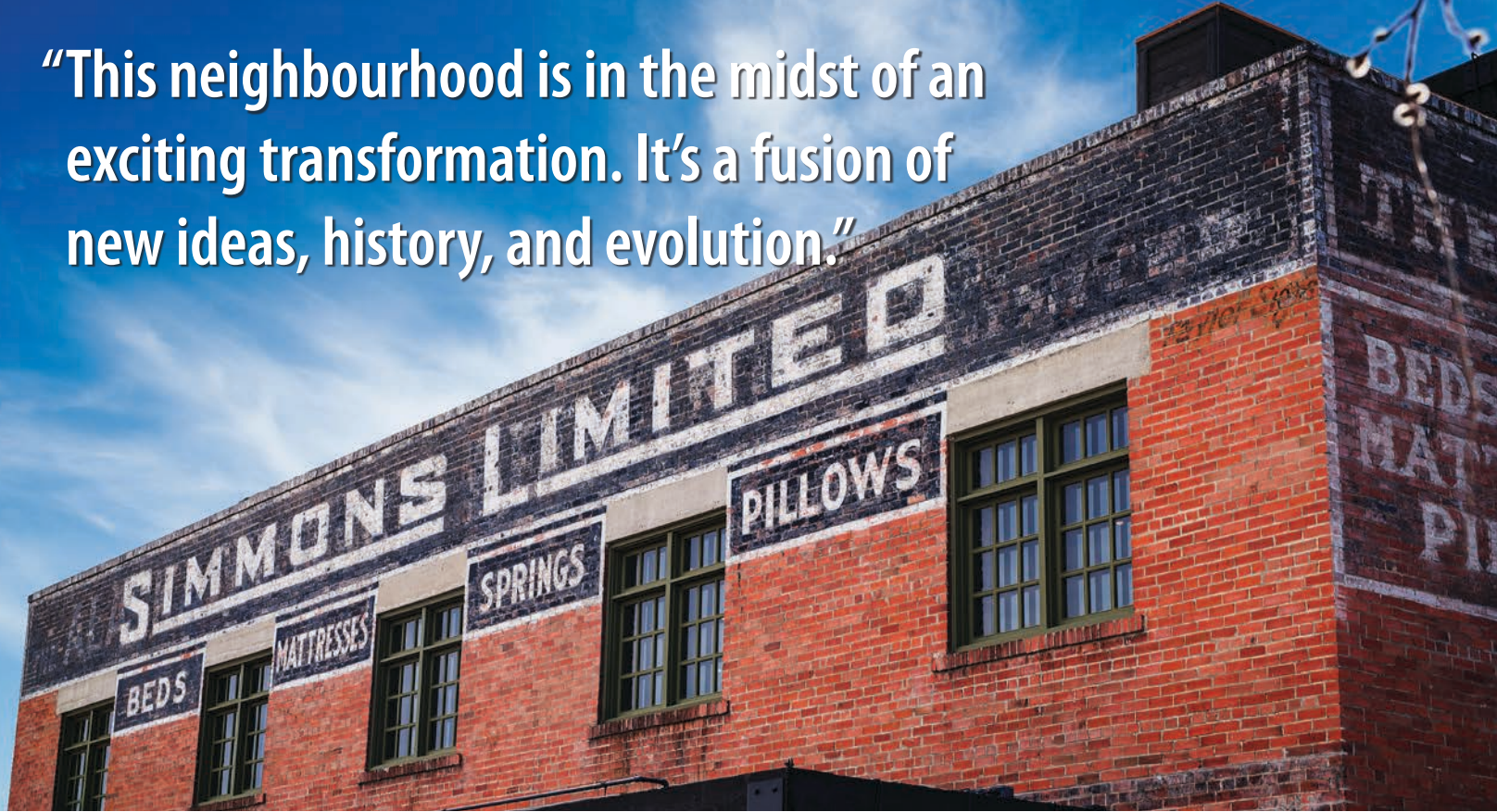


“This neighbourhood is in the midst of an exciting transformation. It’s a fusion of new ideas, history, and evolution.”



Rising in the east

Have you been to the East Village lately? One of Calgary’s most interesting urban neighbourhoods is evolving right before our eyes on the east edge of downtown. The East Village represents the past, present, and future of Calgary.

The East Village was once a bustling community. With strong **turn-of-the-century** roots, it was home to an inner city mix of businesses, restaurants, hotels, and some of Calgary’s oldest homes and apartment blocks. For JB Isaacs, a teenager living with his family in the East Village in the 1940s and 50s, it was the site of excitement, people-watching and street life. “It was a busy place...” recalls JB, “a real hub of activity with two railway lines, Stampede activity close by, and lots of coming and going. My friends and I used to skate on the community ice-rink on Eighth Avenue.”

Urban renewal appeared on the political agenda in the years that followed. New ideas emerged for the desirable inner-city location, land was purchased, and plans for new waves of development were drafted. However, the stars didn’t align for the East Village, and the area sat quiet for a number of decades. Increasingly disconnected from a growing downtown, regeneration efforts suffered from a lack of momentum, investment, and luck. “Residents who lived there faced vacant parking lots and seedy activity; many chose to leave” JB reflects.

In the mid 2000s, the winds changed. With political motivation and

great timing, **urban regeneration** finally took hold. Stewarded by the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) and guided in partnership with The City of Calgary and the Government of Alberta, an innovative financing model was created that was used to invest in infrastructure upgrades and public realm improvements that have attracted development to the neighbourhood.

A master plan was developed which set the stage for redeveloping the East Village into a vibrant, mixed-use, creative, centre-city neighbourhood; an urban village and one of the most dynamic areas within Calgary's downtown core. "This neighbourhood is in the midst of an exciting **transformation**. It's a fusion of new ideas, history, and evolution," says Susan Veres, CMLC's Senior Vice President of Strategy and Business Development.

Today, the East Village is capturing the attention of people from across the city and beyond. New residential living is in full swing and a fresh vibe hums on the east side of downtown. "I love this neighbourhood, I walk everywhere," says Alain Dupere, resident and board member of the East Village Neighbourhood Association. "It's an urban **community** and with that comes a real mix of people and experiences" he says. "We're seeing young families move back, which is really exciting."

The East Village is now home to Canada's National Music Centre, the new world class Calgary Public Library rising over the C-Train tracks, cycling paths, numerous residential towers, a condo building with bike parking instead of car parking, businesses, and great public spaces. The ENMAX Downtown District Energy Centre located along Ninth Avenue delivers heat to neighbourhood buildings through a network of underground hot water pipes. "The pace of change has been massive," says Alain, "but the layers of history here are rich."

Nothing captures the **coming of age** in Calgary over the last 10 years quite like the East Village. The neighbourhood represents some of the vibrancy, urban living, cultural hubs, and local business environments that the imagineCALGARY long-term urban sustainability plan aspired to.

imagineCALGARY.ca

