
Downtown Neighbourhood Plan

Pre-Read

Land Acknowledgment

The City of St. John's, its partners, and its consultants want to ensure Downtown St. John's is Indigenized and that this Plan incorporates feedback from the city's urban Indigenous community. We respectfully acknowledge the land upon which this Plan focuses as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, whose culture has now been lost forever.

We respectfully acknowledge the island of Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland) as the unceded, traditional territory of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq. And we acknowledge Labrador as the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut. We recognize all First Peoples who were here before us, those who live with us now, and the seven generations to come.

As First Peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards of the land and to respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call it home. As we open our hearts and minds to the past, we commit ourselves to working in a spirit of truth and reconciliation to make a better future for all.

Downtown is Changing

Downtown St. John's is recognized for its unique and colourful neighbourhoods; its walkable streets; its arts and entertainment scene; its working port and cruise ship terminal; its collection of interesting buildings; and more recently, its world-class food experiences, among many other things.

Like much of the province, however, Downtown has been experiencing change:

- » Economic and business activity has changed;
- » Many companies have relocated to other parts of St. John's, leaving behind large, empty office spaces;
- » Local storefronts are struggling to compete with online shopping and big box development;
- » Long-term social changes due to COVID-19 have created challenges;
- » There is a need to respond to climate change and extreme weather.

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These challenges, among others, raise some big questions: What does all of this mean for Downtown? How do we tackle these concerns and ensure that Downtown St. John's remains a great place to live, work, and play in the future?

Finding the answer to these and other challenging questions is part of this Neighbourhood Plan.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

The City of St. John's has a Municipal Plan which defines a vision for St. John's and outlines goals, objectives, and policies to guide the city's growth and development over time. As the City's primary planning document, the Municipal Plan focuses on the entire city as a whole.

The intent of this Neighbourhood Plan is to adapt and implement the planning approach of the Municipal Plan to the local or neighbourhood context. In this case, we're focusing on the downtown area, indicated by the area highlighted on the map below.



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The Neighbourhood Plan will determine the following things about downtown:

- » The desired mix of land uses;
- » The height and density of development;
- » The transportation network (both on-street and off-street);
- » The open space network; and,
- » Protection of natural and cultural heritage assets.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be an important tool for City of St. John's Council and Staff when evaluating new or proposed development or re-development within the Downtown area. It will allow for appropriate progress and revitalization to occur, yet ensure that it is balanced with the elements of Downtown that are important and that we do not want to lose.



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Calls for Change

The Downtown Neighbourhood Plan is also an opportunity to advance several of the First Voice [Calls for Change](#). Launched in 2019 by First Light in collaboration with the City of St. John's, First Voice is a coalition of Indigenous Peoples, service providers, and all levels of government working together to advance truth and reconciliation as described in the group's 42 Calls for Change. Many of the Calls relate directly to this Downtown Plan, including:

- » *Call #13: Collaborate with service delivery agencies to ensure Indigenous residents in nonmarket housing have access to culturally appropriate programming and spaces.*
- » *Call #14: Collaborate with service providers to ensure that Indigenous people have equal access to secure and affordable housing that is free of discrimination.*
- » *Call #17: Support efforts to ensure that Indigenous people and members of other racialized and marginalized communities have access to safe, affordable, and reliable transportation.*
- » *Call #19: Decolonize the City's Municipal Plan and all related processes, procedures, and policies.*
- » *Call #21: Work with the City to Indigenize place names.*
- » *Call #23: Promote and support formal Indigenous stewardship of public green spaces in the city.*
- » *Call #24: Establish a highly visible monument in the City of St. John's to honour the survivors of residential schools and those who never made it home to their families.*



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Have Your Say!

The Neighbourhood Plan will be shaped directly by input from the community, including the urban Indigenous community in St. John's. We invite you to share your feedback on the following questions:

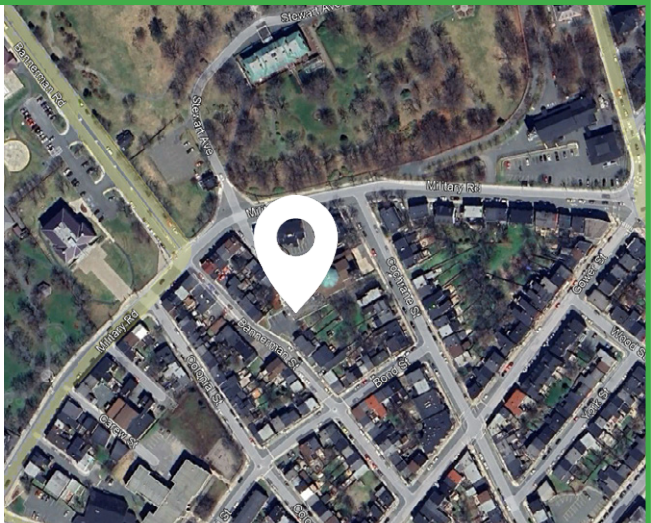
- » **What could be done to better celebrate Indigenous culture in downtown's parks & open spaces?**
- » **How could walking, driving, cycling, or taking the bus downtown be made safer or more accessible?**
- » **Are there challenges to living or visiting downtown that you feel need to be addressed?**
- » **Where in the city would you like to see a permanent monument to honour survivors of residential schools in the province and those who never made it home to their families?**

Join Us for a Community Feast & Conversation to Discuss These and Other Topics

Where:
First Light Centre for
Performance and Creativity

42 Bannerman Street

When:
March 21, 2024
6 to 8:30pm



The event will be co-hosted by First Light and the City of St. John's.

The process of gathering feedback from the urban Indigenous community to help inform the creation of the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan meets the standards for responsible and ethical research as set out in the [First Light Research Policy Framework](#).