

## CIVIC PARTNER 2020 ANNUAL REPORT SNAPSHOT- CALGARY SCIENCE CENTRE SOCIETY (TELUS SPARK)

### CALGARY SCIENCE CENTRE SOCIETY (TELUS SPARK)

**Purpose:** Spark exists to entertain people of all ages in creative encounters with science, technology and engineering.

**Vision:** Through visits to Spark, and encounters with Spark in the community, people are lifted up by the positive power of curiosity, experimentation and problem-solving.

**One Calgary Line of Service: Economic Development and Tourism**

*Registered Charity*

### 2020 City Investment

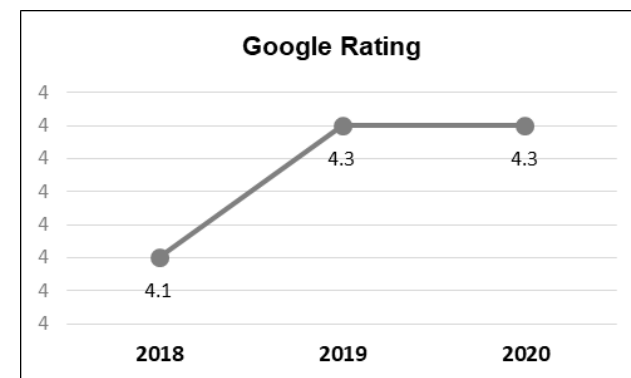
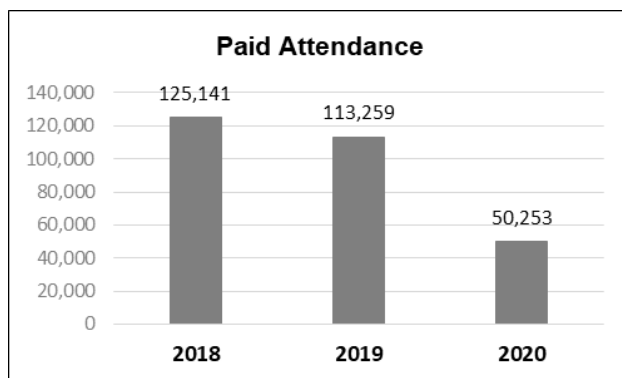
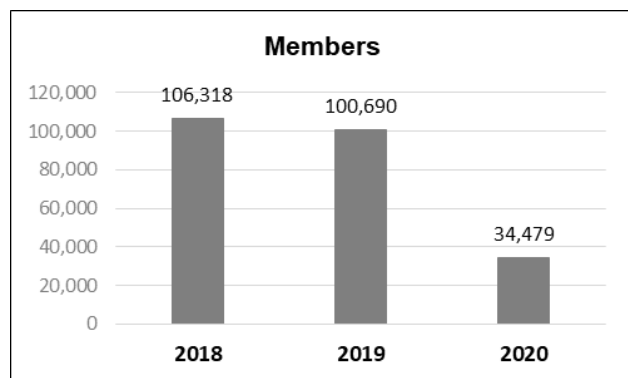
**Operating Grant:** \$2,197,327

**Economic Resiliency Fund:** \$147,000

**Capital Grant:** \$203,229

City owned asset? Yes

### 2020 Results



### The story behind the numbers

- Attendance had a very strong start in 2020 before the pandemic, primarily new visitors, and ongoing attendance showed how much Calgary is broadening its reach.
- The Google rating demonstrates that Spark is holding ground as a key cultural leader throughout the pandemic
- Many members attended online with 60,000 people engaged in virtual programs. Calgarians need Spark to be open to be a part of their daily lives.
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### Current state 2021: COVID-19 impact

- Closed since December 2020, and not able to offer school programs in person.
- Offering digital education programs, spring and summer virtual camps, and generating a very small amount of revenue through online education sales.
- TELUS Spark continues to be very busy with capital upgrade projects.

**Service impact:** Severe (Unable to meet normal objectives due to serious extended disruption- full facility closure)

**Current demand for service:** Demand has decreased notably.



**Organizational Structure:** Independent External Organization

**Fiscal Year:** December 31, 2020

**Manage/Operate City Owned Asset:** TELUS Spark

## STRUCTURE

### 1. Vision, Mission and Mandate:

#### Purpose

Spark exists to entertain people of all ages in creative encounters with science, technology and engineering.

#### Vision

Through visits to Spark, and encounters with Spark in the community, people are lifted up by the positive power of curiosity, experimentation and problem-solving.

#### Mandate

Spark helps people of all ages fuel up for the future. At Spark, science, technology and engineering are embedded in cultural experiences. This creates new points of access to the disciplines at the core of innovation.

#### Aspiration

All Calgarians will take pride in their science centre. Through skilled and confident programming, Spark will attract visitors from around the city, province and globe, and immerse them in emotive experiences as they explore ever-evolving, quirky and thought-provoking galleries. By 2025, Spark will be one of the 10 most-worth-visiting science centres in the world.

## 2020 RESULTS

### 2. What key results did your organization achieve in 2020 that contributed to one or more of the **One Calgary Citizen Priorities**? (*A Prosperous City, A City of Safe & Inspiring Neighbourhoods, A Healthy and Green City, A Well Run City*)

A Prosperous City – In 2020, the Calgary science centre began to implement a new Roadmap for the 2020s, which explicitly mandates the science centre to embed and champion Calgary companies and technology. Even though the pandemic forced two closures, and we had a very bumpy year from an attraction perspective, Spark received funding for renovations that will position it even more strongly as a community asset. *The renovations that will help shape a new narrative about Calgary that supports and grows local companies, and helps therefore to attract talent and new businesses beyond the energy sector.*

A City of Safe & Inspiring Neighbourhoods – Through a partnership with social service agencies, Spark welcomed thousands of Calgarians free of charge with a Community Access Pass. The pandemic sharply reduced access and attendance. However, we maintained our

commitment to providing community access while we were open with limited capacity. Throughout the restricted access, we continued to offer and promote the Community Access program.

A Healthy and Green City – Spark is a LEED gold building. In 2020 we maintained this status with green cleaning products, even as we struggled with budgets and PPE supplies for the pandemic conditions. We cheered loudly when we learned the news about successful funding for a project to install solar panels in the parking lot.

A Well Run City – Spark strove to be a well run Civic Partner by engaging citizens in how the science centre evolves, and by using the dollars provided by taxpayers in efficient and value-added ways. Spark worked very hard to be there for the community during the two closures and in between. In 2020, Spark served 60,000 people through online programs. Spark shared science online and supported vaccine-awareness and safe social interaction practices. Spark also offered to be a high-volume vaccination site.

3. **Briefly describe how your key results in 2020 contributed to Council approved strategies (Select up to three that that are most applicable.)** For example: Calgary in the new economy: An economic strategy for Calgary; Calgary Heritage Strategy; Climate Resiliency Strategy; Resilient Calgary; Enough for All poverty reduction strategy; Cultural Plan for Calgary; Downtown Strategy; Calgary's Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy; Open Spaces Plan; Recreation Master Plan; Sport for Life Policy.

Calgary in the new economy – implemented new Roadmap to connect the science centre to the emerging tech economy. Started capital projects that are part of the new narrative for Calgary.

Cultural Plan for Calgary – building partnerships through the new Roadmap with more diverse communities as program partners and audiences. We set out to engage broad communities when the geographic and cost barriers were removed by the pandemic.

Resilient Calgary – develop social cohesion and next generation problem-solvers through a shared commitment to collaborative ways of knowing with science at the core

4. **Using the chart below, please report your 2020 performance measures that demonstrate: how much you did, how well you did it, and how Calgarians are better off. Please identify through BOLD font, 1-2 measures that are most significant and could be presented in a chart.**

	Performance Measure Name	2018 results	2019 results	2020 results	What story does this measure tell about your work?
How much did you do?	Paid attendance	125,141	113,259	50,253	The very strong start before the pandemic, primarily new visitors, and then ongoing attendance showed how much Calgary is

					<b>broadening its reach.</b>
<b>How well did you do it?</b>	<b>Google rating</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>Spark is holding ground as a key cultural leader throughout the pandemic</b>
<b>How are Calgarians better off?</b>	<b>Memberships</b>	<b>106,318</b>	<b>100,690</b>	<b>34,479</b>	<b>Many members attended online: 60,000 people engaged in virtual programs. Calgarians need Spark to be open to be a part of their daily lives.</b>

**5. Briefly describe the key impacts of COVID-19 on your operations in 2020.**

The Calgary science centre was closed from March 13 to July 10 and again from December 8 onward. Five months of operations represents approximately \$5 million in lost revenue. Spark laid off all but 21 of its staff members within weeks of the closure, and had a very turbulent year with high levels of stress among employees in public-facing roles.

Because of the federal wage subsidy, combined with the City of Calgary operating grant, we were able to bring back people and services. We were very active in the spring and summer with online programs and virtual summer camps. We used the closure to “come back stronger.” This included redoubling of focus on the renovation plan, audit of all education programs, a commitment to reach new audiences where they live, and a close look at the internal culture and capacity to build a world-class science centre in the next five years.

At the beginning of July, we started to re-open. With capacity caps, we welcomed guests in July and August to a feature exhibit and a new outdoor experience. On September 2, we re-opened the main floor galleries for the first time since the covid closure. On September 18, we re-opened the second floor galleries and the upstairs eatery. In December, shortly after premiering a new holiday light experience, the doors closed again and have been closed since.

**6. Are there any program or service changes made in response to COVID-19 that you plan to integrate into longer term operations? For example, shifting some programming online, or modifications to your delivery model or operations.**

Yes. The shift to more online programming will be continued as part of a new audience development program.

The changes that were initiated during the covid closure – such as the organizational design work, the audit of program quality, the commitment to engage a broader range of Calgarians – will be integrated into long term improvement of operations.

**7. Briefly describe any quality improvement changes or operational efficiencies your organization was able to achieve in 2020.**

While closed, our operations director wound down the building so it was humming on a bare bones energy budget. It is a very efficient building to begin with, so this was impressive. About a month prior to re-opening to the public, we started to wind back up.

From an HR perspective, we used the opportunity to look at the organizational structure and its ability to deliver on the goal of becoming one of the top 10 most-worth-visiting science **centres in the world** by 2025. Roles that may have accreted over time but no longer directly supported the clear common goal were eliminated. The organizational design process was, led by an expert consultant, and was completed in 2021.

**8. Briefly describe some success stories in 2020 that demonstrates how your organization worked in partnership with other community, private or public organizations to achieve shared results for Calgary and Calgarians.**

The Big Art Drive In at Spark was a partnership project that created a temporary drive-in for covid-safe viewing of films all summer long. This project involved many partners and was hosted in the Spark parking lot. Many community groups have come forward in early 2021 asking about using it as a venue to safely gather their own communities. As a result, Spark is going to work around the solar carport construction schedule to support the drive in again!

Spark worked with Indigenous elders and their communities to offer Summer Roadtrips that brought together science, community and the need to get out and explore with multiple ways of knowing.

Spark offered storytelling evenings with Indigenous Elders in the outdoor park at Spark, combining science, ways of knowing in a safe covid-friendly setting.

## RESOURCES

**9. Please estimate how The City's operating funding was allocated in 2020. Mark all areas that apply by approximate percentage. For example, 45% allocated to staffing costs, 10% to evaluation or research, etc.**

%	Advertising and promotion
%	Programs or services
%	Office supplies and expenses
%	Professional and consulting fees
30 %	Staff compensation, development and training
%	Fund development

<b>38 %</b>	Purchased supplies and assets
<b>32 %</b>	Facility maintenance
<b>%</b>	Evaluation or Research
<b>%</b>	<i>Other, please name:</i>

**10. Did volunteers support your operations in 2020? If yes:**

<b>How many volunteers?</b>	The volunteer program was put on hiatus when the number of people who could safely enter the building was restricted.
<b>Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:</b>	3,277 (January to mid-March)

**11. What resources or funding sources did your organization leverage to support operations in 2020?**

Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) = \$2,297,592

Alberta Relaunch Grants = \$20,000

Travel Alberta Covid Cooperative Funding = \$50,000

Civic Emergency Resiliency Grant = \$147,000

**12. Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2020 that you want to highlight?**

White Hat Award for Exceptional Service -- Toby Plant

**13. CAPITAL AND ASSET MANAGEMENT (for Civic Partners managing City-owned assets)**

**Asset:** *TELUS Spark Science Centre*

**a) Provide a summary of your organization's 2020 capital work, including specific lifecycle/maintenance projects or capital projects.**

Main Floor Café and Ice Cream Shop

Building Automation System

**b) What funding did your organization leverage to support capital activities in 2020?**

Municipal Stimulus Program = \$2,600,000

Canadian Heritage Canada Cultural Spaces Fund = \$2,045,000

Government of Alberta Cultural Facilities Enhancement Program = \$245,000

#### 14. CURRENT STATE: COVID-19 MARCH 2021 UPDATE

The section focuses on the impact of COVID-19 in the month of March 2021, to provide a snapshot of your organization's current state.

##### Impact

Please choose the one option below that best describes the impact of COVID-19 on your programs or service in March 2021.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Negligible</b>	Minimal to no impact on service. Service is currently operating close to normal.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Minor</b>	Continuing to provide programs and services but some coping strategies required – able to be addressed with existing strategies and resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Moderate</b>	Some challenges on ability to achieve objectives. Some delay. Some aspects of the programs or service are only being met in part.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Significant</b>	Difficulties to achieve objectives. Delays or notable aspects of objectives not completed. Falling well-short of normal operations.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Severe</b>	Unable to meet normal objectives due to serious extended disruption. (e.g. full facility closure, major decrease in users)

##### Impact Description:

Please briefly describe how your programs and services were impacted in March 2021.

**In March of 2021 the science centre was closed to public. Programing continued online.**

We have been CLOSED since December of last year.

We are NOT able to offer school programs in person.

We ARE offering digital education programs.

We ARE offering spring and summer virtual camps.

We ARE able to generate a very small amount of revenue through online education sales.

We ARE very busy with capital upgrade projects.

##### Current Demand for Service:

What is the current demand for your service compared to typical demand?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Demand is steady, largely business as usual.
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Demand has increased notably.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demand has decreased notably.

Online, the demand is growing, indicated by increases in engagement across all social media platforms and sold-out virtual camp programs.

When Spark posted in-person spring break camps in early 2021, in the chance that the public health restrictions would be lifted by the end of March, they sold out. Demand was very high. When the restrictions remained in place, all spots had to be refunded or moved to virtual camps.

There is significant demand for the science centre's services, supported by attendance figures for limited opening in 2020. However due to public health orders the science centre has been closed or operating at limited capacity.

We have received many messages over the closure – words of support from Calgarians – telling us they cannot wait for the science centre to be open again.

When we are able to open, we expect demand will be steady.