

*Airdrie Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan
[Draft]*

Airdrie Downtown

Area Redevelopment Plan [Draft]

February 1 ~~June 21~~, 2021 – Public Engagement

Section 1

Introduction & Administration

1.01 Plan Introduction

Component of the Downtown Revitalization Strategy

Downtown Revitalization represents one of Council's Strategic Priorities (2019 – 2022) and responds to the results of the 2017 Downtown Visioning exercise, which revealed some perceived shortfalls in the downtown and a desire to see it revitalized.

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 the redevelopment aspects of revitalization in a manner that is complementary to Council's aims. Its objective is to accelerate the pace of redevelopment in support of *Downtown Revitalization*.

The ARP is defined geographically by [Figure XX \(Plan Boundary and Local Context\)](#), consisting of approximately 90 acres located centrally in Airdrie and it represents one component of the overall strategy to achieve *Downtown Revitalization*:

- Background Report
- Supporting Studies
- **Area Redevelopment Plan**
- Implementation Actions
- Development Incentives

The strategy starts with an analysis of contextual information and public perceptions in the Background Report and a review of current assets, trends, market analyses and capacity limitations from the Supporting Studies. These documents support the ARP, which establishes the vision and principles for revitalization and which specifically provides a guide for redevelopment complementary to Council's aims within available servicing capacities. The plan sets out the actions that can be undertaken by the municipality to revitalize the downtown and signals the areas for potential incentives to encourage private investment. The strategy is completed with Implementation Actions comprising of bylaws, bylaw amendments and resolutions of Council to formalize the actions to be undertaken by the municipality and to entrench Development Incentives, as appropriate, for private investment.

No one document is designed to work in isolation. It is the combination of the plan and complementary documents¹ that creates the coordinated strategy to achieve *Downtown Revitalization*.

¹ The reader should note that the supporting reports and other complementary documents have similar, but not identical, boundaries for contextual reasons, particular study purposes, or to best develop the coordinated strategy for *Downtown Revitalization*. More details on the purpose of each of these documents can be found within their respective introductions.

Plan Structure

Section 1 of the ARP outlines how the Plan is intended to address Council's priority of *Downtown Revitalization*. It sets the vision and principles for the plan as well as the objectives and targets for redevelopment as a component of *Downtown Revitalization*. Finally, it introduces foundational concepts for **active frontage** and **complete streets**, which are essential to creating a distinct urban experience for the downtown and are referenced throughout later sections. Administrative notes and supporting information is also called out throughout this section.

Policies regarding development form in [Section 2](#) are intended to help achieve the ultimate land use concept developed during public and stakeholder consultation throughout 2019 (see [Figure XX](#)). This includes descriptions of proposed land uses per the MGA, as well as development intensity and characteristics. The relationship of public space, recreation and overall utility servicing capacities to support the ultimate desired form are also described in that section.

Policies regarding the functions to be undertaken in the downtown, and for which the downtown is responsible within the community, are found in [Section 3](#). This section outlines the approach on such areas as social inclusivity (affordable housing, accessibility) and activity generation (placemaking initiatives, event programming, etc.). To the greatest extent possible, the desired results from these policies are shown visually in [Figure XX](#).

In both of these sections, issues are generally addressed with the following structure to ensure that the philosophical approach aligns with the plan vision, principles and Council's statements of success:

- **Preamble** (Description of Current State/Issue)
- **Objective** (Issue Resolution or Desired End State)
- **Principles** (Correlating Plan Principles to our Intended Approach to Achieve Objective)
- **Policies** (Parameters 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 strong relationship between form and function. An active frontage makes it easier to have interactive space and strengthen the positive feelings for downtown. A function like affordable housing will best provide social inclusivity if its form is well-integrated into the rest of the downtown fabric. The policies in these sections reflect that relationship and broaden the nature of the change required to meet both Council's statements of success and the plan vision.

The municipality is committed to defined timelines to take particular steps, make particular investments, or establish specific incentives for potential private investment as part of this structure. Incentives form only part of the overall implementation of the plan. And where they apply, they are intended to achieve the maximum possible return on investment for the taxpayer from any form of subsidy.

[Section 4](#) sets out the key performance indicators by which to gauge success in the implementation of the plan, monitoring the effectiveness of policies, actions and incentives against changing conditions. It provides an unbiased look at what is working and what is not and points to:

- Circumstances to engage the affected communities, businesses, property owners and other stakeholders regarding ongoing implementation processes; and,
- Potential options for changes in policies, actions or incentives when undertaking plan reviews

1.02 Downtown Vision

Downtown Airdrie is the place that people love.

The vision is that *Downtown Airdrie is the place that people love* and it's not a cliché, it's a very intentional choice on how to describe the feelings that will come from 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 on exactly these types of actions as part of *Downtown Revitalization* overall. Council declared, as representatives of all citizens, that they loved downtown, wanted to love it more still – and wanted others to feel the same. The statement of success that Council adopted reflected the outcomes desired from renewed love and commitment for the downtown:

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.

Readers will note that there is no description about form in the desired results or success statement. It's not about design guidelines or bylaw revisions. Those are means to an end and are addressed within the document. However, the concept of revitalization, and this plan that supports it, are about creating a feeling. A place that people will love and where they will want to be.

Making an area the place that people love implies that some improvements are needed to reach that status. That is true of Downtown Airdrie and this plan sets out the steps to make those improvements, including incentives and actions for us to take concurrent with plan adoption to get the ball rolling.

The plan tells our story – including the history, the warts, and the roadblocks facing us as figure out as a community how to make the downtown the place that we truly love, and a key part of why Airdrie is “the place to be”. It unfolds over several chapters and is designed to answer the major questions facing the downtown. A reader will be able to pick up this plan and know exactly the direction of the community, represented by its Council, on each of those issues or questions.

As a community story, the plan 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 – successfully or not.

As well it should be.

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 ⁵ priority.

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

Current State

Airdrie has a population just over 70,000, 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 1,898,364 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 urban residential uses. This has led to an assessment value split of 85:15 for residential to non-residential uses, with little variation over that time. 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 in that complementary strategic priority by leveraging its capacity and potential.

Indeed, ~~the adopted~~Airdrie's Economic Strategy (~~2019~~2018-2028) describes Airdrie overall 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 AV and 8 ST. 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 that Downtown faces. Commercial nodes 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 in the Downtown can service an additional service demand population of 25,000 while the wastewater collection infrastructure can service an additional service demand population of approximately 5,300. Acknowledging this potential limitation, the City has already made substantial servicing upgrades, and plans to make additional upgrades that would accommodate both the minimum population and employment thresholds examined in Section 1.5, as well as the population and employment aspirations. Downtown Airdrie has the capacity to accommodate more than 7,000 new people and jobs right now.

Downtown Airdrie has a floor area ratio of just 0.24 and 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 such time as 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 and yet simultaneously have the potential to expand with so few constraints.

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 less than 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 the bulk 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 with proper focus on its niche elements and competitive advantages – as well as those proposed in the comprehensive *Downtown Revitalization* strategy. 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 70,000 people with a corresponding larger trade area otherwise would.

[Figure XX \(Regional Context\)](#) shows Airdrie's downtown along with other features and elements from the surrounding area that influence development within this plan.

1.03 Plan Principles

Stemming from Council's statement of success and the Plan's vision, there are ten principles that have guided our thinking and decision-making toward *Downtown Revitalization* as a whole. These are also reflected in the approach, policies, and actions under every issue facing Airdrie's downtown which will need to be addressed for our *Downtown Revitalization* efforts to be successful.

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 also faces challenges as competing commercial areas outside of the downtown are still building out and have better access to the QE2 highway corridor. Yet, residents and Council have still expressed the view that this is the core of the city, and the desire to make something more of the downtown. This has been affirmed through the City's visioning exercises, Council priorities, and tangible projects already underway – including servicing upgrades and the site selection of a new public library within the plan area. Through this plan and the actions that follow, the City needs to continue to see downtown as Airdrie's core, and 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 by prior work. Prioritizing the downtown supports 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 as well. It is a main objective of the downtown plan – and by extension, the Municipality – to create a downtown where residents choose to live or visit, and where businesses choose to locate. 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 groups of businesses, landowners, and residents. A vibrant downtown is one where fiscal and emotional investments into projects, activities, and services, are as impactful and successful as possible.

Reimagine Main Street

Strengthen Main Street as the central axis of the downtown.

Through the visioning exercises completed in 2017 which defined the downtown boundary, and the design work done in 2019 to reimagine what new elements would be desired and possible through redevelopment, Main Street has clearly emerged as a key element of the plan. A redeveloped Main Street would be a 'Complete Street', accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and vehicular traffic, as well as landscaping and placemaking elements, and an active street frontage incorporating buildings and land uses. It should also be an organizing feature in the downtown, with traffic, building frontages, landscaping, plazas and gathering spaces spread throughout the street accordingly. As a complete street and a central focus of the plan, Main Street should also provide services, amenities, and draw interest throughout the day, week, and seasons. This involves an integration of characteristics that may change to suit the flow of people around it – during daytime, nighttime, weekends, and including attention to winter city design.

Think Big

Support large-scale catalysts and anchor projects.

The downtown visioning exercises highlighted support for transformational changes and initiatives from the City to come out of the downtown plan. Accordingly, this document is intended to be a plan of change where City staff, Council, business and residents reframe how we think, plan, talk, and make decisions that affect 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. Already initiated through the decision to locate the new Library downtown in August 2019, more projects, events, and programs have to 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, and for it to ultimately be successful, there needs to be a concentration of people, activities, and businesses working collectively to add qualities to the downtown area. Without a residential/customer base, new businesses will not locate in the downtown over other commercial areas in Airdrie or the region, and without activities and services there are no reasons for other residents to go downtown. The Municipality's role here is to market the downtown to prospective investors, and use any policy tools at its disposal to set up the downtown for success by facilitating development, events, programs, and other initiatives to bring more people, businesses, and activity to the area. This should also extend to providing focal points within the downtown; plazas, public art, landscaping and gateways help pronounce areas and keeps people moving, and help build and celebrate the City's identity and reflect the behaviors and interests of the people that live there.

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 that will add new activity and raise the long-term value of the area. The City should be open to exploring a range of projects, partnerships, and grants to facilitate new investment in the downtown, as well as City-led programs for local events and community development that can be transitioned to leaders within the community over time. A key part of this will be in building relationships within the community to ensure that we are all working toward the same goal and supporting the downtown so that it can emerge as a successful investment area. City investments will be made with the understanding that they will pay back dividends over a longer timeframe, both in terms of new value added and recaptured in property taxes for individual projects, as well as each new project contributing to a critical mass that would itself generate more interest and development in the downtown.

Lead by Example

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

When the downtown plan is approved and various implementation projects are initiated, the Municipality will need to assume a leadership role and set expectations for future projects in the area to follow. The new library can be a catalyst project for the downtown but will need to properly execute on commitments to high quality architecture and site design, enhancing both the Main Street corridor and Nose Creek where it has frontage, and setting cues for improvements on the surrounding streets and parcels. Public improvements to streets for better accessibility, complete street designs, landscaping and parking will also set expectations for owners and businesses in the downtown for potential improvements to their street frontage, landscaping, and parking lots. Finally, the City can take the lead on initiatives for downtown events and temporary 'pop-up' uses to increase activity and rally interest in the downtown as redevelopment moves forward.

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 variable elements in marketing and land development, but rules that are too flexible create inconsistencies and uncertainty in how they will be understood and applied from one case to another. There is also a balance that needs to be achieved between supporting private interests in land development and protecting the long-term public benefit for the City and its residents. The downtown plan and any supporting policies, projects, and regulations must ensure that it supports redevelopment and revitalization in the plan area, removing obstacles while supporting good decision-making and ensuring the quality of the built form 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 improving accessibility and connectivity for the entire area. This means providing better east-west connections into the downtown from surrounding areas and improving the north and south gateways into the downtown along Main Street. Key corridors will also have to be improved to be complete streets and support better pedestrian, cycling, transit and vehicle access, and the City will have to work with developers to ensure that parking is appropriately addressed where and when it is needed without impacting further redevelopment and intensification in the area. Above all downtown needs to be accessible to people, keeping attention at street-level, connecting pedestrian walkways, and following standards for accessible and universal design.

Putting People First

Design downtown's form, functions, and experiences with people as a first priority.

Downtowns offer functions that are necessary for the entire community, and in doing so they touch every person that passes through them, creating places for life, community, interaction and culture to thrive. These places build our social context, shape community identities, and celebrate the values and heritage of the people who inhabit them. Residents have communicated the importance for Airdrie to retain its small-town feel, and it is for these reasons that Airdrie's downtown must be a place created for and by people. Achieving this will mean ensuring opportunities are made for a range of services, functions, housing, lifestyles, and activities; that downtown spaces are designed first and foremost for people, understanding our behaviours and interactions with the built environment, exploring senses and interests and offering a range of these elements at any given time.

1.04 Objectives and Approach

Section 635 of the MGA requires an Area Redevelopment Plan to define its objectives and outline the means to achieve them. This subsection outlines the objective for Downtown Revitalization and for this ARP, as well as the specific redevelopment targets and the approach that will be taken to achieve them.

Means to achieve the objectives and targets are presented in Section 2 and Section 3 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

Downtown Revitalization Objectives

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.

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.

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.

Area Redevelopment Plan Objectives

The objective of the Area Redevelopment Plan is:

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

This responds to the premise that redevelopment in the downtown will have a positive impact on the feeling that residents and visitors have for the downtown, and therefore help to achieve Council's statements of success.

Accordingly, specific targets for this objective in the categories of population, employment, and assessed value are described below as thresholds to help achieve success. These targets consider the current state, the regional context, benchmarks from similar communities, and the objectives from other municipal priorities and plans. The approach to achieve these targets considers the gap between the current state and the desired state.

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.

Notwithstanding, an ARP must also be consistent with the broader land use and transportation patterns established under the City's Municipal Development Plan and in turn, any Intermunicipal Development Plan and/or Regional Growth Plan.

The Downtown Airdrie Area Redevelopment Plan addresses these requirements by reviewing the issues primarily related to form (i.e. development intensity or characteristics) in [Section 2](#) and those primarily related to function (i.e. social services, community hub, activity generation) in [Section 3](#) to create the desired feelings for the downtown expressed by Council in their statements of success.

Plan Timeline and Review

The plan is written to address specific issues facing the downtown and defines actions to be undertaken by the City within the first five to seven years following its adoption. This is intended to set 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 on a year-by-year basis as they are resourced through typical 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, or more frequently if directed by Council.

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.

Policies that use “should” indicates action that is preferred but not mandatory. If The City deems that the policy is not reasonable, practical or feasible in a given situation, proposed alternatives will be considered. Where “shall” is used in a policy, the action is considered to be mandatory. Policies that use “may” indicates action by the City that is discretionary and dependent on the circumstances.

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.

The guidelines contained in the Appendices are to be applied at the land use, subdivision or development permit approval stages as determined appropriate. While a guideline should be complied with, where compliance is deemed unreasonable an alternative solution may be considered.

1.05 Approach to Redevelopment

The limited redevelopment experienced 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 asserts that a bold new approach will need to be taken to accelerate the pace of redevelopment:

We will have to attract in order to accelerate.

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 XX \(Downtown Catchment Areas\)](#).
- A regional trade area of 110,000 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 allow for 8 storeys “as of right” and many permitted uses;
- Recently augmented 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

As a key component of the comprehensive strategy for *Downtown Revitalization*, resolutions for issues in this plan consider the existing competitive advantages. But critically, they also identify, create and market other potential advantages to be broadcast regionally, provincially, nationally, and even internationally, for private investment. These competitive advantages influence the recommended Implementation Actions and Incentives that form part of the *Downtown Revitalization* strategy and it can best be said that in applying our proactive approach:

Marketing competitive advantages will be central to our attraction efforts.

Attraction from competitive advantages is designed to bring private investments to the downtown. These may not always immediately take the highest and best form. But the aim of investment attraction is to move the needle on the targets established in this subsection and our approach is designed to translate opportunities into incremental steps that make progress in reaching the targets.

Our approach supports incremental redevelopment and intensification under the maximum heights and densities envisioned in the Plan, or where phrased as limits in the Land Use Bylaw. Such support is contingent on the proposed development providing an increase to the intensity, activities, and/or land uses and facilities offered on the site, and that the incremental intensification is accommodated in such a way so as not to limit future intensifications. Our approach recognizes that:

Incremental results from our competitive advantages also move the needle.

Ultimately, success breeds success and our approach to redevelopment in the downtown suggests that reaching a critical mass of energy, activity and redevelopment will create a virtuous cycle for long-term success and achieve Council's *Downtown Revitalization* statements. More residents living in (or travelling into) the downtown, and more activity (events, festivals, gatherings) throughout the downtown area are needed in order to attract new investment, businesses, activities, and corresponding redevelopment. The influx of more businesses and activities will, in turn, draw more people wanting to live in and travel to the area. This creates a positive feedback loop that supports the objectives for *Downtown Revitalization* and this plan. The proactive approach recognizes that any competitive advantages that we create in the form of incentives must also be evaluated during the recommended plan review horizons to determine if they are making incremental improvements and helping to achieve the critical mass that will sustain investment in the downtown. Our approach acknowledges that not everything will work perfectly and that:

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

The proactive approach commits Council and Administration to seek those that wish to invest in the success of Airdrie's downtown and to offer something unique and advantageous to them. But it also requires us to evaluate our actions and results. Fundamentally, the approach relies on the flexibility to try something new where our initial action or incentive does not achieve the target in the desired timeline without stepping away from the objectives stated by Council for *Downtown Revitalization*.

However, this does not mean that the target is pursued at all costs. Our willingness to manufacture and market competitive advantages through incentives or other means is not intended to create a financial drain for the municipality. This is not a "free lunch" proposition. Rather, a positive return on investment –in either ~~social or~~ economic (improving assessment and generating new investment in the city) or social terms –(improving access to services, community health, and social well-being) is desired and required from any incentive developed to help us reach our development and/or 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 discussion for targets to achieve in the downtown.

As described in the Background Report, Council adopted a non-statutory growth study (2018) that forecasts population and employment growth and corresponding land demand requirements for the Airdrie for out to the year 2065. This gives a picture of growth for the City of Airdrie as a whole but does not identify how new residents and jobs will be split between greenfield and redevelopment, and provides 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 in the absence of specific targets in these areas.

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" in order 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) ~~and Transect Planning~~ suggest targets for downtown areas similar to 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 an equivalent threshold to the one set by Calgary for "Major Activity Centres" and "Main Streets", pursuing a total of 7,300 combined population and jobs within Airdrie's downtown.

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.

Our Aspirations and Targets

Our aspirations and targets for population, employment, and assessed value describe the desired end state in terms that can be quantitatively reviewed and which will allow for review of our approach. They are founded on review of current state, regional context, our intended approach and realistic benchmarks for success:

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.

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.

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1.07 Foundational Concepts

Within this plan, the objective is to accelerate redevelopment and that objective is based on the premise that significant redevelopment in the downtown will change its land use and activity composition, and help achieve Council's statements of success for *Downtown Revitalization*.

Indeed, several of Council's statements of success speak very directly to the idea of changing the perceptions and feelings about the things that we have contact with, and experience, in the downtown:

- Residents enjoy the downtown.
- Residents are proud of downtown Airdrie.
- Downtown is an important part of Airdrie's brand, identity, and economic development.

This plan set targets and aspirations for development intensities and assessed values, and these represent clear thresholds for the tangible aspects of the objective. However, 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 degree of distinctiveness and the associated feelings of enjoyment, from the combination of physical, social, and environmental elements with which we make practical contact.

These perceptions and feelings are not guaranteed to be positive. But the **urban experience** matters because the needle in achieving Council's statements of success moves based on whatever those feelings and perceptions might be from those that experience our downtown.

In order to influence the feelings and perceptions that make up the **urban experience**, two design aspects matter more than any other, that of:

- **Active frontage**; and
- **Complete streets**

The tremendous amount of influence that these two design aspects have in creating the urban experience stems from the way that they draw together the purposes (i.e. land uses and activities) and the mechanisms to reach them (i.e. transportation corridors and modes) at intersecting points that we can experience simultaneously.

Therefore, it is critical to implement the best practice elements of **active frontage** and **complete streets**, where called on in this plan, in order to achieve a positive urban experience.

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 manner in which the increased height, density, and activity from redevelopment are managed through **active frontage** and **complete street** design elements will impact how people perceive the downtown. Executed well, this provides the opportunity to create a distinct and marketable urban experience. Therefore, to achieve the intent of the intangible aspects of Council's statements of success, the overarching approach is:

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 and intent has to be given to the elements of each of the buildings, the street, and the spaces in between in order to create positive experiences and feelings from those areas.

Active frontage is the end result of applying certain elements to these three categories of spaces. Done well, it can drive so much about the downtown's character, sense of place, and how people experience it. As such, it is a key part of creating the kind of environment described in Council's statement of success, and the feeling sought by the vision statement of this plan. Successful active frontage attracts people and energy by virtue of its design, and we focus on these elements in several sections of this plan that call for creating active frontage within the downtown.

The Downtown Plan identifies twelve such elements that must be addressed² to create active frontage. These are described below, and outlined in [Figure XX \(Active Frontage Elements\)](#).

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 making the height of the façade in proportion to the width of the sidewalks and right of way, and ensuring that there are windows and detailing facing into the street along the building frontage. The massing of buildings also affects this relationship, and larger buildings may need to include variations along the length of the street frontage or step back taller buildings 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 both to improve the individual site and recognizing that each building contributes to the overall experience and character of the downtown.

² 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.

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 community-oriented uses that remain open to the public (e.g. Parks, Community Gardens). These uses should be dedicated for spaces immediately facing onto the street where possible and other, more passive land uses (e.g. offices, professional services) 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 along the length of the street, or to provide for additional space for landscaping, gathering spaces, or amenity 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 to 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 of 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 ~~many other innovative concepts that would~~ 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.

Complete Streets

Participants at the design charrettes specifically called out Main Street and sections of other roads through the downtown to be redeveloped as "Complete Streets." In the context of these charrettes, this was used to identify 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 in taking a more holistic approach to accommodating the needs of all roadway users. The 2020 Transportation Master Plan Update (140K Plan) applies more 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 a number of standard road cross-sections but also provides "a 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.

Complete Streets are identified through several sections of this plan, and this is used to identify areas where existing roads are to be designed and transitioned to better accommodate multiple functions. 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 below and outlined in [Figure XX \(Complete Streets Elements\)](#).

Transportation Modes and Connections

1. Streets must accommodate all modes of transportation. 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 best connect to the wider transportation network while it accommodates the required modes of transportation. Conscious thought should be applied in order to harmonize the various transportation modes accommodated within these standards to that of the broader network throughout the city.
3. The design of individual sites and buildings should work with the street design to facilitate accessibility. This can include 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 important elements in the right of way.

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 ~~compel~~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 ~~in order~~ to ensure that the highest priority elements are accommodated.
6. Streets should be designed to support street-facing land uses and buildings. The Transportation Master Plan emphasizes the importance of street interface and 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 ensures 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.

The prior sections introduced the Downtown ARP and established the plan vision, principles, objectives, and targets. It set out the City's approach to *Downtown Revitalization* overall, and the key concepts towards accelerate the pace of redevelopment and support a positive urban experience in the Downtown. The next two sections will address specific issues facing *Downtown Revitalization* – relating to both the form of future development and the functions of the downtown.

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Section 2
Development Form

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 a part of the 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 to those buildings as well. 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.

This section outlines all the elements that are a part of the physical place and form of the downtown, and together with the supporting downtown functions work to create Airdrie's **urban experience**.

2.01 Redevelopment Height, Density, and Form

Preamble:

In order to realize Council's statements of success and to best support the vision and objectives outlined in [Section 1](#), this Plan pursues redevelopment as a key element of *Downtown Revitalization* and outlines the specific approach, targets, and aspirations in support of the same. This section intends to codify the main elements of that approach into policy, and to outline other general elements that are desired of the built form throughout the 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 that are permissible under the Land Use Bylaw. The Downtown Core Mixed Use District that applies across most of the plan area 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 degree of intensity of use allowed under the current Land Use Bylaw accommodates the development targets and aspirations of this plan.

To this end, there were no specific issues raised with the current development rights during engagement, and no specific comments made regarding height and density thresholds that should be reflected in the land use regulations in order to make redevelopment and intensification viable in the downtown. Instead, landowners and development industry representatives clearly stated that Airdrie needs to set a clear and compelling vision for the downtown and determine its competitive advantages. In turn it needs to market that vision and its competitive advantages in order to accelerate redevelopment and meet the targets and aspirations of this plan.

The maximum building heights and densities set in this section are intended to support the approach to redevelopment set in [Section 1.05](#) and the targets and aspirations for *Downtown Revitalization* in [Section 1.06](#). This section guides the built form for this desired amount of redevelopment. This includes the quality of development, winter city design considerations, elements of public safety and crime prevention, signage, and accommodation of service vehicles and functions. All of these elements come together to improve the built form of the downtown.

Objective:

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

Principles:

By providing direction for the built form of the downtown, this sets the foundation for [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. Maximum building heights and densities shall be as shown in [Figure XX \(Maximum Heights and Densities\)](#).
2. The Development Authority may support proposals for redevelopment, additions, and renovations that are under the maximum heights and densities shown in [Figure XX](#), provided that such proposals still improve the density, viability, and assessed value of the downtown.

3. Redevelopment and intensification above the maximum heights and densities shown in [Figure XX](#) may be supported where:
 - a. The application is sited in the Downtown Core and adheres to all downtown core redevelopment policies outlined in this plan ([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, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority, any potential impacts on adjacent properties and roads as a result of the height and density of the development, 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 this plan, as they may apply. ([Section 2.09](#))
5. Development should be marked by high quality materials, good craftsmanship, and innovative design, recognizing that there is no set architectural character or design theme intended for the downtown.
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. Provide more compact and street-oriented development
 - 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 within the downtown should incorporate considerations for public safety and **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** principles as a part of their built form, specifically:
 - a. Designing buildings and open spaces around them to create a sense of ownership by the community
 - b. Ensuring that buildings provide natural surveillance through lighting, landscaping, and clear sight-lines
 - c. Enhancing connectivity between the downtown and the rest of Airdrie through programs and city-wide events
 - d. Increasing the intensity and diversity of uses within the area, and
 - e. Integrating visual cues with buildings and open spaces that reinforce the collective responsibility to ensure each other's safety when experiencing that place or building.
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 as it may deem most appropriate.

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.

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2.02 Downtown Land Uses

Preamble:

Though the process of drafting the Downtown Plan, specific land uses or business types have not had a major focus; the majority of the work on this plan has concentrated on supporting the broader strategic priority of *Downtown Revitalization*, and detailing policies and actions to address specific issues facing the downtown and overall revitalization efforts. Nonetheless, the *Municipal Government Act* requires that an Area Redevelopment Plan describe the proposed land uses for the redevelopment area, and there are specific features in the current land use framework and from engagement events that provide key considerations for the Plan.

Removing public roads and environmental reserve areas, nearly the entire remaining area of the Downtown Plan is regulated by the Downtown Core Mixed Use District (M3) under Airdrie's 2016 Land Use Bylaw. This district supports a wide range of land uses; no other district in the Bylaw has as many permitted uses (19) or land uses overall (48) that are considered, with Live-Work units, Mixed Use Apartments, Retail Services, Offices, Public Assemblies, Restaurants, and Health and Supportive Services being listed as just some options that are supported in the district.

Even with this range of uses written into the M3 District in 2016, it has also not remained static and City Administration has taken regular updates to include additional uses to support businesses in the downtown, amending the Bylaw to add *Vehicle Sales and Leasing* (B-28/2017), *Commercial Child Care* facilities (B-41/2018), and *Major Educational Institutions* (B-25/2019).

With this ongoing effort to ensure that Land Use Bylaw standards best support development in the downtown, there were also specific elements identified through the Downtown Visioning events and design charrettes. Participants in the visioning exercises wanted to see enhanced shopping, dining and cultural activities downtown, and the report on the Downtown Visioning efforts collected responses on "*Desired Downtown Services*" that included local retail and office, restaurants, parks, indoor recreation, arts galleries, community services, and markets. Likewise, charrettes for the Downtown Plan identified a range of desired land uses that included apartments, affordable housing, entertainment businesses, grocery and retail services, incubator spaces, restaurants, recreation, and specialty stores.

Overall, there were two common threads through visioning and engagement on the Downtown Plan that should guide our revitalization efforts:

- Most of the desired land uses are ones where residents would make a choice to go downtown to engage in those uses and activities. This reinforces the approach of the Plan in not relying on market forces, and the importance of attracting new development and marketing competitive advantages in order to bring new development into the downtown.
- There were no clear lines that would pin desired land uses to specific sites or locations within the Downtown Plan. This presented challenges for the plan as there were no clear lines to draw for specific land use clusters (e.g. a Theatre District) within the plan area. However, it also provides an opportunity to market for some of these desired uses and activities with willing partners and without being pinned to a specific site or location within the plan.

The policies in this section reflect the objectives for the downtown overall, the desires of the landowners, and the results of consultation and design charrettes with the public and key stakeholders.

Objective:

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](#), and 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 shall be provided as shown in [Figure XX \(Downtown Land Use Concept\)](#).
2. Support commercial and mixed-use developments throughout the plan area, primarily accommodating a range of retail, [office](#), and service commercial uses along with various forms of residential housing.
3. Support medium density residential intensification and redevelopment of existing apartment sites 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 in order to support the intended flexibility of this space and allow for it to 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. The types of land uses that can be considered as potential candidates for this purpose 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 ~~industrial~~ [innovation spacespaces](#) within the downtown.

Municipal Actions:

1. Council shall direct Administration to implement the Development Attraction Strategy, adopted as [Resolution XX/2020](#), to attract the land uses identified in the land use concept and supported by the policies of this section.
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare amendments to the Land Use Bylaw within 6 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.

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2.03 Maximizing Servicing Capacity

Preamble:

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

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 $\frac{3}{5}$ 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.

Subsequent to the Utility Master Plan work, the City of Airdrie and CIMA+ combined in 2018 to review downtown servicing capacity and determine the redevelopment potential available local pipe improvements for water and sanitary in the downtown core. This work identified eight water/wastewater projects and two stormwater projects that would improve overall servicing to the downtown area, specifically increasing the resilience and connection of the water distribution system and resolving existing issues with wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. With the completion of these upgrades, the assessment of service demand capacity concluded that the could allow for the local water system would have no less than to accommodate a residential population capacity of 25,000 and a capacity of 5,300 residents in the sanitary system. 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 MSA limitations, which will have to be addressed through further municipal actions in support of this plan.

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

Objective:

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

Principles:

Maximizing the redevelopment value of the servicing capacity available for the downtown is in line with the principle of [Investing in our Future](#). Exercising creativity in the management of the available resources and the review of proposed stormwater and servicing infrastructure for private development 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 ~~is encouraged to will~~ support downtown redevelopment projects that incorporate low impact designs, use of green infrastructure, or other innovative methods ~~that may not necessarily meet municipal standards,~~ where they will demonstrably reduce the load on, or be more efficient with, existing water and wastewater networks.
 - ~~4. Property owners are encouraged to tie into adjacent infrastructure when the upgrades noted in Figure XX (Future Infrastructure Upgrades) are in progress to take advantage of economies of scale and to minimize future surface treatment patches.~~
- ~~5-4.~~ Properties not currently connected to the stormwater management system may be required to do so where deemed practical ~~and financially viable~~ by the Development Authority.

Municipal Actions:

1. Council and Administration shall recognize the opportunity to use the existing capacity in the downtown to ~~increase system efficiency and~~ achieve higher assessment value per acre than construction in greenfield environments.
 - a. ~~Council shall direct~~ Administration to prepare a marketing campaign for Council's consideration within 12 months of plan adoption to promote downtown development ~~and take advantage of the efficiencies to be gained by maximizing the use of downtown servicing capacity.~~
2. Council shall direct Administration to ~~monitor~~allocate the use of existing capacity in the downtown and calculate the impacts of each proposed and completed redevelopment project ~~in order to provide best available information for other potential development proposals within the downtown over time.~~
 - a. Administration to advise Council in public forum when 75% of the available capacity has been dedicated to proposals granted Development Permit approval.
3. Council shall direct Administration to continue identifying servicing constraints in the downtown and offer Council options for capital projects, as part of the annual work planning and budget approval process, to ensure that servicing infrastructure is in place to support new development proposals, or to further ~~raise~~adjust the serviceable population in the downtown area.
4. Council shall maintain the competitive advantage for the downtown by continuing the practice of not charging redevelopment levies for the projects shown in Figure X and recapturing the value of the municipal investment through future assessment value.
 - a. Administration to provide Council with options to separate revenues gained from assessment increases for placement in capital reserve funds at a frequency desired by Council.
5. Council shall direct Administration to provide Council with recommendations through the budget process for coordinating ~~the~~ infrastructure upgrades and ~~the surface treatment road~~ improvements proposed in this plan, wherever possible.
6. Council shall direct Administration to evaluate the relationship of servicing demand from the 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 the outlines of 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 perhaps not surprising as this particular geographic area 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 are somewhat typified by 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. With effective resolution of the issues present in this core area, this particular “feel” can be leveraged to make it the place of greatest activity, energy, and development intensity.

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.

Principles:

Identifying this core area for prominence follows from making downtown the [Heart of the City](#). Focusing energy and activity in the core exemplifies the effort to make the downtown as a whole the [Place to Be](#) in Airdrie, with a particular focus on the historic significance and central location of this area. 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.

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.

Policies:

1. Identify the area shown in [Figure XX](#) as the **Downtown Core** and prioritize for public and private investment efforts that create activity, energy, and redevelopment in downtown.
2. Leverage the value of such investments, as well as the existing servicing, public and private parking stalls, as well as transportation infrastructure, to maximize the redevelopment potential of the lots within the **Downtown Core**, specifically:
 - a. Encouraging the highest degree of development intensification possible from vacant lots and buildings nearing end of life cycle, but allowing for:
 - 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.
3. 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.
4. Encourage the location, and relocation, of businesses and activities that can act as a destination, or draw, for residents and visitors, and:
 - a. Allow for development anchors where they provide key retail offerings or services with spin-off effects for other complementary businesses; and,
 - b. Ensure that larger format developments (>2,500m²) demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority, that such size is necessary and valuable to establish it as a destination or anchor and to create spin-off or multiplier 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.
5. 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 the development(s) on the 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 or safety 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. Spill-out space provision for incorporated land uses, etc.~~
 - v.iv. Methods for interaction within adjacent public road rights-of-way, including patios, sidewalk sales, etc. where public mobility is unimpeded.

- 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 adequate **urban experience** elements in any application for redevelopment or improvement; and,
 - e. Protection of established landscaping features within the site, having particular regard to existing elm trees and street trees that may be impacted by the development activity.
 - e.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
6. 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, where all other circumstances and factors are considered equal, 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**).
7. 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. Council shall adopt **Resolution XX** concurrent with the final readings of this plan 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.).
2. 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.
3. Council shall direct Administration to present strategic land purchases and/or partnerships to facilitate redevelopment, as such opportunities arise.
4. Council shall direct Administration to seeksupport coordination between potential tenants for vacant and redeveloping properties to the extent desired by those landowners, and provide funds to Administration for such purposes as part of each Annual Operating Budget.
5. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a recommendation for a grant program to improve existing building façadesfaçades in the **downtown core** within 24 months of the adoption of this plan.
6. Council shall direct Administration to develop a marketing campaign for investment attraction within the **downtown core** specifically, within 24 months of plan adoption.
7. Council shall direct Administration to develop an annual marketing campaign, in conjunction with an incorporated Business Improvement Association, for scheduled programs and events within the **downtown core**, within 12 months of such incorporation.
8. 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, providing an annual budget for such purposes as part of the Annual Operating Budget.

9. Council shall direct Administration to evaluate financial incentives for private, structured on-site parking within 12 months of plan adoption. Such incentives are to consider:
 - 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).
10. 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 XX](#). 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.
11. 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 that bisects the downtown and which 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 ST, 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. It is imperative to 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. The overall system, especially in the **downtown core** will be relied on to pick up the slack and ensure that the downtown can act as a draw without creating unintended problems. However, to be successful, a redesign of Main Street must provide also improve the character of the area and address other functions to make it a different feel 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 connectivity because of the absence of intersections along this corridor. Participants also noted that Main Street takes travelers directly to retail competition areas outside of the plan boundary, notably in the form of major big-box commercial centres.

In the design charrettes undertaken to develop this plan, 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 distinct feel within the downtown, and create a competitive advantage over other commercial formats found on similar road standards.

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 throughout the downtown, but in the **downtown core** in particular.

To exercise this opportunity, any redesign needs to evaluate enhanced on-street parking and/or amenity space options within the existing right-of-way. In this way, the size, length and location of Main Street present a unique opportunity to address both issues, while the street itself can be viewed in two distinct parts. Per [Figure XX](#), 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 lay-by parallel parking and minimal building setbacks. There is a wholly different feel created by its configuration and associated development, potentially warranting a different approach.

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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 dedicated vehicular travel 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 key corridor also tie 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 in so doing 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 ensure adherence to 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, [placemaking \(Section 3.08\)](#) and social [inclusion/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 facilitate improved movement and 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 against the ability of the adjacent system to accept such redirected traffic and still meet acceptable transportation standards;
 - b. The opportunity for a business improvement association (BIA) to host or participate in such events;
 - c. 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](#);
 - d. The balance between economic benefits for adjacent businesses and the community as a whole, with the potential impacts on adjacent land uses from potential events and programming;
 - e. [The needs and 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 establish the desired balance between economic and social supports to be incorporated into the **aspirational design for Main Street**.
2. Council shall establish an **aspirational design for Main Street** within 18 months of plan adoption, and may choose to engage stakeholders and residents on its development, if desired.
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 or 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 to 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 listed above, within 48 months of plan adoption for consideration by Council.
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 2.02 \(Servicing Capacity\)](#), 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.

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2.06 Infilling Vehicular-Orientated Development Areas

Preamble:

Existing commercial plazas have large areas taken up by surface parking and buildings that are set back from the street, typically oriented toward internal parking areas. 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, such infill development will need to balance the current vehicle-oriented plaza layouts while building to support an active pedestrian environment and a high quality public realm for the future. In some instances, this could also mean re-introducing a street pattern into these vehicle-oriented areas.

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 pedestrian areas (i.e. 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 XX](#).
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 3-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 a street-oriented frontage.
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 reconfiguration shall be supported, with or without a redevelopment trigger, on vehicular-oriented infill sites that improve connectivity, accessibility or amenity spaces.

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 approach Council for funding of 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 incite 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, the Bow Valley College site and the Rocky View 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, with the potential for substantially more interactions, are intended. In June 2019, Airdrie City Council selected the former fire hall site as the location for the new civic library. Presently, the library welcomes an average of 512 patrons per day, and this could see a substantial increase with a new facility.

Gateway Site Selection for New Library

Council selected the former Fire Hall, a gateway site, as the location for the new civic 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 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 Library Development

Recognizing the separate process to develop the functional requirements for the new library, participants engaged in the development of the downtown plan noted the opportunity to:

- Co-locate civic uses at the selected library site; and,
- Connect the library and any other facility, or facilities, located there with the adjacent natural greenspace along Nose Creek.

But this type of decision is not done in isolation. 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 and centralization in the downtown and noted the potential for development or expansion to take advantage of that activity and to create additional 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 in the downtown for years to come.

Objective:

To leverage investment in civic and quasi-civic developments to generate activity and promote private investment in the downtown.

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 be designed with consideration of the role of that particular civic development(s) as part of overall investment in the downtown, and as an aspect of the comprehensive redevelopment strategy for the downtown.
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 delineate one planned area, or neighbourhood, 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 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 Ridgeway Way and Elk Hill. These are shown on [Figure XX \(Gateway Areas\)](#).

During the public engagement for the downtown plan, participants noted the importance of gateway developments at the entrances to establish the importance of this geographic area to the community. Participants also commonly placed entrance feature tiles on the road rights-of-way in each of these four directions to announce arrival, provide wayfinding, and complement private and public gateway developments. There was a clear desire to have these areas stand out and, in so doing, instill a sense of pride about the 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.

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. Denote 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, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority, any potential impacts on adjacent properties and roads as a result of 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 XX](#) 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** in order 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 boundary drawn by participants in the Downtown Visioning exercise sees the Canadian Pacific (CP) rail line as the western limit of what is considered to be 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 Canadian Pacific 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, so as 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 particular 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 in order to sensitively mitigate potential impacts on the proposed developments, the existing owners/uses, and the corridors themselves.

Objective:

To ensure that development responds appropriately to any adjacent corridor 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 XX](#) 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.
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 as a result of 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 in order to address these 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 direct Administration to include proactive measures to attract non-residential uses with lesser intensity and interactions for properties in the **railway boundary condition area** as part of the [Development Attraction Strategy](#) adopted concurrently with this plan as [Resolution XX/2020](#).
2. 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.
3. Council shall direct Administration to undertake a shadowing study for both existing downtown development, as well as the maximum development envelopes allowed under the Land Use Bylaw, within 60 months of plan adoption.
4. 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 XX/2020](#).
5. 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.

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2.10 Natural Spaces

Preamble:

The Municipal Development Plan 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 continues to grow. This is reinforced at a non-statutory level 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 spoke further to desires to support, enhance, and celebrate this naturalized corridor, defined in this plan within [Figure XX \(Natural Spaces\)](#).

It is important that the downtown plan properly reinforces this relationship with the natural environment. 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 the downtown area continues to redevelop. 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 moving between the corridor and uses within the downtown, allowing each to support and enhance the other.

In addition to addressing the interface between uses and the Nose Creek corridor, developments in the downtown should protect and enhance this area by ensuring that buildings and hard surfacing are not placed within the corridor or in conflict with provincial Floodway and Floodplain Regulations, respecting proper stormwater management practices and The Nose Creek Watershed Management Plan. There is a fine balance that needs to be struck where development can support and celebrate the surrounding natural spaces, and also protect them from invasive development, activities, stormwater runoff, and other impacts that can impact the natural systems therein.

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 the Creek and helps to foster a [Connected and Mobile](#) Downtown. Maintaining the integrity of Nose Creek and its riparian environs protects the area and is a part of the City [Leading 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 XX \(Floodway and Floodplain\)](#) 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 specifically:
- 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.

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2.11 Urban Parks

Preamble:

The downtown plan area is bookended by significant park spaces in Nose Creek and Fletcher Parks, but within the plan boundary itself, there are limited areas that are developed as urban parks and open spaces. Where these 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.

As part of *Downtown Revitalization*, the downtown plan envisions a network of open spaces, squares, and plazas that can be used for public gatherings, events, and activities and add to the **urban experience**. These should be distributed throughout the downtown to be accessible by foot traffic and to draw additional attention and activity along the Main Street Corridor. This includes defined spaces on public lands like City Hall and the site of the new civic library, as well as potential improvements on privately held properties that are currently vacant or underutilized and which could accommodate pop-up parks or other urban gathering spaces that could complement and enhance public realm improvements as the sites redevelop in the future.

[Figure XX \(Open Space Concept\)](#) identifies three types of urban open space nodes: Gateway Plazas are strategically located to draw people into the Downtown, and are intended to animate 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. Finally, Temporary Outdoor Gathering Spaces are identified on vacant and underutilized sites throughout the 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 of the 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 ~~can support~~ [creates spaces for people to gather. Putting People First and supporting](#) the activities and character desired through our efforts to [Reimagine Main Street](#).

Policies:

1. Encourage new development proposals on private properties to provide open spaces and corridors in keeping with [Figure XX \(Downtown Land Use Concept\)](#) and [Figure XX \(Open Space Concept\)](#) to enhance and activate the public realm.
2. The locations of the open space nodes are conceptual at the ARP stage and the design and programming will be detailed at the development stage.
3. Permanent open spaces on private properties will be developed comprehensively through submission of a Master Site Plan with appropriate landscaping considerations incorporated.
4. Adhere to the [Gateway policies, \(Section 2.08\)](#), [Small Town Feel and Place-Making policies \(Section 3.08\)](#) and the [Pop-Up 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 pedestrian/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 ~~explore and~~ provide a report ~~and draft of~~ detailing recommended mechanisms ~~for achieving to achieve~~ a connected network of open space plazas through the ~~built environment plan area~~ within 60 months of the adoption of this plan. Examples could include the provision of public realm improvements in exchange for increased development rights or establishing a Community Association/Home Owner Association which could coordinate improvements for public gathering spaces, events, shared amenities and/or other initiatives.
3. Council shall direct Administration to work with proponents in defining and supporting new open spaces as part of redevelopment process in the Downtown.

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 municipal administration capacity needs of a growing community and thereby relocate the Municipal Administration Building (City Hall). The purchase included commercial bays and land holdings for future commercial tenancies in order to finance the relocation and reconstruction costs associated with the move and expansion. The commercial tenancies include two major banks (Scotiabank and ATB Financial) and the overall tenancies 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 advice and recommendations for the operation of the complex to all of 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 conducted in 2019 provided the same general recommendation for incorporation into the general land use concept for the Downtown Plan (see [Figure XX](#)).

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 municipal Development Authority.

Principles:

Potential redevelopment of this site operates under the principle of [Everyone's Success](#) in the downtown. With a fertile ground established throughout the downtown via policies, municipal actions, and complementary incentives, 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 – has the opportunity to [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 in order 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 municipal 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 interior facing shopping mall to that of an external facing retail centre, with a select number of new standalone commercial retail units. The centre 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 have greater integration of the Towerlane Centre with the rest of the downtown, with a particular reference to east-west connections from Main Street. The design charrette respondents 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 municipal library in June 2019. The new library is expected to open within the next five years and this is anticipated to change the nature of development and activity in the southwest portion of the plan area dramatically, including the Towerlane Centre site. It provides a potential impetus for redevelopment and an opportunity to coordinate connections and footprints between 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 ([Figure XX](#)).

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 XX](#)), and:
 - a. Shall have due regard for the specific concept for this site shown in [Figure XX](#), 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. Is encouraged to 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 specifically:
 - a. Prioritize pedestrian movement and safety;
 - b. Provide opportunities for plaza spaces and other destinations for pedestrians;
 - c. Limit retail offering 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 [pop-up land use Temporary Land Uses and Activities policies](#) ([Section 3.01](#)) and the [events Events and programming 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 First Capital Realty, and any future 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 XX](#) for the Towerlane Centre site.
2. Council shall direct Administration to engage with First Capital Realty, 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, future library site and Towerlane Mall) to facilitate greater overall development density.

3. Council shall direct Administration to coordinate with First Capital Realty, 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 Mall site in association with such 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 First Capital Realty, or future owners, for appropriate 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 Mall site to First Capital Realty, or future owners, to facilitate the best possible integration between the capital improvement and the Towerlane Centre site.
6. Council shall direct Administration to collaborate with First Capital Realty, 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.

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Section 3

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, in the 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 would support downtown revitalization, and ~~summarizes~~make the ~~intentions~~downtown a more accessible and welcoming place for ~~Removing Regulatory Barriers and to Create~~all its residents, users, and ~~Enhance Social Declarations~~visitors.

This section ~~relates~~outlines all the ~~aspects inherent to elements that are a part of~~ the role ~~of a and~~ functions within the downtown, and ~~as supporting elements for development, together~~ with the ~~built~~policies on the downtown's form work to ~~ensure that we~~ create a unique Airdrie's urban experience. ~~Removing the regulatory barriers makes that experience possible, and the declarations speak to the approach and intended gains for, and from, that experience.~~

3.01 Temporary Land Uses and Activities

Preamble:

Council's statement of success for the downtown plan speaks to a desired level of activity and vibrancy through the area; a place for people to invest in and where there are businesses and activities and people frequenting and experiencing the downtown. In support of these outcomes, this plan aims to accelerate the pace of redevelopment in the downtown, and that should also consider support for new 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 where it supports unique and interesting uses which can significantly add to the overall character and vitality of the 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 also 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 will add to the vibrancy of downtown.

Principles:

Temporary land uses and activities add colour and character to the downtown and contribute to 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 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, establish permitted pop-up or interim uses, clarify how the Development Authority will review potential impacts, and what kind of permits are required.
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. In particular, 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 nearly five years later. A limited number of units can 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, in particular. Several key civic institutions and amenities are located in the Downtown, which is also well serviced by transit. Redevelopment within the 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 land uses on vacant or underdeveloped parcels in the downtown may actually serve as an opportunity to initiate, or incorporate, these types of residential land uses. **Creating this type of social inclusion and allowing for a mix of housing products, incomes, and demographics can create benefits for both the downtown, and the community as a whole.**

Objective:

The objective is to place affordable housing units in appropriate forms and strategic locations within the downtown.

Principles:

Enhancing socio-economic diversity is emblematic of **Putting People First** and municipal involvement to achieve the objective illustrates the principle of **Leading 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 in the Downtown with **access to active and alternative modes of transportation, and** adequate proximity to social and civic amenities, in the opinion of the Development Authority.
4. Mixed-income housing projects shall be the encouraged development form 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, wherever possible.
5. Capital improvements to civic infrastructure (such as roads, sidewalks, etc.) shall make appropriate accommodations for all age demographics and mobility constraints in order to best support the provision of 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. Council shall adopt, in conjunction with the Downtown Plan, [Resolution No. XX/2020](#) to refund the application fee for mixed-income and mixed-use projects at the time that the Development Completion Certificate is issued by the Development Authority.
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare options to incentivize building designs with a proven return on investment from reduced utility/operating costs, 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 into leases/partnerships with downtown land developers so as 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 in the 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; be they public or private, formal or informal.

Such event and programming offerings 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 (or involve). Using this approach, Airdrie has experienced some successes with AirdrieFEST and the Canada Day Parade, in particular. Several thousand people attend these events each year, with many walking from adjacent neighbourhoods to participate.

Future 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 in order to make an informed choice 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. In particular, the Experience Economy requires a 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 in the downtown.

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 in accordance 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 nodes 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 be designed to 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. Council shall provide ~~fiscal~~ support for a Downtown Business Improvement Association (BIA) ~~or~~, Events Committee, or similar group to organize and operate private events in the downtown in accordance with [Resolution No. XX/2020](#).
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare, within 12 months of the adoption of this plan, options for fiscal support of downtown events not organized by a Downtown BIA, Community Association, or Events Committee, and which are anticipated to take place in 2022 or later.
3. Council shall make available a grant program to pay for insurance expenses associated with organizing private events in accordance with [Resolution No. XX/2020](#), and shall direct Administration:
 - a. To make available a list of insurance brokers that can provide effective and affordable insurance to private event organizers.
4. Council shall direct Administration to, within 18 months of the adoption of this plan, make public spaces within the Downtown Plan boundary available for both public and privately organized events with minimal, or no charge, 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.
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 select the Downtown as the location for locating new publicly-organized events, or capital projects/improvements to host events.
9. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a bylaw or resolution, within ⁶⁵24 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.

DRAFT

3.04 Supporting Multimodal Transportation

Preamble:

Multimodal transportation refers to a system with more than one mode of travel. A snapshot of Airdrie's overall transportation network was provided in part of the public engagement for Airdrie's Economic Strategy conducted in September 2017, included in the *2020 Transportation Master Plan*. Currently more than 90% of all daily trips are by vehicles, and the downtown plan will need to continue to accommodate vehicle traffic while enhancing other modes of travelling to and within the downtown.

~~Aspirationally~~Ideally, a multimodal transportation network servicing downtown Airdrie would include cars, bicycles, transit and pedestrians. In keeping with the goal of attracting business and activity to Main Street and the Downtown, pedestrian traffic should be given the highest priority in the transportation hierarchy. Doing this is integral to creating complete streets and the urban experience that will give downtown Airdrie a competitive advantage. This also ties into other policy areas in the plan, including [Reimagining Main Street](#) and encouraging active transportation as a means of [Health Promotion](#) within the downtown.

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 the Downtown by bike a possibility. Additionally, while data from the Economic Strategy engagement showed a dominance of vehicles as the primary mode of transportation, cycling and walking were the next most utilized and accounted for both recreational travel as well as travelling "to get somewhere." A completed multiuse path alongside the railway and Nose Creek constitutes the spine of the active transportation network and proposed cycling network within this plan.

Alternatively to or in combination with cycling and walking, transit is another way of getting to and around the Downtown. Currently ~~the regional bus~~there is transit service that operates along Main Street. ~~No local bus routes circulate through the Downtown.~~ A redesign redevelopment of Main Street and 1st Avenue should take place in accordance with the complete streets framework and incorporate any changes to the regional and local transit service.

Objective:

The objective is to achieve a multi-modal transportation system within the Downtown that favours walking as the highest priority mode.

Principles:

Designing Downtown Airdrie to accommodate a multi-modal transportation system that ~~favours walking~~prioritizes pedestrian mobility aligns with the principle of making Downtown [Connected and Mobile and Putting People First](#). This approach recognizes the continuing importance of vehicles in the Downtown but elevates the importance of other modes of transportation and prioritizes pedestrian traffic. At a smaller scale, this is also a key component of [Reimagining Main Street](#) and ensuring it functions as a multimodal corridor throughout the life of the Plan.

Policies:

1. Pedestrian mobility shall be recognized as the highest priority mode of the downtown's transportation system and hierarchy.
- ~~1-2.~~ 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 XX Multimodal Transportation](#).
- ~~2-3.~~ 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.
- ~~3-4.~~ Transit stops shall provide adequate shelter, seating and user amenities ~~including garbage/recycling receptacles~~.
- ~~4-5.~~ Cycling infrastructure in the Downtown shall be designed to facilitate adequate snow clearing in winter.
- ~~5-6.~~ The 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. through 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.

3.05 Pedestrian Mobility

Preamble:

Downtown currently has a well-connected pedestrian grid that is supported by Main Street and 1st 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 XX \(Pathways and Sidewalks\)](#). Pathway connections are drawn to represent desire lines that were identified by participants during public engagement. These connections are envisioned to have a more natural landscape aesthetic and provide access and enjoyment of natural areas within the downtown, especially Nose Creek, while providing multiple non-vehicular connections to the west and east of the downtown outside of the plan area and into the adjacent communities. Where a pathways connection is shown along a road right of way, sidewalks may be incorporated.

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 create permeability between these neighbourhoods, crossings would have to be considered at certain points along the tracks. Potential locations for elevated pedestrian crossings are identified on [Figure XX \(Open Space Concept\)](#). Connecting Midtown and Iron Horse Park to the Downtown would provide the opportunity to link to Airdrie's railway history. An alternative to explore would be an at-grade crossing.

However, many factors need to be reviewed and considered prior to finalizing the location of these crossings. Therefore, the potential for these locations should be reviewed periodically with relevant stakeholders.

Objective:

The objective is to enhance connectivity of the pedestrian network through thoughtful design, strategic investments, and the integration of all pedestrians' 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 the 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](#).

Policies:

1. All pedestrian connections shall be constructed generally as illustrated on [Figure XX \(Pathways and Sidewalks\)](#). 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.

2-3. 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, and

3-4. The design of sidewalks in the downtown:

- a. shall ensure an unobstructed path for pedestrians.
- b. should be separated from roadways by street furniture, trees and 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.

4-5. 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 the pedestrians' desired travel paths and at right angles across the road.

5-6. 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.

6-7. Mid-block crosswalks should be considered where:

- a. the spacing between intersections is ~~too large~~ 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.

7-8. Pedestrian street crossing distances should be minimized and designed to be visible to vehicles, through the use of 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 XX](#) with the relevant stakeholders.
4. Council shall direct Administration to coordinate pedestrian network improvements with approved developments, in order 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 boundary similar to that of 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 also 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 land form 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 and would appear to have stakeholder support. 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 XX](#)), 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 ~~adheres to the~~incorporates active frontage policies/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, so as to not reduce the total sidewalk width; and,
 - (a) Not obstruct the primary building façade;
 - (b) Consider the proportion of landscaping to the private vehicle parking areas;
 - (c) Provide adequate space for landscaping to ensure the long-term viability of plantings; and,
 - (d) 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 principle entrances deemed appropriate by the Development Authority and where 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. Council shall adopt the preferred version of [Bylaw XX/2020](#) concurrent with the adoption of this plan to amend the on-site parking regulations of the Land Use Bylaw to the extent deemed most appropriate.
2. Council shall direct Administration to prepare a Bylaw, within 3 months of plan adoption, to amend the parking regulations in the Land Use Bylaw to incorporate the degree of changes to the landscaping, paving material, and surface parking stormwater regulations deemed appropriate to Council.
3. Council shall direct Administration to prepare, within 9 months of plan adoption, a resolution for private parking subsidy in accordance with the balance of social and economic incentives adopted by Council for concurrent with this plan for the **aspirational design for Main Street**.
4. 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
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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 is 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/or 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 as a result of its resilient social network, and its economic and 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 a number of 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 can nurture and develop desirable social elements. A well-designed built environment opens up 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 and Accessibility](#) policies ([Section 3.06](#)).
 - 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

One summer day, a resident pulled out of her parking stall at the grocery store and started on her way home. Her burgundy purse had blended with the paint on her car and it remained camouflaged on the top of her trunk as she started on her way. Alertly, two separate residents had spotted the issue and followed the resident all the way back to her house to ensure that the purse did not fall onto the road, caring more about whether or not her day would be impacted than their own immediate needs.

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 stated clearly 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 particular 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 play an active role – **Leading 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 to general public access to the greatest extent possible; ~~and,~~
 - b. Private development is encouraged to consider accessibility of sites and services by vulnerable users, and;
 - ~~b-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 general 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 of 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,.

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Section 4
Implementation

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.

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4.01 A Collective Approach to Removing Development Barriers

Preamble:

Council's statement of success and the principles of the Downtown Plan both highlight the importance of making the downtown an attractive place for businesses. 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. Over the last three years, the City has 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~~measurable difference by facilitating the process for businesses to open in the downtown or for existing businesses to make adjustments 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 in order to:
 - a. Establish and continue to refine appropriate development regulations
 - b. Remove barriers to redevelopment

Municipal Actions:

1. Council shall suspend ~~requirements for Development Permit applications, and associated parking standards, to allow~~ the following requirements for changes of Land Use in established buildings within the downtown in accordance with Bylaw No. XX/2020:
 - a. Requirements for Development Permit applications, and
 - b. Associated parking standards.
2. Concurrent with Plan adoption, Council shall adopt Resolution No. XX/2020, that creates a streamlined Development Permit review processes that will apply to new Development Permit applications within the downtown and establishes its defined level of service standard.
3. 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.
4. Council shall direct Administration to prepare, within 12 months of the adoption of this plan, Phase II Environmental Site Assessment information for interested owners as part of City-led incentives for redevelopment
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.