

GREEN LINE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is one of a series of Green Line reports (CPS2017-0469 and TT2017-0534) going forward to Committee and then Council on 2017 June 26. This intentional linking of reports to Committees of Council highlights the integrated transportation, planning and community building nature of the Green Line LRT Program and is highlighted in the Executive Summary of the Green Line LRT long-term vision (Attachment 1).

This report also includes the results of the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Concept workshops for the northern segment of the Green Line LRT (Attachment 2). The Green Line North Light Rail Transit Corridor Functional Planning Study presents the development concepts for the station areas that were created with the communities and stakeholders. Administration recommends basing future policy and land use planning work on these concepts. Based on the information collected from this report and Council's decision on the first stage of the alignment from 16 Avenue N to 126 Avenue S, we are recommending the prioritization of planning around the proposed 16 Avenue N and 28 Avenue N Stations.

TOD (Layer 3) of the Green Line LRT program is influenced by a variety of development considerations and must be considered in the context of other TOD sites throughout the city. Supportive plans and policies and effective tools are key to influencing the development of communities that benefit citizens by offering greater mobility choices. Since the Green Line LRT funding request does not include a budget for TOD or City Shaping implementation measures, a strategic approach is required moving forward. This approach must be developed in collaboration with the City Shaping implementation strategy, and it must consider City initiatives, resources, timelines and funding options that will create mutually supportive outcomes. In order to develop this effective implementation toolbox, the development of a TOD Implementation Strategy is recommended. The strategy will be based on the attached Framework, which outlines the proposed approach and deliverables (Attachment 3). The TOD Implementation Strategy will address the implementation of TOD sites along the Green Line. However, for its development, the team will look beyond Green Line TOD sites and consider existing and planned efforts around the city, in order to gain lessons learned, identify leveraging opportunities and understand barriers. The recommendations and lessons learned in the Green Line TOD Implementation Strategy may then ultimately inform a city-wide strategy for TOD sites. Developing the strategy and its recommendations will require internal and external collaboration. The strategy will be presented to Council in conjunction with the associated City Shaping Strategy in 2018 Q2.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Planning and Urban Development recommends that Council direct Administration to:

1. Use the Green Line North Light Rail Transit Corridor Functional Planning Study in Attachment 2 as the basis for policy planning and land use redesignation efforts for the 16 Avenue North/ 28 Avenue North, 40 Avenue North, and 64 Avenue North Transit Oriented Development areas; and
2. Develop a Transit Oriented Development Implementation Strategy, based on the framework in Attachment 3, and with priority given to the 16 Avenue North and 28 Avenue North Stations, and report to Council through the Planning and Urban Development Standing Policy Committee no later than 2018 Q2 and in conjunction with associated Green Line reports.

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RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED 2017 JUNE 14:

That Council approve the Administration Recommendations contained in Report PUD2017-0471.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) has been an integral part of the Green Line LRT program since planning for the Southeast segment began in 2014.

On 2015 November 09 the Green Line Southeast Transit Oriented Development Plan was approved (PUD2015-0765). Council directed Administration to "investigate Transit Oriented Development (TOD) policy amendments as outlined in the Potential TOD Policy Implementation document and to undertake implementation by the end of 2016 December".

At the 2015 December 14 Regular Meeting of Council the Green Line North Update (TT2015-0905) was approved. As amended Council directed Administration to undertake the functional planning for the North including the same elements as the Green Line Southeast alignment and stations report of 2015 November.

At the 2016 July 22 Regular Meeting of Council, through PUD2016-0631, Council approved Administration's recommendation for deferral of the Green Line Southeast Local Area Plans until the end of Q1 2017 to provide more time for adequate engagement with communities and the development industry outside of the summer months.

At the 2017 January 23 Regular Meeting, Council approved the recommendations of the SPC on Planning and Development (PUD2017-0025) to again defer the Green Line Southeast Local Area Plans to allow additional time to complete engagement on the Developed Areas Guidebook, and subsequently, to ensure alignment between the local area plans and the Developed Areas Guidebook. Council directed Administration to return to Council, through Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) no later than 2017 Q2.

At the 2017 April 10 Combined Meeting, Council approved the recommendations of the SPC on Planning and Urban Development (PUD2017-0249) to report back with the TOD Concept Report as well as a recommended framework for TOD implementation. Council also deferred the local area plans for Inglewood, Ramsay, Millican-Ogden and South Hill to return to Council, through Calgary Planning Commission, no later than 2018 Q4.

BACKGROUND

The Green Line LRT will play a significant role in receiving future growth in Calgary. In preparation to meet this demand a long-term vision is required to help guide The City's largest investment in infrastructure to date. This long-term vision is a Calgary-designed solution that invests in transit, people, places and programs that, when implemented, makes Calgary more attractive, accessible and vibrant.

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The four-layer planning approach developed by Administration is the strategy for delivering the long-term vision. Multiple aspects of a strong, vibrant city have been considered and the investments made in any one layer can be leveraged to benefit the others. The focus of the four layers are Transportation (Layer 1, Transit Infrastructure and Layer 2, Connections to Stations), Planning and Development (Layer 3, TOD), and Community Services (Layer 4, City Shaping). Planning early in the process and focusing resources within all layers will positively shape communities and benefit Calgarians on opening day and into the future. The long-term vision will only be achieved if all four layers are integrated and build upon each other.

Layers 2, 3 and 4 are primarily unfunded, other than those currently funded initiatives through separate City of Calgary programs that have been redirected towards the Green Line corridor or whose timelines have been expedited in anticipation of the Green Line LRT.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The vision for the Green Line is that of a transit service that improves mobility in existing communities in north and southeast Calgary, connecting people and places, and enhancing the quality of life in the city. The Green Line LRT will provide a fast, frequent and reliable community connected service from 160 Avenue N to Seton adding the City's third rail line and serving 90,000 to 140,000 Calgarians at full build out. The Green Line LRT is a mega program and to deliver it successfully a series of plans were developed to guide all aspects of the implementation. The long-term vision (Attachment 1), is the summary document and represents the holistic approach undertaken and will be used to inform the subsequent implementation documents as outlined in Laying tracks for delivering the Green Line LRT (Attachment 4). A comprehensive Green Line vision will be presented to the SPC on Transportation and Transit as part of the TT2017-0534 report. This document forms the City's commitment to deliver a complete program for the Green Line LRT for the benefit of Calgarians; one that is inextricably linked by the layered approach and that leverages the efforts from one another.

Connecting Destinations and Communities

In its initial construction stage, the Green Line LRT will extend 20km from 16 Avenue North to 126 Avenue S.E. This stage connects Calgary's downtown economic engine to the following major population and employment areas: 16 Avenue North, Centre City, Inglewood, Ramsay, Highfield, Quarry Park, Douglas Glen and Shepard. Its 14 stations provide connections to 191,000 jobs, over 60 community services and more than 7,000 Calgarians living in 2,300 existing affordable housing units. Four TOD areas at six stations are served by Stage 1: 16/28 Avenue North, Inglewood/Ramsay, 26 Avenue SE, Lynnwood-Millican, Ogden and South Hill.

Transit Oriented Development Opportunities

The TOD potential of each of the Green Line LRT stations was analysed based on existing policy, existing and planned development and a study of the anticipated market demand over the next 30 years. Six station areas were the subject of week-long design workshops (Charrettes) to identify opportunities and aspirations and develop feasible and mutually supported concepts with stakeholders from the communities, industry and The City.

The TOD study areas were (from north to south):

1. 64 Avenue North;

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2. 40 Avenue North;
3. 16 Avenue North/ 28 Avenue North;
4. Inglewood/Ramsay/26 Avenue SE;
5. Lynnwood/ Millican/Ogden; and
6. South Hill.

Green Line North Light Rail Transit Corridor Functional Planning Study

The summary of the concepts developed for the three northern TOD areas are presented in Attachment 2 of this report. Administration recommends that Council direct Administration to use these TOD concepts as the basis for subsequent policy planning work and land use redesignation efforts. The concepts were developed in close collaboration with residents, community associations, the development industry and City partners. As such they establish a strong foundation for the next planning steps. However, as more detailed planning occurs, and newer information is available further refinements may be necessary.

Policy and Land Use Redesignation Next Steps

In regard to the TOD areas in the North, Council has directed Administration to return with a scoping report for the Community of Highland Park in conjunction with this report (see C2017-0571).

Prior to undertaking subsequent TOD and community area planning for the North TOD communities further detailed planning is required in terms of station areas and right-of-way design. If these technical aspects are still pending finalization, it may be difficult to smoothly progress policy planning work. If advanced too soon, reconsiderations required due to technical changes may occur, adding significant community engagement and time commitment.

For these reasons Administration recommends coordinating the timing of the subsequent planning policy work in the North with progress on the technical aspects of Green Line LRT. This will also allow the policy planning work to benefit from the updated Developed Areas Guidebook as well as from tools and policy recommendations resulting from the City Shaping and TOD Implementation Strategy outlined in more detail below.

Based on this and the aspects described above, Administration further recommends that Council direct that the focus of the next policy planning efforts be placed on the area of 16/28 Avenue North. This area is the northern end of Green Line's first stage of construction. It is also already today the area with the highest employment and population density outside of the Centre City; it is a main crosstown transit node and it is a gateway to two main streets.

This proposed timing of works also benefits future land use redesignation efforts. The policy plans and the TOD Implementation Strategy will inform the best approach towards land use changes. The objective must be to introduce changes that support the desired redevelopment while also finding community support and avoiding unintended consequences in terms of market readiness.

Station Opportunity Briefs

Urban growth and redevelopment will not only occur in areas identified for specific TOD planning work. Station Opportunity Briefs have been compiled to identify the opportunities at

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each station and inform communities, developers and other City projects of these potentials. Examples of these briefs are presented in Attachment 1. The briefs will provide key information on each Green Line LRT station. This information will be used to align City efforts and encourage private sector development. The briefs should be updated as required over time to reflect new opportunities and in order to serve as a tool for coordinating City projects and promoting private sector redevelopment efforts. These actions will support efforts towards economic diversification in station areas that enhance the city's business landscape.

Green Line TOD Implementation Strategy

TOD is not a new concept in Calgary; it is integral to the Municipal Development Plan and Calgary Transportation Plan. The investments into the Green Line LRT infrastructure are creating new opportunities for TOD along Centre Street North. However, TOD faces challenges that other forms of development do not, such as required infrastructure upgrades, policy gaps and operating practices of the development industry. To address these challenges and create a toolkit that works, TOD must be identified as a corporate objective. Collaboration with City business units is required to create projects that can benefit each other. Aligning and coordinating projects will allow the capital investments being made in Green Line to be multiplied.

The framework presented in Attachment 3 provides the roadmap towards creating a Transit Oriented Development Implementation Strategy for the Green Line. It speaks to the key objectives; first and foremost among them being the prioritization of stations and implementation efforts, the identification of obstacles and utilization of best practices. It is critical that we take a city-wide perspective when developing the Green Line TOD Implementation Strategy. Doing so will ensure that the strategy will be based on an understanding of other TOD sites currently under development so as to not jeopardize their success and to learn from them. It will also seek to leverage projects in support of TOD and identify the most viable areas to foster early development success.

When complete the Green Line TOD Implementation Strategy will provide recommendations and policies for Green Line station areas. It will provide best practices and opportunities for investment around transit infrastructure. It will also consider private sector initiatives. Recommendations for next steps will be made for areas where further work is necessary. The strategy will provide guidance on the sequence and priority of local area policy work, land use redesignations, City real-estate development efforts and City infrastructure projects. This effort will require collaboration and consultation with business unit partners such as Real Estate and Development Services, Urban Strategy, Community Planning and Community Services as well as the private development sector and communities. Administration intends to report back with the Green Line Transit Oriented Implementation Strategy in 2018 Q2. These recommendations and policies may subsequently be used to also inform a city-wide TOD Implementation Strategy in the future.

Alignment with the Green Line City Shaping Strategy

The objective of City Shaping is to leverage Layers 1, 2, 3, and 4 and identify City programs and policies that support healthy, vibrant, resilient and equitable community development and to link them to the opportunities presented by the Green Line investment. As with TOD

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implementation, a City Shaping Strategy is required to identify, coordinate and leverage these opportunities. This Framework will establish the goals and strategies which will guide the development of this strategy which will be presented in the associated report to the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services (CPS2017-0469). The strategies will be mutually supportive. Therefore the TOD Implementation Strategy will be developed in close coordination with the City Shaping Strategic Implementation Plan.

Green Line Urban Integration Volume 1

Unlike the existing Red and Blue lines, which run along the edges of communities or in the middle of major transportation corridors, Green Line will run through the heart of communities. This central alignment makes Green Line more accessible to residents and businesses and it supports redevelopment in the right locations. However, the integration of the line into its host communities must be done properly. Thorough consideration must be given to the adjoining neighbourhoods, public spaces, services and street networks. The Green Line LRT Urban Integration (GLUI) Volume 1 is one of the key documents developed as a result of the identified need to better illustrate and capture the essence of how the physical Green Line LRT infrastructure would integrate i.e. fit, enhance, and transform the various communities along the line. The development of GLUI will be presented to the SPC on Transportation and Transit as part of the TT2017-0534 report.

Alignment with Planning and Development's Ongoing Initiatives

When developing the TOD Implementation Strategy and GLUI the Green Line will continue to work closely with the Developed Areas Guidebook and Main Streets projects. A further refined version of the Guidebook is expected in 2018. Coordination with Planning and Development's work on a comprehensive planning policy strategy (which will review and align MDP, Guidebooks, local area plans, Land Use Bylaw, and other policy initiatives) as well as Community Planning's annual policy work plans will also be essential. Workplan integration between these projects and initiatives will support the development of coordinated and mutually supportive projects and policies.

Close collaboration will also continue with the Main Streets project, in particular because Centre Street is common to both projects. Implementation of Main Streets policies and land use amendments on Centre Street will occur once alignment and station planning for the Green Line North corridor has been approved and in coordination with the TOD Implementation Strategy. These considerations will inform Community Planning's Work Plan.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

In 2015 and 2016 a total of six one-week-long TOD charrettes were held to study opportunities for Transit Oriented Development at ten Green Line stations. Administration continues to meet with stakeholders along the corridor to discuss opportunities to integrate the Green Line LRT with existing and future developments.

Strategic Alignment

The Green Line LRT long-term vision is in accordance with Council's priorities and align with the Government of Alberta's and Government of Canada's strategic objectives.

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The TOD planning efforts and the proposed further steps towards the development of a TOD Implementation Strategy align with City policies including the Municipal Development Plan, Calgary Transportation Plan, RouteAhead, ImagineCalgary, Main streets and the Triple Bottom Line.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

The Green Line program will result in City Shaping outcomes which include social, environmental, and economic benefits for generations to come.

Transit Oriented Development at Green Line stations provides numerous benefits to Calgarians and The City. The development of multi-storey residential and mixed-use buildings in close proximity to the station is an efficient use of the valuable land commodity and reduces the need to develop more land area on the part of the private development industry and The City. More efficient and higher intensity use of land increases property values and municipal tax revenue.

Creating dense, walkable station areas makes efficient use of installed utility infrastructure and supports the viability of municipal and community services. Building out TOD nodes in serviced areas also reduces the need and cost of extending utility and municipal service infrastructure into new areas.

Higher density development in station areas that attracts new residents and employees provides the critical population densities required to continue to support facilities and businesses in established communities and ensure community health. The construction of multi-storey, urban buildings supports the development of the public realm in the form of plazas and open spaces that serve the community and residents. It also allows for the implementation of energy-efficient buildings and the use of renewable energy by providing the development scale required to support district energy installations.

Creating walkable areas where various destinations are located close to each other promotes social interaction between Calgarians and personal health by encouraging walking. Walkable areas reduce the dependence on the automobile, which benefits both individuals and The City. Individuals benefit by reducing the cost of necessary car ownership and use. Less reliance on the car also provides more independence for young, elderly and mobility-impaired Calgarians. Fewer vehicles places less strain on municipal streets and communities in terms of traffic, parking requirements and maintenance. By lowering the number and use of cars, less surface parking and costly underground parking is required. This opens up lands for other uses, such as buildings, facilities, plazas and open spaces that benefit all Calgarians. It also reduces the cost of construction.

Social

As a city-shaping initiative, Green Line supports mixed-use and mixed income communities to reach community aspirations for vitality, sustainability and affordability. Mixed income communities are financially accessible to all Calgarians. A major benefit of increasing access to rapid transit is the overall lowering of transportation costs, and the fundamental link between cost and affordability of housing, especially lower income households.

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Environmental

Green Line presents opportunities to lead Calgary into the next phase of environmental sustainability and accountability through direct reductions in GHGs through the use of renewable energy, emission gains with fewer internal combustion engines in use, facilitating densification around transit villages and our civic facilities being built to LEED standards. The recommended first stage of Green Line, from 16 Avenue North to 126 Avenue S.E. allows for the reduction of 30,000 tonnes of GHG emissions per year.

Economic

Investing in Calgary's future results in economic resiliency through job creation, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, with direct benefits resulting from construction, operations and maintenance, increased property values, increased income tax revenue, savings for households, productivity gains, and contribution to economic diversification. The Green Line LRT will contribute to the economy in Calgary and within Alberta in many ways.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

Maximizing the public investment, enabling the highest and best use of lands at transit stations and developing the primary LRT transit network to provide mobility options to all Calgarians are corporate priorities.

The work required to deliver the TOD Implementation Strategy as outlined in Attachment 3, and future policy work will require staff resources from the partner business units identified in the Framework. These resources are required in addition to those already committed to implementing approved work plans. The successful implementation of Transit Oriented Development and the integration of the LRT into the communities may require a reconsideration of policy work priorities. Prioritization of Green Line may also require a re-allocation of resources to the Green Line. In addition, the services of consultants may be required for certain tasks.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

There are no direct capital budget implications associated with these recommendations.

Risk Assessment

The Green Line program has many risks that are being tracked and actioned. The following risks are the focus of Administration's ongoing risk management as it relates to TOD:

Ongoing Developments

Ongoing developments along the Green Line alignment may not align with TOD principles and City Shaping efforts. The proposed developments may directly impact the construction of the Green Line.

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Displacement Effects

Policy planning and land use redesignations in support of TOD may cause displacement of existing residents and changes to the character and affordability of communities (“gentrification”). Concerns and opposition from communities may be encountered. The TOD Implementation Strategy and Green Line working with its City Shaping partners and communities will strive to mitigate such effects.

Timeline Alignment

Policy planning and land use redesignations in support of TOD need to align with the timelines for the functional planning areas outside of the opening day initial stage of construction (16 Avenue N to 126 Avenue SE.) for the Green Line and with City Shaping efforts. This will minimize the need to amend plans and ensure plans are not developed too far in advance of implementation.

Community Disruption due to Construction Activity

Green Line construction will cause disruptions to residents, businesses and traffic. Minimizing and mitigating these disruptions is addressed in the Green Line’s “Taking Care of Business Initiative”. The mitigation of disruptions due to redevelopment activity will be explored in the TOD Implementation Strategy.

Market Uptake of TOD

Redevelopment activity is dependent on numerous factors that affect the real estate market. Market uptake of new TOD sites may fluctuate. The TOD Implementation Strategy has been proposed to mitigate this risk.

Funding

Funding may be required for additional investments in infrastructure and policy that go beyond the primary Green Line LRT infrastructure to connect the line to communities, promote ridership and enable the desired redevelopment activity. These infrastructure investments and policy projects are not currently funded nor included in the Green Line funding request to the Province and Federal Government.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Basing future planning efforts on the results of the TOD charrettes leverages the investments already made and represents the visions supported by the stakeholders. An implementation strategy is required that identifies, coordinates and prioritizes City initiatives to create mutual benefits and effective implementation actions. This will leverage the immediate and future Green Line investments and implement the Municipal Development Plan and Calgary Transportation Plan. Implementing the recommendations will address obstacles for Transit Oriented Development and lead to greater certainty for both the development industry and communities.

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ATTACHMENT(S)

- Attachment 1: Green Line LRT Long Term Vision Executive Summary and Example Station Opportunity Briefs
- Attachment 2: Green Line North Light Rail Transit Corridor Functional Planning Study
- Attachment 3: Green Line: Framework for a TOD Implementation Strategy
- Attachment 4: Laying the tracks for the Green Line LRT