

# State of Downtown Calgary 2020

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We are proud to present the second annual State of Downtown Calgary report, highlighting where our downtown stands at the end of 2020 – including both its strengths and weaknesses, while looking forward from 2021 towards a decade into Calgary’s future.

This has been an unprecedented year and has taken an enormous toll on Calgarians, our city and our downtown. We’ve been hit hard from every angle by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of our oil and gas sector restructuring. The impact from unemployment, small business struggles and closures, and office space vacancies has been staggering. Families are trying to make ends meet, small business owners are working day-and-night to keep the doors open, and companies of any size are struggling. Our downtown and downtown business owners are taking the brunt of this impact full-on. It’s time that we take a new approach to Calgary’s downtown, learn from both the good and the bad of the past year, and take bold action to shape downtown’s future.

Our downtown is the economic and cultural heart of Calgary. It is a hub for business, innovation, and creativity. What happens downtown impacts the rest of the city and Calgary needs a strong core to grow and create jobs. Calgary, as a whole, benefits from a strong downtown, as it contributes to its economic success and The City’s revenues, tax base, and ability to provide services to citizens. The downtown is connected to the rest of the city and is not an island – what happens downtown has a direct impact on the rest of the city.

A vibrant downtown is vital to Calgary’s economic recovery and we’re facing a long road ahead. There is no looking back – we must focus on the future. Calgary’s downtown will not go back to the way it was before the pandemic, let alone five to ten years ago. We must take bold steps now, implement necessary changes and make decisive moves quickly in order to transform and reinvent downtown for decades to come.

Step one in the road map to reinvention is planning for the next decade of our downtown. **Calgary’s Greater Downtown Plan** is a long-range, non-statutory plan that will help city-builders, decision-makers, investors, and citizens understand the direction for our downtown over the next decade. It is our vision, roadmap and commitment to build a thriving, future-focused downtown.

Our future success relies on downtown being a place people want to live, visit and set up businesses. We need to move beyond the traditional nine-to-five business district towards a vibrant downtown that people enjoy 24/7 – with a diverse mix of residential, office, retail, entertainment, tourism and culture.

The Downtown Strategy team is planning bold moves for the next decade to achieve our vision of a resilient and vibrant place for everyone:

- **Building great downtown neighbourhoods** with vibrant gathering places, lots of housing choices and all of the amenities residents need close by.
- **Expanding our green network** with more parks, natural spaces and river frontage connected by pedestrian-friendly main streets.
- **Creating streets for people** by building connections and support vibrant neighbourhoods.
- **Making transit more appealing to all Calgarians** to travel to and around downtown.
- **Encouraging innovation** to accommodate and attract innovative businesses, testing and economic enterprise from the global technology sector.



**We need to create an even-more thriving downtown community that moves beyond the traditional office-based downtown central business district and instead is a dynamic, vibrant 24/7 centre of our city. This means taking bold action and making intentional investments in public spaces, supporting vibrant neighbourhoods, and ensuring we continue to create a downtown that people want to live and work in.**

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

Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan is just the beginning. In order for downtown reinvention to occur, downtown partners must make an intentional investment in our downtown to make it a place where people want to live and spend their time, while also making it attractive to for businesses to set up shop, innovate and thrive. This means providing financial incentives to convert empty office buildings to residential spaces, educational spaces, urban agriculture pilots or new spaces for retail. This is already underway, with a \$200 million investment from The City of Calgary to make it easier to fill downtown's empty office space and support the establishment of 24/7 communities in our downtown core.

We also need to make a significant investment in vibrancy to support the development of complete neighbourhoods. This means improving public spaces that are community centerpieces, like reinvesting in the future of Stephen Avenue, building a north-south pedestrian connection on 8 Street S.W., opening up Downtown West to the Bow River through an extension of the West Eau Claire Promenade, and transforming Arts Commons into Calgary's arts and culture hub for the future.

Implementing Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan and investing in a shift from vacancy to vibrancy will require the participation and actions of many downtown stakeholders and our Downtown Strategy team is taking a share approach to our roadmap to reinvention.

This report highlights where the downtown is currently in relation to the four pillars of our Downtown Strategy – Place, Work, Live, and Connect. It highlights this past year's successes, challenges and the opportunities that the Downtown Strategy partners are moving forward with in 2021 and beyond. This past year saw extreme challenges and limitations placed on our downtown, but there was still a lot happening in our downtown and this report provides a snapshot of how our efforts are building the foundation for the next decade of our downtown's future.

Our best days are ahead of us. There is no easy fix, but we'll come back stronger than ever with grit, determination and collaboration to move the heart of Calgary along the road to reinvention.



Stuart Dalglish  
The City of Calgary



Thom Mahler  
The City of Calgary



Mary Moran  
Calgary Economic Development



Kate Thompson  
Calgary Municipal Land Corporation



Dr. John Brown  
The University of Calgary



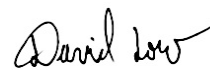
James McLaughlin  
The City of Calgary



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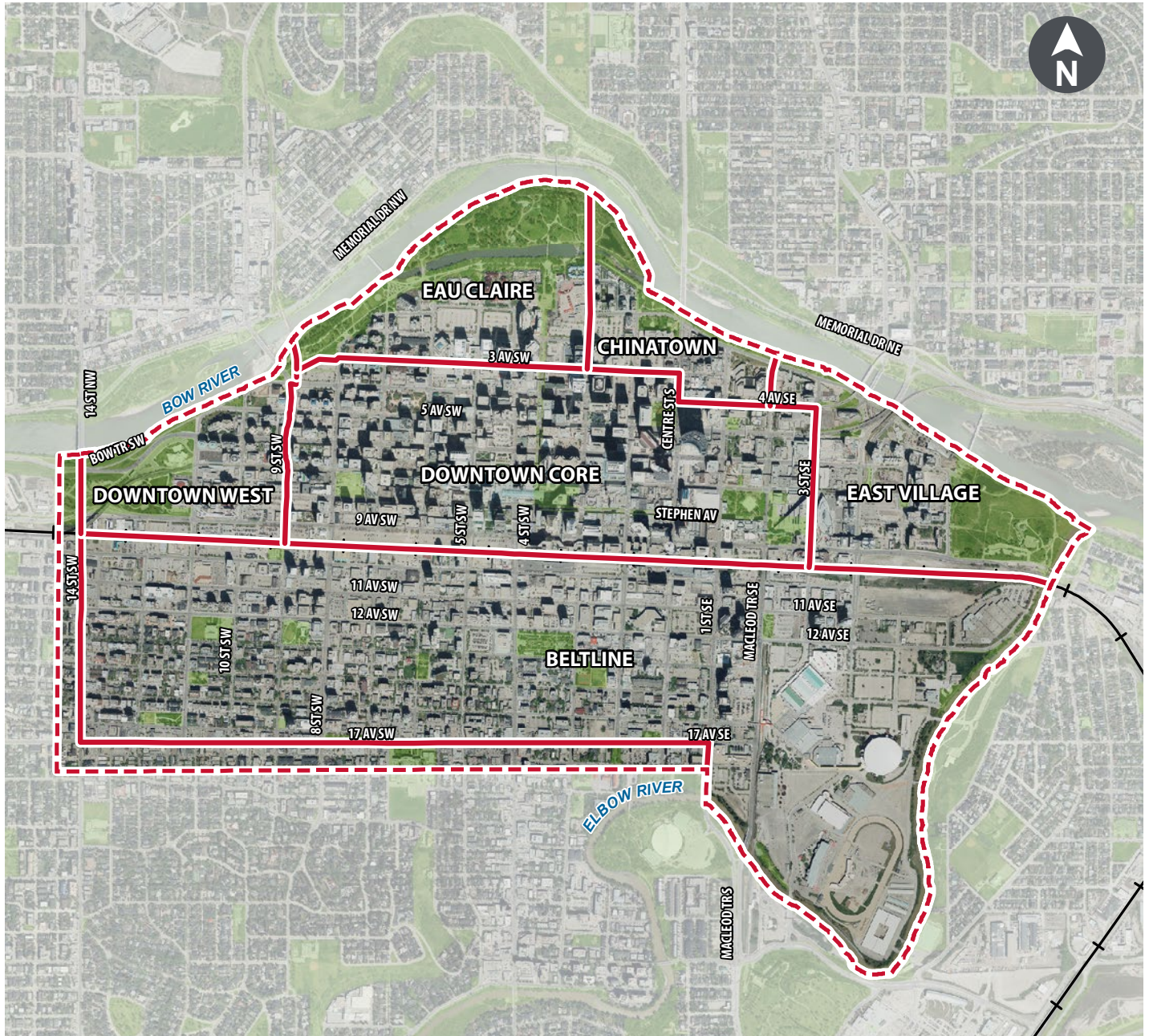


Jennifer Rempel  
Calgary Downtown Association



David Low  
Victoria Park Business  
Improvement Area

## Downtown – The Boundaries



### Legend

- Greater Downtown Boundary
- Neighbourhood Boundary

## Calgary City-wide 2020 Highlights



Highest concentration of **head offices** per capita in Canada  
– FP500 2020 Database –



5th most **livable city** in the world  
– The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019 –  
No change. The EIU did not release a report in 2020 due to COVID-19



493 kilometres of on-street **bikeways and cycle tracks** citywide



Calgary has the second lowest **cost of living** of Canadian cities and 9th lowest of North American cities.  
Mercer 2020 Cost of Living Ranking



Top 10 North American Ecosystem **Affordable Talent** and  
Top 20 North American Ecosystem **Bang for Buck**  
– Startup Genome, 2020 –



33 venture **capital investments** totaling \$353M in 2020  
– Source: 2020 Year in Review: Canadian Venture Capital Market Overview, CVCA, March 2021 –

## Downtown Calgary 2020 Highlights



6 Business Improvement Areas downtown



5 community and neighbourhood associations



956,000 e-scooter trips



200+ art galleries, parks, public art, historical buildings and areas, and shopping malls





# The Place

## The Importance of Downtown Public Spaces

What makes a great public space? It's a place where people want to be. It can mean something different for each person, but it is freely accessible to all. Making a great place is also something on which cities and their business and community partners collaborate and build together.

Placemaking as a community and economic development tool has been around since Jane Jacobs' groundbreaking 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. It recognized public spaces that are regularly visited by diverse people are safer, more prosperous, more enjoyable for residents and more attractive to visitors.

Why is public life an essential part of a healthy, vibrant city? Public life is the social activity that takes place in our public spaces – on streets, in parks and plazas, and in the spaces between buildings. It's created by people when they live their lives outside. A lot of our public life happens by how we design our public spaces and has individual, neighbourhood, and citywide benefits – both economic and social.

The Urban Land Institute Center for Sustainability and Economic Performance's "The Case for Open Space" report validates this approach. Parks and open space, and the public life they create, can increase community health, enhance urban environmental sustainability, increase the value of nearby real estate, and generate higher real property tax revenue for municipalities.

Vibrant public life is an indicator of a city that is successful economically, socially and environmentally. When designed to embrace the changing social needs of its surrounding or the community, public spaces can support enhancing the quality of life for people living and working in those communities. A thriving public life is essential to attract and retain talent for business large and small.



## Building public life in Calgary's downtown and Stephen Avenue

Investing in the future of Stephen Avenue is a fundamental piece of our Downtown Strategy. It's one way we're supporting and attracting private investment, and encouraging people to visit and patronize our businesses. It will provide amenities and services to enhance the quality of life for people living and working in Calgary's downtown.

The Calgary Downtown Association is a major partner as the steward of this space. This is not just about creating a beautiful street, it's about creating conditions that will attract private investment, economic growth, and amenities that will entice residents and visitors for years to come.

Updating Calgary's historic pedestrian hub goes beyond designing and improving the physical streetscape. It involves developing strategies to encourage economic investment and redevelop private space. It's a plan for programming the public space to improve public life and ensure residents and tourists are drawn to Stephen Avenue for years to come.

Cities have discovered this and have begun to redesign streets and urban spaces to allow for public life and support economic growth –like Market Street in San Francisco, 16th Street Mall in Denver and 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica. We're taking this approach in Calgary as well, like our with our community partnerships to develop Bowforth Park in Downtown West, or larger public spaces like Stephen Avenue and the Eau Claire Promenade and Plaza.





## Re-shaping public spaces in the Eau Claire area

The City's efforts in Eau Claire, Chinatown and the East Village, serve a similar purpose in the downtown area. Redesigning the Eau Claire Promenade and Eau Claire Plaza public spaces is possible because the Downtown Flood Barrier, which sits underneath, needs to be improved. This work is part of The City's efforts to create a safe, efficient and beautiful riverfront promenade and cycling network. It will have a ripple effect of supporting neighbouring communities and business areas. These projects are working towards building more resilient and vibrant communities that support future growth and development for the people who live, work, visit and travel the area.

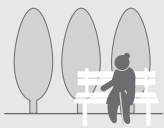


**\$59.1 million**

Capital investment in 2020 and 2023 in Eau Claire area **public space projects**







**1** Eau Claire Plaza  
Eau Claire Promenade/  
Downtown Flood Barrier



**2** Jaipur Bridge,  
Centre Street Ramps



**3** 3 Avenue Walking and  
Wheeling projects

## Public and Private Partners Making Big Moves in the East Village and Rivers District

Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) has been transforming the East Village and the east end of Victoria Park into one of the city's most inviting destinations since 2007. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, CMLC moved forward on the major projects underway in these transforming neighbourhoods.

The vision for east Victoria Park will result in four million square feet of mixed-use development and more than 8,000 new residents moving into the district. CMLC's priority is to enhance the existing urban fabric—including public realm enhancements, connectivity within Stampede Park, the Elbow River and neighbouring communities—and reshape east Victoria Park as an active, walkable, and accessible community with enhanced connections to adjacent neighbourhoods.





## Event Centre

- Community engagement about perceptions of the new facility took place between January and March, with 1,977 Calgarians participating at in-person events and 14,549 Calgarians providing feedback online.
- Dialog and HOK announced as the lead design firms for the Event Centre in June 2020.
- CANA + Mortenson Construction announced as the lead construction management firm.



## 17 Avenue S.E. Extension

- The 17th Avenue SE Extension and Victoria Park/Stampede Station Crossing is a critical connection in the Rivers District Master Plan to reconnect Stampede Park to the Beltline neighbourhood while bringing the energy and excitement of 17 Avenue into the heart of the Culture + Entertainment District.
- Enabling work for the 17 Avenue S.E. extension project began, which will lead to 17 Avenue connecting the Stampede Park with Victoria Park and the Beltline.
- The design for a new, street-level Victoria Park/Stampede CTrain station was approved in October 2020.



## Platform Innovation Centre

- Opening in fall 2021, the Platform Innovation Centre is a hub dedicated to supporting startups and entrepreneurs.
- Work crews topped off the 9 Avenue S.E. Parkade and Platform Innovation Centre with the final concrete pour on its upper level.
- The tech and startup incubator and 500 stall parkade is on track for a spring 2021 completion.





**BMO Centre Expansion**

- Crews finished construction of Hall F, a 100,000 sq. ft. facility on the north side of the existing building that'll allow business to continue uninterrupted through the construction of the BMO Centre expansion.
- Calgary Stampede and CMLC unveiled concept drawings for the expanded convention centre, to be complete in 2024, which will significantly grow and modernize the facility and enable Calgary to host meetings and conventions on a global scale.



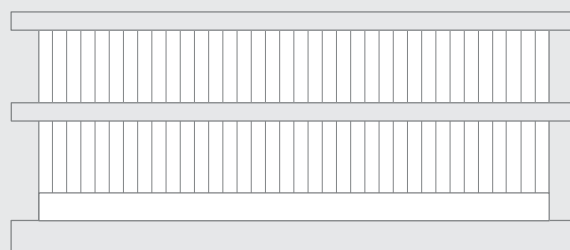
**Arts Commons Transformation**

- CMLC, Arts Commons, and The City of Calgary signed an agreement to begin designing a major transformation to Arts Commons.
- An oversight committee with representation from all three parties will oversee the procurement and design process, which will last through mid-2022.



**Event Centre**

**\$400.3 million** projected returns to The City of Calgary over 35 years



**\$2.5 million** share of naming rights



**\$9.5 million** community engagement programming



**\$138.7 million** incremental Rivers District property tax



**\$155.1 million** City facility fee



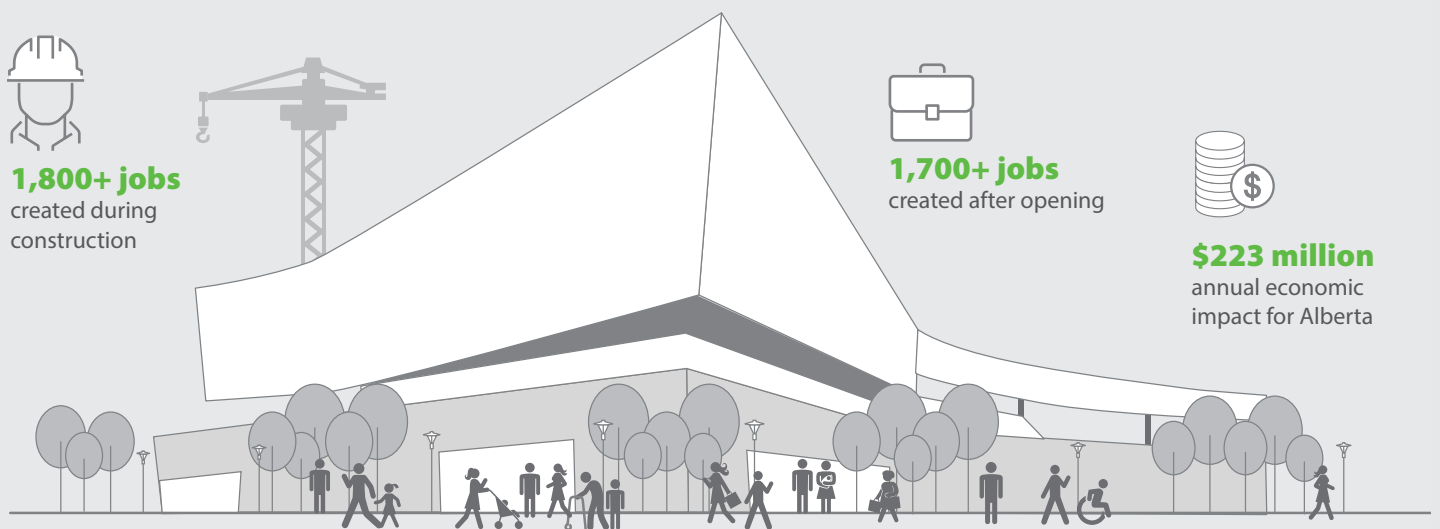
**\$19.4 million** street-facing retail property tax

**\$75 million** support to local community sports organizations

## Arts Commons Transformation



## BMO Centre Expansion



## Historic City Hall

Historic City Hall had been completely under wraps since May 2017, when it was surrounded by a heavy-duty protective enclosure. Exterior work was finished in 2020 and Historic City Hall was “unwrapped”. Calgarians were able to view the building for the first time in three years. While Historic City Hall was undergoing heritage restoration, the wrap covered the construction crew, equipment and materials, and protected the sandstone and exposed building components from weather. It allowed work to occur through every season regardless of extreme temperatures. 15,142 pieces of sandstone were restored and 2,400 new sandstone bricks were installed to the building’s original façade.



## Tomorrow’s Chinatown

One of Calgary’s most culturally distinct and unique neighbourhoods, Chinatown, is getting Calgary’s first-ever cultural plan, which will influence planning policy and a new Local Area Plan. With the guidance of the Chinatown community, and the Chinatown Business Improvement Area (BIA) these new plans, known collectively as Tomorrow’s Chinatown, will help support Chinatown’s future as a vibrant, culturally-rich place to live, visit, work, and do business, for generations to come. Culture plays the defining role in shaping Chinatown. This cultural plan will be a roadmap for the planning and use of cultural resources to strengthen the economy and improve the quality of life in Chinatown. Tomorrow’s Chinatown is expected to finalize the new cultural and local area plan by the end of 2021.



**5 Community leaders** volunteer their time and expertise as part of a project advisory group



More than **1,200 Calgarians** responded to **Tomorrow’s Chinatown discovery survey**



More than **120 hours** of **one-on-one and group conversations** were held on matters affecting Chinatown



**330 businesses** in Chinatown



## High Park

High Park is a new rooftop public park and event space in the Beltline serving as an exciting destination for residents and visitors to the city alike. Built on top of a parkade, the park reimagines the under-utilized rooftop of the City Centre Parkade as public space. The park features a boardwalk, lined with a series of colourful parklets that encourage socially distanced outdoor get-togethers. High Park was developed in partnership by the Beltline Neighbourhoods Association, the Calgary Parking Authority, Public City Architecture and the Beltline Urban Mural Project, with funding from The City of Calgary's Beltline Community Investment Fund.



Located at  
**340 – 10 Avenue S.W.**

**90,000 sq. ft.**  
of public space

**Features murals** from Kevin Ledo, Guido van Helten, Ankh One and Derek Simmers

## Development and Investment



**Construction Value**  
**\$170 million**



**Building Permits**  
**573**



**Downtown and Beltline Office Sales**  
**\$123.09 million**



**Average Downtown Commercial Core  
Net Rental Rate**  
**\$12.15/sq.ft.**

## Where we Work

This past year was extremely tough for downtown's businesses, both large and small. The COVID-19 pandemic and restructuring to Calgary's oil and gas industry hit our downtown hard. Gone are the vast majority of office workers, transit riders, students and visitors and our business are suffering as a result. But it's not all doom and gloom – Calgary brings many assets to the recovery of its downtown work ecosystem. Calgary has a young and innovative culture, a dynamic, diverse and well-educated population, and best-in-class infrastructure. The city also has a vital, respected university sector, and a growing reputation as a tech and innovation hub.

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 and Economic Recovery

Task Force, both of which focus on reducing barriers, time, and cost to enable local business success, while supporting businesses through the effects of the pandemic.

Calgary Economic Development helped attract, expand and retain 15 companies in our downtown and created and retained 1,509 direct and indirect jobs. The Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF) was leveraged to secure high potential organizations to set up shop in Calgary, with five companies making direct and positive impacts on our downtown.







## Platform Innovation Centre

Opening in fall 2021, the Platform Innovation Centre is a hub dedicated to supporting startups and entrepreneur, and a focal point for Calgary's burgeoning tech sector. The Platform Innovation Centre provides a single point of access to resources, supports, programming and events to help startup founders successfully launch and grow their business. It is a critical tool in Platform Calgary's plan to create jobs, diversify the economy, and ensure greater prosperity for all Calgarians.

Located in the heart of the East Village neighbourhood, beside City Hall, Central Library, and Studio Bell, the Platform Innovation Centre will help create connections for local innovators, driving new economic growth and job creation in Calgary.

The Platform Innovation Centre is a partnership between Platform Calgary, Calgary's organization dedicated to making the city a global hub for startups and innovation, the Calgary Parking Authority, and Calgary Municipal Land Corporation. It is being designed to meet the changing needs of Calgary's business community while accelerating Calgary's innovation economy.

The Platform Innovation Centre will provide:

- 50+ program partners helping founders start and grow tech startups and companies
- Access to classes, seminars, workshops, and programs

- Networks of local, regional, national, and global advisors and mentors
- Pitch stage and event-based community space for 450+ people equipped with display screens, built-in sound system, lights, and broadcasting cameras to provide a fully immersed digital-first experience and the ability to pivot to in-person events
- 50,000 sq. ft. to serve entrepreneurs and tech startups

As the home of Startup Calgary, Platform Calgary is a champion for every innovation entrepreneur, especially those in the early stages of a great idea or business. Their goal is to increase the number of technology startups in Calgary by ten times to 3,000 core tech startups in 2031, and in turn, create tens of thousands of jobs and add \$10 billion to Calgary's gross domestic product (GDP).



**Downtown Calgary office space:  
larger and more occupied**

Downtown and Beltline office vacancy at the end of 2020 sat at 29.36%. Calgary couldn't keep up with the demand for space when the city's economy was stronger, so large-scale office developments were approved to keep up. These large projects took years to complete, while the economy contracted in the interim and demand dropped significantly since 2014.

The result of this build-up is that Calgary has not only the highest levels of downtown office supply (commercial core and Beltline), but also the highest occupied downtown office space per capita when viewed against comparable North American cities. As of Q4, Calgary has 43 square feet (sf) of office space, per capita, more than double the amount of Toronto (21 sf per capita), the next highest of any comparable North American city.

While Calgary has the largest amount of downtown office space, per capita, it also has more occupied downtown office space than any comparable city. Calgary currently has 31 sf per capita, more than one and half times the occupied downtown office space of Toronto (20 sf per capita) and more than double Denver (13 sf per capita), a city Calgary is often benchmarked against.

Downtown Calgary office space is highly competitive compared to other cities. Calgary is the best bargain for office space rentals compared with other Canadian cities. Average "class A" downtown lease rates are roughly three times higher in Vancouver than here in Calgary. Calgary has an abundance of high quality, move-in ready, and economical office space downtown. The current rental rates should be attractive to businesses.

**Calgary**



**43 sq. ft.**  
Downtown office  
space per capita

**31 sq. ft.**  
Occupied downtown office  
space per capita

**Toronto**



**21 sq. ft.**  
Downtown office  
space per capita

**20 sq. ft.**  
Occupied downtown office  
space per capita

**Denver**



**15 sq. ft.**  
Downtown office  
space per capita

**13 sq. ft.**  
Occupied downtown office  
space per capita

– CBRE, Oxford Economics, Statistics Canada, U.S. Census Bureau,  
U.S. Department of Commerce –

**ESQ Business Services**

ESQ Business Services chose Calgary to open its sole Canadian support and software development centre. While searching for its newest development centre location in Canada, ESQ looked to Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver, but ultimately chose Calgary as the best option to expand its company into North America. Calgary Economic Development's efforts to promote and attract investment in new technology industries outside of the traditional oil and gas sector was noted as a strong factor in ESQ's decision to launch this new unit in Calgary.



## Symend

Downtown Calgary-based Symend has raised a \$73 million round of funding for its customer engagement platform designed to better connect with financially at-risk customers. The startup has developed an “engagement platform” designed to better engage, treat, and retain financially at-risk customers. Symend’s mission is to digitally transform the engagement experience for those consumers by using behavioural science, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. Symend is targeting a team size of 200 employees by the end of 2020. Not only is Symend delivering an innovative solution to the marketplace, but they are also actively leveraging Calgary’s rich and diverse tech talent pool.



## Harvest Builders

Harvest Builders, a Calgary-based venture builder that provides a co-building approach to growing a business, will receive up to \$4 million from the Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF) over three years to help create and sustain infrastructure in Calgary, allowing startups in western Canada to test new technologies and grow their businesses.

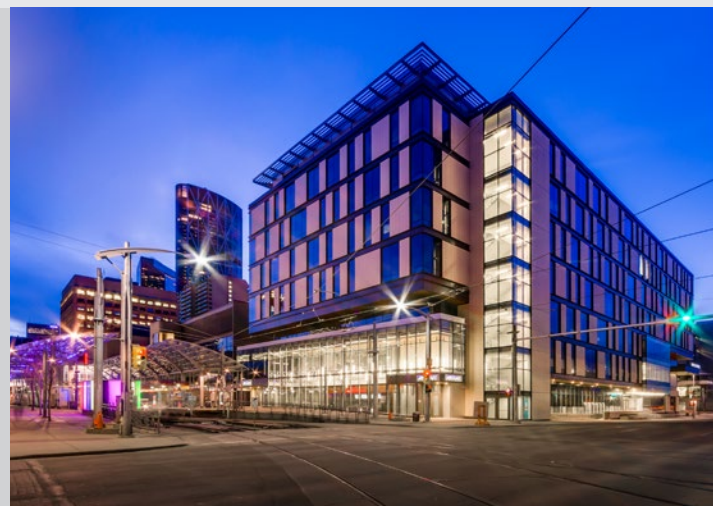
This investment will enable Harvest to expand their initial pilot, and work with startup founders to co-build new companies that continue to fuel the funnel of new innovation and technology in Calgary.

Harvest Builder’s portfolio will initially focus on the financial technology and property/real estate technology sectors, with plans to expand to other portfolios in the future. The Harvest platform is expected to create at least 290 funded high skill full-time jobs.



## Bow Valley College

Bow Valley College was awarded \$1.52 million by the Government of Canada’s Future Skills Centre to help Canadians secure employment by demonstrating their competencies to prospective employers, by “Bridging the Gap” in skills required. This significant investment will be used to develop both scalable Artificial Intelligence (AI) assessments and a technology platform to support reskilling and upskilling. The college and its partners will each identify two in-demand jobs in the region, create scalable AI assessments, and then offer them to job seekers through a network of almost 50 community partners.





### SAIT DX Talent Hub

In September, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) made a significant commitment to enhancing Calgary's tech talent development infrastructure and combatting a shortage in this area by announcing the creation of the Digital Transformation (DX) Talent Hub. Supported by an \$8.2 million investment from the Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF), the DX Talent Hub will

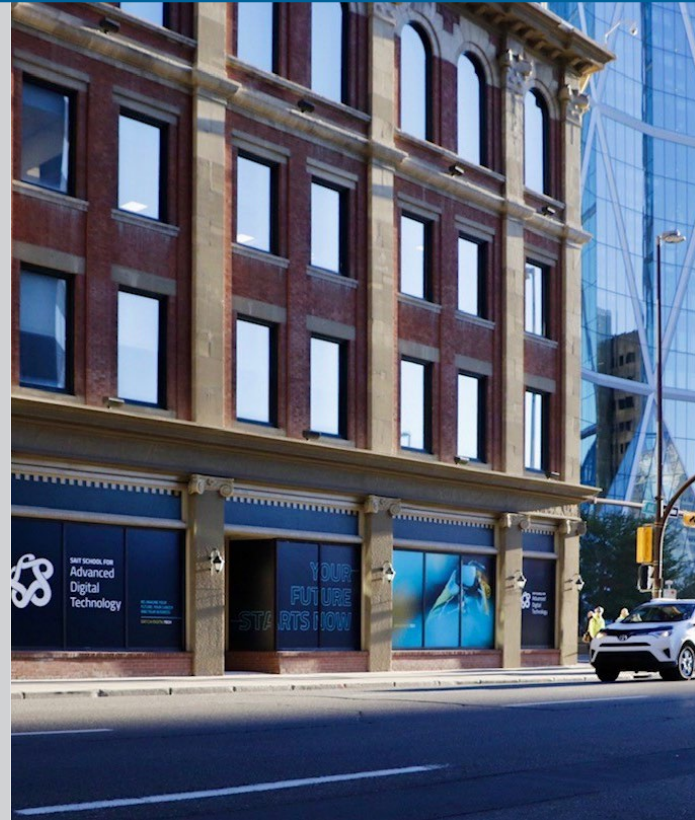
January 2021 in downtown's historic Odd Fellows Building. The Hub's focus is on addressing the digital skills gap in Calgary and helping workers and companies transition to the digital economy. The Hub is expected to produce more than 1,500 graduates, including at least three dozen corporate workforce cohorts, from its Digital Adoption training program within five years. It will also engage hundreds of K-12 students each year to help them explore and build careers in technology.



Occupies **34,000 sq. ft.** of office space



**1,500 graduates** expected within five years



### LodgeLink Inc.

LodgeLink Inc., a digital B2B workplace travel platform that efficiently connects service providers to businesses seeking workforce logistics management, is receiving up to \$3 million from the Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF). This investment will support an expected 300 new tech jobs over five years in Calgary. Along with the 300 tech jobs associated with OCIF support, which will include roles in software development and systems/data analytics, LodgeLink expects to hire another 300 non-tech positions in Calgary.

**LodgeLink Inc. is the 14th organization** approved for OCIF funding

**500+ companies** around the world use LodgeLink launch



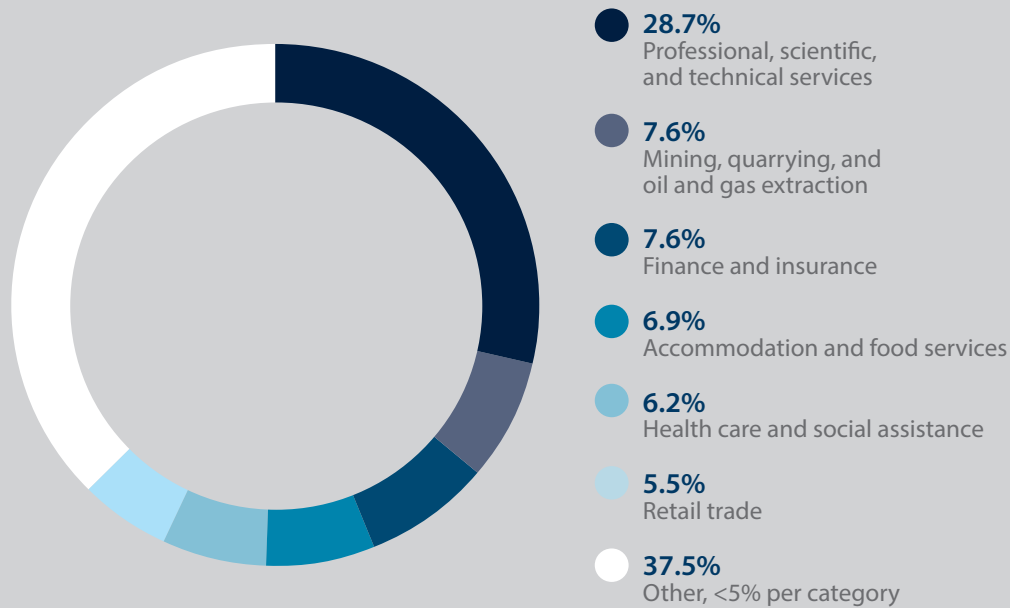
Will require **~50,000 sq. ft.** of downtown office space to accommodate **600 additional staff**



Lists more than **2,000 hotels** and lodge properties on its platform, representing over **200,000 rooms**



## Downtown businesses by industry



– Canadian Business Counts, Statistics Canada, December 2020 –

**117**  
Head offices  
based in Calgary  
– the highest  
concentration per  
capita in Canada

– FP500 2020 Database (Canada's  
largest corporations by revenue.) –



**49,653,988 sq.ft.**  
Downtown & Beltline  
Office and Retail Space



**42,500**  
Number of tech workers in Calgary

– 2020 Scoring Tech Talent, July 2020, CBRE Research –

**-656,295 sq.ft.**  
Office Absorption Volume

– CBRE –



## Where we Live

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 to enhance the quality of life of people living downtown, year-round and to support complete communities. Downtown is a neighbourhood Calgarians are choosing with 44,991 people calling it home.

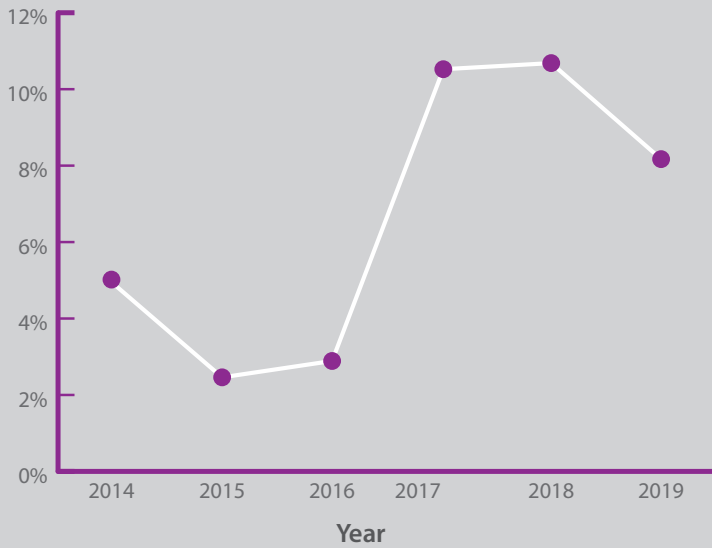
The population gains have been served by a growing supply of housing. Downtown added 1327 housing units last year, with 1084 additional units under construction. The downtown residential vacancy rate is 5.8 per cent for the area of downtown north of the CPR tracks and 15.38 per cent for the Beltline. Monthly rents bumped down slightly downtown (\$1,157 from \$1,165 in 2019) and bumped up slightly in the Beltline (\$1,270 from \$1,225 in 2019).





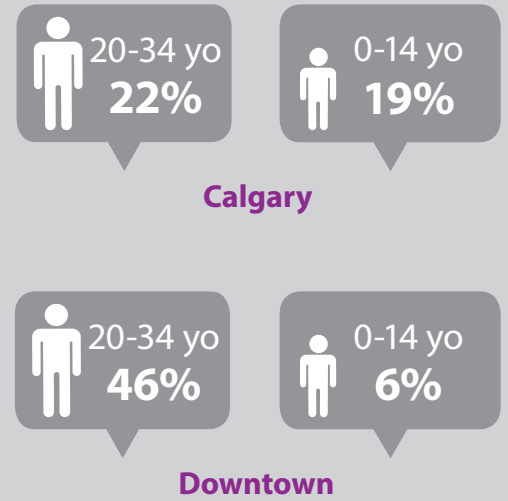
### Downtown Population

Percentage of Calgary's Population Growth that Occurred in the Downtown Area



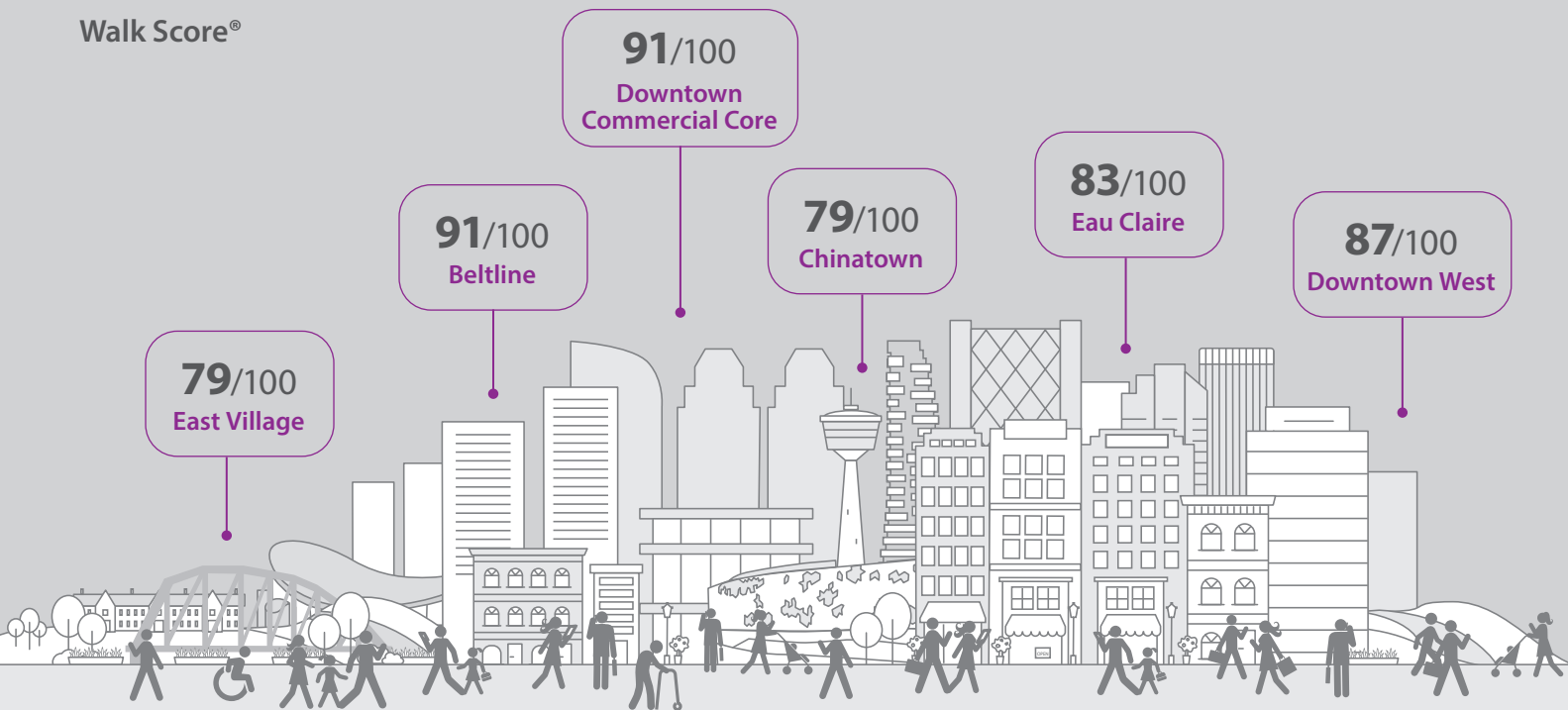
- The City of Calgary -

### Downtown Demographics



- 2019 Civic Census -

### Walk Score®



- WalkScore -

## 9 Block Program

The 9 Block program was an effort to improve vibrancy and safety in the nine blocks that surround City Hall. The City of Calgary, the University of Calgary, the Calgary Downtown Association, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation and Bow Valley College worked collaboratively to improve safety in this important area of the downtown, support the neighbourhoods' businesses, and find low-cost, impactful solutions through partnerships.

The centre piece of these improvements was the installation of a canopy and lighting at the transit stop in front of the University of Calgary's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape (SAPL) on Macleod Trail S.E. Research lead Mauricio Soto-Rubio, with students from SAPL, designed and fabricated this installation to improve the real and perceived safety and vibrancy issues in their neighbourhood. The canopy and improved lighting provides more visibility at the stop during night time hours – highlighted as an ongoing safety issues by students, people who work in the neighbourhood, and neighbourhood businesses.

The partnership between The City and the University of Calgary focused on students and researchers at SAPL exploring how the nine blocks around City Hall could become a more welcoming, distinct and vibrant place for all Calgarians and visitors through innovative design, planning and programming strategies. Urban Alliance, the partnership between The City and the University of Calgary, supported the hiring of a group of SAPL students over the summer to design the bus stop installation.

One of the other cornerstone projects was the launch of a Downtown Ambassador pilot in autumn 2020. The City of Calgary and the Calgary Downtown Association partnered, along with other stakeholders like Tourism Calgary and Alpha House Society, to create the six-month pilot for the 9 Block/Stephen Avenue area. Since September, Downtown Ambassadors have been connecting Calgarians and visitors to information on resources, services, places and supports. The primary focus for the ambassadors has been outreach, safety, and cleanliness, providing a presence to the area.

Over 1,300 interactions between ambassadors and Calgarians occurred in 2020, including more than 800 interactions with members of Calgary's vulnerable population, and over 150 interactions with surrounding businesses on both ground and Plus 15 levels. These interactions have been largely introductions to the program, wellness checks and connecting individuals with social services, referrals to relevant programming and welcoming visitors.

Safety is a major component of this effort. Beyond the Downtown Ambassador pilot, The City and more than 20 community partners in the area have launched a coordinated safety and security strategy for the 9 Block area – focused on training, information sharing and coordinated communication.





### Downtown Ambassadors



**1,302 interactions** with the community between September and December 2020



**200 referrals** to social services supports



**350 wellness checks** with members from Calgary's vulnerable population

## Winter Strategy

The goal of Calgary's Winter City Strategy is to find ways to create more economic, social and cultural opportunities during Calgary's winter months. A major piece of this strategy is to support the development of more outdoor winter activities and events to drive traffic to our downtown, promote Calgary as a Winter City to encourage tourism activities, and increase support for winter-focused opportunities for businesses.

Development of Chinook Blast, Calgary's Midwinter Roundup Festival began in 2020, involving more than 80 partners with a focus on safe, self-directed, physically distanced citizen experiences. Chinook Blast is Calgary's largest winter festival showcasing Calgary as a world class Winter City and the stage for future iterations that will attract visitors from across the country and around the world.

In addition to Chinook Blast, a number of ideas and programs were explored that would make it easier for people to enjoy the outdoors during winter, which included:

- Identifying temporary road and lane closures that could be used during winter for walking
- Reducing barriers for hosting outdoor neighbourhood gatherings, including lowering costs and making permits easier to get
- Introducing a grant program called "Embrace the Outdoors" to activate spaces outdoors throughout the winter and support safe gatherings in communities. The program was so successful that it was fully subscribed within two weeks of the launch date in December
- Eliminating the permit process for allowing fire pits in parks and community spaces and reducing barriers to accessing City owned fire pits. The initial program was so successful that the 16 bookable fire pits had to be expanded to 75 to keep up with the demand







## COVID Compliant Activations and Events

In response to Alberta Health Services restrictions for mass gatherings, events scheduled after mid-March to August 31, 2020 were cancelled. In July applications for drive-in, drive thru events, small community events and non-competitive walks and runs were accepted by The City of Calgary.

Funding applications were shared with external organizations and community groups with the remaining Central Memorial Park (CMP) activation funds from 2019, to be provided as micro grants for sustainable and repeatable programming.

Between July and November, 25 single and multi-day events and activations were held in and around Central Memorial Park, with the support of the Central Memorial Park Activation Fund. These events included:

- Farmers' Stand in the Park
- Shaw/Calgary Pride Art Installation
- Poetry in the Park
- Pet Costume Parade





## Glow Winter Festival

Glow Winter Festival lit up Stephen Avenue for three nights of energy infused art, music and entertainment. The Calgary Downtown Associations free, family-friendly festival brightened the dark days of winter by welcoming Calgarians downtown to enjoy an array of musicians, street activations, and show-stopping lights. This year's festival featured a trackless train running down Stephen Avenue, ice lounges outside restaurants and an international ice carving competition, among other events.



**125,000 Calgarians and visitors** attended over the 3 days



**32 local and international artists** performed



**6 professional ice sculptors** participated

## BUMP Festival

The Beltline Urban Mural Project (BUMP) Festival arrived back in Calgary in August, bringing with it 20 new murals. The community-driven initiative first started back in 2017 and has seen a total of 31 murals painted as a result. The 2020 additions included work from abstract French graffiti artist Astro, Canadian/Kazakhstani contemporary folklore artist Ola Volo, and Calgary painter Michelle Hoogveld. The festival took a new approach this year, due to COVID, focusing on self-guided tours, socially distanced DJ performances at mural sites, and artist panel sessions recorded at Contemporary Calgary.



**22 participating artists**



**20 new murals** completed



**5,000 downloads of self-guided mural tours**



## 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.

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 required nimbleness and innovation to keep people moving downtown, feeling safe and to support downtown businesses. This includes opening up space for people to move in a socially distanced manner, making it easier for restaurants to open or expand their patios, and making it easier for people to come downtown, park and pick-up dinner or purchases from downtown restaurants and stores.

Downtown partners also looked for innovative solutions to staying connected and repurposing space. We talked about the High Park parkade conversion earlier in this report, but that project grew out of the need for space and human connection in a socially distanced time.

### Adaptive Roadways

Calgary was the first major city in Canada to explore road adaptations for better pedestrian use during the COVID-19 pandemic. The City of Calgary added space for pedestrians and cyclists to social distance safely by identifying areas in our downtown where "adaptive road closures" would be the most efficient, safe, and effective. This involved closing off a lane to motor vehicle traffic and opening the lane for anyone walking, running, cycling, rollerblading or e-scootering. The large lanes allowed users to spread out at safe distances. Adaptive road closures changed locations and scopes throughout 2020 to meet the needs of cyclists and pedestrians.

#### The City considers locations if:

- Experiencing high or elevated use.
- Feasible to close lane/road without significant safety risk.
- Closing a lane/road will not negatively impact operating businesses.
- Transit can be maintained effectively.
- It is sustainable and cost effective to maintain.
- It will allow at least 15 minutes of continuous walking to support physical health.



## Temporary patios

Patio season in Calgary is a crowded affair. While there are many established patios in Calgary, there are also many local businesses who needed a bit of extra space to allow for social distancing and to allow customers to come out and eat and drink. In May, The City of Calgary provided temporary permission for outdoor patios on public spaces, such as sidewalks, with no fees involved.

In 2020, this program helped more than 100 businesses, many downtown, by allowing patios on sidewalks and other public land and waiving the fee to make it happen. Not only does this support operators in generating more revenue, it also provides extra space needed for physical distancing through the pandemic and enlivens public spaces.

These patios are not just for restaurants, businesses are able to establish them for retail outlets and sidewalk sales. The new temporary patios sprouted up along Stephen Avenue, and the Beltline and Victoria Park's restaurant and retail hubs.





### 15 Minute Free Parking

The City of Calgary and the Calgary Parking Authority began offering 15 minutes of free on-street parking in Calgary's on-street ParkPlus zones in 2020. Free on-street parking helped to support downtown businesses and restaurants by accommodating expanded curbside pick-ups and deliveries during periods of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Free parking for curbside pick-up and deliveries will remain in place for 2021.

Rush hour parking restrictions were also removed in the fall of 2020 on some of Calgary's Main Streets, including 17 Avenue in the Beltline and Victoria Park, in an effort to support businesses during periods of pandemic-related restrictions.



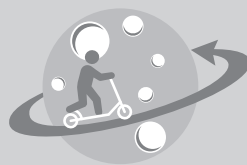
### E-scooter pilot

Calgary's extremely successful two year e-scooter (and e-bike) pilot project became permanent at the end of 2020. During the pilot project, Calgarians travelled more than 2.2 million kilometres, mostly in our downtown. In 2020, 780,000 trips were logged on e-scooters from companies Lime, Bird and Roll. Of the 1.9 million trips on e-bikes and e-scooters over the past two years, roughly 90% were on e-scooters. The City of Calgary made the decision based on analytics and feedback from Calgarians.

To make it easier to park on downtown streets, The City of Calgary implemented something new in 2020 - e-scooter parking zones. With more people using shared e-scooters, The City wanted mitigate public safety concerns while still offering mobility options for Calgarians. Thirty Share & GO painted parking areas were installed around the downtown and intended to be used as a go-to place to find an e-scooter or to end your Lime, Bird or, 2020 new entrant, Roll ride.



Highest ridership per device in North American cities



Amount of e-scooter KMs would reach the moon and back three times



E-scooters were in operation for the equivalent of 42 years



In 2020, 51.5% of all e-scooter trips ended in a downtown business improvement area



## Downtown Digital Infrastructure

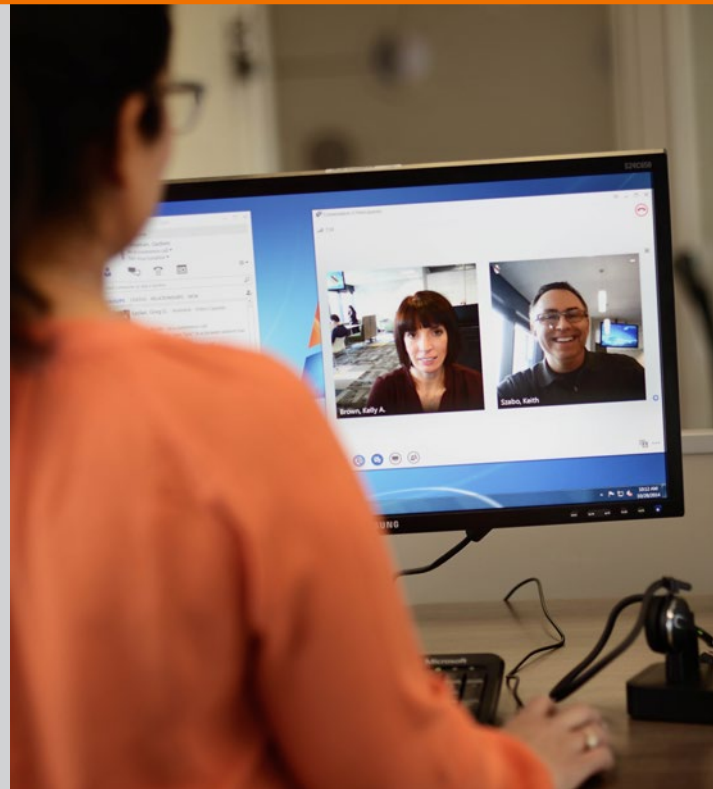
The YYCIX (internet exchange) saw a 50% increase in traffic in 2020 with the peak being 60 Gb/second. The reasons behind the uptick in Internet usage in Calgary are not surprising – staying at home means Calgarians are giving their internet connections a workout. They're trying to stay productive in their jobs and school work while continuing to connect with friends and family. As a result, the use of Zoom and other bandwidth-intensive video conferencing apps skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**500+ km** of City of Calgary fibre network across Calgary



**~82 public wi-fi** sites available downtown



## East Village Nordic loop

The area around Fort Calgary has been transformed into the East Village Nordic Loop a one kilometre-long, groomed cross-country skiing loop. Calgary Municipal Land Corporation, Fort Calgary and the Foothills Ski Club are grooming this downtown and Bow River adjacent loop throughout the winter to give Calgarians a socially-distanced workout space, in the heart of Calgary's centre. Bring your own skis and make use of the onsite waxing station before hitting the trail.



**1 km loop** with access at the Fort Calgary parking lot, 6 Street S.E. and 8 Avenue S.E., and the Elbow River Traverse bridge



**Free** of charge to use





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

**24.1%**

Calgary Downtown Association

**5.2%**

Chinatown

**6.2%**

Victoria Park

**0.7%**

First Street S.W.

**7.7%**

17<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.W.

**3.3%**

Fourth Street S.W.

### Connecting Downtown



#### By train

Ctrain Customer Trip Satisfaction

**2019: 87%**

**2020: 80%**

- The City of Calgary -



#### By bike

Cycle tracks connecting downtown

**8.7 km**

of cycle track in downtown Calgary

- The City of Calgary -

**1 km**

of new cycle track built in 2019



#### By foot

Underpasses

**31,760**

2019 Pedestrian traffic

- The City of Calgary -



#### By car

All-day average occupancy at downtown parkades

**2019: 63%**

**2020: 21%**

- Calgary Parking Authority -



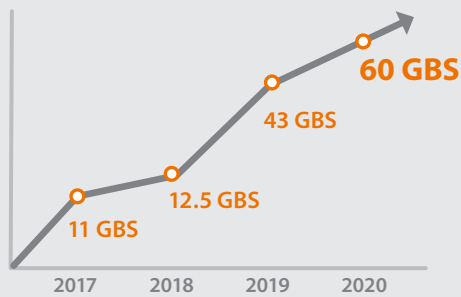
## Supporting business through connectivity

The YYCIX (internet exchange, IX) saw a 50% increase in the traffic in 2020 with the peak being 60 Gb/second.

The IX is an indicator of the strength of our innovation ecosystem and is recognized as a critical piece of infrastructure when attracting leaders in the tech and information sectors, as well as supporting local delivery of services. Whether you're a small business or a global provider, having the IX as critical infrastructure makes Calgary an attractive location to do business.

The IX allows for improved performance, increased resilience, greater access to global content, and reduces costs.

The City of Calgary has been able to leverage existing City infrastructure at little to no cost to enable the internet exchange growth and expansion.



### Calgary Internet Exchange (YYCIX) Data Transfer Peak

**2017: 11 GB/second**  
**2018: 12.5 GB/second**  
**2019: 43 GB/second**  
**2020: 60 GB/second**

– YYCIX Internet Exchange Community –

## Downtown Business Improvement Areas

Downtown is home to thriving business improvement areas (BIAs) that strengthen the downtown business community and vibrant neighbourhoods. These BIAs are essential to the fabric of Calgary's downtown.

### What do BIA's do?






- Enhance the economic development of an area through promotion and marketing.
- Improve the physical environment of public spaces in commercial areas.
- Develop, improve and maintain public parking.
- Work collaboratively with The City of Calgary in delivery of municipal services in their zones.
- Advocate for policies and practices that support economic vitality in their zones.
- Invest annually in promotion, special events, street maintenance and improvements.
- Play a lead role in area revitalization and work with their communities on public safety and crime prevention efforts.
- Create some of Calgary's best known and most loved neighbourhoods.
- People living in and visiting Calgary identify with and value these areas as special and unique - each BIA gives Calgary a distinctive, appealing character.
- Offer an international array of exotic and unusual shops, food stores, restaurants, and coffee shops.
- Collaborate with The City regarding operational issues in the community (parks, land use, urban design, redevelopment, physical improvements, public safety, maintenance, traffic, parking, etc.).
- Provide input on policies to support economic health.







Legend

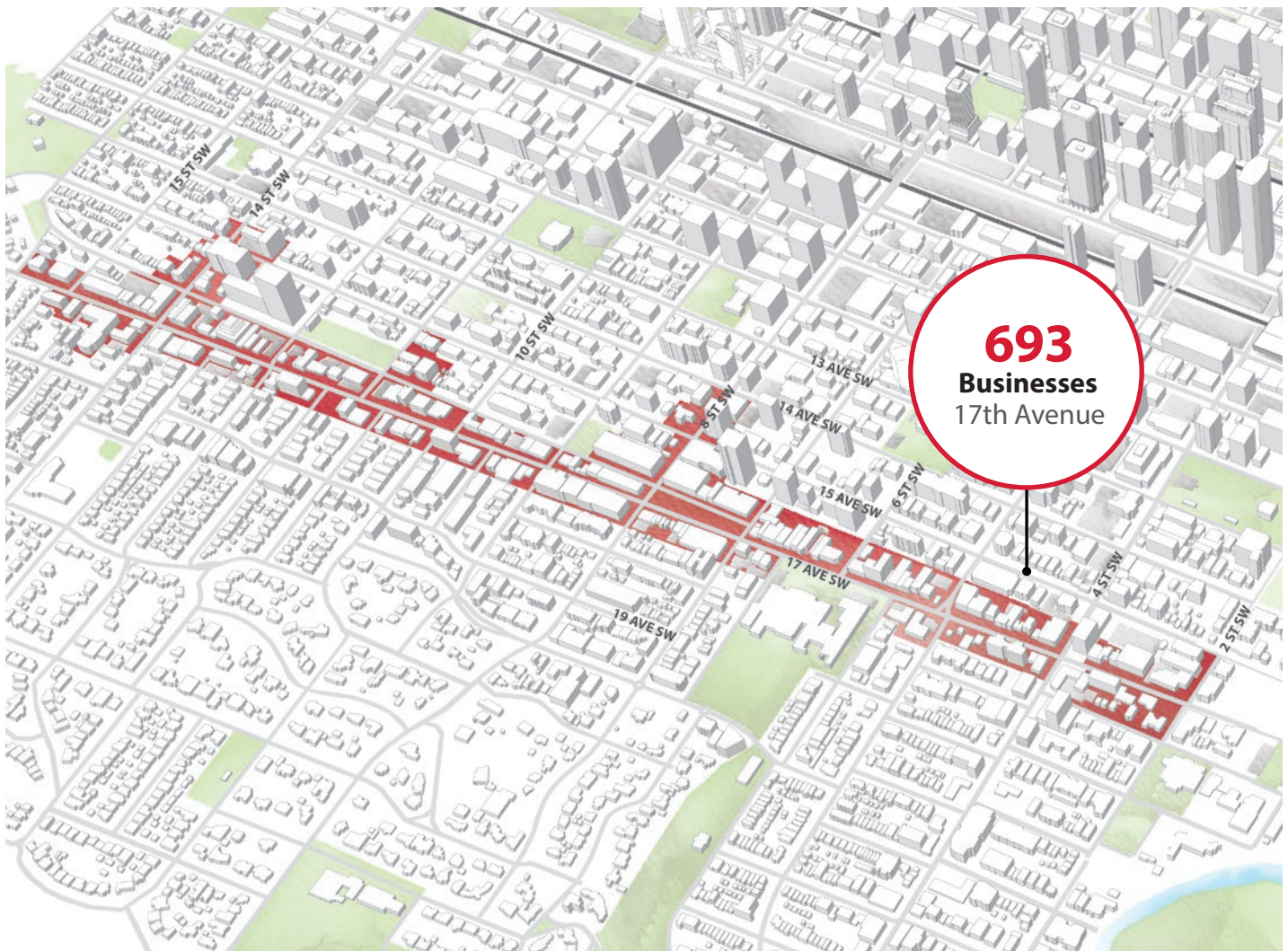
-  Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)
-  Existing Parks/Plaza
-  Proposed LRT Green Line
-  Existing LRT Blue Line
-  Existing LRT Red Line

The illustration is for conceptual purpose only.



## 17th Ave Retail & Entertainment District

The 17th Ave Retail & Entertainment District works hard to make 17th Avenue a dynamic, fun place to shop, relax and people watch. The area stretches along 17 Avenue from 14 Street West to 2 Street East.





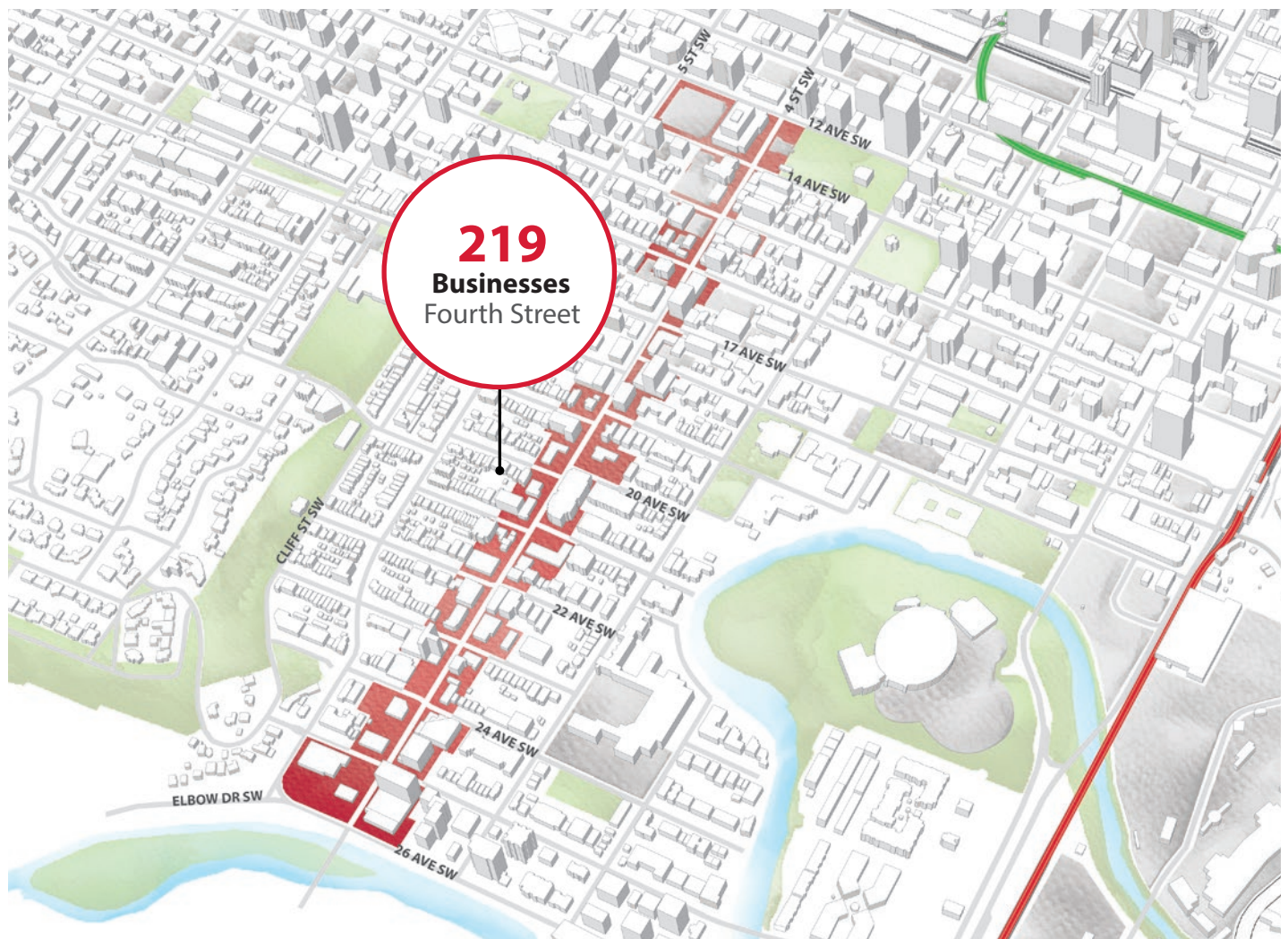
## Taste of 17th

The 17th Ave Retail and Entertainment District inaugural Taste of 17th food festival hit the downtown at the end of November. For 10 days, 20 of 17th Avenue's diverse restaurants and food establishments provided Calgarians with a special three-course meal, while promoting their own classic menus. The event showcased the eclectic and diverse 17th Avenue food community and supported restaurants during a year where many had faced many challenges.



## Fourth Street Business Improvement Area

The mission of the Fourth Street Business Improvement Area is to represent the business interests of its members and to create, promote and maintain a unique, attractive, vibrant and prosperous business area that is appreciated and supported by the local market residents and by visitors from throughout the city and beyond.



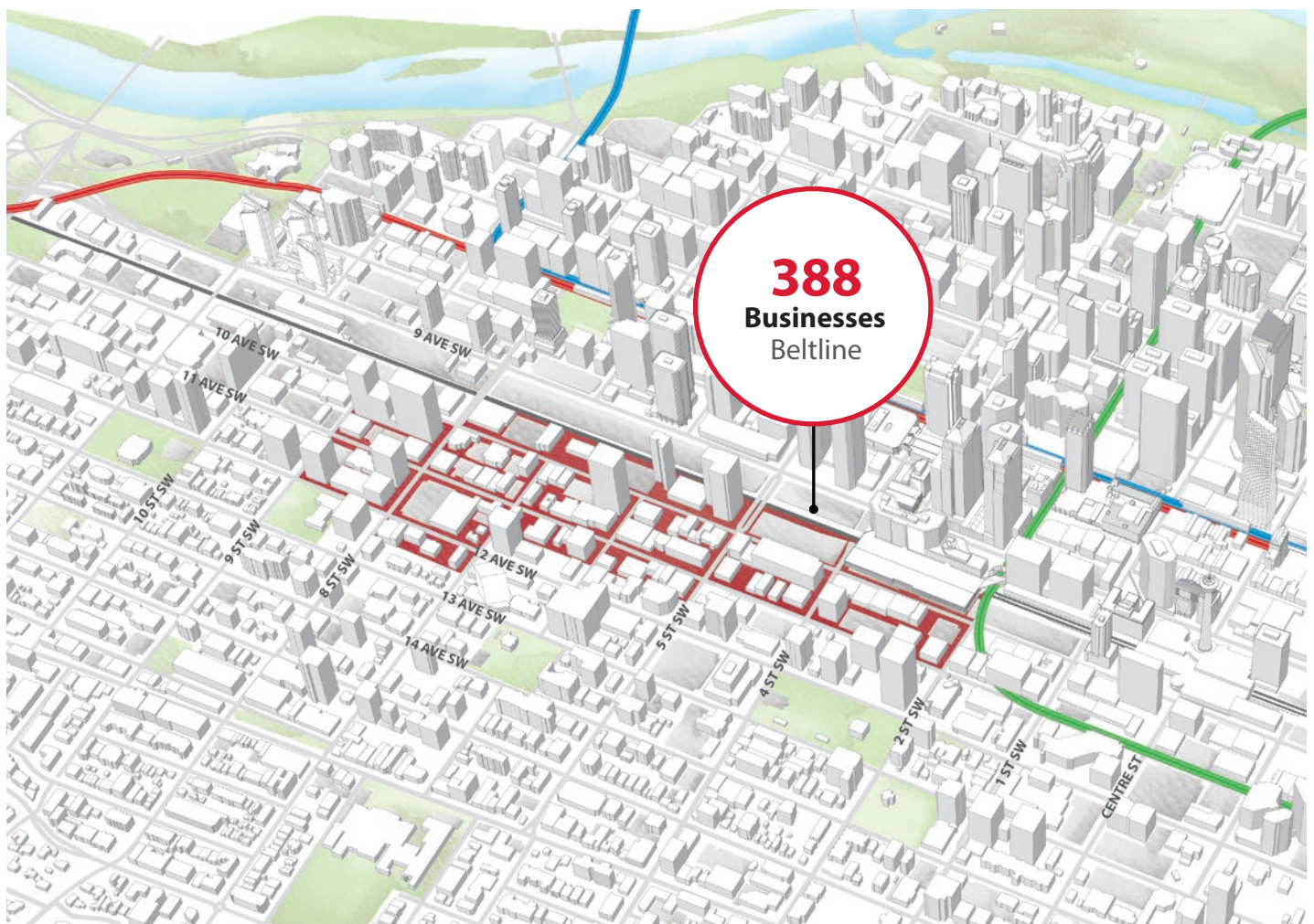






## Beltline Business Improvement Area

The Beltline business community is a safe, fun, and vibrant destination for Calgarians and tourists; it is a central hub for business, shopping, dining, arts, and community events that celebrate local diversity and talent.





## Beltline Balcony Bash

Each Friday during the spring of 2020, the Beltline BIA and Balcony Bash team broadcasted music, live from the Broken City rooftop patio – both streamed digitally and projected via loud speakers. The aim was to drive community spirit and encourage local shopping in the Beltline. Beltline restaurants created a take home menu so that Beltline residents could party together (from a far) on their balconies and show support for Calgary's front line workers. The Balcony Bash party reached over 200,000 Calgarians via organic and social connections.







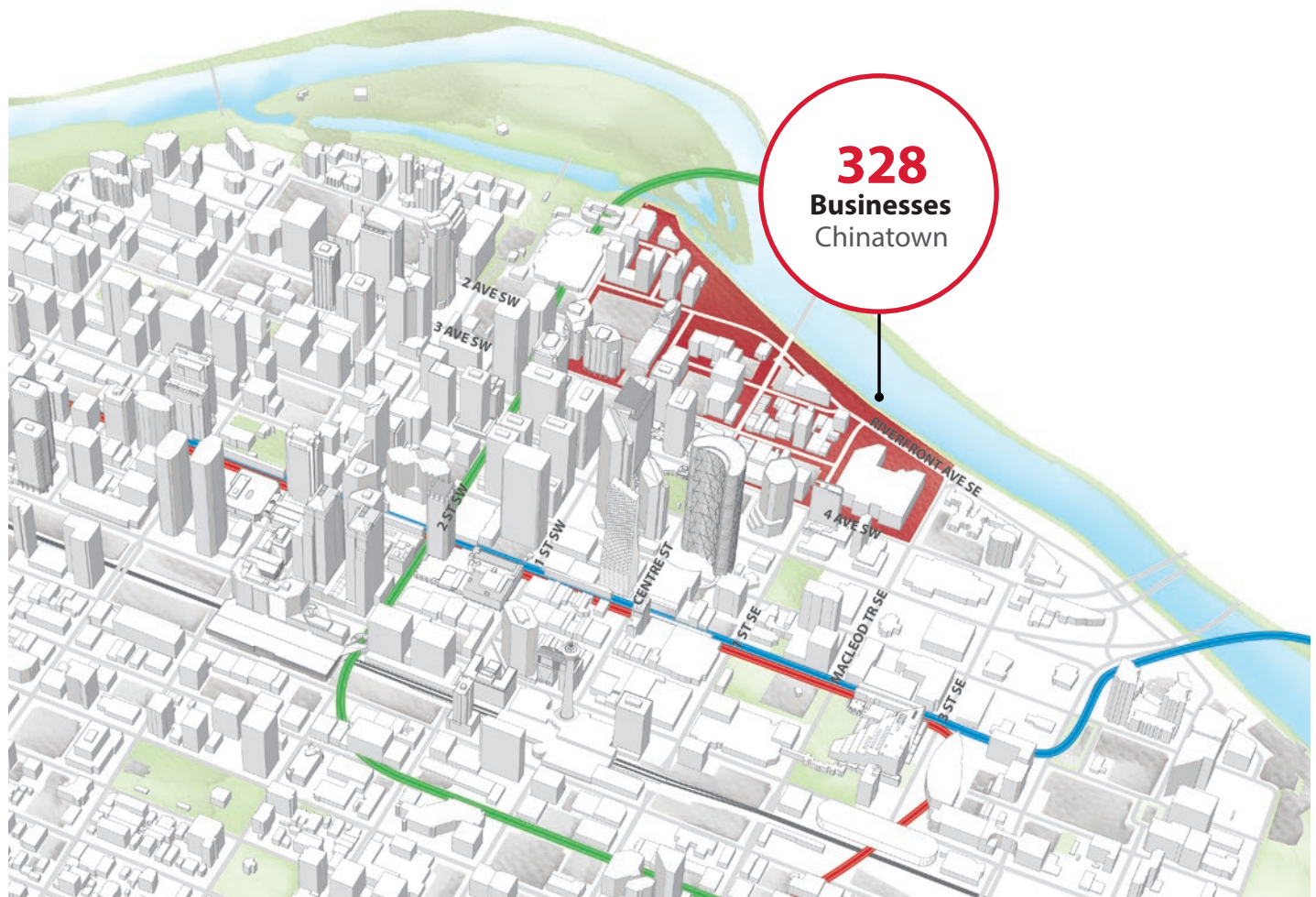
## 1 M Square Feet

The pandemic has had an impact on cities everywhere, disrupting the way we work, live and build, turning downtowns and main streets into ghost towns. But the question isn't if or when we return downtown, but rather how. How will we reconnect with each other to collaborate and innovate? How can we use space to foster innovation if we can't gather and meet like we used to? That's why the Calgary Downtown Association is building 1M - a platform to amplify and accelerate hundreds of small ideas, experiments, and projects that help reconnect people to our downtowns and main streets. 1M is about boosting connectivity at a micro-neighbourhood scale, building momentum one million sq ft at a time.



## Chinatown Business Improvement Area

The Chinatown Business Improvement Area is a partnership program to enable businesses to work together to raise funds and administer an organization that will serve to improve and promote business in this community. CBIA is unique as it also intends to revitalize the distinct Asian culture and societal diversity of this community and 110+ years of civic heritage and pride.





## Chinatown Ice Sculpture Showcase

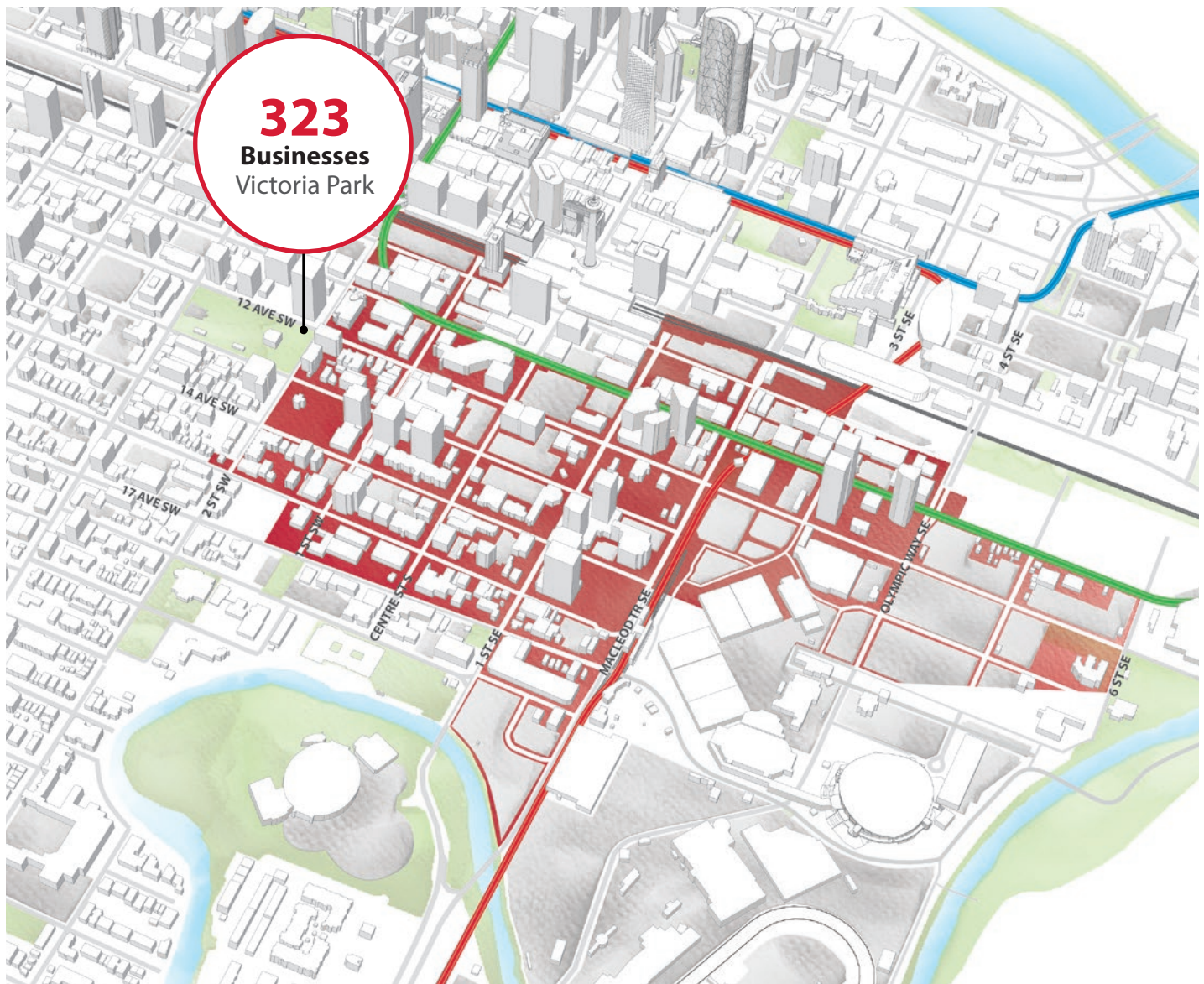
The Chinatown Business Improvement Area proudly displayed its second annual Chinatown Ice Sculpture Showcase to celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year and to welcome in the Year of the Rat. Twelve ice sculptures were carved and displayed throughout Chinatown, welcoming in visitors to Calgary's most unique cultural neighbourhood. The ice sculptures showcased the diversity of the Chinatown business community and celebrated the unique 110+ year history of the community. Calgarians walking along Centre Street and 3 Avenue, exploring Chinatown's eclectic mix of Asian restaurants and shops were encouraged to capture photos of the sculptures and share them out through their social media channels.





## Victoria Park Business Improvement Area

Victoria Park is a place to shop, to dine and to enjoy a night out. Find yourself immersed in vibrant shops, restaurants and cafés. Enjoy independent retailers and the unique wares they have to offer. Discover a rich heritage and the unique people that foster this energetic community.





## Gravitation

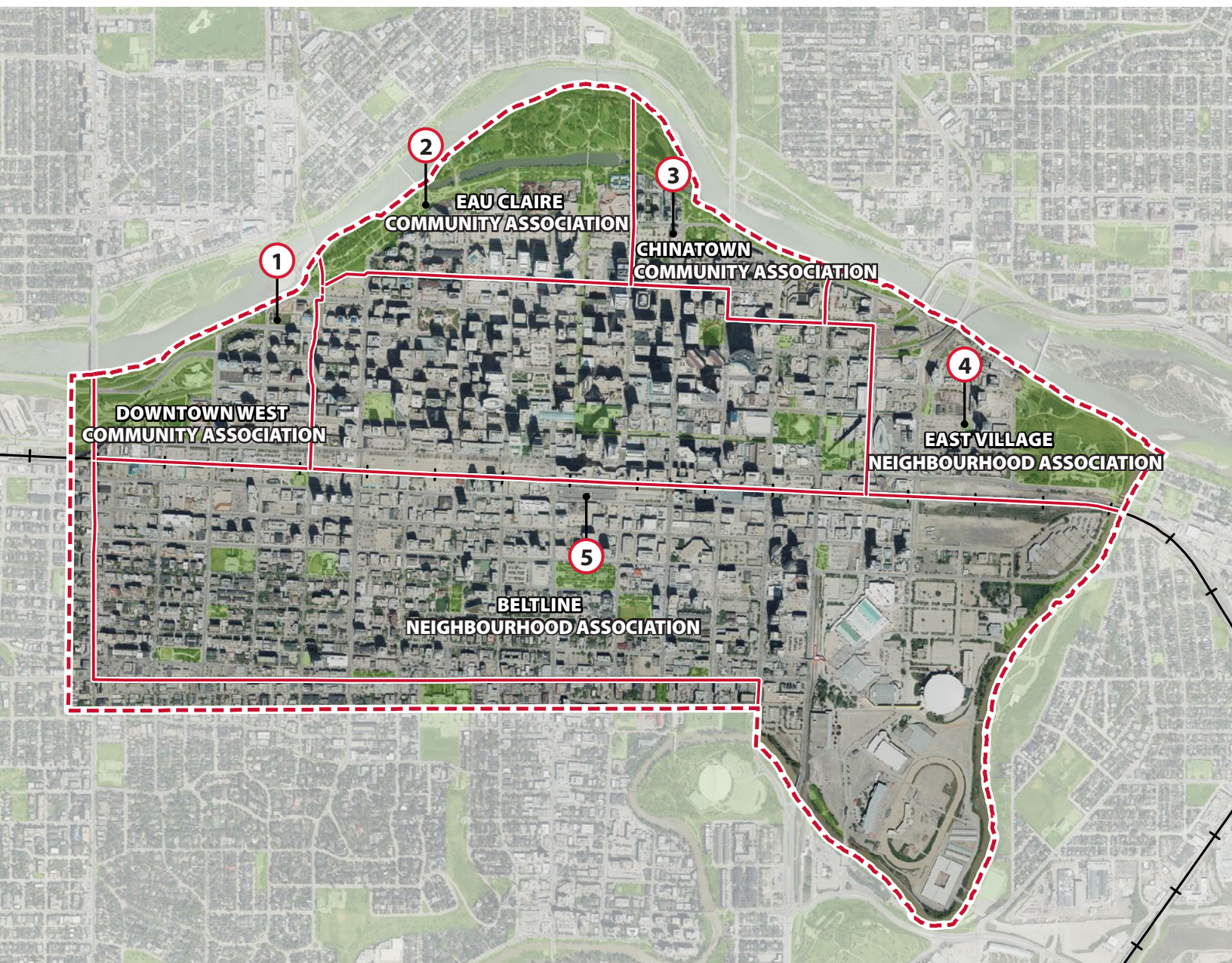
The Victoria Park BIA is partnering with Axis Z Media Arts (AZMA) to bring Calgarians an engaging projection mapping experience along 1 Street S.W. between 12 and 13 Avenues S.W. Three buildings spanning the west side of the street combined to create a seamless high resolution image that ran from sundown until the late evening. The light show centred on movement, change and hope bringing unique animated content to the downtown area. Gravitation combined particle-based animations along with inspirational texts, commenting on life under a pandemic, to create a truly unique and mesmerizing experience for people to enjoy as they travelled through Victoria Park.





## Downtown Calgary Community Associations

Calgary's community associations are vital in creating and sustaining communities throughout the city. With five community associations, downtown Calgary boasts a diverse group of volunteers who support community programs and events, community safety, and community development initiatives.





## Downtown West Community Association

**Population: 2,785**  
(2019 Civic Census)

### 2020 Highlight

- 1 Bowforth Park** – a community-led initiative that established an off-leash dog park and community space on an empty lot in the middle of the community.

## Eau Claire Community Association

**Population: 2,030**  
(2019 Civic Census)

### 2020 Highlight

- 2 Virtual AGM** – the COVID-19 pandemic did not disrupt the Eau Claire Community Association's annual general meeting, with attendance and member participation rising in a virtual setting.

## Chinatown Community Association

**Population: 2,471**  
(2019 Civic Census)

### 2020 Highlight

- 3 Chinese Lunar New Year** – the Chinatown Community Association and Chinatown Cultural Centre welcomed in the year of the rat with celebrations, performances, and a marketplace throughout January.

## East Village Neighbourhood Association

**Population: 3,893**  
(2019 Civic Census)

### 2020 Highlight

- 4 Upside Down Church** – The community highlighted the significance of Dennis Oppenheim's striking, controversial public art piece, which was installed in the heart of the East Village in 2019.

## Beltline Neighbourhood Association

**Population: 25,129**  
(2019 Civic Census)

### 2020 Highlight

- 5 High Park** – Built on top of a parkade, this new rooftop public park and event space in the Beltline serves as an exciting destination for residents and visitors to the city alike.

## Looking Ahead to 2021 and Beyond

Downtown is central to Calgary's economic recovery. It's our hub for business, innovation and creativity. What happens downtown has a direct impact on all Calgarians. Our downtown is also a source of civic pride and our postcard to the world. Calgary needs a strong core to grow our economy, create jobs and fund the City services we rely on every day. When our downtown thrives, Calgary thrives. We all thrive.

Our core will not go back to the way it was before the pandemic, let alone five to ten years ago because of changes to our energy industry and how and where people work. Our future success relies on downtown being a place people want to live, visit and set up businesses.

We need to move beyond the traditional nine-to-five business district towards a vibrant city centre that people enjoy 24/7 with a diverse mix of residential, office, retail, entertainment, tourism and culture.







**The Greater Downtown Plan is our way forward** for downtown and all of Calgary. We're making five strategic moves to achieve our vision of a resilient and vibrant place for everyone.

### **Neighbourhoods for vibrant urban life**

We'll create mixed-use neighbourhoods with gathering places, housing choices and all of the amenities residents need close by.

### **A green network for a healthy environment**

We're going to build a green network by connecting parks, natural spaces and river frontage with downtown's main streets.

### **Streets for people**

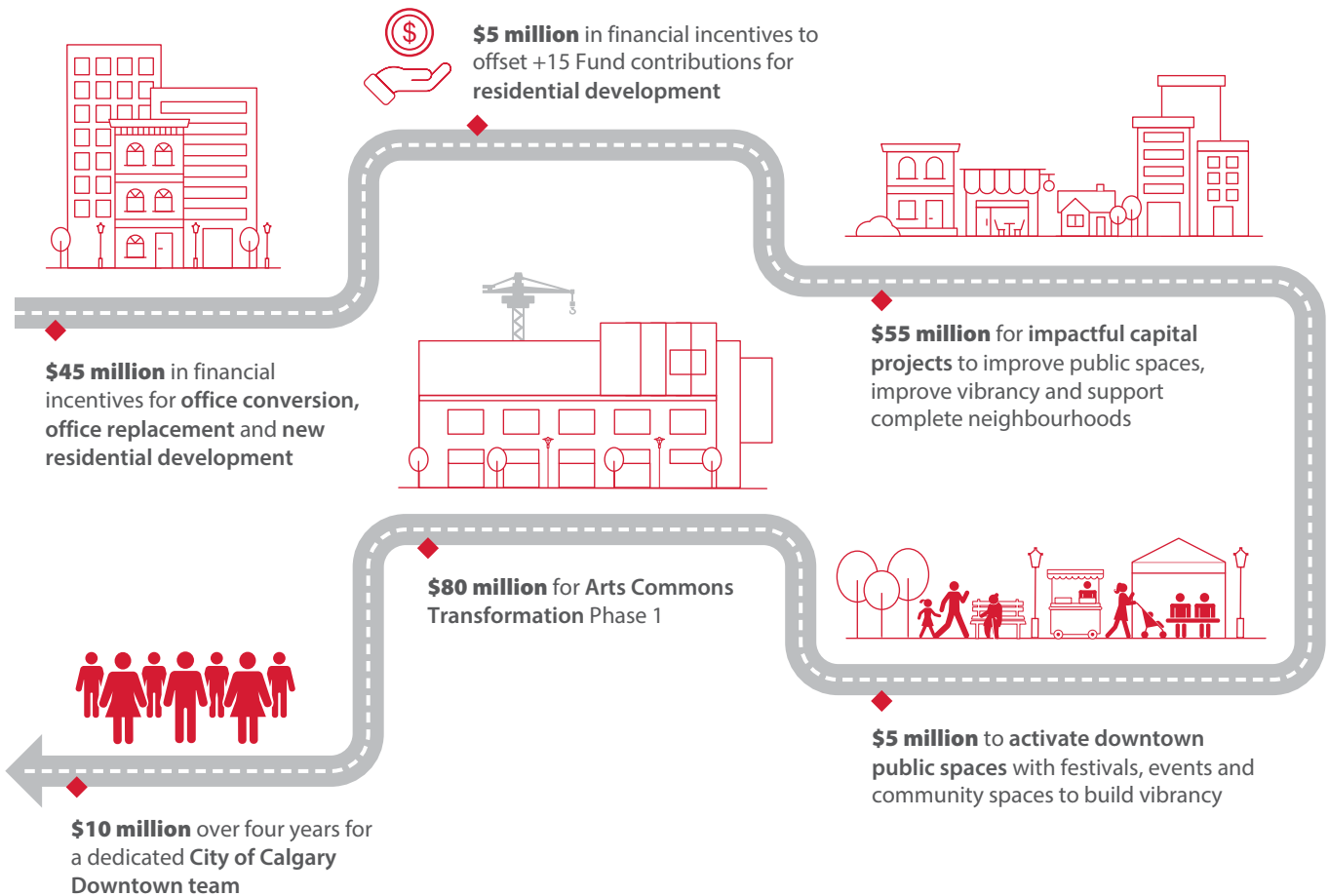
Streets will be designed for walkers and wheelers first that include space to linger and connect with people. Regional pathways will stretch along the riverbanks and underpasses, bridges and on-street mobility tracks will connect to neighbouring communities.

### **Transit for all**

Transit will be the quickest, safest and most cost-effective way to travel to and through downtown while making it an enjoyable experience.

### **Future-proof and innovate for the next generation**

Attracting and retaining the global technology and innovation sector, utilizing our highly educated workforce and leveraging our head office concentration to prosper in the new economy is our highest priority.



City Council approved an initial investment of \$200 million to support the actions outlined in the plan. The City now has the means and approvals required to shift Calgary's downtown from vacancy to vibrancy.

This is an opportunity to create an even-more thriving downtown community that moves beyond the traditional office-based downtown central business district and instead is a dynamic, vibrant 24/7 centre of our city. This Plan and investment allows The City

and its downtown partners to take bold action and making intentional investments in public spaces, supporting vibrant neighbourhoods, and ensuring that Calgary continues to create a downtown that people want to live and work in.

The initial investment of \$200 million is earmarked for actions that will address office vacancy, improve downtown vibrancy, and support the development of thriving neighbourhoods.



The 10-year implementation of **Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan** will require a collaborative approach to enhance Calgary's downtown. The Downtown Strategy partners – The City, Calgary Economic Development, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation, the University of Calgary, and the downtown business improvement areas – along with members of the real estate and business community – worked to create an investment package that will have an impact on downtown's greatest concerns.

A vibrant downtown is essential for attracting and retaining talent and our City's long term success. Harnessing the full potential of Calgary is dependent on creating a significantly improved tax base downtown which will help reduce the tax burden, where it has recently shifted outside the core, and improve competitiveness throughout the city. These financial investments are part of a necessary take-action approach to attract people who want to spend time living, working and playing downtown, by providing long term benefit to all Calgarians.

The investment in Calgary's downtown required from 2021 to 2031 is estimated at \$1 billion. This includes \$450 million to \$500 million to address office vacancy and \$500 million for downtown vibrancy infrastructure and amenities. The initial investment package represents only 20 per cent of the overall need over the next decade. The City will require support from all levels of government to help address this 80 per cent funding gap. City Council has directed the Mayor and City Administration to initiate a formal request to the federal and provincial governments.

A thriving downtown where people want to live and be, and where businesses want to set down roots, means a thriving Calgary. The City has been working extensively over the past several years with our civic partners, Calgary's real estate industry, post-secondary institutions, and the downtown business community. This is just the beginning of our downtown's long road to reinvention. The 10-year implementation of The Plan will require near-term and medium to long-term actions, along with a multi-pronged, multi-phased, and multi-stakeholder approach to reinvent Calgary's downtown and begin the shift from vacancy to vibrancy.



## Realizing Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan – Initial Investments and Incentives

### **\$45 million in financial incentives for office conversion, office replacement and new residential development**

Downtown office vacancy is at approximately 12 million square feet which translates into approximately 30 percent. As downtown office vacancy rates continue to rise, the impacts are far-reaching. Downtown office property values have declined by \$16 billion since 2015, or 60 percent, resulting in the tax shift situation that affects City finances and residential, commercial, and industrial property taxes throughout the city.

The City worked in collaboration with industry experts including Calgary Economic Development's Real Estate Sector Advisory Committee and the Real Estate Working Group to develop an incentives package for downtown office conversions, office replacement, and new residential development.

Converting office to residential uses is complex and expensive, with incentives being required to stimulate investment. The City and its private sector real estate partners have identified 28 potential downtown office buildings for conversion or adaptive reuse. This could include conversion to or reuse as residential units, student housing, senior housing, post-secondary institutions, and the amenities needed to establish complete, thriving neighbourhoods.

### **\$5 million in financial incentives to offset +15 Fund contributions for residential development**

Residential development in the downtown core often includes the requirement to contribute to the Plus 15 Fund, which supports construction, operation, and maintenance of downtown's Plus 15 system. This is often a barrier to residential development in the downtown core.

The City will provide \$5 million in incentives to developers who initiate residential projects in the downtown core to offset the Plus 15 Fund contribution. This removes a potential barrier to office to residential conversion or new residential development. The maximum incentive available is \$1 million and a project will need to be completed in a designated time period to receive the incentive.





**\$55 million for impactful capital projects to improve public spaces, improve vibrancy and support complete neighbourhoods**

Implementing the Greater Downtown Plan means allocating \$55 million immediately for impactful projects, big and small, which move the plan from a planning document to real actions.

The City is considering the following projects that would improve vibrancy in Calgary’s downtown:

**1. Future of Stephen Avenue**

- Create short and long-term strategies that can be implemented over time to make Stephen Avenue better for Calgarians and visitors, while creating opportunities for private investment and redevelopment

**2. Downtown West Promenade, from the Peace Bridge to 14 Street S.W.**

- Create a gateway to the Bow River and river pathway system in Downtown West
- Extend pathway and public space improvements already in place or being built in Eau Claire, Chinatown and the East Village

**3. 8th Street S.W.**

- Improve north-south connections from the Bow River to Downtown West and the Beltline
- Redesign and rebuild public spaces to support residential, retail, and commercial growth in the Downtown Core and Downtown West

**4. Establish a downtown public market**

- Create a sustainable public space that reflects the surrounding communities and The City’s social, environmental, economic and cultural priorities

**5. Renovate Northwest Travelers Building and Historic Firehall #1**

- Redevelop for food and beverage and arts and culture development

**6. Redesign and rebuild Olympic Plaza**

- Re-imagining our Olympic legacy by renovating the living room for City Hall and Arts Commons

### **\$5 million to activate downtown public spaces with festivals, events and community spaces to build vibrancy**

Activating places and spaces is essential to increase downtown vibrancy and make downtown a place that people want to live, visit, and establish a business. The City is setting aside funds to support and enable its downtown partners plan and execute vibrancy-building programming and events.

This includes support for the implementation of the **Tomorrow's Chinatown** cultural plan, along with the **9 Block Program**, which supports safety, security, and vibrancy around City Hall and Stephen Avenue.

Additional programming and events that will be supported will be determined in consultation with The City's downtown partners, business improvement areas, and community associations.

### **\$10 million over four years for a dedicated City of Calgary Downtown team**

To activate the Greater Downtown Plan and move forward with the actions and projects that have been identified as priorities to enhancing downtown vibrancy, The City will allocate resources to a team dedicated to moving the actions required through this investment package forward.

### **\$80 million for Arts Commons Transformation Phase 1**

For the last 35 years, Arts Commons has been a key contributor to social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life in Calgary. As Canada's third largest arts centre, it is home to six resident companies and used by more than 200 community groups.

The Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project of expanding and upgrading Arts Commons supports the goal of improving and diversifying Calgary's economy. It supports the Downtown Strategy and is considered a catalyst project for the Culture + Entertainment District.





Executed in two Phases, Arts Commons Transformation will both expand capacity in an adjoining new building and renew the existing facility.

Phase 1 of the transformation will expand capacity at a new location called Arts Commons North, or The Road House. The Road House will include three versatile, purpose-built venues, a connection to the existing building and supporting amenities. This 173,000 square-foot space will include a new 1,200 seat theatre, two smaller theatres, rehearsal space and an elevated corridor to the existing building and related amenities.

The Government of Canada recently announced its intention to double the federal Gas Tax Fund for one year, as the newly renamed Canada Community-Building Fund. This \$77 million of new federal funding will be directed for the Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) Project Phase 1.

The ACT project has been identified as a catalytic project for downtown vibrancy for more than 15 years. Once completed, Arts Commons, and their resident companies, will generate \$53 million to Calgary's economy annually and support 683 jobs.

During construction, ACT will create 3,155 jobs in Calgary, provide \$239M in labour income, and contribute \$386M to GDP. Upon ACT completion, Arts Commons will support 3,155 jobs in Calgary and provide \$239M in labour income.

With two-thirds of the funding for Phase 1 already in place, through the province and the City, this \$80M will provide the remaining funding required, fulfill the Federal government's funding pledge, and result in all three levels of government support. With \$77M coming from the Canada Community-Building Fund, the City is only required to top up \$3M to achieve full funding for Phase 1 of ACT.



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