

CIVIC PARTNER 2021 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*

**2021 City Investment**

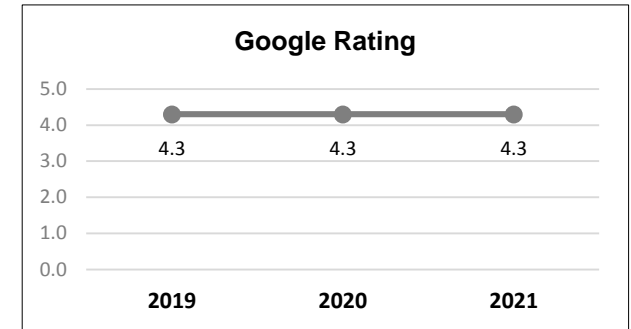
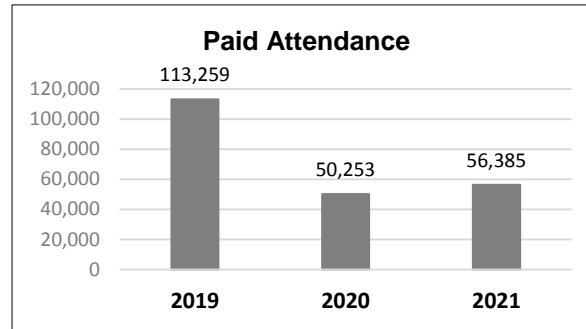
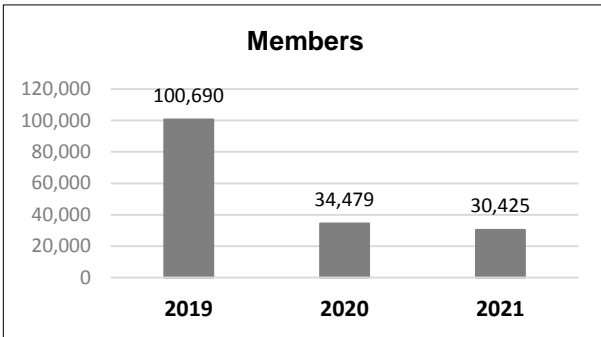
**Operating Grant:** \$2,197,092

**Capital Grant:** \$3,063,202

**Economic Resiliency Fund:** \$182,000

*City owned asset*

**2021 Results**



**The story behind the numbers**

- As soon as it was safe to do so, Calgarians started to return to TELUS Spark for entertainment and education.
- Spark is recovering from the pandemic closures stronger than before due to new capital upgrades.
- Spark is a stable, key cultural leader in the community, working very hard to revitalize the experiences offered through a major renovation project

**Impact of COVID-19**

Six months of the closure were leveraged for capital upgrades including a new Astronaut Ice Cream Shop, digital immersion gallery, and updated dome theatre. Upon re-opening, visitor numbers were 75 per cent compared to normal, and online engagement online.

**Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

In support of a commitment to Reconciliation, the museum held a pipe ceremony with the Indigenous Advisory Circle, board members, and staff. A new Equity Task Force reported on its first year of activities, and the organization reported against five-year benchmark targets. An unconscious bias consultant was engaged to conduct an assessment and recommend actions, and recommendations from equity advisors led to changes in recruitment practices.



## 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.

## 2021 RESULTS

### 2. **What key results did your organization achieve in 2021 that contributed to one or more of the One Calgary Citizen Priorities, or contributed to Council-approved strategies such as *Calgary in the New Economy: An economic strategy for Calgary*, *Calgary Heritage Strategy*, *Cultural Plan for Calgary*, *Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy*, or other strategy.**

A Prosperous City – Spark’s new *Roadmap for the 2020s* explicitly mandates the science centre to embed and champion Calgary companies and technology. Even though the pandemic forced two closures, and we had a bumpy year in 2021 from an attraction perspective, Spark led on-time and on-budget 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 partnerships with social service agencies, Spark welcomes thousands of Calgarians free of charge with a Community Access Pass. Prior to the pandemic, 58 agencies took part in the program. The pandemic sharply reduced access and attendance, and the number of partners reduced to 40. However, when we re-opened in July 2021, we made a concerted effort to increase the commitment to providing community and built up the Community Access Program to include now 63 partner members. In addition, Spark made a commitment to increase subsidized access from 15,000 in 2019 to 15% of ticketed attendance overall.

A Healthy and Green City – Spark is a LEED gold building. In 2021, Spark worked with the City of Calgary team to support the installation of the new Renfrew Solar Carport in the Spark parking lot, and will be the proud and excited beneficiary of this solar energy when the lights go on in July 2022. Spark will champion the net zero status that this solar carport will bring and will be a visible and enthusiastic beacon of the green energy story of Calgary.

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 2021 closure. Spark shared science online and supported vaccine-awareness and safe social interaction practices. Spark also received a grant to support an Indigenous-led vaccine and health awareness hip-hop science education project.

**3. Using the chart below, please report your 2021 performance measures that demonstrate: how much you did, how well you did it, and how Calgarians are better off.**

	<b>Performance Measure Name</b>	<b>2019 results</b>	<b>2020 results</b>	<b>2021 results</b>	<b>What story does this measure tell about your work?</b>
<b>How much did you do?</b>	Paid Attendance	113,259	50,253	56,385	Spark pulled out of the 2021 pandemic closure stronger than before due to capital upgrades.
<b>How well did you do it?</b>	Google rating	4.3	4.3	4.3	Spark is a stable key cultural leader in the community, working very hard to revitalize the experiences offered through a major renovation project.
<b>How are Calgarians better off?</b>	Memberships	100,690	34,479	30,425	Calgarians started to rely on its science centre once again for entertainment and education again as soon as it was safe to do so.

**4. Briefly describe the any key impacts of COVID-19 on your operations in 2021.**

The Calgary science centre was closed from December 8, 2020 through until the end of June 2021. The 2021 closure was even longer than the 2020 closure. Six months of closure was used to undertake capital upgrades: to reopen with a new Astronaut Ice Cream shop in June, open a new digital immersion gallery in July, and open an upgraded dome theatre in November.

Because of the federal wage subsidy, combined with the City of Calgary support, we were able to maintain a workforce of approximately 1/3 of the normal operating workforce throughout the closure in the first half of the year. We were active with online programs and used the closure to do an audit of all education programs, review relevance of programming to new audiences, and redesign the organizational structure to support the creation of a world-class science centre in the next five years. Most importantly, we undertook capital upgrades.

In the second half of the year, we re-opened with covid safety measures in place. With the reduced capacity measures and community cautiousness, Spark engaged almost 75% of its normal numbers, and saw an increase in engagement online on all social media platforms.

**5. Briefly describe any quality improvement changes or operational efficiencies your organization was able to achieve in 2021.**

The quality improvement changes at Spark were noticeable in 2021. We added a food outlet on the main floor (Astronaut Ice Cream), which significantly improved the guest experience especially for groups trying to manage a stroller or wheelchair and little people all at once. We also added a digital immersion gallery, and greatly improved the dome theatre experience for guests. We added a robotic VR experience called Birdly and we also got a dog (a robot dog). The robot is the ambassador for off-site coding programs for youth, especially those who might not be able or interested in attending the science centre.

Spark is also experimenting with an operational efficiency that affects quality. When we reopened in 2021, we eliminated the full-time chef position. The quality of the food offered in the Eatery is somewhat lower, but sales continue to be strong. Spark operates at a lean staffing level in general. One complaint we get is that there are not enough staff to manage peak periods, and we are working on that.

**6. Did your organization implement any strategies or approaches in 2021 that supported racial equity in the delivery of programs or services?**

Very much so. In the summer of 2021, Spark held an important pipe ceremony with the Indigenous Advisory Circle, Spark board members, and Spark staff. This contract supported a commitment to reconciliation through the delivery of the renovation, new programs, and new services at Spark.

The Equity Task Force prepared a report on its first full year of activities and reinforced the path toward the five-year benchmark targets with the board and all staff. The benchmarks include equitable representation and diversity among guests and staff with respect to culture, gender and ability.

An unconscious bias consultant was engaged to assess discrimination at Spark and recommend actions.

The annual Spark internal conference included a half-day workshop on residential schools and other sessions on bias and equity.

**7. Did your organization implement any further changes to strategies, programs or services in 2021 to address equity, diversity or inclusion?**

Yes, Spark made three changes to the recruitment posting process: we no longer require a university degree in any job posting, we do not mention police checks in job postings, and we post in new places. The changes were made based on recommendations from equity advisors. The new posting processes will ensure a wider range of applicants. Spark also introduced a hiring manager awareness program to ensure hiring managers were aware of the equity goals and current status. All of these are simple and straightforward ways to recognize that there is unconscious bias in the system and we must continually surface it and make appropriate changes to eliminate it.

The programming budget for Indigenous-led programming was also increased in 2021, and a position was created to add an Indigenous staff member to the Indigenous engagement team.

On the programming team, a position was created in the 2021 budget for a manager of cultural co-production events so that Spark can lead more relevant programming for diverse communities in partnership with the communities.

Spark added a sensory backpack program in 2021 to support neurodiverse children.

**8. Briefly describe how your organization worked in partnership with other community, private or public organizations to achieve shared results for Calgary and Calgarians in 2021.**

The Big Art Drive In at Spark was a partnership project initiated in 2020 that created a temporary drive-in for covid-safe viewing of films all summer long. Many community groups came forward in early 2021 with requests. As a result, Spark supported the Big Art Drive in during the summer of 2021 as well, working with the solar carport team to maximize the offering.

Spark worked with Indigenous elders and their communities to offer Summer Road trips 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.

Spark partnered with numerous content experts in the city for different programming elements at the science centre include the revived Spark After Dark for adults.

An MOU with Platform, the University of Calgary, as well as SAIT, have all formalized the relationships with a shared commitment to connecting Calgarians to science and engineering knowledge.

In 2021, Spark initiated a task force with members of the scientific brain development community (Palix Foundation, Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation, AHS, Renfrew Educational Services) to inform upgrades to the Creative Kids Museum at Spark, with the goal of better serving new parents and caregivers in Calgary with the latest science on the developing brain.

Spark worked with the City of Calgary and the landscape architecture firm, O2, on redesigning the front yard at Spark to work with the new solar carport. O2 offered to volunteer their time to the science centre cause.

Spark hosted an international “Live Aid” event for science communicators all around the world, including many Calgarians. By assembling some of the top talent in science communications for a three-day conference in support of the importance to communicating science, Spark shone a light on Calgary leadership when it comes to science and society leadership. Faculty members came from New York, San Francisco and Toronto, with 300 fully engaged participants for three days from Germany, Brazil, Trinidad and across North America.

**RESOURCES**

9. **Please estimate how The City’s operating funding was allocated in 2021. 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
<b>30 %</b>	Staff compensation, development and training
%	Fund development
<b>38 %</b>	Purchased supplies and assets
<b>32 %</b>	Facility maintenance
%	Evaluation or Research
%	<i>Administration, technology and contracted services</i>

10. **Did volunteers support your operations in 2021? If yes:**

<b>How many volunteers?</b>	The volunteer program was on hold in 2021 with the exception of Board of Directors and some smaller commitments
<b>Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:</b>	3188

11. **What resources or funding sources did your organization leverage to support operations in 2021?**

- Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) = \$1,931,580
- Alberta Relaunch Grants = \$10,000
- Travel Alberta Covid Cooperative Funding = \$40,000
- Civic Emergency Resiliency Grant = \$182,000

12. **Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2021 that you want to highlight?**

Canadian Museums Association, Award of Outstanding Achievement in Audience Outreach

**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 2021 capital work, including specific lifecycle/maintenance projects or capital projects.

City-CPIG-MSP			
Project Totals:	TOTAL	City	Spark
Astronaut Ice Cream Café	\$ 108,584	\$ 108,584	
Digital Immersion Gallery	\$ 2,049,927	\$ 2,049,927	
Classrooms Upgrade	\$ 299,766	\$ 299,766	
Atrium Speaker Amps	\$ 64,744	\$ 48,558	\$ 16,186
Dome Theatre Seats	\$ 299,999	\$ 224,999	\$ 75,000
Electrical Conduit to Byard	\$ 62,000	\$ 46,500	\$ 15,500
FG Carpets	\$ 60,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 15,000
Dome Hallway	\$ 147,467	\$ 110,600	\$ 36,867
Garage Roof	\$ 68,000	\$ 51,000	\$ 17,000
Project Management	\$ 87,726	\$ 87,726	
Blue Prints	\$ 89,186	\$ 66,890	\$ 22,297
	\$ 3,337,399	\$ 3,139,550	\$ 197,849

b) What funding did your organization leverage to support capital activities in 2021?

CPIG = \$340,447

MSP = \$2,546,003

MSP Upgrades = \$253,100

Canadian Heritage Canada Cultural Spaces Fund = \$2,413,752

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