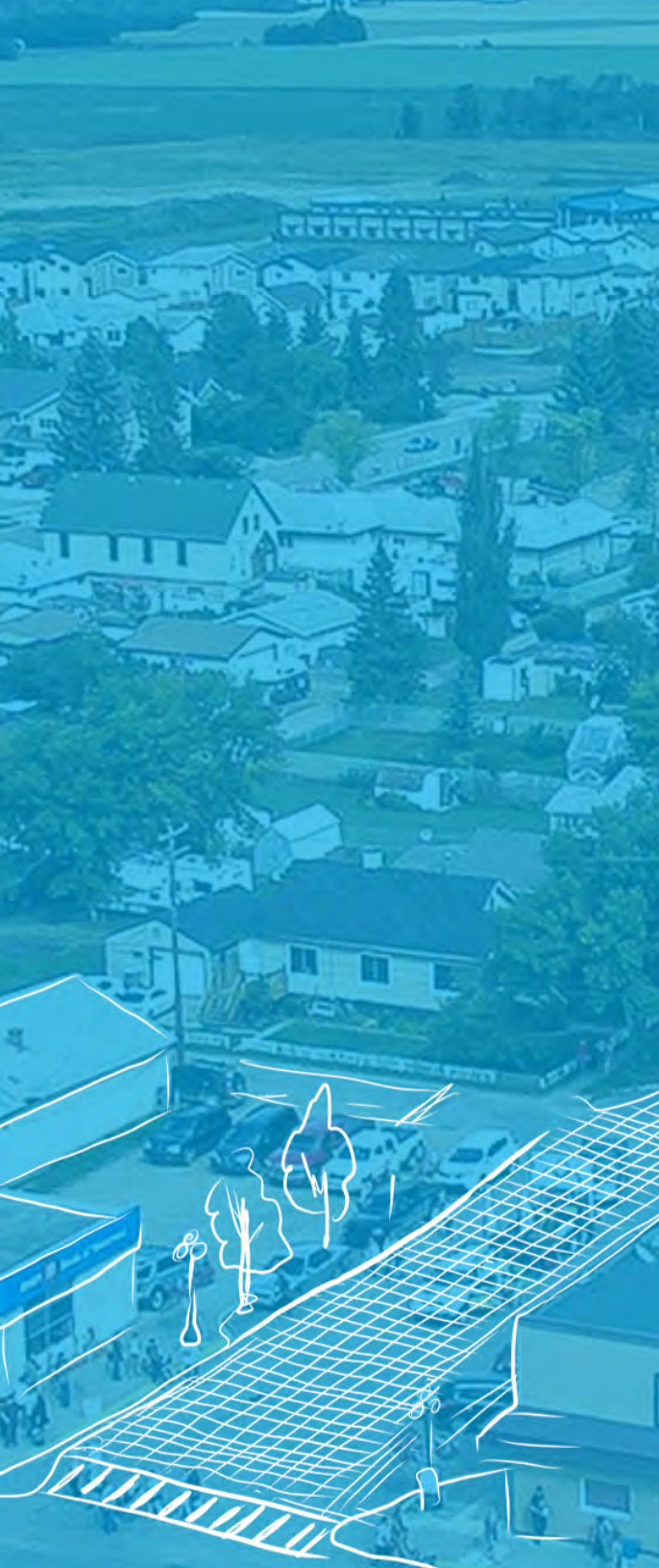


Town of Calmar

COMMUNITY VITALIZATION PLAN

2021





Acknowledgments

The Community Vitalization Plan was prepared by DIALOG on behalf of Town of Calmar and in collaboration with Zag Creative and Intelligence House. The team worked hand in hand with the Town of Calmar and the Community Vitalization Task Force Committee.

Special thank you to:

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Note: This document is best viewed in "two-page" mode, as content on facing pages tend to correspond to each other.

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Introduction From Don Faulker, Town of Calmar Councillor

In the spring of 2020, the Town of Calmar initiated the Community Vitalization Plan project. It was through the public engagement process of the Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Action Plan that this project originated. The Town kicked off the project upon receiving grant funding through the Government of Alberta Community and Regional Economic Development Support (CARES) Program.

The aim was to develop a way forward to define downtown, to enhance the visual ambiance, increase safety, support existing businesses and attract new business, and enhance tourism opportunities. The final plan is a culmination of work over the past year from many individuals and groups including the Vitalization Task Force, residents, businesses, administration, Council and the project team.

I feel confident that our community will be inspired by the vision for downtown and the concepts for main street that are outlined in this plan. This is a plan designed by the community and will require continued support from the community to see it come to fruition over the next ten years.

Calmar has a rich history and an even brighter future! On behalf of Council and administration I am excited to introduce the Community Vitalization Plan.

Sincerely,

Don Faulker, Town of Calmar Councillor





Introduction

Project Background

“Main streets across Canada matter greatly to the livability and prosperity of our communities, towns and cities, and the country. Our main streets are where we go to shop, work, and do business; where we eat, play, and participate in civic life.”

- Canadian Urban Institute

Community Vitalization Plan

The Calmar Community Vitalization Plan (CVP) outlines a vision, guiding principles and direction for future changes along downtown Calmar’s main street, 50 Avenue.

Calmar is a young and growing community and downtown is a key part of this vitality. Founded in 1894, Calmar is a perfectly situated commuter town. A close drive to big city amenities, entertainment and places of work, but far enough away to maintain a small-town feel. This prosperous agricultural community boasts first-rate schools, a strong technical labour force, and a young, growing population of 2,300 people. The town is surrounded by year-round tourism destinations such as Pigeon and Wizard Lakes, and the downtown features vibrant, locally owned businesses that thrive in a supportive, business-oriented community. However, there is a need to invest in aging public infrastructure, make better use of underutilized spaces along main street, support walkability, and encourage new investment so that the overall character and experience of downtown can continue to be enhanced.

The Community Vitalization Plan serves to realize the potential of downtown Calmar – to directly support the Town’s long-range vision and priorities related to the creation of a highly visible and attractive main street with vibrant local businesses and well-design public spaces. It outlines a plan for the implementation of strategic priorities outlined in several of the Town’s existing documents, including the Municipal Development Plan, the Strategic Plan, and the Economic Development and Strategic Action Plan. The values contained in these documents are foundational to the physical design and functionality of downtown. The CVP also builds on the policies outlined in the Town’s regulatory documents and outlines where potential actions are needed to realize the long-standing vision for downtown – to create a vibrant and inviting place for residents, businesses and visitors alike. The Community Vitalization Plan focuses on a planning horizon of 10 years.

The Community Vitalization project was partially funded through the Government of Alberta’s Community and Regional Economic Support (CARES) program. The CARES program provides support to Alberta municipalities for initiatives that promote long-term economic growth.

The Community Vitalization Plan is not a blueprint for development. Rather, it provides a framework for strategic decision-making about the form and character of public spaces, including sidewalks, intersections, and open spaces along main street. It has been developed through a highly collaborative process with Calmar residents, businesses, visitors, Town Council, Alberta Transportation, and Administration, in order to appropriately respond to the needs of the community. Ongoing collaboration with these groups is essential to the future success of the Community Vitalization Plan.

Importance of Downtowns

A functioning and vibrant downtown is vital to the economic health and identity of a community. Successful downtowns function as local and regional amenities, tourist destinations, investment stimulants, and contribute to a community's overall prosperity. Downtowns that are distinct and beautiful can be a tremendous source of civic pride and can shape the image (and future) of a community.

In recent decades, downtown revitalization has been one of the most prominent elements of strategic community revitalization for municipalities, of all sizes. Visionary communities recognize main street as the heart of the community and embrace the opportunity for revitalization by strategically investing in highly visible and desirable public realm enhancements and development projects.

Recent research on downtown main streets suggests that success is best achieved by emphasizing a combination of policies, planning, and design approaches to create long term vitality along a main street. Thriving small towns and cities across Canada are providing more housing options near main streets, strategically investing in public infrastructure, encouraging high-quality development, and ultimately creating business supportive environments to encourage local investment and entrepreneurship.

Best practices for approaching community revitalization initiatives highlight several successful tactics. These include: (1) identifying and building on existing assets of a community; (2) engaging all members of the community; (3) leveraging outside funding sources; (4) creating incentives for redevelopment and encouraging investment in the community; (5) encouraging cooperation within the community and across the region; and (6) supporting community wellbeing and sustainability. Each of these have been addressed as part of the Community Vitalization project.

In 2020, the Canadian Urban Institute initiated the Bring Back Main Street program in response to the recent economic crisis facing downtowns as a result of COVID-19. The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) is not-for-profit organization and think tank leading research on city-building in Canada. In addition to research, CUI creates programs and initiatives to promote effective policies and best practices in planning and urban development.

Although the overall focus of the Bring Back Main Street program is on post-pandemic recovery for communities, the work differentiates between main street type (business district main streets, neighbourhood main streets and rural main streets) and identifies potential planning and policy interventions to support long-term main street vitality. In alignment with the Community Vitalization Plan for Calmar, these include a combination of physical design and planning and policy interventions targeted at long term resilience and vibrancy. The framework provided by this program, has the potential to trigger positive change beyond the boundaries of downtown and throughout the whole community.

Purpose & Objectives

The Community Vitalization Plan is a guide for future changes along downtown Calmar's main street, 50 Avenue (the portion of Highway 39 that runs through the Town's municipal boundary). The CVP makes recommendations on initiatives that will improve Calmar's downtown from urban design, development, and marketing standpoints.

The primary goal of the Community Vitalization Plan is to create a vibrant downtown for residents, business, and visitors alike. The key objectives of the Community Vitalization Plan are to identify the initiatives required to improve and enhance main street; to make recommendations on priority initiatives; and to determine the next steps for plan implementation.

Using this Plan

The Community Vitalization Plan is driven by a vision and set of principles developed through the engagement of the community of Calmar. The vision and principles have led to an overall framework broadly addressing public realm, movement and built form in the downtown and a vitalization concept for downtown main street with five focus areas along main street.

This document is comprised of three main parts:

Introduction

The introduction provides the background and context of the Plan including purpose, objectives, context, engagement and outcomes related to high level opportunities and considerations.

The Plan

The second part, The Plan, outlines, the vision and principles that form the foundation for the Community Vitalization Plan concept and associated recommendations.

Implementation

The final part of the plan provides a phasing strategy for initiatives in the short, medium, and long term. It also includes potential funding opportunities and recommendations for the ongoing administration of the Community Vitalization Plan.



Figure 1 - CVP Study Area and Downtown Context

Planning Context

Downtown Calmar is defined as 50 Avenue from 47 Street to 51 Street and south to 48 A Avenue. The north boundary is the alley north of 50 Avenue. 50 Avenue, Calmar's main street, also functions as Provincial Highway 39, which runs directly through Calmar east to west and is designated as a high load corridor. As a highload corridor, the route must be able to accommodate loads up to 9 metres high.

In addition to serving as a critical transportation route for local and regional industry, main street supports community-based vehicular and pedestrian traffic, as well as through-traffic generated by visitors to Wizard Lake, Pigeon Lake, and destinations beyond. Calmar's location and transportation infrastructure are competitive advantages for Calmar, however, much of the past investment into public infrastructure has prioritized vehicles over pedestrians. Evidence of this is visible in narrow or missing sidewalks, juxtaposed against wide vehicular right of ways, and limited options for formal crossing points for pedestrians. These represent significant opportunities to improve the overall experience of downtown, and the safety and comfort for pedestrians along main street.

Recent and ongoing planning, economic development and beautification initiatives undertaken by the Town demonstrate that the Town and the community recognizes 50 Avenue as more than just a roadway. Main street has served as the focal point for the community since the arrival of the first settlers and continues to be the economic and civic centre of the town.

Characteristic of many small towns in Alberta, several of the original buildings along main street have been identified to be of historic interest. The original prairie-style frontages, along with new brick facades, decorative light posts, the clock tower and murals are iconic elements that represent the identity and sense of place for downtown. Calmar is also known for having a strong entrepreneurial drive. Many of the popular destinations are locally-owned businesses that attract residents and visitors. The Calmar Bakery, Burger Bar, Calmar Pharmacy Ltd., Maggie Moo's Ice Cream Bar, Loganberry's Antiques and Curiosities, Yesterday's Treasure Market, Zyp Art Gallery, and Versus Café currently help to draw visitors and residents to main street, and activate the downtown. Other draws include the Town Office, post office, public library, a child care centre, a bank, and medical facilities, as well as a variety of restaurants, gas stations, and small-scale grocery stores. Cultural institutions along main street includes the seniors centre and Alberta Zirka Ukrainian Performers centre.

To support the important role of downtown, the majority of land along main street is zoned to allow for a mix of small-scale commercial use. The old theatre is the one residential use fronting main street, which was converted to apartments units. Zoning, north of main street is predominantly single-family residential and south of main street is a mix of single-family and low-density multi-family with some commercial uses. Several prominent sites on main street are either vacant, under-utilized or are being used for purposes that are not compatible with the character of a main street. These include storage yards, a bottle depot, and other vehicle-oriented uses such as surface parking lots.

Influencing Plans, Policies & Initiatives

The Town has already completed a significant amount of work which was considered as part of the Community Vitalization project. Many of the existing plans and studies acknowledge the importance of downtown in Calmar and make recommendations that support ongoing revitalization. While the Community Vitalization Plan serves to guide future changes along main street, the broader planning and regulatory context will influence future implementation in a variety of ways. Future implementation of the CVP should account for policy alignment, or where necessary, propose necessary amendments in order to achieve the vision for downtown.

Municipal Development Plan (2019)

The Town of Calmar's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) outlines a 50-year (2018-2068) framework for the town's ongoing growth and development. At a high level, the long-term vision is to provide a variety of living, working, recreating and transportation options for residents, with principles focused on strategic locations such as downtown.

Several MDP policies provide specific direction for downtown related to urban design, development, commerce and transportation. For example, to establish a pedestrian-focus in downtown, the MDP outlines that sidewalks should be widened (to 4.3 m) and unimpeded to provide space for walking, street furnishings, and to encourage features such outdoor patio areas for new development. To minimize the impact to the public realm and overall character of main street, the MDP supports new parking under or behind downtown buildings, in addition to on-street parking, and suggests that any consideration of off-street parking should be rationalized through further studies such as parking impact assessments.

The MDP identifies downtown as the civic, cultural and commercial hub for the Town and provides direction that supports the creation of a mixed-use urban village that maintains the small-town character and encourage opportunities for events, activities and programs to foster a sense of belonging to the community for residents. Overall, the MDP encourages 50 Avenue to be a high-quality and vibrant place, in alignment with the vision for the town.

Strategic Plan (2020)

The Calmar Strategic Plan outlines Town Council's direction for four years (2020-2024). The plan outlines a vision, mission and values to guide strategic decision-making to achieve priority strategies, as defined by Council, creating a plan for action. The Strategic Plan builds on the Municipal Development Plan and provides direction for future planning, budgeting and implementation. Of note for the Community Vitalization Plan are the goals and associated strategies related to fiscal sustainability, community needs alignment and engaged residents, cultural identity and history, economic diversity, residential development, and development processes.

Economic Development & Strategic Action Plan (2020)

The Calmar Economic Development and Strategic Action Plan (2020-2025) outlines seven goals and fifty-five detailed action items for the Town to work towards to create and maintain a strong and vibrant local economy. The development and implementation of the Community Vitalization Plan directly contributes to several of the goals. These are centred around promotion of Calmar through targeted initiative to attract tourists, entrepreneurs, investors, and new residents; enhancing tourism by establishing Calmar as a year-round destination; revitalizing downtown by creating a pedestrian-friendly and business-supportive environment with places to gather and live; and collaboration with the community to identify and leverage opportunities for growth and change in Calmar.

Municipal Sustainability Plan (2008)

The Town of Calmar Municipal Sustainability Plan (2008) is closely tied to the Town's strategic plans. The MSP addresses the five pillars of integrated community sustainability: governance, culture, social, economy and environment and outlines goals, key strategies and metrics of success under each. A key goal of the MSP is to "maintain a framework to represent and promote Town economic development and tourism strategies and initiatives" with the development of a main street revitalization plan as a strategy. The Community Vitalization Plan builds on this early direction from the MSP.

Asset Identification Study & Marketing Plan (2018)

The Asset Identification Study and Marketing Plan (2018) is a situational analysis and marketing plan to guide economic development marketing and promotion for residential and business investment. The study recommends targeting young families for residential growth, and local independently owned businesses and entrepreneurs for business attraction. The Plan provides five strategies and associated tactics. The strategies are: 1) downtown revitalization, 2) foster small independent business and entrepreneurship, 3) nurture positive business relationships, 4) improve community and organizations readiness for economic development, and 5) marketing the community.

Regarding downtown revitalization, the Asset Identification Study and Marketing Plan references the Town's Economic Development Plan which notes that priority should be given to revitalizing the downtown area of Calmar and suggests architectural guidelines. The Study further builds on this to suggest tactics to curate the right mix of businesses in downtown. It also recommends holding festivals, special events and or markets in downtown to bring people in and create a critical mass of visitors and activity that leverages what is already happening along main street.

Land Use Bylaw (2017)

The Town of Calmar Land Use Bylaw (2017) sets out regulations on how land and buildings can be developed within the town based on established land use districts.

Downtown Calmar is defined by the Commercial Central (C1) and Commercial Highway (C2) districts. The Commercial Central District is concentrated between 47 Street and 50 Street with a couple of parcels to the east and west. This district encourages development that is in alignment with the character of main street. A wide range of commercial, civic, and cultural uses are permitted, and development regulations allow for the fine-grained, zero set-back buildings that can effectively encourage vibrant streetscapes. The regulations outline architectural design guidelines, use of quality materials, diversity of form and variety of façade designs while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding scale and context. For example, parking is directed to the rear or sides of buildings, developments are limited to two-storeys and residential and mixed uses are considered discretionary with provisions for at-grade retail. The land use bylaw also provides information about sidewalk cafes for businesses.

Commercial Highway (C2) land use district supports a wide range of uses including eating and drinking establishments, health services, hotel/motels and public buildings that are compatible within a main street context. This district also allows for more land consumptive and vehicular-oriented uses such as automotive and equipment repair shops, drive-in businesses, parking areas, and service stations which are more typically located within business industrial areas outside of downtown areas. In comparison to the Commercial Central district, the Commercial Highway district allows for reduced site coverage, increased minimum required front, side and rear setbacks, outdoor storage of goods, does not allow for mixed-use or residential development and requires more space to be dedicated to off-street parking and loading. Some of these provisions are counter to policies contained in other municipal plans including the MDP, which recommend maintaining a continuous street wall, providing active at-grade uses and encouraging a pedestrian focus within downtown along main street.

North of main street lots are primarily zoned Residential General (R2). South of main street lots are zoned Direct Control (DC) with some areas zoned for Residential Single-Family (R1) and Residential Higher Density (R4).



Figure 2 - Land Use Zoning

- C1** Commercial Central
- C2** Commercial Highway
- DC** Direct Control
- P** Parks and Recreation
- R1** Residential Single Detached
- R2** Residential General
- US** Urban Service
- UR** Urban Reserve

Design & Construction Standards (2020)

The Town of Calmar Design and Construction Standards outline the typical requirements and details for subdivision and development planning, roadway, services, utility and landscape design, and construction specifications. These standards were considered within the context of the Community Vitalization Plan process and may be applicable for future implementation of initiatives.

Recreation Master Plan (2020)

The Town of Calmar Recreation Master Plan (2020) outlines a vision for recreation, parks and culture in Calmar, based on input from the community and current best practices. While the Recreation Master Plan is not directly focused on downtown, it plays an important role in supporting community wellbeing and vitality within Calmar, and several aspects of this will influence decisions to be made as part of the Community Vitalization Plan. Specifically, the plan identifies increased visitation to the town and economic growth in downtown as strategic objectives, focusing on recreational facility improvements, enhanced business offerings, expanded programming, and well-designed community spaces.

The plan includes recommendations to ensure that an expanded and connected trail system throughout town links all neighbourhoods while also connecting to downtown and the surrounding county. It suggests expanding the public library programming to make use of additional spaces in downtown, including vacant buildings, open lots and Woodlands Park. It also recommends creating a culture and festival site at Woodland Park to host performances, civic celebrations, and seasonal activities with possible amenities such as a pavilion/amphitheatre, washrooms, seating and historical interpretive displays, gardens, pathways and water features, and extensions of the existing memorials at the site. Other considerations include relocating the outdoor rink and skatepark to Zolner Park to make a clear distinction between the function of the two spaces that are adjacent to each other.

Calmar Homecoming Activities & Events (2021)

In 2019 Calmar celebrated its 125 year. The Town's Heritage Committee hosted a series of events in 2020 to celebrate. One initiative coming out of the celebrations is a revitalization of the downtown historical walking tour, with updated tour information for visitors. This will be completed in 2021 and will provide direction to several buildings of heritage interest located in downtown.

Development Priorities

A high-level market assessment of Calmar was conducted to inform the creation of the Community Vitalization Plan and development priorities within the downtown. The process involved quantifying the current residential housing supply and demand in the town and the surrounding area. The analysis identified opportunities for housing within the town, including downtown, that could meet the anticipated needs of existing residents, as well as potential future residents. The study specifically looked at affordability, as well as opportunities to fill gaps in the current housing supply in Calmar, such as multi-family residential.

The key finding of the analysis of demographics and market dynamics is that although the current Calmar housing market is dominated by single-detached homes, there is a demand for spacious and affordable rental two-bedroom apartments. As a result, the assessment recommends allowing for low-rise three to four-storey apartment style rental developments within Calmar. A mix of one and two-bedroom units would serve the market of single individuals working in town and the surrounding area, as well as couples and individuals looking for affordable options within the community. By providing housing options that serve this need in Calmar, while at the same time focusing on revitalizing downtown, the town can increase its appeal to a younger population, retain existing residents, and attract new investment. This approach supports the creation of a foundation for long-term growth and economic expansion.

Engagement

Engagement, consultation and collaboration was an integral part of the Community Vitalization process. The purpose of the engagement was to inform the creation of the Community Vitalization Plan, so that it would be build on local knowledge and would reflect what the community imagines for the future of downtown Calmar. The creation of the Community Vitalization Plan was a highly-collaborative process involving Calmar residents, businesses, visitors, Town Council and Administration, and the Vitalization Task Force Committee, with initial input from Alberta Transportation.

The process of creating the Calmar Community Vitalization Plan began in summer 2020 during the COVID-19 global health crisis. As a result, this necessitated a shift from in-person engagement and consultation to remote and/or contactless delivery. Although the team was able to complete an initial site visit with the Town’s project team and host the first Vitalization Task Force Committee meeting as a socially-distanced in-person workshop, self-directed pop-up activities and collaborative online platforms such as Zoom and Miro were critical tools that enabled engagement with the community. Through this approach the team was able to generate ideas, refine the concepts, and finalize the recommendations for the Community Vitalization Plan.

It is also important to note that the impact of COVID-19 extends beyond the delivery of the Community Vitalization Plan. Considerations of planning for community wellbeing and resiliency informed the outcomes as they relate to physical design, policy, and programming recommendations.

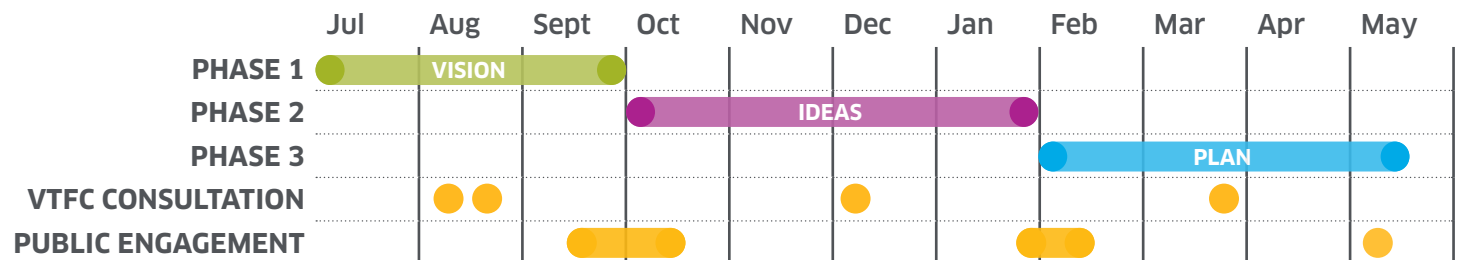


Figure 3 - Community Vitalization Plan Process

Process

Development of the Community Vitalization Plan occurred over three phases: (1) Vision, (2) Ideas, and (3) Plan.

Phase 1 – Vision

The first phase, Vision, occurred over three months beginning in July 2020. The process consisted of initial data collection, research, mapping and analysis of the existing conditions in downtown. The engagement process involved a site visit with the Town project team, an introductory meeting and the first collaborative workshop with the Vitalization Task Force Committee, and public engagement activities including a series of interactive sounding boards in downtown and a survey (available online or hard copy, if requested). The purpose of the engagement activities was to gather input on how residents and visitors view downtown today (strengths and weaknesses) and what their vision is for the future of main street (opportunities and considerations). The feedback was used to develop a draft vision and guiding principles for the Community Vitalization Plan, to identify initial areas of consideration in downtown, and to draft preliminary design concepts which were further developed in the second phase of the project.

Phase 2 – Ideas

Phase two, Ideas, occurred over a five-month period. This phase consisted of the development and evaluation of ideas for the physical design for downtown. In this phase a second collaborative session with the Vitalization Task Force Committee was held, along with a pop-up installation downtown, an online design option presentation, a live community question and answer session and a second public survey (available both online and as hard copy, if requested). The purpose of the engagement was to finalize the vision and design principles, gather feedback on the draft design options and areas of focus, present the outcomes of the market assessment, and seek input on initial marketing and branding ideas. Phase two also involved consultation with Alberta Transportation and Town Administration to confirm direction of draft concept area ideas.

A detailed overview of the phase one and two engagement process is captured in the Outcomes Summary reports which were made available on the Town's Community Vitalization project webpage.

Phase 3 - Plan

The final phase, Plan resulted in the draft and final version of the Community Vitalization Plan. Input gathered as part of phase two was used to confirm direction for the concept area design options prior to the completion of the project work. Engagement included a second meeting with Town Administration and update to Council, a third collaborative session with the Vitalization Task Force Committee, and ongoing communication with Alberta Transportation that resulted in the development of an overall concept for downtown, including design, policy and program recommendations, as well as marketing and branding opportunities. The phase concluded with a final presentation to Council to seek approval of the Community Vitalization Plan, prior to final revisions. Rather than hosting a more traditional engagement activity, a community event with the public was held to celebrate the participation of the community and to demonstrate the potential of the CVP through tactical urbanism activities. This final phase occurred over a two-month period, concluding in May 2021.

Vitalization Task Force Committee

The Vitalization Task Force Committee was formed by the Town's project team prior to the initiation of the Community Vitalization project work. Recruitment was done through a public call for volunteers. The committee was led by the Town's Economic Development Officer with representation from Town Council who also served as committee chair. Other committee members included a small group of interested residents and business owners. As per the CARES grant requirements, the committee members participated in collaborative sessions with the project team and were responsible for providing oversight and input on all key elements of the plan; contributing advice and support to initiate an inclusive and comprehensive public and stakeholder engagement process; and guiding the development of the final Community Vitalization Plan.

Considerations & Opportunities

The considerations and opportunities for the Community Vitalization Plan are related to the challenges facing the town and are the primary drivers behind the project. These were provisionally identified by Town administration and validated through the engagement process. They were considered along with other factors as part of the Community Vitalization Plan process to inform the creation of recommendations for main street.

Considerations

- 1 Main street is the civic centre of the town but also functions as a major transportation highway
- 2 There is a need for unified vision and defined area of focus for downtown
- 3 There is a need for improved safety within downtown for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles
- 4 There is a need to identify and promote points of interest within town
- 5 Further leverage the potential for retail, dining, day trip tourism and new development
- 6 Untapped potential for mixed use residential development

Opportunities

- To further foster relationships, leverage partnerships, and build capacity within the community to encourage stewardship of changes for downtown
- To increase safety through a detailed streetscape design concept for 50 Avenue and streets
- To enhance public space by:
 - a) Encouraging façade improvements
 - b) Creating parks, plazas and places for gathering in underutilized spaces
- To retain existing and attract new residents by:
 - a) Providing a housing mix to address current and future needs, such as first home buyers, downsizing or aging in place
 - b) Enhancing the mix of local businesses to support the character of main street
- To attract new business and development that provides needed services, amenities and unique offerings
- To increase walkability and community visitorship by:
 - a) Improving safety and accessibility issues at intersection and along sidewalks.
 - b) Developing a marketing and branding strategy
 - c) Developing a wayfinding and signage strategy to guide people to places and spaces of interest within downtown and the broader community

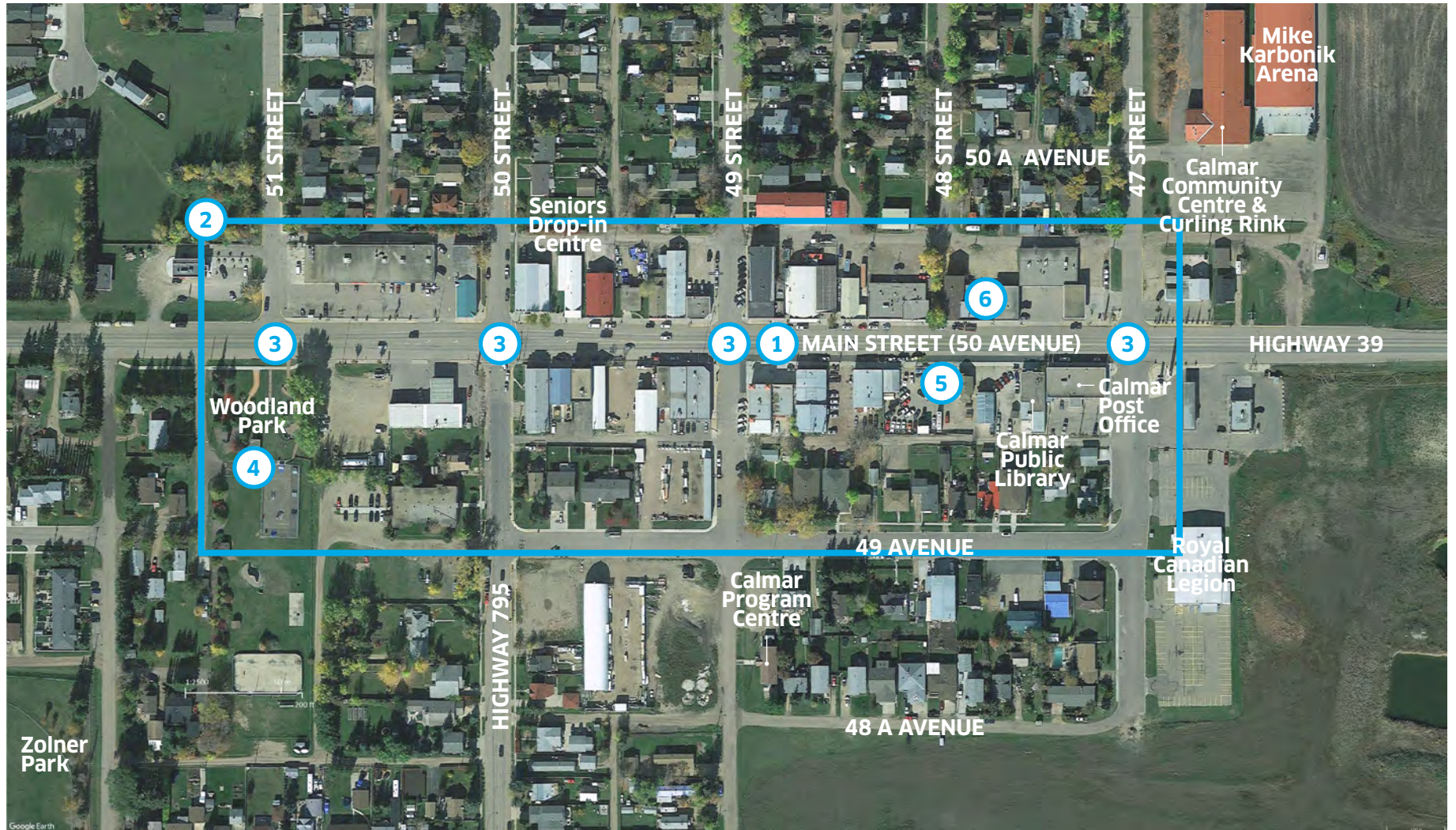


Figure 4 - Considerations & Opportunities Summary





The Plan



The Calmar Community Vitalization Plan, includes a vision, guiding principles, focus areas and associated design, policy and program recommendations, and implementation and funding strategies.

The vision provides overall direction for revitalization of downtown Calmar's main street over a 10-year period. To achieve the vision, a set of principles guided the creation of the recommendations and strategies that are embedded within in the Community Vitalization Plan.

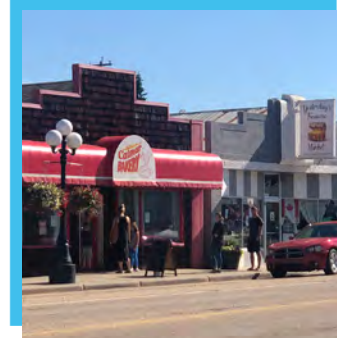
Vision & Plan Principles

Downtown Calmar is a downtown that draws people in. The heart of downtown, Calmar's main street, is a place where people feel comfortable to walk, explore thriving local businesses, and enjoy inviting public spaces. It is a lively and welcoming place that serves daily needs, hosts community events, and celebrates the small-town character of Calmar.



Walkable & Safe

Main street is a walkable environment that is safe and comfortable for both pedestrians and vehicles, throughout the day and night, and in all seasons.



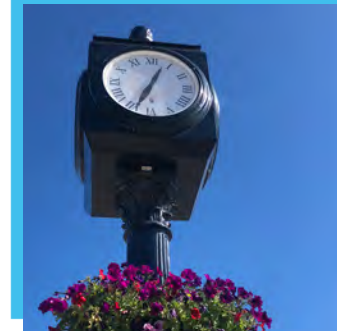
A Variety of Destinations

Main street features a variety of places to shop, work, live, socialize, recreate, and gather.



Beautiful Public Spaces

Streetscapes and open spaces are of high-quality design, contributing to the overall character and identity of Calmar.



Character of Place

Public spaces and private properties strengthen and reflect the distinct character of main street, including the rich history of the town.



Inviting to Residents & Visitors

Residents and visitors feel welcome and invited to visit, explore, and stay in downtown, drawn in by offerings and amenities that are easy to find and walk to.



Supportive of Local Small Businesses

Main street supports the local business through investment in the public realm and programs that foster a strong entrepreneurial environment.

Concept Plan

The concept plan reflects the future of downtown, identifying project opportunities within key focus areas to be undertaken along main street. These projects are generally intended to be undertaken within a ten-year timeline with some development initiatives that may need to be carried out in the longer term. Aspects such as alignment with Town plans and policies, potential for funding availability, partnership opportunities, and general technical considerations have been considered in the development of these focus areas, as well as feedback provided by the community through the engagement process.

The concept plan comprehensively considers improvements to the public realm, including streetscapes, intersections, open spaces, as well as buildings and private spaces interfacing with main street. The following sections outline the concept plan framework, as well as the detailed physical elements and recommended program and policy.

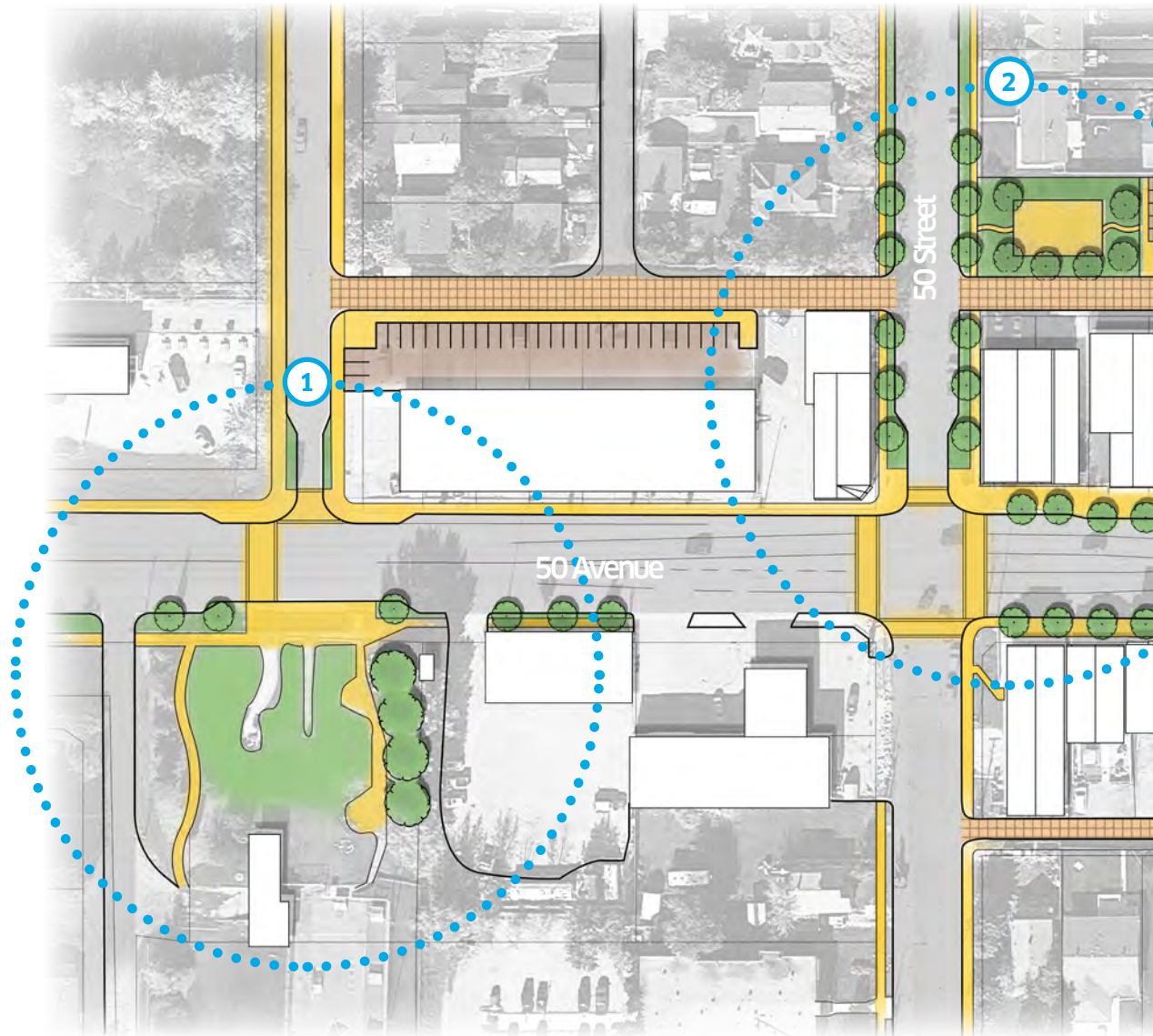
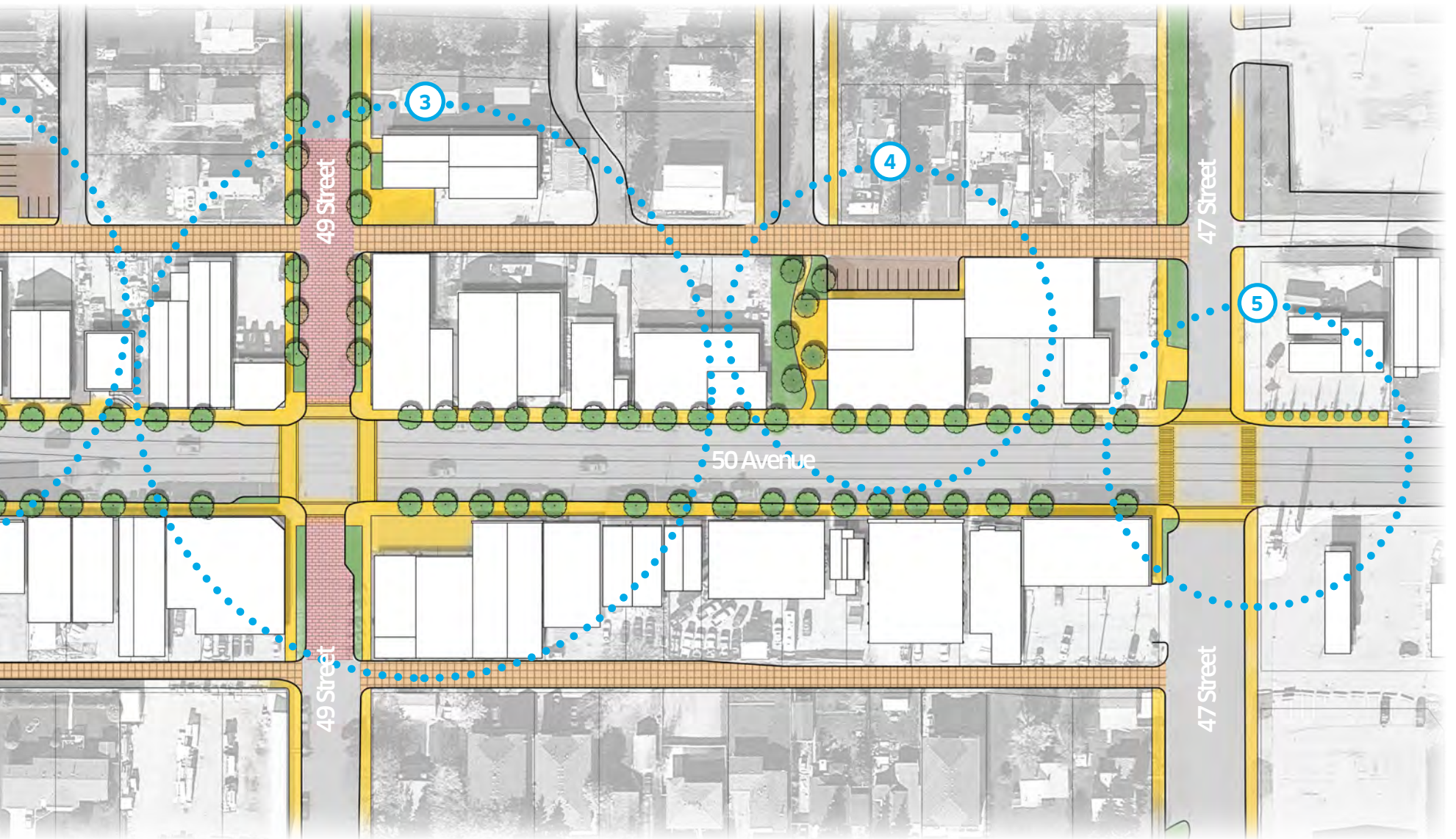


Figure 5 - CVP Main Street Concept Plan



- 1 Woodland Park & 51 Street Intersection
- 2 50 Avenue Intersection & Pocket Park
- 3 49 Street Civic Streetscape
- 4 Mixed Use Development
- 5 47 Street Gateway

Frameworks

The frameworks delineate the organization of the concept plan and provide recommendations for built form, open space, and movement. When implemented, the recommendations work in concert to achieve the Community Vitalization Plan's overall vision and design principles.

Public Realm

Public realm is the foundation of a quality main street. The condition, quality and character of streetscapes, plazas, and parks in downtown signifies the value placed on downtown and represents the overall vitality of the community. Public spaces are any area open to public use. The interface and transition between public to private space is also an important consideration because of the impact private space has on the character of downtown.

Public realm includes sidewalks, plazas, parks and includes elements such as lighting, seating, landscaping, signage, and trails. A variety of types of spaces within the public realm is needed to support a range of needs and enhances the experience for residents, visitors and businesses within the downtown. The following provides direction for the public realm to create a cohesive and quality public realm.

Recommendations

- Widen sidewalks to allow for public seating and patio spaces, addition of street trees, landscaping, bike parking, pedestrian scaled lighting and wayfinding signage, in alignment with the policies and provisions contained in the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw, where possible
- Establish a consistent lighting scheme along main street by continuing pedestrian-scaled lights along the south side of 50 Avenue, using the same light standard as on the north
- Design plazas and parks to include a combination of hardscape and softscaping with decorative lighting, public art/heritage elements, seating areas, shelter/shade areas and spaces for programmed events and informal gathering
- Provide direct access onto the plaza or park from adjacent buildings and a high degree of transparency (i.e. windows and doors) at ground level to animate the space and provide visual connection between indoors and outdoors
- Promote outdoor retail displays and display windows. Discourage product displays and decals that block visibility, and signage that impede pedestrian movements.
- Allow for temporary road closures to support community events (49 Street Civic Streetscape)

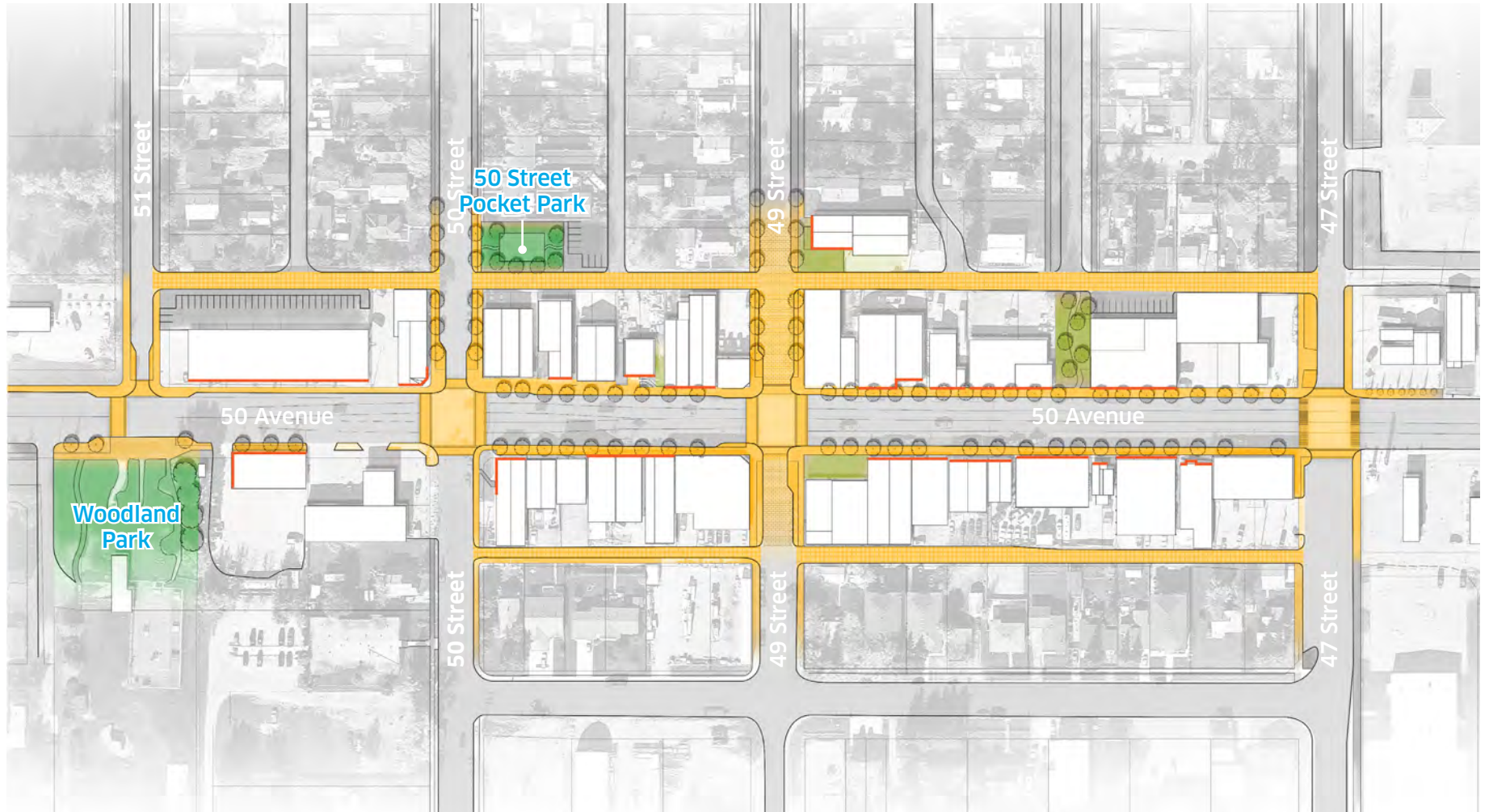


Figure 6 - Public Realm

- Streetscapes
- Parks
- Plazas
- Active Ground Floor

Movement

The movement framework provides direction for all forms of circulation along main street and within downtown, including pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle (of all sizes). It integrates with other areas outside of the downtown boundary and supports the objective of encouraging options for movement within town. While it recognizes the importance of the Highway 39 corridor, it also strives to create a safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment.

Recommendations

- Mark downtown gateways with distinctive elements that align with the overall branding and visual identity of main street
- Use wayfinding signage, lighting and landscaping to define pedestrian entrances into downtown
- Provide a variety of pedestrian and cyclist connections through widened or extended sidewalks, with links to trail connections and mid-block walkways to access adjacent areas
- Resurface downtown alleys to support safe and convenient movement of pedestrians and vehicles
- Explore opportunities to reduce vehicular travels speeds and integrate on-street cyclist infrastructure
- Provide convenient bicycle parking at key locations along main street
- Upgrade intersection design at major intersections along main street to support safe pedestrian and vehicular movement; major intersections should allow for crossings at all four corners
- Convert angle parking to parallel parking on streets to allow for the addition of a planted boulevard
- Complete a town-wide parking study to confirm the need for additional parking in downtown, especially if additional off-street surface parking is being considered and partnership opportunities with other community facilities are leveraged for shared parking during special events (i.e. Legion and Arena parking areas)
- Erect signage to direct downtown visitors to off-street parking areas
- Locate parking at the back of buildings or provided underground for new developments
- Screen existing off-street surface parking fronting onto main street or along the sides of buildings using landscaping to minimize impact to overall character of main street

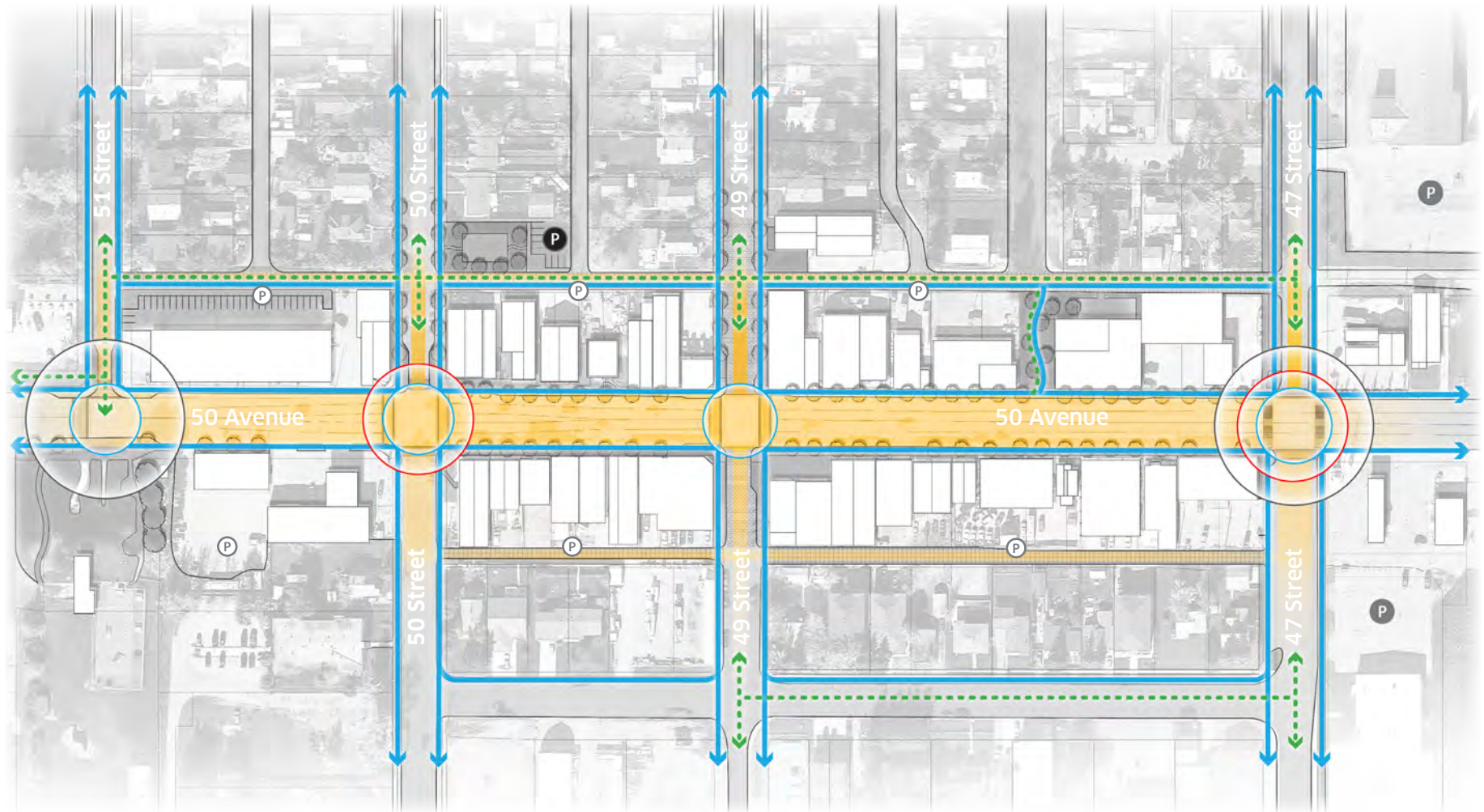


Figure 7 - Movement

- Downtown Gateway
- Vehicular Gateway
- Pedestrian Gateway
- Downtown Streets & Alleys
- Pedestrian Movement
- Cyclist Movement
- P Off-Street Parking (Private)
- P Off-Street Parking (Public)
- P Off-Street Parking (Shared)

Built Form

The built form framework illustrates the development potential of main street. It proposes new buildings on currently vacant or under-utilized sites. They are physically positioned to contribute to the overall character of main street by maintaining a consistent street edge and active interface with the public realm. The following provides direction on the development potential, including location, orientation, quality, general height and massing of new buildings, which is demonstrated in the concept plan.

Recommendations

- Orient new buildings and building additions to maintain a continuous streetwall by requiring new building development to adhere to required setbacks, except where programming warrants increased setbacks (i.e. to allow for patios and seating areas, if it is not possible to accommodate on the public sidewalk)
- Direct primary entrances towards main street and provide pedestrian access to parking at the rear of the building along side yards
- Design ground-floor facades that are transparent and engage with the sidewalk and contribute to the public realm using windows and entrances that allow for views into and out of buildings and activity that can spill out onto the street
- Building scale, massing and facade design should respond to the character of place, and reflect a “human scale” that is friendly and welcoming to pedestrians
- Contemporary designs should be respectful of the character of place and responsive to existing building materials and aesthetics to create a quality and cohesive environment
- Use building design and materials that are complementary to the heritage character, including western-style facades, use of brick, wood or other quality and long-lasting materials such as metal siding or hardie board
- Consider improvements to both front and side facades where side facades are visible from main street which may also include the addition of murals
- Consider additional heights (up to three storeys) to support residential and mixed-use development with respectful transitions to adjacent buildings of lower heights, heritage buildings and public spaces
- Identify additional buildings of heritage interest and protect these buildings to maintain the historic character of main street

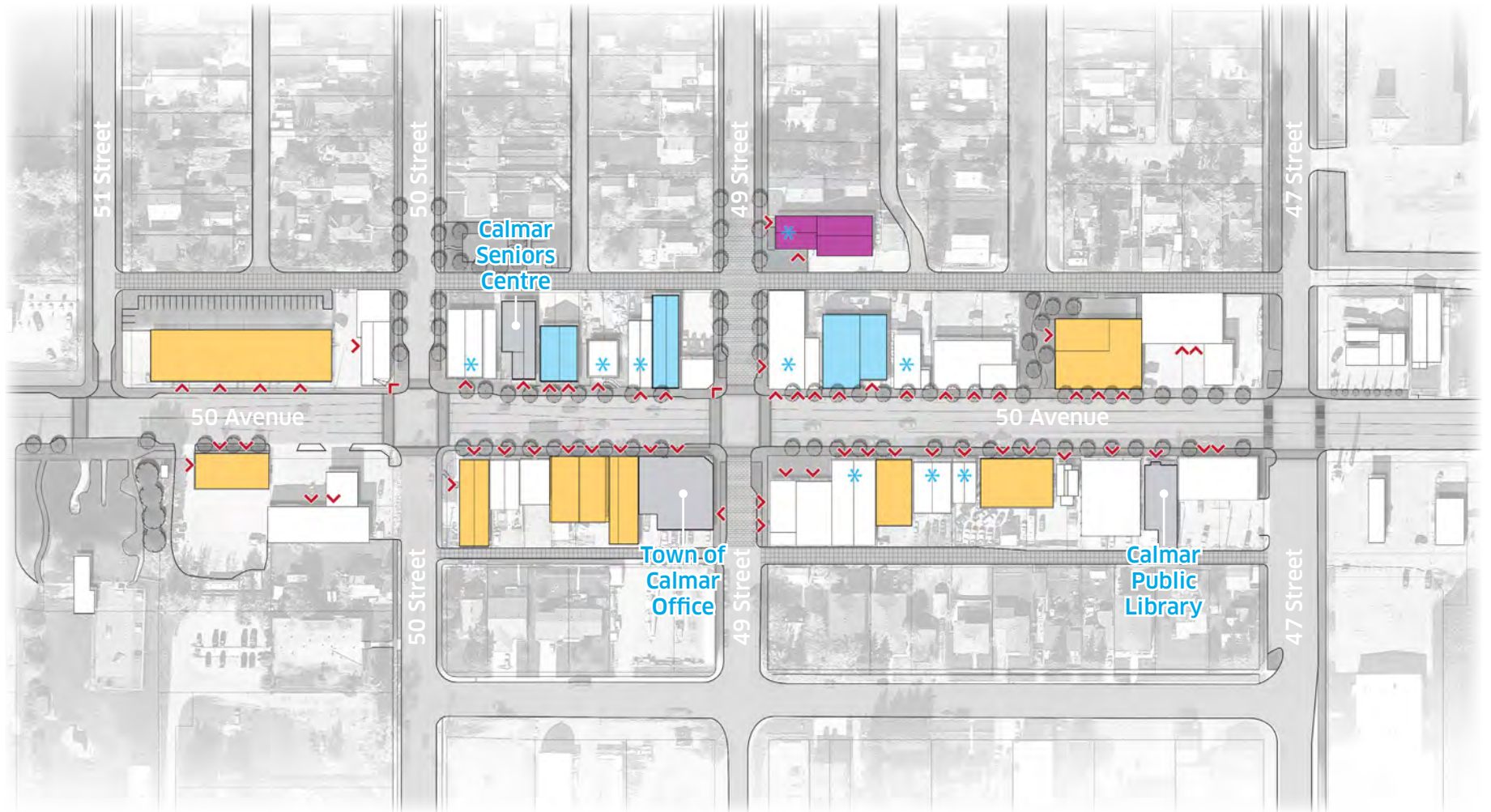








Figure 8 - Built Form

	Public Building		Development Opportunity		Development Opportunity		Identified Heritage Interest Building
	Potential Heritage Interest Building		Primary Entrances				

Focus Areas

Five focus areas have been developed for five different areas within downtown Calmar. Each area shows recommended improvements along main street for the public realm. These include streets, sidewalks, intersections, parks and open spaces, and buildings. Each of the concepts illustrate what is possible and will require further technical studies and approval to confirm final details for implementation.

AREA 1 Woodland Park & 51 St Intersection

At the west end of main street at 51 Street is Woodland Park. Woodland Park is an important asset in downtown because it is the only public open space in Calmar that is currently located along main street. The portion of the park located closest to main street is a large and grassy open space featuring some trees and shrubs, manicured planting beds, a memorial wall with plaques engraved with the names of those who have made contributions to the community, as well as a seating area oriented around a centennial cairn honouring the early pioneers of Calmar. In the centre of the park is a skateboard park, municipal pump house and some small picnic areas. The skateboard park is located near the park entrance, next to the pump house, and at the back of the park is an outdoor skating rink. Several community events are hosted in the front quarter of the park, throughout the year.

Physical Elements

Major improvements include a gateway feature that welcomes and signifies entrance into downtown, a newly designed seating area at the entrance of the park, and a new pedestrian crossing from Woodland Park to 51 Street and the nearby businesses and residential neighbourhood to the north side of 50 Avenue.

Other recommended improvements are new and or widened sidewalks along 50 Avenue and curb extensions at the crossing, wayfinding signage to provide direction for pedestrians to other walkable destinations in downtown, new boulevard and shade trees. On the private property to the north, there is an opportunity to coordinate public realm upgrades together with improvements to the parking area to reduce the impacts of parked cars on the sidewalk (i.e. trucks backing into spots resulting in portions of the vehicle overhanging the sidewalk and obstructing the walkway for pedestrians).

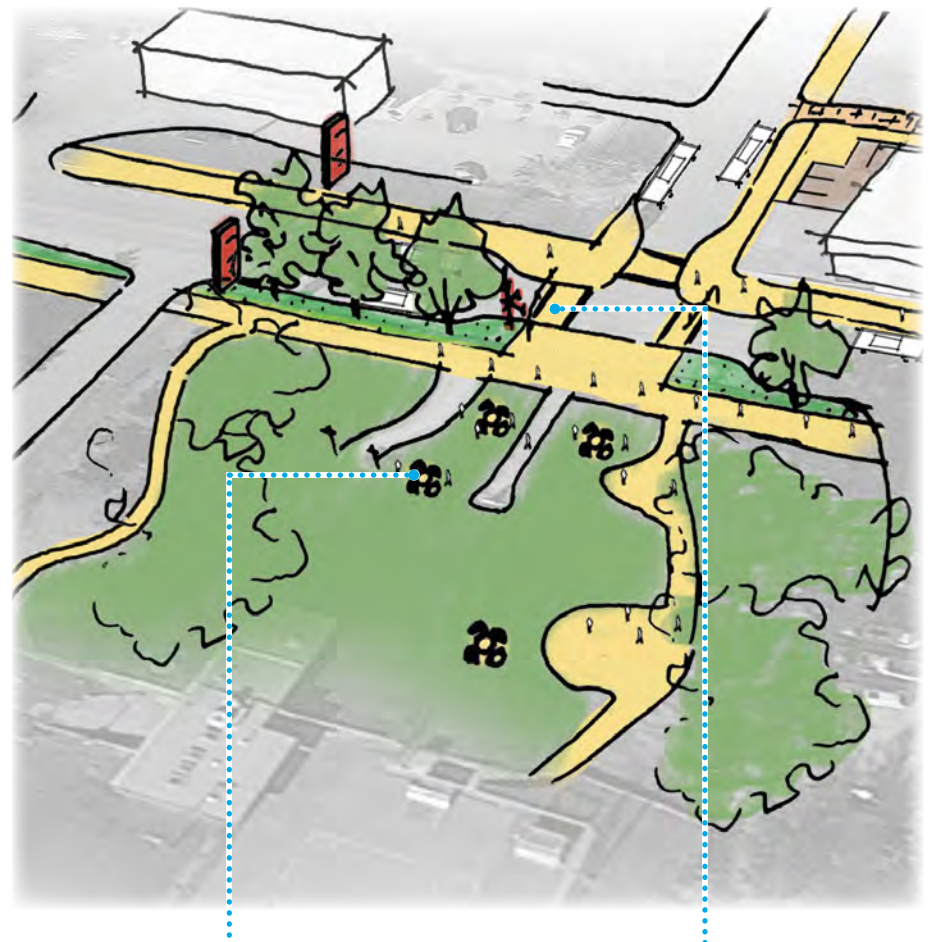
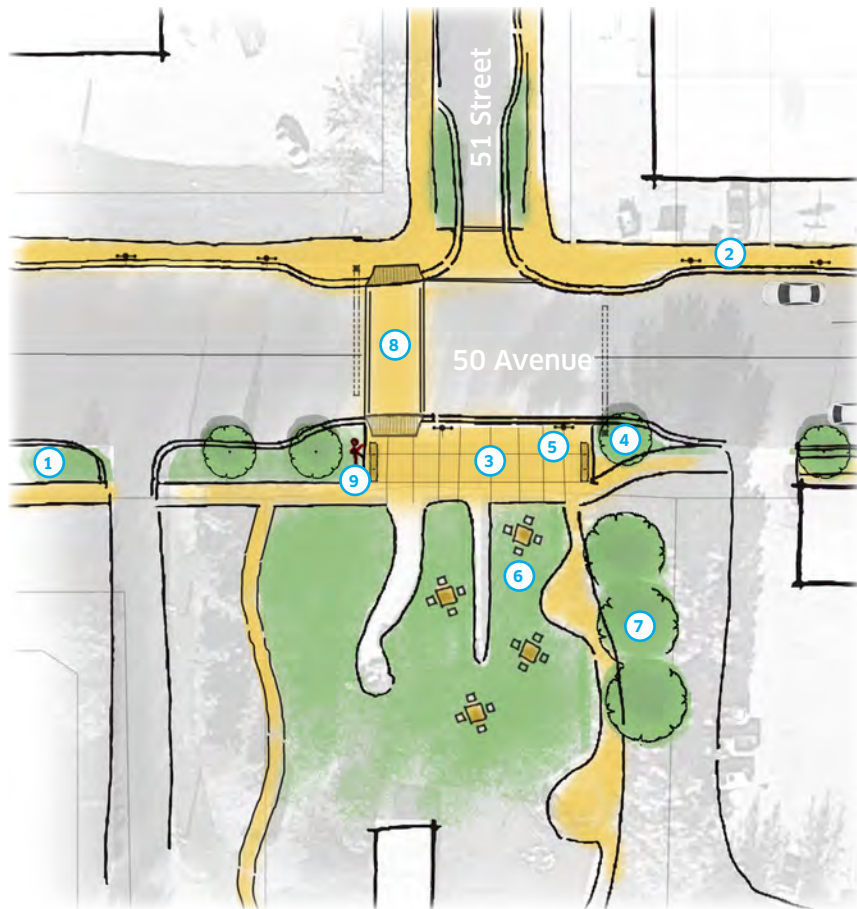
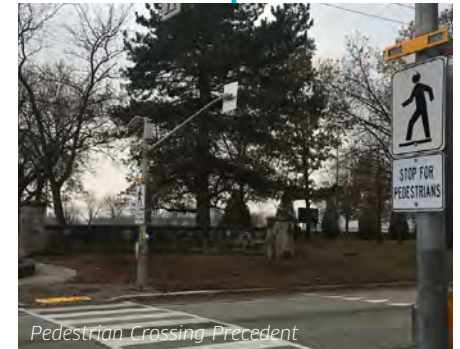


Figure 9 - Woodland Park & 51 Street Intersection

- 1 Downtown Gateway
- 2 Widened & Extended Sidewalks
- 3 Curb Extensions
- 4 Street Trees
- 5 Pedestrian Scale Lighting
- 6 Park Seating Area
- 7 Shade Trees
- 8 Pedestrian Crossing
- 9 Wayfinding



AREA 2 **50 St Intersection & Pocket Park**

The intersection of 50 Avenue and 50 Street (or Highway 795) is a major intersection in town that connects to industrial uses, as well as to regional tourism destinations including Wizard Lake and Pigeon Lake to the south. North of main street, 50 Street is a local road that provides access to Calmar Secondary School and the surrounding residential area.

Physical Elements

Improvements to the intersection including potential signalization for traffic and crossings for pedestrians. Enhancements to the streetscape along main street include widened sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting and wayfinding signage.

A new pocket park is proposed to be located behind the Ukrainian Performers Centre and Seniors Centre. The park could support outdoor programming of these two facilities and will serve as a new space to be used by neighbouring residents and visitors to the downtown. Next to the park is a small off-street surface parking area to supplement what is available on-street. Upgrades to the alley support access to the parking area, as well as parking behind existing businesses front main street.

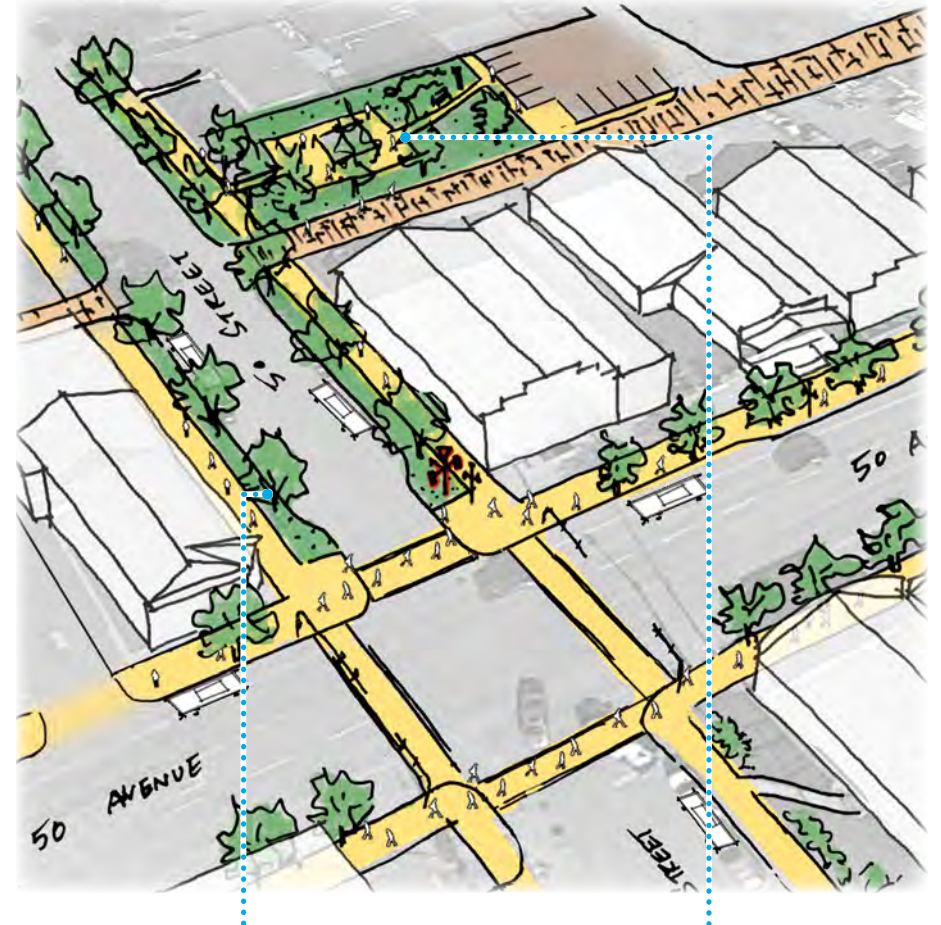
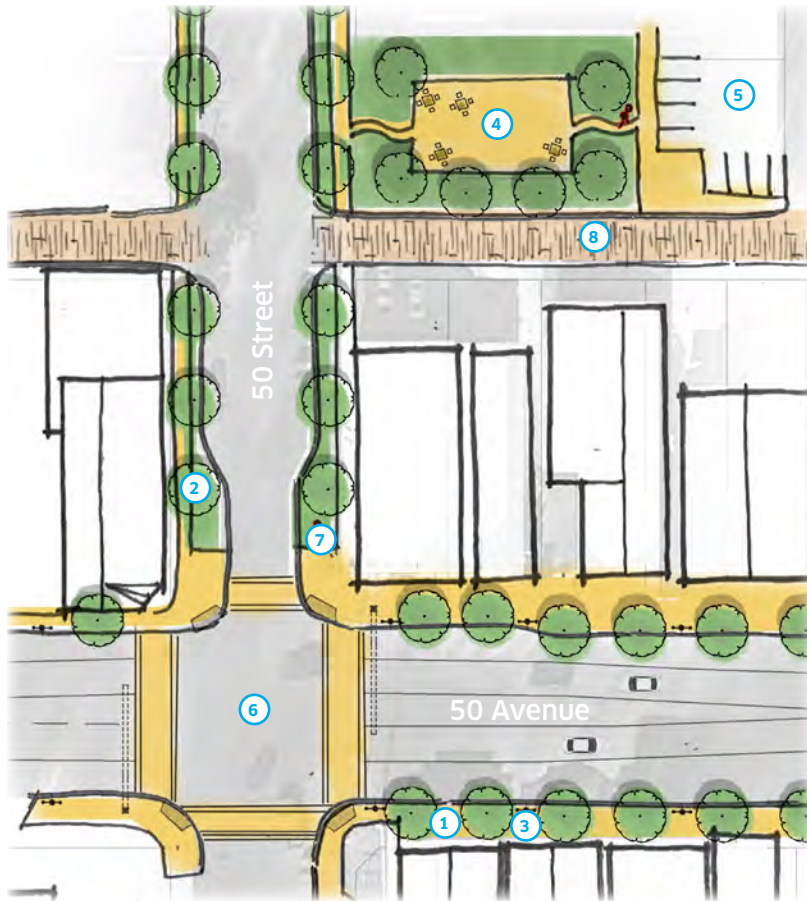


Figure 10 - 50 Street Intersection & Pocket Park

- 1 Widened Sidewalks
- 2 Street Trees
- 3 Pedestrian Scale Lighting
- 4 Pocket Park
- 5 Off-Street Parking
- 6 Intersection Signalization & Crossing Upgrades
- 7 Wayfinding
- 8 Alley Upgrades



AREA 3 49 St Civic Streetscape

The 49 Street Civic Streetscape is the new central north-south corridor along main street. Distinct from the other streets in town, it is designed to invite both pedestrians and vehicles to share the space. This is where many community event and activities, such a farmer's markets in the summer, are held. The streetscape is anchored by two buildings of civic importance - the Town Office and the old fire hall.

Physical Elements

The streetscape is characterized by specialty paving (such as pavers or stamped concrete), street trees and parallel on-street parking both north and south of 50 Avenue. Since the existing intersection already features curb extensions at three corners, an addition of a curb extension on the south each completes the four corners and supports safer and more convenient crossings for pedestrians in all directions. Signalization of the intersection allows for a safer pedestrian crossing and provides more convenient access to businesses on both sides of the main street, in addition to encouraging slower speeds through downtown. Other enhancements include widened sidewalks, where possible, and the addition of street furniture and seating areas in coordination with local businesses and private land owners.

The conversion of the fire hall to new and interesting destination supports several aspects of the Community Vitalization Plan. Continuing to use this space for storage is a missed opportunity to build on the unique draw and development aspirations of downtown Calmar. The old fire hall supports an indoor market space and spaces for retail such as a restaurant/micro-brewery. Outdoor seating is provided along the street and alley to encourage activity, even when the street is not being used for community events. Alley improvements including repaving, create an improved connection to 48 Street to the west for both pedestrians and vehicles.

Many of the Town's existing plans and policies support side walk cafes and encourage on-street patio seating to extend the public realm along main street. However, this may not be feasible due to function and type of traffic along 50 Avenue. Rather than focusing directly on main street, there is an opportunity to encourage this on the lower traffic side streets such as 49 Street that connect to main street. The 49 Street Civic Streetscape design is intended to create a more people-friendly environment that can provide space for patio seating. The street can also be closed to vehicles on a temporary basis or as a pilot project, to allow for the street to function as a plaza during on-street community events.

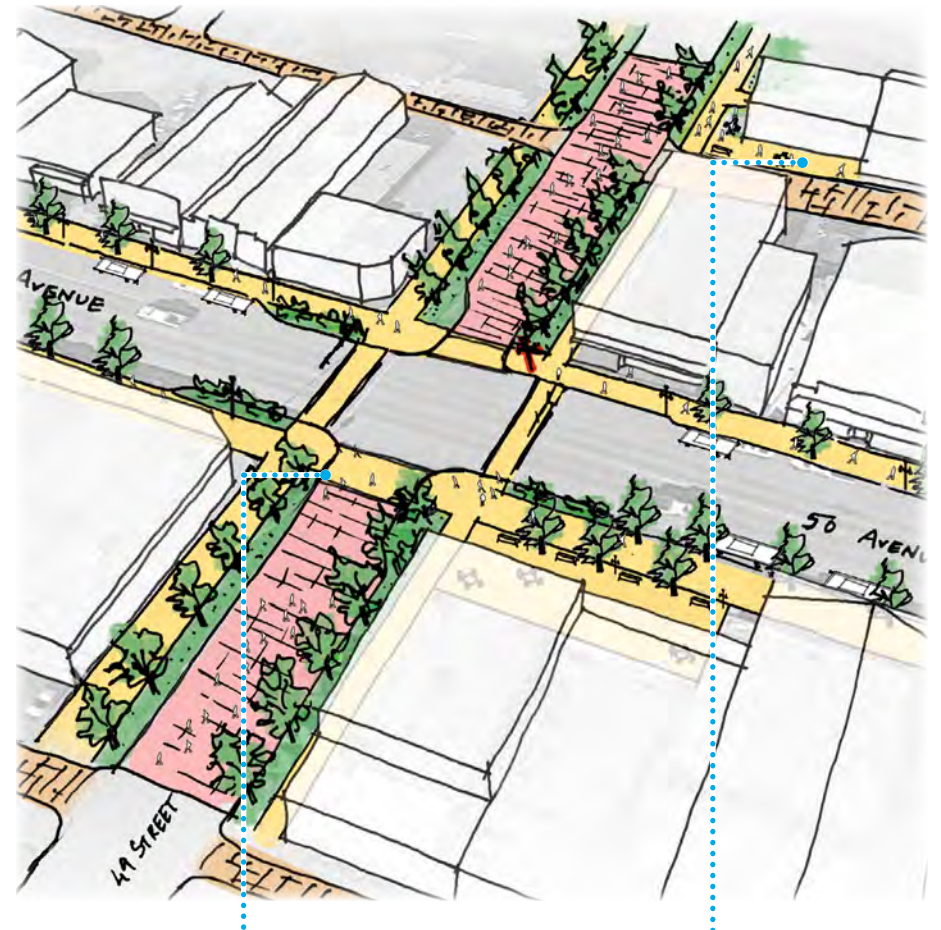
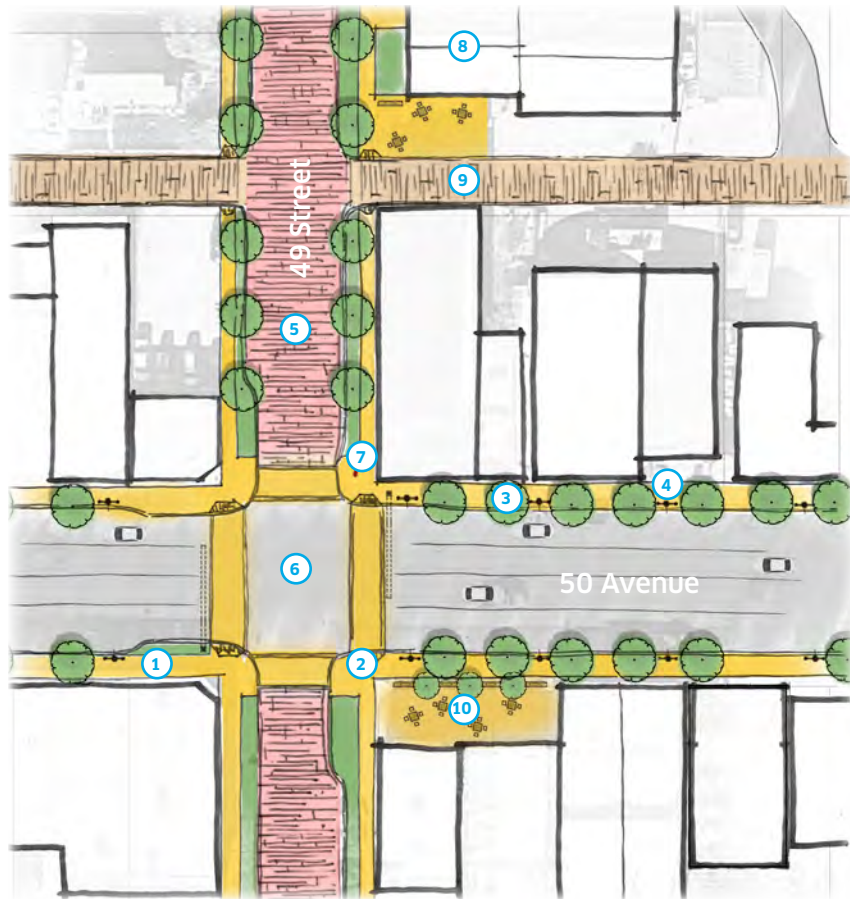


Figure 11 - 49 Street Civic Streetscape

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Widened Sidewalks | 6 Intersection Signalization & Crossing Upgrades |
| 2 Curb Extension (SE Corner) | 7 Wayfinding |
| 3 Street Trees | 8 Market Space/Micro Brewery |
| 4 Pedestrian Scale Lighting | 9 Alley Upgrades |
| 5 Decorative Pavers or Stamped Concrete | 10 Seating Area |



AREA 4 **Mixed Use Development**

The former Calmar Hotel site is the location of a new mixed-use building with active at-grade commercial, residential above, and parking in the back. This new development adds to the overall look and feel of downtown, drawing on the visual identity of the town. It contributes to the mix of businesses, provides for needed indoor and outdoor spaces, and leverages the development potential by offering new choice of quality but affordable housing in downtown.

Physical Elements

In addition to a variety of active ground floor uses facing main street, a key feature of the development is an outdoor public plaza. The plaza offers seating areas for patrons and space for public outdoor gatherings and social activity that further animates main street. A north-south connection through the plaza provides a direct link from 48 Street to downtown for pedestrian and cyclists.

Enhancements to 50 Avenue can be coordinated with the development of the site to provide for widened sidewalks to support active frontages and provide additional space for patio seating and wayfinding signage. On-street parallel parking is maintained to continue to support business along main street. Alley upgrades, which may include removal of above-ground power lines, will improve the overall visual appeal and movement for pedestrians and vehicles. Loading and access to surface and below grade parking is provided at the back of the building.

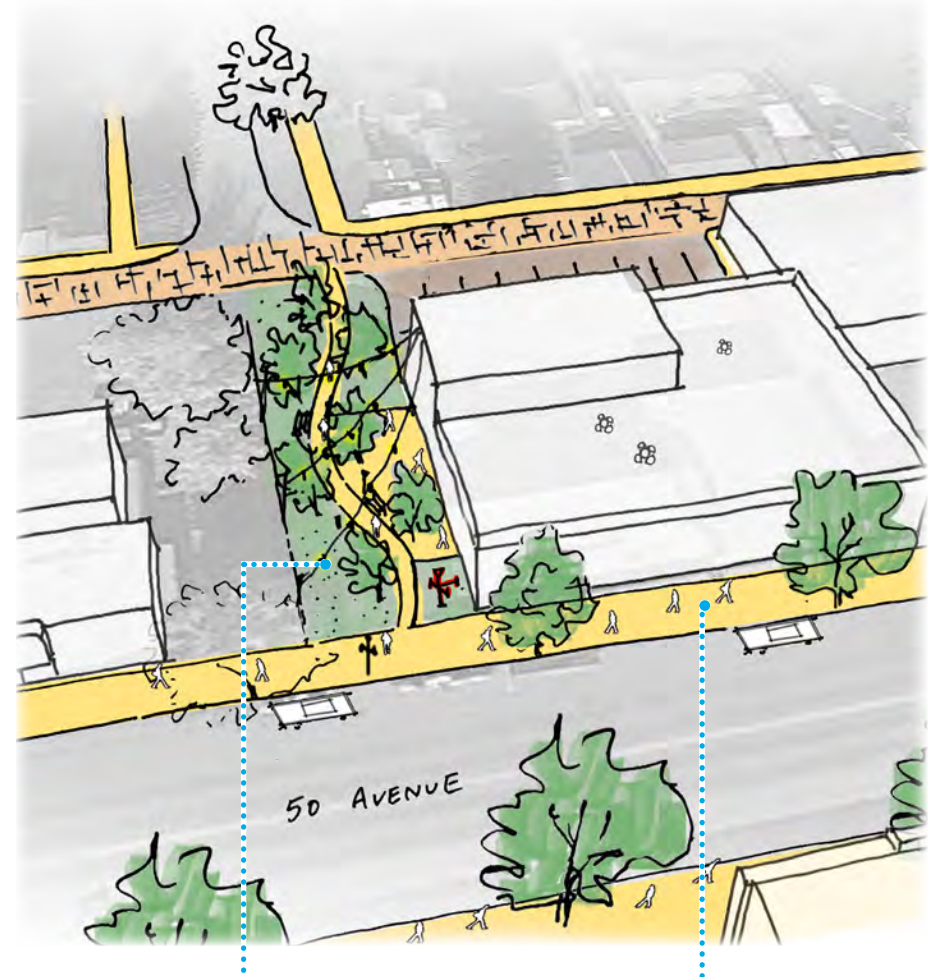
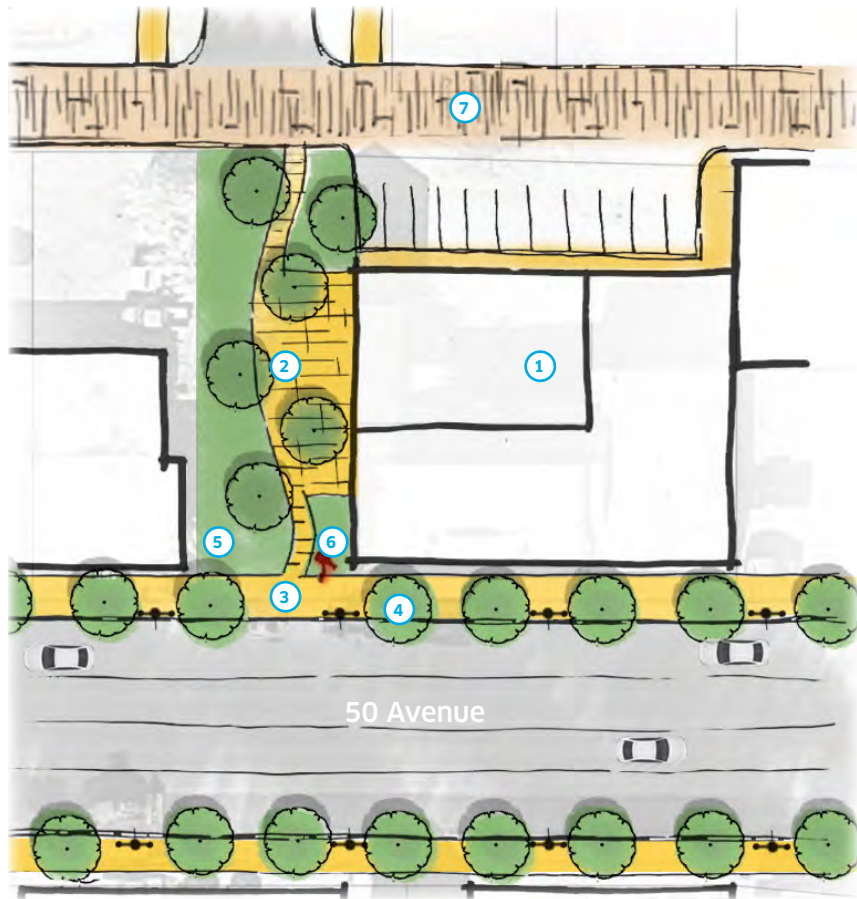


Figure 12 - Mixed Use Development

- 1** Mixed Use Building
- 2** Plaza & Pedestrian Connection
- 3** Widened Sidewalks
- 4** Street Trees
- 5** Pedestrian Scale Lighting
- 6** Wayfinding
- 7** Alley Upgrades



Plaza & Pedestrian Connection Precedent



Mixed-Use Development Precedent

AREA 5 **47 St Gateway**

At the east end of downtown is the 47 Street Gateway. Like the west end of downtown, this area signals entry into downtown Calmar and is one of the busier intersections in town with 47 Street providing access to commercial and residential developments in the south east portion of Calmar.

Physical Elements

Improvements include upgrades to the intersection, landscaping and parallel parking areas along the street to add to what is already available on main street. As this is a major intersection within downtown, full signalization is needed to support anticipated development in south east Calmar. Enhancements along 50 Avenue, sidewalks are complete with widened, pedestrian-scale lighting and wayfinding signage.

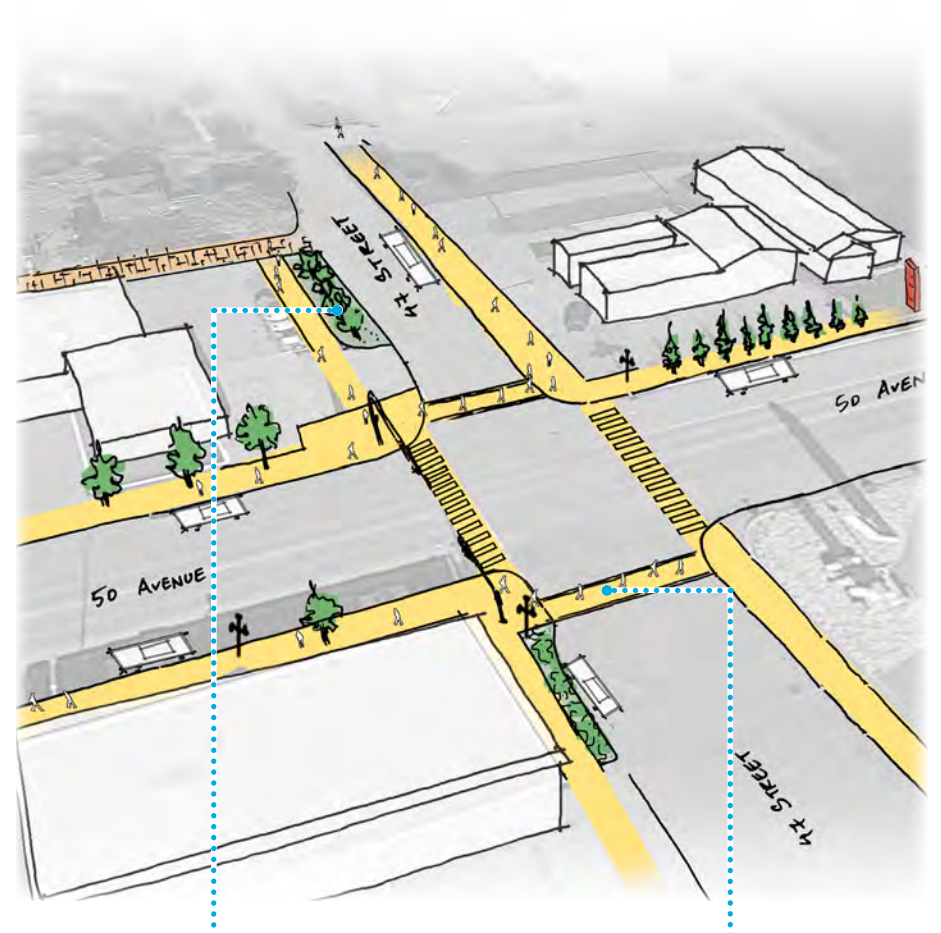
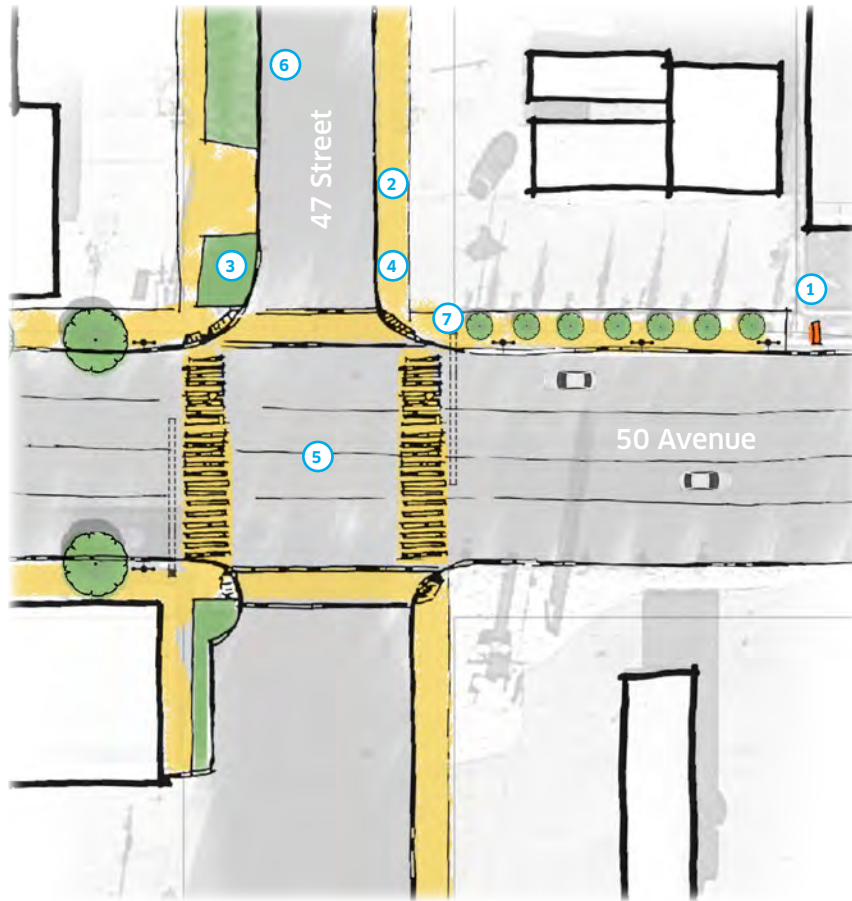


Figure 13 - 47 Street Gateway

- 1 Downtown Gateway
- 2 Widened & Extended Sidewalks
- 3 Street Trees & Landscaping
- 4 Pedestrian Scale Lighting
- 5 Intersection Signalization & Crossing Upgrades
- 6 Parallel On-Street Parking
- 7 Wayfinding



Landscaping Precedent



East West Crossing Upgrades Precedent

Policy Elements

Alberta Transportation Highway Design Guidelines

It is critical that the Town of Calmar continues discussions with Alberta Transportation to pilot main street specific design guidelines for the portion of Highway 39 that functions as downtown Calmar's main street. Currently Highway 39, within the town's boundary, is functionally classified as a Rural Arterial Undivided (RAU) and there have been limited consideration to convert to a regional divided highway in the future. The current classification of Highway 39 focuses on drivers of vehicles being the core user, with an emphasis on uninterrupted flow of traffic. This classification and the associated design guidelines are at odds with the future vision for downtown. It does not consider the context of main street, including the transition from a rural roadway to an urban context, the character of main street, the different types of users including pedestrians and local traffic, or the important heritage, civic and economic significance of downtown to Calmar. Co-operation and coordination between the Town and Alberta Transportation is critical to promote future community vitality.

Land Use Amendments/Rezoning

The Community Vitalization Plan seeks to create a vibrant downtown with a variety of shops, services and housing options. Attracting businesses and adding more residential development will animate public spaces and increase activity to main street. In order to achieve this vision, the following general recommendation are suggested for consideration:

- Create a dedicated Mixed Use standard zone to better enable residential development and allow for heights above two-storeys and reduce need for variances or use of Direct Control districts
- Provide incentives for rezoning of existing Commercial Highway zones located within downtown and along main street to Commercial Central or new Mixed Use standard zone
- Remove business support services establishments, and public utilities (or provide additional clarity in bylaw for what this means), as permitted uses for the Commercial Central District

-
- Remove auctioneering establishments, automotive-oriented uses, contractor services, drive-in businesses, equipment rental establishments, secondary commercial uses, service stations, large-scale shopping centres (supporting big box rather than local businesses) as discretionary uses for the Commercial Central District

Historic Resource Designations

Under the Historical Resources Act, the Minister of Culture may designate any historic resource as a Provincial Historic Resource. The Act also empowers municipalities to designate historic resources of local significance as Municipal Historic Resources. However, there may be an opportunity to formally designate main street as a heritage district. Historic districts may be designated as Provincial Historic Areas or Municipal Historic Areas. Designation of an area or buildings is a form of legal protection that helps to recognize and protect historic places. To qualify, historic places must be associated with a significant aspect of Alberta's past and retain the physical site feature necessary to convey this significance. The Town has identified several buildings within the downtown core that are of historical interest that could support this initiative. While there are regulations which requires owners to seek permission to make changes to designated properties, owners of designated properties can also access grant funding to support restoration, upgrades and maintenance. This is an opportunity for the Town to preserve the character of main street and leverage cultural tourism opportunities, while still enabling new development on other available and more appropriate sites in downtown.

Program Elements

Marketing & Branding

A conceptual marketing and branding strategy for Calmar was created to be a road map for attraction of visitors and businesses through communications and a new visual identity for downtown. The strategy reflects and amplifies the vision for downtown that is captured in the Community Vitalization with the overarching goal of building awareness of the unique value of downtown Calmar.

It's Downtown

The proposed visual identity is centred on one simple yet bold idea – *It's Downtown*. This statement reinforces main street as the heart of the community, the focal point of downtown, a place where local business thrives, and residents participate in civic life. Emerging from this are key messages targeted at distinct audience groups: residents, visitors, and businesses. All of which are integral to ensuring the future economic success of main street.

The Main Street to Success

The Main Street to Success – is targeted at entrepreneurs and aimed at attracting new business to Calmar's downtown that contribute and enhance the existing character.

Stop, Shop & Stroll

Stop, Shop & Stroll – is targeted at visitors and builds on the tourism value of downtown by raising the town's profile as a destination.

Our Heartbeat is on Main Street

Our Heartbeat is on Main Street – is targeted at current residents and motivates the town to be supporters of downtown businesses, as well as stewards of main street as an ideal place to spend time and connect to the community.

Components of the campaign include both digital and traditional media. Recommended digital tools included a campaign landing page, online advertising through a mixture google search ads, and Facebook and Instagram ads. Recommended traditional tools include downtown banners, billboard signage and "Made in Calmar" window signage and stickers, events such as a downtown business week. Additionally, a support strategy/toolkit is recommended for local businesses to leverage these components as resources.



Figure 14 - Downtown Calmar Visual Identity

Signage & Wayfinding Strategy

Coordinating community signage is a programming aspect that has the potential to become a significant asset to the downtown. Not only does it strengthen and reinforce the branding scheme for downtown, but it defines the main street, and helps to ensure visitors to the community can easily navigate to key destinations. The following hierarchy of signage is recommended for downtown Calmar: gateway features, wayfinding signage, banners, and parking signage.

Gateway Features

The primary gateways into downtown Calmar are located east of 47 Street and west of 51 Street. For both locations, a downtown gateway feature is recommended, to signify a clear entrance into downtown and to communicate a change from highway to main street characteristics.

The design of the gateway features should be reflective of the new visual identity, as proposed in the marketing and branding campaign for downtown. It should be an ode to both the past and the future of the community, taking cues from the agricultural history. The design should also incorporate lighting and landscape design.

Wayfinding

Hidden within the town are a variety of community assets and destinations that are not immediately obvious from main street. Developing a legible wayfinding system for both pedestrians and vehicles is as important for visitors as it is to residents. The system should be readily visible and based on the visual identity of downtown established by the branding scheme. The system should include a map of the Town, locate major features and attractions, for pedestrians. It is also possible to link to a directory of town businesses, services, and calendar of events and programming. Information about distances between destinations can encourage walkability downtown and in the broader community, encouraging short trips by foot, rather than by car.

Additional signage should be provided for drivers to indicate location of public parking area. Wayfinding signage should be in high traffic areas and at key decision-making points such as at destinations or key intersections along main street.

Directional highway signage is also recommended to be located on Highway 795, south of Calmar. The purpose of this signage is to direct travelers to downtown and to communicate the amenities that are offered along main street.

Banners

Replacement of the existing banners along main street is a quick and relatively inexpensive program to refresh the image of downtown and to reflect the new visual identity proposed in the marketing and branding campaign. Different banners could be created for various civic events such as Calmar Fair Days and Mega Market, Summer Farmers Market, Christmas in the Park or First Night Festival. There is an opportunity for the Town to partner with businesses who could sponsor the program for specific events.



Figure 15 - Downtown Banner



○ Gateway Feature ● Wayfinding P Parking

Figure 16 - Wayfinding Plan

Façade Improvement Grant

A façade improvement grant program would function as a cost-sharing incentive for building owners to improve the aesthetics of the exteriors of their buildings. In addition to funding support, the program would provide design guidance to redevelopment that preserves and enhances the town's existing historic fabric and character. The intent of this is to ensure improvements are coordinated in alignment with the overall vision for improvements in downtown. The benefits of a façade improvement grant program are increased property assessment values, more attractive building design for owners and overall improvements to the streetscape along main street, beyond public spaces improvements being led by the Town.



Figure 17 - Potential Façade Improvement Locations



① Calmar Bakery



② 4737 50 Ave

Figure 18 - Conceptual Facade Improvements

Mural Program

Murals are a tactic already used in Calmar to support the beautification of main street and celebrate the heritage of the community. The idea to expand this program arose through the public consultation process. Like the façade improvement grant, the Town could establish a program to support this initiative. Another approach would be to offer tax deferrals for building owners interested in commissioning a mural for their building. This program would have basic eligibility requirements for applicants including but not limited to property being located along main street or within downtown, up to date property taxes and utility bills and without enforcement orders. For approval, applications would need to additionally demonstrate a positive contribution to the public realm or be alignment with specific themes or design-guidelines established by the Town.

Other examples are programs and events such as Rust Magic in downtown Edmonton or Mural Fest in downtown Medicine Hat, are run as an annual festival through collaborative partnerships with the event organizer, the City, local businesses and international artists.



Figure 19 - Potential Mural Locations

Farmers' Market

There is strong interest in Calmar for a Farmers' Market. As highlighted in the Calmar Assets and Marketing Plan, a public market creates a reason for people to gather downtown and it serves to build on the already existing connections between the Town, residents, artisans, farmers and the business community. A farmers' market in Calmar also broadens the offerings to visitors and supports agritourism, as well as local businesses on main street. The 49 Street Civic Streetscape is designed with this type of event in mind where the portion of the road north and south of 50 Avenue can be temporarily closed to vehicles to accommodate food vendor spaces and performance areas and allow for pedestrians to spill out onto street. There are specific guidelines for approved Farmers' Markets programs to be established in Alberta including the requirement to operate on a non-profit basis through sponsorship (which includes municipalities or a business improvement association) or by incorporating. As an alternative to the Alberta Approved Farmers' Market program this type of community initiative could operate as a "public market". Either approach would require leadership through a defined governance structure.



Business Improvement Association

A Business Improvement Association is a voluntary group of downtown property owners and businesses. The association would raise revenue through a tax levied on properties along main street or within downtown to augment services provided by the Town. A dedicated business improvement association in Calmar would support implementation of improvements on main street (physical elements, programming, and ongoing upkeep or maintenance). The mandate of a business improvement association would be to work collaboratively and cooperatively with the Town and the community to realize the vision for downtown.

Community-led Placemaking & Tactical Urbanism

Local businesses and residents play an important role in the successful implementation and ongoing stewardship of the Community Vitalization Plan.

Placemaking and tactical urbanism initiatives are ways in which individuals or groups can feel empowered to take an active role and participate in creating a vibrant main street. From seating, sidewalks, storefronts and events, temporary and small-scale initiatives can quickly, easily, and cheaply transform downtown. The purpose is to create inviting places and interactive experiences, while building community connections and promoting local businesses.

The possibilities for placemaking and tactical urbanism are limitless. The following outlines just some examples for Calmar.

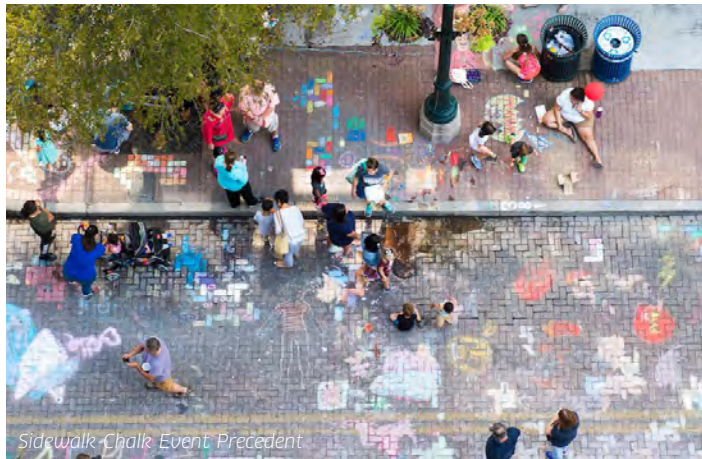
Temporary Seating

Small-scale temporary seating, in the form of benches or movable tables and chairs, can be placed in front of businesses along main street to provide informal places for visitors to sit, socialize and enjoy a coffee, donut or ice cream outside of a local shop.

This type of seating is typically brightly coloured, and can be store-bought or purpose built. It is also an alternative to a more formal sidewalk cafe. Although sidewalk cafes are permitted by the land use bylaw, many of the existing sidewalks are not wide enough to accommodate the space needed and approval by the Town is necessary.



Temporary Bench Seating Precedent



Sidewalk & Window Displays

Activities such as a main street chalk or window display festivals invites the community together to create temporary installations on a sidewalk, streets, crosswalks and intersection, or in business fronts.

This type of event involves local artists, residents, visitors, and businesses, providing spaces along main street that are dedicated for creative expression, games, positive messages, or business promotion. Businesses can use this type of initiative to increase activity in front of their shops, and to increase awareness of their retail offerings and services.

Beautification & Clean-Up Events

Annual clean-up events can be hosted as day or weekend-long activity. The event would involve sprucing up main street and nearby public spaces by planting flowers, picking up garbage, window washing of businesses and power washing sidewalks. This type of event can be organized and led by the local business community, involving properties owners along main street and recruiting additional volunteers from the community. It could be seasonal or scheduled ahead of other public events such as the Calmar Parade or Calmar Fair Days.







Implementation

The Calmar Community Vitalization Plan is a living document, written and structured to provide the town with a flexible decision-making framework to accommodate opportunities and needs as they emerge over a 10+ year time horizon.

Implementation of priority initiatives, as defined by the focus areas, will be based a variety of factors such as funding availability, the outcome of detailed design and associated technical studies, interest by developers and coordination with other projects, as well as requirements of Alberta Transportation.

It is critical that in each phase of the plan's implementation process that design decision remain true to the vision for downtown, the design principles and the design intent of the focus area concepts to guide the evolution of downtown and achieve the overarching aspirations for Calmar.

Administering & Monitoring the Plan

Administration

The Community Vitalization Plan will be administered by the Town of Calmar and more specifically, the Economic Development Officer, under the authority of Council and in collaboration with other Town departments.

An individual who is responsible for the implementation of the Community Vitalization Plan is critical to ensure that the goals of the plan are met and the Focus Area projects are advanced. In addition to liaising with Council and other Town departments, this would also include ongoing capacity-building with local businesses, property owners, potential investors and the community to support alignment and coordination with other initiatives.

Review

The Community Vitalization Plan review process is intended to ensure that the plan is implemented over a ten-year period and in alignment with the vision, principles and recommendations. The review process should be flexible enough to allow for a comprehensive plan overview if new opportunities or new approaches to the plan arise that prove to be of benefit to the Town in the long-term. Generally, the Community Vitalization Plan review should align with annual capital budget planning.

Amendments

If, and when, amendments of substance to the Community Vitalization Plan are required, these should be undertaken in a manner that recognizes the imperative of engaging the broader Calmar community – residents, businesses, Vitalization Task Force Committee members, Town Administration and Council.

Revisions to the Plan should be approved by Council, and by any other regulatory bodies, such as Alberta Transportation, as required.

Phasing

Over the life of the Community Vitalization Plan, the focus area concepts and associated physical design elements will reshape main street to realize the vision for downtown. This section prioritizes these projects over the immediate, short, mid and long terms, quantifies the relative level of resources required and identifies concurrent actions and necessary next steps.

The projects are visualized in the implementation plan using colour coded labels to indicate opportunities to interlink projects across focus areas. The same coding is used in the implementation tables, which also indicate order of phasing priority.

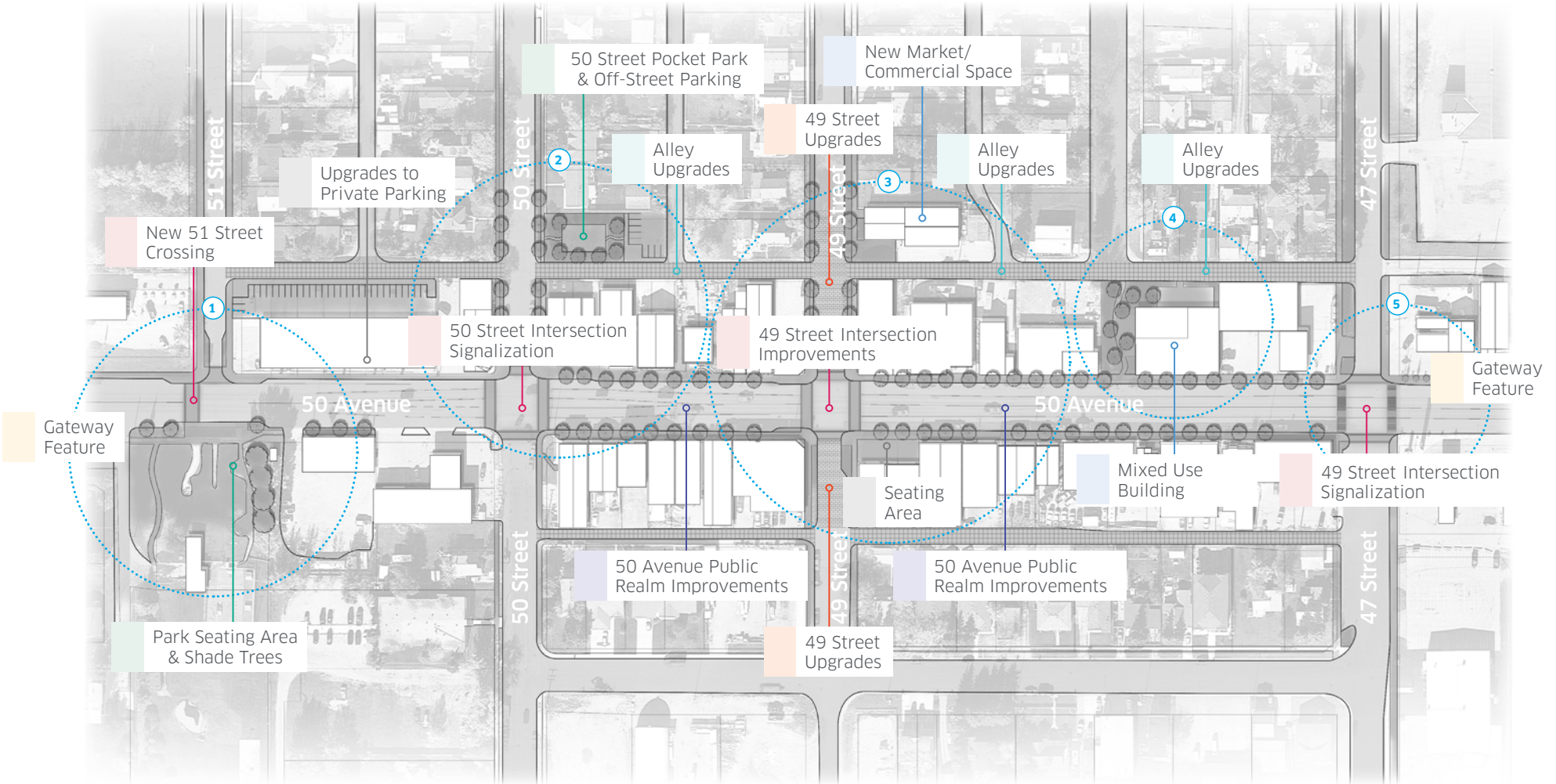


Figure 20 - Implementation Plan

- 1 Woodland Park & 51 Street Intersection
- 2 50 Avenue Intersection & Pocket Park
- 3 49 Street Civic Streetscape
- 4 Mixed Use Development
- 5 47 Street Gateway

Immediate & Short Term

The immediate (year 0) and short term (years 1 to 3) projects are effectively shovel ready upon review and approval by the Town. They respond directly to strategic priorities and an identified immediate need. In some cases, funding has been allocated within the current capital budget or partnership opportunities have already been identified. Short term initiatives represent “quick wins” that may require some additional detailed design but are recommended for upcoming capital budget funding or for coordination with other capital improvements. These projects will be the catalyst for the overall implementation of the Community Vitalization Plan and represent projects that have the most immediate impact to the safety and identity and experience of main street.

FOCUS AREA	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	RESOURCES
Woodland Park & 51 Street	New 51 Street Crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and construction of the 51 Street pedestrian crossing Requires coordination with Alberta Transportation 	• High	• Medium
	50 Avenue Public Realm Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 50 and 51 Street (north and south) Detailed design and construction of new and widened sidewalks, curb extensions and addition of landscaping and pedestrian scaled lighting Requires coordination with Alberta Transportation 	• Medium	• High
	Park Seating Area & Shade Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and install new seating area with shade trees on the east boundary of the park Opportunity to coordinate with the implementation of the Recreation Master Plan 	• Medium	• Medium
	Gateway Feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and installation of west gateway feature 	• Low	• Low

FOCUS AREA	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	RESOURCES
49 Street Civic Streetscape	49 Street Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed design and construction of 49 Streetscape including addition of widened sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian scaled lighting, conversion to parallel on-street parking and decorative pavers or stamped concrete north and south of 50 Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
	49 Street Intersection Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed design and construction of intersection with improved pedestrian infrastructure allowing for crossing in all four directions Requires coordination with Alberta Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High
	Seating Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of street furniture on privately-owned public space located at 4741 50 Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low
50 Avenue Mixed Use Development	Mixed Use Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site feasibility study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low
50 Street Pocket Park & Intersection	50 Street Pocket Park & Off-Street Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of downtown-wide parking demand study Detailed design and construction of pocket park and off-street parking at 5007 50 Street (Town-owned property) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
47 Street Intersection	Gateway Feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and installation of west gateway feature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low

OTHER INITIATIVES	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	RESOURCES
Placemaking & Tactical Urbanism Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small-scale temporary initiatives led by businesses, organizations, and members of the community, and supported by the Town, that activate, beautify and add amenity along main street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low
Marketing & Branding Creative Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execution of marketing and branding creative strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
Farmers' Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a Farmers' Market and temporary closure of 49 Street as outdoor venue for vendors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
Existing Parking Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signage to direct visitors to downtown to existing parking spaces, in partnership with community facilities such as the curling rink, arena and Legion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
Facade Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update architectural design guidelines Establishment of facade improvements grant program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
Downtown Banners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement of existing banners along 50 Avenue with new downtown Calmar visual identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low
Murals Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of downtown murals program in coordination with local property owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low

Medium & Long Term

Medium term (years 3 to 5) and long term (years 5 to 10) projects are to be pursued over the next several years and will require a greater commitment from the Town in terms of detailed design, coordination and approval with Alberta Transportation, partnership with private developers and funding. These projects represent more significant investment into public infrastructure to support anticipated demands while still supporting safety and contributing to the overall experience of downtown.

FOCUS AREA	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	RESOURCES
Woodland Park & 51 Street	Upgrades to Private Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved interface between private parking at 5018 and sidewalk along 50 Avenue (as interim action, prior to future redevelopment of the site) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low
49 Street Civic Streetscape	New Market/ Commercial Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site feasibility study and detailed design and redevelopment of the Old Fire Hall (5019 49 Street) including outdoor patio space (Town-owned property) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High
	Alley Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resurfacing between 48 and 49 Street (north of 50 Avenue) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
50 Avenue Mixed Use Development	New Mixed Use Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed design and construction of new building and outdoor plaza with north-south pedestrian connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
	Alley Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resurfacing between 47 and 48 Street (north of 50 Avenue) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium

FOCUS AREA	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	RESOURCES
50 Street Pocket Park & Intersection	50 Street Intersection Signalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed design and construction of signalized intersection Requires coordination with Alberta Transportation 	• High	• High
	50 Avenue Public Realm Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 49 and 50 Street (north and south) Detailed design and construction of improvement including widened sidewalks, and addition of street trees and pedestrian scaled lighting Requires coordination with Alberta Transportation 	• Medium	• High
	Alley Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resurfacing between 49 and 50 Street (north of 50 Avenue) 	• Medium	• Medium
47 Street Intersection	47 Street Intersection Signalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 47 Street intersection signalization including improved pedestrian infrastructure, new and widened sidewalks (north and south of 50 Avenue), boulevard landscaping, pedestrian scale lighting and formalization of parallel on-street parking north of 50 Avenue Requires coordination with Alberta Transportation 	• Medium	• High
	50 Avenue Public Realm Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 47 and 49 Street (north and south) Detailed design and construction of improvement including widened sidewalks, completion of curb extensions (at SE corner of intersection of 49 Street), and addition of street trees and pedestrian scaled lighting Requires coordination with Alberta Transportation 	• Medium	• High

OTHER INITIATIVES	DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY	RESOURCES
Street Furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of additional public furniture along 50 Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low
Wayfinding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and installation of downtown wayfinding signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
Privately-owned Properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment of vacant lots and underdeveloped sites Coordinated with public realm improvements including alley upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium
Alley Upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resurfacing between 47 and 50 Street (south of 50 Avenue) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High

Implementation Summary

	IMMEDIATE (YEAR 0)	SHORT TERM (YEAR 1-3)
Other Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placemaking & Tactical Urbanism Initiatives Marketing & Branding Creative Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers' Market Existing Parking Signage Facade Improvements Downtown Banners Murals Program
WOODLAND PARK & 51 STREET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New 51 Street Crossing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 Avenue Public Realm Improvements (50 to 51 Street, north and south of 50 Avenue) Park Seating Area & Shade Trees Gateway Feature
49 STREET CIVIC STREETScape		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49 Street Upgrades 49 Street Intersection Improvements Seating Area
MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed Use Building Feasibility Study 	
50 STREET POCKET PARK & INTERSECTION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 Street Pocket Park & Off-Street Parking
47 STREET INTERSECTION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gateway Feature

MID TERM (YEAR 3-5)

LONG TERM (YEAR 5-10)

<p>Street Furniture</p> <p>Wayfinding</p>	<p>Privately-owned Properties</p> <p>Alley Upgrades (47 to 50 Street south of 50 Avenue)</p>
<p>Alley Upgrades (48 to 49 Street north of 50 Avenue)</p>	<p>New Market/Commercial Space</p>
<p>Mixed Use Building</p>	
<p>Alley Upgrades (49 to 50 Street north of 50 Avenue)</p>	<p>50 Street Intersection Signalization</p> <p>50 Avenue Public Realm Improvements (49 to 50 Street, north and south of 50 Avenue)</p>
	<p>47 Street Intersection Signalization</p> <p>50 Avenue Public Realm Improvements (47 to 49 Street, north and south of 50 Avenue)</p>

Defining Success

While success will primarily be measured through completion of projects outlined in this plan and overall alignment with the vision and design principles, success can also be measured through formation of local partnerships and project champions. Although the Town will ultimately play the lead role in most of the implementation, successful execution of the CVP will also be based on involvement of local partners (e.g., businesses, organizations, developers and residents). Their role may include advocacy, promotion, volunteerism and support, investment, and long-term stewardship. It will be the local champions that ultimately see the vision for downtown Calmar take shape along main street. This will be achieved through a commitment to driving actions forward and taking leadership of improvements and initiatives over the long term. These champions are Town Administration, Council, members of the Vitalization Task Force Committee, business owners, residents or other local stakeholders including Alberta Transportation.

Other measurable indicators of success may include retention and financial success of existing businesses, number of new business, utilization of existing spaces (residential/commercial vacancies), amount of new developments, number of community events, and visitorship to downtown. These metrics can give insights into the overall health of downtown and the community based and the success of the Community Vitalization Plan over time.

Funding

The implementation of the Community Vitalization Plan will require funding from a variety of sources. These may include capital budgets, municipal programs, government grants, and private-public partnership. Investment by private land owners into their own properties will also contribute to realizing the overall vision for downtown in the long-term, and opportunity to enable private investment should be encouraged by the Town.

Capital Budget

The Town could create a downtown capital reserve whereby an agreed upon value is transferred to the reserve for annual capital enhancements. The Town could also agree upon a percentage of annual capital be spent on downtown initiatives through current funds access from annual provincial and federal infrastructure grants.

Government Grants

The Town has already taken advantage of government grants to access funding for the Community Vitalization project (CARES). Opportunities for future grant funding for projects and initiatives may be through a combination of federal and provincial sources. For example, the new Canada Healthy Communities Initiative was launched in 2021 and is providing up to \$31 million in funding to support communities as they deploy new ways to adapt spaces and services to respond to immediate and ongoing needs arising from COVID-19 over the next two years. Projects considered include (1) creating safe and vibrant public spaces; (2) improving mobility options; and (3) digital solutions. Opportunities for grant programs will need to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Development Charges & Community Revitalization Levy

Development charges and other growth cost recovery tools such as community amenity contributions outline conditions that developers must comply with in order to obtain a development permit and complete construction. Community amenities may include public spaces such as parks, streetscape, sidewalk and alley upgrades, new park space, public art, and private amenities such as family-oriented or affordable housing and heritage preservation. These types of contributions provide amenities that offer a broad community benefit, and provide the opportunity to supporting initiatives such as enhancements in downtown and along main street.

The Community Revitalization Levy Program is a planning and financial tool that helps municipalities revitalize areas where redevelopment might not otherwise take place. This type of program allows municipalities to borrow against future property tax revenues to help pay for infrastructure required to spur on new development in a specific area. A downtown levy may be collected and used in accordance with the Municipal Government Act and has been identified as an opportunity for downtown in Calmar's Municipal Development Plan. A Community Revitalization Levy must be passed by bylaw, which is not a requirement for other types of development charges such as community amenity contributions.

Landowner Agreements

Some opportunity areas identified in the Community Vitalization Plan require update or renewal to private property to better align with the vision for main street. For example, the parking lot that is adjacent to the sidewalk along 50 Avenue, in front of the Calmar Shopping Centre property at 50 Avenue. The Town should facilitate the development of landowner agreements for the necessary renewal of these types of spaces for the benefit of the public realm. Such an agreement is a legal mechanism for a project to proceed with clear delineation of scope and financial responsibilities.

Public-Private Partnerships

The Town should explore partnership opportunities with the private sector for the completion of key projects or sites. This allows for the sharing of costs, risks and benefits of development while leveraging the expertise of the development industry and the regulatory power of the municipality. It enables development to occur faster than what might be possible without this type of strategic relationship.

The Town already has several Town-owned properties, which have been identified in this plan, that could be made shovel ready for redevelopment. Mixed-use development projects are ideal for public-private partnerships. Best practices have shown that mixed-use developments maximize the most return on investment, diversifies risk, and make projects more feasible than a single-use project. These types of projects have also been proven to spur on other types of investment and private sector development in the area – one of the key aspirations of the Community Vitalization Plan.

Co-operative Funding Model

The Town should explore a development cooperative model to spur on larger projects within the downtown core. A funding cooperative would raise the capital dollars required to kick start a project by way of private investment. Members of the community, or region could purchase RRSP and TFSA eligible shares in the cooperative. The cooperative would then use the raised capital to complete a project or leverage the dollars to access additional forms of funding.



Appendix

Other Supportive Reports

Creation of the Community Vitalization Plan involved the following supportive reports:

- Calmar Housing Market Assessment (2020), **Intelligence House**
- Calmar Awareness Strategy (2021), **Zag Creative**



Community Vitalization Plan

Prepared by:

DIALOG[®]