

Background

The origins of Calgary's Plus 15 network dates to 1963 but the concept was not realized until Urban Renewal Scheme No. 1 in 1965. In 1966, the Plus 15 concept was first introduced in a Planning Department document called "The Future of Downtown Calgary". Public areas on the Plus 15 level were then incorporated into the 1970 Development Control Bylaw (Bylaw 8600). Harold Hanen, a former City of Calgary Planner, recognized the opportunities of the Plus 15 network for Calgary and championed the system. The first Plus 15 bridge was constructed in 1969 and connects the Westin Hotel to Calgary Place over 4th Avenue S.W. between 2nd and 3rd Street S.W.

Previous Council Direction

Plus 15 Must Policy

In 1975, an interim policy was developed for the Plus 15 network where Plus 15 Bonus options were replaced with a Plus 15 Must Area. In the Plus 15 Must Area, minimum requirements of the Plus 15 network were to be implemented regardless of bonus utilization and it was directed that The City obtain public easement areas through developments for the Plus 15 network. The intent of the Plus 15 network was to provide grade-separated pedestrian linkages, primarily in the north/south direction to overcome the heavy vehicular volumes in the east/west roadways. It was also thought that the Plus 15 could eventually provide linkages to inner city communities like the Beltline, Victoria Park and Prince's Island.

Operational challenges were also highlighted in the 1975 "Report on The Calgary +15 System". Challenges identified included: easement acquisition, land use requirements, policing, design guidelines, signage and maintenance requirements.

1984 +15 Policy

The 1984 +15 Policy was developed to describe the form of Plus 15 development planned for downtown Calgary with a primary focus on the growth and development of the Plus 15 network. Additionally, it supplemented the Land Use Bylaw and provided a basis for development agreements with The City and property owners in the areas of operations and maintenance.

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan: Roadmap to Reinvention sets out the vision, roadmap and commitment to build a thriving, future-focused downtown over the next decade and beyond. Strategic moves include:

- Neighbourhoods for vibrant urban life

- A green network for a healthy environment
- Streets for people
- Transit for all
- Future-proof and innovate for the next generation

Actions for the Plus 15 network include:

- Pilot placemaking opportunities and ways to animate the Plus 15 network, making it a destination.
- Pursue opportunities to proactively construct missing Plus 15 network links, as identified in the Plus 15 Network Study, 2019.
- Modernize wayfinding so street-level access points are easy to identify and navigation within the Plus 15 network is improved.
- Integrate the Plus 15 network with LRT stations and enhance street-level entrances that connect to transit hubs.
- Enhance accessibility within the Plus 15 network so it can be used by citizens of all ages and abilities.