

Calgary



# Better Every Day



**THE CITY MANAGER'S QUARTERLY REPORT ISSUE 5**

**THE RECOVERY ISSUE**

**Better Every Day** is a publication of The City of Calgary—we're Calgarians serving the city we live in, the city we love, making life better every day.

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Located on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, and home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3, we are situated on land where the Bow and Elbow Rivers meet. The traditional names for this place we know as Calgary are *Moh-kins-tsis* (Blackfoot), *Wicispa Oyade* (Stoney Nakoda) and *Guts-ists-i* (Tsuut'ina).

CALGARY INCORPORATED  
AS A TOWN IN **1884**

POPULATION ESTIMATE 2022:  
**1,343,500**

**Third most liveable  
city in the world.**

THE ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT, 2022

**Second lowest  
cost of living of  
Canadian cities.**

MERCER, 2021

## MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Calgary, like many cities around the world, is beginning to experience recovery. While we remain in an era of uncertainty around what the future may look like, we can't deny our city feels more hopeful, more vibrant, and ready for what's next. The pandemic changed how we think about our economy and our communities, and there is great opportunity for economic growth and social improvement gathered from the lessons of the past few years. As we anticipate a slow and careful return to normalcy, recovery is a large part of our forward-looking agenda as is the desire to emerge even stronger.

We are anticipating recovery will herald the arrival of more local and international travellers, convention goers, and tourists, and people looking to call Calgary home. I have no doubt they will see what we see – that Calgary has much to offer. Our breath-taking natural surroundings, our arts, culture and attractions, our innovation, our affordability, and most of all, our hospitality. There is no secret as to why Calgary consistently ranks among the world's top five liveable cities and we are ready to show the world what our incredible city has to offer.

Here at The City, our commitment to making life better every day shows up in everything we do. By encouraging innovation, looking for efficiencies, and making community investments, we create the conditions for a strong municipal economy, for now and for the future. For the past two years our focus has been on reducing the impact of the pandemic on individuals, families, and businesses, but we have also been working hard behind the scenes to advance critical initiatives that have longer-term benefits for citizens. Whether we're collaborating with business to offer innovative supports, pushing our capital projects forward, or working with our valued partners to bolster resilience, equity, and the community spirit Calgarians are known for, The City has been taking action to support the recovery of our beloved city. In this issue of Better Every Day, we highlight a few of the ways we are rising to the challenge.

David Duckworth, P. Eng, MBA



# THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

THE RESILIENCE OF CALGARY'S CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

Festivals and events, arts, and culture are important to achieving Calgary's vision of a great place to make a living, and a great place to make a life. These experiences create joy for Calgarians, visitors, and tourists, and enhance the quality of life in our vibrant communities. The creative individuals and industries behind these events, art installations, and cultural opportunities also play a significant role in economic recovery and job creation.

"Cultural events and the arts, in general, are essential to building a resilient city," says Maud Salvi, executive director of [Sled Island](#), an eclectic five-day music and arts festival that draws over 40,000 attendees to multiple venues. "They foster community, provide outlets for expression, and have a significant economic impact that is too often overlooked. The art sector and creative industries can play a pivotal role in the diversification of Alberta's economy."

It comes as no surprise to learn the creative industry, like many other industries, was hit hard by closures and restrictions required as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. But with this challenge also came opportunity for innovation.

"We asked ourselves, how do we not only survive but also set ourselves up to thrive moving forward?" says Jennifer Johnson, Vice President of Programming at [Arts Commons](#) reflecting on the last two years. "We cared for our staff and leaned into the work we don't often get to do since our building is never closed - we upgraded and maintained every piece of equipment we could. Another priority was providing work and paycheques for as many local artists as possible, so we have a healthy ecosystem when we emerge from these tough times."

Understanding that nothing can replace the emotional impact and thrill of live performance, Arts Commons examined options where they could get artists to work, create safe experiences, and perhaps reach more audiences at a time when not much else was going on.



Photos courtesy of Arts Commons, photographer Hian Evans

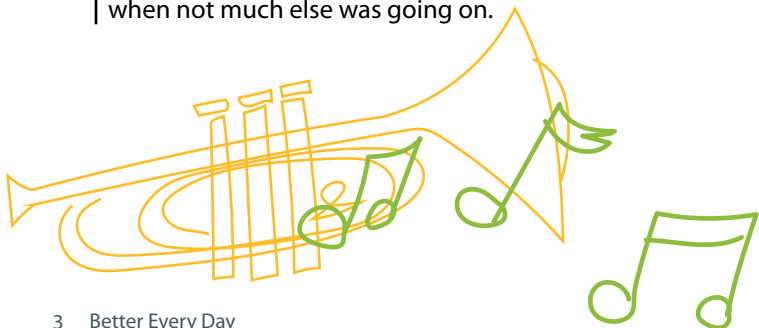


Photos courtesy of Arts Commons, photographer Alex Bonyun

"Our ArtsXpeditions program was born out of the pandemic and will continue," says Jennifer. "We moved performing arts outdoors for the summer of 2020 and 2021, with local artists performing everything from flamenco and jazz to Indigenous drumming and DJs mixing dancehall and electronic. ArtsXpeditions popped up in every quadrant of the city and made real human connections at a time when those opportunities were lacking."

During the pandemic, the festival and event team at The City of Calgary recognized the need to simplify processes such as permitting, road closures, and applications to help organizers execute events and allow Calgarians to get outside to have safe experiences. The City also offered additional support guiding organizers through regulations and restrictions, brainstormed innovative solutions, sourced vendors for fencing, audio equipment and labour, and awarded microgrants to festival and event organizers to help speed recovery.

"The City cleared the way by coming to the table with very specific supports and it made a huge difference despite all the challenges of the past few years," says Jennifer. "We can bring the artists, do the production, but The City helped ensure things like the security, and the permits for Olympic Plaza weren't cost prohibitive when we couldn't charge for a ticket. When The City clears that red tape, it allows us to do what we do best. And when we're allowed to do what we do best, we're supporting artists to do what they do best. Magic happens."





Maud agrees that The City was instrumental in helping Sled Island bring to life the creative and outside-the-box projects they imagined, that lent themselves better to the circumstances of restrictions.

“Camp Sled Island, the first large-scale event to ever take place at [High Park](#) [a rooftop public park in the Beltline], was a celebration of our artistic community and aimed to provide audiences with exciting and exclusive programming in a safe environment,” explains Maud. “Given that the site was used for the first time in this manner, it required a lot of coordination with The City events team. It was a particularly challenging site to work with and The City ended up using a crane to bring tents and other equipment up, which is something we would have never been able to afford if it wasn’t for its support. In the end we were able to deliver a truly unique event, with a stunning view of Calgary’s downtown, and introduce Calgarians to this new park that many hadn’t visited before.”



Jennifer says that Calgarians, hungry for consuming creative experiences, were very receptive to taking in the arts in new ways. “That first summer we took about 50 pop-up performances around Calgary and yes, people were hesitant in that first year,” she recalls. “The crowds were small, but just so delighted. By the end of that first summer some of our colleague organizations started to add pop-ups as well. I think Arts Commons’ role was to just get out of the gate and help inspire other producers who were thinking about doing outdoor programming, to do it as well.”

Innovative and streamlined support of festivals and events give Calgarians places to be creative and growing our creative industries strengthens our economy, our recovery, and improves the quality of life for residents.

### ? DID YOU KNOW?

In a typical year, The City supports over **275 events** coordinating that need **approximately 2000 City approvals, permits, and services.**

In the summer of 2021, Arts Commons programmed **78 ArtXpeditions experiences** and issued **331 artist paycheques.**

The City’s festival and event team has over 150 years of professional event planning experience.

A 2015 economic impact study of Sled Island showed that the festival generated \$3.4 million in economic activity in Alberta; **\$2.1 million occurred in Calgary.**

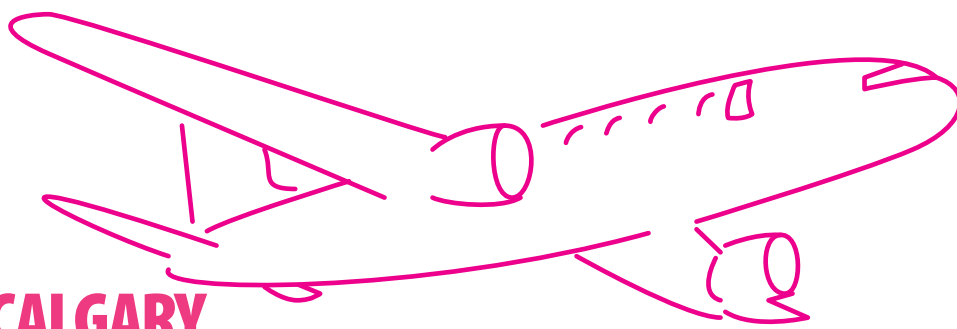
It is estimated that there are **536 events held in public spaces** in Calgary per year.

Throughout the pandemic, The City’s festival and event team supported **106 microgrants to local creative organizations.**

**“The positive impact of music and arts on health and wellness is well documented and given the struggles of the past two years, it is more important than ever,” concludes Maud.**



# MAKING CALGARY HOME SWEET HOME



Buying a home is arguably one of the largest purchases Calgarians will ever make. Weeks and sometimes months can be spent searching for the perfect home within budget. Deciding to purchase a home, sight unseen, seems incredible. But that is exactly what Sarah and her husband, Thomas, did in January when they made the leap and moved to Calgary.

Sarah never thought she would leave British Columbia's lower mainland. After getting married, the couple aspired to own a home and start a family. Both Sarah and Thomas were working two jobs to pay the rent on their 600 square foot downtown Vancouver apartment with the goal of having some earnings left over to save for an eventual home purchase.

"There were a lot of lifestyle factors leading to us wanting to upgrade from our downtown condo lifestyle," explains thirty-something Sarah who works as a bookkeeper in the hospitality industry and picked up serving jobs most evenings. "Working two jobs is not sustainable forever. I had never really considered Calgary being from the lower mainland, but my husband is originally from Calgary, so he put that on the table as something to consider. I kind of abandoned that dream of living in Vancouver and started to look more seriously at other options."

Though Sarah and Thomas's plan wasn't to take the plunge and pull up stakes until 2023, Sarah started to explore online what life might be like living in Calgary.

"We were living in Vancouver and we were working our butts off and saving every spare penny and just watching the inflation and the housing market outpace whatever we could possibly earn and realizing that we were just never going get ahead."

Calgary Real Estate Board's Chief Economist Ann-Marie Lurie says one of the most obvious benefits of living in Calgary is the affordability given the size of the city and the population base relative to other large cities.

"I think on the whole you're seeing growth and that's a good sign and that's also adding some diversity to our city as well," says Ann-Marie. "Job growth and migration are two important fundamentals in terms of housing so that tells me that our housing market is beyond just people coming in and snapping up properties in Calgary for an investment. If I look at 2019, we were losing jobs before the pandemic but now we're coming back, and I'm seeing those employment numbers look so much better."

In early December, Sarah found a home in Calgary online that she couldn't stop thinking about. She started doing price comparisons, looking at its proximity to downtown and the surrounding amenities.

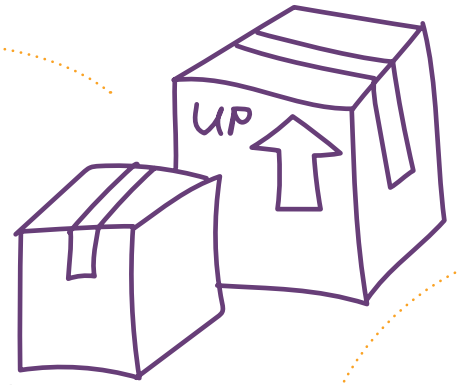
"It was so cute and so charming, and I just fell in love with it the second I saw it," says Sarah. "Every single day I was logging in praying that I wouldn't see a sale pending sign on this house."



Thomas and Sarah with Jerry.



## “I can literally fly from Calgary to Abbotsford and get to my mom’s house faster than I could drive from downtown Vancouver to Abbotsford.”



While visiting Thomas’s family in Calgary over the winter holidays, the couple drove by the home dreaming about owning one like it one day. And then fate stepped in. After a serendipitous flight delay left them with some extra time at the Calgary airport, Sarah and Thomas made the decision to put an offer on the home.

“I was like, ‘What are we waiting for? This just makes sense. We are in a position to buy a house that is in this price range – let’s not overthink this and talk ourselves out of it,’” says Sarah.

They reached out to a recommended realtor and a mortgage broker and the entire process unfolded online.

“It was never the way that I thought I would purchase a home for sure, but I honestly think that it’s just a very modern way to do things – it made the home buying process less intimidating as a first-time home buyer,” explains Sarah. “We finally went on our delayed honeymoon at the end of January, and we were on a beautiful beach in Hawaii when we got the final text from the realtor saying the house was ours. It just really felt like kismet.”

Ann-Marie underlines that while ownership options are favourable in Calgary, it is also important to have options in rental as well. With restrictions lifting, and more people relocating, Calgary’s rental market is currently seeing low supply, increasing prices, however Calgary remains the 16<sup>th</sup> most expensive rental market in Canada according to the Canadian National Rent Report by rent hub [Zumper](#).

“Though comparatively, we have more affordable options for ownership, for some people this is out of reach. We know that housing is a broad spectrum and having availability of affordable housing and affordable rentals is very important to recovery,” she explains. “If you think about the overall aspect of your economy, you need to have housing options for all different groups of earners. In Calgary, we have different options for housing that can attract more people to rent or own. I see that as a huge advantage as well as that we have that ability to increase that supply due to the availability of land. We’ve seen rental constructions improve and a healthy rental market is really important too for an overall housing market.”

After relocating to Calgary in early April, Sarah and Thomas are thrilled not only to be homeowners, but to have employment opportunities and new careers.

“Calgary was not my first choice. I wanted to stay close to my family and my friends and the place where I had grown up,” says Sarah. “But I realized I could have it all by moving to Calgary – the urban, city life that I enjoy, with top notch, chef-driven restaurants, arts and culture, a large stadium, and a real neighbourhood, a garden, and a home, without making some sort of huge sacrifice. I didn’t realize how beautiful Calgary was - the panoramic views of the big sunny skies, the Rockies, and that deep connection to nature. I realized that to truly be happy here, I have to stop trying to find Vancouver 2.0 and learn to see all that Calgary has to offer.”



## CREB® 2022 Forecast Calgary & Region Yearly Outlook Report



[Click to read more](#)

The energy sector remains important to the Calgary economy, both now and into the future. However, announcements from several tech companies planning on setting up offices in the city signal an important shift toward diversification and optimism regarding future growth. It will take time, but the collaborative work between business leaders and policy makers could help support a turnaround in our economy beyond the pandemic. Ability to attract and retain talent hinges on employment opportunities and lifestyle. Housing is an important component of lifestyle. While the pandemic did result in a turnaround in our housing market, Calgary remains relatively affordable compared with other large cities in the country. This relative affordability of housing could be a factor in attracting and retaining talent in the city.

# SURVIVE, REVIVE, AND THRIVE

CALGARY'S HOTEL SECTOR WEATHERS THE STORM WITH HELP FROM THE CITY

howdy y'all

# WELCOME



Sameer Mawji, Executive VP  
Triple One Properties

At the height of the pandemic, the hotel and lodging industry was one of the hardest hit industries with a sharp decline in travellers, tourists, and conferences. Though hotel properties stepped up cleaning protocols and safety guidelines, it is estimated that most were operating under five per cent of capacity, forcing the industry to lay off 80 per cent of its workforce according to the Hotel Association of Canada.

"It is important to note that half the hotels in the city are owned by local families," says Sol Zia, executive director of the [Calgary Hotel Association](#). The Calgary Hotel Association's 76 member hotels represent 87 per cent of the available room nights in our city.

"Not many households have two years of rainy day money to survive on without any income, and our industry isn't any different."

Sameer Mawji, whose family owns Calgary's Hampton Inn & Suites Calgary Airport, says the pandemic had such an unprecedented impact on the industry that it was "catastrophic," with many owners not quite sure how to react when their customers were unable to travel.

"My father immigrated to Canada from East Africa in 1971 and brought the first Hampton Inn & Suites to Canada in 1997, which was Hampton by Hilton's first international property outside of the United States," explains Sameer. "When we lost him six-and-a-half years ago, as a close-knit family, we were devastated. I can honestly say that the pandemic and the possibility of losing everything and his legacy almost pales in comparison to losing him. Having no warning or no control."

Through the Business Sector Task Force, The City worked with the hotel industry to try and find a solution to reduce the financial impact of the pandemic. In June 2021, The City approved [targeted tax relief for hotels and motels](#) so that 2021 property taxes could be deferred without penalty until the end of 2022.

"You can't recover if you don't survive," says Sol. "The property tax deferral has been crucial to managing cash flow, especially for those family-run operations. Cash flow management is distinctly different when you have revenue. But when you have no revenue, it is a completely different financial management exercise. The tax deferral has given hotels the ability within their financial planning to build out a cash flow plan that also incorporates the flexibility to pay back those owed taxes when things start to turn around."

"I have to commend The City for the tax deferral program," adds Sameer. "We have a property in another Canadian city and they offered nothing to the industry. Unfortunately, they think we are a massive, international conglomerate, not understanding that we are like any other small business, but with larger capital expenditures. We are impacted the same way as everyone else and don't have treasure troves of reserves."





Have a nice stay



"There was also the moment of pride, thinking, 'I don't need a government handout or assistance,'" continues Sameer. "The way my father operated, whatever we took on, we took on the responsibility for those decisions, too. But right now, we couldn't pay our mortgage, or our staff, though the circumstances had nothing to do with us, but then, had everything to do with us."

Sol credits The City and Council for being open to learning about the specifics around hotel financial models, and the opportunity to highlight the differences in assessment and commercial processes in the hotel sector.

"We celebrated that. It was so important to our industry to know that The City was open to learning more about the complexities with our local properties," says Sol. "The hotels have certainly recognized the impact and the involvement of The City in our survival. We're just entering recovery, but for two years in the pandemic, it was all about surviving."

What does Sol think the rest of 2022 will bring?

"The good news shows that hotels will be full for Stampede," predicts Sol. "We will see occupancy come back to nearly 80 per cent of 2019 levels by the end of the year. But more importantly, we'll see that rate for the price charge per room increase to almost 90 per cent of 2019 levels by the end of the year."

But Sol cautions that most owners are reserved in their optimism as properties need to attract and pay workers to fully bring back their operations, yet still don't have that steady revenue stream in place.

"We will have owners and general managers cleaning rooms, balancing the books, parking cars and serving plates at banquets," remarks Sol.




Sameer with his mother and business partner, Ronak.

As hotels fill up for the summer, owners will still be operating with tight margins, trying to recover from the losses from the past two years.

"Stampede is just one event and every event in the city is going to be critical to attracting visitors," explains Sol. "No matter how hard we work to attract visitors, corporate travel is beyond our control, and we know most major organizations won't be liberating their corporate travel policies until much later this year."

Sol explains that to be competitive with other major cities to attract large meetings and conventions, Calgary needs a minimum of 15,000 hotel rooms to catch the eye of a meeting or event planner.

"It is a critical metric and during the pandemic we lost nearly 1,000 hotel rooms, so there was concern we wouldn't have sufficient inventory to even meet the minimum criteria for a bid," says Sol, confirming Calgary just meets the room minimum. "Meetings and conventions are the bread and butter of the city and historically the largest revenue base for the hospitality sector collectively. That applies to hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues. We are all part of that ecosystem, and that is why we know we're not going report metrics that are at 2019 levels until 2023." 



### CALGARY'S HOTEL SECTOR WEATHERS THE STORM

[Play video](#) 



**"We love this city so much," says Sameer. "This city is our home, and this is where we want to grow. We want to continue to look for solutions with our new Mayor and Council to take Calgary into a new era where we're going to invest in the city to bring more people, bring more opportunity. That's the beauty of Calgary. We never forget where we come from and that through every roller coaster ride of events, we've always managed to pull through, and we will pull through again. We appreciate that The City took care of us so we didn't lose the dream our father had created."**

# IN SUNALTA, INCLUSIVITY IS THE HEART OF COMMUNITY



Renderings courtesy Sunalta Community Association

Many Calgarians have struggled financially and emotionally during the pandemic. For some, the pandemic has only intensified a reality of unstable employment, food security, isolation, and the struggle to make ends meet. These challenges are often compounded for new Canadians and refugees settling into a new country and seeking the comfort of a community.

But what if things could be different? What if isolated Calgarians had access to a free community, commercial kitchen to start up a baking business? A place where they could batch cook meals and meet their neighbours? A plot in a community garden to grow their ingredients and share gardening tips?

These are just some of the innovative ideas that are part of the Sunalta Community Hub project.

In 2017, Sunalta was selected as one of six communities to be a part of the Community Hubs Initiative, a partnership between The City of Calgary, the United Way of Calgary and Area, and the Rotary Club of Calgary. The Community Hubs Initiative aims to create strong, supportive, inclusive communities where everyone can access required services and supports. The Initiative was able to provide \$1.25 million in funding over five years (2017-2021) that was used to fund community engagement, the business and feasibility plans, and scoping reports, among others.

“We learned a lot about food scarcity and the feeling of isolation in the neighborhood through our year-long community engagement process,” says Jenn Balderson, executive director at the Sunalta Community Association.

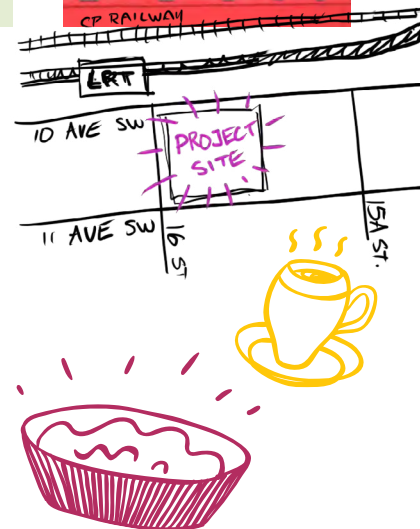
Inner-city Sunalta sees growth, density, and development as a critical part of its future. Sunalta is a neighbourhood where one in four residents live in poverty, 25 per cent are newcomers (27 per cent of which came to Canada as refugees), and over 34 per cent live alone – which is three times the city average. It is also a neighbourhood where residents self-report being isolated and food insecure.

The Hub envisions a “community living room” that will deliver programming to residents and businesses, as well as act as a social enterprise, generating income that will flow back into the community. The inclusive Hub aims to be economically self-sustaining with a focus on creating opportunities for employment, training, and community service delivery.

“We’re really excited about what the commercial kitchen is going to allow us to do – create community connections and then provide food for folks who are hungry,” continues Jenn.



**DID YOU KNOW** the current Sunalta Hall is over 100 years old?





# 1 in 4 Sunalta residents are **NEWCOMERS**



**“We envision being able to use cooking classes as a way to celebrate different cultural foods and cultural practices, and also to be able to teach people skills to cook for themselves. And renting the kitchen to others can generate the revenue we need to fund our charitable work, but then it can also help us meet food security challenges.”**


In addition to a commercial kitchen, a coffee shop, an expanded community facility, and outdoor sports amenities, the Hub will also provide more options for gardeners, including plans for a rooftop greenhouse.

“Right now we have three community gardens for residents to enjoy. The first is a plot-based garden where individuals, households, or a group of folks garden their plot on their own,” explains Jenn. “We also have a communal garden that is gardened and harvested collectively and has a greater educational component to it. And lastly, we have the wildflower garden that is full of plants native to Alberta and a medicinal garden bed for learning about traditional Indigenous medicinal uses.”

Recently, the Sunalta Community Association received a \$2 million contribution from The City of Calgary’s Established Area Investment Fund, part of the [Established Area Growth and Change Strategy](#). The Established Area Investment Fund provides funding for public realm projects that support growth and change happening in established areas

like Sunalta and is supporting 13 public realm projects that are undergoing engagement, design, and construction in 2021 and 2022.

“We will have a lot to celebrate this year. This funding is enabling us to be innovative in our approach to solving challenges specific to Sunalta,” says Jenn. “I am so thrilled that we’ve raised an additional \$1.6M for the project, thanks to the Calgary Foundation (\$600,000K) and the Province’s Community Facility Enhancement Program (\$1M). We’ve also received a lot of support from individual residents and our local businesses that are excited about this project and what it’s going to bring to our community.”

With this recent funding, the Sunalta Community Association will go to tender this fall with the groundbreaking for the new [Green Globes certified](#) building planned for 2023. 

### The Established Area Investment Fund:

Between 2021 and 2023, \$30M is being invested in 15 public realm improvement projects, across 17 communities ([calgary.ca/establishedarea](http://calgary.ca/establishedarea)).

Public realm improvements supported are different in each community, to meet their unique needs as they grow and change.

Growth-related improvements include:

- Making it safer and easier for people to travel through the community, whether they are walking, wheeling, or driving
- Updating and improving parks and public spaces to best meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses

**Learn more at [sunalta.net/imagine](http://sunalta.net/imagine)**



**DID YOU KNOW** that the “public realm” is publicly owned places and spaces that belong to and are accessible by everyone? It includes places and spaces like roads, sidewalks, parks, plazas, pathways and community buildings.

# CAPITAL PROJECTS

Strategic growth and investment are our way forward to expand our economy, create jobs and enhance quality of life. Highlighted are a few of the exciting major capital infrastructure projects we've been working on to support the long-term recovery and the future sustainability of our city.



Once complete, Arts Commons and the resident companies will annually generate \$59M to Calgary GDP and support 743 full time jobs.

## Arts Commons Transformation

As the catalyst project for the [Culture + Entertainment District](#), the transformation will expand capacity in a new building and upgrade the existing Arts Commons facility in order to continue to make a positive economic and social impact.

## BMO Centre Expansion

An expanded BMO Centre provides Calgary with an event venue that will attract large international and national conventions and conferences. As a priority capital project that is already underway, the BMO Centre expansion highlights The City's dedication to invest in our community and Calgary's future.

## Glenbow Museum Reimagined

This project will renovate the interior and exterior of all 8 floors of the existing building with a focus on accessibility and new and diverse experiences.

Upon completion in 2024, the BMO Centre will be the largest meetings facility in Western Canada.

The Green Line LRT will add 46 km of LRT track to the existing 59 km LRT system.



## Green Line LRT Stage 1

The largest infrastructure investment in our city's history with \$4.9 billion in commitments from the Government of Canada, Government of Alberta and City of Calgary. Stage 1 will create 20,000 jobs and build the first 20km core of the 46km Green Line LRT vision. Green Line will expand Calgary's transit network and be a platform for long-term city building encouraging redevelopment and investment.

## Bonnybrook Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades and Expansion

We are investing over \$1 billion in a program of extensive upgrades and expansions to the Bonnybrook Wastewater Treatment Plant, to protect the environment and accommodate our city's future growth.



## MNP Community and Sport Centre

We are investing \$45 million in aquatic leisure amenities at MNP Community and Sport Centre (formerly Repsol) to provide a wider range of recreation programs and services to meet the needs of the greater downtown area, surrounding communities, and all Calgarians.

## Downtown Calgary Development Incentive Program

City Council committed \$100 million to support downtown building owners in the conversion of vacant office space to residential uses. The first three projects are expected to remove ~414,000 square feet of office space to create an estimated 400 homes.

## Calgary Zoo Canadian Wilds Redevelopment Project

This is the first major revitalization of this area of the Zoo since the 1980s with the objective of advancing animal welfare, conservation education, environmental sustainability and creating a unique visitor experience.

## Main Streets

The City has developed streetscape master plans to transform a number of Calgary's main streets to allow for strategic growth, investment, and increased vibrancy, safety and diversity of public spaces where Calgarians come together.

# PROVIDING AN EDGE UP FOR CALGARIANS TRANSITIONING TO CAREERS IN TECH



Calgarians are renowned for their ability to adapt to challenges in an ever-changing world. When oil prices plunged in 2016 and the energy sector restructured, Diana Wong Doolan was among many in Calgary's highly educated workforce suddenly out of work and looking at new career options.

To enable more people to secure jobs in the digital economy, one program from Calgary Economic Development gives displaced energy professionals like Diana an edge up in the transition to in-demand jobs. [The Energy to Digital Growth Education and Upskilling Project](#) (EDGE UP) provides retraining for displaced professionals specifically for jobs in Calgary's growing digital economy. The program aims to retain local talent in all stages of their career and help them continue to make valuable contributions to Calgary's economic recovery, vital for long-term prosperity.

"I looked at the [EDGE UP] program and it seemed like a good fit to emphasize my transferable skills," says Diana, who holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, a Master of Engineering from

the University of Calgary, and worked in the energy sector for over a decade. "I was looking for an opportunity to expand my skills and be able to rebrand and market myself as being capable of being able to land a role in tech."

EDGE UP launched in 2019 with support from Future Skills Canada, ICT Canada, local post-secondary institutions, and employers. It is a model for cities in Canada to test new approaches to skills development and is one of several micro-credentialling programs that have emerged in Calgary in recent years including Lighthouse Labs and NPower Canada.

The EDGE UP pilot program worked with 98 displaced mid-career professionals to help fill some of the thousands of tech jobs being created in all sectors of Calgary's economy. EDGE UP 2.0 recently launched with 320 training places and more training streams.

Employers in Calgary have an unrelenting need for tech talent and prefer to hire locals, creating a demand for short-term skills development programs. Diana is one example of many Calgarians who have transitioned to a new career in tech. Through the program, Diana is now a graduate of EDGE UP's Full Stack Software Development program.

Diana now works for Benevity, one of the half dozen \$1-billion unicorn tech companies that have emerged in Calgary in recent years. She is using her hybrid of professional acumen and new skills in software development. Programs like EDGE UP and grads like Diana are a testament to Calgary's resilient and entrepreneurial spirit.

"Continuing to know that just because you're having a bad day doesn't mean you don't have anything to offer. You were good in your role before, and you'll be good again. It's building the momentum to having those successes," she says.

The economic challenges of the last few years and the challenges that persist today have reinforced for Diana and others the value of resilience and the importance of a future-focused strategy to succeed in a changing world.

"Trying to get people who are transitioning to see and value the transferable skills they have, but also getting potential employers to recognize and be open to those transferable skills will help accelerate Calgary's growth in filling jobs, creating new companies and bringing more opportunities to the city," explains Diana.

Talent and tech innovation are major focuses of the economic strategy [Calgary in the New Economy](#) and together they are enablers of a more diverse and resilient economy.

"Tech is pervasive in our lives everywhere. In all our jobs, in all industries, it is necessary to have more technology," Diana concludes. "As things continue to evolve, I think having the resilience of surviving whatever happens to you gives you the confidence to say I have more control than I think."

**"EDGE-UP helped provide the confidence to network and reach out to people in tech," says Diana. "There were multiple benefits of participating in the program, the technical training was one part, but the connection and relationship building with the people in my cohort provided a network I am still connected to."**

# LOOK AHEAD

## JULY

[Inglewood Night Markets](#)  
Jul – Sep

[4<sup>th</sup> Street Night Markets](#)  
Jul-Sep

[Calgary Stampede](#)  
Jul 8-17

[The Roundup Music Fest](#)  
Jul 13

[Oxford Stomp](#)  
Jul 15

[Calgary Folk Music Festival](#)  
Jul 21-24

[Blackfest](#)  
Jul 23

[Calgary International Blues Festival](#)  
Jul 25-31

[Full Bloom Fest](#)  
Aug 12-13

[Weekly Pop-up Farm Stands](#)  
until Oct

## AUGUST

[Shaw Charity Classic 2022](#)  
Aug 3-7

[Taste of Calgary](#)  
Aug 4-7

[Water Lantern Peace Ceremony](#)  
Aug 6

[Carifest](#)  
Aug 12-13

[Franco Festival Calgary](#)  
Aug 13

[Omatsuri Japanese Festival](#)  
Aug 13

[Marda Gras Street Festival](#)  
Aug 14

[GlobalFest](#)  
Aug 18-27

[Chinatown Street Festival](#)  
Aug 20

[Expo Latino](#)  
Aug 20

[Pride Week](#)  
Aug 26 – Sep 4



## SEPTEMBER

[Beat Beethoven fun run](#)  
Sep 8

[Calgary Corporate Challenge September Games](#)  
Sep 9-24

[Honens Festival](#)  
Sep 8-11

[Calgary International Film Festival](#)  
Sep 22- Oct 2

[Gender Equality Week](#)  
Sep 18-24

[National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Orange Shirt Day](#)  
Sep 30

[Alberta Culture Days](#)  
Sep 1 to 30

## ALL SUMMER

[Summer Neighbourhood Nature Challenge](#)

Explore, play, observe and learn about the wonders of nature in your own neighbourhood.

[Free community outdoor summer programs](#)

Explore fun, FREE activities for children, youth, adults, and families. These safe, supervised programs are great for making new friends and learning new activities.

[Arts Commons ArtsXpeditions](#)

Live concert and performance pop-ups in all quadrants of the city.

*This list is not exhaustive.*

# HAVE YOUR SAY



## Mission Bridge Rehabilitation

Online public engagement to understand citizen priorities for improving the user-experience on Mission Bridge.

**Until Jul 13**



## Indian Residential School Permanent Memorial

The City of Calgary is creating a permanent memorial in honour of Indian Residential School Survivors and the thousands of children who never returned home. At this time, this engagement process is focused on gathering input from Indigenous community members and Indigenous-serving community agencies and organizations.

**Until Jul 29**

## Playgrounds - Building Accessible and Inclusive Play Spaces

Seeking feedback on playground builds to inform potential features in future designs.

**Until Aug 31**

Visit [calgary.ca/engage](https://calgary.ca/engage) to join the conversation.

## Back Lanes Resurfacing

The City is conducting research within selected pilot site locations to better understand how Calgarians use their back lane and in consideration of environmental and maintenance alternatives to gravel.

**Until Sep 15**

