

**THE
CALGARY
PARTY**



SMALL BUSINESS



Backing Calgary's entrepreneurs, builders & job creators.

Small businesses are the engine of Calgary's economy.

They employ the majority of Calgarians, activate our main streets, and reflect the diversity and drive that define this city. But too often, municipal policy treats them as an afterthought. In fact, some entrepreneurs feel the City is actively working against them.

This must stop. The Calgary Party believes in putting small businesses first.



SUPERCHARGE CALGARY'S MAIN STREETS STRATEGY

The City's Main Streets program has laid a solid foundation by improving streetscapes, pedestrian access, and zoning to support mixed-use development in Calgary's historic main streets. This program has resulted in private developers and building owners creating new or renovated commercial spaces which attract new small businesses. But we must do more to prioritize economic development along these corridors.

The Calgary Party will:

- Accelerate funding for the Main Streets Programs so to that more Main Streets projects can be completed faster.
- Improve scheduling and coordination so Main Street projects get completed on time and on budget and minimize disruption to local businesses.
- Support efforts from the local Business Improvement Area(BIA) organizations to activate the neighbourhood.
- Expand the Main Streets program to identify neighbourhood hubs that could benefit from improved infrastructure. Many Calgary neighbourhoods don't have a main street but have main intersections that have a mix of uses. The City could work on improving the public realm in these hubs if the private landowners agree to invest in improving their buildings.
- Establish economic metrics and public dashboards to track job growth, new openings, and commercial occupancy for the Main Street program

The impacts on Marda Loop businesses are an illustration of the failure of City Hall and City Administration to consider the cumulative impacts of their decisions and delays on the small businesses and communities they serve. The Calgary Party would take immediate steps to address this failure. In addition to red tape reduction and streamlining the building process outlined in the Calgary Party Housing Toolkit, the Calgary Party would take the following steps to move forward constructively.

Immediate Response to the Marda Loop Situation

- Appoint an independent mediator to work with affected businesses and the City to resolve the lawsuit quickly and fairly.
- Conduct an urgent audit of the Marda Loop construction project to identify what went wrong—delays, budget overruns, and communication failures.
- Create an interim relief program (grants or low-interest loans) for small businesses experiencing hardship due to prolonged City-led construction.

The Calgary Party would take the following actions to ensure the Marda Loop Situation does not happen again.

Construction Accountability

- Establish a Small Business Impact Assessment as part of all major infrastructure planning processes.
- Introduce a “Construction Mitigation Plan” requirement for all large-scale City infrastructure projects near business areas—includes detour signage, noise/dust control, and access preservation.
- Enforce strict timelines and penalties for City contractors and City Departments who exceed approved construction timelines without cause.

CITY ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CONSTRUCTION & MAINSTREET PROGRAM



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Small Business Protection & Support

- Launch a Construction Impact Compensation Fund, financed in part by contingency fees from major capital projects, to support small businesses disrupted by City works.
- Create a dedicated Small Business Liaison Office to serve as a single point of contact during major construction and advocate on behalf of impacted business owners.
- Offer commercial rent support or tax deferral programs during long-term City infrastructure projects.

City-Wide Construction Reform

- Mandate proactive engagement with local businesses before, during, and after infrastructure projects—including timelines, detours, and expected impacts.
- Publish monthly project progress updates for all major City projects on a publicly accessible dashboard.
- Launch a “Business Disruption Alert System” to give real-time updates via email/SMS to affected businesses during construction.
- Create a Mayor’s Task Force on Infrastructure Accountability to review all major capital projects for efficiency and community impact.
- Implement a digital infrastructure coordination tool to better align utilities, roads, and capital project timelines—reducing overlap and rework.
- Adopt a “Dig Once” policy to coordinate utility upgrades alongside roadwork to reduce future disruptions.

CITY ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CONSTRUCTION & MAINSTREET PROGRAM





SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Many small business are operating in older properties that require capital improvements to attract new business or help existing businesses grow. We are proposing to incentivize investment by the property owners in improving older properties modelled after the successful Edmonton program.

- **Storefront Improvement Grant.** This would be a matching reimbursement grant for large, significant exterior renovations, up to 50% of project costs to a maximum amount of \$50,000 for eligible properties.
- **Interior Building Improvement Grant.** This would be a matching reimbursement interior public facing renovations, up to 50% of project costs to a maximum amount of \$10,000 for eligible properties.

Let's make Calgary a place where bold ideas take flight with real support.

The Calgary Party will:

- Launch an annual Entrepreneurial Challenge, a citywide contest with seed funding, mentorship, and promotion for new and growing businesses
- Award multiple winners with \$25K–\$100K in growth capital, targeting sectors such as retail, tech, food, arts, and trades
- Include a youth entrepreneur stream for business owners under 30
- This will be run by a panel of Calgary Entrepreneurs with start-up experience and Calgary Economic Development
- Showcase winners at a high-profile public pitch event and media campaign

Why it matters

Midland, Texas and other cities have shown how challenges like these not only grow businesses - but inspire communities, attract investment, and create buzz.

CALGARY ENTREPRENEUR CHALLENGE





Our Commitment

We're not just supporting small businesses—we're empowering them to lead.

The Calgary Party will build a city where local entrepreneurs have access to capital, fair rules, great spaces, and real opportunity.

This is how we grow an economy from the ground up.

This is how Calgary builds for the future.

thecalgaryparty.ca