WHAT WE HEARD.

CITY of AIRDRIE COMMUNITY & OPPORTUNITY

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Airdrie Transit Master Plan – Round Two Engagement

Project Overview:
The City of Airdrie (City), partnered with Dillon Consulting Limited (Dillon), is undertaking a Transit Master Plan (TMP) update to establish a direction for the City's transit system over the next ten years (2026-2036).

The City and Dillon conducted the first round of engagement in June 2025 to learn more about the travel patterns and perceptions of the existing and desired transit service of Airdrie residents and employees. Feedback was considered in the preparation of the TMP and proposed transit network and changes.

A second round of engagement was conducted in November 2025 to share the proposed TMP and receive feedback on the proposed transit network and changes. Engagement included an online survey, a stakeholder workshop, and a public information session. This report provides a synopsis of the engagement findings from round two.

Date: December 11, 2025
Prepared for City of Airdrie by: Dillon Consulting Limited

Executive Summary

The City of Airdrie, in partnership with Dillon Consulting Limited, is undertaking an update to the Transit Master Plan (TMP) to establish a direction for the City's transit service over the next ten years (2026-2036). This TMP update is crucial to ensuring Airdrie Transit can support the mobility needs of residents and employees, serving as a reliable transportation mode and an alternative to private vehicles.

The project includes two rounds of public engagement. The first round of engagement, aiming at understanding travel patterns and service perceptions, was completed in June 2025. The What We Heard Report for Round 1 engagement can be found here – Round 1 What We Heard Report.

The second round of engagement was conducted in November 2025 to gather feedback on the proposed transit network and changes. Engagement activities included:

- Online survey: A total of 209 responses were received and analyzed;
- In-person stakeholder workshop: 15 representatives from ten key organizations attended; and
- In-person public information session: Approximately 30 participants attended.

Overall, the participants in the round two engagement activities expressed a strong desire for Airdrie Transit to evolve with the City's rapid growth. A prominent theme heard was service availability, including:

- Longer operating hours and higher frequency across all routes, especially during peak hours and on weekends;
- Expansion of routes and service coverage to new and underserved neighbourhoods in Airdrie, key employment areas, and more destinations in Calgary; and
- Improved on-time performance.

Additionally, there was a strong call for improvements to passenger experience, such as:

- Enhancing customer technology with a single, reliable app for real-time tracking, clearer route information, and online ticket purchases;
- Regional service and fare integration with Calgary Transit, including establishing a single payment fare system and schedule coordination to reduce transfer times;
- More vehicle and stop amenities, including bus shelters; and
- Fewer transfers and more direct routes for both Intercity Express and local networks.

Based on the feedback collected in round two engagement, the Project team will modify and finalize the proposed transit network and service plan. Following this, the Project team will identify the implementation timeline, strategies, and resources required for the new network and draft the final TMP report. The final TMP report is expected to be presented to the Council in Spring 2026.

Project Information

The previous 2016 TMP planned to serve 60,000 Airdrie residents and accommodate population growth to approximately 80,000 by 2023. Today, Airdrie is set to grow at an even faster rate, with a projected population of 121,000 by 2031. To cope with this population growth, a considerable number of new developments will come online in the upcoming ten years – transit needs to serve these areas to support the mobility needs of residents.

The City's 2020 Transportation Master Plan identified the important role of transit in moving a growing number of residents both within Airdrie and to external destinations, especially Calgary. As such, there is a need to update the previous TMP to ensure the transit service of Airdrie can support an increased population and serve as a reliable transportation mode to all residents and employees of Airdrie. This TMP update consists of several tasks:

- Review existing transit services and policies;
- Engage with the public to understand perceptions of the existing and planned transit service;
- Align transit strategies with policies of the province, neighbouring municipalities, and the City;
- Plan and reorganize future transit service; and,
- Identify implementation strategies to support the proposed transit service.

The final TMP is scheduled to be completed by early 2026. After that, the City will proceed with implementing the strategies and directions recommended in the Plan.

Public Participation Approach

Objectives

Round two engagement of the project aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Present the draft TMP and solicit feedback, including the route structure, service level, implementation timeline, and customer technology;
- Provide an opportunity for interested parties to discuss partnership and integration opportunities with Airdrie Transit and strengthen the regional transit network; and,
- Demonstrate how service planning principles and public feedback from Round 1 were incorporated into the proposed plan.

Promotion and Awareness Campaign

To extend public participation and broaden access to the information, the following techniques were used to promote round two engagement activities:

- **Involve Airdrie**: Utilize the dedicated project webpage on Involve Airdrie to share information on the project and serve as a space where the public may contact Airdrie Transit with questions;

- **Poster**: Post project posters at key locations, bus stops, and on transit vehicles. These materials included a QR code to the project website and public survey;
- **App Notification**: Notify the public about the project and encourage survey completion through notification on the Transit and Hello-To-Go apps;
- **In-activity Promotion**: Promote the public survey during the Stakeholder Workshop;
- **Social Media**: Promote engagement activities through the City's social media;
- **Prize Draw**: Organize a prize draw for participants of the public information session and public Survey, in which a Route 900 adult monthly pass was drawn for each; and
- **Free Local Transit**: Waive the fare for all passengers on Route 1, 3, and 900 (section within Airdrie) during the event time of the public information session to encourage attendance at the in-person information session.

In addition to the above strategies, the local newspaper agency Airdrie City View reported on the public information session and interviewed a Dillon staff member. The report and interview content were uploaded to the Airdrie City View website.

Engagement Approach and Activities

Round two engagement activities focused on sharing the proposed transit network and changes, gathering feedback from the public and stakeholders on the draft TMP. It included a stakeholder workshop and a public information session to collect in-depth thoughts on the proposed network, and a public survey to gather both quantitative and qualitative feedback. These engagement activities are introduced below:

Stakeholder Workshop

A two-hour in-person stakeholder workshop for invited key stakeholders was conducted at Inspire on the morning of November 19, 2025. The purpose of the workshop was to present the proposed TMP, collect their thoughts, and offer an opportunity to discuss regional fare and service integration between municipalities and transit service providers. A total of 15 representatives from the following stakeholder organizations attended the workshop:

- Airdrie Regional Chamber of Commerce;
- Volunteer Airdrie;
- Airdrie Dental Studio;
- Fortis Alberta;
- Fountain Tire;
- Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs;
- Rocky View County;
- Calgary Transit;
- Rocky View County Handi Bus; and,
- Driverseat Calgary.

The workshop featured a presentation on the proposed TMP, including key feedback from round one engagement, the proposed Intercity Express (ICE) and local networks, and proposed changes to customer technology. Participants were then divided into groups to discuss their thoughts on the proposed ICE and local networks, facilitated by three Dillon staff members. The following two questions were used to inspire participants to share their thoughts:

- What do you think about the proposed ICE/ local service networks?
- What benefits or potentially unintended impacts do you see that might arise from the proposed changes?

The workshop was then wrapped up with a Q&A session and promotion of the public survey.

Figure 1: Stakeholder Workshop

Public Information Session

A three-hour in-person public information session was conducted at Inspire on the evening of November 19, 2025 and attended by two Dillon staff members. The session was to present the key ideas of the proposed TMP, gather qualitative thoughts, and answer questions from the public. Information boards were used to present ideas and interact with the public, where participants were invited to write down their thoughts on post-its and paste them on the boards. Approximately 30 participants attended the session.

Figure 2: Public Information Session

Online Survey

A public survey consisting of eight closed-ended and three open-ended questions was available online on Involve Airdrie for approximately three weeks from November 12-30, 2025. The survey included an introduction to the network planning principles and a presentation of the proposed network using maps and frequency tables. Survey participants were asked about their satisfaction level with the proposed network changes, what they liked about the network, and what could be improved. A hard-copy version was also made available and could be submitted to the project staff during the engagement activities. A total of 209 responses were received and analyzed by the project team.

Summary of Public Participation Input

Overall, the participants in the round two engagement activities expressed a strong desire for Airdrie Transit to evolve with the City's rapid growth. The general feedback emphasized the need for increased service availability, which should be reflected in:

- Longer operating hours;
- Higher frequency across all routes, particularly during peak hours and on weekends;
- Expansion of routes and service coverage to new and underserved neighbourhoods in Airdrie, key employment areas in East Airdrie and East Balzac, and more destinations in Calgary; and
- Improved on-time performance.

Participants also called for an improvement in passenger experience. This includes improving customer technology with a single, reliable app for real-time tracking, clearer route information, and online ticket

purchases, and providing more vehicle and stop amenities. Furthermore, there was a strong emphasis on regional service and fare integration with Calgary Transit, including establishing a single payment fare system similar to the Arc card system in Greater Edmonton and schedule coordination to reduce transfer times. Many survey respondents were satisfied with the proposed improved coverage for both ICE and local services, but desired fewer transfers and more direct routes for both networks. Stakeholders specifically highlighted the need for transit to support the mobility needs of low-income and vulnerable residents.

Stakeholder Workshop

General Thoughts

- The availability of transportation options affects workers' shifts. The lack of access to these options can impact employment opportunities for certain groups.
- Participants thought transfers are the breaking point for most riders. Trips with more than two transfers would deter most riders.
- Participants noted the importance of transit to low-income people.
- The plan implementation is a crucial step. It was noted that other comparable transit systems have had to revert to original plans because of poor implementation.

Intercity Express Network

- Participants desired fewer transfers required to use Route 900, which would enable them to use transit for the entire trip and avoid park-and-ride.
- Representatives from the City of Calgary recommended a planning approach to focus on providing routing and coverage over service time.
- More new development is expected to happen in NW Calgary, including the new North Calgary/ Airdrie Regional Health Centre that the transit network should plan for. Centre Street would also be a new major corridor to connect Airdrie and Calgary. These factors should be incorporated into future network planning.
- CrossIron Mills used to operate a shopping shuttle to Downtown Calgary and the airport approximately ten years ago, but ridership was insufficient. With more development in North Calgary and routes connecting the North Pointe Terminal, the ridership of inter-municipal services is expected to improve.
- Participants suggested Airdrie Transit discuss opening an East Balzac industrial shuttle with Rocky View County.
- It was noted that riders do not realize that Route 900 can be used for local travel within Airdrie for the same fare as local routes.
- The proposed plans, especially the new Route 903, should be made for connections and transfers to the University of Calgary and SAIT in time for the school year in 2026.

Local Network

- Participants reflected that the proposed network could improve coverage for vulnerable residents, including the senior homes in Sagewood (Bethany Airdrie) and East Lake (Abrio Place Lodge).
- Participants desired to bring people into Main Street and have loops into Airdrie's downtown, which the new network would effectively achieve.
- Participants noted the new local network as being very downtown- and south-focused. They mentioned that residents have a desire to travel east-west, in particular crossing the highway and train tracks. Therefore, they welcomed the idea of an overpass facilitating east-west travel. Meanwhile, there is an equal split between travel to the north and the south sides of the City.
- The location of the future train station in Airdrie in the Passenger Rail Master Plan may induce network changes to be station-centric.
- Participants recommended that Route 3 serve the new NE Regional Park in Highland Park.
- Participants recommended extending Route 4 northward to cover the future residential development in Reunion.
- Participants enquired about how special event organizers should discuss with Airdrie to open a new special event service, on which they can request one-off or annual transit events within Airdrie with the Special Events Department of the City. It was suggested that volunteers could also have their fares waived to boost volunteering participation.

Customer and Fare Technology

- Participants recommended exploration of a distance-based fare system.
- Concern was raised about the data ownership and security of new fare technology systems and preference for Airdrie to ensure that they maintain ownership of ridership data.
- Participants were uncertain whether Airdrie has sufficient fare revenue to support the new fare technology.

Public Information Session

General Thoughts

- Participants recommended that transit information should also be provided in French for the francophone population in Airdrie.
- Participants were concerned about how the improved service would be funded. It was requested that all Airdrie residents, regardless of whether they use the service or not, should pay for it.

Intercity Express Network

- Participants appreciated the airport connections provided by Route 900 and 903. There were also comments indicating a desire for a direct route to the airport.
- Generally, participants requested more connection to Northwest Calgary. While participants noted the importance of ICE routes connecting to the MAX BRT routes, other participants recommended that Route 903 connect to a CTrain station, instead of MAX Green at the North Pointe Terminal. They noted that Route 903 should be implemented to coincide with the start of the 2026 school year.

- There were strong voices for rerouting Route 900 to serve New Horizon Mall and warehouses in the East Balzac area and opening a new East Balzac industrial shuttle.
- Participants welcomed the idea of a shuttle to downtown Calgary for the Calgary Stampede and other large events.

Local Network

- Participants welcomed more local routes through more neighbourhoods. They requested services to route past all higher-density buildings, including large condo and apartment complexes.
- Participants suggested transit should extend to the areas along the 24th Street corridor before the anticipated opening of Route 1 after 2030.
- There were suggestions that the Access Airdrie service requires a dedicated service instead of the existing co-mingling arrangement with Hello-To-Go.
- More bus shelters and the use of mid-sized buses for local service were recommended.

Customer and Fare Technology

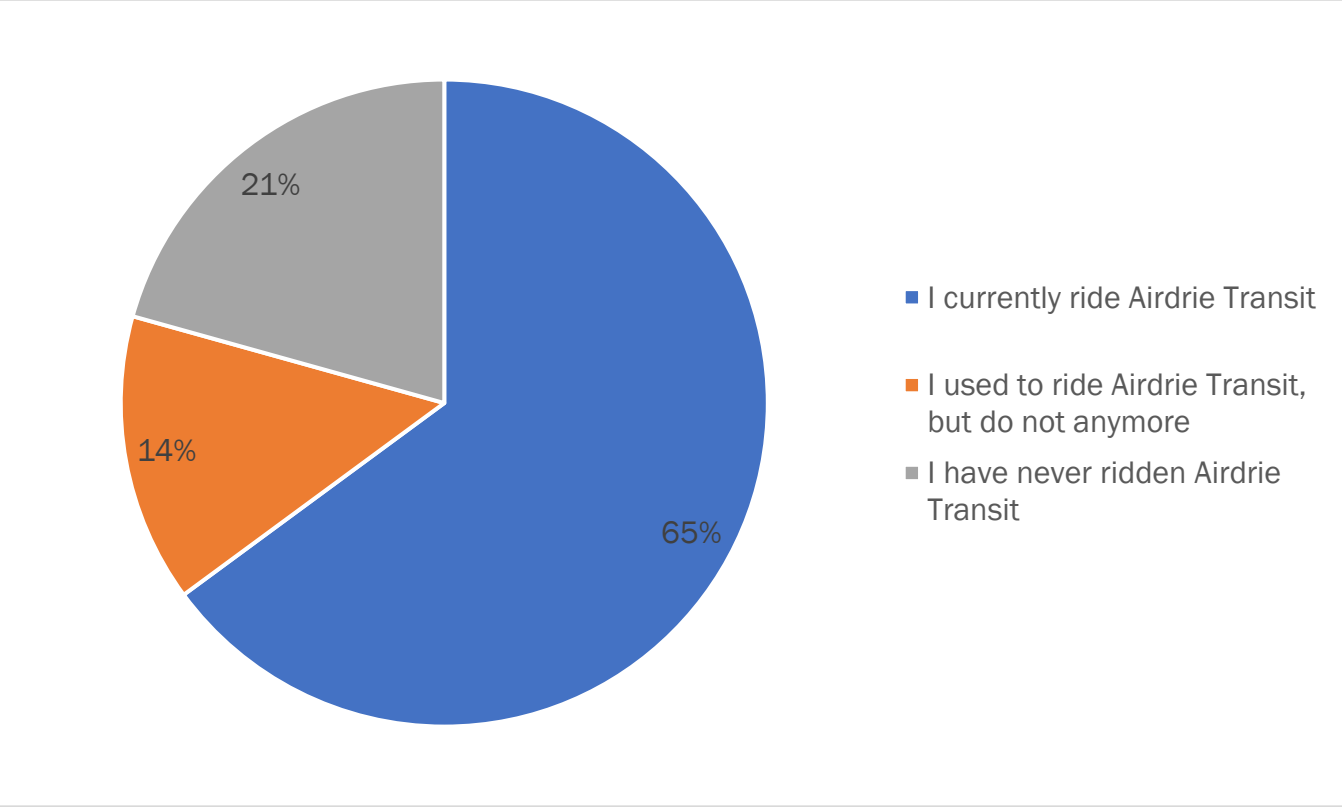
- Participants preferred the simplicity of a single app, website, and hotline for transit information and fare payment. They also requested clear and more precise route information and the estimated time of arrival on apps.
- Participants requested fare integration with Calgary, similar to the Arc Card arrangement in Edmonton.
- Participants requested the function to buy fare products online and transfer to other devices, which will enable parents to buy and transfer these products to their kids to ride transit.

Survey Results

This section summarizes the question-by-question responses received through the online survey. The number of responses to individual questions is shown as (n=x) after the survey question. The survey received 209 responses overall.

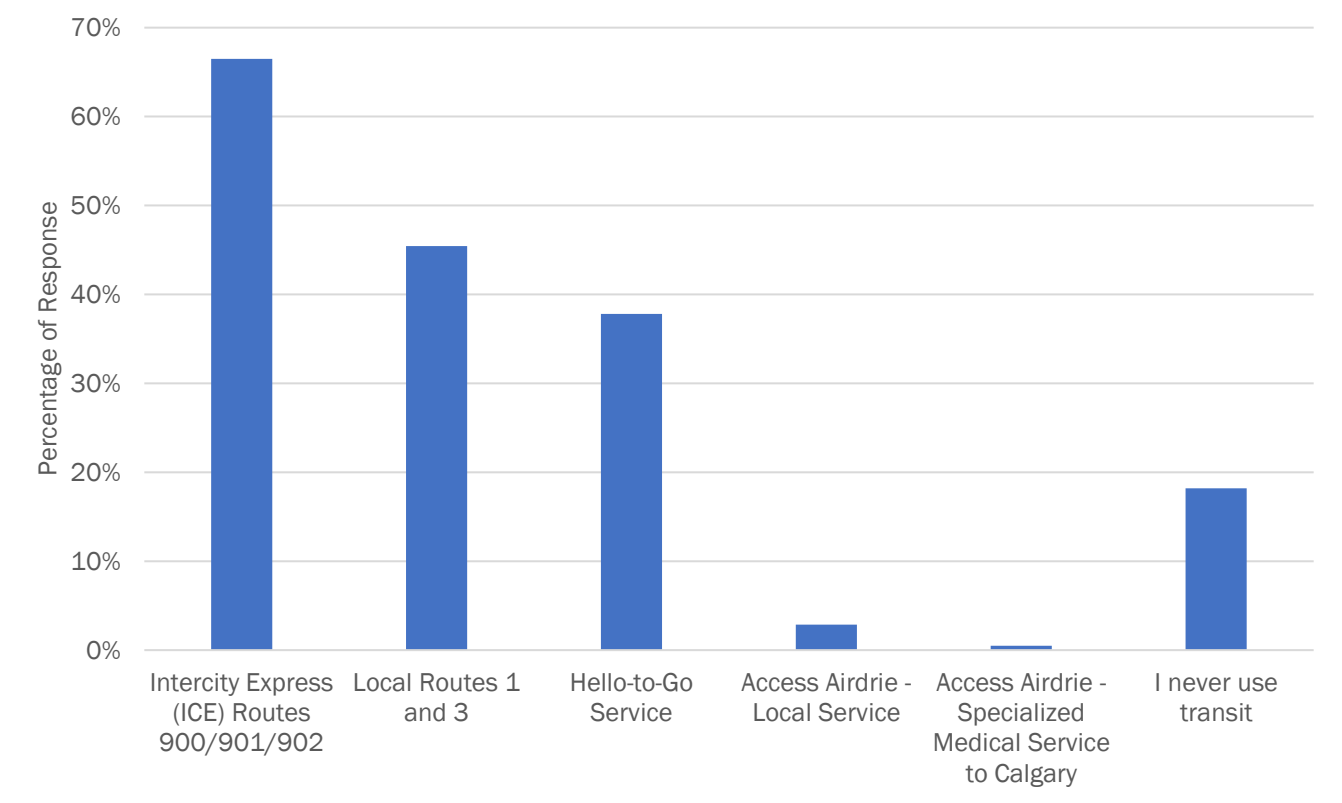
1. Which of the following best describes your use of Airdrie Transit? (n=208)

Around two-thirds of the respondents currently ride Airdrie Transit (65%). 21% of respondents have never ridden Airdrie Transit, and 14% used to ride but do not anymore.



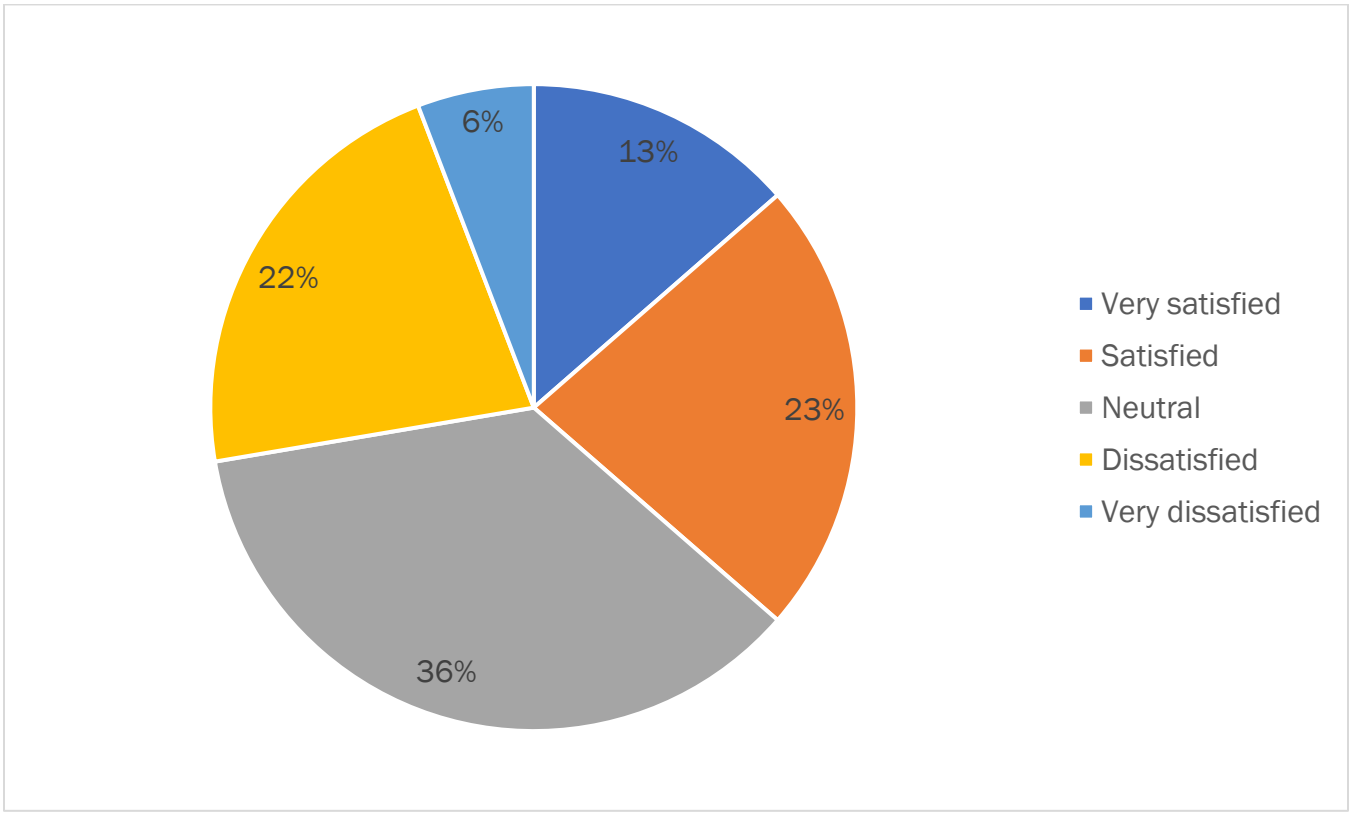
2. *What transit service do you typically use? (n=208)*

Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers for this question. The ICE service to Calgary (Route 900-902) is the most frequently used service, followed by local service within Airdrie (Route 1 & 3) and Hello-to-Go. Only 6 Access Airdrie service passengers responded to the survey. There were also 18% of respondents who never use transit.



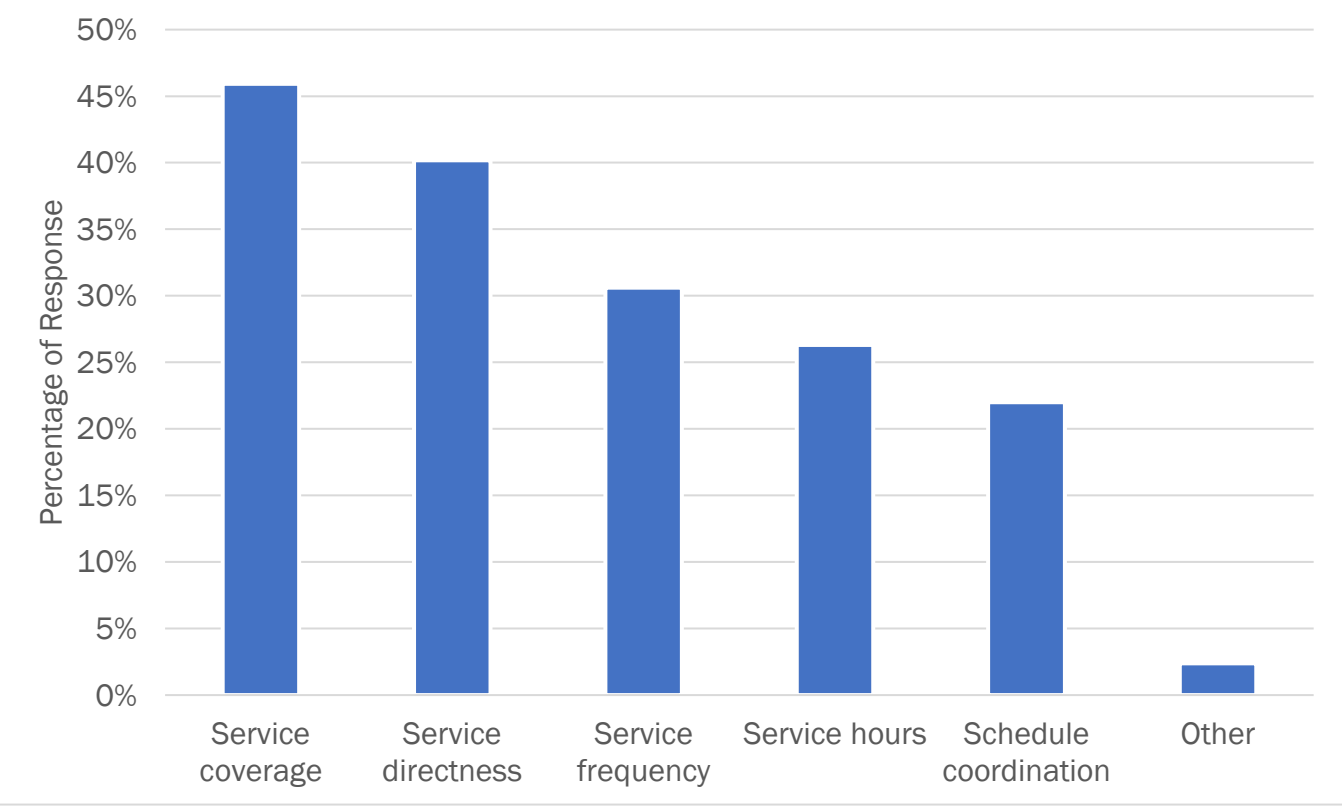
3. How satisfied are you with the proposed ICE service changes? (n=206)

Over one-third of respondents (36%) were either very satisfied or satisfied with the proposed ICE service changes, whereas approximately one-third (28%) of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Approximately another one-third (36%) of respondents were neutral about the service changes.



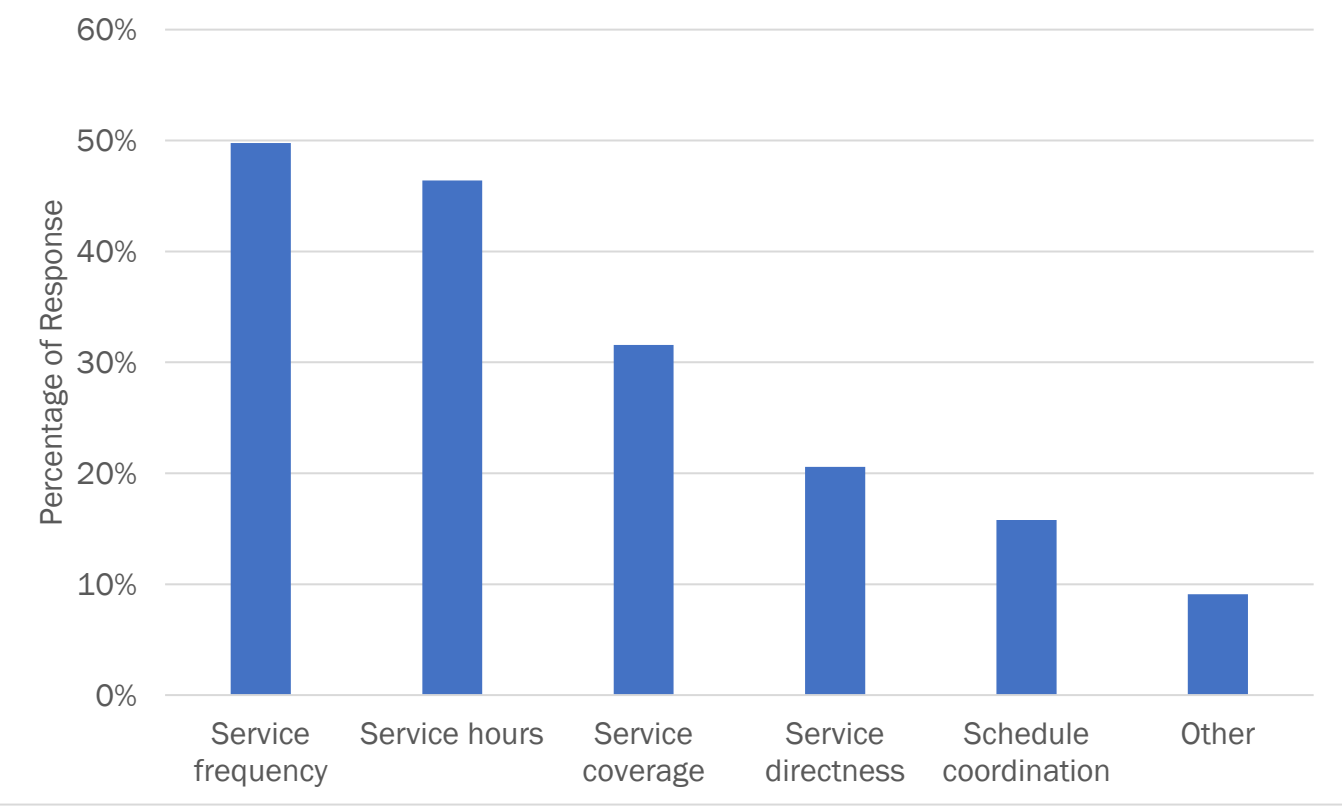
4. What do you like about the proposed ICE service network? (n=176)

Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers for this question. The improved service coverage (46%) was the most satisfactory element of the proposed ICE service network, followed by service directness (40%). There were also 31%, 26%, and 22% of respondents who liked the increased service frequency, service hours, and schedule coordination with Calgary Transit, respectively. There were also a few respondents who provided general comments and suggestions to the network, which are summarized in the analysis for Question 6 below.



5. Is there anything you would improve about the proposed ICE service network? (n=173)

Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers for this question. Half (50%) of the respondents would improve the service frequency of the proposed ICE service network. Close to half (46%) of respondents thought service hours should be improved. For the other service aspects, 32%, 21%, and 16% of respondents would like to see an improvement in service coverage, directness, and schedule coordination, respectively. There were also a few respondents who provided general comments and suggestions to the network, which are summarized in the analysis for Question 6 below.



6. *Do you have any other comments, or is there anything else we should consider about the proposed ICE service network? (n=116)*

In addition to the above responses, some respondents provided the following comments regarding the proposed ICE service network:

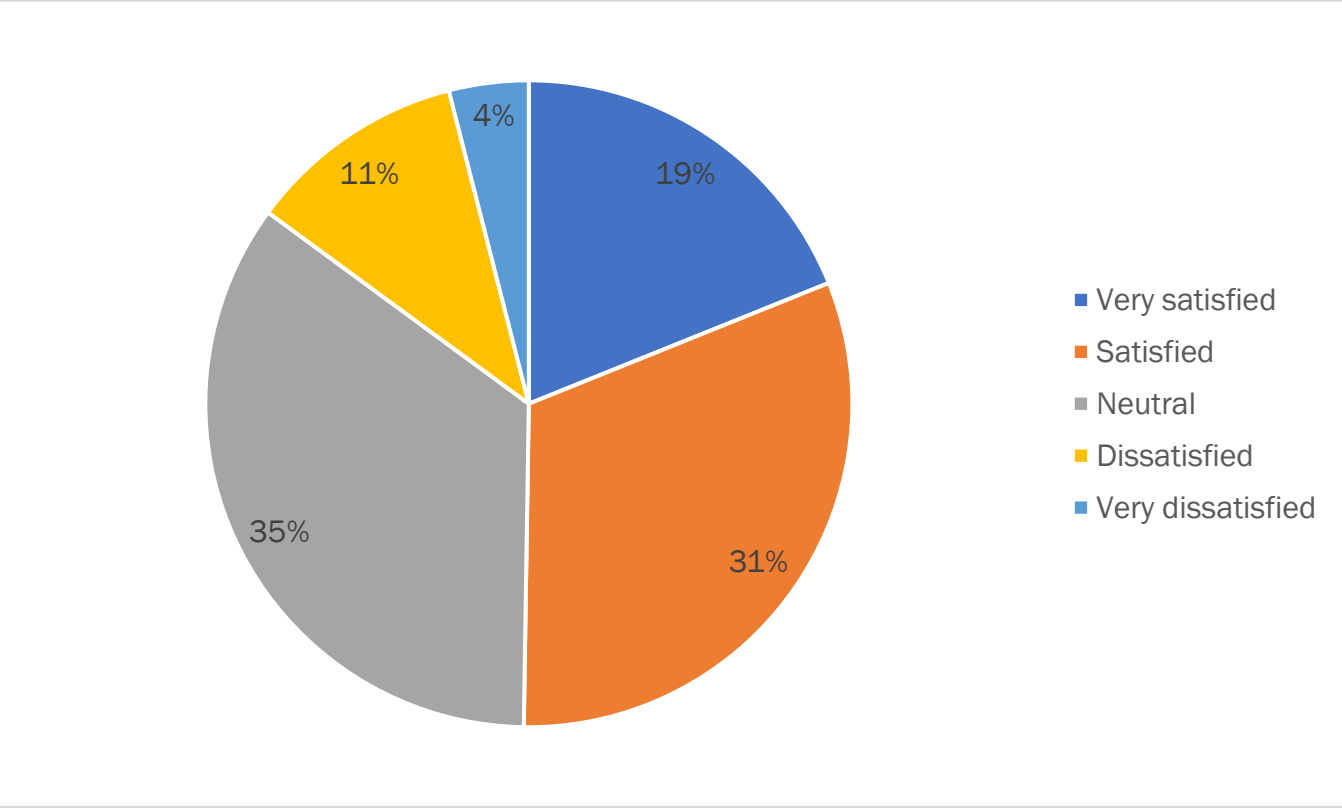
- Route and Service Coverage:
  - Increase service directness and reduce in-vehicle travel times.
  - Improve access and provide direct routes to Mount Royal University, the University of Calgary, the airport, and more key destinations in Calgary, e.g., Crowfoot LRT Station, Foothills Medical Centre, and Peter Lougheed Centre.
  - Concern about the busyness of the South Transit Terminal in peak times when ICE routes are shortened.
  - Offer bus service covering the Balzac Industrial Zone (including High Plains Industrial Park and Nose Creek Business Park) with necessary early morning and late-night coverage.
  - Consider a potential LRT or train network that links Airdrie directly to Calgary to reduce travel times and improve convenience[1].
  - Add more Route 900 bus stops between McKnight Boulevard and CrossIron Mills, including Cityscape and Saddle Ridge.
  - Avoid merging Route 901 with 902 to maintain the existing service coverage in Airdrie neighbourhoods and park-and-ride spots at Rob Ebbesen Arena and prevent longer ride times. Respondents who usually board buses at en-route stops in Airdrie neighbourhoods were also concerned that they would not get a seat after the change.
  - Avoid shortening Route 900 to maintain direct access to Peter Lougheed Centre.
  - Excitement for the new proposed Route 903. Suggest it terminates at an LRT station for a more reliable transfer.
- Frequency and Schedule:
  - Extend service hours on Route 901 and 902:
    - Provide an earlier departure on Route 902 from Airdrie, potentially at 5:30 am and arriving Downtown Calgary between 6:30 am and 7:30 am.
    - Provide a later departure from Calgary, potentially at 6:00 pm or 7:00 pm.
    - Offer non-peak hour service on weekdays and weekends.
  - Improve the frequency of all ICE routes to address overcrowding:
    - Increase the frequency of Route 900 to 30 minutes in all periods.
    - Increase the departures of Routes 901 and 902 from Calgary at around 5:00 pm to better align with typical work schedules.
  - Add additional run times to the operating schedule for higher on-time performance.
- Service and Fare Coordination:
  - Coordinate service schedules with Calgary Transit to reduce transfer time.

[1] The Alberta government is currently conducting the Passenger Rail Master Plan project to study the feasibility of various rail or LRT system options in Greater Calgary and Edmonton. The systems in Greater Calgary may include a station in Airdrie, subject to recommendations. Details of the project can be found at the following website: https://www.alberta.ca/passenger-rail.

- Establish a single payment system or mutual fare integration with Calgary Transit to eliminate the need for separate passes, which is a major limiting and financial factor for users.

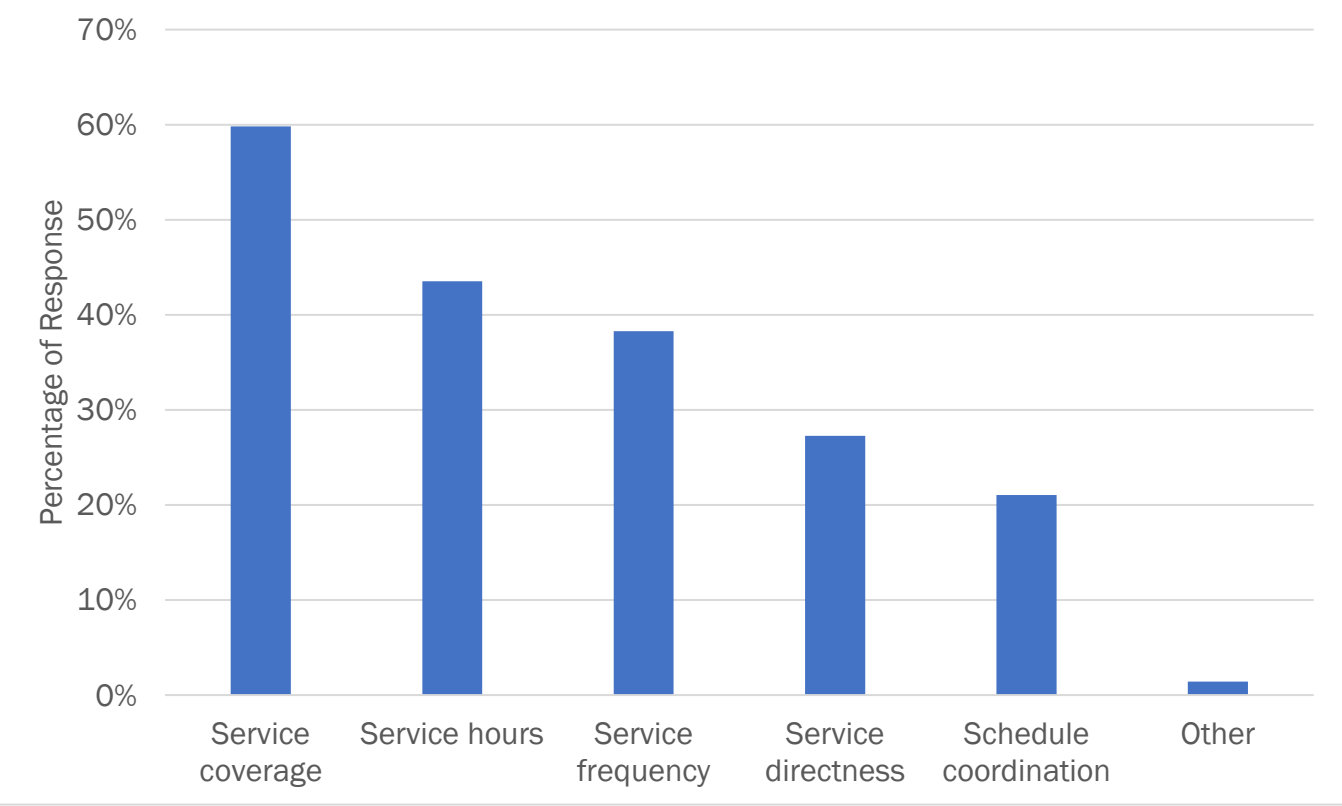
7. How satisfied are you with the proposed local service changes? (n=201)

Half of the respondents (50%) were either very satisfied or satisfied with the proposed local service changes, whereas 35% were neutral toward the changes. Only 15% of respondents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.



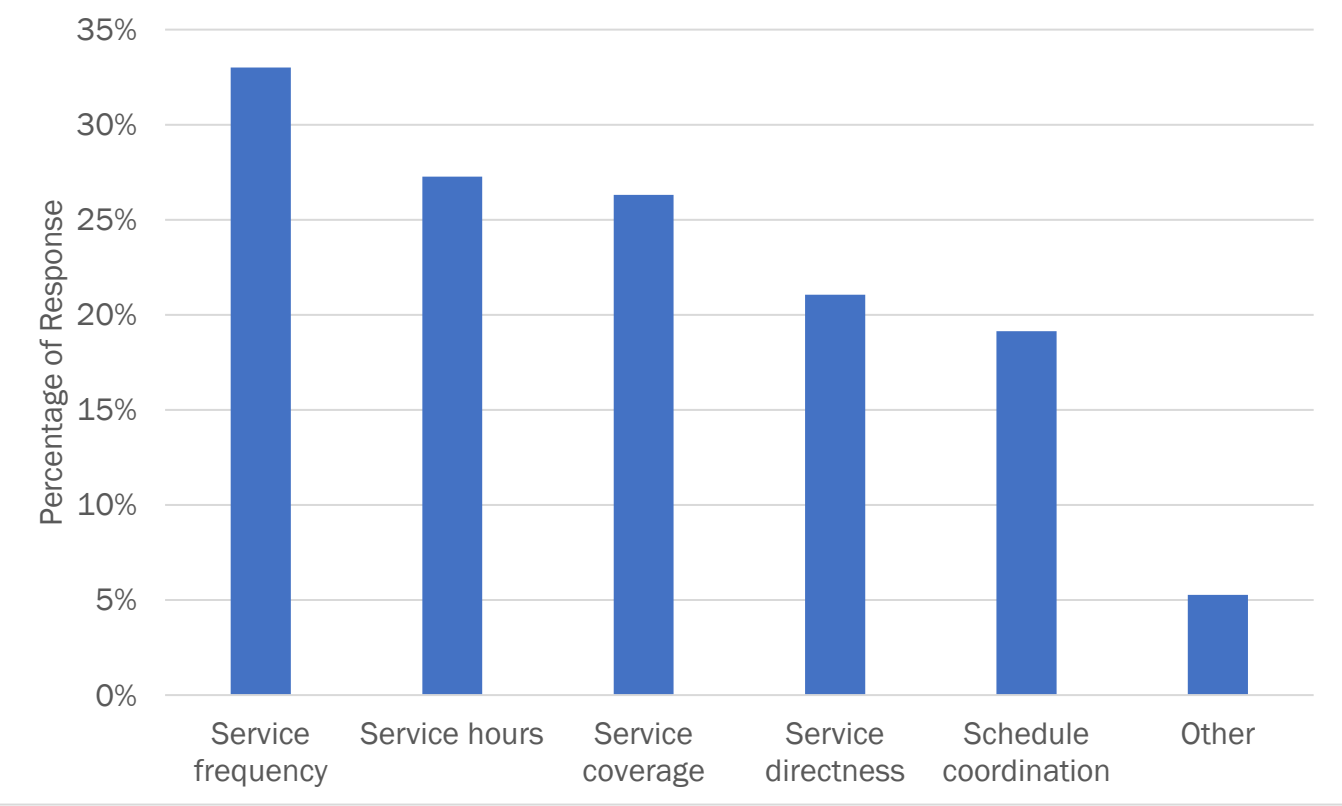
8. What do you like about the proposed local service network? (n=178)

Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers for this question. The improved service coverage (60%) was the most satisfactory element of the proposed local service network, followed by service hours (44%). There were also 38%, 27%, and 21% of respondents who liked the increased service frequency, improved service directness, and schedule coordination with ICE routes, respectively. There were also a few respondents who provided general comments and suggestions to the network, which are summarized in the analysis for Question 10 below.



9. Is there anything you would improve about the proposed local service network? (n=144)

Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers for this question. Around one-third (33%) of respondents would improve the service frequency of the proposed local service network. There were also 27% who thought service hours should be improved. For the other service aspects, 26%, 21%, and 19% of respondents would like to see an improvement in service coverage, directness, and schedule coordination, respectively. There were also a few respondents who provided general comments and suggestions to the network, which are summarized in the analysis for Question 10 below.



10. Do you have any other comments, or is there anything else we should consider about the proposed local service network? (n=83)

In addition to the above responses, some respondents provided the following comments regarding the proposed local service network:

- Route and Service Coverage:
  - Develop better neighbourhood connectivity and coverage, especially in growing and underserved areas (e.g., Cobblestone, Key Ranch, SW Airdrie).
  - Preserve east-west transit connections in the City, as many residents live on one side and work on the other. These connections should serve the Main Street corridor.
  - Design routes to interconnect along their path, not just offering transfers at the South Transit Terminal or Downtown Airdrie, for more convenient transfers.
  - Consolidate the number of routes, as the proposed network includes too many.
  - Minimize the number of bus transfers required to reduce commute times and simplify the system.
  - Keep the existing Routes 1 and 3 the same and add new routes to service all four quadrants with easy transfer locations.
  - Extend bus routes deeper into neighbourhoods to reduce long walking distances for riders.
  - Add service coverage to new and growing communities, including Chinook Gate, Wildflower, Key Ranch, Vantage Rise, Bayview, and Lanark.
  - Route buses through key employment areas like East Lake Industrial Park and East Lake Road (e.g., Propak Systems).
  - Provide a time estimate for when the new local routes will be implemented.
  - Improve the availability of Hello-to-Go, as buses are currently very hard to book for desired times.
  - Consider school bus service for students or route the local routes to schools, e.g., George McDougall High School and St. Martin de Porres High School.
  - Maintain bus stops on 8th Street.
  - Shorten the routing of Route 1 in SW Airdrie. Prioritize its implementation in Phase 1 to service the underserved SW communities.
  - Route service to the Airdrie Registry, possibly via Edmonton Trail.
- Frequency and Schedule:
  - Extend operating hours earlier in the morning to around 5:30 am, and later at night beyond 10:00 pm for evening shift workers.
  - Increase service frequency, particularly in the early mornings, as many residents start work during those hours. Peak hour frequency should be increased to 10-15 minutes, and non-peak hour frequency should be set at 20 or 30 minutes.
  - Equalize the service level for Routes 2, 3, and 5 to match Route 4 in Phase 1.
  - Provide all-day local service on weekends.
  - Offer the Hello-to-Go service during late-night/ early morning hours (e.g., 3:00 am-5:00 am).
- Coordination and Fare:
  - Improve coordination between ICE routes and local commuter services.

    - Issue a local transfer (e.g., valid for 3 hours) to allow riders to use multiple buses without paying for each board.
- Facilities and Technology:
    - Improve the Hello-to-Go booking system to improve the ease and flexibility of booking. Dedicate a service line with service representative assistance for seniors to book transit options.
    - Install a shelter at every bus stop in Airdrie.

11. Do you have any other comments regarding the proposed Transit Master Plan update? (n=88)

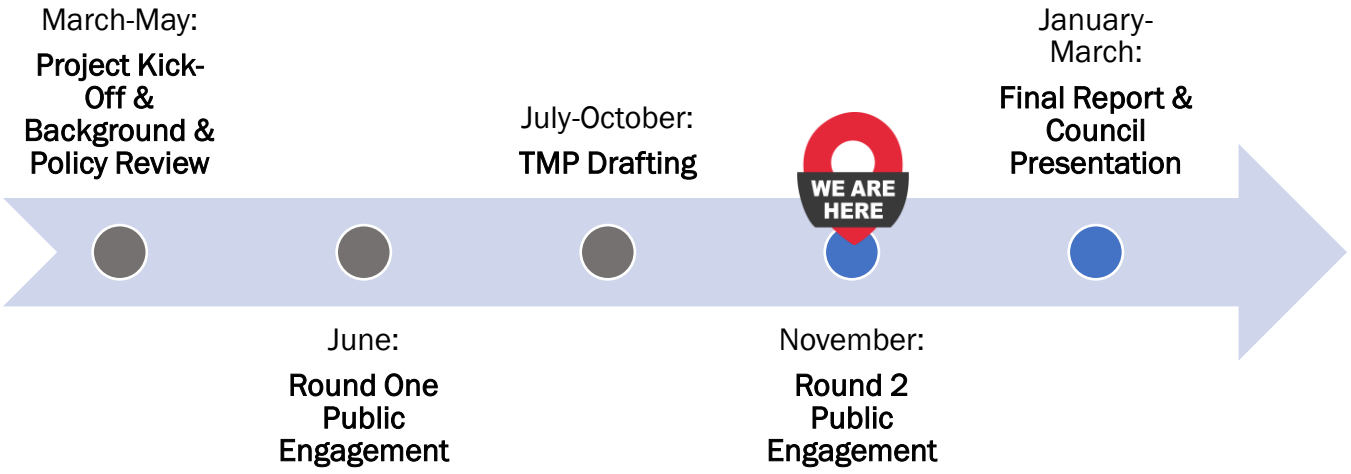
Many responses to this question reiterated the comments already noted. The remaining comments have been summarized into the following key themes:

- TMP Implementation:
    - Accelerate the implementation timeline for transit improvements, as a 10-year plan is too long given the City's current growth and immediate service needs.
    - Ensure the transit plan is future-proof to accommodate new communities being built.
- Vehicles and Facilities:
    - Procure new buses to improve service quality.
    - Ensure the bus displays show the route and number correctly.
    - Install an automatic voice announcement system on buses to announce the next bus stops for people with disabilities, seniors, and visitors.
    - Install bike racks on all buses to support multi-modal commuting.
    - Install a pedestrian crossing at the South Transit Terminal.
- Fare and Technology:
    - Reduce the fare and address the cost of riding. Offer reduced fares for kids, students, newcomers, and low-income residents to make transit a more affordable alternative to driving.
    - Require drivers to issue tickets when cash payments are made.
    - Implement a tap card system similar to Calgary Transit on Airdrie buses.
    - Create unique passes and tickets for low-income and student riders.
    - Improve real-time bus tracking.
- Service Operation:
    - Instruct drivers to wait a few minutes at stops during harsh weather when passengers may be slightly delayed.
    - Transition to city-operated transit (remove third-party contractors) to improve driver wages and retention.
- Communication:
    - Schedule regular public engagement and feedback sessions.
    - Expand the communication platforms used for posting transit updates beyond X (formerly Twitter).

What's Next & Timelines

The project team will modify and finalize the proposed transit network and service plan based on the feedback collected in round two engagement. The Final TMP report will identify the implementation timeline, strategies, and resources required for the new network. It is expected to be presented to the Council in Spring 2026. Once adopted, the City will begin the new network preparation and implementation.

In addition to report drafting and implementation, the project team will continue to facilitate the regional service and fare integration discussions between the City and municipal partners, including Calgary Transit and Rocky View County, to identify service and fare integration directions and how to proceed with the plan.



Contact Information

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