

PEDESTRIAN STRATEGY UPDATE AND DEFERRAL OF FINAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Transportation Department is leading the development of a city-wide Pedestrian Strategy called *STEP FORWARD*, an action plan for improving walking in Calgary.

The Pedestrian Strategy is structured into four Focus Areas: Safety, Plan and Design, Operate and Maintain, Educate and Encourage. The Strategy will be most effective in making change only if actions are developed in all four of these Focus Areas. A draft list of approximately 60 actions has been created in consultation with internal and external partners. Actions have been developed for three time-frames, short, medium, long-term filtered by impact and ability to implement. These actions are assigned to a lead business-unit, with a specific timeline and resource (initial capital, and ongoing operating and staffing) requirements. The lead business units will be supported by other city business units and external partners.

During research and conversations with other best-practice Canadian cities, it became apparent that endorsement of the specific strategy actions by the other business-units, who will be accountable for implementing those actions, is essential. In addition, aligning key outcomes is critical for successful partnerships with external stakeholders such as Alberta Health Services and the Calgary education boards.

The project's timeline has been extended beyond 2015 October and a deferral of the final report to the 2016 January 20 meeting of SPC on Transportation and Transit is requested. This deferral will allow:

- a) focus the December agenda on Green Line;
- b) time to validate the strategy's actions (for feasibility, effectiveness, and resource requirements) with critical stakeholders to ensure the final strategy is well supported and can be implemented;
- c) time to better determine the operating and capital funding requirements for these actions, and strategies to meet those funding needs;
- d) time to hold a final public information session to demonstrate how public input has influenced the Strategy's proposed actions.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Standing Policy Committee (SPC) on Transportation and Transit:

1. Receive this Project Update and Deferral Report for information,
2. Defer the Pedestrian Strategy Final Report to the 2016 January 20 meeting of the SPC on Transportation and Transit.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT, DATED 2015 OCTOBER 14:

That Council:

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1. Receive this Project Update and Deferral Report for information,
2. Defer the Pedestrian Strategy Final Report to the 2016 January 20 meeting of the SPC on Transportation and Transit.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2014 July 28, Council adopted the Pedestrian Strategy Framework report (TT2014-0486) and directed Administration to return to SPC on Transportation and Transit no later than the end of Q1 2015 with a status update report.

On 2015 April 27, Council adopted the Pedestrian Strategy Status Update report (TT2015-0120) and directed Administration to report back through the SPC on Transportation and Transit with the finalized pedestrian strategy on 2015 October 14.

BACKGROUND

The Pedestrian Strategy will identify results that align with the walkability principles outlined in the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP) and the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) 2009.

The CTP recognizes walking as *“the simplest type of transportation; it offers health and wellness benefits, costs very little and is available to almost everyone, regardless of age, gender, ability or income. It is quiet, doesn’t pollute and fosters social interaction.”* The CTP and MDP also recognize the importance of walking in achieving the sustainability directions of smart growth, mobility choice and community well-being and the need to build a quality pedestrian realm as a means to promote a culture of walking.

A project plan was developed using the previously adopted project framework as outlined in report TT2014-0486. During the project the previous framework was revised and has evolved into a table of contents (see Attachment 1) for a pedestrian strategy specific to Calgary.

Further to the adoption of the Pedestrian Strategy Status Update Report (TT2015-0120) the project team reviewed the plans and strategies that other Canadian cities had developed to respond to their pedestrian concerns. Public engagement took place between 2015 March and July to identify local objectives and priorities. Following the engagement process all responses were reviewed and summarized to establish common recurring issues. The project team continued working with other business units and external partners to identify potential actions that will address these common issues.

Administration has revised the project schedule (see Attachment 2) and extended the project’s timeline and as such requests a deferral of the final report to the 2016 January 20 T&T Committee meeting.

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INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Following previous direction from Council the project team conducted an internal review of City programs, initiatives and lines of service related to pedestrians. Though there are many programs and services currently being provided by the City that benefit pedestrians, the work is spread across several departments, business units and divisions (see Attachment 3). The project team has had many conversations with key internal stakeholders within different business units, and has concluded that there is an opportunity for a much higher level of coordination (with the help of a single dedicated coordinator) to work toward a common vision for walking in Calgary.

Through ongoing conversations with key managers and directors and with scheduled Steering Committee meetings, the project team is on track to validate the proposed strategy actions and develop a pedestrian strategy that is supported by other City business units and key external partners. The proposed strategy actions are identified for the short (2016-2017), medium (2018-2021 this will align with the next 4 year business plan cycle) and long term (2022+) (see Attachment 4).

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Engagement

The City undertook a comprehensive engagement process between 2015 March and July that included three streams of engagement (see Attachment 5). The three streams of engagement were:

- 13 workshops with the Main Streets project undertaken by Planning, Development and Assessment (PDA);
- 5 stakeholder events organized by the project team focused specifically on the Pedestrian Strategy and 13 in-person outreach occasions during which City staff engaged with 239 members of public at various locations, and;
- an online tool (MindMixer) that supplemented the in-person engagement.

About 2,300 responses were collected from the engagement events. These responses were reviewed and summarized into 37 recurring issues or themes. Of these 37 themes the “Top 10 Recurring Issues” mentioned were:

1. Street crossings (15%)
2. Speed limit (7%)
3. Sidewalk condition & repair (7%)
4. Streetscape & public art (7%)
5. Pathway connections (5%)
6. Sidewalk snow & ice control (5%)
7. Land-use (4%)
8. Signals & signs (4%)
9. Missing sidewalks (4%)
10. Turning vehicles (3%)

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(% of total number of responses)

The project team is currently working on how best to show the public the connection between the engagement responses and the proposed strategy actions. There will be a final public open house in November, to share this information with the public.

Research

Over a 2 week period in April 2015, a random telephone survey was undertaken to obtain opinions from a minimum of 500 Calgarians from a broad demographic profile on the topic of walking. The average survey conversation length was 15 minutes and typical questions asked were:

“During months when there is snow on the ground, what is your usual method of transportation to commute to and from work, school, college, or university?”

“What methods of transportation do your children use to get to and from school during times when there is snow on the ground?”

“I'd like you to think about all possible walking trips including to work, school, shop, visit friends or for exercise. What are the reasons you do not walk more often? Are there any other reasons?”

Key Survey Findings:

- Few people use walking as the usual method of commuting to work or school (6% for snow months and 8% for no snow months).
- Of all people surveyed, 23% are enthusiastic walkers but 33% consider themselves to be enthusiastic about walking but recognise that they don't walk enough.
- People's choice to walk does not change much between no snow months (44% walk) and snow months (38% still walk).

The survey noted a top barrier to walking is the perception that walking is impractical as destinations may not exist in neighbourhoods or destinations are just too far away for walking trips alone. It was also mentioned that for the City to encourage more walking, the education messages should highlight lifestyle, health and fitness benefits. Physical measures to improve walking focused on maintenance and infrastructure including sidewalk snow clearing, better night lighting and safer crossings.

Communication

During the initial engagement period (2015 March to July) local newspapers and TV stations covered the pedestrian strategy events. Project team members presented the pedestrian strategy to the Pathways to Sustainability Conference (June 19) and the Sustainability for Breakfast REAL Networking event (June 26). A workshop was also held with Grade 6 students at City Hall School, during which the school students described barriers they encounter along their walking routes to their school.

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Project updates have been provided through information posted on the City's web site, at calgary.ca/pedestrianstrategy.

Strategic Alignment

The Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP) recognizes walking as *"the simplest type of transportation; it offers health and wellness benefits, costs very little and is available to almost everyone, regardless of age, gender, ability or income. It is quiet, doesn't pollute and fosters social interaction."* The CTP and MDP also recognize the importance of walking in achieving the sustainability directions of smart growth, mobility choice and community well-being and the need to build a quality pedestrian realm as a means to promote a culture of walking.

The pedestrian strategy aligns with Council Priorities for the 2015-2018 business plan cycle. Specifically, the strategy will address:

- *A city that moves* – responding to the need for a variety of affordable and efficient transportation choices.
- *A healthy and green city* – responding to the need to encourage healthy lifestyles for all Calgarians.

Due to its broad, cross-departmental scope, the strategy will align with policies and plans at the Corporate and business-unit level including the:

- Transit Oriented Development Policy Guidelines (2005)
- imagineCALGARY: Long Range Plan for Urban Sustainability (2006)
- Centre City Plan (2007)
- Pedestrian Policy and Needs Report (2008)
- Municipal Development Plan & Calgary Transportation Plan (2009)
- Centre City Mobility Plan (2010)
- Accessibility Guidelines (2010)
- Complete Streets Policy & Guide (2014)
- Seniors Age-friendly Strategy (2015)

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

By implementing the strategy actions, improvements to the safety and walkability of communities will provide opportunities for Calgarians to walk more regardless of age, gender, income or ability. Walking fosters social interactions; it increases personal awareness of and attachment to one's community. This increased attachment builds social capital which generates interest and involvement in local government and builds community trust. Walking not only improves the health of individuals, but it's also an affordable and inclusive way to travel.

Environmental

Walking is quiet, doesn't pollute and can decrease car travel which in turn decreases greenhouse gas emissions associated with vehicle use, which improves water and air quality. Having more citizens walk is a key long-term strategy for reducing Calgary's per capita ecological footprint.

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Economic

Research indicates that walkable communities have increased residential property values, increased retail sales and can support related industries such as tourism. A well-maintained pedestrian network allows citizens the ability to safely and conveniently patronize local shops, businesses and restaurants.

Providing safe walking options for citizens helps attract and retain young college graduates which in turn generates diversity and could nurture entrepreneurial business. A well designed and attractive pedestrian realm adds value to public space and to the social fabric and keeps Calgary a competitive and international city.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

The development of the pedestrian strategy is being undertaken by City staff within our current operating budget. The Transportation Department may require up to two dedicated staff (one within Transportation Planning, one within Roads) to oversee the planning, coordination, implementation, and monitoring of the Pedestrian Strategy Actions in 2016. This initial staffing resource will be identified in the final strategy report. Any additional staff requirements will need to be assessed in future years after Council approval of the strategy.

A number of operating programs (particularly in Calgary Roads) that are directly tied to pedestrian infrastructure (e.g. pedestrian crosswalk markings) are currently under-funded (see Attachment 6, pg 2). If no additional operational budget for 2016 is available, funding will have to be reallocated from within the Transportation Department. Maintenance of new (and existing) pedestrian infrastructure will also require additional operating funding.

An estimate of additional operating funding needs (for the current 2016-18 business cycle) to bring pedestrian programs up to a service level high enough to make progress on the recommended Actions will be provided in the Final Strategy in January 2016

Current and Future Capital Budget:

The 2015-2018 Council Approved Action Plan directs more capital investment in strategic areas within the City (namely activity centers and corridors) where a significant number of Calgarians will benefit from pedestrian infrastructure. Existing capital programs also contribute to pedestrian investment. In total, approximately \$26 million/year has been budgeted towards pedestrian infrastructure. This represents roughly 7% of the annual Transportation Capital Budget. Unfortunately, many capital programs tied to city-wide (i.e. outside mobility hubs and corridors) pedestrian infrastructure are, like the operating programs, under-funded (e.g. missing sidewalk links, pedestrian bridges).

An estimate of additional capital funding needs (for the current 2016-18 business cycle) to bring pedestrian programs up to a service level high enough to make progress on the recommended Actions will be identified in the Final Strategy in January 2016

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Monitoring & Results Based Accountability

A Results Based Accountability (RBA) approach has been proposed to clearly define desired results for all Pedestrian Strategy partners and for monitoring and evaluating the Strategy. The Strategy has identified seven key pedestrian-related indicators (Attachment 7) that are trending in an unfavourable direction (e.g. decreasing percentage of kids walking to school). The RBA summary pages define the indicator, recommend a 2025 target to strive for, identify key partners needed for change, and, most importantly, what Pedestrian Strategy Actions will help “turn the curve”. This approach helps guide future decisions, and measures our progress towards becoming a pedestrian friendly city.

Risk Assessment

The risk of not approving the deferral of the Final Report is an incomplete Strategy that will be challenging to implement without:

- the proposed actions validated by critical stakeholders who are responsible for delivering them;
- adequate financial and staffing resource requirements identified; and
- communicating a clear connection between public input and the Strategy’s proposed actions prior to endorsement by Council.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The intent of this report is to provide Council with an update on the progress of the Pedestrian Strategy and request a deferral of the final report to allow the project team to validate the proposed actions with critical stakeholders, identify the financial and staffing resource requirements, and to hold a final public information session to demonstrate how public input is connected to the Strategy’s proposed actions.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Revised Table of Contents
2. Revised Project Schedule
3. Internal stakeholders, corporate network
4. Strategy Actions, short, medium and long-term
5. Public Engagement Summary
6. Funding
7. RBA graphs for monitoring