

# Mobility monitor

## Transportation Data

Monitoring today,  
for tomorrow.

## This issue

Transit  
passengers  
and service

March 2008  
Issue #23

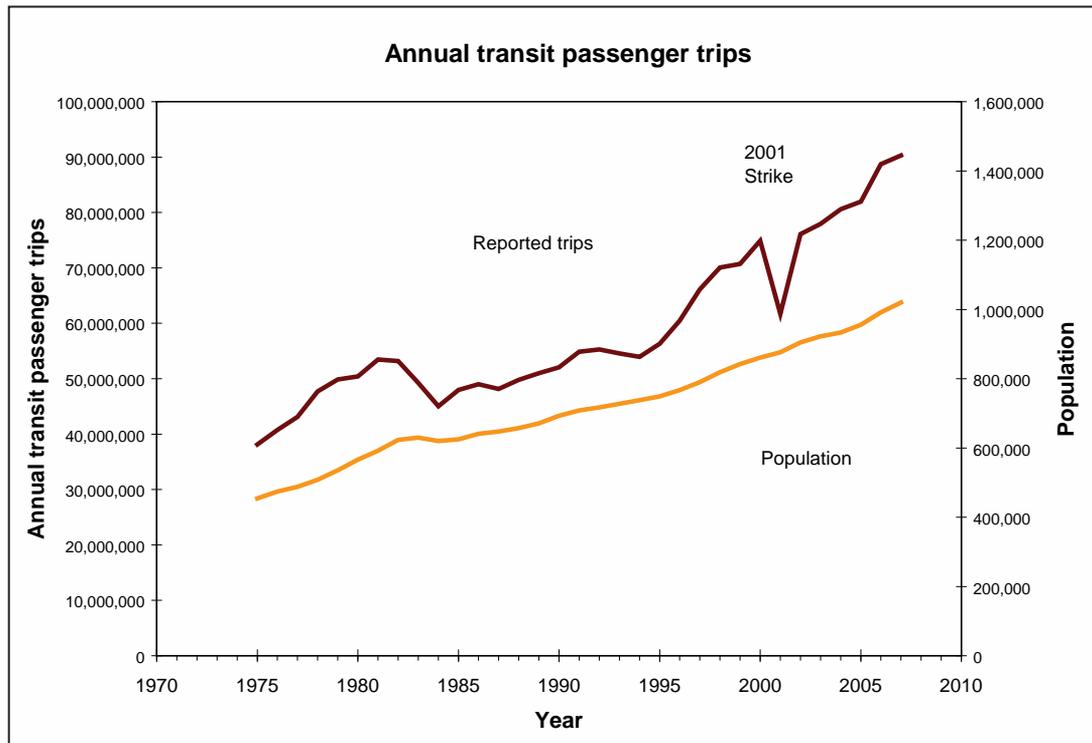
### KEY FINDING

**Annual transit passenger trips grew faster than the population from 2002 to 2007.**

Between 2002 and 2007 the number of transit passenger trips grew by 19 per cent, while the population grew by 13 per cent.

From 1994 to 2000 annual transit passenger trips grew by 39 per cent, while population grew by 17 per cent.

The term annual transit passenger trips, is a standard measure of transit demand. The Canadian Urban Transit Association defines passenger trips as one-way trips from origin to destination. Passengers whose trips involve transfers from one vehicle to another are counted only once.



## KEY FINDING

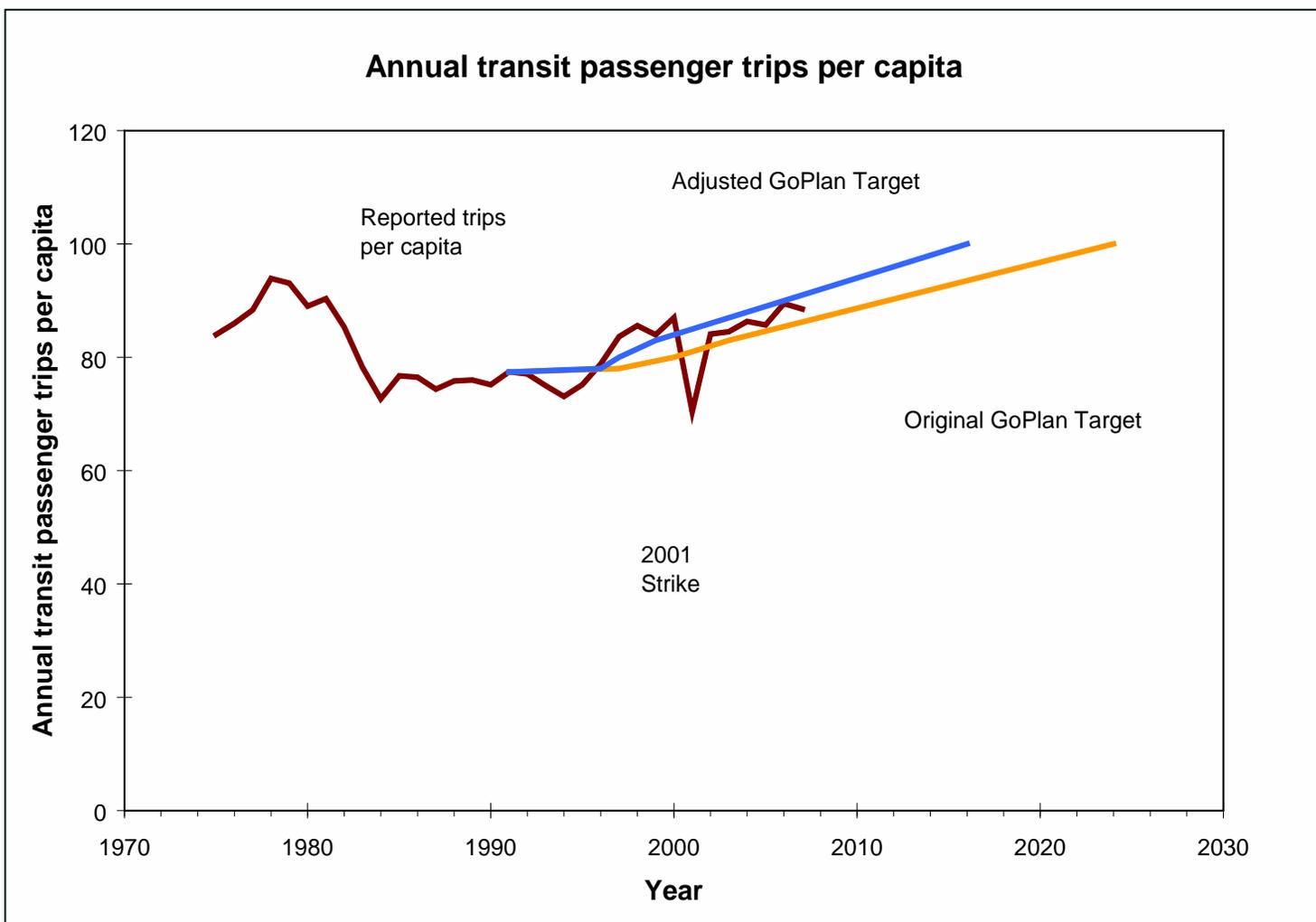
**Annual transit passenger trips per capita in Calgary grew from 86 to 91 between 2005 and 2006, and then decreased slightly in 2007 to 89.**

The chart below shows the annual transit trips per capita reported by Calgary Transit from 1975 to 2007. The chart also shows the original Calgary Transportation Plan 1995 (GoPlan) target approved in 1995.

However, since 1995 the population growth has been higher than expected. To account for this, an adjusted GoPlan target was developed by using the GoPlan population forecasts with historical populations and the most recent population forecasts. This adjusted target has not been formally adopted by the City.

After GoPlan was adopted in 1995, the annual transit passenger trips per capita grew faster than the original GoPlan targets. Until 2001 trips grew faster than the adjusted target, but have since fallen behind.

In 2006 annual transit trips per capita came close to the adjusted GoPlan target. However, in 2007 the rate fell to 3 per cent behind the target.



## KEY FINDING

**The number of transit vehicle hours of service grew by 16 per cent between 2002 and 2007. During the same period the number of transit passenger trips grew by 19 per cent.**

The total operating hours of service is the number of hours that all transit vehicles spend in operation outside garages and storage areas. It is used as a measure of the level of transit service provided in the city.

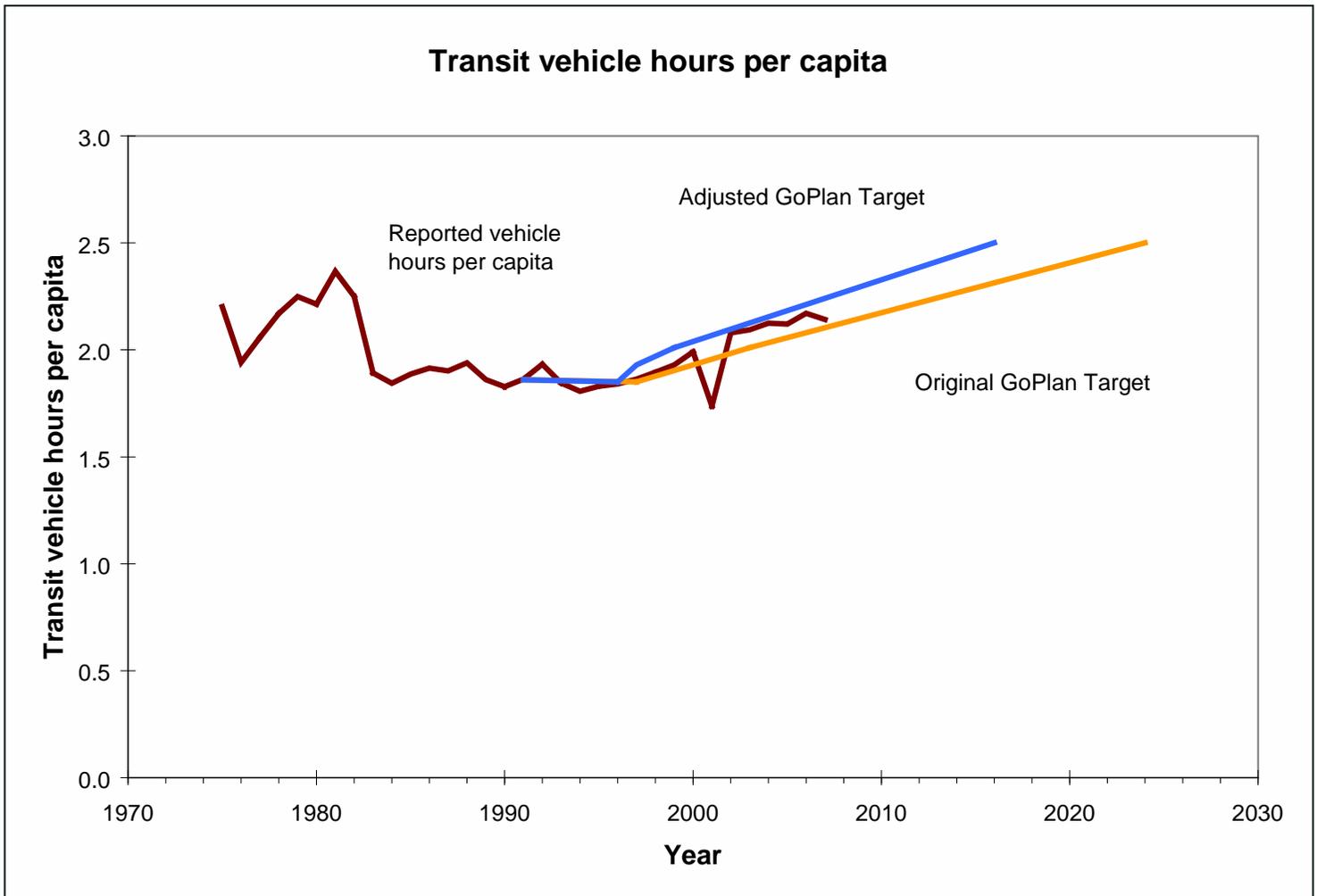
The total operating hours of service provided by Calgary Transit grew from 1,881,728 vehicle hours in 2002 to 2,184,113 vehicle hours in 2007.

Since the GoPlan target was adopted in 1995, Calgary Transit has been increasing the vehicle hours of service. Since 1999 the level of service has been exceeding the original GoPlan targets.

Since population growth has been higher than anticipated, an adjusted GoPlan Target was developed that took the higher population growth into account. This shows service growing slower than the target.

In 2007 the hours per capita dropped by one per cent to 2.14 hours per capita. This is five per cent below the Adjusted GoPlan Target of 2.25 hours per capita.

In 2006 Calgary Transit provided 2.17 vehicle hours of service per capita. This is the highest level of service provided since 1982, when Calgary Transit provided 2.25 vehicle hours of service.



## Implications

The number of passenger trips on Calgary Transit has been growing faster than the amount of service that is being provided. This suggests that a higher rate of service growth may be needed.

The level of service being provided by Calgary Transit has exceeded the target set out in the GoPlan. If higher than expected growth is accounted for with an adjusted target, then the level of service is falling behind the GoPlan target. This suggests that a higher rate of service growth may be needed. However, the adjusted target has not been formally adopted by the City. A more in-depth review of the target would be needed before a formal change could be made.

The shortage of bus drivers available to Calgary Transit is a major barrier to increasing transit service to the levels needed.

## Recommendations

Consider increasing vehicle hours of service.

Consider reviewing the targets for vehicle hours of service and establishing new targets.

## Sources of Information

The Mobility Monitor is part of the Ongoing Monitoring and Implementation Program (OMIP) for the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP). The purpose of the Mobility Monitor is to report on strategic trends and events that affect the implementation of the CTP, and to recommend future actions. The Mobility Monitor is produced by the Transportation Data division of Transportation Planning.

## How accurate and reliable are these data?

How concerned should you be by the potential for error in the data presented in The Mobility Monitor? Traffic on a road can vary by ten per cent or more from one day to the next. Estimates of transit passenger trips and transit vehicle hours come from accounting records, which provide more reliable information.

Even so, a change from one year to the next may be due to some random event, such as the weather, accidents or illness. This is why it is wise to look at trends, since changes that are consistent over a long period of time are more likely to be real, and not just the result of random events.

It must be kept in mind that no one source of information can claim to be infallible. Consideration and appropriate weighting of other sources of information is to be encouraged before making decisions.

