

EXCHANGE

Project Description:

Working Together

Exchange, the winning entry for the City of Calgary's Riverwalk West international design competition, is a product of a collaboration among team members representing landscape architecture, architecture, indigenous storytelling + placemaking, structural engineering, and transportation engineering. The Team demonstrates the value of inclusive, multi-disciplinary design that holds design excellence above discipline.

Stories of Land and People

Storytelling by Blackfoot Elders helped shape the design proposal, the essence of which is captured in the names and ethos of unique character areas along the river's edge:

a'psski (*discover*)

saam (*ceremony*)

ohkanaomowoo (*gather together from all over*)

aisinna'kiiks (*art*)

waahtsowáapiksi (*exchange*)

ssksinima'tsi (*teach*)

The Big Moves – *connecting people with people; people with places; people with nature + water; and people with culture + heritage*

Softening the River's Edge: the edge of the Bow has been hardened over time with non-native plants, human-made structures, and imported fill. The design carves and softens the edge, promoting a more dynamic river, bed, and shore.

Balancing Natural + Urban Ecosystems: in strategic locations, natural ecosystems are pulled well into the urban environment, while in others the urban fabric extends to the river.

Immersing in Nature: visitors are welcomed to immerse themselves in unique river experiences – interaction at a distance, within the tree canopy, suspended over wetland, from lookouts, from up on the bank, and at the water's edge.

Re-acquiring the River's Edge: strategic reconfiguration of adjacent streets, with consolidation of underused parcels, expands public realm opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Dynamic Pathway Networks: in keeping with the existing typology, the pathway design separates users by speed, meanders and undulates with the new topography, and offers a variety of experiences.

Bow River as the Star: by softening the boundaries between ecological and urban corridors, the true expression of the riverbank can be explored via views, access, and physical connection to the water.

Design Outcomes

Innovation in Process:

Client and design teams are working together to do things differently – breaking down discipline boundaries, promoting transparency in design, and building a campaign through community outreach.

Unique Attributes:

Demonstrating willingness to tackle the iconic challenges of our times, uniquely expressed in this place, with goals of furthering inclusivity, biodiversity, climate resiliency, and engaging in conciliation and reconciliation with our Indigenous Communities to heal both our relationships and the land.

Leveraging functional requirements (and investment) to create multi-dimensional experiences; expanding opportunities for recreation, programming and activation, and for casual enjoyment that responds to unique contextual opportunities.

Amplifying natural systems and restoring ecological function within the context of a major urban centre – prioritizing the integration of urban and natural systems for mutual benefit.

Reclaiming road infrastructure to develop a safe and enjoyable pathway network for pedestrians and wheeled users – redefining how Calgarians can move through the city.

Exploring what a four-season city could be – celebrating our seasonality and harnessing its rhythms through a uniquely Calgarian design.

Seamlessly integrating sensitive stormwater management with public realm infrastructure and the restoration of the Bow River ecosystem – a systems-level approach to creative problem-solving