



COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 2 July 2025

Subject: Review of Council Motion with Transit Master Plan Scope

Directorate: Strategic Growth and Investment

Issue:

Administration is responding to Council direction on a proposed Notice of Motion that seeks an exploration of pilot transit routes to post-secondary campuses in Calgary.

Policy / Council Direction:

Councillor Spearman advanced a Notice of Motion seeking an exploration of pilot transit routes to post-secondary campuses in Calgary on May 20, 2025. Council directed Administration to report back with the full scope of resources, costs, and plan required to:

1. Explore the viability of a pilot regional transit route during the academic year, focused on connecting Airdrie directly to Calgary post-secondary campuses, with an assessment of potential costs, regional partnerships, ridership demand, and return on investment;
2. Investigate potential funding opportunities, including provincial and federal grants or partnerships, to support this pilot, and that;
3. Following the analysis of this post-secondary pilot, direct Administration to provide recommendations for broader Airdrie Transit upgrades, which could further enhance regional connectivity in collaboration with partners like Rocky View County and City of Calgary, local route efficiency, and transportation equity.

Administration identified that the scope of the Transit Master Plan (TMP), in progress, includes most of the requested explorations/investigations listed in the Notice of Motion. Administration committed to returning to Council at the earliest possible convenience with options and cost estimates for a change in scope to accommodate the actions included in the Notice of Motion.

Background:

Council adopted the first Transit Master Plan in June 2016 as a 10-year document to guide transit decisions and service levels. Council approved the development of the next 10-year Transit Master Plan as one of the requirements to receive the second installment of the Housing Accelerator Fund payments. Council included the Transit Master Plan in the 2025 Operating Budget, funded through the initial Housing Accelerator Fund payment installment.

The intent of the 2026 Transit Master Plan is to provide an implementation strategy for a coordinated public transit system that will guide the policy development, service planning, and resources (operating and capital) over a ten-year period. The Transit Master Plan will provide a strategic link between Council's Strategic Focus Areas, departmental business plans, and the operating and capital budgets that support transit.

The principal elements of the Transit Master Plan scope include:

- Developing the Master Plan Foundation
- Policy Alignment and Framework
- Planning the Future Transit Network
- Implementing the Future Transit Network

Administration selected Dillon Consulting Limited to develop the Transit Master Plan. This will involve on-site, in-person engagement with both the public and key stakeholders. As part of the project scope, Dillon Consulting Limited will identify changes and additions to the transit network in alignment with the Transit Master Plan Foundation and the Policy Alignment and Framework sections. The service plan will include recommend timing, projections, pace of development, and performance triggers for any service changes or additions. Additionally, Dillon Consulting Limited will provide ridership forecasts based on the proposed changes and additions to the transit network. They will also identify opportunities for enhanced service integration and enhanced customer experience with regional partners, including Calgary Transit.

The principal elements of the Notice of Motion are contemplated in the scope of the Transit Master Plan, which Dillon Consulting anticipates completing by Q4 2025 for presentation/decision at Council in Q1 2026. Existing scope includes consultation with the University of Calgary to cover:

- Existing Transportation Conditions
 - (C-train and bus routes, service levels, operations, gaps in service, any dedicated student transportation operated by U of C – service levels and routes)
- Student feedback
- Feedback on potential service expansion (routing, stop locations, frequency, service hours)
- Funding possibilities
- Typical class schedules
- Typical buildings with most classrooms (Main, Downtown, Spyhill Campus)
- Mode Share – proportion of students taking transit vs driving, usage of existing U-Pass, parking conditions/shortages
- Number of students that live in Airdrie
- Existing mode share of Airdrie students

Calgary Transit:

- Existing Airdrie Transit operations in Calgary
- Potential of service expansion to other areas, particularly the University of Calgary
- Fare and Service integration opportunities.

Dillon Consulting would review this information from key stakeholders to determine if a university route should be included in the TMP. If so determined, it would be mapped and costed at a high level and included in the implementation plan for the TMP.

However, Dillon Consulting can conduct enhanced post-secondary service investigation as part of the TMP scope if directed to do so immediately. There is an additional cost of \$10,310 to complete this work, which would require a budget adjustment from Council.

Council Committee Routed Through:

This report responds to a direct request from Council for more information to decide on a publicized Notice of Motion.

Administration Recommendation:

Administration recommends that Council accepts this report for information, directing no change to the scope of the Transit Master Plan.

Alternatives/Implications:

Alternative 1: Council could elect to have Dillon Consulting Limited expand the scope of the Transit Master Plan to include enhanced post-secondary service investigation.

Implications: The additional work would include the development of up to three different service options to serve the University of Calgary, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Mount Royal University, Bow Valley College, and the Alberta University of the Arts. Dillon Consulting would determine high-level operational service costs for each service option and fleet capital costs. Determinations by Dillon Consulting on the additional post-secondary service options would be presented in a workshop to Administration and included as a supplementary element of the completed Transit Master Plan.

Dillon Consulting identified that the increase scope can be accommodated if confirmed presently, and estimates that the increased scope will cost \$10,310. If this is the Alternative Council wishes to pursue, Administration recommends funding the associated cost through the General Operating Reserve, as Council has allocated all Housing Accelerator Fund amounts on this and other projects.

Budget Implications:

There are no budget implications associated with the Administrative recommendation.

Communications and Engagement:

The direction of Council will be communicated to the consultants engaged in the Transit Master Plan, but will not change the extent of public and stakeholder engagement associated with the development of this document.

Recommendation:

That Council accepts this report for information, directing no change to the scope of the Transit Master Plan.

Billie-Jo Arnott
Team Leader, Active Transportation and Transit

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| Staff Presenter: | Billie-Jo Arnott, Team Leader |
| External Presenter: | N/A |
| Department: | Strategic Growth and Investment |
| Reviewed by: | Mike Korman, Stephen Utz |
| Attachments: | N/A |