

Moose Jaw Downtown Area Plan Unveiled

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🕒 Published: Wednesday, 30 November 2016 08:47

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Jeanie Gartly (L) and Sonny Tomic of B&A Planning Group in front of their display at city hall

Dozens of local residents visited Moose Jaw City Hall Tuesday to get a glimpse of a Downtown Local Area Plan (LAP).

The LAP was created by B&A Planning Group from Calgary. They were contracted for the project earlier this year by the city and after months of planning, including receiving feedback from citizens, they were pleased to show off their vision.

"Over the summer we worked on a plan, refined those ideas and summarized them into a draft plan that we provided to City administration on October and we've now come back to the community share (the draft plan)," explained B&A Senior Planner/Urban Designer Jeanie Gartly.

"It's a 30-year vision," Gartly continued, adding that they took into account feedback from citizens during a [Design Charette](#) held in June.

"There's a lot of components to it, including three catalyst projects for areas that could be revitalized (including) around Mosaic Place, River Street, around Cordova Street by Crescent Park, as well as a potential hub for transit downtown."

Speaking specifically to some the areas, Gartly said "Main Street (and) River Street to Mosaic Place, it was obvious from the beginning that there is a great opportunity for entertainment and for it to be a lively place for tourists and (residents)."

As for Crescent Park she said "one of the things we noticed was that for such an amazing park it's got all of those hedges and fences around it. One idea was to open it up and create a promenade around it so it's more easily accessible."

Gartly added that one part of plan is a component that residents were quite vocal about. "There's a heritage strategy that helps to preserve more of the heritage downtown. As infill and redevelopment happen it's being sensitive (to that). We heard the community definitely values its heritage. There's huge potential reinforcing that."

Housing also plays a role in the plan, as B&A sees opportunity for more people - including families - to make their home in the downtown core.

"For residential, getting things that are 2-3 bedrooms, getting more multi-family (oriented). It's also looking at things like re-adaptive use of buildings, especially some of the heritage buildings and getting residential in there. When you get a downtown vision like this, it provides more certainty and the hope is to get developers from other places that would look to develop new residential in the downtown area. Developers are looking for certainty and if you've got a vision like this that's comprehensive it provides that certainty.

"Sometimes the challenge is in parking," she continued, "so the plan takes a look at the parking standards for residential and ways to get it more affordable and diverse."

Gartly says a survey will follow soon regarding the draft plan "to get the public's feedback, and then we'll refine it into a final plan and look to bring it to city council in the New Year."

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