The Future of

Stephen Avenue

From City Hall to the Armoury

Calgary, Alberta

October 20, 2020

Public Realm Study

Calgary

cDA Calgary Downtown Association



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Important note!

The term ***the Avenue*** is applied throughout this document to describe the project site, including both Stephen Avenue, the current pedestrian mall, and 8th Avenue S. Combined, they form a central spine and connect the downtown core from East to West. A potential re-branding and renaming of the Avenue is subject to further studies.

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A Letter from the GM of Planning & Development

Why it's time to enact change on Stephen Avenue

Stephen Avenue is, and always has been, Calgary's iconic downtown main street. It has played various roles and functions over its history to ensure it stays a vital part of working and living downtown. The success of Stephen Avenue is inextricably linked to the success of our downtown. It provides a wide array of amenities to downtown office workers, residents, local visitors and tourists who visit to dine, shop, play, and enjoy the many arts and culture offerings available on any given day.



In recent times, Stephen Avenue has encountered some challenges that are making it less vibrant than it once was. In some ways, these challenges mirror those faced by Calgary's downtown more broadly due to a decline in the downtown workforce; an increase in office, retail and hospitality vacancies; and increasing concern from citizens and business owners that the physical condition of the avenue is in decline as it approaches the end of its usable life-cycle.

We are embarking on an exciting journey to reimagine Stephen Avenue and position it for a renewed era of success. As a flagship project for Calgary's Downtown Strategy, The Future of Stephen Avenue project provides a foundation for The City to collaborate with stakeholders to consider and implement strategic improvements – whether near, medium or longer term – that will re-position Stephen Avenue, and ensure its future as Calgary's hallmark downtown main street.

Driven by change drivers that span urban design, economics, planning policy, and mobility, this Public Realm Study is a first step towards renewal. It provides a bold, innovative and visionary roadmap towards Stephen Avenue's future, with a goal to improve the way people walk, wheel and experience the avenue. Expanding Stephen Avenue's boundaries beyond the pedestrian mall, the study takes a comprehensive look from City Hall all the way to 11 St SW (Mewata Armoury), and proposes six "strategic moves" that will focus our efforts to help achieve our vision for a renewed Stephen Avenue.

Starting in Winter 2020/2021, The City and strategic partners will begin enacting change on Stephen Avenue through a series of "light, quick and cheap" interventions and prototypes. Our City Council has generously supported this next phase of the project through the Council Innovation Fund, and these funds will be used to prototype many of the "pilot" ideas contained in this report. Over the next few years, The City will work closely with stakeholders and citizens to create an investment plan for a more significant transformation of the avenue in the medium to long-term, considering our most current social, economic and environmental goals for Stephen Avenue, and alignment with our downtown strategy.

I am excited about the future for Stephen Avenue, and the path on which we're embarking together to create it.

— Stuart Dalgleish,
General Manager of Planning & Development, City of Calgary,

A letter from the consultant team

Dear Calgary and the Avenue

Positioned at the intersection of the prairies and Rockies, the heart of Calgary is defined by a fast-flowing, cold-water river valley fringed by a natural landscape. While Calgary's 1.2 million residents are geographically isolated from other cities, the city is recognized globally for its economic muscle, its livability, and as a destination for mountain and natural recreation. This unique geography, challenging climate, and economic position in the region represent an opportunity to better link, reinforce, and leverage these conditions – to be a truly outstanding city.

Downtown Calgary is best positioned to be the centre of gravity for this opportunity. The Avenue, in a role as the primary street for public life in the downtown, could capture this opportunity - to be a city centre for all people; and be the place that attracts vibrancy and a diversified economic pulse, while reinforcing the links to the wild river and nature.

Downtown Calgary is undergoing a transformation on multiple fronts. Past economic pillars of the regional economy are waning as new momentum around the knowledge economy grows. A retreat in the energy sector has resulted in significant sustained vacancy in the downtown office market, with the ripple effects felt across all sectors locally. Trends that are transforming cities globally are also underway in downtown Calgary. Across the Americas, city centres are experiencing a reinvestment and population return, with the transformation of largely single-use central business districts into truly mixed-use neighbourhoods.

Today, the Avenue and the area of influence in downtown are not positioned to capture the vibrant culture and energy of Calgary's future. The area is not ready to capture shifts in Calgary's economy by competing for talent or investment on par with other growth and redevelopment areas of the city, namely the East Village, Marda Loop, Beltline and University District. Large-scale, planned investments in the Rivers District are likely to draw further economic activity away from Stephen Avenue.

The major goals of this planning and design exercise are to clearly identify the corridor's role and function within the City, to leverage and connect various investments in the downtown, and to establish a new story and framework for a city centre undergoing significant investment. The Avenue has the opportunity to be a proving ground for new partnerships that will define the future of downtown, not just as a central business district, but as a diverse and thriving neighbourhood.

What if the Avenue was a place that invites people from all walks of life to come more often, stay longer and enjoy the unique offering of the urban environment? Identifying the keys to unlocking these invitations is at the core of this project. We invite you to join us on this journey of rediscovery in reshaping the central spine of downtown.

We at Gehl, Stantec and James Lima Planning and Development are experts in public space design, the economics of place-making, and mobility and infrastructure but the key to unlocking the potential for the Avenue resides in and relies on you! We are at your service to provide the roadmap and you, the Calgary community must put a stake in the ground and begin to embrace the future.



— John Bela
Partner, Director
Gehl

Equity Diversity Inclusion Access Statement

Future on the Avenue...

We have many visions and goals throughout this document, however one that has not been fully addressed is our desire for the future of Stephen Avenue to be a place that reflects all of Calgary. A place for all Calgarians. A place for everyone.

Over the years, equity seeking groups have identified the need for a more inclusive approach to City service delivery, including in urban planning, through various social movements. Most recently, in March 2020, Black Lives Matter brought the issues of systemic racism to the forefront and highlighted the need for more sincere and effective measures to be taken to reach equality for all. We heed this call. We haven't always gotten it right, but we want to do better.
The Future of Stephen Avenue team is committed to taking action. We will be working over the next few years and the remainder of the project re-imagining a street that is not only a well-designed space or a place for businesses to thrive but is also a street where everyone feels they belong.

To start, we commit to the following actions:

- In line with the City of Calgary's Engage policy of inclusiveness, we will listen and learn from a diversity of stakeholders on how to make Stephen Avenue a place for everyone.
- Accessibility will continue to be an integral component of the design.
- We will enact change on the avenue by empowering the public to get involved in shaping our upcoming "activations and experiments'.
- We will broaden our engagement reach to all Calgarians, including those in outlying communities, whose voices about downtown are not always heard.
- We will continue to put a greater focus on social service solutions over enforcement to challenges of social disorder along the Avenue.
- As this is just the beginning, we will review and undertake further actions to move this commitment forward.

This work aligns with the Council approved Social Wellbeing Policy (2019), which states The City will strive to provide equitable services. This includes removing barriers to access and inclusion.

At The City of Calgary we strive to make life better every day, for everyone.

— The City of Calgary
Future of Stephen Avenue
Project Management Team



Executive Summary

Through this effort the City of Calgary and the Calgary Downtown Association are putting people at the center of reinventing the Avenue as Downtown Calgary's main street. This study provides a roadmap for repositioning and restructuring the Avenue, within a framework for change that thinks beyond streetscape design. The success of the Future Avenue is contingent upon securing a strong framework for public space design, public life, governance, and economic investment. This roadmap connects and relates the Avenue to other Downtown initiatives and proposes actions to secure a thriving Downtown Main Street.



Public Life

Public life is the everyday experience of being in public space.

Public life is good for business! Public Life thrives when all people can enjoy being in public together, and is encouraged by quality Public Space that fosters social interaction. Vibrant Public Life promotes civic agency, supports health and sustainability, builds social capital, and connects people to their local communities.

The Avenue holds the potential to expand its current public life profile, diversify and expand the day, week and year, and reap the benefits that come with it. The current weekday, 9-5 use of the Avenue shows that there are significant gaps, that by carefully combining design, with programming and reinvestment, could breathe new life into downtown. By catering to a more diverse audience by providing more spaces for people to grab a bite, shop, rest, play, socialize, entertain and be entertained, in an environment worthy of the key location and heritage value, the Avenue could become the living room of Calgary.

Public Space

Public space is publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive.

As the Downtown Main Street, the Avenue holds the potential to become the backbone of Calgary. However, creating a complete public realm network, with high quality connections to and from the Avenue and key destinations and neighbourhoods is key to the success of the future Avenue. The character areas along the Avenue hold the potential to become complete neighbourhoods, where mixed use development and everyday amenities support a 18/7 vibrant downtown core.

The historic pedestrian mall is at the end of its lifespan and a reinvestment in infrastructure, furniture and programming is important, to create a platform for thriving businesses, arts and culture and public life. 8th Avenue holds the potential to become a mixed use neighbourhood, with several opportunity areas for investments in housing and neighbourhood amenities. The two sections of the Avenue are linked at the Core, where commercial uses and offices bring in 1000s of people weekdays 9-5. Building on the qualities already in place will secure a strong link between the western and eastern part of the Avenue and bridge between two different street treatments and mobility solutions.

By expanding on the public life profile of the Avenue, investing in a quality public space, and inviting a more diverse audience to live, work, play and operate, the Avenue will become a true connector of people and places in Downtown.

With Covid-19, the need for adaptability and the value and importance of quality public spaces, that allow people to move, exercise, and socialize in a safe and comfortable manner has only increased.



Executive Summary

Economic Investment

Economically, long-lasting and sudden crises bring accelerated needs for change. With the lingering pain from the last recession and major disruptions by recent events, Calgary would need to rethink its urban and economic development endeavors as a unified strategy. Create great places. Enhance resident and visitor experiences. Enrich the downtown with amenities and opportunities for arts, culture, leisure, and entertainment. Build and support partnerships between businesses, institutions, and communities. Invest more in your educational, research, and cultural institutions. These are all viable paths to retain and attract talents, fuel recovery and revitalization, and build a stronger economy and a more resilient place.

Governance

The success of the future Avenue is contingent upon factors beyond investing in a redesign of the Avenue itself. It is key to consider the role of the Avenue within the greater Downtown, and how it connects to existing assets, destinations and other investments made. While a great street design can spur traction, investing in physical improvements is not enough in itself. It is crucial to take a close look at the processes in place for generating desired outcomes that can tie back into reinvestment in the Avenue.

A strong framework for governance is essential to coordinate investments in the hardware and software, from branding, wayfinding and identify, to streetscape improvements to ground floor activation, to programming and events.

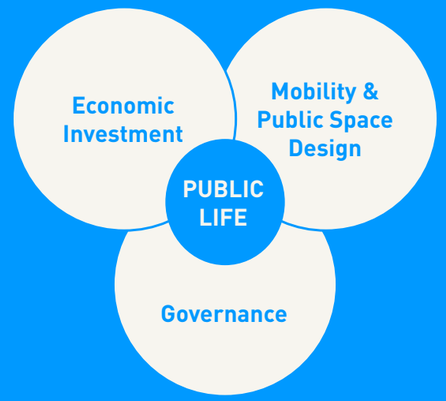
Mobility & Public Space Design

A successful strategy that looks to the future of mobility and public space design within downtown Calgary and enables a growing number of residents, workers, students and visitors to move, live, work and play is a central focus of this report. In order to accomplish this, it is proposed that key links are strengthened to create a complete public space network, and that the design of the Avenue takes the varying land-uses and functions along the street into consideration.

As a roadmap for change, this document provides street design alternatives that improve mobility and safety by creating a clear division of the right-of-way and establishes clarity through design between space for staying and space for moving.

When reinvesting in the Avenue as a key public space in Downtown Calgary, the goal is to create a stronger balance between movement and place and expand on the invitations for people to stop and stay, through implementing creative and experiential design solutions. It is recommended to take an iterative approach to redesigning the Avenue, to bring people on board in the process, expand on opportunities for public-private partnerships and to secure that a permanent redesign of the Avenue is based on the needs, wants and desires of all Calgarians.

The future Avenue is a place for people of all ages and abilities. It is where public life is at the center of investment and decision-making.



Success =
Design + Governance + Economic Investment









How to read this document



2 Project Context

This chapter provides an overview of the project timeline, the project site and area of influence, and sets up the framework for WHY this project NOW. It provides a high level overview of the history of Stephen Avenue and introduces the applied stakeholders engagement and site study methods.



3 Key Findings

This chapter provides an overview of the key findings from 1: The stakeholder engagement What We Heard and 2: The site studies What We Saw. For both pieces, a summary page provides the key takeaways, followed by individual pages that dive deeper and with supporting graphics. In addition, a series of Spotlights (pink pages) provide supporting evidence and both local and global success stories. The Insights are framed through the lens of economy, public life, public space, mobility, utilities and what makes a complete neighborhood. The Insights are used to inform the recommendations in the following chapters.



4 Vision & Goals

This chapter provides a vision statement for the Avenue and ties it to a list of goals, measurable outcomes and potential metrics to apply to monitor impact of applied actions.



5 Strategic Moves

The six (6) Strategic Moves summarize strategic focus areas to guide the future Avenue towards a successful outcome. The key drivers behind each of the Strategic Moves are described with supporting graphics and outtakes from the Insights chapter, and followed by a set of recommended Actions to set this in motion. The Actions are composed of both physical components, hardware, and policy and guidelines components, software. Some of the Actions reach beyond the Avenue itself and are tied to the wider Downtown Strategic Plan or other initiatives (see the project relationship framing page). Each of the Actions outlined are supported with Spotlight precedent projects for inspiration, with the exception of the Actions described in white text boxes and marked with a document icon.



6 Character Areas

In this chapter specific ideas for Reimagining the Avenue are presented. They include ideas for change-making in the broader area of influence that can have a positive impact on the Avenue itself, but are subject to investment and development outside of this project. The ideas presented in this chapter are supported by Aspirational Profiles that help define an identity for the character area and describe the measures of success. The recommendations are divided into three (3) categories: 1: Links + Connections, 2: Spaces + Places, and 3: Development Opportunities. In addition they are supported with precedent images and Best Practice examples.



7 Structuring the Avenue

This chapter looks at redesign of the Avenue RoW. It proposes an overall structuring of the Avenue, dividing it into two segments that respond to overall needs for balancing movement and place. Each of the presented alternatives provide a specific focus that puts emphasis on: Active Mobility, Vehicle Access, Street Greening, Patio Spaces, Flexibility for Larger Events, Seasonal Uses, and so forth. 2 preferred section alternatives for each of the 2 segments of the Avenue have been further conceptualized in axonometric view and a high level cost estimate per block is included.



8 Action Plan

The action plan provides high level overview of tasks that will pave the way for a successful implementation of the Avenue 3.0. It outlines a prioritization framework to demonstrate how the project recommendations can be taken from idea to action. It serves as a guide for how to prioritize the recommendations and puts emphasis on the immediate 5 year time-frame. The prioritization is a result of stakeholder engagement conducted throughout the project process alongside consultant recommendations and client team input. Both physical improvements that will have a direct impact on the Avenue and 'behind the scenes' tasks that needs to be addressed to get from idea to action are listed, and the action plan considers multiple variables from project impact, resources and ownership, to the need for revisions to city policies and permitting processes.



This chapter provides an overview of the project timeline, the project site and area of influence, and sets up the framework for WHY this project NOW. It provides a high level overview of the history of Stephen Avenue and introduces the applied stakeholders engagement and site study methods.

2

Project Context

Reimagining Stephen Avenue and 8th Avenue

From the Armoury to City Hall and Beyond

Project Description

Stephen Avenue is one of Calgary's busiest, most animated, and recognizable streets. The avenue means different things to different people. For some, Stephen Avenue is Calgary's premiere hospitality and retail destination. For others, it's a pedestrian friendly environment to take a walk, to people watch, and socialize. It is also a historic destination, containing the highest concentration of historic buildings in the entire city and a designated National Historic District. It's a cultural hub, connecting Calgarians and visitors with some of the city's most prominent cultural facilities. It is the diversity that makes Stephen Avenue attractive to so many people, and a focal point of Calgary's downtown.

Why this project now?

Despite these strengths, there's room for improvement on the Avenue that will help fast-track economic recovery downtown. Some of these critical factors for economic recovery include:

- **Stephen Avenue can help redefine the identity of Calgary's downtown as it enters a new economic era resulting from significant structural changes to Calgary's economy.**
- **A vibrant Stephen Avenue is critical for attracting new businesses and tenants downtown**
- **Physical conditions are deteriorating – a new plan for the street is needed as it reaches the end of its usable life cycle.**
- **Clearly defining a path forward for the Avenue sends a positive message to property and business owners, and Calgarians.**



This project will aim to:

Extend the energy and liveliness of the pedestrian mall westward along 8 Avenue S.W.

Establish a new vision for Stephen Avenue that creates opportunities for private investment and redevelopment

Create short and long-term strategies that can be implemented over time to make Stephen Avenue better for Calgarians and visitors

A path towards success



What's happening in and around downtown

How does this study relate to other previous or concurrent planning efforts in and around downtown?

The City of Calgary and its strategic partners are actively engaged in numerous planning efforts across the Greater Downtown. Many of these parallel projects overlap with The Future of Stephen Avenue project through alignment of high level goals, scope boundaries, and desired outcomes. These projects can work together to facilitate economic recovery downtown by attracting new institutions, businesses, and mixed-use developments. A summary of these parallel projects, and their relevance to The Future of Stephen Avenue, are summarized on this page.

1 Calgary's Comeback

This City-led initiative focuses on three core areas for economic recovery: (i) supporting businesses who are integral to Calgary's success, (ii) revitalizing our downtown through public realm investments and landmark projects, and; (iii) improved fiscal responsibility and a sustainable tax policy.

For more information, please visit: Calgary.ca/comeback

2 Downtown Strategy

To help support Calgary's economic recovery, The City has created a downtown strategy that brings together our civic and community partners through coordinated and collaborative work. We are committed to making life better every day for citizens, customers, residents and businesses through our focus on the following four pillars: (i) downtown the place, (ii) working downtown, (iii) living downtown, and; (iv) connecting downtown.

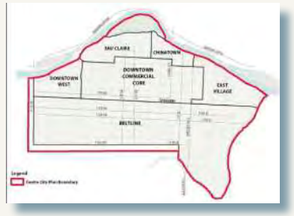


Downtown Strategy

For more information, please visit: www.calgary.ca/downtownstrategy

3 Greater Downtown Plan

The Greater Downtown Plan (formerly the Centre City Plan) is a strategy document that provides direction for place-making in the heart of Calgary over the next decade and beyond. It's vision for Calgary's heart is a resilient and vibrant destination for everyone, with innovative people places mixed throughout interactive neighbourhoods, riverfronts, streets and buildings. The key principles of the Plan focus on: supporting economic vitality, creating amenity rich neighbourhoods, putting pedestrians first, improving climate resilience, celebrating our creative and cultural sectors, and creating a safe and inclusive environment for all.



For more information, please visit: www.calgary.ca/greaterdowntown

4 River's District Master Plan

Envisioned as Calgary's Culture & Entertainment District – Calgary Municipal Land Corporations's 20-year vision for east Victoria Park calls for a mixed use community that will be home to 8000 new residents and 4 million square feet of new mixed use development space. This includes significant investments by The City and its strategic partners in a premiere Event Centre, and an expansion to the existing Convention Centre.

This expansion, combined with the existing Telus Convention Centre on Stephen Avenue, will result in Calgary becoming a "Tier 1" convention city, and competing to attract some of the world's premiere conventions on a global scale.



For more information, please visit: www.calgarymlc.ca/riversdistrictmasterplan

5 Arts Commons Transformation (ACT)

ACT will renew and transform Arts Commons' aging facility, successfully addressing more than $71M in critical life-cycle issues and providing our Resident Companies with the foundation for economic resiliency and sustainability. Since 2015, provincial support ceased for Arts Commons, resulting in a rising demand to more revenue generating spaces as part of the facility. Through facility upgrades, Arts Commons will continue to be a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual lives and well-being of Calgarians and visitors.

Arts Commons, along with Olympic Plaza and The City's Municipal building, create a strong civic anchor on the east end of Stephen Avenue, and are ideally positioned to become a premiere destination for all walks of life.



For more information, please visit: https://artscommons.ca/who-we-are/arts-commons-transformation-act/

6 9 Block Program

The area around Calgary's City Hall – the heart of where decisions about Calgary happen – doesn't feel safe or vibrant. The City of Calgary has identified an opportunity for collaboration with downtown community partners to pilot quick solutions in the nine blocks that surround City Hall – including the east end of Stephen Avenue – that are aimed improving safety and vibrancy in this important area of the downtown, supporting the neighbourhoods businesses, and finding low-cost, impactful solutions through partnerships. This has become especially important due to the impacts of COVID-19.

For more information, please visit: https://www.calgary.ca/9Block

History of the Avenue

The Avenue has been a central gathering point and cultural hub since Calgary's earliest days. The Avenue has evolved with Calgary and experienced many of the same cycles of Boom and Bust. Today the street is in need of repair both physically with the replacement chip and cracked bricks, dying trees and outdated furniture and mentally, from a 9 - 5 street to an inclusive complete neighbourhood. But in order to develop a dynamic plan for the future of Stephen Avenue we must first try and understand how we got here and learn for the past so history doesn't repeat itself on the Avenue.





1968

Historic 8th Ave: Multi-Modal Street (Cars, streetcar, horse-buggy, cyclists)

Stephen Avenue 1.0: Pedestrian Mall Introduced, 1st Phase No Cars

1973

Pedestrian Mall Completed, No Cars

1994

Stephen Avenue 2.0: Street redesigned + rebuilt Cars Re-Introduced (westbound only)

2015

8th Ave Protected Cycle Lanes and Stephen Ave "Shared Space" Pilot begins

2019

Stephen Avenue 3.0: Reimagining Stephen Avenue

Key Dates/ Events

In 1968, at the request of the Downtown Business Association, and The City Planning Commission Council approved a feasibility study on mall development and identified the Mall as the first phase of the Downtown Plan vision's implementation.

In 1970 the Development Control Bylaw mandated +15 development and plazas in all new DT development.

In the 1980's the highest Downtown pedestrian count was no longer on the Mall at 8th Avenue and First Street West but had relocated to the +15 connection between Scotia Centre and TD Square.

In 2001 Stephen Avenue Mall was acknowledged by the Globe and Mail to be Canada's most successful Mall and its best downtown urban open space.

In 2002, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designated a portion of Stephen Avenue as a National District - the first such designation in the Prairie Provinces.

2014 - A second recessionary wave ensued, triggering business failures and for the first time in almost twenty years vacancies on prime corner properties reoccurred on Stephen Avenue.

Project process and timeline

The Avenue 3.0





where we are now

2019-2020 | 2020-2022 | 2022 | 2023

Phase 1A: Craft the Vision and Roadmap

Phase 1A is reflected in this document. It focuses on understanding and reimagining the Avenue. This work has involved engaging citizens and stakeholder, both to understand challenges and opportunities with the current conditions and to pave the way for a new and improved Avenue, through collectively defining what success looks like. As part of this process, phase 1B was identified as a key component to pave the way for project success.

Phase 1B: Activate and Experiment

During this phase the project moves from planning to doing. By using the approach of action oriented planning, the City and CDA will lead an effort to test ideas contained in the roadmap. These ideas may include governance concepts, programming, temporary street closures, short term intersection improvements, and economic development concepts. These pilot projects will be evaluated using the techniques developed in the roadmap phase and used to prioritize and refine ideas contained in the roadmap.

Phase 2: Capital Investment Strategy

This project will be eligible for capital funding in the November 2022 budget cycle and the plans, pilots and evaluation will be presented to the community and council through a Capital Investment Strategy in order to seek support and funding for capital implementation.

Phase 3: Design + Construction

In this phase, the pilot concepts that generate the desired results will be developed into more permanent, detailed design for streetscape improvements, economic development strategies and governance concepts for the Avenue.

Project study area

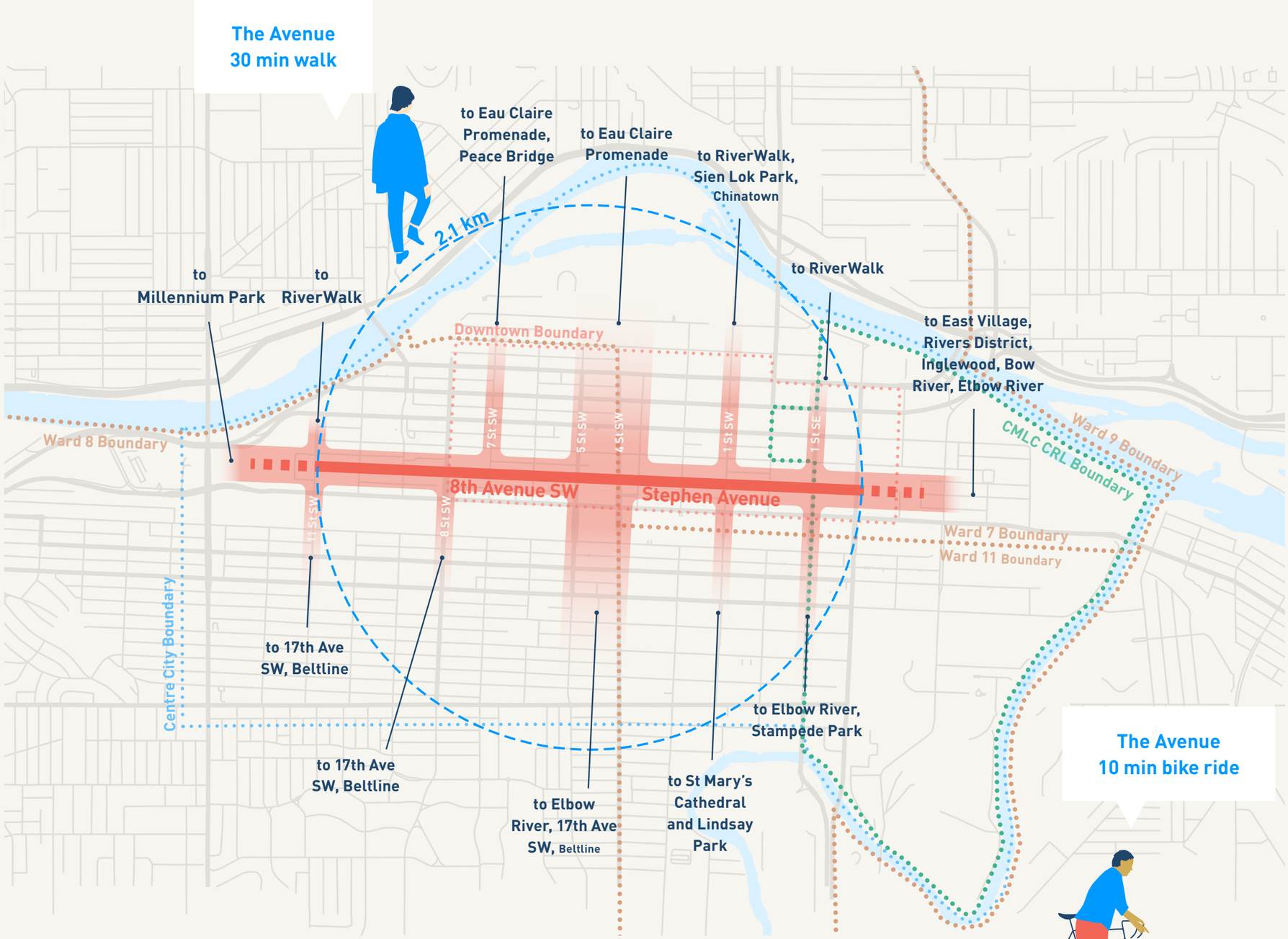
The Stephen Avenue Streetscape Master Plan will focus on 8 Avenue S. in the downtown core – from Olympic Plaza (Macleod Trail S.E.) to Mewata Armoury (11 Street S.W.).



The Avenue

2.1 km

of Downtown Main Street connecting multiple character areas, neighbourhoods, amenities and urban natural assets



Project site

Area of influence

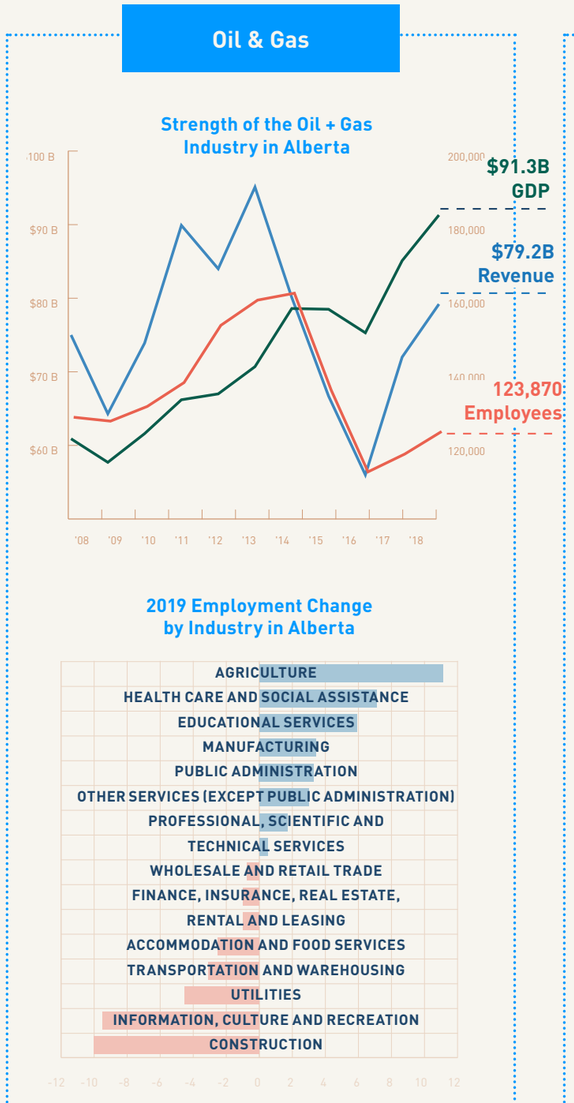
Economic Investment

Change is coming... embrace it!

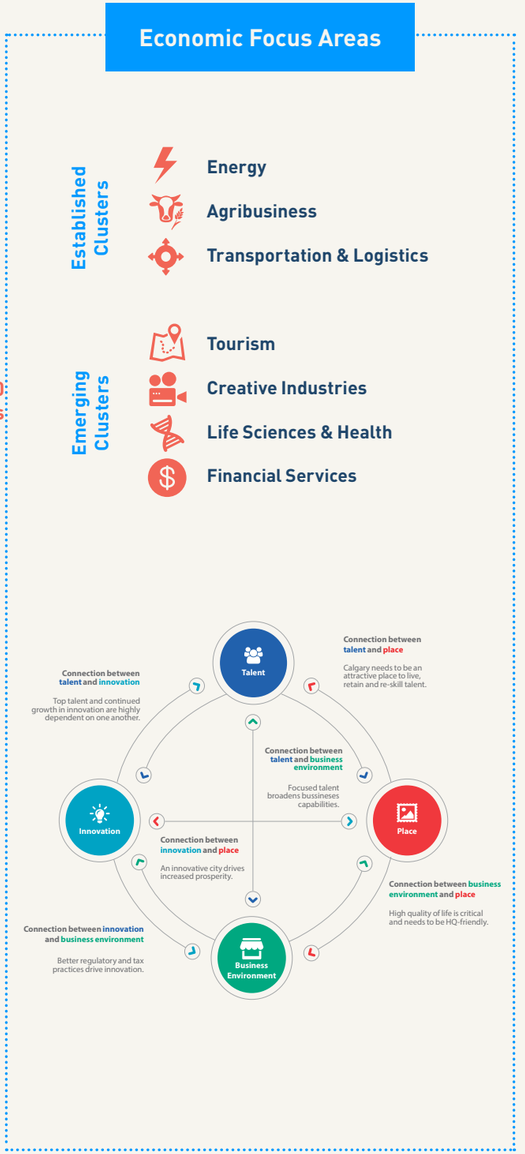
The economic structure of a place often lays the foundation for its vibrancy and livelihood. How cities are made, operated, and experienced can also contribute to the success of those very industries and businesses that make up the overall economy. In downtown Calgary, shifting global and regional economies have been presenting a series of challenges and opportunities that demand pointed responses.

Calgary is the leader in Canada's oil and gas industries. In the downtown, the energy sector has historically occupied the vast majority of office space built in the Centre City. Since 2014, the collapse of oil prices has exposed the risk of this sectoral dominance for the city, prompting job losses, decreasing building occupancy, shrinking the property values of downtown buildings, and hence hampering tax revenue to fund City operations.

However, there are other important industry clusters that provide new opportunities as the downtown seeks to retain new job creators and attract residents and visitors that can support a wide range of service industries. Life science and health, financial services, creative industries, and tourism are examples of new and existing sectors that could further diversify the economy, enrich the downtown experience, and help build a different path forward. Many actors and organizations have been actively shaping such change. It is now time to amplify those impacts.



*Data adapted from Statistics Canada on oil and gas industry extraction & support activities in Alberta

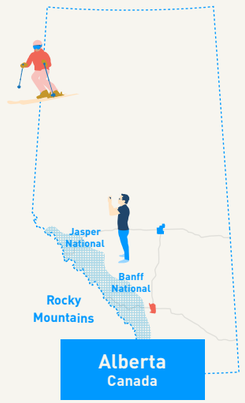


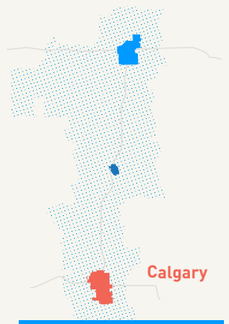
*Data Source Calgary Economic Development "Calgary in the New Economy"

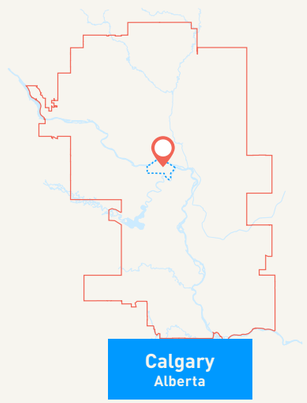
Change is coming ... embrace it!

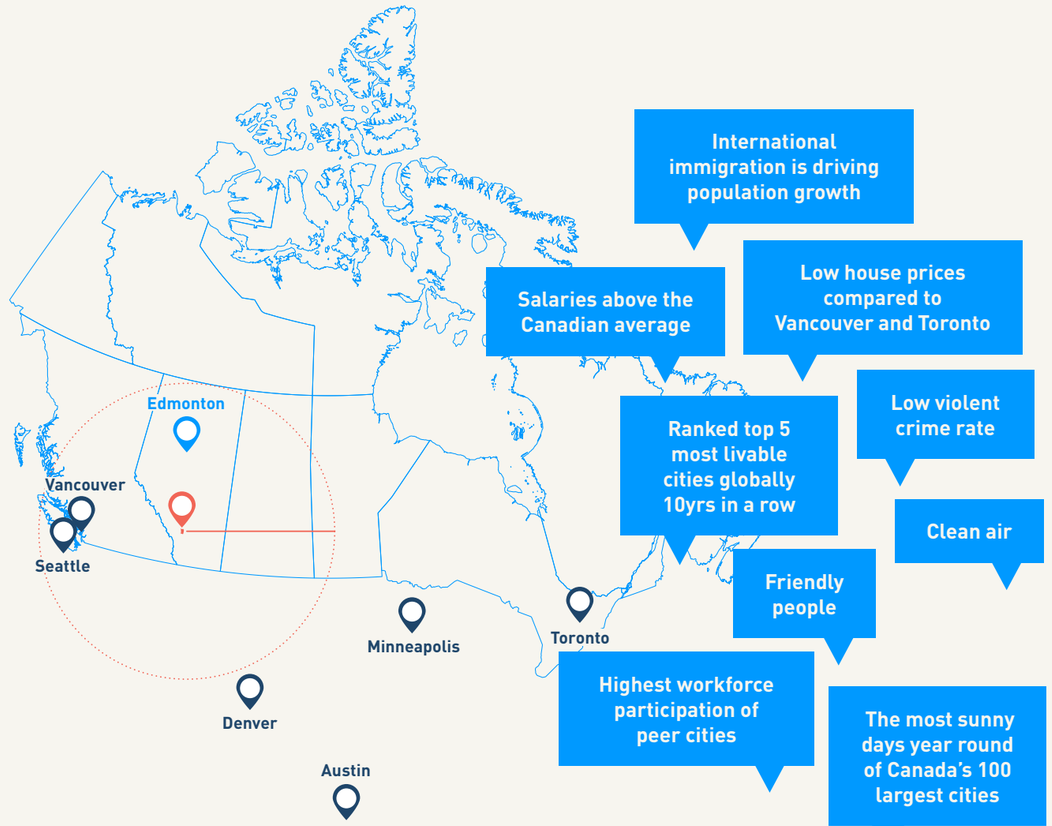
With these existing economic conditions, Calgary entered into a new world with the COVID-19 pandemic and the synchronized collapse of oil prices. On the one hand, these events will likely exacerbate the economic hardship already experienced by Calgary's energy sector. On the other hand, the shutdown and reduced operations of non-essential businesses are posing existential threats to hospitality, conventions, retail, food and beverage businesses, arts and culture, and entertainment establishments in and around downtown Calgary. The resulting reduction in revenue to the City and the province is expected to be unprecedented.

And yet, downtowns and city centres have always been the resilient magnets for economic activities and our collective urban life. This will continue to hold true as places recover and pursue future growth. Strategic investments to address current conditions and shape a more resilient economy provide the opportunity for Calgarians to rethink how the downtown can thrive in the future.









Peer Region Indicators

	Calgary	Edmonton	Vancouver	Toronto
Regional Population	1,596,248	1,420,916	2,650,005	6,341,935
Annual GDP Growth	1.9%	1.9%	2.5%	2.3%
Working Population	73.7%	70.8%	67.5%	66.8%
Median Income	$99,583 CAD	$94,447	$72,662	$104,378
Median Home Price	$419,400 CAD	$319,200	$990,600	$805,500

	Seattle Tacoma	Minneapolis Saint Paul	Denver	Austin
Regional Population	3,867,046	3,600,618	2,888,227	2,115,827
Annual GDP Growth	5.2%	2.2%	3.6%	6.9%
Working Population	68.4%	72%	71.2%	70.4%
Median Income	$102,666	$96,070	$95,804	$92,250
Median Home Price	$626,750	$341,750	$562,375	$394,875

Public Life + Public Space

Embracing change through the lens of public life and public space



Public life

noun

Public life is the social activity that takes place in everyday public spaces - on streets, in parks and plazas, and in the spaces between buildings. It's what people create together, when they live their lives outside of their homes, schools, workplaces and cars.

Public space

noun

Places that are publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive.

What is public life?

Public life is the everyday experience of being in public space.

Public life is measurable, and cities that do so can help develop a high quality of public life through changes in the public realm over time. Public life thrives when all people can enjoy being in public together, and is encouraged by quality public space that fosters social interaction. Vibrant public life promotes civic agency, supports health and sustainability, builds social capital, and connects people to their local communities.

Does a city need public life?

More than "nice to have," fostering robust public life produces a ripple effect of tangible individual, neighborhood, and citywide benefits. Robust public life is key to achieving Calgary's potential as a new kind of successful city — one with a sustained sense of community, high social capital, social mobility and social cohesion.

Vibrant public life is an indicator of a city that is successful in an economic, social and environmental sense. Places that encourage people to walk, bike and spend time on the streets also have residents that are happier, healthier and more connected. In recent years, employers have discovered that locating in cities with thriving public life is essential to attract and retain talent.

With an emphasis on the Avenue, the City of Calgary and the Calgary Downtown Association are embracing change, with public life at the core. Through this collaboration they are paving the way for a more successful outcome for the the future of the Avenue.

With this project, Calgary, joins a network of cities across the globe that are choosing to put public life first. Among them are the cities of Copenhagen, San Francisco, Melbourne, Denver and New York City. These are all cities that are seeing positive outcomes of their investments in public life and are framing their city visions around active mobility and quality of life.

Redefining Mobility

The 21st Century Street is a Public Space

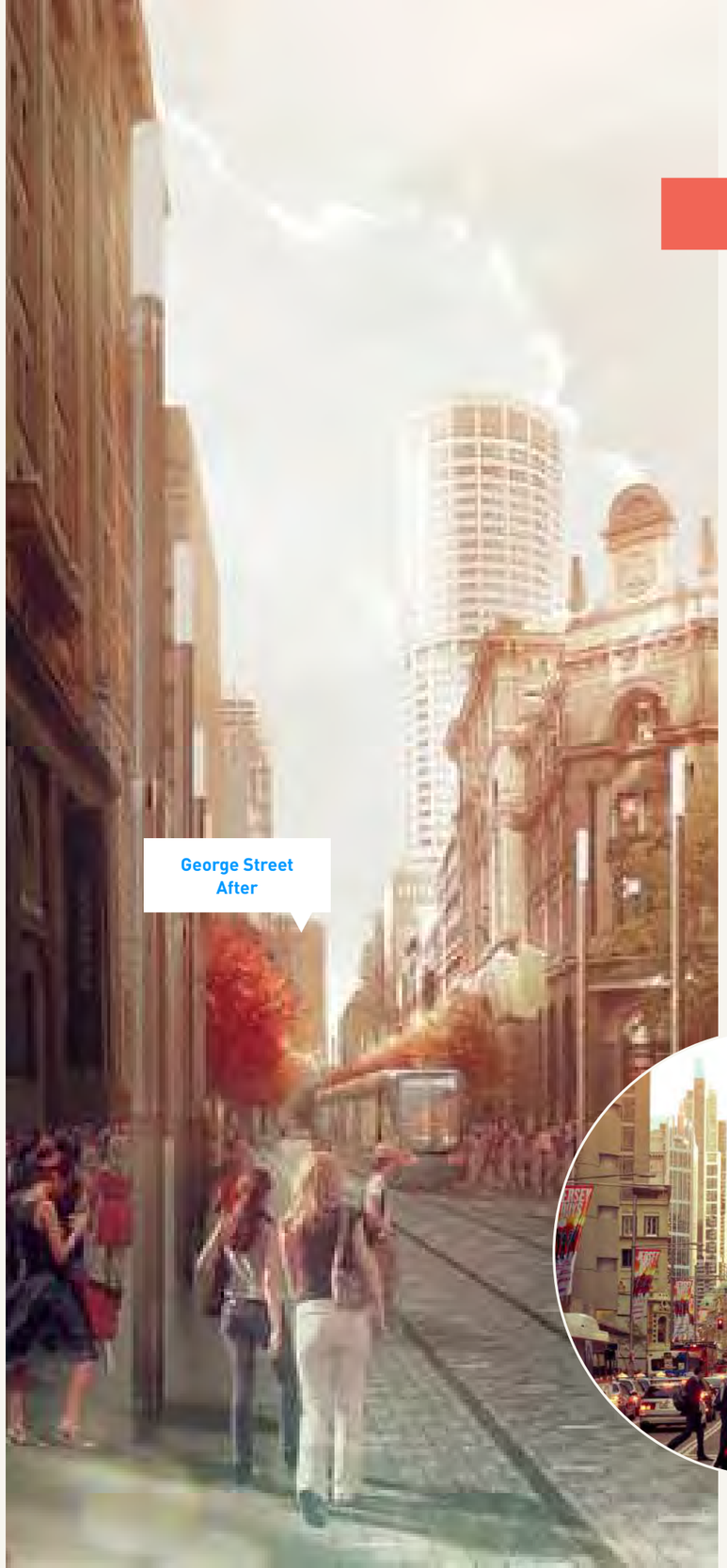
In most cities across North America, streets comprise between a quarter and half of the land area - in some cases more land than all of the parks and open spaces combined. And while Calgary is blessed with stunning natural assets and wonderful neighbourhood parks, streets are also a major component of the Calgary public realm.

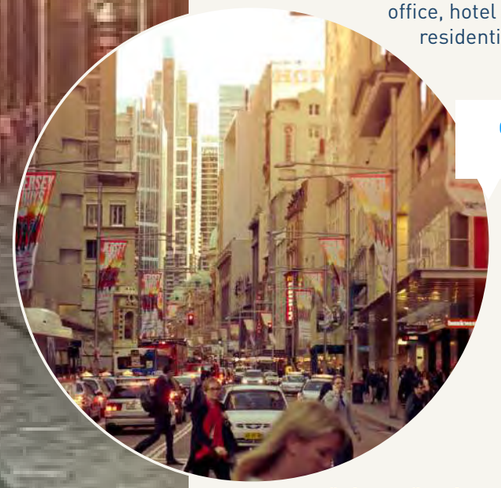
The future of urban streets is in reclaiming them as public space, putting people first and allowing everyone to safely and comfortably enjoy their daily lives. Whether traveling to school or work, running errands, walking our dogs, or taking our kids to the playground, streets serve to enable mobility and are the true everyday and democratic meeting grounds of our neighborhoods and cities. We believe that streets and cities are better when we design them to nurture public life, and create authentic invitations for many people to care and participate in actively stewarding and caring for the space.



Streets account for 80% of public space in our cities

With this project, the Avenue joins other main streets across North America that are being reconfigured to live up to their full potential as connectors of people and places. This counts streets like Market Street in San Francisco, King Street in Toronto, 16th Street Mall in Denver, 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica, Broadway in New York and George Street in Sydney – all being rethought to become 21st Century Streets.





Spotlight

George Street, Sydney

Transforming George Street into a world-class main street has bolstered Sydney's position as an innovative city able to attract new investment and a talented workforce. By reducing congestion and improving connectivity through the provision of light rail and a grand pedestrian boulevard – it has given much-needed breathing space in the heart of the city.

The City committed $220 million to realize the project, unlocking Sydney's potential and strengthening George Street as a transport corridor as well as augmenting public life with new pedestrian spaces, new information signage, upgraded public squares, new street trees and innovative public art.

As a result of infrastructure developments in and around the CBD such as the George Street improvements, The Sydney CBD is currently experiencing an unprecedented level of development activity with a value of over $62 billion that encompasses government infrastructure development, office, hotel and residential projects.

Avenue Analysis

Understanding the Avenue

Key Stakeholder Touch-points and Studies:

90+ **People engaged in stakeholder workshops**
August + December 2019

19 **Organizations and Departments involved**
August 2019-August 2020

32 **People engaged in 1-on-1 interviews**
August 2019-August 2020



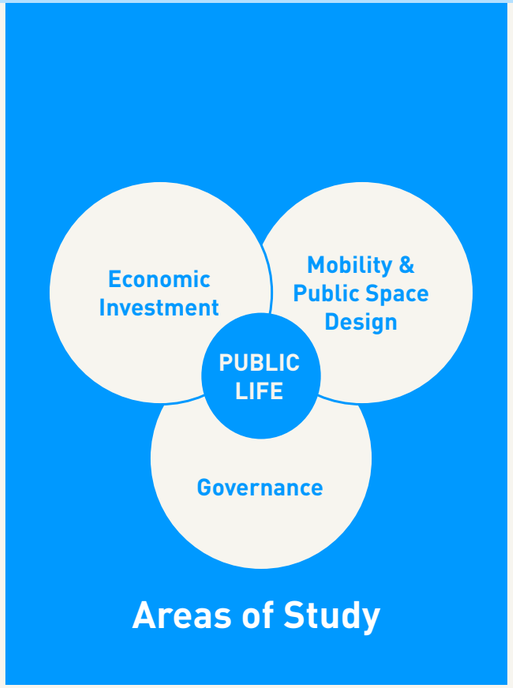
136 **Attendees to the "Future of Stephen Avenue" open house storefront**
December 2019

294 **Online engagement survey respondents**
November 2019

64 **Volunteers for the Public Space, Public Life survey**
August 2019

13 **Summer PSPL survey zones on the Avenue**
August 2019

2 **Targeted Winter PSPL survey zones on the Avenue**
February 2020



Areas of Study



Avenue Analysis

The Public Space, Public Life Survey

What is a PSPL?

A Gehl-developed method focused on putting people first in urban design and planning – measure what you care about!

All cities conduct detailed analyses of traffic and parking. Motor vehicles are ever-present in the planning process. It is unsurprising then that many plans and policies are oriented around the behavior of cars, instead of people.

A growing number of cities now count and observe how people actually use the city, how they move through the city and what they do when they spend time there.

Measuring how people use space allows cities to optimize public space for human comfort and active mobility, allowing for holistic solutions that take all users of the public realm into account.

The consultant and client team kicked off the Future of Stephen Avenue project in August 2019 with a Public Space Public Life (PSPL) Survey, site walks and stakeholder workshops and interviews.

The PSPL survey conducted using methods developed by Gehl, involved more than 64 Calgarians generously donating their time to learn the Gehl methods and apply them on site to the benefit of the Future of Stephen Avenue.

The lessons learned are outlined in this document and will serve both as benchmarking for future change and help to inform preliminary concept designs.

Why study public life?

Identify opportunities to increase people's quality of life.

Understand and visualize the impact that your work has on people.

Tell stories and make evidence based arguments for change

What was studied?

Mode Movement Counts
Measures how many people pass through a space and by what means. Notes whether people are moving as a pedestrian, cyclist, mobility-impaired person, or on an e-scooter/skateboard.

Age & Gender Movement Counts
Measures how many people pass through a space while also noting the age and gender representation of each person. Age and gender representation data gives us a better sense of who is using a particular space, who does not feel welcome to do so, or who is unable to access it at all. As this tool provides observational data, it will not always accurately reflect the gender identities of people in the space.



Stationary Activity Mapping
Provides insights into where people are spending time, what they are doing, and how they are occupying space. It provides a snapshot of all the activities happening in the survey area at a given time and records people's observed age and gender representation.



Mapping Public Space Quality
In addition to public life data, the public space quality was assessed and mapped. Public space components mapped and assessed include ground floor activation, lighting, and paving quality, furniture and more.

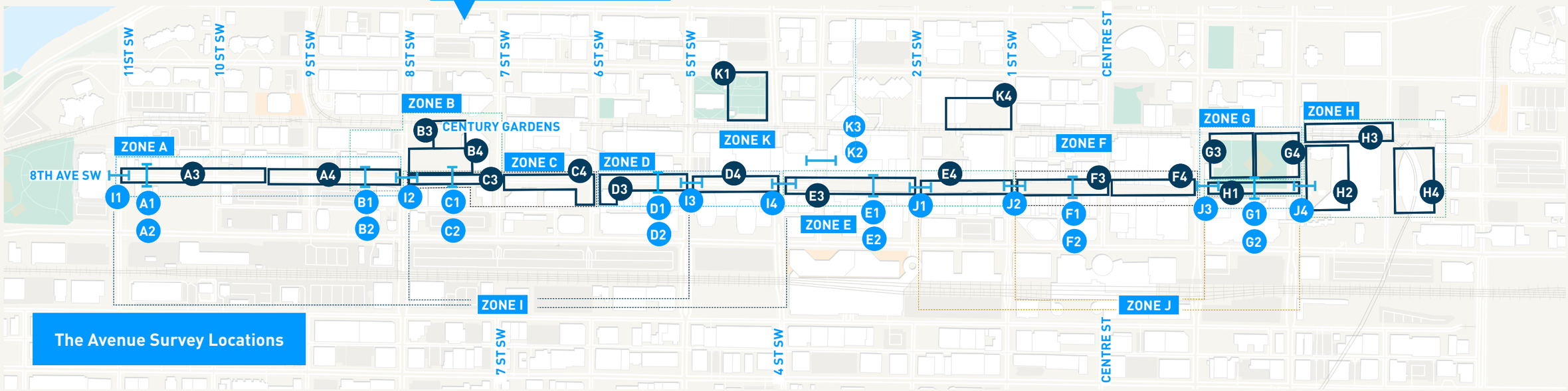
Avenue Analysis

The Public Space, Public Life Survey

Where was studied?

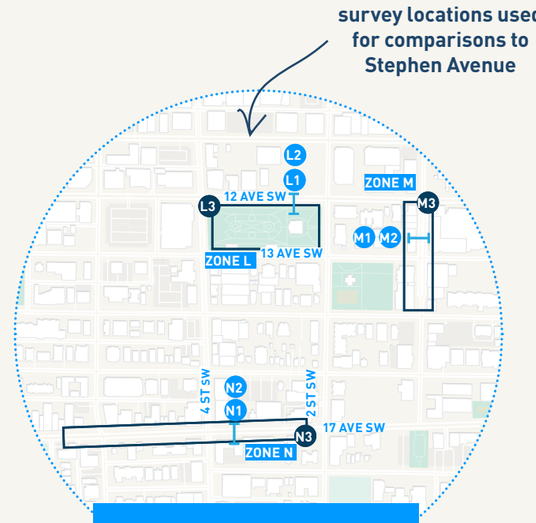
A targeted winter survey was conducted in February 2020

The PSPL Survey occurred over the course of a Thursday (Aug. 15) and a Saturday (Aug. 17) in 2019



The Avenue Survey Locations

survey locations used for comparisons to Stephen Avenue



Comparison Locations

Counting People Moving

Mapping Stationary Activity



This chapter provides an overview of the key findings from 1: The stakeholder engagement What We Heard and 2: The site studies What We Saw. For both pieces, a summary page provides the key takeaways, followed by individual pages that dive deeper and with supporting graphics. In addition, a series of Spotlights (pink pages) provide supporting evidence and both local and global success stories. The Insights are framed through the lens of economy, public life, public space, mobility, utilities and what makes a complete neighborhood. The Insights are used to inform the recommendations in the following chapters.

3 Key Findings

What we heard

What we heard

Insights

1

People want to see a mixed-use street with more small shops, residents, and everyday amenities

People engaged through stakeholder workshops expressed a desire for a more mixed-use street, with more housing options and amenities. They appreciate local businesses and would like to see higher quality retail.

We heard from the community a desire for more local businesses and residential units.

2

People want a diverse and inclusive space for all ages, abilities and price points

People engaged through stakeholder workshops want to see the Avenue become accessible and attractive for everyone - for all ages, abilities and price-points.

We heard from the community a desire for a better place for kids and families, a destination for both tourists and locals, and a hang-out spot for adults.

3

People want more varied programming and events across the day and throughout the year

People engaged through stakeholder workshops want to see the Avenue become accessible and attractive for everyone, all day and all year. They want to see more activity at night and over the weekend.

We heard from the community a desire for a year round place with all season programming and events.

4

People want a more dignified and comfortable experience for all users and modes

People engaged through stakeholder workshops want to see the Avenue as a comfortable place to move through and linger. They want a well defined experience for all modes of transport. They also expressed a desire to keep the avenue pedestrian friendly and improve sidewalks and paving.

We heard from the community a desire for a more pedestrian-friendly street with better bike lanes.

5

People have a varied perception of safety on the Avenue

People engaged through stakeholder workshops want to see improved safety and security on the avenue with less criminal activity, better lighting, reduced mode conflicts and street ambassadors. They also expressed a desire for a safer street with better lighting and a focus on addressing the homelessness.

We heard from the community divergent views on the presence of the homeless population and the perception of safety.

6

People want the Avenue to celebrate its heritage and history

People engaged through stakeholder workshops want to see the character and identity of the Avenue respected. They value the historical buildings.

We heard from the community a desire to honor the history and heritage of the Avenue.

What we heard

1 People want to see a mixed-use street with more small shops, residents and everyday amenities

Participants during stakeholder engagement workshops in August 2019 expressed a need to focus on ...

Economic Development

- Live - Work - Play
- Housing
- Micro retail
- Grocery store

Participants during public engagement hosted by the City of Calgary in October 2018 expressed a need to focus on ...

Retail & Services

- Higher quality retail
- Extended hours



> **"Local amenities are important. Living in the Mission without a car, the Dollarama and Winners are my only walkable options."**
>
> – Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> **"Create amenities for the 'new workforce' that is coming and for the 9-5 already here."**
>
> – Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, August 2019

> **"One-half of the people living in the drop-in center just need affordable housing."**
>
> – Social Agencies, Stakeholder Workshop December 2019

> **"Vacancies are a big issue, there is a need to think in mixed-use development."**
>
> – Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, August 2019

Results from the online engagement survey in November 2019 illustrated that...

51% of survey respondents said they come to the Avenue for "food and drinks" and "shopping."



> **"Let's encourage early activation, pop-ups and improve conditions for vendors on the street and for small businesses to set up shop."**
>
> – Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, August 2019

What we heard

2 People want a diverse and inclusive space for all ages, abilities and price-points

Participants during stakeholder engagement workshops in August 2019 expressed a need to focus on ...

Inclusion

- More for older adults
- More for kids
- Pet access





Results from the online engagement survey in November 2019 illustrated that...

Survey respondents reported average yearly household income:

45%
$100k or more

14%
$35k or less

> **"The gap between the rich and the poor is for me, the most visible on Stephen Avenue."**
>
> – Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> **"I like that this area is more of an adult hangout spot."**
>
> – Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> **"Welcoming places for families."**
>
> – Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

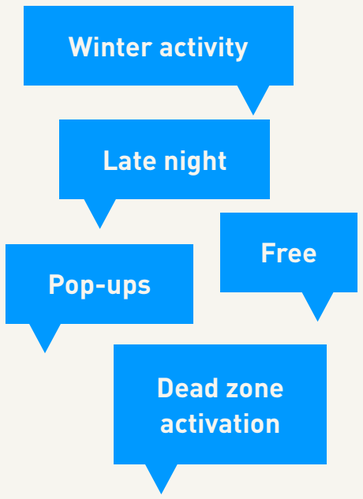
> **"More activities for all ages."**
>
> – Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

What we heard

3 People want more varied programming and events across the day and throughout the year

Participants during stakeholder engagement workshops in August 2019 expressed a need to focus on ...

Activation



Participants during public engagement hosted by the City of Calgary in October 2018 expressed a need to focus on ...

Activities & Events



> "There needs to be more activity on the weekends, especially in the winter."
>
> – Downtown Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> "We need a vibrant and diverse set of experiences to get people out of the sky and onto the street."
>
> –Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, August 2019

Results from the online engagement survey in November 2019 illustrated that...

Respondents frequently cited "things to do besides eat/drink," "evening activity" and "more entertainment" when responding to "I would spend time/more time on Stephen Avenue if ..."

> "Most of the activities on Stephen Avenue are aimed at business people so after 7pm its pretty dead around here."
>
> – Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> "Make Stephen Avenue a busy and vibrant place around the clock rather than just during working hours."
>
> – Student at University of Calgary, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> "It's difficult to animate all of Stephen Avenue and it will require multiple strategies and clusters with something special in each."
>
> –Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, August 2019



What we heard

4 People want a more dignified and comfortable experience for all users and modes

Participants during stakeholder engagement workshops in August 2019 expressed a need to focus on ...

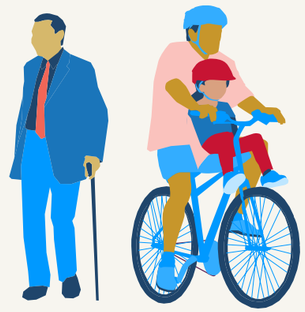
Connectivity & Movement

- Multi-modal
- Loading
- Connect Downtown
- Universal access
- Parking strategy

Participants during public engagement hosted by the City of Calgary in October 2018 expressed a need to focus on ...

Movement & Functionality

- Wider sidewalks
- Improved surfacing
- Better defined cycle-tracks
- Improved connectivity with downtown



Results from the online engagement survey in November 2019 illustrated that...

Survey respondents main mode of transit when visiting the Avenue:

43% walk

21% public transportation

"Take cars out to make it safe, current navigation is messy and makes it unsafe for all."

– Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, August 2019

"As a cyclist, the current infrastructure is not great, especially in winter."

–Local Business Employee, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

"Taxis feel like they own the whole road and it makes it very uncomfortable for cyclists"

– City Staff, Stakeholder Engagement Workshop December 2019

"Prioritize pedestrian safety and well defined spaces for all of the transportation modes."

– City Staff, CEMA, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

"Make it a people street."

– Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

What we heard

5 People have a varied perception of safety on the Avenue

Participants during stakeholder engagement workshops in August 2019 expressed a need to focus on ...

Safety & Security

- Better Lighting
- Street ambassadors
- Less criminal activity
- Safe from vehicular attacks

Participants during public engagement hosted by the City of Calgary in October 2018 expressed a need to focus on ...

Crime & Safety

- Increase in police presence
- Better Lighting
- Address homelessness



> **"More people equals more safety and less crime. Focus on bringing the people."**
>
> – Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> **"Criminalizing homelessness and mental health is not the answer."**
>
> – Social Agencies, Stakeholder Workshop December 2019

> **"Safety is a big issue for me. As a single female who has lived here for almost 30 years, I've seen the downtown decline."**
>
> – Downtown Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> **"Olympic Plaza is one of the few places where people feel a sense of community who are experiencing homelessness."**
>
> – Social Agencies, Stakeholder Workshop December 2019

> **"I don't feel safe at night downtown."**
>
> – Property Owner/Developer, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> **"We're actively trying to address the perception of safety as its declining."**
>
> – Calgary Police Department, December 2019

What we heard

6 People want the Avenue to celebrate its heritage and history

Participants during stakeholder engagement workshops in August 2019 expressed a need to focus on ...

Character & Identity

- Edgy art
- Playful
- Historic
- Seamless design

Participants during public engagement hosted by the City of Calgary in October 2018 expressed a need to focus on ...

History & Placemaking

- Prioritization of historic buildings



> **"We should be honouring the heritage buildings and working with what we already have."**
>
> – Calgary Resident, Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> **"History, heritage and character are vitally important."**
>
> – Public Storefront Open House Attendee December 2019

> **"It would be great to have more residential living in some of these heritage buildings."**
>
> – Local Business Owner, Public Storefront Open House Attendee, December 2019

> **"Think heritage 'beyond old' - there are many wonderful assets on Stephen Avenue that should be preserved and built on."**
>
> – Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, August 2019

Results from the online engagement survey in November 2019 illustrated that...

When asked what survey respondents value when they spend time on Stephen Avenue, "heritage," "architecture" and "history" were frequently mentioned.



What we saw

SUMMARY

What we saw

Insights

1
Working on the Avenue

Developments are changing the dynamic along the Avenue.

The changing economy is reshaping how space is used on the Avenue.

The Avenue links social, cultural and economic assets.

2
Living on the Avenue

People are looking to live in and around downtown.

The Avenue lacks everyday amenities that make up a complete neighbourhood.

3
Shopping + Entertainment on the Avenue

Downtown has a wide array of cultural and recreational assets.

Retail vacancy and the +15 network fracture the Avenue's public realm.

4
Moving on the Avenue

The street design today doesn't give clear mode priority.

Connections to and from public transit need strengthening.

Is vehicle accommodation on the Avenue appropriate?

5
Spending time on the Avenue

Daily and yearly rhythms on the Avenue show major gaps in the public life profile.

Commerce drives the majority of activity.

While there's an even gender breakdown, young kids and older adults aren't invited to spend time.

When people do spend time, they hang out in human-scaled areas with active ground floors.

6
Safety on the Avenue

The perception of safety is declining in Centre City.

7
Public Space on the Avenue

Public life follows the quality of the public realm.

Existing conditions impede universal accessibility.

There are significant perceived and real distances.

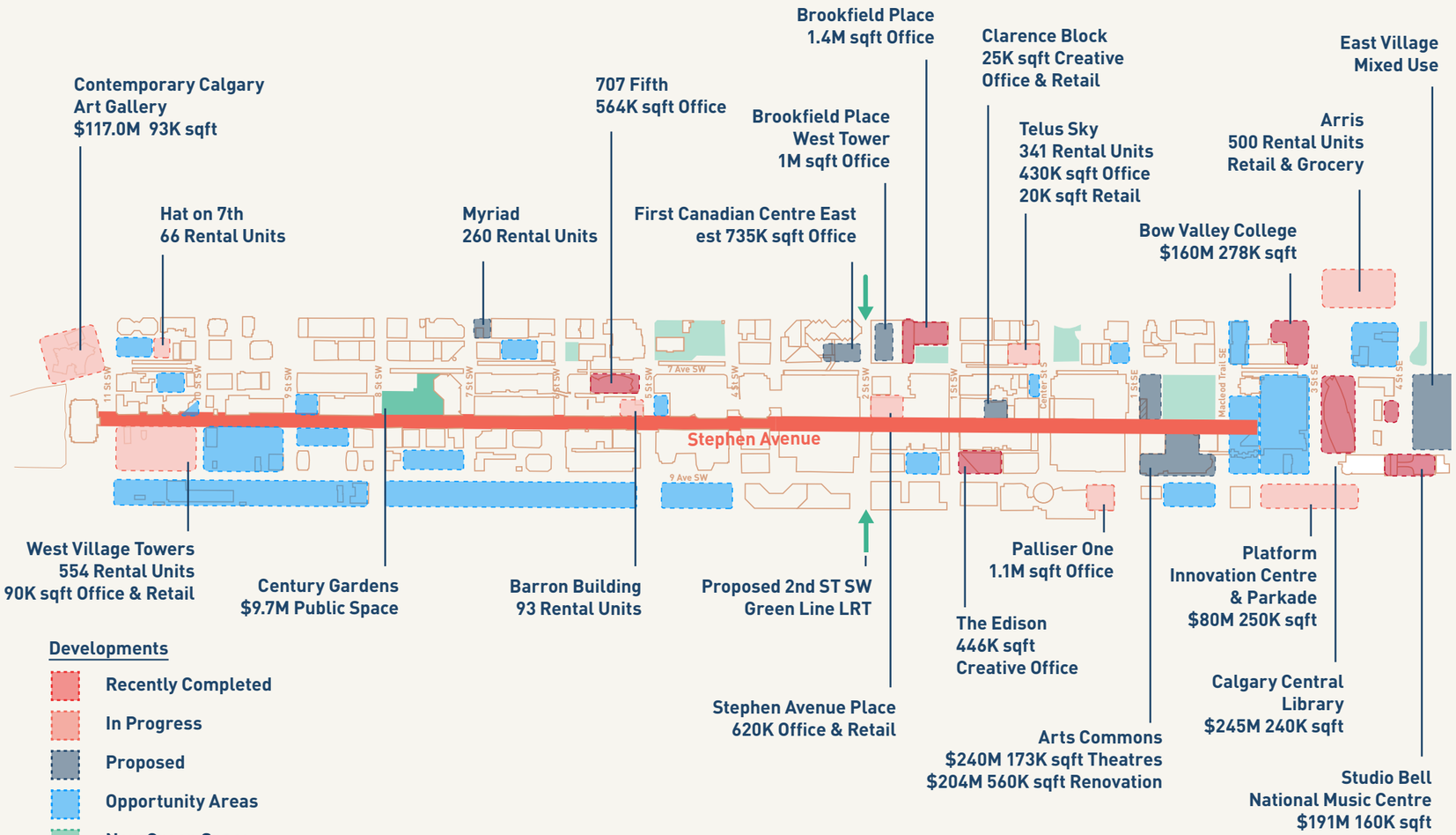
Utilities and infrastructure - a new chapter.

1 Working on the Avenue

Developments are changing the dynamic along the Avenue

There is an opportunity to leverage downtown's assets and build on this momentum to establish a stronger identity for the Avenue. Civic investments in infrastructure for connectivity and mobility, parks and public spaces, cultural assets, and economic hubs are catalyzing renewed interest in Centre City as a place for private investment and redevelopment.

For example, downtown's first office-residential conversion is underway. To fully capitalize on this energy these destinations, neighbourhoods and new investments need to better work together as a network of complementary assets. The Avenue can play a key role in solidifying Centre City as a place defined by and for all of its users.



Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

88% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

+3.75 M ft²
of new and redeveloped offices and retail spaces

+1.5 M ft²
of new and redeveloped cultural and civic spaces

1,250
new residential units under construction on the Avenue

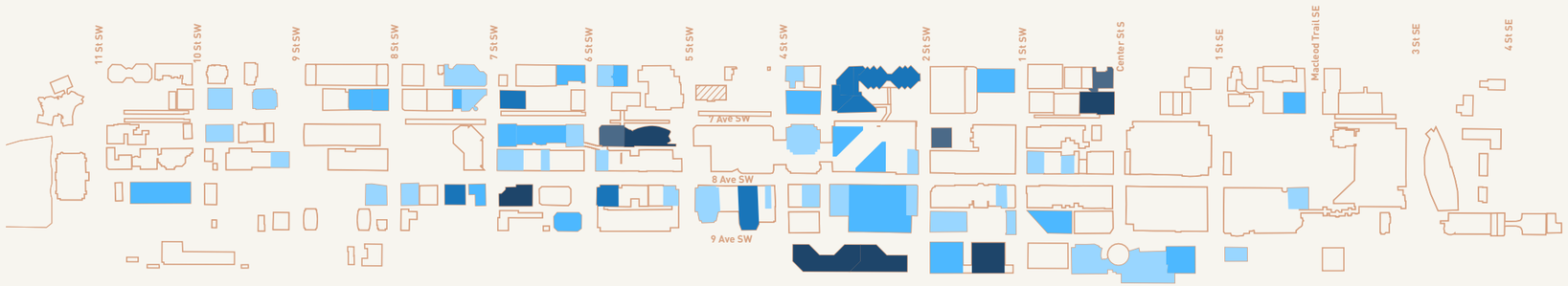
1 Working on the Avenue

The changing economy is reshaping how space is used on the Avenue

The 2014 recession's impact on the province's oil and gas industry produced significant vacancies downtown and along the Avenue, driving down assessed value, tax base, and rents. New office spaces and lease structures designed for today's more nimble economy is producing a trend of "reverse migration" bringing office tenants back into Calgary's core. This is also opening up Class B and C space as well as empty storefronts for re-imagination through interim uses, pop-ups, and experience-based retail.

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

88% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings



Total Vacant Square Footage

- 0-50,000 sqft
- 50,000 - 100,000 sqft
- 100,000 - 150,000 sqft
- 150,000 - 200,000 sqft
- 200,000+ sqft

1.2 M ft²
office available for lease

The Avenue

26.6%
office space vacancy rate (totaling apx 11.7 million sq.ft)

Centre City

additional unused space exists along the Avenue today on the ground floor, +15, and upper building floors but is not marketed for lease

check out the spotlight on The Edison on p. 64



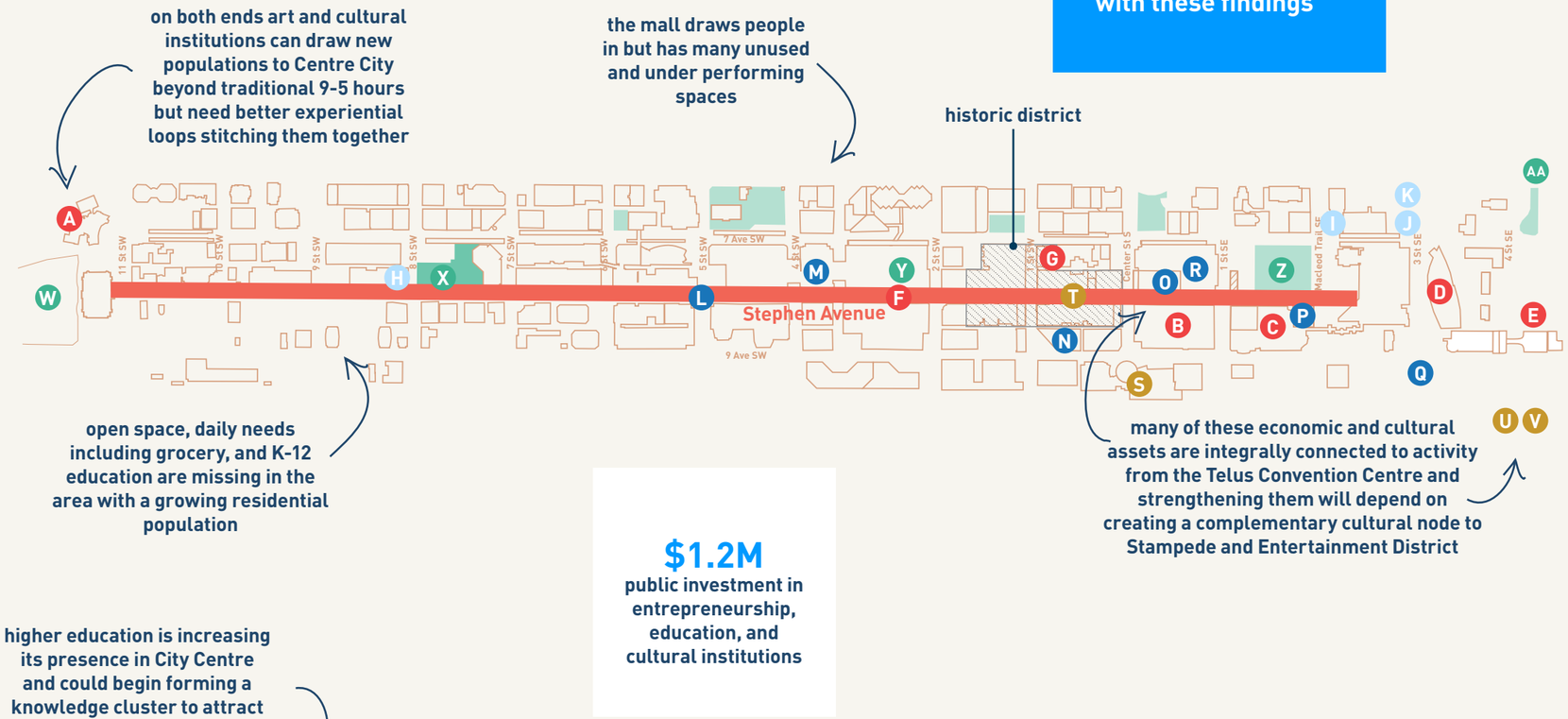
1 Working on the Avenue

The Avenue links social, cultural and economic assets

There is an opportunity for the Avenue to connect the dots between new investments in economic incubators, civic hubs, and cultural institutions. Innovation economies like the one Calgary is growing are sustained by an ecosystem of cultural infrastructure which has the potential to generate an 18hrs day / 7 days a week experience that global talent is seeking. The Avenue will need to better connect existing and new institutions, businesses, and key assets through physical improvements as well as operational and governance systems.

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

88% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings



$1.2M
public investment in entrepreneurship, education, and cultural institutions

Cultural & Arts

- A Contemporary Calgary
- B Glenbow Museum
- C Arts Commons & Theatre Calgary
- D Central Library
- E National Music Centre Studio Bell
- F Public Art Sculptures & Murals (throughout)
- G The Grand Theater

Education

- H University of Calgary
- I UofC School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape
- J Bow Valley College - South Campus
- K Athabasca University

Economic

- L Central Business District
- M CORE Shopping Centre
- N Calgary Downtown Association Business Revitalization Zone
- O Telus Convention Centre
- P Startup Calgary
- Q Chamber of Commerce
- R Platform Innovation Centre

Recreation & Entertainment

- S Calgary Tower
- T Heritage District Restaurants & Shops
- U Calgary Stampede
- V Entertainment & Culture District

Open Space

- W Millennium Park
- X Century Gardens
- Y Devonian Gardens
- Z Olympic Plaza & Municipal Building
- AA Riverwalk



The new public realm at The Edison (Aspen Properties)

Spotlight

The Edison

The Edison is a 30-storey, first of its kind office redevelopment in Calgary situated on 9th Ave and 1st St SW. Developed by Aspen Properties, the project is dedicated to developing a solid business community through cultivating connections and providing spaces that spark creativity. This includes uncommon spaces and ample amenities designed to ignite new ideas and spark creativity. Today the 446,300 sqft tower is home to MobSquad, Clio, chata.ai, Entuitive, and other trailblazing businesses.

Trends

New ways of working

→ Proximity drives innovation

→ Transdisciplinary collaboration

→ Tech is infused across sectors

→ Automation and AI

→ Startups & co-working spaces

→ Gig economy & remote working



2 Living on the Avenue

People are looking to live in and around downtown

New centres of gravity in and around downtown show that there is an increased demand for urban living in Calgary. As is happening in other major cities, people are gravitating towards areas with amenities that support everyday life, such as grocery stores, schools, parks, civic / cultural institutions, bars / restaurants, retail and services. There is an opportunity to leverage this trend in and around the Avenue. Downtown West is well positioned with a stock of lands prime for redevelopment.

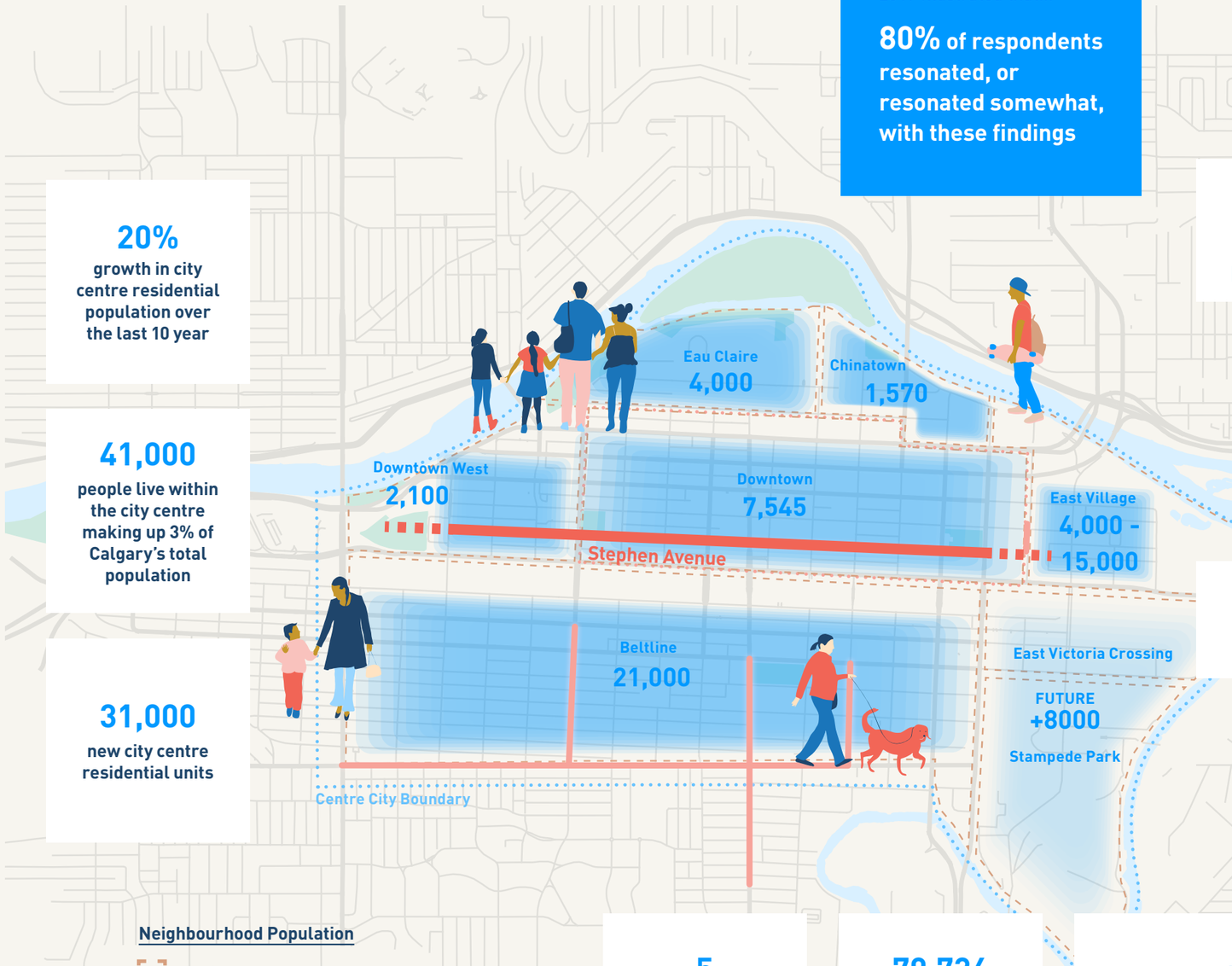
Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

80% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

20%
growth in city centre residential population over the last 10 year

41,000
people live within the city centre making up 3% of Calgary's total population

31,000
new city centre residential units



A variety of unique and everyday amenities attract people to Inglewood



East village is fast becoming a popular neighbourhood

5
public post secondary institutions in Calgary

70,736
public post secondary students in Calgary

10,000+/-
students studying in the Calgary city centre

2 Living on the Avenue

The Avenue lacks everyday amenities that make up a complete neighbourhood

Overall, the downtown offers a range of everyday amenities and services. However, when looking more closely at the three-character areas defined in the City Vision for the Future of Stephen Avenue, the areas along the Avenue do not provide all or amenities of high value for a complete, walkable neighbourhood.

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

80% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

Character Area 3



Character Area 2

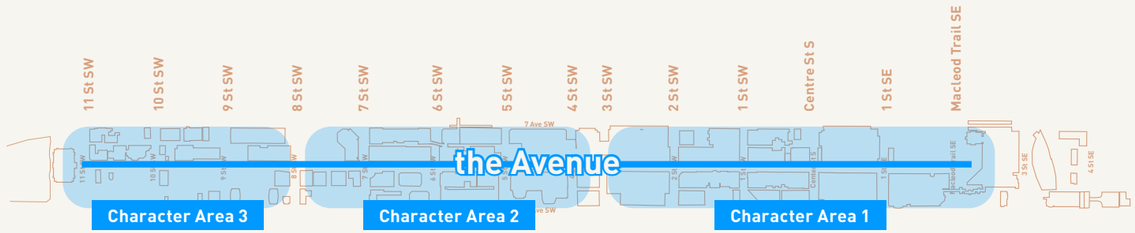


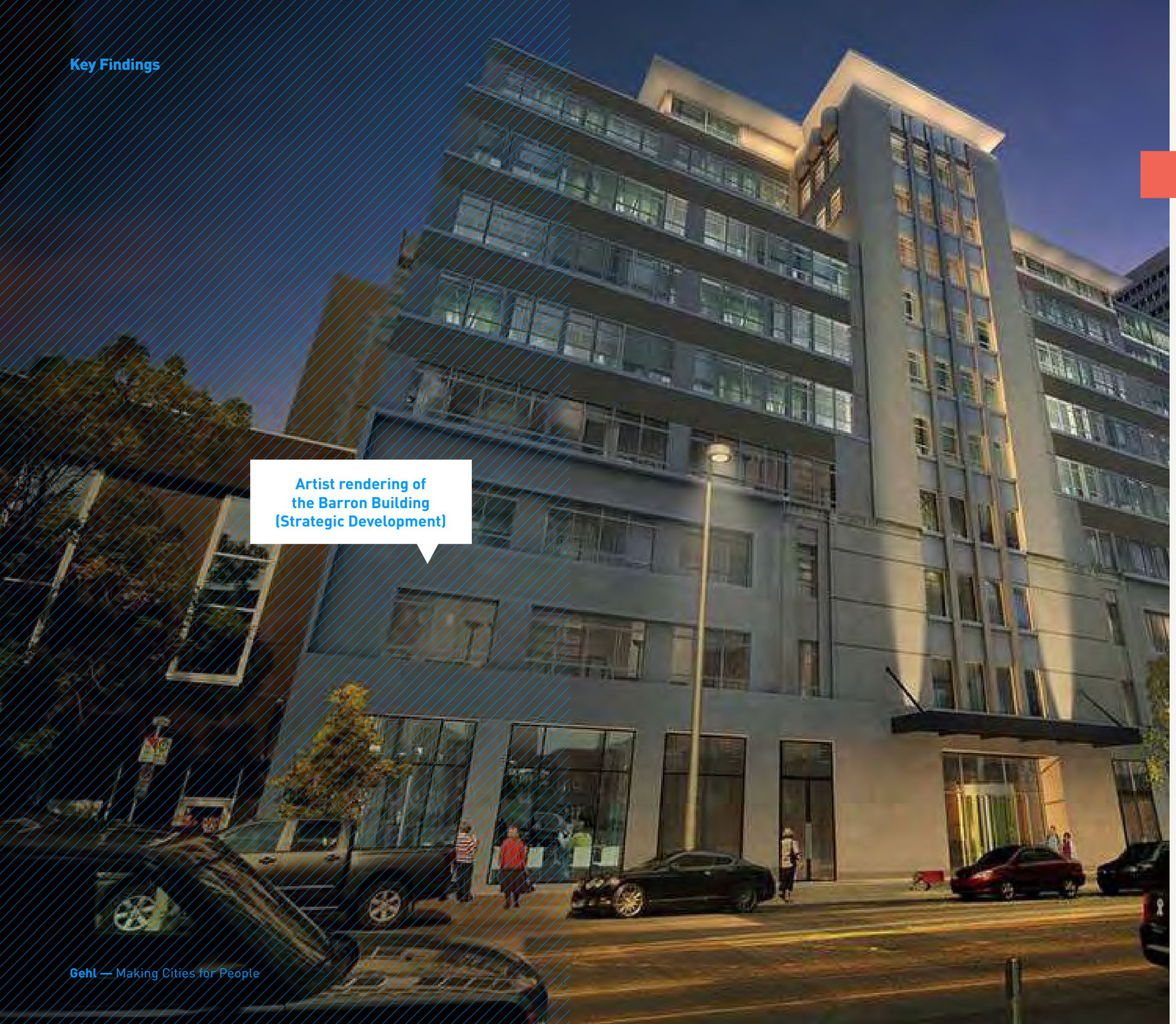
Character Area 1



Neighbourhood Amenities

- **High Value**, City wide destination
- **Medium Value**, Meets the needs
- **Low Value**, Existing but under performing





Artist rendering of the Barron Building (Strategic Development)

Spotlight

The Barron Building

The Barron Building is an 11-storey historical building located on 8th Ave and 5th St SW that was one of Calgary's earliest skyscrapers and home to its first oil and gas giants in 1951. In 2020, it will be a revitalized mixed-use apartment building with street-level retail space, and 93 rental suites with amenities. It will be the first residential rental property on Stephen Avenue in the downtown core and designed for Calgary's growing technology industry workers.

Trends

People want to live in complete neighbourhoods

A complete neighbourhood is walkable and safe for all. It offers everyday life amenities within a reasonable walking distance from peoples' homes and local meeting places that can strengthen an active lifestyle and social connections.

It offers retail and job opportunities that can be beneficial for the local economy and help strengthen the neighbourhood in its' entirety.



Calgary Stephen Avenue

3 Shopping + Entertainment on the Avenue

Downtown has a wide array of cultural and recreational assets

There is an opportunity for destinations, neighbourhoods and new investments to better work together as a network of complementary assets, and all better linked to the Avenue.

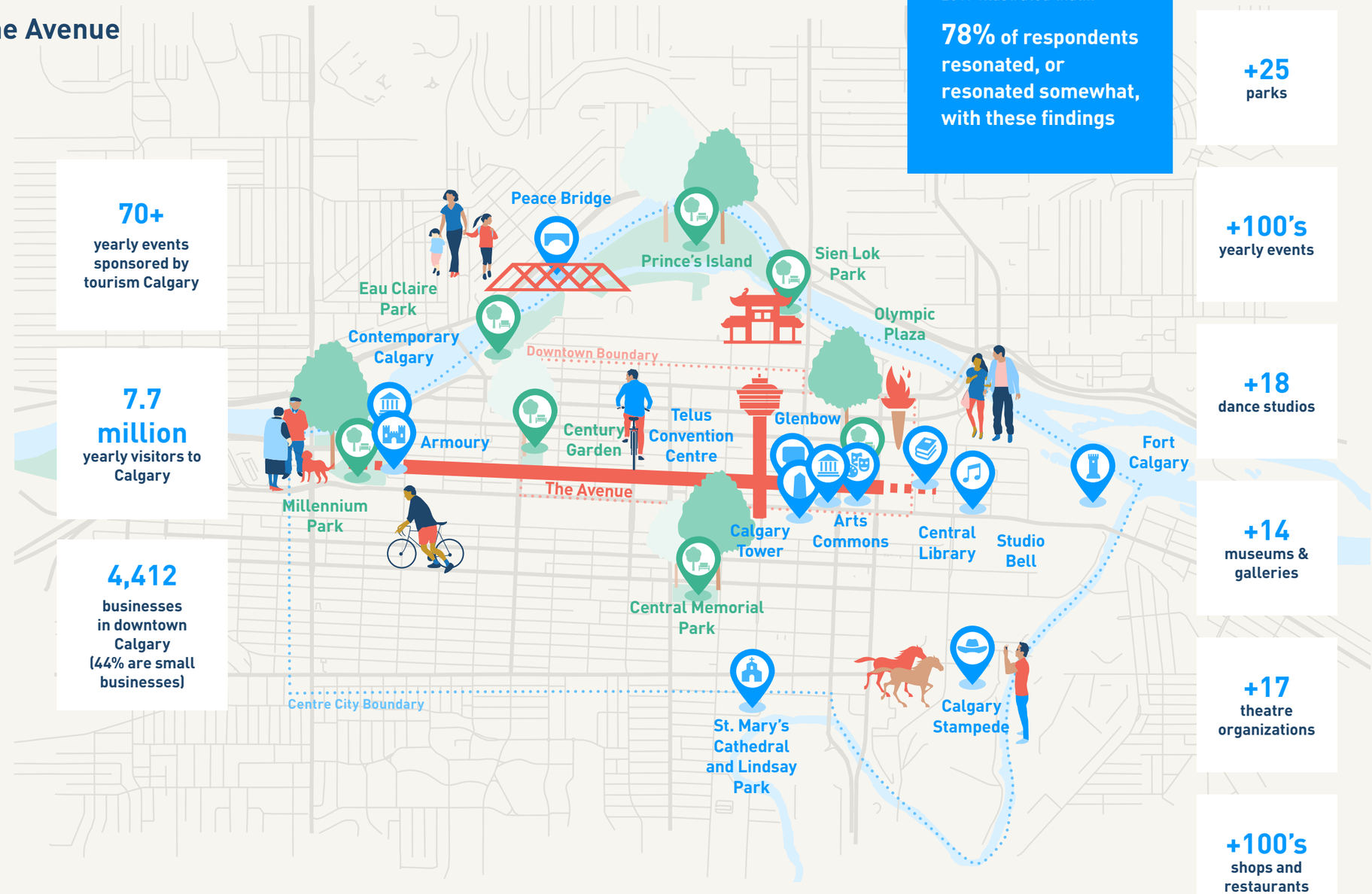
Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

78% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

70+
yearly events sponsored by tourism Calgary

7.7 million
yearly visitors to Calgary

4,412
businesses in downtown Calgary (44% are small businesses)



+25
parks

+100's
yearly events

+18
dance studios

+14
museums & galleries

+17
theatre organizations

+100's
shops and restaurants

Downtown Assets

- Institution
- Park / Plaza

3 Shopping + Entertainment on the Avenue

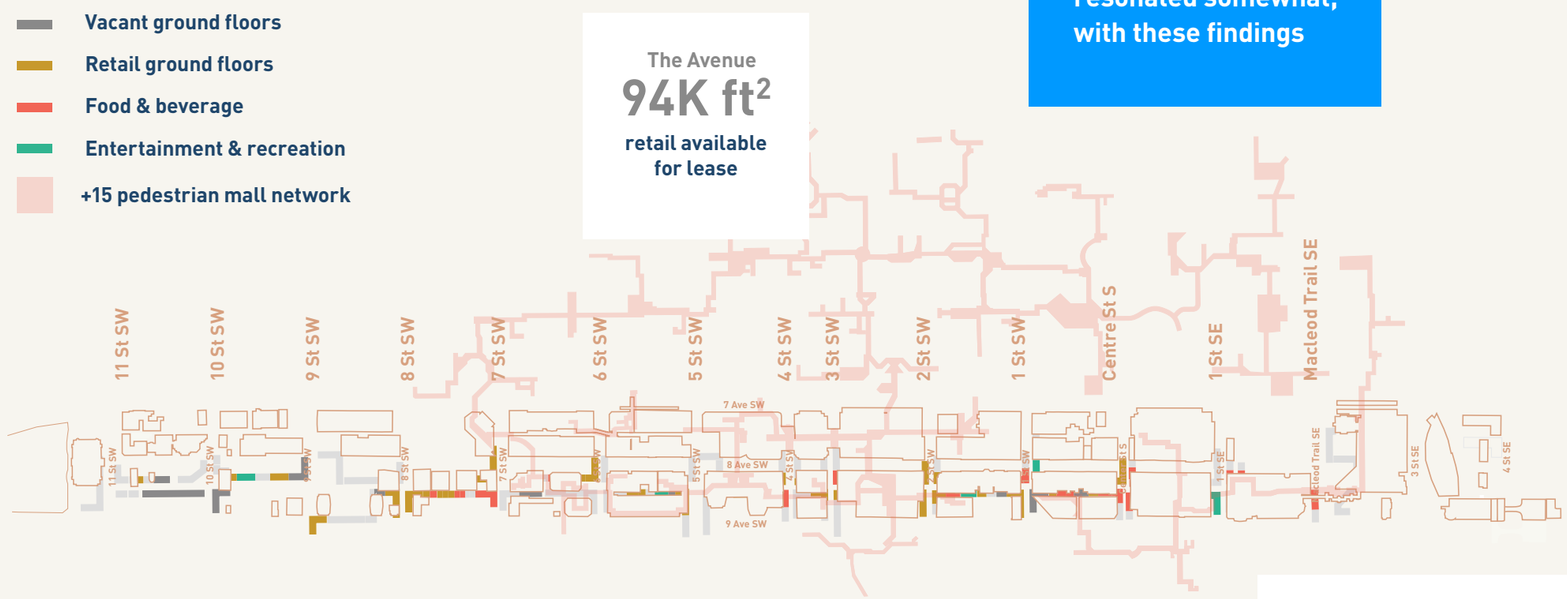
Retail vacancy and the +15 network fracture the Avenue's public realm

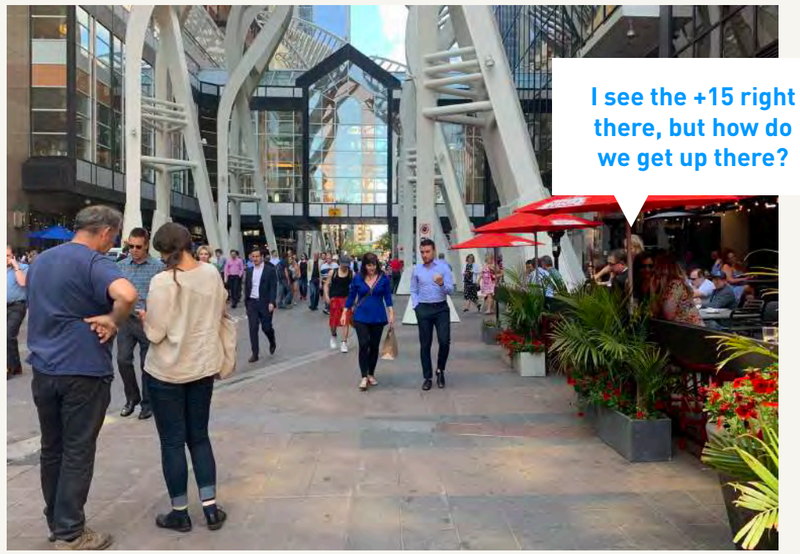
The conversation around the +15 system has long been a divisive one. There are its critics claiming the network robs the street of its vitality and its supporters touting comfort and convenience during Calgary's cold winter months. Whether you are for or against the +15 network what's missing is any connection both physical and visually between the network and the street. Better linking the two could help break the perceived and real barriers caused by the +15 network.

Current vacancies in existing storefront spaces between the central business core and Olympic Plaza are well positioned for interim uses, pop-ups, and experience-based retail.

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

78% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings









Spotlight

Central Library | Calgary Public Library

2018 marked the beginning of a new chapter for Calgary, with the opening of a new cultural icon for the city: the Calgary Central Library. As a community hub, the 21st Century library is a critical piece of social, cultural, and economic infrastructure that helps the entire city succeed by serving as a centre of learning, professional development, wellness, and inclusion. This branch provides free resources, data access, research training, coding classes, welcome settlement services, and more.

Trends

A new experience of retail and shopping

→ E-commerce delivers goods

→ Retail provides experience

→ Brick and click stores

→ Curating community

→ Hybrid business models

→ Customer-level data use



'Appear Here' is a rotating collection of pop-up booths in the UK for makers, crafters, designers and creators.

Calgary Stephen Avenue

4 Moving on the Avenue

The street design today doesn't give clear mode priority

Unclear cues on the Avenue create confusion for people walking and biking along the pedestrian mall and on 8th Avenue SW. There is an opportunity to improve universal accessibility and create more invitations for people walking, people on bikes, and micro-mobility users.

There is a need to improve connectivity by addressing missing links within the overall pedestrian and bike network to create consistency and attract more multi-modal users downtown for users of all-ages and abilities.

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

100% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

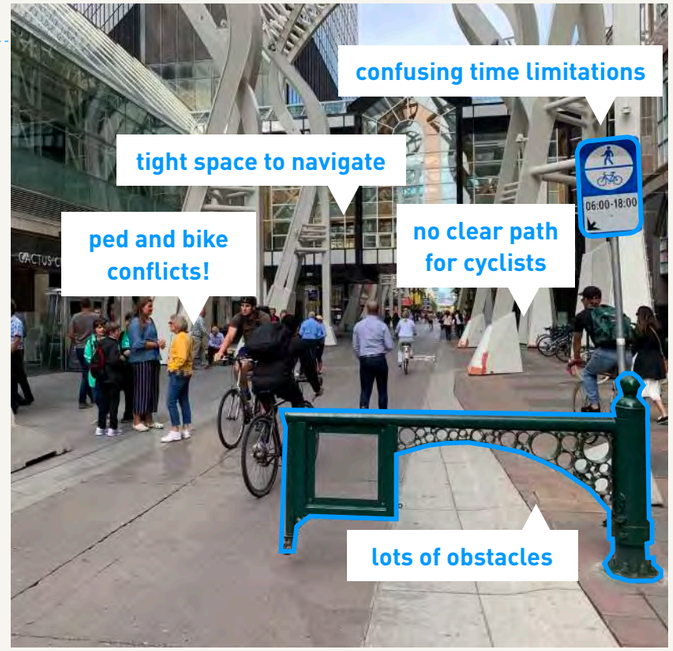
Pedestrian Mall

hourly averages, Stephen Avenue

	weekday	weekend
PEDESTRIANS	1138	858
CYCLISTS	52	26
SCOOTERS + SKATEBOARDS	44	32





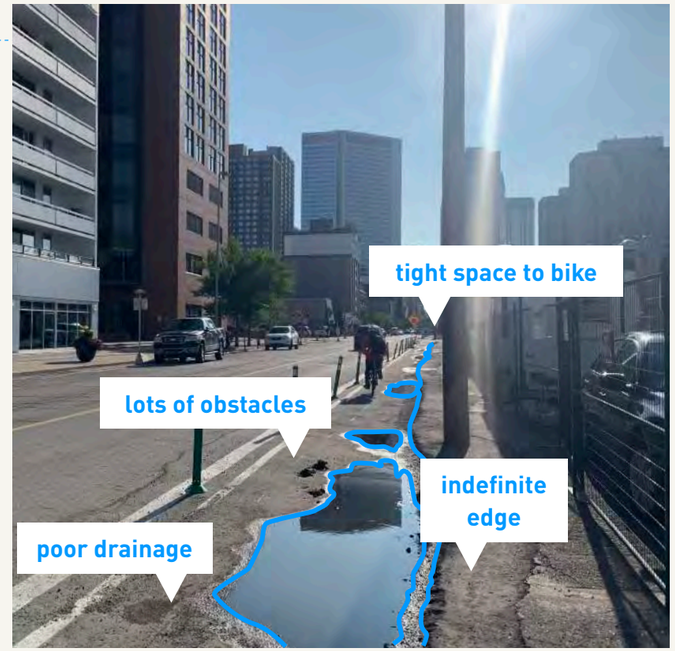


8th Avenue

hourly averages, Stephen Avenue

	weekday	weekend
PEDESTRIANS	258	192
CYCLISTS	44	20
SCOOTERS + SKATEBOARDS	18	21





*Stephen Avenue hourly averages based on mode movement counts from the Public Space, Public Life Survey, Summer 2019

4 Moving on the Avenue

Connections to and from public transit need strengthening

Calgary Transit is effective in bringing people to the downtown core with one of the highest light rail riderships in the world. However, there is an opportunity to strengthen the connection between public transit and the Avenue by improving the pedestrian experience at C-Train stations, major intersections and the north-south connections between the Avenue and the 7th AVE SW transit corridor.

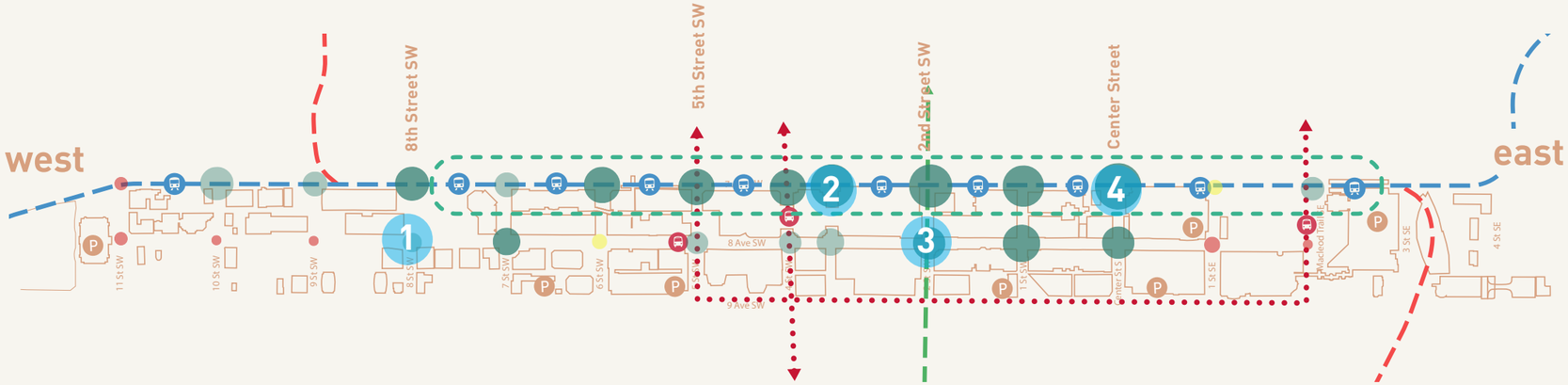
The adjacent map illustrates the intersections where pedestrian traffic far outweighs that of vehicular traffic along the Avenue and on 7th AVE SW. The majority of these intersections are associated with LRT-Stations and hold significant opportunities to strengthen way-finding, pedestrian safety and connections to the Avenue.

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

100% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

Calgary Transit moves +/-50% of people in and out of the core

How can the Avenue strengthen its connection to public transit?



Legend

- Pedestrian Dominate Intersection
- Neutral Intersection
- Vehicular Dominate Intersection
- C-Train Station
- C-Train Route
- Bus Stop
- Bus Route
- Free Fare Zone



Intersection 1
8thST SW & 8th AVE SW
Pedestrians: 1230 /hr
Vehicles 1160 /hr

Intersection 2
3rd ST SW & 7th AVE SW
Pedestrians: 3220 /hr
Vehicles 730 /hr

Intersection 3
2nd ST SW & 8th AVE SW
Pedestrians: 2260 /hr
Vehicles 1040 /hr

Intersection 4
Centre ST SW & 7th AVE SW
Pedestrians: 2675 /hr
Vehicles 523 /hr

4 Moving on the Avenue

Is vehicle accommodation appropriate on the Avenue?

The first iteration of the mall was designed and built to be a pedestrian space and has since evolved into today's iteration with vehicular traffic being permitted on the mall in the evenings (6pm - 6am).

When traffic was reintroduced onto the Avenue it was believed to be good for struggling businesses along the mall and improve safety through the 'eyes on the street approach'. While the vehicular access makes for easy access and convenience for vehicles, space is taken away from pedestrians, and though cycling is permitted, it is confusing for both motorists and cyclists. Though the traffic moves slowly, the vehicle presence creates an unwelcome place for pedestrians and creates confusion between all user groups.

With vehicles accounting for less than 10% of total daily trips on the Avenue it could be concluded that restricting vehicular traffic would not only generate more evening trips in the form of pedestrians and cyclists, but would maintain the corridor experience that attracts so many users to the Avenue during the daytime hours.

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

100% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings



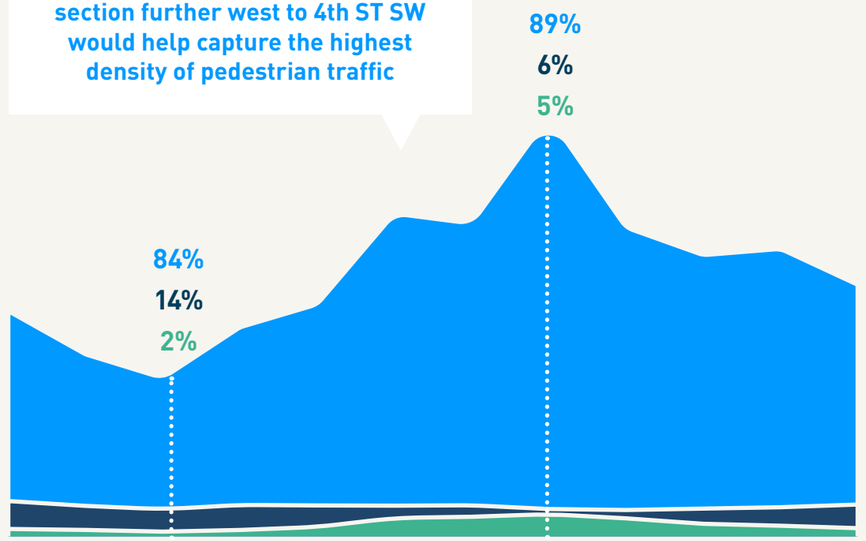
24 Hour Mode Split
January

Pedestrians
11,381

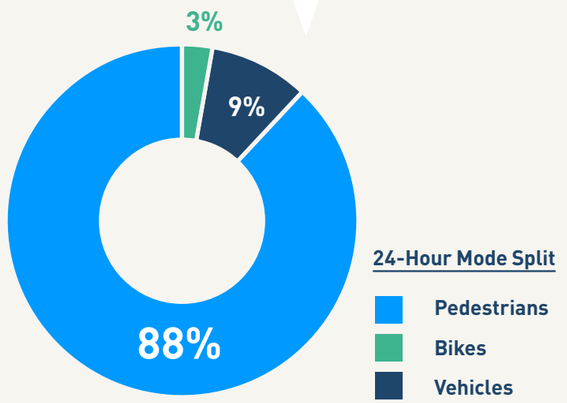
Bikes
368

Vehicles
1,113

Extending the pedestrian only section further west to 4th ST SW would help capture the highest density of pedestrian traffic



88% of traffic is pedestrian, even in January one of Calgary's coldest months



Brighton New Road, UK - clear mode priority for pedestrians and cyclists



Trends

New forms of mobility are influencing the Avenue

The introduction of micro-mobility has opened up a new category of mobility in Calgary, Mobility as Entertainment. Trips are now not only about the destination but rather the journey itself. The largest user group in this demographic is young people bringing a potential new subset of users to the downtown core through the rise of micro-mobility.

As mobility continues to evolve, designing a street that accounts for bicycle and scooter movement, parking (both permanent and shared) and interactions with pedestrians and retail will be vital to the future success of the Avenue.



5 Staying on the Avenue

Daily and yearly rhythms on the Avenue show major gaps in the public life profile

Daily, public life on the Avenue follows the rhythm of a typical 9-5 workday, with peaks around lunchtime and happy hour. Yearly, programming is not equitably distributed throughout the four seasons as events are skewed towards the summer months when the street is already well populated. There's an opportunity to better leverage the evening hours and winter season to attract more people to the street.

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

88% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

There are lots of summer events, like the Summer Stage, but few in the winter season





summer events

82%

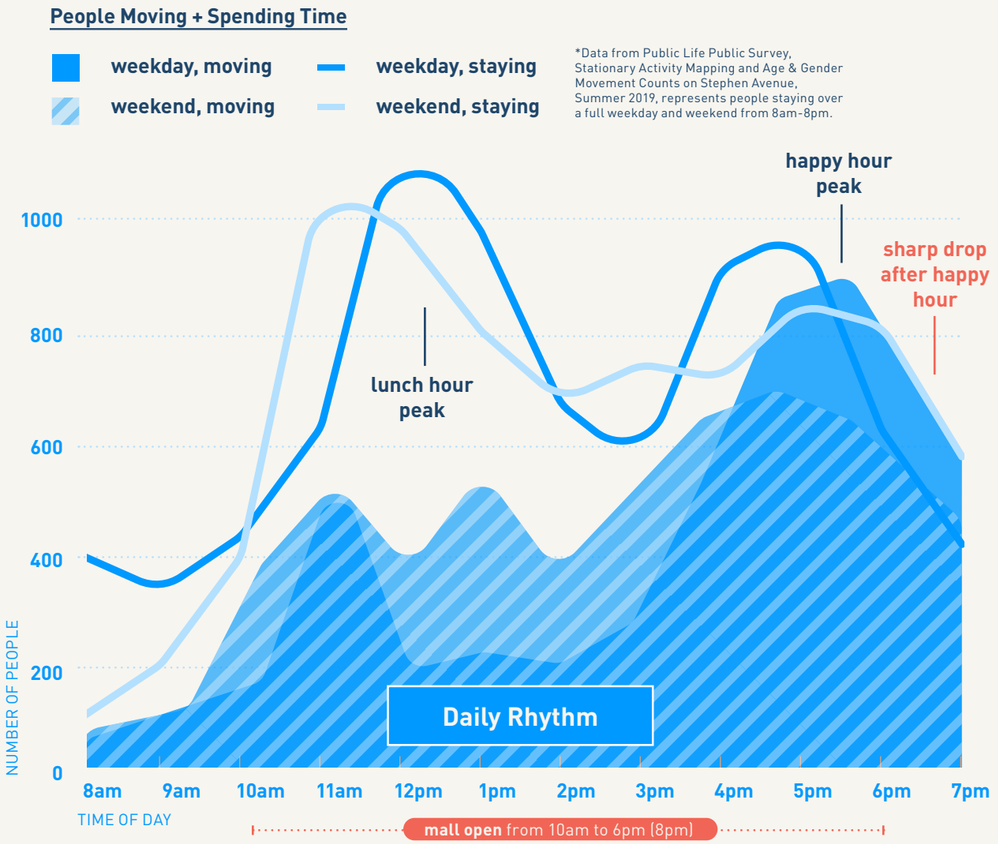
55 major events

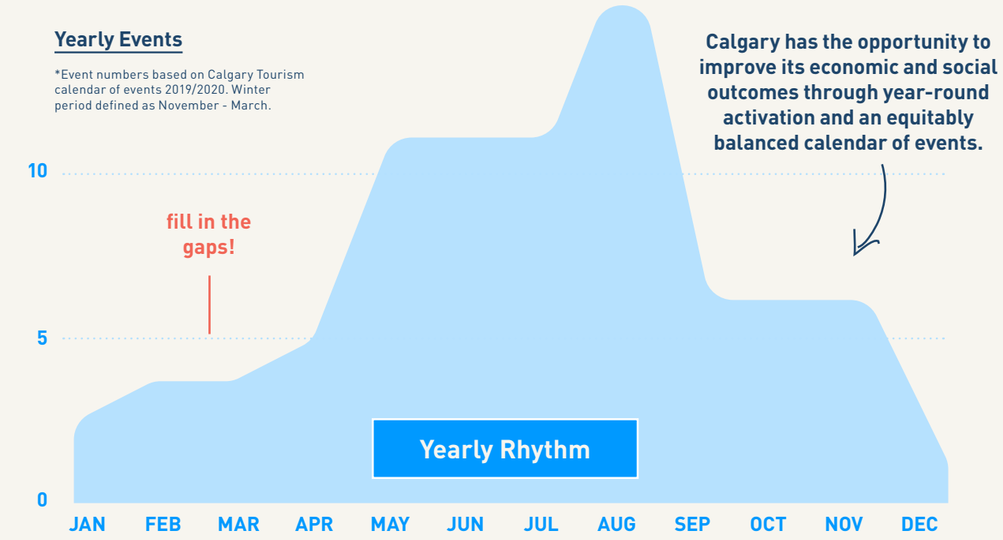


winter events

18%

12 major events





5 Staying on the Avenue

Commerce drives the majority of activity

On the Avenue commercial establishments, like restaurants and bars, support daily public life. Invitations to stop and stay are predominantly tied to places where you have to spend money. There are few opportunities to sit and spend time where you don't have to pay to stay.

While a lot of commercial activity is definitely not a bad thing, it's not enough to sustain a lively and diverse public realm throughout the day, week and year. There's untapped potential for the Avenue to expand beyond its commercial offerings and support more inclusive opportunities to spend time.

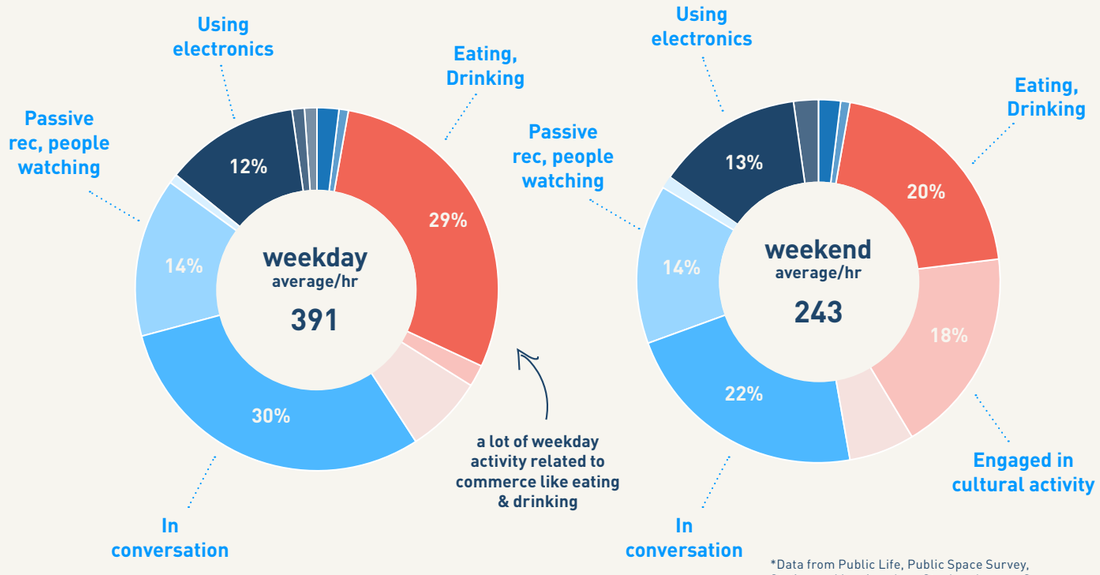
Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

92% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings



Activity Breakdown

- Active rec, play
- Civic work
- Eating, drinking
- Engaged in cultural activity
- Engaged with commerce
- In conversation
- Passive rec, people watching
- Passive rec, reading/writing
- Using electronics
- Waiting for public transport
- Watiing for transport, private



*Data from Public Life, Public Space Survey, Stationary Mapping along Stephen Avenue, Summer 2019 (excluding Olympic Plaza) and represents a summary of the total activities recorded over a full weekday and weekend from 8am-8pm.

NOTE: on Saturday there was a cultural event on Stephen Avenue, which may have affected the data.

5 Staying on the Avenue

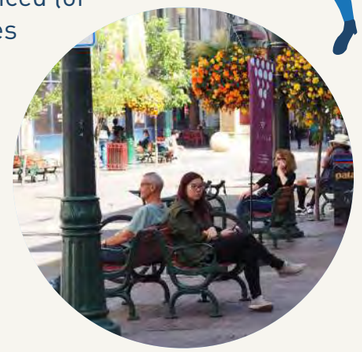
While there's an even gender breakdown, young kids and older adults aren't invited to spend time

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

88% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

As a downtown main street, the Avenue performs well when looking at how it invites both men and women. Generally, public spaces that have a balanced (or higher) ratio of women indicates a higher perception of safety.

The Avenue mainly attracts adults, from 25-64 years old. There's an opportunity to invite a broader range of ages, especially kids and teens, who are currently underrepresented on the Avenue when compared to Calgary's census data.





female representation

44% weekday

female representation

49% weekend

Age Representation, Weekday

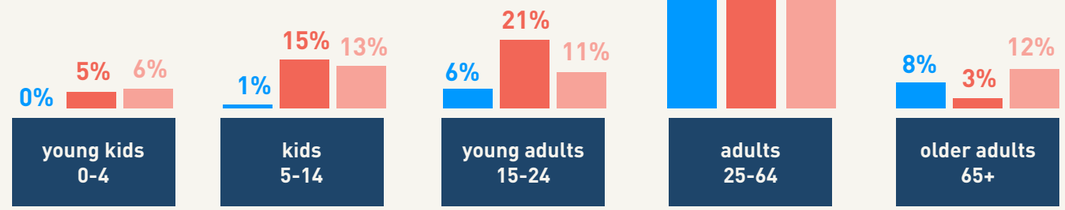


The Avenue (excluding Olympic Plaza)

Olympic Plaza

Calgary Census Calgary Demographic Report

*Age data for Stephen Avenue and Olympic Plaza based on stationary mapping, Summer 2019, across a full weekday and weekend day from 8am-8pm.







5 Staying on the Avenue

People spend time in human-scaled areas with active ground floors

There is a strong correlation between ground floor activity and the number of people who spend time in the area. Unsurprisingly, areas with a fragmented built environment, like the west end, see far fewer people hanging out in the public realm than areas with active ground floors and a human-scaled environment. In particular, the areas with a higher concentration of historic buildings see more people spending time. There's an opportunity to incentivize varied and active ground floor uses and better protect the Avenue's heritage buildings to create more invitations for people to spend time in the public realm.



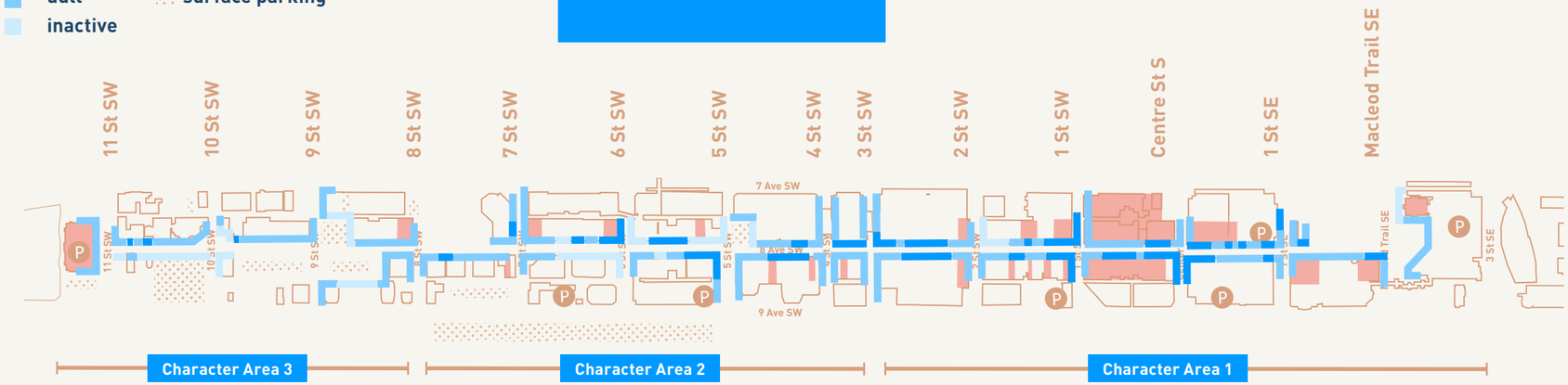
Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

92% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

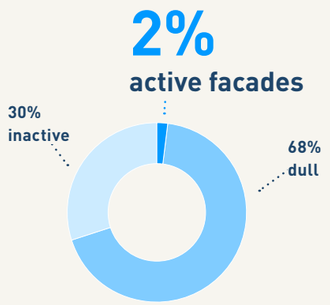
More people spend time on the Avenue in the area with a human-scaled, built environment that allows you to enjoy the positive aspects of the climate.

Facade Quality

- active
- dull
- inactive
- historic building
- surface parking



2 historic buildings

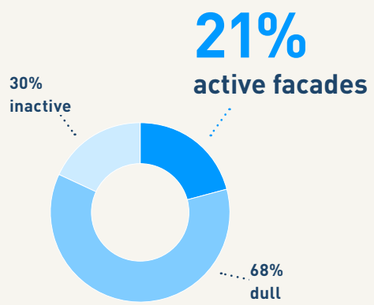


Character Area 3

39:1

out of 39 people moving through, 1 stays

7 historic buildings

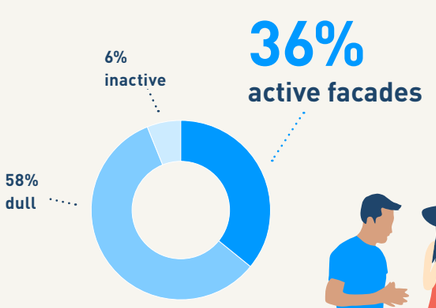


Character Area 2

36:1

out of 36 people moving through, 1 stays

38 historic buildings





Character Area 1

12:1

out of 12 people moving through, 1 stays

*Data from Public Life, Public Space Survey, Facade Quality Mapping and Stationary Activity along Stephen Avenue, Summer 2019

Trends

Expanding the Public Life Profile of the Avenue

In the pre-internet age, the combination of entertainment and shopping fostered vibrant public spaces. Today changing consumer patterns are shifting towards on-line shopping and streaming content at home. This means that in order to attract people to downtown main streets there is a need to rethink the offering that these streets provide.

Retail centres and districts around the globe are introducing cultural facilities, pop-up retail and unique events to entice visitors, and the Avenue is strategically placed to become more than a shopping destination and offer everyday amenities and experiences that will draw more people, also outside of 9-5.



Trends

Improving four-season programming on the Avenue

Winter arrives every year in Calgary whether we like it or not! Cities such as Edmonton, Winnipeg, Olso and Copenhagen have chosen to embrace the colder months, reclaiming the joy of winter and embracing the season so central to our identity as Calgarians. The Avenue could benefit from a vision that celebrates and makes the best of winter; no longer viewing it as a time to shut things down and stay inside but as a time to get outside and enjoy the cold. The Calgary Downtown Association (CDA) has started to embrace this culture with the GLOW festival. The 2020 festival will be the most ambitious yet with world class programming and exhibits from across the globe.



Started as an art + architecture competition in 2009 the Warming Huts embrace Winnipegs famous cold winters.

6 Safety on the Avenue

The perception of safety is declining in City Centre

The majority of Calgarians feel safe using all elements of the City Centre. However, the public perception around safety is worsening. In 2019 32% of Calgarians are likely to say that safety has worsened in the Centre City in comparison to 18% in 2017.

Public generated calls for service over the past year show several areas (hotspots) in and around the Avenue that present social challenges with non-traditional crime statistics (i.e. events such as drunk, disturbance, indecent act).

Calgary Police Service and Calgary Bylaw have indicated that increasing police presence and enforcement alone will not solve these pressing issues. Improving conditions on the Avenue will result from a coordinated effort to address the root causes of social disorder, such as through improvements the health, wellness and access to resources of Calgary's most vulnerable populations.

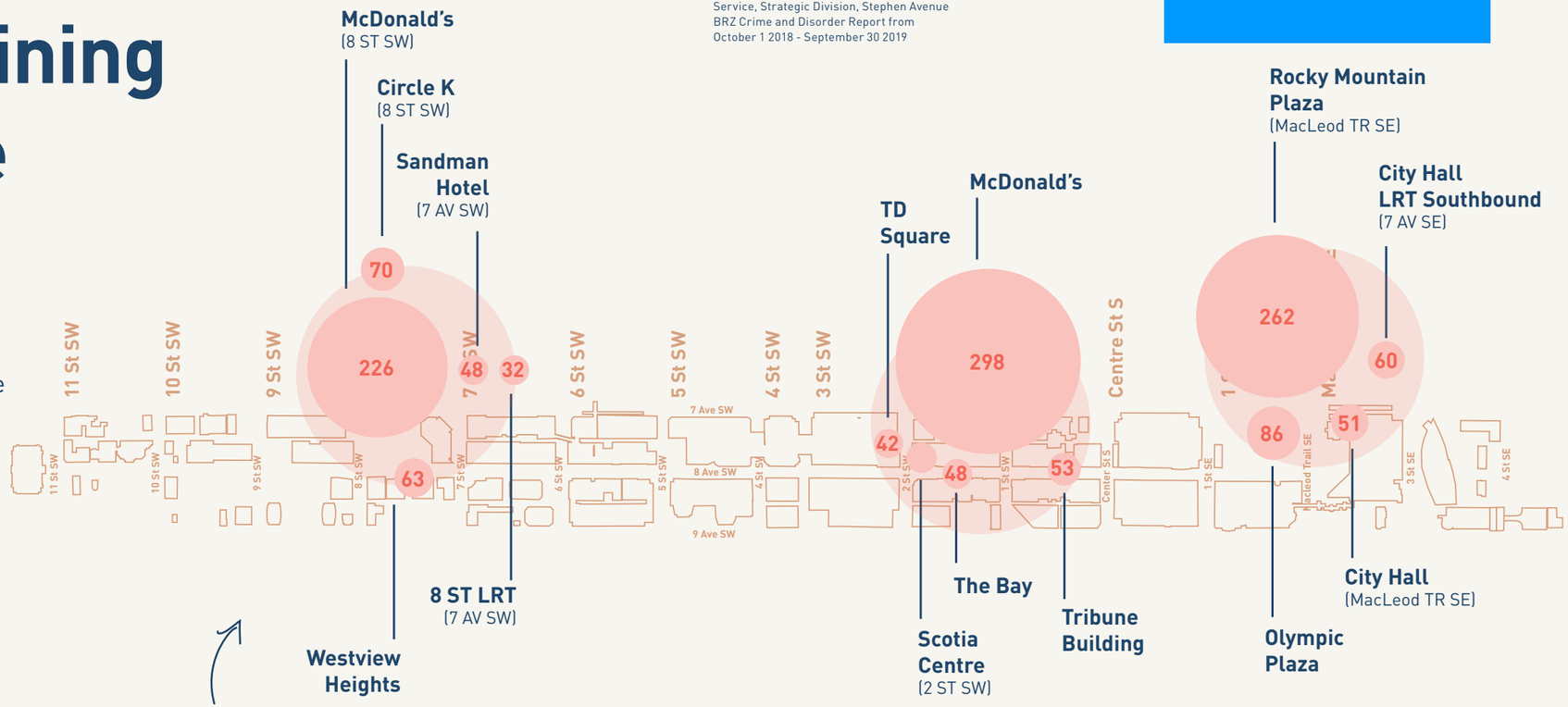
Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

88% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

Disorder Hotspots

# of disorder counts reported to police on the Avenue unless otherwise specified

*Data based on reports from Calgary Police Service, Strategic Division, Stephen Avenue BRZ Crime and Disorder Report from October 1 2018 - September 30 2019



These numbers represent calls for service claiming disorderly conduct over a 1-year period and do not necessarily represent actual threats.

Some of these calls may be fear-based and may reflect bias/prejudice. This data is publicly accessible and based on reports from the Calgary Police Service.



perception of safety

44% very safe

perception of safety

47% somewhat safe



Trends

Stewardship Programs improve service and sense of safety

A strong framework for stewardship, operations and maintenance can play a central role in reinvesting in the Avenue. Having a central entity that can take lead and connect across multiple agencies around governing a central public space, like the Avenue, can be beneficial for both the Avenue itself and the rest of downtown Calgary. While investing in expanding the Public Life Profile and bringing more people to the Avenue at all hours can mitigate some of the more negative perceptions around certain hotspots, a hospitality program with street stewards can provide bodies and eyes on the street, that can act as a link between the public, city services and the governing entity of the street.



Downtown Santa Monica Inc., California ambassador program assists with: Visitor information and directions, visitors escorting upon request, recovering lost items, maintenance, call for services if needed, events and surveys.

7 Public Space on the Avenue

Public life follows the quality of the public realm

The number of people moving and staying increases from west to east, following the overall quality of the public realm. Not surprisingly, the most pedestrian activity is concentrated around the pedestrian mall where there has been the most investment in the public realm. The least activity occurs towards the west end.



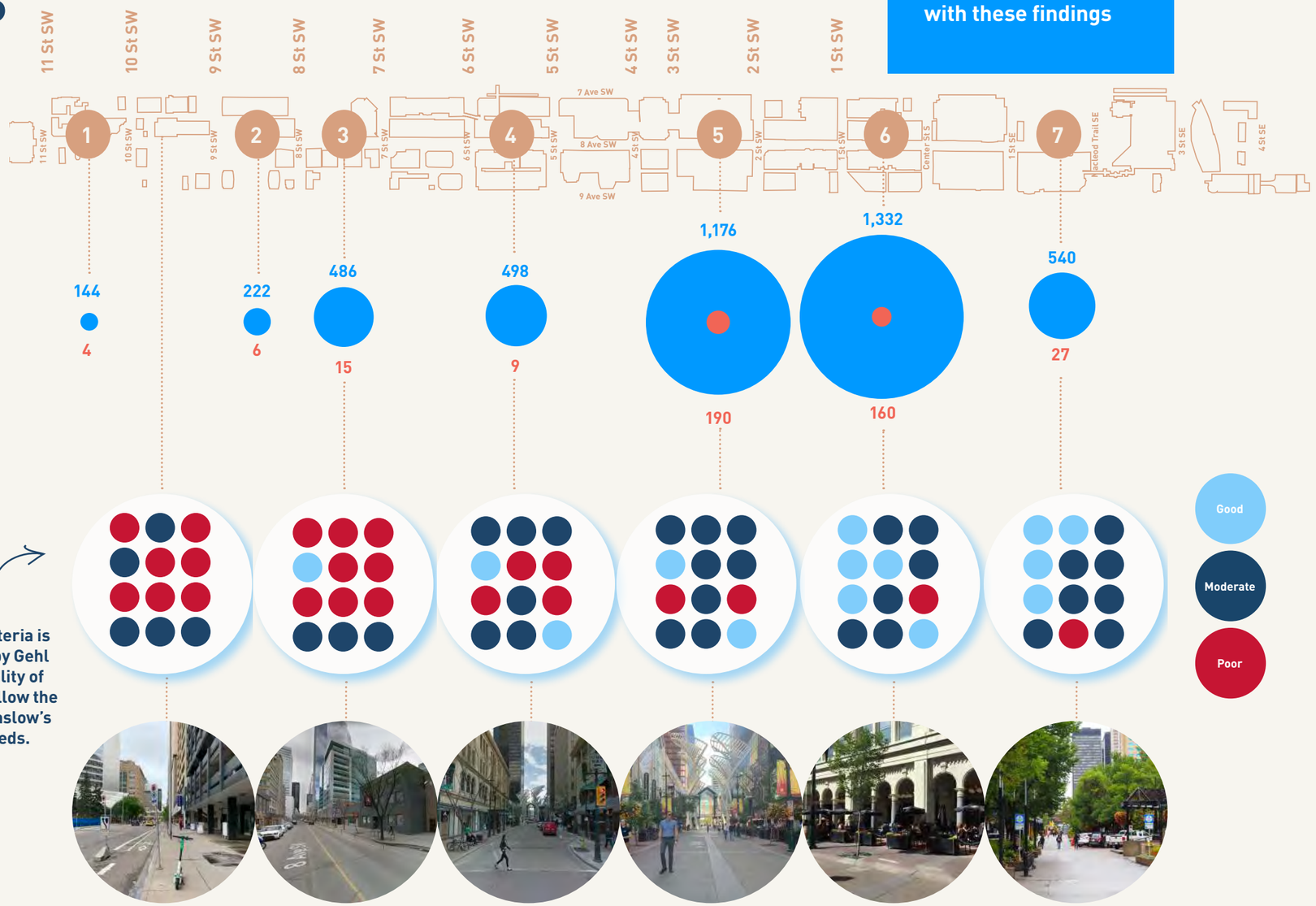
The 12 Quality Criteria is a tool developed by Gehl to assess the quality of public spaces. It follow the concept behind Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Weekday Hourly Averages

# of People Moving

# of People Staying

*Stephen Ave data based on age & gender counts, mode counts and stationary mapping, WEEKDAY, Summer 2019 (excluding Olympic Plaza)



Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

97% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

7 Public Space on the Avenue

Existing conditions impede universal accessibility

The current iteration of the Avenue has been designed to accommodate vehicles on off-peak hours and includes curbs and a drive lane, even though vehicles on the Avenue account for < 10% of the daily trips. This sends a confusing message to all users but especially those individuals with accessibility challenges as it forces them onto the traditional sidewalk zone and in direct conflict with patio spaces, the furniture zone, trees, sandwich boards and other pedestrians.

There is an opportunity to create a more comfortable public realm for people with disabilities. Inconsistency is a common theme when examining the existing conditions on the Avenue and opportunities lie in providing more clarity in design through consistency in materiality, way-finding and both auditory and tactile cues for individuals with accessibility challenges.

Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

97% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

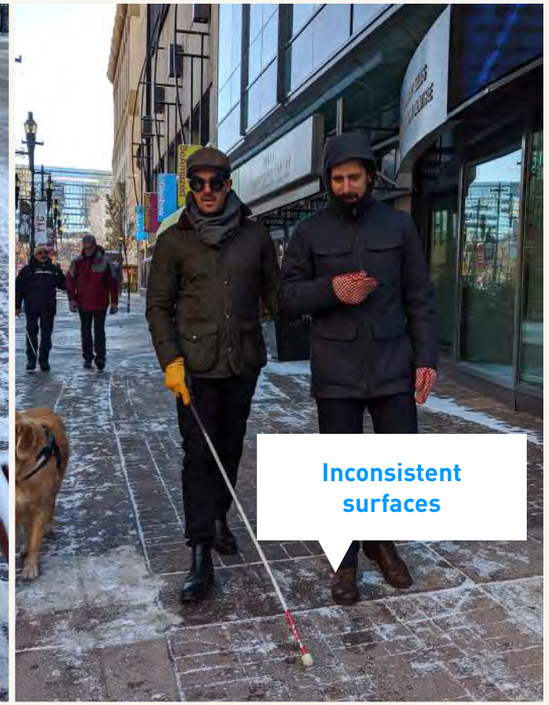
There is an opportunity to create a more comfortable public realm for people with disabilities.



22%
of Canadians live with some form of disability



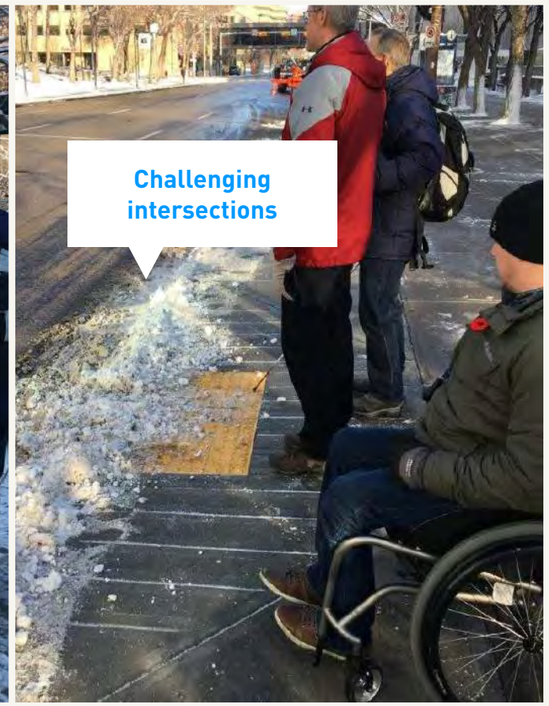
Sandwich boards block movement



Inconsistent surfaces



Poor streetscape conditions



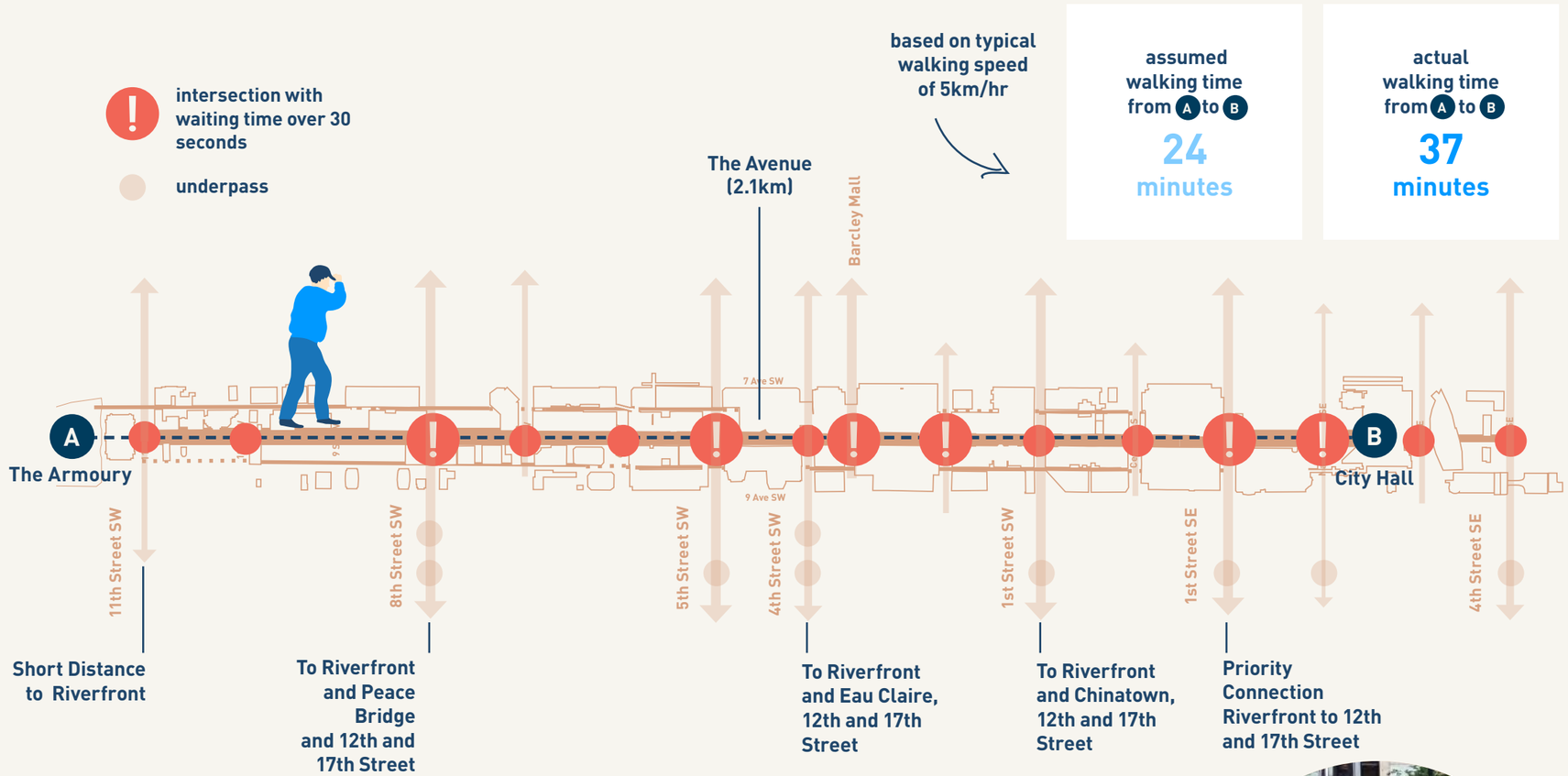
Challenging intersections

7 Public Space on the Avenue

There are significant perceived and real distances on the Avenue

There's an opportunity to improve connections and reduce the mental distance along and between the Avenue and other downtown destinations.

The challenge of perceived distances goes beyond the Avenue, and includes connections between surrounding neighborhoods and amenities. Despite the close physical distance to places like East Village, the library and the Bow Riverfront, the mental distance between these areas discourages walking and cycling. There is an opportunity to do incremental investments in walkability and improve the street for all modes.



Feedback from the Public Storefront Open House in December 2019 illustrated that...

97% of respondents resonated, or resonated somewhat, with these findings

anything above a 30 second wait greatly increases the likelihood of jay walking

50%
of intersections have a waiting time of
30+ seconds



7 Public Space on the Avenue

Utilities and infrastructure – a new chapter for the Avenue

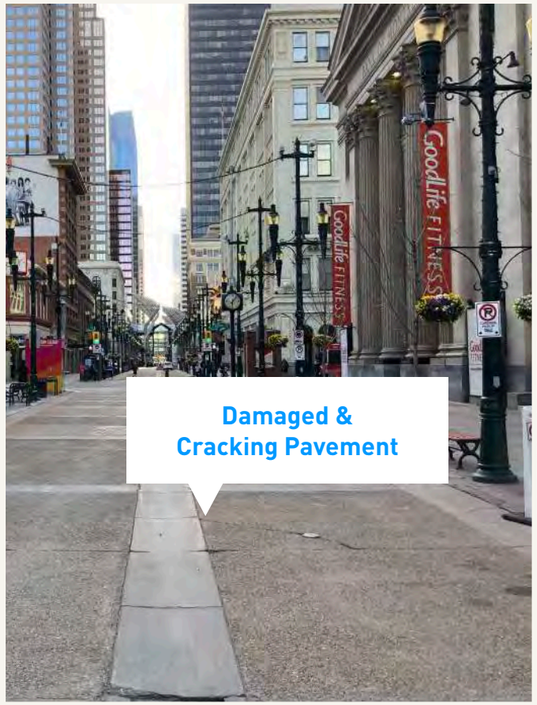
In examining the sites current conditions it is evident that the street has reached the end of its usable lifespan. The pavement is cracked and failing, tree growth stunted and the pedestrian realm is a mishmash of utility boxes, light poles and furniture/signage placed in locations that impede movement and clutter the streetscape. The existing infrastructure is also a hindrance to the creation of a flexible dynamic program that is easily adaptable and flexible during events and throughout the seasonal changes. Carefully consideration should be paid during detail design to ensure the future infrastructure on the Avenue enables programming and flexibility.

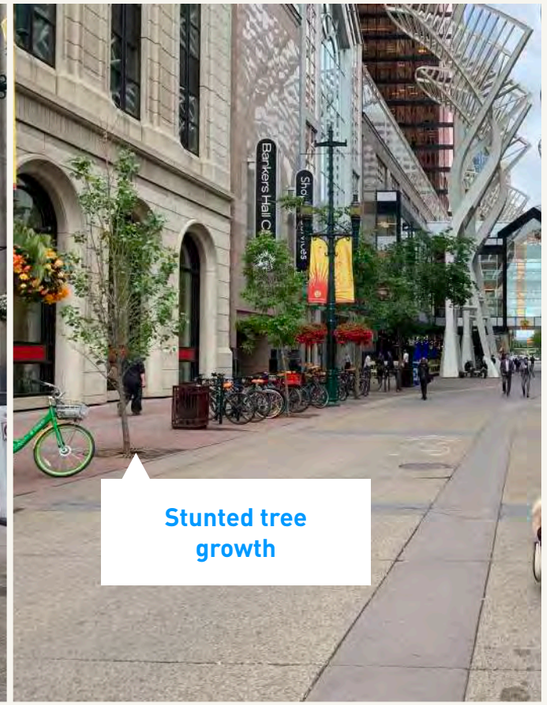
The underground infrastructure is more straightforward, however, proper planning must be considered during all stages of design to ensure the new design for the Avenue is closely coordinated with both shallow and deep utility providers and where possible is designed to accommodate the existing utility locations to minimize major costs overruns to the project.

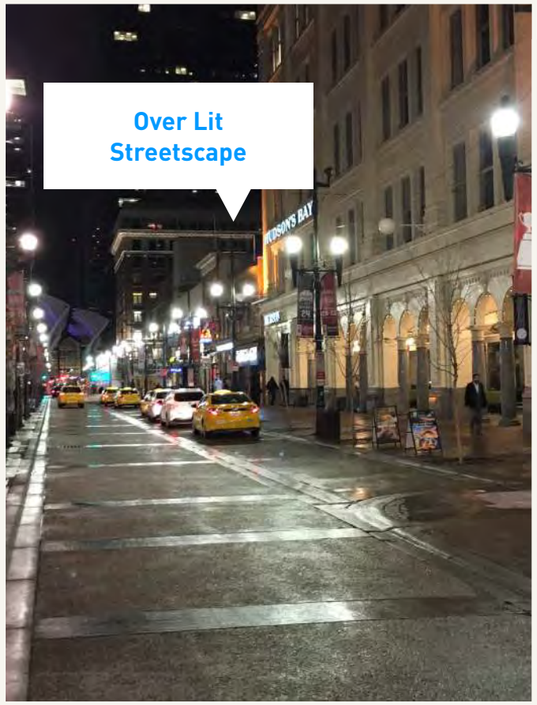
In addition to the existing infrastructure and utility conditions the City of Calgary is undertaking efforts to plan for the roll out of the 5G network. A coordinated approach will be required throughout the design process between the City of Calgary and the telecommunication companies to ensure the future network seamlessly integrates into the urban fabric of the Centre City.

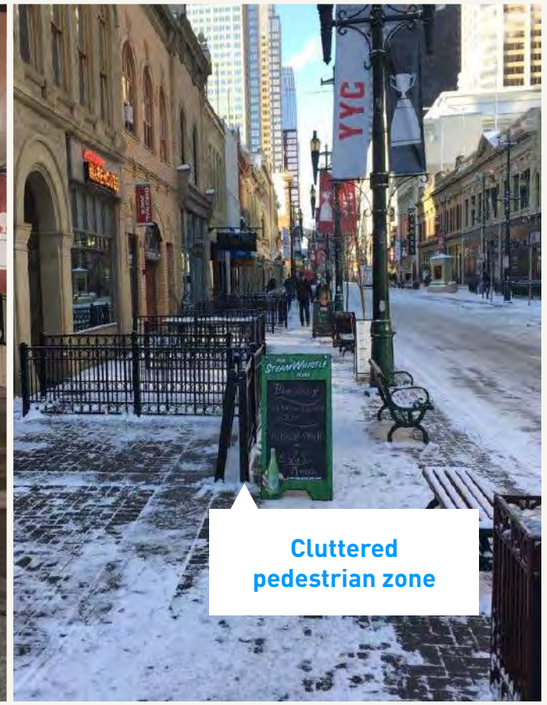
Refer to the appendix for a utility and infrastructure memo











Trends

Streets as Great Public Spaces

Great streets invite people of all ages and abilities to move freely and bring us closer together. They are free of fear and provide safe interactions between all modes of transportation, keeping the more vulnerable users at the centre of decision making. Great streets are places of community and connection. They are places that invite us to meet, socialize and interact. While streets are the connective tissue of our cities, they also make up the majority of our public realm and as such must be treated as public spaces not just as places of transition.

In North America, NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials) estimates that approximately 80% of the public space in our cities are streets. As such they should be treated as public spaces in the same way as parks and plazas. But most streets are designed and operated for speed and efficiency for vehicles and fail to prioritize people walking and on bikes. As the downtown main street, the Avenue holds the potential to become a Great Street, that through clear design cues prioritize people walking and on bikes and invites people to spend time.

Gehl — Making Cities for People



Following the redesign of Brighton New Road, the number of people who spent time increased by 600%.

Calgary Stephen Avenue



This chapter provides a vision statement for the Avenue and ties it to a list of goals, measurable outcomes and potential metrics to apply to monitor the impact of applied actions.

4 Vision & Goals

SUMMARY

Vision

Reimagining the future of the Avenue:

Through four themes:

- **A Arts, Culture & Commerce**
- **B Experimentation & Innovation**
- **C Network & Connection**
- **D Programs & Activation**

Vision statement reflecting the four themes:

The Avenue is Calgary's main connector to arts, culture and commerce and offers a stage for experimentation and innovation.

The Avenue is Calgary's main connector to **A arts, culture and commerce**, and a dynamic stage for **B experimentation and innovation**. A 21st century street, the Avenue **C links Calgary's walkable urban core to its neighbourhoods** through a superlative public realm. **D Active day and night, and throughout the year**, the Avenue is a catalyst for a resilient economy, enabling adaptation towards Calgary's future. As Calgary's premier local and tourist destination, the Avenue fosters social interaction, civic gathering, and community pride.

SUMMARY

Goals

On the Avenue ...

The overarching themes of the goals tie back to the vision for the Avenue on the previous page.

Theme

A Arts, Culture & Commerce

A1 Existing and expanded cultural assets are more visible and integrated within the public realm, allowing for the greatest access to, and participation in, arts, culture & education.

A2 Diverse retail and commercial experiences, combined with hybrid building uses, promote economic resiliency in the urban core.

A3 The experience of the street is amplified by a human-scaled environment, a celebration of heritage buildings, varied ground floor uses and a rhythm of active facades.

Theme

B Experimentation & Innovation

B1 A model for efficient governance, through inter-agency partnerships, collaboration and stewardship, promote effective change and bureaucratic barriers are removed to support public participation and experimentation.

Theme

C Network & Connection

C1 The presence of street greening links the urban core to the riverfront, creates a comfortable microclimate and promotes environmental resiliency.

C2 A clear mobility hierarchy diminishes conflicts between different modes of movement and makes it easy to navigate for all ages and abilities.

C3 Walking is a great experience – a rhythm of connected points of interest spur curiosity and invite people to wander, explore and linger.

Theme

D Programs & Activation

D1 Inclusive and intergenerational gathering places foster civic expression and social mixing, while making everyone feel welcome.

D2 Activation, across the day, into the evening, over the weekend and throughout the year contributes to a lively urban neighbourhood - even in the winter.

D3 Safety is reinforced through codes of positive social behavior, mixed use development with “eyes on the street” and innovative security design solutions.

Amplifying robust public life* is at the centre of every goal for the Avenue

Informed by stakeholder input, key findings and the vision, these goals aim to support and enhance the existing public life of the Avenue.

Vibrant public life is a key indicator of a place that is successful from an economic, social and environmental perspective, and helps to attract investment, talent and visitors.

*Public life is what happens in the public spaces of our cities. It is what a group of people create when they spend time together outside their homes, offices and cars. *Please refer to the context chapter for a further description of public life and its benefits.*

Targets

Tying project goals to desired outcomes

The desired outcomes demonstrate how each goal for the Avenue is action-oriented and measurable. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but rather, to provide a snapshot of targets and a way to evaluate them.

Goal	Desired Outcome	Evaluation Method
A1		
Existing and expanded cultural assets are more visible and integrated within the public realm, allowing for the greatest access to, and participation in, arts, culture & education.	Increase in cultural events on the Avenue	#of Events
	Greater participation in cultural events on the Avenue	#of Event Participants
	Increase in visitors at cultural institutions	Ticket Sales
	Increase in tourism, increase in longer stays	# of Tourists, Hotel Stays
	More people studying in downtown	#of Students Enrolled
	Increase in # of social media posts	Social Media Survey
A2		
Diverse retail and commercial experiences, combined with hybrid building uses, promote economic resiliency in the urban core.	Increase in presence of local businesses on the Avenue	# of New Local Businesses
	Increase in mixed-income apartment units on the Avenue	# of Units, Demographic Data
	Increase in property values	Property Values
	Increase in jobs	# of Jobs
	Increase in variety of everyday amenities	Complete Neighbourhood Analysis
A3		
The experience of the street is amplified by a human-scaled environment, a celebration of heritage buildings, varied ground floor uses and a rhythm of active facades.	Decrease in vacant storefronts	# of Vacancies
	Fewer inactive ground floors	Facade Study (PSPL)
	More people spending time	Stationary Activity Mapping (PSPL)
	Increase in user satisfaction	Intercept / Online Survey
	Increase in heritage renovation and new uses	# of Redevelopment Projects
B1		
A model for efficient governance, through inter-agency partnerships, collaboration and stewardship, promote effective change and bureaucratic barriers are removed to support public participation and experimentation.	Reduction in turn-around time for permit processing	Permit Process Timeline
	Increase in sense of ownership and license to operate	Broadened "Street Programmers" Profile
	Increase in inter-agency projects	# of Projects
	Increase in pop-up and interim uses	# of pop-up and interim use permits

Targets

Goal	Desired Outcome	Evaluation Method
C1		
The presence of street greening links the urban core to the riverfront, creates a comfortable microclimate and promotes environmental resiliency.	Increase tree canopy coverage on the Avenue	% tree canopy coverage
	Reduction of air pollution	Air Quality
	Strengthened street identity	Intercept / Online Survey
	Better microclimate	12 Quality Criteria (PSPL)
C2		
A clear mobility hierarchy diminishes conflicts between different modes of movement and makes it easy to navigate for all ages and abilities.	Decrease in reported pedestrian injuries	# of Accidents Reported
	Increase in number of kids, young adults and older adults biking	Movement Count (PSPL)
	Decrease in reported bike accidents	# of Accidents Reported
	Improved universal accessibility	Accessibility Survey, Intercept/ Online Survey
C3		
Walking is a great experience – a rhythm of connected points of interest spur curiosity and invite people to wander, explore and linger.	Increase in number of people walking on the Avenue	Movement counts (PSPL) + daily pedestrian counters movement
	Reduction in perceived walking distance to destinations and assets on and near the Avenue	Intercept Survey, Walking Time Survey

Goal	Desired Outcome	Evaluation Method
D1		
Inclusive and intergenerational gathering places foster civic expression and social mixing, while making everyone feel welcome.	Increase in the presence of kids, teens and older adults	Age & Gender Counts (PSPL)
	Reported sense of community and belonging	Intercept/Online Survey
	Increase in the public seating offerings on the Avenue	Seating Mapping + Position Counts (PSPL)
	Greater socieconomic diversity among users	Intercept /Online Survey
D2		
Activation, across the day, into the evening, over the weekend and throughout the year contribute to a lively urban neighbourhood - even in the winter.	Increase in # of people spending time outside of event, lunch and happy hour	Stationary Activity Counts (PSPL)
	Greater variety of stationary activities on the Avenue	Stationary Activity Counts (PSPL)
	Increase in play and recreational activities - all year	Stationary Activity Counts (PSPL)
	Increase in Winter programming	# of Events and Activities
D3		
Safety is reinforced through codes of positive social behavior, mixed use development with "eyes on the street" and innovative security design solutions.	Increase in the number of people spending time on the Avenue	Stationary Activity Counts (PSPL)
	Improved perception of safety	Intercept/Online Survey
	Decrease in # of disorder counts reported to police	# of Disorder Counts
	Decrease in public complaints	# of 311 calls and non-emergency police complaints
	Decrease in bylaw infractions	# of bylaw tickets issued



The six (6) Strategic Moves summarize strategic focus areas to guide the future Avenue towards a successful outcome. The key drivers behind each of the Strategic Moves are described with supporting graphics and outtakes from the Insights chapter, and followed by a set of recommended Actions to set this in motion. The Actions are composed of both physical components, hardware, and policy and guidelines components, software. Some of the Actions reach beyond the Avenue itself and are tied to the wider Downtown Strategic Plan or other initiatives (see the project relationship framing page). Each of the Actions outlined are supported with Spotlight precedent projects for inspiration, with the exception of the Actions described in white text boxes and marked with a document icon.

5

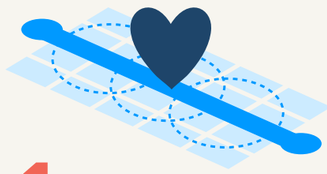
Strategic Moves

Strategic Moves

Success = Design + Governance + Economic Investment

The success of the future Avenue is contingent upon factors beyond investing in a redesign of the Avenue itself. It is key to consider the role of the Avenue within the greater Downtown, and how it connects to existing assets, destinations and other investments made. While a great street design can spur traction, investing in hardware is not enough in itself. It is crucial to take a close look at the processes in place for generating desired outcomes, that can tie back into reinvestment in the Avenue. Both in the hardware and in the software: From streetscape improvements to ground floor activation, to programming and events, and to branding and governance.

As overarching concepts for addressing the future of the Avenue, these six strategic moves outline key drivers for change. From public realm interventions, to economic strategies and mobility principles. The following pages illustrate the importance of each strategic move and provide short to long term actions for how to get there.



1

Branding the Avenue



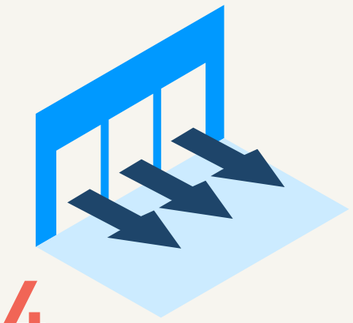
2

Connecting the Avenue



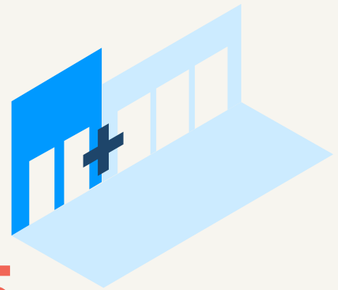
3

Activating the Avenue



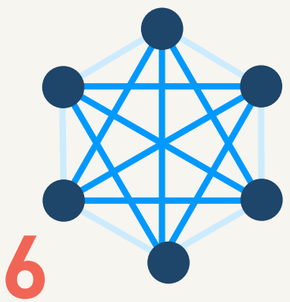
4

Opening up and onto the Avenue



5

Repositioning the Avenue



6

Governing the Avenue

SUMMARY

Vision → Goals → Strategic Moves

The six Strategic Moves are guided by the vision and goals for the Avenue. Each of the moves span across multiple goals. The list below outlines which goals each of the strategic moves will predominantly help achieve.

1. **Branding the Avenue** → A
2. **Connecting the Avenue** → C
3. **Activating the Avenue** → D
4. **Opening up and onto the Avenue** → A
5. **Repositioning the Avenue** → A
6. **Governing the Avenue** → B

Goals - Themes

- A Arts, Culture & Commerce
- B Experimentation & Innovation
- C Network & Connection
- D Programs & Activation

For a complete list of the goals of the Avenue, please refer to the previous chapter.

1 Branding the Avenue

The Strategic Move

Make the the Avenue a connected and complete street that is iconic in stature and a destinations in itself, with distinct design and design features and a consistent visual identity. Develop “one-stop-shop” communication about what is happening on the Avenue and rebrand Stephen Avenue and 8th Street with one consistent name.

Why it’s Important

- The Avenue today lacks an identifying feature that makes it iconic. There are few existing iconic elements, and they are not well tied together.
- The physical conditions of the streetscape are poor and without new investment a continuous decline of the street is evident.
- Stakeholders across all groups have expressed that a lack of consistency in programming and communication is deterring them from exploring the Avenue when they’re not already there.
- Today, 8th Avenue is not mentally regarded as part of the Avenue.





← Image of the Avenue today

For many Calgarians, the Avenue today is characterized as a lunchtime and happy hour hotspot for downtown office workers. The primary perception of the street is limited to the stretch of the pedestrian mall, but by embracing the entire street, from City Hall to the Armoury, the Avenue has the potential to become something even greater than “just the pedestrian mall” and change the perception of the street to the premier centre for arts, culture and commerce in Calgary.

today: 8th Ave SW — Stephen Ave

future: the Avenue

1 Branding the Avenue

How to get there ...



Each action represented in a blue box is further unfolded on the following pages, through the use of precedent projects. In chapter 6 of this document, each of these actions are qualified with ideas for specific projects along the Avenue. The actions represented in white boxes are all related to strategies and policy changes and are subject to further studies.

P Pilot This:

1.1 Roll out “the red carpet” from the Armoury and Millennium Park all the way to the Library and East Village through City Hall. Deploy a continuous street treatment, colorful furniture and planter boxes and artistic lighting. Start with “breaking through City Hall”

1.2 Develop a creative wayfinding system for the Avenue and downtown. Consider collaborating with local artists to evoke creative solutions beyond signage.

S-M Short - Medium Term:

1.3 Provide a mix of high quality commercial, public and flexible seating. Integrate programming, a website and a social media presence.

- Develop a branding and communication strategy that promotes continuous programming and activation on the Avenue. Keep the focus on smaller-scale everyday activities and ensure consistency to make sure people return.

M-L Medium - Long Term:

1.4 Invest in tree planting and street greening on the Avenue. Provide a tree-lined street experience as part of a sustainable streets strategy for Calgary, connecting core to riverfront.

1.5 Invest in a permanent redesign of the Avenue. Create a cohesive public realm design palette, from paving to furniture, light fixtures and signage, that unifies and celebrates the distinct character along the street.

Pilot This

P

1.1 Roll out "the red carpet" from the Armoury and Millennium Park all the way to the Library and East Village

Deploy a continuous street treatment, colourful furniture and planter boxes and artistic lighting. Start with "breaking through City Hall"



Spotlight

"Meet in the Street" – MITS, Denver

Denver's 16th Street Mall is a mile-long main street in the city's historic downtown core. Focused on transforming the street from a movement corridor to a destination, The City and County of Denver and the Downtown Denver Partnership (DDP) partnered with Gehl to implement and evaluate a prototyping festival from 2014 to 2016 called "Meet in the Streets." The temporary pilots aimed to bring more people downtown and celebrate the mall as a meeting place with more invitations to stop & stay, playful furniture and protection from the elements.

Tangible Results - MITS Pilot

30% pedestrian increase overall during MITS compared to baseline

157% increase in commercial activities when lawn furniture was placed along 16th St

Share of 0-14 year old kids increased +77% on MITS Sundays compared to baseline

Pilot This

P

1.2 Develop a creative wayfinding system for the Avenue and downtown

Consider collaborating with local artists to evoke creative solutions beyond signage

Spotlight

Placemaking Stratford, UK

This wayfinding and placemaking strategy was implemented as part a 2 year commitment to public realm improvements. The design is based on public outreach and inspired by the "original" Stratford, it's history and people. The main objectives were to promote Stratford Town Centre's unique identity, encourage visitors to explore and spend time, and to help unify the Town Centre and make it a destination in itself. The project is initiated by London Borough of Newham and the Business Improvement District "Stratford Original" who works collaboratively to make Stratford town centre a better place for businesses to thrive and prosper.

Photo courtesy: www.thomasmatthews.com

Short - Medium Term
S-M

1.3 Provide a mix of high quality commercial, public and flexible seating

Integrate programming, a website and a social media presence

Spotlight

The Porch, Philadelphia

The Porch, once a former parking lot but now one of Philadelphia's premier public spaces, features lunch from rotating food trucks, pop-up performances, lush landscaping, and plenty of places to relax. The Porch Swings, a custom designed flexible urban furniture on The Porch, bring irresistible invitations to play, rest and people watch. The Porch Swings serve as the ultimate activator of the open space in front of 30th Street Station. In addition to being a place to rest and socialize, the Porch Swings have become a prime instagram spot and location for wedding photos.

The Porch Swings are combined with movable chairs and tables and a monthly calendar for events and daily activation can be found on the project website.



Medium - Long Term
M-L

1.4 Invest in tree planting and street greening on the Avenue

Provide a tree-lined street experience as part of a sustainable streets strategy for Calgary, connecting core to riverfront

Spotlight

Bahnhofstrasse, Zürich

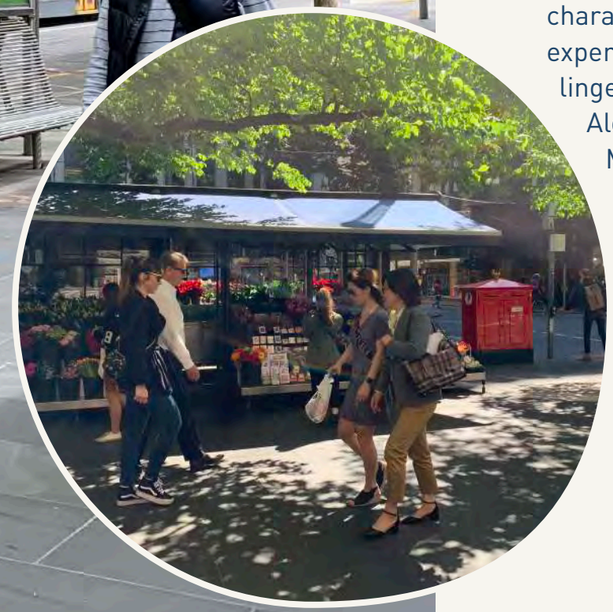
This main downtown street is an attraction as well as the primary shopping street in Zürich. The walking experience is enhanced by an impressive tree canopy that provides protection from the elements, storm water reduction, improved air quality, reduced noise levels and improves health and well-being. Supporting robust green infrastructure is a critical component for creating healthy, sustainable and livable cities.



Medium - Long Term
M-L

1.5 Invest in a permanent redesign of the Avenue with a unifying palette

Create a cohesive public realm design palette, from paving to furniture, light fixtures and signage, that unifies and celebrates the distinct character along the street



Spotlight

Swanston Street, Melbourne Australia

As the main north-south street connecting Melbourne downtown, Swanston Street is well-known locally and around the globe for it's bustling streetlife and distinct design. Blue stone pavers, social seating, bus stops that provides shade and shelter, a dense tree canopy and light poles that mark the first nation peoples, give Swanston Street character and provide a great experience for people walking, lingering and taking the tram. Alongside Bourke Street Mall, Swanston Street was a key street identified in the 1985 downtown renewal plan. It was recognized as a key public space, connecting the CBD to surrounding neighbourhoods and to the Melbourne riverfront.

2 Connecting the Avenue

The Strategic Move

Make the Avenue the downtown connector through a continuous street treatment that prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists. Strengthen key north-south links from the Avenue to surrounding neighbourhoods, public transit and cultural, economic, and natural assets by establishing a comprehensive public space network that better connects people across downtown.

Why it's Important

- Downtown Calgary holds an abundance of great amenities and assets, but links to these destinations are lacking.
- Connections for pedestrians are undefined and a critical missing link to establish a truly strollable and accessible centre city core.
- People bike downtown but an incomplete and fragmented network only invites the familiar and confident. There needs to be more invitations for all ages and abilities.
- Connecting the assets and encouraging greater pedestrian and bike flows throughout the downtown would make it more attractive and induce stronger commercial performance.



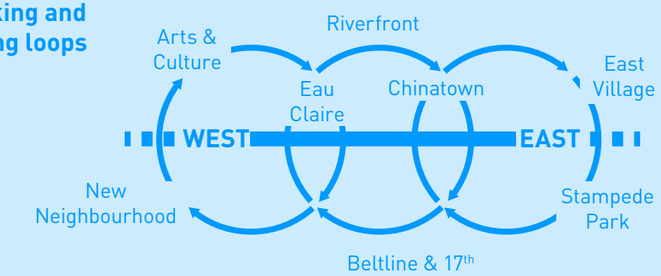
- Project area
- Missing links - immediate area of influence
- Plazas + Parks - immediate area of influence
- Existing bike connections
- Bike connections to prioritize
- Existing stronger links to connect to
- Missing/weak links to prioritize for complete streets / pedestrian focus #1
- Missing/weak links to prioritize for complete streets / pedestrian focus #2
- Missing/weak links to prioritize for complete streets / pedestrian focus #3
- Parks, Plazas

Note: Destinations are marked with text

- Traffic connectors
- Railway
- Light Rail
- Light Rail Station

Links proposed connect to existing assets and investments made across downtown. They are subject to further investigation through a downtown-wide traffic study and strategic plan.

Downtown walking and biking loops



2 Connecting the Avenue

How to get there ...



Each action represented in a blue box is further unfolded on the following pages, through the use of precedent projects. In chapter 6 of this document, each of these actions are qualified with ideas for specific projects along the Avenue. The actions represented in white boxes are all related to strategies and policy changes and are subject to further studies.

P Pilot This:

2.1 Pilot intersection improvements along the Avenue. Include improvements on major north-south walking and cycling connections between 7th Ave SW and 9th Ave SW. Test elements such as signal timing change, lower speed limits, corner extensions and general pedestrian focused improvements.

2.2 Test a Greater Downtown Traffic Calming Strategy. Pilot two-way complete streets on 1st St SW, 2nd St SW, 4th St SW and 8th St SW. Consider testing a two-way street network throughout the Arts Commons to better connect to East Village, Platform and Stampede Park.

S-M Short - Medium Term:

2.3 Activate laneways as public space for people to walk, bike and linger. Consider starting with a laneway placemaking initiative near the Palomino, in partnership with the property owner.

2.4 Prioritize pedestrians at intersections. Adjust signal-timing, implement corner extensions and improve all intersections along the Avenue to favour people walking and biking.

- Develop a strategy for better connecting the Avenue to the +15 network.

M-L Medium - Long Term:

- Develop a Greater Downtown Traffic Calming Strategy that considers converting all downtown streets to a complete streets network. Implement traffic calming measures to help reduce vehicle kilometers traveled and prioritize people walking and biking. Consider prioritizing streets that form “walking loops” between downtown destinations and neighbourhoods.

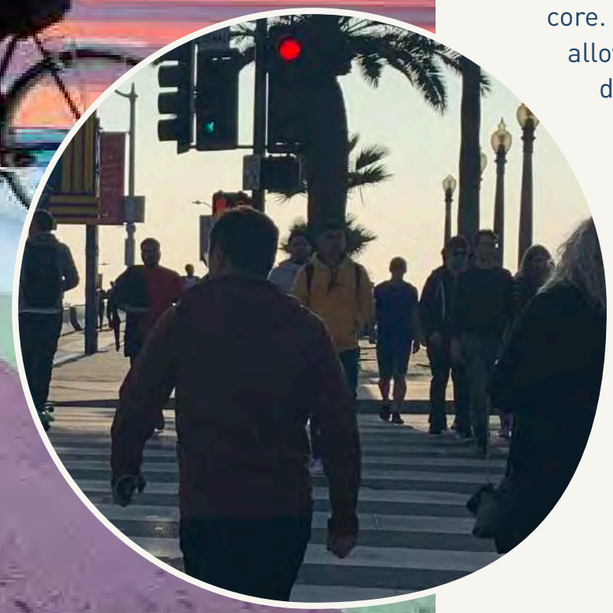
- Develop a laneways placemaking strategy

Pilot This
P

2.1 Pilot intersection improvements along the Avenue

Include improvements on major north-south walking and cycling connections between 7th Ave SW and 9th Ave SW.

Test elements such as signal timing change, lower speed limits, corner extensions and general pedestrian focused improvements.



Spotlight

Downtown Santa Monica Intersection pilots

Locals, residents and visitors value walking in Santa Monica. As part of an effort to support this, the City of Santa Monica studied the current conditions and launched an action plan, that highlighted potential improvements, to enhance the quality of the walking experience. A key component was 12 intersection scrambles implemented in the downtown core. The “scramble” phases allowed people to cross in any direction and supported a high volume flow during peak hour and seasons. The focus on pedestrian improvements is an outcome of the 2010 Land Use and Circulation Element and informed by a Pedestrian Action Plan.



2.2 Test a Greater Downtown Traffic Calming Strategy.

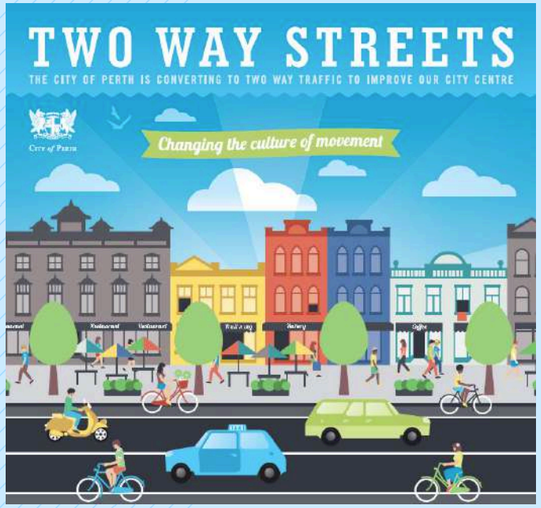
Pilot two-way complete streets on 1st St SW, 2nd St SW, 4th St SW and 8th St SW. Consider testing a two-way street network throughout the Arts Commons to better connect to East Village, Platform and Stampede Park.

What's At Stake?

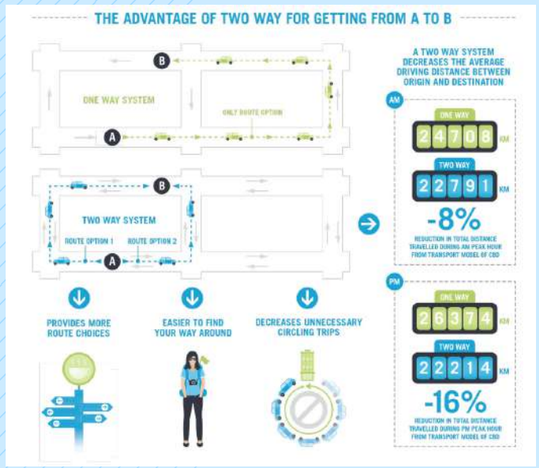
Large scale one-way vehicular arteries cutting through Calgary City Centre is at the expense of a quality public realm that invites people to walk, bike and spend time. Many streets are predominantly designed for vehicular traffic and encourage high speeds, produces noise and air pollution, while discourages other modes. With more people walking and cycling comes increased physical and mental health, better air quality, fewer vehicle kilometers traveled and essentially less congestion. Changing to a two-way system does require rethinking street sections to better balance the different modes. However, lessons learned from places like Copenhagen, that have successfully turned their mobility pattern around, show that in addition to healthier and more vibrant streets, people walking and biking is good for business and money saved on the city and state budget.

Learning from City of Perth Australia

In 2009 The City of Perth council unanimously voted to convert one-way arteries cutting through the CBD, to two-way streets. This to limit non-CBD destination driving. Perth CBD used to have a two-way street system, but this, as in many other cities, was changed with the 'love-affair' for the car in the 60s and 70s. The plan to convert back to a two-way system was initiated in the 2000s, as part of a broader strategy to revitalize the CBD and take advantage of major construction and refurbishment works.



↑ **Perth, Australia: The advantage of two-way for getting from A to B.**



↑ **Perth, Australia: Information pamphlet about 'WHY' the change (back) to a two-way streets system.**

Spotlight

Copenhagen, Denmark

In 2013 the City of Copenhagen conducted a study to understand the impact of cycling vs driving. It included all costs associated, from road implementation and repair, to air quality and health costs e.g. The City learned, among other things, that when a person with a two kilometer commute chooses the bike to the car, they save the city 1.5CAD daily, while drivers cost the city money. The study highlighted that cycling infrastructure is cheaper to maintain, it creates more jobs, and cycling is good for our health and the environment, and for the city budget.

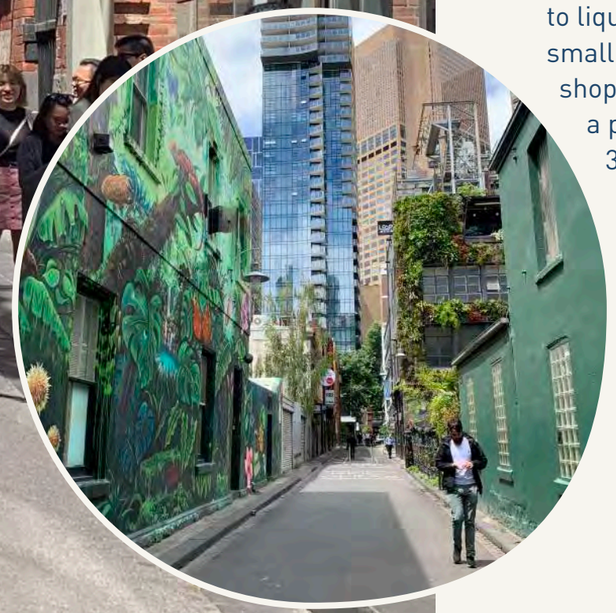
Perth, Australia

Major project endorsement from newspaper coverage of the inauguration of the first converted street; "The William Street two-way conversion is part of a strategic vision that will revitalize Perth and establish it as a vibrant, dynamic and people-oriented city," Ms Scaffidi said.

Short - Medium Term
S-M

2.3 Activate laneways as public space for people to walk, bike and linger

Consider starting with a laneway placemaking initiative near the Palomino, in partnership with the property owner.



Spotlight

Melbourne Laneway Activation Program

Melbourne is known around the world for the way it transformed its laneways and brought energy back to an empty city core. The transformation from service laneways to active public spaces started in the 90's and the success of the transformation happened through a combination of law, planning and activism. Initiatives included: Changes to liquor licensing, enabling small local bars to set up shop,: Implementation of a policy regulating that 30% of all new building ground floors must be active,: And financial support to art initiatives. Melbourne's laneways have become a must see tourist attraction and neighbourhood gems for locals and tourists alike.

Short - Medium Term
S-M

2.4 Prioritize pedestrians at intersections

Adjust signal-timing, implement corner extensions and improve all intersections along the Avenue to favour people walking and biking

Spotlight

Church Street Marketplace, Burlington, Vermont

Four blocks of the pedestrianized main street are defined through a cohesive street design and pavement pattern. The pavement is accentuated at crossing streets clearly signaling priority to people on foot. The pavement pattern continues, in a light touch version, to and from Church Street to key destinations nearby. Church Street is designed for all seasons, with awnings and a clearly defined furniture zone that allows for snow clearing. The snow clearing is handled by contractors, however, local businesses support this effort during high intensity snowfall, and Marketplace BID staff clear around trees and other spots, where machinery cannot reach or may cause damage.



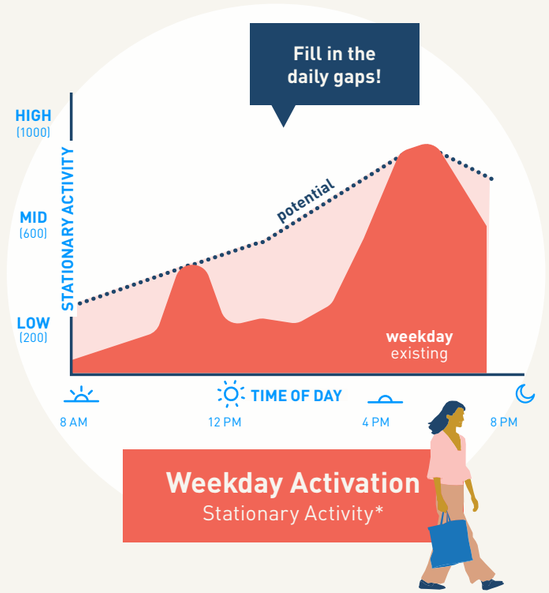
3 Activating the Avenue

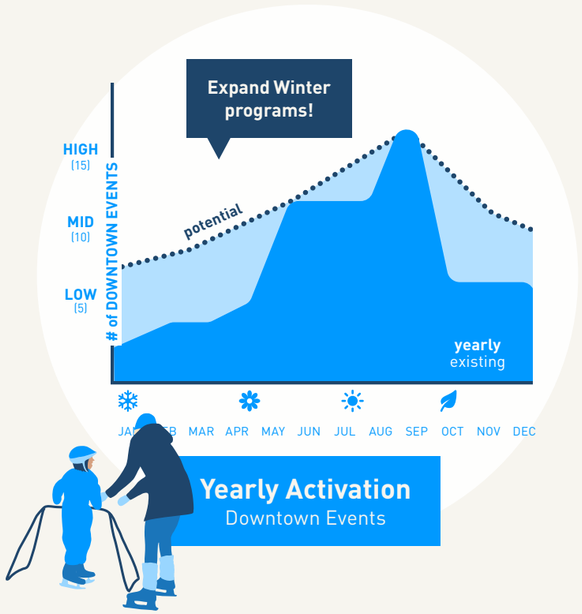
The Strategic Move

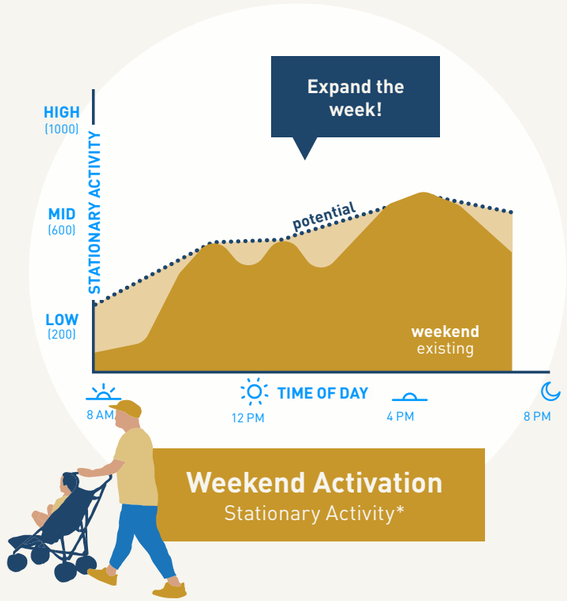
Expand on the public life profile of the Avenue and provide invitations for all Calgarians of all ages, abilities and relations to the Avenue to come and spend time. Provide options for people to linger and enjoy the positive aspects of climate, people watch and socialize. This throughout the day, week and year.

Why it's Important

- There a gaps in the current public life profile, both daily, weekly and annually. Filling in these gaps can foster a more active downtown.
- More programming and activities in the public realm increases foot traffic and associated retail sales, helping businesses to thrive.
- The current public life profile is not representative of Calgary's demographics.
- Stakeholder feedback showed that people want more programming, with activities for kids and families and more invitations for older adults and empty-nesters to come downtown.







Winter Strategy

Developing a dynamic winter strategy is about changing the communities perception of winter and taking advantage of the Calgary climate; Successful visions for winter cities include showcasing numerous opportunities for public activity throughout the winter months (not just during the brief holiday season), focusing on local identity and character and, of course, providing an inviting, vibrant physical environment.

This type of change requires a cultural shift; changing how we think and talk about, and interact with our City during the cold often dark winter months. Viewing winter not as a time to shut things down and stay inside but as an asset offering great social and economic value to Calgary.

Demographics on 'The Avenue' today

Today, 'The Avenue' mainly attracts adults, from 25-64 years old. There's an opportunity to invite a broader range of ages, especially kids and teens, who are currently underrepresented on The Avenue when compared to Calgary's census data.

Note: Data collected on gender ratio showed a balance between male and female presence across the day.

The Avenue Weekday*	Calgary Census	
0%	6%	Young Kids 0-4 years
1%	13%	Kids 5-14 years
6%	11%	Teens, Youth 15-24 years
8%	12%	Older Adults 65+ years

*Data collected from Public Space, Public Life Survey on The Avenue, Summer 2019

3 Activating the Avenue

How to get there ...



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P Pilot This:

3.1 Deploy colourful furniture and informal programming that is inviting for families and kids. Consider program adjacencies that invite diverse people to socialize in the same spaces.

3.2 Curate more evening and winter programming to invite people to spend time on the Avenue all year. Learn from events like Glow to inform smaller scale, everyday, winter programming.

- Pilot a patio strategy, including a model for governance, funding and stewardship, to encourage more street activation and generate revenue.
- Addres event needs, like water and power, to be reflected in redesign of the Avenue

S-M Short - Medium Term:

3.3 Design for comfortable microclimates by providing protection from the wind, cold, and rain. Consider solutions that allow for flexible use and seasonal adaptation.

3.4 Provide a variety of seating that allows people to linger, by themselves or with others. Ensure an balanced mix of public and private seating.

- Establish building guidelines to protect and enhance solar access and the human scale experience along the Avenue.

M-L Medium - Long Term:

3.5 Develop and implement a clear and robust winter strategy. Provide consistent programming and events throughout the year.

3.6 Create the best rotation of public art experiences. Engage artists, designers, students, and businesses.

- Build on the strategic moves in this report to develop a comprehensive public realm plan for the greater Downtown, to ensure connections to surrounding neighbourhoods and destinations. Align with other strategic measures, including Calgarys Main Streets and the Calgary Downtown Strategic Plan.

Pilot This
P

3.1 Deploy colourful furniture and informal programming that is inviting for families and kids

Consider program adjacencies that invite diverse people to socialize in the same spaces



Spotlight

Promenade 3.0, Santa Monica California

During an experiment designed to inform a permanent redesign of The Promenade, a series of programs, supported with colourful installations that offered shade, play areas, seating, and "instagrammable moments," was implemented. Among the goals for the experiment was to create more invitations for families and kids, provide a broader variety of public seating, and make The Promenade less gray. The goals were in response to stakeholder input and Public Space Public Life Surveys. The Experiment was a great success. In addition to an increase in people spending time, including more families and kids, local businesses reported an increase in foot traffic and sales.

Pilot This
P

3.2 Curate more evening and winter programming to invite people to spend time on the Avenue all year

Learn from events like Glow to inform smaller scale, everyday, winter programming

Spotlight

Glow, Calgary

Calgary's only free, family-friendly winter festival was re-imagined in 2020 with the goal to further embrace winter and get the community outdoors and onto the Avenue. GLOW: Where the worlds of art, music and entertainment unite Calgarians under the lights on the Avenue included winter activities, outdoor lounges, live music, art installations, stunning light displays and multiple opportunities to enjoy and interact with exhibits in the public realm. The 2020 iteration of GLOW was an enormous success with over 180,000 attendees and record spending for many of the businesses on the Avenue.





Short - Medium Term
S-M

3.3 Design for comfortable microclimates by providing protection from the wind, cold, and rain

Consider solutions that allow for flexible use and seasonal adaptation.

sustainable heating of streets during wintertime



Spotlight

6th Avenue, Seattle

Near Amazon Headquarters in Seattle businesses have installed retractable awnings in order to extend the summer season and allow more outdoor dining, also in the rainy seasons which make up a large portion of the year.

For the Avenue consider how this can be combined with other measures, like free-standing and movable covered seasonal patios, and investigate whether utilizing excess heat from the commercial ground floors to defrost the sidewalks and invite more people to walk and linger is implementable.

Short - Medium Term
S-M

3.4 Provide a variety of seating that allows people to linger, by themselves or with others

Ensure a balanced mix of public and private seating



Spotlight

Place de la Republique, Paris France

With a combination of movable chairs and tables, that invite people to lounge, socialize, and enjoy their to-go food and drinks from the surrounding businesses, this plaza invites diverse people. In addition, it offers games for free use from a "ludothèque," has a playful water feature, and fixed seating that also invites you to lay down, rest and enjoy a break. Maybe even while your kids play in the water feature: A shallow water mirror with fountains that invite even the smallest kids to partake in the fun. When implementing seating on the Avenue, consider how to accommodate for various types and durations of stays. Mix public and private seating to invite everyone to spend time in the public space.

Medium - Long Term
M-L

3.5 Develop and implement a clear and robust winter strategy

Provide consistent programming and events throughout the year



Spotlight

Spotlight Warming Huts, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Since 2009, Warming Huts: An Art + Architecture Competition on Ice has celebrated two things; innovative design and cold weather. Winnipeg is often referred to as one of the most frigid cities on the planet. This competition, along with the skating trail, attracts designers from around the world and encourages locals to rediscover their city. Every year new designs are submitted online, and through a blind jury process winning submissions are selected and invited to realize their vision.

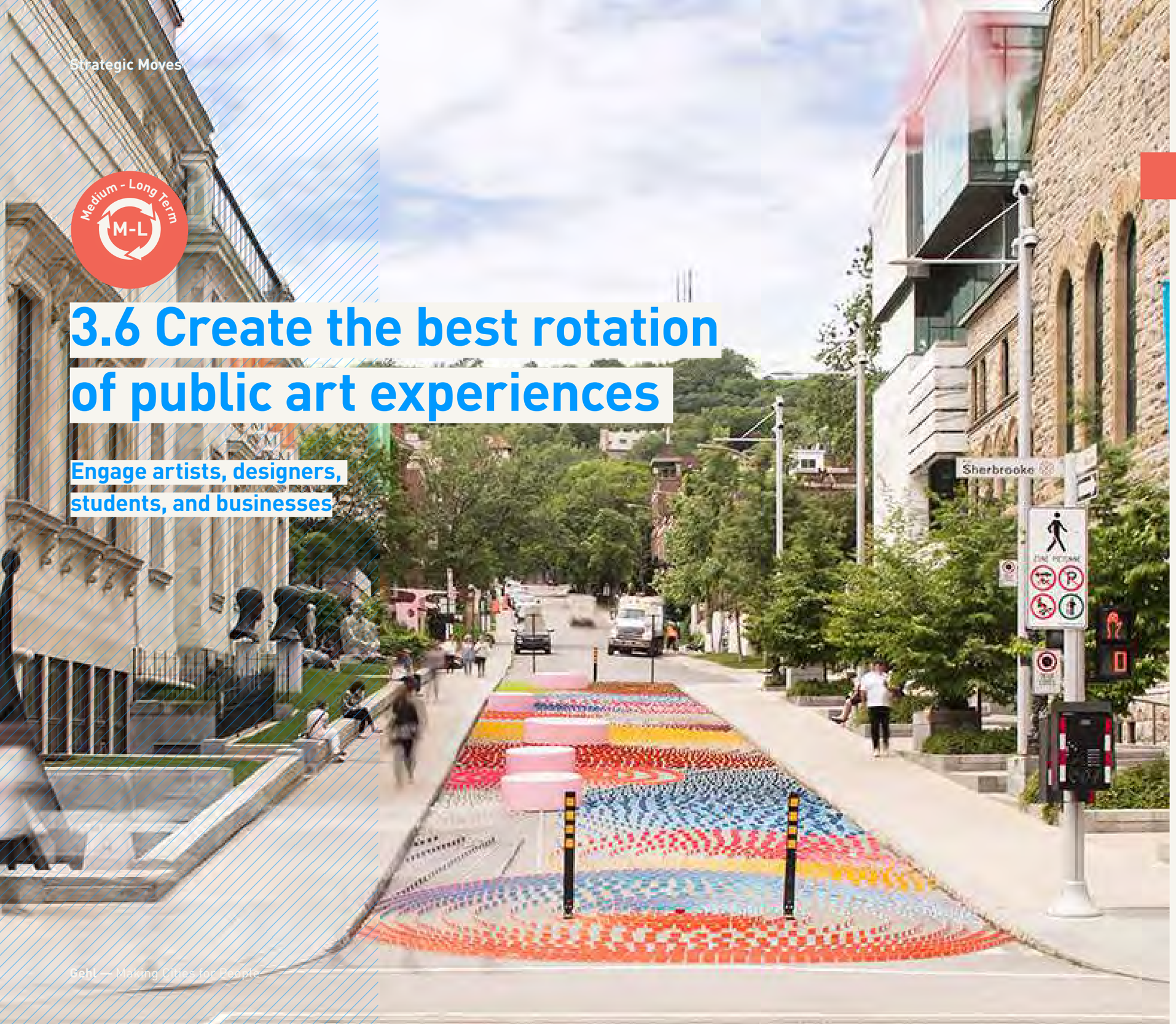
The Warming Huts are related to The Forks, which has been successful in generating activity and revenue year round.

www.theforks.com/about/the-forks: Over 4 million visitors come to The Forks each year and more than 1,200 people work on this site. The Forks contributes over $126 million a year to the local economy, and is financially self-sufficient - we do not rely on government funding to operate.

Medium - Long Term
M-L

3.6 Create the best rotation of public art experiences

Engage artists, designers, students, and businesses



Spotlight

TOMS, Montreal, Quebec

Developed in partnership with the Montreal Museum of Fine Art and installed on Du Musée Avenue in front of the museums, Sculpture Garden is a yearly transformation by landscape architect Claude Cormier that turns the avenue into an ever changing work of art.

TOM (Temporary Overlay Markers) are traditionally used as markers to demarcate temporary lanes in highway work zones before permanent lane lines are installed but come to life as a temporary art installation that unifies the sculpture garden on both sides of the street, and lures visitors from bottom to top and back down again.

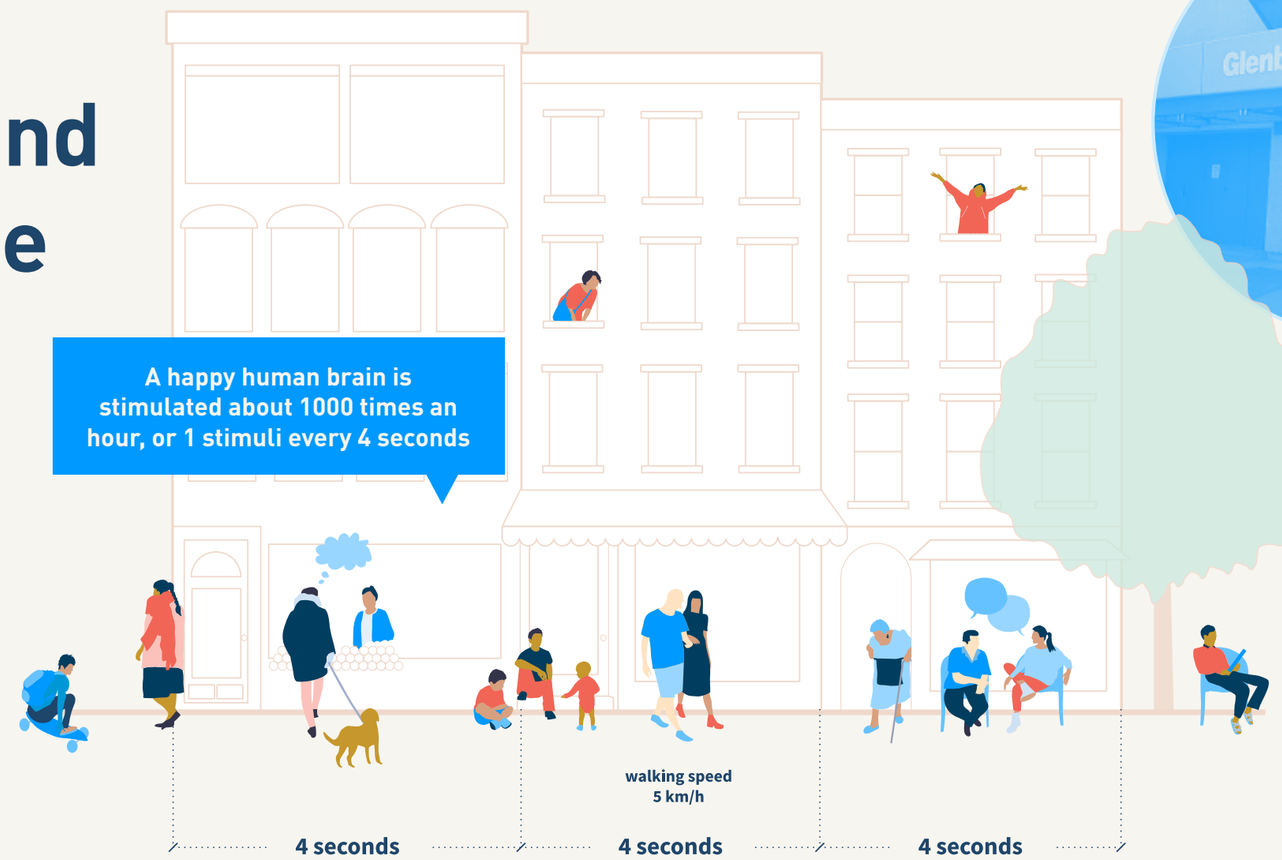
4 Opening up and onto the Avenue

The Strategic Move

Activate the Avenue ground floors. Invite businesses and cultural institutions on the Avenue to embrace it as part of their business and programming. Buildings that face the street should consider the Avenue as part of their territory to curate and care for. Build on the existing human-scaled built environment, especially as in the historic part of Stephen Avenue, to provide a sensory and animated walking experience and maximize sun exposure on the Avenue. Activate vacant storefronts and inactive building ground floors and parkades that front the Avenue.

Why it's Important

- Active storefronts and vibrant facades improve the perception of safety.
- The Avenue has the potential to be a strolling street that engages the senses and inspires you to stroll and discover the city.
- We experience our surroundings at eye level and need continuous stimuli to feel happy – the human brain needs 1 stimuli every 4 seconds to feel happy.





↑Inactive and vacant storefronts on the Avenue

Empty storefronts, parkades and introverted buildings that turn away from the street, like the Glenbow and Arts Commons, present a major opportunity for the Avenue. The relationship between these inactive edges and the street can be re-imagined to better contribute to vibrant public life.



During the summer PSPL Survey 2019:

18% dull facades

9% vacant storefronts

4 Opening up and onto the Avenue

How to get there ...



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P Pilot This:

4.1 Create incentives for creative agencies to activate vacant spaces. Consider an artist in residency program for vacant storefronts.

4.2 Activate parkades and other inactive ground floors that front the Avenue with new uses.

- Develop a program that incentivise small-scale, local and creative businesses to set up shop on the Avenue.

S-M Short - Medium Term:

4.3 Bring public services onto the Avenue and into underutilized ground floors and empty store fronts. Consider a pilot with the Calgary Police Department to establish a downtown presence. Consider integrating outreach services that work with vulnerable people in the city.

- Develop a +15 network strategy that builds on the lessons learned from the +15 Network Survey* conducted in 2018. Consider how to provide stronger and clearer links between the Avenue and the +15 network.

*The +15 Network Survey can be accessed via the City of Calgary Engage portal

M-L Medium - Long Term:

4.4 Open up cultural institutions at street level onto the Avenue to become street activators. Turn the buildings "inside out" to express their values and program on the street.

- Develop a set of guidelines for all existing and future developments along the Avenue. Ensure buildings open up and onto the street, have transparent frontages, active edges and reflect the character of the Avenue.

Pilot This
P

4.1 Create incentives for creative agencies to activate vacant spaces

Consider an artist in residency program for vacant storefronts



Spotlight

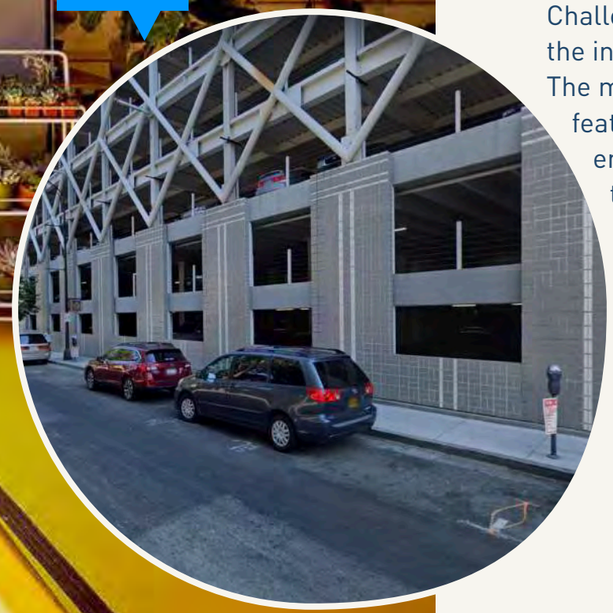
Chashama, New York

Chashama partners with Property Owners to transform underutilized real estate into space for artists to create and showcase their work. Based in New York City, the organization recognized that affordable space was one of the biggest challenges facing the art world and founded Chashama in 1995 to help sustain a diverse cultural environment. Today, Chashama has 150 events a year and workspace for 120 artists across midtown Manhattan and the surrounding 5 boroughs.

Pilot This

P

4.2 Activate parkades and other inactive ground floors that front the Avenue with new uses



Spotlight

MOMENT, San Jose

MOMENT was born from a vision to celebrate and activate San Pedro Street within the rapidly growing urban core of San Jose. MOMENT emerged from an initiative of the San Jose Downtown Association (SJDA) who envisioned converting 12 street-level parking spaces into micro-retail units to support new types of retail and creative culture.

In 2015 SJDA was awarded a grant from the Knight Cities Challenge and implemented the initiative with great success. The micro-retail spaces feature makers, artists and emerging brands for short-to-mid term durations.

Short - Medium Term
S-M

4.3 Bring public services onto the Avenue and into underutilized ground floors and empty store fronts

Consider a pilot with the Calgary Police Department to establish a downtown presence

Consider integrating outreach services that work with vulnerable people in the city

Spotlight

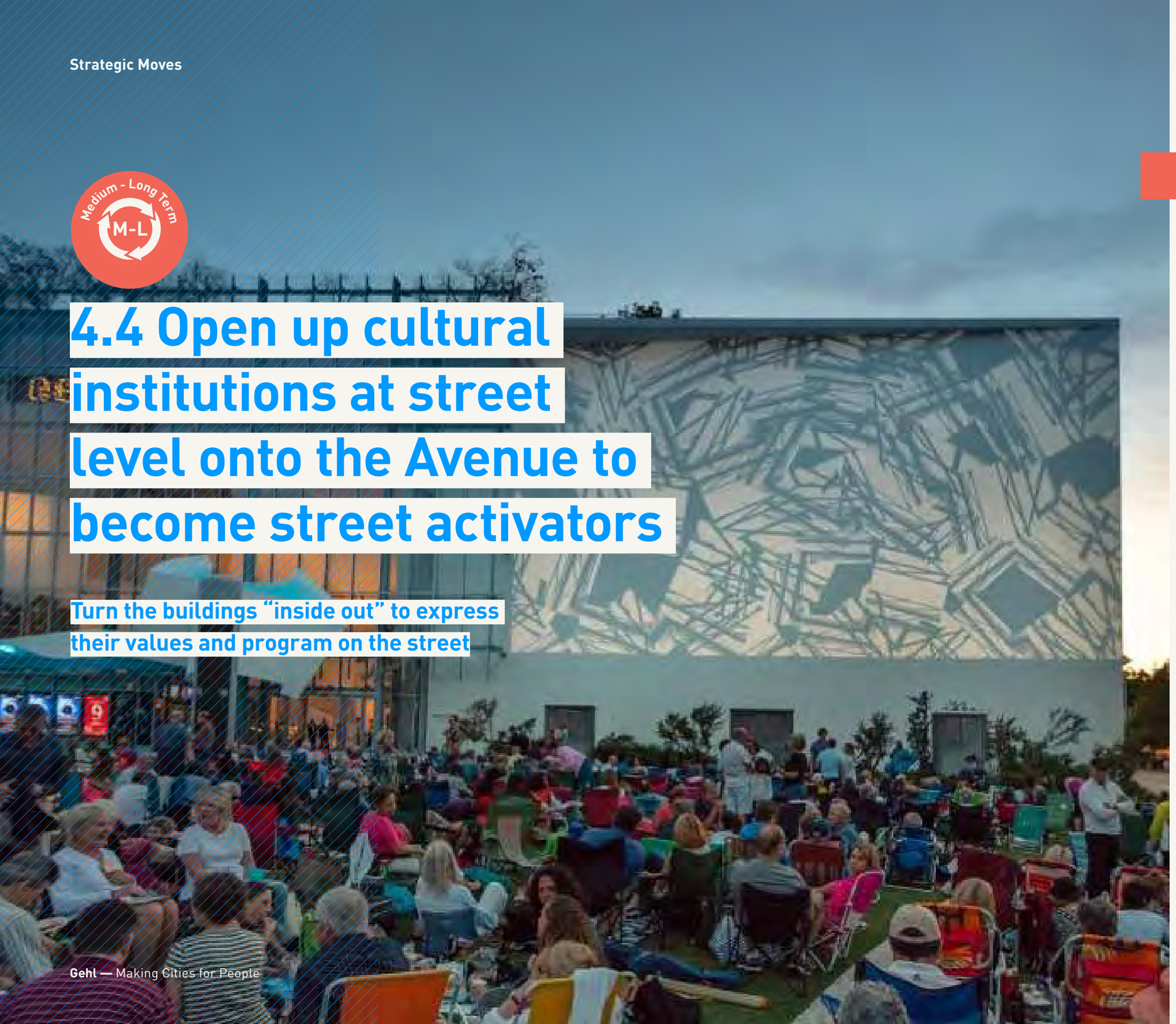
Police Substation, Santa Monica CA

Over the holidays of 2018, the Santa Monica Police Department, set up a substation in a vacant store front on the 3rd Street Promenade. This was in response to monitored seasonal increase in calls during this high activity season the previous years. In addition to minimizing illicit activities through police presence on ground, the substation offered other services from shopping bag storage to limit car break ins, and first responder needs requiring first aid. They also opened up space for other services and programs to set up in the store front. Among others taking advantage of this opportunity, the local shelter set up a pet adoption event.

Medium - Long Term
M-L

4.4 Open up cultural institutions at street level onto the Avenue to become street activators

Turn the buildings “inside out” to express their values and program on the street



Spotlight

SoundScape, Miami Beach

You can experience the New World Symphony performances larger than life in free outdoor Wallcast concerts. Miami Beach’s SoundScape features the latest in visual and audio technology on a 7,000-square-foot projection wall. Wallcast events are free to the public and do not require a ticket.

During Art Basel in Miami, this location is a key attraction.

5 Repositioning the Avenue

The Strategic Move

The Avenue can support Calgary's Economic Development and Downtown Strategies by rethinking real estate at strategic locations to attract tenants and talents for a more diversified economy, enhance visitor and tourism experience to generate new spending, and improve the quality of life for residents. Specifically, The Avenue presents opportunities for **infill development** at selected vacant and/or under-utilized sites and **repositioning strategies** for key cultural and commercial assets. Redevelopments on The Avenue provide tangible and specific opportunities to implement the City's economic and downtown strategies, amplifying the impact of existing public and private investments in Calgary.

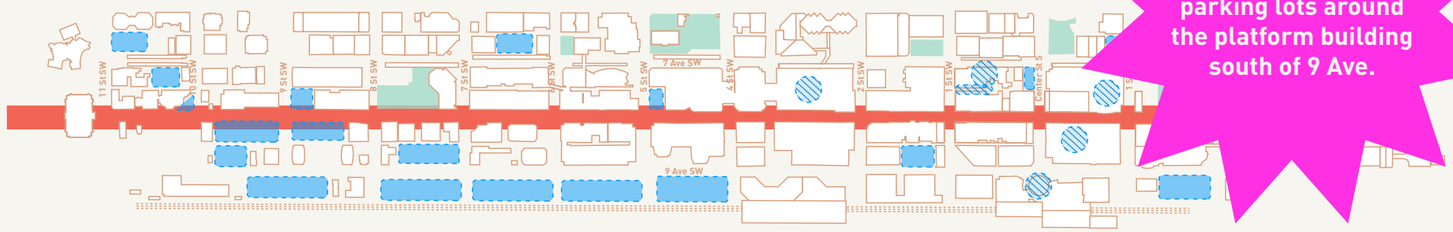
Why it's Important

- Given ongoing economic shocks and to embrace a more diversified and resilient downtown economy, The Avenue would need to emphasize on innovation and attract talent by becoming more mixed-use and amenity-rich.
- Market demand for traditional retail and hospitality is shifting, affecting businesses on the Avenue.
- Convention businesses and related ventures on the Avenue are facing increasing competition and need strategies to differentiate themselves and pursue long-term growth.



Potential infill development site

Potential repositioning opportunity



take a look at google ortho and note the parking lots around the platform building south of 9 Ave.

The Avenue: Supporting and Anchoring the City's Economic Development & Downtown Strategies

Diversified Economy; Innovation in the Downtown

In the pursuit of a more resilient path for economic growth, The Avenue possesses the potential to anchor the development of an innovation district in the downtown core, where the business community, academic institutions, cultural entrepreneurs, and the community work together to enhance Calgary's knowledge economy. Nearby academic institutional presence; transit; strategic investments in Platform Innovation Centre, the public library, and the East Village; and the Avenue's diverse arts, culture, and leisure activities all provide the context and momentum for more resources, amenities, and infrastructure that can support the knowledge economy to emerge and cluster around the Avenue.

Business Attraction and Adaptation

For traditional retail, hospitality, and tourism industries that rely heavily on Calgary's energy sector and convention visitorship, change in demand is a risk during recessions and when the business district's centre of gravity shifts its location. The Avenue can work with property and business owners to pursue strategies that are more adaptable to future risks and opportunities.

Visitor Experience, Tourism, and Downtown Spending

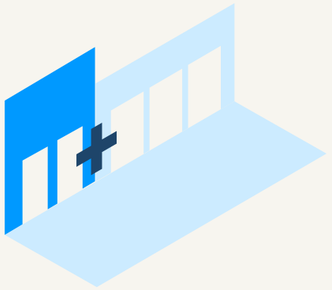
More food & beverage, arts and culture, leisure and entertainment, and public space programming can help activate The Avenue during the day and extend use into the night. Such activities diversify the user group of The Avenue; in addition to office workers, the tourists, visitors, and residents will bring more spending power to benefit businesses on The Avenue.

Quality of Life and Downtown Residents

Currently on The Avenue, services and amenities essential for a live-work neighbourhood have been lacking, such as grocery stores at different price points, visible everyday amenities, bodegas and deli shops, coffee shops, dry cleaners, and entertainment. These amenities [illegible] the Avenue a more appealing place fo[illegible] towards more successful talent a[illegible]

5 Repositioning the Avenue

How to get there ...



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P Pilot This:

5.1 Identify opportunities for transformative repurposing of real property assets.

S-M Short - Medium Term:

5.2 Create clusters of arts, culture, and entertainment by rehabilitating under-utilized real estate assets.

5.3 Explore innovative retail models to enhance the downtown experience.

- Identify constraints for mixed-income residential development and build political momentum.

M-L Medium - Long Term:

5.4 Make the Avenue the centre for convening and idea exchange - a landscape of ideas.

5.5 Anticipate change with new partnerships. Differentiate the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre.

5.6 Boost tourism and sales by converting or retrofitting retail spaces for hybrid programs and uses.

5.7 Increase range of housing choices downtown.

5.8 Stimulate mixed-income residential development.

5.9 Provide amenities to nurture a live-work neighbourhood.

- Develop necessary policy updates to land-use and development regulations that incentivize and enforce mixed use development to secure that the Avenue becomes a complete neighbourhood.

Pilot This
P

5.1 Identify opportunities for transformative repurposing of real property assets

Start early conversations with key stakeholders.

How can creative repurposing of currently underperforming properties reinforce the objectives of the Downtown Strategy and Economic Development Strategy? Assess the locational and building attributes of properties with potential catalytic effects on the district and The Avenue's future.


1
515 Macleod Trail SE


2
101 9 Ave SW


3
7 Ave SW between 1 St & Centre St


4
1011 1 St SW


5
926 6th Ave SW


6
1010 6 Ave SW


7
616 Macleod Trail SE

Spotlight

Potential assets

Start to build an inventory of publicly and privately owned properties on and proximate to The Avenue that could potentially be converted to better uses to enhance the downtown experience in the future.

Below are examples of such properties:

1. Education Centre Building
2. The Base Building of Calgary Tower
3. Multiple parcels on 7th Ave

4 & 5. Office buildings

6 & 7. City-owned (current uses may be relocated)

Short - Medium Term
S-M

5.2 Create clusters of arts, culture, and entertainment by rehabilitating under-utilized real estate assets

After piloting pop up events and storefront activations along and around the Avenue, consider larger-scale adaptive reuse projects to drive greater impacts and help foster the creative cluster as a strategy of economic development. Such developments both offer opportunities for local communities and boost tourism.

Spotlight

Artscape Wychwood Barns, Toronto

An adaptively reused community cultural hub with artist live/work studios, an event venue, the Peter MacKendrick Community Gallery and office spaces for a range of arts, community and environmental organizations. The tenants represent a dynamic mix of artistic practices, community services and cultural interests. They infuse the facility's spaces with activity and creative energy on a daily basis.

Short - Medium Term
S-M

5.3 Explore innovative retail models to enhance the downtown experience

Talk to and partner with entrepreneurs that are reimagining the future of retail. Help them identify real estate and locate in the downtown, because alternative retail models can attract more visitors with unique experiences, fill existing vacancies, and increase the value of properties over time.

Spotlight

Showfields, New York

Showfields reimagines how shoppers interact with direct-to-consumer brands on social media by taking e-commerce offline and into a four-story, 14,000 sq.ft. retail space. Community event space, co-working space, rooftop garden, and gallery space are also incorporated in the building.

Showfields raised $9 million of seed funding from venture capital in 2019 and continues to expand.

Medium - Long Term
M-L

5.4 Make the Avenue the centre for convening and idea exchange - a landscape of ideas

With the existing neighbourhood and facility investments nearby and the changing economic outlook, pursue an innovation district as part of a long-term economic development strategy.

What's At Stake?

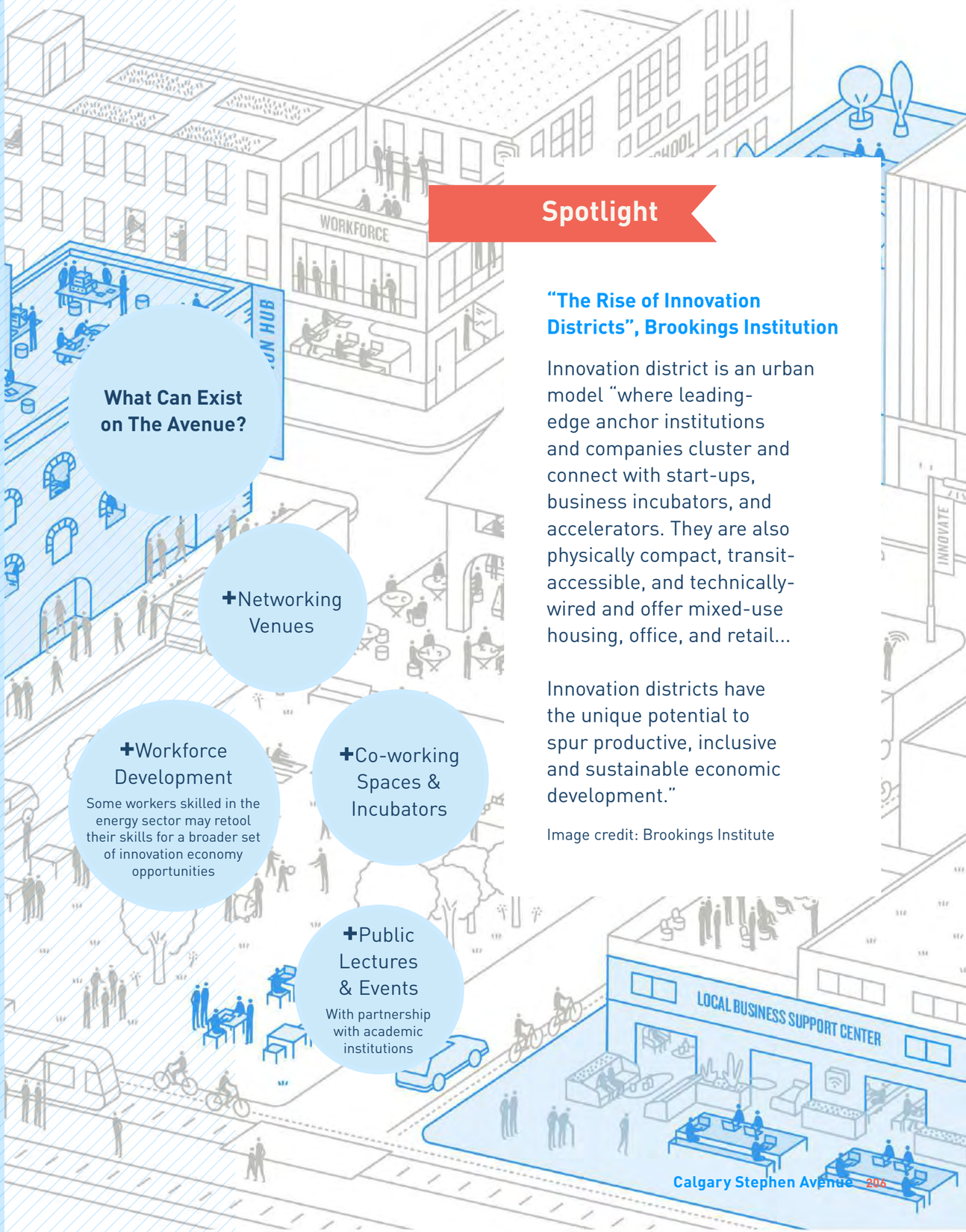
The shifting economy continues to present challenges for the downtown. The Avenue dominated by the energy sector would be vulnerable for current and future economic shocks and expose the broader retail, hospitality, and service sectors to downturn risks.

Opportunities and Strategies

There are other economic sectors emerging and increasing in size, such as life sciences & health and creative industries (according to "Calgary in the New Economy" by Calgary Economic Development).

The further agglomeration of these new sectors could be supported by The Avenue that facilitates **innovation and idea exchange**.

The Avenue has existing assets that are conducive to the innovation economy, including the presence of academic institutions nearby; transit; strategic investments in Platform Innovation Centre, the public library, and the East Village; and arts, culture, and leisure activities. Additional strategic investment in public space and real estate, amplified by targeted programming, could further enhance The Avenue's role in growing the city's innovation economy.



Spotlight

"The Rise of Innovation Districts", Brookings Institution

Innovation district is an urban model "where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators, and accelerators. They are also physically compact, transit-accessible, and technically-wired and offer mixed-use housing, office, and retail...

Innovation districts have the unique potential to spur productive, inclusive and sustainable economic development."

Image credit: Brookings Institute



5.5 Anticipate change with new partnerships

Differentiate the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre (CTCC).

What's At Stake?

CTCC is an important asset that generates economic impact in downtown and beyond. Delegates attend events, visit the city, and support various sectors of the local economy, especially hospitality and retail. With new investments in the Rivers District and Calgary aiming to become a Tier 1 convention city, CTCC can play a differentiated role as the leader of the Centre City's convening and idea exchange infrastructure.

Opportunities and Strategies

CTCC is coordinating with BMO and Tourism Calgary to pursue greater business bookings. CTCC has indicated that the BMO will benefit, not detract from, the convention operations at CTCC. In addition to the convention business, CTCC might also explore opportunities intrinsic to the economic and social roles played by the Avenue, particularly on the ground floor, to amplify the impact of this important downtown institution. CTCC's location at the intersection of the Avenue and 1st Street is an extraordinary confluence of commerce, culture, and civic space. With Glenbow Museum, Arts Commons, and a reimagined Olympic Plaza, **CTCC can unlock the significant economic potential of new placemaking at this important crossroad.**

What if CTCC anchors a larger innovation district for the city's long-term economic development? As a complement to business conventions, CTCC can also position itself around the daily life of the increasingly emergent innovation economy in Calgary, forming a network of knowledge exchange with the Platform Innovation Centre, Bow Valley College, The Edison, workforce training programs, and other resources. Currently, CTCC primarily works with organizations in hospitality, the convention industry, and downtown business and tourism associations. Future opportunities exist in exploring and leveraging **strategic partnerships with academic institutions, civic and other non-profit organizations, and industries**. These entities, as potentially frequent or year-long users of CTCC's event and hybrid spaces and partners for activation at grade and outdoor programming, could bring fresh energy and resources to the Centre and create a distinguished new hub of social interaction, civic dialogue, and innovation.

Note: The BMO Convention Centre will add 500,000 sq. ft. of space, and a new Event Centre will also cover approximately 600,000 sq. ft. for sporting events, concerts, and other entertainment.

The Economic Impact of CTCC

29,000 event-related hotel nights;
$23 million revenue;
$133 million economic impact;
122,000 sq. ft. of convention space
175,000 annual guests, including
26,000 non-residents; and
303 events.
Source: CTCC 2018 Annual Report

Spotlight



↑ Chattanooga, TN: The Edney Innovation Centre is a hub that anchors the downtown innovation district. Located in the building is a wide range of programs including community event space, co-working, and business accelerator.



↑ Pensacola, FL: CivicCon brings speaker events, classes, and workshops to the community, achieved through the partnership between the local media and philanthropy.

Medium - Long Term
M-L

5.6 Boost tourism and sales by converting or retrofitting retail spaces for hybrid programs and uses

What's At Stake?

Tourism and retail are important economic drivers. With changes in the economy, technology, and consumer spending habits, these industries are rapidly evolving and facing challenges. The retail corridor on 'The Avenue' needs to stay nimble and adaptive in order to thrive in the future. The 2014 collapse of oil prices and the resultant recessions in 2015 and 2016 have affected the customer footfall, decreased retail sales, and driven up the vacancy levels.

Opportunities and Strategies

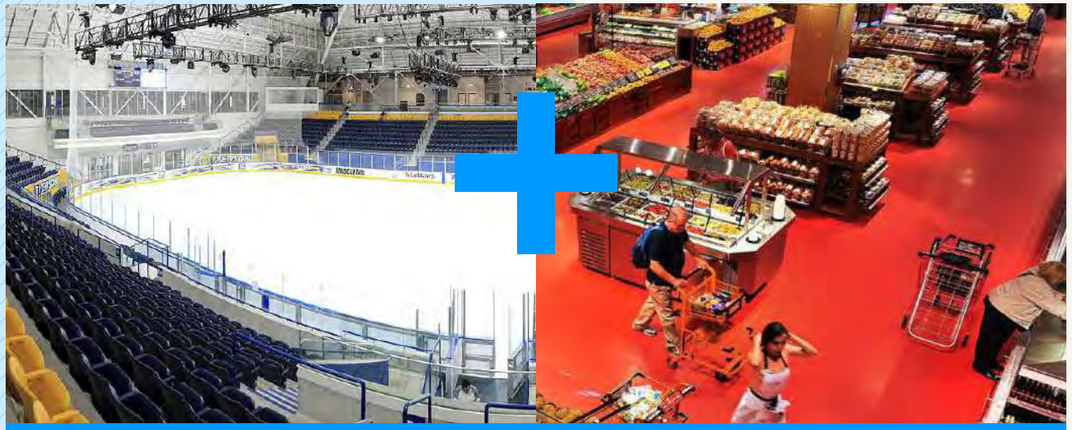
Retail businesses on 'The Avenue' could potentially enhance their competitive positions by exploring new ways of activation with hybrid programs and uses.

Experiential Retail and Entertainment: One way to boost retail performance, in the age of e-commerce, is to pursue experience-based activities that attract visitors to the place. Globally, integrating sports, arts, and games into retail spaces have proven to be an effective way of creating new value in retail.

Mix of Uses: Adding residential, hospitality, and office/co-working spaces in the district could infuse new population that spend time in the place, thereby increasing the "size of the cake" of foot traffic to support retail.

While it is atypical for the public sector to directly incentivize retail development, the City and the CDA could invest in programs to enhance the overall downtown experience and marketing as a way of supporting retail.

Spotlight



↑ Indoor sports + Retail. Shown in the picture: joint use of a grocery store and an ice rink at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto



↑ Mix uses of hospitality, co-working, entertainment, and food & beverage could bring new customer base to retail tenants. Shown in the picture: Parool Theater in The Student Hotel Amsterdam

Medium - Long Term
M-L

5.7 Increase range of housing choices downtown

What's At Stake?

While substantial residential development has occurred in other areas in and surrounding the downtown core, housing along 'The Avenue' has just begun to gain momentum, especially for rental, which is increasingly important for workforce attraction and retail performance. For long-term economic development, 'The Avenue' provides an opportunity for more rental development.

Opportunities and Strategies

As a long-term strategy, Calgary could set a goal for rental housing development in downtown (1,000 new units in the next 8 years, for example). In addition to ground-up development at infill sites, the feasibility of conversion and retrofit/reuse of office floors, hotels, and municipal buildings (full or partial) should be studied. The feasibility of these developments will depend on housing market conditions in the long term, changes in the regulatory environment, and the availability of funding. Calgary should start identifying existing constraints and lobbying for changes.

Downtown Residential Is Gaining Momentum

In Progress/Recently Completed:

West Village Towers: 554 rental units

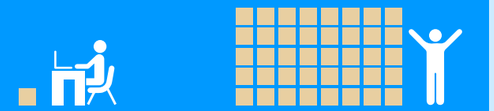
Hat on 7th: 66 rental units

Barron Building: 93 rental units

TELUS Sky: 341 rental units

Arris: 500 rental units

Residential Helps Retail



1 office worker supports **0.5** sq.ft of retail

1 resident supports **10** sq.ft of retail

Source: Stantec Urban Planning & Design

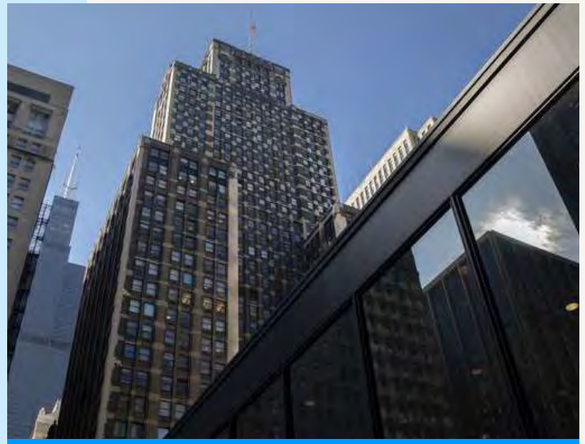
Incentivizing Office-to-Residential Conversion

Following the 9/11 crisis, many worried about the future of Lower Manhattan as a place for live and work. The 421-g Tax Incentive program helped incentivize development in Lower Manhattan. It offered real estate tax exemption and abatement for conversion of commercial buildings, or portions of buildings, into multiple dwellings. All rental units become subject to rent stabilization for the duration of the tax benefits.

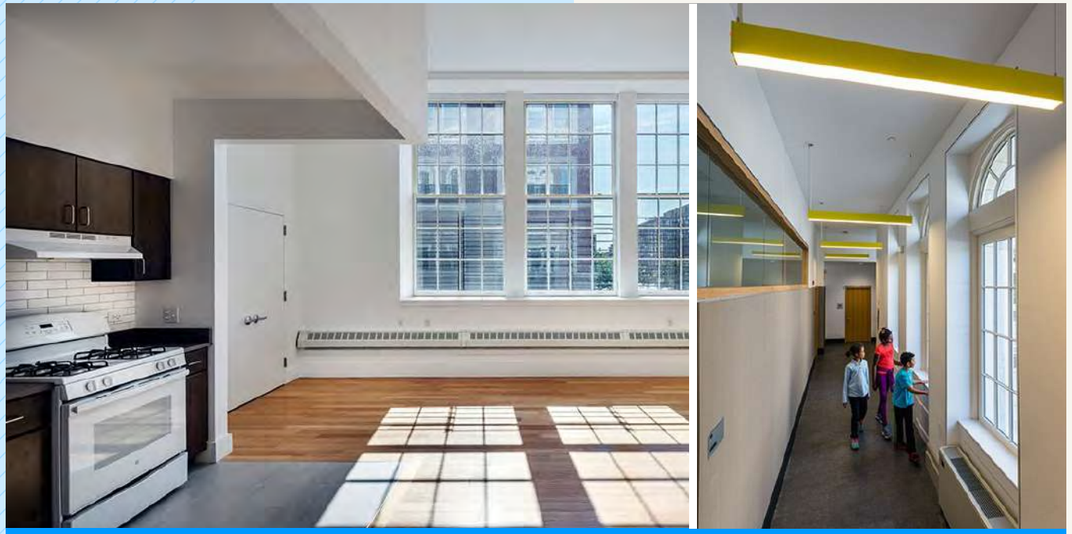
According to available record provided by Alliance for Downtown New York, from 2001 to 2008, the number of residential units converted in Lower Manhattan using 421-g totaled 5,762. From 2001 to 2016, the residential population almost tripled in Lower Manhattan.

↑ Lower Manhattan, NY: 421-g Tax Incentive

Spotlight



↑ Chicago, IL: CityPads has a deal to buy the top 31 floors of the Clark Adams Building, with plans to convert the office space into co-living apartments managed by Common.



↑ Harlem, NY: PS 186 is a mixed-income, mixed-use project converted from a vacant school building, with a Boys & Girls Club of Harlem located in the same building.



5.8 Stimulate mixed-income residential development

Through proactive policy development, political advocacy, and regulatory tools, incentivize the development of more housing choices at different price points.

What's At Stake?

Offering greater and more affordable housing choices for all sectors of the population, from empty nesters, to young professionals, to special needs population and the homeless population, would make Downtown Calgary more competitive, enhance equity, and reduce social disorder.

Opportunities and Strategies

To incentivize and support more affordable housing construction in the city and especially in the downtown area, Calgary would need to utilize policy and funding tools and be mindful of political and market conditions that currently present obstacles for the deployment of such tools.

Affordable housing development can be stimulated by **Density Bonus/ Inclusionary Zoning** (DB/IZ) which offers additional FAR or dwelling units as an incentive for the developer. In downtown, the Centre City Mixed Use District of Calgary already allows for FARs between 3 and 7. In the future and over the long term, to enable DB/IZ, Calgary would need to overcome the political hurdles and down-zone certain areas so as to make DB/IZ a meaningful tool for public-private negotiations.

Regarding funding, Calgary has successfully used **Community Revitalization Levy** (CRL) to support East Village and the Rivers District. In the future and over the long term, the feasibility of the City making public monies available for mixed-income housing development through CRL would depend on the positive outlook of economic and real estate market conditions for underwriting.

City of Edmonton Affordable Housing Strategy (2016-2025)

As the most recent major policy development for affordable housing, the Strategy formalizes the City's role as leader, coordinator, and advocate, uniquely positioned to leverage a tool box of municipal resources including funding, land, regulations and policies.

The City is working to enable supportive environments and engage community partners for a compelling and consistent narrative, building off momentum of the Strategy. In 2018, the City announced a five-year marketing and communications initiative: **The Affordable Housing Public Information Campaign**. The goal is "to shift negative attitudes and behaviours related to affordable housing by bridging existing values with the facts and particularly the benefits of affordable housing." Collaboration is a key feature of this plan, as housing partners must be actively engaged in joint communication efforts, working together to change the community conversation on affordable housing.

Source: Anderson-Baron, J., and Christel K. "Mobilizing Partnerships in Affordable Housing: The Experience of the City of Edmonton."

↑ A Partnership-Based Approach to Affordable Housing Policy and Development

Spotlight

Edmonton's Affordable Housing Sector

Community Partners & Private Industry

Capital Region Housing; Canadian Home Builders Association; Edmonton Coalition on Housing & Homelessness; Edmonton Inner-City Housing; Edmonton Social Planning Council; Greater Edmonton Foundation; Homeward Trust; Métis Capital Housing; Urban Development Institute; Many other housing providers & advocacy groups

City of Edmonton

Sustainable Development; Community Services; Edmonton Police Service; homeEd; Homeless Advisory Committee

Other Orders of Government

Government of Canada; Government of Alberta; Capital Region Board; Treaty 6 Nation; Métis Nation of Alberta

Development on City-Owned Land

The City of Edmonton partnered with the Capital Region Housing Corporation, Edmonton's largest affordable housing provider, to redevelop an 80-unit aging social housing project on City-owned land into 240 affordable housing units.

The City provided the land and administrative/engagement support during the course of redevelopment.



↑ Edmonton, Alberta: Londonderry Affordable Housing Redevelopment

Medium - Long Term
M-L

5.9 Provide amenities to nurture a live-work neighbourhood

Downtown residential development and small businesses are reciprocal, as having more residents living in the place will bolster the long-term viability of retail, and a more dynamic retail scene will make the neighbourhood more attractive for residential development.

The City could deliberately foster such development with: 1) zoning policies and community benefit agreements for commercial development; 2) publicly-owned real estate listed at below-market price as an incentive for certain redevelopment; and 3) public space improvement, programming, and marketing, supported by CDA, to increase the desirability of the place.

Spotlight

Downtown Brooklyn, NY

The third largest central business district in NYC has seen a substantial amount of residential and mixed-use development in the past two decades, supported by a wide variety of neighbourhood amenities and services that make the district liveable and attractive.

Featured on this page is City Point BKLYN, where a grocery store, a food hall, a department store, and a discount store serve residents, office workers, and students in the area.



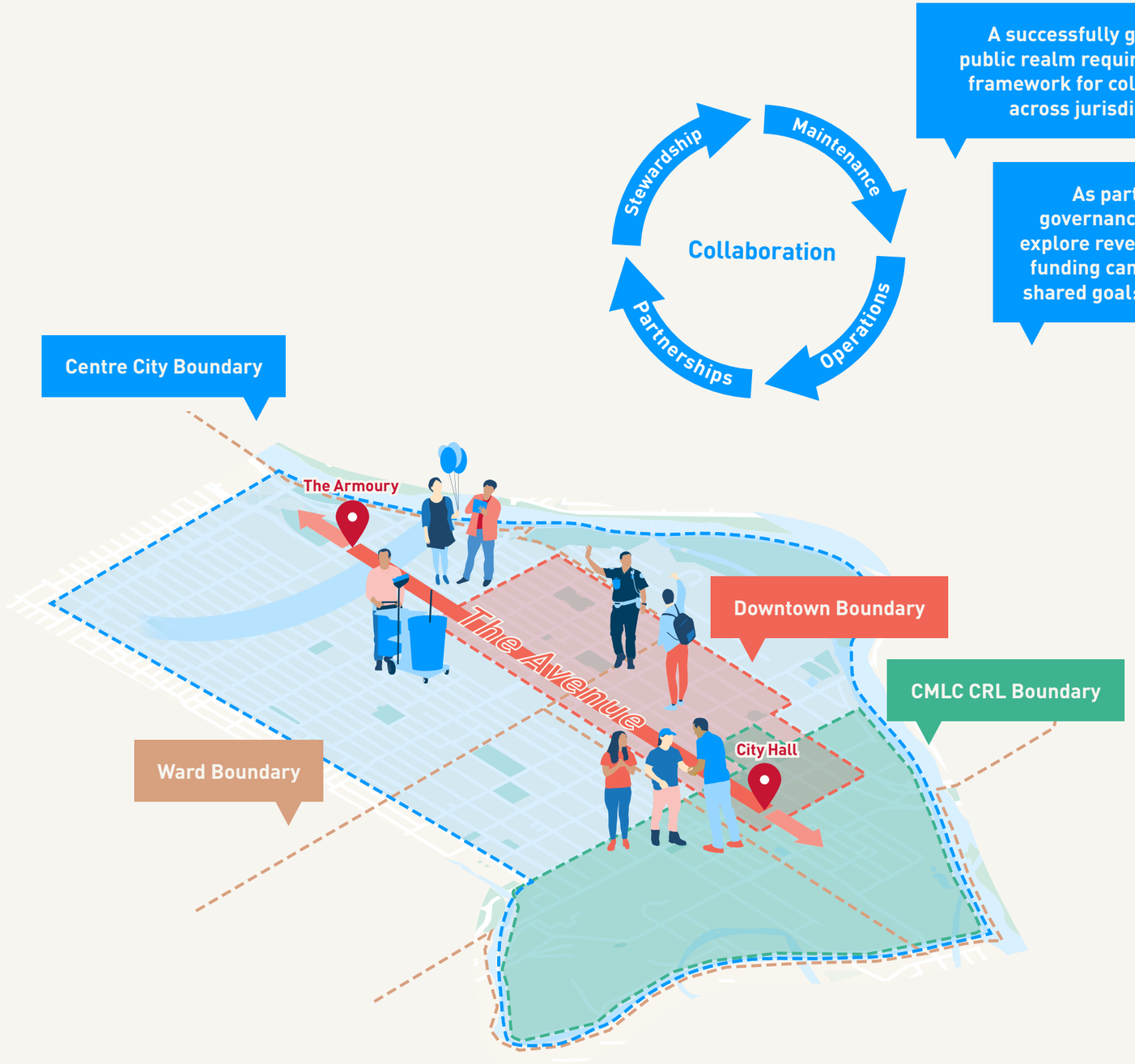
6 Governing the Avenue

The Strategic Move

Develop a strong framework for stewardship, funding, operations and maintenance for the Avenue. Consider establishing a central entity that can take lead and connect across multiple agencies in and around the Avenue.

Why it's Important

- Jurisdictional overlaps with diverging missions are challenging the delivery of a high quality and successful downtown main street.
- Limited collaboration, across public and private entities with varying responsibilities, is a road block for developing a sense of ownership and for new initiatives emerging on the Avenue.
- Limited coordination across entities overseeing different components of the Avenue may mean that funding for governing and maintaining the Avenue are not spent in the best way possible.



As part of the Reimagining Stephen Avenue project, the consultant team has been asked to review the existing governance framework for the Avenue and to assemble case studies and best practices from around the globe for inspiration.

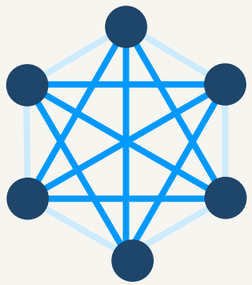
As with the other strategic moves, the recommendations are subject to further exploration following this scope of work, and serves as inspiration for new ways of thinking public realm governance in Calgary.

This strategic move is supported by a white paper outlining the research more in detail.

6

Governing the Avenue

How to get there ...



Each action represented in a blue box is further unfolded on the following pages, through the use of precedent projects. In chapter 6 of this document, each of these actions are qualified with ideas for specific projects along the Avenue. The actions represented in white boxes are all related to strategies and policy changes and are subject to further studies.

P Pilot This:

6.1 Pilot a street ambassador program. Empower on-ground staff to serve as street stewards that provide services, light maintenance and "eyes on the street."

6.2 Test new ways of collaborative governance. Provide streamlined program and event management, permitting processes, funding for services, maintenance and operations.

S-M Short - Medium Term:

6.3 Streamline permitting processes and remove bureaucratic barriers. Encourage creative partnerships and ownership by local residents, businesses and cultural anchors.

- Develop a platform for multi-agency collaboration and private initiatives to promote temporary programming and events. Broadcast that the Avenue is open for piloting new ideas to to the business and greater community.

M-L Medium - Long Term:

- Develop an optimal governance model for the Avenue with a business plan for that entity*.

*For an analysis of best practices within governance models please refer to "The Future of Stephen Avenue, Governance Model Case Studies," a separate document that highlights several case studies.

Pilot This

P

6.1 Pilot a street ambassador program

Empower on-ground staff to serve as street stewards that provide services, light maintenance and "eyes on the street."

Spotlight

Downtown Santa Monica Inc. California

The Downtown Santa Monica Ambassador Program is a hybrid hospitality and social services that assists with: Visitor information and directions, visitors escorting upon request, recovering lost items, maintenance, call for services if needed, events and surveys. In addition the ambassador program provides local jobs, including for people that are unable to work full-time, and surveys conducted by Downtown Santa Monica Inc shows that the ambassadors are loved and appreciated by locals and visitors.

Note: See separate deliverable: Research on Governance Models, for further insights into the Downtown Santa Monica Inc hospitality services and governance model.

Pilot This
P

6.2 Test new ways of collaborative governance

Provide streamlined program and event management, permitting processes, funding for services, maintenance and operations

Spotlight

Civic Centre Commons, San Francisco

Civic Centre Commons initiative in San Francisco California is a dedicated group of City agencies working collaboratively with neighbourhood, cultural, civic, educational and business leaders to activate and care for Civic Centre public spaces now, and to develop a strategy to ensure that the area has the staffing and funding needed to expand services and amenities in the future.

It is a collaborative effort to breathe new life into Civic Center Plaza, UN Plaza, changing how people engage with the place and with each other. Led by the City of San Francisco in partnership with neighbors, community organizations, and cultural institutions, the initiative is transforming the Commons so that everyone can feel welcome and experience the best of San Francisco every day.

https://www.civiccentreinitiative.org/about

Short - Medium Term
S-M

6.3 Streamline permitting processes and remove bureaucratic barriers

Encourage creative partnerships and ownership by local residents, businesses and cultural anchors

The Pavement to Park parklet programs, came from grassroots and the arts, was formalized by the City and by clear guidance and streamlined processes this is now everyday practice.



Spotlight

Groundplay, San Francisco

This multi-agency effort, led by the City of San Francisco Planning Department, brings many initiatives together under one umbrella, from the Pavement to Parks (parklet) program, to Better Market Street. All initiatives respond to a need for a more collaborative approach to developing the public realm of San Francisco, for and with citizens and businesses.

The spirit behind the program is to allow the creativity of partners outside of City government to develop new and insightful ways of addressing community needs and aspirations.

Groundplay projects begin with ordinary San Franciscans with ideas for their neighborhoods. They are made possible by a strong collaboration between community partners, city agencies, and funders.

Graphics courtesy of www groundplaysf.org



In this chapter specific ideas for Reimagining the Avenue are presented. This section includes ideas for change-making in the broader area of influence that can have a positive impact on the Avenue itself, but are subject to investment and development outside of this project. The ideas presented in this chapter are supported by aspirational profiles that help define an identity for the character area and describe the measures of success. The recommendations are divided into three categories; connectivity improvements, public realm improvements and development opportunities which are presented through the "Links + Connections" and "Spaces + Places" diagrams. In addition, precedent images and best practice examples support the ideas presented.

4

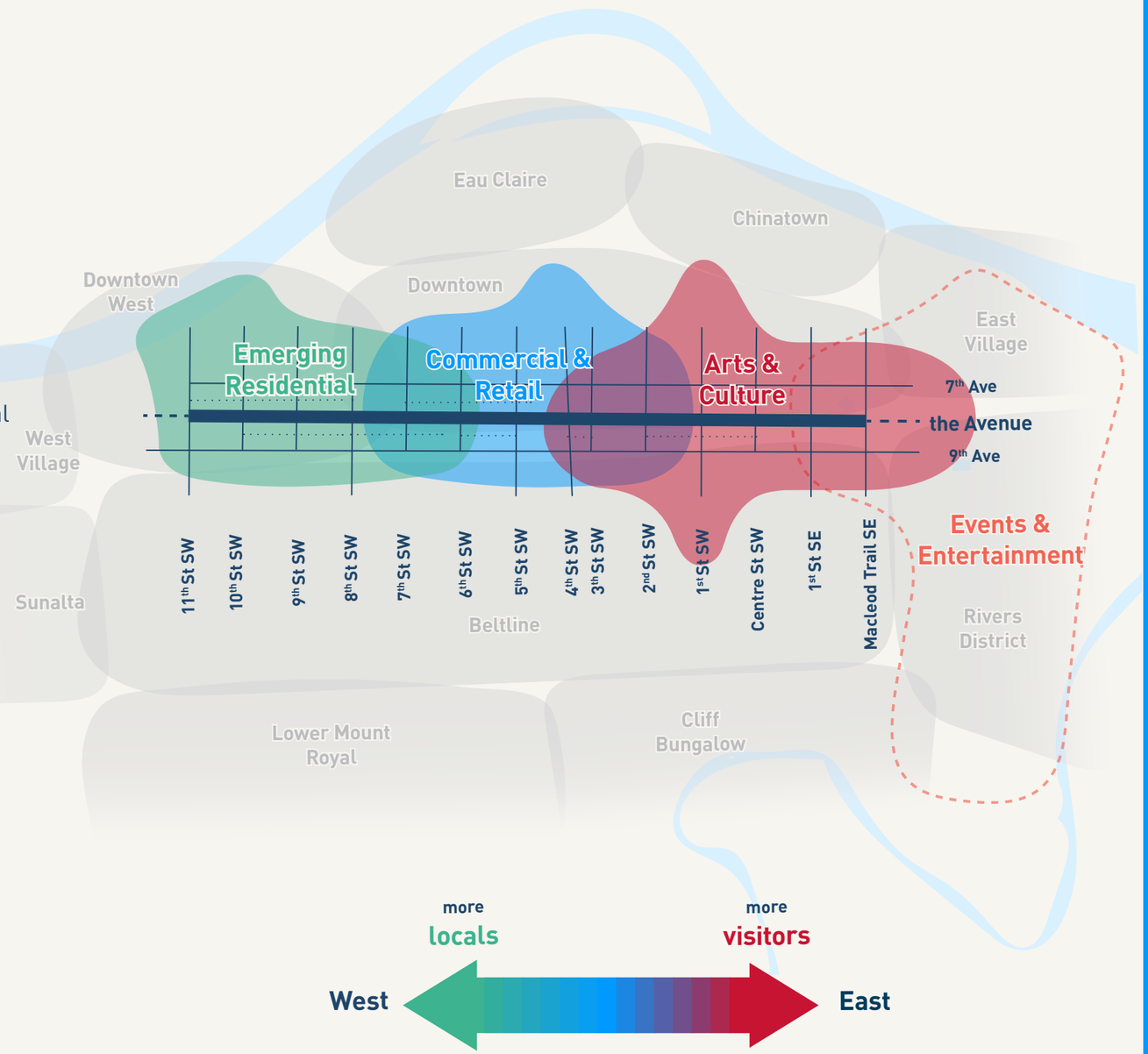
Character Areas

Character Areas

Areas of Influence

Stretching for over two kilometers across Greater Downtown, the Avenue is surrounded by distinct areas and neighbourhoods. These adjacent areas each have their own identity, urban character, economic drivers, and cultural assets which directly and indirectly influence the experience on the Avenue.

Shaped by three predominant areas of influence, the Avenue is defined by the arts & cultural institutions to the east, the commercial and retail zone in the centre and the predominantly residential area to the west.



SUMMARY

Vision → Goals → Strategic Moves → Character Areas

The Strategic Moves identified in the previous chapter outline key drivers that are directly related to the goals of the Avenue. While the Strategic Moves address the entire length of the Avenue, the Character Areas on the following pages identify targeted actions within specific zones to drive success on the Avenue forward. The Character Areas are defined and put into context within the illustrated areas of influence on this page.

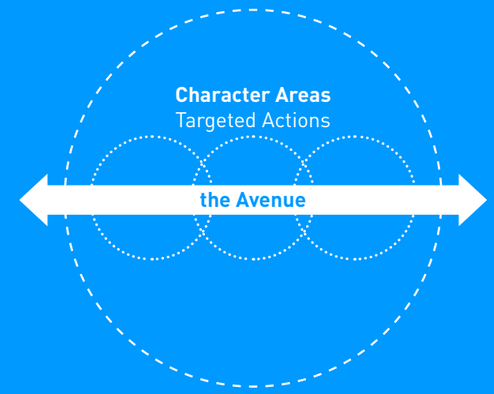
Vision
Aspirational Future

↓

Goals
Guiding Objectives

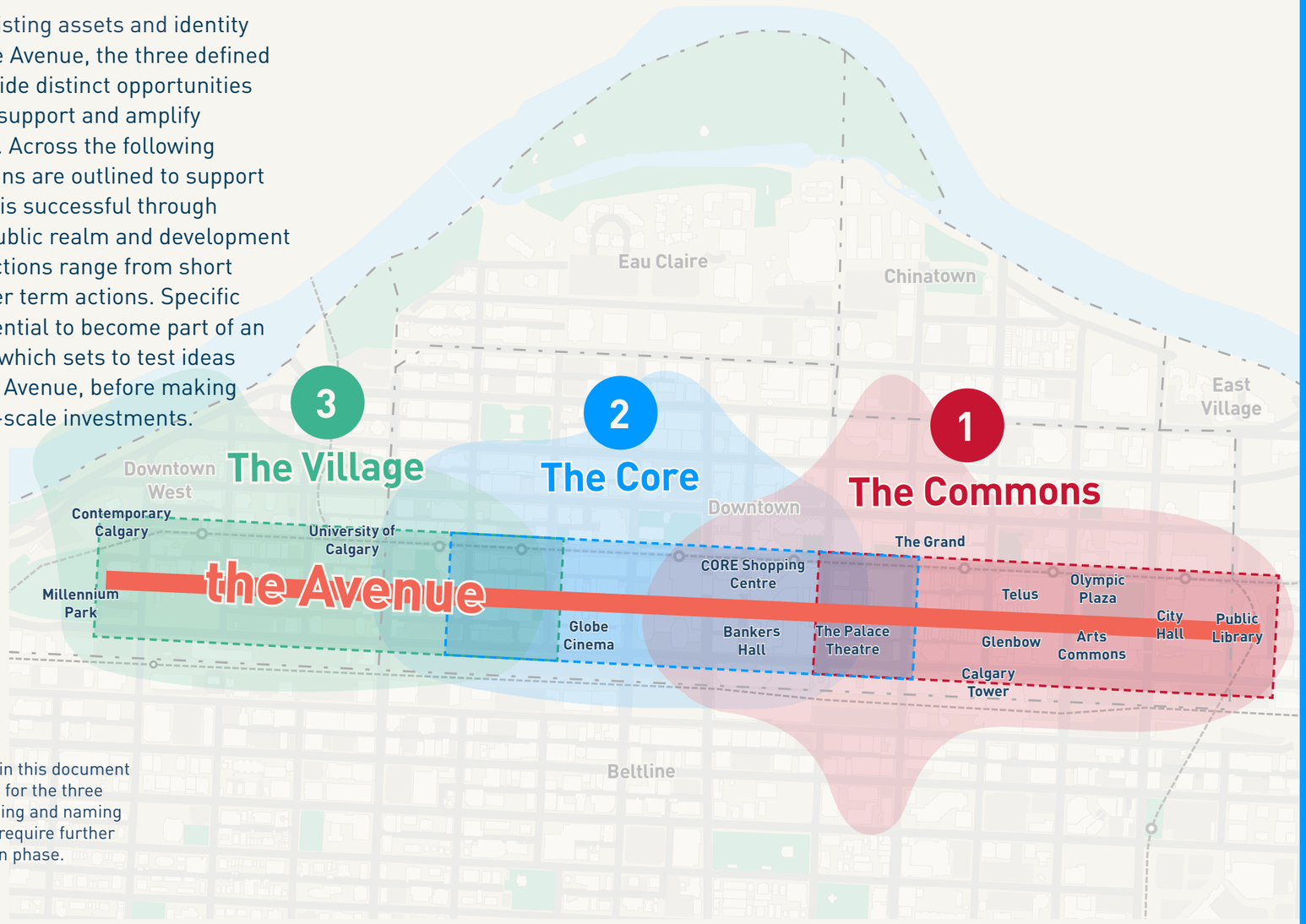
↓

Strategic Moves
Overarching Key Drivers



Character Areas

Building upon the existing assets and identity along and around the Avenue, the three defined character areas provide distinct opportunities with the potential to support and amplify public life downtown. Across the following pages, targeted actions are outlined to support a future Avenue that is successful through investments in the public realm and development opportunities. The actions range from short to near term to longer term actions. Specific actions have the potential to become part of an 'Experiment Phase" which sets to test ideas for reconfiguring the Avenue, before making long-term and large-scale investments.



Note:
The character area names in this document represent conceptual ideas for the three character areas. The branding and naming of the character areas will require further study during a future design phase.

SUMMARY

Understanding the Character Areas

The three character areas are described on the following pages through these four components:

Aspirational Profile
The aspirational profile communicates the defining identity of each character area and describes measures of success.

Links + Connections
Links + Connections focuses on **mobility improvements** that enhance the pedestrian and bike network. Critical connections are considered to strengthen existing links and improve neighbourhood connectivity. These actions aim to get more people to move comfortably, safely and with dignity.

Spaces + Places
Spaces + Places outlines **development opportunities** and **public realm improvements**. These actions focus on leveraging existing assets and encouraging key district players to embrace the public realm. The aim here is to get more people to stay, linger, live, work, shop and recreate on the Avenue.

Best Practices
Best Practices presents global and local precedents that represent the intended character of each zone and further illustrate key moves, programs, and functions.

The Commons 1

Aspirational Profile

The Commons is the epicenter of convening, idea exchange, arts, culture and civic pride. A vibrant district that draws local and global talent and contributes to the growth of the most innovative sectors of the economy. With a powerful mix of cultural institutions, historical buildings, local retail and high quality public spaces for both everyday life and large gatherings, the Commons provides a platform for Calgarians and tourists alike to enjoy the best of Calgary in a concentrated area. This is Calgary's red carpet.



Who is here:

- Tourists
- Creative Entrepreneurs
- The Arts Community
- University Students
- Everyday Residents
- Everyday Office Workers
- Conference-Goers
- Event Visitors
- Cultural Consumers

The draw:

- A cultural heart with exhibits and performances spilling from adjacent institutions onto the street.
- Flexible seating, serving and gathering areas that encourage people to make the space their own.
- A diverse mix of retail, food & beverage and creative space support a dense creative marketplace.
- Small and large scale events and programming across the day, week and year, welcome all walks of life.
- A world-class conference facility with a unique urban setting.

Measures of success:

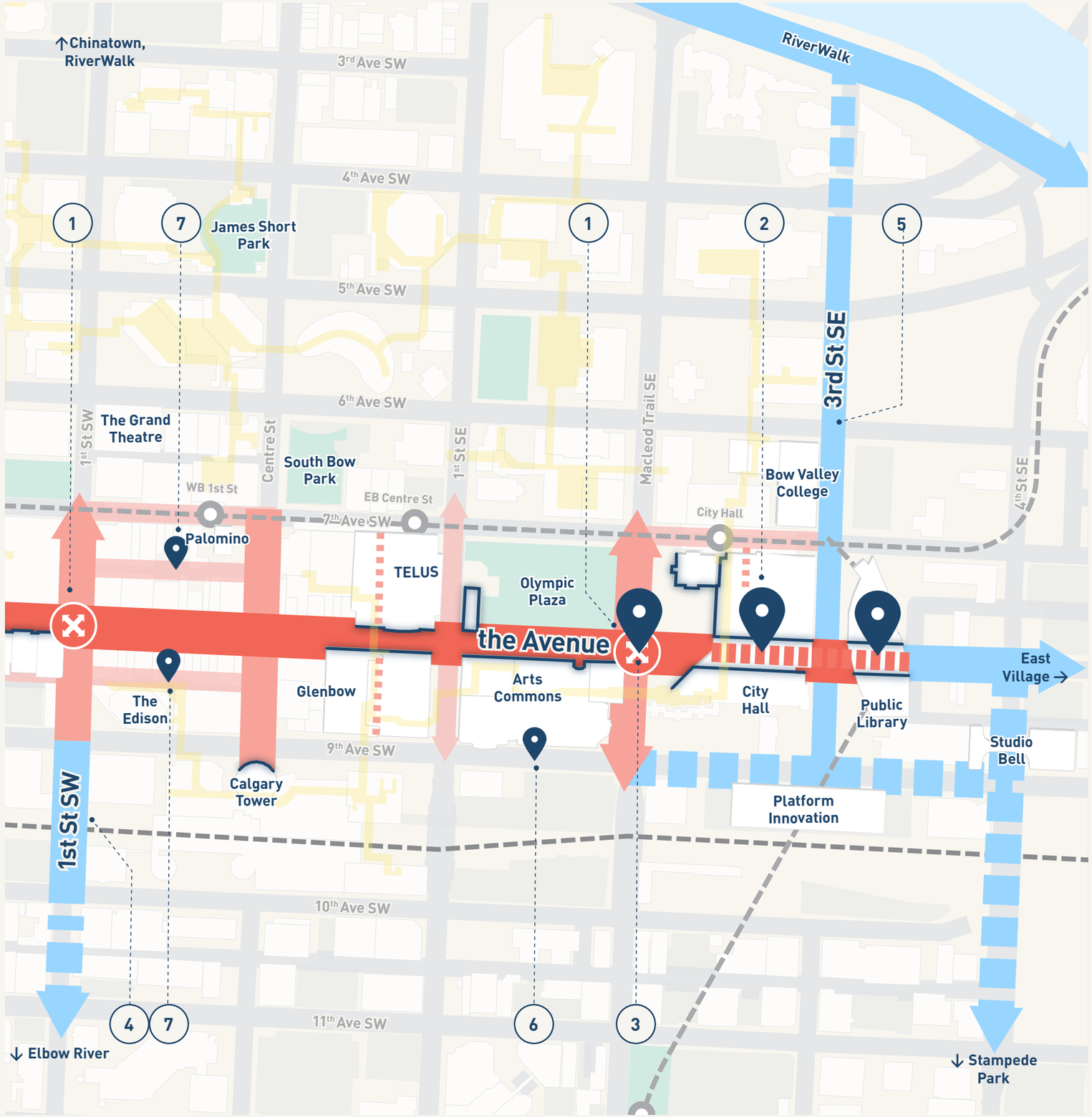
- Cultural institutions open their doors to the Avenue and integrate seamlessly with the streetscape
- New unique businesses begin to populate the vacant storefronts improving the economic condition
- Calgary's relationship with the arts is elevated and tourism increases
- Development on adjacent streets is informed by the Commons
- The Commons becomes a hub of experimentation and innovation, festivals and events are now the norm within these block
- Traffic and parking do not detract from the user experience or impede success of the Avenue during evenings and on weekends, safety and accessibility are improved

The Commons 1

Links + Connections

Transform the Avenue into a high quality complete street with a continuous street treatment. Focus on active mobility and consider how to include service vehicle access.

1. Improve key Avenue intersections to better connect to surrounding neighbourhoods and destinations
2. Ensure continuous public access through City Hall to better connect to the Library and East Village
3. Implement traffic calming on Macleod Trail SE to slow vehicular traffic
4. Transform 1st St SW into a complete street from the Avenue to 17th Ave SW
5. Transform 3rd St SW into a complete street from the Avenue to the RiverWalk
6. Transform 9th AVE SW into a complete street and shift from a one-way to two-way street
7. Consider activating laneways adjacent to the Avenue to strengthen the neighbourhood micro-network



Legend

- Existing link, Greater Downtown
- Existing weak link to improve, Greater Downtown
- Project street
- Link through building
- Proposed priority connection
- Neighbourhood pedestrian micro-network
- Prioritized intersection
- Opportunity area, on Avenue
- Opportunity area, off Avenue
- LRT, LRT Station
- Rail
- Open space
- +15 Network

The Commons 1

Spaces + Places

1. Pilot the Red Carpet: roll a red carpet through City Hall and onto Olympic Plaza, introduce signage that shows the way to the library and other key destinations like Platform
2. Transform Olympic Plaza into a flexible, at-grade front porch to The Commons with a micro-commercial retail edge offering hybrid uses and affordable arts spaces
3. Encourage celebration and public discourse through programs and events in Municipal (City Hall) plaza
4. Integrate plans for the Arts Commons and the Avenue
5. Open up the Glenbow onto the Avenue
6. Consider transforming Centre St into a flexible street for temporary closures for events with the Calgary Tower as backdrop
7. Activate the parking lot adjacent to the Palomino with an interim use, e.g. arts & culture focused pilot



Legend

- Project street
- Link through building
- Neighbourhood pedestrian micro-network
- Existing greenspace
- Existing plaza
- Proposed street plaza
- Existing open space to consider for improvements
- Development zone, in progress or recently completed
- Development zone, proposed
- Opportunity area, on Avenue
- Opportunity area, off Avenue
- LRT, LRT Station
- Rail
- Open space
- +15 Network

The Commons 1

Best Practices

Global and local precedents



Kungsträdgården, Stockholm →
Popular central square with open-air concerts and events throughout the seasons, lined with outdoor cafés, restaurants and art galleries



← Dillworth Plaza, Philadelphia
Waterplay fountain and movable seating next to metro station allow for flexible use for larger events, while activating the every day



← Vitrines Habitées, Montreal
Micro-commercial space adjacent to public space

↓ Church Street, Burlington, Vermont
Large public events, recreation





↑ UBC Robson Square, Vancouver
Lively public space adjacent to The University of British Columbia and the Vancouver Art Gallery with events and winter skating

Brighton New Road, UK →
High quality streetscape design and public seating with active edges



The Grand Theatre, Calgary →
An active hub in downtown Calgary for the creative community through events, gatherings and performances.



↓ Lawn on D, Boston
Playful furniture for all ages, night time activation



Bryant Park, NY →
Public, flexible seating with shade provided by mature trees



The Core 2

Aspirational Profile

The Core is the link between the Avenue east and the Avenue west. Here, thriving businesses bustling with office workers meet high quality small-scale and large-scale retail. The street is a public space for every day use and events. It's a platform for people-watching and socializing and provides the best of both worlds. This is where the +15 network and the Avenue are improved through coordinated efforts to blend them together in a mutually beneficial relationship.



Who is here:

- Everyday Office Workers
- Creative Entrepreneurs
- Tourists
- Everyday Downtown Residents
- University Students
- Local Residents
- Shoppers

The draw:

- The commercial heart of downtown with food & beverage offerings, small- and large-scale retail, and permeable ground floors that create a dense urban marketplace.
- A social staircase, flexible seating and serving zones allow people to use the space in unique ways.
- Strong links to and from the +15 network and a clear wayfinding system.
- Abundant and easy to navigate transportation options and a dynamic curb side management program.

Measures of success:

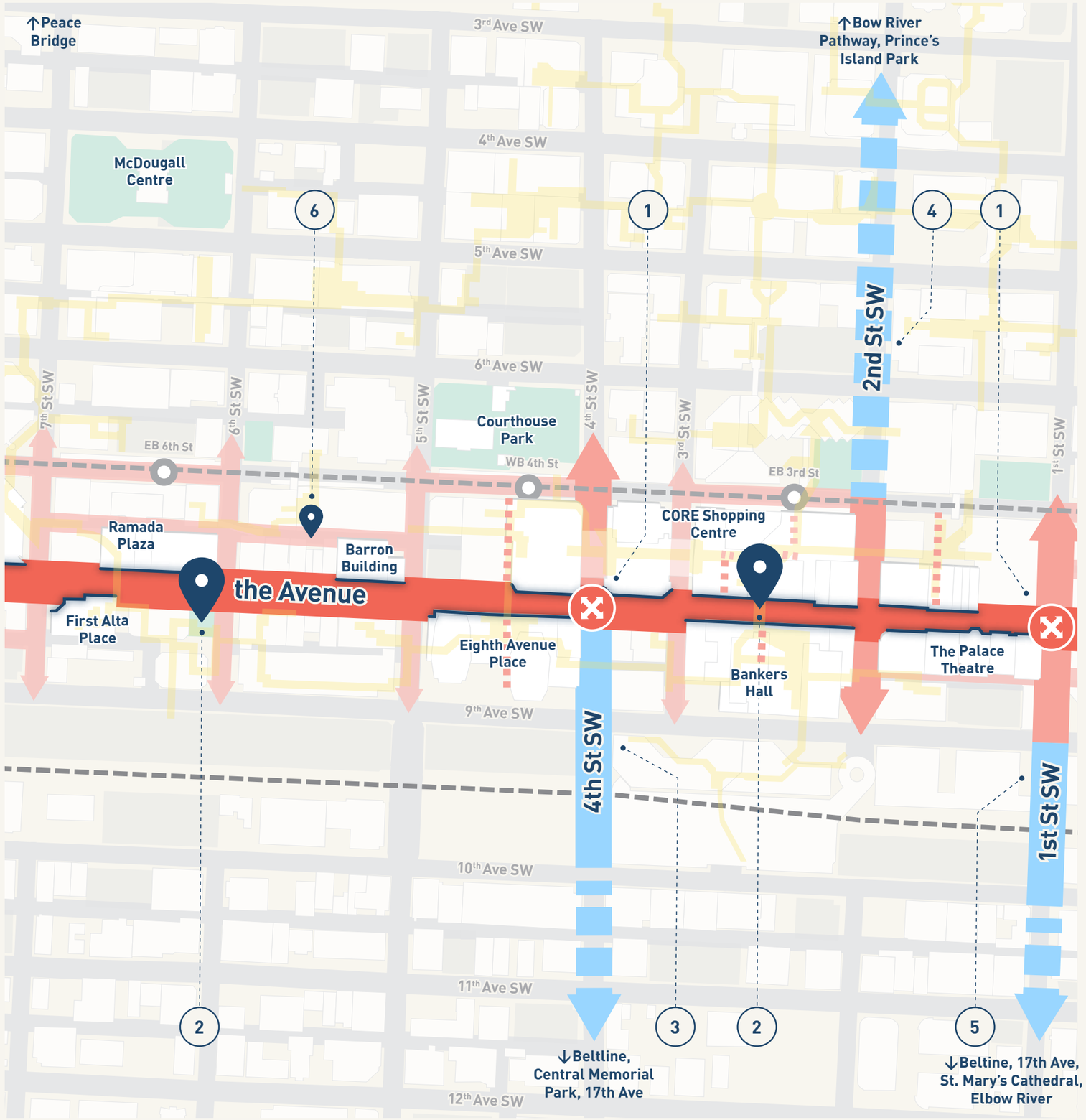
- New unique hybrid uses (retail, civic, art) begin to populate the vacant storefronts improving the economic condition
- Existing commercial developments reimagine their ground floor space opening their doors and integrating with the streetscape
- Festivals and events are now the norm within these blocks
- The +15 network is no longer a barrier but a complimentary network with direct links to The Avenue
- Development on adjacent streets is informed by the The Core
- Traffic and parking are removed from the street and adjacent traffic is calmed as a result of the activity, safety and accessibility are improved

The Core 2

Links + Connections

Transform the Avenue into a high quality complete street with a continuous street treatment. Focus on active mobility and consider how to include service vehicle access

1. Improve key Avenue intersections to better connect to surrounding neighbourhoods and destinations
2. Strengthen connections from the Avenue to the +15 Network and consider programs & events that better link them
3. Transform 4th St SW into a complete street from the Avenue to 17th Ave SW, and shift from a one-way to two-way street
4. Transform 2nd St SW into 2 ways along its length and transform into a premier pedestrian experience alongside Green Line inprovements
5. Transform 1st St SW into a premier pedestrian experience along its length
6. Consider use of laneways adjacent to the Avenue to strengthen the neighbourhood micro-network for people walking and biking



Legend

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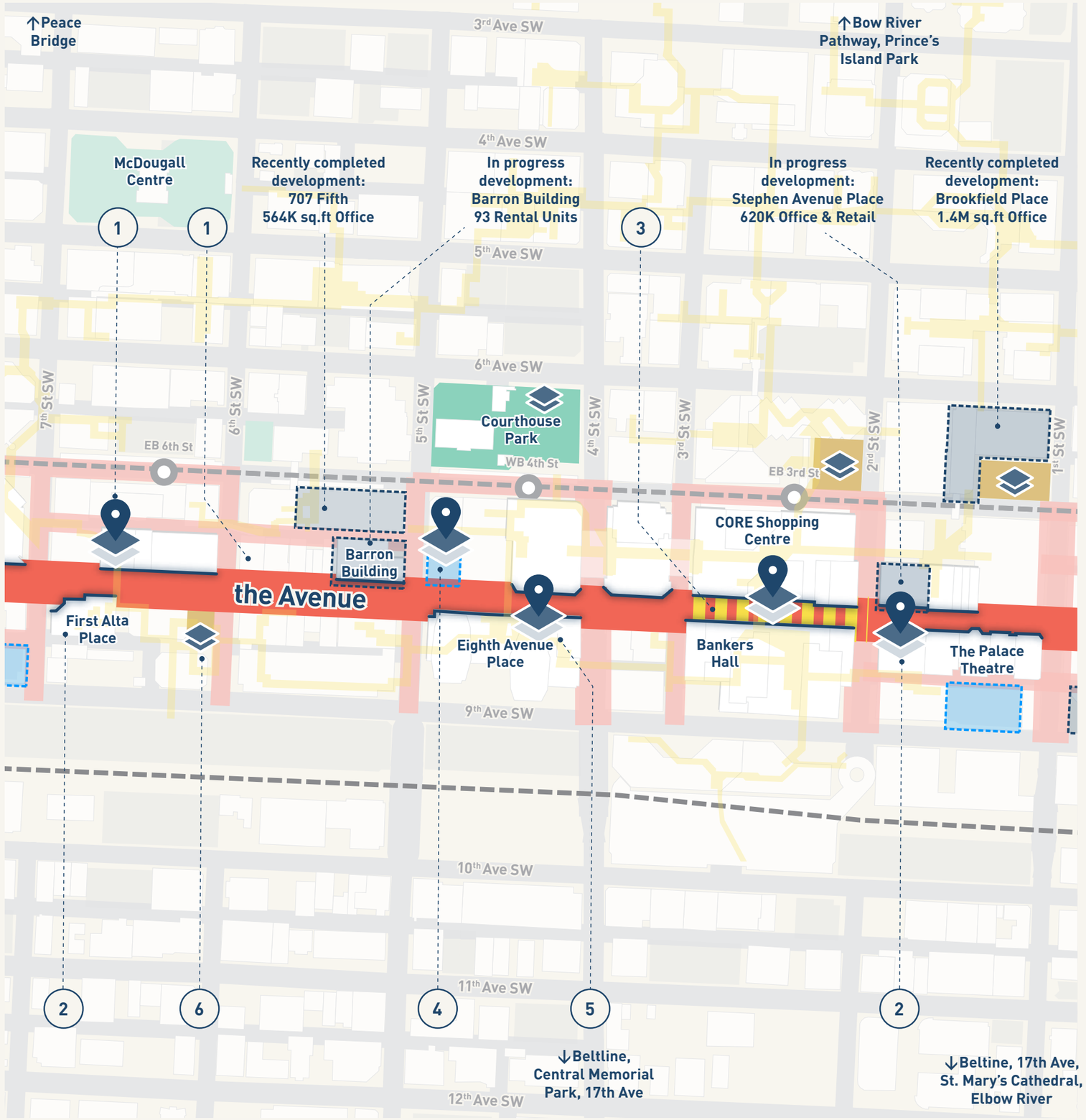
- Link through building
- Proposed priority connection
- Neighbourhood pedestrian micro-network
- Prioritized intersection
- Opportunity area, on Avenue
- Opportunity area, off Avenue
- LRT, LRT Station
- Rail, station
- Open space
- +15 Network

The Core 2

Spaces + Places

Develop ground floor guidelines that protect and enhance the human-scaled built environment and rhythm of varied facades along the Avenue

1. Activate the ground floor of parkades with small-scale, local retail and commerce, e.g. creative tenanting
2. Activate underutilized and vacant storefronts with interim uses, e.g. artist in residency programs
3. Consider alternative treatment to address narrow RoW and wind trees sculptures
4. Incentivize hybrid residential developments and consider interim uses to pilot space activation, e.g. co-living long-term with community/ food focused pilot short-term
5. Open up Eighth Avenue Place and other buildigs like it to the Avenue by creating an activated ground floor with an operable facade
6. Improve ground level to +15 connections at Western Canada Place and other buildings like it through activations of privately owned public space.



Legend

- Project street
- Link through building
- Neighbourhood pedestrian micro-network
- Existing greenspace
- Existing plaza
- Narrow RoW
- Existing open space to consider for improvements
- Development zone, in progress or recently completed
- Development zone, proposed
- Opportunity area, on Avenue
- Opportunity area, off Avenue
- LRT, LRT Station
- Rail, station
- Open space
- +15 Network

The Core 2

Best Practices

Global and local precedents



Moment, San Jose →
Parkade converted into creative micro-retail units



←Pitt Street Mall, Sydney
Street plaza



←A Tilt of Light, Melbourne
Playful public furniture, night light activation





↑ Social Stairs, Highline NYC
Activation of blank wall with social seating



Clyde & Co, POP, San Francisco →
Privately Owned Public Space with a generous entrance and transparent ground floor



↑ Food Pods, Portland
An 'edge' of food pods line a large surface parking lot downtown in Portland and contribute to neighborhood livability



↑ The Hall at 400 Fairview, Seattle
Office building with operable and public ground floor featuring local retailers and gathering spaces

The Village 3

Aspirational Profile

The Village is an emerging complete neighbourhood with human-scaled, mixed-use developments. The Village reimagines the community of Downtown West as a more sought after neighbourhood for everyone, from creative youths to empty-nesters, with amenities and a well-connected public space network, providing a platform for everyday life to unfold. The Avenue connects it all and invites every mobility mode to move safely and comfortably throughout the neighbourhood.



Who is here:

- Creative Entrepreneurs
- The Arts Community
- Everyday Residents
- University Students
- Adventurous Tourists
- Empty-nesters
- New Calgarians
- Traditionally Underserved Populations
- Cultural Consumers and Producers

The draw:

- An urban village, predominantly residential and intentionally human scaled.
- Small-scale retail, a mix of new urban housing forms, creative office space, direct links to city green space and the river, direct links to the c-train, flexible programmable event spaces, exhibition spaces, and night and weekend markets.
- A multi-modal and green street with priority given to pedestrians and bikes.

Measures of success:

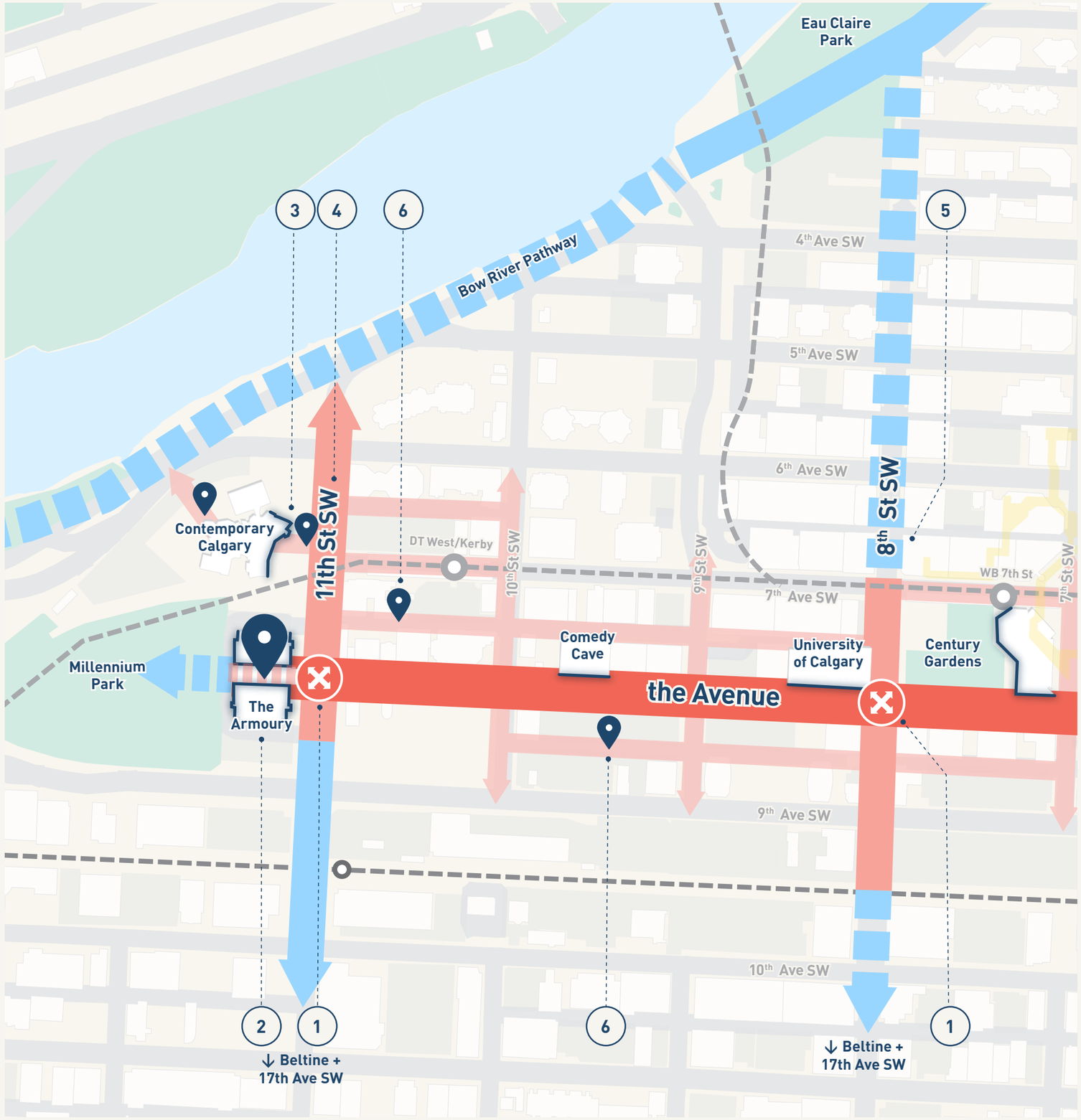
- New local businesses populate the vacant storefronts
- New mixed-income residential developments bring a greater diversity of people downtown
- The village becomes a complete neighbourhood with an increased number of everyday amenities
- Pedestrians, cyclists and micro-mobility dominate the modal splits
- Innovative arts organizations, instutitions, cultural facilities, and artist space are co-located near Contemporary Calgary
- Live-work units facilitate a creative neighbourhood, visible in the public realm

The Village 3

Links + Connections

Transform the Avenue into a high quality complete street with a continuous street treatment. Focus on active mobility and integrate vehicular access

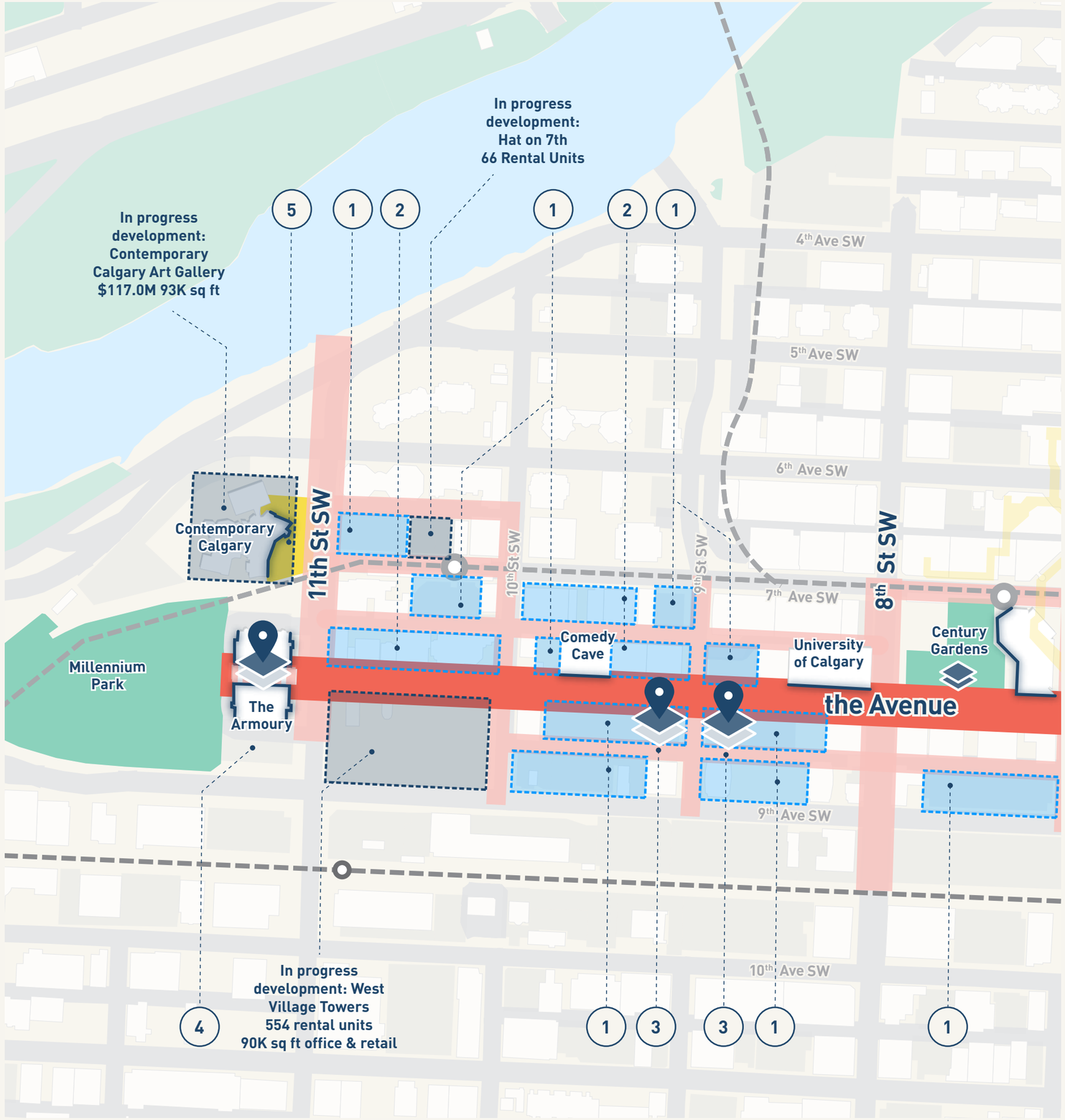
1. Improve key Avenue intersections to better connect to surrounding neighbourhoods and destinations
2. Ensure continuous public access through the Armoury to connect the Avenue to Millennium Park
3. Strengthen the pedestrian connection from the Avenue to Contemporary Calgary
4. Transform 11th St SW into a complete street by strengthening the existing bike connections and prioritizing pedestrians
5. Transform 8th St SW into a complete street from the riverfront to 17th Ave SW
6. Consider activating laneways adjacent to the Avenue to strengthen the neighbourhood micro-network



The Village 3

Spaces + Places

1. Incentivize and support mixed-income, mid-rise residential developments in vacant and underutilized parcels
2. Create incentives for conversion of class B office to residential
3. Consider an interim use to activate the underutilized and vacant parcel, e.g. farmer's market, food vendors, community gardens, outdoor gym
4. Consider a future conversion of The Armoury into a public access facility for art, markets or other uses that can strengthen the neighbourhood profile
5. Integrate Contemporary Calgary's plans for an arrival plaza with the 11th Street interface



Legend

- Project street
- Link through building
- Neighbourhood pedestrian micro-network
- Existing greenspace
- Existing plaza
- Proposed plaza
- Existing open space to consider for improvements
- Development zone, in progress or recently completed
- Development zone, proposed
- Opportunity area, on Avenue
- Opportunity area, off Avenue
- LRT, LRT Station
- Rail, station
- Open space
- +15 Network

The Village 3

Best Practices

Global and local precedents



Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle →
The Olympic Sculpture Park, created and operated by the Seattle Art Museum, is a park, free and open to the public, in Seattle, Washington that opened on January 20, 2007. The park consists of a 9-acre outdoor sculpture museum and beach.



← Belmar Apartments, Santa Monica
Affordable housing development aimed at a supporting community of artists and makers, below market rate units, live/ work studios and lofts



← Jepson Young Laneway, Vancouver
Lush, leafy residential laneway



← Bo01, Malmö, Sweden
Neighbourhood streetscape



← Bridgeland Market, Calgary
Neighbourhood amenities

↓ ContainR, Calgary
Art Park and mural installations made of retrofit shipping containers



Park Avenue Armory, New York →
The massive drill hall of the Park Avenue Armory in Manhattan was converted into a flexible cultural and exhibition space.



← Proxy, San Francisco
A temporary two-block project which seeks to mobilize a flexible environment of food, art, culture, and retail within renovated shipping containers.





This chapter explores ways to better utilize the existing space within the right-of-way. It looks at reorganizing and potentially extending the pedestrian mall, as well as how to reorganize the multi-modal section of 8th Avenue. The link between the 2 overall street section typologies may be subject to an alternative treatment, however, the overall goal is to enhance the street character from City Hall to The Armoury, and strengthen connectivity and sense of place. The future Avenue may consist of various street treatments, but will function as one connected Downtown main street.

7

Structuring the Avenue

The Benefits of Restructuring the Avenue

The following pages explore various streetscape alternatives for the future of the Avenue. The section alternatives illustrate options for the two street types of the Avenue outlined on the following page. While each section alternative presents different opportunities, every alternative aims to improve mobility, economic vitality and increase public life.

By restructuring the Avenue the options outlined in this chapter aim to:

- Create a clear division between **a space for staying** and **a space for moving**. This is achieved by optimizing the street design and striking the right spatial balance between movement and place.
- Maximize the opportunity to improve the Avenue as a 21st century street as it nears the end of its usable life.
- Improve mobility and accessibility for all user groups and modes by providing a street layout with a clear distinction between furnishing zone(s) and space for moving. Alternation in the street section should be limited to be block by block, or less.
- Create more flexibility within the right-of-way and provide high-quality invitations for spending time at both commercial establishments and in non-commercial public program zones, for all user groups, during all seasons, for everyday and for events.

SUMMARY

The Future of Vehicle Accommodation on the Avenue

The first iteration of the mall was designed and built to be a pedestrian space and has since evolved to todays iteration with vehicular traffic being permitted on the mall in the evenings (6pm - 6am) and more recently during the COVID-19 pandemic in the mornings (6am - 11am).

During the detailed stakeholder engagement summarized in chapter 3 - Key Findings we heard many polarizing comments regarding vehicle accommodation on the Avenue. From those who believe vehicle accommodation is *'critical to the success of the Avenue'*, to those who want the space to be fully pedestrianized. There is no easy answer to the future of the car in our cities and as a result each option outlined in this chapter allows for a high level of flexibility.

In restructuring the Avenue the designs put forward aim to improve mobility, economic vitality and increase public life. The options have been designed with a high level of flexibility and in all cases protect space for vehicle movement. During the next phase of the project it will be the job of the City of Calgary and its citizens to help to inform the design team of the appropriate level vehicular accommodation for the Avenue.

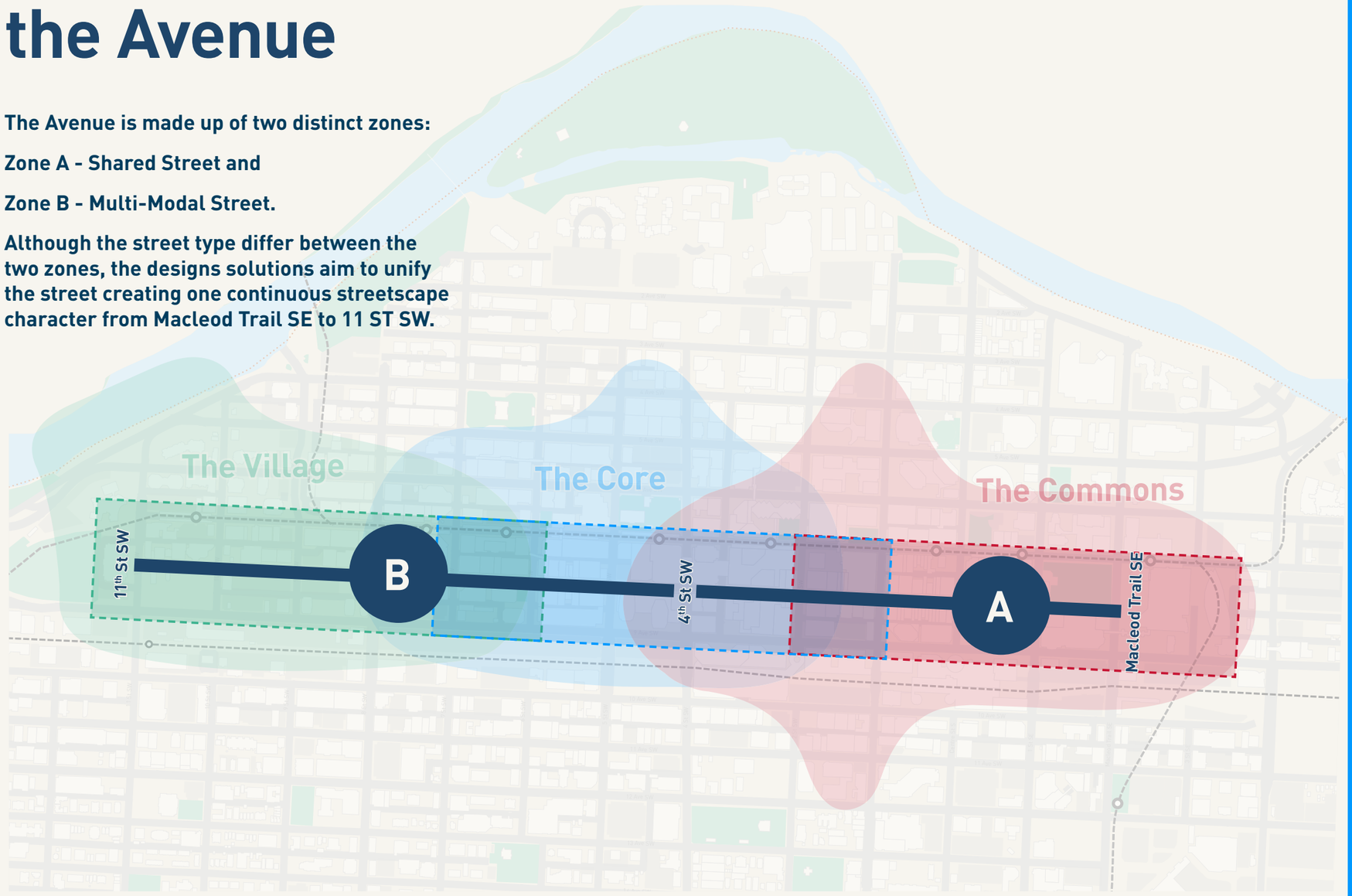
Structuring the Avenue

The Avenue is made up of two distinct zones:

Zone A - Shared Street and

Zone B - Multi-Modal Street.

Although the street type differ between the two zones, the designs solutions aim to unify the street creating one continuous streetscape character from Macleod Trail SE to 11 ST SW.



SUMMARY

Streetscape Classifications Types:

A Shared Street

The pedestrian mall section of the Avenue, in its current iteration, lacks clarity. It is challenging for all user groups to move along the Avenue. Pedestrians, cyclists, and at certain hours, vehicles, all vie for the same space within the right-of-way. This is further complicated on busy days and during events and festivals when the street is crowded. There is a need to clearly delineate a furnishing zone in order to avoid obstacles in the space of movement, which further complicates navigating the street and challenges the potential of the street to become a place for people of all ages and abilities to spend time.

B Multi-Modal Street

The multi-modal section of 8th Avenue SW has a different set of challenges from the pedestrian mall but the same challenge of inconsistency holds true. The quality of the pedestrian through zone and bicycle network lacks consistency and often feels unsafe. This section of the street also lacks moments of interest to capture your attention as a pedestrian and makes traveling more than a couple blocks highly unlikely. In order to draw more individuals to these blocks the designs aim to improve mobility, clearly defining spaces for all user groups, increase safety and add elements of interest to the street to draw people along the corridor.

Key Terminology

Pedestrian Through Zone / Sidewalk: The primary, accessible pathway that runs the length of the Avenue. The through zone ensures that pedestrians have a safe and adequate place to walk the length of the Avenue (2m minimum width). This zone is unobstructed by any furnishing and it can be thought of as flexible, for example allowing access for, deliveries, services and people on bikes outside of business hours.



Fixed Furniture Zone: The area of the Avenue that includes fixed streetscape elements, such as lighting, public seating, art, landscaping, bicycle parking, playful streetscape elements etc.



Flexible Furniture Zone: The area of the Avenue designed with flexibility in mind. Elements could be fixed or movable and may include seasonal commercial patios, public seating, play areas, pop-up event space, market tents and/or art installations.

Shared Space: Prioritizes public space while providing safe multi-modal access at very low speeds, with priority for people walking. Vehicle access would be discouraged and/or limited to certain times of the day/year.

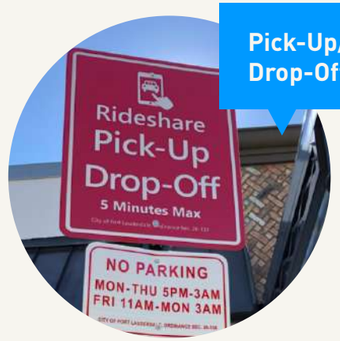


**Note: Key terminology outlined above is consistent for both the Shared Street section and the Multi-Modal section of the chapter 7.*

Commercial Zone: An extension of the building - it includes entryways, sidewalk cafes and sandwich boards. The commercial zone consists of both the structure and the facade of the building fronting the street, as well as the space immediately adjacent to the building. The commercial zone is entirely on private property on the Avenue.



Optional Parking / Pick-Up - Drop-Off: Flexible space within the furniture zone which could be used for parking, pick-up and drop-off, parklet and patios. The locations are evaluated based on the adjacent building uses and are a flexible space that can be adapted over time.



Flexible Use Zones: Areas within the pedestrian mall cross section where usage has the availability to change based on time of day and/or seasonality. Examples of Flexible Use Zones are:

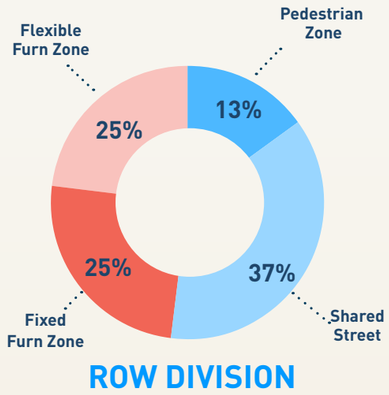
- Vehicle accommodation within the shared space during evenings and/or winter months
- Cycling permitted in the pedestrian through zone outside business hours
- Pick-up/drop-off + loading/unloading within the shared space during designated hours



A

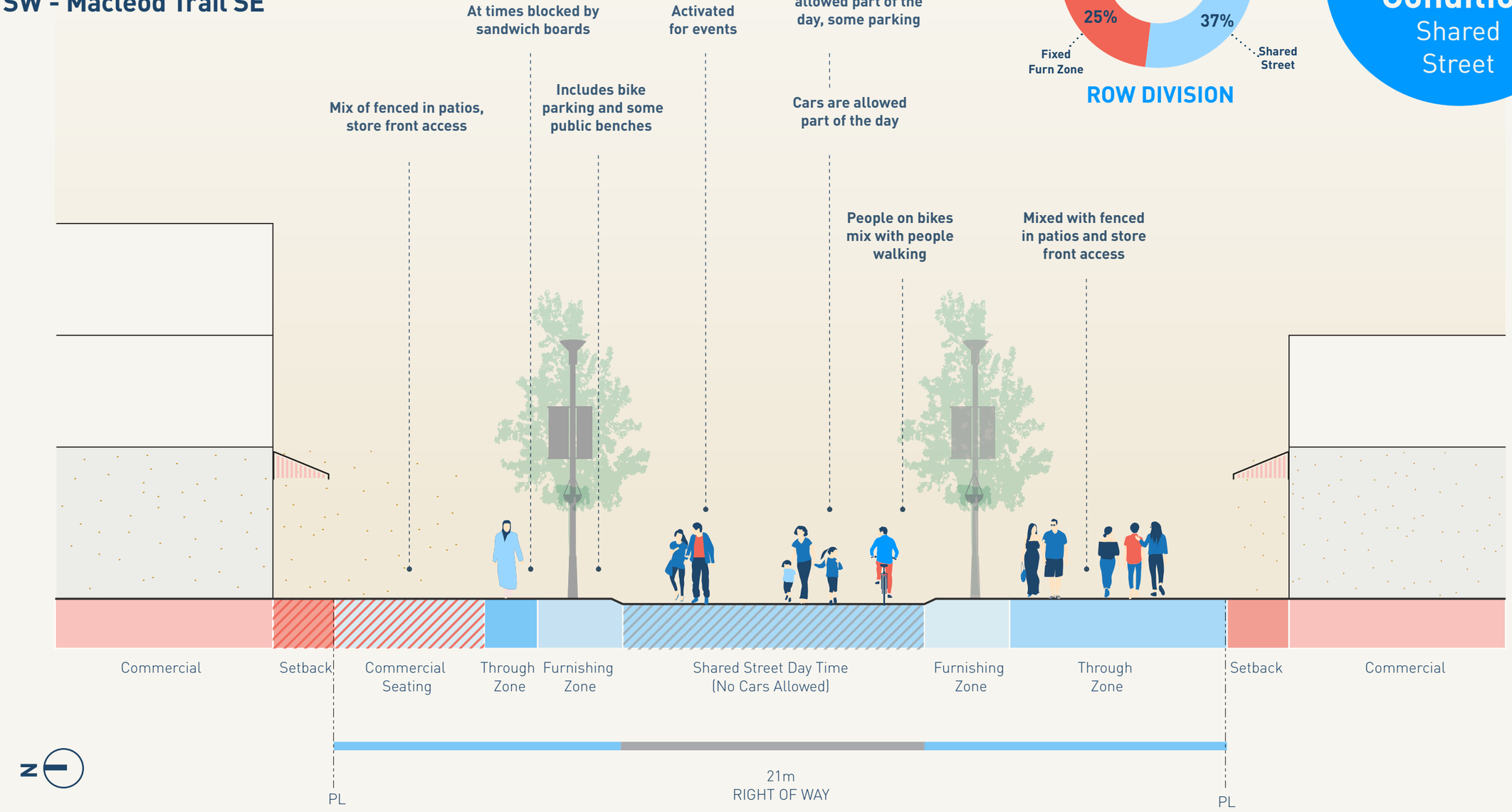
Shared Street

2nd St SW - Macleod Trail SE



ROW DIVISION

Typical Existing Condition
Shared Street



A

Shared Street

2nd St SW - Macleod Trail SE

The current iteration of the shared street section of the Avenue has been designed to accommodate vehicles on off-peak hours (6 pm - 6 am) and includes curbs and a drive lane. Its look and feel is that of a street and as a result creates confusion to the various user groups as to the modal priority and who belongs where and when.

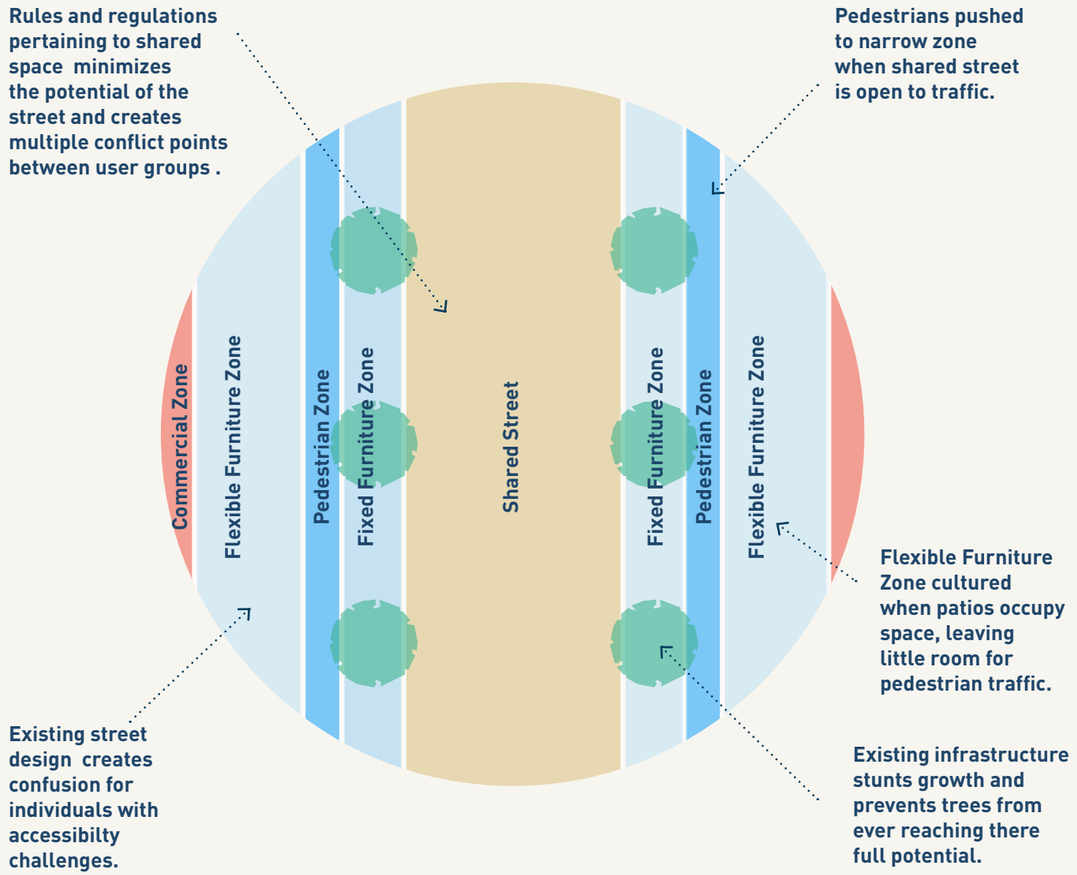




Typical Existing Condition
Shared Street

Problems:

1. Intersections put the automobile and c-train at a priority over the pedestrian.
2. The streetscape is cluttered and full of obstacles.
3. Infrastructure is cracked and failing, tree growth stunted and pedestrian zone is cluttered.
4. Inconsistent surface treatments and damaged infrastructure cause safety hazards.
5. Pedestrians and cyclists are at conflict in multiple locations due to space constraints and confusing rules and regulations.
6. Few opportunities to sit and spend time where you don't have to pay to stay.
7. Outdated design standards create problems for operations and maintenance.
8. The spatial design limits flexible during events and seasonal changes in programming.



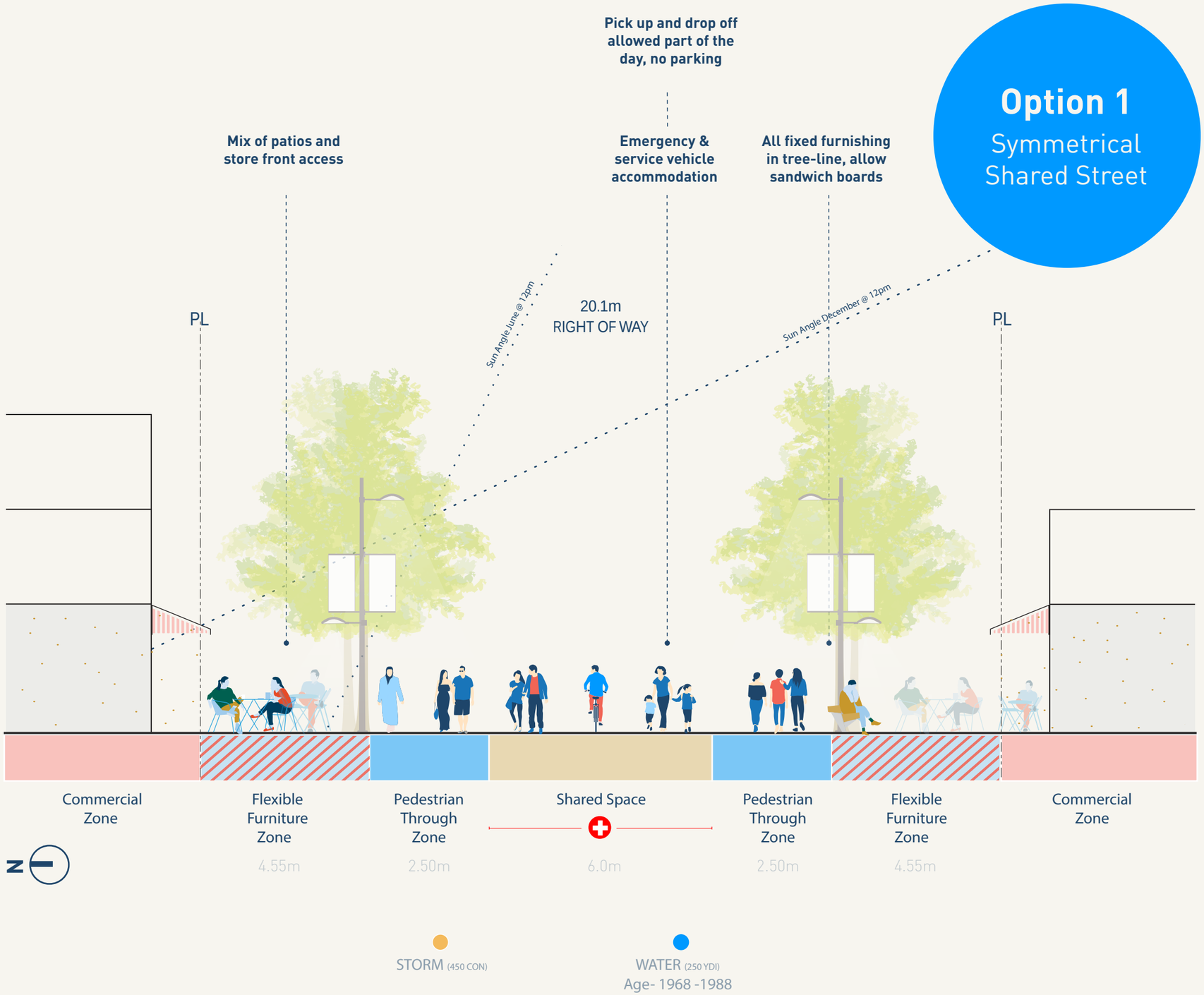
A

Shared Street

4th St SW - Macleod Trail SE

55% Movement vs. 45% Place

- Flexible furniture zone and patio space located adjacent to the commercial zone
- Centralized shared space designed with high level of flexibility and improved connectivity
- Fixed furniture including proposed street trees do not conflict with existing utilities
- 2.5m pedestrian through zones designed to create a continuous space for easy navigation for all ages and abilities
- 6.0m emergency access is located in the centre of the street
- Shared Space has the ability for vehicle accommodation in some manner
- Design is configured most similarly to the existing spatial conditions

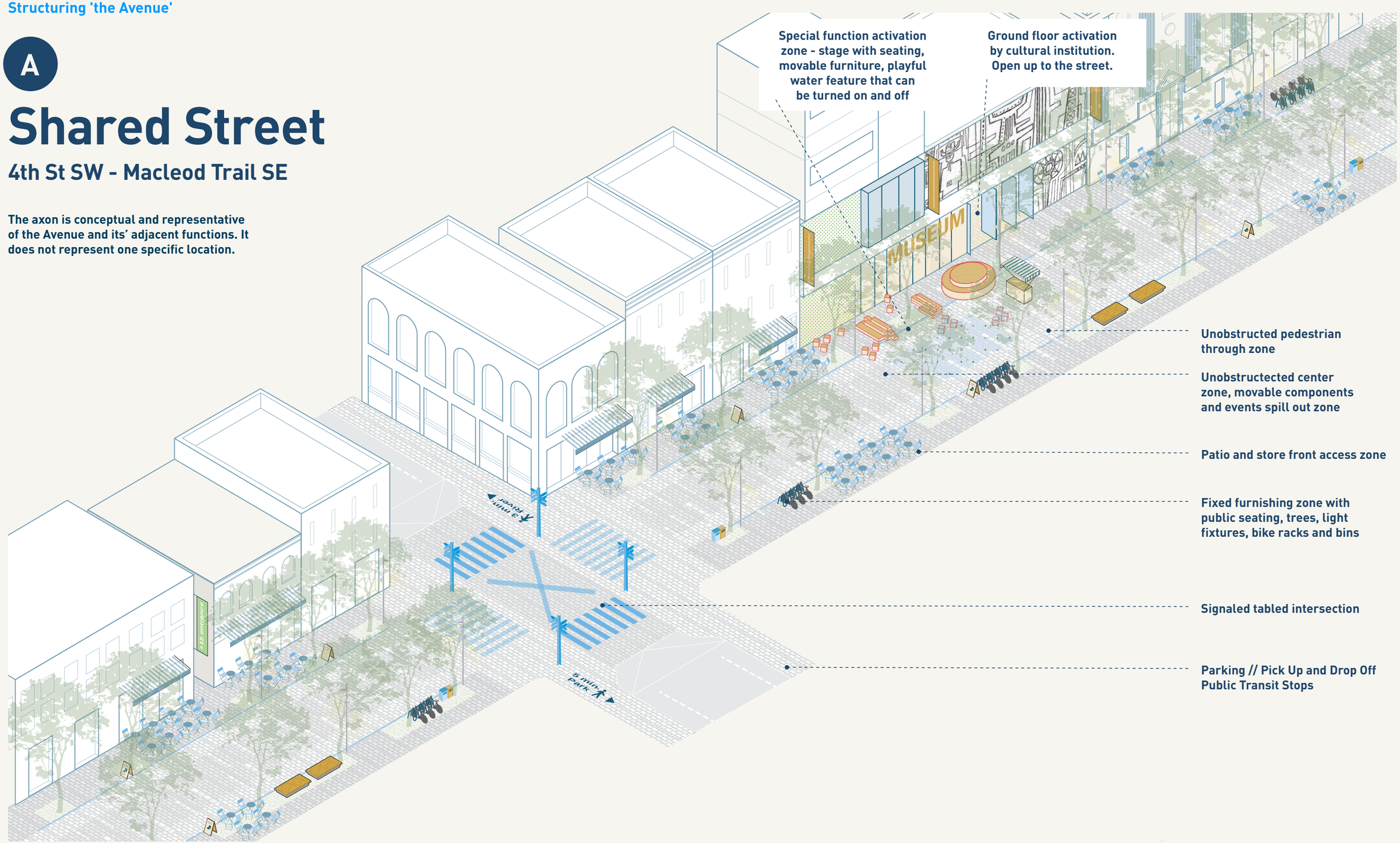


A

Shared Street

4th St SW - Macleod Trail SE

The axon is conceptual and representative of the Avenue and its' adjacent functions. It does not represent one specific location.



A

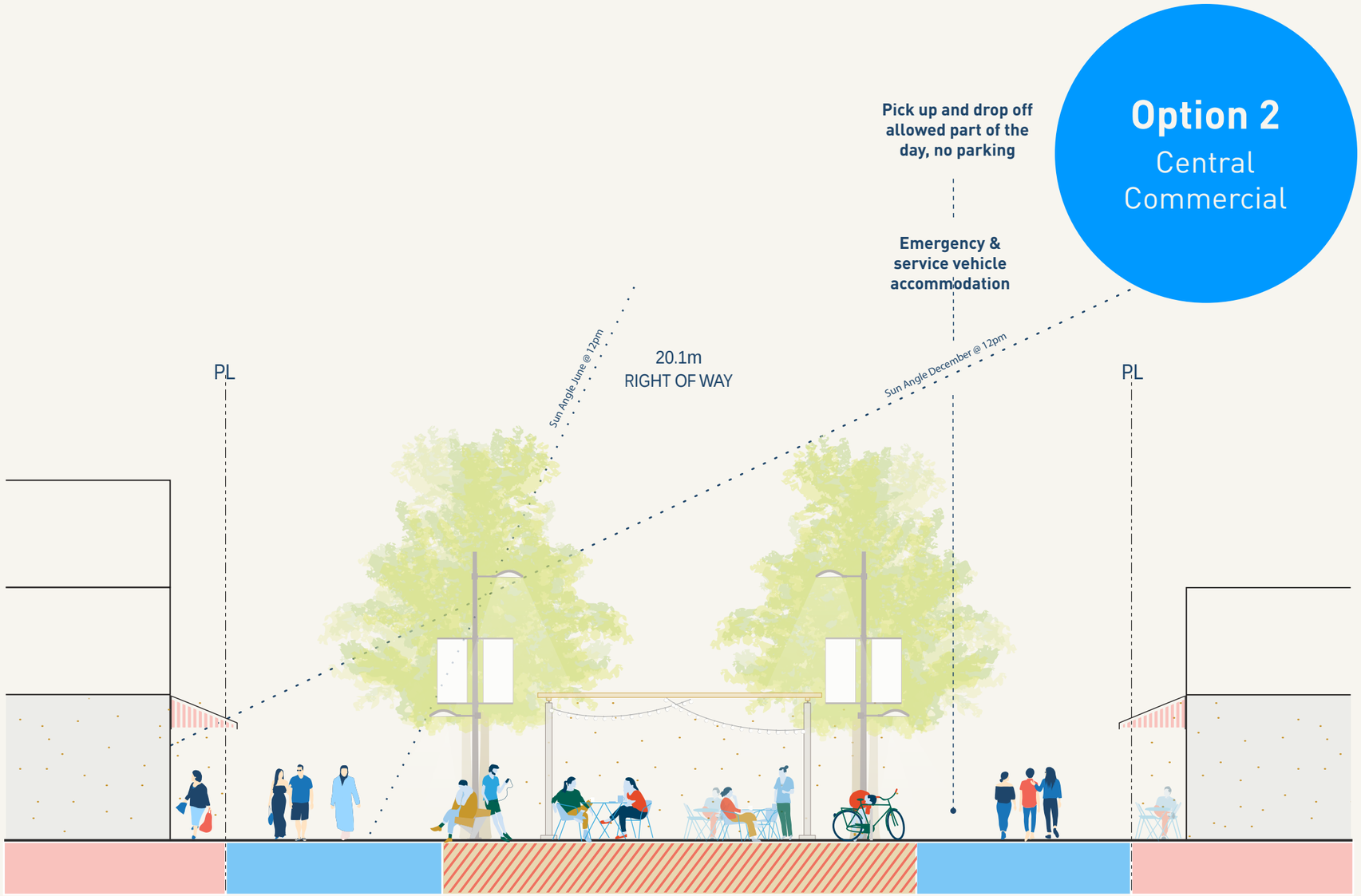
Shared Street

4th St SW - Macleod Trail SE

48% Movement vs. 52% Place

- Centralized flexible furniture zone designed to maximize ability for programming and activation
- Flexible furniture zone has space allocated for commercial patios, flexible seating and playful streetscape elements
- Level of flexibility to be determined during detail design, central zone may be seasonal or more permanent and designed to support winter activation
- Fixed furniture including proposed street trees are in conflict with existing utilities. Some utility relocation may be required
- 6m pedestrian through zones designed to create a continuous space for easy navigation for all ages and abilities. Extra space has been given to the pedestrian due to the high level of programmed space in the centre of the street
- 6.0m emergency access is located on either side of the street
- Vehicle accommodation is not accommodated in this option

Option 2
Central Commercial

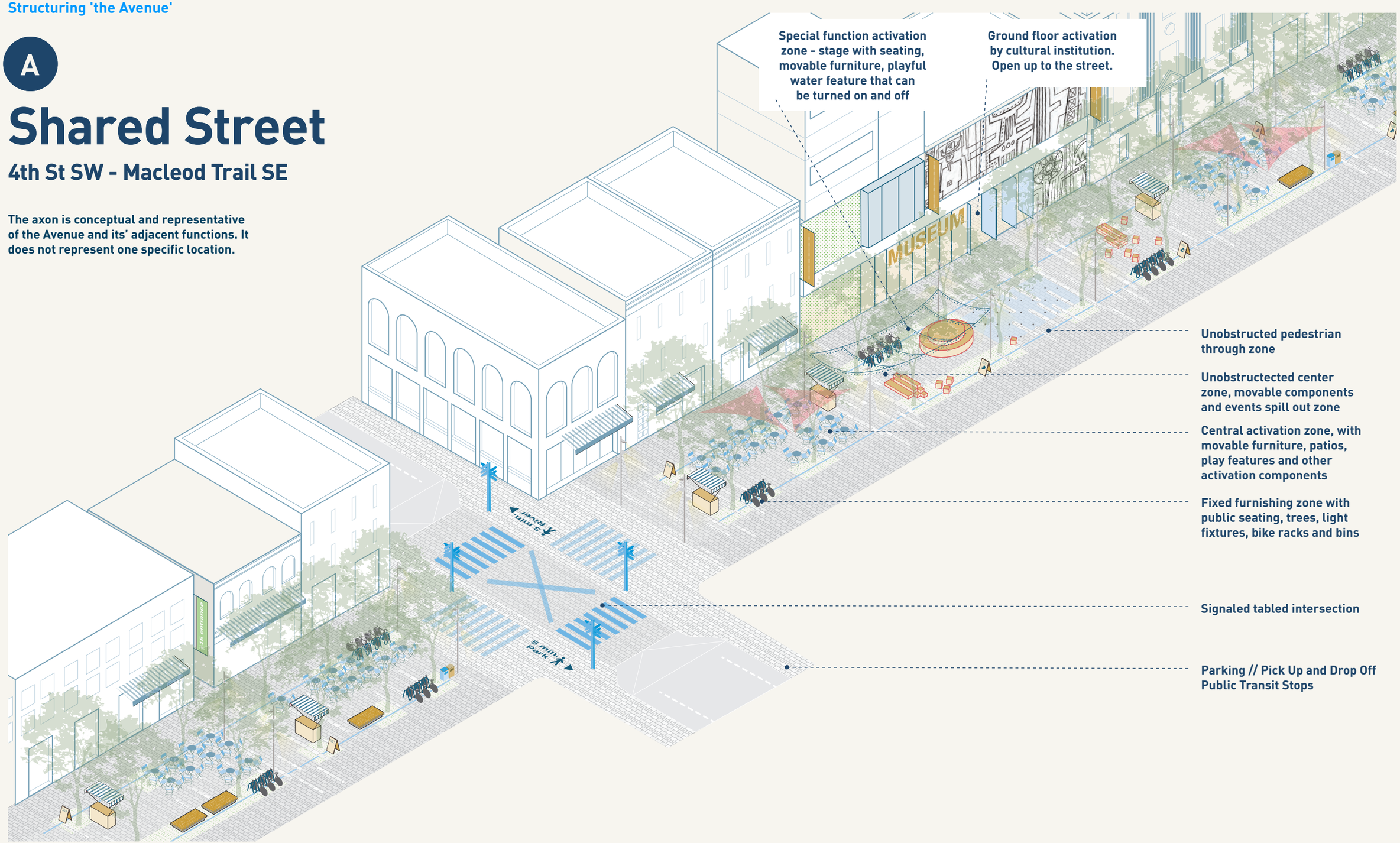


A

Shared Street

4th St SW - Macleod Trail SE

The axon is conceptual and representative of the Avenue and its' adjacent functions. It does not represent one specific location.



A

Shared Street

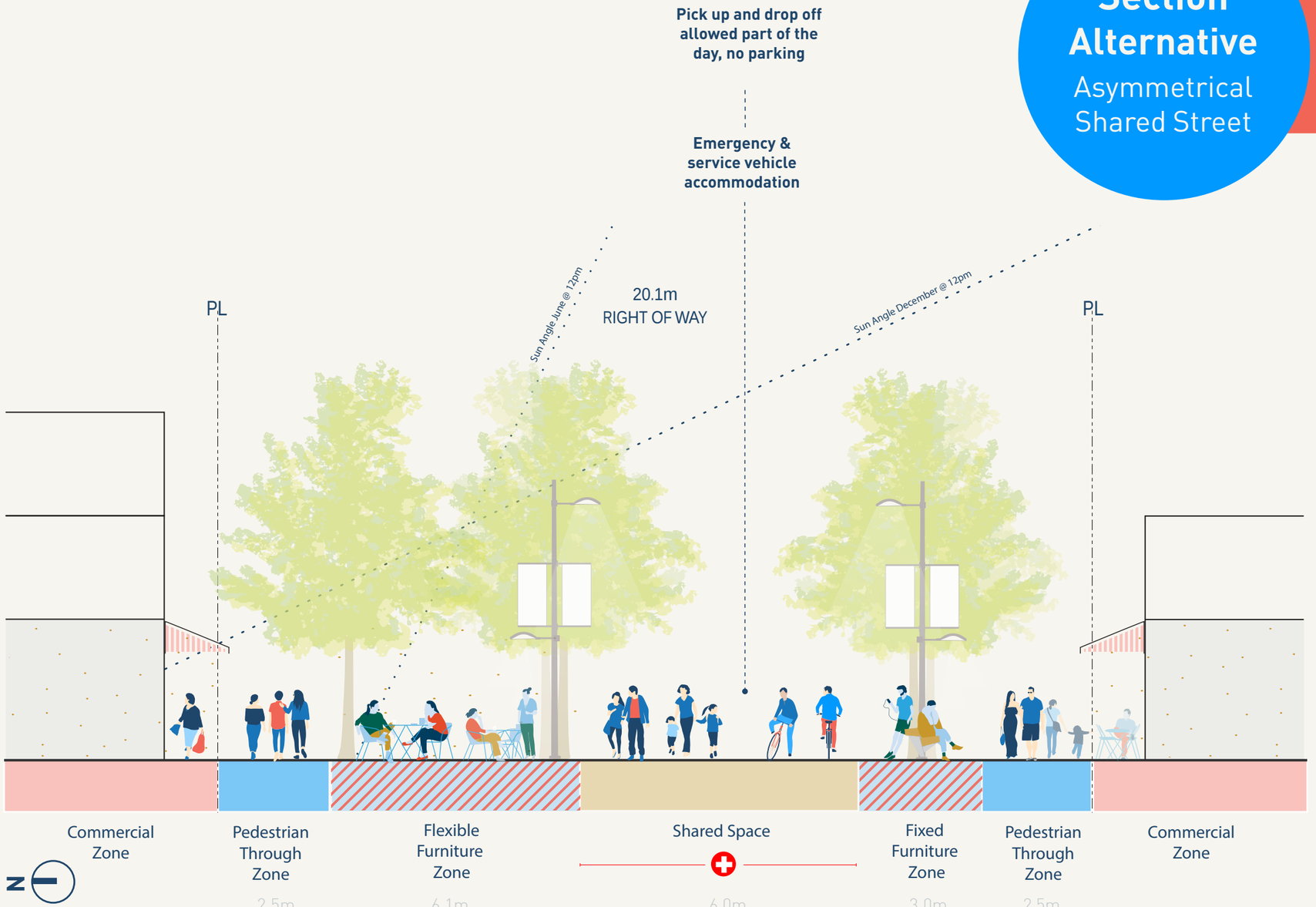
4th St SW - Macleod Trail SE

55% Movement vs. 45% Place

- Flexible furniture zone is focused on the north side of the street to maximize the sun exposure and micro-climate. Designed to maximize ability for programming and activation
- Fixed furniture zone has been designed to accommodate commercial patios, flexible seating and playful streetscape elements
- Asymmetrical street design allows for an additional street tree to be added to the cross section creating a distinct streetscape experience unique in Calgary
- Centralized shared space designed with high level of flexibility
- Fixed furniture including proposed street trees do not conflict with existing utilities
- 2.5m pedestrian through zones designed to create a continuous space for easy navigation for all ages and abilities
- 6.0m emergency access is located in the centre of the street
- Shared Space has the ability for vehicle accommodation in some manner

Not selected for further detailing

Section Alternative
Asymmetrical Shared Street



A

Shared Street Section Alternatives

Three section alternatives have been developed for the shared street section of the Avenue. Each of the alternatives present different ways of configuring the space with the aim of **striking a balance between the Avenue as a connector and the Avenue as a place**. The proposed section alternatives respond to the project goals with a varying degree of emphasis on the following key themes;

Arts, Culture & Commerce
The space is configured to maximize opportunities for adjacent institutions and commercial entities to open up and onto the street with generous furnishing and programming zones.

Network & Connection
The space is configured to establish a clear hierarchy of modes, reduce conflicts and create a dignified and dynamic experience for pedestrians and cyclists.

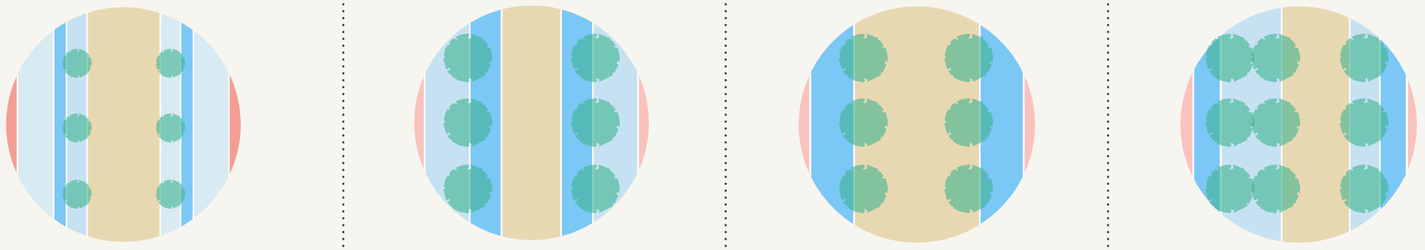
Programs & Activation
The space is configured in a flexible manner that easily allows for small and large-scale events to take place.

Investment*
The space is configured for minimal changes from the existing right-of-way.

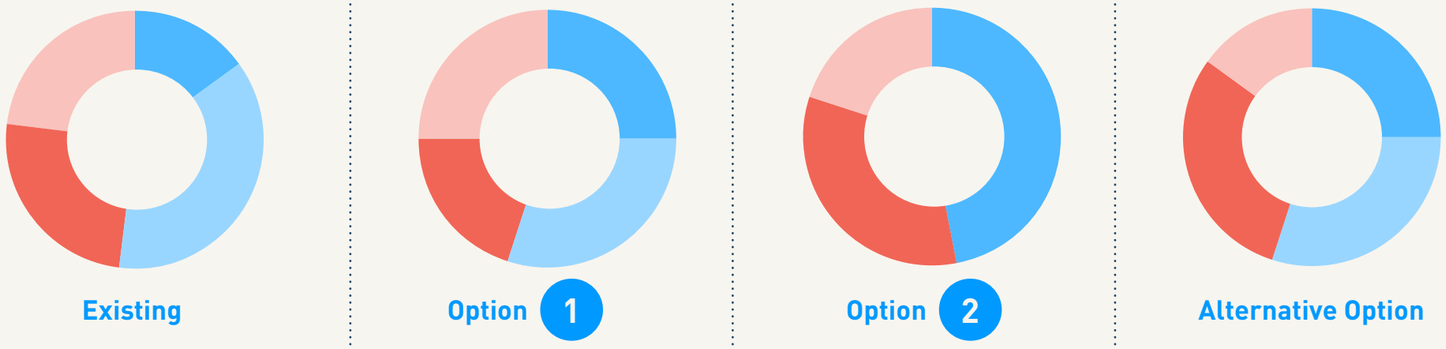
**Not directly outlined in the goals but an important factor to consider in assessing the street section alternatives.*

Space Allocations

Shared Street 4th St SW - Macleod Trail SE



Shared Street Right of Way Division



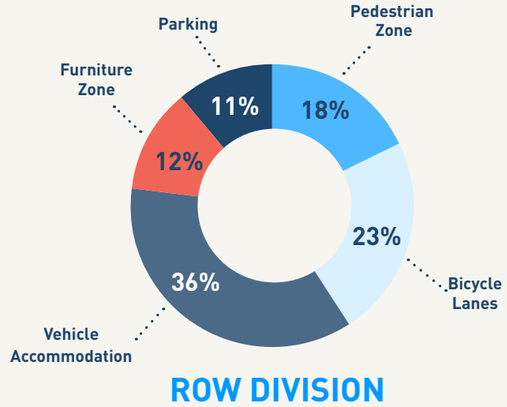
	Existing	Option 1	Option 2	Alternative Option
Pedestrian Through Zone	13%	25%	47%	25%
Shared Street	37%	30%	0%	30%
Fixed Furniture Zone	25%	20%	33%	30%
Flexible Furniture Zone	25%	25%	20%	15%
Vehicle Accommodation	0% | 37%	0% | 30%	0%	0% | 30%
Feasibility ($)		1/3	3/3	2/3

**Existing vehicle accommodation 6pm - 6am westbound only. Proposed section alternatives are design for flexibility and may allow for vehicle access during certain times.*

B

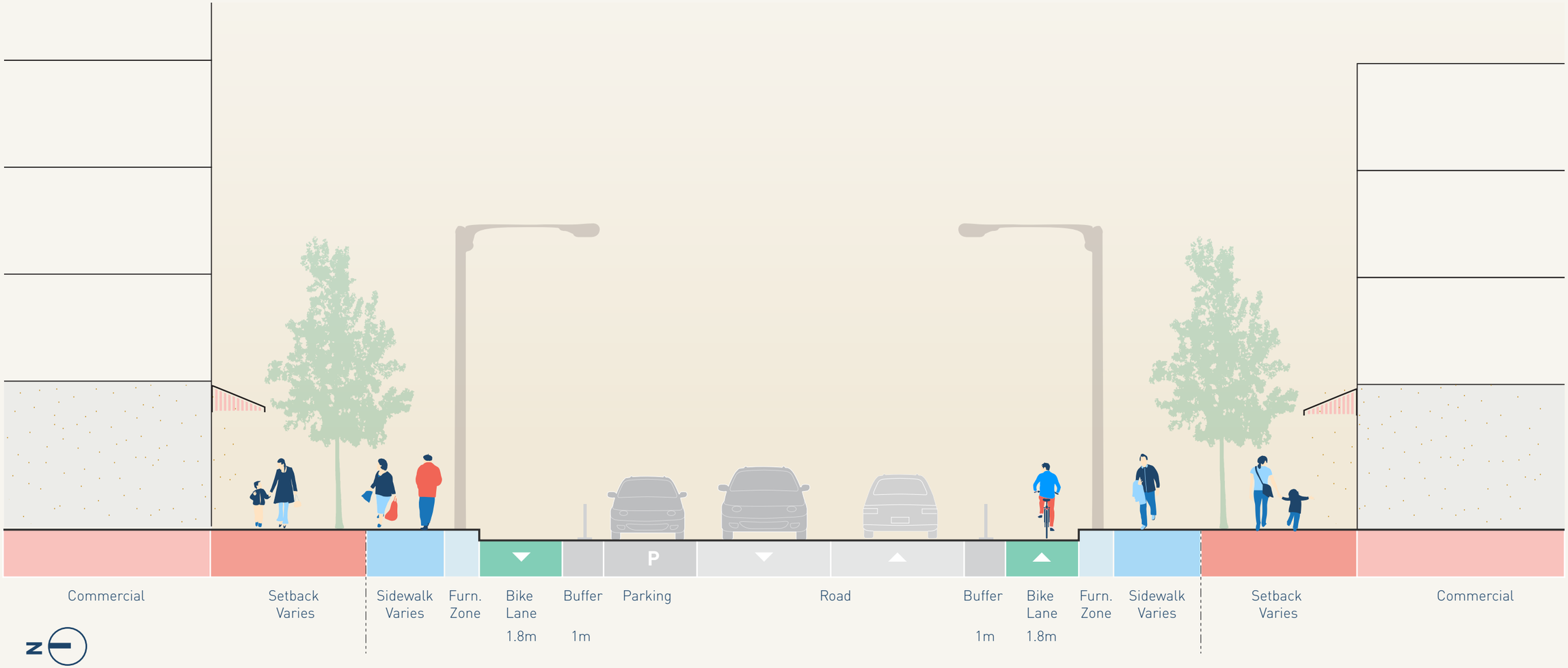
Multi-modal street

11th St SW - 2nd St SW



ROW DIVISION

Typical Existing Condition
Multi-modal street

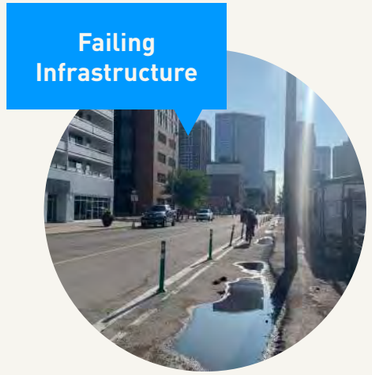


B

Multi-modal street

11th St SW - 2nd St SW

The existing stretch of 8th Ave SW from 11th - 2nd St SW has largerly been a forgotten street in terms of investment to the streetscape and/or public realm. The majority of the street has fallen into disrepair with poor conditions for both walking and cycling and little pedestrian activity.

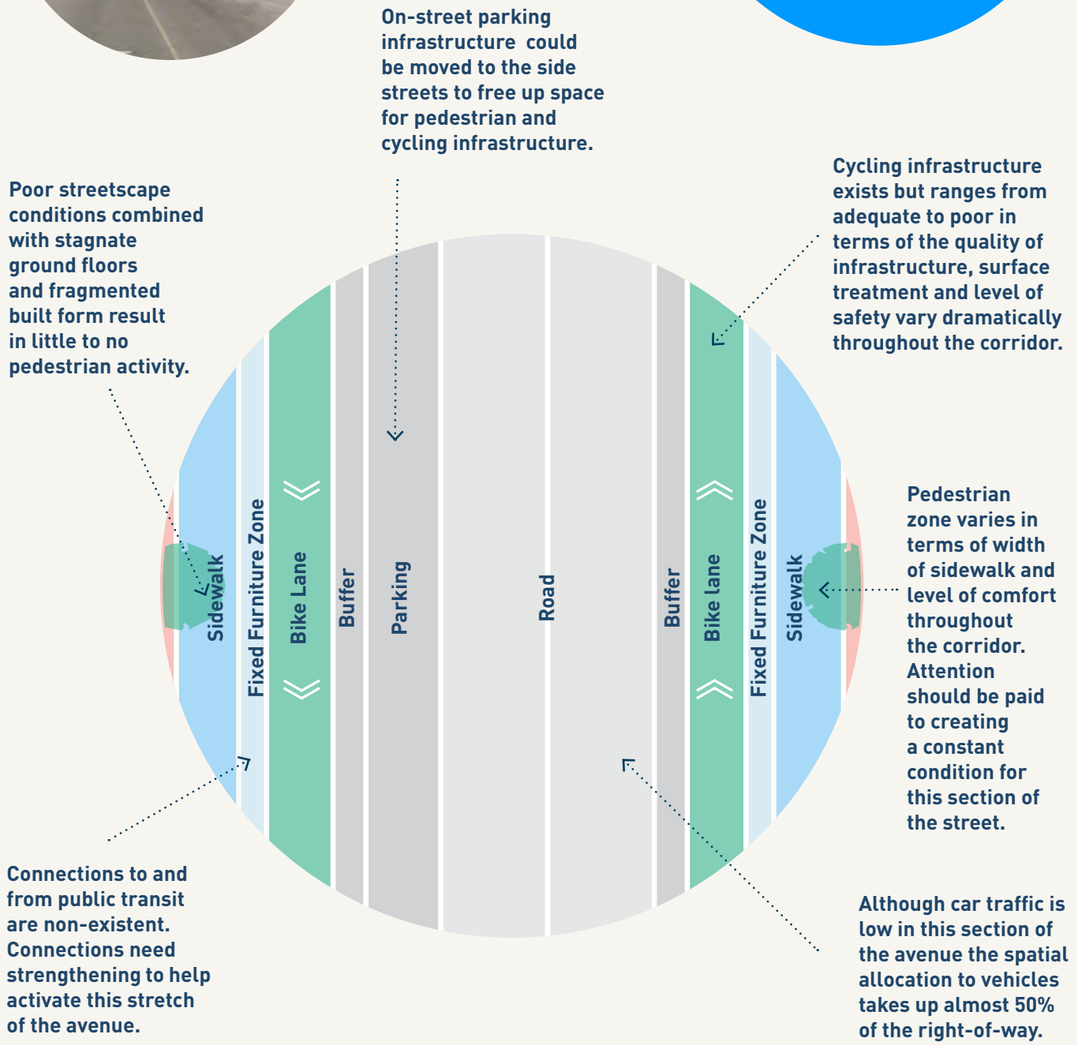




Typical Existing Condition
Multi-Modal Street

Problems:

1. Intersections put the automobile and C-Train at a priority over the pedestrian.
2. Infrastructure is cracked, incomplete, and/or failing.
3. Few opportunities to sit and spend time where you don't have to pay to stay.
4. Outdated design standards create problems for operations and maintenance.
5. Tree growth stunted.
6. Cycling infrastructure is inconsistent and full of obstacles.
7. Condition of streetscape discourages east-west pedestrian movement.
8. Auto-centric design has created limited reinvestment in the area.



B

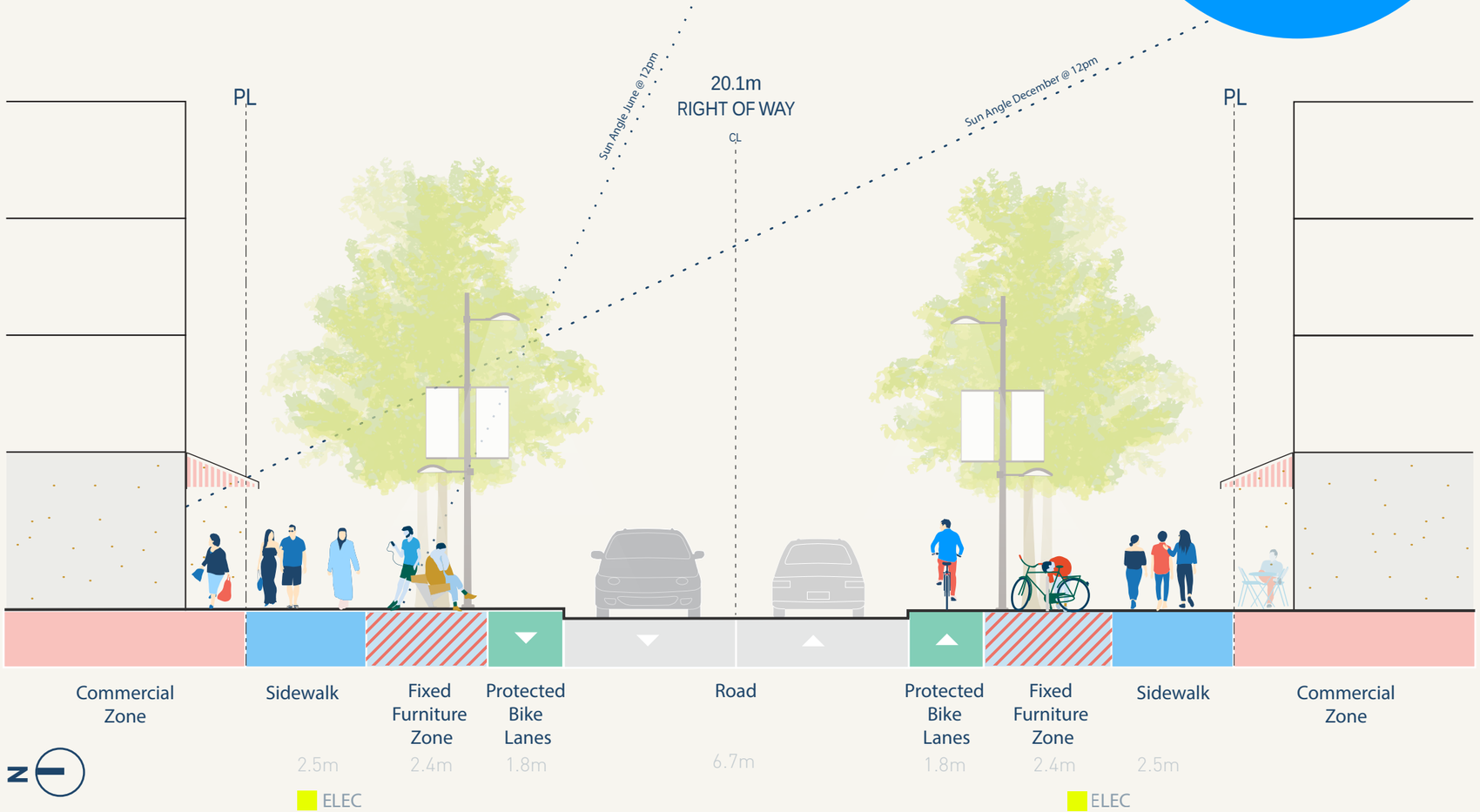
Multi-modal street

11th St SW - 4th St SW

Option 1
Symmetrical, grade separated bike lanes

76% Movement vs. 24% Place

- 2.5m sidewalk designed to create a continuous space for easy navigation for all ages and abilities
- 1.8m raised protected bike lanes designed to improve safety and connectivity for all cyclists and clearly define the movement zones
- Fixed furniture zone has been designed to accommodate landscaping, seating, street furniture, lighting, wayfinding and playful streetscape elements
- On-street parking has been removed
- Design configuration may require some utility relocation

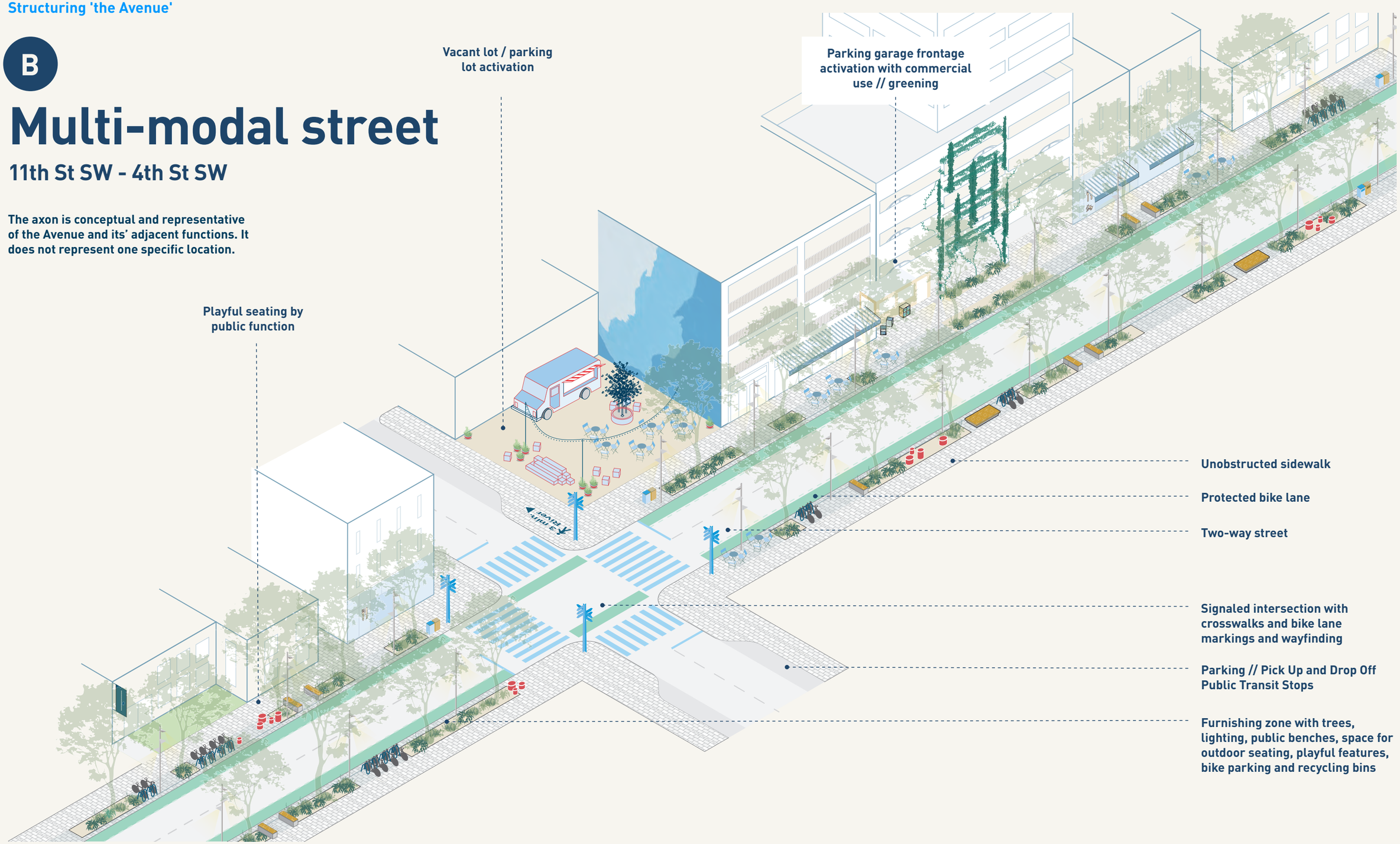


B

Multi-modal street

11th St SW - 4th St SW

The axon is conceptual and representative of the Avenue and its' adjacent functions. It does not represent one specific location.



B

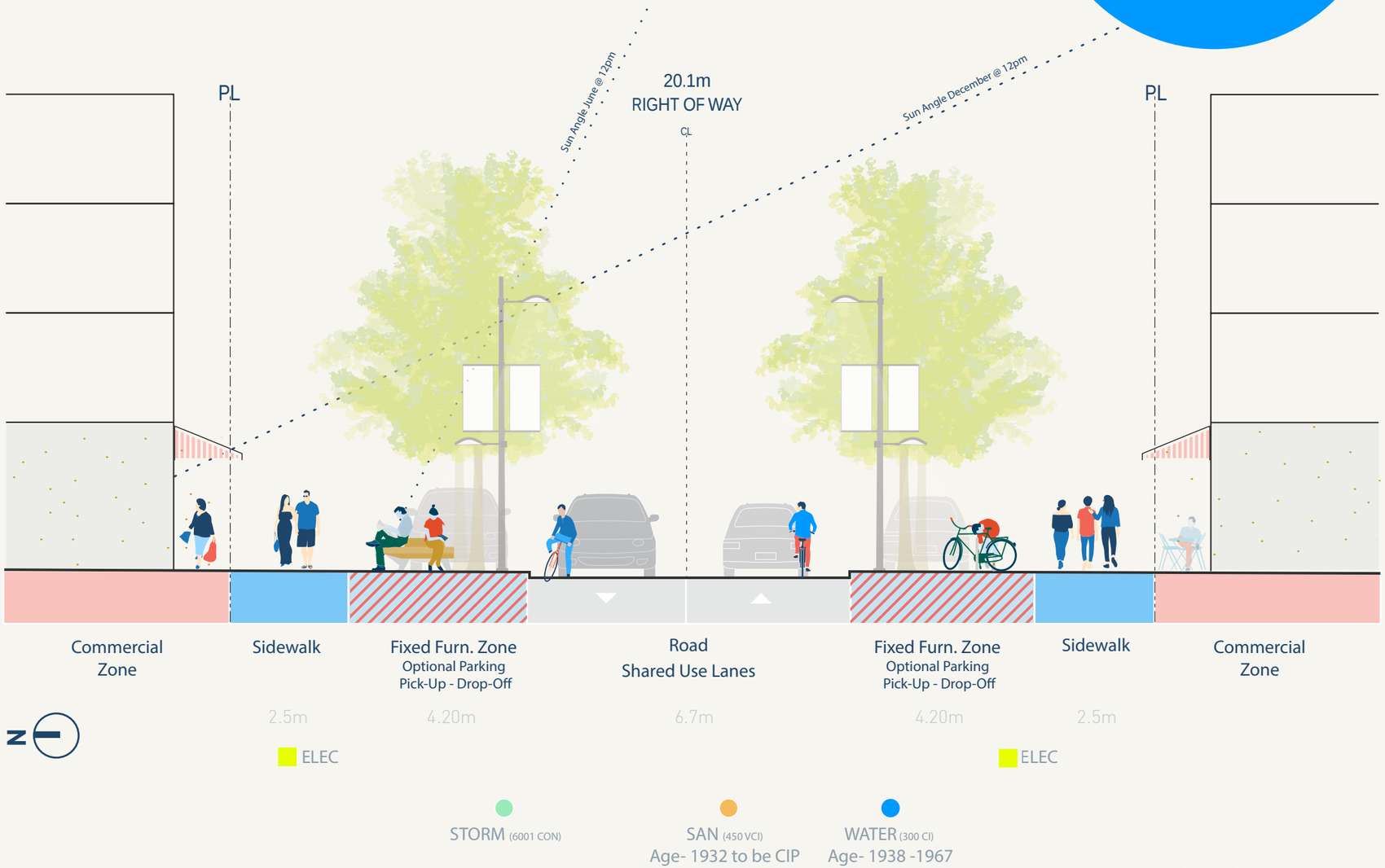
Multi-modal street

11th St SW - 4th St SW

58% Movement vs. 42% Place

- 2.5m sidewalk designed to create a continuous space for easy navigation for all ages and abilities
- Cyclists and vehicles to share the travel lanes. Speed limit to be reduced to 30km/h to accommodate design
- Fixed furniture zone has been designed to accommodate landscaping, seating, street furniture, lighting, wayfinding and playful streetscape elements
- On-street parking and pick-up/ drop-off have been accommodated for in the furniture zone
- Design configuration may require some utility relocation

Option 2
Symmetrical, shared bike facilities

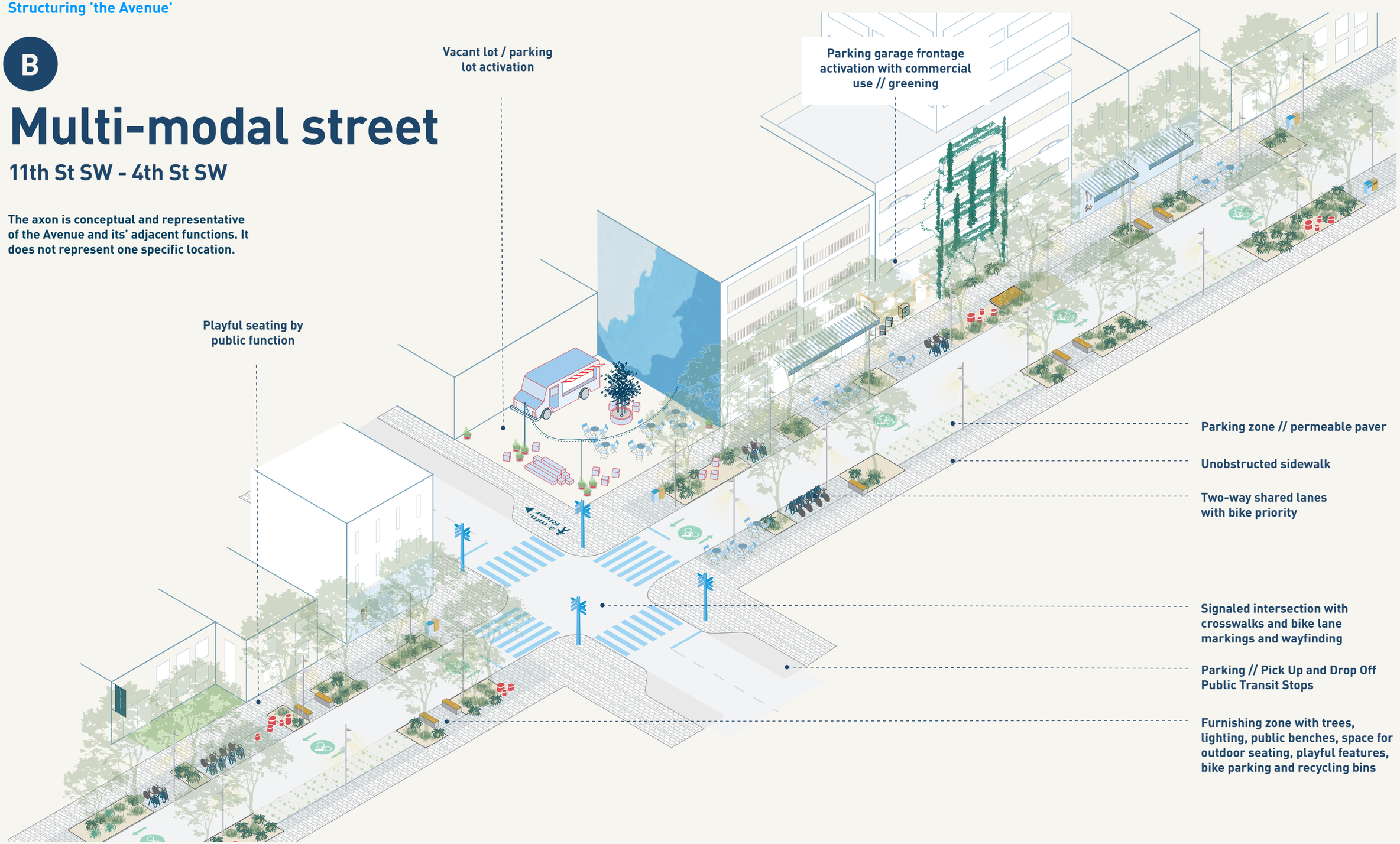


B

Multi-modal street

11th St SW - 4th St SW

The axon is conceptual and representative of the Avenue and its' adjacent functions. It does not represent one specific location.



B

Multi-modal street

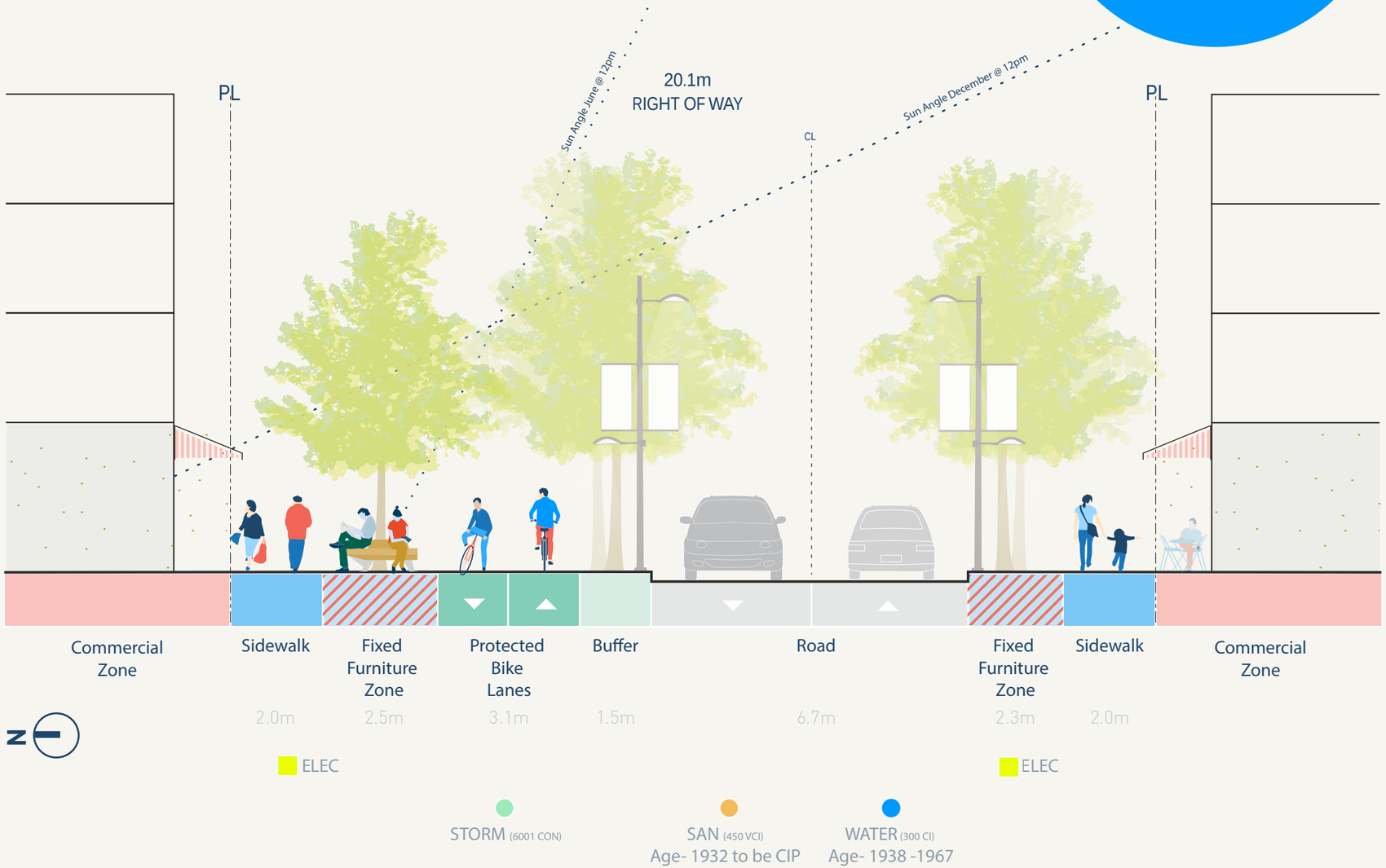
11th St SW - 4th St SW

68% Movement vs. 32% Place

- 2.0m sidewalk designed to create a continuous space for easy navigation for all ages and abilities
- 3.1m separated protected bike lanes designed to strengthen the east-west connectivity and make the Avenue the preferred east-west cycling route.
- Asymmetrical street design allows for an additional street tree to be added to the cross section creating a distinct streetscape experience unique in Calgary
- Fixed furniture zone has been designed to accommodate landscaping, seating, street furniture, lighting, wayfinding and playful streetscape elements
- On-street parking has been removed
- Design configuration to require minimal utility relocation

Not selected for further detailing

Section Alternative
Asymmetrical, grade separated bike lanes



B

Multi-modal street section alternatives

Three section alternatives have been developed for the multi-modal street section of the Avenue. Each of the alternatives present different ways of configuring the space with the aim of **striking a balance between the Avenue as a connector and the Avenue as a place**. The proposed section alternatives respond to the project goals with a varying degree of emphasis on the following key themes;

Arts, Culture & Commerce
The space is configured to maximize opportunities for adjacent institutions and commercial entities to open up and onto the street with generous furnishing and programming zones.

Network & Connection
The space is configured to establish a clear hierarchy of modes, reduce conflicts and create a dignified and dynamic experience for pedestrians and cyclists.

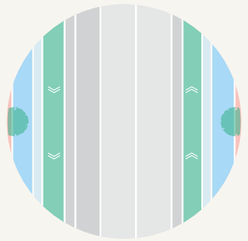
Programs & Activation
The space is configured in a flexible manner that easily allows for small and large-scale events to take place.

Investment*
The space is configured for minimal changes from the existing right-of-way.

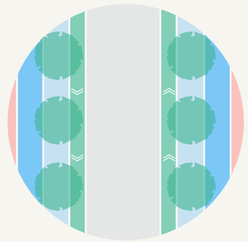
**Not directly outlined in the goals but an important factor to consider in assessing the street section alternatives.*

Space Allocations

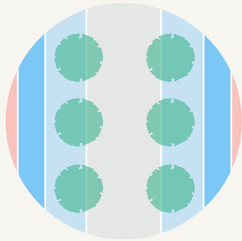
Multi-Modal Street 11th St SW - 4th St SW



Existing Condition



Option 1



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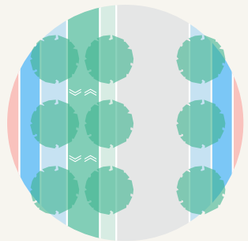
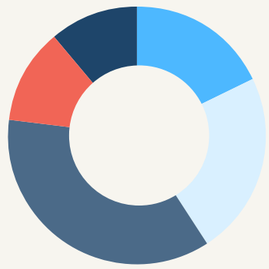
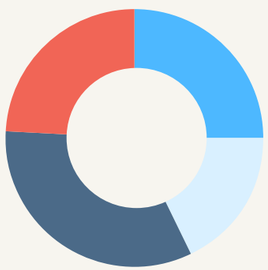


Alternative Option

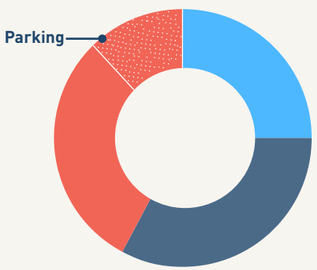
Multi-Modal Street Right of Way Division



Existing



Option 1



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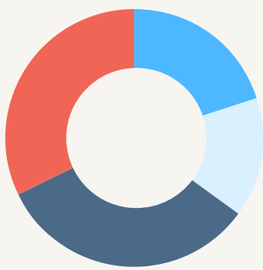


Alternative Option

	Existing	Option 1	Option 2	Alternative Option
Pedestrian Through Zone	18%	25%	25%	20%
Shared Street	23%	18%	0%	15%
Fixed Furniture Zone	12%	24%	42%	32%
Flexible Furniture Zone	11%	0%	(12%)	0%
Vehicle Accommodation	36%	33%	33%	33%
Feasibility ($)		1/3	3/3	2/3

Opinion of Probable Cost Matrix

The opinion of probable cost matrix included on this page is meant to inform the reader at a high level of the cost implications for the various section alternatives and design interventions explored in chapter 7. Included in the matrix are high level costs for the following:

- Short - Medium term temporary activations (price based on similar activations in other cities).
- Shared Street design options (price per square meter)
- Multi-Modal Street design options (price per square meter)

Please note the costs illustrated in this matrix have been developed at a high level and subject to further studies and detail design. The numbers are based on knowledge of projects of similar scale and scope and a reflect the consultant teams best and most accurate assumption at the time of the document being authored.

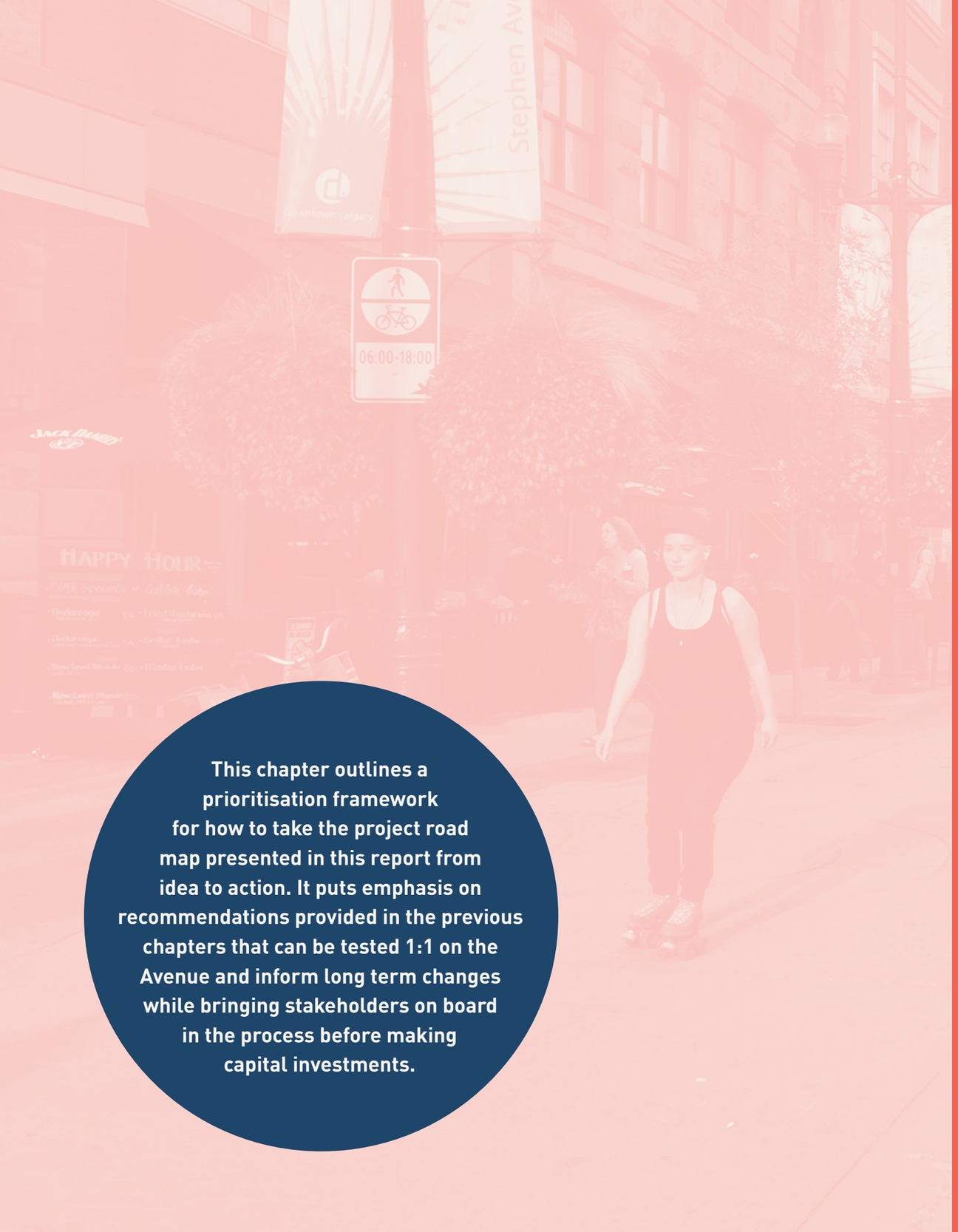
	Temporary Activation - Pilot Programs		
The Porch at 30th Street Station Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	$425,000 - 500,000		Price based on: The cost of custom designed furniture (the porch swings - $300k) including design and fabrication along with a yearly art and activation budget ($150k). The price does not include operations and maintenance. Area size: 3 blocks of pedestrian mall. Activity level: High
Promenade 3.0 Experiment Santa Monica, California	$250,000 - 325,000		Price based on: 1 month of activation and programming, including design, fabrication and materials + monitoring impact. The price does not include operations and maintenance. Design utilized in stock city and DTSM furniture. Area size: 3 blocks of pedestrian mall. Activity level: High
Meet in the Streets Denver, Colorado	$100,000 - 150,000		Price based on: 6 consecutive weekends in the summer of activation and programming, including design, fabrication and materials + monitoring paid for with BID funds + supporting grants from local businesses. Area size: 3 blocks of pedestrian mall. Activity level: High

** * The price range is an estimate and does not include all costs occurred during design and installation of the pilot programs but is the consultants best estimation * **

$2.80 - 3.68 million per block

	Permanent Streetscape Reconstruction - Shared Street		
Shared Street Design Option 1	$750 - 1000 per sq.m	$2.65 - 3.50 million per block (no utility	The price range highlighted in the document highlights a cost range from average construction cost to a high end reconstruction cost. The price range is based on the removals and reconstruction of the a typical block within the Shared Street section of the Avenue between Mcleod Trail - 4th St SW. The price is inclusive of removals, resurfacing, trees, site furniture, lighting, site features, etc. Price does not include considerations for specialty features.
Shared Street Design Option 2	$850 - 1150 per sq.m	$3.01 - 4.03 million per block (utility relocation required at approximately + $1 million per block)	
Shared Street Design Alternative Option	$800 - 1050 per sq.m	$2.80 - 3.68 million per block (no utility relocation required)	

	Permanent Streetscape Reconstruction - Multi-Modal Street		
Multi-Modal Street Design Option 1	$600 - 800 per sq.m	2.15 - 2.80 million per block (utility relocation required at approximately + $1.6 million per block)	The price range highlighted in the document highlights a cost range from average construction cost to a high end reconstruction cost. The price range is based on the removals and reconstruction of the a typical block within the Multi-Modal Street section of the Avenue between 4th St SW - 11th St SW. The price is inclusive of removals, resurfacing, trees, site furniture, lighting, site features, etc. Price does not include considerations for specialty features.
Multi-Modal Street Design Option 2	$575 - 725 per sq.m	2.05 - 2.55 million per block (utility relocation required at approximately + $2.0 million per block)	
Multi-Modal Street Design Alternative Option	$800 - 950 per sq.m	2.80 - 3.33 million per block (utility relocation required at approximately + $1.6 million per block)	



This chapter outlines a prioritisation framework for how to take the project road map presented in this report from idea to action. It puts emphasis on recommendations provided in the previous chapters that can be tested 1:1 on the Avenue and inform long term changes while bringing stakeholders on board in the process before making capital investments.

Action Plan

What we heard

Strategic Moves, Character Areas, and Restructuring the Avenue

For further details:
See project stakeholder engagement What We Heard Report #2 and the prioritization of strategic moves and actions on the following pages.

1

There is support for piloting change on the Avenue with short term actions, including colorful furniture and informal and free programming.

Activation of vacant and underutilized storefronts and lots with interim uses needs to be included.

Note: This ties to the 1M program

2

The Avenue should focus on being a place for arts, culture and commerce.

Activation of the Avenue - for all, all year, including developing a Winter Strategy is key.

3

There is support for mixed-use developments and bringing more residents to the Avenue, especially in the West End of the Avenue.

4

Strengthening connections to other key locations in Downtown, with high quality intersections on the Avenue, and a high quality continuous street redesign is key for the succes of the future Avenue.

5

There is support for the Avenue requiring different solutions along its' length.

Patio location ranked high in solving the street RoW, use and users, alongside active mobility, accessibility and access for service vehicles.

6

Stakeholders voiced project support through building community support and taking ownership of activation. There was a request for dialogue to strengthen public-private partnerships, and for CoC and CDA to streamline permitting processes.

The Future of the Avenue

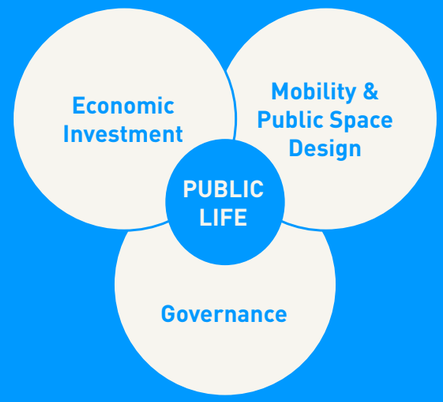
A roadmap to success

The ultimate goal of this project process is to pave the way for a permanent redesign of the Avenue. The Avenue is at the end of its lifespan and no significant investments have been made in years.

Investing in the Avenue will help the City of Calgary and its Downtown navigate these tough economic times, position itself for future investment and develop a framework to help the Avenue thrive in the long term.

The recommendations outlined in the previous chapters provide a roadmap for success, that spans beyond investments in physical infrastructure, and beyond the Avenue itself. These are further synthesized and prioritized in this Action Plan. Based on stakeholder input and consultant team recommendations, we zoom in on the Avenue and its immediate adjacent areas of influence to provide a 5-year Plan for Action to guide permanent redesign of the street.

The following pages outline the project process and provide an overview of tasks to complete and consider to move from idea to action.



Success =
Design + Governance + Economic Investment







Implementing the Future of the Avenue: At a Glance

Process & next steps

where we are now

step 1

Understanding the Avenue

The City of Calgary citizen and stakeholder outreach about the current state of the Avenue revealed a need for reimagining the Avenue. This led to the City hiring a team of international consultants to conduct further stuides and develop a framework for reinvesting the the Avenue

step 2

Reimagining the Avenue

For step 2 the City and Consultant team have worked closely with stakeholders, strategic partners and citizens to refine the strategic and design recommendations outlined in this report. We now have a clear vision for what success looks like, and will finish this step by confirming the recommendations with stakeholders and the public.

step 3

Investing in the Avenue

Now its time to commit! The City has not made any significant investments since the early 90s, maintenance over the last ten years has been minimal and the Avenue is at the end of its lifespan. Investing in the Avenue will help Calgary and Calgary downtown survive these tough econimic times and thrive in the long term.

Tasks - step 1

- Project Formulation
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Design Brief Formulation & RFP
- Consultant Team Interviews + Hire
- Background Research
- Continued Stakeholder Engagament
- Surveys and ethnographic studies (PSPL)
- Research and Surveys Insights Brief
- What We Heard Report + Updates

Tasks - step 2

- Vision & Goals Development
- Strategic Moves Development
- Character Areas Development
- Section Alternatives Concept Development
- Continued Stakeholder Engagement
- What We Heard Report + Updates
- Prioritization of Proposed Actions
- Action Plan
- Continued Stakeholder Engagement - Reveal

Tasks - step 3

- Secure Funding for Phase 1B
- Innovation Fund Capital Secured for Phase 1B
- Activate + Experiment // Phase 1B
- Continued Stakeholder Engagement: 1:1
- Prepare Capital Investment Strategy
- Prepare Governance Strategy // Business Plan
- Transportation // Parking Studies
- Utilities // Infrastructure Studies
- Detailed Design and Policy Revisions
- Metrix Evaluation Framework
- Coordinate with Downtown Plan
- Adopt Planning and Policy Changes
- Continued Stakeholder Engament
- Governance Rollout
- Capital Investment Request, Budget 2023-26
- Detailed Design and Construction Drawings
- Capital Investment + Construction

Strategic Moves // Actions

Prioritize!

The actions span across the Avenue in its' entirety

The Strategic Moves are organized in order of stakeholder prioritization, both the moves and the actions represented for each of the moves.
The red star represents actions to consider for the Activate and Experiment phase (1B).
The gold star represents consultant recommendations for strategic moves and actions that ranked lower through stakeholder engagement, but are key to make the prioritized moves actionable.

For more detail on each strategic move and the actions, see chapter 5 of this report

Moves ranked	Actions ranked: short to medium term	Actions ranked: medium to long term
1 Activating the Avenue	Deploy colorful furniture and informal programming Balance public and private seating Curate more evening and winter programming Design for optimal micro-climate	Develop a winter strategy Create a rotating art program
2 Repositioning the Avenue	Transformative repurpose of property assets Rehabilitation of underutlized real estate assets for arts and entertainment Explore innovative retail models	Stimulate mixed income residential development Provide amenities for live-work New partnerships for change Boost tourism and sales The Avenue is a center for innovation Increase range of housing choices
2 Connecting the Avenue	Pilot intersection improvements Test a greater downtown traffic calming strategy Priorize pedestrians at intersections Activate laneways as public space	*Note: Long term actions tie to the Downtown Strategy and will be further addressed outside of this scope of work. These are a crucial part of the success of the Future Avenue*
3 Governing the Avenue	Roll out a street ambassador program, hospitality and services Test collaborate governance, with streamlined processes Streamline permitting process and encourage public-private partnerships	*Note: To realize Avenue activation both short and long term, it is necessary to revisit the governance structure and update a number of policies and bylaws*
4 Opening up onto the Avenue	Create incentives for activation of vacant storefronts Activate parkades and other inactivate street fronting facades Bring public services into underutilized ground floors	Open up cultural institutions at ground level to become street activators *Note: Combined with "Repositioning the Avenue", this strategic move connects to the 1M project and plans for Glenbow and the Arts Commons. Through the Activate + Experiment Phase efforts needs to be coordinated for maximum collective impact*
4 Branding the Avenue	Roll out 'the red carpet' and break through city hall Develop a creative wayfinding system Provide high quality public seating and program + online presence Develop a branding and communications strategy	Invest in tree planting and street greening Invest in permanent street redesign *Note: Branding the Avenue includes both physical improvements and PR*

tie

tie

Character Areas Projects

Prioritize!

The projects target specific typologies, like intersections, and location based projects. Both tie back to the Strategic Moves

The Character Areas Projects are organized in order of stakeholder prioritization, with the short to medium term projects listed in order at the top, and the medium to long term projects listed in order below.
The red star represents projects to consider for the Activate and Experiment phase (1B).

For more detail on each character area and projects, see chapter 6 of this report

Short -Medium term

Medium-Long term

The Commons

Links + Connections

- Improve key Avenue intersections to better connect to surrounding neighbourhoods and destinations. ★
- Ensure continuous public access through City Hall to better connect to the Library and East Village. ★
- Implement traffic calming on Macleod Trail SE to slow vehicular traffic. ★
- Consider activating laneways adjacent to the Avenue to strengthen the neighbourhood micro-network.
- Transform the Avenue into a high quality complete street with a continuous street treatment. Focus on active mobility and consider how to include service vehicle access.
- Transform 1st St SW into a complete street from the Avenue to 17th Ave SW.
- Transform 2nd & 3rd St SW into a complete street from the Avenue to the RiverWalk.
- Transform 9th AVE SW into a complete street and shift from a one-way to two-way street.

Spaces + Places

- Pilot the Red Carpet: roll a red carpet through City Hall and onto Olympic Plaza, introduce signage that shows the way to the library and other key destinations ★
- Encourage celebration and public discourse through programs and events in Municipal (City Hall) plaza ★
- Activate the parking lot adjacent to the Palomino with an interim use, e.g. arts & culture focused pilot
- Transform Olympic Plaza into a flexible, at-grade front porch to The Commons with a micro-commercial retail edge offering hybrid uses and affordable arts spaces ★
- Integrate plans for the Arts Commons and the Avenue
- Open up the Glenbow onto the Avenue
- Consider transforming Centre St into a flexible street for temporary closures for events with the Calgary Tower as backdrop

The Core

Links + Connections

- Improve key Avenue intersections to better connect to surrounding neighbourhoods and destinations ★
- Strengthen connections from the Avenue to the +15 Network and consider programs & events that better link them ★
- Consider use of laneways adjacent to the Avenue to strengthen the neighbourhood micro-network for people walking and biking
- Transform the Avenue into a high quality complete street with a continuous street treatment. Focus on active mobility and consider how to include service vehicle access
- Transform 4th St SW into a complete street from the Avenue to 17th Ave SW, and shift from a one-way to two-way street
- Transform 2nd St SW into 2 ways along its length and transform into a premier pedestrian experience alongside Green Line inprovements
- Transform 1st St SW into a premier pedestrian experience along its length

Spaces + Places

- Activate underutilized and vacant storefronts with interim uses, e.g. artist in residency programs ★
- Develop ground floor guidelines that protect and enhance the human-scaled built environment and rhythm of varied facades along the Avenue
- Activate the ground floor of parkades with small-scale, creative tenanting
- Improve ground level to +15 connections at Western Canada Place and other buildings like it through activations of privately owned public space. ★
- Consider alternative treatment to address narrow Right of Way and wind trees sculptures ★
- Incentivize hybrid residential developments and consider interim uses to pilot space activation, e.g. co-living long-term with community/food focused pilot short-term
- Open up Eighth Avenue Place and other buildings like it to the Avenue by creating an activated ground floor with an operable facade

The Village

Links + Connections

- Improve key Avenue intersections to better connect to surrounding neighbourhoods and destinations ★
- Strengthen the pedestrian connection from the Avenue to Contemporary Calgary ★
- Consider activating laneways adjacent to the Avenue to strengthen the neighbourhood micro-network
- Transform the Avenue into a high quality complete street with a continuous street treatment. Focus on active mobility and integrate vehicular access
- Transform 8th St SW into a complete street from the riverfront to 17th Ave SW
- Transform 11th St SW into a complete street by strengthening the existing bike connections and prioritizing pedestrians
- Ensure continuous public access through the Armoury to connect the Avenue to Millennium Park

Spaces + Places

- Incentivize and support mixed-income, mid-rise residential developments in vacant and underutilized parcels
- Consider an interim use to activate the underutilized and vacant parcel, e.g. farmer's market, food vendors, community gardens, outdoor gym ★
- Create incentives for conversion of class B office to residential
- Integrate Contemporary Calgary's plans for an arrival plaza with the 11th Street interface
- Consider a future conversion of The Armoury into a public access facility for art, markets or other uses that can strengthen the neighbourhood profile

Phase 1B of the Future of the Avenue

Activate and Experiment

The Activate and Experiment phase sets out to envision long term change on the Avenue through an iterative process of testing ideas to better understand and measure the impacts of change. Through the activate and experiment phase the goals is to bring the community on board throughout the process, before making any investments in a permanent redesign.

Activate and Experiment to:

- Tie vision and goals to iterative approach.
- Inspire action and expedite project implementation.
- Allow people to experience the design.
- Widen engagement by obtaining feedback expressed through use.
- Deepen understanding of local needs and desires.
- Gather data from real-world use.
- Test aspects of the concept design for further iteration and refinement.
- Inform decision-making.
- Communicate change through action.

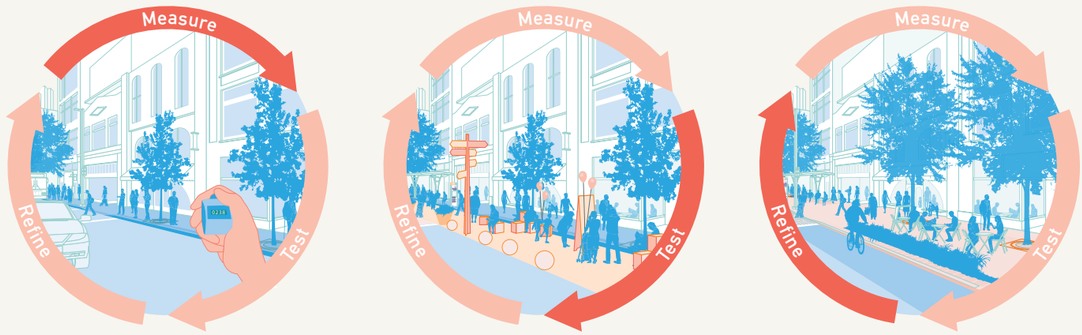
Phase 1B kick off:

- Formulate a pilot program framework that reflects the overall intent with the Future of the Avenue.
- Assign a project manager that will act as the main point of contact for the pilot program.
- Scale the pilot project according to resources and concentrate the effort to maximize effect.
- Develop a communication and engagement plan to secure stakeholder dialogue and inclusion.
- Plan to test prioritized concept RoW configurations.
- Develop a plan for monitoring and evaluating in order to be able to understand impact.

See chapter 7 for high level cost estimate per block for piloting change on the Avenue, based on precedent projects from other cities.

See the actions and projects marked with a red star on the previous pages for ideas for where to start the Activate and Experiment phase.

The **Measure/Test/Refine** methodology supports the achievement of long-term visions through Pilots and Prototypes. With these three steps, interim initiatives are tested and evaluated to inform more permanent and more refined decision-making



Measure
Establish a baseline through use of existing data sets and collection of new and relevant data. Assess both physical conditions and use patterns.

Test
Implement a pilot project that answers some of the needs established through the measure phase. Have use patterns changed with changes to the physical environment? Solicit user-feedback and evaluate the impact of change. Consider how the project has been successful, how it could be more successful and whether there is a basis for more tests or permanent implementation.

Refine
Use the learnings from the first two phases to refine the project's next steps and/or permanent implementation. The next project implementation should have an even better chance of success based on the feedback-loop. Long-term projects will be more cost-efficient and resilient if their performance has been tested and evaluated in advance.
If the first pilot project does not reach the goals, consider running more tests until the right needs are met

