



Phase 2 – RiverWalk West

Report Back: What we Heard

October 23, 2023

Project overview

Calgary's future success relies on our downtown being a place where people want to live, visit, set up business and go to work. When our downtown thrives, Calgary thrives. As the investment and support into downtown grows, Downtown West will transition into a thriving urban neighbourhood. The western gateway to Greater Downtown will be RiverWalk West - a vibrant, high quality riverfront destination, with park and pathway amenities that connect communities and people to the Bow River and the downtown.

RiverWalk West presents an opportunity to create a unique identity and continuous public promenade connecting Fort Calgary to the west end of downtown. The redevelopment will continue the work to harmonize flood mitigation, increase stormwater improvements and upgrade the public realm required to support the growing demands for safe recreational and alternative commuter uses.

Purpose of the project

The Greater Downtown Plan identifies five strategic moves to better serve Calgarians and protect the natural edge of the Bow River:

1. Improve the Bow River promenade and pathway system from Eau Claire to 14 Street SW.
2. Create a better connection between the neighbourhood of Downtown West and the Bow River.
3. Create a better connection between the pathway and the edge of the Bow River.
4. Create more green space.
5. Consolidate and review land use for fragmented City-owned parcels.

Location

The project will extend the existing East Village and Eau Claire improvements to complete the river promenade through the downtown. The new section of the riverwalk will tie-into the work completed along the south-side of the Bow River at West Eau Claire Park and extend past 14 Street S.W. The project may include spaces adjacent to the Bow River and Bow Trail S.W.

Phase 2 – RiverWalk West

Report Back: What we Heard
October 23, 2023

The following map shows the existing RiverWalk and future extension:



The map below shows the future extension, RiverWalk West:





Phase 2 – RiverWalk West

Report Back: What we Heard

October 23, 2023

Design competition

The City of Calgary embarked on a unique approach to conceptual design through the release of a design competition for industry professionals. Design competitions can offer many benefits to the project, the city, and to the public by encouraging a broad range of innovative solutions, and creativity to a challenging site. The Request for Pre-Qualification for the design competition closed in July 2023, with five design teams selected:

- Dub Architects + Hapa Collaborative
- ground3 Landscape Architects
- Public City Architecture
- space2place landscape architects
- W Architecture & Landscape Architecture

Each design team was to submit one design concept that clearly presents the creative solutions and describes the design intent. The winning design concept will be selected by a jury of a diverse group of experienced specialists and professionals in their field. Information about the jurors can be found [here](#). The jury will be tasked with selecting a winner based on predetermined evaluation criteria that reflects the goals of the project and the Greater Downtown Plan:

- Overall design quality;
- Application of the Greater Downtown Plan and other plans and strategies;
- Integration of public feedback;
- Response to cultural history and landscape;
- Climate resiliency, mitigation and sustainable design principles;
- Innovation and design solutions; and
- Technical requirement considerations.

The design concepts were submitted anonymously to ensure impartiality when the jury is selecting the winning concept. The design team names do not appear on the concept boards or on any associated materials submitted with the boards. The names of the five design concepts are:

- Braiding Waters
- Every Step a Story
- Exchange – Realizing RiverWalk West
- Raftlands
- Returning to the River

Phase 1 engagement: Inspire

For the Inspire phase, an online engagement opportunity was available July 10 – 31, 2023 at <https://engage.calgary.ca/riverwalkwest>. Participants were asked to share their ideas for opportunities to:



Phase 2 – RiverWalk West

Report Back: What we Heard

October 23, 2023

- Improve the pathway and park experience of RiverWalk West;
- Create better connections between the neighbourhood of Downtown West and the Bow River;
- Create or add green space to the area; and
- Connect to the Bow River.

The five short-listed design teams received the [Phase 1 What we Heard report](#) and were expected to take the findings into consideration when preparing their design concepts.

Phase 2 engagement: Design Competition

For the Design Competition phase, an online engagement opportunity was available October 3 – 15, 2023 at <https://engage.calgary.ca/riverwalkwest>. There were 6,780 page views during this time and 396 contributions of feedback were submitted.

The project team held an in-person open house event on October 5, 2023 from 5 to 9 p.m. in the atrium of Contemporary Calgary (701 11 Street S.W.). Each design team's concept boards were available for viewing by the public. For participants who preferred to provide input at the event rather than online, paper copies of the engagement questionnaire were available. Completed questionnaires were included with online feedback in the analysis.

Communications overview

The following communications tactics were used to inform Calgarians about the RiverWalk West project and Phase 2 engagement:

- A social media campaign from September 28 – October 15 (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and NextDoor). 3,721 link clicks achieved the goal of driving people to the project engage page to learn more and share their feedback. The campaign performed well with a total of 221,728 impressions. Example of Facebook post:



- A feature story was published to The City’s newsroom on October 3: [Concepts revealed for RiverWalk West design competition](#).
- Postcards* were handed out to attendees at the in-person open house at Contemporary Calgary on October 5.
- A bold sign was placed between Bow Trail S.W. and 6 Avenue S.W. from Sept. 28 to October 16 and directed people to the page on the Engage portal (<https://engage.calgary.ca/riverwalkwest>) for information about the open house and the online engagement opportunity.
- 5 double-sided, a-frame signage* boards were placed along the river promenade from Eau Claire to 14 Street S.W.
- The project lead was interviewed about the project by CBC News, CTV News and the Eye Opener on October 5, 2023.

*Postcards and signage included information on the engagement and a QR and link to the project engage page.



Phase 2 – RiverWalk West

Report Back: What we Heard
October 23, 2023

What we asked

The Engage portal page provided information about the project and presented each of the five design concepts. Visitors to the page could scroll through each of the design concept boards (up to six boards per concept). Each design board image could be enlarged to view the details. Following the design concept boards, participants were asked to answer the following questions:

Provide Your Input!

If you haven't already reviewed the five design concepts above, please do so before providing your input.

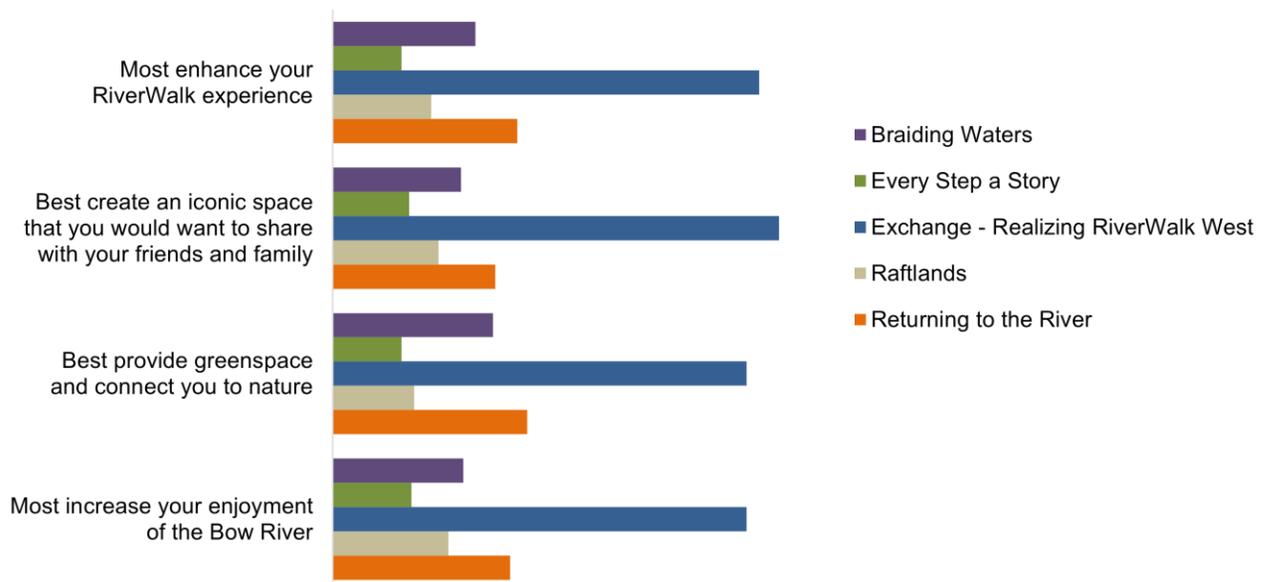
1. Which design concept will . . .
 - a) Most enhance your RiverWalk experience?
 - b) Best create an iconic space that you would want to share with your friends and family?
 - c) Best provide greenspace and connect you to nature?
 - d) Most increase your enjoyment of the Bow River?

2. Please rank the five design concepts with '1' being your most preferred and '5' being your least preferred.

What we heard

Exchange – Realizing RiverWalk West was selected most often in response to question 1:

Which design concept will . . .





Phase 2 – RiverWalk West

Report Back: What we Heard

October 23, 2023

The order of overall preference of the design concepts (question 2), from most to least preferred, is:

Exchange – Realizing RiverWalk West

Returning to the River

Braiding Waters

Raftlands

Every Step a Story

Note that, although Exchange – Realizing RiverWalk West is the most preferred concept among participants, it does not mean it is the winning design concept. The jury will select the winning design concept based on several predetermined evaluation criteria (see “Design competition” on page 3), one of which is ‘Integration of public feedback.’