enhance the tracking and monitoring of program activities.

The Program Charter included a baseline schedule with key milestones and completion dates. There was also a program schedule tracking the deliverables completed based on each of the five focus areas of the Strategy. To further strengthen schedule management, we identified the need for better clarity and alignment between the baseline schedule and the progress schedule. Three of the five sampled initiatives were not identifiable in the progress schedule without the Program Manager's assistance. One of the three initiatives was missing from the schedule tracking document. A clear and aligned program schedule is essential for monitoring progress against the plan, identifying deviations, and taking corrective actions (Recommendation 4).

Performance Management

The performance management processes related to obtaining and validating data for the Strategy's measures of success were generally effective.

Sixteen measures of success were identified in the Strategy, and data was available to support to measures of success or could be obtained as the program progresses from the dispatching system or internal partners. A dashboard was developed, allowing users to extract data from the dispatching system to report on certain measures.

Training manuals and data input controls in the dispatching system support consistency in data entry and reduce the risk of errors. Supporting documents evidenced the completion of three key initiatives to support the reasonability of the output for measures of success:

- Expansion of Transit Peace Officers to enhance public transit safety efforts;
- Opening of the south district office to support resource distribution; and
- Amendments to Transit Bylaw 4M81 to support Transit operator and rider safety.

Observations & Recommendations

#1: Program Change Management	
OBSERVATION	RECOMMENDATION
<p>There is no formal process for logging, assessing, approving, and communicating changes. There was no evidence that changes were assessed for risks and benefits. The absence of a structured change management process can lead to scope creep, budget overruns, quality issues and schedule delays.</p> <p>Our audit identified two changes to the program. Attendees of the Community and Safety Wellbeing committee, including the Executive Sponsors, were informed of the two changes. However, changes for the program were not formally documented, which reflects that a formal change management process was not in place.</p> <p>The City's CPMC Program Management Practices states that "change requests should be analyzed for justification of the change, estimating the likelihood and possible impacts" and changes "should be evaluated based on cost, risk and other relevant impacts to the program."</p>	<p>1. The Program Manager to develop a documented formal change management process that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording changes in a log. • Assessing for risks and benefits. • Reviewing and approving changes. • Documenting whether change requests is accepted or rejected. • Communicating to the interested parties. <p>Consideration should be given to using the Program Change Request template provided by The City's CPMC.</p> <p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE Agreed.</p> <p>ACTION PLAN For changes that impact program scope and delivery, the Public Transit Safety Strategy (PTSS) team will complete a Project Change log and circulate through the Community and Safety Wellbeing steering committee chair. For changes at a project level that impact business units and divisions, a change log will be completed and circulated to Managers.</p> <p>Change logs will be presented to the Executive Steering committee.</p> <p>The program manager and team members will enroll and complete "The Basic of Project Management" training offered on-line in May, June or later this fall. All team members will complete by December 31, 2025.</p> <p>LEAD Lead, Transit Safety Strategy Implementation</p>

	SUPPORT Chief, Public Vehicle Standards COMMITMENT DATE December 31, 2025
#2: Program Progress Communication	
OBSERVATION	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Program progress communication was not complete or consistent to allow internal partners to effectively track the program's status and to support informed decision-making. In the absence of complete and consistent program communication, key deliverables may not be completed as planned to support the achievement of program objectives.</p> <p>We reviewed key documents for progress communication for the program and identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Community Safety and Wellbeing Committee (CSWB) presentation (Q4 2024) did not include a program schedule with the status of high-level program milestones against the program planned schedule. The program status compared to previous reporting periods was unclear in the CSWB presentation (Q4 2024). Four top risks identified in the Emergency Management & Community Safety Program Oversight Meeting (November 2024) presentation were not included in the CSWB or Public Transit Safety Strategy Implementation and Impact Reporting (Q4 2024) presentations. The Program Charter emphasizes that time is the highest priority for the program. Although the Program Charter (May 2024) specifies that a written monthly update should be provided to the Program Sponsor, these updates were instead communicated verbally. <p>The City's CPMC Program Management Practices recommends that program progress reports include information such as the current period and previous periods overall status, the program schedule, and benefits realization.</p>	<p>2. The Program Manager to develop program progress status reports for internal partners that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare the current reporting period with the previous period. Incorporate program quality (benefits realization), schedule, and risks and issues. <p>Consideration should be given to using the Program Progress Report template provided by The City's CPMC.</p> <p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE Agreed.</p> <p>ACTION PLAN Reinstate the monthly status report. Amend the report to include: monthly comparators, a summary report, an assessment of risks and issues, and the identification of any changes. The report will be circulated to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Public Vehicle Standards (Program Sponsor) Manager Optimization Services Leader Business Improvement Team Quarterly update to Public Transit Governance Team, followed by update to Transit SMT. <p>LEAD Lead, Transit Safety Strategy Implementation</p> <p>SUPPORT Chief, Public Vehicle Standards Leader, Business Improvement</p> <p>COMMITMENT DATE September 30, 2025</p>
#3: Program Risk and Issue Management	
OBSERVATION	RECOMMENDATION

<p>The Risk Register for the program had not been updated since April 2024, and there was no program Issue Register. The absence of an updated Risk Register and a formal Issue Register can lead to the inability to identify and address new risks or changes to existing risks. This can result in unmitigated risks impacting the program's objectives, leading to potential delays, budget overruns, and quality issues.</p> <p>During our review, we identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several risks listed in the Program Charter were not included in the program Risk Register. • Residual risk calculations were not performed in the program Risk Register. • The inherent risk likelihood and impact calculation for three of the four risks presented at the EMCS Program Oversight Meeting (November 2024) differed than the inherent program Risk Register calculation. • The Risk Register used a 3x3 risk matrix, which does not align to The City's ERM 5x5 matrix. <p>The PMI Standard for Program Management, states that a Program Manager needs to update the risk register and manage program risks to provide for benefits delivery. The City's CPMC Program Management Practices also notes the importance of integrating component-level risks and issues associated with individual components that may impact the program or other component activities.</p>	<p>3. The Program Manager to establish a formal documented process to monitor and assess risks and track issues, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a frequency for updating, assessing, monitoring, and reporting risks and issues from the registers. • Revisiting the risks identified in the Risk Register and determining the inherent and residual risk based on a The City's ERM 5x5 matrix. • Establishing an issue register and rank/prioritize each issue accordingly. <p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE Agreed.</p> <p>ACTION PLAN Establish a documented process to monitor and assess risks and track issues based on The City's ERM processes and practices. Incorporate process and practices into the monthly status report and the quarterly report to the CSWB Executive Steering Committee.</p> <p>LEAD Lead, Transit Safety Strategy Implementation</p> <p>SUPPORT Chief, Public Vehicle Standards Leader, Business Improvement</p> <p>COMMITMENT DATE September 30, 2025</p>
<p>#4: Program Schedule Alignment and Clarification</p>	
<p>OBSERVATION</p> <p>The program progress schedule requires alignment and clarification as it relates to the baseline schedule. Without a clear and aligned program schedule, it is challenging to track the status of initiatives and milestones accurately. This can lead to missed deadlines, lack of transparency, and difficulties in identifying and correcting variances.</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>4. The Program Manager to clarify and align the progress schedule with the baseline schedule as part of program progress reporting.</p> <p>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE Agreed.</p>

<p>In a sample of five, we could not identify the status of three initiatives in the baseline schedule (from Program Charter – May 2024) when we compared it with the progress schedule tracking presentation (Public Transit Safety Strategy Implementation and Impact Reporting - Q4 2024), without the assistance of the Program Manager. The Program Manager identified the status of two initiatives, while the remaining initiative was not included in the schedule tracking presentation. The baseline schedule should also include additional information on deliverables. For example, milestones number seven, eight, and ten in the Program Charter did not identify key deliverables.</p> <p>The PMI Standard for Program Management states that program schedule management includes tracking and monitoring the start and finish of high-level component and program activities and milestones against the program master schedule planned timelines.</p>	<p>ACTION PLAN Present quarterly implementation and impact report to CSWB steering committee. Discuss initiatives/tasks not completed or progressing as planned. Identify where timelines or adjustments may need to be made and recorded within the change log.</p> <p>LEAD Lead, Transit Safety Strategy Implementation</p> <p>SUPPORT Chief, Public Vehicle Standards Leader, Business Improvement</p> <p>COMMITMENT DATE September 30, 2025</p>
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Acknowledgements

The City Auditor's Office conducts projects, including this audit, in conformance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

The City Auditor's Office would like to thank staff from Emergency Management & Community Safety for their cooperation and support during this audit.

Appendix – Road Map

Public Transit Safety Strategy implementation road map

