

Better Every Day



THE CITY'S QUARTERLY REPORT: 2025 FIRST QUARTER

FROM IDEAS TO IMPACT:

CALGARY'S WAVE TECH CENTRE IS SHAPING A SMARTER, MORE INCLUSIVE CITY



Technology is evolving faster than ever, and in the heart of downtown Calgary, a new hub is quietly turning bold ideas into everyday improvements for the people who call this city home.

Since opening its doors last fall, The City's Wave Tech Centre has become a launchpad for innovation. But while it houses cutting-edge tools like robotic arms and quantum computing infrastructure, its most important role is much simpler: helping Calgarians live better lives through smarter city services.

"We're not chasing the latest gadget," says Jason Cameron, IT Program Manager with The City's Smart Cities team. "We're using strategic foresight to test, learn, and make smart decisions—so that when we invest in new technology, it's because we know it will truly make a difference."

Wave offers 7,000 square feet of secure space for testing technologies in a real-world context. It's where city departments can experiment with pilot projects—like using augmented reality to help city planners visualize infrastructure or deploying robots to assist with accessibility solutions—before those innovations are rolled out to the public.

"We're giving teams the space and support to ask 'what if?' and then answer that with real data," Cameron explains. "That means less guesswork and more impact—whether it's shorter commute times, better waste management, or more inclusive public spaces."

Take for example the Robocraft pilot project, in partnership with the University of Calgary. This three-year initiative uses robotic fabrication to explore new ways of designing urban infrastructure—things like wheelchair ramps and community seating. But the goal isn't just better engineering. It's empowerment.

"By giving people access to digital design and robotic tools, we're not just building infrastructure," says Dr. Alicia Nahmad Vazquez, who leads the project. "We're giving communities the power to shape their own spaces."





▲ “Nachito”

▼ Wave Tech Centre: Employee open house, November 28, 2024.

Wave is a key piece of the City’s broader Smart Calgary Strategy, which aims to make Calgary more connected, inclusive, and future-ready. The strategy focuses on four pillars:

- 1 **Digital equity** – to ensure all Calgarians have the skills and tools to thrive in a digital world.
- 2 **Experimentation** – to give the City the freedom to try, fail, and ultimately succeed faster.
- 3 **Partnerships with organizations like U of C** – to bring academic insight to practical challenges.
- 4 **Engagement** – to ensure these innovations aren’t happening in a vacuum, but in dialogue with the community.

Less than a year into its journey, Wave is already proving that technology isn’t just about speed or scale—it’s about strategy, collaboration, and community impact. Whether it’s improving accessibility, enabling real-time data analysis to improve traffic flow, or helping families engage with city planning through virtual reality, the focus remains on people first.

As Cameron puts it, “Innovation for its own sake doesn’t move the needle. But when we listen to the needs of Calgarians and plan with foresight, we can bring in the right technologies at the right time—making life better, one small improvement at a time.”

And that’s what Wave is really about—not just imagining the future, but building it, together.

[Audio](#)



CREATING RIPPLES BEYOND THE COURT

The City's newest Basketball Courts located in Century Gardens Park have become more than a place to shoot hoops. They've become a gathering place—a vibrant, colorful symbol of what happens when a city invests in connection, inclusion, and youth.

Through a partnership between The City of Calgary, Calgary Parks Foundation and the Calgary Surge (Surge), these courts are showing that recreation isn't just about play—it's about creating space for people to belong. In fact, you'll likely find them activated not just the rhythm of basketballs hitting pavement but with laughter, community energy during rain or shine, and even snow.

"When we invest in free, high-quality recreation downtown, we're investing in more than just sports," says Thom Mahler, Director of Downtown Strategy with The City. "We're building safety, we're creating belonging, and we're showing that in Calgary, community isn't just a concept. It's a court, a team, and a city that shows up for its youth."

Will Tong, a Calgary-born athlete who developed his skills locally and now plays professionally for the Surge, is living proof of what access and encouragement can achieve. As Tong joins the Surge for their third season, Jason Ribeiro, Vice-Chairman & President of the Calgary Surge, hopes that providing access and opportunities like Tong had will spark some of the same passion in the next generation.

Starting this summer, access and opportunity will be opened at the courts in Century Gardens. The Calgary Surge will be offering free basketball clinics at the courts to youth aged nine to 17, pairing them with professional-level coaching and organizing three-on-three tournaments.



- Surge mascot
- ◀ Thom Mahler



▲ L-R Javier Gilgeous Glasgow, Tyrelle Miller, Benjamin Kamba, Angelo Mbituyimana.

"The impact we'll be able to create by youth simply picking up a basketball – some for the first time – and playing with others in an environment where youth are respected, cared for and emboldened to do great things for this city has been our greatest achievement over the last two years," says Riberio. "We're honored to play a role in this."

The biggest hope is that the energy on the courts will spill out into the surrounding streets, bringing foot traffic to local businesses, creating reasons to linger downtown and showing that community investment pays off in more ways than one.

"The courts proximity to transit and other downtown amenities makes it an ideal gathering spot for families, solo visitors, and friends looking to meet up," say Mahler. "Whether you're practicing a jump shot or just stopping by to watch, you're a part of something."

Ribeiro echoes this, citing that there are many things going on in downtown Calgary in the summer. "I can't wait to see it become a hotbed for three-on-three basketball, but also to see the impact that this has after that. Who goes and frequents a restaurant? Who visits a small business?"

No matter the reason why people visit the Century Gardens Basketball Courts, they are a great way to spend a summer afternoon. And for some, they may be the first chapter in a story of growth, confidence, or even a professional career.

"We need our youth to dream. To know what's possible. That's why these spaces—and what they represent—are so important. They bring people together, and they inspire," says Catriona Le May Doan, President & CEO of Sport Calgary.

When a city gives its people room to move, to gather, to play, real transformation happens with Calgarians at the center. 🏀

