

Background and Previous Council Direction

Background – Downtown Strategy

Downtown Calgary is a critical component to Calgary's resilience in the face of economic, social and environmental shocks. Our Downtown needs to transform to position it for success in the new economy and in a post-pandemic world. When the Greater Downtown thrives, so does the rest of the city. Calgary's Greater Downtown is an economic driver and employment centre, historically generating 40 percent of non-residential tax revenue and 25 per cent of city-wide employment. However, an economic downturn has had a significant impact on Calgary's Greater Downtown with high unemployment and office vacancy rates. To address the issues in Calgary's Greater Downtown, there is a need for a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that can leverage the efforts of The City and its strategic partners to invest in infrastructure and stimulate the economy.

Calgary in the New Economy: The economic strategy for Calgary, identifies four pillars of focus – Talent, Innovation, Place, and Business Environment – that are interconnected and an integral part of a prosperous economy – with investment in place-making important for each focus area. This Plan aligns with Calgary's economic strategy by providing the roadmap for placemaking in Greater Downtown to attract business, talent and residents, which supports growth in innovation. People are at the centre of vibrancy and putting people at centre of strategic action and decision-making in Greater Downtown will allow Calgary's downtown to be a more vibrant and prosperous place.

Downtown Strategy: The Downtown Strategy brings together civic and community partners through coordinated and collaborative work with the commitment to making life better every day for citizens, customers, residents and businesses through a focus on four pillars: place, work, live and connect. The Plan is an initiative of the Downtown Strategy with a focus on these pillars. The Downtown Strategy will be the principle driver and coordinator of implementation over time and will help coordinate future budget requests (both capital and operating) and prioritize corporate action across all Service Lines. It will also ensure ongoing community dialogue and alignment with other Civic Partners and partnerships.

Previous Council Direction – Downtown Strategy

In 2020 December, Council approved *Notice of Motion C2020-1439 Providing Incentive to Residential Development in the Downtown Core*. That with respect to Notice of Motion C2020-1439, the following be adopted, as amended: NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council direct City Administration to explore the potential creation of regulatory and financial investment incentives for the development of new high-density residential complexes and the conversion of office buildings to various forms of residential occupancy or other uses within the downtown generally, but with a focus on the Downtown Core, to coordinate with the work of the Real Estate Working Group and Urban Initiatives Downtown Strategy team. AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that Administration report to the Priorities and Finance Committee with its findings no later than the end of 2021 April.

At the 2021 April 26 Strategic Meeting of Council, with respect to report C2021-0524, the following was approved:

1. Approve **revised** Attachment 3, “Greater Downtown Plan – Initial Investment and Approvals”, including investment categories and allocations, and with the \$200 million initial investment funded by \$60 million from the Budget Savings Account, \$63 million from the Fiscal Stability Reserve and \$77 million from the Canada Community Building Fund subject to receipt of the 2021 increase;
2. Request the Mayor write letters to the provincial and federal governments, advocating for funding and other support for Calgary’s Greater Downtown Plan, and direct Administration to pursue the same support by contacting provincial and federal government officials and departments;
3. Authorize entering into a Housing Agreement on Sierra Place at 706 7 Avenue SW and authorize the Community Services General Manager to develop, approve, and execute the agreements identified in Attachment 7 and necessary to implement the HomeSpace project; and,
4. Direct Administration to report back to Council no later than 2022 Q2.