

Better Every Day



THE CITY MANAGER'S QUARTERLY REPORT ISSUE 1

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 Blackfoot name of this place is *Moh'kins'tsis*, which we know as Calgary.

CALGARY INCORPORATED
AS A TOWN IN:

1884

POPULATION:

1,306,700

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

(THE ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT)

MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

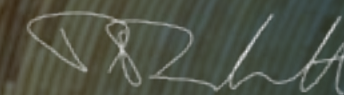
I'm excited to share the first edition of *Better Every Day* as part of my new quarterly reports. Through *Better Every Day*, I hope to share stories and information with you about The City of Calgary, our organization, and the amazing things happening in and around our city.

For our first edition, I thought it would be timely to share stories of compassion and highlight the importance of being kind and caring during times of global uncertainty and unrest. We often hear through the media about exceptional acts of compassion from City employees — from police officers buying lunches for those who are hungry and paying for groceries; Fire staff shoveling walks for the elderly; Transit drivers assisting riders in distress; or employees at the Haddon Roads Depot scooping and securing pickle mixture into a vehicle for a citizen with a disability. Most times, these acts are portrayed as the exception rather than the rule, but we know differently. Anyone who works for The City knows that these acts of kindness and caring are, in fact, the rule.

As public servants, we hold ourselves to a high standard. We have a deep sense of purpose for helping others. City employees understand our organization's contribution to the community, and that understanding creates a deep sense of pride that we feel as we go about and do our daily work.

Compassionate behaviour is consistent with our 4Cs of character, competence, commitment and collaboration. In the midst of upheaval — the global impact of COVID-19, the economic downturn facing our city, conversations and activism around systemic racism — our commitment to compassion and to making life better every day is now more important than ever.

As a municipal organization, we have shown resilience and our ability to adapt and work innovatively with others during these challenging times, but also as part of our regular service delivery. I know we have many stories to tell. I hope you enjoy a few examples as told from the point of view of our citizens and employees that display how much we care about our work, our stakeholders, and our city.



David Duckworth, P. Eng, MBA



KEEPING CONNECTED WITH CALGARY'S YOUTH

Looking for work during a pandemic is difficult, and 18-year-old Peter admits he's a procrastinator. The recent high school graduate is just not sure what he wants to do next, and confesses that procrastinating seems to be an easier avenue than figuring it all out.

"At first when I graduated high school I didn't know what I was going to do and was thinking about nursing," Peter says. "I started to upgrade my chemistry but that was misguided. I realize now that I think I want to do accounting. My sister is an accountant and it looks like a good start... it seems like a solid foundation."

Peter says he feels fortunate to have found a job at a fast food restaurant, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, hours and shifts have been reduced to an extent where he's decided he needs a second job.

Peter was nudged into looking into the services of The City of Calgary's Youth Employment Centre (YEC) by his sister after she was approached by Eric, a youth employment counsellor, in her northwest community. Eric and other counsellors work with youth like Peter to assist them in building the skills necessary to find employment and link them with potential job opportunities.

Youth unemployment is usually double that of the adult population and sat at a troubling 21.8 per cent in the Calgary region as of October 2020. Pre-COVID, youth would come to the downtown YEC location to receive support. But with the pandemic, youth employment counsellors had to

"WE RE-EVALUATED THINGS DURING COVID, WE DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO GO AND MEET WITH THOSE YOUTH... RIGHT WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITY; WHEN RESTRICTIONS WERE SOMEWHAT LIFTED, WE WERE ABLE TO MEET INDIVIDUALLY IN OUTDOOR SPACES."

– ERIC, YOUTH COUNSELLOR



Youth counsellor Eric speaks with a young Calgarian about employment opportunities.

WHERE DO THESE POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS COME FROM?

EMPLOYERS THAT ONCE HEAVILY RELIED ON RECRUITMENT ASSISTANCE FROM THE YEC ARE NOW RECEIVING HUNDREDS OF JOB APPLICATIONS FROM A VERY DEEP TALENT POOL DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, AND NOW MANY YOUTH FIND THEMSELVES COMPETING WITH UNEMPLOYED ADULTS.



Jennifer talks to an employer at the Youth Employment Centre.

adjust their approach to ensure the safety of citizens and the YEC team while continuing to maintain operations to support youth in this very challenging time. Instead of youth visiting the YEC, compassionate counsellors started meeting youth literally on the streets of their communities and introducing them to the services available.

Using census data and analysis, the centre also performed outreach to youth like Peter in specific communities where they found there were higher incidences of disengagement from employment, education or training.

"We were looking to connect with a group of youth that we refer to as 'opportunity youth,'" says Eric. "[These youth] were identified because they were not in school, not employed and not in some sort of training. They are more at risk than their peers as they weren't necessarily getting access to the information that other youth might get. These youth tend to be harder to reach, it takes more time and maybe a bit more innovation, but we do this because we care."

"We re-evaluated things during COVID," continues Eric. "We decided that it would be best to go and meet with those youth...right within their community; when restrictions were somewhat lifted, we were able to meet individually in outdoor spaces."

During the changing health guidelines and restrictions over the past year, the team began to rely more heavily on electronic and social media platforms to communicate with youth and to build relationships. Though Eric says doing employability assessments and questionnaires over text and email has been a bit challenging, Peter thought that the process was simple and friendly.

"You are now having to do that over email or text and still trying to keep questions clear and concise while trying to be cool and relatable," laughs Eric. "But to be able to show that we have a team on board that is willing to use FaceTime or Teams or WhatsApp to connect... I think it has been fantastic and I am sure that we'll be keeping some of these tools. [It is challenging] not being able to meet a person face-to-face at times, yet still build a rapport, still build trust in talking about their barriers to employment, their goals, and identifying a plan."

Peter says he is very appreciative of the services offered through the YEC. "My resume is pretty lack lustre and it wasn't really up to date," admits Peter. "Looking at the way Eric modified it made me realize I need to be more of an adult about these things and come across more professional and not be lazy when I try to express myself."

After completing an employability assessment with Eric to help determine Peter's interests and experience, Peter was surprised at how quickly he was provided a list of potential employers to apply to.

"A big thing in applying for a job — you can just send out everywhere — but, as I like to procrastinate, it was nice to get a list from Eric of places that were actually hiring," says Peter.


Where do these potential employers come from? Employers that once heavily relied on recruitment assistance from the YEC are now receiving hundreds of job applications from a very deep talent pool due to the pandemic, and now many youth find themselves competing with unemployed adults.

"WE HAVE HAD TO BECOME MORE CREATIVE IN HOW WE ENTICE EMPLOYERS TO PARTNER WITH US."

— JENNIFER, A COMMUNITY LIAISON FOR THE YEC

"We offer prescreening to streamline the process and to save time. We take the time to understand the culture of our employers so our counsellors are able to put forward ideal candidates," she says.

Typically, the YEC hosts a large hiring fair each March with over 90 employers and youth attendance numbers around 5,000. Recognizing the significant challenges for youth to secure work, a smaller virtual hiring event was organized this year with the aim to fill 140 positions. Youth were able to interview with employers at the virtual event, in real time.

"Connecting with employers and hooking me up to an information fair about employment opportunities was great," says Peter. "After talking to one company, I was really surprised at how interested I was in working there and wouldn't have thought of applying there on my own. Through the Youth Employment Centre, my resume gets flagged, which it probably wouldn't have been if I had just happened to apply on my own. Getting that interview is so crucial." 



Youth counsellor Eric speaks with a young Calgarian about employment opportunities.



Manuela reads an application form, YEC Hiring Fair in 2015.

Youth Employment Calgary Economic Region



Ages 15 to 24

OCTOBER 2020:

Total employment
95,600

Unemployment rate
21.8%

- The Youth Employment Centre (YEC) is open year round and offers free employment and career services to all youth ages 15–24.
- YEC partners with hundreds of local employers to support their hiring needs and to connect youth with a variety of job opportunities.
- To get connected to YEC visit youthemploymentcentre.ca

A DOG WITH TWO TALES

Rosa the Irish Setter is no stranger to Calgary Animal Services. The energetic nine-year-old was recently rescued from the Bow River during a tragic incident where her dog walker entered the river to save the struggling Rosa who had been chasing geese along the riverbank and broke through the ice. The caring and conscientious dog walker was overcome by the powerful current.

As he reflects upon that day and the loss of his longtime friend, Rosa's owner, Gordon, grieves about the events that unfolded from when Rosa was picked up that morning.

"That day I had a meeting until 7 p.m. and strangely, Rosa wasn't home yet," Gordon explains. "My phone rang and it was Animal Services saying they had Rosa and could I come pick her up. They were actually closed, but they said they would stay until I could come."

The City was able to identify Gordon as Rosa's owner through the licensing program. Once he arrived at Animal Services, it was then that Gordon learned about the death of his friend and how Rosa was pulled from the river.


"Rosa was rescued by EMS and they took her to Animal Services as she was severely hypothermic," Gordon recounts. "There was a team of veterinary staff waiting for her and they rejuvenated her and warmed her up. That is not as easy as it sounds; you have to do it slowly and carefully."

"I am so grateful to them that in this time of great human tragedy and how things would be triaged, someone thought to rescue my dog. It was so unexpected and sad. But in light of what happened that day, getting Rosa home was so appreciated."

Gordon also expresses his appreciation to Animal Services for their care of Rosa during the 2013 flood where he was forced to evacuate his home in the inner city for safety precautions and had to lodge with a family member.

"It was not easy to find boarding at 11 o'clock at night when the Calgary Police Service is knocking on your door, asking you to leave your premises," says Gordon. "I phoned Calgary Animal Services and asked if I could bring Rosa there. They were so good, they took her in, made her comfortable and let me know she could stay as long as we needed."

That stay ended up being five days.



THE CITY WAS ABLE TO IDENTIFY GORDON AS ROSA'S OWNER THROUGH THE LICENSING PROGRAM.

Photo (right) Rosa after intake, with Registered Veterinary Technician Sonja. Rosa is in the initial phase of hypothermia treatment here.





ROSA IS RESTING IN THE KENNEL. SHE IS BEING TREATED FOR HYPOTHERMIA WITH AN EQUATOR® CONVECTIVE WARMING SYSTEM.

“AND IN THE PAST YEAR WE ALSO HOUSED ANIMALS FROM COVID POSITIVE OWNERS. SOME OF THOSE CITIZENS NEEDED TO BE HOSPITALIZED, SO WE TOOK IN THEIR PETS WHILE THEY GOT WELL.” – DR. CHEEMA

“I was so very grateful. When I got [Rosa] back she was happy, healthy and had been cared for,” says Gordon. “The money I spend on registering and licensing the dogs is the best money ever spent.”

Pet licensing is not only essential to the reunification of treasured pets like Rosa, the fees are partially used to fund medical services for injured or sick animals. The City of Calgary Animal Services Centre Clinic plays a vital role in the health and well-being of stray, lost and impounded animals. All impounded animals where an owner is not identified receive a detailed general physical exam after intake. They are then vaccinated, dewormed and, if needed, spayed/neutered before being put forward for adoption. The centre also has capabilities for dentistry, in-house diagnostics and a wide range of surgeries such as orthopedic, abdominal and ear and eye procedures.

The clinic is also a teaching facility for the University of Calgary Veterinary Medicine program, offering student training for shelter medicine and surgery rotations.

“Our team provides very compassionate care for the well-being of these animals with the outcome of reuniting the pet to the citizen, or finding an adoption home,” says City veterinarian Dr. Jagjit Cheema, who leads a team of six technicians and five animal care shelter assistants. “Providing an animal a second chance at life is very rewarding.”

The passionate Dr. Cheema explains that the centre also provides safekeeping of animals for owners who are deceased, hospitalized, incarcerated or affected by natural disasters.

“In 2013, with the flood, our clinic housed a lot of pets that had nowhere else to go,” says

Dr. Cheema. “And in the past year we also housed animals from COVID-positive owners. Some of those citizens needed to be hospitalized, so we took in their pets while they got well.”

The City’s licensing program is often talked about at North American conferences and is held up as a leading example of how fees can fund compassionate services to serve a city’s animal population and citizens.

“It feels very good, and I am proud when we see our hard work pay off. The City’s foresight in funding its own medical clinic can just do wonders,” says Dr. Cheema.



IN 2020:

- 651 spay neuter surgeries performed for animals placed for adoption
- Reunited 1322 cats and dogs with their owners
- The health team performed 185 dental procedures
- Dr. Cheema performed 1058 surgeries



DID YOU KNOW:

The City of Calgary is the only municipality in North America that provides free spaying and neutering surgeries to pets of low income residents?

“THE MONEY I SPEND ON REGISTERING AND LICENSING THE DOGS IS THE BEST MONEY EVER SPENT.”

– GORDON



NINTH AND BRICK CURATING COMMUNITY



Gerri reviews an art piece from a local artist.

Walking in to Ninth and Brick in the heart of historic Inglewood, you immediately notice the unique, quality handcrafted items on offer, made with love, ingenuity and a hint of nostalgia. Owner Gerri is an old soul that perfectly complements the warmth of the shop surroundings, set in a century-old building, with creaking wood floors and walls that whisper timeworn stories. And, just as The City of Calgary is keen to support small business through the economic downturn and the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic, so is Gerri.

At the heart of Ninth and Brick is the curation of a space that feels like a community, bringing together Calgary-owned businesses and local artisans in a creative collective to grow and thrive. Her small business supports even smaller businesses by providing them a 'bricks and mortar' sales channel that offers low rent and even lower risk. Especially now in this pandemic environment, Gerri's business model is a life raft to her community of vendors as many sell their products through local markets, restricted through much of the pandemic.

Gerri modestly credits her close-knit community of vendors as the key to surviving the pandemic. "We have a great group of people that helped support me in the store," Gerri says. "Because we work on a rental system [vendors rent space from Gerri], without their help we wouldn't be here. Giving them a space to be creative and create as they feel the need to — it helps them to remain here and help support the community we are growing."

Gerri also attributes her resilience to growing up as a Black woman where negative experiences only served to strengthen her resolve to succeed and become a role model in the business community.

"Now I am in a place where I am comfortable using my platform. It is important to have representation," Gerri says. "Every week I get somebody messaging me — they are starting a new business. They understand that they can use their platform to be who they are, and they say watching me has helped them. Hearing that feedback is incredible. It took me a long time to get here, but I am glad people are receptive."

Gerri says she is driven to give back to the community and lift up others in doing so.

Gerri speaks highly of the business-friendly environment The City strives to create.

"BY USING THE HASHTAG #SUPPORTLOCALYYC — THE CITY REALLY GAVE US THE PLATFORM TO GROW IT AND DIRECT PEOPLE TO SMALL BUSINESS SPECIFICALLY."





"I want to work with likeminded people. Understanding the lessons the last year has shown us — we are all slowing down, we are seeking more time and realizing that people are brands. We need to portray our belief systems and be the community we want to be a part of."

Gerri notes that over the years it has gotten easier to start up a business with The City streamlining processes. While setting up a new business can be intimidating, Gerri says that once she found her perfect location along Ninth Avenue, with The City's assistance and support, it was fairly simple to work through the startup process.

"Business is never easy and you learn the hard way sometimes," Gerri laughs. "But because we had a business before, we already knew what to expect. It is definitely easier from the first time we started a business. I prefer to go in person and the people at the walk-up counter were so helpful. They told us what we needed and helped us get started. Now you go down on your first day with all the paperwork — much easier than having to go back and forth five times. It is also great that The City has a ton of stuff online."

Gerri speaks highly of the business-friendly environment The City strives to create. "The business fees and licensing are totally affordable for a city of this size," she says.

She also notes the success of participating in the Support Local program that The City organized before the pandemic. "We have really built on that. By using the hashtag #SupportLocalYYC — The City really gave us the platform to grow it and direct people to small business specifically."

As a positive and influential community builder, dedicated to making the world more compassionate and inclusive, Gerri says, "It's easy to be 'anti' and negative, but if you want to build a business in Calgary you have to work with The City. Provide feedback — they are willing to listen."



DID YOU KNOW:

The City waived \$17.6M in business licence and related fees for new and renewing businesses for a period of two years starting March 2021?



Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic has been tough for businesses. We're here to help. The City has provided support for businesses including:

As of March 2021,
waiving business licence-related fees for a period of two years to support 40,000 businesses in Calgary.

Allocating over \$4.2M

in provincial and federal COVID-19 recovery funding toward Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).

All 6,044 businesses

located within the BIAs had a one-time credit equal to their 2021 BIA tax bill applied to their account.



Encouraging Calgarians to buy local, supporting shops and services through our ongoing #SUPPORTLOCALYYC CAMPAIGN



Providing hundreds of small businesses and artists with free online stores through ShopHERE powered by Google, thanks to federal government support.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, waiving various permit fees for development and building totaling over **\$2.26M,** with deferred fees of over **\$2M in 2020.**



CONTINUING TO ALLOW PATIOS ON PUBLIC LAND,

prioritizing those applications, and waiving development permit, licence of occupation and temporary permission fees for 2020 and 2021.

Learn more about supports available to businesses during COVID-19 at calgary.ca/covid-business.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

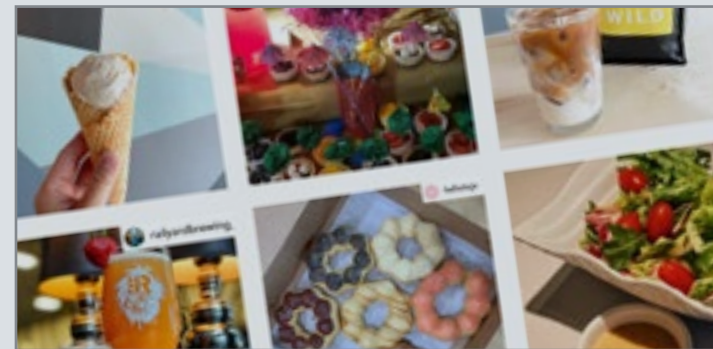


Thank you deeply on behalf of the merchants, businesses and companies and from the Board of Directors of the Chinatown BIA. The typical financial foundation from the previous business year does not exist for many, but these gifts will help soften the impacts to be felt this year and create business opportunities that will, hopefully, harvest greater business prosperity.

– **Grace Su**, Chinatown BIA Chair referencing *The City's 2021 Business Improvement Area tax levy relief*.

From the very beginning, from our licensing, to our development permits [for a patio], The City has been spectacular with us... we found The City very open for business. I think taking advantage of The City's approach would be really smart for any business owners right now.

– **Mike Dejong**, Owner and Head Brewer at Marda Loop Brewing Co. Photo (right) courtesy of Marda Loop Brewing Co.



The #SupportLocalYYC campaign which ran from March–December 2020, was the most successful social media awareness campaign in The City of Calgary's history. **The campaign generated over 16.5 million impressions with 115,000 positive reactions from citizens.**

Calgary was also the top city in Canada for the #SupportLocal hashtag on Twitter in April 2020.

The Calgary BBZs/BIA's are so very grateful for the innovative work of the COVID Executive Response Group in crafting a program that so elegantly puts money back in the pockets of our small and medium business owners. This is truly an inspiring idea on the part of this group and City Council.

– **Annie MacInnis**, Executive Director Kensington Business Revitalization Zone



LOOK AHEAD

APRIL

[Spring clean up](#) starts **mid-April** – watch for crews in your neighbourhood

[Calgary Economic Development Report to the Community](#)
April 15

[Tree Workshops – Pests and Disease](#)

April 20, 22 and 28

[Earth Day in Calgary](#)
April 22

[Community Nature Adventure Playground](#)
April 24

[Day of Mourning](#) – Workers Compensation Board of Alberta
April 28

[Assessment Request for Information \(ARFI\) period](#)
March–July 1



MAY

[Litter Cleanup Kits](#) for community cleanups are available for pick up.

New design guides to plant beautiful garden beds and more [YardSmart](#) tips

[Branching Out](#) tree planting program

[Wildflower seed mix](#) giveaway

Flood readiness: [flood and actions plan](#)

[Community Nature Adventure Playground](#)
May 8 and 22



JUNE

[2021 Mayor's Environment Expo](#)
Virtually **June 1–3, 2021**

[Community Nature Adventure Playground](#)
June 5 and 19

[Neighbour Day](#)
June 19

[Property tax](#) payment deadline
June 30

JULY

[Canada Day 2021](#)
July 1

[Community Nature Adventure Playground](#)
July 3

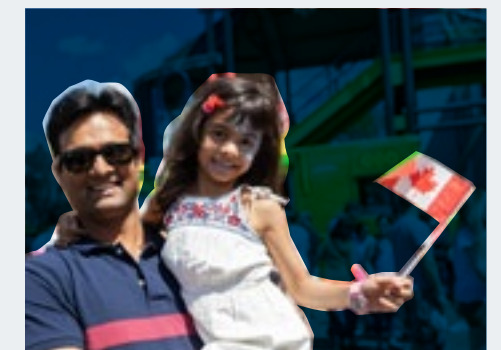
ANYTIME

[Volunteer with The City of Calgary](#)

Experiences include Off-Leash Ambassadors, Animal Wellness Support, Adopt-A-Park, Tour Guides and more!

[Community-based Calgary AfterSchool programs calendar](#)

Fun, safe and low-cost after school programs for children and youth.



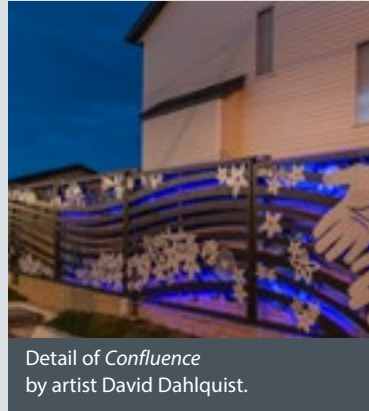
HAVE YOUR SAY



NORTHEAST PUBLIC ART

This project seeks to gather an understanding of public art priorities in northeast Calgary communities, including what public art would be most valued, and the economic and social benefits that might exist.

March 23 – April 19



Detail of *Confluence* by artist David Dahlquist.

THE FUTURE OF 16TH AVENUE

The Future of 16 Avenue N.W. combines a functional planning study and a Main Streets Streetscape Master plan through Montgomery. This is the REVEAL phase of the project in which the preferred design concepts will be shown to stakeholders which showcases how their feedback, along with technical analysis, was used. Stakeholders will be able to provide feedback on these design concepts.

April 12 – May 2

TOMORROW'S CHINATOWN

Tomorrow's Chinatown is a project to create the first cultural plan in coordination with a new local area plan (LAP) through collaboration with the Chinatown community. Working together, these new plans will help support Chinatown's future as a vibrant, culturally-rich place to live, visit, work, and do business, for generations to come.

May Landowner/Developer engagement sessions



ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

The City of Calgary is consolidating our environmental strategies to provide an updated vision for protecting and improving Calgary's environment into the future. Using input from phase 3, phase 4 engagement will invite Calgarians to provide input into prioritizing proposed environmental actions.

May 11 – 25



GREEN LINE LRT CONSTRUCTION

Green Line is developing a [Business Support Program](#) to help businesses and communities prepare for and manage the potential impact of LRT construction. Stage 1 of the Green Line LRT (to [16th Avenue](#)) runs through more than 15 communities and along [16th Avenue](#). We are committed to supporting businesses and [communities](#) to ensure impacted stakeholders have the information they need to be prepared for construction.

May

ENGAGEMENT POSTPONED

