

Winter City Strategy Overview

Background:

City Council, in approving the 2019-2022 One Calgary Budget, directed Administration to develop and implement a Winter City Strategy.

Guiding Principles:

Five guiding principles were developed from researching other winter cities¹, aligning with Council's Citizen Priorities and related strategic focus areas, with validation by internal and external stakeholders:

1. Celebrate what makes Calgary's winter unique
2. Extend Calgary's vibrant event, sport and gathering culture into winter months
3. Find solutions to improve accessibility and safety
4. Reinforce the Downtown Strategy's mandate
5. Join the North American movement of becoming a winter city

Strategy Development:

The strategy was developed through four phases:

Phase	Tactics	Timeline
Discover	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct internal stakeholder workshop to identify issues, opportunities, and external stakeholders 2. Review other winter city strategies 3. Conduct a baseline citizen survey 	Jun - Nov 2020
Engage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement pilot projects 2. Launch "Love Winter" campaign 3. Conduct a post-winter citizen survey 	Nov 2020 - Mar 2021
Validate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct key internal and external stakeholder workshops 2. Present to and collect Council Ward Office feedback 	Apr - May 2021
Create	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify priority actions with key stakeholders 2. Estimate budget requirements 3. Strategy completion 	Jun - Aug 2021

¹ Winter Cities: Edmonton, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina and Quebec City.

Strategy Framework:

The framework supports the guiding principles and is comprised of the strategy vision, outcomes, goals and actions derived from citizen and stakeholder input.

Strategy Vision:

Calgary is celebrated as a world-renowned winter city.

Outcomes:

1. **Economic Diversification:** Leverage our existing assets and arts, culture, and sports activities, and invest in new initiatives to make Calgary a more prosperous, exciting, and welcoming place for citizens, businesses, and visitors throughout the winter season (November – March).
2. **Accessibility and Equity:** Include all citizens, regardless of age, ability, socioeconomic status or ethnocultural backgrounds through initiatives to support inclusiveness, reduce social isolation and increase physical activity during winter.
3. **Infrastructure and Design:** Apply a winter lens to The City of Calgary's services, infrastructure, investment, and business practices to make Calgary a vibrant place to live, work and play year-round.
4. **Calgary's Winter Story:** Promote positive perceptions of wintertime in Calgary with our unique climate, location and beauty, activities, and economic opportunity to build on our strengths as a major tourist, winter-sport and festival and event city.

Goals and Actions:

Consultation with stakeholders helped develop the 12 high-level goals and identified and validated 35 targeted actions.

Outcome	Goal(s)	Action Summary (*Denotes actions that can be started in 2021-2022 with existing budget allocations)
Economic Diversification	Goal 1: Support the development of outdoor winter activities and events	1 * Invest in signature, winter-focused events that differentiate Calgary from other winter cities 2 * Support Business Improvement Areas, community, cultural, arts and sports organizations to create and deliver more grassroots, community-driven winter experiences 3 Pre-approve pop-up event plans for implementation during Chinook weather 4 * Support the development of winter experiences that do not rely on snow or ice
	Goal 2: Promote local, national and international tourism value propositions of being a winter city	5 Support the creation of a one-stop winter "information centre" for winter shopping, dining, art, sport, and event programs 6 * Identify walkable and bikeable winter hub areas incorporating landmark locations, winter amenities and shopping/dining 7 Invest in cooperative marketing campaigns for both city-wide and community endeavours

Outcome	Goal(s)	Action Summary (*Denotes actions that can be started in 2021-2022 with existing budget allocations)
	Goal 3: Increase support for winter-focused opportunities for businesses	<p>8 Support outdoor guided experience vendors and Indigenous tourism sector initiatives to encourage exploring the city in unique ways</p> <p>9 * Support outdoor winter dining and shopping businesses by offering public space, and for temporary vendors, markets, and winter patios</p>
Accessibility and Equity	Goal 4: Increase opportunities for all citizens to embrace winter	<p>10 Create an interactive, multi-language, map of spaces and winter activity locations with ideas for what one can do in these spaces and how to get there</p> <p>11 * Support community and cultural associations to offer more free outdoor activities, winter sport lessons/rentals and outdoor comforts</p> <p>12 Increase support for cultural festivals that occur during winter</p>
	Goal 5: Increase low-cost public access to winter activities and sites	<p>13 Incentivize organizations to offer discounted or free passes to winter events and activities for low income households and vulnerable populations</p> <p>14 Support low-cost or free access to winter activities and events on weekends through parking exemptions and Calgary Transit initiatives.</p> <p>15 Support external organizations to provide free or low-cost transportation to outdoor activities and events for seniors and citizens with disabilities</p>
	Goal 6: Reduce barriers to citizen participation in winter activities	<p>16 * Support education initiatives for how to dress for winter, snow and ice safety, responsible winter recreation and human-wildlife interactions</p> <p>17 Increase support of vulnerable populations during winter through agencies such as Calgary Housing.</p> <p>18 Support the creation of, or invest in existing, initiatives to supply free winter outerwear and sports equipment for lower income households or newcomers</p>
Infrastructure and Design	Goal 7: Apply a year-round lens to future design or use of public spaces	<p>19 Increase investment to offer more ice trails, snowshoe & cross-country tracks, rinks and hills in City parks and greenspaces</p> <p>20 Incentivize businesses and coordinate City services to support greater downtown streetscape winterization upgrades and provide indoor washroom access to the public</p> <p>21 Develop winter-friendly design guidelines for City planning and building / renovation construction</p> <p>22 Invest in developing an environmentally sustainable downtown decorative lighting plan</p>

Outcome	Goal(s)	Action Summary (*Denotes actions that can be started in 2021-2022 with existing budget allocations)
	<p>Goal 8: Implement winter public realm improvements to increase comfort, beauty, and user-friendliness during winter</p>	<p>23 * Invest in permanent or moveable warming huts for high-use public parks or greenspaces</p> <p>24 Invest in winter seating for parks and plazas</p> <p>25 Invest in winterization of amenities such as public washrooms, winter water lines and wind breaks</p> <p>26 Increase investment into the firepit program to provide greater coverage of the city's greenspaces, parks and community association lands</p> <p>27 Support the installation of permanent or temporary exterior animations (i.e. street level lighting, large LED screens, light art) to promote activities, wayfinding, and beautification during winter</p> <p>28 Invest in an outdoor wayfinding system for citizens and visitors to move easier downtown between winter activity areas, the Plus 15 network, and surrounding BIAs</p>
	<p>Goal 9: Increase winter maintenance to support the ease and safety of all modes of transportation</p>	<p>29 Extend the adaptable roadway program for winter recreation on weekends</p> <p>30 Incentivize citizens to actively participate in snow and ice control in their community</p> <p>31 Increase pathway, bikeway and sidewalk snow and ice control to focus on human movement</p> <p>32 Develop innovative solutions to the windrow problem on sidewalks and pathways</p> <p>33 Develop innovative solutions to heat sidewalks and public plazas</p>
<p>Calgary's Winter Story</p>	<p>Goal 10: Increase awareness of Calgary's history as a winter city</p> <p>Goal 11: Celebrate Calgary's unique winter weather and natural features</p>	<p>34 Promote Calgary's Winter Story with key messages that Calgary has or is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a unique Indigenous winter-life history - a diverse city with an array of cultural celebrations happening during winter - citizens who embrace the outdoors to stay healthy and connected to nature and each other - a basecamp for world-class winter activities (skiing, snowboarding, ice climbing, skating, Nordic sports) and national and international amateur or professional winter sporting events - the sunniest city in Canada with about 333 sunny days annually - a unique winter climate with Chinooks delivering 20 – 30 spring-like days during winter - natural winter beauty with Canadian Rockies, snow-swept prairies, and bright, blue sky
	<p>Goal 12: Officially designate Calgary as a world-class winter city</p>	<p>35 * Promote Calgary as a winter destination with key messages that Calgary has or is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - amenities including skiing, ice skating, snowshoeing, winter-biking, and winter walking - a year-round vibrant art, theatre, music, and sporting event scenes

Outcome	Goal(s)	Action Summary (*Denotes actions that can be started in 2021-2022 with existing budget allocations)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- a complex multi-modal transportation system with accessible transit, year-round cleared bike lanes and the most extensive urban pathway/bikeway network in North America- easily accessed through international airport and Trans-Canada highway