

# Downtown **Lethbridge** Area Redevelopment Plan



CITY OF  
*Lethbridge*

BYLAW 5807  
Planning & Development Services July 2013



Bylaw 5807  
Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan

Prepared by  
City of Lethbridge  
Planning and Development Services

July, 2013

**BYLAW 5807**

\*\*\*\*\*

**A BYLAW OF THE CITY OF LETHBRIDGE TO ADOPT  
- AN AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN -**

\*\*\*\*\*

**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LETHBRIDGE, IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA,  
DULY ASSEMBLED, HEREBY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

**WHEREAS Section 634 of The Municipal Government Act, Chapter M-26, R.S.A. 2000,  
provides as follows:**

**A Council may:**

- a. designate an area of the municipality as a redevelopment area for the purpose of any or all of the following:**
  - i. Preserving or improving land and buildings in the area;**
  - ii. Rehabilitating buildings in the area;**
  - iii. Removing buildings from the area;**
  - iv. Constructing or replacing buildings in the area;**
  - v. Establishing, improving or relocating roads, public utilities or other services in the area,**
  - vi. Facilitating any other development in the area**
- b. adopt, by bylaw, an area redevelopment plan, AND**

**WHEREAS the Council of the City of Lethbridge wishes to adopt an Area Redevelopment Plan for that area of land in the City of Lethbridge generally described as:**

**The Downtown (see Schedule A attached) AND**

**Whereas Bylaw 4183, Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (1988) is no longer required;**

**NOW THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LETHBRIDGE, IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA, DULY ASSEMBLED, HEREBY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

- 1. The Plan, which is attached hereto as Schedule B, is hereby adopted and shall be known as the Downtown Lethbridge Area Redevelopment Plan.**
- 2. Bylaw 4183 is hereby rescinded.**
- 3. This Bylaw shall come into full force and effect on the date of final passing**

thereof.

READ A FIRST TIME this 27 day of MAY, A.D. 2013

[Signature] MAYOR D. Sanfield DEPUTY CITY CLERK

READ A SECOND TIME this 8 day of JULY, A.D. 2013

[Signature] MAYOR D. Sanfield DEPUTY CITY CLERK

READ A THIRD TIME this 8 day of JULY, A.D. 2013

[Signature] MAYOR D. Sanfield DEPUTY CITY CLERK

# Acknowledgements

This Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan would not have been accomplished without the support of many individuals who have demonstrated their passion and commitment to creating a vibrant downtown.

The project team would like to thank the Heart of Our City Revitalization Committee – Design, Planning, and Regulatory subcommittee members for their contribution to project implementation. The project team would also like to thank all members of the public who participated in the past engagement process.

The project team would like to acknowledge each individual who provided knowledge and support.

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Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce  
Allied Arts Council  
Economic Development Lethbridge  
Shaw  
ATCO Gas  
TELUS  
Lethbridge School District No. 51  
Park Place Mall

# Executive Summary

The Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (Bylaw 5807, the DARP) is a statutory plan authorized by the Municipal Government Act. The DARP provides a planning framework and supporting policies that will guide the next 10 years of development in the Downtown, in accordance with the 2010 Integrated Community Sustainability Plan/Municipal Development Plan (ICSP/MDP) and the vision of the 2007 Heart of Our City Master Plan (The Master Plan).

The DARP consists of two distinct parts. The first part provides background information describing the Plan area, background analysis, and the factors that have influenced the evolution of Downtown including previous Downtown planning efforts. The second part provides the policy framework, policies and implementation strategies.

The DARP is intended to create a vibrant and walkable downtown where people enjoy working, living, and playing in two major ways:

- 1) by creating a wide range of policy areas including land use, urban design, heritage resource preservation, livability, public realm, traffic circulation and mobility, parking, sustainability, infrastructure renewal and replacement.

- 2) by recommending capital projects for City Council's consideration of future Capital Improvement Programs (CIP's). Monitoring and evaluation strategies have been devised as part of the implementation strategy to ensure priority projects are administered and executed.

Consequently, the DARP has become a comprehensive plan. It is our hope that the DARP will assist in creating a vibrant downtown and providing a more positive downtown experience for all downtown users.

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# PART I



# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (the DARP) is to provide a planning framework and supporting policies that will guide the next 10 years of development in the Downtown in accordance with the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan/Municipal Development Plan (2010) and the vision of the Heart of Our City Master Plan (2007).

## 1.2 Legislative Authority

An Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) is a statutory plan authorized by the Municipal Government Act. According to the Act, an ARP must describe;

- 1) the objectives of the plan and how they are proposed to be achieved
- 2) the proposed land uses for the redevelopment area
- 3) if a redevelopment levy is imposed, the reasons for imposing it, any proposals for the acquisition of land for any municipal use, school facilities, parks and recreation facilities or any other purposes the Council considers necessary
- 4) it may contain any other proposals that the Council considers necessary.

## 1.3 Planning Rationale

The previous Plan (Bylaw 4183), which was adopted in 1988 by City Council, set out to accomplish the following goal:

“To enhance the Downtown as the cohesive, central focus for commercial, social, cultural and government activity in Lethbridge in order to develop a sense of place and identity”

Bylaw 4183 also established a series of objectives and policies to provide guidance for coordinating public and private sector initiatives which were intended to be complementary and mutually supportive in order that Downtown Lethbridge could achieve the goal of remaining the central focus for the City.

It has been nearly a quarter of a century since adoption of the bylaw. Numerous changes have occurred within the City and in the Downtown that could not have been foreseen at the time the previous DARP was adopted. In particular, an economic recession occurred during the 90's which stalled Downtown revitalization for several years.

Between the 1990's and up to the mid 2000's, "big box" retailing areas were established in suburban areas of the city creating competition for the consumer's dollar. Consequently, Downtown experienced some community investment reluctance resulting in fewer businesses, fewer people on the streets and a growing lack of building and property maintenance. In addition, during this time, various social issues manifested themselves on the streets of Downtown.

Although the bylaw's goals, objectives and policies were articulated, the lack of an overall vision for the Downtown coupled with prolonged economic dormancy, resulted in slower than anticipated reinvestment. City Council recognized that a catalyst was necessary to reverse decline in the Downtown core.

Between 2005 and 2007, the City undertook an initiative to develop a Downtown Master Plan. As a result, City Council adopted sections of the Heart of Our Master Plan in 2007. The Integrated Community Sustainability Plan/Municipal Development Plan (ICSP/MDP) was adopted by the City Council in 2010. Both plans recognize that Lethbridge has a strong and vibrant Downtown and a new Area Redevelopment Plan should be prepared.

## 1.4 Plan Objectives

As a statutory plan, the DARP is used as a development guideline on a daily basis by staff, developers, and business owners. Therefore, it is important that the intent of the DARP be clear and understandable and that the DARP achieves the following:

- 1) **To reflect community values**
- 2) **To establish strong planning principles that will guide the next 10 years of redevelopment in the Downtown**
- 3) **To provide supporting policies based on the planning principles**
- 4) **To ensure strong relationships with both internal and external stakeholders for policy implementation**
- 5) **To take a comprehensive approach for overcoming challenges and issues facing Downtown**
- 6) **To focus on implementation plans for achieving the planning objectives**

## 2. Planning Context

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### 2.1 Significant Downtown Revitalization Events Timeline

The following section provides an overview of significant events that have taken place in the revitalization of Downtown Lethbridge over the last quarter century. These events underlie the continued effort to maintain and expand the vitality of Downtown.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>1987</b> | Through a municipal bylaw authorized by the Municipal Government Act, the Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) was established to provide a mechanism for the Downtown business community to initiate projects that would enhance and revitalize Downtown. City Council also established the BRZ tax, which is levied on properties within the BRZ boundaries, that provides funds for the BRZ to operate.  |
| <b>1988</b> | First Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (Bylaw 4183) was adopted   |
| <b>1990</b> | An economic recession in the early to mid 1990's impacted the City in general and the Downtown in particular early. Revitalization activity in Downtown essentially stalled.  |
| <b>1995</b> | <p>Although an economic recovery was beginning in the City, Downtown still experienced some business community investment reluctance, the impact being fewer businesses, fewer people on the streets, an increase of social issues, and a growing lack of building and property maintenance.</p> <p>The 1995 General Municipal Plan (Bylaw 4678) recognized that Downtown should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be a "People Place" as well as a strong commercial and cultural centre</li> <li>• be a place that helps create community identity and pride</li> <li>• have more &amp; varied housing</li> <li>• have more mixed-use development</li> <li>• have more student housing; and attract tourists</li> </ul> |
| <b>1999</b> | A Co-design Charrette, that compiled citizen generated ideas in graphic form, was held to energize Downtown revitalization.   |
| <b>2000</b> | <p>The "big box retailing" paradigm shift was in full swing in the City. This new alternative shopping form brought less expensive shopping closer to growing areas in southeast Lethbridge. Most new commercial investment went elsewhere than Downtown.</p> <p>Negative behaviour, much of which was attributable to underling social issues, in turn contributed to a downward slide of Downtown. Positive experiences were declining and business clientele began to avoid downtown. It became apparent to City Council that to revitalize Downtown, something had to be done to arrest and reverse</p>   |

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
|             | <p>the downward trend taking hold.</p> <p>In a response to reverse the growing trend of building decay, the Downtown Lethbridge BRZ and the City partnered with the Government of Alberta to launch the Main Street Program.</p>  |
| <b>2003</b> | <p>The Downtown Redevelopment Steering Committee (DRSC) was established by City Council</p> <p>City Council established the Downtown Redevelopment Fund to provide capital for the DRSC to undertake projects in the fulfillment of its mandate.</p> <p>City Council also established the Tax Abatement Program or Downtown Redevelopment Incentive Policy (DRIP).</p>  |
| <b>2004</b> | <p>McGill University School of Architecture students developed conceptual revitalization plans for nine blocks in Lethbridge's Downtown core. The study was completed in 2004 and formed the basis of a "catalytic" community forum which resulted in a Community Charter to provide direction for action to the DRSC.</p>  |
| <b>2005</b> | <p>In June of 2005, in a report entitled "Framework for Moving from Planning to Action", the DRSC presented an initiative to City Council to create a master plan that would comprehensively describe the actions required to ensure the Downtown remains vital and vibrant.</p>  |
| <b>2006</b> | <p>A Downtown revitalization master planning project, that involved a comprehensive corporate and community engagement process, commenced and delivered the Heart of Our City Master Plan.</p>  |
| <b>2007</b> | <p>The Heart of Our City Master Plan was partially adopted by City Council.</p>   |
| <b>2008</b> | <p>City Council created the Heart of Our City Revitalization Committee (HOCRC), comprised of City Council members and stakeholder representatives to champion the revitalization of Downtown Lethbridge through implementation of the Heart of Our Master Plan.</p> <p>The construction of Rotary Centennial Plaza water feature essentially transformed Galt Gardens.</p> <p>City Council created an Art Acquisition Program to add Public Art to the Downtown and other areas of the City.</p> <p>Two significant adaptive reuse projects were completed; the conversion of the Coalbanks Inn from a tavern and hotel into a mixed-use commercial and residential and the conversion of the iconic Paramount Theatre into an office building.</p> |
| <b>2009</b> | <p>Public and private investment became more visible with renovations to coffee shops and restaurants, the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Post Office, and the new fire station.</p> <p>City Council purchased lands for a new Community Arts Centre (replacing the aging Bowman Arts Centre) and potentially a Performing Arts Centre.</p>  |
| <b>2010</b> | <p>City Council adopts the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan /Municipal Development Plan. The plan supports the Downtown and</p>   |



states " *The Downtown is a symbol of the whole city – one important way residents throughout the world identify with their cities – the more attractive and vibrant the Downtown is the more pride the residents of the whole city seem to have. For this important reason, among others, the Downtown should always be reinforced and enhanced*".

Preliminary work commenced on a new Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (DARP) to replace the 1988 Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan which had become obsolete.

Private investment continued with a multimillion dollar renovation to Lethbridge Centre which was more than all of the other Downtown construction values combined.

**2011**

With joint funding from Canadian Badlands, the Heart of Our City Revitalization Committee sponsored the Public Realm and Transportation Study which concentrated on 3 key Downtown corridors to determine the nature and extent of possible future improvements to the public realm which consists of the streets and adjacent sidewalk areas within the existing rights-of-way.

A Downtown Marketing Study was undertaken by the HOCRC to devise a strategy that would increase the Downtown's use by both residents and visitors. In addition, the HOCRC instituted the Heart of Our City Activity Grant to help organizations host events that create an exciting and vibrant Downtown and attract audiences to the Heart of the City.

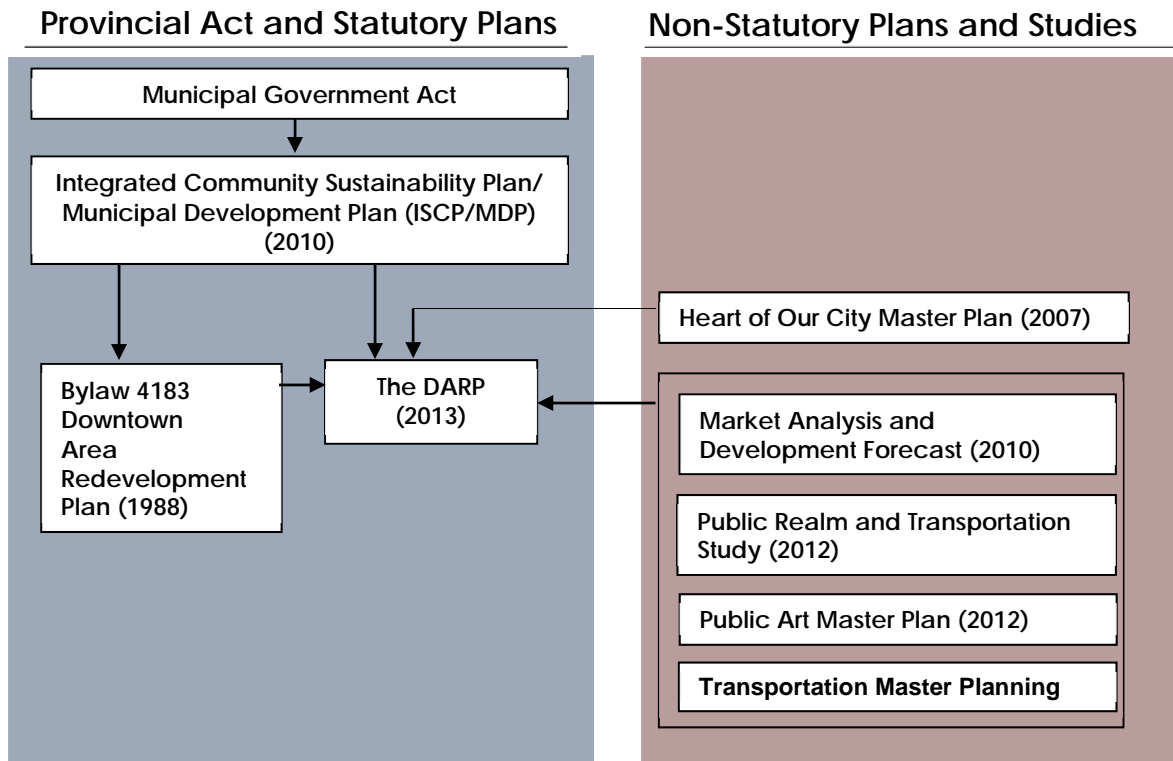
Another significant adaptive reuse project was completed; the conversion of the Alec Arm Hotel into an affordable housing/mixed-use commercial and residential building.

**2012**

The Public Realm and Transportation Study (PRATS) was completed and some recommendations from that study will be implemented through the new DARP.

## 2.2 Relationship to Other Plans and Initiatives

The diagram below illustrates how the DARP is related to other plans and studies and provides a better understanding of the overall planning context of the DARP.



### 2.2.1 Provincial Act and Statutory Plans

#### 1) Province of Alberta Municipal Government Act (MGA)

The Municipal Government Act is the primary Provincial legislation that provides municipalities with a planning framework by setting out the legislated roles and responsibilities of municipal Councils, boards and administrative staff to ensure the development and redevelopment of land in a systematic, orderly, economically, and environmentally responsible manner.

#### 2) 2010 Integrated Community Sustainability Plan/ Municipal Development Plan (ICSP/MDP)

In 2010, the City of Lethbridge introduced its new ICSP/MDP. This guiding policy document enables Council and the community to work toward a vision of the community over the next 50 years. The plan is based on the balance of social, cultural, economic, built and natural environment, and governance dimensions of sustainability. The community's aspirations for the City are

contained within the policies and the intent is for future planning efforts to find their basis or roots with the ICSP/MDP. All statutory plans adopted by the municipality must comply with their ICSP/MDP and all the major planning initiatives and statutory plans including this DARP will follow the policies within the ICSP/MDP.

The ICSP/MDP recognizes the importance of the Downtown in the context of overall community vibrancy. Consequently, maintaining a ***Strong and Vibrant Downtown*** is one of the main objectives of the ICSP/MDP.



### 3) The 1988 Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (Bylaw 4183)

Bylaw 4183 remains in effect until superseded by a new DARP Bylaw. Many aspects of the previous DARP have been accomplished, several remain valid, and as indicated previously, many things have changed in the City over the past quarter century. Among those aspects which remain valid is the fundamental Downtown planning principles, which have been followed in the preparation of both the Heart of Our City Master Plan and the new DARP.

For instance, the central goal of the Bylaw was to recognize Downtown as **“the cohesive central focus for commercial, social, cultural and government activity in Lethbridge in order to develop a sense of place and identity.”**

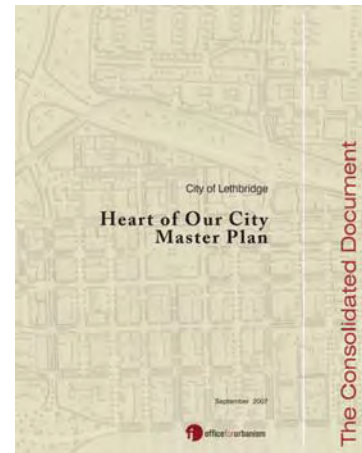
Implementation policies were formulated based on identified areas of concern or opportunity. Some of the policies and implementation strategies in the Bylaw are still relevant and will be incorporated into the DARP. This will maintain continuity and ensure a smooth transition from the past to the future.

## 2.2.2 Non-Statutory Plans & Initiatives

### 1) Heart of Our City Master Plan (the Master Plan)

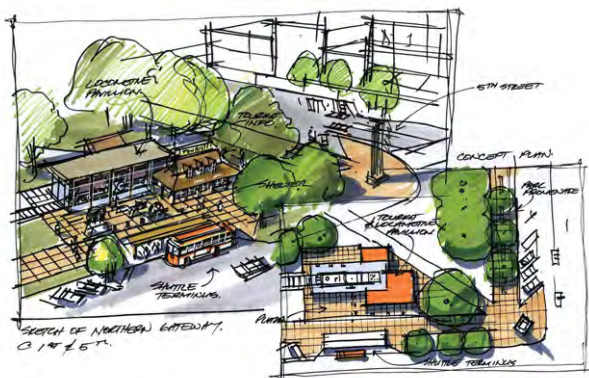
The Master Plan, part 3: the vision, part 4: the guiding framework, part 5: development guidelines, was adopted by City Council in 2007. Though it is not considered a statutory plan, the Master Plan provides the framework to guide future public involvements and private development and to ensure the emergence of cohesive, vibrant, and economically vital Downtown. The Master Plan also presents a long-term vision with the potential to transform Downtown and benefit the entire community.

It is a comprehensive document that consists of the vision statement, campaign pillars, guiding principles and guiding framework. Therefore, the majority of the core planning principles from the Master Plan has been rearticulated in the DARP.



### 2) Public Realm and Transportation Study (PRATS)

The PRATS is a comprehensive technical exercise that provides an examination of the public realm elements that contribute to a pleasing environment and included both streetscape design and traffic engineering for the DARP. Parking condition analysis and future parking demand were also examined to identify challenges and opportunities.



**3) Downtown Lethbridge Market Analysis and Development Forecast**

This analysis was undertaken for the purpose of providing background information of the potential for economic investment in the Downtown. The analysis includes a future population projection, future housing supply and demand projection, and a future retail growth outlook.

**4) Transportation Master Plan 2050 (the TMP)**

The TMP will develop a long-term transportation planning framework that supports the future land uses and development pattern envisioned by the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan/Municipal Development Plan (ICSP/MDP).



**5) 2012 Public Art Master Plan**

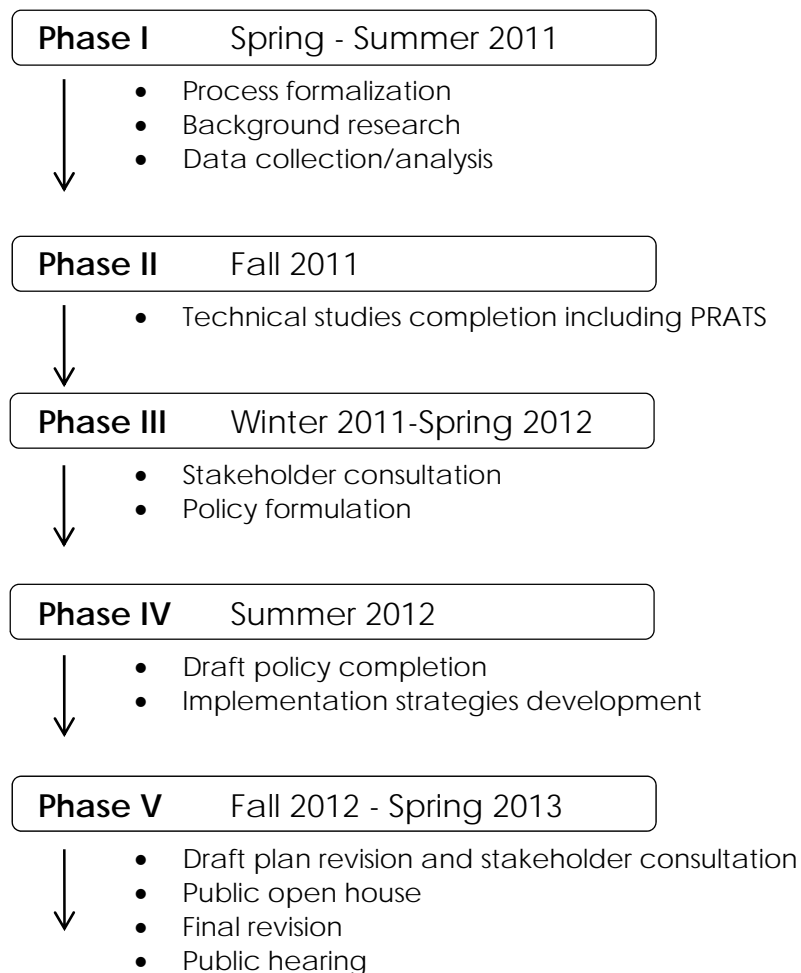
The Public Art Master Plan defines a long-term vision for public art and seeks to integrate the City's current initiatives under a coordinated framework for public art.



## 2.3 Planning Process

The DARP was undertaken by staff of the City of Lethbridge's Planning and Development Services Department who were supported by internal city department representatives.

The DARP was also vetted through the Heart of Our City Revitalization Committee, its Design, Planning and Regulatory sub-committee, Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone, the Chamber of Commerce, Allied Arts Council, Economic Development of Lethbridge, utility companies, and many other community organizations and individual members.



Due to the extensive public consultation involved in the creation of the Master Plan and the targeted consultation of the Public Realm and Transportation Study, and the fact that outcomes were affirmed by the ICSP/MDP, stakeholder involvement in the DARP is limited until Phase V.

## 2.4 Regional Context

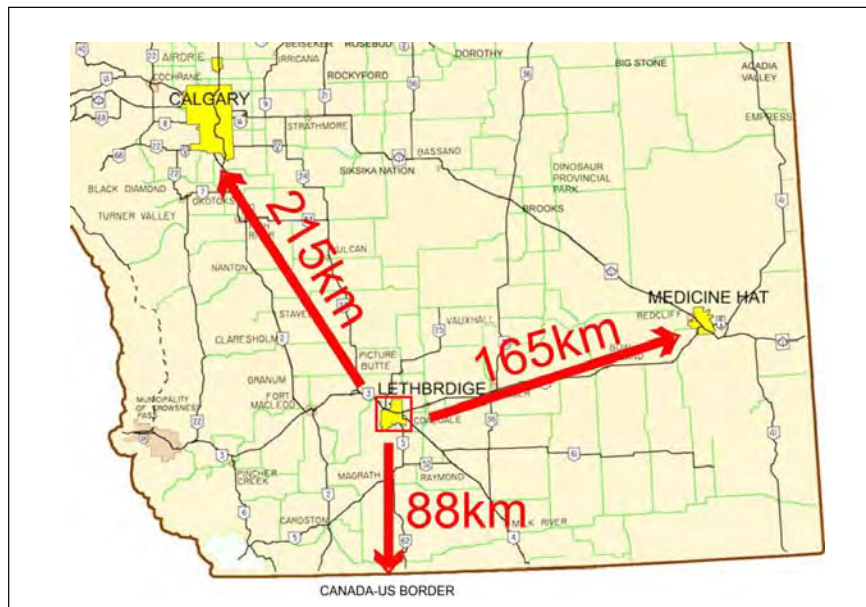
According to the market analysis and development forecast, Lethbridge's trade area is generally considered to extend to the eastern boundaries of the Municipal District of Taber and the County of Warner No.5 in the east, the United States border to the south, a portion of the East Kootenay Regional District in British Columbia to the west, and the southern portion of the Municipal District of Willow Creek and Vulcan County to the north. Within this trade and service area, Lethbridge serves as the centre for southern Alberta's 190,000 residents.

Lethbridge's history began in the Downtown. Located in the centre of our community, it plays an important role for economic and cultural activities. Downtown Lethbridge is truly the community's focal point of business as it provides approximately 8,000 employment opportunities.

Although the Downtown has been in competition with other commercial districts within the City such as the Mayor Magrath Drive South commercial area, due to its history, mixture of business, retail, public sector, and cultural activities it still remains the Heart of the City.

As the City continues to grow and new commercial areas are developed in other sections of the City such as the Crossings and the West Lethbridge Employment Centre, The Downtown will continue to function as the City's focal point because of its physical location and centralized functions.

Figure 1: Regional Map



## 2.5 Plan Area

As shown on map below, the plan area is bordered by 1 Avenue South to the North, Stafford Drive to the East, 6 Avenue South to the South, and the coulee setback to the West. The total area is approximately 700,000 sq.m<sup>2</sup> (70 ha). The plan area is generally considered as the Downtown core. The majority of the lands are zoned as Downtown Commercial (CD) and Direct Control (DC)<sup>1</sup>. An additional 39,000 sq.m<sup>2</sup> (3.9 ha) are Parks and Recreation (PR) and another 215,000 sq.m<sup>2</sup> (21.5 ha) comprise roads and utilities.

Figure 2: Plan Area



<sup>1</sup>Indicated in dashed lines throughout this plan

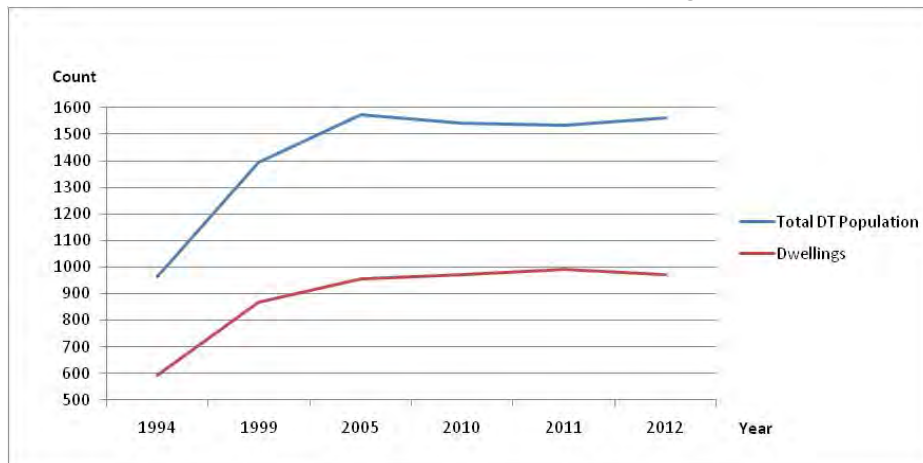


## 2.6 Analysis

### 2.6.1 Demographics

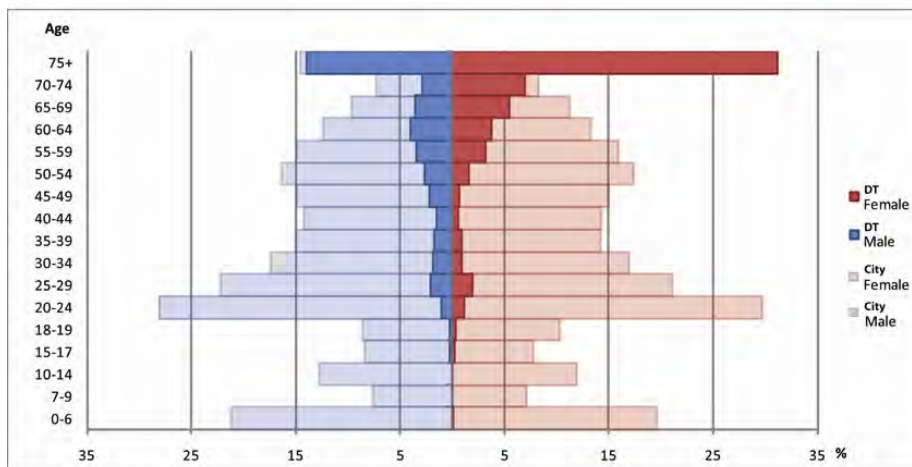
The population growth in the last ten years in the Downtown area has been fairly flat. This is due to the limitation of the residential infill development opportunities and the market demand for residential developments in the downtown. Influencing the Downtown population is single concentration of residents over 55 years old. A large number of the senior oriented buildings have been built on the west side of Scenic Drive due to the market demand at the time and public funding that was available. This pattern is unique to Downtown and is not replicated elsewhere in the City.

Figure 3: Downtown Population and the Number of Dwelling



Source: The Municipal Census

Figure 4: 2012 Population Pyramid: Downtown versus. City-Wide



Source: The Municipal Census 2012

## 2.6.2 Land Use

The table below indicates a statistical breakdown of land uses in the Downtown. The majority of properties in the Downtown are designated as Downtown Commercial (C-D), making up 64 percent of the total land area. The C-D land use district includes the greatest variety of land uses of any district in the City. It includes retail, personal service, office, restaurant, residential, medical and health offices and government services as examples. Although only 0.1 percent of the total land area is currently designated as Direct Control (D-C), immediately north of the plan area, called Centre Site, is zoned under this category. The C-D district provides a greater deal of flexibility to developers and landowners and a compatible mix of uses suitable to the Downtown.

Table 1: Land Use Statistics

|                                | Area (m <sup>2</sup> ) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Gross Area</b>              |                        |                |
| Downtown Commercial (C-D)      | 452,014                | 63.9           |
| Direct Control (DC)            | 836                    | 0.1            |
| Parks and Recreation (P-R)     | 39,270                 | 5.6            |
| Transportation (roads/utility) | 215,451                | 30.4           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>707,571</b>         | <b>100.0</b>   |

Figure 5: Current Land Use



## 2.6.3 Built Environment

### 1) Built Form

The Downtown is comprised of relatively low-rise buildings between one to three stories high. Minimal building setbacks along the minor streets provide a strong street wall and engage pedestrians walking by. Many buildings still show evidence of the attractive architectural detailing of the pre World War II era of their construction.

Amongst historic buildings in the Downtown, the Lethbridge Post Office built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with distinctive architectural features made of Tyndall stone is often noted as a civic landmark. Several other buildings in the same era such as the former Royal Bank now Esquires or the new Foster & Sons Jewelers Ltd., also incorporated this unique building material. Brick is also a popular material used for many buildings in Downtown and acts as a unifying element across building eras.

The majority of the buildings are used as retail stores, restaurants or offices. The redevelopment of the CP rail marshalling yard allowed for the establishment of Park Place Mall within the Downtown. The Mall's design is unique in that there continues to be a strong pedestrian focus along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue with the majority of the parking in the rear.

Figure 6: Built Footprint



## 2) Galt Gardens and Urban Forest

Galt Gardens, a beautifully landscaped urban oasis with a multi functional open theatre and a water feature, is located in the centre of the Downtown. The land was originally owned by the Galt family and kept as parkland. At one time, the park was used as a turning ground for bull trains. In 1908, Elliot Torrence Galt, Sir Alexander Galt's son, donated the land to the city and the park was named Galt Gardens in their honour.

Most recently, the Lethbridge Rotary Club approached the city to revitalize the park with a Rotary Centennial Plaza Project. In June 2008, Galt Gardens Water Feature and associated improvements were completed and opened for the residents. This project contributed a significant civic feature and amenity to Downtown Lethbridge and essentially transformed Galt Gardens. Throughout the year, Galt Gardens is a popular place for not only daily activities but also annual festivals including the Bright Lights Festival at Christmas time.

Mature urban trees along the streets in the Downtown are well-maintained and not only provide a pleasant atmosphere for visitors and residents but also mitigate the hard surfaces of roads and buildings and contribute to the environmental health of the Downtown.

Figure 7: Downtown Open Space



### 3) Heritage and Historical Assets

Many heritage buildings are located in the Downtown. These buildings were built between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Distinctive architectural details as well as the history of these buildings are often unique and make the Downtown a distinctive place in the City. For example, the Bowman Art Centre building was built in 1912 and originally called the Manual Training School. It served as a public school until the city purchased it and utilized it as a civic museum.

Figure 8: Built Year – Downtown Buildings (August 2012)



#### 4) Building Façade (Alberta Main Street Program)

The Main Street Program was initially established by a three party agreement amongst the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, the Heritage Canada Foundation, and Alberta Culture and Community Spirit in 1987. Since its establishment, this program has been a strong tool to preserve historic assets in downtowns throughout Alberta.

In Lethbridge, the City and the Downtown BRZ have been participating in this program since 2000. The Lethbridge Main Street Project receives annual funding for building rehabilitation projects through the Heart of Our City Revitalization Committee with additional funding through the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation (AHRF).

Table 2: Main Street Program Summary

| Year         | Project   | Total Value         |
|--------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 2002         | 2         | \$45,000.00         |
| 2003         | 11        | \$69,525.22         |
| 2004         | 13        | \$73,441.82         |
| 2005         | 7         | \$51,315.90         |
| 2006         | 13        | \$26,942.35         |
| 2007         | 7         | \$39,162.92         |
| 2008         | 11        | \$98,383.65         |
| 2009         | 8         | \$36,758.66         |
| 2010         | 13        | \$35,472.65         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>85</b> | <b>\$476,003.17</b> |



## 5) Roads/Pathways Network

The street pattern within the Plan area is a typical grid system. All local streets are well connected with adjacent neighbourhoods allowing for the movements of pedestrians and cyclists. Connectivity with the major arterial roads and Highway 3 allows for a large volume of traffic movement to major destinations not only north and south of Lethbridge but also to Calgary and other major cities. Local roads provide efficient movement for all transportation modes within the City.

Both pedestrian pathways and vehicular access to the River Valley provide an excellent opportunity for Downtown visitors to experience the natural beauty of the River Valley.

Figure 9: Downtown Road Network/Classification (2012)



## 6) Infrastructure Condition

Downtown is served with all municipality underground utilities as well as telecommunication and a natural gas system.

A GIS analysis was conducted based on the following criteria:

- Road condition (PQI pavement quality index)
- Water main breaks (Quantity per street)
- Water - year installed
- Sanitary - year installed
- Storm- year installed
- Electric- year installed

As indicated, in Figure 10, the underground infrastructure in the Downtown is aging. For instance, blue indicates better pavement quality and newer infrastructure; light yellow indicates moderate conditions while red indicates the poorest pavement quality and the oldest infrastructure. This means that well-coordinated asset management and replacement strategies are required. This will ultimately lead to sustainable Downtown redevelopment.

Figure 10: Downtown Underground Infrastructure Analysis





## 7) Future Market Analysis

A Downtown Market Analysis and Development Forecast Study was undertaken in 2010. It identified the future market demand for residential, office, and retail developments in the Downtown.

### Population

The projected number suggests that if current trend continues the Downtown could experience population growth of approximately 12 to 53 persons per year between 2010 and 2031.

### Residential, Office/Retail Development

Due to the limitation of vacant lands, unless there are any major redevelopment projects, it cannot be anticipated that the area will capture significant population or office/retail growth. However, table 1 below indicates the possible scenarios for future residential and office/retail development prospects in the Downtown.

### Future Market Outlook

Although the study identified that a range of retail growth is expected in the Downtown as the population increases, the economics of new development in the Downtown, in terms of the price of land per square foot and development costs, makes it difficult for developers to create financially viable projects that generate an adequate return on investment in comparison with cheaper land on the extremities of the City. This ultimately requires a comprehensive approach to the future redevelopment that could include a parking, incentive program and an appropriate developer engagement process.

Table 3: Future Market Analysis Summary

|   | Low Scenario | High Scenario |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| <b>Population Share (person)</b>                                |              |               |
| Downtown share (1%)   | 260          | 470           |
| Downtown share (3.5%)   | 910          | 1,645         |
| <b>Residential (unit)</b>                                       |              |               |
| Single  | 0            | 0             |
| Multi-family  | 118          | 746           |
| <b>Office (sqft.)</b>   |              |               |
| 20% of city-wide office additions (TOTAL)                       | 70,000       | 154,000       |
| <b>Retail (sqft.)</b>   |              |               |
| • Neighbourhood Retail 20 sqft./Capita.                         | 5,200        | 32,900        |
| • Employment-based retail 200 sqft. of Office Space per worker. | 1,750        | 3,850         |
| TOTAL   | 6,590        | 36,750        |

## 8) Parking

### General Observation

Parking for private automobile is a matter that requires frequent monitoring. Several prevailing patterns that influence this situation are apparent. Firstly, citizens of Lethbridge are predominately car-oriented as opposed to other modes of mobility. Secondly, business clients and employees alike prefer to park as close as possible to their Downtown destinations. Thirdly, on-street parking contributes to the domination of public realm space dedicated to the automobile.

### Current Condition and Analysis

The Downtown parking supply is comprised of both on street and off street parking areas. All of the on-street parking is owned and managed by the City. Most off-street parking facilities are privately owned and operated.

The future non-residential parking supply within the Downtown is estimated to be 6,284 stalls, including 1,857 public on-street, 556 public off-street, and 3,871 private off-street parking spaces (currently 5,418 stalls, including 1,827 public on-street, 440 public off-street, and 3,151 private off-street parking spaces). This estimate takes into account development that has already been identified by the City, five potential future developments, as well as any existing parking spaces that are temporarily in use as of May 2012.



### Future Demand

According to the PRATS parking survey, future parking demand is estimated to be 4,700 to 4,974 spaces during the overall peak hour, reflecting a parking utilization between 75 and 79 percent.

Parking on a number of blocks is forecast to be highly utilized in the future, with three blocks operating over 85% capacity. In this case, the parking demands would “overflow” onto the adjacent blocks. A one-block walking distance from the location of parking to the driver’s actual destination is considered reasonable in a larger urban context, however, due to the observed behaviour, this may not be perceived by Lethbridge residents in the same manner.

## **Future Considerations**

In order to create more public realm space and promote a modal shift towards sustainable transportation, The PRAT recommended a small reduction of the on-street parking supply. The reduction should be garnered from among each of the priority streets, rather than at one location.

The PRATS parking surveys also indicated a residual capacity and that the parking supply could accommodate a small reduction. When the parking demand exceeds parking supply, the short-fall may be met by spare capacity on adjacent streets or by the off-street supply.

In its present state, the on-street parking is critical to the vitality of businesses and commerce in Lethbridge. The PRAT considered that the level of parking reduction shown in the Master Plan, without an accompanying replacement strategy, was too great a change initially and that a gradual reduction in parking, together with improvements in transit and active transportation, was preferable.

To minimize the potential impacts related to the reduction of the existing on-street parking supply, PRATS recommend that the City adopt mitigation measures such as the following:

- Converting all of the on-street parking into short term parking
- Strategize parking rates to ensure that the utilisation level, of the on-street parking, is maintained at about 85-90%.
- Encourage long term parkers to use off-street parking providing convenient alternative parking locations nearby.
- Providing signage to direct parkers to alternative parking opportunities
- Providing new parking opportunities

The Master Plan also indicated that the fragile balance between demand and supply should be maintained. If any parking stalls are to be removed from the supply side, an equivalent number of stalls should be provided elsewhere. In order to redistribute public realm space to create the more welcoming environment that is envisioned, a great deal of creativity and thought is required. Therefore it stands to reason that with less space available on streets for parking and with the need to maintain the demand supply balance, that a new parking solution such as a parkade may be required.

## 2.6.4 Public Realm and Transportation Study (PRATS)

The Public Realm and Transportation Study (PRATS) was conducted and identified three corridors for the future streetscape improvement. The DARP prioritizes a few recommended projects in the PRATS as catalyst projects to achieve the vision and goals for the Downtown.

### Priority Corridor Selection

An existing street condition analysis was conducted to determine which streets or avenues in the Downtown will gain the highest return on investment. Three weighted criteria were used;

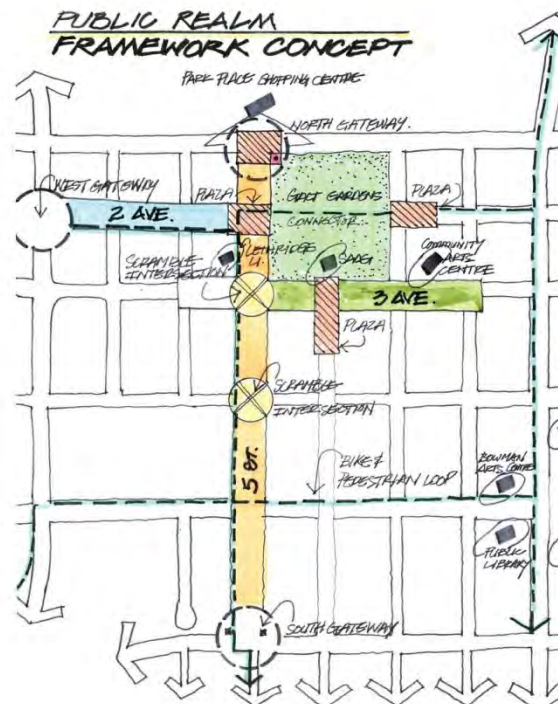
- the condition of the existing infrastructure
- the potential for enhancement of the public realm
- the opportunity to stimulate future development

Subsequently, three priority corridors were selected based on the criteria.

The selected corridors fall within the Master Plan's central district of the Downtown. The central district is the historic and cultural centre of Lethbridge containing the greatest concentration of heritage buildings as well as major civic and cultural amenities such as Galt Gardens, the SAAG, the Lethbridge Community Art Centre, and the historic Chinatown district.

The central district is also the retail core of the Downtown, characterized by a number of small specialty shops with retail use at street level and office or residential uses above. Many of these historic buildings are well-maintained and the ongoing renovation is one factor that has contributed to renewed interest in the central district.

Considering other factors such as physical and economic impact, level of activities or connectivity, streetscape improvement along these corridors makes the most sense.



## 2.6.5 Strengths and Opportunities

### 1) Built Character

Downtown's distinctive built form and architectural features of historic buildings make the Downtown an attractive and unique place.

### 2) Employment and Commercial Opportunities

As a regional trade centre, the City and the Downtown draws businesses, employees, and tourists. The Downtown accommodates large employers such as provincial government offices, Lethbridge Centre, Park Place Mall, the Fire and Emergency Services, and Lethbridge Regional Police Services.

It is estimated more than 8,000 people are employed. Park Place Mall as the largest retail use has over 1,000 employees and Lethbridge Centre accommodates many finance, government and health related offices. Major public transit service hubs are located in the Downtown core on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and provide daily access to the community.

### 3) Diversity

The Downtown hosts many events, festivals, activities and the annual Whoop-Up Days parade. The variety of cultural facilities, restaurants, and independent retailers provide a niche that should be encouraged and capitalized on in order to continue to attract residents and visitors.



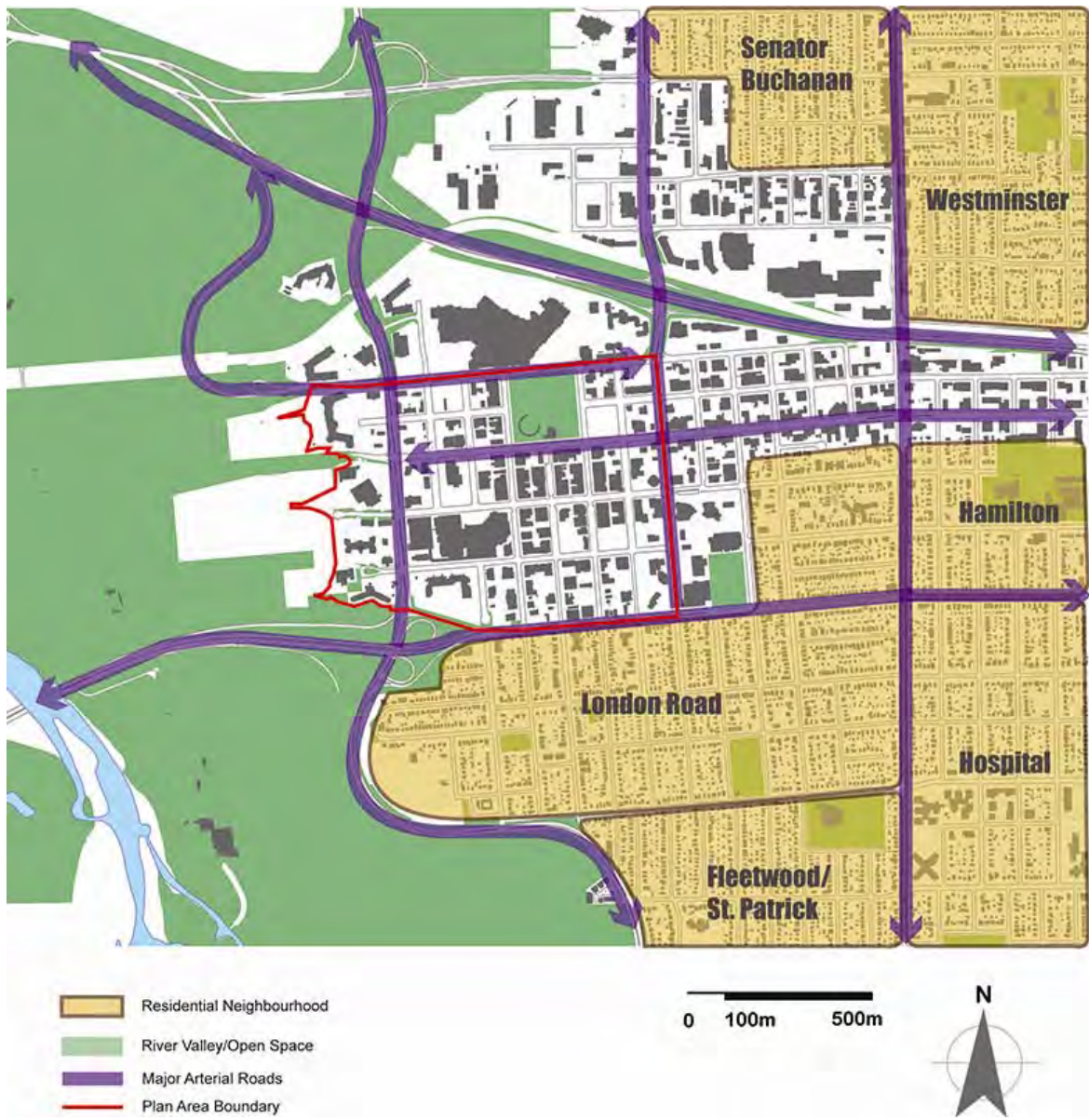
### 4) Transportation Network Hub

The Downtown is well-connected to some of the City's major arterial roads. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue S is a major arterial road that connects the east and west side of the community. Scenic Drive S and Stafford Drive which is directly linked to the Crowsnest Trail provides an easy access to both surrounding areas and major cities. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is the major arterial connects Scenic Drive to Mayor Magrath Drive. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave is the major public transit hub providing users will convenient access to all locations within the community.

### 5) Proximity to Adjacent Residential Neighbourhoods

The London Road Neighbourhood, one of the oldest residential neighbourhoods in the City, is located immediate south of the Downtown. Hamilton Neighbourhood and Senator Buchanan Neighbourhood are also located within walking distance to the Downtown. This is an opportunity for the DARP to create a walkable, accessible, and safe downtown to welcome local residents.

Figure 11: Adjacent Residential Neighbourhoods



## 2.6.6 Challenges

### 1) The Impact of Technologies and Behavioral Change

The speed of movement of goods, services, money and information is much faster than ever before. The economic impact through the use of online retail activities continues to grow and can be combated with personalized service and a great shopping experience.

### 2) Competition with Commercial Nodes

In the last few decades, Lethbridge has seen the development of commercial nodes in both the north and south. A large highway commercial zone along Mayor Magrath Drive, consisting of major retail companies such as Costco and Wal-Mart, has become a popular destination among residents in the trade area. In West Lethbridge, a new area structure plan for a future employment centre is also being prepared. The Downtown is no longer the only shopping destination and will have to continue to provide employment opportunities and cultural activities to maintain its momentum.



### 3) Regulatory Environment

Amongst the existing City's bylaws, the list below indicates the name of the bylaws that influence activities in the Downtown. These bylaws ensure the public safety and health in the Downtown. At the same time, these bylaws must be understandable, reviewed on a regular basis and updated if necessary. Effort on compliance should also be made.

1. Assessment and Taxation Bylaws
2. Development Bylaws
  - Bylaw 5700 Land Use
  - Bylaw 5624 Building Permit<sup>2</sup>
3. Streets and Roads Bylaws
  - Bylaw 3499 Traffic - parking etc.
  - Bylaw 3446 Streets – street signs etc.
  - Bylaw 4865 Snow Removal
4. Bylaw 5270 Noise Bylaw
5. Parks Bylaws

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to the City Building Permit Bylaw, Provincial Building legislation may apply.

#### 4) Higher Redevelopment Cost

The cost of land in the downtown is approximately \$30 per square foot. The market analysis identified that this is significantly higher than that in new areas within the city boundary and that the higher cost of land is somewhat viewed as an investment barrier for developers.

#### 5) Lack of Housing Choice and Residents Support Services

There is a lack of housing choices for wider demographic groups in the Downtown. This is a barrier to the creation of a lively and vibrant environment 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. A strategy to encourage or facilitate residential development may be required.

#### 6) Preservation of Historic Buildings

While historic buildings provide unique urban characteristics, preservation of these buildings can be challenging. Regular maintenance is required more often than newer buildings. The way these buildings were built almost a century ago does not meet the current building codes. Consequently, restoration costs of these buildings are extremely high and some buildings are left vacant.



#### 7) Negative Public Perceptions

According to the citizen satisfactory survey conducted in 2011, the general perceptions about safety in the Downtown were the lowest scored. There was a slight improvement since the previous two surveys in 2005 and 2008. A total of 55% of the participants agreed that the Downtown area is safe. Crime prevention and safety enhancement has been identified as important concerns for many citizens. Continued effort to encourage more street activities will be a strong initiative to increase public awareness toward the positive aspects of the Downtown.





## 3. Plan Elements

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### From the Past to the Future

In order to determine the future planning direction for Downtown, it is crucial for the DARP to incorporate core values and fundamental components formulated in previous plans. This ensures that the DARP will be consistent with the existing paradigm and direct new planning initiatives appropriately in Downtown. Present conditions must also be taken into account when determining focus areas for the future and allocation of resources. Finally the vision for the Downtown will be achieved over many years.

### 3.1 The Past

#### 3.1.1 The 1988 Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (Bylaw 4183)

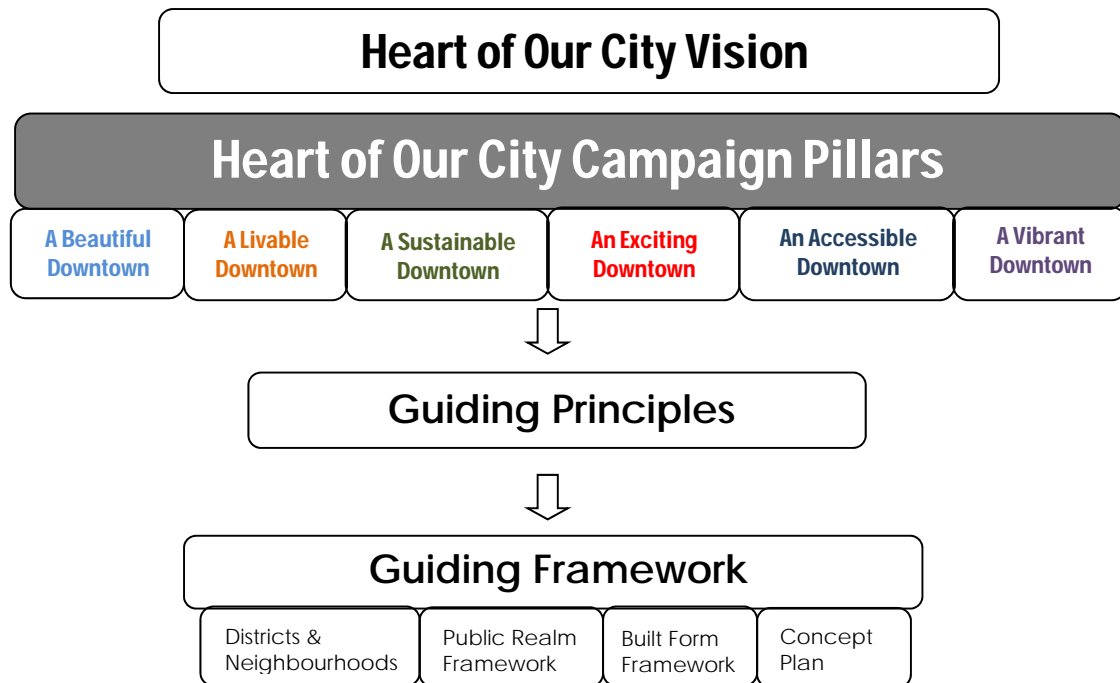
Downtown Lethbridge has been as a strong centre for business, culture, and institutional activities in Southern Alberta since the beginning of the last century. City Council in the mid-1980's recognized the importance of Downtown and commissioned a Task Force with responsibility for the preparation of a detailed action plan which would serve to guide future growth and development in the following decades. Consequently, Bylaw 4183 was created in 1988. Some streetscape improvement projects including 6 St (between 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.) were successfully completed based on this plan.

Bylaw 4183 played a vital role for redevelopment activities in the last 24 years in Downtown and some of the planning principles such as creating a pedestrian friendly environment are still valuable by today's standard. These principles should be re-evaluated and carried over to the next planning period.

#### 3.1.2 Heart of Our City Master Plan (the Master Plan)

Prior to the adoption of the ICSP/MDP, the Master Plan was developed in 2007. The primary sections of the Master Plan that were adopted by City Council included the vision statement and six campaign pillars. The Master Plan was also characterized as a "Campaign", meaning that revitalization requires ongoing commitment that is dynamic and able to respond to both issues and opportunities. Guiding Principles and a Guiding Framework were also established to facilitate implementation of the Master Plan.

Figure 12: Heart of Our City Master Plan Diagram



## The Vision Statement

The Heart of Our City Vision Statement sets the overarching intent and Master Plan objectives and it’s fundamental direction.

*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-to-day function and role of Downtown Lethbridge (Heart of Our City Master Plan 2007).*

## The Master Plan Campaign Pillars

The six campaign pillars establish the core building blocks of the Master Plan.

### A Beautiful Downtown

Downtown is a special place and needs to exhibit splendid civic spaces, inspiring architecture, coherent and cohesive streetscapes, strengthened visual and physical connections, enhanced environmental quality, visually prominent “gateways” and public art.



### A Livable Downtown

For Downtown to flourish, more people should live there. For more people to live in Downtown needs also to continue to demonstrate the “sense of community” that sets Lethbridge apart from other communities. Downtown needs to celebrate the diverse population of the City and there needs to be more places for public gatherings.



## A Sustainable Downtown

Downtown needs to be socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. Downtown must take a balanced approach to be active at all hours and in all seasons. By utilizing infrastructure and transportation more efficiently and taking a “life-cycle approach” to new infrastructure replacement, sustainability is demonstrated.



## An Exciting Downtown

Downtown needs to attract and retain a creative and talented workforce like that being generated at the University of Lethbridge and Lethbridge College. To facilitate this happening, it is important to continue to concentrate civic and cultural attractions in the core. Development of more “night-life”, utilizing cultural and artistic assets, will benefit tourism and the overall economy in general.



## An Accessible Downtown

Downtown should be a destination for everyone. It should be welcoming and convenient for shopping, walking, dining, lingering and exploring. It is thus necessary to enhance the quality of connectivity through the Downtown and to the surrounding neighbourhoods. Connections to existing streets and trails should be accessible to all people. As well a variety of movement choices, including walking, biking, transit, and driving should be ensured.



## A Vibrant Downtown

Downtown needs to ensure that in addition to traditional offices and employment uses, jobs in information technology, art and design, culture and new media can occur. A dynamic, high quality urban work environment for which Downtown is uniquely suited, provide a lifestyle factor for the creative sector.



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### 3.1.3 Integrated Community Sustainability Plan/Municipal Development Plan (ICSP/MDP) (Bylaw 5650)

In the ICSP/MDP, the following policies have been established to help accomplishing the community vision for the Downtown:

Section 6.4.7 '*Lethbridge has a Strong and Vibrant Downtown*'

Policies;

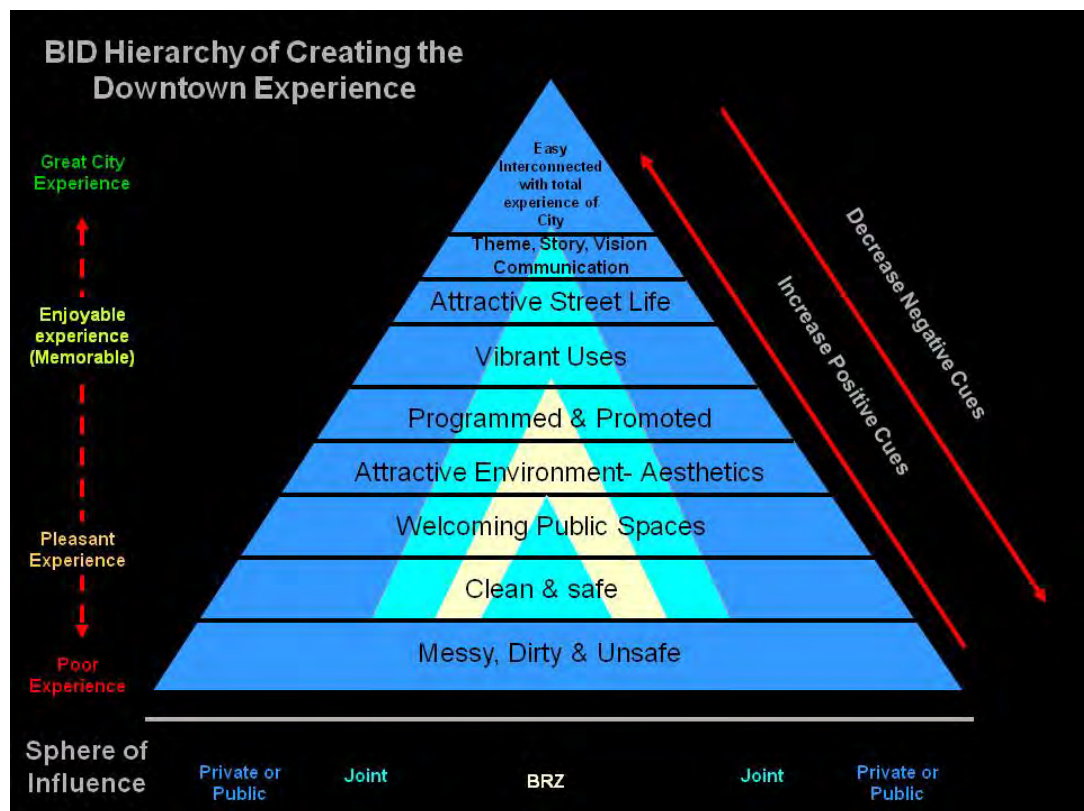
- 1) Revitalize and redevelop the Downtown as **the cultural, economic and civic heart of the City** and region
- 2) Promote and facilitate **residential development** Downtown
- 3) Encourage the development of **commercial, institutional and transit services that support a Downtown residential community**
- 4) Continue to **strengthen the public realm** in the Downtown
- 5) Develop Downtown as a venue for the **best in urban design and architecture**
- 6) Recognize and conserve **significant historic resources** in the Downtown
- 7) Encourage major **cultural facilities** to locate Downtown

## 3.2 The Present

There are many stakeholders, groups, and individuals that have worked tirelessly over the past number of years to improve the health, aesthetics and functioning of the Downtown.

The illustration below is the Business Improvement District (BID) hierarchy of creating a positive downtown experience. It suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the secondary or higher level needs are achieved. The most fundamental layers of the pyramid contain aesthetic cleanness and security of place. The second and third most fundamental layers contain welcoming public spaces and attractive environment. If these fundamental needs are not met, creating a vibrant downtown will not be possible.

Figure 13: BID Hierarchy of Creating the Downtown Experience



## 3.3 The Future

### 3.3.1 Planning Direction

One of the most important elements of the DARP is to employ planning concepts identified by the PRATS in the next 10 years. It utilized **New Urbanism**, which promotes the creation and restoration of diverse, walkable, compact, vibrant, mixed-use communities and **Sustainable Development Planning** principles that create an exciting and lively urban space. More precisely, it sought to balance the space allocated to vehicles with pedestrian/cyclist opportunities.

In order to carry out this planning concept, PRATS identified three priority corridors for future streetscape improvement based upon current infrastructure conditions, the potential for enhancement of the public realm, and the opportunity to stimulate future redevelopment. PRATS also provided preliminary design alternatives, implementation methods, and cost estimate for these streets.

It is believed that streetscape improvement along the priority streets will address level 2 and 3 of the Business Improvement District hierarchy and move the experience of the Downtown users from pleasant to truly enjoyable.

### 3.3.2 Planning Goal

*In the next 10 years, Downtown Lethbridge will become more walkable, increase its vibrancy, and demonstrate sustainability through the adherence to the policies and the implementation strategies of the Plan.*

### 3.3.3 Planning Principles

Downtowns are constantly evolving across North America and the world. While the future is often unpredictable, there are basic principles that can be employed in the DARP to order to accentuate positive conditions and mitigate negatives.

The DARP incorporates the following four planning principles for the purpose of achieving the planning goals.

#### **INTEGRATION**

The DARP's policies and implementation strategies will be integrated to address the plan objectives. Effective integration requires expertise from various fields and the use of a wide variety of planning tools and existing and new processes. Unlike typical green field development, redevelopment of an established neighbourhood like Downtown involves many layers of coordination and consultation with multiple stakeholders. The integrated approach will foster mutual understanding amongst stakeholders such as City administration, business owners, the development community, special interest groups, and individual residents and achieve better results in the end.

#### **FLEXIBLE & RESPONSIBLE**

Since the DARP is intended to be implemented over the next 10 years, it must be both flexible and time sensitive. The DARP will be used as a "living document" on a daily basis. Therefore, the policies have been written in such a manner that some interpretation is allowed and the intent of the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan is respected.



## **PARTNERSHIPS**

The DARP will not be implemented without strong and effective partnerships amongst stakeholders. This requires new ways of achieving results and ensuring the vision for Downtown is continued to be communicated. The use of existing committees and relationships, all forms of communication and creative thinking will be used to foster positive interaction amongst stakeholders.

## **SUSTAINABLE**

In developing the implementation strategy of the DARP, economic, social and environmental sustainability is improved from the current situation. An equitable balance of these three components will be achieved at the end of the 10 year planning period of the DARP.

# PART II



## 4. Policy Framework

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This section develops a fundamental policy framework that links the planning contexts and the plan elements described in the previous sections to actionable outcomes in the implementation section.

### 4.1 Foundation

The DARP has been developed based upon the planning context as well as the current conditions of the Downtown including demographics, land use, and the built environment. The DARP illustrates opportunities and challenges that the Downtown currently faces. It has become apparent that some conditions positively influence the development of the Downtown while others do not. While the Downtown has much to offer, it faces challenges that must be addressed.

A 'successful downtown' is one that is created by a combination of a number of positive factors, not a single factor. Downtown users are also diverse from business and land owners, employees and customers, to visitors and residents. Their expectations are high and complex. As a result, a tremendous amount of attention and care is required.

Traditional area redevelopment plans tend to focus only on land use components. However, for a successful downtown, the DARP needs to focus not only on physical elements, but also social and economic components. Policies in the DARP cover a wide range of areas, but are targeted in their focus.

### 4.2 Policy Themes

This section outlines core policy themes that support a successful Downtown. The policy themes are broad groupings that have a relationship to each other as well as the planning context and plan elements.

These themes were chosen based on either accentuating a positive attribute, improving a negative condition, supporting the 6 Master Plan Campaign Pillars and/or the ICSP/MDP vision and goals. For example, the analysis section earlier suggested that the distinct urban build form including the concentration of heritage buildings makes the Downtown a unique place and attracts business and commercial activities. Therefore, policies that address this characteristic are included. As an underlying premise the requirement for a safe and clean Downtown is paramount and must be maintained to ensure the positive Downtown experience continues to be refined and improved.

## 4.2.1 Core Policy Themes

Core policy themes are;

### 1) LAND USE

Develops overlay districts to reflect a distinction in the land use activities within the Downtown.

### 2) URBAN DESIGN

Addresses building design to enhance a walkable, vibrant, and beautiful Downtown.

### 3) HERITAGE RESOURCE PRESERVATION

Supports heritage resources in the Downtown for the benefit of future generations.

### 4) COMMERCIAL & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Supports public and private investment and encourages partnerships.

### 5) LIVABILITY

Provides a complete neighbourhood approach to live, work, play, and shop in the Downtown.

### 6) PUBLIC REALM

Addresses improvements to public space that attracts business, residents, and visitors in the Downtown.

### 7) CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

Supports desired development and manages transportation demands in the Downtown efficiently.

### 8) PARKING

Provides options for Downtown users now and into the future.

### 9) UNDERGROUND INFRASTRUCTURE

Provides a linkage with public space improvements and coordinated asset management.

### 10) SUSTAINABILITY

Responds to the community's growing awareness in sustainability.

The following section provides more detailed descriptions of why the Policy Themes are important in the Lethbridge context, what the implications are, and how they are further articulated into policies.

# 1) LAND USE

Sub-Theme

Regulation and control of the use and development of land within the Downtown is an essential component in the realization of the Downtown vision. Regulatory elements are those aspects of development control which will direct the built form that development will take.

Most new structures will likely have a lifespan that exceeds the range of the current Downtown vision. It is therefore important that new structures contribute both individually and collectively to the quality and durability of the Downtown built-form environment.

**Districts**

**Overlay Land Use Regulation**

**Interim Redevelopment**



## 2) URBAN DESIGN

Sub-Theme

Urban space is composed of buildings, streets, places, parks and open spaces. These are the features that residents, workers, and visitors experience and crucial components that contribute to city vibrancy. Downtown is often considered as the “face of the community” as all of the urban features occur in one place.

The quality of the urban space relies heavily on the variety of design and materials that are used. Therefore, good urban design is a key factor in continuously improving the attractiveness of Downtown.

**Building Design**

**Safety and Security**

**Stakeholder  
Engagement**



### 3) HERITAGE RESOURCE PRESERVATION

Sub-Theme

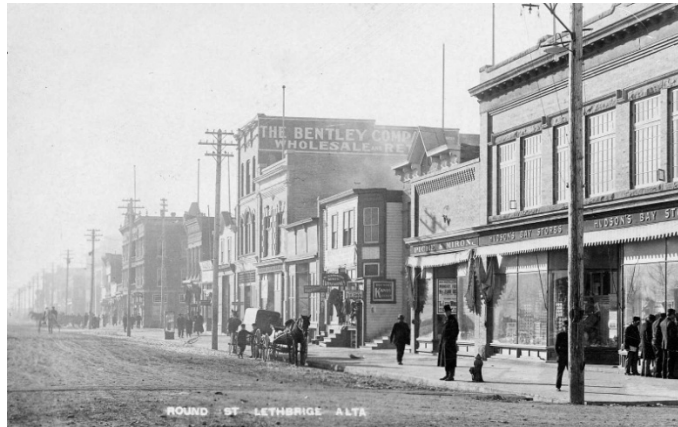
Being the oldest neighborhood in the City, Downtown is rich in heritage assets. Architectural details and the history of these buildings distinguish Downtown as a unique place. Due to their age and construction techniques, heritage assets often require careful approaches to renovation and preservation.

**Preservation and Restoration**

**Adoptive Re-use**

**Public Education**

Therefore, flexible and sensitive policies are needed to encourage preservation, restoration, and the adaptive reuse of these assets. The DARP sets out a proactive and collaborative approach toward the preservation of heritage resources in the Downtown.



## 4) COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Sub-Themes

Lethbridge serves as the business and service centre for southern Alberta's 190,000 residents. Located in the heart of the City, Downtown accommodates several large employers including federal, provincial, and municipal government offices resulting in more than 8,000 jobs. Over half of the jobs in the Downtown are generated by the office sector, retail and personal services account for about 40% of downtown jobs. The retail and service sectors benefit from the business generated by the government office workers.

As the Downtown continues to develop, ensuring the needs of employers, business owners, and employees are understood and addressed will be a crucial factor for success. The Downtown is the only place in the community that offers the proximity of business, customers, and cultural opportunities.

The DARP ensures that strong commercial and business development is supported through regulations, policies, and collaboration with the local business community.

**Public-Private Partnerships**

**Private Sector Investment**

**Public Sector Investment**

**Art, Culture, Tourism**

**Business Operation**





## 5) LIVABILITY

Over the past 100 years, Downtown Lethbridge has experienced a gradual population decline as a result of suburbanization. Revitalization initiatives assisted in averting a similar decline in the business and commercial sector.

The Heart of Our City Master Plan recognized the importance of having a critical population mass to help sustain the vitality of the Downtown. To retain and attract Downtown residents, it is essential to re-establish elements which contribute to a neighbourhood feeling. This will involve enhancing downtown by providing the necessary services and amenities to support 'living' and a sense of community that is also more walkable and appealing.

The 'complete' Downtown neighbourhood will accommodate a diverse population, offer places to gather and ensure that transit and community facilities are within walking distance.

### Sub-Themes

**Medium and High Density Housing**

**Housing Accessibility**

**Student Housing**

**Affordable Housing**

**In-fill, Re-use Housing Development**

**Mixed-Use Development**

**Cultural Events and Activities**



## 6) PUBLIC REALM

### Sub-Themes

Downtown is a multi-functional urban environment and it is essential that the policies created reinforce its stature as a *special place* within the City.

Businesses, workers, visitors, residents and tourists are attracted by the distinctive features in this public space when they choose to work, live, or visit. Strengthening visual and physical connections between the built form and people who use this space, will lead to a memorable experience that people will want to recreate.

The public realm is a strategic space in the Downtown as the City owns and regulates what occurs. Changes to the streets, sidewalks, lanes, rights-of-way, parks, and public infrastructure, which comprise the Public Realm, will occur as part of a continuous improvement process.

**Streetscape Improvement**

**Gateways**

**Way-finding**

**Street Tree**

**Street Furniture**

**Public Art**

**Public Open Spaces**

**Galt Gardens**



## 7) CIRCULATION & MOBILITY

The historic Downtown grid street pattern creates and defines the urban form of the Downtown. Within this urban structure, the street network's primary function is to accommodate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation users, freight vehicles, and private vehicles.

Policies in this section aim to reinforce the efficiency of the network while expanding the pedestrian environment without compromising system functionality and to support desired future development.

### Sub-Themes

**Pedestrian Mobility**

**Bicycle Mobility**

**Public Transit**

**Private Automobile**

**Emergency Access and Delivery for EMS Service**

**Universal Design**

**Pathways**

**Connection with Adjacent Neighbourhoods**

**Snow Removal and Other Regular Maintenance**

**Transportation Demand Management**



## 8) PARKING

### Sub-Themes

Parking is an ongoing concern to all Downtown users. Due to the nature of modern urban development, there will not be a perfect solution for parking. However, the DARP recognizes that the perceived lack of convenient parking for employees or shoppers and a poor public perception toward parking in general is significant. Therefore, parking in the Downtown should be managed appropriately.

The DARP provides policies that have the potential to minimize the parking related issues in the Downtown.

**Parking Needs Assessment**

**Public-Private Partnerships**

**Parking Management**



## 9) UNDERGROUND INFRASTRUCTURE

Sub-Themes

Cost and impact of underground infrastructure renewal and replacement projects can be substantially high. Therefore, other related projects that are located in the same spaces must be well managed and coordinated to minimize and mitigate any negative impacts.

The DARP expects that when underground infrastructure projects are undertaken in the Downtown, they are planned and executed wherever possible and that all underground infrastructure remains reliable for all users.

**Renewal/Replacement Project**

**Public Engagement**

**Sustainable Approach**



# 10) SUSTAINABILITY

## Sub-Themes

In response to the growing awareness of environmental concerns within the community, it is appropriate for this DARP to address the concept of sustainability in the Downtown context.

This is an opportunity for the Downtown to achieve some of the sustainability visions and policies established in the ICSP/MDP for the 10-year horizon.

The focus for sustainability will include policies on building construction, solid waste, and water conservation.

**Building Construction**

**Solid Waste Management**

**Water Conservation**



# 5. Policies

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## 5.1 Land Use

### 5.1.1 Purpose

The land use policy section establishes policies that regulate and control of the land use and development within the Downtown in order to achieve the built form envisioned by the Master Plan. Since the DARP is a regulatory document, it also requires appropriate policies and strategies to achieve planning goals and policies. Therefore, in addition to the policies below, new approaches are introduced in the following Plan Implementation section to support the policies.

### 5.1.2 Goals

- 1) To protect the unique urban characteristics in the Downtown core area through land use regulations.
- 2) To achieve the built-form envisioned by the Heart of Our City Master Plan.
- 3) To develop new regulations and overlays that will replace parts of the current Land Use Bylaw.
- 4) To create a vibrant mixed-use downtown where people enjoy working and living through new land use and development regulations.

### 5.1.3 Policies

#### Districts

- 1) Create land use districts that demonstrate distinctive characteristics within the Downtown.
- 2) Amend the Land Use Bylaw according to the creation of new land use districts.

**Overlay Land Use Regulation**

- 3) Develop land use overlays and land use regulations that enhance the character of existing built-form and active retail frontage in the Downtown.
- 4) Amend the Land Use Bylaw according to the creation of new overlay land use regulations.

**Interim Redevelopment**

- 5) Until new land use regulations are developed and the Land Use Bylaw is officially amended, proponents shall be required to consult staff of the Planning and Development Services to ensure development proposals are in alignment with the proposed regulations in the Plan Implementation section.



## 5.2 Urban Design

### 5.2.1 Purpose

The urban design policy section establishes policies to create vibrant urban spaces including streets, built form, parks and open spaces. As urban design is strongly connected with the land use related policies described in the previous section, the policy implementation between the two areas will be integrated in the Plan Implementation section.

### 5.2.2 Goals

- 1) To create exciting streets, built form, parks and open spaces.
- 2) To ensure quality development in the Downtown through quality urban design regulations.
- 3) To develop distinctive character, human scale architecture and a pedestrian-focused environment in the Downtown.
- 4) To involve the Downtown stakeholders in the DARP Plan Implementation process.

### 5.2.3 Policies

#### General

- 1) Whenever improvements to Downtown streets or public spaces are contemplated, the surrounding urban design elements shall be considered in the overall project scope.
- 2) City Administration should consider partnering with the HOCRC and Downtown stakeholders to establish an Urban Design Awards Program to acknowledge outstanding redevelopment projects that reflect the philosophy of the DARP.

#### Building Design

- 3) When a redevelopment opportunity arises, proponents shall give special considerations to the following aspects;
  - i. Impact on views and shadowing from adjacent buildings and streets.

- ii. Compatibility with surrounding buildings and streetscapes.
- 4) Linkages with major focal points, destinations, streets, open spaces, and other significant gathering places shall be reinforced through providing a walkable street network.
- 5) Continue the Main Street Program partnership with the BRZ to reinforce continuity of façade rehabilitation and signage design throughout Downtown.
- 6) Animation, transparency, articulation and material quality will be a component of overlay requirements.
- 7) Reinforce street network links with adjacent neighbourhoods, major activity centres, landmarks and open spaces through way-finding<sup>3</sup> strategies including gateway features identified in the Master Plan.

#### **Safety and security**

- 8) Support a safe and secure downtown environment through continuation of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) analyses of public and private development projects.

#### **Stakeholder Engagement**

- 9) Continue to engage stakeholders including business/land owners, residents, groups, and associations through the Plan Implementation phase of the DARP.
- 10) When significant development projects that have incompatible design elements in terms of the DARP, opportunities for public input shall be provided.

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<sup>3</sup> The ways which people orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place. Wayfinding refers to both the built and natural environment and contributes to making a city more "legible" for users.

## 5.3 Heritage Resource Preservation

### 5.3.1 Purpose

This section establishes policies that support heritage resources preservation in the Downtown. As one of the original cores of the community, there are many heritage resources remaining in the Downtown. Policies in this section are focused on the integrity of the heritage resources and provide better understanding of both conservation and active reuse for the community.

### 5.3.2 Goals

- 1) To enhance the unique character of Downtown through preservation and restoration of heritage assets.
- 2) To facilitate enhancement and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.
- 3) To improve public awareness of heritage assets and support for preservation that includes regular maintenance and upkeep.

### 5.3.3 Policies

#### **Preservation & Restoration of Heritage Assets**

- 1) Continue to identify buildings, structures, monuments and artifacts that are historic or that have architectural merit
- 2) Heritage assets will continue to be preserved by;
  - i. Continuous consultation with the Heritage Advisory Committee, the Building Safety and Inspection Services Department, owners, local groups, and individuals to identify and prioritize heritage assets; and
  - ii. Providing financial and city administrative support to the Heritage Advisory Committee to enable continuation of heritage asset preservation.
- 3) Acknowledge and support federal, provincial, and municipal designations, when evaluating redevelopment opportunities.

- 4) When preservation of heritage assets conflict with the existing legislation (e.g. the City of Lethbridge Land Use Bylaw and the Province of Alberta Building Code), alternative methods to preserve those assets should be considered.
- 5) Any variance from established legislation shall be examined on a case by case basis in consultation with the City's Building Inspection Services since each case is likely to be unique.
- 6) When new buildings or renovations to existing buildings are being proposed, consideration should be given to the character of any adjacent heritage buildings.
- 7) Communicate available funding opportunities to provide barrier-free access to historic buildings.

#### **Adaptive Re-use**

- 8) Conduct research on various types of funding mechanisms and seek opportunities for adaptive re-use of heritage assets.
- 9) Facilitate the preservation and enhancement of buildings featuring heritage or architectural significance through adaptive reuse measures such as asbestos removal, life-safety system upgrading, and universal access.

#### **Public Education**

- 10) Increase public awareness through funding interpretive displays or other strategies that tell the story of the resources in a meaningful and engaging manner.
- 11) Planning and Development Services assists stakeholders such as the Galt Museum, the Heritage Advisory Committee, Lethbridge Historical Society or individual owners in heritage preservation activities including plaque program and walking tours.

## 5.4 Commercial & Business Development

### 5.4.1 Purpose

This section establishes policies that support commercial and business development in the Downtown. As the largest commercial and business district in the region, attractive commercial and business environment is crucial for both existing and future businesses. Policies in this section are designed to maximize the opportunities to champion the Downtown.

### 5.4.2 Goals

- 1) To facilitate the continued development of Downtown Lethbridge as a significant economic driver and premiere business centre of Southern Alberta.
- 2) To identify opportunities for public - private partnerships.
- 3) To advance business development in the Downtown through partnerships with BRZ, EDL, and the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce.
- 4) To develop Downtown into a creative urban environment that provides a creative milieu for artists, community groups and non-profit organizations.

### 5.4.3 Policies

#### **Public-Private Partnerships**

- 1) Attract employment growth through the development of high quality services, facilities and amenities in partnerships with BRZ, EDL, and the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce.
- 2) Structure the Downtown land use districts to allow various forms of residential development that would appeal to a broad and diverse residential and worker demographic.
- 3) In partnership with BRZ, EDL, the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, promote Downtown Lethbridge as centre of new business opportunities such as technology transfer, business incubation, University-business partnerships, and College-business partnerships; and government agencies (e.g. research station)

- 4) Structure the Downtown land use districts to allow for flexibility through use of variance opportunities to enable mixed-use development.

#### **Private Sector Investment**

- 5) Support EDL in engaging the development community to determine the needs of financial institutions, professional offices, and knowledge-based companies in order for them to locate in the Downtown in the preferred built form for the area or street.
- 6) Ensure that stakeholders such as the BRZ, the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, or Park Place Mall are involved to identify needs and barriers of their businesses development.

#### **Public Sector Investment**

- 7) Support governments, offices, and public agencies to maintain a strong presence in the Downtown.
- 8) Provide adequate infrastructure to support a wide range of business and commercial activities.
- 9) If considering financial incentives aimed at the small businesses, ensure that increasing business opportunities in the Downtown is an outcome.
- 10) The City, in cooperation with BRZ, assists new businesses in the Downtown by providing guidance with regulatory processes including development and building permit applications.

#### **Arts, Culture, and Tourism**

- 11) Provide for arts and culture land uses to locate Downtown as a key component in the revitalization of Downtown.
- 12) Allow for development of creative spaces for artists, cultural organizations and business incubation in the land use overlays for Downtown.
- 13) The HOCRC, through partnerships with entities including the Allied Arts Council, broaden the tourism market for Downtown by developing an array of cultural-oriented events and attractions.
- 14) The HOCRC, through partnerships with entities including the Chinook Country Tourism Association, broaden the tourism

market for Downtown by supporting and promoting an array of tourist-oriented facilities, events and attractions.

- 15) Continue to leverage program funding, such as the Heart of Our City Activity Grant, to expand the creation of downtown events and festivals.
- 16) Provide education, accessibility and participation opportunities for arts, performances, concerts, and exhibitions, through strategic partnerships with the HOCRC, Allied Arts Council, and other groups.

**Business Operation/Building Maintenance**

- 17) In conjunction with the City's business license bylaw, each individual business owner shall be responsible for obtaining appropriate licenses or permits in order to maintain a safe and secure business environment in the Downtown.
- 18) Provide timely guidance on the building codes and the inspection process to business and land owners through printed materials, the City's website or consultation.

## 5.5 Livability

### 5.5.1 Purpose

This section establishes policies that support livability with a strong focus on a wider range of housing provision in the Downtown. New policies are intended to diversify the current demographic pattern and create a more dynamic living environment that attracts artists, professionals, or young families while supporting a critical mass of cultural activities and diversity.

### 5.5.2 Goals

- 1) To continue to expand services and amenities that support residential living and a sense of community.
- 2) To attract residents with different life styles, occupations, family structure and/or income status.
- 3) To celebrate the cultural diversity that the Downtown has to offer.
- 4) To allow for a mix and variety of housing types that reinforces and supports a critical mass of activity and diversity.

### 5.5.3 Policies

#### General

- 1) Allow for a wide range of housing choice in terms of type, affordability, and design in all districts in the Downtown.
- 2) Support the BRZ and the development community in the creation of an effective marketing program to promote downtown living.
- 3) Collaborate with the current or future owner regarding the conversion of a heritage building into residential use, building safety, and potential options such as preservation.
- 4) If the number of school age children increases, consult with school boards to ensure that access to schools is not a barrier to residential development in the Downtown.



- 5) Evaluate residential development proposals, in accordance with a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) process to ensure that potential safety and security issues are effectively addressed.

### **Medium and High Density Housing**

- 6) Medium and high density housing development is to be provided for the proposed Office Mixed-Use Land Use district.
- 7) Design of medium and high density housing developments should align with design criteria established in the land use/urban design policy section.
- 8) Structure the Downtown land use districts to allow for a density bonus or parking waivers to help achieve housing objectives.

### **Housing Accessibility**

- 9) Based on the Provincial Building Codes, universal access principles shall be employed and utilized in designing accommodation for persons with special needs and persons with disabilities.
- 10) The most current Barrier Free Design Guidelines shall be applied as a minimum standard. Any use of innovative and advanced technologies is encouraged in consultation with Building Inspection Services to ensure compliance.

### **Student Housing**

- 11) Collaborate with the University of Lethbridge and Lethbridge College administration and their student associations to understand the opportunities for student housing in the Downtown.

### **Affordable Housing**

- 12) Collaborate with stakeholder organizations such as the Lethbridge Housing Authority to understand the housing needs in the Downtown.

### **In-fill, Re-use Housing Development**

- 13) Allow for infill and adaptive reuse housing development in appropriate districts of the Downtown to achieve housing objectives.
- 14) When considering infill or adaptive reuse housing projects, proponents should consult with City officials in assessing sites for potential incompatible uses on adjacent properties.

### **Mixed-Use Development**

- 15) Allow for mixed-use development to maximize housing opportunities as well as to contribute to the vibrancy of the Downtown.
  
- 16) Engage with the development community and property owners to determine the requirements for live-work units, such as artist studios and one bedroom apartments, above or behind permitted commercial and the combination of compatible commercial uses within the Downtown.

### **Cultural Events and Activities**

- 17) In partnership with HOCRC, BRZ, and Allied Arts Council, continue to encourage festivals and cultural or community events year round as part of the Downtown Lethbridge experience.
  
- 18) Any redevelopment of Galt Gardens should be evaluated to ensure that space to host annual festivals, seasonal and cultural events, and recreational activities is provided.
  
- 19) When the City contemplates creation or development of new public open spaces, such as a Civic Plaza at 5th Avenue and Stafford Drive and on 3rd Avenue at 6th Street, between Festival Square and the SAAG, the capacity of such public spaces should be capable of supporting larger community events.
  
- 20) When barriers that reduce opportunities for such events and activities to occur in the Downtown are presented by the HOCRC planning, design, regulatory sub-committee, City Administration shall investigate to ensure the livability of Downtown is not compromised.

## 5.6 Public Realm

### 5.6.1 Purpose

This section establishes policies that are also intended to create the built form envisioned by the Master Plan with focuses on public realm components such as street trees, public art, signage or street furniture. This section is therefore strongly connected with the land use and section the urban design section. The policies in this section will support creating a successful public realm in the Downtown.

### 5.6.2 Goals

- 1) To create a vibrant, beautiful, exciting, accessible, sustainable public realm in the Downtown without compromising its functionality.

### 5.6.3 Policies

#### **Streetscape Improvement**

- 1) Streetscape improvement projects identified in the PRATS for 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue S. and 5<sup>th</sup> Street S. should be considered for inclusion in future City Capital Improvement Programs.

#### **Gateways**

- 2) When redevelopment or public realm improvement opportunities occur in strategic Downtown locations; Gateway creation as a means of identifying and enhancing the entrances to Downtown should be considered.
- 3) Public art should be incorporated as part of Gateway projects wherever possible.

#### **Wayfinding**

- 4) Enhance the visual quality of the public realm as well as guide users to and from their destinations by creating an easy to understand and attractive wayfinding system.
- 5) Coordinate wayfinding signage with any streetscape pageantry.

- 6) Adopt a graphic layout for the wayfinding system that is distinctive for the Downtown area while maintaining a level of consistency and cohesiveness with any the City-wide way-finding strategy.
- 7) The following key destinations should be identified in the strategic way-finding program (see also policy 5.2.3, 7)):
  - Galt Gardens and the Southern Alberta Art Gallery
  - The Galt Museum
  - Chinatown District
  - City Hall
  - University of Lethbridge Penny Building
  - CASA
  - Park Place Mall and Lethbridge Centre
  - Transit shelters and bike parking facilities
  - Lethbridge Regional Police Services headquarters
  - Public washrooms in Galt Gardens
  - Any new civic institutional facilities
- 8) Ensure the periodic maintenance, review, and repair of signage and maps with way-finding components are coordinated with the City's infrastructure asset management plan.

#### **Street Trees**

- 9) Support urban forestry initiatives and biodiversity conservation in the Downtown, the City, through the Parks Department, should consider increasing the quantity and variety of species of boulevard trees on all streets in the Downtown.

#### **Street Furniture**

- 10) Harmonize the selection of street furniture which includes: street light poles, benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, bike shelters, information kiosks, and banner poles, to create a pleasant, unified, clutter free, safe, low maintenance, and pedestrian oriented environment.
- 11) Adopt a Street Furniture Manual to be comprised of a representative selection of common site furniture elements that correspond with the different streetscape characters and unique historical images which may consist of: Historical, Transitional, or Contemporary design styles.
- 12) Ensure that future street light replacement occurs in accordance with City energy saving street light replacement programs and utilize street furniture elements

identified in a street furniture manual adopted for Downtown.

- 13) Street furniture maintenance throughout the Downtown should be coordinated with the City's infrastructure asset management plan.

#### **Public Art**

- 14) The design, installation and maintenance of public art in the Downtown as a means to intensify Downtown arts and culture should be coordinated with the City's infrastructure asset management program.
- 15) Opportunities for public art shall be considered in the overall design and context of the Downtown redevelopment.
- 16) Include and coordinate public art installation with identified streetscape priority investments and the Public Art Master Plan in consultation with the Public Art Committee.

#### **Public Open Spaces**

- 17) Evaluate changes to Downtown open spaces to ensure that both active and passive recreational needs of residents, workers and visitors, throughout the year is continued.
- 18) Public open spaces should be developed to a high standard and should be clean and well maintained.
- 19) Employ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure continued safety in all public and private Downtown open spaces.
- 20) The supply of parks and open space will be monitored based on changes in the Downtown so that the needs of the Downtown residents, workers, and visitors are continued to be met.
- 21) Explore the creation of a new classification of park such as an "urban park" that responds to the needs of the Downtown and ensure the classifications are incorporated into the Parks Master Plan.
- 22) Allow for new, innovative open spaces such as pocket parks, and rooftop gardens to occur throughout the Downtown.

**23)** When planning or constructing new roadways or trails, the existing connections between open spaces streets and the pathways system will be maintained and linked.

**Galt Gardens**

**24)** Any redevelopment of Galt Gardens shall be evaluated and its function as a multi-purpose urban park will not be compromised.

**25)** Any concept planning for redevelopment of the north half of Galt Gardens will be in consultation with community stakeholders and will recognize emerging social gathering, recreation needs, and the history and identity of Galt Gardens as the oldest park in Lethbridge.

**26)** High quality landscaping and rigorous lifecycle management should be employed in keeping with the significance of this unique urban park.

## 5.7 Circulation and Mobility

### 5.7.1 Purpose

This section is one of the fundamental components of the DARP as Transportation plays a critical role in creating a walkable downtown. Therefore, policies in this section are intended to provide a clear direction for future roadway and development projects in the Downtown.

### 5.7.2 Goals

- 1) To upgrade selected Downtown streets to create a walkable environment and provide more space for multi modal transportation modes.
- 2) To expand walking and cycling opportunities and the use of public transit as optional modes of circulation.
- 3) To create a high quality, universally accessible circulation system.
- 4) To support desired land use, built form, and other development activities through transportation planning.
- 5) To manage transportation demand in the Downtown efficiently and appropriately.
- 6) To provide an acceptable level of service for roadway operations.
- 7) To provide safe, flexible, timely transportation management for all users.

### 5.7.3 Policies

#### **Pedestrian Mobility**

- 1) When contemplating changes to streets, the design should be safe, secure, comfortable, and accessible for all users.
- 2) Employ the PRATS pedestrian walkways planning principles to new streetscape improvement projects in the Downtown.

- 3) The existing maintenance program for Downtown streets should be evaluated with pedestrians in mind.

### **Bicycle Mobility**

- 4) Updates to the current bicycle network should consider the construction of the necessary amenities to support expanded bicycle use within the Downtown.
- 5) A separated commuter bicycle lane is optimal where street configuration allows.
- 6) When contemplating upgrades to the bicycle network connectivity within the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods or major destinations, arterial roads such as 6th Avenue South, Scenic Drive, 13th Street, or Mayor Magrath Drive shall be considered.
- 7) Signage, racks, and safe and secure bicycle parking facilities in the public open spaces, major transit stops, and public parking lots should be a part of capital and operational budgets in order to maximize the convenience of using bicycles in the Downtown.

### **Public Transit**

- 8) Lethbridge Transit should engage major employers such as government entities to determine their employee's thoughts and needs to provide convenient public transit services to the Downtown.
- 9) The corner of 4th Avenue and 6th Street will continue to function as a Downtown public transit hub.
- 10) Upgraded bus stops in high use locations should include shelters, benches, garbage bins, updated route map, and timetables and employ barrier free design principles to support growth in transit ridership.
- 11) Design public transit facilities in alignment with the planning concepts that are established in the PRATS.
- 12) Downtown redevelopment projects shall be circulated to Lethbridge Transit to capitalize on opportunities to improve transit ridership.
- 13) CPTED principles should be employed to evaluate and design the transit facilities such as shelters or benches.



### **Private Automobiles**

- 14) Any changes to the Downtown streets classification and functionality need to balance all users' requirements and multi modal choices.

### **Emergency Access and Delivery EMS Service**

- 15) Any changes to streets and parking facilities in the Downtown shall have adequate provision for access for emergency and protective service vehicles.

### **Universal Design**

- 16) Universal access principles will be utilized in designing accommodation for persons with special needs and persons with disabilities and to increase accessibility to the Downtown.

- 17) The PRATS barrier free planning principles will be referred to when designing future streetscape improvement projects.

### **Pathways**

- 18) Develop well-connected pathways to the River Valley from the Downtown to maximize the opportunity to enjoy the integrity of the nature.

- 19) Strengthen the links with the Downtown core and adjacent neighbourhoods in consideration of safety and efficiency for pedestrians and bicycle users.

### **Connection with Adjacent Neighbourhoods**

- 20) Strengthen connections between the Downtown core and adjacent neighbourhoods by improving street pavement, landscape, and intersection safety.

### **Snow Removal and other Regular Maintenance**

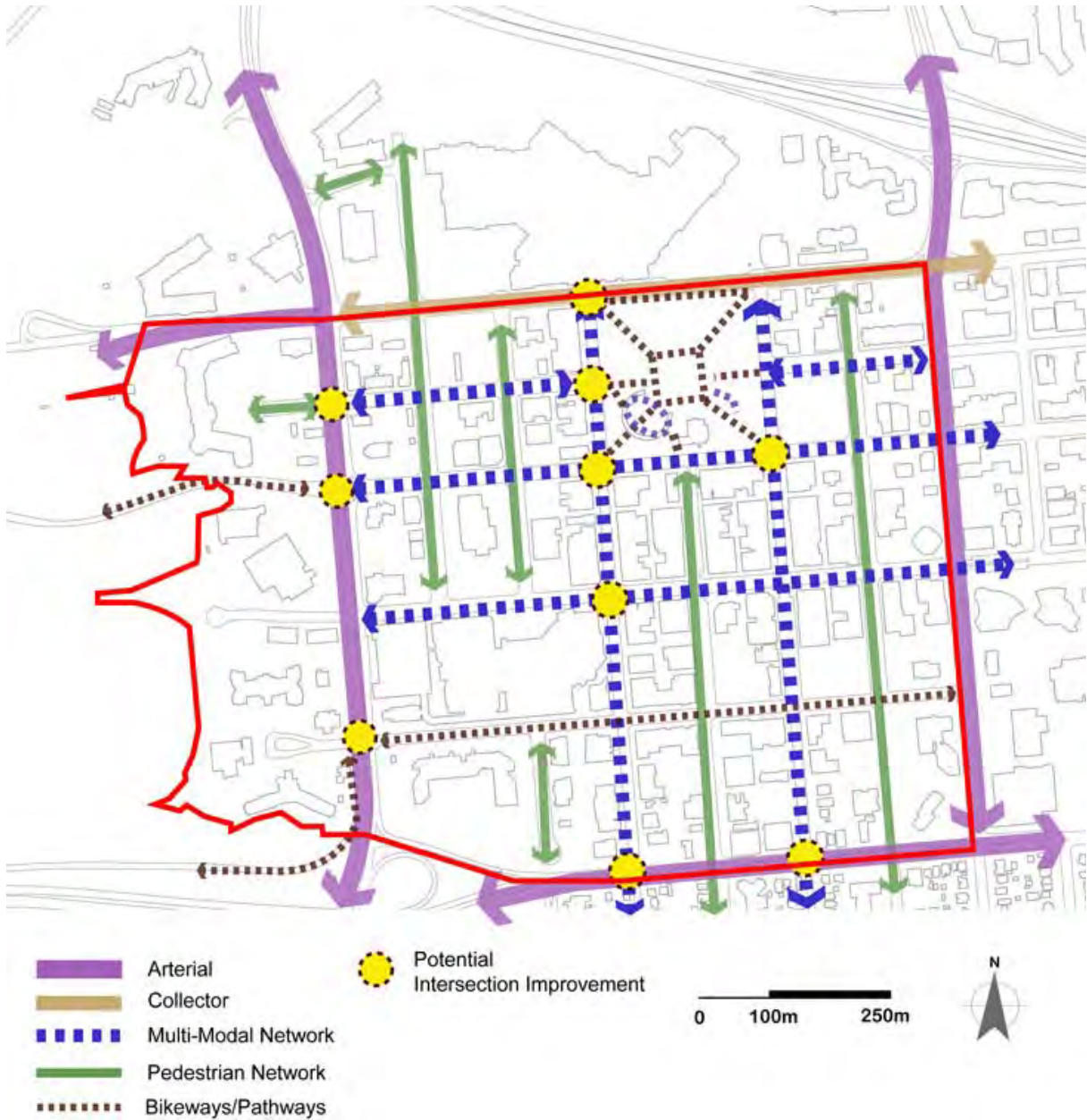
- 21) Any changes to the maintenance of streets and right-of-ways should be evaluated to support efficient traffic flow in the Downtown and to increase safety and accessibility.

### **Transportation Demand Management**

- 22) Continue to improve traffic movements in the Downtown by implementing transportation management measures that address specific needs such as parking and public transit as well as to achieve the vision of the ICSP/MDP, the Heart of Our City Master Plan, the Transportation Master Plan and the DARP.

23) Through the Transportation Master Plan, new transportation management measures that are implemented should be monitored and reported to affected stakeholders including the HOCRC.

Figure 14: Proposed Road Hierarchy/Classification



## 5.8 Parking

### 5.8.1 Purpose

Parking is an on-going challenge in the Downtown. Although the PRATS indicated that there is a reasonable amount of parking spaces available throughout the Downtown, a lack of parking is seen as a problem on certain streets or in some areas. Therefore, policies in this section are intended to ensure adequate amount of and access to parking are provided to all users. In addition, the policies are intended to coordinate future parking management plans and strategies in the Downtown.

### 5.8.2 Goals

- 1) To mitigate parking related issues in the Downtown.
- 2) To provide convenient access to parking for both employees and customers.
- 3) To provide a level of certainty in regards to the provision of parking in the Downtown in the future.
- 4) To coordinate Downtown parking plans and programs.

### 5.8.3 Policies

#### **Parking Needs Assessment and Plan Revision**

- 1) City Administration shall continue to monitor and evaluate the parking availability in the Downtown, particularly in areas adjacent to large office/commercial, recreational, and cultural facilities.
- 2) City Administration shall report to City Council, the Heart of Our City Revitalization Committee, and stakeholders with regard to parking issues in the Downtown as requested.
- 3) If, as a result of redevelopment or other land use changes in the Downtown, the parking availability undergoes a large change, the DARP should be revisited to determine if policy changes are warranted.

### **Public-Private Partnerships**

- 4) The City will be open to the involvement of local business organizations, retail businesses and landowners in the development of parking solutions and initiatives.

### **Parking Management**

- 5) Based on the issues identified and policies established in the DARP, a comprehensive downtown parking management plan and cost sharing formulas that would create a flexible and realistic funding framework should be developed as part of implementation plan.
- 6) A parking management plan should take a comprehensive approach that balances technologies, land use considerations, alternative transportation modes, and regulatory requirements.
- 7) The development of a multi-level parking facility (-ies) shall be considered where and when appropriate based on parking needs to balance the supply and the demand.
- 8) Detailed financial and engineering analysis for a future parking structure will be undertaken once location and timing of the project are determined.
- 9) When planning and designing a parking facility, the following design principles shall be considered in addition to the minimum development regulations defined in the Land Use Bylaw:
  - i. High quality facade design including, but not limited to, display windows, public art, lighting, landscaping, small retail or office spaces, and effective signage to navigate the facility.
  - ii. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- 10) Research and evaluate new technologies for an on-street parking system that will improve the user experience and increase future flexibility.
- 11) Reevaluate Land Use Bylaw parking requirements in the Downtown, which may include minimizing the supply of off-street parking spaces required for both residential and commercial uses.
- 12) When issuing development permits for private property lots, owners shall undertake effective and efficient parking improvements in compliance with the goals of the DARP.

## 5.9 Underground Infrastructure

### 5.9.1 Purpose

Without stable and reliable underground infrastructure, activities in the Downtown would not be possible. Underground infrastructure improvements and replacements are also costly. This section establishes policies that ensure provision of an efficient and reliable underground infrastructure, coordinate future projects according to the planning principles, and consider advanced technologies in the Downtown.

### 5.9.2 Goals

- 1) To coordinate underground infrastructure renewal/replacement with surface improvements and major redevelopment projects.
- 2) To provide efficient, reliable underground infrastructure that support development of the Downtown, wherever possible.
- 3) To consider the use of Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Design in infrastructure projects in the Downtown.

### 5.9.3 Policies

#### **Renewal/Replacement**

- 1) Except for emergency situations such as water main breakages, any underground utility infrastructure renewal/replacement projects shall be coordinated with streetscape improvements to ensure speedy and cost-effective public works. Related budget shall be allocated strategically and communication shall occur amongst stakeholders.

#### **Public Engagement**

- 2) When planning new infrastructure projects, require public consultation and effective communication with affected business/landowners and residents.

#### **Sustainable Approach**

- 3) Employ innovative construction techniques or methods for infrastructure projects to secure minimum business interruption.

- 4) Consider sustainable approaches for any underground infrastructure renewal/replacement projects.

## 5.10 Sustainability

### 5.10.1 Purpose

This section establishes policies that support and promote environmental sustainability in the areas of building construction, waste management, and water conservation. This is an opportunity for the Downtown to achieve some of the sustainability visions and policies established in the ICSP/MDP for the 10-year horizon.

### 5.10.2 Goals

- 1) To be able to demonstrate a measurable improvement in one of the three component areas of sustainability from the current status quo.
- 2) To accomplish best practices in sustainable construction in all aspects of redevelopment activities from planning to completion.

### 5.10.3 Policies

#### **Building Construction**

- 1) All municipal building construction in the Downtown will be equivalent to LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) silver or higher or similar standard.
- 2) The Downtown land use districts will be structured to include LEED certified projects as criteria for allowing a waiver of development requirements.
- 3) Support re-use of historic buildings and a sustainable approach in building construction to reduce solid waste and preserve heritage assets in the Downtown.

#### **Solid Waste Management**

- 4) The reuse and recycling of building materials generated by the construction process should be explored by the City, the BRZ, and the development community.
- 5) Continue to reduce the amount of solid waste generated in the Downtown through approved recycling programs that ensure areas, heavily used by pedestrians, are adequately supplied with recycling receptacles.

- 6) The City and the BRZ should explore strategies to increase a focused effort on the recycling of cardboard, paper, and food waste for the Downtown businesses.
- 7) Continue to support education and outreach programs in the Downtown that benefit community health and the environment.

**Water Conservation**

- 8) Develop an Urban Forestry protocol that balances the introduction of more boulevard trees with the principles of water conservation and xeriscaping.
- 9) Communicate the usage of new technologies in water conservation through building renovation projects such as low flush toilets, upgraded plumbing fixtures, and water efficient faucets or showerheads through community events or the City's website and outreach initiatives.



# 6. Plan Implementation

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## 6.1 Components

This chapter outlines a number of key components that are fundamental to the success of the DARP implementation. The components include; governance and leadership, projects and initiatives, funding tools, development guidance, performance monitoring and evaluation system, reporting, plan amendment, and revision.

In the beginning of this section, it is important to revisit the guiding principles of the DARP to ensure the Plan Implementation is consistent throughout. Those principles are;

**INTEGRATION**  
**FLEXIBLE & RESPONSIBLE**  
**PARTNERSHIPS**  
**SUSTAINABLE**

## 6.2 Governance and Leadership

The implementation of the DARP will be a cooperative effort that involves many stakeholders from both public and private sectors. Each stakeholder has their own functions and roles, which must be well defined in order to provide a clear understanding of how governance and leadership is structured.

### 6.2.1 Roles of the Key Stakeholders

#### 1) City Council

Strong support from City Council is essential for implementation of the DARP. City Council provides leadership and support for implementing policies and securing financial resources. City Council also listens to the Downtown community and provides direction to City Administration. Without long-term commitment and continuing effort by City Council, vision, goals, and policies of the DARP will not be achieved regardless of its merits and numerous efforts made in the past.

#### 2) City Administration

City administration is responsible for supporting Council's direction and decision-making process by administering programs, initiatives, and projects.

All City business units are responsible for reviewing the policies in this plan when making operational and capital planning decisions. Staff from Planning and Development Services will utilize the policies in this plan when rendering land use decisions, providing advice and liaising with business units within the organization and external partners and stakeholders in the Downtown.

**3) Heart of Our City Revitalization Committee (HOCRC)**

The HOCRC consists of seven City Council appointed members as well as City Council representatives. The HOCRC's primary role is to provide strategic leadership and to champion the revitalization of Downtown Lethbridge through implementation of the Heart of Our Master Plan.

The Planning, Design, and Regulatory Sub-committee is a working committee that researches new initiatives, reviews plans, planning documents and provides recommendations to the larger HOCRC.

**4) Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ)**

The Downtown BRZ is a non-profit organization that is funded by over 400 businesses in the Downtown. Membership in the BRZ is required by a mandatory fee. Each business continues to be a member as long as it falls within the Downtown Commercial district boundaries. The Downtown BRZ serves its members by implementing unique programs to promote the community's interests and attractions and promoting the Downtown business community.

**5) Business/Land Owners, Interest Groups, and Individuals**

Those who live, work or operate businesses in the Downtown are the key players for revitalization. Patronizing businesses, attending events and festivals, supporting City projects such as streetscape improvements are all actions that contribute to the DARP implementation.

They will continue to be advocates of Downtown revitalization. It is important that communication amongst all the stakeholders including the business community, special interest groups and individuals, professionals, artists, and residents or visitors is open, effective, clear, and transparent.

## 6.3 Strategic Initiatives and Capital Projects

### 6.3.1 Strategic Initiatives

Redevelopment initiatives and programs should be undertaken strategically to support the vision, goals, and policies of the DARP and other plans. Specific initiatives and programs are planned annually and the budget is allocated from the Downtown Redevelopment Fund (DRF) or other available funding sources.

#### 1) Criteria

The DARP establishes criteria for use in evaluating redevelopment initiatives and programs to ensure effective and efficient use of resources in achieving the vision for the Downtown.

- a) Will the initiative contribute to high quality private sector developments that align with the vision and goals of the DARP and supporting plans?
- b) Does the initiative contribute to creative and flexible development in the following areas such as historic preservation, mixed-used development, infill development, or sustainable development?
- c) Does the initiative seek new ways of attaining Public-Private Partnerships in redevelopment/revitalization activities?

### 6.3.2 Capital Projects

Through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Downtown Redevelopment Fund (DRF), City Council will determine priorities and funding amounts to be allocated to public projects.

City Administration is responsible for preparing documentation accompanied by a budget and project status for submission to City Council. The proposed budget will clearly identify project phasing, timeframe, and proposed funding sources.

#### 1) Streetscape Improvement

Although three transportation corridors have been identified by the PRATS for future street improvement, 3rd Avenue S. and 5th Street S are recommended to be the first two capital projects for the next 10 years. The detailed design, construction scheduling and phasing will be determined for each segment, based on the allocated budget. Another potential capital project is a Downtown parking structure. This project may be planned and undertaken when appropriate budgets and resources are allocated.

### 3rd Avenue South. (between 4<sup>th</sup> St. S. and 8<sup>th</sup> St. S.)

#### a) Contemporary Urban Design Direction

3 Avenue S is one of the multi-modal roadways serving Downtown. Major focal points such as the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (SAAG) and the CASA (Lethbridge Community Arts Centre) are located here. Much like the building design of the SAAG, the design character of the CASA is defined by the contrast between historic and modern-day styling. Ample heritage elements are demonstrated in existing buildings, thus it is recommended that the urban design of the public realm be of a more contemporary character featuring wide 'promenade' sidewalks and a high level of pageantry. Where it is evident that historic design elements would be more complementary to existing features, those should be used instead of contemporary design elements.



Figure 15: 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. Future Image

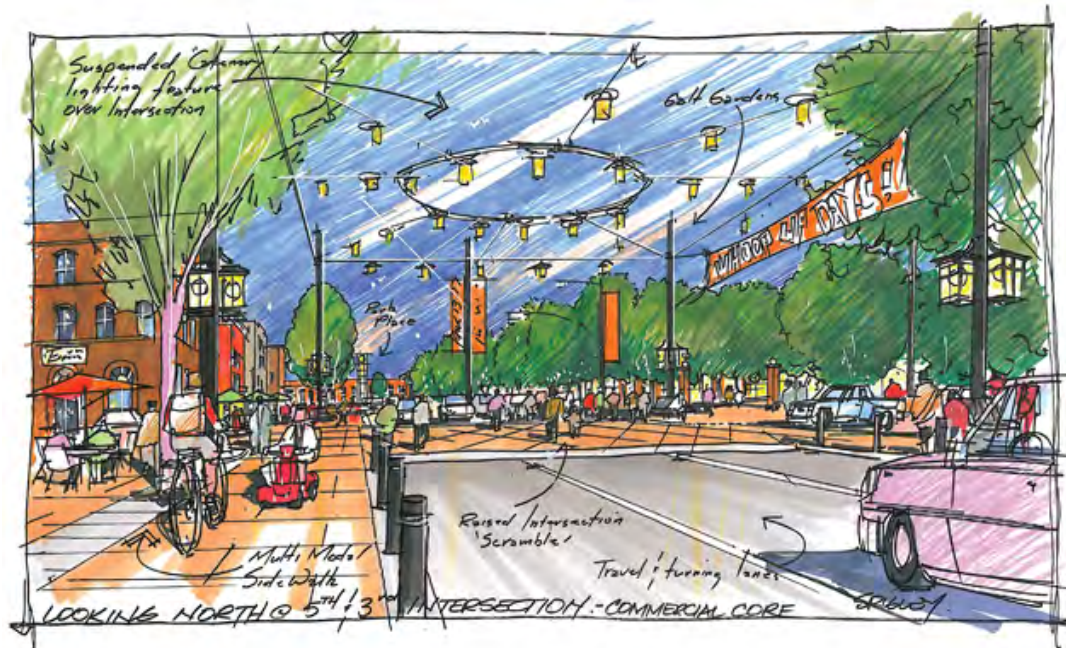
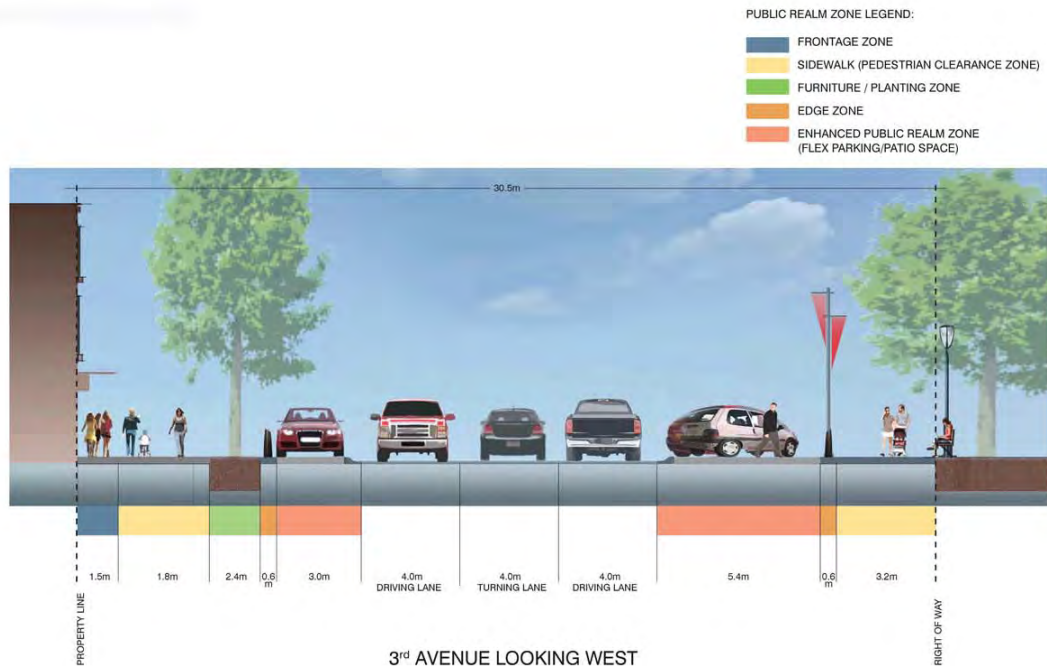


Figure 16: 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. Proposed Street Section



### b) Proposed Public Realm Design Features

Public Realm and Transportation Study recommendations are being incorporated into the design of the Downtown public realm within 3rd Avenue in several ways including the following:

- three travel lanes with a middle turning bay
- rolled curb between travel lanes and parking
- parking raised to sidewalk level, allowing flexibility of use for both pedestrian and vehicle use
- angled parking on the north side of the street in front of Galt Gardens and the CASA
- parallel parking on the south (retail) side between 8 Street S and 5 Street S, and parallel parking on both sides of the street west of 5 Street S
- street trees on both sides, spaced at +/- 15 meters on-centre
- pedestrian lighting spaced at +/- 15 meters on-centre
- wider sidewalks on both sides that will improve both pedestrian movement and the space in front of existing businesses
- a wider promenade sidewalk on the north, adjacent to Galt Gardens between 5 and 8 Street S

## 5<sup>th</sup> Street South (between 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. S and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.)

### a) Contemporary Urban Design Direction

5<sup>th</sup> Street S will continue to be a major retail corridor in the Downtown. This street should be defined by wider sidewalks to accommodate higher levels of pedestrian activity. Two distinct characteristics help define the street:

- the concentration of heritage structures along the street across from Galt Gardens
- the transition from business uses to residential uses south of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

The character of this corridor is proposed to be supported by complementary site elements such as paving treatment, benches, trash receptacles, bollards, and lighting. Gateway spaces within the public realm are proposed at both the 1<sup>st</sup> avenue and the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue ends of 5<sup>th</sup> street. Public Art opportunities will animate these spaces, create convenient gathering spaces and provide opportunities for public interaction. A multi-modal bike lane on the west side of 5 Street S would provide an improved connection from the London Road neighbourhood to Galt Gardens and other destinations.



Figure 17: 5<sup>th</sup> St. Future Image



Figure 18: 5<sup>th</sup> St. Proposed Street Section



### b) Proposed Design Features

Public Realm and Transportation Study recommendations are being incorporated into the design of the Downtown public realm within 5th Street in several ways including the following:

- two travel lanes, with a middle turning lane at each intersection
- rolled curb between travel lanes and parking
- parking raised to sidewalk level, allowing flexibility of use for both pedestrian and vehicle use
- angled parking on the east side and parallel parking on the west side
- a multi-modal corridor (recreational bike lane) on the west side
- street trees on both sides, spaced at +/- 15 meters on-centre
- pedestrian lighting spaced at +/- 15 meters on-centre
- wider sidewalks on both sides that will improve both pedestrian movement and the space in front of existing businesses
- a wider promenade sidewalk on the north, adjacent to Galt Gardens between 1 and 3 Avenues S

## 2) Future Parking Structure

The PRATS indicated that a new public parking structure may not be necessary in the short term, based on the supply and demand for parking across the entire Downtown area. However, areas where supply is limited were identified and it was suggested that it would be prudent to protect future parking opportunities where possible.

Strategically, it may be worthwhile to construct a parking facility, sooner than indicated in the PRATS, to alleviate some supply side challenges in parts of Downtown and to address customer and employee parking needs. Parking alternatives would then be in place when streetscape improvement projects commence that could possibly remove parking stalls, either temporarily or permanently.

Identification and protection of potential parking structure sites also provides flexibility for the City to accommodate future changes in parking supply or demand, including reductions in on-street parking or unforeseen developments.

The following section suggests a process for moving forward with approval and planning of a parking structure:

### a) Process

Prior to City Council budget approval, additional research into funding options, including potential partnerships, as well as stakeholder consultation should be undertaken. This would assist in determining if, when and where a parking structure should be built. Following budget approval, detailed design and construction would proceed.

### b) Parking Structure Considerations

#### i. Site Location Factors

Location of a parking facility will be influenced by several factors including proximity to existing or possible uses especially those that have or may have relatively high parking utilization such as: the CASA; the public library; adjacent blocks with development potential and the possible Performing Arts Centre.

City ownership of potential sites will help reduce both time and cost since land acquisition would be unnecessary. Vacant land is desirable to avoid demolition costs. Both the area and shape of a site are important so that development of potentially available sites is maximized. Sites bounded by streets and lanes also provide greater design flexibility for access/egress and circulation.

#### ii. Preferred Parking Structure Site

With these factors in mind, the municipally owned Bompas lot located north of 5th Avenue S between 7th Street S and 8th Street S has been identified as a preferred site.



### iii. Parking Capacity

A multi-storied structure capable of accommodating at least 375 parking stalls could be constructed on the preferred site. In addition, latent development intensification may occur on vacant, underutilized, or potentially redevelopable parcels which would elevate parking demand. Therefore, it may also be beneficial to design a parking structure with future expansion up to 450 parking stalls for which the site has additional capacity.

### iv. Facility Design Considerations

When planning and designing a parking facility, the following design elements should be considered in addition to the minimum Land Use Bylaw requirements:

- at-grade retail and office use designed to interface with a pedestrian environment;
- high quality façade; design including, but not limited to, display windows, lighting, and effective signage to find and navigate the facility;
- site amenities such as landscaping and public art; and
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

### v. Funding Considerations

Detailed funding and engineering for a parking structure will be required once location and timing of the project are determined.

Figure 19: Conceptual Image of Future Parking Structure on Bompas



## 6.4 Downtown Parking Management

### 6.4.1 Purpose

Downtown parking should encourage private investment and be regarded as an essential and integral part of the City's economic development strategy. Thus it is important to provide a Downtown parking system that makes parking an incentive rather than a disincentive to downtown revitalization and improvement.

The Public Realm and Transportation Study indicated that there is a reasonable amount of parking space available throughout the Downtown; however a lack of parking is seen as a problem on certain streets or in some areas. In addition, stakeholders have identified a range of other issues that could be considered as part of Downtown parking management.

The policy considerations in this section are therefore intended to take a holistic approach in the management of Downtown parking.

### 6.4.2 Goals

- 1) To develop a parking management plan to address issues and guide policy implementation.
- 2) To create a parking management strategy that enhances the economic viability of Downtown.
- 3) To provide convenient parking for Downtown customers, visitors and employees.
- 4) To coordinate Downtown parking planning and programming.
- 5) To mitigate parking related issues in the Downtown.

### 6.4.3 Policy Considerations

- 1) There is a need to:
  - 1) monitor and evaluate parking availability in the Downtown, particularly in areas adjacent to significant parking generators;
  - 2) consult with stakeholders, including the Heart of Our City Revitalization Committee, with regard to:
    - i. better understand downtown parking situations;
    - ii. specific short-term issues;
    - iii. long-term parking issues; and
    - iv. development of parking solutions and initiatives that insure there is an adequate supply of public parking in the downtown area;

- 3) continue to improve the Downtown parking system so that parking is an incentive to downtown revitalization;
  - 4) ensure coordination with other plans and programs; and
  - 5) report to City Council with regard to parking matters when necessary.
- 2) Employees should be encouraged to park in underutilized, peripheral areas of Downtown, thus providing convenient parking for visitors and customers, unless employment requires regular vehicle access to during the business day.
  - 3) Incentivizing Downtown companies to provide employees with options, such as transit, to reduce commuter trips to and from Downtown should be considered.
  - 4) If, as a result of proposed redevelopment or other land use changes in the Downtown, parking availability may undergo a significant change, the DARP should be amended if revisions to policy are warranted.
  - 5) The City should consider the possibility of partnerships with other public sector entities as well as the private sector when new parking facilities are proposed.
  - 6) Evaluation of Land Use Bylaw parking requirements which may include minimizing the off-street requirements should be undertaken.
  - 7) Development of a multi-level parking and mixed-use facility or facilities should be considered based on the principle of balancing parking demand and supply.
  - 8) Parking garages should be considered as a catalyst for private sector investment.
  - 9) Parking meter fees should increase in accordance with operational requirements and to continue contributing to the capital growth of the off-street parking fund.

#### 6.4.4 Downtown Parking Management Plan

In accordance with the Parking Management goals of this DARP, a comprehensive Downtown Parking Management Plan intended to mitigate parking related issues should be prepared in collaboration with: the Planning and Department Services Department; Infrastructure Services Department; the Regulatory Services Department; Lethbridge Transit and stakeholders. The proposed Downtown Parking Management Plan should address:

- 1) new, on-street parking system technologies that could improve user experience and allow for future flexibility;
- 2) a better understanding of downtown parking customer needs;
- 3) location, design and scale of adequate, convenient, reasonably priced parking areas;
- 4) alternative cost-sharing formulas that would create a responsive funding framework and which may require revamping of the off-street parking fund;
- 5) balancing reserved and scramble parking in City facilities;
- 6) promotion of alternatives to single vehicle occupancy transportation such as car-pooling, transit, walking and cycling;
- 7) a higher level of administrative focus on parking meter management, marketing and infrastructure provision which may include creation of a Downtown Parking Authority;
- 8) if a Downtown parking Authority was to be created, such matters as the following could be assigned to the authority:
  - a) management of parking meter collection maintenance, security and marketing
  - b) enforcement and management of the off-street parking fund;
  - c) management downtown parking infrastructure development, using dedicated revenues from parking meter collections, fines and parking infrastructure

## 6.5 Managing Downtown Land Use

### 6.5.1 Preamble

Downtown has undergone several economic cycles resulting in the construction of a variety of buildings that reflected prevalent design styles of the period. Furthermore, the areas in which these buildings were located were characterized by the types of land use activities that occurred within them. Thus, in the development and redevelopment of downtown, several unique buildings and areas, were created and are still identifiable.

The Heart of Our City Master Plan recognized these identifiable areas of Downtown together with the differing purposes each have played in the past. New or different “built-form” ideas are emerging as Downtown continues to transition into the future. In tandem with possible “built-form” changes, the permit/approval system created to manage development will also need to transform.

To facilitate this transformation, both new and modified approaches to development control will be required. Traditional “zoning”, currently in place, primarily regulates the use of land through a development application process which provides for both permitted uses and discretionary uses which may or may not be approved with or without conditions. Additional regulatory aspects, such as parcel size, building setbacks, parking requirements and design criteria are also addressed.

Presently, there are five Land Use Districts within the Downtown boundaries<sup>4</sup>. These land use district classifications were created over time to manage the contemporary land use issues. As Downtown has evolved and conditions have changed, some of the original land use districts and corresponding regulations, that were created to manage those issues, are no longer appropriate. In recognition of this obsolescence and with the emergence of new circumstances, it is proposed to introduce new land use districts. The intention of these changes is to position the regulatory system to respond to current conditions while being flexible enough to address emerging opportunities.

Lands to the west of Scenic Drive have developed in a more suburban and car-oriented layout than the traditional Downtown east of Scenic Drive. With many newer buildings in place and little developable land left, this area is not currently in need of revitalization. Applying new standards at this time would be unnecessary and could create uncertainty for existing businesses. Therefore

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<sup>4</sup> Current Land Use Districts include: Downtown Commercial; Park and Recreation (Galt Gardens & a sliver of the River Valley); Transportation (parts of the roadway system) and 2 Direct Control Districts (former Railway Relocation Project lands & the “Atrium Site”)

retention of the Downtown Commercial (CD) Land Use District classification is advisable for the foreseeable future.

Retention of CD zoning is sufficiently aligned with shorter range aspects of the Heart of Our City Master Plan Vision. Longer range goals of the Heart of Our City Master Plan, such as reconnecting land west of Scenic Drive with lands to the east thus providing both a “front door” to Downtown and the Oldman River valley, will be addressed in the future when conditions warrant.

Property lying between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South and the Crowsnest Trail Corridor, once referred to as the “Centre Site Lands”, are regulated by the 1983 Railway Relocation Lands Area Redevelopment Plan (RRLARP) Bylaw #3899 and the 1986 Direct Control Bylaw #4190. This area too, is car-oriented and suburban in layout. Major land use decisions, which lead to the creation of the Park Place Mall shopping centre, were made by City Council. Subsequent development decisions have been delegated to the Municipal Planning Commission and Development Officers in the Planning and Development Department.

Since a satisfactory regulatory system that is in relative alignment with the Heart of Our City Master Plan is in place, it is recommended that the existing Direct Control Bylaw be retained for the present.

### **6.5.2 Enhancing Downtown Character**

The Downtown Core includes property located between 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues and between Scenic and Stafford Drives. When considering potential changes to the regulatory system, it is important to build upon the strengths and character of particular areas as well as to address aspects of the regulatory system that may also need to be improved. The Heart of Our City Master Plan land use evaluation indicated that there were several areas, both within and adjacent to Downtown, that exhibited particular features which could be built upon to further enhance special characteristics.

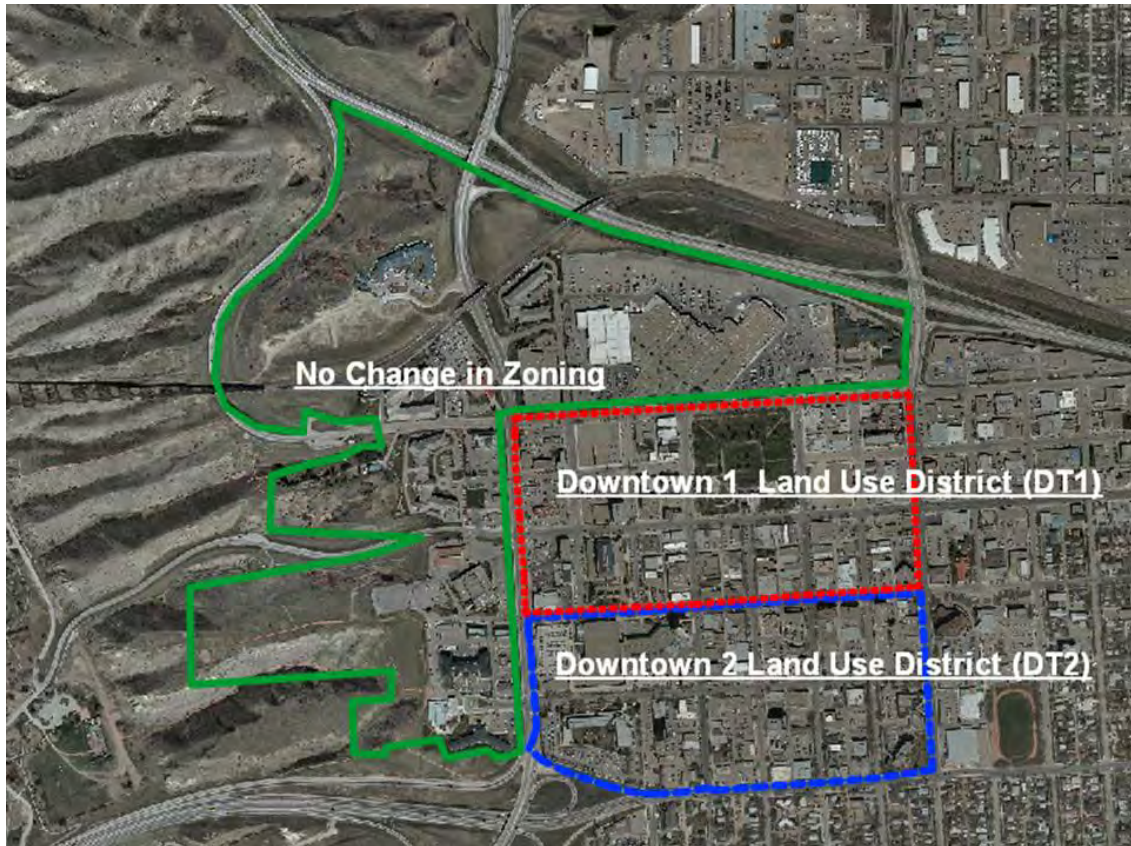
To establish the regulatory approach which responds to these challenges, a three-pronged approach has been created that will entail:

- 1) creating zoning districts with appropriate land uses
- 2) articulating the form based and design elements within the new zoning districts; and
- 3) identifying the preferred pace of change.

### 6.5.3 New Land Use Districts

In order to establish and support land uses that more directly distinguish the character and purpose of the Downtown Core described above, two sub-areas have been further recognized and designated:

Figure 20: Proposed Land Use Districts



1) **Downtown One (DT-1)** is the area located between First and Fourth Avenues and between Scenic and Stafford Drives.

**a) Purpose**

The DT-1 district is intended to align with the Heart of Our City Master Plan Pillars of “Vibrant and “Exciting”. The range of uses is intended to encourage continuation of street-oriented, private sector commercial investment as well as uses with cultural and entertainment orientations. In addition, the DT-1 would support associated and complementary uses and provisions to preserve the heritage character within this district.

**b) Permitted and Discretionary Uses**

The mix of Permitted and Discretionary Uses in the proposed DT-1 District are closely aligned with the purpose suggested in the possible new DT-1 District and would resemble those in the current Downtown Commercial District (CD). The following list provides an example of the suggested mix:

**Permitted Uses**

- accessory buildings
- animal care, minor
- amusement facilities
- business support services
- clubs
- child care, major
- child care, minor
- commercial schools
- cultural facilities
- dwelling, apartment mixed use
- education facilities
- entertainment establishments
- exterior building alterations or improvements (that meet design criteria)
- financial institutions
- fitness facility
- government services
- home occupations – type A
- hotel/motels
- household repair services
- manufacturing, specialty
- medical and health offices (outpatient)
- offices
- parking facilities, parkade
- parks
- personal services
- restaurants
- retail stores
- retail stores, convenience
- signs (that meet design criteria)
- tourist information centres

**Discretionary Uses**

- drop-in centre
- entertainment establishments
- freight and storage, except on ground floors
- home occupations – type B
- home occupations – type C
- medical and health facilities (inpatient and outpatient)
- parkade
- parking facilities, surface
- protective services
- recycling facilities
- religious assembly
- transportation services
- utility facilities
- vehicle rental



2) **Downtown Two (DT-2)**, is the area is between Fourth and Sixth Avenues and between Scenic and Stafford Drives.

**a) Purpose**

The DT-2 district is intended to align with the Heart of Our City Master Plan pillars of “Livable” and “Sustainable”. Primarily, the DT-2 Land Use District would enable the intensification and mix of land uses and would build upon existing uses by facilitating the concentration of office uses, residential uses and those other uses that would complement either or both of those.

Regulatory elements will be established to emphasize the maintenance or creation of a welcoming street or ground level, parking at the rear below or above ground, as well as landscaping elements to enhance the residential components of mixed-use developments.

**b) Permitted and Discretionary uses**

The following list provides an example of the suggested mix of DT-2 land uses:

**Permitted Uses**

- accessory buildings
- animal care, minor
- business support services
- clubs
- child care, major
- child care, minor
- cultural facilities
- dwelling, apartment
- dwelling, apartment mixed use
- education facilities
- exterior building alterations or improvements (that meet design criteria)
- financial institutions
- fitness facility
- government services
- home occupations – type A
- medical and health offices (outpatient)
- offices
- parking facilities, parkade
- parks
- personal services
- retail stores, convenience
- senior citizen housing , Independent living facility
- senior citizen housing, assisted/supportive living facility
- signs (that meet design criteria)

**Discretionary Uses**

- commercial schools
- drop-in centre
- entertainment establishments (between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues)
- home occupations – type B
- home occupations – type C
- household repair services
- parking facilities, surface
- recycling facilities
- religious assembly
- restaurants no larger than 46.5m<sup>2</sup>
- service station
- transportation services
- utility facilities
- vehicle rental

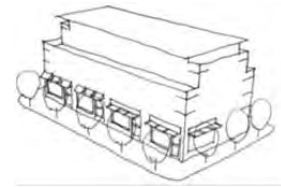
## 6.5.4 Regulatory and Design Elements

The subsections which follow are intended to help create a built form that generally describes the regulatory and design elements that will be considered for the DT-1 and the DT-2 Land Use Districts when they are subsequently articulated.

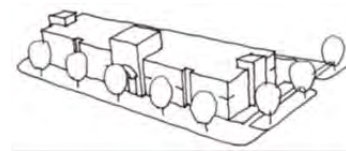
Several of these design elements represent a strengthening of existing Land Use Bylaw direction.

### 1) Desired Building Types

Building Types refers to the conventional terms used to describe standards of building forms. At this time, there are certain building types that are sought after in the Downtown but not currently evident. This feature is intended to identify “missing” building forms that would be attracted when the market conditions permit.

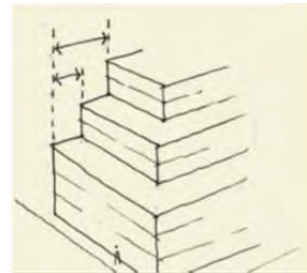


This design element provides guidance to potential builders and developers, for proposed new buildings. Currently this provision does not exist in any City regulatory documents.



### 2) Building Height and Massing

Massing refers to the general shape and size of the building footprint in three dimensions. It is important to achieve appropriate proportions among these 3 elements so that a building does not appear too tall, too short or too long. This feature represents a strengthening of existing Land Use Bylaw direction.



### 3) Building Elements

To encourage continuity in the streetscape and to ensure breaks in facade, buildings should be designed to reinforce key elements through the use of setbacks, extrusions, textures and materials. This design element represents a strengthening of existing Land Use Bylaw direction.



#### 4) Street Wall and Facade Articulation

Street wall refers to the part of a building that faces the street, but it generally pertains to how and where several buildings line up together to define a proper walking environment. At the most basic level, buildings should be set back an equal distance so that facades are aligned for as far as a pedestrian can see. New buildings should also respect the established pattern of façade division by ensuring the horizontal and vertical alignment of façade elements with neighbouring buildings. The sense of formality thus created also includes a continuous variety of first floor businesses. Solid upper floors also help to focus all street activity on the building's "permeable" first floor (retail, restaurants and services), which attracts "eyes on the street". This design element represents a strengthening of existing Land Use Bylaw direction.



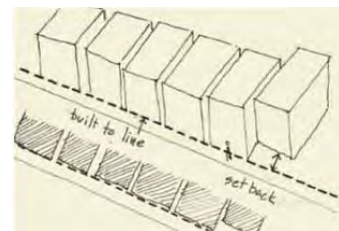
#### 5) Corner Site Terminus and Site Maximization

New developments on terminus and corner sites can shape the image and character of an area. Thus there is an implied civic obligation to enhance the distinction and landmark quality of prominent corner sites to ensure that the highest possible standards in design and material quality are met. This feature represents a strengthening of existing Land Use Bylaw direction.



#### 6) Building Orientation and Placement

Site design taking into consideration where buildings are situated on a site as well as how they are oriented provides opportunities to: retain architectural continuity with existing buildings; introduce new buildings that will not be out of place; reduce overall environmental impacts; and the flexibility to adaptively reuse space. This design feature represents a strengthening of existing Land Use Bylaw direction.



**7) Architectural Quality and Façade Materials**

Developers of new buildings should seek to contribute to the rich variety of architectural styles and expressions evident in the Downtown Core by utilizing building materials chosen for their functional and aesthetic quality. Exterior finishes should exhibit quality of workmanship, sustainability and ease of maintenance. If introduced as a design element, this feature would represent a strengthening of existing Land Use Bylaw direction.

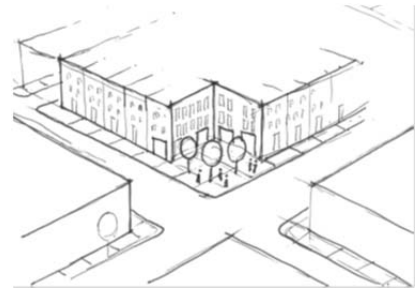
**8) Site Access, Off-street Parking & Servicing (loading/unloading)**

In recognition of the type and extent of existing development, current parking requirements within the current CD Land Use District is generally less onerous than in all other commercial land use districts. To obtain a reasonable balance between supply and demand for parking, the amount of parking provided for any new development should be in direct proportion to the need generated from the users of the building. Opportunities to create below or above surface parking should be encouraged to stretch the supply of developable land.



**9) Landscaping & Amenity Areas**

Creation of landscaped and other amenity features on the site will contribute to the aesthetics, enjoyment, and ambiance of the site. Landscape guidelines from Land Use Bylaw #5700 would continue to apply, however expansion in the variety of landscaped forms is encouraged. An example would be the creation of a landscaped courtyard.



**10) Open Storage**

Aesthetic quality is one of the most important contributing factors to making Downtown a Special Place. Open storage areas often become cluttered and unsightly thus detracting from the aesthetic qualities of Downtown. Regulatory requirements would continue to eliminate the possibility of open storage associated with future development applications from being approved.

### 6.5.5 Pace of Change

As mentioned previously, the intention of proposed regulatory changes is to respond to both current conditions and anticipated opportunities so, in addition to identifying “character areas”, the pace of introducing change to the regulatory system is important. In this context, two options have emerged.

#### 1) Option One - “Go Slow”

The **primary intention** of the “go slow” option is to balance higher standards that would advance the Heart of Our City Vision for Downtown, with the economic and market realities facing Downtown stakeholders. For this to be accomplished, regulatory change in the Downtown would be introduced at a more measured rate, allowing for transition to take place gradually and stakeholders to adapt accordingly.

Option One would also improve existing standards and features more “should” or discretionary clauses, than Option Two, thus reinforcing the gradual transition to higher standards.

#### 2) Option Two - “Raise the Bar” (RTB)

The **primary intention** of Option Two would be a more immediate introduction of the higher standards recommended in the Heart of Our City Master Plan. This “**Raise the Bar**” approach accelerates incorporation of higher development standards in the near term. In Option Two, the degree of regulatory vigour would be higher than in the Option One. In particular, there would be a more immediate emphasis on those aspects, described in the previous section, and would utilize more mandatory or “shall” provisions than the Option One.

A **secondary intention** of the Option Two would be to introduce special purpose, overlay zones. Overlay zones are individual or groups of property, to which specific development requirements are applied. The intention of overlay zones is to address unique circumstances or situations through the land use bylaw. In this case, requirements that would assist in achieving Heart of Our City Master Plan objectives have also been included. In consideration of this situation, two potential overlay zones a *Heritage Character* focus sub-area and *Animated Frontages* focus sub-area are identified in sections of both the DT-1 and the DT-2 (for additional details, refer to *Appendix A*).

### 6.5.6 Selecting a Pace of Change Option

The primary purpose of an Area Redevelopment Plan is to establish a direction that works towards achieving the Heart of Our City Master Plan Vision for Downtown revitalization. It is evident that revitalization efforts undertaken over the past decade have reversed a downward trend that was being experienced at end of the 1990’s.

Through the Heart of Our City Master Plan, the vision and a suggested framework provided a much needed focus for revitalization to continue. It is vital that ongoing change continues to build upon the successes of existing plans, policies and investments, both public and private. Furthermore, change should not stall momentum or create uncertainty in the business community.

Therefore, as previously indicated, it is essential to maintain the necessary balance between public and private interests in a regulatory environment. Bearing this in mind, the Option One, the Go Slow approach, provides a reasonable balance between modified or new regulatory elements and the capacity of the Downtown stakeholders to absorb the proposed changes.

### **6.5.7 Moving Forward**

Several phases have to be undertaken for the three-pronged approach to materialize as envisioned in the Managing Land Use section of the DARP. Amendments to the Land Use Bylaw will require refinement of the land uses within each land use district to ensure that the permitted and discretionary uses support the purpose of the land use district and are in unison with the pace of change.

Amid competing interests, it would be prudent to engage stakeholders during the refinement process of Land Use Bylaw amendments so that the resulting regulatory framework continues to balance the certainty of a land use approval with the desired outcome of the land use regulations.

Upon completion of the Land Use Bylaw amendment consultation process, the pace of change selected by City Council, whether "Go Slow" or the "Raise the Bar", will establish the degree of transformation desired. This, in turn, will direct both when and the extent to which the Land Use Bylaw needs amending to establish the proposed new land use districts and corresponding regulatory and design elements.

The concept of Overlay Zoning should be evaluated further as the Downtown continues to transform, so that its unique characteristics can be accentuated and maximized. Incentive considerations, similar to the previous Downtown Redevelopment Investment Program (DRI P), may be desirable to "jump-start" private investment incorporating overlay objectives. (refer to *Appendix A*).

## 6.6 Funding Sources

### 6.6.1 Public Sector Funding

Most of the Downtown projects will be financed through the City's Capital Improvement Plan. Currently the City's Downtown Revitalization business unit is responsible for administering budget and coordinating Downtown related projects and initiatives from the Downtown Redevelopment Fund. In addition to City funding, other financing mechanisms that assist with plan implementation may become available from time-to-time, through both the provincial and the federal government programs.

### 6.6.2 Potential Redevelopment Levy

Additional funding could possibly include private sector partnerships, redevelopment levies and Community Revitalization Levies, as allowed for by the Municipal Government Act. Should either or both of these options be considered in the future, City Administration would establish a business case indicating the rationale for engaging in a partnership and/or imposing a redevelopment levy.

### 6.6.3 Major grants available for the municipality and individual business owners

- **Alberta Historical Resources Foundation (AHRF)**  
The Alberta Historical Resources Foundation (AHRF) was established in 1973 through the Historical Resources Act to promote public awareness and enjoyment of Alberta's heritage. It provides financial and technical assistance to individuals and organizations for initiatives that preserve and interpret Alberta's heritage through a variety of grants offered by the Heritage Preservation Partnership Program and to municipalities through Municipal Heritage Partnership Program.
- **Main Street Program**  
The Alberta Main Street Program was successfully applied in Downtown Lethbridge until discontinued in 2009. At that time, the City decided to carry on with a similar Main Street Program funded through the Downtown Redevelopment Fund, to ensure that meaningful projects continued to receive funding which helps maintain both heritage aspects of buildings and compatible business signage. Stakeholders are encouraged to continue to utilize this program which is effectively managed through the BRZ.
- **Business improvement Loans**  
A Business Improvement Loan program that provides loans with a \$10,000 maximum from Community Futures while the interest component is paid by the

Heart of Our City. These “interest-free” loans are available to downtown business owners for 3-year terms which are intended for improvement projects such as painting, flooring, shelving, lighting, signage, restoring or repairing building exteriors to name a few.

## 6.7 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

The main purpose for performance monitoring and evaluation is to ensure that planning initiatives and programs are consistent with: the Heart of Our City vision and the goals and objectives of this DARP; established planning principles, policies, initiatives, or other programs are implemented as effectively as possible.

Performance measures, based on the principles described below, will establish the essential monitoring and evaluation components of plan implementation.

### 6.7.1 Principles

Performance measurements can be either qualitative or quantitative but the results of actions should be easy to understand and be measurable. Performance monitoring and evaluation will be conducted according to the followings:

- **Timeframe Benchmarks:** Benchmarks will be established for short-term (1-3 year), mid-term (4-6 years), and long-term (7-10 years) evaluation of projects and programs.
- **Downtown Experience:** The Business Improvement District (BID) Hierarchy for Creating Special Downtown Experiences<sup>5</sup> will form the basis of evaluations for success.
  - It is essential that the Downtown is always clean and always feels safe. If Downtown is messy and dirty, it generally feels unsafe and provides a poor visitor experience.
  - When Downtown is clean it feels and is safer and the visitor experience improves.
  - It is important to sustain “Clean and Safe” aspects which are the foundation of the Downtown experience, otherwise it is not possible to improve on the Downtown experience and public realm investments could be wasted.
  - When Downtown is clean and feels safe, investment in the creation of welcoming public spaces will contribute to a more pleasant Downtown experience.
  - As public spaces become more welcoming, the experience is continually improved with enhancements to the physical and

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to page 35, Figure 13 BID Hierarchy of Creating Downtown Experience.



aesthetic environment such as public art, “street furniture”, flowers and vegetation coupled with other public realm elements.

- o Programming and promotion of existing and new public spaces begins to transform the Downtown experience from pleasant to enjoyable.
- o Vibrant uses such as festivals and open air markets contribute the vibrancy and so on until a “Great City Experience” has been created.

It should be noted that as the various stages are succeeding encountered, there is an increase in positive cues and a decrease in negative cues exhibited within the Downtown area. To be effective and sustainable, the experience needs to be a collaborative effort between the City, the BRZ Downtown businesses and land owners.

### **6.7.2 Outcome Identification**

Before success can be measured, detailed targets can be identified. For instance it is valuable to know/measure:

- the total number of employees Downtown and how those figures have changed over time
- comparison of jobs per unit of land (job density) and whether employment is a stable, growing or declining compared to other employment areas in the City
- how much non-residential tax is collected from the Downtown area and how that changes/fluctuates during the 10 year timeframe
- how much construction investment takes place during 10 year timeframe, how high the completion rate of approved building permits is and how new construction impacts the value of tax generation Downtown
- track the change the amount of commercial floor space as the City has grown
- determine the effectiveness of public sector investment in the stability/growth of Downtown by tracking public sector investments – (draw correlations)

### **6.7.3 Measure of Success**

Citizens, the business community and other Downtown entities together with City Council and City Administration all have a stake in the success of Downtown revitalization endeavours. Thus, assessing the success of the DARP is important. Measuring success is also challenging because achievements are not often publicized. As a way to maintain momentum, successes attributable to the DARP

should be widely accepted, acknowledged, and promoted amongst all Downtown stakeholders and the public.

**Acceptance**

Downtown stakeholders and the public share the vision and goals of the DARP and work together to implement the policies.

**Acknowledgement**

Downtown stakeholders and the public respect each other, work together, and celebrate each other's success.

**Promotion**

Success stories should be shared and promoted.

Stakeholders can also analyze the success of the DARP quantitatively by utilizing information such as municipal census data, citizen surveys, data collected by special studies or projects. Typically, questions described below can be asked whether a successful downtown is being created.

Example questions:

- Is Downtown cleaner and safer than in the base year?
- What projects have been approved by City Council for CIP funding?
- What projects and initiatives of the HOCRC have been funded and completed or are successful and ongoing?
- Other metrics could include;
  - Changes in employment numbers
  - Numbers of dwelling units created
  - Population change
  - Extent & value of construction (new & renovation-adaptive reuse)
  - Assessment & taxation change

### 6.7.4 Action Identification

The table below lists actions that are proposed to occur during the next 10 years in both operational and Capital Improvement Program. Through this timeframe matrix, projects and programs have been identified as short-term, medium term or long term. The type of action and the City Department responsible has also been indicated. Proposed actions may, however, need to be adjusted over the course of the 10 year timeframe due to changes in priorities, budget availability or other circumstances.

**The DARP - 10-Year Action Matrix**

|                   | Action Plans                                       | Action Type     | Department Responsible  |
|-------------------|--|-----------------|---|
| <b>Short-Term</b> | Establishment of Urban Design Award                | Program         | Community Planning  |
|                   | Core District Overlays and Development Guidelines  | Program         | Community Planning  |
|                   | Development of Street Furniture Manual             | Program         | Community Planning, Parks Planning                                  |
|                   | Development of a Downtown Bylaw                    | Program         | City Clerk's Office   |
|                   | Urban Park Classification Study                    | Program         | Community Planning  |
| <b>Mid-Term</b>   | Comprehensive downtown parking management plan     | Capital Project | Community Planning, Transportation, Regulatory Services             |
|                   | Streetscape Improvement (3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue S) | Capital Project | Transportation, Community Planning, Water, Wastewater, & Stormwater |
| <b>Long-Term</b>  | Streetscape Improvement (5 <sup>th</sup> Street S) | Capital Project | Transportation, Community Planning, Water, Wastewater & Stormwater  |

## 6.8 Reporting

City Administration is responsible for regular reporting results of DARP actions to City Council, Downtown stakeholders and members of the public. Normally, these results will be reported in conjunction with the HOCRC Year End Report.

## 6.9 Plan Amendment

Amendments to the DARP will be consistent with the vision, planning principles, goals and policies of all the statutory plans and aligned with the Master Plan. Plan amendment may be triggered by;

- Changes in legislation (federal, provincial, inter-municipal, municipal)
- Changes in Council direction
- New findings based on research or studies
- Significant social, environmental, or economic trend changes

City Administration will continue to engage stakeholders and members of the public when amendments to the DARP and/or to related bylaws, including the Land Use Bylaw, are proposed.

## 6.10 Plan Revision

Comprehensive review/update of the DARP should be initiated within 10 years following adoption by City Council.

# APPENDIX



# Appendix A

## Potential Zone Overlay Zones

Overlay zoning if or when it is enacted, would be subject to a stakeholder consultation process associated with amending the Land Use Bylaw. To achieve maximum investment impact, Overlay Zoning would endeavour to co-ordinate public realm improvements with both private and public sector development, wherever possible.

Actual overlay requirements will need to be created and where a district overlay is indicated, requirements of both the base Land Use District and the Overlay area would be considered in a land use related decision.

Potential zone overlay zones are briefly described below:

### **Heritage Character Focus Overlay Zone**

Within the proposed DT-1 district, a Heritage Character Focus Overlay is suggested. Such an overlay zone would identify and facilitate the use of significant heritage resources by permitting appropriate, adaptive re-use and compatible infill development sensitive to the quality, scale and character of adjacent heritage character buildings.

### **Animated Frontages Focus Overlay Zone**

This potential overlay zone features *animated retail frontages* intended for street oriented specialty stores, boutiques and restaurants; residential development as part of mixed-use developments is proposed as follows:

- o Phase 1 would concentrate on those sections of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue identified for Public Realm investments within a City of Lethbridge Capital Improvement Program.
- o Additional development phases may be identified in subsequent Capital Improvement Programs.

### **Future District Overlay zones**

No Heritage Overlay Zones are proposed within the DT-2 at this time however, future district overlays may include arterial roadway corridors which also provide unique development opportunities including: 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and/or 5<sup>th</sup>. Avenue Future District Overlay zones may also include arterial roadway corridors which also provide unique development opportunities including: Scenic Drive, Stafford Drive, 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup>. Avenue.

Heritage Character Focus Area



Animated Retail Frontage Area



