

CITY OF AIRDRIE
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
BYLAW NO. B-01/2022

Being a bylaw of the City of Airdrie
to adopt the Airdrie Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan

WHEREAS under the authority and subject to the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*, Revised Statutes of Alberta, 2000, Chapter M-26, and amendments thereto, the Council of the City of Airdrie may adopt, by bylaw, an area redevelopment plan for the purpose of improving land and buildings and facilitating redevelopment in the area; and

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Airdrie has passed Bylaw No. 24/99 as the City of Airdrie Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan; and

WHEREAS Council deems it is desirable to replace Bylaw No. 24/99;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Airdrie in Council duly assembled enacts as follows that:

1. This Bylaw may be cited as the City of Airdrie Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan;
2. The bylaw attached hereto as Schedule "A" is adopted in its entirety as the City of Airdrie Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan;
3. Bylaw No. 24/99 and all amendments thereto, is hereby repealed in its entirety.

Read a first time this 6th day of June, 2022.

Read a second time this 6th day of June, 2022.

Read a third time this 6th day of September, 2022.

This bylaw was executed as of the latest
date evidenced by digital signature below.

Peter Brown

Mayor

Charlotte Satink

City Clerk

Bylaw No. B-01/2022
Schedule "A"

**Our Core Strategy:
Airdrie's Downtown
Revitalization Plan**

June 2022





Council's Statement of Success for Downtown Revitalization

A revitalized downtown has more people living, shopping and spending money there. Businesses stay open in our downtown. Residents are proud of downtown Airdrie. It is an important part of Airdrie's brand, identity and economic development.

Acknowledgements

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Councillor Heather Spearman
Councillor Candice Kolson
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CITY of
AIRDRIE
COMMUNITY & OPPORTUNITY

D *Airdrie* } **downtown
differently**



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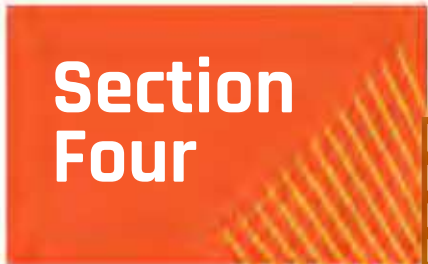
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Section One

Introduction & Administration



Airdrie } **downtown**



1.01 | Plan Introduction

Component of the Downtown Revitalization Strategy

Downtown Revitalization represents one of Council's Strategic Priorities (2019 – 2022). Council defined success for Downtown Revitalization as follows:

A revitalized downtown has more people living, shopping and spending money there. Businesses stay open in our downtown. Residents are proud of downtown Airdrie. It is an important part of Airdrie's brand, identity and economic development.

The purpose of the Airdrie Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) is to establish the vision and principles for revitalization and to guide redevelopment in support of Council's Strategic Priority. The ARP is one component of the overall strategy to achieve Downtown Revitalization:

- Background Report
- Supporting Studies
- Area Redevelopment Plan
- Development Incentives

The Background Report provides current assets, trends, market analyses and the 'downtown visioning' results from 2017. The Supporting Studies identify capacity limitations and opportunities. These documents support the ARP, which sets out the actions to revitalize the downtown and the potential incentives to encourage private investment.

The strategy is completed with a series of bylaws, bylaw amendments and resolutions of Council which translate the actions from the plan into focused redevelopment and activity incentives. The municipality is committed to defined timelines to take steps, make investments, and establish specific incentives for private investment. Incentives form only part of the overall implementation of the plan, but are intended to achieve the maximum possible return on investment for the taxpayer where they apply.

No one document is designed to work in isolation. It is the combination that creates the coordinated strategy to achieve Downtown Revitalization.

Plan Structure

Section one outlines how the Plan addresses Council's priority of Downtown Revitalization. It sets the vision and principles for the plan, as well as the objectives and targets for redevelopment. It introduces the foundational concepts of active frontage and complete streets, which are essential to creating a distinct urban experience for the downtown.

Citizens and stakeholders provided a preferred land use concept for the downtown during a series of charrettes in 2019. The policies in **Section two** regulate development form to achieve that vision. This section describes the proposed land uses, as well as the rules for density and characteristics. The relationship of public space, recreation, and overall servicing capacity to support the desired land use concept are described in that section.

Section three describes the services that should be located downtown for the benefit of the community and the position of downtown within the community overall. It describes things like social inclusivity (affordable housing, accessibility) and activity generation (placemaking initiatives, event programming, temporary land uses and activities. etc.).

In **Section two** and **Section three**, issues are laid out in the following way to ensure that the policies and actions for each issue align with the plan vision, principles and Council's statements of success:

- **Preamble** | The Current State of the Issue
- **Objective** | The Desired End State for that Issue
- **Principles** | The Approach to Reach the Objective
- **Policies** | The Means to Create Change in the Direction of the Objective
- **Municipal Actions** | Direct Steps by the Municipality in Support of the Objective

These sections acknowledge the relationship between form and function. For example, a function like affordable housing will do a better job of providing social inclusivity when the building design and form fit in well with the rest of the downtown. The policies in these sections reflect that relationship and broaden the nature of the change required to meet Council's statements of success and the plan vision.

Section four describes additional ways that we can make downtown redevelopment happen faster and sets out the key performance indicators. It tells us what is working, and what is not, and points to:

- Ways to engage the affected communities, businesses, property owners and other stakeholders regarding ongoing implementation processes; and,
- Potential options for working with landowners or other levels of government to achieve success with the plan.

Current State

Airdrie counts a population over 75,000, an employment base of 16,000 jobs, and a total non-residential assessment value of approximately \$1.85B. Downtown Airdrie, as defined by this plan, is home to 432 residents and 1,364 jobs. With approximately 57,700 m² (621,000 ft²) of commercial building floor area, it has a total non-residential assessment value of \$177.0M.

Airdrie has been a high-growth community for more than 25 years, especially for residential uses. This has led to an assessment value split of 85:15 for residential to non-residential uses, with little variation. Accordingly, Council adopted a strategic priority to Attract and Retain Businesses with a target of a 75:25 residential to non-residential assessment value split. Successful Downtown Revitalization can play a large role in reaching the assessment value target set by Council.

Airdrie's Economic Strategy 2018 – 2028 describes Airdrie as a market of untapped potential, perhaps nowhere more so than in its downtown. In the past quarter-century, the primary development successes in the downtown have only been in the form of new construction on vacant sites along 1 Avenue and 8 Street until the replacement of a service station in 2020, no demolition for the purposes of reconstruction occurred.

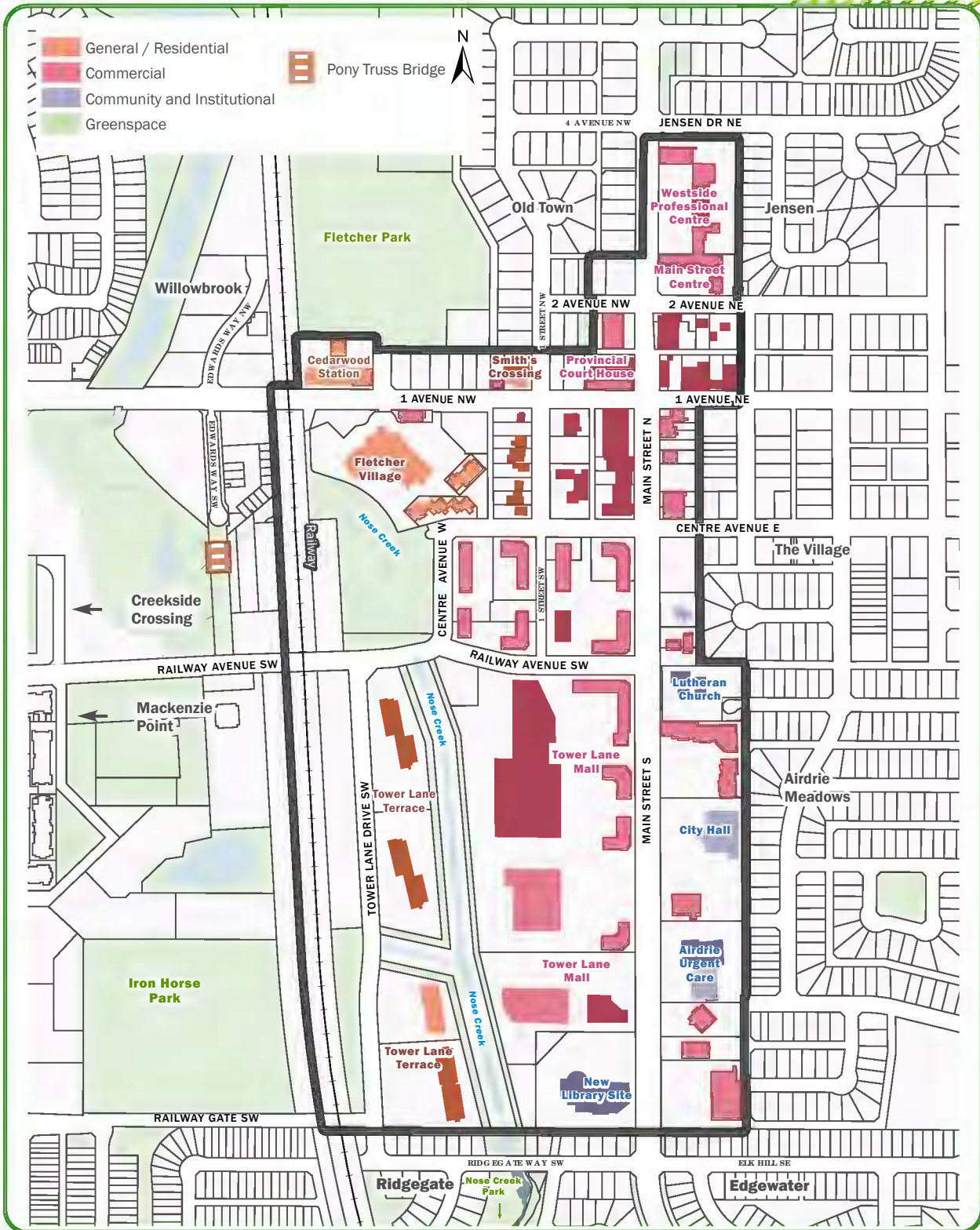
The slow uptake may be due to the significant competition with other commercial areas. Commercial retail in Gateway, Sierra Springs, Cooper's Crossing and Kingsview compete for local spending, while CrossIron Mills Mall in Rocky View County is a substantial regional draw, grossing approximately \$547M in spending annually (2019 data from most recent Property Fact Sheet).

However, the opportunity in Downtown Airdrie is huge. As identified in the Supporting Studies, the water network can service an additional service demand population¹ of 25,000 while the wastewater pipes can service an additional service demand population of approximately 5,300. Between 2019 and 2021, the City made substantial servicing upgrades to accommodate the minimum population and employment thresholds found in **Section 1.5**, as well as the population and employment aspirations.

Downtown Airdrie has ample locations for redevelopment, with associated gains in population, jobs and assessment value. The downtown offers the best opportunity to sustain or improve the non-residential assessment ratio until some of the key industrial areas outlined in the Growth Strategy (12,000 Acres Plan) can be reached. Looking beyond our own boundaries, few locations in the region already represent such a significant commercial, social and employment draw with such unconstrained potential to expand.

¹ See "Service Population Demand Explained" in Section 2.03 for a definition of this term.

Plan Boundary and Local Context



Regional Context

The Calgary Metropolitan Region has a population of approximately 1,400,000 and Airdrie is the second largest city in the region with about 5% of the total. The Interim Regional Growth Plan anticipates an additional million residents by 2045 with only a slight increase in the proportion of persons and jobs locating in the outlying communities, like Airdrie.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the larger urban hub of Calgary may continue to draw most of the additional activity and businesses. However, this does not mean that Downtown Airdrie cannot play a unique and important role for knowledge economy and local tourism attraction in the region. It is simply to say that expectations for commercial and employment growth need to be tempered with this in mind, as Airdrie functions very differently in its local and regional context than a stand-alone, urban city of 75,000 people with a larger trade area.

Figure 01 | **Regional Context** shows Airdrie's downtown along with other features and elements from the surrounding area that influence development within this plan.

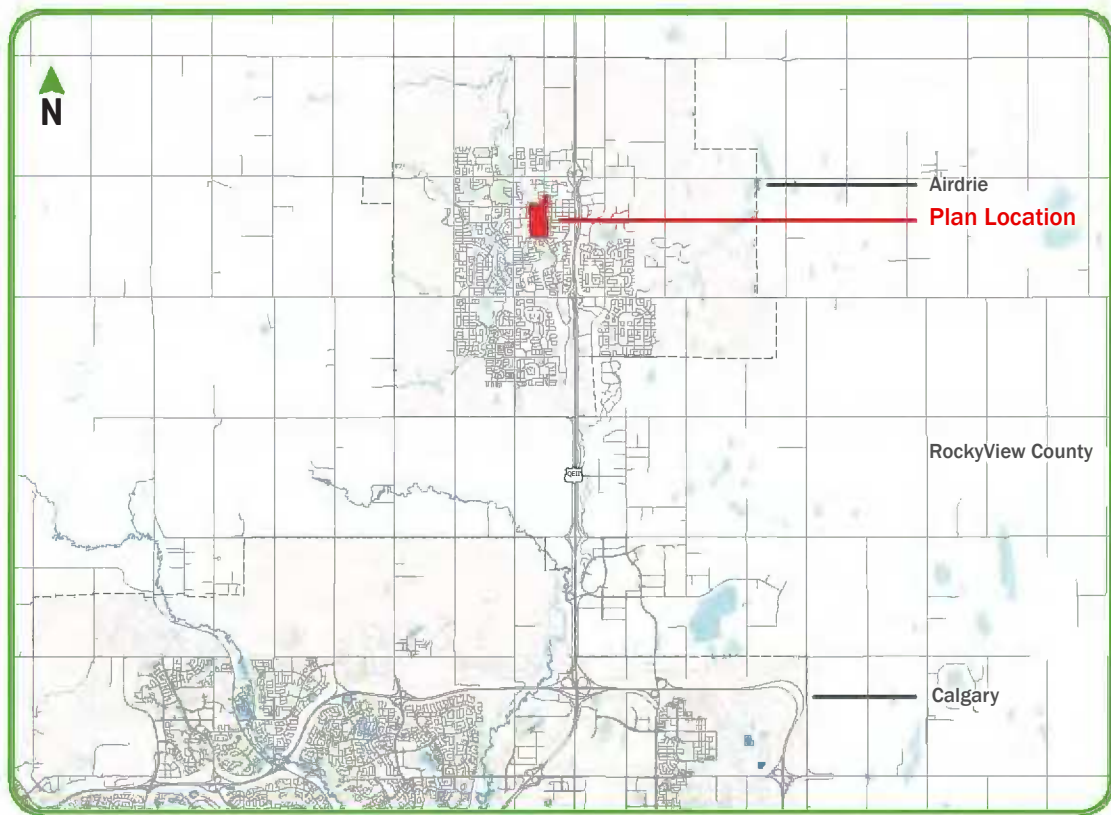


Figure 01 | **Regional Context**

Requirements and Plan Alignment

Section 635 of the MGA states that an ARP is required to address the following:

- Objectives of the plan and how they are proposed to be achieved,
- Proposed land uses
- Reasons for imposing redevelopment levy (if proposed),
- Proposals for the acquisition of land, and
- Any other proposals that council considers necessary.

An ARP must also be consistent with the broader land use and transportation patterns established under the City's Municipal Development Plan and any Intermunicipal Development Plan or Regional Growth Plan.

The Downtown Airdrie ARP addresses these requirements by reviewing the issues related to form (i.e., development intensity or characteristics) in **Section two** and those related to function (i.e., social services, community hub, activity generation) in **Section three**.

Plan Timeline and Review

The plan defines actions for the City within the first five to seven years. This sets a foundation to reach targets for population, employment and assessed value within the first ten years, with the ultimate development concept being realized within a 20–30-year horizon.

Individual actions and initiatives can be reviewed annually through business planning and budget processes, and the plan and associated documents that make up the Downtown Revitalization strategy should be reviewed not less than once every five years.

Plan Interpretation

In reading the plan, the intent or text preceding a policy is provided only as information to enhance the understanding of the associated policies.

Where “shall” is used in a policy, the action is mandatory. Policies that use “should” indicate that the particular action or thing is preferred, but not mandatory. If the City deems that the policy is not reasonable or feasible in a situation, alternatives will be considered. The City can use discretion to implement or enforce policies that use “may”.

The boundaries or locations of any symbols or areas shown on a map are not intended to define exact locations except where they coincide with clearly recognizable physical features or fixed boundaries such as property lines or road and utility rights-of-ways.

Please note: Figures in the plan are aspirational in nature and include elements that may not reflect the current orientation and layout of existing parcels, roads and other features.

»» 1.02 | Downtown Vision

Downtown Airdrie is the place that people love

The vision that Downtown Airdrie is the place that people love is a very intentional choice on how to describe a successful revitalization. After all, when you love something –

- » You invest your time, effort, and money on it.
- » You prioritize it in your decision-making process.
- » You take care of it.
- » You protect it.
- » It becomes central to who you are, and...
- » ...you want to show it off to the world.

In setting the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Priorities, Council stated their intent to take exactly these types of actions as part of Downtown Revitalization. Council declared that they loved downtown, wanted to love it more still, and wanted others to feel the same. Council expressed that:

A revitalized downtown has more people living, shopping, and spending money there. Businesses stay open in our downtown. Residents are proud of downtown Airdrie. It is an important part of Airdrie's brand, identity, and economic development.

The plan to revitalize downtown is about creating a feeling – a place that people will love and where they will want to be. It is our path to get to that point, telling the story as we roll out a strategy to make the downtown the place that we truly love. Designed to answer the major questions facing the downtown, a reader will be able to pick up this plan and know the exact direction of the community on each of those issues or questions.

As a redevelopment strategy, the plan acknowledges that the path may not necessarily be easy. Making Downtown Airdrie the place that people love is likely to require actions and incentives never previously considered for development in Airdrie.

As a community story, it will always be in progress to some extent. A plan is a living document that will be altered and improved along the way to reflect the needs of the community, the issues of the day, and to update the portions of this plan that have been implemented.

Any such tweaks will only add to the story of a growing and prominent community and further the plan and the aspirations of its citizens. But this plan is our declaration on how best to reach the vision today, with all available information, best intents, and declared support for this strategic priority.

This is our story, and this is our plan. We hope that you love it.

»» 1.03 | Plan Principles

The following principles have guided our thinking and decision-making toward Downtown Revitalization as a whole. They are reflected in the approach, policies, and actions for every issue found in the plan.

Heart of the City

> **Develop downtown as the central core of population, jobs, services, and amenities.**

Despite a central location and substantial opportunities, Airdrie's downtown faces challenges from competing commercial areas outside of the downtown that are still building out and have better access to the QE2 highway corridor. Yet, residents and Council have expressed the view that this is the core of the city, and the desire to make something more of it. This has been affirmed through the City's visioning exercises, Council priorities, and tangible projects, such as servicing upgrades and site selection for the New Multi-use Facility and Library. Being the heart of the city means that it is the primary location for new investment, residents, services, and employment. Attracting growth and investment in the downtown will make efficient use of the existing infrastructure and build on the foundation already laid and support the prevailing view that this is the heart of Airdrie.

Everyone's Success

> **Stimulate private investment and redevelopment in the downtown.**

For Airdrie's downtown to be successful, the businesses, residents, and groups within the area must be successful. It is a main objective of the plan to create a downtown where residents choose to live, visit, and do business. Investment in the area needs to be encouraged, facilitated, and supported by policies in the downtown plan and decisions made by the City and other supporting stakeholders. In this plan, private development success is seen as being equally important as public action, if not more so. Leveraging the private dollar is seen as one of the best ways to create a vibrant downtown.



Reimagine Main Street

> Strengthen Main Street as the central axis of the downtown.

Through the visioning exercises of 2017 and the design work of 2019, Main Street emerged as a key element of the plan. Residents wanted Main Street to be a 'Complete Street', one that accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, transit and vehicular traffic at the same time. The goal is to have it become the organizing feature of the plan area, with strategic placement and management of traffic, buildings, landscaping, plazas and gathering spaces. It needs to provide services and amenities, and become a constant source of activity. This will require flexibility moving forward to suit the flow of people—during daytime, nighttime, weekends and the challenging winter months found in this part of the world.

Think Big

> Support large-scale catalysts and anchor projects.

The downtown visioning exercises highlighted support for the types of actions and changes that would transform our downtown. This is intended to be a plan of action, where City staff, Council, businesses, and residents reframe how we think, plan, talk, and decide on things when it comes to the downtown. Beyond this fundamental change in the City's approach, the downtown needs strong anchors and catalyst projects which will create interest and energy in the area and drive other businesses, people, and developers to create the same. In addition to the decision to locate the New Multi-use Facility and Library downtown in August 2019, more projects, events, and programs must follow suit to create a critical mass that will attract new investment and redevelopment to the area.

The Place to Be

> Generate traffic, activity, and interest throughout the plan area.

For Airdrie's downtown to attract investment and new development, there needs to be a concentration of people, activities, and businesses working collectively to add value for each other. Without a residential/customer base, new businesses will not locate in the downtown, and without activities and services there are no reasons for residents to go downtown. The Municipality's role here is to market the downtown to prospective investors and use the tools at its disposal to facilitate development, events, programs, and other initiatives to bring more people, businesses and activity to the area. This should also extend to providing destinations that celebrate the City's identity and reflect the behaviours and interests of the people that live here.



An Investment in our Future

> Leverage municipal resources to lead and support revitalization efforts.

The City of Airdrie is uniquely positioned with time, people and resources that it can invest in the downtown. These can be leveraged to initiate necessary projects and programs, as well as to support developers and businesses looking to start projects in the area. The City should be open to exploring a range of projects, partnerships and grants facilitating new investment, as well as subsidies for local events and placemaking which can be transitioned to community leaders over time. A key part of this will be in building relationships to ensure that we are all working toward the same goal and supporting the emergence of the downtown as a successful investment area. City investments will be made with the understanding that they will pay back dividends over time from the value captured in property taxes, and as part of a critical mass needed to generate more interest and development in the downtown.

Lead by Example

> Demonstrate support for the downtown and the plan policies in municipal projects.

The municipality assumes a leadership role in the actions needed to speed up redevelopment, but also sets the expectations for future private developments. There are many ways to take this leadership role, including improvements to the accessibility, flow, landscaping and availability of parking on public streets. Doing so simultaneously confirms municipal commitment to the downtown and provides connection points and standards for owners and businesses in adjacent areas.

Civic catalyst projects provide another opportunity to be a leader, especially with the New Multi-use Facility and Library at the south end of the downtown. Execution here on commitments to high quality architecture and site design will enhance Main Street and Nose Creek and set the tone for private redevelopment projects.

The Right Rules and Processes

> Identify and remove barriers to redevelopment projects.

Planning standards and Land Use Bylaw requirements need to strike the right balance between predictability and flexibility. Rules that are too rigid will not respond to changing times and opportunities, but rules that are too flexible create uncertainty in how they will be understood and applied from one case to another. A balance needs to be struck between supporting private development and protecting the public interest. The downtown plan and any supporting policies, projects, and regulations must remove obstacles to support revitalization, but retain good decision-making and quality development throughout the downtown.



Connected and Mobile

> Create an accessible and well-designed urban centre.

For the downtown area to be competitive and successful, there will need to be a commitment to improve accessibility and connectivity. This means providing better east-west connections into downtown and improving the north and south gateways on Main Street. Key corridors will have to be upgraded to become complete streets, and the City will have to work with developers to ensure that parking is accommodated without impacting future redevelopment potential. Above all, downtown needs to be accessible to people, with connecting pathways, accessible design standards, and attention paid to street-level building and right-of-way designs.

Putting People First

> Design downtown's form, functions, and experiences with people as the priority.

Downtowns offer functions that are necessary for the entire community. They are the places where we build our identity and celebrate our values and heritage. Residents told us that it is important for Airdrie to retain its small-town feel, and it is for that reason that downtown must be a place created for and by people. Achieving this will mean that downtown has a range of services, functions, housing, lifestyles, and activities designed with people as the priority.



» Downtown Revitalization Objective

The objectives for Downtown Revitalization have been defined by Council in the following strategic priority statements:

SP5.1 | Residents go to downtown Airdrie

SP5.2 | Residents support the businesses

SP5.3 | Residents enjoy the downtown

» Area Redevelopment Plan Objective

The objective of the Area Redevelopment Plan is:

To accelerate the pace of redevelopment in support of Downtown Revitalization.

» 1.04 | Objectives

Section 635 of the MGA requires an ARP to define its objectives and outline the means to achieve them. This subsection outlines the objective for this ARP, as well as the redevelopment targets and approach to achieve them.

Means to achieve the objectives and targets are presented in **Section two** and **Section three** of this plan. Those sections guide the nature of private redevelopment and outline the municipal actions and potential incentives included in the full Downtown Revitalization strategy.

Council has expressed the objective of Downtown Revitalization as a series of outcomes that are tied closely to our emotional connection to the downtown, which is reflected in the vision for Downtown Revitalization contained in this plan.

Specific targets for this objective in population, employment, and assessed value are described here. They consider the current state, regional context, benchmarks from similar communities and objectives from other municipal priorities and plans. The approach to achieve these targets considers the gap between the current state and the desired state.

»» 1.05 | Approach to Redevelopment

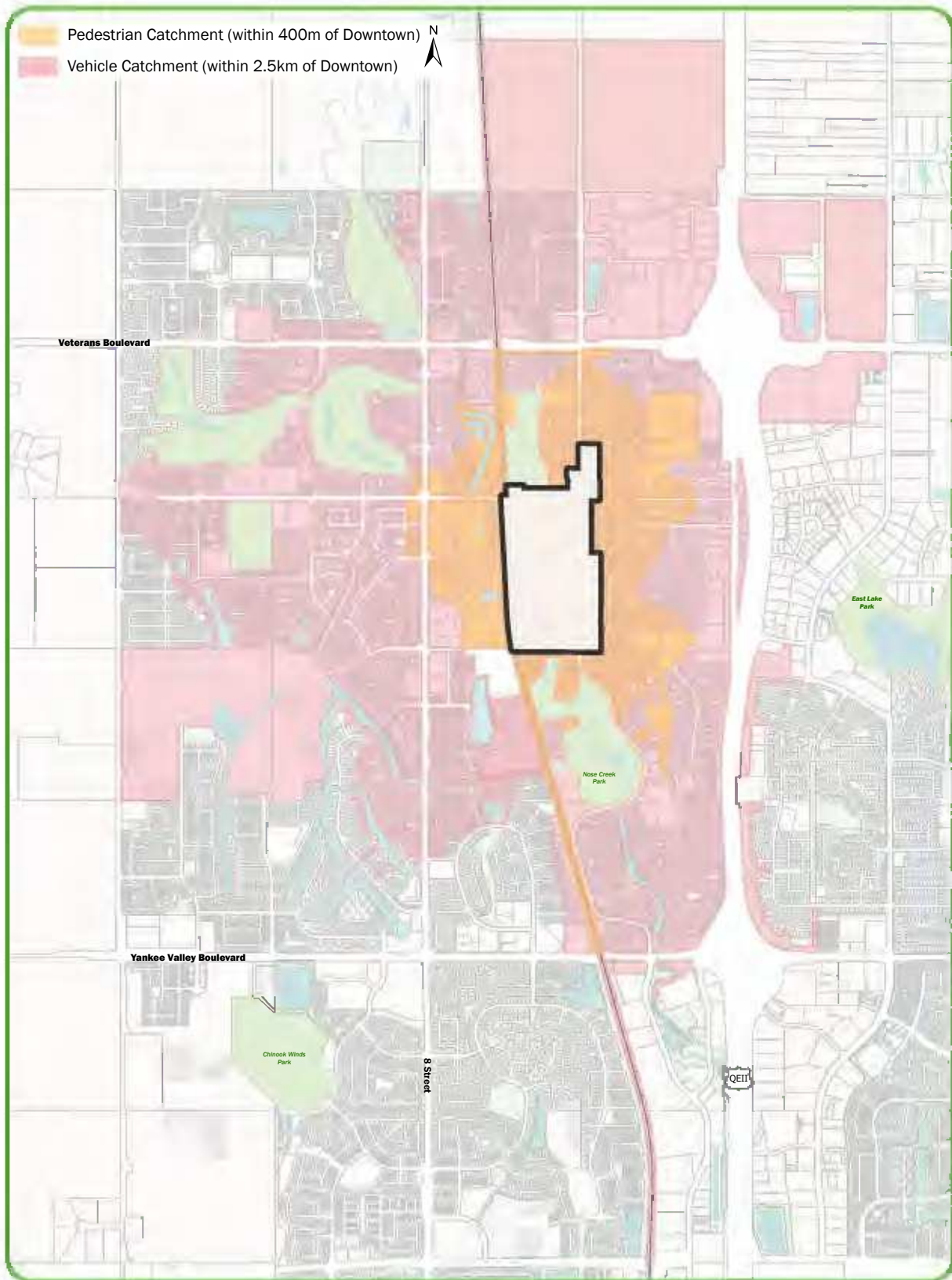
The limited redevelopment in Downtown Airdrie over the last 25 years and the results of the Downtown Visioning exercise indicate market forces alone may not be enough to achieve Council's description of successful Downtown Revitalization. This plan suggests that a bold new approach will need to be taken to accelerate the pace of redevelopment.

Fortunately, Downtown Airdrie has several elements that can be used to attract redevelopment and other forms of investment:

- A local trade area comprising of 4,420 residents within 400m (a 5-minute walk) and a total of 23,029 within 2km (a typical 10-minute bike ride, transit ride or private vehicle trip), illustrated on [Figure 02 | Downtown Catchment Areas](#).
- A regional trade area of 110,000 people, with an average household income of \$149,000.
- Approximately twice the required number of on-site and on-street parking stalls that can be converted into new development.
- Permissive zoning regulations that guarantee up to 8 storeys of development rights, along with many permitted uses.
- Servicing capacity that allows for approximately twice the current amount of development; and,
- No off-site levy bylaw payments required for use of this increased servicing capacity.

**We will have to attract
in order to accelerate.**

Figure 02 | Downtown Catchment Areas



The policies and actions for the issues described in this plan consider the existing competitive advantages. But they also identify, create, and market other potential advantages to be broadcast regionally, provincially, nationally, and even internationally. These competitive advantages influence the recommended Municipal Actions, as:

» Marketing competitive advantages will be central to our attraction efforts.

Competitive advantages are designed to bring private investment to the downtown. Such investment may not always immediately take the highest and best form. But the aim of investment attraction is to translate opportunities into steps toward the targets.

Our approach supports incremental redevelopment and intensification under the maximum heights and densities allowed by the ARP and Land Use Bylaw. However, it requires the proposed development to increase the intensity, activities, land uses, and/or facilities offered on the site, without limiting future intensification. Our approach recognizes that:

» Incremental results from our competitive advantages also move the needle.

Our approach to redevelopment in the downtown suggests that reaching a critical mass of energy, activity, and redevelopment is essential for long-term success. More residents living and travelling in the downtown, and more activity (events, festivals, gatherings) throughout the area are needed to attract new investment, businesses, and activities. The influx of more businesses and activities will, in turn, draw more people to live and travel within the area. This creates a positive cycle that supports the objectives of Downtown Revitalization and the ARP. The proactive approach recognizes that the competitive advantages we create through incentives must be evaluated to determine if they help us make progress to achieve the critical mass that will sustain investment in the downtown, noting that:

» Actions and incentives must help achieve critical mass to be retained.

The proactive approach commits Council and Administration to offer something unique and advantageous to those who seek to invest in Airdrie's downtown. But it also requires us to evaluate our actions and results. We must be flexible enough to try something new and yet adjust when an incentive does not achieve the target, without ever stepping away from the objectives stated by Council for Downtown Revitalization.

Competitive advantages through incentives or other means are not intended to create a financial drain for the municipality. A positive return on investment either in economic (improving assessment and generating new investment in the city) or social terms (improving access to services, community health, and social well-being) is required from any incentive developed to help us reach our development and revitalization targets:

» Incentives should achieve a positive return on investment for the taxpayer.

Our approach views incentives as investments in the social and economic potential of the downtown and a way to help Airdrie meet its other strategic priorities and retain its strong competitive position within the region. As investors in this community, residents will benefit from this approach.

»» 1.06 | Aspirations and Targets

Establishing Targets

The definition of success for Downtown Revitalization, the current state, the regional context, and our intended approach frame the targets established for downtown redevelopment.

As described in the Background Report, Council adopted the 12,000 Acres Plan in 2018 to forecast population and employment growth, with corresponding land demand requirements to the year 2065. This gives a picture of the growth for Airdrie but does not identify how new residents and jobs will be split between greenfield and redevelopment areas, and it provided no specific growth targets for the downtown area.

Likewise, the Airdrie City Plan and the AirdrieONE Sustainability Plan do not set a specific population threshold, employment threshold, or overall redevelopment target for the downtown. Therefore, other benchmarks need to be reviewed to help set targets for this plan.

Other Benchmarks

Researching the range in potential growth for Downtown Airdrie, there is general alignment on some benchmark targets that would position the Downtown Plan for success. As a suburban town centre within the Calgary Region, consider that:

- Calgary's City-Wide Policies target minimum thresholds of 100 people or jobs per gross developable hectare for "Activity Centres" to support quality transit service, and higher minimum thresholds of 200 people or jobs per gross developable hectare are set for Major Activity Centres and Main Streets.
- Ontario's Transit Supportive Guidelines and Growth Plan Performance Indicators suggest a minimum density threshold of 100 combined residents and jobs per hectare to support Frequent Bus Service with the potential for future development of Light Rail Transit (LRT) or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. Mid-sized Communities (50,000–150,000 population) have established "growth centre" targets of 150 combined residents and jobs per hectare.
- Additional literature on Transit Oriented Design (TOD) suggests targets for downtown areas like Airdrie's size and context (e.g., suburban town centres) of at least 37 people per hectare and up to 100 jobs per hectare.

Aligning with similar thresholds, the Downtown Plan could set a reasonable target to accommodate between 3,700 and 5,500 combined population and jobs within the plan area. An aggressive, stretch goal would target the threshold set by Calgary for "Major Activity Centres" and "Main Streets," pursuing a total of 7,300 people and jobs.

The Supporting Studies confirm that such benchmarks for new population and employment creation can be achieved presently with the recent servicing infrastructure investments made by the City.

Scenarios, Aspirations and Targets

Section 14.11 of the Airdrie City Plan (MDP) identifies the need for a Financial Impact Assessment (FIA). The City of Airdrie selected IBI Group to complete this FIA in 2022 in association with the Downtown Plan. IBI Group produced two redevelopment scenarios with combined employment and residency calculations for the plan area, found below. However, we have also set targets and aspirations for population, employment, and assessment value based on benchmarks for very strong, urban downtowns:

FIA | Low Redevelopment Scenario

- » 650 combined jobs and residents
- » \$55M in new assessment value

Population and Employment Target

- » A minimum of 4,000 new residents and jobs within the Plan area.

Population and Employment Aspiration

- » 7,000 new residents and jobs within the Plan area.

FIA | High Redevelopment Scenario

- » 1,350 combined jobs and residents
- » \$154M in new assessment value

Assessment Value Target

- » \$65,000,000 in new assessed value in any form within the Plan area.

Assessment Value Aspiration

- » \$130,000,000 in new assessment value, with at least \$65,000,000 in new non-residential assessment value within the Plan area.

»» 1.07 | Foundational Concepts

This plan recognizes that there are intangible aspects of Council's statements of success that require additional thinking and effort for the type of urban experience that we are looking to create.

For the purposes of this plan, urban experience is defined as:

Our perception of the things in the physical and social environment of an urban area that set it apart from other man-made or environmental contexts.

These perceptions and feelings are not guaranteed to be positive. But the urban experience matters because the needle toward achieving Council's statements of success moves based on the feelings and perceptions of those who experience our downtown.

To influence the feelings and perceptions that make up the urban experience, two design aspects matter most:

- Active frontage; and
- Complete streets

Combined, these two design aspects create so much of the urban experience because they draw together land uses, activities, and transportation forms at places, and in ways, that we can experience simultaneously.

Creating Distinctness and Marketability

Accelerated redevelopment is expected to further distinguish the downtown from other areas in Airdrie and the experiences from those areas. The way the increased height, density and activity from redevelopment are managed through active frontage and complete street design elements will impact how people perceive downtown. Executed well, this provides the opportunity to:

Create a distinct and marketable urban experience.

The following sections highlight the design aspects and explain the elements that go into each.



Active Frontage

A lot of work goes into creating a good relationship between buildings and the street. Concentrated effort must be given to the elements of the buildings, the street, and the spaces in between to create positive experiences and feelings from those areas.

Active frontage is the result of applying certain elements to these spaces. Done well, it can drive so much about the downtown's character, and how people experience it. It is a key part of creating the kind of environment described in Council's statement of success. Successful active frontage attracts people and energy by virtue of its design alone.

The Downtown Plan identifies twelve such elements² that must be addressed to create active frontage. These are described below:

Building Design

1. Buildings should apply a comprehensive and cohesive design, with massing and architecture working together and considering the building's relationship with surrounding spaces and developments. Readers should note that this does not imply that building designs should be 'the same as' the surrounding development – in fact, there are certainly circumstances where unique design styles and elements are supported or even encouraged – but any design should still relate to its surrounding environment.
2. Buildings should establish a clear relationship to the street and surrounding public space. This is created and enforced by having the height of the façade relate to the width of the sidewalks and right-of-way and ensuring that there are windows and detailing facing the street along the building frontage. The massing of buildings also affects this relationship and larger buildings may need to include variations to keep the massing of the building appropriate at the street level.
3. Building and architectural features should express conscious thought and detail in their design. While the downtown plan purposefully does not set a specific architectural theme or style, it is expected that buildings should apply detailing along the façade as well as textures and materials in service of enhancing the building where it is visible along the street. This should be pursued to improve the individual site and the way that each building contributes to the overall experience and character of the downtown.



Land Use Elements

4. Individual land uses should promote activity at the street level. This should focus specifically on restaurants, retail and recreational land uses, some institutional uses such as libraries or museums, plazas and public or parks and community gardens. These uses should be dedicated for spaces immediately facing the street where possible and passive land uses like offices can be placed above the first storey or away from the dedicated building frontage.
5. The primary access for buildings and land uses should face the street. The access should always be directly accessible and have a clear line of sight from the sidewalk.
6. Buildings and land uses should have appropriate setbacks from the front property line. In most cases, this setback can be reduced to zero, but there are some cases where a deeper setback can be appropriate - to allow for variation in the building façade or to provide additional space for landscaping, gathering spaces or amenities along the front of the building.
7. Wherever possible, land uses should be allowed to extend into the street. Retail displays, restaurant patios, seating areas and gathering spaces help generate activity and interest along the street frontage and should be strongly encouraged.

Site Improvements

8. Site improvements should include landscaping and amenity features. These should be designed to work with the architectural details along the building to provide a variety of elements and attractions within the area, contributing to create interest and activity along the building frontage. Features are meant to include changes in paving or surface material, benches provided for seating, bike racks, and similar items that provide some attraction or amenity to those travelling within the right of way.



9. The placement of buildings, landscaping, and other improvements should respond to climate and weather considerations. This is meant to include considerations like ensuring that patios and public gathering spaces are south-facing or not shadowed by surrounding buildings, making provision for snow clearing and storage space from sidewalks within the right-of-way, and ensuring that the massing of buildings does not create wind tunneling effects.
10. Individual sites and the streets connecting them should prioritize pedestrian traffic. This is mostly accomplished with appropriate design within the road right of way, but it can be supported through the individual sites and along building frontages by varying setbacks to provide space for sidewalks, plazas, and gathering spaces. Sites can also incorporate wayfinding and traffic or access control measures to ensure that traffic from various modes does not come into conflict.

Activities & Promotion

11. Areas along the frontage should incorporate features and activities that are intended to attract people. This could include public art installations, fitness equipment installations, chess tables, shared library kiosks, and other activities to animate the frontage around buildings and within the road right-of-way, while still allowing for boulevard areas to accommodate pedestrian traffic and other necessary infrastructure (street lighting, fire hydrants, landscape plantings, etc.).
12. Sites and the surrounding road right of way should incorporate programming and events to promote as much activity and vibrancy within the area as possible. Spaces should be designed to allow for events to take place, and these areas can be prioritized as outlined in later sections of this plan.

³ Descriptions of the twelve elements in this section are intended to guide the City and developers in understanding how they should be assessed qualitatively. Where Active Frontage is referenced in other sections of this plan, it is intended that all elements are to be considered and applied in a way that is appropriate to that context; understanding that there is no one specific formula or solution. Discretion to require specific elements is outlined throughout this plan for certain geographic areas or circumstances, and readers should note that there are some sections which require the twelve elements of Active Frontage as well as additional elements or considerations.



Complete Streets

Participants at the design charrettes called out Main Street and sections of other roads through the downtown to be redeveloped as “Complete Streets.” This meant identifying streets that would not just accommodate vehicle traffic but would also equally consider pedestrians, cyclists, transit, parking, landscaping improvements, retail space, and other elements in their design.

This concept is echoed through the Airdrie’s Transportation Master Plan and supporting documents. A Complete Streets Toolkit was developed in 2014 to guide both Airdrie and developers to take a comprehensive approach to accommodating the needs of all roadway users. The 2020 Transportation Master Plan Update (140K Plan) applies updated recommendations for the integration of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and recognizes the connected nature between the functionality of a roadway and the land uses located along the corridor. The 140k Plan provides several standard road cross-sections but also provides “à la carte” options and alternatives to allow for customization of design elements of any cross-section. This approach recognizes the various functions that streets can serve and allows different functions and modes of travel to be included and prioritized within a Complete Street, accounting for sidewalks, landscaping, cycling, transit, parking, and vehicle travel within the roadway.

The transition of existing roads into Complete Streets involves the potential addition of bike lanes, sidewalk connections, and placemaking improvements to the pedestrian environment. There are nine elements that must be considered as part of a Complete Street. These are described on the following pages.



Transportation Modes and Connections

1. Streets must accommodate all transportation modes. The road right-of-way should be designed to ensure that there is space provided for pedestrian traffic as a top priority, but also for cyclists, transit, personal and service vehicles.
2. The design of the street should consider how it can connect to the wider transportation network while accommodating all transportation modes. Conscious thought should be applied to harmonize the transportation modes accommodated within these standards to the broader network.
3. The design of individual sites and buildings should work with the street design to increase accessibility. This includes situations where private sites should provide access and connect to adjoining properties, but it also means designing appropriate places between the site and the road right-of-way for parking and loading spaces and vehicle accesses that don't interrupt other complete street elements.



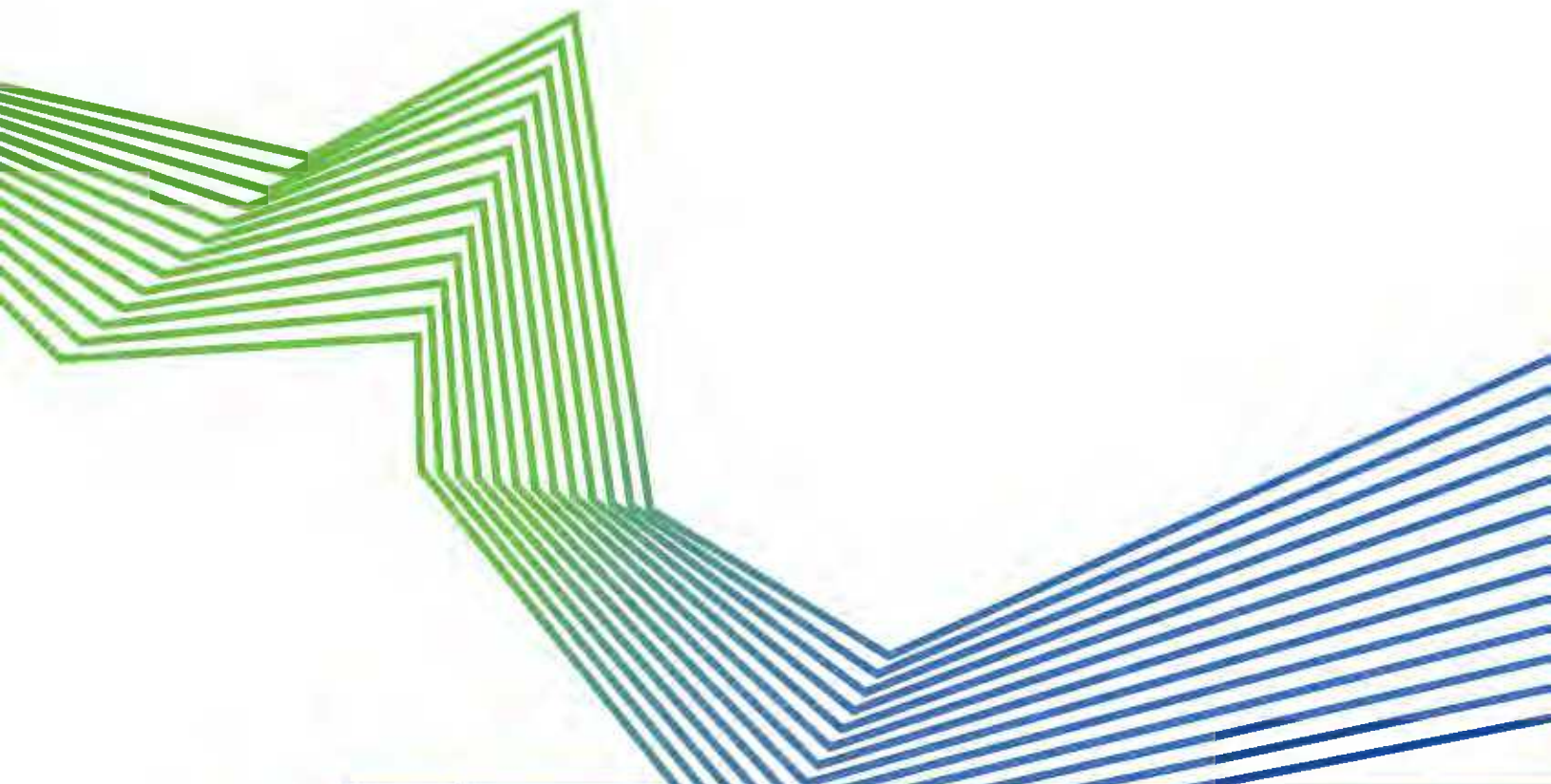
Relationships with the Existing Environment

4. The design of the street should improve permeability and connections along the length of the corridor. This requires careful design to manage access for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and vehicles, acknowledging that there may be conflicts and limitations for certain transportation modes. Means to increase permeability and connections may include crosswalks, mid-block connections, and coordination between the City and property owners to connect sidewalks and pathways across individual sites.
5. In many cases, design standards for complete streets will need to work within existing road widths and building setbacks which may provide less space than required for specific standards and cross-sections. Accordingly, this may mean that we consider how space is best used within the right of way (e.g., moving existing overhead utilities underground to make more efficient use of space) and may include adjustments to the overall street design to ensure that the highest priority elements are accommodated.
6. Streets should be designed to encourage land uses and buildings to face the street. The 140k Plan emphasizes the importance of the relationship between land use and transportation, and calls for minimizing features like back-lotting, buffers, and street-facing parking lots. This should also avoid barriers like sound fencing and utility corridors that restrict more integrated designs along the street frontage.

Landscaping and Character

7. To improve walkability and better support multiple modes of transportation, streets throughout the downtown should provide enhanced landscaping and amenity. Improvements to these aspects ensure that the street contributes to the character of the downtown and create an attractive environment along the corridor.
8. As part of its inherent design, the street should be able to accommodate multiple functions. It should support surrounding land uses by having space for the right combination of parking, event sites, gathering spaces, landscaping features, and extensions from commercial spaces, as may be appropriate. It develops part of its character from these additional functions, and that character contributes to the overall urban experience.
9. Additional details should be provided along the street that enhance the character of the downtown. These include spaces that can be converted for pop-up uses and events, site furniture, unique streetlights, wayfinding signage, banners, public art, and pavement markings.



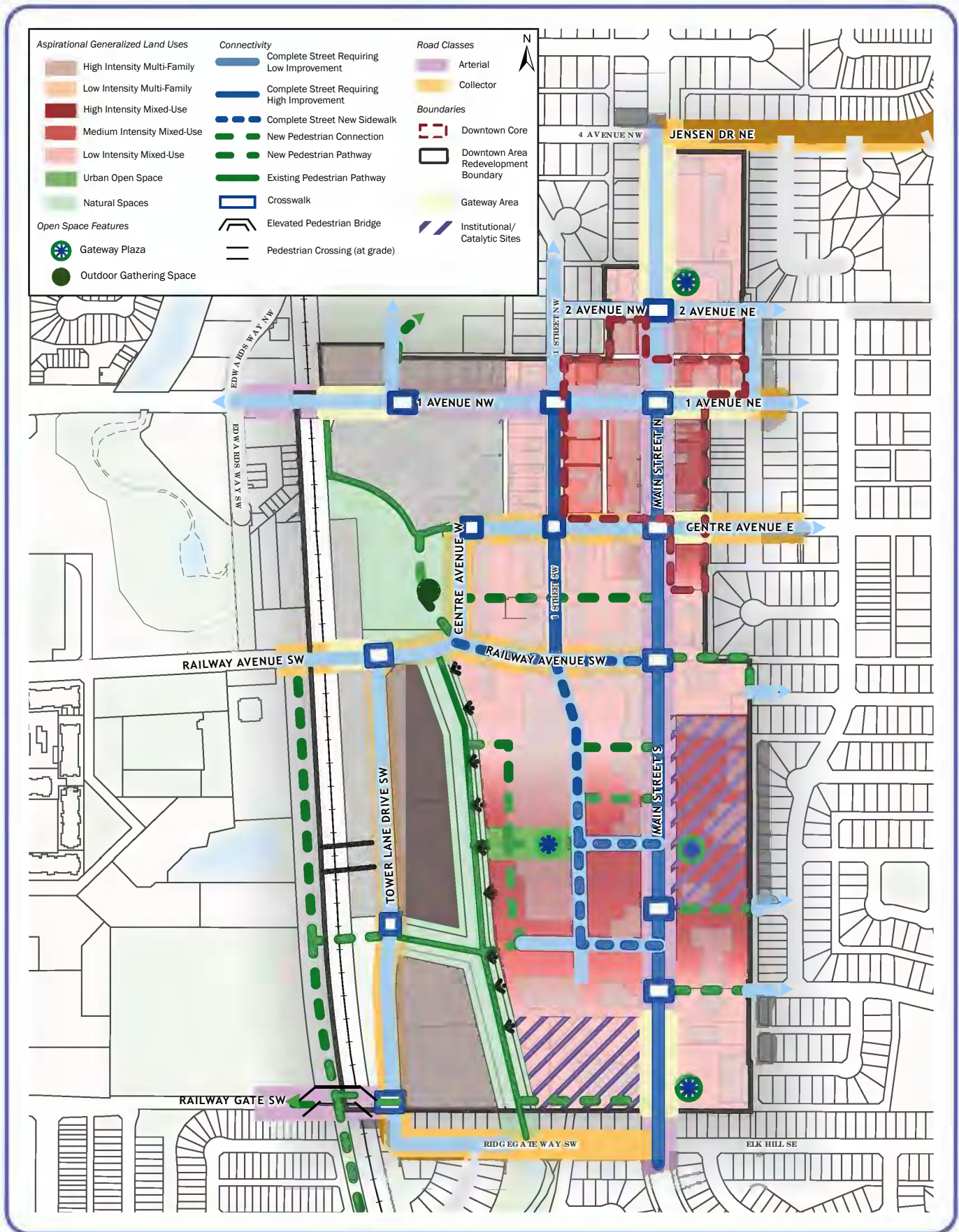


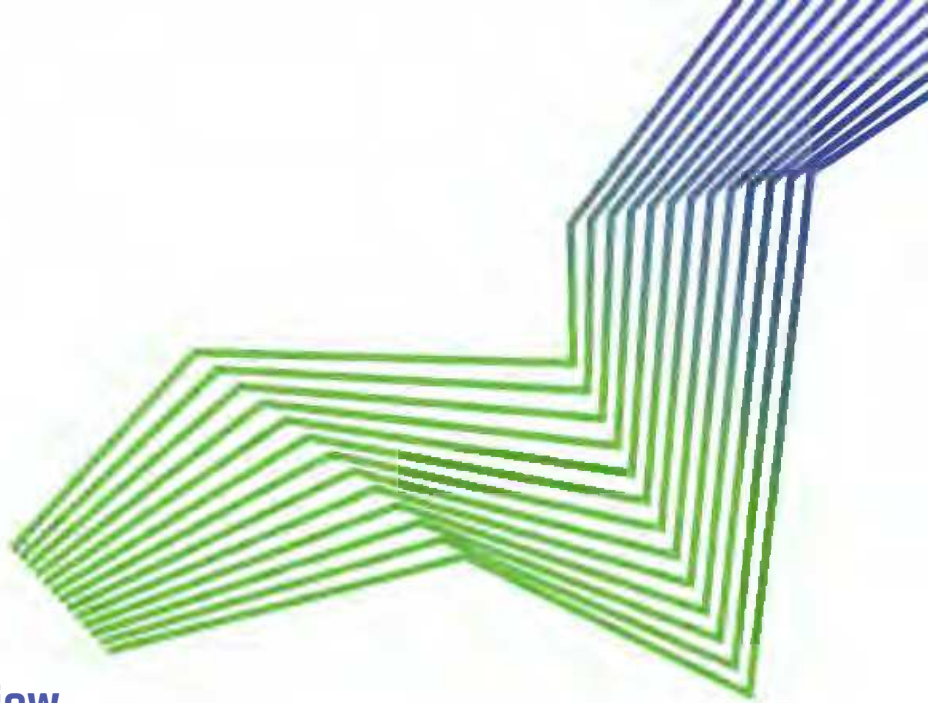
Section Two

Development Form



ARP Development Concept





Development Form Overview

This section describes the development form intended for the downtown that will support the activity and revitalization described by the plan's vision, objectives and targets. The development form works in concert with downtown functions to create the urban experience of the downtown.

The policy areas in this section address elements that are physically built as part of downtown. This includes general policies that speak to the overall height, density, and form of buildings and the infrastructure that provides water and wastewater servicing. This section addresses elements of the downtown that are tied to a specific type of form or place, outlining policies for how to Infill Vehicle-Oriented Sites, or to create Gateways and Civic Development Catalysis. It also speaks to specific sites or locations within the plan area, including our Natural Spaces, Downtown Core, Main Street, Towerlane Centre and Airdrie Main Street Square.

»» 2.01 | Redevelopment Height, Density and Form

Preamble

This Plan pursues redevelopment as a key part of Downtown Revitalization, and outlines the specific approach, targets, and aspirations for that redevelopment. This section organizes the main elements of that approach into policy and outlines what is desired of the built form throughout downtown.

In setting height and density policies for this plan, it is important to consider that the current development form in the downtown is well below the maximum thresholds allowed by the Land Use Bylaw. The Downtown Core Mixed Use District applies to most of the plan area, and it allows for significant height (up to 8 storeys), coverage (80% of Site Area, with no required setbacks), and density (up to 148 units per hectare). The current Land Use Bylaw accommodates the development targets and aspirations of this plan.

No specific issues were raised with the current development rights during engagement and no specific comments were made regarding the existing height and density thresholds. Instead, landowners and development industry representatives clearly stated that Airdrie needs to determine the competitive advantages for downtown and then set a clear and compelling vision to maximize them.

Objective

Provide comprehensive direction to guide the height, density, and form of redevelopment.

Principles

Direction for the built form is part of providing The Right Rules and Processes to support Downtown Revitalization. The various aspects of built form addressed here work together to set the downtown as the Heart of the City, and to achieve the targets and aspirations for the intensity of development that will make this The Place to Be. Each of these elements also contributes to making the downtown interesting and inviting for businesses, residents, and visitors alike and shape how people will experience the area, making it a key expression of Putting People First.

Policies

1. Developments should conform generally to the heights and densities shown in [Figure 03 | Maximum Height and Densities](#).
2. The Development Authority may support proposals for redevelopment, additions, and renovations that are under the maximum heights and densities shown in [Figure 03](#), provided that such proposals still improve the density, viability, and assessed value of the downtown.

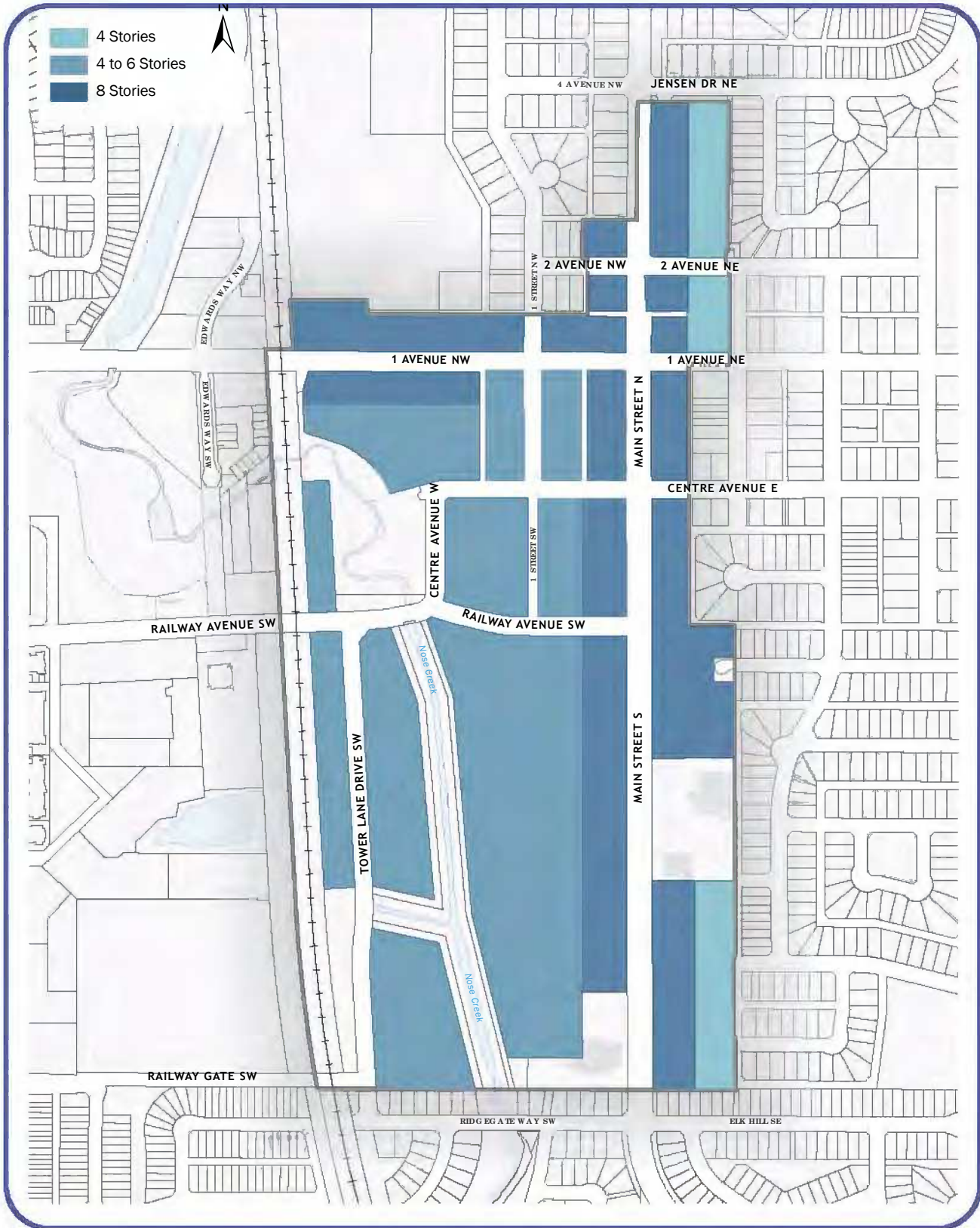
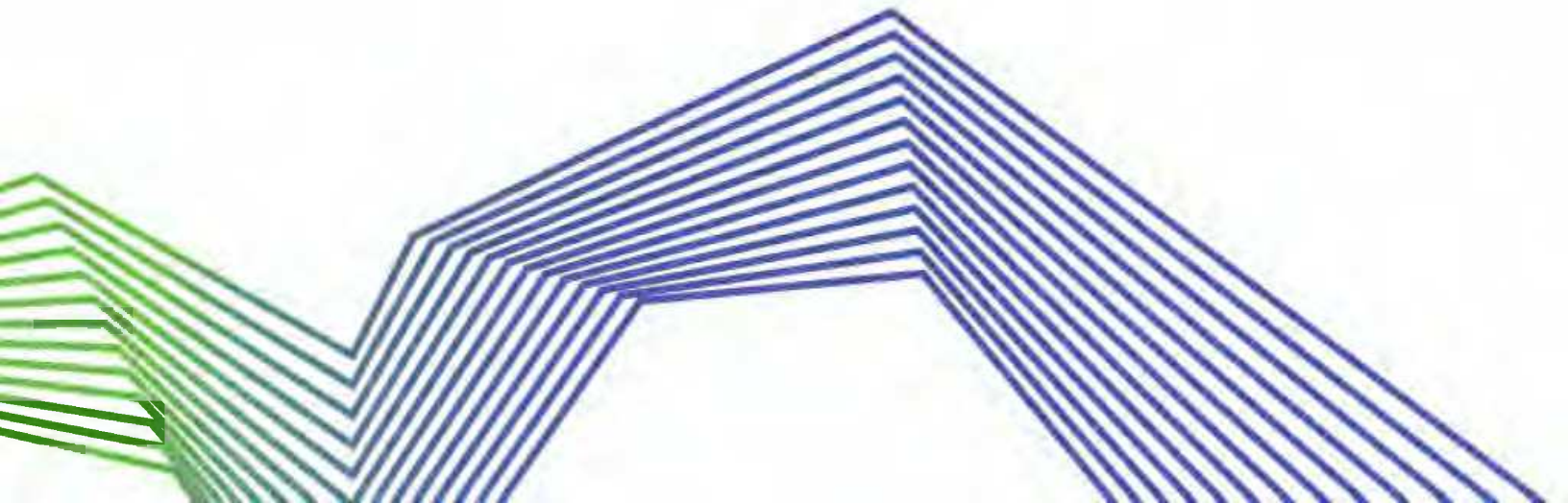



Figure 03 | Maximum Heights and Densities

3. Redevelopment and intensification above the maximum heights and densities shown in **Figure 03** may be supported where:
 - a. The application is sited in the Downtown Core and adheres to the policies outlined in **Section 2.04**.
 - b. The application is designed as a landmark within Airdrie's downtown
 - c. The built form and orientation are designed to mitigate impacts on adjacent properties and roads as a result of the height and density of the development, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority, and
 - d. There are measures provided to minimize the impact of the proposed development on available servicing capacity.
4. Building heights and orientation shall be sensitive to adjoining corridors and boundary features and adhere to the corridor and boundary policies of **Section 2.09**.
5. Development should be marked by high quality materials, good craftsmanship and innovative design.
6. Buildings should be designed to optimize sunlight, views, and access to public spaces.
7. Built form within the downtown should address elements of winter city design, and specifically:
 - a. Incorporate design elements to block wind
 - b. Have buildings face the street
 - c. Maximize sun exposure through building orientation and massing
 - d. Use colour to enliven the surrounding area
 - e. Create visual interest with lighting, considering intensity, spread, contrast and colour
 - f. Provide infrastructure that improves comfort and access in cold weather
 - g. Plan for snow storage areas and the relationship of these areas with other considerations, including walkability, aesthetics and parking.



- 
8. Buildings and sites should incorporate considerations for public safety and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and, specifically:
 - a. Design buildings and open spaces around them to create a sense of ownership by the community
 - b. Ensure that buildings provide natural surveillance through lighting, landscaping and clear sightlines
 - c. Enhance connectivity between the downtown and the rest of Airdrie through programs and city-wide events
 - d. Increase the intensity and diversity of uses within the area, and
 - e. Integrate visual cues with buildings and open spaces that reinforce the collective responsibility to ensure each other's safety.
 9. Buildings on corner lots should front both adjacent streets, feature attractive architecture and provide opportunities for landmarks and corner entrance features.
 10. Signage shall be pedestrian-oriented, using framing/structural materials consistent with the associated building and/or with the adjacent public realm streetscape elements (e.g., light standards or street furnishings).
 11. The Development Authority shall have the discretion to locate garbage, loading, and other servicing functions at the side, rear, or from the laneway access.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to continue to work with the existing business community, landowners, and prospective developers to identify:
 - a. Changes to height and density thresholds that may be necessary to improve the viability of redevelopment and intensification projects in the downtown and
 - b. Areas where built form policies may benefit from more detail and supporting guidelines to best support development proposals in understanding and meeting those policies.

2.02 | Downtown Land Uses

Preamble

Participants in the 2017 visioning exercise wanted to see enhanced shopping, dining, and cultural activities in the downtown. Administration collected responses on "Desired Downtown Services" that included local retail and office, restaurants, parks, indoor recreation, art galleries, community services, and markets.

Downtown Plan charrettes held in 2019 identified a range of desired land uses, including apartments, affordable housing, entertainment businesses, grocery and retail services, incubator spaces, restaurants, recreation, and specialty stores.

Overall, there were two common threads that framed a preferred land use concept that has a mixed-use commercial focus, and sets out greater intensity for existing institutional and residential sites:

- Most of the desired land uses are ones where residents would make a choice to go downtown to engage in those uses and activities.
- There were no clear lines that would pin desired land uses to specific sites or locations within the Downtown Plan.

The concept the public created is broadly supported by the land use districts already found in Land Use Bylaw B-01/2016. Except for public roads and environmental reserve, nearly the entire Downtown Plan area is regulated by the Downtown Core Mixed Use District (M3). This district supports a wide range of land uses, including 19 permitted uses and 48 land uses overall. Key land uses in the M3 District that support the land use concept include Live-Work units, Mixed Use Apartments, Retail Services, Offices, Public Assemblies, Restaurants, and Health and Supportive Services. City Administration has also brought updates to include additional uses, amending the Bylaw to add limited-term Vehicle Sales and Leasing (B-28/2017), Commercial Child Care facilities (B-41/2018), and Major Educational Institutions (B-25/2019).

However, there are challenges in pairing market forces with the desired uses, which is part of the reason that major redevelopment has not happened so far. Also, there are few clear lines for specific land use clusters (e.g., a Theatre District) within the plan area. As such, the focus of this section is to market the competitive advantages of this area to willing partners, rather than directing specific types of land uses to the area.

Objective

To describe the plan's expectations and aspirations for land uses within the downtown.

Principles

Supporting the right mix of land uses within the downtown is a major part of making the downtown the Heart of the City. Reflecting the uses and activities that are desired for the area will make it The Place to Be for residents and businesses.

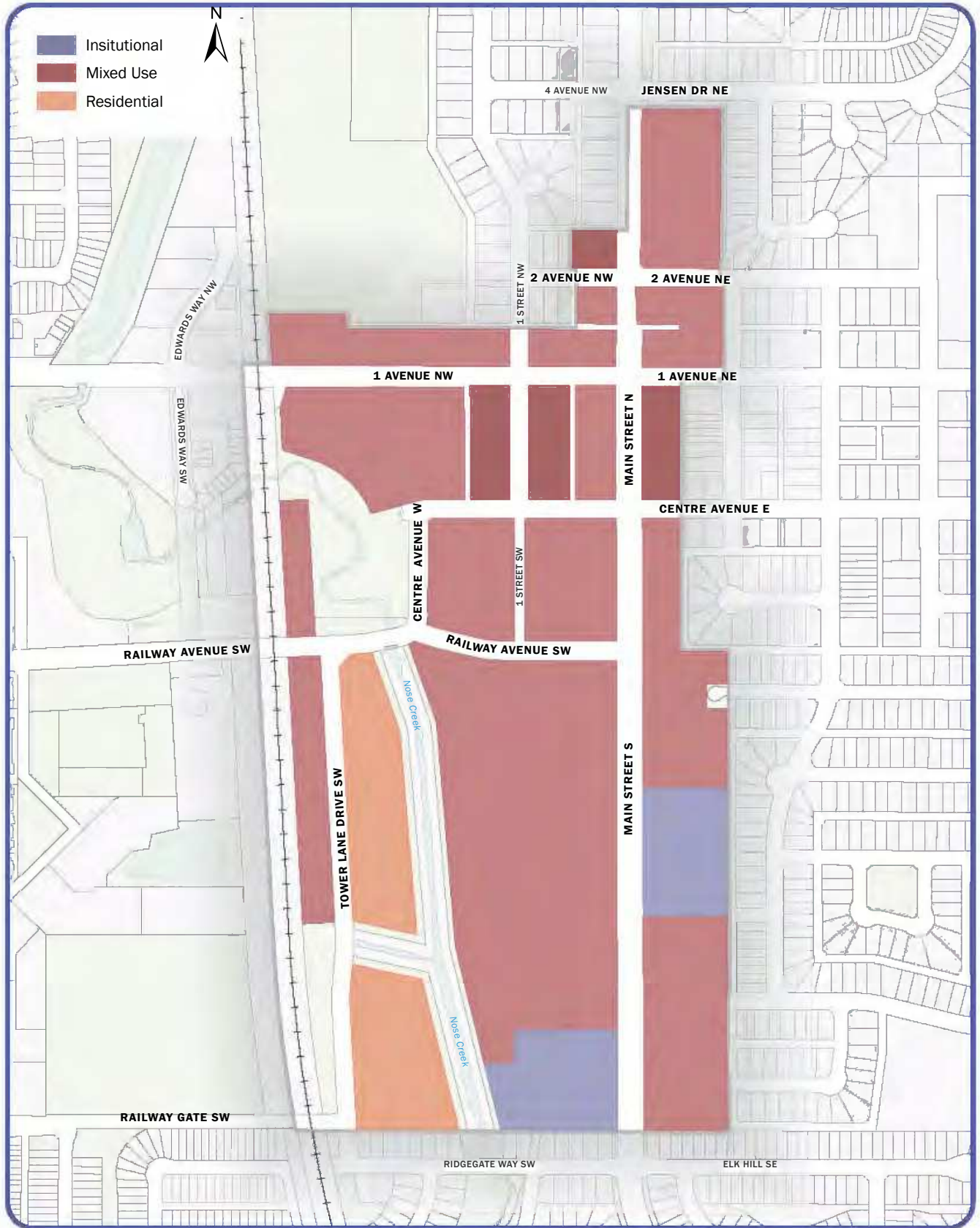
Policies

1. Land uses within the plan area should conform with [Figure 04 | Downtown Land Use Concept](#).
2. Commercial and mixed-use developments supporting a range of retail, office, service commercial and residential uses are encouraged throughout the plan area.
3. Medium density residential intensification and redevelopment of existing apartment sites are supported along the west side of the plan boundary.
4. For stand-alone residential developments or mixed-use projects including residential space, a range of housing formats is encouraged to accommodate different income levels, age groups, households, and lifestyles.
5. Stand-alone residential developments are encouraged to design the ground floors of any street-fronting buildings to be able to transition into commercial or mixed use in the future.
6. Developments throughout the plan area are encouraged to provide for innovation/flex spaces which can support a wide range of uses and activities over time. These spaces should accommodate various forms of start-up businesses or entrepreneurial projects, warehouse areas, artist studios, offices, etc.
7. Any innovation/flex spaces must be developed using appropriate construction standards to support flexibility and accommodate a wide range of uses/occupancies over time.
8. Developments throughout the plan area are encouraged to provide additional supporting land uses as an integrated part of the proposed development (e.g., residential units above ground floor commercial, commercial services at grade or within residential/institutional sites, etc.)
9. Clusters of specialized land uses that would serve as potential draws/destinations are supported within the plan area. Land uses that can be considered as potential candidates include:
 - a. Entertainment businesses, including theatres, arcades, concert halls, gyms
 - b. Health services and care facilities, offices for medical practices and research
 - c. Restaurants
 - d. Convention centres and hotels
 - e. Post-secondary institutions and supporting facilities
10. Flex spaces are encouraged to support new business incubators and innovation spaces.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a Development Attraction Strategy to draw the land uses identified in the land use concept and policies of this section within nine months of plan adoption.
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare amendments to the Land Use Bylaw within nine months of the adoption of this plan, to support the desired land uses outlined in this section.
3. Council shall direct Administration to report back every two years following the adoption of this plan and identify if there are clusters or emerging land uses supported by this section that can be further marketed and/or enhanced.

Figure 04 | Downtown Land Use Concept





2.03 | Maximizing Servicing Capacity

Preamble

Airdrie is fully integrated with the City of Calgary's water and wastewater distribution system. This provides known opportunities and constraints to provide servicing capacity for the growth of the entire community. Servicing capacity is an expression of the combined number of residents and jobs that can be served by the system, described as a service population demand.

Service Demand Population Explained

The contribution of residents and jobs to overall service demand population is not equal. It is an industry accepted standard that an employee uses only 3/5 of the demand as a resident for water and sanitary use. Hence a location with 6,000 residents and 6,000 jobs would create a service demand population of 9,600 and not 12,000. This is true whether they live and work in the same geographic area or not, the differences in demand are so marginal as not to impact analysis.

Council adopted a Utility Master Plan in February 2016 that identified an anticipated a population of 85,000 in the pre-annexation area and a total service demand population of approximately 99,000.

After the Utility Master Plan work, the City of Airdrie and CIMA+ combined in 2018 to review downtown servicing capacity and determine the potential improvements for water and wastewater servicing downtown. This work identified eight water/wastewater projects and two stormwater projects that would improve the servicing capacity and connections, which are shown in [Figure 05 | Servicing Projects](#). Completing these upgrades allows the local water system to accommodate a residential population capacity of 25,000 and a wastewater capacity for 5,300 residents. Divided equally between residential and non-residential uses, the limiting capacity in the sanitary system would still allow for 2,650 residents and 4,415 jobs and meet the aspirational targets of this plan. It should still be noted that the local upgrades made to date have not accounted for regional lift stations, regional water supply, or limitations of the Master Servicing Agreement (MSA), which need to be addressed for all growth in Airdrie.

CIMA+ further refined this available servicing capacity into catchment areas and estimated the service population demand that can be facilitated in each of those geographic areas. [Figure 06 | Servicing Catchment Areas and Capacities](#) identifies those areas and respective capacities, which influence the land use planning for these areas.

Objective

The objective is to achieve the aspirational development thresholds of this plan with the available servicing capacity.

Figure 05 | Servicing Projects

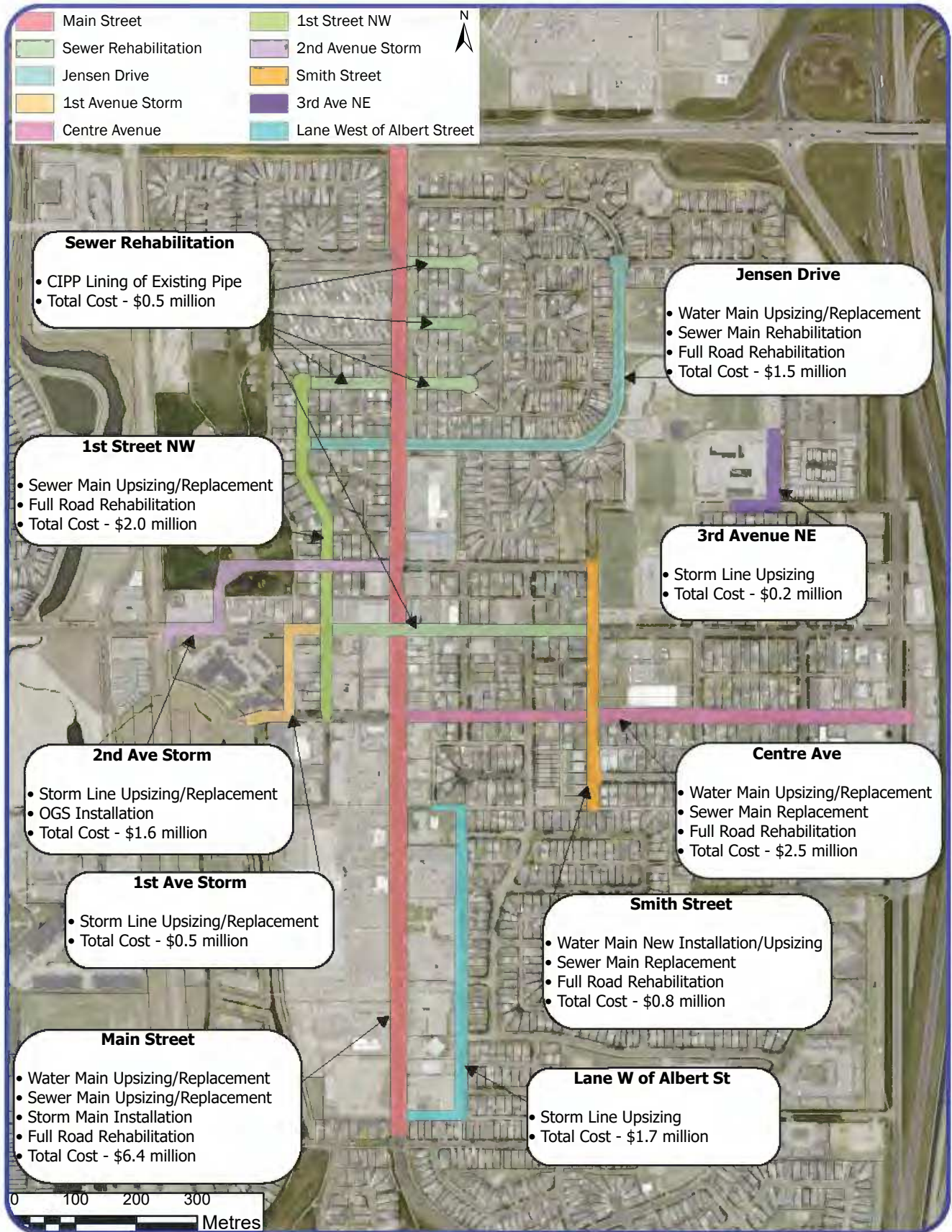
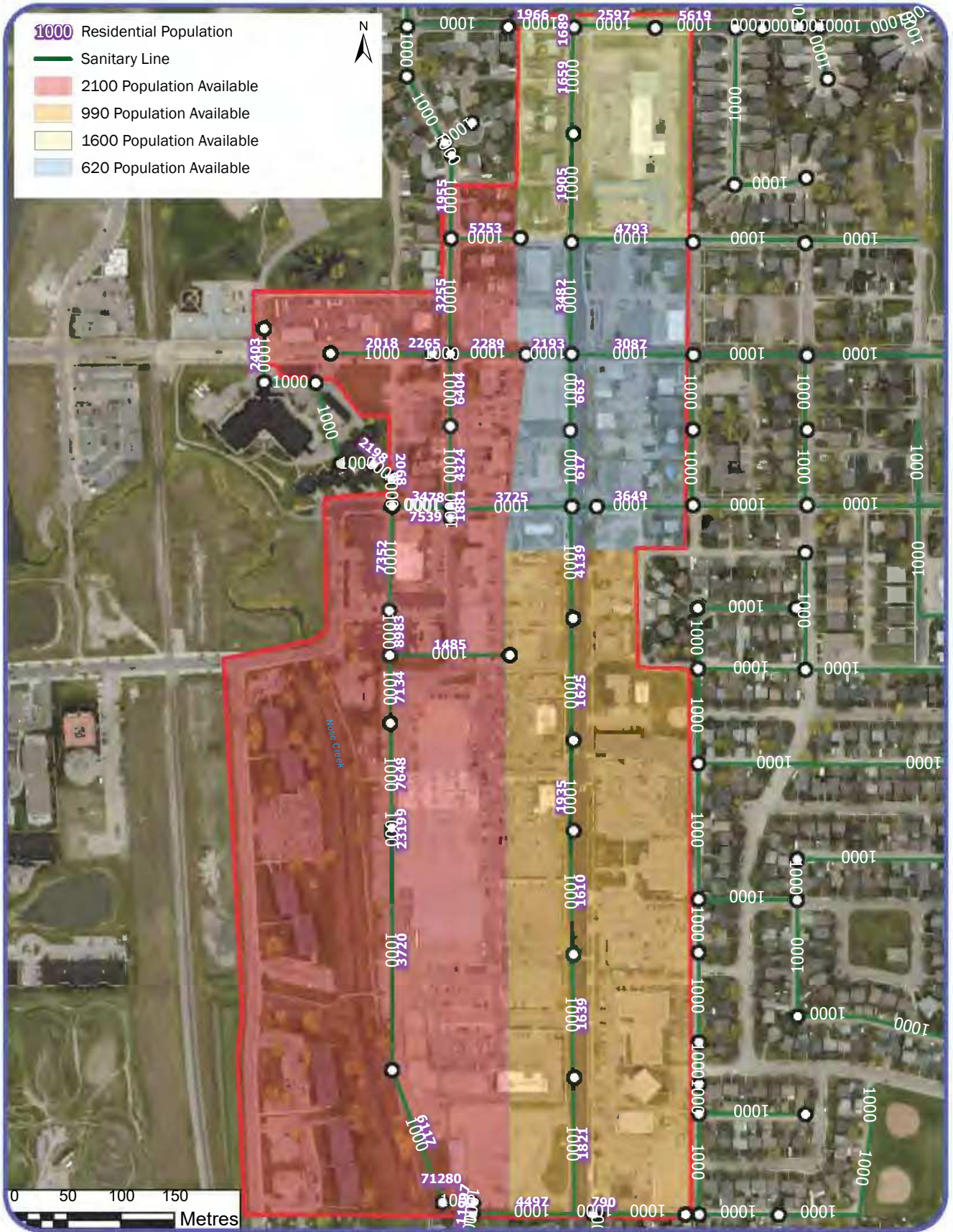


Figure 06 | Servicing Catchment Areas and Capacities



Principles

Maximizing the redevelopment value of the servicing capacity available downtown is in line with the principle of Investing in our Future. Exercising creativity in the management of the available resources speaks to having the Right Rules and Processes to facilitate redevelopment in the downtown.

Policies

1. New developments and intensifications shall improve the density, viability and assessed value of the downtown when taking advantage of the existing servicing capacity.
2. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate servicing infrastructure and connection devices that will reduce demands on existing capacity with their redevelopment and intensification proposals.
3. The Development Authority will support downtown redevelopment projects that incorporate low impact designs, use of green infrastructure, or other innovative methods where they will demonstrably be more efficient with existing water and wastewater networks.
4. Properties not currently connected to the stormwater management system may be required to do so where deemed practical by the Development Authority.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to allocate the use of existing capacity and calculate the impacts of each proposed and completed redevelopment project over time.
 - a. Administration shall advise Council in public forum when 75% of the available capacity has been dedicated to proposals granted Development Permit approval.
2. Council shall direct Administration to offer Council options for capital projects to support new development proposals in the case of identified constraints are identified or adjust the serviceable population in the downtown.
3. Council shall maintain the competitive advantage for downtown by continuing the practice of not charging redevelopment levies for the projects shown in Figure 05 and recapturing the value of the municipal investment through future assessment value.
 - a. Administration shall provide Council with options to separate revenues gained from assessment increases into capital reserve funds at a frequency desired by Council.
4. Council shall direct Administration to provide Council with recommendations to coordinate the infrastructure upgrades and road improvements proposed in this plan, wherever possible.
5. Council shall direct Administration to evaluate the relationship of the service demand from downtown on the entire servicing system with each update to the Utility Master Plan or as otherwise deemed appropriate by Council.

»» 2.04 | Redevelopment of the Downtown Core

Preamble

The boundary used for this plan is taken from what participants considered to be “downtown” during the visioning exercise. Almost universally, citizens outlined the blocks surrounding the intersections of Centre Avenue and Main Street, as well as First Avenue and Main Street, as part of their definition of “downtown.” This is not surprising as it has a historical connection as the core of Airdrie’s Downtown. Buildings essential to the history and development of Airdrie are located on these blocks. Long-standing residents recall businesses and developments like the former DuSand’s department store and the “Old Hotel” within these blocks as community icons, and as places of gathering, connection, and commerce.

Presently, these blocks have low-rise buildings on smaller parcels which are brought up to the property lines along Main Street and the intersecting avenues, with parking areas located to the side and rear. Many of the buildings in this area are reaching the end of their life cycles and there are a handful of vacant properties within this core area that have consolidation and/or redevelopment potential. From that perspective, there is a tremendous opportunity to increase the intensity of development, activity, and energy within this specific area.

Many development issues addressed in this plan intersect in this key geographic area. Key civic institutions, general parking constraints, pedestrian connections, placemaking opportunities and façade considerations are all present here. The downtown core contains the shortest, but widest block of Main Street – and the only portion with dedicated on-street parking. It has a different “feel” than the rest of the downtown area identified during the visioning exercise; one that is more typical of a traditional “High Street³” character and, with enough development intensity and activity on the street, is most often associated with an active and successful downtown. Resolving issues well here will have a ripple effect on the rest of downtown.

Objectives

Leverage the existing character and development potential of the downtown core into the area of greatest activity, energy, and development intensity within the downtown.

³ This refers to a specific form of development characterized by smaller parcels, buildings facing toward the sidewalk, and a vibrant and pedestrian-focused area along the street. This kind of environment is typical of the primary retail and business streets in older cities. Throughout Canada, the terms “Main Street” and “High Street” are both used to describe this character. We are using the latter in this Plan so that it does not create any confusion with the proper name for Main Street.

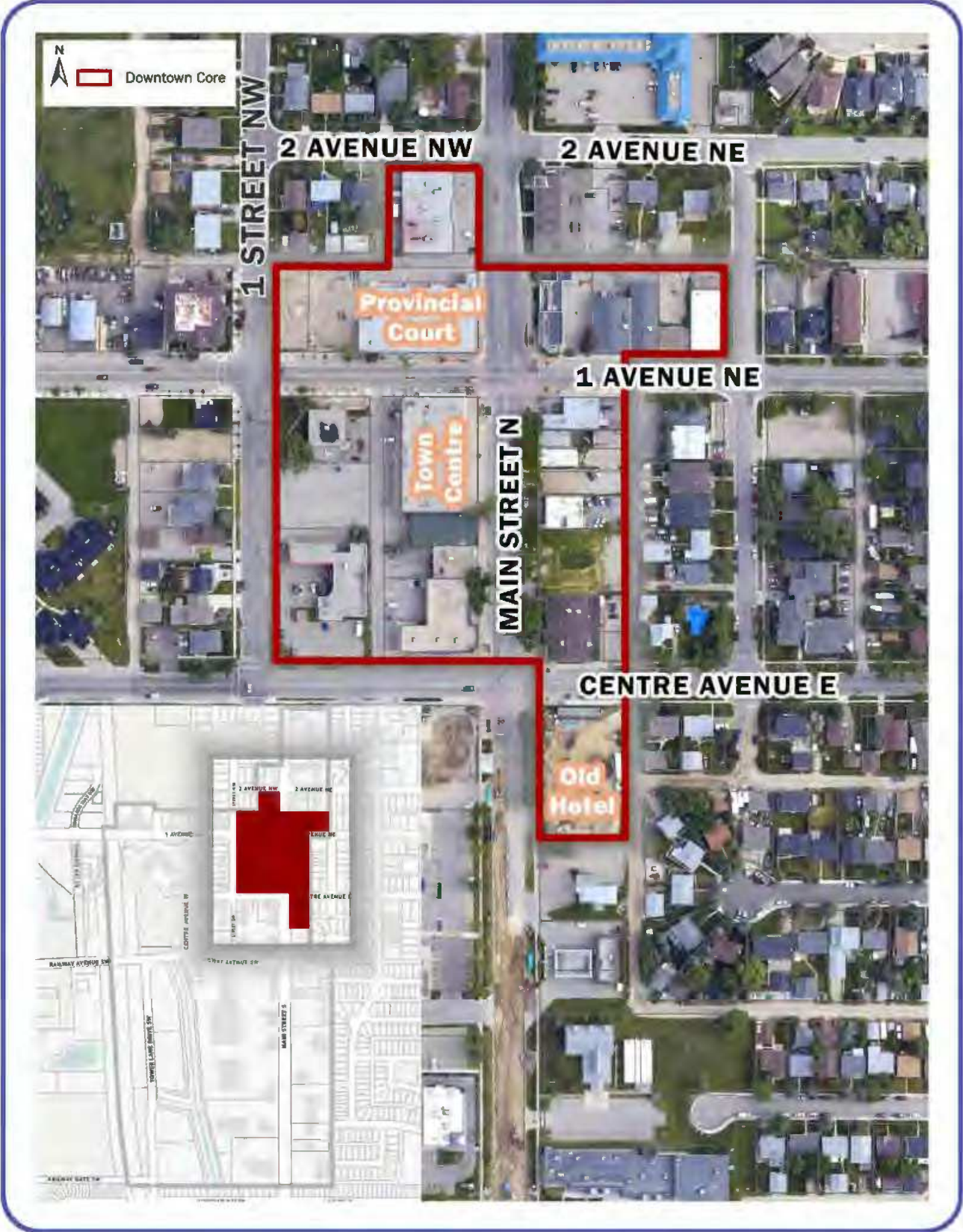
Principles

Identifying this core area for prominence follows from making downtown the Heart of the City. Focusing energy and activity in the core shows how we want to make the downtown the Place to Be. Leveraging the development potential of the existing state to its fullest potential is all about Thinking Big when it comes to our downtown and what it can be within the region.

Policies

1. Identify the area shown in [Figure 07 | Downtown Core](#) as the Downtown Core and prioritize for public and private investment efforts that create activity, energy, and redevelopment.
2. Highlight key blocks in the Downtown Core through visual cues such as lighting in boulevard trees to create extended hours of activity.
3. Leverage the value of existing servicing, transportation infrastructure, public parking stalls, and private parking stalls to maximize the redevelopment potential of the lots in the Downtown Core, and:
 - a. Encourage the highest degree of intensification possible from vacant lots and buildings nearing end of life cycle, without prohibiting:
 - i. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings where adequate lifespan of the building remains in the opinion of the Development Authority, and where such reuse does not preclude future redevelopment opportunities.
4. Support parcel consolidation and comprehensive redevelopment proposals, provided that any such redevelopment:
 - a. Maintains or enhances the existing high street character of the area and
 - b. Does not conflict with any other policies in this section.
5. Encourage the location/relocation of businesses and activities that can act as destinations for residents and visitors, and:
 - a. Allow for development anchors that provide key retail offerings or services with spin-off effects for other complementary businesses; and,
 - b. Ensure that larger format developments (>2,500m²) demonstrate, that such size is necessary and valuable to establish it as a destination or anchor and to create spin-off effects. In making such a determination:
 - i. The Development Authority may reference the Downtown Retail Study, or any other economic indicator or information deemed appropriate; and,
 - ii. The Development Authority may require opportunities for smaller format bays and retail opportunities to complement the larger format developments.

Figure 07 | Downtown Core



6. Development in the downtown core shall achieve the following to the satisfaction of the Development Authority:
 - a. Building character and façade development that is complementary to surrounding sites and the downtown overall; unless deemed acceptably unique, eclectic, or bold.
 - b. An active frontage between building façades and adjacent streets, pathways, and amenity areas, and in addition shall have.
 - i. Development form that is constructed directly to the property line boundary adjacent to public streets with at-grade entries, unless sufficient rationale for an alternate distance and/or means of access is provided.
 - ii. Pedestrian-oriented street wall heights and cornice lines as part of building massing, setbacks, or other architectural detailing; and,
 - iii. High quality building materials, good craftsmanship, and innovative design details.
 - iv. Methods for interaction within adjacent public road rights-of-way, including patios, sidewalk sales, etc.
 - c. Connection of the private pedestrian areas (i.e., sidewalks and crosswalks) associated with infill development to existing and proposed private and public pedestrian systems.
 - d. Incorporation of urban experience elements in applications for redevelopment; and,
 - e. Protection of established landscaping features within the site, having regard to existing trees in a public right-of-way that may be impacted by the development activity.
 - f. A mix of land uses that reflect the emerging needs of the knowledge economy, with a particular focus on:
 - i. Live work developments.
 - ii. Shared working spaces; and,
 - iii. Business incubator developments
7. Encourage all parties to think creatively when applying the event and programming policies found in **Section 3.03** for the potential placement of events and programming within this area, and to this end:
 - a. All parties are encouraged to choose this location for conducting special events first, and may:
 - i. Apply to close portions of the public road right-of-way for Main Street to host events in keeping with the event and programming policies (**Section 3.03**) in this plan as well as the policies for reimagining Main Street (**Section 2.05**).
8. Adhere to the Parking policies found in **Section 3.06**, removing minimum parking thresholds and providing specific incentives for structured parkade development within the downtown core.

Municipal Actions

1. Concurrent with the final readings of this plan, Council shall adopt Resolution No. 01/2022 to provide a financial incentive for private, structured on-site parking in the downtown, considering:
 - a. Maximum parking stall count or municipal investment limitations.
 - b. Conditions for receiving such financial incentives; including, but not limited to, concurrent development approval requirements and/or design requirements for future conversion from structured parking to building expansion(s).
2. Concurrent with the final readings of this plan, Council shall adopt Resolution No. 02/2022, which outlines a program to compensate landowners for insurance costs associated with encroachments into public rights-of-way in the downtown core that create enhanced public interactions (patios, sidewalk sales, etc.).
3. Council shall direct Administration to support the development of a Business Improvement Association (BIA) and shall seek a recommendation from Administration for the adequate amount of seed funding for such a private organization within 12 months of plan adoption.
4. Council shall direct Administration to present strategic land purchases and/or partnerships to facilitate redevelopment, as such opportunities arise.
5. Council shall direct Administration to connect potential tenants with owners of vacant and redeveloping properties to the extent desired by those landowners and provide resources to Administration for such purposes as part of each Annual Operating Budget.
6. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a recommendation for a grant program to improve existing building façades in the downtown core within 24 months of the adoption of this plan.
7. Council shall direct Administration to develop a marketing campaign for investment attraction within the downtown core specifically, within 24 months of plan adoption.
8. Council shall direct Administration to develop an annual marketing campaign for scheduled programs and events within the downtown core, within 24 months of plan adoption.
9. Council shall direct Administration to proactively review shared parking opportunities between parcels in the downtown core, and to register any such agreements at municipal cost, to the extent desired by landowners.
10. Council shall direct Administration to develop a plan to add lighting features to trees within the public right-of-way in appropriate areas of the downtown core within 6 months of plan adoption.

11. Council shall direct Administration to provide an annual report on opportunities for street improvements, to enhance the character of high streets within the downtown core, as shown in **Figure 07**. This report shall include, but not be limited to, a review of the following character elements:
 - a. Landscaped boulevards
 - b. Protection of existing street trees
 - c. Opportunities for new street trees
 - d. Street light standards, including pedestrian scale lighting
 - e. Street furniture designs and locations
 - f. Pavement marking and crosswalk designs
 - g. Signage and branding standards for placemaking, marketing and wayfinding

12. Council shall direct Administration to report on opportunities to include public art on public and private locations within the downtown core within 36 months of plan adoption as a form of additional public investment.



»» 2.05 | Reimagining Main Street

Preamble

Main Street is a 1,100m stretch of road running through downtown that represents almost 8% of the total plan area. It is the primary north-south transportation corridor in the downtown, carrying approximately 12,000 vehicles per day. However, transportation volumes decrease substantially outside of weekday AM/PM peaks, and the Transportation Master Plan (2020) confirmed that it does not have to be a major north-south corridor within the entire system to accommodate total demand. Effective use of other north-south arterial corridors, such as Edmonton Trail and 8 Street, allow for the possibility for Main Street to carry less traffic, and to be reimagined and redesigned accordingly.

There is a delicate balance to be struck for reimagining the design of Main Street. We must retain the capacity necessary to ensure traffic flow and the liveliness of the downtown. Traffic attraction and accommodation is still important to create interest and customers for businesses along Main Street. However, to be successful, a redesign of Main Street must also improve the character of the area and address other functions to make it a complete street - either for the entire stretch of road within the downtown plan, or at least critical sections within the downtown core.

Residents and stakeholders have expressed interest for reimagining Main Street with this balance in mind. During the visioning exercise in 2017, participants noted that Downtown is centred on Main Street and that there is a lack of street intersections in the corridor. Participants also noted that Main Street takes travelers directly to retail competition areas outside of the plan boundary, notably in the form of big-box stores.

In the design charrettes, participants universally supported the development of Main Street as a complete street, capable of accommodating alternate forms of transportation within the existing right-of-way. They indicated that an alternate design for Main Street could provide a different feel and create a competitive advantage over other commercial formats found on similar roads.

Discussions with redevelopment experts and key stakeholders regarding Main Street and the downtown identified the absence of two major items as obstacles for redevelopment:

- lack of parking in key places at key times in the downtown core (economic deficiency); and,
- lack of events and programming to generate activity in downtown (social deficiency)

These stakeholders identified the potential to leverage the design of Main Street to provide a combination of economic and social supports for redevelopment in the downtown core especially. Any redesign needs to evaluate enhanced on-street parking and/or amenity space options within the existing right-of-way. Main Street is generally characterized by four lanes of vehicular traffic and large spaces between intersections for which a redesign standard could be applied almost universally.

However, there is a portion of Main Street between Centre and First Avenue that is only 130m long and which has dedicated parallel parking and minimal building setbacks. There is a wholly different feel created for this area that warrants a different approach.

In making decisions on a redesign of Main Street, Council should consider the impact that this corridor has overall for generating development and activity. Carefully balancing economic supports through on-street parking and social supports by reducing traffic lanes and enhancing amenity areas is critical for accelerating redevelopment, especially within the downtown core.

Objective

To reimagine the physical design of Main Street as an economic and social support for the acceleration of redevelopment in the downtown.

Principles

Reimagining Main Street is a principle that is foundational to achieving of Downtown Revitalization. Considering alternate formats and connections for this corridor ties directly to the principles of making downtown Connected and Mobile, as well as the Place to Be.

Policies

1. Main Street shall be recognized as the primary transportation corridor within the downtown, and shall be considered first for:
 - a. Developing an aspirational design for surface treatment improvements and implementing those improvements.
 - b. Considering new or alternate intersections with east-west connections; and,
 - c. Locating public and private events
2. An aspirational design for the surface treatment of Main Street shall be developed and communicated, which considers:
 - a. Means to attract and accommodate all modes of transportation, including emergency and large transportation vehicles, as part of a true “complete street corridor”.
 - b. Anticipated traffic volume in the corridor for the 110,000 and 160,000 population thresholds, as identified in the adopted Transportation Master Plan (2020).
 - c. Techniques to provide universal accessibility.
 - d. The reduced intersection lengths and current design standard for the portion within the downtown core relative to the remainder within the Downtown Plan.
 - e. Required elements to achieve the balance set by Council for:
 - i. Social incentives for redevelopment via increased pedestrian amenity areas.
 - ii. Economic incentives for redevelopment via increased on-street parking; or
 - iii. A combination of such social and economic incentives
 - f. The overall potential to create a distinct feature within the downtown that can:
 - i. Create a competitive advantage for redevelopment over other areas in Airdrie and the region, and be marketed as such; and,

- ii. Represent a component of a visitor attraction strategy for tourism in Airdrie
 - g. The development and placement of unique elements and features, including:
 - i. Gateway treatments at appropriate boundary points and intersections.
 - ii. Installations of public art; and,
 - iii. Wayfinding signage and standards
 - h. The policies of small-town feel (**Section 3.08**) and social well-being (**Section 3.09**) in this plan; and,
 - i. Any other policies deemed relevant to its role as the primary transportation corridor within the downtown, as deemed applicable by Council.
- 3. Improved connectivity to and from Main Street shall be prioritized to accelerate redevelopment, relying on:
 - a. Review by Administration and/or consulting firms to evaluate existing intersection designs with east-west connections and access points for potential improvement, and:
 - b. Communication between the municipality and private landowners to enhance intersections and access points connecting from private property to Main Street.
- 4. The Main Street right-of-way shall be considered a potential location for public and private events and adhere to the events and programming policies (**Section 3.03**) when acting in that capacity. In addition to such policies, events to take place on Main Street shall consider:
 - a. The volume of traffic anticipated on Main Street during the proposed road closure period.
 - b. The opportunity for adjacent land uses to extend into the public right-of-way to provide enhanced retail or interaction opportunities where public mobility is unimpeded.
 - c. The balance between economic benefits for adjacent businesses and the community, with the potential impacts on adjacent land uses from potential events and programming.
 - d. The ability of Main Street and the surrounding road network to effectively accommodate transit and emergency service traffic.

Municipal Actions

1. Concurrent with plan adoption, Council shall adopt Resolution No. 06/2022 to establish the desired balance between economic and social supports in the aspirational design for Main Street.
2. Council shall direct Administration to engage stakeholders and residents to establish an aspirational design for Main Street within 18 months of plan adoption.
3. Council shall direct Administration to conduct a detailed review of existing intersections with public roads accessing Main Street within 36 months of plan adoption, including recommendations for immediate capacity improvement, and/or for alterations to be incorporated into an ultimate conceptual design for Main Street, and in so doing:
 - a. Administration shall undertake efforts to coordinate with private landowners to develop enhanced east-west transportation connections or align development access points to increase flow on Main Street and throughout the downtown as part of the review
4. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a detailed design for Main Street, reflective of the adopted balance of social and economic supports, as well as the intersection and access reviews, within 48 months of plan adoption.
5. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a capital project request for surface treatment improvements on Main Street within the downtown core within 72 months of plan adoption, allowing for the following to be considered as part of the capital project implementation(s):
 - a. Piloting with temporary surface treatment measures to gauge impacts before installing permanent surface treatment improvements, where appropriate.
 - b. Coordinating surface improvements with the sub-surface improvements identified in **Section 2.03** (Servicing Capacity), where possible, or with surface treatment lifecycle replacements if this is not possible.
 - c. Effective impact mitigation, consisting of:
 - i. Avoidance of full street closures for surface treatment capital projects.
 - ii. Reduction of impacts for surface treatment capital projects, through construction hours, techniques, or other measures in consultation with affected stakeholders; and,
 - iii. Communication, liaison, and advertising support for landowners, business owners, and other key stakeholders subject to surface treatment improvement impacts.
6. Council shall direct Administration to seek all possible provincial and federal grant opportunities to fund part, or all, of the detailed design adopted by Council and present these to Council for consideration.
7. Council shall direct Administration to develop a campaign to market the competitive advantages of the corridor for redevelopment and tourism attraction, concurrent with the implementation of the aspirational design for Main Street.
8. Council shall direct Administration to provide recommendations, within 36 months of plan adoption, on the times and portions of Main Street that can be closed on a temporary basis to support road closures for public or private events.



»» 2.06 | Redeveloping Underutilized Parking Areas

Preamble

Existing commercial plazas have large areas of surface parking and buildings that are set back from the street, typically used for customer parking. This occurs primarily in the south half of the plan area along Main Street South, as well as pockets on Centre Avenue West and Main Street North.

There are opportunities to intensify these existing surface parking areas through infill development. However, this will need to balance the current vehicle-oriented plaza layouts with the pedestrian environment and the building designs and layouts.

Objective

The objective is to facilitate infill development of parking lot areas in commercial lots downtown.

Principles

Infilling vehicular oriented areas operates under the principle of making Downtown Airdrie the Place to Be by creating a greater concentration of people, places, and activities.

Policies

1. New buildings and expansions to existing buildings should replace existing surface parking and increase the floor area ratio for development on the vehicular-oriented infill site.
2. Vehicular oriented infill development in Downtown Airdrie shall achieve the following to the satisfaction of the Development Authority:
 - a. Building character and façade development that is complementary to the development(s) on the existing site and the downtown overall.
 - b. Successful execution of active frontage elements between building façades and adjacent streets, pathways, and amenity areas, where applicable.
 - c. Connection of the private sidewalks and crosswalks associated with infill development to existing and proposed private and public pedestrian systems.
 - d. Adherence to the corridor and boundary policies (**Section 2.09**) of this plan to the extent that the development falls within the railway boundary condition area, the residential boundary interface area, or the Nose Creek boundary condition area, as identified in **Figure 09**.

3. The Development Authority may exercise discretion by approving infill development where the main entry of the building faces into an existing surface parking lot rather than an active frontage on a temporary basis only. Such temporary permits shall be re-evaluated at the end of a three-year term. Once deemed appropriate by the Development Authority, an approval granted for main building entry toward existing surface parking lots shall be transitioned to the street.
4. Plaza infill development should be designed to provide opportunities for small-scale boutique stores and restaurants.
5. No new drive-thru facilities shall be allowed as part of infill development for vehicular-oriented development sites.
6. Other than fully enclosed retail and accessory services (e.g., indoor automotive sales centre), no new automotive uses shall be allowed.
7. Parking lot reconfigurations that improve connectivity, accessibility, or amenity spaces shall be supported, with or without a redevelopment trigger, on underutilized parking areas.
8. Where parking lot reconfigurations occur without a development trigger, they should delineate the envelopes for future buildings or building expansions between the proposed drive aisles and landscaped areas.
9. Events and temporary uses shall be supported within established parking areas, or reconfigured parking areas that:
 - a. Do not conflict with appropriate connectivity and accessibility for all modes of transportation within the infill site.
 - b. Are sited prominently and visually accessible to public corridors, such as roads and pathways.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to maintain and enhance lines of communication with infill development site owners to ensure that constraints are not inadvertently placed on these properties.
2. Council shall direct Administration to review connectivity and amenity area plans associated with infill development applications to ensure logical connections and interfaces within the adjacent public lands.
3. Council shall direct Administration to identify and determine costs for logical connections and interface improvements on public lands where opportunities for such connections are triggered by adjacent infill developments.
4. Council shall direct Administration to prepare updated templates for Development Agreements, within 18 months of plan adoption, for applicable infill developments to allow for reductions in security where public space improvements have been triggered and for which they have been funded as capital projects.

»» 2.07 | Civic Development Catalysts

Preamble

Leveraging public investment to create broader private investment can be an important part of community building. Major civic developments function as generators, creating a synergy with private retail, entertainment, and employment land uses by bringing people and activities to central locations. Airdrie has a history of leveraging public investments into key pieces of community building and achieving an even greater public good as a result. Downtown Airdrie is presently home to several major civic and quasi-civic developments, including City Hall, the Provincial Courthouse, the Airdrie Public Library, Bow Valley College, and the Rocky View Adult Education Centre. These generate thousands of visits and interactions per day and are home to hundreds of employees who support downtown businesses.

Further public investments for more interactions are intended. In June 2019, Airdrie City Council selected the former fire hall site as the location for the New Multi-Use Facility and Library. Presently, the Airdrie Public Library welcomes an average of 512 patrons per day, and this could increase substantially with a new facility.

Gateway Site Selection for the New Multi-use Facility and Library

Council selected the former Fire Hall, a gateway site, as the location for the New Multi-use Facility and Library in June 2019 under the guidance of the following mission statements:

- A library is a community hub and landmark destination that provides residents a sense of ownership and civic pride; and,
- A library can spark synergies, ignite the surrounding community and provide connections.

The location is within the southern portion of the downtown plan, and the vision statements for the New Multi-use Facility and Library are as follows:

- A library that is multi-functional and sized to adapt to meet current and future needs.
- A library that is flexible to accommodate changing demographics and their evolving needs; and,
- A library that benefits from being adjacent to other community facilities and retail centres, and vice versa.

Additional Considerations for the New Multi-use Facility and Library Development

Recognizing the separate process to develop the functional requirements for the new New Multi-use Facility and Library, participants engaged in the development of the downtown plan noted the opportunity to:

- Co-locate civic uses to the selected Multi-use Facility and Library site; and,
- Connect the New Multi-use Facility and Library and any other facility, or facilities, located there with the adjacent natural greenspace along Nose Creek.

Other civic and quasi-civic institutions, such as Bow Valley College, Rocky View School Division and the Airdrie Health Cooperative (AHC) have each looked at the current level of civic activity downtown and noted potential for development or expansion to take advantage of that activity and create synergies.

Participants in the plan development events also saw the opportunity to leverage civic investments as potential private redevelopment catalysts in the downtown. During the design charrettes, participants placed major civic institutions (municipal buildings, libraries, post-secondary institutions, and plazas) in locations with the greatest possible opportunity to support private redevelopment. They sought to create a public-private development synergy for years to come.

Objective

To leverage investment in civic and quasi-civic developments for activity generation and private investment.

Principles for Change

Making investments in key civic developments is the ultimate example of how the municipality and other institutions can Lead by Example, and it expresses how we can Think Big about the downtown. Concentrating major public and quasi-public institutions to drive activity to this core area complements the principle of recognizing and enhancing downtown as the Heart of the City.

Policies

1. Downtown shall be considered the primary location for major civic and quasi-civic development investments in Airdrie.
2. Civic development investments shall be located and designed with the intent to promote private investment on adjacent properties, and shall:
 - a. Coordinate with adjacent owners to determine opportunities to integrate developments and land use types, where appropriate.
 - b. Adhere to gateway development (**Section 2.08**) and corridor and boundary area policies (**Section 2.09**), where applicable; and,
 - c. Connect such developments with nearby municipal holdings, including roads, lanes, paths, amenities, defined activity areas, and any municipal or environmental reserves.
3. The orientation of the civic building(s) and other site improvements shall consider the role of that civic development(s) as part of overall investment in the downtown, and as an aspect of the comprehensive redevelopment strategy.

4. Civic development investments shall make all possible efforts to generate social interactions and activity, and may:
 - a. Create formal and informal areas for social congregation as part of their design.
 - b. Alter or augment hours of operation to extend opportunities for social interaction; and,
 - c. Coordinate land use types to create synergies that will increase interactions and activity.
5. Civic development investments shall reflect the intent of making downtown a regionally recognizable location as part of their design and function(s).

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall consider the downtown first for making civic development investments and shall direct Administration to provide rationale for any civic development project recommended for a location other than the downtown as part of any request to Council Budget Committee.
2. Council shall support investments from other civic and quasi-civic institutions in the downtown and shall direct Administration:
 - a. To retain open communication with all other civic and quasi-civic institutions on needs and potential location opportunities; and,
 - b. To provide in-kind support or studies, as deemed necessary by Council, to assist other civic and quasi-civic institutions that are considering a development investment in the downtown.
3. Council shall direct Administration to develop a plan, within 36 months of plan adoption, to market the scale and scope of civic development investments made in the downtown to attract private development(s) and retail spending.

»» 2.08 | Gateways

Preamble

Gateways serve to distinguish one planned area from another. They announce a sense of arrival and declare the degree of intention and prominence for that area; providing the first indication of the experience that a user can expect to have there.

For Downtown Airdrie, there are gateway areas in each of the four cardinal directions.

To the west, these are found along Centre Avenue and First Avenue abutting the Canadian Pacific (CP) rail line. In the north, the gateway area stretches along Main Street between Second Avenue and Jensen Drive. Coming from the east, the gateway area is again on Centre Avenue and First Avenue, running for the length of the property boundaries to the east of Main Street. And from the south, the gateway is the southern boundary line of the commercial and municipal property lines just north of the intersection of Main Street with Ridgegate Way and Elk Hill. These are shown on [Figure 08 | Gateway Areas](#).

During the public engagement for the downtown plan, participants noted the importance of gateway developments to establish the importance of this area to the community. There was a clear desire to have these areas stand out and, in so doing, instill a sense of pride for downtown.

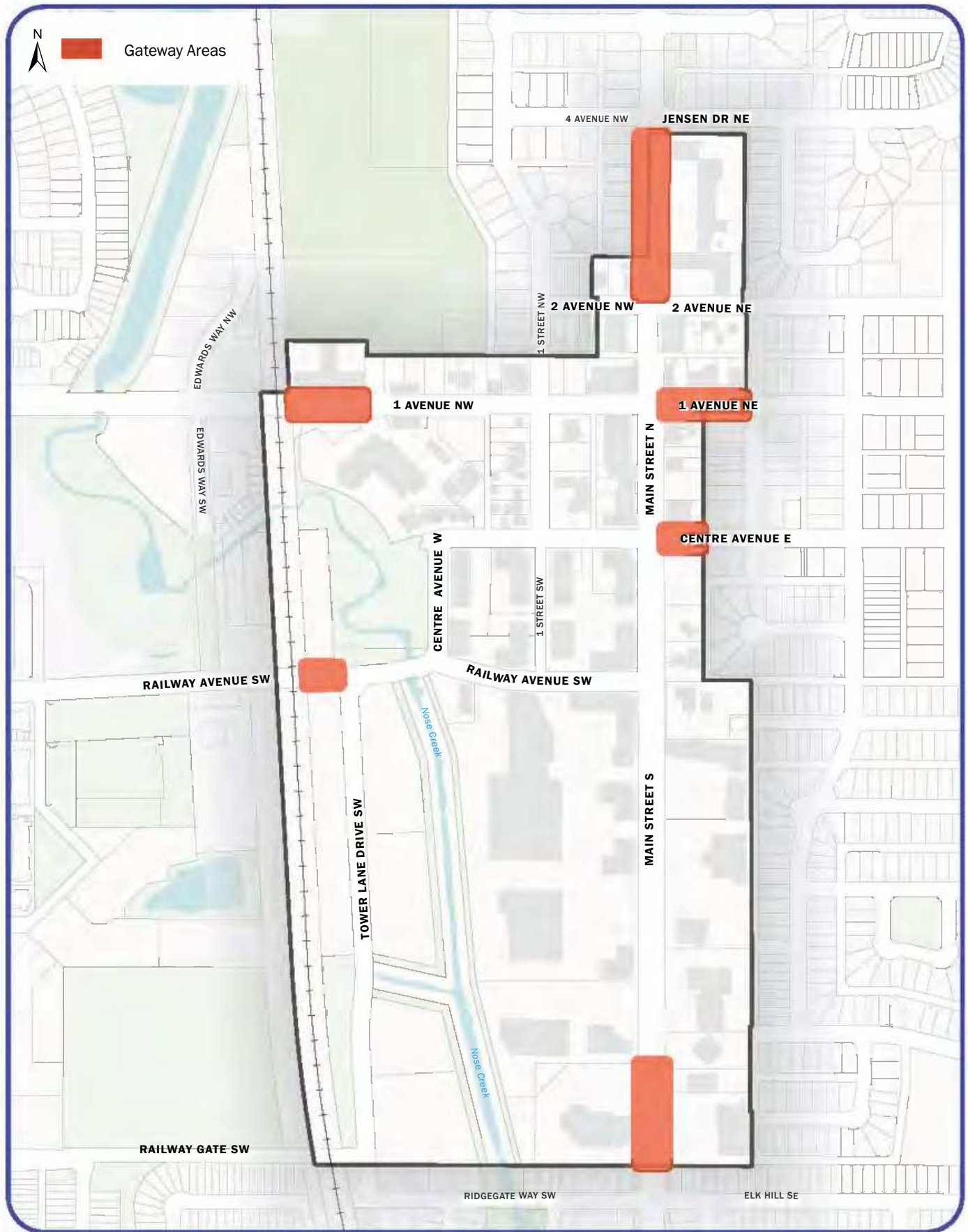
Objective

To ensure that public and private investments in the gateway areas convey arrival into downtown and the importance of this central area.

Principles

Creating prominence at the entrances identifies the downtown as the Heart of the City. Giving a high degree of thought and treatment to the entrances through showcase developments and complementary features helps make downtown the Place to Be. The degree of public and private investments to create these types of showcase developments and to announce a sense of arrival shows that we Think Big when it comes to our downtown.

Figure 08 | Gateway Areas



Policies

1. Development on a gateway parcel shall be designed as a landmark within Airdrie's downtown.
2. Development on a gateway parcel shall consider the potential for buildings on such sites to be prominent within Airdrie and the region.
3. The design for any development on a gateway parcel shall consider the youthful population, rapid growth, and prominent position of Airdrie within the region and the province.
4. Development on a gateway parcel shall feature prominently in the redevelopment of downtown through its design aspects; and,
 - a. Be welcoming, instill a sense of civic ownership and pride for residents, and adhere to the civic development catalyst policies (**Section 2.07**), in the case of a municipal development.
 - b. Give a sense of arrival to the downtown through site design and orientation.
 - c. Ensure visibility to and from the site development(s) in all directions.
 - d. Ensure that the design and orientation of site development(s) retains sightlines to and from amenity areas and other public locations.
 - e. Consider the relationship with adjacent streets and ensure that the site design and orientation enhance the streetscape and create a positive environment for pedestrians.
 - f. Adhere to the boundary and corridor policies (**Section 2.09**) of this plan where they apply; and,
 - g. Mitigate any potential impacts on adjacent properties and roads from the uses, design characteristics, and the orientation of the site and/or building(s), even where the boundary and corridor policies (**Section 2.09**) do not specifically apply.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall consider these policies as part of the design of any civic development catalyst project.
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a gateway entrance feature plan for the road right-of-way areas identified in **Figure 08** within 60 months of the adoption of this plan, and may:
 - a. Direct Administration to coordinate with private development in the construction of gateway entrance features to achieve an economy of scale, but may also:
 - b. Direct Administration to prepare a gateway feature design for a road right-of-way at a gateway area to complement an approved development, and/or achieve an economy of scale with that development, within 12 months of the applicable development approval.

»» 2.09 | Corridor and Boundary Areas

Preamble

The participants in the Downtown Visioning exercise viewed the CP rail line as the western limit of what is downtown. To the north, south and east, the boundary generally follows the rear property lines of commercial lots facing major roads such as Main Street and First Avenue. Approaching the western limit of the downtown boundary, Nose Creek is a corridor to be considered for transportation and utility crossings, as well as development transition.

Accordingly, the downtown faces two major types of interface conditions: external boundary conditions and internal corridors. The external boundary conditions include the CP rail line and the survey delineations with adjacent neighbourhoods, while Nose Creek makes up the internal corridor. Given the type and extent of redevelopment contemplated in this plan, it is important to pay attention to the relationships between development and these corridor and boundary features. Several development guidelines influence the thinking on these relationships:

- For development adjacent to active rail lines, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) released the Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations in 2013 and continues to update this important document. The intent of these guidelines is to ensure an appropriate relationship between the operation of the rail line and nearby land uses, to reduce the risk to human life and safety.
- Legislation for development in Alberta under the Municipal Government Act does not specifically protect the “right to a view”. However, it does provide the opportunity for a municipality to consider certain uses as discretionary, and to then weigh the impacts on use, enjoyment, amenity, and value from those developments on adjacent properties.
- The City of Airdrie is an active member in the Nose Creek Watershed Partnership (NCWP), and endeavours to protect, preserve, and enhance the watershed – especially in terms of water quality.

Managing the relationship of development with these corridors and boundaries is a delicate balance under these legislative conditions and advocacy positions. The City must act carefully to mitigate potential impacts on the proposed developments, the existing owners/uses, and the corridors themselves.

Objective

To ensure that development responds appropriately to adjacent corridors and boundary conditions.

Principles

Addressing corridor and boundary conditions is an element of creating The Right Rules and Processes to guide redevelopment in the downtown.

Policies

1. Policies in this section apply to the corridor and boundary areas identified in [Figure 09 | Downtown Core](#) and apply to the full property area abutting the defined corridor and boundary areas.
2. Non-residential land uses with lesser intensity, operational risks, and exposure for life safety issues are uses that are encouraged within the railway boundary condition area.
3. Residential land uses and land uses with intense interactions, such as daycares or health facilities, are not specifically encouraged within the railway boundary condition area. However:
 - a. These land uses are not prohibited, unless already specifically called out as such by the Land Use Bylaw, as adopted at the time of development application; and,
 - b. May be permitted by the Development Authority where the risks and impacts can be appropriately mitigated in accordance with the policies of this plan.
4. Any development within the railway boundary condition area must conform to all requirements of the City at the time of application, and mitigate the risks and impacts associated with railway operations to the satisfaction of the Development Authority, and to this end:
 - a. The Development Authority shall have regard for the current version of the Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations when considering development adjacent to the CP rail line and right-of-way, including but not limited to:
 - i. A 30m setback along a rail line measured from the mutual property line to the building face of the principal building; and,
 - ii. Noise attenuation features: including setbacks, noise attenuation barriers, earthen berms, and fences.
5. Development in the residential boundary interface area shall be sensitive to the existing forms of adjacent development, especially adjacent low-density residential uses.

Figure 09 | Downtown Core



6. The Development Authority shall consider the transition to adjacent residential neighbourhoods in reviewing any development application in the residential boundary interface area, and:
 - a. Require applications to address the potential impacts on the use, enjoyment, amenity, and value of adjacent properties from the proposed development, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Abrupt changes in height with existing development.
 - ii. The creation of shadows.
 - iii. Changes in traffic and activity generation; and,
 - b. May request special studies as part of an application submission to address potential impacts on the use, enjoyment, amenity, and value of adjacent properties; and,
 - c. For discretionary uses, may request measures to reduce the potential impact on use, enjoyment, amenity, and value for existing development(s), including, but not limited to:
 - i. additional setback distances; and/or,
 - ii. reductions in upper floor areas; and/or,
 - iii. additional landscaping
7. Development in the Nose Creek boundary condition area shall be designed to address the Floodway and Floodplain Regulations of the Land Use Bylaw to the extent that they apply to the respective property, or properties.
8. Development in the Nose Creek boundary condition area shall consider best practices for stormwater and watershed management, including any applicable policies in the Nose Creek Watershed Management Plan.
9. Development in the Nose Creek boundary condition area shall have its principal entrances and pedestrian connections oriented toward pathways and other connections forming part of the Nose Creek Naturalized Open Space area, and in addition:
 - a. Walls, fences, and berms shall not be permitted between the development footprint and the Nose Creek Naturalized Open Space area for properties in the Nose Creek boundary condition area; and
 - b. Loading bays, waste enclosures, mechanical equipment, utilities, or any other aspect of development deemed impactful by the Development Authority shall not be permitted between the development footprint and the Nose Creek Naturalized Open Space area for properties in the Nose Creek boundary condition area.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall amend the Land Use Bylaw concurrent with plan adoption, to prohibit walls, fences, and berms in the Nose Creek boundary condition area, as Bylaw No. 03/2022.
2. Council shall direct Administration to develop a master plan for the municipal reserve and environmental reserve to connect the Nose Creek Naturalized Open Space area with the Nose Creek boundary condition area within 48 months of plan adoption.
3. Council shall direct Administration to develop guidelines for properties adjacent to railways, including those in the railway boundary condition area, within 60 months of plan adoption.
4. Council shall direct Administration to undertake a shadowing study for both existing downtown developments, as well as the maximum development envelopes allowed under the Land Use Bylaw, within 60 months of plan adoption.

2.10 | Natural Spaces

Preamble

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) identifies the naturalized area surrounding Nose Creek as Airdrie's most significant natural asset and a feature that must be protected and enhanced as the community grows. This is reinforced in the Great Places Plan which identifies the area as a green corridor in the Open Space Concept. Participants in the visioning exercise and design charrettes strongly support enhancement and celebration of the- naturalized corridor shown in Figure 10 | Natural Spaces.

Figure 10 | Natural Spaces



It is important that the downtown plan properly reinforces this relationship. This can be achieved through properly designing the frontage and interface of developments along the Nose Creek corridor, and by protecting this area and its surroundings that are intended to remain as natural open space while downtown redevelops. There are opportunities to front commercial uses onto Nose Creek and provide better access to this Naturalized Open Space. Framing this area and allowing for active uses near Nose Creek can highlight the natural space and facilitate activity and pedestrian traffic between the corridor and downtown, allowing each to support and enhance the other.

Additionally, developments in the downtown should protect and enhance this area by ensuring that buildings and hard surfacing placed there do not conflict with provincial Floodway and Floodplain Regulations or the Nose Creek Watershed Management Plan. A fine balance needs to be struck between development support and celebrating surrounding natural spaces.

Objective

The objective is to ensure that redevelopment in the Downtown respects existing natural areas and recognizes them as key amenities that attract pedestrians, cyclists, and visitors.

Principles

Natural areas that are accessible and suitable for year-round activities help make Downtown the Place to Be. Appropriate building orientation and site design maximizes views and access to Nose Creek and helps to foster a Connected and Mobile downtown. Maintaining the integrity of Nose Creek and its banks demonstrates how we Lead by Example with the ecological and open-space objectives of the MDP.

Policies

1. Development within the Naturalized Open Space shall include public access to the regional pathway system.
2. The provisions of the Land Use Bylaw with respect to Floodway and Floodplain Regulations are to be adhered to for any new development in the areas shown on [Figure 11 | Floodway and Floodplain](#) in the Naturalized Open Space.
3. Development within the Naturalized Area shall adhere to the management practices of The Nose Creek Watershed Management Plan (NCWMP) for protecting the Nose Creek corridor, and in this regard:
 - a. Development of permanent structures in the riparian area of the creek shall not be permitted, and.
 - b. Minimum development setback distances established in the Nose Creek Watershed Management Plan and the Land Use Bylaw shall apply.
4. All development shall incorporate appropriate built form elements to achieve an appropriate interface with the Nose Creek corridor, including Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and Winter City Design principles, and shall adhere to other applicable policy areas of this document, including:
 - a. the Redevelopment Height, Density, and Form policies (**Section 2.01**).
 - b. the Corridors and Boundaries policies (**Section 2.09**).

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to coordinate with NCWP to ensure:
 - a. That impacts on Nose Creek from any proposed and completed redevelopment project are properly reviewed, mitigated, and monitored, and.
 - b. That redevelopment in the downtown overall remains consistent with the principles and guidelines of the NCWMP.

Figure 11 | Floodway and Floodplain



»» 2.11 | Urban Parks

Preamble

The downtown plan area is bookended by significant park spaces in Nose Creek and Fletcher Parks, but has limited urban parks within the plan boundary itself. Where spaces are provided (such as the plaza at the front of City Hall or on various private sites), there is little additional amenity developed or direct programming provided.

The downtown plan envisions a network of open spaces, squares, and plazas that can be used for public gatherings, events, and activities to add to the urban experience. These should be distributed throughout downtown to be accessible on foot, and to draw attention and activity along the Main Street Corridor – especially for public lands like City Hall and the New Multi-Use Facility and Library. Vacant and underutilized private properties could also accommodate pop-up parks or other urban gathering spaces to complement and enhance the public realm as part of site redevelopment.

Figure 12 | **Open Space Concept** identifies three types of urban open space nodes:

- Gateway Plazas are strategically located to draw people downtown and are intended to generate traffic to the area through their uses and activities.
- An Outdoor Gathering Space located in the Nose Creek naturalized open space is intended to support smaller functions and passive recreation activities.
- Temporary Outdoor Gathering Spaces are identified on vacant and underutilized sites throughout downtown and are intended to enhance the public realm by filling in gaps in the streetscape, creating a more visually appealing walking environment.

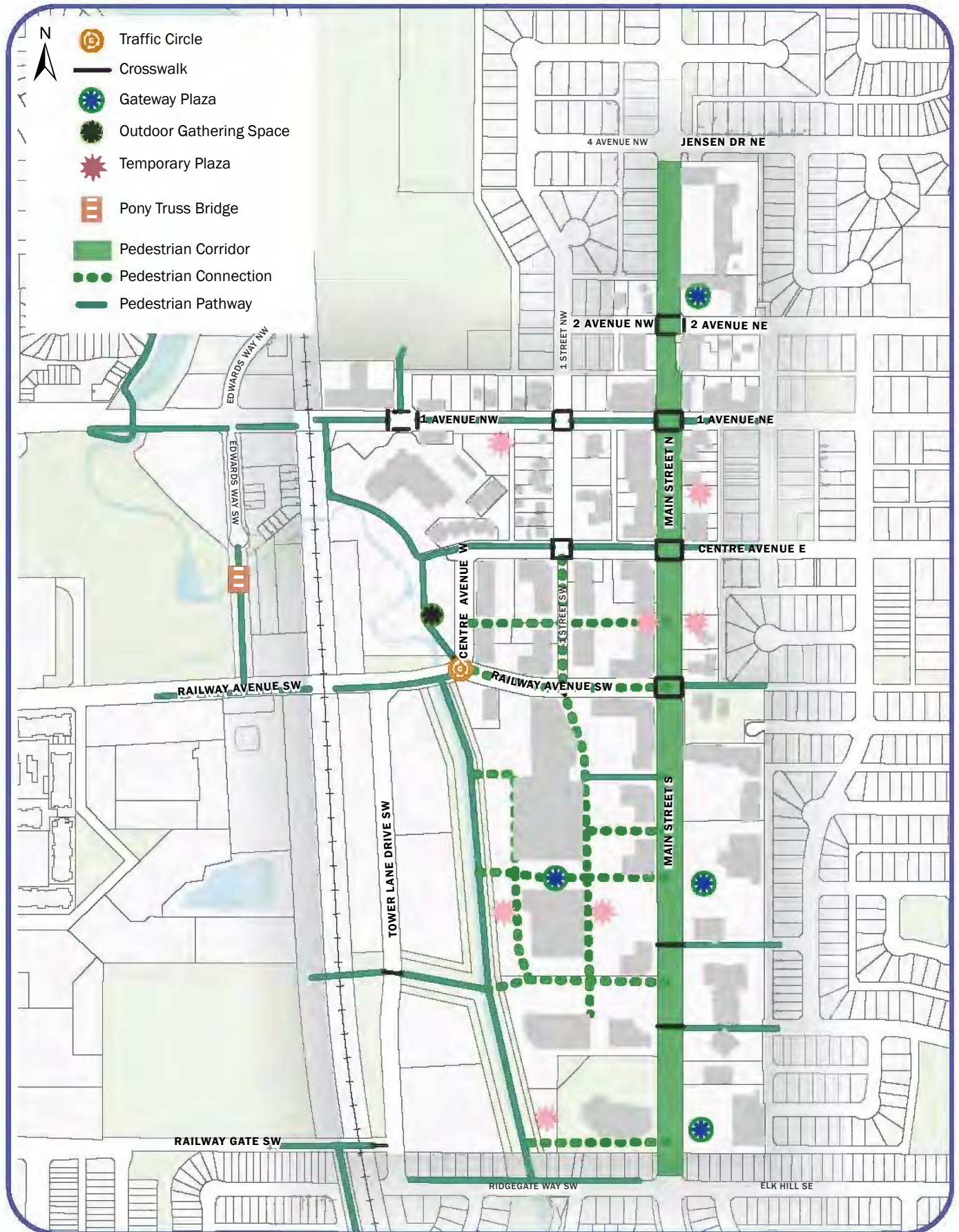
Objective

The objective is to develop a range of connected urban parks to enhance the public realm in downtown.

Principles

Developing a range of connected urban park spaces operates under the principal of making Downtown Airdrie The Place to Be and adds to the quality of the public realm. Strategically locating these areas to create gathering spaces and activities throughout the downtown creates spaces for people to gather, Putting People First and supporting the activities and character desired through our efforts to Reimagine Main Street.

Figure 12 | Open Space Concept



Policies

1. Encourage new development proposals on private properties to provide open spaces and corridors in keeping with **Figure 04** and **Figure 12** to enhance and activate the public realm.
2. Place conceptual open space nodes at the ARP stage and detail the design and programming at the development stage.
3. Develop permanent open spaces on private properties comprehensively through a Master Site Plan.
4. Adhere to the Gateway policies (**Section 2.08**), Small Town Feel policies (**Section 3.08**) and the Temporary Land Uses and Activities policies (**Section 3.01**) of this plan where they apply.
5. All open space development should incorporate Winter City Design and CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles.
6. All new public open spaces should be designed and constructed in accordance with the current edition of The City of Calgary's "Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications for Landscape Construction," as well as The City of Airdrie's Standard Landscape & Specifications.
7. Space for community gardens should be a consideration in all public and private urban parks.
8. All public and private urban parks shall be connected to the surrounding land uses and amenities through active transportation connections and appropriate edge conditions.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to explore year-round programming opportunities for recreation and cultural activities within the public open space network and outline potential programming opportunities within 24 months of the adoption of this plan.
2. Council shall direct Administration to provide a report detailing recommended mechanisms to achieve a connected network of open space plazas through the plan area within 60 months of the adoption of this plan⁴.
3. Council shall direct Administration to work with proponents in defining and supporting new open spaces.

⁴ Examples could include the provision of public realm improvements in exchange for increased development rights or establishing a Community Association/Homeowner Association which could coordinate improvements for public gathering spaces, events, shared amenities and/or other initiatives.

»» 2.12 | Airdrie Main Street Square Complex

Preamble

The Main Street Square Complex is a 5.0-acre parcel on the east side of Main Street that is owned and operated by Airdrie Main Street Square Real Estate Inc. (AMSQ), a wholly owned subsidiary of the City of Airdrie.

The City of Airdrie purchased the property in 2002 to meet the space needs for municipal administration. The purchase included commercial bays and land holdings for future commercial tenancies to help finance the relocation and reconstruction costs. The commercial tenancies include two major banks (Scotiabank and ATB Financial), and they create a revenue source to offset municipal taxes.

As a wholly owned subsidiary, AMSQ has a governance structure made up of a board comprised of City Councilors and volunteer members of the public-at-large. This board provides recommendations for the operation of the complex to City Council, as the overarching board of directors for the subsidiary.

The AMSQ Board publicized a redevelopment proposal in Fall 2016. Council elected not to pursue the proposal further and passed a motion to conduct a visioning exercise for the downtown overall.

During the Downtown Visioning exercise in early 2017, the public expressed a general preference for key institutional developments on the parcel. Participants in the design charrettes of 2019 provided the same general recommendation for incorporation into the general land use concept for the Downtown Plan (**Figure 04**).

Municipal Administration presented the results of the design charrettes to the AMSQ Board in early 2020 and maintained open communication with the Board throughout the development of the Downtown Plan. The AMSQ Board has the same rights and opportunities to develop, or redevelop, in conjunction with the general land use concept and development policies of this plan as any other landowner within the downtown.

Objective

The objective for the Airdrie Main Street Square Complex is to contribute to the overall development of the downtown to the satisfaction of Council as both the board of directors for the subsidiary and as the Development Authority.

Principles

Potential redevelopment of this site operates under the principle of Everyone's Success in the downtown. This site will have an equal opportunity to support the overall social and economic success of this core development area.

As a holding of a wholly-owned municipal subsidiary, redevelopment of this site – whenever it may occur – can Think Big. Resident and stakeholder input to date has encouraged this big picture thinking to reflect their preference for key institutional uses on this site.

Policies

1. Maintain open communication between the AMSQ Board and municipal administration to identify any redevelopment proposal(s) for the site and to describe the progress of the downtown plan, respectively.
2. Any redevelopment proposal for the Main Street Square Complex shall recognize the current public preference for major civic uses, and:
 - a. Adhere to the civic development catalyst policies (**Section 2.07**), if applicable; and,
 - b. Shall consider public outreach for any potential redevelopment proposals.
3. Consideration of a specialized land use district may be given to prescribe the vision of Council as the Development Authority for any site redevelopment.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to provide information relevant to economic development trends and the management of commercial properties as deemed necessary for its role as the AMSQ Board of Directors.
2. Council shall direct Administration to provide advice, as deemed necessary, to assist in the review of any potential redevelopment proposals or plans for events that would use the AMSQ property and parking facilities in its role as a Development Authority.



»» 2.13 | Towerlane Centre Development Area

Preamble

The Towerlane Centre is a private retail development area located in the southwest portion of downtown, representing almost 25% of the total plan area. Constructed primarily between 1981 and 1983, this site comprises primary grocery, retail, and professional services to meet daily needs.

Over time, the Towerlane Centre has transitioned from an internal facing shopping mall to an external facing retail centre, with a select number of new standalone commercial retail units. It is a vehicular-oriented development centre sandwiched between Nose Creek and Main Street, with private ownership of all roads and driving aisles. On-site parking is abundant, with over 800 stalls on the combined property holdings. This single site contains nearly 1/3 of the total parking in the downtown.

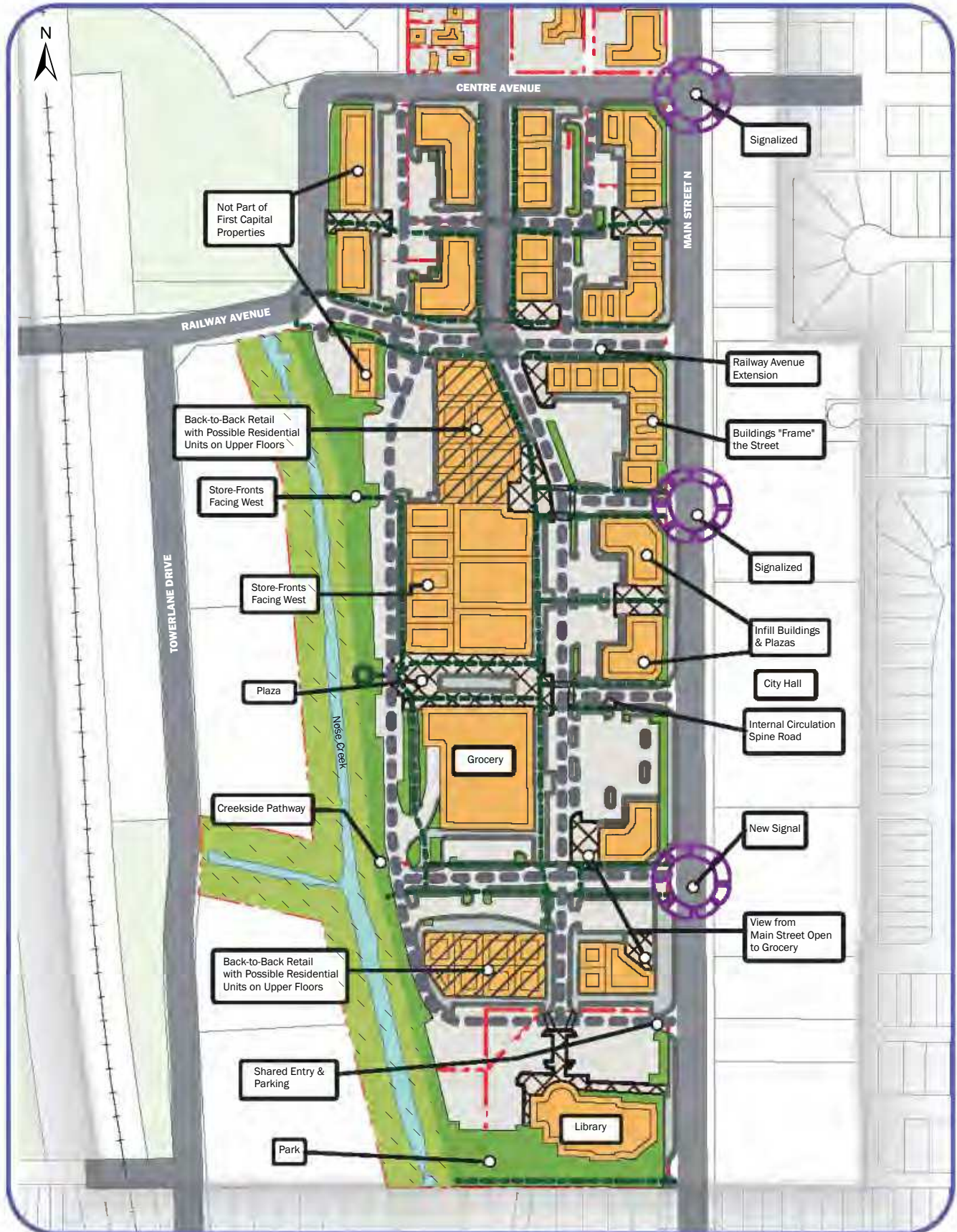
During the downtown visioning exercise, residents expressed a desire to integrate the Towerlane Centre with the rest of the downtown and have more connections to Main Street. The design charrette participants specifically laid transportation and greenspace corridors across the Towerlane Centre site to improve the connection between Main Street and the Nose Creek corridor. They also placed new retail and professional development areas along a potential internal grid to frame and connect this site within itself, and to the remainder of downtown.

However, there are key challenges to overcome in terms of redevelopment and connectivity. Certain leasehold provisions and/or other registered instruments are in place which provide retail exclusivity, or other forms of constraint that could make redevelopment more challenging. The remaining lifespan of existing building footprints combined with land development and construction costs further hamper redevelopment and public connection opportunities.

Bearing this in mind, Council selected the adjacent former fire hall site to the south as the site for the future Multi-Use Facility and Library in June 2019. This facility is expected to open within the next five years, and change the nature of development and activity in the southwest portion of the plan area dramatically. It is seen as a potential catalyst for redevelopment and an opportunity to coordinate and connect the two sites, even if redevelopment at the Towerlane Centre is not necessarily expected to occur at the same pace as the adjacent civic gateway development.

City Administration and First Capital Realty have kept an open line of communication for aspirational redevelopment designs. The preferred aspirational concept is included in this plan for reference, recognizing that development may not necessarily occur in precise keeping with such plans as on [Figure 13 | Aspirational Concept](#).

Figure 13 | Aspirational Concept



Objective

The objective is to coordinate the redevelopment potential of the Towerlane Centre with the adjacent development sites and public infrastructure.

Principles

Coordinating the redevelopment of the Towerlane Centre with the adjacent sites, infrastructure, and amenities helps to make downtown the Place to Be. The effort to ensure that all development opportunity sites are explored operates under the principle of Everyone's Success and requires the Right Rules and Processes to achieve the best possible results.

Policies

1. Redevelopment of the Towerlane Centre shall generally conform to the land use concept for the Downtown Plan (**Figure 04**), and:
 - a. Shall have due regard for the specific concept for this site shown in **Figure 13**, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.
 - b. Shall integrate with the adjacent properties and the downtown generally, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.
 - c. Shall prioritize integration with Main Street and the surrounding properties to incorporate the desired economic and social supports set by Council in this plan; and,
 - i. Shall conform to the site access locations prescribed by the aspirational design for the reimagining of Main Street; or,
 - ii. Adhere the policies for reimagining Main Street (**Section 2.05**), should the Development Authority accept a redevelopment proposal or deem a new site access required prior to the adoption of the aspirational design
 - d. Should provide a variety of retail, professional and entertainment services, as well as other commercial and office land uses deemed acceptable to the Development Authority; and,
 - e. May consider a Direct Control district to recognize the unique development context and to provide the greatest possible certainty for the owner(s) and the municipality.
2. Redevelopment of the Towerlane Centre site shall adhere to the vehicular oriented infill development policies (**Section 2.06**) to the satisfaction of the Development Authority and in addition to those policies, shall:
 - a. Establish a grid road network in conjunction with redevelopment phases, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority, even where private ownership of such roads and aisles is maintained; and,
 - b. Ensure that such an internal road network provides connections from public road rights-of-way to the Nose Creek Corridor

3. Redevelopment on the Towerlane Centre site shall coordinate with the development of the new library on the gateway parcel to the south, and:
 - a. Prioritize pedestrian movement and safety.
 - b. Provide opportunities for plaza spaces and other destinations for pedestrians.
 - c. Limit retail conflicts, to the extent that they are proposed as ancillary or complementary uses in the new library; and,
 - d. Acknowledge that the future library site shall be subject to the gateway development policies (**Section 2.08**) found in the Downtown Plan, which may impact coordination opportunities.
4. The Towerlane Centre site is encouraged to provide opportunities for pop-up land uses and/or private events and programming, adhering to the Temporary Land Uses and Activities policies (**Section 3.01**) and the Events and Programming policies (**Section 3.03**) to the extent that such land uses, events and programming transpire.

Municipal Actions:

1. Council shall direct Administration to collaborate with the property owner(s), for the integration of the new library site with the existing development at the Towerlane Centre site, bearing in mind the aspirational design shown in **Figure 13** for the Towerlane Centre site.
2. Council shall direct Administration to engage with the property owners, within 18 months of the adoption of this plan, to propose shared parking opportunities between the three properties under common ownership in this area (City Hall, Multi-Use Facility and Library, Towerlane Centre) to achieve greater development density.
3. Council shall direct Administration to coordinate with the property owners, within 24 months of the adoption of this plan, for the provision of community events and support enhanced retail opportunities (sidewalk sales, etc.) on the Towerlane Centre site during events.
4. Council shall direct Administration to identify, within 36 months of the adoption of this plan, any external pedestrian or vehicular access changes that may impact the Towerlane Centre site to the property owners, for coordination of efforts and accesses.
5. Council shall direct Administration to identify, within 48 months of the adoption of this plan, any potential capital improvements adjacent to the Towerlane Centre to the property owners, to facilitate the best possible integration between the capital improvement and the Towerlane Centre.
6. Council shall direct Administration to collaborate with the property owners, within 60 months of the adoption of this plan, to develop the best possible development regulation mechanism(s) to implement the ultimate redevelopment plan(s) for this portion of the Downtown Plan.



Section Three

Downtown Functions





Downtown Functions Overview

This section describes the functions of a downtown that allows its role within the community to be enhanced. These downtown functions work in concert with the development form to create an urban experience that supports the vision and objective of the plan.

The policy areas in this section speak to the services and functions that are located, or best located, downtown to meet the needs of the community, including Affordable Housing, Events and Programming. This section describes Transportation Methods that support downtown's activity and built form, and Development Supports that allow for a mix of diverse and vibrant land uses. Policies and actions in this section also describe desired elements that support downtown revitalization and make it a more accessible and welcoming place for all its residents, users and visitors.

This section outlines all the elements that are a part of the role and functions within the downtown, and together with the policies on the downtown's form work to create Airdrie's urban experience.

Conceptual Renderings for Downtown Revitalization



These conceptual images build on the public and stakeholder participation in the design charettes to present the aspirational outcome of the ARP redevelopment concept.

»» 3.01 | Temporary Land Uses and Activities

Preamble

Council's statement of success for the downtown plan speaks to a place of business and activity worthy of public and private investment. This plan aims to accelerate the pace of redevelopment in the downtown by supporting businesses that may be looking for a place to start out, do not have a permanent location or the ability to commit to a long-term lease, and those that don't fit under typical business models of operating every day throughout the year.

Temporary land uses and activities can cover a range of businesses and endeavors, including street vendors, food trucks, retail spaces, recreational and fitness facilities, shared studio spaces, markets, and events. Supporting these kinds of uses would open doors for a range of businesses and can animate areas within the downtown with different and unique activities. In addition to supporting new businesses in the area, this approach gives a space to support unique and interesting uses that significantly add to the character and vitality of downtown.

There are success stories from other cities that we can learn from to guide our approach, and some clear opportunities for this kind of initiative to have a positive impact here. Food carts are a celebrated and widely recognized part of Portland's downtown and community identity, and similar uses could be supported on many undeveloped sites, in parking lots, and on vacant sites within Airdrie's downtown to support existing businesses, or even act as activity generators on their own. Calgary has implemented more robust allowances for pop-up and interim uses which would help to inform our own approach.

In addition to stand-alone uses that can occupy parking lots and undeveloped sites, this initiative can also support flexible uses within established buildings. 'Flex spaces' or 'Innovation spaces' were a common element through charrettes on this plan and have been an emerging component of commercial development proposals discussed with the City across new policy plans and development concepts.

Objective

Support temporary land uses and activities that add to the vibrancy of downtown.

Principles

Temporary land uses and activities add colour and character to the downtown, making it The Place to Be. Being flexible in allowing these uses to operate is a case of setting up The Right Rules and Processes, and this can create an environment to let more businesses and investments thrive in the downtown, making it a part of Everyone's Success.

Policies

1. The Downtown shall be considered the primary location in Airdrie for temporary (pop-up and interim) uses.
2. Temporary land uses and activities within the downtown shall be supported and encouraged. The Development Authority shall generally consider interim, and pop-up uses appropriate within the downtown and, if there are no impacts on surrounding uses, may support applications for such uses to occupy:
 - a. Existing buildings on a site.
 - b. Portions of a site (e.g., part of an established parking lot) and/or
 - c. Undeveloped or underdeveloped sites.
3. Where a temporary land use or activity is proposed within an established building, the Development Authority may consider the remaining anticipated lifecycle of that building in support of a temporary use in that location to bridge the gap to a more comprehensive redevelopment plan or proposal.
4. New commercial buildings and sites in the downtown should consider how temporary land uses and activities can be accommodated within the context of each proposal, and may:
 - a. Provide flex spaces to allow for pop-up and interim uses, and/or;
 - b. Be designed to facilitate a range of uses and occupancies.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to prepare Land Use Bylaw amendments within 12 months of the adoption of this plan to formalize the City's approach for temporary uses and clarify how the Development Authority will review and regulate potential impacts.
2. Council shall direct Administration to work with property owners to prepare, within 36 months of the adoption of this plan:
 - a. Prospective site plans and logistics for how pop-up and interim uses can be accommodated on sites within the downtown, and
 - b. Marketing opportunities for pop-up and interim uses on individual sites and in the downtown overall.

»» 3.02 | Affordable Housing

Preamble

Airdrie has a very high need for a variety of affordable housing options. The Housing Needs Assessment (2016) identified that only 2.2% of the community's total housing stock is oriented to households with greater housing support needs. There are critical shortages in below-market rental and rental supplement products, which are two key components in the complete housing spectrum.

The challenges identified in the Housing Needs Assessment persist today, despite gains from hotel conversions during the pandemic. A limited number of units can also be gained from a municipal land asset on Edmonton Trail; however, the land economics from that site for below-market and subsidized housing products have not yet proven to be viable.

Downtown Airdrie provides a preferable option for the location of affordable housing products; below-market and supplemented products. Downtown is well-served by transit and home to several key civic institutions and amenities. Redevelopment within downtown provides the opportunity to accommodate all parts of the housing spectrum, from supportive housing to niche market ownership. The density required in many cases to make the economics work for many lands uses on vacant or underdeveloped parcels in the downtown may serve as an opportunity to initiate, or incorporate, these types of residential land uses. Allowing for a mix of housing products, incomes, and demographics can create benefits for both the downtown, and the community.

Objective

The objective is to create affordable housing in appropriate forms and locations within downtown.

Principles

Enhancing socio-economic diversity means Putting People First and municipal involvement to achieve the objective shows how the City can Lead by Example.

Policies

1. The Downtown shall be a location that possesses a wide range of housing choices in support of increased social well-being.
2. Downtown shall be considered the primary location for affordable housing offerings (below-market and supplemented) in Airdrie.
3. Affordable housing offerings shall be located with access to transportation modes and amenities to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.
4. Mixed-income housing projects shall be encouraged to provide affordable housing options wherever possible. Preference shall be given by the Development Authority for mixing commercial and residential land uses as part of such developments.
5. Capital improvements to civic infrastructure (such as roads, sidewalks, etc.) shall make appropriate accommodations for all age demographics and mobility constraints to support affordable housing units.
6. Developers shall be encouraged to design any projects containing affordable housing units (below-market and supplemented) to have low energy demand to reduce long-term operating costs for housing need tenants/owners.

Municipal Actions

1. Concurrent with the final readings of this plan, Council shall adopt Resolution No. 04/2022 to refund application fees and reduce development security requirements for mixed-income and mixed-use projects.
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare options to incentivize building designs with proven utility/operating cost savings within 12 months of the adoption of this plan.
3. Council shall direct Administration to prepare, within 12 months of the adoption of the plan, options to convert available land and/or financial assets, so as:
 - a. To make strategic investments in property for affordable housing development(s) in the downtown; and/or,
 - b. To match housing needs with proposals from downtown land developers, focusing particularly on potential mixed-income and mixed-use developments; and/or,
 - c. To enter leases/partnerships with downtown land developers to simultaneously facilitate guaranteed unit payments and provide below-market or subsidized units for populations at need, and to this end:
 - i. Council shall direct Administration to pursue landowners poised to initiate developments downtown to find matches for potential affordable housing integrations and subsidized units leases in conjunction with the adoption of this plan.

»» 3.03 | Events and Programming

Preamble

Events and programming are vital parts of the social connections cherished by a community. They act as a means for a community to express itself and its culture, and there is no limit on the variety of ways that a community can express itself through events and programming.

Events and programming represent a gauge on the amount of social connection and social sustainability being generated in a community. A failure to come together would often mean failing to enhance the values of the community, as well as the levels of social and economic capital.

Airdrie takes a community development approach that relies on community members coming together to take collective action for organizing events and programming. The approach is premised on the assumption that people have the desire to make positive change or improve the state of their community. It recognizes the right of people for self-determination and empowers them to make decisions about how and where they live, and what their quality of life will be. Using this approach, Airdrie has experienced some successes with the Canada Day Parade, AirdrieFEST, and the Airdrie Festival of Lights. Several thousand people attend these events each year, with many walking from adjacent neighbourhoods.

Direction set by Council in the policies of the AirdrieONE Sustainability Plan and the Airdrie City Plan direct the City to work with community groups on the design and delivery of events and programming. Specific language exists in those policies to accommodate both innovative projects, programming, and events in the Downtown.

Ultimately, Council requires good information to make informed choices on the costs and benefits of proactive event and programming delivery. But studies like the Demand and Distribution Report released by Jones Lasalle Lang in 2019 note that cities must transition to include four new economies if they hope to stay competitive:

- The Innovation Economy;
- The Experience Economy;
- The Sharing Economy; and,
- The Circular Economy.

The Experience Economy requires a particular mix of activities to ensure continuous experience opportunities for its visitors. Increasing competition in this economic sector may make financial outlay now essential for reach, for investment attraction, and to sustain the high quality of life enjoyed here.

Objective

To make the downtown the primary location for the events and programming that generate additional activity and energy.

Principles

Pointing events and programming to the downtown is essential in living up to the principle that downtown is the Heart of the City. The activity, energy and social connection created by such events serve to make downtown the Place to Be. Improving pedestrian access to these social connection opportunities aligns with the principle of Putting People First, not only in the physical form(s), but also in the destinations for people.

Policies

1. The Downtown shall be the primary location for events and programming in Airdrie and shall be supported with the actions and incentives referenced in this plan.
2. Events shall form part of the comprehensive strategy to allow the Downtown to compete with other areas in Airdrie and destinations within the region.
3. The events and programs offered in Downtown Airdrie shall be marketed to external audiences, wherever possible and applicable.
4. Events shall be designed to enhance civic pride in the Downtown.
5. There shall be a culture of creating enhanced social connection through the event and programming offerings in the Downtown.
6. All publicly organized events shall accommodate all age demographics, social demographics and accessibility needs.
7. Events shall mitigate their potential nuisance impacts to the satisfaction of the Community Development Department.

Municipal Actions

1. Concurrent with the final readings of this plan, Council shall adopt Resolution No. 03/2022 to provide supports for businesses and property owners to achieve enhanced beautification and social connections downtown, and/or initiate a Business Improvement Association (BIA).
2. Council shall select the Downtown as the location for locating new publicly organized events, or capital projects/improvements to host events.

3. Council directs Administration to prioritize the funding opportunities for events within the Downtown Plan boundary and to broaden the event aspects that can be paid under the annual budget amount.
4. Council shall direct Administration to prepare, within 12 months of the adoption of this plan, options for fiscal support of downtown events not otherwise organized by a BIA, Community Association, or Events Committee.
5. Council shall direct Administration to prepare options for a capital project, or capital project improvement, to provide all-year public washrooms within the downtown, within 12 months of the adoption of this plan.
6. Council shall direct Administration to prepare options for capital projects, or improvements, to enhance physical access to downtown event locations, and increase walkability to events for residents in adjacent neighbourhoods within 12 months of the adoption of this plan.
7. Within 12 months of the adoption of this plan, the City of Airdrie shall make parking facilities on municipally owned properties within the downtown available to support privately organized events. Such shared parking opportunities will be arranged and implemented without charge to the event organizers in all circumstances that they can be reasonably accommodated in the opinion of the Corporate Properties Department, and in addition:
 - a. Council, as the primary shareholder of the Airdrie Main Street Square (AMSQ), shall direct that corporation to take the same approach as part of its mandate.
8. Council shall direct Administration to make public spaces within the Downtown Plan boundary available for both public and privately organized events with minimal, or no charge within 18 months of the adoption of this plan, and:
 - a. To post such a fee and availability schedule publicly; and,
 - b. To provide a transparent and predictable process for prioritizing or determining the ability to use such spaces.
9. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a bylaw or resolution, within 24 months of the adoption of this plan, in alignment with the reimagining Main Street policies (**Section 2.05**), outlining a process to allow Main Street to be closed for either public or private events.
10. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a 3-year events plan for the downtown, within 24 months of plan adoption, which shall:
 - a. Propose at least one publicly funded and organized event in the downtown each month of the calendar year designed with the regional audience in mind.
 - b. Include cost estimates and activity options.
 - c. Estimate potential return on investment from event and activity expenditures; and
 - d. Set out a procedure for extension or reoccurrence for Council's consideration at the expiry of the adopted events plan.

»» 3.04 | Supporting Multimodal Transportation

Preamble

Multimodal transportation refers to a system with more than one mode of travel. Currently more than 90% of all daily trips in Airdrie are by vehicles, and the downtown plan will need to continue to accommodate this traffic while enhancing other modes of transportation through downtown.

Ideally, a multimodal transportation network serving downtown would include cars, bicycles, transit and pedestrians. To continue attracting business and activity to Main Street and downtown, pedestrian traffic should be given the highest priority. Doing this is integral to creating complete streets and the urban experience that will give downtown Airdrie a competitive advantage. It also ties into other policy areas in the plan, including Reimagining Main Street and encouraging active transportation as a healthy lifestyle choice.

There are opportunities to make some significant gains in this regard. Almost the entire city is within a 7km radius of the City Centre, which makes traveling to and from Downtown by bike possible. While data shows vehicles as the dominant mode of transportation, cycling and walking were ranked closely behind. A completed multi-use path alongside the railway and Nose Creek is the foundation of the active transportation network proposed in this plan.

Airdrie Transit provides another way of getting to and around downtown, with service operating along Main Street and 1 Avenue.

Objective

The objective is to achieve a multi-modal transportation system within the Downtown that prioritizes walking.

Principles

Designing downtown Airdrie to accommodate a multi-modal transportation system that prioritizes pedestrian mobility puts the City in a position to Lead by Example. It is also a key component of Reimagining Main Street.

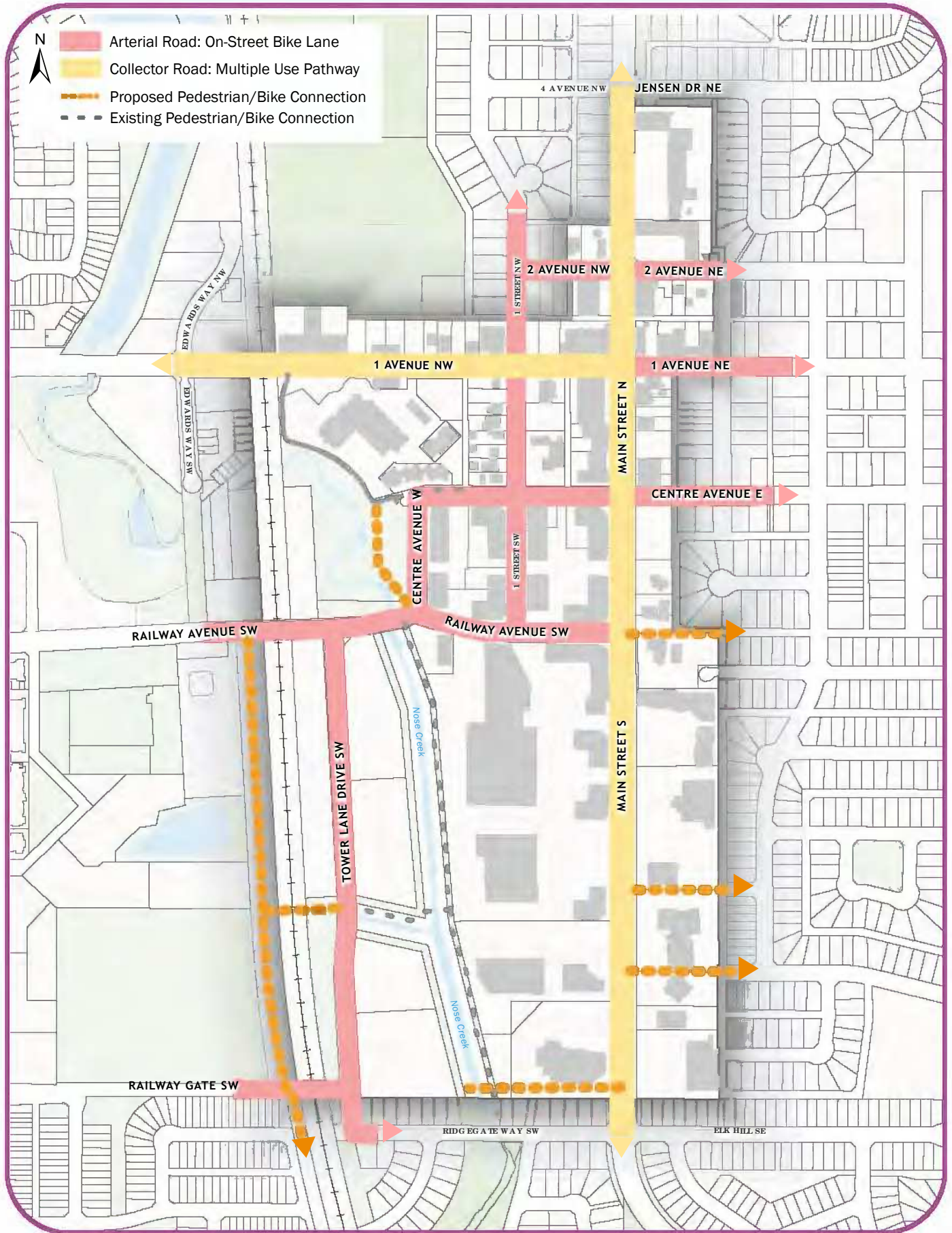
Policies

1. Pedestrian mobility shall be recognized as the highest priority mode of transportation in the downtown.
2. Any new redesign of the transportation system in the Downtown ARP shall incorporate improvements to the pedestrian/pathway/cycling network as shown conceptually in [Figure 14 | Multimodal Transportation](#).
3. Street network improvements in the downtown shall incorporate elements of Complete Streets, and specifically consider the following design elements:
 - a. Design speed of vehicle lanes should be compatible with adjoining land uses and prioritize the overall safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists.
 - b. On-street parking should be accommodated where possible to support fronting retail businesses along the street, provide a buffer for pedestrians, and to calm traffic speeds.
 - c. Direct access onto streets within the downtown should be limited where appropriate to avoid breaks in the pedestrian network and provide space for landscaping, lighting, and utilities.
4. Transit stops shall provide adequate shelter, seating, and user amenities.
5. Cycling infrastructure in the Downtown shall be designed to facilitate adequate snow clearing in winter.
6. Downtown should feature attractive streetscapes through aesthetic building faces and landscaping.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to update design standards and operational practices, within 36 months of the adoption of this plan, to ensure that active transportation modes are supported year-round (e.g., snow clearing in winter).
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a transit strategy for moving people to and within the downtown using transit, within a timeline determined by Council.
3. Upon finalization of the 'Reimagining Main Street' design, Administration shall review and reconcile all multimodal transportation systems and connectivity to and within the Downtown.
4. Council shall direct Administration to collaborate with landowners and developers, when redevelopment occurs on private sites, to make infrastructure improvements or connections that are identified through this plan and subsequent actions.

Figure 14 | Multimodal Transportation



»» 3.05 | Pedestrian Mobility

Preamble

Downtown currently has a well-connected pedestrian grid that is supported by Main Street and 1 Avenue as main corridors within that network. However, there are opportunities for improvements and specific areas where there are clear needs that should be addressed.

The network can be enhanced through additional east-west and north-south connections shown on [Figure 15 | Pathways and Sidewalks](#). Pathway connections are drawn to represent desire lines that were identified by participants during public engagement. These connections are envisioned to have natural landscaping and provide access and enjoyment of natural areas such as Nose Creek while providing non-vehicular connections to the adjacent communities to the west and east of the downtown.

Although a necessity, the presence of the railway serves as a barrier between the Creekside Village, Iron Horse Condominiums, Midtown, and the Downtown. These developments, if connected, have the potential to bring more pedestrian activity and vitality to Main Street. To open up these connections, crossings would have to be considered at certain points along the tracks. Potential locations for elevated pedestrian crossings are identified on [Figure 12 \(Section two\)](#). Connecting Midtown and Iron Horse Park to the Downtown would provide the opportunity to link to Airdrie's railway history.

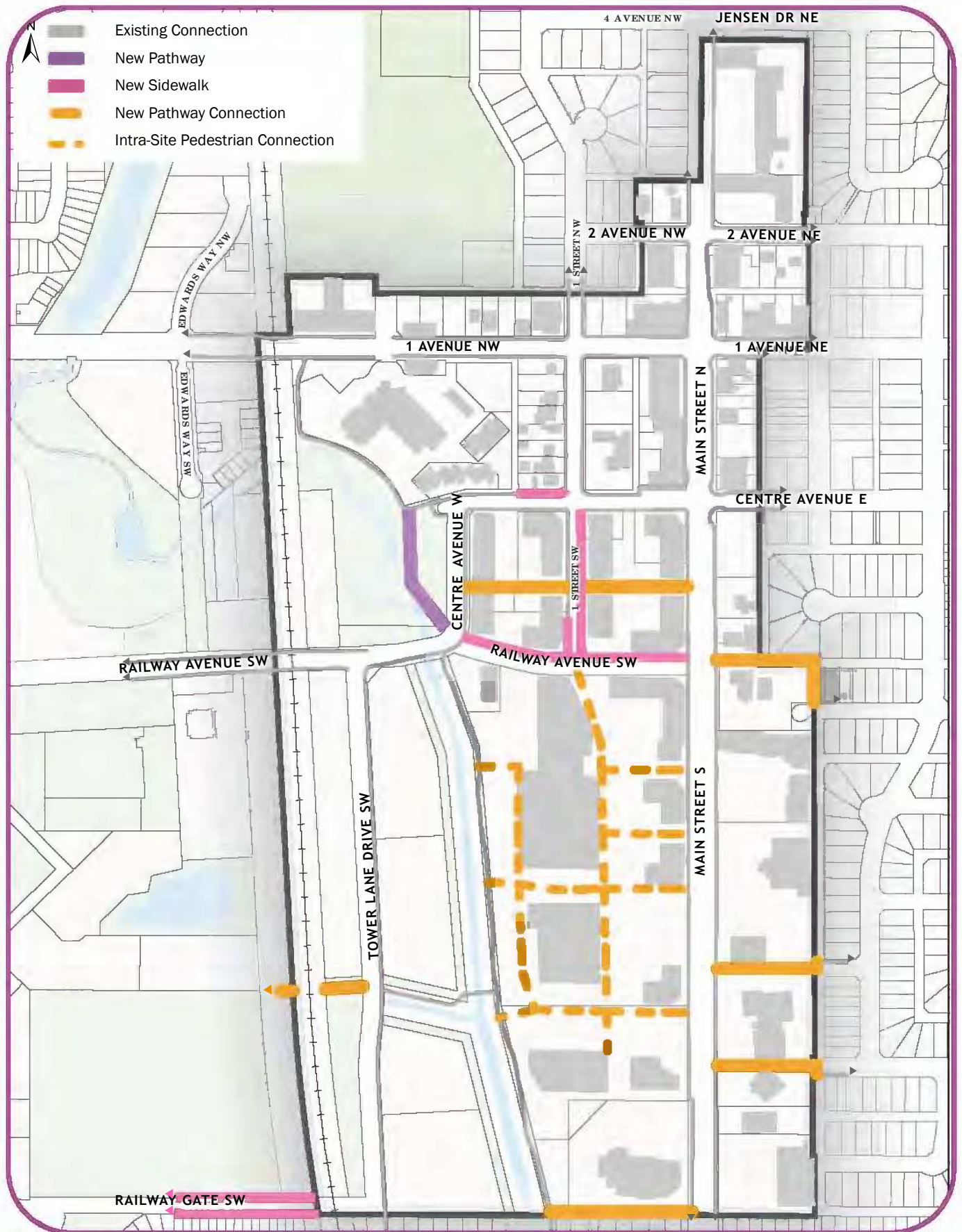
Objective

The objective is to enhance connectivity of the pedestrian network through thoughtful design, strategic investments and the integration of pedestrian needs in the downtown.

Principles


Enhancing the pedestrian realm is a key part of creating a Connected and Mobile downtown, and the design of these areas operates under the principle of Putting People First. Designing Downtown with attractive storefronts, interesting spaces, comfortable sidewalks and pathways and a safe environment encourages pedestrian activity. Pedestrian activity in turn, increases interest in the Downtown and helps make it The Place to Be.

Figure 15 | Pathways and Sidewalks



Policies

1. All pedestrian connections shall be constructed generally as illustrated on **Figure 15**. These connections shall be expanded where appropriate and linked to on-street pedestrian routes.
2. All pathways, sidewalks, and crosswalks within the downtown should be designed:
 - a. As part of a cohesive and accessible pedestrian network, with accessibility to developments, transit stops, and features within the plan area and with appropriate transitions between different elements.
 - b. To accommodate vulnerable users, including but not limited to wheelchairs, motorized wheelchairs, people/persons with disabilities, children and strollers.
3. Regional pathway connections and pedestrian trails should:
 - a. Be routed along the edges of environmentally significant areas or into locations with less sensitivity to the natural ecology to minimize the impact on the natural environment.
 - b. Be designed for all non-vehicle transportation modes, including walkers, runners, cyclists, inline skaters, skateboarders, and persons with reduced mobility. Designs should consider access, safety, and adequate signage.
4. The design of sidewalks in the downtown:
 - a. Shall ensure clear paths for pedestrians.
 - b. Should be separated from roadways by street furniture, trees, and/or landscaping.
 - c. Should be built with hard, durable, level and slip-resistant materials that can be easily cleared of snow and ice, and
 - d. Shall be adequately illuminated with appropriately scaled lighting to increase pedestrian comfort and safety.
5. Crosswalks should be included at every intersection within the downtown on all sides and should achieve the following in their location and design:
 - a. Be a natural and convenient extension of the overall pedestrian network.
 - b. Be as close as possible to desired travel lines.
6. Where on-street parking is allowed, curb extensions should replace the parking lane at crosswalks. Curb extensions should be the same width as the parking lane where possible.

- 
7. Mid-block crosswalks should be considered where:
 - a. the spacing between intersections is greater than 150 metres,
 - b. there is a need to connect uses on either side of a street,
 - c. there is an existing pedestrian route perpendicular to the street
 - d. there is a provable desire line or high pedestrian volumes that a crosswalk can address.
 8. Pedestrian street crossing distances should be minimized and designed to be visible to vehicles, using signage, signals, “zebra striping” or differentiated paving materials as may be appropriate for its context to address safety, traffic, speed, and maintenance.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to prepare, within 12 months of the adoption of this plan, a prospective summary, and associated costs for Capital Projects to address new pedestrian connections and improvements to the existing pedestrian network.
2. Council shall direct Administration to provide an annual report, to be presented in coordination with the annual budget, on potential improvements to the pedestrian network and associated costs for review and prioritization.
3. Council shall direct Administration to review, every two years following the adoption of this plan, the potential for the key pedestrian rail crossing locations as shown on **Figure 15** with the relevant stakeholders.
4. Council shall direct Administration to coordinate pedestrian network improvements with approved developments, to complement development projects and achieve an economy of scale with those development in the downtown.

»» 3.06 | Private Vehicle Parking

Preamble

Downtown Airdrie has a considerable amount of private vehicle parking overall. The Downtown Parking Study (2019) counted over 2,700 stalls in a similar boundary to this plan. Approximately 2,450 of those stalls are located on private properties. However, despite this apparent abundance, the Downtown Parking Study also found several areas, mostly in the downtown core, with virtually no peak hour availability. This has the corresponding effect of constraining development aspirations in those areas and creating an impression that there is a lack of parking in the downtown.

This is a challenging issue to address. Private vehicle parking stalls are sought by the public and dutifully supplied by landowners, but they are also land consumptive, expensive, and unable to be redistributed or reallocated easily. In many vehicular-oriented developments in the downtown, they represent the dominant landform and require special attention for placement and design. While private vehicle parking is certainly needed to support the redevelopment targets and aspirations for the downtown, constructing more parking stalls in an environment with an apparent excess has a counterintuitive flavour.

The City of Airdrie reached out to landowners and redevelopment experts in the preparation of this plan to discuss this and other key issues. These stakeholders highlighted parking as one of the most important issues facing the downtown and the impact that it can have on the economics for redevelopment. They urged the municipality to consider incentives for private vehicle parking that would reduce anticipated redevelopment costs and serve to maximize yield, generating a future return on such civic investment in the form of an increased tax base.

The approach outlined in **Section 1.05** of this plan is to take proactive steps to achieve the objective of accelerated redevelopment. As such, simultaneous actions to remove parking regulation barriers, gain efficiency from the existing supply, and incentivize parking areas to match the desired amount of redevelopment are in line with that approach. But any such approach, and/or complementary set of actions, needs to consider the costs and benefits of parking carefully when being presented to Council.

Objective

To harmonize the amount, and placement, of parking with the redevelopment aspirations of this plan.

Principles

Matching the location and amount of parking with the incremental increases in redevelopment will require the Right Rules and Processes to be in place. But if they are, then Everyone's Success is possible, since the finite resources of land, time, and money will not be wasted for landowners and not be charged back correspondingly to consumers. The right amount and location of parking allows for greater intensity, other uses, and new amenities – helping to make downtown The Place to Be.

Policies

1. Maximum use and efficiency shall be sought from every available private vehicle parking stall in the downtown.

2. The total number of parking stalls shall be reduced to the greatest extent possible, while still supporting the desired **Land Use Concept (Figure 04)**, and to help achieve this:
 - a. Shared and joint use parking agreements shall be encouraged; and,
 - b. Shared entrance locations shall be encouraged to reduce intersection conflicts and achieve greater site development efficiency on private parcels.
3. Potential impacts from autonomous vehicle technologies shall be anticipated, embraced, and accommodated to the greatest extent possible, and:
 - a. Ride stop locations shall be considered as part of public road right-of-way standards and site developments; and,
 - b. Public and/or private structured parking areas shall be designed to accommodate potential conversion to other land uses if/when structured parking stalls are made obsolete by such technologies; and,
4. The Development Authority shall require parking to be located to the side and rear of properties whenever possible, unless such parking:
 - a. Is incorporated as part of the building design in a manner deemed acceptable to the Development Authority; and/or,
 - b. Takes the form of a parking structure that adequately addresses any potential safety issues, and which adequately incorporates active frontage elements, in the opinion of the Development Authority.
5. Surface parking lots in the Downtown shall be carefully designed to minimize their impacts on the public realm and to permit redevelopment, and in this regard:
 - a. Vehicular access to individual sites should be from rear lanes and side streets wherever possible.
 - b. Large surface parking lots (>50 stalls) shall:
 - i. Be screened from view with landscaping on the edges and medians, and such edge and median treatments shall:
 - ii. Have a minimum width of 3.0m between parked vehicles and the sidewalk in a front yard.
 - iii. Be located within the private realm, to not reduce the total sidewalk width; and,
 01. Not obstruct the primary building façade.
 02. Consider the proportion of landscaping to the private vehicle parking areas.
 03. Provide adequate space for landscaping to ensure the long-term viability of plantings; and,
 04. Concentrate landscaping where it will be of benefit to long-term viability of plantings.
 - iv. Consider appropriate snow storage areas and potential groundwater recharge from these areas, where it can be accommodated appropriately; and,
 - v. May include permeable paving (unit pavers, porous concrete or asphalt, etc.), bioswales, and/or infiltration measures, where deemed appropriate by the Development Authority and where environmental and maintenance considerations are properly addressed.

6. All surface, structured and underground parking facilities shall adhere to the minimum requirements of the Alberta Building Code and the City of Airdrie Land Use Bylaw, and beyond that:
 - a. Shall provide stalls for priority purposes within a proximity of the principal entrances deemed appropriate by the Development Authority and were deemed necessary by the Development Authority, in keeping with the following hierarchy of needs and objectives:
 - i. Parking stalls for disabled persons.
 - ii. Parking stalls for persons with mobility challenges.
 - iii. Stalls or designated areas for non-vehicular transportation modes (i.e., bicycles, motorized personal transportation devices)
 - iv. Parking stalls for car share formats; and,
 - v. Parking stalls for energy efficient vehicles

Municipal Actions

1. Concurrent with the final readings of this plan, Council shall adopt Resolution No. 01/2022 which will provide a private parking subsidy for land uses within the downtown.
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare an amendment to Land Use Bylaw B-01/2016 a to reduce on-site parking regulations in the downtown to the extent that Council deems most appropriate.
3. Council shall direct Administration to prepare, within 36 months of plan adoption, a detailed study on enhanced on-street parking options within the downtown core other than Main Street that includes:
 - a. Cost estimates for ultimate on-street parking designs; and,
 - b. Potential interim measures for such designs, as well as associated cost estimates
4. Council shall direct Administration to identify opportunities for shared or joint use parking agreements within the plan area within 18 months of the adoption of this plan, and in this regard:
 - a. Shall direct Administration to contact landowners within the downtown to facilitate and register such parking agreements; and,
 - b. Shall direct the Council Budget Committee to provide an annual budget amount deemed appropriate to cover the costs of such registrations at the Land Titles Office.
5. Council shall direct Administration to provide estimates of the approximate cost of a surface, structured, and underground parking stall within the downtown core at a frequency desired by Council.
6. Council shall direct Administration to provide, at a frequency to be determined by Council, an update on:
 - a. the state of autonomous vehicle technologies.
 - b. the state of any other technologies relevant to transportation and vehicle parking; and,
 - c. the best practices available to address such technologies in urban environments

» 3.07 | Health Promotion

Preamble

Health service delivery is a provincial responsibility in Canada. However, health promotion and wellness are a universal responsibility. In this way, it is much like the development of the built environment that we all share. Each of us reaps the rewards and consequences of the choices that we make in building our urban environment, but each of us also has a share in the responsibility of making the choices that create that environment.

Studies have shown that there is a clear relationship between the built environment and the health of its citizens. Good choices lead to a healthy built environment that provides social, economic, and environmental benefits. A well-executed built environment provides direct benefits to those who experience it, and indirect benefits for the community from its resilient social network, and economic/ environmental efficiencies.

Airdrie has an opportunity to create a healthy built environment in its downtown and participants in the visioning exercise and design charrettes noted that the health of the downtown is a symbol of the health of the community. They wanted the health of the downtown and the health of the community to improve, and pointed to several aspects that can promote health as part of the physical built environment, including:

- Walkability and alternate modes of transportation.
- Connection to environmental areas.
- More efficient use of land; and,
- Augmented landscaping and greenspaces

Further, they recognized that a successful built environment could nurture and develop desirable social elements. A well-designed built environment opens the options to increase all aspects of social well-being, and its physical form and development choices may facilitate:

- Event and programming options; and,
- Affordable housing supports

In short, the design of downtown provides the opportunity to make it the key place of community health promotion.

Objective

To develop a built environment in the downtown that facilitates increased health and wellness.

Principles

Promoting health and wellness allows the municipality to Lead by Example and placing a priority on wellness is the ultimate expression of Putting People First. Promoting our actions for the health of citizens and visitors shows that we Think Big about the downtown and its purpose within Airdrie – and beyond.

Policies

1. Downtown shall be recognized as the most important built environment in the community for health promotion, and:
 - a. Choices in the design of the downtown built environment shall be made with that recognition in mind, and adhering to other applicable policy areas of this document, such as, but not limited to:
 - i. the Urban Experience elements
 - ii. the Reimagining Main Street policies (**Section 2.05**)
 - iii. the Civic Development Catalyst policies (**Section 2.07**)
 - iv. the Strengthening Social Well-Being policies (**Section 3.09**)
 - v. the Affordable Housing policies (**Section 3.02**)
 - vi. the Events and Programming policies (**Section 3.03**); and,
 - vii. the Pedestrian Mobility policies (**Section 3.05**)
 - b. Choices in the design of the downtown shall consider opportunities to increase quality of life to the greatest extent possible for all; and,
 - c. Choices in the design of the downtown shall consider human health needs to the greatest extent possible.
2. Developing a healthy built environment shall be considered the responsibility of all citizens and stakeholders, and:
 - a. Citizens and stakeholders are encouraged to present opportunities to the City of Airdrie, or other applicable civic institutions or levels of government, that would assist in creating a healthy built environment or otherwise promoting healthier living in the downtown
3. Recognizing the higher order of government responsible for health service delivery, downtown shall be considered the primary option for locating health facilities in Airdrie where possible and shall adhere to the civic development catalyst policies (**Section 2.07**) to the extent that they can be applied.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to identify areas where the design and construction of civic development projects can contribute to health promotion and support better public quality-of-life outcomes in the downtown.
2. Council shall direct Administration to keep an open line of communication with built environment and health promotion experts and may require Administration to review recommendations to Council on civic development projects, or any other matter that Council deems appropriate, with such subject matter experts.
3. Council shall direct the Development Authority to consider best practices for healthy built environment design on review of development applications where such authority is granted discretion under the Land Use Bylaw.



»» 3.08 | Experiencing Small Town Feel

Preamble

It would be an understatement to say that Airdrie residents value the “small town feel” present in this community. Time after time it is mentioned as a top reason for locating oneself or one’s business in Airdrie. Citizens have clearly stated that “small town feel” is part of what differentiates us in the region. The City of Airdrie commissioned the consulting firm of Intelligent Futures Inc. to assist in defining this term, which can mean something a little different to everyone. Intelligent Futures established the following to represent the community’s thoughts, based on review of community satisfaction surveys, downtown visioning responses, and primary experience interviews:

Small Town Feel happens when we are connected to one another, and to the spaces, people and events that make our city unique. It creates the combination of several related feelings: trust, safety, belonging, comfort, support, engagement, and pride from our collective and shared experiences.

While residents are clear that they do not want to lose the “small town feel” that Airdrie possesses, this is not an exclusionary definition. It applies equally for a long-standing resident as it does for a visitor looking to experience our small town feel for the first time. However, Airdrie is not necessarily a small town anymore – at least not physically. If we want to continue to have a small-town feel, we need to support and expand the unique offerings that connect residents to each other, and to the places where they work, relax, and meet to create that special and intangible combination of feelings. We need to tie our perception of small town feel with our aspirations for strengthening social well-being.

Placemaking is one method to support such connections in the community and to retain or enhance “small town feel”. Placemaking is a people-first approach to city building. It connects citizens to their built environment by reflecting the community ideals in all aspects of place development, as well as programming and service offerings. Effective placemaking results in spaces where people want to live, work, and play and heightens the feeling of civic pride – influencing how people feel about each other, their neighbourhoods, and their city overall.

The municipality can apply this people first approach to its core functions of civic project design, social service delivery, policy development, and regulatory reviews to have a positive impact on our sense of small-town feel. Guided by principles that lean on the development of community relationships and effective processes, the municipality can show leadership in a variety of ways to create unique offerings and make connections that retain and enhance our “small town feel” as redevelopment occurs downtown. Redevelopment, in turn, can also embrace placemaking principles in the design elements of the buildings, quasi-public spaces and the nature of any programming or event offerings.

Objective

The objective is to retain and enhance the small town feel cherished by the community as redevelopment occurs downtown.

Principles

Retaining and enhancing small town feel is part of making Downtown Airdrie The Place to Be. It provides this area with a distinct advantage in quality of life through unique offerings and sense of connection. Here the municipality can Lead by Example and apply the people first approach of placemaking to its core functions of civic project design, service delivery, policy development and regulatory reviews.

Policies

1. Where required by the policies of this plan to create an active frontage, private developments shall consider placemaking principles and best practices to facilitate a sense of place and opportunities for social connection. Specifically:
 - a. Informal gathering spaces shall be encouraged as part of private development.
 - b. Building designs that reflect the eclectic character of Airdrie are encouraged.
2. Placemaking principles and best practices shall be incorporated into the design of public spaces and any civic improvements or initiatives within those spaces.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to develop an internal structure or process to provide placemaking expertise for the civic project, service delivery, policy development and regulatory review functions of the municipality within 12 months of the adoption of this plan.
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a list of potential programming and event options, as well as their anticipated social and economic returns, within 24 months of plan adoption that will best enhance the unique sense of place and connectedness within the downtown.
3. Council shall direct Administration to develop a grant program to encourage a business improvement association or similar entity to assist with programming and events in the downtown within 24 months of plan adoption.

Placemaking Principles

Collectively, the Placemaking Principles establish a philosophical approach, or paradigm, to come back to when applying placemaking as a decision-making filter for projects, policies, services and regulatory reviews. They provide expert guidance on how placemaking practices can go from good to great:

1 | Begin with A Collective Vision

Identify a collective vision for a space at the beginning of the process that focuses on evoking small town feel emotions, building strong local character, a community identity, and a sense of place. Establishing a project vision early on, identifying a community or site identity, or supporting pre-existing heritage traits can support this endeavour. A successful project vision helps community members understand, connect, and relate to each another, while having a clear understanding of what they are trying to accomplish with the Placemaking Action.

2 | See the Community as An Expert

Empower community members as experts in their own lived experiences, to help them create spaces in which they see themselves and their values reflected. Placemaking Actions with this trait empower communities to create and maintain their own spaces, and/or ensure there is a substantial amount of community input in deciding a project's strategic direction.

3 | Build Collaborative Partnerships

Identify and work with the right partners to help bring more resources, ideas and sources of energy to placemaking methods. Partners can include local community organizations, informal neighbourhood groups, business owners and developers. While collaborating, it is essential to clarify who is responsible and accountable to ensure the continued success of a project.

4 | Function, Safety, Access

Create public spaces that feel safe for all members of the community, whether day or night, summer or winter. This includes safe access and accommodations for active transportation, to enhance user experience and make safe public spaces. High-quality spaces increase people's desire to use the space. Actions that support this principle must be sure to be inviting to multiple demographics, including those demographics which are not often considered.

5 | Fun and Active Spaces Don't Have to Be Costly

Use small, inexpensive actions to create big changes, or pilot future large projects. Quick and inexpensive solutions like implementing temporary and flexible pilot spaces are sometimes the most effective solutions to improve public spaces and gauge public response. These actions can be implemented quickly for impact, then refined and improved upon over time.

6 | Create Spaces that Bring People Together

Community members should be brought together through comfortable and accessible placemaking. A great place offers many activities, which helps reduce social barriers and allows individuals to connect to one another. By leveraging shared interests, interactions in placemaking methods can move beyond surface-level interactions and toward personal connections. Placemaking Actions that use this principle should result in bringing general members of the public together to build relationships.

7 | Experiment, Observe, Repeat

It is important to make Placemaking Actions adaptable to new uses and behaviours, and to design them to meet the evolving needs of the community they serve. One of the best ways to transform an Action is simple: observe it. Get a closer look at what goes on in an area and take note of what is working and what is not. Adjust accordingly and iterate. Actions which abide by this principle are flexible in their processes and can adapt to change when necessary. The best Actions are often those that have testing, reporting and modifying built into their framework from the very beginning.

8 | Create Visually Attractive Spaces

It is important to use design to showcase and enhance the strengths of an area. Thoughtful design is used to highlight community character, promote healthier lifestyles and support the economic vitality of an area. People are drawn to comfortable spaces that are visually attractive and inviting. This also adds excitement and vibrancy to spaces. Actions reflecting this principle focus on the creation of vibrant spaces and atmospheres that people want to spend time in.

9 | Focus on Process

Relationships among community members can be built throughout placemaking development, making the process fun, easy, inclusive and rewarding. Efforts to reduce the red tape community organizations face when implementing their own Placemaking Actions can be supported by City Administration, so successful placemaking is achievable by many different community actors.

10 | Resilient Process

It is important to continue managing placemaking efforts to monitor, change and adapt Actions after their completion. This helps to create transformable and relatable spaces that people want to visit again and again. Although any placemaking effort may be evolving continuously, the memories that people create in these spaces can last a lifetime. A resilient Placemaking Action is one that can continue to grow and change as Airdrie continues to change.

»» 3.09 | Strengthening Social Well-Being

Preamble

The City of Airdrie believes that the strength of a community rests, in part, on the social well-being of its residents. Social well-being depends on a diverse, inclusive, connected, equitable, and proactive community. City Council adopted the Social Policy for Airdrie in April 2020 with this in mind, and defined social well-being as “a state of positive relationships in the community”, characterized by:

- social acceptance (a willingness to respect the difference in others).
- social contribution (a desire to give back to society).
- social inclusion (a sense of belonging).
- social support (close relationships with others); and,
- social capital (the means, knowledge, and relationships required to access resources)

Urban downtown centres frequently possess a critical mass of uses and activities that support these aspects of social well-being. Downtown Airdrie is no exception, as it is home to volunteer organizations, social assistance organizations, civic institutions, and public events that support these aspects of social well-being.

This plan further recognizes that social well-being can be influenced by change, either positively or negatively. Accelerated redevelopment is the objective of this plan, and as a type of change, it is important that the potential social impacts are considered, monitored, and mitigated. The overarching premise is “to do no harm”. But beyond that, it is desirable to accommodate redevelopment and change in such a way as to strengthen social well-being in the downtown to the greatest extent possible.

Objective

To ensure that the social well-being of residents is enhanced as part of downtown redevelopment and revitalization.

Principles

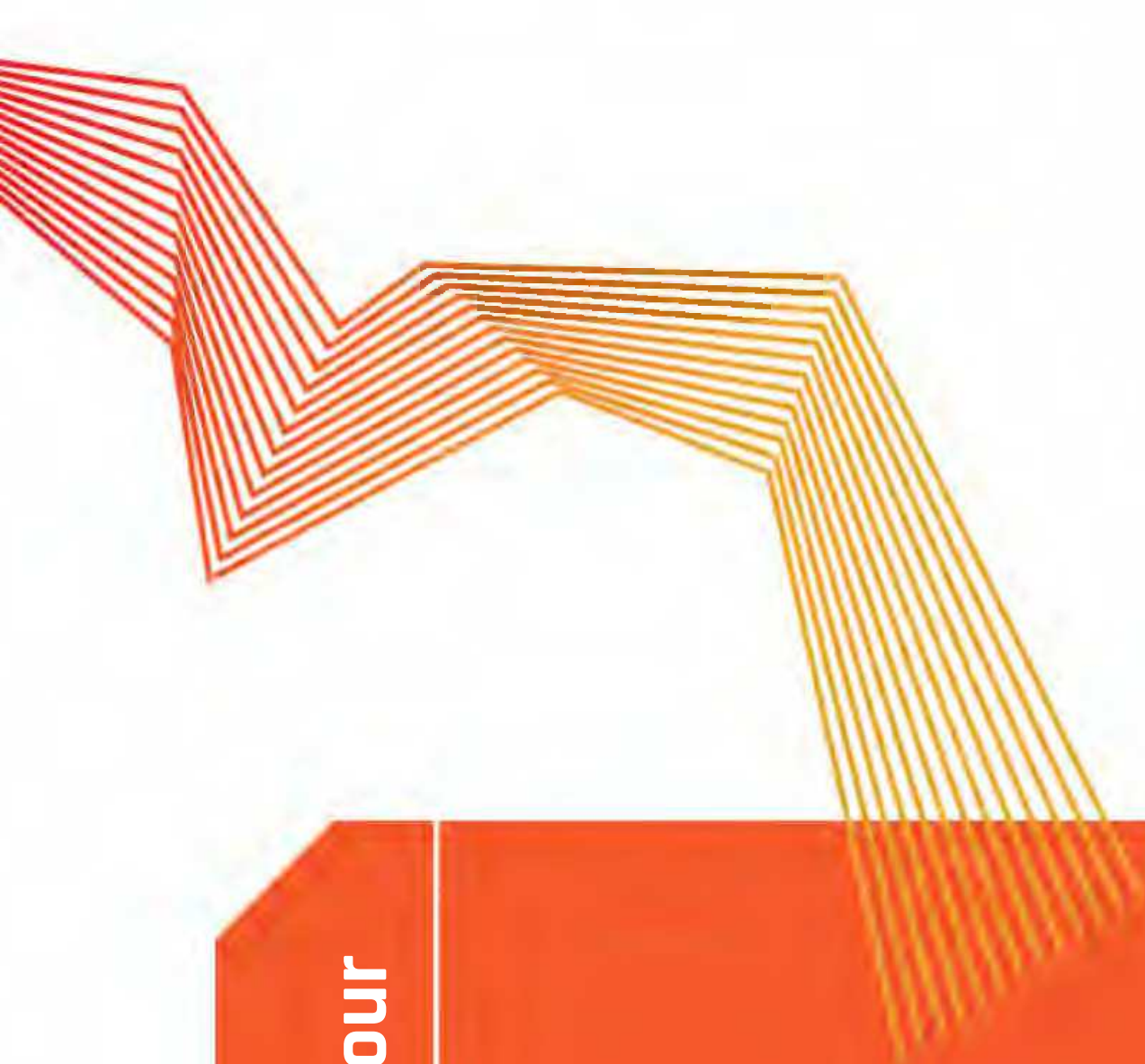
Enhancing the social well-being of residents is the ultimate articulation of Putting People First, ensuring that their needs are prioritized within this defined geographic area. It makes downtown the Place to Be, and the municipality can Lead by Example with its projects, policies, and service deliveries.

Policies

1. A diversity of people and activities shall be encouraged in the downtown.
2. A culture of support for the residents, businesses and visitors engaging in the downtown shall be encouraged through the actions, activities and developments undertaken in the downtown.
3. The Development Authority shall consider how the physical form, design, and character of private redevelopment augments the aspects of social well-being as part the approval process for Discretionary Uses, and in particular:
 - a. Private development is encouraged to be constructed without physical or symbolic barriers for public access to the greatest extent possible.
 - b. Private development is encouraged to consider accessibility of sites and services by vulnerable users, and.
 - c. Private development is encouraged to promote and include:
 - i. Social inclusion and acceptance as part of its form and function; and,
 - ii. Opportunities to increase social connection and improve social support for owners, tenants, and members of the public equally

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to reduce barriers to public services by providing extended or alternate means to access such services located in the downtown, within 60 months of the adoption of this plan, and:
 - a. Where applicable, the City of Airdrie shall work with other civic and quasi-civic agencies and institutions to coordinate alternate or extended access methods to the greatest extent possible.
2. In determining the capital projects to complete in the downtown, and in evaluating the design, execution, and function of such projects, the City of Airdrie shall consider the components of social well-being, per the adopted Council policy.
3. Council shall provide Administration with funds to prepare an inclusionary zoning bylaw, applicable to part or all the downtown, within 36 months of the adoption of this plan.
4. Council shall direct Administration to make a conscious effort to attract land uses and services that promote the five components of social well-being in the downtown, and in particular:
 - a. Attraction efforts shall seek a balance of land uses that serve to reduce inequalities and allow for all citizens to engage with the uses, each other, and the built form(s) which contain the uses or activities.
5. Council shall direct Administration to take social well-being into account in the same manner that would be required for a board or commission of Council, per the Social Policy where Administration is designated to act as the Development Authority in lieu of Municipal Planning Commission or Council for Discretionary Uses in the downtown.

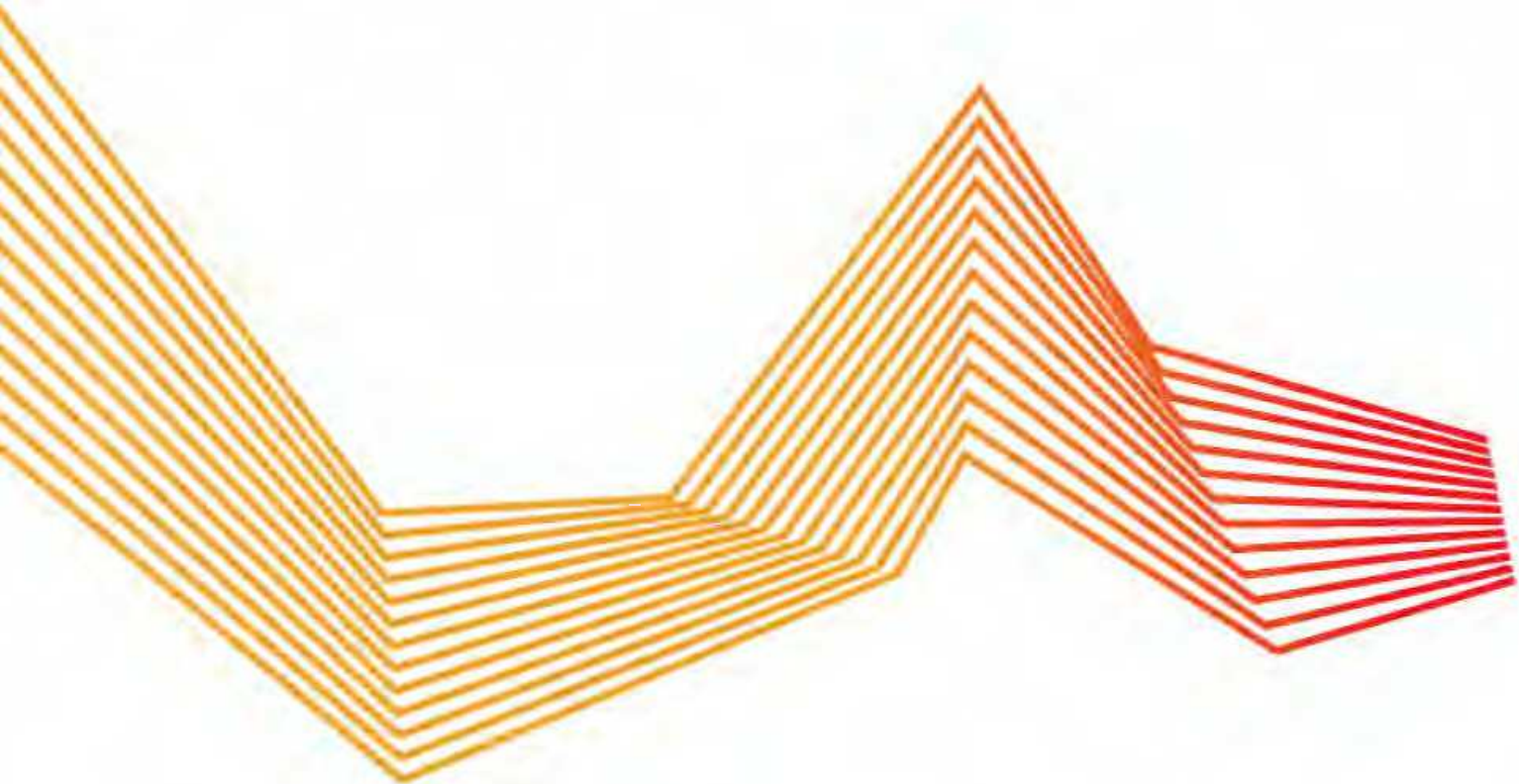


Section Four

Implementation



Airdrie } **downtown**



Implementation Overview

Successful implementation will be what determines the success of this Area Redevelopment Plan and of Downtown Airdrie as a whole. The following sections set up future steps and coordination that will be necessary to guide implementation efforts, summarize key actions and initiatives that are being brought forward for implementation with the Downtown Plan, and outline the required steps and timing for monitoring and updating the Plan in the future, and setting out measures of success for the Downtown initiative overall.

This Plan is adopted by bylaw and is required to be amended by bylaw in accordance with the Municipal Government Act. The appendices and supporting documents are intended to give context to the Plan and guide interpretation but have no legal effect. The City retains the discretion to determine when an amendment is required and when wording can bear an interpretation or when specific measurements can be varied without need for an amendment.

»» 4.01 | A Collective Approach to Removing Development Barriers

Preamble

Council's statement of success and the principles of the Downtown Plan highlight the importance of making the downtown an attractive place for business. Planning requirements need to follow suit and must protect the public good while allowing new uses to locate within the downtown. This requires a delicate balance between clear rules that are easily understood and flexibility for those rules to adapt with changing trends, circumstances, and new business models.

This is not solely the responsibility of the City. All parties involved in redevelopment projects and growth of the downtown have a responsibility to prioritize open communication and proactive discussion to identify and resolve potential concerns.

One area where we can address these considerations is to improve process for Development Permit applications, especially changes of use within existing buildings in the downtown. Change of Use Development Permit applications can take weeks of lead time and typically do not require a robust planning review of the file beyond parking requirements, as the rest of the site is already established. From 2017-2019, the City processed 42 "Change of Use" Development Permit applications within the plan boundary. This number shows that changes to these practices can make a clear and measurable difference by facilitating the process for businesses to open in the downtown or for existing businesses to adjust over time.

Engagement on the Downtown Plan also identified that there could be significant benefit for administration to establish a streamlined process of managing Development Permits, pre-emptively working through obstacles, and ensuring that resourcing is in place to review and render decisions quickly. Doing so would ensure that there is minimal lead time through this critical part of the planning and approvals process.

All these elements point to improvements that could allow for more flexibility for businesses in the area. Removing barriers for these types of development reviews would contribute to making downtown Airdrie a location of opportunity for adaptive and innovative business models.

Objective

The objective is to establish processes for Development Permit applications in the downtown that facilitates and removes barriers for applicants while ensuring that the City is protecting the public interest and preventing negative impacts.

Principles

Removing barriers for Development Permits is entirely about putting The Right Rules and Process into place to support the downtown. Promoting these types of initiatives is also a key component to stimulate new investment and redevelopment in the downtown, contributing to Everyone's Success.

Policies

1. New Development Permit applications in the downtown should be supported where such proposals do not conflict with any other policies within this plan.
2. The underlying approach to development in the downtown is to keep open lines of communication to:
 - a. Establish and refine appropriate development regulations
 - b. Remove barriers to redevelopment

Municipal Actions

1. Concurrent with the final readings of this plan, Council shall adopt Resolution 05/2022 to absorb the costs of Environmental Site Assessments for properties in the downtown as part of approved developments.
2. Concurrent with the final readings of this plan, Council shall amend the regulations for applications to change land use in established buildings within the downtown in accordance with Bylaw No. 06/2022.

3. Concurrent with the final readings of this plan, Council shall adopt Resolution No. 07/2022 to create a streamlined Development Permit review process for new Development Permit applications within the downtown.
4. Council shall direct Administration to prepare Land Use Bylaw amendments, within 12 months of the adoption of this plan, to define the extent or circumstances where exemptions from Development Permit applications can be granted for minor alterations, additions, and renovations to existing buildings.
5. Council shall direct Administration to conduct an analysis of Development Permit applications, within 18 months of the adoption of this plan, and determine initiatives for proactive support of applications within the downtown. This analysis should outline:
 - a. prospective role(s) of Administration
 - b. proactive measures necessary
 - c. resourcing requirements, and
 - d. anticipated return on investment.
6. Council shall direct Administration to work collaboratively with the existing business community, landowners, and prospective developers to maintain open lines of communication and ensure that planning regulations are best supporting downtown revitalization efforts.

»» 4.02 | Alternate Funding Sources and Supports

Preamble

This plan is drafted with the primary intent of leveraging private investment from strategic local public investment to create Downtown Revitalization as Council has defined it. However, this Strategic Priority is just one of several listed by Council in relation to issues facing the community. Resources are always constrained at a municipal level and the borrowing and financial limits in Airdrie will be tested by the needs of a growing community, as outlined in the annual updates to the 10-Year Capital Plan. Every dollar shifted to any one priority is at the expense of another equally important community priority.

In this regard, relationships, in-kind supports, and direct grant funding opportunities represent important means to achieve Council's Strategic Priority of Downtown Revitalization.

Leading up to the decision on this plan, Council and Administration have undertaken several significant steps to achieve external grant funding sources for elements of the Downtown Plan. In October 2020, Council supported an advocacy letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to create a Community Revitalization Levy (CRL) Bylaw and Plan that could yield up to \$10M in redirected provincial funding over the next 20 years.

Community revitalization levy explained

A community revitalization levy (CRL) is a funding initiative that allows a municipality to redirect a portion of the provincial tax revenues coming from a designated revitalization area and direct them to proposed municipal expenditures in that area. The revenue that is redirected is a portion of the provincial (education) share of the property tax revenue. The expenditures must have a direct role in fostering redevelopment of the area, and therefore tend to be capital improvements or one-time investments. These municipal improvements encourage property owners to invest in their properties resulting in a renewal and revitalization of an existing area.

A community revitalization levy is not a municipal or provincial tax rate increase. However, the revenue from the incremental increase in value must be directed toward infrastructure or amenity improvements within that defined area, which does provide a degree of constraint on the purposes to which future revenue can be applied.

The provincial government has historically allowed and promoted a wide range of purposes for funds gained under a CRL, including:

- clean up of environmental damage in areas where development is needed.
- directing tax dollars to improve the economic viability of neighbourhoods.
- addressing affordable and social housing needs in an area.
- improving the livelihoods of area residents and addressing socio-economic issues.
- reducing urban sprawl through better land-use.
- increasing safety for residents.
- improving infrastructure and environmental conditions through new building practices; and,
- creating a larger tax base

A CRL works best in areas that could use additional economic or infrastructure stimulus to incite development or redevelopment. Vacant, contaminated, or underdeveloped areas tend to provide the best opportunity for a CRL because they allow for the greatest possible incremental assessment value increase, and correspondingly more funds to be redirected from the provincial government for local purposes.

The Government of Alberta has approved five Community Revitalization Levy Bylaws in Alberta:

- Calgary Rivers District CRL (2008)
- Edmonton Quarters Downtown CRL (2010)
- Edmonton Belvedere CRL (2010)
- Cochrane South-Central CRL (2012)
- Edmonton Capital City Downtown CRL (2013)
- Other Grand Opportunitéis

Also, as part of a national relief program from the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government made available grants of up to \$750K for a variety of main street, revitalization, and environmental improvement projects. Administration made application for this grant opportunity based on the similarity of scope of acceptable projects to those listed as actions in this plan.

Success for these types of grant opportunities could support some of the costs associated with the new library, the reimagining of Main Street, and environmental improvements in Nose Creek. Where listed as projects under in the 10-Year Capital Plan, external funds for these projects allow for dollars allocated for these projects to be stretched further and allow for other projects (i.e., regional servicing) to proceed sooner, or with less impact.

Grants and supports are not only available for municipalities. From time to time, such opportunities are made available, or are exclusive to, businesses, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders that are based out of our downtown. As there are overall community benefits associated with Downtown Revitalization, there are obvious synergies in working collaboratively with the community to achieve funding and other supports for Downtown Revitalization.

Objective

The objective is to achieve the maximum amount of external funding and support for Downtown Revitalization.

Principles

Municipal efforts to achieve alternate funding sources and supports meets the principle to Lead by Example and helps to stimulate new investment and redevelopment in the downtown, contributing to Everyone's Success.

Policies

1. Government and community to combine to prioritize the application of grants in support of Downtown Revitalization and/or the 10-Year Capital Plan.
2. Strengthen and maintain relationships between government and downtown stakeholders for the purpose of making joint applications for grants or other supports for Downtown Revitalization.

Municipal Actions

1. Council shall direct Administration to seek out and apply for grants that can assist with Downtown Revitalization, and/or the 10-Year Capital Plan.
 - a. Administration shall advise Council of resources required to apply for funds or as part of joint funding circumstances.
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a public engagement campaign on the potential benefits of a Community Revitalization Levy Plan (CRL) for the downtown within 12 months of the adoption of the plan.
 - a. Pending the opportunity to apply to Municipal Affairs, Council shall direct Administration to prepare a CRL Bylaw and Plan within 12 months of support from Municipal Affairs.
3. Council shall direct Administration to adjust annual operating and capital budgets to reflect grant funds from successful applications.
 - a. Council may elect to accelerate implementation actions within the various sections of this plan that require funding.

"Downtown is like a puzzle, we have the edges but now we need to fill in the pieces."

- Downtown Visioning Participant, 2017



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differently**

CITY of
AIRDRIE
COMMUNITY & OPPORTUNITY