

Background

Calgary and Chestermere staff, along with Chestermere's consultant HDR, have been working collaboratively since October 2019 on a Feasibility Study for an intermunicipal transit connection between Calgary and Chestermere, with Calgary Transit as a potential service provider.

Context

Chestermere Committee of the Whole (COW) received the Chestermere Calgary Transit Feasibility Study on 2020 October 13 for discussion.

The Feasibility Study comprises five phases with key findings:

1. Context and Background Review

The background review found support for a regional transit connection in the Calgary Transportation Plan, RouteAhead, and the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board Transit Background Report. The peer review concluded regional transit to Chestermere is comparable in distance, population, and operating logistics to existing successful regional service in Beaumont, Fort Saskatchewan, Spruce Grove and Airdrie.

2. Service and Routing Options

The Feasibility Study focused on three service options. Chestermere Council directed exploration of the first two service options. The project team added the third option, which represents a hybrid. All options begin in downtown Calgary, follow the MAX Purple route and transitway, and extend to Chestermere along Chestermere Blvd. All options consist of two, two-way trips during the morning peak and two, two-way trips during the evening peak to maximize revenue potential. The three options are:

- Formal express route to downtown Calgary with several stops in Chestermere;
- Peak-period extension of Calgary Transit's MAX Purple route with a single Chestermere stop; and
- Hybrid Calgary Transit MAX Purple extension with several stops in Chestermere.

3. Ridership Estimates

HDR developed ridership estimates using Calgary Transit express routes with a similar travel time and population to Chestermere, the phase one peer review, and the 2017 East-West Regional Transit Feasibility Planning Survey. Estimates indicate Chestermere will generate 40 to 80 inbound passenger trips per day.

4. Cost and Revenue Estimates

Calgary Transit provided cost estimates based on the principle of full cost recovery. The values represent inclusive gross annual operating costs, and do not include reductions to total cost paid after accounting for fare revenue, or any additional costs Chestermere may incur.

Service Option	Gross Annual Operating Cost Estimate
MAX Purple Extension, Single Chestermere Stop	\$120,000 – 140,000
Express with Multiple Chestermere Stops	\$290,000 – 335,000

MAX Purple Extension with Multiple Chestermere Stops	\$170,000 -195,000
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Chestermere may choose the regular Calgary Transit fare (\$3.50) or charge a premium fare (\$5.00) similar to Calgary Transit's airport service. Based on ridership and revenue recovered from fares, Calgary Transit will charge Chestermere the net cost.

On 2020 October 20, Chestermere City Council directed their administration to proceed with next steps on a transit connection with The City of Calgary, with a focus on a hybrid MAX Purple extension service option with multiple stops in Chestermere.

Following on Chestermere City Council direction, the Mayor of Chestermere has sent Mayor Nenshi and Calgary City Council a letter confirming the City of Chestermere's administrative commitment to jointly, with The City of Calgary, advance the transit service agreement negotiations. The project has been added to their 2020 and 2021 work plans and they request a reciprocal letter of commitment to allow for formal negotiations to proceed.

Previous Council Direction

Chestermere-Calgary Transit Project Timeline

DATE	REPORT NUMBER	DIRECTION/DESCRIPTION
6/18/2020	IGA2020-0676	Chestermere-Calgary Regional Transit Feasibility An update outlined timing and next steps: "If Calgary and Chestermere City Councils direct their Administrations to proceed with the Regional Transportation Feasibility Project, Administrations for both cities will begin negotiation and development of a transit service agreement including operating costs and cost recovery. The possible implementation of a regional transit connection between Calgary and Chestermere is still feasible for 2021 as originally planned."
9/19/2019	IGA2019-1194	Calgary and Chestermere – Update on Regional Transit Discussions (Verbal) That the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee direct Administration to continue discussions with Chestermere Administration exploring the possibility of transit service between Calgary and Chestermere and report back to IGA with an update on discussions by Q2 2020.
2/4/2019	VR2018-0121	City of Calgary, City of Chestermere Direction (Verbal) To begin discussions with Chestermere Administration exploring the possibility of transit service between Calgary and Chestermere and report back to IGA with an update on discussions in Q4 2019.