

**Operational Services Briefing to  
Infrastructure and Planning Committee  
2023 September 13**

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## **RouteAhead Implementation**

### **PURPOSE OF BRIEFING**

The purpose of this Briefing is to provide an overview of The City of Calgary's RouteAhead implementation, comprised of operating and capital investments that focus on improving public transit in Calgary.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

On 2023 July 4, Council directed Administration to return to the Infrastructure and Planning Committee in 2023 Q3 with a RouteAhead Implementation Plan consisting of near-term operating and capital investments in advance of the Standing Executive Committee Item 'Strategic Discussion on Building and Delivering on Plans and Budgets' for consideration as part of the Adjustments to service plans and budgets in 2023 November. In response to Council's direction, Administration has developed a 10-year RouteAhead Implementation Plan spanning 2024 to 2034 with timelines and budgetary allocations for city-wide transit service improvements.

#### *RouteAhead Implementation Plan*

The Calgary metropolitan area's population is projected to reach 1,850,000 by 2035, an increase of approximately 14 per cent from 2023. As our city grows, it will require sustained investment in transit to enable it to become the preferred transportation choice of Calgarians.

The RouteAhead strategy focuses on three core principles: enhancing customer experience, optimizing network planning, and securing sufficient financing. 159 strategies were developed to progress the three core principles, which are being actioned through Administration's work plans to ensure the success of Calgary's transit system.

A key goal of RouteAhead is to connect communities by building the Primary Transit Network, comprised of key corridors operating every 10 minutes or better, at least 15 hours a day, seven days a week. To achieve this level of service for Calgarians, the Public Transit service requires an additional investment of 1.12 million annual transit service hours. A transit service hour measures the amount of service provided by a transit vehicle over a specified period. The RouteAhead Implementation Plan divides the 1.12 million transit service hours needed across a ten-year period, with an annual investment required to cover the cost of increased service hours, fuel, maintenance, and other operational expenses. The net annual operating cost of the city-wide service improvements is projected to be \$127.4 million by 2034, representing an average increase of 3.7 per cent per year to Public Transit's base operating budget.

#### *Optimizing Calgary's Transit Network*

RouteAhead also strives to expand service into new communities to build transit habits early. Improving service will make using transit faster, easier, and more convenient. It will create a system that is safe and accessible, where customers can show up and go without having to plan their day around a transit schedule, providing customers with increased freedom, encouraging more Calgarians to take transit.

As part of the RouteAhead Implementation Plan, regular transit service reviews will be conducted to find efficiencies and make improvements to base and local bus routes, based on the directions and strategies in RouteAhead. The goal is to seamlessly connect base and local routes into the Primary Transit Network and to pathways and sidewalks, creating a more

cohesive and interconnected transportation experience for Calgarians. In addition to transit service reviews, Calgary Transit will look at tools like OnDemand to provide improved transit service in existing and new communities. This iterative approach to improving service works together with the Primary Transit Network investments to ensure Calgary's transit system incorporates data-driven decisions and responds to customer's changing needs and preferences.

### *Capital Investments*

Capital investments are also needed to deliver the service improvements outlined in the RouteAhead Implementation Plan. The City of Calgary will need to procure 540 net new buses over the 10-year period at an estimated one-time capital cost of \$405 million. Early capital investments will be necessary to meet this service delivery, as current fleet procurement can take up to two years between order and delivery. In the short-term, Calgary Transit's existing vehicle storage and maintenance facilities have sufficient capacity to accommodate the initial increase in buses. A new bus storage and maintenance facility is already planned to accommodate additional fleet by 2030; it is unfunded at an estimated cost of \$350 million. The facility is already planned to accommodate the extra buses required to implement the service improvements outlined in the Implementation Plan. This budget ask will be included in the 2027-2030 Service Plans and Budgets for approval. See Attachment 1 for the financial breakdown of the RouteAhead Implementation Plan.

Administration is actively exploring a range of new funding tools that could provide stable capital and operating funding sources. This includes options within The City's control and those that require provincial approval. These funding tools are being considered as potential avenues to generate funding dedicated to advancing the RouteAhead Implementation Plan. Administration is bringing forward a report to a strategic meeting of Council in 2023 Q3 that will provide more information on potential funding tools and mechanisms.

### *Timeline and Risk Analysis*

Administration undertook a risk assessment to ensure a holistic understanding of potential challenges with the RouteAhead Implementation Plan. Three timelines for completing service improvements were evaluated to identify the most feasible, practical, and resilient approach in line with Council's strategic objectives. Attachment 2 provides an overview of the risk analysis.

The quicker timeline aims to implement the plan in six-years; however, this approach is characterized by high complexity and risk, making it less feasible. The quicker timeline increases the likelihood of risks from procurement delays to operational challenges. The longer timeline, 30 years, was identified as low complexity and risk, but does not align with Council's strategic direction and other key initiatives in the Calgary Climate Strategy - Pathways to 2050, the Downtown Strategy, and Municipal Development Plan. The preferred 10-year timeline mitigates some of the risks associated with a quicker timeline and supports the timely realization of transit service improvements that address Council's strategic direction and Administration's climate and resiliency goals.

### *Projected Ridership*

Attachment 3 provides a visual comparison of ridership between the status quo and service improvements included in the RouteAhead Implementation Plan. The service improvements are expected to attract approximately 42.5 million additional annual trips by 2034.

## **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Attachment 1 – RouteAhead Implementation Plan 10-Year Budget
2. Attachment 2 – RouteAhead Implementation Plan Investment Scenarios & Risk Assessment
3. Attachment 3 – RouteAhead Implementation Plan Projected Ridership