

MARDA LOOP BIA

REPORT TO COMMUNITY 2024

Year in Review

In 2024, the Marda Loop BIA has grown from 174 to 196 members and this number continues to rise 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, but, we were also very sad to see business leave the area as well and are sympathetic to the ongoing construction challenges.



2024 had some very serious concerns related to construction and perceptions of the area. The MLBIA board and our entire team worked very hard to address these challenges.

We had a strong program of events to bring people into Marda Loop, including our signature Marda Gras Street Festival. Eggfest and Spook The Loop had unprecedented participation and attendance. The Marda Loop Night Markets also brought thousands of people into the area and amplified a positive Marda Loop message. And Santa is on the way for Spirit of the Loop on December 7, while we have a brand new shop local event that just launched on November 23rd.

Robust marketing efforts attempted to keep people visiting Marda Loop. We executed a six-month media partnership with CTV, which included a television advertisement and a "live on location" morning with the CTV Morning News at four businesses. This was in addition to summer advertisements in Avenue Magazine, maildrops to local neighbourhoods, a Love the Loop rewards program and more. It was busy in the news! We had a proactive and reactive media relations strategy that resulted in more than 35 pieces of media coverage. Our monthly community newsletter list grew to 1,300 members, and our social media profiles grew substantially in both quality and quantity, giving us a stronger base to market the area and promote events. We also worked hard to feature as many businesses as we could, both proactively and by request, to support those needing extra eyes.

We have worked with the City of Calgary to try to ensure timely and thoughtful Main Streets updates were communicated to both our businesses and the community. A big part of what the BIA does relates to maintaining the streetscape. A lot of our regular programs like planter and banners have been on hold during construction, but in the spring we engaged the RadiCare Ventures team to do litter clean up and graffiti removal. We have put up Christmas lights on our larger trees and by next year we will have many more opportunities. In 2025 more resources will go pivoted to the streetscape, with new planters, banners, historic signage and other initiatives.

On the social media front, we published 1,500+ posts focused on our businesses, construction updates, event promotions, and feel-good stories about the Loop. To date, our Reels and video content featuring our businesses have garnered over 370,000 views. Each month, we worked with an average of 6-10 individual businesses to share positive stories about our vibrant district. Our social media engagement rate consistently exceeds BIA averages, and we've reached more than half a million Calgarians with our content. Read on for more detailed insights into all of the solutions we've implemented to support and elevate our community.



MARDA LOOP
where life connects

MEET YOUR BOARD & TEAM

Executive Committee

Mike Bruni, Board President (Bruni Law)
Whitney Titheridge, Vice President (Crabapple Clothing)
Nova Kane, Treasurer (ATB Financial)
Mike de Jonge, Secretary (Marda Loop Brewing)

Directors at Large

- Nova Kane, ATB Financial – Treasurer
- Doug Anderson, Ballistic Echo
- Shelley Anderson, Anderson & Co. Hair
- Steph Davis, 360 Brainbody
- Jon Green, Leonard Development Group
- Paul Morrisette, Fresh Kitchen
- Kelly Summers, Belle Beauty Lounge

Executive Director

Bob Van Wegen

Subcontractors

Dakota Kidby, Marketing and Communications
Shannon McNally & Freedom of Expression Events, Marda Gras Street Festival
Eggfest, Spook the Loop and Spirit of the Loop: Ceilidh Price, Ditto Productions
RadiCare Ventures, Litter and Graffiti control
Margaret Hope, Admin Support

Priorities for 2024 Included

Mitigating the impact of Main Streets construction through our promotional efforts and events. Planning for the completion of Main Streets construction with new decor, banners, lighting, etc. We are working on the Marda Loop Heritage Project to better tell the Marda Loop story in our marketing, beautification, and community engagement efforts.



Hours and Stats

Board and Subcommittee Volunteer Hours

Hours totalling: 338

Main Contractors Hours

Marketing and Communications: averaging 40 per month
Eggfest, Spook the Loop, Spirit of the Loop Events: roughly 135

Communications Stats

Member meet and greets: 1 in early 2024
Member newsletters: averaging 2-4 per month
Engagement sessions with BIA and City: averaging weekly

Streetscaping & Clean-up

In the spring we engaged RadiCare Ventures to help clean up litter and graffiti. RadiCare specializes in urban clean-up and is a social enterprise that employs people who have come through adversity. Since April they have collected 29 bags of garbage, over 2,300 cigarette butts and cleaned 98 posters/stickers and 101 pieces of graffiti.

MAIN STREETS

Streetscape 2025

As 2024 comes to an end we are starting to see the new Main Street streetscape come together where it has been mostly completed, including wider sidewalks, corner bulbs at pedestrian crossings, the decorative paving of the "Loop in the Loop" area, and new trees. Marda Loop branded sidewalk stamps, tree grates and bike racks have been installed, and new benches and garbage cans. The area is much brighter with better street lighting.

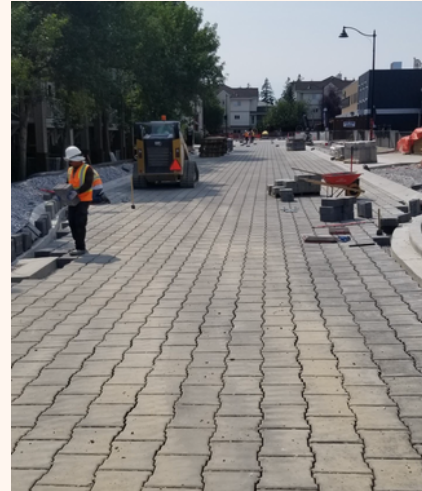
We will see similar improvements in the remainder of the BIA in 2025

What's else is coming?

2025 will bring the return of the Crowchild entryway sign and four other entryway markers (they are from the 1980s and are being refurbished), and new directional "wayfinding" signage, similar to what you see in downtown.

BIA projects for 2025:

- New street banners to be mounted in the spring (the old banners served us for over 6 years). The City is paying for most of the cost except for the artwork.
- The City is providing us with new planters. We plan to make them bloom after Victoria Day 2025.
- Heritage signage to tell some of the stories from Marda Loop's past.
- Seasonal lighting on our new lamp-posts, and on our new trees.
- Looking at opportunities for murals, and art-wraps for electrical boxes. There's opportunity for City funding support.
- Continuation of litter and graffiti control program.



Grants and Sponsorship

City of Calgary grants:

Community Standards Fund Grant (for cleaning): \$7,500
Festival and Events Innovation Microgrant for Marda Gras enhancement: \$7,135
Construction Support Grant for BIA promotions - \$20,000. Was in 2023 but some benefit flowed to 2024.

Sponsorships

- ATB Financial
- Calgary Co-op
- CivicWorks
- Marda Loop Braces
- Masters Academy
- Southland Transportation
- Standard General
- Surredeo Orthodontics
- Truman Homes



Partnerships

- Marda Loop Communities Association
- Richmond Knob Hill Community Association
- CTV Calgary Major Media Partner
- Marda Loop Night Markets
- City of Calgary Support Local Activations
- Tourism Calgary
- Avenue Magazine / Daily Hive / Curiosity
- Bird and Neuron Scooters
- Heritage Calgary
- cSPACE Marda Loop

Major Developments and Achievements

- Launch of BIA Marketing Supports Page
- Area-wide Marda Card Gift Card with 30 participating businesses.
- Launch of city wide commercial with CTV Calgary.
- Securement of funding from City.
- Marda Loop Rewards for Shopping Local, averaging 20 entries per month with 50 and up during summer periods.
- Highest ever attendance of public and business involvement at events.
- More than 65+ businesses supported on social media.
- Launch of "Acts of Kindness Campaign" using Coney "icon" to support tone and thankfulness during construction - extremely popular with public.
- More than 1,300 dedicated newsletter subscribers with an above average open rate.

MARKETING AND EVENTS

Social Media (organic)

(Does not include numbers for Nov 15 and into the holiday season, which will likely bring in an average of 100k more eyes and ample awareness to the area)

Channels: the BIA is on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter

***New Channels*: We have a new TikTok as of spring 2024**

Current audiences:

Instagram: 4,194

Facebook: 2,094

TikTok: 750 (in just six months)

Twitter: 2,503

Impressions: 606,766

Engagements: 23,474

Engagement rate: 3.9%

Video views: 373,337

Compare to 2023: growth across data between 12% and 400%

Marda Loop Public Newsletter:

Founded in 2023 and has since amassed 1,300 subscribers and is growing monthly, our newsletter has an over 70% open rate and is widely read and remarked on!



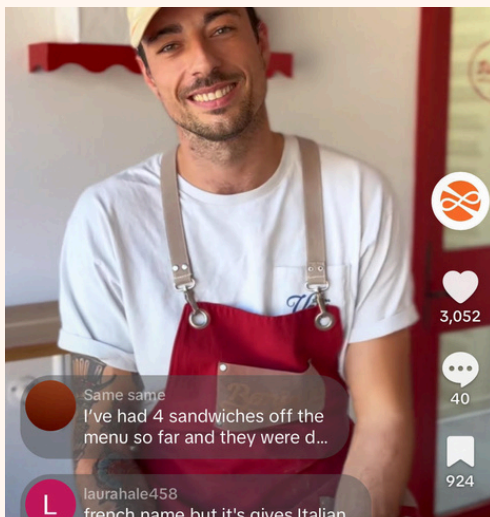
Our 2024 Events and Results

Our events had record participation and attendance this year

- Marda Loop Eggfest
- Marda Loop Night Markets x3
- Marda Gras and Pet Pageant
- Spook the Loop
- Spirit of the Loop (December 7)
- Sip and Support Local *NEW* Nov 23 - Dec 21

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

- Marda Gras Street Festival, 225 vendors (sold out) including 40 BIA businesses, 30,000+ attendees.
- Marda Loop Eggfest, our Easter event with 37 participating businesses and approximately 1,250 attendees (kids and parents) Fun fact: 288 lbs of chocolate Easter eggs were handed out at Eggfest.
- Spook the Loop with 51 participating businesses and estimated 1500 attendees. Our biggest Spook ever!
- Marda Loop Night Markets - 15,000 attendees over 3 markets this year.
- Spirit of the Loop with Santa. In Dec. 2023 we had 200 kids to see Santa, estimated 500 people including parents.



Media Relations + Influencer Relations

- FULL coverage of Spook the Loop across 75% of Calgary's major outlets.
- Partnership with Sarah Sociables for winter events.
- Averaging 2-5 local influencer pushes per week of local business openings and more.
- QR770 Drivetime Show was live on location in Marda Loop with host Sarah Crosbie
- CTV partnership which saw more than 300,000+ eyes on the Loop across Bell Media channels and outlets.
- More than 35 stories in the news on major channels such as Global, CBC, City News and CTV.

MARDA LOOP HISTORY PROJECT

Celebrating the 40th year of Marda Loop and Marda Gras!

This is the 40th anniversary of the Marda Loop BIA. We have been working with Heritage Calgary, local historian Harry Sanders, and the Marda Loop Communities Association Senior's Group on researching the history of Marda Loop. 1985 will bring a rich document, talks and tours, and historic signage. There will be lots of interesting content for newsletters, online posts, social media and more. The project has so far reached many in the community, and we can't wait to unveil the finished products. With the support of MLCA, Main Streets and a grant from the Province.



Marda BRZ Members Group Photo with new entryway sign circa 1990



Bob van Wegen and Mike de Jonge posing with historic signage



Who remembers Casablanca Video?

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 street scaping and Main Streets as well as opportunities to connect! If you're still not subscribed, chat with Bob or Margie or visit our website at www.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!

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, our *NEW* TikTok and Twitter (X) @visitmardaloop - follow along, 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 tags to help Calgarians see how great our hood is:

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

