

PEDESTRIAN STRATEGY STATUS UPDATE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Calgary is leading the development of a pedestrian strategy: *STEP FORWARD* which is an action plan to create a better quality pedestrian environment for Calgary.

Transportation Planning is working with other business-units, other levels of government (Alberta Health Services), Calgary Police Services and the non-profit organization Safer Calgary, to develop the strategy. The Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP), Municipal Development Plan (MDP), 2020 Sustainable Direction and the Walk21 International Charter for Walking (Attachment 1) and previously Council approved framework for the pedestrian strategy (Attachment 2) are guiding this development.

In keeping with the project's timeline (Attachment 3) engagement is well underway and includes but is not limited to: one-on-one meetings with internal City staff and external public stakeholders; hosting public engagement sessions in the four quadrants of the city, an online engagement tool to capture comments and ideas from the public and partnering with other City projects (Next City Main Streets, Green Line) to combine engagement opportunities and public feedback.

This report provides the vision, goals and guiding principles as detailed in the project's strategic planning document (Attachment 4), developed in part by input from an internal stakeholder discovery workshop. The project's strategic planning has been reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee. Specifically, the newly created vision, "*To Be a Pedestrian Friendly City*" is supported by six goals and a set of guiding principles taken from the four guiding policy documents mentioned above. These principles in turn lead to four focus areas: safety, plan and design, operate and maintain, educate and encourage. From these focus areas an action plan will be established that lists action items with associated lead business-units, timelines and funding requirements.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit recommend that Council Direct Administration to report back through the SPC on Transportation and Transit with the finalized pedestrian strategy on 2015 October 14.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT, DATED 2015 MARCH 18:

That the Administration Recommendation contained in Report TT2015-0120 be approved.

Opposition to Recommendation:

Opposed: S. Chu

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PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2014 July 28, Council adopted the proposed framework for the Pedestrian Strategy project (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.

BACKGROUND

The *STEP FORWARD* Pedestrian Strategy was initiated by the General Manager of Transportation to further develop the walkability principles as outlined in the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP) and the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) 2009. The CTP recognizes walking as the most basic and both environmentally and economically sustainable form of transportation and key to a complete multi-modal system. 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.

Walk21 is an international organization that champions the development of healthy sustainable and efficient communities where people choose to walk. Through the Walk21 Conference series and the International Charter, Walk21 has a vision to create a world where people choose and are able to walk as a way to travel, to be healthy and to relax.

Further to the adoption of the pedestrian strategy framework report (TT2014-0486) it was concluded that the CTP, MDP, 2020 Sustainability Directions and the Walk21 International Charter for Walking, are the best sources of guiding principles for the project as they are current, relevant to Calgary and internationally recognized.

The project team developed a project plan which includes comprehensive public engagement to discover what concerns citizens have and what opportunities exist for improving walking in Calgary. The first rounds of engagement sessions are underway this month. In this first phase of engagement the project team is hosting five open house kick-off events across the four quadrants of the city.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Following the direction from Council on 28 July 2014, the project team started with an internal review of City programs, initiatives and lines of service related to pedestrians.

Initial findings indicate that although a lot of work is being done by The City for pedestrians, there is the opportunity for a much higher level of coordination among internal service providers and a common vision for walking in Calgary.

Over the past year there has also been an increased public concern with pedestrian fatalities and injuries from vehicle collisions.

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Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Engagement

Initial outreach in April to July 2014 was conducted by one-on-one meetings with internal City staff in other business-units, key external stakeholders, and non-profit organizations. The purpose was to learn what's important to pedestrians and to determine what the expectations are for a pedestrian strategy. A workshop has been held with Grade 6 students at City Hall School, during which they shared what barriers they encounter along their walking routes to school.

The first phase of public engagement kick-off events, are currently underway. The project team will be hosting these engagement events in the four quadrants of the city. The public have been invited to attend to learn more about the project and provide input on what's important to them when they are walking.

In addition, the project team has partnered with two other City projects, the Next City Main Streets and the Green Line projects to combine engagement opportunities and to reach a broader audience.

The second phase of engagement will focus on attending special events such as Jane's Walk and being on location in high activity pedestrian areas such as C-Train stations and the University of Calgary campus.

Research

From August 2014 to February 2015 the project team undertook a literature review on the theories of walkability and conducted an evaluation of the current trends in city planning and urban design. This literature review also included a review of other national and international cities' pedestrian plans and strategies to understand what has worked and what to avoid in responding to pedestrian needs.

A random telephone survey of the general public on the topic of walking in Calgary is scheduled for 2015 April. The object of the survey is to get a better understanding of current recreational and commuter pedestrian behaviours, to gauge satisfaction with the current pedestrian experience, identify special mobility needs and to establish the public priorities for the pedestrian strategy.

Communication

Early in the project, 27-28 October 2014, Jeff Speck a city planner and urban designer and the author of the book "Walkable City" who advocates internationally for smart growth and sustainable design, was invited to Calgary to present a series of public lectures on why and how walkability is important to modern cities. Approximately 160 people attended the lectures, the audience ranged from interested members of public to design and engineering professionals and students.

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Following the direction from Council on 2014 July 28, the project team established a Steering Committee composed of internal and external stakeholders. The committee's purpose as stipulated in the terms of reference (Attachment 4) are to use influence and authority to assist the project in achieving its desired results and to be a platform for sharing information about opportunities that may exist for the project and other matters relating to the pedestrian realm.

With the Steering Committee in place, and with on-going dialog with stakeholders and with the engagement of citizens, the project team is well positioned to identify priorities and develop an action plan to improve walking in Calgary.

Strategic Alignment

The pedestrian strategy aligns with Council Priorities for 2015-2018. 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.

The pedestrian strategy also aligns with the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP) and the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) as it supports the goals to:

- Promote safety for all transportation system users. (CTP)
- Enable public transit, walking and cycling as the preferred mobility choices for more people. (CTP)
- Maintain automobile, commercial goods and emergency vehicle mobility in Calgary while placing increased emphasis on sustainable modes of transportation (walking, cycling and transit). (MDP)

With implementation of the action plan the pedestrian strategy will assist with the City's efforts to achieve the 2020 Sustainability Direction, specifically addressing:

- *Smart Growth and Mobility Choices* – responding to the need to increase transportation choice and optimize existing transportation systems.

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)
- Centre City Mobility Plan (2010)
- Complete Streets Guide and Policy (2014)

The pedestrian strategy will include a monitoring and evaluation program which will allow The City to gain information that can guide future decisions, measure progress towards becoming a pedestrian friendly city and provide accountability to the public.

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Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

Improvements to the safety and walkability of communities will provide opportunities for Calgarians of all ages and abilities to walk more regardless of age, gender, income or ability. Walking improves social interactions between community members; it increases personal awareness of and attachment to one's community. This increased attachment builds social capital which fosters 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. A well designed and attractive pedestrian realm adds value to public space and to the social fabric of Calgary.

Environmental

Walking can decrease car travel which in turn decreases greenhouse gas emissions associated with vehicle use, which will result in improved water and air quality. Having more citizens walk is a key long-term strategy for reducing Calgary's per capita ecological footprint.

Economic

The presence of sidewalks and other walking facilities is shown to increase property value, retail sales and promote tourism. Sidewalks and connected, well-maintained pedestrian networks allow citizens the ability to safely and conveniently patronize local shops, businesses, and restaurants.

Providing safe walking options for citizens can help attract and retain young college graduates which, in turn can help attract, retain and nurture entrepreneurial business in Calgary. This further helps maintain Calgary as a city where people want to live and invest, and keeps Calgary a competitive and international city.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

The development of the pedestrian strategy will be undertaken within Transportation Planning's current budget. The additional operating budget to support the pedestrian strategy's actions will be brought forward as a separate future item as required.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

Additional capital budget to support the pedestrian strategy's actions will be brought forward as a separate item as required.

Risk Assessment

The development of a pedestrian strategy and action plan is a complex project, due to the broad scope of the strategy and the large number of stakeholders involved. There is a risk that stakeholders will have different expectations regarding the priorities and goals of the strategy. There may be inadequate time to engage such a broad range of Corporate and community stakeholders, and to ensure that the process is truly collaborative and supported by all involved.

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REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The intent of this report is to provide Council with an interim update on the progress of this key strategic plan development.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Walk21 International Charter for Walking
2. Previously Approved (TT2014-0486) Framework for the Pedestrian Strategy
3. Project and Engagement Timeline for *STEP FORWARD* Pedestrian Strategy
4. Strategic Planning for *STEP FORWARD* Pedestrian Strategy
5. Steering Committee Terms of Reference