The Confluence

The Confluence Site Concept Plan is a 20-year vision for a 42-acre site at the meeting of the Bow and Elbow Rivers, transforming one of Calgary's most culturally and ecologically significant landscapes into a place that reconnects the city with its origins. Developed through Pre-Design, Site Concept, and Final Concept phases, the plan establishes a clear path from vision to implementation, identifying priority interventions as an actionable platform for the site's future.

At its core is an innovative Biocultural Diversity Framework that recognizes land and culture as inseparable, translated into nine planning principles that guided every design decision.

Reflecting shared priorities around inclusivity, diversity, equity, climate, and resilience, the plan was shaped through sustained engagement with community organizations, city partners, Treaty 7 First Nations, the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, urban Indigenous Calgarians, and residents citywide. More than 500 participants contributed through 50+ touchpoints and three community surveys.

Balancing long-term ambition with practical delivery, the plan resolves site-wide circulation, defines distinct character areas, and calibrates the capacity of key spaces. Each area can be implemented independently while contributing to an interconnected system that grows stronger over time, creating a layered landscape of gathering, reflection, and play.



Hands-on working sessions layered ideas directly onto the map, sketching priorities one note at a time.



Larger gatherings brought many voices together to reflect on the journey and where the plan was heading.



As design evolved, a site-wide loop pathway emerged — connecting to RiverWalk, linking new features and programming nodes, and letting visitors navigate between key destinations.

Countless sketches and conversations shaped the plan, refined again and again through circulation, programming, scale, and geometry until the design revealed itself.

River-forward programming celebrates and reorients the space to the meeting of the Bow and Elbow Rivers.



Year-round programming transforms The Confluence into a winter destination, with skating, winter activations, and gathering spaces along the Bow.



The Confluence Garden expands into a foraging forest, cultivated with culturally significant native plants and layered ecosystems for all to explore.



Organic, wandering pathways weave through Fort Calgary Gardens, holding the site's colonial history alongside spaces for healing and discovery.



A fluid, water-inspired form frames the Pow Wow Arbour — a 2,500-seat landmark and framework for Indigenous-led design.



The Journey winds between the Holy Gathering Place and Confluence Point, immersing visitors in native plantings and moments for reflection.

