

# NWT/HFH1 A&C Assessment

## Engagement Statement

The intention of the needs assessment is to identify arts and culture space needs and amenity gaps in downtown Calgary, and to determine how to connect artists and cultural groups to North West Travellers and the Historic Fire Hall 1 buildings and shared site.

At The City of Calgary, decisions are made on a daily basis that impact more than one million people. Input of citizens and stakeholders helps The City better understand the perspectives, opinions, and concerns of people affected by City decisions. Public input is collected, where appropriate, and considered along with other factors (such as cost, environmental impact, technical limitations and long-range plans/goals) before decisions are made.

"Engagement" at The City of Calgary is defined as: *"Purposeful dialogue between The City and citizens and stakeholders to gather information to influence decision making."*

## Project Overview

The North West Travellers and the Historic Fire Hall 1 buildings are legally protected provincially designated heritage assets located adjacent to each other downtown.

Once the ongoing site assessment, heritage assessment and arts and culture needs assessment studies are complete the City of Calgary will be in a position to determine possible next steps for the activation of the site including potential timelines, budget requirements and funding approaches.

The City of Calgary is working in collaboration with the [Calgary Municipal Land Corporation \(CMLC\)](#) on an exploratory site assessment to identify opportunities for short-, medium- and long-term activations of the North West Travellers and the Historic Fire Hall 1.

Activations that are being explored include outdoor installations (such as a temporary park), adaptive reuse of the buildings, and/or expansion and construction allowing for additional space. Outcomes may include short-term place-making activations that contribute to a vibrant downtown Calgary, and a longer-term strategy for the provision of a space for civic uses, the arts and culture community, and/or co-location of these uses within a mixed-use, private/public building.

### Engagement Overview

In July and August 2020 The Arts and Culture (Recreation) division at the City of Calgary undertook targeted stakeholder engagement of the local arts and culture community regarding a downtown Calgary arts and culture needs assessment. The intention of the needs assessment was to identify arts and culture space needs and amenity gaps in downtown Calgary, and to determine how to connect artists and cultural groups to North West Travellers and the Historic Fire Hall 1 buildings and shared site. Further engagement was conducted throughout the fall.

Initially a series of small group conversations were coordinated with various organizations to discuss and assess what gaps/needs currently exist within the arts and culture community in the downtown area. The focus of the conversation was in conjunction with the overarching project overview with regards to potential space utilization in the North West Travellers and the Historic Fire Hall building parcels.

From these conversations we were able to establish a series of questions that identified what we heard from the individuals and groups that had given their feedback. A semi-private portal page was set up to check back on the information obtained and to gather further insight from those associated with the arts and culture community in the downtown area. The link to the page was sent out to all who participated in the first round of conversations along with those individuals and groups who were on the initial stakeholder list that may have not been able to attend sessions in the first round. The site was by invitation but it was not locked/password protected and could be shared with others as deemed appropriate for this stage of engagement input.

### Who did we talk to?

Arts and Culture developed a stakeholder list based on their ongoing work and known contacts within the downtown area and across the Arts community. This list included the following:

CADA	Public Art Indigenous Guiding Circle	Calgary Downtown Association
Chinatown BIA	Eau Claire CA	Calgary Public Library
Arts Commons	AU Arts	Contemporary Calgary
Glenbow	Sled Island	High Performance Rodeo
NMC	Festival Hall/Folk Fest/Blockheater	H&R Real Estate Investment Trust (Bow Tower owners)
Indefinite Arts Society	Art Point	Antyx Arts
Center for Newcomers	Victoria Park BIA	Beltline BIA
Inglewood BIA		Downtown West CA

Crescent Heights CA	Inglewood CA	Beltline Neighbourhood Association
Ramsay CA	Chinatown CA	River's District/BMO expansion/Stampede
United Way	YWCA	Decidedly Jazz Danceworks
The New Gallery	Theatre Grand	Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre
cSpace		

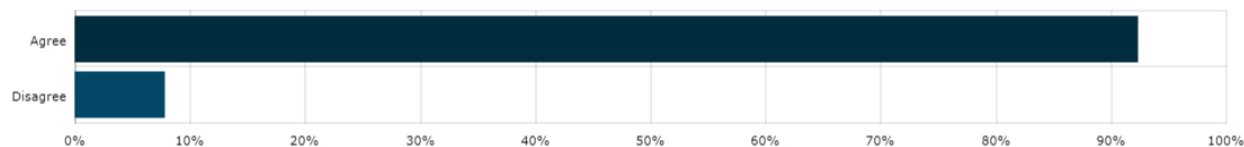
Please note that although this represents an initial stakeholder list the link and portal page was open and could be shared with others as appropriate to provide feedback at this stage.

## What did we ask? / What did we hear?

- comments are presented in verbatim form with no alterations to spelling or grammar -

**1) From the initial Arts and Culture Needs Assessment, the following gaps/needs for arts and culture spaces were identified. Do you agree with this analysis, or do you feel we've missed anything?**

- A youth arts and culture space
- A small recording/ rehearsal space
- Small and mid-sized studios/ work-space with commercial opportunities
- Shared "incubator" areas and shared common spaces
- Flexible arts and culture space for exhibitions, events, and programming
- Small and mid-sized spaces for culturally-focused groups



(Total Response #: 12 agree - 1 disagree)

- **Comments as to why you "agree" or "disagree"**

### “Agree” comments:

- ✓ A DEDICATED youth arts and culture space WITH STORAGE (youth must feel this is their dedicated space), Small and mid-sized spaces for culturally-focused groups MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO SMUDGE
- ✓ The bullets points to me represent a fulsome list of cultural needs well. Definitely agree!
- ✓ It's important to bring more arts to Calgary downtown.  
The needs above cover a broad range of tools and support that are useful to all artists at some stage in their careers

- ✓ Having flexible and affordable facilities provide the opportunity to arts groups to thrive and adapt to a new digital economy,
- ✓ seems to have a wide range proposed
- ✓ Based on the demand for space at our cSPACE King Edward facility, I can relay that we remain 100% leased since opening in 2017. We receive regular space requests from the community and from existing tenants looking to grow. Diverse uses are key.
- ✓ There is a shortage of dedicated affordable art spaces downtown, in all of the above mentioned categories
- ✓ Many immigrants with background in are express interest in this and would be happy to get the opportunities to showcase their art
- ✓ Calgary downtown is home for many newcomers, but it's not culturally vibrant as it can be. More open and accessible spaces are needed in order to give an opportunity to newcomers to learn and explore the city.
- ✓ The needs are obvious and should be encouraged in other areas such as those identified but also areas that are also centres of the art scene such Contemporary Calgary

### **“Disagree” comment:**

- ✓ Very limited support for immigrants/newcomers paid mentorship and training opportunities, job shad

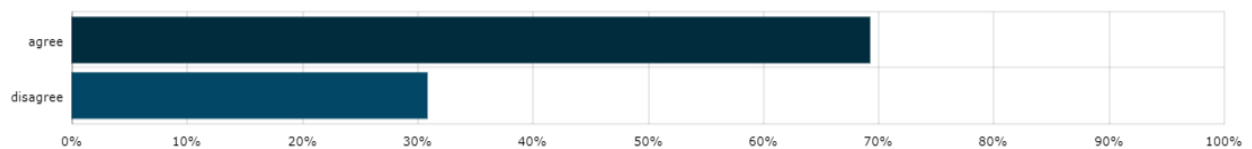
### **2) From the initial Arts and Culture Needs Assessment, we have identified that it is important that these spaces remain affordable and accessible. What does this mean to you or your organization?**

Affordable and accessible spaces are critical to the success of this initiative, as well as ensuring that someone from the arts and culture community curates the tenants, renters and programming in the spaces, including outdoor spaces

- ✓ I don't currently represent an org, so my insights here are to poll enough orgs to come up with the right data to represent "affordable/accessible"
- ✓ If we had the possibility, our organization would love to rent space there.
- ✓ For independent artists and small (
- ✓ Flexible and affordable space is needed to host art and culture programs that can create an impact in the new economy. Funding has been most restricted for the arts and cultural sector, so it is important to provide first class facilities that are affordable.
- ✓ In times when government is looking to cut expenses, what business model will be put in place to allow for this level of subsidy?
- ✓ It helps to ensure arts and heritage can flourish with a minimum of cost  
The affordability threshold is critical for our arts and culture community. cSPACE is committed to affordability as key to our shared space strategy. Diversity, inclusion and accessibility are key to how curate our facilities - we build community hubs.

- ✓ Newcomers/immigrant artists would not have financial resources to pay rent. Free access to the space will be great
  - ✓ Affordable means that all organizations, regardless of their budget, can access the space for their activities. Accessible means physically accessible for people with disabilities, with gender neutral washrooms, accessible through public transport.
  - ✓ Newcomers/immigrant artists would not have financial resources to pay rent. Free access to the space will be great
  - ✓ We would get opportunity to support our clients and get them exposed to Canadian Art community
  - ✓ More opportunity for immigrants to express themselves, particularly for those who are not directly related with their cultural communities. e.g There is no space for immigrants involved into contemporary art, to express themselves.
  - ✓ Starting artists are not always well supported.
  - ✓ There needs to be low-cost/free options available.
- **Please provide any details you can as to current rental rates your organization pays for space (e.g. studio space, programming, rehearsal etc.)**
- ✓ We are happy to share general data we have about the sector. ----- (name removed) @calgaryartsdevelopment.com
  - ✓ sorry. I can't help here
  - ✓ We are currently located at cSPACE but are looking to expand with like rates.
  - ✓ Affordable dance studio rental rates range between \$15 and \$20/hour, with potential subsidies for organizations that are in financial need.
  - ✓ \$400 monthly for coworking space at cSpace. Hallways and theatre for events is very affordable. Less Than \$1,000 per function.
  - ✓ no costs incurred, currently
  - ✓ \$20/sf.pa
  - ✓ Venues we use for performance presentations vary from \$600 to \$2,500 a night, however the ones on the higher end come equipped with a professional sound system. It is way easier (and affordable) for us to bring our own technicians.
  - ✓ n/a; no budget for this
  - ✓ I do not know the answer on this
  - ✓ Variable but usually depending on the event size.
  - ✓ My organization provides space, free of charge

**3) We've identified the following complementary uses that we'd like to explore co-locating with arts and culture spaces downtown. Do you agree with this analysis, or do you feel we've missed anything?**



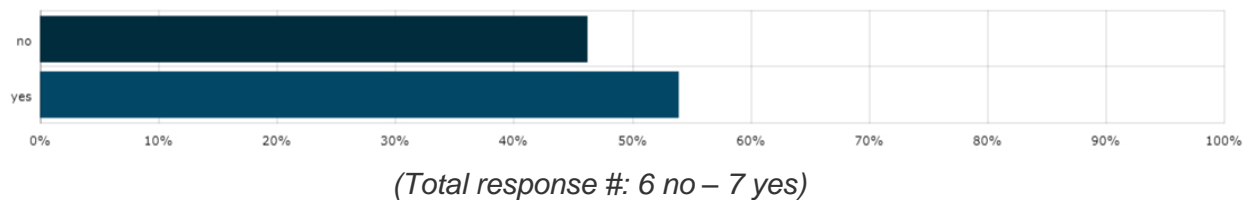
(Total response #: 9 agree – 4 disagree)

### - Comments as to why you "agree" or "disagree"

- ✓ Not a Brewery: alcohol deters some communities from participating. Not residential condos: conflict with events and with youth space.
- ✓ I'd also suggest indi-owned, local merchants that would fit the concept aesthetically/thematically
- ✓ It would be great to be a lively place with coffee/brewery and arts at the same time.
- ✓ Coffee shops and brewery would be preferred; I feel there are probably enough condos and office spaces in the core at this time.
- ✓ Coffee places is an important place to create community and have meaningful conversations.
- ✓ how about several arts co-locate as well, spaces in Museums, galleries, libraries, public buildings
- ✓ Arts and Culture can have increased impact when we consider adjacent uses that may support audiences, patrons or the resident communities themselves. Childcare is another use that is complimentary that we have integrated into creative hubs.
- ✓ Condos make no sense as there would be noise complaints. Brewery, coffee shops or restaurants could only work if they do not get exclusivity on food and beverages service during events.
- ✓ Is it possible to consider recreation space too?
- ✓ Those are great spaces for the artist to showcase their work
- ✓ Every space could be used to exhibit art and bring more vibrancy into Calgary downtown.
- ✓ Public access is important.
- ✓ I think it would be great to mix residential in with commercial, at low rent spaces, so it's like a live/work space for artists.

**4) During Phase 2 of this project, we will be exploring innovative models for service delivery and for the operations of arts and culture spaces.**

**Do you have any ideas or suggestions for operating models, including partnerships or shared operating models that you would like to share with us to explore further in Phase 2?**



- ✓ Operating model is key to the authenticity of this facility. Look to organizations like Cspace as an excellent example.
- ✓ the cSpace model. It is a great model based on recovery costs, very affordable and with a great sense of community, creativity and collaborations.
- ✓ There are many arts organizations in the downtown core that I trying to come up with innovative ways of reaching new audiences. Efficiencies and economies of scale might be achieved if you work with them.
- ✓ cSPACE Projects is a social enterprise committed to developing and operating creative and community hub facilities. Our model relies on a portfolio of facilities at a sufficient scale to operate with below market rents and as a cost recovery enterprise.
- ✓ It would be interesting to explore a collective operating model where organizations could contribute volunteer hours in exchange for free or discounted rent. Every organization using the space could become a member of a non-profit managing it and vote.
- ✓ Reaching out to new Canadian artists
- ✓ As I mentioned above, there is a very few places for immigrants to express their passion for the art. As immigrant community in Calgary is bigger each year, we have different needs.

### 5) Do you have any other thoughts or comments?

- ✓ Re comments above use: Not a Brewery: Some community leaders (particularly Indigenous women, Muslim women) will be deterred by a use that includes alcohol. Not condos: Beware of potential conflicts between amplified / late / outdoor arts / culture event organizers / attendees and condo residents, as well as the possibility of race-based negative interactions between condo owners and the grassroots communities this project intends to support.  
Thank you for the opportunity to offer feedback!
- ✓ no
- ✓ Very excited to see this project come alive.
- ✓ It will be a joy to see these beautiful historic buildings put to use for the enhancement of public art in our city!
- ✓ Thank you, Excited about this initiative
- ✓ No



- ✓ Reducing immigrants to the culture of their own ethnic/cultural communities create obstacles in their sense of belonging and integration.
- ✓ We have existing arts and culture tenants who are looking to grow and have an invested interest in space in the core. Please connect with me to discuss circulation of this survey - as I know some may wish to comment.  
deeter.schurig@cspaceprojects.com
- ✓ It is imperative for an event space to let renters bring their own liquor licence as liquor sales are an important revenue generator that is currently inaccessible to many.
- ✓ It will be great to tap and support the development and mainstreaming of new Canadian artists in the Calgary Arts industry by making it easy for them to access services and funding for their projects or career and employment pursuits in this field.
- ✓ Great initiative that needs exposure.

### What did we hear? General Summary:

Overall there is support for the concept and possibility of a shared/collaborative arts space at this downtown location. There was agreement that a space of this nature should provide opportunities to a wide array of arts and cultural groups to create and showcase their work adding to the vibrancy of downtown. The central location is desirable from a general access standpoint but there was some variance in how these buildings can be adapted for physical accessibility and affordability for all groups. Having space that can be deemed as their own (youth or culturally) is a recurring theme that needs to be further explored in how to have groups feel ownership of their space while remaining a cross collaborative space for that is operationally viable. In regards to the operational mode “cSPace Projects” was mentioned as a potential model to utilize (or further explore) however, there were comments to support a wider possibility of ancillary options, both for and against, coffee shop, brewery/liquor sales, and condos. In general the responses received do provide some common directions for the space but will require ongoing work to further evaluate and assess what options and models will be most viable in conjunction with the concurrent building assessment and market research.

### Next Steps / Timeline:

- The Site Assessment Report will be finalized by the Design Consultants and sent to the City by in January, 2021.
- Facility Planning will begin the implementation phase of the project January, 2021.
- CMLC intends to put forward a proposal to Facility Planning by mid-February 2021 for the short-term activation of HFH1.
- Heritage and Building Condition Assessments are expected to be finalized by Q2 2021.