



“Food access and social justice are at the heart of a sustainable food system.”



## Edible city

Food is changing Calgary’s urban landscape. From community gardens, urban agriculture, and farmers’ markets, to food trucks, industrial composting, and a new community food centre - the local food scene has exploded in Calgary over the past 10 years. Food is helping to shape a healthier, vibrant, and sustainable city.

A healthy and sustainable **food system** includes the full loop of growing, processing, distributing, cooking and consuming food, as well as dealing with food waste in a sustainable way. Many individuals and organizations contribute to this system here in Calgary.

Rod Olson has been digging his hands in **urban soil** since 2010. Rod is the founder of Leaf & Lyre Urban Farms and a member of YYC Growers & Distributors. YYC Growers is a non-profit alliance of urban farmers in Calgary sharing knowledge and building infrastructure for a thriving urban food system.

Rod has seen exponential growth in urban agriculture over the last several years. “YYC Growers started with three farmers in 2013, and there are now 20,” says Rod. “It is a **collaborative** effort to get healthy, local food into the hands of Calgarians and it is growing fast.” Recognizing the increased demand for urban farm space, The City of Calgary is reviewing land use bylaws and exploring opportunities to enable more people to grow food at a larger scale.

Many initiatives in Calgary are working to **build bridges** across the food

system to make local, sustainable food more accessible to vulnerable members of our community. For example, Grow Calgary is a community urban farm run by volunteers that grows vegetables for food access agencies like Inn from the Cold, the Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre, and the Calgary Food Bank. In addition, The Alex's new Community Food Centre will build better health, skills, connections and belonging through food access, food skills, and education and engagement programs.

"Food has a way of fostering **social inclusion**" says Kate Stenson, Community Food Program Supervisor at Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association (HSCA) and co-chair of Calgary EATS!. Calgary EATS! was formed in 2012 as a conglomerate of individuals and organizations interested in developing Calgary's local food system and continues to be inspired by the vision and goals of imagineCALGARY.

"Calgary has a rich local food scene with restaurants and artisanal producers providing a variety of ways to enjoy and appreciate local cuisine," says Kate. "But it's about so much more than that. Food access and social justice are at the heart of a sustainable food system."

Calgary is also leading the way in innovations at the end of the loop and addressing **food waste** on multiple levels. Kevin Davies is Founder and CEO of Hop Compost. Hop is Canada's first urban composting facility located in a revitalized old warehouse in the inner city and has diverted over two million pounds of food waste from landfill. "We're taking a table-to-farm approach and creating a healthy, organic product that closes the loop and contributes to a **regenerative** food system," says Kevin. The City of Calgary will also be opening an organics composting facility in mid-2017 – the largest of its kind in Canada.

This is only a taste of what is going on in the local food system in Calgary. Ten years ago Calgarians imagined a city with access to reliable, quality, and local food sources derived from a sustainable food system for everyone; we can see that vision coming alive all around us.

[imagineCALGARY.ca](http://imagineCALGARY.ca)

