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1.0 A WELL-DESIGNED DOWNTOWN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the urban design strategy that will be established through the Plan to ensure that new development is well integrated with the public spaces in the Downtown. Public spaces refer to sidewalks, streets, parks, plazas, alleys and urban pathways. Enhanced attention is given to the application of Urban Design initiatives in all forms of development to ensure that harmony between private developments and the public realm are achieved. The urban design strategy will enhance the urban character of the five Downtown districts as well as reinforcing their unique differences. Overall urban design objectives and policies for the entire Downtown, as well as more specific individual objectives for each of the five Downtown Districts, are contained in this chapter, as well as the Street Types Framework which outlines the character to be established for each type of street within the Downtown.

Downtown Edmonton symbolizes the identity of the entire metro region and as such it is important to ensure that the Downtown puts forward a good impression, one that presents a credible image to the world. The skills and practices of Urban Design draw our attention to the many details of development, and challenge us to handle them with care to preserve, protect and elaborate upon the best of Downtown Edmonton's physical assets. Urban Design involves the creation of high quality public and private spaces, by considering a multitude of components ranging from weather protection and sunlight access, to protection of views, inclusion of public art, and protection of heritage buildings and landscapes that fit harmoniously within their surroundings. At its heart, urban design capitalizes on the opportunity to work with nature, our own creativity, and community needs to craft an environment of comfort and beauty.

2.0 URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

GOAL: Augment the beauty and amenity value of Downtown neighbourhoods, creating more people places, so that the Downtown can sustain a rich urban lifestyle, and attract more residents, students, workers and visitors.

The Urban Design Strategy sets out an ambitious and proactive approach to augmenting the beauty and amenity value of the Downtown. The combined effect of all initiatives contained in the strategy is a cohesive and attractive city where opportunities to live, learn or work downtown are coveted by citizens

The Urban Design Strategy:

1. **Street Relationship:** Establish a framework to firmly establish the role of Downtown streets
2. **Beautify the Downtown:** Prepare detailed Urban Design plans for each of the 5 Downtown districts
3. **Design Excellence:** Downtown developments will be models of excellence, unique to Edmonton.
4. **Open Spaces, Activity Centres and Connections:**
 - a. Provide more people-friendly open spaces and plazas, and recreational facilities
 - b. Connect activity centres to each other, adjacent communities and the River Valley
5. **View Preservation:** Identify and preserve views of the River Valley and significant views within the Downtown
6. **Sustainable Design:** Build downtown buildings and public spaces to reduce their impact on global and local ecosystems
7. **Heritage Resources:** Protect, renovate and integrate heritage buildings with new developments
8. **Variety of Urban Spaces:** Provide a diversity of urban activity spaces to support the growing residential population
9. **Improve Walkability:** Put "Pedestrians First" in considering the design of all Downtown buildings and infrastructure

2.1 URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY – UMBRELLA POLICIES

The Downtown Urban Design Strategy features a set of "umbrella" policies that apply throughout the Downtown and serve to address the overall approach to urban design in the Downtown. These policies set the tone for the rest of the chapter which contain more specific policies to address a range of issues.

District Urban Design Plans

Each Downtown District will feature a unique urban design plan to detail street furniture and landscaping standards for implementation through capital projects and the development process.

Urban Design Guidelines Manual

Use the **Downtown Design Guidelines Manual** to serve as the basis for District Urban Design plans and in the evaluation of development permit, rezoning and plan amendment applications.

Downtown as a Model for Excellence

Downtown development will serve as a model for urban design excellence, exhibiting a high degree of thoughtfulness that is expressed through the use of appropriate scale and massing, high quality building materials, and a design that is intended to last decades, persevering through variable economies, social movements, changing climates, and are adaptable to host a variety of users over time.

Unique, Context Sensitive Designs

Encourage building design to be unique to Edmonton, with designs providing relief in form and texture and responding to the challenges and characteristics of their location and the climate in Edmonton.

Design for Longevity & the Future

Evoke a sense of permanence, durability and thoughtfulness through careful choice of building materials that contribute to the sustainability and maintainability of a building, for generations to come.

Design Competitions in the Downtown

Commission urban design, architecture or urban planning design competitions for major public projects and make the design competition process available to private sector developers interested in using this tool.

The City is a Leader

Leading by example, The City of Edmonton and all its corporations will address the principles of urban design and continuously strive to make positive contributions to the Downtown urban environment, sharing knowledge and methods with the development industry.

Community Involvement & Enhancement

Facilitate community involvement in design related issues and initiatives in the Downtown and encourage and assist in the development of partnership programs that enhance the quality of the urban environment.



Volunteer members of a Capital City Clean Up Crew

Public Safety Downtown

Incorporate design measures to enhance public safety Downtown; ensure a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design analysis is an integral component of all public and private projects, including street improvements and building development.

Edmonton Design Committee

Support the mandate of the Edmonton Design Committee to provide advice and guidance on development proposals in the Downtown, including Major Development Permits and applications for Direct Control rezoning applications.

3.0 DOWNTOWN STREET TYPES

A NEIGHBOURHOOD OF STREETS

Edmonton has suffered in some respects from not having adopted and implemented a detailed plan to guide the evolution of its physical development from the outset. There is no regular pattern of leafy squares as in Savannah or Philadelphia, or axial roadways leading to prominent landmarks as in Paris or Washington DC. Thankfully we have a Downtown that is perched on the cusp of a dramatic river valley, which we have wisely preserved, to lend flair and attractiveness to our core. Thus the defining feature of Edmonton's street pattern is its gridiron layout and its relationship with the North Saskatchewan River Valley.

In the absence of regularly spaced squares and plazas, we will need to find new ways of injecting high-quality public spaces into our downtown, and further enhance the level to which the streets themselves can serve as public spaces for day-to-day living.

The street grid has endured since it was laid out in the Hudson's Bay Company survey of 1892 with relatively few changes. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the grid was interrupted in a few locations to consolidate blocks in an effort to accommodate large re-development projects like Canada Place, Manulife Place and Commerce Place, as well as City Centre Mall. One of the best attributes of the grid layout is that it provides an essentially walking scale to the Downtown and distributes access across a number of alternate, but equally direct routes. Today, the consolidated sites are the most difficult for pedestrians to navigate. The former rail yards to the north of the Downtown continue to experience redevelopment and these offer an important opportunity to secure pedestrian linkages across these sites, ensuring improved walkability of the Downtown.



ABOVE: The gridiron is the organizing framework for Downtown Edmonton and is evident from above.

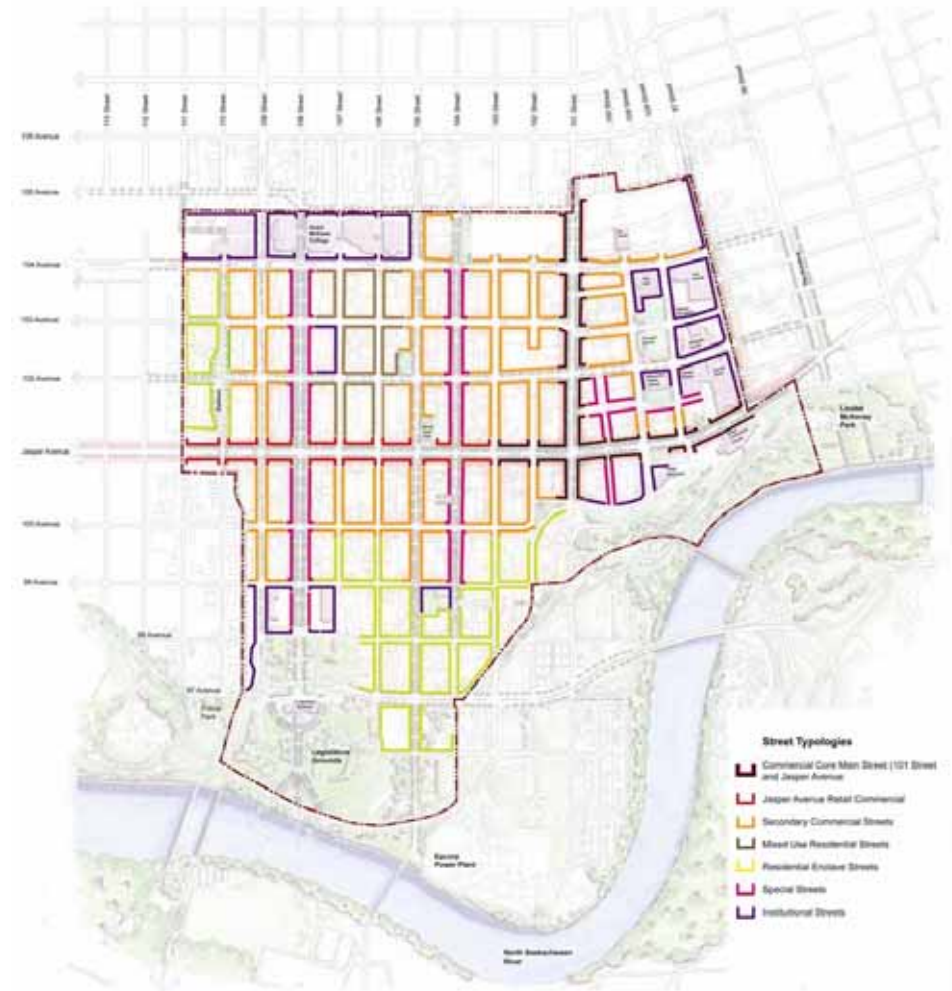
3.1 STREET TYPE FRAMEWORK

The downtown streets are divided into seven different types of street representing the different patterns of activities and land uses that define their role in the downtown neighbourhood. The desired street characteristics will be achieved through the various policies of the Downtown Plan and the zoning strategy.

Over the last 40 years of Downtown development activities, certain streets have evolved to fulfill a variety of specific roles: 104 Street is pedestrian scaled residential and retail space, Jasper Avenue and 101 Street are prestige retail and core commercial streets, and Rice Howard Way is a pedestrian oriented restaurant and patio café environment. Formalizing the role of various downtown streets through the Urban Design Strategy will allow focused development initiatives to secure and reinforce the desired range of activities taking place on each street and strengthen their defining features. The overall outcome should be cohesively designed streets where all development contributes to the desired role identified for each street, where buildings and streets interface in harmony, serving as destinations and activity generators.

The Street Type Framework is the basis for determining the critical elements of urban design necessary to produce the desired characteristics for each street type. The map on the right identifies the street type assigned to each section of roadway in the downtown. The Street Type Framework establishes a common set of building and design parameters for each street type, to ensure a coordinated approach to development on each of these streets. The intent is to secure development that contributes to the vision laid out for each street and to avoid development that detracts from the intended vision for the street.

To achieve the desired street character zoning and urban design regulations are applied in a strategic manner. Each street type is elaborated in greater detail on the following pages.



3.2 STREET TYPE DESCRIPTIONS & CROSS SECTIONS

Each street type in the downtown has a detailed description of the characteristics that it is to embody. The street characteristics inform the role that the street is intended to fulfill within the overall structure of the Downtown street network. These street type descriptions inform the zoning, and provide guidance to the Development Officers in reviewing applications for development permits, rezoning applications and applications for plan amendments.

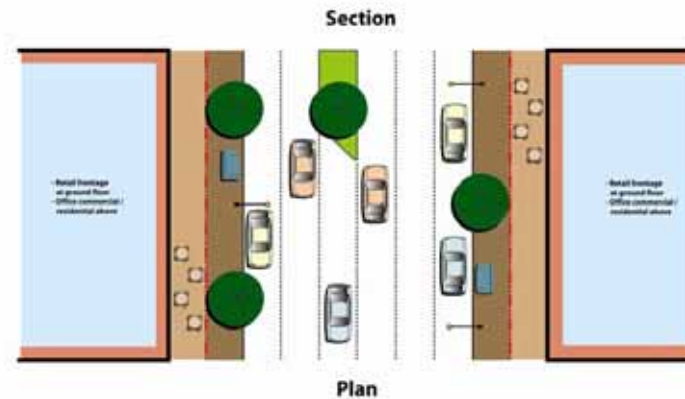
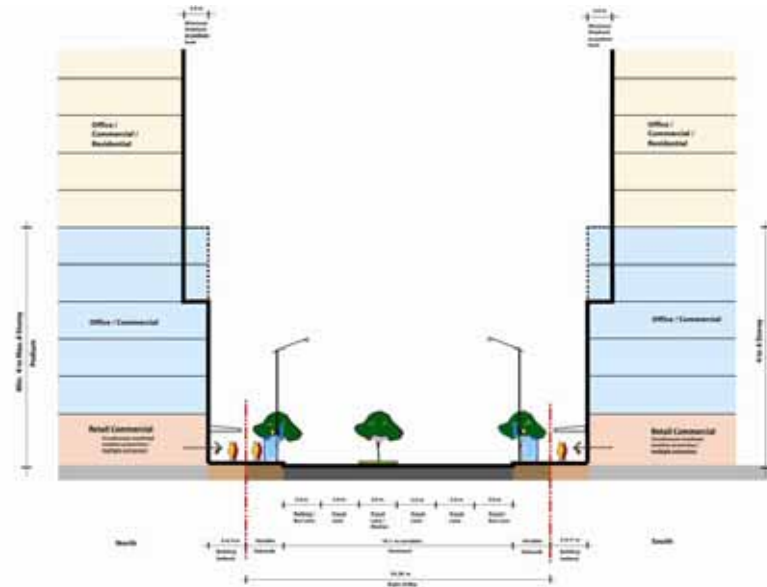
Urban Core Main Streets: Jasper Avenue & 101 Street (Main Street 1)

Private Realm/Street Wall:

- Building podiums will be developed, with height ranging from 4 to 6 commercial stories.
- No building less than 4 storeys may be developed.
- Towers will be setback at least 2 meters from the podium parapet.
- Retail store fronts and hospitality uses feature a rhythm of individual building entrances
- Individual retail frontages up to 18 meters/60 feet in length to accommodate flagship retailers, hotels and hospitality uses, entertainment facilities and office building lobby spaces
- Façade retrofits that introduce at grade activity are required as a function of redevelopment
- High-quality materials such as glass, steel, granite and other forms of stonework are required.
- Building frontages will address the corner or both street and avenues
- Continuous overhead weather protection is required

Public Realm/Sidewalks & Streets:

- 4 lanes of traffic (2 each way)
- 2 dedicated curb parking/bus stop lanes (one each way)
- 1 lane of alternating centre left turn bays or medians
- centre medians with lights, plantings and hard decorative elements
- pedestrian bump-outs at key intersections
- Building setback of 2 to 4 meters will allow the creation of people spaces, wider sidewalks, pedestrian plazas, streetscape improvements and tree planting
- attractive pavers and street furniture contribute to an upscale environment
- single row of street trees on both sides of the street introduces greenery and shade
- Heighten the significance of the 101 Street and Jasper Avenue intersection
- decorative lamp standards with separate pedestrian and vehicle light sources
- trash receptacles designed for high volumes, recycling and closing lids
- bus stop, telephone and information kiosks



Urban Core Main Street - Jasper Avenue and 101 Street

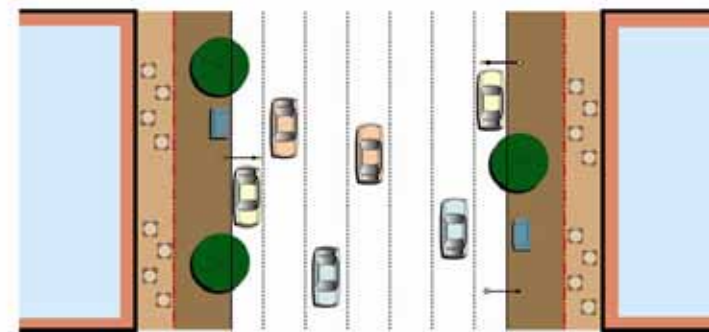
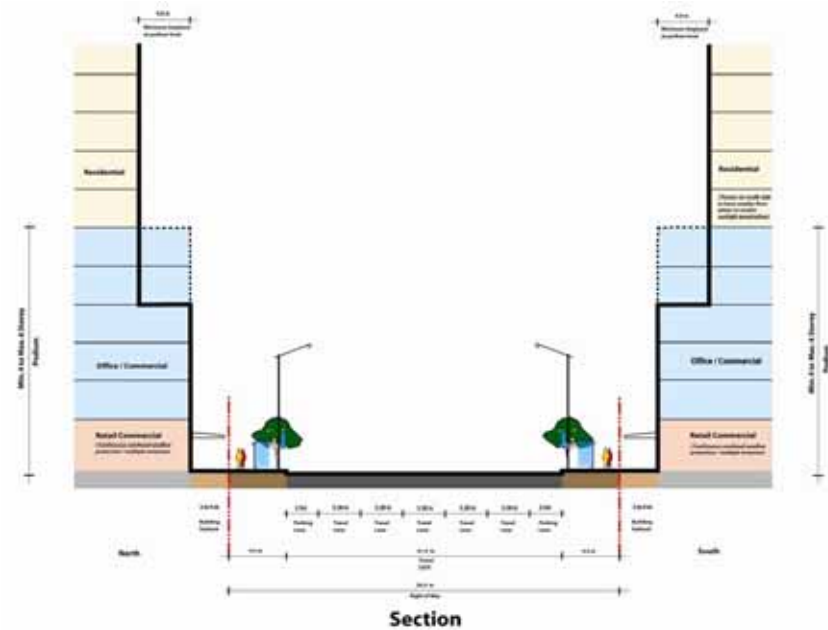
Jasper Avenue West (Main Street 2)

Private Realm/Street Wall:

- Building podiums developed to 4 to 6 stories
- No building less than 4 stories may be developed
- Towers setback a minimum of 4 meters from the podium parapet
- Towers on the south side of Jasper Avenue are to be narrower in width to promote sunlight penetration
- Where high rise towers are not contemplated buildings may develop to a height of 6 to 8 storeys
- Continuous street-level retail stores and services
- Large display windows engage the pedestrian
- Buildings will be designed at grade to feature numerous individual store fronts
- Larger internal spaces shall be accessed from multiple entrances or wrapped with numerous individual storefronts no more than 32 meters in length
- Offices at grade are not permitted
- An eclectic mix of materials is permitted – wood, tile, terra cotta, stone, and brick, etc.
- Continuous overhead weather protection is required
- Plaza landscaping, planters, and tree plantings to increase greenery
- Buildings address the corner or the street and avenue

Public Realm/Sidewalks & Streets:

- 4 lanes of traffic (2 each way)
- 2 dedicated curb parking/bus stop lanes (one each way)
- 1 lane of alternating centre left turn bays
- pedestrian bump-outs at key intersections
- Building setbacks of 2 to 4 meters will allow the creation of people spaces, wider sidewalks, pedestrian plazas, streetscape improvements and tree planting
- attractive pavers and street furniture
- single row of street trees on both sides of the street
- other landscaping components such as planters
- decorative pedestrian sidewalk lighting and vehicle lamp standards
- transparent bus shelters, telephone booths and information kiosks
- improved trash receptacles



Plan
Jasper Avenue West

DRAFT

WELL-DESIGNED

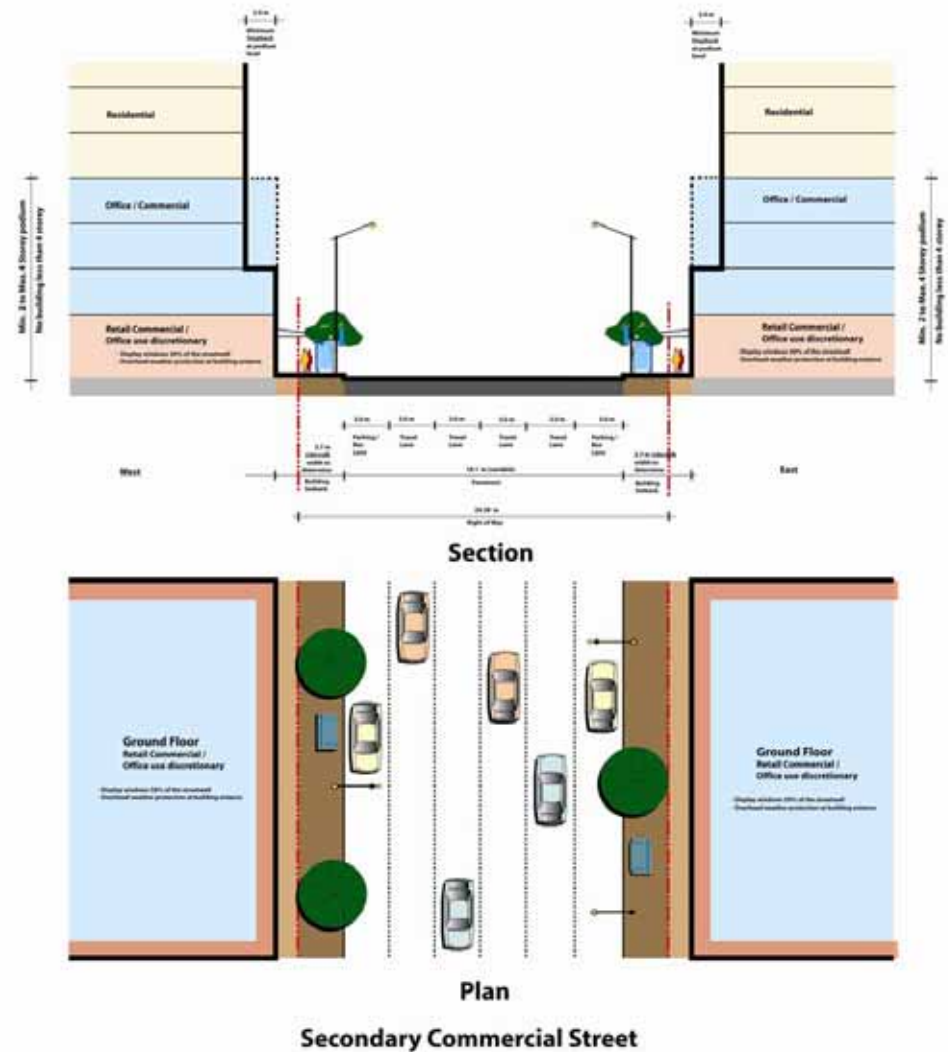
Secondary Commercial Streets

Private Realm/Street Wall:

- Podiums will be a maximum of 4 storeys, and a minimum of 2 storeys.
- No building less than 4 storeys may be developed
- Towers will be setback at least 2 meters from podium parapet
- Buildings will address the corner
- At-grade uses and activity is encouraged
- Less active uses at grade, such as office uses, are discretionary
- Individual storefronts limited to 32 meters in length
- Finer grain of activity at-grade than above
- Upper floors may contain either office, or residential uses
- Display windows will comprise 50% of the street wall
- Overhead weather protection will be provided at building entrances
- Signage is pedestrian in scale and orientation
- Building retrofit to increase at-grade activity and address the street are required as a function of major redevelopments (especially along 102 Ave)

Public Realm/Sidewalks & Streets:

- 2 to 4 lanes of traffic (1 or 2 lanes each way)
- 2 lanes of curb parking/bus stop (one each way)
- 1 or no left turn bay
- Single row of street trees on both sides of the street
- decorative pedestrian sidewalk lighting and vehicle lamp standards
- intermediate level of pedestrian street furniture amenities
- Minimum sidewalk width of 3.70 meters will determine building setbacks



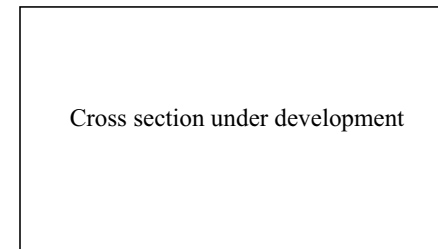
Mixed-Use Residential Streets

Private Realm/Street Wall:

- Podiums are a minimum of 2 storeys, maximum 4 storeys
- No buildings less than 2 storeys may be developed
- Towers will be setback a minimum of 4 meters from the podium parapet to preserve the integrity of the Warehouse street wall.
- Where high rise towers are not contemplated buildings may develop to a height of 6 to 8 storeys.
- Limited mix of uses to create streets that are predominantly residential and low-impact commercial
- Provide opportunities at grade for neighbourhood convenience uses such as cafes, small restaurants, specialty retail and galley spaces or live-work professional spaces geared towards craft and design oriented establishments.
- Ground floor frontage should be primarily commercial in nature, with residential components located above.

Public Realm/Sidewalks & Streets:

- 2 lanes of traffic (1 each way)
- 2 dedicated curb parking/bus stop lanes
- Building setbacks of 0 to 1.5 meters to develop people oriented spaces & landscaping
- Single row of street trees on both sides of the street
- Low scale decorative lighting in combined pedestrian vehicle formats
- Limited street furniture – intersections and activity nodes only



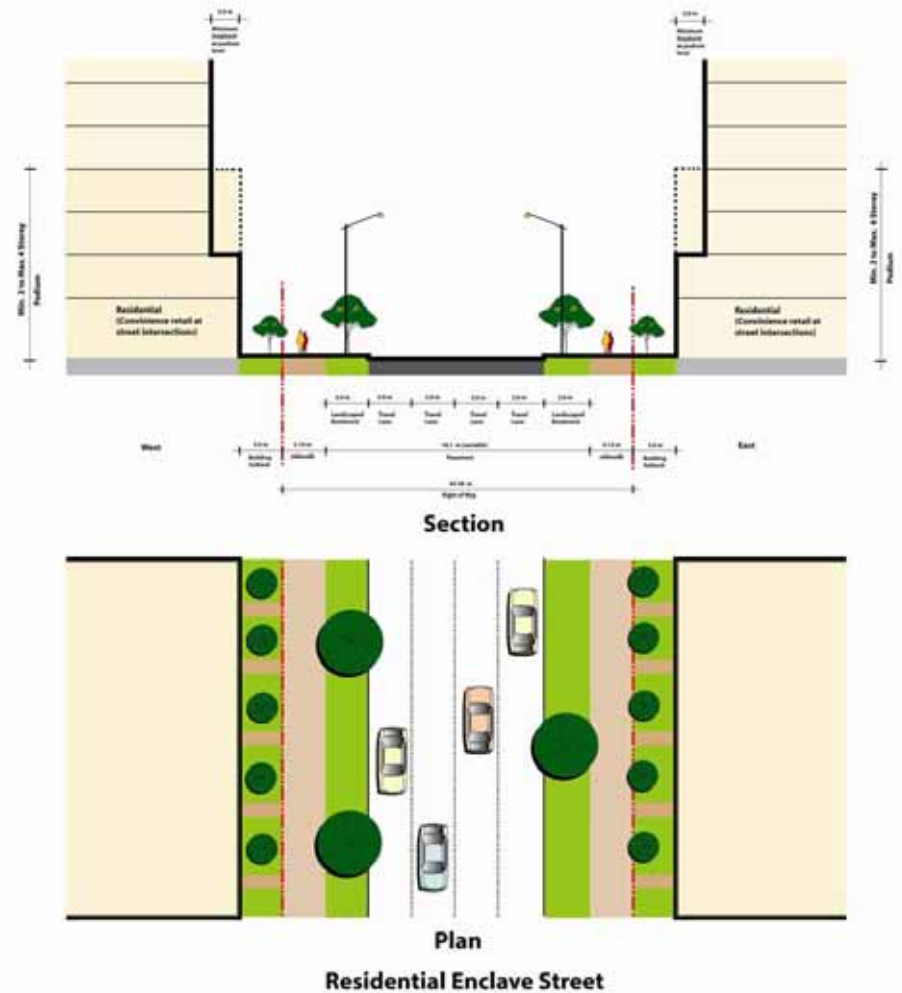
Residential Enclave Streets

Private Realm/Street Wall:

- This street type is the closest to a single-use type of street in the Downtown and features a limited variety of mixed uses.
- The intent is to create urban, pedestrian focused residential streets.
- Podiums are a minimum of 2 storeys, maximum 4 storeys
- No buildings less than 2 storeys may be developed
- Towers will be setback a minimum of 2 meters from the podium parapet wall
- Individual habitable units are oriented to the street to promote activity, human scale design and natural surveillance.
- Provide opportunities at grade for neighbourhood convenience uses such as cafes, small restaurants, personal service shops and convenience stores.

Public Realm/Sidewalks & Streets:

- 2 lanes of traffic (1 each way) – except on 1 way streets and Bellamy Hill (4 lanes)
- 2 dedicated curb parking/bus stop lanes (except on Bellamy Hill – no parking lanes)
- Building setbacks of at least 3 meters to develop people oriented spaces & detailed landscaping of private amenity areas.
- Single row of street trees on both sides of the street
- Low scale decorative lighting in combined pedestrian vehicle formats
- Limited street furniture – intersections and activity nodes only, pedestrian oriented in nature – bollards, trash cans, water fountains, lamps. No advertising components.



Institutional & Ceremonial Streets

Private Realm/Street Wall:

Podium development is not necessary –emphasis on openness and views
Focus on civic, provincial, cultural or educational uses
Encourage cafes, dining and entertainment opportunities at grade
Public agencies and institutions, lobbies, galleries and commercial spaces at grade
Large grained public, cultural and institutional developments
High quality building materials
Prominent building entrances
Illumination of architectural details and entrances
Weather protection over building entrances

Public Realm/Sidewalks & Streets:

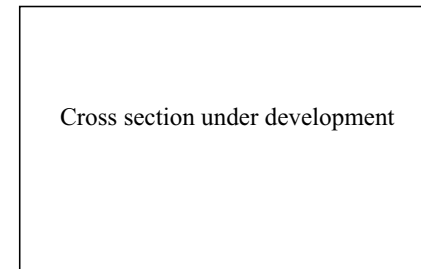
Varying street configurations – generally 1-2 travel lanes each way
Curb Parking may or may not be present
Generous building setback of 3 to 6 meters to facilitate public plaza designs
Double row of street trees to provide shade and greenery
High quality public realm and street furniture designs
Enhanced pedestrian and vehicle lighting

Special Streets

These streets have special roles which are defined by their individual roles and design parameters. These streets are uniquely pedestrian oriented and feature rich streetscape designs reflective of their thematic and geographic settings.

The Special Streets are:

1. 104 Street Promenade – Refer to HA Zone and the D.2.9 **Downtown Design Guidelines Manual**
2. Rice Howard Way – Refer to...what is there?
3. Capital Boulevard – Refer to D.2.7 & D.4.4 **Downtown Edmonton Design Guidelines Manual**
4. MacDonald Drive – Refer to D.1.3a **Downtown Edmonton Design Guidelines Manual**



3.3 STREETScape & BUILDING INTERFACE

The relationship between buildings and their street is of importance in achieving street environments that are welcoming to pedestrians and encourage increased activity at the sidewalk level. This is especially important in Edmonton where a limited amount of public squares and plazas means that the streets and sidewalks form the principle living space for Downtown residents and workers.

GOAL: Buildings are oriented to the street with appropriate features to promote a pedestrian shopping environment.

The following policies apply to Downtown development as specified beneath each policy based on the classifications of the Street Type Framework.

Wider, Better Sidewalks

Provide adequate space to allow comfortable pedestrian movement in both directions and facilitate specialized uses such as sidewalk sales, streetscape treatments, and seasonal patio areas and maintain to a high standard to allow continued use.

MAIN STREET 1, MAIN STREET 2, SECONDARY COMMERCIAL, SPECIAL STREETS, INSTITUTIONAL



ABOVE: Wide sidewalks on key commercial streets provide room for high pedestrian volumes, additional retailing activities, tree plantings and specialized pavement treatments.

Overhead Weather Protection

Require the provision of overhead weather protection on pedestrian shopping streets to improve the year-round sidewalk shopping conditions and protection from falling snow and ice.

MAIN STREET 1, MAIN STREET 2, and only building entrances on **SECONDARY COMMERCIAL, SPECIAL STREETS, INSTITUTIONAL**

At-Grade Connectivity & Interaction

Facilitate activity, interaction and commerce on the streets of Downtown by requiring building designs that provide multiple points of interaction in the form of doorways, operable windows, large display windows and offer pedestrian weather protection in the form of colonnades, arcades, and glazed canopies. Refer to the **Downtown Design Guidelines Manual** for further details.

MAIN STREET 1, MAIN STREET 2, SECONDARY COMMERCIAL, SPECIAL STREETS



ABOVE: Overhead weather protection extends usability of the sidewalk seating areas and an active building frontage provides numerous points of interests and interaction.

Smaller Storefronts/Finer Grain Development

Produce more opportunities to foster the development of retail shops, and street-oriented entertainment and dining experiences by designing active block faces that contain numerous unique shop fronts and a variety of textures and building materials.

MAIN STREET 2, SECONDARY COMMERCIAL, SPECIAL STREETS

Street Furniture Standards

Improve the servicing of pedestrian needs by providing a standardized set of street furniture for use across the Downtown (outside of Special Streets with their own furniture standards) with customization features that respond to each of the District Urban Design Plans.

MAIN STREET 1, MAIN STREET 2, SECONDARY COMMERCIAL, SPECIAL STREETS, INSTITUTIONAL



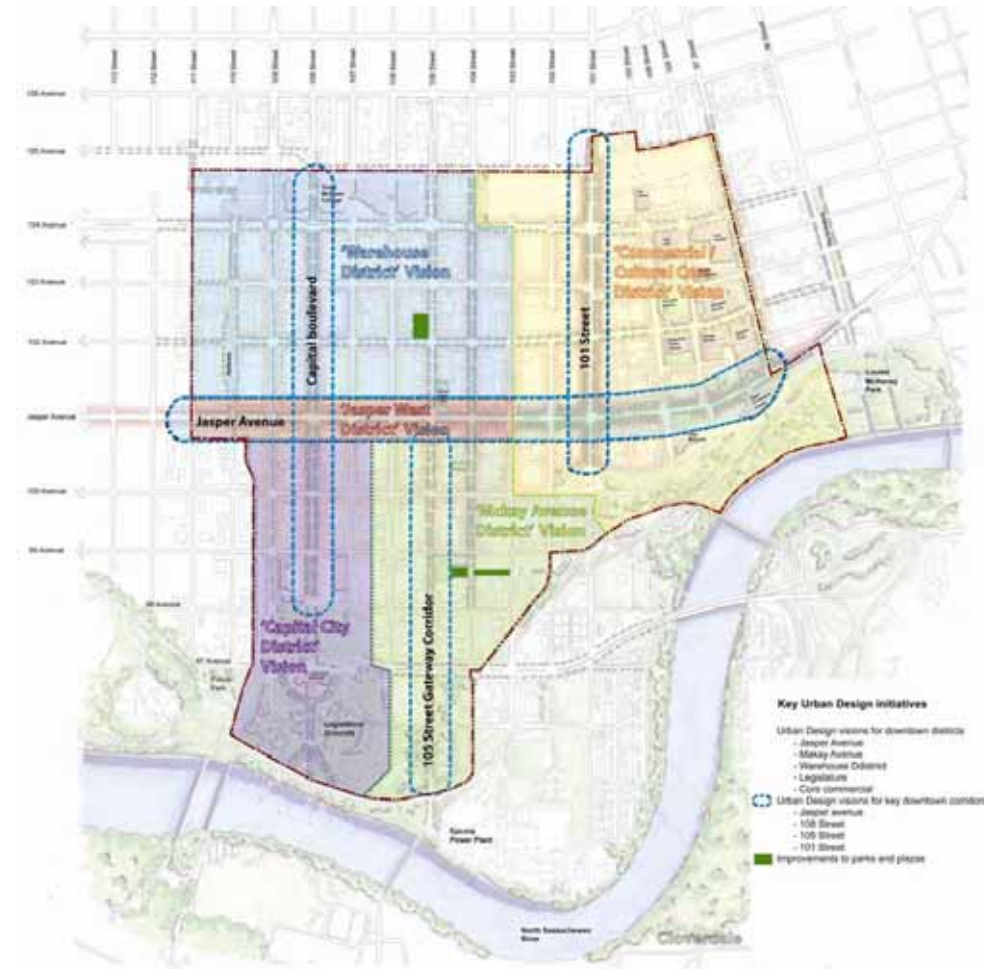
ABOVE: Standardization of street furniture can assist in organizing sidewalk activities to improve pedestrian movements and present a credible retail image to visitors and residents.

3.4 URBAN DESIGN INITIATIVES

A major component of the plan is to complete urban design visions for each of the five downtown districts and 4 major streets in the Downtown. The first street and district urban design plan to be developed is that for Jasper Avenue, realizing the priority that is placed on this significant defining element of the downtown. Subsequent design projects will address either the creation of urban design plans for the remaining 4 downtown districts, or Capital Boulevard, Gateway Boulevard or 101 Street.

GOAL: Improving the distinct nature of each Downtown district and enhancing as yet unimproved key streets through the implementation of detailed urban design plans and visions

The urban design plan boundaries will follow the Downtown District boundaries and are shown on the map at right along with the 4 street corridors identified for improvements.



4.0 VIEW PRESERVATION

Our river valley is the birth place of our City, with aboriginal, colonial, political and industrial beginnings taking place on the flats, slopes and embankments of the North Saskatchewan River. Enhancing and maximizing views of the River Valley and significant buildings is a priority of this plan.

Previous versions of the Downtown Plan encouraged the preservation of views, but did not specify specific views for preservation or provide a view preservation framework; as a result some special views were lost. This plan provides a bias from with to move towards a comprehensive view preservation policy.

OBJECTIVE

Identification and retention of dramatic views and vistas for the enjoyment of all Edmontonians.

STRATEGY

The Downtown Plan's view preservation and skyline composition strategy will:

1. Designate and preserve vistas of the North Saskatchewan River Valley through a view corridors approach
2. Identify and protect significant views of historic and iconic buildings within the Downtown
3. Enhance the character and vibrancy of the Downtown skyline by establishing a skyline composition framework

4.1 VIEWS INTO THE RIVER VALLEY

The North Saskatchewan River Valley is the most significant defining feature of the Downtown geography. Views and connections to this asset must be protected and enhanced wherever possible. Careful planning can ensure that views and connections to this asset are available to the broadest range of users and residents possible.

GOAL: Preservation of public views into the River Valley, and where possible opening up new viewpoints into the River Valley.



POLICIES

River Valley View Preservation & Enhancement

Protect public views of the River Valley by establishing view corridors with appropriate development standards, and capture new public views where possible as a function of redevelopment, at strategic locations on the escarpment and hillside. (Refer to Map River Valley View Corridors)

Retention and Enhancement of River Valley Views

Positioning and massing studies of proposed developments shall be completed where proposed buildings are adjacent to or within identified view planes and view corridors to create outcomes which have the greatest potential to preserve existing views, vistas and visual corridors, and where possible open up public access to create new ones.

MAP - Views Preservation INTO THE River Valley

4.2 VIEWS INSIDE THE DOWNTOWN

When reviewing the addition of new buildings to the Downtown community we must do so with care to preserve terminating views of significant heritage buildings or otherwise iconic structures, which provide interest and relief in the Downtown built environment.

POLICIES

Historic & Iconic Building View Corridors

Protect views of historic and iconic buildings by prohibiting all forms of development, including overhead pedways, which close view corridors or significantly obscure views towards the identified terminating vista.

Retention and Enhancement of Downtown Views

Positioning and massing studies of proposed developments shall be completed where proposed buildings are adjacent to or within identified view corridors to create outcomes which have the greatest potential to preserve existing views, and where possible open up public access to create new ones.

Improvements to Downtown Views

Encourage property owners to complete renovations that improve views within the Downtown and reconsider public space designs to contribute to a memorable impression of the Downtown.

GOAL: Retention of unique terminating views inside the Downtown and realizing new iconic views through creative design on sites where redevelopment opportunities exist



5.0 OPEN SPACES, ACTIVITY CENTRES & GATEWAYS

Establishing focal points for activity throughout the Downtown will enable all sectors of the Downtown to support increased residential, institutional and commercial activities. At present a number of activity centres function at differing levels and two Downtown Districts require the creation of enhanced focal points: The Warehouse District and McKay Avenue. The Commercial Core has a number of successful focal points including Sir Winston Churchill Square and the wider Arts District, Rice Howard Way, Jasper Avenue and McDonald Drive. These policies contribute to the creation of a downtown community with a strong and memorable identity.

OBJECTIVE

Establish a range of inter-connected focal points for activity, commerce, leisure and socialization throughout the Downtown, to support the development of high-intensity residential, learning and employment service areas.

STRATEGY

The open spaces and activity centres strategy will address:

1. Balance the distribution of people places, open spaces, and community focal points across the Downtown.
2. Provide new or improved community focal points in the Warehouse, McKay Avenue and Capital Districts.
3. Secure more small open spaces as a function of Downtown redevelopment.
4. Enhance the beauty of Downtown gateways using the Gateway Program Design Guidelines.



ABOVE: Winter activities programming in Sir Winston Churchill Square.

5.1 DISTRIBUTION OF OPEN SPACES & ACTIVITY CENTRES

Improving the capacity of the Downtown to serve as a high density residential, learning and working area requires the provision of open spaces and activity centres. To support, attract and retain growth in the resident, worker, and learning populations it is important to augment attractiveness of the downtown by providing more evenly distributed amenities and focal points in the Downtown. Presently the eastern end of the Downtown is home to the majority of the downtown’s best designed public and private spaces. Strategic deployment of new community focal points is required in the western portions of the Downtown, including the Warehouse, McKay Avenue and Capital Districts.

GOAL: Balance the distribution of open spaces and activity centres across the Downtown

POLICES

Distribution of People Places, Squares and Plazas

Enhance the Downtown experience by providing a more even distribution of memorable public places throughout the Downtown for planned and spontaneous public use, gatherings, and meeting points.

Establish Community Focal Points

Create medium sized community focal points in the Warehouse and McKay Avenue Districts, and improve the ability of the Legislature Grounds to function as a focal point for the Capital District, to further increase the capacity and attractiveness for development of residential, commercial and institutional developments in these districts.



ABOVE: Providing spaces for organized, casual or spontaneous public activities helps to build an interactive city full of a range of activities that appeal to a broad spectrum of people.

Small Public Urban Spaces, Squares & Plazas

Dedicate more small public spaces for informal activities in the development or expansion of both private and public buildings and facilities, to result in a Downtown environment that is memorable, attractive, and full of unique urban settings.



5.2 GATEWAYS

Gateways are prominent and valued locations that integrate natural and built urban form and introduce common design elements to enhance, symbolize and announce entry into the Downtown and each of its unique districts. Downtown gateways were identified in the Downtown Gateway Program, an initiative of the 1997 Capital City Downtown Plan. This Downtown Plan continues to recognize importance of the Major Gateway Nodes identified and reinforces continued implementation of the Gateway Program Design Guidelines.

GOAL: Create a distinct sense of place, focus, and arrival at Downtown gateway locations

POLICIES

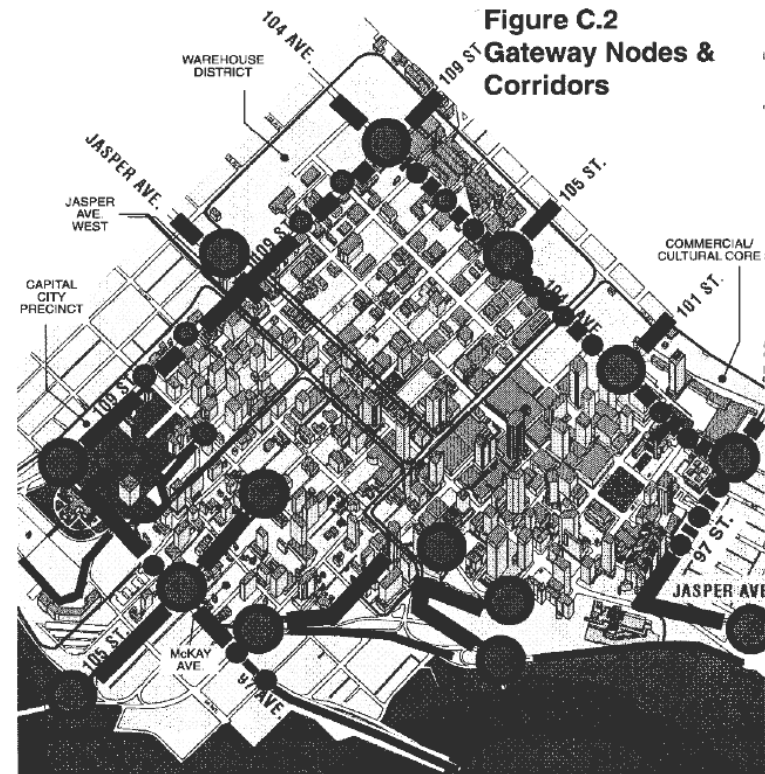
Major Entrance Points & Corridors

Reinforce the significant role that major intersections and boulevards play as entrances to the Downtown by developing specialized design regulations to enhance the sense of place and overall perception of the Downtown as a high quality, liveable environment.

Downtown Gateway Program

Reference the Downtown Gateway Program as the basis for evaluating both public and private development proposals adjacent to Major Gateway Nodes.

**Figure C.2
Gateway Nodes &
Corridors**



Legend

- Major Gateway Nodes
- Minor Gateway Nodes
- ▬ Major Gateway Corridor
- ▬ Minor Gateway Corridor

Major Downtown Gateways are shown on the map above.

6.0 CONNECTIONS & LINKAGES

The Downtown forms the heart of the Capital Region, and it acts as an anchor, providing services and amenities to its seven surrounding neighbourhoods; including Oliver, Queen Mary Park, Central McDougall, McCauley, Boyle Street, Riverdale and Rosedale. Strengthening and improving the connectivity of the Downtown to its adjacent neighbours can contribute to improved quality of life in the adjacent communities as well in the Downtown. By improving the ability to traverse the barriers and gaps between communities, residents, students and workers can shop in the local businesses and eat in the restaurants both in the Downtown and in the neighbouring communities. Neighbouring communities also play a role in the overall health and vitality of the Downtown through their ability to act as residential communities that support the Downtown and all its businesses and institutions.

Connecting the Downtown to its greatest amenity, the North Saskatchewan River Valley, is also of vital importance. The river valley is an oasis of green and a haven of recreational and leisure activities, home to a wider range of cultural and tourist amenities. The sheer size of the river valley park system allows it to support a large population of users. Improving the connections from adjacent communities, and across the Downtown to the river valley represents an opportunity of untold proportions.

OBJECTIVE

Improving the connectivity of the Downtown to its adjacent neighbourhoods and maximizing the accessibility of the River Valley from within and across the Downtown.

STRATEGY

1. Create well designed, walkable links to the neighbourhoods surrounding the Downtown.
2. Link the Downtown neighbourhood more clearly and more effectively to the River Valley park and trail system.
3. Provide links to the River Valley that cross through the Downtown to improve River Valley access to the communities beyond the Downtown.
4. Connect open spaces and activity centres to each other with a highly walkable network of streets and pathways



ABOVE: Mid block pathways and connections to adjacent neighbourhoods can increase the walkability of the Downtown neighbourhood and improve the ability of the Downtown to act as a hub that supports increased residential populations outside the immediate Downtown area.

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WELL-DESIGNED

6.1 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In order to improve the Downtown's relationship to its neighbouring communities it is critical to improve the connections to its surrounding neighbourhoods.

GOAL: Improve the ability of people to walk between the Downtown and its surrounding neighbourhoods

POLICIES

Community Connections

Enhance the connections to adjacent communities with urban pathways that connect with the Downtown and create a sense of place and provide easily identified crossings into the Downtown with pedestrian amenities in the form of benches, lighting and safe cross walks.

Connect Activity Centres and Open Spaces

Establish welcoming, walkable routes to connect and link together the Downtown's major activity centres and open spaces to augment their accessibility and drive pedestrian activity towards these focal points.



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6.2 RIVER VALLEY CONNECTIONS

Improving the connections from adjacent communities, and across the Downtown to the river valley can improve the attractiveness of the Downtown and its neighbouring communities, as places for active, healthy and diverse lifestyles.

GOAL: Increase the exposure of the Downtown and its adjacent neighbourhoods to the River Valley Park and trail systems to increase their attractiveness to a broad range of users.

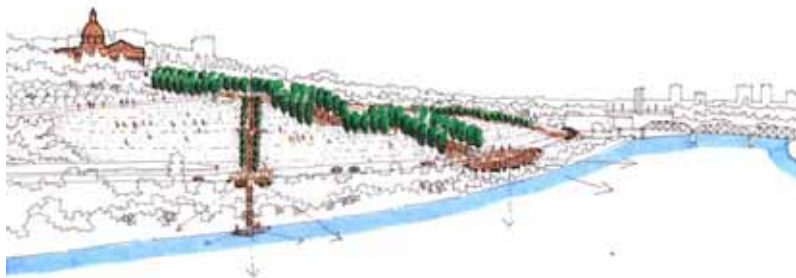
POLICIES

Links to the River Valley

Maximize the amenity value of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and its proximity to the Downtown by clearly marking access routes from within the Downtown to enhanced access points at the top of the escarpment.

Connect the Legislature & River to Downtown

String together the grounds of the Legislature of Alberta with the North Saskatchewan River and Downtown to improve the accessibility of our greatest assets, and augment the amenity value of the Downtown.



ABOVE: An opportunity exists to dramatically increase the connectivity of the Legislature Grounds to the River Valley Park System and the rest of the Downtown.

WELL-DESIGNED

6.3 CONNECTING OPEN SPACES & ACTIVITY CENTRES

Creating a downtown neighbourhood that provides a rhythm of interesting things to see and places to rest, recreate and socialize requires a network of open spaces and activity centres. Pedestrian access to all of these public places is essential in order to activate their use throughout the day. Providing a walking network that stitches together all of these spaces will ensure that the entire collection of open spaces and activity centres are within easy walking distance.

GOAL: Create a network of easily accessed, interconnected, open spaces and activity centres.

POLICIES

Interconnected Parks & Urban Spaces

Create a network of parks, plazas, boulevards and other pedestrian friendly streets through the preparation of detailed urban design plans for each Downtown District.

Mid-Block Pathways and Connections

Provide pedestrian connections through large mid-block redevelopment sites to improve the connectivity and walkability of the Downtown.

Public Washrooms & Water Fountains

Increase the availability of public washrooms and water fountains in the Downtown by integrating these amenities into streetscapes, major development proposals, park acquisitions and other developments

6.4 WAYFINDING

Wayfinding is the art and science of helping people find what they are looking for. Helping people find their way through a vibrant and exciting city often relies upon the development of a comprehensive system of signage, graphic elements, icons and maps to assist in the identification of popular districts, destinations and attractions.

The ease at which the Downtown is navigated has a direct relationship on the perceptions that are formed about the attractiveness of our city. Visitors to the Downtown, be they local or international, visiting as business professionals or as tourists, need to know how to locate the destinations that they are looking for. Unlike many smaller cities of its size, Edmonton has not developed a very effective wayfinding system for orienting visitors in the Downtown. Separate wayfinding systems exist for the LRT stations and the Pedway system of internal pathways, and these should be linked together through a unified approach to navigating the Downtown.

GOAL: The Downtown is easily navigated with attractions and destinations clearly marked by a detailed and comprehensive wayfinding system.

POLICIES

Wayfinding System Design

Improve the navigation of the Downtown by designing and providing a well designed, on-street wayfinding system which orients tourists, business people, students and, local visitors and new citizens and is integrated with or replaces the existing Pedway and LRT station wayfinding systems.

MAIN STREET 1, MAIN STREET 2, SECONDARY COMMERCIAL, SPECIAL STREETS, INSTITUTIONAL

Wayfinding System Information Accuracy & Maintenance

Maintain a comprehensive downtown wide wayfinding system with annual system reviews to ensure that information is up-to-date and well maintained.

Application of Wayfinding Systems Outside the Downtown

Realize system efficiencies and cost savings in wayfinding system design by expanding of the wayfinding system outside of the physical boundaries of the Downtown neighbourhood to encompass special areas in neighbourhoods adjacent to the Downtown.

7.0 BUILT FORM

This section outlines provides discussion and guidance about the general dynamics of the built form for each district of the Downtown and the Downtown as a whole. Considerations in determining the built form of the various portions of the Downtown include the ability for sunlight to access the ground, be it sidewalks, park spaces or portions of buildings. Other key factors involved in determining the downtown built form are building and tower spacing and location, building shape and form, (often referred to as “massing”), the orientation of buildings to the street, the size and frequency of at-grade interface and the overall composition of the Downtown skyline. Taken together the range of considerations covered in this section establishes a framework to guide the shape and form of building development in the Downtown.

OBJECTIVE

Creating a built form framework to ensure that building designs in the Downtown are sensitive to their surroundings and contribute in a positive manner to the overall appeal and liveability of the Downtown.

STRATEGY

1. Controlling built form on a district-by-district approach, and providing the basis for detailed zoning content
2. Establishing/initiating a skyline composition framework
3. Introducing more precise policy regulations on shadow impacts and sunlight preservation
4. Provide for the review of development proposals for optimal interface with the street
5. Direct the location and grain of developments across the Downtown



ABOVE: Edmonton's downtown skyline as seen from the Oliver neighbourhood to the west.

7.1 BUILDING MASSING

Building massing controls assist will minimize the negative effects of bulky building designs, and encourage increased height in exchange for narrower tower design. The resulting buildings are therefore spaced at greater distances from each other, improving the ability for view retention, sunlight penetration and privacy between towers. Detailed massing controls have been developed for each Downtown district, each of which is generalized in the sections below. The massing controls illustrated here are elaborated in the zoning regulations.

GOAL: Building massing is optimized for the specific needs of each downtown district and the individual impacts of each building form are mitigated through careful site and design controls.

POLICIES

Building Envelope Review

Review applications for increased building massing against the criteria contained in this plan throughout the rezoning and Development Permit application process in conjunction with the review of the Edmonton Design Committee to exchange amenity provisions with increased density and massing.

Tall Building Design

Establish a Tall Building Design Framework to guide the development of tall buildings in Edmonton, and to evaluate their relative impact on their surroundings.

Building Length

Establish maximum building lengths for the Downtown in an effort to preserve specific views, to enable mid block pathways, to increase sun light penetration and to provide improved architectural variation along Downtown streets.

Separation Distance

Address the issue of privacy, views and sunlight penetration through minimum separation distances between buildings.

7.2 SKYLINE COMPOSITION

Cities are quickly identified by snapshots of their skyline. The more distinctive and dramatic the skyline, the more recognizable the city. Edmonton's skyline has evolved as an indirect result of policies contained in the previous generations of Downtown plans, these policies were intended to address issues other than the emergence of our skyline, and had no direct requirements for buildings to contribute to the creation of a deliberately crafted skyline.

The purpose of this section is to elaborate on the notion that a skyline can be crafted deliberately or allowed to emerge a function of other indirect policy objectives. Many cities have determined their skyline through an analysis of development opportunities relative to the potential or desired skyline effects. The single greatest constraint on the Edmonton skyline at this time is the Airport Protection Overlay (APO) associated with the City Centre Airport. The APO restricts building heights in the centre of the Downtown to 148m, 36 to 40 stories, with further restrictions to the east and west of this area requiring that building be no taller than 45 meters or 12 to 15 stories.

GOAL: The planned evolution and development of a dramatic skyline for Edmonton

POLICIES

Skyline Composition Framework

Augment the drama of our skyline through the development of a Skyline Development Framework which outlines project evaluation criteria for new tall buildings and identifies areas available for increased skyline development.

Iconic Architecture

Recognize the importance that landmark buildings have in establishing a rhythm of urban landmarks which are an important factor in making a memorable impression and which contribute to neighbourhood identity and improve navigability. Highly visible locations requiring a high level architectural consideration have been identified on the Urban Design Strategy Map.

7.3 SUNLIGHT ACCESS & WIND MINIMIZATION

The Downtown's open spaces can only be attractive to a wide range of users and activities if sunlight reaches these spaces. As such development guidelines are required to inform the review of development applications that are in proximity to open spaces in the Downtown.

Wind tunnel effects can be unintended negative results of building design. Building design modifications are an acceptable requirement to eliminate or dramatically reduce wind tunnel effects to ensure a useable, inviting pedestrian environment at-grade, in public spaces and building amenity spaces.

GOAL: Ensure sunlight access to public spaces in the Downtown and provide a set of performance based measures to ensure sunlight penetration throughout the Downtown, and minimize the negative effects of wind tunnel effects.

POLICIES

Shadow Sensitive Areas

Conduct a sun shadow analysis of the Downtown to determine areas sensitive to the shadow effects of tall or elongated building development. A map of areas sensitive to shadow effects would be inserted into the plan at this location.

Sun Preservation Regulations

Establish a series of regulations to guide the evaluation of development applications in proximity to publicly accessible open spaces and other shadow sensitive locations. Regulations developed would be inserted into the plan at this location.

Wind Tunnel Prevention

Establish a Wind Prevention Framework to guide the development of buildings and to evaluate their relative climatic impact on their surroundings, with a view to providing access to sunlight and minimizing wind effects in the Downtown environment.

7.4 BUILDING & STREET INTERFACE

Streets are where people experience the Downtown. How buildings interface with the street will largely determine if the street is an interactive, inviting and memorable place to carry out commerce, leisure and social activities. The **Downtown Design Guidelines Manual** provides detailed guidance to evaluate development proposals with supplementary policies outlined below.

GOAL: Buildings contribute to the desired street character and provide interactive designs that contribute to an active pedestrian environment.

POLICIES

Blank Walls

Blank walls have a detrimental effect on the vibrancy and activity levels in the Downtown and as such blank walls are not permitted in the Downtown.

Signage

Recognize the function that signage can have in animating spaces, while at the same time acknowledging that minimum standards ensure quality signage design and consistent enforcement of the regulations shall be applied.

Rich Landscape Plantings

Enhancing the Downtown with landscaping and plantings will require the submission of professionally prepared landscape plans which will result in a profound softening effect on the Downtown environment, as well as providing the opportunity to decrease the amount and speed of urban runoff.



ABOVE: generous landscaping can assist in the creation of pleasant and green streetscapes even with limited setback and right of way spacing.

Pedway Impacts

Strike a balance between the shelter and convenience that the Pedway system can provide, and the need to encourage on street activity year round and throughout the day and night by restricting Pedway expansion to the established Pedway Network in the central core of the Downtown and to improve connectivity to transit services.



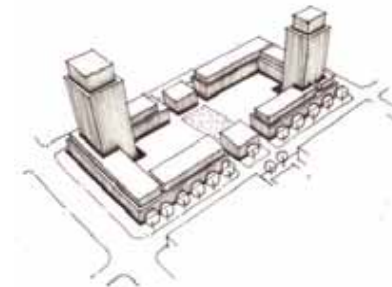
ABOVE: Pedways can cast shadows and compromise the comfort of the street. Improvements pedestrian oriented lighting and reduced widths can improve the on street experiences beneath pedways.

Urban Design Regulations for Parking Facilities

Ensure that parking facilities provide parking for bicycle commuters, mixed use retail, commercial and residential opportunities, and incorporate sustainability or green features such as roof gardens, living walls, and solar energy production.

Tower Arrangement

Arrange high rise towers to increase the amount of light and space on a site and to increase privacy. Towers should be setback above the podium to preserve the human scale street-wall.



ABOVE: This sketch illustrates the concept of providing mid-block pathways through major redevelopment sites and illustrates how tower locations were carefully chosen to maximize sunlight penetration on the interior of the block and to increase the sense of privacy between buildings. Towers are setback over the podiums to preserve the characteristic human scale street-wall.

7.5 FINE GRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Returning a sense of bustle and vitality to the Downtown requires a corresponding return to the re-emergence of fine grain development that provides a wide range of retail shops and services in a limited amount of space – this makes pedestrian travel make sense, and results in busy sidewalks and streets. A large scale development with consolidated shop fronts and limited external openings makes pedestrian travel less logical and results in lonely sidewalks. Fine grain development is essential in a high-intensity urban setting, and consists of, small lot development featuring a range of distinct building frontages, a range of architectural styles, and diversity of building entrances and windows.

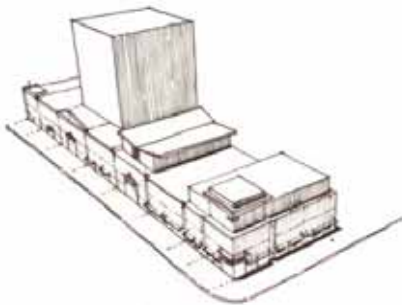
GOAL: Re-establish a rhythm of fine-grain development on key streets in the Downtown necessary to support a high intensity urban population.

POLICIES

Smaller Storefronts/Finer Grain Development

Produce more opportunities to foster the development of retail shops, and street-oriented entertainment and dining experiences by designing active block faces that contain numerous unique shop fronts and a variety of textures and building materials.

MAIN STREET 2, SECONDARY COMMERCIAL, MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL, SPECIAL STREETS



ABOVE: This sketch illustrates how building façades should address the street with numerous small-scale retail bays and a variety of architectural styles and building materials to reflect the traditional pattern of Downtown development. Overhead weather protection should be continuous in certain locations, and serve to define the building entrances.

7.6 LARGE FLOORPLATE AREAS

In the Commercial-Cultural Core and the Capital District areas of the Downtown there is an emphasis is on the continued development of a high intensity office and employment base. Full block floorplate development at lower floors will be permitted in these areas to further solidify the employment base.

GOAL: Concentrate large floorplate developments in areas where employment and office building development are anticipated.

POLICIES

Large Floor Plate Districts

Designated areas for large floorplate development are intended to provide a consolidated employment growth areas and as such this type of development is preferred in the Commercial-Cultural Core and the Capital District.

Large Floorplate Exemption Streets

Exemptions to the permitted large floorplate districts are those sites interfacing with Rice Howard Way, 97 Street, 101 Street and Jasper Avenue.

8.0 HISTORIC & CULTURAL PRESERVATION

"preserving elements of our past for a more vibrant future"

Edmonton has a rich cultural heritage that we have made significant progress towards preserving, celebrating and integrating with our City. Because we are a relatively young city, incorporated in 1904, we only have to reach back a number of decades, as opposed to centuries, in order to discover our origins.

Cities that have retained and enriched their landscapes through preservation and integration of historic buildings, art, sites of cultural relevance, or awe-inspiring views make a memorable impact on visitors and residents alike. The City of Edmonton has made good progress in preserving many elements of our past, especially those dating from the turn of the Century, up to the Depression era. Our efforts must not forget the more recent past.

Explosive growth in Edmonton in the post-war era resulted in our City being home to a large number of "modern" heritage buildings. This particular style of architecture and art and design should not be forgotten. Our parents and grandparents worked and prospered in many of these buildings, and many memories and important events took place with these modern artifacts in the background. Our modern past should not be dismissed, indeed the 1940s and 1950s represented a period of architectural experimentation in our City, a period we owe much of our current prosperity to.

OBJECTIVE

Enhance the unique character and vibrancy of Downtown through the continued preservation, integration and enhancement of historic resources and cultural references from a variety of periods.

STRATEGY

The Downtown Plan's cultural and heritage preservation strategy will:

1. Continue to preserve unique historic buildings in the Downtown
2. Preservation activities will recognize a range of cultural, artistic and architectural styles from a variety of periods
3. Integrate preservation activities with redevelopment opportunities
4. Preserve and showcase cultural artifacts within the Downtown
5. Enhance the cultural character and vibrancy of Downtown



ABOVE: The Ramsey Building, built 1927, (left) and the Kelly Block, built 1915, (right) on Rice Howard Way

8.1 HERITAGE BUILDINGS & ARCHITECTURE

Incorporating heritage buildings into redevelopment provides a unique downtown experience and allows for the retention of buildings and features that are no longer produced today. Retention and integration of heritage buildings and elements is a costly and time intensive exercise. In recognition of the challenges that are involved in heritage preservation and integration incentives in the form of density bonuses, parking relaxation and financial consideration are at times necessary.

GOAL: Retain and integrate a broad range of architectural styles and periods throughout the Downtown.

POLICIES

Active Approach to Preservation

Priority will be given to the preservation of those buildings, areas and structures, including monuments, bridges, built landscapes and cultural artifacts that are of historical or architectural merit to ensure that these resources are protected, incorporated and enhanced in accordance with the proposals in this Plan and existing City policies

Special Historic Preservation Areas

Continue to identify special historic areas within the Downtown and develop zoning regulations and plans that preserve their unique characters while maximizing economic potential of the areas. (103 Avenue West warehouses to be protected under this policy and through a zoning approach)

Promote the Benefits of Historic Preservation

Increase public awareness of Downtown's historic resources by providing information, education, seminars and advice to owners, developers, interest groups, individuals and the media to foster a sense of ownership and pride in our buildings and history.

Adaptive Re-use for Economic Purposes

Promote the re-use of historic properties by providing advice, incentives, exemptions and regulatory relaxations that enable adapted uses and continued preservation.

Integration of Historic Properties

Heritage properties will be integrated into new developments and their Character Defining Elements become integral to the development's overall design.

Financial Support to Encourage Rehabilitation

Implement City Policy C-450A (A Policy to Encourage the Designation and Rehabilitation of Municipal Historic Resources in Edmonton) and use the City's Heritage Investment Fund to help finance the rehabilitation and re-use of buildings and structures that are designated as historic resources.

Support Community Heritage Organizations

Support and provide advice and assistance to community heritage preservation groups who undertake rehabilitation and preservation initiatives that satisfy the objectives of this plan.

Government, Community and Cultural Group Accommodation

Encourage civic agencies, and other government-funded agencies and socio-cultural groups to locate their offices and activities in above grade locations in heritage buildings, with ground floor spaces reserved for more interactive uses.

Redevelopment of Heritage Resources

Preserve historic buildings through zoning regulations that require the retention and integration of Character Defining Elements while allowing redevelopment opportunities.

Development Adjacent to Historic Properties

Encourage infill developments, and renovations or additions to existing buildings to respect the nature of adjacent historical properties through intentional design initiatives and in consultation with the city heritage planning officer.

Density Bonus or FAR Transfer

Reinstate the use of a density bonus system or Floor Area Ratio transfer as a means to encourage the restoration of heritage buildings or their inclusion in redevelopment projects.



ABOVE: Preservation and reuse of heritage buildings retains a link to our past and provides a unique variety of building design and detail not normally seen in today's architectural and construction practices.

8.2 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Edmonton has a rich cultural heritage, dating to the pre-colonial era when First Nations people had settled in the River Valley, including the area now occupied by the Rosedale Generating Station and the Legislature of Alberta. Sometime after the Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Edmonton on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, a variety of people from a range of European backgrounds began arriving to settle the land and build the city. Evidence of cultural heritage can be seen in the Ukrainian Orthodox churches, east of the Downtown, and interpretations of the Hudson's Bay Company settlement are recreated at Fort Edmonton Park. More recently the Aboriginal heritage of Edmonton has been recognized in the Rosedale flats through the reinstatement and memorializing of a pre-colonial burial ground. Heritage is not always symbolized through buildings, much of it remains in the form of buried artifacts and traces of activity on the landscape.

GOAL: Honour the unique and diverse stories of the many people who have made a home in Edmonton by finding new ways of telling their stories through design.

POLICIES

Tell Stories With Design

Illustrate, communicate and translate stories from a range of cultural backgrounds into modern day design ideas to create meaning in the urban landscape.

Interpretive Monuments

Improve the public understanding of lesser-known cultural groups by incorporating a interpretive and artistic elements into building and public space designs as an alternative to standard public art commissions.

Cultural Preservation Areas

Identify special cultural areas within the Downtown and develop frameworks for the retention, rehabilitation or reintroduction of special features appropriate to the group identified.

Support Community Cultural Organizations

Support and provide advice and assistance to community cultural organizations who undertake interpretive and memorial initiatives that satisfy the objectives of this plan.

9.0 ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Humans have been designing with the environment in mind since the construction of the first mud shelter in the African plain over 6000 years ago. Environmental Design is the study and practice of creating designs that respond to the environment in which we live. In Edmonton we don't yet design our places of working and living to make the most efficient use of our climatic conditions. Our institutes of higher learning have begun to get a better understanding in this regard, and the learning institutions are often the first to improve on the prevailing "industry standard".

In Edmonton we have done well at designing for a winter climate, but we have not excelled in this area – yet. Inexpensive and nearby natural resources have allowed the city to evolve with a heavy reliance on fossil fuels to combat the winter cold and traverse great distances despite unfavorable conditions. By designing for our climate it is possible to reduce our reliance on complex, centralized and unsustainable fossil fuel delivery systems.

Celebrating our status as the largest population "this far north" on the continent is also a reason to do things differently, and to derive inspiration from our unique experience. It is time to make our long cold winters a reason to do things differently rather than as an excuse for doing things the same as we always have.

OBJECTIVE

Improve the Edmonton's relationship with the natural environment by learning to embrace our Northern climate and reducing our impact on global change through improved sustainability initiatives.

STRATEGY

The Downtown Plan's environmental design strategy will:

1. Respond to our status as a Winter City
2. Integrate sustainable development practices
3. Prepare the city for global change and longer term stability in the face of uncertainty

9.1 WINTER CITY DESIGN

Being a Winter City means that Edmonton can experience winter weather 5 to 6 months of the year. Although the winter here is long, it is not that extreme – the worst temperatures are experienced as "cold snaps" that last a week or two. Learning to make the most of our situation by building a city that is designed to be beautiful in our prolonged winter nights and still walkable in the ice and snow of winter will make Edmonton unique in the North American context. Icons and symbols unique to the north, such as the Northern Lights and ice crystals can be capitalized on and used to inspire creative designs – after all the long Canadian Winter is what makes us who we are.

GOAL: Design our public spaces, buildings and streetscapes to remain functional, safe and attractive throughout the winter, celebrating our status as a Winter City.

Downtown development applications shall be reviewed against the following Winter City Design policies:

POLICIES

Public Spaces Designed for Winter Use

Constantly consider winter conditions in the design of publicly accessible spaces, ensuring that the spaces can be adapted to winter use, that snow clearing has been considered, and that winter walking conditions are considered.



Winter City Design can improve the experience of living in Edmonton in the winter

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Falling Ice & Snow

Protect pedestrians from the danger of falling ice and snow by designing all buildings to minimize the risk, and to incorporate protective features such as overhead canopies to promote on-street activity year round.

Lighting/Illumination Plans

Recognize the special role that lighting effects can have in our dark Northern climate by providing unique illumination effects on landmark structures and buildings and or on special architectural features.



ABOVE LEFT: Winter landscaping
ABOVE RIGHT: Night time illumination of architectural detailing and landmark buildings to signify beacons of activity

Winter Landscaping

Landscape plans shall provide for visual interest throughout the winter by incorporating a variety of elements that create rich winter landscapes. Initiatives can include coniferous winter greenery, plants with unique branch structures or bark colours, shrubs with vibrant berries and incorporating colourful sculptural and paving arrangements.

Design for Winter Walkability/Snow & Ice Clearance

Ensure that the storage and removal of snow and ice is considered and incorporated into designs and that winter walkability is enhanced through the use of textured surfaces and gently sloped grades.

Winter City Design Review

Identify and establish detailed Winter City design criteria for Downtown development to ensure that both the public and private realms are enhanced for activity and use in our northern winter climate.

9.2 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Sustainability is a complex concept that means ecologically sensitive design to some people, and designing objects or systems to withstand system instability in an uncertain future to other people. These are two different, yet interrelated concepts, both of which make up the major components of the sustainability movement. This emerging approach to design is in its infancy, but is definitely here to stay. This section of the plan anticipates further advances and commitments to sustainability as the approach matures and the City's commitment to this approach solidifies.

GOAL: Incorporating design features to increase the sustainability of all aspects of human behaviour and development impacts in the Downtown.

Sustainability is addressed in greatest depth in an eponymously titled chapter of this plan. Policies will challenge designers, planners and architects to incorporate sustainability features into their designs, which will position the downtown for long term stability in a climate of global change.

POLICIES

Sustainability in Downtown Design

Establish design principles, practices and targets which can be used to assess and mitigate a development's environmental impacts, and improve its contribution to the emergence of a sustainable Downtown.

Density and Height Bonuses in Exchange for Increased Sustainability

Increased development density and height can be secured as a function of improved sustainability commitments, among other amenity contribution options.

Incorporate Sustainability in Public Projects

Innovative sustainability concepts should be integrated into City projects for public spaces design, streetscape projects, roadway and sidewalk rehabilitation, civic buildings, and park and plaza designs.

Green Roofs and Walls

Require the use of green roofs, and green walls where possible, on podium roof surfaces and other large, contiguous roof surfaces over 1,858 square meters, to reduce run off, improve aesthetics, conserve energy by reducing cooling and heating loads, assist in carbon dioxide and pollutant capture, and combat urban heat island effects.

Parkade Roof Screening or Greening

Design parkade roof decks to include screenings mechanisms that combat urban heat island effects, possibly through the use of living materials, green roof technology or other innovative measures, and providing improved visual interest to surrounding high rise buildings.



ABOVE: Green roof elements incorporated into building and site planning improves visual and environmental qualities of the downtown landscape.

10.0 INITIATIVES, ACTIONS & PROJECTS

The following tables outline the policies laid out in the Downtown Design chapter and provide recommendations for achieving the intent behind each policy.

URBAN DESIGN POLICIES

Policy	Actions	Lead Role
Umbrella Policies		
District Urban Design Plans	<p>Initiate the development of District Urban Design Plans for each of the 5 Downtown Districts, beginning with Jasper Avenue Corridor and the Warehouse District</p> <p>Develop implementation and funding mechanisms for each of the District Urban Design Plans</p>	<p>P&D DECL DBA</p> <p>P&D</p>
Urban Design Guidelines Manual	Review and update the Design Guidelines Manual, to reflect the policies, objectives and principles of the revised Downtown Plan.	P&D
Downtown as a Model for Excellence	Hold Downtown development to a high level of rigour by continuing to route all projects requiring a Major Development permit to the Edmonton Design Committee for review.	EDC P&D
Winter City Design	<p>Conduct a study on Winter City initiatives that can be implemented into urban design, building construction, architecture and urban planning initiatives in the Downtown. Prepare a Winter City addendum to this plan.</p> <p>Work with the Edmonton Design Committee to evaluate building designs for contextual responses to the Winter City aspects of the Edmonton Climate.</p>	P&D
Unique, Context Sensitive Designs	Work with the Edmonton Design Committee to evaluate building designs for contextual responses to their environment.	
Design for Longevity & the Future	Zoning Bylaw amendments to elaborate on the range of permitted building materials in certain areas, and the advice of the Edmonton Design Committee.	
Design Competitions in the Downtown	<p>Employ open design competitions for major and minor public projects in the Downtown.</p> <p>Prepare a set of design competition guidelines for private sector use.</p> <p>Partner with academic institutions to conduct local design studios, urban design labs,</p>	<p>P&D AM&PW</p> <p>P&D</p>

	design competitions and consulting services in the Downtown.	P&D AM&PW
The City is a Leader	All City owned projects will apply for EDC approval and be held to the same or better level of rigour as private development projects.	P&D EDC
Celebrate Local Heritage, Culture and Art	<p>Expand the Percent for Art Program to include private development projects, and remove the financial cap on contribution maximums.</p> <p>Create public art platforms, one for each district in the downtown, for programming with rotating artistic installations.</p> <p>Require major buildings on Jasper Avenue, 101 Street, and 102 Avenue to incorporate creative or cultural references to the satisfaction of the Edmonton Design Committee.</p>	<p>P&D WORKS</p> <p>EAC AGA</p> <p>P&D EDC</p>
Community Involvement & Enhancement	<p>Partner with and provide financial assistance to non profit organizations where mutual interest results in addressing the objectives of this plan</p> <p>Work with the Downtown Business Association and the Downtown Edmonton Community League in the review of all Direct Control rezoning applications and discretionary approvals in the Downtown.</p>	<p>P&D</p> <p>P&D DBA DECL</p>
Public Safety Downtown	<p>Review and update the <i>Design Guide for a Safer City</i> to incorporate new approaches and advances in understanding crime prevention through environmental design with improved sensitivity to urban design issues.</p> <p>Require a CPTED review of all major development permit projects in the Downtown by a qualified individual</p> <p>Work with the DBA & DECL & EPS to address safety initiatives as necessary.</p>	<p>P&D EPS BRZs EFCL</p> <p>P&D</p> <p>P&D, EPS DBA, DECL</p>
Edmonton Design Committee	Continue to support and enhance the role that the Edmonton Design Committee plays in improving design in Edmonton and the Downtown by supporting professional development for committee members.	EDC P&D

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	Work with EDC to identify initiatives appropriate to advancing the sophistication of design in the Downtown	EDC P&D
People Places/Squares & Plazas	None	
Iconic Architecture	None	
Major Entrance Places	Create design parameters including increased setbacks and public space provisions and building criteria for the major entrance intersections identified on the map.	P&D
Community Connections	Identify the nodes in the plan and prescribe intersection improvements, small plazas and entrance features through the application of detailed urban design approaches.	P&D
Wayfinding	Design, fund and construct a way finding system that integrates the functions of the Pedway and LRT signage systems, making the Downtown one of the most seamlessly navigated places in Canada	P&D
Streetscape & Building Interface		
Wider, Better Sidewalks	Standards for minimum sidewalk conditions and widths will be determined as a function of the District Urban Design Plans.	P&D
Overhead Weather Protection	Overhead weather protection is to be provided to the satisfaction of the Development Officer.	P&DD
At-Grade Connectivity & Interaction	Refer to the Downtown Design Guidelines Manual for greater details.	P&D
Smaller Storefronts/Finer Grain Development	None	
Street Furniture Standards	Standards for street furniture provision and maintenance will be determined as a function of the District Urban Design Plans.	
Urban Design Initiatives		
Urban Design Plans	Urban Design Plans will be prepared for each of the 5 Downtown Districts, and 4 specified street corridors as identified on the Urban Design Initiatives Map.	P&DD
View Preservation		
River Valley View Preservation	None	
Retention and Enhancement of River Valley Views	None	
Historic & Iconic Building View Corridors	None	

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Retention & Enhancement of Downtown Views	None	
Improvements to Downtown Views	Partner with property owners to promote the improvement of selected views in the Downtown Review and improve public space design in Railtown park to provide improved views and vistas of this unique public space.	P&DD AM&PW
Open Spaces, Activity Centres & Gateways		
Distribution of People Places, Squares and Plazas	Urban Design Plans for the Downtown Districts will specify new public spaces, with an emphasis on increasing the public spaces in the Warehouse District and McKay Avenue areas.	P&DD
Establish Community Focal Points	Through the Urban Design Plan process establish community focal points for the Warehouse, McKay and Capital Districts.	P&DD Province DECL
Small Public Urban Spaces	Require the provision of publicly accessible spaces as a function of redevelopment approvals	P&DD
Major Entry Points and Corridors	Create specialized design regulations to enhance the built environment at key locations in the Downtown	P&DD
Downtown Gateway Program	None	
Connections & Linkages		
Community Connections	Enhance existing community connections such as the Railtown Park, 104 Street pedestrian links, 97 Street, and develop new north-south links across the remaining CN redevelopment lands and as directed by District Urban Design Plans	P&DD Transportation AM&PW
Connect Activity Centres & Open Spaces	Provide enhanced streetscapes and other forms of pedestrian links as directed by District Urban Design Plans.	P&DD Transportation AM&PW
Links to the River Valley	Develop enhanced access points at the top of the river valley escarpment Identify river valley access points through an integrated Downtown wayfinding program. Initiate a project to design and implement upgrades to existing staircase links to the River Valley with a view to transforming the staircases and their surroundings into park-like community amenity spaces.	AM&PW
Connect the Legislature & the	Develop new access points to connect the	Province

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River to the Downtown	Legislature to the River Valley Develop new access points to connect the Legislature to the River Valley Work closely with the Province of Alberta on the creation urban design plans and the phased redevelopment of the Legislature Grounds and the interface with the Downtown urban fabric.	AM&PW
Interconnected Parks & Urban Spaces	None	
Mid-Block Pathways and Connections	None	
Public Washrooms & Water Fountains	District Urban Design Plans to provide direction.	P&DD
Wayfinding System Design	Contract the development of a wayfinding system for the entire Downtown area.	P&DD
Wayfinding System Maintenance	Contract for the annual maintenance and information updating	P&DD
Application of Wayfinding Systems Outside the Downtown	None	
BUILT FORM		
Building envelope review	None	
Tall Building Design	Create a tall-building design framework	P&DD
Building Length	Establish a maximum building length framework	P&DD
Separation Distances	Established within the zoning	P&DD
Skyline Composition Framework	Initiate discussions about the form of Edmonton's skyline completing corresponding height and zoning changes.	
Shadow Sensitive Areas	Conduct a sun shadow analysis of the downtown to determine areas sensitive to tall or elongated buildings. Establish shadow intrusion limits for the sensitive areas.	
Signage	Conduct a review of Downtown signage regulations and identify where the intensity and operation of signage can have a positive effect on the public realm, and where signage can have a detrimental effect on public spaces. Change regulations accordingly	
Richer Landscape Plantings	Plant more flowers and trees in the Downtown. Install more hanging baskets in the Downtown	
HERITAGE & CULTURAL PRESERVATION		
Active Approach to	Evaluate downtown buildings every 2 years	P&DD

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Preservation	for addition to the Register of Historic Resources	
Special Historic Preservation Areas	Continue to support the 104 Street Heritage Area Zone and develop additional heritage zones in areas containing significant clusters of heritage buildings (see map 1)	P&DD
Promote the Benefits of Historic Preservation	Maintain a communication program to advertise the benefits of historic preservation	P&DD
Support Community Heritage & Cultural Organizations	Make funding available to support initiatives or studies that support heritage preservation activities	P&DD
Adaptive Re-use for Economic Purposes	Relax development requirements to encourage the retention and adaptation of heritage structures.	P&DD
Integration of Historic Properties	None	
Financial Support to Encourage Rehabilitation	Implement City Policy C-450A (A Policy to Encourage the Designation and Rehabilitation of Municipal Historic Resources in Edmonton)	P&DD
Government, Community & Cultural Group Accommodation	none	
Redevelopment of Historic Properties	None	
Development Adjacent to Heritage Resources	none	
Density Bonus or FAR Transfer	Develop policy criteria to enable the transfer of FAR within the Downtown ARP or the application of a density bonus to encourage the retention and integration of heritage buildings.	P&DD
Tell Stories With Design	None	
Interpretive Monuments	None	
Cultural Preservations	None	
Support Community Cultural Organizations	None	
WINTER CITY DESIGN		
Public Spaces Designed for Winter Use	Designate sections of all new park and public spaces as "winter activity areas" where plantings, activities programming or other considerations create a focal-point for winter use and enjoyment.	
Falling Ice and Snow	Evaluate all development proposals for risk	

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	associated with falling ice and snow	
Lighting/Illumination Plans	Lighting plans are required components of major development permits. Landmarks like the High Level Bridge should be integrated into the Winter Lighting Program and illuminated to create drama and signatures features on our night time landscape.	P&DD Transportation
Winter Landscaping	Landscape plans submitted for major development permits shall include an explanation of their plantings and other features designed to provide interest through the winter.	P&DD EDC
Winter Walkability and Snow Clearance	none	
Winter City Design Review	Create a Winter City Design brief outlining specific design considerations for an enhanced winter experience.	P&DD
SUSTAINABLE DESIGN		
Sustainability Design Standards	Prepare a set of sustainable development and construction standards for the Downtown	
Density and Height Bonuses in Exchange for Sustainability	Make sustainability initiatives eligible for density bonusing or discretionary approvals.	
Incorporate Sustainability in Public Projects	City Commitment	
Green Roofs and Walls	None	
Parkade Roof Screening or Greening	City to initiate a parkade roof greening project in partnership with private parkade owner.	AM&PW