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Spin city

On the corner of Fifth Street and Ninth Avenue S.W., by the Canadian Pacific underpass, is a small post with digital numbers that flash and change over the course of any given day. In the winter months, the number on the display reaches 600; in the summer, the display can read 2,000 or more. The display is connected to loops embedded in the pavement and tracks the number of cyclists that pass by every day.

Gerardo Marquez is one of these cyclists. Gerardo is an avid cyclist and President of Cyclepalooza - a community-based, do-it-yourself bicycle-themed festival promoting arts, culture, and fun in Calgary. Over the past decade, Calgary has seen an explosion of cycling organizations and citizens getting involved in the **cycling movement**.

“Perceptions about cycling are changing,” Gerardo says. “Cycling is on the rise thanks to countless individuals and organizations who are passionate about a vibrant Calgary. As a city, this makes us healthier, more resilient, and more connected.”

Cities all over the world are investing in cycling **infrastructure** as a way of creating multi-modal transportation options that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote health, well-being, and active lifestyles while creating more vibrant and livable communities. Calgary City Council approved the Cycling Strategy in 2011, and since then The City of Calgary has invested in cycling infrastructure, education, and monitoring initiatives.

“Not only has the number of commuters cycling into the downtown core increased, but we’ve also seen an uptake in cycling in key populations including women, children, and seniors” says Kimberly Fisher, Active Transportation Education Planner with The City of Calgary. “It’s a pilot project and we are seeing real uptake and success.”

Sylvia Trosch is a new urban cyclist. She is starting to cycle to work after years of just thinking about it.

“I wanted to get on my bike, but I didn’t feel comfortable on busy roads and it’s hard to know what to wear when the weather changes so quickly here” she confesses. “Several colleagues in my office bike to work and have been **motivating** me. Not only are they getting in shape, but they say it helps clear their minds and de-stress at the end of the day. That’s appealing to me.”

The bottom line is that more people are getting on their bikes and Calgary is becoming a city that moves in diverse and sustainable ways. But getting around is only part of the picture.

“It’s not just about infrastructure,” Gerardo says. “It’s about **community engagement**, advocacy and people coming together around a shared vision. It is a story of transformation that shows what is possible when citizens engage in efforts to improve our city.”

Ten years ago, Calgarians imagined a vibrant and **healthy city** with more bikeways and pathways for cyclists, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and a city where fewer kilometers of travel happen by car. This vision is becoming a reality through the commitment and investment by The City and a growing community of active and engaged citizens dedicated to moving more sustainably together and having fun along the way.

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