

# State of Downtown Calgary 2019



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**Publishing Information**

**Title**  
State of Downtown Calgary 2019

**Author**  
The City of Calgary

**Published**  
Q2 2020 - DRAFT

**Additional Copies**  
The City of Calgary  
Records & Information Management (RIM)  
Inspection & Permit Services  
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Letter from Downtown Strategy Leadership Team

We are proud to present the inaugural State of Downtown Calgary report, highlighting where our downtown stands at the end of 2019 – its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for continuous improvement. Downtown is the economic and cultural heart of Calgary – a livable, thriving place for people, business, innovation and creativity. Although North American downtowns, including Calgary, occupy less than one per cent of a city’s total land area, they generate outsized benefits in terms of jobs, tax revenue, and construction value. When a downtown thrives, so does a city as a whole. This remains true for Calgary.

Ultimately, vibrancy is the word that encapsulates a thriving downtown. It’s important that the downtown be economically vibrant. It is also vital to develop cultural vibrancy and a strong sense of place that impacts how residents, workers and visitors interact with our downtown.

The last few years have seen our downtown take a hit. We have lost businesses, realized a large shortage of tech talent, seen our office vacancy rate rise and had some of the energy sapped from the street life of our downtown neighbourhoods. At the same time, we have seen new businesses move in, explored creative uses of downtown spaces, and have seen new opportunities for building vibrancy bubble up throughout the downtown.

There are a lot of great things happening as our city continues to collaboratively implement **Calgary in the New Economy: The Economic Strategy for Calgary**, with a focus on the future of our downtown. Given the urgency that exists to build a thriving, vibrant downtown, efforts are being made to align work that attracts new businesses, supports existing ones, and builds critical infrastructure.

Calgary’s downtown is a great place to live, work and play. It’s the hub for culture, arts, sports, entertainment, events and a big tourism driver attracting residents, visitors, and business travelers. The opportunities to leverage these strengths are even more heightened now. The story of opportunity is that Calgary has an abundance of economical and move-in-ready office space for companies and businesses to locate, grow, and create jobs.

This has all led to the creation of The Downtown Strategy – a concentrated focus and coordinated effort on the economic and cultural opportunities in the downtown to drive a thriving local economy. This work encompasses all aspects of working and living downtown, fostering a sense of place and connection to ensure a vibrant city for all Calgarians – today and in the future.

It brings together The City of Calgary (“The City”), our Civic Partners, community partners, and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in a coordinated and collaborative effort to make life better every day for citizens, customers, residents and businesses as it relates to the downtown. This strategy brings new energy to a future-focused, collective approach to align existing projects and initiatives, thereby increasing the impact of our work. We are acting with urgency to address this economic shift by creating new opportunities in our downtown and enabling the downtown to flourish.

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

- Place** — accelerating urbanization and connectivity
- Work** — increasing opportunities to work, study, and run a business
- Live** — making Calgary a more attractive place to live in and to visit
- Connect** — connecting people, goods, information, and ideas

The enormity of, not only the challenges, but the opportunities our downtown faces has brought together a team that believes in Calgary’s future place in the new economy. This unprecedented collaborative group is working together to help ensure downtown’s ongoing success now and into the future.

Stuart Dalglish  
General Manager, Planning and Development  
The City of Calgary

The current economic situation may take an extensive amount of time to recover and requires a long-game approach, coupled with nearer term strategies and actions. Managing expectations is important. Our Downtown Strategy has a long-term view, and the team is focused on near-term actions, ongoing monitoring, the ability to course correct along the way, and being nimble and flexible.

This report highlights where the downtown is currently in relation to our four pillars and highlights some of the successes, challenges and opportunities that were identified in 2019 and moving forward. There is a lot happening in our downtown and this report provides a snapshot of how the Downtown Strategy’s efforts are moving the needle. It establishes a baseline against which we can measure our future success.

It is going to take all of us to build and reshape downtown and it’s important we all take a shared position in stewarding our downtown into the future. As you will notice in this report, through our collaborative work, we are building a downtown that embraces moving towards new ideas and new areas of the economy. We’re implementing innovative ideas, strategic decisions, dynamic partnerships, and thoughtful investments in the four areas of our Downtown Strategy.

Building a vibrant and resilient downtown is a task that never ends. We’re going to take what we know about the state of our downtown and keep working to ensure downtown Calgary continues to evolve as a livable, thriving place for people, business, innovation and creativity.

  
Stuart Dalglish  
The City of Calgary

  
Thom Mahler  
The City of Calgary

  
Mary Moran  
Calgary Economic Development

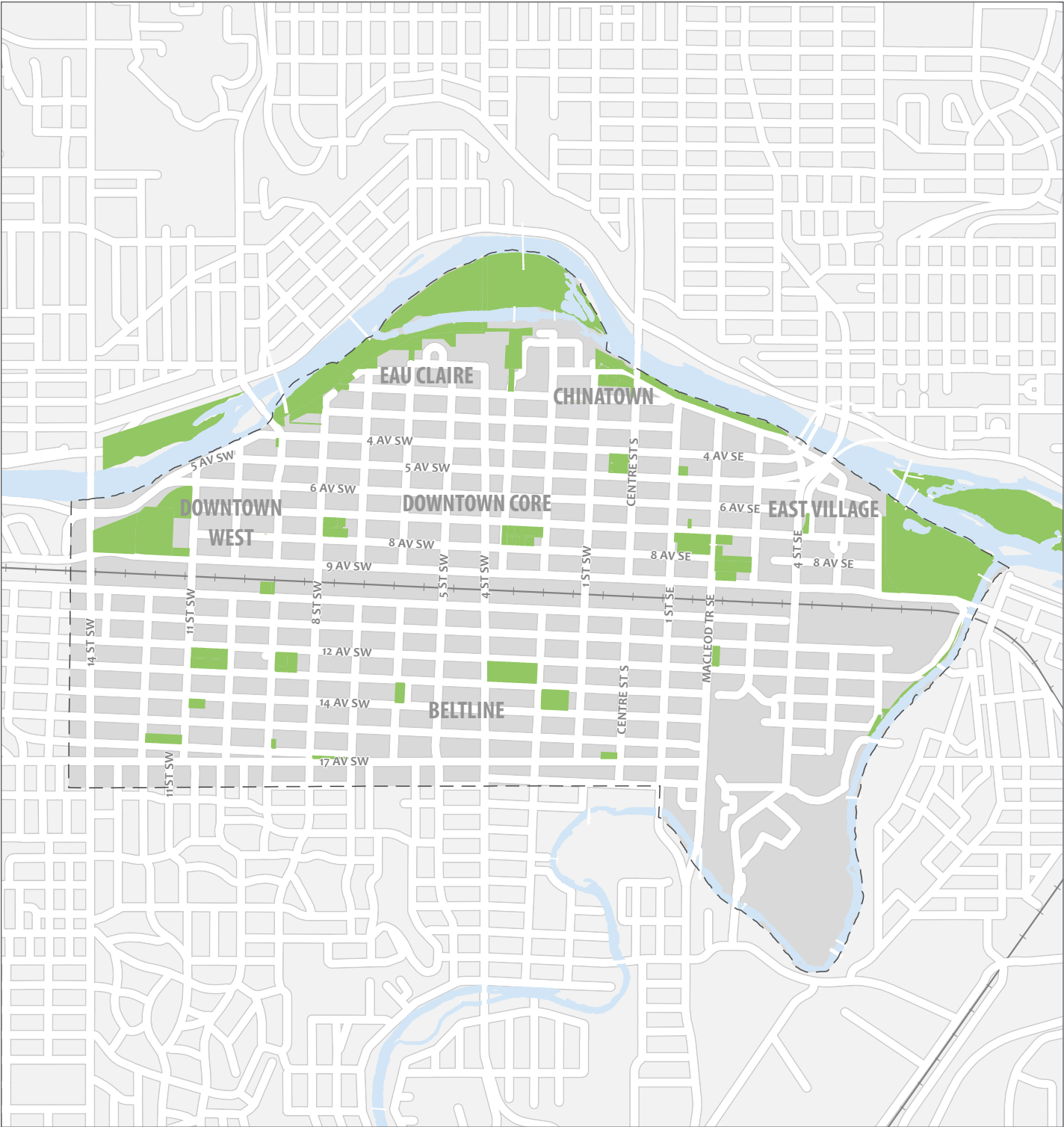
  
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**Calgary City-wide**  
2019 Highlights



Highest concentration of  
head offices per capita in Canada  
– FP500 2019 Database –



5th most livable city in the world  
– The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019 –



418 kilometres of on-street  
bikeways and cycle tracks citywide



32nd in the  
world for quality of living  
– Mercer Cost of Living –



2nd in Canada for  
healthy lifestyle and life satisfaction  
– Conference Board of Canada –



8th best city out of 150 for families  
around the world  
– Movinga, 2019; Best Cities for Families 2020 –



Top five global ecosystem for  
startup connectedness  
– Startup Genome, 2019 –

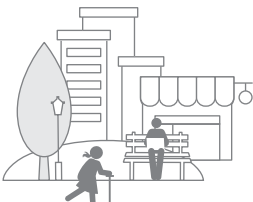


1st in Canada for  
concentration of high-tech works  
– Brookfield Institute, 2019 –



30+ co-working spaces opened,  
the 2nd fastest growth in Canada  
– CBRE, 2019; Calgary Economic Development –

**Downtown Calgary**  
2019 Highlights



22 parks and  
greenspaces downtown



6 Business Improvement Areas  
downtown



5 community and  
neighbourhood associations



\$40.85 million being invested  
in building public spaces  
downtown



1,879 trees per sq. km  
in downtown



750,000 e-scooter trips



45% of people travelling into and out of downtown are  
walking, cycling and taking transit





# The Place

We aim to invest in the physical spaces, buildings, and infrastructure to increase the number of downtown residents and visitors, and drive investment into our downtown. Over the next 15 years, we will create a downtown that's more attractive to current and future businesses, residents and visitors.

2019 was the kick-start to this investment, with a major commitment made to improving public spaces throughout downtown – including walking and cycling connections, our major downtown activity hubs, and major capital projects that will drive arts and culture, sports, and business opportunities into the area for decades to come.



**\$40.85 million**  
Capital investment in 2019 in **public space projects** completed and underway

## Investing in Calgary's Public Spaces

Investing in the future of public spaces is a fundamental piece of the Downtown Strategy in order to support and incentivize private investment, generate visits and spending, and provide amenities and services to enhance the quality of life for people living and working in Calgary's downtown.

Investment in public space projects, including: the Eau Clair Promenade; Jaipur Bridge Replacement; 5 Street S.W. Underpass; and The Future of Stephen Avenue, have the objective of building and maintaining a wonderful downtown neighbourhood. It is important that each project is implemented to meet current needs and to lay the foundation for expected future demand as Calgary grows and evolves.



## The Future of Stephen Avenue

Stephen Avenue is one of Calgary's busiest, most animated and recognizable streets. The avenue means different things to different people. For some, Stephen Avenue is Calgary's premiere hospitality and retail destination. For others, it's a pedestrian-friendly environment to take a walk, to people watch, and socialize. It is also a historic destination, containing the highest concentration of historic buildings in the entire city, and in fact, a portion of Stephen Avenue has been designated as a National Historic District. This cultural hub connects Calgarians and visitors with some of the city's most prominent cultural facilities, including Contemporary Calgary on the west end and Arts Commons on the east. It is this diversity that makes Stephen Avenue attractive to so many people, and a focal point of Calgary's downtown.

The City of Calgary and the Calgary Downtown Association are generating a bold and compelling vision and design for the future of Stephen Avenue that will require new ways of working and thinking.

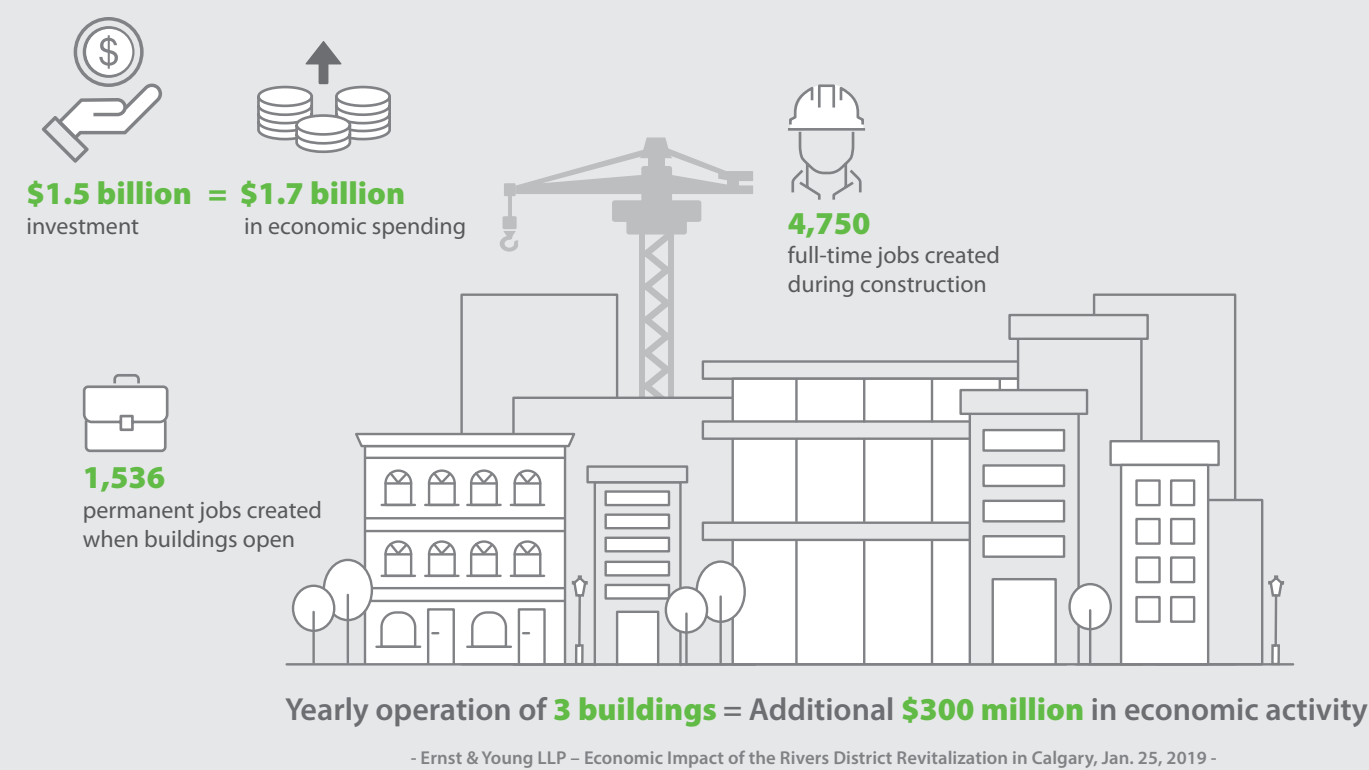
The vision and plan will focus on a combination of culture, commerce, and play. A great design for downtown's pedestrian hub will also be complemented with a robust program for economic investment and redevelopment and a strong framework for operations, maintenance and stewardship. The design and plan will begin implementation in 2020, with small-scale activations along the avenue. The full design and plan will come to fruition over the next decade.





Downtown’s Big 3 Priority Capital Projects

In 2019, funding was secured for a new Event Centre in east Victoria Park and a major expansion to the BMO Convention Centre on Stampede Park. Additionally, a funding strategy was approved to transform downtown's arts and culture hub - Arts Commons. The Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) is the development manager for all three projects leading both the design and construction of these facilities, and ensuring alignment with the **Rivers District Master Plan**. These investments support The City of Calgary’s Downtown Strategy to further Calgary’s economic recovery and resilience, through being catalysts for revitalization and private investment.



Calgary’s New Event Centre

- Project Framework Agreement and Development Management Agreement signed December 5, 2019 between The City of Calgary, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation and Calgary Sports and Entertainment Corporation
- \$550 million capital cost
- \$400.3 million projected return on investment to The City of Calgary



BMO Convention Centre Expansion

- Funded through equal investments from the Government of Canada, Government of Alberta and The City of Calgary
- \$500 million investment to increase total floor space to one million square feet
- Construction is underway, with expected completion in spring 2024
- BMO Convention Centre will be the largest meeting facility in Western Canada when complete



Arts Commons Transformation

- Funding strategy established in March 2019 by Calgary City Council
- Phase 1 of the project is a new 1,200 seat theatre with two smaller theatres and rehearsal spaces
- 1,300 jobs will be created during design and construction and 1,000 permanent jobs created on completion of the project
- \$165 million annual economic impact to Calgary’s downtown





Development and Investment



Construction Value  
**\$720 million**



Building Permits  
**840**



Downtown and Beltline Office Sales  
**\$21.25 million**



Average Downtown Commercial Core  
Net Rental Rate  
**\$11.85/sq.ft.**

A New Life for our Old Library

Due to an innovative agreement between The City of Calgary and Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC), and the drive to find a new way to utilize vacant spaces in the downtown core, the Castell Building (better known as “the old central library”) has been activated once more.

The School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the University of Calgary has opened their community-based outpost for teaching, research and community collaboration called the City Building Design Lab. The lab is providing students with opportunities to connect with the planning and development industry to explore how innovations in design and construction can make cities more sustainable.



The M2 in East Village

The M2 project was completed in the East Village in November. The riverfront mixed-use project combines village-style retail space at the ground level with unique office and residential space above. M2 features 7,500 square feet of retail space on the main level that will become home to two local businesses set to begin operations in 2020 – a new restaurant from Concorde Entertainment Group and a downtown location for Bow Cycle, a longstanding Calgary business. Harvest, North West Capital, XYZ Design + Development and Quebe Technologies Inc. will also call the building home.



The Dorian Hotel

Construction of a new luxury hotel has begun downtown at 525 Fifth Avenue S.W. The site, which has operated as a surface parking lot for close to forty years, will become home to The Dorian Hotel. The 27 story luxury hotel is being developed by PBA Land & Development, and constructed by EllisDon with a focus on the expected future growth of visitors to Calgary. Hundreds of jobs will be created during the construction process and over 150 jobs when the hotel is expected to open in spring 2022. The hotel was granted the first ever development permit featuring a density bonus due to excellence in design.



Stephen Avenue Place

Among the efforts to revitalize Stephen Avenue is the \$33 million redevelopment of Stephen Avenue Place (previously Scotia Centre) by Slate Management, in partnership with Oliver & Bonacini Hospitality and Concorde Entertainment Group. This includes the addition of three levels of restaurant and retail space to help ensure that this part of Stephen Avenue remains a vibrant hub for activities. The top floor of the 620,000 square foot building will be taken up by a world-class restaurant, making the most of the 400+ foot high view. The base of the building is expected to become a bustling retail and dining area, with a second-floor food hall, shopping spaces, and a ground floor restaurant complete with bar and patio.





# Where we Work

Calgary has a global reputation as an inclusive and entrepreneurial city that is connected through incredible community spirit. Like many cities, our economy is at a crossroads and must adapt. In 2018, Calgary City Council unanimously approved the **Calgary in the New Economy** economic strategy, which focuses on four key areas – talent, innovation, place and business environment. The Downtown Strategy supports the implementation of this economic strategy.

The Downtown Strategy team aims to support and encourage private investments in downtown businesses and buildings. Over the next 15 years, we are looking to re-energize downtown office spaces with diverse and innovative businesses and jobs. We will help our existing businesses and attract new companies over the next five years, using a variety of metrics such as business counts, office vacancy rates, and industry types to measure success. A big part of this has been the creation of The City's Business and Local Economy program, which focuses on reducing barriers, time, and cost to enable local business success.

The year 2019 was a balance of successes and challenges. Calgary Economic Development attracted and retained 28 companies in our downtown and created 2,300 direct and indirect jobs. The Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF) was leveraged to secure high potential organizations to set up shop in Calgary, with four companies making direct and positive impacts on our downtown.

These successes were offset by some challenges, including attracting the right type of talent to fill available jobs (many require skillsets in advanced technology), a lack of availability of contiguous office space, and tough competition with other jurisdictions to attract new businesses.

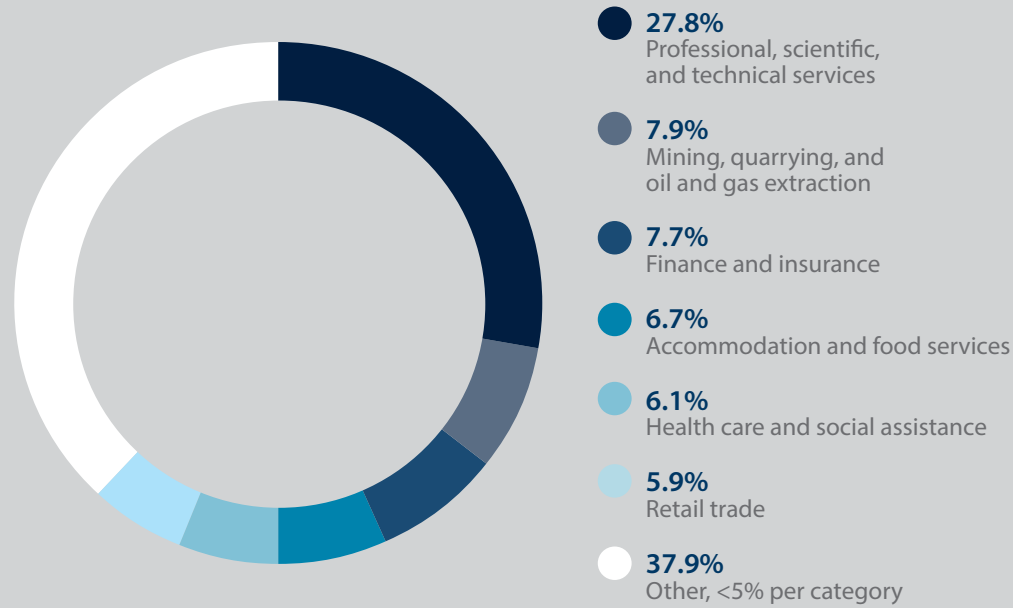


Despite high unemployment, Calgary added **26,500 jobs** in 2019; **ranking fourth in Canada** (Calgary was behind Toronto 131,200, Ottawa 36,400 and Montreal 36,300)

– Statistics Canada; Calgary Economic Development –



## Downtown employment by industry



– Canadian Business Counts, Statistics Canada, December 2019 –



**30+**  
**co-working spaces**  
opened in Calgary,  
the **2nd fastest**  
**growth in Canada**

– CBRE, 2019; Calgary Economic Development –



Supporting Growth and Targeting Opportunities

The City of Calgary and our partners are supporting economic recovery and growth to help reduce the impact of the most recent economic downturn on citizens and businesses, and to help ensure Calgary’s ongoing success into the future. As part of these efforts, Council created the \$100 million Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF) administered by The City and managed by a wholly owned subsidiary of The City. OCIF was established to create an environment that encourages economic recovery and growth, helps reduce the impact of the economic downturn, and capitalizes on new opportunities to support Calgary’s economic success into the future.

OCIF is a powerful financial tool to help create the right conditions for economic growth, diversify the economy, create and stimulate employment, and support downtown vacancy challenges.



Downtown & Beltline  
Office and Retail Space

<b>Office Supply</b> <b>48,662,993 sq.ft.</b>	<b>Retail Supply</b> <b>4,428,620 sq. ft.</b>
<b>Office Vacancy</b> <b>27.17%</b>	<b>Retail Vacancy</b> <b>8.94%</b>

– CBRE –

**118**  
**Head offices**  
**based in Calgary**  
– the highest  
concentration per  
capita in Canada

– FP500 2019 Database –



**-109,760 sq. ft.**  
Office Absorption Volume

– CBRE –



**38,500**  
Number of tech workers  
in Calgary

– CBRE Research, July 2019 –

Finger Food Advanced Technology

Finger Food Advanced Technology Group chose Calgary for its first advanced technology centre. It is anticipated that 200 full-time jobs for design, software development and management professionals will be created in Calgary by 2023. The advanced technology centre will be a facility for global innovation; a state-of-the-art space the company says will be dedicated to disrupting traditional thinking, fostering user-centric and innovative ideas, and learning opportunities. The organization is being supported by a \$3.5 million grant from OCIF.



Businesses Setting up Shop Downtown

**NPower Canada** opened and offers free digital skills training to under-served youth, and then connects them with employers. The charitable organization’s first location in Canada outside of Toronto has already seen its first round of Calgary students graduate in August 2019 – just four months after opening. OCIF granted \$100,000 to NPower.

**Thin Air Labs** joined forces with award-winning developer, New World Interactive, to create a hub for gaming that supports creators with new game development ventures.

**Parkland Fuel** consolidated its national operations downtown, including relocating or creating 430 permanent, full-time jobs, including 270 new positions. The company now occupies 100,000 square feet of additional office space downtown. The company is supported by a \$4 million grant from OCIF.



Office Absorption, not Office Vacancy

While downtown and Beltline office vacancy rate is a frequently referenced indicator, looking at office supply, office occupancy, and office absorption tells a more comprehensive story. Once normalized for population size, Calgary has by far, the highest downtown office space occupied per capita among 13 comparable North American cities.<sup>1</sup>

Calgary has 42 square feet of downtown and Beltline office supply per capita compared to an average of 13.9 square feet per capita among other comparable cities. It has 31 square feet of downtown office space occupied per capita compared to an average of 12.0 square feet per capita among other cities. The opportunity for Calgary moving into 2020 is that it has an abundance of economical and move-in-ready office space for companies and businesses to locate, grow, and create jobs.

<sup>1</sup> The 13 North American cities compared to Calgary were Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Austin, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Nashville, Oklahoma City and Pittsburgh.







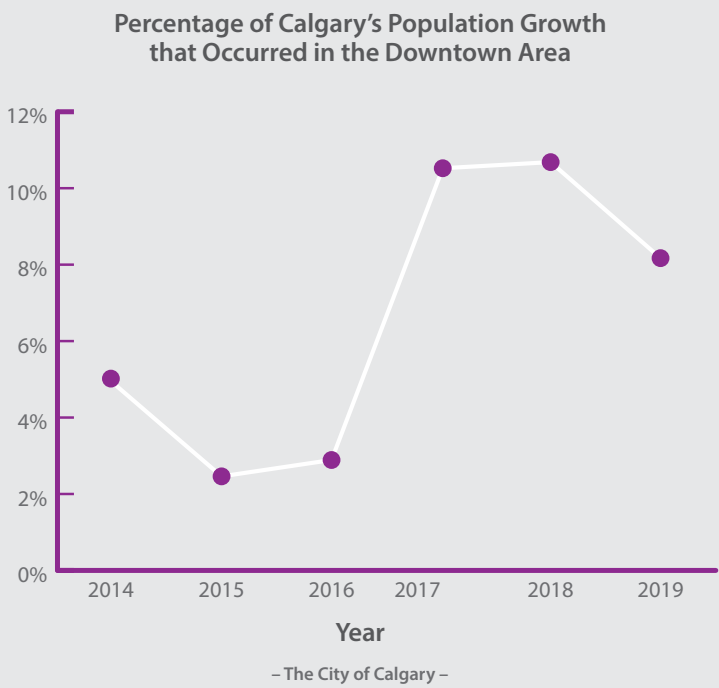
# Where we Live

## Residents

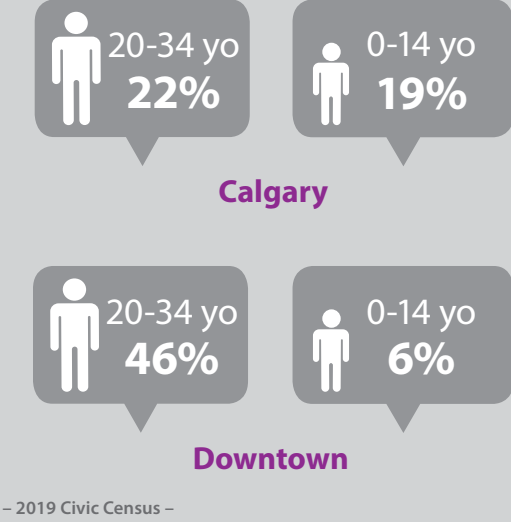
The Downtown Strategy team is committed to ensuring that downtown is a neighbourhood of choice to live in. We are working to provide the amenities and develop a winter strategy to enhance the quality of life of people living downtown, year-round. Downtown is a neighbourhood Calgarians are choosing with 44,991 people calling it home in 2019. This is an increase of 1,499 residents from 2018 or 6.5 per cent of Calgary's total population.

The population gains have been served by a growing supply of housing. Downtown added almost 1,300 housing units last year, with almost 3,000 additional units under construction. The downtown residential vacancy rate is slightly lower than the citywide rate of 3.9 per cent – 3.4 per cent for the area of downtown north of the CPR tracks and 3.2 per cent for the Beltline. Monthly rents bumped up slightly in both areas - \$1,165 in downtown, up from \$1,144 in 2018, and \$1,225 in the Beltline, up from \$1,194 in 2018.

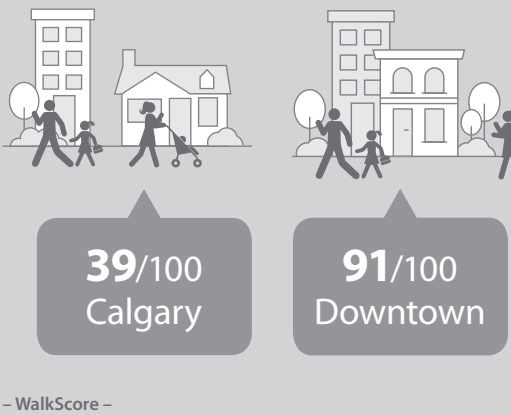
## Downtown Population



## Downtown Demographics



## Walk Score®



The City of Calgary's Pedestrian Strategy includes several key strategic initiatives for improving walkability downtown, including conducting a downtown public realm audit to identify bookable public spaces and alternative spaces for temporary and seasonal activities. Calgary is ranked the 13<sup>th</sup> most walkable large city in Canada with an overall score of 39, with the average Canadian score being 48. Calgary's downtown neighbourhoods are significantly more walkable, with an average score of 91.





Community Safety

In 2019, the majority of Calgarians considered safety in the downtown to have remained the same. However, downtown residents are more likely in 2019 than in 2017 to feel that safety has worsened. The majority (62 per cent) of Calgarians perceive the safety of the downtown to have remained the same over the past 12 months (lower than 67 per cent in 2017), and shows an increase in worsened ratings from 17 per cent in 2017 to 24 per cent in 2019. Downtown residents are more likely to say that safety has worsened in the Centre City in comparison to two years ago (32 per cent, increased from 18 per cent in 2017).

The perception of cleanliness in the downtown has remained stable since 2017. The majority (69 per cent) of Calgarians feel that the cleanliness of the downtown has remained the same over the past 12 months (consistent with 72 per cent in 2017).

Downtown residents are less likely to feel that the cleanliness of the downtown has remained the same over the past year (63 per cent, lower than 72 per cent in 2017).

– Centre City Perception Survey –

Community and Safety near Sheldon M. Chumir

The City worked collaboratively with the Calgary Police Service, Alberta Health Services, non-profit organizations, Business Improvement Areas and community partners to implement short-term actions to address community safety near the Sheldon M. Chumir Supervised Consumption Services. Beginning in June, a daily security presence at Central Memorial Park was initiated where security guards on foot–patrol interacted with citizens. As of December, corporate security guards had over 1,000 public interactions, resulting in 200 instances where guards were able to ensure misuse of the park space was appropriately mitigated and ensure vulnerable citizens were connected with services and emergency support on 85 occasions.

The City scheduled over 150 events and activities in Central Memorial Park. They partnered with community groups on a number of these events. Calgarians have enjoyed a number of recreation and cultural activities, including spin classes, drumming circles, jazz battles, Movies in the Park and outdoor theatre events. Sidewalk Citizen opened for business in Central Memorial Park. The restaurant is helping to build community at this location by creating a gathering place for the neighbourhood.



Festivals and Events

Improving the capacity of organizations in the downtown to host flagship cultural events is part of the vision to elevate Calgary as a destination for tourism and event promoters. The annual economic benefits generated by major arts, cultural, and sporting events in the downtown amount to over \$28 million in visitor and operational spending, 172,000 citizen volunteer hours, and \$6.6 million in charitable donations for medical research, education, and international growth and sustainability efforts.

Events and programs delivered a significant infusion of economic activity and cultural vibrancy to the downtown, the largest of which Calgary is most famous for – the Calgary Stampede. In addition to events referred to above, this annual event draws visitors from all across the globe. In 2019 it saw the second-highest attendance ever for the annual 10-day event of close to 1.3 million people. An impressive increase of more than 4,000 people from 2018.



City of Calgary Events	Civic Partner Events	Total
Total events <b>182 events</b>	Total events <b>2,286</b>	Events and programs <b>9,808</b>
Event attendees <b>2,707,252</b>	Total programs <b>7,340</b>	Attendees and program participants <b>3,761,306</b>
<small>* Events submitting applications to The City of Calgary</small>	Event attendees <b>884,004</b>	<small>* These numbers do not include The Calgary Stampede event</small>
	Program participants <b>170,050</b>	
	Total people at events and programs <b>1,054,054</b>	

Civic Partners Building a Lively Downtown

Civic Partners, including the Calgary Convention Centre Authority, Arts Commons, Platform Calgary, Calgary Public Library, Calgary Economic Development, and Tourism Calgary; Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and Community and Neighbourhood Associations (CAs/NAs) all contribute to the livability of the downtown.

The Downtown Strategy work includes all, or portions of, six BIAs (17th Ave. Retail & Entertainment District, Chinatown BIA, 4 Street S.W. BIA, Calgary Downtown Association, Beltline BIA, and Victoria Park BIA), three CAs (Eau Claire, Chinatown, Downtown West) and two NAs (Beltline, East Village) that help support and promote the downtown through advocacy, place making, and community-building.

The Calgary TELUS Convention Centre (CTCC) draws delegates to our city who contribute significantly to the local economy. In 2019, the CTCC hosted 267 events that attracted 156,020 participants and delegates. Arts Commons activated the downtown by hosting more than 1,039 events that attracted over 260,000 people; and over 9,000 programs. All together Civic Partner events and programs attracted more than 1 million people downtown.

Comprised mainly of volunteers, Calgary’s downtown BIAs, CAs and NAs organize, fund and host more than 200 public festivals, events and programs annually. These diverse events include the Glow Winter Festival, Beltline Bonspiel, Canada Day events, and the Lunar New Year Festival.





Livable Spaces



– The City of Calgary –

Creating Downtown Greenspaces

With downtown's high density, ensuring adequate amenities for Calgarians of all ages presents unique challenges due to a lack of space. This means that The City of Calgary must leverage all greenspaces as much as possible. One example of this is the redevelopment of a former lawn bowling site into Thomson Family Park in the Beltline. The topography of the space was integrated into the playground – a winding slide is built into a hill in the park. A bowling green has been kept as a nod to the site's history, which is turned into a skating rink during the winter months. This offers fun activities for children and their families year-round.

Credit: Ground Cubed Landscape Architects



Beautifying Downtown, one Mural at a Time

The Beltline Urban Murals Project (BUMP) is a community-driven project that showcases art, promotes tourism, improves the Beltline's public realm and builds community spirit. BUMP, a Beltline Neighbourhoods Association initiative, funds murals throughout the community that brighten up and draw attention to otherwise unattractive or forgettable building faces. BUMP, with assistance from the Beltline Community Investment Fund and local landlords, funded the creation of 16 murals in 2019 and drew over 1,000 people to its inaugural festival in August. The organization partnered with The City of Calgary this fall to create an eye-catching murals.

Art and photograph with permission of artist Natalie Nehlawi and photographer Jennie Price.



Our Urban Canopy

Urban trees provide social, environmental, and aesthetic benefits. As a municipality, Calgary has approximately seven million trees, located on both public and private lands, in parks, natural areas and green spaces. In downtown Calgary, the trees provide shade and cooling, enhance walkability of city streets, maintain the historic aesthetics of downtown streets and parks, create a sense of safe gathering spaces, and create natural areas along the river. Urban trees are vital green infrastructure for climate change resiliency in downtown built environments. Calgary's urban forest on public land has an estimated value of over \$1.3 billion. Downtown communities account for over 8,600 trees with an estimated value of \$27,966,491.







## How we Connect

The Downtown Strategy's Connect pillar is about creating and managing the frameworks that connect people, goods, information and ideas. Over the next 15 years, the Downtown Strategy team will achieve this through investing in an environment (physical and digital) that accelerates new ideas and innovation.

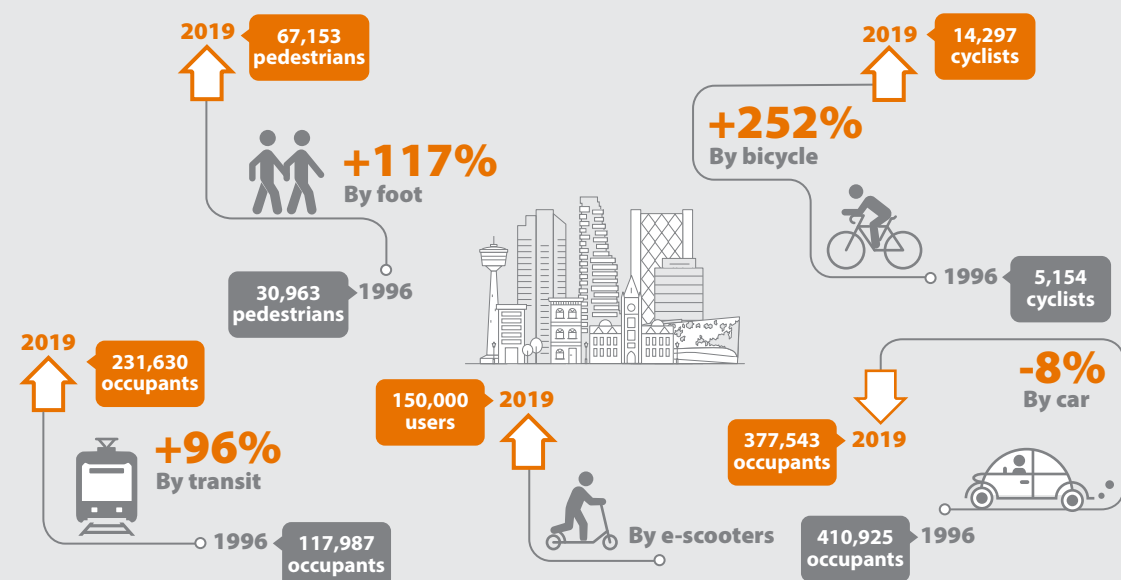
When it comes to mobility, more Calgarians get to work by different modes of transportation than ever before – a third are using transit, while three in 100 people are biking into the downtown every day. The City has also welcomed two e-scooter companies as part of a two-year pilot program, with 150,000 Calgarians and visitors scooting through the city.

Great strides have also been made through diverse initiatives to strengthen the resiliency of our business and digital networks. They range from safeguarding our downtown economic engine by designing a flood barrier for the area, to supporting the ongoing development of a city-wide Internet exchange.

### Mobility in downtown Calgary

#### How commuting has changed from 1996 to 2019

Every year the month of May, The City conducts the Central Business District (CBD) cordon count at 31 locations over a three-week period. Data is collected on how people commute into and out of downtown Calgary on a typical weekday. For more information, please visit [calgary.ca/cordoncount](https://calgary.ca/cordoncount)



The CBD cordon circles the downtown with the Bow River to the north and the railway tracks to the south and from 11 Street in the west to the Elbow River in the east.

### Scooters Hit the Streets

Electric scooters from Lime and Bird hit the downtown in July as part of The City's Shared Electric Scooter Pilot. The 16-month pilot program is part of The City's commitment to explore new ways of providing flexible, affordable and accessible mobility options for Calgarians. More than 150,000 unique users took e-scooters and e-bikes for a spin for 918,000 trips in four months.

The e-scooters provide a fun and convenient way to travel short distances and help to promote an active and healthy lifestyle, while helping to support downtown businesses. Roughly 45 per cent of e-scooter trips ended in one of downtown's Business Improvement Areas. E-scooters will be back on streets in 2020 for the second half of the pilot.



**63%**  
of all e-scooter trips  
ended downtown



#### Where were e-scooters used?

**30%** cycle track infrastructure  
**30%** pathways  
**40%** roadways and sidewalks



#### E-scooter trips ending in downtown's Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)

<b>25%</b> Calgary Downtown Association	<b>0.6%</b> First Street S.W.
<b>3.8%</b> Chinatown	<b>6%</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> Avenue S.W.
<b>7%</b> Victoria Park	<b>3.1%</b> Fourth Street S.W.

#### Most popular routes

- 📍 The Bow River Pathway north of the downtown
- 📍 8 Avenue S.W. between 7 Street S.W. and Macleod Trail S.E.
- 📍 12 Avenue S.W. between 10 Street S.W. and 3 Street S.E.
- 📍 17 Avenue S.W. between 9 Street S.W. and 1 Street S.W.
- 📍 5 Street S.W. between 17 Avenue and 9 Avenue S.W.

– The City of Calgary –



Connecting Downtown



By train

Ctrain Customer Trip Satisfaction

2018: 85%  
2019: 87%

– The City of Calgary –



By bike

Cycle tracks connecting downtown

8.7 km of cycle track in downtown Calgary  
1 km of new cycle track built in 2019

– The City of Calgary –



By foot

Underpasses

24,420 Pedestrian traffic

– The City of Calgary –



By car

Parking occupancy rate after 6 p.m. for off-street facilities

2018: 17%  
2019: 18%

– Calgary Parking Authority –

Easing Downtown Parking

Pricing for Calgary's on-street parking is based on demand, and paid parking is divided into 27 pricing areas. Demand-based pricing helps ensure on-street parking is managed in a transparent and equitable manner, and is used by many other major North American cities. The cost of parking is periodically adjusted to match demand, which encourages drivers to find lower-cost spots in underutilized areas. Rates are adjusted by a maximum of \$0.25 per year. In areas where occupancy is below 50 per cent, prices decrease by \$0.25, and in areas where occupancy is above 80 per cent, prices increase by \$0.25.

In 2019, over \$2.2 million was also made available for Business Improvement Areas to invest in improvements to public spaces through The City's Parking Revenue Reinvestment Program. Improvements to public spaces helps keep these areas attractive for people, contributing to business and community vitality.



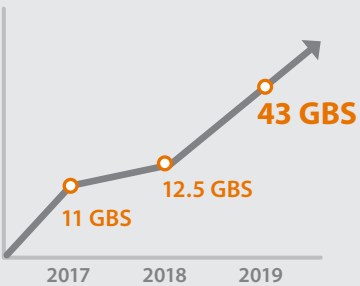
The Centre City Underpass Enhancement Program

Over 20,000 pedestrians and 2,500 cyclists use the underpasses connecting downtown and the Beltline. The City is making both major and minor improvements to these underpasses to make it easier, safer and more enjoyable for Calgarians to use these important connections. Quick, low-cost improvements were made to the Macleod Trail S.E. and 1 Street S.E. underpasses, including mural artwork and repaved sidewalks. Future work will include improved lighting, safer guardrails and improved maintenance and cleaning processes. The 5 Street S.W. underpass has been redesigned, with construction slated to begin this year.

Art with permission of Michelle Hoogveld



Supporting business through connectivity



Calgary Internet Exchange (YYCIX)  
Data Transfer Peak

2017: 11 GB/second  
2018: 12.5 GB/second  
2019: 43 GB/second

– YYCIX Internet Exchange Community –

Calgary Internet Exchange

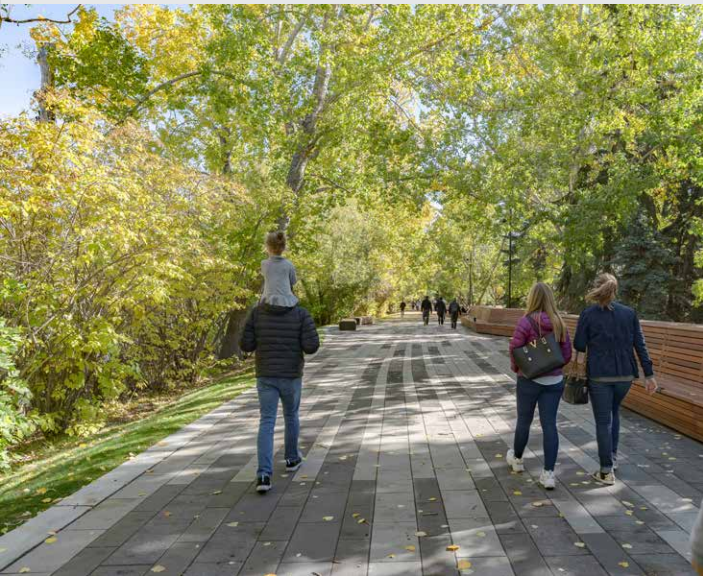
The Calgary Internet Exchange (YYCIX) is a not-for-profit group focused on improving the Internet experience for everyone in Calgary and the region. YYCIX accomplishes this through a peering service that results in higher bandwidth, faster response times, and lower costs. Internet exchange locations, including The City of Calgary Municipal Building, are primarily located in the downtown but are also located in data centres in other parts of the city. YYCIX is building our local internet infrastructure capacity with the goal of reducing costs for users, providing greater bandwidth, and increasing the reliability and resiliency of Calgary's digital networks. YYCIX saw the usage of its circuits increase by 300 per cent in 2019 and added a major partner in Facebook to go along with existing peers like Google, TELUS and Hurricane Electric.



Downtown Flood Resiliency

Updating our downtown's interface with the Bow River goes beyond designing improved pathways and public spaces. It involves a flood mitigation effort that will increase resiliency.

Design of the Downtown flood barrier is underway. Community engagement started in April 2019 and construction is estimated to begin sometime in 2020. The Downtown flood barrier, once complete, will connect with the West Eau Claire Park flood barrier and extend to the Reconciliation Bridge to form a single, contiguous piece of flood mitigation infrastructure for Calgary's downtown. These measures will result in reduced business and economic interruptions, and increased resiliency for critical services and public infrastructure.





Downtown is core to our city’s vibrancy and economic resilience. The Downtown Strategy supports its recovery and the future of Calgary’s cultural and economic district. This strategy is the result of the collaboration and significant effort of community leaders and their teams. Together, they have guided the development of workplans and performance measures for each of the strategy’s four pillars.

The downtown leadership team is focused on working together to help ensure downtown’s ongoing success now and into the future. Recovering the current economic situation will take time and requires a coordinated strategy to leverage the collective efforts of The City, its public, nonprofit and private sector partners.

The strategy’s workplan identifies immediate actions with a future vision to guide the recovery from the prolonged economic challenges our downtown has

faced. Together, this focus and alignment will help the downtown leadership team recognize, seize, and capitalize on opportunities that will create jobs, drive economic recovery, and revitalize the downtown. Looking ahead to 2020 and beyond, the implementation of the Downtown Strategy continues through its four pillars: Place, Work, Live, and Connect. The team is focused on taking actions that will have positive impacts on our downtown vibrancy.



Place

- Support private investment
- Invest in physical infrastructure
- Provide amenities/services
- Align safety resources for optimal benefit
- Work with Calgary Heritage Authority on downtown heritage priorities



Work

- Grow existing companies and attract new companies that support high-potential innovation ecosystems and clusters
- Transition, develop, and attract top talent to support the goals of **Calgary in the New Economy**



Live

- Provide programming and services to enhance visitor and resident experiences
- Identify and prioritize programming that increase visits locally and from afar
- Align safety resources for optimal benefit



Connect

- Strengthen the resilience of our mobility, utility, and digital networks
- Foster a future - focused ecosystem that embraces disruptors and innovation
- Pilot innovative solutions to improve safety, vibrancy and connections in the nine blocks surrounding City Hall



In partnership with



CALGARY  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT



VICTORIA  
PARK  
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FOURTH  
STREET



[calgary.ca/downtown](http://calgary.ca/downtown)