

# Calgary alderman proposes BRT study in wake of funding crunch

BY KIM GUTTORMSON, CALGARY HERALD FEBRUARY 15, 2010



The city needs to determine where bus rapid transit routes can be most effective, given the increasing demands on limited capital funds, Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart says.

**Photograph by:** Grant Black, Calgary Herald

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CALGARY - The city needs to determine where bus rapid transit routes can be most effective, given the increasing demands on limited capital funds, Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart says.

In a notice of motion going to council Feb. 22, Colley-Urquhart is calling for an overall plan identifying potential BRT routes, ranking them by priority and looking at opportunities to speed up transit runs, such as transit-only signals and lanes.

"We need a very comprehensive implementation plan for BRT in the city," she said, adding the last BRT study was done in 2002.

"Especially now with constraints around capital funding."

The city will begin construction shortly on its first new LRT line in two decades, which will cost \$700 million to build.

The city would also like to run tracks into the southeast and north-central areas, but there is no money available to do so.

BRT is considered a precursor to those lines, getting commuters used to taking transit along certain routes while at the same time speeding up their trip with express buses making fewer stops.

A BRT route into the southeast began last fall.

And at its last meeting, council approved a BRT route to move passengers from Woodbine to downtown along 14th Street S.W., Glenmore Trail and Crowchild. It could be in place by 2015.

Colley-Urquhart said she was reluctant to support that express route because she "could have done the same thing for every other community in Calgary."

A big picture look at where the routes will best serve commuters is needed, the Ward 13 alderman said.

Ald. Brian Pincott, who asked for the southwest BRT, said a better way of moving people is needed in that area, but a citywide look is also useful.

"BRTs are a cost-effective way to go," he said, adding that the city must also seriously look at dedicated bus lanes to make them really work. He pointed out there is room along the southwest route for bus-only lanes.

Colley-Urquhart's motion also calls for reviewing the efficiency of the routes now operating, looking at bus-only facilities and a summary of the costs.

A report is due back a year from now.

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