

## Calgary Transit Fare Principles (for approval)

Administration is seeking Council’s approval of principles to inform an updated fare strategy, inclusive of fare structures, which will be brought to the Infrastructure & Planning Committee by end of Q1 2027.

Approving principles now will provide direction for what should be included in the updated fare strategy and will support closer alignment with Council. These principles support strategies in RouteAhead, such as “make it easier to pay to ride Calgary Transit” and “ensure the Calgary Transit payment structure is transparent and equitable”. There are three main themes on which the principles are based.



### 1. What do I get for a transit fare?

Currently, customers pay the same fare regardless of the distance of their trip or time of day. Principles consider changes to that approach, if desired by Council.

Recommended principles	Explanation
With a single fare, customers can transfer between buses and trains within the system, as required to get to their destination.	No change from today’s practices but clarifies that a customer should be able to get to their destination on a single fare.
Customers may pay different prices based on the distance of their trip or time of day.	This is a change from today’s practice - customers pay the same fare regardless of distance or time of day.
Customers may be required to pay special surcharges to recognize the cost of enhanced or premium services.	This is a change from today’s practice. There may be enhanced transit services and/or regional transit services in the future.

### 2. How much does a transit fare cost?

Many factors need to be considered when setting the prices for transit fares (single tickets and passes). These principles do not restrict Council decision-making on fares but provide guidance to Administration on what prices to recommend for Council approval.

Principles	Explanation
Transit fares cover a portion – but not all – of transit operating costs, in line with User Fee Policy (CP2024-02).	Calgary Transit tracks the revenue cost ratio to determine how revenue is trending relative to cost of service. We currently sit at 33% (see IP2026-0142 Attachment 2).
Transit fares can be different prices for different riders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fare discounts should be primarily based on ability to pay.</li> <li>Implementing fare discounts should consider revenue impacts to ensure adequate funding is available to sustain service levels.</li> </ul>	This principle helps to inform the fare structure and how to prioritize fare discounts. Fare discounts impact Calgary Transit’s revenue and net budget, so any new or expanded discounts need to consider the financial impacts

Principles	Explanation
<p>Any increases to fare prices should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inflation and the rising costs of goods and services.</li> <li>• The cost of riding transit relative to other transportation options.</li> <li>• Implementing gradual increases, rather than significant jumps.</li> </ul>	<p>No change from current practice but clarifies the key considerations when setting fare increases.</p>
<p>Other sources of revenue (e.g. advertising, sponsorships, parking fees) should be maximized to help cover the operating costs of the transit system.</p>	<p>No change from today's practice. Clarifies that non-fare revenue streams continue to be an important revenue source for Calgary Transit.</p>

### 3. How do I pay for transit fares?

Calgary Transit is working towards modernizing our fare payment systems to provide a better customer experience. These principles will help inform the roll-out of new processes and technologies and the payment options provided to customers.

Principles	Comments
<p>Fare payment systems should be convenient and equitable – they should not be a barrier to using transit.</p>	<p>In transit's customer commitments, one promise is that it is easy to use, inclusive of how customers pay for fares.</p>
<p>Customers should have the option to "pay as they go" for single trips or purchase passes in advance.</p>	<p>No change from today's practice. Solidifies that some customers want to purchase single trips, and that some customers want to be able to purchase fares in advance of their trip.</p>
<p>Fare payment systems should enable paying fares on behalf of others (e.g. children).</p>	<p>No change from current practice but clarifies that not all our customers pay for their own fares, and in these cases, the system should allow a caregiver, parent, or guardian to purchase fares on their behalf.</p>
<p>Special fare programs should be available for groups or events, to drive tourism and economic benefits.</p>	<p>No change from current practice but clarifies support for bulk discounts in partnership with major events and conferences.</p>
<p>Fare payment systems should enable operational efficiency and minimize processing and management costs.</p>	<p>No change from current practice and supports reducing costs related to processing fares whenever possible.</p>
<p>Fare payment systems should enable data generation to inform decisions on fares and the transit network.</p>	<p>Clarifies that fare payment systems can and should be a source of transit data.</p>