

**Operational Services Report to
Infrastructure and Planning Committee
2026 May 07**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED
IP2026-0142**

RouteAhead Annual Status Report 2025

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update to Council on the progress of Calgary Transit's 30-year strategy, RouteAhead, and seek approval of transit fare principles to inform an updated fare strategy. It also provides an update on new fare payment technology and information about non-seasonal bus route changes implemented last year.

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 information on the status of operating investments, capital projects, and non-seasonal bus route changes.

Attachment 1 provides a comprehensive list of previous Council directions.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Infrastructure and Planning Committee recommend that:

1. Council approve the Calgary Transit fare principles in Attachment 3 and direct Administration to bring an updated fare strategy to the Infrastructure and Planning Committee by the end of Q1 2027; and
2. Council direct Administration to prioritize the RouteAhead 10-Year Implementation Plan through the 2027-2030 Business Plans and Budgets proposals.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

This section will remain blank until reviewed by the General Manager or Chief Administrative Officer. Expected information in this section is that the Chief Administrative Officer/General Manager concurs with this report. May also include information on direct connections to other lines of work/initiatives..

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025, Calgary Transit focused on what riders care about most: safer trips, more reliable service, and buses and trains that arrive often enough to be convenient for our customers.

- Council's goal is a transit system people can rely on, where getting around the city is easy, accessible, and works for everyday life.
- Recent investments have helped protect and improve service, but there is still a gap between today's funding, and the level of transit Calgarians expect under RouteAhead.
- More investment is needed to keep vehicles and stations in good shape, increase service where it's needed, and expand transit as Calgary grows to two million people.
- Calgary Transit is updating fares and how people pay, with a focus on making fares fair, easy to understand, and clearly tied to better service. New fare payment technology will make paying simpler and more convenient, support affordability, and help reinvest fare revenue into safer, more reliable transit.

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DISCUSSION

Transit is the backbone of Calgary's best future. It drives the city's economy by strengthening economic competitiveness and connecting people to school, jobs, businesses, and daily essentials. The RouteAhead annual report is an opportunity to update Council on progress towards implementing our 30-year vision for transit, while also updating Council on specific initiatives underway related to transit service.

As Calgary grows toward two million residents, transit will play a bigger role in how the city develops and how people move around. Transit customers want services that are safe, reliable and predictable, and frequent. Consistent and appropriate funding will ensure RouteAhead implementation, enhance service levels, and improve customer satisfaction.

RouteAhead Annual Status Report 2025 (Attachment 2)

The annual status report provides an update on progress towards implementing RouteAhead, highlights key initiatives undertaken last year, and presents updated information about the current funding gap.

In 2025, Calgary Transit undertook many initiatives to improve transit safety, reliability and frequency, which are areas that matter most to transit customers. Examples include:

- Transit peace officers are now deployed across five districts, closer to where service is delivered, aiming for seven to 10-minute response times.
- Two pedestrian crossings on the CTrain were enhanced for safety, and another is underway.
- Calgary Transit's fleet started transitioning to Three Peak Mountain Snowflake tires to increase reliability of buses in winter conditions.
- Several bus routes were optimized to improve connectivity and travel times for customers across the network. Attachment 5 provides more details regarding 2025 transit route changes and impacts to ridership.

While progress was made in 2025 to improve transit service, the city is still served by a limited transit system and RouteAhead's vision implementation will require substantial effort, both to secure funding and to operationalize transit improvements. There are five key components to the funding gap: maintaining service, increasing service, growing the network, enhancing safety, and keeping transit affordable. Attachment 6 summarizes the importance of transit in Calgary and investment needed in our transit system.

Attachment 2 presents an updated RouteAhead 10-year implementation plan, including operating and capital funding requirements. Calgary Transit is preparing options to begin closing these funding gaps for the 2027-2030 budget cycle for Council's consideration.

Calgary Transit Fare Principles (Attachment 3)

Administration is seeking Council's approval of Calgary Transit fare principles (Attachment 3), which are organized into three categories from a customer perspective:

- What do I get for a transit fare?
- How much does a transit fare cost?
- How do I pay for transit fares?

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Once approved, the fare principles will provide direction and inform an updated fare strategy, aligning fare structures and the principles. The new fare strategy will be brought back to the Infrastructure and Planning Committee by the end of Q1 2027.

Transit Fare Innovations (Attachment 4)

Attachment 4 provides a current state assessment of Calgary Transit's fare collection technology and opportunities/next steps to modernize. Currently, fare collection relies on aging infrastructure and multiple systems, which limits flexibility, increases operating costs, and may create barriers for some customers.

The fare payment system needs to be modernized, and implementation will take a phased approach throughout the next four-year budget cycle. It will advance toward a fare system that is account-based, reducing reliance on cash, lowering handling and processing costs, and supporting more efficient service delivery. Throughout this fare payment modernization transition, Calgary Transit will share information at key milestones to confirm customer adoption, financial impacts, and operational readiness.

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. The low-income transit pass helps low-income Calgarians with affordability and the high cost of living. Demand for this program has continued to grow, with over 600,000 monthly passes sold in 2025. While municipal funding was secured to continue providing this program in 2026, there is currently no funding commitment beyond this year.

The proposed fare principles and fare innovations consider an equitable approach to paying for transit, while modernizing Calgary Transit's processes and technology.

Environmental

Transit provides people with a transportation option that reduces traffic congestion and improves air quality. Better transit is critical to achieving The City's greenhouse gas reduction and environmental resilience goals. RouteAhead promotes early introduction of transit services in new community developments, helping Calgarians build transit habits early. For transit to be Calgarians' first option for transportation and boost environmental benefits, we need to enhance the safety, reliability and frequency of transit service.

Economic

Transit drives Calgary's economy by strengthening economic competitiveness and connecting people to school, jobs, businesses, and daily essentials. Transit contributes to addressing Calgary's housing needs, livability, and affordability by attracting more types of housing near

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existing and future public transit lines and stations. Increasing transit service improves access to the city for Calgarians and visitors, supporting thriving, safe communities and a vibrant downtown.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

There are no direct operating or capital impacts as a result of this report.

RISK

Calgary Transit is facing a funding gap on multiple fronts, including maintaining existing service, increasing service (per RouteAhead), growing the network, enhancing safety, and keeping transit service affordable.

Since 2023, investment has not matched the original RouteAhead implementation plan, causing the timeline to extend beyond 10 years. Attachment 2 presents an updated plan with operating and capital funding required to implement RouteAhead, and funding options will be brought to the 2027-2030 budget deliberations for Council's consideration. The budget proposals will focus on delivering Council's priorities and advancing transit's strategic plan. If funding continues to be delayed, RouteAhead implementation becomes more costly and Calgarians who rely on transit will notice service decline.

If not addressed, the funding gap will increase the strain on the transportation network.

- Service levels will decline:
 - Buses and trains will feel more crowded and less reliable, making daily trips harder to plan and less comfortable.
 - Service will be reduced, meaning longer waits and fewer travel options, especially during busy times.
- The state of good repair of transit assets will worsen:
 - Vehicles, stations, and infrastructure will be more worn down, leading to breakdowns, delays, and a poorer experience.
- The transit network will not expand to provide service to a growing city
 - Transit won't reach new neighborhoods or keep up with city growth, limiting choices for Calgarians.
- Safety perception of safety will decline:
 - Customers may feel unsafe if transit peace officers are less visible across the system and it may prevent some customers from using transit services.
 - Response times will increase if transit peace officers are spread thinly across the system, which will reduce customer's confidence that help will arrive quickly when needed.
- Affordability needs will not be met:
 - Affordable transit options will not improve, making it harder for some people to rely on transit for work, school, and daily life.

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In addition to network challenges, current fare technologies are near the end of their lifecycle and need to be replaced.

Without investment we will not be able to support a level of service envisioned in RouteAhead and expected by Calgarians. Funding is the tool to get to the level of service that Calgary needs to be a world-class city. It is a service gap that requires a sustained investment from Council.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Previous Council Direction and Background
2. RouteAhead Annual Status Report 2025
3. Calgary Transit Fare Principles
4. Calgary Transit Fare Innovations
5. Route Changes in 2025
6. Transit Story Advocacy Key Messages
7. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Doug Morgan	Operational Services	Approve
Deb Hamilton	Planning and Development Services	Inform
Katie Black	Community Services	Inform
Michael Thompson	Infrastructure Services	Inform
Sharon Fleming	Calgary Transit	Approve
Iain Bushell	Emergency Management and Community Safety	Inform
Sarah Huber	Project Development	Inform
Kerenza Fromherz	Public Spaces Delivery	Inform
Ryan Vanderputten	Capital Planning	Inform
Wendy Tynan	Green Line LRT – SE Project	Inform
Kathy Davies Murphy	City and Regional Planning	Inform

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