

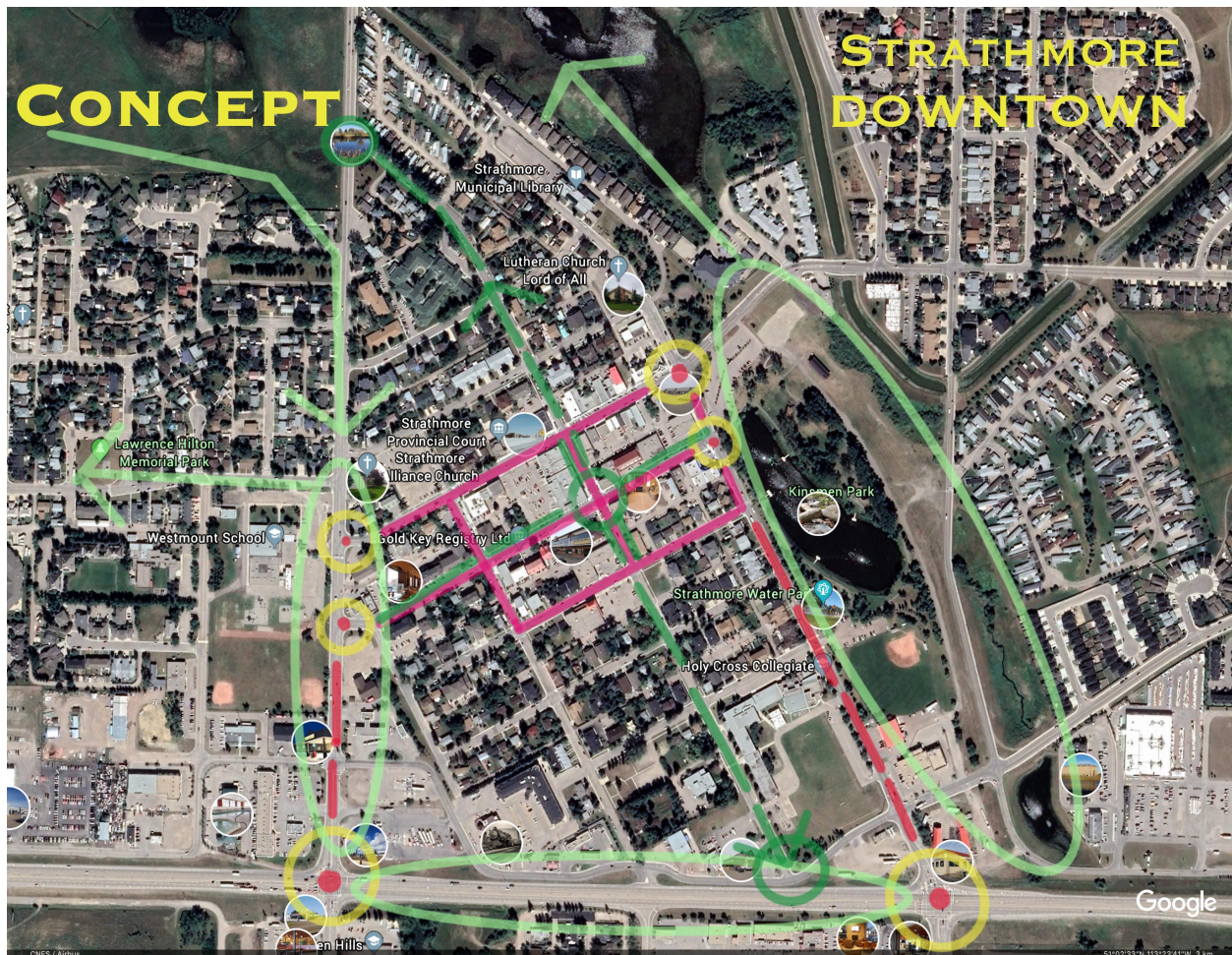
Appendix D
MVH Downtown and Highway
Workshops Summary, October 23,
2019

TOWN OF STRATHMORE

Downtown + Highway Workshops

SUMMARY REPORT

FINAL: V3, October 23, 2019



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PART A: OVERVIEW

This report and process was a cooperative effort between the Town of Strathmore and MVH Urban Planning & Design.

Purpose: This report summarizes and make recommendations regarding Strathmore's downtown and highway areas as a result of three community workshops held on September 16 and 17, 2019 at the Legion in downtown Strathmore. This report will inform the *Municipal Development Plan Update* that is underway and also, hopefully, inspire further improvements to the downtown and highway areas.

Background: Michael von Hausen of MVH, the workshops facilitator, visited the highway area and downtown in the morning and early afternoon of September 16, took photographs, and met with staff prior to the workshops starting at 5:00 pm. MVH had also reviewed the current policies and another recent event on June 20 to determine potential opportunities that could help guide further improvements and inform the MDP Update that is currently being undertaken (see *Appendix A* for further detail).

Workshops Format and Discussion: The workshops began on Monday, September 16 with dinner at 5:00 pm. Two workshops then followed from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The first workshop focused on downtown from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm, followed by a highway discussion from 7:30 to 8:30 pm. For the downtown workshop portion, the 40 participants were divided into 5 tables supported by a staff facilitator for small group discussions to answer the following questions:

- **What are the challenges and opportunities?**
- **What is unique about the downtown?**
- **What actions can happen NOW?**
- **What mix and form of development should be envisioned for the downtown?**



For the final question for downtown, participants at each table used LEGO sets and placed different coloured pieces on the aerial photo provided to illustrate the form and use potential in the downtown.

Each of the 5 tables then presented a summary of their results. Following a short break, each table discussed highway challenges, opportunities, and potential improvements from 7:30 to 8:30 pm and the evening then adjourned.



The following morning at 9:00 am another workshop followed breakfast. This workshop began with a brief summary of the results of the previous evening. Approximately 20 people attended this final workshop. The summary was followed by an open discussion on what actions were priorities that could be implemented now for the downtown and the highway.

PART B: RESULTS AND FEEDBACK

The following is a summary of the common themes that came from the five table discussions.

Downtown



Opportunities:

1. **Build on improvements:** The new sidewalks and associated benches, lights, and planting in the downtown core have improved the look and freshness of downtown. Now is the time to build on these enhancements, especially as the new Town Hall takes shape on the edge of Kinsmen Park.

2. **Compact size and location:** The downtown core consists primarily of two blocks or an easy 5-minute walk down to Kinsmen Park on 3rd Avenue or on 2nd Avenue. This is a perfect size for a walkable downtown. It is a grid street layout, so all is visible, permeable and easily accessible. The downtown is also only a few blocks from the highway.
3. **Local businesses and good buildings:** There are a majority of locally based and unique businesses that are attractors for people looking for something special rather than the national chain stores or eateries.
4. **Lots of free parking:** There is lots of street and off-street free parking that provides a number of convenient choices close to businesses with a reasonable time limit.
5. **Façade improvement, murals, and public art:** There is an opportunity to enhance the facades, as well as extend the creation of murals and public art in the downtown.
6. **A central plaza:** The downtown needs a heart or central meeting place where people can meet outside, a central place for the market and other special events beyond Kinsmen Park.
7. **Placemaking and programming open for business:** There are opportunities for improving the spaces along the street, vacant lots, and providing opportunities for pop-up businesses and events that create more attractor factors downtown.
8. **Green space and trail network:** Kinsmen Park at the foot of Downtown provides an incredible opportunity to mix active recreation with shopping and tourism. Extending a trail network in Kinsmen Park to the highway and throughout the community will enhance the walkable and bike-friendly aspects of downtown and a healthy community.
9. **Collaboration and completion:** There are opportunities for more business collaboration, coordination, and expanding the mix and richness of the businesses downtown. Zoning is flexible and accommodating of a diversity of uses.
10. **Identity and theme:** There are opportunities to clearly define what Strathmore was, is, and wants to become – develop an authentic brand. This can be expressed in signage, wayfinding, and public art throughout the downtown.
11. **Mobility:** There is potential to connect the community heart to other parts, so people don't have to drive, supported by a community shuttle, especially during special events.
12. **Wayfinding and "yes" signage:** Make clear where downtown is and make it easy to get there and stay with supportive facilities that invite visitors to stay for more than one reason.
13. **Celebrate the history:** Culture, art, and history are important in creating a unique place and place recognition where people feel at home or see it as something unique and worth coming back to again and again.
14. **Expand events and programming to four seasons:** Consider more events during all season, including skating on Kinsmen Lake, a S'more Festival, Taste of Strathmore, and a demonstration farm.

Challenges:

1. **No access and orientation:** It is hard to find downtown and there is no specific downtown signage to indicate where it is! This is a serious problem, especially with the thousands of vehicles coming past Strathmore every hour along the Trans-Canada highway.
2. **Limited businesses and hours:** The majority of businesses downtown are business services. There is a need to diversify and enrich the mix of uses – expanding retail as well as food and beverage in the downtown core area. The hours of businesses are very limited and not posted on many businesses.
3. **Empty storefronts:** Vacant storefronts are like “missing teeth”. They do not add value and attractiveness to the downtown.
4. **Limited diversity and attractions:** There are few reasons for senior citizens to come downtown and limited reasons for others to come downtown. We need to program the downtown for the whole family. People could come once and are not prompted to return.
5. **No attraction on the highway:** A progressive “Community Resource Centre” could attract and orient newcomers and visitors to the community with public washrooms, information, and support.
6. **Disconnection with business owners and the community:** There appears to be a lack of coordination and support within and outside the downtown. Do people shop locally or elsewhere and why?
7. **Lack of basic services:** There is no grocery store downtown and other basic or services where people can buy for their daily and weekly needs.

What is Unique About Downtown?

1. **Sunny, attractive, and charming scale with wide sidewalks:** The downtown is scaled for the pedestrian and is easy to walk with a sunny orientation as there are generally one- and two-story buildings.
2. **Central park:** Kinsmen Park provides a large recreation green space adjoining downtown with a splash park relatively close as well as pathways and a beautiful lake.
3. **Care and cleanliness:** The sidewalks are clean and new – enhanced by planting and new seating areas.
4. **Co-workers space and theatre:** There is a co-working space at Bow Valley College and a historical theatre in the Downtown. These uses are both traditional (reflecting history) and progressive for the next generation.

5. **No highway or train through downtown:** There are many downtowns that have highways or train tracks limiting access, safety, and enjoyment. Strathmore's downtown is quiet and safe that way.
6. **Schools close by:** Two schools are relatively close to the downtown.
7. **History of the railway and agriculture:** Strathmore has a unique story to tell and share.
8. **Diversity of new and old buildings:** The downtown has a variety of new and old buildings.
9. **Walking tour map (History):** Strathmore has a walking tour app.
10. **Strong community groups and volunteers:** Opportunity to promote and coordinate the arts, music, and history.

Actions Now

1. Develop a wayfinding strategy and archway signage similar to Old Strathcona in Edmonton
2. Inform drivers on the Trans-Canada highway of downtown
3. Create a communication strategy with website, online presence, apps, and advertising outside Strathmore
4. Implement a customer service training program for all businesses and "warm welcome" approach
5. Coordinate business hours and communication
6. Build a public washroom at the north end of Kinsmen Park
7. Provide more water fountains
8. Partner with Community Futures for storefront façade improvements
9. Create more co-work spaces
10. Complete a vacant space inventory
11. Encourage pop-up retail
12. Extend downtown seasonal events (like an annual winter S'more Festival)
13. Develop an outdoor fitness park and yoga space
14. Support public art installations
15. Provide scooter and bike rentals
16. Create banners and plaques to share the history of Strathmore
17. Provide cool lighting like Helsinki, Finland
18. Make Kinsman lake swimmable
19. Add pop-up businesses
20. Replace the current fountain on Kinsmen Lake with a larger with special features (lighting, music and special effects)
21. Provide tax incentives for improvements

Modeling the Future Downtown

Each of the 5 tables developed a model of their downtown using pieces to illustrate building and open space placements as well as use and density. It is important to note that the red colours generally represented commercial, yellow residential, orange higher residential density with commercial, and blue institutional uses.



Table 1: Concentrate commercial uses in the core area with residential uses or offices uses above. Add institutional uses around downtown to bring more visitors. Keep Kinsmen Park green and extend the green north with a trail and open space system.



Table 2: Keep and emphasize Kinsmen Park as a major asset for the downtown commercial core. Maintain and enhance the commercial core and keep it concentrated. Add more residential density around it and extend and connect the parks in the downtown area.



Table 3: Create a mix of uses in the downtown core concentrating development in the western sector but considering additional significant density and new uses near the highway and on special sites.



Table 4: Envision a bigger downtown with significant redevelopment, while maintaining the commercial core of service and retail. Around the edges, redevelop sites into more compact and denser residential neighbourhoods with commercial for local service, green roofs, and a transition of building heights to Kinsmen Park.

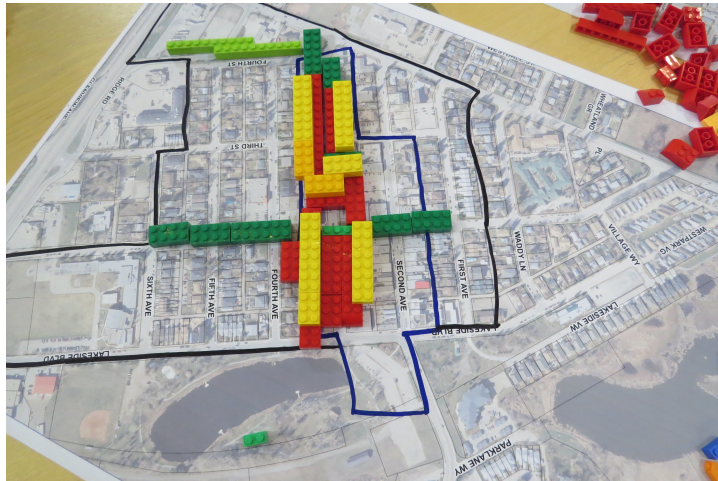


Table 5: Maintain and densify the core downtown area with residential and commercial mixed uses while adding pedestrian green streets and connectors to the highway and adjoining neighbourhoods as well as gateways to the downtown.

Overall Themes:

1. Concentrate commercial in the core along 2nd and 3rd Avenues with residential uses above.
2. Connect the surrounding neighbourhoods with green/pedestrian streets.
3. Retain and enhance Kinsmen Park with adjoining mixed uses but keep the park green.
4. Introduce green roofs and active upper levels with increased residential around the core area to support and expand the businesses, generally in the order of 3 to 6 storeys in some cases.
5. Increase density along the park edge but ensure that the building step back and respect the sensitive edges.
6. Bring further park spaces into the downtown core for community gathering and create a heart to the downtown.
7. Define gateways into the downtown from the highway and along Wheatland Trail to clearly define and invite visitors into the downtown.
8. Possibly consider even higher density on special sites that could bring more people into the downtown.

Highway Improvements



Opportunities

1. Visibility and connection to downtown
2. Beautification: adding trees, flowers, signage and symbolic Strathmore (e.g., a bull statue/gateway symbolizing “running with the bulls” annual event)
3. Wayfinding strategy and gateway signage
4. Pathway: along the highway from Chestermere to Strathmore: legacy trail, railway trail and trailhead
5. Pedestrian crossings
6. Overpass and traffic circle considerations
7. Service road continuity
8. Information Centre at one entry point

Challenges

- Signage pollution
- Lack of wayfinding signage

How can we improve the look and feel of the Highway Corridor?

- Sign coordination (regulations / consistent colours)
- Tourist booth (with greenspace and bathrooms)
- Planters
- Power poles with flags like downtown (interchangeable – seasonal / events specific)
- Façade upgrades

Actions to take now

- Organize a **Highway leadership group** to coordinate and improve highway aesthetics (leadership from Planning and Economic Development)
- Sign coordination (remove illegal signage / consistent colours)
- Power Poles with flags like downtown (interchangeable – seasonal / events specific)
- Façade upgrades
- Service road upgrade is underway

PART C: RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview and Strategy Framework

Overview: *The downtown and highway areas need leadership to turn them around. Without a directed and supported coalition of the Town of Strathmore (Planning and Economic Development), Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, and Bow Valley College as well as key business leaders, the downtown and highway will continue as they are and decline further over time. The downtown needs an enriched mix of uses, a memorable “experience”, and coordinated extended hours. Why even go there if the shopper can’t depend on the operating hours or interesting and unique products? The highway is polluted with too much and uncoordinated signage (some illegal), and uncoordinated strip landscaping or no landscaping at all. You wonder why the thousands of passersby don’t stop? The answer is obvious right now. However, there is an outstanding opportunity to capture these passersby and have the downtown overflowing with visitors and local residents. Let’s look at the possibilities.*

Strategy Approach: The concept that follows illustrates the overall framework for a further vitalization of Strathmore’s downtown with highway and gateway improvements as part of the integrated approach. The highway and downtown, should be seamlessly connected, not separate. There are thousands of potential customers coming by Strathmore’s front door every day. Not many towns have that advantage. The question is how does Strathmore capture these passersby’s not once but as a place of memory that they come back to over and over again? In this respect, the workshops solidified the need to connect the highway to downtown. There are many supportive policies within the existing MDP (see *Appendix A summary*) but a clear road forward to incent and build the necessary improvements is necessary. Policy without action are really just good intentions.

There are 10 strategies recommended to jump-start the next stage of vitalization. These strategies are then segmented into NOW (immediate), short-term (1-3 years) and medium-term strategies (3-10 years) based on level of support, cost, ease of implementation, and impact of investment. They are meant to build a momentum of successes that feed further funding (local and provincial) as the groundwork is set and the customers (locals and tourists) feed vibrancy, and a further significant place-to-be feeling in downtown Strathmore. People will want to move to Strathmore because they feel something special – all part of the special small-town character to build on and cherish.

The following recommendations are divided into three components:

1. Physical Concept Framework: Make Connections
2. Ten Strathmore Strategies
3. Downtown and Highway Action Plan



A. **Physical Concept Framework: “Make Connections”**

Strathmore has the great Kinsmen Park at the doorstep to its downtown and has made significant improvement to the sidewalks, planting, and lighting in the downtown core. With the planned Town Hall located also on the edge of downtown, the area is primed for complementary enhancements to make the downtown further shine. In some cases, the actions may take more significant funds (e.g., overhead gateway option), while in other cases, smartly located unique signage and planting with take relatively small capital investments.

1. **The Strathmore Downtown Gateways: Three Components**

- **Create a highway gateway** to the downtown on the highway with proper signage and a Community Resource Centre at Wheatland Trail or Lakeside Boulevard. Make the proper signage and “warm welcome” also well before entering the town, east and west of the town limits (one sign without specific downtown messaging is not good enough).
- **Upgrade the gateway streets** – Wheatland Trail on the west and Lakeside Boulevard on the east should be tree-lined and landscaped to create a continuous quality experience. “Downtown 300 metres” signs should be noted on the streets. These should be unique downtown signs as they are not regulated by Alberta Transportation as highways signs are regulated for colour, size, and design.
- **Consider downtown overhead gateways** at the edge of the downtown core located on the west at the intersections of 2nd and 3rd Avenues at 3rd Street, and on the east at Lakeside Boulevard on at the intersections of 2nd and 3rd Avenues. These gateways (there could be four or two locations) could be overhead within the relatively narrow right-of-way, similar but much smaller than the Old Strathcona overhead gateway in Edmonton.

2. **Overall Wayfinding and Sequencing/Size**

Critical to attracting more visitors to the downtown is a clear sequencing of signage and the accompanying “messaging”. The sequence, size, and messaging of signs connected to Smart Phone apps is important. There could be an automatic “pop-up” as visitors approach Strathmore that highlights events and special attractions. Consider painting wayfinding on the sidewalks (e.g., books to the library or around library).

3. **Trails, Pathways, and Park Connections**

- **Visual connections** to the downtown via the park space connecting to the Trans-Canada Highway is important. There could be a connected trail system and series of fountains that connect the highway to the downtown and Town Hall area via the open space/park system.
- **Trails and pathways connections** including connecting to the Trans-Canada Trail (Great Trail) south of the downtown and along the highway would be a significant improvement to attract bicyclists and trail enthusiasts. These could include:
 - The *Trans-Canada Trailhead* and connection south of the highway via underpass or crossing with signage with trail connections to Kinsmen Park

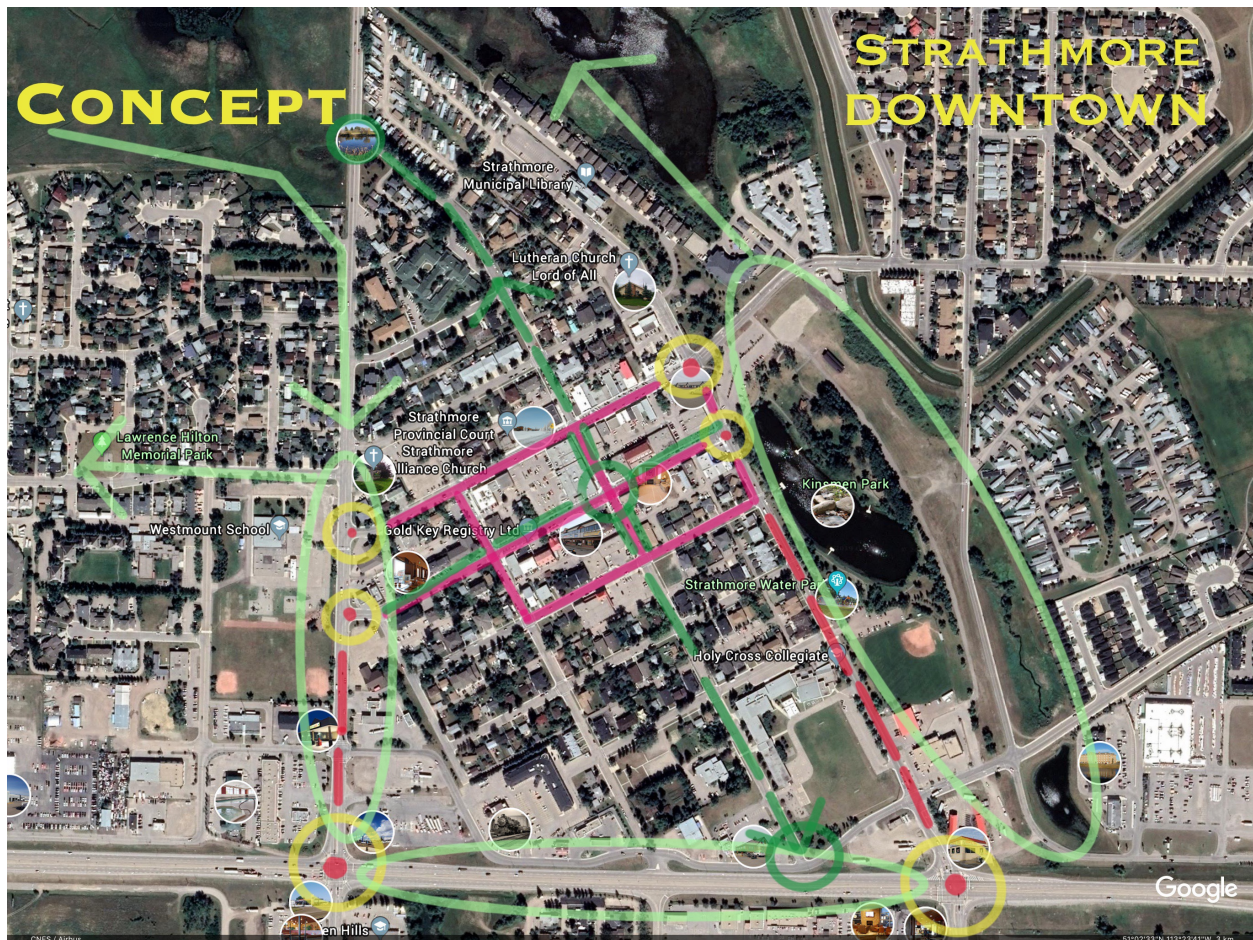
- A *Legacy Trail* from Strathmore to Chestermere along the Highway
- A comprehensive *Strathmore Park Trails* system that connects Kinsmen Park to the Highway and north to the other parks and green spaces of the Town

4. Special Central Plaza and Meeting Place

Strathmore should create a central meeting place in the downtown core separate from the new Town Hall and Kinsmen Park. It could be located on one of the vacant lots. This spot will be the place to have lunch, listen to music, a new location for the farmer's market, and an opportunity for temporary pop-up businesses. Both the City of Leduc and Drumheller have created these kind of plaza improvements, especially as a base for special events and to attract visitors on weekends (*See Strategy 5 for photographs*).

5. Significant Feature and Attractor Landmark

A special feature like a large fountain with lighting and music in Kinsmen Lake and/or a symbolic large bull sculpture (tastefully done) on or near the highway could be a unique and memorable landmark for Strathmore. The old rail car at the Station restaurant along the Trans-Canada Highway is an example of a local landmark that is memorable.



B. Ten Strathmore Strategies

1. **Be inviting and connect at the Trans-Canada Highway:** You have one chance to make a good impression. A warm welcome along the Highway that is directed by proper coordinated and unique clean signage goes a long way to invite visitors into your downtown and create a clean and attractive “local” highway corridor.
 - Clean up the illegal and non-authorized signs that create visual pollution, clutter, and confusion along the Trans-Canada Highway
 - Coordinate signage to limited points so there is a legible sequence to each block
 - Improve the landscapes on each of the highway properties through a special “highway gardening and landscape program.”
 - Introduce a historical themes or contemporary banner or lamp standard public art attachment (Highway 2 entry to Edmonton) that distinguished Strathmore and slows traffic as they appreciate the townscape improvements
 - Add seasonal landscaping to the central median that is protected in planters but are significant, colourful, and add texture to the welcoming experience
 - Provide a visual cue to the downtown by adding a significant feature (e.g., large fountain) that can be seen from the highway in Kinsmen Park or adding a sequence of beautiful fountains starting at the highway to attract visitors into the downtown
 - Complete a trail system along and to the Highway that could include *Legacy Trails*, *Parks Trails*, and *Trans-Canada Trail* connections (*see also Physical Concept Framework #3*)
 - Partner to develop a Visitor/Information Resource Centre. A visitor centre is being developed with the Siksika First Nation to include gift shop and cultural/art centre and should be located at one of the downtown entries either at Lakeside Boulevard or Wheatland Trail
 - Create a series of gateways into the downtown and connect the highway to the downtown (*see also Physical Concept Framework #1*)



Potential visual connection to Kinsmen Park and downtown from the Trans-Canada Highway



Overall downtown orientation map, parking wayfinding, and tourist ambassadors help visitors
(Bozeman, MT, Osoyoos, BC, and Quebec City, PQ)

2. Add muscle to business diversity and breadth: The majority of the businesses in the downtown are professional services (estimated at 70%). Approximately 21% is retail and 9% restaurants. The mix and breadth of retail and food offerings should be expanded to attract residents and visitors on an ongoing and “destination” basis. Otherwise, we can attract them with signage and information but there is not the diversity and choice for them to return on a continuous basis and stay longer in Strathmore.

- Develop an inventory of businesses so that Strathmore knows the desired mix (at least 65% retail and restaurant) and what is missing -then actively market and attract the right businesses in the right locations
- Ensure that there are active businesses along the street front that engage the street with outdoor patios and inviting entrances
- Place office uses on second floors with redevelopment and active retail and restaurants on the first floors
- Encourage a local small grocer to locate in the downtown, sorely missed since the Co-op relocated to the highway
- Place business hours on store fronts (apparently only an estimated 30% of businesses have posted hours)
- Coordinate store hours so that potential clients know that many stores are going to be open at the same time
- Encourage Bow Valley College to continue to provide customer service training so that the businesses people can be more inviting and know their products and the Town of Strathmore as ambassadors
- Experiment with different and extended hours especially during special events
- Extend or change store hours (for example, 11 am to 7 pm) to cater to buyers since an estimated 70% of retail sales take place between 5:00 and 7:00 pm
- Limit specific retail, restaurant, office, and institutional uses to the downtown area



Unique retail and entertainment uses in the downtown that should be retained

3. Recognize your history: The history of a community is its authentic footprint and attracts curiosity and interest. Strathmore has the railway and agricultural history (e.g., Agricultural Demonstration Farm) that have roots in the community. Strathmore can reveal this history in various ways.

- Enhance your heritage walk with placement of plaques and recognition of various special places with public art sculptures and murals
- Extend these interpretive areas and places along the recommended Strathmore trail system to recognize the pioneers of the community
- Support the development of the former “Demonstration Farm” along the Highway at the east gate as a tourist attraction and local place to celebrate the agricultural roots of the community
- Add interpretive information and plaques to the Station restaurant railway car and adding more elements around it would enhance a historical point along the Highway and attract more visitors to stop and get drawn into the downtown



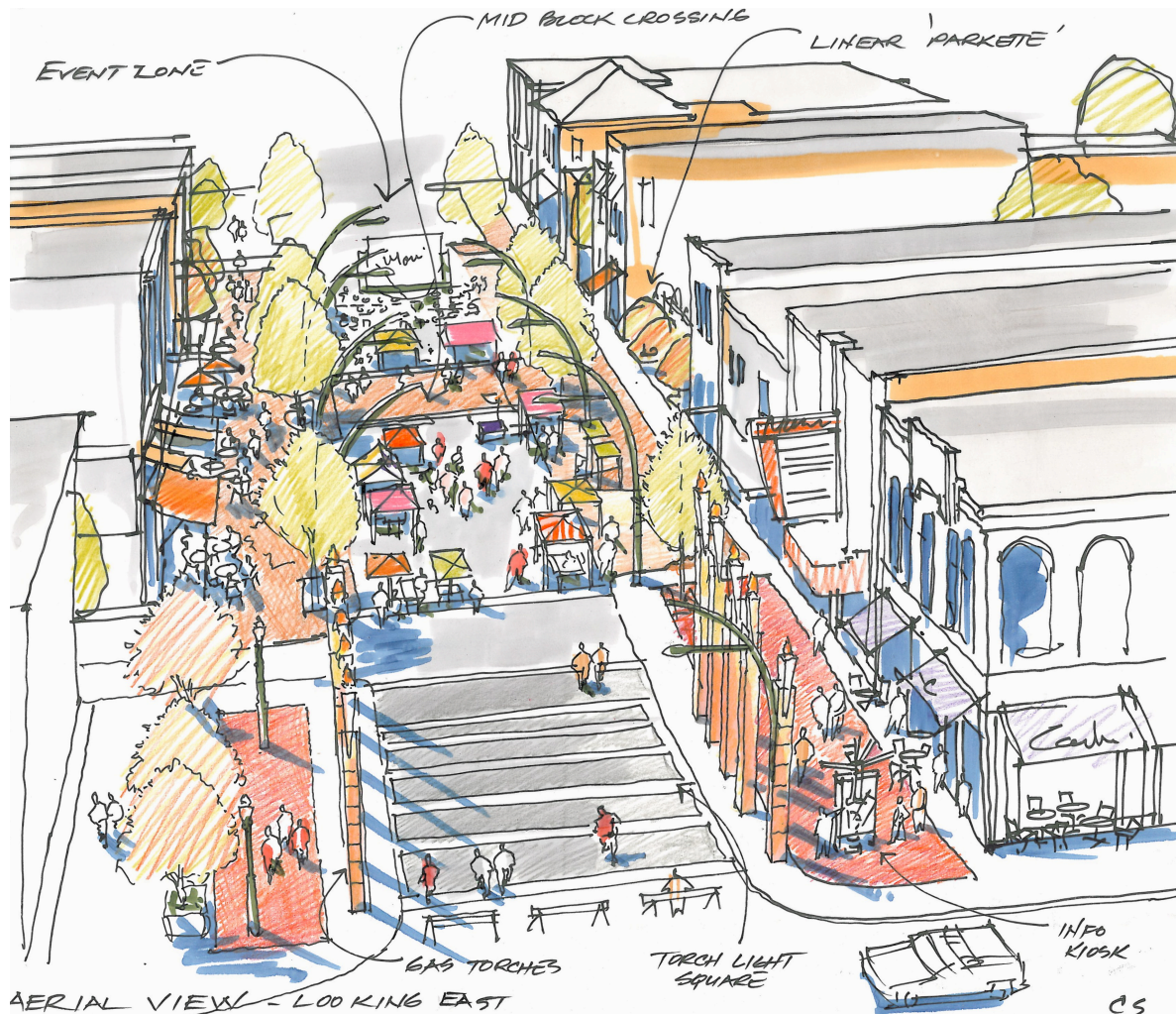
The CP railway car adjacent to the Station restaurant is a valued historic asset

4. Develop a special brand: Your brand is your mark and signifies who you are. Developing this brand is important to your recognition locally and regionally. Who are you and what do you want to be is an important question to answer? The past informs your future. There are important considerations in developing that brand, so it is memorable and place specific.

- Develop the Strathmore brand (this initiative is underway)
- Create a video and photo library (has been completed)
- Ensure that the brand is used consistently and carefully to represent Strathmore's past and future

5. Get organized and expand events: There is not one business organization or tourism organization in Strathmore that coordinates businesses in the downtown or attracts visitors. There are a number of initiatives being planned or underway but a downtown business entity that coordinates business interests is important to its success.

- Develop a Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) or a Business Improvement Association (BIA) or similar but more informal organization to coordinate business interests in the downtown. This organization can better coordinate events, marketing, promotion, coordinated hours, and further improvements
- The Chamber of Commerce is currently working with some downtown businesses as well as the Agriculture Society to work on:
 - S'more's Festival (Council Committee – Downtown Focus Group)
 - Music Festival (Agriculture Society)
 - Taste of Strathmore, business awards, luncheons, and monthly business feature (Chamber of Commerce)
- A tourism organization is being developed over the next few months
- Plan an "Events Street" (3rd Street) for special events



The concept of an events street for market and other special activities in Medicine Hat, Alberta (MVH/Cal Srigley)

6. Create the heart and extend uses: It is important to create a “heart” in your downtown separate from Kinsmen Park, so it has a specific identification and sense of place. This “heart” can be in the form of a central plaza where residents meet, linger, and celebrate (see *Physical Concept #4*).

- Create a special plaza in the downtown that could be on a vacant lot that starts as a temporary “pop-up” event and gathering place and evolves into a permanent place
- Program the events and design so it is flexible with a stage or presentation area, areas for seating and movable landscaping
- Develop community gardens to attract residents as stewards of the special place
- Relocate the weekly market to the plaza to create support and buy-in as the centre of the downtown
- Provide colourful and economical movable chairs that can be stored or transported easily and have adjoining landowners manage the chairs and tables storage on a daily basis
- Install public art murals and temporary art displays to the adjoining walls and landscape
- Provide overhead catenary lighting for evening events and festivities (special events and beer gardens)
- Encourage local “incubator pop-up” businesses and possible food trucks during special events that expand food options in the downtown
- Encourage outdoor patios throughout the downtown and possible seasonal parking patios that extend onto the parking spaces in front of businesses

Pop-Up Parks in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Oakland, California



The conversion of sidewalk areas and parking spaces in Winnipeg to play space and sitting areas, and a vacant lot in Oakland, California transformed into the 4th Annual Beer Garden.

In **Summerland, BC** (photo below), businesses have developed unique and generous outdoor patios that extend across the entire sidewalk width (approximately 4metres) with the sidewalk being realigned around the outside on the parking spaces adjoining the businesses.



In **Kelowna, BC** on Bernard Street (photo below left), angled parking was converted to parallel parking or eliminated in some instances near the new corner bulges, to create a generous promenade and entertainment outdoor patio district. In **Squamish, BC** (photo below right), the addition of a “Community Table” outside a coffee shop engages the street and is less of an imposition on the sidewalk. It is a very efficient use of space.



Application: Outdoor patios could infill some of Strathmore’s underutilized sidewalk spaces





Temporary and permanent art installations, food trucks, markets, lighting, and temporary artisan markets can animate the potential transformation of the downtown into a meeting and gathering place (Quebec City, PQ and White Rock, BC)

7. Partner with other community organizations: The Town of Strathmore has significantly organizations including Wildrose Community Futures, the Legion, Lions Club, Communities in Bloom, Western District Historical Society, and Bow Valley College who are current or future partners in downtown and highway improvements. With limited public funding, these partners are important to the future success of the downtown and highway public realm enhancements. They can provide special project or in-kind project support (customer-service training, special features, and promotion).

- Partner with Community Futures to provide support for the business development and improvement in the downtown
- Create a series of pilot projects in the Downtown that are offerings as “special projects” for community organizations
- Actively engage with potential partners in the community to see what they could be interested in funding or supporting
- Seek out provincial and federal grants to support special or seniors housing close to the downtown
- Continue to work with Bow Valley College on customer service training for the businesses as ambassadors for Strathmore
- Reach out to the arts and culture community to seek their advice and support in developing a public art and mural program for the downtown and highway



Existing and potential public art that is memorable (Quebec City, PQ)

8. Create a Façade Facelift Program: Further to Strathmore’s significant investment (over \$ 2 million) in the improvement of the infrastructure, sidewalks, planting, lighting, and seating areas in the downtown core, there is an opportunity in a cost-sharing loan or grant Façade Facelift program that will further improve the look and feel of downtown.

- Introduce a Façade Facelift program in partnership with Wildrose Community Futures to restore and enhance the existing storefronts that could include a loan or cost sharing program that supports the improvement. Mission City in British Columbia has successfully run a façade improvement program. (*See Mission City program*)
- Consider also a blade signage program that is supported by the arts and businesses that encourage innovative blade signage along the street for pedestrian orientation and convenience. These blades could be three dimensional and innovative that reflect the businesses and add character. Many communities have been successful in creating a welcoming and warm as well as uniquely quirky set of signs

Building facade improvements in the Mission City Downtown (before and after)



Application: A similar “Facade Facelift” and other incentive programs could be used for downtown businesses. It is high time for a “refresh” as well as attract a richer mix of uses. See more details on the program are available at: <https://www.mission.ca/wp-content/uploads/Downtown-Incentive-Program.pdf>.

9. Bring more residents closer: To improve downtown business and expand business opportunities, a more compact downtown is required. Without more residents nearby, it will be difficult for businesses to survive on a daily basis.

- Encourage new development to be mixed use in the downtown core a minimum of 2 to 3 storeys with active (street engaging uses) on the first floor with office or residential uses above
- Increase residential densities for new development around the downtown core to allow for multiple-family housing with a range from 3 to 6 storeys so that a more significant number of residents are located within a 5-minute walk of the downtown
- Along with infill and redevelopment, ensure that tree planting and sidewalk improvements create a safe and convenient walking environment to downtown
- Ensure that these new developments provide adequate on-site amenities, landscaping, and their form transitions properly (stepping) to adjoining lower forms of development.



Compact multiple-family housing within a comfortable walking distance of the downtown

10. Go regional and national: To echo the June 20 special session on Emerging Opportunities (*see Appendix A*), Strathmore has to be bold in its marketing and business recruitment efforts. It has nothing to lose and everything to gain.

- Create an innovative and aggressive marketing campaign to attract businesses and residents to Strathmore
- Support the tourism website (launch planned for 2020) that will provide a one-stop shop for events and attractions
- Further develop a social media presence (Facebook, Instagram and Others) as well as a Strathmore app that instantly connects the visitor and resident with interesting and inviting information

C. Downtown and Highway Action Plan

Priority/ Project	Description	Responsibility and Funding	Significance/Impact
Now Plan (Immediate or underway)			
1. Organize and Champion	Lead the change	Strathmore Planning and Economic Development with Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, and Bow Valley College as well as key business owners	Champions have to lead the change and create an example that pulls the businesses up (coordinated and extended hours, mix of uses, training, and product mix/experience)
2. Wayfinding	Signage and information	Strathmore Economic Development along with Alberta Transportation and businesses	Finding downtown and identity is paramount
3. Business Strength and Diversity	Retain and Expand retail and restaurant offerings	Strathmore Economic Development with Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures and businesses	Strathmore should have more choice and diversity to attract visitors and residents regularly
4. Communications	Increase capacity for external communication; marketing online and otherwise (Tourism website)	Strathmore Economic Development with Tourism organization and businesses	Comprehensive tools are critical to get the messages out to the public
5. Events	More and 4 seasons considering S'more Festival and Taste of Strathmore	Strathmore Economic Development with Tourism Organization, Chamber of Commerce, and service organizations	The events will attract people even from Calgary and then they could return regularly

Priority/ Project	Description	Responsibility and Funding	Significance/Impact
6. Brand	Identity for Strathmore	Strathmore Economic Development with others	Fresh identity to provide a clear vision of what Strathmore is and where it is going
Short Term (1-3 years)			
7. Resource Centre	Resource Centre at gateway on Highway	Partnership with Tourism Organization, Strathmore, and Wheatland County and Siksika First Nation	A welcome/orientation centre and resource centre for the community
8. Gateways for Highway and Downtown	See three gateway components in <i>Physical Concept Framework #1</i>	Partnership with others and in consultation with Alberta Transportation on Highway	Connections to Strathmore and to downtown
9. Heart Plaza	The outdoor meeting place downtown (<i>see Strategy #6</i>)	Landowner(s) and Town of Strathmore	The central meeting place and celebration of place and culture
10. Façade Facelift	Improving storefronts and building signage (<i>see Strategy #8</i>)	Strathmore, Community Futures, and business/landowners program	Further refresh of downtown
11. Heritage Program	Develop for heritage assets and landscapes	Town with others (Legion and Western District Historical Society)	Recognize rail and ag history/First Nations
12. Public Art Program	Public art and murals installations	Town and arts community with partners	Arts recognition in the community
Medium Term (3-10 years)			
13. Landmark	Consider a significant feature like a fountain or series of fountains in the lakes with lighting and music (<i>see #5 in the Physical Concept Framework</i>)	Town and a number of partners including technology partners	The landmark attractor to Strathmore – a destination-making feature

Priority/ Project	Description	Responsibility and Funding	Significance/Impact
14. Legacy Trails	Create a comprehensive trail network to connect communities and adjoining municipalities and counties (<i>see #3 in the Physical Concept Framework</i>)	Local, adjoining counties and municipalities, provincial and national partners (Trans-Canada Trail and Legacy Trail)	A provincial, national and international attractor factor

APPENDIX A:

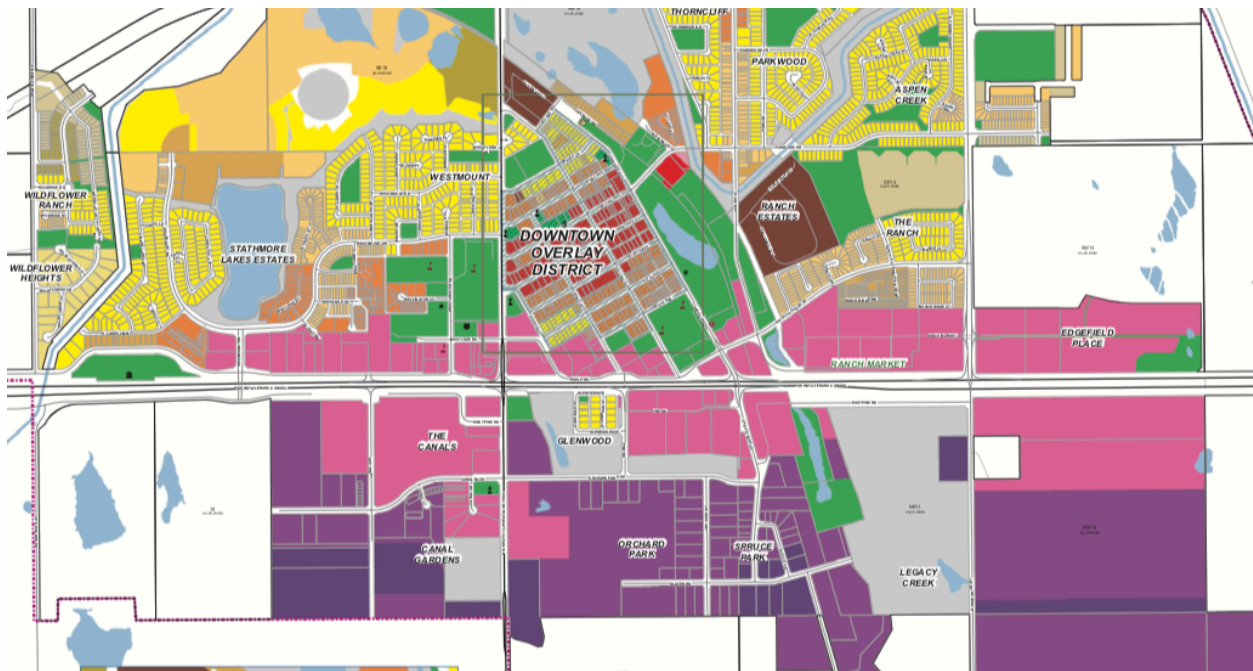
TOWN OF STRATHMORE

CURRENT POLICY REVIEW AND POTENTIAL IDEAS

KEY DIRECTIONS:

1. Land Use Plan is creating a 'by-pass downtown'.

- To ensure local businesses thrive, the land use plan could be reconfigured to support downtown businesses instead of providing a big-box commercial corridor along highway 1 (revise section 3.4 of the MDP). What is drawing people into the downtown?
- Land uses could be modified to direct people into the town, instead of creating a block between the downtown and the highway. Highway commercial uses should be limited in order to support and reinforce the downtown commercial businesses.
- How can the land be modified to create a land-use plan the supports a thriving downtown? (supported by policy 2.3.7)



2. Planning for Demographics

- 29% of the population is 19 or younger = ~4,000 people (almost 1/3!!!)
- How can land uses plan for a large number of children and youth?
- Key components that were identified were having a good environment for raising a family and parks and open space

3. Greenways Plan (or update to open space concept)

- Can a greenways plan be created throughout the ASP's that ensures green spaces throughout new neighbourhoods are planned for and implemented so children, youth, and families as well as seniors can have connectivity that is safe and green (this may be apparent in existing ASP's but hard to identify connections. May want to ask staff). (supported through policy 2.2.2 and 2.2.7)

- b. How can new neighbourhoods enforce these connections?
- c. Update the Open Space Concept (page 35 of the MDP) to create more connections between established neighbourhoods and ASP areas (policies with section 3.6, 4.1.17)

4. Highway beautification

- a. Incorporate tree-planting requirements where safe (no view or safety impacts) as well as landscape buffering standards.
- b. Consider 'identity' for Strathmore (as previous identified) and how inviting directional signage can be incorporated into the vehicular directional signage.
- c. Consider the development of standardized signage along highway one in terms of signage height (standing signs) and dimensions to create uniformity while still allowing for diversity
- d. Currently there are just parking lots surrounding big-box retail – incorporate stricter landscaping standards to provide buffering from highway
- e. Create an entrance feature directing traffic into downtown Strathmore with flowers and shrubs, conifers to provide enhancement during the winter months as well as summer
- f. Could there be a light display/program for lamp standards leading from highway 1 into the downtown area? With lights also displayed throughout the DT.
- g. Policy 2.3.8 addresses a highway bypass around the town. How can land uses support the current location of the highway if moving its location is not an option? Can a stronger connection be developed to support driving passing traffic into the downtown area instead of through?

5. Business Enhancement

- a. Façade Improvement Program as identified below in consultation to help local businesses beautify their premises
- b. Explore options of having a post-secondary institution (policy 2.3.3)
- c. How can land use plan support innovative industries to relocate to the town? (2.3.6)
Attracting supportive industry that bolsters local businesses and contributes to tax base and population growth
- d. Create design guidelines for big-box retail to create cohesive architectural character along corridor. Ensure new developments are planned with consideration to the surrounding context.

6. History of Strathmore Program

- a. Strathmore started surrounding CPR rail lines in 1883. How can we celebrate Strathmore's history? <https://strathmoreliving.ca/about-the-town-of-strathmore/>
- b. Can a historical walk be created highlighting history can celebrating the Town today? This could be incorporated into the many green areas surrounding the Downtown!
- c. Work with heritage society for prov/fed funding if they have a heritage society to develop heritage walk (policy 2.4.4, 3.6.14) – this could even incorporate a 'welcome to Strathmore' sign that capitalizes on CPR heritage etc.

MDP POLICIES

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2014) BYLAW #14-03

<https://strathmore.ca/en/residents/municipal-development-plan.aspx>

- 29% of the community 19 or younger (2011 census data)
- Key components: affordability, school availability, health facilities, parks and open space and a good overall environment for raising a family
- By 2030, population projections are between 20-30 thousand! Right now, just over 13,000
- Updated water and sewer infrastructure will allow for growth from between 30-50 thousand residents (page 10)
- Future parks and open space resources, school sites, and natural areas allows Strathmore to encourage healthy living (maybe the creation of a green spine network and multi-use path system?)
- Respecting culture and history of the town

- **1.3 Vision Statement** (page 11) – 4 key values: History, Space, Family, Recreation
 - Vision Statement: “Strathmore is a community of history and space. A community, in which responsible development is balanced with smart well-planned parks, wetlands and open space. As a regional service centre, Strathmore provides a strong environment for families to grow while still recognizing connection to the past. Strathmore is a community where quality of life is a way of life.”

- **2.2 Community and Neighbourhood Design** (page 15)
 - 2.2.2 Demonstration of connectivity between neighbourhoods and ASP lands shall be required.
 - 2.2.4 Design shall respect existing features and topography... retention of significant vegetation
 - 2.2.5 Sensitivity of new development to existing through buffering, screening, coordination
 - 2.2.6. TOD principles close to transit nodes.
 - 2.2.7 Integrate comprehensive parks and pathway systems
 - 2.2.8 Commercial uses to serve neighbourhoods
 - 2.2.10 Neighbourhood to have individual focal points with services and opportunities for socialization

- **2.3 Economic Development** (page 17)
 - 2.3.2 Support businesses that allow people to live and work in the community
 - 2.3.3 Encourage a post-secondary institution
 - 2.3.4 Cooperative partnerships with community business associations
 - 2.3.5 Reasonable approval timelines
 - 2.3.6 Encourage new innovative industries to relocate to the town, reinforce strong business centre
 - 2.3.7 Vibrant, thriving DT
 - 2.3.8 Mutually beneficial solutions for the transcanada hwy corridor and a bypass around the town
 - 2.3.9 Pursue transit system and connections to enhance mobility

- **2.4 Heritage Preservation (page 18)**
 - 2.4.1 Preservation of historic sites
 - 2.4.2 Develop heritage inventory
 - 2.4.3 Work to enhance the knowledge of Strathmore (Heritage walk integrating into green spines and linking through neighbourhoods to different historic sites)
 - 2.4.4 Explore options for funding for historical landmarks
 - 2.4.6 Names reserve List for naming parks/streets/muni facilities after significant individuals who made contributions to the community
- **2.5 Environmental Management (page 19)**
 - 2.5.3 Retain wetlands wherever possible
 - 2.5.4 Incorporate natural amenities as part of parks and open space
- **2.6 Agricultural Operations (page 20)**
 - 2.6.1 Respect existing operations
 - 2.6.2 Further intensification not supported
- **3.1 Development Concept (25-26)**
 - Refer to Maps
- **3.2 Residential Development (26-27)**
- **3.3 Downtown District (28-31)**
 - Goal: To create a vibrant and diverse downtown with a strong mix of residential and commercial uses which provide a diverse living, shopping, and working experience for residents and visitors increasing pedestrian friendly elements to reduce automobile dependency
 - 3.3.2 Three unique areas
 - Downtown North: professional offices/personal services
 - Downtown Central: Traditional business district
 - Downtown South: CBD expansion and mixed use developments, enclave SF
 - 3.3.7 Integrate link with DT central and boarder community
 - 3.3.8 Support conversion of SF to offices in the DT
 - 3.3.13 Streetscape initiatives
 - 3.3.17 Building owners encouraged to reuse/renovate historic buildings
 - 3.3.18 Community gardens
- **3.4 Commercial Development (32)**
 - Large box-box retail promoted along highway commercial corridors
 - Goal- to promote diverse commercial which expands existing services to support local/regional needs
 - 3.4.4. Attract commercial developments that reaffirm Strathmore as a regional service centre/provide growth and employment
 - 3.4.6. Encourage mixed use
 - 3.4.7. Commercial provides direct links to transportation routes

- **3.5 Industrial Development (33)**
 - Encourage more industrial
 - 3.5.5. Encourage development of innovative and environmentally friendly industrial development that are comprehensively designed, eco-business parks which can create employment and minimize environ impact.
 - 3.5.6. Linkages to transit routes
- **3.6 Parks/Open Space/Pathways (34)**
 - Quality of life master plan (2010) top 3 priorities:
 - Comprehensive trail system
 - Open spaces
 - Sports fields
 - Goal: to create a community that supports a healthy active lifestyle and promotes space for activity and interaction for the residents of Strathmore.
 - Open space concept (35)
 - 3.6.2-3.6.5 Residential/Commercial/Industrial requirement for dedication of land with development proposals
 - 3.6.8 New development areas shall provide functional linear parkway systems which link to school sites (existing/future) open and park space, and adjacent communities and future development
 - 3.6.10. Continue to work with WID to utilize canal ROW's for public linkages and pathways through the town
 - 3.6.11. Over dedication may entitle developer to density bonus
 - 3.6.13. Encourage all parks to provide active options for all ages
 - 3.6.14. Encourage development of interpretation and educational infrastructure within natural and ecologically significant areas
 - 3.6.17. Consider public/private partnerships for the development of recreational uses including corporate sponsorship
 - 3.6.18. Joint uses of open spaces and fields
 - 3.6.19 Pathway systems shall be looped (internal and external connectivity)
 - 3.6.20. Neighbourhood design shall emphasize the importance of walking and cycling paths for transportation/recreational purposes
 - 3.6.21. Encourage the development of a comp parks plan for the entire community
- **Wetlands (37-38)**
 - Ensure a no-net loss of wetlands in the community
- **Annexed Lands (40)**
 - Ensure that comprehensive, sustainable and well-designed urban expansion occurs within the community
- **Transportation (44)**
 - 4.1.17. Require transportation infrastructure such as cycling and walking paths be developed within major road ROWs and in key locations to promote connectivity throughout the community

▪ **Community Services and School Sites (51)**

- Town has aquatic centre, family centre with two ice sheets, splash park, library, skate park, amphitheatre, off-leash dog park, and walking paths create the open space and recreation network.
- Goal: support expansion of facilities which assist and enhance the lives of residents by ensuring opportunities for facility integration are well thought out and managed.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES – JUNE 20, 2019 EVENT SUMMARY

<https://strathmore.ca/en/residents/resources/Documents/buildinganddevelopment/Emerging-Opportunities-Event-Feedback-Summary-June-2019.pdf>

Emerging Opportunity #1 – Community Rec and Culture

1. Establish and Market a Unique Identity

- a. Strathmore has many identities, but there is not one consistent theme which people associate with Strathmore. Develop a unique identity for the Town.
- b. Explore an identity which is separated from Chestermere, Okotoks, or High River.
- c. The Town's current logo implies we "do everything" – the logo is misleading
- d. Strathmore is very much a Sports Town, great access to sports facilities and teams
- e. Rural Values and Rural Business is a common theme throughout Strathmore
- f. Value for Money in Strathmore – small town population with big City amenities
- g. **Implementation: Focus Group, Public Consultation, Development of New Brand / Logo. Marketing Campaign once Identity is Identified, strong Regional Promotion**

2. Attract Visitors to Town's Amenities

- a. Downtown Strathmore, Kinsmen Park, Sports Facilities & Sports Clubs, Utilize existing parks and pathways to promote that Strathmore takes recreation to every community
- b. Creating an inviting environment for travelers as they approach Strathmore on the Highways. Curb appeal from the highways needs to be focused on.
- c. Highway Traffic does not know of the Town's amenities downtown or elsewhere. Marketing the Town from the Highway will promote visitors to stop and stay.
- d. Encouraging the improvement of storefronts and relative attractiveness throughout the Downtown will keep people downtown and assist in getting return trips from non-locals
- e. Potential Residents need to know the benefits of Strathmore on their down time; provide confidence that we are not simply a bedroom community
- f. Determine incentives for downtown businesses to have an evening every week where all businesses are open to 8:00 or 9:00pm
- g. Show residents the breadth of recreation activities and clubs which currently exist
- h. Explore methods to promote downtown storefront updates.
- i. **Implementation: Highway Beautification; Highway Signage Marketing or Advertisement of "Downtown Strathmore" through billboards, online advertisement, or other local methods;**

3. Promote Strathmore After Dinner

- a. **Implementation: Utilize Downtown Vitalization Committee to explore having an evening with Businesses open late, connect with sports association to understand all their offerings for every age group, Promote year-round facilities and parks.**

4. Explore Events to be Hosted in Strathmore & Utilize Facilities for Cultural Activities

- a. Events that bring people together/draw visitors:
 - i. Strathmore Rodeo
 - ii. Canada Day Celebrations
 - iii. Music Events
- b. Promote the Benefits of hosting existing events in Strathmore versus other communities
- c. Target events which have good attendance, a committed following, and fit the general interest of Strathmore residents.

- d. Utilize existing venues which are not being used to their full potential and upgrade existing facilities to increase their attractiveness to bring more events to Strathmore
- e. Make Strathmore's existing events unique, what makes the Strathmore Rodeo different than Calgary, Airdrie, or Ponoka?
- f. Additional Spaces for Arts and Music was a common theme throughout the event.
- g. Partner with local business to host events where people can try an Art or Craft
- h. Utilize existing facilities to allow seniors to continue their skills, such as wood working.

Emerging Opportunity #2 – Commerce, Industry, and Employment

1. Develop and Promote Community Synergies

- a. Origin Brewing Company is a great example of a local success story. More vertical integration within the region will strengthen the local business economy.
- b. Support farm to table initiatives with farmers and farmers markets in Town. This will allow local restaurants and farming operations to support one another. This can also be achieved through Joint Use agreements between schools and local government bodies.
- c. Synergies with Siksika Nation and the local school boards and recreational groups, Seniors community and high school students, Downtown businesses and Council Focus Groups.
- d. **Implementation: Economic Development Strategy, Municipal Development Plan, Trade Show and Industry Specific Conferences.**

2. Foster a Business-Friendly Development Environment

- a. Current market downturn will be difficult for Strathmore and Calgary area businesses to deal with.
- b. Strathmore's proximity to Calgary is close enough for people to easily shop in Calgary, but far enough from Calgary to potentially discourage relocation.
- c. Establish consistent development standards for all applicants.
- d. Offer flexible land uses in the Land Use Bylaw that allow Developers and Builders to offer unique co-working spaces instead of structured traditional office space. This applies to secondary suites and innovative residential housing options.
- e. Provide better access to Town statistics and data.
- f. Establish more frequent meetings with development industry will be appreciated.
- g. Offer a façade improvement program, especially for Downtown businesses as well as businesses location in high visibility locations will help ensure the Town continues to beautify and private investment in existing buildings continues to occur.
- h. Create a way-finding signage program for downtown businesses.
- i. **Implementation: Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, Development Application Forms and Checklists, Grant Programs, Wayfinding Initiatives**

3. Make Strathmore a more beautiful and memorable Town with a commitment to excellence in urban design and placemaking

4. Create a Town attractive to business by promoting and providing locations for new growth while remaining open to innovation and flexibility.

- a. Downtown – Beautification is incomplete without facades upgrades
- b. The Town should have a Plaza (gathering area)
- c. The Town should have more Events
- d. The Downtown need to be more distinctive, more accessible by path system, better signage

- e. The Downtown needs to have better connectivity, more uses that promote day and night activity
 - f. The Downtown is the Town's 'core' – our branding and identity needs to be reflected in the way finding/banners/signs/public art etc
5. **Pursue Development Incentive Options and Bold Marketing Initiative**
- a. The Development Industry relies on affordability and the cost of developing being fair, the Town should venture to keep costs low
 - b. The Town needs to attract more cultural events which will bring in more people and will keep people from moving away
 - c. The Town needs more incentives, help, and tools for small businesses. Helping our small businesses will lead to a healthy business climate in Town and the residents will have access to quality services and shops
 - d. Investigate marketing incentives. Marketing the Town will get the word out about Strathmore and attract new residents and businesses.
 - e. Investigate tax breaks and tax holiday programs for businesses and industry. Tax incentives may spur investment in other areas, such as façade improvements.
 - f. Investigate grants and other incentives for the Municipality. Grants may increase savings for the Town, allowing money to be spent elsewhere on other programs and services to offer people.

ASP's:

<https://strathmore.ca/en/residents/plans-reports-and-studies.aspx>

Land use plan:

<https://strathmore.ca/en/residents/land-use-bylaw-and-land-use-map.aspx>