

RE: EC2022-0150 | Indigenous Gathering Place Land Transfer Notice of Motion

Dear Mayor Gondek and Members of City Council,

What makes Calgary unique is its Indigenous history, which is not recognized or celebrated enough. The creation of an Indigenous Gathering Place at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers - a place that has held cultural significance for Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial - is an important step towards advancing national goals of Truth and Reconciliation.

Further, the proposed Notice of Motion is an important step for the City of Calgary to deliver its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and take concrete steps towards advancing the City's White Goose Flying Report (2016).

I am writing to support the Indigenous Gathering Place Society and City of Calgary's work to establish an Indigenous Gathering Place, and to continue these important conversations on our shared history as Treaty People.

Thank you,

Lisa Chong

February 10, 2022

**Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP)
Public Hearing and Combined Council Meeting**

Dear Honourable Council Members:

In our continuous work to support anti-racism action within the City of Calgary, we recognize the necessity and importance to centre both the spirit and calls to Truth and Reconciliation in addressing systemic racism that Indigenous communities have faced across this land.

The Anti-Racism Action Committee (ARAC) is in support of the proposed action to build and sustain the Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP). This initiative is integral to social inclusion and anti-racism and aligns with our own mandate, as outlined in our Terms of Reference, to advise Council on the development and lead the implementation of a community-based anti-racism strategy. As this IGP will be led by Indigenous Peoples, Elders, and youth, we recognize how this development will address structural racism and exclusion by being a space to, “share, connect, heal, renew, and celebrate Indigenous culture.” It is an important step in the ongoing work of becoming an Anti-Racist City of Calgary.

We also recognize the importance of thorough community consultation with regards to the concerns raised by the Metis Region III community. We hope that a resolution can be established as part of the commitment and approval of the IGP.

Please know that ARAC is willing and able to support the ongoing dialogue, implementation and transparency of this initiative.

Thank you for your time and acknowledgement of this letter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sonia Aujla-Bhullar and Eileen Clearsky
Co-Chairs Anti-Racism Action Committee



February 14, 2022

Mayor Jyoti Gondek
Office of the Mayor
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB T2P 2M5

Stoney Consultation Office
Box 120
Morley, Alberta
T0L 1N0
Office: (403) 881 – 4276
Fax: (403) 881 – 4250

Via email : themayor@calgary.ca

Re: Notice of Motion - Indigenous Gathering Place Land Transfer.

Dear Mayor Gondek,

The Stoney Nakoda Nations (SNN) are comprised of the Bearspaw First Nation, Chiniki First Nation, and Wesley First Nation that are situated on: the Stoney Indian Reserves #142, 143, 144 at Morley, Alberta; the Eden Valley Indian Reserve #216; the Rabbit Lake Indian Reserve #142B; and the Bighorn Indian Reserve #144A. The SNN were signatories to Treaty No. 7 in 1877.

This letter is to inform the City of Calgary that the Stoney Nakoda Nations, the Bearspaw, Chiniki and Wesley First Nations, have not been included in any content or discussions regarding the "Indigenous Gathering Place" project. The SNN are concerned that the "Indigenous Gathering Place" project is not representative of the Treaty Rights holders, or that an "Indigenous Gathering Place" is being considered without Stoney Nakoda representation, input or collaboration.

The "Indigenous Gathering Place Society" do not represent the interests of the Stoney Nakoda Nations.

The Stoney Nakoda have unextinguished Rights and Title in the Treaty 7 area and beyond. Stoney Nakoda Nations are Aboriginal & Treaty Rights Holders in the Treaty 7 area, and Wichispa Oyade, also known as Calgary, is within Stoney Nakoda Traditional Territory. The Stoney Nakoda have been living, camping, gathering, hunting, trapping, fishing, worshipping and healing on these lands since Time Immemorial.

The Stoney Nakoda Nations recommend that the City of Calgary defer its Notice of Motion, to a later date, so that proper and meaningful consultation can be initiated with Stoney Nakoda Nations.

The Duty to Consult and Accommodate is a duty of government to meaningfully consult with First Nations, as set out by federal and provincial case law. In this era of Reconciliation, The City of



Calgary must consult meaningfully and properly with First Nations regarding spaces for gathering, and or land transfers for this purpose.

The Stoney Nakoda Nations look forward to the City of Calgary consulting with Stoney Nakoda Nation, the Bears paw, Chiniki and Wesley First Nations, in a proper and meaningful way on the Calgary Gathering Place project.

Sincerely,

William Snow
Consultation Manager
Stoney Tribal Administration

C.C: Chief Darcy Dixon
Chief Aaron Young
Chief Clifford Poucette
Councilor Rod Hunter
Councilor Boyd Wesley
Councilor Hank Snow
Ryan Robb
Rob Shotclose
Brian Evans
Ray Greenwood
Jennifer Bobrovitz
Cathy Arcega
City Clerk

February 14, 2022

Dear Mayor Gondek and City Councillors,

Thank you for your consideration of the motion that will be put before you tomorrow, February, 15, which considers initiating a land transfer to the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary (IGPSC). An affirmative vote will give space to a decades-long vision for an Indigenous Gathering Place in Calgary. ***We humbly ask that you read this letter and deeply contemplate the potential for an authentic and timely action toward reconciliation.***

Rooted in the Seven Sacred Teachings

As the IGPSC, we uphold the values of *love, trust, courage, respect, wisdom, honesty, and humility*. These seven sacred teachings matter deeply to us and are guideposts as we work to advance the vision to build a physical gathering place in Calgary that is:

*A space where we share, connect, heal, renew, and celebrate Indigenous cultures.
A place to protect Indigenous practices, languages; and Elders' wisdom, oral and written teachings among all nations and all our relations.*

Calgary is home to over 40,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people from diverse Nations and communities with and without representative bodies. A key part of the IGPSC's vision is to build a place where ***all Indigenous cultures will be celebrated***, offering the opportunity to connect and heal while participating in community.

We are a grassroots Indigenous-led non-profit cultural society that is volunteer-driven and supported by those who share our vision. We work collaboratively to create a place for, with and by Indigenous peoples for true reconciliation and healing, spirituality and cultural exchange. As a grassroots non-profit society, the IGPSC does not represent all or any groups of Indigenous peoples and therefore has no legal authority to conduct consultation on a nation-to-nation basis. We remain inclusive in our practices and have always invited everyone interested to join the discussion. We are looking forward to continuing this collaborative approach to engagement as the project advances with all who are interested. We respect the very important role of Nation leaders who represent their own members and encourage these leader-to-leader conversations simultaneously while our non-profit collective advances this ambitious project.

The idea of an Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP) was reignited in 2014 in response to a question posed by Chief Robert Joseph during a workshop that brought community leaders and agency representatives together: "*What does Calgary need to reconcile?*" The IGPSC was ceremonially

validated as the appropriate group to carry this work through a First Nation protocol of a Pipe Ceremony in 2017. We formed through the Western protocol as a non-profit Society in 2018. We are continuing the conversations that began decades ago. We are welcoming of all people who share this goal and we thank the hundreds of community members from within and around Calgary who have joined us on our journey over the last eight years. We wish the IGP to be in addition to the hard work that many are tirelessly doing across the City to meet the diverse needs of Indigenous peoples. The IGP is another action step toward true reconciliation and is not looking to displace or replicate services and programming.

The Journey Ahead

Further conversations and open discussions will be an important part of learning what else this space will be used for and we are looking forward to further defining the scope in a collaborative way. The process for developing an IGP has and will continue to respect both Indigenous and Western protocols and practices. **We describe this approach, in which one way of working is not seen as 'better than' the other, as working in "ethical space"**. Our Elders teach us that there are parallels that can be found between Indigenous and Western practices, and that space between those parallels is the *ethical space* where we come together. We believe that within this *ethical space*, reconciliation is possible. This is a unique approach and a key determinant of why the City has committed to support and learn from the IGP in our work together.

The IGPSC envisions a gathering place that is inclusive and welcoming for all peoples. We are guided by the input from the diverse Indigenous peoples in and around this land, especially by the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and youth. The gathering place will be a safe access point for Indigenous people to connect with each other and the Elders and Knowledge Keepers that are fundamental to our survival as peoples. We have heard time and again from engagement sessions about the urgency of building an IGP. **We cannot see a delay.** Knowledge is being lost. Language is being lost. The Elders that have said they want to see this built before they die, have waited and waited, and some have since passed on.

We implore Council to consider this urgency in your decision-making. There will be many more opportunities to envision the space together through collaboration. Those conversations will continue as we take this next step to explore meeting the needs of so many citizens.

Inclusive Engagement

In May 2018, Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Region 3 was one of the first groups specifically invited to explore the idea of an IGP and join an open discussion and feast to ask everyone we knew two preliminary questions:

1. *As the IGP moves forward, who should we be talking to and why?*
2. *What should we be talking about? Where and how should the IGP seek input from community members?*

At the time, the MNA Region 3 leadership declined the invitation due to a schedule conflict but asked for further clarification to understand the need for an IGP given the presence of the Friendship Centre. A follow-up discussion clarified the IGPSC's intention to avoid duplicating existing services, programs or resources, after which MNA Region 3 leadership encouraged us to invite Métis Nation Elders. We were happy that Elders endorsed the IGP through a Pipe Ceremony held on June 26, 2018, at Tsuut'ina Nation with full blessings to move forward.

Every meeting we have had and every meeting we will have is open for all. Elder Sky Blue Morin, one of the Métis Nation Elders and Michif language speaker who joined us at that Pipe Ceremony, has provided a letter in support of the motion along with her extensive knowledge about *why* the IGP meets an urgent need. We are also encouraged by the many individual Métis Nation of Alberta citizens and Elders who have continued to be involved in all IGPSC activities throughout the last eight years.

Broad Community Support

The IGPSC is grateful for the spiritual, human, emotional, and financial resources that have been gifted to us over the years. We have been funded through grants from organizations like the Calgary Foundation and Calgary Homeless Foundation, in addition to receiving private donations. While no funding for IGPSC activities has come from the City of Calgary to date, we are excited about the opportunity to work more closely together over the coming months and years.

The IGPSC is humbled by the support we have received from our many organizational partners and allies. Within this package you will find letters of support from the following:

Indigenous Organizations and Leaders

- Elders Knowledge Circle, including Elders Reg Crowshoe, Rosemary Crowshoe, Tina Fox, Anne Paulette Kokak, Herman Many Guns, Diane Meguinis, Vinnia Van Overdyk, Violet March, Frisco,

Brenda Manyguns, John Chief Moon, Wallace Alexson, Darryl Brass, Jackie Bromley, Shirlee Crow Shoe, Doreen Healy, Patrick Daigneault, and Francis Melting Tallow

- Michif language speaker and Métis knowledge keeper Elder SkyBlue Morin
- Blackfoot Language Revival Initiative
- Métis Calgary Child and Family Services
- Awo Taan Healing Lodge
- Sunrise Healing Lodge Society
- Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness
- Miskanawah Community Services Association
- Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee
- Colouring It Forward
- Circle for Aboriginal Relations Society

Community Organizations and Leaders

- Calgary Foundation
- Calgary Homeless Foundation
- Alberta Recreation & Parks Association
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area
- MRU Institute for Community Prosperity
- Suncor Energy Foundation
- Calgary Arts Development
- Momentum
- Axis Connects
- Circle Connections for Reconciliation
- Oscill8 Collective
- Social Policy Collaborative
 - Including the following organizations: The Calgary Counselling Centre; The Calgary Food Bank; Carya Society of Calgary; Catholic Family Services; CUPS; The University of Calgary; Momentum; United Way of Calgary and Area; Vibrant Communities Calgary; The Women's Centre of Calgary; YW Calgary; The Alex; Inn From the Cold; Calgary Drop In Centre; Trellis; and McMan
- Calgary Alliance for the Common Good
 - Including the following members: Amalgamated Transit Union Local 583; Ambrose University; Anatolian Turkish Islamic Center of Calgary; Anglican Diocese of Calgary; B'Nai Tikvah; Calgary Climate Hub; Calgary Interfaith Council; Calgary Unitarians; Cerebral Palsy Association in Alberta; Christ Church Anglican; Eritrean Canadian Community Association of Calgary; EthioCare; General Teamsters Local 362; Good Shephard Moravian; Hillhurst United; Knox United; Synod of Alberta & the Territories - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; Lutheran Church of the Cross; Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary - Office of Social Justice; Scarboro United; St. Andrew's Anglican Church; St. David's United Church; St. Laurence Anglican; St. Mary's University; St. Thomas United Church; Symons Valley United Church; The Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 37 (CUPE); The Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 38 (CUPE); The Canadian Union of Public Employees,

Local 1169 (CUPE) - Calgary and Cochrane Public Library Workers; Trinity Place
Foundation; UBCJA - 2103

Walking *With* the City of Calgary

We also celebrate our relationship with the City of Calgary, which was formalized through the Western protocol of a Memorandum of Understanding and validated through an Indigenous protocol of a Pipe Ceremony on May 26, 2021 which shows commitment to advance the work and conversation in a good way. As has been noted by the Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (CAUAC), building an IGP advances key recommendations from the White Goose Flying Report as tangible and direct responses to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #21, #22, and #48ii.

We commend the bold actions proposed in the *Indigenous Gathering Place Land Transfer* Notice of Motion that will be considered on February 15, 2022. Many municipalities have sought to develop Indigenous cultural spaces within their existing colonial city structures, by making a decision first to create a gathering space and then inviting communities to participate. You, however, recognize the far more meaningful action of initiating the process of transferring land to a grassroots group of Indigenous peoples for their own use to build a gathering space as they so determine through trust and collaboration. ***This is truly a made-in-Calgary approach that may serve as a path that others might be inspired to pursue.*** We are most excited to explore the positive impacts for all as an important economic and cultural hub adding vitality to the rivers district area while ensuring the central location gives equitable access to all Calgarians.

Your recognition of the importance of Indigenous self-determination is in alignment with the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and shows courage, wisdom, honesty, respect, humility, trust, and love. Thank you for walking with us along this path in ceremony and procedure as we move toward healing as a City.

We urge all members of Council to vote in favour of the Notice of Motion and look forward to the work we will do together to advance our shared vision.

John Fischer, Co-Chair
Michelle Fournie, Co-Chair
Anne Harding, Vice-Chair

On behalf of the Indigenous Gathering Place Society Board of Directors

February 11, 2022

Mayor and Council
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB, T2P 2M5

Subject: Indigenous Gathering Place Notice of Motion

Dear Mayor and Council,

As the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Calgary, known today as the Elders Knowledge Circle, we hold great fundamental and sacred responsibilities for preserving and protecting our traditional way of life and educating our children. We are writing to share our support for an Indigenous gathering place in Calgary.

The Indigenous Gathering Place will be a space of healing for all Indigenous people who call Calgary home; whether they are First Nations from Treaty 7 or other territories, Métis, or Inuit. It will also be a place for all Calgarians to learn about our cultures, directly from Indigenous people. Most importantly, the Indigenous Gathering Place will be for our youth; those who have been disconnected from our culture and teachings will have a chance to find their way home through Ceremony as they continue to build their lives here in the city.

We are happy that Calgary City Council is considering initiating a land transfer for the purpose of building an Indigenous gathering place at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers. We support the work of the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary and the efforts they have made over the last number of years to get an Indigenous gathering place built.

As Knowledge Keepers and Elders we look forward to the Indigenous gathering place, a place where we are the books in a library to share our knowledge. Therefore, we respectfully decline involvement in any political issues that arise from or are related to these endeavors.

We have provided the Indigenous Gathering Place Society with consistent advice about the urgency and importance of this place. We are anxious to see an Indigenous gathering place for all peoples built as soon as possible.

With respect and peace,

The Elders Knowledge Circle

Reg Crowshoe, Rosemary Crowshoe, Tina Fox, Anne Paulette Kokak, Herman Many Guns, Diane Meguinis, Vinnia Van Overdyk, Violet March, Frisco, Brenda Manyguns, John Chief Moon, Wallace Alexson, Darryl Brass, Jackie Bromley, Shirlee Crow Shoe, Doreen Healy, Patrick Daigneault, and Francis Melting Tallow

February 11, 2022

Mayor and Councillors

City of Calgary

Re : Support Letter for the Indigenous Gathering Place

During my thirteen years working as a Resolution Health Support Worker providing support for the more than five hundred homeless Indigenous Residential School Survivors and their second generation children, I met a number of families that had as many as three generations of homelessness. I have provided support to a few Indigenous families as they struggled with meeting requirements of Social Services to keep their children. A number of grandmothers (seniors) whose grandchildren had been taken by Social Services due to family dynamics have been left to fend for themselves and living in homeless shelters. This should not be the quality of Life for Indigenous people who survived residential schools and the child welfare system. Historically, much was taken from Indigenous people so society could build their cities.

In my outreach work on the streets of Calgary (2004-2017), I have seen that homeless Residential School Survivors do not have an appropriate place where they can attend ceremony or do ceremonial cleansing. They are not always accepted at agencies to do this because of not being clean enough and becoming aggressive when refused. Agencies do not always have the Indigenous cultural teachers and ceremonial medicines that are required for cultural purposes. I have had many requests to provide sage or sweetgrass to homeless residential school survivors and their second generation children. Although homeless Residential School Survivors have had small circle gatherings in public parks to pray or do ceremonial smudge, this does not provide the privacy to practice their cultural beliefs. Sometimes, it is misunderstood by law enforcement.

An Indigenous Cultural Centre would provide for a safe and understanding place for homeless Indigenous people to smudge themselves in ceremony with cultural medicines that would be available. As there are different Indigenous cultural ceremonies and medicines from different Indigenous nations, it would be a respectful place that is respectful to the person's needs. It would also be a place for Indigenous homeless people to learn their cultural teachings and their Indigenous language which many say they have lost. They can consult with Indigenous cultural Elders who could teach them about different ceremonies from different cultural nations. This place would also offer an opportunity for homeless Indigenous people to learn their Indigenous

language which would revive the values of community and acceptance. Indigenous languages are nurturing languages and of the connection to the land. We learn to walk upon sacred Mother Earth with gentleness.

Homeless residential school survivors have expressed a loss that there would be no one to provide emotional and spiritual support when a funded agency withdraws the support work. One of the critical things that needs to be done is to connect homeless Indigenous people with their Indigenous culture through ceremony which would reconnect them to their spiritual beliefs. These ceremonies come from First Nations and Metis Elders (Knowledge Holders). The Indigenous Gathering Place would also be a place where healing from the trauma from residential schools and child welfare societies can begin.

Referencing to the 94 Calls To Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Canada, it is essential that homeless Indigenous Residential School Survivors are provided with cultural support through a safe Indigenous place to begin their healing process. It is also essential that housing to get them off the streets of Calgary and into their own living space be provided, so that they can be safe and can focus on their healing. It is time to take care of our Indigenous relatives as we are all related in the Circle of Life.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that Indigenous people have a right to maintain the customs and traditions and to practice their spirituality. Although previous efforts were made by the Canadian Government not to recognize the abuse and trauma of Residential Schools, the current findings of unmarked graves at residential schools has brought that information to the forefront. This is another trauma of grief for residential school survivors and has to be addressed. Many Indigenous people, homeless or in prisons, have said that the smell of a cleansing sage smudge or a sweetgrass ceremony, or the smell of cedar in a sweatlodge has provided the temporary calm to go on in Life.

All My Relations....

SkyBlue Morin

skybluem@shaw.ca



Feb. 9, 2022

Re: Notice of Motion Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary Feb. 15, 2022 Vote

CC: Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary

Dear City Council representatives,

My name is Eldon Sheldon First Rider. I am from Kainai, and the designated bundle holder and society leader of The Run with transferred rites to speak on behalf of the Elders that who have entrusted me with these sacred stories within Blackfoot Confederacy. I am also engaged with over 400 Elders across Blackfoot Confederacy, including relations in Southern Piegan, Browning Montana. I work with a dedicated team, including Gene Braverock (actor and advocate) to educate on the practice and use of Blackfoot syllabics through the Blackfoot Language Revival Initiative. To date, I have educated over 100,000 students (12-15,000 of those in the Blackfoot Language program) at the Glenbow Museum as part of the Indigenous studies school program. Our vision is to create thriving and proud communities for future generations through active promotion of Indigenous history, language and culture. We are dedicated to preserving the Blackfoot language and culture by creating educational tools and opportunities to connect people with our way of life.

UNESCO declared 2022 to be the international decade of Indigenous Language Revitalization. Language *is* culture. Dedicated to raising awareness, understanding and respect for our ways, we are encouraged by the prospect of an Indigenous Gathering Place for all Nations at the confluence of the rivers. Exploring the possibility of having an Indigenous-owned, non-political space for us to be able to speak, share, teach and host the Elders, will be a vital step in preservation of languages and culture.

I have been invited to by the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary to be engaged in ongoing discussions and hope to play a vital role in connecting the Society with other language speakers, story holders and those who have the rites to share on the stories of *Mohkinstis*.

The Blackfoot Language Revitalization initiative aims to preserve and continue our cultures and ways of being. We are in the pursuit of multiple projects, including sourcing spaces for teaching, learning, sharing and recording. We are interested in the possibility of tourism and engaging all Calgarians in learning more about the Blackfoot Ways. We are in support of the vote for an Indigenous Gathering Place land transfer and look forward to being involved in the conversations moving forward.

Sincerely,

Sheldon First Rider

For more information: <https://blackfootlanguage revival.com/>

E: sfirstrider@yahoo.ca

Metis Calgary Family Services Society

Ke Mama Nnanik Family Support, Medicine Wheel Early Learning Centres,
Aboriginal Students Program, Native Network Family Resource & Parent Link Centre, Elders Program,
Rainbow Lodge, Little Sundance Child Care Centre

City of Calgary Council
c/o
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB T2P 2M5

Attention: Her Worship Jyoti Gondek

February 3, 2022

Regarding: Indigenous Gathering Place Support

Metis Calgary Family Services Society is an urban Aboriginal organization established in Calgary in 1992, and we encourage the City of Calgary Council, by way of land transfer, to assist IGPSA in the quest for an urban Aboriginal gathering place.

It is unfortunate that at a time when the urban indigenous population of Calgary exceeds 50,000 individuals, is the fastest growing demographic in urban centres across Canada, and bold overtures for truth, reconciliation and decolonization are being made, that in Calgary currently there is no permanent or designated space dedicated to it Aboriginal citizens for use both in traditional and contemporary ways.

Often land acknowledgments are being verbalized and added to footers, with a context and view to a colonial era process known as treaties with a Nation to Nation dogma, and reiterated with little regard to the relationship with Mother Earth, nor the ceremonies associated with honoring Mother Earth. Relationship with land is fundamental for ceremony and during a time when land acknowledgments focus on constitutional Indian Act parties and treaties, those individuals without status or are disenfranchised from any respective Nation, lack such ceremonial space when Calgary is home. Nor is it practical or fair for the Treaty 7 Nations to facilitate the 50,000 plus remaining urban Indigenous within their own on-reserve capacity, even as those Treaty 7 members constitute a few thousand of the urban indigenous number captured in the City census.

The need for an Indigenous Gathering Place is long over due and we would like to acknowledged the fortitude and spirit of intent demonstrated by this and prior City Council's to support our community. The vision of IGP is a shared one, and much larger than any single entity could undertake, it reflects a true alliance and partnership within Calgary's diverse aboriginal dynamic. A land transfer would facilitate even further development and social cohesion for Calgary's urban Indigenous citizens and we can attest to the value it would have for our organization as relationships with Creator and Mother Earth manifest inevitably throughout our daily community engagements. This Gathering place would serve as a natural

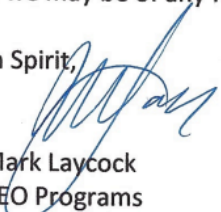


support in many respects and have collateral benefits well beyond the iconography and scope captured here.

We propose that such a land transfer would be viewed as a monumental step for a positive legacy; a legacy for our Elders today and our Elders of tomorrow beyond the next 7 generations with and for all Calgarians. As a benchmark in reconciliation, the space will provide many opportunities for both Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal people who call Calgary and area home.

If we may be of any further assistance in this matter, please feel free to contact us.

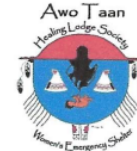
In Spirit,



Mark Laycock
CEO Programs
On behalf of the Board of Directors
Metis Calgary Family Services



Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society



"Nurturing Families Living in Peace"

PO Box 6084 Str. A
Calgary, AB
T2H 2L3

Office: 403-531-1970
Fax: 403-531-1977
Crisis Line: 403-531-1972

July 29, 2019

Dear Eve Macmillan and John Fischer,

I am pleased to provide a letter in support of the Indigenous Gathering place. I understand that the committee has been working diligently on this strategy for quite some time. This project is very much needed as more Indigenous peoples move into the city connecting to community is crucial for safety and transition.

Awo Taan Healing Lodge has been providing services to families affected by violence for more than 25 years to families in Treaty 7 and area. We are very excited about the potential for a gathering place because we often see new families who are isolated and disconnected. Quite often families have no choice to leave their home communities to seek shelter and a safe place. The gathering place will fill a void where families can gather and build community relationships.

This will benefit all Calgarians as we work towards reconciliation and building greater understanding. This will be the place to plan, gather and educate. I imagine a space that will be welcoming, inclusive, filled with love and kindness and healing. I look forward to the completion of this project where we as Indigenous peoples can have a place to call our own.

I wish to congratulate the co-chairs for their hard work and dedication on the project. please contact me if you require further support. Wishing you all the best.

Sincerely,

Josie Nepinak
Executive Director
Josien@awotaan.org
Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society
P.O. 6084, Station "A" Calgary, Alberta T2H 2L3
(403) 531-1970 ext 202





SUNRISE

Healing Lodge Society

1231 - 34th Avenue N.E., Calgary, AB T2E 6N4

(P) 403-261-7921 (F) 403-261-7945

(E) nasgeneral@nass.ca

October 26, 2021

Re: Letter of Support for the Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP)

The Sunrise Healing Lodge Society is writing this letter in support of the Indigenous Gathering Place in creating a building to house the IGP's important work.

Sunrise Healing Lodge Society has provided addictions treatment through Indigenous and 12 step-based programs in the community since 1974. Our services are open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Persons.

Currently the IGP is a strong community leader and has the intention of building their physical space as a place of reconciliation and community. It will be a place for Indigenous Peoples to gather and share their traditions, culture and history. For others, the centre will be a place to reconnect - when they have experienced a disconnection from their traditions, culture and history. For others, it will be a place of discovery and education, where they will learn about Indigenous Peoples and their traditions, culture and history – perhaps for the very first time.

Sunrise Healing Lodge Society has been part of the IGP since its inception with the participation of our previous Executive Director, Eve MacMillan as an active member in forming the IGP then Co-Chair. Our agency's Accountant sits on the Board of Directors as their Treasurer and our agency is the IGP's fiscal agent. We would not have so many close ties with the IGP if we did not believe in the work that they do and the integrity with which they do it.

The Indigenous Gathering Place is now and will in the future, enhance the landscape of Calgary by being an accessible avenue for relationship building between the Indigenous community and the greater Calgary community. It can only benefit all Calgarians.

I thank you for your kind consideration.

Yours truly,

Sunrise Healing Lodge Society

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leslie Big Bull". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ms. Leslie Big Bull
Executive Director



ABORIGINAL STANDING COMMITTEE

on Housing and Homelessness

Indigenous Gathering Place

February 8, 2022

Mayor Gondek and Councillors

Re: Response to the City's Allocation of Land Transfer for the Indigenous Gathering Place

Dear Honorable Mayor Gondek and Councillors

The Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness (ASCHH) has provided support to the urban Indigenous community through advocacy, research, and education on the issues of Indigenous housing and homelessness since 1999. We have acted in the capacity of the Community Advisory Board as decision makers for federal Indigenous funds for homelessness and housing projects in Calgary over the past 23 years. We work in collaboration with community and governments to develop solutions towards the reduction of Indigenous homelessness and improving core housing stability.

ASCHH was initially heavily involved in the early development of the Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP) along with the Aboriginal Friendship Centre (George Calliou/Joe Pimlott), Sunrise Healing Lodge (Eve McMillan) and many other community partners. The IGP work was headed by Eve who identified this project as an essential direction in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action in 2015. These early discussions were focused on the importance of urban Indigenous peoples in Calgary having a place of connection, culture and community. While various organizations have taken on this role to some degree throughout the years, for some time our community has been without a distinct space or centre committed solely for this purpose and open to all urban Indigenous peoples.

The urban Indigenous population is an independent stakeholder from the existing distinction-based Indigenous groups reflecting First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples. As such urban populations reflect multiple nations, treaty areas, affiliated and non-affiliated Métis peoples, non-status and Inuit peoples from across the country. Many Indigenous peoples have been disenfranchised from their culture due to the historical context of colonization and assimilation policies which included residential schools, the 60s scoop and the current day child welfare systems. In addition, urbanization of Indigenous peoples has contributed to the limitation of meaningful connection to culture and Indigenous community. As such, the Indigenous Gathering Place is imperative for urban Indigenous peoples and should reflect the diversity of our peoples and provide access to diverse cultural teachings, traditions, ceremonies and community connections.

It is important for the City of Calgary, to understand that as a community of Indigenous people, we need to move forward on what is best for our community. For the benefit of all Indigenous peoples in our community, we need to be open and collaborative towards the development of projects which enhance the lives of urban Indigenous peoples. Over the many years, collaboration and communication has been essential in bringing forward this project to where it is today and extensive work to this end has been accomplished to include as many voices



ABORIGINAL STANDING COMMITTEE

on Housing and Homelessness

similarly committed to this spirit of collaboration. While throughout its development there have been parties, whose commitment may have waned or disengaged, it can be assured that all essential parties have been consulted or invited to participate at multiple junctures regardless of their commitment at this time.

The Indigenous Gathering Place, is for all Indigenous peoples and will provide an important and historic opportunity for the City of Calgary to provide this space and place to broaden the accessibility of Indigenous community and culture for all Indigenous Calgarians no matter whether they are from the local territory, or those of us who have made Moh'kins'tsis our home.

The Indigenous Gathering Place began as initial discussions amongst interested parties, and an extensive amount of volunteer work and community support has been involved in working towards its development. The City of Calgary's Poverty Reduction groups also identified an Indigenous Gathering Place as a vital urban project through the work of Genevieve Fox with the Enough for All strategies under the Indigenous Constellation. All those willing to be community partners in this endeavor have been highly engaged in this project which included both urban Indigenous peoples, leaders, distinction-based groups, as well as highly supported by Elders and community allies.

The Indigenous Gathering Place has been working actively with community stakeholders and the Elders Knowledge Circle throughout the past 6 years, with open support and collaboration. No one has intentionally been left out of these discussions or the development of the project. Almost all of the work has been conducted by dedicated and passionate volunteers who are working towards the actualization of an Indigenous Gathering Place. To be in opposition at this stage is not conducive to the desire that most urban Indigenous Calgarians do want and will support this project and support the City's announcement.

ASCHH is highly supportive of the City's original announcement on January 15, 2022 to commence discussions on land transfers to the Indigenous Gathering Place Society for the purpose of further development of the IGP. This is necessary and an imperative step towards reconciliation. We implore the City to continue to focus on the larger objective of supporting all urban Indigenous Calgarians towards an opportunity that will benefit all of us.

Katelyn Lucas/Richard Horvath
ASCHH Co-Chairs



Miskanawah Community Services Association
2716 Sunridge Way NE
Calgary, AB T1Y 0A5

Monday, February 14, 2022

Calgary Council
c/o City Clerk #8007
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station "M"
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5

RE: Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary

Members of Council,

Please consider this letter as support for the *Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary*.

Miskanawah is an Indigenous non-profit agency that draws jointly from the strengths and guidance of Indigenous teachings and traditions, and evidence-based practices in human services, to support vulnerable children, youth and families. Serving Calgary and the surrounding area for over 30 years, Miskanawah works from a trauma-informed and strength-based perspective to support families in building skills and resiliency by forming natural supports.

[Miskanawah](#) (meaning "Pathways" in Cree) is our philosophical framework that is rooted in Indigenous teachings, ceremonies and guidance from Elders. As its name implies, this approach assists individuals and families in building pathways to and within the community, strengthening their natural supports, and engaging in healthier ways of living.

Being mindful of this and our own roots as an agency founded in Cree traditions, serving Indigenous peoples in Mohkínstsis, Miskanawah supports the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary's objective to create a physical space where peoples of Calgary and area can learn and practice cultural, historical, and spiritual traditions associated with Indigenous ancestry.



We believe in the value and importance of acknowledging and celebrating the rich culture and history of Treaty 7.

The Indigenous Gathering Place in Calgary will contribute significantly in supporting Miskanawah and many Indigenous & non-Indigenous peoples in creating a healthy and resilient Calgary community. I would like to reiterate Miskanawah's support for the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kirby Redwood
CEO, Miskanawah



March 24, 2021

City Council
The City of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta

Dear Mayor Nenshi and Councilors,

We are writing in support of the Indigenous Gathering Place Society's mission to work with The City of Calgary towards the realization of an Indigenous Gathering Place, ideally, at the Fort Calgary site. The confluence at the Fort Calgary site is culturally significant to Indigenous Elders and people because it is the location where cultural gatherings and sacred ceremonies took place prior to the arrival of settlers. Indigenous Elders and people in the Calgary area continue to have a spiritual connection to the Fort Calgary site.

We know that the Indigenous population in Calgary is over 42,000 and growing. Increasingly, we are hearing from Indigenous Elders, people and organizations that a place to practice and nurture Indigenous culture, ceremony, spirituality and language is needed in Calgary.

The City of Calgary established a firm commitment to Truth and Reconciliation through the development of the White Goose Flying Report (2016) that establishes which of the 94 Calls to Action are actionable by the Calgary municipal government.

The recommendation in the White Goose Flying Report responding to Calls to Action # 21, 22 and 48ii call upon The City to work collaboratively to seek real estate, appropriate infrastructure, public buildings, gardens and parkland for Indigenous ceremonial, cultural, commemorative activities as well as healing. The achievement of an Indigenous Gathering Place would be a decisive expression of reconciliation by The City of Calgary.

In addition, City Council also passed a Council Indigenous Policy in 2017 that supports City Administration in *Ways of Knowing, Ways of Engaging, Ways towards Equitable Environments and Ways of Building Relationships with Indigenous people*. An Indigenous Gathering Place aligns with the Indigenous Policy's four ways forward and presents opportunities for collaboration with The City.

The Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee supports the Indigenous Gathering Place Society and encourages The City to work in partnership with the society to make the Indigenous Gathering Place a reality. We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

A blue ink signature of Justin Jimmy, written in a cursive style.

Justin Jimmy,
Chair, CAUAC

A blue ink signature of Eileen Clearsky, written in a cursive style.

Eileen Clearsky,
Vice Chair, CAUAC



February 10, 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

On behalf of Colouring It Forward Inc and the Board of CIF Reconciliation Society, we would like to ask you for your full support of the Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP). In Calgary, we are sorely in need of a place where Indigenous people can gather, where we can organize programming and more, and particularly a place that is governed by Indigenous people using Indigenous ways of knowing and living and is dedicated to them.

Colouring It Forward works with Indigenous artists and elders to share their artwork and their wisdom in books, journals and other products including orange shirts. We are an Indigenous social enterprise that loves to work in collaboration, organize events and elder's talks. With our sister not-for-profit organization, we organize orange shirt events, language revitalization programming as well as a traveling art exhibit. Our dream one day is to be able to hold these gatherings and events in an Indigenous location and to better support learning for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and to foster connections between the two groups. We believe that programs and services that the IGP plans to offer will help to foster reconciliation in Calgary.

Between 2007 and 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada travelled across Canada and heard from over 6,500 witnesses from the Indian Residential Schools System. In June 2015, the TRC identified 94 Calls to Action, in Action 21, the Commission called upon the "federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools".

We entreat you to help make Indigenous Gathering Place a reality.

Meegwetch

--

Diana Frost - Natohyinhsin / Holy Song

Colouring It Forward / CIF Reconciliation Society

Tel: 1-855-500-1166

Ste. 337, 104-1240 Kensington Rd. N.W. Calgary, AB T2N 3P7

cell: (403) 921-3534

email: diana@colouringitforward.com



website: www.colouringitforward.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/colouringitforward

Instagram: [@colouringitforward](https://www.instagram.com/colouringitforward)

I honour and acknowledge that the land I live on is the traditional territory of the Blackfoot, the Stoney Nakoda and the Tsuut'ina Nations as well as home to the Metis Nation, Region III.



February 8, 2022

Dear Madam Mayor and Members of City Council:

Please accept this as our letter of support for the Indigenous Gathering Place of Calgary.

As a small grassroots Society whose mission is to provide leadership in Aboriginal, government and industry relations by creating a circle of relatives to foster a broad understanding of different perspectives, the similarities between the organizational objectives of CFAR and IGP are clear. The Circle for Aboriginal Relations Society would like to express our wholehearted support of the Indigenous Gathering Place.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People states that Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain “their institutional structures and their distinctive customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices and, in the cases where they exist, juridical systems or customs, in accordance with international human rights standards.” The Indigenous Gathering Place will provide a central place for Indigenous Peoples to safely gather and to participate in and share (as appropriate) ceremonies and traditional activities.

The actualization of a vision to create a cultural and spiritual space specifically devoted to Indigenous peoples – the first of its kind in Calgary at this level and in many years – will significantly advance reconciliation and provide expanded meaningful opportunity for connection within the community; as well as a place where all citizens can benefit through impactful learning with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous community members.

The Indigenous Gathering Place is needed and will reinspire pride in community, place, and heritage for all Calgarians but especially for the oft overlooked First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples who have made our city their home.

We are excited to witness the many positive impacts for Mohkinstsis and well beyond the city’s borders that a place to call our own will engender.

Yours Sincerely,

Sandra Sutter
President of the Board
Circle for Aboriginal Relations Society



Eve MacMillan
John Fischer
Co-Chairs, Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary

Dear Eve MacMillan and John Fischer:

In our reconciliation journey, Calgary Foundation is committed to building meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities, and incorporating strategies based on mutual respect and traditional knowledge. For this reason, the Foundation is supportive of the development of an Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP) within the city. The IGP lays out a community-driven collective vision of a physical space where peoples of Calgary and area can learn and practice the cultural, historical and spiritual traditions associated with Indigenous ancestry.

Currently Calgary lacks a designated spiritual and culture space for Indigenous peoples. The need for such a space was identified by the community over 30 years ago and over the years remains in alignment with the City of Calgary's White Goose Flying Report and City Cultural Plan, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, and the IGP's own engagement with the urban Indigenous community and Elders of all nations.

The Foundation has financially supported the Indigenous Gathering Place Society to develop a Western business plan alongside a parallel Indigenous strategy. We supported the engagement of Elders from across Treaty 7 territory to learn more about potential locations for the site, and to bring the discussion of these sites into a cultural and ceremonial context. We have also supported the society to further conversations with the City of Calgary and to secure architectural and engineering expertise. In total we have provided \$190,000 in grants to this important initiative.

We are excited to express our support for this very important project and committed to see it become a reality.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eva Friesen", is written over a light blue circular scribble.

Eva Friesen
President and CEO



SUITE 1500, 815 MACLEOD TRAIL SE
CALGARY ALBERTA, CANADA T2G 4T8
Homeless Serving System-of-Care

30 July 2019

Eve MacMillan and John Fischer
Co-Chairs
Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary

RE: Support for the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary Application to Infrastructure

Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) is pleased to provide this letter in support of the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary's (IGP) application to Infrastructure.

In 2017 CHF provided funding to support the IGP committee to prepare a business plan based on the need for an Indigenous Gathering Place in Calgary. It was through discussions, meetings and workshops that "A Case for Calgary Indigenous Gathering Place" emerged, and identified the clear need for a physical structure for urban indigenous peoples to gather to practice cultural and spiritual ceremonies. In 2018, this plan was published and it identified six critical next steps, inclusive of the comprehensive IGP Business Case. Since that plan was published, CHF has continued to support and work with the urban Indigenous community and IGP in support of this physical space and accompanying Indigenous programming.

Currently, CHF supports Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary (IGP) by funding through their fiscal agent Sunrise Healing Lodge Society. The IGP is working as a volunteer, nonprofit society to build a culturally safe place for Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of Calgary to work towards reconciliation. This is a collaborative partnership that embodies a connection to civil society and shared values between IGP and CHF. Additionally, IGP is focused on creating the physical space identified in the business plan for Indigenous Peoples to reconnect with their origins, identities, languages, and protocols - and ultimately heal on the road to reconciliation.

According to our 2018 Point in Time Count, Indigenous persons are overrepresented and account for 20% of the homeless population in Calgary while making up only 3% of the general population. It's clear that the need for an Indigenous Gathering Place for cultural practice, cultural revitalization, and virtuous relationships addressing reconciliation and cultural safety in the urban setting is critical in Calgary. CHF is pleased to endorse this mission and project.

Thank you for considering this request. If I can provide any additional information you can reach me at mattn@calgaryhomeless.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Nomura".

Matt Nomura
Vice President, Calgary Homeless Foundation



October 26, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find this letter in support of Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary.

The Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) is a provincial not-for-profit organization committed to building healthier and engaged communities and citizens by developing and promoting recreation and parks. We have been supportive of the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary since its early inception following the Calls to Actions from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* in 2015. Our own Janet Naclia, Director of People and Programs for ARPA, sat on the IGP Board.

ARPA firmly believes in the power of community and the need for the Indigenous community in Treaty 7 to have its own place to gather, heal, and celebrate culture. We believe it is detrimental that such a facility does not already exist in Calgary. ARPA has seen how community, across the province in many diverse settings, has faltered when its members are unable to access spaces and places built for their own specific wellness and growth.

As part of our own reconciliation journey, ARPA believes in the importance of honouring Indigenous ways of knowing, knowledge translation, and respecting Indigenous oral practices. This commitment means that we embrace these practices by making sure diverse voices are heard and celebrated, creating ethical spaces for sharing, and by inviting Elders to be collaborating partners and guides in what we do.

We believe that the creation of the IGP in Calgary will advance these goals as well and we look forward to a future where all voices are heard, embraced, and celebrated.

In support,



Janet Naclia, Director of People and Programs, ARPA
jnaclia@arpaonline.ca
<https://arpaonline.ca>



Feb 12, 2022

City Council
The City of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta

Dear Mayor Gondek and Council,

I am writing to express support and encouragement for Council to work with the Indigenous Gathering Place Society (IGPS) to make the Indigenous Gathering Place vision come alive for our community.

As our city's mentorship charity, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area (BBBS) believes that every single child is born with incredible potential, and that mentoring relationships are the key to unlocking that potential so that it can be shared with the world. In particular, for children and youth who are facing adversity, there is no better intervention than caring, consistent relationships. This takes intentional investment and resources, particularly within communities that have outsized challenges. We are proud to support urban Indigenous youth and their mentors through our model, and we believe an Indigenous Gathering Place is an exciting opportunity to deepen the cultural understanding of the youth we serve.

Currently 12% of the children and youth in developmental relationships through BBBS identify as Indigenous. We aim to increase this number and have recently partnered with Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown which has gifted the Rotary Tom Jackson Stay in School Program to us to help us fulfill this ambition. This program is designed to provide unique, culturally-appropriate mentoring relationships and supports to Indigenous youth, and a key part of the strategy is visiting meaningful sites that allow a young person to learn about, and take pride in, their Indigenous history. In that way, the Indigenous Gathering Place concept is an ideal fit for future experiences for the youth we serve.

We believe the power of the Indigenous Gathering Place goes far beyond a much-needed location for connection and ceremony, however. As an organization on our own Reconciliation journey, we would hugely value a consistent hub where we can connect with like-minded organizations, share resources, and connect directly with Indigenous people as we learn and as we grow.

Please consider this letter our unqualified support for the IGPS, its exciting vision and an invitation to the City of Calgary to support it for the good of our community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Ken Lima-Coelho".

Ken Lima-Coelho (He/Him)
President & CEO
403-852-9168
klima@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca



Institute for Community Prosperity
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW, Calgary, AB, Canada T3E 6K6
Tel: 403 440-7055
www.mtroyal.ca/communityprosperity

December 31, 2021

Office of the Mayor
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB T2P 2M5

Re: Support for an Indigenous Gathering Place in Calgary

Your Worship,

Congratulations on the strong leadership you have provided in these first few months, from taking a stand on the xenophobic and unconstitutional Quebec Bill 21 to declaring a climate emergency and catalyzing the development of renewable energy solutions. These have been a proud few months to be identifying as a “Calgarian”. Let me also suggest a potential third such defining project, to make a ‘triple crown’ of Gondek-era transformative municipal initiatives: Please consider this letter as a strong endorsement for the development of an Indigenous Gathering Place, and as an appeal for the City of Calgary to support this important initiative.

As lovely a city as Calgary is, I believe it suffers from a chronic sense of being temporary – a pitstop on the way to somewhere else, or a large, gleaming and sophisticated resource camp. As we think about such challenges as attracting and retaining talent, about revitalizing and transforming the downtown, we must put placemaking – creating spaces that feel authentic, permanent, and grounded in history and/or culture - front and centre. And I can think of no more urgently needed placemaking initiative than an Indigenous Gathering Place.

An integral part of reconciliation is acknowledgement of land, not merely through reciting a creed at public events, but more importantly for acknowledging this land on which we have built the thriving, vibrant city of Calgary is Indigenous land. Yet, aside from the occasional street or bridge name, the landscape barely acknowledges this. Moreover, the confluence of the two rivers, the very heart of the city, is marked by a colonial fortification. The notion of “land back” is not just a federal (or even a federal-provincial joint) responsibility, nor is it just limited to a conversation about crown land. Municipalities can share in this movement. The City of Victoria, for example, is looking at sharing a fixed portion of all newly assessed (developed) lands with the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations on a permanent basis. At minimum, however, the City’s contribution could take the form of a transfer of existing public land, planning and regulatory expertise, as well as serving as a keystone financing partner for this vital initiative.

A diverse grassroots community group of volunteers has been laying the groundwork for a few





Institute for Community Prosperity
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW, Calgary, AB, Canada T3E 6K6
Tel: 403 440-7055
www.mtroyal.ca/communityprosperity

years on this initiative, guided by Elders and energized by Indigenous youth. They have modeled the sense of welcome, openness and malleability that a Gathering Place will ultimately be defined by. Regardless of what form this ultimately takes (and there are many exciting possibilities), it will be a place that all Calgarians, Indigenous and non, will feel called to visit, share in, and steward (and grow) for decades to come.

As such, on behalf of the Institute for Community Prosperity, I strongly support the City of Calgary's active financial and in-kind support for an Indigenous Gathering Place – and ideally many such spaces - within Calgary.

Sincerely,

James Stauch
Director, Institute for Community Prosperity

cc. John Fischer, Co-Chair, Indigenous Gathering Place



Suncor Energy Foundation
150 6 Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta T2P 3E3
www.suncor.com

February 10, 2022

City Council
City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Stn. M
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 2M5

RE: Indigenous Gathering Place

To whom it may concern,

Please accept this letter on behalf of Suncor Energy Foundation, in support of the Indigenous Gathering Place Society (IGPSC). My colleagues and I were thrilled to see the steps being taken by the City of Calgary toward a potential transfer of land to the IGPSC.

While we do not currently provide financial support to IGPSC, we were recently reminded by one of the society's volunteers that the grassroots group that formed IGPSC first came together at a Reconciliation Canada event in 2014, funded by the Suncor Energy Foundation.

More recently, we have updated our funding priorities to articulate our commitment to learning from and with Indigenous Peoples and other community members to strengthen community – especially while communities are in energy transition. In Calgary and across Canada, we are collectively experiencing the impacts of many changes, and we believe Indigenous ways of knowing and community strengths will help us make the adaptations required for the well-being of all.

Speaking of adaptations and well-being, we hope the City of Calgary will be able to make further progress toward this initiative – to support reconciliation, and to extend your earlier steps made during ceremony and a memorandum of understanding. As has been noted by the IGPSC volunteers, there are more than 500 places in Calgary devoted to cultures and spirituality, but not one specifically dedicated for Indigenous Peoples' ceremonial practices. We applaud the efforts being made to change this fact.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the opportunity further, please don't hesitate to contact me or a member of our team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "BVeness".

Bonnie Veness
Director, Suncor Energy Foundation
bveness@suncor.com / (403) 296-4027



Letter of Support: Indigenous Gathering Place Project in Calgary

To Whom It May Concern

This letter is in support of the Indigenous Gathering Place in Calgary. As our city's designated arts development authority, Calgary Arts Development has been paying close attention to the work of the Indigenous Gathering Place Committee since 2016. We deeply appreciate the approach of using both traditional Indigenous and western processes and protocols in creating a gathering place that is imbued with Indigenous arts and culture.

Calgary Arts Development supports the vision and principles laid out in the Indigenous Gathering Place Summary report published in February 2019 and subsequent updates on the Indigenous Gathering Place website. Our arts spaces strategy report, *Building on Our Momentum*, incorporates recommendations from The City of Calgary's *Cultural Plan for Calgary* (2016) and in the *White Goose Flying Report* (2016) in calling for support "toward projects that will fill an identified gap in Calgary's arts and culture infrastructure, such as infrastructure that supports Indigenous culture." Finding 1.1A of our report further notes that Calgary lacks "a year-round purpose-built space to serve as a gathering space for Indigenous Calgarians to practice cultural traditions and as a learning and meeting space for all Calgarians."

Please contact me if I can answer further questions about Calgary Arts Development's support for this important initiative that will further all Calgarians' journey of reconciliation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patti Pon", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patti Pon
President & CEO

501, 237 – 8th Avenue SE, Calgary, AB T2G 5C3
calgaryartsdevelopment.com | 403.264.5330



Mayor Jyoti Gondek
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB T2P 2M5
themayor@calgary.ca

November 26, 2021

Re: An Indigenous Gathering Place for Calgary

Dear Mayor Gondek,

We know you are supportive of the creation of an Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP) for Calgary – thank you. We are writing this letter to offer our support and to further equip you with a compelling case to make it a reality in 2022. The creation of an IGP aligns well with our work at Momentum to improve economic inclusion, and our vision that every person has a sustainable livelihood and contributes to their community. The IGP also has the potential to position Calgary as a leader in reconciliation efforts, which could contribute to our local economic and social recovery efforts.

Other important reasons to support this initiative are well articulated by the IGP including:

- Access space to provide a consistent point of contact for organizations and individuals within Calgary to develop meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples. For example, many organizations in Calgary are seeking to advance reconciliation efforts, but there is no consistent hub where these organizations can connect with one another, share resources, and connect directly with indigenous people regarding their reconciliation efforts.
- A central place to advance reconciliation that welcomes all Calgarians would help to make Calgary a more inclusive and welcoming place for all Calgarians, regardless of their heritage.
- Alberta includes Indigenous topics in the K-12 curriculum, and in post-secondary institutions, skills and employment training organizations, but Indigenous students often learn this limited information through a colonial lens. An IGP would provide a space where Indigenous learners can connect with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and members of their community about culture, traditions, and language in a traditional way that is not guided by colonial practices.
- As a space that would be welcome to all Calgarians, the IGP would provide an opportunity for Indigenous allies to be educated on Indigenous issues, and learn about culture, directly from Indigenous Peoples.



For further information, visit <https://indigenousgatheringplace.ca/>. We are hopeful that your leadership and commitment to reconciliation will make an IGP a reality.

Sincerely,

Jeff Loomis, Executive Director, Momentum

Cc:

Councillor Sharp sonya.sharp@calgary.ca
Councillor Wyness jennifer.wyness@calgary.ca
Councillor Mian jasmin.mian@calgary.ca
Councillor Dhaliwal raj.dhaliwal@calgary.ca
Councillor Pootmans richard.pootmans@calgary.ca
Councillor Wong terry.wong@calgary.ca
Councillor Walcott courtney.walcott@calgary.ca
Councillor Carra gian-carlo.carra@calgary.ca
Councillor Chabot andre.chabot@calgary.ca
Councillor Penner kourtney.penner@calgary.ca
Councillor Spencer evan.spencer@calgary.ca
Councillor McLean dan.mclean@calgary.ca
Councillor Demong peter.demong@calgary.ca



YMCA Calgary
Association Services
11300 Rocky Ridge Rd NW
Calgary, AB T3G 5H3
ymcacalgary.org

February 11, 2022

Letter of Support: **Indigenous Gathering Place**

Dear Mayor Gondek,

YMCA Calgary is pleased to offer our support for the Indigenous Gathering Place. We share the vision that Calgary needs 'a space where we share, connect, heal, renew and celebrate Indigenous cultures; a place to protect Indigenous practices, languages; and Elders' wisdom, oral and written teachings among all nations and all our relations'.

As part of our own reconciliation journey at the YMCA, we are committed to building meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities and incorporating strategies based on mutual respect and traditional knowledge. We believe in the importance of honouring Indigenous ways of knowing, knowledge translation, and respecting Indigenous oral practices.

YMCA Calgary's Indigenous department and staff team provides programs and services to Indigenous children, youth, and families in the community. Their work is centred around Indigenous culture and supported and guided by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders. The Indigenous Gathering Place will be an amazing resource to the team and the community. It is a strong signal that the community is committed to making sure diverse voices are heard and celebrated, and that safe and ethical spaces for sharing are created.

An Indigenous Gathering Place would be a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call-to-Action #21, calling upon the "federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools".

We ask you to vote to support the upcoming motion to transfer land near the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers to the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary and to continue to prioritize this important project.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Doram'.

Shannon Doram
President and CEO, YMCA Calgary
Shannon.doram@calgary.ymca.ca



January 14, 2022

Re: Letter of Support for the Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP)

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of the Indigenous Gathering Place's (IGP) vision to create *'a space where we share, connect, heal, renew and celebrate Indigenous cultures; a place to protect Indigenous practices, languages; and Elders' wisdom, oral and written teachings among all nations and all our relations'*.

The IGP has our full support as the realization of an indigenous gathering place would be a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada's Call-to-Action #21, calling upon the "federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools".

Axis Connects is a Calgary-based non-profit that was established with the goal of being a central Hub that connects women & diverse leaders with organizations and resources that can support their growth into high impact decision-making roles. Like Axis, the IGP will also act as a Hub where organizations in Calgary looking to make changes in the name of reconciliation can connect with one another, share resources, and connect directly with indigenous people on their ideas surrounding reconciliation.

The IGP would offer businesses and non-profit organizations like Axis Connects, and the Network Partner organizations we convene, a central place to advance reconciliation that welcomes all Calgarians would help to make Calgary a more inclusive and welcoming place for all, regardless of heritage.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information about this important act towards reconciliation in Calgary.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amber Griffith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amber Griffith

Executive Director

Axis Connects Corporation

E: amber@axisconnects.com



January 26, 2022

Letter of Support: Indigenous Gathering Place of Calgary

To the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary (IGPSC), Mayor Jyoti Gondek, Councillors Terry Wong and Evan Spencer and all other parties of concern;

It has come to our attention that the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary has a motion going forward regarding a proposed land transfer to the IGPSC. I am writing to you from Airdrie, Alberta, your neighbor to the north, to express our support for this amazing act of reconciliation.

I am one of the founders of a new group in Airdrie called the Circle Connections for Reconciliation (www.facebook.com/circleconnectionsforreconciliation). Our group will be watching what happens with great interest and in the hopes of one day doing something similar in our city.

All Canadians are called to do this work - learning the truth and moving towards genuine acts of reconciliation. We fully support the land back movement in Calgary as an amazing step on the path of reconciliation and a wonderful example for other cities.

Thank you for showing how we can do this in a good way. We look forward to watching the progression from Airdrie and learning from this example.

Sincerely,

Sue Methuen

Sue Methuen
Co-Chair
Circle Connections for Reconciliation



January 20 2022

Subject: Indigenous Gathering Place

To the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary

We are writing to express our resounding support for the creation of an Indigenous Gathering Place in Calgary.

The Oscill8 Live Electronic Music Performance Society is a Calgary-based non-profit which aims to support and educate live electronic music performers across western Canada. One of our organization's commitments is to find opportunities to create and support acts of reconciliation. We can think of no stronger act than the creation of an Indigenous Gathering Place, particularly in the downtown where strong arts and culture infrastructure exists.

One of Calgary's strengths has been the successes of creating a strong and inclusive arts and cultural scene. Along side projects such as the Central Library, Museum of Modern Art, Glenbow Museum, Jack Singer Concert Hall, National Music Centre, Fort Calgary, and the ongoing development of the culture and entertainment district, the Indigenous Gathering Place will be a critical component of the downtown urban fabric. Having cultural facilities located close together creates opportunities for cross-fertilization, which can inspire artists and help tell Calgary's rich indigenous history to the world.

We are committed to supporting indigenous artists, and educating our membership about the Indigenous Gathering Place, and we will explore opportunities for collaborations to share indigenous music and knowledge with our members and performing artists.

Oscill8 Live Electronic Music Performance Society

SOCIAL POLICY

COLLABORATIVE

Mayor Jyoti Gondek
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB T2P 2M5
themayor@calgary.ca

December 2nd, 2021

Re: An Indigenous Gathering Place for Calgary

Dear Mayor Gondek,

The Social Policy Collaborative is a group of community organizations committed to working together to inform the development of public policy that improves the economic and social wellbeing of Albertans. We believe Calgary needs an Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP) to showcase and reaffirm the continued presence and value of Indigenous culture in Calgary, in the heart of Treaty 7 Territory. The IGP is supported by 16 member organizations including: The Calgary Counselling Centre, The Calgary Food Bank, Carya Society of Calgary, Catholic Family Service, CUPS, The University of Calgary, Momentum, United Way of Calgary and Area, Vibrant Communities Calgary, The Women's Centre of Calgary, YW Calgary, The Alex, Inn From The Cold, Calgary Drop In Centre, Trellis, and McMan.

Although many of us provide vital cultural supports and programming to Indigenous peoples, many of these programs are targeted towards individuals who require other supports and so are not accessible by all. Many Elders and knowledge keepers in our city are challenged to find appropriate spaces large enough for ceremonies and other cultural activities that require large gatherings. Many of us serve vulnerable populations and we know that struggles faced by urban Indigenous People who have left their home communities are exacerbated because they feel far away from their families and support networks. The IGP would provide a place for these individuals to reconnect or continue to connect with their Indigenous heritage in a safe and welcoming environment. The IGP will address many gaps and reduce pressure in the social service sector, while providing the necessary space to protect traditional Indigenous practices, languages, Elders' wisdom, and oral and written teachings. The Indigenous Gathering Place is more than just a building, it's a physical expression of reconciliation, and a place to bring people together to learn about the history of Calgary in a more authentic way, directly from Indigenous Peoples.

For further information, visit <https://indigenousgatheringplace.ca/>. We are hopeful that your leadership and commitment to reconciliation will make an Indigenous Gathering Place a reality.

On behalf of Calgary's Social Policy Collaborative,



Meaghan Reid,
Executive Director, Vibrant Communities Calgary



Joy Bowen-Eyre,
Executive Director, The Alex




Calgary Alliance for the Common Good
1703 1 St NW
Calgary, AB, T2M 4P4
www.CalgaryCommonGood.org

November 18th, 2021

To the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary,

We are writing to express our heartfelt support for the creation of an Indigenous Gathering Place in Calgary.

When our members first committed to working together towards Truth and Reconciliation, they began a process of listening to Indigenous Leaders and Elder. Again and again, they heard was the need for an Indigenous Gathering Place that would be a centre for ceremony and community. We heard stories about how people had found healing through embracing traditional ceremonies, but we also heard that while there were over 500 places of worship for other faiths, there was nowhere set aside for Indigenous people to have their spiritual practices in Calgary. We heard stories of people coming to the city and seeking to connect to an indigenous community, but because they were unable to find a connecting point they became lost. We heard stories about not having a place for a funeral or other community gatherings. We also heard how there are many places that provided services and are orientated towards Indigenous people as "vulnerable people", there was not a place for Indigenous people to gather, as a people, in the strength of their culture and community.

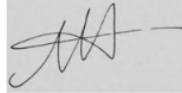
Based on this listening, since 2017, we have been actively supporting the creation of an Indigenous Gathering place in Calgary. Since that time, our members of been engaged in speaking with city councillors and the Mayor and asking for their support of an Indigenous Gathering Place. Our member organizations have educated their members about the need for such a gathering place in Calgary. Our members also participated in the community engagement process of listening for what a gathering place needs to become so that it serves the community.

When the Indigenous Gathering Place is built in Calgary, it will be a gift for all Calgarians. It is a way of making truth and reconciliation real. It is a way of recognizing who's land we gather on. It is also a way for all Calgarians to celebrate and learn from the wisdom of the people who originally gathered at Mohkinstsis.

On Behalf of the Calgary Alliance for the Common Good.



Ryan Andersen
Lead Organizer



Suzanne Karhiio Dzus
Organizer

