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Please note that your name and comments will be made publicly available in the Council or Council Committee agenda and minutes. Your e-mail address will not be included in the public record.

ENDORSEMENT STATEMENT ON TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION, ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

The purpose of The City of Calgary is to make life better every day. To fully realize our purpose, we are committed to addressing racism and other forms of discrimination within our programs, policies, and services and eliminating barriers that impact the lives of Indigenous, Racialized, and other marginalized people. It is expected that participants will behave respectfully and treat everyone with dignity and respect to allow for conversations free from bias and prejudice.

First name [required] Buddie

Last name [required] Dixon

How do you wish to attend?

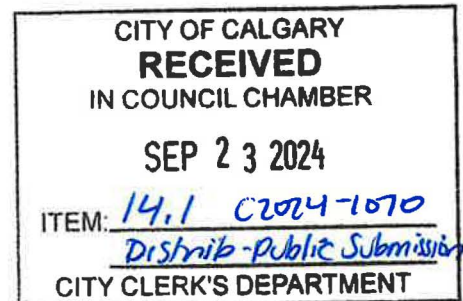
You may bring a support person should you require language or translator services. Do you plan on bringing a support person?

What meeting do you wish to comment on? [required] (if you Council

Date of meeting [required] (if you are providing input on service plans and budget adjustments, please select "November 18") Sep 23, 2024

What agenda item do you wish to comment on? (Refer to the Council or Committee agenda published [here](#).) (if you are providing input on service plans and budget adjustments, please write "budget" below.)

[required] - max 75 characters C2024-1070



Are you in favour or opposition of the issue? [required]

Neither

ATTACHMENT_01_FILENAME

C2024_1070_IndigenousGatheringPlaceUpdate_Sept21.pdf

ATTACHMENT_02_FILENAME

Oki Mayor Gondek and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Indigenous Gathering Place Society (IGPS), we're sending you the attached letter for inclusion in the public record for the upcoming Council meeting on Monday, September 23. The letter outlines concerns regarding the Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP) project, particularly its representation in Council item C2024-1070.

Comments - please refrain from providing personal information in this field (maximum 2500 characters)

As you discuss progress made towards White Goose Flying on Monday, it is important to note that the Indigenous Gathering Place is currently listed as the number one action item on the City's website, with a link to our Society's website and work. Given this significance, we believe our submission is essential to the conversation and respectfully request that it be considered part of the official public record.

Please note that we have included our respected Treaty 7 Nation leaders in this email given the importance of this place to Treaty 7 peoples.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and your continued support. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you require any further information or clarification regarding the letter.



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Saturday, September 21, 2024



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

Re: September 23, 2024 Council Meeting, Indigenous Gathering Place Update (C2024-1070)

Oki Mayor Gondek & Members of Council,

On behalf of the Indigenous Gathering Place Society (IGPS), we thank you for your support and commitment to creating the Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP) through the Memorandum of Understanding and our Pipe Ceremony. In response to Council item C2024-1070, we are writing to express our concerns about our project's representation in your Council package, which we only accessed on September 18. While we appreciate the City's continued attention to the IGP, we believe it is crucial to provide Council with an update in our own words to honour Indigenous ways.

For over ten years, we have been diligently working on this initiative under the guidance of our respected Elders, who have shaped the vision of the IGP -- a purpose-built and culturally appropriate gathering place for passing along their wisdom and teachings to future generations at Moh'kinstis. The Elders, who have dedicated significant time and wisdom to this cause, are growing weary and frustrated by the slow progress. Some have passed away without seeing their dream realized, while others fear they may not live to see the day the IGP becomes a reality.

Since 2018, the IGPS has made substantial investments to fulfill the direction in The City's White Goose Flying report—over \$500,000 of private donor dollars. This includes a comprehensive business case, operating plan, conceptual architectural drawings, extensive consultations with Indigenous Peoples, including leadership of Treaty 7 (centred in Indigenous ways), and support for the Historical Resources Impact Assessment (HRIA) application. The City mandated these requirements and despite no financial support from the City, we have provided the draft documents for review in May of this year.

Under the HRIA process, the City completed the required testing on the site's southwest and northeast corners. We chose the southwest corner, given the potential for flood risk on the northeast part of the site. However, after the HRIA was submitted, the City raised concerns regarding our proposed location. The Confluence expressed a preference for the northeast corner, given the community and revenue-generating activities that occur on the southwest corner of the site, which we are open to exploring. However, after reviewing the Council package for Sept. 23, we have learned that the northeast corner is being designated for the Residential School Memorial, which is, in fact as we understand, envisioned by the IRO to be a pow wow arbour. This has surprised us and the Elders.

We are working on building a strong relationship with The Confluence and support their initiatives to contribute to Indigenous spaces in Calgary. There are both capital and operational opportunities for our organizations to work together to support Indigenous Peoples on a site that is important to our history and our culture. We also fully support the creation of a Residential School Memorial and projects to honour Indigenous culture throughout the city. This letter is not meant to criticize these initiatives. We have all engaged with Indigenous Peoples, Elders, and the broader community, and not surprisingly, we are all hearing the same thing – the importance of a gathering place for Indigenous Peoples and all people at this location.

Our concern is that there is currently no mechanism for us to collaborate on finding the best way forward to meet the goals. We are all providing the City with our individual plans at great expense. We fear that the IGP will be left behind as we are a volunteer-run organization led by the Elders, have not been operating on the land for years, so therefore, do not have a stake in the land under Western rules, and are not a department of the City. With the northeast corner being potentially allocated for the memorial and the southwest corner potentially being used for the new 6 Street underpass, we are concerned that there may be no space left for the IGP at this location. This represents a significant setback for the Elders vision for a place to gather.

We acknowledge that we may not have always managed the project in the way the City expected, nor have we had extensive experience with large infrastructure development. However, there have been no meaningful efforts to break down the systemic barriers and colonial processes that hinder this work. Instead, we have faced new requirements at critical stages when we thought we were progressing. Each of these initiatives – IGP, Confluence, and Memorial, fall under the responsibility of different City departments, and it has become apparent that these departments operate in silos, leading to conflicting directions for our projects, despite commitments made by Council to all groups. We have all invested significant government and donor funds to advance efforts at this location with City endorsement. As the landowner of this site, we believe that it is incumbent upon the City to forge a collaborative path forward and break down silos. There is an incredible opportunity to create something special if the process allows us to all come together for a common goal.

We appreciate the efforts of The Confluence leadership to find opportunities for our involvement in their plans at the site. However, as volunteers without funding, our capacity to fully engage in these opportunities is limited without completely abandoning the Elders' vision. Given these challenges, we respectfully request the following:

- **Trust & Respect:** The Elder's wisdom, time invested, and The City's participation in our ceremonies.
- **Transparency & Accountability:** We ask for clearer communication from The City regarding the current status of the IGP project, including accurate updates to Council, Elders, and stakeholders.
- **Funding Clarity:** An explanation for why funding for the next phases of the IGP has not been granted despite promises and us providing the documentation required, at great cost.
- **Site Feasibility:** Given the land allocation for other projects and infrastructure, we ask for a formal discussion regarding the future of the IGP at The Confluence.
- **Inclusion in Decision-Making:** We strongly urge Council to ensure that the Indigenous Gathering Place Society, as representatives of the Elders, is included in all future discussions regarding our project, in alignment with the principles of collaboration and respect for Indigenous leadership ("nothing about us, without us").
- **Consistent Expectations & Requirements:** The other projects have progressed faster with less rigid requirements and expectations that have been placed upon us as an Indigenous organization.
- **A Collaborative Path Forward:** A path that does not divide Indigenous Peoples and pit Indigenous initiatives against one another and is centred on Indigenous ways.

Additionally, we are volunteers who have done our best, with limited resources, and we need funding support from the City to move forward to the next phase of planning and hire those with the expertise to develop a plan for our future.

Calgary is the only major city in Canada without a purpose-built Gathering Place for Indigenous Peoples, and the need to make this vision a reality is becoming increasingly urgent. We remain committed to realizing the IGP's vision as a place for healing, connection, and cultural celebration for all peoples in Treaty 7. We believe that with the support of Council and the City, we can find a path forward that honours the Elders' vision and meets the needs of our community. We look forward to working collaboratively to address these issues and advance the Indigenous Gathering Place in accordance with the shared principles of respect and reconciliation.

Sincerely,

Elder Doreen Healy, Board Advisor and Buddie Dixon & Shawna Morning Bull, Co-Chairs
Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary

Cc. Chief Ouray Crowfoot, Siksika Nation, Chief Roy Fox, Kainai Nation, Chief Troy Knowlton, Piikani Nation, Jack Royal, Blackfoot Confederacy, Chief Roy Whitney, Tsuut'ina Nation, Chief Darcy Dixon, Bearspaw Nation, Chief Aaron Young, Chiniki Nation, Chief Clifford Poucette, Goodstoney Nation, Dean Manywounds, G4 Tribal Nations.