

Calgary Transit Park and Ride – Guiding Principles for Future Improvements

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides follow-up on outstanding recommendations from a comprehensive review of Calgary Transit Park and Ride that was presented to Council on 2016 June 20 (TT2016-0319). It also addresses a related notice of motion (NM2016-18) on the feasibility of satellite park and ride.

Administration initially recommended “transition[ing] towards a system of 100 percent monthly reserved parking with differential pricing” to improve the customer experience and customer certainty of finding a parking spot at Calgary Transit park and ride lots. This recommendation was referred for further study of five items:

- a. Daily parking provisions for occasional riders that do not utilize vacant monthly spaces.
- b. A system whereby monthly parkers could place their reservations on “hold” when they are not using them without forfeiting the right to purchase a monthly pass when they return.
- c. Altering the time when the spots become free in order to stretch out the peak period on transit.
- d. Working with adjacent landowners on shared parking solutions (in addition to the land use changes in Recommendation 2).
- e. The feasibility of differential paid/free parking rations [sic] at the different locations; and to return to Council no later than Q1 2018.

Currently, in accordance with Council direction, up to 50% of park and ride stalls at a given lot can be made available for reserved parking (weekdays between 2:00 am - 10:00 am) with the remainder available for free. Based on the analysis of the five items above and customer feedback, this report proposes four principles to guide future improvements to the operations and customer experience of Calgary Transit park and ride lots.

NM2016-18 directed Administration to undertake a Transit Feasibility Study to assess the demand for satellite park and ride lots outside of the city limits with bus service to Calgary. Since this Council direction, the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) has been established with a mandate to consider intermunicipal transit as part of its growth and servicing plans. Administration requires more time to engage with the recently-formed CMRB on regional park and ride and transit servicing, to allow for holistic analysis and coordination.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That the SPC on Transportation and Transit recommend that Council:

1. Approve the following principles to guide future improvements to the operations and customer experience of Calgary Transit park and ride lots:
 - a. Make park and ride easier to use by increasing the certainty of finding a space
 - b. Offer some free stalls on all CTrain lines
 - c. Build transit ridership by pricing competitively with alternatives and optimizing the use of available stalls
 - d. Respond to changing technology that improves the customer experience
2. Direct Administration to continue to review intermunicipal transit solutions including regional satellite park and ride lots outside of the Calgary city limits through the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board and report back with an update on the feasibility of such lots by Q2 2019.

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PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2016 June 20 Regular Meeting of Council, report TT2016-0319, A Review of Calgary Transit Park and Ride, was approved with a number of recommendations. With the exception of item 4 and a related notice of motion (NM2016-18), all recommendations were addressed at Council through TT2017-0547, Calgary Transit Park and Ride Review – Update (items 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7) and TT2015-0719, Anderson Station Park and Ride Plan (items 6 and 8). TT2016-0319 was approved as follows:

1. Develop a general park and ride strategy for current and future CTrain stations with the goal of optimizing park and ride and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities to achieve an overall target to serve approximately 15 percent of weekday peak period CTrain trips based on the park and ride planning criteria outlined in Attachment 1.
2. Enable shared use parking in the vicinity of CTrain stations and major bus use terminals through Land Use and Policy provisions.
3. Explore additional funding for park and ride development and management using surplus revenues from other parking.
4. REFER Transition towards a system of 100 percent monthly reserved parking with differential pricing based on demand and offer a system of daily reserved parking that utilizes vacant monthly reserved spaces.

The following five items were referred to Administration for further study:

- a. Daily parking provisions for occasional riders that do not utilize vacant monthly spaces.
 - b. A system whereby monthly parkers could place their reservations on “hold” when they are not using them without forfeiting the right to purchase a monthly pass when they return.
 - c. Altering the time when the spots become free in order to stretch out the peak period on transit.
 - d. Working with adjacent landowners on shared parking solutions (in addition to the land use changes in Recommendation 2).
 - e. The feasibility of differential paid/free parking rations [sic] at the different locations; and to return to Council no later than Q1 2018.
5. Report back to the SPC on Transportation and Transit regarding progress on recommendations 1, 2, and 3 no later than 2017 June.
 6. Develop detailed parking plans to include timelines, phasing and cost estimates that reflect TOD planning for all current and future CTrain stations.
 7. Identify how Calgary Transit could charge a higher fee for reserve parking to customers who live outside Calgary and report back in conjunction with Recommendation 5.
 8. Report back to the SPC on Transportation and Transit with a park and ride plan for Anderson Station no later than 2016 September.

Council also adopted Notice of Motion NM2016-18 as follows:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Administration is directed to: undertake a Transit Feasibility Study to assess the demand for satellite park and ride lots outside of the city limits with bus service to Calgary;

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AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the study identifies the associated marketability, ridership potential, financial implications, operational requirements, and synergy with other Calgary Regional Partnership plans and Province of Alberta transportation projects, and to report back to Council through the SPC on Transportation and Transit with an update no later than Q1 2018.

At the 2017 February 13 Regular Meeting of Council, the following recommendation was approved from TT2017-0042, Enabling Public Parking in Existing Parking Lots, with respect to shared parking:

2. Direct Administration to develop an implementation process to enable public parking in existing developments and apply this process to pilot sites over 2017.

BACKGROUND

Calgary Transit park and ride is attractive to those who value the convenience of using a car for part of their trip. Some park and ride users would be less likely to use public transit without this option. Most park and ride customers are either traveling downtown or to post-secondary schools. Using park and ride allows them to save money over parking at these locations and to avoid traffic congestion. By intercepting these customers near the origin of the trip, park and ride reduces travel demand in the downtown and major activity centres.

Calgary Transit charges for reserved parking at many park and ride lots. Currently, in accordance with Council direction, up to 50% of park and ride stalls at a given lot can be made available for reserved parking (weekdays between 2:00 am - 10:00 am) with the remainder available for free. There are also a small number of short-stay (four hour) parking stalls available in most lots.

In 2016 June, Calgary Transit presented a comprehensive review of park and ride (TT2016-0319) as an overall response to evolving policies such as the Calgary Transportation Plan, RouteAhead and the Transportation Department's Consolidated Parking Policy Work Plan. Through that report, Council approved a target of serving approximately 15 per cent of weekday peak period CTrain passenger trips through park and ride. A follow-up report in 2017 June (TT2017-0547) provided greater clarity in direction for the parking strategy around Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and maintaining the same parking fee for all customers regardless of their city of residence.

This report addresses outstanding Council direction from TT2016-0319 (recommendation 4) and NM2016-18.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

This purpose of this report is to set the principles to guide the introduction of revised customer-centric parking measures at Calgary Transit park and ride lots. These principles have been informed by analysis of the items referred to Administration in recommendation 4 of TT2016-0319 (provided below), as well as customer feedback and the framework of other Council-approved parking policies.

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a. Daily parking provisions for occasional riders that do not utilize vacant monthly spaces.

Adding some daily parking would offer customers the choice to pay a daily fee for parking instead of a monthly reservation. There are currently three park and ride options at Calgary Transit lots: monthly reserved parking, free parking and a small number of 4-hour parking stalls. Customers who do not reserve stalls and do not arrive early enough can experience difficulties accessing parking stalls, depending on the location and time of day. Attachment 1 contains a graph of arrival times of park and ride customers at the Rocky Ridge lot at Tuscany Station (on the North side of Crowchild Trail), and shows that free parking is typically full by 7:00 am whereas reserved parking fills up just after 9:00 am.

The current arrangement of free and reserved parking may not meet the needs of the occasional parker, the customer on the reserved parking waiting list, customers who cannot or do not need to arrive in the early morning, or those who cannot afford a monthly reservation. An option for daily parking in addition to free and monthly reserved parking may help all four categories of customers.

There are currently a few daily paid parking options near CTrain stations that the public can use but are not controlled by The City. These include lots at Banff Trail Station (McMahon Stadium), Zoo Station (Calgary Zoo parking), and Erlton Station (Calgary Stampede parking).

b. A system whereby monthly parkers could place their reservations on “hold” when they are not using them without forfeiting the right to purchase a monthly pass when they return.

Currently, parking reservations must be renewed and paid every month. Introducing a system that allows customers to place holds would make reservations more affordable, flexible and attractive; however initial investigations show that this type of hold feature is beyond the capability of the current technology options for administering parking reservations. There are also further considerations related to reservation certainty, optimization of the number of reserved stalls, and cascading effects on the reservation waiting list that need to be further analyzed when implementing a reservation holding system. This option will be considered for a future parking operating model, but further analysis on the costs, operational impacts, and value to customers will be required.

Beyond a system to hold reservations, other changes in technology and mobile devices have the potential to improve customer flexibility and convenience in their interactions with park and ride and transit. With trends such as growth in on-demand and shared transportation services, and increased prevalence and capacity of transportation-related mobile applications, there are growing opportunities to enhance the Calgary Transit customer experience. If future changes to the park and ride pricing and reservation structure yield increased revenues, this funding could be directed to other parking-related and/or customer experience improvements, based on an evaluation of the costs and benefits. Examples of improvements could include:

- Mobile applications that support improved customer convenience and flexibility for parking.
- Promoting parking options for customers who use “mobility as a service” options to connect to the transit network, such as car sharing and shared ride services.
- Investments in technology that improve connections between various mobility options, public transit and park and ride.

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- Investments in technology that provide dynamic information on park and ride occupancy, for enhanced customer information and optimization of parking supply to better meet customer needs.

c. Altering the time when the spots become free in order to stretch out the peak period on transit.

Reserved parking areas are limited to those with a reservation between the hours of 2:00 am and 10:00 am. Changing the hours of reserved parking was proposed by Committee as a means of extending the peak travel period. It is unlikely that adjusting the hours of reserved parking would result in a significant change to travel patterns in Calgary. Most reserved park and ride customers arrive by 9:00 am or earlier. Past surveys have shown that 2.7% of all park and ride customers (free and reserved) arrive between 10:00 am and 11:00 am.

d. Working with adjacent landowners on shared parking solutions (in addition to the land use changes in Recommendation 2).

In 2017 January, as part of report TT2017-0042, Council directed Administration to develop an implementation process to enable public parking in existing developments. The main objective of this work is to better use the existing, developed parking supply around areas such as CTrain stations and Main Streets to supplement City-provided parking and aid in the transition of TOD areas. The entire park and ride supply cannot be accommodated in this type of structured parking in the long term due to cost. However, this work will help achieve the approved park and ride supply target in station areas while facilitating TOD development by leveraging available private parking supply. Administration is developing the planning process for implementation and will apply it to pilot sites in 2018. This approach was approved in TT2017-0719 for Anderson Station to support the development of TOD near the station.

e. The feasibility of differential paid/free parking ratios at the different locations

As of January 2018, up to 50% of parking stalls in each Calgary Transit park and ride lot are available for reservation at \$85/month. Most terminus lots (e.g. Tuscany Station, Somerset-Bridlewood Station, 69 Street Station) are fully subscribed, i.e. all reservable spots have been reserved by customers. Other lots have a great deal of variation, from one reservation at McKnight-Westwinds Station to a fully subscribed reserved lot at Shawnessy Station (Attachment 2). Allowing more flexibility in the ratio of paid/free parking stalls (i.e. exceed 50% of the total lot capacity for reservations) would enable Calgary Transit to offer more spots to reserved parking customers based on demand and address their needs. A differential paid/free maximum ratio strategy has the potential to better address customer needs in park and ride lots where reserved parking demand currently exceeds supply. Further analysis is required to better understand the scale and efficacy of location-based adjustments to pricing and supply for transit customers.

Similarly, adjusting pricing according to demand may be used to encourage customers to choose different park and ride lots and facilitate a more even distribution of parking utilization. Differential pricing can also have added customer benefits of improved affordability and certainty of finding a spot. Pricing must still remain competitive with the costs of alternatives such as downtown parking, to ensure that transit is still a desirable commuting option.

The framework of the *Calgary Parking Policies* includes considerations on occupancy, customer search behaviour, and pricing, and can be applied to managing park and ride. The policies provide a structure for when prices will change, under what circumstances and by how much.

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Annual price changes for on-street parking are data-driven based on occupancy targets and have been successful in helping to achieve those targets. Basing prices on occupancy also helps achieve transparency regarding charges in a particular area. Using the policies as a framework for park and ride could help improve customer certainty through occupancy targets and price.

While more flexibility in the pricing and supply of reserved parking is beneficial, past Council discussions regarding park and ride have referred to those Calgarians who need to use park and ride but cannot afford or make good use of a monthly reservation. Some park and ride lots have available free parking stalls during the day, although park and ride lots with high demand create challenges for those who need to access a stall but do not have a reservation. Maintaining some free parking stalls on all CTrain lines, in conjunction with a revised reservation structure, will allow for the optimization of park and ride supply and usage in conjunction with the diversity of customer parking needs.

Proposed Principles

Considering the above analysis and customer feedback on their parking needs, the following principles are being proposed to guide future improvements to the operations and customer experience of Calgary Transit park and ride lots:

1. Make park and ride easier to use by increasing the certainty of finding a space
2. Offer some free stalls on all CTrain lines
3. Build transit ridership by pricing competitively with alternatives and optimizing the use of available stalls
4. Respond to changing technology that improves the customer experience

Regional Park and Ride

The Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) has been established with a broad direction of helping the region coordinate decision-making and work collaboratively. The broad mandate of the CMRB is to promote sustainable, environmentally responsible land use planning, growth management and efficient use of land for development. Related to servicing, the CMRB will coordinate investment in infrastructure and core regional servicing considered necessary by its members.

To fulfil the mandate of the CMRB, direction has been given to create two plans:

- Prepare a long-term Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Plan. Certain statutory land use plans will be required to be endorsed by the CMRB.
- Prepare a five-year Metropolitan Servicing Plan. This servicing plan must list the servicing required to support the development in the CMRB

Regional transit has been identified as an item to be included in both the growth and servicing plans; building park and ride lots outside of Calgary for the purposes of travelling to Calgary should be considered in conjunction with these plans mandated by the CMRB. This allows regional park and ride to be coordinated holistically with regional planning and transit service that meets the needs of regional customers and intercepts car trips to Calgary. The CMRB has just been introduced in early 2018, and Administration requires more time to engage with the CMRB on regional park and ride and transit servicing.

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Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Calgary Transit customers were engaged in preparation for the 2016 June Park and Ride report (TT2016-0319). The Calgary Parking Authority was consulted on methods for improving the customer experience.

Strategic Alignment

The strategic supply of park and ride has a positive impact on achievement of goals set out in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan. Park and ride also provides mobility choices to Calgarians as well as people who commute to Calgary and makes it easier for all to make lifestyle choices that mitigate climate change.

RouteAhead also identifies park and ride as an important element of the customer experience. The plan acknowledges the role park and ride plays in enabling customers' choices as well as the benefits to the overall mobility network e.g. reduced traffic volumes into the core.

The Calgary Metropolitan Region Board has been established with a broad direction of helping the region coordinate decision-making and work collaboratively. Building park and ride lots outside of Calgary will be considered in conjunction with this direction and the Board.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

Park and ride provides an attractive option for those who value the convenience of having a car for part of their trip. Some customers would be less likely to use public transit without park and ride since they need a car for some of their trip. Most park and ride customers are either travelling to the downtown or to post-secondary schools and are able to save money and avoid traffic congestion at or near their destinations.

If the principles were approved, we would expect the customer experience to improve by providing customers more choice and certainty, improving access to transit for Calgarians.

Environmental

Park and ride lots located in convenient locations intercept trips that would otherwise continue on to their destinations or downtown. These lots allow customers to use transit for a portion of their trip thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Economic

Park and ride customers are an important segment of Calgary Transit ridership. However, large parking lots are an inefficient use of land in close proximity to the CTrain. Park and ride is also associated with considerable capital and operating costs.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

Implementing the proposed principles could have positive or negative impacts to Calgary Transit, depending on the pricing and reservation options determined. Calgary Transit will not operate a system that will potentially reduce overall revenue; however, if revenue increases are

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forecasted, this funding will be directed to parking-related and/or customer experience improvements.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

Capital programs/projects that are required for asset management or customer improvements will be identified as part of the public transit service business plan and budget in One Calgary.

Risk Assessment

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The recommendation to approve principles will guide Administration's operational decisions with respect to park and ride lots, based on customer feedback and analysis of the items referred for further study in TT2016-0319.

The creation of the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board by The Province mandates the new Board to create a Growth Plan and Servicing Plan which explicitly reference inclusion of intermunicipal transit. Satellite parking lots and associated bus service will be considered with these future plans.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Attachment 1 – Arrival Times of Park and Ride Customers at Tuscany Station – Rocky Ridge Lot
2. Attachment 2 – Calgary Transit Reserved Parking Utilization 2017