

# BLUEPRINT FOR THE BELTLINE



THE CITY OF CALGARY

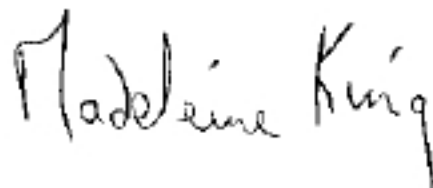
beltline



COMMUNITIES  
of victoria and connaught

## FORWARD

"The Blueprint for the Beltline enables us to develop this core inner city area with vision rooted in the best current thinking on urban planning and solidly founded on community involvement. It having won the support of the two community associations and three business revitalization zones (BRZs) in the area, I'm therefore delighted to add my support. This is a landmark document in which the City of Calgary will come to take great pride."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Madeleine King". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Madeleine King  
Ward Alderman  
Ward 8  
April 22, 2003



# BLUEPRINT FOR THE BELTLINE

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## 1 PREFACE

The process to formulate a Blueprint for the Beltline reflects a common vision that is shared by the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught, The City of Calgary, and many other people interested in the development of Calgary's Beltline. This project began as the Connaught/West Victoria Special Study, which was originally intended to examine the RM-7 Land Use District (the predominant residential Land Use District in the Beltline) and possible improvements to streets and lanes in the area. Nonetheless, as the Special Study progressed and the communities of Connaught and Victoria began to cooperate on an increasing number of issues, it became apparent that there was merit in expanding the scope of the planning study to encompass a wider geographic area and a broader range of issues.

Accordingly, all parties in the process have agreed that the best way to address this expanded scope is to plan in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion for the entire Beltline. The next steps in the process, then, will be to further develop, complete and implement a Blueprint for the Beltline to replace the multitude of existing planning policies and land use regulations within the newly amalgamated Beltline Community District. Putting these pieces together will constitute a work in progress toward completion of a Blueprint for the Beltline in time for Alberta's centennial in 2005.

### *Acknowledgments*

The City of Calgary and the Beltline Planning Group, which represents the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught, are pleased to acknowledge the many stakeholder groups (including Beltline residents, architects, planning consultants, developers, heritage interests, and utility providers) that have contributed knowledge, insight, and good ideas to this document. In particular, we thank our consultants, Sturgess Architecture, for providing many of the design concepts for this project. Finally, we extend our sincere gratitude to the many members of the public who attended our open houses and other meetings throughout our citizen engagement process. Their comments and support are greatly appreciated.

### *Perspectives*

Each major part of this document is prefaced by a section of Perspectives, one Perspective written by The City and the other Perspective written by the Beltline Planning Group. The intention of these sections is to set the stage or explain in less technical language what the Blueprint is meant to achieve.

#### **CITY PERSPECTIVE**

A great deal of consensus has been reached between The City and the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught. Nonetheless, the Perspectives help to highlight some of the subtle differences that do exist between these two groups of people: those charged with the responsibility of developing and implementing planning policies and land use regulations for the community; and those who live, work, and play in the community ? the people who have the most at stake in its planning.



## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

A walk through the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught would suggest that, in large part, good things have happened in this area. This has often been the case despite the planning approaches of the last several decades rather than because of them. The area is the product of more than 100 years of historic forces, and it's the furthest thing from a planned community in Calgary. The Beltline is, and aspires to be, an intense live-work-play community characterized by a diverse mix of people, places, opportunities and experiences, all in close walking proximity. Outside of our front doors is an urban place that others drive great distances to enjoy.

While historic processes have made the Beltline vibrant, they can only take us so far within the current planning framework. Existing rules inhibit many kinds of urban-style development from happening in the central city. And more than 100 years of history is catching up with us. Existing priorities have neglected the public realm, and not kept pace with the Beltline's physical growth and evolving economic and cultural roles. It is time to renew the area's planning and development regime and to turn fresh attention to Calgary's urban centre south of the tracks.

The communities of Victoria and Connaught believe that success requires a new way of thinking about urban development in the Beltline. A multifaceted and proactive approach that:

- ✧ Views the Beltline communities as an integrated whole from 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the Elbow River and from the CPR tracks to 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Beltline is stronger together. At the same time, planning policy needs to address variety within the district by giving full consideration to its diversity and eclecticism.
- ✧ Recognizes the differing characters of the Victoria, Connaught and the south downtown neighbourhoods as parts of the Beltline and encourages the use of the historic names within the neighbourhoods and the district.
- ✧ Emphasizes the connections between Downtown and the Beltline and acts to the mutual benefit of both. The Beltline district can offer a great deal to the long sought vitalization of Downtown.
- ✧ Better coordinates the efforts of The City of Calgary on issues including land use planning and regulation, parks and the public realm, transportation, engineering standards, community standards bylaws and the social environment.
- ✧ Promotes our community and its values to the development industry, and invites developers to contribute their best efforts and best projects to the Beltline.
- ✧ Develops innovative approaches to finance and management of public assets that serve the Beltline's distinct infrastructure and service needs.
- ✧ Applies the tools of civic government, community organizations, and the private sector together in service of a powerful urban vision for the Beltline Communities, with the goal of creating a great urban place.

The Connaught/West Victoria Special Study as originally cast by The City's Planning & Transportation Policy Business Unit was too modest to serve the role envisioned by the Beltline communities. But thanks to the positive and creative interaction between the communities, The City, and other stakeholders, the Special Study has expanded in scope. Now it can become a powerful vehicle for change that will benefit the Beltline and Calgary as a whole.

The Blueprint for the Beltline is a product of the ideas, experiences, aspirations, and interaction of hundreds of people and many stakeholder groups. An informal process began even before the Special Study with the rebirth and growth of community associations and community activity in the Beltline. During the Special Study, the communities and The City facilitated a series of successful open houses and stakeholder roundtables to foster more formal dialogue. The Beltline Outlook, a community newspaper distributed throughout the study area and beyond, publicized the details of the Special Study and extended this public discourse to thousands.

We are gratified by the positive response to the development principles and recommendations generated by the Special Study. There is great support for creating a strong urban identity for the Beltline. We look forward to maintaining vigorous community engagement as we move forward to implement the Blueprint.



## 2 PURPOSE

The purpose stated at the beginning of the Beltline Development Principles is:

*To promote quality, variety, and density in the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught.*

The intent of the Blueprint for the Beltline is to use these three attributes to help develop and sustain a vibrant, safe, and attractive inner-city urban community. Insisting on a high level of *quality* in private development and public improvements will add value and increase the sense of community pride in the Beltline. In recognition that Connaught and Victoria are heritage communities that contain much of Calgary's historic legacy and cultural value, the promotion of *variety* in the urban landscape will maintain these communities' character and enhance the richness of the urban environment. Higher residential *density* will increase population, promote investment, and support a broader range of activities, services, and amenities.

The key to promoting these three attributes is design innovation. Allowing for creativity, insisting on durability, and providing for more investment in the public realm will advance the community and the city toward the goals of greater energy efficiency, decreased automobile dependency, increased sustainability, and enhanced community health, safety, economic development, and vitality.

## 3 IMPLEMENTATION

This document provides guidance to The City and the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught for the possible interim revision and ultimate replacement of the following within the new Beltline Community District:

- Connaught/West Victoria Area Redevelopment Plan
- Victoria Park East Area Redevelopment Plan
- Core Area Policy Brief Commercial Core Zone 2 (South Downtown)
- RM-7 Land Use District and, where appropriate, other Land Use Districts within the Beltline Community District, subject to the prior approval by Council of any new planning policies for that Community District.

The two Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs) and the Land Use Bylaw have been approved and amended at Statutory Public Hearings of Calgary City Council and consequently assume legal standing under the Alberta Municipal Government Act. Although the Blueprint for the Beltline does not have statutory status, its administrative function is to guide the formulation of new planning policies and land use regulations in Connaught and Victoria.

### *Boundaries of the Blueprint for the Beltline*

The original boundaries of the Connaught/West Victoria Special Study were the same as the boundaries for the Connaught/West Victoria ARP:

- 12 Avenue S to the north
- 1 Street SE to the east
- 17 Avenue S to the south
- 14 Street SW to the west.

As the Connaught/West Victoria Special Study progressed, it became apparent that both the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught require revised planning policies and land use regulations. Given that the two Community Associations of Connaught and Victoria are combining their efforts on a number of fronts, the official City of Calgary Community Districts are being amalgamated into one new Community District called the Beltline (see maps on pages 8 and 9).

The boundaries of the Beltline are as follows:

- the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) tracks to the north
- the Elbow River to the east
- 17 Avenue S (and, east of 1 Street SE, the Elbow River) to the south
- 14 Street SW to the west.

Even though the amalgamated Community District will take on a new name, the names of Victoria and Connaught will continue to be used to distinguish the important character and heritage of these historic communities.

### *Relationship to other City Policies and Regulations*

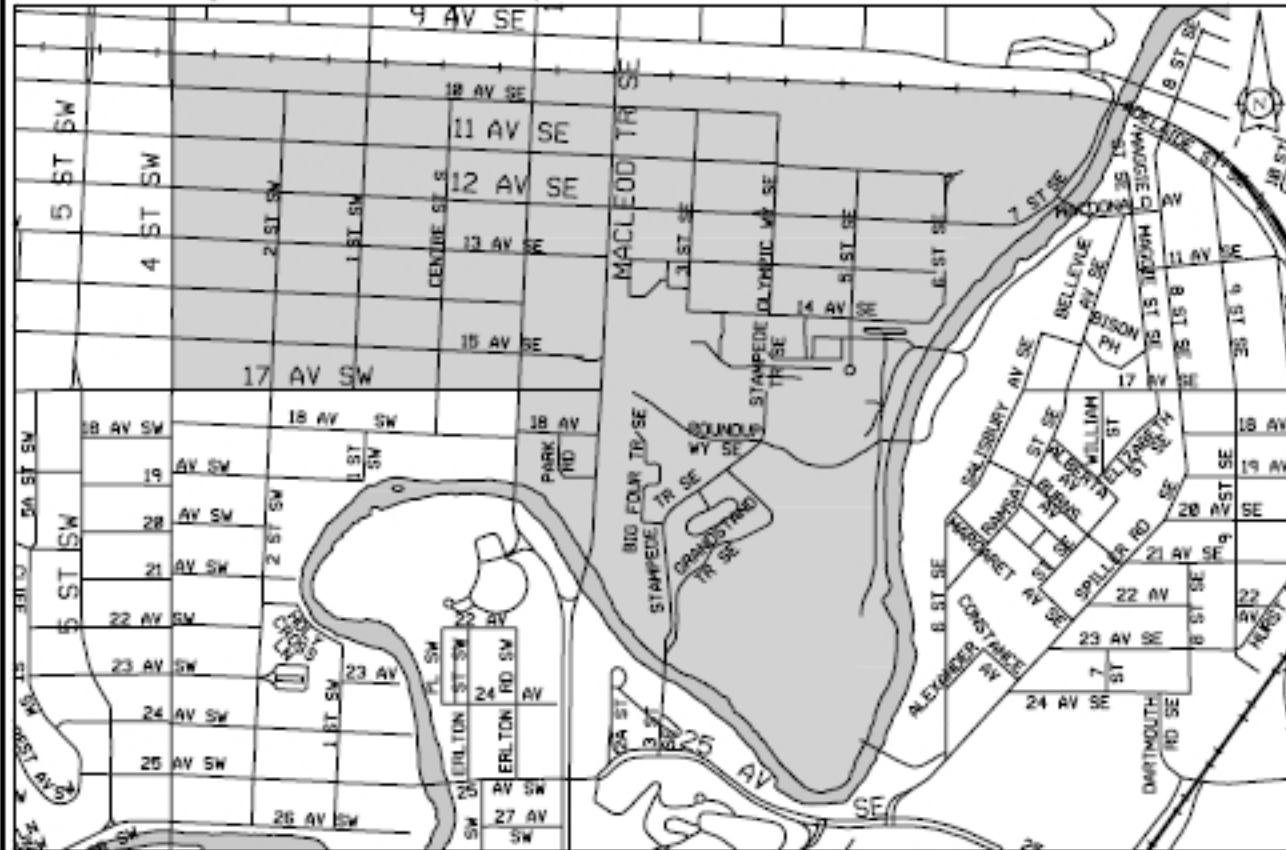
The Blueprint for the Beltline will not perform the same regulatory role as the approved statutory ARPs and the Land Use Bylaw. Rather than prescribing development standards, the Blueprint for the Beltline describes design opportunities that challenge developers, The City, and the community to enrich the urban environment through means not contemplated under prevailing planning policies and regulations. In addition to assisting developers and designers in producing better development, the resulting policy and regulatory changes should help community members and City staff in evaluating more innovative development proposals.

All parties involved in the planning process must recognize that while the Blueprint for the Beltline addresses specific design issues and suggests different responses, simply applying it to every situation will not necessarily result in acceptable development. Conversely, it may not always be possible to achieve all the objectives set out in this document. For each site, there may be conditions that require giving preference to one design approach over another. In many cases, it will be necessary to balance objectives. To the extent possible, this balance will be achieved through the use of overlays. Above all, the priority for every site should be the achievement of development that sustains a vibrant, safe, and attractive inner-city urban community.

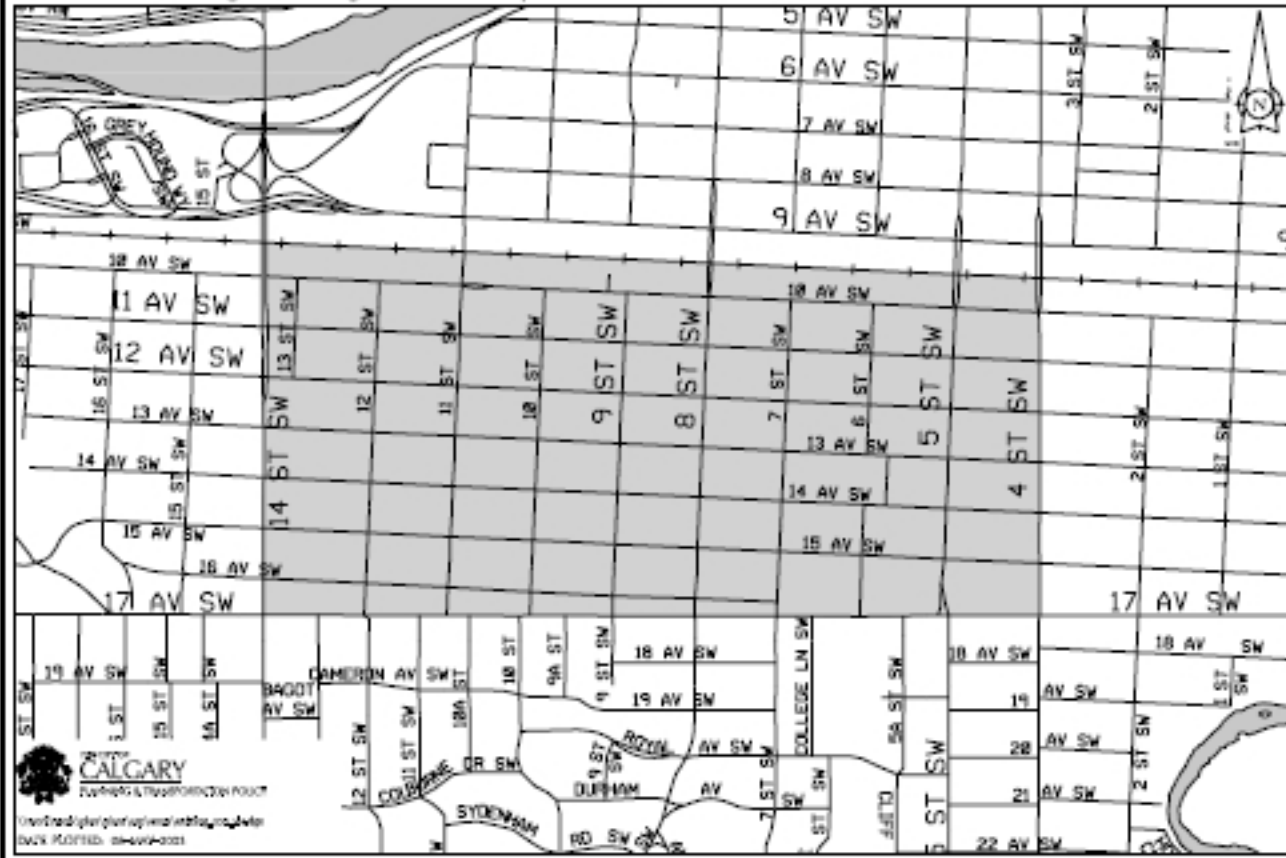




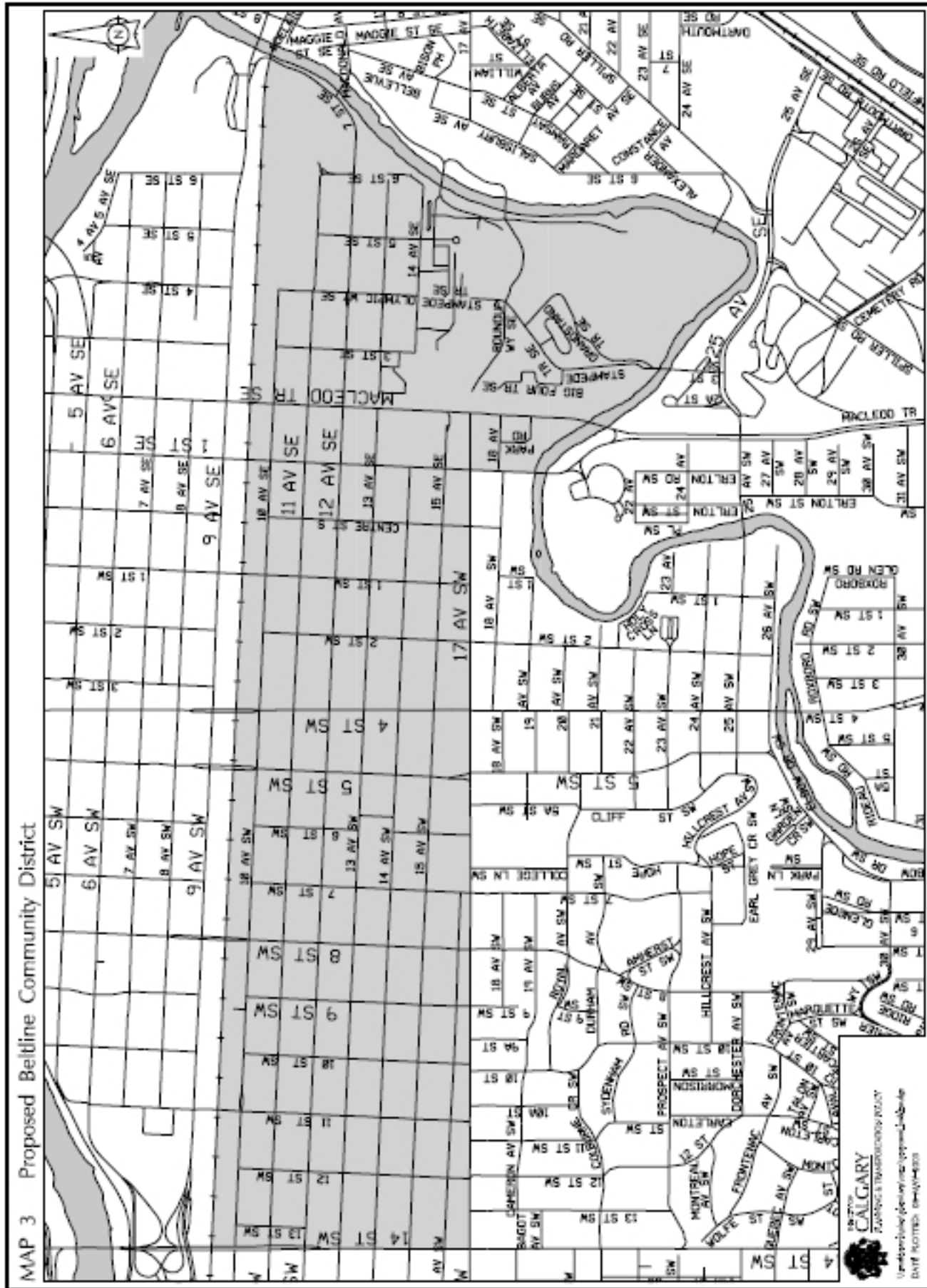
MAP 1 Existing Victoria Park Community District



MAP 2 Existing Connaught Community District







## *Organization of the Blueprint for the Beltline*

This document has been jointly developed by The City of Calgary and the Beltline Planning Group, which represents the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught. The *Beltline Development Principles* were formulated early in the Special Study process and have established a basis for the Blueprint. To assist the reader, the Blueprint portions of the document regularly refer back to applicable or related categories of the Development Principles.

This Blueprint is organized according to the following three main subject areas:

- The Basic Blueprint

In addition to providing a *Blueprint for the Community*, this section deals with streetscapes, lanescapes, and other public areas that affect pedestrians, residents, and visitors to the Beltline. In particular, it addresses elements such as sidewalks, street trees, street furniture, and building façades in sections entitled *Blueprint for the Streets* and *Blueprint for the Lanes*.

- Blueprint for Site Planning

This section includes recommendations for the physical design of development sites.

- Blueprint for Buildings

This section deals with general architectural character, including building design and construction materials.

These Blueprint concepts will ultimately be applied to the entire Beltline, through revisions to or replacement of the existing statutory planning documents. On the other hand, the *City* and *Community Perspectives*, written respectively by City staff and members of the Beltline Planning Committee, are meant to describe what the Blueprint is intended to achieve from both of those points of view. The Perspectives address both the general ideas expressed in the *Basic Blueprint* and particular areas or types of development, which may eventually become subject to overlays (see below). By way of example, three extra sets of Perspectives are provided in this Blueprint to indicate how they would address three specific overlays: heritage, landmarks, and institutions & community services.

## *Future Overlays*

The Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught contain a finely grained variety of land uses, development forms, and building types. Extensive policy areas and blanket zoning are entirely inappropriate for this area. Over time, City Council has resorted to approving numerous direct control land use districts as the only available means to deal with the diverse character of the Beltline.

Section 6 of this document, entitled *Basic Blueprint for the Beltline*, contains the underlying planning policy direction for the entire Beltline. Nonetheless, the Basic Blueprint does not represent a blanket approach to planning the area. It provides a policy grounding for the Beltline, over which more context-specific or even site-specific policies or regulations may be overlaid.



It is therefore proposed that the final Blueprint for the Beltline will use a number of policy or regulatory overlays to indicate appropriate locations for different types and mixes of development, public improvements, and community services. Future overlay policies, guidelines, or land use regulations would enhance implementation of the Blueprint by paying special attention to specific areas with complex and unique conditions. Moreover, individual overlays may be easier to amend in response to evolving conditions.

The overlays would not replace the underlying planning policies or land use regulations that would be formulated in accordance with the Basic Blueprint. Rather, the overlays would be applied in addition to such policies and regulations within the areas that they cover. Overlays could deal with major commercial and mixed-use corridors in the Beltline as well as primarily residential neighbourhoods. Other overlays could address specific development types that merit special treatment, such as heritage sites, landmark locations, institutional uses, and community services. The following represents a preliminary list of overlays that would be included in the ultimate Blueprint for the Beltline:

- Primarily Residential Uses
- Primarily Commercial Uses
- Mixed Uses on Integrated Sites
- Heritage Sites
- Landmarks
- Institutions
- Community Services
- Parks
- Recreation
- Urban Public Spaces

As formulation and implementation of the Blueprint for the Beltline proceeds, other ideas for overlays may emerge. Further planning analysis and consultation will help to determine the need for such overlays. The final Blueprint, which is to be considered by City Council by July 2005, will also address other matters such as open space, circulation, and financing for public improvements.

### ***Implementation Roles and Responsibilities***

Both the Development Principles and the Blueprint for the Beltline propose actions that may be implemented by private developers, The City of Calgary, the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught, or other parties such as non-governmental organizations, foundations, or philanthropic organizations. So far in the planning process, the primary emphasis has been placed upon planning and development aspirations. The next stages in this process will more clearly define roles and relationships, not only according to standard responsibilities, but also through the investigation of new and innovative approaches to planning, regulation, and the achievement of public improvements.

### ***Illustrative Images***

This document contains a number of images used throughout the course of the Connaught/West Victoria Special Study, particularly for the purposes of public consultation and stakeholder involvement. These pictures provide context for many of the planning and design ideas promoted by the Blueprint for the Beltline.



## 4 FOUNDATION

The foundation of the Blueprint for the Beltline is best expressed in *Council's Priorities 2002-2004: Looking Ahead, Moving Forward*. That document promotes Smart Growth, which is based upon the following ten principles: \*

- **mixing land uses** to keep homes, jobs and stores close together, increasing convenience and reducing the need to drive
- **taking advantage of existing community facilities** to get the most out of the parks, schools, roads, transit systems, and utilities that have already been built
- **creating a range of housing choices** including single-family homes, townhouses, apartments and suites to meet different lifestyle needs
- **fostering walkable neighbourhoods** not only by creating a pleasant walking environment, but by ensuring that there are nearby destinations, like schools, stores, and transit stops, to attract pedestrians
- **promoting distinctive, attractive communities** with strong identities by taking advantage of features that make an area special, like heritage buildings, unique shopping streets, or appealing open spaces
- **preserving open space** and sensitive environmental areas
- **encouraging growth in existing communities** by finding ways for new development to fit in with the older neighbourhood
- **providing a variety of transportation choices** so that there are safe, viable alternatives to driving cars
- **making land use and development decisions that support smart growth** by changing regulations that facilitate sprawl and by removing obstacles for developers who want to implement smart growth
- **encouraging citizen participation** in development decisions.



\* adapted from *The United States Environmental Protection Agency*.

## 5 BELTLINE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

**PURPOSE:** *To promote quality, variety, and density in the Beltline Communities of Connaught and Victoria.*

*The Beltline Development Principles have been formulated through discussions among community representatives, City staff, specific stakeholder groups, and the public at large. These Principles express the community's aspirations at a higher level of generality than the Blueprint policies stated later in this document. Given this level of generality, these statements may refer to the future actions of The City, private developers, community organizations, other levels of government, or other non-governmental organizations.*

### *Density*



1. Development will achieve high residential densities in order to provide a variety of land uses, amenities, and building types for a diverse inner city population.
2. Higher density development will be accommodated in a variety of building forms that will integrate building height, site coverage, and innovative design to maximize both development potential and community value.

### *Mixed-use development*

3. Mixed-use development will be encouraged where appropriate to incorporate compatible office, retail, and other commercial uses with a variety of dwelling types while still meeting high standards for design and density.

### *Minimum standards*

4. Development will meet or exceed minimum standards for design, density, building height, site coverage, landscaping, detailing, and both structural and external building materials.

### *Development context*



5. Building height, massing, materials, site coverage, setbacks, and overall design (including architectural quality, style, originality, and authenticity) will complement surrounding development, streetscapes, and lanescapes while recognizing the value in providing for a diverse and evolving urban environment.
6. Certain developments in key locations may be expected to serve as landmarks while other developments will be expected to complement existing landmarks or character buildings, which may include notable private developments, public buildings, public open spaces, and heritage resources.

### *Heritage resources*



7. Heritage resources will be treated with a view to honouring the past and, where appropriate, will be protected. Other older character buildings will continue to add value and diversity to the community through appropriate renovation, innovative redesign, or adaptive reuse.
8. New architecture will hold historical significance for future generations by employing design that is of its time rather than imitating historical themes.



*Building &  
Site design*



*Building  
entrances*



*Parking, loading  
& driveways*



9. Building height and massing will be mitigated by architectural devices such as relative yard setbacks, landscaping, stepped-back storeys, terraces, innovative orientation, mixed dwelling types, balconies, windows, and other types of articulation.
10. Balconies and patios may be open or enclosed, but must provide strong visual connections with surrounding streets and lanes.
11. Building façades, as well as rear and side elevations, will address their surroundings to enhance both the pedestrian environment and views from neighbouring buildings.
12. In order to enrich life on the street, both private and public spaces surrounding buildings will be designed to favour pedestrians over automobiles.
13. Spaces around buildings will complement the height and massing of the buildings they surround and will appeal to rather than exclude pedestrians by providing strong visual and pedestrian connections among buildings, streets, and lanes.
14. Perimeter walls, fences, and landscaping will allow for visual connections between buildings and the surrounding pedestrian environment.
15. Entrances to buildings will be clearly oriented to the street at or above grade without overdependence on signs, in order to create strong visual, spatial, and pedestrian connections, to minimize confusion, to provide for personal safety, and to enhance the appearance of buildings from streets and lanes.
16. Individual private entries for ground level units will be encouraged for the purposes of addressing, complementing, and enhancing streetscapes.
17. Vehicular entries to buildings will be located and designed to minimize disruption to streetscapes and the pedestrian environment. Preference will be given to lane access for vehicles.
18. Features such as service entries, loading areas, mechanical structures, storage areas, and garbage enclosures will be located and designed to minimize disruption to streetscapes, lanes, and the pedestrian environment.
19. Commercial and retail frontage in mixed-use developments will be oriented to the pedestrian. Where parking is required on the site, it will be located and designed to minimize disruption to streetscapes and the pedestrian environment.





*Courtyards,  
rooftops, &  
terraces*



*Public access &  
open space*

*Sustainable  
building design*

*Streetscapes*



*Lanescapes*

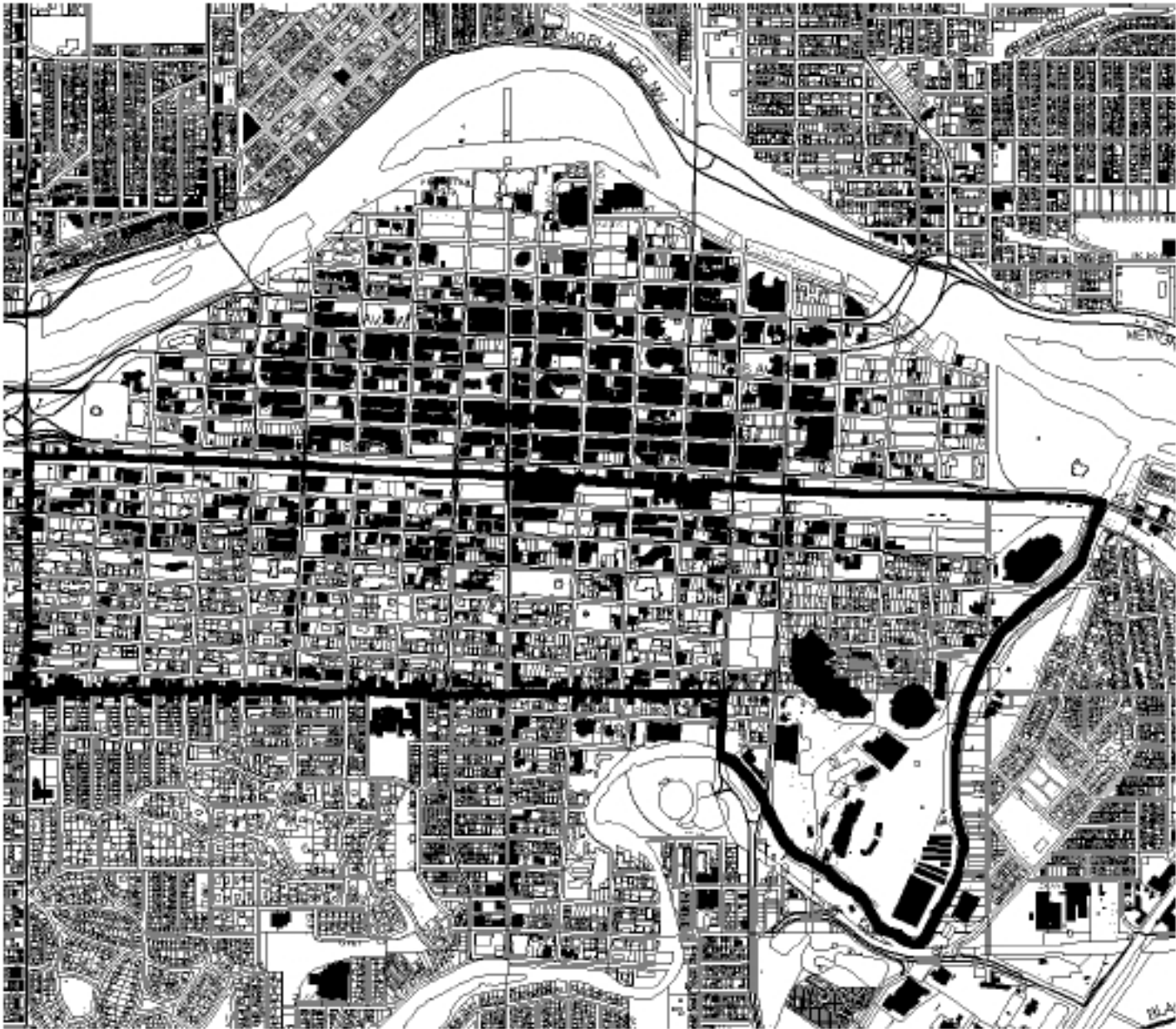
20. Parking structures (either free-standing or associated with other development) will complement or enhance streetscapes from both ground level and overlooking views. Such structures will meet external design standards that are consistent with those for residential buildings.
21. On-site parking areas will also provide for secure bicycle storage.
22. Off-street surface parking will only be developed where site conditions constrain other options. Such parking will complement or enhance streetscapes from both ground level and overlooking views.
23. Apart from buildings, patios, and sidewalks, impermeable surfaces such as surface parking areas and driveways will be minimized and landscaped areas with diverse vegetation will be maximized.
24. To the extent that they are visible from surrounding streets and buildings, courtyards will provide visual relief and sight lines through the use of open entryways, varied landscaping, walkways, furniture, and pedestrian connections to the street.
25. Rooftops and terraces used as amenity space will be designed to enhance views through the use of varied landscaping, furniture, and proper screening of mechanical equipment.
26. Public access may be required through, around, or onto private development sites in order to provide for public open space and pedestrian or bicycle connections through the community.
27. Energy efficiency in the construction and life cycle of buildings will be encouraged through the use of sustainable design innovations. Examples of such innovations include management of sunlight, shade, and wind effects, solar heating, cogeneration, fuel cell conversion systems, green roofing, and insulation.
28. Streetscapes will be enhanced by improvements such as landscaping, boulevards, sidewalks, light standards, street furniture, public art, kiosks, performance spaces, wastebaskets, bus shelters, bicycle racks, bicycle lanes, pedestrian crossings, and traffic calming.
29. Although more significant roads and bicycle routes will receive priority for streetscape improvements, other streets and avenues within the Beltline may also warrant such improvements.
30. Lanes and lanescapes warrant improvement by the same means used to improve streetscapes (refer to Development Principle 34). Such improvements will enhance a significant proportion of the public space within the Special Study area, particularly for the considerable number of residential units that look out over lanes.



31. Lanescape improvements receiving the highest priority will include paving and installation of underground utilities.
  32. In special circumstances, future uses for lanes may include parks or park extensions, pathways, bikeways, or mews development. Such innovative uses may be implemented through full or partial lane closures as well as other means used for streetscape and lanescape improvements.
  33. Streetscape, lanescape, and other community improvements will accommodate alternative and emerging forms of infrastructure. Areas to consider include transportation (e.g., public transit, bicycles, and fuel cell automobiles), energy supply (e.g., cooperative cogeneration), information and communication technologies, sewer and water servicing, and waste management (e.g., recycling and composting).
  34. Streetscape and lanescape improvements will be implemented both through the approval process for new private development and through a variety of public improvement programs involving The City, granting agencies, public/private partnerships, and local improvement bylaws.
  35. Development of interim uses with low densities or inefficient site designs will be discouraged. In instances where interim uses will not constrain future redevelopment to higher urban densities and standards, such uses may be developed subject to time limitations or phasing plans.
  36. Market forces will be linked to City and Community development objectives through the use of incentives, bonusing, and levies. Examples of desirable public benefits include open space, streetscape or lanescape improvements, heritage resources, redevelopment of key sites, affordable housing, and other community development initiatives.
  37. In order to enhance the public realm and to encourage and complement high-quality private development, The City will continue to invest, subject to Council's future budget deliberations, in improvements to public assets such as parks, cultural and recreational facilities, streets, boulevards, sidewalks, pathways, bikeways, and lanes.
- Sustainable infrastructure*
- Implementing streetscape & lanescape improvements*
- Interim uses*
- Development incentives, bonusing & levies*
- Public improvements*



## 6 BASIC BLUEPRINT FOR THE BELTLINE



## 6.1 BLUEPRINT FOR THE COMMUNITY

### CITY PERSPECTIVE

The Beltline communities have taken on a distinct role in Calgary. They represent one of the city's main opportunities for an urban neighbourhood on the edge of downtown. This urban character is expressed through *quality, variety, and density*.

Insisting on high *quality* developments and public improvements will create a community that is a source of pride for its residents and the city as a whole, now and in the future. Developing higher quality also means building durability, which will help sustain Calgary's inner city for future generations.

*Variety* of development broadens the choice of housing types within Calgary, providing alternatives for people who want to live in the heart of the city. In the Beltline itself, a variety of uses within buildings or along streets also allows for richer and more interesting residential and pedestrian experiences.

*Density* is good for both the city and the Beltline. Adding density to existing communities makes more efficient use of The City's investment in roads, utilities, services, and public facilities. A greater concentration of population on downtown's doorstep contributes to a vibrant central core. People enjoy the opportunity to live near their place of employment and the stores, entertainment venues, and cultural facilities that downtown has to offer. The result is a reduced need to drive in order to participate in the life of the city. Finally, more people living and working in the Beltline will in turn attract more amenities and services to benefit the community.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Density, variety and quality work together to create a great urban community.

#### *Density*

A big city urban neighbourhood needs people. Population density, more than any other element, distinguishes the Beltline from other Calgary communities. Density fills the coffee shops, galleries and music houses with people and makes urban activities like people-watching enjoyable. It allows people to interact, share ideas, and fuel cultural and economic creativity. It supports economic diversity and growth. It reduces the requirement for new transportation infrastructure and extended land servicing. Vibrant central city communities attract the best and brightest. It's no accident that several industry clusters are centred in the Beltline.

Density provides the framework for an urban lifestyle, with variety and quality completing it.

#### *Variety*

Variety means a variety of building types that reflect the eclecticism of the area. The Beltline communities want to encourage opportunities for built form and site design that have been previously discouraged or ignored. Towers integrated with townhouse and commercial components, perimeter and "street wall" buildings, mews developments, zero lot line attached structures, and mixed-use projects of all kinds should be encouraged. Heritage and other high quality older buildings should be preserved and adapted. Housing choices for families with children should be promoted.

Variety also means variety of use. Residential, commercial and institutional uses in close proximity are an essential part of the Beltline fabric. They contribute to neighbourhood vitality, and provide job opportunities, conveniences and services close to home.

*(continued on page 18)*



## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE *(continued from page 17)*

Variety also includes social, economic and cultural diversity. The Beltline invites all kinds of people as residents, workers, and patrons of our popular commercial areas. The communities welcome organizations that provide social, educational and health services. The Beltline also welcomes affordable housing, including non-market housing, seniors housing, and innovative residential concepts. The flexibility recommended in the Blueprint can help to make affordable housing possible. The desired outcome is to provide for a mix of housing that serves most economic circumstances and ways of life.

### *Quality*

While the idea of quality is hard to define, it is at minimum a set of tangible aspects that contribute to the feeling of satisfaction one experiences when living in a "good" neighbourhood.

Tangible aspects include quality of construction materials, and the quality of design that these materials service. Construction materials should be appropriate to the scale and longevity of buildings, and authentic in their use and appearance. In most cases, combustible buildings should be avoided. Operating and environmental efficiencies should be encouraged.

Quality design means buildings that are interesting to look at and contribute to the streetscape and the skyline. Quality design also means the best in contemporary design. Landmarks and "future heritage sites" should be worthy and contemporary additions to more than a century of Beltline architecture. These buildings should be durable enough to serve those purposes.

A compatible mix of building forms and uses in different areas within the district can be achieved through policy and regulatory overlays. The basic, or bottom, layer of the Blueprint for the Beltline intends to maximize opportunity. Here, it is recommended that much of the detailed and prescriptive regulation of built form and use be stripped away. When completed, the Blueprint for the Beltline will provide a more clear, open and better delineated set of policies and statutes that functions to promote urban-style development across the whole of the new Beltline district.

Attributes of specific areas within the district, in some cases even specific sites, would be addressed by overlays. These overlays would limit or constrain use and built form only to the extent required to ensure reasonable compatibility of height, massing and use and to enhance the diverse character of the neighborhoods within the district. In this way, the district's history of eclectic, spontaneous, market-driven urban development can best be extended into the future.

Related  
Development  
Principle  
Categories

*Density*  
*Mixed-use development*  
*Minimum standards*  
*Development context*  
*Development incentives, bonusing & levies*  
*Public improvements*

Purpose

- **Quality, variety, and density** will be promoted and employed to develop, achieve, and sustain a vibrant, safe, and attractive inner-city urban community.

*Quality*



- New buildings and streetscape improvements should provide high-quality, long-term contributions to the urban environment, including Calgary's skyline.
- Construction materials should be selected for durability and longevity without foregoing aesthetic quality.



## Variety



## Density



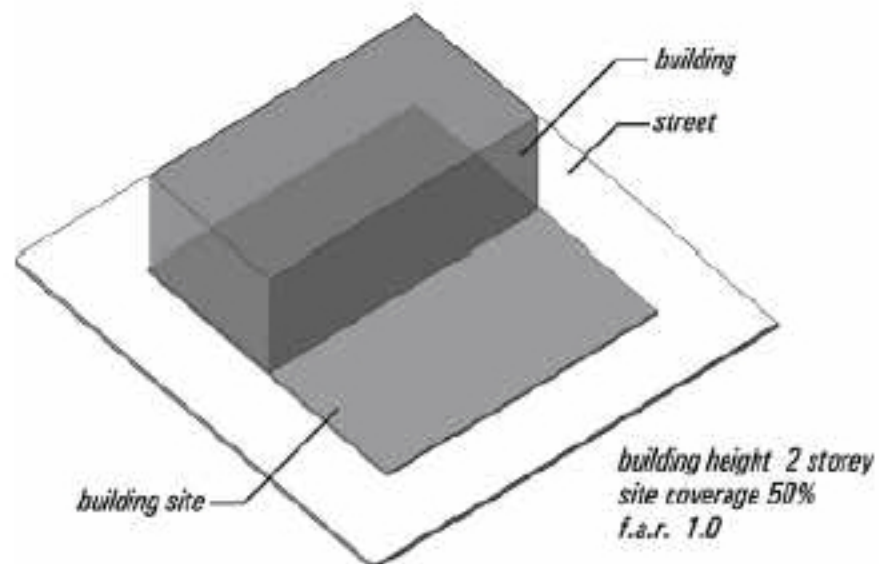
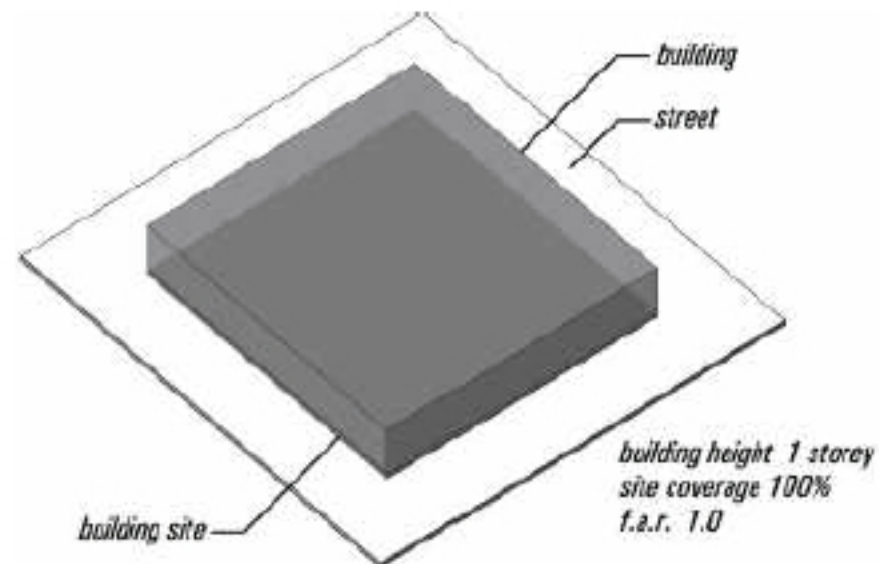
- Development should be sensitive to existing structures and patterns of development. To evaluate design compatibility, the Development Authority may require that development applications include streetscape elevations and perspectives from the pedestrian and other points of view.
- Architectural representations or caricatures of past or distant places, particularly which may imitate historical themes, should not be developed.
- An appropriate mix of land uses, development types, and building forms will be encouraged throughout the Beltline.
- Although the major shopping streets will accommodate the broadest mix of uses, other areas in the Beltline may be considered for appropriately mixed uses, provided that they are compatible with their surroundings.
- Integrated mixed-use developments are encouraged where they are compatible with their surroundings.
- Diverse ground level uses are encouraged to provide street activity throughout both daytime and evening hours.
- A variety of residential and live/work uses will be encouraged throughout the Beltline in order to satisfy a wide range of housing needs with respect to affordability, residential unit size, type, density, and form.
- Changes of use may be accommodated within existing buildings to enhance character buildings, to protect heritage resources, or to encourage the diversity of built form.
- Given that quantitative measurements of density are by themselves insufficient to describe urban environments, qualitative terms should also be used to evaluate development. Outcomes of intensification, including quality and variety of development, street life, customers for businesses, better public places, community identity, sense of place, and quality of life, should all be used in the consideration of development proposals.
- Both residential and commercial densities may be expressed, evaluated, regulated, and managed using a variety of terms, including maximum floor area, floor area ratio (FAR), number of units, net and gross units per acre or units per hectare (upa or uph), building envelope, intensity of use, occupancy, and context.





- Regulation of density will be based not only upon location and development context, but also upon the potential to achieve public benefits such as open space, heritage preservation, and improvements to streets and lanes.

*Illustration showing the use of Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to calculate net site density*



## 6.2 BLUEPRINT FOR THE STREET

### CITY PERSPECTIVE

Several elements need to come together to support an environment where walking is the preferred option. The *quality* of the street environment helps to ensure that the pedestrian experience is safe, comfortable, and interesting. People choose walking routes based on convenience to their destination, but also on their level of comfort. Active, well-landscaped, clean, safe, and secure streets contribute to that sense of comfort. *Variety* of uses helps to ensure that these shops, services and amenities can locate near residents, providing destinations within walking distance. *Density* helps to ensure a neighbourhood with enough people to support shops, services and amenities.



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Good street character depends on quality private development, the quality of public space, and the way these elements come together on the sidewalks, boulevards, and streets in the Beltline.

In the high-density urban setting, the street functions as an extension of interior living space. It should be spatially defined, interesting for people to walk along, and include places to meet or relax or enjoy public art. "The street" is where people meet. In our urban district, sidewalks are heavily used. They are the vital connections between the places we live, work and play in a pedestrian environment. Yet sidewalks are often neglected as development planning focuses on single buildings and transportation planning focuses on the driving lanes.

In the public realm, the Uptown 17, Victoria Crossing, and 4th Street BRZs have built quality commercial streetscapes. A similar effort needs to be made throughout the district, including in residential areas

Tree lined streetscapes are key to the urban landscape. The quality of our urban forest, sidewalks, street lighting, boulevards, street furniture and maintenance standards should reflect that we are a high-density urban area busy with people. City standards that reflect the special needs of the Beltline would contribute greatly to making the central city a better place to live.

Building design should contribute to attractive streetscapes. The interface of buildings and streets is a design consideration addressed by the Blueprint.

Public and private investments can contribute to the public realm in a number of ways. These options should be investigated. Innovative financing and management of public assets hold the potential for making the Beltline an even more beautiful and productive place.



Related  
Development  
Principle  
Categories

Landscaping



*Streetscapes*  
*Lanescapes*  
*Sustainable infrastructure*  
*Implementing streetscape & lanescape improvements*  
*Development incentives, bonusing & levies*  
*Public improvements*

- Trees will be planted along all streets and avenues within the Beltline.
- Consistent alignment and spacing of a continuous tree canopy should be maintained along roads and pedestrian corridors.
- Along roads and sidewalks, a greater proportion of deciduous as opposed to coniferous trees should be planted to ensure adequate penetration of sunlight in winter.
- Trees may be planted in islands along lengths of street parking, on corner bulbs, or within parking lots.
- To maintain the emphasis on providing street trees in the Beltline, the developer will, in general, be required to provide trees on City boulevards.
- The Development Authority may consider deferring some of the Land Use Bylaw requirements for on-site trees to adjacent City boulevards.
- Subject to Council's future budget deliberations, The City will implement public improvement programs to landscape boulevards with elements such as street trees, grass, textured paving surfaces, and street furniture.
- Standards and methods respecting utility and road infrastructure should respect the planting of trees and landscaping.
- In order to optimize the number of street trees, shallow buried utilities such as gas, electric, and telecommunication lines may not be located under City boulevards, but should be located under sidewalks, lanes, or other paved driving surfaces.
- Wherever possible, utility servicing such as sewer, water, gas, electric, and telecommunication lines should coincide with existing driveway locations so that tree planting will not be reduced in the boulevards. Pre-servicing of lots should only be allowed once driveway locations have been accurately determined.



Street  
infrastructure



- Tree wells in existing or new sidewalks must be large enough to sustain mature trees.
- Wherever practical, continuous street tree trenches are preferred over tree wells in order to provide maximum soil area for roots to spread and for water and air to penetrate the soil.
- Sufficient room should be provided for tree canopies to grow and mature without conflicting with structures or overhead utilities.
- The eventual height and mass of mature plants should be considered with respect to views, shade, and maintenance.
- Landscaping should provide for adequate drainage to storm sewer infrastructure.
- Tree guards should be installed in areas of high pedestrian traffic to protect trunks from damage, but must be large enough to allow for proper tree growth.
- Plants that are adapted to the harsh conditions of both the local climate and a dense urban environment should be selected for low water use and low maintenance.
- Notwithstanding the use of drought resistant species, adequate soil depth, drainage, and irrigation should be provided to nurture healthy growth and to ensure the survival of plants.
- In general, landscaped areas, including City boulevards, should be irrigated. Any irrigation within City boulevards will be maintained by the adjacent land owner.
- The City, private land owners, and community organizations should work together to provide an adequate number of street litter containers that are emptied on a regular basis.
- Particular attention should be given to garbage containers, mechanical equipment, and loading areas at street level. Such elements should be screened in a way appropriate to the streetscape and located away from the street edge.
- Subject to Council's future budget deliberations, The City will implement public improvement programs to bury utility lines (wires) along both streets and lanes.
- Utility connections, service access, and support structures should be located to avoid conflict with pedestrian movement.





Visibility and lighting

- The principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design will be taken into consideration in the design of all streetscapes, lane improvements, public areas, and buildings.
- Direct pedestrian access and public outdoor seating should be designed to enhance connections between the street and ground level building entrances.
- Pedestrian flow should be guided through the use of built elements such as:
  - ◊ edges with nooks and corners that provide a variety of seating and viewing opportunities
  - ◊ subspaces to invite and accommodate small groups within larger public areas
  - ◊ opportunities for pleasant meandering shortcuts.
- Wayfinding tools such as specialty pavements, signs, and graphics should be provided to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle movement.
- Information kiosks may be provided to post scheduled events, particularly in important locations within the community.
- The Development Authority may require, where appropriate, that the developer provide street furniture in the public realm for pedestrian use.
- Street furniture may include benches, litter containers, telephones, clocks, and civic art where appropriate.
- Street furniture may be fixed to the sidewalk as long as adequate clear passage for pedestrians and emergency access is provided.
- Pedestrian cover may take the form of arcades or building projections (including retractable or non-retractable fabric awnings or fixed non-fabric projected covers) and shall be open to the street.
- Where buildings have been set a significant distance back from the property line, freestanding pedestrian cover may be provided along the sidewalk.
- Building projections should be designed to mitigate dripping and ice formation on sidewalks.
- On-street parking, trees, bollards, or corner bulbs should be provided along curbs to buffer pedestrians from street traffic.
- Clearly visible pedestrian access should be provided from sidewalks to building entrances.



Street frontage



Transit stops



- Subject to Council's future budget deliberations, The City will implement public improvement programs to install pedestrian-scaled light fixtures in appropriate locations along pedestrian paths, streets, lanes, and bicycle routes.
- Where appropriate, street lights may be equipped with fixtures for banners, decorations, or appropriate signs.
- Lighting may be installed on pedestrian-scaled pole fixtures or attached to building façades. The type and size of pole fixtures should be as consistent as possible along the street.
- Frontage should enliven the street by providing sidewalk treatments, active storefronts, multiple doorways and windows.
- Buildings should be designed to create a scale and level of detail at the street appropriate to the pedestrian.
- Pedestrian scale may be addressed through variation in the three-dimensional character of the building mass as it rises skyward.
- Development on corners or sites with multiple street fronts should ensure that all façades and corners contribute to the streetscape.
- Drive-through facilities will be prohibited in all new commercial development.
- Individual front-drive garages for new residential units at grade will be restricted.
- Street facing, ground level façades for non-residential uses should be highly transparent and designed to make uses inside easily discernible to passers-by. The use of reflective and highly tinted glass is discouraged.
- In most cases, the interiors of lobbies should be visible from the street.
- Enhanced and visible transit stops should be located near important pedestrian crossings, at bus route transfer stations, and at or near activity centres within the community.
- Development adjacent to transit stops should provide amenities for transit customers such as benches, bicycle racks, and shelters.
- Transit stop design should accommodate a variety of needs (e.g., bicycles, wheelchairs, and strollers).





- With reference to The City's *Transit Friendly Design Guide*, transit stop improvements may include:
  - ◊ enhanced lighting
  - ◊ compatible landscaping and street furniture that allow for proper sight lines, pedestrian access and circulation
  - ◊ full shelters with benches
  - ◊ newsstand
  - ◊ bicycle racks
  - ◊ maps and signs
  - ◊ public telephones
  - ◊ litter containers
  - ◊ information or retail kiosks
  - ◊ distinctive paving.
- Uses that support transit, such as newsstands, coffee shops, dry cleaners, and day care, should be developed adjacent to transit stops.
- Transit stops may be developed adjacent to or in conjunction with taxi stands.
- Civic art may be incorporated into transit stops.

*Civic art adds life to the street.*



### 6.3 BLUEPRINT FOR THE LANES

#### CITY PERSPECTIVE

Lanes are often a necessary element in our communities. They provide locations for utilities and access for services, parking and loading. However, they must not be neglected. Particularly in a high-density environment, buildings should not be forced to turn their backs on lanes. Paying attention to the lanescape may open up more options for building and site design. Improving lanes may also increase the opportunity to provide open space in the community. Creativity and innovation will be required to retain or replace the traditional functions of lanes while integrating these spaces into the public life of the community.

#### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Large parts of the Beltline have back lanes. It is safe to say that about half of us live in homes that face a lane. Participants at open houses put lane improvements near the top of their list of priorities.

Lanes are needed for workaday service, but in a high-density urban area, they should be more than a place for dumpsters, dust and utility wires. The Blueprint describes lanescape improvements including paving, burying utilities, and the greening of lanes. Where appropriate, partial or full lane closures could help create usable public space and innovative development opportunities that benefit the neighbourhood.

In areas where there are no lanes, the problems of locating and managing utilities, garbage pick-up, and so on are manifested on the street. The need to improve the function and appearance of these streets is equally important.

Related  
Development  
Principle  
Categories



*Streetscapes*

*Lanescapes*

*Sustainable infrastructure*

*Implementing streetscape & lanescape improvements*

*Development incentives, bonusing & levies*

*Public improvements*

- Lanes may be closed or reconfigured to complete streetscapes and to provide opportunities for land assembly, mews development, open space, landscaping, mid-block pathways, courtyards, and plazas.
- Lanes will be closed only where adequate street circulation can be maintained and where access to utilities, parking, deliveries, and garbage collection will not be impeded.
- Development along lanes should be designed to provide adequate sight lines among buildings, open spaces, streets, and lanes for the benefit of both visual interest and public safety.
- Lane frontages should provide clearly visible pedestrian routes among features such as courtyard entries, pathways, landscaping, common building entranceways, and individual entrances to dwelling units.





- Lane access to buildings should be clearly indicated and well lit to promote not only safety, but also the perception of safety, especially in corners and other secluded areas.
- Every opportunity should be pursued to pave lanes and bury overhead utilities, whether this is achieved through public improvement programs, contributions from developers and landowners, or any combination of available funding and implementation mechanisms.
- Lighting, landscaping, paving, and burying of utilities along lanes should be coordinated to prevent unnecessary or inefficient duplication, reinstallation, or reconstruction.
- Where appropriate, alternative lane surfaces such as permeable paving should be considered, tested, and installed.
- Trees may be planted along lanes, provided that sufficient room is available for tree roots and canopies to grow and mature without conflicting with built elements or utilities.
- Plants that are adapted to the harsh conditions of both the local climate and a dense urban environment should be selected for low water use and low maintenance.
- Notwithstanding the use of drought resistant species, adequate soil depth, drainage, and irrigation should be provided to nurture healthy growth and to ensure the survival of plants.
- Mechanical equipment and garbage containers along lanes should be screened from grade level and from above.

### *Mews development along a reconfigured lane*



## 6.4 BLUEPRINT FOR SITE PLANNING

### CITY PERSPECTIVE

The public and private spaces between buildings, as much as the buildings themselves, influence our experience of a neighbourhood. Elements of site design, including where the building is located on the lot, how vehicles and pedestrians leave and enter the site, and the amount and location of landscaped area, shape and define the spaces between buildings. Good site design acknowledges its importance to the public realm, creates opportunities for activity and interaction, and contributes to the neighbourhood.

### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

The existing Land Use Bylaw and other regulations often work against innovative site planning and design solutions that are appropriate for a high density urban area. The Blueprint describes how new approaches to site design can contribute to quality, variety and density by emphasizing a full range of urban building forms and block configurations. Good site design supports better urban connections, efficient use of land, and better streetscapes and lanescapes.

For example, the existing Land Use Bylaw encourages the development of useless and vague side yards between buildings which are often filled with dead grass, gravel, and stored items. These “buffers” are not appropriate for urban settings, and do not mitigate but aggravate building issues. Unused and unwatched yards can become safety problems.

There is a wide range of proven site designs suitable for high intensity urban areas. Many of these are prohibited by RM-7, the district’s dominant land use classification, leaving the more cumbersome direct control district as the only viable option. The Blueprint for the Beltline presents an opportunity to deploy the entire catalogue of site designs, and even to invent original approaches.

#### Related Development Principle Categories

*Development context*  
*Building & site design*  
*Public access & open space*  
*Courtyards, rooftops, & terraces*  
*Parking, loading & driveways*

#### Yards & site coverage



- Given that development should present attractive façades on all sides, distinctions among front, side, and rear yards are not necessary for high-density development.
- To provide greater design flexibility and better use of yards, lot coverage may be used instead of yard requirements.
- In order to address neighbourhood context in the design of buildings and yards, build-to lines (up to the property line where appropriate) may be required instead of yards.
- Yards along streets need not follow the repetition or rhythm of neighbouring building setbacks. Site design, including yard dimensions, lot coverage, and building massing, should take into account the future life span of nearby buildings in order to create long-lasting and attractive streetscapes.





Courtyards,  
rooftops, &  
terraces



Parking, loading  
& driveways



- Yards between buildings with different heights should be designed to respect and relate to the immediate development context.
- The design of yards should provide for transition areas from streets to building entrances as well as visual setbacks for buildings.
- Yards should include active areas that accommodate public interaction as well as private areas that provide more relaxed and secure experiences.
- Yards must not be provided where they would create empty, inaccessible, or concealed spaces.
- Yards should be designed to provide adequate sight lines among buildings, open spaces, streets, and lanes to enhance both visual interest and public safety.
- Yard lighting should promote safety by illuminating visual connections among buildings, open spaces, streets, and lanes.
- Innovations in the design of block configurations, block penetration, and courtyards may be employed to open up blocks and provide for public access to interior open space.
- Courtyards should have multiple uses, such as green space, pathways, and service access.
- Interior courtyards should be visible from nearby streets, lanes, or buildings.
- Access corridors among buildings, courtyards, streets, and lanes should be clearly indicated and well lit.
- Rooftop or terrace landscaping or gardens may be used to satisfy requirements for landscaped areas.
- Although parking requirements may be based upon floor area, underground parking areas should not be included in the calculation of FAR.
- Any parking that is required for commercial or multi-unit residential development will be provided underground, unless absolutely precluded by site conditions.
- Where site conditions require that parking be provided at or above grade, such parking should be incorporated within the building so that active commercial or residential uses can be presented to the street.



- Opportunities should be pursued to develop joint-use, multi-use, shared, or destination parking structures in locations of critical parking demand.
- In order to provide for alternative parking solutions, The City may consider implementing policies and regulations for cash-in-lieu of parking in certain commercial parking areas within the Beltline.
- The City will identify locations of critical parking demand within the Beltline and, subject to Council's future budget deliberations, will implement parking solutions to serve those locations using tools including cash-in-lieu of parking.
- Innovative designs, technologies, and management systems (e.g., automated parking structures) should be incorporated into new parking facilities.
- Opportunities should be pursued to share space for multiple uses such as garbage collection, loading, and visitor parking.
- Driveway access to parking should be designed so that buildings are not adversely affected by automobile exhaust, noise, or headlights.
- Drive-through facilities will be prohibited in all new commercial development.
- Individual front-drive garages for new residential units at grade will be restricted.
- Residential parking requirements may be determined according to floor space rather than number of units.
- Bicycle parking should be provided on site in secure and convenient locations for all types of land use and development. Reference may be made to the *Bicycle Parking Handbook: A Developer's Guide*.

### *Underutilized surface parking in the Beltline*





## 6.5 BLUEPRINT FOR BUILDINGS

### CITY PERSPECTIVE

There is a public component to building design. Every building has the opportunity to contribute positively to the quality of the built environment and the quality of life within its surroundings.

Buildings can begin to achieve this by:

- ◇ being sensitive to the adjacent buildings and spaces
- ◇ paying attention to street-level uses, architectural detail, design and materials
- ◇ being aware that all sides and even rooftops are visible
- ◇ avoiding negative shadow and wind effects.



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

The Beltline is a celebration of eclecticism. The variety of built form reflects our rich history and points the way to the future. New construction should be compatible with its neighbours, but should also reflect long term aspirations for the community. The Beltline communities invite a new standard being established on a block.

The Beltline is a three-dimensional neighbourhood. Buildings are experienced from all angles — above and below, front and back. Streetscapes, lanescapes, roofscapes, neighbouring views, climatic factors, and the overall skyline need to be considered. This degree of complexity places primary importance on the need for quality architecture, and creates opportunities for innovative design solutions.

Each building and site should contribute to the Beltline mix. Here again, the Blueprint for the Beltline intends to maximize opportunity, not to determine every outcome. But outcomes should be vital and urban, and contribute to the community and public realm. The Basic Blueprint requires a response to the development context. Overlays can further address relevant local conditions.

Related  
Development  
Principle  
Categories

*Development context*  
*Building & site design*  
*Building entrances*  
*Sustainable building design*  
*Interim uses*

Development  
context



- Development should be sensitive to existing structures and patterns of development. To evaluate design compatibility, the Development Authority may require that development applications include streetscape elevations and perspectives from the pedestrian and other points of view.
- Setbacks of upper stories may be designed to make new buildings more consistent with adjacent older buildings at street level.

Building design



- New development should achieve high density in a variety of built forms such as:
  - ◊ residential towers on top of street level commercial, residential, or mixed-use development
  - ◊ residential towers surrounded by townhouses
  - ◊ perimeter blocks
  - ◊ street townhouses
  - ◊ mews development on lanes
  - ◊ appropriate combinations of these or other types of development.
- Roofs should be designed and constructed to acknowledge their visibility from other buildings and from the street.
- All rooftop mechanical and electronic equipment should be screened and any unused equipment should be removed from view.
- The use of high-quality building materials is encouraged and care should be taken to avoid artificial or simulated materials.
- Blank walls will be prohibited. Walls should include elements such as landscaping, murals, multiple entrances, or windows.

Building  
entrances



- Access to buildings should be clearly expressed and well lit.
- Primary building entrances should be accentuated and designed so that they are not easily confused with other ground level entrances.
- Primary building entrances should not be located below grade.
- Individual ground level units should incorporate external access to the street.



### Sustainable building design



### Light, wind, and ventilation



- The City will encourage building design and development that meets or exceeds current industry standards of sustainability.
- Green roofs and other sustainable and energy-efficient building technologies will be strongly encouraged.
- Buildings should be designed for long-term use.
- Appropriate renovation, innovative redesign, adaptive reuse, and recycling of construction materials are all strongly encouraged.
- Consideration should be given to ceiling heights and structural grids as they may affect possible future uses.
- Building design should provide for convenient recycling.
- As warranted by site context and neighbourhood conditions, approval of new buildings may be subject to the preparation of studies to determine both wind and shadow-casting effects.
- Ventilation of buildings and parking areas should be designed to mitigate noxious or undesirable fumes or odours.
- The primary living areas of all residential units should be provided with adequate natural light and ventilation.

*Great buildings do not replicate the architecture of the past.*

*They lend new form to our ever-changing city landscapes.*







## 7 PERSPECTIVES FOR PARTICULAR AREAS OR DEVELOPMENT TYPES





## 7.1 HERITAGE

### CITY PERSPECTIVE

Heritage is important in the Beltline and every effort will be made to support the retention of such resources. The historic sites within this area contribute both cultural and open space values to the community and the rest of Calgary. Historic sites and older buildings throughout the community are an essential component of today's urban fabric, contributing to the diversity of built form, streetscape character, and the inner city skyline.

Current issues facing heritage resources in the Beltline include exterior and interior building maintenance, site landscaping treatments, parking, and redevelopment pressures. It is important to attract and retain both traditional and alternative uses that support the ongoing viability of heritage buildings. It is also important to seek sensitive redevelopment opportunities that respect the character and situation of the community's existing heritage resources. The Beltline should be seen as an example of how heritage resources can be rehabilitated and successfully adapted to ongoing uses. The use of a variety of traditional and alternative tools for the protection of historic sites will be supported.



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

The Beltline doesn't need "new urbanism". We have the real thing. Over 100 years of history has given the Beltline buildings from many decades to serve as fitting homes for a wide range of people, businesses and institutions. There is no need to create site plans or structures that recall a way of life gone by. The city has its own dynamic. Our challenge is to adapt and reuse authentic, standing pieces of a real history. Much like other elements that enhance big city urban life, heritage and older buildings can offer an economic advantage to the central city. They add diversity, character, and culture. They lend value to neighbourhoods. They create a sense of place and stability. They help attract young, educated individuals who choose where to live first, and how to make a living afterwards. They help attract "empty-nesters" who seek the comfort and convenience of an urban life style. They help attract urban tourists who stay here during Stampede and stay on to explore central city Calgary when Stampede is over.

Today's best urban economic development initiatives depend on attracting the right people. Companies, industries and sectors are secondary. The public consultation process for the Special Study revealed that heritage is at the top of the priority list. There is a pressing need to find better ways to protect heritage resources and encourage their productive adaptation and use. Traditionally, development has been seen as a threat to heritage. The Blueprint for the Beltline suggests harnessing development opportunities in support of heritage. The Beltline includes many older buildings that hold potential for renewal, reuse or partial redevelopment. Overlays will be vital in defining and applying opportunities for these sites. A large part of Calgary's heritage potential is in the Beltline. Heritage buildings are not just reminders of the past, they are cornerstones of our urban future.



## 7.2 LANDMARKS

### CITY PERSPECTIVE

Landmarks are important in an urban environment. They assist travelers in keeping their bearings, give communities their sense of identity, and help boost community pride. In the Beltline, significant and memorable landmarks can be found at heritage sites such as the Lougheed House and Central Memorial Park. As an international tourist destination, the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede is quite obviously a landmark unto itself.

For wayfinding and planning purposes, landmark locations in the Beltline are found at some of Calgary's most active and recognizable intersections along 17 Avenue: at 14 Street, 8 Street, 4 Street and 1 Street SW. In addition, there is potential for a new landmark location at the intersection of 17 Avenue and Centre Street S, where redevelopment would reap significant benefits for the entire community. Both private development and public improvements in these important locations should reinforce the Beltline's identity and relationship to the rest of Calgary by providing:

- ◇ an enriched pedestrian condition
- ◇ a greater sense of urbanity
- ◇ rich, contemporary architectural expression
- ◇ vital, pedestrian-oriented, high-density, mixed-use development
- ◇ unique, remarkable buildings that serve as icons or landmarks providing orientation for people throughout the community
- ◇ towers that impress pedestrian passers-by with architectural detailing and three dimensional variation as they rise skyward
- ◇ truly urban public spaces, including plazas, terraces, courtyards, and outdoor pedestrian malls
- ◇ exemplary models to act as catalysts for further high-quality development.



### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

The Beltline communities want to open the door to developers and architects who rise to the challenge of obviously important sites. This can be supported through policies that encourage landmark visions and discourage mediocre development of key sites.

Sometimes great landmarks are planned. Most just happen. In any case, an examination of the Beltline's urban structure and the district's place in the central city can reveal prime sites for new landmarks. How do we weld the Beltline to Downtown? How do we link the Beltline to the riverbank and the regional pathway system? How do we connect the parts of the Beltline together, uniting its various neighbourhoods and elements into a legible whole? Landmark sites are an important aspect of this challenge.

Not all landmarks are tall buildings. Nevertheless, one purpose of a landmark overlay would be to help locate very tall structures that make strong architectural statements. Such landmarks achieve more than a response to their immediate context. These buildings can also identify neighbourhood centres and create markers for identifiable places from multiple vantage points.

The Beltline Communities invite incentives for landmarks.

### 7.3 INSTITUTIONS & COMMUNITY SERVICES

#### CITY PERSPECTIVE

The Beltline is home to many institutional uses and community services, including schools, churches, community organizations, recreational facilities, and social agencies.

These uses and facilities contribute both needed services and a greater sense of community for local residents, businesses, and the rest of Calgary. These uses must be sustained for the Beltline to flourish as an integrated residential and commercial community.

Current issues facing institutional uses and community services in the Beltline include building maintenance, parking, and economic viability. The City will need to take the value of these important resources into account as it formulates planning policies, regulations, and development standards within the Beltline Communities of Victoria and Connaught.



#### COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Residential, commercial, institutional and service uses in close proximity are an essential part of the Beltline fabric. They contribute to neighbourhood vitality, and provide job opportunities, conveniences and services close to home. The celebrated variety of the Beltline includes social, economic and cultural diversity. Organizations that provide social, educational and health services to our diverse population are welcome and needed here.

The Blueprint for the Beltline promotes increased population density. It also promotes a variety of housing types for a more diverse population, including empty nesters and families with children who want an urban lifestyle. The growing number and variety of people in the Beltline will require and support a wide range of improved community services and institutions – including schools and recreational facilities. Given the Beltline's location, the potential for such uses to also serve the central city workforce and other residents should also be considered. As the Blueprint moves forward, the improvement, reconfiguration, and expansion of community services and facilities should be explored.

The Blueprint advocates a compatible mix of uses throughout the Beltline, informed by development context. Where institutions and services adjoin residential areas, intensity of activity needs to be considered. Likewise, projects and uses that are proposed near established institutions should be appropriate for that context. Achieving a balance that benefits the community is always the goal. Some institutions operate a mix of cross-supporting services on and near their sites. For example, religious services, child care, education services and seniors housing may be run by one institution in close proximity. Overlays should address such vital and complex nodes of community services.

Parking and building maintenance have also been identified as issues. While large surface parking lots are discouraged, the Blueprint for the Beltline advocates shared parking solutions including the potential for shared financing. Building maintenance is a special challenge for institutions that occupy older buildings. The continued productive use of historic buildings is a top priority for the Beltline communities and the Blueprint. The stewards of historic buildings will benefit from this new focus. Community institutions and high quality services and facilities are necessities in a high-density urban area like the Beltline. Let's plan for growth.