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5.1

DARP Prioritization

Presented by: Craig Walker, Planner II, Planning Branch

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S)

That the agenda report dated January 17, 2024 entitled “DARP Prioritization” be received for information.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report summarizes a high-level, strategic evaluation of initiatives recommended within (and supplemental to) the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan - from a priority-based, best-practice, return-on-investment perspective. This exercise is one of several priority projects referenced within the Corporate Business Plan, listed under the category of “Downtown Vibrancy”.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Area Redevelopment Plans (ARP's) are statutory documents which establish policy direction around land use, infrastructure, and related matters within existing built-up areas. ARP's differ only slightly in scope from Area *Structure* Plans (ASP's) insofar as ASP's typically pertain to greenfield areas that have no/limited development - which are more common in St. Albert's context. ARP's provide the critical link between the statutory general direction of the Municipal Development Plan, and the regulation contained within the Land Use Bylaw.

In St. Albert, the Downtown ARP (or “DARP”) was adopted in 2010, replacing its 1990 predecessor. Many of DARP's recommendations aim to spark vibrancy and greater private-sector investment, and are listed within Part C (“Implementation”) of that document - see **Attachment #1**. It references 28 strategic initiatives for the City to consider. Among other matters, these strategic initiatives pertain to technical studies, capital projects, development regulations, funding tools, and more.

This report now seeks to help answer the question: given the gap in time since DARP's adoption back in 2010, which of the original 28 initiatives (and a few new supplemental ones) could now be most timely, affordable, and impactful in order to create more favorable market conditions and reignite interest in Downtown St. Albert from developers, businesses, and customers?

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Given the diverse spectrum of initiatives contained within DARP, the following five-phase methodology was applied:

1. Confirm the interpretation, and present-day status, of all 28 initiatives referenced within DARP;
2. Undertake a jurisdictional scan and literature review to learn from successes of comparable municipalities seeking Downtown growth;
3. Contemplate additional initiatives to supplement the original ones from DARP;
4. Commission a traffic impact assessment to determine the implications of fully implementing DARP's vision and goals; and
5. Assess Administration's inter-departmental consensus on current opportunities and challenges - and evaluate these using consistent prioritization criteria.

The following elaborates further, correspondingly:

Phase 1) Status of Original DARP Initiatives

The *DARP Prioritization Matrix* contained within **Attachment #2** summarizes the present-day interpretation and status of all 28 initiatives referenced within DARP. As detailed further therein, at the time of submitting this report:

- 10 (36%) are already fully completed;
- 7 (25%) are deemed to be underway in one way, shape, or form; and
- 11 (39%) have not been started yet.

The 'Discussion' section located later in this report outlines how these initiatives are ranked and prioritized, which emphasis on those that are either "underway" or "not started".

Phase 2) Jurisdictional Scan & Literature Review

Although there are complexities whenever attempting to compare "apples with oranges", a jurisdictional scan was undertaken. This high-level exercise explored general trends and best-practices around the kinds of downtown initiatives employed by 20 other Canadian municipalities, and noted any direct measurable results whenever known.

Generally, the municipalities short-listed for review were due to factors such as:

- Considered to be a suburban municipality; and/or
- Designated as one of "Canada's Best Small Cities"; and/or
- Population or socio-economic similarities to St. Albert; and/or
- Availability/quality of the information.

As a generalization, this phase of the project confirmed the adage, "*the whole is greater than the sum of its parts*", while also acknowledging the financial impracticalities of implementing the "whole" simultaneously. Furthermore, it demonstrated that there is no one-size-fits-all silver bullet proven to spark downtown investment overnight.

Several common best-practices did emerge from across the country, summarized below (in no particular order):

- Revising Land Use Bylaw regulations - regarding matters such as parking, sidewalk patios, density/performance bonusing, and enabling more mixed-uses;
- Various beautification measures such as: streetscape improvements, civic plazas and parks,

signage, public art, cultural venues, and related projects/programming which provide four-season “experiences”;

- A general philosophy that “*if you build residential the businesses will come*”, emphasizing housing choice that includes various forms catering to multi-generational, mixed-income clientele;
- Implementing a variety of development incentives such as: cash grants for downtown construction/renovations/patios, downtown planning and development application fee relief, tax abatement in various forms, fast-tracking permits for downtown properties, and the like;
- Partnering with the business community to implement certain initiatives via business improvement areas;
- Selling/leasing City-owned land in exchange for public amenities provided in conjunction with private development; and
- Constructing downtown transit hubs and public parking structures.

For a more detailed overview of these best practices, please view **Attachment #3**.

Phase 3) Supplemental Initiatives to Consider

Based upon learnings acquired during the previous phase above, five new supplemental initiatives (i.e. not originally contemplated by DARP) were also deemed worthy of analyzing. These include:

- Introducing a Business Improvement Area;
- Exploring offering incentives to Downtown developers/businesses;
- Undertaking a review of Downtown Transit Servicing;
- Revisiting a 2015 study regarding proposed LRT station locations; and
- Creating a brand new Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan.

The ‘Discussion’ section located later in this report discusses further.

Phase 4) Traffic Impact Assessment

In 2023, a consultant was retained to undertake a traffic impact assessment analyzing the future performance of the downtown transportation network. With guidance from Administration, the consultant considered a range of population and employment growth over the next 20 years - in alignment with the vision and goals of DARP. Achieving such growth may require tempered expectations of what is considered “acceptable” traffic operations, especially at the upper limits of growth, but as a byproduct of a vibrant Downtown, this may be considered an acceptable trade off. Working within the confines of the existing transportation network, minor improvements such as traffic signals and adjustments to intersection geometry can be considered at select locations when warranted, along with an increased emphasis on walking, cycling, and transit. There is capacity in the existing Downtown transportation network to support continued growth for years to come; therefore, it is submitted that transportation impacts can be considered relatively moot in terms of the current efforts to prioritize the various DARP initiatives. For an excerpt of this traffic impact assessment, see **Attachment #4**.

Phase 5) Administration’s Consensus & Scoring

Lastly, an integral component of this project included collectively re-examining DARP’s original assumptions from 2010, with updated input from Administration regarding matters pertaining to project interpretation and status, high-level cost estimates, perceived priorities, and alignment with Council’s Strategic Plan and Corporate Business Plan. Thereafter, to minimize the degree of discretion and any potential biases, each initiative has been assigned “points” based upon

established prioritization methodology.

DISCUSSION

With reference to the *DARP Prioritization Matrix*, 33 initiatives have been ranked using established prioritization methodology used by the Financial & Strategic Services department to prioritize strategic and corporate initiatives (i.e. DARP's original 28 initiatives recommended within Part C of that document, plus the five new supplemental ones). In collaboration with other departments, points were assigned for each criteria: 1) strategic alignment, 2) risk management, 3) financial impact, 4) service levels, 5) degree of commitment, and 6) capacity - in order to obtain the final score for each DARP project. The following section elaborates further, while **Attachment #5** paraphrases the same in graphic form for simplicity.

Completed Initiatives:

As described further within the *DARP Prioritization Matrix*, the 11 initiatives with a deemed status of "*Completed*" have simply been assigned a score of "0" - on the premise that such initiatives require no further action nor analysis at this time. These include:

1. DARP Policy C.1.2: Design Review Panel;
2. DARP Policy C.2.1: Downtown Parking Strategy / Traffic Impact Assessment;
3. DARP Policy C.2.2: Civic & Community Facilities Strategy;
4. DARP Policy C.2.6: Downtown Approaches Study;
5. DARP Policy C.2.7: Servicing & Stormwater Management Study;
6. DARP Policy C.3.2: St. Anne Street Extension & Improvements;
7. DARP Policy C.3.12: Expansion of the Profiles Art Gallery;
8. DARP Policy C.3.13: Development of new Seniors Centre;
9. DARP Policy C.3.15: Library Project;
10. DARP Policy C.6: Plan Monitoring/Amending; and
11. New Supplemental Initiative: Business Improvement Area.

Initiatives Recommended to **Postpone**:

Of the 22 remaining initiatives that are deemed either "*Underway*" or "*Not Started*" - inclusive of 18 original DARP initiatives and four new supplemental ones - in using Administration's inter-departmental consensus to apply the prioritization methodology, the resultant scores ranged between 6 and 28 points.

The majority of them (16 out of 22 initiatives, or 73%) scored relatively low, with 14 or fewer points. These include, listed from highest to lowest (yet with multiple "ties" to note):

1. New Supplemental Initiative: Review Downtown Transit Servicing (14 points).
2. DARP Policy C.5.3: Community Revitalization Levy (14 points);
3. DARP Policy C.5.1: Community Enhancement Fund (12 points);
4. DARP Policy C.2.3: Signage & Wayfinding Strategy (10 points);
5. New Supplemental Initiative: Revisit Study on LRT Stations and Alignment (10 points);
6. DARP Policy C.3.7: Civic Plaza (8 points);
7. New Supplemental Initiative: Create a brand new DARP (8 points);
8. DARP Policy C.3.11: Cardinal Walk (8 points);
9. DARP Policy C.3.1: St. Anne Street Improvements (6 points);
10. DARP Policy C.3.3: St. Anne Street Extension from Tache to Churchill (6 points);
11. DARP Policy C.3.4: Perron Street Improvements (6 points);

12. DARP Policy C.3.5: St. Thomas Street Improvements (6 points);
13. DARP Policy C.3.6: Tache Street Green Corridor (6 points);
14. DARP Policy C.3.14: City Hall Annex Building (6 points);
15. DARP Policy C.3.17: Construct a Public Parking Structure (6 points); and
16. DARP Policy C.5.2: Establish a Redevelopment Levy (6 points).

Given that the highest feasible score could potentially be up to 30 points, the above 16 initiatives are the lowest priorities for the time-being - but should be revisited again in the future. For further explanation, please view the comments directly within the *DARP Prioritization Matrix*.

Initiatives Recommended for **Action**:

Finally, 6 (27%) of the 22 remaining initiatives received a passing score of between 16 and 28 points - and are therefore recommended as the initiatives most worthy of consideration during the near-term horizon. These include, listed from highest to lowest:

1. DARP Policy C.1.1: Land Use Bylaw Update (28 points);
 - Note: Already underway. As a next step, Council approval will be required.
2. DARP Policy C.2.4: Detailed *Design* (only) for Millennium Park (22 points);
 - Note: Already underway. If the associated borrowing bylaw is approved, as a next step, see item #3 below in this same list.
3. DARP Policies C.3.8, C.3.9, C.3.10, and C.3.16: *Construction* of Millennium Park (22 points).
 - Note: Not started yet, since construction is first dependent upon item #2 above in this same list.
4. DARP Policy C.4: Development Partnerships (18 points).
 - Note: Already underway. For clarification, this initiative entails collaborating with other parties to develop surplus land currently owned by the City (e.g., Downtown properties which may be unnecessary for future corporate needs - such as 22 St. Thomas Street; former Fire Hall #1 site; central parking lot at 6 St. Anne Street; and others).
5. DARP Policy C.2.5: Public Art Strategy (16 points).
 - Note: Equivalent endeavors are already underway. See the *DARP Prioritization Matrix* for more details.
6. New Supplemental Initiative: Explore Development Incentives (16 points).
 - Note: Already underway, being explored by the Economic Development department. For more details, see the *DARP Prioritization Matrix*, and the 'Conclusions & Recommendations' section located later in this report.

Opportunities to discuss these initiatives in more detail will occur during the Standing Committee of the Whole meeting on January 17, 2024. For further explanation, please view comments directly within the *DARP Prioritization Matrix*.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

At this point, it is worth reiterating that DARP provides general direction but it is not meant to be

overly-prescriptive. Part C(6) of DARP clarifies that it “*will not be a static document. It is a plan that will evolve, change and be amended as new ideas and opportunities come forward over the next 25 years.*” In other words, it is not necessarily imperative that every specific project and policy be implemented verbatim as-originally-contemplated by DARP back in 2010.

Much more importantly, is that the City of St. Albert simply invests strategically into the Downtown in general - in recognition that downtowns punch well above their weight class (e.g. economically, culturally, jobs per hectare, aging-in-place, etc). For instance, a 2023 study by the University of Alberta concluded that: “*Downtowns generate far more tax revenue, per square foot, than any other neighbourhood, and investing in the downtown area is a proven net gain for the city as a whole.*” Downtown St. Albert represents 0.76% of the land area within the City, and yet provides 1.6% of the City’s property tax revenue. The tax revenue percentage within Downtown St. Albert is more than double its land area, which is noteworthy given the number of tax-exempt institutional uses and undeveloped properties in the Downtown. Further, with at least two anticipated development projects on the horizon for 2024 anticipated at roughly \$45M in combined construction value, these will have a significant impact on increasing Downtown property tax revenues.

Research suggests significant financial returns by investing into a Downtown - hence this DARP Prioritization exercise. Though numerous complexities make it challenging to provide a single financial figure that all researchers can agree with, it has nevertheless been suggested by others that for every \$1 of public investment made into a Downtown by a municipality, it has achieved estimated returns of:

- \$3 of private sector investment (solely as a result of city-led beautification initiatives alone) - as determined by the University of Alberta in 2023;
- \$11 of private sector investment - as determined by Edmonton’s Capital City Downtown Plan in 2010; and
- \$26.43 of private sector investment - as determined by Main Street America in 2019.

As detailed within the *DARP Prioritization Matrix*, five of the six highest-ranking initiatives are already underway - including the Land Use Bylaw Update, detailed design for Millennium Park, exploring opportunities for development partnerships, Public Art Strategy, and exploration for development incentives. By implication, whenever these (and any related) items come before Council for future decisions, Council should be cognizant of their broader strategic importance, synergies, and return-on-investment potential.

Among the six highest-ranking initiatives, only one has not started yet: the *construction* of Millennium Park is pending *detailed design* (and an associated borrowing bylaw) first - which is nearing completion at the time of submitting this report.

Based upon the analysis, the City is currently pursuing *the* most strategic initiatives that will help to create more favorable market conditions and reignite interest in Downtown St. Albert from developers, businesses, and customers. As for the other initiatives which were assigned a relatively lower score for the time-being, they should be reassessed again in the future.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Ongoing Administrative collaboration with internal City departments/branches, including:

- Capital Projects,
- Community Services,
- Economic Development,
- Asset Management, Land and Integrated Infrastructure Services,
- Financial Services,
- Planning & Development,
- Public Operations,
- Recreation & Parks,
- Strategic Services,
- Transportation, and
- Utilities.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

None at this time.

Compliance & Legal:

In light of ongoing Council discussions around Millennium Park at the time of submitting this agenda report, the future of the Civic Plaza project - as originally envisioned in DARP - may need to be reviewed as part of a future DARP update.

Program or Service:

None at this time.

Organizational:

Administration and Council may refer to this report as an additional tool to assist in future decision-making.

Risks

None at this time.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #2: Downtown Vibrancy

- Foster a downtown where people come to live, gather, celebrate, shop and do business.

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Service: Long Range Land Use Planning

- Management of long-range land use plans including the MDP, Statutory and Regulatory plans and future growth policies.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

Municipal Development Plan policy 14.3.8 seeks to "*maintain the Downtown Area*

Redevelopment Plan so that it adequately guides future development and reinforces Downtown as the city's civic and cultural heart."

Accordingly, at Standing Committee of the Whole on April 6, 2022, Council was advised that an analysis was underway to help prioritize the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan's various recommendations pertaining to capital projects and other strategic initiatives.

Subsequently, in June 2022, this ongoing analysis was incorporated into the 2022-2025 Council Strategic Plan as a priority - and likewise into the 2022-2025 Corporate Business Plan in August 2022.

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

If Standing Committee of the Whole does not want to proceed with the recommended motion, the following alternative may be considered:

1. Do nothing.

Report Date: January 17, 2024
Author: Craig Walker, Planner II
Department: Planning & Development
Department Director: Adryan Slaght
Managing Director: Diane Enger
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts
Chief Administrative Officer: Bill Fletcher



Part C:

Implementation

To achieve the vision of the DARP it will require deliberate action, leadership, cooperation and substantial investment over time by all stakeholders and elected officials. Approval of this Plan is simply the first step in realizing the potential for downtown St. Albert. A number of initiatives, studies, investments and other actions will be needed as downtown develops into a vibrant and complete community. Careful planning and approval of privately and publicly-led development will be fundamental to the success of the plan. This part of the document outlines a number of key tools, projects and strategies critical to implementing the DARP.

1. Zoning and Development Review

1.1 Embedding DARP policies in the Land Use Bylaw

The Land Use Bylaw for downtown will be one of the primary vehicles by which urban design policies will be enforced. It is recommended that the City of St. Albert embed many of the urban design policies and recommendations contained within the DARP in the Land Use Bylaw for downtown.

1.2 Development Review

As new development comes forward, the City of St. Albert will be responsible for enforcing the policies and intent of the DARP. Given the plan's emphasis on design quality, it is recommended that the development review process include rigorous review of a project's design. The City should consider establishing a standing or ad hoc design review panel comprised citizens from St. Albert and the Capital Region with professional backgrounds in architecture, landscape architecture, building construction and urban design.

The panel would play an advisory role, making recommendations for design changes during the approvals process to ensure a high level of design quality. More and more municipalities across Canada are using design review panels with good results.

2. Future Studies

Throughout the DARP, several future studies are recommended to support and supplement the plan:

1. A Downtown Parking Strategy: As described in the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan, a new approach to parking downtown will be critical to unlocking key sites for redevelopment, better serving existing businesses and meeting the demand for future parking. A comprehensive parking strategy will be an important follow-up study. In general terms, the strategy should aim to consolidate public parking in a series of strategically located facilities over time and optimize the use of on-street parking. The study should include the following key tasks:

- Updated analysis of existing parking supply versus demand;
- Assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of existing parking locations;
- Projection of future parking demand from commercial uses (retail and office) either proposed or anticipated by this plan;
- Quantitative analysis of the potential for additional on-street parking on new and

improved streets in this plan;

- Make recommendations for the preferred locations and general sizes of future off-street public parking facilities (structures or surface lots);
- Develop a general phasing plan for future public parking facilities and identify the preferred location and size for a “phase one” structure;
- Explore and make recommendations regarding a cash-in-lieu policy applicable to commercial developments to assist in the implementation of parking structures;
- Make recommendations regarding the management and operations of public parking facilities;
- Coordinate with the downtown civic and community facility strategy.

2. Downtown Civic and Community Facilities Strategy: Previous studies have identified the need for additional office space for City employees downtown, an expanded library, a new seniors’ centre and additional cultural facilities.

The DARP identifies potential sites for new or improved civic, cultural and community facilities in and close to St. Albert Place and in Millennium Park. To provide direction on the most appropriate locations for needed facilities, in the context of the DARP, and define general space requirements for each facility, the City should undertake a strategic planning exercise. The strategy should consider a range of cost-effective approaches to implementing new civic and community facilities, including optimizing the use of St. Albert Place, developing a new multi-purpose building and public-private development partnerships. The strategy may also provide direction on which City-owned lands downtown are not needed for future municipal facilities and might be sold for development to help finance required facilities.

3. Signage and Wayfinding Strategy: Easy navigation to and within downtown will be vital to its success as a destination. The City and its economic development partners should prepare and implement a signage and wayfinding strategy

consistent with the City's overall economic development and tourism strategy. The study should address:

- Welcome and directional signs on the major routes to downtown;
- Directional signage within downtown that includes distances to key destinations, including parking;
- Standards for appropriate commercial signage on buildings and signs that may encroach in the right-of-way, e.g., perpendicular blade signs and sandwich or 'A' boards;
- Policies and regulations needed to prohibit inappropriate signs, e.g., billboards, pole-mounted and rooftop signs, and mobile signs.

4. Millennium Park Master Plan: The transformation of Millennium Park, as envisioned by the DARP, may occur in phases. The first step is to prepare a detailed master plan for the park that clearly defines each distinct component of the park and how they fit together to create a holistic, multi-faceted place. The area to

be planned should include Lion's Park and the adjacent section of the Red Willow Parks System, and indeed the Sturgeon River. It may also include the area identified in this plan as Cardinal Walk, between St. Albert Place and the Provincial Courthouse.

The master plan should include a detailed concept and guidelines that together provide direction regarding landscaping, environmental features, programming (all seasons), and structures for appropriate community and commercial uses (e.g., restaurants, concession stands, rental facilities). The accommodation of special events and festivals may also be considered. The master plan should also identify opportunities for improvements to the river as a natural, cultural and recreational resource, in the context of a larger inter-municipal strategy addressing the health of the river. An additional pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the river should be considered.

5. Public Art Strategy: With the goal of continually expanding the presence of public art downtown, a strategy should be developed to identify policies and programs that encourage art projects in publicly accessible spaces, sponsored by the public and private sectors. The strategy should consider requiring a financial contribution from public and private developments (e.g., 1% of the construction budget) to be used for on-site for a public art project or pooled to fund a downtown public art grant program. It should also identify opportunities to integrate public art in streetscape elements and infrastructure projects generally.

6. Downtown Approaches Study : Recognizing opportunities for potential redevelopment and streetscape improvements in strategic areas along the vehicular approaches to downtown, the City should initiate a land use and urban design study for these areas, which are generally identified in the DARP. They include properties on Green Grove Drive, older commercial sites on St. Albert Trail close to downtown and

sites at the east end of Riel Business Park. Redevelopment in these areas over time will play an important role in reinforcing the identity and vitality of downtown. The Approaches Study should identify appropriate land uses and built form parameters for each of these areas, being sensitive to adjacent stable areas. Future change in these areas should be planned holistically to support not only downtown but also current plans for higher order transit facilities on St. Albert Trail and improvements of Red Willow Park System.

7. Servicing and Stormwater Management Study:

In light of the significant population growth planned downtown, the City should study the network and capacity of sewers and water mains serving downtown and identify improvements anticipated to be required. The study will inform the City's Capital Plan. In addition to addressing piped services, it should also consider policies and guidelines for "best practice" approaches to stormwater management.

3. Strategic Capital Projects

The DARP highlights a number of specific projects that should be implemented by the City of St. Albert over the lifespan of the plan. It is recommended that some of these projects be initiated in the short term to act as catalysts for growth and private development in the downtown. These projects can be designed and built independently or bundled in groups for greater impact or effectiveness. The timing and phasing of recommended improvements will depend on available funding, development pressures and other factors.

Street Improvements

1. St. Anne Street roadway narrowing and pedestrian realm improvements – Perron to St. Thomas segment

This project should be coordinated with development of the Civic Square.

2. St. Anne Street realignment and extension from St. Thomas Street to Tache Street

This project could proceed before or after the above St. Anne Street improvement. It includes an extension of Grandin Road to the realigned St. Anne Street.

3. St. Anne Street extension from Tache Street to Sir Winston Churchill Ave

This project should follow the above St. Anne Street improvements.

4. Perron Street roadway narrowing and pedestrian realm improvements

5. St. Thomas Street median improvements

6. Tache Street green corridor north of Sir Winston Churchill Avenue

The section of Tache Street south of Sir Winston Churchill Ave should be secured through the redevelopment of the Grandin Mall site.

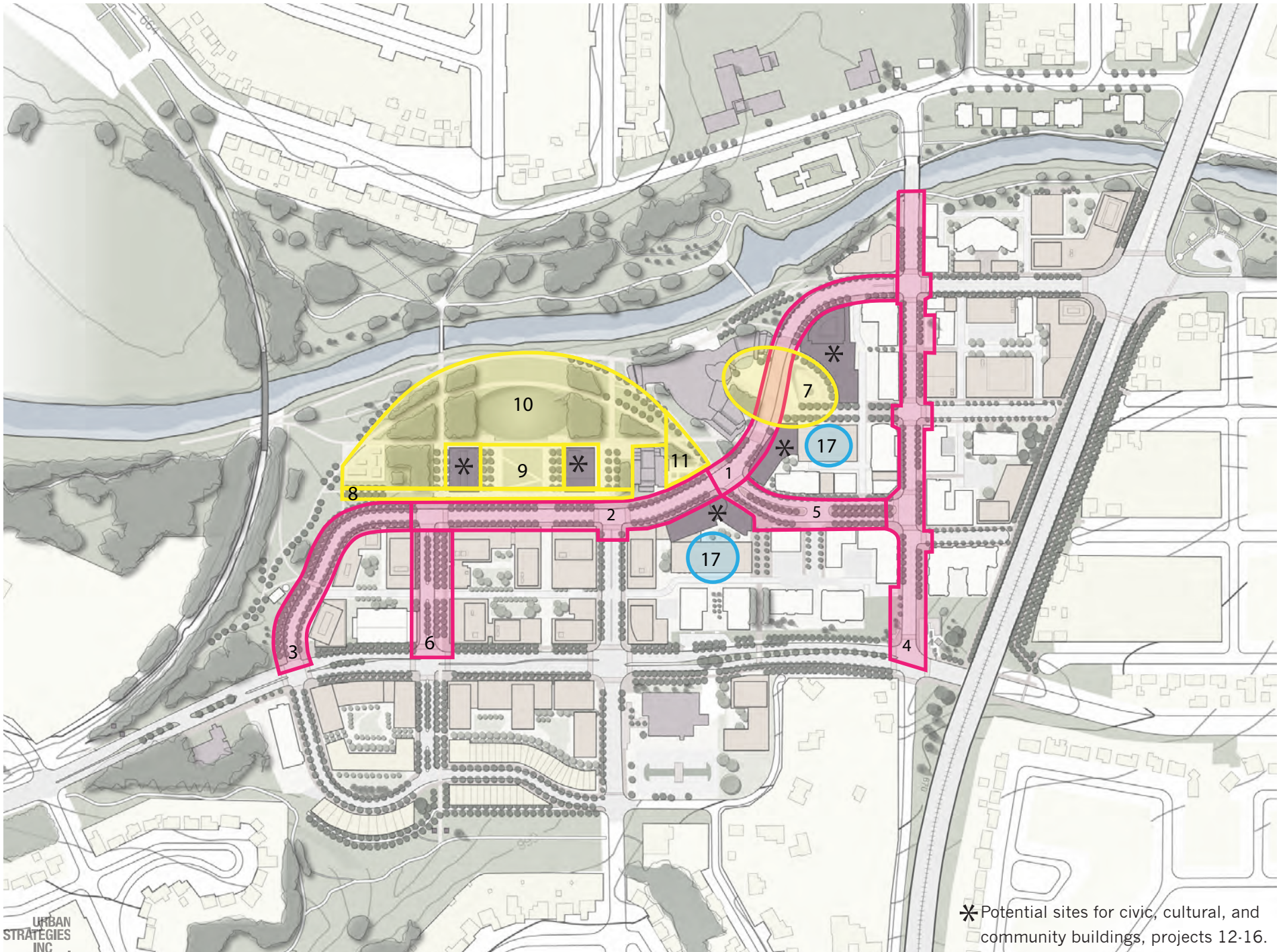
Parks and Open Spaces

7. Civic Square

This project will be coordinated with development of a public parking structure on the south side of the square, with retail uses at grade.

8. Millennium Park Phase 1 – The Promenade

This project should be coordinated with the extension of St. Anne Street to Tache Street.



9. Millennium Park Phase 2 – Millennium Square

This project should be coordinated with the development of one or both public buildings in the park.

10. Millennium Park Phase 3 – The Lawn and Amphitheater

11. Cardinal Walk between St. Albert Place and the Provincial Courthouse

This project should be coordinated with improvements to St. Thomas Street.

Civic, Cultural and Community Buildings

12. Expansion of the Profiles Art Gallery

13. Development of a New Seniors Centre

This project should consider incorporating space for the Canadian Legion.

14. City Hall Annex Building

Three potential sites have been identified for this building. It may be pursued as part of a

joint project that also includes a public parking structure and/or private development.

15. Library Project

Five potential sites have been identified for the potential relocation of the library. These includes the two sites flanking Millennium Square. Alternatively, the library may be expanded in its current location within St. Albert Place.

16. Cultural and Potential Market Building in Millennium Park

Other

17. Public Parking Structure(s)

The Downtown Parking Strategy will set out an implementation plan for the phased development of parking structures. These projects should be developed with other abutting or integrated uses (civic, commercial, residential).

4. Development Partnerships

The City's ownership of a large proportion of downtown's redevelopable lands is a tremendous advantage. Strategic sites not required for municipal purposes may be sold to private developers or used to leverage development partnerships for public and private benefit. A thoughtful approach is needed to redevelop lands, form partnerships with developers, build necessary supporting infrastructure and manage the redistribution of parking as surface parking is replaced by development. The City should monitor the marketability of its lands and periodically assess the costs and benefits of selling land or pursuing a development partnership to achieve one or more projects identified in section 3.

In looking for a partnership model, the City should consider The Bridges development on the former site of the Calgary General Hospital. In this redevelopment model, a department responsible for city-owned land assets, Corporate Properties and Buildings, acted as land developer, created an Outline Plan, subdivided the land and sold off individual parcels in phases through a competitive Request For Proposal process. Each parcel was

sold based on specific criteria that included triple bottom line objectives and other very specific design guidelines based on an Area Redevelopment Plan. Prior to the disposal of land to private developers, the physical infrastructure including new streets, sidewalks, landscaping, public parks and plazas, sewers, and other hard infrastructure were built.

The Bridges is one of the best examples of how to implement a large scale publicly-led redevelopment project. It offers a proven model already in place in Alberta, and has similarities to the reurbanization context in downtown St. Albert.

5. Funding Tools and Strategies

This section sets out a number of tools and strategies that may be utilized by the City to fund and achieve the various improvements in the plan.

5.1 Community Enhancement Fund

Revenue for public improvements in St. Albert such as development levies, Council-approved budget allocations and grants from senior levels of government could be pooled into a Downtown St. Albert Community Enhancement Fund (CEF). The CEF would be established by Council and administered by a Committee with a Terms of Reference and membership to be approved by Council. The Committee should have a core membership from a number of departments within the City including: Planning and Development, Parks, Transportation and others. Additional membership could include other stakeholders within downtown St. Albert such as businesses and landowners. Each year, or as is necessary, the Committee would prepare a list of priority projects for funding to be approved by Council.

5.2 Development Levy

A Development Levy should be one of the primary sources of funding for recommended improvements. The levy rate must be fair and equitable to developers and ensure that downtown St. Albert is competitive with other areas of the city for development.

To determine the Levy rate, the City should:

- Prepare a costing of priority public improvements;
- Determine what proportion of this cost should be funded through the development levy in light of other potential funding sources; and
- Determine an estimate of the quantity of development that will occur within the downtown and establish a levy rate per square metre of gross floor area that will achieve the desired amount of revenue.

5.4 Community Revitalization Levy

A Community Revitalization Levy (CRL) is a variation on the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) tool which is commonly used in the United States and has recently been adopted in Alberta under the Municipal Government Act. It is being utilized in Calgary's Rivers District and is being implemented for the Fort Road area in Edmonton. This financing tool works by identifying a redevelopment area and affixing a boundary. Within that boundary, the existing tax base that will continue to flow into the City's general revenue stream is determined. The City or development agency borrows money which in turn is reinvested in the community, commonly for affordable housing, public realm improvements and other hard and soft infrastructure. This investment spurs private development, which increases the tax base. The incremental amount above the 'frozen' tax base is used to pay back the loan.

The CRL or TIF system is often only utilized in situations where there is zero or negative growth and where a community is 'blighted', therefore unable to attract any private investment. However, this definition is fluid, and is often used in areas where there is growth. It can be seen as a way for improvements to 'pay for themselves' and access to financing for projects. The ability to leverage the sale of public lands is an important factor in establishing CRL zones.

6. Plan Monitoring

The DARP will not be a static document. It is a plan that will evolve, change and be amended as new ideas and opportunities come forward over the next 25 years. The policies of this Plan will be monitored for their effectiveness and adapted to respond to changing conditions. Amendments arising from the monitoring program will be brought forward for City Council's consideration where appropriate. Indicators should be developed and used to monitor the effectiveness of the DARP policies over time.

The City will continue to engage affected businesses, property owners, other stakeholders and the public as the plan is implemented and when amendments to the DARP and to the Land Use Bylaw are proposed.

Section (Part C of DARP)	DARP Policy	Summary/Interpretation of Initiative	Status	Comments & Assumptions	TOTALS
1) Zoning & Development Review	C.1.1	Amend Land Use Bylaw to incorporate DARP policies.	Underway	- Partially addressed in a significant manner when the "DT" (Downtown) district was introduced into the Land Use Bylaw in 2012, which "converted" high-level DARP policies into enforceable development regulations. - Directly aligns with Council Strategic Plan (Priority #1 re. Land Use Bylaw Update). - Directly aligns with Municipal Development Plan (Policy 16.1.1). - Revising regulations to increase flexibility and enable more innovation will reduce risks for private sector investors. - The ongoing Land Use Bylaw Update project is nearing completion. It will be consistent with other Planning documents, and is intentionally aiming to implement strategic DARP and MDP policies.	28
2) Future Studies	C.2.4	Commission the Detailed Design for Millennium Park (i.e., not construction yet).	Underway	- Directly aligns with Council Strategic Plan (Priority #2). - A 2018 report to the Leadership Team stated that Millennium Park was "the" highest priority among all of the DARP initiatives. - The next step is to complete Detailed Design and its associated borrowing bylaw (ongoing) - which could allow the City to consider next steps.	22
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.08, C.3.09, C.3.10, & C.3.16	Millennium Park <i>Construction</i> - Phases 1, 2, 3 (Promenade, Square, Lawn, Amphitheatre)	Not Started	- Directly aligns with Council Strategic Plan (Priority #2). - A 2018 report to the Leadership Team stated that Millennium Park was "the" highest priority among all of the DARP initiatives. - Recreation & Parks advised that the current detail design work melds together the three-phases originally contemplated within the DARP. - The jurisdictional scan and literature review consistently confirmed the general merits of investing in these kinds of amenity sites as part of an overall strategy for attracting more residents, customers, events, tourists, and developers.	22
4) Development Partnerships	C.4	"Activate" Surplus and/or Under-Developed CoSA-Owned Lands	Underway	- Broadly aligns with intent of Council Strategic Plan (Priorities #1, #2, and #3). - Broadly aligns with intent of Corporate Business Plan (Priorities #2 and #3). - Aligns with Municipal Development Plan (Policies 7.2.4b + 14.3.2). - The CoSA owns several Downtown properties. An updated inventory/appraisal should be undertaken to determine which properties are surplus and viable for redevelopment in partnership with the private-sector (e.g. former Fire Station #1 site; parking lots for St. Albert Place and Lion's Park etc). For example, a mixed-use development with ground floor retail, upper-level residential/hotel/office, and potentially underground public/private parking. - Work is ongoing to divest sites such as former Fire Station #1, 13 Mission Avenue, and 22 St. Thomas Street. - Linked to DARP Policy C.2.2 as well (see comments herein).	18
2) Future Studies	C.2.5	Commission a Public Art Strategy.	Underway	- Aligns with Council Strategic Plan and Corporate Business Plan (Priority #2). - Aligns with Municipal Development Plan (Sections 6.5 + 9.4). - Community Services advises that the Public Art Policy (last updated in 2019) is being revised. - Furthermore, work on a strategy is underway to review existing Downtown artwork, a plan to rejuvenate/replace/reimagine the Downtown artwork, and an assessment of new locations where artwork may be suitable.	16
Other	Extra (Not in DARP)	Explore Offering Incentives	Underway	- At the time of preparing <i>this</i> report, Economic Development is exploring potential incentives, and anticipates presenting to Council in late 2024 or early 2025. - Generally aligns with the intent of Council's Strategic Priority #1 regarding fostering development in St. Albert. - To reduce the risk of delayed development, many municipalities offer incentives to stimulate growth, development, and reinvestment in focused areas (best practices reviewed included comparable municipalities in Alberta and accross Canada). - Comparable municipalities had grant budgets of \$500k to \$10M+. - Most of the DARP initiatives adopt a "built it, and they will come" -type approach. However, incentives directly offer carrots to the private-sector, making them strategic as well.	16
Other	Extra (Not in DARP)	Review Transit Servicing of the Downtown under projected Growth Scenarios and Municipal Growth Plans	Not Started	As the City completes the Mobility Strategy and advances associated supplemental Mobility Services strategies; Public Transit services and long-term strategic planning should consider and investigate necessary resources, structures and routing to best service the community; inclusive of consideration of Downtown densification. Work should align to achievable service levels, jurisdictional growth, concepts of DARP and other strategies such as LRT and account for regional servicing or partnerships.	14
5) Funding Tools & Strategies	C.5.3	Introduce a Community Revitalization Levy	Underway	- Aligns with intent of Council Strategic Plan and Corporate Business Plan (Priority #5). - Aligns with Municipal Development Plan (Policy 10.2.5). - Allows CoSA to borrow against future property tax revenues to help pay for infrastructure in a specific area. However, it is "a financial tool of last resort", according to a Government of Alberta representative, and used for "blighted" areas. More info: www.alberta.ca/community-revitalization-levy.aspx - The viability of a CRL is being explored by Administration, however the eligibility criteria is understood to be changing. A comparable municipality took an estimated 1,000 hours to submit a CRL application to the Government of Alberta, with no guarantees of approval. Assumed consulting fees for such an undertaking would exceed \$100,000.	14
5) Funding Tools & Strategies	C.5.1	Establish a Community Enhancement Fund for Downtown	Not Started	- Aligns with intent of Council Strategic Plan Priority #5 regarding diversifying revenue sources and alternative service delivery. - This initiative aims to pool various revenue streams (e.g. levies, approved budget allocations, provincial/federal grants) for the purposes of funding priority projects. - On January 1, 2024, a Business Improvement Area will be in-effect for the Downtown. Discussions regarding the viability of this topic between the CoSA and the BIA could occur at that time. - Note: this initiative is not to be confused with the Government of Alberta's "Community Facility Enhancement Program".	12
2) Future Studies	C.2.3	Commission a Signage & Wayfinding Strategy.	Underway	- Aligns with Council Strategic Plan and Corporate Business Plan (Priority #2). - Aligns with Municipal Development Plan (Policy 12.6.3). - The ongoing Land Use Bylaw Update project will regulate signage on private property. - Various directional/interpretative signage and wayfinding throughout Downtown has been introduced in recent years. - However, "Welcome" signage at major gateways has not been addressed to its full potential, and should be - particularly on St. Albert Trail at St. Anne Street and Green Grove Drive. Potential examples in the City of Edmonton include gateways to Little Italy, Chinatown, Old Strathcona, and Old Beverly. - Assumes a budget of \$100k to \$1M (estimated via a jurisdictional scan) for gateway signage, since the other wayfinding matters have already been mostly addressed. Could potentially be championed by the new Business Improvement Association.	10

Other	Extra (Not in DARP)	Revisit Study re. Proposed LRT Station Locations and/or Alignment	Not Started	• Generally aligns with the intent of Council's Strategic Priority #2 regarding review and planning for the Downtown. • The 2015 LRT Alignment Study envisioned a station on the east side of St. Albert Trail by the Sturgeon River, which is a ±1.3km (±15 minute) walk from the furthest part of Downtown (former Fire Station #1 site). • To reduce the risk of the LRT being less effective, this walking distance should be reduced if viable (there will be trade-offs). A study could be commissioned to examine the feasibility of an alternative (or additional) station located on St. Albert Trail above Sir Winston Churchill Avenue, which could result in a ±800m (±10 minute) walk to the same site, while maintaining an identical ±500m (±6 minute) walk to St. Albert Place.	10
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.07	Civic Plaza	Not Started	• In 2011, a Financial Analysis identified the civic plaza as one of six high priority projects, with an estimated cost of ±\$1.5M at that time. (Engineering / Design should be completed to establish up to date and more accurate cost estimates.) • However, present day staff consensus is that this is no longer a priority and is potentially no longer strategic, particularly given that: 1) the recent concept plan for nearby Millennium Park would duplicate the role, function, and design elements of the Civic Plaza; 2) St. Anne Street is typically closed during major events, which is an equivalent gathering-place solution; and 3) this initiative would likely be dependent upon either/both the narrowing of St. Anne Street (which was identified to be low priority) or redevelopment of at least a portion of the central parking lot (6 St. Anne Street). The future of the Civic Plaza, as envisioned in DARP may need to be reviewed as part of a future DARP update.	8
Other	Extra (Not in DARP)	Create a new DARP	Not Started	• Although minor house-keeping DARP amendments were approved in January 2023, it is common best-practice to completely re-do statutory plans from time to time. • The current version of DARP was adopted in 2010, replacing its 20-year old (1990) predecessor. The current version of DARP was anticipated to have 25-year time horizon, which risks being too out-of-date (i.e. 2035).	8
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.11	Cardinal Walk (St. Albert Place & Courthouse)	Underway	• As <i>originally</i> contemplated within DARP, the added costs are now deemed to be too significant due to converting parking areas, along with identifying alternate parking and loading area options for what is being removed. • Further, the Government of Alberta owns the adjacent parking lot, and uses part of this area for sensitive activities related to the court house. • Recreation & Parks advise that they will incorporate what they can from the idea of Cardinal Walk into the footprint and scope they have for the Millenium Park detailed design.	8
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.01	St. Anne Street Improvements. (Perron to St. Thomas)	Not Started	• In 2011, a Financial Analysis estimated this cost at ±\$5.5M, and named this project as one of six priority projects at the time. If pursued, it could be implemented in conjunction with the proposed Civic Square (estimated in 2011 to cost additional ±\$1.5M), or alternatively in conjunction with future redevelopment of the central parking lot (6 St. Anne Street). (Engineering / Design should be completed to establish up to date and more accurate cost estimates for both of these.) • Notwithstanding, staff consensus today is that this project is no longer a priority at this time.	6
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.03	St. Anne Street Extension. (Tache to Churchill)	Not Started	• Although DARP originally contemplated this extension (at an estimated cost of \$5.4M in 2011), the 2023 traffic impact assessment for Downtown took the position that this extension is likely unnecessary from both a traffic operations and a future development/subdivision perspective. (If pursued in the future, Engineering / Design should be completed to establish up to date and more accurate cost estimates.)	6
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.04	Perron Street Improvements	Not Started	• In 2011, a Financial Analysis estimated these costs at ±\$5M, and identified this as one of six high priority projects. (Engineering / Design should be completed to establish up to date and more accurate cost estimates.) • Since this area is already fully developed, future discussions around such endeavours could be deferred to the new BIA, anticipated to come into existence on January 1, 2024.	6
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.05	St. Thomas Street Improvements	Not Started	• In 2017, a Financial Impact Analysis suggested a ±\$3M capital cost, and recommended this project be removed for the time being (Engineering / Design should be completed to establish up to date and more accurate cost estimates). In recognition of potential cost reduction and efficiency of the project delivery and mitigation of disruption to the downtown, this project should be considered for delivery in a timed fashion with applicable RMR work. • Since this area is already fully developed (pending the 22 St. Thomas Street housing), this 2017 assumption (for removal) is still believed to be valid today.	6
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.06	Tache Street Green Corridor	Not Started	• In 2017, a Financial Impact Analysis suggested a ±\$2.6M capital cost, and recommended this project be removed for the time being (Engineering / Design should be completed to establish up to date and more accurate cost estimates). In recognition of potential cost reduction and efficiency of the project delivery and mitigation of disruption to the downtown, this project should be considered for delivery in a timed fashion with applicable RMR work. • This 2017 assumption (for removal) is still believed to be valid today. Streetscape improvements could be required through private and/or public redevelopment in the future.	6
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.14	City Hall Annex Building	Not Started	• Few specifics are provided within DARP about this initiative. At the time (2010), DARP had alleged that St. Albert Place "<i>has become too small for the current needs of City Hall</i>", and that "<i>some functions will eventually be shifted out of the building into new facilities</i>". • Notwithstanding, staff consensus is that this is now unnecessary due to work-from-home initiatives which remain post-pandemic, thereby alleviating demand for office space. • Furthermore, this initiative was aiming to address the need for future cultural-related expansion (e.g. studios, performing arts, etc) - which is not required at this time. This could be revisited in the future to coincide with a potential museum expansion.	6
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.17	Construct a Public Parking Structure(s).	Not Started	• In 2011, a Financial Analysis estimated this cost at ±\$17M, and listed it as one of six priority projects for the Downtown. • However, in 2017, a similar Financial Impact Analysis recommended that this project be removed for the time being, as there was an adequate parking supply in the Downtown already. That study recommended that the idea could be revisited in the future, potentially with a money-in-lieu of on-site parking program (which would not only offset capital costs, but allow more developable land on each individual property for commercial/residential purposes - as opposed to private on-site parking). • City staff have undertaken multiple Downtown parking utilization studies since DARP's approval in 2010. In each occasion, it was demonstrated that there is presently adequate parking supply Downtown, with the exception of during special events (e.g. Children's Festival, Farmers Market, etc). • This initiative is viewed by most staff as being unviable at this time, due to the approximately \$20M+ capital cost today. Therefore, the 2017 conclusion is still appropriate. (If pursued in the future, Engineering / Design should be completed to establish up to date and more accurate cost estimates.)	6
5) Funding Tools & Strategies	C.5.2	Establish a [Re]Development Levy	Not Started	• A 2011 Financial Analysis concluded that "<i>any notion of an offsite levy for those remaining acres will only serve to sterilize the remaining vacant lands in the downtown.</i>" This assumption remains.	6

Other	Extra (Not in DARP)	Business Improvement Area	Completed	• Directly aligns with Council Strategic Plan (Priority #2 re. BIA). • Aligns with Municipal Development Plan (Policy 6.2.3). • Over time, there is potential for savings and ROI for the CoSA, if the BIA assumes certain expenses associated with improvements, marketing, staffing, etc. • Positive discussions have been ongoing between the CoSA and the Downtown business community, and at the time of submitting this report, the BIA is anticipated to be established as of January 1, 2024.	0
1) Zoning & Development Review	C.1.2	Establish a Design Review Panel.	Completed	• Certain development permit applications are now outsourced to a design review consultant for input (e.g. Amacon, Niche, Riverbank). • This consultant is equivalent to the "panel" originally envisioned by DARP - yet is more efficient, and fully paid for by applicants.	0
2) Future Studies	C.2.1	Commission a Downtown Parking Strategy (and Traffic Impact Assessment).	Completed	• Although DARP originally contemplated a centralized public parking structure(s), this is now viewed by most as being unviable at this time due to the approximately \$20M+ capital cost. • Therefore, a consultant was retained to analyze broader transportation impacts resulting from DARP implementation in general (i.e. without a public parking structure) - with regard to increased employee/residential populations, the proposed improvements to segments of St. Anne and Perron Streets, and the like. • With guidance from Administration, the consultant considered a range of population and employment growth over the next 20 years – in alignment with the vision and goals of DARP. Achieving such growth will require tempered expectations of what is considered "acceptable" traffic operations, especially at the upper limits of growth, but as a byproduct of a vibrant Downtown, this may be considered an acceptable trade off. Working within the confines of the existing transportation network, minor improvements such as traffic signals and adjustments to intersection geometry can be considered at select locations when warranted, along with an increased emphasis on walking, cycling, and transit. There is spare capacity in the existing Downtown transportation network to support continued growth for years to come; therefore, it is submitted that transportation impacts can be considered relatively moot in terms of the current efforts to prioritize the various DARP initiatives. • As for parking, City staff have undertaken multiple Downtown parking utilization studies since DARP's approval in 2010. In each occasion, it was demonstrated that there is presently adequate parking supply Downtown, with the exception of during special events (e.g. Children's Festival, Farmer's Market, etc).	0
2) Future Studies	C.2.2	Commission a Civic & Community Facilities Strategy.	Completed	• Aligns with intent of Council Strategic Plan and Corporate Business Plan (Priority #2). • Aligns with Municipal Development Plan (Policy 9.1.1). • Older studies prior to the DARP suggested needs for: 1) additional CoSA office space (unnecessary since pandemic); 2) an expanded library (added to Jensen Lakes, and likely not feasible in the Downtown); 3) a new senior's center (addressed via Red Willow Place); and 4) additional cultural facilities (see below comments). • In 2012 a Cultural Master Plan referenced several cultural/entertainment/programming matters. • Lastly, in 2015, the Build St. Albert initiative included a data-driven model which attempted to forecast what the priority and timeline for new city-owned facilities should be.	0
2) Future Studies	C.2.6	Commission a Downtown Approaches Study.	Completed	•Downtown Approaches Study completed in 2014. Elements related to this study may be incorporated into the Land Use Bylaw Update where applicable.	0
2) Future Studies	C.2.7	Commission a Servicing & Stormwater Management Study.	Completed	• The Utilities Branch is satisfied that the City now possesses sufficient information to address DARP's long-term requirements for water, waste-water, and storm-water. Projects have been identified to address known deficiencies and anticipated growth.	0
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.02	St. Anne Street Extension & Improvements. (St. Thomas to Tache)	Completed	• St. Anne Promenade and roundabout completed.	0
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.12	Expansion of the Profiles Art Gallery	Completed	• Profiles Art Gallery expansion completed.	0
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.13	Development of new Seniors Centre	Completed	• Red Willow Place completed.	0
3) Strategic Capital Projects	C.3.15	Library Project	Completed	• Presumed unnecessary due to Jensen Lakes branch. • Community Relations advised that although the library still needs more space, it may be challenging to do so Downtown.	0
6) Plan Monitoring	C.6	Plan Monitoring (and Amending)	Completed	• Minor house-keeping DARP amendments approved in January 2023 via Bylaw 33/2022.	0

Attachment #3 – Summary of Learnings

(Jurisdictional Scan and Literature Review)

Jurisdictional Scan:

Municipality: (A to Z)	Reference Materials:	Noteworthy Information:
City of Airdrie , AB (2023 population: ±80,649)	• Best Cities (Resonance)	• Canada's Best Small Cities: Airdrie ranked as #22 in 2022.
	• City web page re. Downtown Revitalization	• When Airdrie's DARP was adopted in 2022, the City simultaneously approved seven incentives to accelerate downtown redevelopment, including: 1) Downtown Parking Structure Subsidy; 2) Insurance and Improvement Subsidy for Street Interaction; 3) Downtown Business/Organization Support Fund; 4) Application Refund and 50% Security Reduction Policy for Mixed-Use/Income Developments; 5) Downtown Property Environmental Site Assessment Grant; 6) Balancing Social and Economic Supports on Main Street; 7) Expedited Development Permit Review Process.
	• City web page re. Downtown Community Revitalization Levy	• A Downtown Community Revitalization Levy came into effect on January 1, 2023, anticipated to fund: 1) Environmental site assessments; 2) Environmental remediation; 3) Library and multi-use amenity space; 4) A municipal parking structure; 5) Pathways/amenity spaces; and 6) Public parking and Main Street redesign.
City of Barrie , ON	• Best Cities (Resonance)	• Canada's Best Small Cities: Barrie ranked as #17 in 2022.

(2023 population: ±161,712)	• City web page re. Community Improvement Plan	• In 2019, the City committed \$2.5 million “to the Community Improvement Plan Reserve to incentivize land development priorities” [...] which “provides financial incentives for eligible projects that target key planning and growth management objectives for development within Barrie. Eligible projects include affordable housing projects, brownfield site redevelopment, and mixed use developments within the Urban Growth Centre, key intensification areas, and the preservation of built heritage.”
City of Beaumont , AB (2022 population: ±21,918)	• Our Centre-Ville Area Redevelopment Plan	• Section 7.1 states that “the primary means to implement the policies of Our CentreVille is Our Zoning Blueprint [Beaumont’s Land Use Bylaw], which accommodates mixed use opportunities, increased residential densities and building heights, reduced setbacks, parking strategies and requires adherence to Beaumont’s Urban Design Guidelines.” By implication, this validates the importance of St. Albert’s Land Use Bylaw Update. • Section 7.3 lists multiple initiatives which could act as catalysts for growth in Beaumont’s Downtown, including, for example: 1) Developing a Downtown transit center; 2) Beautification measures such as gateway features; 3) Creation of a central plaza; 4) Creation of two new parks; and more. • Section 7.5 proposes development incentives, however a Beaumont representative advised that none of them have been implemented yet: 1) A tax abatement program; 2) Grants for multi-family, live/work, and commercial developments; 3) Grants for architectural enhancement.
City of Burlington , ON	• Best Cities (Resonance)	• Canada’s Best Small Cities: Burlington ranked as #7 in 2022.

(2023 population: ±194,409)	• Burlington Downtown Business Association	• In 2021, the City of Burlington, along with the Governments of both Ontario and Canada – announced joint funding (\$1.3M, \$1.6M, \$1.9M, respectively) for the revitalization of a Civic Square in downtown Burlington. • <i>“Inclusive, accessible gathering spaces are the heart of any community, and vital to healthy, vibrant, safe and successful communities that are better equipped to restore growth, create jobs, build a greener, more competitive and resilient economy and repair the damage done by the pandemic.”</i>
City of Edmonton , AB (2022 population: ±1,087,803)	• Capital City Downtown Plan	• <i>“Past experience with the Downtown Housing Reinvestment Program, initiated through the previous Capital City Downtown Plan, demonstrated that \$11 of private investment was generated for every \$1 of public investment in the Downtown.”</i> • The 9 City-led Catalyst Projects are: 1. Central Warehouse Area Housing Incentive Program (\$10k per unit); 2. Warehouse Campus Neighbourhood Central Park; 3. Jasper Avenue New Vision; 4. River Valley Promenades; 5. Integration of At-grade LRT; 6. High Profile Bikeway System; 7. Central Gathering Place for McKay Avenue; 8. Green Building and Development Strategy; 9. Green and Walkable Downtown. • Plan predicted <i>“an additional \$200-250 million in property tax revenues, above the base scenario without the Plan, accumulated over 35 years”</i>. • <i>“Simply providing regulatory incentives such as high densities, a broad mix of allowable uses, and reduced parking requirements has not succeeded in revitalizing the area. While good regulation is an essential piece of the puzzle, the City will need to take a leadership role and fund key projects in order to spur redevelopment.”</i>
	• City web page re. Grants and Funding	• Includes 30 diverse time-limited grant programs, such as: - Brownfield Redevelopment Grant (up to \$200,000, and/or site remediation costs);

		- Business Improvement Area Grant (up to \$50k for corner buildings, and up to \$25k for mid-block buildings); - Downtown Vibrancy Funding (has awarded \$6.5M+ to 61 projects since launching in 2021); - Economic Action Plan Grant (up to \$50k); - Economic Incentive Grant (\$23M in grants made available. 10 successful applications featuring construction values of \$10M+ each represented the addition of 2,341 new residential units and approximately 4,050 jobs in Downtown Edmonton); - Community Mural Matching Grant (eligible mural projects in Downtown up to \$10k each); - Affordable Housing Investment Program (Funding of up to 25% of total construction cost of the affordable housing component of the project).
City of Fort Saskatchewan , AB (2023 population: ±28,624)	• Fort Saskatchewan Downtown Action Plan	• “<i>This Plan, in its simplest form, is about providing visitors with an experience when they are downtown.</i>” • Recommended initiatives included – among other things – stringing lights, sidewalk café program, a gap analysis, artwork displays in vacant storefronts or vacant lots, pop-up parks, grant programs that support events, a business improvement zone, partnerships with downtown property owners, developer outreach, a downtown-specific website, etc.
	• City webpage re. Downtown Development Incentives	• As a result of the aforementioned Downtown Action Plan (described above), two incentives are now available to encourage new multi-unit and mixed-use residential developments in downtown Fort Saskatchewan. In summary: 1) Brownfield Tax Exemption: “<i>Provides a 100% exemption of the municipal portion of property taxes on new multi-unit and mixed-use residential development on specific properties for a period of up to 15 years.</i>”

		2) Downtown Development Grant: <i>“Provides a cash-based grant equivalent to 3% of the eligible capital costs to create a mixed-use or multi-unit residential development on properties in the downtown that would not qualify for the tax exemptions. The development grants will be subject to certain conditions and are paid out only once the project is complete.”</i>
City of Fredericton, NB (2023 population: ±61,134)	• Best Cities (Resonance)	• Canada’s Best Small Cities: Fredericton ranked as #9 in 2022.
	• Canada’s Best Communities (MacLean’s)	• MacLean’s: Fredericton ranked as #2 in 2021.
	• City webpage re. revitalization of civic square	• Revitalized civic square to acknowledge history, better-accommodate events, 4-season outdoor walkway / skating track, seating areas, playground, water feature, etc.
	• Fredericton City Centre Plan	• Received an ‘Award of Merit’ from the Canadian Institute of Planners. • Implementation strategies included reconstruction of a street; undertaking a geotechnical investigation; building a new performing arts centre (up to \$40M), relocating a power substation, constructing bikeways, reconfiguration of a grade-separated intersection, construct a new transit hub in conjunction with a developer, public art, sale/lease of City-owned land in exchange for public amenities provided in conjunction with private development.
City of Grand Prairie, AB (2022 population: ±67,669)	• City webpage re. Economic Development Grants and Incentives	• The City of Grande Prairie has three streams of grants and incentives. The Downtown ‘stream’ is comprised of: - The ‘Demolition Grant’ is <i>“a matching grant that provides business owners with 50% of the Hard Costs of demolition, up to a maximum of \$50,000.”</i> - The ‘Façade Improvement Grant’ is <i>“a matching grant that will provide 50% of the project cost up to the lesser of \$750 per Front Foot or a total of \$50,000 for Façade Improvement Projects in the Downtown Incentives Program Boundary.”</i>

		- The 'Patio Grant' is "a 50% matching grant, up to \$5,000 to encourage business owners in the downtown area to invest in the addition of an outdoor patio." - The 'Urban Residential Development Grant' is "to encourage the addition of residential units in the downtown area, eligible projects may receive grants up to \$10,000 per Dwelling Unit for apartment buildings and \$15,000 per Dwelling Unit for Mixed-Use Apartment Buildings located within the Downtown Incentives Program Boundary." • For the entire City of Grande Prairie more broadly (i.e. not just downtown specific), similar grants/initiatives include: - Barrier-Free Grant - Beautification & Patio Grant - Local Marketing Grant - Training Grant - Business Retention & Expansion Grant - Business Revitalization Grant - Municipal Fee Rebate - New Business Development Grant - Residential Infill Grant
City of Guelph , ON (2023 population: ±152,963)	• Best Cities (Resonance)	• Canada's Best Small Cities: Guelph ranked as #8 in 2022.
	• City of Guelph Official Plan	• Policy 11.1.3.2.3: "A City land banking program may be established for buying, selling or leasing property to meet public policy objectives or to assist private sector development under community improvement provisions of the Planning Act." • Policy 11.1.4.5.2: "As a priority, the City shall develop a public parking structure on the Wilson Street lot." • Policy 11.1.8.3.1: "The City may consider additional incentives for downtown development, including tax increment equivalency grants, a heritage property tax relief program, total or partial exemptions from development charges, application fee rebates, and grants for building conversions, including second storey residential

		<i>conversions, structural improvements or energy efficiency improvements”.</i> • Policy 11.1.8.4.1: <i>“The City may in a bylaw permit a maximum of two (2) additional storeys of height above the identified maximum and/or additional density (i.e. FSI) where such development provides public benefits beyond what would otherwise be required by the Downtown Secondary Plan”.</i> • Policy 11.1.8.8.1: <i>“There are many opportunities for the City to work with private landowners, developers, institutions, the Downtown business community, including the Downtown Guelph Business Association, and other groups to implement key elements of the Secondary Plan.”</i> • Priority capital projects included a new library, public structured parking, public square, street reconstruction, civic square reconstruction, and development of a new waterfront park.
Halifax Regional Municipality, NS (2023 population: ±101,343 in the suburban area of Dartmouth specifically)	• Secondary Planning Strategy for Downtown Dartmouth	• <i>“This plan builds on the philosophy, if you build residential the businesses will come”.</i> • Vacant or underutilized buildings/properties in the core are encouraged to convert to residential use. • Policy B-8: <i>“The municipality should work with the Province to develop and implement an incentive based program for the downtown business district. Such a program is recognized as an important part of stimulating business investment within the area.”</i> • Among other initiatives, the development of two anchor parks at either end of the waterfront, linked via a multi-use linear trail, were listed as priority projects.
	• Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission	• In 2023, the Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission publicized a request for proposals for the design, fabrication, and installation of two community gateway signs. Budget was \$35,000.
City of Kelowna , BC	• Best Cities (Resonance)	• Canada’s Best Small Cities: Kelowna ranked as #2 in 2022.

(2023 population: ±235,473)	• City webpage re. Downtown plans	• <i>“Downtown projects benefit from 29 per cent lower development cost charges and priority processing of rezoning applications that are consistent with adopted plans. Properties may qualify for exemptions of up to 100 per cent of incremental property taxes, and we also offer \$200,000 in annual grants to encourage construction of affordable rental housing. Additionally, only one parking stall is required per dwelling unit regardless of the unit’s size.”</i> • <i>“We’re also investing in our public spaces downtown, such as the multi-million-dollar Stuart Park project, which added an outdoor skating rink as well as pedestrian and cycling connections. Additionally, investments in the Queensway Transit Exchange created a hub for public transit in our community. There is now an extensive bike network that extends from downtown, making the area a quick 15-minute trip for the neighbouring 50,000 residents.”</i> • Civic expansion plans included a \$3.2 million public pier and marina; a \$2.2 million Stuart Park Phase 2 and promenade; a \$2 million Kerry Park upgrade; and a \$2 million Queensway Transit Exchange. • <i>“With arenas, galleries and venues for performing arts and festivals, the area is seeing the results of over \$100 million of public investments since 1995.”</i>
City of Lacombe, AB (2022 population: ±14,229)	• Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan: Capital Project Recommendations	• Short-term priorities included stringing lights along 50th Street; installing Downtown entry/landmark signs to encourage social media interaction; etc. • Medium-term priorities included park upgrades to allow for year-round use; conversion of a two-way street into a one-way street to enable a more pedestrian friendly environment; etc. • Long-term priorities included decorative cobblestone crosswalks; and a Downtown plaza.

	• City webpage re. Downtown Storefront Enhancement Program	• Encourages Downtown businesses to improve the appearance of their businesses, utilizing grant dollars, up to a maximum of \$2,000. Must comply with DARP Architectural Guidelines. Application deadline was time-limited to encourage uptake.
	• Article from Lacombe Express newspaper	• <i>“According to the National Main Street Center, a non-profit organization, every dollar invested in local main street programs over the last 10 years generated \$16 to \$33 in new investment in the community.”</i>
City of Langford , BC (2021 population: ±46,584)	• Canada's Best Communities (MacLean's)	• Canada's Best Communities: In 2021, Langford ranked as #1 in British Columbia, and #18 in Canada overall.
	• Official Community Plan	• <i>“Every new [Downtown Langford] development shall consider how to include park and open space in a manner that contributes to the overall community space.”</i> • Policy 1.6.3: <i>“The City Centre shall be developed with a vibrant mix of housing types and tenures to provide housing for the widest possible range of people.”</i>
	• Various City webpages re. keyword “downtown”; and • 2023-2027 Council Strategic Plan (Draft)	• Langford, a Greater Victoria suburb, has grown from just 12,000 in 1992 to nearly 50,000 today. • Recent Downtown Langford endeavors include: - Retrofitted shipping containers placed on an underutilized lot featuring arts/cultural/business space; - Residential tower proposals up to 24 stories; - Express bus route with minimum 15-minute frequencies between the downtowns of Langford and Victoria via dedicated bus lanes in key locations; - 1,500 seat Downtown live-performances theatre; - Purchased 3 lots in order to expand an existing Downtown park by 1.35 acres; - Encouraging affordable housing in the Downtown; - Reviewing off-street parking requirements to ensure suitability for a densifying Downtown;

		- Lobbying post-secondary institutions to develop a satellite campus.
City of Leduc, AB (2023 population: ±36,060)	• What We Heard Report re. Proposed Urban Centre Redevelopment Plan	• Participants identified their top priorities for Downtown as follows (in no particular order): 1) <i>“Transportation and transit;</i> 2) <i>Public art and culture;</i> 3) <i>Support for local businesses;</i> 4) <i>Diversity of daily goods and services</i> 5) <i>Housing affordability”.</i> • Participants identified the following as key opportunities (in no particular order): 1) <i>“Engage and partner with property owners on redevelopments;</i> 2) <i>More support for disadvantaged people;</i> 3) <i>Indoor recreation;</i> 4) <i>Gathering and event facilities (unique);</i> 5) <i>Winter activities around Telford Lake;</i> 6) <i>A beautiful art centre;</i> 7) <i>A better housing mix;</i> 8) <i>Public art.”</i>
City of Lethbridge, AB (2023 population: ±106,550)	• City webpage re. Affordable and Social Housing Capital Grant	• <i>“Provides financial support for eligible projects that involve purchasing, constructing, renovating or retrofitting affordable and social housing units”.</i> • Administration may approve applications for funding under \$300,000, while City Council may approve applications for funding over \$300,000. • <i>“Approved projects must remain as social and affordable housing for a minimum of 20 years from the date of the last occupancy permit.”</i>

	• City Policy CC53: Targeted Redevelopment Incentive Program Policy	• Offers a tax incentive <i>“for targeted redevelopment projects by reducing the effect of an increase in municipal taxes attributable to the differential between the pre-renovation assessment and the post-renovation assessment.”</i> • As two examples, if the construction/renovation value was: - Between \$0.5M and \$1M, this incentive would pay the developer \$60,000 annually over 5 years, to a total of \$300,000. - Greater than \$12M, this incentive would pay the developer nearly \$364,000 annually over 11 years, to a total of \$4M.
City of Medicine Hat , AB (2022 population: ±80,126)	• City webpage re. Development Incentives	• <i>“The Brownfield Redevelopment Tax Incentive, will provide financial assistance to non-residential property owners to remediate brownfield sites located within the City of Medicine Hat by providing tax relief for a period of up to five years.”</i> • <i>“The Infill Incentive, comprised of five separate grants, is designed to support our local home building industry and incentivize expeditious development and construction of infill properties. Owners of an infill property can apply and may be eligible for up to a combined maximum of \$25,000 for each single civic address.”</i> • <i>“The Waterfront District Housing Incentive is to provide financial assistance to property owners to construct attractive, self-contained, market-rate dwelling units, with a preference for mixed-use developments, within the Waterfront Development District.”</i> • <i>“The Waterfront District Vibrancy Incentive is designed to provide financial assistance to property owners undertaking commercial property improvements which add to the vibrancy and livability of the Waterfront District. Up to a 50% matching investment, to a maximum of \$50,000 per property, for commercial property improvements.”</i>
City of Nanaimo , BC	• Best Cities (Resonance)	• Canada’s Best Small Cities: Nanaimo ranked as #20 in 2022.

(2023 population: ±106,631)	• City webpage re. Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption Program	• Program provides a ten-year tax exemption on the municipal portion of property taxes within the revitalization area. Eligible projects include: - New multi-family residential; - New commercial buildings; - Additions/renovations to existing commercial buildings
City of Red Deer , AB (2023 population: ±109,489)	• City webpage re. Greater Downtown Action Plan	• “Of the Plan’s 46 recommendations, 34 are underway or have been completed”.
	• Greater Downtown Action Plan Update	• Many of this Plan’s recommendations were relatively similar to those in other municipalities. However, Recommendation #2 was more unique, as follows: <i>“Establish a senior management position responsible for overseeing the implementation of Greater Downtown projects, with authority for guiding downtown initiatives.”</i> • Other noteworthy recommendations included: - streetscape revitalization project (and one-way street conversion) for Gaetz Avenue; - a pedestrian promenade project (Taylor Drive); - creating a civic plaza as part of City Hall upgrades; - creating a call for proposals for development of a hotel, convention center, and parkade; - construct a pedestrian and bicycle oriented park; - inclusion of bike lanes; - regular re-investment in landscaping, street furniture, and related enhancements - adopt Land Use Bylaw changes necessary to stimulate high-density, mixed-use, quality development
	• Downtown Red Deer Residential Attraction Strategy	• This study resulted in six recommendations: 1) <i>“Develop targeted grant programs to encourage residential development in the Historic Downtown”;</i> 2) <i>“Make grant funding time-limited”;</i>

		3) <i>"Prepare an enabling bylaw to better promote brownfield development opportunities (including tax deferrals) within the Historic Downtown";</i> 4) <i>"Review alternative parking requirements for residential approvals in the Historic Downtown";</i> 5) <i>"Provide greater certainty for developers with partially off-setting connection fees to water and sewer infrastructure";</i> 6) <i>"Market residential development opportunities, both to the development community in Alberta and local community partners".</i>
	• City webpage re. Grants	• Although the application submission periods for these particular ones are now closed, the City of Red Deer had enabled Downtown developers to apply for one of the following rebates: 1) Residential and Mixed Use Development Rebate; or 2) Façade and Storefront Improvement and CPTED Rebate • According to a 2023 article in the Red Deer Advocate newspaper, <i>"Since the residential and mixed use grants program began, four projects have been approved which have added 15 residential units to the downtown and another 24 units are expected to be completed. Private investment in the projects is estimated at \$17 million, and the city provided \$850,000 in grants.</i> <i>A total of 30 applicants have been approved for facade or storefront improvement projects and over 10 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments were conducted. Private investment is estimated at \$860,000, and the city provided more than \$440,000 in rebates."</i>
City of Spruce Grove, AB (2023 population: ±38,985)	• City webpage re. City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan	• Approved in 2020, this area redevelopment plan identified dozens of initiatives for future consideration as part of a comprehensive implementation strategy. Some of the noteworthy items identified for implementation within 5 years include: - Undertaking a parking management plan; - Review values for existing cash-in-lieu policy for parking; - Planning for the revitalization of Main St. and McLeod Ave.;

		- Columbus Park detailed design and construction; - Assess feasibility for a sidewalk patio incentive program; - Land Use Bylaw amendments to incorporate ARP policy (e.g. land uses, sidewalk patios, parking requirements, etc). - Establish a vacant lot strategy for interim uses
	• Consultant's report entitled "Economic Benefits & Costs" (in association with implementing the City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan)	• <i>"It is at a minimum recommended as part of this ARP that the City undertake the infrastructure improvements (\$5.45 million), Columbus Park re-visioning (\$1.59 million) and the Phase 1 streetscape and landscape improvements (\$6.24 million)."</i> • <i>The above "initial investment by the City will have the greatest impact on the future of the City Centre; a decision that would generate the most significant economic benefit and further provide a reason for people to live in and around and visit/shop more frequently for retail, services and cultural activities".</i> • <i>"The positive economic benefits of redevelopment and infill will result in substantial increases in property tax revenue for the City that can be put back into and offset the necessary and desired investment in infrastructure, streetscape and landscaping, including Columbus Park to make Spruce Grove's City Centre a thriving, attractive and successful business, retail and cultural hub in the region, and one that other communities will use as their benchmark".</i>
Strathcona County, AB (2022 population: ±73,000 in the suburban area of Sherwood Park specifically)	• Centre in the Park Area Redevelopment Plan	• Approved in 2020, this area redevelopment plan identified 15 initiatives for future consideration as part of a comprehensive implementation strategy. Some of the noteworthy items include: - Land Use Bylaw amendments as necessary to incorporate ARP policy; - Monitor criteria related to pedestrian safety, traffic counts, transit performance, water/wastewater/stormwater capacities. - Numerous technical studies;

		- Establish Centre in the Park as a priority location for the spending of money in place of municipal reserve received in other locations.
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Literature Review and Other Professional Development Learnings:

Organization: (A to Z)	Reference Materials:	Noteworthy Information:
Canadian Urban Institute	• The Value of Investing in Canadian Downtowns	• This report claimed to be “<i>one of the most significant reviews of Canadian downtowns to date,</i>” examining 17 downtowns across Canada. • Downtown areas generally occupy less than 1% of the citywide land area, yet are responsible for generating between 10% to 25% of the cities’ total tax revenues. Of note, Downtown Edmonton was at 10%, “<i>almost double its contribution from 2004</i>”. • “<i>The importance of partnerships cannot be underestimated when working to implement a specific downtown master plan and its accompanying vision.</i>” • “<i>There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to realizing a stronger downtown.</i>” • “<i>Overall, the demographic profile of our downtowns will be important to understand, as it could contribute to less diverse communities</i>”. [...] “<i>As each of the downtowns continues to grow, it will be important that strategies are developed to achieve vibrant, diverse, and multi-generational communities.</i>” • “<i>The impression emerging from dozens of interviews is that big investments are important to grow confidence and increase the profile of the downtown core, yet small scale financial incentives can lead to many improvements that add up.</i>” Examples:

		- <i>“The City of London has had significant success investing in both large scale cultural and entertainment facilities designed to bring new users to the core, coupled with smaller scale financing programs and waiving of residential development charges in priority areas of the downtown. As a result the core has increased its levels of vitality with more visitors and residents, as well as seen significant public realm improvements from property owners making use of incentive programs to enhance their buildings.”</i> - <i>“The City of Hamilton has also put in place an aggressive public investment program. These investments were largely made following the [2008] financial crisis and were important in stimulating local economic growth and supporting local construction firms. Again these investments have been coupled with a Community Improvement Plan that has been strategic in the way it attracts private developers into the downtown with financial incentives.”</i> - <i>“Downtown Ottawa, on the other hand, has been focused on small scale investments in the downtown, primarily through the waiving of development charges that has helped the City see \$235M in residential growth between 2002 and 2011.”</i> • <i>“Overall there is no one ‘right way’ for a City to invest, yet it seems that many of the downtowns which are receiving both large and small scale public investments are seeing some of the most significant transformations. Moreover the impression emerging from dozens of interviews with private developers is that they are motivated to invest in the downtown if they see a City Council consistently prioritizing the core, showing high levels of both vision and commitment to a variety of investments over a sustained period of time. Therefore having a comprehensive range of investments</i>
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		<i>allows for a municipality to lead by example and demonstrate its ongoing support for the downtown."</i> • <i>"Around the world cities are beginning to temporarily transform vacant lots into more humanized spaces that can both revitalize and differentiate the downtown core, until market conditions are in place to achieve a major redevelopment."</i> - Examples: food trucks, farmers' markets, urban farming, outdoor cinema, solar panels, sporting tournaments, outdoor skating, etc. • <i>"Several interesting partnership models have been identified in the downtown case studies, which have helped generate increased investment and vitality. For example, the Charlottetown Area Development Corporation (CADC) is a self-financed entity representing a partnership between the Province of PEI, the City of Charlottetown and the Town of Stratford. CADC attracts private sector commercial development and investment and has played a major role in redeveloping downtown Charlottetown's waterfront."</i> • <i>"Cities have a number of incentives they can deploy to promote new development. The permits for certain kinds of proposals, for example, can be moved to the front of the queue, receiving quicker approvals. Application fees, development charges, and parking requirements can also be reduced or waived."</i>
Destination Development International	• <u>The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown</u>	1) <i>"They all begin with a plan.</i> 2) <i>They defined a strong brand and retail focus;</i> 3) <i>They orchestrated recruitment of "critical mass" or "clustering."</i> 4) <i>They each have "anchor tenants";</i> 5) <i>Lease agreements included defined operating hours and days;</i> 6) <i>People living and/or staying downtown;</i>

		7) <i>Pioneers with patient money were convinced to invest;</i> 8) <i>They started with just one or two blocks – a “demonstration project”;</i> 9) <i>Solving the parking dilemma;</i> 10) <i>Public washrooms;</i> 11) <i>Development of gathering places;</i> 12) <i>Creation of good first impressions: Community Gateways;</i> 13) <i>Design, fabrication & installation of a wayfinding system;</i> 14) <i>A good first impression: downtown or district gateways;</i> 15) <i>Retail signage rules & regulations;</i> 16) <i>Sidewalk cafes and intimate surroundings;</i> 17) <i>They invested heavily in retail beautification;</i> 18) <i>They provide activities and entertainment: bring downtown to life!</i> 19) <i>They gave downtown districts a name;</i> 20) <i>The marketing is experiential: focus on activities, not buildings.”</i>
Main Street America	• <u>Article: “Main Street’s Future is Strong”</u>	• <i>“For every dollar invested in a Main Street program, local communities saw an average reinvestment of \$26.43 in their downtown district.”</i>
Planetizen	• <u>A New Era of Downtown Opportunity: The Intersection of Housing and Innovation</u> (Course instructor: David Dixon, Urban Places, Stantec)	• <i>“The pandemic has not so much changed the future of downtown, as made much more clear what that future is.”</i> - <i>“Acceleration of hybrid work models points to little or no demand for new office development in downtowns for the foreseeable future and the consequent need to diversity downtown’s economic base.”</i> - <i>Investors are seeking locations that consider the following dimensions: entrepreneurship, innovation,</i>

		community regeneration, workforce development, and infrastructure. • The “new normal” post-pandemic includes: - Workforce growth being fueled by immigration; - A greater need for higher education; - <i>“Talent prefers mixed-use complete live/work/play places that don’t require a car. They share qualities that mark traditional neighborhoods” [...] such as walkable streets, lively squares, unique shops, etc.</i> • <i>“Why start with housing? It represents a powerful tool for building walkable, mixed-use, downtown innovation communities.” [...] “1,000 units of housing – within a 5-minute walk – can bring a block of ‘Main Street’ to life”.</i> This represents the critical mass. • Between 2020 to 2040, approximately 80% of net new households will be singles and couples in U.S. and Canada. By 2040, approximately 25% of households will include kids. Therefore, the large majority of housing demand 2020-40 will be for urban housing. • Mobility innovations (e.g. autonomous vehicles) will incentivize compact growth, support transit, and connect communities by the early 2040’s. This will improve safety, free up road space for people, enhance access to transit, and reduce parking requirements in mixed-use, walkable areas. • Other recommendations pertained to addressing: 1) Public-private partnerships to unlock investment and align with policy; 2) Promoting equity and inclusion; 3) Enabling an affordable mix of housing; 4) A diverse mix of retail; 5) Public spaces and public realm; 6) Walkability/connectivity; and
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		7) Context and authenticity (celebrate a community's stories and living culture).
Planetizen	Calculating the Benefits of Parks, Trails, and Open Space (Course instructor: Todd Poole, 4ward Planning Inc.)	• Parks add value to adjacent real estate. One of the world's most famous examples is New York City's Central Park. • Quality of life is a determining factor in real estate values and economic vitality. A 1998 real estate industry report calls livability a <i>"litmus test for determining the strength of the real estate investment market...If people want to live in a place, companies, stores, hotels, and apartments will follow"</i>. • <i>"Employers consider a variety of factors including amenities for their employees when looking for places to relocate or expand their business"</i>. • <i>"Workers, particularly young people, are attracted to places that provide opportunities for easy access to outdoor recreation"</i>. • <i>"The positive effect of parks and recreation areas on residential real estate values can contribute to higher property assessments, which result in increased municipal tax revenues"</i>. • There are also non-market values – such as the added values resulting from improved public health, stormwater management, carbon capture, plant/animal habitat, etc. • For parks, the broader the appeal that the planned activities have, the greater the likelihood it is to be successful. (e.g. appealing to multi-generational clientele, as opposed to a more narrowly-focused demographic). In addition, parks should provide strong opportunities for food and beverage sales (e.g. kiosks, concessions, food trucks, restaurants) – since people are drawn to such areas.
Planetizen	Land Use Planning to Support Economic Development	• Initiatives which are supportive of economic development include listing permitted development uses that are market viable (particularly into the future); providing adequate

	(Course instructor: Todd Poole, 4ward Planning Inc.)	existing infrastructure/utilities; and having a consistent review and approval processes (this is “<i>more important than incentives</i>”). • Regional trends are more important than local trends. “<i>Local private investment is a function of the health of your regional labor market area</i>”. Examples: growth/decline in high-wage employment industries; corporate layoff announcements at regional/national levels; housing starts/permits; vacancy rates; etc. • Market studies can help to understand and interpret these trends, and should inform land use policy.
Scotiabank	• 2023 Scotiabank Affordable Housing Summit	• Most panelists concurred that housing affordability is a multi-faceted challenge that is too big for any single entity to resolve independently. However, at the municipal level, the following matters can be addressed: - Revising zoning regulations and engineering standards (speaker’s quote: “<i>we’ve zoned ourselves out of affordability</i>”); - Addressing any developer uncertainties and prolonged timelines for municipal approvals; - Ensuring availability/capacity of infrastructure (particularly in small to mid-sized municipalities where infrastructure doesn’t have as much elasticity); and - Confronting NIMBY-ism; • There are increasingly slim profit margins for developers, which means they have a lower risk tolerance. This is particularly true in infill settings, hence the reduced interest from developers in such areas. • Sample of potential solutions that were debated by panelists: - Amend zoning regulations to allow missing middle / gentle density where infrastructure can accommodate added flows/traffic. Where possible, make them

		'permitted uses', to avoid extra costs/risk/time associated with appeals and rezoning. - Tax relief/deferral or grants from all levels of government is required to make non-market housing more feasible (including a lower mil-rate for non-market housing and/or apartments). - Combine housing and transit strategies. The cost of having a vehicle completes with the cost of housing. Greatest opportunities exist where public transit is available and people aren't forced into car ownership. - Consider housing development on all municipally-owned sites including those with other municipal services (City Hall, fire halls, recreation centers). Examples above fire halls in Vancouver and Calgary.
Strong Towns	• Article: "Strong towns need strong downtowns".	• <i>"Value-per-acre analyses show that a walkable downtown—even a neglected one—can be far more financially productive than the ring of big-name big box stores on the outskirts of town"</i>.
Urban Development Institute – Edmonton Metro	• Designing Downtown Field Trip	• Warehouse Park in Downtown Edmonton: - The design (and features) of this park were developed by the City of Edmonton in close collaboration with a developer which owned multiple adjacent properties. - Since plans were announced by the City of Edmonton in 2022, major developments have been proposed on three sites fronting the park, which could include up to five towers and ±2,200 residential units. - This project is an important catalyst project identified in the Capital City Downtown Plan, and is to be funded by the Capital City Downtown Community Revitalization Levy. • During an informal conversation with the private developer's representative, they advised that, hypothetically,

		had the City of Edmonton <i>not</i> proceeded with Warehouse Park, they likely could have proceeded with a different, yet scaled-down development.
University of Alberta	• Downtown Edmonton Streetfront Retail Report 2023	• <i>“For every \$1 invested publicly in beautification initiatives, an additional \$3 is generated by the private sector. This strongly suggests that residents seek out and prefer places to work, live, and socialize that are attractive.”</i> • <i>“Investing in bold beautification isn’t just about aesthetics—it’s a strategic move towards economic growth. A well-maintained, visually appealing downtown creates a sense of security and pride among its residents, thereby attracting private investment and stimulating economic activity.”</i> • <i>“Changing the downtown narrative from “return to work” to “return to live” can help build a vibrant and resilient community that doesn’t solely rely on office workers, but also includes residents, visitors, and a variety of social activities. Encouraging people to live and engage downtown promotes a sense of place identity and place dependence, which is crucial for its social and economic vitality”.</i> • <i>“Downtowns generate far more tax revenue, per square foot, than any other neighbourhood, and investing in the downtown area is a proven net gain for the city as a whole. In Edmonton, downtown represents 1% of the land in the city, and 9% of the overall tax base.”</i> • <i>“Investing equitably means prioritizing downtown, rather than investing equally across the entire city. This will have larger economic benefits, a faster growth of the tax base, and added cultural enrichment, as well as creating a trickle-down benefit for suburban areas. Strong policy and strategic planning will be required to ensure that downtown receives the appropriate level of investment required to drive citywide economic prosperity.”</i> • <i>“Increasing residential capacity, with the help of new conversion policies and flexible zoning, can help revitalize</i>

		<i>downtown and reduce retail vacancies. Public-private partnerships can also play a key role in facilitating and speeding up this conversion process."</i> • <i>"Transit optimization and place-based investments are critical elements of downtown revitalizations. They can increase community building, property values, and retail activity, thereby contributing to the overall vibrancy and economic health of downtown spaces."</i>
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9.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

This study was to understand the implications of development intensity on the downtown roadway network, consider minor roadway or intersection upgrades where appropriate/applicable, and identify the need for potential travel demand management. The following is concluded based on a review of the 2045 DARP roadway network under a Low and High development intensity scenario:

- A significant proportion of trips pass through the downtown. Reducing these pass-through trips by providing alternate routes or making the downtown roadways less appealing would free up spare capacity for development.
- The DARP roadway network is expected to operate well in the Low Scenario, and, with more detailed traffic signal coordination coupled with an increased non-vehicle mode share and/or reduced pass-through trips, the roadway network would likely operate sufficiently.
- Six total lanes of travel north/south in the downtown area, whether that be Perron Street as four lanes and St. Anne Street as two or the reverse, is expected to be sufficient.
- St. Albert Trail is expected to be congested and over capacity northbound regardless of development intensity downtown.
- The DARP roadway network is generally expected to be able to accommodate the Low development scenario, excluding common operational issues that occur in all scenarios and should be reviewed by the City.
- Most roadways are expected to be over capacity during the High Scenario. While these operational issues do not exclude a future development intensity like the High Scenario, demand management will be required.

9.2 Recommendations

As discussed previously, congestion comes naturally with growth and can be an opportunity to shift travel behaviors to more sustainable options. The following is recommended for the DARP transportation network:

- Traffic signals at the intersection of Perron Street and Mission Avenue.
- Consider traffic signals at the intersection of Perron Street and St. Thomas Street. As an option, the city may also consider installing a roundabout, but further study is needed to understand available right of way and implications on active transportation.
- Consider a westbound left turn lane or traffic signals at Grandin Road and St. Louis Street.
- Explore demand management options to reduce the demand on Perron Street and St. Anne Street, particularly to reduce the proportion of trips passing through the downtown.
- Continue to invest in transit, walking, and cycling infrastructure in and connecting to the downtown.

Discussion

