

Downtown **Public Places Plan**

ANALYSIS REPORT

May 2018

Edmonton

CONTENTS

- 2** EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- 4** PUBLIC PLACES
- 8** BREATHE: EDMONTON'S GREEN NETWORK STRATEGY
- 10** BREATHE RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC MOVES
- 12** LAND USE ZONING
- 14** NEIGHBOURHOOD IDENTITIES

POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

- 20** POPULATION PROJECTIONS + DEMOGRAPHICS
- 22** POPULATION DENSITY
- 24** NUMBER OF RESIDENTS SERVED BY PARKS
- 26** OPEN SPACES PER PERSON BY DISSEMINATION BLOCK
- 28** PARK PRESSURE

URBAN LIFE

- 32** COMMUNITY SERVICES AND RECREATION
- 34** COMMERCIAL AMENITIES
- 36** MAJOR DESTINATIONS
- 38** VISUAL QUALITY Of Ground FLOOR FRONTAGES
- 40** PERCEPTION OF SAFETY
- 42** HOMELESSNESS

PUBLIC PLACES AND MOVEMENT

- 48** WALKABILITY (400 meters)
- 50** ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION
- 52** PUBLIC TRANSIT
- 56** IMPERVIOUS SURFACES
- 58** VEGETATION
- 60** SLOPE
- 62** SHADOW STUDY
- 64** CLIMATE + WEATHER

FUTURE SCENARIOS

- 70** RELEVANT FUTURE PROJECTS
- 74** FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS
- 78** VACANT LAND



The Edmonton **Downtown Public Places Plan** (EDPPP) will meet community needs and help provide guidance for an increasingly vibrant, well-designed, accessible and sustainable Downtown.

The objectives of this plan are to:

- + Turn Downtown public places into comfortable, memorable, attractive destinations and spaces
- + Improve and leverage existing and new connections between the Downtown and the River Valley
- + Provide strategic direction for open space development, design and programming in Downtown
- + Focus on the quality, functionality, connectivity and supply of open spaces
- + Provide design recommendations for developments impacting open spaces
- + Inform and align current and future Downtown projects

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Downtown public places provide space for Edmontonians to socialize, celebrate, recharge and live life. Downtown public places (open spaces, parks, and plazas) need to act as the playgrounds, resting spots and social spaces for residents, workers and visitors, while also providing premiere locations to host international and local festivals, events, commerce, arts, and culture.

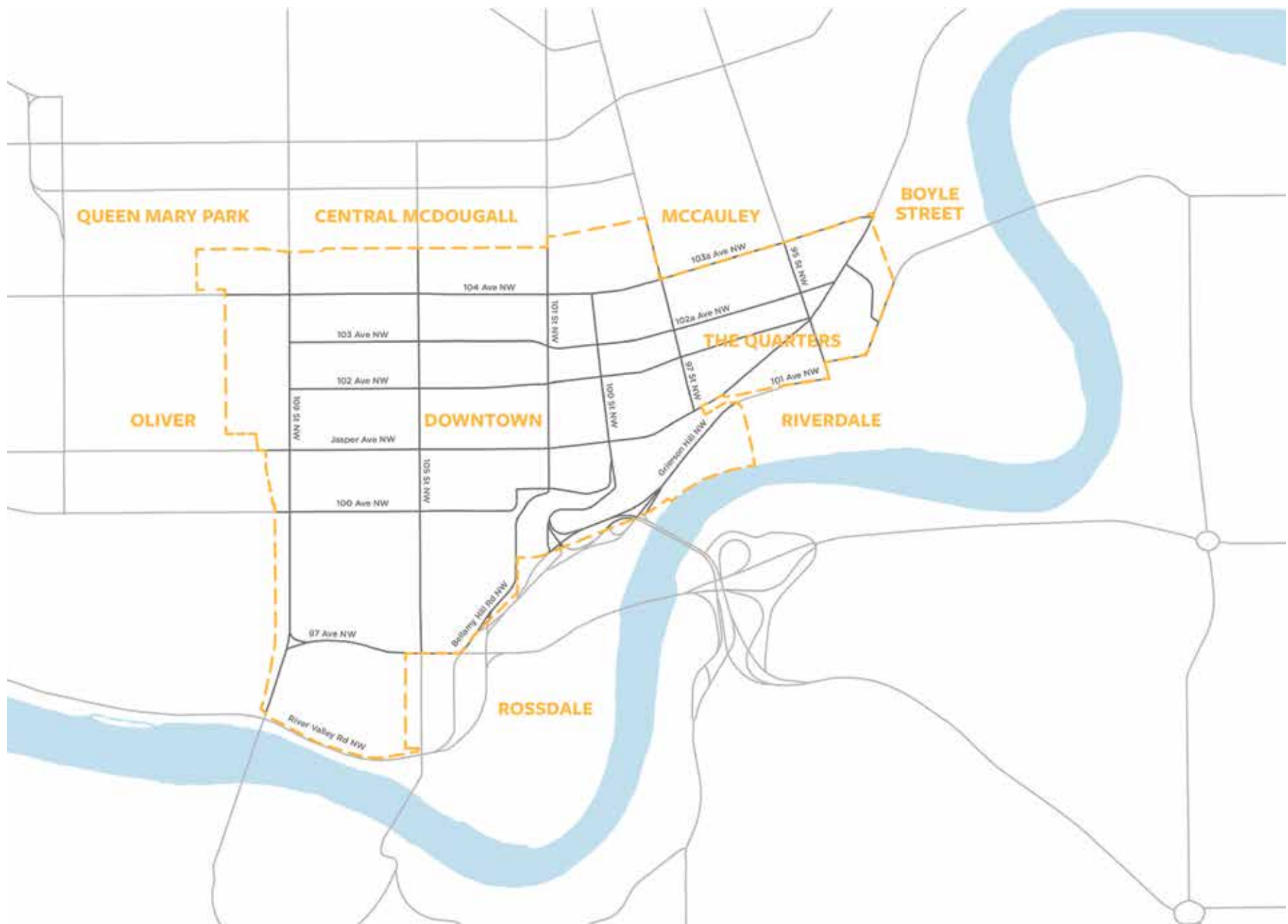
To achieve the objectives of the EDPPP, high level spatial quantitative and qualitative data has been analyzed within the study area. Three overarching areas of analysis were reviewed with several components within it.

- + Population and Demographics
- + Urban Life
- + Public Space and Movements
- + Future Developments

This Analysis Report summarizes each component of analysis undertaken for this study including desktop analysis (high-level mapping) and field analysis (public engagement + site visits).

KEY FINDINGS

- + Downtown Edmonton currently has many public places that are extremely popular and well used throughout the year, however some parks need to be enhanced in terms of its perception of safety and amenities.
- + Parks are within a 400 meter catchment (5 minute walk) of all residents and employees throughout the site, however the connections are not always convenient, easily accessible and pleasant.
- + While there is some access, connections to the river valley is a well recognized desire that is challenged by the steep slopes of the escarpment.
- + With the current population, each 1000 people have access to 2.6 ha of parks and open spaces. If the supply of park space remains constant, each 1000 people will have access to 1.3 ha of parks and open spaces.
- + There is a significant amount of development taking place throughout Downtown Edmonton with new high density towers. This will increase the number of people living, working and visiting Downtown, and as a result the supply and qualities of public places become more crucial to the wellbeing of the population.
- + 82% of Downtown is covered with impervious surfaces and 18% is vegetated. A reoccurring request during the public engagement was to add more green spaces. Although much of the paved surfaces are parking lots, many people avoid coming into Downtown due to the inaccessibility and affordability of parking.





PUBLIC PLACES

STUDY AREA

The Public Places Plan undertakes the study of Edmonton's Downtown and Quarters as defined in the Capital City Downtown Plan and The Quarters Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan.

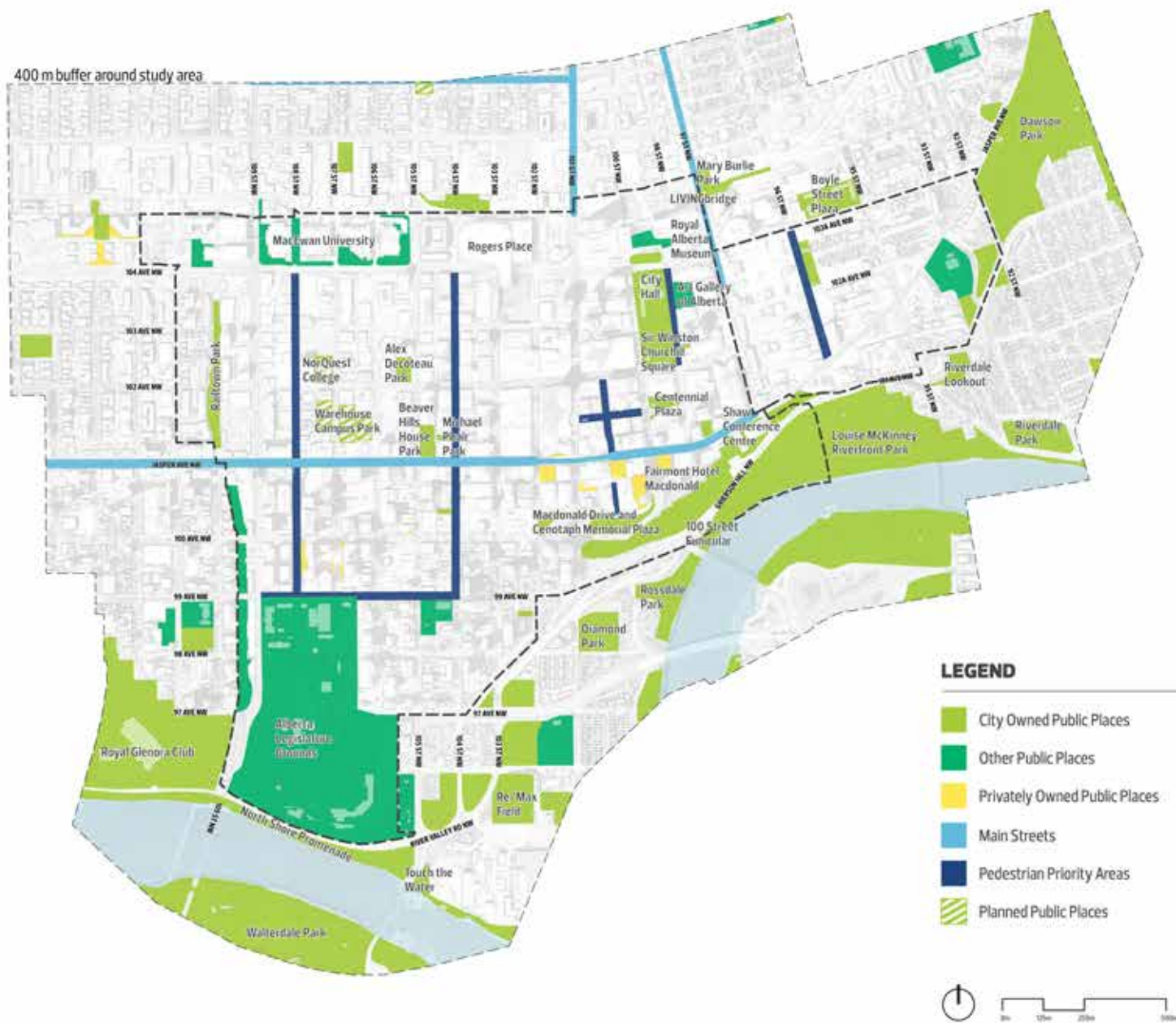
The total study area is 286 ha where Downtown is 245 ha and the Quarters is 41 ha. The total area of public places within the site is 56.2 ha where 53.1ha is within Downtown and 3.1ha is the area of The Quarters.

AREA OF PUBLIC PLACES WITHIN DOWNTOWN STUDY AREA

AREA (HA)	
City Owned Public Places	16.6
Other Public Places	33.4
Private Owned Public Places	1.3
Planned Public Places	1.7
Total	53.1

QUARTERS STUDY AREA

City Owned Public Places	1.4
Other Public Places	1.7
Private Owned Public Places	0
Planned Public Places	0
Total	3.1
TOTAL AREA IN SITE	56.2



SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE



LOUISE MCKINNEY RIVERFRONT PARK



ALEX DECOTEAU PARK



BOYLE STREET PLAZA



RIBBON OF STEEL CORRIDOR



TELUS PARK



BEAVER HILLS HOUSE PARK



ALBERTA LEGISLATURE GROUNDS





ECOLOGY

Supports and enhances the environment by sustaining healthy and resilient ecosystems.



CELEBRATION

Connects people to one another and builds a sense of place by providing places for communities to thrive, gather and celebrate.



WELLNESS

Promotes healthy living and fosters wellbeing through diverse kinds of recreation, mobility and environments.

BREATHE: EDMONTON'S GREEN NETWORK STRATEGY

BREATHE

Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy is a transformative strategy that aims to ensure that each neighbourhood in Edmonton will be supported by a network of open space for the next 30 years. The main goal of *Breathe* is to plan and sustain a healthy city by encouraging connection and integration of open space at the site, neighbourhood, city and regional levels. *Breathe* analyzed open spaces by their multi-functionality. Focusing on the functionality of open spaces based on ecology, celebration and wellness, allows for a more nuanced understanding of what each open space provides the community it serves. The functionality of open spaces may be enhanced to provide wider array of amenities particularly in areas where additional parkland is difficult to acquire, such as the Central Core.

MAP

The map highlights the multi functionality of Downtown Edmonton's open spaces as per *Breathe*.

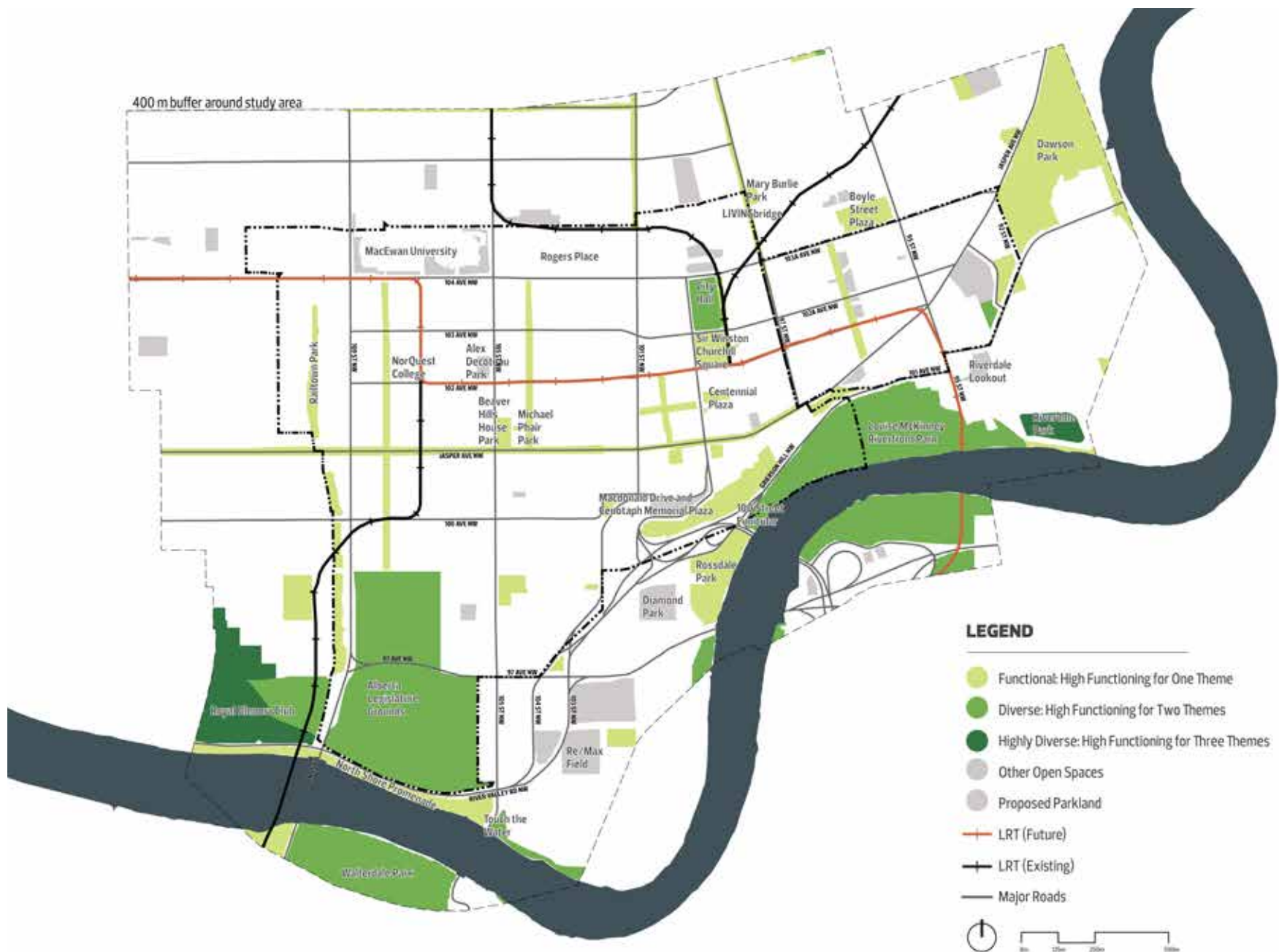
FUNCTIONALITY IN DOWNTOWN EDMONTON

In general, most multi-functional high-scoring open spaces are larger parks with district or citywide service areas. They contain more amenities, programs and services because of their larger size and their importance as destinations for the city and the region. Usually these parks include a variety of recreational amenities and facilities such as playgrounds, splash pads, sports fields, picnic sites, tobogganing hills, pavilions and recreation centres. In addition, as they attract more people, these open spaces also have enhanced park amenities such as washrooms, drinking fountains,

parking facilities and shared-use pathways. Within the EDPPP site boundaries, the higher functioning parks are the Alberta Legislature Grounds, Sir Winston Churchill Square and Louise McKinney Riverfront Park.

Among all open spaces, 6.4% provide a high level of Wellness function. Conversely, 48.1% of open spaces provide high Celebration function and 28.9% provide high Ecology function.

73% of open spaces in the Central Core provide high function for either Ecology, Celebration or Wellness. Nearly 27% of open spaces do not provide high functionality for any theme. Just over 1% have high functionality for all three themes, emphasizing the need for multi functionality as a means to support residential intensification.



BREATHE RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC MOVES

MAP

The map illustrates the strategic moves surrounding open spaces recommended by *Breathe* based on a case study of Downtown Edmonton.

RIVERWALK PROMENADE AND LEGISLATURE GROUNDS

The Legislature Grounds are a highly used and recently refurbished destination space that would benefit from better pedestrian connection to the river; however, 105 St and River Valley Rd pose significant barriers.

- + Provide greater connection into the river valley from residential areas in the Central Core, strengthening the recreational use of the river. The promenade should include connectivity into and from the Legislature Grounds.
- + Greater pedestrian and bicycle connectivity across 105th Street will help connect the Downtown core with the Touch the Water promenade, extending pedestrian and commuter travel opportunities from Capital Boulevard.
- + Greater pedestrian and bicycle connectivity across 109th Street will connect the Legislature Grounds with the Ribbon of Steel park and provide better access to the river valley through Constable Ezio Faraone Park.

WAREHOUSE CAMPUS NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRAL PARK

- + Streetscape development of the areas surrounding the planned Warehouse Campus Park will ensure connections between nearby parks and improved pedestrian access.

- + Design and program this space using a multi-functional approach, to improve wellness and child-friendly opportunities Downtown, opportunity for Celebration space and improve ecological connectivity and function in the Central Core.
- + Improve connections from Beaver Hills House Park and Alex Decoteau Park into the Warehouse District Park Area.
- + Improve walkable connections through the alleys surrounding Warehouse District and the Corona LRT station.

RIBBON OF STEEL CORRIDOR AND RAILTOWN PARK

Enhance the Ribbon of Steel Corridor and Railtown Park to provide better wayfinding and east-west connections to encourage pedestrian and cycling connections throughout the length of the park.

- + Improve the connection from the end-of-line, across Jasper Avenue, and into Railtown Park.
- + Make strong connections from Railtown Park to the east along 102nd Avenue towards the new Warehouse Park area will provide better access to the Downtown cycling network and a more connected Downtown parks system overall.

CONNECTIONS TO SURROUNDING NEIGHBOURHOODS

- + Northward connections along 95th Street will improve access to the river from core and mature neighbourhoods.
- + Westward connections along the rail line provide walkable / bike-able routes connecting the northeastern Downtown with the Coliseum redevelopment area.
- + Connections along Jasper Avenue must be strengthened to allow greater access into the Dawson Park / Louise McKinney Riverfront Park area.





LAND USE ZONING

ZONING

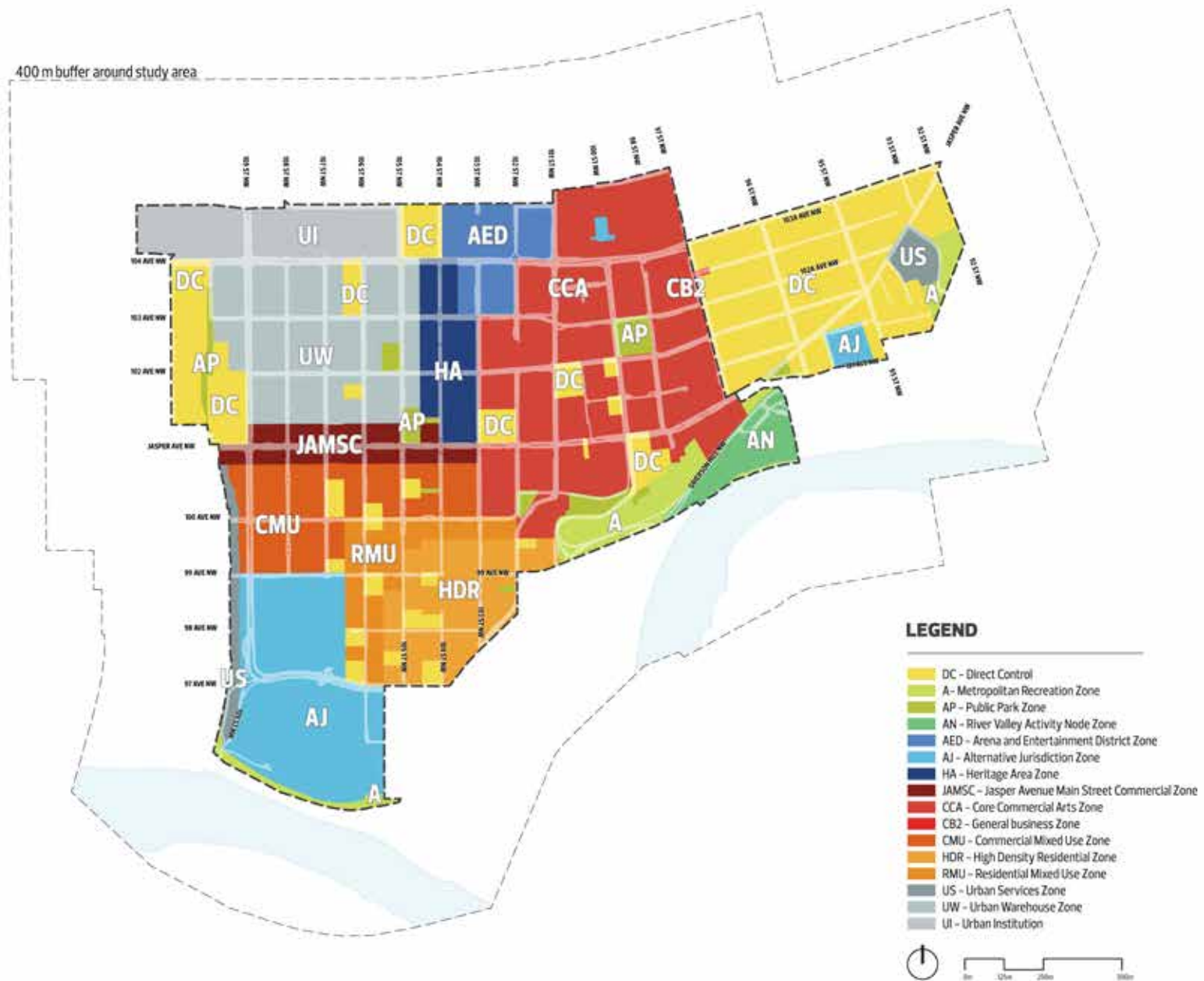
There are a total of sixteen different zones throughout Downtown Edmonton. Majority of the zones accommodate a range of mixed-use commercial, residential, offices, institutions, arts and entertainment uses. Each zone corresponds to their respective neighbourhood identities. Some major identities include high density residential, commercial, urban warehouse, heritage and main street commercial.

With respect to opportunities for public places, these zones can often determine the functionality, purpose and the way in which the space might be utilized. For example, public spaces located within the commercial mixed-use zone, core commercial arts zone and the urban warehouse may heavily be utilized by day visitors and employers in Downtown who are looking to use the spaces as areas of respite, or programmable spaces. On the contrary, public places located primarily in the residential areas may include more family amenities such as playgrounds for children or dog parks.

While there is a variety of zones, there are only three sites with a designated Public Park Zone. The parks in these zones include Alex Decoteau Park, Beaver Hills House Park and Sir Winston Churchill Square.



400 m buffer around study area



NEIGHBOURHOOD IDENTITIES

Downtown Edmonton provides a mix of institutional, office, retail, warehouse and residential land uses which are supported by LRT stations and major transportation corridors. There are five distinct neighbourhood identities that are diverse in their land uses, culture and urban form.

WAREHOUSE CAMPUS NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Warehouse Campus Neighbourhood is an urban mix, made up of old warehouses converted to commercial, residential and other uses and a large number of vacant properties ripe for development.

THE COMMERCIAL CORE

The Commercial Cultural Core is a concentration of high-density commercial uses combined with cultural facilities. All but one of Downtown's major office towers (25 storeys or greater) are located here.

JASPER AVENUE

Jasper Avenue is one of Edmonton's Main Street. It contains a variety of retail and other commercial uses interspersed with several high-rise office towers.

THE CAPITAL CITY DISTRICT

The Capital City District is home to the Alberta Legislature building and grounds and several high quality mid rise offices towers and associated commercial uses, along with notable heritage buildings.

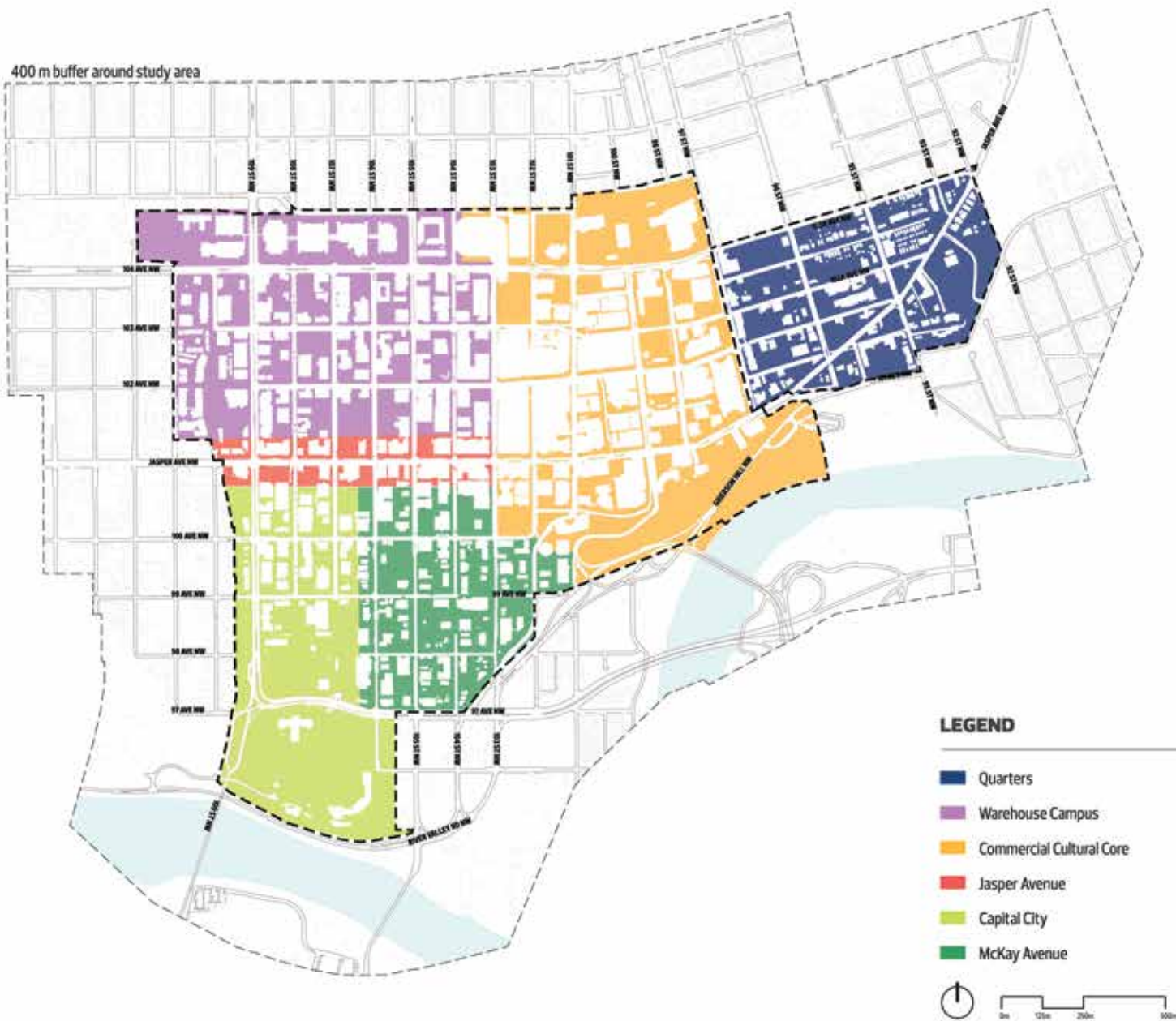
MCKAY AVENUE NEIGHBOURHOOD

McKay Avenue Neighbourhood contains an established residential community with single detached housing as well as walk-up and high-rise residential units.

THE QUARTERS DOWNTOWN

The Quarters Downtown is a 40 hectare area that extends from 97 Street to 92 Street, and from 103A Avenue to the top of the North Saskatchewan River Valley. Over the next 20 years, The Quarters Downtown will be transformed into a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive community, taking advantage of its connectivity to the central business district, cultural districts, and river valley.





WAREHOUSE CAMPUS



An urban mix of old warehouses converted into residential, commercial and retail outlets in an area zoned as urban warehouse

COMMERCIAL CORE



High density commercial uses in an area primarily zoned as Core Commercial Arts Zone and General Business Zone.

JASPER AVENUE



A main street aligned with residential, commercial and office buildings located in the Jasper Avenue Main Street Commercial Zone.

THE CAPITAL CITY DISTRICT



The area that houses Alberta's Legislature Grounds and other government office towers. This neighbourhood falls under the Alternative Jurisdiction Zone and Commercial Mixed Use Zone.

MCKAY AVENUE



McKay Avenue neighbourhood is primarily a high density residential neighbourhood zoned as high-density and residential mixed-use.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS



POPULATION PROJECTIONS + DEMOGRAPHICS

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

Residential development in the Downtown has proved an important ingredient in creating a sustainable local economy. A strong residential population stimulates and makes viable retail and services that would otherwise depend mostly on “9 to 5” business activity in the Downtown. Today, residential uses are focused in the McKay Avenue and Warehouse Campus Neighbourhoods.

Residential development is designated as the primary land use for the southern part of the McKay Avenue Neighbourhood and is also a permitted use (in combination with commercial use) in that part of McKay Avenue which is predominantly a commercial area. The Warehouse Campus Neighbourhood is a mixed-use area that has experienced considerable residential growth over the last 10 years, with most of this growth being focused in the western and eastern portions of the neighbourhood.

POPULATION

According to the 2016 Municipal Census Results, the population of Downtown Edmonton is 19,508 people. Based on data from *The Quarters District Retail Feasibility Study (Interim Report)* in 2015, the population in The Quarters is 1,663 residents.

- + Over two-thirds of the population in Downtown is between the ages of 20 – 30 while over one-third of the population in the Quarters is between those ages.
- + In Downtown, the average household income is two-thirds of the City's average where as in the Quarters is slightly over half of the City's average.
- + The ownership of dwellings in both Downtown and the Quarters area is significantly lower than that of the City's average at 29% and 10% respectively.

Current Site Population:
21,908



Projected site population by 2050:
36,550 – 43,812

	DOWNTOWN	THE QUARTERS	EDMONTON
Population	19,508	1,663	899,447
Married	22%	21%*	45%
Single	49%	47%*	32%
Household Size 1 person	58%	58%*	29%
Average Household Income	\$61,466	\$48,746*	\$90,340
Owner Occupied	29%	10%**	65%
Renter Occupied	71%	90%**	35%

*Source: Boyle Street Neighbourhood, Municipal Census Data 2016

**Source: The Quarters Downtown Urban Design Plan

DOWNTOWN POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND TARGETS

A goal in the Capital City Downtown Plan is to promote a twenty-year population growth target of Downtown residents up to 24,000 by 2030.

Downtown accounts for only 2.1% of the City's population. Majority of Edmontonians continue to settle into lower density housing in the suburbs. *The Downtown and Quarters Population and Jobs Outlook* projects the following:

- ✦ By 2050, Downtown Edmonton would have a residential population of 29,288 and Quarters between 7,262 and 14,524.
- ✦ The total population projection for the site area would therefore be between 36,550 to 43,812.
- ✦ By 2050, Downtown would have 96,660 jobs and the Quarters 4,238 jobs. This totals to 100,989 jobs within the study boundary.

THE QUARTERS POPULATION PROJECTION

Based on *The Quarters Downtown Urban Design Plan*, It is anticipated that once The Quarters is fully developed and built out it could accommodate a population of approximately 18,000 to 20,000 people.

CHILDREN

Children are a good indicator of the family friendliness of the neighbourhood and whether it is designed as an all ages neighbourhood. Only 6 % of the population of Downtown is children whereas 23% of Edmonton's population is under the age of 19. Although the general population projection for Edmonton's Downtown is that it will grow significantly, the 2016 report from the Edmonton Public School Board indicates that growth among youth who are school-aged will be under 1% citywide. Since the City of Edmonton's goal is to develop a more family orientated Downtown, *Breathe* recommends that Downtown public places should provide additional recreational spaces that are child-friendly and offer amenities targeted at youth and families with children.

SENIORS

By 2041, one in three Edmontonians will be a senior. Within the population of seniors, the most dramatic growth will be in the 80+ year age group . The study area comprises of 28% seniors as of 2016 whereas by 2041 it is highly probable that the percentage of seniors in Downtown Edmonton will increase significantly as the percentage of seniors rise citywide.

STUDENTS

Downtown Edmonton is home to fourteen schools, post-secondary and private-sector trade colleges. Two of Edmonton's six publicly funded post-secondary institutions are located in Downtown. MacEwan University (19,000 students) and NorQuest College (9,000 students) are the two largest post-secondary institutions within Downtown that aggregate to a population of 28,000 students only in these two institutions. Both universities are within a 10-minute walk of an LRT station (Corona Station or MacEwan Station).



746

Children in Downtown + Boyle Street Neighbourhood

6% of population < age 19



3,659

Seniors in Downtown + Boyle Street Neighbourhood

28% of population > age 55



> 28,000

Post-secondary Students in MacEwan University + NorQuest College

POPULATION DENSITY

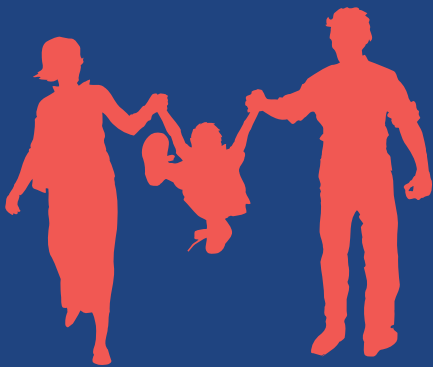
MAP

The map illustrates the residential population density per square kilometer in dissemination blocks in Downtown Edmonton. Blocks that are coloured in white have no residential population as they have predominantly employment of civic buildings. These are largely located in the Commercial Core and parts of the Urban Warehouse District.

It is important to note that the data for population density is based on 2016 statistics. Since then, there have been residential buildings built on areas indicated in white representing no population.

POPULATION DENSITY

- ✦ The highest population density of population in Downtown Edmonton live in McKay Avenue, which is zoned for high density residential as well as mixed-use residential. While the density in central Downtown is currently relatively lower than McKay Avenue, it is projected to increase over time as more residential buildings are developed.
- ✦ In the Quarters, while the residential population spread throughout the neighbourhood the population increases near the edges of the site boundary into the 400 meter buffer areas as these areas are predominantly residential neighbourhoods adjacent to Edmonton's Downtown and the Quarters.







NUMBER OF RESIDENTS SERVED BY PARKS

MAP

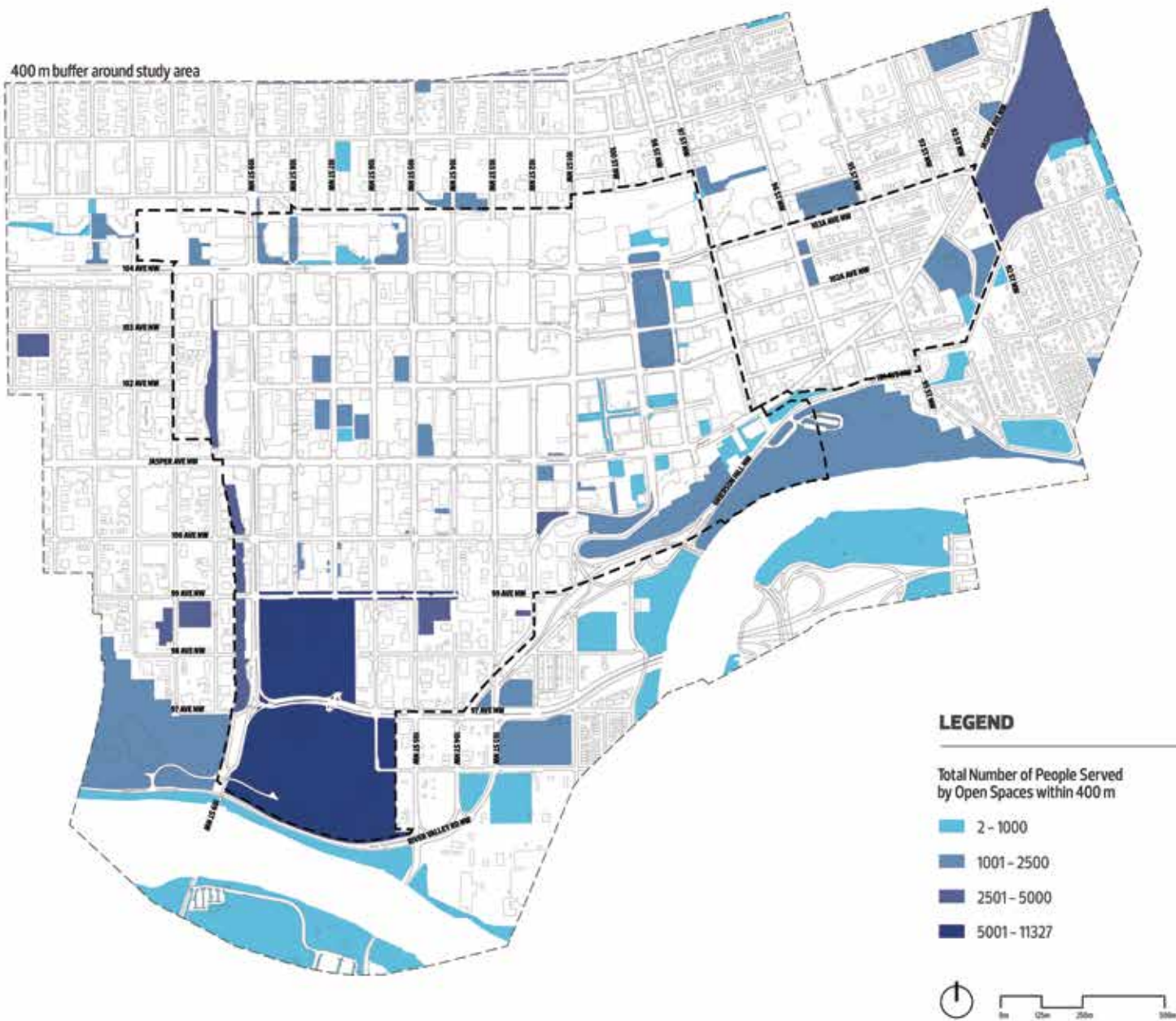
The map illustrates the total number of residents served by dissemination blocks per open space within a 400 meter catchment area. The darker the shade, the more people that public space serves, the lighter the shade, the less people it serves.

NUMBER OF RESIDENTS SERVED

Based on the analysis, the Alberta Legislature Grounds serves the largest number of people within a 400 meter catchment area. This is likely due to the high residential density in the dissemination blocks adjacent to the park. Additionally, due to the large size and perimeter of the park, it is able to capture large numbers of people. On the contrary, parks near the central core serve much lower numbers of residents within a 400 meter catchment due to the lower population density in these areas.

The public places adjacent to the River Valley is also easily accessible to those living near its access points, servicing a larger population.

While the map suggests the number of people served by open spaces within a 400 meter catchment area, it does not show the amount of open space that is easily accessible per resident based on where they live. This can be seen in the following map.



Parks + Open Spaces in Study Area

56 ha

Current population in Study Area

21,171 people

Total parks + Open Spaces per 1000 people
based on the current population of 21,171

2.6 ha



Maximum projected population in Study Area

43,812 people

Total parks + Open Spaces per 1000 people
based on a projected population of 45,000

1.3 ha

OPEN SPACES PER PERSON BY DISSEMINATION BLOCK

MAP

The map illustrates the total amount of open space (meter²) per person within 400 meters of a dissemination block. The darker the shade, the more open space an individuals living in that dissemination block has access to within a 5 minute walking distance.

OPEN SPACE PER PERSON

The amount of open space per resident is dependent on the population density of the dissemination blocks and their distance to parks. For instance, if a dissemination block has a low population density, but is directly adjacent to a park, the people in that block will have a larger area of open space compared to blocks with high residential density adjacent to the same park. This is evident in the block with Beaver Hills House Park compares to those that are adjacent to the park.

In general, blocks with a residential population typically have access to open spaces over 100 meters ² and only two blocks within the site boundary have less than that. However, they are high density blocks adjacent to a park, therefore still have access to an open space very near to their residents.

While the map suggests the amount of open space is accessible per dissemination block based on a 400 meter catchment, it does not show the amount of parkland being shared per resident. This can be seen in the following map which illustrates the pressure on each park.



PARK PRESSURE

=

PARK AREA

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE



PARK PRESSURE

MAP

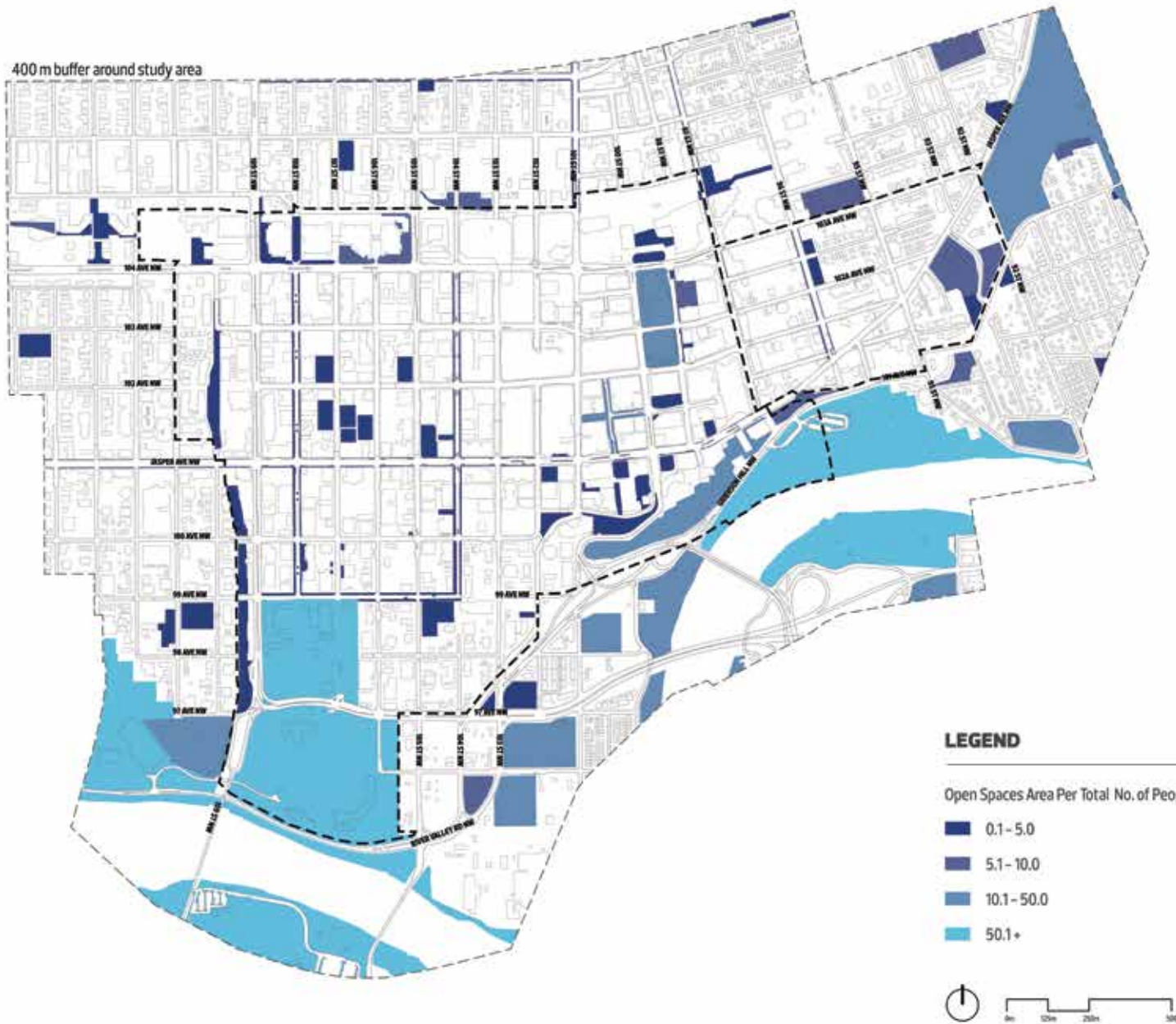
The map illustrates the total amount of parkland accessible to residents within a 400 meter catchment area. It represents the amount of pressure placed on each park by calculating the park area divided by the number of residents in the dissemination block.

PARK PRESSURE

The larger open spaces such as the Alberta Legislature Grounds and Churchill Square have much lower park pressure due to their size relative to the population in their adjacent dissemination blocks. On the contrary, parks such as Alex Decoteau, Beaver Hills House Park and others that are of similar size have much higher pressure serving only between 0.1 to 5 square meters of park space for the total number of people with 400 meters.

As residential populations in Downtown Edmonton and The Quarters rise in the future, if the supply of park space remains as is, the total number of people each park serves will increase significantly, resulting in added park pressure to each park.

400 m buffer around study area



URBAN LIFE



19

Recreational Facilities



12

Libraries



31

Community Services



16

Churches



13

Educational Institutions

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND RECREATION

MAP

The map illustrates services that are scattered throughout the site. These include recreational facilities, libraries, community services, churches and educational institutions.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community services and recreational facilities enhance the livability and vibrancy of the city by providing places and opportunities for all Edmontonians to gather, connect, recreate and celebrate.

There is a range of community service facilities in Downtown where many are located in close proximity to Jasper Avenue. Warehouse Campus, southern McKay area and parts of the Quarters is comparatively less dense with services.

Recreation

There are many indoor recreational amenities along 109 St NW and in the Commercial Core. These recreational amenities include private gyms, school gyms and fitness studios. While the Downtown is well served with indoor recreational facilities for the winter months, it is lacking outdoor facilities including playgrounds.

Library

Downtown has a well distributed supply of libraries with the exception of McKay Avenue.

Community Services

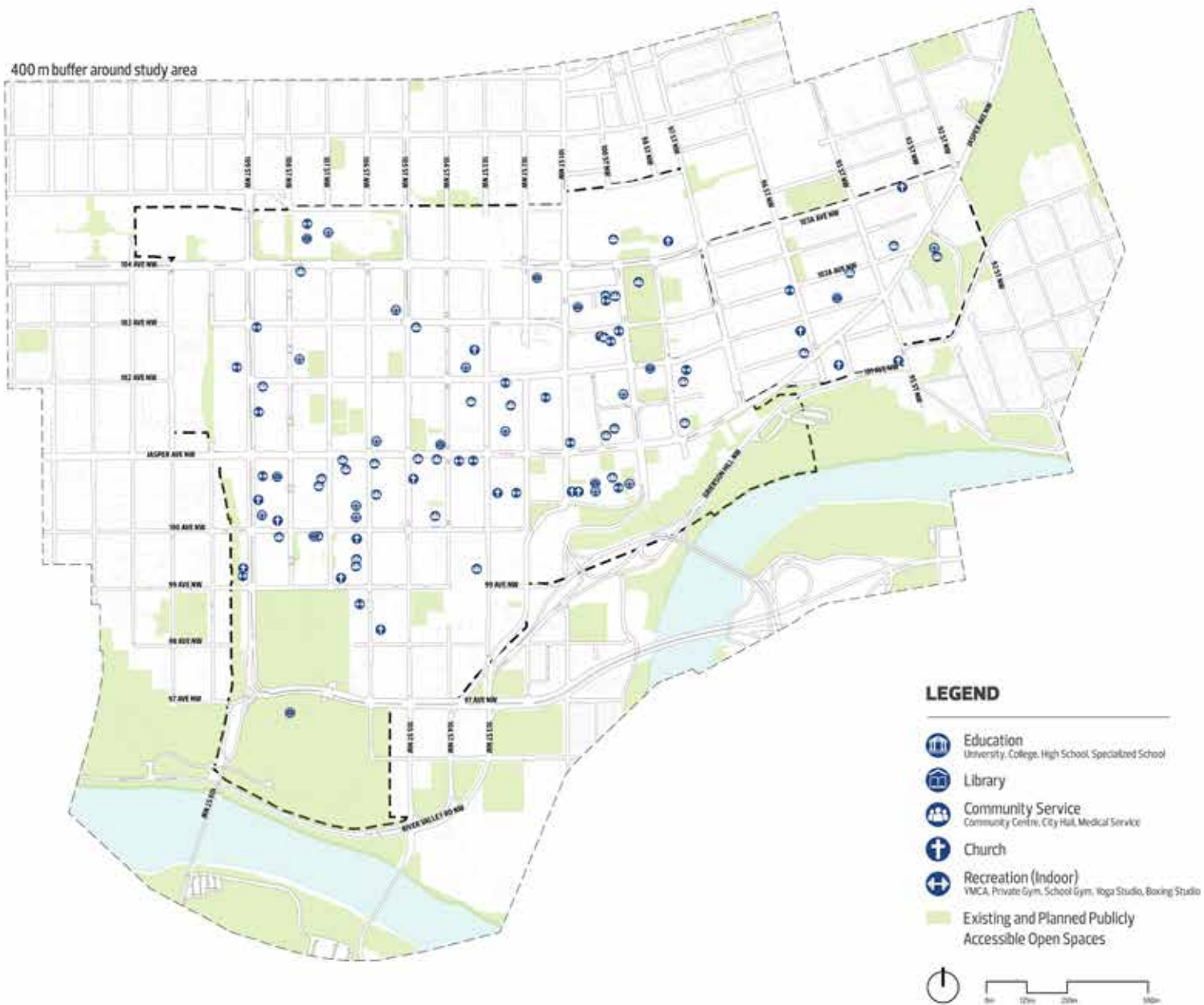
There is a large quantity of community services in Downtown that include community centers, service agencies, city hall and medical services. Many of these are located along Jasper Avenue.

Churches

Downtown is well supplied with churches, most of which are located in the Capital City neighbourhood and McKay Avenue neighbourhoods.

Schools

Downtown has a well distributed supply of schools that include university, colleges, high schools and specialized schools.



275,000

Anticipated average of visitors
every year



64%

Visit Downtown to dine



46%

Visit Downtown to attend festivals and
social events



38%

Visit Downtown to for concerts and live
performances

COMMERCIAL AMENITIES

MAP

The map illustrates commercial amenities that are scattered throughout the site. These include, cafes, restaurants, bars, grocery stores, theaters and cinemas.

COMMERCIAL AMENITIES

Commercial amenities are primarily clustered around high density office buildings that is zoned as the core commercial arts zone, Jasper Avenue and the arena and entertainment district zone. Currently there is minimal retail in the Quarters area however majority of it is clustered along 97 St. There is minimum commercial activity in the high density residential zones within the McKay area. Many of the commercial amenities are accessible using the PedWay system.

There is opportunity to focus the supply of commercial amenities around and adjacent to public places to encourage increased use of spaces while people enjoy the surrounding commercial amenities.

PURPOSE FOR VISITING DOWNTOWN

According to the Downtown Edmonton Survey, the main purpose for people visiting Downtown other than work is dining (64%), attending festivals/social events (46%), and live performances/concerts (38%). In 2010, "Casual Dining", "Live Performances" and "Festivals" were voted as the top three priorities that survey respondents wanted to see more of in Downtown. Rogers Place s estimated an average attendance of more than 12,000 visitors per event (Rogers Place). Additionally, Churchill Square sees thousands of visitors annually for several festivals and programming that host

their events on the plaza. With more than 30 annual festivals and special events happening every year, Downtown Edmonton has become the hub for a variety of celebrations and entertainment options.

Retail

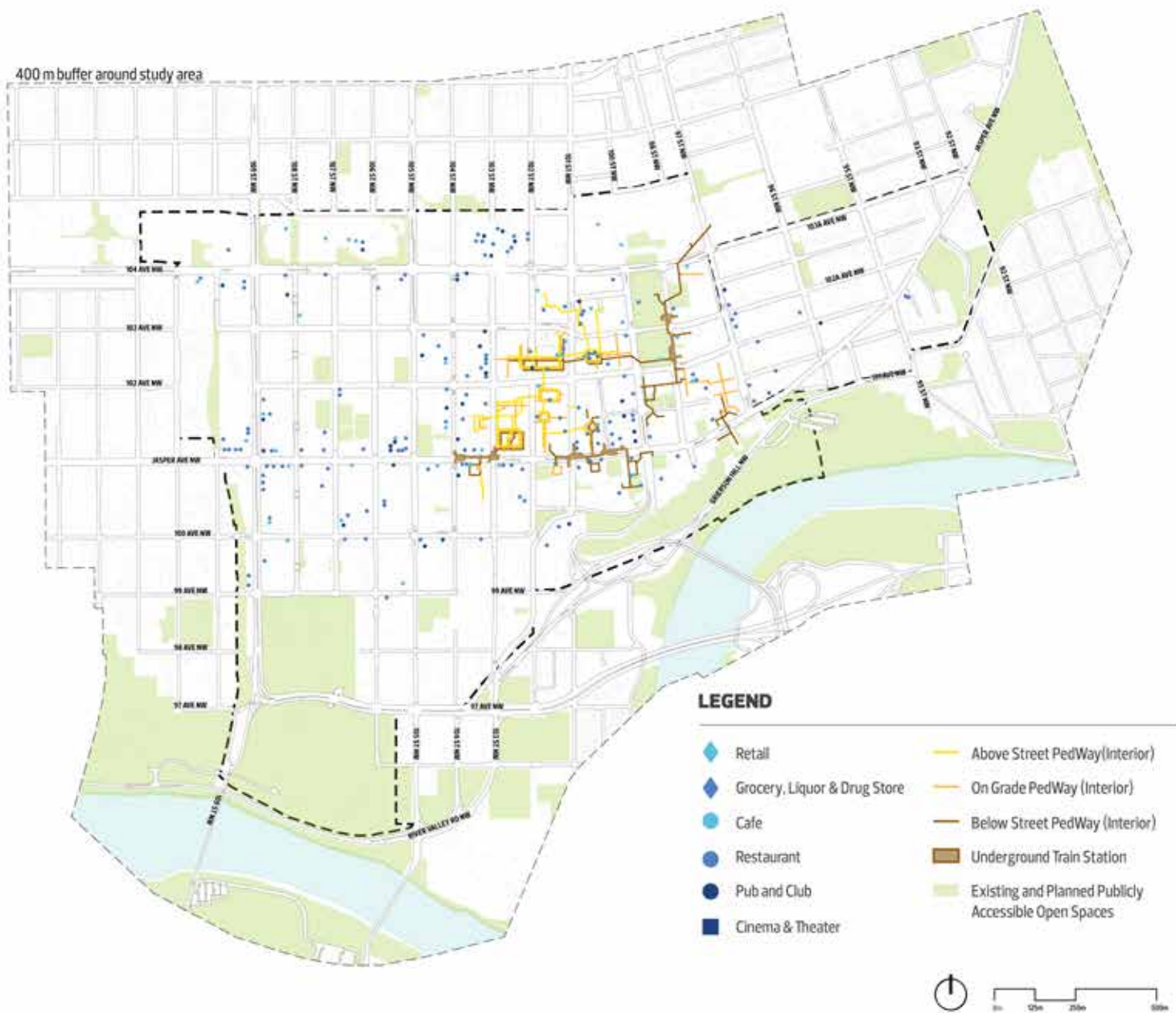
Only 17% of respondents visit Downtown for shopping. People prefer convenient and cheap parking therefore malls and retail stores that are outside Downtown such as West Edmonton Mall draw more people. The development of 300,000 square feet of retail in the Ice District will require creating a unique experience to attract visitors Downtown for shopping .

Grocery Stores

There is currently only one grocery store in Downtown Edmonton along the west of 109 Street (Save-On-Foods).

Cafes, Pubs and Restaurants

Downtown Edmonton is well supplied with a wide array of food joints. While many of these are located along Jasper Avenue and the Commercial Core, there are few scattered in each of the Downtown neighbourhoods. Over he recent years, more than a dozen food and beverage options have opened up in Downtown.



MAJOR DESTINATIONS

MAP

The map illustrates any major destinations that might attract tourists or visitors into Downtown . There is an array of theatre, visual art, music, and culture to be experienced in Downtown.

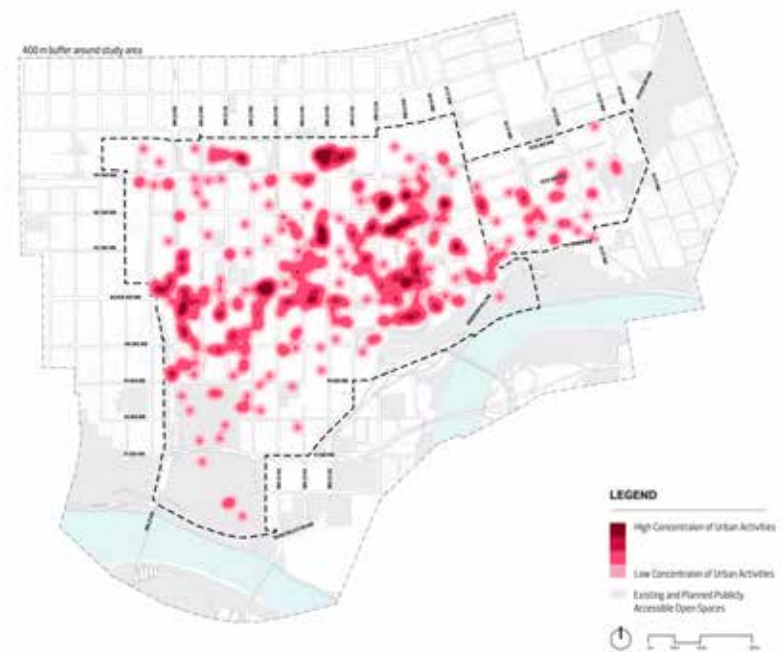
DESTINATIONS

Major destinations in Downtown Edmonton are those that bring people together, attract tourists, host thriving culture, history and art. It is essential that these destinations are well connected to each other through high quality streetscapes and public places. Some of Edmonton's most attractive destinations are located Downtown. A few of these include the Royal Alberta Museum, Legislature Building, Art Gallery of Alberta, Shaw Conference Centre, Rogers Place, etc.

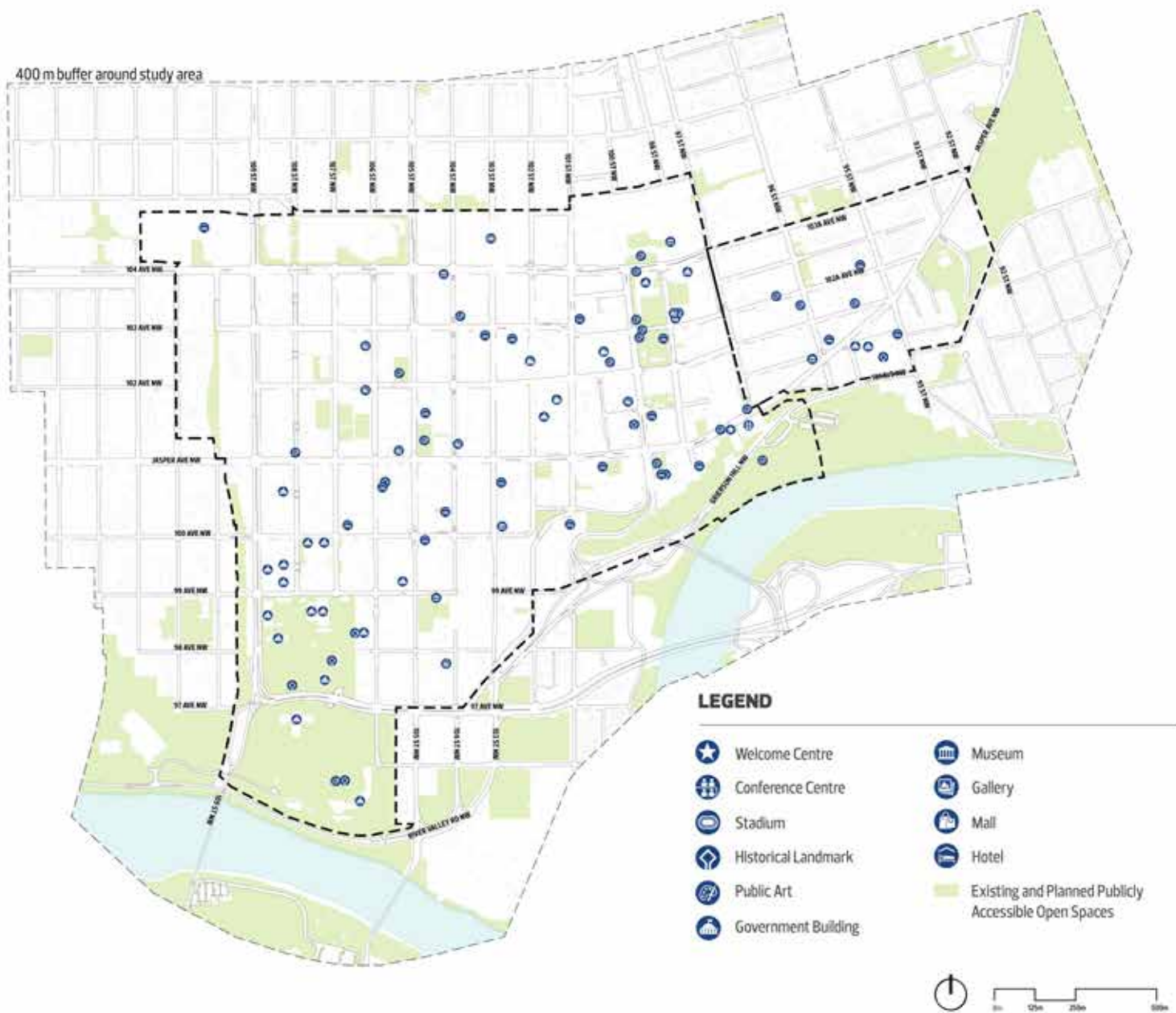
Major destinations are well distributed and supplied throughout Edmonton's Downtown. These include a welcome center, conference centers, a stadium, historical landmarks, public art, government buildings, museums, galleries, malls and hotels.

There is an opportunity to improve the access of major destinations through increased connectivity with the use of public places. These public places can then also serve as destinations for those visiting Downtown.

Downtown hotels are scattered throughout the commercial core and along Jasper Avenue. There is also one hotel located in the Quarters. In the future, there are plans for additional hotels near the Ice District. The placement of hotels offer visitors the convenience of easy access to commercial amenities.



The map above illustrates the concentration of community services and recreation, commercial amenities and major destinations. It indicates a large concentration of services along Jasper Avenue and the Commercial Core.



Attractive

- + Narrow units (10 – 20 units per 100m)
- + Many entrances
- + A diversity of functions
- + Few closed, passive units
- + Interesting facades
- + Quality materials and details

Neutral

- + Mixture of small/large units (6–10 units per 100 m)
- + Some diversity of functions
- + Some closed, passive units
- + Average facades
- + Decent materials and details

Facades Need Improvement

- + Larger units (1–5 units per 100 m)
- + Little diversity of functions
- + Many closed, passive units
- + Primarily unattractive facades
- + Few or no architectural details

VISUAL QUALITY OF GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES

MAP

The map illustrates the quality of ground floor frontages along each public spaces in the site area.

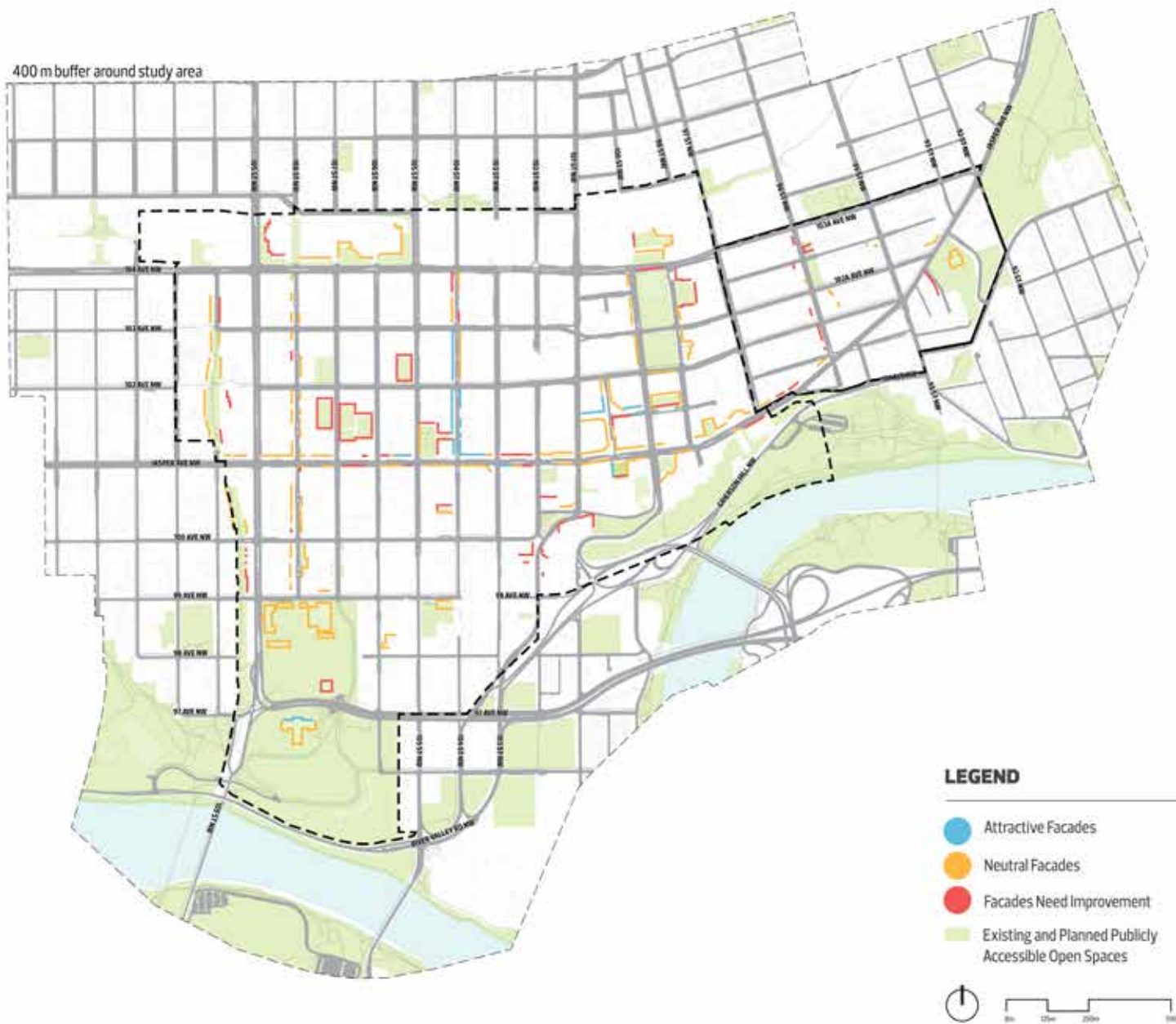
GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES

The ways in which buildings are designed, particularly their ground floor street level frontages have an impact on the experience of pedestrians and those that use the space around them. These frontages can often activate the street and encourage interaction with street users.

Elements that activate the street frontage include permeability, transparency, building materials, signage, style and details of the building's architecture. The evaluation criteria utilized to determine the visual quality of ground floor frontages encompassing each public space included the distribution of units and number of entrances, the diversity of functions, the richness of facades and the architectural details.

Attractive frontages are primarily located along 104th Street as well as along Rice Howard Way. These streets are busy with many commercial amenities such as shops, restaurants, pubs and grocery stores. Jasper Avenue, a pedestrian orientated street is diverse in its ground floor frontages and consists of attractive, neutral and unattractive frontages.

Many of the public places that are engulfed by buildings are located to the side or back of the building, thus resulting in neutral or facades that need improvement.



PERCEPTION OF SAFETY

MAP

The map illustrates the perception of safety as identified by participants from the phase 1 public engagement. Participants in the online interactive map and those approached during pop-up events were asked the question “Where do you feel safe or unsafe?” Some reasons for which people feel unsafe are summarized below:

POOR LIGHTING

In several areas of Downtown particularly on the eastern parts of Jasper Avenue, there is a lack of lights which make people feel unsafe.

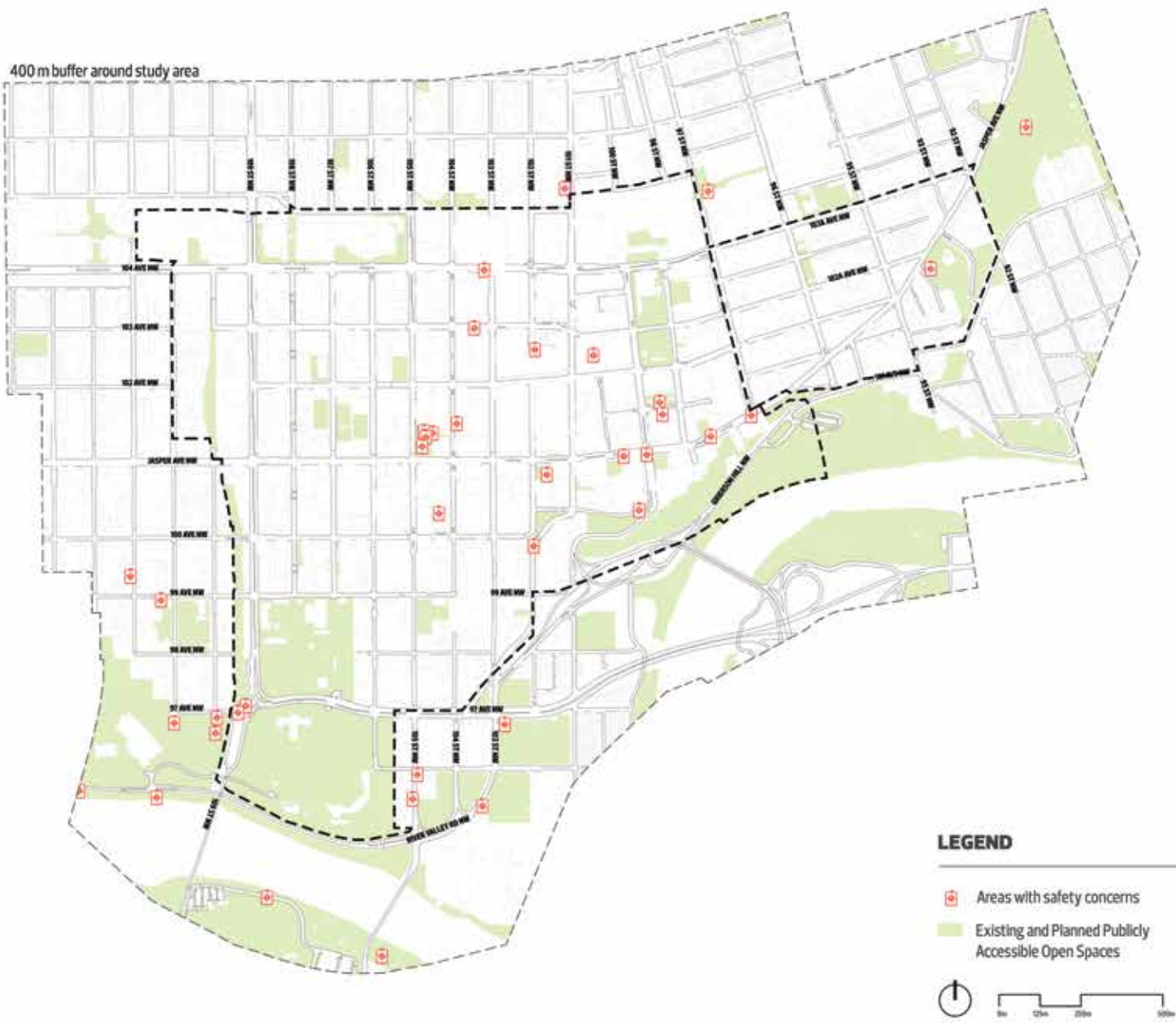
PEOPLE

Intoxicated people, panhandlers and homelessness were identified as issues causing safety concerns. This was also echoed in the Downtown Survey as the top concern for public safety.

PATHWAYS

People feel unsafe walking or running along several pathways near the river valley due to narrow sidewalks and pathways. Additionally, many feel that some pathways are too close to streets with high and speed traffic flow. The intersection between the Constable Ezio Faraone Park into the Alberta Legislature Grounds is one that is perceived as unsafe due to high traffic speeds and poor sight lines. Some pathways are also outdated and broken resulting in drainage issues and trip hazards.





1,752

People experiencing
Homelessness in
Edmonton in 2016

11%

People spent the night
in public places

HOMELESSNESS

MAP

The map illustrates the number of people experiencing homelessness as encountered by the REACH Crisis Diversion Team through their services.

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

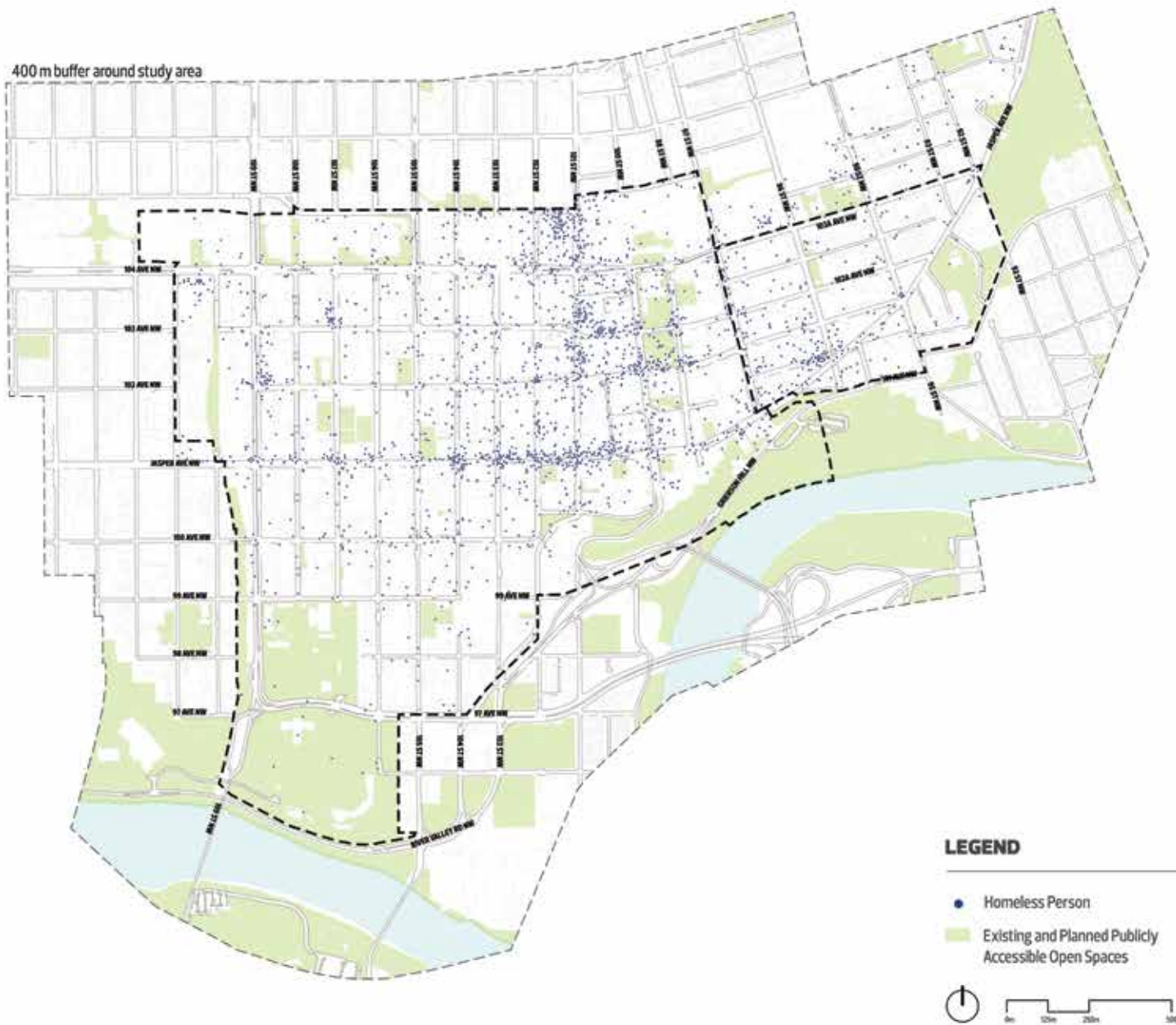
Within the site boundary, there is a higher density of homeless population along Jasper Avenue, particularly near the east end. There are also hot spots near the north east of the site. This is justified as there are several community service agencies in these areas that specifically serve the homeless population. The density of people decreases towards the residential neighbourhoods of Downtown. The population is mostly scattered and concentrated on the streets compared to public places.

2016 HOMELESS COUNT

In Edmonton, 1,752 people were counted as experiencing homelessness across the city in 2016. Out of this, 187 individuals were found to be spending the night in public spaces including parks, sidewalks, squares and plazas. This accounts for 11% of the counted homeless population. 11 people, or 1% spent the night in other unsheltered location unfit for human habitat. A total of 108 youth were found to be homeless. 11% of the youth found had spent the night in a public place.

While the count took place in the inner city of Edmonton, several areas surrounding the Downtown and Quarters site boundary was considered. In addition to people on the streets, homeless individuals staying at all service agencies located in Downtown and the Quarters were also accounted for.





AN ATTRACTIVE STREET



Downtown Edmonton's 104th Street NW is lined with a diverse range of commercial amenities such as retail outlets, restaurants, cafes and bars that spill onto the street during the summer months. 104 St is home to the Downtown Farmer's Market and hosts several other festivals throughout the year when it is converted into a pedestrians only street. Michael Phair park is located off this street, through which one can also access Beaver Hills House Park. The street is easily accessible on public transit as Bay/Enterprise Square Station entrance is located at the corner of 104th St and Jasper Avenue. This street is an example of one that is attractive and pedestrian friendly.

GROUND FLOOR FACADE THAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT



A blank wall is located on 105th street across from Alex Decoteau Park.

UNSAFE AREAS



One area marked as unsafe through the public engagement is the path that connects Michael Phair Park and Beaver Hills House Park. This area has been known to have poor lighting, hidden corners and intoxicated people.

POOR CONDITIONS



97 St Underpass is located directly below the Living Bridge and is adjacent to Mary Burley Park. This underpass is dark, with poor lighting making many individuals feel unsafe to walk through it. Additionally, the state of Mary Burley Park is also of concern given its poor state.

PUBLIC PLACES AND MOVEMENT



Reasons to live in

Downtown:

Walkability
59%

Lifestyle
56%

Proximity to Work
53%



WALKABILITY (400 METERS)

MAP

The map illustrates the walkshed of parks 400 meters around it using the street network.

PUBLIC PLACES CATCHMENT

The catchments of public places considers the access to parks with the use of walkability as an evaluation metric. Walkable catchment calculations are often expressed as the distance it takes for an individual to travel within a five minutes of walking. As a result, a five minute walk time is considered to be 400 meters in distance.

The catchment of each park in Downtown Edmonton has been calculated by the actual distance of 400 meters (or 5 minutes travel time) from parks using the street network.

Based on the current distribution and supply of parks, and the given area of the Downtown Edmonton, majority of the area is accessible to a public place within a 400 meter walking distance.

DOWNTOWN EDMONTON SURVEY

Based on a Downtown Edmonton Survey conducted in 2017 that questioned people on their reasons to live in Downtown, 59% of people voted for walkability, 56 % of people voted for Lifestyle of Downtown, 53% of people voted for Proximity to Work.

Comparatively when the survey was conducted in 2010, only 4% of the people voted for Walkability and another 4% voted for Lifestyle of Downtown. Proximity to work still remains one of the top three reasons to live in Downtown.

This indicates that striving towards a more pedestrian friendly neighbourhood has played a critical role in becoming a preferred place to live for its walkability and lifestyle.

400 m buffer around study area



LEGEND

- WalkShed (400 m)
- Existing and Planned Publicly Accessible Open Spaces



Commute to work on foot

Quarters: 7%

Downtown: 33%

Edmonton: 5%



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

MAP

The map illustrates all active transportation amenities in the site boundary. This include sidewalks, shared-use pathways, bike lanes, and Edmonton's PedWay. The heat map was extracted from Strava indicating the volumes of pedestrians and bikers.

PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

Pedestrian connectivity of parks, greenways, enhanced streetscapes and plazas is incomplete in many areas. This is indicated through the lack of continuous sidewalks throughout the site boundary. Evidently, as shown on the heat map, Jasper Avenue and 99 Ave sees high pedestrian traffic and they have continuous sidewalks. From the public engagement results, it was often mentioned that there is a lack of safe, sidewalk connections, or intersections in specific areas of Downtown. The indoor pedway system connects various Downtown buildings underground and above ground. The system also provides access to some major public places including Churchill Square, Centennial Plaza and Rice Howard Way while also providing access into 3 LRT stations.

BIKE NETWORK

Downtown Edmonton offers over 7.8 km of protected bike lanes, shared roadways and paths to get around downtown. The heat map illustrates the volume of travel by foot and by bike throughout the Downtown area, which indicates that the volume of people traveling along the river valley, along Railtown and through the Alberta Legislature Grounds. The public engagement revealed that while some view the bike lanes as obstructive, others value the bike lanes for transportation within Downtown as well as connecting to its surrounding neighbourhoods.

The 2016 census results indicated that only 1% in Downtown and 3% of the people in the Quarters ride their bikes to work. A survey conducted immediately after the bike lanes were launched revealed that 30% of residents plan to use the infrastructure anywhere between every day to once a week. Bike trips recored prior to the launch was 2,454 and after the installation, it was 4,711. Since the launch of the network, it is possible that more than 1% to 3% of residents journey to work on their bicycles.

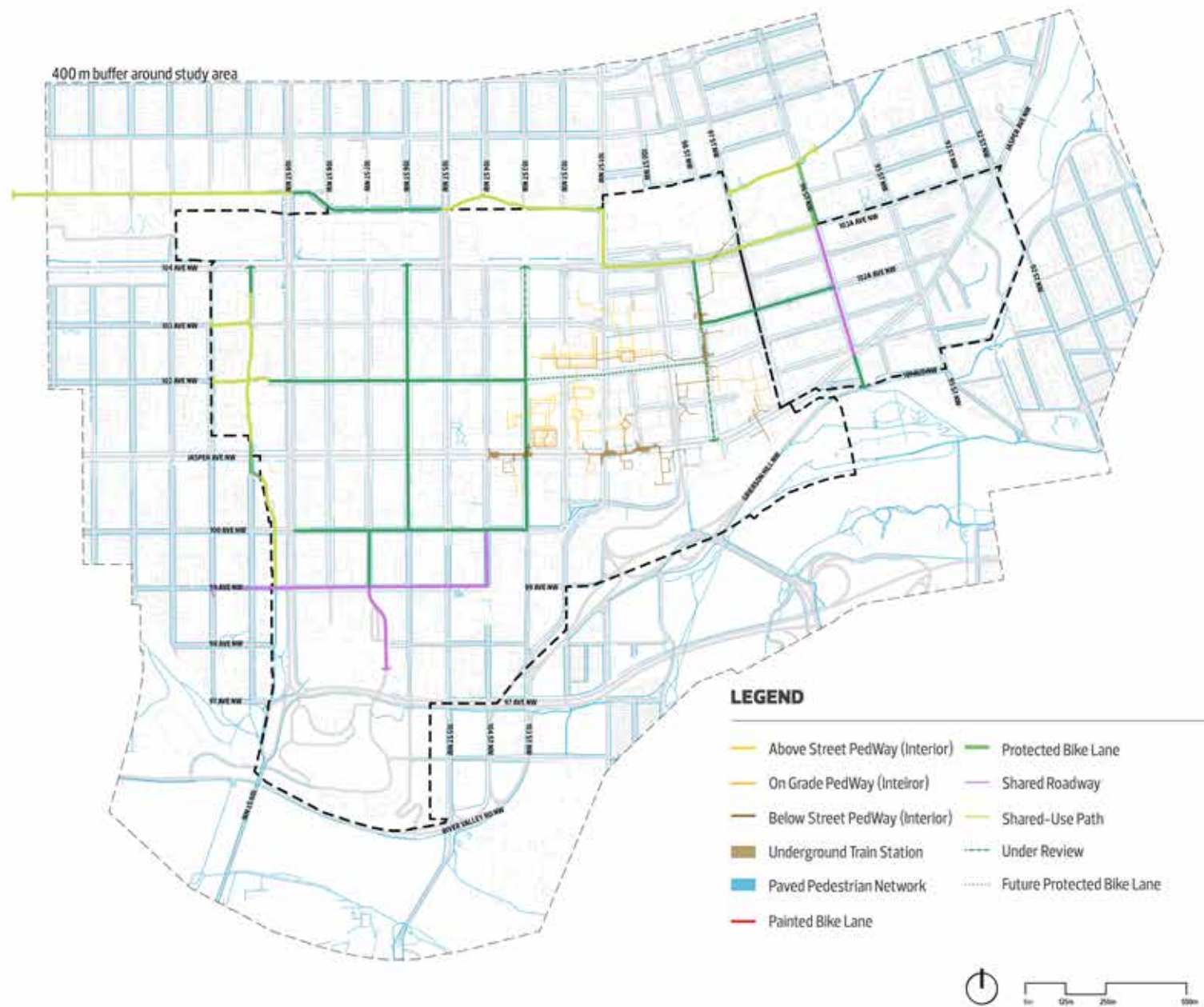
Commute to work on a bicycle

Quarters: 3%

Downtown: 1%

Edmonton: 1%





Commute to work
on Public Transit
Quarters: 27%
Downtown: 23%
Edmonton: 15%



Existing LRT Stations
6
Future LRT Stations
11

PUBLIC TRANSIT

MAP

The map illustrates the existing and future Light Rail Transit (LRT) lines and bus stops.

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT

Edmonton's current light rail transit (LRT) comprises of two lines including the Capital Line and the Metro Line. The Capital Line runs from the north east to south west of Edmonton and provides access to Downtown and terminates at Clareview Station in north east or Century Park in the south west. The Metro line operates from the south west of Edmonton and terminates at NAIT, while also providing access to Downtown.

Currently, there are a total of five LRT stations in Downtown. These include Grandin/Government Centre, Corona, Bay/Enterprise Square, Central and Churchill. Churchill Station is located directly below a public space (Churchill Square), while the other stations are in close proximity to public places.

There are opportunities to develop public spaces that are well connected and easily accessible to future transit stations.

Valley Line

The Valley Line LRT is a 27 km low-floor LRT that will operate between Mill Woods in the south east of Edmonton and Lewis Farms in west Edmonton. It is planned to have four stations in Downtown (MacEwan Arts/112 Street Stop, Alex Decoteau Stop, 102 Street Stop, Churchill Stop) and one in the Quarters (Quarters Stop). The Valley line south east is currently under construction and expected to be open to the public by the end of 2020.

Centre LRT Study

The Centre LRT is a route that was identified in the City's Long Term LRT Network Plan (adopted in 2009). It is proposed to connect with the Valley Line West at 101 Avenue and 107 Street. It will head south along 107 Street and turn west on 99 Avenue, where it will cross the river over a newly constructed bridge. The Centre LRT will ultimately connect Downtown to the Alberta Legislature, University of Alberta and the neighbourhoods of Strathcona, Bonnie Doon.

BUS

There are over 40 bus routes that go through Downtown Edmonton. While they are well distributed throughout the area, few sections within the Quarters and McKay Avenue that are sparse.

NON-DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS COMMUTING TO DOWNTOWN

Based on a Downtown Edmonton Survey conducted in 2017 that questioned people on their commuting habits to Downtown, 55% of people that do not live in Downtown use their personal vehicles to travel to work in Downtown and only 30% use public transit. This indicates that people in Edmonton prefer to use their personal vehicles to work Downtown. While this might be the case for those who are required to come to Downtown for work, the phase 1 public engagement revealed that the biggest reason preventing people from coming to Downtown is parking.



THE BIKE NETWORK



Dedicated bike lanes are highly valued by bikers in Downtown Edmonton, however some automobile drivers find them to be obstructive.

WALKABILITY



104th Street, a pedestrian orientated walkable street with attractive ground floor frontages, parks and transit options nearby.

EDMONTON TRANSIT SYSTEM – LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT



The Bay/Enterprise Square station located on 104th Street, across the street from Michael Phair park.

EDMONTON TRANSIT SYSTEM – BUS



There are over 40 sub routes travelling through Downtown Edmonton.

IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

Impervious surfaces are artificial structures or hardscapes that are made of impermeable materials such as asphalt, concrete, brick, stone and rooftops. There is a significant amount of impervious surfaces within Downtown Edmonton which include roads, sidewalks and driveways. Majority of these surfaces are made up of parking lots adjacent to buildings. Almost every block in Downtown Edmonton consists of a parking lot.

PARKING

According to the Downtown Edmonton Survey, top three factors that would motivate people to make more purchases Downtown include a greater variety of goods and services (50%), cheaper parking (42%) and more availability of parking (29%). Currently, there are 18,000 parking spots within Downtown core that is comprised of parkades, surface lots and on-street parking. As more people are anticipated to visit Downtown, there will be an increased demand for parking.

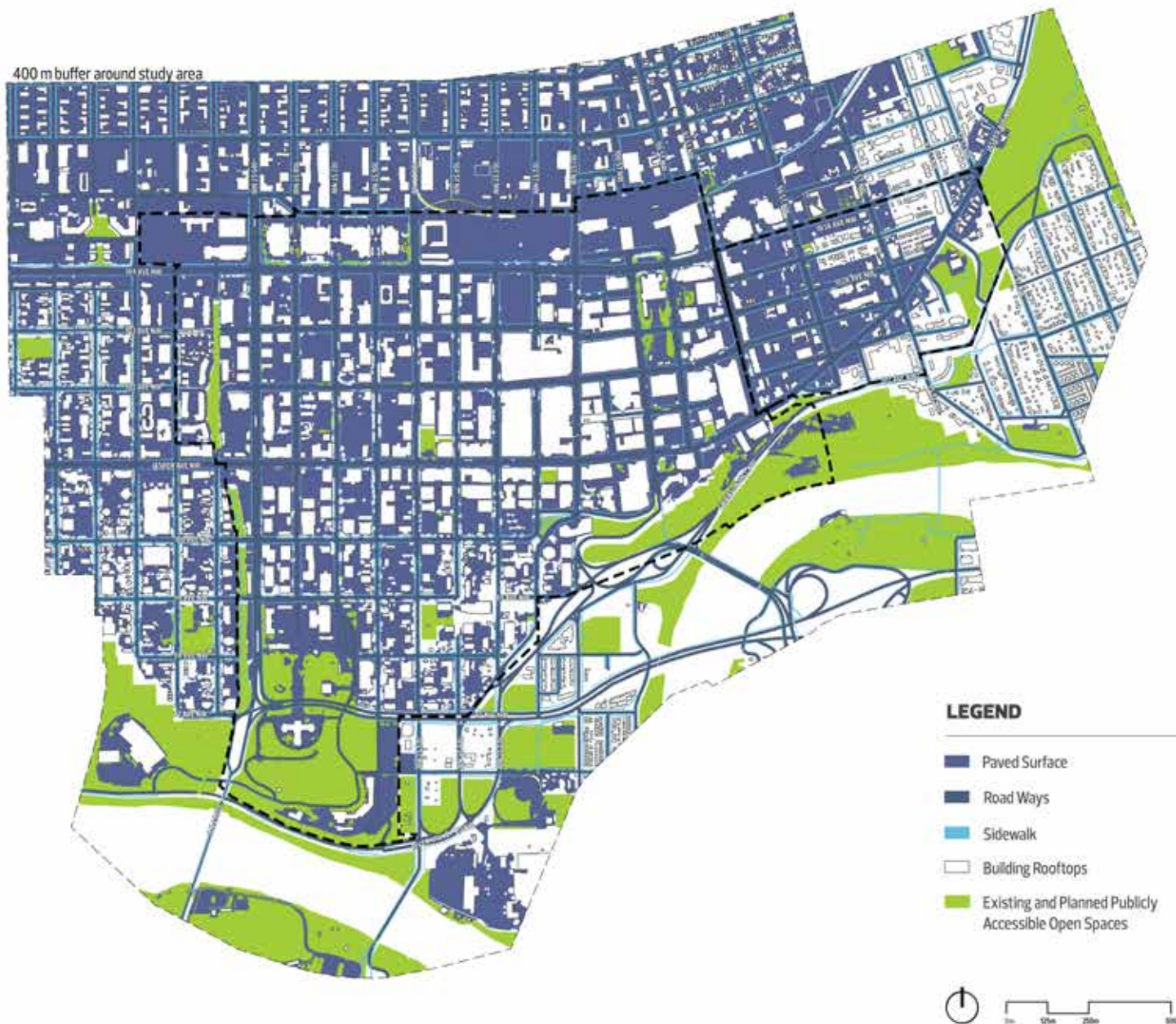
While the demand for parking may increase in the future, surface parking often causes buildings to be set back away from the street and each other. They create unattractive street frontages and result in a poor quality walking experience.

Percentage of the study
area that is paved:

82%



400 m buffer around study area



Percentage of the study
area that is vegetated:

18%



VEGETATION

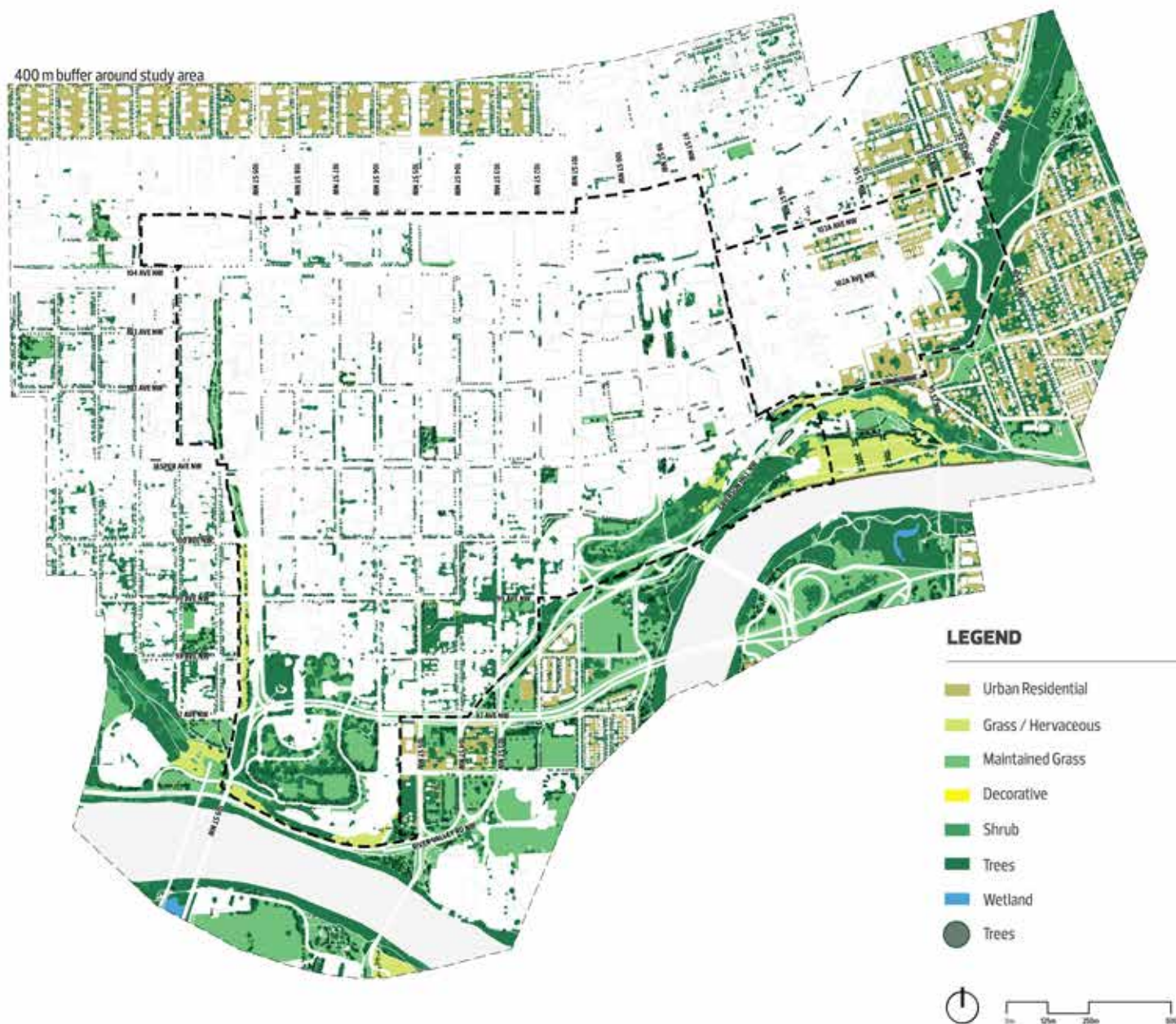
PERMEABLE SURFACES

Vegetated landcover include any surfaces that are made up of landscaping, plant cover or turf. Trees and vegetation reduce runoff and absorb water. The leaves catch water and increase evaporation.

Downtown Edmonton has a high amount of impervious surface and low amounts of vegetation. Majority of the vegetated land cover is located near the south Downtown on the Legislature Grounds and Louise McKinney Riverfront Park. Near the north side of the site by the commercial district, there is a significant lack of vegetation where only some trees are present.

The Edmonton Downtown Public Places Plan has the opportunity to significantly increase the amount of vegetation throughout the Downtown region with the help of trees and green spaces. Landscaping, trees, green spaces and flowers was a frequently recommended resource resulting from the phase 1 public engagements.

400 m buffer around study area



SLOPE

MAP

The map illustrates the slopes within the site boundary.

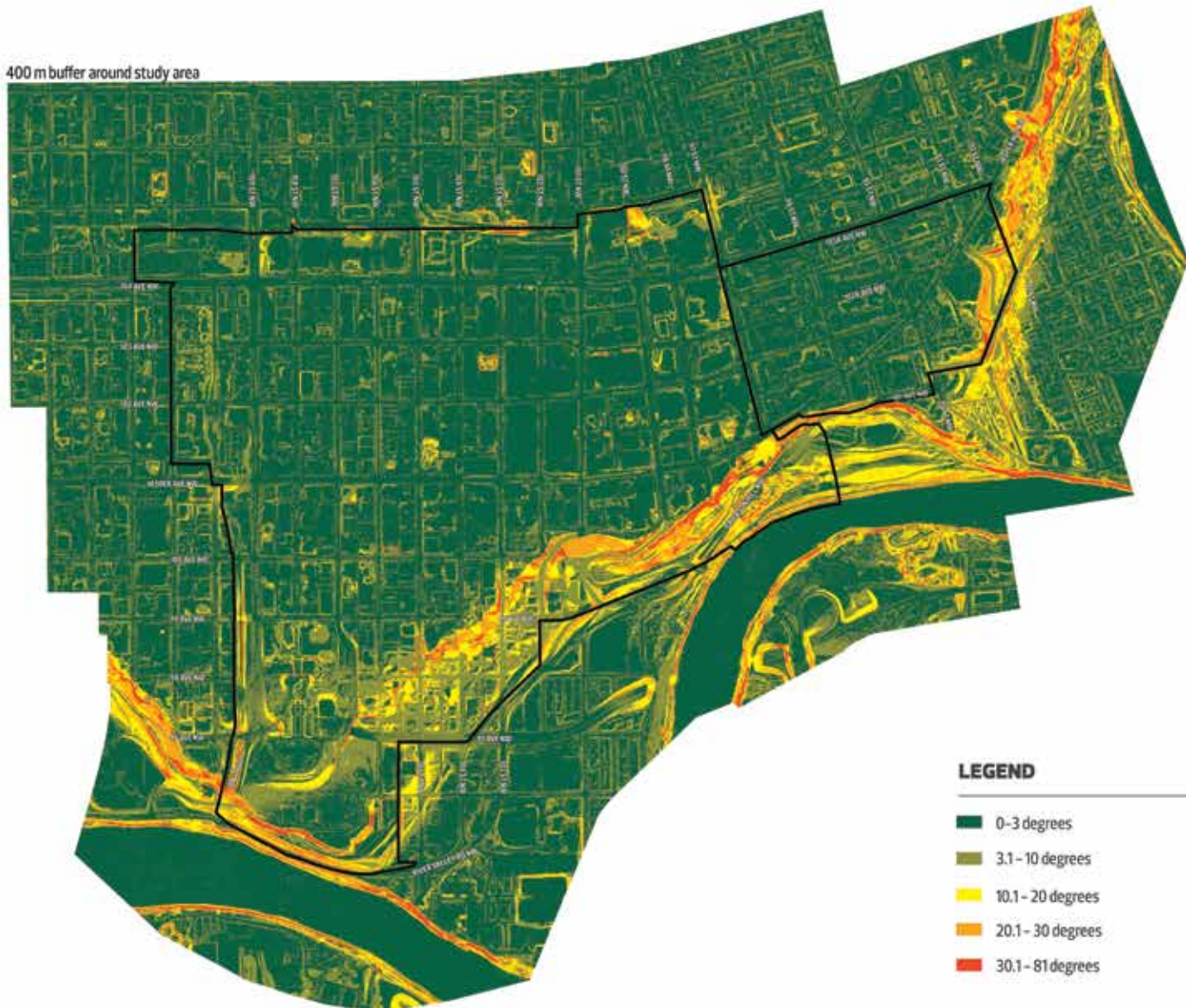
SLOPES

While majority of Downtown Edmonton has slopes of between zero to three degrees, there is an escarpment with slopes of over 30 degrees along south end of the site that trails close to the river.

There are several pristine view points along the slopes of Downtown Edmonton in which there are opportunities to improve and enhance the public places. While these slopes can pose barriers for those with mobility challenges, they are also frequently visited and appreciated by many. Particularly, the stairs along the slopes that connect the higher elevated areas to the top of bank areas, are well used for exercise or a through fare.



400 m buffer around study area



SHADOW STUDY

MAP

The map illustrates the shadows cast by the buildings within the site area. The shadow study was conducted for the following dates and times:

- + March 20 at 10:00am, 12:00pm and 4:00pm
- + June 21 at 10:00am, 12:00pm and 4:00pm
- + September 22 at 10:00am, 12:00pm and 4:00pm
- + December 21 at 10:00am, 12:00pm and 4:00pm

SHADOWS

Based on the current built form and building footprint, large parts of Downtown is shaded. Fortunately, much of the green spaces along the river valley and south side of Downtown remain sunny. The Warehouse Campus Neighbourhood Central Park will remain sunny throughout the year.



400 m buffer around study area



CLIMATE + WEATHER

TEMPERATURES AND WIND

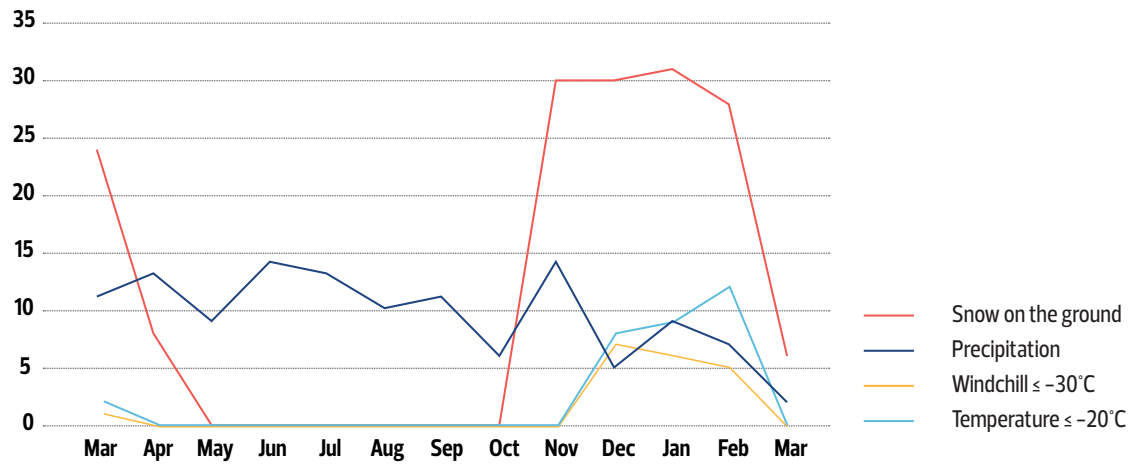
The diagram illustrates the average maximum and minimum temperatures in Edmonton each month. July is the hottest month, and January is the coldest month. Edmonton has four distinct seasons. In its extreme, Edmonton has experienced a high of 33°C and the lowest of -36°C. However, with the windchill and humidity it can often feel much hotter or colder. The average prevailing wind directions are between west-north-west to south-west.

PRECIPITATION

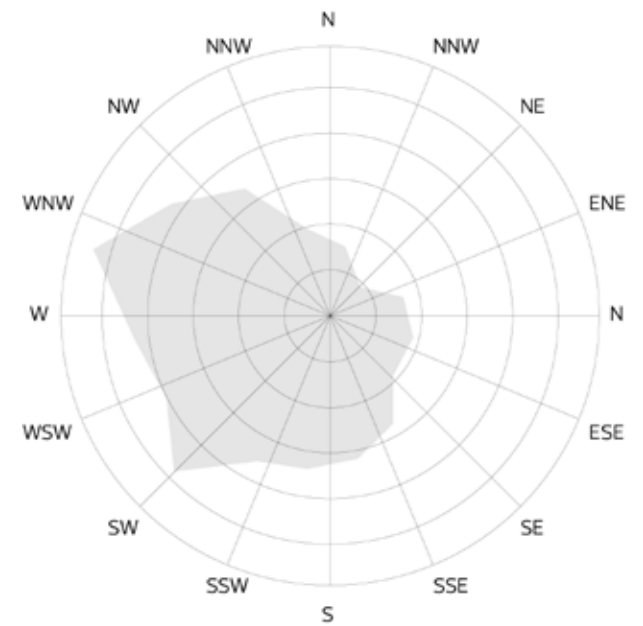
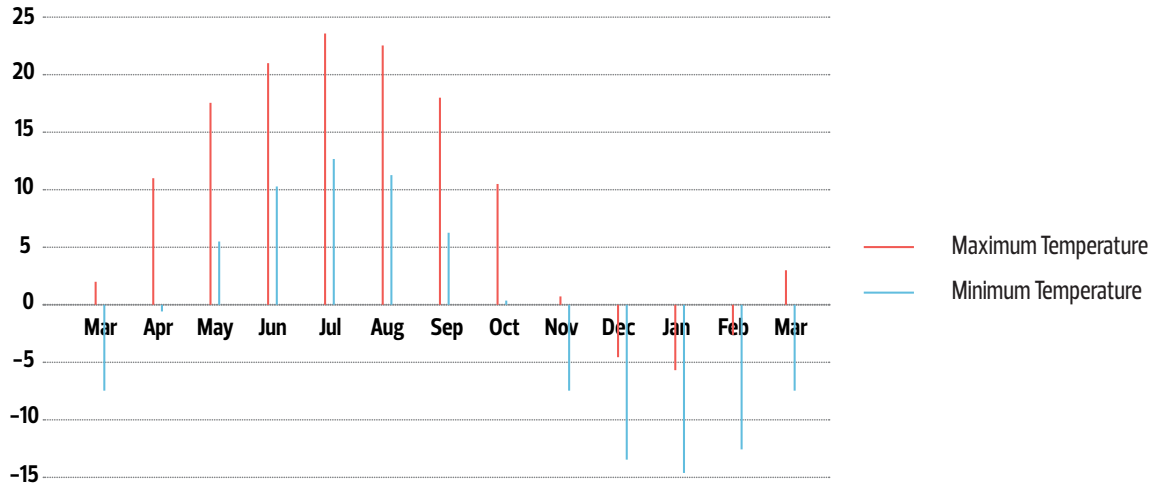
Edmonton experiences a fair amount of precipitation during the winter months. The mean daily snow depth ranges from 0cm to 24 cm, however in its extreme, the depth could be up to 46cm.



Number of Days



Temperature (°C)



SLOPES ALONG DOWNTOWN



View from Constable Ezio Faraone Park. The stairs along this steep slope is widely used by many for exercise and through fare.

WINTER ACTIVITIES ON CITY HALL PLAZA



Located in City Hall Plaza is converted into a ice skating rink over the winter months.

IMPERVIOUS SURFACES



Much of the surface in Downtown Edmonton is impervious with many parking lots. Alex Decoteau Park was formerly a parking lot which was then turned into a park. The billboard plays on the excess amounts of gravel in the area while informing the public on the construction of the park.

SHADOWS



Michael Phair park is located off 104th St alongside a laneway, resulting in shadows and heavy winds during parts of the day.

FUTURE SCENARIOS



RELEVANT FUTURE PROJECTS

MAP

The map illustrates all known major future projects within the site boundary that may be impacted by the Downtown Public Places Plan. This includes any developments policy plans, and transportation infrastructure.

FUTURE PROJECTS

There is a wide variety of future projects and developments taking place in Edmonton. These include the following projects.

Projects integrating the North Saskatchewan River consider connections from the south of Downtown into the river as well as promenades along the river.

- + Touch The Water
- + River Crossing
- + North Shore Promenade

Some major developmental projects include residential and commercial developments:

- + Ice District Phase 2
- + Stationlands
- + Boyle Renaissance Project

Redevelopment of streetscapes focus on creating high quality pedestrian streets:

- + Jasper Avenue New Vision
- + 105 Avenue Streetscape

Plans underway in Downtown Edmonton to explore the re-development and re-vitalization of areas include:

- + Chinatown

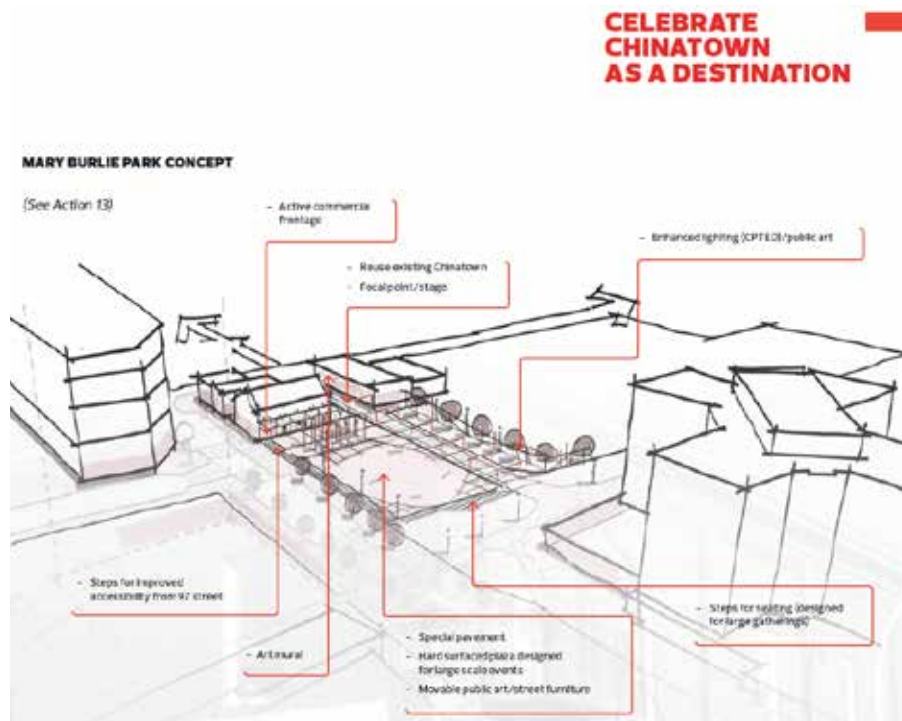
- + Civic Precinct
- + The Quarters Downtown

Public Transit projects include the construction of the new Central LRT route as identified in the City's Long Term LRT Network Plan. The Centre LRT Study will determine the best LRT route to connect Downtown Edmonton to Strathcona, Bonnie Doon and east Edmonton.

- + Central LRT route
- + Valley Line West



CHINATOWN STRATEGY: MARY BURLEY PARK CONCEPT



Action 13 in the Chinatown strategy is to develop a concept and execute the future develop of Mary Burle Park that enable inclusive and programmable public space for the community. The strategy also identifies the 97th St Rail Bridge as an opportunity for multi-modal connections (Action 17).

KINISTINAW PARK IN THE QUARTERS



As part of The Quarters Downtown redevelopment, the City of Edmonton is working on a new park for the area called Kinistina Park. This new park is intended to create a community space for people to gather and to attract further redevelopment to the area.

STANLEY A MILNER LIBRARY



In the fall of 2014 City Council approved funding for the revitalization and renewal of the Stanley A. Milner Library, which is across the road from Churchill Square. Behind the library is Centennial Plaza, making the library an important landmark surrounded by public places.

NORTH SHORE PROMENADE



The North Shore Promenade is to propose a promenade along the north shore of the north Saskatchewan River. Illustrated above is one of two concept plans for the promenade, which is a more manicure scheme. The second option is one that is more naturalized with the upper promenade, the bike path, the viewing deck and a natural river bank, as opposed to a staircase and a lower promenade.

FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

MAP

The map illustrates potential future residential developments that are planned to be constructed in Edmonton. Having known the number of units in each residential building a projected population was calculated per building using an average of 1.5 persons per unit. The bubbles in the map represent the potential population where the larger the circle, the higher the projected population in the area.

DEVELOPMENTS

Future residential developments in Downtown will be primarily concentrated within the Warehouse District and the Commercial Core. These developments are of various commercial, residential and municipal development that will contribute to shaping the future of the Downtown.

While these developments are a fragment of the growth that will take place, they identify and validate key areas that should be considered while planning the development and enhancement of new public places. Ensuring that residents and employees are able to access open space without significant pressures on them due to the volume and frequency of use.



400 m buffer around study area



ENCORE TOWER



Located on 103 Street NW and 102 Avenue NW, the Encore tower is under construction, to be completed in 2019. The residential building is to be 43 storeys with 179 units.

ALLDRITT TOWER



Alldritt Tower is to be an 80 storey mixed use building that is 280 meters in height. The top 60 floors are to be residential while the remaining will be offices and retail. The first three storeys will have a transparent base.

ICE DISTRICT PHASE 2



Concept renderings for the commercial and residential development north of Rogers Place

MASSEY FERGUSON BUILDING REDEVELOPMENT



Located on 106 Street NW and 103 Avenue NW, the Massey Ferguson Building Redevelopment is a residential, office and retail building in its pre-construction stage. There are a total of three buildings of 48, 45 and 42 storeys with a total of 1300 units.

VACANT LAND

MAP

The map illustrates the vacant land available in Downtown Edmonton.

VACANT LAND

Open space acquisition in the Central Core is limited by land availability and its high cost. The smaller parcels of land available with diverse ownership make land assembly difficult in Downtown Edmonton and the Quarters. Additionally, land values in the Central Core are appreciating faster than the accumulated value of reserve funds. In order to secure land for public places, the City must compete to acquire land in the Central Core. There is a larger inventory of vacant land available in the Quarters while some scattered around the McKay Avenue neighbourhood.



