



Readiness Report

for a refreshed, revitalized downtown

May 2019 Highlights

Revitalization of downtown is a priority in the 2018-2021 Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Strategic Plan. The community has invested a significant amount of volunteer time and the municipality has invested a significant amount of funds in preparation for a refreshed, revitalized downtown area.

Has there been significant stops and starts – yes. Are we ready to try again – yes.

Step one – are we ready?

Capital Projects



Revitalizing well established areas often takes multi-year infrastructure investment and construction just to get the land ready to accommodate a variety of uses including commercial, residential and institutional developments. The good news is that the RMWB has already made a number of those investments, completing several underground and road construction projects in the downtown area and continues to support new ones. A good overview of the types of projects currently underway are highlighted on the Capital Projects map at rmwb.ca/constructionmap. Highlights of a few other planned projects include:

- Corless Field tennis fencing upgrade
- Riverfront park development (trails)
- Waterways tennis court resurface
- Shell Place feasibility study

Community Committees and Corporations



Community input is vital in community planning. There are several community groups, past and present, who have a vested interest in seeing the downtown area thrive. The Waterfront Steering Committee and the Heritage Society are two that come to mind. Urban planning is also included in the work done by the Mayors Advisory Council on Youth and the Regional Advisory Committee on Aging provides input on strategies that impact seniors. Council also supports several regional corporations that have a vested interest in a revitalized downtown area.

Take a look at the Community Committees and Corporations list

- Communities in Bloom
- Community Identification
- Homelessness Initiative Strategic
- Mayors Advisory Council on Youth
- Public Art
- Regional Advisory Committee on Aging
- Regional Advisory Committee on Inclusion, Diversity and Equality
- Regional Recreation Corporation
- Wood Buffalo Development Advisory – NEW
- Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation – NEW
- Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation
- Wood Buffalo Regional Library Board

Events and Programs



Events and community programs in the downtown area also bring residents together. Exposure to downtown amenities and businesses help to attract more traffic and a desire to spend more time and money in the area. Events also engage local merchants, artists, and entrepreneurs. A selection of events and community programs are in the Events and Programs list.

Events

- Alberta Culture Days
- Arctic Winter Games
- Canada Day and Santa Claus Parades
- Communities in Bloom National Symposium
- Council's Holly Jolly Tree Lighting in Jubilee Plaza
- igNIGHT Public Art Exhibition
- McMurray Marathon
- Urban Markets
- WinterPLAY Festival

Programs

- Adopt a Rink
- Adopt a Park, Trail or Roadway
- Anti-Litter Campaign
- Community Clean Up
- Community Placemaking
- Community Investment
- Community Gardening
- Communities in Bloom Business Beautification
- Communities in Bloom Nominate Your Neighbor
- Culture Asset Mapping
- Crime Free Multi-Housing
- Graffiti Wipeout
- Public Art (Murals, Permanent Public Art)
- Shop Local
- Snow Angel
- Street Banner

Research and Plans



Guiding documents are an important part of planning for the future. Everything from the Municipal Development Plan to a Public Art Strategy informs and influences downtown development and revitalization.

Several Council approved guiding documents have helped to prepare us for downtown revitalization, but in some instances, they were created during different economic times, with varying growth projections, prior to the 2016 Horse River Wildfire and need to be updated. At this time approximately 80% of 200+ recommended actions within 11 Council approved documents created between 2009-2018 have been identified as in progress, ongoing or complete and contribute to revitalization both direct and indirectly. Councils 2018-2021 Strategic Plan is the most current plan that outlines key actions and ongoing progress towards downtown revitalization. Quarterly progress updates can be found at <https://www.rmwb.ca/strategicplan>

Guiding Documents

Long-Term Guiding Bylaws

Municipal Development Plan, Bylaw No. 11/027 – **update in progress**

City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan Bylaw No. 12/003 – **update in progress**

City Centre Land Use Bylaw No. 12/012 (Part 9 of Land Use Bylaw 99/059) – **update in progress**

Documents

2010 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

2010 Envision Wood Buffalo

2012 City Centre Waterfront Program

2012 Crime Prevention and Reduction Plan

2015 Regional Indoor Recreation and
Community Facilities Master Plan

2015 Waterfront Preliminary Assessment (based
on the Waterfront Steering Committee
Report)

2018 - 2021 RMWB Strategic Plan

2018 Social Sustainability Plan

2018 Wildfire Mitigation Strategy

Plans

Currently underway or being created in partnership with community stakeholders.

- Culture Plan
- Parks Master Plan
- Public Art Plan

*Is the RMWB ready for a refreshed, revitalized downtown area? **Yes, we are.***

*Is the community ready for a refreshed, revitalized downtown area? **Let's ask them.***

Step two – build a community plan

With our community and business partners by our side, begin by asking residents what they would like to see in the downtown area. Let's start by asking what residents consider to be the downtown area; how do they see the various districts interacting; what's on their list of important elements to be included in a refreshed, revitalized downtown? Let's ask businesses what's important to them; what would make it easier for them to attract customers; what's on their list of important elements in a refreshed, revitalized downtown?

Armed with fresh feedback, the RMWB and its citizens together can continue to make progress and build a plan for a space, or spaces, that work for everyone.

