

# DRAFT Civic Square Area Redevelopment Plan

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PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

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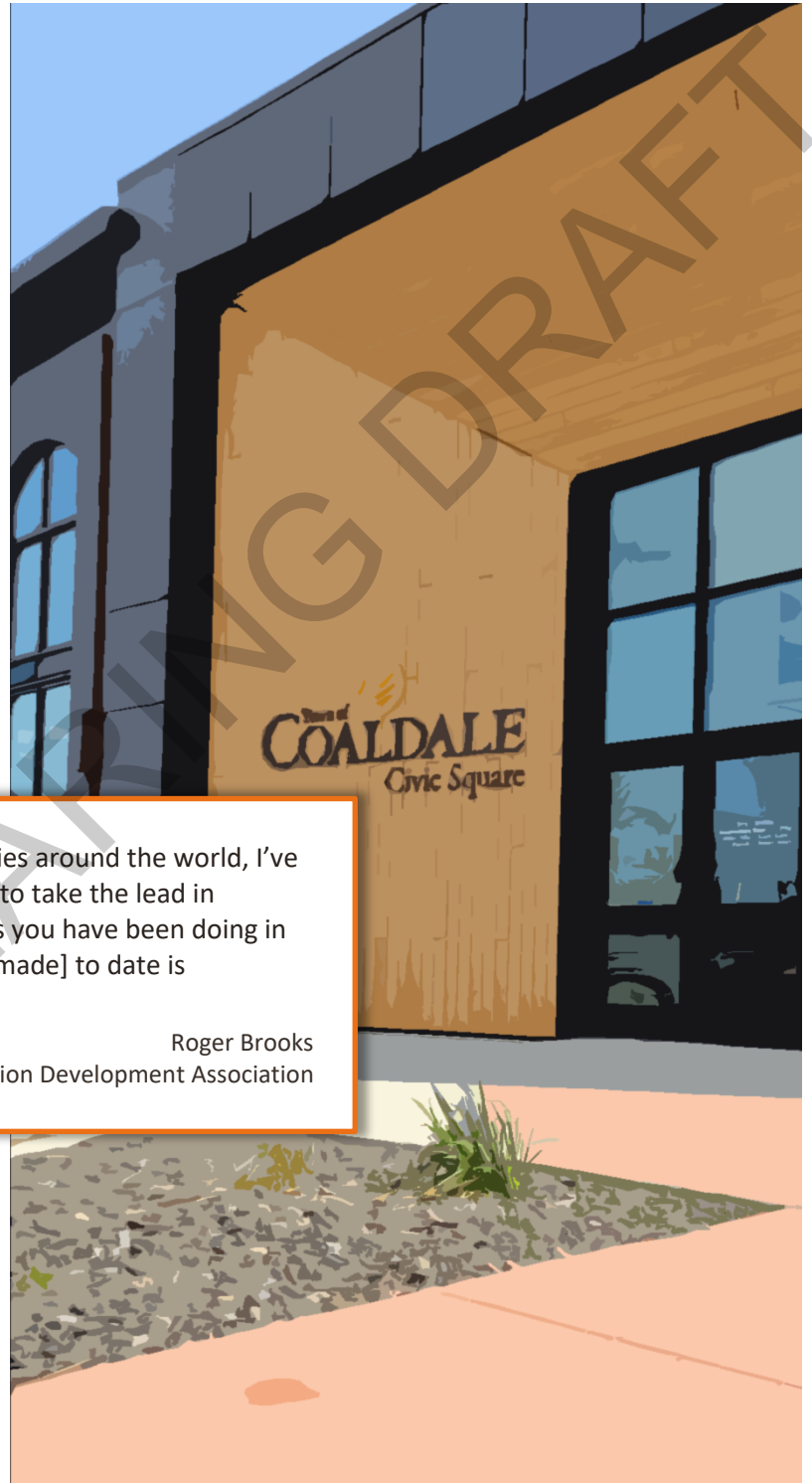
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PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

## INTRODUCTION

An Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) is a statutory plan adopted by Municipal Council that provides more in-depth policy and guidelines for the development and redevelopment of an existing development area.

This ARP relates specifically to the three-phased Civic Square development area in Downtown Coaldale, which has experienced significant economic growth and revitalization over the past 5 years. As Coaldale continues to grow, the Town has identified this area as a centre for the development of public space, commercial redevelopment and community activity. The importance of sustaining Coaldale's momentum relative to these objectives was underscored recently by tourism and downtown expert, Roger Brooks, who toured and evaluated the community in June 2023.



“After working in more than 2,500 communities around the world, I’ve learned that, quite often, towns are required to take the lead in downtown revitalization and development, as you have been doing in Coaldale. Indeed, the progress [Coaldale has made] to date is impressive.

Roger Brooks  
CEO, Destination Development Association

Through the adoption of the Civic Square ARP, Council will formalize its commitment to build on recent successful initiatives, and continue to promote and strengthen Downtown Coaldale. This ARP is intended to set clear policy direction for the development and redevelopment of properties within the Civic Square development area over a 5-year horizon.

## PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this ARP is to set out goals and strategies for the redevelopment and revitalization of the Civic Square development area over the next 5 years in accordance with the Town Plan (MDP), and to provide a framework for Council to improve the quality, accessibility and overall experience of the Town.

The objectives for the Downtown Coaldale ARP are to accomplish the following:

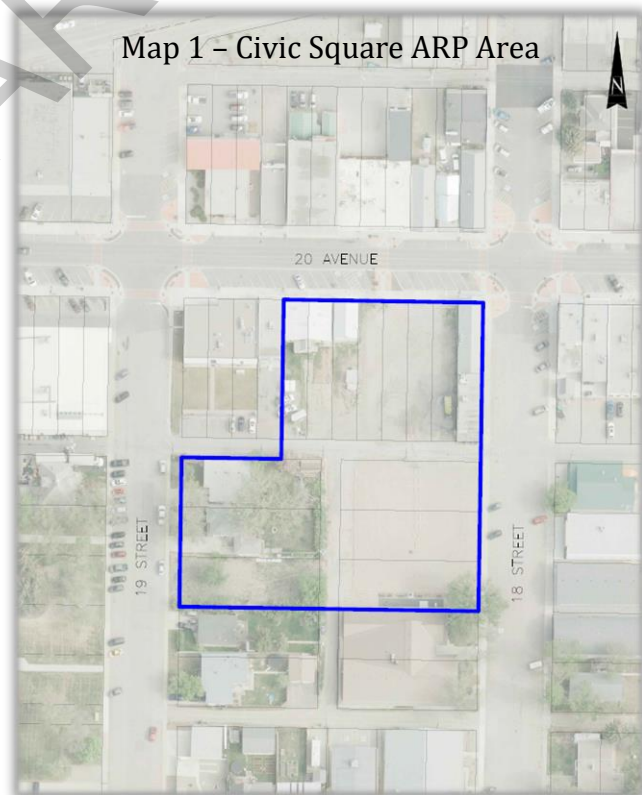
- Encourage the appropriate integration of retail, commercial and dining establishments
- Improve vibrancy, economic vitality, and livability
- Identify opportunities for redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties
- Encourage the sustainable development of the Downtown community
- Build a strong sense of place that contributes to a positive community identity

## PLAN AREA

The Civic Square ARP applies to the Plan Area show on Map 1 (below), located south of 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, between 18<sup>th</sup> Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Plan Area is predominately zoned Commercial C-1 and Direct Control DC. Town Administration does not anticipate the zoning will change significantly under this ARP.

The Civic Square ARP Plan Area contains the new Town of Coaldale Administration building, including commercial bays, Council Chambers and a community auditorium. Additionally, the Plan Area contains a number of vacant or underutilized commercial buildings along 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as well as undeveloped Town-owned lands to the south.



## MANDATE & ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER PLANS

This ARP will operate within the hierarchy of planning documents in the Province of Alberta and the Town of Coaldale (Figure 1), and will align with the Town’s various statutory and non-statutory planning documents.

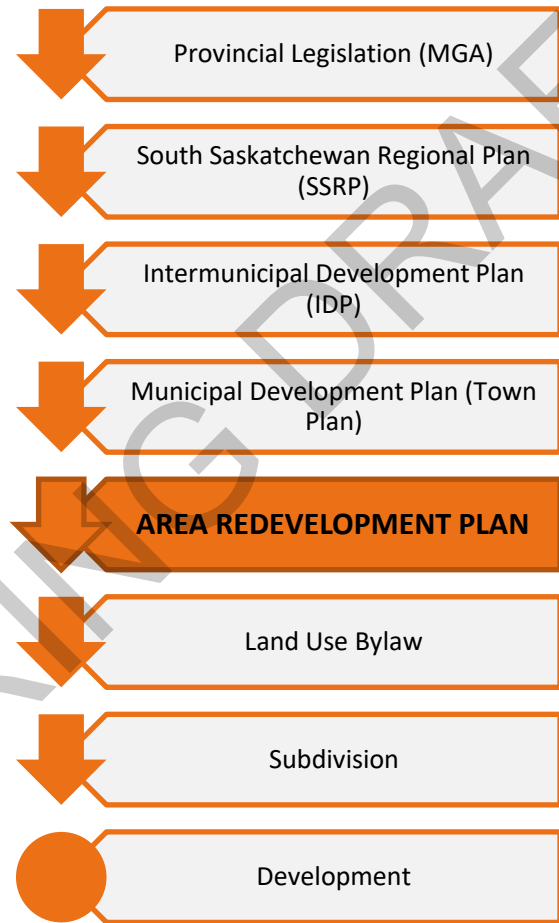
The preparation of an ARP by a municipality is authorized under section 634 of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), which states that a Council of a municipality may:

- (a) designate an area of the municipality as a redevelopment area for the purpose of any or all of the following:
  - a. preserving or improving land and buildings in the area;
  - b. rehabilitating buildings in the area;
  - c. removing buildings from the area;
  - d. constructing or replacing buildings in the area;
  - e. establishing, improving or relocating roads, public utilities or other services in the area;
  - f. facilitating any other development in the area,
- (b) adopt, by bylaw, an area redevelopment plan,
- (c) in accordance with this section and Division 6, provide for the imposition and collection of a levy to be known as a “redevelopment levy”, and
- (d) authorize a designated officer, with or without conditions, to perform any function with respect to the imposition and collection of that redevelopment levy.

It is important to note that although the MGA does allow for a municipality to impose a redevelopment levy, no redevelopment levy is provided for in this ARP.

Coaldale should regularly monitor this ARP and consider and adopt amendments as required to reflect changes in the Plan Area and the municipality’s goals and objectives. This ARP should be considered a living document which should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure it is current and relevant to the Plan Area.

Figure 1 – Planning Hierarchy



# BACKGROUND

Shortly following the construction of the railway line through Southern Alberta in the mid-1890's, the railway company named its first rail siding east of Lethbridge, Coaldale. Coaldale became a village in 1919, and as the population grew, incorporated as a town in 1952. Since its inception, Coaldale has played a pivotal role as a shipping point for agricultural products and commercial goods. As additional people moved to the area, a busy and industrious community emerged. Downtown Coaldale began take shape, boasting restaurants, retail establishments, and commercial businesses.



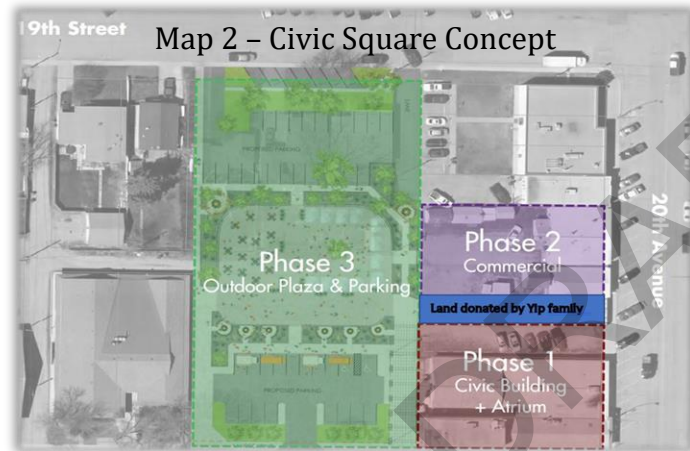
Throughout the years, Coaldale has seen steady growth in population which may be attributed to its burgeoning reputation as a safe, affordable and vibrant community to live, work and play. Through initiatives including the Main Street Revitalization and the forthcoming Civic Square Outdoor Plaza, the Town has taken a proactive approach towards fostering a supportive, inclusive and attractive community that residents can take pride in.



## CIVIC SQUARE PROJECT

In April 2021, the Town began Phase 1 of the Civic Square Project. The Civic Square Project Phase 1 involved the construction of a new, two storey commercial development on Coaldale's Main Street. The Town of Coaldale relocated its municipal offices to the building. The building boasts a large atrium for public gatherings and over 4,500 square feet for new commercial development.

To accommodate increasing interest in commercial development opportunities, Phase 2 calls for further development of up to 10,000 square feet of additional commercial space along Coaldale's Main Street.



Completing the Plan Area, Phase 3 of the Civic Square Project will see the development of an outdoor space between the Coaldale Public Library and the new Civic Square building.

The outdoor space will be developed to function as a central community gathering space by serving as a hub for festivals, markets, and other community events, while also providing parking for Coaldale's expanding downtown.



## DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION CONSULTATION

In June 2023, the Town of Coaldale hosted Economic Development consultant Roger Brooks to the new Civic Square atrium to share his expertise and guidance with regards to the continued revitalization and prosperity of Downtown Coaldale. In a follow-up letter from Mr. Brooks, the following insights were provided:

*“As a matter of best practice, buildings should not be allowed to sit empty for any more than six months. Otherwise, they become a risk in terms of fire, stability, vandalism, public safety, and they become an eye-sore and a deterrent keeping customers and residents from frequenting downtown.”*

While the Town’s revitalization efforts to date have significantly improved the quality and appeal of Downtown Coaldale, it is critical that the Town pursue the redevelopment and revitalization of existing vacant and/or underdeveloped lots within Phase 2 of the Civic Square Project.



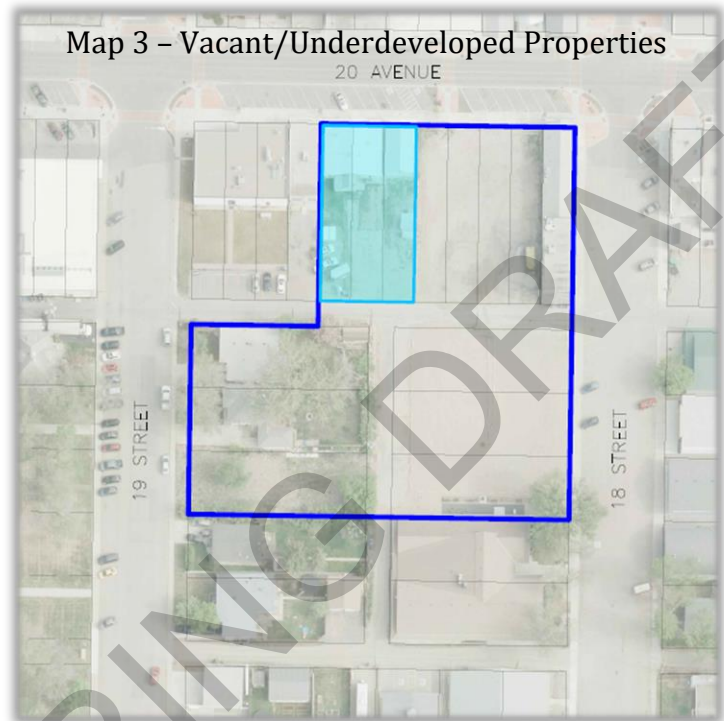
## EXISTING CONDITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

The Plan Area has experienced recent commercial intensification, making the area more attractive to businesses and Coaldale residents.

The Plan Area is currently a mix of active commercial enterprises and empty buildings or buildings in disrepair. Certain buildings that remain within the ARP Plan Area vary in their state of repair; some have undergone extensive renovations or total replacements, while others remain largely untouched. There are several parcels of land that are vacant or under utilized. These parcels are shown on Map 3 (inset).

The vacant and under-utilized buildings provide a significant opportunity to re-energize the Plan Area with active businesses, restaurants, and community gathering spaces. The redevelopment of these properties complements the vision and goals set out in Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Civic Square Project.

The proposed land uses for the Plan Area will support and encourage Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Civic Square Project, as well as businesses, restaurants, and community gathering spaces.



## VISION & DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Downtown Coaldale is the heart of the community.

In the future,  
Downtown  
Coaldale will  
be...

Economically and culturally vibrant;

Aesthetically pleasing;

Friendly, family-oriented, and providing a fun environment for citizens of all ages and abilities; and

An area with space for large community gathering, filled with civic spirit and pride.

The Plan Area will be developed in such a way so as to preserve the neighbourly and 'small town feel' its community members and visitors have come to love. The "main street" character will be honoured and expanded as Downtown Coaldale flourishes with active commercial enterprises, retail businesses, restaurants and cafes. The properties' potential will be maximized with robust use.

## POLICIES & KEY ACTIONS

The policies that guide the redevelopment of the Plan Area are as follows:

1. Recognize opportunities for local businesses to serve the community.
2. Establish a high standard of commercial redevelopment.
3. Vacant or underutilized properties are discouraged. The Town will encourage and support redevelopment of underutilized and vacant properties.
4. New commercial developments and redevelopments should complement the adjacent businesses.

The key actions that will be taken to achieve the policy objectives are as follows:

1. Reinforce and extend the downtown retail environment to underutilized and vacant properties.
2. The Town will encourage the redevelopment of the underutilized and vacant properties shown on Map 3.
3. The Town will encourage and support Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Civic Square project.
4. The Town may acquire land within the plan area for redevelopment, including the underutilized and vacant properties shown on Schedule Map 3.