



Downtown Strategy 10-Year Capital Infrastructure Needs Assessment

April 2026

1. Service Overview

Downtown Strategy coordinates The City of Calgary's efforts by working with internal business units, community partners, and the private sector to support the long-term revitalization of downtown. Approved by Council in 2021 alongside the Greater Downtown Plan, it is a 10-year, place-based response to long-term economic and social change.

Downtown Calgary continues to face structural office vacancy while experiencing rapid residential growth driven by office-to-residential conversions and ongoing private development. This transition is increasing daily activity downtown and demand for public spaces, streets, amenities, safety, and connections that support everyday life. Strategic investment through the Downtown Calgary Development Incentive Program, combined with targeted capital investment in public amenities, is producing clear and measurable outcomes for Calgarians:

- **Conversion Success:** To date, **21 conversion projects** have been approved, removing approximately **2.68 million square feet** of surplus office space and creating housing capacity for more than **4,000 new downtown residents**.
- **Target Progress: Seven projects are complete**, including Calgary's first hotel conversion and a post-secondary campus that has brought **1,200 University of Calgary students downtown**. These completions represent **nearly half of the 10-year target to remove six million square feet** of underused office space.
- **Economic Impact:** These investments are catalyzing private reinvestment, not replacing it. **For every \$1 invested by The City, approximately \$4 of private capital has been leveraged**, generating an **estimated \$1.4 billion in economic impact to date**.
- **Fiscal Benefits:** The combined direct and indirect tax uplift is estimated at over \$14 million annually, with full fiscal benefits accruing over time as additional projects are delivered, supporting long-term, city-wide services for all Calgarians.

Capital investment in the public realm is a critical enabler of this progress. Since 2021, Downtown Strategy has deployed approximately **\$163 million** to priority projects such as Stephen Avenue, Eau Claire Plaza, Olympic Plaza, Century Gardens, 8 Street SW, and the Glenbow Museum, ensuring residential growth is supported by high-quality, inclusive public spaces. These combined efforts are translating into improved public confidence: perceptions of downtown vibrancy increased to **65% in 2025**, up from 57% in 2024, while the share of Calgarians with a positive view of downtown has grown from **47% to 58%**.

As part of the 2027–2030 budget cycle, continued and coordinated capital investment is required to sustain momentum, address remaining amenity gaps, and support a resilient, mixed-use downtown.

Proposed Capital Projects and Delivery Approach

Informed by work undertaken with external advisor Arup, the proposed **Downtown Strategy Capital Infrastructure Plan** focuses on a small number of high-impact, place-based projects that strengthen downtown public spaces, streets, and connections. These investments continue momentum on existing projects, support downtown living, enable private investment, and improve how people move through and experience the downtown core. Arup reviewed amenity gaps, investment prioritization, and comparable downtown revitalization case studies across North America. Their findings demonstrate that strategic public-realm investment is strongly associated with increased private investment, higher property values, improved pedestrian activity, and stronger perceptions of safety.

All projects will advance through The City's stage gate process and be coordinated through the cross-corporate **Downtown Revitalization Capital Portfolio Management Committee** to align delivery with other City projects, utility upgrades, and community priorities.

Priority projects over the 4 and 10-year horizons include:

- **Downtown Amenities Fund:** This fund provides flexible, responsive capital capacity to address smaller-scale, high-impact, and resident-serving needs as downtown evolves. As part of the investment strategy, Arup's technical amenity gap validation identified specific deficiencies in parks and recreation infrastructure. This fund allows for a data-driven and community-driven response to emerging priorities, such as public space, safety, and mobility, while enabling The City to leverage matching funding from other orders of government or private partners.
- **Stephen Avenue:** Renewal of the primary pedestrian corridor to improve accessibility, public space quality, and year-round use. Delivery is expected in phases and coordinated with utility upgrades and nearby development.
- **8 Street SW:** Streetscape improvements to a key north-south connector supporting walkability, safety, and access to transit, residential areas, and destinations.
- **1 Street SE:** Public realm upgrades strengthening connections to the Culture and Entertainment District and supporting adjacent redevelopment.
- **Riverwalk West:** Enhancements to a major recreational and mobility corridor, improving pathway connections, accessibility, and public space quality along the Bow River

2. Strategic Alignment

The Downtown Strategy Capital Infrastructure Plan aligns directly with **Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan (approved 2021)**, which establishes a long-term vision for a resilient, mixed-use downtown supported by high-quality public spaces and strong connectivity.

The Greater Downtown Plan identified the place-based investments and actions required to support downtown reinvention. The projects in this Capital Infrastructure Plan advance those priorities by strengthening key corridors, public spaces, and connections that support downtown living, economic activity, and private investment.

This plan also supports objectives in **Home is Here: Calgary's Housing Strategy**, and the **Municipal Development Plan** by enabling compact, transit-oriented growth, supporting residential intensification, and improving the quality of the public realm. Collectively, these investments align with Council priorities for reliable infrastructure, community safety, livability, balanced growth, and collaborative government.

3. Service Risks

Downtown Calgary's transition from a primarily office-focused district to a mixed-use neighbourhood introduces risks that must be actively managed through coordinated capital investment.

Key risks if investment does not keep pace include:

- **Amenity and infrastructure gaps** as residential growth accelerates
- **Loss of momentum** on complex, multi-year revitalization projects
- **Increased disruption and higher long-term costs**- from uncoordinated or deferred work
- **Reduced effectiveness of other City investments**, including incentives, programming, and safety initiatives

The Downtown Strategy Capital Infrastructure Plan mitigates these risks by advancing priority public realm and connectivity projects, delivering work in phases, and coordinating with other City capital programs. The Downtown Amenities Fund further reduces risk by providing flexibility to address emerging gaps and high-impact needs over both the 4 and 10-year planning horizons.

4. Service Objectives

Downtown Strategy's capital investments support downtown Calgary's long-term transition into a more livable, resilient, and inclusive mixed-use neighbourhood. Unlike traditional City services, Downtown Strategy does not deliver a single ongoing operational service. Instead, capital investment acts as a strategic enabler to support housing, economic activity, safety, and quality of life outcomes downtown. Strategic investments in the downtown are intended to lift property values and support City services across Calgary through property tax generation.

Over the next 10 years, capital investment will focus on:

- **Supporting thousands of new downtown residents and ongoing growth** through high-quality streets, public spaces, and amenities;
- **Strengthening key public spaces and connections** linking homes, transit, employment, and cultural destinations;
- **Enabling private investment and economic confidence** through improved public realm quality;
- **Improving livability, safety, and year-round use** of downtown spaces; and
- **Delivering projects in a coordinated and flexible way**, aligned with utility upgrades, community priorities, and other City initiatives.

Together, these objectives support Council’s goals for livability, balanced growth, reliable infrastructure, and the responsible stewardship of public funds.

5. Previously Approved and Capital Infrastructure Needs

Table 1: Previously Approved and Capital Infrastructure Needs (\$ millions)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031-2035	Total
Previously approved	-	-	5	8	9	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	25
Capital Infrastructure Needs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	53	20	5	170	271

A listing of previously approved investments was provided in **Appendix A** for 2026+. A listing of capital infrastructure needs for 2027-2035+ was provided as **Appendix B**.

Note: The approved budget for 2021-2026 for Downtown Strategy was ~\$163 million. Of that, Downtown Strategy transferred ~\$138 million to executing Business Units, which has left Downtown Strategy with ~\$25 million of total budget over that period.

Figure 1: Summary of Capital Infrastructure Needs by Investment Driver

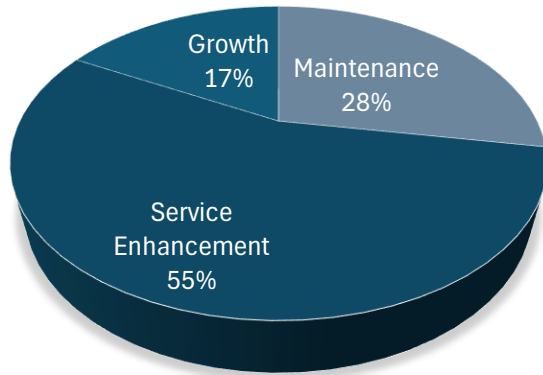


Table 2: Summary of Operating Cost of Capital for Capital Infrastructure Needs by Year (\$ millions)



	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031-2035	Total
Total	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Operating cost impacts are to be determined, subject to project scope.

Operating requirements are expected to remain comparable to current levels, as the proposed projects primarily focus on the renewal of existing assets. However, the specific operating cost impacts remain to be determined. Projects such as the **Stephen Avenue Revitalization Project, 1 Street SE Revitalization Project, Revitalize 8 Street SW Project,** and **RiverWalk West** could require an enhanced level of operating service in the future. This will depend on the final scope of project phases and the results of community engagement and coordination with other City business units.

Appendix A: Previously Approved Capital

Legend (% of capital \$ per opportunity item)

1% ~ 10%	
11% ~ 25%	
25% +	

Appendix A: Previously Approved Capital (\$millions)

<i>Total</i>		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035+
2026-2035+											

Downtown Strategy Capital



Total Previously Approved Capital - Downtown Strategy

2

Appendix B: Capital Infrastructure Needs

The values presented reflect identified capital needs and have been rounded to the nearest million for presentation purposes. These capital needs have not received approved budget and will be considered for future business cycles.

The 10-year capital investments for Downtown Strategy are foundational in nature and have been prioritized as High. This reflects the essential funding required to sustain revitalization momentum, support accelerating residential growth, and manage core risks associated with the district's transition to a mixed-use neighborhood. These investments establish the baseline for a resilient downtown and define the essential capital required to maintain economic confidence and public realm quality over time. All values are presented in 2025 dollars, with estimates prepared as of January 2026. Further refinements and adjustments are expected through the development of the 2027 to 2030 Budget and the 10-Year Capital Infrastructure Plan.

Legend (% of capital \$ per opportunity item)

1% ~ 10%	
11% ~ 25%	
25% +	

Critical Assets in Poor / Very Poor Condition

Severe Consequence of Failure	
High Consequence of Failure	

Appendix B: Capital Infrastructure Needs (\$millions)

	Priority (H / M / L)	Total 2027-2035+	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035+
Service Enhancement - Primary Driver											
Downtown Amenity Fund	H	45									
Stephen Avenue Revitalization Project	H	120									
8th Street SW	H	35									
Riverwalk West	H	43									
1 Street SE	H	28									
Total Capital Investment Needs - Downtown Strategy		271									