

CALGARY'S CENTRE CITY

# WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

2013-2014 ANNUAL UPDATE

**A collaborative, corporate approach to the implementation of the Centre City Plan.**



DAVE BRECKON

It is through the collaborative efforts of City of Calgary business units, community organizations and industry partners that the vision of the Centre City Plan can be realized. This annual update features a snapshot of 2013 business unit and partnership achievements in Centre City and planned activities for 2014.

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**Onward / A vibrant city depends on a vibrant centre.**



THE CITY OF  
**CALGARY**

# VIBRANT PLACES

## 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

### CITY DESIGN

- > Poetic Plaza hosted its official opening in May.
- > Development of the new Central Library began.
- > Work began on the development of the Civic District Public Realm Strategy, a comprehensive vision for the public spaces around City Hall, Olympic Plaza and the new Central Library.
- > The New Downtown Land Use District, which included an updated incentive density system designed to support public amenities, was approved by Council.

### EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

- > With the support of community partners, Canada Day festivities were moved from the flood-devastated Prince's Island Park to Shaw Millennium Park and Olympic Plaza.
- > "Opera in the Village," the first outdoor summer opera festival in Canada was hosted by CMLC and multiple partners.

### VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- > "Luminous Crossing" was installed at the 'gateway' stations along the 7th Avenue Transit Corridor.
- > New LED lighting illuminated and animated the metallic tree sculptures on Stephen Avenue Walk.
- > The annual Centre City Banner Program displayed the work of local artist, Wil Yee on gateway bridges and Olympic Plaza.

### AWARDS

The 2013 Mayor's Urban Design Awards (MUDA) acknowledged a number of projects in the Centre City for the contribution that designers, architects and artists make to improve the quality of life in our city.

- > *The Lions Awaken: Relighting the Centre Street Bridge* received The Mawson Urban Design Award.
- > *East Village Art in the Public Realm* was the winner in the Urban Fragments category.
- > 1st Street S.W. Underpass Enhancement, Devonian Gardens Redevelopment and the St. Patrick's Island Redevelopment and Bridge projects all received Honourable Mention within their respective award categories.



A vibrant Centre City offers a myriad of opportunities to work, play and learn; where visitors, businesses and residents are attracted to an exciting and creative environment. Strategies and policies that support an enhanced public realm; the development and creative use of public spaces through public art, programming or physical enhancement, all contribute to public places where people can meet, mix and grow community together.

## » 2014 OUTLOOK / VIBRANT PLACES

- > Finalization of the Century Gardens concept plan.
- > Completion of the New Victoria Park (also known as Enoch Park).
- > Development of a common public amenity catalogue and incentive density system for Centre City neighbourhoods.
- > Development of Centre City Urban Design Guidelines.
- > Completion of the Civic District Public Realm Strategy.
- > Concept plan development for the Eau Claire West public realm.
- > Formal opening of Barb Scott Park (adjacent to the Dr. Carl Safran Centre).



## GETTING AROUND

### 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

#### CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENTS

- > Development of the 8th Street S.W. Corridor Master Plan.
- > Phase 1 (1st Street S.E. to 4th Street S.W.) construction of the 13th Avenue Heritage Greenway project was completed. Phase 2 of the project (1st Street S.E. to Macleod Trail) commenced.
- > Detailed design of the 1st Street S.W. Underpass Enhancement Project was undertaken.

#### CUSTOMER/USER EXPERIENCE

- > Linking East Village and the community of Inglewood, the installation of the Elbow River Traverse and accompanying landscaping work commenced in the spring.
- > The Commercial On-Street Parking Policy was implemented, aligning prices with demand to make the best use of street space in the downtown.
- > A refurbishment of the mall surface on Stephen Avenue Mall was undertaken.

#### PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK

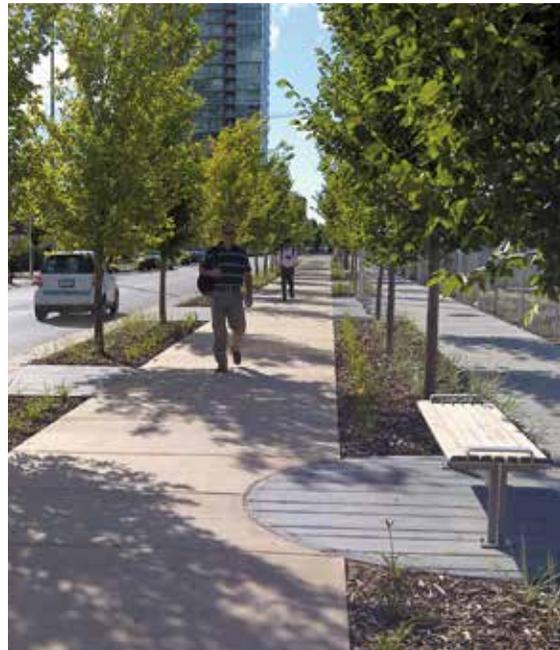
- > The 7th Street S.W. cycle track was opened to cyclists with 1,160 daily bicycle trips being recorded within the first two months.
- > 150 secure bicycle stalls were added to the Calgary Parking Authority inventory.
- > 100 short-term bicycle parking stalls were installed to help meet the growing demand for bicycle parking in the downtown core.
- > A new downtown density incentive was introduced to promote the construction of public bicycle parkades.
- > New bicycle parking requirements were introduced for the downtown that include showers and change rooms.



The Centre City Plan makes pedestrian, transit and bicycle travel a priority. Through the ongoing development of walkable and accessible streets, upgrades to CTrain stations, expansion of transit service and improved cycling options Calgarians have a range of mobility options to and within the Centre City.

## » 2014 OUTLOOK / GETTING AROUND

- > Development of the Centre City Cycle Track Network.
- > Completion of detailed design for the remainder of the 1st Street S.W. Corridor Enhancements (10th to 17th Avenues).
- > Completion of the St. Patrick's Island Bridge.
- > Construction of the 1st Street S.W. Underpass Enhancement Project will commence.
- > Completion of The Elbow River Traverse (connecting East Village and Inglewood).
- > Construction of Phase 2 of the 13th Avenue Heritage Greenway Project.
- > Development of a coordinated street furniture strategy.
- > Establishment of "Getting Around Calgary" an on-line information source for commuters.
- > Arrival of 150 brand new 40-foot New Flyer transit buses.



# COMMUNITY

## 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- > Stakeholders participated in an interactive online community engagement tool to support a new Area Redevelopment Plan in Downtown West.
- > Development of an Amenity and Market Analysis of Recreation Services was informed by Calgarians living, working and recreating within the inner city.
- > The 2013 Centre City Perception Survey engaged Calgarians to gauge their perception of the Centre City, including sense of community:
  - **91 per cent** of Centre City residents agreed that the Centre City is a desirable place to live.
  - **93 per cent** of Centre City residents agreed that they are proud to live in their neighbourhood.
- > Expressions of Interest were received from non-profit organizations capable of developing, promoting and operating a publicly accessible Arts, Culture or Heritage centre at the former Centennial Planetarium.

### PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- > Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) funded 23 social services programs within Centre City in 2013.
- > In the fall of 2013, Centre City Afterschool programs experienced a 30 per cent increase in the participation of children and youth over the previous winter/spring session.
- > Promoting the wellness of those impacted by the 2013 flood, the Seniors Collaborative Community Outreach Team (SCCOT) began working to improve the accessibility, continuity, coordination and comprehensiveness of senior's services within Calgary's East Village.

### BUILDING COMMUNITY

- > A Vulnerable Populations Strategy was undertaken to understand the needs of, and support vulnerable Calgarians as they move through flood recovery.
- > Prince's Island Park hosted the annual Folk Festival thanks to the support of hundreds of volunteers who assisted in the flood clean up of the island.
- > Development permits for approximately 900 new residential units in the Centre City were approved.
- > Development permits were approved for 422,222 square metres of non-residential development in the Centre City, a 23 per cent increase over 2012.
- > The Downtown West s-PARK pilot reinvented the street environment as a temporary community and pedestrian space.
- > The Centre City Wayfinding Program was expanded to include signal box wraps that promote place making and celebrate the heritage of the Centre City.

### AWARDS

The Centre City Wayfinding Program received multiple honours in 2013:

- > A Downtown Merit Award in the category of Public Space from the International Downtown Association.
- > Enhancing the Downtown Through Streetscape Improvements, Vitality Award from the Calgary Downtown Association.



Supporting communities where people feel connected, safe, valued and included is a primary goal of the Centre City Plan. Sense of community is fostered by engaging Calgarians in influencing decision-making, developing plans and policies; offering programs and services and building opportunities and infrastructure for people to live, work and play in the Centre City.

## » 2014 OUTLOOK / COMMUNITY

- > As part of the Communities of Focus program, the communities of Beltline, Downtown West/Commercial Core and East Village will be undergoing an assessment in the four elements of a strong neighbourhood: appropriate programs and services, built and natural environment, positive community economic development and social cohesion.
- > The Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan will be reviewed.
- > A new land use district will be introduced that will consolidate and harmonize the various existing districts in Centre City.
- > The new Downtown West Area Redevelopment Plan will be finalized to help guide development towards an attractive, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighbourhood.
- > The new East Village Area Redevelopment Plan will take effect.



# SAFETY

## 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

### CITIZEN PERCEPTIONS

The 2013 Centre City Perception Survey reported:

- > A majority of Calgarians continue to express positive views about safety in the Centre City, with **91 per cent** of all Calgarians reporting that safety has stayed the same (73 per cent) or improved (18 per cent) over the last 12 months.
- > Among Calgarians surveyed, **90 per cent** perceived safety walking on sidewalks, driving the streets, waiting at the CTrain stations, waiting at bus stops, visiting parks and travelling on river pathways in the Centre City between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. as very safe or reasonably safe for most activities.

### SAFETY INITIATIVES

- > With a local state of emergency in effect and public safety a paramount concern, City of Calgary and Emergency Services staff worked tirelessly as the rivers spilled over their banks and flooded communities, evoking the largest mandatory evacuation in the city's history.

### VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- > The City of Calgary worked with the Government of Alberta to lease the Planetarium as interim support to house the Calgary Alpha House Society's shelter and services while the Alpha House facility in Victoria Park was undergoing flood-damage repairs.
- > Supported by community-based agencies, the Safe Communities Opportunity and Resource Centre (SORCe) opened its doors to enhance capacity and leverage existing resources to help vulnerable people.

### ROAD SAFETY

- > A safety review was conducted of late night traffic congestion, emergency vehicle access and mobility of patrons on Stephen Avenue Walk resulting in a pilot program to improve late-night safety and access to taxi services.
- > An education campaign was launched to ensure that motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians understood how the new 7th Street Cycle Track project works and their responsibilities on the road.

### NIGHT LIFE

- > Signage revisions for late night taxi stands were tested and adopted. The signs clarify parking restrictions for citizens and also help taxis safely pick up and drop off patrons in high volume areas.
- > Best Bar None, a partnership with the Alberta Liquor & Gaming Commission, recognized 34 bars for their commitment to best practices in bar management and safety.

### AWARDS

The Best Bar None Program was recognized for a Vitality, Social and Safety Award by the Calgary Downtown Association.



In developing the Centre City Plan, stakeholders defined a vision of an urban living and business environment that was safe and attractive. City of Calgary business units, Calgary Police Service, industry, community and government partners work collaboratively to identify issues and opportunities and develop and implement solutions.

## » 2014 OUTLOOK / SAFETY

- > Continued collaboration and focus on initiatives working with vulnerable populations in the Centre City.
- > Additional Transit Peace Officers will join the Public Safety and Enforcement section to target social disorder and improve customer safety and security on the transit system.
- > Business units will continue to address safety concerns through public realm enhancements.
- > Shared resources will again focus on achieving greater compliance and inspection of all licensed establishments applying for Stampede tents.



# CLEANLINESS

## 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

### CITIZEN PERCEPTIONS

The 2013 Centre City Perception Survey reported:

- > A strong majority (**92 per cent**) of Calgarians surveyed report that the overall cleanliness of the Centre City in the last year has either improved (21 per cent) or stayed the same (71 per cent).
- > A significant increase in the perceived level of cleanliness since 2011 was reported for Centre City bus stops (11 per cent), roads (8 per cent) and sidewalks (8 per cent).

### PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES

- > As part of the Clean to the Core Program, City staff removed 280,620 kilograms of garbage from 300 waste receptacles in the Centre City.
- > 66 recycling bins located in the Centre City yielded 3,770 kilograms of newspaper.

- > Citizen volunteers continue to donate hundreds of hours to clean up initiatives in Centre City parks and open spaces.
- > City business units rallied to support trash/waste removal and infrastructure repairs immediately following the 2013 flood.

### RESEARCH

A review of past Center City engagement confirms the highest priorities for citizens are cleanliness and safety.



Through the collaborative “Clean to the Core” Program, more than a dozen City business units and the Calgary Police Service work with community and industry partners on initiatives for a clean and safe Centre City. Clean to the Core addresses the connection between a clean city, a safe city and a vibrant city.

## » 2014 OUTLOOK / CLEANLINESS

- > Implementation of proactive initiatives to address vandalism in the Centre City.
- > Continuation of the Graffiti Abatement Program.





The Centre City Plan is a comprehensive and strategic long-term vision for the future of Calgary's Centre City. The Plan was approved by City Council in 2007 and outlines a vision for creating a Centre City that is a livable, thriving and caring place.

Implementing the vision of the Centre City Plan requires a collaborative effort by City of Calgary business units, community partners and private industry. Over the last six years, great strides have been made in building a safer, cleaner, and more vibrant Centre City.

The City of Calgary's investment in the Centre City since 2007 has created a more attractive core which has a greater capacity to support and encourage future investment and growth. Continuing to sustain the momentum and investment is critical to achieving and maintaining the vision of the Centre City Plan.

This report acknowledges the efforts of City of Calgary stakeholders who continue to make a difference for those who live, work and/or play in Calgary's Centre City.

Animal & Bylaw Services

Calgary Fire Department

Calgary Municipal Land Corporation

Calgary Parking Authority

Calgary Police Service

Calgary Transit

Community & Neighbourhood Services

Corporate Properties & Buildings

Corporate Security

Development & Building Approvals

Land Use Planning & Policy

Parks

Recreation

Roads

Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation Planning

*Some photos courtesy of: Calgary Municipal Land Corporation; Dave Breckon*

**For more on Calgary's Centre City visit [calgary.ca/centrecity](http://calgary.ca/centrecity).**