

CALGARY'S CENTRE CITY

WHERE YOU WANT TO BE

2014-2015 ANNUAL UPDATE

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



This annual update is a snapshot of the work of City of Calgary departments in the Centre City for 2014 and planned activities for 2015.

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THE CITY OF
CALGARY

Onward / A vibrant city depends on a vibrant centre.

VIBRANT PLACES

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

DESIGN

- > Citizens and stakeholders were engaged in the development of the Civic District Public Realm Strategy.
- > The design of the New Central Library was released to the public and construction began on the LRT tunnel that will run through the library.
- > Input was sought from the community and stakeholders on a plan to develop West Eau Claire Park and adjacent public space.
- > Concept drawings for the first off-leash area in the Centre City were finalized for Connaught Park, following extensive community engagement.
- > Concept drawings were unveiled for the redevelopment of a historically significant lawn bowling green in to Thomson Family Park, following community and stakeholder input.
- > Council approved a new land use district for Calgary's downtown, including an updated density incentive system promoting a range of items, from green buildings to residential support uses.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- > Barb Scott Park, named for the late alderman and community builder, opened in the Beltline in a celebration attended by more than 200 community members.
- > Chinook Arc was installed in the new Barb Scott Park. This interactive, illuminated sculpture allows visitors to change the piece's lighting sequence through the wave of a hand.
- > The historic McHugh House was successfully relocated from Mission to Humpy Hollow Park at Centre Street and 17th Avenue S.W.
- > Parks installed 629 hanging baskets in Centre Division in 2014.

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

- > 117 events were held in Centre City public spaces, with estimated attendance totalling 807,835. Some of the highlights included:
 - The Celebration of Excellence parade honouring Canadian athletes who participated in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games.
 - Canada Day celebrations including a living Canadian flag and spectacular fireworks.
 - Nuit Blanche, an annual international late-night arts festival.
 - Alberta Culture Days block party.
 - Celebration of the Calgary Stampeders' 2014 Grey Cup win.
 - A Family Dance Party at the Municipal Building and Outdoor Celebration at Olympic Plaza to ring in 2015.



It takes the interaction of many elements to create a dynamic Centre City. Beautiful parks that invite people to pause and to gather, public art from banners to installations, innovative illumination, and events that celebrate our city, all work together to support a vibrant Centre City experience.

» 2015 OUTLOOK / VIBRANT PLACES

- > A new park for East Victoria Park will open in the spring.
- > Construction will begin on Connaught Park off-leash area.
- > St. Patrick's Island is on track to open to the public.
- > Detailed design for Phase 1 of West Eau Claire Park will be completed.
- > Final drawings for the Beltline Thomson Family Park will be presented to the public in early 2015, with finalized drawings going to tender by late summer.
- > The Simmons Building will open in the summer.
- > The Centre City Urban Design Guidelines will be delivered in the third quarter of 2015 and reflect the importance of Universal Design in public realm design.
- > The Heritage Interpretation elements for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of 13th Avenue Heritage Greenway will be implemented.
- > The Civic District Public Realm Strategy will be completed.
- > Planning for Phase 2 of the Centre City Wayfinding Program – Vehicular Wayfinding will begin.
- > Construction on the New Central Library will start in late 2015.



GETTING AROUND

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

BRIDGES

- > The Elbow River Traverse between Fort Calgary and Inglewood officially opened, managing 800 to 1,000 pedestrians and cyclists per day.
- > Nicknamed the “skipping stone bridge,” St. Patrick’s Bridge connecting East Village, St. Patrick’s Island and Bridgeland was completed.

PATHWAYS AND PEDESTRIANS

- > Repairs were completed to sections of the Centre City pathway damaged in the 2013 floods.
- > Implementation of the Pathway Safety Review Report was completed including repairing bollards, new signage to highlight hazards, painting yellow centre lines, and safety markings.
- > Sixteen art panels highlighting Alberta landscapes were installed along the 5th Street S.W. underpass.
- > Detailed design was completed and the construction tender was awarded for the 1st Street S.W. Underpass Enhancement Project.
- > Detailed design for the 8th Street S.W. Underpass Enhancement Project was undertaken.

CYCLING

- > There has been a 26 per cent increase in bike trips into Centre City since the Cycling Strategy came into effect in 2011.
- > Council approved a pilot cycle track network in Centre City to improve mobility.
- > The City installed the first automated bike counter on the Peace Bridge. The data is publicly accessible online.

TAXIS

- > In September 2014, 126 more taxi plate licenses were issued in the continuing effort to improve the safety and efficiency standards of Calgary’s taxi system.

TRANSIT

- > Transit users in the Centre City will benefit from three initiatives:
 - All LRT platform extensions are substantially complete in preparation for 4-car LRTs.
 - Council approved the planning and design of six priority bus rapid transit corridors identified in RouteAhead.
 - Green Line S.E. Transitway pre-design and base line studies have begun.

PARKING

- > The new Virtual Pay Machine (VPM) service was implemented. It allows anyone to securely pay for parking on-street or in any Calgary Parking Authority (CPA) facility with their cell phone and credit card.
- > Travel time information screens were installed as an added convenience for CPA’s parkade customers.
- > ParkPlus cell phone account holders were able to park with the CPA in five parkades for \$5 during the lunch rush, from June 2 to August 28.
- > CPA offered free parking in all parkades on Canada Day for the first time; on-street parking was also free.
- > Curbs were painted bright blue along on-street accessible parking stalls in 20 locations to improve access to spaces for people with permits and to reduce ticketing.



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 access, and travel within, the Centre City.

» 2015 OUTLOOK / GETTING AROUND

- > The Pilot Cycle Track network will be operational by the end of June. The network will include separated bike lanes on 12th Avenue S., 5th Street S.W., and 8th and 9th avenues south.
- > Several more automated counters will be installed to help track the number of bicycles in Centre City.
- > 800 new bike parking spaces will be installed.
- > A comprehensive education campaign will roll out to help motorists and cyclists understand their rights and responsibilities with the opening of the cycle track network.
- > Through the use of newly available taxi GPS data, taxi stand locations will be optimized in the downtown core to meet increasing demand and availability for taxis.
- > Stampede attendees can expect continued improvement of taxi queuing and safe orderly movement of taxi services for the 2015 Calgary Exhibition & Stampede.
- > The Centre City Underpass Enhancement Program will continue with:
 - The completion of 1st Street S.W. underpass.
 - Detailed design completed and construction tender issued for the 8th Street S.W. underpass enhancement.
 - Conceptual design process and stakeholder engagement initiated for the 4th Street S.W. underpass enhancement.
- > Development will begin of the Pedestrian Strategy STEP FORWARD, a strategic plan for improving walking in Calgary, including the Centre City.



COMMUNITY

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

ENGAGEMENT

- > A public engagement event was held for East Village to solicit feedback on what public amenities would be most valued in the neighbourhood, with over 100 surveys completed.
- > Beltline residents were invited to join an online conversation to suggest how to improve public spaces in the area through the Beltline Community Investment Fund.
- > The communities of Beltline, Downtown West, Downtown Core and East Village underwent community needs assessments.

COMMUNITY SPACES

- > Devonian Gardens provided educational and entertainment events including complimentary, live performances by the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.
- > Parks staff provided Prince's Island skaters with fire pits to keep warm and held talks about local plants and animals.
- > Central Memorial Park hosted the five-part Music in the Park series.
- > The RiverWalk™ Plaza festival tent hosted an outdoor summer opera festival and a high end fashion show featuring local designers and artists.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

- > The Chinatown community used a flood recovery gift of money from Calgary's Sister City, Daqing, China, to coordinate community building initiatives that included a week of cultural events culminating with a night market and celebrations on July 1.
- > Supported by their Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator, Eau Claire Community Association was engaged to identify community improvement projects in Eau Claire.
- > Supported by their Community Social Worker:
 - East Village Community Safety Committee was established as a collaborative effort between City departments and the community.
 - A grassroots residents group was formed in Beltline-West Connaught with the purpose of building a sense of community in the neighbourhood.
 - Residents in Beltline-West Connaught came together to build a community garden on land donated by St. Stephen's Church. The garden provides an opportunity for residents to grow their own food, participate in community life, and meet new people.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- > Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) funded 18 agencies delivering 34 social service programs within Centre City.
- > The Beltline Calgary AfterSchool Program saw a 40.6 per cent increase in attendance in 2014 over the previous year.
- > The addition of a climbing wall at Beltline Aquatic and Fitness Centre responded to a need for more diverse programming opportunities in the downtown core.
- > A new Chess Club was offered to children in the Beltline, free of charge.



Supporting communities where people feel connected, safe, valued and included is one of the primary goals of the Centre City Plan. A sense of community is fostered by engaging Calgarians in influencing decision-making and developing plans and policies; and by offering programs and services that support those who live, work and play in the Centre City.

» 2015 OUTLOOK / COMMUNITY

- > The Community Social Worker will continue to help facilitate a multi-agency process that will streamline referrals and improve inter-agency communications.
- > Findings from the East Village Community Needs Assessment will be shared with the community association to facilitate discussion and action planning.
- > Opportunities will be developed for Beltline-West Connaught children to participate in free programs that increase their skills and abilities to be a part of the community.
- > Implementation of the Volunteer Way Master Plan will begin with the enhancement of the pedestrian realm and installation of light standards and benches at 10th Avenue and Volunteer Way S., celebrating volunteerism in Calgary.



SAFETY

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

PUBLIC SAFETY

- > Calgary Emergency Management Agency's members and partners provided services to several hundred Calgarians when an underground fire in the west end of the downtown core caused a power outage.
- > The Safe Housing Inspection Program (SHIP) team continued to address unsafe and unhealthy residential rental housing and conducted comprehensive joint inspections.

ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

- > Best Bar None recognized 10 bars in the Centre City for their commitment to best practices in bar management and safety.
- > The Licensed Establishment Multi-Agency Group (LEMAG) consulted with all licensed establishments applying for Stampede tents to ensure greater compliance with safety rules and to reduce social disorder. By sharing resources, inspection coverage was in effect 20 hours a day during Stampede.
- > The multi-agency Public Safety Compliance Team made 301 visits to 127 late night venues to support vibrancy in the Centre City while enforcing safety and licensing requirements.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- > The Beltline Community Partners Safety Group was established for community leaders, organizations and public safety personnel to communicate initiatives and respond to emerging trends.
- > In conjunction with local business owners, several Calgary Police Service's (CPS) Beat initiatives were conducted in areas known for social disorder, identifying chronic offenders and directing them to appropriate resources.
- > CPS solidified a partnership with the downtown retail security firms to facilitate communication regarding property crime.
- > The Partner Agency Liaison (PAL) Team, in collaboration with the Downtown Outreach & Addictions Program (DOAP) Encampment Team, continues to work with partner agencies to find long term solutions for people experiencing homelessness.
- > The City's new Co-ordinated Safety Response Team 2 (CSRT2) was created to respond to incidents around construction sites.
- > Animal & Bylaw Services, CPS and Calgary Transit all dedicated resources to the Joint Graffiti Investigation Team and the Corporate Co-ordinated Graffiti Abatement Program.



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

» 2015 OUTLOOK / SAFETY

- > Expansion of the Public Safety Network of closed-circuit televisions will continue, particularly in the Beltline-Victoria Park area.
- > Corporate Security will assist with the design and operation of enhanced security features for the redevelopment of the Canadian Pacific Railroad underpasses.
- > Integrated Transit and Calgary Police Service beat teams will be piloted along the downtown LRT corridor.
- > An evaluation of the 2014 Transit Security Service Delivery Model will be undertaken.
- > A new Calgary Transit initiative will explore best practice responses to persons living in public spaces due to homelessness.
- > Trial use of GIS will be piloted to produce real time maps of areas of concern, like encampments and vacant properties, to assist business units in allocating resources to critical areas.



CLEANLINESS

2014 HIGHLIGHTS

- > The Centre City Signal Box Wrapping Initiative was expanded into the Beltline community. The program wraps traffic signal utility boxes with graphics that promote community placemaking and celebrate the local history of the community, while deterring graffiti.
- > Through the Parks Green Projects program, 35 volunteers invested 105 hours taking care of Centre City park spaces through activities such as weeding, beaver wiring, shrub bed enhancements, and improving playgrounds.
- > On May 25, five km of Centre City pathways were cleared by 160 volunteers as part of the annual Pathway and River Cleanup. Volunteers contributed 320 volunteer hours, and removed litter from park spaces during the cleanup.
- > The Roads Team introduced a new piece of equipment in the Centre City to help increase efficiency. The Wille, a small tractor that can clear snow while sanding and salting at the same time, is a versatile piece of equipment helpful for winter maintenance on the Cycle Track and for spring cleanup activities.
- > Operational improvements were undertaken to improve the lighting, cleanliness and repair of downtown Canadian Pacific Railway underpasses.
- > City staff removed 240,171 kg of garbage from 543 waste receptacles in the Centre City.
- > 61 recycling bins located in the Centre City yielded 5,880 kg of newspapers.

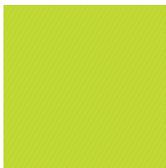


Through the collaborative Clean to the Core program, more than a dozen City business units and the Calgary Police Service work with community and industry partners on initiatives for a clean and safe Centre City. Clean to the Core addresses the connection between a city that is clean, safe and vibrant.

» 2015 OUTLOOK / CLEANLINESS

- > Continued improvements will be made to Centre City underpasses.
- > Additional signal box community placemaking and heritage wraps will be installed in the Beltline and Downtown Core.





The Centre City Plan is a comprehensive and strategic long-term vision for the future of Calgary's Centre City. Defined by the natural borders of the Bow and Elbow Rivers to the north and east, and 17th Avenue and 14th Street S.W. to the south and west, the 2007 City Council approved plan 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 seven years, great strides have been made in building a safer, cleaner, and more vibrant Centre City.

Since 2007, The City of Calgary's investment in the Centre City 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 play in Calgary's Centre City.

- Animal & Bylaw Services
- Calgary Fire Department
- Calgary Municipal Land Corporation
- Calgary Parking Authority
- Calgary Police Service
- Calgary Transit
- City Wide Policy & Integration
- Community & Neighbourhood Services
- Corporate Properties & Buildings

- Corporate Security
- Inspections & Permit Services
- Local Area Planning & Implementation
- Office of Land Servicing & Housing
- Parks
- Recreation
- Roads
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Transportation Planning

*Photo of St. Patrick's Bridge courtesy of Calgary Municipal Land Corporation.
Image of Barb Scott Park features Chinook Arc by artists Joe O'Connell and Blessing Hancock.
Image of City Hall LRT station features Luminous Crossings by Cliff Garten Studio.*

For more on Calgary's Centre City visit calgary.ca/centrecity.