

Update on Living a Creative Life: An Arts Development Strategy for Calgary

December 10, 2013

Overview

As a Cultural Capital of Canada in 2012, Calgary made a commitment to conduct long-term planning for the development of the arts sector, a goal that aligns with Calgary's 2004 Civic Arts Policy for a municipally-owned corporation to provide strategic leadership for the long-term growth of the arts sector. Calgary Arts Development embarked on a citizen-led process called Arts Plan in May 2012 to create a comprehensive strategy for arts development and investment in Calgary. Over 18 months, dozens of consultations with hundreds of Calgarians have yielded the framework for *Living a Creative Life: An Arts Development Strategy for Calgary*, to be presented to City Council in March 2014.

Through this process, it has become clear that the arts are a valued part of daily life for Calgarians and that Calgary is a unique and important contributor to the national arts landscape. A movement has been building in this city over the last decade, fuelled by the energy of our citizens, the creativity of our artists and the leadership and support of our community, business and political champions. There are thousands of voices behind this work, willingly and enthusiastically participating in shaping the artistic life of our city. Through this strategy, we bring together and channel the investments and efforts of government, the private sector, artists, arts organizations and champions from all walks of life.

The 'Calgary way' is different: we're happy to blaze a new path, and we can collaborate across boundaries like no one else. This strategy is purposefully designed to capitalize on Calgary's strengths and build on the momentum generated by Calgary 2012.

Overarching Vision

Calgary is a city that encourages every resident to live a creative life. Calgary will prosper as the arts sector achieves excellence and innovation, and as Calgarians engage with their city as co-creators within its vital arts ecosystem.

Guiding Principles

Several inspiring themes emerged from the thousands of voices engaged in this process. These themes serve as a set of values to guide the signatories of this strategy as they work together to achieve its vision. We define 'creativity' as the ability to generate innovative ideas and manifest them from thought into reality. The process involves original thinking and then producing.

1. **Creative Citizens:** The Arts are for Everyone
2. **Creative Places:** Build Social Capital
3. **Creative Economy:** Fuel our Prosperity
4. **Creative Image:** Calgary on the World Stage
5. **Creative Leadership:** Broad Base of Champions
6. **Creative Ecosystem:** Connect and Balance

Key Success Indicators

Over the next 10 years, the signatories committing to work together to achieve the vision of *Living a Creative Life* should consider the following success indicators as they build action plans and direct their investments:

1. Prominent artistic voices and high levels of participation from all aspects of Calgary's increasingly diverse population.
2. City Council is a leader in prioritizing the arts as a key driver of the success of the city, generating new investments from other orders of government and the private sector.
3. Artists working in Calgary experience a healthy and fulfilling quality of life.
4. Artists are able to develop work over long periods of time and to conduct research that may not result in a "commercially viable product" in the short term.
5. A full portfolio of facilities to support artistic practice and cultural activity.
6. Consistent and strategic support for the operating costs of existing facilities.
7. Dynamic and sustainable large arts organizations/ institutions.
8. High-quality arts education and engagement opportunities for youth.
9. A high-quality post-secondary arts education/pre- professional training system.
10. The arts are positioned to play a prominent role in enhancing the vitality of public space.
11. Significant collaboration on planning, programming and investment to realize increased efficiency and effectiveness in developing the arts sector.

Focus Areas

An inspiring agenda has emerged from community consultations, collaborative working sessions and current state research and gap analysis. Each of the goals below has a motivated group of stakeholders that have already identified themselves as champions. The City of Calgary, several civic partners, promotional and umbrella agencies, public and post-secondary education leaders, corporate supporters, cultural institutions, arts organizations (including their volunteer board members) and artists all have significant roles to play in the collaborative effort of achieving some or all of these goals.

Youth & Education

Vision: Calgary's youth are highly ethical and innovative citizens because they engage meaningfully with one another and with their communities through arts participation.

- **Outcome 1:** Established and effective channels of communication between artists, arts educators and youth help broker collaboration and increase authentic arts experiences for youth.
- **Outcome 2:** There is innovative and efficient use of shared resources (finances, facilities, equipment, transportation) to help provide equal access for all youth to opportunities for arts participation.
- **Outcome 3:** The arts are integrated into rich and diverse learning opportunities across all subject areas.

Arts Incubation

Vision: Calgary is incredibly attractive as a city where artistic talent chooses to live, work and achieve artistic excellence.

- **Outcome 1:** There is an abundance of the necessary resources required to support artistic creation.
- **Outcome 2:** Artists and arts administrators are able to dedicate themselves to their artistic careers while maintaining a healthy and fulfilling quality of life.
- **Outcome 3:** The contribution of the arts to our city is valued at a high level by all Calgarians.

Artistic Exchange

Vision: Calgary's professional artists, arts organizations and presenters trade the highest quality of work on regional, national and international markets.

- **Outcome 1:** The work of acclaimed Calgary-based artists and arts organizations is often found outside the city limits, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- **Outcome 2:** The work of acclaimed artists and arts organizations from abroad is often presented in Calgary.

Creative Communities

Vision: Arts participation is a fact of daily life in all Calgary communities.

- **Outcome 1:** There is an increase in the amount of arts experiences that are embedded in communities across the city in both traditional and alternative arts spaces.
- **Outcome 2:** The work of the arts sector is reflective of Calgary's cultural diversity, its inclusivity and the desire of Calgarians to learn more about one another.
- **Outcome 3:** Calgarians have a high level of awareness of, and familiarity with, arts opportunities available to them in their own communities and in other parts of the city.

Centre City Arts District

Vision: Calgary's Centre City is a hotbed of artistic activity, making it a destination for Calgarians and visitors alike.

- **Outcome 1:** The innovative use of both traditional and non-traditional spaces enables arts experiences to flourish throughout the Centre City.
- **Outcome 2:** Calgarians and tourists visit the Centre City often specifically to experience the arts.

Linkages to imagineCalgary

Partway through the process, it became clear that the aspirations of this strategy tie closely to imagineCalgary, Calgary's Long Range Plan for Sustainability. Some of the concepts from imagineCalgary were used to influence the directions indicated in this report.

Direct Connections

All aspects of life in Calgary provide opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment. We recognize and protect our natural and built environments for their beauty. Our traditions, values and distinctive characteristics are used to enhance physical and human resources. Opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment are accessible to all.

- **Target 86:** By 2036, 95 percent of Calgarians report that they have a range of opportunities for the aesthetic enjoyment of nature, arts and culture.

Creative self-expression is cultivated and nurtured as part of everyone's life. We renew ourselves, using our unique gifts and talents, through creative self-expression. There is a wide range of opportunities for creative expression.

- **Target 87:** By 2016, 90 percent of Calgarians report that they have opportunities to express their unique gifts and talents.
- **Target 88:** By 2021, 90 percent of Calgarians report that Calgary is a city that promotes creative freedom.
- **Target 89:** By 2026, 90 percent of Calgarians report that participation in creative activities is an important part of their lives.

We are continually renewed by participating in activities that refresh our bodies and minds; active lifestyles contribute to our abilities to restore and enhance our senses of personal and community well-being.

- **Target 107:** By 2036, 90 percent of people living in Calgary report that they participate in active lifestyles that include informal and structured recreational opportunities.
- **Target 108:** By 2036, 100 percent of Calgarians report that they can access a range of high-quality recreational experiences, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, age, ability, religion, race, sexual orientation or heritage.

Indirect Connections

We create individual meaning, purpose and connectedness in our lives for our own benefit and that of others. We respect and embrace the ways in which others choose to create meaning, purpose and connectedness.

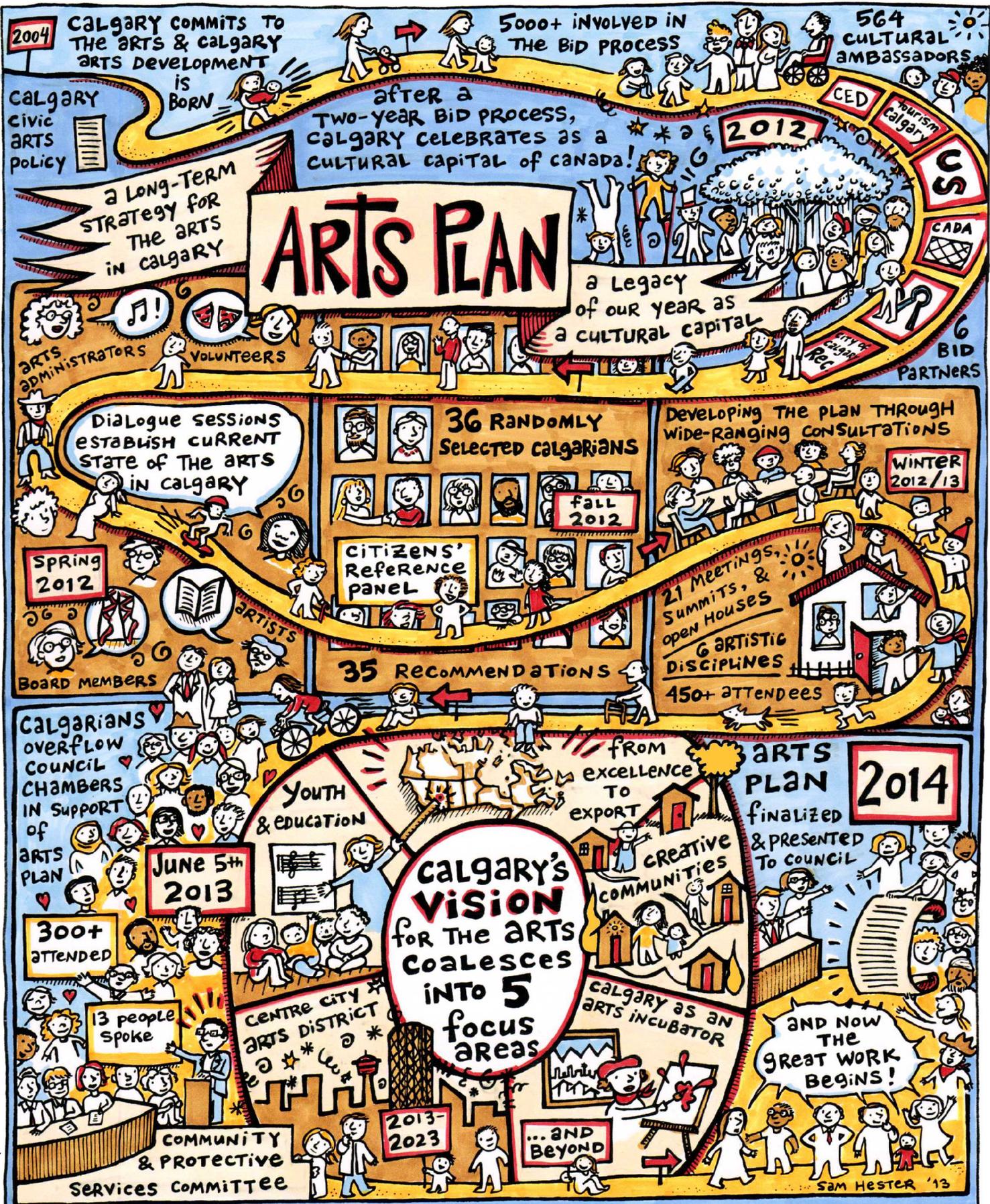
- **Target 101:** By 2036, 90 percent of citizens agree that "Calgary is a city with soul," which is defined as citizens having meaning and purpose in life and experiencing ongoing feelings of connectedness with some form of human, historic or natural system.
- **Target 102:** By 2036, 100 percent of Calgarians report that they feel respected and supported in their pursuits of meaning, purpose and connectedness, and that they extend respect and support to others who meet this need in ways different from their own.

We have a sense of belonging, friendship and identity within the context of our groups and neighbourhoods. We honour and celebrate diversity. We act as collective stewards of our values, traditions, institutions and the natural environment.

- **Target 112:** By 2010, 90 percent of Calgarians agree that there is a strong sense of community in Calgary, and at least 80 percent of Calgarians report high levels of satisfaction, sense of belonging, attachment and civic pride.
- **Target 113:** By 2010, 80 percent of citizens experience a high sense of community in their neighbourhoods and affinity-related communities, as reflected by residents' reports of neighbourhood participation and volunteering, sense of belonging, neighbourliness and reciprocity, sense of efficacy, attachment, safety and voter turnout.
- **Target 114:** By 2010, at least 75 percent of Calgarians report that they volunteer for the benefit of others who are outside their circles of family and friends.

Further Information

More detailed information on the Arts Plan process and *Living a Creative Life: An Arts Development Strategy for Calgary* is available in the Progress Update (May 2013), available at ArtsPlan.ca.



if you're passionate about the arts in this city, there is a place for you in ARTS PLAN. LEARN MORE & GET INVOLVED AT ARTSPAN.CA