

Transportation Report to
Intergovernmental Affairs Committee
2019 June 20

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
IGA2019-0669

Calgary-Bow Valley Mass Transit Feasibility – Next Steps

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 2019 February 27, the Town of Banff released the Calgary-Bow Valley Mass Transit Feasibility Study which review the feasibility of introducing a mass transit service between the Calgary area and the Bow Valley. The study reviewed bus and rail options, high level infrastructure and fleet requirements, an operations plan as well suggestions for the regulatory framework around introducing mass transit.

On 2019 April 4, Elected Officials and Administration from the Town of Banff, Town of Canmore, Town of Cochrane, Improvement District No. 9 (Lake Louise) and City of Calgary met to discuss next steps for the potential of mass transit connections between Calgary and The Bow Valley. The outcomes and next steps of the discussion will be focused on three topic areas: Technical/Financial, Communications and Governance of potential transit service.

Prior to further decisions, agreements and potential funding advocacy for mass transit between Calgary and The Bow Valley, Administration requires a broader understanding of the three topic areas as it relates to a position from The City of Calgary. Council support is requested for ongoing participation in discussions related to Calgary – Bow Valley Regional Mass Transit including bus and rail options.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee recommend that Council endorse The City of Calgary's participation in ongoing discussions regarding mass transit between Calgary and The Bow Valley subject to the principles identified in this report.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2016 February 22 Regular Meeting of Council, C2016-0182 Alberta Community Partnership Provincial Grant Funding Request – Regional Passenger Rail Feasibility Study, was approved as follows:

That Council resolves to support The City of Calgary's participation in the Bow Valley Passenger Rail Feasibility Study as per requirements of the Provincially-funded Alberta Community Partnership grant program.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Banff partnered with the regional municipalities of, Canmore, Cochrane, Improvement District 9, and The City of Calgary to study the feasibility of introducing a mass transit service between the Calgary area and the Bow Valley. The study confirmed that mass transit (bus and rail) is feasible; however, capital and operating costs are significant. The report was publicly released on 2019 February 27 and was shared with other communities in the Bow Valley, Parks Canada, CP Rail, regional bus operators, private-sector businesses that have indicated interest, and the Provincial and Federal governments.

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General conclusions from the study:

1. The study's municipal partners agree that for effective mass transit to occur, partnership with other orders of government will be required.
2. The consultant team developed bus and rail options to provide transit along Highway 1 and the CP right-of-way, respectively.
3. The proposed rail service concepts are based on the provision of a dedicated track along CP's right-of-way, except in downtown Calgary, where the passenger train would need to operate on one of CP's existing tracks. Multiple sidings will also be required along the entire corridor.
4. The ridership forecasts were developed for the purposes of assessing the potential feasibility of a mass transit service, based on a range of assumptions that are subject to changing external conditions.
5. Bus Implementation – Service described in the report could be implemented by 2022 subject to capital and operating funding agreements, member municipality approvals, fleet procurement, service contracts, storage and maintenance facility, bus stop & terminal implementation and fare strategies.
6. Rail Implementation – Service as described in the report could be implemented in the mid to late 2020's subject to governance and operating structure approvals, approvals with CP, property acquisition, environmental reviews, engagement, capital and operating funding agreements, member municipality approvals, detailed design and construction, fleet procurement, service contracts, storage and maintenance facility construction, train terminal implementation and fare strategies.

	Capital Cost (millions) (Class 5 estimate)	Operating Cost (millions) (annual)	Ridership (2022) (annual)
Bus Implementation	\$8.1 - \$19.6	\$4.5 - \$5.8	200,000 - 490,000
Rail Implementation	\$660 - \$680	\$13.4 - \$14.3	220,000 - 620,000

7. The consultant studied scenarios based on Calgary-Banff one-way fares of between \$10 and \$15, with higher or lower for different distances in between, and considered options for seasonal or year-round scenarios.
8. Each of the municipal partners have a range of different jurisdictional priorities; the level of importance of regional mass transit and the infrastructure requirements are different for each municipality, relative to other priorities. But partnership for long-term solutions is a shared priority.

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INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Although the feasibility report identified that mass transit is technically feasible, critical topics need to be reviewed in greater detail prior to determining value to Calgarians and The City's participation in agreements and funding advocacy.

- Technical/Financial – Review gaps and update technical and financial information based on feedback heard to date.
- Governance – Review governance authority and models for owning and operating the service.
- Communications – Develop a communication strategy for advocacy including stakeholder identification (orders of government/public and private) and specific tactics.

While The City supports mobility choice to the Bow Valley, competing priorities within The City of Calgary do not currently make it feasible to provide capital and operating support to the bus and rail options outlined in the report. To participate in ongoing discussions related to mass transit between Calgary and The Bow Valley, Administration requires Council support to provide input into the three topic areas. Moving forward, Administration is recommending participation, not only to help shape the three items, but to also better understand their scope and evaluation before developing a long-term position. Two principles have been developed to guide Administrations participation:

Advocacy Principles:

1. Mass Transit between Calgary and The Bow Valley should not compete with existing and future infrastructure projects and funding in Calgary.
2. The project should benefit Calgarians from a Triple Bottom Line (social, environmental, economical) perspective

Prior to any advocacy of mass transit between Calgary and The Bow Valley, Administration requires a broader understanding of the three topic areas as it relates to a position from The City of Calgary. Participation does not bind Calgary to pursuing it further if it is determined that mass transit is not in our interests. There will be several off-ramps ahead and Administration will keep Council informed on major developments.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

As part of the Mass Transit Feasibility Study, online and in-person surveys were completed between July and August 2017. Future stakeholders including public organizations, private organizations and other levels of government will be identified.

Strategic Alignment

This report is aligned with the following long-term plans: Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP) and Municipal Development Plan (MDP, 2009), RouteAhead: A Strategic Plan for Transit in Calgary (2013) and the Calgary Metropolitan Plan (2012). Mass transit between Calgary and They Bow Valley would help serve principal goals of providing sustainable transportation options for the region, improving highway safety and enhancing opportunities for economic growth through tourism.

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Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Mass transit between Calgary and The Bow Valley has the potential to increase sustainable travel and reduce the use of private vehicles, achieving improvements in road safety, reducing congestion, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and stimulating regional economic growth.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

The commitment of time and staffing from City of Calgary staff can be accommodated within Calgary Transit's regional transit planning activities with no additional request for funding. The ongoing work will refine future capital and operating costs.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

None associated with the participation in the feasibility study.

Risk Assessment

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

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S): The recommendation in this report will allow Administration to participate in the ongoing discussions to shape and provide input on mobility options between Calgary and The Bow Valley. In the absence of active participation from Administration, decisions on mobility and advocacy will be made without a perspective from Calgary.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. No attachments.