



CALGARY'S INNOVATION STRATEGY



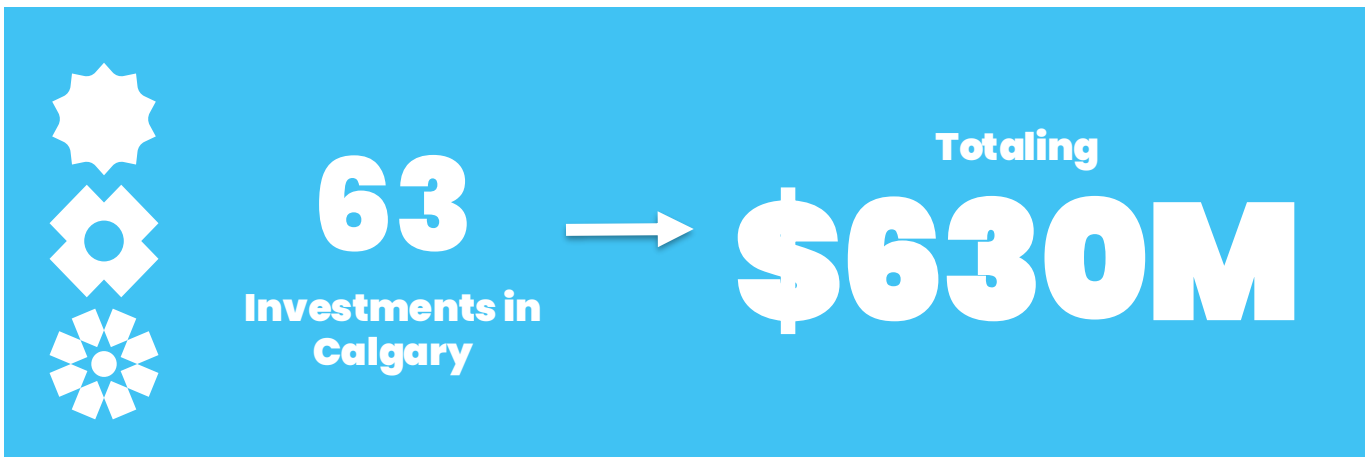
OVERVIEW

INNOVATION IN CALGARY

Calgary has established itself as a thriving startup ecosystem with a growing reputation on the global stage. The city's entrepreneurial spirit and strategic investments in key industries are fueling economic growth, creating jobs and positioning Calgary as a leader in technology and innovation.

Our history of innovation in the oil and gas sector is a testament to our ability to overcome challenges and drive progress. At one point, it was thought to be impossible to develop the oil sands. Today, we continue to see innovation breakthroughs in Calgary.

This is evident in the latest Canadian Venture Capital & Private Equity Association (CVCA) Venture Capital [Report](#).



CVCA Venture Capital Report

CVCA Venture Capital Report

Since 2018, annual venture capital investment in Calgary has grown 1,000 per cent.



OVERVIEW

INNOVATION IN CALGARY

\$8.1 BILLION

In value to the Calgary economy

From July 2021 to December 2023, Calgary's tech ecosystem added [\\$8.1 billion in value](#) to the Calgary economy, a growth of 83 per cent over the last three years, higher than the global average of 46 per cent.

FASTEST GROWING

Tech talent hub in North America

Calgary broke into the top 20 on [CBRE's Tech Talent ranking](#) for North American cities in 2024 and was named the fastest growing tech talent hub in North America with 78 per cent growth over the last five years.

RANKED 1ST IN CANADA

For startup creation

The University of Calgary has further solidified the city's innovation leadership, ranking first in Canada for startup creation for three consecutive years as of 2024.



Our momentum and growth over the past five years has been unprecedented. Calgary must capitalize on this and continue doubling down on its competitive advantages by fostering innovation-driven economic growth. The innovation strategy aims to establish an ecosystem of interconnected nodes across the city to provide vital infrastructure, resources, and collaboration opportunities for emerging businesses, ensuring Calgary remains at the forefront of technological advancement.



OUR VISION

We aspire to be the innovation capital of Canada.

Calgary has seen remarkable growth in not only its innovation ecosystem but the diversification of its economy including sectors like aerospace, creative industries, life sciences and agriculture. If we continue on this trajectory, Calgary can **become the innovation capital of Canada.**

To do so, we need to focus on **adoption of new and emerging technologies** across all sectors, and accelerate research and cross-pollination between startups, research institutes and large corporates in our right-to-win sectors.

In Calgary we see this sector focus coming to fruition through **nodes – concentrations of critical sector-specific innovation supports** - across the city. Each node will be connected to the other nodes around the city. This means innovators in Calgary will have an established roadmap to guide them from startup to scaleup with access to the assets and resources they need to thrive. Structuring our innovation ecosystem will also allow for better identification of investment opportunities, increasing capital attraction for Calgary. Our innovation strategy builds off innovation districts seen in other cities and takes this concept to the next level.

We aim to create over 187,000 jobs over the next 10 years, which we expect to contribute over \$28 billion in economic activity by 2034.



NODES

LIFE SCIENCES EXAMPLE

What is a node?

A node is a dense concentration of sector-specific innovation supports which have developed across Calgary. A node is not one building but a collection of resources, spaces and assets that together drive innovation. A node is connected to other Nodes across Calgary.

Supports within a node

The nodes contain many avenues of support located within the area allowing for great networking, access to resources and a vibrant community.

<p style="text-align: center;">Academia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Calgary • Foothills Medical School • Children's Hospital 	<p style="text-align: center;">Accelerators & Incubators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W21C • Alberta Precision Labs • Creative Destruction Labs
<p style="text-align: center;">Operating Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Science Innovation Hub • Biohub X 	<p style="text-align: center;">Funders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta Innovates • Genome Alberta • NRC IRAP

Supports outside of the node

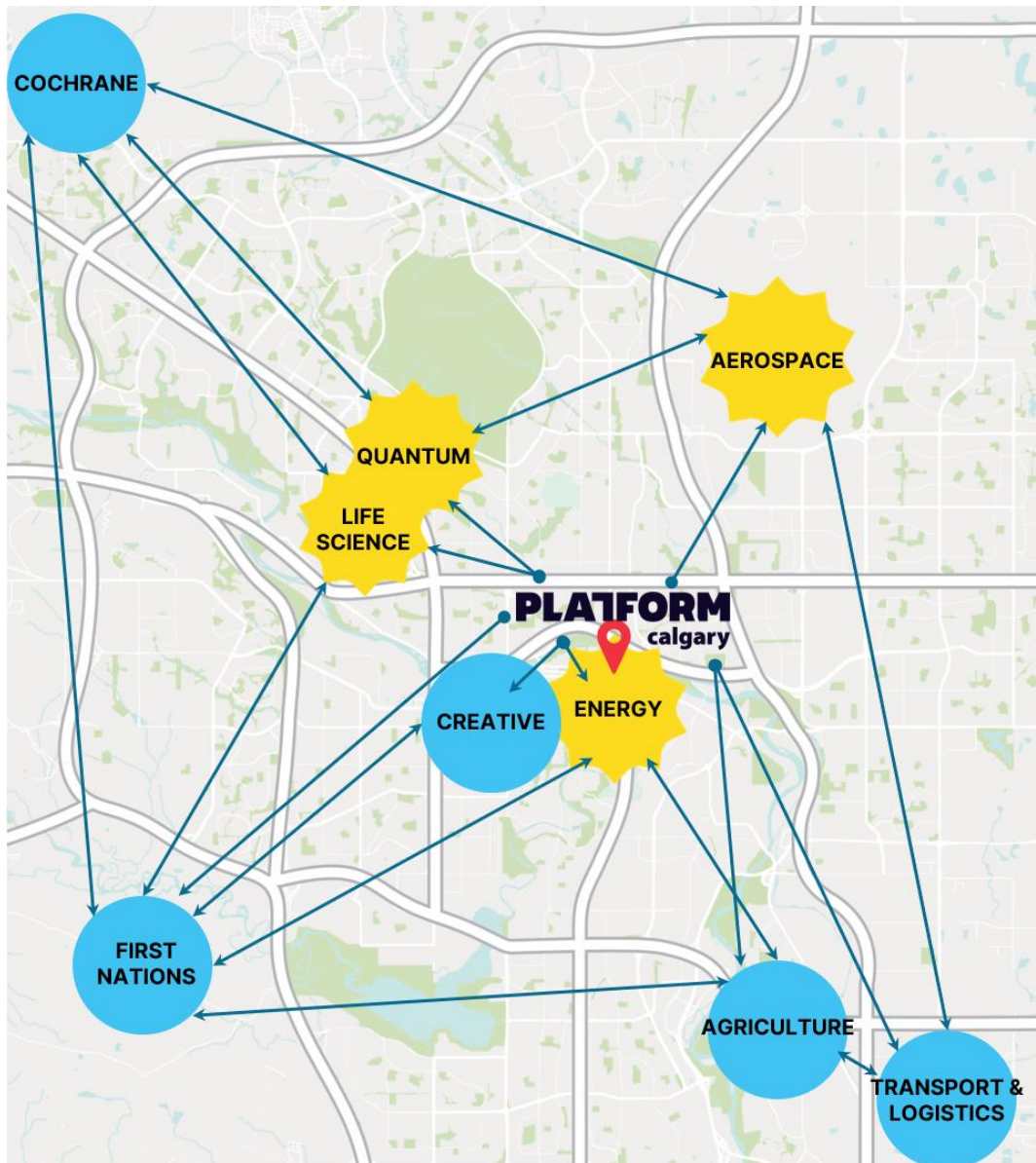
Being in a node offers many advantages, but they are not isolated islands and can still draw on the resources across the city.

<p style="text-align: center;">Academia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAIT • Mount Royal • Bow Valley College 	<p style="text-align: center;">Peer Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern RNA • Providence Therapeutics 	<p style="text-align: center;">Funders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDC • Alberta Enterprise Corporation
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NODES

CONNECTING THE NODES



The Innovation Strategy aims to establish multiple nodes across the city. We are currently working to establish seven nodes across all quadrants of the city, with Platform as a central on-ramp into the network as startups move to scaleup.

Once established, these nodes will not exist in isolation. They will share resources and supports build a connected network of nodes and support the growth of companies and sectors across the city.



STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1

ESTABLISH SECTOR-SPECIFIC INNOVATION NODES ACROSS CALGARY

Calgary's innovation strategy is founded on the establishment of nodes across the city.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 Identify nodes in our right-to-win sectors critical for innovation across Calgary.
- 2 Assess innovation resources in each node.
- 3 Strengthen nodes by assessing gaps in resources and support establishment of resources within each node.

- Once nodes are established, assess and identify future sub-
- 4 sectors that could be strengths for Calgary.





STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 2

LAUNCH AN INNOVATION ROADMAP

The intent of the strategy is to create better navigation within Calgary's innovation ecosystem. From ideation to unicorn, entrepreneurs, scale-ups and large corporates can use resources such as training, networking opportunities, office space, access to capital providers, professional services and a peer support network.

OBJECTIVES

- 1** Identify 'innovation champions' to adopt the vision and act as liaisons between businesses and the innovation ecosystem, helping people navigate the system and gain access to the resources they need.
Connect nodes to our innovation champions.
- 2** Establish on-ramping supports for businesses into the ecosystem at all levels of development.
- 3** Connect resources and supports in the nodes to each other.
- 4**



STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 3

ENHANCE THE IMPACT OF OUR INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

Our strategy extends beyond establishing nodes, we will leverage all resources across the city to enhance outcomes for our innovation community.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 Support innovation in our surrounding municipalities, leveraging regional economic development efforts to scale the size of opportunities.
- 2 Focus on a comprehensive IP strategy to support home-grown innovations.
- 3 Expand regulatory sandboxes to incentivize prototyping and experimentation across all sectors.
- 4 Structure the innovation ecosystem to make wayfinding easier for both startups and investors.



STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 4

TELL OUR STORY

Calgary is ambitious and building a network of innovation nodes to attract people and companies from around the world to solve global challenges.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 Communicate our strategy and gain local awareness.
- 2 Spotlight success stories and share our model with external audiences.
- 3 Continue showcasing innovation as a core part of the Blue Sky City brand.
- 4 Attract new businesses and talent who want to contribute to our innovation ecosystem.





SUCCESS FACTORS

Calgary’s innovation ecosystem is at a critical stage where we are starting to see significant success through the supports which have organically formed across the city. By uniting under a common banner, we can organize and structure our ecosystem to provide better support for both entrepreneurs and service providers. Through the establishment of sector-specific nodes, we can take the existing resources in our city to strengthen our position and create an environment where innovation can thrive, and startups are supported throughout their commercialization journey.



We have identified three factors we need the community to rally around to make this strategy happen:

Unlocking capital

This vision cannot be done without unlocking the necessary capital for our innovation ecosystem partners to thrive. We will explore funding opportunities from all levels of government, while structuring our innovation ecosystem to allow for better wayfinding of investment opportunities for private sector investors.

Shared direction and commitment

Our goal is for all players in Calgary’s innovation ecosystem to embrace this vision and potential. We aim for everyone in the ecosystem to speak with one voice about innovation in Calgary. We will continue to identify organizations who will help innovators navigate and champion this work.

Strategic investments from the Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF)

OCIF is one of the most effective tools our city has to help ensure our economy is diversified and resilient. Through targeted investments in the nodes, OCIF can help fuel the strategy and provide further opportunities for our innovators.



CALGARY'S INNOVATION STRATEGY

**CALGARY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
237 4 AVENUE SW
CALGARY ALBERTA
T2P4K3**



**Calgary Economic
Development**
BLUE SKY CITY



Opportunity Calgary
Investment Fund

PLATFORM
calgary