

PLACE MATTERS: COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RECOMMENDATIONS AND TOOLKITS

vivo™



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was funded through the City of Calgary's Council Innovation Fund, awarded to Parks Foundation and Vivo for Healthier Generations.

Support for project evaluation, engagement and reporting was provided by Habitus Consulting, Hive Developments and Human Insights.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of all the community leaders, members and organizations who gave their time, voice, insights, and efforts to the advancement of this project.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information or questions about this report, please contact:

Vivo for Healthier Generations:

placematters@vivo.ca

Parks Foundation:

info@parksfdn.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PLACE MATTERS PROJECT

Vivo for Healthier Generations and Parks Foundation received \$100,000 in funding from the Council Innovation Fund in 2021 for the project *A Strategy Model for Grass Roots Park Space Development in North Central Calgary*, herein referred to as *Place Matters*. The objective of the project was to engage North Calgary community members in the development of a strategy model for grassroots park development and to identify priorities for outdoor public space projects. Report contents include a summary of community engagement methods and insights, recommendations to support Calgary's outdoor public spaces, priorities for future outdoor public space projects in North Calgary, and community toolkits to support future community engagement and outdoor public space project development.



THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The project team carried out a series of community engagement activities to solicit input from North Calgary community members, organizations, and subject matter experts. Feedback from these activities served as the principal data source to inform the development of project deliverables. Engagement activities included:

1. **Values and Needs Event:** A community event October 15, 2022, with ~275 attendees providing feedback on values and needs associated with outdoor public spaces.
2. **Subject Matter Expert Interviews:** Interviews between March 3 - April 19, 2023, with 13 subject matter experts exploring the process of developing and activating outdoor public spaces.
3. **Capital Projects Survey:** An online survey available between March 1 - April 5, 2023, with responses from 25 community organizations contributing to an initial list of projects for North Calgary communities.
4. **Prioritization Event:** A community event June 17, 2023, with ~250 attendees providing feedback on priorities and preferences for outdoor public space projects in North Calgary.



CALGARY'S OUTDOOR PUBLIC SPACES

Community member feedback in all four engagement activities provided insights that are applicable beyond prioritizing North Calgary's outdoor public spaces. This section of the report provides information that can complement strategic planning and management of Calgary's outdoor public spaces. This includes:

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Key roles and responsibilities involved in developing, activating, and maintaining Calgary's outdoor public spaces.
- **Community Needs and Values:** Community needs and values to inform future outdoor public space projects.
- **Challenges for Outdoor Public Space:** Challenges that should be considered as part of planning for a future of sustainable and community-driven outdoor public spaces, along with recommendations to address those challenges.
- **Supporting Grassroots Initiatives:** Recommendations to address the barriers encountered by community advocates involved in outdoor public spaces. Barriers include: Partnership and Collaboration, Funding, Processes Navigation, Agency, and Maintenance and Activation.



NORTH CALGARY PRIORITIES

Priorities for North Calgary outdoor public space projects were developed based on feedback from community members and organizations who participated in the Capital Projects Survey and the Prioritization Event. North Calgary community organizations identified 13 projects which serve as a starting project for additional community engagement and prioritization. Community members informed the development of a prioritization framework including outdoor public space types and activities, characteristics, and purposes. The most common themes associated with community member priorities included:

- **Nature:** Spaces should provide a connection to nature and incorporate natural elements.
- **Play:** Spaces should provide opportunities for children to play, exercise, and grow.
- **Social Connection:** Spaces should provide opportunities to connect with other community members.
- **Multi-Purpose:** Spaces should incorporate infrastructure and amenities that can be used for a variety of activities.
- **Convenience:** Space should be close and/or easily accessible to as many community members as possible.
- **Equity and Inclusivity:** Spaces should be usable by all members of a community.
- **Health Promotion:** Spaces should be built to promote physical and mental health.

NEXT STEPS

This project provides a list of community-driven projects and priorities which serve as a starting point for future North Calgary outdoor public space projects. Additional community engagement and review of existing asset distributions is recommended to ensure that projects meet the needs of the communities they are proposed for; this will require funding and the support of partner organizations (e.g., Parks Foundation) to coordinate and execute. In addition to projects for North Calgary, a series of opportunities to enhance Calgary's outdoor public spaces generally are presented. These opportunities can be collectively addressed through additional investment in outdoor public space systems and initiatives aimed at optimizing existing processes and service delivery models.

COMMUNITY TOOLKITS

Two toolkits are provided as appendices to the report. These toolkits are designed for community members interested in community engagement and outdoor public space development.

The Community Engagement Toolkit provides a series of recommendations and lessons learned based on the project team's experience with the community engagement activities conducted as part of Place Matters. The toolkit is intended to serve as a resource for individuals and organizations interested in conducting future community engagement initiatives.

The Community Advocate Toolkit is a resource to support community advocates involved in leading their own outdoor public space projects. It presents seven key activities, each accompanied by a description of the activity's purpose, recommendations to complete the activity, common challenges associated with that activity, key partners to engage in the activity and links to additional activity resources.

