

EXPLORE #YYC DOWNTOWN

MASTER BRAND IDENTITY & STYLE GUIDE

KEY MESSAGES & TONE

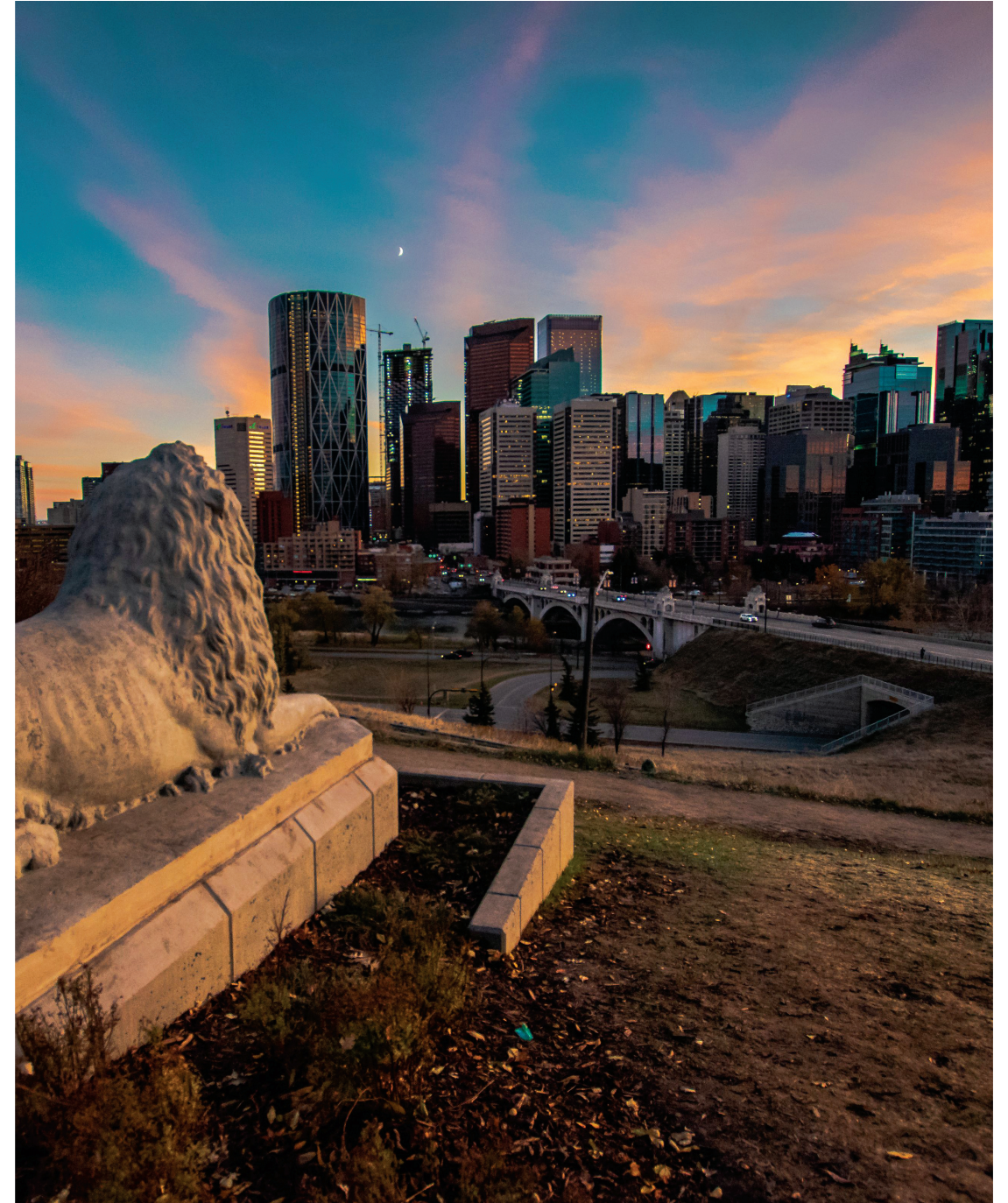
1.0 – OUR BRAND STORY

Making life better every day.

Calgary's downtown is the city's economic and cultural heart—an evolving, vibrant core where opportunity and quality of life converge. Through strategic investments, creative placemaking, and collaboration with developers, investors, and community leaders, we're shaping a resilient and inclusive downtown that fuels innovation, supports entrepreneurship, and celebrates everyday experiences.

From welcoming neighborhoods and dynamic public spaces to rich cultural offerings, downtown Calgary is more than a destination, it's where people come to make a living and build a life.

This transformation is guided by a shared vision for the future: to create a downtown that reflects Calgary's spirit—bold, creative, and connected. Whether you're launching a venture, discovering your home, or simply soaking in the energy of the city, downtown is where life happens.



1.1 – OUR BRAND **PILLARS**

Civic Heart

Downtown is Calgary’s symbolic and functional core—a place of gathering, celebration, and civic pride. Investments in Olympic Plaza, Central Library, and The Confluence Historic Site reflect a commitment to inclusivity, safety, and cultural legacy.

Entertainment Hub

Downtown is alive day and night. Festivals, pop-ups, patios, and major venues like Scotia Place and Cowboys Park make it a destination for culinary, cultural, and nightlife experiences

Urban Recreation & Culture

Downtown blends natural beauty with cultural richness. Parks, pathways, murals, festivals, and institutions like Glenbow and Arts Commons create a dynamic, walkable, and expressive urban environment.

Learning & Innovation

Downtown is a hub for education and tech. Post-secondary expansions, innovation labs, and initiatives like Community Court and Esports Arena position Calgary as a forward-thinking city.

Creative Commerce

Downtown is reinventing retail and workspaces. From office-to-residential conversions to urban grocery stores and modernized office buildings, it’s becoming a 24/7 community where commerce meets lifestyle.

Investment & Economic Growth

Downtown is a magnet for investment and innovation. Office conversions, tech sector expansion, infrastructure upgrades, and strategic partnerships are driving Calgary’s economic resurgence.

1.2 – OUR BRAND AREAS

Programming & Placemaking – Motivational

Come for the energy, stay for the moments you won't find anywhere else. Present the strongest arguments first and repeat them at the end. Use informal, conversational language. Choose emotional and personal imagery.

Underlying Brand Pillars:

Civic Heart, Entertainment Hub, Urban Recreation & Culture

Messaging Example:

"Unleash your weekend with live beats, bold flavours, and unexpected finds — every block's got a story".

Incentive Programing – Informational

We're committed to building a stronger downtown—one that grows with us. Through long-term investment and fresh ideas, we're shaping a resilient future. Use institutional and formal tone. Present information in a straightforward, explanatory, and neutral way. Use concrete, direct, factual, and jargon-free language and imagery.

Underlying Brand Pillars:

Learning & Innovation, Creative Commerce, Investment & Economic Growth

Messaging Example:

"We're investing in people, places, and possibilities. Together, we're shaping a downtown that works for you — today and tomorrow".

1.3 – OUR CITY OF CALGARY **WRITTEN STYLE**

Our style and tone should be appropriate to the type of conversation we're having and with whom we're having it. It helps to remember that we're communicating with citizens, not at them.

The copy must:

Be friendly, jargon-free and audience-appropriate. Be concise with a maximum of three short sentences per paragraph. Be inclusive rather than exclusive, using personal pronouns like "we" and "you".

Use connecting words and phrases to draw readers through the copy.

Use informal language:

Use to the degree that it is appropriate to the audience and circumstance. Words such as "of the" often can be replaced by a more informal simple plural, or an apostrophe followed by an "s" to indicate ownership.

Example: *'The road's surface' instead of 'surface of the road';
'community leaders' instead of 'leaders of the community'.*

Write as if speaking:

Use casual language strategically to keep your audience with you and help them easily follow your thinking.

Write as if speaking directly to one person only:

One person logged onto the website, one pair of eyes reading that newspaper or watching that television message.

Use active words:

Everywhere, especially in headlines.

Look for every opportunity to use inclusive expressions ("*we'll all*" or "*every one of us*"). Use imperative verbs that direct the reader/viewer/listener ("*get it,*" "*see it*" or "*try it*").

1.4 – OUR EXPLORE DOWNTOWN WRITTEN STYLE

Explore Downtown’s written style extends the City of Calgary’s style. It speaks to the curious, the bold, and the ready-for-anything. Every message should feel like an invitation to jump in.

Edgy and motivational:

Use punchy, active language that sparks movement and action. Energizing verbs include: ‘dive in’, ‘feel it’, ‘make it yours’. Avoid passive phrasing.

“Skip the routine. Downtown’s calling.”

“Fuel your day with art, music, and something unexpected.”

Exciting and emotional:

Tap into feelings—joy, wonder, thrill, connection. Use sensory and emotional cues to help readers feel the experience.

“Every corner’s got a story. Come find yours.”

“You, your crew, and a night that turns into a story.”

Visual and experiential:

Paint pictures with words. Help readers imagine the sights, sounds, and vibes of downtown. Use short, vivid sentences that move fast and hit hard.

“Wander into something unforgettable.”

“No map needed. Just curiosity.”

Inclusive and empowering:

Celebrate diversity and possibility. Make everyone feel welcome and inspired to explore—locals or visitors, solo or with family.

“One downtown. A million ways to belong.”

“You’re not just welcome—you’re wanted.”