

DRAFT Downtown Redevelopment Plan

Public Open House Comments

June 2009

***Please note that while comments are reported verbatim, some have been edited to remove any personally identifying words. These edits are indicated by [edited].**

A number shown behind a sentence shows the number of people who had a similar comment.

1. WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE VISION, PRINCIPLES AND POLICY DIRECTION PRESENTED IN THE DRAFT DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (THE “PLAN”)?

Transportation

Pedestrian/Cycling

- Start today by closing 3rd Street for pedestrians and work from there
- A pedestrian/cycling first initiative Downtown with people friendly areas. This will make people walk and shop and will also provide pedestrian access to many facilities in a safe and pollution free environment (14)
- Pedestrian first initiative is under realized in the plan
- Looks like it will be a downtown core that will attract people
- Focus on gathering places and the movement of people
- The bike trails and bike racks plan. I bike but am careful about where to leave my bike. I also find it scary to deal with some of the traffic
- More bike paths

Public Transit

- Moving the transit terminal. It also makes accessibility more effective (4)
- More parkade parking
- Improved public transit
- Makes sense to me. My husband told me that the transit was once on 6th Avenue and that at one time 6th Avenue was closed to traffic. Is the new bus location appropriate, the Greyhound turns into that alley this may cause excess congestion?
- Moving the buses back on the street
- Moving the Greyhound depot (2)
- I really like the idea of moving the bus depot into more of a drive through approach – it is also a bit of a scary place.

Railway

- The railway plan. It would be nice to have passenger rail service again for Medicine Hat residents who want to travel. It would also be good for tourism. The railway station should also be kept as a heritage building (3)
- Reducing the size of the rail yards

Vehicular/Parking

- Making streets two-way again. Jane Jacobs would approve as traffic would no longer be rushed through the Downtown (9)
- Don't like the 2 way streets for 2nd and 3rd Streets
- Downtown will only expand once density is allowed to increase and parking requirements are dropped
- More Downtown parking is required; using the existing transit terminal is a good solution to provide parking (2)
- Keep parking areas safe (3)

Connections

- Reconnecting the North Flats area back to downtown with an accessible, safe and clean connector route (pedestrian/vehicular). The railroad is currently a barrier. Access to the Flats from Downtown is important. (7)
- Gateway entry to Downtown (creates a sense of place)
- Improving the unsafe, scary pedestrian underpass (6).
- Join North Railway and Downtown with a pedestrian overpass (6)
- Pedestrian and bicycle bridge over 5th Street
- Emphasis on historical connections
- Integration of the railway district with both Downtown and Flats Plans
- Removal and re-design of existing dangerous pedestrian mid-block crossings to improve safety (5)
- Connectivity of parking and pathways, walkability

Aesthetics

- Making downtown attractive, with emphasis on streetscapes and keeping greenery i.e. trees, flowers. A better, brighter, downtown with street lighting (4)
- Focus on defined districts with a focus
- Architectural guidelines
- Maintain architecture
- Maintain the brick and mortar look
- Non-corporate designs
- Waterfront improvements

Uses

- Preservation/enhancement of heritage buildings and churches such as St. Barnaba Church and the other two. Retaining the history of Medicine Hat is important and key. To promote revenue. I would like to see one City street with old historic buildings restored as they were when they were erected to attract tourists (9)
- The multi-use component with overlapping uses in the different parts of the downtown. Like the mixed-use concept residential, and offices above and commercial and retail space at ground level. Retail (1st floor), commercial (2nd floor) residential (3rd and 4th floors). Keeping the railway station both as a heritage building, heritage initiatives (7)
- Encourage retail sectors (2)
- Encourage business sectors
- Promote local businesses
- More housing options: townhouses, apartments.
- Inclusion of attractive residential opportunities. People that live downtown spend more income downtown – get more housing! Would be nice to have more residential in the area. Residential development will make the plan succeed! More medium density! A new residential area is wonderful. Bringing in more residential. More housing downtown. More residential close to the core. I agree with the concept of increasing residential density. (10)
- The idea of providing housing where the arena and curling club are currently located
- Entertainment District (people have a reason to be downtown, give them one)
- North Railway area
- Engage the “River Road” experience
- Keep Veteran’s Park
- Green space
- Second Avenue improvements
- More people and more interest from business to find ways to service them
- The idea of closing part of 3rd Street and creating seating areas etc.
- I have always felt that downtown should be developed more. I love shopping downtown but many businesses don’t last long. It would be great to see some evening establishments that could be visited after events at the Esplanade
- Both the Flats and Downtown would be better served by the removal of the railroad – build the new arena down on the old R.R. property. Both the North Railway and Downtown could be united as a single

commercial/residential area. Good access with South Railway and Maple Avenue to the new downtown core.

- International cultural meeting place
- Downtown hotel (7)
- Downtown farmers market. It also provides space for artisans etc. (4)
- Infill into the Downtown core
- Better use of North Railway Street for artisan fair etc.
- Non-profit on 2nd floor and up to leave more room for businesses on main floors.
- Making promenades
- High density commercial and residential areas
- Buildings need to have more than 1-2 floors
- We definitely need the plan as the downtown area is becoming a “weedy” area with too many empty buildings
- The mix. Getting back to the sense of community. [Edited]
- Improve the “Tim Hortons” area. This will encourage the public to visit downtown. Suggestions – take out benches in front of Tim Hortons, put in a small fenced patio – remove sign post – that attracts the wrong type to hang around...who wants to “elbow” past this?
- The organizational groupings of districts
- I love the idea of the farmers/artisan market in the North Railway Street area
- Liked the direction the old railway redevelopment. This is such a unique feature it could become a super tourist attraction especially if rail service is restored. A year round market there is a great idea but only if enough parking is made available. High tech is not needed downtown. These high tech buildings are usually less than attractive.

Vision/Identity

- New ideas and vision is excellent and tremendous, thought has gone into it (4)
- Vision is a good word. Is it just a vision?
- Vision is great but lets make it a reality
- The sooner the better
- I may not agree with all, but respect the effort you have gone to. I believe the focus of downtown Medicine Hat must change. It must become trendy, upscale place that people want to visit and live in, not have to. I have traveled extremely, and have witnessed the downtowns to flourish, be the ones that are progressive at attracting the young and the affluent.
- Border needs to be expanded
- I like the “feel”. The vision seems to me to be urbane and visually pleasing. It has a boutique feel which would work well.
- The long-term vision
- In general, the vision is good. The demonstration through pictures is excellent. Ties it together well.
- Imaginative, comprehensive, builds on the unique strengths of the downtown.
- Plan creates a feeling of downtown as livable space and opportunities for creative exchange.
- Vision - been there.
- Expanding on identity. Idea of unique identity → red brick, heritage initiatives (but electric lighting? In the gas city? = unique identity – can’t gas lights be retrofitted for more efficient use? (3). Creating a unique downtown identity to offer something different in shopping and entertainment than other areas of the City
- Downtown needs an identity – good

Implementation

- Development should be in a shorter time span:15-20 years is too long
- The City MUST gather the land needed to redevelop within 2 years, not 1-5 years.
- Please try and speed up the process so we can all still be alive to see and enjoy the new city.
- The City taking the lead
- Green Plan
- Appreciate efforts to increase the City’s focus on the downtown – but is there the political and societal will to implement change? As a resident of downtown and also a downtown employee, I hope to see vibrancy brought to the core.

- I like the idea of revitalizing the downtown area. There is a need to bring people into the area or change the focus of the area entirely. If you do not have affordable housing there is no point in having retail stores. Best is to build businesses with restaurants.
- We need some changes NOW! When do we get started? (2)
- Administration needs to be more forward thinking. The story boards are nice, but do something!
- For many residents it will mean nothing if the Planning Department doesn't start relaxing on some issues – approving projects, get tied up in this vision if ...one comes up???
- This is a real plan for the “90s”. Development is going to be a lot less aggressive with the boom off and with the burst finance bubble. The boom isn't coming back. The plan is pretty grandiose, and the fiddly little districts are unnecessary in such a small area. Also, the huge upfront expense to the City in the form of a 5 year planning cycle appears to be mainly for the benefits of consultants vs. the community.
- [Edited]. We have been involved in lots of draft plans for the downtown. The visions, principles and policies are just great but who will have the desire to see it through?
- Re-claim property (slum landlords) good
- Encouraging more people to move into the downtown core.
- Lots of talk but is anything going to happen? Some stores downtown are in favour of having 3rd street as a mall, some say it will ruin their businesses. The downtown mall is good for those living downtown (very few) but not if you have to walk a couple of blocks and you are elderly.
- Inclusion of attractive residential opportunities – but how will developers buy in?
- The plan appears as though it will cost a lot of money to implement. I do not want the taxpayers to have to pay this if this means that taxes will increase. If not, and taxes stay the same this is terrific

General Comments

- Overall, I like the plan (9)
- Great to have an actual redevelopment plan that looks achievable and realistic over the long term
- Great ideas have been proposed. Thanks to the Planners, keep up the excellent work
- Appreciate open houses and opportunity to see proposals and have input
- Nothing really new – not worth the money to hire consultants to add a few walkways etc.
- Plan is already behind: hotel kitty corner from City Hall is wrong
- Most European cities have lots of people living downtown – we should too
- The flats and the railroad development
- It was colourful
- The visuals provided a good view of the proposed changes
- Well played out – terrific concepts, well explained
- The downtown plan is also very good. It will look more like parts of Las Vegas
- The fact that there isn't so much skyscrapers. I am glad to see Medicine Hat will still be Medicine Hat. I especially like the farmer's market.
- I like the optimistic planning but it will take some way to excite the City of Medicine Hat and the retail and business community.
- [Edited] – nothing new has been presented that we have not seen or heard over the past 25 years. All ideas are great on paper as they have been previously- however no political will exists to affect change and by adopting this plan does not mean anything will change – we need to!

2. WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE OR ADD TO THE *DRAFT PLAN*?

Transportation

Pedestrian/Cycling

- Ensure that there is access for bikers and rollerbladers and do not forget about those that are handi-capped (2)
- “Pedestrian only” seems to have been a failure to businesses in the downtown. Granville Street Pedestrian Mall as opposed to Robson Street in Vancouver for example. Also, it's a shame that the only neighbourhood that has excellent access to the downtown is “The Hill”
- Consider changing sections of 2nd or 3rd Streets to pedestrian only traffic with the other being two-way.
- Walking roadway – switch from Avenue to an East < --- > West street

- 2nd Street behind Parkers and Core is dead. Esplanade did not add to “life” along this block. What can be done?
- Prioritize planning as: #1 pedestrians #2 cyclists #3 automobiles
- Close Finlay Bridge to vehicular traffic – use as a walking bridge complete with view areas of the river
- Some consideration should be made for individuals who find “walking” difficult due to age or disabilities. Maybe a tourist bus.
- More seating areas for older citizens to rest in the revised Downtown area.

Public Transit

- Increase in public transit use – electrically powered buses
- Bus service could be better from numerous sheltered terminals in the outskirts
- Is there a way to have an accessible transit system without a lot of lumbering buses on narrow pedestrian-friendly streets?
- How does the Greyhound bus terminal fit in?
- Park buses on 6th Avenue SE (where they used to be) – there is no designated parking, therefore no disturbance to existing businesses that require parking.
- No bus mall on the street → check Saskatoon bus block

Bus Terminal (local)

- Maintain the location of the current bus terminal, just add more floors on top to accommodate more vehicles and encourage more public transit use. Elevators could also be installed. (4) Leave the bus terminal where it is.
- More security and maintenance are needed for the existing bus terminal
- The new proposed bus terminal does not sit well with me. Before the bus terminal was built the buses were on 6th Avenue. Then the bus terminal was built to make our transit system more accessible. By moving the bus terminal to 5th Avenue, I see this as a step backward. As a tax payer I do not see why I should pay for another bus terminal when I have already paid for one. In addition, transit users will have to J-walk to get across the street to catch their bus which creates a safety issue. Improve the current bus terminal with more lighting and security guards and you will find more people are willing to park there as well.
- [Edited].
- Why would it be a safer location? People will sneak out between buses to cross the street – into traffic.
- Customers, clients and patients will have less access to close parking.
- Talk about new terminal, more central – how can a movement of 1 block make a difference to how central it is? And if 5th Avenue is more central location and force people/employees to park and walk. Why not promote more business and building in that central location?
- Talk of 300 additional transit terminal parking spots (with expansion) - only 100 more by moving the buses – can’t set people to use the current ones.
- Creating more parking spaces by removing the transit terminal is a bad move. Emphasis should be given to public transit access and a reduction of the number of cars in the downtown area. Safety and pollution free environment should be priorities.
- Although I love the idea of reducing the parkade, I have poor/bad memories of the buses on the avenue. I do not believe you have the space to properly accommodate and believe it will be dirty. Not sure on 2 way traffic, but trust you have researched. I envision long delays at traffic lights where cars want to turn. I fear we have too much traffic to return to 2 ways. Again, my travel experience does not agree with a 2 way concept working.
- The transit building should be scrapped or turned into all public parking. A rapid transit route or (poor mans light rail) using buses should run from Northlands to Wal-Mart down Maple and Allowance Avenues with a terminal in the Flats. All bus routes would feed them in route. A bus lane east and west would be non stop except at terminals and gates would be implemented similar to Calgary light rail
- There are many issues with relocating the bus depot along 5th Avenue [edited]
 - Fumes and dust generated by the buses will impact the air quality [edited]
 - The removal of ten parking stalls along 5th Avenue to accommodate the bus terminal will exacerbate an already tight parking situation [Edited]
 - [Edited]

- “Transit Avenue” – why re-create the problem that existed that prompted the building of the parkade in the first place? Where will transit users go when it is 30 degrees Celsius?

Railway

- Rail yard is taking up too much space. The polluting freight engines are a health problem. Move freight yard to Suffield.
- Is it realistic to think CPR will move their rail yard?

Vehicular/Parking

- Reduction of car use, or elimination to reduce pollution and enhance safety
- Use roundabouts so traffic can flow in all directions at the 4th Street level, i.e. transition to residential areas
- Further consideration on vehicular traffic patterns – the plan appears to encourage extremely high traffic volumes
- Scrap two-way streets (2). I only see problems. One example – after a heavy rain - 1st Street underpass is flooded. Traffic would be at the standstill. Also, it would take forever to get through downtown.
- Make sure that parking design is effective from multi-use perspective.
- Dead end streets 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th limit response times for emergency vehicle.
- Much of the traffic through downtown is just “through traffic” with people who have no interest in stopping. Downtown is key to an overall transportation master plan.
- Keep 3rd and 2nd Streets as one-ways.
- Keep one way streets but implement angled parking to create easier in/out of vehicles (2)
- Provide more parking to businesses.
- Remember the attraction to the mall and new shopping complexes is parking – access! Yes people could walk and bike more, but from the suburbs they have to drive and park in the downtown before they can get out and walk.
- Where is the parking issue being addressed?
- Free downtown parking
- I would change parking and keep one way. Have angled parking on one side for “small green vehicles” and keep parallel parking on the other side of the street

Connections

- More river crossings are needed especially a pedestrian/bicycle bridge that connects Police Point Park and Strathcona Park.
- Finley bridge is not adequate enough for its current use capacity, upgrading may be required.
- Where does the South Flats fit into the overall planning process for redevelopment of downtown? This neighbourhood and associated businesses should be involved and considered part of the downtown. Almost like another gateway to downtown.
- If you want to connect the Flats to the Downtown you need to get rid of the rail yards and construct underpasses and crossings over the rail line. Check out Bismarck, North Dakota.
- Consideration should also be given to accessing NE and NW. As well as the bridges, one or more tunnels under the river should be considered especially since that side of the river is developing.
- Include replacing the Finley Bridge
- Recognize the role the downtown plays as the location of the variety of social services the community requires – don’t vanish??? The people with needs, no matter how unattractive they may be to some out of sight industrial area as Calgary seems to want to do.
- Add an overpass on 6th Avenue from where the proposed hotel is to be and where the service stores are.
- I wouldn’t add a bridge across the CPR tracks. Underpass under the railroad tracks will always be a perceived safety/security risk, no matter how much upgrading is done. Replace with all weather overpasses (2)

Aesthetics

- The wide sidewalk with boulevard trees is appealing
- No grey brick finish
- Current gateways to downtown are atrocious (CORE, Glanville site, large blank walls on Esplanade, 1st Street underpass and rail yards). These need significant attention

Uses

- The focus on specialty retail may not work, expanding the focus to include additional office space would likely result in faster growth
- More use of the river needs to be considered (2)
- Where the arena is along the river would be nice area to have a river front plaza i.e. Eau Claire Market, Calgary
- The addition of a grocery store, or one large one
- A minimum height for buildings in the downtown should be required, i.e. 4 floors or more. The City should try and grow upward. Provide more residential development
- VERY IMPORTANT – Don't even consider putting the cultural centre on the corner of 1st and Maple Avenue (prime real estate for River View Condos)
- Not sure of splitting the proposed marketplace and tourism office, they should be combined. I.e. Granville Street in Vancouver - a wonderful walk through – all the art galleries, specialty shops, boutiques. I think that the greatest feature of the downtown is the South Saskatchewan River.
- Regarding downtown restructuring; close off 2nd street from 6th avenue to South Railway. Put a glass/plexiglass roof over the street. Pedestrian traffic only in this area/. Restore existing store fronts. Have a combination of small boutiques, cafes/bistros, living quarters and an open green atmosphere on the street level. Tables, chairs, hanging flower baskets. Riverside park would be a great place for families to relax and enjoy. Parking area at the back of the 2nd Street to 1st Street. This could offer a great addition to downtown all year round. Ice sculptures would be a nice feature in winter months in Riverside Park.
- [Edited]
- The hotel on 1st and 6th Avenue could cause parking issues depending on the hotel size.
- Some of my favourite places to visit are Stratford Ontario and Nelson BC, also downtown Chicago. All are interesting and busy with events and culture and support businesses working hand in hand to make my visit unforgettable. I hope to see Medicine Hat become a well-known City for travelers.
- Add/make clearer the intention to create accessible pathways, businesses and housing.
- Some of the plans, drawings, ideas seem to conflict with each other. What is a hotel in one is entertainment in another. The land was recently sold for residential/commercial.
- Restaurants, hotel, condo, growth.
- Promote brownstone infill or businesses on the main floor with one or two stories of residential above.
- The downtown is on the flats, please stop separating.
- Include Riverside area into the plan
- Create native species ecozones and xeriscape into beautification.
- A definite time frame for derelict landlords to cleanup, develop, tear down or sell their properties. They are the disgrace of our downtown – an embarrassment when showing the downtown to visitors – this should apply to all properties in city limits – cheaper rents enforced to encourage more artists to establish studios downtown.
- Having traveled to small cities all over the world, your plan could really enhance the downtown but you need the political will to bring your derelict landlords under control now!
- Information kiosks are important
- A second hotel instead of a Cultural centre on 1St Street and Maple Avenue.
- The 600 block of 2nd Street should be closed or the alley behind be closed and used as a large patio and market with a glass cover.
- Add more residential suites for downtown so seniors could live down there (that didn't need to drive or park).
- Put the events centre downtown! It is really too bad that the decision on the events centre has moved from a downtown location to the outskirts or Medicine Hat. To who's benefit? (3)
- Move/put the proposed event/conference centre downtown to create the impetus to see the private sector move the downtown revitalization on a fast track
- Make sure alleys were clear at entrances so that larger vehicles can turn down them without causing a back log in traffic, i.e. buses, transport, trucks, garbage trucks etc.
- Need a commercial anchor in downtown to help support the current niche commercial. Could we entice Chapters or Barnes and Noble to open a "junior size" store in the downtown? Hopefully where CORE exists

- The limiting factors of designating non-profits as secondary. [Edited].
- Close off 3rd Street from Dairy Queen to Railway Street to make it a pedestrian strolling area and outside restaurants/music – i.e. Kimberley's plaza
- Have the CPR building as a museum catering to a different concept than the Esplanade
- I would add more shopping
- I would definitely try and take out fast food and add some of our locally owned businesses, like homemade sandwiches
- Where are nonprofits going? Bridges, CORE, Miywasin, John Howard, etc. Do they have to open stores?
- Get the downtown core to revitalize old stores etc.
- Would like a better or newer library especially parking. Present parking area is too small, poorly laid out. Existing is positively dangerous!

Implementation

- Can the CCDA actually be the leaders in implementation? Perhaps with more input from City staff, residents, developers etc. this could be possible? I have some reservations; however there is hope.
- Limit invisible landlords who do not plan to restore and redevelop to the requirements of the plan.
- Under "Historic Conservation" rather than "encourage landowners to use brick," legislate it through defined architectural controls. Make downtown Medicine Hat a truly unique "red brick" community. The City should re-introduce tax incentives to downtown owners to assist with complying with this central theme. The absence of defined front elevation controls will only continue to reinforce or encourage the use of non-historical cladding materials. Many Ontario communities (I.e., Stratford) have similar brick architectural controls. We have the opportunity to create something very unique in western Canada but specific controls are required to achieve it.
- Implement plaques on historic buildings detailing their history. Be sure to preserve what few historic buildings we have, I.e. what Moose Jaw has done with their downtown.
- How is it going to happen? When is it going to happen?
- Cut back into consulting projected for the first five years
- Fix mis-referenced streets and avenues (looks sloppy) (Maple Street)
- Mention developers once or twice. The plan reads like City Hall is going to be doing everything when in fact, the role of City Hall is to provide oversight and facilitation. Acknowledging the current state of downtown retail wouldn't be bad either
- Tax holidays as an incentive for redevelopment
- Leave as is on the draft
- The City needs to purchase land for redevelopment ASAP!
- The Plan should be shortened to 20 years
- The Plan needs to be more specific for infill and land use policies
- We don't need the plan. Start applying. We revisit everything over and over again.
- Add a lot more street parking now (there are about 80 spots that could be added ASAP by just changing some parking posts around and extending parking to corners and not have turning lanes and regular lanes
- Downtown should go to Division Avenue on 1st, 2nd and 3rd
- I like the vision and how does this vision get "kick started"? Are there key permits that can be implemented sooner than later?
- A greater sense of a plan (rather than a collection of architectural sketches of what could but will probably never happen). A downtown redevelopment plan, if one is ever to work, would require a larger/greater urban vision that this one provides. In fact, such a plan should start outside the downtown and put limits to growth – both commercial and residential – in the city's newer (suburban) areas. We can dream of new hotels and businesses, new housing developments and pedestrian places, but unless the gross mega-development in the City's margins is controlled (if not hotel), none of this will come to pass.
- It's vague, fuzzy language that was remarkably short on specifics, long on warm fuzzies and not much else – pure bureaucratic double – speak. It needs to be more specific. I don't see concrete ideas. (2)
- No changes at this time (2)
- It seems like a very first draft! The areas each need to have their own fully thought through development plan: civic, commercial transit, etc.
- Right now we get random lists of "maybe" possibilities
- The different areas need also to be more fully integrated with each other

- Am opposed to 2-way streets, 1 way slows down traffic (or how about pedestrian only downtown! There's a vision
- I didn't see anything definite on the changes they are proposing. Given them a clear picture of the proposals
- I wouldn't change anything at this point except that I believe that the arena should be downtown to increase awareness/visibility for the downtown businesses and would catapult the process of downtown revitalization
- See strong policies and commitment from Council to see the plans implemented on a steady timeline.
- Deal with the absentee landlords. It always seems to be a "draft plan". When are we seeing some action? Is this just another plan?
- Contact the owners of the buildings that are going to be affected
- Action needed now, plus thinking about the future
- No mention in presentation about how vagrants and ruffians will be coerced to leave
- I would be very cautious about counting on the CCDA for leadership
 - I give the example of the Monarch Theatre. Communication with the public has been very poor. I am frustrated by its seemingly disorganized effort to move the Monarch Theatre forward to re-opening. It was to open at the beginning of January and several other openings have been announced. Now I'm doubtful that it will open in 2009
 - There are some great businesses downtown. I feel that many business owners are putting their creative energies into their business and that is appropriate. They contribute now to the unique identity
 - If the CCDA is to contribute leadership in the implementation of the redevelopment plan, it is important to have a mix of board members who are aware of the time commitments required to be effective board members and who are willing to make a commitment to improving the downtown.
- The timeline for years 1-5 needs to be more ambitious. People need to see something happen sooner than the present timeline
- The City of Medicine Hat's building codes and a more positive approach to new endeavours.

3. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE *DRAFT PLAN*?

#1 Priority

Pedestrian/Cycling

- Eliminate cars and traffic lights downtown
- Pedestrian first initiative including the transit mall (3)
- Enhance walking experience downtown
- Bike racks

Public Transit

- Public transit in the downtown area

Vehicular/Parking

- Parking (3)
- Ensure that there are minimal disruptions to parking during development
- Get employees/volunteers to quit parking on the street in the downtown – better understanding of the effects of this, better communication and monitoring/ticketing
- Implement 2 way streets

Connections

- A Skywalk over the tracks making the downtown more accessible to the Flats
- Better access
- I think one of the first things that needs to happen is to make South Railway Street less frightening. I've gone under the pedestrian walkway many times and have always been looking over my shoulder as it looks so sketchy.

Aesthetics/Safety/Heritage Preservation

- Work on existing buildings/facades. Give existing buildings (that are buried beneath layer upon layer of façade) a facelift to look like our historical buildings (use of traditional brick) (2)
- Helping businesses/owners/historic groups to care for old buildings. It may be cheaper to raze the older dilapidated structures but their history is important. Preserving heritage (buildings and landscapes) (3)
- Creating developer opportunities for fair values and historical presence and protection
- To move forward with a clear vision now as many buildings are being under-used and not maintained.
- Beautify the downtown
- Clean up 3rd Street in front of Tim Hortons
- Increase safety. There needs to be a greater police presence (immediate change could occur) (2)
- Remove unsafe pedestrian crossings (2)

Uses

- Encourage low cost residential development by addressing the zoning issues to get residential possibilities moving (6). We need to have some housing started soon. I.e. not just billboards but shovels and footings
- Remove the rail yards (3)
- Everyone in town knows where the Flats is already, why change it?
- Encourage a park-like festival atmosphere
- Creating a sense of community – a desire to be downtown – to interact with other citizens on the streets in the shops, etc.
- Farmers market – I believe this would spearhead the surrounding development (2)
- Keep one rail line.
- Need a brand name hotel with a grand restaurant, casino, services and pools
- Tourism. If we had more to do here, people would visit, so add entertainment
- Increased apartments or condominiums

Implementation

- Proposed businesses need to see the plan, so they know what to expect and see how the plan will impact their businesses. Landlords are the first step in educating potential tenants. They should direct potential tenants to liaison officers that the City will hire to guide business owners through potential pitfalls. Having responsible landowners (2)
- Remove old rundown buildings and their non-resident landlords. Fixing the derelict landlords of condemned and deserted downtown properties to clean up and restore store fronts, to tear down condemned buildings and to sell the land to others within a certain time frame if they refuse to redevelop the site (2)
- Set up a definite set of changes
- Get Council to buy in and City staff
- Policies and political will
- Land Use Bylaw and MSSM amendments
- Broad support from the entire Medicine Hat community. Selling it to the public (2)
- The spirit of the people living/working in these areas must be friendly, helpful, sharing (you know all those things we were to learn in kindergarten and or secondary school?) to be an exciting community.
- Money, funding, budgeting and backing to implement the vision (3)
- Connecting with CPR to make the changes
- Take smaller steps up front with actual development instead of commissioning tons of studies
- The City buying land and setting firm policies
- Willingness of Planning to think outside the box
- Start down FIRST. Growth is important to maintain the history of Medicine Hat
- Get started – take some steps to get things going. Less talk more action (3)
- Start something! (significant I mean) and leave the longer term open ended
- Increasing population density without more customers, businesses will not come; people will continue to go out of the area to shop etc. and the whole thing fails
- Actually completing it through prioritizing random lists into a coherent plan for each area (2)
- Political buy in, and not merely service
- Timelines

- North Railway's reputation as not being part of downtown really needs to go. The CCDA has done a good job of excluding North Railway businesses. Changing this mind set in our City is a start
- Making the opportunity for developers on those with the vision to move ahead as easily as possible. Reduce the red tape
- Political will in City Hall. So many of these strategies could be implemented now that could be implemented now that would improve aesthetic elements immediately in the Downtown. Without this will no other implementation can take place.
- City has to show commitment to infrastructure. Tax incentive for incentives of some kind to get stores, i.e. grocery, drugstore, hardware stores to move in so people will follow: "throw out a bone".

#2 Priorities

Pedestrian

- Health – all the walking would keep people in good health (no fast food)

Public Transit

- Beginning with transit terminal redevelopment regardless with whatever happens
- Moving the bus depot to the transit area and closing 4th to anything but transit

Vehicular/Parking

- More parking (3) – move transit garage and use for parking
- Shut off 3rd Street to traffic
- Correcting parking problems in the downtown
- Work on the parking/traffic/transit plan

Connections

- Make Crescent Heights and the North Flats neighbourhoods more accessible from downtown. Tunnel under river for vehicle and pedestrian access. Larger and more attractive tunnel under the railway.
- Reconnect the downtown
- More cohesive (across tracks)
- Better connection between North and South Railway Streets

Aesthetics/Safety/Heritage Preservation

- Develop a "green plan"
- Keeping trees and parks
- Streetscape improvements including store fronts and to improve street appeal (2)
- Create a unique downtown identity
- The downtown plan appears very appealing. It would be nice to have more activity and have it be a destination of choice
- Better access to the river
- Making it more safe and pollution free by reducing the number of cars
- Lighting in the evening needs to be improved (immediate change could occur)

Uses

- Ensure future development strictly adheres to plan and vision
- Develop the lot kitty corner to City Hall (Glanville site) with the proposed hotel
- Cultural meeting place
- Events and conference centre
- Encourage residential development within the downtown core (2)
- Promote development of suites above stores (new regulations?)
- A specific infill residential plan of Medium or higher densities
- Do not separate Downtown and North Flats
- Start with the Railway Street as it needs a lot of work but changes will be recognizable immediately
- Removal of CPR or at least minimize it

Implementation

- Attracting visit able, accessible, clean shops/businesses to support the new residents (2)
- The cost to developers to build. Will there be incentives?
- Offer incentives for developers that are willing to invest in the core
- Reduce barriers to developers, especially by streamlining the planning process
- Protect retailers during redevelopment, re: street closures and the like
- Keep the momentum – start something soon and keep the ball rolling. Tune out the nay-sayers
- Working with the Flats in the North Railway area vision and considering what the Flats has to say about it
- Having definite timelines to implement the plan (2)
- Money
- A “buy back program” for unused lots
- Sustained political commitment
- Public/society/local businesses buy in (2). With Medicine Hat’s big box focus (we are a Wal-Mart town) need to bring attention to downtown – and not merely negative attention
- Getting everyone moving in a sustainable pace
- To target and direct the right growth
- Don’t get stuck on plan if a project that would be great gets offered
- More policing of absentee landlords often living in other areas of the City – then the cooperation of community engagement will begin.

#3 Priorities

Pedestrian/Cycling

- Making pedestrians first over the car
- Transportation routes developed to encourage a mix of walkers, bicycles, buses and cars

Public Transit

- Introduce electric shuttle bus service to selected areas downtown. They must be user friendly to seniors and people with disabilities
- Transportation is key

Vehicular

- Better traffic flow

Connections

- Underpass
- Overpass walkway joining North and South Railway Streets, regardless of whatever else happens (3)
- New bridge
- Tunnel tours
- Improve the image of Downtown– gateway entrances are horrible as are the vagrants. Shop keepers seem willing to improve their businesses, now the City needs to step up and improve the image

Aesthetics/Safety

- More trees and plants all the way down Kingsway
- Add extra evening lighting

Uses

- Residential Bring the people downtown to live. (2)
- Making the downtown area an attractive place to be that complements the malls
- Allowing businesses, cafes, etc. to use the streets for events, patio, and street dining without so much red tape. Your city bureaucracy discourages all creative use of the downtown spaces – definitely need to let people develop lofts above store fronts and encourage more downtown living
- Add arena to the downtown area as part of the plan
- Attracting a hotel in the area designated ASAP (major-draw – hotel) (2)

Implementation

- Force absentee landlords to upgrade their properties
- Removal of old buildings which are condemned or close to it
- Take the Arts and Heritage Advisory Boards Historical Resources Policy into proper consideration where needed and necessary
- Keep George Webb involved
- Encourage upper class businesses rather than the businesses that seem to follow decay in neighbourhoods
- A Council willing to put some action behind their words. This Council will never do it
- Stimulus and private sector investment
- Keeping abreast of worldwide trends, so as not to develop in a way that will seem “old” too soon
- Target and direct the right growth
- Spend wisely and with restraint
- Adequate public funding coupled with visible private sector champions
- Keeping costs minimal
- It will take money and it is WORTH it, I live downtown! (others will come)
- Coordination
- Shorter timeline with specific goals to be obtained, with a deadline!
- Fast track development for developers who play along. There must be an incentive, be careful that not everything gets caught up in bureaucracy
- Limit “red tape” – make it enticing to develop your business downtown
- Let the affected people know what the cost will be for implementation
- Identify one visible/feasible addition on which could happen within 2-3 years to be an impetus for support for the plan e.g. Tourist office of Farmer’s Market – a new draw!
- Well newer is better; people like shiny new things
- To create a unique downtown identity. [Edited].
- Lead redevelopment – This has been studied to death – do something!

Additional Priorities

- Remove the marshalling yards out of Downtown
- Adequate public/private cooperation and funds to keep things moving. Perhaps a building tax incentive to encourage change and development
- A hotel if it can be arranged
- Events centre Downtown
- River Road – needs more emphasis – more garbage containers a few more benches. Close River Road for events along the riverbank

4. PLEASE CONTRIBUTE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.

Transportation

Pedestrian/Cycling

- Bike paths on the street, are the streets wide enough? (ex. Yuill Street).

Public Transit

- More services for Greyhound passengers
- Electrically powered transportation in the downtown area could be considered to reduce pollution and improve public access, especially for seniors.

Railway

- Re-introduction of passenger train service, at least to the west coast, from the train station
- The railway is unsafe

Vehicular

- Traffic lights downtown need to be removed
- Another road that connects North and South Railway Streets should be considered

Connections

- The railway overpass bridge could be developed into a unique pedestrian and cycling bridge
- In the future, turn Finlay Bridge into a pedestrian corridor to engage Riverside
- Bridge across the river is an excellent idea
- What about developing a level crossing over the railway tracks at 3rd Street from South to North Railway?
- A unique downtown identity is needed with the gateways
- Overpass to train station a great idea. We've been in the Hat 1 year and had no idea an underpass existed. Now that I know about it I probably wouldn't use it anyway as I hear it is dingy and poorly lit.

Aesthetics

- Promote the many brick murals as part of the walking tour. Possibly partner with IXL Brick, service clubs, and owners to add to what is already a unique and stunning collection
- I enjoy the concept of red brick facades/buildings
- The downtown should provide a pleasant experience for everyone
- I loved the comment "upgrade to electrical street lighting". You'd think it was 1925 or something and that electrical street lighting was something new. The existing gas lighting is one of the only unique features of our downtown landscape. I think that at some point such an interesting historic "throwback" was an upgrade from bland modern urban lighting (however trendy or historic looking we might try to make it.)

Safety

- Safe places downtown are needed for children to play
- I enjoy living in the downtown however when I lived there my car was stolen and vandalized when parked in my designated parking area – hence lighting is key. Public safety is paramount. I would definitely live in this area in the future
- Lower mid block crosswalks

Uses

- More washrooms downtown
- More public telephones downtown
- A grocery store in the downtown
- Re-use the reclaimed rail yard for construction of multi-family dwellings
- There will be no indoor skating rink if they take the arena away? Would we get a new skating rink?
- I like the idea of having non-profit organizations being located on the second floor of existing buildings
- Please no more adult condos and no more areas where everyone is the same. Please stop allowing very large houses on small lots that are so close together you can pass butter back and forth. Thanks!
- I hope that plans for a hotel would look far enough ahead to accommodate growth and include a convention centre and restaurants. Some people are traveling quite a distance to attend Esplanade events and shouldn't have to navigate the city to spend the night
- The proposed hotel and the end of Finlay Bridge bothers me. The Medicine Hat Inn has been a consistent flop and it takes 5 minutes to drive to a Holiday Inn Express. I don't see how such a hotel can happen and I think doing a study on it is a waste of time
- Consideration should be given to multi-level underground malls
- Not for profit organizations must be on the second floor or higher
- A plan to move the rail yards

Implementation

- The partners involved need to be identified
- To what degree will developers have freedom to interpret the dream?
- Commercial, artistic, entertainment potential if the railway was moved is staggering????
- A very well thought out development plan, now action needs to be taken that is real and tangible.
- We need to see a commitment from the property/business owners in the downtown. The Municipal Government cannot implement the vision without their commitment and co-operation
- In the summer months or on Saturdays you could close the streets downtown and allow people to walk around for leisure, lunch and shopping.
- What would it take for the "Hill" or "First Street" residents to be able to be a part of a development plan?

- How can the long First Street drive to downtown be provided (historically – landscape and buildings) as one of the gateways to downtown?
- Concrete works great to bury contaminated soil
- I like the overall plan. I have concerns as to the placement of the bus terminal on 5th and the disruptions of businesses there
- Improvements around North Railway Street are essential, this is a good aspect of the plan
- The “Flats” is clean sounding; “River Flats” actually sounds silly
- Thanks for giving me the opportunity to provide comments
- Implement Winnipeg’s derelict building bylaw where the City after a warning period (3 months?) confiscates such derelict buildings.
- For both Flats and Downtown Redevelopment plans how, by whom and when will the visions, principles be implemented?
- Good turn out; vision is good, go for it
- Take this opportunity to be bold
- Will the draft make an impact on the shape and way our community will look and feel?
- [Edited].
- Look at Bilbao, Spain. It has a small population, incredible old town, incredible walks, pathways, and parks – very people friendly
- Architectural controls must be included in policies
- When are we going to deal with our condemned buildings downtown? Also the buildings where taxes are not paid on? Maybe before we start something new we should “clean up” our downtown now.
- Again, I like your ideas, but I think the City must also plan ahead and protect its major arteries. Too many cities have their major arteries turn into a log string of sex shops and pawn shops. Dunmore Road and Kingsway are a major impression of the City for all that travel between the mall and downtown. Best of luck!
- Planning and City Hall must realize that:
 - Downtown is already great
 - Add parking now by moving some parking posts and eliminating turning lanes on avenues – can add some spots
 - Downtown is great despite that its not spending money on flowers for every post, tree lights at Christmas, banners and flags being put up and down for every event, supporting street closures often for all kinds of festivals and parades
 - Money spent on this should have gone to above statement. We have a great downtown; put money in beautifying at City’s expense and start using it yourself!!!! Planning and Alderman don’t even know how great it is despite them!
 - More lighting can be done now
- Encourage growth/development of the downtown area sooner than later! Perhaps the City needs to lead the way...what can the City of Medicine Hat do to make the downtown streets brighter, cleaner and fresh?
- Sorry for being so negative, the revitalization of the downtown is important. I would just like it to happen!
- You can plan etc. all you want, if the economics don’t work, nothing will happen. Restrictions on building to make them “fit in” will add unnecessarily to costs and slow the process. This is a living area; there is no good reason to try to freeze it in the last century
- Make a good plan and stay with it
- Changes to accommodate businesses or companies distract people in small business to build which will be our major supporter
- I always think of the downtown core as being the heart of the City – if it isn’t appealing, I don’t want to be in that city. It is the 1st place I head to when traveling
- CCDA → Monarch Theatre: fabulous initiative but look at how many snags and roadblocks? How can this model be trumpeted? The civic government needs to take a more visionary leadership role: better laws to take over properties that remain vacant for decades
- Where’s Esplanade as a key hub of the downtown cultural/commercial community
- Where’s funding and plans for an expanded library?
- Something needs to be done and if not done soon, the only option will be a bulldozer
- I understand that Finlay Bridge is being closed for renovations. The people that now walk to work downtown are angry that for the next year they have to walk over the Maple Bridge – not fun when icy and cold. They don’t see any point in renovating the bridge

- You have a good start but elaborate more of the positive points you are proposing
- I'm worried about traffic flow in the area especially with the potential highway revisions
- Before anything can happen there have to be changes made to the various City Hall Departments, e.g. Planning, license etc. At present they discourage rather encourage development
- Speed it up. Common sense is sadly lacking
- This will help make Medicine Hat a true oasis in Alberta. City Council → empower staff to make both downtown and flats a priority. Provide policies to support this. Keep momentum and private investment interest high. Great job. A wonderful start to give Medicine Hat the core/centre it deserves!
- If nothing better and more is done before Phase II there won't be anyone left to participate in Phase II
- How often have we done this before? How many more times before something is done? Again, this Council doesn't have the "balls" to do anything
- There have been many years of studies and plans – will there be action? Will there be a follow through? I'm sure looking forward to it and will try to keep my space looking good and attract people to my business
- Have the owner of buildings or lots develop them or sell them. City buy back unused lots. Buildings should not look cracked and gutted.
- In a few cases the length of parking time is too short for example 2hour when a facial is 2 1/2 hours. Most of the particular clientele are getting old and cannot walk far at all. Special permits may work?
- Work on what we have now and can afford...get people downtown. Tax empty store owners, high...encourage store owners (now) for brighten and friendly up what we have. 2-3 years is a long time.
- Hopefully progress can be made without too much hysterical/political drama
- The number of elderly people in the area do not like change
- I would say the quicker the better, but all in all good
- I love the plans. It is a great start. We need building owners to start fixing their empty buildings. The City has allowed them to do nothing with them and they are an eye sore. The City needs to make them keep up their properties
- I like the idea of connecting the downtown with the Flats by a pedestrian overpass
- Is the Greyhound bus terminal to remain in the downtown?
- I understand that the building on 2nd Street SE (former location of the Salvation Army) is to house a market. Is that in conflict with the proposed market in the Flats?
- How will the proposed interchange at the Trans Canada and 1st Street SW impact the downtown?
- Are there any off leash areas for dogs?
- The Redevelopment Plan could help seniors stay independent.
- I live downtown and support the downtown and would like to see it flourish. Thanks for doing this!
- The City of Medicine Hat will have to provide some way of helping businesses redevelop and/or rebuild
 - Forgive taxes for 10 years
 - Modify Building Codes to help remodel older buildings
 - Suggest a theme of red brick throughout the entire area
- Looks like a lofty undertaking, but it makes me excited to think of what potential the Hat has.
- Once we start to take pride in our Downtown it will blossom. Already there has been so much positivity surrounding it, I'm looking forward to the progression. Now hopefully the River Street development will go through. Thanks for the opportunity to provide input.
- Get progressive merchants downtown
- Slum lords must go
- Perfect location for spectrum, chili cook off, Easter, Fall and Santa Claus parade