

# Engagement Update

Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan  
Engagement Strategy | Phase 2

**IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES  
FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2026**

*Prepared by the Downtown ARP project team May, 2026*

# Engagement Strategy Review



The Downtown ARP Engagement Strategy was crafted with the idea of bringing the community's voice directly into the project.

From an International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) perspective, the strategy is firmly anchored in the "Involve-Consult" part of the participatory spectrum. A brief overview of each of the strategy's four phases is provided here.

**As of May 2026, we are nearing the end of Phase 2!**

Engagement Objective	Key Message
Phase 1 - To kick-off the ARP project by stimulating a first round of feedback focused on general, overarching questions to create a benchmark for partners initial thoughts, ideas, concerns and expectations.	The ARP is starting, this is the why, when and what of the project, and who and how you can get involved. Please share initial thoughts and ideas about the future of Downtown Coaldale!
Phase 2 – To shift from initial feedback and benchmarking to more detailed dialog about ideation and specific outcomes for different areas, topical areas and themes.	We heard your initial feedback, now let's dialog about the different ways you see your downtown changing in the future; let's come together and share our ideas!
Phase 3 – Ideation to reality; on a timeline basis, identify and commit to actions on the highest priority items.	Let's 'hit the ground running' and help identify priority projects that we can either get working on right away, or develop prototypes for, to test new and innovative ideas that might work in reality, but that we need some initial feedback on before committing to fully.
Phase 4 – Project approval and celebration.	The ARP is done, and approved by Council, in large part through the support shown by project partners. Now let's get to work!

## PROJECT ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

### Phase 1 · Jul – Sep 2025

- Project Kick-Off & Survey
- Survey launched and a project display hosted at Civic Square.
- Summary report now available online.

### Phase 2 · Q1–Q2 2026 ► WE ARE HERE

- Topical Engagement & Ideation
- Direct outreach to downtown businesses and property owners.
- Themed roundtable workshops and feedback activities at community events on transportation, land use, community experience, and more.

### Phase 3 · Q2–Q3 2026

- Plan Drafting & Refining
- Technical analysis and community feedback will be combined into a draft plan.
- A draft plan survey and static displays at Civic Square will invite further input.
- Additional community roundtables may offered.

### Phase 4 · Q3–Q4 2026

- Plan Review & Council Approval.
- Public hearing, formal circulation to project partners, and Council consideration for 2nd and 3rd reading.

# Phase 2 Engagement Opportunities and Themes



## FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2026

The survey held last summer marked the start of the project, and represented Phase 1 of the Engagement Strategy. With more than 100 responses to the survey, it helped identify and shape key themes that have been used to frame Phase of the strategy.

### Key themes that have shaped Phase 2 engagement include...

#### 1 – Transportation and Mobility

##### Connection to Phase 1 – Improved Infrastructure

Downtown elements: streets and sidewalks, accessibility, ease of movement through the area

#### 2 – Events and Activities

##### Connection to Phase 1 – Events and Activities

Downtown elements: related to public realm and green spaces, gathering spaces and programming

#### 3 – Public Realm and Green Spaces

##### Connection to Phase 1 – Beautification and Gathering Spaces, Improved Infrastructure

Downtown elements: streets and sidewalks, adaptable public spaces such as Civic Square

#### 4 – Shops, food, and entertainment

##### Connection to Phase 1 – Greater Variety of Shops, More Dining Options, Entertainment, Extended Hours

Downtown elements: local shops and businesses, land use considerations, social experiences

#### 5 – ...A sense of place

Bringing it all together; more vibrancy, vitality and energy in the downtown

#### 6 – John Davidson School Site

While not a theme, dialogue on the site is invaluable to help guide its redevelopment

Opportunity	Format
Community Fest Pop-up held on February 16th	Pop-up booth at larger Town facilitated event
Chamber of Commerce lunch session held on March 18th	Presentation and facilitated dialogue
Prairie Winds class presentation held on March 23rd	Presentation and facilitated dialogue
Alberta Health Services (AHS) session held on March 24th	Facilitated dialogue
Property owner meetings (x1) held on March 25th	Facilitated dialogue
Access Coaldale session held on March 25th	Facilitated dialogue
Easter Event pop-up held on April 4th	Pop-up booth at larger Town facilitated event
Community Roundtable held on April 14th	Workshop-style dialogue
Downtown Businesses Roundtable held on April 16th	Workshop-style dialogue

# Phase 2 Engagement Reach and Methods



## PROPOSED IDEAS | Theme | A Sense of Place

### SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK COLLECTED SO FAR

Across all sessions, participants expressed a desire for a stronger, more distinctive downtown identity. The current downtown is described as "basic," "transactional," and lacking character. Community members referenced other successful Alberta downtowns and suggested Coaldale develop its own authentic identity rooted in its history and community values.

### HOW TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS THIS EVENING

1. **Share your "Level of Agreement" with dots**  
Please read through each proposed response to feedback and share your level of agreement by placing a dot in the white space to the right of the text.

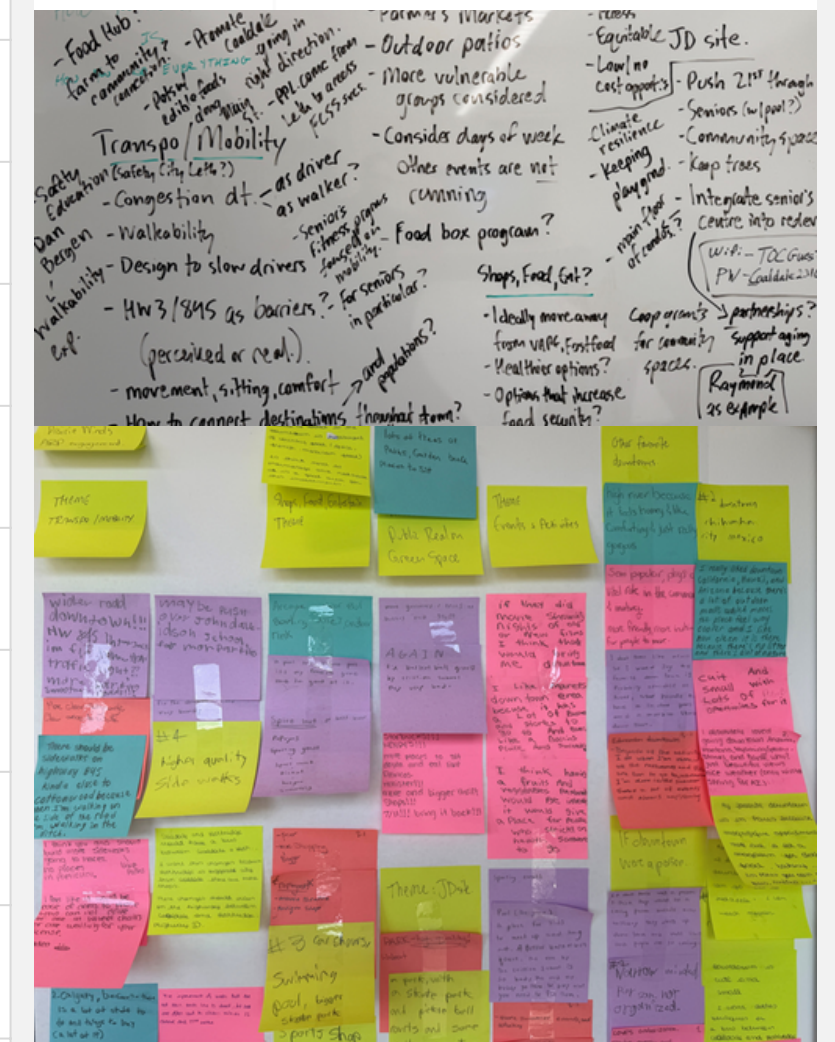
2. **Leave a written comment with sticky notes**  
If you wish to provide a written comment for any of the proposed responses to feedback, please fill out a sticky note and place it on the map.

- GREEN = agree
- YELLOW = unsure
- RED = disagree
- BLUE = need more information

3. **Call a Town of Coaldale team member over to discuss**  
We are happy to chat with you, please let us know if you would like to discuss any of the Proposed Ideas, or anything else that comes to mind.

Proposed Ideas	Your level of agreement
Articulate a clear Downtown Vision Statement grounded in Coaldale's specific character, history, and community aspirations.	●
Downtown Design Guidelines to establish a distinctive design for the downtown unique to Coaldale, rooted in exterior materials choices, building massing and orientation, window proportions, and other architectural elements.	●
Downtown Design Guidelines to encourage multi-generational programming capacity in all major public spaces (seating, shade, play elements, accessible surfaces for all ages and mobilities).	●
Develop a Heritage and Storytelling Strategy, identifying sites, stories, and figures significant to Coaldale's history.	●
John Davidson site concept to include multi-generational design elements serving all age groups.	●

Opportunity	Format	Reach	Method(s)
Community Fest Pop-up held on February 16th	Pop-up booth at larger Town facilitated event	~ 30-40 ppl.	Engagement Booklets and sticky notes, scribing
Chamber of Commerce lunch session held on March 18th	Presentation and facilitated dialogue	~ 25 ppl.	Engagement Booklets and sticky notes
Prairie Winds class presentation held on March 23rd	Presentation and facilitated dialogue	15 ppl.	Engagement Booklets and sticky notes, scribing
Alberta Health Services (AHS) session held on March 24th	Facilitated dialogue	4 representatives	Engagement Booklets and scribing
Property owner meetings (x1) held on March 25th	Facilitated dialogue	1 property owner	Engagement Booklets and scribing
Access Coaldale session held on March 25th	Facilitated dialogue	2 representatives	Engagement Booklets and scribing
Easter Event pop-up held on April 4th	Pop-up booth at larger Town facilitated event	~ 10-12 ppl.	Engagement Booklets and sticky notes
Community Roundtable held on April 14th	Workshop-style dialogue	7	Engagement Booklets, dotmocracy, and sticky notes
Downtown Businesses Roundtable held on April 16th	Workshop-style dialogue	5	Engagement Booklets, dotmocracy, and sticky notes
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED TOUCHPOINTS</b>		<b>~ 100 to 120</b>	



# Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes



*OUTCOMES ARE ORGANIZED BY THEME INTO TWO LISTS...*

## **FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2026**

Phase 1 focused on asking respondents general questions about Coaldale downtown, and other downtowns.

Phase 2 shifted to proposing ideas and concepts for policies, programming and actions, framed around the key themes identified at the conclusion of Phase 1.

Phase 2 outcomes are presented here theme-by-theme, and are organized into “what we heard” and “proposed ideas”.

### **1 – Transportation and Mobility**

#### **Connection to Phase 1 – Improved Infrastructure**

Downtown elements: streets and sidewalks, accessibility, ease of movement through the area

### **2 – Events and Activities**

#### **Connection to Phase 1 – Events and Activities**

Downtown elements: related to public realm and green spaces, gathering spaces and programming

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Downtown elements: local shops and businesses, land use considerations, social experiences

### **5 – ...A sense of place**

Bringing it all together; more vibrancy, vitality and energy in the downtown

### **6 – John Davidson School Site**

While not a theme, dialogue on the site is invaluable to help guide its redevelopment

### **List 1 – What We’ve Heard So Far**

These lists represent the culmination of feedback collected from all of the events held between February and April 2026.

### **List 2 – Proposed Ideas**

The lists present common tools, techniques and design ideas matched with the feedback from the “What We Heard” summaries.

The “Proposed Ideas” lists were ‘tested’ with roundtable participants on April 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The tables in this update are colour-coded to present the results of the discussions and feedback collected through roundtable discussions.

The next step will be to check roundtable responses by releasing a community survey that covers ideas and questions presented in this engagement update.

# Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes



## Theme **Transportation + Mobility**

What we've heard so far
20th Ave / HWY 845 intersection is the top infrastructure concern, with respondents citing near-misses, difficult left turns, poor sight lines, and emergency access issues.
Pedestrian infrastructure is under-served beyond the 20th to 17th block; barrier-free and accessible design needs to be embedded in all future builds.
Speed management on Main Street is a priority, with many respondents recommending 30 km/h from 13th to 20th and some suggesting going all the way to the Sunny South Lodge; HWY 3 and HWY 845 perceived as barriers to pedestrian movement.
Parking management (not just supply) is a theme shared across topics; respondents suggest infill development will strain current parking.
A bus connection between Coaldale and Lethbridge is desired by youth and those without vehicles.

# Phase 2 Engagement Proposed Ideas

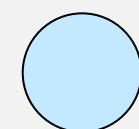


Theme  
**Transportation + Mobility**

Proposed Ideas
Policy recommending a comprehensive 20th Ave. and HWY 845 intersection redesign as a priority study, with emergency services access as a design criterion alongside level of service.
Develop a design concept for 20th/845 intersection as a visual gateway to the downtown, with requirements for landscaping, lighting, and built form orientation.
Explore traffic flow adjustments including extending 21st Ave. through the school site to relieve pressure on the 20th and HW 845 intersection.
Downtown Design Guidelines to focus on exceeding minimum building code with explicit barrier-free access requirements for all new development, including auto-door installation for ground-floor commercial uses.
Designate Main Street from 20th to 17th as a 30 km/h zone, with the possibility of expanding further east in future.
Wayfinding Strategy with enhanced pedestrian crossing treatments at key HWY 3 and HWY 845 intersections to improve safety and connectivity for seniors and other vulnerable groups.
Explore feasibility of voluntary timed parking along 20th Avenue in the study area to improve stall turnover.



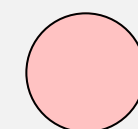
General agreement



Need more information



Mix of agree + unsure + disagree



General disagreement

# Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes



## Theme **Events & Activities**

What we've heard so far
Farmers' Market is the most consistently cited desired event across nearly every session; pop-up markets and food vendors broadly supported as beneficial additions.
Live music, concerts, and outdoor screening events called for by community members and students; a user-operated AV system concept suggested for Civic Square and similar spaces.
More year-round programming is needed; the downtown is described as 'transactional.' Asks include Christmas markets, Halloween/fall and spring festivals, car shows, and parades.
Events should be inclusive and accessible; free or low-cost, and considerate of vulnerable groups including seniors and youth.
Youth-specific programming gap is real and many suggest there is 'nothing to do' in Coaldale; seniors' fitness and mobility-focused programming also a gap that has been identified.

# Phase 2 Engagement Proposed Ideas

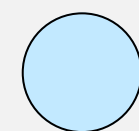


## Theme **Events & Activities**

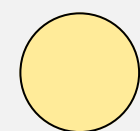
Proposed Ideas
Temporary use permits for pop-up markets and food vendors in public spaces and parking areas, with a simple, light-touch permitting process.
Include space for pop-up events and related infrastructure (power, water, flat surfaces, shade) in and around the John Davidson site in the redevelopment strategy.
Ensure infrastructure is installed in key public spaces: power pedestals, shade structures, and flat hard surfaces.
Install a PA system in Civic Square and/or John Davidson site redevelopment area for events and activities.



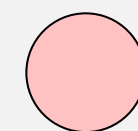
General agreement



Need more information



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# Phase 2 Engagement Proposed Ideas

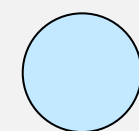


## Theme **Events & Activities**

Proposed Ideas
Downtown Design Guidelines for Civic Square and John Davidson site to include power and sight lines suitable for outdoor activities incorporating large screens (movies, festivals).
Policy to support street closure capability on key corridors for major events; include bollard/closure infrastructure in streetscape infrastructure.
An Events Strategy to include an equity lens: criteria for event scheduling, pricing, location rotation, and outreach to underserved groups.
Investigate grant and partnership funding to support free community programming.
A Youth Programming Strategy as part of the implementation plan, developed with input from school-aged students and youth organizations.



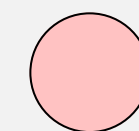
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# Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes



## Theme **Public Realm & Green Spaces**

What we've heard so far
Existing downtown lighting is widely praised; tree lighting year-round and string lights between Main St. light standards desired.
More trees, greenery, and seating cited across nearly every session; urban tree canopy preservation is a priority; xeriscaping and non-potable irrigation flagged as opportunities.
Public washrooms needed throughout the study area and incorporated into permanent and temporary event signage, with new washrooms in Civic Square and concession noted as big wins.
Highway frontage is underutilized; travelers don't know how good the downtown is; a 'wow factor' needed at entry points with better visual appeal and wayfinding.
Noise from trucks and trains affects downtown comfort; sound mitigation and barriers should be considered; sidewalk accessibility hazards also flagged.

# Phase 2 Engagement Proposed Ideas

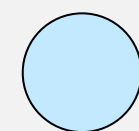


## Theme **Public Realm & Green Spaces**

Proposed Ideas
Streetscape enhancements to include year-round decorative lighting on trees along Main Street as a key Town deliverable.
Work with Fortis to assess feasibility and cost of string lights between Main St. light standards.
Downtown Design Guidelines to include street trees at regular intervals on all Main Street blocks and key corridors, with a species palette suited to Coaldale's climate.
Protect and retain established trees wherever possible; incentivize replacement planting ratio (e.g., 2:1) when removal is unavoidable.
Downtown Design Guidelines to encourage xeriscaping and drought-tolerant plantings; discourage potable water irrigation for public landscapes unless absolutely necessary.
Install clear, consistent public washroom signage throughout downtown as a near-term improvement.



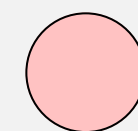
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# Phase 2 Engagement Proposed Ideas

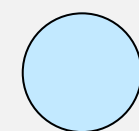


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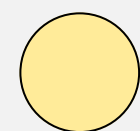
Proposed Ideas
Temporary Events Strategy to include accessible washrooms in the Town's events permitting process and referenced in plan implementation guidance.
John Davidson site design concept to require publicly accessible washrooms as a mandatory program element.
Downtown Design Guidelines to address noise mitigation for public spaces and residential development adjacent to rail and heavy traffic corridors.
Downtown Design Guidelines to consider landscape and built form design features for noise-sensitive locations.
Recommend Access Coaldale accessibility audit findings be formally incorporated into Downtown Design Guidelines and implementation checklist.



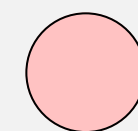
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# Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes



## Theme **Shops, Food & Entertainment**

What we've heard so far
More variety of restaurants and dining is the top commercial ask, with a focus on sit-down family dining, diverse cuisine as standalone and paired with other developments.
More commercial variety desired, with a focus on uses such as retail mix, thrift stores, sports shops, bakeries, clothing stores, and so on.
Movie theatre and entertainment anchors (arcade, bowling alley, go-karts) mentioned as draws for younger demographics to enhance destination appeal.
A food hub or food-security-oriented commercial concept raised (farms-to-community, healthier options, low/no-cost food access); outdoor patios and pop-up vendors desired.
Seniors need nearby services (laundromat, restaurants, shuttle to Lethbridge); John Davidson site seen as the right location for mixed-use seniors' development that would draw more activity and positive experiences into the downtown.

# Phase 2 Engagement Proposed Ideas

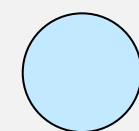


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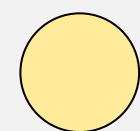
Proposed Ideas
Encourage, support, and prioritize food and beverage uses (sit-down dining, cafes, specialty food) as target uses for the downtown commercial mix through land-use policy.
Business attraction strategy targeting sit-down restaurant operators, including incentive tools.
Policy to support for outdoor patio extensions as-of-right for food and beverage establishments, subject to design guidelines.
Policy to encourage a broad range of retail, specialty, and experiential uses as-of-right in the downtown commercial land use district.



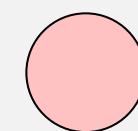
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# Phase 2 Engagement Proposed Ideas

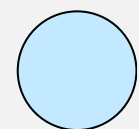


## Theme **Shops, Food & Entertainment**

Proposed Ideas
Develop a Retail Attraction Strategy targeting experiential and specialty retail such as artisans, makers, specialty food, boutique retail, etc.
Downtown Design Guidelines to encourage active, transparent ground-floor frontages on all commercial buildings to maximize retail visibility and street activity.
Policy to encourage food hubs, community kitchens, and urban agriculture uses in the downtown area.
Explore partnership with FCSS, AHS, and local producers to develop a food hub concept for the John Davidson site or other suitable downtown locations.



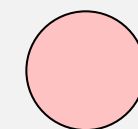
General agreement



Need more information



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General disagreement

# Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes



## Theme **A Sense of Place**

### What we've heard so far

Downtown Coaldale needs a stronger, more distinctive identity; currently described as 'basic,' 'transactional,' and lacking character. Canmore, Banff, and High River cited as aspirational models, among others.

Avoid generic 'modern with basic colours' design aesthetic; encourage character, warmth, and authenticity; preserve and rebuild character of older parts of town.

Multi-generational design is a shared value; spaces and programming should serve youth, families, seniors, and people with disabilities together.

Commemorate local history and connect it to the downtown; heritage and storytelling seen as place-making tools.

Accessible design and events for all ages and incomes; equity and inclusion as foundational values; 'Take a seat, you belong' proposed as a downtown branding concept.

# Phase 2 Engagement Proposed Ideas

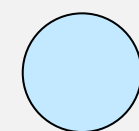


## Theme **A Sense of Place**

Proposed Ideas
Articulate a clear Downtown Vision Statement grounded in Coaldale's specific character, history, and community aspirations.
Downtown Design Guidelines to establish a distinctive design for the downtown unique to Coaldale, rooted in exterior materials choices, building massing and orientation, window proportions, and other architectural elements.
Downtown Design Guidelines to encourage multi-generational programming capacity in all major public spaces (seating, shade, play elements, accessible surfaces for all ages and mobilities).
Develop a Heritage and Storytelling Strategy, identifying sites, stories, and figures significant to Coaldale's history.
John Davidson site concept to include multi-generational design elements serving all age groups.



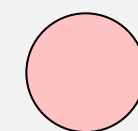
General agreement



Need more information



Mix of agree + unsure + disagree



General disagreement

# Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes



## Theme **John Davidson School Site**

### What we've heard so far

The John Davidson site is the downtown's biggest opportunity.

Key community feedback ideas include mixed-use development, seniors housing, amphitheatre/permanent stage, green space, water feature, daycare, festival/event space, play spaces, public washrooms, multi-generational community facilities, and so on.

Seniors housing at the John Davidson site described as an opportunity to help address a serious community need; mixed-use preferred; daycare also identified as a downtown need.

Extending 21st Ave. through the John Davidson site seen by many respondents as having many potential benefits such as making access to downtown better, reducing pressure at the 20th Ave / HWY 845 intersection, also cited as a likely benefit for downtown event management.

Events, live music, outdoor markets, and multi-generational programming are central to the redevelopment of the site.

# Phase 2 Engagement Proposed Ideas

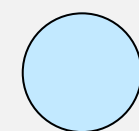


Theme  
**John Davidson School Site**

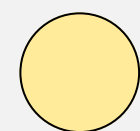
Proposed Ideas
Preparation of a John Davidson Site Redevelopment Strategy as a key “first project”, reflecting the range of community-identified ideas shared through feedback so far.
Mixed-use development, where mixed uses could include: seniors’ housing, daycare, an amphitheatre / performing arts spaces, festival and event space linked with Festival Square, publicly accessible washrooms, a water feature, play space or a playground, and so on
John Davidson site programming to include dedicated multi-generational programming space for activities such as seniors’ fitness, drop-in activities, social programming, and so on.
Designate 21st Ave. extension as a key component of the John Davidson site’s redevelopment, and pending transportation network analysis and provincial approvals, a priority transportation network improvement.
21st Ave. extension design to prioritize active mode users (pedestrians, cyclists) in addition to vehicle movement.
John Davidson site redevelopment strategy to encourage and enable temporary road closures between Civic Square and the school site to expand contiguous event space for major events.



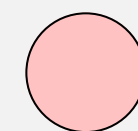
General agreement



Need more information



Mix of agree + unsure + disagree



General disagreement

# Next Steps

**Let's keep the conversation going!**

**More opportunities to engage coming up**

*For those who wish to engage with the project, the final activity for Phase 2 of the Engagement Strategy is a survey that will be open from the week of May 18<sup>th</sup> to the week of June 15<sup>th</sup>.*

*Please remember, if you wish to discuss the downtown, feel free to reach out to the project team at any time!*



## **Phase 2 – Survey (Final Activity, running May and June)**

The Final activity for Phase 2 of the Engagement Strategy will be a survey about the same themes, outcomes and proposed ideas that have been the focus of in-person activities held from February to April of this year.

## **Phase 3 – Plan Drafting and Refining (July – August)**

After the survey is closed and results are analyzed, a summary of findings will be presented to Town Council and the community. After this, the project team will begin writing the plan. A draft of the ARP is anticipated to be ready for community review and feedback by the end of this summer.