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Plans for direct tram-train link between Glasgow Airport and city



Plans to create a "tram-train" link between Glasgow Airport and the city centre have been unveiled.

The £144m Glasgow Airport Access Project could see journey times cut to 16.5 minutes and would bypass the need to use the busy M8.

It would involve a specially-designed hybrid tram-train using the existing railway network and on-street tracks. It comes seven years after the Scottish government scrapped plans for a direct rail link on the grounds of cost.



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If approved the system would be operational by 2025, with construction due to begin in 2022.

'Single biggest element'

Four tram-trains per hour would run in each direction taking travellers between Glasgow Central Station, Paisley Gilmour Street and the airport.

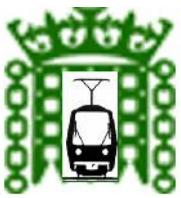
The tram-trains would travel from Glasgow Central to Paisley before joining a new tram-line system to complete the journey to the airport.

The interchange point at Paisley Gilmour Street would allow passengers destinations on the Ayrshire and Inverclyde train lines to access the service.

The proposals are part of the £1bn city deal announced for Glasgow in 2014.

The leader of Glasgow City Council Frank McAveety said the project was "essential".

The Labour councillor said: "We've long argued that a new rail link between the airport and the city centre is essential for the thousands of tourists and business travellers who fly into and out of Glasgow every day.



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More than 80% of travellers to Glasgow Airport currently make the journey by road

"The airport already supports thousands of jobs but this new rail link, which is the single biggest element of our City Deal, will be the catalyst that takes us to a new level, vastly improving the customer experience and generating even more jobs and inward investment."

Those behind the scheme say that more than 80% of passengers and staff currently travel to and from the airport by road, with the M8 already experiencing serious congestion during peak times.

According to their figures, the airport injects about £170m into the local area every year.



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'Transparent business case'

Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce chief executive Bob Grant said there was a strong business case for the project.

He said: "A direct rail link is crucial to allow our companies to compete more effectively.

"Glasgow Airport is a key economic driver for the whole of Renfrewshire and greater Glasgow. Our most important asset needs an effective transport infrastructure which will allow businesses to service new markets, attract and retain staff and maintain a competitive advantage."

Scotland's Transport Secretary Humza Yousaf said he would be working with Renfrewshire and Glasgow City Councils and the airport on the plans.

He said: "I look forward to continuing to work with the project team in order to assist them produce a robust and transparent business case which clearly sets out the impacts and a realistic and well informed assessment of all costs of any proposals to ensure informed decisions are made."

The proposals will now be discussed by councillors in Renfrewshire and Glasgow before they go for approval by the Glasgow City Region Cabinet - made up of the leaders of both councils - in December.

BBC News Services