EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our ambition is to build a place for all Calgarians. To build a place that is modern, exciting, and vibrant. To build Calgary’s favourite place – indoors and out. We want to build a place where the lights are bright, the fans are loud, and Calgary’s Opponents are always outdoing each other. We want to build a year-round destination – a place where Calgary can come together. We want the Event Centre to be what we call an ‘Urban stadium’ – an engine that energizes the entire Culture and Entertainment District. We want to build a place that enables communities to come together in the river, activates the densest laps, and is the best public space in the city. We want to build a beacon for people, a gateway to Stampede Park, an urban living room for all Calgarians to enjoy. We want to attract people from all over Calgary, from all over Canada, and from around the world. We want to see big events, the concerts and festivals coming up to use the spaces we designed. And we want to build a proud showcase for Canada’s next generation of teams. We want to do it to be here for a long while so that the Event Centre can continue the great work of the Scotiabank Saddledome and create new memories for generations to come.

The building is more than a place. It is an experience that blurs the lines between indoor and outdoor. It’s an experience that blends an exciting mix of retail, entertainment, sports, and events. It’s an experience that makes people want to keep coming back. We want to build that experience. Anchored by the history of an ancient gathering place, at the confluence of two rivers, the Calgary Event Centre will be a modern-day Colosseum, drawing all together in its warmth and energy. It contributes this energy to the greater Culture and Entertainment District, complementing the expanded BMO Field, western Canada’s largest convention venue, and the 120-year history of the Stampede.

It is with purposeful intent that the design of the Event Centre creates a competitive advantage for sporting events and is mindful of the Partnership Fundamental Principles and Rivers District Master Plan design principles.

- **Competitive Advantage.** We’ve designed Calgary’s opponents to come out of the Starting Gate and the seating bowl to be designed to align with today’s market demand for live hockey, and the ability to house and attract large concerts, small shows, and everything in between. Scaling the “House” in achieved through use of bowl reduction and half-house curving systems, as well as offering a range ofPEL opportunities.
- **Fan Centric.** From the approach to the building, through the entry, and to the seat experience itself, the Event Centre is designed to engage and excite the fan. The experience will be grounded in the City’s rich sports and arts tradition, while enhancing the new expectations modern fans have for the social environments, amenities, and technology a new building should offer.
- **Optimise Facility Revenues.** Exterior spaces and interior destination zones are designed in a manner to leverage a multi-use partnership asset inventory. Through careful analysis of fan and user demographics, the seating bowl responds to the demand for premium seating as close as possible to the event floor without disproportionately displacing general admission seats in the lower bowl. Unique premium seating options are featured throughout both levels. Further, the asymmetrical design provides for more seats in the hockey arena and opposite an end-stage concert configuration to maximize preferred seat locations and ticket revenue streams.
- **Multi-Purpose Facility.** The venue design has the flexibility to support a wide array of events from sports to shows, large to small presentations, to social and arts events, and entertainment and special events, and a broadcast infrastructure that includes space for production trucks in a weather-protected environment.
- **Rift Design.** With a focus on scalability and flexibility, the seating bowl is designed to align with today’s market demand for live hockey, and the ability to house and attract large concerts, small shows, and everything in between. Scaling the “House” in achieved through use of bowl reduction and half-house curving systems, as well as lighting control. Incorporating strategies for flexibility in the design of premium seating and adjacent lounge space allows the venue to adapt to ever-evolving social expectations. This approach to scalability and flexibility offers opportunities to be “strengthened” for the future, potentially offering additional opportunities and increasing year-over-year revenues.
- **Sustainable Business Model.** The design combines revenue opportunities by creating space to support a high level of service, extending hours before and after events, and providing a desirable destination for everyday restaurant, hospitality, retail and banquet facilities that become an integral part of the City fabric while maintaining operational efficiencies to drive down costs.
- **Operationally Efficient.** Strategies for sustainable design, venue conversions, and flood mitigation are embedded in operational efficiency. The green design strategy begins with The City of Calgary’s Sustainable Buildings Policy (SBP), featuring with additional policies and strategies for sustainability.
- **Catalyst and Sense of Community.** The design includes hallmarks of a catalyst building that will infuse new energy and new life into the district. This includes a design that is infused with Calgary, support of connectivity within the public realm, resilient in terms of business and operations, and supports community engagement and activity that will be great for the surrounding community and in support of the vision that the Culture and Entertainment District, this venue will attract those who want to be close to all within the Calgary experience and become retail, residential, and office neighbours.

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**Visible, Sustainable, Accessible.** The design responds to the aspirations and needs of those who are athletes or performers, those who walk at the venue every day or part time, and those who visit regularly or rarely. Design strategies focus upon the path of travel, developing proper spaces and scales and spaces that provide amenities that create expectations, incorporating future proofing and flexibility, barrier-free use, and transformable spaces allowing for a wide range of engagement beyond the public realm and the venue depending whether the building is an event, multiple, daily, or festival mode.

**Gathering Place.** Stampede Trail is envisioned as the heart of the Culture and Entertainment District, and the Event Centre takes centre stage in developing a comfortable street frontage with active and inviting ground floor use that will make this area a destination for outdoor festival events, outdoor dining, and a pavilion that functions as an outdoor living room for everyday and event use.

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COMMUNITY BENEFITS

A) CIVIC ASPIRATIONS

Our overarching design ambition sees the Event Centre as a catalyst for development in Calgary’s Culture & Entertainment District that activates a vibrant, mixed-use community with a network of new uses and the creation of Calgary’s gathering place that creates a neighbourhood of belonging and celebration for all.

Elbow River and over 100 years of celebration with the Calgary Stampede – from indigenous beginnings to the modern city. Our design will respect and highlight this tradition of meeting and celebrating together.

- We will set the benchmark for future development of the Elbow River and areas on and around the Elbow River, from the east of 4th Street SW to and beyond of the new low road, and will allow the new low road to seamlessly transition to the Stampede Park.

The Event Centre will be a destination for all Calgarians and for people across Canada and around the world. It will be an iconic event place and host world-class events, concerts and sports. Retail, bar and restaurant venues will work together to provide quality food and beverage while delivering unique experiences for spectators. The Event Centre design will create an “Urban Magnet” that further activates the entire Elbow River. It will enhance connections to the Elbow River, 12th Avenue SW, to and beyond the new low road, and to and beyond of the new low road, and will also become a gateway to the Stampede Park. The design will be a beacon for people and create a new destination for Calgary to come together.

Context
The concept design has been heavily influenced by the following reference documents:

1. Rivers District Master Plan (CMAE) – December, 2018
2. Rivers District Streetscape Guidelines (CMAE) – Ongoing
3. Stampede Park Concept Plan (Calgary Stampede), 2018
4. East Village Master Plan (CMAE), 2009
5. Battlefords Area Redevelopment Plan, Part 2 East Battlefords Area (City of Calgary) – 2019
6. Municipal Development Plan (City of Calgary) – December, 2018

From these plans, we have incorporated several design aspirations for the building and the surrounding neighbourhood:

- Our design concept recognizes that safety and accessibility are important goals in the development of the public realm.
- The development must contribute significantly to local and regional economic development.
- It is important that the project recognizes and honours the area’s culture and history.
- The area will become a vibrant mixed-use culture and entertainment district.

These aspirations align with the CMACE Public Engagement Plan (July 2020). The extensive process discovered that Calgarians want the Event Centre to deliver three common themes:

- PRIDE – The Event Centre is an opportunity to revitalize east Victoria Park and the surrounding neighbourhoods, catalyzing growth and giving Calgary a world-class facility that will be the city’s cultural and civic centre.
- SAFETY – People want the space to be safe and vibrant and opportunities to consistently attract locals and tourists to Calgary and east Victoria Park year-round, in addition to the more obvious benefits of being able to host major concerts and sporting events.
- CONNECTION – The Event Centre is an opportunity for Calgarians to connect with each other, with friends and family, with business associates, and with the community at large.
Urban Design Rationale:
The site consists of two city blocks bounded by 4th Street SE to the west, 8th Street SE to the south, 12th Avenue to the north and 14th Avenue to the south that make up 7.24 acres (2.93 hectares) in area. It is currently used as surface parking. Between property lines the site is 106.7 meters x 153.4 meters (350 x 500).

The existing segment of 13th Ave. that bifurcates the site will be closed and the utilities below and above grade removed.
The high point of the site is in the northwest corner with approximately 2.4 meters of fall to the southeast corner. The site is near to the flood plain and is within the overland flood area.

5th Street SE, adjacent to both the South Campus and the future Calgary Opera building to the east, is an important link to East Village and is the primary access for service vehicles. A future residential precinct to the north is supported with strong connectivity to the existing Victoria Park / Stampede Station at Macleod Trail and the future Green Line LRT station on 12th Avenue SE (planning trial location/training).

The area south of the site will likely see future mixed-use development and the creation of a gateway into Stampede Park, including the expanded Stampede Centre. Stampede Trail to the west will host future retail and restaurants and will be designed to support public activation. The design team is coordinating with CMHC and the Stampede Centre design team to ensure a consistent approach to the public realm between the two buildings and the Festival Street.

Streetcombe Study
12th Avenue Greenway

12th Avenue SE is the primary entryway into the Cultural, Entertainment and Education character area described in the ROMIF and is a critical component of the open space framework. The southside of 12 Avenue SE is characterized by a wide pedestrian walk framed with a double row of trees from Macleod Trail to 5 Street SE. West of Macleod Trail, the pedestrian promenade continues along 12th Avenue SE with its prominent sidewalk. 12th Avenue SE will continue to accommodate the Greenway extension and will provide ample room for crowd assembly.
Stampede Trail (4th Street, Olympic Way, Festival Street)

Festival Street is of primary importance to the Event Centre's ability to contribute to the character of the Culture & Entertainment District along the East side. Providing primary access to retail, bars and restaurants from the Festival Street, with secondary access from within the Event Centre will be key in creating a successful public space.

4th Avenue SE

4th Avenue SE is primarily used as a drop off and pick up area and for traffic relief when Stampede Trail is closed. The avenue is capable of handling truck access and can be used as a broadcast vehicle staging area during events. 14th Ave SE is also bordered by an Event Place that is contemplated as part of the public realm plan in the Rivers District Master Plan. This is becoming an important pedestrian route between Stampede Park and Enmax Park as it offers the most direct path from the Elbow River bridge.
B) RESPECTING THE PAST, EMBRACING THE FUTURE

The area has a long and rich history as a site for gathering. The Event Centre site itself is situated near the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers which is the traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy and is the birthplace of Calgary.

The confluence of the rivers has been a significant gathering place throughout Calgary's history.

Nearby Fort Calgary, established as an outpost for the Northwest Mounted Police in 1875, also sits on this traditional land. The Canadian Pacific Railway arrived in Calgary a few years later, cementing the area's importance as a vital economic hub.

In modern times, beginning around 1910, the area became home to a busy industrial presence (Victoria Park) and a warehouse district served by spurs for the original rail line. Several sandstone quarries along the Elbow River served the city's building industry until the 20th century.

For the last 140 years, the area has been the site of numerous civic gatherings and events, including such special events as the 1921 Winter Carnival and the annual Calgary Stampede established in 1886.

Of special interest, the Event Centre will be the fifth in a line of similarly-purposed structures built in the area:

- Sherman Arena (early 1900s)
- Victoria Arena (1912)
- The Corral (1960)
- The Saddledome (1982)
- The Calgary Event Centre (2004)

The design team is in ongoing engagement with Indigenous groups to have their voices manifest in the design of the Event Centre and the greater neighborhood context. This engagement builds upon the work done as part of the Beltline Area Redevelopment plan and discussions with the Treaty 7 and Mi'kmaq nations.

The area's rich history will continue to evolve, shepherded now by CMU's vision for Calgary's Culture & Entertainment District. Guided by the aspirations outlined in the Rivers District Master Plan, the area will continue to be a gathering place for different peoples, cultures, and ideas. Enhanced by the Event Centre and alongside the BMD Centre expansion, the district is evolving into a year-round destination where Calgary comes together.
C) A CATALYST FOR A WORLD-CLASS CITY

As Event Centres often become a great place to bring our out-of-town guests, associates, and friends and family, the project will become a collection of the best regional offerings. The design team is working to highlight food and beverage offerings, retail opportunities, and design characteristics that create a uniquely Calgary experience. It’s our desire to enhance the Calgary brand and increase regional pride.

“We want the Event Centre to be what we call an ‘Urban Magnet’—an anchor that energizes the entire Culture & Entertainment neighbourhood. We are designing a place that enables connections—the hub to the active edges along 12th Avenue and Stampede Trail and to the best public spaces in this city.”
Figure 1 - Rivers District (Calgary's Culture & Entertainment District) Context Plan

The rivers are the most significant natural element in the landscape of the city. The confluence is the historic meeting place of Calgary and is its Indigenous nameake - Moh-Kin-Tsis, or Elbow.

Figure 2 - Object vs Context Building

The building is to be contextual as opposed to an object building. This implies that the building must gracefully embrace the Rivers District on all sides and be a good neighbour to all. The building massing and elevations must address the different characteristics of the context in which it sits and positively contribute to the vibrancy of the city streets.
Figure 3 - 12th Avenue Greenway & Connection to Elbow River
12th Avenue is the site's main connection to the Beltline. The Greenway connects the Rivers District to the Elbow River.
The forth elevation is the "northern" front door and face to the City.
The East elevation is less formal and scaled more to the South Campus immediately adjacent to the site. Treatment along this edge should make a connection to the natural environment and the contours of the Elbow River.

Figure 4 - Stampede Trail and Building Scale
Stampede Trail is intended as a high energy festival street that connects the Rivers District central core to future development and the primary building entrance and plaza on the south west corner of the site. The building scale should respond to the 2-3 storey retail character defined in the River’s District Master Plan guidelines and acknowledge the Stampede Park to the south.

Figure 5 - Building Access Points
Parks and patrons will approach the building from all directions and entrances located in multiple corners reflect that.
Access will be multi-modal with:
- Parking to the south,
- Lift access from the west and north,
- Foot traffic from the Beltline, Downtown, and the Elbow River pathway,
- Bike access from the 12th Ave cycle track,
- The majority of patrons will access the facility at the northwest or southwest corner.
BUILDING OVERVIEW

The Calgary Event Centre (CEC) will become the gathering place for all of Calgary. The project will establish a vibrant streetscape of shops and retail along 12th Avenue and Stampede Trail, creating a new gateway for Stampede Park. This facility will replace the iconic Saddledome with a vibrant new beacon of energy and excitement that will become a source of civic pride for all Calgarians.

Design Goals

The objective of the design concept was to create a structure that was grounded, both in terms of its physical presence but also in terms of its form, structure and scale. Given its unique location in the city of Calgary, the Event Centre will become one of the first city-building projects in the Rivers District Master Plan. Located by 12th Avenue S/W to the north, the InA-D Concourse to the west, Calgary Stampede’s South Campus and Elbow River to the east, the complexity of the site has informed the design direction, requiring very different architectural responses for all four elevations in composition, massing and materials.

Careful consideration was also given to the scale and massing of the structure. A desire for a significant presence on the west, open and inviting with large expanses of glass that showcase the energy and excitement of events taking place will be visible from the surrounding Beltline and downtown communities and the majority of spectators arriving at the main entrance located on the northeast and northwest corners of the site. The lower volume of the west elevation is the location of the West Pavilion which houses various food and entertainment program elements. It has been conceived as a response to the scale of the “fig leaf” street (Stampede Trail), and is in keeping with the more traditional retail street scale of the city of Calgary. The East massing of the Centre’s performance space has been reduced in size by softening the corners and lowering the internal volume with a stepped facade. These intentional moves create a more organic form that complements the lower scale of neighboring existing and future developments. A dramatic gesture to the river and green space that will connect to the district as development continues.
Symbolism, Meaning and Narrative

The Event Centre design can be perceived as a composition of three elements; in classical architectural terms, Base, Middle and Top. These elements not only come together to form an elegant design composition, but each has been derived from a specific meaning intended to establish the design narrative for the Event Centre.

THE BASE
The base derives its design cues from the natural topography of the site, materials and shapes of a riverside or bank. Features of the lower facade include massing of stone and precast tilt frames, smaller openings consistent with the scale of the city Streetscape. The base becomes the strong foundation that supports the middle and upper design elements and contrasts its mass with a complimentary lightness to the building mass out of the site towards the sky.

THE MIDDLE
Just above the foundational base the structure gives way to a clear band of glass that showcases the activity within. Glazed openings allow light and energy inside to be revealed. The middle zone of the elevations allows those inside to take in the spectacular views of the surroundings and the skyscrapers of Calgary.

THE TOP
Above the middle is a sinuous shaped form resembling a ribbon. The ribbon envelops the performance space of the Event Centre, gently rising from the critical corner of the northwest plaza and wrapping the structure around the east, terminating and pointing toward the neighboring BMW Centre and Stampede Park to the southwest. Both the curvilinear form of the ribbon and the color of the metal panels represent the flowing nature of the sky.