

Operational Services Report to
Regular Meeting of Council
2026 April 28

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
C2026-0285

Extending Calgary Transit Transfers to 120 Minutes

PURPOSE

This report responds to Council direction to extend the validity period of transfers on Calgary Transit from 90 to 120 minutes.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

During the 2026 February 24 Regular Meeting of Council, Notice of Motion EC2026-0042 was adopted directing Administration to report back to the 2026 April 28 Regular Meeting of Council and “to extend the transfer validity period from 90 minutes to 120 minutes”.

RECOMMENDATION:

Council direct Administration to:

Extend the valid transfer time to 120 minutes effective 2027 January 01 and refer a request for \$2 million in base operating funds for Calgary Transit to the 2027-2030 budget deliberations for funding approval.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- With this change, Calgary Transit customers will enjoy unlimited travel and transfers on a single cash fare or ticket for 120 minutes.
- This could increase the perception of fare value among customers who use cash fares and tickets.
- Based on current customer behaviour this is expected to provide a benefit and cost savings to approximately two per cent of Calgary Transit customers who purchase tickets. An additional 1.4 per cent who purchase tickets will see benefits if they change their travel behaviour to complete additional trips within the 120 minutes.
- Our modelling estimates a reduction in fare revenues of approximately \$2 million per year based on a combination of observed and expected changes in customer behaviour.

DISCUSSION

The extension of the transfer window to 120 minutes will provide Calgary Transit customers with additional time to complete longer trips as the city grows, as well as make additional trips on a single fare. A subset of existing customers may adjust their travel behaviour to complete round-trip travel within the new 120-minute window, resulting in the use of one fare instead of two.

Data and feedback from customers, including customer service requests (311) and mobile app data was analyzed by Administration to estimate how this change will benefit customers and the potential cost.

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To assess potential impacts, Administration reviewed data from Calgary Transit's My Fare mobile ticketing app. The data shows that fewer than two per cent of customers who use tickets purchase a second ticket within 120 minutes of a previous purchase. In addition, just over one per cent of customers activate a second ticket between 120 and 150 minutes after the first activation. These customers represent the group most likely to be affected by the policy change. Combined, this represents about 500,000 trips per year, or about 0.5 per cent of all Calgary Transit trips.

Travel behaviour data from Transit, Calgary Transit's official trip planning app, shows for most customers their transfers are completed within 33 minutes of the start of their trip. 98 per cent of customers complete their transfers within the current 90 minute window. Based on a review of data from the My Fare mobile ticketing app less than two per cent of customers who use tickets currently purchase a second ticket within 120 minutes of a previous ticket purchase. This may indicate the customer is completing a single journey longer than 90 minutes, but it can also indicate the customer is beginning a return trip or separate trip.

Between 2022 and 2026 March, 22 customer service requests (311) have been received requesting to extend the valid time for transfers, or about six per year.

Based on the data, Administration estimates the cost of extending the transfer validity window to 120 minutes represents a loss of \$2 million in fare revenue per year. This value does not include additional revenue loss represented by future fare increases and increases in ridership.

A jurisdictional scan was conducted examining 19 major transit agencies in Canada, with 11 of those providing transfers of 120 minutes. Six of those transit agencies receive funding for the extended transfer times from the government of Ontario. More information and analysis is shared in Attachment 2.

Extending the transfer window from 90 to 120 minutes is a practical improvement that enhances the customer experience and perception of fare value. However, customer demand for this change is low and the foregone fare revenue will increase in future years.

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.

Environmental

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Transit provides people with a transportation option that reduces congestion and improves air quality. Better transit is critical to achieving The City's greenhouse gas reduction and environmental resilience goals.

Economic

Transit drives Calgary's economy by connecting people to jobs, business, and daily essentials. It also helps address housing needs by improving access to jobs/services and support inclusive and safe communities. Linking transit and land use promotes strategic development along key corridors. Strong transit reduces the need to use or own a vehicle, reducing household costs for Calgarians.

Service and Financial Implications

New operating funding request

If the recommendation is approved without additional funding it will lead to further erosion of Calgary Transit's fare revenue (adding to pressures from 12 and under free, Low Income Transit Pass, fare evasion), and eliminating new service planned for 2026 September.

RISK

- When asked, Calgary Transit customers identify more frequent and more reliable service as their top priorities. Very few customers submit 311/customer service requests asking for a longer transfer time.
- This policy change along with the public communications could influence behaviour and lead to increased use of transfers to complete round-trip journeys leading to additional revenue loss which is not included in the \$2 million cost estimate. Unintended customer behaviour, as experienced with the change to children 12 and under free, could increase costs above what was expected.
- Stand-alone decisions about fare products outside the context of an updated fare strategy could erode the effectiveness of the strategy. Administration will be bringing principles forward for approval in May, and an updated strategy by the end of Q1 2027. An integrated approach with changes to fare systems and policies would also align better with the introduction of new fare payment features and overall customer experience.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Previous Council Direction, Background
2. Analysis and Background on Extending Calgary Transit Transfers to 120 Minutes
3. Presentation

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Department Circulation

| General Manager/ Director | Department | Approve/Consult/Inform |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Chief Marcia Gonder | Community Services | Inform |
| Sharon Fleming | Operational Services | Approve |
| Doug Morgan | Operational Service | Approve |

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