

# accessability

*Transportation services for people with disabilities*

## What a Ride

After I was injured in a diving accident 13 years ago and became a full-time wheelchair user, I quickly realized that my range of transportation choices had changed in a big way. In those days, going almost anywhere in Calgary meant either booking a trip on HandiBus or trying to find one of the few wheelchair taxis that were on the road at that time.

I am happy to report that Calgary has come a long way since my early years of trying to get around. Now, thanks to Access Calgary, I have a more convenient and affordable option for travelling to my appointments and work. I still find it pretty hard to believe that for \$2.10 (10 transit tickets for \$21) I can call, book a trip, and receive door-to-door service from one end of the city to the other. While I may have to share the vehicle with other passengers, I always get where I'm going safe and sound, despite traffic congestion or bad weather.

To think that Access Calgary now schedules approximately 4,000 trips a day still amazes me. As I write this article, there are 100 accessible taxis on the streets of Calgary. While the availability at times is not ideal, it is nice to know they are there as another option.

Calgary Transit's fixed-route buses and CTrains are also an option for the wheelchair user. Calgary Transit started with just 50 wheelchair accessible buses back in 1993. Now it

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access  
calgary



### Calgary Transit's Mission

is to provide safe, accessible, and courteous public transportation service in response to the needs of our customers.

## Calgary Transit



*What a Ride (continued from page 1)*

operates over 562 low-floor buses, with more coming every year. Having accessible CTrain cars and stations sure adds another great way of getting around.

Recently, I got a chance to look at Calgary Transit's new accessible shuttle buses.

The shuttles will allow even more people to use Calgary Transit. There are even fewer excuses now for not getting out into the community.

I think all of us should be proud of how Calgarians, City Council, Access Calgary, Calgary Transit and the taxi industry have worked together to improve the transportation choices for people with disabilities in our community. While not everything is perfect, our city is definitely moving in the right direction!

*(Article submitted by Barry Lindemann, Canadian Paraplegic Association and Access Calgary Advisory Committee).*

## Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs)

Access Calgary recently started work on a mobile data computing project. The objective of the project is to improve customer service by having all Access Calgary transportation service providers (HandiBus, Southland Transportation, Checker Cabs and Associated Cabs) communicate with Dispatch mainly via computerized devices rather than radios or cell phones. The global position system (GPS) will make it possible for Access Calgary to provide customers with more accurate pick-up times on the day of service. It will also provide the drivers with a map and turn list that will make

it easier to find the pick-up and drop-off addresses.

The technology will be implemented in two phases. Phase 1 will see the installation of the devices on HandiBus and Southland Transportation buses. In Phase 2, Checker Cabs and Associated Cabs will be migrated to the new system.

By the fall of 2008, a pilot project will be conducted using 10 buses to test the technology. This will identify any issues that need to be addressed before full implementation proceeds. The project from start to finish is expected to take between 12 to 16 months.

## Access Calgary 2007 Statistics

### Trips

Total shared-ride trips provided	902,051
Preschool trips through CHB	49,743
Access Calgary extra trips	87,662
Unaccommodated prior-day trips	3,039
Per cent of trips accommodated	99.7%

### Phone calls

Phone calls – Operations	445,426
Phone calls – Administration	10,266
Phone calls – Acrobat	390,849

### Eligibility Applications

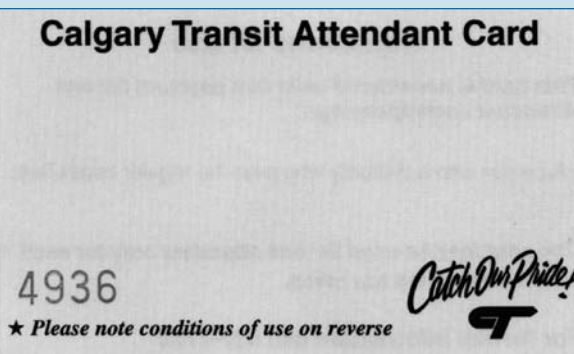
Interview	2,109
Other	3,756
Appeals	61

## Attendant Cards

Attendant Cards may be obtained by customers who require assistance on the bus or CTrain due to physical or cognitive issues. The Attendant Card allows an attendant to ride free while assisting a customer.

The Attendant Card is registered to the person with the disability and only one card will be issued. The person with the disability pays regular transit fare (cash, ticket, or pass) and presents their Attendant Card to the operator when boarding the bus, or to a Peace Officer upon request while riding the CTrain. The Attendant Card may be used for only one attendant and is not transferable.

The attendant should be seated or standing near the person they are assisting. It is recognized that there



are some valid reasons/opportunities (i.e. for training purposes) that the attendant may not want to be near the individual with a disability, however, the attendant is responsible for the customer when they are on Calgary Transit.

Please call 537-7770 for more information.

## Customer Open House

Access Calgary would like to invite you to a Customer Open House on Tuesday, June 17. There will be several stations where staff will explain what they do at Access Calgary (e.g. scheduling, booking, customer service, eligibility and operations control). Sessions will be scheduled at set times in the afternoon. The new Access Calgary video will be shown, and light refreshments will be available. Registration is required as space is limited. To register or find out more information, please call Laura at 537-7861.

## Use ACROBAT for trip cancellations

Acrobat is a 24-hour automated information line. This is the fastest and easiest way to confirm or cancel trips that occur within the next seven days. You need a touchtone phone and your Access Calgary password (usually your month and day of birth. So, as an example, April 10 is 0410). Call 537-7777 Press #1 and follow the recorded instructions from there.

## Community Resources

Many Access Calgary customers inquire about getting help with their groceries and prescriptions or assistance to medical appointments. In addition to the Access Calgary trips taken for these purposes, the following list may provide some other options.

### Calgary Meals on Wheels –

[www.mealsonwheels.com](http://www.mealsonwheels.com), prepares and delivers nutritious, affordable meals to people in need of the service. Also available: "Magic Meals," home-style frozen dinners delivered once a week – ideal for those who do not need full meal service. Contact Meals on Wheels at 243-2834.

### Calgary Seniors Resource Society –

[www.calgaryseniors.org](http://www.calgaryseniors.org). Volunteer drivers provide support for medical appointments, shopping and banking. Call 266-6200.

**Calgary Co-op** offers a free busing service for senior members (living in certain apartment blocks) each week from locations across the city. For pick-up and drop-off locations, and times, please contact your local Co-op or the Marketing department at 219-6025, ext. 6145.

**Kerby Center Seniors Grocery Delivery –** [www.kerbycentre.com/grocery\\_delivery.php](http://www.kerbycentre.com/grocery_delivery.php)

For frail, housebound seniors. Please note that an income limit is in effect.

Phone 265-0661, Ext. 340.

**Pic'n'del –** [www.picndel.com](http://www.picndel.com). An online grocery delivery service provided through Calgary Co-op.

Phone 1-866-PICNDEL (1-866-742-6335) for more details.

**Shoppers Drug Mart** is one of the many pharmacies that will deliver prescriptions to your door. Check with your pharmacy to see if they have a delivery service.

**Sunterra Market –** [www.sunterramarket.com](http://www.sunterramarket.com). An Alberta-owned grocery store that has an online delivery service.

Phone: (403) 266-2820

**Dairyland Home Service –** [www.morethanmilk.ca](http://www.morethanmilk.ca). Online shopping and grocery delivery.

## Meet the Service Audit staff

"You can't improve what you do not measure." This is certainly true at Access Calgary. We constantly strive to improve our service and a big part of that is the work of Access Calgary's Service Audit group. The three staff members of the team are responsible for collecting statistical information concerning on-time performance, on-board times, trip costs and productivity, and fare compliance.



Each day, Access Calgary's four different service providers provide approximately 4,000 trips between more than 200 vehicles. After the driver has completed their day, the work of the Service Audit group begins. The trip sheet is collected and returned to Access Calgary. Sample information from the drivers is then

entered into our database, reviewed and then used to identify the areas where we are doing well, and those where improvement is required.

"The work is challenging, and at times a little overwhelming," says Brian Cripps, team leader for the group. "However we have a good team here who are up to the challenge."

## Access Calgary – Bags/Parcels Procedure

The Access Calgary Handbook states the driver will assist with a reasonable number of bags. The suggested maximum is two grocery bags or whatever the customer can carry on their lap. If this limit is exceeded it could result in having to make other arrangements to transport the groceries home as space on the vehicle is limited.

## Handover to Caregiver (HH)

This code is applied to customers who must be met by or handed over to or from a caregiver at their departure point and their destination. To ensure on-time performance and safety, it is important that caregivers be at the designated drop-off point on time. Lateness causes service disruptions and inconvenience for other customers. If the vehicle is required to wait more than five minutes, the customer will receive a warning. Repeated incidents will be investigated and may lead to a suspension of service.

A complete description of the Handover Policy is on page 20 in the Access Calgary Handbook.

## Access Calgary Advisory Committee

The Access Calgary Advisory Committee (ACAC) is looking for new members to start in the fall. The 10-member committee is made up of Access Calgary service users, representatives from various agencies and Calgary Transit staff.

ACAC reports to the director of Calgary Transit with a mandate to provide input and advice on transportation services for people with disabilities. Members serve a one or two-year term with meetings held the second Wednesday of every month,

from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Calgary Transit Spring Gardens Administration Building (928 32 Ave. N.E.).

Anyone interested in joining this committee is asked to respond in writing, indicating their interest and any background information that would be relevant during the committee selection process. Please respond to Access Calgary, Attn: Manager, Box 2100 Station M #170, Calgary, AB T2P 2M5. Applications must be submitted by May 30, 2008.

## Access Calgary Agency Meeting

The next Access Calgary Agency meeting will be held Tuesday, April 22 from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. at the Calgary Transit Spring Gardens Administration Building (928 32 Ave. N.E.) The purpose of the meeting is to share information between Access Calgary and Agency staff/representatives on initiatives, programs and changes that affect transportation for people with disabilities. Please RSVP by April 15 to 537-7944.

## Contact numbers

Access Calgary Registration	537-7770
Access Calgary Trip Booking	537-7777
Access Calgary Customer Service	537-7777
Calgary Transit Customer Service (low-income pass)	262-1000
TTY (hearing impaired customers)	537-7977
Calgary Transit website	calgarytransit.com
Access Calgary website	accesscalgary.ca

**Accessibility is available in alternative formats.**

**Call 537-7770.**