

Downtown Action Plan

	Pending
	In-Progress
	Complete or Ongoing



CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN
**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Strategy Progress

Project		Proposed Timeline	Current Status
INITIATIVE 1: ACTIVATE VACANT AND UNDER-UTILIZED SPACE			
1.1	Install string lights along 100th Avenue between 101st Street and 103rd Street to create a central gathering space in the downtown.	Winter 2021- Spring 2022	- Installation complete June 2022. - Quarterly maintenance as required - Colour-changing lights were updated for the holidays, this program will continue for significant holidays and celebrations
1.2	Invite property owners and landlords to use vacant storefronts to display local artwork.	Spring-Winter 2023 - Ongoing	- As the cost of creating temporary artwork displays in vacant storefronts was higher than expected, the decision was made to shift this project focus to creating long-term mural installations - The Downtown Development Strategy will investigate using window decals or banners to promote how the space could be used, as well as possible funding options for this program.
1.3	Complete an inventory of downtown public spaces and identify those areas that could realistically be activated with City-led investment in amenities or infrastructure such as benches or interactive structures.	Spring - Summer 2023	- Two murals completed in Fall 2022 - "We All Belong" mural at 10203A 100 Ave, artist: Ashley Rosenow, Illustrious Interiors - "In Bloom" mural at 9924 102 St, artists: Thomas Brothers (Dave and Allan), Flying Colors Murals - Three murals completed in Summer-Fall 2023 - "Welcome to Fort Sask" mural at 9905 102 St, artist Dave Thomas, Flying Colors Mural - "Grow in Fort Saskatchewan" mural at 8803 102 St, artist Ashley Rosenow, Illustrious Interiors - "Aurora in the Birch" mural at 10310 100 Ave, artist Kelly Mellings, PulpStudios.Inc - To learn more about the murals visit: www.foortsask.ca/downtown - Planters, chairs, and picnic tables have been added in several strategic locations throughout downtown to create beautiful spaces to gather and connect

1.4	Expand the Sidewalk Café program to encourage businesses to activate other City-owned property such as laneways and greenspaces.	Winter 2021	- New streamlined application process and guidelines (including a reduction of fees) completed in July 2019 - Sidewalk Café expenses are eligible for Storefront Improvement grant
1.5	Modify the existing Shape Your Community Grant and increase funding to be more accessible to downtown business and property owners. Promote the modified program to local business owners and organizations.	Dec-23	- Evaluation Rubric for Placemaking - Evaluation Rubric for Community Events - Creating a Guide for Placemaking Projects, considering Safety, Access, Maintenance, etc. - Create reference group - Describing Timeline for process - Schedule a program sharing in 2024 - emphasis on community benefit.
1.6	Continue to remove barriers and obstacles such as fees and regulatory processes associated with temporary parks/patios and other installations that encourage activation.	2023	- New streamlined application process and guidelines (including a reduction of fees) completed in July 2019 - Sidewalk Café expenses are eligible for Storefront Improvement grant
1.7	Develop a large City-led pop-up park that is open for public use in the downtown.	Spring - Fall 2022 Spring - Fall 2023	- Two public parklets with outdoor dining were installed (one parklet was located in two parallel parking spaces on 100th Ave. and one was located as an expansion to the existing 102nd Street green space) in June/July 2022. - A new pergola was installed in January 2023 at the 102nd Street ; dining tables were added for May-September - 100th Ave. Parklet reinstalled in May 2023, and expected to return seasonally May-September moving forward - Custom "Downtown Fort Saskatchewan" branded signage identifying both parklets as public spaces were installed in May/June 2023 - QR Code decals (leading to Downtown Website Places to Eat) were placed on dining tables, June 2023
INITIATIVE 2: ENHANCE PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS TO ATTRACT VISITORS			
2.1	Modify the existing Tourism Hosting Grant so that it can be leveraged by external stakeholders to assist in covering costs associated with programming and events that attract visitors to the downtown.	2024	Economic Development is collaborating with Culture and Recreation on adjusting the grant to enhance the variety and number of events that downtown businesses can benefit from. The proposed alterations include reducing the event duration to one day; extending the grant opportunity for annual events during their initial three years to support their growth.
2.2	Partner with external stakeholders to increase promotion and marketing of downtown events and programs to a broader audience.	2021 - Ongoing	- In Summer of 2022, Economic Development worked with the Downtown Business Council to support an Improv Comedy night and Beer Garden in the Downtown Core - Discover Downtown during the Holidays program and campaign marketed extensively in November/December 2022 - Significant Downtown Events (both internal and external) are posted on the downtown website, social media

2.3	Review the Special Event Permit process to remove unnecessary obstacles and barriers to external stakeholders.	2022 - 2023	- Special Events is moving their application to a new City website platform in 2024 to streamline the application and review process. Economic Development will support with communications regarding these changes and will promote the process through its communication and marketing channels.
2.4	Undertake early and frequent engagement with the downtown business community regarding City-led events to ensure they are able to maximize their involvement and benefit.	Winter 2021 - Ongoing	- EcDev to continue communication and engagement for future events including ways for businesses to participate, notification of temporary road closures or potential operational impacts, and notification of potential marketing or engagement opportunities. - In February 2023, a downtown specific e-newsletter was developed to share downtown specific programs, information, and events.
2.5	Review existing City-led events to identify how they can be modified and/or expanded to increase involvement of the downtown business community.	2023 - Ongoing	- Potential events to review include Family Festival, Canada Day, Sheep Leaving Parade, and Lights Up! - Sending to the businesses year-around event calendar - Providing any updates on events, including registration openings, notifications about time and locations
2.6	Identify additional City-led events that can be reasonably incorporated into the schedule, with the goal to offer a minimum of one signature-level event per season.	2024	- An Arts Festival has been identified as a potential event downtown, to be considered for summer 2024
INITIATIVE 3: INCREASE MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF THE DOWNTOWN			
3.1	Develop a downtown identity and 'campaign', using a similar approach to the Support Your Fort campaign.	2023	- A Downtown Brand and Marketing Campaign was created in Fall 2022 - Discover Downtown during the Holidays campaign launched in November 2022 - Three A-Frame signs were installed in the Downtown core and have QR-codes leading to the Downtown website pages Places to Shop/Dine/See, Downtown Events - A second marketing campaign "Rediscover Your Downtown" has started in Summer 2023 and takes place through November 2023. It includes on-line and off-line downtown promotion. - Downtown Fort Saskatchewan Signs were installed on the pergola and parklet planters in May 2023 - Downtown Map providing locations of restaurants, stores, entertainment, parking, etc., was developed in June 2023 and is distributed through downtown businesses - 32 Street Banners installed in July 2023

3.2	Create and maintain a downtown specific website to serve as a central hub of information.	2023	- Downtown Website was launched in May 2023 - QR Codes leading to the Downtown Website pages were placed in the Parklets, A-Frame Signs, Downtown Map, and in some Storefronts to direct visitors to the Website - Contest for the Best Downtown photo began in June 2023 and runs through September 15, 2023 to boost community engagement and interest - Posting frequent updates, news on downtown events, programs
3.3	Promote City-led and privately organized events and programs through City communication channels.	2021 - Ongoing	- Increased promotion is ongoing for Downtown events and initiatives through Downtown and City Websites, Social Media, Mobile Billboards, and City-Owned Electronic Signage
3.4	Seek funding opportunities from the Provincial and Federal governments to support the development and promotion of downtown specific branding and programming.	2021 - Ongoing	- \$97,000 was received from the Canada Community Revitalization Fund 2021-2023 for special Downtown infrastructure projects including parklets, murals, and signage - \$200,000 was received from the Northern and Regional Economic Development Program in 2023 for the 104th Street Revitalization, to increase the mural program, and for Professional Development for the Economic Development Department
INITIATIVE 4: ESTABLISH DOWNTOWN AS A DESIREABLE PLACE TO INVEST AND DEVELOP			
4.1	Establish downtown as a Business Improvement Zone for the purposes of: - Streamlining development regulations and permitting processes to ensure flexibility and reducing barriers - Establishing development incentives to encourage development/redevelopment	2022-2023	- In May 2022, Downtown Development Incentives were approved by Council to encourage residential and mixed-use development in the City's downtown core including a Brownfield Tax Exemption and a Downtown Development Grant - Additional work to create and foster an environment supportive to investment and growth, including the review of regulations and permitting processes as well as potential new incentives, to continue into 2024 with the Downtown Development Strategy.
4.2	Gather downtown-specific commercial data as a supplement to the Retail Market & Gap Analysis	2021	- Completed in July 2019.
4.3	Establish productive relationships with property owners and landlords to assist in increasing their reach to potential businesses and developers.	2021 - Ongoing	- In addition to direct support and in-person meetings with Downtown property and business owners, digital communications are ongoing regarding Downtown Development Incentives, Business Development Incentives, and special events.
4.4	Offer pro-active reviews of pre-design work and artist renderings to assist in preparing shovel-ready projects, which can better attract potential development, buyers, and businesses to the downtown.	2023 - Ongoing	- Initial work has begun on creating detail property reports for vacant, underutilized, and undeveloped properties including design guidelines, available incentives, etc. - A "Why Live Downtown?" document is being developed to help property owners and developers promote the benefits of living downtown.
4.5	Connect with smaller, independent and niche developers who are more likely to undertake projects in the downtown and work to connect them with potential projects or properties.	2022	- Promotion of the Downtown Development Incentives to encourage high-density and infill residential development in the downtown is ongoing - Direct support of property owners and potential developers is ongoing
INITIATIVE 5: DEDICATED DOWNTOWN RESOURCE			

5.1	Establish a temporary 2-year position within the City to serve as a dedicated resource to downtown revitalization to fully implement the Downtown Action Plan.	Winter 2021- Fall 2023	- Completed and Downtown Action Plan Coordinator Viktoriia Yalanska hired in October 2023.
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