Calgary

Centre City
URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

great
STREETS

quality
BUILDINGS

memorable
PLACES

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

TITLE:	Calgary Centre City Urban Design Guidelines
AUTHOR:	Citywide Policy and Integration Planning, Development & Assessment
STATUS:	Version 1 ISC: Unprotected
PRINTING DATE:	2015 October
ADDITIONAL COPIES:	The City of Calgary Records & Information Management (RIM) Development & Business Approvals P.O. Box 2100, STN "M", #8115 Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5
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1.0 THE GUIDELINES FOR CALGARY'S CENTRE CITY

Memorable Places, Great Streets and Quality Buildings

These guidelines reinforce the fundamental principals of the City of Calgary's Municipal Development Plan

Prosperous economy | **Compact city** | **Great communities** | **Good urban design** | **Connecting the city** | **Greening the city** | **Managing growth and change**

"Make Calgary a more beautiful, memorable city with a commitment to excellence in urban design."

2.4.1 Creating a beautiful city, Municipal Development Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

IN THIS SECTION:

1.1 The Guidelines for Calgary Centre City
1.2 The Guidelines Framework
1.3 The Guidelines Role and Intent
1.4 How to Use The Guidelines

1.0 THE GUIDELINES FOR CALGARY'S CENTRE CITY

Memorable Places, Great Streets and Quality Buildings

WHAT

A consolidation of City of Calgary urban design policies and best practices

The Centre City Urban Design Guidelines (CCUDG) serve as a guide and inspiration for future development decisions for the Centre City area. Along with the existing Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs) and corporate-wide policies (6.1 Relevant Policies), the guidelines build on the intentions of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the Centre City Plan through policy consolidation and best-practice urban design solutions.

CCUDG engage stakeholders (6.2 Planning Process Summary), clarify expectations, and work toward achieving greater clarity, consistency and certainty in both policy-making and development review processes.

CCUDG align with the implementation of the new planning system in terms of contributing to the outcome-based decisions that help achieve the urban design goals for the Centre City - creating memorable places, great streets and quality buildings.

WHERE

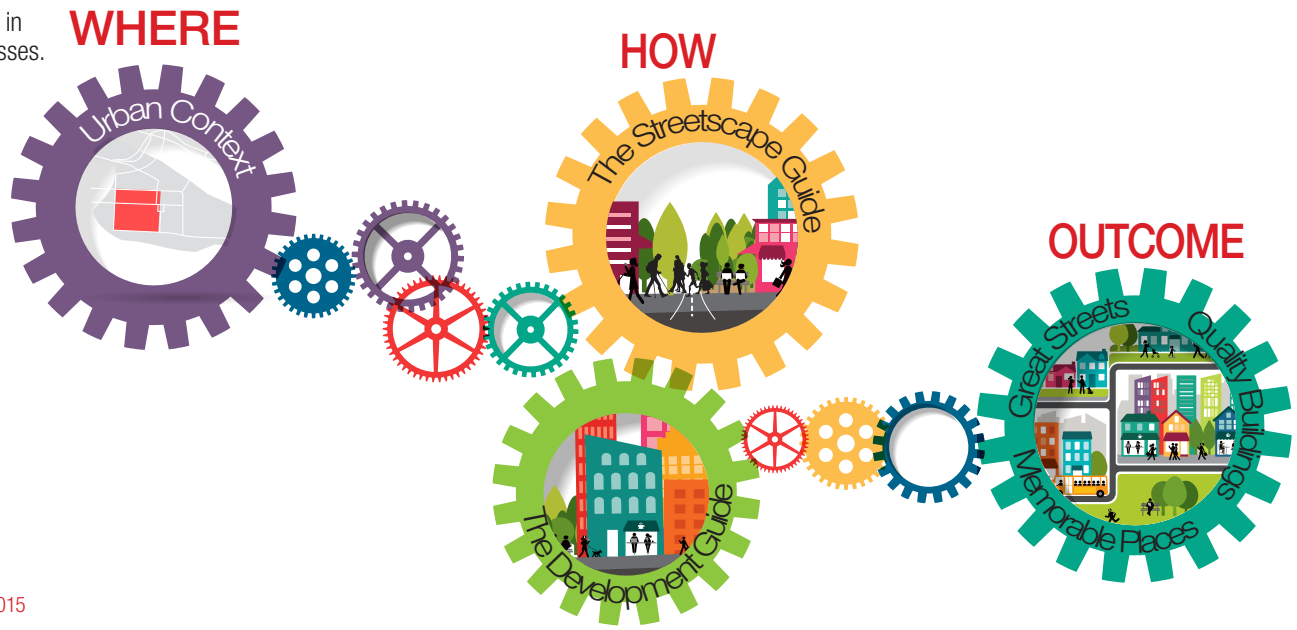
The guidelines apply to the Centre City

CCUDG are applicable to the Centre City including the communities of Downtown Commercial Core, Beltline, Downtown West, Eau Claire, Chinatown, and East Village. They are intended to support, respect, and augment Centre City's most celebrated features and characters. The 12 overlays of urban context (2.0) will be used along with context-specific guidelines to determine how the project fits into the big picture for the area.

HOW

Comprehensive, flexible and considered urban design guidance

CCUDG provide comprehensive, flexible and considered guidance on enhancing pedestrian experience through sensible and context-specific urban design solutions. Organized into two sections, The Streetscape Guide (3.0) and The Development Guide (4.0), the guidelines establish urban design objectives, rationales, and specific implementation directions for the physical components of private and public realm as they relate to the common good of the city.



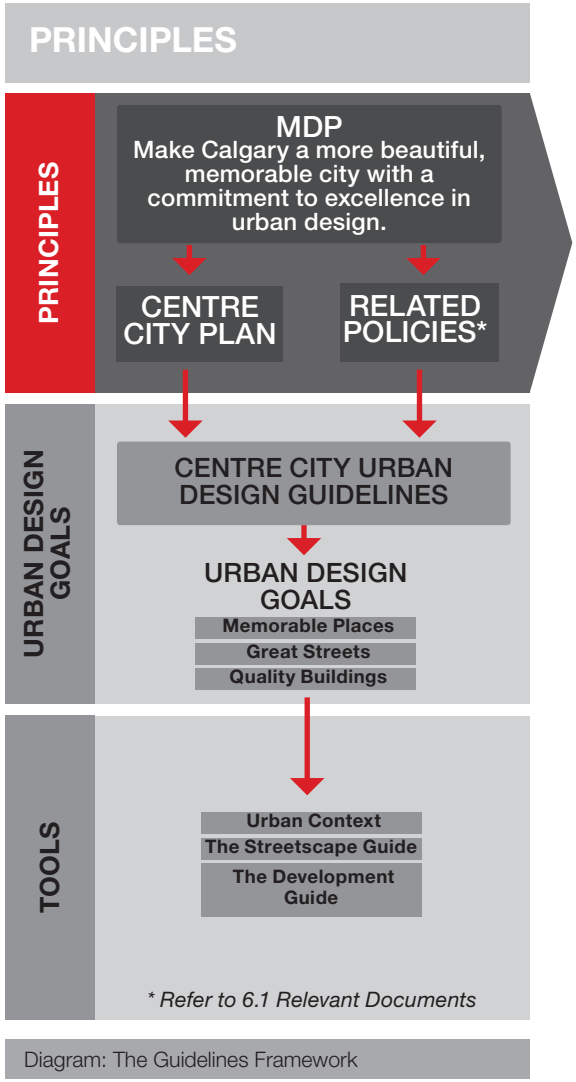


Diagram: The Guidelines Framework

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MDP) URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS

01. Creativity and Innovation
02. Context and Appropriateness
03. Connectivity and Continuity
04. Functional and Aesthetic Integration
05. Legibility and Accessibility
06. Enclosure and Human Scale
07. Comfort and Safety
08. Quality and Durability
09. Vitality and Animation
10. Flexibility and Adaptability
11. Diversity and Variety
12. Sustainability and Accountability
13. Wayfinding and Orientation

Source: Section 2.4, Municipal Development Plan

The guidelines build on and expand the intentions and aspirations of the Municipal Development Plan and the Centre City Plan through policy consolidation and the provision of best-practice urban design solutions.

1.2 THE GUIDELINES FRAMEWORK

Memorable Places, Great Streets and Quality Buildings

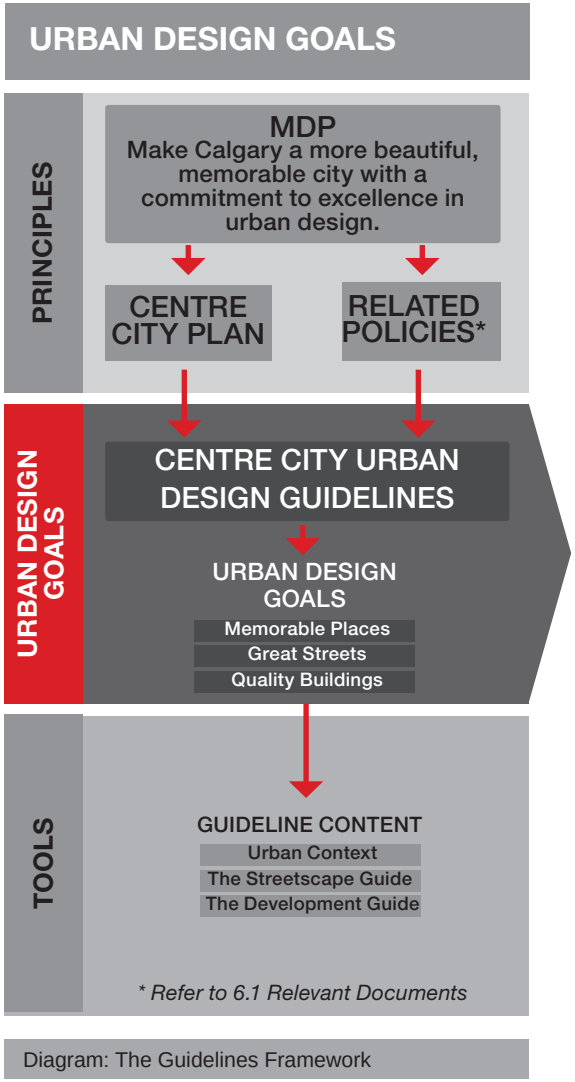


Diagram: The Guidelines Framework

Memorable Places

1 Respect the unique characteristics of the Centre City's urban fabric and climate

2 Enhance the image and legibility of the Centre City

3 Encourage a well-defined, active, and publicly accessible open space network

4 Protect access to sunlight in the Centre City's public and private realm

Great Streets

5 Facilitate safe, accessible, vibrant and comfortable movement of people and goods throughout the Centre City

6 Establish a system of streetscape characters and pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular travel modes priorities

7 Strengthen the public realm interface to reinforce walkability throughout the Centre City

8 Provide sustainable, low impact development opportunities

Quality Buildings

9 Create an active and continuous street frontage and a public realm that is lively, safe, and successful

10 Support innovative opportunities for place-making through contextual design of high quality, sustainable buildings that are diverse in building form, type and use

11 Provide a sense of enclosure on the street through human-scaled building massing

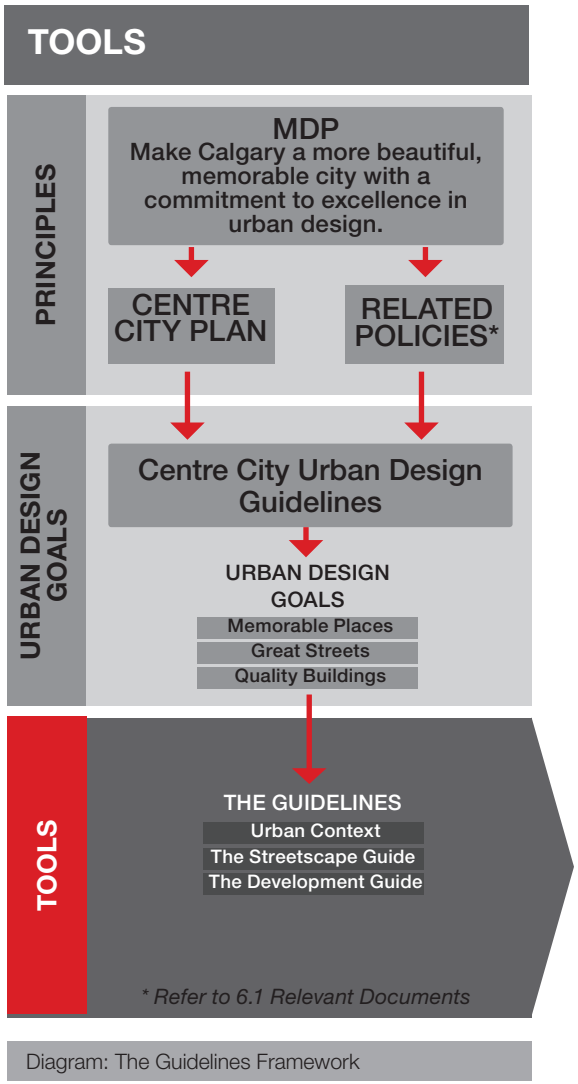


Diagram: The Guidelines Framework

The guidelines are comprehensive, flexible and context-specific. They establish the urban design objectives, rationales, and specific implementation directions for the physical components of private and public realm as they relate to the common good of the city.

Urban Context

Urban Context 12 Overlays (The intent is to determine how the project fits in the big picture for the area)

The Streetscape Guide

Streetscape Zones
Streetscape Elements
Lane Character Typologies

The Development Guide

Contextual Design Elements
Built Form
Green Infrastructure

IMPLEMENTATION

Outcome-based Decisions

INTENT OF THE GUIDELINES

The guidelines are intended to provide clear direction for designers, developers, and property owners, and will be used as an assessment tool during the design review process for new development and retrofitting projects in the Centre City. Although these guidelines are not regulatory, they are intended to be used by City staff and other decision makers in the review of new development proposals.

The guidelines provide recommendations that, if followed, should result in better public realm design in the Centre City. The building interface relationships with the public realm should aspire to the highest level of urban design excellence by contributing to a pedestrian-friendly, vibrant and livable Centre City.

As the definition of a memorable place, or a great street, or a quality building may vary with individual opinion, the guidelines will be used to ensure that proposed projects achieve the intentions of the urban design goals.

DESIGN PROPOSAL EQUIVALENCIES

The guidelines are not a formula or checklist. They are intended to maximize creativity and promote architectural and urban design excellence. There may be solutions that achieve the urban design principles that are not included in this document. Many quality solutions can be appropriate given the opportunities and constraints of a development site and the nature of ongoing advances in innovative and sustainable building and site practices. As such, it is important to view the guidelines as one set of possible solutions among a range of possibilities.

The guidelines will be used as a benchmark for design performance. If a project does not fully adhere to the guidelines, but meets the spirit and intent of the design goals while demonstrating an alternative approach toward achieving the urban design principles, it could be recognized as a valid approach.

The guidelines will also be used as a benchmark for reviewing equivalencies. For example, smaller parcels may have limiting conditions and/or other developmental constraints. In such cases, the applicant must demonstrate how the solution achieves the intent of the guidelines.

FUTURE AMENDMENTS

CCUDG is a living document and will be periodically amended as necessary to maintain consistency with statutory policies and to evolve with international best practice aspirations. See 5.0 for design guidelines within the context of regulatory framework and proposed policy and process changes.

Designers, landowners, developers, citizens and staff at the City of Calgary are seen as the collective authors of the city. These guidelines serve as an inspiration for creativity, innovation and cutting edge architectural expressions, and are intended to further enhance Calgary's progressive image on the national and international scene.

STEP 1: DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

- Determine surrounding context and areas of particular attention based on the 12 overlays of urban context
- Define streetscape characters
- Determine travel modes priorities

Urban Context

2.1 Streetscape Characters
2.2 Urban Structure
2.3 Retail Nodes and Corridors
2.4 The Riverfronts
2.5 Parks and Open Space
2.6 Skyline, Gateways, Landmarks and View Corridors
2.7 Historic Resources
2.8 Character Areas
2.9 +15 Skywalk System
2.10 CPR Special Area
2.11 Bike and Transit Integration
2.12 Seasonal and Night Design

STEP 2: STREET INTERFACE

- Determine appropriate streetscape elements for defined streetscape character
- Determine curb line locations and building setbacks
- Determine the location, type, scale, design and character of each streetscape element
- Determine site access

The Streetscape Guide

3.1 Streetscape Zones
Roadway Zone
Pedestrian Zone
Frontage Zone

3.2 Streetscape Elements
Public Sidewalks
Transit Facilities
Bike Facilities
Furniture
Street Trees
Signage
Lighting
Public Art
Utilities

3.3 Lane Character Typologies

STEP 3: BUILDING INTERFACE

- Determine site interface conditions
- Determine on-site open spaces
- Determine building frontage characteristics and design treatments
- Determine building massing and study building impacts
- Integrate green infrastructure

The Development Guide

4.1 Contextual Design Elements
Public Open Space Interface
On-site Open Space
Heritage Interface
+15 Skywalk System
Seasonal Design and Sun Access
Pedestrian and Vehicular Access

4.2 Built Form
Frontage
Street wall
Building Massing
Facade Articulation
Street Corners
Upper Building Levels

4.3 Green Infrastructure

STEP 4: IMPLEMENTATION

- Evaluate proposed development against the principles, the urban design goals and pertinent urban design objectives
- Make outcome-based decisions based on proposed implementation strategies

IMPLEMENTATION

1.2 The Guidelines Framework
(Principles/Urban Design Goals)

2.0/3.0/4.0
Urban Design Objectives
(included at the beginning of each section)

5.0 Implementation
Guidelines and Regulatory Framework
Areas of Particular Concern