

The Future of Stephen Avenue FAQ

Project Overview

What is a streetscape master plan?

A streetscape master plan is a guiding document that will help us determine how Stephen Avenue will look and feel in the future. A streetscape master plan is more than improved connectivity, accessibility, safety and beautification of a street. It is about place-making, creating vibrant places that put a priority on sociability, access and linkages, and uses and activity.

Why is The City undertaking this work?

Stephen Avenue is downtown Calgary's main street. It is the primary street for public life in the downtown and is one of Calgary's most animated and recognizable streets. It is a meeting place, where people socialize, go to work and where all walks of life gather. Despite these strengths, it has been decades since Stephen Avenue has experienced changes and it needs a refresh to ensure its success into the future. Now is the time to make sure Stephen Avenue thrives as a key great public space and connector of downtown destinations for Calgarians and visitors.

The work that we are doing on Stephen Avenue is a focal point for [The City's Downtown Strategy](#) and our partners efforts to revitalize downtown into an attractive place to live, work and play. It also aligns with [Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan](#), The City's roadmap for the next decade of downtown revitalization. This includes supporting the Greater Downtown Plan's priority strategic moves through this project, including:

- Building neighbourhoods for vibrant urban life
- Creating a green network for a healthy environment
- Designing streets for people
- Supporting transit for all
- Future-proofing and innovating for the next generation

What is The City's Downtown Strategy?

The Downtown Strategy is The City's team that leverages the collective efforts of The City and its public and private sector partners to respond to prolonged economic challenges, and capitalize on opportunities that will create jobs, drive economic recovery, and revitalize and transform the downtown. It's focus is on building great public spaces that encourage people to want to live, work and visit downtown; supporting building owners to convert office to space to homes and other uses; and supporting community groups program and activate their neighbourhoods.

How is The City making Stephen Avenue a more inclusive space?

Our goal is to make Stephen Avenue an inclusive place for all. Through public engagement, we want to hear from all Calgarians on how they want the future of Stephen Avenue designed. We want to hear about what types of programs and amenities would encourage a broad range of Calgarians to come down to the Avenue at all times of the year, on weekends, and into the evenings. Having a broad range of participants and input through this engagement will help ensure a variety of perspectives are considered in the final streetscape design.

How is this project being coordinated with other downtown projects?

The Stephen Avenue project team meets regularly and works closely with other teams delivering projects in the downtown, as this project is a cornerstone of [The City's Downtown Strategy](#) and our efforts to revitalize downtown. We work to coordinate designs, engagement and share information to ensure our projects are well aligned and are supporting the goals and outcomes of each project. We are also tracking and coordinating with other private development work happening in the downtown, sharing timelines and schedules to look for synergies and conflicts. This type of team coordination will continue throughout the life of the project ensuring coordination is happening during all phases of the project.

What are the timelines for this project?

The master plan will be complete in the Fall of 2023. Following that, we will move into the next phases of the project which includes detailed design and construction. We plan to get to the first phase of construction within two years.

How will the project move forward with construction?

A detailed implementation strategy will be developed as part of the deliverables for Phase 2, which will outline how and when the project moves into construction. Proper detours, phasing and sequencing of work will be coordinated to mitigate impacts for the public, businesses and residents. We will also coordinate with other projects (both City-led and private development) to look for ways to minimize impact during construction.

Public Engagement

Who can get involved in this project?

Anyone who is interested in the project can provide their feedback. Our public engagement site is open now until February 28th. We want to hear from all Calgarians on how they want the future of Stephen Avenue designed.

What is the focus of engagement for this project and how will feedback be used?

We are engaging on three main topics:

- **Key design moves.** Feedback collected will help us prioritize how design moves are incorporated into the final plan.
- **Draft representative concept designs.** Feedback collected will be used to validate that draft designs are meeting Calgarian's expectations for the Avenue and the vision established in Phase 1.
- **Programming ideas for the two street types.** Feedback be used to help the team prioritize what kinds of amenities and infrastructure is need in the street scape design to support the programming ideas that Calgarians want most, with the goal of making it a great public space for everyone.

Construction

How will you minimize construction impacts on businesses, residents, workers and visitors?

A detailed implementation strategy will be developed as part of the deliverables for the project. We will also coordinate with other projects (both City-led and private development) to look for ways to minimize impact during construction. Proper detours, phasing and sequencing of work will be coordinated to mitigate impacts for the public, businesses and residents.

Will there be interim improvements to address failing infrastructure?

Ensuring public safety and preventing damage caused by failing infrastructure is paramount for The City. Any immediate safety concerns relating to failing infrastructure will be addressed in a timely manner to ensure public and user safety. If you are aware of any specific areas needing immediate attention, please contact 311.

Funding

Is the project funded for construction?

The project is funded through creating the master plan, and detailed design to get the project construction ready. An implementation plan will be developed as part of this work to outline a strategy for construction phasing, including which blocks and seg-

ments of the Avenue move forward with construction first. The master plan is a critical next step to advance the project to construction. As the full cost of rebuilding Stephen is yet to be determined through design, the amount of funding available for construction had not been finalized.

Project funding comes from the recently approved 2023-2026 budget through the Downtown Strategy Capital Program.

Does the budget for revitalizing Stephen Avenue include funds for maintaining the new furniture and other new amenities after construction has finished?

Funding for the long-term maintenance of Stephen Avenue is provided separately from the capital infrastructure project. The long-term maintenance, operations, and stewardship of the infrastructure is important and we will be having conversations with our internal and external partners who will be responsible for them long term. These conversations will become more detailed as further design progress is made. We are committed to working with these groups, to share what we are doing and to learn how potential outcomes of our design could affect maintenance and operations.

Public Safety

How is this project addressing safety concerns that exist on Stephen Avenue?

Safety and security for all citizens is priority for The City. It's also a complicated matter that requires a multi-prong approach - one of which is improving the physical infrastructure of the street to attract more people down to the avenue. This is where the project can have the greatest impact – by designing a street that improves the sense of safety and comfort to walk and spend time on Stephen Avenue. By making Stephen Avenue a vibrant and inviting place, there will be more activity with eyes on the street. Stephen Avenue will be designed with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals in mind, and other physical improvements such as improved lighting and consistent paving will also make it safer and easier to navigate.

Is more security and police presence a part of your plan?

The project is focused on physical improvements for Stephen Avenue and what we can do to help address current safety and security concerns. This can include elements such as: improved lighting for better security, making Stephen Avenue wayfinding and signage more legible and consistent, and designing to crime prevention through environmental design principles. We are also looking at how improved infrastructure and amenities can better support programming and activation to bring more people to Stephen Avenue to further enhance safety and security through activity and “eyes on the street”.

How will this project ensure and continue to uphold that this space truly is for everyone?

Our goal is to make Stephen Avenue an inclusive place for all and safety for all citizens is a priority for the City. Physical improvements such as improved lighting, designing to crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles, providing amenities like benches, shade, water, etc. allow for the comfort and enjoyment for all.

Understanding how these design changes might impact all populations is part of the process. We are committed to working with our partners to understand how our designs could potentially impact certain populations, including unhoused individuals, and further understand how we could help alleviate concerns or at least not exasperate problems. Unhoused Calgarians are part of our community and a diverse community who have a right to public space. The safety challenge is not about specific communities, but about illicit behaviours exhibited by individuals.

Parking

How will parking change?

Parking will be removed from Stephen Avenue in the multi-modal street section to improve the street experience and make it safer and more comfortable for pedestrians, cyclists and other wheeled users. This will provide a wider through zones for walking, street trees, and allow more social space for programming and street furniture.

Some of the lost parking may be replaced through proposed designated parking zones at cross-street intersections. The net loss of parking will not have a significant impact on the overall parking supply as there is a large supply of available public parking nearby within 1 block of the corridor. Improved wayfinding to these existing parking facilities will also be explored to help people navigate to convenient nearby parking.

Design

Why is two-way traffic maintained in the multi-modal street section as opposed to one-way streets?

Along the multi-modal section of Stephen Avenue, dedicated two-way travel lanes are maintained. As opposed to one-way streets, two-way streets make for a better neighborhood street by encouraging calmer, slower traffic.

In the multimodal zone will there be surface or elevated signage identifying the pedestrian pathways as different from the wheeled pathway areas?

Conflicts between pedestrians and active mobility users will be mitigated by using the furniture zone to separate the through zone and the active mobility zone. The streetscape design will include appropriate signage so it is clear what zones are designed for which users.

How are loading areas being considered in this project?

Along the entire length of the Avenue, the primary proposed strategy is to leverage alleyways and designate zones for loading, pick up and drop off at cross streets near intersections. Additionally, the multimodal street is generally suitable for in-lane drop-off given the low traffic volumes.

We have been engaging with businesses, property owners, organizations and institutions along Stephen Avenue to understand their current loading operations and looking for input on how new loading recommendations might affect this. The final streetscape master plan will consider these needs.

Will the program zones have available access to power provision to eliminate the need for self-generated power?

Specific infrastructure and amenities needed to support different programming needs will be informed through this phase of engagement. By understanding what kind of activities and programs are most desired in specific areas, we will be able to identify, plan and design the infrastructure needed to support them, including appropriate access to power. Everyday amenities (like seating, lighting, trash receptacles, bike racks etc.) will be provided as baseline amenities throughout the corridor.

Do all concepts consider the ability for programing of major events?

The design does consider the need for programming and activation of the street and what infrastructure is needed to support those uses. This is important to create vibrancy and support spillover economic benefits. That said, not all activities can be accommodated within Stephen Avenue, as some uses such as larger festivals/event might not be suitable for a streetscape and can be better accommodated on a festival site. Part of our task is finding the right balance of uses to activate the street and providing flexible designs that accommodate those uses.

How will the upgrades to Stephen Avenue be balanced with the heritage aspects?

In Phase 1, we identified a goal of celebrating the existing heritage buildings. We know that the existing historic building facades bring a unique character and sense of place to Stephen Avenue. One of the key design moves identified in this phase of work is 'light the avenue at the human scale'. One way to achieve this design move is to explore architectural accent lighting that highlights and celebrates the historic building details, while adding ambiance to these blocks.

If you're trying to make Stephen Avenue more vibrant, why would you make it easier to get off the street into the Plus-15?

Strengthening connections between the Plus-15 network and Stephen Avenue will improve access that is limited today and make navigation more intuitive. Direct connections reduce the complicated detours pedestrians make when navigating the Plus-15, and clear connections make it easier for users to spontaneously descend to Stephen Avenue. More clear and direct links can support both the businesses on Stephen Avenue and in the Plus-15. Creating direct links to the Plus 15 network will also provide the potential for activating the spaces below and opportunities for wayfinding and iconic branding.

Are public washrooms in scope?

Public washrooms are not currently being considered for Stephen Avenue. This type of amenity is better suited and more appropriate in a larger venue, such as a park or plaza. There are currently public washrooms available at Olympic Plaza, Devonian Gardens, Century Gardens and Millennium Park. We are considering opportunities to improve wayfinding to these nearby existing facilities.

Through our engagement we are hearing that there is a need for better access to better public washroom facilities in the downtown and we are committed to sharing what we are hearing and working with other groups internally to understand how this issue could be better addressed.

Trees generally take decades to mature. How long will this plan vision take to be fully realized?

Trees will take time to mature, but one of the key moves we're making is to provide adequate soil volumes for trees to grow to full maturity and be healthy. Selection of tree species might help by choosing faster growing species to realize a large canopy.