

## **CROWCHILD TRAIL STUDY – PROJECT UPDATE**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update to Council on the achievements of the Crowchild Trail Study.

Since the last project update, Phase 2 of the study concluded with confirmation of the Crowchild Trail Study Project Goals. The project goals were developed and finalized through multiple rounds of stakeholder and citizen engagement between June and September 2015, inclusive and were endorsed by the Project Steering Committee October 9, 2015. Over 3000 ideas were generated for project goals, gathered by the project team from over 300 participants at 23 in-person engagement events, and over 1000 interactions and hundreds of ideas submitted online. From this input, eleven project goals were developed based on three key principles: Maintain and enhance bordering communities; Improve travel along the corridor; and Improve mobility across the corridor. Two City policy goals were also advanced by the project team that complement the eleven project goals, ensuring the study outcomes align with City Policy.

Phase 3 of the study launched in late-October 2015, with the objective to gather ideas, concepts, and options for short-, medium-, and long-term changes to Crowchild Trail. Throughout October and November 2015, the project team engaged Calgarians through a series of workshops, drop-in sessions, sounding boards, and online engagement to solicit ideas for Crowchild Trail. The project team also worked with participants to explore the benefits, constraints, trade-offs, and implications of ideas brought forward. At the time of writing this report, the project team has collected over 500 ideas under review by the project team. Throughout February and March 2016, Calgarians will have an opportunity to learn more about the ideas, build on the ideas and concepts developed to date, and options that may not move forward for further consideration. Calgarians will also be asked to begin evaluating the remaining ideas against the three project key principles.

Phase 3 is scheduled to be complete early-Spring 2016. The six phase project plan is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2016, with a final report to be presented to Council Q1 2017.

### **ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the SPC on Transportation and Transit recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information;
2. Accept the process outlined in Phase 3 and 4 of this study to develop and refine short-, medium-, and long-term options for Crowchild Trail, in accordance with the Council approved Transportation Corridor Study Policy; and
3. Direct Administration to report back to the SPC on Transportation and Transit with an update on the Crowchild Trail Study no later than July 2016.

### **RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT, DATED 2016 JANUARY 20:**

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report TT2016-0012 be approved.

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### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

At the July 28, 2014 Regular Council meeting, Council adopted the Transportation Corridor Study Policy as presented in report TT2014-0400. Council further directed Administration to restart the Crowchild Trail Study in Q3, 2014.

At the July 22, 2015 SPC on Transportation and Transit meeting, Council accepted Administration's recommendation to report back to Committee with an update on the Crowchild Trail Study no later than January 2016.

### **BACKGROUND**

In July 2014, Council approved the Transportation Corridor Study Policy as recommended by Administration in report TT2014-0400, and directed Administration to restart the Crowchild Trail Study. Crowchild Trail is a critical part of Calgary's transportation network. More than 100,000 Calgarians rely on Crowchild Trail to get to their destinations each day. It functions as the main north-south link across the west side of Calgary. Access to the city centre was identified as early as the 1959 Calgary Metropolitan Area Transportation Study.

The study recognizes Crowchild Trail's importance for accommodating Calgary's continued growth in the coming decades, facilitating the redevelopment of the inner-city and established communities, and supporting the development of vibrant activity and neighbourhood corridors through key planning initiatives such as the Main Streets program.

The main objective of the new study is to develop short-, medium-, and long-term plans for the Crowchild Trail between 24 Ave. N.W. and 17 Ave. S.W. that align with the MDP and CTP, and is consistent with the goals and principles of the Transportation Corridor Study Policy, taking into consideration both land use and mobility factors.

The project team developed a six-phase plan to deliver the project. The plan was endorsed by the Project Steering Committee in December 2014 and is outlined as follows:

- Phase 1: Engagement Process Design;
- Phase 2: Confirm Project Goals;
- Phase 3: Concept Identification;
- Phase 4: Concept Evaluation;
- Phase 5: Concept Selection and Recommendation; and
- Phase 6: Reporting and Completion.

Phase 1 of the study launched in February 2015, and was completed in May 2015. The outcome of Phase 1 was a set of tools that provide Calgarians with multiple opportunities to participate throughout the entire study, that maximizes outreach and awareness of the study, and that confirms report-back processes and methodology. A targeted and broad-based engagement methodology was developed and implemented that provides a forum for residents immediately bordering Crowchild Trail, Community Associations, business owners, large institutions, and stakeholder groups ensures meaningful engagement to inform the corridor planning process throughout the course of the study.

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### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

#### **Phase 2 – Confirm Project Goals**

Phase 2 of the study launched May 27, 2015 with the objective of developing project goals specific to the Crowchild Trail Study. The project goals will help guide the development and evaluation of preliminary concepts throughout Phases 3 and 4 of the study, and establish a set of criteria against which study recommendations will be measured. The project goals were developed with Calgarians based on three key principles of the Transportation Corridor Policy, as follows:

- Maintain and enhance bordering communities;
- Improve travel along the corridor; and
- Improve mobility across the corridor.

The goals were developed and confirmed through multiple rounds of stakeholder and citizen input. Throughout June and early July 2015, the project team worked with Calgarians to **gather** ideas, thoughts, issues, and concerns for Crowchild Trail, forming the primary input in development of the project goals. Opportunities included:

- A series of invite-only workshops for residents bordering Crowchild Trail, for emergency response agencies, business owners, and major institutions along Crowchild Trail;
- Public workshops, several walking tours and bus tours along the corridor;
- Community-based outreach tools including door-to-door information kits, sounding boards, bold message signs, and attendance at several community events; and
- Online tools used to seek input from a broader audience of Calgarians, and also allowed Calgarians to discuss community issues and provide an opportunity to work together with the project team in developing solutions.

By mid-July, over 3000 ideas were generated for project goals, gathered by the project team from over 300 participants at 23 in-person engagement events, and over 1000 interactions and hundreds of ideas submitted online. From this input, the project team identified eleven draft project goals. Two City Policy Goals were also advanced by the project team that complement the eleven project goals, ensuring that the study outcomes align with City Policy initiatives defined in the MDP, CTP, and the Transportation Corridor Policy.

Throughout August and early-September, the project teams asked Calgarians to help **refine** the project goals, using online questionnaire and email to approximately 2000 Calgarians who signed-up for project updates was sent to solicit feedback on the draft goals. Approximately 650 responses were received by the project team to help refine the project goals. In addition, the project team completed a plain language audit to further refine and clarify the project goals.

In response to participant feedback, the project team hosted two public drop-in sessions and an online survey in late-September to **confirm** and finalize the project goals. Based on the feedback received at the drop-in sessions and from the online survey, the project goals were finalized by the project team, and endorsed by the Project Steering Committee October 9, 2015, completing Phase 2 of the study.

#### **Crowchild Trail Study: Project Goals**

Approval(s): Logan, Malcolm concurs with this report. Author: Sedor, Andrew A.Lakha, Feisal  
City Clerk's: D. Williams

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### City Policy Goals:

- Support community redevelopment by aligning the Crowchild Trail corridor with community planning policies including the MDP, Area Redevelopment Plans, and the Main Streets initiative; and
- Support Crowchild Trail's role in the CTP as a critical network connection between north and south Calgary, and a vital link to east-west routes.

### Goals in Key Principle No. 1 – Maintain and enhance bordering communities:

- Prioritize concepts that fit within existing City-owned lands over concepts that require purchasing private property;
- Address how changes to Crowchild Trail affect traffic patterns and safety in bordering communities;
- Recommend current and visually-pleasing ways to reduce traffic noise along Crowchild Trail; and
- Enhance green spaces, park spaces, and pathways along the Crowchild Trail corridor.

### Goals in Key Principle No. 2 – Improve travel along the corridor:

- Provide continuous pedestrian and cycling routes nearby, but not on, Crowchild Trail to connect major destinations along the corridor;
- Provide for convenient, high capacity, high frequency bus service along Crowchild Trail;
- Enhance the Crowchild Trail corridor to better fulfill its role as a primary route for delivery of emergency response and health services, and for connecting to major destinations; and
- Provide for more continuous traffic flow on Crowchild Trail that addresses bottleneck points and traffic weaving.

### Goals in Key Principle No. 3 – Improve mobility across the corridor:

- Enhance the safety and accessibility of transit stops throughout the Crowchild Trail corridor;
- Enhance pedestrian and cycling access across Crowchild Trail, both in the number and quality of crossings; and
- Ensure alternate access is provided for bordering communities and businesses if access to Crowchild Trail is removed or changed.

### **Phase 3 – Concept Identification**

Phase 3 of the study launched in late-October 2015. The objective of this phase is to **gather** ideas, concepts, and options for short-, medium-, and long-term changes to Crowchild Trail. Throughout October and November 2015, the project team engaged Calgarians through a series of workshops, drop-in sessions, sounding boards, and online engagement tools to share their ideas for Crowchild Trail. The project team is using the ideas and feedback gathered to develop preliminary concepts and options for Crowchild Trail, and will re-engage Calgarians in spring 2016.

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Consistent with our engagement approach, The City first hosted several workshops for residents bordering Crowchild Trail, emergency response agencies, business owners, and major institutions along Crowchild Trail, followed by workshops for the general public. Participants at every workshop were asked to share their ideas and thoughts on possible changes to Crowchild Trail. Technical and discussion facilitators worked with participants to further expand on ideas brought forward, and worked together to explore the benefits, constraints, trade-offs, and implications or impacts of ideas presented. This facilitated approach allowed the technical specialists to share their knowledge and expertise with participants, and provided participants an opportunity to better understand the benefits, constraints, trade-offs, and implications of their ideas.

Over 500 ideas for possible changes to Crowchild Trail were collected between October and November 2015. At the time of writing this report, the project team is reviewing all the ideas gathered. In February and March 2016, the project team is hosting a series of drop-in sessions to share the collated results of the ideas gathered. Calgarians will be invited to see what common ideas were provided to The City last fall, and to see what these ideas look like when applied to the Crowchild Trail corridor. Calgarians will have an opportunity to learn more about why some ideas will not move forward for further consideration, as well as help evaluate the remaining ideas against the three project key principles.

The feedback gathered in February and March 2016 will help the project team identify concepts and ideas to be carried forward through to Phase 4 – concept evaluation – of the study. Phase 3 is scheduled to be complete in early-Spring 2016.

### **Look Ahead to Phases 4 to 6**

Phase 4 of the study is scheduled to begin in spring 2016. In-person and online engagement opportunities will be provided to share preliminary concepts for Crowchild Trail, gather feedback from Calgarians, and to evaluate preliminary options against the study goals.

The project team will work with stakeholders to evaluate benefits and opportunities of the preliminary concepts for Crowchild Trail, and to assess the constraints, trade-offs, and implications of the options against the project goals. The feedback gathered in Phase 4 will be used to **refine** and identify the concepts that will be carried through to Phase 5: concept selection and recommendations of the study.

Recommendations to **confirm** short-, medium-, and long-term plans for the Crowchild Trail corridor will be finalized in fall 2016, with final project reporting and presentation to Council expected Q1 2017.

### **Crowchild Trail – Bow Trail – Memorial Drive Interchange**

Structural rehabilitation of the bridges within the Crowchild Trail – Bow Trail – Memorial Drive interchange area is scheduled to begin in Spring 2016, starting with the bridges across the Bow River, and the Crowchild Trail bridge over eastbound Memorial Drive. Work on the bridges is expected to take two years to complete. Rehabilitation of remaining bridges will be scheduled thereafter.

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The Crowchild Trail Study project team is working in close consultation and coordination with the Roads division to align the corridor study with the structural maintenance work required along Crowchild Trail. The project team is also coordinating efforts with Roads to inform Calgarians of the upcoming structural rehabilitation work, by incorporating this information directly into the corridor study engagement and communications program.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

A foundational element of the Crowchild Trail Study process is that it ties engagement to the entire planning and design process, whereby discussion with Calgarians drives the course of the study. Each phase of the engagement process provides opportunities for both **gathering** ideas, and then **refining** those ideas into final **confirmed** output. Engagement techniques are selected to allow stakeholders to interact with each other, as well as with the project team, to further understanding of how multiple perspectives can be accommodated within the study, and to expose stakeholders to the diversity of feedback received and collated by the project team.

The project team implemented a targeted and broad-based engagement strategy, based on the recommendations from the citizen Engagement Design Team in Phase 1 of the study. Targeted engagement seeks input from residents bordering Crowchild Trail, as well as business owners, emergency response agencies, and major institutions prior to engagement with the broader communities and the public. Targeted engagement activities provide a forum for those bordering Crowchild Trail to share their unique perspectives, concerns, insights, and issues as it relates to the study. The strategy has helped the project team take great strides in addressing negative perception associated with the 2012 study, and begin the process of rebuilding trust through inclusive, transparent discussion with stakeholders.

Calgarians have been forthcoming with thoughts and suggestions to improve the study engagement and design process, and the project team has made every effort to incorporate these suggestions into the process, such as:

- Increasing the amount of advanced notice for upcoming events to a minimum of four weeks;
- Providing an online project library that includes links to relevant land use and transportation plans, access to engagement summaries as they are prepared; and
- Participating in community events and meetings to present and answer questions about Calgary's Transportation Plan, and how Crowchild Trail fits into the overall network.

### **Strategic Alignment**

The Crowchild Trail Study aligns with the transportation goals identified in the 60-year Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP), the Calgary Municipal Development Plan (MDP), and the 2020 Sustainability Direction, including:

- CTP Goal No. 1: Align transportation planning and infrastructure investment with the city and regional land use directions and implementation strategies;
- CTP Goal No. 2: Promote safety for all transportation system users;
- CTP Goal No. 5: Promote economic development by ensuring the efficient movement of workers and goods;

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- CTP Policy 3.1: Maintain automobile, commercial goods and emergency vehicle mobility in Calgary while placing increased emphasis on sustainable modes of transportation (walking, cycling, and transit).
- Sustainability Principle for Land Use and Mobility No. 4: Provide a variety of transportation options; and
- MDP Key Direction for Land Use and Mobility No. 5: Increase mobility choices.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

This report was reviewed for alignment with The City of Calgary's Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Policy Framework. The following implications were identified to date:

Social: Recommendations of the study will be measured against the three key principles of the study, two policy goals, and eleven project goals developed with Calgarians in Phase 2. Recommendations will align with the MDP, CTP, and the Transportation Corridor Policy.

Environmental: Recommendations of the study will be measured against the three key principles of the study, two policy goals, and eleven project goals developed with Calgarians in Phase 2. Opportunities to improve travel and mobility along and across the corridor for all travel modes will be considered, as well as opportunities to improve park and gathering spaces, and the Bow River environment.

Economic (external): The City is working with area businesses, stakeholders, and institutions along the corridor to identify issues and concerns. The study will develop recommendations to preserve economic vitality and goods movement along the corridor, while developing opportunities for land redevelopment and renewal.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### **Current and Future Operating Budget:**

Funding for the Crowchild Trail Study is contained within Transportation Planning's Functional Studies budget under program 617-OB1. No changes to current or future operating budgets will occur as a result of this report.

#### **Current and Future Capital Budget:**

There are no immediate current capital budget impacts. The study will identify short-, medium-, and long-term upgrades to the corridor to align with the CTP and MDP goals and objectives, as well as align with the Crowchild Trail Study Key Principles and Project Study Goals developed throughout Phase 2 of the study.

Any recommended changes and upgrades to the Corridor will be prioritized with the next update of Investing in Mobility, upon completion of the study.

### **Risk Assessment**

The key risk to the success of the study was to address the legacy of a strong, negative perception from the 2012 study. A fundamental shift in The City's approach to corridor planning, guided by the Transportation Corridor Study Policy, and integration of an engagement and

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communications strategy focused on addressing the legacy issues on Crowchild Trail into the project process, has helped move the project forward.

Engagement and communications tactics and techniques that offer Calgarians opportunities to interact with each other and with the project team, as well as providing Calgarians multiple opportunities to participate throughout the entire study through several mediums, has also helped to rebuild relationships with stakeholders.

As the study proceeds through Phase 3 and beyond, the study team will continue to work with Calgarians to develop of short-, medium-, and long-term solutions for the Crowchild Trail corridor.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The new six-phase developed for the Crowchild Trail Study ties corridor planning and design directly to engagement, provides project information, and maintains clear, consistent and transparent communication. A July 2016 project update is proposed to inform Council on the progress of the study.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Crowchild Trail Study – Phase 2: Confirm Project Goals Engagement Process Summary