

## **Summary of Engagement Completed**

### **Civic District Public Realm Strategy**

#### **Summary of Stakeholder and Citizen Engagement Completed (August 2015)**

##### **A. Stakeholder and Citizen Engagement Overview**

The engagement process for the Civic District Public Realm Strategy project builds on a large body of knowledge generated through past studies and engagement initiatives, such as the 2007 Centre City Plan and 2007 Olympic Plaza Cultural District Strategy, and for this reason, the process was designed to build on previous efforts and was focused on obtaining input from stakeholders and citizens who use the space and have familiarity with the Civic District area.

From fall 2013 to spring 2014, the project team engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders and citizens who have an interest in the Civic District. Stakeholders invited to participate in the engagement process are listed in the table below and include business organizations, community groups & social organizations, cultural institutions and City of Calgary business units. These stakeholders were engaged through one-on-one meetings with the project team and through two separate stakeholder workshops. In addition over 350 citizens were engaged through online and in-person open houses. The engagement chronology and input received, to date, is summarized below.

##### **B. Engagement Chronology**

###### **Fall 2013:**

###### **One-on-one stakeholder meetings**

Stakeholders participated in one-on-one meetings to share details about their current and future development plans for the Civic District area. The intent of these meetings was to build a collective understanding of how the area will likely be developed over time, to help the project team identify possible synergies between developments, and to identify specific areas that might require a more comprehensive vision to be developed in order to best support The City in responding to and reviewing future development applications (e.g. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Corridor).

###### **Winter 2013:**

###### **Stakeholder Workshop #1 – Vision Review, Issues and Opportunities**

In December 2013 stakeholders participated in their first workshop, which was designed to solicit feedback on a draft vision statement for the Civic District and to identify issues and opportunities within the area. Draft vision statements were developed by the project team based on a consolidation of past citizen engagement and plans developed for the area, such as the 2007 Olympic Plaza Cultural District Strategy and 2007 Centre City Plan. Stakeholders were asked for input to determine if the vision statements resonated with them, and to provide input for refining them. Stakeholders also participated in group brainstorming exercises that identified issues and opportunities in the area, and potential ways to improve the Civic District.

###### **Winter 2014:**

###### **Online and Roving Citizen Engagement – Vision Review, Issues and Opportunities**

Following the first round of stakeholder workshops, the consultant team engaged Calgarians through an online survey and a series of roving open houses. Over 350

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citizens, from across the city and all wards (see representation map below), responded to the online survey and were engaged in dialogue with the project team at open houses held at the EPCOR Centre for Performing Arts, Bankers Hall/CORE Shopping Centre, +15, Calgary Public Library, Bow Valley College and City Hall/Municipal Building Atrium. These locations were selected to ensure that the engagement process would consider the broad range of interests that might be represented by patrons of these different facilities.

Citizens were asked to provide feedback on a draft vision for the Civic District and to comment on what is working well and what could be improved in the area. A summary of the input received is described in the following section.

### **Spring 2014:**

#### **Stakeholder Workshop #2 – Review of Draft Strategies**

Input provided by stakeholders during the first workshop and by citizens through the online and open houses was used to develop a series of draft strategies for improving the Civic District. These initial draft strategies were presented at the second stakeholder workshop held in spring 2014, where stakeholders were asked to evaluate and provide feedback on the strategies.

### **Spring 2014:**

#### **Additional One-on-one Stakeholder Meetings**

Following the workshop, stakeholders continued to provide feedback to the project team on the draft strategies and additional one-on-one meetings were scheduled with stakeholders to continue exploring synergies and consolidating design visions for key developments in the area, such as the new Central Library.

### **Spring - Fall 2014:**

#### **Project Team Refining Strategies**

Throughout spring and summer 2014, the project team has been refining the draft strategies based on stakeholder and citizen input received to date. The final draft strategies was be presented to stakeholders, citizens and members of Council in fall 2014. Input received during this final phase of engagement allowed the project team to refine and finalize the draft strategies and prioritize which public realm improvements will yield the greatest benefit for the district. This feedback will inform the development of the Civic District Public Realm Strategy report.

### **Summer - Fall 2015:**

#### **Chinatown Stakeholder Meeting**

In August of 2015, the City met with the Chinatown community to review the document and outline how it might affect their community. The strategy that would have an impact on their community was identified as “1<sup>st</sup> Street SE Green Mall”. Generally the community representatives acknowledged the value of the vision and understood that the actual elements to be included would be developed through a project engagement process, including whether cycle infrastructure would be included.

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### C. Listing of stakeholders invited to participate in the engagement process

#### Business Organizations:

- Aspen Properties
- Calgary Arts Development
- Calgary Chamber of Commerce
- Calgary Downtown Association
- Calgary Economic Development
- Calgary Hotel Association
- Calgary Municipal Land Corporation
- Remington Development
- Rocky Mountain Plaza
- The Teatro Group
- Tourism Calgary
- Transformation Calgary
- Victoria Park BRZ
- Yale Properties

#### City of Calgary

- Animal & Bylaw Services
- Calgary Police Service
- City Manager's Office , Office of Sustainability
- City-Wide Policy & Integration
- Community & Neighbourhood Services
- Community Services & Protective Services
- Corporate Properties & Buildings

#### Community Groups & Social

##### Organizations:

- Beltline Community Association
- East Village Neighbourhood Association
- Salvation Army
- The Mustard Seed
- YWCA
- Chinatown

##### Cultural Institutions:

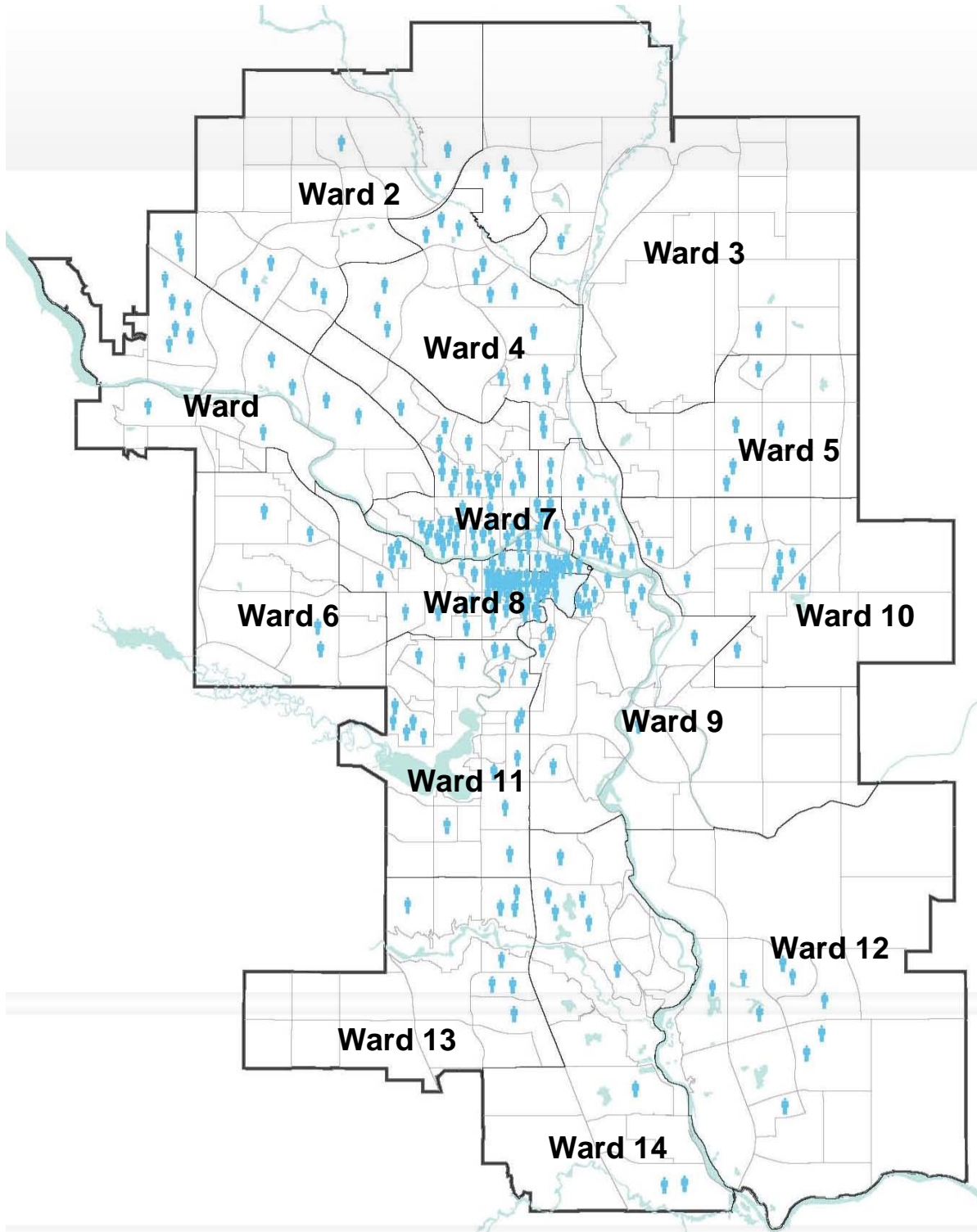
- Bow Valley College
- Calgary Public Library
- Calgary Tower
- EPCOR Centre for Performing Arts
- Glenbow Museum
- National Music Centre
- Telus Convention Centre

- Customer Service & Communications
- Local Area Planning & Implementation
- Parks
- Recreation
- Roads
- Transit
- Transportation Planning
- Water Resources

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### D. Engagement Map

The general residence locations of citizens engaged.



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### E. Summary of Engagement Results to Date

#### **Citizen Feedback on the Draft Vision Statements for the Civic District**

Citizens were asked to provide feedback on the draft vision for the Civic District by rating how well they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The draft vision statements are presented below, along with the results of the online feedback. The engagement results confirm that Calgarians have a desire to improve and strengthen the area as a key destination for Calgarians and visitors alike.

*The Civic District will be Calgary's focal point for civic pride and a welcoming destination for citizens and visitors alike (91% of on-line respondents agreed).*

*Connected public spaces will promote community and urban social living, while fostering new opportunities for culture and invocation in a place of discovery (93% of on-line respondents agreed).*

*It will be a vibrant, beautiful and memorable district that reflects the spirit of Calgarians in the heart of the city (53% of on-line respondents agreed).*

#### **Citizen Comments on What is Working Well in the Civic District**

Key themes around what is working well in the Civic District include:

**1. Olympic Plaza is a great destination for the public.**

Citizens enjoy the location, its events, its connectivity, and the gathering of people.

**2. Citizens look forward to the East Village development.**

Citizens see huge potential in the East Village, from the key amenities, such as RiverWalk, New Central Library and the National Music Centre, to the community's walkability and the animation that it will bring to the Civic District.

**3. The Civic District is a great area to experience culture.**

The Performing Arts Centre, Glenbow Museum, City Hall, Convention Centre, Calgary Tower, Central Library and Bow Valley College are important cultural and visitor institutions in our city that draw many Calgarians and visitors to the area.

**4. Stephen Avenue is a great pedestrian walk.**

Citizens love the animation that the street brings to the city, and many people expressed the desire to extend the pedestrian walk into East Village.

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### **5. New cultural institutions and public spaces are great additions to the downtown.**

Citizens felt that RiverWalk is a great new asset to the area, and that the New Central Library and the National Music Centre will help draw more Calgarians and visitors to the area.

### **6. Transit in and out of the Civic District was identified as working well.**

Many citizens felt that the mobility and accessibility into and out of the Civic District was good, and that the recent improvements to the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue CTrain corridor have greatly improved the transit experience.

### **Citizen input for improving the Civic District**

Citizens provided nearly 1,000 unique comments about ways to improve the Civic District. A review of the responses revealed the following general themes.

#### **(1) Olympic and Municipal Plazas should be safe, vibrant and animated gathering spaces with a variety of public amenities.**

Citizens felt these plazas need to be improved with additional amenities, such as ice skating rentals, engaging public art and water features, coffee shops and sunlit patios. Additional amenities would give Calgarians and visitors more reasons to visit and engage in this area of downtown outside of those times when the plazas are programmed with events.

#### **(2) Additional measures are needed to improve the safety and comfort of visitors.**

Citizens felt that additional measures are required to improve their comfort and confidence to engage in the space and to enhance their sense of personal safety.

Suggested improvements include additional pedestrian lighting, more programming and events to draw people to the space, provide additional social services to support vulnerable citizens, and increase police/security presence.

#### **(3) Improving the public realm and pedestrian experience.**

Citizens felt that many of the pedestrian routes in the area are uninviting and lacking interest. In order to encourage Calgarians and visitors to spend more time engaging in the area and visiting the many cultural institutions, the pedestrian experience needs to be improved.

Suggested improvements include creating beautiful walkways with more greenery and trees, improving night-time lighting (e.g. pedestrian lighting, architectural lighting), providing engaging public art, increasing the availability of street furniture and adding wayfinding signage to better direct visitors to the areas many cultural institutions (e.g. Municipal Complex, Glenbow Museum, Convention Centre Performing Arts Centre).

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Citizens also felt that cultural institutions should play a role in improving the quality of public spaces by modifying their blank walls and creating visual interest at street-level, such as engaging lighting and art and providing transparent windows to see inside the buildings.

(4) Pedestrian connections need to be improved.

Citizens felt that surrounding communities are not well-connected to the Civic District and identified many barriers to pedestrian movement. Citizens expressed an expectation for stronger pedestrian connections between East Village and the Downtown Core, particularly along Stephen Avenue and around the Municipal Building Complex. Respondents also felt there should be improved connections between the Civic District and the Bow River pathway system, RiverWalk and communities North of the Bow River, as well as improving the CPR underpass connections that connect to the Beltline.