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## Transit Plan and Downtown All Ages and Abilities Cycling Network Update – Response to Plan for Growth Summit

### Recommendation

That the report of the General Manager, Community Services Department, dated October 15, 2018 be received as information.

### Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to address issues raised regarding the plans for Bus Rapid Transit and the Downtown All Ages and Abilities Cycling Network during the June 20, 2018 Special Meeting of the Governance and Priorities Committee. The report will identify the next steps in planning and engagement for the two projects.

### Report Highlights

1. The Administration has developed and begun executing an engagement plan for the remainder of the planning phase of the BRT and Downtown AAA Cycling Network, as well as a framework for engagement through the design and construction phases of these projects.
2. The Administration conducted evaluations of the issues raised by the Governance and Priorities Committee at its June 20, 2018 meeting; technical evaluations included the options for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routing through Nutana and the Downtown and the consequent location for the Downtown All Ages and Abilities (AAA) Cycling Network facilities.
3. The Administration intends to bring forward decision reports on the network and configuration of the BRT and AAA networks in the first quarter of 2019.

### Strategic Goals

The Growth Plan supports the City's Strategic Goals of Asset and Financial Sustainability, Sustainable Growth, and Moving Around. The Growth Plan will also assist in meeting the Strategic Goal of Environmental Leadership by enhancing the range of sustainable choices for Moving Around and providing a new model for growth that more effectively utilizes infrastructure.

### Background

During its June 20, 2018 Special Meeting, the Governance and Priorities Committee received a series of reports and a presentation from the Administration providing an update on the technical work and a summary of the stakeholder/community engagement activities, completed to date, to support the Transit Plan/Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Plan and the Downtown All Ages and Abilities (AAA) Cycling Network. The members of the committee raised a number of considerations that the Administration committed to respond to prior to bringing a decision report forward to confirm the BRT and Downtown AAA cycling networks.

## **Report**

### Execution of Engagement Plan for Remaining Phase

The Administration has completed technical and policy analysis to address many of the issues raised during the June 2018 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting, and will be undertaking an engagement plan and additional review.

### Evaluations of Issues Raised

1. Benefits and risks of the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue BRT Option and to Move AAA Facility from 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

Both 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues are viable options for the BRT corridor. Both have associated benefits and risks that will need to be considered. Attachment 1 provides an analysis of using 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue as the north-south connection for the BRT route in the Downtown, and an illustration of downtown routing options.

Attachment 2 provides a technical evaluation of the benefits and risks of moving the AAA cycling route from 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue through Downtown in the event that BRT is established on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

The Administration will be using this analysis as the basis for engagement with stakeholders through the fall of 2018.

2. Evaluate Victoria Avenue as an Option for BRT Blue Line

Attachment 3 provides a technical analysis of the slope between the Traffic Bridge and the 11<sup>th</sup> Street intersection. Victoria Avenue is not the recommended option for year-round BRT Blue Line routing for operational reasons during winter months. In winter driving conditions, buses negotiating this incline could experience impacts to reliability due to vehicle slippage (a major concern impacting BRT success) as well as safety (longer vehicles are at greater risk of slipping sideways when traction is lost).

Should Broadway Avenue be selected for the BRT route, Victoria Avenue would be recommended as a viable option for temporary detours when Broadway Avenue is closed for street activities or maintenance during the snow/ice-free months.

3. Engagement with Broadway Avenue Stakeholders and Stakeholder Consultation Process throughout Planning, Design and Construction of BRT and AAA Lanes

The Administration has developed an Engagement Plan that divides the BRT/Transit Plan into phases, with a different approach for each phase:

- a) Phase 1 – Planning and Approval;
- b) Phase 2 – Detailed Design; and
- c) Phase 3 – Construction.

Attachment 4 provides an overview of the engagement plan for both BRT and AAA. The engagement activities for Phase 1 will inform the network and configuration decisions that are underway and are envisaged to conclude in November 2018.

#### 4. BRT Impacts on Storefront Businesses in Other Municipalities

BRT and streetcar case studies on the impacts to businesses in other North American cities have shown benefits to development, property values, employment and businesses. Attachment 5 provides an analysis of the impacts other cities have experienced. Available case studies show either positive or neutral impacts associated with higher-order transit, following implementation.

Construction impacts were not included in the studies. Strategies to manage construction impacts for Saskatoon’s BRT will be developed as part of the detailed design and implementation planning stages.

#### 5. BRT Alignment and Support for Broadway 360 Plan

The Administration has reviewed the proposed BRT system in the context of the Broadway 360 Plan. The first pillar of this plan recognizes that greater densities along Broadway Avenue are “a planning imperative, given that it is a transit corridor, in close proximity to Downtown, and afforded with schools, shops and the amenity of the river valley within walking distances”. The fifth pillar of the plan identifies “pedestrians first”.

The proposed BRT route aligns with and supports the vision for Broadway articulated in the plan by:

- a) supporting increased access and amenity for existing and future businesses and properties;
- b) providing a catalyst for investment and redevelopment with greater densities through corridor growth; and
- c) supporting a pedestrian-focused street environment through high-quality transit service (supports pedestrian traffic) and the opportunity for investment in streetscape improvements.

Should Broadway Avenue be identified for the BRT route, particular attention to the design will be necessary to ensure that other important pillars of the plan are met, specifically maintaining Broadway’s distinct character and ensuring that key aspects of the public realm, such as medians, are maintained, wherever possible.

#### 6. Accessibility – BRT and AAA Facilities

Attachment 6 focuses on the design principles and guidelines that are being applied to create safe and functional BRT infrastructure for Saskatoon. These guidelines ensure that the system can be used by all, without the need for adaptation or specialized design to accommodate transit customers with disabilities.

Accessibility treatments can be applied to all of the AAA candidate corridors and will be addressed through detailed design. Attachment 7 identifies three examples for provisions of accessible parking near or adjacent to protected bike lanes that facilitate safe and convenient access to sidewalks.

7. Right, Responsibilities and Education/Awareness – All Road Users

A comprehensive education campaign is currently being scoped by Administration and is planned for 2019, subject to funding approval. Some of the content of the campaign is dependent on the review of Bylaw No. 6884, The Bicycle Bylaw. After stakeholder engagement, legal review, and City Council approval, a revised Bicycle Bylaw will be enacted. Education will be developed in conjunction with the bylaw and will follow.

8. Impacts of Not Including Dedicated Lanes for Recommended Portions of BRT

Dedicated transit lanes contribute significant schedule reliability benefits and travel benefits by eliminating conflict with curb-side parking, stopping/loading vehicles, and right turning vehicles. BRT dedicated transit lanes and stations are unlike the current transit mall as buses will not lay over or dwell at stations. While the three dedicated transit lane locations previously identified are only 9% of the BRT length, they contribute 4 minutes or 20% of the total travel time savings and 24% of the schedule reliability improvements.

Additionally, public realm improvements are often a catalyst for investment and redevelopment along corridors. Implementation of dedicated transit lanes presents an opportunity to support corridor infill through complementary public realm improvements to the street.

Attachment 8 illustrates the benefits of dedicated lanes for transit across eight categories.

9. Imagine Idylwyld Presentation to Governance and Priorities Committee

The Administration will provide a presentation on Imagine Idylwyld in conjunction with this report.

10. Evaluate the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Corridor as a Route Option Instead of Idylwyld Drive - Considering Saskatchewan Polytechnic

The option to use 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue for BRT routing was evaluated, but is not recommended. While there is a potential for modest travel time savings along the Blue Line, such a route would inadequately serve a significant trip generator in Saskatchewan Polytechnic and would not support planned corridor growth and public realm improvements along Idylwyld Drive. Should Saskatchewan Polytechnic or any other significant trip generator move some or all of their functions, transit service will need to be adjusted. Idylwyld Drive is a location for planned corridor growth regardless of the location of Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Further implications are discussed in Attachment 9.

#### 11. Impact of Stops in a Walkshed

Attachment 10 provides an explanation for how transit walksheds are determined and shows the walksheds for stations in Nutana and the Downtown. Saskatoon has adopted industry standard walksheds of 600 metres for BRT and 400 metres for local bus routes.

#### **Options to the Recommendation**

There are no options to the recommendation of this report.

#### **Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement**

Public and Stakeholder involvement is addressed through the stakeholder engagement plan for the BRT project.

#### **Communication Plan**

The Administration has developed comprehensive communication plans for the Growth Plan implementation initiatives.

#### **Safety/Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**

The Bus Rapid Transit Project is undergoing CPTED review.

#### **Other Considerations/Implications**

There are no Policy, Financial, Environmental or Privacy implications arising directly from this report.

#### **Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion**

The Administration will provide a decision report on the network and configuration of BRT and AAA in early 2019. This will include the results of Phase 1 engagement and a summary of the technical analysis, including the projection to 500,000 population and its implications on the transit system.

#### **Public Notice**

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

#### **Attachments**

1. Downtown Future Transit Network
2. Technical Update to the May 18, 2018 Downtown All Ages and Abilities Cycling Report
3. Victoria Avenue Evaluation
4. BRT/Transit and Downtown AAA Cycling Network Engagement Plan
5. Economic Benefits of Bus Rapid Transit
6. Saskatoon BRT Accessibility
7. Accessibility Adjacent to AAA Routes
8. Value of Dedicated Runningways
9. North Downtown BRT Route Option
10. Downtown and Nutana Route Options - Walkshed Analysis

**Report Approval**

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