

Specialized Transit

Led by: Director of Calgary Transit

Service Description

Specialized Transit provides specialized buses, vans and sedans for Calgarians with disabilities and seniors with limited mobility to get them where they need to be safely, reliably and affordably. Calgarians who have disabilities often have fewer transportation options; our service is a vital connection to the people, services and amenities Calgary has to offer.

Service Updates

Key Service Results

In 2023, Specialized Transit saw an uptick in trip counts compared to 2022, reaching 84% of pre-pandemic 2019 ridership levels.

The service completed 3,491 eligibility interviews and processed 8,232 applications, a historic all-time high. Overall, interviews, calls, and applications processed were 11 per cent higher in 2023 over 2022, showing an increased demand for service and the value of maintaining and improving service levels.

As part of its customer commitment, the service answered 90.1 per cent of calls in three minutes or less, exceeding the service level expected performance by ten per cent. To enhance service levels, 27 new vehicles were ordered. Further, 100 per cent of scheduled advanced booking trip requests were accommodated. An upgraded scheduling software facilitated online trip bookings, increasing bookings by up to 23 per cent and reducing overall trip costs. The updated booking and scheduling software significantly improved user experience.

In the community, Travel Training worked with organizations that provide service and support to people with disabilities and held 254 one-on-one training sessions, a 15 per cent increase over 2022.

Service Challenges

Moving forward, training for contracted service providers needs refinement to ensure consistent application of policy, procedure, and customer service. In 2024, the service will focus on clear guidelines for vehicle incident investigations and other high-priority training focus areas. Additionally, the service is anticipating a workforce gap due to labour market conditions and developing an agile strategy to mitigate the risk. There is a permanent position shortage brought on by temporary staff that will need to be addressed to maintain service levels.

Trends & Potential Uncertainties

The service is looking to address service disparities for wheelchair users because of limited accessible vehicles. For example, 97 per cent of same-day ambulatory trip requests are met, compared to 65 per cent of wheelchair requests. Accessible taxis have a lifecycle of ten years, while federal initiatives like fleet electrification may deter costly modifications and limit supply.

The service currently seeks explanations from customers for trip purpose, a practice not universally required in Canada due to discrimination concerns and impact on trip priority. Legislative changes in this area are a source of uncertainty and may require service changes to remain compliant. The service is following policy developments to minimize any service disruptions for customers.



Measuring Our Performance

Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

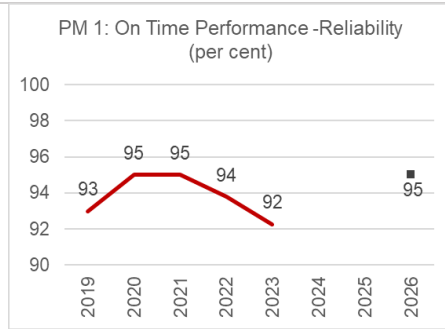
➔ Progressing as planned

⊖ Not progressing as planned

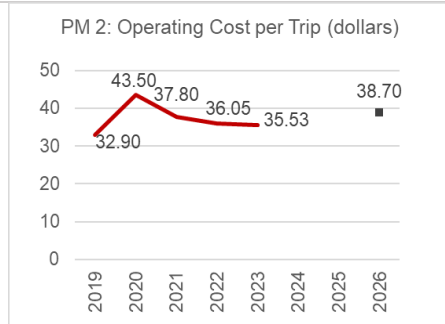
Performance Measures

Story behind the numbers

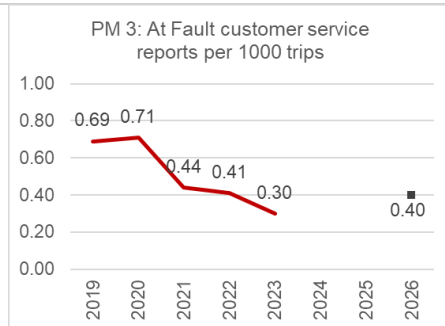
Status



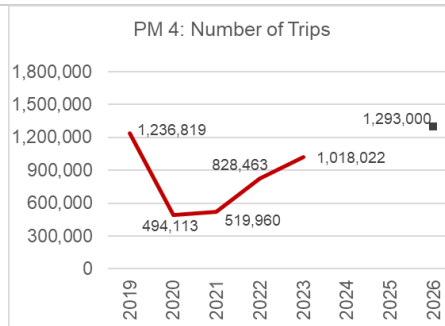
The service has maintained service reliability and demonstrated consistent improvement in On Time Performance. The minor gap can be attributed to new drivers being hired and learning their duties on the road, a necessary step to continue to provide accessible and reliable Specialized Transit.



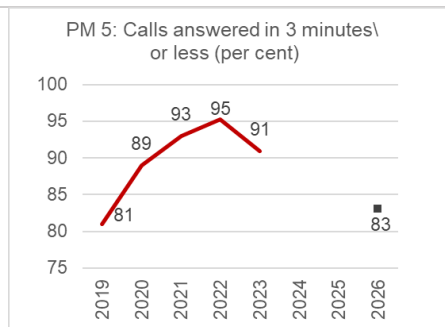
Cost per trip remains well-below upper limit, and is in alignment with the increasing demand for specialized transit. Operational efficiency efforts and new software systems contribute to reduced costs while improving service outcomes for customers. To proactively meet the rise in demand, Specialized Transit hired and trained a new cohort of operators to improve service levels and reduce costs of contracting services.



At-Fault Concerns remain well below the upper limit of 0.80, which demonstrates a successful commitment to safety, customer service, and effective operator training.

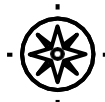


In 2023, Specialized Transit completed 1,018,022 tips, which is a 25 per cent increase from 2022, which had 816,244. Overall, service use is at 84 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, and continues to rise. To accommodate the increase in demand, the service is proactively hiring operators and growing its fleet, while ensuring that current workforce is safe and trained.



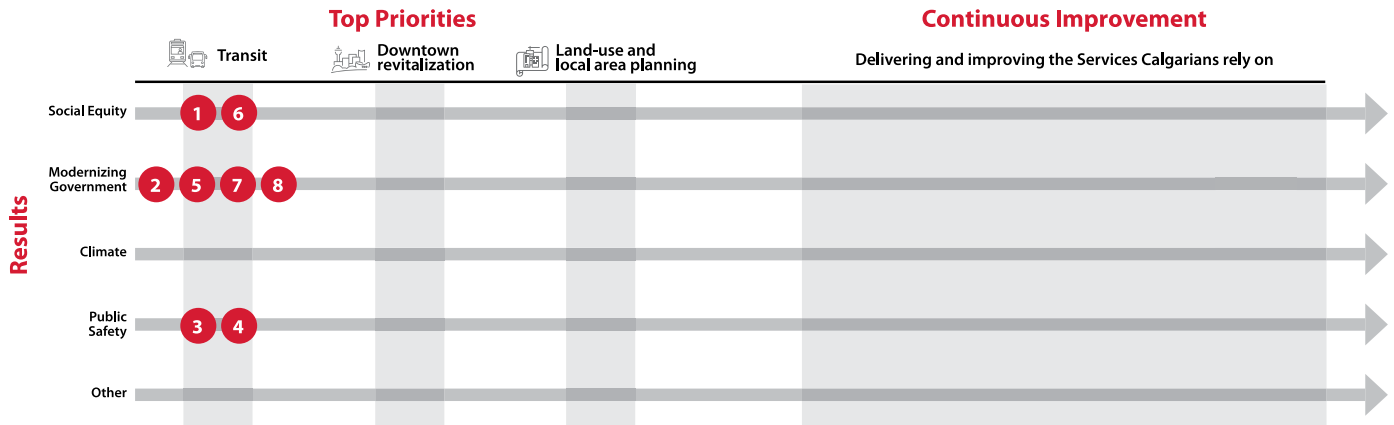
Despite a rise in call volumes, the service continues to exceed the expected future performance and in 2023, answered 91 per cent of call center calls in three minutes or less. This translates to better customer experience for users who spend less time on hold and improves service reliability for customers who count on Specialized Transit for equitable transportation for both planned and unplanned trips.








Progress on Service Delivery

Alignment with Council Refined Priorities and Result Areas



- Legend**
- ✔ Completed
 - ➡ Progressing as planned
 - ⊖ Not progressing as planned
 - ⏻ Not started
 - 1 Initiative number

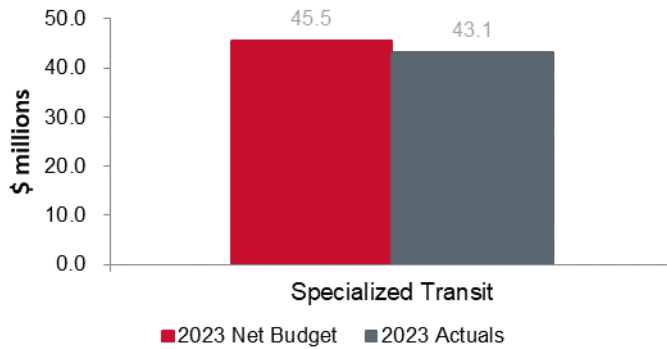
| Initiative | Initiative Update | Status |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Improve service and align service levels with return of customers to the specialized transit system by optimizing schedules. | Specialized Transit enhanced its scheduling software which optimized schedules for improved service with the return of ridership levels. The service recruited and trained Calgary Transit Access drivers to meet customer demand and completed a shared-ride accessible mini-van Request For Proposals to ensure ample support and capacity for customers. Further, an agreement with a contractor to utilize the existing fleet was secured to address vehicle shortages and thus enhance overall service reliability. | ✔ |
| 2 Improve service by investing in innovative service delivery options and technologies. | The service invested to upgrade its online trip booking tool to provide new, more robust and accessible self-serve features that make it easier for customers to book and manage their own trips. The project is ongoing and expected to be completed in spring 2024. Additionally, an internal tool was developed to allow Passenger Agents to guide customers through using the online booking tool, facilitating a smoother transition to a self-serve environment with personalized assistance. | ➡ |
| 3 Improve employee engagement and safety awareness/training by investing in employee commitment. | Several initiatives were implemented including Beyond the Driver's Seat Sessions to enhance safety and boosted morale among operators, the Pink Shirt Day campaign to combat bullying and the Thank Your Driver Day to acknowledge the vital contributions of The City's largest frontline workforce. The Operator Safety & Readiness Notebook was amended to provide operators with more information on how to report hazardous conditions. This led to a significant increase in the amount of hazardous condition assessments reported in 2023. | ➡ |
| 4 Implement and monitor the accountability framework for Calgary Transit safety areas which are moving to other business units and/or departments. | Key deliverables in 2023 included ensuring leaders were empowered to conduct workplace safety inspections, and e-learning opportunities were extended to all staff. This led to a 38 per cent increase in inspections compared to the previous year. Metrics were analyzed to identify operational improvements and potential mitigation strategies. A plan was developed and executed to increase site visits at higher-risk workplace areas, reinforcing the commitment to safety and proactive risk management. | ➡ |
| 5 Implement a continuous improvement framework to improve service delivery while coordinating across the corporation. | Specialized Transit developed and implemented Transit Service Governance Teams that meets regularly to address factors shaping service delivery across The City. These teams covered Council reports, risk management, service awareness, and strategic initiatives like RouteAhead, Green Line, Public Transit Safety Strategy, and the Canada Transit Fund. A sub-team was created to focus on Specialized Transit to prioritize advancing service for eligible clients. | ➡ |

| Initiative | Initiative Update | Status |
|---|--|---|
| 6 Leverage continued support from Provincial government for initiatives like Sliding Scale program while working with corporate partners. | Calgary Transit remained committed to social equity by aiming to remove financial barriers for transit access. Through effective advocacy with the Provincial Government, \$6.2 million in funding was secured for the sliding-scale low-income transit pass program in 2023. The City also contributed an additional \$32 million, culminating in an annual subsidy of approximately \$38 million. An enhanced Fair Entry program update has been implemented enhancing access to the Seniors Low-Income Transit Pass. These initiatives align with The City's dedication to providing an affordable transit network. |  |
| 7 Mitigate potential On Time Performance impacts of increased motor vehicle traffic volumes post-pandemic | Specialized Transit consistently monitored on-time performance, actively adjusting trip schedules for improvement. Increasing customer demand was met by expanding the operator workforce and adding more vehicles. For heavy traffic events or increased motor vehicle volumes, the service strategically deployed floater buses to minimize disruptions. During severe weather, the scheduling team continued to adjust road speeds to match conditions to mitigate potential on time performance impacts. |  |
| 8 Increase use of online booking for specialized transit service trips by promotion | The online trip booking tool underwent a significant upgrade. Calgary Transit launched a communication strategy designed to familiarize customers with its new features. A manual was shared with our partner agencies, made available online, and our internal staff received training to ensure a seamless transition. The tool's functionality was enhanced to provide on-screen guidance for resolving issues and meeting specific trip requirements such as snow day advisories. The overarching aim is to increase online bookings and improve the accessibility and quality of our services. |  |



Service Updates on Financial Performance

Net Operating Budget and Actuals as of December 31, 2023



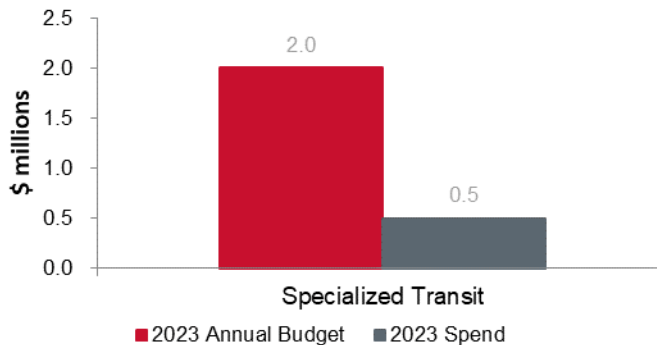
Operating Budget Updates - 2023 net operating budget vs actuals:

Specialized Transit has a favourable operating variance of \$2.4 million. The primary drivers of the variance were lower than budgeted expenditures for contracted service providers.

Furthermore, demand for Specialized Transit is below budget (84.0 per cent of pre-pandemic levels), resulting in savings of \$3.1 million in contracted services.

These savings are partially offset by lower-than-budgeted historic revenues of \$0.7 million as ridership continues to recover from the pandemic.

Capital Budget and Spend as of December 31, 2023



Capital Budget Updates - 2023 total capital budget vs 2023 spend:

In 2023, Specialized Transit had a capital budget of \$2.0 million committed towards investments in customer technologies that will improve service, ease of use, and accessibility for customers.

As of year-end, 25.0 per cent or \$0.5 million was spent on the planned software upgrade. The remaining \$1.5 million is committed and will be used towards purchasing Mobile Data Terminals in 2024 and other customer service technology.