

Le VIRAGE (the curve/twist), is part of Calgary's elevated walkway system located along 9th Avenue at the terminus of 2nd Street SW. The structure connects Penn West Plaza to Gulf Canada Square.

Four challenges had to be addressed through the design. Challenge one was to connect two offset buildings while circumventing the existing infrastructure such as driveways, walkways, footings, and underground utilities associated with the site. The second challenge was to screen an imposing concrete parking structure while maintaining its accessibility. Challenge three was to deliver an aesthetically pleasing elevation that would complete the façade and celebrate the terminus of 2nd street, improving the overall streetscape. Challenge four was to design a space that provides more to the public realm than the typical utilitarian Plus-15.

Le VIRAGE brings forth an interactive experience that can be appreciated from the interior and exterior of the structure. Inside, the curvature of **Le VIRAGE** transcends the typical point A to B journey. Forced perspective is created encouraging the users to turn their attention to the surrounding streetscape instead of having it focused on the exit of the passage. This creates a public space that functions as a decompression zone which can be utilized for more than a means to traverse two buildings. The design includes an internal solid wall for structural purposes which provides an opportunity for local artists to display their work for the enjoyment of the users. Outside, **Le VIRAGE** in massing, completes the façade of the streetscape and serves as the visual focal point to the terminus of 2nd Street. The curved cantilevered structure provides a viable solution to the existing site impediments.

Le VIRAGE serves as a kinetic piece of public art, offering substantial improvement to the urban environment as it animates the surrounding streetscape. The use of LED lighting mixed with directed natural light, changes the effect of the Plus-15 design depending on the time of day. Angled and suspended glass panels are juxtaposed over the glazing to enhance the kaleidoscopic effect of the building during variations in lighting. This layering of light creates an external and internal appearance of a building in a state of continuous transformation which contributes to the structures animated and kinetic nature. The LEDs are programmable, and the colours and combinations can be altered to reflect Calgary's important events, days of awareness, and celebrations; further connecting the structure to the sociology of the city and its respective civic interests.

Le VIRAGE is a result of the successful collaboration between The City of Calgary, private sector, and the design team. It is a structure designed by the common ground found between these groups and offers the public an accessible space and dynamic sculptural expression that can be enjoyed by all from the interior and exterior of the building. **Le VIRAGE** is inherently a significant contribution to urban design and further promotes the unique and interactive impact a structure can have on its urban environment.