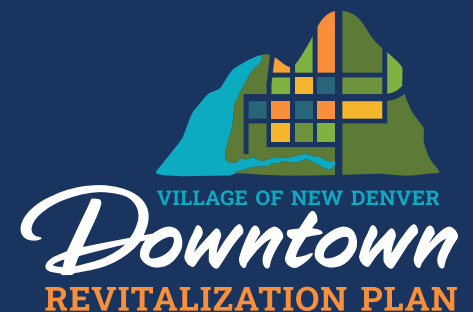


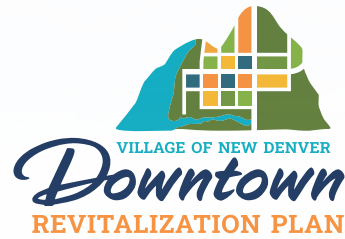


BACKGROUND REPORT **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN**

VILLAGE OF NEW DENVER

AUGUST 2023





BACKGROUND REPORT DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

VILLAGE OF NEW DENVER | AUG 2023

PREPARED BY



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1. OVERVIEW

The primary purpose of the New Denver Downtown Revitalization Plan (NDDRP) is to provide a vision and roadmap for future land use and urban design in Downtown New Denver. The NDDRP will include objectives, policies, guidelines, conceptual designs, and implementation priorities to guide the Village and community in future decision-making and investment. Downtown Revitalization Plans typically include topic areas such as Land Use, Transportation, Parks and Open Space, Sustainability (e.g., climate action, stormwater management, etc.), Urban Design, and Placemaking.

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The New Denver Downtown Revitalization Plan (NDDRP) process involves three primary phases

- Startup and Background Analysis
- Community Consultation
- Plan Development

This report is a summary of the project team's background analysis.



1.1.1. BACKGROUND REPORT AND ANALYSIS

The Background Analysis and subsequent Background Report provide a basis for community consultation and subsequent phases of the project, while also acting as a repository of information for the public, stakeholders, and staff about the current conditions in the study area.

First, the Project Team undertook a review of existing policies, plans, documents, and related reports from the Village. This provided a better understanding of [a] the overall project rationale and intent and [b] the policy directions that inform the Downtown Revitalization Plan as well as the policy framework that the Plan will be integrated into.

Second, we conducted a set of technical analyses of the study area across three broad disciplines – planning and urban design, transportation and traffic, and landscape architecture. The main outcomes of these analyses are highlighted in the diagrams and maps in this report

Finally, we integrated and layered the various technical outcomes in order to identify key issues, opportunities, core themes, and the needed areas of exploration to address during the community consultation phase.

1.2 PROCESS OVERVIEW



BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

July/August 2023 - *Project Team*

Technical analysis of existing conditions to identify challenges and opportunities and outline a policy framework to inform the project. Outcomes will inform the content of the Ideas Fair and online discussions.



IDEAS FAIR & SURVEY

August/September 2023 - *Public*

An interactive consultation event – along with a corresponding public survey – to harvest public feedback and generate high-level ideas and early directions for the future of Downtown New Denver.



INTERVIEWS

September 2023 - *Stakeholders*

Targeted interviews will then be used to fill any information gaps. From there, a set of key elements and scenarios will be developed into Early Directions.



POP-UPS & DISCUSSION

September 2023 - *Public*

Pop-up events around Downtown, along with online discussions, will extend the reach of the Ideas Fair to the wider community.



EARLY DIRECTIONS

October/November 2023 - *Staff/Stakeholders*

Based on the Background Analysis and Round 1 of Community Engagement, the Project Team will develop draft Goals, Principles, and Early Directions for the Downtown Revitalization Plan. The Early Directions are developed in order to receive further feedback from staff and key stakeholders.



OPEN HOUSE (DRAFT PLAN)

November/December 2023 - *Public*

The draft Downtown Revitalization Plan will be presented for public comment at a digital Open House and corresponding online engagement. A final draft will then be iteratively refined with staff.



COUNCIL PRESENTATION

January 2024 - *Public*

The final Downtown Revitalization Plan will be presented to Council at a public meeting.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS GALLERY



New Market Foods along 6th Ave east of Highway 6.



Corner of 6th Ave and Highway 6.



Commercial buildings along south side of 6th Ave.



Commercial buildings and patios along north side of 6th Ave.



Commercial buildings along south side of 6th Ave.



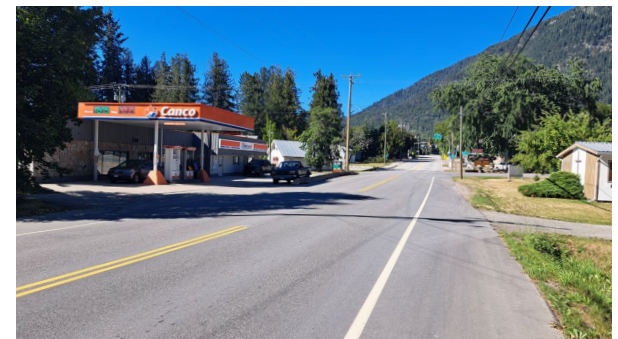
Post Office (6th Ave) and BC Liquor along Josephine St.



Museum and Information Centre along north side of 6th Ave.



Village Fire Hall and Offices along Slocan Ave.



Service station along Union St / Highway 6.

3. PLANNING + DESIGN ANALYSIS

3.1 HISTORICAL ANALYSIS



3.1.1. FIRST NATIONS

New Denver is part of the core traditional territory of the Sinixt Nation, an interior Salish people. Sinixt people originally lived in the West Kootenay, from around present-day Kettle Falls, Washington, to Revelstoke, BC. The Sinixt were traditionally a matrilineal society with villages along the banks of the Kootenay, Slocan, and Columbia Rivers.

Smallpox and the arrival of missionaries, miners, and settlers eventually pushed the Sinixt out of the West Kootenay region and off their territory. Although declared “extinct” in 1956 by the federal government, it is known that Sinixt people remain. A 2021 Supreme Court of Canada decision confirmed that members of a successor group of the Sinixt, the Lakes Tribe of the Colville Confederated Tribes in Washington, are in fact Sinixt people who primarily occupied territory in the BC Interior prior to being pushed out of the region. No Canadian Sinixt Band is recognized in Canada at present.

New Denver is also part of the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa, the Syilx, and the Secwepemc, through ancestral ties to the Sinixt.

3.1.2. EARLY SETTLERS

New Denver was a squatter’s camp for miners until the government survey in mid-1890s. Originally named, El Dorado, the legendary city of gold, the surrounding mines were hoped to bring comparable prosperity. On discovering the mines were silver deposits, the name changed to reflect the famed silver mines of Denver, Colorado. New Denver was an early service center for mines and nearby mining towns, with trail, train, and boat connections to Nakusp, Slocan, Kaslo, and Nelson. After the decline in mining, forestry became the economic base, and tourism in more recent times.



Japanese Internment and the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre

Between 1942 and 1949, approximately 22,000 Japanese Canadians were forcibly relocated to camps and interned under the pretext of “national security.” The New Denver Orchard camp was one of nine Kootenay-area internment camps, hosting 1,500 individuals uprooted from Coastal BC.

In 1947, the Canadian government began closing camps and forced Japanese Canadian internees to decide between moving east of the Rockies or being exiled to Japan. This event is commonly referred to as the “Second Uprooting.” Uniquely, the New Denver Camp continued to function through the operation of the local Sanatorium facility. New Denver became a holding area for internees from other closed camps and was the last internment camp to be closed in 1957.

In 1994, the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre (NIMC) was established by the New Denver Kyowakai Society, commemorating this history on the former Orchard internment grounds. Preserving original structures, artifacts, and interpretive displays, the Center, along with the Heiwa Teien Peace Garden, serves as a living memorial to the resilience and struggles of Japanese Canadians during that period.



Doukhobor Internment

Between 1953 and 1959, the former tuberculosis sanatorium in New Denver was used as a dormitory for Doukhobor children. These children, from homes across a broad geographical area, had been apprehended from their families because they identified as Sons of Freedom Doukhobors and opposed government policies and regulations, including refusing to send their children to public school.

The Doukhobor children interned in the former sanatorium attended public school in New Denver. The children were not allowed to speak Russian, their native language, and family visits were strictly limited (see the photo above; families were separated by a chain link fence from 1956 on). In 1959, the Doukhobor children remaining in what was then called the New Denver Dormitory, were released only when their parents swore an oath in court before the magistrate, undertaking to send their children to school. In 1999 BC’s Office of the Ombudsperson investigated these events and found what happened to these children “unjust and oppressive.”

3.2. POLICY ANALYSIS

The NDDRP is guided and informed by several Village documents (e.g., Zoning Bylaw, Economic Development Plan, Active Transportation Network Plan). In particular, the Official Community Plan (OCP) provides an important foundation on which this plan can be built.

Official Community Plan (2007)

New Denver's OCP was written in 2007 and is anticipated to be updated soon and remains a Council Strategic Priority. Key guiding policy directions – which will inform the creation of this plan – include the following:

- General Downtown Direction
 - » Encourage a compact, visually appealing commercial core that operates year-round to provide a wide range of goods and services.
 - » Promote New Denver as a focal point for tourism uses in the Slocan Valley, while still encouraging uses that serve the local community.
- Downtown Land Use Direction
 - » Create a commercial core focused on 6th Avenue, Slocan Avenue, and parts of Union Street and Highway 31A, providing a unique shopping experience for residents and tourists alike.
 - » Encourage mixed-use development in the commercial core consisting of residential uses on the second storey or at the back of commercial buildings and ensure street-level frontage shall be reserved for commercial uses.
 - » Direct multiple-family residential use to areas in the core commercial area, near the school, near the Slocan Community Health Centre and in areas where conflicts with other uses will be minimized.
 - » Ensure that the general form of new development is compatible with the quiet, small-town, natural pristine character of New Denver.
 - » Limit building height in the commercial area to two and a half stories.
 - » Encourage infilling of the commercial core by directing commercial and professional services development to existing vacant lots in the core.
 - » Enforce the Commercial Development Permit Area Guidelines, provide facade design guidance, and support Heritage Area Revitalization programs.
 - » Actively encourage the development of and preservation of healthcare establishments that can serve the increasing senior population as well as the general public.
 - » Encourage home-based commercial activities that provide protection from land use conflict with existing residential uses.



- Other Downtown Direction
 - » Promote new development or redevelopment that shall strive to be sustainable and sympathetic to the community character
 - » Provide opportunities for walking, cycling, kayaking, canoeing and sailing as alternatives to carbon-fuel-based transportation;
 - » Create connections and links to resources, activities and assets outside the Village boundaries.

Zoning Bylaw

The New Denver Zoning bylaw outlines two commercial zones and one institutional zone for the Downtown Core area with uses outlined below.

- C1 - Core Commercial - Permitting a wide range of commercial uses such as retail, service commercial, bakery, residential, motel, and restaurants.
- C3 - Residential Commercial - Permitting residential commercial uses such as residential, secondary suites, churches, parks, and bed and breakfasts.
- P2 - Public and Institutional - Permitting public and institutional uses such as churches, community halls, daycare, hospitals, museums, and schools.

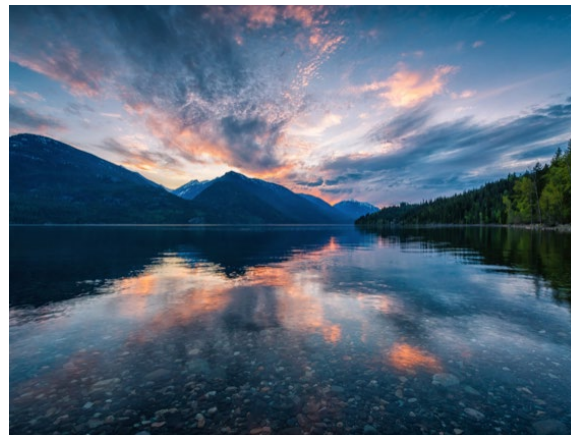
Slocan Valley Economic Development Strategy (2017)

The Slocan Valley Economic Development Plan provides high-level guidance for economic development in the Slocan Valley and Villages of New Denver, Silverton, and Slocan. The strategy recommends 27 actions to expand economic development capacity and begins to build a strong economic development foundation for further initiatives and specific projects.

Council Strategic Priorities (2023)

The 2023 Council Strategic Priorities list several priorities for the Downtown Core area including:

- Active Transportation Capital Improvements - including Kootenay Street (700 block) sidewalks and parking, and various intersection, sidewalk, and stair improvements.
- Process to update to OCP & Zoning bylaws and Development Approvals Program.
- Downtown Revitalization Plan (this project).
- Traffic calming measures at the intersection of Hwy 31A and 8th Ave.



Resident Attraction & Retention Report (2018)

The New Denver Resident Attraction & Retention report is an asset-based community development research project that included a survey of residents in New Denver and the area, aiming to gain an understanding of resident satisfaction, factors influencing the quality of life, perceptions of community well-being, and interest and ideas for future services and infrastructure. Respondents to the survey noted that employment is difficult to find and that the vitality of the Downtown is lacking and should seek investment and development. Finally, respondents noted desired amenities including a public washroom, community tool library, and a dedicated car-free community and market space.

New Denver Poverty Reduction Report (2021)

The New Denver Poverty Reduction Report's purpose is to further understand and provide recommendations to reduce poverty in New Denver. Some recommendations and actions for housing and other support for consideration for the Downtown Plan include:

- Explore and pursue opportunities and collaborations for improving the supply of affordable housing in New Denver.
- Review and update bylaws, as needed, to support affordable housing options, including higher-density or tiny homes.
- Identify and track specific housing needs and plan for a range of housing options and consider the needs of different demographic groups such as seniors, Indigenous people, people with developmental disabilities, children and youth, LGBTQ youth, women, immigrants and refugees, and more.
- Develop and implement strategies that target business and industry retention, expansion, and attraction.

Active Transportation Network Plan (2021)

The New Denver Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP) purpose is to establish a long-term vision for active transportation and identify steps that the Village can take now and in the future. Key active transportation directions relating to the Downtown Core area include:

- Replace or add accessibility site furnishing to support a broader range of physical abilities and better support New Denver's aging population, including benches, tables, and bike racks.
- Coordinate signage and wayfinding that builds off New Denver's existing trail signs and kiosks, helping to support users to better navigate and understand the network around New Denver.
- Complete a detailed design & construction of the 6th Avenue sidewalk extension to New Market Foods along with new covered stairs with a seasonal ramp connecting New Market Foods to Kootenay St.
- Phase in new sidewalk connections, improvements & accessible corner ramps along focus corridor routes as funding comes available.
- Complete a detailed design for a dedicated walking & cycling bridge over Carpenter Creek.
- Work with the Ministry of Transportation (MOTI) to explore improved crosswalks, corner ramps, and missing sidewalks gaps along Union Street and Highway 31A.
- Implement traffic calming measures on 11th Ave, Columbia St, and 8th Ave to reduce vehicle speeds and shortcutting volumes.



3.3. OTHER VILLAGE INITIATIVES + PROJECTS

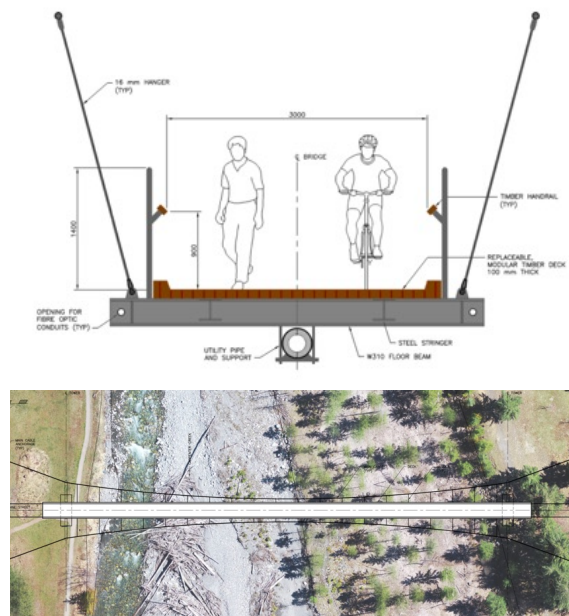
New Denver Centennial Park Masterplan (2021)

Centennial Park is a village-owned park and primary gathering and recreating space in New Denver. With numerous public lake access points, the park holds tremendous recreation and cultural values to the community and serves as a community hub, active and passive recreation venue, economic driver through the municipal campground and has a rich cultural history. The Centennial Park Masterplan provides guidance as to public and private investment in the park over a ten-year period and beyond.



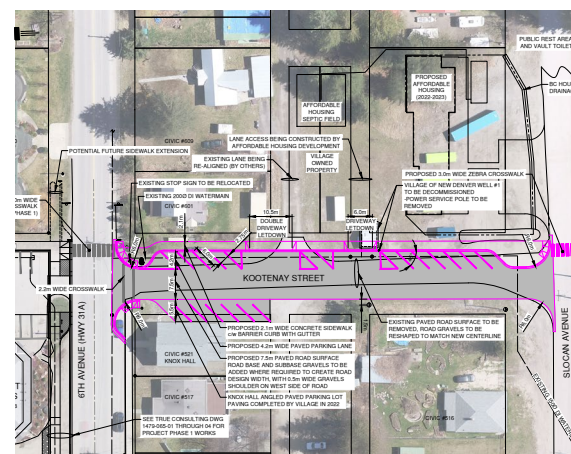
Proposed Pedestrian Bridge over Carpenter Creek

The proposed pedestrian bridge over Carpenter Creek and Josephine Street aims to provide dedicated pedestrian and cyclists access between the north and south portions of the Village. The bridge concept plan will integrate with the Village's ongoing plans for Centennial Park on the south side of the village.



Kootenay Street Streetscape Project

As part of Council's 2023 Priority list, conceptual plans for Kootenay Street (700 block) have been developed for streetscape improvements including sidewalks, parking, curb letdowns, and other pedestrian amenities.



3.4. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves an estimated population of 60,000 residents. The Village of New Denver is one of nine member municipalities, including Castlegar, Creston, Kaslo, Nakusp, Nelson, Salmo, Silverton and Slocan. In addition to these municipalities, the region consists of 11 Electoral Areas. The Village participates in a significant number of shared services with RDCK Municipalities and works together on various programs and projects to advance the quality of life within New Denver and the Slocan Valley as a whole.

The Village of New Denver is located on the east-side of Slocan Lake in proximity to nearby towns including Nakusp, Kaslo, and Slocan. New Denver is also close to numerous recreational opportunities and parks including Goat Range, Valhalla, and Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park. Nearby lakes include Kootenay and Upper Arrow Lake.

REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP

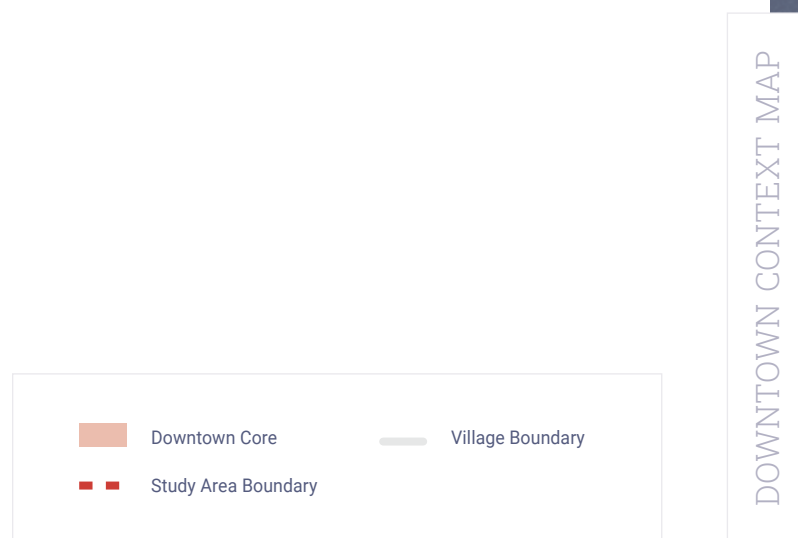


3.5. DOWNTOWN CONTEXT

Downtown New Denver is characterized by a small retail core surrounded by civic, park, and residential uses. The wider community consists primarily of single-family housing.

Downtown is centrally located within the Village and has strong connections to Highway 6 and Slocan Lake. South of Downtown across the bridge are key community and cultural sites including Centennial Park, Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre, and the Slocan Community Health Centre.

The OCP defines one 'Commercial' designation associated with the Downtown Core. As a result, the CDRP will focus on the general Downtown Core, as defined in the OCP, but will also address the wider study area where appropriate and explore the relationship between the core and outlying areas.

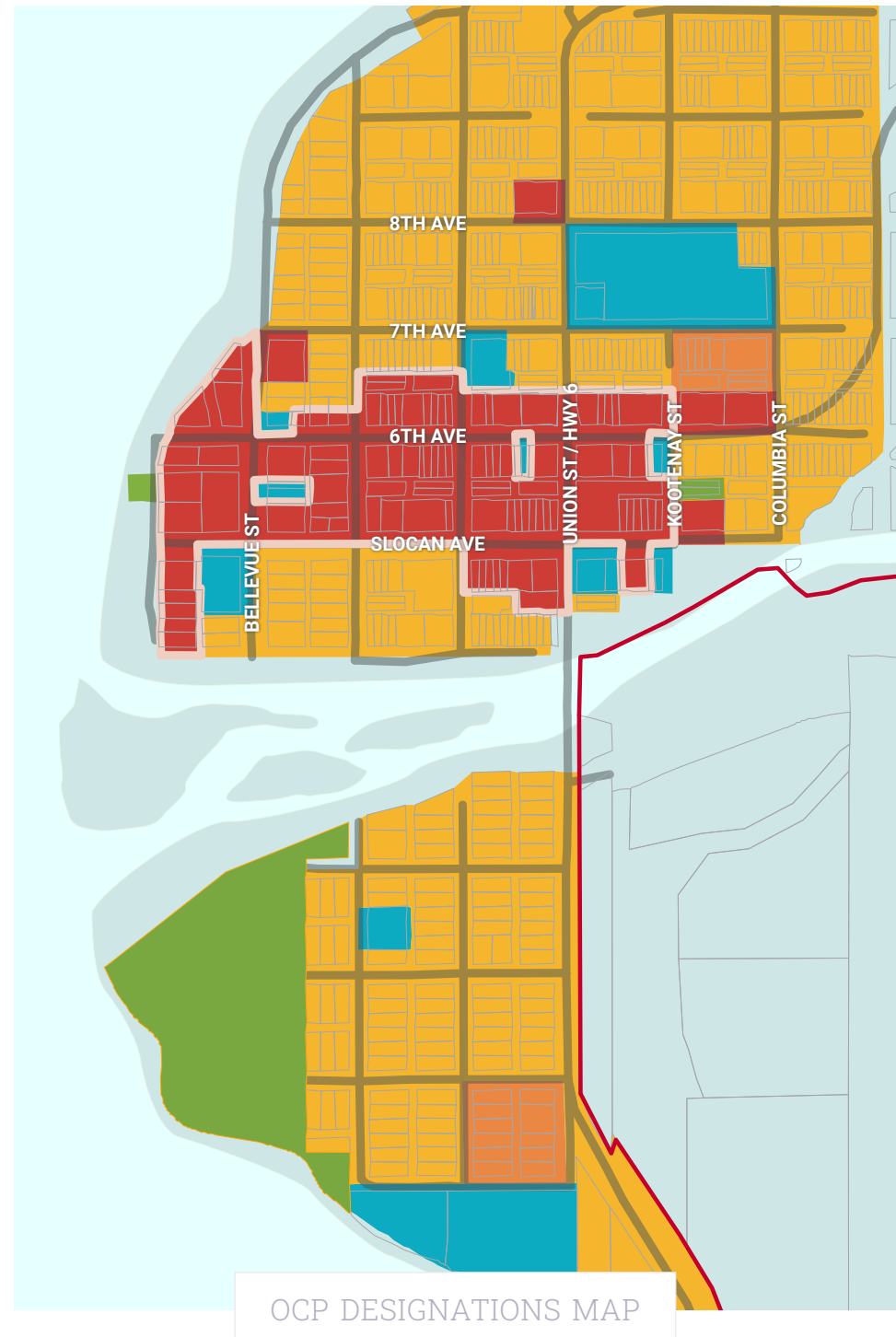
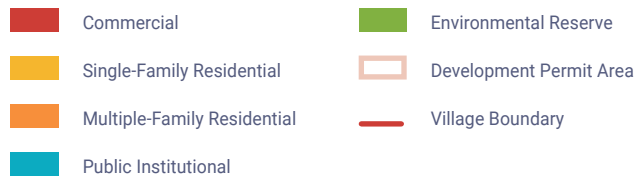


3.6. OCP LAND USE

In the OCP, the Downtown is primarily designated Commercial, envisioning such uses as personal service, retail, office, hotel/motel and restaurant establishments. The designation also encourages a compact, visually appealing commercial core that operates year-round to provide a wide range of goods and services. Additionally, the OCP envisions Downtown New Denver as a focal point for tourism uses in the Slokan Valley, while still encouraging uses that serve the local community.

There is one Development Permit Area (DPA) associated with the Downtown to revitalize the commercial core and multi-family developments. The associated “Building Design Guidelines” for the DPA describe the “village’s approved design expectation for regulating quality revitalization design”. Generally, it describes the expectation of new construction to blend well with the historic core, with emphasis on the use of natural material.

Adjacent designations in the study area include Residential, Institutional, and Environmental Reserves.



3.7. ZONING

In the Zoning bylaw, the Downtown Core area is primarily zoned Core Commercial (C1) with some limited areas of Local Commercial (C2), Residential Commercial (C3) along the Slocan Lake and Bellevue Street, and some limited Public Institutional (P2) along 6th Ave. Permitted uses, density, and height considerations for these zones are outlined below.

C1 - Core Commercial

- » Permit a wide range of commercial uses (e.g., service commercial, bakery, residential, motel, retail, restaurant)
- » Allow for mixed-use developments with dwelling units above or behind commercial activity
- » Minimum 4.5 m setback on a parcel with a highway frontage
- » Minimum 4.5 m rear yard setback
- » Maximum height of 10m or two and a half storeys (whichever is less)
- » Maximum 90% site coverage for commercial buildings and 45% for single-and two-family dwellings

C3 - Residential Commercial

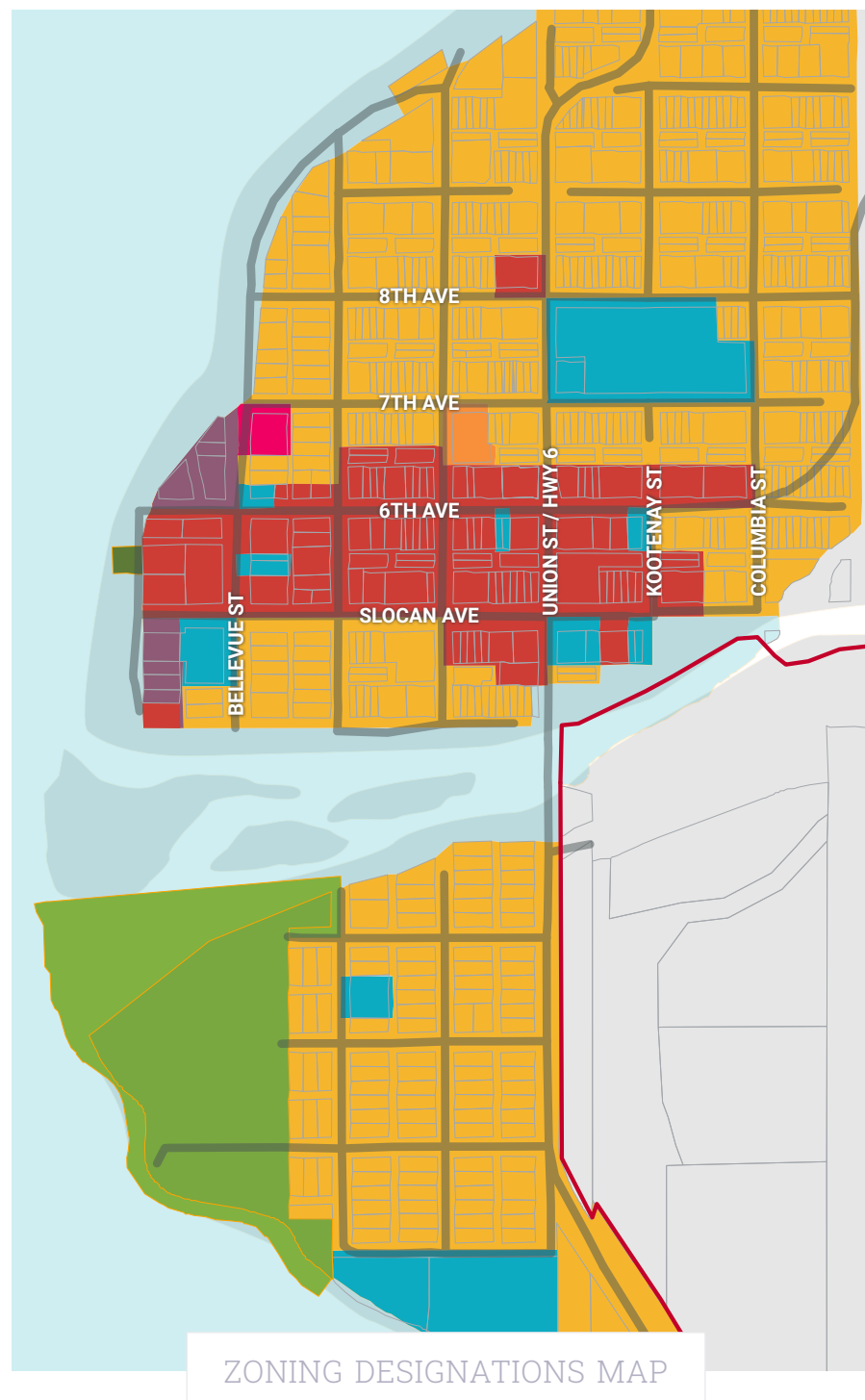
- » Permit residential commercial uses (e.g., residential, secondary suite, church, park, bed and breakfast)
- » Minimum 15 m parcel frontage
- » Maximum height of 8.5m or two storeys (whichever is less)
- » Maximum 45% site coverage

P2 - Public Institution

- » Permit public and institutional uses (e.g., church, community hall, civic, daycare, hospital, museum, school)

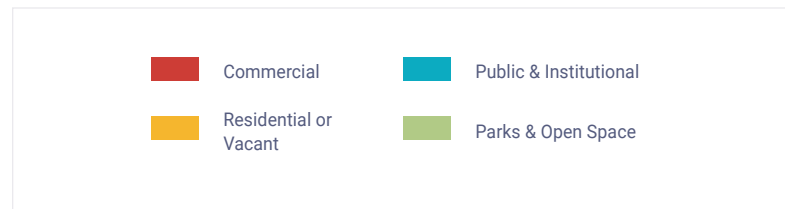
Adjacent zones in the study area include Low-Density Multi-Family Residential, Single-Family & Two Family Residential, Local Commercial and Environmental Reserve.

■ C1 - Core Commercial	■ R1 - Single-Family and Two-Family Residential	■ P - Parks
■ C2 - Local Commercial	■ R2 - Low Density Multiple-Family Residential	■ P1 - Parks and Open Space
■ C3 - Residential Commercial	■ E1 - Environmental Reserve	■ P2 - Public and Institutional



3.8. CURRENT LAND USE

The existing land use pattern of the study area is characterized by a clear commercial core, along with civic uses such as Schools and Churches. Outside of the core are residential uses including a mix of low to medium-density residential buildings.



3.9. UNDERUTILIZED SITES

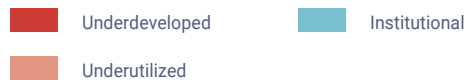
New Denver's Main Street (6th Ave between Kootenay St and Bellevue St), is characterized by small footprint commercial with a non-continuous street wall (frontages, where the building meets the street) and underdeveloped or undeveloped lots.

Beyond 6th Ave, there are other underutilized and underdeveloped lands.

For this analysis, “underutilized” refers to lands that have uses or developments that are inconsistent with OCP policy, zoning, and/or community goals (e.g., vibrant commercial core, a mix of housing), and “undeveloped” refers to empty lots.

New Denver's Main Street (6th Ave) presents an active and inviting pedestrian streetscape but lacks a continuous experience with pockets of commercial activity broken by existing residential uses. Much of the Downtown streetscape is dated, with limited pedestrian infrastructure including wide sidewalks and street trees.

Beyond 6th Ave, the Downtown lacks high-quality streetscapes and pedestrian-oriented design (e.g., landscaping, seating, buffers to traffic, street trees). Many of the commercial buildings are oriented towards an internal circulation lane or parking lot and buildings that do front primary streets are set back significantly. This creates large open spaces adjacent to wide streets, resulting in a lack of pedestrian comfort, safety, and interest, as well as a lack of streetscape “texture” and vitality.

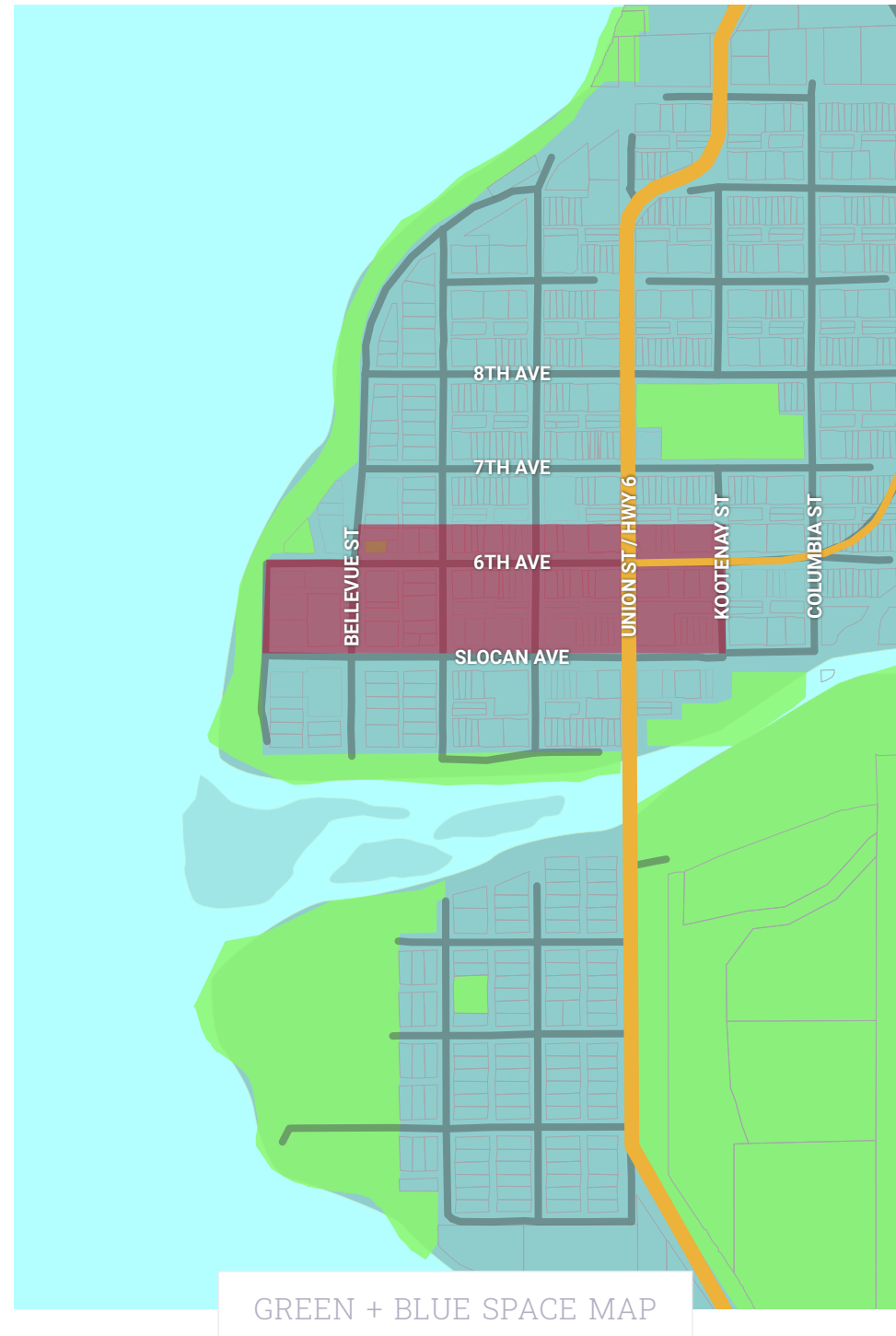
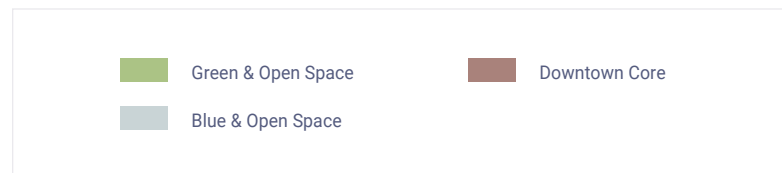


UNDERUTILIZED SITES MAP

3.10. GREEN + BLUE OPEN SPACE

The Downtown Core is characterized by a strong connection to Green (e.g., parks, environmental reserves, and open spaces) and Blue (e.g., lakes and rivers) open spaces. These connections are central to New Denver's identity, attraction, and lifestyle.

The Village has recently received approval for a grant to undertake floodplain mapping. The Village hopes to move toward flood construction levels.



4. TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

4.1. WALKABILITY + TRAILS

In addition to the lack of active building frontages off of 6th Ave, Downtown streetscapes have barriers to pedestrian comfort and safety, including driveway crossings (along sidewalks) and missing segments of sidewalk. The sidewalks that do exist are generally narrow and, in some cases, lack pedestrian/bicycle amenities and accessible conditions. Additionally, there are only a few pedestrian crossings off of 6th Ave.

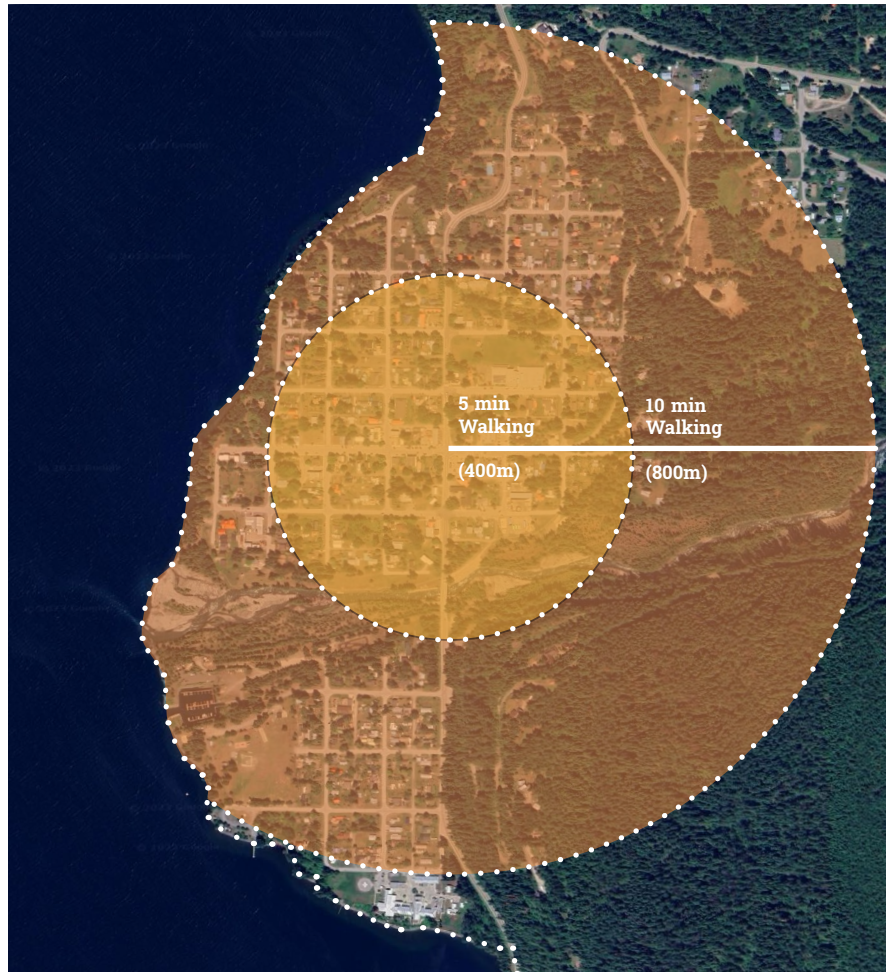
Nearby trails offer residents and visitors active transportation and recreation opportunities that tie into the Downtown Core.



- | | |
|---|--|
|  Sidewalks |  Vehicle Crossings |
|  Trails |  Pedestrian Crossings |

4.2. WALKING DISTANCES

This diagram shows the compact structure of New Denver, With nearly the whole town within a 10-minute walk of the Downtown Core. The Village's Active Transportation Network Project identifies key walking and cycling issues and presents a plan to improve active transportation throughout New Denver. Directions from the Plan include improvements for the Downtown core and surrounding area and address sidewalks, trail, and cycling facilities.



5. LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

5.1. DOWNTOWN TREE CANOPY + IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

Much of New Denver's Downtown Core lacks street trees, especially along 6th Ave. While there does exist a healthy tree canopy in or near Downtown, most of it is locked away on private property or underdeveloped sites – or larger park areas outside of the Downtown. In the Downtown, few trees exist on public or private properties that are regularly utilized by the public.

Recently, the Village had 10 Akibono Cherry Trees planted in the fall of 2022. These trees were purchased through a grant that was coordinated by the gardener for the NIMC. In the Downtown Area, three were placed in Greer Park. Two were placed at the 'Welcome to New Denver' sign at the northern entrance to the Village and five in Centennial Park.



Impervious Surface Tree Canopy Downtown Core

TREE CANOPY + IMPERVIOUS SURFACES MAP

NEXT STEPS

The data collected and related analysis and outcomes of this background analysis will inform the remaining project process, serving as important baseline information on which to build the NDDRP.

The next step in the process is Community Consultation, in which the outcomes of this report will directly inform the engagement materials for the upcoming Public Ideas Fair, which is scheduled for August 28 at Knox Hall.

Please, visit the project webpage to stay up to date on the latest news, events, and online engagement opportunities:

www.newdenver.ca/drp

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. In the upper left, a large commercial building with a flat roof and solar panels is visible. Below it, several residential houses with varying roof colors (red, grey, brown) are scattered among green trees. A road curves through the center of the image. In the lower right, there's a parking lot with several cars and a building. The overall scene is a mix of commercial and residential development with significant green space.

BACKGROUND REPORT DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

VILLAGE OF NEW DENVER | AUGUST 2023