

City fast-tracks transit system safety review

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Calgary Herald

Friday, February 22, 2008

A public safety audit of Calgary's transit system could begin as early as next week after a city committee fast-tracked a report on its mandate.

The audit, which was proposed in January, comes as Calgary Transit brings in measures to deal with growing safety concerns after several high-profile incidents around the LRT lines.

Another public awareness campaign will be launched today on the city's C-Train system.

On Thursday, the audit committee nominated three of its members to sit on a special sub-committee that will set the review's scope and come up with a series of goals and objectives to make long-term changes.

It will go to council Monday for approval, and the audit will begin soon afterward.

The sub-committee is also expected to include other aldermen, an independent consultant, a representative of the union and officials from Calgary Transit.

In the weeks since the audit was approved by council, Calgary Transit has introduced several safety initiatives -- including hiring extra protective services officers, installing cameras on its buses and having police officers patrol the northeast C-Train line.

Ward 13 Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart, said she doesn't want the safety audit to get "stonewalled" by administration because they believe they have already dealt with the problem.

Transit officials said they were confident the safety measures being implemented would be supported by the audit.

"I would be shocked if anyone could look at what we are doing and say we are subverting the work of the committee," said John Hubbell, the city's general manager of transportation, told the committee.

Since November, there have been half a dozen incidents of attacks near bus stops and LRT stations -- including the death of Arcelie Laoagan near the Franklin C-Train station.

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