

# Better Every Day



▲ Rowena, Martin, Joan and Kevin



**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 ancestral and traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, and homeland to the Métis Nation Battle River Territory (District 5 and 6), 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), *Otos-kwunee* (Métis) and *Guts-ists-i* (Tsuut'ina)

CALGARY INCORPORATED  
AS A TOWN IN **1884**

POPULATION ESTIMATE 2023:  
**1,422,800**

**Lowest cost of living**  
of Canadian cities.

MERCER, 2023

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

ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT'S GLOBAL  
LIVEABILITY INDEX 2023

**Friendliest city**

in the world. CONDÉ NAST 2023  
READERS CHOICE  
AWARDS

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

As summer comes to an end, it's a great time to reflect on the successes and challenges we faced in the past months. We came together to respond to the initial break on the Bears paw South Feeder Main, to address the hotspots in need of immediate repair and we're once again coming together in a planned manner to conduct additional repairs to ensure water continues to flow safely to Calgarians. We hosted a record-breaking Stampede. We broke ground for our new event centre, Scotia Place. We helped our neighbours fleeing the tragic Jasper wildfire. These are just a few of the projects we tackled, and they all demonstrate how collaboration, resiliency and determination are essential in the face of adversity.

These qualities also apply when it comes to our approach for downtown revitalization, which brings us to the theme of this edition of *Better Every Day*. When you think of the economic recovery of downtown Calgary, occupancy rates and office towers often dominate the conversation. It's easy to forget that revitalization goes beyond real estate. We need to make downtown a place where people are excited to live, work, play, visit and set up a business. A key part of Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan is dedicated to creating vibrancy.

Through Calgary Economic Development's Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund, we're also working to make strategic investments in cutting-edge technology spaces that will incubate local talent while attracting global attention.

In this issue, we'll introduce you to the people and projects that are building a true feeling of vibrancy in downtown Calgary. From a new esports arena and riverside improvements to addressing food insecurity, you might find yourself pleasantly surprised at the unique ways vibrancy is growing in our core. I hope these stories inspire you to explore one of our city's greatest urban playgrounds this fall.

David Duckworth, P. Eng, MBA







# WHERE HISTORY MEETS MODERN DESIGN: A NEW VISION FOR RIVERWALK WEST



If a picture paints a thousand words, then the Bow River must paint a million. As Jared Tailfeathers looks at the flowing waters near the Louise Bridge at 10th Street SW, he knows this area holds thousands of years of history and stories of the Blackfoot people.

“These places where there are bridges and crossings, there would be lots of meetings happening for trading, ceremonies and things like that,” explains Tailfeathers. “There are a whole bunch of important sites in and around here, even a couple of buffalo jumps down the river.”

Now the next chapter of the Bow’s story is set to begin with the new RiverWalk West redevelopment project, with Tailfeathers playing an important role as historian and Indigenous Placemaking consultant.

He’s part of a dedicated team of designers, landscape architects and planners behind the award-winning plan for the area: *Exchange – Realizing RiverWalk West*.

With goals to enhance vibrancy and accessibility, the design aims to improve the pathway system along the Bow River’s southwest bank by seamlessly connecting the East Village to the west end of downtown past 14th Street SW. It will also create new areas for people to gather and experience the river in unique ways while harmonizing flood mitigation.

“It’s a nice marriage of traditional and contemporary,” Tailfeathers explains. “There will be some revitalized nature walk sites and river art with natural elements. So that calls back to some traditional methods of making. There’s going to be lots of markers of points where it was really important, and there will be some public art to go along with that.”



Containing a restaurant, a takeout window, washroom and changeroom, the amenity pavilion is embedded in the landscape and the design logic of the pathway.







**As part of the Greater Downtown Plan, this project helps achieve the strategic moves needed to better serve Calgarians while protecting the natural edge of the Bow River. Honouring and integrating the ecosystem and history of the area is at the heart of the concept.**



**DID YOU KNOW?**

The river pathway system connects Calgarians to **700 kilometres** of scenic pathways.



That's roughly the same distance as driving from Calgary to Edmonton and back!

The design of RiverWalk West is the winner of Calgary's first public realm design competition. Typically, the process entails a Request For Proposal (RFP) but instead there was an international call for ideas. A group of five finalists were shortlisted and given a grant to come up with a unique approach to revitalize the area.

"The result was a really exciting and innovative plan, it opened possibilities for looking deeper into the site than the restrictions of an RFP," explains Tamara Marajh, project manager with urban community systems. "The site is really complicated. This team was able to explore that site and figure out how to make it work and get the results from the greater downtown plan that we really wanted to see in such a restricted and confined space."

In a unanimous decision by a jury of diverse and expert professionals, *Exchange – Realizing RiverWalk West*, was selected.

"The design is compelling, founded in the cultural and historical influence on the site. It tells a story of recognizing everyone's voice, both past and present," the jury said in a statement. "We were impressed with the level of consultation and the inclusive nature of the Indigenous and colonial histories that were well represented to move us in the right direction."

Joyce Tang was a member of the jury and works for The City as the leader of greater downtown in public space delivery. She says the design gives this popular area some much needed improvement to create more inviting public spaces for Calgarians.

"If you were to walk down this area as a pathway user or a cyclist or a family who's trying to picnic in the area, you may feel that you're invading a roadway environment. It's very auto centric, it doesn't feel very safe," explains Tang.

"There's a lot of overgrown vegetation and just not an opportunity for people to want to stay. It really is a chance to provide more equitable spaces for everyone, whether you're living or visiting or working in the downtown," she adds.

The project even gained national recognition with a 2024 National Urban Design award from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada for Urban Design Plans.

Greg Stewart is part of the project's design team and a partner with local architecture and planning firm, Ground Cubed, and says the award is a huge honour.

"It was incredible," says Stewart. "It goes back to being an unapologetically local team. First of all, being recognized locally for that design strength, and then when it went to a National Urban Design Award, it really did a wonderful thing. Just such a proud moment for Calgary's design community."

From extended boardwalks to intimate trails, the new concept features unique ways to interact with the river.

"The design really is a curated experience as you move from east to west or west to east," explains Stewart. "It allows people to experience the river in different ways. In some cases, we're taking you right down to the water, experiencing it. You're in it. In others, it's a very light and sensitive approach to the ecosystem, where you're up on an elevated boardwalk in with the ability to bird watch and be immersed in nature."





▲ Michael, Joyce, Greg, Jared and Tamara



“We’re also looking for amenities that used to exist in and around our site. Calgary’s first municipal pool was in where Contemporary Calgary sits now. So, we wanted to bring back a municipal pool in a way that you could experience water in the river throughout the year, day and night. There’s also places for ceremonies to happen, where you could have an outdoor concert, an outdoor event, and have the river as your backdrop,” he adds.

Michael Zabinski is also part of the design team and the principal and co-founder of HEREBY architecture. With more office towers being converted to residential homes, he agrees reclaiming park space will have a big impact.

“Right now, there are a number of triangle pieces of land – city owned – that are severed from the river. By taking that lane of traffic away at fourth avenue, we increase the real estate of RiverWalk to create a full park as opposed to a single line of pathway,” says Zabinski.

“I think it’s really important for this neighbourhood – the downtown west and the future west village – to have the social infrastructure necessary. We’re seeing a lot of conversions of office buildings into residential buildings, but it’s never going to be a neighbourhood unless people have a place to come, gather, and enjoy each other. That’s what this project’s going to do,” he adds.

The RiverWalk West project team is now working to refine the conceptual design before construction can begin. An updated timeline is expected to be shared with Calgarians in late 2024.

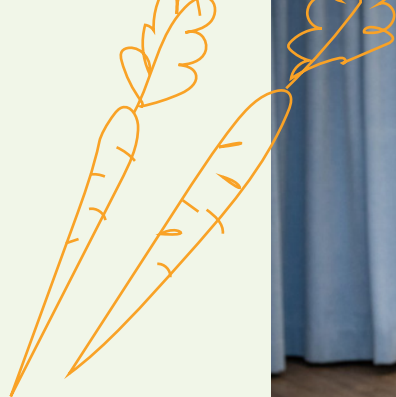
As the project gains momentum, Jared Tailfeathers looks forward to more opportunities to engage with the community to honour the deep-rooted history of the Bow River.

**“After the project really gets going, there will be a lot more community engagement, which will involve elders and knowledge keepers and ceremonialists, just to make sure that we’re doing it correctly,” says Tailfeathers. “Our histories are as important as the contemporary worldview.”** Eng

For more information, visit: [engage.calgary.ca/RiverWalkWest](https://engage.calgary.ca/RiverWalkWest)

# GROWING

## MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFFORDABLE PRODUCE



▲ Rowena

For those living with mobility or health issues, a trip to the grocery store can be stressful.

Factor in the rising prices at grocery stores and a simple errand becomes a daunting task.

This is the reality for many residents of Murdoch Manor, a low-income seniors' apartment building in the East Village housing over 300 people.

Communities like these are exactly why The City of Calgary's Farm Stand Program continues to grow and expand. By partnering with local farms and vendors, fresh and affordable produce is brought directly to where it's needed. The Farm Stand Program started as a partnership with Calgary Transit with six farm stands at various C-Train stations across the city. Since its launch in 2017, the program has expanded to over 30 locations at community hubs across the city, including Community Associations and Parks.

**"As a non-profit organization, we are tasked with bringing fresh, affordable fruits, vegetables and market fresh eggs to communities. We go to communities that might need a little bit of extra help with mobility issues, extra help with affordability, and so we do this on a regular basis,"** – Martin Robillard, route operator with Fresh Routes.

Fresh Routes is one of nine vendors in the program, offering a monthly pop-up market at Murdoch Manor and many other locations in and around Calgary. As a non-profit organization, Fresh Routes is a unique vendor in the program, focused on keeping costs low to make healthy food more accessible to Calgarians on a budget.

"We are tasked with bringing fresh, affordable fruits, vegetables and market fresh eggs to communities. We go to communities that might need a little extra help with mobility issues,

extra help with affordability, and so we do this on a regular basis," says Martin Robillard, Route Operator with Fresh Routes.

"We try as much as possible to charge about 20 – 25 per cent less on certain items. We look at our seasonal items too, so we're not going to bring things that are the same price as the grocery store, then what's the point?" He adds.

The Farm Stand Program is part of the CalgaryEATS! Food Action Plan. Endorsed by Council in 2012, the Food Action Plan contains 17 City actions to lead us toward a more sustainable and resilient food system.

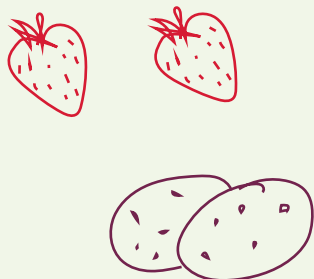
The City has been operating farm stands with local farmers and vendors at various community hubs since 2017, providing Calgarians with more options to purchase fresh food.

"I think it's important because of the food prices. That's a big issue. I think it's important for dignity as well," says Robillard.

The organization is also launching a pilot project called Fresh Routes Go, which is a weekly delivery service. This gives residents of Murdoch Manor and other communities the option to pre-order and have their produce delivered each week.

"I think it's important for nutrition for all communities, not just seniors' communities. There are people with mobility, anxiety or mental concerns that just don't want to be in a crowded grocery store or don't want to be on transit, don't want to be on the bus or walking. We bring all that to them and hopefully they take advantage of it," Robillard adds.

Before the construction of the East Village Real Canadian Superstore, the area was considered a food desert, meaning the community had little or no access to foods needed to maintain a healthy diet.





Rowena Williams has volunteered with Fresh Routes for over two years, inspired to help seniors struggling to access food in the East Village.

“First of all, I love volunteering because I like meeting people from different backgrounds. Plus, the East Village is my neighbourhood. I started volunteering when I realized that vegetables and fruit were so expensive,” explains Williams. “Most of the seniors here have mobility issues, like myself. Some people have wheelchairs, scooters, or a cane, so we did it for convenience for the seniors. It’s hard to travel if you don’t have a car.”

Depending on weather, Fresh Routes either sets up in Murdoch Manor’s garden area or dining hall.

“People are happy since they can get their fruits and vegetables and the price is right. They can come and get one banana for 25 cents or two sticks of celery and Martin treats them really good, so they’re happy,” adds Williams.

“The program increases face-to-face interaction between Calgarians and farmers, increasing appreciation for food producers and awareness of how food is grown,” explains Kristi Peters, Food Systems Planner with The City. “The Farm Stand Program helps to increase the resilience of our food system by creating sales opportunities for locally and regionally grown food, contributing to the local economy by keeping our spending dollars in the community, and supporting the success of local and regional producers.”

Farm stands launch across the city through May and June and most operate until Thanksgiving. As the summer continues, veggies and fruits will change as produce is ready for harvest. For more information on what veggies to expect at your farm stand and information on schedules and locations, visit [calgary.ca/LocalFood](http://calgary.ca/LocalFood). 



It’s something you wouldn’t expect to stumble across in the heart of downtown Calgary. What appears to be a beautifully painted shed along 221 12th Ave. S.W. actually plays an important role for those facing food insecurity.

Beyond a set of flowered turquoise doors, you’ll find a fully functional fridge nestled next to a pantry where donated food is available for anyone – 24/7 with no questions asked.

The Beltline Fridge and Pantry is a labour of love running on generous donations and the hard work of volunteers. The idea was sparked by community members who recognized a growing need for more food resources in the area. With no monitoring or registration, people are welcome to come by at any time to take what they need, no matter their situation.

“They come from all walks of life. We see a lot of elderly people come in, which is a lot of people in the community. We see people who are unhoused, but we also see your everyday people,” says Jessica Watson, planning committee member for the project.

“I’d say overall the impact has been pretty amazing. We strive to have food security available for anyone who needs it, but we’re also trying to reduce food waste and build the sense of solidarity and community,” she adds.

The pantry didn’t simply pop up overnight. In fact, it took over a year of planning and collaboration before it was able to officially launch in Oct. 2023.

“A lot of that time was getting the committee together – planning how we wanted to build the structure, working with different community associations on the location and with The City of Calgary to actually get the space available for us,” explains Watson. “We also worked with other groups to make sure we had something that was going to stay in place, stay strong and have a good user and volunteer base.”





Collaboration was key when bringing this project to life. Several members of The City and community worked together to secure the permits and funding to make it happen.

"This was really the optimal location for the group to locate the fridge, central to the community of Beltline, and it happens to be City property. I helped to navigate all those internal processes to be able to get the approvals," says Sarah Papineau, neighbourhood partnership coordinator.

"To hear some of the stories of the impact it's made on people having a meal – just the simple thing of having a meal – the rewards are well worth the investment on this project."

Community Social Worker, Silvia Ross, worked with residents and partners in the Beltline to address needs in the area, and creating a pantry was a clear way to support those in need of food.

"What this project has revealed is that there is food insecurity in our neighbourhood. It's not just food insecurity alone, like the lack of food, it's a bigger issue," explains Ross.

"However, this project, what it comes down to is the power of community. It's about how we've come together to address some of the immediate needs and mobilizing to get neighbours to help neighbours."

The pantry would not be possible without the help of volunteers like Harp Kaddoura, who is proud to play a role in keeping the area clean. He comes by every week to ensure the area is free of garbage and spills so visitors can have a positive experience.

**"I come, I clean up, and I do my part because I was there at one moment, and I needed help myself. So, it's time to give back to the community," explains Kaddoura. "This is the best thing that the Beltline needed, it helps lots of people down here, it's just amazing."**

The group is now asking for the support of Calgarians and local businesses to keep the shelves stocked. You can drop off items

including fresh food, canned and dry goods, bread, toiletries and pet food. For health and safety reasons, they can't accept raw meat or seafood, home-cooked meals, open or expired items, alcohol or food without labels.

Jessica Watson says making someone's day can be as simple as grabbing a few extra items while you're at the grocery store.

"One of the fun stories I had recently is I had gone and done some shopping for the fridge, and I just happened to pick up plain yogurt, cucumbers and some lemons. I came down and there was a lady here who was like, 'I just really want to make tzatziki, that's really what I'm hoping to make.' And I was like, I have everything you need. I've never seen a bigger smile than I saw that day."

Learn more about the continuous improvements we're making to City services like the Beltline Fridge and Pantry by visiting <https://www.calgary.ca/planning/community/beltline-investment-fund.html>





# GAME ON!



## NEW SPACES AT BOW VALLEY COLLEGE CULTIVATING TALENT AND COLLABORATION

◀ Bruno

Imagine packing up your entire life and moving to a new country – all for the promise of living and learning in a place where the latest technology thrives.

For Bruno Matarazzo, that's exactly what happened. He was accepted in to Bow Valley College's Advanced Game Development program, and it wasn't long before he moved his entire life from Brazil to Calgary.

"My wife and I basically moved in one month. We dropped our apartment and then sold everything," explains Matarazzo. "It was life changing and I'm super happy. I've dreamed about being here for so long."

That's why Matarazzo is excited to hear even more investments are being made in the school's technology spaces and programs.

After earning a four-year game design degree in Brazil and creating his own video game, he was struggling to take his concept to the next level and make industry connections.

"I already had this game that I'm still working on today, with four other friends in in Brazil and we were looking for like more opportunities to show it to the world," Matarazzo explains. "We talked with a few people and they said Bow Valley has this super cool course that's brand new. I looked up everything I was going to learn, and it seemed

interesting, with topics like Virtual Reality. I would never see that in Brazil,"

Bow Valley College is home to the new Digital Entertainment Nexus, which is set to become a world-class tech facility designed to take careers and companies to the next level. The space will feature Calgary's first esports arena along with state-of-the-art labs and technology — not only for students — but for entrepreneurs and businesses in the community.

"Knowing that Bow Valley is investing in these things, also gives me hope. Just having this contact with more technology, more information, teachers that know what they're talking about and know what they're doing. All of them, or most of them, are working in the industry which is very valuable as well," Matarazzo adds.

The creation of the Digital Entertainment Nexus was supported by a \$5.5 million investment by the Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF), realizing the need for an innovative technology training hub in downtown Calgary.

Created in 2018, OCIF is a \$100 million fund sourced from The City of Calgary's existing fiscal reserves to grow and diversify our economy, create jobs and training opportunities, and spur a wide range of private, non-profit and public sector investments in the city.





One of the most exciting elements is the construction of Calgary's first esports arena, which includes six gaming consoles, two racing simulators, a varsity space for teams to play, broadcast and live streaming rooms, a stage and much more.

Construction is now underway and expected to be complete in late September.

Michael Crowe is Bow Valley College's VP of Academic and says this new facility will help grow investment and collaboration in downtown Calgary.

"This is creating something that could have an impact on Calgary's economy, especially here in the downtown core. These new facilities will meet a number of student needs here on campus, but it really is about the community around us and welcoming that community onto campus," says Crowe.

"One of the things we really love about this project is it brings a new sector to the city. Calgary has a big reputation for several economic drivers, and the digital and entertainment arts sector is one that we think has a lot of potential," explains Crowe. "We're trying to nurture the talent and grow these early startup businesses so that we have another impactful economic sector driving Calgary's economy. To be part of that is really exciting for us."

Jeff Clemens is the associate dean of the Centre for Entertainment Arts at Bow Valley College and says the combination of new programs and new technology will help fill the tech-talent gap.

"In the past few years, we've launched six new programs at the college, we're able to kind of build up the industry here, building up the VFX, building up the 3D animation, film, gaming. Just some really cool places where students can come where they really didn't have that specialization before. It's something where we can bring our students into the industry and they can fill in a lot of those gaps," says Clemens.

With the global popularity of esports growing, having an arena will help put Calgary on the map to host large scale events as well.



▲ Jeff and Michael

## According to The City of Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan, the startup community is expected to triple the size of the tech sector in the city and create 30,000 new jobs by 2031.

"I believe the League of Legends esports Championship actually had more viewers than Superbowl which is crazy," explains Clemens. "The more we build our industry, the more we say, hey, Calgary is really here, and we're investing in it. The more we build up our credit in this field, I think the bigger the events we'll be able to get and the more we'll be able to add to it."

Collaboration opportunities for esports business and game development are already underway thanks to Bow Valley's accelerator program. The two streams – Game Development and Esports Business – are designed to give students and local companies the opportunity to work together to solve problems and create new concepts.


Bow Valley College is looking for 20 companies in the Fall of 2024 and an additional 30 companies for the Winter of 2025, when a third stream, Film and Animation, will be added.

"When people want to start an esports league or potentially create an IT company to support esports, we'll have our accelerator to bring them in and actually give them that opportunity to build out their company, and support them through that process," adds Clemens.

The Digital Entertainment Nexus will also include a new cutting-edge motion capture lab, supported by a \$195 thousand research grant from the federal government's Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

This lab will feature technology that records movement and applies it to a 3D model used in industries like gaming, animation, film and television. Local esports teams can also use the technology to improve player performance.

As for students like Bruno Matarazzo, he's excited to continue learning in the heart of the action and make more connections in Calgary's bustling gaming community.

"I'm grateful for the opportunities they gave to me to just go there and present my game to more people and then just meet people here with different goals." 

For more information on investments in Calgary's downtown, visit [calgary.ca/Downtown](https://calgary.ca/Downtown).



# LOOK AHEAD

*This list is not exhaustive.*

## SEPTEMBER

### Alberta Culture Days

Sep 1 – 30

### 1616 Hyundai Hockeyfest: Calgary

Sep 8

### RBC Race for the Kids

Sep 8

### Taste of Italy Festival

Sep 8

### Honens Piano Festival

Sep 9 – 11

### Monster Jam Calgary

Sep 14 – 15

### Calgary International Film Festival

Sep 21 – 29

### Curling Canada Pointsbet Invitational

Sep 25 – 29

### Calgary Fall Home Show

Sep 27 – 29

### All My Relations Healing Powwow

Sep 28

### Orange Shirt Day

Sep 30

## OCTOBER

### Calgary Career Fair and Training Expo

Oct 2

### Spruce Meadows Oktoberfest

Oct 2 – 6

### Calgary Police Half Marathon

Oct 6

### Screamfest

Oct 6 – 31

### Fall Gluten-free Market

Oct 12

### Wordfest's Imaginarium

Oct 16 – 21

### Rocky Mountain Wine & Food Festival

Oct 18 – 19

### YYC Travel Show

Oct 20

