



Alberta commits funding to connect Calgary Airport Banff Rail project and LRT Blue Line Extension to create Airport Rail Hub

Premier Danielle Smith prioritizes project at the Tourism Advocacy Summit on Budget Day

March 2, 2023

The Alberta Government announced \$5 million in its 2023-24 Budget to advance the development of the Calgary Airport Banff Rail (CABR) heavy rail project. The funding will allow for engineering work for extending the LRT Blue line to the airport from the east and determining optimal connections at the airport for a seamless integration with CABR's heavy rail express system to move people west and south to downtown Calgary.

Over the last two years, Liricon Capital Ltd. and its development partner, Plenary Americas, have worked closely with engineering consultants to develop a plan for an integrated, multi-rail transportation hub at the Calgary Airport (YYC). As part of this work, Liricon/Plenary has entered into Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with both the Calgary Airport Authority and the City of Calgary, as well as stakeholders including proponents of future high speed rail connections between Calgary and Edmonton.

"The February 28 Budget was an important milestone in advancing the Calgary Airport Banff Rail project. The Province and City are now aligned on providing efficient integrated public transit connections for all the markets the airport serves. We look forward to working with all levels of government to develop world-class rail services from the Calgary Airport," said Jan Waterous, Managing Partner with Liricon.

The Alberta Government's funding commitment will facilitate further research and engineering to integrate CABR with other transportation options for airport passengers, employees and commuters. Premier Danielle Smith prioritized the CABR project at the Tourism Advocacy Summit in Edmonton on Budget Day.

"I have seen a proposal for.. a hydrogen train going from the airport through Calgary and then on to Banff and I think that that could really position us in the world as being a leader in the new clean energy technologies that are going to work in our environment," Smith said to industry leaders at the Summit. "Those to me are really essential experiences for people to have when they are looking to travelling around the world. I think that if we can put those pieces together and, as a Province, help facilitate some of that big infrastructure, then once you've got at least a couple of those legs started then other (train projects) will be able to develop from it."

The Airport Rail Hub (ARH) is being designed to serve the transportation needs of a wide range of passengers. For the LRT riders in northeast Calgary, the hub will connect to a planned east-west Airport

Transit Line paralleling Airport Trail and connecting to the Blue Line in the east and ultimately, in the future, travel west to the planned Green Line Phase Two in the north.

For travelers seeking an express connection between the airport and downtown, CABR will connect directly to the airport terminal and travel initially west along Airport Trail and then south to downtown in the CP Rail corridor. Since CABR's service between the airport and downtown is high frequency (every 10 minutes), it can also serve as a people mover efficiently transferring passengers from the airport terminal to an LRT transfer station for the Airport Transit Line along Airport Trail and an Airport West Station situated at the airport's western commercial district. This mirrors the highly successful Canada Line in Vancouver which moves airport employees and passengers between three airport stations before proceeding north to Downtown and south to the commuter suburb of Richmond.

The ARH can also accommodate a potential high-speed rail (HSR) service from Edmonton to Calgary. Liricon/Plenary and the proponents of HSR have entered an MOU which contemplates HSR using the CABR heavy rail track (which will be separate and dedicated to CABR but required by CP Rail to be interoperable with its own heavy standard gauge non-electrified rail track) from Airport Trail into downtown.

Studies conducted since 2016 indicate that successfully attracting airline passengers to travel by mass transit rail between YYC and downtown Calgary requires a fast, direct service directly between the terminal and downtown. Similarly, many airline passengers whose ultimate destination is Banff and the Bow Valley are prepared to pay a premium for a "one seat" ride from the terminal to their ultimate destination. Accommodating these different travelers by offering multiple classes of service allows CABR to charge higher fares for first class and premium economy to support affordable economy fares. By bringing premium travelers to the middle of the city and providing a major amenity to those living and working in the central core, CABR will help to revitalize downtown Calgary.

The latest ridership analysis indicates that CABR will have 11.8 million riders a year by 2035, 80 per cent of which will travel within the City of Calgary. Vancouver's highly successful Canada Line has demonstrated fast, frequent and direct airport transit can capture more than 25 per cent of airport passengers and a high proportion of people working in and around the airport.

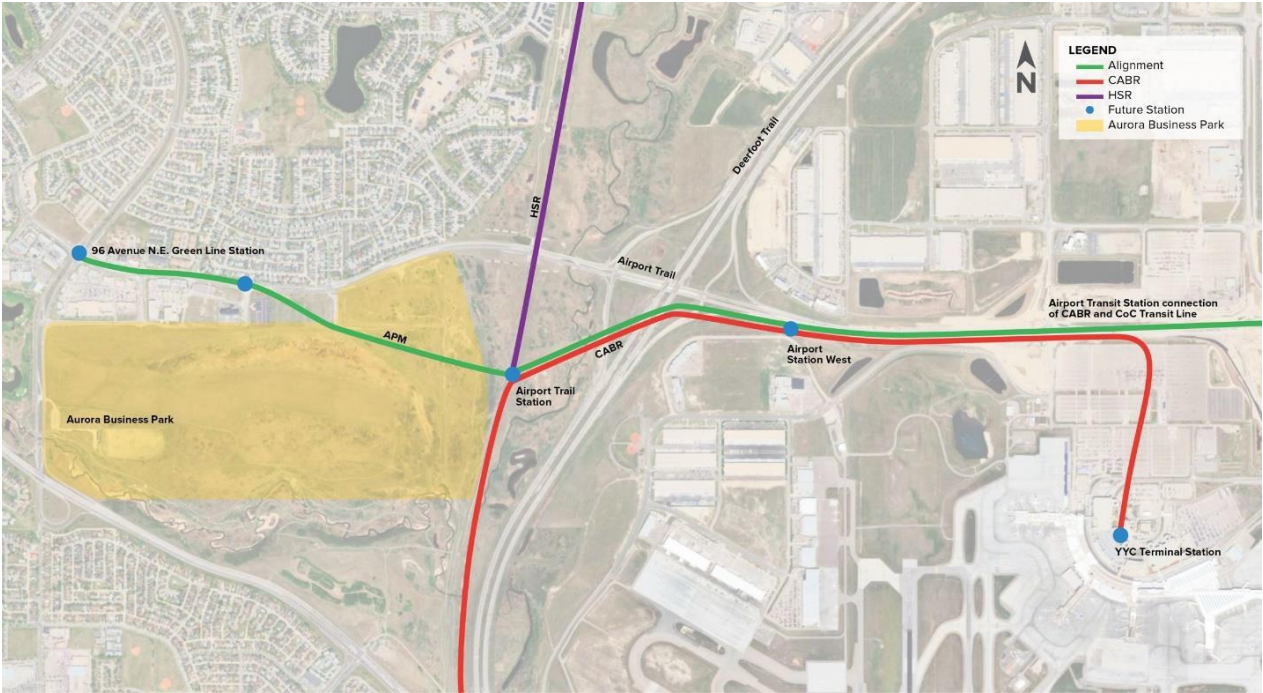
To inform key operating parameters including train frequency capacity and length, CABR will update its ridership projections, not only for riders from the airport to downtown, but also visitors from the airport traveling beyond downtown including Calgary West, Cochrane, Morley, Canmore and Banff.

CABR's most recent ridership projections were conducted prior to 2 important developments: firstly, the Province of Alberta had yet to signal its interest in advancing the Airport Transit Line along Airport Trail from the airport east to the Blue Line (important as this new LRT connection will deliver more riders to CABR looking for an express service from northeast Calgary to downtown and points west) and secondly, the Government of Canada through its release of Parks Canada's *Banff National Park Management Plan 2022* have officially prioritized mass transit as a solution to Banff National Park's congestion issues and Park Canada's *Expert Panel on Moving People Sustainably in Banff* identified CABR as a potential solution to reduce personal vehicle traffic in the Park. Because of these 2 developments, CABR will need to further update its ridership projections which will inform key operating parameters including train frequency capacity and length. Accurate ridership numbers will directly impact the ARH station configuration and integration with the LRT.

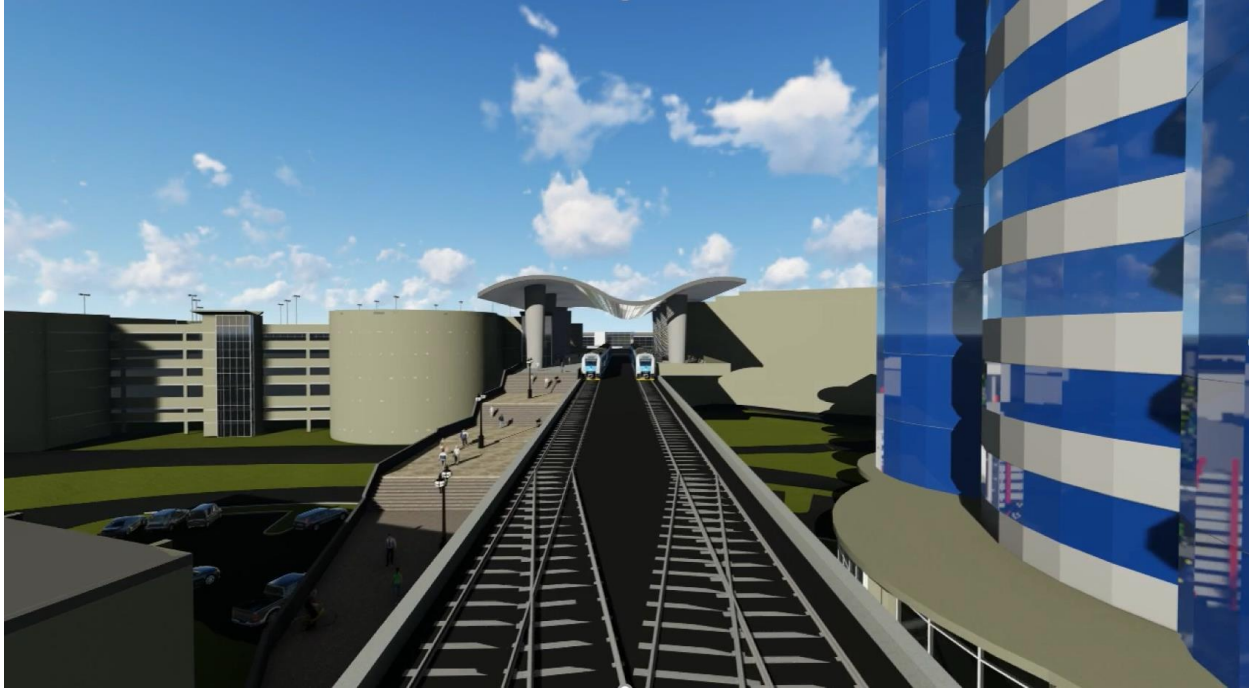
Accurate ridership numbers will directly impact the ARH station configuration and integration with the LRT. The detailed configuration of CABR also offers opportunities for significant cost savings and operating efficiencies for the proposed Airport Transit Line LRT, including shared infrastructure and potential shared or common vehicles.

Concurrently with proceeding with the ARH engineering work, Liricon/Plenary will work with the Alberta Government and the Canada Infrastructure Bank to conclude the Project Development Agreement for the CABR project which will allow full supporting information to be incorporated into the design of the ARH.

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Calgary Airport Rail Hub, Liricon/Plenary



Calgary Airport Terminal Station Courtesy of Calgary Airport Authority