




What We Heard:

Public Engagement Results for the Downtown West Area Redevelopment Plan

For engagement that occurred between November 20 and December 11, 2015

January 12, 2016
The City of Calgary, Local Area Planning & Implementation

intelligent futures 



Process

This second round of public engagement for the Downtown West Area Redevelopment Plan ran for three weeks from November 20, 2015 to December 11, 2015. Citizens had three methods of participation available to them:

1. Lobby displays in 9 multi-unit dwelling buildings plus the Kerby Centre consisting of a poster, ballot box and short questionnaire
2. An online survey available on the project webpage www.calgary.ca/downtownwestarp
3. An open house hosted at the Kerby Centre foyer from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. December 2, 2015

Input collected during the second round of engagement is summarized below and will be used to inform the draft Downtown West Area Redevelopment Plan. We plan to report back in the second quarter of 2016 on how public feedback influenced the draft guidelines.

Communication Techniques Employed

The project team employed a number of techniques to advertise the public engagement. These included:

1. Bold signs	
2. Postcards	Mailed out to every residence in Downtown West and between 8 Street SW and 9 Street SW north of the CPR tracks.
3. Posters	Distributed throughout the neighbourhood and surrounding communities
4. 10 Lobby Displays	In 9 multi-family buildings plus The Kerby Centre
5. 2 Sandwich boards	Located the Downtown West – Kerby Centre C-Train Station to advertise the open house
6. Facebook Ads	Targeted to people who work and/or live within and surrounding Downtown West
7. The Downtown West Community Association	Helped to spread the word
8. The Ward 8 Councillor's office	Also helped to spread the word via social media and Councillor Woolley's interview on the CBC Eye-opener on December 3, 2015
9. Social Media Posts	Through Facebook and Twitter
10. Downtown West Email List	It was established through the previous engagement and helped to spread the word here

How people found out about the engagement

Technique	Number
Postcard	41
Lobby Display	33
City of Calgary Website	22
Social Media (Facebook Ads, Twitter postings, etc.)	274
Signs in the Neighbourhood	4
Community Association	2
Email	11
Friend	6
Other	1



Participation

In total the Downtown West Area Redevelopment Plan had **715** participants.

The Online Survey

411 surveys filled out

It is important to note that **1183** individuals clicked on the survey with 35% staying to fill it in. A potential explanation for this response rate is the potential confusion between Downtown West and The West Village, especially with recent news about the West Village in the media. Participants likely clicked on the survey link anticipating that the survey was about the West Village saw that it wasn't and then exited the website.

Online Survey Stakeholder Feedback Groups

Residents	250
Visitors	107
Business Owners	10
Developers	1
Architects	3
Landowners in Downtown West with Redevelopment Potential	2
Other: Lives in neighbouring community	16
Other: Works in Downtown West	8
Other: Commutes through the neighbourhood	3
Other: Condominium owner who rents out their unit	3
Other: Miscellaneous	8

The Open House

45 People attended

The entryway to the Kerby Centre provided the location for the open house. Only those who stopped to read the posters, provided feedback, or asked questions of staff were counted as participants.

The Lobby Displays

259 Ballots received (plus 21 spoiled ballots)

Ten buildings within and neighbouring Downtown West accepted display boards and ballot boxes for their lobby. These buildings include:

- The Marquis
- Westview Heights
- Axxis
- Five West
- Riverwest
 - Barclay Tower
 - McLeod Tower
- Tarjan Place
- West Pointe Plaza
- The Kerby Centre
- O'Neil Towers



Questions

The same questions were through multiple engagement channels; however, the lobby display focused on two questions given the nature of this engagement tactic to accommodate quick feedback. In total, nine questions were asked through the online survey, five at the open house and two at the lobby displays.

Online Survey	Open House	Lobby Display
Do you agree with the draft vision and core principles?		
What are your top 3 goals or concerns for future development in Downtown West?		
Pick your top 3 amenities for Downtown West		
When improving the streetscapes within Downtown West, which one is your first priority?		
Would you like an underpass at 11 Street SW to help cross the rail tracks?		
For Developers and Architects Are there any specific challenges faced by those who wish to develop in Downtown West?		
For Landowners looking to redevelop Do you have any plans or ideas for how to develop your property?		
For Developers, Architects and Landowners looking to redevelop Have you taken advantage of density incentives before?		
For all types of stakeholders Do you have any other comments?		



Responses Rate per Question

From all open-ended responses there were a total of **3982** ideas shared. The number of responses and ideas by question can be seen in the chart below.

Open-ended Questions Response Rate

Question	Responses	Ideas
Online Survey and Open House Do you agree with the draft vision and core principles?	435 answered yes or no 256 provided why	396
Online Survey, Open House and Lobby Display What are your top 3 goals or concerns for future development in Downtown West?	1230 responses total to all three goals/concerns	2483
Online Survey and Open House Would you like an underpass at 11 Street SW to help cross the rail tracks?	411 answered yes or no 340 provided why	749
Online Survey – For developers and architects Are there any specific challenges faced by those who wish to develop in Downtown West?	3 responses provided	12
Online Survey – For landowners looking to redevelop Do you have any plans or ideas for how to develop your property?	2 responses provided	5
Online Survey – For developers, architects and landowners looking to redevelop Have you taken advantage of density incentives before?	11 answered yes or no 5 provided why	7
Online Survey Do you have any other comments?	208 responses	330

Prioritization Questions Response Rate

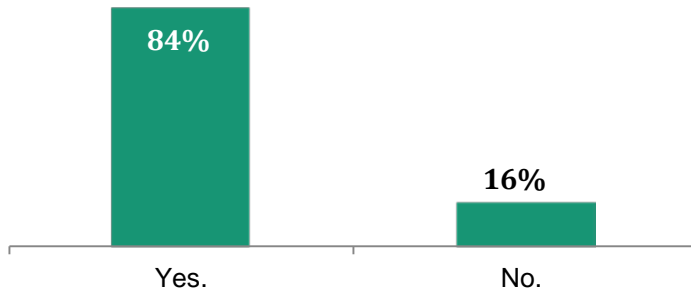
Question	Responses
Online Survey, Open House and Lobby Display Pick your top 3 amenities for Downtown West	663
Online Survey and Open House When improving the streetscapes within Downtown West, which one is your first priority?	431

Feedback Analysis

The following analysis combines the feedback from all three methods.

Do you agree with the draft vision and core principles? Why?

Table 1: Yes vs. No responses to agreement with vision and principles



Key themes for why people support the vision are as follows:

- It's a good and much needed plan
- It can benefit the local art and culture scene
- It can foster community
- There's a need for more food and restaurant vendors
- It could make Downtown West End its own destination or hub
- It promotes active street life and overall neighbourhood vibrancy.
- The project is taking a local focus.
- Infrastructural considerations are key

Not much was mentioned around why people do not support the vision, but the most prominent comments had to do with the area not becoming a retail and arts space, for example:

- "Why arts and local food? What about DW screams 'arts'? What does local food mean? Ok to be an ordinary urban neighbourhood"
- "Isn't east village focused on attracting arts? I would prefer (and believe tourists would as well) "one-stop" shopping for arts and culture (e.g., museum mile in NYC or National Mall in DC)"
- "We have that on 17th Ave. and Stephens Ave (as well as countless other places)"
- "What about the west says a place for the arts? That area is more known for good condos and parks. So parks would be a good model to keep vs. arts."



What are your top three (3) goals or concerns for future development in Downtown West?

Resident

Priority 1	Restaurants and Retail (33)	Walkable/Pedestrian Friendly (31)
Priority 2	Residential Retail (24)	Restaurants and Retail (21)
Priority 3	Park/Greenspace (17)	Affordable (14)

Visitor

Priority 1	Public Space (19)	Restaurants and Retail (18)
Priority 2	Public Space (20)	Restaurants and Retail (17)
Priority 3	Public Space (18)	Restaurants and Retail (10)

Business Owner

Priority 1	Draw People In (3)	Off Peak Hours (3)	Parking (3)
Priority 2	Bike Infrastructure (3)	Public Space (3)	
Priority 3	Vehicle Traffic (2)		

Developer/Architect

Priority 1	Active and pedestrian-oriented ground floor (2)	Setbacks for gathering space (2)
	No surface parking lots (1)	Maintain a residential focus (1)
Priority 2	Landscape and street parking buffers (1)	Setbacks at grade (1)
	More amenities and retail (1)	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (1)
Priority 3	Roads dedicated for people after peak hours (1)	Underground parking (1)
	Too much focus on vehicles (1)	Appropriate vegetation (1)

Landowners looking to redevelop

Priority 1	Better connections (1)	Safety (1)
Priority 2	Improve Bow Trail (1)	Convenience - Supermarket (1)
Priority 3	Good roads (1)	New stadium (1) Modern (1)

Other

Priority 1	Public Space (9)	Parking (7)
Priority 2	Restaurants and Retail (8)	Public Space (5)
Priority 3	Public Space (9)	Restaurants and Retail (7)

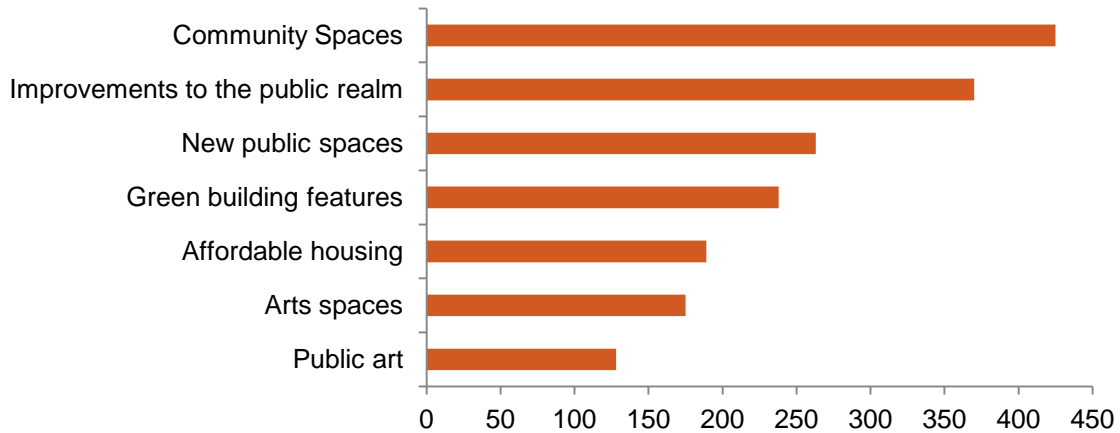
Lobby Ballot

Priority 1	Public Space (35)	Density* (17)
Priority 2	Public Space (43)	Park/Greenspace (13) Restaurants and Retail (13)
Priority 3	Public Space (29%)	Park/Greenspace (10)

*Comments spoke both in favour of and against density. Some felt that Downtown West has become crowded with few amenities, whereas others spoke in favour of increased density, often specifying a balance of uses. Overall, the number of responses against and in favour of density was evenly split.



We would like your help to identify the items that would provide the most public benefit to Downtown West today. Take a look at the list and pick your top three amenities or provide another suggestion.

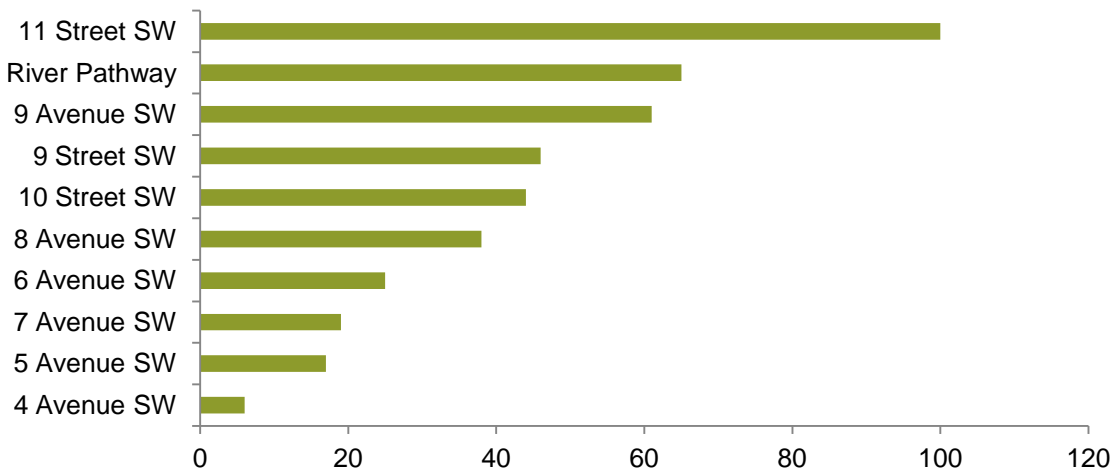


Examples of additional suggestions include:

- Link the plus 15
- Provide an athletic complex
- Community art/garden space
- Retail

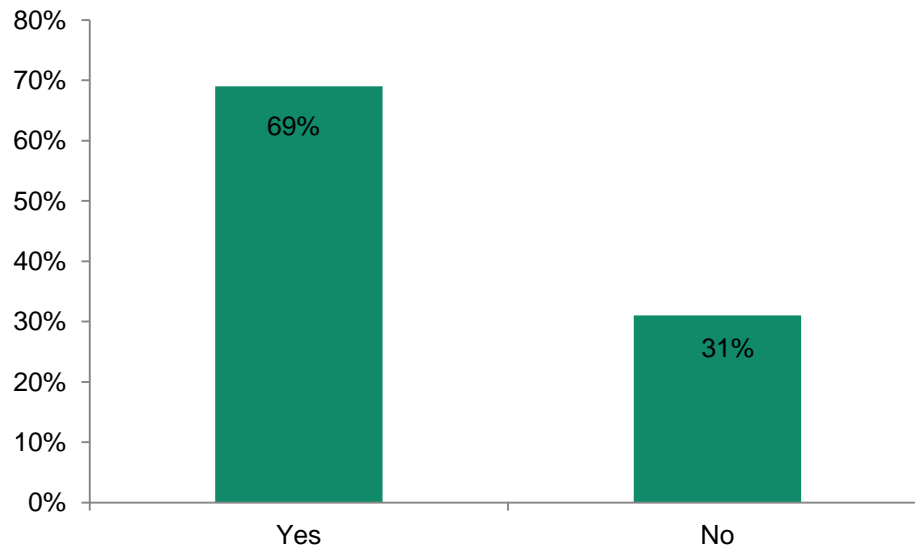
This question also saw participants speak both in favour of and against density.

When improving the streetscapes within Downtown West, which one is your first priority?



Good pedestrian, cyclist and transit connections arose frequently in this question and were strongly supported by participants. Regarding vehicles, the majority of people believe traffic, particularly at rush hour, is a concern in Downtown West.

Would you like an underpass at 11 St. SW to help cross the rail tracks?



Why?

The most common reasons for why participants do or do not want to see an underpass at 11st SW included the following.

YES to underpass

- Vehicle flow
- Pedestrian flow
- Creates better connections and accessibility (e.g. to the core)
- Maximizes safety

NO to underpass

- It's unnecessary (other underpasses are nearby and the train is not frequent enough to disturb flow)
- Too costly, money better spent elsewhere
- Dislike underpasses, predominately for safety reasons (e.g. lack of visibility)
- Hinders the pedestrian realm



Do you have any other comments regarding the Downtown West End Area Redevelopment Plan?

Participants largely reinforced the same points in this question as previous questions.

- Improving the pedestrian realm
- Providing better opportunities for active and alternative modes of transportation –cycle tracks, paths, sidewalks, transit
- Providing affordable housing options in future residential development
- Ensuring Environmental and economic sustainability
- Creating active and social spaces
- Facilitating more retail, restaurants, the arts, markets, entertainment and green spaces
- Improving connections to Downtown West’s neighbours and the waterfront

Most of the participants concluded the survey by providing general, positive input and shared excitement about the project.

In contrast to the more positive responses, many expressed an anti-development viewpoint or viewing the project as a waste of tax dollars.

A number of responses took a general negative tone, from anti-development/developer to seeing the project as a waste of tax dollars. Some comments highlighted the amount of homeless people and panhandlers in the neighbourhood and drew a correlation between high density and a higher crime rate as well as safety concerns.

Many people also confused this project with development in Calgary’s West Village. This led to multiple comments about a new arena and redevelopment further west of Downtown West.

Developers/Architects

Are there any specific challenges faced by those who wish to develop in Downtown West?

There were three responses to this question and they are listed below:

- “Existing buildings have no street presence. Streetscape is dismal, and dominated by major auto routes & the LRT”
- “General lack of appeal - pedestrian unfriendliness due to a focus on commuter traffic, a lack of access to quality green space beyond the narrow strip of river walk, limited connection to active parts of downtown”
- “I suppose the water tables issue is costly and is difficult to offset to do a good job without a high-rise to support it, so something that would traditionally require adequate parking may be costly to do well. Perhaps it's time to ensure public transit is truly supported by the ARP.”

Developers/Architects/Landowners interested in redeveloping

Have you taken advantage of density incentives before?

YES	4	“Keep it simple with real targets. 5% of units to be affordable housing. Building shall attain LEED gold. 20 MW solar power.”
NO	8	For those who responded ‘No’, they cited a lack of opportunity, willingness and reason to take advantage of an incentive program.

Landowners interested in redeveloping

Do you have any plans or ideas for how to develop your property?

The landowners that responded either stated that they didn’t have a specific plan at this time or were intending on building up, with retail that was convenient, modern and safe.