

## Infrastructure Services Briefing to

Infrastructure and Planning Committee

2025 January 08

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IP2024-1246

## Calgary Airport Rail Connection Study

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### PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

This briefing provides an update to Council on the progress and next steps of the Calgary Airport Rail Connection Study, emphasizing key outcomes and next steps. The study identifies a preferred option that ensures:

1. Building on findings from the 2020 Airport Transit Line Study, the preferred option ensures the east-west connection remains intact, linking northeast and northwest Calgary communities where approximately 60% of the demand for airport service was identified.
2. Integration with future regional rail, preserving opportunities for a direct airport-downtown connection.
3. Flexibility for phased implementation based on funding priorities, with the east leg identified as a potential first phase, reflecting partner collaboration.
4. Alignment with the Provincial Passenger Rail Master Plan, ensuring consistency with provincial goals and long-term transit planning.

The final report, which includes functional drawings and cost estimates, will be shared publicly with the Government of Alberta to support funding and development decisions.

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### Initiation and Context (2020-2023)

The Calgary Airport Rail Connection Study builds on the foundation established by the 2020 Airport Transit Line Study, which highlighted the importance of linking the Calgary International Airport with The City's Blue and Green LRT lines. This work aligns with RouteAhead's vision for an integrated transportation network. In 2023, The City partnered with the Government of Alberta, which allocated a \$3 million grant to initiate the study. This partnership underscores a shared commitment to enhancing Calgary's transit infrastructure while aligning with regional transit goals.

**Input Committee Contributions:** To ensure a collaborative and comprehensive approach, an Input Committee was established with representatives from the Government of Alberta, City of Calgary, Canada Infrastructure Bank, Calgary Airport Authority, Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway, and private rail developers. The committee provided critical technical insights, shared regional and local priorities, and reviewed study progress. Their input significantly shaped the recommendations by ensuring alignment with stakeholder needs, technical feasibility, and best practices.

#### Key Study Highlights:

1. **East-West Connection:** Building on findings from the 2020 Airport Transit Line Study, the preferred option ensures the east-west connection remains intact, linking

northeast and northwest Calgary communities where approximately 60% of the demand for airport service was identified.

2. **Direct Airport-Downtown Link:** The alignment does not preclude a direct connection between the airport and downtown Calgary, preserving opportunities for enhanced connectivity. The alignment was modified from the 2020 Airport Transit Line Study (including wider radii) to allow for regional rail services to serve the airport in the future which would be delivered by private rail providers.
3. **Regional Rail Compatibility:** The design ensures that future expansions for intercity and regional rail remain viable, supporting broader transit integration.
4. **Funding Flexibility:** The option enables prioritization of the east leg, reflecting funding partner priorities and allowing for phased development.
5. **Alignment with Provincial Goals:** The study complements the Provincial Passenger Rail Master Plan by integrating local and intercity transit considerations into a unified framework.

The Preferred Option is identified in Attachment 1 and illustrates the alignment and specific features of the proposed east-west connection, integration with regional rail, and phased implementation strategy. This visual representation supports the study's findings and provides clarity on the proposed approach.

## Next Steps

The Study's Final Report will be completed in Q1 of 2025 and shared with the Government of Alberta as per the Grant Agreement with The City of Calgary. The findings of the study will be used and built upon by the Government of Alberta to inform their ongoing Passenger Rail Master Plan.

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Preferred Option IP2024-1246

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A/General Manager Infrastructure Services, Ryan Vanderputten, concurs with the information in this Briefing.