

CALGARY PLAN | CHAPTER 4

General City Policies

This chapter has policies about how and where different uses and amenities should occur to support the ways we live, do business and spend our leisure time. It also guides City operational and emergency services.

General City Policies matter because they:

- Accommodate growth within the city boundary
- Provide more flexibility in the type of new housing built
- Locate retail close to housing for complete, walkable communities
- Have an accessible and well-connected parks system
- Achieve high quality urban design
- Protect and manage Calgary's heritage resources
- Manage our floodplain to prioritize safety, minimize property damage and support environmental health

What might this look like for Calgarians?

It's easy to start, operate, and grow a business in a vibrant local economy.



Childcare is available close to home or work.



There are parks and community spaces close to transit to meet up with friends and family.



We heard Calgarians care about...

Affordable housing options for families of all sizes.

Affordable transit and the ability to access daily needs with relative ease improve quality of life.

Opportunities to gather and share ideas and experiences in vibrant public spaces.

Walkability, more mobility networks and greater amenities within their neighbourhoods.

Concentrating development to limit the amount of sprawl that is occurring.

Preserving heritage and cultural activities in the city.



Complete communities:

A community that is fully developed and meets the needs of local residents through an entire lifetime. Complete communities include a full range of housing, commerce, recreational, institutional and public spaces. A complete community provides a physical and social environment where residents and visitors can live, learn, work and play.

What's included in General City Policies?

The Calgary Plan combines existing direction for the *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP) and the *Calgary Transportation Plan* (CTP), and aligns with other City documents such as the *Connect: Parks Plan*.

-  No/minimal new direction
-  Some new direction
-  All new direction

What are the direction highlights?

What's new to the Calgary Plan?

Growth

To support a growing population and economy, all areas of Calgary will need to accommodate growth over time.

Triple Bottom Line: Align growth decisions with triple-bottom line policies (social, environmental and economic sustainability) and indicators related to how growth is occurring geographically across the city.

Land Supply: Maintain a 30-year land supply. Plan built-out areas to accommodate growth and change. Work with neighbouring municipalities on joint planning.

Sustainable Development: Ensure development is compact, contiguous and readily serviceable (water, mobility, emergency services). Locate the highest densities and greatest mix of uses near primary transit.

Greenfield Development: Ensure greenfield areas have an interconnected parks and mobility network. Achieve a minimum density of 25 dwelling units per gross developable residential hectare.

Prioritizing Investment: Prioritize growth investments in built-out areas, areas that do not require new municipal-funded infrastructure and where development does not trigger a net increase in municipal-funded operating costs.



The plan continues to guide balanced growth decisions with a focus on sustainability. This includes providing more housing options, ensuring financial and environmental sustainability, and striving to become a great city with complete communities. It aligns with the growth plan of the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB) and includes simplified and modernized policy direction from the existing MDP.

Design

Communities: Create communities with easily accessible retail and services, a comfortable pedestrian experience, connections to parks, nature, art and culture and open spaces. Support community resilience through design.



The plan continues to support complete and walkable communities by strengthening some existing policies and adding new ones. The Calgary Plan includes policies that encourage mixed-use developments, blend public and private spaces and create opportunities for urban agriculture.



There is now a focus on boosting pedestrian activity near transit stations, in Activity Areas and in Greater Downtown.

General Urban Design: Support innovative design. Provide transitions between buildings and adjacent spaces. Frame sidewalks with transparent and permeable facades. Allow spaces to adapt over time.

Public Spaces: Create comfortable, convenient, accessible, year-round and safe spaces activated by building entrances. Design to support art, nature, climate resilient, festivals and events.

Sites: Respond to site context whether it is a natural area, a view, a historic resource, or another building. Provide amenity spaces, connections to the public sidewalks, landscaping and well-designed parking facilities.

Buildings: Encourage climate-resilient buildings. Reduce the visual impact of large buildings. Create comfortable outdoor amenity areas. Provide direct connections to the public sidewalk. Provide interesting facades.



The plan includes ideas from the existing MDP and consolidates Urban Design policies for simplified direction.



There is now clearer guidance on how to enhance design quality in public spaces, sites and buildings.

Public Art: Promote a range of artistic expression throughout the city and create opportunity for equity, diversity and inclusion to be part of the public art process.



The plan builds on the existing MDP goal to include public art in public spaces and promote its inclusion in private developments.



There is now an emphasis on partnering with Indigenous communities on public art projects.

Heritage: Balance the needs of growth and the management of heritage resources. Work with Indigenous communities to integrate cultural values, identity, history and narratives into heritage planning towards Truth and Reconciliation efforts.



The plan continues to protect heritage sites, promoting their preservation.



The plan formalizes The City's commitment to collaboration with Indigenous communities into heritage policy. The plan also re-introduces existing City guidebook policies that guide redevelopments and developments near heritage.

What are the direction highlights?

What's new to the Calgary Plan?

City-wide Land Uses

Housing: Offer a variety of housing options to meet different needs, allowing for growth and new housing styles in developed areas with existing infrastructure. Ensure homes are resilient to hazards and extreme weather.



The plan includes simplified policy direction from the existing MDP to continue to enable diverse types of housing.



The plan includes a focus on housing diversity, climate change and Truth and Reconciliation by offering incentives for more energy efficient housing and boosting Indigenous housing availability.



The plan enables a diversity of housing types in all neighbourhoods. This includes market housing as well as transitional housing, supportive housing, community housing and affordable housing which are all captured as non-market housing.

Economic Growth & Participation: Support local retail close to housing. Increase opportunity and participation for equity-denied groups. Support urban agriculture uses throughout the city. Support diverse childcare facilities across a range of sites.



The plan continues to encourage the development of complete communities.



There are now increased protections for industrial lands, and the plan makes it easier for small businesses to be near their customers and employees. The plan also includes expanded support for childcare to be in various areas of the city to improve access for Calgarians.

City Facilities & Spaces

Parks System: Connect parks and open spaces to neighbourhoods. Provide multi-functional parks within walking distance to all residences. Address gaps in park provision through improved connections, functionality, design or more space. Locate parks in new communities centrally or near natural areas. Provide a range of amenities to meet diverse needs.



The plan follows the existing MDP parks vision, focusing on versatility, convenience, inclusivity and safety. It prioritizes sports, arts, culture, and nature access.



There is now more detailed guidance to address park shortages, including improving connections, acquiring new park areas, and enhancing features. It also provides clearer direction for placing parks in new communities, ensuring fair amenities, supporting compatible commercial use and adding more restrooms.

Public Recreation System: Provide an equitable distribution of facilities by providing new facilities, enhancing existing facilities or improving the allocation of spaces to fill gaps. Reflect the diversity of our city in facilities. Ensure facilities are inclusive, accessible, affordable, adaptable and climate-resilient.



The plan includes simplified policy direction from the existing MDP. Its goal is to provide easily accessible community facilities like libraries and recreation centers for Calgarians.



There is now clearer guidance on where to locate these facilities, emphasizing placement near the main transit network for better access.

Municipal Community Facilities: Locate cultural, educational and other support services near the primary transit network. Design facilities to fit within their context and meet the diverse needs of the local population. Co-locate with other facilities if possible. Incorporate climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Municipal Operations and Emergency Response Facilities: Allocate land for these facilities in early planning stages. Meet or exceed safety and operational requirements. Co-locate with other uses where appropriate. Incorporate disaster and risk mitigation strategies and design to be climate resilient.



The plan includes simplified policy direction from the existing MDP. It ensures that vital infrastructure and emergency services are available for Calgarians when needed.

Natural Hazards & Flooding

Assessments: Integrate hazard mitigation options assessments, risk management practices, climate change modelling and an understanding of cumulative impacts into land use and development decisions.

Planning: Prioritize public safety, minimize property damage and protect environmental health through flood hazard area planning.

Design: Ensure development design in flood hazard areas minimizes damage from floodwaters (groundwater, stormwater and river flooding). After upstream and community-scale flood mitigation infrastructure is operational, account for any remaining risks. Support flood mitigation and risk reduction work including bank repair and flood mitigation infrastructure.



The plan continues to prioritize safety, minimize property damage, and protect the environment.



There are new policies to align with new flood maps, emphasizing risk reduction beyond floods. It recognizes shared responsibilities, ecological connections and building stronger infrastructure for flood resilience.

How is this direction connected to other City Building plans?

The *Zoning Bylaw* and *Street Manual* are tools to implement the direction of the Calgary Plan through rules for new buildings and guidelines for street design.

The **Zoning Bylaw** can include requirements for:

- Balanced Growth:** Making the regulatory system and approval process more fair by simplifying zoning districts.
- Complete Communities:** Creating more opportunities for local retail and a mix of housing types within neighbourhoods.
- Design:** Encouraging architectural innovation by only regulating necessary elements of sites and buildings.
- Economy:** Creating an easier, more flexible approval process for new development, enabling land and business owners to quickly adapt to evolving social and economic trends.

The **Street Manual** can include guidelines for:

- Accessibility:** Creating street standards that ensure accessible infrastructure for people of all abilities for all travel options.
- Context:** Guiding street designs that respond to the adjacent development, including specific street design guidance for industrial areas.