

# CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL ITEM

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## BUS RAPID TRANSIT ROUTE NETWORK AND CONFIGURATION

### ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon (City) is working towards implementing a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system to improve transportation options in the community. Administration is seeking approval for the network of streets and BRT elements to improve public transit as a transportation choice for citizens and support the goals of the Plan for Growth.

### RECOMMENDATION

That City Council approve the Bus Rapid Transit route network as proposed, including dedicated transit lanes and conceptual station locations and including any decisions on the Downtown and Nutana segment options, which are dealt with in preceding reports.

### BACKGROUND

#### History

In 2016, Saskatoon City Council approved “The Growth Plan to Half a Million.” The plan charts a course for long-term growth and revitalization that balances and promotes quality of life, sustainability and economic development.

A key element of the Growth Plan is rethinking the way in which the City provides transportation options to existing and future residents. As Saskatoon grows to 500,000 people, it will require a variety of transportation options to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the city. Given this objective, the Growth Plan includes a specific “Transit Plan” that aims to redefine public transit in Saskatoon. The proposed transit plan primarily focuses on building a BRT system, and identifies changes needed to the current system to support high-frequency, direct service along the major corridors.

The BRT is intended to form the backbone of a more modern transit system and is seen to be a catalyst for the corridor growth component of the Growth Plan. In order to have a successful BRT system, Saskatoon needs to reconfigure its transit system around the BRT lines, and this means fundamental changes in how the transit system operates.

In November 2017, City Council approved a “preferred configuration and conceptual network” for the BRT system. The preferred configuration included “runningways” or dedicated lanes along select short road sections. In June 2018, City Council entertained public comment on the proposed BRT configuration. During that meeting, several questions were asked that required the Administration to report back on.

During its October 15, 2018 meeting, the Governance and Priorities Committee received a report and a presentation from the Administration providing responses to the majority of technical questions raised in June and a summary of the stakeholder/community engagement activities completed to date to support the Transit

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Plan/Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Plan and the Downtown Active Transportation (AT) Network. This was in response to the considerations that were raised by committee members at the June 20, 2018 Special Governance and Priorities Committee meeting. The Administration committed to respond to the technical questions and conduct further stakeholder and public engagement prior to bringing a decision report forward to confirm the BRT and Downtown AT Networks.

### **Current Status**

The BRT project is undergoing detailed design for most components of the network and system. This design utilizes feedback from the comprehensive public stakeholder engagement on the system. Details of the public engagement feedback is provided in Appendix 1.

The proposed network consists of 38 kilometres of BRT, which consists of 34.5 kilometres running in mixed traffic and up to 3.5 kilometres in dedicated transit-only lanes through Downtown, College Drive and potentially Nutana. Six bus-only queue jump locations along with 38 kilometres of fibre optic communication cable, 114 upgraded traffic signal controllers and transit signal priority at 90 intersections is also proposed to improve reliability of BRT. The following customer systems at each of the 85 accessible station platforms are also included:

- Identification pylon;
- Real-time information display;
- Shelter & on-call radiant heater;
- CCTV camera;
- Advertising display; and
- Public art opportunities.

To offset the costs associated with constructing and implementing the BRT in Saskatoon, the City is working with federal and provincial governments on potential funding for various infrastructure projects. The BRT is an excellent candidate project for federal and provincial funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan (ICIP). If successful under the ICIP, the City would be required to cover approximately 27% of total eligible costs, while the balance would be covered by the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan. For example, the total capital investment for phase one of the BRT system is estimated \$120 million +/- 25%. Under this investment scenario, the City would contribute an estimated \$32.4 million, while the remaining \$88 million is anticipated to be covered by the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

- In order to complete the detailed design and implementation planning, the Administration is requesting that City Council adopt the overall BRT route network as outlined in Appendix 2, including the Downtown and Nutana portions of the network (addressed in preceding reports).
- The BRT route network and elements of the BRT system that will be included have been selected to meet the overall objectives of the Plan for Growth and its supporting Transit Plan.

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- The Administration has consulted with stakeholders and has explored potential route configuration options to ensure that citizens can be served by the proposed BRT.

### **NEXT STEPS**

- Following approval by City Council, Administration will proceed with detailed design of the BRT system including implementation planning. This will include continued work and engagement with the community on the reconfiguration of the conventional transit system to ensure it supports BRT and the goals of the overall transit plan.
- Budget requests will be brought forward at the appropriate time.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

### **APPENDICES**

1. Engagement Summary
2. BRT Functional Plan Summary

#### Report Approval

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