

Green Line Report to
Green Line Board
2021 June 18

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
GLB2021-0975
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Green Line Taking Care of Business Q2 2021 Update

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Green Line Board:

1. Receive Report GLB2021-0975 for the corporate record.

HIGHLIGHTS

- This report presents an update on how The City will work to support businesses impacted by Green Line LRT construction. It includes a summary of consultation completed to date as well as an assessment of the applicability of the research, lessons learned, and outcomes of the targeted interviews conducted with businesses impacted by past construction projects.
- Administration was directed through a Notice of Motion (Attachment 1) to report back in advance of construction of the Green Line LRT project.
- This report is being brought to the Green Line Board for information.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** This report describes the framework for how The City will help businesses and communities prepare for and manage the impacts of Green Line LRT construction.
- **Why does this matter?** Green Line LRT project is the largest infrastructure project in Alberta's history. Construction will be ongoing for several years and it will be disruptive. With 15 communities and hundreds of businesses operating along the Council approved alignment from 126 Avenue S.E. to 16 Avenue N, and at a time when businesses are recovering from the impacts of a prolonged economic downturn and the global pandemic, The City is committed to planning proactively for business continuity, ensuring businesses are informed and working to develop initiatives to support businesses during Green Line LRT construction.
- Since Council's Notice of Motion, the project team have undertaken a comprehensive review of best practices and lessons learned from comparable projects (Attachment 2), as well as commissioned research through targeted interviews with impacted businesses (Attachment 3). The programs which are most successful have dedicated teams that are committed to clear and trusted communication, strong stakeholder relationships, and direct contact between citizens and the project team. This key learning is at the core of the business support program being developed for the Green Line LRT project.
- To date consultation with impacted businesses has been focused on meetings with Green Line's Business Insights Panel (BIP). Since launching in January 2021, the panel has met five times and members have had the opportunity to share local insights and help the project team to better understand business perspectives. Input is well aligned with the research and lessons learned review and emerging themes have been summarized in a What We Heard Report (Attachment 4) and been used to inform a set of draft program objectives (Attachment 5).

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- The approach to support businesses and communities is grounded in our understanding of stakeholders and business operations. Equipped with this information, The City is better able to develop proactive plans for business continuity and help to minimize construction impacts. This understanding helps the team to develop relevant communications, identify and begin working with stakeholders who will be most impacted by construction; it will be used to establish program priorities and will support evidence-based decisions around business support initiatives.
- *Strategic alignment to Council's citizen priorities:* A prosperous city, a city of safe & inspiring neighbourhoods, a city that moves, a healthy & green city, a well-run city.

DISCUSSION

The Green Line LRT is the largest infrastructure project in Alberta's history and will take several years to build. The project covers a length of 20 km and is made up of various infrastructure components – each with different construction impacts. The methods for constructing the project will be determined through the procurement process and means specific construction impacts may not be known for years. It also means that in some cases, the team may need to help businesses and communities to be prepared for different construction scenarios.

To guide development of Green Line's approach to supporting businesses during construction, a review of recent local, North American and international public transit infrastructure mega-projects was conducted. Of the projects reviewed, the most successful included effective and timely communications programs, resourcing that allowed for responsive issues resolution and for stakeholders to easily access project staff, opportunities for ongoing feedback, and programs where support initiatives were well aligned with the needs and interests of affected stakeholders or businesses.

There is no "one size fits all" business support program. Business support initiatives can generally be categorized into six types: 1) Access and construction management, 2) Business capacity building, 3) Marketing and promotion, 4) Procurement, 5) Workforce training, and 6) Financial support. Multiple initiatives can be implemented in combination and in response to specific construction impacts and changing stakeholder needs. A growing number of measures are focused on leveraging partnerships where possible.

The following three initiatives have broad applicability for the Green Line LRT project and are closely aligned with the outcomes of the targeted research conducted and input from the Business Insights Panel (BIP).

- **Access and construction management** initiatives will look to address traffic congestion and loss of parking, as these were among the biggest pain points for businesses experiencing construction. Attention to minimizing impacts on businesses recovering from the impacts of the pandemic was also a repeated theme.
- **Business capacity building** will be explored with additional input from the BIP and the broader business community, including an online discussion forum and digital marketing opportunities. These types of sharing platforms could allow for an opportunity to promote businesses be linked to The City's business hub.
- **Marketing and promotion** initiatives were felt to have broad applicability to Green Line businesses. Interview results indicated that making signage larger and more prominent

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near construction sites would be “very helpful” and signage and online marketing opportunities, including opportunities to link to local parking availability information was shared by members of the BIP.

As for the last three types, opportunities to support small and medium local businesses through procurement and workforce training initiatives have been identified. This aligns with the Community Employment Benefits requirements in the project funding agreement and will be advocated for during the development of the redefined procurement strategy. Financial support initiatives are more complex to develop and implement and can have broader impacts for The City beyond a single project. T team will focus on the first five of the six initiatives as those are considered most applicable support initiatives for Green Line business stakeholders.

As we continue to build the program and as more detailed construction information becomes available, we will use this information together with our understanding of the project and our knowledge of various business support programs to ensure that we are working to implement initiatives to support stakeholders most impacted by Green Line LRT construction.

Next steps:

- Building out Green Line’s business database (including business operations survey)
- Utility relocation project pre-construction plan for Victoria Park, Beltline and Downtown

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

To date, four components of the engagement program have taken place: 1) Initial online public engagement including program promotion and BIP recruitment, and information was shared at public information sessions for Segment 2 Functional Plan, 2) Regular meetings with the BIP, 3) In-person and virtual alignment “walks” with members of the BIP, and 4) Complementary research to learn from other Canadian business experiences.

Recruitment of the *Business Insights Panel* was initially targeted on Business Improvement Area and Community Association representatives. Engagement ensures local business perspectives are considered and is being used to inform the framework for the business support program. To date it has focused on a) providing program updates, b) informing program objectives, c) collecting ideas for business support and communication initiatives, and d) understanding community context, issues, needs and anticipated construction concerns.

The project team will continue to engage impacted businesses to share information about the project and to inform the initiatives throughout the construction of the Green Line LRT, and as the program evolves and COVID-19 challenges decrease, membership of the BIP will be expanded.

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IMPLICATIONS

Social

The Stage 1 Council-approved alignment connects with 15 communities and while Green Line will contribute to the overall social well-being of the city, during construction it will be disruptive. The project team is working to build strong relationships with Calgarians living and working in these communities and is committed to staying connected and helping Calgarians to prepare and manage construction.

Environmental

Through the access and construction management initiatives, the business support program will look for creative ways to maintain access and minimize impacts to parks and public spaces during construction. By promoting a healthy, active lifestyle, it can increase use of transit, reduce preference for car travel and help reduce GHGs.

Economic

As we prepare for Green Line LRT construction, our understanding of businesses and their operations will assist the project team to plan for business continuity. We will be focused on building business capacity while leveraging internal and external partnerships to support and promote impacted businesses and stimulate local economies in and around the Green Line LRT construction areas.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

Green Line's business support program is funded as part of the Green Line LRT project. There is no impact to the current operating budget from this report.

RISK

If construction impacts are greater than The City anticipates due to construction complications or unanticipated impacts, then businesses may experience greater disruptions than they were prepared for. To mitigate this risk, a business database, including business operations survey and contact information, is being developed so we can plan for business continuity and contact an impacted business, share information with the team and advocate for the business in the event that an issue arises.

Expectations for what business support will look like need to be managed based on the level of disruption that is anticipated. To mitigate this risk, the project team undertook a significant lessons learned review and established a Business Insights Panel to understand potential impacts and which initiatives are most effective. Regular communication to gather feedback will ensure that the initiatives being implemented are supporting stakeholders and provide value.

If The City does not have the resources to adequately respond to and support impacted stakeholders, Calgarians may lose trust and confidence in the commitment to help prepare for and manage the impacts of LRT construction. To mitigate this risk, a dedicated team will communicate and engage with stakeholders based on the level of disruption they are likely to experience so stakeholders know what to expect, how to stay informed and who to contact with questions or concerns.

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ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – Notice of Motion (NM2015)
2. Attachment 2 – Lessons Learned Report
3. Attachment 3 – Probe Research Report
4. Attachment 4 – What We Heard Report
5. Attachment 5 – Business Support Program Objectives

Department Circulation

General Manager	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Michael Thompson	General Manager - Green Line	Approve
Wendy Tynan	Director – Stakeholder Relations	Approve