

Calgary



# Centre City Plan Refresh

## **Parks Brief**

## About this brief

This brief summarizes inputs collected and reviewed related to centre city parks as part of the Centre City Plan Refresh project. This brief presents some preliminary ideas and proposals for Plan content based on the process to date. A detailed internal review of the ideas and proposals included within this brief is ongoing prior to the release of a formal draft Plan.

Through the project work to update the *Centre City Plan* there have been multiple inputs to consider. These inputs include:

- a review of the existing 2007 *Centre City Plan* to identify which information should remain in the Plan and be updated and which information should be removed;
- a review of related City of Calgary policy, guideline and strategy documents;
- input collected from various departments throughout The City;
- results of the Strategic Foresight process;
- stakeholder and public engagement that was compiled into a *What We Heard Report*;
- results from the Downtown Economic Summit that was held on 2017 March 2; and
- a review of best practice research.

All this information was used to compile several briefs relating to a variety of topics. Each brief starts with an overview of the topic, which includes a description and statistics. Then, through analysis of the inputs, key elements for parks in the Centre City were compiled. These elements include outcomes, goals, challenges and questions for analysis. All these elements informed topics for discussion in a parks workshop held on March 20, 2019. The workshop provided an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss The City's goals for parks in the Centre City and prioritize initiatives to achieve those goals.

After the workshop, a *What We Heard Report* was prepared for the parks workshop and this brief was updated with a summary. This brief has also been reviewed and updated with more recent information and answers to some of the questions posed at the time of the workshop. This brief will inform the new Plan for the Centre City.

## Project overview

In 2007, based on extensive citizen input, City Council adopted the [Centre City Plan](#), a visionary document that describes what the Centre City could look like in 30 years. The *Centre City Plan* is a coordinated strategy document that pulls together the vision for the Centre City along with strategies and actions relating to land use planning, economic, cultural, and social development, and governance. With the approval of the adoption of the *Centre City Plan* (CPC2007-049), it included a recommendation for regular monitoring and reporting. In January 2017 the *Centre City Plan* was identified as one of 28 Council policies to be amended. It's time to review and refresh the original Centre City Plan.

Calgary's Centre City is the area south of the Bow River (including Prince's Island Park) from 17th Avenue Southwest and 14th Street Southwest, to the Elbow River. It also includes Downtown, Eau Claire, West End, West Connaught, Connaught Centre, Victoria Crossing Centre, East Victoria Crossing, East Village, Chinatown and Stampede Park area. (A map is contained in the *Centre City Plan, 2007*.)

The purpose of this refresh project is to: affirm the current plan's vision and principles; reassess the big-picture direction for the Centre City; identify actions to realize the vision; update the information in the Plan to align with other city policies; and eliminate overlap with other documents.

Engagement was approached with the understanding that the plan need not be re-written; rather it will be updated or, "refreshed", to reflect the current thinking within the Centre City. An update to the *Centre City Plan* is an opportunity to refocus Calgary's energy and reinvigorate a commitment to success in the Centre City. For more information, see [Calgary.ca/centrecityplan](http://calgary.ca/centrecityplan).

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## Overview of Parks in the Centre City

Parks and open space in the Centre City contribute significantly to livability and vitality of the area and the city as a whole. The Centre City includes local and regional parks such as the river pathway system, Prince's Island Park, Shaw Millennium Park, Olympic Plaza, Devonian Gardens and Fort Calgary. The Centre City open space system relies on public streets to provide connectivity and continuity between open spaces.

## Analysis

Approximately half of the parks projects identified in the *Centre City Plan* and subsequent *Centre City Parks & Public Realm Enhancements Plan* have been completed (12 completed, 2 ongoing, out of 26 projects). There have been significant strides in both adding new parks (i.e. Enoch Park) and in improving parks over this time to better meet the needs of residents. During this period, new or upgraded amenities in the form of passive areas, playgrounds, dog parks, and flexible field spaces have also been provided.

An analysis of open space using population estimates predicts that there will be increasing pressure on open spaces, particularly as the amount of open space per capita in the Centre City is expected to decrease. While these analyses typically only include local park amenities, regional parks have been included in the Centre City analysis to better reflect the quantity and quality of regional park assets available to local residents.

The *Centre City Parks: Open Space Management Plan* and the *Open Space Strategy for Established Communities* set a target of 1.0 hectare of open space per 1000 residents in the Centre City and Beltline. This is half the target of 2.0 hectares per 1000 residents utilized elsewhere in the city and referenced in the *Municipal Development Plan (MDP)*, which is a result of the very different nature of development patterns and density present in the Centre City. To offset the lower target, the focus for open spaces in the Centre City is on higher quality with respect to both amenities and maintenance.

The following are some statistics for parks in the Centre City:

**Area of Centre City:** 592.2 ha

**Total area of local parks and open space in Centre City** = 11.65 hectares (2.61%)

**Total hectares / 1000 (local parks only) in Centre City:**

- 2014: 0.3 HA/1000 people
- 2018: 0.269 HA/1000 people

**Total area of regional and local parks and open space in Centre City** = 64.49 hectares (10.89%)

**Total hectares / 1000 (local and regional) in Centre City:**

- 2018: 1.43 HA/1000 people
- 2028 (projected): 1.23 HA / 1000 people
- 2039 (projected): 0.92 HA / 1000 people



## Amenity inventory: open space and recreation

### Parks

- Barb Scott Park
- Bosa/Beltline 16 AV SW park
- Central Memorial Park
- Century Gardens Park
- Connaught Park
- Courthouse Park (provincial)
- Enoch Park
- Fort Calgary
- Haultain Park
- Humpy Hollow Park
- James Short Park
- Prince's Island Park
- Riverfront (Eau Claire Park and Riverwalk Calgary)
- Shaw Millennium Park
- Sien Lok Park
- Thomson Family Park
- Tomkins Park

### Plazas

- Beaulieu Gardens
- Connaught School
- Devonian Gardens
- Eau Claire Plaza
- McDougall Centre (Provincial)
- Olympic Plaza
- Poetic Garden Plaza
- Various corporate plazas

### High Streets/ Active Frontage

- Stephen Avenue
- East Village Riff
- 17 AV SW
- 2 ST SW
- 3 ST SW
- 4 ST SE

### Green Streets

- Centre ST S 12 AV SE
- 13 AV SW
- 11 ST SW

### River Crossings

- Centre Street Bridge
- George C. King Bridge
- Jaipur Bridge
- Louise Bridge
- Macdonald Avenue Bridge
- Macleod Trail Bridge
- Peace Bridge
- 9 AV SE Bridge
- 1 ST SE Bridge
- 14 ST Bridge

### Recreation Facilities

- Beltline Aquatic & Fitness Centre
- Eau Claire YMCA
- Repsol Sport Centre (nearby)
- Bow River surf wave

### Stormwater Facilities

- East Village Pond

## Key elements for Parks

### Alignment with Centre City Plan principles

The intent of the *Centre City Plan* is to strengthen the Centre City in accordance with eight fundamental principles. Principles related to parks include:

- Principle 1: Build livable, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods
- Principle 3: Create great streets, places and buildings – for people
- Principle 7: Create a lively, active and animated environment
- Principle 8: Be a model of urban ecology

### Key outcomes over the next 10 to 20 years

These were suggested “big moves” or outcomes for parks in the Centre City over the next ten to twenty years and discussed at the parks workshop on March 20, 2019. These outcomes are the measurable results of successful implementation of the key goals (see next section).

- Greening the Centre City; and
- Connecting people to destinations.

An additional key outcome is proposed with respect to parks:

- Create great parks that benefit Centre City residents and all Calgarians.

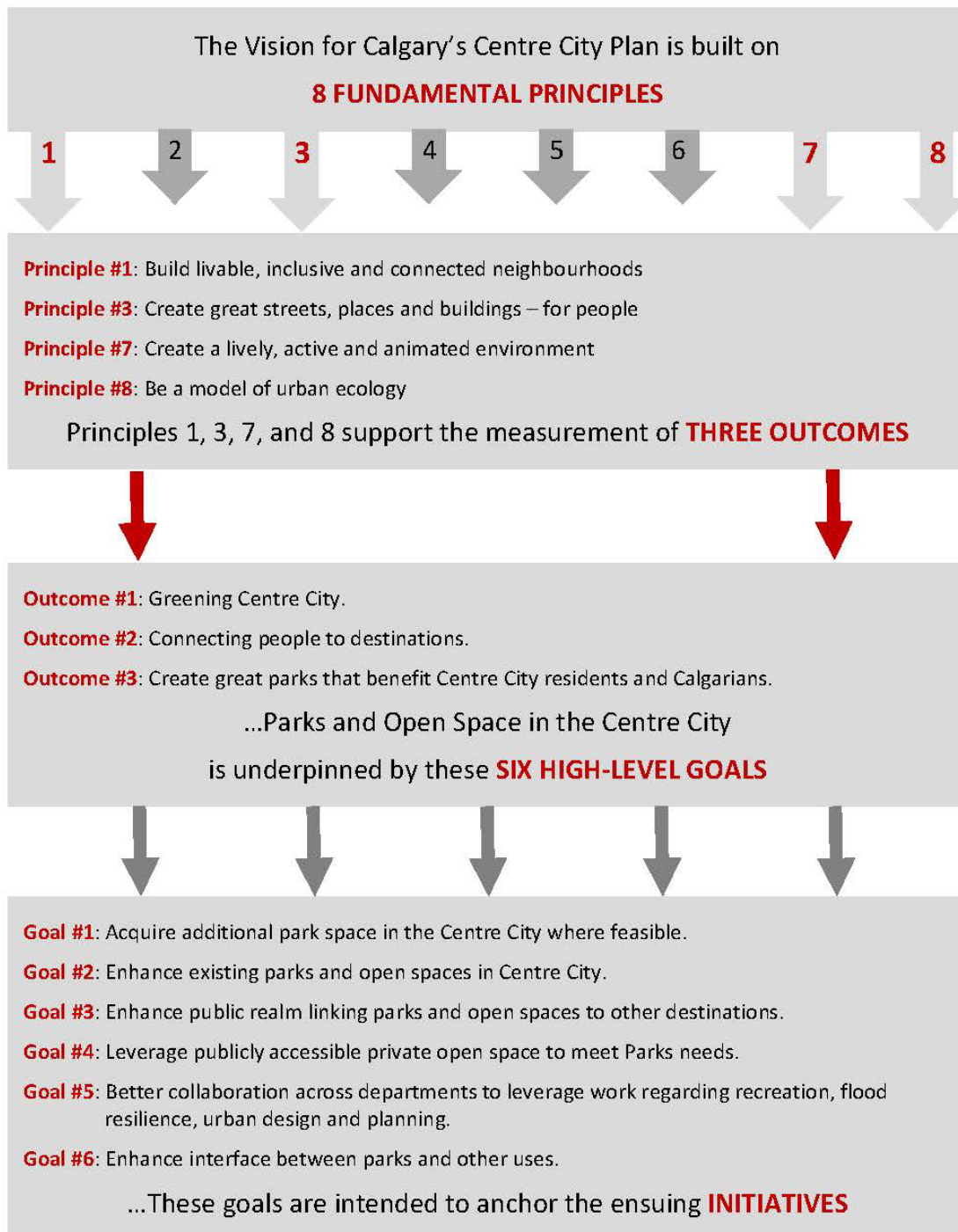
### Key goals

The following goals are specific to the Centre City to achieve the key outcomes listed above. These goals are based on an analysis of all the inputs or information gathered relating to this topic in the Centre City. See the **Goals and Initiatives Overview** section in **Appendix C** at the end of this document to see how these goals were crafted. The goals below have been amended slightly since the parks workshop on March 20, 2019.

1. Acquire additional park space in the Centre City where feasible.
2. Enhance existing parks and open spaces in Centre City.
3. Enhance public realm linking parks and open spaces to other destinations.
4. Leverage publicly accessible private open space to meet Parks needs.
5. Better collaboration across departments to leverage work regarding recreation, flood resilience, urban design and planning.
6. Enhance interface between parks and other uses.

The vision for the Centre City was established in the 2007 *Centre City Plan* with eight fundamental principles to support that vision. The current vision and principles are under review, but still valid for the purposes of evaluating outcomes and goals. Relating to the topic of Parks, there are four principles that apply. The figure below (Figure 1) shows the relationship between the principles and Parks outcomes and goals.

Figure 1: Hierarchy of Principles, Outcomes, Goals and Initiatives



## Key challenges and opportunities

The following are key challenges/opportunities relating to parks and open space in the Centre City:

1. High land costs make acquisition challenging.
2. Utilization of City-owned lands for open space may conflict with other municipal priorities for the land.
3. Smaller maintenance and capital budgets. In order to upgrade parks and keep them operating at a higher than normal standard (due to higher usage) more funding may be required.
4. Developer buy-in with respect to provision of publicly accessible private open spaces.
5. Ensuring private uses do not encroach onto public parks – unless it is deemed appropriate to do so in specific instances.
6. Safety in parks. Ensuring all citizens feel safe and welcome in parks.
7. Ensuring parks are viable and welcoming in all seasons.
8. Balancing human use with the need to preserve biodiversity, particularly in riparian environments.
9. Shadowing impact on parks– Not all parks in Centre City are covered by shadow protection policy. A fine balance to protect the parks not to be shadowed by nearby buildings versus the land uses allowing high-rise developments to be built within close proximity of the parks.
10. Balancing the desire for soft landscaping versus high maintenance costs in heavily used parks and open spaces
11. Protection of existing urban forest.
12. Viability of new tree plantings (due to limited right of way widths, utility conflicts).

## Summary of workshop findings

A parks workshop was held on March 20, 2019. The workshop provided an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss The City's goals for parks in the Centre City and prioritize initiatives to achieve those goals. After the workshop, a *What We Heard Report* was prepared for the parks workshop and below is a summary of the findings from that workshop.

- New open space is needed, but acquisitions should be focused on creating linkages along green streets and corridors, as well as through partnerships rather than outright purchasing of new land for development. Key sites should be identified, and land swaps should be considered. Streets, plazas, and all other elements of the public realm should be treated as open space.
- Vertical spaces should be considered and included as part of the parks and open space network. Building owners should be encouraged to promote green roofs and spaces as public amenities. Collaboration with private owners of amenities and land is essential. Public and private amenities can benefit from increased foot traffic through either.
- In some instances, existing park space is not designed properly and therefore is not well used. There is the potential to consider park land as being primarily for events and programming rather than for passive enjoyment. Spaces need to be flexible to respond to pop-up uses and community-driven programming.
- The public wants to enjoy parks, but park spaces need to be designed to be comfortable and inviting for the public's intended use. Investment in enhanced park space should target potential users. Public Wi-Fi should be provided. Understand each park's unique adjacencies and strengths and build on them.



- The distinction between “local” and “regional” park space is largely unnecessary in the Centre City, as local residents frequently use regional parks and regional parks provide local level amenities.
- Suggestions for improvements include beautification like flowers, murals, light art and other “Instagrammable” elements; and innovative uses like dog parks, market stalls, and public washrooms.
- City business units need to work together more collaboratively to improve the public realm. However, major concerns exist that limited operational funding will result in avoidance of improvements as a way of limiting costs for each business unit.

## Rationale for goals and priority actions

During the parks workshop on March 20, 2019 there were discussions regarding the viability of the proposed goals along with prioritization of related actions. The case for each goal along with its highest-priority actions are as follows:

### Big Move / Outcome 1: Greening the Centre City

The concept of “greening the Centre City” was presented as a big move in the parks workshop. However, it was a consistent theme that came up through-out the workshop when discussing other goals. Urban environments can be harsh and unfriendly and soft landscaping, trees and plants go a long way in enlivening these environments and making them comfortable for people. Research describes the benefits of urban tree canopy and soft landscaping in carbon capture, health outcomes and general wellness.

The city should strive to increase the tree canopy in the Centre City by planting additional trees within boulevards. This may require the widening of some pedestrian areas to account for new trees and pedestrian traffic. The city should also continue to utilize and encourage best practices with regards to tree plantings techniques, and use of innovative infrastructure that encourages healthy tree growth and sustainability. The city should also continue to monitor maintenance practices to ensure the viability and longevity of the urban forest in Centre City.

Parks and open spaces also have a role to play in greening the Centre City. It is recommended that a significant amount of green/soft landscaping be provided in any new park development (i.e. 50 per cent) and in the development of publicly accessible private open space. There are underutilized spaces in the Centre City and many of these are hardscaped – a softer environment may enhance the attractiveness and of parks, streets, open spaces to residents.

### Goal 1: Acquire additional park space in the Centre City where feasible

Additional land for parks in the Centre City may be required in the future as the population continues to increase, however it is recognized that there are significant challenges with implementing this goal. Historically, the strategy for Parks has been, and is recommended to continue being, to upgrade existing parks to a higher level of service in order to better meet citizen needs while ensuring efficient capital expenditures.

The discussion of acquisition often results from the analysis of community open space provision data. These numbers generally demonstrate the amount of local open space in a community. As a city-wide measurement these numbers are beneficial for providing a snapshot, however understanding the local context of a given area is critical. The Centre City has a unique context – there are seven regional parks within or abutting the plan area. No other community in the city has this proximity to this quantity and quality of regional parks. As such, open space provision data should be understood in the context

of regional parks within Centre City in addition to local parks. It is recommended that the *Centre City Plan* re-establish a goal of 1.0 hectares of open space per 1000 residents.

The viability of land acquisition in the Centre City for open space purposes is highly dependent on a number of factors including acquisition cost, capital development cost, future operational cost, parcel size, parcel location and park catchment area. Through analysis of the inputs into the Plan, it seems that the most viable method of acquiring new land for parks is to utilize existing City-owned land holdings. This strategy would reduce costs since land cost is the largest barrier to the acquisition of new park space. The concept of a land swap of City-owned land for private land should also be explored to ensure open space acquisition, if it is to occur, happens in the right location. When considering the acquisition of new open space, the City should prioritize areas that are most deficient from a catchment perspective. Also, the City should continue to explore using non-traditional methods of park provision including using space within boulevards, continuing the implementation of sParks, and developing partnerships with private land owners to better leverage underutilized land holdings. The development of an acquisition strategy for Centre City parks should be considered to investigate opportunities.

One direction from the previous iteration of the *Centre City Plan* was to develop an action strategy with respect to park acquisition and redevelopment. The *Centre City Parks and Public Realm Enhancement Plan* was the result of this direction. This Plan should be updated to reflect the current condition of parks in the Centre City.

### Priority actions:

- Create a master Centre City parks and open space plan that identifies:
  - the location of all Centre City parks;
  - clarifies the role of each; and
  - assesses gaps and proposed new park locations and types to fill those gaps.
- Consider sunlight penetration to new parks and implement suitable regulations to protect it.
- Create new open space in the Beltline between 8 Street and 14 Street and be open to reallocating existing under-utilized open space.

### **Goal 2: Enhance existing parks and open spaces in Centre City**

Existing policy, precedent research, and results of internal engagement consider enhancements to existing parks an important element of ensuring Centre City parks can meet the needs of Calgarians.

Since the *Centre City Plan* was originally adopted, many Centre City parks have undergone significant upgrades and the improvements have resulted in increased usage and more varied programming choices. Usage information from these parks is generally anecdotal in nature as no formalized usage tracking methods are in place. Moving forward, parks that have lower levels of usage, that have not been recently upgraded, and are nearby to residential developments should be those strongly considered for upgrades.

Any upgrades to the existing parks in Centre City have been and should continue to be developed in consultation with local communities and with an analysis of amenities in other nearby parks to ensure the amenities provided are not duplicated and that all parks amenities meet the diverse needs of citizens.

Local level amenities (i.e. playgrounds, small sports courts, benches/tables, etc.) should be included in all Centre City parks, including regional parks to ensure that regional parks can perform a dual function – attracting local use and city-wide use. Parks should also always include amenities that can function during winter to ensure year-round activity.

Specific parks in Centre City that have been identified as needing upgrades include James Short Park, Sien Lok Park and Humpy Hollow park. Other parks such as the southern half of Beaulieu Gardens, Eau Claire Plaza, Olympic Plaza and West Eau Claire Park should also be considered for capital improvements.

There may be opportunities in the short-term for quick-win improvements to existing park spaces that are underutilized. Placing moveable furniture in parks and adding interest through the use of paint/colour are potential options that are low cost and may improve park aesthetics and functionality.

### Priority actions:

- Protect natural habitat and wildlife corridors by connecting green spaces and corridors to form a green network in the Centre City;
- Develop a parks and open space usage monitoring strategy to facilitate more informed decision making;
- Design parks and open spaces with suitable infrastructure for turn-key festivals and events throughout the year, including being open to alcohol;
- Prepare a plan for public restrooms in the Centre City; and
- Improve lighting and safety along river pathways.

### **Goal 3: Enhance public realm linking parks and open spaces to other destinations**

The spaces between parks and other destinations are often as important as the destinations themselves. Analysis of the feedback received indicates that improvements to the public realm, in key locations, most of which have been identified in the existing *Centre City Plan*, are important. The planting of boulevard trees and trees on private sites are critical in creating an attractive public realm and healthy city. Enhanced pedestrian connections create a more liveable environment and foster pedestrian travel between destinations, including regional parks which are generally located on the edges of the Plan area.

Thirteenth Avenue is an east-west connection through the Beltline that has been identified as a critical pedestrian connection. This connection is currently being enhanced through the 13 Avenue Heritage Greenway project, which runs from MacLeod Trail SE to 17 Street SW. Also important are north-south pedestrian-enhanced connections to the riverfront between 17 Avenue SW and the Bow River. Enhanced pedestrian linkages both north-south and east-west would enable looped recreational and functional travel between all Centre City neighbourhoods and would enhance access to the various parks within the area.

The river pathway system and pedestrian-enhanced connections to the river should be improved where necessary as these are amenities within the Centre City. Calgarians love to walk and cycle along the river pathway and the City should strive to align the demand for this great space with available infrastructure. Potential upgrades to the pathway system include (but are not limited to) having a continuous separated cyclist pathway from East Village to the West End and also continually reviewing widths of existing pathways to ensure they meet the carrying capacity.

### Priority actions:

- Upgrade Stephen Avenue;
- Adapt to climate change by increasing tree canopy and promoting use of hardier plants in landscaping;
- Enhance east-west connectivity with green corridors along the Bow River, 13 Avenue S, and future redevelopment of the CPR corridor; and
- Enhance north-south connectivity to the rivers.

## Goal 4: Leverage publicly accessible private open space to meet Parks needs

Given the limited public land available for open space, it is important that private industry play a role in the provision of open space in Centre City. The City currently has bonusing policies with respect to the provision of publicly-accessible private open space in Centre City, however the approach towards this is handled on a case-by-case basis. Amenity spaces are also important for providing outdoor recreational opportunities for building tenants.

The City could evaluate the current bonusing program to determine what is working and what could be improved upon to better achieve publicly accessible private open spaces.

Through engagement it was identified that there is a perception regarding some privately-owned publicly accessible spaces where people did not feel welcome in them, particularly if they did not live or work in the associated building. Additionally, many of these spaces are underutilized. To mitigate this perception, there may be an opportunity to formalize some design standards (soft and hard landscape areas, seating, accessibility, CPTED), which could be very general in order to not stifle creativity and flexibility for private developments, to make these spaces appear more 'open to the public.' Common identification (i.e. signage/mapping) and basic design language may be used to help these spaces appear as 'open to the public' which will then allow these spaces to be better utilized as small hubs for the community.

### Priority actions:

- Identify privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS) like Toronto did; and
- Plan for land uses in adjacent parcels that enhance the vitality of both properties.

## Goal 5: Better collaboration across departments to leverage work regarding recreation, flood resilience, urban design and planning

Elements of parks planning can be found in the work of nearly every business unit in The City. Whether related to place-making, ecology, recreation, water management, or best practices for urban design, each initiative can benefit from collaboration.

For example, any riverfront improvement and protection project can and should be carried out in collaboration with Water Resources to ensure flood and stormwater improvements can serve multiple purposes. The planning department should be involved in the discussions in order to plan for appropriate land uses adjacent to the site and other related interventions that would be needed to connect Calgarians to the newly upgraded riverfront amenities.

### Priority actions:

- Development projects led by Water Resources or Parks should be collaborative from the beginning to ensure an integrated water management approach and ensure alignment with the Riparian Strategy; and
- Transit-oriented development projects should identify specific areas in the Centre City where interim place-making uses are acceptable.

## Goal 6: Enhance interface between parks and other uses

Parks succeed when people use them and when they are highly visible. Improving visibility and permeability of park edges and encouraging active uses in the right places along interfaces with parks will help Centre City parks become more successful than they are currently.

Parks supports active uses adjacent to parks in key areas. The *Centre City Plan* should identify these key frontages and appropriate land use determinations should be made as a result that will enable activation of park edges on private development sites. One concept that could be explored further is a

'beaded necklace' along the Bow River pathway along the north edge of downtown where the necklace is the river pathway and the beads are areas of high activity with active frontages on adjacent private development sites. Envision a walk along the riverfront with interesting points to stop / rest / recreate along the way, beginning in East Village, continuing through Sien Lok Park, Eau Claire/Prince's Island, and locations in West Eau Claire near the Peace Bridge. These hubs of activity could encourage pathway users to enter the edges of these communities (Chinatown/Eau Claire) and could encourage residents of those areas to utilize the park system more. There are other opportunities for active uses adjacent to parks throughout Centre City which should also be explored.

Whenever active uses are proposed, such as outdoor patios, bike rentals, or vendors, the interface with the park should be seamless. Commercial activities should be confined within the private parcel of land but the spaces should read as an extension of one another. There is also an opportunity for commercial uses strategically located within the park spaces themselves if they are compatible with the park.

Priority actions:

- Finish the redesign of Eau Claire Plaza and its interface with Prince's Island Park; and
- Incorporate green uses into the Plus15 system.



## Appendix A: Inputs into the refreshed Plan

### Strategic Foresight

Strategic Foresight is a scenario-based methodology that immerses participants in a study of the future by asking them to explore multiple plausible alternatives and identify the challenges and opportunities that may emerge within each.

Across all scenarios there is increased investment in the public realm including parks. The Beyond Energy scenario states that “By 2038, the Centre City’s public realm is a place designed for people first. New investments in sidewalks and parks and lighter regulations allow public space to be used in more flexible ways, such as for markets, busking and services.”

### Strategies and tactics

- Create a network of destinations and connections throughout the Centre City
  - Identify existing and future destinations and improve the mobility connections between them.
  - Improve Stephen Avenue as both a connector and a destination, especially west of 3 Street SW.
  - Link to destinations outside the Centre City (Kensington, Mission, Inglewood etc.)
  - Revitalize/redesign/rebrand Eau Claire as a destination.
- Improve stormwater and drought management
  - Increase the amount of permeable surfaces throughout the Centre City.
  - Balance the riverfront’s role as a recreation destination with its ecological/stormwater management functions.
  - Integrate stormwater management into design and transportation projects and ensure proper maintenance.
  - Lobby the Alberta Government to change the building code to accommodate greywater reuse in buildings.
  - Look for opportunities to use stormwater for irrigation.
  - Use drought tolerant and hardy plants for landscaping.

### Downtown Economic Summit

The Downtown Economic Summit was held on 2017 March 2 and was hosted jointly by The City, CED and CMLC with approximately 160 participants. Throughout the event, participants answered specific questions about Calgary’s Centre City, including its current strengths and possibilities to help address vacant office space and job creation. Participants then put the possibilities into priorities and identified tactics to consider moving forward.

The following actions are outlined in Attachment 2 of Report C2017-0344:

3. Implement the Council approved Civic District Public Realm Strategy.
7. Complete redevelopment and construction of Century Gardens.
8. Complete construction of West Eau Claire Park.
18. Support alternative cultural groups and venues in the Centre City by providing administrative and financial support, brokering access to facilities and spaces, ensuring flexible and supportive land use and design policies, and providing access to City-owned buildings.
19. Increase the visibility of indigenous communities and heritage in the Centre City through public art, place names and urban design.
20. Design parks, public spaces and streetscape spaces so there is appropriate infrastructure in place for turn-key festival and event use.

21. Explore the potential to bring smaller programs and events tied to major downtown festivals to neighbourhoods

## External stakeholder and public engagement

The details of engagement for the Centre City Plan Refresh project can be found in the [What We Heard Report](#) online at [Calgary.ca/centrecityplan](http://Calgary.ca/centrecityplan).

Engagement was approached with the understanding that the *Centre City Plan* need not be re-written; rather it will be updated or, “refreshed”, to reflect the current thinking within the Centre City. The targeted audience for this engagement was divided into three primary categories: Key stakeholders, Calgarians interested in the Centre City, and Internal stakeholders. The engagement approach intended to be respectful of the diversity of people living, working and spending time in the Centre City and a number of steps were taken as outlined in the above-mentioned Report.

The following input from the *What We Heard Report* relates to this topic.

- Values (200 references)
  - #1 = Parks, green spaces, and outdoor attractions
- Aspirations (126 references)
  - #2 = Parks, green spaces and outdoor attractions
- Concerns (233 references)
  - #5 = Parks, green spaces, and outdoor attractions
- Principle #8: Be a model of urban ecology
  - Top themes
    - Value our river, parks and other green spaces. General discussion of the importance of including green spaces. Quality over quantity is emphasized. The river is discussed as a great asset and something that could be used as more of an attraction. Maintenance, cleanliness and programming discussed as ways to sustain use.
- Big Ideas, issues and actions
  - Top themes
    - Ideas surrounding nature, outdoor recreation and events, the river and green spaces
      - Parks and other community gathering spaces. Need for trees and greenery. Conflict between festival noise and residential comforts. Ideas to "green" the CPR tracks. Stating the value of the river and pathways.

The full list of Quick Win Ideas can be found in the [What We Heard Report](#) online at [Calgary.ca/centrecityplan](http://Calgary.ca/centrecityplan) and are also included in this document in the Goals and Initiatives Overview.

## Existing policy review: Centre City Plan (2007)

### Policy and actions to remain in the Centre City Plan

The following is a list of existing policies within the 2007 Centre City Plan. A review of these policies identified a need to keep their intent in the updated Plan. Policies as written below may be consolidated or rewritten as necessary.

4.1.8. Upgrade or redevelop open spaces with an emphasis on James Short Park and Olympic Plaza.

4.1.9 Support opportunities in the Downtown that promote additional open space and public realm vitality such as sPARKS. See Open Space section and Appendix D: Glossary.

4.2.1.6 Ensure the appropriate pedestrian movements are maintained and enhanced within Shaw Millennium Park. This should include consideration of a visually creative pedestrian overpass over Bow Trail to the riverfront.

4.2.2.7 Reinforce all pedestrian and bicycle-oriented, physical and visual connections to the riverfront and across to Prince's Island Park and the Bow River as well as improve key bicycle routes through this neighbourhood. See Concept 23: Bicycle Network.

4.2.3.11. Consider the potential for sPARKS and/or a woonerf along Macleod Trail SE and 1 Street SE between Riverfront Avenue and 4 Avenue SE. See Section 6: Open Space and Appendix D: Glossary.

4.2.5.2. Develop a significant Elbow Riverfront Park that provides adequate active recreational space and good street frontage for pedestrian access. The park should incorporate urban edges and active land uses for enjoyment by a diversity of residents.

4.2.6.4. Establish a strong pedestrian linkage to the Elbow riverfront via the 13 Avenue and 12 Avenue SE Greenway and to the Bow River via 1 and 4 Street SW. The pedestrian linkage should provide ease of access for pedestrians and cyclists to the riverfront pathway and regional parks.

4.2.8 ACTIONS Identify and acquire open space between 8 Street SW and 14 Street SW (inclusive) to meet the needs of the local population. Ensure adequate functionality of the open space with an optimal size of 0.2 hectares as well as be open to opportunities to reallocate existing under-utilized open space.

4.3.1. Ensure the highest quality of development and appropriate land uses within/surrounding the Centre City's existing open space/public realm special areas of Shaw Millennium Park, Eau Claire Plaza, Prince's Island Park, Fort Calgary, Central Memorial Park, Olympic Plaza, Devonian Gardens, and new West and Elbow Riverfront Parks. Similarly, ensure that development/redevelopment of Stampede Park, the Calgary Tower, 17 Avenue S, Stephen Avenue Mall, the CPR Special Area and any other future special areas are of the highest quality in design and well-integrated with surrounding residential and mixed land uses.

4.3.5. Ensure future transportation and transit opportunities associated to Shaw Millennium Park respect the high quality of design and redevelopment required to maintain this open space as a special area.

5.1.2 Create a comprehensive and connected open space system that links parks/plazas, the riverfront, and special areas.

5.1.3 Ensure the future vision of Fort Calgary is integrated as a part of the open space system and special areas within the Centre City.

5.1.5. Create an open space/linkage loop through and around the Centre City via the riverfront, 13 Avenue S and the CPR Special Area. Include opportunities to celebrate the historical significance that is found along 13 Avenue S and the role of the CPR to the City of Calgary.

5.1.6. Create a park/plaza within a five-minute walk for residents and employees in the Centre City. The parks/plaza shall meet the criteria set out in the Public Realm Policies and Parks criteria for the design or redevelopment of neighbourhood and urban open spaces.

5.1.7. Establish a new Centre City West Park as a regional amenity for Centre City and city-wide enjoyment.

5.1.8 Establish a new neighbourhood and riverfront park along the Elbow River in the East Victoria Crossing neighbourhood.

5.1.9. Establish and develop sPARKS as flexible and eco-friendly places/connections that complement neighbourhood centre activities and create places for localized civic celebrations and events. sPARKS shall:

- Be located on north-south oriented streets that have low traffic volumes (e.g. less than 5,000 vehicles per day);
- Be located in areas that already have active land uses at-grade or have the potential for redevelopment or significant improvement of existing building edges;
- Accommodate slow-moving vehicular traffic and on-street parking in the winter and various active/passive pedestrian activities in the summer;
- Ensure through-cycling;
- Consider distinctive eco-paving (e.g. full or partial water retention or permeability), textures and colour treatments;
- Provide distinctive, movable and multipurpose street furniture to accommodate various pedestrian activities; and
- Provide special lighting, water, landscaping or public art features.

5.1.10. Preserve sunlight access for all existing and new open spaces as per the Sunlight Preservation section.

5.1.11. Plan for land uses that are supportive and enhance the vitality of both existing and new open spaces.

5.1.12. Explore opportunities for incorporating bicycle facilities in Centre City parks.

5.1.13. Emphasize all Centre City parks as locations for public art.

5.1.14. Establish, as a priority, the portions of the Centre City Public Art Strategy that relate to the open space, riverfront and linkages system.

5.1.15. Support and facilitate the implementation of the Open Space Strategy for Established Communities and the Centre City Open Space Management Plan.

5.1 ACTIONS Acquire additional open space to provide open space amenities for residents/employees within a five-minute walk.

5.1 ACTIONS Develop a detailed action strategy that:

- Defines/redefines the function/role of all existing Centre City parks in an effort to establish what is required in an acquisition of new open space for size and function;
- Establishes the spatial distribution of parks relative to people;
- Plans for a variety of open spaces with criteria that will create a sense of place to meet the needs of each neighbourhood and the Downtown;

- Locates future parks such that view lines to and from the parks are reviewed to ensure vitality of the park;
- Integrates with the pathway and linkage system; and
- Recommends enhancement/revitalization of existing parks to better meet their role/function and create of a sense of place."

5.1 ACTIONS Acquire new park lands in the West Connaught, Connaught Centre, and Victoria Crossing Centre neighbourhoods to meet local open space needs. Ensure adequate functionality of the open space with an optimal size of 0.2 hectares.

5.2.1. Reinforce the riverfront as a premier open space component of the Centre City.

5.2.2. Protect existing open space along the entire riverfront by transferring it to Parks inventory and designating it with the appropriate Land Use.

5.2.3. Reinforce strong pedestrian connections to the riverfront to meet open space needs for the residential/mixed-use neighbourhoods in the following manner:

- Establish a 12/13 Avenue S Greenway connection to the Bow and Elbow Rivers by connecting the new West Park and Elbow Riverfront Park; and
- Reinforce the importance of the north/south pedestrian-enhanced connections to the riverfront.

5.2.8. Resolve the pathway/transportation conflict points between the Louise Bridge (9 Street SW) and the new West Park (Crowchild Trail SW) by twinning the pathway system from Nat Christie Park to the Pumpouse Theatre and/or other solutions that would minimize congestion for the pedestrian along this area of the riverfront.

5.2.10. Establish opportunities for an urban edge (e.g. restaurants/coffee shops) in appropriate locations along the riverfront such as the new West Park and Elbow Riverfront Park.

5.2.11. Create special places along the riverfront that connect with the north/south street intersections (e.g. public art, activity/interpretive opportunities such as where 6 and 8 Street SW connects to the river pathway system).

5.2.13. Preserve all pedestrian views and connections directly to the Bow and Elbow Rivers.

5.2.14. Implement the new Eau Claire Plaza Design Concept and its interface with Prince's Island Park.

5.2.15. Implement the Utilities & Environment Protection Public Art Master Plan along the riverfront.

5.2 ACTIONS Prepare Urban Design and Environmental Guidelines for future urban edges along the Bow and Elbow riverfronts.

7.6.3. Selection of future open space within the Centre City should give consideration to the amount of sunlight the site receives. At the time a park site is formally secured, consideration should be given to the level of sunlight protection required to serve the functions of the park.

## Redundant policies

The following is a list of existing policies and actions within the 2007 Centre City Plan. A review of these items identified that they are redundant. They may be in a Local Area Plan, Guideline or Strategy document and do not need to be kept in the updated Plan. Policies as written below should be deleted.



## ***Policy to go to a Local Area Plan***

4.2.2.3. Establish a new local Neighbourhood Centre in the vicinity of 2 Avenue SW and 5 Street SW to reinforce and provide a local gathering and amenity area for the residents of the neighbourhood. The Neighbourhood Centre should incorporate the following components:

- Local retail;
- Neighbourhood-scale green open space;
- A potential opportunity for sPARKS along 5 Street SW; and
- A clearly integrated linkage to a transit loop.

See Concept 24: Transit Network.

4.2.2.5. Due to the ultimate increase in residential development and population in the Eau Claire neighbourhood, a review of the need for and/or possibility of alternative sites for the heliport pad within the Centre City should be undertaken. Should the heliport be removed/relocated then the area it occupies shall become parks open space.

4.2.3.4 Upgrade the design, quality and accessibility of Sien Lok Park.

4.2.6.7. Redesign Humpy Hollow Park to better integrate with the vision for Centre Street/Volunteer Way and the eastern end of 17 Avenue S.

4.2.9.2 Integration of residential and commercial uses within a park setting;

5.1 ACTIONS Identify an opportunity to undertake a sPARKS pilot project. The project should include feasibility study, design and implementation of the sPARKS (e.g. Centre Street S/Volunteer Way).

## ***Policy to go to Guidebook or MDP***

5.1.1 Strengthen the value that “quality” open spaces add to the legibility, livability and vitality of the Centre City.

5.1.4. Enhance the riverfront as an active, livable, pedestrian/bicycle-oriented amenity for the Centre City neighbourhoods and the city as a whole.

## ***Policy to delete from Centre City Plan***

4.2.1 ACTIONS Establish a comprehensive planning, parks and transportation process for implementation of the LRT/Transportation directives through Shaw Millennium Park.

4.2.2.4. Protect existing open space along the riverfront by transferring it Parks inventory and designating it with the appropriate Land Use District.

4.2.3.2. Reinforce the Chinese Cultural Centre, Sien Lok Park and 1 Street SW as a Neighbourhood Centre and local gathering place for the residents.

4.2.4.6. Ensure Fort Calgary is a key part of the open space system for the Centre City.

4.2.5.10. Provide a significant public art opportunity in the new Elbow Riverfront Park.

4.2.6.8. Support the implementation of the redevelopment of Central Memorial Park and Haultain Park including ensuring active land uses surround the parks for vitality and safety.

4.2.6 ACTIONS Identify and acquire open space between MacLeod Trail SE and 1 Street SW to meet the needs of the local population. Ensure adequate functionality of the open space with an optimal size of 0.2 hectares.

4.2.7 ACTIONS Identify and acquire open space between 4 Street SW and 8 Street SW to meet the needs of the local population. Ensure adequate functionality of the open space with an optimal size of 0.2 hectares.

4.2.8.2. Reinforce the existing Neighbourhood Centre along 11 Street SW by supporting local retail developments and reinforcing and enhancing the park/open spaces along 11 Street SW (e.g. redevelop Connaught Park adjacent to St. Stephen's Church).

4.2.8.4. Upgrade the quality and function of existing parks to maximize their public use within this neighbourhood.

4.2.9.1 Review the potential of the West Park/Lower Sunalta area to provide Transit-Oriented Development and a regional scale park.

5.1 ACTIONS: Establish a comprehensive planning, parks and transportation process for implementation of the LRT/Transportation directives through Shaw Millennium Park.

5.1 ACTIONS: Plan for significant new open space in the long-term (10-30 years) in the following locations:

- Lands between the Elbow River and 4 Street SE and the CPR tracks and 12 Avenue SE/Victoria Park Transit Centre lands; and
- New West Park/Lower Sunalta neighbourhood.

5.2.4. Identify recreational and interactive art opportunities that better connect the pedestrian directly down to the river, onto the river and over the river.

5.2.5. Complete the comprehensive promenade concept along the Bow and Elbow riverfronts. The riverfront promenade should include the following:

- Articulated, high-quality paved pedestrian areas;
- Delineation of the pedestrian from other alternative modes of movement;
- Fully accessible and employing partial Calgary Urban Braille System elements;
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting that is of the highest quality of design and materials, integrated with other street furniture such as benches, trash receptacles and similar;
- A pedestrian/bicycle-oriented way-finding system and other interpretive systems that educate and inform about the geographic, natural and cultural heritage of the Bow and Elbow Rivers, or inform about adjacent facilities, places and attractions; and
- A celebration of the Bow and Elbow Rivers through two and three-dimensional public art features that are located at the areas of highest pedestrian traffic.

5.2.7. When required, due to an increase in pedestrian, bicycle and pedestrian-motorized vehicles, explore the separation of pedestrians, bicycles and in-line skaters along the riverfront pathways/promenade to ensure the pathway system remains comfortable and safe for both the pedestrian and cyclist's recreational and commuter needs.

5.2.9. Explore the feasibility and opportunities for three new pedestrian/bicycle bridges from Prince's Island Park/6 Street SW to the north side of the Bow River/Memorial Drive, between Fort Calgary and the St. George's Island and the Bridges Redevelopment, and between Fort Calgary and Inglewood (north of 9 Avenue to connect the pedestrian pathway system over the Elbow River).

5.2.12. Enhance crossings and connections to the north side of the Bow River (including implementation of the approved Memorial Drive landscape design concepts) and through to the Zoo and the Bridges Redevelopment.

5.2 ACTIONS Prepare a Feasibility Study of the potential opportunities to better connect the pedestrian directly down to, onto, over and along the Bow River. The study should:

- Identify recreational opportunities on the river such as rafting/boating launches and a river taxi;
- Support implementation of skating on the Bow River lagoon in the Eau Claire neighbourhood; and

- Resolve existing and future increased congestion points of pedestrian, bicycle, inline skating and pedestrian-motorized vehicle movements along the riverfront pathway/promenade.

5.2 ACTIONS Prepare a Feasibility Study on future pedestrian/bicycle bridges from Prince's Island Park/6 Street SW to the north side of the Bow River/Memorial Drive, between Fort Calgary and the St. George's Island and the Bridges Redevelopment, and between Fort Calgary and Inglewood (north of 9 Avenue to connect the pedestrian pathway system over the Elbow River).

5.2 ACTIONS Prepare and implement a comprehensive promenade design concept with lighting/street furniture and lookout points in the locations that currently do not have such a design (e.g. West Park and West End neighbourhood, East Village between Centre Street and Fort Calgary and along the entire Elbow River). Prioritize the Elbow River pathway extension through Stampede Park due to the flood-prone nature of the east bank pathway.

6.1.2. Enhance existing regional pathways and provide new pathways as shown in the Beltline Area Redevelopment Plan and including 9 Avenue SE from 4 Street SE to the Elbow River, and the Elbow River/Stampede Park pathway.

## Maps to be reviewed

The following maps exist in the 2007 Centre City Plan and will be reviewed and possibly updated or eliminated.

- Centre City Parks & Public Realm Enhancements Plan. Centre City Parks and Public Realm Proposed Concept on Page 3.
- Centre City Plan Concept 19: Open Space on Page 79
- Centre City Plan Concept 20: Riverfront on Page 83

## Internal Stakeholder Review

Internal stakeholders reviewed the 2007 Centre City Plan, provided comments, and proposed new policy.

## Review by parks specialist

- Based on this definition of urban ecology I do not think 5.1 (parks) and 5.2 (riverfront) should be in this section. This definition is speaking more to using technology in new developments and redevelopment scenarios. I'd suggest the Parks and Riverfront sections go in section 4.0 (Create Great Streets, Places...) or perhaps another section all together.
- Policy 4.2.6(7) regarding redesign of Humpy Hollow Park. This action is not complete. It's still relevant.
- Action 4.2.8 Action 1 regarding open space acquire between 8 ST SW and 14 ST SW still relevant. May not want to be this specific.
- Riverfront introduction statement is still good, but should be reworded to reflect recent policy language.
- Regarding upgrade the design, quality and accessibility of Sien Lok Park, the policy is still relevant, transferred from 4.2.3(4). Parks has a design concept plan but don't have the budget to redevelop this park currently.
- 4.2.2.7. Still relevant.
- 4.2.5.2 Not complete. Still relevant (although will also be covered in Rivers District. Combine two policies: (4.2.5.2. and 4.2.5.8)
  - Develop a significant Elbow Riverfront Park that provides adequate active recreational space and good street frontage for pedestrian access. The park should incorporate urban

edges and active land uses for enjoyment by a diversity of residents. This park should include a significant public art component.

- 4.2.5.8.
  - Close 7 Street SE to provide adequate pedestrian Elbow riverfront connections to Fort Calgary and the Bow River.

## Proposed new policy for the Centre City Plan

The following text is proposed to be added to the *Centre City Plan*.

### 5.3 Green Infrastructure

An integrated design approach should be engaged to resolve and accommodate multiple building and/or development objectives through green infrastructure and sustainable measures in all development. For example, installing a landscaped or green roofing system as a solution to:

- manage storm-water;
- reduce energy consumption; and
- increase the attraction and comfort of amenity areas and public realm and add green open space at the Centre City.

#### 5.3.1 Sustainable Urban Drainage

##### Policies

- Enhance storm-water management by employing a sustainable form of urban drainage system for all development within the Centre City
- Begin a development by fitting its design to the site features and the natural drainage so as to minimize site disturbance and/or accommodate the existing drainage flow paths. This helps to preserve the pre-development drainage conditions of the site, while reducing the amount and cost of required underground drainage infrastructure.
- Incorporate all-season and on-site low impact development (LID) solutions into the design of streets, open spaces and buildings to:
  - reduce overall surface run-off volumes leaving the site;
  - control the rate of drainage flow; and
  - improve water quality before it enters any water course or storm sewer system.
- Reduce paved surfaces by (a) concentrating density in compact forms of development, especially on larger sites; and (b) co-locating services into shared spaces, such as shared driveways and utility or servicing areas. This will minimize storm-water run-offs from paved surfaces.
- Maximize permeable paving to increase on-site natural infiltration of storm-water run-off by using permeable inter-locking concrete pavers, plastic or concrete grid paving systems, or pervious concrete or porous asphalt, where possible. Suitable applications of permeable surface treatments include low traffic roads, driveways, parking lots, pedestrian plazas and walkways.
- Related to river flooding, consult with The Water Resources Business Unit at The City of Calgary at the onset of all development projects at the Centre City planning area to:
  - confirm the applicability of all River Flooding policies and related regulations that could potentially impact development plans and schedules;
  - minimize accrual of incremental safety, property and environmental risk under flood conditions; and
  - protect riparian functions, water quality and aesthetics of the shoreline interface of the Bow and Elbow Rivers.

- Consider ice effects of the Bow and Elbow Rivers on the design and location of watercourse crossings, utilities and their related infrastructure in the vicinity of these rivers. Use appropriate building forms, structural and foundation drainage design, bank protections and geotechnical measures to mitigate such impacts.
- Generally, ensure no structural and/or topographical modification of the floodways. Comply with all flood proofing and setback requirements specified in the Land Use Bylaw for all development at the flood fringe areas.
- Address all regulatory requirements in The Water Act, Fisheries Act, and Navigable Waters Act for the design of paths, promenades, landscaping, plantings, and/or other features in the floodway areas, from the earliest conceptual design stage of any development project.
- Use vegetative treatments of a softer (or biological) engineering approach, where possible, to ensure bank stability when bank rehabilitation works are required at or near shorelines of rivers.

### 5.3.2 Efficient Resource Use

#### Policies

- Use energy and resources efficiently, by protecting and conserving water, reusing and recycling water, reducing energy consumption, minimizing waste output, waste and all forms of resources, using renewal energy and building materials, and incorporating mixed-uses in new development
- Incorporate sustainable and/or green building design practices and technologies to reduce development footprint, minimize adverse impacts on the environment and increase green open space

#### Water Use

- Harvest rainwater and reuse storm-water in buildings, open space, parks and other landscaped areas for non-potable water consumption and irrigation purposes. See applicable licensing requirements and policies of Alberta Environmental and Sustainable Resources Development (AESRD) for accepted practices of rainwater and storm water re-use.
- Install efficient water fittings like dual flush toilets and low flow household appliances in buildings.
- Use drought-resistant plant species, that are regionally appropriate, in the design of water-efficient parks, landscaped (or green) roofs and all other landscaped areas.

#### Energy Use

- Orientate and design buildings and open space on sites to optimize sun access and natural ventilation for efficient lighting as well as mechanical heating and ventilation.
- Manage solar gain from southern and western sun exposure during summer through the appropriate use of colonnades, trellises, horizontal or vertical wall projections or recesses, operable windows and other shading devices. Also consider using deciduous trees and shrubs at grade, or on roofs or podiums.
- Use building design elements like light shelves, clerestory lighting, skylights and translucent wall materials to reduce the use of artificial daytime lighting and energy consumption.
- Use landscaped roofs, courtyard designs, colonnades, canopies and other passive space-cooling techniques to allow for natural ventilation and passive temperature regulation through buildings during summer.
- Integrate active solar technology such as photovoltaic panels on roofs and/or into the external wall cladding systems, as well as geo-thermal heating technology for renewable energy use.
- Install fixtures and operating systems with high energy-efficiency ratings when improving or rehabilitating existing buildings, as well as in all new buildings, to lower energy consumption.



## Building Materials

- Use materials and assemblies that are durable and can be rapidly renewed, from renewal sources and/or made of largely recycled contents, and are compatible with reusing and recycling.
- Reuse and recycle construction and demolition materials appropriate for new construction.
- Use building products and materials from local regions to conserve energy and transportation resources.
- Use lightly tinted glazing and other bird-friendly materials and facade treatment techniques to mitigate built form impact on bird migratory paths.

## Waste Management

- Provide collection facilities for recyclable materials within buildings in all new developments
- Maximize tree canopy in all new developments using street trees, tree groves or clusters at open space areas, amenity space and along streets to reduce urban heat island effects and CO2 emissions.
- Minimize glare and light trespass into the night sky from exterior lighting of buildings.

## Flexible Reuse of Buildings and Sites

- Design block layouts, buildings and open space with generous space standards and carefully planned spatial arrangement that can allow for adaptation with relative ease to suit the needs of different users over the years.
- Convert existing, redundant or under-used buildings and open space, including derelict sites, to high density development or intensified productive uses.

### 5.3.3 Biodiversity

#### Policies

- Protect and enhance urban forestry and the natural habitat by conserving and enhancing riparian areas, retaining natural vegetation and features, habitats and wildlife, as well as connecting green space and corridors to form a green urban network in the Centre City

#### Native Vegetation and Habitat

- Mix native and ornamental plants to enhance diversity. Use native and drought-resistant plant species that are tolerant of urban pollution and conditions in new developments.
- Design project landscaping to increase the interconnected corridors of urban forest and natural habitat as well as all riparian areas and open space at the Centre City.
- Use lightly tinted glazing and other bird-friendly materials and facade treatment techniques to mitigate built form impact on bird migratory paths.

#### Urban Community Gardens

- Create community gardens at grade in sunny, non-windy locations, or on podiums or roofs, particularly in residential development, for economic and social benefits. Include pedestrian lighting and sitting areas to enhance such community gardens as additional amenity space. Consider using these community gardens as gateway features for different neighbourhoods.

#### Riparian Corridors

- Protect, restore and enhance all riparian areas in any development at and/or in the vicinity of riparian corridors within the Centre City.
- Collaborate with Water Resources and Parks at The City of Calgary at the onset of all development projects to:



## Centre City Plan Refresh

Parks Brief

Workshop held 2019 March 20

- develop an integrated and adaptive water management approach to protect and manage riparian areas; and
- confirm on requirements and targets of The City of Calgary Riparian Strategy that may impact development projects.

## Appendix B: Best practice research

### Other cities

#### City of Edmonton

The City of Edmonton is using money from a CRL to expropriate land west of downtown (Oliver area) to accommodate a park. Part of 107 Street will be closed. Eighteen lots were bought. There is a design concept. New mixed-use development will face the park.

#### Toronto – POPS program

Toronto has formalized a program for design, identification, mapping and signage related to privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS). This program raises the profile of publicly accessible spaces in the City through formal City GIS mapping and a single brand, complete with signage. The intent is to move towards creating more welcoming publicly accessible spaces. This is an interesting way of leveraging private investment for the public good – especially in an environment where City acquisition of lands for open space purposes can be cost prohibitive. Challenges with these publicly accessible private open spaces relate to design, operation, questions of trespassing (am I allowed to be here?) and so on. This program seeks to mitigate some of those issues.

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/private-owned-publicly-accessible-spaces-pops/>

#### Redesign Cities with Women in Mind

[https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A\\_www.theglobeandmail.com\\_canada\\_toronto\\_article-2Ddesigning-2Dsafer-2Dcities-2Dfor-2Dwomen\\_-3Ffbclid=3DlWAr2ICdKj1KWZLHOYII2VYVXMTuGbXzmiLT43b-5F-5FdYOo2cqJwEot6epTx4c&d=DwlFAg&c=jdm1Hby\\_BzoqwoYzPsUCHSCnNps9LuidNkyKDuvdq3M&r=v6IYymjmBPEaJd9fNDCeRpoXlDAMUNEyNVdavUxR4AY&m=oTq7J3FlkEkbG\\_uBu-dzqcXfaNUlj4-dwHEEa692mjw&s=cQoA98-07dxGqVgU0HNLsmZuRRIR2uMYvJ5VY8FBJus&e=](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A_www.theglobeandmail.com_canada_toronto_article-2Ddesigning-2Dsafer-2Dcities-2Dfor-2Dwomen_-3Ffbclid=3DlWAr2ICdKj1KWZLHOYII2VYVXMTuGbXzmiLT43b-5F-5FdYOo2cqJwEot6epTx4c&d=DwlFAg&c=jdm1Hby_BzoqwoYzPsUCHSCnNps9LuidNkyKDuvdq3M&r=v6IYymjmBPEaJd9fNDCeRpoXlDAMUNEyNVdavUxR4AY&m=oTq7J3FlkEkbG_uBu-dzqcXfaNUlj4-dwHEEa692mjw&s=cQoA98-07dxGqVgU0HNLsmZuRRIR2uMYvJ5VY8FBJus&e=)

#### Cities Turn to Parks

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/05/climate-crisis-cities-turn-to-parks/>

#### As the climate crisis worsens, cities turn to parks

Cities across the U.S. are seeing worse floods and hotter summers, but experts believe urban parks can help residents cope.

By Sarah Gibbens

*City parks have long been a place for urban residents surrounded by the gray of asphalt and concrete to get a small dose of green. As cities increasingly feel the impacts of rising seas and temperatures, city planners are rethinking the roles of urban parks.*

## Appendix C: Goals and initiatives overview

### Goal 1

Goal #1	Acquire additional park space in the Centre City. 5.1 ACTIONS Acquire additional open space to provide open space amenities for residents/employees within a five-minute walk.
Source	Initiative
CCP 4.3.2	CP Rail Corridor Future Vision. Plus 30 public spaces that bridge the CPR Tracks. East West connections. At-grade plazas at entrances to plus 30.
CCP 5.1.6	Create a park/plaza within a five-minute walk for residents and employees in the Centre City. The parks/plaza shall meet the criteria set out in the Public Realm Policies and Parks criteria for the design or redevelopment of neighbourhood and urban open spaces.
CCP 5.1 Actions	Acquire new park lands in the West Connaught, Connaught Centre, and Victoria Crossing Centre neighbourhoods to meet local open space needs. Ensure adequate functionality of the open space with an optimal size of 0.2 hectares.
CCP 5.2.8	Resolve the pathway/transportation conflict points between the Louise Bridge (9 Street SW) and the new West Park (Crowchild Trail SW) by twinning the pathway system from Nat Christie Park to the Pumphouse Theatre and/or other solutions that would minimize congestion for the pedestrian along this area of the riverfront.
CCP 7.6.3	Selection of future open space within the Centre City should give consideration to the amount of sunlight the site receives. At the time a park site is formally secured, consideration should be given to the level of sunlight protection required to serve the functions of the park.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Identify indoor green spaces and whether there is a need for more.
CCP 4.2.8 ACTIONS	Identify and acquire open space between 8 Street SW and 14 Street SW (inclusive) to meet the needs of the local population. Ensure adequate functionality of the open space with an optimal size of 0.2 hectares as well as be open to opportunities to reallocate existing under-utilized open space.
CCP 5.1 ACTIONS	Develop a detailed action strategy that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines/redefines the function/role of all existing Centre City parks in an effort to establish what is required in an acquisition of new open space for size and function;</li> <li>• Establishes the spatial distribution of parks relative to people;</li> <li>• Plans for a variety of open spaces with criteria that will create a sense of place to meet the needs of each neighbourhood and the Downtown;</li> <li>• Locates future parks such that view lines to and from the parks are reviewed to ensure vitality of the park;</li> <li>• Integrates with the pathway and linkage system; and</li> <li>• Recommends enhancement/revitalization of existing parks to better meet their role/function and create of a sense of place."</li> </ul>
CCP 5.2.2	Protect existing open space along the entire riverfront by transferring it to Parks inventory and designating it with the appropriate Land Use.
Learnings from other municipalities	Use money from a CRL to expropriate or purchase land to create a new park. Leverage development around the park.

## Goal 2

Goal #2	Enhance existing parks and open spaces in Centre City
Source	Initiative
TAC Input	Parks and open spaces should be designed or upgraded to support major festival and events. Design parks, public spaces and streetscape spaces so there is appropriate infrastructure in place for turn-key festival and event use.
DT Economic Summit	Increase the visibility of indigenous communities and heritage in the Centre City through public art, place names and urban design. Add indigenous elements to parks, open space, public realm, etc.
TAC Input	The following is a list of amenities that could be in parks...
TAC Input	Parks should have four-season amenities.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Allow restaurants or food trucks in parks
CCP 4.1.9	Support opportunities in the Downtown that promote additional open space and public realm vitality such as sPARKS. See Open Space section and Appendix D: Glossary.
CCP 4.2.1.6	Ensure the appropriate pedestrian movements are maintained and enhanced within Shaw Millennium Park. This should include consideration of a visually creative pedestrian overpass over Bow Trail to the riverfront.
CCP 5.1.3	Ensure the future vision of Fort Calgary is integrated as a part of the open space system and special areas within the Centre City.
CCP 5.1.13	Emphasize all Centre City parks as locations for public art.
CCP 5.2.1	Reinforce the riverfront as a premier open space component of the Centre City.
CCP 5.2.10	Establish opportunities for an urban edge (e.g. restaurants/coffee shops) in appropriate locations along the riverfront such as the new West Park and Elbow Riverfront Park.
CCP 4.2.3.11	Consider the potential for sPARKS and/or a woonerf along Macleod Trail SE and 1 Street SE between Riverfront Avenue and 4 Avenue SE. See Section 6: Open Space and Appendix D: Glossary.
CCP 5.1.12	Explore opportunities for incorporating bicycle facilities in Centre City parks.
CCP 5.1.14	Establish, as a priority, the portions of the Centre City Public Art Strategy that relate to the open space, riverfront and linkages system.
CCP 4.2.2.5	Due to the ultimate increase in residential development and population in the Eau Claire neighbourhood, a review of the need for and/or possibility of alternative sites for the heliport pad within the Centre City should be undertaken. Should the heliport be removed/relocated then the area it occupies shall become parks open space.
TAC Input	Assess existing parks and open spaces to determine how they do or do not support major festival use.
TAC Input	Finish 13 Ave Greenway
TAC Input	Shaw Millennium Parks should have a master plan completed. Venue Optimization Project.
TAC Input	Sien Lok Park upgrade.
Strategic Foresight	Revitalize/redesign/rebrand Eau Claire as a destination. OR the Riverfront as a destination.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Install some outdoor park workout/exercise equipment.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Review the allowance of drinking alcohol in public parks.



WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Build another dog park.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Prepare a plan for public restrooms in the Centre City
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Activate Thompson's Family Park
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Identify locations for community gardens and build more
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Winter events programming. Incentives for Winter events or subsidize Winter events.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Identify locations for playing soccer in the Centre City.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Spray parks in the Centre City need bathrooms with change tables.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Devonian Gardens needs longer operating hours.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Riverwalk paths should have good lighting. There are some locations that are dark.
CCP 5.1.10	Preserve sunlight access for all existing and new open spaces as per the Sunlight Preservation section.
CCP 5.2.13.	Preserve all pedestrian views and connections directly to the Bow and Elbow Rivers.
Internal Stakeholder Review	Finish redesign of Humpy Hollow Park
CCP 4.2.2.7	Reinforce all pedestrian and bicycle-oriented, physical and visual connections to the riverfront and across to Prince's Island Park and the Bow River as well as improve key bicycle routes through this neighbourhood. See Concept 23: Bicycle Network.
Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.	Design block layouts, buildings and open space with generous space standards and carefully planned spatial arrangement that can allow for adaptation with relative ease to suit the needs of different users over the years.
Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.	Protect and enhance urban forestry and the natural habitat by conserving and enhancing riparian areas, retaining natural vegetation and features, habitats and wildlife, as well as connecting green space and corridors to form a green urban network in the Centre City

<p>Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.</p>	<p>Mix native and ornamental plants to enhance diversity. Use native and drought-resistant plant species that are tolerant of urban pollution and conditions in new developments.</p>
<p>Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.</p>	<p>Design project landscaping to increase the interconnected corridors of urban forest and natural habitat as well as all riparian areas and open space at the Centre City.</p>
<p>Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.</p>	<p>Create community gardens at grade in sunny, non-windy locations, or on podiums or roofs, particularly in residential development, for economic and social benefits. Include pedestrian lighting and sitting areas to enhance such community gardens as additional amenity space. Consider using these community gardens as gateway features for different neighbourhoods.</p>
<p>Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.</p>	<p>Protect, restore and enhance all riparian areas in any development at and/or in the vicinity of riparian corridors within the Centre City.</p>

## Goal 3

Goal #3	Enhance public realm linking parks and open spaces
Source	Initiative
Proposed new policy for CCP by TAC	Use drought tolerant and hardy plants for landscaping.
CCP 5.1.2	Create a comprehensive and connected open space system that links parks/plazas, the riverfront, and special areas.
CCP 5.1.5	Create an open space/linkage loop through and around the Centre City via the riverfront, 13 Avenue S and the CPR Special Area. Include opportunities to celebrate the historical significance that is found along 13 Avenue S and the role of the CPR to the City of Calgary.
CCP 5.2.3	Reinforce strong pedestrian connections to the riverfront to meet open space needs for the residential/mixed-use neighbourhoods in the following manner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a 12/13 Avenue S Greenway connection to the Bow and Elbow Rivers by connecting the new West Park and Elbow Riverfront Park; and</li> <li>• Reinforce the importance of the north/south pedestrian-enhanced connections to the riverfront.</li> </ul>
CCP 5.2.11	Create special places along the riverfront that connect with the north/south street intersections (e.g. public art, activity/interpretive opportunities such as where 6 and 8 Street SW connects to the river pathway system).
Strategic Foresight	Identify existing and future destinations and improve connections between them. Destinations could be outside of the Centre City.
Strategic Foresight	Stephen Avenue upgrade
TAC Input	Increase the amount of permeable surfaces throughout the Centre City.
Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.	An integrated design approach should be engaged to resolve and accommodate multiple building and/or development objectives through green infrastructure and sustainable measures in all development.
Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.	Enhance storm-water management by employing a sustainable form of urban drainage system for all development within the Centre City
Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.	Harvest rainwater and reuse storm-water in buildings, open space, parks and other landscaped areas for non-potable water consumption and irrigation purposes. See applicable licensing requirements and policies of Alberta Environmental and Sustainable Resources Development (AESRD) for accepted practices of rainwater and storm water re-use.
Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.	Maximize tree canopy in all new developments using street trees, tree groves or clusters at open space areas, amenity space and along streets to reduce urban heat island effects and CO2 emissions.

Seattle Downtown Plan	Enhance connections to rivers.
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## Goal 4

Goal #4	Leverage public and publicly accessible private open space to meet Parks needs
Source	Initiative
CCP 5.1.9	<p>5.1.9. Establish and develop sPARKS as flexible and eco-friendly places/connections that complement neighbourhood centre activities and create places for localized civic celebrations and events. sPARKS shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be located on north-south oriented streets that have low traffic volumes (e.g. less than 5,000 vehicles per day);</li> <li>• Be located in areas that already have active land uses at-grade or have the potential for redevelopment or significant improvement of existing building edges;</li> <li>• Accommodate slow-moving vehicular traffic and on-street parking in the winter and various active/passive pedestrian activities in the summer;</li> <li>• Ensure through-cycling;</li> <li>• Consider distinctive eco-paving (e.g. full or partial water retention or permeability), textures and colour treatments;</li> <li>• Provide distinctive, movable and multipurpose street furniture to accommodate various pedestrian activities; and</li> <li>• Provide special lighting, water, landscaping or public art features.</li> </ul>
CCP 5.1.11	Plan for land uses that are supportive and enhance the vitality of both existing and new open spaces.
TAC Input	Program events in s-parks
CCP 5.2.13	Preserve all pedestrian views and connections directly to the Bow and Elbow Rivers.
Learnings from other municipalities	Toronto has formalized a program for design, identification, mapping and signage related to privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS). This program raises the profile of publicly accessible spaces in the City through formal City GIS mapping and a single brand, complete with signage.

## Goal 5

Goal #5	Better collaboration across departments to leverage work regarding recreation, flood resilience, urban design and planning
Source	Initiative
CCP 5.2.15	Implement the Utilities & Environment Protection Public Art Master Plan along the riverfront.
TAC Input	Where TOD projects are underway, identify specific areas in the Centre City where public-private partnerships may happen in short-term (tactical urbanism, sPARKs, etc.)
Strategic Foresight	Integrate stormwater management into design and transportation projects and ensure proper maintenance.
Downtown Economic Summit Actions	Support alternative cultural groups and venues in the Centre City by providing administrative and financial support, brokering access to facilities and spaces, ensuring flexible and supportive land use and design policies, and providing access to City-owned buildings.
Internal Stakeholder Review. Proposed new policy for CCP.	Collaborate with Water Resources and Parks at The City of Calgary at the onset of all development projects to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop an integrated and adaptive water management approach to protect and manage riparian areas; and</li> <li>• confirm on requirements and targets of The City of Calgary Riparian Strategy that may impact development projects.</li> </ul>

## Goal 6

Goal #6	Good interface between parks and other uses.
Source	Initiative
CCP 5.2.14	Implement the new Eau Claire Plaza Design Concept and its interface with Prince's Island Park.
CCP 5.2 ACTION S	Prepare Urban Design and Environmental Guidelines for future urban edges along the Bow and Elbow riverfronts.
WWHR Quick Win Ideas	Guidelines for interface with Plus 15 system. Could green spaces be incorporated into the Plus 15 systems?



## Appendix D: Questions and answers

During review of all the inputs, several questions arose that needed to be addressed prior to finalizing the draft Plan. These questions were placed in this section and answers were provided.

**Q1. The Centre City Parks and Public Realm Enhancements Plan is the high-level parks and open space plan for the Centre City. Through the Centre City Plan Refresh Project, there is the need to confirm the relevance of this existing plan.**

1. *New Plan for Fort Calgary. Show connections. How does the support major festival use?*
2. *Riverfront – major run/walk corridor*
3. *13 Ave S*
4. *CPR?*
5. *Historically Significant buildings or areas?*
6. *Connections with Arts, Culture, Recreation*
7. *Parks designed/upgraded to support major festivals and events*
8. *Public art*
9. *Redevelopment to support placemaking/festival and event activity (i.e. St Ave)*

A1. *The Centre City Parks and Public Realm Enhancements Plan should be updated to reflect changes over the past 10 years. Significant investment into Centre City parks has occurred with respect to both acquisition and park upgrades.*

**Q2. Do we still want to promote sPARKS?**

A2. Yes, these temporary parks are an opportunity to recapture public roadways for pedestrian use. This will require collaboration with Urban Strategies and Transportation.

**Q3. What about parks in relation to indigenous elements?**

A3. The Bow and Elbow Rivers, both bordering the plan area, are significant for First Nations in the area. There are also significant archaeological sites within the Centre City. Recognition of this history and culture should be incorporated into the Centre City parks system, although the means of doing so are not known at this time. Further engagement should occur to determine next steps.

**Q4. Do we need to include a list of all the amenities (elements) we want to see in parks? If we want public art in parks, should we include that in a list or put it in the section with public art?**

A4. Infrastructure and services to support festivals and events (power/potable water/sewer) are desirable in all parks. It would also be worthwhile to include content about stormwater management functions in parks recognizing the challenges that this function can have on park functionality and adaptability over time.

For a high-level policy such as this an amenity list would not be necessary. General principles about amenity mix, park programming, etc. are sufficient.

**Q5. Designs to support four-season activities – promotion of Winter activity to align with Winter Strategy 2021.**

A5. Parks should be designed to support activities in all seasons, including the winter.

**Q6. What is the future of Shaw Millennium Park?**

A6. Shaw Millennium Park will have life-cycling completed at some point down the road although there are no plans for that at this time. Connections to the Park should be improved. This is

also a heavily booked festival site. Upgrades are in place to support this festival activity with more to come to support safety/security initiatives (Venue Optimization Project)

**Q7. There are riverfront enhancement projects already complete or funded. Do we need to still have policy about enhancing the Riverfront?**

A7. The entirety of the riverfront within the plan area has not been completed (the Downtown west end, around Sien Lok Park, and the Elbow River from the confluence south to the Stampede grounds). Additionally, further enhancements may be required in the future as needs change. The policy language could change to reflect that much of the work has been completed but we need to be agile in responding to changing needs and in ensuring that the riverfront continues to be a preferred destination for all Calgarians.

**Q8. Parks integrated with recreation? How can this better happen?**

A8. I believe we are well integrated with regards to events and bookings. Not sure if there are any other areas where collaboration could increase.

**Q9. Parks, flood resilience, and urban design. Better collaboration.**

A9. The flood mitigation work and continued work on riverwalk is evidence of the collaboration that is occurring on this issue. This speaks to the need to include language about the riparian, water quality and flood mitigation functions within the Centre City Plan in addition to the riverfront's role as a recreational destination.

**Q10. Pathway system? This area of the pathway system is the most desirable run/walk location for numerous events that raise millions of dollars for charities. What can be done to continue to support this activity?**

A10. Continue to maintain the pathway system and enhance it when necessary. Utilize the Bow River pathway system as the showcase for best practices with respect to pathways in the city.

**Q11. Urban edge? Coffee shops lining parks?**

A11. This is something that is supportable and desirable, as long as the private uses remain on private sites. Need to be thoughtful of which parks and where so as not to negatively impact existing major events through conflicting interests.

Balance an urban edge with a natural riparian edge from a stormwater, riparian health and flood perspective.

**Q12. Any interface between Parks/Open Space and the Green Line?**

A12. The Green Line should offer good connections to existing open spaces such as Prince's Island Park, Central Memorial Park and should also ensure stations are designed as places that are a component of the open space system. Work is ongoing on Green Line design.

**Q13. How do we set strategic direction for the future of the CP Rail corridor, even though it's a 50+ year vision?**

A13. Start by recognizing the opportunity that the rail line offers. Perhaps include policy about strategic acquisition of lands adjacent to (or within) the corridor. Include policy about retaining all City owned lands in the area for this purpose. Perhaps reference high level design concepts like that found in the *Centre City Parks and Public Realm Enhancements Plan*.

**Q14. Chinatown Cultural and Local Area Plan is underway. Should the implementation of Sien Lok Park be put on priority list?**

A14. Yes. Sien Lok Park is overdue for a redesign. Parks has this park on our capital upgrade list however it is currently unfunded.

- Q15. Limited-term developments around TOD projects is underway (temporary uses and evolutionary uses, David Couroux). Are we able to identify specific areas in the Centre City where public-private partnerships may happen in the short-term (tactical urbanism, sPARKs, etc.)? This relates to added value to arts and culture using limited resources.**
- A15. The best opportunities for this sort of activity would be in existing underutilized at-grade parking lots which could be City or privately owned. It may be beneficial to locate these tactical limited term uses in areas where a longer-term acquisition vision exists.
- Q16. How do we approach Green Infrastructure (Urban Ecology)? Especially the application of Low Impact Development measures along public roads (landscaped curb extension, structured swales, etc.) like what other municipalities have done?**
- A16. Parks supports green infrastructure in road right of ways but this is primarily a question for Roads.
- The biggest challenge related to implementing LID and Green Infrastructure along public roads is maintenance (the stormwater function gets undermined as they become clogged). I think broad direction about increasing permeability is good since the downtown is essentially impermeable to any change is a positive.
- Q17. Street trees and linear connections vs. acquisition of park spaces, which one is more value added?**
- A17. Both would add value to the open space system. Land acquisitions would have to occur in the right place. Supporting enhanced pedestrian environments, through wider sidewalks and street trees may be a lower cost option.
- Q18. Interfaces with +15 System rooftop spaces – considering the lack of open spaces in general, how do publicly-accessible private spaces contribute to the overall open space system?**
- A18. Collaboration with the adjacent property owners with regards to programming, maintenance, and operation.