BUDGET

We want to know if you have any questions about budget related to the BRT network.

Budget related to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) program is one of the topics we've heard Calgarians would like to discuss. You'll find some information about this topic and the opportunity to provide feedback below.

Budget

The capital budget approved by City council in 2014 allocated $78M to the BRT program, which includes the South Crosstown, North Crosstown, 17 Avenue S.E., and Southwest BRT projects. In the fall of 2015 the Government of Alberta approved The City of Calgary's application for $130M in GreenTRIP funding for the BRT program, bringing the total approved BRT program funding to $208M.

The $208M BRT program budget was developed based on the following project estimates:

- South Crosstown BRT – Class 5 – Order of Magnitude estimate - $20M
- North Crosstown BRT – Class 5 – Order of Magnitude estimate - $50M
- 17 Avenue SE BRT – Class 4 – Conceptual Design - $98M
- Southwest BRT – Class 4 – Conceptual Design - $40M

Infrastructure programs and projects follow The City of Calgary Project Management Framework, which uses the following five stage process for estimating and establishing program and project budgets:

Class 5 – Order of Magnitude—Generally prepared based on very limited information. They're often based on judgment and/or experience.

- Expected accuracy range is -50% to +100%

Class 4 – Conceptual Design—Generally prepared based on conceptual or feasibility studies considering project options and known constraints.

- Expected accuracy range is -40% to +75%

Class 3 – Preliminary Design—Generally prepared based on preliminary design information. Project assumptions and constraints have been defined.

- Expected accuracy range is -30% to +50%

Class 2 – Detailed Design—Generally prepared on detailed design information. Project constraints have been resolved and detailed design is advanced.

- Expected accuracy range is -15% to +20%

Class 1 – Final Design/Pre-Tender—Generally prepared based on the final design information. At this stage the design is complete.

- Expected accuracy range is -10% to +10%

The $208M BRT program budget was established based on project estimates at the Order of Magnitude and Conceptual Design stage. The Conceptual Design was based on having basic bus stops with limited features, similar to a standard bus shelter on a concrete pad. In the years since the conceptual design was produced, we've heard from Calgarians, through engagement as part of RouteAhead in 2012, that they'd like to see a higher level of service, with better features for an improved customer experience. This will have an impact on the cost of individual projects.

The City is currently in the design phase for all four of the new BRT projects. As design progresses, we know that the costs of some projects will decrease and others will increase. The City is in the process of balancing the costs of each project to deliver the entire BRT program within the approved budget of $208M.

An update on the budget for the BRT program will be presented to the Transit and Transportation Committee of City Council on April 20, 2016.

Do you have any questions about the BRT program budget?

Comment Submission Disclaimer

Feedback provided is moderated to ensure a productive, positive and respectful space for everyone. All questions and comments are welcome but keep in mind that the submissions are being moderated and any comments that are insulting, rude or dismissive of others ideas are subject to removal. If you disagree with an idea or comment you are encouraged to have a discussion about the content and to do so in a way that is respectful and talks about the ideas not the person.

This forum is monitored 24/7 to ensure all submissions comply with the above Comment Submission Guidelines. Questions will only be monitored and addressed during regular business hours. Thank you for your understanding.

What will we do with your feedback?

Questions will be answered as soon as possible, either in the discussion forum or through a 'Frequently Asked Questions' report back. Additional feedback will be compiled and we will produce a 'What We Heard' report back as soon as possible.

Links

- More Information About BRT
- BRT Engagement Home Page

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103 Messages

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voice of reason | Posted on May 15, 2016

Where is the business case for this project? I couldn't see one anywhere. I would like to see it because I suspect there is no valid business case. If you have ever driven this route you will know that this will only benefit transit between 7-8am and 4-6pm Monday to Friday. We've already heard that the cost has already escalated for the gross under-estimate of $40 million to $65 million (>60% higher). I suspect that the cost will come in even higher. This looks like a complete waste of money.

This money would be much better used to build interchanges on 14th Street that would help all road users and improve traffic flow at all times of the day.

CityofCalgary | Posted on May 18, 2016

Hi Voice of reason – thanks for participating. The SW BRT project (and the other three BRT projects system nor about the impact of the new ring road. In our Woodbine/Woodlands area there is significant transit capacity currently available to handle any growth from our area. Our area and indeed much if not all areas along 14th are fully developed so it would be hard to see any need for a new system especially when the existing system has so much capacity available.

The information provided did not address the escalating cost of construction or the cost in traffic delays both during and after construction. The costs are out of control and not likely to get better. At this late stage in the project to go from $45M to $65M which is a 44% cost overrun shows that the project has not been fully thought out and the development plan is flawed. For those of us who have developed major projects before, once you get to the stage where engineering is complete construction is about to begin you'd be way closer in the estimate typically -/+15%.
From what I have read on the Engage website, the vast majority of comments are against this project. Again, the information provided did not address the consultation outcome. This project is scheduled to go ahead prior to knowing what the consultation outcomes are. I have developed projects in various municipalities in Alberta and Saskatchewan and I can tell you that councils would not even begin to consider a project until we held public open houses and in many cases personal one on one meetings with affected people. Obviously this "consultation" is just window dressing.

I see no need whatsoever for this project based on the information given to date and the projected cost. It need to go back to council for more study given the out of control costs, changing economic environment and the impact of the new ring road.

Budget | Posted on Apr 28, 2016

This project and the associated costs need to be shelved!! This proposed project is wasteful and unnecessary.

Spend our tax dollars on needed expenditures...and no that doesn't mean waste more money on bicycle lanes!

Confused | Posted on Apr 26, 2016

What is the current budget for South West BRT? Of the budget how much is required to install the bus only lanes on 14th Street on an all inclusive basis including the new pedestrian overpass, underpass, new traffic control, new medians, moving existing roads and shrinking width etc.?

Budget | Posted on Apr 23, 2016

accuracy ranges are an indication of a poor estimate job. You don't have the luxury of instant available funds unless the plan is when you have over run by a 100% you cut what is needed by other segments and sacrifice the needs of the riders in other areas.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 28, 2016

Hi Budget – thanks for your comment. Original budget estimates were based on preliminary project concepts and basic design. As the projects progressed through functional studies and preliminary design, project scope and details were refined and budget estimates were adjusted accordingly.
Some projects now have lower budget estimates than their original valuations, while others have higher budget estimates. Technical considerations, aesthetic elements, transit service needs, project elements such as noise walls and utility relocations, and land acquisition requirements

allow.

You ask why we're skeptical? You 'announced' the project would cost $40 million, take 4 years, no make that 2 years, and will commence 'in the spring of 2016 come hell or high water'. You have a job to do and it's clearly not an easy one. But the citizens of Calgary want honesty and transparency when it comes to how our tax dollars are spent. Had people not questioned this project, the City could well have started construction by now and it would prove to be the mother of all City mess-ups! Please, take the time to develop a complete scope and accurate estimate and then take it back to Council for a proper analysis and debate. In the meantime, if the City truly believes this project is wanted and will provide cost effective transportation, then take the time to communicate and consult with impacted parties. We are not unreasonable people but we are not prepared to be hoodwinked.

Captain Moderate | Posted on Apr 23, 2016

I understand that many cities have utilized rapid transit systems -- especially more affordable and flexible BRT -- to make living more pleasant and affordable for citizens AND to save in the long term on city budget. This investment in transit has good potential to help us avoid much larger expenses in road building and maintenance. Tax dollars subsidizes every drive at a much higher level than than they subsidize transit riders. The real cost for the city is parking and roads that are terribly cost-inefficient ways of moving people in the urban environment.

urban biodiversity | Posted on Apr 23, 2016

Re: SW BRT .Thank you for your comments Captain Moderate. I think all the reasons which oppose the SW BRT are in fact based on a closer look at capital costs, long term maintanence costs, current bottlenecks and the major optionality of the SW Ring Road when it is completed in 2020. Parking around a transitway station in a neighbourhood can be a real future problem and I have watched most buses on current equivalent routes which have many vacant seats as it is. Adjusting the current system, its routes and frequency is the common sense option especially while the oil and gas industry is in profitabilty crisis.

Concenred Taxpayer | Posted on May 8, 2016

Urban biodiversity

I couldn't agree more. I have used the bus service many times and there is ample capacity. The current system adjusts to off-peak hours by reducing the number of buses and even the size of the buses - very smart. I can not understand why we need to spend $65M on this system when we already have capacity available in a little to no growth corridor.

Even if there was the projected growth, the existing system can accommodate by adjusting schedules and buses.

Any of us who have actually built large projects will know that you don't build the project to handle the peaks. It's just too costly to address. Like one guy said. You don't build a church just to accommodate the crowds on Easter Sunday. You build a system with some excess capacity but variable in costs so you can dial up or down the system as needed, but you never spend capital to handle maybe 3% of the times when you'd be overloaded.

MC | Posted on Apr 19, 2016

Given today's bad news regarding the the NDP provincial taxes, how can the city in good faith think that the citizens of this city can continue to foot the bill for bad planning? What may have been a possible great idea years ago, needs re-thinking, re-tooling, better community consulting, and restraint on spending. A province in debt only compounds the budget of a city that is struggling with over 8% unemployment. Please stop the insanity and spend with constraint on the areas in the NW and SE that have been allowed to explode without proper transportation planning. Give the ring road a chance to prove itself rather than continuing to feed more traffic to the bottleneck called Glenmore Trail. The planning process is obviously flawed if so late in the game the budget figures are so far off base. Stop and reconsider and admit that the process has failed!!

Tonga | Posted on Apr 18, 2016

Can you please explain the following in regard to the City of Calgary Project Management Framework and the SWBRT Estimates:

Class 4 Estimate - $40MM - Range $24MM to $70MM (-40% / +75%) (prepared about 5 years ago)

Current April 2016 Estimate - $57MM to $65MM (the Class of estimate was not stated)

This latest estimate range works out be +/- 7% based on the midrange cost of $61MM.

Therefore this new estimate must be BETTER than a Class 1 Estimate (+/-10%).

This would mean that the design is:

- 100% complete,
- Firm bids have been received and make up at least 80% of the estimate
- Remaining estimate numbers are based on similar recently completed projects
- All risks have been identified and mitigated and any residual risks are included in the contingency fund.

Questions:

- Why is the City still going out for opinions and feedback on the station designs, routings, logistics, etc. when in theory, the design should be frozen?

- Why was Stantec drilling bore holes at 14th St and 90th Avenue only two weeks ago?

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 28, 2016

Hi Tonga – thanks for posting your questions. Answers are provided below for you; we hope this is helpful.
Your question:
Why is the City still going out for opinions and feedback on the station designs, routings, logistics, etc. when in theory, the design should be frozen?

Answer:

The new budget estimates are Class 3 for SW BRT and 17 Ave SE BRT, and Class 4 for North Crosstown BRT and South Crosstown. None of the designs are 100% and are still very much in the design phase, which is why we are still seeking input from Calgarians. Why was Stantec drilling bore holes at 14th St and 90th Avenue only two weeks ago?

The project was undertaking Geotechnical site investigations to inform the detailed design. Geotechnical surveys are a standard part of project planning, and not part of project construction.
Your question:
Why does the new estimate have such a tight range (+/- 7%) as it appears the new estimate should be a Class 3 which equates to a range of $43MM to $92MM. ($61MM -30% / + 50%)?

Answer:

The new estimate is not meant to replace the Class 3 expected accuracy range. The new cost estimates are being displayed as range budget estimates. The low end of the range includes all currently known costs including, construction estimates, land acquisition, utility relocations, noise mitigation triggered by the projects, engineering and design, temporary traffic control, and the required public art allocation. The high end of the range includes all of the items listed in the low end of the range along with a contingency for unknown risks. The Class 3 estimate range -30%/+50%still applies.

Your question:
Why was the project sanctioned on a Conceptual Estimate 5 years ago?
Answer:

Class estimate ranges are a City and industry standard. The program was approved in 2011 and we began the preliminary design process as soon as the program received funding in fall 2015.
Your question:
Why is construction starting well before the design is complete?

Answer:

Construction is not yet underway. The specific construction staging plans haven't been developed yet, as the project is still in the design phase. Once the design is complete, The City will work with the selected contractor to determine the best construction staging plan to keep Calgarians moving throughout construction. Construction staging details will be shared with the public when they are ready. As mentioned above, surveying and geotechnical work is part of the design phase, not the construction phase.

Your question:

Why are they being too optimistic on the risk assessments**Answer:**
Can you please provide further context as we would need some clarification in order to answer this question.

Concenred Taxpayer | Posted on May 8, 2016

CityofCalgary

I am not sure you answered Tonga's questions. Normally projects go through some sort of gate process. Money is allocated to further refine costs estimates and a each step of the gate a decision is made as to whether or not to continue to proceed with the project based on the refinements and studies at each gate.

It seems to me that approval 5 years ago to begin the development of this project does not equate to approval for actually building it.

It would also seem, as Tonga points out, that if you are truly seeking feedback from the public the cost estimates are simply not valid until the public input has been taken into consideration. Yet, I see that there is a publish start time for construction. How can that be?

Once the consultation is complete and more engineering is done to get a much better handle of the costs, it should go back to council for review of both the public input and the cost. Or is there any costs or amount of negative public opinion at which this project would be stopped?

Contingencies??? | Posted on Apr 17, 2016

As stated in the newly released Transportation Report (TT2016-0335) the North Crosstown BRT funding has been cut by 50% and those savings have now been allocated to SWBRT. What has been sacrificed on the north leg in return for an extra $25 mil for SW and what does that extra $25 mil buy those in SW? North Crosstown is now a class 4 estimate meaning it still could be -40% to +75%. SWBRT is now class 3, -30% to +50% leeway. It is shocking that the original estimates have ended up to have been sooooooo wrong. When will the final, real budget be released? If SWBRT moves to class 2 and once again needs it's contingency will North Crosstown be cancelled all together? I must say I've never been an advocate of stealing from Peter to pay Paul.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 19, 2016

Hi Contingencies - more information about the updated budget will be provided at tomorrow's Transportation and Transit Committee. The primary difference on the North Crosstown project is that the stations have been scaled down to fit within the limited space for bus stations along 16 Avenue N - these stations need to be smaller than the initial estimate predicted, which resulted in the cost estimate difference.

In short, it's not so much taking from Peter to pay Paul - Peter just didn't need as much as he originally thought and so had more to share with Paul.

Ann | Posted on Apr 18, 2016

Yes, an interesting development considering the North Crosstown had a higher score, thus higher priority, in the RouteAhead report than the South West Transitway How do these decisions get made?

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 19, 2016

Hi Ann - we hope the answer above helps!

Ann | Posted on Apr 19, 2016

Thanks, it does. So if $20M+ is saved by scaling down the bus stations, how much do the scaled up ones cost

CD | Posted on Apr 17, 2016

I think Segment 5 along 14th St SW should use shoulder lanes instead of building new lanes. It's just more practical from a cost, time and carbon emission stand point.

Reckless Spending | Posted on Apr 17, 2016

The updated class 3 estimate for SWBRT is now **$57,000,000-$65,000,000 (-30%-+50%)** an increase of 55% over their class 4 estimate. When will the class 2 estimate of **$97,500,000** be made public? And when will this madness stop?

MartinCol | Posted on Apr 15, 2016

Interesting how the City of Calgary is OUTRAGED over having to pay the Carbon Tax, but has not problem with the citizens of Calgary paying the Carbon Tax themselves. It is either good equally for everyone or it is bad and should be abolished. Having the attitude that government should not pay is absurd, unfair and elitest.

Bruce W. | Posted on Apr 13, 2016

I am concerned that city council has ,as I understand it, signed off on a project based on Class 4 and Class 5 estimates. Hopefully the enhanced estimates of capital cost to be presented on April 20th will not be too late to have them reconsider this project in terms of whether the cost benefit works,. Living in the SW, the SW BRT project seems of questionable benefit, particularly when the largest ridership estimates for increases appear to be from Mount Royal and Currie Barricks. I therefore struggle with the addition of two dedicated BRT lanes on 14th Street, While arguably a few of the Mount Royal students may come from further SW, I would expect them to come from all over the city so they are not SW BRT numbers. The large estimated growth of ridership from Currie Barricks again seems somewhat unrelated to ridership further South along 14th Street, again raising questions about why we have two dedicated BRT lanes being added to 14th Street, since I would expect a lot of the ridership would be between Currie Barricks and downtown. Expecting a lot of this traffic to engage with the Rockyview Hospital and Glenmore Landing seems somewhat fanciful. This seems like a lot of money (even with old capital estimates) to spend on what I would characterize as somewhat questionable ridership numbers.

Budget Watcher | Posted on Apr 13, 2016

Re: SW BRT. Further to my earlier comments posted here I now read that the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers expects a 62% drop in capital spending by the oil and gas industry when comparing 2016 to 2014. Also many Canadians politically oppose construction of any new pipelines for oil and natural gas which would allow volumes to reach export markets or even eastern Canadian markets. The current road ahead does not look promising for oil and natural gas employment in downtown Calgary or Alberta Government Royalty income. Why don't we wait until employment numbers improve?

Budget Watcher | Posted on Apr 10, 2016

This may seem off topic but it is important to remember that West Texas Oil is about $37.50 per barrel and Alberta spot gas is about $1.00/gj. These commodity prices allow very little if any profit for oil companies. On April 7, 2016 Premier Notley advised there is a near 90% drop in oil and gas revenue to the Alberta Government from the former $10 billion dollar levels. I really don't think this particular infrastructure spending is necessary at this time and there is little evidence to suggest that commodity prices are going to get better. According to the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers between 100,000 and 110,000 jobs have been lost. Fewer people are travelling to downtown Calgary each day for work.

Lane Armstrong | Posted on Apr 10, 2016

Just curious but are these buses going to run up and down the BRT empty when not peak travel time ? What is the annual cost of more City people on the payroll? Can taxpayers continue to afford living here? Since Nenshi got in our taxes have gone up substantially !!

> **CityofCalgary** | Posted on Apr 12, 2016
>
> Hi Lane - as with any bus route, buses will run the route for the duration of service hours, no matter the occupancy.

Glenn Johnston | Posted on Apr 9, 2016

What is the estimated bus travel time using the dedicated bus lanes from the BRT stop on Southland drive at the Southland Leisure Centre to entering Glenmore Trail by Rockyview.

What is the corresponding time for a bus travelling along this segment of route using existing infrastucture?

What is the capital cost of developing the dedicated bus lanes along the above segment of the route
process is a complete sham and City Council, particularly our Mayor should be ashamed. There are Stantec trucks on 14th Street as we speak, no doubt getting the process ready for construction. This tells me that this project is a done deal. I am still waiting for the business case for this project; have you looked at alternatives (HOV lanes); what are the real costs (not estimates from 2011); what is the projected ridership that justifies this project; where is the risk assessment...Project Management 101! Don't treat taxpayers like fools...station features, design look and feel questions on your pamphlet are just feel good fluff which most taxpayers don't care about. Stop wasting our money and focus on projects that are value add and not just "social engineering" feel good initiatives. No doubt, this Tax and Spend Mayor and majority of City Council will carry on with this farce of a project. A significant number of us so look forward to November 2017 when we will have an opportunity to support a fiscally responsible Mayor and Council.

> **CityofCalgary** | Posted on Apr 12, 2016
>
> Hi there - the trucks that you're seeing on 14 St SW are for hydrovacing, which is a standard survey process that helps us determine the exact location of underground utilities so that we can build out plans from there.
>
> HOV lanes have been considered for the SW BRT project, but ultimately not deemed the best solution to achieve our objectives. Bus-only lanes provide assurance of bus reliability, while HOV lanes (mixed traffic) present the same challenge to reliability as a standard mixed use lane. From a traffic perspective, cars would have to stop and wait behind buses at station, while dedicated bus lanes allow traffic to operate as it does now, regardless of the bus schedule. Additionally, pull-out spaces for bus stops so that HOV traffic could bypass stopped buses could require more land than the current dedicated-lanes plan. Ultimately, the current SW BRT project plan is the best solution to get Calgarians where they want to go (and efficiently!), no matter how you choose to travel.
>
> We will have more info on ridership and budget next week, with the report to the Transportation and Transit Committee on April 20. Stay tuned!
>
> > **Chris Davis** | Posted on Apr 16, 2016
> >
> > I am finding all the web information and it is great reading. Excellent to see most of it presented from open house with limited editing.
> >
> > I look forward to seeing and hearing more information at the April 20th committee meeting (given the anticipated numbers, will it be moved from Engineering Traditions room to Council chambers?).
> >
> > Please don't dump a lot of last minute budgeting data just prior to the meeting. That would just beg for an adjournment.

Woodlander | Posted on Apr 7, 2016

The Southwest BRT is grossly over-designed and overpriced. At a time of economic downturn, massive deficits, and 5 years of double-digit property tax increases, the last thing we need is to waste tax dollars on a "Cadillac" when a "Smart Car" can provide most of the benefits at a fraction of the cost. We don't need expensive, glorified "bus stations", when simple, inexpensive "bus stops" will do. We don't need expensive, disruptive, bus lanes, and an overpass on the west side of 14th Street when a simple, lower cost addition of bus lanes on each side of 14th would provide the same benefits. Needed service improvements could be achieved with far less cost by simply increasing the frequency and hours of service on existing bus routes and by adding a route to the Mount Royal area using existing infrastructure.

Ali H. | Posted on Apr 5, 2016

I am anxiously waiting for the BRT to connect through 14th street s.w.

Please speed up the process.

Gary | Posted on Apr 2, 2016

I am looking forward to the update of the budget to be presented to committee on April 20. I suspect there will be an increase in the dollar value. This should come as no surprise as the early budget was based off a high level functional study and as pointed out, a lower standard of bus station. Citizen feedback consistently shows the importance of transit and the quality of the service, inclusive of frequency, bus station designs, separation from traffic and other items. I look forward to seeing more specifics in the update and will revisit this topic again when I see those details. The BRT projects and specifically in my area of the city, the SWBRT, are important additions to the transit system.

I do find it interesting that a number of people seem very supportive of the $5 billion dollar SW ring road and the millions of dollars in costs that the City will have as a result of the downstream impacts of the Provincial Ring Road. That said; these are two distinct projects that can complement each other. The ring road will give people travelling from the SW additional driving options, but transit service is not part of that plan. It also does not provide a direct connection to the hubs along the SWBRT route. The two systems, the SWBRT and the SWRR, will both benefit the southwest communities in Calgary for different reasons and will complement each other.

Specific budget items:

avenue: this is predicted to have a high cost attached to it. I am generally supportive of the tunnel at 90th avenue as the more free-flowing the BRT is and the less disruption to existing vehicle traffic the better for all users, whether in one's own car or being chauffeured on a bus. I would be interested in seeing information showing the difference in traffic flow and patterns between an at grade crossing at 90th avenue vs tunneling at this location. I have heard the suggestion that if a tunnel is not necessary then that money could be reinvested into pedestrian crossings along 14th street at 90th avenue and Heritage Drive.

The bus stations need to be high quality, practical, welcoming, functional, safe and more. They should be built to last and easy to maintain. Items such as real time bus information may be a potential cost saving area. However, security features, lighting, wind and weather protection, adequate seating should not be sacrificed as they enhance the customer experience and will contribute to increased and consistent ridership along the route.

While I tend to focus on the SWBRT, as that is the one in 'my backyard', all of these BRT routes are important to Calgary and improving transit connections. All deserve to have high quality construction and high levels of service. Given the importance of transit to residents, and the benefits that transit provides everyone, this budget is more than reasonable as a starting point and I will make additional comments after I have seen the budget update.

JCSixpac | Posted on Apr 21, 2016

Glad to hear you're going to make additional comments robickinson. Hope you understand the city's $66 mil is just another smoke screen. If you think that's unfair, have a look at Councillor Colley Urquat's website and listen to how the entire council was being told $85 mil jet weeks ago. This is sincere as their original estimate of $40 mil. Wow, there are a lot of nieve people out there!

Toasty | Posted on Apr 4, 2016

Perhaps the costs associated with the operation should be borne by increased taxes on those who benefit the most. I'm sure you would agree that those that will benefit the most will be those businesses that are located within TOD areas along the Transitways. Places like Currie Barracks and Glenmore Landing where restaurants and otther shops are lobbying for this project.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

Hi everyone. We have had a number of questions about an updated budget for the project. Cost estimates are being updated as part of the preliminary design work and an update will be available at the April 20 Standing Policy Committee Transportation & Transit meeting. If you like you can check www.agendaminutes.calgary.ca on April 20 for the committee meeting schedule and updates.

robdickinsonAB | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

Hello CityofCalgary - it might just be me but that link in your post to the agenda section does not seem to be working...

http://agendaminutes.calgary.ca/sirepub/meetresult...

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 2, 2016

Thanks robdickinsonAB - you are absolutely correct! Should have left off the "www"...

The corrected link is as you noted, is: agendaminutes.calgary.ca

JCSixpac | Posted on Apr 3, 2016

Will you be posting a schedule/agenda for the April 20 Transportation meeting before April 20?

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 12, 2016

An update on this, JCSixpac: the April 20 T&T Committee agenda will be published the afternoon of Friday, April 15!

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 3, 2016

Hello JCSixpac. The Agenda for the Transportation meeting is typically posted on the Council Agenda page by the end of the day on Thursday prior - which in this case would be Thursday, April 14th.

BlairCalgary | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

Anyone who has working in projects knows that the level of risk regarding budgets drops significantly with the increase in project detail. I'm content with the current budget with the expectation that updates on the budget and design come concurrently. I'm surprised how easily most people accepted a $5.5B ring road nearby that will serve fewer people per $.

Ali H. | Posted on Apr 5, 2016

shows you how much we love expensive roads for our cars but do not want a reasonable transit

sh | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

a fine example of Nenshi's wasteful spending for little return.

Ali H. | Posted on Apr 5, 2016

You would rather have a 6billion dollar ring road for cars then reasonable transit. We want reasonable transit.

A millennial

Concerned Taxpayer | Posted on May 8, 2016

Ali H.

There already is a transit system in the SW. Lots of buses to the LRT. Lots of capacity. What's not reasonable about that?

Glenn Johnston | Posted on Mar 30, 2016

When was the cost estimate last updated using the current plans. What Class is the current estimate?

Does the city have a performance measure by which it assesses and prioritizes the spending of citizens tax dollars on public transit. I'm thinking of something like $ per rider km? Hopefully it does.

Does the City have a stage gate process to asses the project for Stop/Go/Hold decisions along the way.

Who would be accountable for such decisions? Hopefully our elected council

The issue with the current project is that the $'s seem too low and the ridership seems to high, particularly from the areas affected south of Glenmore Trail.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 12, 2016

Hi Glenn - All good questions. The cost and ridership estimates are being updated and will be presented to the Transportation and Transit Committee on April 20. Stay tuned!

Sam | Posted on Mar 30, 2016

I agree with previous comments about the accountability of these cost estimates.

If these costs were identified in RouteAhead several years ago, have they been updated? If they have been updated, why is the City not provided the updated numbers? The projects in RouteAhead were not designed to a conceptual level to get even an order of magnitude cost estimate.

Here are some common sense inconsistencies:

- Both the North and South Crosstown Routes are almost the same length, but the north is 50M while the south is only 20 M

- Why is the North Crosstown BRT going to cost $50M (more than the SW BRT at $40M) when the SW BRT proposes a separated transitway and North is going to be in-street?

- If the conceptual design cost estimate was "based on having basic bus stops with limited features, similar to a standard bus shelter on a concrete pad", then how much more is it going to cost with the giant stations with wood canopies?

Other concerns

- operating cost can be a huge determining factor for these BRTs, way more than capital costs - Where is there any reference to the operating cost from these projects - where will funding come from? Will there be savings from cutbacks from other routes? Why is there no transparency on operating costs?

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 12, 2016

Hi Sam - Good question. The cost estimates are being updated and will be presented to the Transportation and Transit Committee on April 20. Stay tuned!

DD | Posted on Mar 30, 2016

I am amazed at the number of people who say this project is a waste of money but then advocate for the SW ring road as a solution. The ring road is a multi-billion dollar investment to connect cars from SW Calgary to West Calgary. The BRT is expanding and upgrading existing infrastructure to improve transit service to the major SW hubs at 1 to 5% the cost.

Concerned Taxpayer | Posted on May 8, 2016

The difference is that one is needed and one is not. The similarity is that both are extremely overpriced and not worth the investment. That said, since the province and the City have committed to the ring road, it would make a lot of sense to wait to see the impact is has on traffic in the SW.

In my 21 years in the neighbourhood, I have never heard of anyone complaining about not being able to get a seat on the bus. I have however heard numerous complaints about the road system in the SW.

Barb | Posted on Mar 29, 2016

I would like to see a specified budget for the "fly-over" lane required to have the buses merge onto Glenmore from 14th Street. Also, will that close the u-turn route that now exists for 14th Street?

CityofCalgary | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

Hi Barb. The bus-only lanes on 14 Street S.W. only run from Southland Trail to 75 Avenue S.W. North of 75 Avenue, buses will run in mixed traffic or will use shoulder lanes on Glenmore Trail to bypass traffic in peak period, similar to the function of bus shoulder lanes on Crowchild Trail. There is no work planned on the flyover from northbound 14 Street to westbound Glenmore Trail. There are also no impacts to the u-turn route that exists north of Glenmore Trail.

SB | Posted on Mar 29, 2016

The statement at the top of this page made me laugh. **Meaningful dialogue. Informed decisions.** Nenshi's behaviour has been shameful and does not align with this statement. I feel he likes this type of platform for communication because it silences people and leaves people in an uninformed state. It's time for city hall to put their agenda to the side and listen to the people that live here and come to the table with a better thought out solution to public transit for the SW.

I suspect that the 14th street BRT will be closer to $100M with all the changes and things that area proposed with it. The estimate being at the Class 4 - 5 level leaves a lot of room for the cost to actually be ratcheted up.

It's an expensive project and the city is not listening to the people that it will affect.

Hi Oakridge Resident - The cost estimates are being updated and will be presented to the Transportation and Transit Committee on April 20. Stay tuned!

The Southwest Calgary Ring Road Project is not a replacement for the SW BRT Project. They are two different projects that serve very different purposes. The Ring Road is designed to help drivers get around the city and avoid traffic. The SW BRT, however, will ensure there is sufficient transit capacity for SW Calgary residents in the near and long term while providing more direct connections to major destinations such as Rockyview Hospital, Glenmore Landing, MRU, Currie Barracks, Lincoln Park, and Marda Loop. The need to access those destinations (and the need for a good transit option to do so) won't change after the Ring Road is built.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Mar 29, 2016

Thanks for all of the feedback! There have been a lot of great questions and comments. We're currently connecting with the technical and subject matter experts to get your questions answered. We'll get back to you as soon as we can. We appreciate your patience.

Glitch | Posted on Mar 29, 2016

Please note that budget comments are not coming up on all mobile devices, TOD comments come up on mobile devices for both budget and TOD. That may be why there are only 21 comments in this section. Since this is out only way to engage, at least the site need to work properly. As well, as a general comment some people are having trouble wading through the info and set up of your site to even know where they can comment. This is likely more so for the less tech savvy demographic which is going to be underrepresented by this form of engagement.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Mar 29, 2016

Hi, Thanks for the heads up. A couple of us checked on our phones and the comments appear to be showing up properly. What device are you using? Also, for people who are not as tech savvy, there is also the option of calling 311 as an alternate option to have feedback captured and added into the site.

Robyn in Woodbine | Posted on Mar 28, 2016

I recall from the Citizen Satisfaction Survey that investment in transit remains a high priority for citizens. I often read comments online about people wanting better transit options. I feel that this investment in the SW BRT is taking a huge step towards improving transit options in the SW. As a property owner and tax payer, I am fully supportive of my tax dollars going towards this initiative, not only for my own benefit, but for the general benefit of this city that I call home. It takes money to improve the world around us, and having quality transit options is very important to me. Thank you for seeing this project through to completion!

Lea | Posted on Mar 28, 2016

I have NO faith that the City will be able to stick to a $40 million dollar budget for the SW BRT. Add PARKING at strategic locations, like Currie Barracks, and increase your ridership to help reduce this huge tax burden!

JN | Posted on Mar 27, 2016

The Southwest portion is a complete waste of taxpayer $. Buses on 14 St SW going anywhere are usually half empty. A tunnel under 90th is unnecessary & overly expensive - it will also flood. Finish the ring road & the volume on 14th Street SW, Glenmore, Crowchild will substantially decrease. Problem - solved!

Ali H. | Posted on Apr 5, 2016

As a tax paying resident of S.W, I would rather have the city build BRT than ring road. Thanks.

Henry H | Posted on Mar 25, 2016

I am glad to see that the recurring theme is to hold the City responsible for proper and up to date cost estimates and also projected revenues.This is a discipline that has been sorely lacking and is disrespectful to the taxpayers who fund these projects..There appears to be recurring cost overruns on most City Projects without consequences...I do not believe that it is appropriate to ask the people who fund these projects to make a decision without the most important facts..

LeMoN | Posted on Mar 25, 2016

This is a GREAT initiative! Thanks City of Calgary for continuing to improve access to transit that is so desperately needed.

J | Posted on Mar 25, 2016

Disregard note immediately below, I see the mention of the Southwest BRT – Class 4 – Conceptual Design - $40M, with an expected accuracy range is -40% to +75% (24-70 million). I still hope alternatives are being looked at to bring this in on the lower end of that range!

Owl | Posted on Mar 25, 2016

It seems unlikely that BRT for the city can be built for $208 million based on the city's methodology of cost estimation. I believe the number will be at least $500 million and that SW BRT will come in at $80 million or much more. During a time of economic downturn and economic uncertainty it seems illogical and foolhardy to be spending this kind of money for ridership that doesn't exist in the numbers needed to sustain the system.

The true costs and benefits for BRT have not been clearly outlined or computed based on generally accepted accounting principles. Construction costs can be computed with some accuracy. But the $ value of intangible costs such as social costs (increased crime, density) environmental costs (noise, pollution,loss of parkland) are more difficult to determine. The $ value of benefits are also problematical e.g. -removal of cars, more effective and efficient mass transport. But this cost- benefit analysis must be done by experts in the field before projects like BRT and TOD go forward. I see little evidence of this in the city's approach.

J | Posted on Mar 25, 2016

On a closer look, I see information initially posted on this page about the stage of design that each project was in, has now been removed. It had stated that the SW BRT was at a Class 4 Conceptual Design phase with a accuracy range of -40% - + 75%. Now the design classes are still broken down, but there is only a generic statement about all projects being in a "design" phase. For transparency it might help to put this content back up. Could you please clarify which stage the SW BRT is in?

J | Posted on Mar 25, 2016

I am kind of surprised about the 40 million, based on a 2010 study, with a range of up to +75%, at this point, when I thought the project was going to tender and start construction in Q3? Even 40 million seems like a very high number, but it sounds like so many additional things have been added in that it will go much higher. If this current design and plan is a great value for Calgarians, why wasn't a budget from the recent Stantec study released? When it is not released people start to wonder why it wouldn't be? If this can't be reigned in for very close to the original budget, I hope you will go back and rethink the design. Bus lanes on either side of the street could be put in much more economically, for one eliminating the need for a bus only tunnel at 90th.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

Hi J. Thanks for your comments. Cost estimates are being updated as part of the preliminary design work and an update will be available at the April 20 SPC T&T meeting. If you like you can check agendaminutes.calgary.ca/ on April 20 for committee meeting schedules and updates

Ann | Posted on Apr 1, 2016

In this response, you say you are in preliminary design and budget will be updated at the April 20th T & T meeting. Yet, in another posting, Howard Kai of the City of Calgary, in a response to another citizen, talks of being in the detailed design phase. From your definitions above, each are at different points along the process. So which phase are we at

This is a waste of money. Should push ring road instead. | Posted on Mar 24, 2016

This is a waste of money. Should push ring road instead.

Ali H. | Posted on Apr 5, 2016

Yes spend 10 billion instead of 40 million

- Said no tax payer ever.

- Said every Realtor n Land owner close to Ring Road

Mcl | Posted on Mar 24, 2016

Speaking of water issues - how are they planning on dealing with rain water and flooding issues that currently exist at the exit from 14 street onto 90. The proposed tunnel will always be flooded during severe hail storms.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 3, 2016

Thanks for your insights, L&W and Mcl.

The bus only underpass at 90th Avenue and the associated drainage requirements were identified in the January 2016 Functional planning update. The preliminary design includes more detail on these components. The January 2016 Functional planning update also included estimates for utility relocations. The City is currently in the process of performing exact locates of all utilities by exposing them with a hydrovac truck and then surveying them. This information will confirm the cost estimates completed to date.

The City has been receiving tenders significantly below estimates over the past year, leading to savings on several infrastructure projects.

Infrastructure Needs | Posted on Apr 5, 2016

The fact that the 90th Ave underpass as well as locations of underground utilities were only identified in Jan '16 (5 years after approval and a mere months before construction begins) is proof that this project is ill conceived, will go significantly over budget and is being rammed through at any cost. City Council (many of whom are long gone) unanimously approved this project without necessary and pertinent facts and figures. I hope that current Councillors who were not involved in the 2011 approval realize that if they don't stand up and demand debate they will be the ones held to account when this fiasco plays out. Time to go back to the drawing board and time for those responsible for the incomplete original plan to look for another job!

BIS | Posted on Mar 24, 2016

I would seem reasonable that the conceptual design estimate be updated to reflect final design adjustments prior to a final decision to proceed. The city appears resistance to the cost conversation which makes the opponents case look stronger than it probably is.

McI | Posted on Apr 19, 2016

I don't think so BIS. The City vehemently maintained the total cost would be $40 mil but just last week admitted it could be $55 to $66 with a 50% contingency. Then Councillor Colley-Urquhat indicated $85 mil (see interview on her website) was being openly tossed around City Hall just a few weeks ago which makes one very suspicious of the $66. All this for a project the City says is going to tender in the next few months. Then again, the city has 'the ability to move funds around from project to project'. Ha!

Toasty | Posted on Mar 24, 2016

where will funding for the operating budget come from? Where will there be cuts in other programs to divert funds for the operating budget? Will there be added taxes to support the operating budget?

CityofCalgary | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

Calgary Transit is currently funded through a combination of factors. Currently between 50-55% of our operating costs come fares, advertising, and other sources. This leaves 45-50% of operating budget that is typically allocated by Council during budget deliberations.

Toasty | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

where is the 45-50% allocated during council budget deliberations going to come from? If this is an additional service there needs to be funds allocated to operate. Building a white elephant that we can not afford to operate or maintain is not prudent civic planning. Before this project to build a transitway ever sees a shovel in the ground, funding to operate the BRT and funding for the maintenance of the transitway needs to be allocated.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 2, 2016

Budget for the BRT network operations is included in the 2015-2018 Business Plan and Budget. The investments for operations of the new BRT program begin in 2018 to align with construction completion timelines. The final implementation plan will review the entire BRT network to ensure we are improving service in a coordinated manner.

GW | Posted on Mar 23, 2016

According to the first page of this Engage Page, in 2011 Council Approved the Calgary South West BRT Functional Planning Study with construction to start in 2016. What is not shown is the timeline for Council Approval. The level of accuracy of the estimate is -30% to +75%, that is, there could be a cost of $75 million. Will Council have a Preliminary Design estimate before they make a decision with an upset limit at the detailed design stage? Why has there not been a trail run along this route using existing infastructure to age interest before considering moving to the design stage? IS the decision process similar to West LRT when the Province had some money and an old plan was resurrected and started before the Province changed their mind? Please show comparison between initial estimate before decision on West LRT and final cost. Do you promise to not repeat this in the South West BRT?

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 3, 2016

Thanks for your input, GW. There are several questions here, so will respond to each:

Will Council have a Preliminary Design estimate before they make a decision with an upset limit at the detailed design stage?

> The BRT program is comprised of four projects – North Crosstown, South Crosstown, 17th Ave SE, and Southwest. Council has already approved the BRT Program and the related budget of $208m, but will be receiving an update on April 20th regarding the allocation of that $208m to each of the four projects.

Why has there not been a trial run along this route using existing infrastructure to gauge interest before considering moving to the design stage?

> A trial run of the route would not be an accurate indication of the ridership for this route, as without the infrastructure to provide the improved travel times, reliability, and enhanced customer experience, the pilot route would not be a very attractive service to customers.

Is the decision process similar to West LRT when the Province had some money and an old plan was resurrected and started before the Province changed their mind? Please show comparison between initial estimate before decision on West LRT and final cost. Do you promise to not repeat this in the South West BRT?

> A LRT and a BRT initiative are not conducive to cost comparison, as they have very different budget levels. A LRT (light rail transit) project is large infrastructure investment, with fixed components (e.g. rail lines), requiring dedicated land, larger stations and larger capacity cars due to the volume of passengers being transported across large, stand-alone infrastructure.
>
> A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system is a fast, reliable bus service with fewer stops than a regular bus route, which means they can cover more ground more quickly. The BRT typically utilizes existing road infrastructure, or dedicated components linked to existing road infrastructure. The BRT stations typically serve as a connection point for a number of bus routes, vs a LRT station which requires significantly larger passenger capacity, and vs a regular bus stop that primarily serves people walking from within a community.

Brenda | Posted on Mar 23, 2016

The range of accuracy in the budget is huge.

I do not believe that the city has a grasp of the actual cost of this project.

Mark Kruse, PEng | Posted on Mar 23, 2016

Considering that the City can spend $25M on a pedestrian overpass:

- I do not believe 36 BRT stations can be built for $40M
- I do not believe a 6-lane underpass at 90 Ave & 14 St can be built for $40M
- I do not believe new pedestrian overpasses can be built within the $40M

The overall project should be re-costed, and then go BACK to council for a proper value/benefits based evaluation using the new (much larger) cost estimates.

Jim | Posted on May 13, 2016

Well put Mark. This is the typical shoddy planning that City Hall seems so adept at. They make no compelling case for its need, try to stifle or ignore opposition or criticism, and pull cost numbers

barb | Posted on Mar 24, 2016

How will the two lane access to the causeway from 14th be addressed? Does that need to be widened and if so is that also part of the $40m budget

CityofCalgary | Posted on Mar 30, 2016

Hi Barb. The dedicated lanes only run between Southland Drive and 75 Avenue S.W. North of 75 Ave S.W., buses will run in mixed traffic and on shoulder lanes on Glenmore Trail during peak traffic periods. As a result, the flyover from 14 Street onto Glenmore Trail does not need to be widened.

DW | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

Actually, if the space for shoulder lanes on Glenmore were used to eliminate the bottleneck the whole system would work better and allow buses AND CARS to move. Expecting 2 solid lanes of traffic to efficiently merge into 1 on Glenmore is insane and is probably responsible for 90% of the existing problems.

The bus-only lanes further north on Crowchild were needed for the same reason....an even worse bottleneck has been created over the Bow that backs up traffic for miles with every simple fender-bender. How 'green' is it to have hundreds of cars stuck idling next to an empty bus lane? Bus lanes don't fix these problems; they just allow buses to drive around the problem.

Ann | Posted on Mar 23, 2016

Why was there not an updated budget available for the second functional study done by Stantech? How can we have a reliable update on the budget April 20 when project timeline states detailed design completion and final design/pre-tender is not due until July (3rd Q)? Preliminary design budget is still -30 to +50%.

CityofCalgary | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

Hi Ann. Cost estimates are being updated as part of the preliminary design work and an update will be available at the April 20 Standing Policy Committee (SPC) Transportation & Transit (TT) meeting. If you like you can check agendaminutes.calgary.ca on April 20 for committee meeting schedules and updates

Ann | Posted on Apr 1, 2016

Thankyou for the reply. I assume this update will be the preliminary budget which still could vary by -30 to +50% in the final analysis

CityofCalgary | Posted on Apr 2, 2016

Hello Ann. The report being provided at the April 20th SPC T&T meeting will be an update on the entire BRT Program approved budget of $208m, which includes the SW BRT, the North Crosstown BRT, the South Crosstown BRT, and the 17th Ave SE BRT, focusing on the allocation of the $208m across the four 'legs' of the BRT program.

Piper | Posted on Mar 23, 2016

SWBRT budget as I understand based on conceptual design is $40M. When will the design be finalized and the budget firmed up? It is normal to include a construction contingency typically in the order of +/- 10%. Will the city strive to bring the project in under budget? What will be the accountabilities should the construction be over budget? In other words how will taxpayers be protect in the event of cost overruns

CityofCalgary | Posted on Mar 31, 2016

Hi Piper. Cost estimates are being updated as part of the preliminary design work and an update will be available at the April 20 SPC T&T meeting. See the link we provided to Ann (directly above) if you are interested in emerging updates from that committee meeting.

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