



GROW CALMAR

Community Strategic Direction
2021

A focused vision for the future.

start now





What if we could achieve the exceptional as a community?

What kind of community do we want to leave behind for our children and grandchildren? How do we create the transformative in our plans that help get us to an ambitious horizon line for Calmar?

The Town of Calmar has established building blocks that will work to answer these questions:

- Strategic Direction - a focused vision for the future.
- Communications Strategy – that helps the Town of Calmar enhance engagement with residents.
- Brand – fresh marketing that connects with residents and attracts investment, new residents, and visitors.



Community Development Foundations

Strategic Direction refreshes vision, which is made more powerful with focus, expression of tangible initiatives, and emotion. This is our “elevator pitch” that answers why Calmar matters and guides priority in action.

Strategic Direction is the heartbeat of strategic planning, and translation in policy (e.g. Council Strategic Plan, MDP, Land Use Bylaw).

A Community Development Roadmap is a plan on a page that helps people understand strategic direction, and inter-connectivity of initiatives.

Strategic Direction is made transformative when paired with an aggressive and focused brand that connects with audiences needed to make vision happen: residents, and potential investors, new residents, and visitors.

Our Vision

Home is where the heart is in Calmar – as the Edmonton region’s most affordable community. Connected to the earth in what we sow and grow. Connected to the neighbours you know. Pursuing an energized downtown, imaginative new housing options, and new types of spaces and places for entrepreneurs to grow their craft.

A prism applied to all actions....





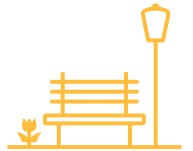
Value Proposition

WHY DO WE MATTER? Answer this question and 80% of a community's economic development pathway is defined via connection to people and enterprise who best connect with value proposition. And the more unique or powerful the value proposition, the further the lengths people will go to pursue it.



Affordable housing with urban amenity access

This is a quantified value proposition, tracked over time.



Amenity (in order): trails, library, arena (Src: Recreation Master Plan)

Lifestyle: safe, friendly, connected community, small, location (Src: Town of Calmar staff workshop, 2021)

TOWN OF CALMAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

GROW CALMAR

Calmar's industrial development strategy should target agriculture services as priority #1, with a secondary general regional industrial services target. Vertical farming/greenhousing is a natural fit.

THE LANDSOME STRATEGY

Calmar is struggling with industrial land availability (e.g. orphan wells). The community needs more industrial land to grow its industrial base and meet a non-residential assessment target.

NICHE EXPERIENCES

Calmar won't win the race to chain and big box stores. Calmar's opportunity lies in unique experiential retail and services.

THE AGRIHOOD

Agrihoods – where residential development, productive agriculture, and commercial opportunity converge - is a key distinguishing housing product development pathway that aligns with Calmar area agriculture strength.

GET DOWN... TOWN

Calmar should prioritize and accelerate implementation of the Community Vitalization Plan as the heart and soul of community life, and placemaking.

ADVANCED BROADBAND

It's no longer good enough just to be connected to the Internet. Gigabit broadband is now an essential utility re investment and resident location decision making, an enabler of competitive economies of the future.

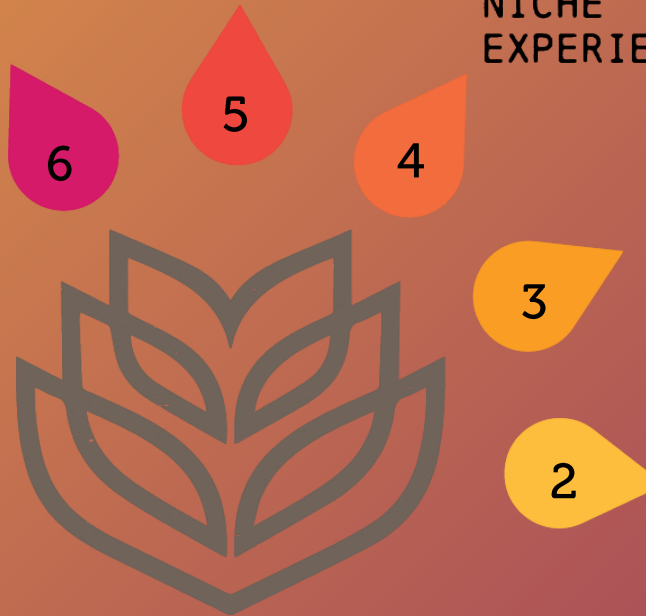
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The economy is evolving, with a greater share of self-employed, and/or work from home...the "independents." Calmar can stand out from the crowd by enabling physical space and program opportunities that accelerate local small business growth rates.

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

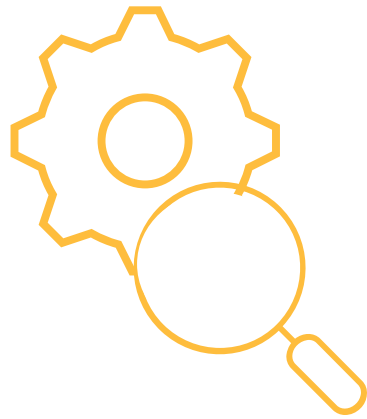
Calmar has a significant housing price competitive advantage. Calmar should maintain and enhance housing value proposition via policy and advocacy for housing choice, and alignment with new home-based commercial opportunities.

Who? Millennials, Gen Z, Families



Strategic Priorities

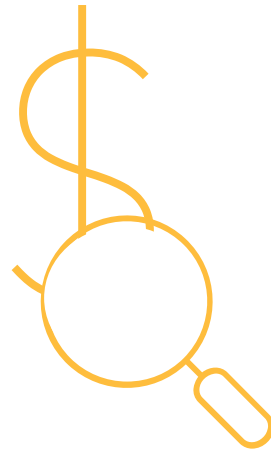
Great strategies aren't about everything we do on a day-to-day basis. Great strategies solve challenges and/or step into opportunities. Great strategies identify best return on investment of time and energy in initiative areas that lie at the heart of progress and transformation.



EXPAND THE ECONOMY

Target sector development (specialty retail, ag services, food & beverage, regional industrial services)

Attract "Independents"



NURTURE ENTREPRENEURS

Missing middle commerce

Placemaking



ATTRACT FAMILIES

Innovative housing that nurtures affordability and attainability

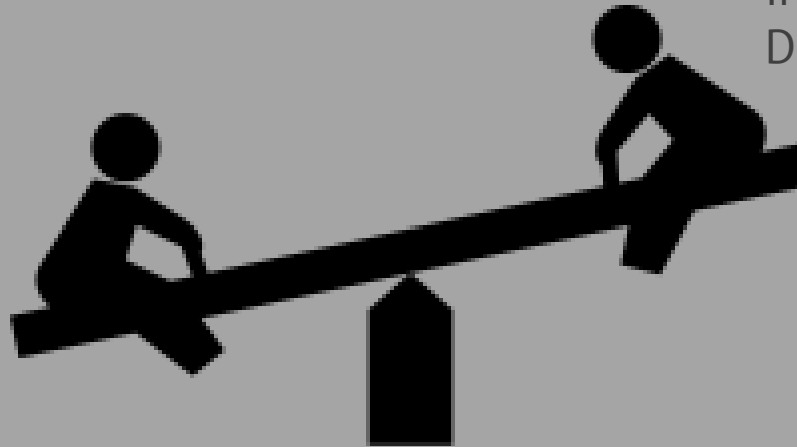
Focused/prioritized recreation amenity

Talent Attraction and Retention is the Future

Think of economic development as a see-saw. Traditionally – we only tackled industry sector development in positioning “site location factors” – like skilled workforce supply, transportation access, and build/operating costs. These days, a proportionately growing independent workforce requires different considerations – with a focus on quality of life and place as a leading location decision making framework.

“The Independents”

- Creative Industries
- Tech
- Transportation
- Construction
- Professional Services
- Entrepreneurs



Industry Sector Development

- Ag Services
- Food & Beverage
- Speciality Retail
- Regional Industrial Services – all sectors

Did You Know?

9.9% of the Calmar workforce was self-employed, and 5.9% of the workforce worked from home in 2016, below 12% and 7.8% Alberta averages respectively. Calmar should enhance efforts to attract “The Independents” given many economic, and social benefits.

ENABLING ACTIONS: Gigabit Broadband, Housing Policy innovation, Placemaking, Community Vitalization Plan implementation, Sustained resident attraction economic development marketing campaign.



1

ACTIONS: Evaluate best practices, develop comparatives, and be conscious of business models and power of property development to be an investment vs a mortgage in making policy adjustments.

“Home” Is Your Lead

Create more choice that sustains/deepens affordability value proposition via MDP and Land Use Bylaw policy adjustments. Foundational for attraction of “Independents,” and competitive cost of living for sector-based workforce supply.

What It Looks Like

- Mixed-use/more density downtown
- Secondary suites
- Work-live buildings
- Home-based business
- Mixed-use buildings
- Accessory dwelling/commercial units
- Adaptive housing
- Agrihood/eco-village at master planning level

Enabling Policy Areas

- Greater site coverage
- Smaller minimum house sizes
- Smaller lots
- Mixed use
- Multi-unit R1
- 2+ units/lot
- Lower parking standards
- More home-based business flexibility
- More permitted uses,
- Fewer land uses



ACTIONS: 1) Make policy adjustments to enable temporary uses, accessory commercial units, and a mixed-use downtown expansion zone; 2) Facilitate creation of a co-work/co-location/creator space downtown; 3) Poll community to determine top 1-2 entrepreneur program supports that would best enable local entrepreneurialism.

Nurture Entrepreneurship

Calmar can address an enduring challenge – and set itself apart – by enabling entrepreneurial uplift with “middle ground commerce” policy and advocacy that creatively bridges the gap between home-based business and large commercial and industrial spaces.



Img Src: Strong Towns <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/11/6/theres-a-missing-middle-for-commercial-spaces-too>

What It Looks Like

Form: Pop-ups (tents, trailers, temporary structures), Accessory Commercial Unit (commercial edges), co-work spaces, incubators/accelerators/tech hub space, market spaces/buildings, arterial neighbourhood gateway road, work-live, “the corner store”

Function: e.g. youth entrepreneurship program, micro investment fund, mentorship, start-up program



2

ACTIONS: Consider land use bylaw amendments to be more permissive with home-based business regulation – reflecting changing nature of use of the home and an economic development strategy priority: only identify non-permitted uses, signs up to 5 sq. ft., a Home Industry classification on large lots that permits more extensive use of residential property for enterprise, including outdoor storage, use of up to 50% of dwelling, no permitting for Minor classification, removal of client visit restrictions, permission of retail sales if produce on premises, remove or increase employee limit (at least 2 for Minor), remove parking requirement, and introduction of a complaint-based mediation process.

Nurture Residenterprise™

Apple. Google. Amazon. Disney. Facebook. Spanx. Mattel. A laundry list of today's notable giants started in homes and garages. Homes are leading business incubators. The way we use our homes is changing...today's homes are a central nervous system for living, work, and recreation. Policy tends to over-regulate for fear of impact...amidst a world that is increasingly tolerant of the many ways we use our homes. More enabling policy would enable entrepreneurial growth and feed growth of broader, visible commerce and industry in Calmar.

What It Looks Like

Calmar's current home-based business regulation: Specifies approved uses; Identifies non-permitted uses; Has each of a Minor and Major classification; Can be located in principal or accessory building
Is more permissive for larger lot sizes; Limits # client visits – 2/day Minor up to 8 larger lot size/Major
1 off-site employee for Minor up to 3 on larger lot size/Major; Requires a development permit for both Minor and Major (Minor permitted in land use, Major – discretionary); 1 flush-mounted sign not to exceed 2 sq. ft. (note an address can be 3 sq. ft.); 1 off-street parking space required



3

Get Down...Town

Downtown is where entrepreneurial spirit is most heartfelt, and can be most enabled. Calmar should prioritize resources to fast-track implementation of the Community Vitalization Plan. A set of complementary implementation actions are identified in Strategic Direction to incent downtown enhancement, and enhance redevelopment business models – particularly related to more floor area/lot size and less red tape=less risk in development approval processes.

What It Looks Like

The great policy enablers of animated downtowns and investment business models are: Mixed use; Lower parking standards, Manufacturing/Retail combo as permitted use; Open Streets (private sector use of public streets/sidewalks); More permitted uses; Shared commercial spaces/markets; All things smaller; allowance for temporary uses (e.g. pop-ups).

ACTIONS: 1) Increase number of permitted uses/decrease number of discretionary uses; 2) Reduce non-residential parking requirements/assume use of public streets; 3) Create seasonal open streets program to encourage business use of sidewalks/animate downtown; 4) Encourage establishment of a private "market" for crafters to retail products, and facilitate public/private outdoor markets; 5) Permit temporary commercial uses downtown.



3

Get Down...Town – Cont'd

NEW MIXED-USE DISTRICT

Proposed new mixed-use district indicated in red (approximate). This district would, for example, permit greater site coverage, up to quads on residential properties and/or mixed-use buildings, reduced parking standards (better business models), permit accessory commercial units on residential properties, and permit up to two accessory dwelling units.

ACTIONS: 6) Create a new mixed use land use district for the downtown that enables mix of activity including expressed permission for more density and residential above main floor, and more breadth of activity (e.g. Village of Canal Flats - Zoning Bylaw page 52 – Village Centre Mixed Use - <https://canalflats.civicweb.net/document/11376>). Note: there is presently no mixed-use zoning in Calmar.



ACTIONS: Nurture and focus economic development attraction marketing and product development advisory on development of differentiated niche, experiential retail and services.

Develop Niche Experiences

Calmar won't win the race to chain and big box stores. Edmonton and Leduc offer existing breadth and depth. Calmar's opportunity lies in unique, experiential retail and services. This in turn supports a Calmar value proposition and brand focused on deeper, more soulful connection to people and place. High quality stand-out experiences are foundational for this value proposition and brand.



5

Grow Calmar – Ag Centre

Calmar is situated amidst some of the most fertile agricultural land in Alberta – in a Canada that will soon be one of the few net exporting agriculture nations on the planet.

Key Anchor – Food Processing Development Centre, Leduc
<https://www.leduc.ca/innovation/agri-food>



Img Src: <https://www.seed.ab.ca/food-processing-development-centre-grows-provinces-food-and-beverage-industries/>

ACTIONS: 1) Market Calmar as a location of choice (land availability, low business costs, central to ag hub south of Edmonton) for ag services; 2) Work with/piggyback onto Leduc County's Agricultural Strategy - https://www.leduc-county.com/uploads/11023/Doc_637116739188262000.pdf?ts=637119565197307509



Land Development Strategy

Strategy: EXPAND EMPLOYMENT LANDS SUPPLY

Actions:

- 1) Identify a non-residential assessment ratio target: 78% residential/22% non-residential (Town average – Alberta, 2020).
- 2) Place target in Council Strategic Plan.
- 3) Create a map of constrained/undevelopable non-residential lands.
- 4) Calculate land area requirement to meet target.
- 5) Initiate and sustain inter-municipal conversation re future target-based non-residential land requirement to secure land supply required.



Why is Non-Residential Development Important?

Non-residential development creates comprehensive sustainability benefits...



ECONOMIC

- Direct employment generation.
- Enhanced ability to pay for desired services and amenities – which contributes to a virtuous cycle of quality of life/placemaking enhancements that attract repeating cycles of increased investment.
- “Basic” (exporting) industry has higher job multipliers, creating spin-off economic opportunities and demand for “non-basic” supporting employment like retail and professional services.



FISCAL

- Commercial/industrial development generally has a higher/acre assessment than residential development.
- Non-residential development in AB and Canada pays higher property tax rates than residential development.
- Relative housing affordability and attainability requires density. Density in turn creates more people requiring basic services and asking for enhanced amenities on a per acre basis. Non-residential development is critical to creating ability to support services and amenities for increased densities.



SOCIAL

- More 24hr residency has social benefits – e.g. volunteerism.



ENVIRONMENTAL

- A lower commuter ratio would reduce CO² emissions.



Calmar has an urban agriculture policy - <https://www.calmar.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/085-2021-Urban-Agriculture-Policy.pdf>

Bridging Catalyst - Agrihood

Agrihoods are a match with a Calmar value proposition and brand that is deeply connected to place and people, while taking advantage of competitive local area advantage in land fertility, and value-added opportunity. While there are approximately 150 agrihoods in North America, there is only one pending in Alberta (Airdrie), offering Calmar a pathway for unique residential development that would attract new residents.

Definition - a type of planned community that integrates agriculture into a residential neighborhood. The purpose is to facilitate food production as well as provide green space, recreation, aesthetics and value for a community.

Business opportunities: production, hand-craft processing, farm to table restaurant.



Bridging Catalyst – Advanced Broadband

It's no longer good enough just to be connected to the Internet. Broadband is now an essential utility. Speed and service reliability enable life itself. Studies show speed is correlated with economic productivity. Reliability is critical for generations to come. Digital networks are a central nervous system for the "economy of the brain" that will be central to an ambitious path forward for communities.

The Town of Calmar can't delay in securing advanced broadband infrastructure and service levels as a critical enabler of economic activity and quality of life.



Key Performance Indicators

Two measures are indicative of Strategic Direction success:

← 1

22% Non-Residential Assessment Base

Current: 16.5%

Alberta Towns - 2020 – 22%

A larger non-residential assessment base creates the ability to pay for services and amenities residents desire, and consider enhancements that are appealing to new/expanded forms of investment and tourism. Increasing this ratio is ambitious amidst population (residential assessment) growth.

← 2

33% of Calmar Residents Work in Calmar

Current: 23%

More people working in Calmar has many benefits, including: direct job creation, spending multipliers, social benefits (e.g. reduced crime, increased volunteerism), better fiscal bottom line for the Town of Calmar, and CO² emissions reduction.

