

## **Bridgeland Riverside Multimodal Pedestrian Bridge**

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Calgary Planning Commission receive this report for the Corporate Record.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- The project will replace the ageing and functionally obsolete LRT/Memorial Drive bridge crossing with a new bridge that extends the connection to St. Patrick's Island.
- What does this mean for Calgarians? The project will promote sustainable transportation by creating a vibrant, accessible connection between the Bridgeland-Riverside community, LRT station, Bow River pathway, and St. Patrick's Island.
- Why does this matter? The project will reconnect Bridgeland-Riverside with nature while promoting safety, accessibility, community, sustainability, and economic growth. It will support key city plans, including the Municipal Development Plan, Calgary Transportation Plan, and Council's Strategic Direction.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Site Context**

The project is located at the Bridgeland/Memorial LRT station in Calgary's NE Bridgeland-Riverside community. It will connect four key areas: the community and local pathways, LRT station, Bow River pathway, and St. Patrick's Island (Attachment 1). The north end of the project is a central community hub surrounded by residential buildings, seniors' housing, businesses, and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, all within 400 m of the bridge. Currently, access to St. Patrick's Island requires users to travel up to 1 km in either direction to access the island, which is a major deterrent to access. The project will create a direct, safe, and accessible multimodal link between the community, transit, and riverfront.

#### **Background**

**1997** | The Calgary General Hospital Legacy Fund was established based on the proceeds from the sales and leases of the Calgary General Hospital and Bow Valley Centre lands. The fund's intent is to support "healthy Calgary initiatives".

**2020** | The community association applied to have the fund sponsor the feasibility study for the project citing their desire to be better connected to nature and surrounding amenities. The initiative was supported by the fund committee as a "healthy Calgary initiative" with the potential to increase access and ease of travel for sustainable transportation.

**2021** | A feasibility study administered by the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation established the project goals and design principles and a recommended alignment.

**2022** | The City engaged a consultant team to develop a conceptual design and administered the first round of interested party engagement. An optimized alignment was selected.

**2023** | Council approved additional funding from the fund reserve to support further development of the project. Bridge options were developed.

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**2024/25** | The project team continued interested party engagement and completed preliminary design. Detailed design, regulatory applications, and development of the procurement package for Stage 1 construction are ongoing.

### **Scope and Staging**

The project will replace the ageing and functionally obsolete LRT/Memorial Drive bridge crossing with a new bridge that extends the connection to St. Patrick's Island. New community gathering spaces will also be provided on the north and south sides of Memorial Drive. The project will be constructed in two stages (Attachment 1):

- Stage 1 construction will consist of the St. Patrick's Island ramp, river bridge, south ramp and plaza, and north riverbank activation.
- Stage 2 construction will consist of the Memorial Drive bridge and north ramp and plaza.

Currently, there is only enough funding for Stage 1 construction. Additional funding is required to complete Stage 2 construction which will be requested during the 2027-2030 service cycle. Stage 2 construction could potentially align with future rehabilitation of the LRT station, development surrounding the north plaza, and upgrades to the community pathway network, presenting an opportunity for economies of scale, cost sharing, and reducing service disruptions. The LRT station will remain in service during construction.

### **Urban Design Principles**

**Place** | Consistent materials and finishes across structures and public spaces unify the high-quality experience of all components of the urban realm while providing spaces for pause, views, community gatherings, and passive enjoyment outside the paths of travel and away from traffic noise.

**Scale** | The project team has taken intentional care in the design of elements like guardrails, plazas, furniture, and lighting to create an appropriate pedestrian-scale experience throughout the project's 1.2 km length.

**Amenity** | The north plaza and ramps frame the site, protecting it from the traffic of Memorial Drive while embracing the adjacent Silvera for Seniors community and providing opportunity for future development. A unified stair and ramp landing seamlessly connects the north plaza with Bow Valley Drive, 9 Street, and McDougall Park.

**Legibility & Vibrancy** | Open sightlines and strong visual alignment of main bridge spans accommodate intuitive wayfinding and opportunities for strong passive surveillance. The path of travel will have a larger width, flatter grades, and larger turning radii to accommodate both walking and wheeling.

**Resilience** | The strength of the design lies in the visual interconnectivity of adjacent spans and spaces, defined by simple, elegant guardrails and an integrated lighting scheme. These simple moves, in combination with the activation of the north riverbank, result in a safe and comfortable community amenity that is timeless in its aesthetic.

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### **Design Review**

As part of the design review process, the proposed bridge infrastructure was reviewed by the Access Design Subcommittee (Attachment 2) and the Urban Design Review Panel and Office of Urban Design (Attachment 3). Recognizing the design constraints presented by the limited project budget and site context, prioritization of maintenance considerations and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles, and the intention for the design to have a light touch on the landscape and showcase the surrounding natural environment, advisory comments were provided related to accessibility, structure form, articulation, aesthetics, respite/viewing areas, and lighting. The applicant's rationale and the resulting revisions to the design elements were deemed appropriate and sufficient.

*"We have been involved in the evolution of the project from the initial design stage. The project team utilized six urban design principles as summarized above. Based on its merits, we fully support the proposed design and are looking forward to implementation of this important civic project" - Office of Urban Design.*

### **Legislation & Policy**

#### Municipal Development Plan

The project aligns with the key directions of accommodating a growing city, protecting, connecting and integrating natural areas, creating inclusive, resilient and healthy communities, building around transit, connecting mobility networks, and achieving quality design outcomes. The project is located in the Neighbourhood – High Activity category and aligns with the Neighbourhood – High Activity policy in that the quality, connectivity and capacity of walking and wheeling networks should be improved, particularly on corridors connecting to rapid transit.

#### Calgary Transportation Plan

The project aligns with several of the goals and policies related to transportation choice, walking and wheeling, transit, quality of service and user experience, local transportation connectivity, transportation safety, universal access, and environment and transportation.

#### Council's Strategic Direction

The project aligns with Council's foundation of economic resilience by prioritizing economic benefit, social resilience by prioritizing safety and accessibility, and climate resilience by prioritizing sustainability and reducing environmental impact. The project also aligns with Council's guiding principles of strengthening relationships with Calgarians via extensive interested party engagement, building strong communities by prioritizing community building and placemaking, and investing in infrastructure. Additional focus areas of social equity are met through enhanced accessibility, prioritizing transit connections to/from the LRT station, and hosting and hospitality with direct connections to St. Patrick's Island and the community.

### **ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

- ☒ Outreach was undertaken by the Applicant
- ☒ Public/interested parties were informed by Administration

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### **Applicant-Led Outreach**

Applicant in this instance was City of Calgary.

### **City-Led Outreach**

Engagement and communication have included an online public survey, meetings and presentations, and website updates. Feedback received was captured in a What We Heard Report (Attachment 4) and meeting minutes. The project team has worked hard to incorporate feedback that aligns with the project goals and design principles. Key external interested parties have included the public, fund committee, community association, Bridgeland Business Improvement Area, Silvera for Seniors, Bridgeland Crossings, McPherson Place, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (the steward of St. Patrick's Island), various utility owners, and Urban Design Review Panel. Communication with interested parties will continue as the project progresses.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Social**

The project is a "healthy Calgary initiative" that will support sustainable transportation (walking, wheeling, and transit) and benefit all Calgarians by activating the space, creating a destination, and providing a safe, accessible, and direct multimodal connection. These features, including reducing service disruptions during construction, can improve wellbeing, social connections, and the sense of community while deterring antisocial behavior and crime.

### **Environmental**

The project aligns with the [Calgary Climate Strategy](#) goals of progressing towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and becoming a more climate-resilient city by supporting sustainable transportation and designing for climate change. The bridge infrastructure is designed for a 100-year service life. The project incorporates durable, low maintenance materials and native, hardy landscaping which will reduce lifecycle costs and provide long-term value.

### **Economic**

Improved connectivity and clear wayfinding will reinforce access to the Bridgeland Business Improvement Area. The project will provide a direct connection between the community, LRT station, and St. Patrick's Island, thereby increasing ridership and bringing additional patronage to the area.

### **Service and Financial Implications**

Other: The bridge infrastructure will be maintained by The City.

### **RISK**

There are no known planning risks associated with this project.

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**Calgary Planning Commission**  
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**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Bridgeland Riverside Multimodal Pedestrian Bridge Presentation
2. Access Design Subcommittee Review
3. Urban Design Panel Review
4. What We Heard Report

Department Circulation

General Manager (Name)	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Kerensa Swanson Fromherz	Public Spaces Delivery	Approve
Michael Thompson	Infrastructure Services	Approve