

Bridgeland Walks Self Guided #10
Getting to Know our Parks and Natural Spaces



Bridgeland Walks Self Guided #10 Getting to Know our Parks and Natural Spaces

Our community of Bridgeland Riverside has experienced continual growth since the early 2000s and now has a population of over 6500 people. And we can expect approximately 1500 more new Bridgelanders when the high rise apartment buildings under construction at the corner of McDougall Rd & 9 St NE are completed in 2022. The higher buildings are part of the City's goal to "densify" inner city neighbourhoods, especially in locations close to CTrain stations.

Our parks play a huge role in the health and quality of life of all people and this becomes more important as more people move here. People of all ages want, and need, to get outdoors and enjoy their park spaces in many different ways and in all seasons. The BRCA Beautification Committee is undertaking a Parks Study. The major goal is for people to explore our parks with new eyes and appreciate these outdoor spaces as a vital part of "Living in Bridgeland"! A noticeable impact of COVID19 is the significant increase in the numbers of people using Murdoch and Riverside parks and General Plaza in 2020 compared to 2019. However, we don't want to "stress out" our parks so a second objective of the Parks Study is to encourage people to visit and enjoy other parks in the neighbourhood.

Bridgeland Riverside is the home to 12 park spaces. Each one is unique with history, personality, assets, and potential. Only a few parks have names. A name is a key part of placemaking and local ownership so naming of the unnamed parks is an important part of our review project.

Calgary Parks department owns and is responsible for all parks, however. cutbacks in funding and services means that local residents need to take an active part to help keep our parks clean, safe, and enjoyable for all. Our parks are living spaces and evolve according our community's present and future needs.

This 6 kilometer long self guided walk will acquaint you with 12 of our parks. We hope this inspires you to make parks part of your "living in Bridgeland" experience.

As you can see from the map, our parks are in all corners of Bridgeland Riverside. The map suggests starting at the BRCA Hall and ending at General Plaza. However, you can start your walk at the park which is closest to you. Also, you may want to complete the entire walk in 2 or 3 chunks of mini-walks on different days. Do it your own way & have fun but take care crossing busy streets and in the vicinity of construction zones at McDougall Rd & 9 St, and Flyover Park at Memorial Dr & Edmonton Tr. And a friendly reminder to be COVID19 safe out there.

As you visit the different parks consider how & why each space is attractive to you. What other features could be added to make it better and more appealing to Bridgelanders of all ages. If it does not have a formal name, consider what the park might be called. The city of Calgary has a formal naming policy that our project must follow.

Our Parks Study Project needs your feedback. Please complete the survey on the last 2 pages. Your ideas and suggestions, will provide valuable contribution to our Bridgeland-Riverside Parks Report and will make our project successful!

You can drop off your completed report through the mail slot on the North side door of the BRCA Community Centre, 917 Centre Ave NE. Or you can scan your report and email to bridgelandwalks@gmail.com

Please submit your reports no later than October 31. Thank you!

Prizes for doing the Parks Survey will be given by a draw for gift certificates from Bridgeland businesses! Easy as 1-2-3...

- 1. Visit the parks...*
- 2. Do the survey...*
- 3. Cross Your Fingers & you may win a prize in December!*

Start the walk at the Community Centre – at the corner of 9 St and Centre Avenue. Proceed west along Centre Ave also called “the Promenade”.

Stop #1 Murdoch Park

Stop by the brick wall made using bricks from the Calgary General Hospital. Before you is a panoramic view of the largest and most visited park in our community. This park is named for Calgary’s first mayor George Murdoch (1884–6). Centre Avenue was previously named Murdoch Avenue as can be seen in the sidewalk stamps from the early 1900’s found along Centre Ave east of 9 Street.

Murdoch Park is the centrepiece for ‘the Bridges’ condo housing area that was developed after the implosion of the entire Calgary General Hospital campus in 1998. You are standing now where thousands of Calgarians came to work, to visit and to receive health care during CGH’s 88 years of service to Calgary. The park extends East to West from 9 St to 7A St and North to South from Centre Ave to McDougall Rd. It has many features including a large soccer field, a fun filled playground, rose & rain garden with pergola & bench in the South East corner, skating rink in the BRCA Hall courtyard, and a West end slope with amphitheatre potential that is also great for seasonal tobogganing. A weekly Farmers Market is held in the BRCA courtyard and parking lot, at the east end of the park during most summers. In addition to soccer, people have been seen playing frisbee, bocce and croquet on the field and participating in small exercise & yoga classes along the edges.

Walk down the sloped sidewalk alongside the General Hospital wall and along the paved sidewalk. Turn left at the T junction. Walk to the Rose & Rain Garden with its alley of small trees that blossom in spring, creating a romantic bower around the pergola and little bridge. Check out the sign describing how the Rain Garden functions to improve the quality of the river water and walk ahead to the corner of 9 St and McDougall Rd.

What are your ideas to enhance this park area, with its varied topography and unique corners?

Walk North along 9 St till you reach the entrance to the BRCA parking lot and cross 9 St Eastward to enter the opening between the two condo buildings – the 8 storey Radius to the north and 15 storey twin towers of the Dominion block (under construction). Walk along the sidewalk....

Stop #2 St. Matthew Square

Looking straight west from the edge of the park you will see gothic spire of St Matthew Lutheran Church – a local landmark since 1912. This small park, established as part of the Bridges Development project, has two grassy areas; one mostly flat and the other well sloped for drainage. There are trees and many rose bushes. Metal benches that are set into concrete platforms that take advantage of the slope of the area. There has been little additional development to date as the first condo buildings only opened in 2018. Might this be a good location for a fenced dog park?

From the East end of St Matthew Square proceed south along 9A St and cross McDougall Rd looking out for cars, buses, and construction trucks! Walk East along McDougall Rd to 11 St and arrive at the entrance to....

Stop #3 Riverside Park

Before becoming a park this area was a grassy (flood) plain south of the hospital and then was converted into baseball diamonds. In the mid 1990's there was a collaborative effort between the nearby organizations (General Hospital, Carewest, CNIB, Silvera for Seniors, Rehab Society of Calgary and the City) to build an accessible park – which they named Riverside Park. The archway and light poles bear the colour scheme of that era. Partly shaded by mature trees, this park is frequented by some of the hundreds of seniors who live in the area as well as children from a nearby preschool. The baseball diamond is well utilized by recreational slow pitch and kickball teams and is the practice field for a girls competitive fastball team. A locked metal storage bin behind the ball diamond could be made available for ball equipment if locals wished to book the ball diamond and make use of it.

A Little Free Library and a pleasant rose/rain garden and picnic tables complete the East end of the park. The West end of the park includes a semi-circle of mayday trees (beautiful and scented in the spring), park benches and a great view of the mural “Connecting back to the Bow” (River) on the ball diamond chain link fence. For those who wish to pause and hang out or have a snack picnic benches are available under the shade of the big poplar trees.

There are some vacant strips of grass in the park where games such as horseshoes, bocce or croquet could be played. Might the West end be a good location for equipment for a fitness park? Other ideas?

Walk South on the sidewalk beside Bridgeland Crossings condo building to reach the foot of the Bridgeland Memorial CTrain station bridge. Turn right and walk around the condo building to the crosswalk at McPherson Rd. Walk across the very busy 9 Street; watch out for cars coming out of the condo garage, bikes & scooters sharing the sidewalk, and big trucks for “The Bridge” condo under construction on the West side of 9 Street. and continue west on the south sidewalk of McPherson Rd about 100 meters till you see our next park on your right...

Stop #4 McPherson Square

This is the third park that was part of the ‘Bridges’ redesign for the area. McPherson Rd is named for one of the original land owners in the area, likely a member of Calgary’s original NWMP detachment. This park will soon be surrounded by “Steps”

condo block (6 floors) on the West and the three towers of “The Bridge” complex (8, 8, & 16 floors) on the East and North. McPherson Square has lovely trees that blossom in spring, shrub beds and park benches. *What more might this park become?*

Walk west along McPherson – you’ll pass the tennis court which is also used for pickleball. Keep going till you reach the next intersection 7A St and go north. Cross over McDougall Rd and walk on the paved area by the east end of the apartment building and around to the back... where you’ll find a paved path and our next park....

Stop #5 New Park with No Name

Before people were living in the 2 apartment blocks at 814 McDougall Rd, there were 2 large 1912 era houses at this location. Density happens! The area at the back was to have been the parking lot for the new buildings, however a revised plan angled the parking out front. This saved cutting down beautiful spruce trees! This resulting green space is registered as a City Park space. How could this park be used? Can you suggest a name for this new park?

Continue West on the pathway past the historic Vacant Lots Garden to the 7 Street and turn left, go to McDougall Rd and turn right. From there walk West along to 6 Street and carefully cross this poorly controlled intersection. Stop alongside the construction zone of our next park...

Stop #6 Flyover Park

When the East Memorial Road project was being built in the early 1970s, numerous houses were expropriated along McDougall Rd to make way for the 4th avenue Flyover which was needed to flow commuter traffic into the downtown core. No funding was available to address the resulting rough area underneath the Flyover. Over the years it attracted social disorder which made this area of McDougall Rd uninviting and unsafe. As Bridgeland Riverside grew, there were calls, from walkers in particular, to improve this area.

A grassroots effort involving Langevin school kids, University of Calgary Architecture students, and local Bridgelanders has unlocked this area’s potential. Flyover Park is becoming a reality through hard work led by Ali McMillan with BRCA, and through funding grants from the Parks Foundation, Province of Alberta, Calgary Foundation, and TD Bank Environment Foundation. Check out the plans for the completed project at website: <https://www.parksfdn.com/flyoverpark>

When Flyover Park opens in October 2020, it will be a welcoming entrance to Bridgeland. This park is a good example of how an empty and unpleasant park space can be transformed into an active community space to be enjoyed by all.

As we Walk North on Edmonton Trail. Cross 1st Ave at the lights and keep going north and you will start to go up hill past the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. Go across 4th Ave, walk past Bridgeland Hill condo building and immediately turn right at the gravel pathway. (This would be a great location for a park entrance sign!) You’ll find two routes to get to the top at 5th Avenue – a set of stairs that bears to the left and a continuation of the gravel pathway to the right and you arrive at....

Stop #7 Unnamed park with a Regal View

This steep hillside area is designated as a Natural Area Park. This is a section of the Bow River Escarpment which extends from Crescent Heights in the West, to Tom Campbell Hill in the East. Pathways and steps were put in place to make it easier for people to enjoy this park. Slopes were contoured and planted with natural grasses and flowers and the area has flourished! There are several benches which offer an amazing view. Walkers and dog owners now frequent the park.

This area was settled very early in Calgary's history and the community was called Regal Terrace. Over the years it became part of Renfrew Community. The proposed name for the park "Regal View" seems to capture both the history and spirit of the place. What do you think?

The paved road at the top of both trails is 5th Ave. Head East on 5th Ave till you reach 4A Street. Go to the Southeast corner where you can see a guard rail barrier. View the park area from here, and take the steep path to the bottom area of the park... or you can walk down 4A St till you reach 4th Ave and turn East – walk a short distance till you reach the back lane. Go up the lane approximately 75 meters and the park magically appears on your left....

Stop #8 The Park that is Forgotten

This small sunny, secluded and unmarked park is mostly the steep slope of the escarpment. Up until a few years ago, a playground was here but all that remains is a cement pad, park bench and garbage can. The grass in the flat space is mowed by the city and nearby residents visit here. Some play bocce using the slope to make the game more challenging. Most Bridgelanders do not know about this park.

The path from 5th Ave into the park below is too steep for most people so access would be improved if a more gradual path is cut into the slope. A sign at the 4th Ave lane would help bring people to this park to play bocce, frisbee, ball, practice yoga, taichi or meditation, or have a picnic.

Trimming the large bushes would improve sight lines and increase the feeling of safety in this park. What do you think? Other ideas?

Walk south down the lane and turn left, and go along 4th Ave as far as 6A St. Turn left and walk north to 5th Ave and then walk East. A sloped green space is on your left.....

Stop #9 Green Space with No Name

This green area encompasses the slope of the escarpment in the street design around Bridge Crescent, 5Ave and 6A St. Bridgeland was one of the Canadian Pacific's Railway's land holdings in Calgary (in addition Scarboro and Mt Royal) where the Olmsted landscape architecture company was hired to design the streets to incorporate housing along the steep escarpment. Currently the grass is mowed and trees have been planted by city Parks but otherwise this green area lacks development. What might attract you to spend a little time here? How might Olmsted philosophy be followed to make this space a more desirable destination? For more details see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Law_Olmsted#Olmsted's_principles_of_design

Walk East along 5th Ave as far as 9A St and turn right. When you reach 4th Ave you will see the next park on the southeast corner.....

Stop # 10 9A St Park

This well treed park has been here almost as long as Bridgeland (which was annexed to the city in 1907). Back in the day this area had a mostly German from Russia population and a popular skating rink. In more recent years, families come from all corners of Bridgeland come this park's here, the playground. The "spider web" climbing structure, swings, and slides, large trees for shade, picnic tables, and park benches make this a popular place in both winter and summer. A small grassy area between the play equipment is available for playing catch or bocce or other grassy sport. How do you enjoy this park when you come here? Spielplatze is the German name for playground – might this name be a recognition of the heritage of this area.?

Continue walking east on 4th Ave, cross 10 St carefully (as cars speed down the hill). Walk as far as 11A St where you will see some wooden steps that take you to a paved pathway leading southeast toward the park

Stop # 11 Tyndale Park

The original 1921 Bridgeland School previously occupied this entire corner up to the edge of the steep escarpment. The school building and a small part of land was sold to a private school in the early 2000's, and the remainder was created as an "oasis" for this corner of Bridgeland. The name Tyndale appeared around this time although it is not known where the name came from. The large area of this park, treed at the North end and along the paved pathway is primarily flat and the grass is mowed by the city. While there are small net backstops for baseball, it is not certain if baseball is played here very much. Soccer is the more common sport and recently bicycle polo is played here. Cyclists and walkers can follow the paved pathway along the side of the escarpment slope up to Abbott Ave. Notice the short steep slope at the south end (great for rolling down).

Would park benches or picnic tables make this a more desirable destination for walkers and those watching the games? What other uses could be made of this park? Kite flying?

Exit the park on the South side through a break in the fence – onto 2nd Ave. Walk south along 12th St till you reach 1st Ave and turn right... walk west. You will find General Plaza at 9 St. Cross 1st Ave at the polkadots

Stop # 12 General Plaza

This city park/open space, fondly known as 'The Piazza' is a nod to our community's Italian heritage and a reminder that the General Hospital was the heart of Bridgeland. This park was developed in the early 2000s as part of the "Bridges project" which redeveloped the previous General Hospital site with multifamily apartment buildings and storefronts along 1st Ave. General Plaza has evolved into a thriving people space; it is the patio for shops along 1st Ave & General Ave. The BRCA supplied and maintains sidewalk tables & chairs and strings of evening lights welcomes people to spend time together here and create community! A little bit of Europe is how some

people describe the vibe here and people from all over the city visit. The attractive seasonal plants provided by City Parks displayed at the East end and the new mural of peony flowers on the Telus utility structure at the West end add to the ambience.

What would make this park even more appealing? How could the park be programmed to add value to the space?

This is the end of the walk. Now you've seen many of the playspots and seating areas around the Bridgeland - Riverside. We'd love to hear your thoughts about the parks, their potential and possible names. Complete the survey form on the next 2 pages and submit by Oct 31st to be included in the draw for gift certificates to local business!

Winners will be announced in the December Bridges newsletter.

Thank you from the Bridgeland Riverside Beautification Committee

BRIDGELAND - RIVERSIDE PARKS SURVEY

What would encourage you or your family & friends want to come to this park now and in the future?

Park Map Number Name & Location	Your Comments
1. Murdoch Park Centre Ave @ 7A to 9 Streets	
2. St Matthew Square 9A St just North of McDougall Rd	
3. Riverside Park McDougall Rd @ 9A to 11 Streets	
4. McPherson Square McPherson Rd between 8 St & 9 St	
5. New Park/ escarpment behind McDougall/7A St	
6. Flyover Park McDougall Rd at 6 St	
7. Park with a Regal View 5 Ave @ 4 St	
8. Park that is forgotten 5 Ave @ 4A St	
9. Olmsted Corner 5 Ave @ 7 St/ Bridge Cres	
10. 9A St Park @ 4 Ave	
11. Tyndale Park 2 Ave & 11A St behind school	
12. General Plaza "The Piazza" 1st Ave & 8A/9 Streets	

Please go to the next page to complete the survey...

BRIDGELAND - RIVERSIDE PARKS SURVEY

What would encourage you or your family & friends want to come to this park now and in the future?

- Did you visit the parks with friends or family?
- Did you visit the parks with your dog?
- Day & time you visited the park
- What was the weather like when you visited
- What animals or birds did you see?
- Which park is the closest to where you live?
- How often do you visit this park?
- What 3 parks you would visit the most?
- What 3 parks you would visit the least?

Any other comments, suggestions, ideas...

Thank you for being part of our Parks Study!

Name: _____

Contact info: _____