



Silverado Sod-Turning
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Alderman Diane Colley-Urquhart

South West Calgary Ring Road Becoming Reality

The South West Calgary Ring Road (SWCRR) for residents of SW Calgary is closer now to becoming a reality than ever before. Four decades of ongoing discussions and planning reports have raised hopes for a western North-South route as part of a continuous ring road to circle our city. Planning in the 1960s looked at a 30 year vision proposing various alignments. In the 1990's, the transportation links required were reviewed as part of the 4-year GoPlan process. This comprehensive technical and public project culminated in the current Calgary Transportation Plan. Residents of SW Calgary have pressured planners to take a broader view of the future, and they are now looking at a 50 to 70 year horizon when Calgary's population forecasts reach 2 million citizens. Most of this anticipated growth as you know is in the SW quadrant of the city. The SWCRR will ultimately connect Highways 8 and 22X, forming part of the Provincial Highway system. There are **two** equally important steps that need to be undertaken concurrently.

The historic **first** step has been taken as a result of Chief Sandford Big Plume's leadership which has resulted in an historic agreement-in-principle with the Province of Alberta that will facilitate a land valuation and transfer for the roadway through the Tsuu T'ina Nation. Chief Big Plume is to be commended for his vision of future economic and social sustainability for the Nation and for his diligence and dedication in moving this important transportation link forward. The Nation, the Province of Alberta and the City of Calgary each have a shared a vital interest in completing the SWCRR portion of the ring road as soon as possible. This important milestone has brought many years of planning closer to the reality of a continuous, high quality transportation and utility corridor that will serve the needs of the city and the region for the long term. We could not have moved forward on the equally important second step without this commitment and agreement.

As part of these negotiations, we must identify every single option for the ultimate land requirements to accommodate freeway, utility corridor and connector roadways. This not only means acquiring land requirements for connections at 90 Avenue SW, and/or Southland Drive SW, but also means that we have to maximize access at Anderson Road SW and 130 Avenue SW where considerable capital investments have already been made by the citizens of Calgary. Functional planning for this initial step of the SWCRR began in June 2005 and will continue to examine alignments, connection points, land requirements, potential environmental factors and mitigation measures, and is anticipated to take 12 to 16 months to complete. Public open houses to solicit community input will be ongoing and it is vital that you participate in these discussions. Council will give city administration direction for their negotiations with the Nation and the Province on what the ultimate land requirements should

be to accommodate the road, utility corridor and connector roadways. This will ultimately comprise the final land transfer agreement between the Province and the Tsuu T'ina Nation. The Nation has made it very clear that they only want to visit this particular matter once.

Step **two** is equally important and in my view, must proceed **concurrently** with the above discussions. This involves the Province completing the SWCRR from the Nation to Highway 22X, including the development of a comprehensive plan that includes interchanges at 130 Avenue SW, 146 Avenue SW, 162 Avenue SW, and at Highway 22X.

Highway 22X from the west city limit to the east city limit is currently part of the ring road planned for the City of Calgary and is part of the Transportation System Bylaw (41M95) in accordance with the Province of Alberta's Transportation Act. A right-of-way and design standard has been established for the development of a freeway standard highway with the joint purpose of providing a free flow facility for regional, commercial and personal travel, and to accommodate sector-to-sector travel within the City.

In addition, Highway 22X also provides the only Bow River crossing point for city-based east-west travel south of Fish Creek – an area that is planned to accommodate a population of 350,000. The protection of this corridor has been a key assumption in Calgary's city-wide long term land use planning for the entire southern portion of the city. The Calgary Transportation Plan approved by Council not only recognized the Highway 22X corridor as critical to the Province as part of the ring road and regional road pattern, but more importantly, recognized its greater importance to the City as part of the "skeletal road network," since more than 95% of the trips forecast to use this facility will be city trips. A critical priority for us is to also achieve an all-turns interchange at 14 Street SW (Spruce Meadows Way), and that there be a full interchange for 6 Street SW. As part of this step we also must provide an alternate access to Tournament Lane.

I also want to emphasize that the future of this corridor has more immediate interest to the City. Our city-wide land use and transportation planners are in on-going discussions with major land owners of the proposed Providence area, with a view to commence urban development of the 6 square miles of lands west of the proposed SWCRR and north of Highway 22X. Current city planning strategies over the next 15 years are for an ultimate population of approximately 60,000 people and 17,000 jobs. The full build-out of Highway 22X and completing the SWCRR are essential before this development rolls out. We must build the roads before the houses.

City planners have prepared travel forecasting scenarios for this build-out including growth south to the new south city limit at Pine Creek. The City has assumed the extension of Sarcee Trail south of the City to tie into a possible future east-west second ring road corridor. The results of these analyses are significant with respect to Highway 22X, predicting long term daily traffic volumes in excess of 100,000 vehicles per day in both scenarios. This is a roadway of similar significance to the City as Deerfoot Trail is today.

I will continue to work closely with my provincial colleagues and local MLA's for this important second step to be completed. The design standards that have been established through the current legal agreement signed by the City and the Province in 1991 (Ring Road and Highway Penetrators) are still valid today, and must continue to be the basis by which the Province funds this infrastructure and access to Highway 22X.

It is imperative that planning these additional connections south of Fish Creek and identifying and securing the necessary land, be done concurrently with the design work underway for the portion of the road through the Tsuu T'ina Nation to ultimately produce a comprehensive network that will address the anticipated growth south of Fish Creek for the long term. This particular file is the top

priority of the Ward 13 President's Council and Land Use & Mobility Advisory Council (LUMAC) chaired by Tony Cleveland. LUMAC has representation from each community in Ward 13 and is currently finalizing membership for the coming year. If you are interested in sitting on LUMAC please let me know and I will take your name forward. I look forward to your feedback and input on this file.

City of Calgary Wastewater Update to Residents of Woodlands

In response to the many incidents of sewer backup during the June 2005 floods, The City of Calgary Wastewater has hired an engineer with extensive experience in municipal drainage systems who will review how the City sewer infrastructure performed. This complex analysis will require 6-12 months to complete and will also involve a number of existing City staff. Based on the engineer's report, there may be recommendations for improvements which will become part of our capital program. At that point we can advise how this may impact your community.

Please be assured that the community of Woodlands is included in this work. As the work is in the initial phase, it is important that City Wastewater develops a complete picture of events, sewer performance and a program for improvements. If the investigation detects any problems which are simple to fix, they will be taken care of immediately. Please contact '311' for further information.

As always, you can contact my office regarding these or any other civic matters at 268-1624, by email at dcolley@calgary.ca, or through my website, www.aldermandiane.ca. Alternatively, you can contact '311.'