

LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE

AN ARTS DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY FOR CALGARY

MARCH 2014





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Creative Communities:

Calgary's communities enjoy access to a rich spectrum of arts experiences.

Overarching Vision

Calgary is a place that empowers every resident to live a creative life, fuelling a vital, prosperous and connected city.

Mission

To align and activate Calgarians in creating a vital, prosperous and connected city through the arts.

Executive Summary

The 2004 Calgary Civic Arts Policy led to the formation of Calgary Arts Development, an organization that promotes and directs investments in the arts to increase the sector's public and artistic impact. The Calgary Civic Arts Policy also directed this arm's length authority to create an arts development strategy for Calgary.

When our city was designated a Cultural Capital of Canada in 2012, the time had come to take action. Winning the Cultural Capital bid involved a renewed commitment to developing a long-term strategy for the arts in Calgary, and Calgary Arts Development began to lead the Arts Plan process that has now become [LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE](#).

Engaging a wide group of stakeholders, the Arts Plan process took place from April 2012 to December 2013 and involved consultations with Calgarians who ranged from interested citizens, community groups, educators, and civic and provincial partners, to arts administrators from organizations of all sizes, and independent artists of all disciplines.

These conversations included over 1,000 voices and occurred at dialogue sessions, summits, open houses and discipline-specific meetings, as well as at four full-day sessions spent with the 36 members of the Citizens' Reference Panel, who were randomly selected from across the city. After many hours of discussion, a shared vision and five major focus areas for the arts in Calgary emerged.

Each of these focus areas is supported by detailed outcomes, drivers and tactics, as well as indicators by which success will be tracked and progress measured.

Focus Areas

Centre City Arts District:

Calgary's Centre City radiates creative energy from the core out, making it a destination for Calgarians and visitors alike.

Arts Incubation:

Calgary strongly attracts artistic talent to live, work and achieve artistic excellence.

Artistic Exchange:

Calgary is regarded as a world-class city because its artists, arts organizations and presenters import and export the highest quality of work on regional, national and international markets.

Youth & Education:

Calgary's youth become highly engaged and innovative citizens as they connect with their communities through the arts.

Tactics, the tangible actions that will support positive change in each focus area, are not listed in this report. Rather, they will be detailed in separate tactical plans for each focus area (available at LivingCreative.ca), serving as a roadmap for those who have agreed to help effect change in that area. Tactical plans are an integral part of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** and will always be included when discussing this strategy.

A strategy of this scope requires broad and unprecedented collaboration, with stakeholders from different sectors committing to the vision and goals of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**. The strategy already has many signatories, i.e., groups or

organizations that have agreed to contribute to **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** and consider the strategy's overall vision and focus areas during their own strategic planning. Signatories will also participate in shared measurement activities so that progress towards the strategy's goals can be tracked.

As the facilitator of the Arts Plan process and a signatory to **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**, Calgary Arts Development has a role to play in some areas, and in others will support the leadership activities of signatories. This strategy outlines shared visions, and so the work—and the results—will likewise be shared with all Calgarians.

Opening Messages

Calgary Arts Development had the great privilege of facilitating the process that led to the creation of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**. As we look ahead to playing our part in realizing the goals outlined in this strategy, we would like to offer the perspectives of two of Calgary Arts Development's leaders on the creation of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** and what we hope the strategy will mean to Calgarians, both today and in years to come.

Message from the Chair

Speaking not as an artist, but a business person, I recognize the profound benefits of arts participation. Living a creative life, for me, is not only about enjoying live theatre or music, but also about success in the business world. Innovation and entrepreneurship are driven by creative thinking—the type of practice that you'll find artists engaged in every day.

Quite apart from business, the arts are integral to a healthy society, and that's the key to **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**: it's a strategy designed to benefit all Calgarians. If we value and support our artists, if we recognize the role the arts play in our daily lives, if we cultivate the creative practices we all undertake or experience, then our lives, and our children's lives, will be richer for it.

The arts are manifold: yes, they are the professional productions and exhibits you'll see on stages and in galleries in the city's core, but they are also experiences you'll find throughout the city and probably in your daily life. They are the novels you love to read; they are your favourite musical group; they are your children's dance or art classes; they are films and animation; they are the architecture and public art that vitalize our civic spaces.

Moreover, art has been part of the fabric of Calgary throughout its lifetime. We would not be at a point today of rallying a city in support of its arts community if visionary Calgarians had not laid the foundation in preceding decades and centuries. Many of our institutions and festivals have been enlivening our city for generations, and at the same time we have an optimistic energy in our arts community that dares to create new artwork, and new artistic opportunities, every year.

Many of us have long understood the strength of Calgary's arts community. A movement has been building for years. The founding of The Grand Theatre, the Calgary Stampede, The City of Calgary's Recreation Department, Pumphouse Theatre and the Calgary Public Library date to over 100 years ago, and more recent landmarks include the opening of the EPCOR CENTRE for the Performing Arts in 1985, the 1988 Winter Olympic Games, and our year as a Cultural Capital of Canada in 2012. Countless arts experiences have played out in this city, enriching the lives of millions of people who have made it their home.

LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE has given us the opportunity to declare a shared commitment to the arts and articulate where we would like to go as a city—and how we're going to get there.

The key word that you'll find throughout the document actually isn't 'arts'—it's 'our.'

Join the movement. Let's build a city where all of us can celebrate the arts, where our artists can thrive, and where we all have the opportunity to live creative lives.

Dean Prodan

CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
CALGARY ARTS DEVELOPMENT

Message from the President & CEO

When Calgary was designated a Cultural Capital of Canada in 2012, the distinction confirmed for many Calgarians what I have known for quite some time: that our city is full of bright, innovative minds, and that it's a breeding ground for remarkable discoveries and experiences. Ours is a city where the possibilities are limitless, where visionaries think big and make their ideas a reality.

For example, who would build a 700-seat opera house in 1893 for a city that had a population of less than 4,000? A Calgarian, that's who (William Roper Hull). Who is behind Theatresports, a now worldwide form of improvisational theatre? A Calgarian (Keith Johnstone, who developed the form at Loose Moose Theatre Company in 1977). Who believes that they can build a respected national airline from scratch? You guessed it—a Calgarian (Clive Beddoe). And what is it that convinces Calgary bartender Walter Chell that it's a good idea to combine clam juice, tomato juice, vodka and spices to make a Caesar cocktail?

Where else but in Calgary could these things have been possible? And moreover, *why* in Calgary? What is it in our civic DNA that creates the conditions where creativity and innovation can flourish, and more importantly, how do we continue to foster those conditions?

There are many factors that go into building a great city, and **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** specifically explores how the arts contribute to creating a vital, prosperous and connected Calgary.

Supporting our professional artists and arts organizations is an integral part of this strategy. After all, they are the creators of work that is an essential part of Calgary's character, that inspires our citizens and tells our stories beyond our city limits. However, **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** is about more than the arts sector itself.

When we asked Calgarians how we could strengthen Calgary through the arts, we heard that by empowering all Calgarians to live creative lives, the arts can be an avenue through which each and every one of us will benefit.

I firmly believe that the arts matter—and that our city matters. Calgary already has a strong track record of innovators, and the arts are a path for maintaining our free-thinking spirit and helping it grow. **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** encourages all Calgarians to foster the creativity inherent in their lives, however it may manifest: playing in a garage band, innovating a new startup, or maybe even creating the next crazy cocktail.

Patti Pon

PRESIDENT & CEO,
CALGARY ARTS DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

This is a strategy for Calgary, by Calgarians.

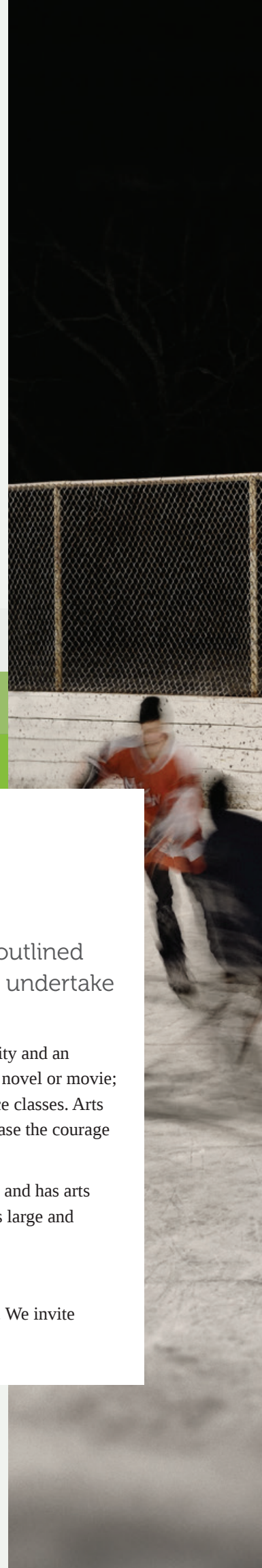
Over 1,000 voices have contributed to the arts development strategy outlined in this document, and we hope that thousands more will join them to undertake the work and realize the outcomes in the years to come.

This strategy will touch the lives of all Calgarians, just as the arts are an integral part of our city's identity and an essential part of our daily lives. We all have some contact with the arts: maybe it's your favourite band, novel or movie; or a mural you pass on your commute; or maybe it's watching your child perform in a play or take dance classes. Arts experiences enliven our communities, cultivate creative skills in our children and ourselves, and showcase the courage and talent of some of Canada's finest artists.

Whether you work in Calgary's arts sector or simply desire to live in a city that radiates creative energy and has arts opportunities for all, we hope that you can see yourself reflected somewhere in this strategy. Its scope is large and seeks to include the work of professional artists along with the everyday experiences of citizens.

This is Calgary's strategy. It was created for Calgarians, and will be enacted by Calgarians.

This is *your* strategy, reflecting the type of city that hundreds of your fellow citizens spoke in favour of. We invite you to be part of the movement, and encourage all of you to live a creative life.



Creative Communities:

Calgary's communities enjoy access to a rich spectrum of arts experiences.

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"Being a part of the Citizens' Reference Panel really opened my eyes as to why Calgary was named a Cultural Capital of Canada. **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** is going to provide a map to make Calgary an internationally renowned place to live."

Chris Pryce

CITIZENS' REFERENCE PANEL MEMBER

"Strong support of artistic practice in Canada's cities and communities directly contributes to the health of our arts sector nationally. **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** sets the scene for Calgary's extraordinary artists to work alongside their fellow citizens to make their city, and our country, a vital and creative place to live."

Kelly Wilhelm

HEAD, POLICY, PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP SECTION,
CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

"It is always energizing to look to the future and dream about what we might become. I think this is a perfect time to thank the many artists and community supporters whose hard work and persistence has given us such an amazing platform to leap from. This plan didn't take a few months to build, it has taken decades!"

Dr. Terry Rock

FOUNDING PRESIDENT & CEO,
CALGARY ARTS DEVELOPMENT

"The **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** document represents one of the most comprehensive, consultative processes ever undertaken to define the collective vision of Calgarians for arts development in our amazing city. Given the depth and breadth of input from Calgarians across all segments of our city, it will be impossible to ignore the strategies and priorities that have been identified. This document provides us an opportunity to dramatically raise the bar on the quality of our life experience in Calgary! Great art; great city!"

Chip Burgess

CHAIR, THE CITY OF CALGARY PUBLIC ART BOARD

"Just as artists draw inspiration from their hearts and souls, so too did the 36 randomly selected civic-minded volunteers comprising the Citizens' Reference Panel for the arts. It was a privilege to participate and help shape the future of Calgary's arts community. Through this collaborative process and visionary leadership I have faith that our city will continue to build a cultural arts legacy from generation to generation."

Lauren Bell

CITIZENS' REFERENCE PANEL MEMBER

Arts Incubation:

Calgary strongly attracts
artistic talent to live,
work and achieve artistic
excellence.

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Context

The Arts Plan process was one result of our year as a Cultural Capital of Canada in 2012, but the momentum for a formal arts development strategy started several years earlier.

The 2004 Calgary Civic Arts Policy led to the creation of Calgary Arts Development, an arm's length arts development authority for The City of Calgary that promotes and directs investments in the arts to increase the sector's public and artistic impact. Calgary Arts Development was also directed, via the Calgary Civic Arts Policy, to create an arts development strategy for Calgary.

In 2007, Calgary Arts Development identified a gap in access to affordable arts space in Calgary, which was a catalyst for creating the 2007 *Art Spaces Strategy and Capital Plan*. This document helped shape new investments in the arts sector and has also informed **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**.

By 2010, the prospect of becoming a designated Cultural Capital of Canada galvanized Calgarians.

Over 5,000 people participated in an unprecedented bid process that saw six civic partners join forces (Calgary Arts Development, Calgary Economic Development, the Calgary Public Library, the Calgary Stampede, The City of Calgary - Recreation, and Tourism Calgary). That bid was successful, and Calgary was designated one of Canada's Cultural Capitals in 2012.

Calgary 2012, which oversaw Cultural Capital activities and investments, engaged Calgarians from diverse communities in Calgary's arts, culture and heritage sectors. Attracting thousands of participants to events like the One Love Concert and Sweet City Lip Dub, Calgary 2012 also supported many creative projects through its Grassroots Inspired Grants (GIGYYC). Legacies from our year as a Cultural Capital include crowdfunding platform InvestYYC.com and the Cultural Leaders Legacy Artist Awards, but perhaps most importantly, a widespread pride in Calgary's arts scene.

In June 2013, Calgary was hit by a hundred-year flood that devastated several neighbourhoods and irrevocably changed the lives of many Calgarians. Many artists and arts organizations were affected by the floodwaters. Yet, in the midst of the disaster, our city witnessed an outpouring of generosity from Calgarians who helped their neighbours get back on their feet. Our artists were also on the front lines, donating their talents as musicians, visual artists and more towards flood fundraisers—sometimes when they, themselves, were still struggling to recover.

More than 35 organizations and agencies across Alberta banded together in the aftermath of the flood to form Alberta Arts Rebuild, which both measured the flood's impact on Alberta's arts community as well as raised funds for arts-specific rebuilding efforts. While funding was disbursed to successful applicants in 2013 and 2014, the needs of those affected far outstrip the available resources, and the repercussions of the disaster will be felt for many years. While **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** is presented with optimism and a faith in Calgary's hell-or-high-water spirit, we must also acknowledge that there are enduring challenges ahead, not only for the arts community, but also for the public and private sectors that support it.

All the same, Calgary enjoys a rich artistic heritage. The arts are everywhere and they touch everyone: from popular music to theatre to dance; from neighbourhood galleries and festivals to children's programming. Calgarians are involved in the arts in countless ways, big and small. Now is the right time to build on this legacy and to imagine how the arts can continue to play a vital role in building our city.



Connections to Other Strategies

LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE is a development strategy that seeks to enrich Calgary specifically through the arts, and many of its goals dovetail with plans designed to improve our city from other perspectives. Signatories to **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** also commit to considering the strategy when undertaking their own strategic planning.

A few specific parallels are listed below.

imagineCALGARY (September 2007)

The aspirations of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** tie closely to *imagineCALGARY: Calgary's Long Range Plan for Sustainability*.

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.

The City of Calgary’s Centre City Plan (May 2007)

The arts are embedded throughout the *Centre City Plan*, which particularly refers to public art as a way of enlivening our streets and identifies areas of the Centre City as potential ‘entertainment districts.’ In Section 8.0: Vitality, the plan devotes specific subsections to Tourism (8.2), Entertainment (8.3), Arts and Culture (8.4) and Public Art (8.6).

A few specific connections to **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** are listed below.

8.4 Arts and Culture

Policies

1. The Centre City contains many of Calgary’s major cultural institutions and festivals. The City, in collaboration with Calgary Arts Development, will actively support these institutions and festivals to ensure their long-term sustainability and growth within the Centre City.
2. The Centre City should become a place where new and alternative cultural groups and venues are developed and supported. The City, in collaboration with Calgary Arts Development, will be an active partner and enabler to nurture the growth of culture in the following ways:
 - Administrative and financial support;
 - Support the establishment of an organization to champion the brokering of partnerships and arrangements to connect cultural groups with facilities and spaces;
 - Flexible and supportive land use and design policies and regulations; and
 - The use of City-owned lands and buildings, including heritage buildings.

Actions

- Prepare a Centre City Arts and Culture Master Plan to include both facility and programming strategies.
- When reviewing the Downtown density bonus system, specifically include the provision of cultural facilities as a key objective.

8.6 Public Art*Policies*

The Public Art Strategy within the Centre City Plan involves:

1. Capitalizing on the opportunities afforded within the Centre City for strategic and thoughtful public art projects and initiatives that celebrate the area's unique characteristics, mixed-use neighbourhoods, history, and urban and natural environment;
2. Creating a culture of excellence in regards to public art by encouraging collaboration and cooperation between The City and the private sector;
3. Adhering to the principles and processes outlined in the Public Art Policy, and developed by the Public Art Program, in the implementation of diverse public art projects and initiatives throughout the Centre City;
4. Developing and enforcing criteria, standards and a review process for all privately owned art to be sited on publicly accessible locations as a result of a bonus requirement;
5. Continuing to research and refine the priority areas identified on Concept 29: Public Art Strategy; and
6. Implementing the Centre City portions of the Utilities and Environmental Protection Art Masterplan.

Actions

- Develop a Centre City Public Art Plan, in collaboration with the Public Art Program that provides a long range, visionary approach to public art in the Centre City and contributes to a culture of excellence for all public improvement projects in the area.
- Develop a strategy to position the Public Art Program as an essential resource for private developers looking to create privately-owned public art on publicly accessible/visible land.
- Research and implement mechanisms to support private/public collaboration, cooperation and shared commitment.
- Ensure successful implementation of the Public Art Actions by allocating additional resources. There is not, at present, the capacity to undertake the planning, implementation, administration and management necessary to support such large scale cross-departmental and cross-sector initiatives.

Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans (April 2010)

Alberta Education's *Inspiring Education* report has a vision that reflects Albertans' desire for our education system to cultivate qualities in students that will help them be engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit. The report identifies three shifts needed to achieve this vision:

- partnering effectively with the community, including not-for-profit organizations and cultural groups;
- supporting children's personal interests and strengths, including activities that encourage play, creativity and imagination; and
- developing skills for lifelong learning, including a focus on "a curriculum that allows for more interdisciplinary learning, combining the arts and other academic streams."

Starting a Conversation for a Blueprint for the Future of Fine and Performing Art Education (June 2013)

The Calgary Board of Education's 2013 report on arts education has connections with **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** in its education-specific goals as well as its commitment to aligning more effectively with freelance arts educators, artists and arts organizations.

In Section B: Context, the report states, "Not only are the arts of great value in themselves, there is now wide-spread support for strengthening art education to develop well-rounded, creative, innovative and compassionate citizens who can problem-solve, collaborate, network and contribute to society, both socially and economically."

Section C: Emerging Themes in Art Education describes the role the arts play in education for eight areas that align with the goals of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**:

1. Curriculum Development/Pedagogy
2. Staffing
3. Professional Learning
4. Accessing Artists
5. Fine Arts Integration
6. Collaboration/Community
7. Facilities/Space
8. Resources

Other Strategies

As **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** progresses, it will continue to find ways of joining its efforts with other relevant planning initiatives, such as:

- Calgary Economic Development's *10-Year Strategy*
- Tourism Calgary's strategic plan

Centre City Arts District:

Calgary's Centre City radiates creative energy from the core out, making it a destination for Calgarians and visitors alike.

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Process Overview

LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE is an arts development strategy for Calgary, built by Calgarians. Over 1,000 voices helped create this strategy over a rigorous, nearly two-year consultation process. Interested citizens from many backgrounds, community groups, educators, civic and provincial partners, arts administrators from organizations of all sizes, and independent artists of all disciplines contributed to the vision and goals outlined in the Strategy Framework & Focus Areas section.

Calgarians will continue to enact the strategy and move us all closer to its overarching vision. **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** is building on the momentum of decades of artistic strength in our city, and outlines a path for Calgarians to collectively create an even more vital future for our city.

Consultation (April 2012 - December 2013)

The Arts Plan consultation process took place over several stages.

Spring 2012: Dialogue Series

This phase included an analysis of data already gathered by Calgary Arts Development through granting programs and previous surveys; an update of 2007 research into venues and other supporting infrastructure (as part of an Art Space Research Consortium); and a dialogue series with artists, arts administrators and board members to get a firsthand perspective on the experience of working in the arts in Calgary.

Fall 2012: Citizens' Reference Panel

This phase was launched to widen the conversation and engage a representative cohort of Calgarians in a discussion about the significance of the arts to Calgary's future.

Overseen by citizen engagement experts MASS LBP and with support from Calgary 2012, Calgary Arts Development established Calgary's first Citizens' Reference Panel. The Panel comprised 36 Calgary residents who volunteered from among the 5,000 Calgary households randomly selected to receive an invitation to participate on the Panel. The Panel was evenly split between genders and was broadly representative of Calgary's age demographic and four geographic quadrants.

The Panel met over four Saturdays in September and October 2012 to learn about Calgary's arts sector and work together to determine the priorities and vision that would guide the creation of a long-term arts development strategy for Calgary. The 36 panelists heard from a wide range of experts, policymakers and artists. They worked in small, facilitated group sessions to learn about the arts sector in Calgary and how it contributes to the city's quality of life. Ultimately, the Panel produced and ratified a set of recommendations as well as a vision for future arts development and investment. Their recommendations have been integrated into the strategy outlined in the Strategy Framework & Focus Areas section.

For a full description of the Citizens' Reference Panel process, as well as their recommendations, please see *The Citizens' Reference Panel Report on Calgary's Arts Plan*, available at LivingCreative.ca.

From *The Citizens' Reference Panel Report on Calgary's Arts Plan*:

Who we are and why we volunteered

We are 36 randomly selected Calgarians, chosen to represent each of the city's quadrants and, ultimately, the city as a whole. We are people from all walks of life with varying degrees of involvement and interest in the arts. We are business people, nurses, arts patrons, students, professional artists, engineers, teachers, civil servants and parents.

We volunteered because we are engaged citizens—not because we're experts, but because we care about our city and our communities. We came together in the knowledge that the arts make Calgary a better place and we hope our report will be a catalyst for improving the state of the arts in Calgary.

During four Saturdays, we learned, listened, discussed and debated the role and value of the arts in our city. It wasn't always easy. Occasionally, we struggled to resolve our competing points of view. At such moments we were guided by our task, which was to represent all Calgarians, and we set aside our individual views in search of a broad consensus.

What we learned

Throughout the Panel process, we saw evidence of Calgary's rich and diverse arts community. We also considered a range of factors that helped us to better understand the complexity of the arts and its significance to civic life. We considered the economic and social value of the arts and we reviewed potential barriers to creativity and arts production. We heard the struggles of emerging and established artists alike and we explored the powerful contribution that the arts can make to the innovation, creativity and success of Calgary.

Our recommendations for the Arts Plan [now **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**] are intended to guide CADA [Calgary Arts Development] and its partners as they strengthen the role of the arts in the lives and livelihood of Calgarians.

Winter & Spring 2012/2013: Summits and Open Houses

From December 2012 until May 2013, interested Calgarians convened in a variety of settings to establish a shared vision for the arts and their goals for a thriving arts ecosystem in Calgary. This phase of the process included three summits (one held in partnership with the Calgary Board of Education specifically on the topic of youth and education), six discipline-specific meetings, and a variety of open houses and community meetings held throughout the city.

Other elements that informed the development of the strategy at this stage in the process included six external critiques of the process: three each from Toronto-based dancer and Metcalf Arts Policy Fellow Shannon Litzenberger, and from arts policy expert Ian David Moss, Research Director at Fractured Atlas. A series of 21 visionary articles from a variety of Calgarians also offered multiple perspectives on how Calgary can reach its full potential. The critiques and visionary articles can be viewed at LivingCreative.ca.

June 5, 2013: Update on **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**

On June 5, 2013, Calgary Arts Development presented an update on **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** to the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services of The City of Calgary. This update was the first presentation of the five major focus areas that are found in the final strategy (now titled Creative Communities, Centre City Arts District, Arts Incubation, Artistic Exchange, and Youth & Education). Over 300 supporters of Calgary's arts community attended in person, overflowing Council Chambers.

Finalizing the Strategy

In the fall of 2013, stakeholder groups convened twice around each focus area to give further feedback on the structure of the strategy, including its visions, outcomes, drivers and tactics.

Engaging Stakeholders

Once the strategy framework was solidified in January 2014, Calgary Arts Development sought formal support for the strategy from the many individuals and organizations who took part in building **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**. There are two levels of support:

- Endorsers are individuals or organizations that endorse the overall vision and focus areas of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** and believe that the arts contribute to a Calgary they want to live in. Endorsers make no formal commitment to the strategy other than personally striving to live a creative life and encouraging other Calgarians to do the same.
- Signatories are groups or organizations that will contribute to one or more tactics outlined in **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** and agree to consider the strategy's overall framework during their own strategic planning. Signatories will also participate in shared measurement activities so that progress towards the strategy's goals can be tracked. Signatories will sign a document that outlines these commitments. (Note: signatories are also considered to be **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** endorsers.)

Those who believe in the vision presented in **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** are encouraged to become endorsers at LivingCreative.ca. Signatories are also welcome to contact Calgary Arts Development to pledge a greater level of support.

Tactical Plans

This strategy presents a framework of outcomes, drivers and success indicators for each focus area. Specific tactics and progress measurements will be detailed in separate tactical plans, which will be a primary tool for accomplishing the goals of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**. Signatories who are aligning their activities to the strategy will dictate which goals will be undertaken first.

Tactical plans will include:

- tactics that contribute to achieving the goals of each focus area
- a list of signatories who have committed to aligning with some or all of the strategy's focus areas
- a summary of the work currently being undertaken in support of each focus area and the activities of relevant signatories
- success indicators for each focus area
- measurements of progress in each focus area, as data is collected by Calgary Arts Development in collaboration with **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** signatories

Calgary Arts Development will be responsible for updating these plans and reporting back on **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** progress annually, as well as continuing to engage signatories with the strategy and its focus areas.

Youth & Education:

Calgary's youth become highly engaged and innovative citizens as they connect with their communities through the arts.

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"Calgary's arts and culture scene is maturing. Arts and culture is becoming a vital part of Calgary's identity."

THE CALGARY FOUNDATION'S 2013 *Vital Signs*
SURVEY RESPONDENT

"It's important for Calgary to have a unifying strategy surrounding support for the arts and how we will share our cultural community's accomplishments. Artists and performers act as Calgary ambassadors and create remarkable experiences that help define the character of our city, and give Tourism Calgary the stories we need to surprise and inspire travellers to visit Calgary."

Cindy Ady

INTERIM CEO, TOURISM CALGARY

"We want to create the conditions that bring the entire community to value and participate in arts education for our youth. Not only are the arts of great value in themselves, there is now widespread support for strengthening art education to develop well-rounded, creative, innovative and compassionate citizens who can problem-solve, collaborate, network and contribute to society, both socially and economically. There is a sense of urgency across many spheres, including and perhaps especially the business community, for education reform that embeds the arts, creativity, innovation and design as key components."

Cathy Faber

SUPERINTENDENT OF LEARNING INNOVATION AND CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,
CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION

"Developing the arts is a critical piece to the overall economic development strategy for our city. In addition to providing employment, the arts are a catalyst for stimulating creativity, providing learning and defining the soul of our city. An arts development strategy will help us further collaborate and align our resources, allowing us to advance the arts and, ultimately, make Calgary one of the greatest places to live and visit."

Luke Azevedo

COMMISSIONER, FILM, TELEVISION & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES,
CALGARY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

"Arts and culture play a vital role in improving neighbourhood life in Calgary. Participation in the arts helps local residents by building social cohesion and establishing local identity and image. A vibrant arts strategy is important to communities and our member community associations. We are proud to have partnered on **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**."

Leslie Evans

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
FEDERATION OF CALGARY COMMUNITIES



Strategy Framework & Focus Areas

Overarching Vision: Calgary is a place that empowers every resident to live a creative life, fuelling a vital, prosperous and connected city.

Mission: To align and activate Calgarians in creating a vital, prosperous and connected city through the arts.

After close to two years of consultation, Calgarians' vision for the arts coalesced into five major focus areas: Creative Communities, Centre City Arts District, Arts Incubation, Artistic Exchange, and Youth & Education.

Each focus area is broken down into a framework made up of the following elements:

Focus area: Each of five major goals that will contribute to **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**'s overarching vision. Each focus area is broken down into a vision, outcomes, drivers and tactics.

Vision: The aspirational description of what Calgarians would like their city to look like, as it pertains to the focus area.

Outcome: The state or condition that does not currently exist but must exist in order to achieve the vision.

Driver: A movement coordinated by various stakeholders to help achieve the outcome.

Tactic: A single program, task or initiative that contributes to the driver.

This document outlines the visions, outcomes and drivers of each of the five focus areas. Tactics for each driver are detailed in separate tactical plans, which will be updated annually and made available at LivingCreative.ca. These plans will summarize the work currently being undertaken in support of the focus area, the activities of relevant signatories, as well as report on results as time progresses.

This report also includes the success indicators that will provide evidence of progress for each outcome and focus area. The success indicators are systems-level measurements that will be evaluated on an annual basis to assess whether the strategy is achieving its goals and having impact in our city. Each success indicator is attached to a number of specific measurements (e.g., the number of Calgary youth attending arts events each year) that will be detailed and reported on in each focus area's tactical plan.

For more information about tactical plans, see the Process Overview section.

FOCUS AREA:

Creative Communities

Vision: Calgary's communities enjoy access to a rich spectrum of arts experiences.

One of Calgary 2012's great successes during our year as a Cultural Capital of Canada was reaching into diverse neighbourhoods and communities to foster arts participation. These efforts clearly resonated with Calgarians, as the idea of embedding arts experiences throughout the city geographically as well as engaging and embracing our varied communities found strong traction during the process of creating **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**.

Making the arts accessible to Calgary's many communities has several dimensions; with many arts organizations concentrated in the city's core, distributing arts experiences geographically throughout the city will make the arts accessible to all residents. Additionally, reaching diverse communities is important in creating equitable arts experiences for all.

Outcome one: A wide variety of arts experiences are embedded in neighbourhoods across the city.

DRIVERS:

- Encourage the private, public, community and arts sectors to incorporate the arts into the daily lives of Calgarians in both purpose-built and alternative arts spaces
- Increase awareness within the arts community of opportunities to create and present work in neighbourhoods throughout Calgary, in both purpose-built and alternative arts spaces

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Quantity and usage of arts spaces across the city
- Quantity and diversity of arts events across the city
- Calgarians' engagement in the arts

Outcome two: Calgarians' arts participation and the arts sector itself are reflective of Calgary's diversity, its inclusivity and the desire of Calgarians to learn more about one another.

DRIVERS:

- Encourage cross-cultural collaboration during the artistic process to create more diverse arts programming that will attract audiences from across the city
- Increase support for Calgary-based artists who are new to Canada
- Diversify the range of cultural, social, geographic and economic voices within the arts community

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Artists and arts participants represent diverse populations
- Quantity and variety of culturally diverse arts events across the city

DEFINITIONS

COMMUNITIES:

In this context, this term can apply to both geographic neighbourhoods as well as cultural groups.

DIVERSE:

Representing a variety of cultural, social, geographic and economic perspectives.

FOCUS AREA:

Centre City Arts District

Vision: Calgary's Centre City radiates creative energy from the core out, making it a destination for Calgarians and visitors alike.

Calgarians have told us that they want their city to have a central, iconic arts hub. This part of the city will be a locus for festivals and spectacles, showcasing the highest-quality art from Calgary and around the world. Additionally, citizens want our central public spaces to be inspiring and infused with public art and safe, street-level experiences.

The borders of the Centre City arts district are defined in alignment with The City of Calgary's *Centre City Plan*: the Bow River to the north, the Elbow River to the east, 17th Ave. and the southern tip of the Stampede grounds to the south, and 14th St. to the west. Creating a central arts district will be mainly about

building on the existing strengths of this area, such as the EPCOR CENTRE for the Performing Arts, the Glenbow Museum, and many other arts organizations that present in and operate out of the Centre City.

There are also several prospective developments that will lend fresh energy to a Centre City arts district. The revitalization of the East Village will be supported by major institutions, such as the new site for the National Music Centre as well as a new Central Library in coming years. There is also a massive Stampede expansion underway that will feature an extensive arts campus. Finally, both existing and future iconic architecture and public art permanently enrich Calgary's downtown core.

Fostering a wide variety of arts experiences in the Centre City and improving access to those experiences will make our downtown an arts destination for both Calgarians and visitors to our city, and will benefit our own city by spreading its vibrancy to the rest of Calgary. **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** is committed to aligning its Centre City Arts District priorities with The City of Calgary's *Centre City Plan*.

Outcome one: A wide variety of arts experiences are embedded in the Centre City, creating a dynamic, central arts hub for the city.

DRIVERS:

- Prioritize the creation and upkeep of purpose-built arts spaces within the Centre City
- Ease the process of creating arts experiences in alternative Centre City spaces
- Include an artistic element in key aspects of Centre City planning

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Quantity and usage of Centre City arts spaces
- Quantity and diversity of arts events in the Centre City

Outcome two: Calgarians and tourists often visit the Centre City specifically to experience the arts.

DRIVERS:

- Provide resources to create remarkable arts experiences in the Centre City
- Create incentives to travel within and to the Centre City from other parts of Calgary

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Attendance at Centre City arts events
- Number of people travelling to or within the Centre City outside of business hours

DEFINITIONS

CENTRE CITY:

Living a Creative Life defines Calgary's Centre City in alignment with The City of Calgary's *Centre City Plan*: its borders are the Bow River to the north, the Elbow River to the east, 17th Ave. and the southern tip of the Stampede grounds to the south, and 14th St. to the west.

FOCUS AREA:

Arts Incubation

Vision: Calgary strongly attracts artistic talent to live, work and achieve artistic excellence.

To have a thriving arts community, Calgary needs artists. While this may seem straightforward, there are many factors involved in creating a city that not only sustains both the practices and overall wellbeing of its artists, but also attracts new creators to live and work within it.

Emerging, mid-career and established artists all require an array of resources to make artistic creation possible. Space and funding are perennial issues for artists: in Calgary there is a shortage of creation, exhibition, rehearsal and performance space, and the grants currently available at all three levels of government do not meet the needs of Calgary's artist population. Recent arts graduates and other artists who are building a new practice benefit greatly from emerging artist programs, internships, mentorships and artist residencies. This focus area seeks to leverage the resources already available to the arts community, and develop new models for allowing artists access to the resources essential to their livelihoods.

On average, Calgary artists earn less than a living wage, which can impact their health, living conditions, and overall safety and wellbeing. **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** aspires for Calgary to be a place that values the contributions its artists make to the vitality of our city and its citizens, resulting in a better quality of life for our professional artists.

Outcome one: Calgary artists and arts organizations have access to an ample range of resources required to support artistic creation.

DRIVERS:

- Develop sustainable funding models and other initiatives to address the evolving needs of Calgary's arts sector
- Provide ample opportunities for emerging artists to transition from school to their professional arts careers
- Increase opportunities for artists and arts organizations to network, learn and share their knowledge and resources.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Financial health of arts sector
- Labour capacity of arts sector
- Access to an inventory of arts spaces
- Quantity and diversity of professional opportunities for artists

Outcome two: A strong arts sector is highly valued by Calgarians and is part of what defines us as a city.

DRIVERS:

- Raise Calgarians' artistic discourse to a higher level
- Encourage Calgary's private and public sectors to incorporate the arts into their operations and business practices in a way that is meaningful for them and impactful to their stakeholders
- Increase Calgarians' familiarity with arts opportunities available to them across the city

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- The Calgary Foundation's *Vital Signs Arts & Culture* grade
- Calgarians' familiarity with and awareness of local arts activities
- Increased media coverage of the arts in Calgary

Outcome three: Calgary's arts professionals are able to dedicate themselves to their careers while maintaining a healthy and fulfilling quality of life.

DRIVERS:

- Increase the affordable housing options available to Calgary arts professionals
- Increase the resources available to arts professionals to help them manage their personal health, wellness, safety and finances

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Housing security of arts professionals
- Financial security of arts professionals
- Access to health care for arts professionals

DEFINITIONS

ARTS PROFESSIONAL:

Someone who makes their living through the arts sector, such as a professional artist, arts administrator or arts educator.

EMERGING ARTIST:

An artist within the first five years of a professional career.

FOCUS AREA:

Artistic Exchange

Vision: Calgary is regarded as a world-class city because its artists, arts organizations and presenters import and export the highest quality of work on regional, national and international markets.

Calgary's arts community deserves to be considered in an international context. Both our artists and our citizens must have the chance to experience the best of all artistic disciplines from around the world, without having to travel beyond city limits. Calgary is already home to many festivals and organizations that present acclaimed art and artists from around the globe, and in supporting this type of activity we can ensure that Calgarians are able to see the best the world has to offer in their very own city.

Conversely, Calgary artists have already proven that they can produce world-class art, earning accolades across the country and beyond. **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** imagines a city that is able to help its artists transition from creating local artistic offerings to being viable on the regional, national, and international market.

Outcome one: Calgarians benefit from experiencing world-class art presented locally.

DRIVERS:

- Support and strengthen arts events and organizations that present national and international artists, performers and productions as part of their mandates
- Ease the process of importing artistic work from outside the city

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Quantity of artistic work from outside Calgary presented locally
- Calgarians' perception of Calgary as a world-class city
- Local media coverage of national and international art presented in Calgary

Outcome two: Made-in-Calgary artistic work has a high profile outside the city and is often found on tour in other regions, provinces and countries.

DRIVERS:

- Raise the profile of our outstanding artists and arts organizations
- Ensure that artists are included in trade missions at the municipal and provincial levels
- Ease the touring process for Calgary artists and arts organizations

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Quantity of Calgary-based artistic work exported beyond the city
- Non-Calgarians' perception of Calgary as a world-class city
- National and international media coverage of Calgary-produced artistic work

DEFINITIONS

EXPORT-READY:

Possessing attributes that make a product attractive to an international market.

WORLD-CLASS:

Ranking among the foremost in the world; of an international standard of excellence.

FOCUS AREA:

Youth & Education

Vision: Calgary's youth become highly engaged and innovative citizens as they connect with their communities through the arts.

Calgary's young people are the next generation of artists and arts patrons, and many educators and policymakers are identifying the arts as a means to develop critical thinking and creative competencies that will help youth succeed. Authentic arts experiences through direct contact with professional artists are key, whether in the context of artists guiding youth in creating art themselves or presenting high-quality art.

Ensuring that all of Calgary's youth have access to high-quality arts experiences involves a wide spectrum of stakeholders: educators, school administrators, parents, freelance arts educators, artists, arts administrators, community groups and, of course, the youth themselves. Achieving the vision of this focus area will involve providing sufficient resources to facilitate arts experiences for youth, but also ensuring that Calgarians recognize the value of the arts for our young people. Alberta has made great strides in prioritizing arts education, valuing arts and sciences equally in their 2010 *Inspiring Education* report.

This strategic framework seeks to include all school systems, such as the Calgary Board of Education, the Calgary Catholic School District, charter schools, private schools and home schools. Post-secondary institutions that offer arts programs (the University of Calgary, Mount Royal University and the Alberta College of Art + Design) also have a role to play in fostering the next generation of artists, which links up to outcomes in the Arts Incubation focus area. However, the goals of the Youth & Education focus area are not limited to the school system. Other exciting drivers for increasing arts experiences exist within community programs and opportunities outside of schools.

Outcome one: Calgarians recognize the value of the arts in developing creative thinking, and seek out authentic arts experiences for youth.

DRIVERS:

- Increase awareness of the programs and events offered for youth by freelance arts educators, artists and arts organizations
- Emphasize the value of the arts through their inclusion in a wide variety of youth programs

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Youth arts participation
- Perception of the value of arts experiences for youth
- Correlations between arts participation and academic achievement among youth
- Correlations between arts participation and community involvement among youth

Outcome two: A strong base of resources facilitates authentic arts experiences for youth.

DRIVERS:

- Sustain a healthy baseline of funding dedicated to arts programs in schools and communities
- Optimize the use of resources already present in school and community settings to increase access to authentic arts experiences

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

- Quantity of arts experiences available to youth
- Equitable access to arts experiences for youth

DEFINITIONS

AUTHENTIC ARTS EXPERIENCE:

An opportunity for youth to engage with professional artists and their work, both inside and outside of the school environment.

CREATIVE COMPETENCIES:

An interrelated set of creative and innovative attitudes, skills and knowledge applied to a particular context for successful learning and living.

EDUCATION:

Learning both inside and outside of the school environment for those aged 18 or younger.

YOUTH:

Person aged 0-18 years.

Artistic Exchange:

Calgary is regarded as a world-class city because its artists, arts organizations and presenters import and export the highest quality of work on regional, national and international markets.

MORE ON PAGE 28



"The arts make a significant contribution to the vibrancy of our downtown. Whether it is beautifying the financial heart of the city with public art, or making the downtown a destination on evenings and weekends to experience the performing arts, the heart of the Calgary wouldn't beat as strongly without the contributions of our creative class."

Maggie Schofield

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
DOWNTOWN CALGARY

"Art should be celebrated throughout the city. We need to strengthen our willingness and ingenuity to engage new populations in the arts—new Calgarians, young Calgarians, vulnerable Calgarians and senior Calgarians."

Cory Mack

COMEDIAN AND WRITER

"Newcomers bring with them experiences, knowledge, and perspectives that not only enhance communities, but also strengthen the foundation of our city. Art creates bridges for these experiences to be voiced into a collective awareness. Calgary needs to ensure that all of our artists have the space to express the richness of their culture as defined by their own experiences."

Myriam DeRosa & Amanda Koyama

CALGARY CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION SOCIETY

"Let us stop speaking of us and them, of producers and consumers, of being misunderstood and underappreciated. Let us foster taking joy in each others' creativity, amateur or professional, young and old. Let us find a mature language where we can criticize constructively and hear constructive criticism. Let us pay attention to what is being explored in other disciplines than our own and to the fostering of the next generations. Let us create an environment where our boards are deeply passionate about the artists and the artists feel valued by the organization. Let us create the expectation that all have a sense of mission that includes building our own practices and organizations AND a genuine, humble desire to be part of and to serve this city of opportunity."

Colin Jackson

CHAIR, IMAGINATION 150

"Whether it takes weeks, months, or years, advancing goals that will ensure a city and its people have the opportunity to participate in creative life, to enjoy creative spaces, to belong and to be proud of its creative communities is always worth fighting for."

Shannon Litzenberger

METCALF ARTS POLICY FELLOW

"If each individual community member savours the role of arts in their lives, considers it a personal value, and possibly even sees it as part of their defining identity, the shape of Calgary's future will be member-driven, self-sustainable, and ever-growing and evolving."

Shivani Thakkar

DANCER AND ACTOR



Looking Forward

While decades of committed artistic and city-building work in Calgary shaped the right environment for a comprehensive arts development strategy to be built, the results of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** lie in the future.

Embedded in the framework outlined here is the larger, longer story of the arts in Calgary, and of the many organizations and individuals—both from the arts sector and otherwise—who contribute to building a vital, prosperous and connected city through the arts.

Calgary Arts Development, along with the other signatories to **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**, will continue to measure success and report back annually on progress made in all focus areas, as well as actively engage new signatories as the strategy evolves. This strategy will only be accomplished through tactical plans for each focus area that highlight signatories' activities undertaken in support of **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE**'s outcomes, and that track the effect those activities are having.

LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE is a long-term strategy, and its wide-ranging outcomes cannot all be accomplished at once.

This document does not presume to select which of its many tactics should be tackled first; rather, the signatories who commit to aligning themselves to **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** and undertaking the work required to achieve its goals will determine the priorities.

The voices that contributed to **LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE** reflect the energy we see every day in how Calgarians create and engage with the arts. Together, we are up for the challenge of strengthening our arts sector and making Calgary a place where every resident can live a creative life.



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Business for the Arts (Toronto):

Nichole Anderson, President & CEO

Calgary 2012:

Karen Ball, Executive Director

Calgary Arts Development

Board of Directors:

Peter Boyd (Board Chair through May 2013)

Dr. Daniel Doz

Anila Lee Yuen (through February 2013)

Judy MacLachlan

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Patti Pon (President & CEO as of August 2013)

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Terry Rock (President & CEO through July 2013)

Pat Schneider (Steering Committee Chair)

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Calgary artists, arts organizations and arts administrators: your dedication to your vocations makes Calgary a more vibrant place to live.

Citizens from every corner of the city, who co-create our vibrant culture every day—especially those who have contributed ideas online and in person.

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LIVING A CREATIVE LIFE is available at LivingCreative.ca.

