



Crowchild Trail Study

Peer Review Summary September 14, 2016

Project overview

The City of Calgary is conducting a transportation study to identify short-, medium- and long-term upgrades for Crowchild Tr. between 24 Ave. N.W. and 17 Ave. S.W.

Crowchild Tr. is an important roadway within Calgary's overall transportation network. Its function is critical to both the land use and transportation needs of Calgary as it continues to grow and redevelop in the coming decades.

The study consists of a six-phase process that provides multiple opportunities for Calgarians to provide feedback through each phase of the study.

Ideas and feedback received from stakeholders and the public will help The City make better decisions for the future of Crowchild Tr.

Peer Review objectives

In Phase 4: Concept Evaluation, Calgarians helped evaluate seven preliminary concepts for the corridor. Based on feedback from the Phase 4 engagement activities, and the project team's technical evaluation, the project team began developing draft recommendations to be shared with Calgarians in Phase 5: Concept Selection and Recommendation.

Phase 5 engagement events were scheduled for late September 2016. Two distinct long-term options for the central section of the corridor were evaluated in developing a draft recommendation: a surface option and a tunnel option. The evaluation process and resulting draft recommendations for this area were the focus of the peer review.

The project team assembled a "peer review" or "expert panel" to obtain external feedback on the process used to arrive at the draft recommendations for the central section of the corridor. Objectives included:

- Determine if experts in different fields can easily understand how the project team moved from evaluating concepts in Phase 4: Concept Evaluation to providing a recommendation in Phase 5: Concept Selection and Recommendation; and
- Determine how experts in different fields would tell the story of how the recommendation was formed.

Peer Review participants

Aziz Merali, P.Eng. – Transportation Planning & Design

Aziz has over 35 years of hands-on experience in planning, design and contract administration of transportation facilities in Western Canada. He completed functional planning studies for over 150 km of urban freeways with some 50 freeway interchanges. Aziz has successfully managed a number of multi-discipline projects and has considerable experience in public consultation.

Joel Leisch, P.Eng. – Transportation Planning & Design

Joel Leisch is well known for his in-depth knowledge in transportation planning and design. Joel has over 50 years of experience as a consultant, working with various transportation agencies in the United States, Israel, Japan, Canada, Greece, and New Zealand. His technical expertise include geometric design of freeways/interchanges, intersections and roundabouts. He is also the author of the ITE, Freeway and Interchange Geometric Design Handbook.

Tim Creelman, MEdes, ACP, MCIP – Urban Planning

Tim Creelman is currently a member of the University of Calgary's Senate. His 23-year career in urban and regional planning within The City of Calgary included managing activities for The City's strategic regional interests mandated

Crowchild Trail Study - Peer Review Summary Report



by City Council. This included addressing interests of regional planning under the Province of Alberta's new regional planning framework, annexation project management, community planning, strategic policy development, and industrial growth management. He retired as Manager, Regional Corporate Initiatives Division with the Planning, Development and Assessment Department at The City of Calgary in 2013. Tim is actively involved in the consulting industry and working on City Council's Ward Boundary Commission studying Council governance matters.

Dr. Jyoti Gondek, Ph.D. – Urban Planning

Jyoti Gondek holds a PhD in urban sociology and is currently the Director of the Westman Centre for Real Estate Studies at the University of Calgary's Haskayne School of Business. Jyoti is also a member of The City of Calgary Planning Commission and the Chair of Research and Education for the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Alberta. Over her career, she has published works in both academic and applied contexts. She also operates her Calgary-based company, Tick Consulting, providing expertise in strategic planning, research, communications, and stakeholder engagement.

Anne Harding, M.A. – Public Relations and Communications

Anne Harding currently works for Suncor Energy as a Senior Advisor in Stakeholder & Aboriginal Relations. In addition to her full time job, Anne operates a Calgary-based consulting company, Forum Stakeholder Relations. Forum Stakeholder Relations provides consulting and public engagement services in the government and education sectors. Anne has worked with over 50 Aboriginal communities across Canada and served on the board of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Canada.

The following members of the project team participated:

- Feisal Lakha, City of Calgary, Project Manager
- Kirsty Neill, City of Calgary, Engagement Advisor
- Chris Delanoy, ISL Engineering and Land Services, Consultant Project Manager
- Jana Sinclair, Russell Public Relations, Consultant Engagement Lead
- Alana Getty Somers, ISL Engineering and Land Services, Consultant Technical Lead

What we asked

The peer review panel were provided project information including: engagement process infographics, City Council reports, Phase 3 and Phase 4 public open house display materials showing the preliminary concepts, and concept evaluation criteria. They were asked to review these materials and provide comments from the perspective of their specific area of expertise (transportation planning, development/real estate, community/urban planning, and public engagement). In addition, the panel was asked to provide comments on how they would arrive at a recommended plan decision. The peer review panel was asked to consider the following questions during their individual preparation for the facilitated workshop:

1. From the materials provided, is it clear to you how the draft recommended plan was developed?
 - a. If not, what information would help clarify how the draft recommended plan was developed?
 - b. If yes, what materials were most helpful to you in understanding how the draft recommended plan was developed?
2. From your point of view, what are the greatest challenges with the draft recommended plan?
3. From your point of view, what are the most successful or positive elements of the draft recommended plan?
4. What suggestions would you make for taking this draft recommended plan to the public?
5. What other considerations should we be aware of before sharing the draft recommended plan broadly?



What we heard

The following is a high level summary of what we heard from the peer review panel:

- There was support and understanding of the public engagement process to date. The panel understood the process of how the project team worked with the public to reach the draft recommendations.
- There was mixed feedback from the panel on how the evaluation criteria were grouped and how the ratings were determined. Some felt that the ratings could vary depending on how the criteria were grouped, and others felt that the groupings could be broken down further.
- Combining the benefits of both the surface option (Kensington Rd. Interchange) and tunnel option (Central Tunnel) concepts to develop a hybrid concept was supported and well received. The peer review panel believed development of a hybrid concept demonstrated that public input and evaluation of both concepts were considered equally by the project team, and extracted the benefits of both concepts in arriving at the draft recommendation.

For a verbatim listing of all the input received at the Peer Review, please see the [Verbatim Responses](#) section.

Next steps

The project team will use the feedback from the Peer Review to refine the draft recommended plan to be presented in Phase 5.



Verbatim Responses

- Having over 20 years' experience in public sector community planning, I am impressed with how thorough your public process is especially in light of the complexity of the material for stakeholders to digest. The preparation and distillation of the 11 goals connecting the three key principles, and consistently checking these at public consultation meetings and through on-line material helps create long-term public trust in the process. I strongly advise against characterizing many issues as "non-technical" and "intangible". From the list of issues in the material, many that fall under these headings tend to be resident and general public issues. You don't need these titles unless you were to weight them. Simply blending all issues suggests all are equally important in the review process. The public would quickly pick up on this if "their" issues were labelled in this way, especially as "intangible".
- As you move toward public meetings on the evaluation and recommended plan selection, I strongly encourage each event to begin with a presentation followed by traditional open house panel reviews and one on one discussions. This helps achieve two key goals: first, it levels everyone's knowledge at the same time, and second, helps to answer questions before they are asked. You should not invite general questions during the presentation format as that could serve to ignite dissension on such an emotional study for some. Your City of Calgary "Engage" staff on the team may have different advice on this, but having presented sensitive planning information to meetings of hundreds of people during emotional annexation processes has taught me this successful approach. The evaluation criteria component is especially well designed. The metrics link back to the goals and there is sufficient comparative narrative to convey the nuances between the IC and Tunnel options. As was indicated, unlike the south and north corridor options, there isn't the obvious black and white choice here. Nuanced trade-offs are obvious and explained well. The use of three colours is brilliant. It is an excellent tool to use especially in a column slide format during presentations. However, I feel many of the colours didn't fit the narrative in each box. You have a copy of my slide deck recommending colour changes, many of which actually bolster the IC choice over the tunnel. It is very important that the financial cost slide be at the end of the deck as you have it, in order to soften anticipated public reaction that the decision is already made based on cost; best that the comparative criteria slides be reviewed first.
- Overall the public consultation approach and careful evaluation and selection process is an excellent piece of professional work combining technical analysis and sincere commitment towards achieving often disparate goals and objectives among your various publics. If I was an adjacent resident or business owner, I would be satisfied that I was heard, and the recommended plan reflects many of my interests. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input.
- 1) Great job on the community engagement process design for the first 4 phases of the project! The fact that the project goals were developed by a team of diverse community representatives is the foundation for great process. Furthermore, it appears that those goals carried through to phase 4 of the project and participants were asked to develop and evaluate ideas based on those goals, while learning about technical constraints, benefits, and trade-offs along the way. Really well done.
- 2) My concern is that at phase 5 it appears as though new evaluation criteria has come into the process to develop a recommendation that (a) was not developed or endorsed by community; (b) has not been shared or discussed publicly in phases 1 to 4, and (c) appears to carry more weight in the process to develop a recommendation. This is a huge red flag for me for the following reasons: first, because introducing this new criteria in phase 5 undermines the fabulous work that was done to establish common goals and principles in the first four phases and will decrease trust in the process. Second (and most importantly, I think), because it appears to me that the evaluation against the new criteria is what drove the recommendation toward the interchange option, thereby demonstrating that public input - while valued and appreciated - did not significantly influence decision-making in the end.
- 3) The hybrid inter-chunnel (if it is indeed a viable option) mitigates these concerns. There will still be new evaluation criteria introduced that the public hasn't seen before (and you'll need to be clear and transparent about where these criteria come from and why they're as important as the community developed/endorsed goals). However, the creation of a "third way" is a very strong demonstration that the new criteria do not in fact trump public input, but forced the project team to look for alternatives that address the benefits desired by the public as

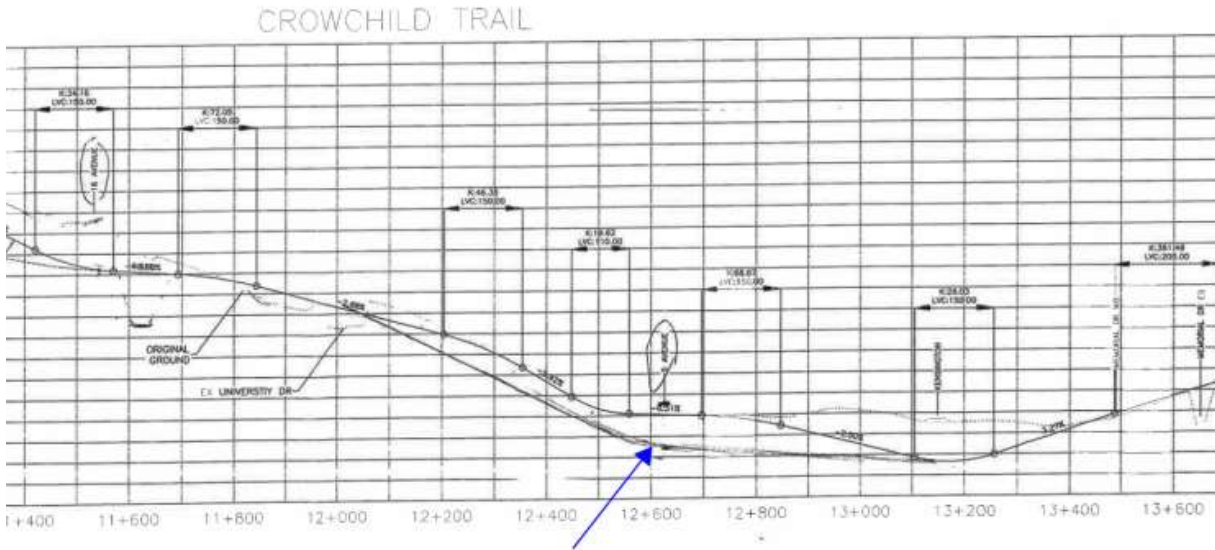
Crowchild Trail Study - Peer Review Summary Report



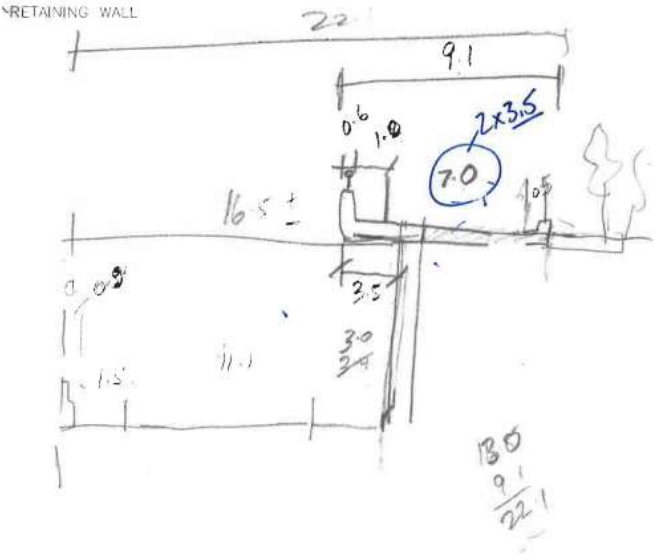
well as the constraints and very valid concerns (such as public safety and cost) of the City. I firmly believe that presenting the third option will build trust rather than breaking it down.

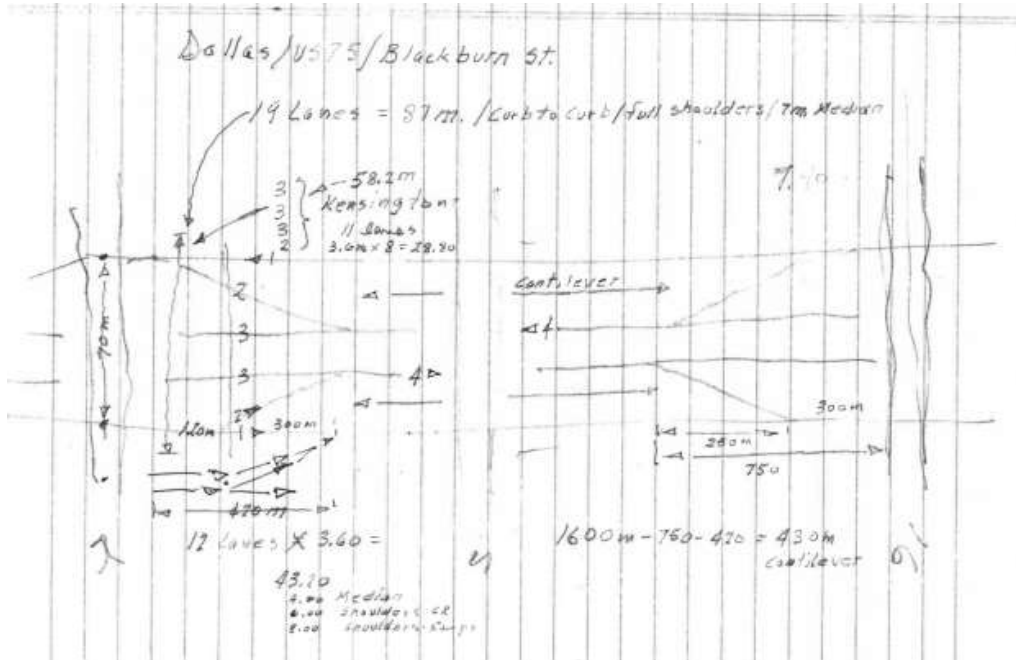
- 4) A few more quick notes that I'd like to reinforce:
 - Just because the central section was the most complex for the project team to deal with and involves the hardest decision doesn't make it the most important or interesting in the eyes of every member of the public. Be sure to present the full corridor recommendation up front, including how noise attenuation, parks, transit, etc. have been embedded in the plan (and that that's something new). Then get into the specific sections and know that you'll have to have more backup information for the central section because there will likely be the most questions about it.
 - Definitely present what you're thinking in terms of staging/timing. This helps people see themselves in the recommendation and picture how the plan will impact their lives (short, medium & long term). A very important step in bringing people along.
 - Use a storytelling approach to talk about how you arrived at the recommended plan (again, for the whole corridor, not just the central section). You've already started the story by talking about 2012 and why this time is different. Continue to back up that humble and transparent message by talking about how the benefits of a tunnel (urban boulevard) are not as likely as was originally thought (at least in terms of timing), and consider admitting that the (what appears to be) new evaluation criteria (such as public safety/flood considerations, environmental impact, and cost) were purposely downplayed in the earlier phases in an effort to have participants talk about their values rather than their fears/concerns because that's a more effective way to generate ideas and concepts (I assume).
 - In terms of the infographics, try to simplify them to align with the storytelling approach. More "here's how things went down" rather than "here are the numbers about who showed up". The idea selection infographic is amazing because it makes it look like public input was valued on the same level as technical input and I do believe that's what happened in the process. As you're designing additional infographics to tell the story in phase 5, make sure you consider not just the words and images on the page but also the relative size of images and what they represent (i.e. if the new criteria are just as important as the public goals and policy goals, make them all the same size. But if the new criteria were valued more in landing on a recommended plan, they should be bigger and you should be able to explain why.)
- Context of why we're doing this - addresses needs of multiple stakeholders: adjacent residents, neighbouring communities, commutes by car, commutes by transit, pedestrians, bikes, City, businesses in area, businesses as destinations en route. Need to look at other cities, other designs (i.e. pictures, statistics of improved traffic flows, pedestrian safety). Council priorities include: universal access (0 at-grade crossings), pedestrian's safety and access and innovative solutions. The lived experience needs to be operational as this allows you to discuss the non-quantifiable stuff. Use variables to define "impact" and "value". Impacts could include number of properties/houses, quality of life, construction cost. Value could include time saved to access communities, property values, business foot traffic or vehicle access, safety, universal access. Show humility: we had to go the experts – they presented hybrid. Discuss the uncovering of the desirable and undesirable unintended consequences. Include opportunity to repurpose City owned spaces along the corridor. Can be hybrids not "canned" park or residential – innovation to serve the local community (not increase vehicle trips). Use time as a comparison variable and outline each option for which generation will benefit today, or 2-3 generations away. Discuss the phasing/staging and cost comparisons (estimated). INTERCHUNNEL. Just saying!
- Specific transportation design suggestions, including:
 - Suggestion of a "hybrid" alternative using cantilevered frontage roads (example location: Dallas, TX I-75 at Knox St)
 - Suggestion to lower the profile of Crowchild Tr. at 5 Ave. N.W. to achieve less visual and noise impacts
 - Include a wider bridge at 5 Ave. N.W. for landscaping and pedestrians/bikes
 - Suggestion to close the northbound Crowchild Tr. exit to University Dr. and move the traffic destined to the University of Calgary to 24 Ave. N.W.
 - *See hand sketches and images from the peer review panel on the following pages.*

Crowchild Trail Study - Peer Review Summary Report



Crowchild Trail Study - Peer Review Summary Report





Crowchild Trail Study - Peer Review Summary Report

