

WEST AND SOUTH WEST RING ROAD DOWNSTREAM TRAFFIC IMPACTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alberta Transportation ("AT") is preparing to construct the final sections of the Calgary Ring Road. This includes the South West Ring Road (from 69 Street SW to Macleod Trail S) and the West Ring Road (from Trans Canada Highway to 69 Street SW).

The City of Calgary ("The City") is working with AT on key items and issues related to the ring road projects. Topics range from environmental to traffic related issues. Administration is also preparing to construct ring road connections, and reviewing traffic pattern changes that are anticipated to occur when the west and south west ring road sections are open to traffic.

Administration has had an opportunity to hear from communities and residents and undertake preliminary traffic analysis work. As a result of the process undertaken to date, downstream traffic implications at a number of locations are still being reviewed based on the information and input available. Administration will review the public input to the process, complete the required technical analysis and investigate all required items. A comprehensive report will follow in 2015 that identifies issues that have been verified, potential mitigation options, and cost benefit analysis of the options.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Administration recommends that Council:

1. Direct Administration to continue to investigate implications of traffic pattern changes within the City roadway network as a result of the South West Ring Road, and report back to the SPC on Transportation & Transit with a completed summary of downstream implications and recommendations by the end of Q4 2015; and
2. Direct that the report and attachments be kept confidential pursuant to Section 24(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act until Council rises and reports.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2014 April 30, Council approved NM2014-23, which directed that:

"Administration review the impacts and implications of the new ring road sections, evaluate solutions to mitigate impacts and approach the Province to discuss these solutions including options to fund improvements as part of the ring road program"

and that "Administration report back to Council no later than the end of Q4 2014 with an update on the ring road program."

BACKGROUND

As AT proceeds with preparations for the ring road construction, The City is working with AT on items of interest and concern from The City's perspective.

Administration is also preparing to construct ring road connections so these roads are ready to connect to the ring road when that project is completed. The locations shown on Attachment 1 are projects that are being undertaken with funding from the Ring Road Connections budget identified in Investing In Mobility.

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In addition, Administration is reviewing traffic pattern changes to ensure any areas where modifications might be required are identified and a comprehensive mitigation strategy is identified.

The West and South West ring road sections are anticipated to draw traffic from existing roadways in Calgary. This will result in changes to traffic patterns in many areas of the south west road network. A number of skeletal and arterial roads will see reductions in traffic volumes, while others will see increases in traffic volumes.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Administration has had opportunity to review technical information and to speak with residents and community associations through the second half of 2014. This information has identified a number of locations which Administration is recommending undergo further review.

The locations shown on Attachment 2 represent key areas of interest for the public, and key locations where further analysis is required. The review to date has resulted in three levels being identified: Tier 1: Skeletal Road locations of high interest; Tier 2: Arterial Road locations of high interest; and Tier 3: Other locations of interest.

Downstream implications at these locations are still being reviewed based on the information and inputs available. This analysis includes verification of the issues, evaluation of the changes or impacts, and mitigation options if required. Many of the identified locations are interrelated, and further analysis is required to ensure the investigation is comprehensive and accurately accounts for the complexity of the traffic patterns.

Generally, network roads where traffic is anticipated to decrease include 14 Street SW, Elbow Drive SW, Macleod Tr S, and Glenmore Trail between Crowchild Trail and Elbow Drive. Network roads where traffic is anticipated to increase include Anderson Road, Glenmore Trail between Sarcee Trail and Crowchild Trail, Richmond Road, and Highway 8. Traffic volumes are anticipated to change on other network roads, however this includes either increases or decreases depending on the time of day and direction of travel.

Some of the key infrastructure which is being recommended and/or reviewed at this time includes:

- Glenmore Trail, which will be widened to 6 lanes from AT's project limits to Crowchild Trail (as identified in Investing in Mobility),
- Glenmore Tr/Crowchild Tr interchange. The eastbound to northbound movement will see more traffic with the opening of the ring road, while the westbound to northbound movement will see less traffic with the opening of the ring road. This interchange will also be studied for longer term improvements. The functional planning study will be conducted in the 2016-2018 time frame,
- Anderson Road, which should be widened to 6 lanes from the ring road to 14 Street (included in Ring Road Connections, identified in Investing in Mobility),

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- Sarcee Trail, which is still under review due to the complexity of the potential traffic pattern changes along this skeletal road. Recommendations for this area will follow in a subsequent report.

Some of the traffic pattern changes also offer an opportunity to work toward Calgary Transportation Plan goals and Council objectives. For example, the section of 14 Street SW south of Glenmore Trail will have very different traffic volumes with and without the South West Ring Road. The South West Ring Road lowers potential traffic volumes and improves the opportunity to provide dedicated busway facilities for the SW Transitway.

Administration will review the recent public input to the process, complete the required technical analysis and investigate all required items. Recommendations will follow the investigation and are anticipated to identify issues that have been verified, potential mitigation options, and a cost benefit analysis of those options. This will be presented in a report to the SPC on Transportation and Transit, which will contain a complete set of findings and recommendations, by the end of 2015.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

The City participated in seven information sessions and a number of community meetings with the Province through the fall of 2014. Citizens filled out more than 500 City of Calgary feedback forms with comments and questions. Administration is using this information and the information provided to the Province to help guide future communications about the project through 2015. The project team is also considering the input when studying traffic changes as result of the ring road.

Strategic Alignment

This project is reviewing the downstream impacts with a goal to ensure The City's approach is in keeping with policies and goals such as the Calgary Transportation Plan, Route Ahead, and Council Priorities.

This project is aligned with City policies such as; Calgary Transportation Goal #1 (Align transportation planning and infrastructure investment with city and regional land use directions and implementation strategies), Sustainability Principle #9 (Connect people, goods and services locally, regionally and globally), and Sustainability Principle #10 (Provide transportation services in a safe, effective, affordable and efficient manner that ensures reasonable accessibility to all areas of the city for all citizens).

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

This project will involve changes to community access for citizens, impacts for adjacent properties, information about what to expect as the project moves forward, and changes to traveller choices and patterns once construction is complete, with improved mobility along the west and south west edges of Calgary.

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Environmental

Administration continues to bring environmental issues and concerns to AT for their attention. The City will follow existing policies and standards in evaluation, design, and construction of ring road connections and downstream improvements.

Economic (external)

Additional goods movement and mobility options will be available when this project is complete, which will enhance business and traveller movement through and around Calgary and can offer support to smart growth initiatives and investments. This project also helps to create opportunities on the SW Transitway for Transit Oriented Development.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

No implications as a result of this report.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

Funding for the Ring Road Connections has been identified in the amount of \$133M. \$114M of this will come from Fuel Tax Revenue Sharing and \$19M from Transportation Acreage Assessment.

Risk Assessment

Investigating the downstream implications of the west and south west ring road sections helps to ensure that City infrastructure priorities are evaluated and assessed in a comprehensive manner. The addition of this Provincial infrastructure is expected to change some of the travel patterns within the City. Some of this may alleviate current or projected future areas of concern, and some may result in the need to advance infrastructure improvements. The downstream implications assessment allows The City to identify these risks, and develop recommendations for improvements including funding opportunities and options.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

A significant amount of information has been gathered from the public, and traffic analysis is ongoing. Further work on all identified items is required before option recommendations can be presented to ensure a holistic analysis is completed to assess the changes to the transportation network and the implications on infrastructure planning and investment.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Funded Ring Road Connections Projects
2. Downstream Impacts – Locations Under Investigation