

NW-HUB Transit Feasibility Study Overview

1. Executive Summary

In partnership with the University of Calgary (U of C) and Alberta Health Services (AHS), The City of Calgary is conducting a public transit enhancement study in the northwest area of the city between Lions Park and Brentwood CTrain stations in the part of Calgary referred to in this study as “NW-HUB”. The purpose of the project is to review the existing transit service to, from and within the NW-HUB and provide recommendations that will enhance transit service and delivery, including access to transit for pedestrians and cyclists. The project is being led by Calgary Transit.

2. Project Background

Initial engagement took place in summer 2013, when over 2,000 Calgarians completed an online questionnaire. The following key themes arose in the initial engagement:

- Top overall priorities were building missing pedestrian links and new cycling paths.
- Top public transit priorities were higher frequency buses and an internal bus route.
- Three alternative technologies (elevated train, streetcars and urban gondolas) had a high level of baseline approval.

In winter 2013, engagement sessions were held with employees at AHS and U of C. The focus of these sessions was to identify specific locations/times of day where public transit improvements are required and to conduct a preliminary review of routes/technologies using evaluation criteria agreed to by all three funding partners. The evaluation criteria included capital and operating costs, environmental impacts, community well-being and growth and mobility. The route/technology options included streetcar/tram, urban gondola/aerial tram, and automated elevated rail.

A key objective common to AHS and U of C is to improve accessible travel within their campuses, not just to and from their campuses. This will result in more stations/stops than initially foreseen. As a result, we will be reviewing the opportunities for transit priority for ground-level bus and rail options. This is consistent with public feedback themes of high frequency buses and an internal transit route. It will also allow for more opportunities to integrate stations/stops into the urban realm on their sites. Administration has provided input into development proposals and other projects within the study area (examples include West Campus Development Trust, Stadium Shopping Centre, Shaganappi Trail Corridor Study) with these objectives in mind.

3. Moving Forward

Calgary Transit's 30-year strategic plan, RouteAhead, outlines a rapid transit plan that includes a number of customer-oriented capital projects. A high-level capital cost of \$30 million was assigned to the first phase of the NW-HUB project (identified in RouteAhead as "West Campus Mobility"). The second phase, a connection to Southwest Calgary, is identified in the 20-year timeframe, and was assigned a capital cost of \$60 million.

In conjunction with this plan, the NW-HUB was presented as part of Transportation's 10-year Investing in Mobility Plan.

Next steps on the project include the following:

- Evaluating in detail the station locations and opportunities for bus-based improvements, transit priority and existing and new bus route enhancements.
- Assessing future technologies.
- Refining the short, medium and long term improvements.
- Conducting public engagement to solicit feedback on alternatives and recommendations.