

What citizens envision for our Greater Downtown

Greater Downtown Red Deer (or simply “downtown”) is a large area at the heart of our city – most of the areas in our river valley, south of the Red Deer River. Greater Downtown will be the thriving core of our city, with a cluster of popular urban areas where people can live, work, interact, visit and enjoy themselves. To fulfill that vision, citizens want downtown to be a place of:

Great Streets



Vision: Lively streets filled with people interacting amidst bustling stores, offices, shops, restaurants, public buildings and open spaces. Our great streets encourage multiple types of use, balancing the need for slow, safe vehicle movement with the many other non-vehicular uses.

Great Places



Vision: The buildings, outdoor spaces, and informal spaces are designed to enhance positive interaction among residents and visitors. Courtyards, plazas, fountains, flower gardens, ice sculptures abound. The great spaces of downtown are our first choice for gatherings of community members.

Great Connections



Vision: Our central district is strongly connected, through attractive natural and constructed corridors, to the Red Deer River, Waskasoo Creek and districts outside the core. Downtown also weaves together natural and constructed assets into seamless, continuous spaces.

Vitality



Vision: Our downtown is a place for all citizens, for diverse urban activities, and for varied buildings, facilities and outdoor amenities. Downtown is continually changing, re-inventing itself over time. As the living centre of our community, downtown is a place of innovation, ideas, exploration and creative progress. It is alive and evolving.

Authenticity



Vision: Red Deer originated at its river crossings; the history of our community is embedded in the layout, buildings and natural areas in the downtown. Today, downtown honours its origins and builds on authentic western Canadian themes.

Sustainability



Vision: With its existing natural and built infrastructure, downtown is inherently sustainable. In our downtown, we can achieve higher density and lower per-capita resource use. Greater Downtown is a model of our community's commitment to living in concert with our environment.

3 Great Districts

Greater Downtown development will be driven by development in 3 distinct districts.

Historic Downtown

- pilot projects - bicycle lanes, parking and other improvements
- new 'Complete Streets' traffic design guidelines to encourage multiple uses

Riverlands

- Alexander Way extended from Historic Downtown
- new sidewalks with landscaping

Railyards

- added sidewalks throughout
- new walk / bike routes connecting Old Train Bridge to Riverlands and Historic Downtown

- new Civic Plaza and enhanced laneways
- water (and ice) features
- child-friendly amenities
- Cenotaph Plaza

- 'Spirit of the River' Plaza and other public gathering spaces
- water features and waterways

- high-density 'point and podium' residences
- mini plazas in new developments

- continuous Alexander Way promenade from Barrett Park to Bower Ponds
- new bike path link through 45 St. green belt

- new or improved intersections on Taylor Drive to connect to Historic Downtown
- free public wi-fi zone to encourage creative collaboration

- improvements in Taylor / Ross intersection to connect with Riverlands

- zoning, guidelines and incentives for high-density residential
- more parking on streets, above and below ground to minimize surface parking lots
- guidelines to encourage on-street cultural events

- mixed-use commercial and residential attractive to varied demographic groups including culture sector and RDC students
- phased redevelopment with early success projects

- mix of services (food, recreation, child care, etc.) to support high-quality urban living

- public involvement in naming of key features and spaces
- commitment to preserving historic resources

- interpretive features to enhance learning about the waterfront district and water usage

- rename area as 'Railyards' or other to honour rail heritage
- add historic locomotive as attraction
- historical interpretive signage

- commitment to multi-use buildings and public-private partnerships
- improvements to encourage active and low-emission transportation

- 'green' development standards
- development partnerships to ensure private involvement and financial feasibility

- 'green' development standards
- commitment to multi-use buildings

Elsewhere in the Greater Downtown

In addition to the three feature districts of Historic Downtown, Riverlands and Railyards, Greater Downtown includes a number of residential and mixed use areas with strong histories and healthy futures. Continuing the directions established in the original (2000) Greater Downtown Action Plan, the updated plan calls for preservation of single-family residential districts in Parkvale and from 56 St. north to the river (an area that could reacquire its historic name of River Park). Just north and south of the Historic Downtown core are mixed use areas where commercial development can continue – preferably with residential development above the ground floor.

Next Steps

As a concept plan, the Greater Downtown Action Plan 2008 Update will guide the development of more detailed Area Redevelopment Plans, implementation strategies and budgets. Much of the development envisioned in the concept plan will be private sector development and will depend on market conditions.

The plan also identifies a number of short-term initiatives which can generate interest and energy around Greater Downtown possibilities. These include the development of a market and arts area in adapted City buildings in Riverlands, and the use of low-cost pilot projects to test concepts.

More About the Plan

The Greater Downtown Action Plan was updated over a nine-month period in 2008, with participation from over 500 citizens through a series of workshops, design open houses, walking tours and feedback questionnaires.

Lead consultants for the Greater Downtown Action Plan were Grandview Consulting and John Hull Architect, assisted by the Michael von Hausen team (MVH Inc.) of Burnaby BC, urban planner Ken Johnson, and planning educator Michael Geller.

We invite you to read the complete Progress and Potential plan on The City of Red Deer web site:

www.reddeer.ca/downtownplan

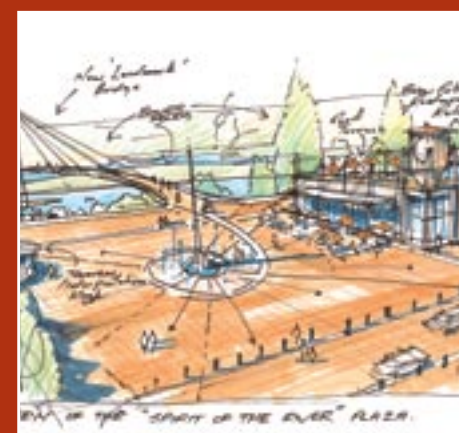


Progress and Potential

A renewed concept plan for Red Deer's Greater Downtown area

In 2008, citizens and planners created an updated vision for the future of our city centre.

Explore that vision here.



www.reddeer.ca/downtownplan

Introducing the future of Red Deer's greater downtown



I am pleased to present this overview of the updated Greater Downtown Action Plan.

The development of this concept plan has been a great process for Red Deer, bringing forward innovative ideas and new perspectives. As a community, we have now identified the directions that we want our downtown areas to take over the coming years. It is a future of exciting opportunities.
- Mayor Morris Flewwelling



This is the right time to take advantage of the significant opportunities we have in our downtown. Our city centre districts are perfectly poised to lead with sustainable, high-density, riverfront development; this kind of growth will mean a more exciting experience for residents and visitors alike.

This plan reflects the public's desire to create an inviting downtown urban environment with vibrant life on our streets - inviting places for families, businesses and visitors to enjoy.

- Councillor Cindy Jefferies, Chair, Greater Downtown Steering Committee

Progress and Potential

The Greater Downtown Action Plan 2008 Update reflects our city's vision for the future of our city centre. It is a long-range concept plan that recognizes our once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reconnect with our riverfront.

The updated concept focuses on three distinct but complementary areas: Historic Downtown in the city centre, Riverlands west of Taylor Drive, and the district tentatively called Railyards, west of Gaetz Avenue and north of Ross Street.

Three key districts will become focal points in Greater Downtown Red Deer. Each will have its own character and complement the other. Together, our Historic Downtown, Railyards and Riverlands districts will exhibit a sustainable, high density urban design.

Railyards

A vibrant mixed-use urban living district with high-density residential development.

- Reconfigure 55 St. west of Gaetz and 53 Ave. into attractive pedestrian and vehicle intersection
- Continuous trail walkway from Old CPR Bridge south, through the new intersection down 53 Ave. to Ross St. and Taylor Drive
- 'Bridges' park and signature residential / commercial development at corner of Gaetz and 55 St.
- New access to river trails system from 54 Ave.
- New pedestrian and bike route south on Gaetz from 55 St. to city centre

Historic Downtown

The focal area for our city's offices, retailers and public buildings. A lively urban city centre.

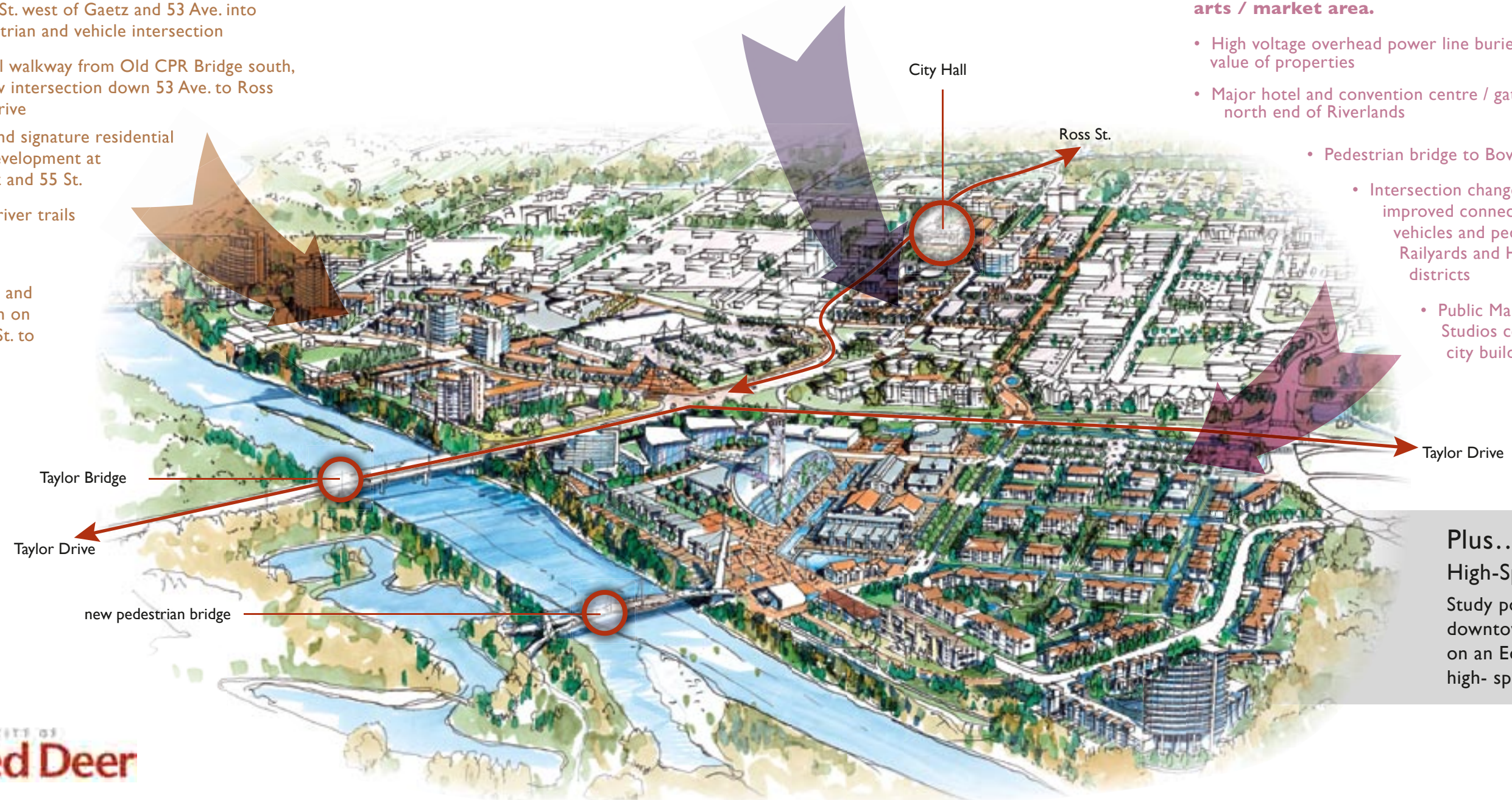
- 'Complete Streets' guidelines to improve on-street safety and encourage bicycle, pedestrian and retail uses while providing additional on-street parking
- New civic plaza immediately west of City Hall to complement historic flower garden
- Upgraded laneways to encourage retail and active use by citizens
- Re-use of current RCMP property and parking areas for City Hall extension and future Museum
- New dedicated bike lanes on Ross St., Gaetz Ave. and 51 Ave.
- Completion of Alexander Way

While all three districts will be mixed-use districts, the emphasis in the Historic Downtown will be on office and commercial development, often with residential above. In Riverlands, significant new public spaces including an expanded public market are proposed, along with a hotel site, water features and a convention centre. In Railyards, the emphasis will be on high density urban residential, supported by the commercial facilities and services for urban living. The spring 2009 move of the Civic Yards from Riverlands and light-industrial businesses from Railyards creates a new opportunity for stronger residential and recreational connections to the riverfront.

Riverlands

A diverse riverfront district featuring medium-density housing along with visitor and convention facilities and attractions, as well as a public arts / market area.

- High voltage overhead power line buried to capture market value of properties
- Major hotel and convention centre / gathering centre on north end of Riverlands
- Pedestrian bridge to Bower Ponds
- Intersection changes providing improved connectivity for both vehicles and pedestrians from Railyards and Historic Downtown districts
- Public Market and Arts Studios complex in adapted city building



Plus...
High-Speed Rail Hub
Study potential for a downtown connecting point on an Edmonton-Calgary high-speed rail line

