Part 3 The Vision

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1.0 Introduction to The Vision

The Vision provides a broad framework for shaping the intended future role, function, and character of Downtown Lethbridge. It builds on the area's inherent assets and potential strengths to set the overarching intent and objective for the Downtown Master Plan.

The Vision flows equally from and extends the Heart of Our City Campaign begun in 2005, and consolidates key directives from previous studies and plans. The Vision will be an enduring document that will provide a reference and benchmark for periodic planning redirection, future implementation approaches and expansion of the guidelines as the Downtown grows.

An important milestone in community planning, the Vision is comprised of the Heart of Our City Vision Statement, six Campaign Pillars that reinforce and provide focus for the Heart of Our City Campaign, ten Guiding Principles and ten Key Visioning Strategies. This section culminates with the Demonstration Concept Plan, which illustrates a scenario of the potential build-out of Downtown that is consistent with the Heart of Our City Vision.



The Mayor addresses participants



Generating Guiding Principles



Generating visioning options for Downtown

Heart of Our City Vision Statement

Downtown is characterized by a variety of residential, commercial, institutional, cultural and recreational components that firmly establish the role of the city core as the heart of the greater Lethbridge community.

Downtown is also the symbolic and historic heart of Lethbridge. It is distinguished by its rich past that is evident in its historic architecture, streets, parks, neighbourhoods and landmarks, which are also expressive of the cultural heritage and community values that are unique to Lethbridge as a whole. Downtown is thus both a source and an expression of community identity and pride. Change and growth should strive to strengthen these roles and build on the best qualities that define this urban environment.

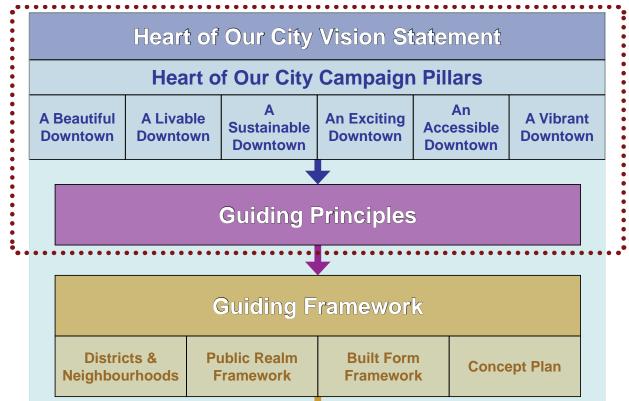
Downtown will build on its rich history and distinctive character to nurture an urban context that will create broad sustainable benefits to the community with respect to social, arts, cultural, educational, environmental and economic vitality. Downtown will serve to enhance the quality of life for all Lethbridge citizens.

The vibrancy of Downtown is rooted in its diverse population and accordingly it will strive to be an open, safe, affordable, accessible and welcoming place to people of all walks of life. This social diversity will be embraced and celebrated through urban design, architecture and the day-today function and role of Downtown Lethbridge.

2.0 Heart of Our City Vision Statement

Derived from the community's participation, the Heart of Our City Vision Statement provides a broad mission to guide planning for Downtown Lethbridge. It sets the overarching intent and objective and is a fundamental direction setting directive that is the "hook" from which all other Downtown Master Plan initiatives ought to "hang". Accordingly, the Campaign Pillars, Guiding Principles, and Guiding Framework all seek to bring to light the meaning of this vision and how it could be brought to fruition.

The Vision Statement is intentionally broad in scope as it ought to have longevity for many years to come. Still, it will continue to be useful as a consistent reference and reminder, particularly in times when decisions are being made on plans and ideas that may not evidently lay bare in the content of this Master Plan but which need guidance to ensure the intent and objectives for Downtown continue to be considered.



The Vision in the hierarchal structure of the Master Plan

To reinforce and provide focus for the Heart of Our City Campaign, the Master Planning approach for bringing the Vision to fruition is organized around six key 'Campaign Pillars". These Campaign Pillars serve as the broad yet tangible objectives for shaping future growth in a manner and character that is desired for Downtown Lethbridge. They are the themes that emerge from the Guiding Principles to follow and are evident in the Guiding Framework, contained in Part 4 of the Master Plan.

As the symbolic, historic and functional heart of Lethbridge, the urban quality and character of the Downtown touches the lives of most residents and makes the greatest impression on the image of the city to visitors. In many ways, these Campaign Pillars are not just about the Downtown but are also relevant and meaningful to Lethbridge and the surrounding areas and communities - that make Lethbridge the great city that it is.





Workshop participants ponder some difficult issue



Forum One Closing Ceremony display of work

When I'm working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I think only how to solve the problem. But when I am finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong. – Buckminster Fuller

A Beautiful Downtown



A city designed with splendid civic spaces, great streets and inspiring architecture can lift spirits, generate civic pride, create economic value and resonate with visitors.

Striving for a beautiful Downtown requires recognizing streets as significant public open spaces and the primary way in which we experience and formulate our impression of urban places. Streetscapes should provide a coherent and cohesive experience that balances all modes of movement, reinforces retail streets, ensures sun penetration, and strengthens visual and physical connections to important civic destinations.

Alongside great streets are tremendous opportunities to enhance the environmental quality and attractiveness of Downtown Lethbridge. Downtown should be expressive of the cultural heritage and community values that are unique to Lethbridge, by creating visually prominent sites and gateways for public art and landmark architecture; reinforcing continuity by filling in "gaps" in the urban fabric; and, creating new public spaces at a variety of scales and for all interests.

Buildings, like streets, have civic obligations to contribute to the quality of the public realm which they frame. New buildings in Downtown need to be appropriately designed and well "mannered" with respect to their fit in context; their relationship to heritage and adjacent properties; and their impact on the pedestrian environment.

In a neighbourhood, everything that is needed is there and everything that is there is needed. – Lewis Mumford

A Livable Downtown

Ensuring a high quality of life for existing and future residents is about creating a Downtown that is walkable, appealing and that provides the necessary services and amenities to support 'living' and a sense of community. Within close proximity of the Downtown core, 'complete' neighbourhoods should accommodate a diverse population, offer places to gather, and ensure that transit and community facilities such as schools, daycares, parks, recreation centres and libraries are within walking distance.

By nurturing livable urban communities, Downtown will accordingly develop as an open, safe, affordable, accessible and welcoming place to live. In turn, living and breathing urban places provide for exciting destinations in their own right.

As the building blocks of great cities, well designed streets and dense urban neighbourhoods can attract a diversity of lifestyles. These elements are essential to sustainability and to nurturing cultural amenities, a vibrant street life, retail vitality, and safe, well used public spaces.



We make our buildings and afterwards they make us. They regulate the course of our lives. - Winston Churchill

A Sustainable Downtown

The Lethbridge Region is widely known for its innovative and sustainable practices in agriculture. In keeping with this, a core principal for Downtown revitalization is that the Heart of Our City Master Plan be socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. To achieve this goal means that Downtown needs to be diverse, compact, walkable, economically active, and environmentally sound. To do so, is to make efficient use of infrastructure, energy, and other resources - enhancing city-wide sustainable objectives.

An economically-active Downtown depends on both destination and everyday traffic to support businesses, a broad range of civic, cultural and recreational activities, and high-quality employment opportunities. This ensures activity at all hours and through all seasons, increasing public safety and efficient use of the existing and planned transportation network.

An environmentally-sound Downtown means taking a life cycle approach to new development, whereby the environmental impacts of construction and land utilization are accounted for and mitigated to the greatest extent possible, achieving smart growth principles where possible. All development approached should draw from Lethbridge's unique natural and climatic context.

A good city is like a good party. People don't want to leave early. - Ian Gehl

An Exciting Downtown

Being a great city is as much about culture, arts, night life, and a diverse social demographic, as it is about nice neighbourhoods and a healthy economy. Not only must the Downtown accommodate these aspects, it must provide the infrastructure to cultivate them. These characteristics can enhance the city's distinction; assist in retaining a young, creative and talented workforce; and are the basis of tourism and economic development.

The Heart of Our City Master Plan should reinforce the vitality of Downtown by continuing to direct a strong concentration of civic and cultural attractions to the city core; by improving the quality of the civic infrastructure; and most importantly, through a targeted strategy of residential intensification. The best and most enduring urban destinations are living and breathing communities that are dense with activity and people at all hours and seasons - a community that theme parks, museums, stadiums and casinos alone cannot build.



Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears. - Italo Calvino

An Accessible Downtown



Many studies of Downtown revitalization emphasize the importance of diversity to the livability of communities. A socially diverse community is one that can offer accommodation and support to a wide range of people.

A key goal of the Heart of Our City Master Plan is to promote a truly mixed Downtown residential community that houses people of different ages, backgrounds, lifestyles, and economic status. A broad range of housing types and tenures, including affordable rental and ownership housing, will also be encouraged to promote low levels of socioeconomic inequality and a better living environment for all.

Equally, Downtown should be a destination for everyone: open, accessible, convenient and a place to spend the whole day or evening. Downtown should welcome visitors not only to shop but to walk, eat, linger, and explore everything the core has to offer. Fundamental to enhancing accessibility is ensuring strong physical and visual connectivity through the Downtown and to the surrounding neighbourhoods. Enhancing the quality of existing road and trail connections and creating new ones will be critical to encouraging greater use of Downtown and through a variety of choices for movement - walking, biking, transit as well as driving.

Congestion is a sign that you have a healthy, growing economy and have refrained from over-investing in roads. - Robert Cervero

A Vibrant Downtown

Lethbridge can potentially experience much of its future employment growth in the information, technology, communications and other "creative" sectors. These new jobs symbolize a new class of workers – in design, arts and culture, and new media. A key characteristic of this new workforce is that its employment base is generated largely by small, innovative firms that locate as much for lifestyle considerations as economic factors.

Downtown Lethbridge has an opportunity to connect with this new workforce by creating a dynamic urban environment, supportive of arts, culture, and diversity. As Downtown is an important lifestyle factor for these workers, nearby residential opportunities are a key part of a business attraction strategy, as is the ability to offer a wide range of complementary businesses and other services nearby. Urban characteristics such as low social barriers to entry (immigration and lifestyle tolerance), provision of a creative environment for artists, and industry-university linkages all contribute strongly as attractors of innovation and economic growth.

By creating a high-quality urban environment that encourages pedestrian activity, development and intensification opportunities, and accessibility to a diverse community, Downtown Lethbridge will make its most important investment for an economically sustainable future.



4.0 Heart of Our City Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles for the Master Plan give direction to the Vision by providing a framework to organize concepts, plans and ideas for Downtown. Together the Guiding Principles direct all aspects of the Plan from process to implementation. The principles were prepared collaboratively with community participants.

These principles will guide decision-making according to their respective themes. They reinforce the Vision Statement and are the 'backbone" to the Campaign Pillars. These principles apply generally throughout Downtown, yet can be further articulated and refined to different district conditions and objectives.



Developing the Vision

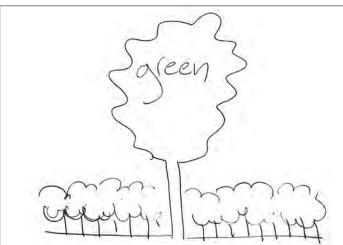


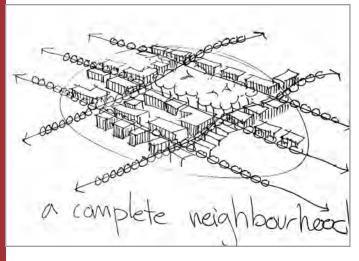
Group present back of Vision Principles and 'Big Moves'



Workshop Group explores Character Areas at Forum One







1. Movement

- Downtown should provide transportation options that are safe, integrated and that prioritize walking and cycling.
- Downtown should be pedestrian-oriented with buildings, uses and streets that are human-scaled.
- Parking should be integrated with intensified development.

2. Green

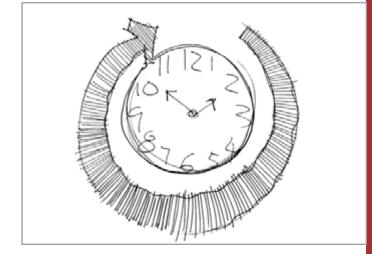
- Downtown should be green sustainable and beautifully landscaped.
- Public space should be protected and enhanced, and the creation of new public space should be made a priority.
- Microclimate conditions and the unique character of the bioregion should be considered and respected when planning and designing the public realm.

3. Complete Neighbourhoods

- Downtown should be comprised of appealing neighbourhoods that provide the necessary support services and amenities for living within walking distance.
- Downtown should provide a mix and variety of housing types that reinforces and supports a critical mass of activity and diversity.

4. Animated & Vibrant

- Downtown should be active at all hours of the day and night and during all seasons.
- Downtown should be a dynamic, diversified centre that includes artistic expression, cultural experience, and should be a fun and welcoming place for employees, visitors and the community.



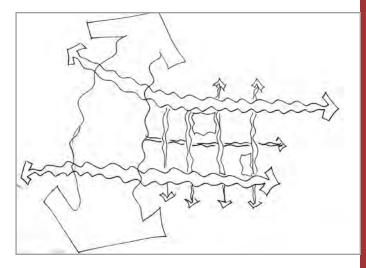
5. Entrepreneurial & Supportive

- Downtown should be an attractive and sustainable place to invest.
- Downtown should have a vibrant and diversified economic base.
- Downtown should promote, facilitate and enable small, local entrepreneurial and creative businesses.

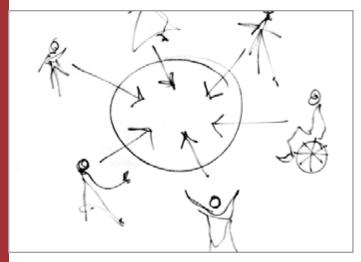


6. A Quality Public Realm

- Downtown should recognize that streets are a key component of the urban open and green space experience, and should be planned with this in mind.
- Downtown should reinforce and build upon the distinct qualities and characters that already exist.
- Downtown should be a source of pride and community meaning; as such it should be designed with an emphasis on craftsmanship, quality and permanence.

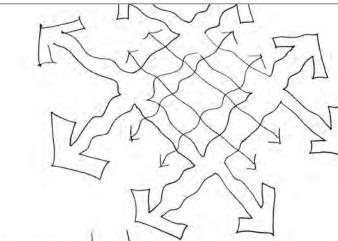


4.0 Heart of Our City Guiding Principles





- Downtown should be a vibrant, safe and welcoming environment to live, work and play.
- Downtown should include a diversity of uses, users and cultures, and be a place that people from around the world want to visit.
- Downtown should accommodate housing that appeals to a broad demographic, and offers a variety of tenures (ownership and rental).

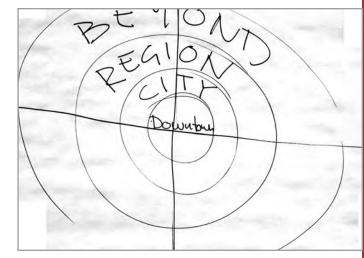


8. Integrate heritage, culture & local values

- Downtown should celebrate and use heritage resources; built, landscape, arts and cultural. Specifically, it should reinforce and embrace the diversity of cultures in Lethbridge and their contribution to the city and region.
- New development should be compatible with the scale, rhythm, height, setback and material quality of the historic Downtown character.
- New built forms should also be compatible with areas adjacent to Downtown, and serve a variety of life styles.

9. Downtown=Lethbridge= Region

- Downtown should be integral and integrated with the city, and should continue to enhance its role as the primary commercial and service centre for the region.
- More than just a neighbourhood within the city, Downtown should serve as the primary social gathering place for all of Lethbridge.



10. Process Matters

• The planning of Downtown should continue in a manner that values the input of stakeholders – residents, landowners, businesses – that have an interest in the outcome.



5.0 The 10 Key Visioning Strategies

The following 10 Key Visioning Strategies summarize the most significant and unifying themes in the Guiding Framework that will shape the intended future character of Downtown Lethbridge. They embody the Vision and point the way towards its realization. Consistent with the Guiding Principles, these strategies present the important 'big moves' to make in order to achieve the long term planning and urban design outcomes envisioned over the long-term – 20, 50 years or more.







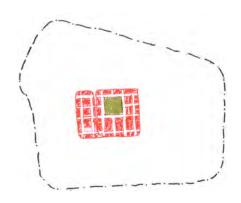
Generating the Visioning Strategies in Forum One

Heart of Our City Master Plan Part 3: The Vision 19

5.0 The 10 Key Visioning Strategies



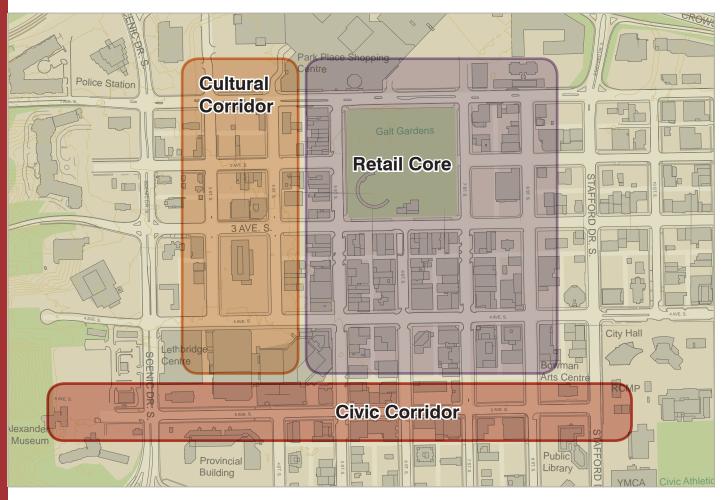
The historic and pedestrian oriented Retail Core

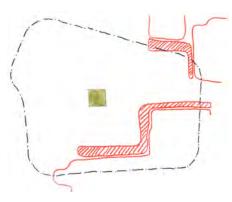


1. Reinforce the Retail Core & Cultural & Civic Corridors

A priority will be to enhance and strengthen the Retail Core of Downtown as characterized by pedestrianoriented retail and heritage resources. Beautiful spaces and streetscapes, infill development and adaptive reuse will help to revitalize and intensify this area.

A Cultural Corridor incorporates "Chinatown" and an emerging concentration of cultural and entertainment businesses. The "Civic Corridor" correspond to the concentration of public and office uses on 5th Avenue, linking the Civic Centre with the Galt Museum.

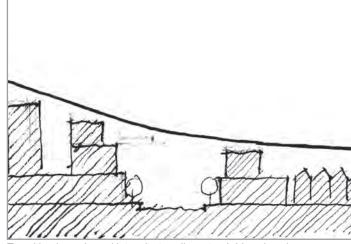




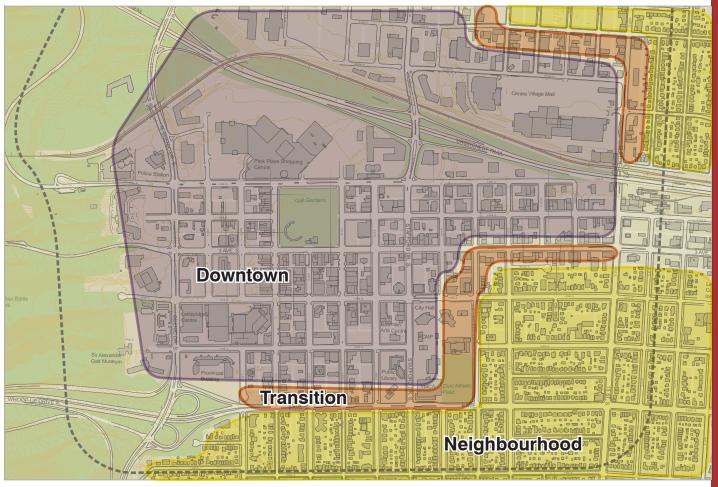
2. Transition areas to buffer established neighbourhoods

The Central Neighbourhoods of Lethbridge form a stable 'backbone' for Downtown where change is anticipated to be minimal. Their proximity to Downtown presents opportunities to integrate appropriate infill in a way that reinforces their low-rise residential character.

The districts on the periphery of the Downtown will create 'transition zones' to ensure appropriate land uses and development scale adjacent to stable residential areas.



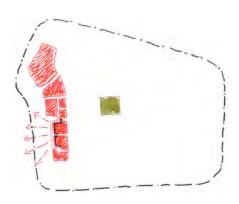
Transition in scale and intensity to adjacent neighbourhoods



5.0 The 10 Key Visioning Strategies



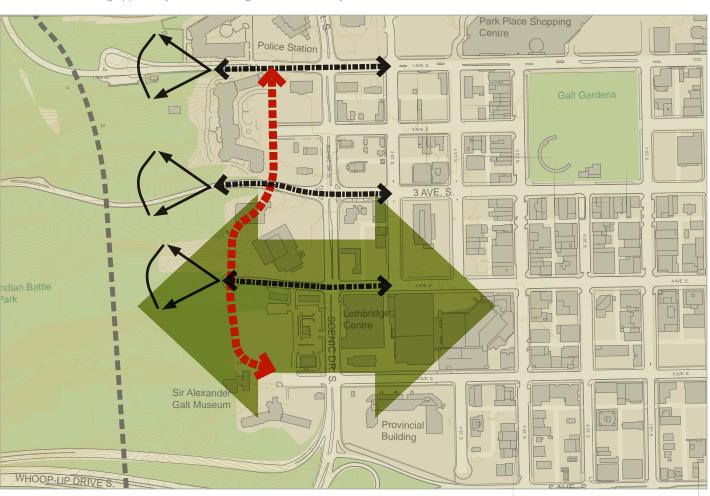
The last remaining opportunity for reconnecting with the river valley

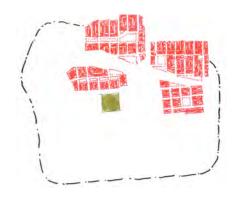


3. Reconnect the Downtown to the River Valley

The river valley edge is Downtown's most significant natural open space and 'front door.' East-west connections across Scenic Drive are enhanced to frame views to the valley and to potential public art sites.

A new north-south boulevard aligned to the edge of the river valley will help to reestablish a meaningful connection while serving as a desirable address for living and new potential attractions.





4. New complete mixed-use Downtown neighbourhoods

Current or future areas that are in transition from former commercial or light industrial uses in and around Downtown present significant opportunities to develop desirable neighbourhoods within walking distances. This includes current shopping malls that may in future be redeveloped or intensified to accommodate living in addition to retail functions.

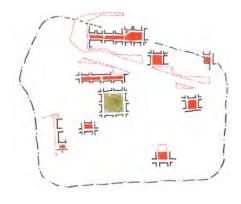
These areas can become complete neighbourhoods that provide a mix and variety of housing types, valuable open space and necessary support services and amenities.



Dense downtown living with a mix of uses an abundance of amenities



5.0 The 10 Key Visioning Strategies

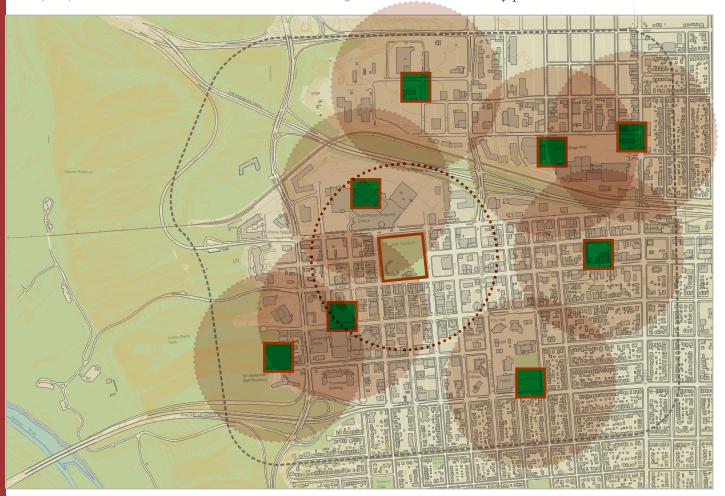


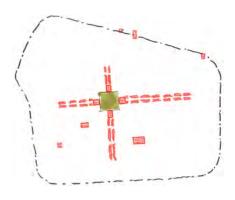
Open spaces to serve as the focus for Downtown districts for living

5. New open spaces for amenity & foci for livable districts

New open spaces - parks, squares and plazas - animated by retail and public uses provide a civic focus to enhance district identity and can serve as a catalyst for revitalization.

Open spaces will form an important component of the network of public spaces, connections and destinations that enhance the livability, aesthetic quality and pedestrian environment in and around Downtown. To do so, public spaces should be provided within a 5 minute walk from any part of Downtown.





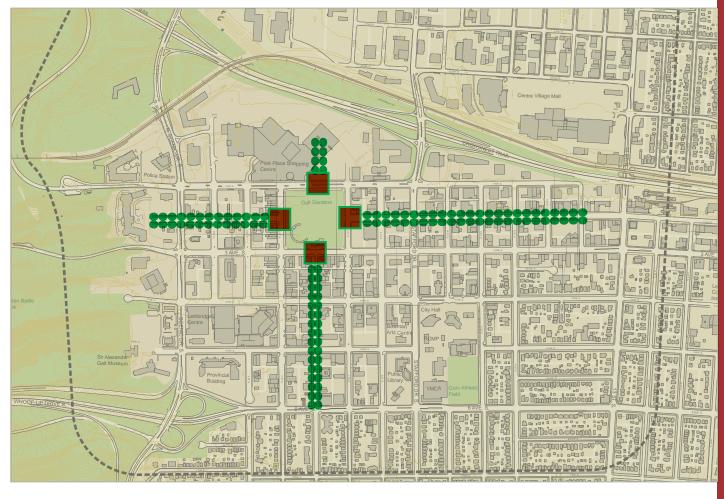
6. Promenades & plazas to extend from Galt Gardens

To reinforce the prominence of Galt Gardens, four grand Promenades will extend as 'green fingers' from all sides of the park and link across Downtown's districts. These Promenades will serve to enhance visual and physical connectivity while providing for local amenity.

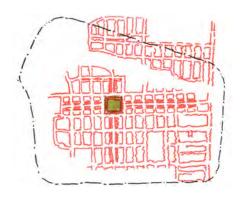
Where the Promenades connect to Galt Gardens, a series of public plazas similar to Festival Square are proposed for all sides of the Park. Distinctly designed, they will function as gathering spaces for occasional markets, events and festivals.



Grand Promenades to link Galt Gardens to the rest of Downtown



5.0 The 10 Key Visioning Strategies

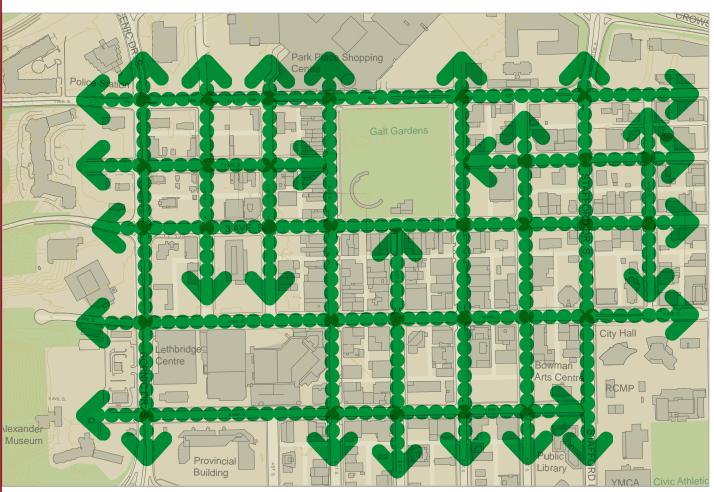


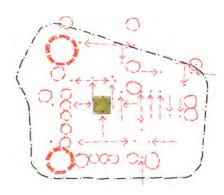
Streets with the comfort, convenience and visual delight of pedestrians

7. Streets designed to enhance the walking experience

Streets form the largest and most important public open space that will have the greatest impact on the image and success of the Downtown.

To ensure the comfort, convenience and appeal to pedestrians, all Downtown streets ought to be designed with walking in mind. An abundance of street trees will help to break the wind, provide shade and visual appeal, while broad sidewalks, furnishings and clearly defined crosswalks can ensure amenity, safety and convenience.





8. Gateways & landmarks for orientation & visual delight

Gateways have been identified to signal key points of arrival into the City or Downtown Districts. Along with identified landmark opportunities and Open Spaces, these features can help visitors and residents navigate the area, provide for a 'sense of place' and enhance civic pride in the City.



Gateway features to signal ones entry into Downtown



5.0 The 10 Key Visioning Strategies



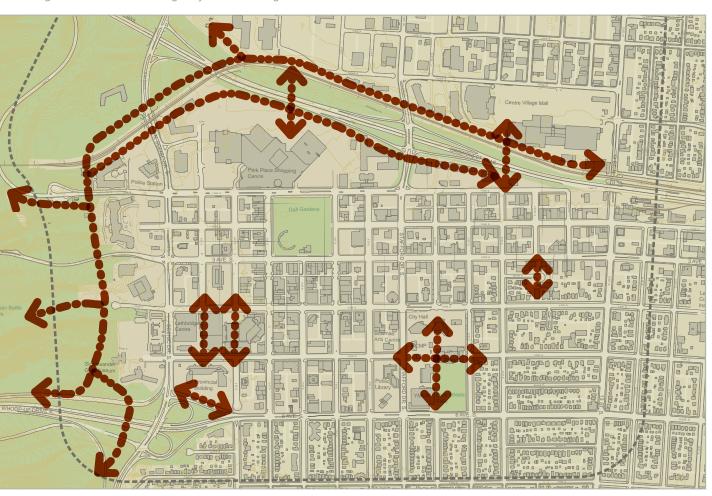
Footbridges over Crownest Trail to greatly enhance linkages to the north



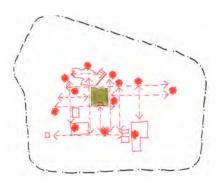
9. Enhanced pedestrian & cycling connections

'Completing' the City street grid will provide for enhanced circulation and accessibility for movement by vehicles, on foot, bicycle, rollerblade, or wheelchairs.

The Downtown pedestrian and cycling network will be augmented by improving access and connectivity to the wider City by bridging barriers such as highways and connecting to Lethbridge's excellent trail system along the river valley.



Part



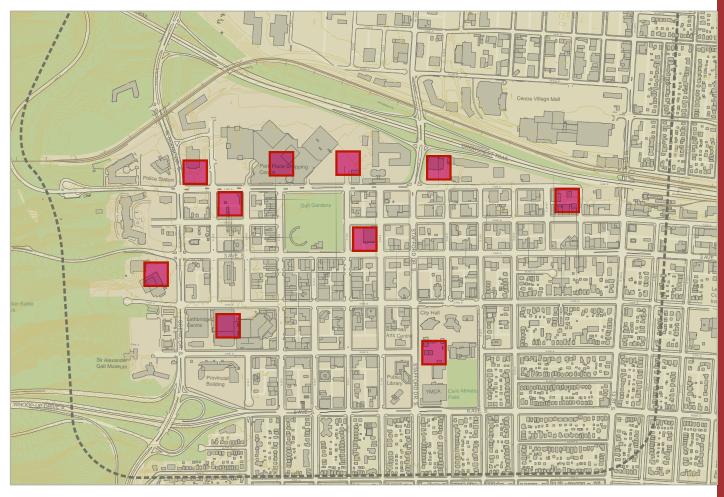
10. Strategic sites for attractions & civic destinations

Several visually strategic sites have been identified for opportunities to develop new civic, cultural, entertainment or commercial attractions.

These sites can serve to reinforce existing assets and/or catalysts to transform certain areas. Public-private partnerships and high-quality urban design and architecture can showcase the objectives of the Vision and signal to potential investors a confidence in Downtown and its bright future.



New well designed civic buildings and attractions strategically located



6.0 Demonstration Concept Plan

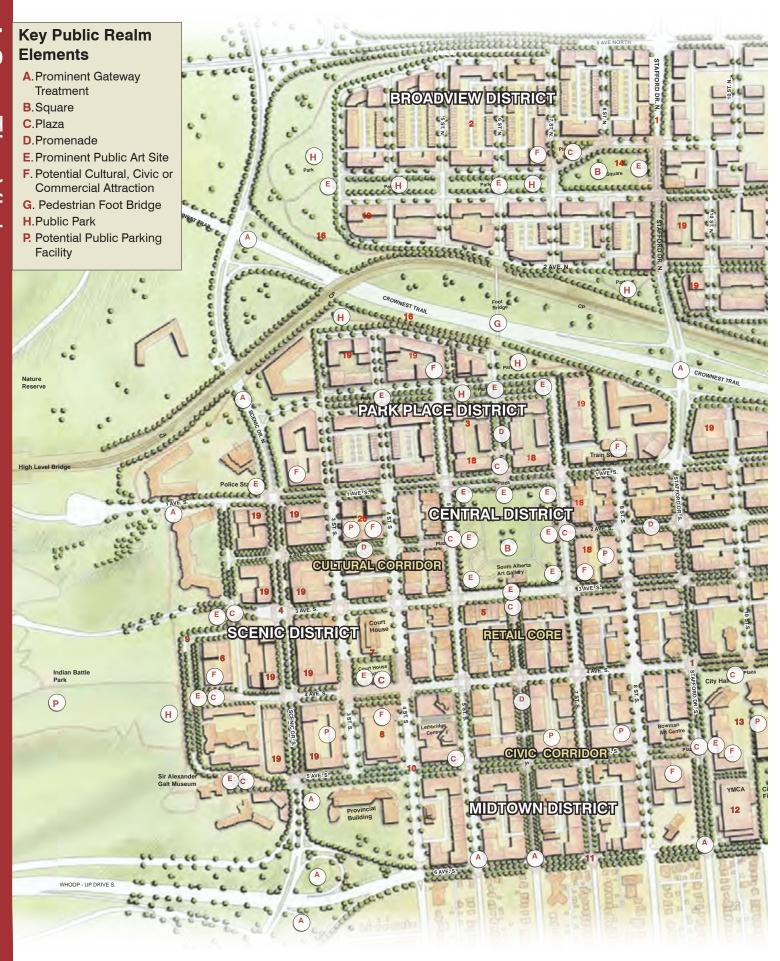
The Demonstration Concept Plan provides a hypothetical rendering of the long-term built-out of Downtown and its context to demonstrate the implementation of the Vision; illustrate the application of the Guiding Principles and Frameworks; and, to integrate and refine many of the substantive ideas that emerged throughout the Heart of Our City Master Plan process. The purpose of the Concept Plan is to illustrate how Downtown might transform over many years with adoption and implementation of the Master Plan. Although it is meant to be demonstrative and not proscriptive, the Concept Plan serves as a tangible and compelling illustration of the Master Plan's intended outcome.

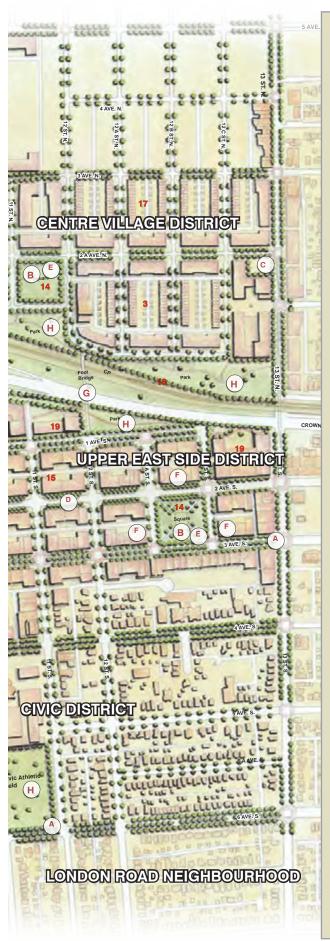
Comprised of a plan view and aerial perspective, the Demonstration Concept Plan including descriptions of its key features are provided on the following pages. Embodied in the Concept Plan are the following tenants of the Vision for Downtown:

- **1.** A high quality public realm through splendid streetscapes, parks, plazas and other amenities.
- **2.** A pedestrian-oriented environment through traffic calming measures, crosswalks, convenient parking and inviting streetscapes.
- **3.** Heritage assets leveraged as an important cultural overlay.
- **4.** Diverse residential housing choices for students, families, young couples and 'empty nesters'.
- **5.** Strategically located and well designed municipal parking structures to attract development, enable streetscaping and provide convenient parking for employees and visitors
- **6.** Enhanced retail environment in the Core supported by continuous retail frontages, extensive wayfinding, public washrooms, gathering spaces, and pleasant streetscapes.
- **7.** Strengthened and expanded business clusters through supporting infrastructure and amenity.

- **8.** Residential infill development on vacant sites and adaptive reuse of upper-storey spaces in existing buildings within the Central District.
- **9.** Larger-scale residential mixed-use developments on significant Downtown sites within or adjacent to the Central District.
- **10.** Complete neighbourhoods within walking distance of the Central District.
- **11.** Broadened sidewalks on priority retail streets through conversion of angled parking to parallel parking and 'butting-out' at intersections.
- **12.** High quality bus shelters with enhanced rider amenities at major Downtown stops in conjunction with streetscape improvements.
- **13.** Transit "Terminal" improvements including shelters, service kiosk, pilot retail stall, and wayfinding signage.
- **14.** Bicycle parking facilities at key locations including racks for short term stays and lockers for employees.
- **15.** Public art throughout and at key visual locations such at end of streets and in open spaces.
- **16.** A high-quality way-finding strategy and the reintroduction of historic street names.
- **17.** Up-lighting of prominent landmarks including historic buildings, bridges, churches and City Hall
- **18.** A central tourist information booth to provide information, promote the vision, and highlight progress.
- **19.** A Cultural Corridor to provide a focus for restaurants, bars, entertainment venues, galleries and studios.
- **20.** New cultural facilities and attractions anchoring strategic sites, potentially including a performing arts centre, Aboriginal cultural centre and gallery, new library, convention centre and a high-end hotel.

6.0 Demonstration Concept Plan

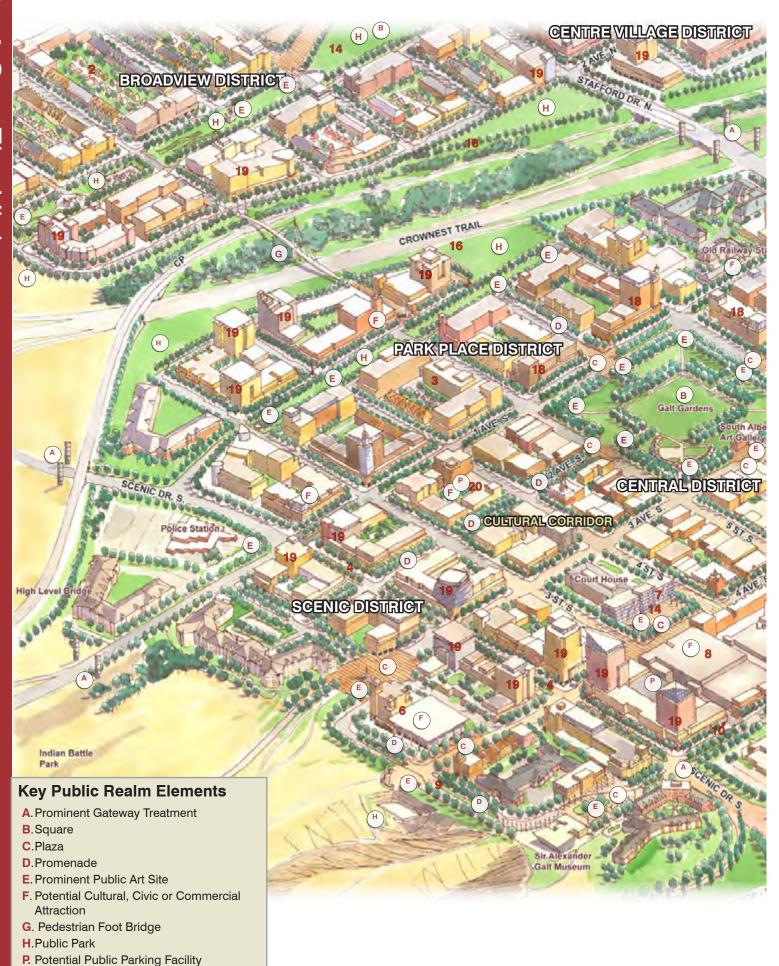


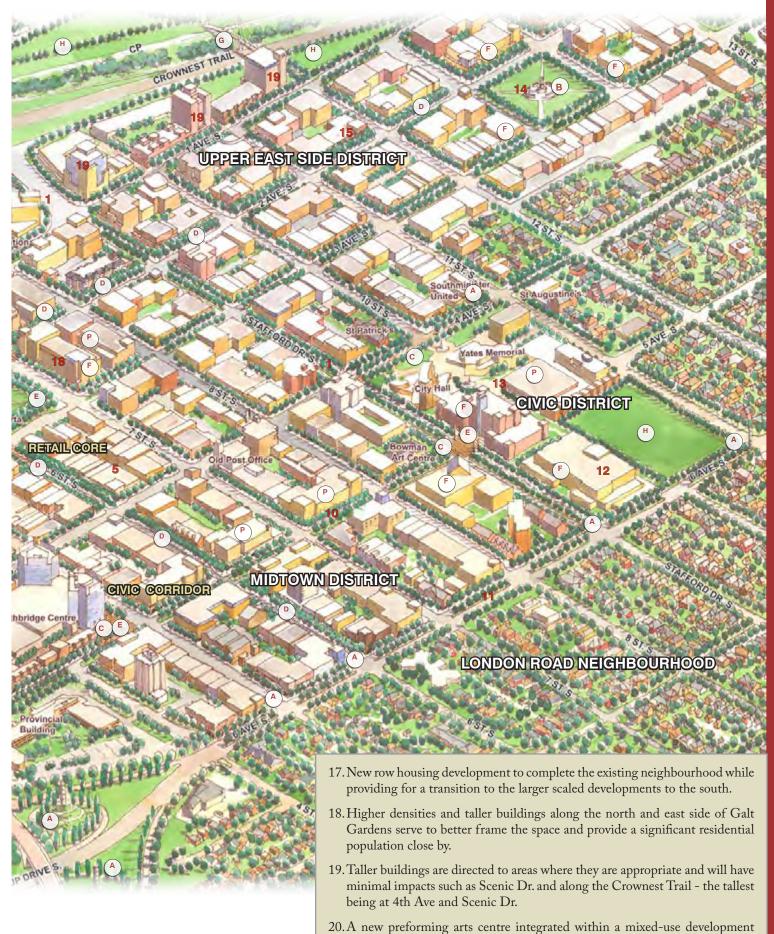


Key Features of the Demonstration Concept Plan

- 1. Stafford Drive serves the primary north-south spine for pedestrians, transit
- 2. Views, parks, a mix of housing choices and proximity to Downtown will make the new Broadview District an appealing place to live.
- 3. Over the long-term Park Place and Centre Village malls can be better integrated into Downtown through strategic modification or redevelopment. These areas can evolve into mixed-use districts including the extension of the street grid, retail at-grade, residential uses above, and parking structures hidden within the blocks.
- 4. Scenic Drive transformed from a barrier into an inviting Grand Urban Boulevard.
- 5. The historic and pedestrian-oriented Retail Core is reinforced with compatible infill developments.
- 6. A potential Conference Centre and high quality hotel overlooking the river
- 7. A redesigned Courthouse Plaza framed by an addition the Courthouse to provide a new focus and anchor for the Cultural Corridor.
- 8. Lethbridge Centre is reintegrate into Downtown with partially redevelopment that adds street-oriented retail around the perimeter; high density mixed-use along Scenic Drive; a second tower on 5th St; northsouth links aligned to the street grid; a new plaza at 5th Ave; and, overall upgrading to the design that includes a re-facing of the existing tower.
- 9. A new boulevard provides a public edge that reconnects the Downtown to the river valley and provides a desirable new address and destination for residents and tourists.
- 10.5th Avenue is redesigned as a boulevard and serves as the Civic Corridor, anchored by the Galt Museum to the west and the Civic Centre to the east.
- 11.6th Avenue will balance its key vehicular role with improved north-south pedestrian connections to the London Road Neighbourhood.
- 12. Various recreational facilities are integrated into a sate-of-the-art facility serving new Downtown residents and the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- 13. Infill developments in the Civic District are designed to integrate various new and expanded functions that include an addition to City Hall; an expanded Senior's Community Centre and Bowman Art Centre; a new major parking facility; well defined mid-block pedestrian connections; and, positive frontages onto the Athletic Field - now a community park.
- 14. New formal green squares will provide the Broadview, Upper East Side and Centre Village Districts with a local focus for retail, civic and potentially academic uses.
- 15. The Upper East Side District can serve as an incubator for small, creative and innovative industries.
- 16. Open space along the Crowsnest Trail provides for new green space opportunities and city-wide trail connections to Downtown.

6.0 Demonstration Concept Plan





serves to anchor the north end of the Cultural Corridor.