

**Summary of Feedback on Key Directions  
Federation of Calgary Communities Sponsored  
June Workshop Series on the Key Directions of Plan It Calgary  
Facilitated by Plan It Calgary Staff**

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In June 2008, three workshops were held. The Federation of Calgary Communities (FCC) promoted these workshops, recommended their location and managed the registration of attendees. Plan It Calgary staff developed, facilitated, and recorded the workshops. The workshops were held in the communities of Crescent Heights, Kingsland, and Westgate.

**Methodology**

The sessions started with an icebreaker where participants were assigned to debate "Yes, The City should change how it grows and how people travel" or to debate "No, The City should not change how it grows and how people travel". A spokes person from each table presented their arguments to the rest of the group. A brief presentation about Plan It Calgary was then made.

The majority of the time in these sessions focused on talking about the Key Directions. The 8 key directions were grouped by two and split among the 4 tables and participants rotated between the tables. At each rotation, participants discussed the key directions assigned to their table and then brainstormed "opportunities" and "challenges" that may result from those key directions. These ideas were recorded on flip charts.

**Summary from flip charts**

*Key Direction 1:*

*Achieve a balance of growth between established and Greenfield communities.*

Opportunities:

- better/more diverse Greenfield communities
- Green belt to prevent urban sprawl
- more density/mixed use in established areas
- revitalize areas (old strip malls, underutilized sites, etc.)
- new communities provide community centre to support residents
- better integration of schools into planning for new communities as well as earlier transit, mixed use
- incentives to get affordable housing
- intensify University Research park
- need enough residential to support commercial
- province should coordinate City and school boards to work more creatively
- choice in area
- attract families
- bring schools back
- different kinds of housing
- closer to establish facilities
- higher density in suburbs
- more walkable suburbs

- decentralize from downtown – more nodes
- link places directly (LRT to buildings)
- economic opportunities
- put in industrial areas vs. integrating into communities

Challenges:

- existing zoning
- incentives needed for development in established areas
- need to provide additional amenities to support higher density
- gentrification and redevelopment at existing density
- change in mindset needed
- underutilized open space (Stampede downtown)
- affordability
- MGA needs to be changed
- Lack of city vision
- City approving the wrong things
- curvilinear road network – not transit friendly but developers like it
- profit motive of developers
- piece meal development
- transitions between higher and lower densities
- blending and integrating of designs
- allocation of density to each and every community
- parking in communities – people should pay for additional parking
- inventory opportunities
- fear of mismanagement of opportunities.
- public perceptions (e.g. of affordable housing)
- quality of life

*Key Direction 2:*

*Provide more choice within existing communities.*

Opportunities:

- Age in place (mother-in-law suites, multi-generational lots)
- cradle to grave amenities to stay in communities
- use existing commercial sites for redevelopment
- Community schools (not big box schools)
- community sized library (not big box library)
- more services in community
- smaller independent shops
- fused/hybrid grid road pattern
- more mixed use
- more pedestrian facilities
- mixed densities
- all communities should be built with access to interesting things
- integrate big retail into communities to anchor commercial (no surface parking)

### Challenges:

- Greenfield developers – difficult to regulate and can't get business to locate just because you want it there
- fear of infringing on individual rights
- existing rules (parking, bylaws, cultural)
- affordability
- difficult to ensure good design
- dead streets
- need incentives
- need to engage citizens early on
- monster house syndrome (i.e. in Elbow)
- quality of life impacted by redevelopment

### *Key Direction 3:*

*Direct land use change within a framework of nodes and corridors.*

### Opportunities:

- limit some land uses (too much of one restricts the ability of others)
- preserve existing mixed use
- make mini-villages
- create incentives for businesses to locate in nodes
- invest in transit to facilitate growth in key areas
- proper transition of land use
- recognize regional nodes
- need to understand where change should occur in established communities
- high street with density, walkable and mix of housing
- people could live near where they work
- opportunity to have better transit
- get rid of asphalt (parking lots)
- providing more services to communities
- transit stations
- education & employment centres
- bike and car pooling lanes along corridors
- district energy opportunities
- corridors and nodes within industrial to place people closer to where they work

### Challenges:

- need incentives
- don't kill the downtown to achieve density elsewhere
- protect existing low density (transition by stepping heights and densities)
- need communications and consultation with communities
- need more long range planning
- integrating nodes & corridors
- building beside established communities

- maintaining housing affordability (preventing residents from being taxed from their homes)
- coordinated development is needed (not piece meal)
- design guidelines that are context sensitive to existing communities
- regional planning to support concept

*Key Direction 4:  
Link land use decisions to transit.*

Opportunities:

- for changes to take place, create benefits, e.g. recreational, shopping, theatre, restaurants, transit isn't enough of a benefit
- house prices go up near high capacity transit
- a work/live plan for encouraging less travel is good
- bring jobs and recreation closer to people
- develop the whole plan – not just pieces of it
- cross town routes connecting all parts of the city
- LRT/rapid transit service
- more variety of transportation technology
- geographic features are important
- higher density supports better transit
- stations should be developed properly – integrated with community
- public spaces should be focused in community

Challenges:

- financing
- how will the transition to Plan It occur and be managed?
- how will communities be engaged in the future?
- when is density too high?
- how do we keep small independent shops?
- increasing density without density is NOT acceptable
- don't move the parking problem to communities with densification

*Key Direction 5:  
Increase mobility choices.*

Opportunities:

- basic things in life should be walkable
- compact development creates more opportunity for walking and reducing auto-dependency
- make real bike paths/lanes
- carpool and bike lanes
- healthy community – more walking
- provide dedicated bus lanes to improve transit service
- increase service in the employment centres and industrial areas

### Challenges:

- change the way the transportation department thinks about roads
- front drive garages in the suburbs – not walkable
- concrete jungle – no trees vs. inner city where people are on the sidewalks in front and cars in back
- Children's Hospital – no public transit and no sidewalks
- crime/safety – more people in the street, less crime

### *Key Direction 6:*

*Develop a primary transit network.*

### Opportunities:

- subway
- expand LRT
- support grid transit network
- decrease auto dependence
- decrease air emissions
- increased transit mobility (cross town)
- better connections to industrial areas
- restrict car movement
- transit should support interesting destinations
- supports smaller independent retailers (big box shopping is not conducive)
- put transit close to amenities and services
- congestion charges for downtown to fund transit and make way for pedestrians
- better transit to airport
- transit infrastructure in place before new development
- mixing land use is important
- change in fare structure to zone system

### Challenges:

- NIMBY
- cost
- crime
- density thresholds – what is needed to make it work? Lead or respond to demand?
- better development around transit stations – no parking lots and no 30 storey towers
- air quality
- traffic congestion
- reduce auto dependence
- activity centres increase vibrancy
- Winter weather – people won't walk more than 10 blocks max
- stigma towards riding buses (regardless of bus lanes)
- don't follow Greenfield developers with transit

- major recreational opportunities and amenities are not close to transit
- more opportunities for bus / EMS only roads
- build 10-12 car platforms now – land won't get cheaper
- transit safety
- hub and node focus
- put transit underground
- 50 Avenue link intrusive to river valley and communities (upgrade Glenmore or bury it)
- 50 Ave should also be a car link
- more parking and shuttles to transit stations

*Key Direction 7:  
Create multi-modal roads.*

Opportunities:

- eliminate one-way streets downtown and make more interesting and pedestrian friendly streets
- safety first – separate cars, bikes & pedestrians
- create/enhance communities
- integrate cars, pedestrians, bikes through better design
- more efficient grids rather than looping streets
- increased livability
- increased mobility choice
- decrease cost to individuals
- decrease infrastructure capital and maintenance

Challenges:

- increased congestion
- need to educate citizens about implications
- how fast can we change?
- increase cost to individuals
- slower travel
- cost – who pays?

*Key Direction 8:  
Optimize existing infrastructure.*

Opportunities:

- developers should pay more for infrastructure
- maximize existing infrastructure and improve network
- direct growth to better use existing infrastructure
- City to demonstrate good development & new direction (pilot project)
- support diversification of existing uses to allow them to evolve
- HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lanes in the right places

- Home work opportunities
- goods directly to house/or to community – people don't have to move to shopping areas

Challenges:

- municipal government – leadership for change isn't there
- how can we retrofit in a sensitive way?
- seasonal issues
- time shifting – flextime
- safety
- reversed flow
- unfair – people in growth area requires more infrastructure which the established communities have to pay for
- if we keep this up, we will end up as the Los Angeles or Houston model
- existing built form is isolating for youths