

Calgary



Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan

Roadmap to reinvention



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Roadmap to reinvention

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An aerial photograph of downtown Calgary, Alberta, Canada, taken at dusk. The scene captures the city's skyline with various buildings, some under construction with cranes. A prominent feature is the Bow River, which flows through the center, crossed by the illuminated Bow Bridge. The sky is a mix of deep blues and oranges from the setting sun. In the foreground, a large, vibrant crowd of people is gathered in a public space, likely for a festival or event, with colorful lights and structures visible. The overall atmosphere is one of a lively, well-used urban environment.

Vision

Greater Downtown is the economic and cultural heart of Calgary. It is a resilient and vibrant place for everyone, with welcoming neighbourhoods, active streets and well-used public spaces.



Our commitment to equality, inclusion and accessibility

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan provides the roadmap for the future of our downtown. However, it must be noted that the ultimate outcome for Greater Downtown is to be a place that reflects all of Calgary – now and into the future. Greater Downtown is a place for **all** Calgarians. Over the years – through various social movements – equity-seeking groups have identified the need for a more inclusive approach to The City's service delivery, including in urban planning. In 2020, systemic racism was brought to the forefront and further highlighted the need for effective measures to achieve equality for **all**. This is the right thing to do. This Plan provides direction for further study, action and investment in equality, inclusion and accessibility over the next decade.

We encourage those and those helping to implement this Plan to commit to the following actions:

- Be intentional about including equity-seeking communities and their perspectives and experiences as part of decision-making processes.
- Recognize the needs of people from a cross-disability perspective through the use of The City of Calgary's Access Design Standards.
- Empower the public to get involved in shaping future policy, projects and initiatives, in line with The City of Calgary's Engage policy and using Planning and Development's community outreach toolkit.
- Broaden engagement for significant projects in Greater Downtown and reach out to all Calgarians, including those in outlying communities
- Focus on social service solutions and prevention in addressing matters of social disorder.
- Respect and honour the Indigenous history that our city is founded on.

This work aligns with the **Council approved Social Wellbeing Policy (2019)**, which strives to advance equity for all and removing barriers to access and inclusion.

At The City of Calgary, we endeavor to make life better every day, for everyone.

— The City of Calgary

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Introduction



Why now?

Downtown is the economic and cultural heart of Calgary. It's our central hub for business, innovation and creativity. What happens downtown, especially in terms of real estate, has a direct impact on the rest of the city. Calgary needs a strong core to grow our economy, create jobs and fund the City services we rely on every day. Calgary's future success relies on our downtown being a place where people want to live, visit and set up businesses. When our downtown thrives, Calgary thrives.

Calgary's downtown is facing a long road to recovery and there is no looking back — we must focus on the future. Calgary's downtown will not go back to the way it was before the pandemic, let alone five to ten years ago. We must take bold steps now, implement necessary changes and make decisive moves quickly in order to transform and reinvent downtown for decades to come.

The pandemic has accelerated Calgary's need to evolve with the new ways people live, work, travel and build a sense of community. With business being conducted virtually and people staying closer to home, we need to reexamine the traditional work and entertainment offerings that once brought people downtown.

We must continue to diversify our economy. Changes to our oil and natural gas industry, and the Canadian and global economies have created both challenges and opportunities for Calgary. Our future economy needs to include sectors like agribusiness, creative industries, energy and environment, technology and many more.

Calgary has already experienced significant shifts and swings in our local climate, including more frequent and intense storms, and flooding. We'll face even more weather-related risks to our population, environment and economy in the future.

In response to these challenges, The City launched the Downtown Strategy as an effort to get major organizations focused on private investment, generating visits and commerce and enhancing the quality of life for people who live and working the downtown. There is an immediate need to address these challenges, seek out innovative solutions and embrace opportunities. With this mandate, a new type of plan for downtown was needed. As a resilient city, the time to act is now to ensure that Calgarians will be able to experience and enjoy all that downtown has to offer for generations to come.

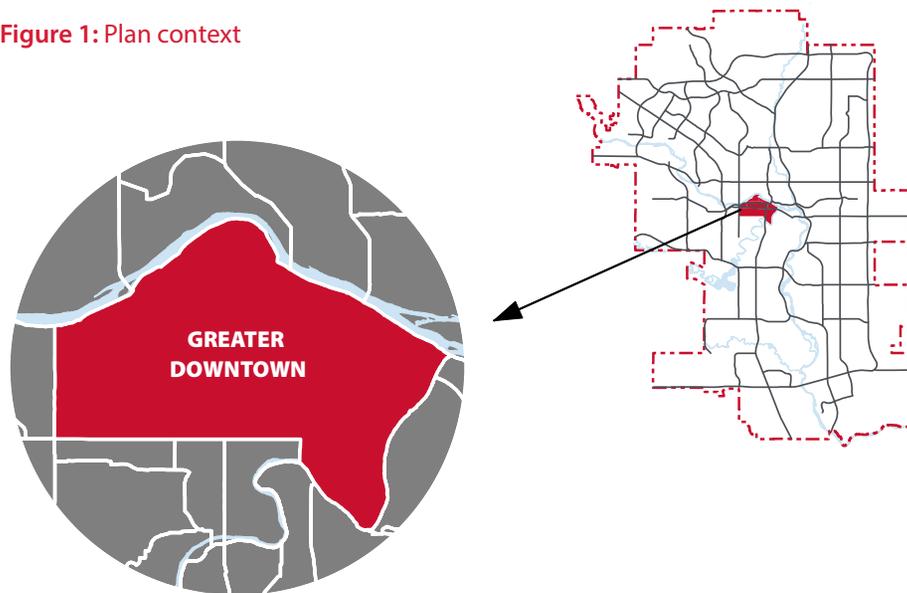
Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems within a city to survive, adapt and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

— Resilient Calgary, p. 127, 2019

About the Plan

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan (the Plan) is a non-statutory plan that sets out the future vision and strategic moves to support the reinvention of Greater Downtown. The neighbourhoods of: Downtown Core, Downtown West, Eau Claire, Chinatown, East Village and Beltline are collectively referred to as Greater Downtown (Figure 1 and Map 1). The Plan takes a co-ordinated approach to working across neighbourhood boundaries. This leverages the connections and shared assets to help city-builders, decision-makers, investors and citizens understand and realize opportunities for Greater Downtown over the next decade. Realizing the Plan's vision will depend on several factors such as: building on current momentum, strategic investment, multi-party collaboration and flexibility to adjust to changes in the economy, trends and population.

Figure 1: Plan context



This Plan replaces the 2007 **Centre City Plan**. The 10-year review of the **Centre City Plan** resulted in a new vision and set of principles as well as a number of strategic moves and actions. The 10-year review of the **Centre City Plan** revealed that considerable progress was achieved over the past decade. Yet with changing times, there was a need for a new strategy. A new name for the Plan was also required as the term “Centre City” lacked meaning to our citizens who refer to the area as the “downtown” or “core.”

The Plan is part of a group of planning initiatives which work together under the Next Generation Planning program. Next Generation Planning is required to meet the goals of the **Municipal Development Plan/Calgary Transportation Plan** and successfully plan our city for two million residents. The Plan also aligns with, and builds on other in-flight projects in Greater Downtown such as **Tomorrow’s Chinatown, Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan** and Master Plans in the Rivers District. Implementation of the Plan will leverage the Next Generation Planning program, particularly with respect to funding, financing and the Land Use Bylaw Renewal project.

The Plan also aligns with **Calgary in the New Economy, the economic strategy for Calgary**. Following the approval of the economic strategy for Calgary, The City created its administrative framework called the “Downtown Strategy” to support economic recovery by focusing resources on the geographical area of downtown. The Downtown Strategy brings together civic and community partners to work collaboratively on four areas of focus — or ‘pillars’ — which include: Place, Work, Live and Connect.

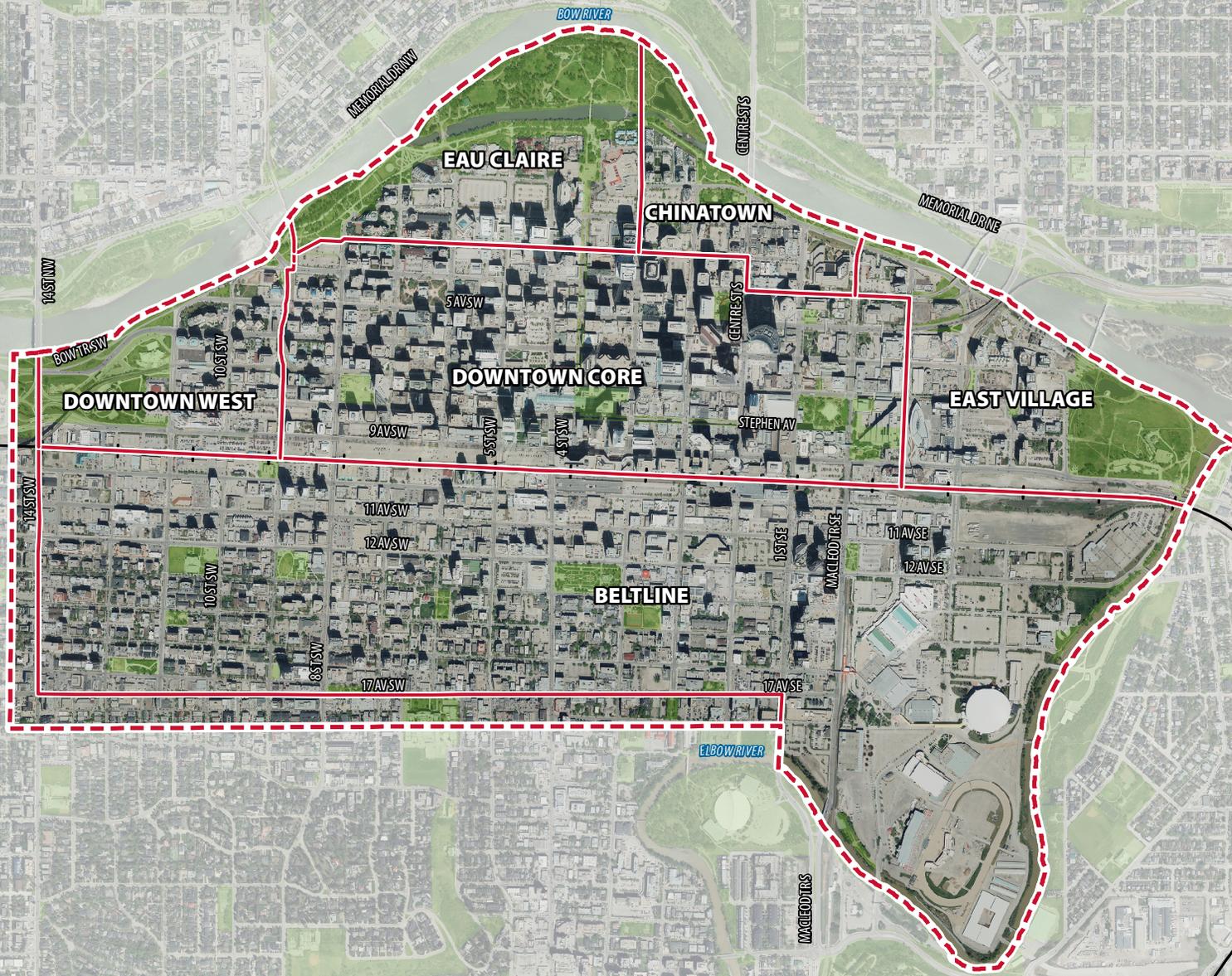
The Downtown Strategy will be the principle driver and coordinator of implementation and will help coordinate future budget requests (both capital and operating) and prioritize corporate action. It will also ensure ongoing community dialogue with our civic and community partners.

Plan area

The boundary for Greater Downtown encompasses approximately 592 hectares of land and was established in the 2007 **Centre City Plan**. The neighbourhood structure identified a more condensed downtown core that transitioned to a number of distinct residential mixed-use neighbourhoods. The boundary extended past these neighbourhoods to include properties on both sides of 17 Avenue S. and 14 Street S.W. This Plan is not changing the boundary established in 2007.

Greater Downtown is geographically central within Calgary and made up of the following neighbourhoods: Downtown Core, Beltline, Downtown West, Eau Claire, Chinatown and East Village (see Map 1). Greater Downtown is located on the south bank of the Bow River and bounded to the east by the Elbow River, to the south by 17 Avenue S.W. and to the west by 14 Street S.W.

The Plan considers policy boundaries both within and outside of the area to allow for integrated neighbourhood planning. As such, the direction within this Plan will apply to properties west of 14 Street S.W. and south of 17 Avenue S.



Map 1: Context and neighbourhoods

Legend

- - - Greater Downtown Plan Boundary
- Neighbourhood Boundary



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**Greater Downtown
today**

Our city's roots

Calgary is shaped both by natural and human influences. Our city is located at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers (the Rivers), where the Rocky Mountain foothills meet the vast Canadian prairies. These are the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7. This includes: the Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika, Piikani and Kainai First Nations; the Îyârhe Nakoda Wîcastabi First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Wesley First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

Glaciers shaped the area that eventually became Calgary. They continue to feed the Bow River, which meets the Elbow River at the eastern edge of Calgary's Greater Downtown. Over millennia, these rivers have sculpted the landscape that gives the Greater Downtown area its definition and form. Riparian areas add richness to this landscape through their unique ecosystems, resilience and beauty. Together, this topography and natural assets have supported people at the confluence of the rivers for thousands of years.

The place where the rivers meet has long served as a symbol of the interconnectedness of different cultures and the natural world surrounding us. The peoples of Treaty 7 have called this area home for millennia, often travelling across the prairies from as far as present-day southern Montana and central Saskatchewan. Locations along the rivers made the area an important place for First Nations peoples to gather and trade, with the warm chinook winds encouraging activity through the winter. These same attributes attracted the attention of European explorers, Métis interpreters and eventually British colonizers. Traditional knowledge tells us that the landscape is deeply integrated with the social and physical systems we have built upon it. This Plan respects the spirit of this place by encouraging Calgarians to forge meaningful connections with those who have shared it with us, and with those who are yet to join us.



Calgary's urban development began with the establishment of Fort Calgary by the North West Mounted Police in 1875. By 1883, the Canadian Pacific Railway arrived in Greater Downtown and the intersection of Ninth Avenue S. and Centre Street S. became the young settlement's main entrance, administrative hub and cultural centre. Urban growth began to spread outward along the gridded street pattern still visible today.

Significant flooding of the Bow River in 1897 and 1902 resulted in land close to the river remaining largely undeveloped until flood mitigation projects were completed in 1906. Sand and gravel excavated from foundations elsewhere in the area were used to build up the terraces along the river's margins. These fill sediments capped the natural ground surface protecting archaeological evidence of the earliest settlement activities as well as the thousands of years of Indigenous occupation on these lands.

A major fire in 1886 inspired the use of sandstone for significant buildings, giving Calgary the nickname "The Sandstone City." Further reinforcing Calgary's identity was the arrival of the first stampede in 1912, although the Calgary Stampede site had been used for exhibitions since 1885. This recognition attracted Canadian and international migrants, spurring growth and a real estate investment boom. Similar booms occurred in the 1940s, 1950s, 1970s and early 2000s due to the discovery of oil and subsequent increases in price. Each boom can be seen in Greater Downtown's skyline, with clusters of office and residential towers that reflect the prevailing architectural style at the time.

The 1988 Winter Olympic Games gave Calgary international attention and transformed Greater Downtown through construction of the CTrain light rail transit system, Olympic Plaza and the Saddledome. These pieces of civic infrastructure are key components of Calgary's urban fabric and cultural landscape and contribute to the city's identity as a hub for transportation, winter sports and recreation.

"For thousands of years, people have met at the confluence of two vital rivers to imagine and realize their futures. Together, we have built a city of energy, born of a powerful convergence of people, ideas and place.

Together, we continue to imagine a Calgary and a community where:

We are each connected to one another. Our diverse skills and heritage interweave to create a resilient communal fabric, while our collective spirit generates opportunity, prosperity and choice for all of us.

We are each connected to our places. We treasure and protect our natural environment. Magnificent mountain vistas and boundless prairie skies inspire each of us to build spaces worthy of our surroundings."

— Resilient Calgary, p. 25, 2019.

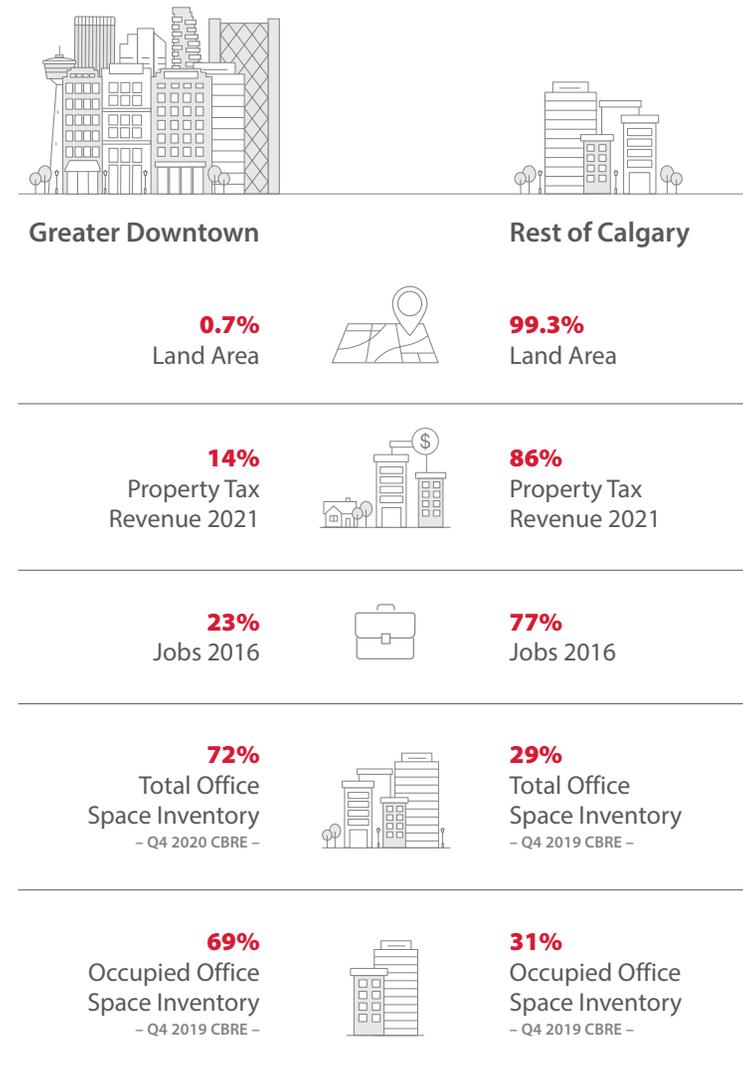
Regional significance

The exceptional location of Calgary's Greater Downtown, in addition to the economic role it plays within the city and region, supports the need for continued investment and innovation over the next decade.

Calgary is home to approximately 1.3 million citizens and 700,000 jobs, making it the largest municipality in the province of Alberta.¹ It's the hub of business, sport and logistics for the western prairies and the gateway to the Rocky Mountains. Greater Downtown Calgary's prominent skyline can be seen from great distances within and outside of the city, rising tall against the mountains and forming a key aspect of Calgary's visual identity.

Although Greater Downtown accounts for only 0.7 per cent of Calgary's total land area,² it's a key economic hub for the region. It generates 14 per cent of The City's annual tax revenue,³ contains 72 per cent of all office space⁴ and has 23 per cent of all jobs in Calgary⁵ (see Figure 2). The importance of Greater Downtown to the Calgary region cannot be overstated.

Figure 2: Importance of Greater Downtown



Source: Assesment, The City of Calgary, Statistics Canada, CBRE

¹ Statistics Canada (2020)
² The City of Calgary (2020)
³ The City of Calgary (2021)
⁴ CBRE (2020)
⁵ Statistics Canada (2016)

Working in Greater Downtown

Calgary's Greater Downtown has been a national and global centre of business for decades — the heart of one of North America's most productive cities. In the recent decade, change in the energy sector has led to a decrease in this industry's downtown workforce. Many businesses have shuttered or downsized and supporting services have suffered. Businesses that remain are threatened by shrinking disposable income and lower activity in the downtown. **Calgary in the New Economy**, the economic strategy for our city, identifies "Place [as a] strategic focus area because enhancing livability can support how well we attract new talent and businesses".⁶ The economic strategy also identifies an opportunity to embrace innovation and technology while "continuing to diversify into high-growth sectors".⁷ That said, Greater Downtown must be the nexus of a renewed focus on placemaking, economic growth, diversification and business support. This Plan supports, where possible, the repurposing of Greater Downtown office spaces and the public realm surrounding them to attract talent, diverse and innovative businesses and jobs.

⁶ Calgary in the New Economy, the economic strategy, page 23

⁷ Calgary in the New Economy, the economic strategy, page 5

Calgary's experienced workforce, along with a high quality of life makes it a desirable location for both local and global offices. These factors have led to the creation of a dense employment hub in Greater Downtown, with nearly 23 per cent of the city's jobs.⁸ In 2016, Greater Downtown had approximately 156,000 employees. This has the potential to increase to as much as 184,000 by 2035, if we realize the benefits as a result of this Plan.

The remarkably high concentration of jobs in Greater Downtown is reflected in the built environment. It is home to 71 per cent of all office space in the city, which in 2019, equated to almost 50 million square feet. The Downtown Core neighbourhood alone — with its highly connected office towers — accounts for 63 per cent of all office space in Calgary. Between 2007 and 2020, the office inventory in Greater Downtown increased by 35 per cent. However, by the end of 2020, 29 per cent of that inventory

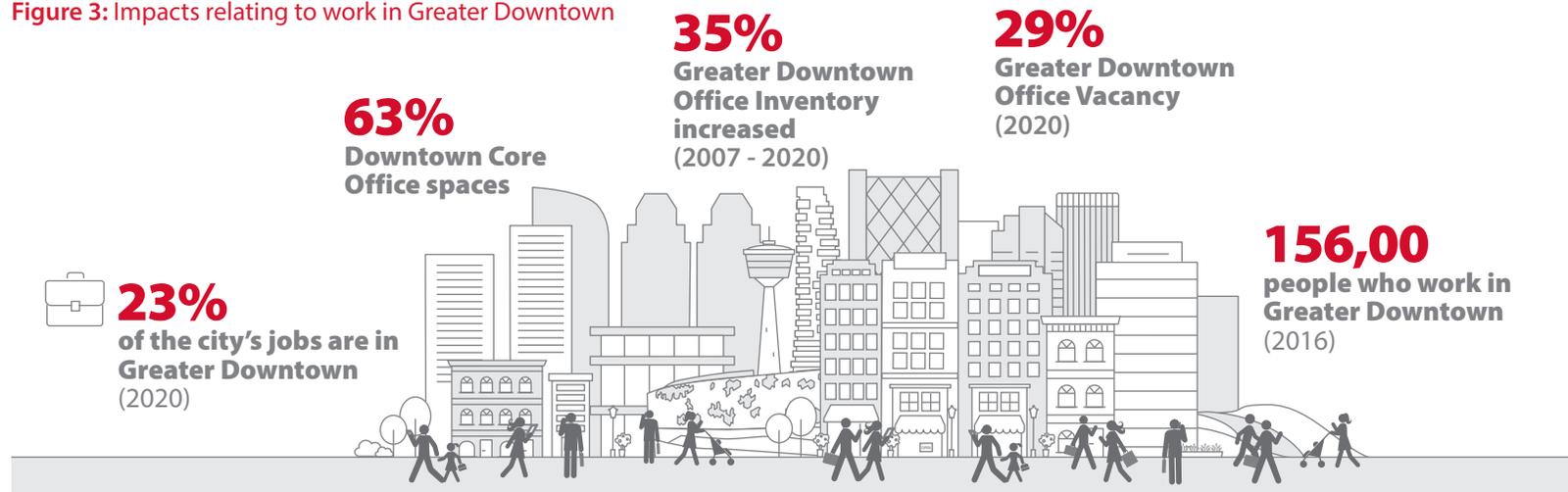
was vacant and trending higher due to impacts of the pandemic. With the available office space and a shift in work trends, Greater Downtown has adequate inventory to accommodate anticipated job growth.

As the economy and nature of work continues to change, the office market is adjusting in response. Tenants are moving to the best buildings at more affordable rates. Property managers are finding that they require smaller office spaces and better amenities to attract modern tenants. Improvements in the Downtown Core can help building owners reposition their assets and provide amenities suitable for the offices of the future. If today's employers want their workers to always be connected, they will need to locate themselves in livable areas where work and home can be more closely integrated. They will need to provide new spaces and amenities that allow employees to have opportunities for a better work-life balance.

Tomorrow's organizations will attract talent by providing and enabling vibrant urban environments with a sense of place, diverse housing choices and desired amenities. Placemaking is now an integral part of economic development strategies that seek to attract and retain mobile workers in the rapidly evolving knowledge economy.

Investing in public spaces is fundamental to achieving the vision for Greater Downtown over the next decade. It will support and incentivize private investment, generate visits and spending, and provide amenities and services to enhance the quality of life for people living and working in Greater Downtown.

Figure 3: Impacts relating to work in Greater Downtown



⁸ Statistics Canada (2020)

Living in Greater Downtown

Growth in population and the number of housing units is expected to continue in Greater Downtown. Therefore, keeping pace with quality public infrastructure and amenities will be important. Great places to live must be complemented with a range of opportunities for people to work, live and connect. To attract new residents and talent, Greater Downtown needs to be a high-quality environment where all have the opportunity to flourish and grow.

Enabling the development of diverse types of housing will result in accessibility and inclusion among a breath of people, ages, incomes, tenures and household types. This is foundational to economic vitality as it will create local jobs, strengthen residents' purchasing power and attract employers. People will feel connected to and included in their neighbourhoods — which will have a wide range of housing and employment options, a vibrant public realm, and a full range of public and private services. Without these elements, Greater Downtown will not realize its new potential.

Civic census data shows that Calgary's population increased by 26 per cent from 2007 to 2019, making it one of the fastest-growing major cities in the country. As quickly as Calgary has grown, it has urbanized even more quickly.

The population of Greater Downtown's six neighbourhoods has increased by 36 per cent over the same period to nearly 45,000 people. Greater Downtown is expected to receive an additional 20,000 residents by 2035 for a total resident population of between 65,000 and 75,000. The population gains have been served by a growing supply of housing. Between 2007 and 2020, the number of residential units in Greater Downtown increased by 52 per cent, from 22,175 to 33,740 units (Assessment, City of Calgary). Continued growth in Greater Downtown assumes the continued overall growth of Calgary and the trend towards multi-unit residential as a principal housing choice.

Like Calgary overall, Greater Downtown is a growing and diverse area. The 2016 federal census shows that 40 per cent of the population

identified as a visible minority and residents spoke at least 105 languages. Residents of Greater Downtown are typically younger and have more education than residents elsewhere in the city. A wide range of ages is expected, but with an emphasis on young (20 to 34 years old) or empty nest (55+ years old) households. An emerging trend is the increase in households with children. Between 2006 and 2019, the population in the age range of 0 to 14 years of age increased by 109 per cent. Trends indicate that a growing number of families are choosing to move or remain downtown.

With the focus on the young and empty nesters, the accessibility needs of these groups should be considered in all Greater Downtown initiatives.

The influence of the pandemic

The pandemic accelerated the response of cities to create a future-state for downtowns. Calgary's downtown is competing with cities in taking bold action. The focus is to provide experiential offerings and amenities that encourage people to stay, linger and interact. Calgary's downtown has a great foundation. This Plan builds on that, as well as recent learnings to create a future-focused plan.

A PwC Report commissioned by the City of Montreal identifies three trends that have significant impacts on downtowns globally, including Calgary's downtown:

- Work from home
- E-commerce
- Tourism/business travel

Work from home

The trend to work remotely may significantly reduce the amount of office space that companies require. This will likely slow office absorption over time, but more importantly it reduces the market for services such as restaurants, retail outlets and personal services. It also means less commuting to the downtown reducing the "rush-hour" phenomenon and changing how transit and parking may be used throughout the day and week. This gives us a significant opportunity to use our streets and sidewalks in different ways that cater more to residential and tourist needs, such as accommodating outdoor dining and extra space for walking. There will be a greater reliance on residents and tourists to generate activity and vibrancy that will be lost with the reduction in office workers.

E-commerce

E-commerce and the move to online retailing will mean fewer bricks and mortar retail stores, particularly fashion and other consumer goods. This will change the character of our streets and retail centres. We will need new and innovative concepts to fill those spaces.

Tourism/business travel

Travel has been turned upside down because of the pandemic and there is still uncertainty as to what extent it will return. Early predictions suggest business travel will never return to pre-pandemic levels which will have a significant impact on Calgary's downtown's hospitality sector such as hotels and restaurants that served the massive business travel market driven by the oil and gas sector. However, leisure travel is expected to come back strong. This means our city including our downtown needs to be attractive to tourists by providing cultural and recreational attractions that complement our strong mountain-based tourism sector. It's predicted that the convention business will thrive in cities that offer a compelling tourist destination.

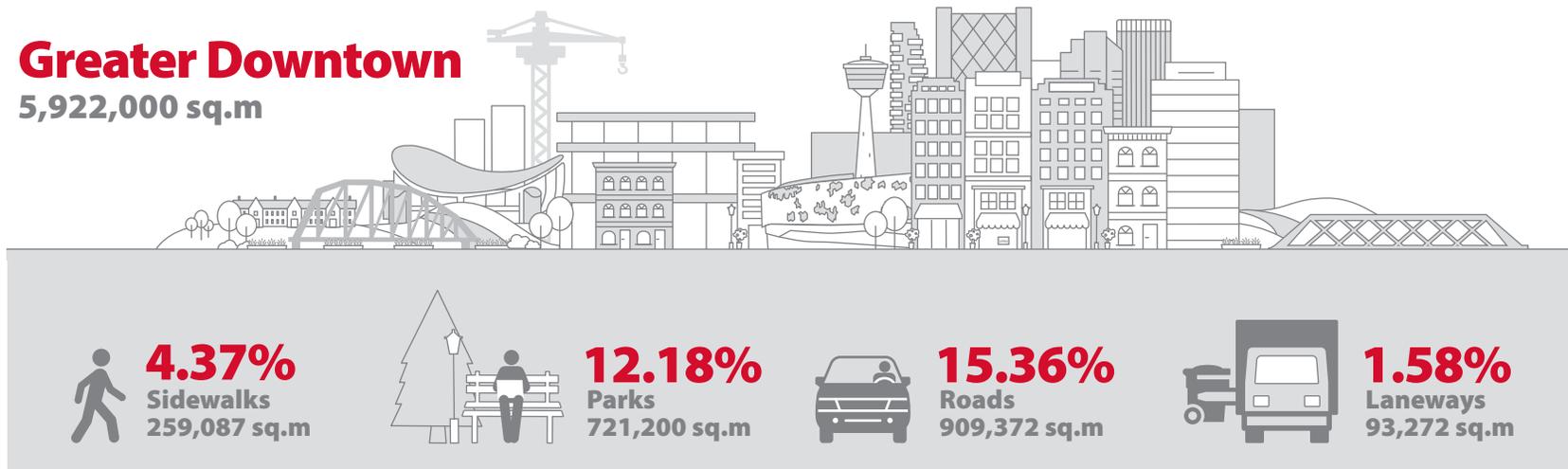
Trends and this Plan

This Plan addresses these trends and leverages opportunities by emphasizing the importance of the residential and tourist experience through creation of places, facilities and public spaces that are attractive at a local, national and international level. Since leisure tourism is growing, it will be important for Calgary to allow people to experience our way of life as well as our unique festivals and events.

The influence of our transportation network

Vehicle, transit, walking and wheeling mutually benefit from Greater Downtown's grid streets network that connects people and places throughout the area. This can be seen in changes to the mode split over the past 20 years (Figure 5). The streets network is a strategic public asset that accounts for just over 21 per cent of the total land area in Greater Downtown (Figure 4). This Plan supports leveraging this strategic asset to increase mobility choice, facilitate space and place for people and to connect people and places within Greater Downtown.

Figure 4: Public realm elements by type, as a percentage of the total area of Greater Downtown



As Calgary has grown, greater pressure has been placed on Greater Downtown's access points and network capacity. Every spring, The City conducts the Central Business District (CBD) cordon count at 31 locations over a three-week period. This provides data on how people commute into and out of downtown on a typical weekday.

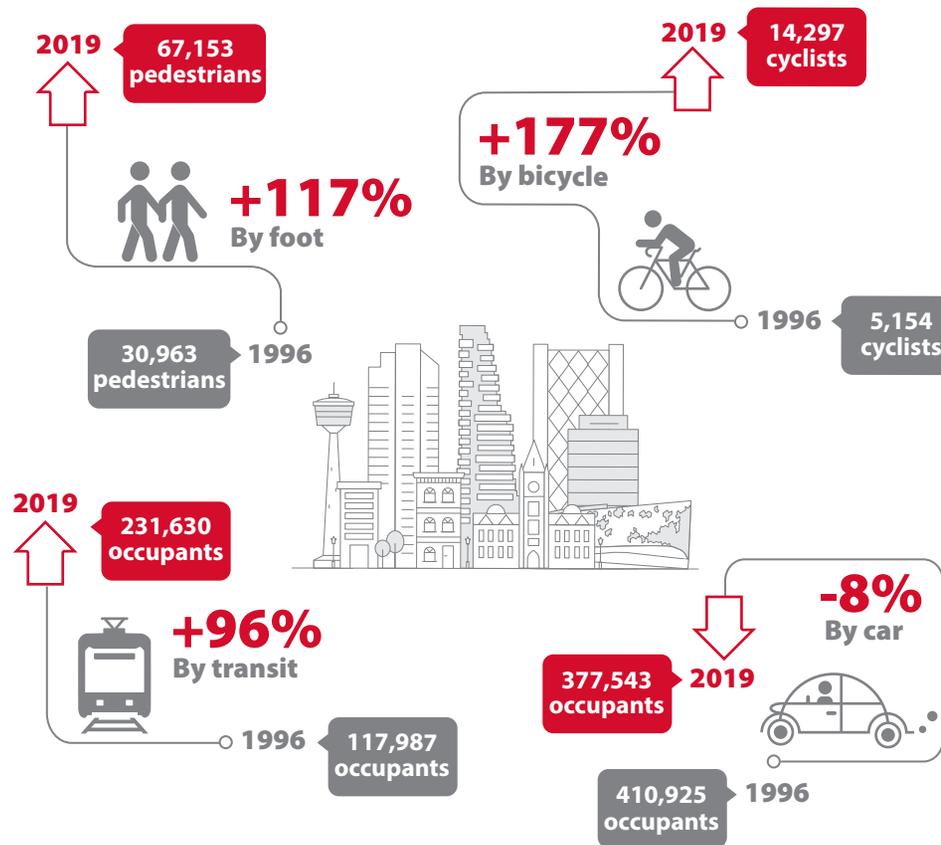
Changes in travel mode are shown in Figure 5. This shows that there is less reliance on vehicle parking and an increased reliance on transit. This means that there is a need to provide reliable and comfortable transit as well as create safe and direct cycling and pedestrian connections.

The 5A Network

The way Calgarians get around is changing. More people are choosing to walk, scooter, skateboard or cycle for their daily commute to work or school, errands and recreation. The Always Available for All Ages & Abilities (5A) Network is a citywide vision to provide accessible, affordable, year-round options for active transportation. This Plan supports continued investment in the 5A network, including investments in the mobility tracks network, providing mobility choice for residents, workers and visitors to downtown.

Separated bike lanes opened in 2015, and as of 2020, there were a total of 10 kilometres of mobility tracks in Greater Downtown (Figure 5). City policies, strategies and plans including Calgary Parking Policies, Complete Streets, and Pedestrian Strategy have further supported accessibility and mobility choice within Greater Downtown.

Figure 5: Mobility in downtown Calgary, 1996 to 2019



The City of Calgary's Central Business District (CBD) cordon counts between 1996 and 2019



Public transit infrastructure

Greater Downtown is the epicentre of transit in Calgary. The existing Blue and Red lines of the LRT system converge into and through Greater Downtown along Seventh Avenue S. The future Green Line will connect north and southeast Calgary to the area. The MAX Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines also build connections from Greater Downtown to other parts of the city. MAX Purple operates between the Downtown Core and East Hills and MAX Yellow connects Greater Downtown to Southwest Calgary. This Plan supports improving connections to transit stops, as well as improving amenities and experiences of patrons at transit stops. The Plan explores opportunities to facilitate access to transit to and through Greater Downtown, including exploration of extension of the free-fare zone and improving north-south transit routing throughout the area.



Freight rail corridor and underpass infrastructure

The Canadian Pacific freight rail corridor runs east-west through Greater Downtown — between 9 Avenue and 10 Avenue S. Underpasses at regular intervals connect the two sides of Greater Downtown, with one at-grade crossing at 11 Street S.W. Over 30,000 pedestrians and 3,500 wheelers use the underpasses on a daily basis.

This Plan supports continued investment in improving the pedestrian and active modes experience through the underpasses, increasing the number of underpasses where possible, and increasing space for people, making commutes safer and more enjoyable.



Plus 15 network infrastructure

The Plus 15 network, established in 1969, now comprises upwards of 86 bridges and over 16 kms of elevated, weather-protected walkways in the Downtown Core. The Plus 15 network is an identifiable asset, providing increased opportunities for placemaking and economic investment in supporting services. This Plan supports the further enhancement of the network, including investment in missing links needed to complete the network, improvements in accessibility/operating hours, as well as continued maintenance and operations of the network.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change

Greater Downtown will be an important driver for Calgary's transition to a low-carbon economy and a focal point for increased risk brought on by climate change. Greater Downtown is a major source of emissions, and its people and infrastructure are exposed to climate-related hazards. The increasing likelihood of severe weather means that mitigation is required to minimize property damage, service disruptions and safety risks.

To reduce exposure to these risks, and to do our part to reduce emissions, we must integrate climate change mitigation and risk-reduction strategies into decision-making within Greater Downtown. Our mitigation and adaptation measures can be significant local economic development opportunities that expand our green economy, create jobs and encourage diversified investment. By mitigating risk through adaptation and naturalization of our infrastructure, we can help Greater Downtown to thrive no matter what nature has planned.

Approximately two-thirds of Calgary's measured emissions are caused by electricity use and heating in buildings, and one-third are caused by consumption of transportation fuels. To progress toward our emissions reduction goals, we will need to reduce emissions from buildings and transportation in Greater Downtown. To mitigate Calgary's contribution to climate change, thousands of small actions, along with broader programs and regulations, could reduce greenhouse gas emissions and generate cost savings — particularly as the costs of emitting greenhouse gases go up. A low-carbon future for Calgary and Greater Downtown can also deliver economic and social benefits to Calgarians.

Positive impacts from reducing emissions have been identified in areas such as placemaking, job creation, cleaner air, energy equity and improved mobility.

The coming decades will be defined by a much more variable and unpredictable climate. This will bring more frequent, intense and severe weather events that can significantly damage infrastructure and impact the health, safety and well-being of residents. These events will place stress on City infrastructure as well as emergency response and public health services. Greater Downtown will need to be more prepared for stronger climate-related hazards — particularly drought, intense storms, heat waves, high winds and major river flooding. Adaptation and risk-reduction practices will help us to reduce economic and social disruptions, bring positive economic gains, and deliver social, reputational and environmental benefits.

Adopting adaptation measures now will be more cost-effective than waiting, as costs will rise over time. To reduce risk effectively, adaptation solutions must be tailored to geographically-specific hazards and community context. Natural infrastructure is an important line of defence

against events such as flooding and extreme heat, and provides many other benefits including support of biodiversity, improvement to public health and well-being, and placemaking. Adaptation efforts must account for inequities as well as the needs of marginalized groups. Enabling the most vulnerable to participate in decision-making will make programs more inclusive, sustainable and effective for them and their communities.

The inevitability of climate change requires us to integrate mitigation and risk-reduction strategies into all land-use and operational planning within Greater Downtown. This will help us to maintain servicing ability and minimize the cost of adaptation. This Plan supports strategies that mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and increase Greater Downtown's climate resilience.

Being prepared

The changing climate will bring more intense and frequent extreme weather events including major river flooding, requiring us to move beyond the traditional response-based approach to emergency management. Strategic investments in resilience and disaster prevention can provide significant long-term cost savings as well as environmental, economic, and social benefits.

Flood resiliency

Updating Greater Downtown's interface with the Bow River goes beyond designing improved pathways and public spaces. It involves a flood mitigation effort that will increase resilience. Construction of the Downtown Flood Barrier is underway. Community engagement started in April 2019 and construction began in 2020. The Downtown Flood Barrier, once complete, will connect with West Eau Claire Park and extend to the Reconciliation Bridge to form a single, contiguous piece of flood mitigation infrastructure for Calgary's downtown. These measures will result in reduced business and economic interruptions, and increased resilience for critical services and public infrastructure.

Emergency management

The Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) works to promote and strengthen emergency preparedness, resilience and the co-ordinated response to — and recovery from — major emergencies and disasters in Calgary. It works in partnership with city services, government agencies, businesses, non-profit groups, first responders and citizens.

“CEMA co-ordinates periodic citywide disaster risk assessments in order to understand Calgary's

disaster risk environment, share disaster risk information with Calgarians, and prioritize activities towards reducing disaster risk” (Disaster Risk Report, 2018).

CEMA has identified 13 risks of high concern for Calgary, many of which are relevant for Greater Downtown. This work is reinforced by global risk reports, such as the World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report, which in 2019 identified natural disasters and extreme weather as top risks to economic and human development in a global context.

Since 2013, Greater Downtown has been impacted by four emergencies that required activation of the Municipal Emergency Plan or a declaration of a State of Local Emergency. These were the 2013 flood, the 2014 September snow event, the 2014 vault fire (causing a prolonged power outage in the downtown) and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. These events had social, safety and economic impacts on residents and businesses in Greater Downtown. In addition, CEMA regularly monitors mass-gathering events in Greater Downtown, such as the Stampede Parade and Red Mile festivities.

Urban resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems within a city to survive, adapt and grow

no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. CEMA provides a number of services that promote urban resilience in Greater Downtown, such as:

- Ready Calgary, a program that informs, educates and builds resiliency to the impacts of emergencies and disasters in the city. It is designed to prepare businesses, individuals and families for emergencies, and empower communities to act effectively and safely in response to an emergency impacting their residents.
- Corporate Business Continuity, which is designed to ensure city services and businesses can continue to operate or resume operations as soon as possible following a disruption.
- Calgary's Critical Infrastructure Network, formed to increase cross-sector communication and collaboration among various key partners to build resilience.

In addition, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce and Calgary Economic Development are agency members of CEMA. These relationships bridge municipal emergency management and economic resilience in Calgary, and will continue to result in business-specific emergency management planning in the future.

Championing quality urban design

The design of all new architecture and public realm in Greater Downtown is a collaborative co-creation process. This process focuses on the quality of the human experience — and particularly the improvement of the interface between buildings and the public realm. Improving this interface, based on local context and best practices, will showcase the area’s unique features, while stimulating innovative design solutions. It will also create market opportunities that will support businesses downtown.

The quality design of buildings, sites and the public realm contributes to placemaking. All of this makes up Greater Downtown and benefits users with increased activity, comfort, safety, accessibility and enjoyment. Amenity-rich, successfully designed communities are more resilient, attract a diversity of development, and offer housing and lifestyle choices to current and future residents.

The Elements of Urban Design, as outlined in the **Municipal Development Plan**, provide high-level design guidance, clarify design expectations and set design quality evaluation criteria for the physical design of the public and private realms and all buildings in Greater Downtown (and the city as a whole).

Designers, developers and citizens are encouraged to apply the Elements of Urban Design and consider the following actions that place leadership, people, process and environment at the forefront of design:

- Inspire bold, innovative, human-centred and solution-focused design that consider the possibilities while addressing the uncertainties facing Greater Downtown.
- Incorporate the Elements of Urban Design as a “design lens” to evaluate and improve all public and private development, public improvement and infrastructure projects (BRT, LRT, bike facilities, bridges, intersections, underpasses, et cetera) and policies.
- Strive for design excellence in all aspects of interdisciplinary design and shared best practices, including but not limited to, design for: active and healthy lifestyle, engaging places to support the economy, shared mobility, social inclusion and climate resiliency.
- Continuously generate conversations with industry, businesses and the public to identify future placemaking at different scales and in a wide variety of locations to serve new needs that emerge as a result of the ongoing evolution of Greater Downtown.

The influence of our green network

With downtown's high density, providing adequate amenities for Calgarians of all ages presents unique challenges due to a lack of space. This means that parks and open spaces are valued assets that The City must ensure are preserved.

The Centre City Parks: Open Space Management Plan and the Open Space Strategy for Established Communities set a target of 1 hectare of open space per 1,000 residents in Greater Downtown and the Beltline neighbourhood.

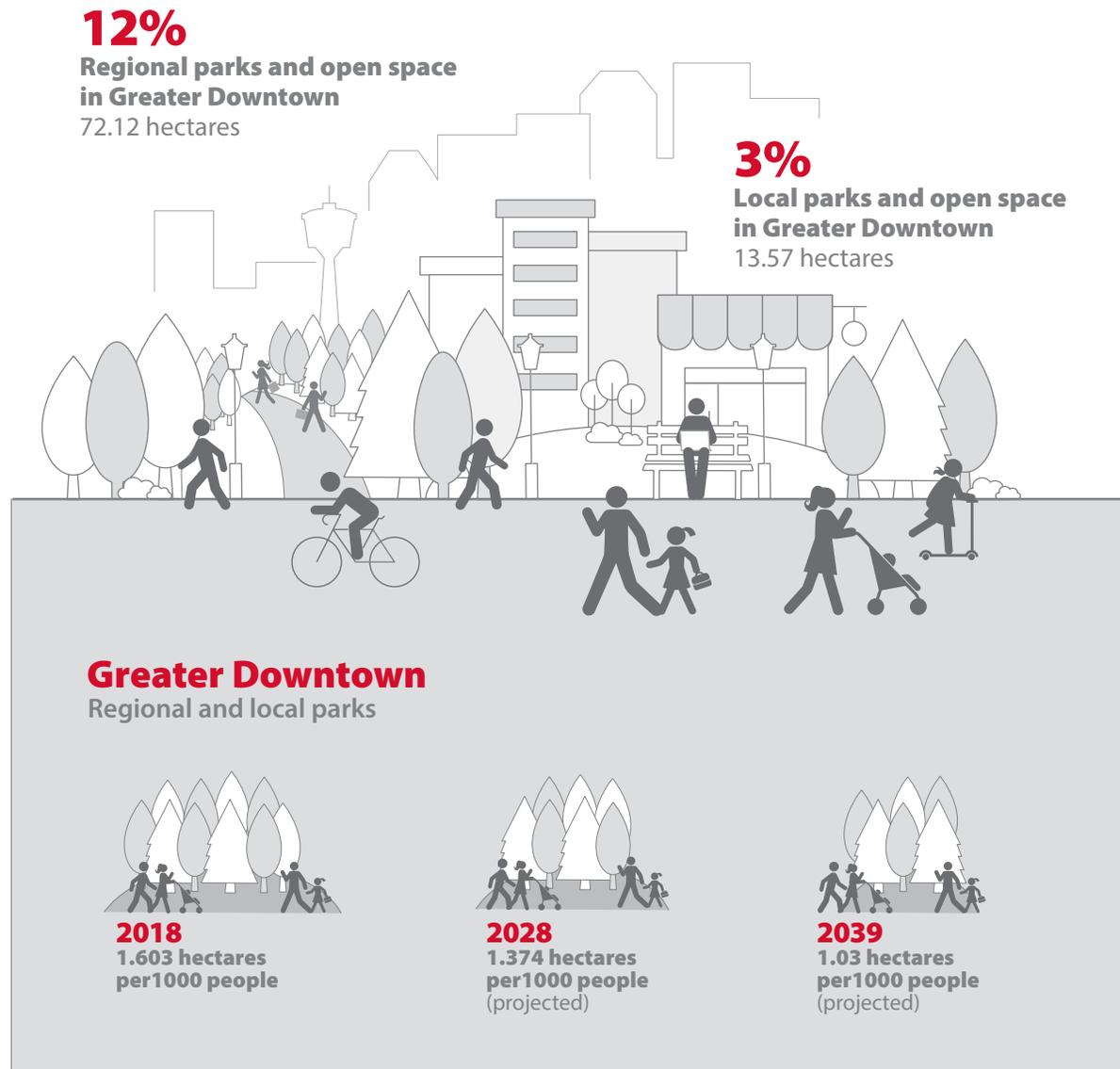
This is half the target of 2 hectares per 1,000 residents elsewhere in the city and referenced in the **Municipal Development Plan** — and reflects a very different development pattern in Greater Downtown. To offset the lower target, the focus for open spaces in Greater Downtown is to provide higher quality amenities and maintenance.

Some of Calgary's most prominent parks and open spaces are in Greater Downtown, providing special places for people to connect with one another in different ways. We can connect to Calgary's Indigenous and colonial heritage at Fort Calgary and the confluence of the rivers, or to our exciting winter sports legacy at Olympic Plaza. The riverbanks of our mountain-fed rivers and Prince's Island Park connect us to natural areas. Plazas and parks help us connect with one another through activities and programming like skateboarding at Shaw Millennium Park or festivals at Eau Claire Plaza. This Plan supports

linking these assets to create a connected green network throughout Greater Downtown. It also supports creating spaces and amenities that have universal accessibility, so that parks can accommodate all abilities.

The urban forest provides social, environmental and aesthetic benefits. Greater Downtown has approximately 8,600 trees located on both public and private lands, in parks, natural areas and green spaces. These trees provide shade and cooling, enhance walkability of city streets, improve aesthetics of downtown streets and parks, create a sense of safe gathering spaces, increase property values and create natural areas along the river. Urban trees are vital green infrastructure for climate change resiliency and have an estimated value of \$28 million.

Figure 6: Greater Downtown regional and local parks





3

Vision and principles

Supporting our city vision

Calgary's **Greater Downtown Plan** is the vision, roadmap and commitment to build a thriving, future-focused downtown.

The enduring perception of downtown has been that of a workplace — vibrant and thriving by day yet quiet at night. This identity of downtown is supported by the transportation system which was designed to efficiently and quickly move people in and out of downtown during the day. Greater Downtown continues to grow in residential population and remains a regional draw for a diversity of people to live, visit, work and invest. It is at a pivotal stage in its evolution following structural changes in our economy and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is an opportunity to focus on giving people reasons to stay, linger and experience being part of the Greater Downtown community.

The 2007 **Centre City Plan** set out a vision, principles and framework to make “Centre City a livable, caring and thriving place” while also providing supporting policies and actions. This Plan builds on that foundation by offering a modernized vision and principles for the area. The new vision and principles will be a primary consideration in any new policy work for Greater Downtown.

Calgary's **Municipal Development Plan (MDP)** provides a decision-making framework that outlines the relationship between vision, principles, goals, objectives, indicators and targets, strategies and actions (Figure 7). The MDP provides a citywide vision; sustainability principles for land use and mobility; citywide goals and objectives; core indicators and 60-year targets. Guidebooks further refine principles and goals, whereas local area plans provide community-specific visions, core ideas and policies that align with goals and objectives of the appropriate guidebook.

This Plan serves multiple functions. Since the **Centre City Guidebook** doesn't currently apply to the entire Greater Downtown, this Plan provides guidebook-level principles and high-level direction to decision-makers. This Plan also provides: a community-specific vision for the area based on public and stakeholder input, strategic moves to turn those ideas into action, objectives for each strategic move and actions to achieve the vision.

Greater Downtown is made up of diverse and unique “neighbourhoods” focused around the Downtown Core and includes Stampede Park. Greater Downtown is well connected with the rest of the city by multiple routes of the Primary Transit Network and high-quality pedestrian connections within and beyond its boundaries.

— MDP, Section 3.2, p. 96

Figure 7: Decision-making framework



The vision for Greater Downtown

Greater Downtown is the economic and cultural heart of Calgary. It is a resilient and vibrant place for everyone, with welcoming neighbourhoods, active streets and well-used public spaces.

The principles for Greater Downtown

This Plan builds on the foundation of the **Centre City Plan** by offering a modernized set of principles. These principles express a sought-after end state that is not time dependent. They provide context and direction for decision-making in Greater Downtown.



1. Economic vitality and innovation

Create exciting places that attract, support and retain businesses, entrepreneurs and talent to provide diverse employment opportunities.



2. Identity and place

Design neighbourhoods that Calgarians are proud to call home. Ones that are inclusive, connected, and accessible to businesses and services



3. Opportunity and choice

Give everyone access to places to live, shop, learn, work, eat and play, plus diverse housing choices and mobility options.



4. Health and wellness

Ensure everyone has equitable access to health care and medical services, recreational and cultural opportunities, and healthy food.



5. Social interaction

Build gathering places for civic, arts, cultural, recreation and entertainment activities, and neighbourhood get-togethers.



6. The green network and natural environment

Protect and restore the green network, natural areas, biodiversity and ecological functions for everyone's enjoyment.



7. Mobility for all

Provide options that address the mobility needs of people of all ages and abilities, including walking, wheeling and using transit.



8. Climate mitigation and adaptation

Support the transition to a low-carbon economy and adapt to the changing climate by enhancing the resilience of our infrastructure.



9. Quality urban design

Connect buildings, streets and places while responding to the emerging needs of people, property owners and businesses.



10. Resilient and prepared

Adapt, survive and thrive in the face of chronic stresses and acute shocks to our physical, natural and social systems.

4 Strategic moves and actions



Strategic moves framework

To achieve the vision of a resilient and vibrant Greater Downtown for everyone, with welcoming neighbourhoods, active streets and well-used public spaces, Calgary must commit to sustained action in each of the strategic moves:

Strategic move 1: Neighbourhoods for vibrant urban life

Strategic move 2: A green network for a healthy environment

Strategic move 3: Streets for people

Strategic move 4: Transit for all

Strategic move 5: Future-proof and innovate for the next generation

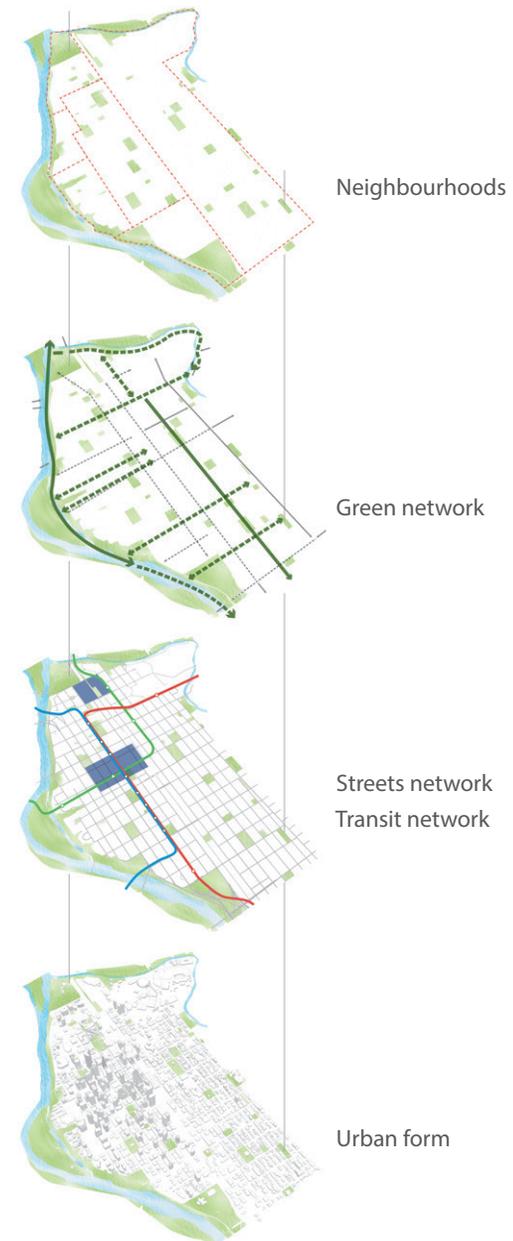
The strategic moves and actions are the roadmap for the future of downtown. Like a roadmap, there are many ways to get to a destination. The strategic moves and actions provide many different ways to get to the future we envision.

The strategic moves and actions can be applied at different scales of geography. The Greater Downtown community is on the larger end of the scale followed by neighbourhood, district or corridor. The smaller end of the scale might include a block, park, intersection or building. For Greater Downtown to be successful, there is a need to employ actions at a variety of scales.

The actions range from short-term pilot projects to long-term initiatives. Short-term pilot projects have the potential for major impact five to ten years into the future. They also allow for the testing of ideas to better understand direction for long-term investment. Long-term actions may be transformative in nature and may require more time for adequate planning and community involvement.

To fully understand the strategic moves, Chapter four of this Plan will provide an overview of the strategic moves and actions within Greater Downtown. Chapter five will provide an overview of place-based actions within the context of current investment.

Figure 8: Greater Downtown framework





Vision

Greater Downtown is the economic and cultural heart of Calgary. It is a resilient and vibrant place for everyone, with welcoming neighbourhoods, active streets, and well-used public spaces.

10 Principles

Greater Downtown Plan

• Strategic move 1: Neighbourhoods for vibrant urban life

- Create and support mixed-use neighbourhoods
- Reinforce neighbourhood gateways, landmarks and view corridors
- Celebrate diversity, culture, art and history
- Develop an array of key gathering places
- Make downtown living more attractive
- Shift the image of the Downtown Core

• Strategic move 2: A green network for a healthy environment

- Plan, expand and connect to the green network
- Protect, maintain and grow the tree canopy
- Connect and celebrate the rivers
- Be flexible and accommodating in design and use
- Leverage green infrastructure to create year-round vibrancy

• Strategic move 3: Streets for people

- Invest in a multi-modal transportation network
- Re-envision street space and public rights-of-way
- Improve connectivity throughout Greater Downtown
- Invest in the public realm
- Support the Plus 15 network

• Strategic move 4: Transit for all

- Expand and enhance transit service
- Improve transit stations and stops to create welcoming experiences

• Strategic move 5: Future-proof and innovate for the next generation

- Encourage innovation and testing
- Innovate the regulatory environment
- Reduce vulnerabilities
- Improve energy use and reduce GHG emissions



Strategic move 1: Neighbourhoods for vibrant urban life

By 2031, Greater Downtown has unique, mixed-use neighbourhoods with vibrant gathering places, lots of housing choices and all of the amenities residents need close by.



Addressing climate

Great neighbourhoods are the building blocks of resilient, low-carbon, climate-adapted cities. Sustainable neighbourhoods that function like ecosystems can reduce vulnerability to climate-related hazards, save on infrastructure costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Downtown residents tend to emit less greenhouse gas per capita than residents of low-density, vehicle-oriented places.

How we get there

Create compact, amenity-rich neighbourhoods where many more people can live, work, shop and play without using a car. Transition to net-zero, disaster-resilient buildings and infrastructure.

Create and support mixed-use neighbourhoods

The unique neighbourhoods of Greater Downtown function as distinct parts of a larger community. Regional destinations, institutions and civic amenities span multiple neighbourhoods and attract visitors from all parts of the city and region, as well as tourists from all around the world. Appropriate amenities and aesthetic qualities within each neighbourhood are essential to achieving complete and unique neighbourhoods that have their own identity. People want to live in complete communities that are walkable and safe, and have amenities that support their everyday needs.

Goal

Planning and regulations in Greater Downtown are current and simplified, and support a wide range of public and private investment and initiatives.

Actions

Pilot

- Support a wide range of public and private initiatives to increase neighbourhood vibrancy and identity such as:
 - Mural programs
 - Façade improvement programs
 - Temporary uses for public spaces, parking lots and vacant lands

Short to medium term

- Amend the **Centre City Guidebook** and **Municipal Development Plan Volume 2, Part 2**, and support non-statutory design guidelines to expand their application to all areas of Greater Downtown.

- Review regulations — such as local area plans, land-use districts, density bonus contributions or increases in property tax revenues — to take a more holistic view of the area north of the freight rail tracks within Greater Downtown. The intent is to effectively distribute the financial benefits of new development in this area.
- Prepare a coordinated brand strategy for areas north of the freight rail tracks within Greater Downtown.

Medium to long term

- Monitor policies within Greater Downtown local area planning documents in relation to development trends to ensure they remain current and relevant. Where determined necessary by administration, these policy documents will be updated through the plan amendment process. Suggested timing for these actions:
 - Once every two years, monitor local area planning documents and prepare a report on trends and issues with recommendations for plan amendments
 - Update local area planning documents as determined by administration

- Update local area plans to include the identification of transition areas interfacing with surrounding neighbourhoods, such as:
 - The edges of the Downtown Core
 - 14 Street S.W.
 - 17 Avenue S.
- Prioritize, invest in and form partnerships for the advancement of placemaking in the neighbourhoods of Chinatown, Downtown West and Downtown Core. These neighbourhoods have not received as much investment as other neighbourhoods in Greater Downtown and have been identified as a focus for investment over the next decade.
- Include expertise in urban design and placemaking in the scope of any new public infrastructure projects in Greater Downtown. For example, projects like bike lanes and transit stops can include design elements that add to the overall human experience in high-density environments.



Spotlight

The Beltline neighbourhood

The Beltline is a vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood that has benefited from having one local area plan, a community enhancement fund and a set of land-use districts. The Beltline has also benefited from a density bonus system to achieve a variety of public realm enhancements over the years. While there is a variety of bonusing options, the most popular has been the contribution to the Beltline Community Enhancement Fund. This option requires a monetary contribution during the development permit stage where density is awarded. This fund has been successful in spurring projects such as urban murals, artful bike racks, innovative park spaces such as High Park, and public art features. These improvements have enhanced the community character and identity, making Beltline a distinct and unique area with a defined sense of place. This is important in keeping Beltline an attractive community in which to live and invest.

Reinforce neighbourhood gateways, landmarks and view corridors

Streetscapes and buildings should be designed to highlight and promote the landmarks, gateways and view corridors as identified on Map 2: Greater Downtown gateways, landmarks and view corridors. The identified sites, buildings, structures, parks and escarpment areas will serve as important urban context and character-defining elements for both public improvement and new development projects.

Goal

Development, preservation and enhancement of neighbourhood gateways, landmarks and view corridors signifies entry to unique places and helps people orient themselves within Greater Downtown.

Actions

Short to medium term

- Review the function of Second Avenue S.W. between Third Street S.W. and the Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre at First Street S.W. to better define pedestrian priority and guidance for private redevelopment. Considerations may include pedestrian connectivity and experience around the future Green Line LRT station, view corridors to the Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre, as well as pedestrian linkages to the east part of Chinatown all the way to the riverfront.

- Prepare a Centre Street S. public-realm improvement plan.

The improvements will benefit Chinatown, improve an important and iconic gateway into Greater Downtown, support **Municipal Development Plan** goals and be part of the downtown recovery. The scope of work may include:

- A review of Centre Street S. from Centre Street Bridge south to the Calgary Tower at Ninth Avenue S.
- A review of vehicle and pedestrian volumes and predicted need (including BRT) to determine whether vehicle lanes can be reduced or eliminated, and curbs relocated to potentially maximize walking and wheeling space
- Implementation phasing, which may include short- and long-term assessments
- Community engagement, which could be part of a local area planning process
- A collaborative planning process, which will involve Green Line LRT planning, **Tomorrow's Chinatown** local area planning and the Main Streets program
- A funding structure identified outside of the Green Line LRT program

Medium to long term

- Update local area plans to identify unique sites — such as landmark or gateway sites — and the views they provide. Provide community-specific policy to guide future development in these areas. The identified gateways, landmarks and view corridors in Greater Downtown, as shown on Map 2, should be preserved and enhanced with explicit attention to the significant views of the following structures, parks and escarpment areas:
 - Views of Calgary Tower, St. Mary's Cathedral, Mewata Armoury, Contemporary Calgary, Centre Street Bridge, Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre and Calgary Municipal Building
 - North views along streets between Third Street S.E and Eighth Street S.W. which end at the Bow River pathway system with glimpses of the escarpment beyond. Dramatic escarpment views are opportunities to tell Indigenous perspectives and stories about the landscape (i.e. importance of the escarpment landscapes for buffalo hunting)
 - East views along Sixth and Seventh Avenues S. which are terminated by views of Fort Calgary
 - Views from bridges that cross over the rivers, providing valuable opportunities to connect to nature and pre-contact history
 - When on Centre Street S., views of the Centre Street Bridge and Calgary Tower should be preserved by limiting new Plus 15 bridges across Centre Street at a minimum distance of two blocks from each of these landmark structures. New Plus 15 bridges should provide for public access from grade to take advantage of views from the Plus 15 bridge to the Centre Street Bridge and Calgary Tower
 - When on 2 Avenue S.W., views of the Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre should be preserved by limiting new Plus 15 bridges across Second Avenue S. at a minimum distance of one block west of the landmark structure. New Plus 15 bridges should provide for public access from grade to take advantage of views from the Plus 15 bridge to the Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre



Spotlight

Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, in Spain, is one of the most recognizable pieces of architecture of its time. It was designed by renowned architect Frank Gehry. Located alongside the Nervion River, the museum merges with La Salve Bridge to link a curved pedestrian walkway to the waterfront. The unique design incorporates new shapes and materials that create a memorable, iconic gateway. In the first three years of operation, the museum welcomed nearly four million people, while generating approximately \$500 million in profit and \$100 million in taxes.

Celebrate diversity, culture, art and history

A successful Greater Downtown isn't just about physical infrastructure or moving people in and out for work, but about people wanting to stay to experience the location, activities and culture of an area.

Goal

Heritage and cultural assets are more visible and integrated within the public realm, allowing for the greatest access to — and participation in — arts, culture and education.

Actions

Pilot

- Pilot a project to recognize the importance of the confluence of the rivers to our Indigenous neighbours, and work with the First Nations so they can share stories and perspectives through art installations and events.

Short to medium term

- Incentivize the retention of heritage assets through financial and planning tools.
- Prepare a strategy to identify and provide long-term options for cultural and festival spaces in Greater Downtown. This may include recommendations for regular investment to maintain leisure spaces. This will allow for activation, animation and activity for the residents of Greater Downtown, while supporting business and community. This will ensure the area remains a hub for southern Alberta's cultural sector.
- Recognize the value of our cultural and historical landscapes and develop a strategy to share stories of our history through an Indigenous perspective.

Medium to long term

- Ensure artistic, creative, historical or cultural features are incorporated within infrastructure along high pedestrian movement streets.
- Investigate ways to promote arts and culture throughout Greater Downtown, such as:
 - Support digital video and auditory experiences in the public realm as new and innovative forms of public art
 - Support the development of spaces that provide artistic and cultural uses as a method for advancing the long-term economic and social sustainability goals for Greater Downtown communities and residents
 - Feature Indigenous art and culture prominently throughout Greater Downtown to reflect the importance of Calgary's Indigenous heritage



Spotlight

Beltline Urban Murals Project

The Beltline Urban Murals Project (BUMP) started in 2017 as a community-led initiative to transform the Beltline neighbourhood into an open-air art gallery through inspiring and creative murals. The program receives financing from the Beltline Community Investment Fund and the Parking Revenue Reinvestment Program to fund artists to install their creations on buildings. The mural selection process invites building owners to apply for their exterior wall to be painted and artists to submit their proposals. Once the location and artists are selected, the murals go up over a one-month period culminating with a festival of walking tours and events. BUMP contributes to creating spaces that celebrate diversity, culture, art and history.

Develop an array of key gathering places

Key gathering places in Greater Downtown are special places that contribute to people's everyday experience of interacting with one another. These key places are unique to Calgary's Greater Downtown and are ones that people identify as destinations.

Goal

Key gathering places foster a distinctive sense of place and vibrancy.

Actions

Pilot

- Support the transformation of Stephen Avenue as the primary street for public life in Greater Downtown by implementing the pilot projects outlined in the document **The Future of Stephen Avenue: from City Hall to the Armoury**.

Short to medium term

- Support the transformation of the area encompassing Olympic Plaza, City Hall and the several blocks surrounding them. This area is recognized as a special place that contributes to the civic and cultural vitality of Greater Downtown. It is the focal point for civic pride and a destination for citizens and visitors alike.
- Better connect the Rivers District Culture + Entertainment District with the area encompassing Olympic Plaza, City Hall and the several blocks surrounding them. Consider the following strategies:

- Provide better connections and wayfinding for people walking and wheeling between Stephen Avenue and Stampede Trail
- Provide better connections and wayfinding for people walking and wheeling between the BMO Centre and the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre to enhance shared activities, parks and plaza space
- Provide walking and wheeling improvements and wayfinding between Red and Blue line LRT stations and Green Line stations for people transferring between lines
- Support walking and wheeling improvements between LRT stations and Main Streets or festival streets

Medium to long term

- Support the transformation of Stephen Avenue as the primary street for public life in Greater Downtown by implementing the strategy outlined in the document **The Future of Stephen Avenue: from City Hall to the Armoury**. Ensure:
 - A continuous public realm strategy for Stephen Avenue from Mewata Armoury and Shaw Millennium Park all the way through to City Hall, the Central Library and East Village, with public access through City Hall. Special enhancement of intersections along Stephen Avenue to create a sense of place and identity

- Transform Olympic Plaza into a flexible, at-grade front porch for the area with a micro-commercial retail edge offering hybrid uses and affordable arts spaces. Redesign and reconstruct Olympic Plaza to:
 - Better integrate it with surrounding development
 - Provide accessibility to all users
 - Be more vibrant, comfortable and animated through continued uses and programming
 - Better host large-scale events and festivals
 - Celebrate winter events and sport
 - Recognize Calgary's Olympic legacy
 - Be sustainable through different governance and stewardship models
- Investigate ways to align work and make the most of the investment happening in east Victoria Park and East Village as outlined in the **Rivers District Master Plan** and **East Village Master Plan**.
- Ensure universal accessibility is considered in the design of any new development and/or redevelopment of key gathering places.



Spotlight

Culture + Entertainment District (The C + E)

Just as the **East Village Master Plan** (2009) has been successfully guiding the revitalization efforts in that community, the vision for east Victoria Park is articulated in the **Rivers District Master Plan** (RDMP). The RDMP was developed by the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) in partnership with Calgary Stampede to create a cohesive vision document to guide the planning and development within Stampede Park and the surrounding community of east Victoria Park to create Calgary's Culture + Entertainment District (C+E). Over the next 20 years, this area will be the focus of major city-building projects including the soon-to-be expanded BMO Centre, Calgary's new Event Centre and the much-anticipated extension of 17 Avenue S.E. into Stampede Park are just the beginning of the initiatives underway.

The BMO Centre expansion is a catalyst project identified within the RDMP and involves the expansion and modernization of Calgary's

premier convention centre. Valued at \$500 million, it will more than double the BMO Centre's rentable space. Upon completion (in 2024), the BMO Centre will rank as Western Canada's largest facility, and it will give Calgary top-tier destination status in the competitive international meetings and conventions market.

In July 2019, The City of Calgary, Calgary Sports and Entertainment Corp. (CSEC) and its affiliates, the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Limited and CMLC agreed to fundamental terms and conditions for developing a new public sports and entertainment complex in east Victoria Park. Beyond establishing a new, world-class sports and entertainment arena, the vision for the \$550 million project is complemented by the development of outdoor festival space and enhanced public realm and infrastructure to support the vision for the Culture + Entertainment District.

To increase connectivity and create an attractive right-of-way for new retail and commercial development within the District, the extension of 17 Avenue S.E. forges a pedestrian and vehicular link into Stampede Park across Macleod Trail S.E.

CMLC is stewarding the delivery of the **East Village Master Plan** and RDMP and serving as development manager, on behalf of The City of Calgary and Calgary Stampede, for the delivery of the BMO Centre Expansion. CMLC is also serving as development manager for the Event Centre, on behalf of the City of Calgary and CSEC.

Make downtown living more attractive

Regardless of design, for any place to be vibrant, it needs people to breathe life into it. For Greater Downtown to be vibrant — at all times of day and throughout the year — the residential population needs to increase along with the quality of amenities to support that population.

Goal

The number of residential housing units, housing choices and supporting amenities in Greater Downtown grows to a level that supports neighbourhood vibrancy, the local economy and a diverse residential population.

Actions

Pilot

- Pilot temporary uses of surface parking lots and underutilized parcels in creative ways to better serve community needs (e.g. parks, food trucks, outdoor markets).
- Work with cultural groups to pilot the inclusion of amenities within downtown parks that meet their specific needs.
- Pilot an urban agriculture program. This may include working with landowners to temporarily repurpose a vacant lot or working with the appropriate departments within The City to temporarily repurpose land owned by The City or rights-of-way.
- Pilot initiatives to develop green roofs on public and private facilities to increase recreation and green space opportunities in Greater Downtown.

- Seek opportunities to pilot placemaking initiatives to increase vibrancy and safety. Work alongside our partners in business improvement areas, the Calgary Police Service, local social agencies and other city services.
- Pilot options to expand communication of important public notices and information through physical, visual, auditory and digital means.

Short to medium term

- Explore the potential creation of regulatory and financial investment incentives. These would be for the development of new high-density residential complexes and the conversion of office buildings to residential occupancy or other uses within Greater Downtown.
- Identify a potential site or building for a market (permanent, seasonal or weekly) that supports Greater Downtown residents and the local economy. A market can help grow small businesses, preserve food security and lend to a vibrant destination. The same idea applies to identifying potential locations for an art hub, independent bookstore, medical centre or major institutions.
- Confirm opportunities to develop or repurpose public recreation facilities and amenities within Greater Downtown and surrounding area to better meet the needs and preferences of residents.
- Support the continued development of programs and services that encourage residents to gather, celebrate, learn and play.
- Review density bonus systems in Greater Downtown to support the goals of this Plan and better complement placemaking initiatives offered by The City and its partners. Bonusing review considerations may address:
 - Enhanced energy performance beyond energy code requirements
 - The provision of non-market housing, cultural amenities or civic facilities
 - The effectiveness of the exceptional design density bonus criteria in the CR20 District in promoting architectural excellence, and developing a new set of measurable performance criteria applicable to the entire Greater Downtown, if appropriate

- Prepare a housing strategy for Greater Downtown to support and attract a diverse population through housing choice. Housing options are needed to foster accessibility and diversity among people, ages, incomes, tenures and household types, to accommodate different household compositions, lifestyles and multiple generations. For example, to attract families, units need more than one bedroom and a rethink of common and private amenity space offerings. Also, the growth in single-person households might boost the desire for co-living environments with less private space and more shared space.
- Explore the potential creation or amendment of regulatory and financial investment incentives to:
 - Increase non-market affordable housing development for individuals and families in housing need. This may be purpose-built non-market housing or integrated within market housing developments
 - Increase new purpose-built market rental housing development, co-housing and co-operative housing models to contribute to a diversity of housing choice
 - Preserve existing non-market housing and purpose-built market rental housing, especially in comprehensive developed sites
- Prepare a strategy to improve amenities at public spaces relative to usage. Amenities may include (but are not limited to) public washrooms, water bottle filling stations and wi-fi.

Medium to long term

- Continue to collaborate with school boards and educational institutions to maintain existing school sites and post-secondary campus facilities within Greater Downtown. If possible, collaborate with them to create new sites and facilities.
- Explore regulations and guidelines to mitigate the negative impacts of ambient light and noise on residential livability.
- Ensure the needs of the population are met by developing new or expanded publicly accessible, universally-designed recreation facilities, amenities, programs and services that are integrated into the community and provide core City recreation services.
- Ensure new or expanded public recreation sites are incorporated into the community within walking distance of the majority of residents and meet the principles of multi-purpose, multi-generational, quality and adaptable spaces that support active, creative and flexible year-round use.
- Work in partnership with school boards to consider innovative and alternative approaches for school sites in Greater Downtown that value play, physical activity and social connection of recreation space. Traditional school facilities have specific requirements for recreational space and building design requirements. In dense urban environments such as Greater Downtown, it is challenging to provide at-grade, outdoor recreation space to support a school facility.



Spotlight

The Barron Building

The Barron Building is an 11-storey historic building located at 610 Eighth Avenue S.W. in the Downtown Core. It was constructed between 1949 and 1951 and is an Art Moderne-style landmark. The Barron Building was one of Calgary's earliest skyscrapers and symbolically significant for solidifying the city's position as the centre of the oil industry in Alberta. The Barron Building is being revitalized to a mixed-use apartment building with street-level retail space and 93 rental suites with amenities. It was the first residential rental property on Stephen Avenue in the Downtown Core and designed for Calgary's growing technology industry workers.

Shift the image of the Downtown Core

It has long been recognized that vibrant downtowns with activity at all times of day and throughout all seasons have a healthy mix of commercial and residential development with the amenities to support both. With a better understanding of the role of placemaking in support of the economy, Calgary's Downtown Core has the potential to further invest in public realm improvements to attract more residents and businesses. A focus on the lived experience within the public realm will support the Downtown Core's continued transition into a diverse and thriving neighbourhood.

Goal

The Downtown Core neighbourhood isn't only a regional work, retail and entertainment hub — it is a neighbourhood of choice to live in.

Actions

Pilot

- Undertake pilot projects to activate publicly accessible, private open spaces in the Downtown Core such as plazas or ground-floor lobbies, in collaboration with building owners.

Short to medium term

- Undertake a project to investigate commercial, office and hotel vacancy. The research should include existing status, applicable regulations, best practices and opportunities such as initiatives, regulatory changes, programs, funding and investment opportunities to advance the:
 - Conversion of underutilized or vacant commercial, office or hotel space in Greater Downtown to other uses

- Refurbishment of underutilized or vacant commercial, office or hotel space in Greater Downtown to entice reoccupation of the space
- Deep energy retrofit of underutilized or vacant buildings to achieve significant energy savings and increase asset values
- Identify strategic public investments that directly support private investment and improve the public realm. This may include investments in the Plus 15 network to complete the system, public spaces on underutilized private or public sites, and enhanced pedestrian environments designed for programming. Identified projects should be considered high priority for future budget cycles.
- Prepare a digital corridor plan for Seventh Avenue S. between Fourth Street S.E. and First Street S.W. to create a legible, animated route for digital communication and connection to culture and events in the area.

- Transform the existing LRT corridor into an interesting and interactive place with rich visual experiences. The CTrain transit system provides access into Calgary's downtown for tens of thousands of people each day. Arriving, departing and waiting are all everyday actions common along the Seventh Avenue S. LRT corridor, and so it should be an attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment for all.

Medium to long term

- Tie any public improvement priority projects in the Downtown Core to new private development projects to ensure alignment in placemaking efforts and to explore any opportunities for public-private partnerships.

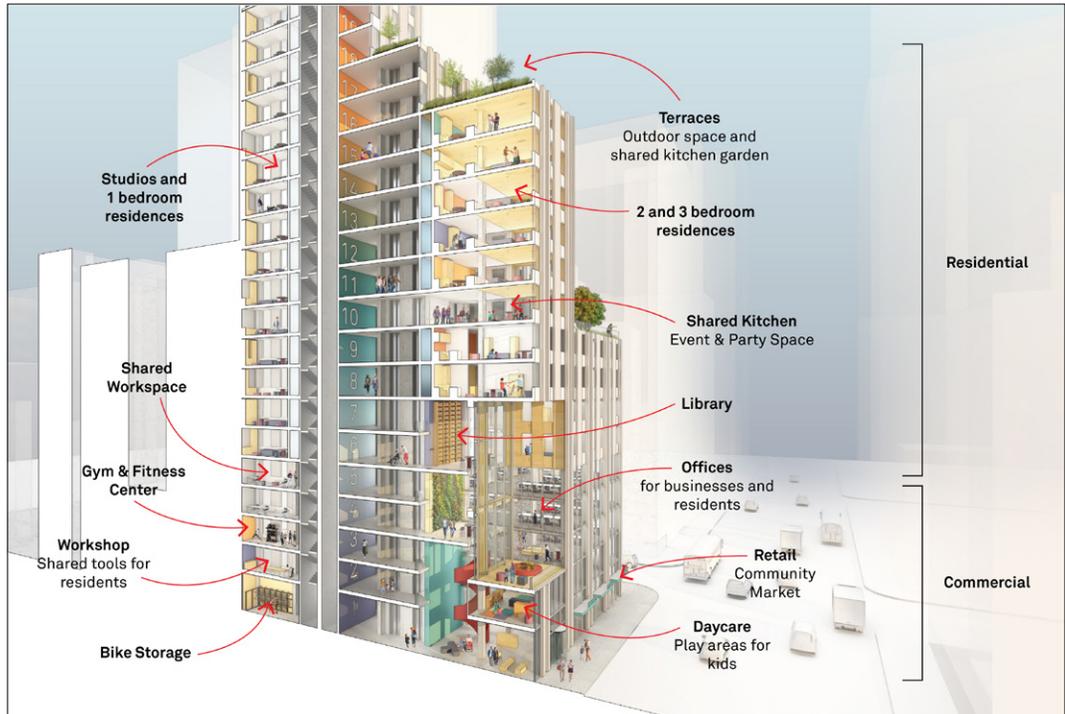


Image provided by Architecture Research Office

Spotlight

Theoretical building conversion

Calgary’s downtown has a healthy stock of aging office buildings with high vacancy rates, which are ripe for being re-purposed or re-imagined. With lower lease rates and ample space in newer buildings, many tenants have moved into newer office buildings, leaving Class B and C buildings struggling to attract tenants in a challenging market. If no targeted action is taken to address this issue, the value of these office buildings will continue to decline, threatening the health, vibrancy and reputation of our downtown. One solution is to incentivize the refurbishment and adaptive reuse of these spaces.

The image above illustrates how a vacant office building might be repurposed for a number of uses to attract new tenants and residents. To do this, there will need to be changes to both the regulatory environment and the offering of financial incentives. The City is committed to both short-term and on-going action to enable the transformation of these older buildings into new purposes or the replacement of these buildings with new products that better meet the needs of the changing downtown environment.



Spotlight

The Edison

The Edison is a 30-storey, first-of-its-kind office redevelopment situated at 150 Ninth Avenue S.W. Developed by Aspen Properties, the project is dedicated to building a solid business community by cultivating connections and providing spaces that spark creativity. This includes unique spaces and ample amenities designed to ignite new ideas and spark creativity. Today, the 446,300-square-foot tower is home to MobSquad, Clio, Chata.ai, Entuitive and other trailblazing businesses.

Strategic move 2: A green network for a healthy environment

By 2031, our vision for Greater Downtown is a vibrant urban environment whose residents and visitors benefit from an interconnected system of regional and local parks, natural spaces and river frontage connected by high-quality people-focused streets (such as Main Streets). The resulting benefits being local beautification, mental and physical wellness, and carbon reduction.



Addressing climate

Nature is vital in the fight against climate change. Living greenery absorbs carbon dioxide and other pollution from the atmosphere, reduces the “urban heat island” effect, helps manage stormwater and provides habitat to support biodiversity including pollinator species. The changing climate is impacting the condition and stability of our waterways, affecting water quality and increasing the risk of flooding and drought. Healthy waterways are vital for healthy communities, quality of life and vibrant economies.

How we get there

Enhance and expand public green spaces and connections in the downtown. Support street trees, green roofs, parks, gardens and other green infrastructure planted with regionally appropriate climate-adapted vegetation. Find opportunities to naturalize open spaces. Increase permeable surfaces and treat stormwater as a valuable resource. Consider how predicted changes in the climate will affect our waterways and their ecosystems in the future. Account for climate change in land-use planning and management of our waterways to maximize resilience.

Map 3: Green network map



Legend

- Green Network
- Potential Green Network
- Confirmed Main Street
- Potential Main Street
- Potential location for Open Space Acquisition
- Existing Parks/Plaza

The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

As significant pieces of natural infrastructure, the Bow and Elbow River corridors provide tremendous ecological value – they help manage stormwater and flood risk, and they provide habitat that supports biodiversity. These riverfronts are also key to Greater Downtown’s sense of place and are welcoming places for visitors.

By 2031, the natural characteristics of our Bow and Elbow river corridors will be vibrant natural spaces that are well-used and well-maintained. The river corridors will create better connection with the rest of Greater Downtown – the Bow River corridor connected to Stephen Avenue and the Elbow River corridor connected to the 13 Avenue S. Greenway and 17 Avenue S.

By 2031, anyone who spends time in Greater Downtown will easily be able to connect with nature — whether it be along a riverfront, in a park or along a landscaped street. The resulting benefits being local beautification, mental and physical wellness and carbon reduction.

Plan, expand and connect to the green network

The green network is a system of parks, natural spaces and river frontage connected by high-quality, pedestrian-enhanced streets that include trees and additional high-quality landscaping treatments. Streets within the green network will provide an opportunity for walking and wheeling, placing an emphasis on pedestrian safety, quality of landscaping, recreation and the natural qualities of the street. This Plan will build on the success of the 13 Avenue S. Greenway project and the Bow River riverfront improvements to develop a green network that connects Greater Downtown communities to one another and to the Bow and Elbow Rivers.

Goal

Anyone living, working or visiting Greater Downtown can experience nature through the green network.

Actions

Pilot:

- Pilot the use of an innovative, multi-functional stormwater management system on a portion of the green network. This will allow testing of a new technology that better holds water and rewaters from the roots up. Consider applying the findings to further multi-functional stormwater strategies.
- Identify spaces along streets, in plazas, or on buildings that would be good places to create pollinator-, butterfly- or bird-friendly gardens.
- Pilot local placemaking initiatives in and around Courthouse Park.

Short to medium term

- Replace the Centre City Public Realm Enhancements Plan for the green network and other public realm investments in Greater Downtown. This strategy should identify specific open space improvements as well as public realm improvements within road rights-of-way identified on Map 3. Infrastructure investments proposed within the green network should focus on enhancing the pedestrian experience through landscaping that brings people closer to nature and makes them feel removed from traffic on the roadway.
- Acquire additional open space in the Beltline, Downtown West and other locations as opportunities arise. Areas of higher need have been identified on Map 3. Locations outside these higher priority areas may also be considered for acquisition on a case-by-case basis. The acquisition of new open space in Greater Downtown should be carried out by:
 - Requiring municipal reserve dedication, wherever it is owing, with highest priority given to land dedication

- Using existing land owned by The City, either by converting land directly to a park or disposing of land and using the funds to purchase park spaces in areas of need
- Converting underutilized road rights-of-way into open space where appropriate
- Land purchase
- Implement enhancements to road rights-of-way within the green network, as shown on Map 3, including landscaping and pedestrian amenities that will better connect people to nature. These streets will have a strong green environment with high-quality landscaping, amenities supporting walking and wheeling, and recreational opportunities. Actions include:
 - Expand the 13 Avenue S. Greenway between 14 Street S.W. and the Elbow River
 - Support the Riverwalk extension south along the Elbow River in east Victoria Park, led by the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC)
 - Support the development of the Open Space Framework as identified in the **Rivers District Master Plan** led by the CMLC
 - Plan for, fund and develop green streets that run north-south from the Bow River to 17 Avenue S. and have distinct connections to Stephen Avenue

Medium to long term

- Ensure dedicated space within road rights-of-way in the green network, as shown on Map 3, receives enhanced tree planting and landscaping beyond typical standards, including supporting sustainable planting infrastructure (e.g., double row of trees, understory plantings, tree trenches, increased soil volumes, soil cells and passive irrigation).



Spotlight

13 Avenue Heritage Greenway

The 13 Avenue Heritage Greenway (The Greenway) combines a rich collection of historic buildings with a mix of heritage homes, high-rise apartments and condominiums, parks, institutions and commercial districts in the community of Beltline. It runs along 13 Avenue S. from Macleod Trail S.E. to 17 Street S.W. passing through the Beltline neighbourhood. This is a key connection for the green network because it prioritizes pedestrians and enhances the connection between the Bow and the Elbow Rivers.

The Greenway sets a framework for the shaping of a unique and vibrant public realm along a residential street. It is a perfect example of a street retrofitting to create a beautiful green corridor and public amenity space within

the existing right-of-way. The Greenway encompasses 20 full blocks and involves the reduction of automobile lanes and street parking to provide for a separated pedestrian and multi-use pathway. The design is punctuated by “nodes” providing opportunities for interpretive features and seating. The first five blocks of The Greenway were completed in 2012 by multiple departments from The City working collaboratively, with the remaining blocks to be completed as funding becomes available. The capital investment in public realm has helped to attract private developments along the corridor over the years and benefited the Beltline neighbourhood as a whole.

Protect, maintain and grow the tree canopy

The urban forest provides many benefits to Calgarians. For some, it is their first glimpse of nature as they leave their front door, including beautification, feelings of general well-being, provision of habitat, carbon sequestration, cooling and shade.

The **Municipal Development Plan** outlines a citywide urban forest canopy target of 14–20 per cent by the year 2069 and to establish specific targets for local areas. Not every community is expected to be exactly the same. To be equitable, all communities will strive to increase tree canopy — some higher and some lower than the average. To achieve these targets in Greater Downtown, a focus needs to be placed on sustainably planting, maintaining and protecting trees both on private and public land. The canopy coverage for Greater Downtown was 9.10 per cent as of 2020. In order to achieve the citywide target, the tree canopy in the Greater Downtown needs to increase. Existing trees should be retained whenever possible, maintained appropriately and new trees planted in ways that are sustainable for a downtown setting.

Goal

Trees and other landscaping elements are sustainably maximized in the public realm and on private sites, mitigating the effects of the urban heat island effect, providing shelter from weather and enhancing quality of life.

Actions

Short to medium term

- Establish a target of 10 per cent tree canopy coverage in Greater Downtown by 2031, with a longer-term goal of 12 per cent tree canopy coverage by 2069.
- Determine optimal locations for tree planting, prepare a planting strategy that identifies elements such as underground utilities, street width, soil volume and microclimate conditions such as access to sunlight.

Medium to long term

- Increase the canopy through the following initiatives:
 - Protect existing trees on private and public lands wherever possible
 - Maximize the tree canopy in all new developments by protecting existing trees on private and public lands, planting boulevard trees and planting tree clusters in open areas and amenity spaces with consideration for the long-term survival of the trees
 - Provide sufficient soil volume and composition, water and nutrients to boulevard trees in all new developments. This will be achieved by prioritizing tree plantings within right-of-way designs and investment in sustainable tree planting infrastructure

- Re-evaluate the allocation of space within road rights-of-way to provide dedicated space for trees. Additional space may be required above and below grade for enhanced levels of planting such as double rows of trees and understory plantings, particularly within the green network
- Plan for and invest in improved infrastructure for soil volumes, soil quality and watering
- Plan for anticipated changes in climatic conditions when selecting tree species

“Trees are contagious; as soon as one neighborhood or street is planted, citizen pressure builds up for action from the next street.”

— MDP, Section 3.2, p. 96



Spotlight

Snowtember

In September 2014, an unprecedented snowstorm brought significant damage to Calgary's urban forest and became known as "SNOWTEMBER" and "TREEMAGEDON." The weight of the wet snow on full-foliage trees led to the loss of entire trees and a high number of fallen and hanging branches throughout Calgary. As the cleanup progressed across the city, the impact was seen in a significant reduction of the overall tree canopy. Greater Downtown saw its canopy reduced from 8.59 per cent in 2012 to 8.04 per cent in 2015. With a substantial investment from Council, Re-tree YYC was able to restore the health of remaining trees, replant lost canopy and improve the resiliency of the urban forest on both public and private land. A focus on maintenance and sustainable planting practices has resulted in a healthy canopy that is expected to continue to grow.

Connect to and celebrate the rivers

The City is responsible for ensuring Calgary's natural river systems maintain their critical role in contributing to the ecological network within the city, as well as maintaining biodiversity and future water security for Calgary and the region. The ecological health of the rivers and adjacent riparian areas must be the first consideration when planning and designing within or along the edges of the rivers.

Natural assets are better able to self-adapt to changes to climate than hard infrastructure. Protecting and maximizing the use of these natural assets can offset costly investments and efficiently manage the risk of increasingly intense storms and flooding. Since the 2013 flood, The City has completed major flood mitigation in Calgary that has helped reduce our flood risk by about 50 per cent. Continued investment in flood mitigation and resiliency will be critical to ensure the vibrancy of Greater Downtown.

The following projects will contribute to downtown flood resilience:

- Downtown barrier (estimated completion 2023 — extends from Eau Claire Plaza to Edmonton Trail/ Reconciliation Bridge)
- Springbank Off-stream Reservoir (Province of Alberta project)
- Province of Alberta–TransAlta agreement on the Bow River
- Future Province of Alberta Bow River Reservoir Option
- The recently completed Glenmore Gates (2020), which provides significant flood resilience and is able to mitigate smaller floods on the Elbow River

Goal

Greater Downtown is well connected to the Bow and Elbow River corridors which retain their ecological function and natural characteristics while providing places of activity and enjoyment for everyone.

Actions

Short to medium term

- Use funding from the Riparian Action Program to support a tree-planting and naturalization program within riparian areas. This will strengthen ecological connectivity, enable plant succession, foster a sustainable urban forest, and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

- Protect and enhance the overall quality of the rivers, including fish habitat, update the Land Use Bylaw to maintain sunlight penetration in the Bow River open space west of Eighth Street S.W.
- Consider improvements incorporating flood mitigation where necessary, enhanced walking and wheeling infrastructure, and ecological restoration for the Bow River riverfront west of 10 Street S.W. and south along the Elbow River from the confluence.

Medium to long term

- Continue naturalization efforts within Prince's Island Park so it continues to function as a healthy riparian environment while being a great space for recreational activities. The natural characteristics of Prince's Island Park should continue to be its defining feature. Ancillary uses within the park should be recognized as secondary to the park's primary, natural function.
- Enhance the open space along the rivers and at the confluence of the rivers to celebrate Indigenous history. Work with the First Nations and Calgary Stampede to develop ways for Indigenous perspectives on the value of the rivers to be shared. Explore how the landscape can be better incorporated within Greater Downtown.

- Enhance pedestrian connections from: downtown to the Bow River; and Beltline to the Elbow River in alignment with direction in the following sections:
 - Rethink the road rights-of-way
 - Improve connectivity between destinations
 - Consider streets as places continue to support and advocate for the priority protection of environmentally significant areas in Greater Downtown, in accordance with the **Municipal Development Plan**.
- Improve flood resiliency by supporting green stormwater infrastructure projects, which increase the ability of the land to absorb water.
- Continue to work with developers, the business community and residents on flood mitigation and related resiliency measures in Greater Downtown.
- Continue working with developers and project teams to address flood resilience of major infrastructure and development in the downtown area, such as the Greenline, BMO Centre, Calgary Event Centre and new bridges in the area.
- Continue working with Calgary's floodplain communities to enhance public education and awareness.



Spotlight

“Urban renewal” of the 1960s and 1970s

Today, one of the best components of Calgary's downtown is considered to be direct access to the river for recreation and play. But Calgary only has this access because we continually resisted best practices of the urban renewal era of the 1960s and 1970s. The 1964 Downtown Redevelopment Plan proposed to move the railway to the south bank of the Bow River and build a parallel eight-lane parkway — can you imagine? The project was successfully fought by the Local Council of Women, led by Ruth Gorman, and supported by Alderman Jack Leslie. More proposals followed — a 1965 plan to extend Bow Trail through Chinatown, a 12-lane parkway on the Bow, and a 1967 plan to rebuild Centre Street Bridge to better connect to Bow Trail. But each time Calgarians, recognizing the importance of our rivers, came together to successfully stop the plans of “urban renewal.”

Be flexible and accommodating in design and use

Greater Downtown has some of the most iconic regional parks in the city such as Prince's Island Park, St. Patrick's Island and Central Memorial Park. It also has several well-designed and well-used local-serving parks such as Thomson Family Park and Haultain Park. Since the 2007 **Centre City Plan** came into effect, there has been significant investment in improving public parks in Greater Downtown to meet the needs of an ever-growing population. This strategy of upgrading existing parks to enable them to be great gathering places must continue. It should be complemented with an investment strategy aimed at acquiring new land for public park use. It is also important to include privately owned, publicly accessible open spaces so they can be regarded as a part of the open space network. Since not all parks can be everything to everyone, it is important to ensure there is a diverse mix of programming and amenities in Greater Downtown park system as a whole, so that the parks can continue to meet the needs of diverse populations.

Goal

Develop a new approach to using spaces to meet the needs of park users.

Actions

Pilot

- Work with and support private landowners and developers to pilot the use of vacant lots as temporary publicly accessible open spaces.
- Pilot the use of modular park infrastructure that allows a variety of configurations to be transported to underutilized locations.
- Undertake a pilot to work with the eight First Nations and urban Indigenous population to explore the inclusion of amenities within downtown parks that meet their specific needs, including the ability to practice ceremony, collect plants and share stories/perspectives.

Short to medium term

- Develop an events strategy aimed at ensuring festivals and events have access to spaces that complement their programming. Recognize that some parks in Greater Downtown are primarily designed for the local population and, as such, certain types of events may not be appropriate.
- Greater Downtown has a number of privately owned, publicly accessible spaces that can play a role in enhancing public park access. However, these spaces need better identification and wayfinding. A solution is to implement a project to inventory and map privately owned, publicly accessible spaces in Greater Downtown and incorporate them into a broader branding and wayfinding initiative.

- Develop a new park within The City-owned site of Historic Fire Hall #2 at Macleod Trail and Park Road S.E.
- Develop an inclusive playground in an existing or new park space within Greater Downtown in support of the Inclusive Play Spaces Implementation Plan.

Medium to long term

- Continue to upgrade parks to increase the capacity of those spaces and ensure that amenities continue to meet the diverse needs of citizens. Parks that should be enhanced include, but are not limited to:
 - Sien Lok Park
 - Humpy Hollow Park
 - Olympic Plaza
 - Beaulieu Gardens
 - Tomkins Park
 - Shaw Millennium Park
- Ensure universal accessibility is considered in any new park development and redevelopment.
- Support the provision of publicly accessible, private open space adjacent to the green network.
- Support the provision of commercial enterprise in parks where it is compatible with the main function of the open space, and allowable within relevant legislation.
- Collaborate with the school boards to accommodate public access to sports fields and other open spaces on school sites.



Glenbow Archives, A-2864-5807a

Spotlight

Prince's Island Park

Prince's Island, and the surrounding riverbank area, was first developed during the 1880s by Peter Prince of the Eau Claire Sawmill Co. and the Calgary Water Power Company. The island served to protect log booms in the river and did not see a great deal of traffic. It functioned more as a space than a place.

William Pearce had proposed the island be used as a park back in 1910. The City purchased the island in 1947 and only got as far as labeling it a regional park of special significance in its 1966 **Downtown Master Plan**. The Calgary Beautification Association, a citizen led advocacy group, wasted no time from there as they pushed for the development of Prince's Island Park as their first project. They commissioned an independent study of Prince's Island and the Bow River banks to determine its feasibility for park development. In 1967, The City hired an architectural firm to draw up a master plan for the park's development, and Prince's Island opened to the public in 1970.

Leverage green infrastructure to create year-round vibrancy

Competition for funding dollars within the municipal environment has increased dramatically. Money allocated to parks must be distributed to maintain more than 10,000 hectares of parkland and natural areas; 1,000 kilometres of pathways; 1,100 playgrounds; 475 soccer fields and 430 baseball diamonds. Traditional cost-saving strategies including deferring maintenance in the short term, just compounds maintenance issues and undermines the ability of The City to provide programs and deliver new park spaces. To reach the goal of growing green infrastructure in Greater Downtown, The City must consider alternative solutions to fund growth and maintenance of the green network in Greater Downtown, such as:

- Use The City's park space to generate revenue which can be put back into programming and public improvements.
- Partner with other organizations to deliver some programs and/or maintenance.
- Create opportunities for organizations and individuals to invest in public spaces.

Goal

Green infrastructure assets in Greater Downtown are well maintained and used to grow the green network.

Actions

Short to medium term

- Conduct a comprehensive open space inventory and analysis of public, private and corporate plazas and open spaces in the downtown.

Medium to long term

- Investigate opportunities to deliver park activation and operational efficiencies in downtown parks, including fee-based and revenue-generating programs.
- Invite business areas to deliver new parks and open spaces along with prioritized investment in public green infrastructure.
- Work collaboratively with private landowners to deliver increased programming on corporate plazas.



Spotlight

Bryant Park, New York

The State of New York allows any municipality to establish a business improvement district “to restore or promote business activity by building and maintaining improvements, including parks, landscaping, and transportation” (Rizzo, 2015). “The Bryant Park Corporation (BPC) is a not-for-profit, private management company founded in 1980 to renovate and operate Bryant Park in New York City” (Corporation, 2021). “The BPC collects about \$1 million annually from nearby property owners; this \$1 million makes up only a small portion of the Bryant Park Corporation’s annual \$12 million budget for Bryant Park” (Rizzo, 2015).

The BPC “was established to restore historic Bryant Park, which had suffered a severe decline in conditions in the 1970s. A 15-year agreement was signed in 1988, entrusting management and improvements to BPC. The park reopened in 1992 after four years of renovation with a budget six times higher than under prior city management. It is the largest effort in the nation to apply private management backed by private funding to a public park (Corporation, 2021).”

Strategic move 3: Streets for people

By 2031, our vision for Greater Downtown is a streets network and Plus 15 network that provides lively, people-focused spaces that contribute to creating vibrancy and activity by improving the environment and experience for residents, workers and visitors to the area.



Addressing climate

A multi-modal transportation network that is accessible and equitable is vital to meeting Calgary's climate goals. A renewed focus on active travel modes and continued investment in transit and micromobility options will help reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and could provide space to support biodiversity.

How we get there

Invest in infrastructure that supports active modes and micromobility choices, improving connectivity across Greater Downtown. Increase permeable surfaces and incorporate green infrastructure such as trees, rain gardens, and bioswales

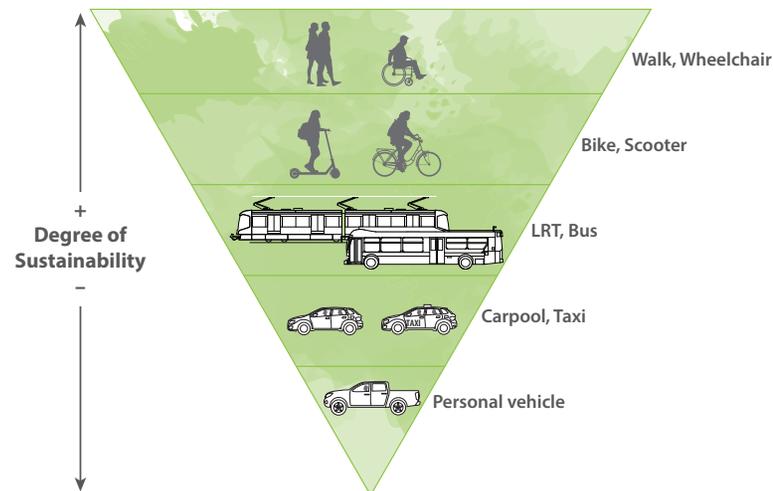
Greater Downtown streets network and the Plus 15 network are assets within the overall transportation network that can be leveraged to achieve spaces and places for people. Street space can be adapted to create an environment for people to congregate and stay downtown. By reallocating space for private uses — like patios and outdoor spaces — and strengthening active modes and micromobility choices there will be more welcoming and accessible options to attract and keep people in the downtown.

The existing streets network was built and operated to move people, goods and services in and out of Greater Downtown safely and efficiently. The streets network connects to regional routes along Bow Trail S.W., Macleod Trail S.E. and Memorial Drive N.W., with a strategic connection to Crowchild Trail N.W. Maintaining these connections into downtown is important however, trips moving through downtown will be given less priority over the movement of people in and around Greater Downtown.

Cities around the world are realizing a multitude of economic and health benefits by investing in active modes, micromobility, and transit. Transit provides city-wide access to Downtown, regional pathways stretch along the riverbanks and underpasses, and bridges and on-street mobility tracks connect walkers and wheelers to the rest of the inner city. Investment in the Green Line LRT will also provide additional opportunities to create people-focused places and spaces.

The transportation network must reflect the priorities of the Calgary Transportation Plan’s sustainability triangle (Figure 9). Tools and resources identified within this Plan will help us move towards a vision of a transportation network that is safe, efficient, and comfortable for all users and all mobility choices. “Increased walking and wheeling activity will occur primarily in Greater Downtown, Activity Centres, and Main Streets. Homes, jobs, services, and amenities will be located in close proximity to each other in these locations. Therefore, the needs of Calgarians who walk and wheel should be given the highest priority in Greater Downtown, Activity Centres, and Main Streets.” - **Municipal Development Plan.**

Figure 9: The transportation sustainability triangle



Invest in a multimodal transportation network

Streets connect our city and allow for the movement of people, goods, and services throughout Calgary. They provide critical access for emergency services, and space for underground and overhead utilities, for on-street parking, and facilitate efficient services delivery such as Transit.

Goal

Continued investment in active modes and micromobility choices, improve connectivity to transit, and ensure that networks are safe, reliable and efficient for everyone.

Actions

Short to medium term

- Prepare a multimodal transportation strategy for Greater Downtown that identifies and prioritizes networks across all modes. Update **Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan** to include this prioritized network.
- Continue to expand the cycling network in Greater Downtown and improve connectivity with existing off-street pathways, on-street bikeways and regional pathways, in line with the 5A network as shown in the Calgary Transportation Plan (MDP Volume 3).

Medium to long term

- Give pedestrians the highest priority in the planning, design, operation and maintenance of transportation infrastructure. For the pedestrian corridors identified in the multimodal transportation strategy for Greater Downtown, emphasize accommodation of accessibility needs for people with disabilities.
- Continue to update this Plan to align with the Calgary Transportation Plan (MDP Volume 3), Green Line design work studies and any recommendations/outcomes from the bylaw setback review. In addition, consider the following:
 - The role, function, standards and potential interim uses for road rights-of-way with a focus on streets that have road rights-of-way setbacks
 - Integrate public transit operations with other forms of mobility
 - Optimize existing infrastructure to accommodate alternative and future mobility



Spotlight

Curitiba, Brazil

Curitiba, Brazil, has one of the most effective and well-used transit systems in the world which contributes significantly to the city's livability. Its Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system is designed like a subway system and features dedicated travel lanes that are unimpeded by traffic signals or congestion. Bus stations are designed with fare collection prior to boarding and dedicated queues for rapid loading and unloading. All located above ground, this results in reliable, low-cost service paired with a convenient, comfortable and attractive riding experience. Curitiba's BRT system moves about 70 per cent of Curitiba's commuters, resulting in congestion-free streets and pollution-free air in a city of 2.2 million people.

Re-envisioning street space and public rights-of-way

The streets network comprises upwards of 22 per cent of the total space within Greater Downtown and includes roadways, sidewalks, and public laneways. This Plan recognizes the opportunity to leverage streets to create spaces and places for people, to promote activity and encourage residents, workers and visitors to take part in urban life in the area. This Plan proposes using the street space to improve or expand the public realm and promotes the investment of accessible and equitable infrastructure that support active modes and micromobility choice.

Goal

Initiatives that support active modes and micromobility choices and the use of streets to create space to improve the public realm and vibrancy of Greater Downtown are prioritized.

Actions

Pilot

- Conduct pilot projects for innovative uses within the roadway zone.
 - Examples include partial/full closure of streets to vehicles in East Village for use of the space to celebrate the river and draw people to the area
- Review speed and collision data in residential neighbourhoods within Greater Downtown and pilot traffic-calming measures where issues exist.

Medium to long term

- Redesign road rights-of-way to provide space for natural infrastructure including trees, other planting and green stormwater management features that will adapt to a changing climate.
- Dedicate space for trees within all boulevards during design and redevelopment. Maximize their long-term success through measures that may include appropriate soil composition and volumes, and planting multiple trees and companion plantings in continuous trenches. On high pedestrian movement streets, additional space may be required for enhanced levels of planting.
- Determine the impacts of mobility-as-a-service technologies as well as transportation network companies on short-stay and delivery parking demand and amend the Calgary Parking Policies if necessary.



Spotlight

Adaptive roadways program

The COVID-19 outbreak of 2020 resulted in the closure of many public facilities and places of work. The City of Calgary created a response team to use temporary materials to repurpose street space normally used by vehicles. The repurposing created additional capacity for people to walk, cycle and connect with one another in safe ways. In a parallel effort, roadways were also opened to pedestrians to allow restaurants and other businesses to use sidewalk space for new patios and waiting areas in response to interior occupancy limits. The adaptive roadways program represents an opportunity to be flexible with the use of our Greater Downtown roadways. Which promotes, non-motorized uses in support of local residents and businesses.

Improve connectivity throughout Greater Downtown

The unique neighbourhoods of Greater Downtown function as distinct parts of a larger community. Regional destinations, institutions and civic amenities span multiple neighbourhoods and attract visitors from across the city. Residents of Greater Downtown, other inner-city communities and Calgary overall can benefit from better connectivity — not only between the neighbourhoods of Greater Downtown, but also to the rest of the city. We will plan and invest in a network of streets that prioritize the pedestrian experience. They will have ample space to allow people to move between destinations or linger and connect with others or the environment.

Goal

Connectivity between key destinations within Greater Downtown provides more opportunities for physical activity and accessibility. Walking and wheeling will be prioritized for all ages and abilities.

Actions

Short to medium term

- Transform 11 Street S.W., between the Bow River and 17 Avenue S.W., into a street that accommodates pedestrian space for enjoyment and acts as a gathering place for uniquely scaled events. Key design strategies may include:
 - Reviewing the at-grade freight rail corridor crossing at 11 Street S.W. to improve active mobility options
 - Providing a separated cycle facility with mobility-friendly intersections

- Providing sidewalks that are appropriately scaled to various activities and movement
- Protecting the line assignment for street trees on at least one side of 11 Street S.W.
- Work with Main Streets to prepare a streetscape master plan for 14 Street S.W. to improve connectivity for all modes along the street, and between the street and the Bow River and adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Review pedestrian crossings of streets with more than two lanes in the Downtown West and Downtown Core neighbourhoods. Work within the Neighbourhood Streets Policy and pilot innovative solutions to improve the pedestrian experience across these roads.

Medium to long term

- Pursue a transportation corridor linking YYC Calgary Airport, Downtown Calgary and Banff. Investigate a station location in Greater Downtown.
- Continue to improve north-south underpasses to increase pedestrian comfort and safety under the freight rail corridor.

- The City of Calgary is in the unique situation of owning road rights-of-way and parcels adjacent to the Bow River and westbound Fourth Avenue S.W./Bow Trail S.W. between Ninth Street S.W. and Bow Trail S.W. Continue to explore options for roadway realignment in this area to:
 - Improve the Bow River promenade and pathway system
 - Create better connection to the edge of the Bow River
 - Consolidate fragmented parcels

Calgarians want safe and great spaces for walking and wheeling so they can enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of those activities.

— One Calgary, Sidewalks & Pathways.



Spotlight

12 Avenue S. mobility track

The 12 Avenue S. mobility track (Phase 1) was constructed in 2014 as part of the Council-approved downtown cycle track pilot project. Council approved to make the mobility tracks permanent in December 2016. The next phases of the 12 Avenue S. mobility track are currently under construction. Phase 1 spanned from Olympic Way/Fourth Street S.E. in the east to 11 Avenue S.W. in the west. Phase 2, built in 2019, extended the facility to the west to 15 Street S.W. Phase 3, due to be constructed in 2021, further extends the mobility track to the west to 10 Avenue S.W. via 19 Street S.W. The completed facility will connect multiple north-south mobility track routes and pathways to key destinations and transit facilities including, but not limited to:

- Fourth Street S.E. into East Village and to the future Green Line station
- Second Street S.W. to the Elbow River Pathway
- Fifth Street S.W. to Eau Claire

- 11 Street S.W. to the Bow River Pathway
- 15 Street S.W. to Sunalta LRT
- Mobility track network in east Victoria Park

In the future, The City plans to expand the mobility track network to the east, providing a much-needed connection to the upcoming Culture + Entertainment District under development in east Victoria Park, and further into the Inglewood/Ramsay neighbourhoods.

This premier east-west mobility track will continue to connect residents and visitors to tourist destinations, events centres and the natural parks system that showcases all Greater Downtown has to offer.

Invest in the public realm

Calgary has no shortage of great destinations, but the spaces we use to move between them needs to be improved. High land values limit the ability to provide cost-effective public spaces, meaning we need to make the most of what we have including our streets, sidewalks, corner plazas and setbacks. Over the years, a fragmented approach to integrating development with the public realm has prevented Greater Downtown from achieving a strong sense of place and vibrancy. By making spaces more comfortable and livable along important corridors, streets become more than just places of transition. Public realm improvements are critical to foster social interaction and economic well-being for residents, workers and visitors. Therefore, over the next 10 years, investment in design and infrastructure in Greater Downtown is necessary.

Goal

The public realm in Greater Downtown invites people to wander, explore and linger while enjoying their daily lives.

Actions

Pilot

- Test, phase and fund streetscape improvements for streets with existing streetscape master plans such as Eighth Street S.W. and Stephen Avenue S.
- Use the public realm on Second Street S.W. to pilot semi-permanent and temporary installations, such as retail, food and public art.
- Pilot a variety of seating options on pedestrian-priority streets that allow people to spend time together.

Short to medium term

- Explore the creation of citizen zones. By routing traffic around multi-block areas to limit vehicle traffic, more space can be converted into greener and pedestrian-friendly areas for citizens (inspired by Barcelona's Superblock).
- Facilitate investment in design and infrastructure through master plans, public realm plans or placemaking strategies. Invest in the preparation of a plan and/or strategy for Greater Downtown that sets high-level concepts and priorities for public realm improvements. Any plan and/or strategy should have an implementation plan that is reviewed every budget cycle.
 - A public realm strategy should identify priority streets for public realm improvements based on factors such as:
 - Missing links in the network
 - The 5A network
 - The green network
 - Connectivity to open space
 - Connectivity to surrounding neighbourhoods and destinations
 - Land-use changes
 - Cultural and entertainment opportunities

- A public realm implementation plan should identify opportunities for public realm improvements based on factors such as:
 - Lifecycle work (deteriorating sidewalks, safety)
 - Active development projects
 - Major infrastructure projects
 - Programming
- Identify, prioritize and construct missing sidewalk links in Greater Downtown. Missing links will be prioritized based on the following criteria:
 - A high pedestrian movement street
 - Multi-modal connection
 - A transit stop location

Medium to long term

- Design for comfortable micro-climates with protection from wind, cold and rain. Consider solutions that allow for flexible use and seasonal adaptation.
- Design for pedestrian-first at intersections along pedestrian-prioritized corridors. Identify opportunities to adjust signal timing, shorten crossing distances and/or other experimental strategies.
- As infrastructure is redesigned or upgraded along high pedestrian movement streets, look for opportunities to incorporate electricity and/or water hook-ups to accommodate events and activities along the street.



Spotlight

Copenhagen, Denmark

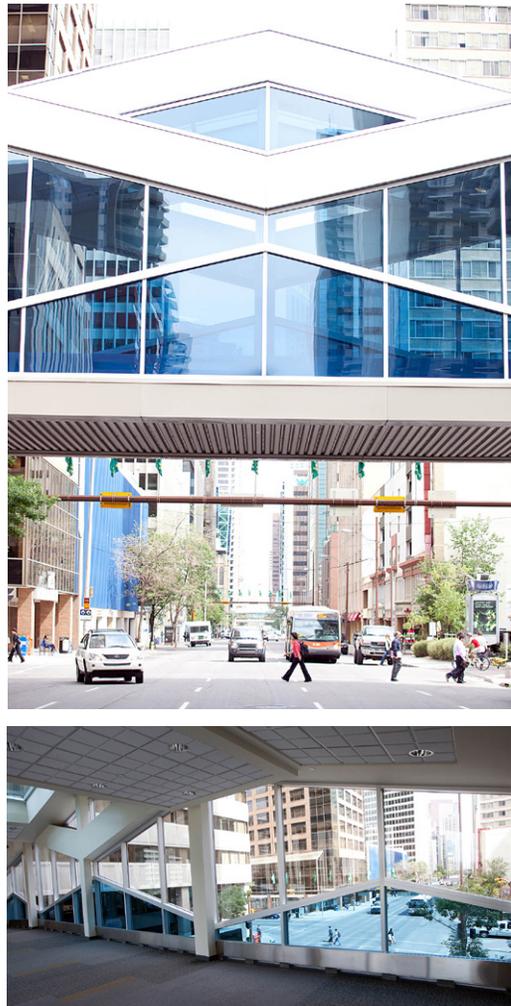
In 1962, Strøget, a street in Copenhagen, Denmark, was dirty, noisy and clogged with cars. By banning cars and pedestrianizing the route, Copenhagen created one of the longest and most popular shopping streets in the world. Beloved by both locals and tourists, at peak times over 120,000 people visit in a day to eat, shop and enjoy vibrant public life. The street remains popular for outdoor activity throughout the cold winter months. Strøget's success led Copenhagen to place much greater emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle access to the city, greatly improving livability. The initiative has been globally influential as well, and helped pushed cities around the world to create their own pedestrian streets.

“The street is the river of life of the city. They come to these places not to escape but to partake of it.”

— William H. Whyte

Support the Plus 15 network

Since the construction of the first Plus 15 in 1969, the network has grown to 86 bridges and over 16 kilometres of elevated, weather-protected walkways in Calgary's downtown. The network is a unique part of Calgary's downtown landscape and connects people to home, work, amenities, services and recreation. The Plus 15 network continues to provide Calgary with a competitive advantage over other cities and downtowns. It supports business and services, the real estate sector and the downtown economy, by enabling unimpeded mass movement of people, goods, and services around the Downtown Core.



The Plus 15 network is an identifiable asset for Calgary's Downtown Core with the following benefits:

- Creates a secondary pedestrian network necessary to move large volumes of people during the morning, lunchtime and afternoon peak periods within the Downtown Core.
- Supports connections from Arts Commons and the Glenbow Museum to underground parking in adjacent buildings.
- Has become a popular destination for different artistic endeavours like photography and sketching, due to its unique views.
- Is a space that allows people to connect and interact with one another.
- Attracts walkers and wheelers for exercise and recreation year-round.

This Plan recognizes several opportunities to grow and enhance the Plus 15 network, including adding missing links to the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre, existing and future hotels and expanding the network with links to the new Green Line LRT. This Plan further recognizes the Plus 15 network as an asset that can support continued economic and business growth within Greater Downtown. It identifies the need to maintain and operate the Plus 15 network. There is the opportunity for innovative uses within the network space to advance, connect and integrate to streets level and artistic expression.

Goal

The Plus 15 network is a valuable part of the pedestrian network in the Downtown Core. It provides safe and attractive connections to destinations as well as utilizes this connective space to create unique experiences for users.

Actions

Pilot

- Pilot placemaking opportunities and ways to animate the Plus 15 network, making it a destination.

Short to medium term

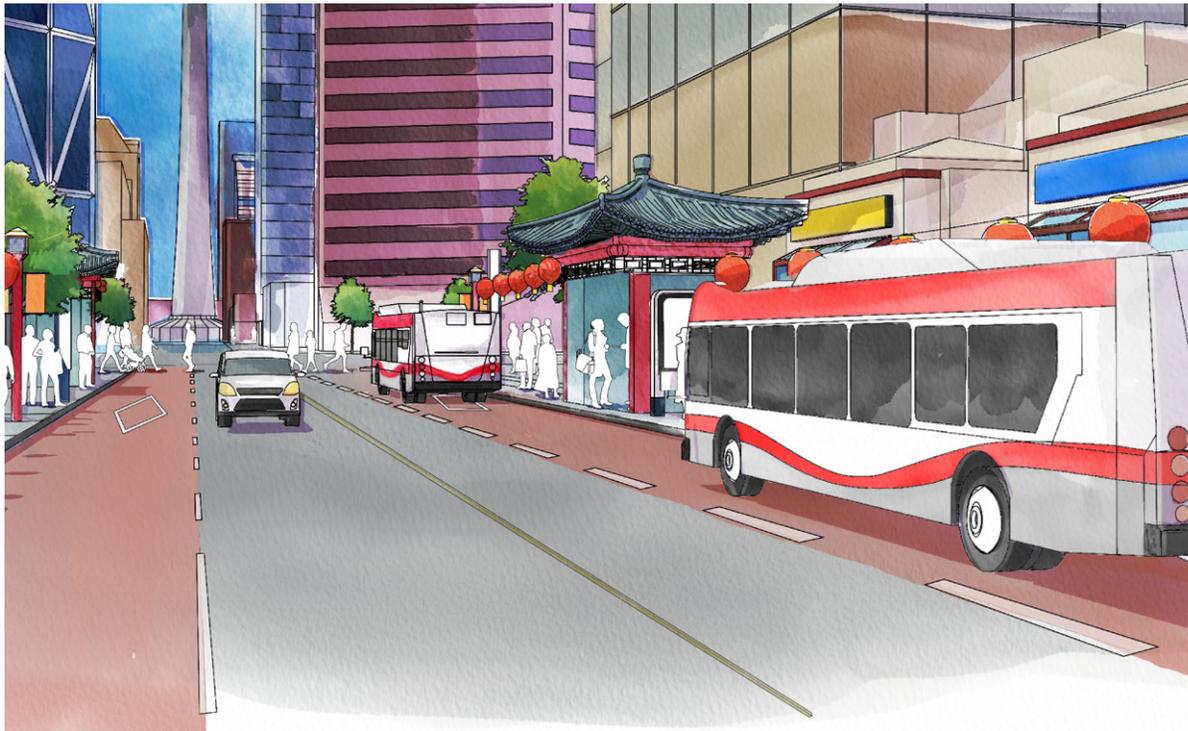
- Pursue opportunities to proactively construct missing Plus 15 network links, as identified in the Plus 15 Network Study, 2019.
- Modernize wayfinding so street-level access points are easy to identify and navigation within the Plus 15 network is improved.

Medium to long term

- Integrate the Plus 15 network with LRT stations and enhance street-level entrances that connect to transit hubs.
- Enhance accessibility within the Plus 15 network so it can be used by citizens of all ages and abilities.

Strategic move 4: Transit for all

By 2031, our vision for Greater Downtown is for transit to be the preferred mobility choice for the majority of residents, employees and visitors to Greater Downtown accounting for 60 per cent of all peak-period trips.



Addressing climate

High-quality public transit can protect public and environmental health by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. Shifting people out of cars and onto transit can free up space for green infrastructure and other land uses that support a resilient environment.

How we get there

Make transit the quickest, safest, most convenient and most cost-effective way to travel to and through downtown. Enable safe and secure active transportation as “the last mile” of the public transit system by providing multiple options, routes and secure parking for wheeled mobility devices.

Expand and enhance transit service

Transit routes are a critical element of a well-connected mobility network. Transit service complements great neighbourhoods — it provides an important mobility option and connects people to places within their community and the city. Dedicating space for transit routes to reduce trip times and operational costs while increasing service reliability will be key.

Goal

Transit complements active modes in Greater Downtown by providing convenient and attractive connections.

Actions

Short to medium term

- Identify areas where there may be gaps in transit service.
- Explore opportunities to expand the Free Fare Zone within Greater Downtown. This may include temporary or limited expansions of the zone through partnerships or sponsorships for major events or festivals.
- Prepare a feasibility study on the creation of dedicated transit lanes, time-of-day transit lanes and other infrastructure in Greater Downtown to improve travel time and reliability for customers. High-priority corridors for such treatments include:
 - Fifth Avenue S.
 - Sixth Avenue S.
 - Centre Street S.

Medium to long term

- Improve transit progression along major transit streets as identified in Map 4. These streets are critical for transit operations and connectivity through Greater Downtown and should be enabled to accommodate efficient public transit service.



Spotlight

MAX BRT lines

The MAX Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines are Bus Rapid Transit services that were originally envisioned in the RouteAhead strategic plan for the expansion of rapid transit in Calgary. MAX lines feature faster travel times and enhanced customer comfort when compared to standard bus routes. MAX Purple, which opened in 2018, connects Greater Downtown to east Calgary. MAX Purple operates between the Downtown Core and East Hills, with dedicated transit lanes between 19 Street S.E. and 52 Street S.E. MAX Yellow, which opened in 2019, connects Greater Downtown to southwest Calgary, Mount Royal University and the Rockyview General Hospital. MAX Yellow operates between the Downtown Core and Woodpark Boulevard S.W. with high-occupancy vehicle lanes on Crowchild Trail S.W. and a dedicated transitway between 75 Avenue S.W. and Southland Drive S.W.

The overall network of MAX BRT lines, when combined with the existing and proposed light rail transit lines, provides the basis of a robust transit system that connects major tourist destinations, public spaces and neighbourhoods throughout Greater Downtown and the city.

Improve transit stations and stops to create welcoming experiences

Access to and from transit should be a positive and safe experience for all. Provide a high-quality pedestrian and cycling environment to support access to transit and encourage the use and enjoyment of the public transit system.

Goal

Transit stations and stops are safe, comfortable, accessible and convenient for all. Major transit stations are vibrant community spaces where people are able to meet, linger and interact.

Actions

Short to medium term

- Plan for two multi-modal transit hubs, as shown in Map 4. These hubs will integrate rapid transit lines (LRT, BRT), local transit routes and regional public transit with other modes. Over time, features which should be included are:
 - Safe, universally accessible, direct, convenient and weather-protected pedestrian connections between key transit stations and stops
 - High-quality wayfinding, communication, public safety and service information systems
 - Improved or integrated transit waiting amenities for bus zones
 - High-quality and secure bike and scooter parking
 - Enhanced landscaping and art features

- Construct BRT stations in Greater Downtown, either as standalone structures or integrated with adjacent developments.

Medium to long term

- Support dedicated space for amenities at all bus zones in Greater Downtown, either as standalone structures or integrated with adjacent developments or streetscape elements.
- Invest in the integration of the Always Available for All Ages & Abilities (5A) Network with the primary transit network.



Spotlight

The Green Line Public Gardens Initiative

With the Public Gardens Initiative, the Green Line team is developing a public gardens master plan that can support future public art and placemaking opportunities along the new LRT line within Greater Downtown. There is an opportunity to connect LRT infrastructure and urban fabric, and the potential for new public spaces.

Strategic move 5: Future-proof and innovate for the next generation

By 2031, Greater Downtown accommodates and attracts innovation, testing and economic enterprise from the global technology sector. Technology infiltrates every sector of the economy and Greater Downtown remains competitive and resilient.



Addressing climate

Calgary has already experienced significant changes in its climate, including more frequent and intense storms, and will face intensifying climate-related risks to our population, environment and economy in the future. Building resilience in the downtown can improve quality of life, protect infrastructure and boost the economy.

How we get there

Through protecting and enhancing our grey and green infrastructure, we can prepare for floods and other disasters. By supporting prosperity and innovation in the low-carbon economy, we can work towards improved social cohesiveness, inclusivity and climate justice and equity.

Encourage innovation and testing

As technology infiltrates every sector of the economy, there is an increased focus on innovation and use of technology to remain competitive. Greater Downtown can be a living laboratory, offering a place for the research and testing of ideas. The living lab concept fosters partnerships and welcomes the community into the experimentation process. This approach in Greater Downtown provides the opportunity for organizations to test, learn, get input from the community and make modifications to get to the best innovative outcomes.

Goal

Greater Downtown is a key part of Calgary's innovation ecosystem and there is continued investment in innovative and digital infrastructure that supports economic development, technological advancement and collaboration.

Actions

Pilot

- Pilot initiatives to promote Greater Downtown as a living lab.
- Pilot Smart City strategies in Greater Downtown.
- Research and analyze the feasibility of a pilot to provide free internet access in public buildings, the Olympic Plaza area and Stephen Avenue in the Downtown Core.
- Pilot innovative ways of collecting data to be used to further innovation and achieve the goals of this Plan.

Short to medium term

- Invest in the evaluation of a strategy and plan towards the creation of an innovation district to help build and share knowledge while unlocking opportunities for collaboration.
- Upgrade underground power to meet the demands of upcoming technology.
- Collaborate with technology carriers to enable the provision of infrastructure (hardware) that allows fast and reliable digital connectivity.
- Work with ENMAX to evaluate the growing power requirements for Greater Downtown and the feasibility of decentralizing the power network. This could include a more robust traditional power network, but should focus on renewable, low-carbon and decentralized power generation and distribution.
- To measure success of initiatives, initiate a program to monitor initiatives, collect data and present metrics.
- Invest in Internet Exchange Point (IXP) infrastructure to support the 5G network.

Medium to long term

- Continue to invest in digital infrastructure (fibre, wireless, LoRaWAN) to support Greater Downtown as an innovation hub.
- Continue to grow Greater Downtown's innovation ecosystem by working with key partners to help connect innovation stakeholders such as educational institutions, civic partners, businesses, all levels of government, funders and entrepreneurs.
- Ensure necessary infrastructure (hardware) for digital connectivity is designed to be unobtrusive and integrated with other utility infrastructure or the environment to minimize its visual impact.
- Provide redundant data connections to ensure a resilient, robust digital network capable of withstanding disruptions.
- Continue to lease out The City of Calgary's fibre optic cable network to other entities.
- Make public spaces, transportation corridors and facilities more accessible for the testing of innovative technologies.



Spotlight

LiDAR testing in the heart of the city

Exciting experiments are happening in downtown Calgary as part of The City's Living Labs initiative. Calgary-based Lux Modus used Living Labs for a collection and mapping opportunity along the Seventh Avenue S. transit corridor. The company tested its remote sensing platform, which uses advanced mobile light detection and ranging technology (LiDAR) and imagery. It was able to use the city as a real-world lab, and with just one day of field testing accelerated its technology development by about three months. In doing so, it was able to refine its technology before going to market.

The City of Calgary's Living Labs continues to break down local barriers to innovation, helping businesses and researchers conduct real-world testing to bring their ideas to fruition in a safe and effective way.

Innovate the regulatory environment

Calgary's past economic success can be attributed to its young and highly educated population, entrepreneurial and innovative pursuits, and centrally located corporate head offices. Providing regulatory flexibility is a key aspect to attracting investment and supporting businesses in Greater Downtown. Anything that can save a business money and time, such as lower fees or ease in meeting regulations, is supported. Businesses thrive and innovate when there are opportunities to network and collaborate while vibrant surroundings help to attract customers and talent.

Goal

By providing regulatory clarity, flexibility, incentives and a collaborative environment, businesses, developers and investors are enticed to Greater Downtown.

Action

Pilot

- Pilot opportunities to help applicants repurpose existing downtown real estate for other uses.

Short to medium term

- Improve the collection, monitoring and reporting of land-use and population data to ensure water and sanitary servicing can effectively meet changing demands.

- Develop a public-facing web portal to share spatial data and project information to potential land developers, event producers, the public and other stakeholders. Spatial data and project information regarding Greater Downtown are currently scattered across numerous existing internal websites and partner websites. Whenever possible, collaborate with Calgary Economic Development to share data to promote Greater Downtown.
- Review the expansion of the Centre City Enterprise Area to include all areas of Greater Downtown, as well as other business improvement areas that are not within Greater Downtown but connect to Greater Downtown.
- Review and update the Land Use Bylaw and density bonus systems to help achieve this Plan and identify additional at-grade uses.

Medium to long term

- Support Land Use Bylaw relaxations that increase retention, conservation or adaptive re-use of a historic resource (e.g. relaxations for parking stall requirements).



Spotlight

Centre City Enterprise Area

Since the economic downturn began in 2014, our downtown has experienced high vacancy rates in both the office and retail sectors. The Centre City Enterprise Area (Enterprise Area) was instituted as a pilot in July 2017 to make it easier for new businesses to set up operations and for building owners to make improvements to accommodate and attract new tenants. Specifically, bylaw changes have accomplished the following:

- Established a boundary for the Centre City Enterprise Area.
- Allowed for exemptions for change-of-use applications within the Enterprise Area from requiring a development permit, provided it is for a listed use in the district.
- Allowed for exemptions for applications for exterior alterations within the Enterprise Area from requiring a development permit, unless it is a building on the Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources.

- Allowed for exemptions for additions less than 1,000 square metres in size within the Enterprise Area from requiring a development permit, provided the proposed development still meets Section 24 Conditions for Development Permit Exemptions.

Monitoring of the Enterprise Area has shown that it is having a measurable, positive impact.

The exemption of change-of-use applications within the Enterprise Area was made permanent and the exemptions for exterior alterations and additions were extended to July 2021.

Reduce vulnerabilities

The next generation downtown will have reduced vulnerabilities to high-risk hazards and long-term climate impacts. Calgary has 14 high-risk hazards, including both natural and human hazards. Greater Downtown is in close proximity to heavy rail, flood plains, many mass gathering spaces and key components of our critical infrastructure. The potential for complex and cascading impacts due to disasters is significant. Given the unique socioeconomic role that this area plays in Calgary, integrating risk-informed decision-making into future development will be vital.

Climate change has increased the frequency and severity of climate-related hazards around the world, and Calgary has experienced these effects first-hand. These types of events can considerably affect The City of Calgary's ability to deliver essential services to all Calgarians. We must prepare our infrastructure and our population to withstand additional strain and fulfill a greater role in supporting the natural systems that surround us. By building sustainable infrastructure and social support systems that consider climate trends and projections, we may be able to reduce climate-related impacts.

Goal

Greater hazard awareness and risk-informed decision-making in Greater Downtown improves resilience by further adapting and developing sustainable infrastructure.

Actions

Short to medium term

- Conduct an urban heat island analysis to inform a heat mitigation strategy.
- Complete climate risk assessments for each community in Greater Downtown to inform appropriate adaptation measures. This may include incorporating strategies to protect public safety and minimize damage to public and private infrastructure.
- Prepare a risk profile for Greater Downtown to further integrate disaster risk reduction principles and practices.

Medium to long term

- Prepare a green infrastructure adaptation strategy for Greater Downtown to reduce risks from climate hazards including extreme temperatures and stormwater runoff.
- Conduct a review of critical and social infrastructure that supports essential services, and include:
 - Recommendations regarding disaster risk reduction practices such as backup power sources and other key redundancies
 - Prioritization of infrastructure investments that increase resilience and reduce susceptibility to failures. Recommendations for the co-ordination of utility upgrades with other infrastructure improvements throughout Greater Downtown
 - Recommendations to support the conversion of overhead to underground electrical distribution while considering accessibility



Spotlight

Downtown Flood Barrier and Eau Claire Promenade

The Downtown Flood Barrier protects Calgarians from floods while providing visual enhancements to the area at the same time. Protecting Calgarians from floods is a top priority for The City. Calgary's Flood Resilience Plan, approved by Council in 2017, includes flood barriers and stormwater improvements to ensure Calgary is protected against a 2013-level flood on the Bow and Elbow rivers. The Downtown Flood Barrier will extend from the Peace Bridge to Reconciliation Bridge and lower the risks of flooding in the downtown, Chinatown, East Village and Eau Claire communities.

Improve energy use and reduce GHG emissions

The next generation downtown will have improved energy use and reduced GHG emissions in buildings and infrastructure. Greater Downtown is a major source of Calgary's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and will be an important driver in our transition to a low-carbon economy. Calgary has a citywide target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent below 2005 levels by 2050. This Plan supports climate change mitigation goals with initiatives and infrastructure to reduce emissions by decreasing reliance on private vehicles and improving the energy efficiency of buildings.

Goal

Greater Downtown leads in approaches to transitioning to a low-carbon economy, improving energy use and reducing GHG emissions.

Actions

Pilot

- Pilot a program to monitor and report energy performance in new and existing buildings.
- Create better access to charging stations for electric vehicles (EV) throughout Greater Downtown. Pilot on-street charging infrastructure and the supporting requirements for EV charging stalls in new multi-residential and mixed-used developments.

Short to medium term

- Implement an energy performance standard for new buildings and major renovations to buildings in Greater Downtown. Over time, increase the standard to require buildings to have net zero emissions by 2050.
- Create a district energy strategy for Greater Downtown.
- Develop a program for deep energy retrofits of existing buildings to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, or a minimum GHG emissions reduction of 80 per cent below 2005 levels.

Medium to long term

- Support on-site and neighbourhood-scale renewable and low carbon energy systems.



Spotlight

Central Library

The Central Library opened on Nov. 1, 2018. It has won several architectural and design awards, and has achieved a LEED Gold certification for sustainability incorporated in its design and operation. The building has numerous energy-efficient building upgrades such as LED lighting. As well, design features were incorporated to reduce the energy needed for heating and cooling, such as improved insulation, triple-pane windows, solar shades and reflective materials. It also connects to the Downtown District Energy System for heat. The library has excellent connection to public transit, and provides secure bicycle storage and commuter facilities to encourage active transportation. During construction, over 79 per cent of building waste materials was diverted from the landfill and 100 per cent of the wood used in the project is Forest Stewardship Council certified.



5

**Building on
our investments**

Place-based investment

Calgary's future success relies on our downtown being a place where people want to live, visit, set up businesses and go to work. When our downtown thrives, Calgary thrives. Downtown neighbourhoods are at different stages of redevelopment and are continually evolving. Over the next decade, investment in physical spaces, buildings and infrastructure will increase the number of residents and visitors, and drive investment. Each area outlined in this chapter contains unique features and opportunities that have influenced the proposed future actions. Greater Downtown is stronger as a whole. Investment and planning within every neighbourhood is required and is a priority of this plan.

The City continues to make significant investments to enhance vibrancy within Greater Downtown. This chapter presents our current efforts and future strategic direction in Greater Downtown within the areas of:

- Downtown Core
- Downtown West
- River frontage, Chinatown and Eau Claire
- Beltline west
- The Rivers District

Each area presented in this chapter will outline the strategic direction for the area in the context of the strategic moves — outlined in detail in Chapter 4 of this Plan. Then we will more closely examine significant investments as shown in maps.

The aim is to show proposed place-based actions and how they related to current investment in Greater Downtown.

Successful placemaking along the Bow River pathway and in the Rivers District is evidence of what happens when The City invests in planning and infrastructure to create places people love. This same focus is needed to strengthen other areas of Greater Downtown to support our citizens and business through economic changes.

This map presents an overview of Greater Downtown, showing existing infrastructure and proposed investment. The next sections will take a closer look at:

- Downtown Core
- Downtown West
- River frontage, Chinatown and Eau Claire
- Beltline west
- The Rivers District

Figure 10: Overview of Greater Downtown



The Downtown Core

About the Downtown Core

The Downtown Core neighbourhood is the location of Calgary's Central Business District. It has the highest concentration of commercial real estate, largely in the form of office space, and is the largest source of municipal tax revenue. Thus, the resilience and vitality of the Downtown Core isn't just important for Greater Downtown, but it is important for the city as a whole. As the economy changes, the Downtown Core must change in response. Given the approximately 13 million square feet of vacant office space — estimated to be able to accommodate 130,000 employees — it might be many years before another office development starts construction. In fact, it may take 10 to 15 years to recover to where the downtown employment base was in 2014.

It will take a bold and focused strategy to overcome the perception that our downtown is an expensive office market that caters to the oil-and-gas and head-office market. Investors currently don't see the Downtown Core as a future-focused and thriving district, even though it has made considerable progress over the past 10 years. We need to get our downtown noticed and on the radar of investors. If not, we will get left behind other cities that have stronger brands and reputations as cities for the next generation and the new economy, such as Austin, Texas or Nashville, Tennessee.

If we are successful, the potential financial return to The City could be substantial. This will be achieved by stabilizing, and eventually increasing, the value of downtown properties. And this will reduce the need to shift the tax burden to other parts of Greater Downtown and the city overall. If we do not take swift action, there is a significant risk that the Downtown Core will further lose its value as a place to invest, resulting in further property value decline.

Stephen Avenue

Stephen Avenue is downtown's east-west spine — running through the Downtown Core — anchored by Mewata Armoury on the west and Fort Calgary to the east. A section of Stephen Avenue between Macleod Trail S.E. and Fourth Street S.W. is Calgary's only pedestrian mall that closes to traffic during the day. A portion of Stephen Avenue is also designated a National Historic Site. Stephen Avenue is the primary street for public life downtown. It is the nucleus for all people and the place that attracts vibrancy and a diversified economic pulse. At the same time, it reinforces links to the river and nature. Because most office personnel leave the Downtown Core after work, Stephen Avenue is not the vibrant, animated space on weekends and evenings that it is during the day. This is the avenue's greatest challenge — drawing people in for more than a place to go for lunch or for a short time after work.

This challenge was undertaken by **The Future of Stephen Avenue** project (2019) as a collaboration between The City of Calgary and The Calgary

Downtown Association (CDA). Efforts are focused on reinventing Stephen Avenue as downtown Calgary's main street. The future success of Stephen Avenue will be contingent upon securing a strong framework for public space design, public life, governance and economic investment. The roadmap connects and relates Stephen Avenue to other downtown initiatives and proposes actions to secure a thriving downtown main street. Over the next decade, the actions on Stephen Avenue will focus on activation at all times of day and throughout the year.

The Civic Commons

The Future of Stephen Avenue document referred to the area around Olympic Plaza as the Civic Commons because of the large number of civic uses and public spaces that exist in the area. It has previously been referred to as the Olympic Plaza Cultural District and the Civic District. Regardless of its name this area hold immense potential to be a major arts, innovation and tourist destination for both Calgarians and tourists alike. This area should develop its own sense of identity built upon the aspirations and long-term visions of the key institutions in the area by developing a Master Plan. It should build upon the successful **9 Block Program** that brought stakeholders in the area in 2020 to focus on safety, collaboration, programming and animation to create a place where all feel welcome and safe.

Strategic direction

Challenges in the Downtown Core provide a significant opportunity to purposefully remake our downtown into a neighbourhood that is as appealing a place to live as it is to work. By focusing on creating an environment that has the physical attributes, services and amenities that appeal to a residential population, it is expected this will also attract companies that are growing and thriving in the new economy. With the drop in land values and lease rates, there is a unique opportunity to attract residential development along with other retail businesses and services that have historically been precluded from the Downtown Core due to costs.

To transform the image of the Downtown Core, there must be:

- A substantial increase in residential units.
- Adaptive reuse of older office buildings to residential or other uses.
- Public realm improvements.
- An adjustment to the mix of amenities and services to better serve a residential market.



The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

Spotlight

The illustration above imagines the future of Stephen Avenue, having transformed into a complete street with a continuous street treatment and a focus on active mobility and integrated vehicular access.

This transformation will be guided by the **Stephen Avenue Streetscape Master Plan** — from Olympic Plaza (Macleod Trail S.E.) to Mewata Armoury (11 Street S.W.).

The future Stephen Avenue S. will:

1. Improve key intersections.
2. Strengthen connections to the Plus 15 network.
3. Activate the ground floor of parkades.
4. Activate underutilized and vacant storefronts.
5. Consider alternative treatment to address narrow road right-of-way and wind trees sculptures.
6. Offer incentives for adaptive reuse of office space.
7. Ensure continuous public access through the Armoury to connect Stephen Avenue to Shaw Millennium Park.

Figure 11: Downtown Core Strategic investments

Projects – Completed, underway, designed

Park / Plaza Projects

- ① Century Gardens
- ② Eau Claire Plaza redesign

Streetscape Enhancement

- ③ 3 Avenue South walking and wheeling upgrades
- ④ 8 Street S.W. Master Plan
- ⑤ The Future of Stephen Avenue Public Realm Study

Underpass Enhancement

- ⑥ 8 Street S.W.
- ⑦ 5 Street S.W.
- ⑧ 4 Street S.W.
- ⑨ 1 Street S.W.
- ⑩ Macleod Trail and 1 Street S.E. temporary improvements

Project and Programs

- ⑪ Art Commons Transformation
- ⑫ Calgary Public Building exterior stabilize and rehabilitation
- ⑬ 7 Ave. and Centre St. LRT Platform – Public Art Project
- ⑭ 9-Block

Projects – Proposed

Park / Plaza Projects

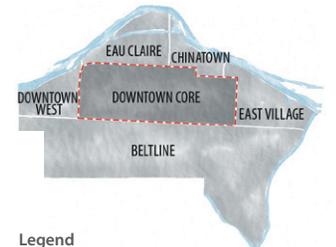
- ⑮ Court House Park and surrounding area activation

Streetscape Enhancement

- ⑯ 8 Street S.W. upgrades
- ⑰ Stephen Avenue Public Realm upgrades
- ⑱ 2 Street S.W. Master Plan
- ⑲ 7 Avenue digital corridor
- ⑳ Centre Street S. Bridge to 4 Ave. upgrades
- ㉑ Macleod Trail S.E. Master Plan
- ㉒ 9 Avenue S. Master Plan

Project and Programs

- ㉓ Transit Hub



- Legend**
- Green Network
 - Potential Green Network
 - Confirmed Main Street
 - Potential Main Street
 - Potential location for Open Space Acquisition
 - Existing Parks/Plaza
 - Streetscape Enhancement
 - Underpass Enhancement
 - Projects and Programs
 - Transit Hub
 - Proposed LRT Green Line
 - Existing LRT Blue Line
 - Existing LRT Red Line

The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

Downtown West

About Downtown West

The boundary between the Downtown Core and Downtown West is blurred, but the integration between these two neighbourhoods supports the vitality of both. As Greater Downtown's western gateway, Downtown West is a transitioning residential mixed-use neighbourhood with the potential to be a sought-after location for start-up companies and creative professionals. Its residential density and proximity to recreational and cultural resources are tremendous assets, but it is challenged by a lack of community identity, aging infrastructure and few local opportunities for goods and services. In spite of its prime location, pedestrians in Downtown West remain largely disconnected from surrounding neighbourhoods. Major vehicular corridors as well as the freight rail corridor divide Downtown West and separate it from the Bow River and adjacent neighbourhoods.

Strategic direction

To transform the image of Downtown West, there must be:

- A rebuilding of neighbourhood identity and vitality, possibly by leveraging the role of Contemporary Calgary.
- Improved connections to the river, Beltline and Downtown Core.
- Significant public realm improvements.
- Adaptive reuse of older office buildings.



The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

Spotlight

Downtown West River Promenade

The illustration above imagines the future of Downtown West, having transformed into a vibrant connected neighbourhood with a high-quality park and pathway amenity that connects the neighbourhood to the Bow River and beyond.

This transformation will be guided by a master plan and capital investment plan that will reduce and/or realign redundant roads to increase the size of the River Park lands, and consolidate fragmented parcels to improve development potential.

The future Downtown West River Promenade will:

1. Improve the Bow River promenade and pathway system from Eau Claire to 14 Street S.W.
2. Create a better connection between the neighbourhood and the Bow River.
3. Create a better connection between the pathway and the edge of the Bow River.
4. Create more green space.
5. Consolidate and review land use for fragmented City-owned parcels.

Figure 12: Downtown West Strategic investments

Projects – Completed, underway, designed

Park / Plaza Projects

- 1 West Eau Claire Park

Streetscape Enhancement

- 2 11 Street S.W. Master Plan and underpass study

Project and Programs

- 3 Contemporary Calgary Located at: 701 11 Street S.W. (old Planetarium)
- 4 Dog park – temporary
- 5 Façade Improvement Program – temporary
- 6 Mural program
- 7 Flower pot program - temporary
- Downtown West Action Strategy (Action refers to the whole neighbourhood)

Projects – Proposed

Park / Plaza Projects

- 8 Shaw Millennium Park upgrades

Streetscape Enhancement

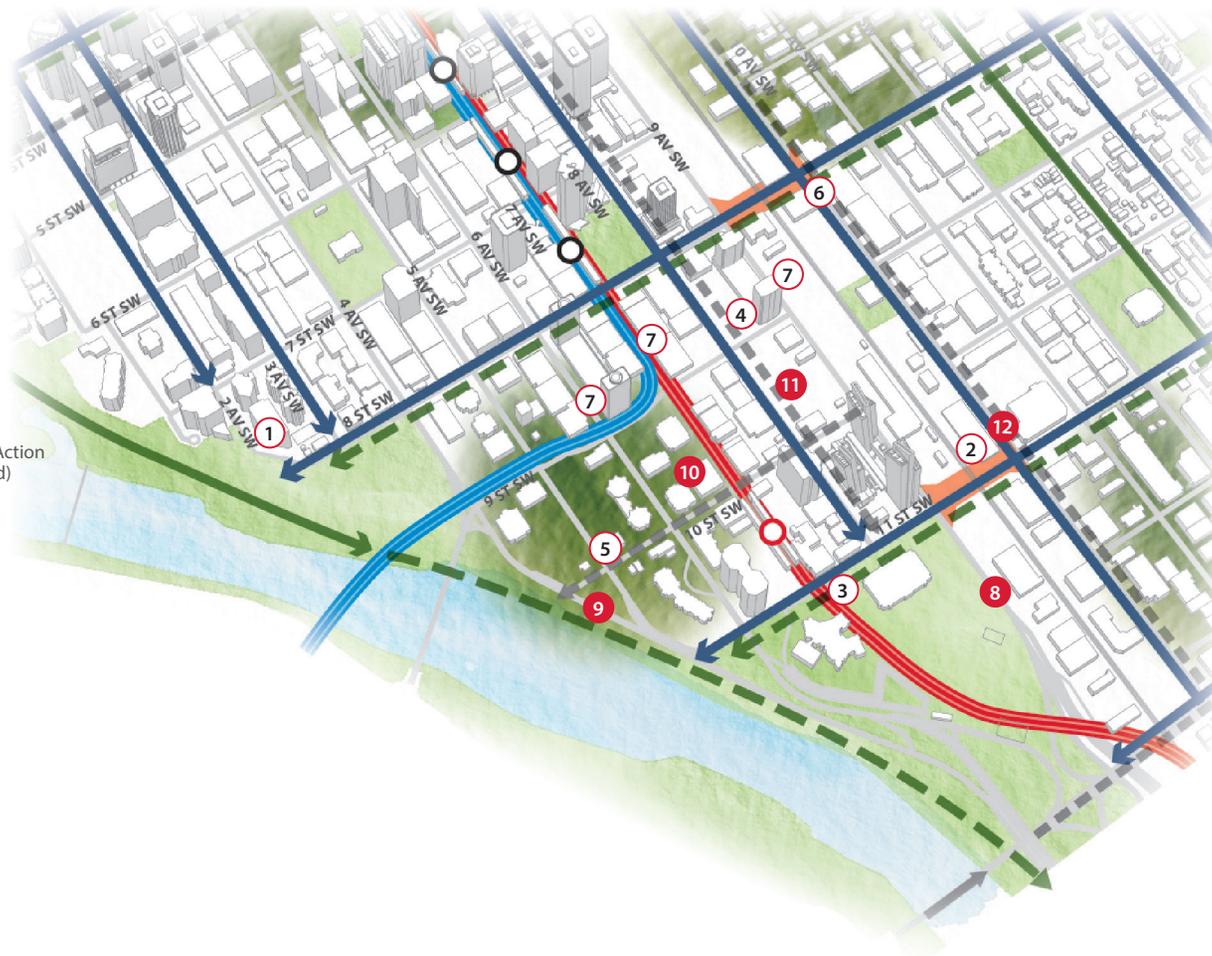
- 9 4 Avenue S.W. Realignment/ Downtown West River Promenade
- 10 10 Street S.W. potential main street activation
- 11 Stephen Avenue Public Realm upgrade

Underpass Enhancement

- 12 11 Street S.W. underpass design and build

Project and Programs

- Downtown West local area plan update or visioning (Action refers to the whole neighbourhood)



Legend

- Green Network
- Potential Green Network
- Confirmed Main Street
- Potential Main Street
- Potential location for Open Space Acquisition
- Existing Parks/Plaza
- Streetscape Enhancement
- Underpass Enhancement
- Proposed LRT Green Line
- Existing LRT Blue Line
- Existing LRT Red Line

The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

River frontage, Chinatown and Eau Claire

About the river frontage

Greater Downtown is blessed with two rivers — the Bow to the north and the Elbow to the east. For thousands of years, people have met at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers. Today we know this landscape as Calgary, but we also recognize the cultural and historical importance of the rivers to our Indigenous neighbours. The confluence is known as Mohkínstsis by the Blackfoot Nations, Otokwunee by the Métis Nation, Wícispa Oyade by the Stoney Nakoda Nations, and as Guts'ists' by the Tsuut'ina.

The rivers are the lifeblood of Calgary. They provide safe, clean drinking water and reliable water sources to support Calgary's economy and sustain our natural environment. The rivers are primary destinations within Greater Downtown and will continue to thrive as a main component of the green network. The impact of city- building and human use must be balanced with ecological health, flood mitigation and climate adaptation.

About Chinatown

Chinatown is one of a few culturally rich neighbourhoods in Calgary — with a long and distinct history. Re-located twice before, the current location of Chinatown dates back to 1910. It is a unique area that is highly valued by Calgarians and visitors. Like other cities with Chinatowns across North America, Calgary needs to consider how it can sustain and grow Chinatown's vitality through its cultural presence, community design and built form.

An area redevelopment plan for Chinatown was approved in 1986 when the role of community character and culture was not well represented. Commencing in 2020, for the first time in our city, an area-based cultural plan will be prepared to inform the planning policy. With the guidance of the community, the new cultural plan and local area plan will help support Chinatown's future as a vibrant, culturally rich place to live, visit, work and do business.

About Eau Claire

The Eau Claire neighbourhood's identity is firmly embedded with the riverfront pathway system and a regional draw. Eau Claire evolved into a highly desirable residential neighbourhood that transitions down in scale and height from the Downtown Core towards the riverfront where there is sunlight protection. The neighbourhood is challenged by the continued desire to develop to the scale of the Downtown Core, but the **Eau Claire Area Redevelopment Plan** provides sensitive and integrated transition edges along Third and Fourth Avenue S.W. and this Plan supports that vision.

Eau Claire will also be integrated with the future Green Line light rail transit line. This provides the opportunity and challenge of careful integration of this system.

Strategic direction

Transformation of this area is well underway with the Eau Claire improvement program — extending from The Peace Bridge eastwards to the Reconciliation Bridge — bringing riverfront improvements for Chinatown, Eau Claire and East Village. The program includes the Downtown Flood Barrier, Jaipur Bridge replacement, Eau Claire Promenade and Eau Claire Plaza — with objectives to significantly improve pedestrian and cyclist connections and vibrancy for thousands of daily commuters and visitors.

This infrastructure and public realm program is a major pedestrian gateway to our downtown and an iconic recreational destination on Calgary's urban river promenade. It provides increased opportunities for programming and events with major benefits to the neighbourhood restaurants and businesses, and catalyzes private sector investment for adjacent re-development.



The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

Spotlight

The illustration above imagines the future of Centre Street S., having transformed into a complete street with enhanced gateway features for Chinatown, a focus on mobility, improved accessibility, safety and beautification.

This transformation will be guided by the Centre Street S. Streetscape Master Plan.

The future Centre Street S. will:

1. Provide vibrant places for social connections.
2. Support local character.
3. Provide pedestrian comfort.
4. Support community activities.
5. Enable transit connections.
6. Support local businesses.

Figure 13: Eau Claire and Chinatown Strategic investments

Projects – Completed, underway, designed

Park / Plaza Projects

- ① Eau Claire Promenade
- ② Eau Claire Plaza redesign
- ③ West Eau Claire Park

Streetscape Enhancement

- ④ 3 Avenue S.E.
- ⑤ 1 Street S.E. (Green Mall)
- ⑥ Centre Street from Bridge to 4 Avenue S.
- ⑦ Barclay Mall (3 Street S.W.) Master Plan
- ⑧ 2 Street S.W. Master Plan
- ⑨ 3 Avenue S. walking and wheeling upgrades

Project and Programs

- ⑩ Downtown flood barrier and Eau Claire Promenade
- ⑪ Jaipur Bridge Replacement
- ⑫ Green Line 2 Avenue S.W. LRT Station
- ⑬ Tomorrow's Chinatown Cultural Plan and local area plan

Projects – Proposed

Park / Plaza Projects

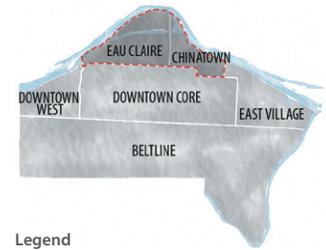
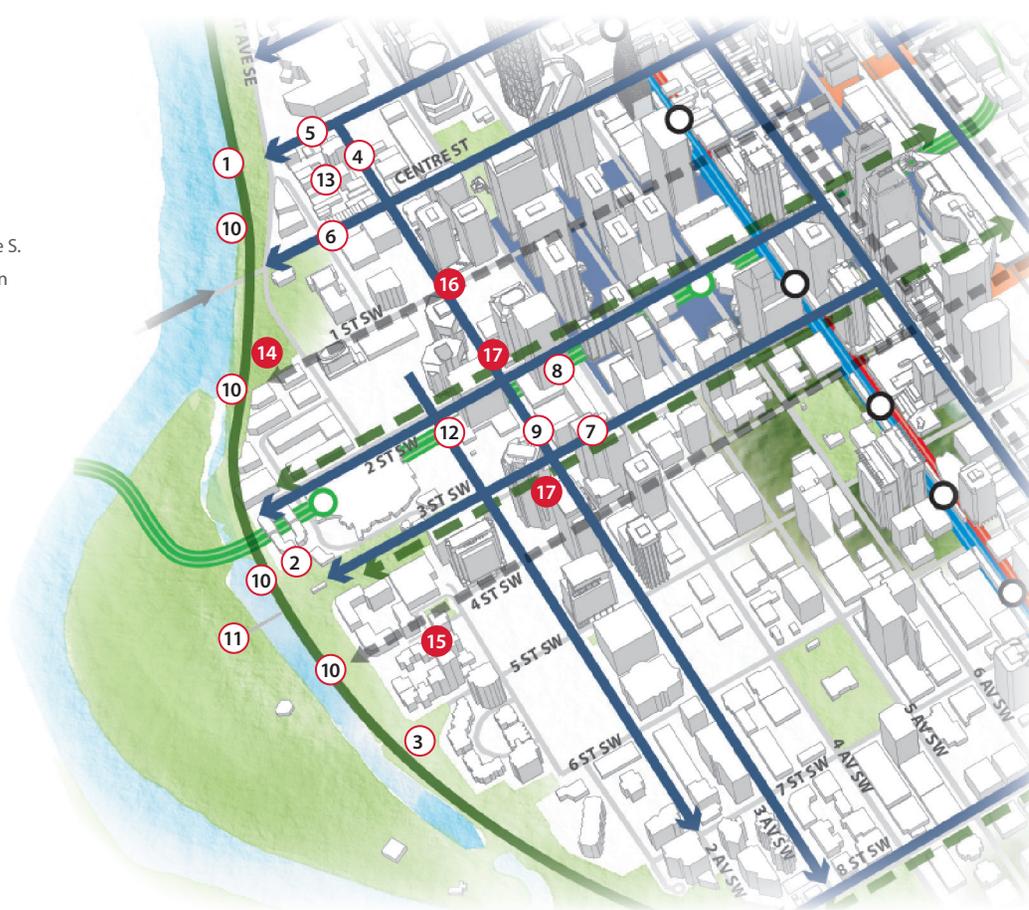
- ⑭ Sien Lok Park upgrades

Streetscape Enhancement

- ⑮ 4 Street S.W. main streets activation
- ⑯ 1 Street S.W. main streets activation
- ⑰ Green network streets upgrades

Project and Programs

- Policy and local area plans review and update or visioning (Action refers to the whole neighbourhood)



Legend

- Green Network
- Potential Green Network
- Confirmed Main Street
- Potential Main Street
- Potential location for Open Space Acquisition
- Existing Parks/Plaza
- Streetscape Enhancement
- Underpass Enhancement
- Proposed LRT Green Line
- Existing LRT Blue Line
- Existing LRT Red Line

The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

Beltline West

About Beltline

This section focuses on the Beltline neighbourhood west of First Street S.E. The remainder of the neighbourhood — east Victoria Park — is addressed in the next section called the “Rivers District.”

South of the freight rail tracks is Greater Downtown’s largest residential neighbourhood called “Beltline.” It spans the width of Greater Downtown from 14 Street S.W. to the Elbow River with 17 Avenue S. as the key activity corridor — main street — at the south boundary. 17 Avenue S. features a mix of street-oriented retail and office development. Road and utility upgrades on 17 Avenue S. between Macleod Trail S.E. and 14 Street S.W. were completed in 2019 with concrete sidewalk and streetscape upgrades on major street corners.

The two communities of Connaught and Victoria Park were officially combined in 2003 to form Beltline, named for one of Calgary’s old streetcar routes that formed a perimeter around the area. Though Beltline is primarily residential, its three northernmost avenues feature a mix of retail and office development. Street-oriented retail is mostly focused along 17 Avenue S., Eighth Street S.W., Fourth Street S.W. and First Street S.W.

Transportation in Beltline is primarily defined by its walkable nature, though proximity to downtown means that it is bisected by several one-way couplets designed to efficiently shuttle automobile traffic into and out of the central business district. A Red Line station at Macleod Trail and 17 Avenue S.E. serves Calgary Stampede and Saddledome crowds. Green Line stations at Fourth Street and 11 Avenue S.E. and Centre Street S. and 11 Avenue S. are expected to also provide service to the area.

The 2007 **Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan** formed the basis for much of Greater Downtown’s existing density bonus scheme and paved the way for much of the substantial growth the neighbourhood has experienced over the past decade. The Beltline neighbourhood plays a significant role in Greater Downtown.

Strategic direction

The 2007 **Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan** has been very successful as the roadmap for success in the Beltline neighbourhood. An update to this local area plan is another opportunity to have a community conversation about the future of this area. This Plan recognizes big-picture challenges facing the Beltline neighbourhood. Beltline is also being impacted by retail and office vacancies, especially along main streets. These main streets are facing increased competition with other main streets in the city, putting neighbourhood vibrancy at risk.

Although the Beltline neighbourhood is a popular destination for Calgarians with a healthy mix of uses and amenities, there is always room for opportunities. With the significant investment happening in east Victoria Park, there is opportunity to leverage that investment for the Beltline by improving connections to and along 17 Avenue S., 12 Avenue S., the Elbow River and Macleod Trail S.E.

Strategic direction for the next decade will be to focus on providing an attractive public realm and activating key corridors that connect to the rivers so that the neighbourhood remains an appealing place to live and do business.



The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

Spotlight

The illustration above imagines the future of Eighth Street S.W., having transformed into a complete street with a continuous street treatment, a focus on active mobility and more vegetation.

This transformation will be guided by the Eighth Street S.W. master plan which establishes a strong connection along the high-use corridor between the Bow River waterfront and 17 Avenue S.W. in the Beltline neighbourhood. The vision for the redevelopment of this unique corridor addresses area needs and enhances the pedestrian experience by focusing on improving sidewalks, street crossings and urban design.

The future Eighth Street S.W. will:

1. Narrow road lanes.
2. Add mobility tracks between 10 and 12 Avenue S.W. with painted mobility tracks through the underpass.
3. Improve lighting, sidewalks and street trees.
4. Provide opportunities for integrated public art and animation of interfaces.

Figure 14: Beltline West Strategic investments

Projects – Completed, underway, designed

Park / Plaza Projects

- ① Thomson Family Park
- ② Barb Scott Park
- ③ Humpy Hollow Park Design
- ④ McHugh House Relocation
- ⑤ Connaught off-leash dog park
- ⑥ High Park on City Centre Parkade
- ⑦ New park on 16 Avenue S.W. at 9 Street S.W.

Streetscape Enhancement

- ⑧ 1 Street S.W. Master Plan
- ⑨ 8 Street S.W. Master Plan
- ⑩ 13 Avenue Greenway (Macleod Trail to 4 St SW)
- ⑪ 17 Avenue Reconstruction

Project and Programs

- ⑫ Historical Beltline YWCA Rehabilitation
- ⑬ 11 Street S.W. wheeling upgrade from 12 to 17 Avenue S.W.

Underpass Enhancement

- ⑭ 8 Street S.W.
- ⑮ 5 Street S.W.
- ⑯ 4 Street S.W.
- ⑰ 1 Street S.W.
- ⑱ Macleod Trail and 1 Street S.E. Temporary improvements

Projects – Proposed

Park / Plaza Projects

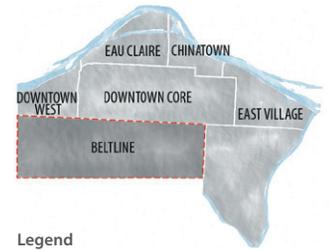
- ⑲ Humpy Hollow Park upgrades
- ⑳ Beaulieu Gardens upgrades
- ㉑ Tomkins Park upgrades
- ㉒ 4 Street S.W. Public Realm Master Plan

Streetscape Enhancement

- ㉓ 8 Street S.W. construction
- ㉔ 14 Street S.W. Master Plan
- ㉕ 10 Avenue S.W. Master Plan
- ㉖ 13 Avenue Greenway completion (4 Street S.W. to 11 Street S.W.)
- ㉗ Macleod Trail S.E.

Underpass Enhancement

- ㉘ 11 Street S.W. underpass design and build



Legend

- Green Network
- Potential Green Network
- Confirmed Main Street
- Potential Main Street
- Potential location for Open Space Acquisition
- Existing Parks/Plaza
- Streetscape Enhancement
- Underpass Enhancement
- Projects and Programs
- Transit Hub
- Proposed LRT Green Line
- Existing LRT Blue Line
- Existing LRT Red Line

The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

The Rivers District

About the Rivers District

In 2007, City Council created the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) with the ambitious mandate to revitalize the Rivers District, a 500-acre portion on the east end of downtown. The Rivers District is bound by the Bow River on the north, the Elbow River on the east and south sides and First Street S.E. on the west side. CMLC began revitalizing East Village and over the past 13 years has expanded their work into the southern portion of the district in east Victoria Park. The organization is guided by the following principles:

- Revitalize urban spaces and animate public places to meet the needs of the city and its citizens.
- Manage land and infrastructure investments to optimize financial returns and enable long-term social, environmental and community resilience.
- Operate intelligently — and innovate relentlessly — in our pursuit of excellence.

With a strong track record of building resilient communities, CMLC continues to undertake projects that will transform east downtown. Guiding that transformation are master plan documents for East Village (**East Village Master Plan**) and east Victoria Park (**Rivers District Master Plan**). The **Rivers District Master Plan** is a 20-year vision for the creation of Calgary's Culture + Entertainment District (The C + E).

CMLC's leadership in the Rivers District has supported the attraction of private-sector development along with strategic infrastructure programs to support the long-term master plan visions for this area.

Strategic direction

The **East Village Master Plan** and **Rivers District Master Plan** provide the roadmap for success in the Rivers District. CMLC is stewarding the successful delivery of these plans through the breadth of projects identified in Figure 15 and as outlined in the categories within this section.

City building projects

- CMLC and The City completed high-level planning and policy documents to guide growth and development within the Rivers District.
 - **East Village Master Plan.** Updated East Village Area Redevelopment Plan to guide development in East Village
 - **Rivers District Master Plan.** Updated **Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan** to guide development in east Victoria Park
- CMLC is underway with planning for considerable infrastructure and streetscape improvements programs within the **Rivers District Master Plan** area (see the map under strategic investment).
- East Victoria Park is a small community within the Beltline and encompasses Stampede Park. Guided by the **Rivers District Master Plan**, this area is planned as a vibrant, high-density, mixed-use community that draws on the spirit of entertainment that resides in its DNA, as well as its natural surroundings. This high-density mixed-use neighbourhood will be a destination for urban living and entertainment. Projects currently underway include:

- BMO Convention Centre expansion (underway, completion 2024)
- Event Centre (underway, completion 2024)
- 17 Avenue S.E. extension and Stampede Station rebuild (underway, completion 2023)
- CMLC is also planning for considerable infrastructure and streetscape improvements programs within the district to help support the successful delivery of the master plan.

Public and open space development

- The **East Village Master Plan** outlines a network of parks and open spaces that led to the redevelopment of St. Patrick's Island and the construction of many other park spaces such as the Crossroads public realm improvements, C-Square Park, 5th Street Square and RiverWalk.
- The **Rivers District Master Plan** outlines a network of parks and open spaces that are part of the green network. As these build out, the green network grows. This includes improved connections to the Elbow River, urban plazas and festival street.

Public realm improvements

- The **East Village Master Plan** outlined the strategy to transform East Village. Since 2007, CMLC's commitment of \$396 million to infrastructure and development programs attracted nearly \$3 billion of planned development. The stunning transformation of the public realm makes this neighbourhood one of the most sought after in the city.

- The **Rivers District Master Plan** outlines strategies to re-knit the urban fabric, connect people to and through the community and improve accessibility and permeability for all modes of transportation.
- Re-establishment of the urban grid.
- Create a network of primary circulation routes which include an improved 11 Avenue S., extended 12 Avenue S, a new 5 Street S.E. underpass, Stampede Trail and 17 Avenue S.E. extension connecting 17 Avenue to 4 Street S.E.
- A network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities will link the open space network to the surrounding neighbourhoods, the regional pathway and citywide park and open space system.
- A new 9 Avenue S.E. bridge (under construction since 2020).

Mobility improvements

- The new Green Line LRT system will run through east Victoria Park with a station integrated into the neighbourhood. This will provide great connections for people coming to the area.
- Relocation of the Calgary Transit facility.

Sustainability

- The **Rivers District Master Plan** encourages environmental sustainability, promotes economic resiliency, enhances social sustainability, attracts private investment and sustains a destination and local economy.



The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.

Spotlight

The illustration above imagines the future of 17 Avenue S.E. extension and Victoria Park/Stampede Station crossing. This is critical to reconnect Stampede Park to the Beltline neighbourhood. In partnership with Calgary Transit, the Victoria Park/Stampede CTrain station will be overhauled to create a barrier-free and accessible experience for all users.

The future 17 Avenue S.E. extension and Victoria Park/Stampede Station crossing will:

1. Remove the stairs and overpass at 15 Avenue S.E.
2. Add two at-grade pedestrian crossings at Macleod Trail S.E.

Figure 15: Rivers District Strategic investments

CMLC Completed projects

- ① St. Patrick's Island
- ② George C King Bridge
- ③ Central Library
- ④ 4 Street Underpass
- ⑤ RiverWalk
- ⑥ Storm pond
- ⑦ 5 Street square
- ⑧ C-Square
- ★ St. Louis Hotel
- ★ Simmons Building
- ★ Hillier Block
- ⑨ Elbow River Traverse
- ⑩ East Village Dog Park
- ⑪ Crossroads
- ⑫ 6 Street S.E. Edges
- ⑬ 4 Street S.E. Mobility track
- ⑭ 9 Avenue S. Mobility track

CMLC Projects Underway

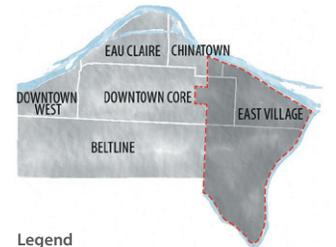
- ⑮ BMO Convention Centre expansion
- ⑯ Victoria Park Streetscape enhancements
- ⑰ Event Centre
- ⑱ 9 Avenue S.E. Parkade/ Platform Innovation Centre
- ⑲ Arts Commons Transformation
- ⑳ Event Plaza
- ㉑ RiverWalk Stage 2
- ㉒ Stampede Trail
- ㉓ 17 Avenue S.E. extension
- ㉔ Victoria Park/Stampede LRT Stampede station redesign

Other funded projects in Rivers District

- ⑮ 9 Ave Bridge
- ⑯ Green Line

Future Projects

- ㉗ 12 Avenue S. Mobility track
- ㉘ 10 Ave Greenway
- ㉙ Relocation of the Victoria Park Transit Centre
- ⑳ Fort Calgary national historic site and museum renovation
- ㉚ 5 Street underpass



Legend

- Green Network
- - - Potential Green Network
- Confirmed Main Street
- - - Potential Main Street
- Existing Parks/Plaza
- Streetscape Enhancement
- Underpass Enhancement
- Projects and Programs
- Transit Hub
- Proposed LRT Green Line
- Existing LRT Blue Line
- Existing LRT Red Line

The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.



6

**Interpretation and
implementation**

How to use this Plan

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan (the Plan) is a living document that supersedes the successful 2007 **Centre City Plan**. Through engagement with The City's departments, civic partners, stakeholders and the public, the vision and principles were modernized and a number of strategic moves, goals and actions were prepared. The vision, principles, strategic moves and goals guide overarching action throughout Greater Downtown.

The Plan provides a clear vision and outlines strategies to guide and support progress toward the vision over a 10-year time frame. It is recognized that new opportunities, challenges and trends will emerge throughout the life of this document. The Plan provides enough direction for decision-makers and investors while also being flexible enough to accommodate changing trends and technologies. The level of detail provided allows local area plans to be more specific through direct community engagement. A review and update of this document will occur at least every 10 years to address changes and to reflect Council priorities.

This Plan identifies actions to realize the strategic moves proposed in this Plan. The actions have been broken down into two time frames:

- Short- to medium-term priorities may be less complex and require less investment. These investments could be used in support of larger or longer-term projects or future permanent infrastructure.

Pilot projects are ideas that could be completed in a short- to medium-term time frame and would typically be temporary in their installation.

- Medium- to long-term priorities may be significant projects that require longer lead times to allow for adequate planning and project management including more detailed design, costing, budgeting and procurement. These projects may be transformative in nature toward the vision for Greater Downtown.

The Plan supersedes the **Centre City Plan** — any reference to the **Centre City Plan** elsewhere should now be read as **Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan**. The Plan will guide decision-making and actions impacting Greater Downtown and should be read in conjunction with other statutory and non-statutory documents. In the event of a conflict, this document does not overrule statutory guidance. Direction in this document may provide support for projects, work plans and interpretation of the Land Use Bylaw. This document aligns with other Council policies, strategic initiatives and guidelines.

Interpretation

1. Unless otherwise specified in this Plan, the boundaries or locations of any symbols or areas shown on a map or illustration are approximate only, not absolute, and will be interpreted as such. The maps are not intended to define exact locations except where they coincide with clearly recognizable physical features or fixed boundaries such as property lines, roads or utility rights-of-way. The precise location of these boundaries, for the purpose of evaluating development proposals, will be determined by the approving authority at the time of application.
2. No measurements of distances or areas should be taken from the maps or illustrations in this Plan.
3. All illustrations and figures are for conceptual purposes only.
4. Any change to the text, maps or illustrations within this Plan need to be approved by council in the same way that this document was approved.

Implementation

Role of the Downtown Strategy program

The Downtown Strategy was approved by City Council in April of 2019. It is a program that brings together The City of Calgary, our civic partners, community partners and business improvement areas in a co-ordinated and collaborative effort to make life better every day for citizens, customers, residents and businesses as it relates to the downtown. The Downtown Strategy brings new energy to a future-focused, collective approach to align existing projects and initiatives, thereby increasing the impact of our work. The City and our partners are striving to support and incentivize private investment in business and buildings, align programming that generates visits and spending in the downtown, and provide amenities and services to enhance the quality of life for people living and working in the downtown. The Downtown Strategy focus is on vibrancy, to make the downtown a welcoming, inclusive and thriving place for all — a destination for Calgarians and visitors alike.

The Downtown Strategy includes four pillars important to a vibrant downtown and our city's economic resilience. These working areas are built on the four areas of focus in Calgary's economic strategy, Calgary in the New Economy:

Place — Investing in the physical spaces, buildings, and infrastructure to increase the number of downtown residents and visitors, and drive investment into our downtown.

Work — Supporting the development of new and existing business in downtown Calgary by ensuring our policies and services drive business success.

Live — Ensuring that downtown is a neighbourhood of choice to live in by providing the amenities to enhance the quality of life for people living downtown.

Connect — Connecting people, goods, information and ideas by investing in physical and digital infrastructure, mobility projects and developing stronger networks and utility resilience.

It will take all of us to build and reshape downtown and it's important to take a shared position in stewarding our downtown into the future. The Downtown Strategy is built on the foundation of community collaboration and its organizational structure reflects that principle.

The Downtown Strategy Leadership Team is comprised of leadership from The City, Calgary Economic Development, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation, Greater Downtown Business Improvement Areas and the University of Calgary. This team leads, guides, supports and communicates progress for initiatives in Greater Downtown and will be key to the implementation of this Plan. Supporting the Leadership Team is a Working Group comprised of subject matter experts from across The City and our partners to provide the necessary resources and relationships to coordinate and deliver on strategic priorities.

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan is one of the major initiatives of the Place pillar and as such, its implementation will also be supported and guided by the Downtown Strategy organization in addition to direct implementation by City departments through their work programs and budgets.

Organizational focus

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan was prepared by a cross-corporate team representing key functional areas that are responsible for delivering on the actions in this plan including planning, transportation, parks and climate resilience. This cross-corporate approach will be continued through the implementation of this Plan to ensure that work programs, resources and budgets are aligned to deliver on priority actions. At the time of writing, The City is undertaking a large-scale corporate re-alignment and through this process a focus on downtown will be embedded as one of the key priorities of The City.

Budget process

Through The City's regular four-year budget process and mid-cycle adjustment process (every two years) the implementation of the Plan will be an ongoing input into deliberations over both operating and capital budgets. This will include the ongoing assessment of Plan implementation priorities and the preparation of detailed operating requirements to support initiatives and projects. It will also include the preparation of formal business cases for capital projects that will be submitted for consideration in the overall corporate capital prioritization process.

Integrated project approach

Projects in Greater Downtown should use an interdisciplinary approach with the emphasis on collaboration. All the stakeholders involved in the project collaborate to develop optimum solutions to achieve the highest number of objectives. This is a comprehensive process that concentrates as much on design, construction and operation as on the occupancy and vitality of the area.

This approach optimizes the interaction among the various disciplines and stakeholders rather than each discipline's systems. It enables City and other stakeholders to develop and achieve the social, environmental, mobility and economic objectives of a project while leveraging public and private investment for multiple outcomes and increased value.

Community partnerships

The Plan recognizes the importance of partnerships in the successful implementation of this Plan. Through the work of the Downtown Strategy, partnerships will be continually sought and encouraged. In some cases, delivery of Plan objectives may be feasible through the efforts of groups and organizations outside the formal City of Calgary organization. The Downtown Strategy team will be resourced to enable the use of partnerships through funding and agreements to optimize community-led or partner-led initiatives — including leveraging partner resources and capacity. Examples of partnerships may include Business Improvement Areas, Community Associations, Civic Partners, post-secondary institutions and any other community groups that have ideas that align with the Plan visions and where there is a desire and capacity to successfully deliver outcomes.

Private sector partnerships

Greater Downtown has always relied on the investment of the private sector in providing buildings, amenities and services that contribute to the overall quality of life for downtown residents, employees and visitors. The implementation of this Plan will similarly require the investment of the private sector to design, build and finance many of the spaces that host urban life. The relationship between public and private space has never been more critical to the success and competitiveness of Greater Downtown. The way people work, live and play has become much more seamless between public and private spaces and amenities. Successful cities require a full amenity package that can only be delivered through the actions of both the public and private sector. To that end, this Plan embraces the pursuit of mutually beneficial partnerships to extend the value of investments of both parties. This can include aligning the improvements to the public realm with private investments for new or refurbished buildings to create places that attract businesses and visitors. Or it could be to create viable projects for the conversion of existing buildings to new uses that align with the Plan vision. This Plan is not prescriptive as to the nature of these partnerships, but they are recognized as critical to achieving outcomes. The City is committed to ensuring that it is resourced to facilitate the necessary agreements and arrangements to foster a partnership approach.

Leveraging the development application process

This Plan will be used to support the review and evaluation of development applications, especially with respect to ensuring new development aligns with the long-term vision of this Plan. The Development Application Process can also be used as a tool to implement specific aspects of the Plan through land use bylaw provisions or development permit application requirements and conditions. Where possible, public investment will be aligned to support and enhance projects that demonstrate implementation of the Plan.

Monitoring and reporting

Following guidance in the 2007 **Centre City Plan**, The City has undertaken a biennial citizens' perception survey to collect information on how Calgarians view downtown in terms of safety, attractiveness and livability. This survey has allowed for police and social services to identify problem areas that need to be addressed. It has also identified ways in which community associations and other civic groups can make the area more attractive for residents and visitors. This Plan supports the continued collection of this data, particularly as new initiatives are piloted in Greater Downtown. The survey is scheduled to be updated and improved to better measure key metrics that will be developed to track progress of both the Downtown Strategy and this Plan.

Additionally, this Plan supports frequent reporting of key metrics to City Council through the Downtown Strategy program. This is currently delivered through an annual **State of the Downtown Report** and quarterly **Downtown Calgary Snapshot**. These reports are made available to both City Council and the public. The **State of the Downtown Report** highlights where the downtown is currently in relation to the four Downtown Strategy pillars and

highlights some of the successes, challenges and opportunities that were identified in the previous year and moving forward. The **Downtown Calgary Snapshot** is a graphic report updated quarterly based on current statistics, research and measures, and offers a one-stop glance at how we are doing with our economic recovery efforts. Through these updates, The City can monitor progress towards successful implementation of this Plan.



7

Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

Please see the Glossary in the **Municipal Development Plan for definitions that you cannot find here.**

arcade — A roofed exterior passageway lined with a colonnade along at least one edge.

bonus — A term used in Greater Downtown to allow an increase in density of development in return for providing public amenities.

building classes — BOMA Canada provides building class definitions that categorize office buildings as Class A, Class B and Class C. In many markets, Class A can be subdivided into subcategories such as Prestige, AAA, AA and A. The factors that determine a building's class vary in each market.

- **Class A Buildings:** The most prestigious buildings with the most amenities in the best locations. They are generally the most attractive, and built with the highest quality materials and construction methods. They usually have a professional manager and good access, and are typically located in highly visible areas on high-traffic streets.
- **Class B Buildings:** These buildings are a grade below Class A. Generally, they are slightly older with good management and quality tenants.
- **Class C Buildings:** This is the lowest grade for useable office buildings. These are generally older and may be located on less-desirable streets in older sections of the city.

(BOMA Canada, 2021)

Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) — CMLC was incorporated in 2007 as a wholly-owned subsidiary of The City of Calgary to implement and execute the **Rivers District Community Revitalization Plan** — a public infrastructure program approved by The City and the Province of Alberta to kick-start Calgary's east-side urban renewal. CMLC substantially funds the delivery of the **Rivers District Community Revitalization Plan** with a Community Revitalization Levy (CRL). The first of its kind in Canada, in 2005 the CRL was enabled by provincial legislation for a 40-year period (2007 to 2047). The levy provides a means to segregate increased property tax revenues in the Rivers District, which result from redevelopment, into a fund that will go towards the new infrastructure required. These taxes would, in effect, replace the municipal and provincial portions of the property tax, and the rate would be equal to that which is charged throughout the city. The end result is that improvements in the Rivers District are self-funded without any additional tax burden on the rest of the city, and at the end of the 20-year CRL period, the amounts that were charged would become general property tax revenues and flow into the general revenues of The City and the Province.

Chinatown — Chinatown consists of approximately 19.8 hectares bounded mainly by the Bow River on the north, Macleod Trail on the east, mainly Second Street S.W. on the west, and Third Avenue S.W. to the south, with a bump-out extending one block south along Centre Street South and two blocks east across Fourth Avenue S.E. The community boundaries also include the eastern portion of Prince's Island.

colonnade — A series of regularly spaced columns providing load-bearing support of an overhead structure, such as an arcade.

concept — A general notion or idea.

connections — The linkages within Greater Downtown that bring together and move pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles, et cetera from one area to another.

Council — The Council of The City of Calgary.

district — An area identified by a distinguishing feature such as land use, heritage, cultural and/or any other significant characteristic.

Downtown Core — One of the neighbourhoods that make up Greater Downtown. This area is a prominent destination for business, entertainment, culture and events. It is an area of intensive high-rise, high-density developments with a high-quality public realm. Buildings in this area incorporate a mix of uses and may have access to the Plus 15 skywalk network.

The Downtown Core neighbourhood is referred to as the Downtown Core throughout the document.

5G — The next-generation mobile internet connectivity standard, which promises faster data download and upload speeds, wider coverage and more stable connections. It will enable more devices to access the mobile internet at the same time.

freight rail corridor — The land on which the Canadian Pacific Railway is built.

gateway — Important transportation connections either to enter the city or to signify entrance into a specific part of the city. Well-designed entrances welcome people and provide a sense of arrival to an important place.

goal — A desirable condition to be achieved — a sought-after end state that is not quantifiable or time-dependent. Provides context for corresponding objectives and policies.

Greater Downtown — Refers to an area comprising the Eau Claire, Chinatown, Downtown West, East Village, Downtown Core and Beltline communities. Greater Downtown is located on the south bank of the Bow River and bounded to the east by the Elbow River, to the south by 17 Avenue S.W. and to the west by 14 Street S.W. The direction within this Plan will also apply to properties west of 14 Street S.W. and south of 17 Avenue S.W.

heritage asset — A privately owned structure, typically constructed before 1945, that significantly retains the original form, scale, massing, window/door pattern and architectural details or materials. Individual heritage assets may not warrant inclusion on the **Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources** or consideration as a heritage resource.

heritage resource — Includes heritage buildings, bridges, engineering works and other structures, as well as cultural landscapes such as heritage parks, gardens or streetscapes, culturally significant areas, Indigenous traditional-use areas and sites with archaeological or palaeontological resources. These can be managed by municipal, provincial or federal authorities.

imagineCALGARY — A two-year process initiated by The City and community-led to create a 100-year vision for Calgary.

inclusion — An environment in which any individual or group is respected and valued, and supported to fully participate in society.

indicator — A variable that is representative of progress towards the achievement of an objective, policy or action.

internet exchange (IX) — An internet exchange allows networks to interconnect on an open-access ethernet fabric — providing low latency and high bandwidth cost-effectively in a locale.

Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources (Inventory) — A growing (non-exhaustive) list of sites that have been assessed by Heritage Calgary according to the Council-approved Historic Resource Evaluation System.

key destinations — Mainly existing public open spaces (parks) within Greater Downtown that are unique for their contribution to providing a welcome relief to Greater Downtown's urban environment and to meeting local needs. Key destinations also refers to existing and future areas that are unique for their contribution to the vitality and energy of Greater Downtown.

landmark sites — Prominent sites of high visual impact where buildings are — or would be — recognizable and contribute to wayfinding and placemaking for the community. Landmark sites are rare within a community and may include hilltops and terminating vistas. They may be buildings, structures such as bridges, memorials or public art. They may also be landscapes that have a special heritage, architectural or cultural significance.

landscaping (soft and hard) — The modification and enhancement of a site in any of the following ways:

- Soft landscaping consisting of vegetation such as trees, shrubs, hedges, grass and ground cover.
- Hard landscaping consisting of non-vegetative material such as brick, stone, concrete, tile, wood and other material.
- Architectural elements consisting of sculptures and the like.

LoRaWAN — A low-power, wide-area (LPWA) networking protocol designed to wirelessly connect battery-operating items to the internet in regional, national or global networks. It also targets key Internet of Things (IoT) requirements such as bi-directional communication, end-to-end security, mobility and localization services.

Municipal Development Plan — The City of Calgary's vision for how the city grows and develops over the next 30 to 60 years.

objective — An expression of a desired outcome or more specific way to achieve a goal.

pathway — A facility for use by walkers and wheelers for recreation and transportation purposes, but where motorized modes are prohibited. The regional pathway system is Calgary's citywide linear network.

pedestrians — The term is often used for walkers and wheelers.

the Plan — Refers to **Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan: Roadmap to Reinvention**.

Plus 15 network — A network of grade-separated pedestrian walkways and bridges, 15 feet above the road grade, which connects developments within downtown Calgary.

private realm — Consists of private space or buildings that are visually incorporated into the public realm and allows for limited or no physical access to the public.

promenade — A formally designed pedestrian-priority walkway along the riverfront that includes a walkway and urban features such as benches, garbage disposal and pedestrian-scale lighting.

public realm — The space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, parks and open spaces. These areas and settings support or facilitate public life and social interaction.

recreation — The City of Calgary defines “recreation” as the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community well-being.

retail — Commercial uses that include a range of businesses that depend on public traffic. Examples include shops, personal services, eating and drinking establishments, and other uses that generate frequent activity in and out of a building or business entrance.

Riverfront — Refers to the area alongside the Bow and Elbow Rivers.

the rivers — Refers to the Bow and Elbow Rivers.

semi-private realm — Consists of the space between a building façade and a public sidewalk as well as any private spaces that may be accessible to the public such as the Plus 15 network or enclosed atriums/galleries. Semi-private space ties together linkages and built form in a comprehensive and connected public realm.

setback — An area measured as a distance from a public right-of-way or private lot line restricting building development.

shared mobility — Transportation services that use fleets of vehicles that are shared among users. This can include shared automobiles, bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters.

shared streets — Streets where different modes of transportation share rights-of-way.

strategy — An expression of how and where efforts will be focused to achieve goals.

streetscape — All the elements that make up the physical environment of a street and define its character. This includes paving, trees, lighting, building type, style, setback, pedestrian amenities and street furniture.

traffic calming — The combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behaviour and improve conditions for non-motorized street users. Typical devices include traffic circles, curb extension, diverters and speed humps.

traffic signals — A traffic control device used to regulate the flow of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians through an intersection.

transit service — Refers to all components (type of transit, routes, schedules, et cetera) of providing transit to residents, workers and tourists.

transit station area — The area surrounding a transit station along a primary transit line, such as a light rail transit or Bus Rapid Transit route, that includes enhanced amenities.

universal accessibility — Creating an environment with no barriers, so that all members of society can access the community amenities and participate in the activities of the neighbourhood.

utilities — Facilities for gas, electricity, telephone, cable television, water, and storm or sanitary sewer.

view corridors — Defined and discrete views from one point to another point. These may include, for example, views of the Calgary Tower from Centre Street S. or views of the Rocky Mountains from Nose Hill.

walkways, pedestrian — Principally a public linkage for pedestrians only — a right-of-way or easement.

Appendix 2: Relationship to other plans

The following is a guide to the Plan and its relationship to other planning documents including local area plans, **The Centre City Guidebook** and the **Municipal Development Plan** (MDP). The Plan is non-statutory and sets out the future vision and strategic moves to support the evolution of Greater Downtown over the next decade. **The Centre City Guidebook** provides the foundational framework and policies for creating great communities in Greater Downtown. And the local area plans offer additional locally specific guidance.

Municipal Development Plan

Calgary's **Municipal Development Plan** sets out a vision for how Calgary will grow and develop over the next 30 to 60 years. The policies in Volume 1 of the MDP inform local area plans by providing a citywide level of direction on land use, urban form and transportation that is interpreted and applied within a local-planning context. Specifically, the MDP identifies broad urban form typologies for the entire city including urban and neighbourhood main streets as well as activity centres that have been applied to the local context through the local area plans.

The Centre City Guidebook

The **Centre City Guidebook** is Volume 2, Part 2 of the **Municipal Development Plan** and the foundation for local area plans in Greater Downtown. The policies in the **Centre City Guidebook** are designed to create and maintain great communities for everyone and build upon the policies of the MDP. While local area plans set out the community-specific vision and policy, the **Centre City Guidebook** outlines a land use framework and common policies to support unique neighbourhood planning guidance within local area plans. The **Centre City Guidebook** currently only applies where a local area plan says it applies.

Local area plans

The local area plans provide the long-term vision specific to Greater Downtown communities and articulate a broad strategy for accommodating community growth and change. Community-specific policies related to land use planning and development matters are also included.

The local area plans in Greater Downtown include:

- **Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan Part 1** (approved – May 15, 2006, amended April 2019)
- **Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan Part 2** (approved – May 15, 2006, amended April 2019)

The Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan is a statutory document that is divided into two parts: Part 1 applies to the west portion of the Beltline. Part 2 provides specific policy for East Beltline and the Culture and Entertainment District envisioned for the area. The policies in the Centre City Guidebook apply only to Part 2.

- **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan** (approved January 1986, office consolidation November 2018)

The **Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan** is a statutory document. The policies in the Centre City Guidebook do not apply. However, an update to this local area plan is underway (2021) and once approved, the policies in the Centre City Guidebook should apply.

- **Downtown West End Policy Consolidation** (approved April 1993, office consolidation June 2009)

The **Downtown West End Policy Consolidation** is a non-statutory document. The policies in the Centre City Guidebook do not apply.

- **Eau Claire Area Redevelopment Plan** (approved July 1995)

The **Eau Claire Area Redevelopment Plan** is a statutory document. The policies in the Centre City Guidebook do not apply.

- **East Village Area Redevelopment Plan** (approved Feb. 14, 2017)

The **East Village Area Redevelopment Plan** is a statutory document. The policies in the Centre City Guidebook apply.

Master plans within the Rivers District

Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) was incorporated to implement and execute the Rivers District Community Revitalization Plan funded through a community revitalization levy (CRL). CMLC prepared master plans within the Rivers District for East Village and east Victoria Park.

- **East Village Master Plan**

The **East Village Master Plan** established the framework for redeveloping East Village into a vibrant, mixed-use, creative city neighbourhood — an urban village and one of the most dynamic areas within Calgary’s Downtown Core.

- **Rivers District Master Plan**

Although, Rivers District refers to the 504-acre (CRL) boundary, the **Rivers District Master Plan** refers to east Victoria Park. The **Rivers District Master Plan** envisions a mixed-use culture and entertainment district that unites with the City of Calgary’s vision and objectives. It will deliver a vision for the future growth, investment, attraction, connectivity and livability of the Rivers District while respecting east Victoria Park’s history as Calgary’s original entertainment and cultural centre. The comprehensive plan considers development and land-use plans underway and creates a more refined vision for east Victoria Park.

Centre City Urban Design Guidelines

The Centre City Urban Design Guidelines serve as a guide and inspiration for future development decisions in Greater Downtown. The guidelines build and expand upon the 2007 **Centre City Plan**. Along with other policies, the guidelines work towards the vision of “making Calgary a more beautiful, memorable city with a commitment to excellence in Urban Design.” (Section 2.4, **Municipal Development Plan**).

Designers, landowners, developers, citizens and our municipal government play an important role in building and shaping our city. These guidelines serve as an inspiration for creativity, innovation and cutting-edge architectural expressions, and are intended to further enhance Calgary’s progressive image both nationally and internationally.

Centre City Illumination Guidelines

Centre City Illumination Guidelines is a non-statutory document providing comprehensive urban design-based lighting guidance for Greater Downtown in the form of principles, guidelines and solution-based case studies. The guidelines align with the vision and goals of the 2007 **Centre City Plan**. They provide The City of Calgary leadership and design community with guidance for incorporating innovative, interesting and inviting illumination solutions for Greater Downtown. Implementation of the recommendations in these guidelines is purely voluntary.

Downtown Underpass Urban Design Guidelines

Downtown Underpass Urban Design Guidelines is a non-statutory document providing comprehensive urban design guidance for new underpasses and any improvements to existing underpasses within Greater Downtown area. These guidelines include urban design principles and design solutions that address common issues associated with Calgary's downtown underpasses. These issues are related to safety, connectivity, accessibility, context, vitality, greenery and beauty. The intent of the document is to create best-practice solutions in underpass design and improvements that would guide the public and private sectors. It is intended to achieve a high-quality public realm, pedestrian and cyclist linkages, as directed by the 2007 **Centre City Plan**. The underpasses are gateways to Greater Downtown's destinations for work, arts and culture, administration and retail. These gateways have to be designed as highly functional and inviting for the various needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users and motorists.

The following table outlines the relationship between key planning documents in Greater Downtown.

| Key content for identified document | Centre City Guidebook, MDP Volume 2, Part 2 | Local area plans | Greater Downtown Plan |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Statutory/ non statutory | Statutory | Statutory | Non-statutory |
| Time frame | MDP is 30 to 60 years | 20 years | 10 years |
| Use of document | Used during preparation of a local area plan and when reviewing development applications. | Used when compiling or reviewing a planning application. | Used when preparing budgets, work plans, business cases, project scopes, public realm improvement plans and amendments to local area plans |
| Contextual Information | None | Community-specific statistics | Greater Downtown statistics |
| Vision, principles and goals | Copy of MDP vision for Centre City at the time – outdated | Vision and core ideas – community | For Greater Downtown within timeframe: |
| Framework | Land use and policy framework – land use categories and associated policy for Greater Downtown | Application of the land use and policy framework within the community | Vision – 30 to 60 years |
| Development policies | Greater Downtown-wide development policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urban design ▪ Open space ▪ Mobility ▪ Infrastructure and environment | Community specific development policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urban design ▪ Parks and open space ▪ Mobility ▪ Arts and culture ▪ Infrastructure and environment | Principles – 30 to 60 years |
| Supporting growth and taking strategic action | None | Community-specific - Future projects and studies | Goals – 10 years |
| Implementation tools | None | Actions – pilot and short, medium and long term | Detailed implementation |

Appendix 3: Public engagement

Overview

The City of Calgary started conducting engagement in 2018 for the project to replace the **Centre City Plan**, now referred to as **Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan**. The project embraced a collaborative approach guided by a Technical Advisory Committee, a Management Steering Committee and frequent involvement of key stakeholders. Engagement targeted key stakeholders, Calgarians passionate about downtown and internal stakeholders.

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan project team met with 535 different people in-person and 300 virtually who offered their time, expertise and hopes for the future of downtown through 16 formal engagement sessions and many more informal meetings. More than 990 people completed online surveys. To ensure widespread and inclusive participation in developing this Plan, public outreach included standard outreach with an email list and Facebook and Twitter posts as well as targeted outreach for Chinese-speaking residents. In total, the engagement process for this project engaged over 1,500 people.

Downtown Strategy discussions

Through the Downtown Strategy working group discussions regarding Greater Downtown were ongoing with Community and Business Associations, Civic Partners, local leaders, institutions, developers, architects and downtown advocates. These conversations presented opportunities to have honest conversations about the challenges and future of downtown.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The project team assembled a TAC team comprised of members across City departments and key external stakeholders to meet on a regular basis. The role of the TAC team was to help guide review and development of the Plan as well to support during engagement events.

Cross-corporate Manager Steering Committee

Once a proposed draft Plan was prepared, a new project structure was put in place with a cross-corporate manager steering committee. The reason for this new structure was to have a quality assurance process in place to ensure an increasing amount of certainty and ownership over the content and document. Creation of the multi-departmental Steering Committee was also to oversee reviews, edits and decisions relating to the draft document. The visionary nature of the Plan highlighted differences in priorities between different departments and the need for a multi-departmental Steering Committee of decision-makers to fill this role.

Website

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan website (calgary.ca/greaterdowntownplan) served as the online home for the duration of the project. The website was kept current with background information, opportunities to get involved, results from engagement and key milestone dates. There was also a link to sign-up for a mailing list to receive project updates.

Online engagement

The online engagement webpage received 9859 views and 1036 contributions of feedback. Activities took place in two forms. The first "social map" allowed participants to identify likes and dislikes about the current Centre City by marking locations and comments on a map. The second social map allowed participants to identify locations of hopes and fears for the future of Centre City. Feedback helped the team to identify values, aspirations and concerns for the area.

Key stakeholder and public workshops

Engagement for **Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan** convened at the historic St. Louis Hotel in East Village for three three-hour sessions — two in the morning and one in the evening — to provide information through story boards and a presentation followed by facilitated activities with subject matter experts.

All workshops required an RSVP to ensure appropriate participation numbers of 60–80. This technique worked well and allowed us to provide

important information and reading materials ahead of time. The workshops covered Plan vision, principles, big ideas, issues and actions.

In total 155 people participated by providing meaningful discussion, comments and ideas.

Pop-up engagements

At each pop-up event, a table was set up with a large map of Greater Downtown. Participants were asked to identify ideas and opportunities on the map, as well as major issues that should be addressed. This activity was well received as the map made it participant-focused. For the second activity, participants could review the principles of the Plan. This activity was not received as enthusiastically due to the quick-stop nature of the pop-up engagement. Pop-up events gained feedback from 180 people across Greater Downtown.

Focused workshops

Focused stakeholder workshops were held to dive deeper into specific subjects, including:

- Parks
- Inclusive, caring and safe
- Culture and activity
- Transportation
- Economic and climate resilience
- Placemaking

Workshops were attended by a total of 200 people representing internal City departments and external stakeholder groups.

These workshops each began with a 30-minute presentation, which provided an overview of the Plan accompanied by a more detailed briefing document.

The table activities focused on goals for the subjects. They explored whether these goals were realistic and how they could be implemented.

The events finished with a report back from participants and comments regarding next steps.

Final information session

On January 20, 2021, The City hosted a live, virtual event in which key elements of the proposed draft Plan were presented to stakeholders and the public at large. This online event was attended by close to 300 participants. The focus of this information session was to share **Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan** vision, principles and actions within the Plan.

Within the presentation, an online tool was used to collect feedback on areas such as the vision statement and the big moves.

“This Downtown Plan affects every Calgarian. Active participation should be sought whenever practicable, not just until the Plan is adopted but in the continuing process of implementation.”

— The Future of Downtown Calgary, 1966

