Calgary

EXPLORE #YYC
DOWNTOWN

MASTER BRAND
IDENTITY & STYLE GUIDE

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MASTER BRAND IDENTITY & STYLE GUIDE

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1.0 OUR WRITTEN BRAND

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.
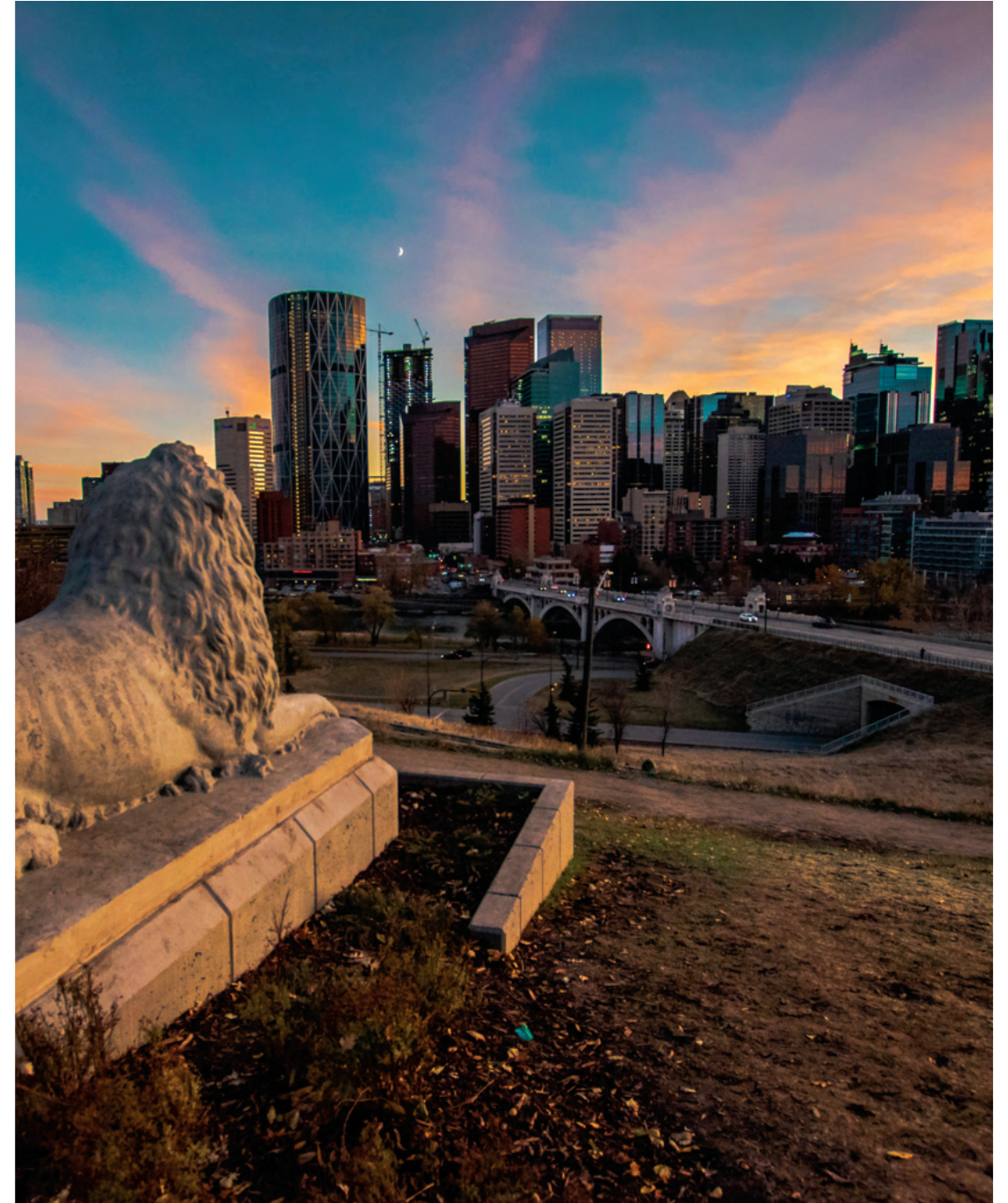
1.1 – OUR BRAND **PILLARS**

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."
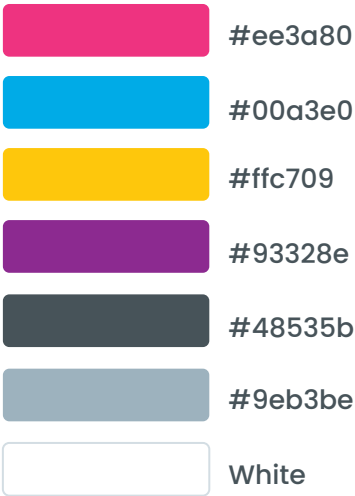*"You're not just welcome—you're wanted."*

2.0 OUR VISUAL BRAND

2.0 – OUR BRAND **OVERVIEW**

We use five core elements in our design: a logo, colour, typography, photography, and iconography.

LOGO

E✕PLORE #YYC
DOWNTOWN

COLOUR

■	#ee3a80
■	#00a3e0
■	#ffc709
■	#93328e
■	#48535b
■	#9eb3be
☐	White

TYPOGRAPHY

Primary
Poppins

Secondary
Myriad

System
Arial

PHOTOGRAPHY

ICONOGRAPHY

2.1 – OUR BRAND **COLOURS**

PRIMARY COLOUR

CMYK: 0,91,19,0
RGB: 238,58,128
HEX: #ee3a80

SECONDARY COLOUR
HEX: #6c1d45

PRIMARY COLOUR

CMYK: 86,8,0,0
RGB: 0,163,224
HEX: #00a3e0

SECONDARY COLOUR
HEX: #005670

PRIMARY COLOUR

CMYK: 0,22,100,0
RGB: 255,198,0
HEX: #ffc709

SECONDARY COLOUR
HEX: #e0b000

PRIMARY COLOUR

CMYK: 53,99,0,0
RGB: 147,50,142
HEX: #93328e

SECONDARY COLOUR
HEX: #642f6c

PRIMARY COLOUR

CMYK: 15,0,0,80
RGB: 72,83,91
HEX: #48535b

SECONDARY COLOUR
HEX: #303236

PRIMARY COLOUR

CMYK: 15,0,0,30
RGB: 158,179,190
HEX: #9eb3be

SECONDARY COLOUR
#6c8c9d

TERTIARY COLOUR
HEX: #2e953e

TERTIARY COLOUR
HEX: #e57326

TERTIARY COLOUR
HEX: #003560

TERTIARY COLOUR
HEX: #1e5f30

TERTIARY COLOUR
HEX: #803d1b

TERTIARY COLOUR
HEX: #071829

2.2 – OUR BRAND DIGITAL GRADIENT COLOURS

To comply with WCAG 2.2 standards, our brand colours must shift slightly when used in gradients to ensure accessibility compliance.

COPY HEADING GRADIENT

HEX: #ce0f69 > #8c2a80

COPY HEADING GRADIENT

HEX: #0ea888 > #006298

COPY HEADING GRADIENT

HEX: #d87a00 > #ed1e27

COPY HEADING GRADIENT

HEX: #119cd3 > #01669c

BACKGROUND GRADIENT

HEX: #8c2a80 > #006298

BACKGROUND GRADIENT

HEX: #c5530b > #ed1e27

BACKGROUND GRADIENT

HEX: #177cb3 > #003d77
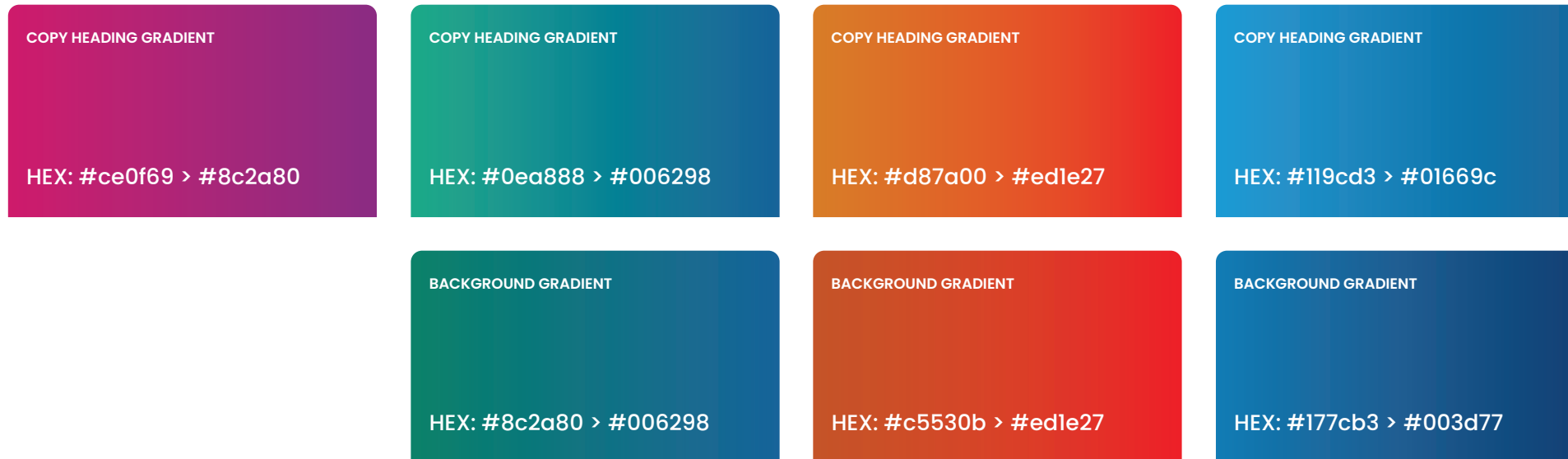
2.3 – OUR BRAND **IDENTITY**

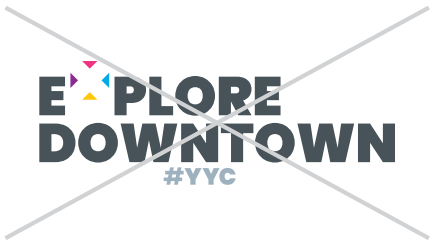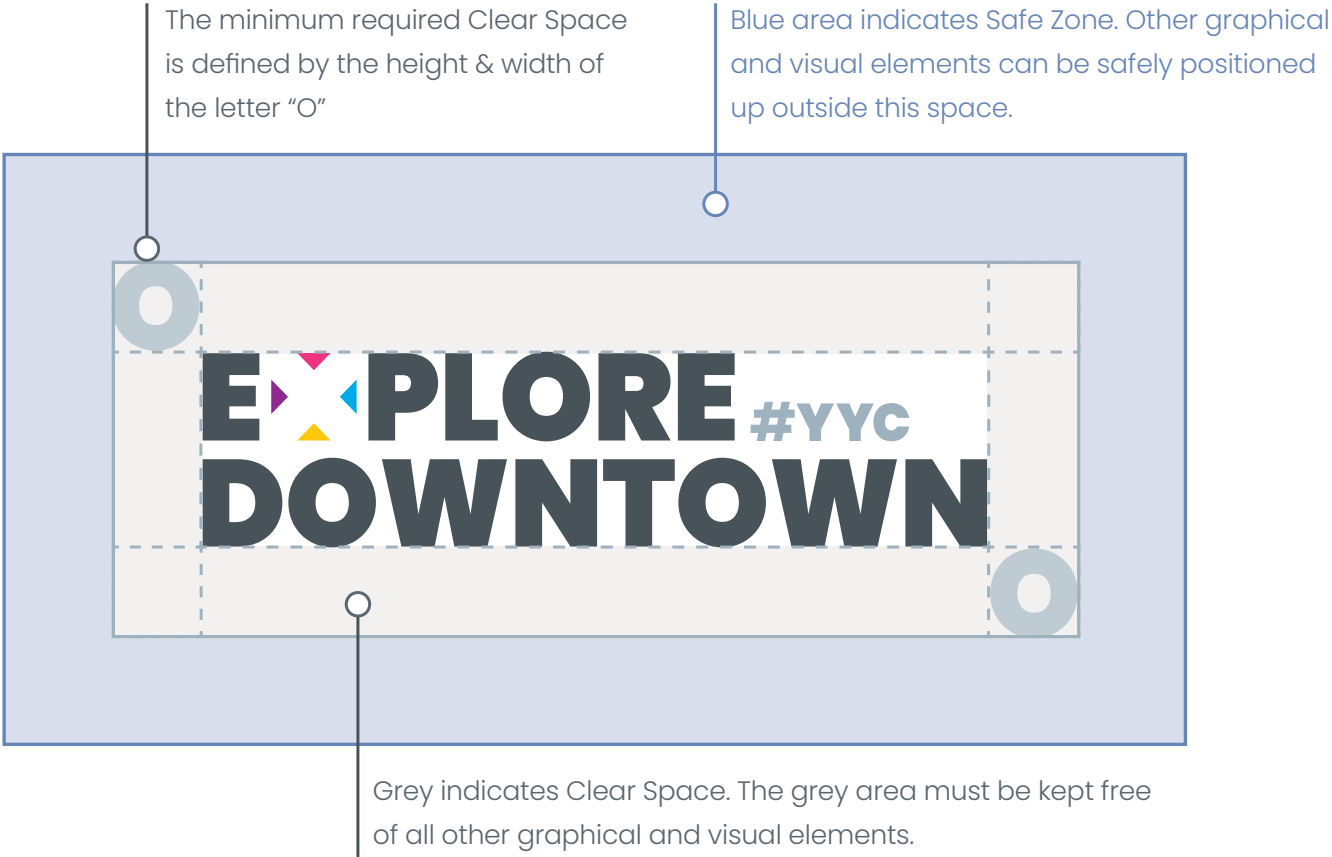

Our Logo: Vibrant. Dynamic. Inclusive. Reversed arrows form an 'X' in 'Explore,' cleverly marking downtown as the center of discovery. This bold symbol draws attention inward, suggesting connection, movement, and energy—while subtly mapping out the vibrant pathways of the inner city.

Whenever possible, always reproduce our logo in full colour on a white background.

X Icon: The colorful 'X'—crafted from four dynamic triangles—steps out of the lockup to stand on its own. As a shorthand for Explore Downtown YYC, it captures the brand's vibrant energy and symbolizes the city's diverse, interconnected core.

2.4 – OUR BRAND LOGO

The minimum required Clear Space is defined by the height & width of the letter "O"

Blue area indicates Safe Zone. Other graphical and visual elements can be safely positioned up outside this space.

Grey indicates Clear Space. The grey area must be kept free of all other graphical and visual elements.

DO NOT reposition elements of the lockup.

DO NOT stretch or squash the logo.

DO NOT change the colours even if they look similar.

DO NOT use any other font for the main logo.

2.5 – OUR LOGO **LOCKUP**

City of Calgary Logo Lockup: The lockup visually unites two distinct brand elements—Calgary's official identity and the Explore Downtown identity—while maintaining clarity, hierarchy, and balance.The alignment and spacing rules ensure consistency across applications, whether digital or print, and preserve the integrity of both logos.

2.6 – OUR ICON **LOCKUP**

Icon Text Lockup: We can use the X Icon with text in situations where the full Explore Downtown YYC brand is clearly visible in a particular creative execution. For example, in a social media post where our brand is clearly represented.

2.7 – OUR BRAND **TYPOGRAPHY**

Aa
Light

Aa
Medium

Aa
Black

Poppins is the primary typeface across all Explore Downtown creative. It is one of the main design elements that help create a cohesive and consistent brand. It can be used in all design elements as headlines and body copy. This typeface also connects Explore Downtown with Blue Sky City by using the same font.

Download Poppins: https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Poppins

Aa
Light

Aa
Regular

Aa
Black

Myraid Pro is the City of Calgary's primary typeface and serves as a visual link between the Explore Downtown brand and the City's official identity. Within the Explore Downtown brand system, Myriad Pro can be used as a primary typeface in headlines and body copy, for Downtown Strategy's Incentive Programming for consistency and readability.
See page 21 for example

Aa
Regular

Aa
Bold

For applications that rely on system fonts, such as email campaigns, we use **Arial**—a common system font on both Mac and PC..

2.8 – OUR TYPOGRAPHY **STYLES**

A HEADLINE THAT HIGHLIGHTS SPECIFIC INFORMATION

A GRADIENT HEADLINE ON WHITE

A GRADIENT HEADLINE KNOCKED OUT IN WHITE

Body copy should be set in Poppins Light or Regular, depending on size. Use sentence case only for body copy. **Black may be used to highlight specific words or phrases within the body copy**. All-caps is acceptable when used sparingly. Bullets, numbering, and other styles may be applied to body copy as needed.

2.9 – OUR BRAND **ICONOGRAPHY**

Explore Downtown uses a universal visual language that is understood by all. Iconography is consistent across all visual mediums. To ensure this consistency, we use Font Awesome Classic Solid Icons, consisting of a diverse set of 1,500+ icons.

Font Awesome Icons can be downloaded from:
https://fontawesome.com/download

2.10 – OUR BRAND SHAPES & PATTERNS

Programming & Placemaking – Motivational

Explore Downtown's visual identity is built around the dynamic X Icon, composed of four colored triangles—pink, purple, blue, yellow, and gray—arranged at 45-degree angles.

These triangles can be used together or independently to create flexible, engaging layouts that reflect the brand's themes of exploration, movement, and discovery.
The color blocks serve three key functions: guide the viewer's eye, suggest motion, and imply a journey.

To add depth and context, a specific downtown map file is overlaid at 8% opacity on the background. This subtle texture connects the design to place, reinforcing the brand's downtown roots.

Transparency ensures legibility of content while establishing a clear visual hierarchy.

Anchor the 'Sun Bead' from the Blue Sky City branding on a single corner of the white shape.

Shaping a Greater Downtown

Incentive Programing - Informational

Incentive Programming visuals adopt a more flexible interpretation of the brand's shape language. Layouts may feature shapes crafted from multiple angles and endpoints, allowing for greater variety and adaptability.

**To enhance visual interest:**
White-stroked shapes at 20% opacity are layered to create depth. The same 8% opacity downtown map overlay is applied to color blocks to maintain consistency, support readability, and establish information hierarchy.

Typography for Incentive Programming:
• Myriad Pro Bold for Title Case Headlines
• Myriad Pro Regular for Sentence Case Body Copy

2.11 – OUR BRAND **EXAMPLES**

Lifestyle Marketing

Festival and Event Marketing
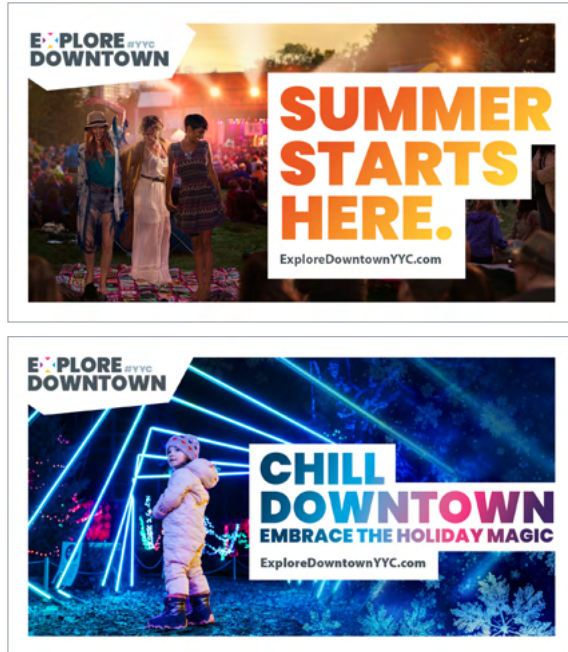
We highlight real people—students, couples, families, seniors, pet owners, and individuals with disabilities—engaging in candid, everyday downtown moments that reflect movement, connection, and community.

Event imagery captures the energy and excitement of downtown's cultural life. We feature performers, artists, and venues that reflect the spirit of celebration and shared experience.

3.0 OUR PHOTOGRAPHY

3.1 - OUR LIFESTYLE **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Lifestyle imagery is central to Explore Downtown's storytelling approach. We take a human-centered approach to draw the viewer in, inviting them to visualize the experience of downtown living.

We highlight students, couples, families, seniors, pet owners, and individuals with disabilities in candid, everyday moments that reflect movement, connection, and community.

Lifestyle photography captures the moment—a snapshot of a resident's daily life, their family, their friends, and their home.

Our visual style balances people and place, using a mix of wide, mid-range, and first-person point-of-view shots. This composition shifts between broad cityscapes and street-level detail, offering depth and variety while showcasing the vibrancy of downtown life.

Scenes should feel natural and relatable, capturing authentic experiences such as walking, biking, commuting, grabbing coffee, or enjoying patios and public spaces.

3.2 – OUR FESTIVALS & EVENTS PHOTOGRAPHY

Festival and event photography captures the energy, emotion, and cultural vibrancy of downtown life. These images showcase performers, artists, organizers, and engaged audiences in dynamic, candid moments that reflect the spirit of celebration, creativity, and shared experience.

Composition should balance wide shots to establish setting with closer frames that capture performance details, helping viewers feel part of the experience. Images should convey a sense of movement and atmosphere, using a mix of wide shots to establish setting, mid-range shots to show interaction, and close-ups to capture emotion.

This layered approach helps tell a complete story—one that invites viewers to imagine themselves in the moment.

The environment plays a key role in storytelling. Photography should highlight distinctive venues, vibrant streetscapes, and recognizable landmarks, while also capturing the textures and details that make each event unique.

From large-scale festivals to intimate pop-ups, the goal is to reflect the diversity and richness of downtown's cultural offerings.
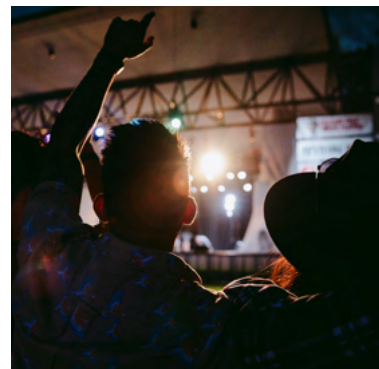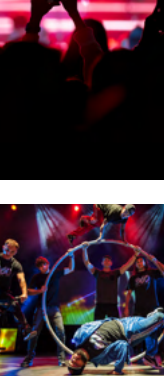
3.3 – OUR COMMUNITY SPACES **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Community spaces are a vital part of the downtown experience. Photography showcases how residents actively engage with outdoor shared spaces, emphasizing connection, activity, and a sense of belonging.

We focus on authentic participation—talent is shown interacting with their environment, whether relaxing, socializing, playing, or attending community events. These moments should feel genuine and spontaneous, reflecting the diversity and vibrancy of downtown life.

The environments featured must represent safe, inclusive, and communal spaces that support a wide range of activities—from quiet reflection to energetic gatherings. These help reinforce the brand's values of accessibility, openness, and urban wellness. Natural lighting is essential.

The goal is to create imagery that feels warm, inviting, and grounded in reality.