Bylaw No.23/016
Schedule A

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO

DOWNTOWN AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

June 2023



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With gratitude, the Regional *Municipality* of Wood Buffalo acknowledges this land is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and the unceded territory of the Métis people.

DENE

The Regional *Municipality* of Buffalo holyé, beta aderıhłchahele, nederi nı ́ke yaghé, honodanowaltł'ı, eghadaleda, senaıhdé, Treaty 8 holyé bénék'e, Enά, Dene, Beghak'ąsé yonızıhoch'ı derınué k'e hotsı dıałı, t'a hotıyı danohołta ʔąt'e sı,

CREE

mistahî ētiyîtamok
oma
treaty 8 askîy
eta
kawîkitwâw,
ka kiskinahâmatwâw,
katoskîtwaw,
ekwa
kamîtawîtwâw
nihîyawâk, denesoline ekwa mētis
otaskîwâw

CONTENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT..... I

1 INTRODUCTION..... 1

1.1 How to Use This Plan 1

1.2 Regional Context..... 3

1.3 Downtown Fort McMurray..... 7

1.4 Plan Area 8

1.5 Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan..... 10

1.6 Guiding Values 15

2 BACKGROUND & PLANNING CONTEXT..... 19

2.1 Population 19

2.2 Economy 22

2.3 Infrastructure 24

2.4 Flood Mitigation 24

2.5 Land Use 26

2.6 Built Form 30

2.7 Parks and Open Spaces 32

2.8 Transportation and Mobility 38

2.9 Heritage, Culture and Public Art 44

3 VISION, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES..... 49

3.1 Vision 49

3.2 Goals And Objectives.....49

4 DOWNTOWN ARP OVERARCHING POLICIES 55

4.1 Land Use 56

4.2 Built Form 61

4.3 Parks and Open Spaces 65

4.4 Transportation and Mobility 69

4.5 Heritage, Culture, and Public art.....75

5 DOWNTOWN ARP AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES 82

5.1 Business and Civic Area 84

5.2 Entertainment/Retail Area..... 92

5.3 Hospital/Medical Area 98

5.4 King/Education Area 102

5.5 Waterfront Area.....108

5.6 MacDonald Island Park Area..... 114

5.7 Borealis Area 118

5.8 Snye Area.....122

5.9 Biggs Area 126

6 IMPLEMENTATION..... 133

7 GLOSSARY OF TERMS..... 137





1 Introduction

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The *Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan* (ARP or the Plan) sets out how *Downtown* revitalization is to be achieved over the next 10 years. The ARP has been organized into six sections (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Plan Structure



1.1.1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

SECTION 1 | INTRODUCTION

Sets out the ARP structure and key *policy* terminology to guide interpretation.

SECTION 2 | BACKGROUND & PLANNING CONTEXT

Introduces the *Downtown*, its regional context and establishes the planning area for the ARP. Lastly, this section describes the legislative framework, outlining the directions and guiding principles that inform the ARP.

SECTION 3 | VISION, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

Reflects the community's aspirations for the *Downtown* and provides the framework and direction for the ARP's *policies*.

SECTION 4 | DOWNTOWN ARP OVERARCHING POLICIES

Outlines *policies* that are broadly applicable to all areas of the *Downtown*. The *policies* are organized into broad categories that emerged during the ARP engagements, including *Land Use, Built Form*, *Parks* and Open Spaces, *Transportation* and *Mobility,* and *Heritage, Culture, and Public Art*.

SECTION 5 | DOWNTOWN ARP AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES

Organizes the *Downtown* into smaller geographic areas based on site features, neighbourhood characteristics and future plans. Area specific *policies* are only applicable to the local context as referenced.

SECTION 6 | IMPLEMENTATION

Outlines the required actions needed to implement the ARP and advance the ARP's vision, goals, and objectives.

1.1.2 ARP POLICIES

While all ARP *policies* must be read and interpreted as a whole, the Overarching *Policies* found in Section 4 apply to the entire *Downtown* plan area, whereas the Area Specific *policies* in Section 5 apply only to the local context for each Area.

1.1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE DOWNTOWN ARP

The ARP provides the *policy* framework to help guide future development and re-development in the *Downtown*. As set out in the *Municipal Government Act,* the ARP is a plan that must describe:

- plan objectives and how they are proposed to be achieved; and
- proposed *land uses*.

It provides a framework for future *redevelopment*, not a guarantee as to the types of future activities, programs, and events in the plan area.

1.1.4 TERMS USED IN THE ARP

Terms shown in *italics* can be found in the Glossary.

Policies set out how the ARP's objectives are to achieve the plan's goals and vision. They are high-level statements of intent.

Table 1: Important Policy Terms

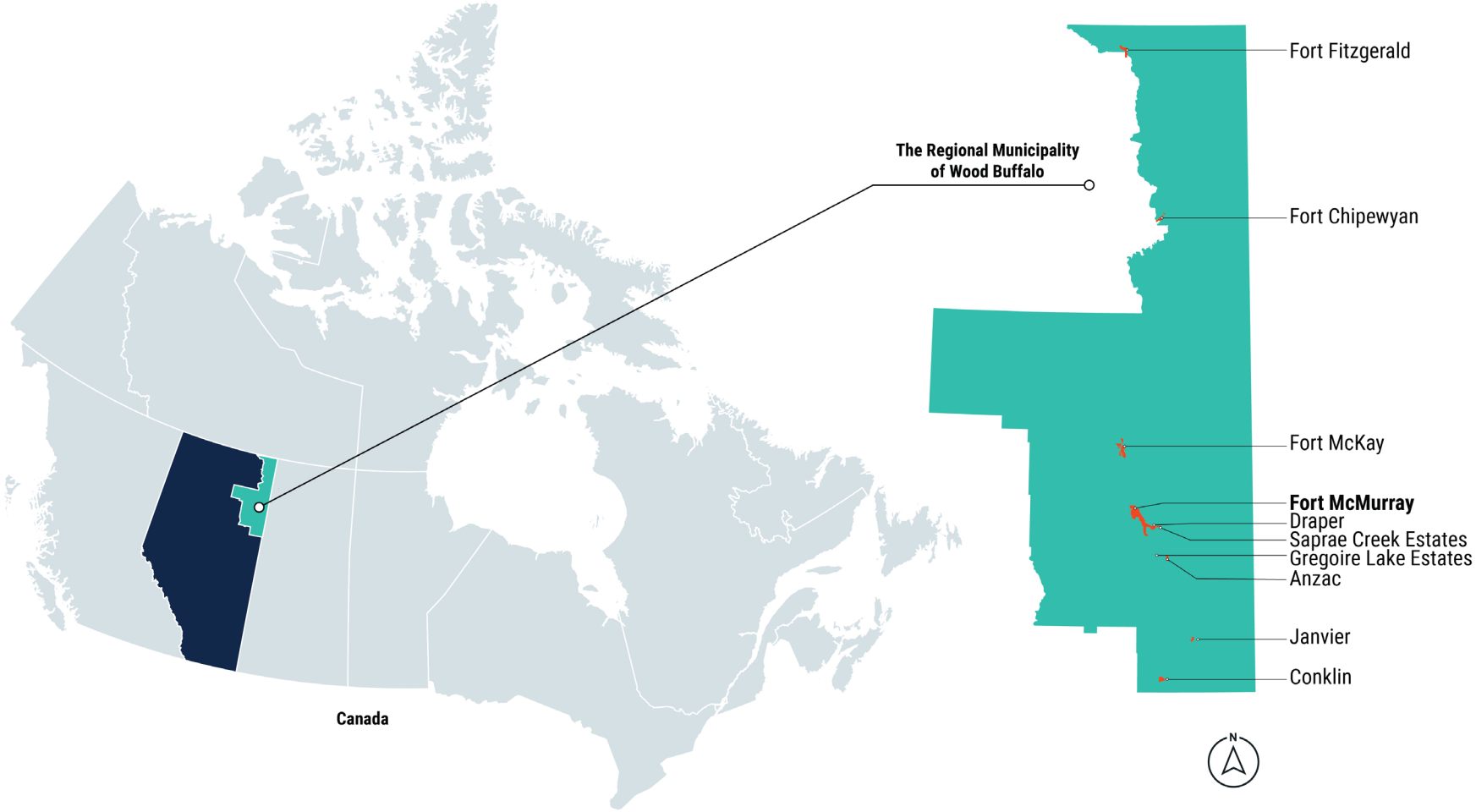
Important Policy Terms	
Require	Indicates a compulsory obligation.
Encourage/ Support	Provides direction for what is expected.
Consider	Provides criteria for when actions may be suitable.

1.2 REGIONAL CONTEXT

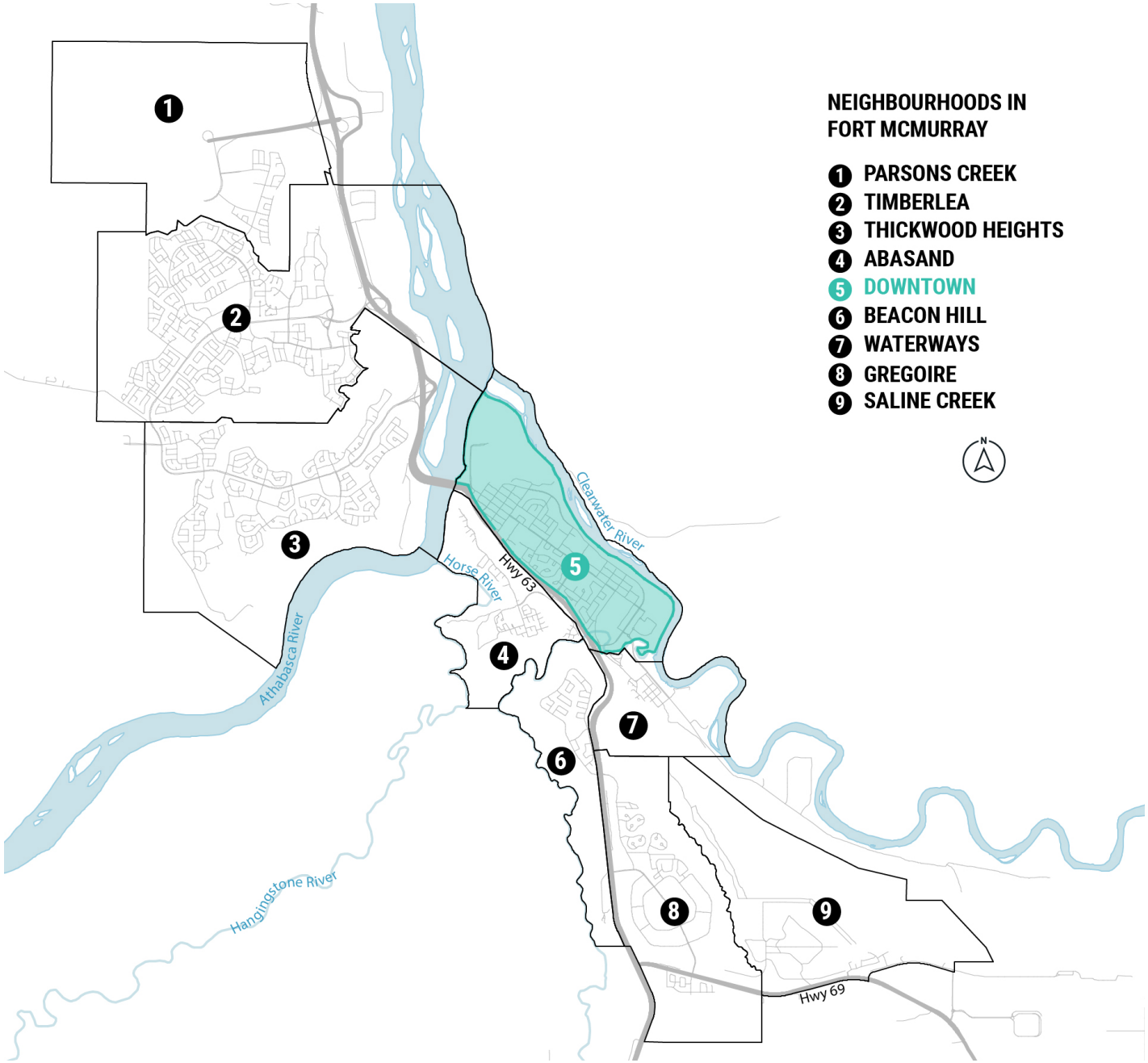
The Regional *Municipality* of Wood Buffalo (the *Municipality* or *the Region*, **Map 1**) is located within the northeastern corner of Alberta. It comprises a portion of Treaty 8 Territory and unceded Métis homelands and is, as a result, home to six First Nations and six Métis communities. Fort McMurray (**Map 2**) is the principle urban centre within the *RMWB*. It is designated by the province as an "*Urban Service Area*" and functions as *the Region*'s administrative and business centre, serving nine rural communities.

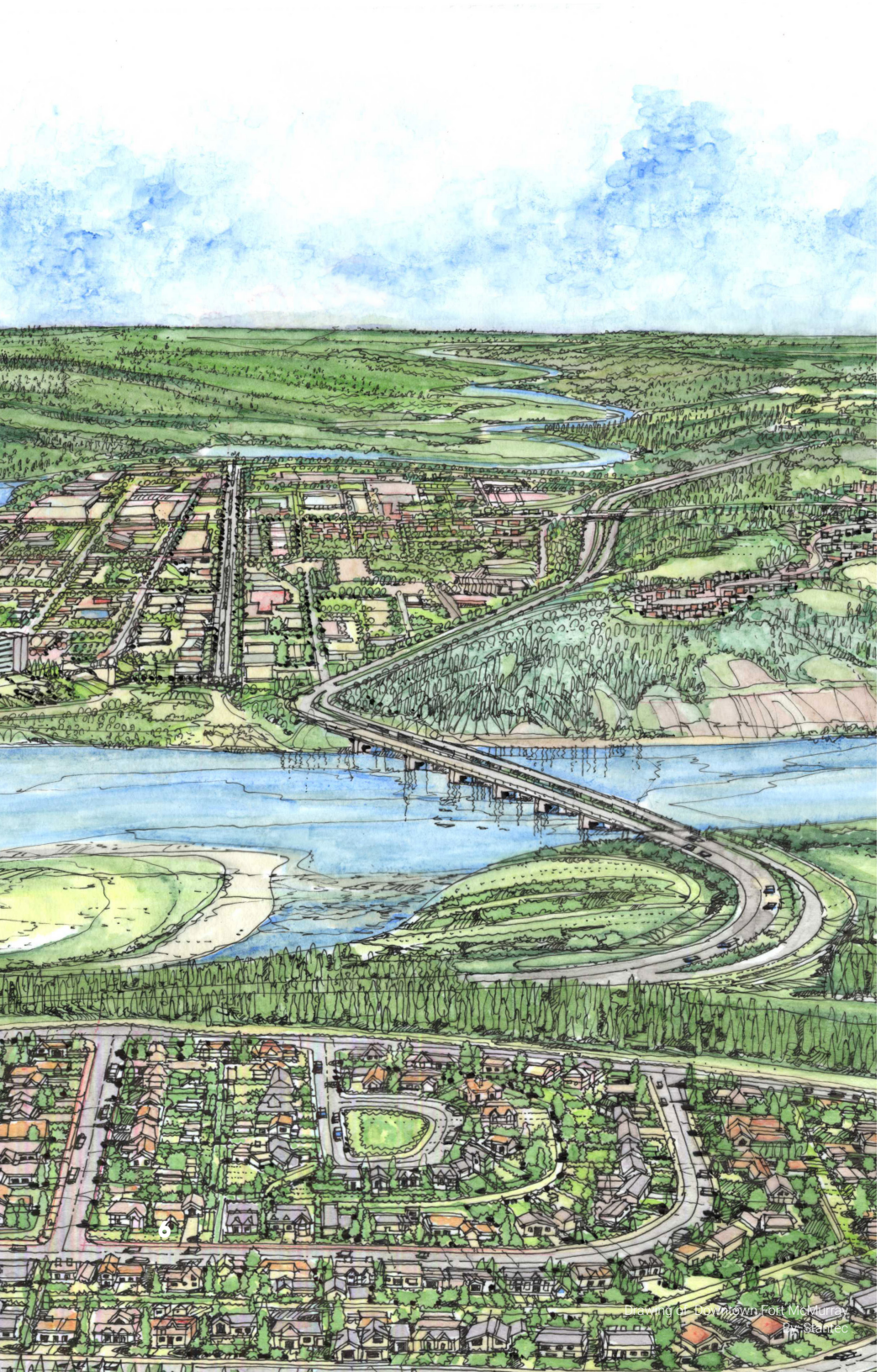
The Region is one of the largest geographic municipalities in Alberta, covering an area of over 60,000 square kilometres. It stretches eastward from north central Alberta to Saskatchewan and northward to the Northwest Territories. It is a relatively remote region; the distance from Fort McMurray to other service centres ranges from around 300 kilometres (Athabasca and Lac La Biche) to over 400 kilometres (Cold Lake and Edmonton).

Map 1. Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo



Map 2. Fort McMurray Showing Location of the Downtown





Drawing of Downtown Fort McMurray
By Stantec

Outside of the *Urban Service Area*, the majority (99.6%) of land within the *Municipality*'s boundaries is owned by the Crown. Much of the land consists of wilderness areas, provincial *parks*, protected areas, waterways, and water bodies, including Lake Athabasca, the eighth largest lake in Canada. The *Municipality* is also adjacent to Wood Buffalo National *Park*, which is Canada's largest national *park*.

A significant characteristic of *the Region* is the abundance of oil sands resources. *The Region* includes the Athabasca oil sands deposits, which is a major economic driver in Canada's energy sector. The oil sands industry has shaped the development of *the Region* and that of Fort McMurray, in particular. It is a key determinate of the economy, infrastructure, population, and other community characteristics.

1.3 DOWNTOWN FORT MCMURRAY

Fort McMurray is the largest population centre in the *RMWB*. As of the 2021 Municipal Census, the *Urban Service Area*'s population was 76,006, compared to 75,615 in 2018.[1]

The *Downtown* is situated within a unique municipal and geographic context. The boundary of the *Downtown* is formed by Highway 63, and the Athabasca, Clearwater, and Hangingstone rivers. This creates a rectangular shaped area that covers some six square kilometres of low-lying land.

Most of the *Downtown* lies within a flood plain and has experienced recurring ice-flooding events, the most recent occurring in April 2020. While permanent mitigation efforts are under construction, temporary mitigation measures are being deployed in the interim.

The *Downtown* is an important centre for federal, provincial, and municipal government. It also contains education and medical services, and acts as a hub for the social profit sector.

There is a concentration of recreational, cultural, retail, and commercial facilities in the *Downtown*. The *Downtown* also serves all the rural communities within *the Region*. However, the *Downtown* does not have a readily defined centre or traditional 'main street' consisting of a variety of retail and other commercial uses that front directly onto the street. Large stretches of development along Franklin Avenue, the *Downtown*'s main thoroughfare, are set back from the street behind areas of car parking. Rather, the *Downtown* can perhaps be best described as a series of commercial areas, interspersed with residential neighbourhoods, a medical hub, and the Keyano College Clearwater Campus.[2]

Recent events, including the 2020 flood, the COVID-19 pandemic, the global fall in oil prices between 2014 and 2020 have all impacted the regional economy in general, and have each presented a setback to the *Downtown*'s recovery and revitalization. In addition to these external factors, there has been significant growth in both commercial and residential development beyond the confines of the *Downtown* area. This trend is anticipated to continue, with proposals for larger-scale commercial and residential development emerging in the newer neighbourhoods outside of the *Downtown*.

As well as a regional centre, the *Downtown* is, importantly, home to 10,638 people (2021 Municipal Census), making it the third largest community within Fort McMurray. It is also one of the Fort McMurray's most culturally diverse communities, including members of the Cree, Dene and Métis communities from both within *the Region* and from across the country, along with a large proportion of visible minorities, Permanent Residents and other newcomers to Canada.

1. Municipal Census Report: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2021.
2. Keyano College serves *the Region* with two campuses in Fort McMurray. The Clearwater Campus is located in *Downtown* Fort McMurray and is home to the majority of the academic and trades program areas. The Suncor Energy Industrial Campus is located in the Gregoire industrial area and is home to Keyano College's Heavy Industrial Programs.

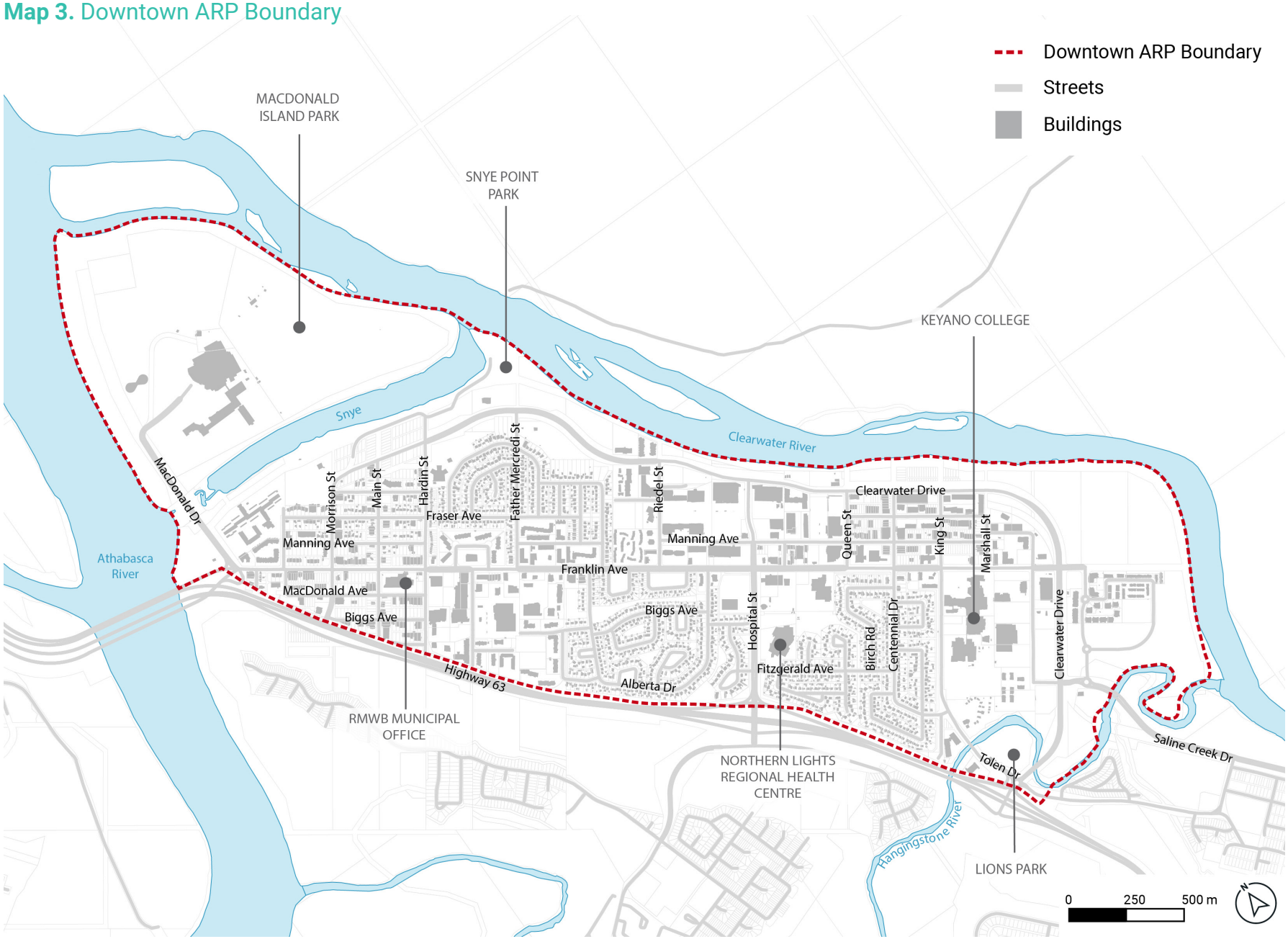


1.4 PLAN AREA

The *Downtown* ARP area, illustrated in **Map 3**, is bounded by:

- Athabasca River,
- Clearwater River,
- Hangingstone River, and
- Highway 63.

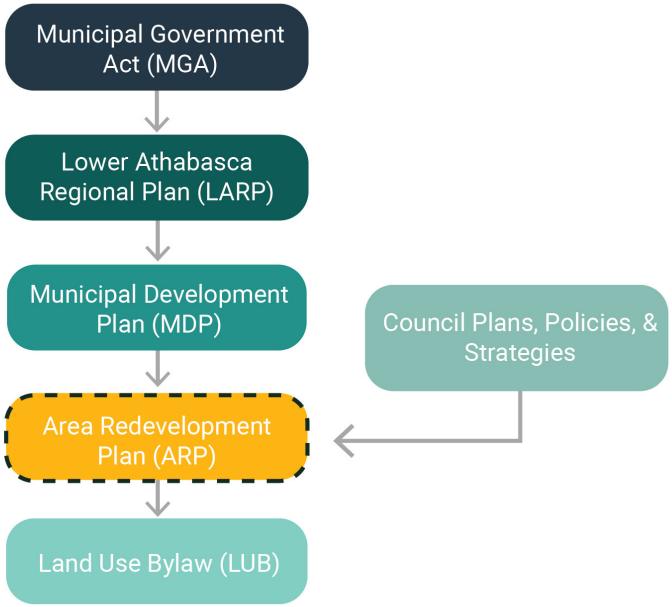
Map 3. Downtown ARP Boundary



1.5 DOWNTOWN AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

This section outlines the purpose of an ARP, the planning legislation and hierarchy, and Council's strategic priorities. In addition, the direction of the ARP is informed by *Guiding Values* that were developed through broad public engagement with residents, various stakeholders, and *Indigenous* partners.

Figure 2: Planning *Policy* Hierarchy



1.5.1 WHAT IS AN AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN?

An *Area Redevelopment Plan* (ARP) is a statutory plan, authorized according to the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) that guides *land uses*, development and *redevelopment* decisions within an area designated by a *Municipality*.

In this case, the ARP is the primary planning document for the *Downtown*. Its purpose is to provide the *policy* framework for future development and re-development in response to changing social, economic, and cultural dynamics and help achieve the vision for the *Downtown*.

It is anticipated, subject to Council amendments, that the *Downtown* ARP's *policies* will be applied over the lifetime of the plan, approximately 10 years.

1.5.2 ENABLING LEGISLATION

An ARP sits within a hierarchy of provincial legislation and regulations, and municipal *policies*, strategies, and bylaws. **Figure 2** illustrates where the ARP fits within this hierarchy.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT

The *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) provides the legislative framework under which all municipalities in Alberta must operate. The MGA enables the *Municipality* to create Municipal Development Plans, *Area Redevelopment Plans* and Area Structure Plans. These are statutory plans, meaning they are legal documents that must go through three readings and a public hearing before being adopted by a municipal Council.

LOWER ATHABASCA REGIONAL PLAN

The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) sets strong environmental limits, conserves sensitive lands, provides certainty regarding *land use*s to industry, diversifies the economy and offers numerous recreational opportunities in *the Region*.

The current LARP was effective on September 1, 2012. The Alberta Land Stewardship Act requires the *Land Use* Secretariat to, at least once every 10 years, review regional plan and report to the Stewardship Minister on its ongoing relevancy and effectiveness. The 10-year review of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan commenced on August 26, 2022.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A Municipal Development Plan (MDP) guides planning for an entire *municipality* with the purpose of communicating the long-term *land use* and providing high-level direction for how a community is expected to change over time.

The MGA requires a *municipality*'s ARP to be consistent with its MDP. The *Municipality*'s current MDP was approved by Council in 2011. A new version of the MDP is currently under consideration.

AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The MGA enables municipalities to adopt an ARP to outline proposals for addressing planning issues when revitalizing an existing developed area. These proposals may include preserving or improving land and buildings, roads, public utilities, or other services, replacing buildings and facilitating any other development in the area.

1.5.3 DIRECTIONS FOR THE ARP

In addition to the Muncipal Development Plan (MDP), the ARP takes its direction from Council's Strategic Plan (2022–2025), community, stakeholder and *Indigenous* partner engagement, and other Council approved plans and *policies*.

COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN (2022 - 2025)

Council's Strategic Plan (2022 – 2025) articulates Council's vision, mission, values, milestones and actions for *the Region*, and includes the following values:

- Fiscal Management;
- Building Partnerships;
- Rural and *Indigenous* Communities and Relationships;
- Local Economy; and
- *Downtown* Visualization.

"*Downtown* Visualization" provides directions to:

- Support the creation of a strategy for the *Downtown* that identifies and coordinates municipal investment and improvements;
- Ensure a review and update of the *Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan* is completed;
- Support the creation of detailed land map for future *Downtown* planning that guides the public and businesses on the vision for the *Downtown*;
- Approve, enhance, and enforce bylaws and beautification standards;
- Incentivize private investment in the *Downtown*;
- Conclude flood mitigation infrastructure investments; and
- Complete *waterfront* beautification.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Feedback and direction from the community is the foundation of the ARP. Community engagement was undertaken in three stages:

Stage 1: 2019 *Downtown* Revitalization Engagement

Engagement on the ARP began in 2019 when residents from across *the Region* were asked, "What would a revitalized *Downtown* look like"? The engagement was carried out between May and September of 2019, and was extensive. In addition to one-on-one sessions and public meetings, 1,200 residents took part in a questionnaire survey intended to inform the ARP's vision and guide recommendations for the next steps and long-term planning.

The top recurring survey themes that emerged from the 2019 engagement included the following:

- Create a strong sense of place that feels welcoming, safe and attracts people *Downtown*;
- Enhance beautification and community cleanliness;
- Establish the *waterfront* as a focal point;
- Maintain public and private buildings, *landscapes* and open spaces in ways that reflect pride of ownership;
- Attract new businesses and identify strategies to retain existing businesses;
- Identify strategies to address vacant buildings and vacant storefronts;
- Update the look, feel and character of *Downtown* buildings on main streets;
- Identify a uniform design theme for *streetscape*, *wayfinding* signage, banners, seasonal decorations, and *public art* on main streets; and
- Create an attractive, and well-connected pedestrian friendly *Downtown* supported by convenient parking and access to an increased density of new businesses.



Stage 2: 2020 *Downtown* Vision

Throughout 2020 virtual open houses, public presentations, stakeholder interviews, and workshops with the *Municipality*'s Administration were held to validate the vision for the ARP derived from the 2019 engagement.

Stage 3: 2023 *Downtown ARP* Validation

In 2023, the final stage of the engagement for the ARP was undertaken. This final validation stage of engagement provided residents, *Indigenous* partners, and key stakeholders with an opportunity to review the plan to confirm that it not only reflected what they had told the *Municipality* in the earlier stages of engagement, but that the ARP met the needs of the community. As a result of extensive communications and marketing strategy, a total of 1,055 engagement touchpoints were achieved during this validation stage of engagement.

Much of the feedback received during this stage reinforced the importance of being fiscally responsible, aligning with other municipal projects including flood mitigation, *wayfinding*, *heritage* management, public *transportation*, and implementing the plan. The majority (about 70%) of participants were supportive of the plan and felt it aligned with their vision and the *Municipality*'s vision for a revitalized *Downtown*.



1.6 GUIDING VALUES

This ARP is built on five *guiding values*. These *guiding value*s provide guidance through which all *redevelopment* matters will be considered under this ARP.

1 TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AND "CALLS TO ACTION"

Arising from the Indian Residential Schools settlement agreement in 2007, the national commission on *Truth and Reconciliation* (TRC) spent 6 years travelling to all parts of Canada and heard from more than 6,500 witnesses. In June 2015, the TRC held its closing event in Ottawa and presented the executive summary of the findings contained in its multi-volume final report, including 94 "calls to action" (or recommendations) to further reconciliation between Canadians and *Indigenous Peoples*. The TRC "calls to action" that have been adopted by Council include:

- Action 1 (child welfare);
- Actions 13 and 14 (language and *culture*);
- Action 43 (*UNDRIP* endorsed as municipal framework for reconciliation);
- Action 82 (commemoration); and
- Action 92 (business and reconciliation).

The TRC "calls to action" are a key consideration of the ARP. Recognition of the TRC "calls to action" allows for a collaborative process between all stakeholders and *Indigenous* partners to create a plan rooted in respect and understanding. This collaborative process helps facilitate collective healing, building trust, and creating an environment with respect to *Indigenous culture* and *heritage*.

2 BUILDING ON MUNICIPAL PLANS AND POLICIES

To provide continuity, the content of the ARP builds on legacy *Downtown* plans, and on both on-going *waterfront* planning, and continuing flood mitigation efforts. It is also informed by other municipal plans (i.e., *Transportation* Master Plan) and *policies* and aims to develop land-based *policies* that will contribute to their implementation.

3 LOCALLY GROUNDED

The ARP's *policies* outlined in this plan are intended to be realistic, grounded in best practices and relevant to both the *Downtown* specifically and Fort McMurray and *the Region*, generally. *Policies* aim to guide actions that can be delivered by the *Municipality* and, in partnership with all stakeholders and *Indigenous* partners, in a manner that has the most impact to create a vibrant and revitalized *Downtown.*

4 RESPONSIVE TO CHANGE

The ARP is intended to provide a flexible *policy* framework that is able to respond to both foreseen and unforeseen variables without losing sight of the vision and goals for the *Downtown*.

The momentum towards positive change in the *Downtown* will be influenced and challenged by a variety of factors. Recent environmental and economic challenges have shown how quickly *the Region* can be impacted by natural or external forces.

Over the lifetime of the ARP, the Council's Strategic Plan will be updated, and new directions and priorities established. Requests may also be made to amend the *Land Use* Bylaw, for example, to modify the *land uses* in the *Downtown,* resulting in changes to the ARP.

Monitoring and reviewing the progress of implementing the ARP's *policies,* will help ensure the ARP's ongoing relevance. The ARP will be reviewed regularly.

5 COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The ARP has been informed by residents, community stakeholders and *Indigenous* partners, and reflects the comments and aspirations shared by the community with the *Municipality*.

The work completed to-date has been collaborative with the community contributing their time and resources, and the *Municipality* investing in projects, programs, services, and initiatives to create a vibrant and inviting *Downtown*.

Resident, community stakeholders and *Indigenous* partners feedback will be an integral part of the ARP's monitoring and review process. Collaboration and partnerships will be an essential component of implementing and delivering the ARP.



2 Background & Planning Context

2 BACKGROUND AND PLANNING CONTEXT

This section summarizes the factors that have helped shape the ARP's direction and informed the development of the goals, objectives and *policies* found in Sections 3, 4 and 5.

Population, economy, infrastructure, and flood mitigation are key factors in shaping the scale and location of future growth and development in the *Downtown*.

The existing conditions in the *Downtown*, feedback from the community, and challenges and opportunities are described in five categories:

- *Land Use*
- *Built Form*
- *Parks* and Open Spaces
- *Transportation* and *Mobility*
- *Heritage, Culture* and *Public Art*.

2.1 POPULATION

The *Downtown* is the oldest settled part of Fort McMurray. It has long been a gathering place for the Cree, Dene, and Métis that lived, hunted, trapped, and travelled through t*he Region*. It emerged in the 19th century as a fur-trading post, attracting Métis families and was developed as a Métis town.

While oil sands exploration first commenced in the inter-war period, the commercial value of the oil sands was not fully realized until the 1960s. Fort McMurray then grew from a small town of 1,100 people, living mainly in the *Downtown* area and Waterways, into a rapidly growing community of approximately 25,000 by the early 1980s. The growth of the oil sands industry attracted workers from all over Canada and beyond.

To accommodate the population expansion of workers and their families, residential neighbourhoods were built on land outside of the *Downtown*. Between the mid-1990s and 2015, traditional master-planned neighbourhoods, such as Timberlea, experienced rapid growth. At the same time, the *Downtown* saw an increase in the number of apartment buildings and townhouses, designed to attract one and two person households. Although population numbers have fluctuated, the *Downtown*'s population of approximately 10,000 persons has remained relatively stable since the 1980s.

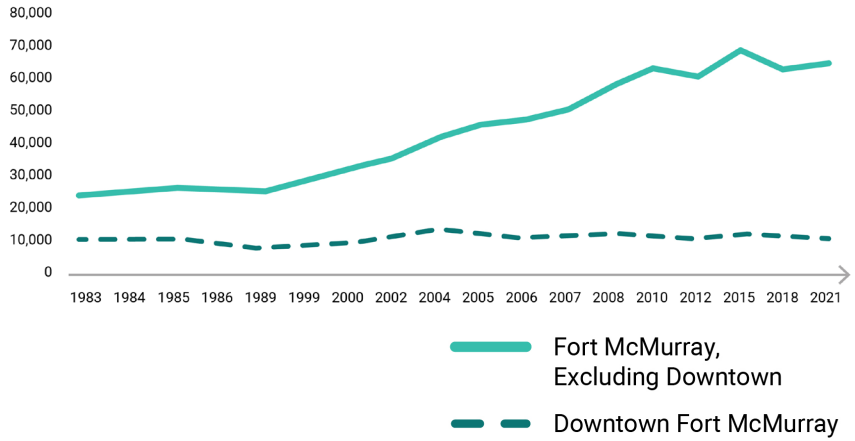
Figure 3 compares historic population totals in the *Downtown* to the rest of Fort McMurray. From 2000 to 2021, Fort McMurray (excluding the *Downtown*) grew at a rate of approximately 3.15% annually from 32,595 to 64,548. During the same timeframe, the population of *Downtown* Fort McMurray grew at an annual rate of approximately 0.49%, from 9,561 to 10,638, peaking at 11,703 in 2015.

Differences in the long-term population growth of the *Downtown* can be attributed to several factors including housing availability and affordability, provision of amenities and services, and perceptions of *safety*. Employment opportunities are a key factor and influence resident decisions about where to live. This is especially the case for remote, resource-based communities such as Fort McMurray.

2.1.1 POPULATION PROFILE

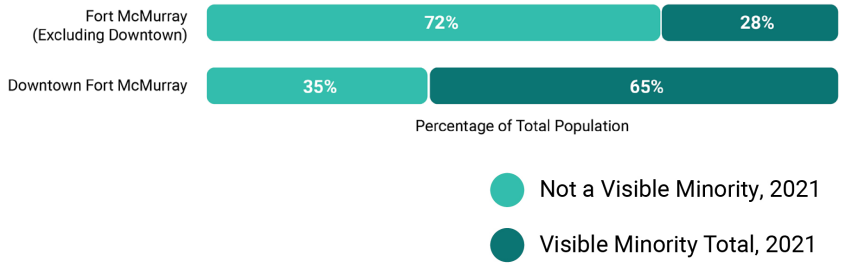
The current population (2021 Municipal Census) in the *Downtown* of 10,638 people is characterized by its diversity. There is a large proportion of visible minorities and newcomers to Canada. As shown in **Figure 4**, 65% of the *Downtown* residents identify themselves as visible minorities, as compared to 28% for the rest of Fort McMurray.

Figure 3: Historic Population Change



(Source: *RMWB* Municipal Census, 1983, 1999, 2010, 2015, 2018, 2021)

Figure 4: Visible Minority Status, 2021



(Source: Environics Analytics)

The *Downtown* has a slightly older population profile when compared with the rest of Fort McMurray. According to the 2021 Municipal Census, 51% of the *Downtown* population is between 35-64 years of age. There were fewer children aged 0-19 (23.3% compared to 28.3% for the rest of Fort McMurray) and more seniors aged 65+ (8.4% compared to 4.3% for the rest of Fort McMurray).

2.1.2 HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND OWNERSHIP

Older and smaller sized households, of one and two persons (i.e., including those no longer having school aged children), may favour apartment living for reasons of either affordability, convenience, or both. The average household size of Fort McMurray is 3.0 people per dwelling unit. The *Downtown* has the lowest average household size at 2.6 people per dwelling unit compared to other neighbourhoods in Fort McMurray. Fort McMurray outside the *Downtown* has a larger proportion (63.1%) of occupied dwelling units that are owner-occupied versus the *Downtown,* which has a much lower homeownership rate of 30.7%.[3]

2.1.3 HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household income in the *Downtown* differs to that of the rest of Fort McMurray. The *Downtown* has twice as many low-income households versus the rest of the *Urban Service Area* (8.3% make between $40,000 to $59,000 per year, compared with 3.5% elsewhere) and approximately 65% of *Downtown* households made $100,000 or more compared with 81.4% of households outside of the *Downtown*.

Differences in household incomes can be explained by the types of work that *Downtown* residents are employed in. Currently, almost a third (32%) of the *Downtown*'s resident workforce were employed in sectors traditionally associated with lower rates of pay. These included food and accommodation services (11.3%), administrative, waste management and remediation services, (9.5%) and retailing (11.1%). In the case of retailing, this accounts for 8% of the workforce in the rest of Fort McMurray.

In jobs associated with higher rates of pay, 19.7% of the *Downtown's* workforce were employed in the resources sector (mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction), compared with 30.1% in the rest of Fort McMurray.

3. Municipal Census 2018

2.2 ECONOMY

The *Downtown*'s businesses and services provide employment opportunities for residents which contribute to Fort McMurray's and *the Region*'s economy.

Since 2016, the *Downtown* has faced significant challenges. These have included the fall in the price of oil due to the downturn of the global economy, the social and economic impact of the May 2016 Horse River Wildfire, the April 2020 ice-flood, and the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022). All these challenges have implications for the *Downtown*'s future development, which will inform the ARP's direction and *policies*.



4. The data is from a municipal survey carried out in September 2021.
5. According to North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), activities of the sector "other services (except public administration)" are providing services not elsewhere specified, including repairs, religious activities, advocacy, laundry, personal care, death care, and other personal services.

2.2.1 DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

In 2021, approximately 444[4] businesses were located in the *Downtown*. Retail accounted for the highest number of businesses (31%), followed by other services (except public administration)[5] (18%), accommodation and food services (16%), healthcare and social services (12%), and professional, scientific and technical services (9%).

The *Downtown*'s share of Retail Trade increased from 17% to 31% between 1984 to 2021, reflecting its role as a regional centre for retail space. However, ongoing growth outside of the *Downtown* has resulted in the development of competitive retail centres outside the *Downtown*, particularly in Timberlea, making it essential to identify and consider retail and other non-residential development opportunities where the *Downtown* has a locational advantage.

In addition to competition from within Fort McMurray, the Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Retail & Commercial Recruitment Strategy (2021), calculated that more than $706 million is currently outflowing from *the Region* via online purchases or in-person purchases outside of Fort McMurray. This level of market leakage would suggest that *the Region* could potentially support 3 to 4 additional major mixed-use projects with commercial/retail components in the range of 275,000 square feet. Subject to debates about traditional "bricks and mortar" versus on-line retail, the *Downtown* has the potential to fill at least some of this gap for market leakage.

2.2.2 HOTELS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION

The *Downtown* is also a hub for visitor and tourist accommodations with a higher percentage of hotel inventory compared to the rest of Fort McMurray. The Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Retail & Commercial Recruitment Strategy (2021) indicated that there are 25 hotels in Fort McMurray, 14 of which are located in *Downtown.* The combination of these businesses contributes to the *Downtown*'s role as a destination for residents and visitors alike.

Demand for hotel space is driven by a number of factors such as growth in business and leisure travel, however, the Fort McMurray hotel market is unique given its proximity to the oil and gas industry. Rapid increases in economic activity can be followed by more modest and slow rates of growth, which is challenging for hotel accommodation providers.



2.2.3 OFFICE SPACE

The 2018 Commercial and Industrial *Land Use* Study (CILUS) concluded that *the Region* had sufficient vacant office space as well as shovel ready lands, that could accommodate new office space demand particularly in the *Downtown*. CILUS referred to an inventory carried out in early 2017 that found a high (31.5%) vacancy rate in the *Urban Service Area* and suggested that there was no need for any new lands to be allocated for office development until the vacancy rate fell below 10%.

A more recent 'snapshot' carried out in May 2022, identified 621,047 ft² of office space in the *Downtown*, with a vacancy rate of 19% (117,502 ft²). The 2021 labour market study (Applications Management Consulting, Labour Market Study, August 2021) estimated the demand for office space in the *Downtown* between 2020 and 2025 would be in the range of 532,625 ft² and 547,125 ft² and concluded that the current supply of just over 621,000 ft² would provide sufficient office space to meet the likely demand. The *Municipality* needs to consider working with property management companies to identify initiatives that will improve competitiveness and maintain a healthy office market.

2.3 INFRASTRUCTURE

The *Downtown*'s municipal infrastructure, which includes water, stormwater, and wastewater servicing, is essential for the health and well-being of *Downtown* residents, visitors, businesses, and municipal operations.

The 2015 Water Master Plan indicates that the water supply system provides sufficient capacity for the *Urban Service Area*, including the *Downtown*. The system has capacity to serve an *Urban Service Area* population of 106,000, which includes an allocation of 48,000 for the *Downtown*. The water supply for the *Downtown* comes from a reservoir on the south side of Highway 63.

The wastewater treatment system will support an *Urban Service Area* population of 133,00, including the *Downtown*. The *Downtown*'s storm water catchment area is approximately 830 acres (335 hectares). The stormwater network for this catchment area drains through storm sewer outfalls into the surrounding rivers. In its current state, the stormwater network has sufficient capacity to accommodate minor to moderate storm events. This means the drainage systems (underground pipes, manholes, and outfalls) are designed for storms that occur in a 1-in-5-year period (minor) to 1-in-10-years (moderate).

The *RMWB*'s Water Master Plan (2015) and Wastewater Master Plan (2014) provide additional details on the *Downtown*'s existing water, stormwater, and wastewater systems, as well as recommendations on upgrades.

2.4 FLOOD MITIGATION

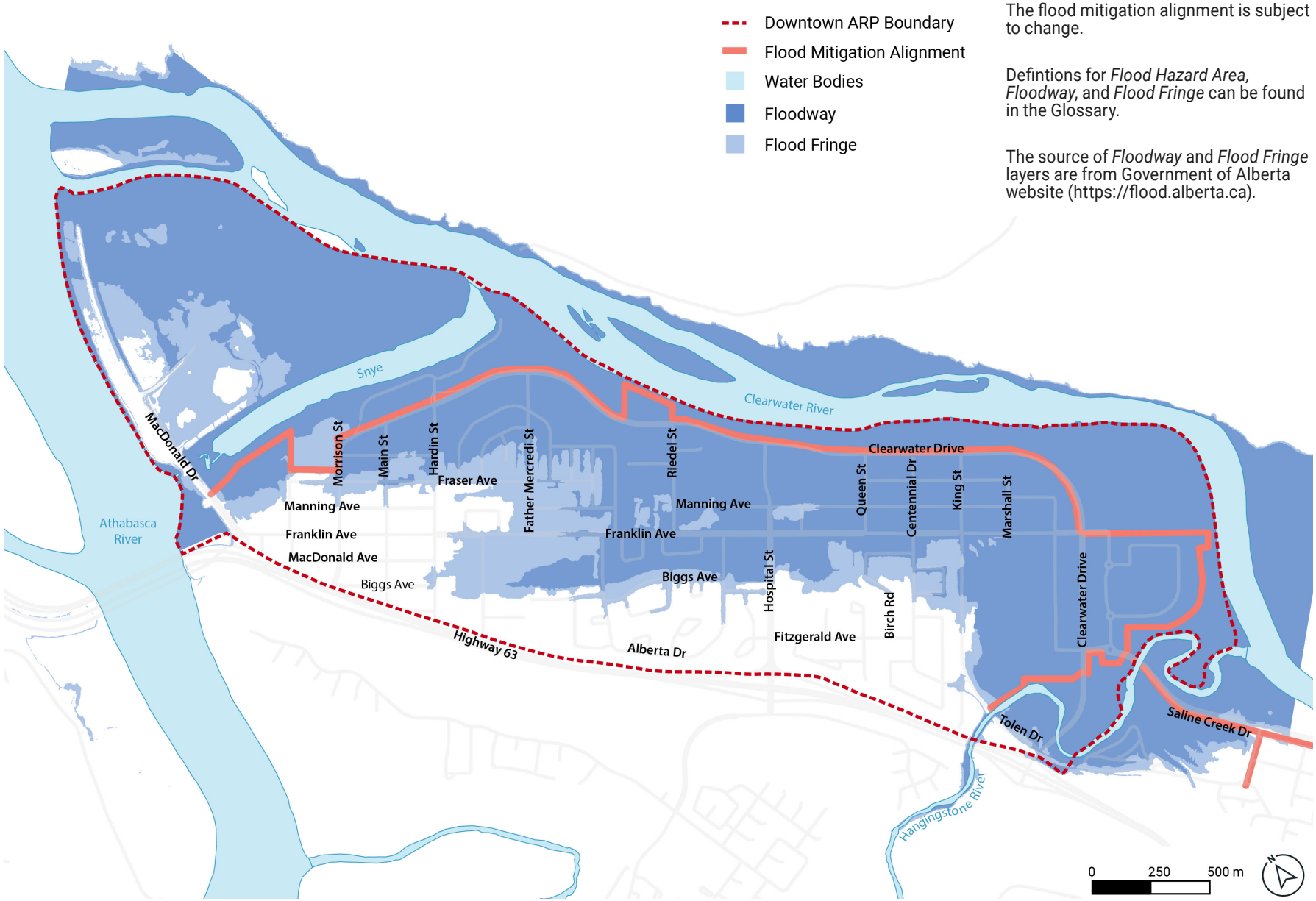
The Region, and Fort McMurray in particular, has had a long history of devastating floods caused by ice jams, with records dating back as far as 1835. Most recently, the April 2020 ice jam flood caused more than $500 million in insured damages to property in the *Downtown*, Waterways, Draper and the Taiga Nova Eco-Industrial *Park*, and displaced thousands of residents from their homes. In the *Downtown*, homes and businesses faced significant damage in the midst of the already significant challenge of the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Municipality* began implementing a Flood Mitigation Program in 2014 which included permanent structural mitigation (i.e., berms and retaining walls) at the 1:40-year event elevation (248.50 metres above sea level). In late 2016, the Government of Alberta directed that post-wildfire rebuilding within flood prone areas should be constructed to the 1:100-year event elevation (250.0 plus 0.5 m of additional "freeboard"). Following the 2020 flood, planned flood mitigation efforts were approved by Council and are continuing, which include:

- Complete structural mitigation to the 1:200-year elevation (250.4 metres above sea level, plus an additional 0.5 m "freeboard"); and
- Preparation and implementation of temporary mitigation measures to provide protection until the permanent measures are completed.

Map 4 identifies the extent of proposed flood mitigation in the *Downtown* as well as the existing *Flood Hazard Area* identified by Government of Alberta.

Map 4. Downtown Proposed Flood Mitigations and Existing Flood Hazard Area



The flood mitigation alignment is subject to change.

Defintions for *Flood Hazard Area*, *Floodway*, and *Flood Fringe* can be found in the Glossary.

The source of *Floodway* and *Flood Fringe* layers are from Government of Alberta website (https://flood.alberta.ca).

2.5 LAND USE

In the context of this ARP, the term "*land use*" means the types of activities or uses made of land parcels in the *Downtown*. *Land use*s may be categorized as residential, commercial, industrial, *institutional*, and open spaces. It also includes utilities and infrastructure such as roads. The location and organization of *land use*s are important to the way in which *Downtown*'s function and whether they are safe and pleasant places to live, work, and visit.

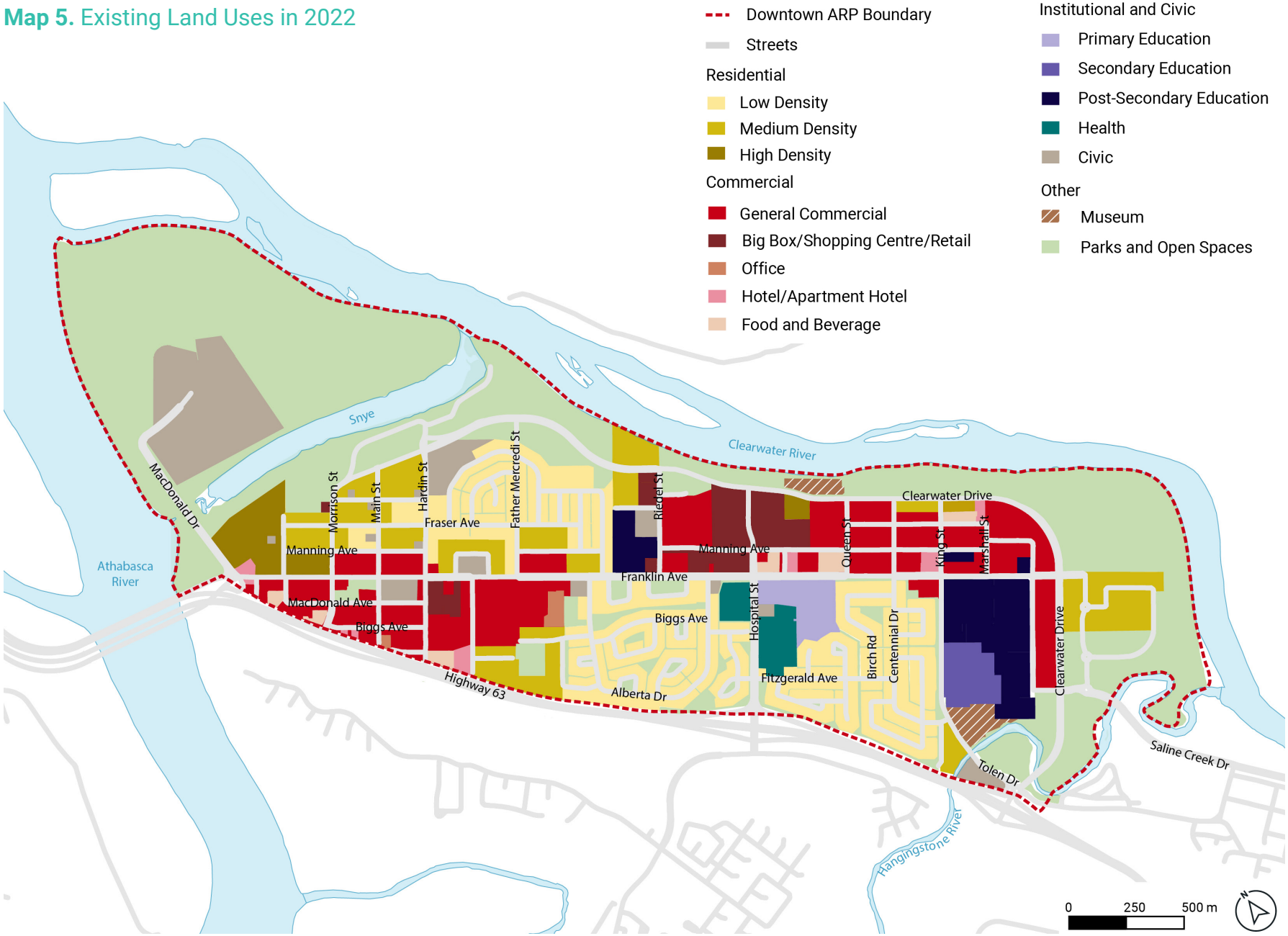
The *Downtown* is a series of commercial areas interspersed with residential neighbourhoods, a medical hub and the Keyano Clearwater Campus. MacDonald Island *Park*, located at the northwestern end of the *Downtown*, and the *Waterfront*, which runs along the *Downtown*'s northern boundary along the Clearwater River, are two significant areas of green space within the *Downtown* (**Map 5**).

The predominately commercial areas of the *Downtown* contain a range of *land use*s, including retailing and personal services, commercial and government offices, community and social services, cultural and recreational facilities and amenities, and *parks* and open spaces. The *RMWB* also has many municipal land holdings in the *Downtown* (**Map 6**).

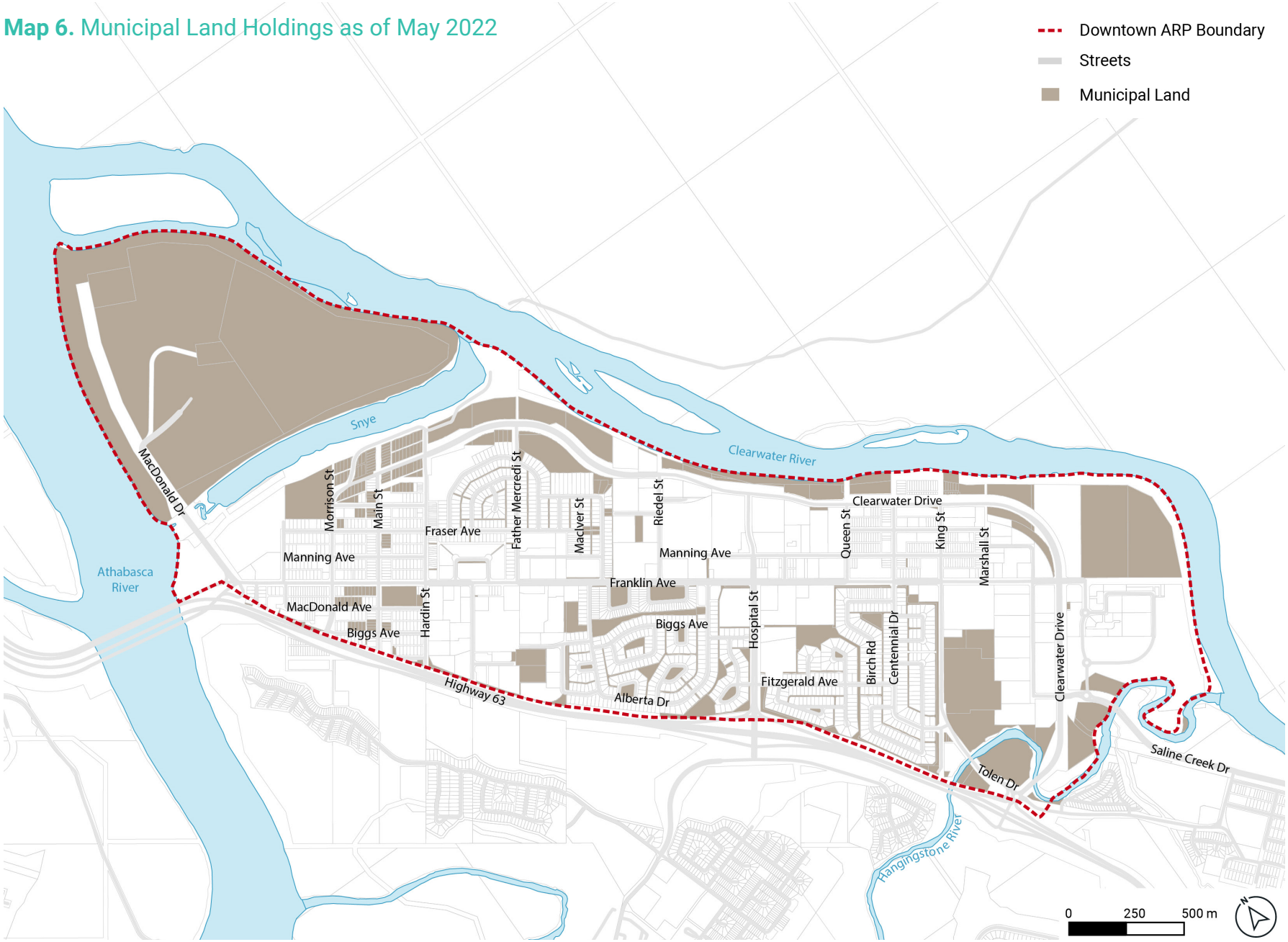
Of the various activities and services offered in the *Downtown*, the main reasons cited in the 2019 Revitalization Engagement survey for visiting the *Downtown* were:

- Recreation and entertainment;
- Shopping;
- Work and business reasons;
- Healthcare; and
- Education.

Map 5. Existing Land Uses in 2022



Map 6. Municipal Land Holdings as of May 2022



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the feedback from resident, stakeholder and *Indigenous* partner engagement, the main *land use* challenges and opportunities are described as:

CHALLENGES

- Lack of cohesiveness: *land use*s and amenities are not organized or integrated.
- Maintaining the existing resident population numbers.
- Securing the *Downtown*'s overall competitiveness with the surrounding suburban neighbourhoods.
- Housing to meet the demands of all ages and incomes.
- High vacancy rates in commercial and residential areas (i.e., long-term vacancies hinting of a possibly unmotivated landlord class).
- Perceived continuing flood risk and the potential for further impact on *Downtown* homes and businesses.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The re-use and *redevelopment* potential for vacant buildings and land.
- Need to focus on areas where there is a key use or concentration of uses that can act as a catalyst and attract investment in similar or complementary uses.
- Need for permanent and temporary small scale, commercial development opportunities, such as markets, pop-ups, and sidewalk patios.
- Allowing for a greater mix of residential and commercial uses.

2.6 BUILT FORM

"*Built form*" is the term used to describe the look and feel of the improvements located within the *Downtown*. It is what makes a place inviting and attractive to residents, businesses, and visitors.

Built form includes the layout of the streets and the shape, scale, and height of buildings. It also determines the relationship of streets to open spaces and buildings. *Built form* supports having a high-quality *public realm*, including street furniture, such as lighting and benches, and the use of interesting construction materials for building and sidewalks.

The origins of the *Downtown*'s present-day *built form* date back to the 1980's and 1990's, when Fort McMurray began to experience rapid growth as a resource town for the oil sands industry.

Residential buildings range from low density single detached housing (constructed during the 1980's and 1990's) to high-density high-rise apartments (constructed in the 2000's), which account for more than 70% of residential units in the *Downtown*.

Commercial developments include pedestrian-scale buildings (remnants of the pre-1980's main street), strip malls separated from pedestrian paths by front yard parking, (in the 1980's and 1990's), and large-format retail (i.e., big box stores of the 1990s and 2000's). With the exception of hotels, most commercial buildings in the *Downtown* are limited to one- or two- storeys high.

From around 2005 onwards, the *Downtown* has seen the construction of more mixed-use developments (i.e., ground-floor commercial with apartments on the upper floors), which tend to be between three and five storeys in height.

Although more recent residential and mixed-use structures provide underground parkades, earlier developments were associated with large expanses of surface car parking. Together with vacant and underutilized parcels, and buildings with lengthy blank walls (solid walls with no windows or design elements), a visitor may be left with the impression of a *Downtown* with underutilized, inactive, or uncomfortable spaces.

The *Downtown* has a number of features which add to its interest and character. Features include purpose-built buildings such as the Provincial and Municipal office buildings, Keyano Clearwater Campus, schools, religious assemblies (churches, temples and the like), hotels, medical facilities (hospital and Willow Square Continuing Care Centre), and seniors' housing such as the Rotary House Seniors Lodge. Recreation centres such as MacDonald Island *Park*, and public spaces and *parks* such as Jubilee *Plaza* and Kiyām *Park*, and the *Waterfront* are important features unique to the *Downtown*. Such features provide a foundation for the development of an inviting and attractive *Downtown*.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Feedback from the 2019 Revitalization engagement survey highlighted the following challenges and opportunities with respect to *Built Form*.

CHALLENGES

The community's perception of the *Downtown* is:

- Visually unappealing – it looks dated and does not feel safe;
- Not physically cohesive and does not reflect Fort McMurray's northern geography, history, or cultural traditions;
- Poorly maintained and does not reflect pride of ownership;
- Lacking community cleanliness and beautification;
- Lacking character and vibrancy; and
- Not pedestrian friendly, as there are few connected and accessible pathways, no directional or *wayfinding* signs, and a limited number of amenities such as benches or sheltered seating areas.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Promotion and enhancement of existing features, such as the *Waterfront*;
- Emphasizing the uniqueness and character of the different areas of the *Downtown*;
- Developing design guidelines that provide direction for *public realm* improvements, including lighting, landscaping, and use of colour to create year-round vibrancy; and
- Utilizing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to improve public *safety* in the *Downtown*.



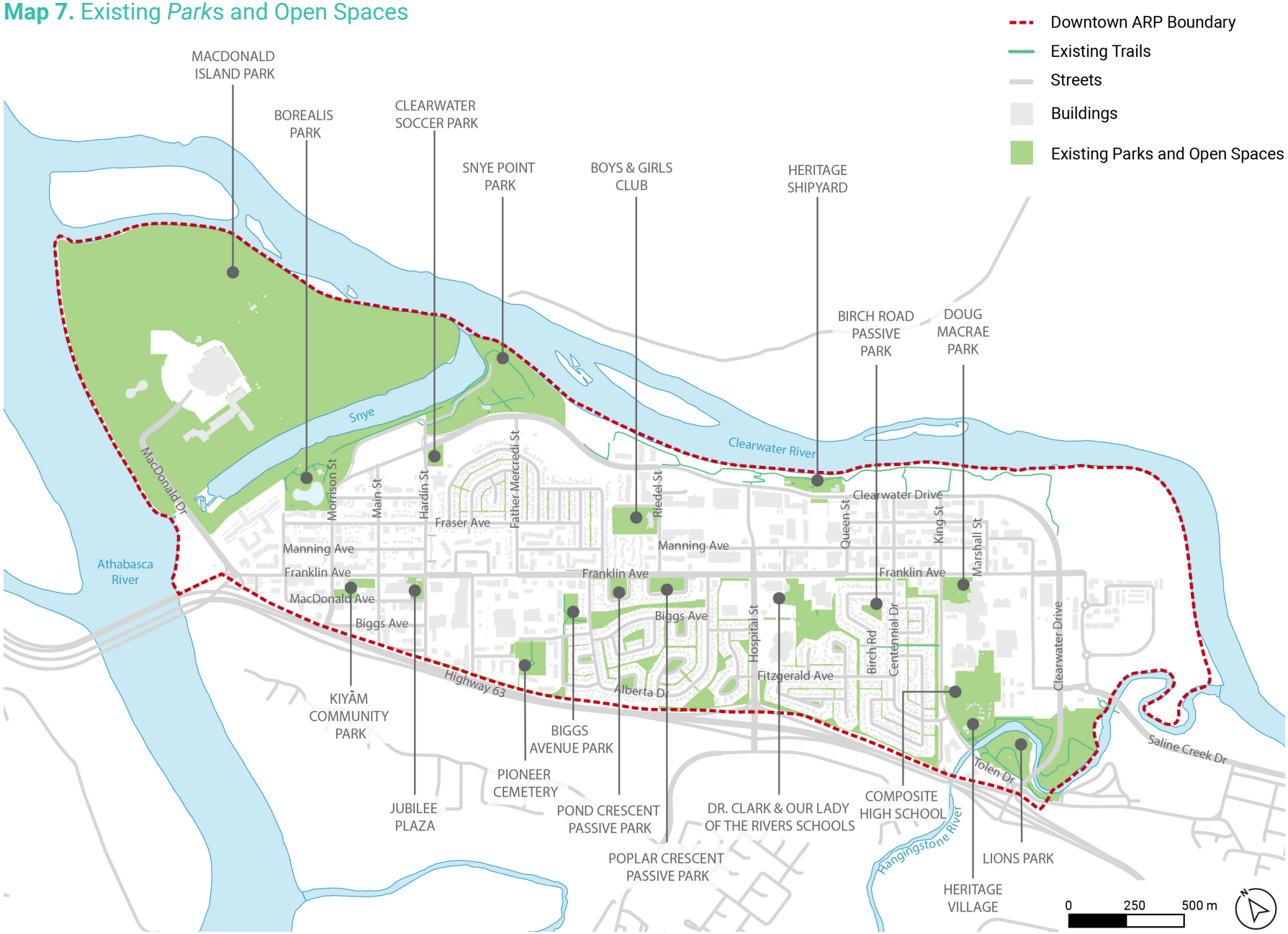
2.7 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Parks – which include open spaces, trails and trees - are important in urban areas and form the *Downtown*'s "green infrastructure". This enhances the *Downtown*'s attractiveness, contributes to the community's physical and mental health, and benefits the environment.

Parks provide *Downtown* residents, workers, and visitors with opportunities to enjoy the natural amenities and facilities that the *Municipality* has to offer. People use *parks*, to relax, exercise, and play. They are also valued gathering areas for socializing, holding events and celebrations, all of which help build a sense of community. The *Downtown*'s existing *parks* (including open spaces, trails and treed areas) are illustrated on **Map 7**.

Well managed *parks* help protect the environment. They can improve air quality, moderate temperature, lower noise levels, and help mitigate stormwater management by aiding in capturing and absorbing rain and snow. Trees and shrubs and open spaces further provide a habitat for wildlife and encourage ecological diversity.

Map 7. Existing *Parks* and Open Spaces



REGIONAL PARKS

Municipal *park* facilities in *Downtown* include two regional facilities, MacDonald Island *Park* and the *Waterfront* (including Snye Point *Park*).

MacDonald Island *Park* (MIP) is operated by the Regional Recreation Corporation of Wood Buffalo (RRC). Recreational amenities at MIP include both indoor facilities (including pools, indoor rinks, fieldhouses, badminton centre, curling facilities and a fitness centre), and outdoor facilities (including a baseball field, an outdoor stadium, an 18-hole championship golf course, a walk thru art *park* and trails).

Snye Point *Park*, within the *Waterfront*, is owned and operated by the *Municipality*. Amenities include seating and play areas and beach volleyball and a boat launch. The *park* is integral to the further development of the *Waterfront* as an outdoor recreation destination of the *Downtown*. The Snye continues to host seasonal activities, with skating, dog-sledding and cross-country skiing in winter and canoeing, stand-up paddleboarding, boating, fishing and swimming in summer. The Snye continues to support floatplane activity, harkening back to the history of northern exploration in *the Region*.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community *parks* are smaller in scope and purpose than Regional *Parks* and may include amenities such as playgrounds, trails, picnic and BBQ areas, sports fields, skate *park*s, and sports courts. There are four community *parks* in the *Downtown*, including Lions *Park*, Heritage *Park* (Heritage Village), Borealis *Park*, and Kiyām *Park*.

OTHER PARKS, CEMETERY, AND SCHOOL GROUND SITES

Neighbourhood *parks* are natural grassed areas that have limited facilities. Neighbourhood *parks* in *Downtown* include Biggs Avenue *Park*, Clearwater Soccer *Park*, Pond Crescent *Park*, Poplar Crescent *Park*, Birch Road *Park*, and the *park*land near the Boys and Girls Club. Doug McRae *Park*, owned by Keyano College, is a green space that forms part of the Keyano Clearwater main campus. *Downtown* also has three school ground sites which include baseball diamonds and soccer field, running track, play and picnic areas. The Pioneer Cemetery (formerly known as Fort McMurray Cemetery) is located on Biggs Avenue and is the oldest cemetery in Fort McMurray. This cemetery is no longer admitting new burials, with regional requirements accommodated at both the Abasand and Woodlawn (Real Martin Drive) cemeteries in the *Urban Service Area* and at other hamlets within the *RMWB*.

OPEN SPACES

Open spaces include grassed areas that may also contain trees and shrubs. Some areas are maintained, and others are left in their natural state. Open spaces may be owned by the *Municipality* or by private landowners.

Open spaces are somewhat unevenly distributed in the developed areas of the *Downtown*. Maintained open spaces are largely concentrated in the south and central areas and primarily located within the residential neighbourhoods. Well maintained open spaces can enhance the attractiveness of a street or an area.

Natural areas can be found along the *waterfronts* of both the Athabasca and Clearwater Rivers, within MacDonald Island *Park* and the *Waterfront*. These natural areas contribute to ecological diversity by providing habitats for wildlife, which benefit the environment. Several open space areas remain in private hands on the *Waterfront,* including two former industrial sites (owned by Imperial Oil and Suncor) and the remainder lands associated with the Longboat Landing development (Clearwater Properties/ Devonian Properties).

TRAILS

Trails provide opportunities for exercising, socializing and for getting from one area of the *Downtown* to another area. The existing trails in the *Downtown* are largely contained within MacDonald Island *Park*, and along the Snye, connecting south of the Snye to Snye Point *Park*. In 2019, a 5 km asphalt trail was completed between the Macdonald Island causeway on the west and Franklin Avenue / Clearwater Drive on the east, running parallel to the Snye and the Clearwater River. Other short trail segments are scattered through the *Downtown* and connect to sidewalks and local *parks*. The *Downtown* currently lacks a comprehensive network of trails and sidewalks connecting the *parks* and open spaces. Opportunities exist to expand the trail network within existing residential areas using the “public utility lot” (PUL) network that currently provides utility services, overland storm drainage and green space at the rear of most lots within these communities. A safe, well connected trails network is an essential component of the *Downtown*.

TREES

Trees are important in urban areas. As well as being visually pleasing, they benefit the environment by reducing the *heat island effect*, contributing to cleaner air, and helping water retention and reducing stormwater runoff.

While natural forest cover was abundant throughout much of the *Downtown* until the mid-1970s, the tree cover in the *Downtown* is now somewhat patchy; trees can be found in municipal *parks* and open spaces, and in privately owned gardens and commercial spaces. There are some stretches of road which are tree-lined, with either early residential developers (like Great Canadian Oil Sands' land development division) planting during the development of residential communities or through the *Municipality* having taken the opportunity to plant them when carrying out projects like the sidewalk renewal program.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

During the 2019 Revitalization Engagement, when residents were asked where revitalization efforts would have the most impact in the *Downtown*, "*parks* and open spaces" was a popular choice. These spaces are important to people's experiences and impressions of the *Downtown* and were frequently identified as one of the *Downtown*'s key assets.

CHALLENGES

- Improving *safety* and *accessibility* to all residents;
- Ensuring all season access and use of *parks* and trails;
- Underused *parks* and open spaces in the winter month;
- *Downtown* is underserved, with only 3.3. hectares of parkland (*parks*, open spaces, and trails) per 1,000 residents, compared with the Canadian Standard of 7.7 hectares per 1,000 residents,
- Need for new *parks* and open spaces serving the needs of both *Downtown* residents and visitors; and
- Loss of existing trees (as evidenced by abandoned metal grates and tree boxes on MacDonald and Franklin Avenues).

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expanding the trail network to create an interconnected *parks* and open space network;
- Making use of underutilized and vacant sites to create new *parks*;
- Increasing year-round use and access to *parks* and trails;
- Making greater use of *parks* for programmed events such as sports competitions and community celebrations;
- Increasing tree planting on key street and transport corridors; and
- Maintaining the existing tree cover by replacing trees that are removed.



2.8 TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Multi-modal transportation and *mobility* networks ensure the *Downtown* is well connected to surrounding areas in Fort McMurray and *the Region*. *Downtown*'s *transportation* and *mobility* networks allow residents, workers, students, and visitors to travel to and through the *Downtown* and the destinations within it.



ROADS AND STREETS

The *transportation* network is *Downtown*'s structure of roads and streets that enable the movement of vehicles and public transit throughout the *Downtown.*

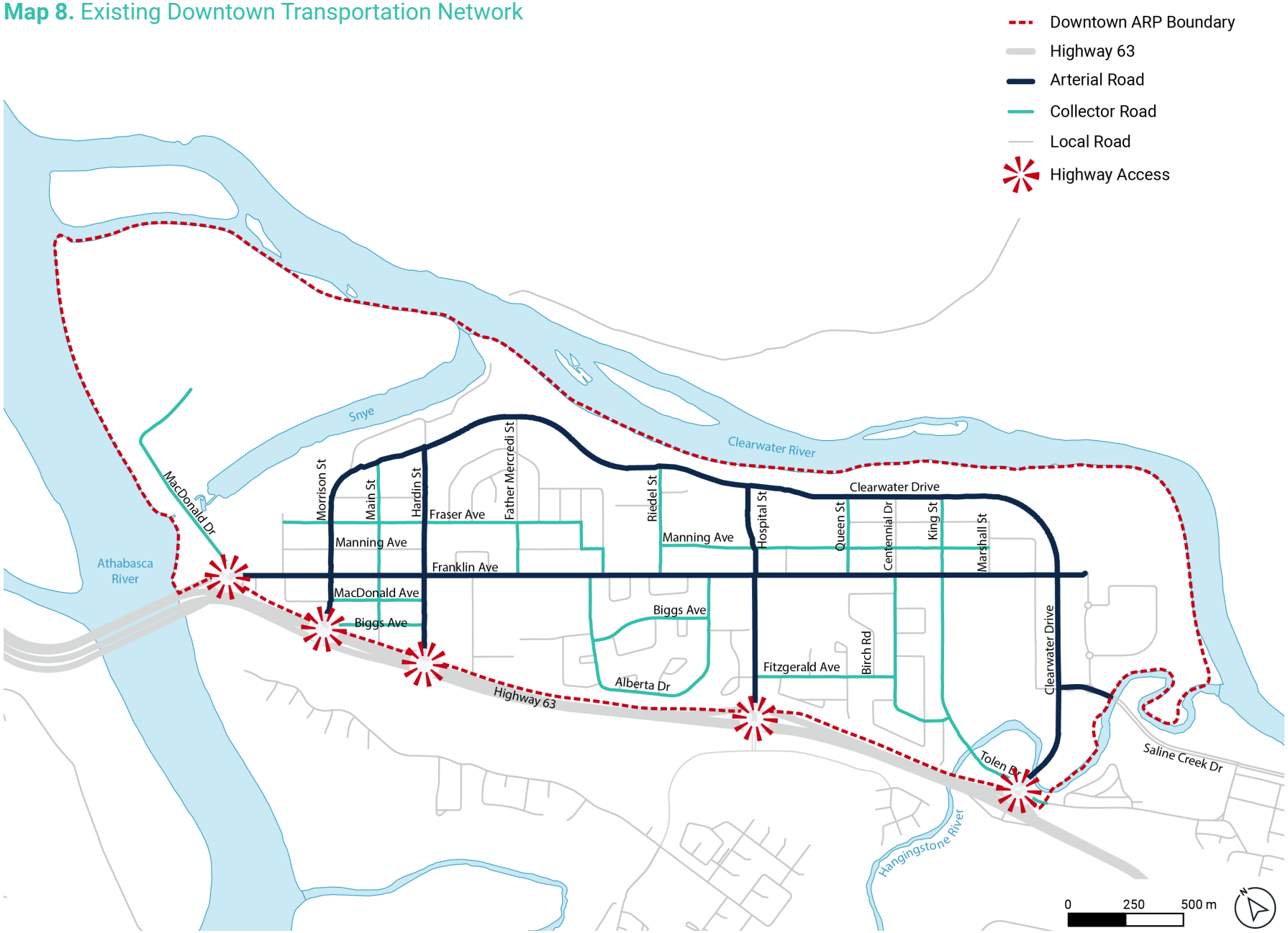
The hierarchy of roads that makes up the *Downtown*'s *transportation* network is shown in **Map 8**.

Arterial Roads: five arterial roads namely: Franklin Avenue, Morrison Street, Hardin Street, Hospital Street, and Clearwater Drive provide access to the *Downtown* from Highway 63. Within the *Downtown* they serve as the main *transportation* corridors for the movement people, vehicles and goods.

Collector Roads: *Downtown*'s collector roads are the interface between the arterial and local roads. They provide access to commercial and residential areas by vehicle and public transit.

Local Roads: designed to accommodate a low volume of traffic, local roads are intended solely to provide access to individual properties. They mainly serve the *Downtown*'s residential neighbourhoods. Traffic calming measures to reduce volumes and speeds are encouraged along local roadways.

Map 8. Existing Downtown Transportation Network



PUBLIC TRANSIT

The *Municipality* provides multiple forms of public transit to and within the *Downtown*, including regular bus services to all major neighbourhoods with *connections* to public service, retail, and other areas of interest. The existing services include conventional buses, rural buses, and specialized *transportation* for individuals with disabilities (SMART Bus). **Map 9** highlights the existing *Downtown* routes, bus stops, and transit terminal.

The main routes travelling in and around the *Downtown* connect the Main Street Terminal to Abasand Heights, Beacon Hill Drive, Gregoire and Prairie Creek, Fort McMurray Airport, Longboat Landing, and the Syncrude Sport and Wellness Centre.

The *Downtown* is currently served with 70 bus stops that are well-maintained and equipped with benches and shelters. at many stops. The majority of bus shelters include heaters to provide a more comfortable experience in the winter.

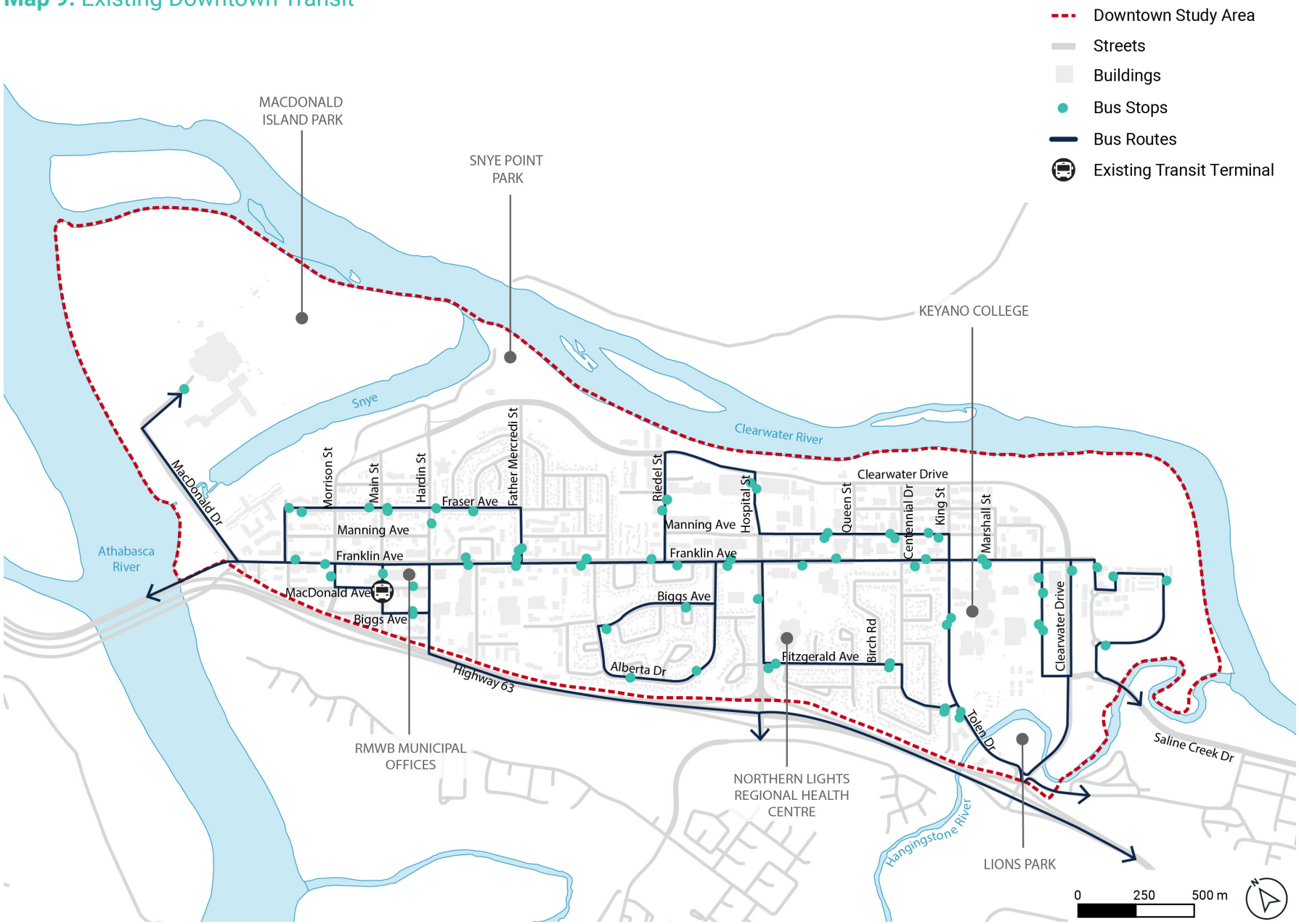
Public engagement has revealed that public transit is an important option for people travelling to and from the *Downtown*. The Main Street Terminal is the only terminal in the *Downtown*.

Creating a covered terminal with facilities for both staff and transit users, was the top response to improving transit services.

The *RMWB* "Transit Master Plan" (2023) was recently approved by Council. Transit routes through the *Downtown* are being reconsidered, along with the past emphasis on the Main Street / Franklin Avenue location as a primary transit "hub". The plan includes multiple phases to be implemented over several years. The recommended transit network has three major components, with no major changes planned for school routes.

- Two high-frequency core routes.
- Neighbourhood routes to connect with core routes.
- On demand routes to provide service to low-ridership areas.

Map 9. Existing Downtown Transit



MOBILITY NETWORK

The *mobility* network includes *active transportation* facilities such as sidewalks, trails, and paths, that allow people to walk, wheel, and bike in the *Downtown*.

Trails and paths provide *active transportation connections* within *parks* and open spaces. Some sidewalks are narrow in width and do not provide a buffer from vehicle travel lanes and the trail network is currently disconnected in some locations with little *wayfinding* signage to help people navigate the *Downtown*. The *Downtown Wayfinding* Plan (2023) will support *park* and trail sign identification and directions.

Currently, there are no bicycle lanes or marked bicycle routes in the *Downtown*.

PARKING

The *Mobility* and Parking Study (2023) found that the *Downtown* has sufficient parking to meet the current and future demands with 13,534 parking stalls located on public and private property throughout the *Downtown*. Based on the *Land Use* Bylaw 99/059 there are 9,731 parking stalls that are required for all existing developments, and currently there are 11,248 parking stalls that are available. In addition, there are 1,090 on-street parking stalls available, with a further estimated 1,000 parking stalls present at MacDonald Island *Park*.

Based on parking occupancy studies carried out in 2016 and 2017, the on-street parking utilization rate was approximately 45% at the time. A follow-up study was conducted in 2021 during the summer and winter, which indicated that on-street and off-street parking was significantly under-utilized with less than 30% of parking being utilized for retail, business, hospitality and accommodation, and educational uses. The impacts of Covid-19 public health restrictions were taken into consideration when conducting the study in 2021. While the public health restrictions may have been influential in the utilization estimates, based on historical trends the general conclusion of parking being under-utilized in the *Downtown* remains unchanged. For this reason, the ARP does not call for additional parking within the *Downtown*.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A recurring theme that emerged from the 2019 *Downtown* Revitalization public engagement was the need to create an attractive, and well-connected pedestrian friendly *Downtown*, supported by convenient parking.

CHALLENGES

- Vehicular-focused network.
- Only one bus terminal.
- Inadequate transit services for getting around in the *Downtown* and to the *Downtown*.
- Limited pedestrian environment that is not accessible to all.
- Disconnect between trails, paths, and sidewalks.
- Poor *accessibility* in winter, including poorly maintained pedestrian paths.
- Lack of bicycle routes and facilities, such as bike racks and defined bike paths.
- Uneven distribution and use of parking spaces.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Introduce pedestrian-friendly measures.
- Incorporate *accessibility* improvements.
- Improve and upgrade the existing bus terminal (see 2023 Transit Master Plan).
- Develop a second bus terminal, in addition to the current bus terminal.
- Use *wayfinding* signs to improve connectivity between paths, trails and sidewalks.
- Introduce cycle routes.
- Develop management strategies to make better use of existing parking.



2.9 HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

The *Downtown* is located between the confluence of the Athabasca and Clearwater Rivers, and the confluence of the Clearwater and Hangingstone Rivers.

Cree, Dene, and Métis knowledge and history predate the settlement that became known as Fort McMurray. The 18th and 19th centuries saw the development of the fur trade, and what is now the area of *Downtown* Fort McMurray became an important junction on the fur trade route from eastern Canada. By 1870, it had become an established Hudson's Bay fur trading post. It continued to operate as an important river and rail-based freight *transportation* hub until the early 1950s.

Fort McMurray has since gained prominence for its significant oil sands reserves and associated oil industry. With the development of the oil sands industry in the 20th century, the town has become the centre of production, given that Alberta's oil sands are the fourth-largest oil reserves in the world. The development of the oil sands and its supporting industries in the latter half of the 20th century created the need for more workers, and Fort McMurray as a result is now home to a large and culturally diverse population.

The new construction needed to accommodate the growing population was initially concentrated in the *Downtown*. The development of single-detached and semi-detached homes, apartment buildings, town houses, and retail malls replaced or displaced many of the earlier *heritage* buildings and the area of the *Downtown* expanded within the level ground between the three rivers. This was not without controversy. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the residents of the predominately Métis settlement known as "Moccasin Flats", lying adjacent to the south bank of the Snye and proximate to the Athabasca River, were evicted to make way for an apartment and townhouse complex. The *Municipality* has since acknowledged its role as one participant in the dislocation of the Moccasin Flats residents. As part of several actions to advance reconciliation related to the events at Moccasin Flats, Council approved funding for a memorial, and updated the Community Identification *Policy*'s objective to include honouring *Indigenous* place names and history in recognizing the history of *the Region*. More work within the scope of reconciliation will be continuous and on-going.

PRESERVING AND RECORDING HISTORY

The *Downtown* is an important location in the preservation and recording of Fort McMurray's and *the Region*'s history. It is home to both the Fort McMurray Heritage Village (located adjacent to the Hangingstone River) and the Heritage Shipyard (located adjacent to the Clearwater River). The Fort McMurray Heritage Society created the Heritage Village on land donated by the *Municipality* in 1964, and in 2014 also opened the Heritage Shipyard. The 6.6-acre Heritage Village contains numerous historic buildings and a collection of large artifacts. The Heritage Shipyard showcases six historic vessels, two train cars and a collection of artifacts.

The *Municipality*'s Heritage Resources Management Plan (2023) helps ensure the future of *the Region*'s historic places. A *Heritage Inventory* lists significant sites eligible to be designated Municipal Historic Resources (MHR), meaning they are legally protected *heritage* sites. Designation is accomplished pursuant to the Historical Resources Act, RSA 2000 Ch H-9, as amended. The inventory is kept up to date by working with communities and *Indigenous* partners to designate important historical places and *landscapes* that meet specific criteria.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS

The *Municipality* recognizes the value of encouraging and supporting cultural traditions through education, community development and the arts (which encompasses a whole range of activities such as the spoken word, literature, film, theatre, music, dance, painting, and sculpture).

The *Municipality* is a culturally diverse region. The Cree, Dene and Métis are the original people of the *Region*. Their *cultures* embrace a strong sense of kinship and community that are celebrated through ceremony, dance, music, games, storytelling, berry and medicinal plant picking, and traditional dress. It is important that the *culture* and traditions of the Cree, Dene, and Métis people are respected and embraced as a key part of the *Downtown*'s cultural identity.

DOWNTOWN DIVERSITY AND CULTURE

As a result of ongoing settlement in *the Region* and the development of its natural resources, the *Region* is home to diverse peoples and dynamic *cultures* from across Canada and the world. Supporting *the Region*'s cultural development will enhance quality of life for all, provide opportunities for the economy, and help attract and retain newcomers to this Region.

DOWNTOWN VENUES

Residents and visitors can experience arts and cultural performances at the Keyano Theatre and Arts Centre, which includes two theatres, and music and visual arts classrooms.

MacDonald Island contains a number of venues and facilities:

- Shell Place which, in addition to offering both a sport playing field and stadium and a baseball field and stadium, also hosts a variety of live entertainment events.
- Suncor Community Leisure Centre, which is home to the Kirschner Family Community Art Gallery.
- Wood Buffalo Public Library, which contains a visual arts studio.
- An outdoor Aboriginal Interpretive Trail alongside the Athabasca River.

PUBLIC ART

The *Downtown public realm*, which includes *parks*, open spaces, trails, streets and intersections, plays a significant locational role in the expression of Fort McMurray's *culture, heritage*, and the arts. The *public realm* provides opportunities for the installation of permanent and temporary *public art* as well as providing a natural venue for festivals and events.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The 2019 *Downtown* Revitalization engagement identified a need to increase the amount of cultural and recreation festivals, events and programming in the *Downtown*. Festivals were identified as infusing energy and adding vibrancy to the *Downtown*. Additionally, they provide opportunities for people to get together, create a sense of community and further contribute to the quality of *Downtown* life.

CHALLENGES

- Lack of visibility of the *Downtown*'s history, *heritage* and cultural traditions.
- Need for a more cohesive and coordinated approach to organizing celebrations and events.
- Need for more programs and events celebrating the *Downtown*'s and *the Region*'s history, *heritage*, and *culture*.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Maximizing the use of existing facilities for festivals, ceremonies, storytelling, other community events, and *public art* displays.
- Development of studio and makerspaces to support the arts in the *Downtown* and *the Region*.
- Temporary uses to activate under-used and vacant land and building.
- Incorporation of art into trails and the *public realm*.
- Use public buildings to display murals and lighting installations.
- Collaboration with the Cree, Dene and Métis to highlight their history and *heritage* in the *Downtown*.
- Regularly update the *Heritage Inventory* in the *Heritage Resources* Management Plan for the *Downtown* sites and building.

3 Vision, Goals & Objectives

3 VISION, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

3.1 VISION

The vision for the *Downtown* sets out what is intended to be achieved by the ARP's *policies*. The vision reflects the 2019 *Downtown* Revitalization engagement, when participants were asked what *Downtown* revitalization meant to them. The vision was also validated during the ARP engagement in 2020.

3.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals for the ARP have been crafted from the vision for *Downtown* and have been separated into the five categories of

- *Land Use*;
- *Built Form;*
- *Parks* and Open Space;
- *Transportation* and *Mobility*; and
- *Heritage, Culture, and Public Art*.

Each goal is an aspirational statement for the future of the *Downtown*. Goals are supported by a series of objectives. Objectives are more specific and provide a framework and direction for the *policies* of this ARP. Goals and Objectives are addressed through the overarching or *Downtown*-wide *policies* in Section 4 and the Area Specific *Policies* in Section 5.



VISION

The *Downtown* is an all-seasons, accessible destination that showcases our people, our businesses, our services, and our amenities. Vibrant spaces, inviting storefronts, an accessible *waterfront* and unique experiences will welcome residents and visitors to the *Downtown* in a safe and memorable environment.



LAND USE

Downtown is an important civic and economic hub in the *RMWB*. It is where people come to do business with the *Municipality* and other partners. It is a place of learning, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Equally important, it is home to a diverse population, who require a range of housing types and access to local facilities and amenities.

LAND USE GOAL

To encourage, support, and foster economic activity and become a regional economic leader, as well as a destination for goods, services, knowledge-building, and supporting local business. The *Downtown* will meet the needs of residents by providing a range of housing types, employment opportunities and places to visit.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES

a. Promote the *Downtown* as a centre for public administration, recreation, education, healthcare, and social sector in the *RMWB*.

b. Identify areas that will act as catalysts and attract investment in similar or complementary uses.

c. Support retail development and attract a diverse range of businesses.

d. Encourage new development within the *Downtown* while supporting existing businesses, services, social sector, and amenities.

e. Allow for the development of a diverse range of housing types that will attract new residents and enable existing residents to remain in the *Downtown* at all life stages.

f. Support the development of local (neighbourhood-level) facilities and amenities to meet the needs of *Downtown* residents.

g. Seek and encourage creative solutions to make use of vacant and underutilized land and buildings.

h. Advocate and partner with all levels of government and stakeholders to deliver consistent and accessible services.

BUILT FORM

Downtown's built form contributes to its vibrancy and attractiveness year-round. It is what makes the *Downtown* inviting and a place where people feel welcomed and safe.

BUILT FORM GOAL

To create a *Downtown* that is engaging, memorable, and vibrant, the *Downtown* must be an area where all people feel safe, comfortable, and welcomed and a destination where people can celebrate, shop, visit, and participate in activities.

BUILT FORM OBJECTIVES

a. Foster a sense of place through architectural design, and the use of colours, lighting, and other materials.

b. Develop safe, accessible, inclusive, and welcoming public spaces.

c. Create a pedestrian-focused *Downtown* through the design and siting of buildings, the *public realm*, and amenities.

d. Improve *Downtown* visualization through the creation of a strategy that identifies and coordinates municipal investment and enhances beautification standards.

e. Improve the experiences of people in the *Downtown* during winter, through thoughtful enhancements to the built environment and *public realm* to reduce the impacts of seasonal weather conditions.





PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Parks, open spaces, trails, and trees benefit not only the community's health and wellbeing but also the environment. They provide unique opportunities for recreation and connection to nature in an urban environment.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES GOAL

While respecting *Indigenous* ways of knowing and connection to the land, the *Municipality* will enhance and preserve the *Downtown's* open space, *parks*, and natural areas to provide opportunities for connection, relaxation, and recreation, as well as protecting the natural environment.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES OBJECTIVES

a. Protect and strengthen the *Downtown's* natural environment for the ecological, climate, and quality of life benefits they bring.

b. Increase the *safety*, usability and *accessibility* of *parks* and trails for year-round use.

c. Enhance *parks* and provide more opportunities for community events, gatherings and activities.

d. Create an interconnected network of pedestrian trails and bicycle paths linking *parks* and open spaces throughout the *Downtown*.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Well-connected *transportation* and *mobility* networks are vital for the *Downtown's* future development and prosperity. Providing a range of *transportation* choices enables all ages and abilities to travel to and within the *Downtown*.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY GOAL

Downtown will be a well-connected and accessible area through the creation of *transportation* and *mobility* networks that are safe, comfortable, and accessible year-round to all users.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY OBJECTIVES

a. Provide a range of *transportation* and *mobility* options to travel to and throughout the *Downtown*.

b. Improve the *safety* and *accessibility* of *transportation* and *mobility* networks.

c. Improve transit services within the *Downtown*.

d. Develop a connected network of trails, sidewalks and bicycle paths throughout the *Downtown*.

e. Provide sufficient and well-managed parking spaces to residents, businesses, and visitors.

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

Downtown is the historical and cultural centre of Fort McMurray. Rich in diversity, the *Downtown* will be a place where visual storytelling is shared, the past is honoured and celebrated, and the *culture* and traditions of the Cree, Dene and Métis are respected.

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART GOALS

Commemorate and celebrate the history of the *Downtown*, the people and their cultural traditions.

Honour the *culture* and traditions of the Cree, Dene and Métis through relationship building and authentic acts of *Truth and Reconciliation*.

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART OBJECTIVES

a. Recognize, protect and conserve historic buildings and sites.

b. Support opportunities to connect, and celebrate the history and diversity of people, *cultures*, and traditions that make the *Downtown* and *the Region* unique.

c. Acknowledge, honour and support *Indigenous heritage* and *culture*.

d. Amplify the cultural expression of *Downtown* through the arts, including *public art*.

4 Downtown ARP Overarching Policies

4 DOWNTOWN ARP OVERARCHING POLICIES

The *policies* in Section 4.0 are broadly applicable to all areas of the ARP. The overarching *policies* set out how the objectives are to be achieved in broad terms and meet the goals. These *policies* are categorized as follows:

- ***Land Use*;**
- ***Built Form*;**
- ***Parks* and Open Spaces;**
- ***Transportation* and *Mobility*; and**
- ***Heritage*, *Culture*, and *Public Art*.**



4.1 LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Land use policies cover the following themes in the *Downtown*:

- Development Nodes
- Offices, Retail and Commercial uses;
- Entertainment and Recreational uses;
- Community Services and *Institutional* Uses;
- Housing; and
- Vacant Lots and Buildings.

To support the *Downtown* as a regional centre, *Development Nodes* have been identified for specific areas. These are areas where there is a concentration and grouping of uses such as commercial or civic buildings, or a mix of both. They are connected to each other and their surrounding neighbourhoods by important *transportation* corridors. *Development Nodes* are intended to act as catalysts for *Downtown* revitalization and investment by attracting people, organizations, businesses, and services with shared and complementary interests.

The *Land Use policies* that apply to commercial, community services, *institutional*, entertainment and recreation uses are intended to support the *Downtown* as the economic and civic centre of *the Region*, and enhance its role as a centre for learning, innovation, and entrepreneurship. These *land use*s aim to attract people, organizations, and businesses offering goods, services, and employment.

Housing *policies* are intended to encourage and support a range of residential uses that will help retain the existing and diverse population and attract new residents.

Vacant lots and buildings *policies* identify potential opportunities for re-use and *redevelopment* to create new and innovative spaces.

Collaboration between the *Municipality*, all stakeholders and *Indigenous* partners will be important to promote investment and initiatives vital to the *Downtown's* revitalization.

LAND USE POLICIES

DEVELOPMENT NODES

4.1.1 Identify and support the creation of *Development Nodes* (see **Map 10**) focused on key locations in the:

- **a.** Business and Civic Area;
- **b.** Entertainment/Retail Area;
- **c.** Hospital/Medical Area; and
- **d.** King/Educational Area.

4.1.2 Encourage specific and complementary businesses, services, and other uses, to locate within the *Development Nodes* as concentrated activity areas by various means, including but not limited to:

- **a.** providing municipal incentives (e.g., grants; etc.).
- **b.** partnering with both the private business sector and Wood Buffalo Economic Development and Tourism to promote development and investment in the *Downtown*; and
- **c.** encouraging new and innovative projects, such as those having increased site densities and mixed-use developments.

OFFICES, RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL USES

4.1.3 Support the development of a variety of innovative spaces, sizes, and formats for commercial and retail projects, including but not limited the following:

- **a.** urban markets
- **b.** pop-ups; and
- **c.** studio and workshop spaces.

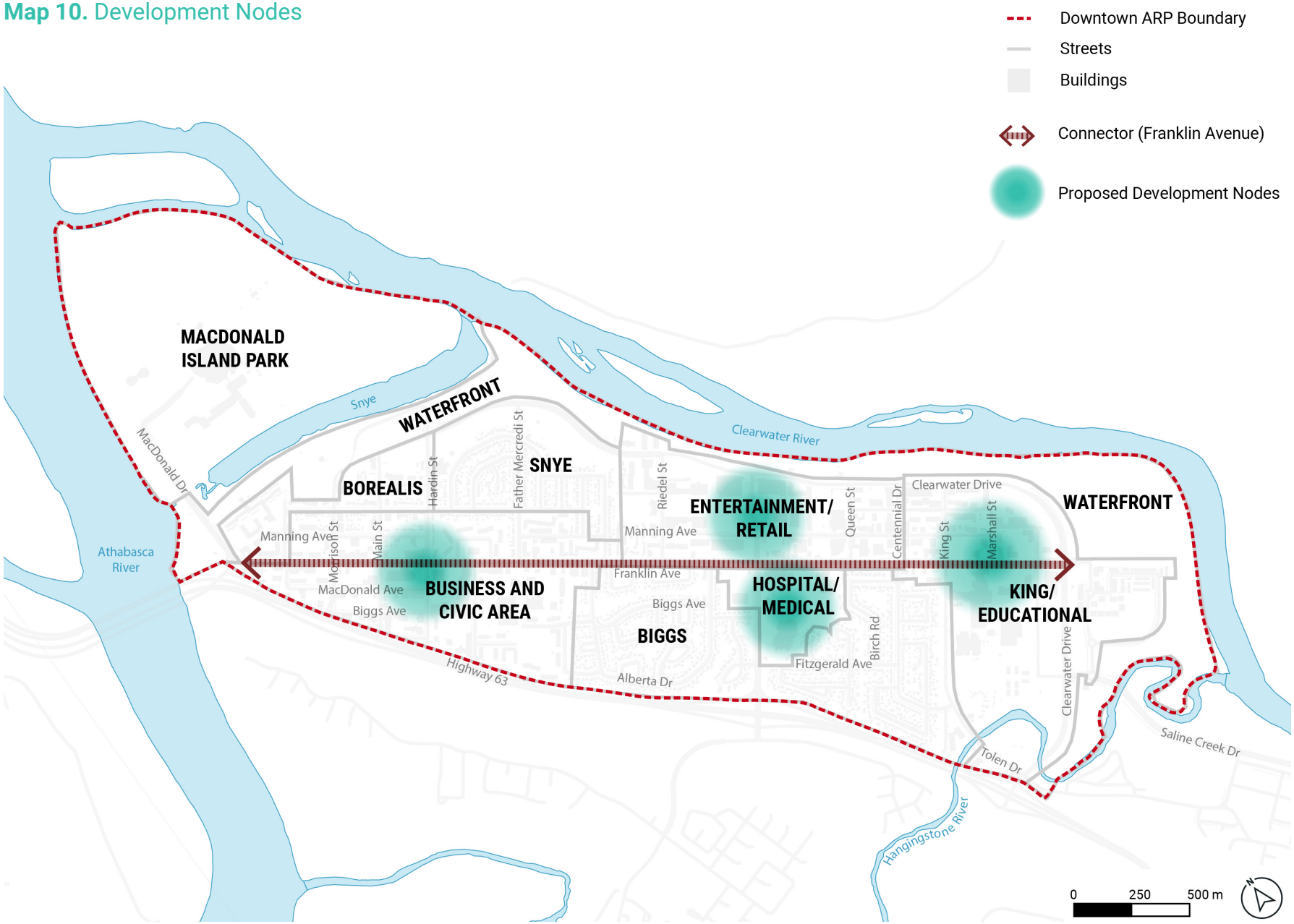
4.1.4 Explore the re-introduction of one or more local *Business Improvement Areas* within the *Downtown*.

4.1.5 Respond to current market spending leakage and fill the gaps in the retail market by:

- **a.** encouraging the development or *redevelopment* of a variety of business types and scales;
- **b.** re-using and reconfiguring existing commercial spaces; and
- **c.** introducing programs and incentives to support small- to medium-sized commercial activity.

4.1.6 Promote *Indigenous* entrepreneurship and commercial activity, innovation, and knowledge-sharing through opportunities for a variety of permanent and temporary retail spaces that showcase local goods and services.

Map 10. Development Nodes



ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATIONAL USES

4.1.7 Support and improve access to *Downtown*'s existing public and private recreation and entertainment amenities through enhancing transit and *active transportation connections*.

4.1.8 Encourage entertainment and indoor-recreational uses to occupy the Entertainment/Retail and King/Education Area, through supportive municipal incentives and bylaws, public and private partnerships, and other initiatives.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INSTITUTIONAL USES

4.1.9 Support the development of new assisted living and group accommodations in areas that are well-connected to transit and *active transportation* paths.

4.1.10 Improve transit and *active transportation connections* for existing assisted living and group accommodations.

4.1.11 Encourage partnerships and initiatives with stakeholders and *Indigenous* partners, including the Government of Alberta, for expansion of community services, outreach programs, and specialized housing.

4.1.12 Encourage collaboration with industry and academic institutions through funding opportunities and incentives to support new businesses by promoting synergies, supporting new ideas, innovations, and the testing of new ideas and emerging businesses and industries.

HOUSING

4.1.13 Explore opportunities to attract new residents into the *Downtown*. These could include but are not limited to:

- **a.** Promoting the development of a more diverse housing stock, including family- and age-friendly options; and
- **b.** supporting home improvement projects.

4.1.14 Encourage new residential developments to meet the needs of all income levels.

4.1.15 Create more walkable *Downtown* residential neighbourhoods by allowing the development of retailing, services, and commercial uses in residential neighbourhoods to meet residents' daily basic needs.

VACANT LOTS AND BUILDINGS

4.1.16 Encourage all sector (social, public, and private) administrative functions to occupy existing vacant office spaces.

4.1.17 Promote street-oriented development along Franklin Avenue by encouraging *infill development* of parking lots for larger retail centres.

4.1.18 Support higher density residential, commercial, and mixed-use development on underutilized or vacant lots that are easily accessed by transit and pedestrian paths and ensure convenient access for people with a range of *mobility* levels.

4.1.19 Address commercial vacancies by providing opportunities to adapt, reuse, or redevelop existing underutilized buildings.

4.1.20 Partner with private landowners and other stakeholders to reduce commercial vacancies in the *Downtown* by:

- **a.** exploring the reasons for vacant and underused commercial buildings and spaces in the *Downtown*;
- **b.** supporting a range of uses that encourage local entrepreneurship by creating live-work studios and business incubators; and
- **c.** developing incentives.



4.2 BUILT FORM

INTRODUCTION

The *Downtown's built form* is about the shape, scale, and height of its buildings, the layout of the streets, and the quality of the *public realm* (such as lighting and benches). These elements determine whether people find the *Downtown* attractive and inviting, whether they feel safe, and how well they can move around in all weather and seasons regardless of age or ability.

Feedback from the public engagements revealed that the community has a poor impression of the *Downtown*. They see it as generally unattractive, outdated, lacking cohesion and not pedestrian-friendly. Importantly, they perceive it to be unsafe.

To address the community's concerns, *built form policies* focus on:

- *Downtown* Design Guidelines
- Building Form and Design
- *Public Realm*
- Access and Design
- *Safety*
- Year-Round Design and Use

BUILT FORM POLICIES

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

4.2.1 Promote a high standard of architecture and design in new buildings, renovations to existing buildings, *public realm* upgrades, and *safety* and year-round use of the *Downtown* by:

- **a.** preparing *Downtown* Design Guidelines; and
- **b.** updating the *Land Use* Bylaw to require developers to adhere to the *Downtown* Design Guidelines.

BUILDING FORM AND DESIGN

4.2.2 Require transitions in development intensity between higher intensity residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments and lower intensity residential developments such as single detached housing to ensure compatibility between developments.

4.2.3 Create more inviting pedestrian-orientated streets by encouraging parking for commercial, medium-density residential, and mixed-use developments to be located to the rear of buildings or internal to the sites and screened from public streets.

4.2.4 Develop a human-scaled street corridor and wind protection for pedestrians along Franklin Avenue by requiring:

- **a.** new buildings to step back upper storeys above the third floor; and
- **b.** new additions to existing buildings which are located above the third storey to be stepped back.

4.2.5 In new developments, require transparency of ground floor commercial, office and retail façades to ensure permeability of building frontages and blending of private and public space to create a safer pedestrian environment.

4.2.6 Require new buildings Franklin Avenue to have active ground floor uses (i.e., retail, commercial and personal services, etc.) and their primary access fronting onto the street.

4.2.7 Drive-thru facilities located:

- **a.** Adjacent to arterial roads shall be located at the side or rear of the building and not between the building and the street; and
- **b.** On-non-arterial roads are encouraged to be located at the side or rear of the building.
- **c.** Where a drive-thru can only be accommodated between the building and the street, additional landscaping and screening will be required.

4.2.8 Support the development of improvement programs and initiatives to provide municipal grants to property and business owners to improve the aesthetic appeal of buildings and their premises area in the *Downtown*.

PUBLIC REALM

4.2.9 Prioritize *streetscape* improvements to Franklin Avenue Hardin Street, Hospital Street, and King Street, and Clearwater Drive. Improvements may include integrating elements not limited to: pedestrian paths; landscaping and street trees; and options for cycling infrastructure.

4.2.10 Encourage building and urban design in all major new buildings to promote a distinctive *public realm* with streets and sidewalks that are well-lit and landscaped.

4.2.11 Require new developments along Franklin Avenue to frame the edge of the street to ensure that *built form* and public spaces are coordinated to promote a cohesive *public realm*.

ACCESS AND DESIGN

4.2.12 Encourage the preparation of an *accessibility* assessment for new developments, and renovations to existing buildings, to allow individuals, regardless of age or ability, to access developments.

4.2.13 Support incorporating *universal design* principles in public and private development, including but not limited to pedestrian paths, building entrances, *parks*, and other open spaces.

SAFETY

4.2.14 Encourage development to adopt Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to make the *Downtown* safe and inviting for residents and visitors by including, but not limited to:

- **a.** using landscaping, including fencing and shrubbery, and change in texture and design, to convey a sense of ownership;
- **b.** properly placing windows and transparent building material to allow for natural surveillance all year; and
- **c.** providing adequate lighting both outside and in buildings in order to promote a safe night-time environment.

4.2.15 Encourage commercial, medium- and high-density residential, and mixed-use developments to provide *active frontages* (i.e., retail, commercial and personal services, etc.) with main doors and windows oriented to the street to make the area attractive, safer, and accessible for pedestrians.

4.2.16 Investigate "dark areas" in the *Downtown* and prioritizing street light installation in these areas and encourage private land and building owners to enhance building facades with decorative lighting.

YEAR-ROUND DESIGN AND USE

4.2.17 Prepare a Winter City Strategy to guide the design and maintenance of public and private development and spaces in the *Downtown* to create comfortable and livable spaces for residents and visitors year-round.

4.2.18 Encourage incorporation of winter city design in public and private development and spaces through broad principles such as:

- **a.** use of colour and lighting that creates vibrancy and a safer and inviting *public realm*;
- **b.** explore opportunities for snow removal and storage;
- **c.** weather and wind protection elements incorporated into new and existing building design, public amenities, and transit stops; and
- **d.** create spaces that encourage social gathering and interaction on public and private lands.



4.3 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

INTRODUCTION

Residents of *the Region* value being outside and enjoying green areas. The *Downtown's* green infrastructure of *parks*, open spaces, trails, and trees plays an important role in fostering a healthy community and lifestyle and contributing to the quality of the environment.

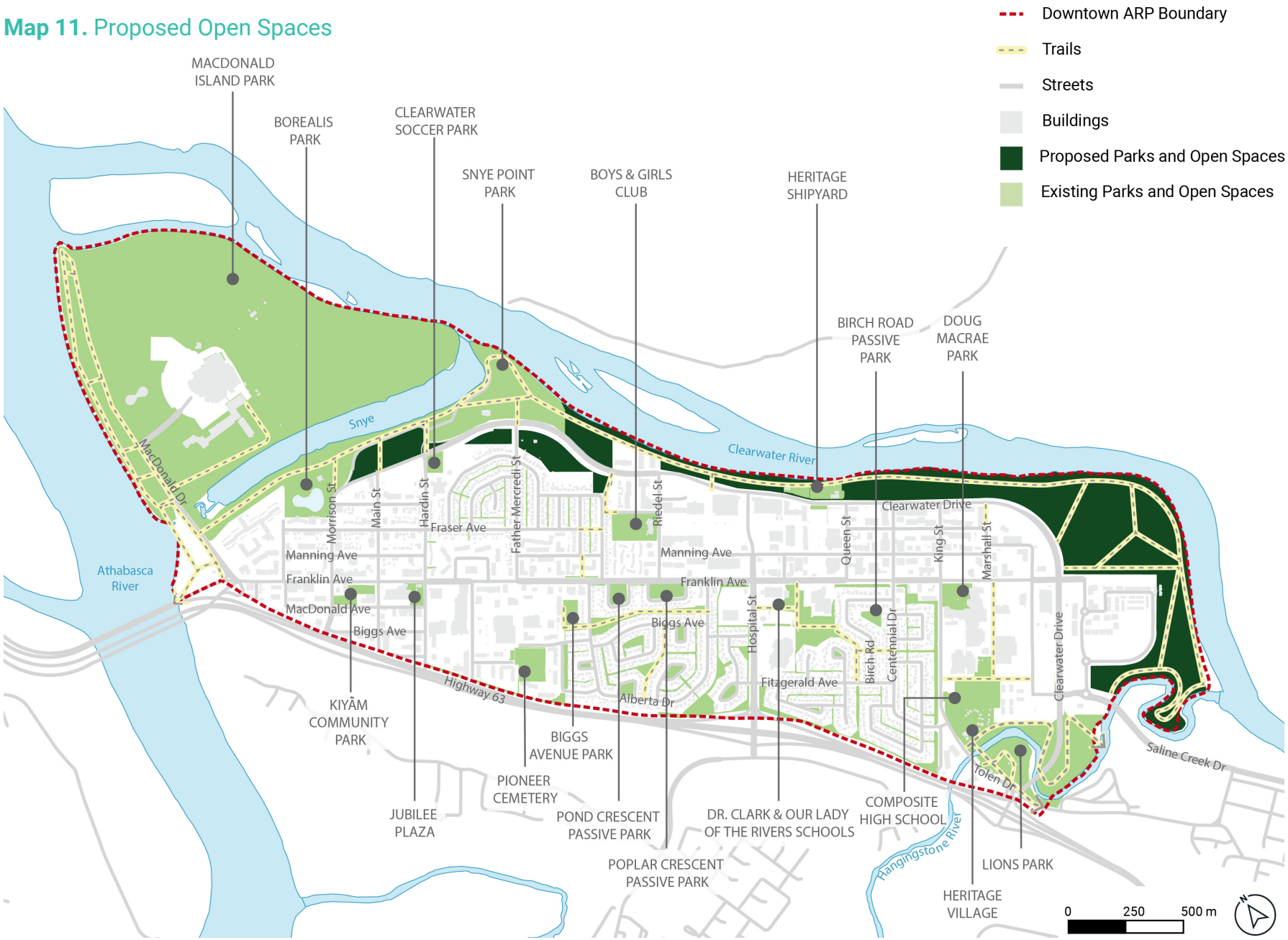
In response to community feedback, the overarching *policies* for *parks* and open spaces are intended to enhance the recreational and social opportunities for *Downtown's* residents as well as those of the rest of Fort McMurray and *the Region*.

Safe and year-round access to *parks* and open spaces was an important concern raised during community engagement. *Policies* therefore support the development of a trail network connecting *parks* and open spaces that ensures they are accessible by all ages and abilities and activated in all four seasons.

In urban areas, trees are not only visually attractive, but play a significant environmental role in terms of air quality, providing shade, and reducing water run-off. Therefore, *policies* have been developed to protect, preserve, and identify opportunities to increase the number of trees and to improve the tree canopy, which will contribute to the quality of the *Downtown's* environment.

See **Map 11** for proposed open spaces.

Map 11. Proposed Open Spaces



PARKS AND OPEN SPACES POLICIES

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

4.3.1 Promote year-round use of *parks* by site design to provide comfort in all-seasons, including the use of quality and durable materials and lighting to create visual appeal.

4.3.2 Provide *active* and *passive recreation* opportunities in *parks* and open spaces in the *Downtown* by integrating elements including but not limited to:

- **a.** *plazas* and hardscaping;
- **b.** trees, native plants, landscaping, and *low impact development;*
- **c.** *public art*, interpretive features, landmarks, or access to existing natural water features;
- **d.** open turf or programmed areas to accommodate formal or informal sport and *active recreation* such as soccer, hockey, tennis, basketball, softball, or cricket;
- **e.** playgrounds and outdoor fitness equipment;
- **f.** urban and street furniture, picnic areas, gazebos, and lighting;
- **g.** trails or sidewalks that connect to the surrounding *active transportation* network;
- **h.** designated off-leash dog areas; and/or
- **i.** small scale and/or temporary commercial development.

4.3.3 Support social programs, events, community gatherings developed by community-based groups in *parks*, throughout the year that cater to the diverse interests of people in *the Region* and visitors.

4.3.4 Promote Kiyām Community Park and the *Waterfront* Area as regional destinations for community events and gatherings.

4.3.5 Design new *parks* with the following features:

- **a.** at least one public street frontage;
- **b.** *universal design* principles;
- **c.** CPTED principles;
- **d.** winter city strategy guidelines;
- **e.** landscaping and amenities (for example, benches, bike racks, trash and recycling cans) to complement adjacent residential and commercial areas.

4.3.6 Support investment in interim open space solutions for vacant or underutilized spaces within the *Downtown* to enhance open space options for users.

4.3.7 Identify and prioritize improvements to existing *park*lands in alignment with the *RMWB Parks* Master Plan.



TRAIL NETWORK

4.3.8 Create a trail network using *universal design* principles that identify the key access points, and active *mobility connections* that provide access to the *Downtown* and other areas in Fort McMurray.

TREES

4.3.9 Protect existing vegetation, trees, and woodlots during development of new and existing buildings as well as public infrastructure such as sidewalks and roads.

4.3.10 On public and private lands, require the replacement of trees that are removed for any reason (i.e., tree health, public *safety*, construction, etc.) to maintain the urban tree canopy.

4.3.11 Establish a tree planting or tree canopy target for the *Downtown* to support enhancing the urban tree canopy and visual appeal of the *public realm* and promote reduction of the urban *heat island effect*.

4.3.12 Plant trees on key streets and transport corridors, including Franklin Avenue, Morrison Street, Hardin Street, Hospital Street, King Street, and Clearwater Drive.

4.4 TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

INTRODUCTION

Well-connected *multi-modal transportation* and *mobility* networks are essential to a thriving *Downtown*. They connect the surrounding areas of Fort McMurray and *the Region* to the *Downtown* and enable residents, workers, students, and visitors to travel to and through the *Downtown* and to destinations within it, using their preferred mode of travel.

The *Transportation* Network proposes three active street typologies within the ARP area:

a. Street with *Active Transportation* Paths;

b. Enhanced Streets; and

c. Festival/Curbless Street.

The **Street with *Active Transportation* Paths** is designed to provide a safe and efficient environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. It features upgraded bike infrastructure, pedestrian infrastructure, and sidewalks with separation to allow for convenient and safe access for every mode of transport.

Enhanced Streets focus mainly on improvements (i.e., street furniture, lighting, *landscape*, and sidewalks) to prioritize the *safety* and needs of pedestrians.

Festival/Curbless Street are streets with curbless sidewalks and limited vehicle traffic. This type of street is intended to create a shared space for pedestrians, motor vehicles, and street vendors with a focus on outdoor activities, entertainment, and celebration.

The street typologies are further defined through the *Downtown* Design Guidelines.

The proposed *Downtown Transportation* Network and proposed *Active Transportation* Network is shown in **Map 12** and **Map 13**, respectively.



TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY POLICIES

ROAD SYSTEM

4.4.1 Support prioritizing street improvements, *active transportation* path enhancements, and transit routes based on the proposed hierarchy in the *Downtown* as noted in **Map 12.**

4.4.2 Investigate the feasibility of an extension of Fraser Avenue from MacIver Street to Riedel Street, including potential realignment to Gordon White Avenue.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

4.4.3 Require an assessment of existing *active transportation* infrastructure and develop a strategy for *active transportation* path replacement focusing on prioritizing the most deteriorated infrastructure that does not meet *universal design* principles, or where there are apparent gaps in connectivity.

4.4.4 Prioritize improvements to *active transportation* paths:

- **a.** which connect through the neighbouring areas from Fort McMurray;
- **b.** from North-south corridors that connect the *Waterfront* to the rest of *Downtown* as identified in **Map 13**.

4.4.5 Improvements to *active transportation* paths may include:

- **a.** textured road materials;
- **b.** enhanced lighting;
- **c.** wider and bumped out curbs at key intersections;
- **d.** wider sidewalks;
- **e.** *wayfinding* signage;
- **f.** introducing landscaping and other amenities such as street furniture and lighting; and
- **g.** identifying cycle paths through road markings.

4.4.6 Require the development of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, as well as safe and convenient bicycle parking to ensure sufficient access to the *Waterfront*, arts and *culture* facilities, and *parks* through *active transportation*.

4.4.7 Explore opportunities to undertake pilot projects that would eventually lead to permanent measures to increase pedestrian and cyclist *safety,* such as exploring options to separate vehicles from *active transportation* paths.

4.4.8 Explore options for multi-use paths during road renewal projects in the *Downtown*.

4.4.9 Support *wayfinding* in the *Downtown* through municipal led initiatives, such as the *Downtown* Fort McMurray *Wayfinding* Plan, to help residents and visitors navigate throughout the *Downtown*, highlight important locales, and provide a cohesive identity for the *Downtown*.

TRANSIT

4.4.10 Explore enhancements to the existing transit terminal and the potential need for additional *Downtown* terminal locations.

4.4.11 Explore the feasibility of a high frequency or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along Franklin Avenue as a connector to link the key *Development Nodes* in the *Downtown*.

4.4.12 Encourage transit stops to be located at activity nodes of retail, civic, employment centres, and social service facilities to ensure public transit as a convenient *transportation* option.

4.4.13 Identify key areas within the *Downtown* to provide transit supportive amenities at bus stops including pedestrian path *connections*, lighting, benches, and shelters to promote public transit as a safe, comfortable, and convenient *transportation* option.

PARKING

4.4.14 Investigate the impact of replacing angle parking with parallel on-street parking and enhanced sidewalks along Franklin Avenue to improve business access, traffic calming, and the *public realm*.

4.4.15 Investigate shared parking and parking management in business and commercial areas to let people adequately access the *Downtown's* business services by car.

4.4.16 Encourage vehicular access to parking facilities be provided from side streets where *land use*s are adjacent to Franklin Avenue to minimize impacts on pedestrians.

4.4.17 Facilitate construction of multi-level parking facilities with *connections* to public transit in strategic locations to limit the amount of land devoted to surface parking and provide easy access to services and amenities in the *Downtown*.

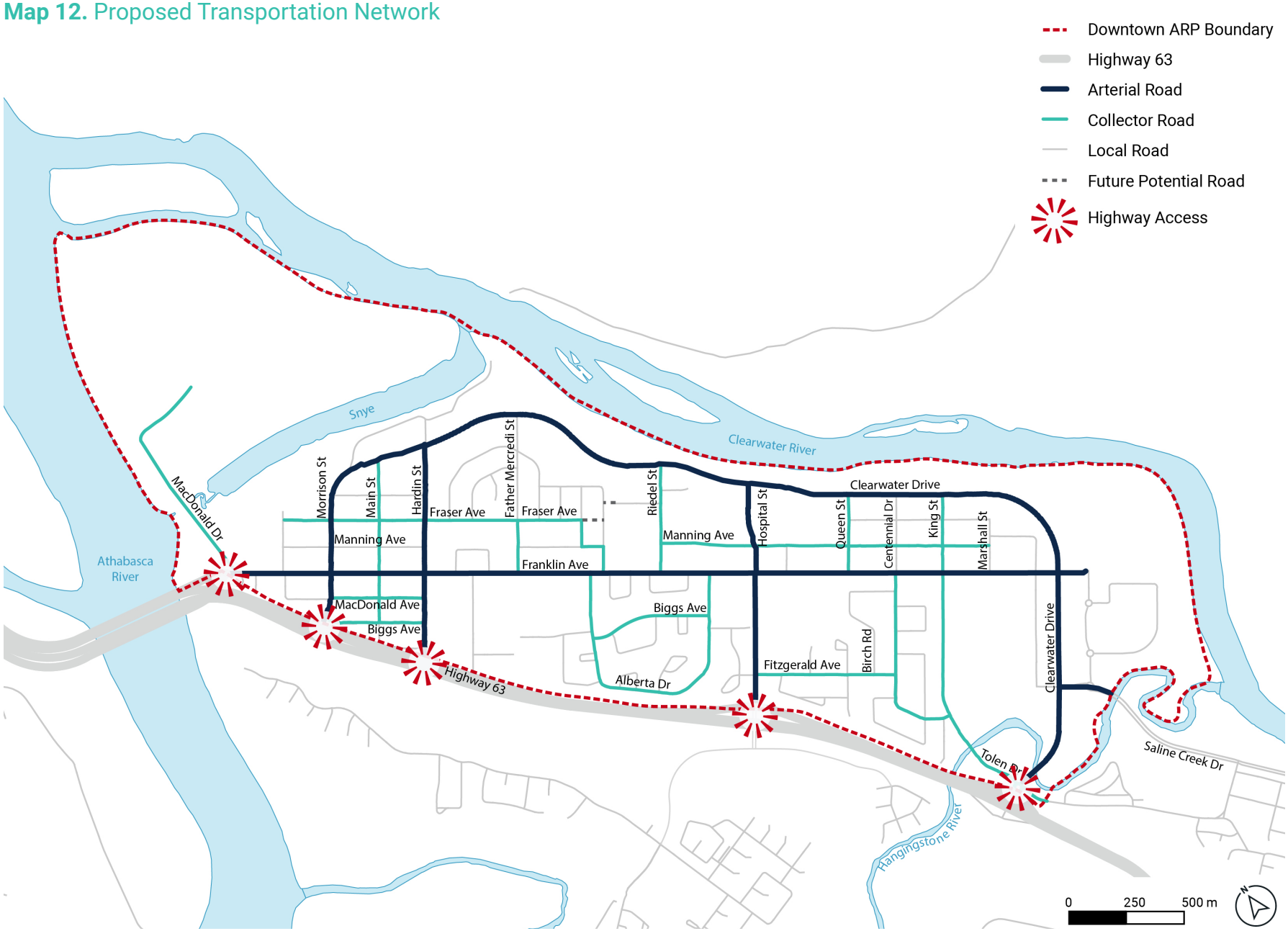
ACCESSIBILITY

4.4.18 Prioritize *accessibility* improvements of municipal infrastructure in the *Downtown*, such as tactile domes, accessible audible signals, curb let-downs, sidewalk widening, and dedicated loading zones for *accessibility* support vehicles, to create a *Downtown* that is safe and welcoming for everybody.

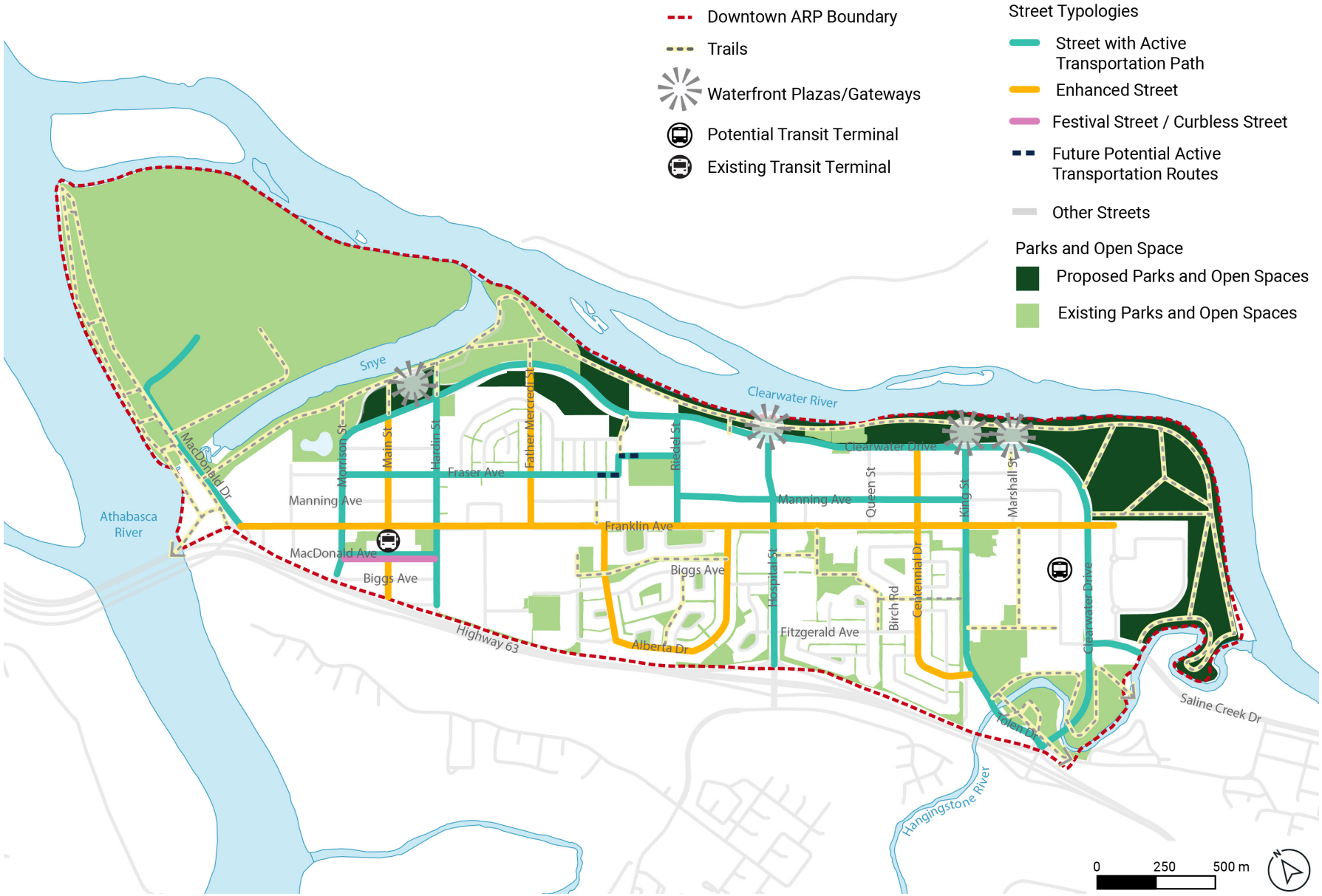
4.4.19 Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting along sidewalks throughout the *Downtown* and pathways along the *Waterfront* to improve pedestrian and cycling *accessibility* and *safety*.

4.4.20 Undertake regular cleaning and snow clearing of transit stops, sidewalks, crosswalks, and paths to ensure year-round *accessibility* for pedestrians. Priority will be given to heavy traffic areas, such as the area around Jubilee *Plaza* and Keyano Clearwater Campus.

Map 12. Proposed Transportation Network



Map 13. Proposed Active Transportation Network



4.5 HERITAGE, CULTURE, AND PUBLIC ART

INTRODUCTION

An authentic *Downtown* tells the history of not only *Downtown* but also of the wider region and people. The *Downtown* has the ability to showcase how the story of *the Region* is tied to the economy, location, rivers, traditional uses, historic residents, and a diverse population.

Existing *heritage*, *culture*, and *public art* sites as well as future opportunities are shown in **Map 14.** Proposed sites and opportunities will be addressed in the specific *Downtown* area which is located in **Section 5.0**.



HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART POLICIES

HERITAGE

4.5.1 Acknowledge and promote *Indigenous heritage* and *culture* through measures such as, but not limited to, incorporation of *Indigenous* place names and integration of interpretive elements within the *Downtown* to support cultural understanding, learning, and *Truth and Reconciliation*.

4.5.2 Implement the Heritage Resource Management Plan (HRMP) to encourage the conservation, retention, and recognition of all *heritage* properties and sites in the *Downtown*.

4.5.3 Support new development that is compatible with historic sites to promote the protection of *Downtown's* built *heritage* and historic *landscapes*.

4.5.4 Continue the implementation of the *Municipality*'s Heritage Plaques Program by displaying relevant information to describe the History of *Downtown* on Historic significant sites.

CULTURE

4.5.5 Work with *Indigenous* partners to promote *the Region*'s rich *Indigenous heritage* and *culture* and to recognize the importance of the *Downtown*, including the *Waterfront*, for the Cree, Dene, and Métis through the creation of memorials, *public art* and gardens.

4.5.6 Encourage gateways to the *Downtown* to incorporate prominent signage, *landscape* elements, and lighting to promote visibility and *wayfinding* for travellers into the *Downtown* and to support creation of focal points that provides a sense of identity for the area.

4.5.7 In collaboration with community partners, the *Municipality* will encourage public activities and events in the *Downtown* throughout the year by providing a variety of places and spaces that can support gatherings of a variety of types and sizes to promote a vibrant and active *Downtown*.

4.5.8 Encourage participation in diverse arts, festivals, and cultural activities to celebrate the unique *cultures* within *the Region*, provide educational and growth opportunities, and enhance quality of life for all.

4.5.9 Prioritize Jubilee *Plaza* and Kiyām Community *Park* for promoting different community programs and celebrating *the Region*'s multiculturalism and diversity.



PUBLIC ART

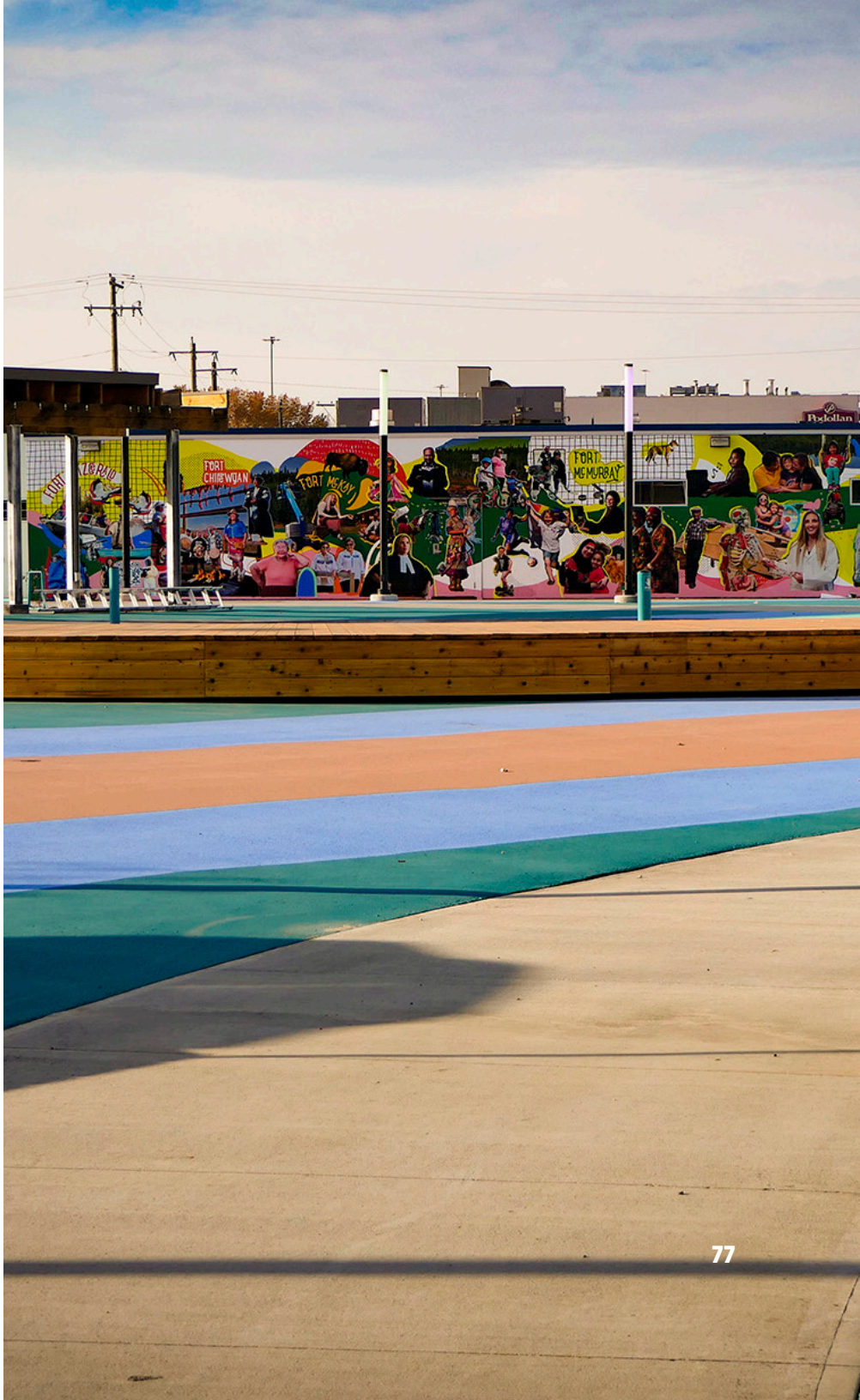
4.5.10 Encourage *public art* on municipal property at different sites. These sites can include *parks*, trails, greenspaces, infrastructure projects, gateways and corridors, *streetscapes*, transit bus stops, and community facilities.

4.5.11 Thoughtfully consider the incorporation of *public art* into municipal capital projects located within the *Downtown*, with priority given to the *Waterfront* area.

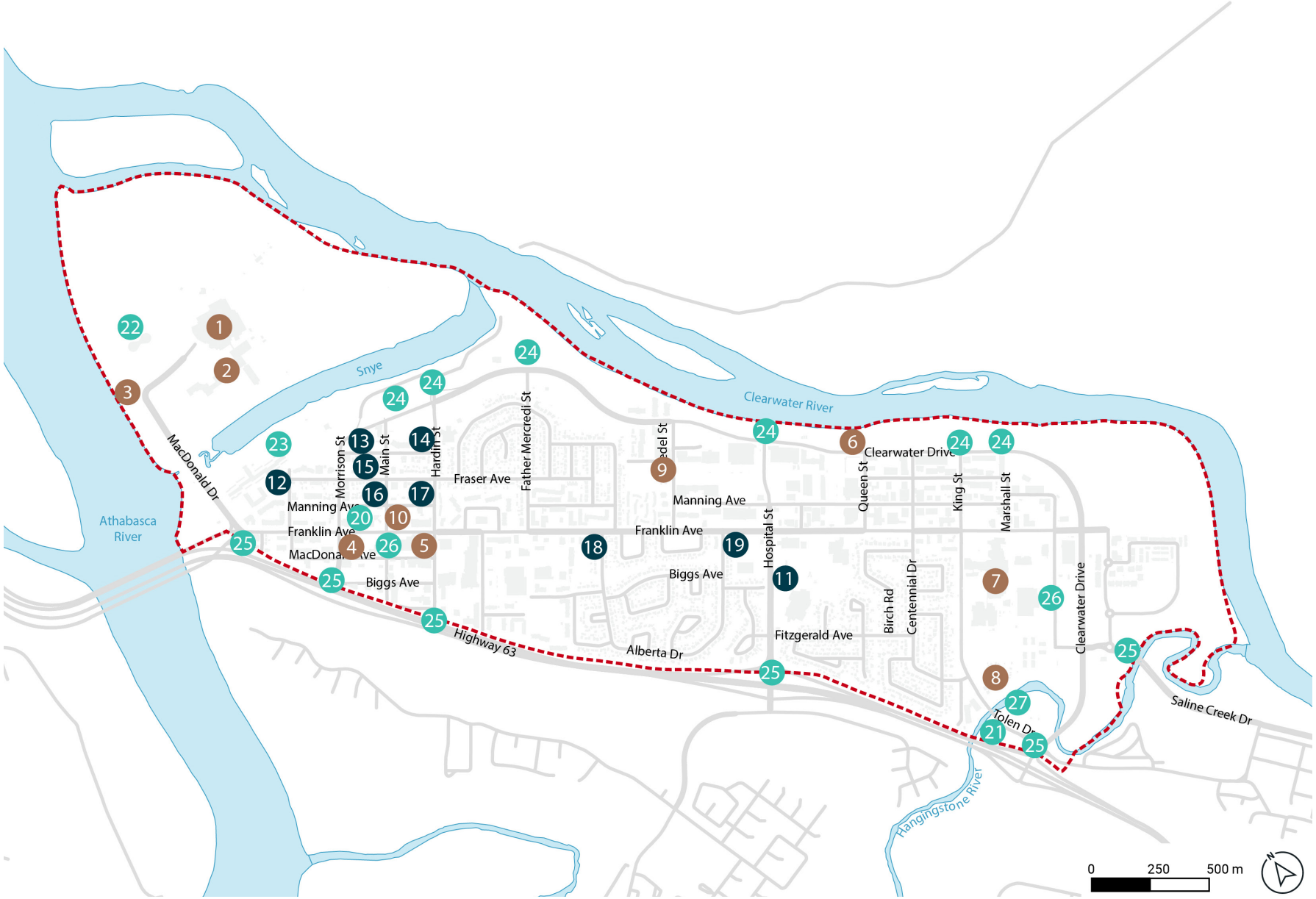
4.5.12 Encourage private developers to incorporate art, where possible within new developments in the *Downtown*. Art included on private land should promote the aesthetic improvement of buildings with blank walls, street corners, and underdeveloped areas to create visual interest and foster a sense of place in the *Downtown*.

4.5.13 Encourage continued growth of visual and performing arts in the *Downtown* in collaboration with community partners, by supporting the development of programs, events and facilities which assist local visual artists and performance groups.

4.5.14 Support the development of public and private arts facilities (such as arts centres, studios, and incubators) that help create a vibrant arts community in *the Region*.



Map 14. Heritage, Culture, & Public Art Sites and Opportunities



--- Downtown ARP Boundary

Existing Cultural and Heritage Sites

1. Suncor Community Leisure Centre and Library
2. Shell Place
3. Aboriginal Interpretive Trail
4. Kiyām Community Park
5. Jubilee Plaza
6. Heritage Shipyard
7. Keyano Theatre and Arts Centre
8. Heritage Village
9. Boys and Girls Club
10. Mitchell's Cafe (heritage site)

Existing Religious Assemblies

11. St John the Baptist Catholic Parish
12. Jesus the Anointed One Church
13. Native Christian Fellowship
14. Markaz ul Islam (Mosque)
15. United Church of Canada
16. McMurray Gospel Assembly
17. All Saints Anglican Church of Canada
18. NorthLife Fellowship Baptist Church
19. The Lord's Heritage - RCCG

Proposed Sites and Opportunities

20. Arts Facility
21. Fort McMurray Fire Hall #1 (heritage site)
22. McMurray Métis Cultural Centre
23. Moccasin Flats Memorial
24. Proposed Gathering Sites
25. Public Art Opportunity: Downtown Gateways
26. Public Art Opportunity: Transit Hubs
27. Heritage and Culture Opportunity: Integrate Heritage Village and Lions Park



5 Downtown ARP Area Specific Policies

5 DOWNTOWN ARP AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES

The ARP divides the *Downtown* into smaller, geographic locales, referred to as Areas. These Areas were developed based on their existing *land use*s and roles within the *Downtown*, and opportunities for change and development to facilitate revitalization.

For convenience, the Area boundaries follow road lines. However, it should be noted that these are not hard or fixed boundaries. There is fluidity between each Area. The boundaries mark spaces of transition for future uses and functions between adjoining Areas.

DOWNTOWN AREAS

The **Business and Civic Area** is the heart of *the Region*'s public administration, office, and retail.

The **Entertainment/Retail Area** is where we find many of the big box stores and entertainment uses within the *Downtown*.

The **Hospital/Medical Area** is where we find the Northern Lights Regional Health Center and Willow Square Continuing Care Centre, the aging-in-place facility.

The **King/Educational Area** has the Keyano Clearwater Campus as a major focus.

The ***Waterfront* Area** provides direct access to the *waterfront* that many in *the Region* consider a key asset for Fort McMurray and the *Downtown*.

The **MacDonald Island *Park* Area** features *the Region*'s largest indoor recreation facility.

The **Biggs**, **Borealis** and **Snye Areas** are predominately residential neighbourhoods.

While the *policies* provided in Section 4 apply broadly to the entire *Downtown*, including these Areas, the *policies* in Section 5 apply only to the Area specified.

The *Downtown* Areas are shown in **Map 15**. They fall into 3 groups:

Commercial and Community Services Areas

- Business and Civic Area
- Entertainment/Retail Area
- Hospital/Medical Area
- King/Educational Area

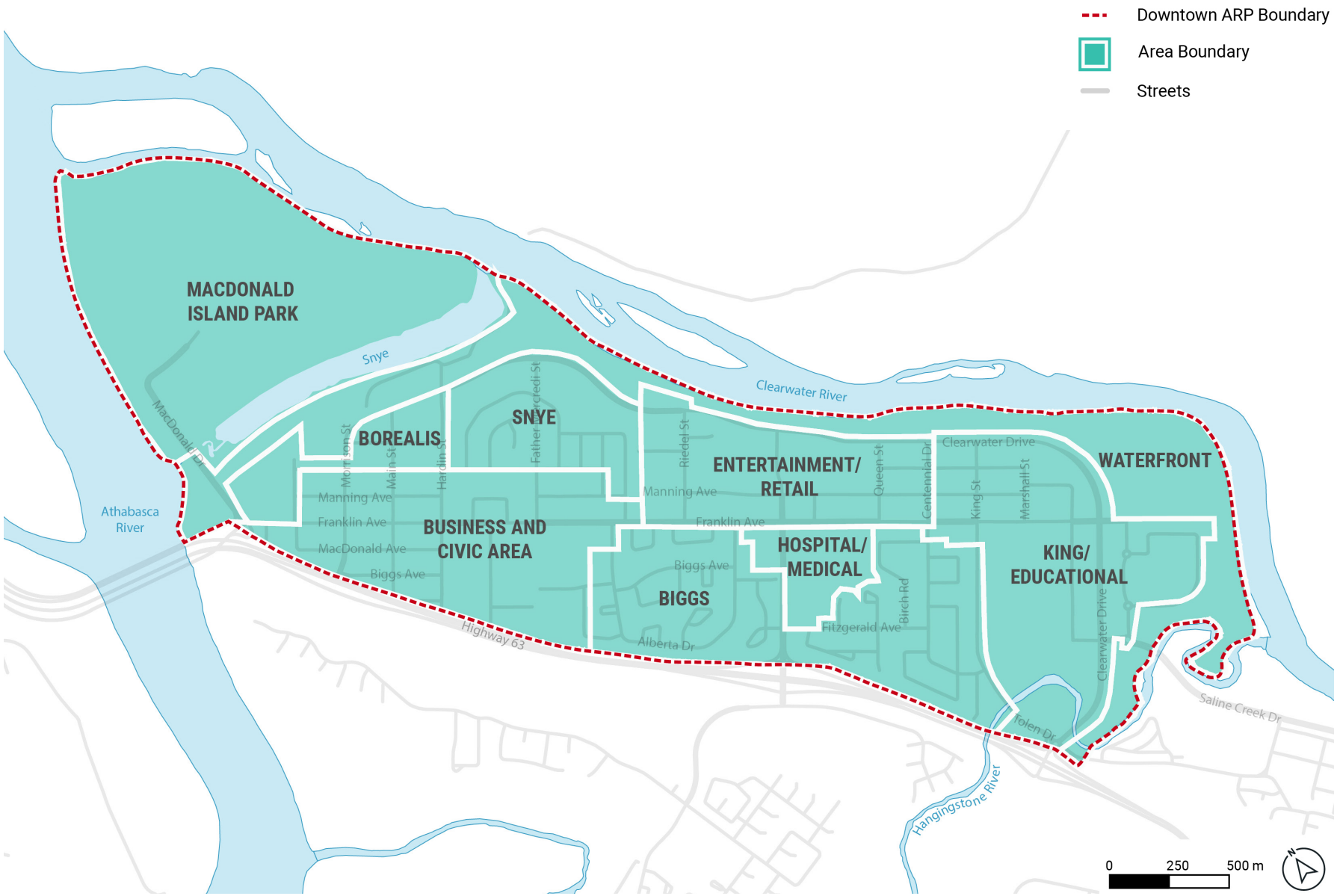
Green Space and Recreational Areas

- *Waterfront* Area
- MacDonald Island *Park* Area

Residential Neighbourhoods

- Borealis Area
- Snye Area
- Biggs Area

Map 15. Downtown Areas





5.1 BUSINESS AND CIVIC AREA

The Business and Civic Area is where there is a concentration of uses found in the centre of most towns and cities across Canada. It consists of a mix of uses, including offices, retailing, hotels, public open spaces, and residential developments.

EXISTING USES AND FEATURES

The most notable uses of this Area are the municipal and provincial government offices (Jubilee and Provincial Buildings), the Provincial Courthouse, Peter Pond Mall, a casino, Jubilee *Plaza*, and Kiyām Community *Park*. Main Street between MacDonald and Franklin Avenue serves as the transit hub for connection to and from Fort McMurray's residential areas and within the *Downtown*.

Most of the hotels within the *Downtown* are also concentrated in this Area, creating a demand for restaurants and cafes, supporting goods and services.

Residential development is mainly in the form of higher density apartment blocks. Lower density single family homes can be found along Fraser and Manning Avenues, in the area between Main Street and Father Mercredi Street.

The Area serves as a gateway to the *Downtown*, with three *connections* from the Highway 63 (Hardin Street, Morrison Street and Franklin Avenue).

Retailing is also a key feature of the Business and Civic Area. In addition to Peter Pond Mall, there are two supermarkets, and a variety of smaller and locally owned outlets. Most retail development is in the form of strip malls and large format box stores with front yard parking. Generally, car parking lots in this Area are poorly maintained, with poor lighting, little or no landscaping and pedestrian pathways. These car parking lots contribute to the poor impression people have of the *Downtown*.

The two blocks between Hardin Street and Morrison Street along Franklin Avenue form one of the older parts of *Downtown*. Along the north side of Franklin Avenue, there is a more traditional feel of the historic main street found across North America, with building frontages coming up to the property line and the sidewalk.

The Business and Civic Area has several vacant and underutilized lands. The majority of these sites are used as unpaved parking lots and are located to the rear of the properties on the south side of MacDonald Avenue. Feedback from the 2019 and 2020 public engagement expressed concern about the length of time these lots had been undeveloped, since they are in a prominent location in the *Downtown*.

Public engagement also identified the need to improve the Main Street transit hub. A weather protected transit hub was seen as an important amenity to make the *Downtown* more accessible by transit. This would also make transit a more desirable way to access the *Downtown*.

Accessibility and connectivity of this Area was also identified as something needing improvement, by providing connected sidewalks, trails, and bike paths. This will ensure that everyone, regardless of age or ability, can easily access key destinations such as Borealis *Park*, the *Waterfront* Area, and services.



FUTURE DIRECTION

The Business and Civic Area has been identified as the location for one of the *Downtown Development Nodes*, the Business and Civic Node. The Business and Civic Node's focus will be on the zone surrounding the Jubilee and Provincial Buildings, where professional and government services are concentrated. This concentration is intended to act as a catalyst, attracting similar and supporting business, services, and amenities such as restaurants. The transit hub is a key feature of the *Development Node*.

The *Municipality*, which is a key employer in the Area, is in the process of consolidating staff and services from other parts of Fort McMurray into the Jubilee Building. In addition, a local non-profit is developing an arts facility by adaptively reusing a vacant building on Manning Avenue. These two efforts will act as a catalyst to revitalization by bringing additional workers and people into the Area, to support existing businesses and services and create a demand for new ones.

The completion of Kiyām Community *Park* has added to the *parks* and open spaces in the Business and Civic Area and complements the existing Jubilee *Plaza*. Identifying "festival streets" for occasional and temporary use increases the variety and number of spaces for gatherings, events, and attractions.

The following *policies* apply to the Business and Civic Area as shown on **Map 16**, in addition to the Overarching *Policies* in Section 4.

LAND USE

5.1.1 Promote the continued importance of the area as Fort McMurray's main business district by encouraging commercial and professional offices, and accommodation services (i.e., hotel, motel, etc.) to locate in the Business and Civic Node.

5.1.2 Support a variety of uses (e.g., stores, restaurants, personal services, etc.) that generate activity in the Business and Civic Area year-round and throughout the day and evening.

5.1.3 Encourage amenities and services needed for daytime employees, such as restaurants, cafes, and street vendors.

5.1.4 Provide a more pedestrian- friendly environment and activation of the *Downtown* throughout the day and evening, by encouraging medium-density mixed-uses with commercial, office, and retail located at grade and residential located above.

5.1.5 Encourage more intensive mixed-use developments in the Area, especially west of Hardin Street, through *infill development* of vacant lots to promote intensification.

5.1.6 Encourage the development of small to medium scale retail and commercial uses to the west of Hardin Street to meet the daily needs of the surrounding residential areas.

5.1.7 Continue to support the upgrades of Peter Pond Mall to accommodate potential expansion of commercial and retail services that benefit residents of *the Region*.

5.1.8 Support the development of an arts facility on Manning Avenue.

BUILT FORM

5.1.9 Encourage a high standard of architecture and urban design in all major new buildings.

5.1.10 Enhance the *public realm* and activation of the surrounding locale by developing public amenities surrounding the proposed arts facility.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

5.1.11 Partner with private property owners to encourage the creation of new *parks*, *plazas*, and open spaces within new and existing developments.

5.1.12 Encourage *active edges* where buildings abut Kiyām Community *Park*, new *parks*, and other open spaces to promote overlook into *parks* and open spaces and year-round active use.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

5.1.13 Encourage construction of multi-level and/or underground parking facilities in the Business and Civic Area to limit the amount of land area devoted to surface parking.

5.1.14 Promote *active transportation* in the Area by developing cycling infrastructure (such as bike paths) along Morrison Street, Hardin Street, Fraser Avenue and MacDonald Avenue.

5.1.15 Explore the feasibility of replacing angled parking with parallel parking to enhance the *public realm* through widened sidewalks, street trees, and street furniture to promote activation of the Area.

5.1.16 Enhance the existing transit terminal by improving the connectivity with *active transportation* paths, increased weather protection and heated shelter, and the potential development of public washrooms.

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

5.1.17 Promote awareness of *the Region*'s growing cultural diversity by encouraging and supporting events and festivals to occur along MacDonald Avenue to activate the *streetscape* around Kiyām Community *Park* and Jubilee *Plaza*.

5.1.18 Encourage regular programming, by community groups, including farmer's markets, street parties, dining patios, and other events, within the Business and Civic Node to celebrate the Area as the civic heart of the *Downtown* and Fort McMurray.

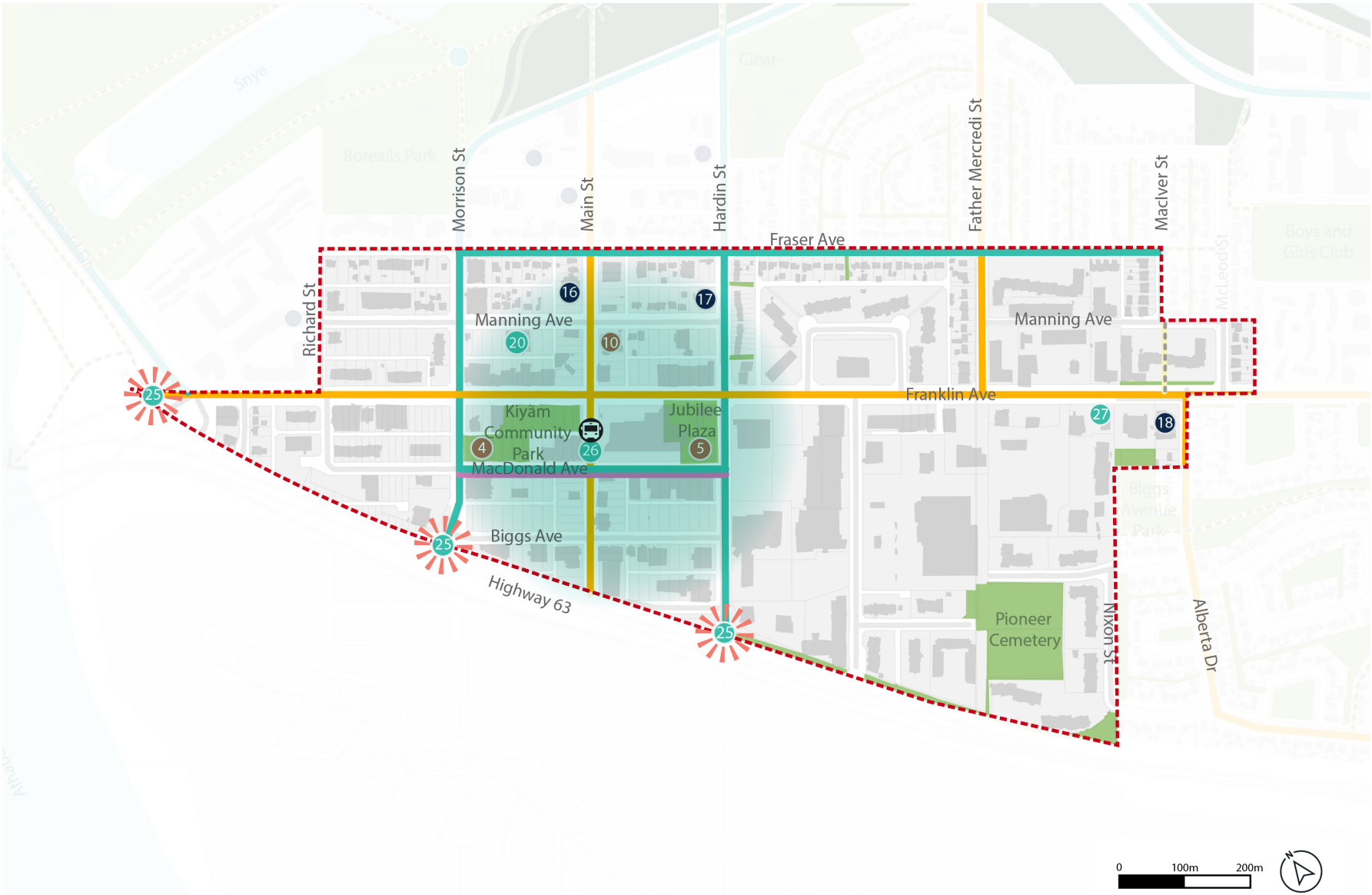
5.1.19 Promote *Downtown*'s visibility and identity by installing *gateway features* at the intersection of Highway 63 with Franklin Avenue, Morrison Street, and Hardin Street.

5.1.20 Prioritize Jubilee *Plaza* as a space for promoting different community programs and celebrating *the Region*'s multiculturalism and diversity.

5.1.21 Encourage the incorporation of *public art* at various sites, including the transit hub and as part of *Downtown gateway features* to promote an engaging and vibrant *Downtown*.



Map 16. Business and Civic Area



Business and Civic Area Boundary

Existing Transit Terminal

Downtown Gateway

Proposed Development Node

Street Typologies

Streets with Active Transportation Paths

Enhanced Streets

Festival Street / Curbless Street

Other Streets

Trails

Built Form/Other Assets

Buildings

Parcels (lots)

Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Cultural and Heritage Sites

4 Kiyām Community Park

5 Jubilee Plaza

10 Mitchell's Cafe (heritage site)

Existing Religious Assemblies

16 McMurray Gospel Assembly

17 All Saints Anglican Church of Canada

18 NorthLife Fellowship Baptist Church

Proposed Cultural Sites and Opportunities

20 Arts Facility

25 Public Art Opportunity: Downtown Gateways

26 Public Art Opportunity: Transit Hub

27 Heritage and Culture Opportunity: Integrate Heritage Village and Lions Park



Photo: Adobe



Photo: Pinterest

5.2 ENTERTAINMENT/RETAIL AREA

The Entertainment/Retail Area is the hub for entertainment and commercial uses in the *Downtown*. The Area includes a variety of uses including entertainment, commercial (retail, services and offices), residential and light industrial uses.

EXISTING USES AND FEATURES

Large format commercial uses dominate the Area. They include major brands of grocery stores and other retail anchors. The dominance of car parking lots in the Area are associated with these uses. In addition, there are two malls and a number of smaller strip malls, which accommodate local independent businesses.

Entertainment is a developing use in the Area and includes a bowling alley. The Entertainment/Retail Area is also well served by a variety of restaurants. The adjoining King/Education Area has also seen the development of commercial and community recreational uses including gymnastics, fitness and martial arts and children's indoor play spaces.

Apartment and mixed-use buildings (ground floor commercial and residential above) are the main type of residential uses in the Area. Keyano College owns residential units in the form of some 82 row houses and two/three-storey apartment buildings. The majority of the row houses are vacant and there is potential for *redevelopment*.

The Area only has one community *park*, located adjacent to a social profit that serves *the Region*'s youth on Riedel Street, and a small strip of open space alongside Clearwater Drive opposite the Heritage Shipyard.

A key feature of the Entertainment/Retail Area is that many of the buildings experienced damage caused by the April 2020 ice jam flood. Since then, nearly all buildings have undergone remediation work. The flood resulted in some of the smaller independent businesses closing or moving out of the Area permanently. However, new businesses are gradually moving into the Area.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The Entertainment/Retail Area has been identified as the location of a *Development Node*, the Entertainment/Retail Node. Existing retail and commercial uses will continue to be supported with opportunities for finer-grained commercial frontages. The Area's entertainment assets provide an opportunity to become a hub for entertainment activities such as shopping, dining, and indoor recreation.

The Area's proximity to the *Waterfront* Area and the Fort McMurray Heritage Shipyard provides further opportunity to revitalize the Area by encouraging commercial and entertainment uses compatible with the *Waterfront*. For example, there are development opportunities for the privately-owned lots located on Clearwater Drive. In addition, the development of Queen, Riedel, and Hospital Streets and Alberta Drive as key connectors to the *Waterfront*, will help promote the Area.

The following *policies* apply to the Entertainment/Retail Area as shown in **Map 17** in addition to the Overarching *Policies* in Section 4.

LAND USE

5.2.1 Promote the Area as the *Downtown's* key entertainment destination by encouraging new entertainment and indoor recreation/entertainment facilities to locate in the Entertainment/Retail Node.

5.2.2 Require new retail and commercial developments and indoor recreation facilities to be pedestrian oriented, through high-quality design, to ensure improved comfort, *accessibility*, and *safety*.

5.2.3 Encourage the intensification of existing commercial and retail uses to support a pedestrian-friendly environment where they can be easily accessed by walking and other modes of *active transportation* by people of all ages and abilities.

5.2.4 Encourage student housing and higher intensity mix-use development on the corner near Franklin Avenue and Riedel Street and promote improved transit and *active transportation* access to this location.

5.2.5 Support the use of car parking lots by allowing temporary structures (i.e., food trucks, outdoor markets, pop-up retail, etc.), community events, programming, and other initiatives to take place.

BUILT FORM

5.2.6 Encourage new commercial and retail to minimize their building footprint by distributing floor area over multiple floors to promote intensification and finer-grained development at the *ground level*.

5.2.7 Support an engaging and safe *public realm* by using incentives and grants to encourage apartment, mixed-use and commercial developments to beautify frontages and, where feasible, have their primary entrance opening on the street.

5.2.8 Create a safe and aesthetically pleasing connection to the *Waterfront* by requiring new development and the *redevelopment* of existing retail and commercial uses to front onto Clearwater Drive and provide high-quality façade design and landscaping.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

5.2.9 Encourage private property owners to develop new *parks* and *plazas* within large-scale projects to promote access to open spaces.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

5.2.10 Explore the potential for a continuous pedestrian and bicycle pathways through pilot projects to ensure safe access for *active transportation* options through the Area and to the *Waterfront* along:

- **a.** Fraser Avenue and Manning Avenue;
- **b.** Hospital Street from Franklin Avenue to Clearwater Drive; and
- **c.** Manning Avenue between Riedel Street and Hospital Street.

5.2.11 Enhance the *connections* from the *Waterfront* to streets in the Entertainment/Retail Area prioritizing Riedel Street, Hospital Street and Queen Street

5.2.12 Require *redevelopments* to examine the technical feasibility of extending vehicular and pedestrian routes, to allow for improved connectivity within and through the Area and to provide frontages to smaller development blocks.

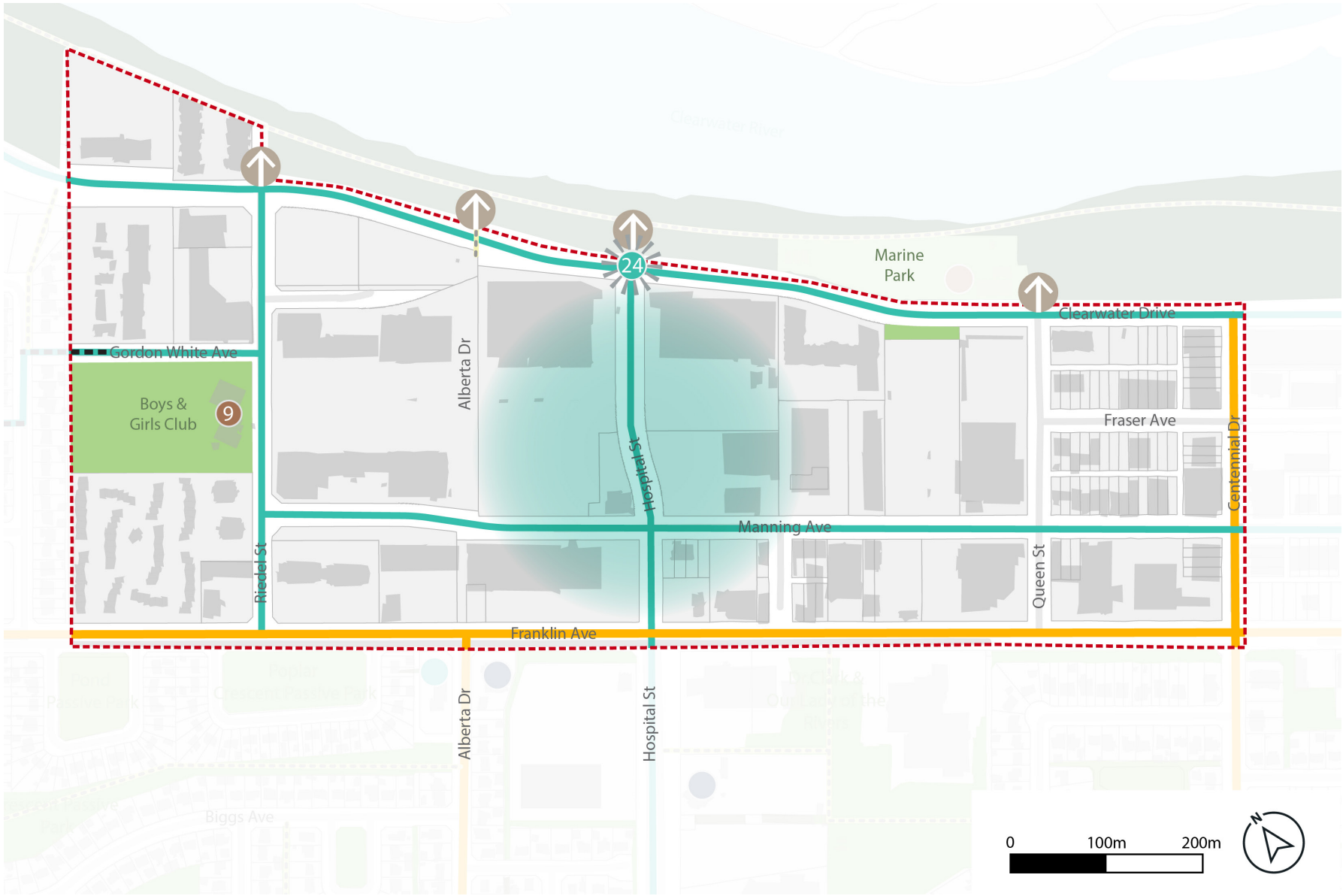
HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

5.2.13 Encourage enhancements at the intersection of Hospital Street and Clearwater Drive to promote integration of the *Downtown public realm* with the *Waterfront*.

5.2.14 Encourage the provision of *public art* and other *public realm* enhancements (such as seating areas) long Clearwater Drive to promote a vibrant and active *Downtown* and *Waterfront*.



Map 17. Entertainment/Retail Area



Entertainment/Retail Area Boundary

Waterfront Gateway

Waterfront Connection

Proposed Development Node

Street Typologies

Streets with Active Transportation Paths

Enhanced Streets

Potential Street

Other Streets

Trails

Built Form/Other Assets

Buildings

Parcels (lots)

Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Cultural and Heritage Sites

9 Boys and Girls Club

Proposed Cultural Sites and Opportunities

24 Proposed Gathering Sites



Whyte Ave, Edmonton
Photo: Pinterest



Pearl Street, CO
Photo: CBC Edmonton

5.3 HOSPITAL/MEDICAL AREA

The Hospital/Medical Area contains a concentration of medical and healthcare uses. These include the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre and the Willow Square Continuing Care Centre, the aging-in place-facility.

EXISTING USES AND FEATURES

In addition to the medical and healthcare facilities, a public school, a catholic school, their respective playing fields, and a faith centre are also located in the Area.

The Biggs Area residential neighbourhood surrounds the Hospital Medical Area on three sides, with Franklin Avenue forming the fourth boundary with the Entertainment/Retail Area.

A key feature of the Area is Hospital Street which is one of the five arterial roads connecting the *Downtown* with Highway 63. Hospital Street runs through the Area from its junction with Highway 63 to the south of the area, to Franklin Avenue and continues across to Clearwater Drive and the *Waterfront* Area.

FUTURE DIRECTION

This Area has been identified as a *Development Node*, the Hospital/ Medical Node, for medical, educational, and *institutional* uses.

The main development opportunity in the Area is that of the privately-owned lot located to the north of the Willow Square Continuing Care Centre, which fronts onto Franklin Avenue, the *Downtown's* main thoroughfare. The site is at the bottom of the hill and is overlooked by the continuing care centre. Any development must be sensitive to the position and outlook of the Willow Square Continuing Care Centre.

As an arterial road and a gateway into the *Downtown*, improvements to Hospital Street and its intersection with Franklin Avenue will contribute to *Downtown* revitalization and an improved *public realm*.

The following *policies* apply to Hospital/Medical Area as shown in **Map 18**, in addition to the Overarching *Policies* in Section 4.

LAND USE

5.3.1 Encourage development in the Hospital/Medical Node to support health and wellness, including but not limited to medical centres, paramedical services, and alternative therapy clinics to promote complementary uses in the Area.

BUILT FORM

5.3.2 Require new buildings on the site between Willow Square Continuing Care Centre and Franklin Avenue to have an enhanced *public realm* by providing amenities that add value to the overall aesthetic of the Area.

5.3.3 Require new development on the site between Willow Square Continuing Care Centre and Franklin Avenue to limit sightline impacts to the Willow Square Continuing Care Centre.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

5.3.4 Encourage the development of pedestrian routes from Hospital Street and Franklin Avenue to Fitzgerald Avenue to promote *accessibility* and connectivity.

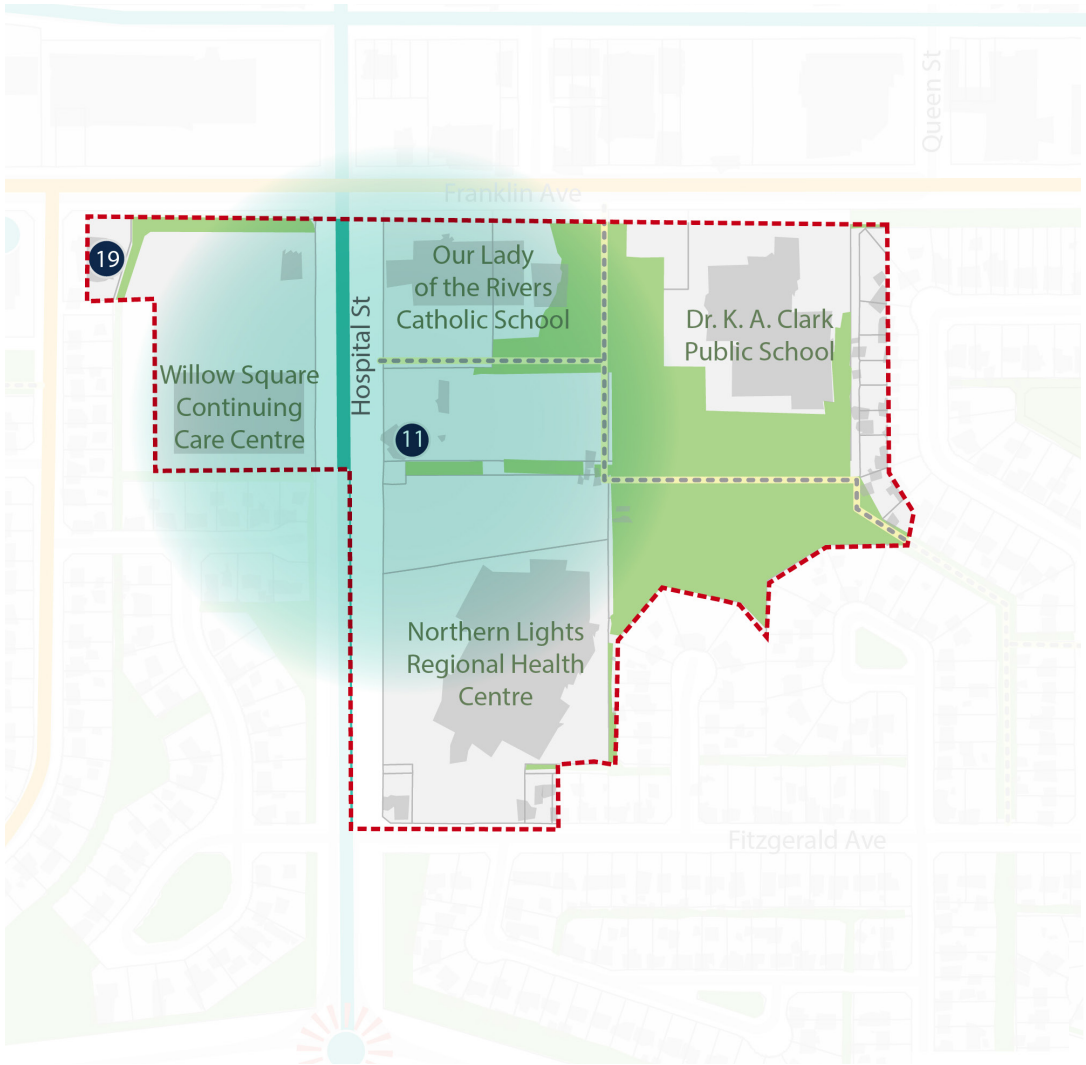
TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

5.3.5 Explore the feasibility of developing cycling paths along Hospital Street, Fitzgerald Avenue and Biggs Avenue to support *active transportation* opportunities.

5.3.6 Prioritize *streetscape* improvements to Hospital Street as it is a primary *multi-modal* gateway to the *Downtown* and the *Waterfront* Area, by integrating elements including but not limited to:

- **a.** extended pedestrian paths;
- **b.** opportunities for landscaping;
- **c.** enhanced lighting; and
- **d.** potential cycling paths.

Map 18. Hospital/Medical Area



Hospital/Medical Area Boundary

Proposed Development Node

Street Typologies

Streets with Active Transportation Paths

Other Streets

Trails

Built Form/Other Assets

Buildings

Parcels (lots)

Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Religious Assemblies

11 St John the Baptist Catholic Parish

19 The Lord's Heritage - RCCG

0 100m 200m



Photo: Adobe

5.4 KING/EDUCATION AREA

The King/Education Area is an area with an eclectic mix of uses. These uses include Keyano College's Clearwater Campus and a mix of smaller commercial and light industrial uses such as mechanic and vehicle repair businesses. There is potential to build on the unique entrepreneurial and innovative spirit that characterizes the Area.

EXISTING USES AND FEATURES

The Area's educational uses are located to the south of Franklin Avenue and consist of the Keyano College Clearwater Campus, and Fort McMurray Composite High School. Other uses in the Area include a sports and fitness centre, a hardware store, a strip mall and gas bar, Fire Hall 1, and the Fort McMurray Heritage Village. The Area also includes the Lions Community *Park* and the school fields of Composite High.

There are two residential neighbourhoods: one off Penhorwood Street, to the west of Clearwater Drive, and the second, known as Longboat Landing which is situated to the east of Clearwater Drive. Properties off Penhorwood Street consist of row houses which provide accommodation for college staff and students with families. Longboat Landing is a mix of apartment buildings and townhouses providing some 360 homes.

The area also has a light industrial area, located north of Franklin Avenue. This part of the King/Educational Area is characterised by its grid-iron streets and blending of newer mixed-use buildings and older industrial buildings. The older industrial buildings offer a variety of different sized workspaces, often at a lower rent than other parts of Fort McMurray and the *Downtown*, which makes them attractive to smaller independent businesses. The existing street pattern contributes to the pedestrian-scale of the Area.

There are sites of vacant and under-utilized land situated along Clearwater Drive. There are also vacant sites and land used for storage fronting onto Franklin Avenue which create a poor impression of the Area.

Key features of the King/Education Area include the Keyano College Clearwater Campus, the Area's proximity to the *Waterfront* Area, and the Hangingstone River which flows between the Heritage Village and Lions *Park*. The Area is a gateway into the *Downtown* from Highway 63, and Saline Creek Drive.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The King/Education Area has been identified as a *Development Node*, the King/Educational Node, for education and entrepreneurship. The sites south of Franklin Avenue include the Keyano College Clearwater Campus, and the Fort McMurray Composite High School and will continue to be a focus for education within the *Downtown*. The Area also features the Fort McMurray Heritage Village, an important attraction for residents and visitors. The area north of Franklin Avenue is intended to support entrepreneurs and innovation by providing sites for local manufacturing, collaborative workspaces, and small businesses.

Residential development will continue to be supported at Longboat Landing and at Penhorwood Street to provide student family housing.

There are opportunities to improve access to the *Waterfront* via Marshall Street and King Street and connectivity within and from the Area will be prioritized with enhancements to existing pedestrian paths and creating new pedestrian and cycling paths.

Transit is an important mode of travel for students and there is an opportunity to explore a location for a second *Downtown* transit hub in the Area. This would help support additional transit services for the area's residents and businesses and their employees.

The following *policies* apply to the King/Education Area as shown in **Map 19**, in addition to the Overarching *Policies* in Section 4.

LAND USE

5.4.1 In the area north of Franklin Avenue, support the *redevelopment* or the reconfiguration of existing buildings to provide light industrial collaborative workspaces to promote local business, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

5.4.2 Encourage *institutional* and smaller-scale independent commercial, retail, entertainment, and recreation uses within the vicinity of the Keyano College Clearwater Campus to promote the development of an interconnected campus community.

5.4.3 Encourage and support the development of student housing to accommodate students attending Keyano College Clearwater Campus.

BUILT FORM

5.4.4 Require all *redevelopments* and new developments along Franklin Avenue and Clearwater Drive to:

- **a.** have the minimum property line setback;
- **b.** face these streets to promote a welcoming and inviting space for pedestrians; and
- **c.** provide parking and deliveries at the rear of the property.

5.4.5 Require outdoor storage to be limited and screened, especially along Clearwater Drive, King Street, Marshall Street and Franklin Avenue, to ensure an improved aesthetic character and pedestrian experience.

5.4.6 Retain the grid-iron street pattern in the area north of Franklin Avenue.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

5.4.7 Explore how Heritage Village and Lions *Park* can be integrated with the *Waterfront* through pedestrian and *active transportation* paths, *wayfinding*, or other measures to support a connected *parks* and open spaces network.

5.4.8 Explore a partnership to manage Lions *Park* with the goal of expanding the *Park*'s potential use, revenue generation and programming opportunities for the Fort McMurray Historical Society.

5.4.9 Prioritize connecting high-quality and accessible *active transportation* paths from the *Waterfront* to streets in the King/Education Area including King Street, Clearwater Drive, and Franklin Avenue.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

5.4.10 Investigate the development of cycling infrastructure along King Street and Clearwater Drive to ensure *active transportation opportunities*.

5.4.11 Explore potential locations for a transit hub in proximity to the Keyano College Clearwater Campus to promote transit ridership.

5.4.12 Encourage the widening of *active transportation* paths between Keyano Clearwater Campus, the elementary and high schools and transit stops for easy and safe access to transit.

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

5.4.13 Consider establishing partnerships through programs between local educational institutions, vendors, and development partners to support knowledge transfer and training to a new generation of entrepreneurs, creatives, and students.

5.4.14 Encourage the incorporation of *public art* into the design of a future transit hub within the King/Education Area to promote arts and *culture* and enhance the *public realm*.

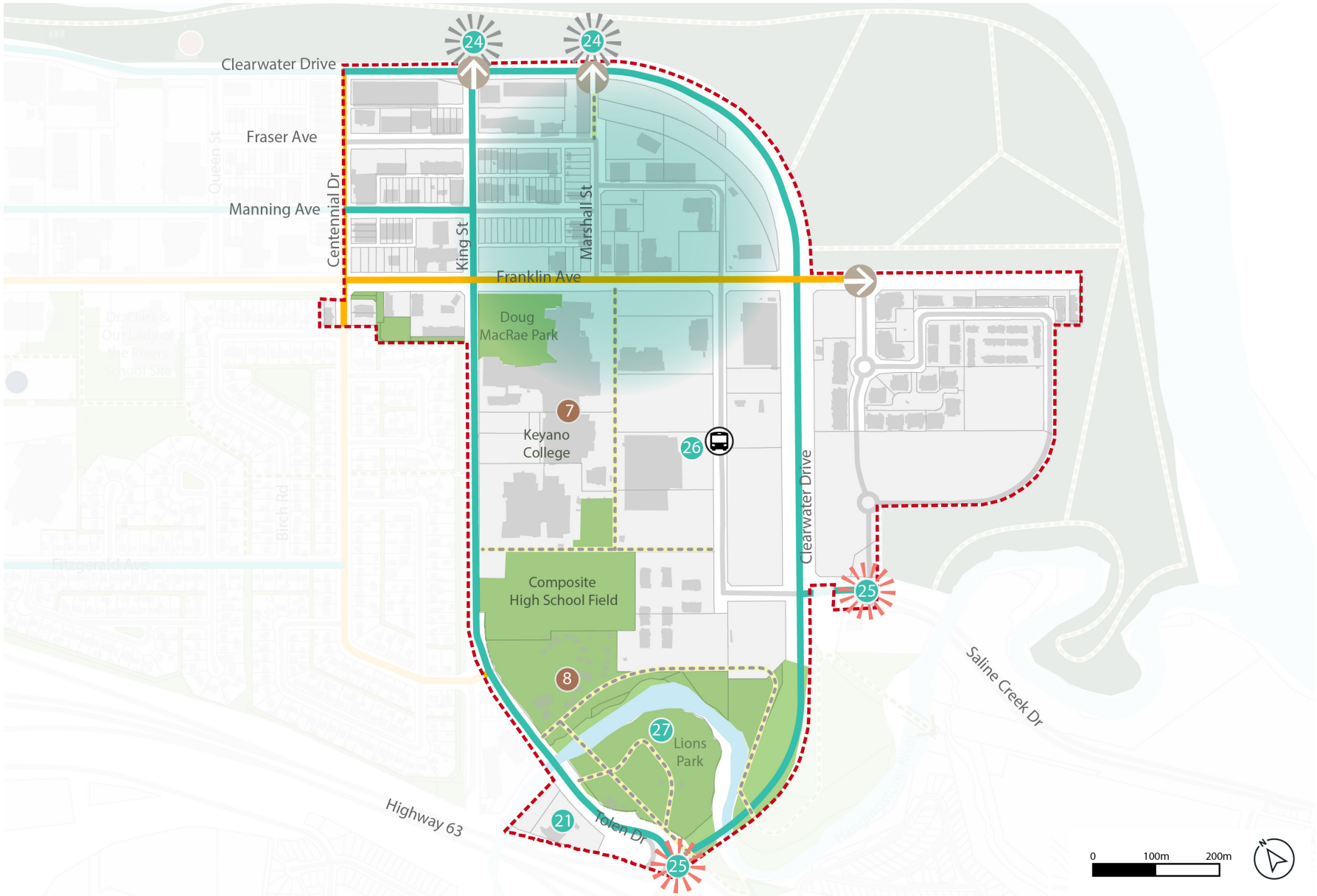
5.4.15 Encourage the incorporation of *public art* at various sites including transit hubs and *Downtown* Gateways to promote an engaging and vibrant *Downtown*.

5.4.16 Encourage the installation of a *gateway feature* to promote *Downtown* visibility and identity with a focus on historical themes at:

- **a.** the intersection of Highway 63 and King Street/ Clearwater Drive; and
- **b.** the intersection of Clearwater Drive and Saline Creek Drive.

5.4.17 Promote the seamless integration of the *public realm* with the *Waterfront gateway features* at the intersections of King Street and Marshall Street with Clearwater Drive

Map 19. King/Education Area



King/Education Area Boundary

Waterfront Gateway

Highway Gateway

Waterfront Connection

Potential Transit Terminal

Proposed Development Node

Street Typologies

Streets with Active Transportation Paths

Enhanced Streets

Other Streets

Trails

Built Form/Other Assets

Buildings

Parcels (lots)

Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Cultural and Heritage Sites

7 Keyano Theatre and Arts Centre

8 Heritage Village

Proposed Cultural Sites and Opportunities

21 Fort McMurray Fire Hall #1 (heritage site)

24 Proposed Gathering Sites

25 Public Art Opportunity: Downtown Gateways

26 Public Art Opportunity: Transit Hub

27 Heritage and Culture Opportunity: Integrate Heritage Village and Lions Park



Photo: Adobe



5.5 WATERFRONT AREA

The *Waterfront* Area is an important *Downtown* destination for outdoor recreation. Establishing the *Waterfront* as a focal point of the *Downtown* was one of the reoccurring themes of community engagement.

EXISTING USES AND FEATURES

The *Waterfront* is a long and, in places narrow, area that runs the whole length of the *Downtown*. Starting at MacDonald Drive, its boundary follows the Snye, the Clearwater and Hangingstone Rivers, and Clearwater Drive (**Map 20**).

Snye Point *Park* and Borealis *Park* are situated within the Area, along with two natural open space sections, owned by the *Municipality* and located at the eastern end of the *Downtown*. One section lies between the Clearwater River and Longboat Landing residential neighbourhood, while the second sections is between the Hangingstone River and Clearwater Drive.

Most of the remaining *Waterfront* is undeveloped and consists of sections of open spaces, underused and vacant land, most of which is municipal land. However, there are some notable developments within the *Waterfront* Area which include the Heritage Shipyard, three apartment buildings, and a restaurant.

The *Waterfront* is integral to the *Downtown*'s flood mitigation program and the use of the Area for recreation supports mitigation measures.

The existing *parks*, Snye Point *Park* and Borealis *Park* are used for a variety of community gatherings and events such as music festivals, the WinterPLAY Shootout on the Snye, recreational activities including canoeing/kayaking, rowing events, and fishing.

One of the attractions of the *Waterfront* is being able to walk or cycle alongside the water. Community engagement supported creating and maintaining an accessible and safe *Waterfront* trail system that is fully connected to MacDonald Island *Park* and throughout the *Downtown*.

A key feature of the *Waterfront* is its *heritage* and history, and in particular the history of the Cree, Dene, and Métis. Lands along the Snye and the rivers were home to *Indigenous people* before living memory. The area includes Moccasin Flats, which in the early 1900s, became a permanent community of mostly Métis people. In the 1970's and 1980's, families living in Moccasin Flats were evicted by the then New Town of Fort McMurray. This was done to allow for the development of apartment buildings to accommodate the town's growing population. Acknowledging, remembering, and memorializing this history will be part of the *Waterfront's* development and a step towards *truth and reconiciliation*.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The *Waterfront* Area is a key asset of the *Downtown*. It has the potential to become a focal point of the *Downtown* and a key destination for both residents and visitors during all seasons. To ensure the *Waterfront* benefits both residents and visitors, it is important to ensure that it has distinctive areas and is also connected in an integrated and accessible manner.

Since this Area is within the flood mitigation area, future development will be limited to *parks*, open spaces, and trails. However, to support the *Waterfront* Area as the *Downtown's* premier recreation destination, seasonal and/or temporary small-scale commercial developments will be allowed. These include markets, pop-ups, food trucks, and events and festivals. The flood mitigation measures provide an opportunity to consider the development of a trail and/or boardwalk along the top of the berm to provide an enhanced *public realm*.

Creating distinctive areas along the *Waterfront* provides opportunities for more *active recreational activities* such as play areas and sporting amenities, such as volleyball courts. It also creates areas for more passive activities such as socializing and walking. In addition, it provides opportunity to identify staging locations for boating, canoeing, and kayaking and to protect and preserve natural features.

To make the most of the *Waterfront* Area, equitable access to the Area, by all methods of *transportation* (*active transportation*, transit, and private vehicle) is necessary. Access within the *Waterfront* Area that meets the needs of all ages and abilities will ensure residents and visitors will be able to enjoy the site and its amenities. In addition, *wayfinding* will provide directions to and within the *Waterfront*.

The *Waterfront* has an important role in acknowledging, preserving, and recording the history of Fort McMurray. The history, *culture* and traditions of the Cree, Dene and Métis is integral to the Area. This should be reflected in the way the *Waterfront* Area is promoted as a destination for leisure and recreation. Historic and cultural markers (such as plaques), display boards and *public art* provides an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the Area's *heritage*.

LAND USE

5.5.1 Encourage recreational opportunities such as areas for community and *active recreation* programming, passive use and leisure, and other initiatives to promote the *Waterfront* Area as the destination of choice for residents and visitors.

5.5.2 Develop partnerships with stakeholders and *Indigenous* partners to support temporary development, such as food vendors and pop-ups for the sales of goods and services to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to utilize the *Waterfront* all year long.

5.5.3 Require all developments below the 250.9-metre elevation be restricted to *parks*, open spaces, low-impact outdoor recreational uses, temporary developments, and essential utilities to ensure future flood impacts are mitigated and reduced.

5.5.4 Consider small-scale community spaces and commercial developments above the 250.9-metre elevation to support appropriate development that mitigates future flood impacts.

5.5.5 Require new developments along the Hangingstone River to undertake environmental impact studies and geotechnical assessment to actively protect the natural quality and character of the riverfront to ensure environmental impacts are mitigated.

BUILT FORM

5.5.6 Encourage the inclusion of *Indigenous* design elements in seasonal retail pavilions, marker poles, signage, and *wayfinding*.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

5.5.7 Develop universally accessible trails and facilities to ensure the Area is accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

5.5.8 Promote year-round use of the *Waterfront* Area by encouraging enhancements including but not limited to:

- **a.** improved pedestrian and *active transportation connections*;
- **b.** marker poles, signage, and *wayfinding;*
- **c.** lighting, and amenities such as seating areas;
- **d.** landscaping; and
- **e.** lookout areas.

5.5.9 Encourage the use of environmentally sustainable materials for lighting, street furniture, erosion control, trails, promenades, boat launches, and buildings to promote environmental stewardship and the longevity of development.

5.5.10 Mitigate the environmental impacts of past development by encouraging opportunities to re-establish a healthy environment for both aquatic and terrestrial habitat using primarily native planting material including grass, shrubs, and trees.

5.5.11 Require preservation of natural areas to support the provision of natural amenities, prioritizing riparian areas to ensure protection of water quality and waterways.

5.5.12 Promote the *Waterfront* as a place of gathering by encouraging access to the water, providing seating, and passive and *active recreation* areas.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

5.5.13 Develop safe, direct, and highly visible pedestrian crossings across Clearwater Drive from Father Mercredi Street, Hardin Street, Hospital Street and King Street to the *Waterfront* Trail network.

5.5.14 Enhance pedestrian crossings by including lighting elements, raised walkways, and/or delineated by paint.

5.5.15 Encourage the development of Clearwater Drive as a pedestrian- and cyclist- friendly corridor along the northern edge of the *Downtown* to ensure *active transportation* opportunities.



HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

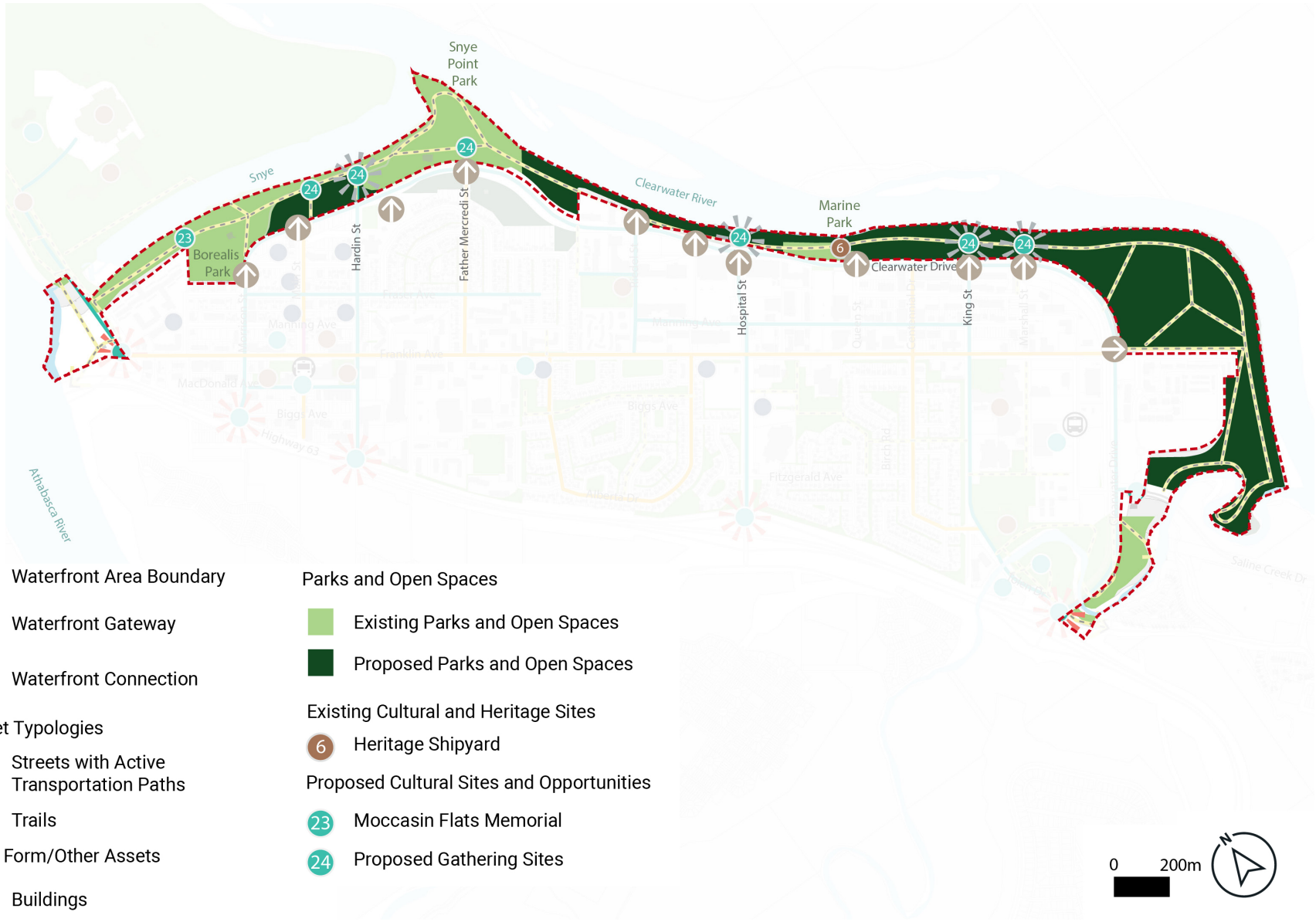
5.5.16 Use historical and *cultural* markers (such as plaques) in the *Waterfront* Area to promote learning, dialogue, understanding, inclusiveness, and creation of the *Downtown's* identity.

5.5.17 Encourage *Indigenous* art in the *Waterfront* Area to promote and celebrate the rich *heritage* and history of Cree, Dene and Métis within t*he Region*.

5.5.18 Promote the *Waterfront* Area as a regional recreation and tourist destination in collaboration with local *Indigenous* partners, and through partnerships with local, regional and provincial tourism agencies and community organizations.

5.5.19 Integrate the Moccasin Flats Memorial with the adjacent trail network to promote increased visibility and access.

Map 20. *Waterfront* Area



- Waterfront Area Boundary
- Waterfront Gateway
- Waterfront Connection

Street Typologies

- Streets with Active Transportation Paths
- Trails

Built Form/Other Assets

- Buildings

Parks and Open Spaces

- Existing Parks and Open Spaces
- Proposed Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Cultural and Heritage Sites

- 6 Heritage Shipyard

Proposed Cultural Sites and Opportunities

- 23 Moccasin Flats Memorial
- 24 Proposed Gathering Sites



5.6 MACDONALD ISLAND PARK AREA

MacDonald Island *Park* is located north of the Snye and had its beginnings as a *park* in the 1970's, which included the development of the Miskanaw Golf Club. With major expansions and development of new multi-purpose recreation facilities including the Suncor Community Leisure Centre (2010) and Shell Place (2015), MacDonald Island *Park* is an important regional destination for sports, leisure, recreation, and celebration.

The MacDonald Island *Park* Area will continue to support the recreational and cultural activities of residents and visitors alike.

The following *policies* apply to the MacDonald Island *Park* Area as shown in **Map 21** in addition to the Overarching *Policies* in Section 4.

LAND USE

5.6.1 Encourage continued opportunities for recreation such as spaces for community and *active recreation* programming, passive use and leisure, and other initiatives to promote this Area as the premier recreation destination for *the Region*.

5.6.2 Support temporary commercial uses within the Area provided they are related to, and compatible with, recreational activities.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

5.6.3 Encourage the continued use of the MacDonald Island *Park* Area as a significant gathering place for sporting, arts, cultural, and recreational events and activities to promote community celebration, gatherings, traditional practices and learning.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

5.6.4 Partner with the Regional Recreation Corporation of Wood Buffalo to encourage improvements to pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular access, and transit services to and from the MacDonald Island *Park* Area, by:

a. Encouraging an enhanced and regular transit service between MacDonald Island *Park* and Downton; and

b. Exploring the options for a new pedestrian bridge, connecting the *Waterfront* Area to MacDonald Island *Park*.



HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

5.6.5 Through partnership with the Regional Recreation Corporation of Wood Buffalo and other community organizations, encourage elements of interest such as art and landscaping, to be included along the perimeter promenade and trail system to showcase *the Region*'s history, *Indigenous heritage*, and cultural diversity.

5.6.6 Encourage improvement of the Snye *waterfront*, taking into account its relationship with development on its south side, to promote the MacDonald Island *Park* Area as an important *park* destination in the *Downtown*.

5.6.7 In partnership with local, regional, and provincial tourism agencies and community organizations, promote Macdonald Island *Park* Area as a regional, provincial and national destination for:

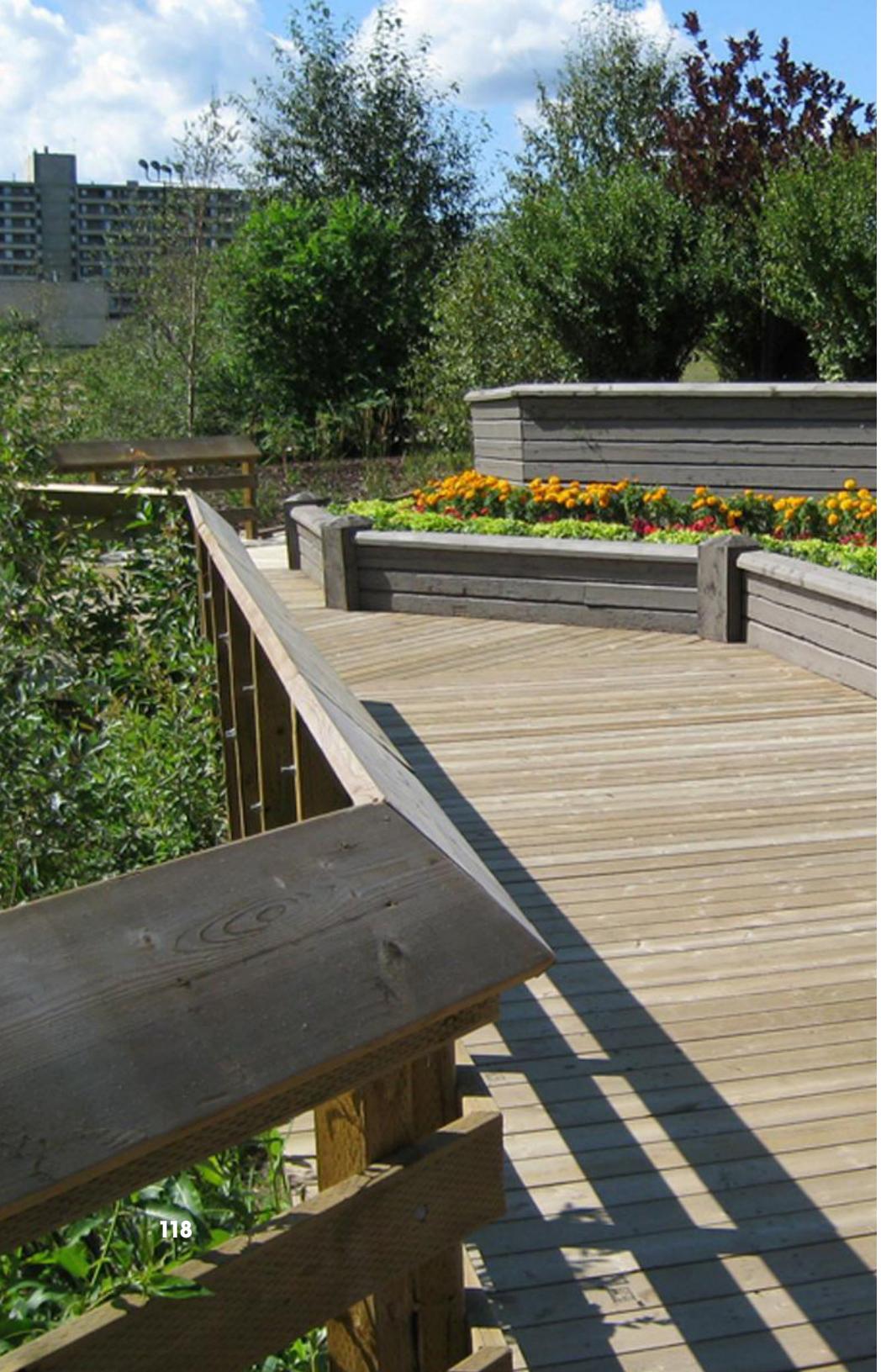
- **a.** recreation and tourism; and
- **b.** conference centre.

5.6.8 Support collaboration with the Cree, Dene, and Métis to ensure the history and *heritage* of *the Region* is reflected in any promotion of MacDonald Island *Park*.

5.6.9 Support the development of the Fort McMurray Métis Cultural Centre within MacDonald Island *Park* to promote *the Region*'s history, *heritage* and *culture*.

Map 21. MacDonald Island *Park* Area





5.7 BOREALIS AREA

The Borealis Area is located between the Snye Area and the Business Civic Area, in proximity to the *waterfront* and with convenient access to Highway 63. With an existing concentration of higher-density residential development, the Borealis Area is and will continue to be one of the higher- density neighbourhoods in the *Downtown*, transitioning to medium-density residential located in the Snye Area to the east. While this is primarily a multi-family residential Area, it also includes four places of worship, senior independent and assisted-living accommodations, and two hotels.

This Area will focus on medium density residential *infill development* on underutilized lots and improving *connections* to the *Waterfront* Area.

The following *policies* apply to the Borealis Area as shown in **Map 22**, in addition to the Overarching *Policies* in Section 4.

LAND USE

5.7.1 Encourage mixed-use development by considering small-scale commercial and retail uses at grade along Hardin, Main and Morrison Streets.

5.7.2 Encourage *infill development* of medium- and high-density mixed-use development on vacant lots along Main Street and Clearwater Drive.

5.7.3 Require new development adjacent to Clearwater Drive to provide public spaces and amenities, such as *parks* and open spaces.

5.7.4 Encourage developments in the Area to contain a variety of housing types such as row housing, low- and medium- rise apartments, and other forms of medium-density housing to promote alternative housing options to meet the needs of various lifestyles and incomes.

BUILT FORM

5.7.5 Through partnerships between the *Municipality* and private property owners, and the use of incentives and grants, encourage upgrades to the facades of existing buildings along the *waterfront* to enhance their visual appearance and create interest.

5.7.6 Require new developments fronting the Snye to have enhanced *connections* to the *Waterfront* and are of high-quality design.

5.7.7 Require a smooth transition in building heights in the Borealis Area with an increase in height towards the Business Civic Area and decreasing towards the Snye Area.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

5.7.8 Require *multi-modal connections* from the *Waterfront* trail network to Morrison Street, Main Street, and Hardin Street. Emphasis should be placed on greening these streets and providing attractive night lighting.



TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

5.7.9 Enhance pedestrian *connections* and establish Main Street and Hardin Street as pedestrian corridors by providing, where feasible, broad tree-lined streets with sidewalks.

5.7.10 Require age-friendly and *universal design* to be incorporated into the access to all new forms of development.

5.7.11 Support access improvements to existing developments that incorporate age-friendly and *universal design*, with priority for improvements in and around of senior housing.

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

5.7.12 Support the development of a *gateway feature* that celebrates the *Downtown* at the entrances of Franklin Avenue and MacDonald Drive.

Map 22. Borealis Area

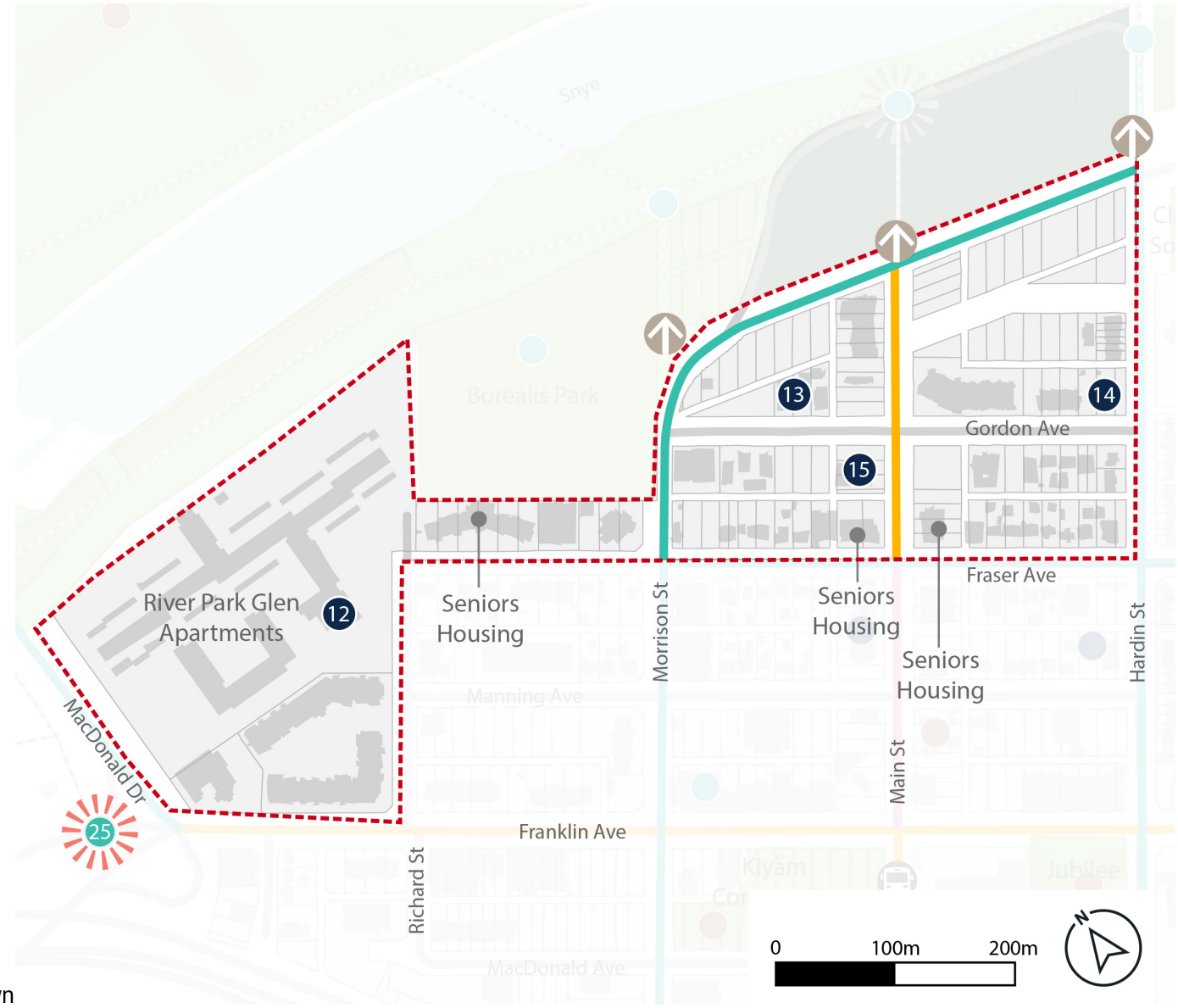




Photo: Adobe

5.8 SNYE AREA

The Snye Area will continue to support the low-density residential character and function which exists today.

Medium-density residential uses may be supported in the Area's boundary regions, especially along Hardin Street. Uses in this boundary or transitional areas should be orientated towards and have a high-quality design treatment fronting these roadways.

The following *policies* apply to the Snye Area as shown in **Map 23** in addition to the Overarching *Policies* in Section 4.

LAND USE

5.8.1 Consider medium-density residential uses in the transitional area along Hardin Street and the *Waterfront* Area to support the development of a range of housing types.

BUILT FORM

5.8.2 Encourage medium-density developments in the Area to contain a variety of *built forms* such as row housing, low- and medium- rise apartments, and other forms of medium-density housing to promote alternative housing options.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

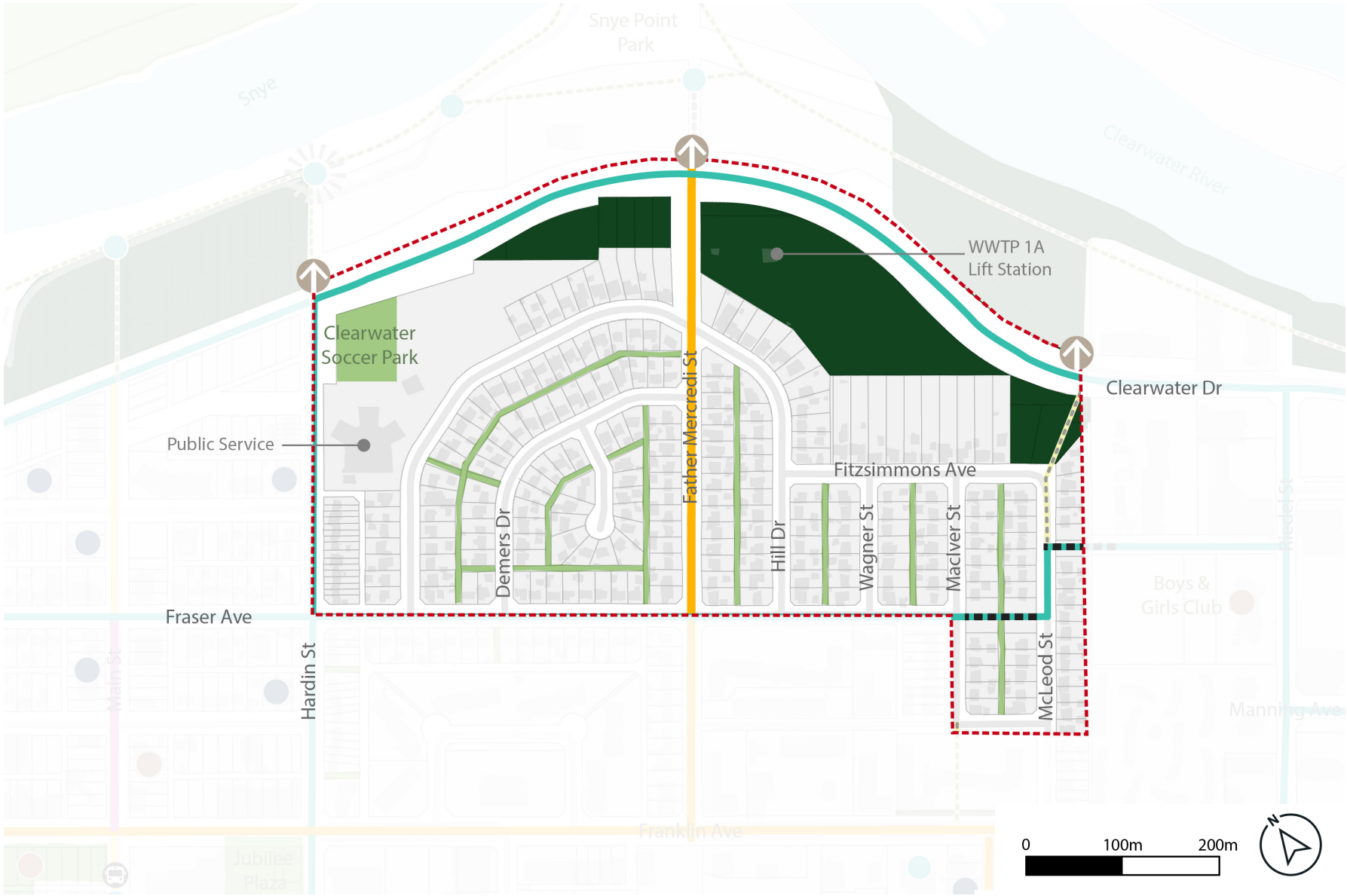
5.8.3 Limit development on lands owned by the *Municipality* adjacent to Clearwater Drive to ensure these lands are maintained for *parks*, open spaces, and public infrastructure.

5.8.4 Connect the *Waterfront* trail network to streets in the Snye Area including Father Mercredi Street and Hardin Street.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

5.8.5 Improve *connections* within and through the Snye Area by developing a continuous pedestrian and cycling network, including the creation of cycling infrastructure, along Fraser Avenue and Hardin Street.

Map 23. Snye Area



Snye Area Boundary

Street Typologies

Streets with Active Transportation Paths

Enhanced Streets

Other Streets

Potential Streets

Trails

Built Form/Other Assets

Buildings

Parcels (lots)

Waterfront Connection

Parks and Open Spaces

Proposed Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Parks and Open Spaces



Photo: Adobe



Photo: Adobe

5.9 BIGGS AREA

The Biggs Area represents the largest residential neighbourhood in *Downtown*. The Area is primarily low-density residential and is not anticipated to undergo significant change.

This Area is envisioned to provide increased *connectivity* to adjacent Areas, improved *park* spaces and trail systems, and tree preservation on municipal lands.

The following *policies* apply to the Biggs Area as shown in **Map 24,** in addition to the Overarching *Policies* in Section 4.

LAND USE

5.9.1 Encourage *infill development* where appropriate while retaining the low-density residential character of the Biggs Area to support sensitive intensification and diverse housing choices.

5.9.2 Consider a mix of residential uses including single-detached, semi-detached, duplexes, and row housing to support diverse housing choices.

5.9.3 Support neighbourhood commercial development on corner lots along Franklin Avenue, to serve the residents of the Area.

BUILT FORM

5.9.4 Include design criteria in the *Downtown* Design Guidelines to ensure *infill development* retains the character of the Biggs Area.



Photo: Adobe

5.9.5 Encourage development of trails in existing *parks* and Municipal right-of-way and utility lots through *park* enhancement or trail extension initiatives, along key roadways including:

- **a.** north of Biggs Avenue;
- **b.** within the Alberta Drive crescent; and
- **c.** connecting from the Hospital/Medical Area to Centennial Drive and Fitzgerald Avenue.

5.9.6 Encourage improvements to Pond Crescent Passive *Park* and Poplar Crescent Passive *Park* through *park* enhancement initiatives to improve their interface with Franklin Avenue and to make them more useable and attractive for year-round use. Improvements may include but are not limited to:

- **a.** hard surface areas or *plazas*, seating areas, and utility *connections* to support community gathering and events;
- **b.** low-level landscaping and flowerbeds to complement the large coniferous trees;
- **c.** incorporation of *public art* or monuments commemorating the history of Fort McMurray; and
- **d.** addition of lighting to improve *safety* and visual interest.

5.9.7 Encourage improvements to the Biggs Avenue *Park* through *park* enhancement initiatives to improve *safety* and to make it more useable and attractive for year-round use. Improvements may include but are not limited to:

- **a.** hard surface areas or *plazas*, seating areas, and utility *connections* to support community gathering and events;
- **b.** low-level landscaping and flowerbeds to complement the large deciduous trees;
- **c.** playgrounds and recreation fixtures such as basketball courts, badminton or volleyball nets, and outdoor fitness equipment;
- **d.** pedestrian and bicycle *connections* to the Business and Civic Area; and
- **e.** addition of lighting to improve *safety* and visual interest.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

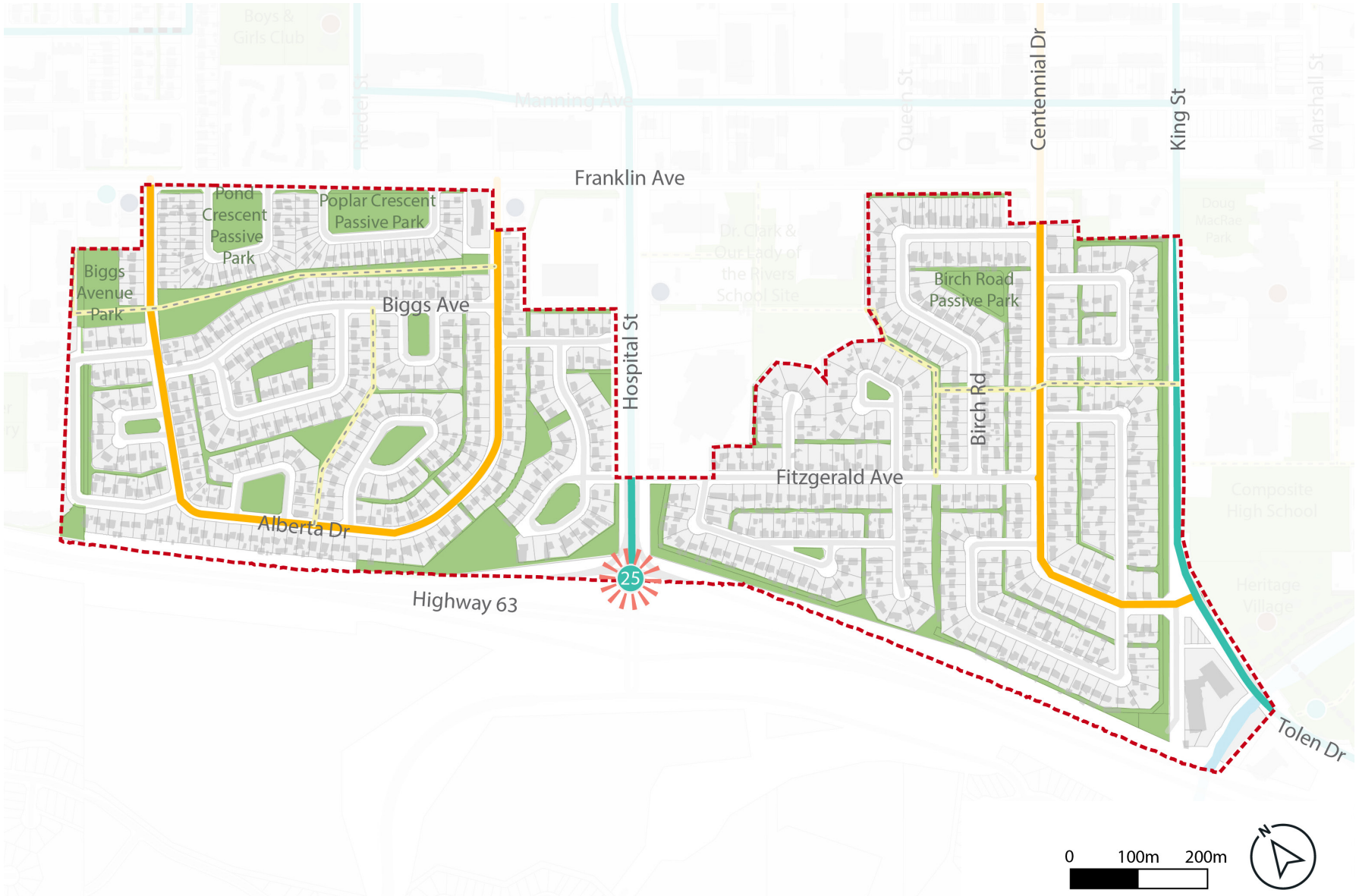
5.9.8 Encourage a connected network of sidewalks, bike paths, trails, and open spaces to ensure safe and convenient access within and through the Area to *parks* and the *Waterfront* Area, as well as provide recreation and *active transportation* opportunities.

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND PUBLIC ART

5.9.9 Encourage a *gateway feature* at the entrance to the *Downtown* on Hospital Street from Highway 63 to promote *Downtown* visibility and identity.



Map 24. Biggs Area



Biggs Area Boundary

Street Typologies

Streets with Active Transportation Paths

Enhanced Streets

Other Streets

Trails

Built Form/Other Assets

Buildings

Parcels (lots)

Downtown Gateway

Proposed Sites and Opportunities

25 Public Art Opportunity: Downtown Gateway

Parks and Open Spaces

Existing Parks and Open Spaces



Photo: Adobe

6 Implementation

6 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this ARP will require a collaborative and coordinated effort by the *Municipality*, stakeholders, *Indigenous* partners, and other community partners. For successful implementation, it will be imperative to leverage synergies between private and public efforts to ensure the most efficient use of resources throughout the lifespan of the plan and to have a significant impact on revitalization efforts in the *Downtown*. An important tool to achieve this is the *Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan* Action Plan ("Action Plan"). The Action Plan is a companion document to this ARP.

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan identifies short-, medium- and long-term actions that will support realizing the vision for a revitalized *Downtown* as presented in the ARP. The *Municipality* will work internally to align these short-, medium-, and long-term actions to operational budgets which will then be brought forth to Council for approval. The Action Plan will also identify stakeholders, *Indigenous* partners, and other community partners who will also play an important role in supporting the implementation of the ARP.

TECHNICAL STUDIES

In support of the preparation of the Action Plan, the following technical studies have been reviewed and/or completed, these include:

- ***Transportation*** **Master Plan**
- ***Public Art*** **Plan**
- ***Land Use*** **Bylaw**
- **Socio-economic Study**
- **Transit Master Plan**

The technical studies provide a high-level overview for the *Downtown*. Further work or additional studies may be required to support development within the *Downtown*.

AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Any changes to the *Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan* must be consistent with the *Municipal Government Act* and the Municipal Development Plan. Applicants applying to amend the ARP must provide supporting information, analysis, and technical data at the request of the *Municipality* in order for the merits and impacts of the proposed changes to be properly determined and evaluated. Given the integration of the ARP with the supporting technical studies listed above, any amendment to the ARP may require updates to these studies.

ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN REVIEW

Th ARP may be reviewed:

1. At the request of Council;
2. Upon amendment of the Municipal Development Plan to ensure consistency; or
3. After a period of five years to ensure that the ARP remains applicable and relevant. Any new information that is made available must be considered to determine if it changes the direction of the plan, including information related to the environment, the market, or population.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Through the Action Plan, the *Municipality* will monitor and evaluate the progress of implementing the ARP. Since Action Plan items that require financial resources will be required to come before Council, the *Municipality* will be able to track which Action Plan items have been accomplished and which items are still requiring implementation.

The Action Plan will also be reviewed yearly, to ensure that proposed action items are still relevant or if new ones are required to be included based on Council and community priorities. This will provide for a transparent and accountable process where Council, residents, stakeholders, and *Indigenous* partners can track progress along side the *Municipality* as we all work together towards a revitalized *Downtown*.



7 Glossary of Terms

7 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACCESSIBILITY	The degree to which people of all ages and abilities are able to move about within an area's-built environment. Best practices in *universal design* are often referred to as "barrier-free design" or "universal *accessibility*."
ACTIVE FRONTAGES	The front of a building facing towards the road that is designed to provide access and interaction between the private building and public space or for the display of the actual goods and services for sale within the building.
ACTIVE RECREATION	Outdoor recreational activities, such as organized sports and playground activities.
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION	Any form of human powered *transportation*, such as walking, biking, wheeling, skating, and cross-country skiing.
AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (ARP)	A statutory plan recognized as such in the Alberta Municipal Government Act that applies to existing built up or developed areas in a municipality. Through an ARP, Council may designate an area for the purpose of preservation or improving buildings, rehabilitating of buildings, removal of buildings, or constructing or replacing buildings.
BUILT FORM	The function, shape, and configuration of buildings as well as their relationship to streets and open spaces.
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREAS	A *Business Improvement Area* (BIA) allows local business people and commercial property owners and tenants to join together and, with the support of the Municipality, to organize, finance, and carry out physical improvements and promote economic development in their district.
CONNECTIONS	Roads, trails, and corridors which provide safe, accessible, and efficient movement into and out of the Downtown area.
CULTURE	The distinctive spiritual, materialistic, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or group; includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities, modes of life, fundamental human rights, value systems, traditions, and habits acquired by a human as a member of society (UNESCO, 1982, 2001).

DEVELOPMENT NODE	*Development Node* is an area with a concentration of uses, such as commercial or civic uses, which are connected to each other by important transportation corridors. Its purpose is to act as catalyst and leverage the concentration of people, businesses, services, and amenities.
DOWNTOWN	The *Downtown* of Fort McMurray, the heart of the *Urban Service Area* and the entire *Region*. Due to its regional significance, *Downtown* is a priority area for investment, development, and improved *connectivity* throughout the ARP. The boundaries of the *Downtown* are identified in Map 3: *Downtown* ARP Boundary.
FLOOD FRINGE	The portion of the *flood hazard area* outside of the floodway. Water in the *flood fringe* is generally shallower and flows more slowly than in the *floodway*. New development in the *flood fringe* may be permitted in some areas where permanent flood mitigation measures are in place.
FLOOD HAZARD AREA	The *flood hazard area* is the area of the land that will be flooded during a 1:100 flood. The flood hazard area is typically divided into two zones, the *floodway* and the *flood fringe*.
FLOODWAY	The portion of the *flood hazard area* where flows are deepest, fastest and most destructive. The floodway typically includes the main channel of a stream and a portion of the adjacent overbank area. New development is typically discouraged in the floodway.
GATEWAY FEATURE	A feature such as a sign or *public art* that is usually placed at the main entry points in cities, districts, or neighbourhoods. They welcome people into the area and help communicate a unique identity.
GUIDING VALUES	Pursuant to section 1.6 of this ARP, these are the five review filters providing a lens through which all redevelopment matters will be considered under this ARP.
HEAT ISLAND EFFECT	The urban *heat island effect* happens because the closely packed buildings and paved surfaces that make up cities amplify and trap heat far more effectively than natural ecosystems and rural areas, which are often shaded by trees and vegetation and cooled by evaporating moisture.

HERITAGE	A legacy inherited from the past, valued in the present – which it helps interpret – and safeguarded for the future – which it helps shape (Cole & Dubinsky, Ottawa Heritage Plan), including: ■ built *heritage*: buildings, structures, and sites. ■ natural *heritage*: elements of biodiversity including flora and fauna, ecosystems and geological structures. ■ cultural *landscapes*: significant historic *landscapes* which are meaningful to particular groups, *cultures* or populations. ■ cultural *heritage*: an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including both intangible and tangible cultural *heritage.* ■ documentary *heritage*: documents, records, artifacts, and images. ■ intangible *heritage*: traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as beliefs, languages and attitudes, oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge, and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts (UNESCO). Source: Wood Buffalo Culture Plan (rmwb.ca)
HERITAGE INVENTORY	A comprehensive evaluation process and formal listing of a *municipality's* significant historic places. It is prepared by evaluating *heritage* sites using specific criteria to evaluate significance and integrity. The Heritage Inventory lists sites eligible to be designated Municipal Historic Resources (MHR). MHRs are designated by municipal bylaws and are legally protected *heritage* sites.
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	The original Peoples of the land, the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.
INFILL DEVELOPMENT	Development in an existing built-up area using vacant or underutilized lands in front of, behind or between existing buildings.

INSTITUTIONAL	A development to serve a community's social, educational, health, cultural, faith, and recreational needs.
LANDSCAPE	*Parks*, open spaces, and other natural features which provide passive and *active recreational* options.
LAND USE	The way land is used and organized. It represents the economic and cultural activities (e.g., agricultural, residential, commercial, and recreational uses) that occur on a given piece of land.
LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)	A land development approach of using various planning and design techniques that minimize the effect that development will have on the quality of the surrounding environment. This includes conserving and protecting natural resource systems and reducing infrastructure costs. This allows land to still be developed in a cost-effective manner that helps mitigate potential environmental impacts.
MOBILITY	The ability to move between locations freely and easily.
MUNICIPALITY	Refers to the local government, the municipal corporation in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
MULTI-MODAL	Transportation systems that account for various means of transportation such as public transit, walking, biking, and personal vehicles. This includes planning for the connections and synergies among various modes that play a role in the overall transportation system.
PARK	A publicly owned greenspace used for recreation.
PASSIVE RECREATION	Outdoor recreational activities that involve a lower level of activity such as walking, running, cycling, nature observation and picnicking.
PLAZA	A predominantly hard-surfaced public gathering space.
POLICY	Sets out the approach the Municipality will generally apply in its decision-making to achieve an objective, goal, strategy, or intent.
PUBLIC ART	Artistic and cultural expression as experienced in the *public realm*. *Public art* is a place-based creative practice. Unlike a singular, moveable art form, public art embraces a series of creative practices that encompass a variety of forms and approaches, temporary or permanent, that respond to and engage with specific sites and situations.

PUBLIC REALM	Publicly owned streets, sidewalks, pathways, rights-of-way, *parks,* and open spaces primarily designed for use by pedestrians in getting around the *Downtown* or spending time at, or gathering in.
REDEVELOPMENT	New construction or repurposing of existing structures on previously developed land, including significant changes to the adjacent *public realm*.
RMWB OR "THE REGION"	Refers to the geographic jurisdiction of the *Municipality*.
SAFETY	Aspects of an area that contribute to or detract from people's sense of security.
STREETSCAPE	The combination of physical elements that give character to a street, including the roadway, streetlights, street trees, street furnishings, sidewalks, and building façade treatments.
TRANSPORTATION	*Downtown's* network of streets that enable the movement of vehicles including public transit.
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION	*Truth and Reconciliation* Commission was established to uncover the truth about Canada's Indian Residential School System and to guide and inspire a process of healing towards reconciliation. The Commission defines reconciliation as establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between *Indigenous* and non-*Indigenous* people in Canada. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgment of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.
UNDRIP	The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of *Indigenous* Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007.
UNIVERSAL DESIGN	The design of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors.
URBAN SERVICE AREA	The geographic boundaries of Fort McMurray, located within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
WATERFRONT	The area of land owned primarily by the *Municipality* fronting on the south bank of the Snye and the south bank of the Clearwater River lying east of the Snye, as identified in Maps 5, 7, 11 & 20.
WAYFINDING	*Wayfinding* is a series of visual cues to help a visitor understand where they are and where they are going. *Wayfinding* enhances sense of place and creates a shared regional identity with colour, graphics, designs, and public celebration of *culture* and *history*.



Regional Municipality
of Wood Buffalo