



## Convention District Impact Study

# CALGARY TELUS CONVENTION CENTRE CONVENTION DISTRICT

THE REAL IMPACT OF CONVENTIONS ON DOWNTOWN CALGARY

## **Building a Neighbourhood: The Impact of the TELUS Convention Centre on the Downtown Core and its Business Community**

The Calgary TELUS Convention Centre opened in 1974 and was at the time the first and only purpose-built convention centre in Canada. With a hotel attached to it and a Museum sharing its space, Calgary's city planners of the 1960's conceived of a gathering place for Calgarians and visitors, which was thoughtful and experiential for both Calgarians and visitors to our city.

In 2000, with the expansion of the CTCC to add a North Building, once again the city planned well to straddle one of Calgary's National Historic sites, Stephen Ave Mall. The historic significance of this District has been part of Calgary for well over 125 years as a place for gathering, trading, celebrating and doing business. Today, the CTCC builds on these traditions and deep historic significance.

The shopkeepers of 2019 may do business differently and transact in modern ways but the sense of place that was Stephen Avenue in the late 1800's is alive and well today. The importance of having a central location to convene to share ideas from around the world with Calgarians and Calgary businesses is a fundamental component of the heartbeat of our downtown core.

With the hotel community growing and the restaurant scene developing in new and exciting ways, the reasons to come to the downtown core are growing. As we see the convergence of the daytime business community and convention delegate mix and mingle with the after-hours offering of theatres, museums, shopping and food, there is an opportunity to accelerate this activity and make downtown Calgary a vibrant, lively 24/7/365 place in our city.

This neighbourhood has the potential to truly become a hosting district that generates economic impact and influences our community in many ways. Job creation, business sustainability, intellectual capital exchange, exposure to the arts, elevation of the food scene and visitor hosting are all components of the district. The sum total of this economic impact in 2018 was calculated to be over \$133 million. By extension, this sustained multiple businesses in Calgary and over 1500 jobs for Calgarians. This demonstrates the opportunity to focus our city on this important district.

Recently the CTCC team went down Stephen Avenue and interviewed a number of the retail outlets along the Mall to better understand the impact that a convention or other activations at the CTCC, has on their business. It was remarkable to hear the stories they told of serving our visitors and Calgarians alike. Here are some samples of the stories we heard.

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Nikisha Mohamed

"We need more conventions! You don't realize what the month looks like us for when a convention brings tourists to Stephen Avenue. Last Otafest at the Convention Centre, a tourist bough \$1K worth of maple syrup alone. One year when there were international guests here for a week-long event at the TELUS Convention Centre, I had to restock my key chain display six times over four days! That was \$18K in keychain sales! I also sold \$25K worth of maple syrup – I ran out of syrup."

**Nizar Mohamed**  
Kanata Trading Post



Ewelina Jurek

"There is a huge difference for sales when there is a conference in the North Building of Calgary Telus Convention Centre. Our store is right in here and we always get really positive feedback about how we add more vegan and vegetarian options for the downtown core."

**Ewelina Jurek**  
Rosso Coffee Roasters



Cullen Cousins

"We do see more sales and business increases noticeably when there is a convention next door. It would be great if we could get more meetings here on Stephen Avenue because the store gets busier, we sell more First Nation's blankets and get to meet really interesting people."

**Cullen Cousins**  
Glenbow Museum Gift Shop

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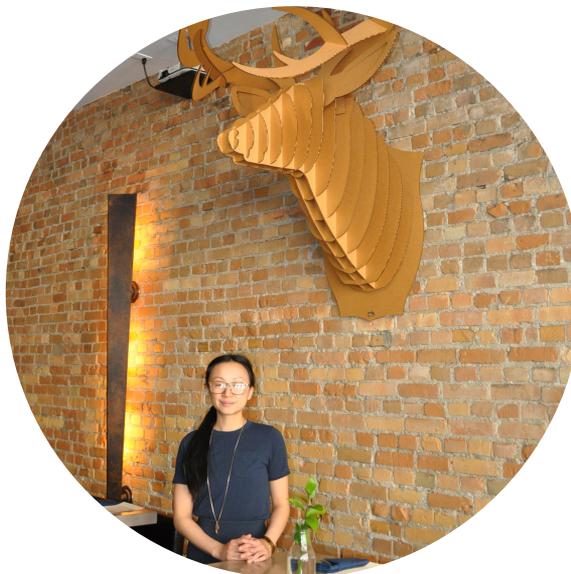
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Bryce Hickson

"I've worked here as a bar manager for three years and I always notice the difference when there is a convention or event happening – even if folks don't come in to dine, it will still add to the vibrancy of the street life on Stephen Avenue. I take the weekly event schedule that TELUS Convention Centre sends me and plan shifts accordingly so I know I have enough staff on convention days."

**Bryce Hickson**  
SALTLIK Calgary



Christina Mah

"We love having convention delegates in because it's a chance to tell Calgary's story. The Telus Convention Centre team always let's us know in advance what the weekly event schedule is so that we can plan for it well – we feel supported and connected to this community which allows us to continue to build relationships with other small business owners here, and showcase them to our guests too."

**Christina Mah**  
KLEIN / HARRIS



Colin Logiss & Dottie the Scottie

"It's the tourists who actually keep the businesses going on Stephen Avenue and in downtown Calgary. Tourists are the ones making purchases not Calgarians – tourists that are brought here because of conventions, meetings and events are the ones supporting the front of our store and buying flowers."

**Colin Logiss**  
Twigs & Company

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Omar Jivraj

"There is a very significant impact when a conference or event is on Stephen Avenue. We all benefit from this activity – for us, it means a sale for forgotten toiletries or snacks but even if people don't make a purchase and only came in to ask for directions or local recommendations, it is still very interesting to meet people from other cities and countries. In the winter when the foot traffic is a lot slower due to the cold weather, the convention delegates keep us going."

**Omar Jivraj**  
Downtown Drugmart



Spencer Arthurs

"Delegates at the Telus Convention Centre keeps us busy and the environment positive during the day when there aren't any shows happening at Arts Commons yet."

**Spencer Arthurs**  
Ca'Puccini Café



Patrick Lynn

"I've been working at this location for 13-years and what I love about conventions are seeing my annual regulars. Sometimes they have post-event receptions and we bring in band/artists. Events at the TELUS Convention Centre always have such a positive impact on our team. Our restaurant was completely empty one day but then people from the Robert Burns Supper let out and suddenly were a full house with a line-up at the doors out into the street."

**Jen Dean**  
James Joyce Irish Pub