

MARDA LOOP BIA

REPORT TO COMMUNITY 2025

*UPDATED NOVEMBER 2025

Year in Review

2025 was a year of adversity with main streets construction, but we turned a corner with its completion. New projects continue to add to the area's residential population and commercial space, as more businesses join our vibrant district. We're excited to see popular restaurants and well-known brands choose Marda Loop as their home, adding to the area's dynamic and diverse offerings.



2025 marked the final year of Main Streets construction, and the BIA worked extremely hard to shift public perception of the area. Thanks to intentional programming, strong promotion, and consistent community engagement, we saw some of our strongest results to date. Signature events — including Eggfest, Marda Gras, Spook the Loop, Sip & Support Saturdays (happening Nov-Dec), and Spirit (happening Dec 6)— drew / are positioned to draw record attendance and record business participation, with more than 50 businesses involved in each major event and more than 45,000 visitors to the area overall.

The period from October through early November became one of Marda Loop's most visible and successful stretches in recent years. With construction wrapping up, the BIA executed a series of high-performing initiatives — Spook the Loop, targeted earned media outreach, influencer partnerships, and focused digital growth campaigns — all of which drove record engagement and positioned the neighbourhood strongly heading into the Sip & Support Local holiday series that is occurring from November 22 - December 20.

Throughout the year, we worked closely with the City of Calgary to ensure Main Streets updates were communicated clearly and consistently to both businesses and the broader community. Streetscape maintenance remained a key priority, and we are proud to introduce brand-new street banners featuring artwork by local artist Natalia Ionescu, and our new planters will soon be decorated for the season. Our RadiCare team is keeping the area clean, and Christmas lights are being hung throughout the area, including on our new street poles providing a sense of warmth and vibrancy.

With construction now behind us, 2026 will allow for a renewed emphasis on beautification and placemaking. The BIA plans to allocate additional resources toward streetscape enhancements, including the aforementioned new planters, historic signage, and other initiatives that will continue to elevate the look and feel of Marda Loop.

In 2025, Marda Loop's marketing and events programming delivered record-setting growth across every major channel. Our social media presence expanded significantly, with Instagram up 30%, Facebook up 15%, and our TikTok ranking among the top BIA accounts in the city. Together, our platforms generated 4.5 million impressions, 75,981 engagements, and nearly 680,000 video views — representing a 35% increase in channel growth and a 85% surge in content consumption compared to last year. Tone and sentiment also noticeably improved, with a 70% rise in positive or trending-positive language across all posts and public interactions. Our monthly newsletter continued to build momentum as well, growing to 1,545 subscribers with exceptional open and above average click-through rates which led to increased traffic on our website and direct-to-businesses.

Events and storytelling remained core drivers of visibility and community engagement and media and influencer relations amplified this further: 100+ positive stories were published across TV, print, radio, and digital outlets drove 12.6 million impressions, supported by Calgary-based creators with a combined reach of over 350,000 Calgarians.

This integrated approach ensured that even during the end of construction, Marda Loop remained one of Calgary's most talked-about, most visited, and most community-driven districts.



MARDA LOOP
where life connects

MEET YOUR BOARD & TEAM

Executive Committee

- Paul Morissette, Fresh Kitchen
- David Jannard, Blush Lane
- Nova Kane, ATB Financial
- Mike de Jonge, Marda Loop Brewing

Directors at Large

- Doug Anderson, Brokercore
- Cameron Fraser, Fraser & Fig
- Jon Green, Leonard Development Group
- Lachlin Muir, Distilled Beauty Bar
- Whitney Titheridge, Crabapple Clothing

Executive Director

Bob van Wegen

Subcontractors

Dakota Kidby and August To, Social Centric and Co., Marketing and Communications Agency of Record
Eggfest, Spook the Loop and Spirit of the Loop: Ceilidh Price, Ditto Productions
Shannon McNally & Freedom of Expression Events, Marda Gras Street Festival
Worthington PR and Story, Public Relations Support
Parsons Dialogue: Business Engagement
RadiCare Ventures, Litter and Graffiti control
Margaret Hope, Admin Support

Priorities for 2025 Included

A robust marketing plan guided our work this year, anchored in positive public relations, strategic search and storytelling investments, and targeted growth initiatives — all designed to mitigate the impact of the final stages of Main Streets construction. Through a combination of promotional efforts, signature events, and consistent community engagement, we kept Marda Loop top of mind and continued driving visitors to the area.

As we planned for the completion of construction, we also invested heavily in the neighbourhood's future presentation. New decor, banners, seasonal lighting, and additional streetscape elements were prepared to support a refreshed, vibrant post-construction experience. We also celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the Marda Loop BIA and Marda Gras, advancing the Marda Loop Heritage Project to share the area's history and identity across marketing, beautification and community-building initiatives.



Hours and Stats

Board and Subcommittee Volunteer Hours

Hours totalling: over 400 hours

Main Contractors Hours

Marketing and Communications: averaging 45 hours per month
Eggfest, Spook the Loop, Spirit of the Loop Events: 175 hours
Marda Gras: 350-400 hours

Communications Stats

Member meet and greets: three in 2025
Monthly member newsletters: averaging 2-4 per month / as well as area updates
Engagement sessions with BIA and City: 2-4 per month



Streetscaping & Clean-up

RadiCare specializes in urban clean-up and is a social enterprise that employs people who have come through adversity. In the last 12 months up to October 31, 2025, RadiCare removed 91 bags of garbage, 2,000 cigarette butts and 62 poster/stickers and 240 letters of graffiti.



MAIN STREETS CONCLUSION

Streetscape 2026

As 2025 comes to a close, Marda Loop enters a new chapter with the completion of its fully reimagined Main Street streetscape — a milestone years in the making and one that will positively shape the community for decades. The new streetscape blends modern functionality with thoughtful nods to the neighbourhood's history. Refurbished entryway “lollipop” signage, sidewalk stamps, and refreshed street banners honour Marda Loop's past while helping define a cohesive sense of place. Wider sidewalks now create a safer, more welcoming pedestrian environment, while upgraded electrical and water infrastructure ensures a more efficient, resilient neighbourhood beneath the surface.

These improvements also unlock new opportunities to position Marda Loop as a true destination. Enhanced electrical capacity supports year-round lighting installations and future public-realm projects, while the designated “Loop in the Loop” (aka the No. 7 District) event space expands our ability to host markets, activations, and community gatherings. Additional amenities — including tree grates, bike racks, benches, and waste bins — make the area easier, cleaner, and more enjoyable to visit.

We also have new gateway signage above Crowchild Trail and improved directional wayfinding throughout the district is coming in 2026, helping residents and visitors alike navigate the neighbourhood and discover its many small businesses. Together, these upgrades create a more vibrant, accessible, and future-ready Marda Loop — one that honours its history while supporting growth, connection, and community well into the years ahead.

BIA projects for 2026:

- Marda Loop History Project, including: heritage signage to tell some of the stories from Marda Loop's past.
- Bringing our new street planters to life!
- Looking at opportunities for murals, and art-wraps for electrical boxes. There's also opportunity for City funding support.
- Enhancement of litter and graffiti control program.



Grants and Sponsorship

City of Calgary grants:

- Community Standards Fund and “CBIZ” grants to support “clean and safe” - e.g. litter and graffiti control.
- Art and Culture Grant to celebrate 40th Anniversary of Marda Loop at Marda Gras
- Grants for post-construction marketing
- Support for streetscape decor

Sponsorships

Thank you to 13 businesses and organizations that contributed over \$40,000 in sponsorship to our festivals and events!



Natalia Ionescu, Banner Artist

Partnerships

- Tayler Schenkeveld and the CADA utility box painting program.
- Natalia Ionescu, banner art
- Calgary Arts Development
- Marda Loop Communities Association
- Richmond Knob Hill Community Association
- Marda Loop Night Markets
- Tourism Calgary
- Avenue Magazine / Sarah Sociables
- Bird and Neuron Scooters
- Heritage Calgary
- cSPACE Marda Loop

Major Developments and Achievements

- Looking at opportunities for murals and other art projects in 2026 and beyond.
- New street banners and decorative lighting.
- New utility box art with Calgary Arts Development.
- Strong PR, Events and Marketing push in fall 2025 to bring visitors back post-construction.
- Securement of funding from City.
- Marda Loop Rewards for Shopping Local, averaging 20 entries per month earlier in the year with 50 and up during early summer.
- Highest ever attendance of public and business involvement at events.
- More than 100+ businesses supported on social media.
- Launch of second Sip and Support local campaign.
- More than 1,500 dedicated newsletter subscribers with an above average open rate.
- One of the best social media presences in the BIA community with above average visits from local influencers and content creators.

MARKETING AND EVENTS

Social Media (organic)

(Does not include numbers for November 25 onward and into the holiday season, which will likely bring in an average of 150k more eyes to the area's social media channels - per 2024 averages)

Channels: the BIA is on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok

Channel snapshot

Instagram: 5,789 (up by a whopping 30%)

Facebook: 2,280 (up by 15%)

TikTok: 1,191 one of the top BIA TikToks in the city (up by 30%)

We have retired X in 2025 due to alignment and audience

Data snapshot

Impressions: 4.5 million

Engagements: 75,981 engagements

Engagement rate: 7.9%

Video views: 678,987

Compared to 2024: our channels have grown by 35% with views of content having grown by 90%

Marda Loop Public Newsletter:

The Marda Loop "In the Loop" newsletter was founded in 2023 and has grown to 1,545 subscribers. It has an average growth rate of around 50 new subscribers per month and an open rate of 59% - which is much higher than average for public email lists which are typically around 35%.

About 250 of our subscribers this year came from our website pop-up form, while more than 750 others came from targeted advertising with partners like Avenue magazine and event sign-ups utilizing reward-based marketing.



Our 2025 Events and Results

Our events had record participation and attendance this year

- Marda Loop Eggfest
- Marda Gras and Pet Pageant
- Spook the Loop
- Spirit of the Loop (December 6)
- Sip and Support Local Nov 22 - Dec 20

Marda Loop's signature events have continued to bring thousands of people to discover the area - even during construction

- Marda Gras Street Festival had 240 vendors including 40 BIA businesses and 40,000+ attendees this year.
- Marda Loop Eggfest, our Easter event - had 47 participating businesses and an estimated 1,500 attendees (kids + parents).
- Spook the Loop had 46 participating businesses and estimated 2,200 attendees.
- Marda Loop Night Markets - a third-party event held in Marda, hosted more than 15,000 attendees over three markets this past year.
- Spirit of the Loop with Santa and Mrs. Clause will be hosted on December 6th. In 2024 we had more than 350 kids to see Santa, and an estimated 700 visitors including parents.

These events have driven more than 59,400 visitors to the area this year.

Media Relations + Influencer Relations

From our PR push announcing the end of construction in October 2025:

Stories: 101 positive stories across TV, print, and digital

Audience Reach: 126.9 million impressions

Value of editorial coverage: \$616,429 CAD

Sentiment: 73% positive or trending positive

Top Outlets: CBC Radio / TV, CTV, Calgary Herald, LiveWire Calgary

Influencers: 4 Calgary-based creators (35.5K combined reach | \$30.3K value of coverage)

Content: 72 stories + multiple reels

Top Performers: @alysiarkwong (13.2K views) | @imrffabulous (17K views) @sarahsociables (150k+ views)

HOW TO CONNECT WITH US

Be Informed and get Involved

The MLBIA Newsletter

The BIA sends out newsletters regularly to our businesses about our events, marketing updates, area updates like streetscaping and Main Streets as well as opportunities to connect! If you're still not subscribed, email info@visitmardaloop.com to get signed up.

Marketing Supports Page

Looking for more support for your business? Visit our website and find "marketing supports" in our navigation bar to get in-the-moment updates on upcoming events, ways to get involved in the area, information on how to connect with our marketing team - who handles all of our social media, newsletter and media relations - and check out what sign-up forms are available for our next event or activation!

Connect with the Board

The BIA has committees for Marketing, Streetscape and Development Issues. If you are interested in being part of a committee, joining the Board, or just knowing more please contact us!

Get Social with Us!

MLBIA Channels

The BIA is active on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok @visitmardaloop - follow us back and make sure to tag us in your content! We do our best to spread the love and share as much as possible (within reason) - the more you poke us and share, the more your content will be reposted.

Area Hashtags

Looking for more ways to elevate your reach?

Use the following hashtags to help Calgarians see how great our hood is:

#visitmardaloop
#intheloop
#mardaloopyyc
#mymarda
#meetmeinmarda
#mardaloophistory

