

June 13, 2019

To: Members  
Community and Protective Services Committee

Re: Regina Airport Transit Options

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### RECOMMENDATION

1. That item MN19-1 be removed from the list of outstanding items for the Community and Protective Services Committee.
2. That this report be received and filed.

### CONCLUSION

Administration has provided information on Regina International Airport's need for transit service to the airport and surrounding area including two options. Any additional bus service will require additional resources and will also require approval from City Council as part of the annual budget process.

### BACKGROUND

At the City Council meeting held on February 25, 2019, Council considered item MN19-1 and requested Administration to prepare a report that identifies the following:

- 1) Costs, benefits and ridership statistics related to a dedicated airport route;
- 2) Costs, benefits and ridership statistics related to an airport stop using an existing route(s);
- 3) In consultation with the Regina Airport Authority (RAA), identify the challenges and potential solutions to servicing the needs of travellers and employees who work at or around the Regina International Airport and airport lands; and
- 4) Potential third-party capital and operational funding support for airport transit service.

Currently, the closest transit stop to the airport terminal is on Pasqua Street at Regina Avenue, which is one kilometre away from the airport. Transit service standards aim to have 90 per cent of all residents and places of work within 400 metres of transit service. Paratransit service provides trips to the airport when requested by customers and provides an average of 40 trips to the airport each year.

### DISCUSSION

Administration met with the RAA to gain an understanding of their business and their peak times. The RAA indicated that their highest traffic hours are between 4 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 1 a.m. each day of the week. The afternoon/evening is busy with both businesses ending work shifts and flights departing and arriving. The period of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. is less busy with, on

average, three flight arrivals and three departures each day during this time period. Furthermore, the RAA noted they are planning to further develop the area adjacent to Sandra Schmirler Way for additional commercial business opportunities.

Administration has had discussions with the RAA on what transit service could look like for Regina. Typically, when starting a new route for a new area of the city, it would start small with limited hours. However, the airport is a different service as employees work irregular shifts and flights come and go within the hours of 4:00 a.m. until 1:00 a.m., seven days a week. In addition, there are several businesses in the area, including a new facility that is set to open in late 2019. Administration also contacted other Canadian municipalities about their airport bus service. A summary of this information can be found in Appendix A. Overall, there are a wide variety of service types, to which all were considered when looking at services to the RAA.

Given the unique operating hours of the airport, and in consultation with other municipalities, the following two options were considered. A summary of the two service options, including initial operating hours, ridership and cost projections, can be found in Appendix D.

#### 1) Option 1 – New Route

The proposed standalone route for the airport is shown in Appendix B. This route would service the airport and downtown areas via 13th Avenue and Sandra Schmirler Way. The benefits of this route include the following:

- Direct service to and from the airport to the downtown area.
- Service to the businesses adjacent to Sandra Schmirler Way.
- Direct access to the main transfer points downtown, plus direct-drop off at some downtown hotels.
- Will increase frequency of transit on 13th Avenue in the Cathedral neighbourhood, as well as introduce service to the small residential area west of Lewvan Drive.

A drawback to this proposal:

- It is the more expensive service option.

There were other route variations discussed with the RAA, including running the bus from downtown via Albert Street and Regina Avenue, but the proposed route would service the business area adjacent to Sandra Schmirler Way. It was also discussed to have the bus meet at the Golden Mile Shopping Centre, but it was determined that the downtown was an important linkage as it accesses the most transit routes and is home to a variety of downtown hotels for travellers. In our research, other Canadian municipalities indicated that the best ridership for an airport route would be a location with hotels and amenities for travellers, as well as a major transfer point location to make the service as convenient as possible for residents.

To start this service, the bus used would be a small to medium sized bus as ridership levels are expected to be smaller at start. No capital is required to purchase additional buses for the service as the current fleet size can handle the increased service.

Sandra Schmirler Way does not currently have sidewalks and the edge of the roadway is a ditch. To make this bus route viable, bus stop drop-off and pick-up points need to be created along

Sandra Schmirler Way. The RAA indicated they would pay for up to four bus stop waiting areas (concrete pads) along Sandra Schmirler Way.

A summary of initial operating hours, ridership and cost projections can be found in Appendix D.

## 2) Option Two – Expansion of Current Route

An extension to the bus route that comes closest to the airport (Route 8 Normandy Heights/Eastview) was also explored. Appendix C shows this route with the potential route expansion. The benefits of this route are the following:

- Is the most economical option for bus service.
- Has access to the downtown area.

Drawbacks to this type of service are as follows:

- Adding a deviation to this existing route is poor transit route planning. Customers who are travelling to other key destinations on the route, such as the Golden Mile Shopping Centre, Sheldon Williams Collegiate or downtown, would have an additional 10 minutes added to their trip by going to the airport. This approach would be opposite of the policy in the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) regarding Transit planning;  
*3.2 Design the Transit system and its routes to provide direct and time competitive service.*
- This option would exclude the businesses to the north of the airport and the future development planned there.
- Ridership would be low.
- Pre-existing ridership would be reduced due to the increase in travel time to key destinations.

A summary of the two service options, including initial operating hours, ridership and cost projections, can be found in Appendix D.

## Additional Information

The RAA has indicated that they would provide \$100,000 in operating funding for up to three years to start the new route. This is reflected in the pricing, found in Appendix D. In addition, RAA has indicated they would pay for up to four bus stop waiting areas (concrete waiting pad) along Sandra Schmirler Way to make sure that it is a safe waiting space for the bus. They have also committed to developing bus stops on the airport lands, including at the airport terminal.

## RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

### Financial Implications

Bus service to the airport would require additional resources to implement. At this time, additional buses would not be required regardless of the option as there is an adequate amount of buses in the Transit fleet to perform this additional service. All financial information is contained in Appendix D and would have to be considered as part of the 2020 budget process. The recommended Option 1 would be a net cost of \$144,000 per year for the first three years of

operation as the RAA has indicated that they would provide \$100,000 in operating funding each year. After the third year, the funding required could increase to \$244,000 if the RAA no longer funds the \$100,000 each year.

The Option 2 would be a net cost of \$109,000 for the first three years of operation as the RAA has indicated that they would provide \$100,000 in operating funding each year. After the third year, the funding required could increase to \$209,000 if the RAA no longer funds the \$100,000 each year.

### Environmental Implications

None with respect to this report.

### Policy and/or Strategic Implications

Expanding transit service, helps achieve the transportation goals and policies in *Design Regina*, the City of Regina's Official Community Plan (OCP) and specifically, "Goal 2: Public Transit: Elevate the role of Public Transit" in Section D3.

*Policy 5.11:* Enhance transit service in existing residential neighbourhoods to support continued residential and employment growth.

It also supports the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), specifically Goal 10: Transit will be a reliable and convenient travel choice throughout Regina in section D3.

*Policy 3.2* Design the Transit system and its routes to provide direct and time competitive service.

*Policy 3.4* Expand transit service through increased frequencies and /or hours of service where appropriate.

*Policy 3.21* Extend Transit service to all major employment and residential areas in the city that currently do not have transit service.

It also supports direction 7 - Support a Prosperous Regina and Region, specifically,

*Policy 7.4* Support access to municipal and regional intermodal facilities including the Regina International Airport.

### Other Implications

None with respect to this report.

Accessibility Implications

All buses in the conventional fleet are low floor accessible. Accessibility along Sandra Schmirler Way have been considered as there currently are no sidewalks or waiting areas. If transit service was started in this area, appropriate bus waiting areas must be built. The RAA has indicated they would provide funding and build up to four waiting areas to City of Regina specifications.

COMMUNICATIONS

There are no communications required at this point. If service is extended to the airport a communications plan would be developed in partnership with the RAA.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Any additional budget for Transit service must be approved by Council.

Respectfully submitted,



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5/17/2019

Respectfully submitted,



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6/5/2019

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