



2019 Downtown Clean & Safe Strategy



CITY OF
Lethbridge

2019 Downtown Clean & Safe Strategy



In order to effectively revitalize downtown we need to create a positive, unforgettable downtown experience. To achieve this, the most fundamental issue we need to address is the real and/or perceived notion that Downtown is messy and feels unsafe.

Since the adoption of the Heart of Our City Master Plan in 2007, creating a clean and safe downtown has been a fundamental goal of downtown revitalization. These efforts have seen a number of initiatives implemented such as the Clean Sweep Program, Downtown Ambassadors, expansion of Lethbridge Police Service's downtown presence and private security in Galt Gardens.

Between 2007 and 2016, there was a noticeable improvement in terms of cleanliness and safety in the downtown. Unfortunately, over the past two years, the downtown has faced escalating instances of drug use, theft, erratic behavior and petty crime.

The majority of incidents cause little to no physical harm to residents and are considered minor on the spectrum of crime. However, due to the small and concentrated nature of the downtown area and the increased use of social media to share and respond to incidents, every experience, inappropriate act, or negative cue that one observes or is exposed to is extremely impactful to peoples' perception of cleanliness and safety in the downtown.

2019 Downtown Clean & Safe Strategy

Overview

The Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy (DCSS) is a city-led strategy that has been developed in collaboration with various stakeholders including Heart of Our City Committee, Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone, Chamber of Commerce, Lethbridge Police Service, Diversion Outreach Team/Canadian Mental Health, and business and residents of Downtown.

The strategy will highlight, coordinate, and implement all the initiatives, programs and tasks the City is doing with respect to addressing the negative perceptions on cleanliness and safety in the Downtown (and adjacent areas).

Initiatives and tasks will impact some of the large underlying issues of the drug crisis such as homelessness, addiction and unemployment, however this is not a strategy to attempt to solve these. That work is being completed as part of the Community Drug Strategy (www.lethbridge.ca/drugstrategy) which is currently being developed at the direction of City Council.

To ensure the DCSS is implemented and that it is able to respond to the ever-changing clean and safe issues this document will evolve and change throughout 2019.

Strategic Goals

- To implement a strategic approach to addressing the real and/or perceived notion that Downtown is dirty and feels unsafe.
- To promote new initiatives in the Downtown in a way that makes the community feel safe for the purpose of reducing negative sentiment.
- To promote positive downtown activities and events in a way that supports business owners and builds confidence in investors for the purpose of increasing vibrancy and revitalization in the Downtown.
- To inform residents on what the City of Lethbridge is doing that builds understanding for the purpose of dispelling myths about safety in the Downtown.

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Focus Area

It is important to note that typically we define Downtown by a set boundary of the coulee setback to the west, CPR line to the north, Stafford Drive to the east, and 6th Avenue to the South.

For the purposes of the DCSS, "Downtown" as defined above will be extended to reflect the area of greatest need. This area will not be set in stone and will be flexible for the City of Lethbridge to address certain initiatives, programs, tasks, or issues on a case by case basis.



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Stakeholders

Internal

An internal City ad-hoc committee has been established as part of the DCSS to oversee its implementation throughout 2019. The committee is composed of representatives from key City departments who have a direct role in Downtown cleanliness and safety through their existing day to day roles and responsibilities (see Initiative 12 for more information). The committee will be led by the Urban Revitalization Manager. The committee will meet monthly to review implementation and ensure the document is responding to the needs of the Downtown.

Representatives: Communications, Community and Social Development, Facilities, Finance, Fire and EMS, LPS, Parks, Planning and Development, Recreation and Culture, IRM and Infrastructure.

External

Throughout the year, the committee will ensure open lines of communication and collaboration with the Heart of Our City Committee, Downtown BRZ, Chamber of Commerce, and other key stakeholders. When required, special meetings or sub-committees may be initiated.

Role of Urban Revitalization Manager

The Urban Revitalization Manager is a manager position held within the Property Services division of the City of Lethbridge tasked with taking the lead on engaging and coordinating internal departments, stakeholder groups, and public in the design, planning, transformation and revitalization of existing neighbourhoods including Downtown.

While the majority of the initiatives and roles highlighted within the DCSS do not fall under the responsibility of the Urban Revitalization Manager they directly impact the day to day revitalization efforts of the City as the fundamental base of revitalization efforts is the establishment of a clean and safe environment. Therefore the Urban Revitalization Manager is well positioned to coordinate the DCSS to ensure that this fundamental piece is in place as to set the stage for revitalization efforts and initiatives such as welcoming public spaces, programs and events, vibrant uses, and marketing and promotion. As shown in Figure 1.

Downtown is at a critical point where we run the risk of quickly undoing many of the improvements done over the last 10+ years. If we do not reestablish clean and safe in the downtown it makes other revitalization efforts less effective if not impossible.

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Creating a Positive, Unforgettable Downtown Experience

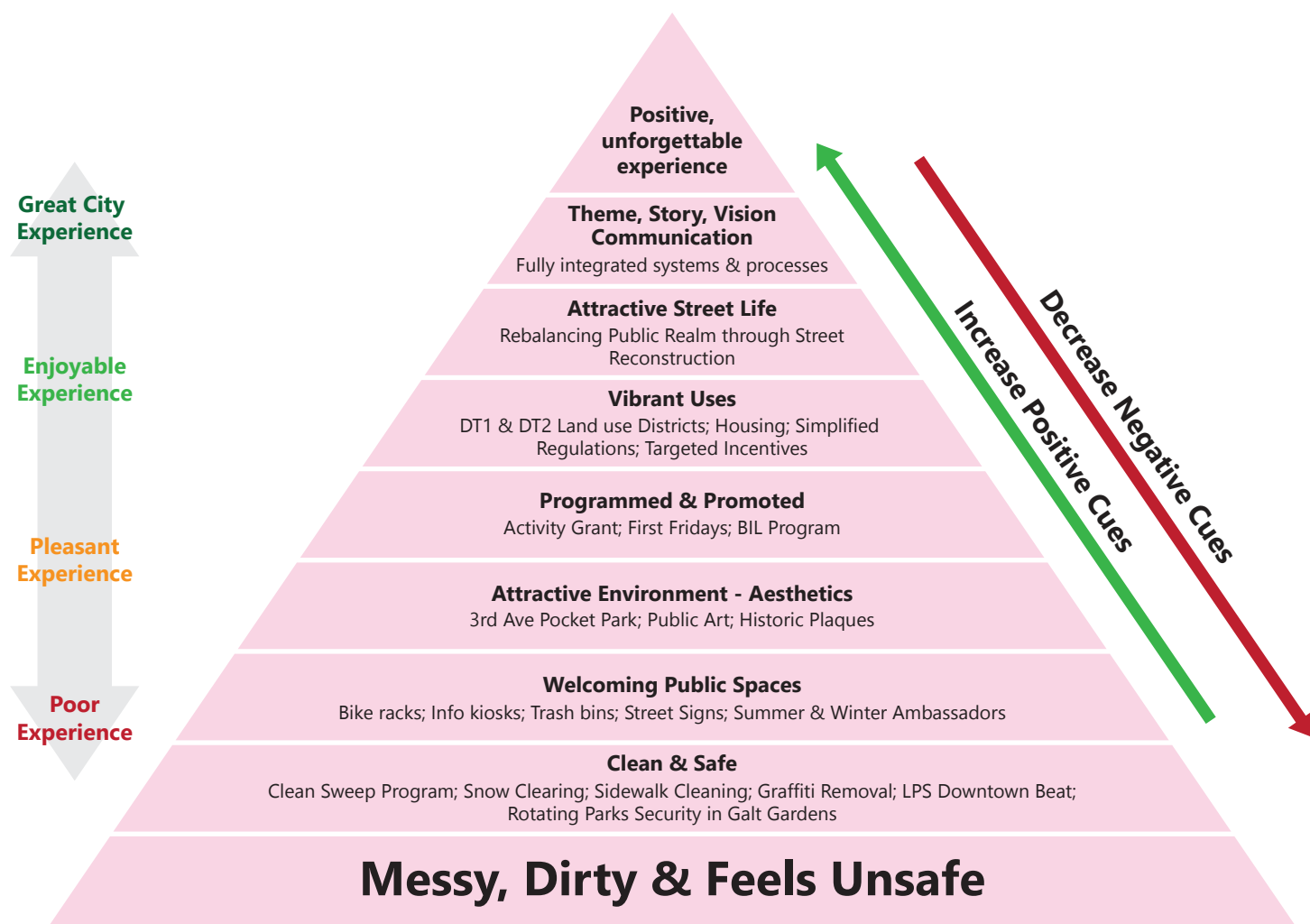


Figure 1: Creating a Positive, Unforgettable Downtown Experience

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Action Plan

Enforcement

| | Initiative | Status | Brief Description |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | LPS Downtown Policing Unit (DPU) | Ongoing with expanded service in Fall '18 | Composed of 1 Sergeant and 8 constables that operate in 4 teams of 2. The DPU patrol on foot, bike when the weather permits and also the dedicated DPU Police van. |
| 2 | LPS Watch Program | New (Summer '19) | Assist in improving public safety in the downtown, parks and other areas throughout the city that attract negative users. |

Security

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| 3 | Downtown HotSpot Security | New (Feb '19) | Temporary program in place until Watch Program is operational. This hot spot patrol will complement the Galt Gardens/SAAG/Casa security. |
| 4 | Public Facility Security | Ongoing with revisions in Spring '19 | The City provides private security coverage for Galt Gardens, SAAG, CASA, and a mobile patrol of the various parks in the City. |

Outreach

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| 5 | Diversion Outreach Team (DOT) | Ongoing with expanded service coming in Spring '19 | Provide transportation supports for persons vulnerable to homelessness or other street behaviors and who may be exhibiting symptoms of public intoxication or drug use. |
| 6 | S.A.G.E Clan Patrol Team (SAGE) | New (Fall '18) | A patrol team tasked with engaging the aboriginal community through conversations, presentations and participation. The group has been responding to individuals that require assistance as well as other duties such as needle debris collection. |

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Cleaning

| | Initiative | Status | Brief Description |
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| 7 | Needle Drug Debris Collection Program | Ongoing with expanded service in Spring '19 | To combat needle and drug debris issues a needle collection program was which includes a needle collection, collection of needles from needle boxes and sharps containers, walking outreach, and community education and awareness. |
| 8 | Clean Sweep Program (CSP) | Ongoing with expanded service coming in Feb '19 | Offers individuals experiencing homeless the opportunity to engage in employment related activities such as cleaning up garbage, sweeping sidewalks, shoveling snow, needle cleanup, and other cleaning tasks etc. |

Promotion

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| 9 | Downtown Ambassador Program | Ongoing with expanded service coming in Feb '19 | Year round on the street engagement and promotion offering daily connection with businesses, residents, and tourists on the street in our Downtown - a visible and welcoming presence. |
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Education

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| 10 | Downtown Safety Education Program | New (Spring '19) | Designed after a successful LPS and BRZ "Business Watch Program" program from 2001 this education program would be a program outlining everything to do with Downtown Safety and Security. Program will include education in print/digital form as well as monthly seminar. |
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Built Environment Improvements

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| 11 | Mainstreet CPTED Grant Program | Ongoing with expanded program in Spring '19 | An expansion of the municipal main street program providing matching grant funding for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) evaluations and improvements identified within evaluation. |
| 12 | City Department Tasks and Actions | Ongoing with continual change | The City of Lethbridge's various departments are continually attending to a variety of tasks and actions related to their departments operations which address Downtown Clean and Safe. |

* There are additional 'Clean and Safe' related initiatives being implemented by various community partners and organizations (e.g. ARCHES Community Outreach Addiction Program COAP). However, the DCSS focuses on initiatives that the City of Lethbridge has an active role in.