



Cultural Plan for The City of Calgary

What We Heard Report

Prepared by **MDB Insight Inc.**



A Cultural Plan for The City of Calgary

In order for The City of Calgary to fully understand the scope of our current cultural resources and plan for future needs and opportunities, we are developing a Cultural Plan for Calgary.

This plan will allow Calgarians to understand what we already have in the way of cultural resources, help identify the gaps and plan for what we need to do in the future. The Cultural Plan will allow us to demonstrate what a culturally rich city Calgary is, which strengthens our economy and improves the quality of life for all Calgarians.



Purpose of this report

In developing the Cultural Plan for Calgary, we have been engaging a broad and diverse range of people from the community. This Plan is intended to reflect the voice of citizens, and your views and knowledge are critical to its success.

The following What We've Heard Report is a thematic recap of our engagement activities that reflect your comments and ideas.

This will help us to identify Calgarians' perceptions of culture and its value to making a great city, as well as collect your aspirations for Calgary's cultural future.



60
1 on 1
Stakeholder
Interviews

7
Topic Driven
Focus
Groups

6
City-Wide
Community
Soundings



2
Online
Engagement
Platforms

You Spoke and We Listened



**An Evolving
City Identity**

**Communicating and
Connecting on
Culture**

**A City Of
Diverse Voices**

**Conserving the
City's Heritage**

**Neighbourhoods As
Cultural Engines**

**A Growing
Creative Economy**

**Understanding the
Value of Culture**

**Adopting a Cultural
Lens Across the City**



Themes



An Evolving City Identity

- Our city is evolving. We are at a tipping point where our cultural expression is becoming increasingly rich and diverse.
- We are a young, energetic city with a desire for great amenities and opportunities. At the same time, our city is entering a generational shift as it matures.
- Our city is more than bricks and mortar, but cultural expression requires accessible and affordable public space and facilities.
- The city is changing the ways in which people live, create and experience their cultural life, creating new cultural experiences every day.
- We are redefining ourselves using a blend of Western cultural spirit and new expressions.



Communicating and Connecting on Culture

- As a culturally rich city, Calgary needs to embrace a broader definition of culture to include more than traditional definitions of the arts and culture.
- Our city needs tools in place to ensure our cultural products and resources are embraced. We need to celebrate our successes. We need to develop awareness of Calgary's culture to citizens, visitors and businesses.
- We are interested in the development of our city's cultural life. We need Calgary's momentum to be sustained and leveraged to enhance our status as a culturally great city.



A City of Diverse Voices

- Our city needs to leverage and empower diverse cultural exchanges. We need to improve our education and cultural sensitivity. Our city is eager for intercultural perspectives.
- Calgary's ethno-cultural communities are highly diverse and rapidly expanding. Our city needs to provide opportunities for communication and connection between these communities and Calgary's existing cultural organizations.
- Our city needs to do a better job of recognizing the diversity of indigenous cultures (Métis, First Nations, Inuit) and the connection to their identity. This includes visibly acknowledging their creative talent, languages and connection to the land.



Conserving the City's Heritage

- Our city needs more robust tools to preserve its heritage. We need to maintain a good record of our history, our built heritage, our cultural landscapes, and our community stories.
- We must preserve our historical collections (i.e. artifacts, buildings) and archives. The City of Calgary needs to take its responsibilities seriously and professionally.
- Our city is a growing city; we need to engage our new residents with an appreciation of Calgary's and the land's history. This includes recognizing indigenous history.



Neighbourhoods as Cultural Engines

- We are a city made up of unique neighbourhoods, many representing their own story and identity.
- We want tools to empower us to express our neighbourhood identity. Examples include supportive resources for Community Associations as well as communication tools to help build connections and awareness across neighbourhoods.
- Our neighbourhoods should be places where spontaneous cultural activity can occur and be supported.
- Our community partners (Community Associations and libraries) are natural vehicles for community cultural development and local capacity building.



A Growing Creative Economy

- Our city has an entrepreneurial and innovative spirit that drives creative economic activity.
- We need to do a better job at supporting creative enterprise across the city. This includes providing space, communication, training and business resources for creative industries, individuals and organizations.
- Calgary has a great variety of creative industries. However, we need to cross-pollinate to generate superior products.
- We should have ongoing forums to discuss and share challenges and solutions to improve our creative industry sector.
- We need to consider an innovative approach to digital platforms.



Understanding the Value of Culture

- Investing in cultural development will help our city diversify its economy, increase its tourism opportunities and build a stronger sense of community through developing its character as a culturally rich place to live and visit.
- Our cultural organizations, industries and institutions require diversified and sustained funding and resources.
- A healthy cultural environment will make our city a destination for talent, investment and visitors and from around the world.



Adopting a Cultural Lens across The City

- The City of Calgary needs to develop a cultural vision.
- Planning culturally at The City of Calgary requires a holistic ‘bridge building’ policy and principle framework that is supported by a set of clear definitions (what does it mean to plan culturally) and an understanding of resource requirements.
- The adoption of a City-wide cultural lens will require...
 - A shared knowledge across departments and professional disciplines.
 - A collaborative and cross-departmental/disciplinary working environment across the Administration of The City.
 - Commitment from Council and external partners.