

# BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE

2015

## Active Neighbourhoods Canada

How can the design of our communities contribute to public health, wellness and safety? Respond to traffic congestion? Stimulate the economy? Work towards the overall sustainability of our city? These are questions that inspired the development of Active Neighbourhoods Canada, a collaboration between Sustainable Calgary, the Montreal Urban Ecology Centre and the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation.

Active Neighbourhoods Canada envisions neighbourhoods that are liveable, vibrant, and inviting; that encourage active modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling; and that re-imagine the way we share public space

— particularly roads and pathways — in order to provide choices when it comes to transportation. Sustainable Calgary is working alongside 4 communities in Alberta over 4 years to explore these themes. With the help of participatory urban planning tools, communities will identify strengths and weaknesses in their neighbourhoods, explore design solutions and work towards the implementation of at least one design change within 2 years. Their experiences will be shared with professionals, decision-makers and community organizations over the course of the project to contribute to best practices in participatory planning and sustainable urban design.

## Active Neighbourhoods in Bridgeland

From the demolition of the General Hospital to its cultural history, its diversifying population and most recently the start-up of its Tool Lending Library, Bridgeland is many places to many people.

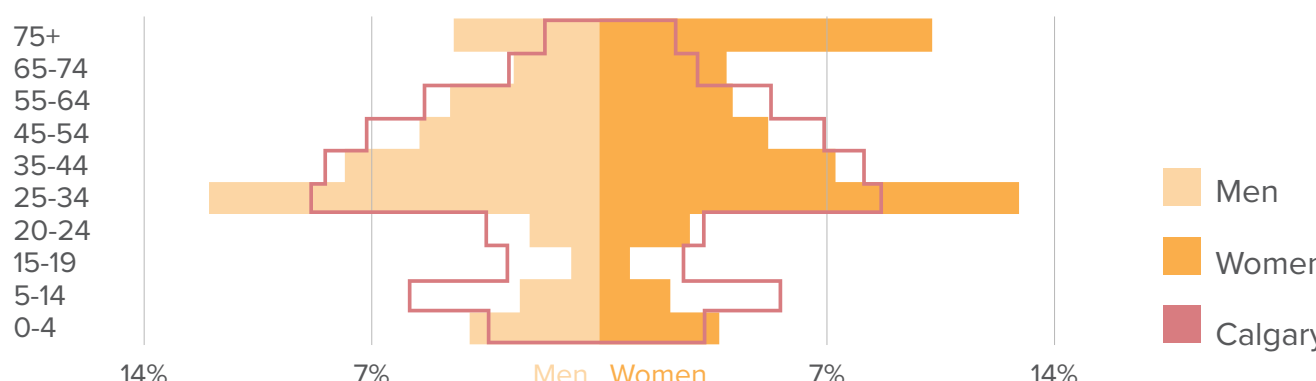
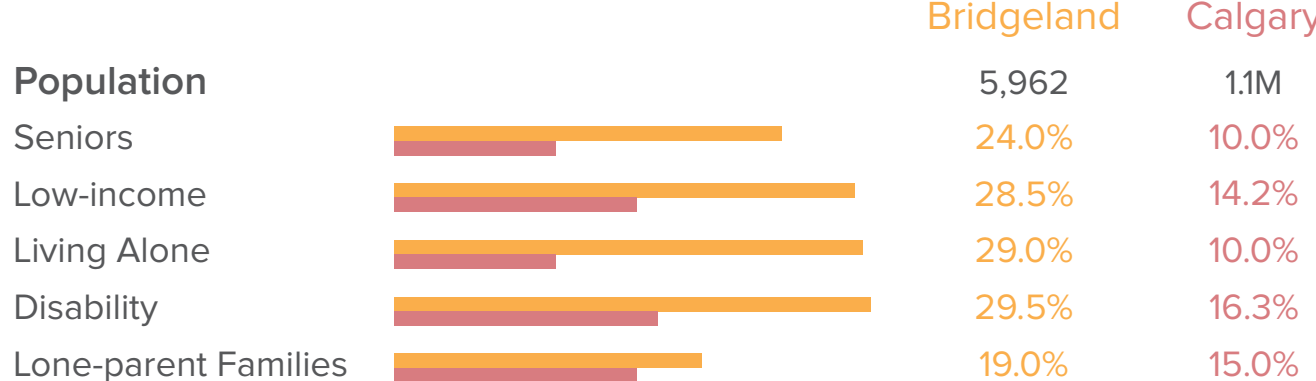
Bridgeland is a neighbourhood in flux, experiencing substantial population growth, a surge in multi-family housing developments, and growing numbers of young children, millennials and boomers. Across the river, the construction of East Village will bring in thousands of new people, and many new businesses. Currently, it is home to many experiencing low-income (29%), a high percentage of persons with disabilities (30%), and a high percentage of seniors (24%). It houses the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), several retirement homes, two public schools, daycares and the Women's Centre. It boasts a wide array of businesses, amenities and major destinations, such as the Telus Spark Science Centre and Calgary Zoo, but does not house a major grocery store, which is identified as a major challenge.

A community bordered by several natural and man-made barriers — the bluff, Tom

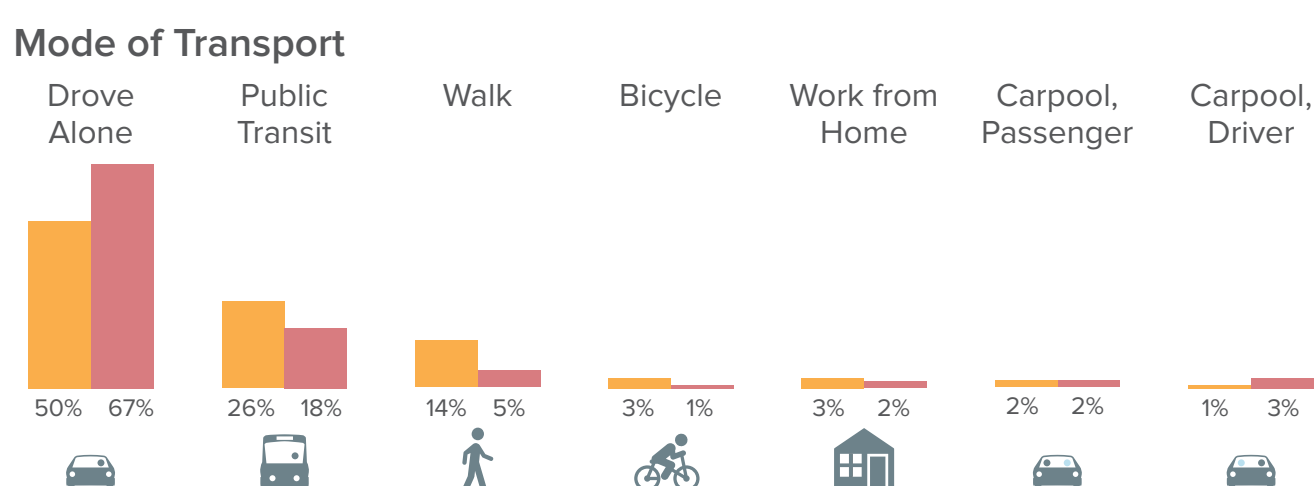
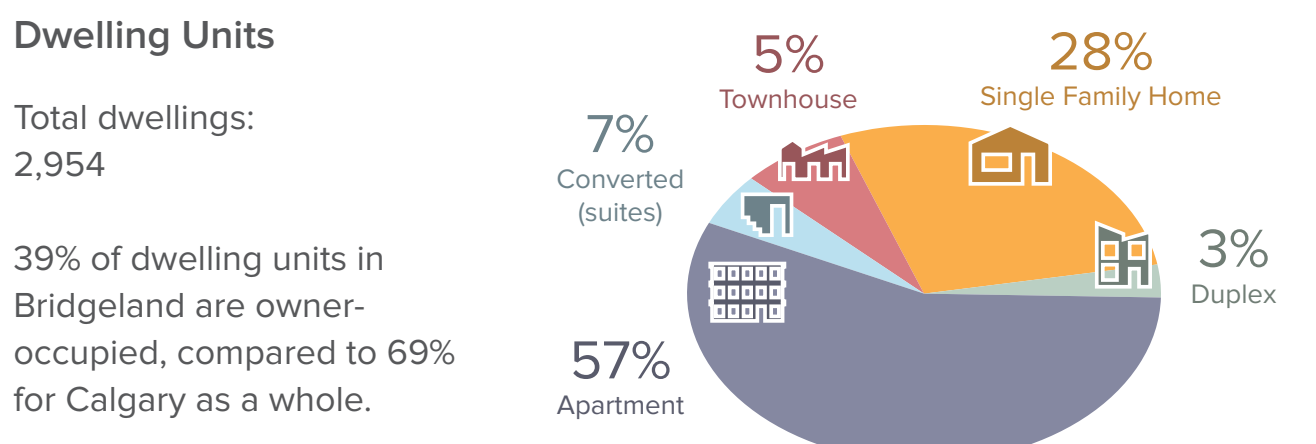
Campbell Hill, Nose Creek, the Deerfoot, the Bow River and Memorial Drive - Bridgeland is a "nook" in the core of Calgary, with a small-town feel. Because of its geography, many of its establishments rely on local residents, and cater to this clientele. "We want the restaurant to be a neighbourhood hub, and to feel like an extension of our own kitchen," says one business owner. Similarly, residents have expressed a desire to make Bridgeland an extension of their backyards and living rooms — a neighbourhood where they can sit, play, hang out. Developing connections to other neighbourhoods, for example by developing better connections across the river, is nonetheless a priority for residents and businesses alike.



## Population & Dwellings



Between 2009 and 2014, Bridgeland increased its 0-4 population by 104%, compared to 24% for Calgary as a whole.



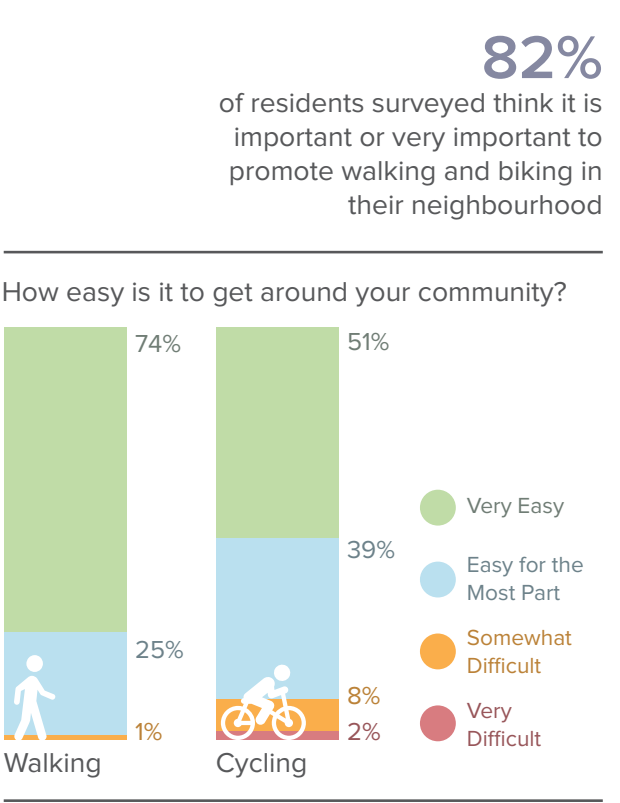
## Activity Surveys

According to a 2014 household survey, Bridgeland residents gave the following primary reasons for:

- Why they would choose to get around by foot or bike:
  - To get better exercise: 49%
  - Convenience: 19%
  - Better the environment: 12%

- Why they might choose not to walk:
  - Weather, 46%
  - Distance, 34%
  - Too much to carry, 26%

- Why they might choose not to bike:
  - Weather, 41%
  - Traffic Safety, 21%
  - Too much to carry, 20%



Better street design is the #1 factor that would influence Bridgelanders to walk or bike more.

## Safety

My neighbourhood is a safe place to live:

- 30% Strongly Agree
- 63% Slightly Agree
- 6% Slightly Disagree
- 1% Strongly Disagree

## Social Connectivity

I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood.

- 29% Strongly Agree
- 45% Slightly Agree
- 23% Slightly Disagree
- 5% Strongly Disagree

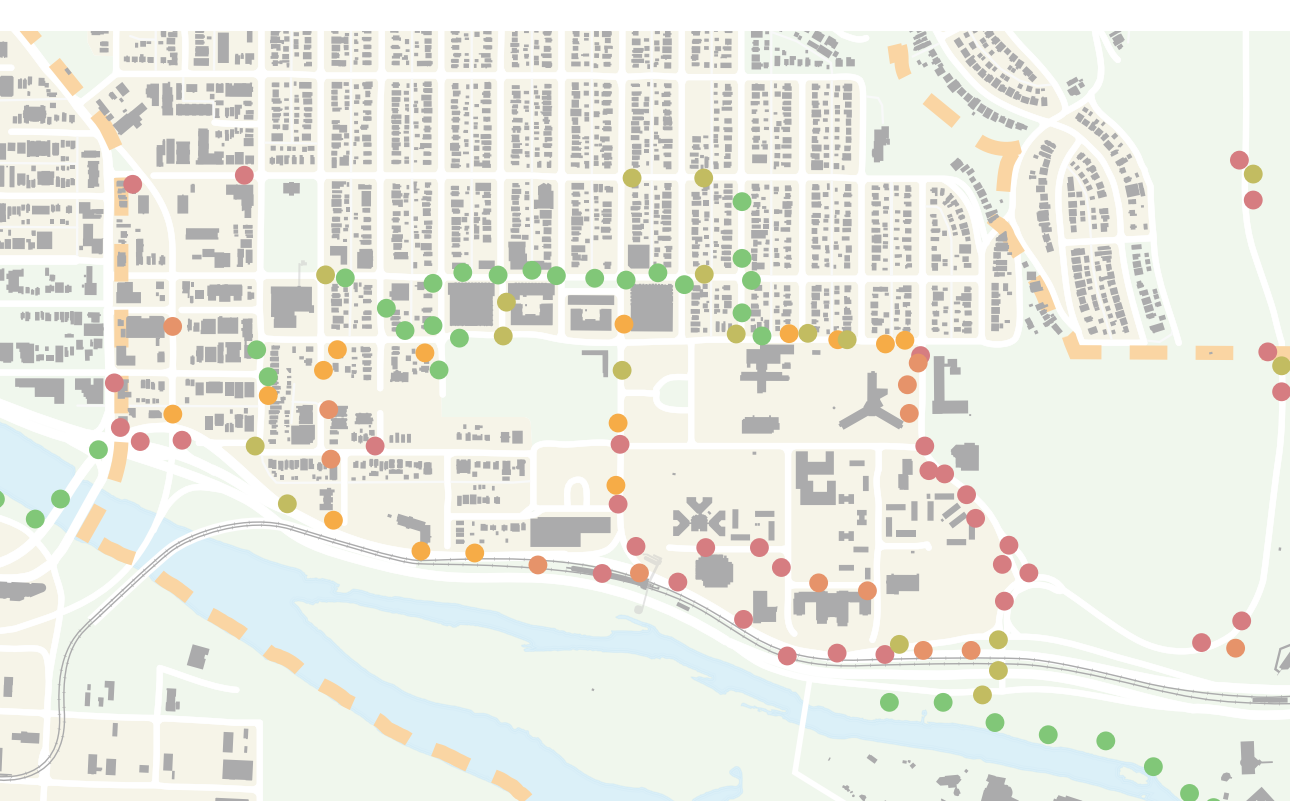
59% of Bridgeland residents chose the neighbourhood for its proximity to downtown.

## Walkscore

According to walkscore.com, Bridgeland-Riverside has the following overall scores:



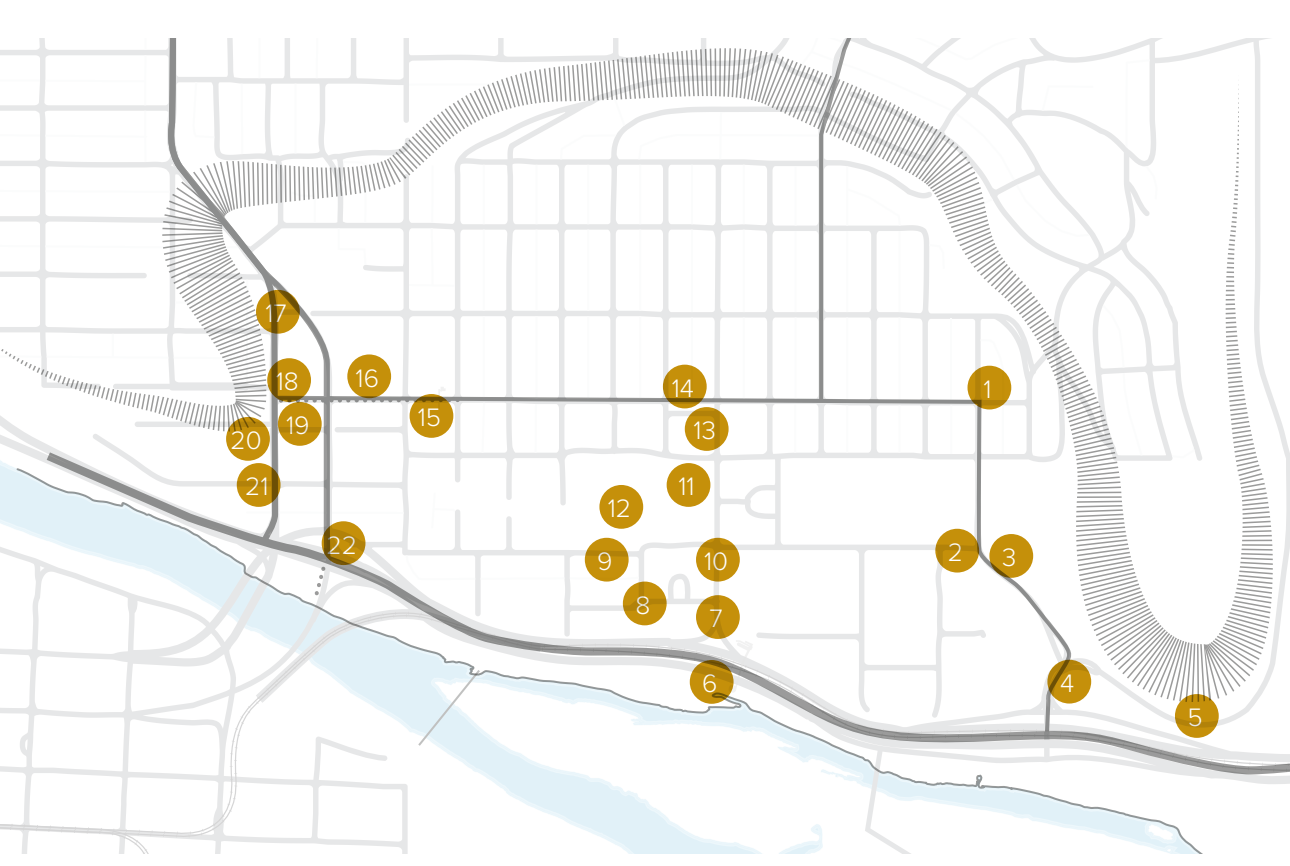
## Experience Maps



A mix of walking tours and engagement activities led to the map above, which documents how pedestrians tended to feel in different parts of the neighbourhood. The trend was for the commercial and public core (including the playing fields and community centre) to be spaces where people felt safe and happy. The experience of participants tended to turn towards bad feelings as they made their way to the neighbourhood edges. The reasons given for feeling bad mostly related to traffic safety or a sense of isolation (security). The reasons give for feeling good tended to be related to the presence of other people, activity, and things to do.

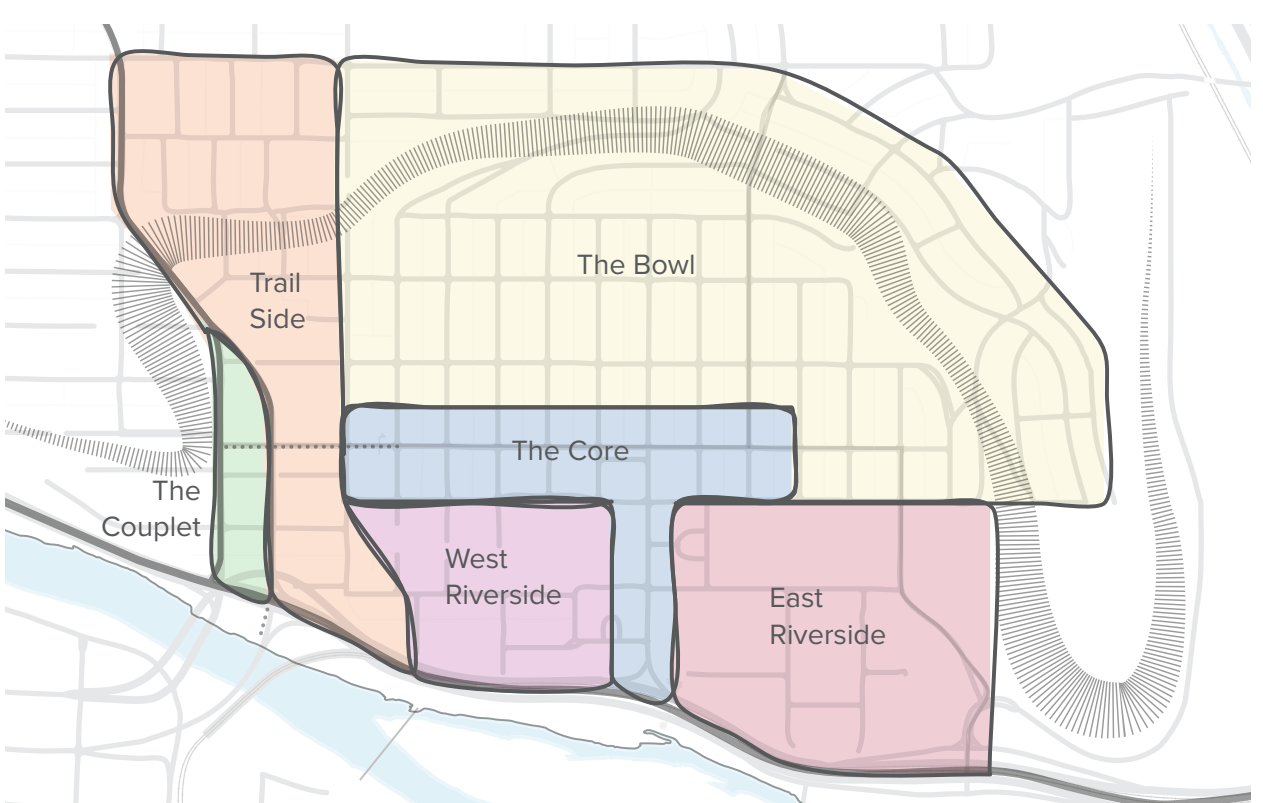


## Hotspots



- Street not legible for pedestrians, bikes & vehicles — where to go next?
- Right-of-way confusing.
- No crosswalk, fast traffic, and many destinations, including schools, daycare, a church and a bus stop.
- Confusing 5-way intersection.
- General feelings of desolation.
- Feels secluded and unsafe.
- Pedestrian crosswalk + high vehicle speed. Vehicle access needed here?
- Where do pedestrians walk?
- Short one-way stretch near the Children's Cottage is confusing. Cars/trucks often drive the wrong way.
- Steep hill makes access to 1st Ave difficult, particularly for seniors.
- Bridgeland Riverside Community Centre; site of old General Hospital.
- Good vibes, especially related to Farmers' Market.
- Well-lit & business open late. Makes pedestrians feel secure.
- Residents feel good here; potential to make even more use of this space.
- Long dark stretch feels unsafe at night.
- Can feel isolated and unsafe; make more vibrant.
- Unsafe crosswalk. Curving road creates blind spot & hill increases vehicle speed.
- Awkward crossing, inaccessible in the winter; development projects in the works nearby.
- Good vibes.
- Upgrade bus shelter + better lighting.
- Safety concerns, illicit activity.
- Traffic & personal safety concerns.

## Priority Areas



Priority areas have unique identities, patterns and issues. Most resident feedback and opportunities for improvement centered around Southeast Bridgeland, the Couplet, and the Core.

### 1. Southeast Bridgeland

Home to retirement homes, Iswaths of green space, the CNIB, apartments, medical centres, and the Christine Meikle School[R1], and gateway to the Zoo and Telus Spark Science Centre, and Bridgeland LRT.

- Issues:**
- (1) Traffic safety: high-speed traffic on 12th St NE with no pedestrian crossings; (2) lack of amenities: coffee shops, convenience stores or grocery stores; (3) accessibility to 1st Avenue, esp. with steep hills; (4) distances between buildings; (5) feelings of isolation by residents; (6) legibility: little sense of having entered Bridgeland via 12th St NE; (7) winter snow

clearing on public land; (8) sense of safety at Bridgeland LRT; (9) unpleasant pedestrian/cyclist access to Zoo & Inglewood; (10) zoning.

### Opportunities:

- (1) Redevelopment & rezoning of institutional land to incorporate more mixed use is currently being explored; (2) Improving quality of access to LRT & core via 9th Street; (4) at-grade commercial near LRT to improve vibrancy/safety; (3) pedestrian snow routes for seniors; (4) walking/cycling paths along Memorial; (5) traffic calming & pedestrian crossings on 12th Ave NE; (6) creating gateway to Bridgeland that embraces the southeast; (7) enhance connectivity from Centre St to McDougall Road.

### 2. Couplet

Home to businesses and restaurants, the Women's Centre, the Islamic Information Society of Calgary, and the Radha Mahdava Cultural

Association, single-family and multi-family housing, adjacent to two public schools, and key access point to downtown for commuters.

### Issues:

- (1) Crosswalks (safety, convenience, enjoyment); (2) accessibility, including inconsistency of curb cuts; (3) winter accessibility — poor snow clearing on public land; (4) traffic speed; (5) legibility — little sense of entering Bridgeland; (6) disconnection from rest of commercial strip on 1st Ave NE; (7) lack of bicycle infrastructure into downtown, Renfrew and Crescent Heights; (8) illicit activity.

### Opportunities:

- (1) Mixed-use redevelopment at 1st Ave & 4th St NE; (2) bicycle lanes slated; (3) leveraging universal design and winter design principles; (4) traffic-calming; (5) crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED).

### 3. The Core

Home to Bridgeland's commercial core, and adjacent to the Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association and park.

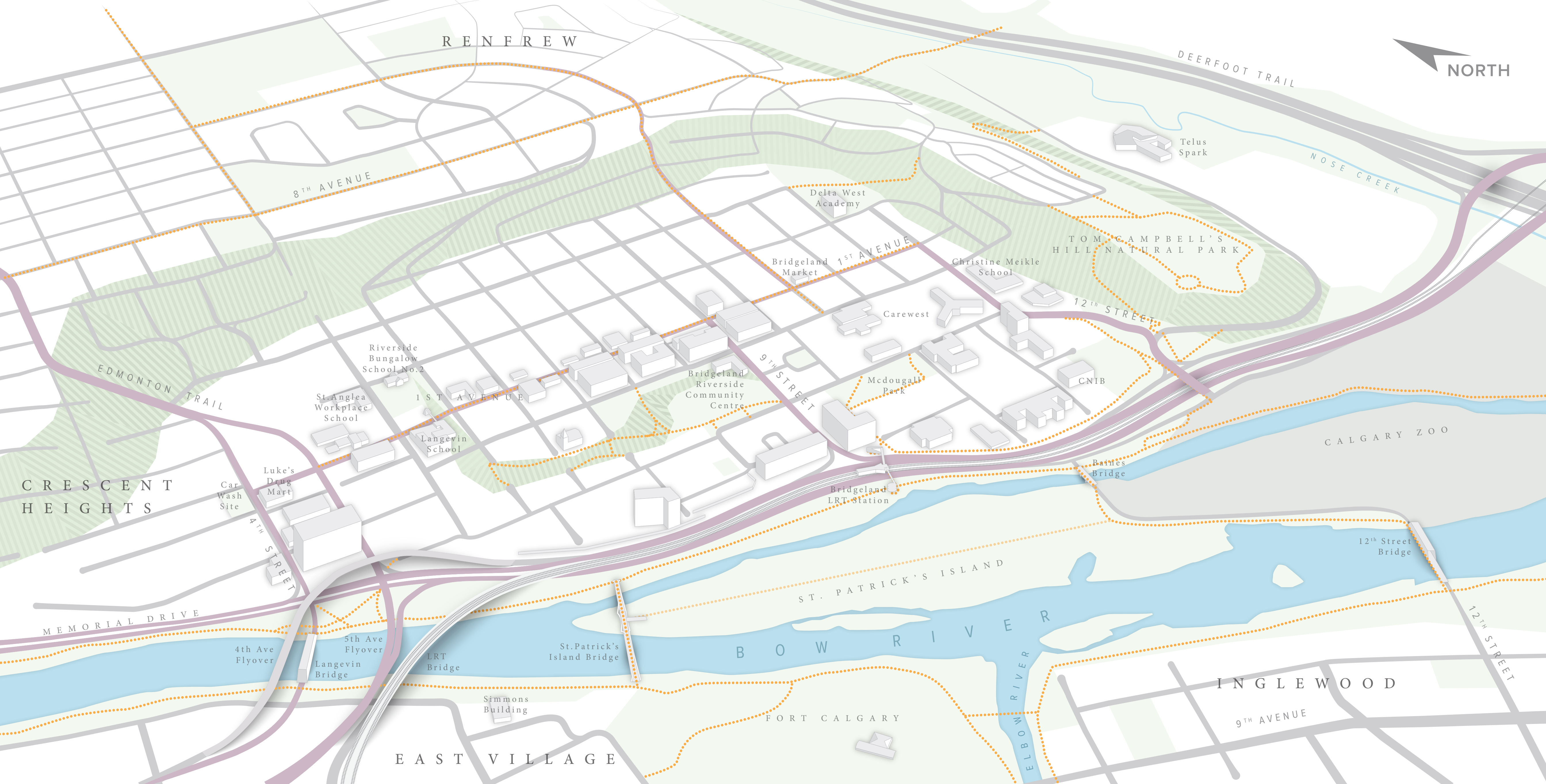
### Issues

- (1) Traffic speed; (2) cut-through traffic at rush hour; (3) lack of public seating, urban furniture, bus stop shelters; (4) lighting gaps; (5) gaps in commercial strip; (6) bylaws — seating & sandwich boards; (7) legibility: beginning & ending of commercial core, access to LRT.

### Opportunities

- (1) BRCA-owned land along 9th St NE; (2) pilots/pop-ups that circumvent cumbersome bylaws; (3) attracting further development & tax dollars via investment in urban design & neighbourhood branding; (4) opportunities to develop Bridgeland-Riverside Community Centre. Riverside Community Centre.





### Neighbourhood Overview

Ask Bridgelanders what defines their neighbourhood, and there will not be a shortage of answers – from the demolition of the General Hospital to the changing demographics of the residents and most recently the start-up of its Tool Lending Library, Bridgeland is many places to many people.

Bridgeland is a neighbourhood in flux, dating back at least to the demolition of the hospital. Currently it is experiencing substantial population growth, a surge in multi-family housing developments, and growing numbers of young children, millennials and boomers. Across the river, the East Village is under construction, bringing in thousands of new people, and many new businesses.

Bridgeland has a high low-income population (29%), high percentage of persons with disabilities (30%), and a high percentage of seniors (24%). It houses the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), several retirement homes in its southeast, two public schools, daycares and the Women's Centre. Nearby destinations include the Telus Spark Science Centre, the Calgary Zoo and Fort Calgary. While it boasts a wide array of businesses and amenities, it does not house a major grocery store – identified as a major challenge, particularly for local seniors.

A community bordered by several natural and man-made barriers – the bluff, Tom Campbell Hill, Nose Creek, the Deerfoot, the Bow River and Memorial Drive - Bridgeland is a "nook" in

the core of Calgary. Major flows of vehicle traffic going East-West occur primarily on Memorial Drive and 1st Avenue, and North-South traffic via Edmonton Trail and 4th Street, aided by 9th Street, 12th Street, and 8th Street.

Bridgeland is described by residents and design professionals alike as having "good bones" for walking, due to its grid system and vibrant main street. On 1st Avenue, its sidewalks are generous, and its density of shops and restaurants lends itself to walking and wandering.

Unsurprisingly, restaurant owners have communicated that their customer base is substantially local, and that business survival can depend on adapting to residents. Given Bridgeland's "nook-like" form tucked into the bluff, Bridgeland businesses likely always will have to depend, to some extent, on local residents. This seems to have contributed to the flavour of the neighbourhood. "We want the restaurant to feel like an extension of our kitchens," says one business owner. Attracting clientele from outside the community is nonetheless considered desirable – for example, by developing better connections to the other side of the river and calming, rather than reducing, traffic.

Similarly, resident feedback has expressed a desire to make Bridgeland an extension of their backyards or living rooms – creating places where they, their friends, their children, or their grandchildren can comfortably sit, play, and hang out.



- Resident Priorities:**
- Pub
  - Grocery Store
  - Outdoor seating & furniture
  - Cafes open later
  - More nightlife (for safety & enjoyment)
  - Bicycle/pedestrian bridge over Memorial
  - Lighting
  - Traffic Calming
  - Construction regulations
  - LRT safety and connection to neighbourhood
  - Bicycle access to downtown and Crescent Heights
  - Recreational amenities (eg. skating rink, splash pad)

