

Canadian Brownfields Case Study

4th Avenue Flyover

QUICK FACTS

Location

Calgary, Alberta

Project type

Public Space Revitalization

Land uses

Park space, public space

Keywords/special features

Public engagement, youth-led initiatives, vibrant public space, pedestrian corridor

Website

<https://engage.calgary.ca/flyover>

Project address

4th Avenue Flyover Bridge
Calgary, Alberta

Brownfield Awards

2017 Brownie Awards RENEW - Redevelopment at the community scale

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If you are aware of any errors or updates to the case studies, please contact chris.desousa@ryerson.ca.

The opinions expressed in this case study are those of the authors only and do not represent the opinions and views of either Ryerson University, the School of Urban and Regional Planning, or the Canadian Brownfields Network.



Source: engage.calgary.ca/flyover

Final design site plan for the 4th Avenue Flyover

PROJECT SUMMARY

The 4th Avenue Flyover public space project in Calgary, Alberta is a community run initiative to revitalize the space under the 4th Avenue Flyover. The project is envisioned as a welcoming public space for the community. This project is connected with the City of Calgary’s Pedestrian Strategy. The final design concept aims to create a vibrant pedestrian corridor with the help from public input and a youth-led design process. This project hopes to improve the local neighborhood by providing opportunity for community growth and to improve overall safety for pedestrians accessing the underpass.

Site Characteristics

The site is located under the 4th Avenue Flyover in Calgary, Alberta in the community of Bridgeland Riverside. The provincial definition of a brownfield site in Alberta is a vacant/underutilized, potentially contaminated and previously developed (commercial/industrial) land parcel (MGA s.364.1 (1)). Though this site meets the criteria, it is likely not contaminated¹¹.

Zoned M-C2 Park, the project is a public space revitalization effort, which was proposed by the Bridgeland Riverside Community Association (BRCA) and supported by the City of Calgary⁰².

Remington Group previously used the site for construction purposes. On December 31, 2018, the lease expired, leaving the community with a blank slate to revision⁰². The underpass of the flyover is a gateway between Bridgeland community and downtown Calgary. This path is critical for residents in the north side of the Bow River wishing to walk or cycle into the downtown⁰⁶. The community has expressed the need to clean up the underpass, as the site is currently characterized as a dirt pit surrounded with graffiti, litter, and drug paraphernalia.

The site is in desperate need of safety

enhancement in order to transform it into a vibrant pedestrian corridor. There is poor lighting, and hardly any street furniture to accommodate pedestrians with accessibility needs, and for visibility at night⁰¹.

Redevelopment Project Description

In January 2017, students from the University of Calgary Landscape Architecture program worked with grade 6 students from Langevin School. Over the course of 3 months, the students from the University of Calgary incorporated feedback collected from residents and other stakeholders in the community and design concepts inspired by the youth from Langevin School⁰¹.

A community task force was organized and they prepared a report regarding the Public Space Enhancement Proposal for City Council consideration⁰². This report was submitted on June 15, 2017. In addition, residents have submitted letters to council regarding their interest in the need for clean up to support crime prevention, and a vibrant public space.

This public space project is connected with the City of Calgary's Pedestrian Strategy. The overall proposal for the project aligns with Action 17 of the pedestrian strategy to establish a Tactical Urbanism Program. According to the Pedestrian Strategy project team, Tactical Urbanism is a term used to describe a collection of low-cost, temporary changes to the built environment⁰⁷. The program intends to improve local communities, including city gathering spaces, in order to provide temporary enhancements. The end goal is to provide the opportunity for longterm change in a much-needed pedestrian corridor. The final design concept for the 4th Avenue Flyover Public Space can be viewed on the City of Calgary's engage portal. The final concept highlights two design aspects that were highlighted throughout the public engagement sessions as being priorities to the community.

The final design concept includes a rain garden, public art, and natural play elements that are safe for children to interact with. Inclusion of a plaza in the form of repurposed storage containers has also been proposed⁰¹.

A site assessment determined that there was no clean-up or EA required for this proposal.



View of the project site

Key Challenges

Initial efforts to propose a change for the safety and public access through the 4th Avenue Flyover underpass was primarily community led. Collaboration between the BRCA, local stakeholders, and students from the University of Calgary and Langevin School have resulted in a series of design concepts and priorities for the project. The project has been recognized for design excellence and is currently awaiting construction.

lack of funds to turn the vision a reality. The BRCA has partnered with the Park Foundation of Calgary in order to leverage the project team. The Park Foundation of Calgary has a record of building successful public spaces in the City. The team applied for a large CFEP grant from the Province of Alberta, however, the financial reality of the project requires the grant funds to be matched in order for successful implementation⁰⁶.

Financing

Barriers to starting construction include

Funding this initiative is the ultimate barrier to making the vision a reality. The project team is awaiting incoming funds from grants and

Welcoming entrance design concept



municipal allocations to the project in order to start construction.

Benefits and Lessons Learned

The project was nominated for the 2017 Brownie Awards RENEW - Redevelopment at the community scale¹². In addition, the project recently received national recognition with a Certificate of Merit from the National Urban Design Awards at the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada⁰⁴.

This project showcases the benefits of including ample public engagement during a site redevelopment proposal. Community input has allowed the vision for the 4th Avenue Flyover public space to be inclusive, imaginative, and overall a safer environment.

The 4th Avenue Flyover project aspires to become a model for the integration of sustainable storm water management, as a strategy in the social and ecological reclamation of marginalized spaces of transportation infrastructure⁰¹.

Final concept designs



Source: engage.calgary.ca/flyover



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Endnotes

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