



GamePLAN

Reimagining Public Recreation

February 2025



GamePLAN at a Glance

The Problem

Calgary’s public recreation system is at a crossroads. Without investment, the system will degrade. Facilities will close and service levels will decline.

What does service decline look like?

- 11 fewer aquatic facilities
- 50 per cent fewer swim lessons
- 50 per cent fewer ice sheets
- Same bookable fieldhouse and athletic park hours as population/demand grows
- Overall service declines as aging facilities close and population grows

How did we get here?

- Investments in public recreation have not kept pace with population growth and diversification.
- Demand for activities, amenities, programs and services has changed.
- Accessibility standards are evolving with limited capacity to implement change at existing facilities.
- While barriers to participation have always existed, new barriers are emerging and becoming more prevalent.

What is GamePLAN going to do?

The vision

Calgary is where people of all backgrounds play, connect and create. Public Recreation is a collection of active, affordable and safe spaces that breathe life into our city.

The principles

Level the playing field

GamePLAN seeks to remove barriers to participation, especially for children and youth.

It takes a team

GamePLAN leverages a network of service providers, programmers, facilities and amenities aimed at continuing Calgary’s legacy as one of the most livable cities in the world.

Change the game

GamePLAN challenges historical definitions of recreation and promotes new ways of thinking about the role of public recreation in civic life.

Service Level Scenarios

Staying Afloat

- better facility distribution across the city
- 10 per cent more swim lessons
- same number of ice sheets
- 2x bookable hours at fieldhouses/athletic parks
- service remains the same as population grows

Making Waves

- equitable facility distribution across the city
- 40 per cent more swim lessons
- 25 per cent more ice sheets
- 2.5x bookable hours at fieldhouses/athletic parks
- service increases to match population growth

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Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the concept of recreation is a western construct. GamePLAN recognizes Indigenous traditions that the land, nature and creator give us all the elements of wellness – everything we need for physical, spiritual, emotional and mental wellness. We acknowledge the wisdom and ideas around wellness of the Indigenous Peoples who came before us on this land and who continue to contribute significantly to a culture of sport, athleticism and wholistic well-being.

In the City of Calgary, all recreational activities are experienced and enjoyed on the ancestral and traditional territories of the Siksikaitsitapi, also known as the Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika, Piikani, Amskaapipiikani and Kainai First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, within Métis Nation Battle River Territory (Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6).

We acknowledge all Indigenous Peoples who have made Calgary their home. Oki, Dadanast'ada, Āba wathtech, Taanishi, Thank you for allowing Calgarians to experience and enjoy recreational activities on your lands.

Message from the General Manager

Public recreation is the heartbeat of vibrant, thriving communities, yet the growing and ever-changing needs of residents call for immediate attention.

In a time when physical and mental health challenges are on the rise, and the need for connection and equitable access has never been greater, recreation services are a lifeline for individuals and families. Meeting these needs requires bold, urgent action to expand and elevate programs and facilities that inspire joy, nurture well-being and strengthen the bonds that unite us. A shared vision for the future of public recreation offers a powerful opportunity to transform lives and communities, ensuring everyone has access to inclusive, innovative and life-changing experiences.

Together, we can seize this moment to build a future where recreation enriches every life and strengthens every community.

Katie Black
General Manager of Community Services

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Message from the Director

GamePLAN is a foundational document that recognizes the role of public recreation in promoting individual and community health and well-being. Public recreation fosters a sense of belonging and social connection, is a tool for advancing equity and inclusion, and contributes to the livability of our city. However, Calgary's public recreation system is at risk. On our journey to a population of two million, the city's growth has outpaced investment, and we are left with an inventory of aging, outdated facilities that no longer meet the needs of the people who live here and are costly to operate and maintain.

The City of Calgary owns and operates over 50 publicly accessible recreation facilities throughout Calgary while partners operate more than 200 facilities or amenities on City-owned land. Our goal has long been to make introductory-level recreation opportunities available to everyone at an affordable rate. We actively partner with organizations to help bridge gaps and extend services deeper into communities. We partner with amateur sport to encourage participation in sport and long-term athletic development.

The City has been serving Calgary communities with recreation opportunities for more than a century. While the goal of public recreation has always been to provide public benefit, we recognize a one-size-fits-all approach (one in which programs, services, facilities and amenities do not account for differences among participants and communities) leaves some people out. As our city has grown more diverse, gaps in inclusion have widened and community needs have evolved. There is an urgent need to address barriers to participation for those who have been or are currently underrepresented.

The economy has also caused change. Rising operational and development costs are impacting our ability to invest in new or existing facilities and amenities. Rising costs of living are impacting peoples' ability to access recreation opportunities. Investment by other orders of government has declined while demand for new and improved services has increased.

These factors led to the need for GamePLAN. We are at a crossroads. GamePLAN will inform service levels and decision-making to usher public recreation into the future, to keep pace with change and anticipate future demand. Before GamePLAN, there was no guiding framework that Council, partners, the public and City administration could align to. GamePLAN is transformational because it addresses current gaps while also anticipating future changes in demand. There is a need for a versatile service planning approach that creates and sustains space for new and emerging sports and other diversified interests.

GamePLAN is not just a plan for the future, it's a call to action. It invites partners, the public and the entire sport and recreation sector to reimagine how public recreation is developed and delivered to better meet Calgary's changing needs and expectations.

At its core, GamePLAN is a document to guide us in the pursuit of a more equitable, collaborative, innovative and sustainable approach to recreation service. One that is better equipped to respond to changes over time, and one that represents the richness in diversity of Calgary communities.

Heather Johnson
Director of Recreation & Social Programs



Executive Summary

Calgary has been ranked as one of the **top 10 most livable cities in the world** for the past decade. Despite this global recognition and the fact that Calgary enjoys a strong economy and a celebrated culture, **Calgary's public recreation system stands at a crossroads.**

The vast and impressive network of public recreation facilities that characterized Calgary's public recreation system in the 1970s and 1980s still exists today, but the city has changed around it. These celebrated community fixtures, where they exist, are worn by several decades of service to residents. While still standing, they are tattered and scruffy and would happily be retired to the status of keepsakes were they not so expensive to collect.

With most of The City's public recreation facilities having been built more than 35 years ago in established communities and with 80 per cent of growth occurring in new communities, gaps are emerging that our existing inventory of small, aging, inner city assets cannot address. Interests and expectations are changing, established sports are evolving and experiencing unprecedented growth while new sports are emerging. Existing facilities do not have the amenities people want and need and are not adaptable to changing demand.

GamePLAN will guide service decisions, inform policy, strengthen partnerships and introduce innovation to enhance the public recreation system's collective impact.

It aims to enhance quality of life, foster community and ensure Calgary remains one of the most livable cities in the world.

GamePLAN is an exploration of where we are today, how we got here and where we are going in the future.

GamePLAN considers:

- historical investments in public recreation,
- current service coverage and how we compare to other Canadian municipalities,
- the types of activities, amenities, programs and services people want, including trends in participation and sport,
- best practices for facility design, including accessibility standards, co-location with other public services and integration with other public systems (i.e., mobility networks) and
- barriers preventing people from accessing recreation, such as accessibility, transportation, costs and exclusion.

Through extensive research and engagement with the public and partners, GamePLAN establishes the first system-wide strategy that Council, partners and Administration can align to.

It includes:

- **a vision** – sets the tone for the next 25 years of service
- **principles** – guide decisions to enhance equity, collaboration and innovation
- **commitments** – are measurable and track progress
- **actions** – create tangible and lasting change
- **service standards** – provide a baseline to which Calgary should aspire, including facility investment principles to inform future planning and design
- **service level scenarios** – equip Council for a decision about where the public recreation system will be in 25 years

GamePLAN is about more than supply and demand. Equity, collaboration and innovation are at the heart of GamePLAN. It recognizes that well-meaning initiatives targeting equity and inclusion are only as good and effective as the systems in place to support them. Diversity, growth and change need to be incorporated into the foundation, not the paint.

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Playing the Long Game: a Strategic Plan for Public Recreation

GamePLAN defines the vision, principles and commitments needed to achieve sustainable change. The success of GamePLAN will be measured by peoples' access to recreation opportunities and the benefits derived from participation.

It combines research, analysis and engagement to guide service and investment planning decisions on the path to a population of two million.

1.1.

About GamePLAN

GamePLAN is a:

- system-wide approach to improving access to public recreation,
- vision that reflects public aspirations for public recreation in Calgary,
- strategic framework to safeguard the long-term viability of the public recreation system and
- service standard for facility provision.

What does GamePLAN do?

- Provides a guiding framework for public recreation in Calgary that Council, partners and Administration can align to,
- Evaluates the design and delivery of programs and services and the need for enabling infrastructure to respond to growing and changing demand,
- Reflects on the roles and contributions of partners, sport groups, community associations, social recreation organizations and education agencies in creating safe and welcoming spaces for people to play, connect and create,
- Defines Calgary's first system-wide service standards for recreation facilities and amenities and establishes current and future service levels based on investment scenarios,
- Leverages best practices, participation trends, geospatial analyses and municipal benchmarking to make recommendations for improving service coverage,
- Reflects feedback from engagement with partners, the public and sport and recreation organizations to better understand needs and to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement,
- Sets the tone and strategic direction for the next generation of public recreation service in Calgary.

Staying on Track

GamePLAN will be updated to align with budget cycle intervals to advance implementation and ensure the strategy remains aligned with the evolving needs of the people living in Calgary.

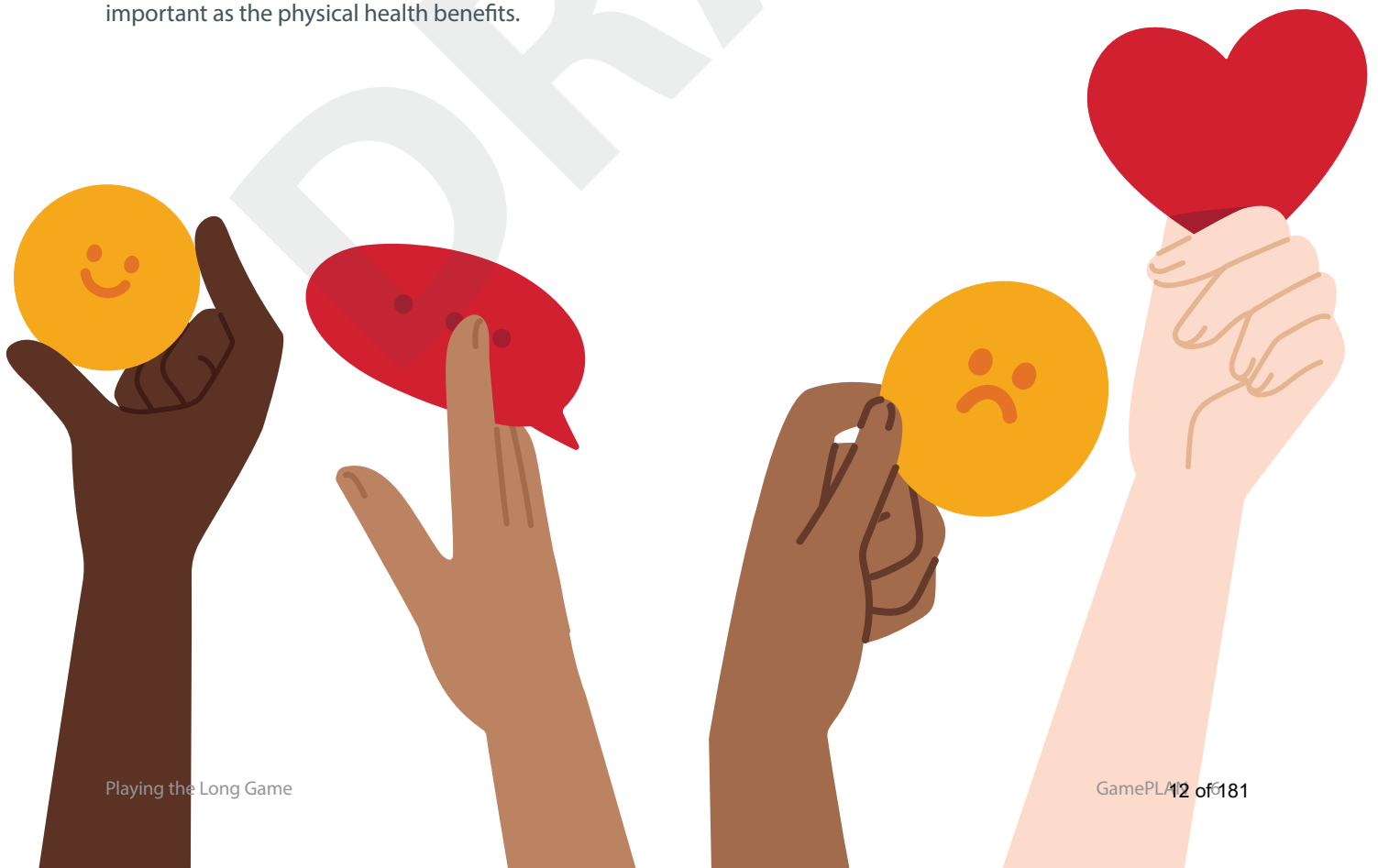
Future iterations will seek to leverage opportunities as they become available. This will ensure GamePLAN's continued relevance over time.

1.2.

Building on What We Heard

Between November 2022 and October 2024, GamePLAN surveyed more than 6,000 members of the public about their perceptions of, experiences with and desires for the public recreation system in Calgary.

Dozens of interviews, workshops and surveys with community and operating partners were also conducted. Engagement sought to better understand the role of recreation in peoples' lives, what it means to them and why it's important. Findings show that ideas about recreation are as diverse as Calgary's population, and that the positive community impact and mental health benefits derived from participation in recreation are as important as the physical health benefits.



1.2.1. Public engagement

Themes emerged that represent respondents' values and priorities for the public recreation system in Calgary (see Appendix 3, *What We Heard*).

People shared they felt The City could be doing more to improve access for those who face barriers, particularly with respect to affordability, accessibility and inclusion. Many expressed a strong desire to foster community through public recreation. Participants provided ideas and suggestions for improving service, from introducing new programming to extending hours of operation.

Feedback was used to establish a vision for the public recreation system in Calgary and to understand the needs and preferences of public recreation customers and non-customers alike.

1.2.2. Community partners

Feedback from engagement with community partners, including social recreation organizations and community associations, provided important context for understanding the roles and strengths of these organizations, as well as the challenges they face in providing public recreation services. For example, these partners are deeply embedded in communities, rely heavily on volunteerism and are challenged by increasing demand for facilities and programs.

Barriers to participation

While there is a need to ensure recreation remains affordable, Fair Entry metrics indicate there are other barriers to accessing public recreation services beyond the cost of admission. For example, in 2023, over 106,000 Fair Entry applicants applied to the Recreation Fee Assistance Program for access to City recreation (95 per cent of all City Fair Entry applicants). Of those, only 21 percent accessed City recreation programs and services.

Feedback from engagement suggests cost is only one barrier to participation. Other barriers include the cost and availability of transportation and childcare, while some described feelings of exclusion in public spaces.

Through programs, services and facilities, GamePLAN seeks to level the playing field so all people living in Calgary can experience and enjoy the benefits of public recreation.

1.2.3. Operating partners

Engagement with operating partners revealed a desire for better collaboration among partners and with The City to address sector challenges and improve service outcomes. Engagement identified four primary themes, including:

- identifying common service outcomes for the sector,
- building stronger relationships and collaboration,
- responding with recreation opportunities people want and
- addressing strained operational needs, including aging infrastructure, increased operational expenses and staffing challenges.

Research

GamePLAN included a robust research program to better understand public perceptions, behaviours and motivations for attending public recreation facilities and amenities. Research included an Amenity Prioritization Survey to identify the types of amenities people living in Calgary want access to, including leisure pools, court space and fitness centres.

For a complete list of research tactics and findings, see *Appendix 2, Research Summary*.

1.2.4. Indigenous Peoples

Results of wisdom shared through targeted engagement with Indigenous Peoples highlighted the need for activities such as powwow dancing, arts and land-based programming, traditional games and Elder-led teachings that are highly valued and integral to Indigenous wholistic health and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Wisdom seeking also identified barriers that Indigenous Peoples face in accessing public recreation, including racism and feeling unsafe or excluded.

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A Vision for Public Recreation

Equipped with a better understanding of what recreation means, why it's important and how it can be improved, GamePLAN establishes a vision for Calgary's public recreation system: **Calgary is where people of all backgrounds play, connect and create. Public recreation is a collection of active, affordable and safe spaces that breathe life into our city.**

GamePLAN recognizes expectations for the public recreation system are changing. It establishes a set of principles to guide service planning decisions now and in the future. These principles prioritize building strong, complete communities and delivering quality services and programs that people care about.

2.1. Level the Playing Field

This principle focuses on 'leveling the playing field' for everyone living in Calgary, especially children and youth. It seeks to create the conditions for anyone living in Calgary to experience the benefits of public recreation.



2.2. It Takes a Team

This principle recognizes the role of partnerships and sector collaboration in improving service planning and performance measurement. Ensuring the health, growth and long-term sustainability of the sector is a team effort in which partners play a key role. **It explores opportunities for better system-wide collaboration to ensure the health, growth and sustainability of the sector.**



2.3. Change the Game

GamePLAN challenges historical definitions of recreation and promotes a new way of thinking about the role of public recreation in civic life.

This principle introduces approaches to improve existing practices and services and identifies areas to adapt or grow in a way that better responds to changes in the public recreation and sport sectors.



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What is the Public Recreation System?

In Calgary, the public recreation system is a network of service providers, programmers, facilities and amenities aimed at continuing Calgary’s legacy as one of the most livable cities in the world. It reflects the dedication of partners, policymakers and the public who are committed to creating a Calgary that is safe, welcoming, inclusive, active and healthy.

The Public Recreation System is made up of:

- **public spaces** where people go to connect and play, from arenas to athletic parks,
- **programs** where people learn and grow, from learning to swim, to learning pottery and
- **people** who bring these spaces to life, from dance instructors and lifeguards to coaches and seniors’ club members.

The public recreation system is supported, in part, through municipal funding, either directly through City operations and programming, or indirectly through capital investments and grants, land leases, licenses of occupation or operating funds.

This section describes the role of The City, programs and services, partnerships, facilities and amenities in helping to build a livable city.

The public recreation system supports both physical and mental health while advancing equity, inclusion and belonging through the diversity of activities and spaces it offers throughout the city.

This emphasizes Calgary’s public recreation system is a critical component of a complete community.

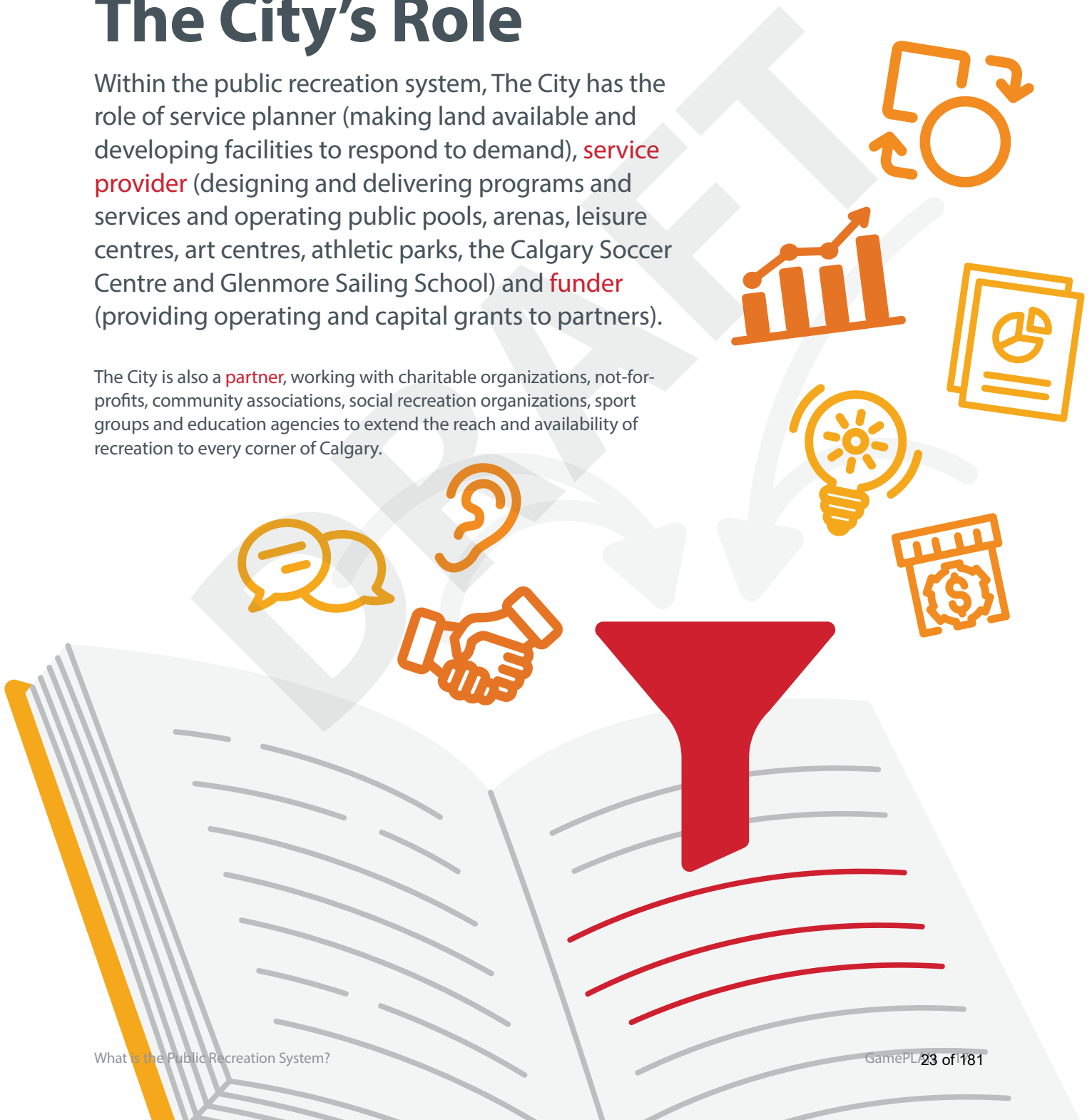


3.1.

The City's Role

Within the public recreation system, The City has the role of service planner (making land available and developing facilities to respond to demand), **service provider** (designing and delivering programs and services and operating public pools, arenas, leisure centres, art centres, athletic parks, the Calgary Soccer Centre and Glenmore Sailing School) and **funder** (providing operating and capital grants to partners).

The City is also a **partner**, working with charitable organizations, not-for-profits, community associations, social recreation organizations, sport groups and education agencies to extend the reach and availability of recreation to every corner of Calgary.

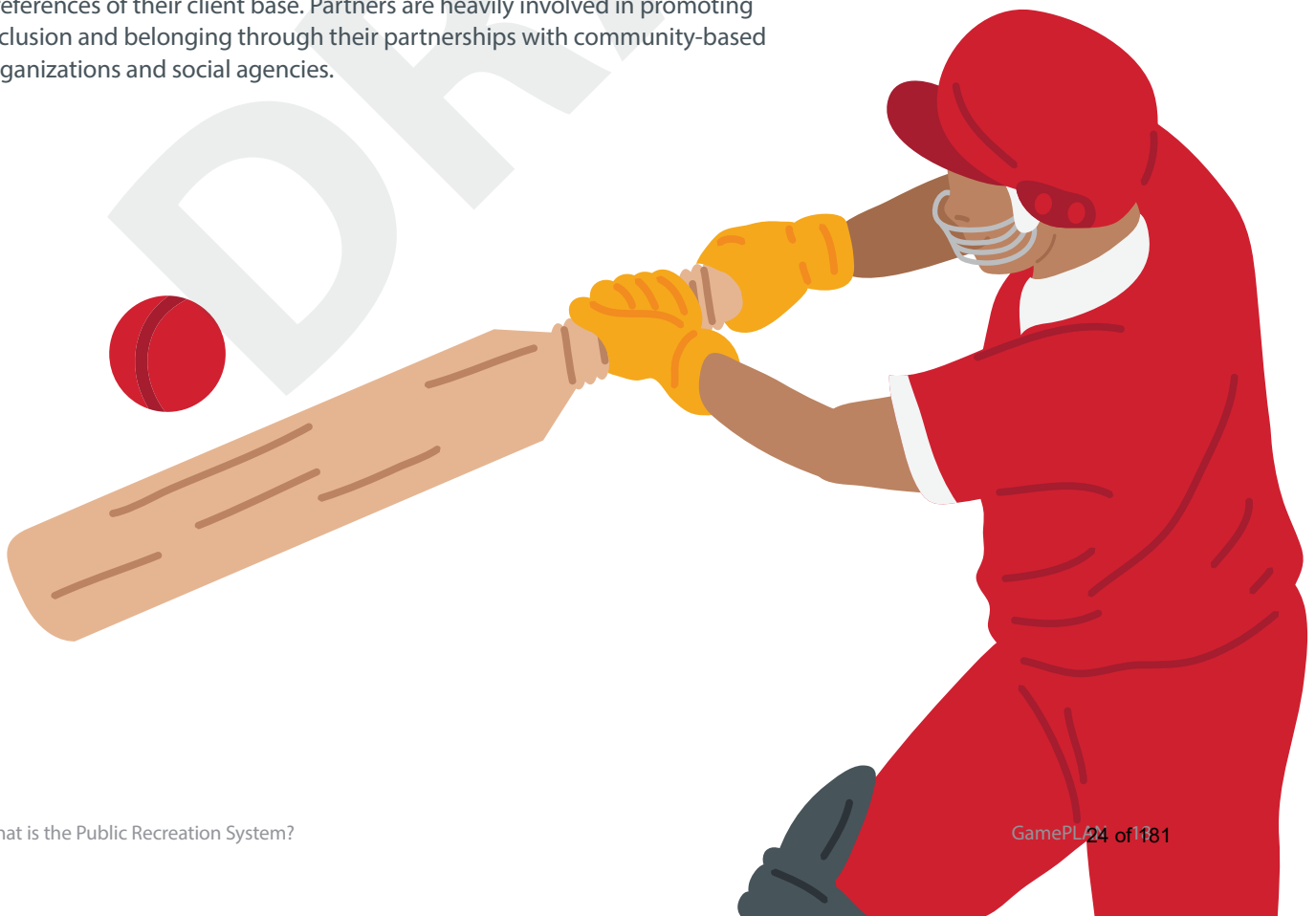


3.2.

Programs and Services

The City is an effective and efficient recreation service provider due to its network of existing infrastructure and operational expertise. The City's goal is to provide accessible, affordable and quality recreation opportunities for all people living in Calgary.

City programs and services prioritize introductory and entry-level recreation skill development for children, youth and those experiencing vulnerability. Partners also deliver programs and services. They possess extensive recreation sector knowledge and are acutely aware of the unique needs and preferences of their client base. Partners are heavily involved in promoting inclusion and belonging through their partnerships with community-based organizations and social agencies.



In 2024, The City ran more than:



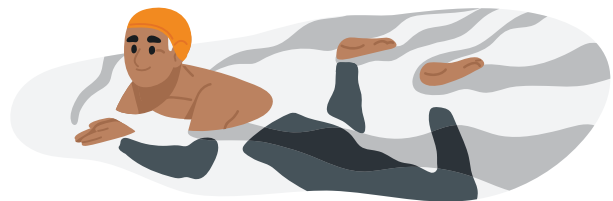
500+ learn-to-skate programs with
3,200+ participants



230+ day camps with
3,100+ participants



670+ visual arts programs with
7,200+ participants



8,300+ swim lessons with
42,000+ participants

3.3.

Facilities and Amenities

The City and partners operate over 250 publicly accessible recreation facilities, including aquatic and fitness centres, leisure centres, outdoor pools, arenas, indoor and outdoor sport fields and courts, skateparks, art centres, golf courses and the Glenmore Sailing School.

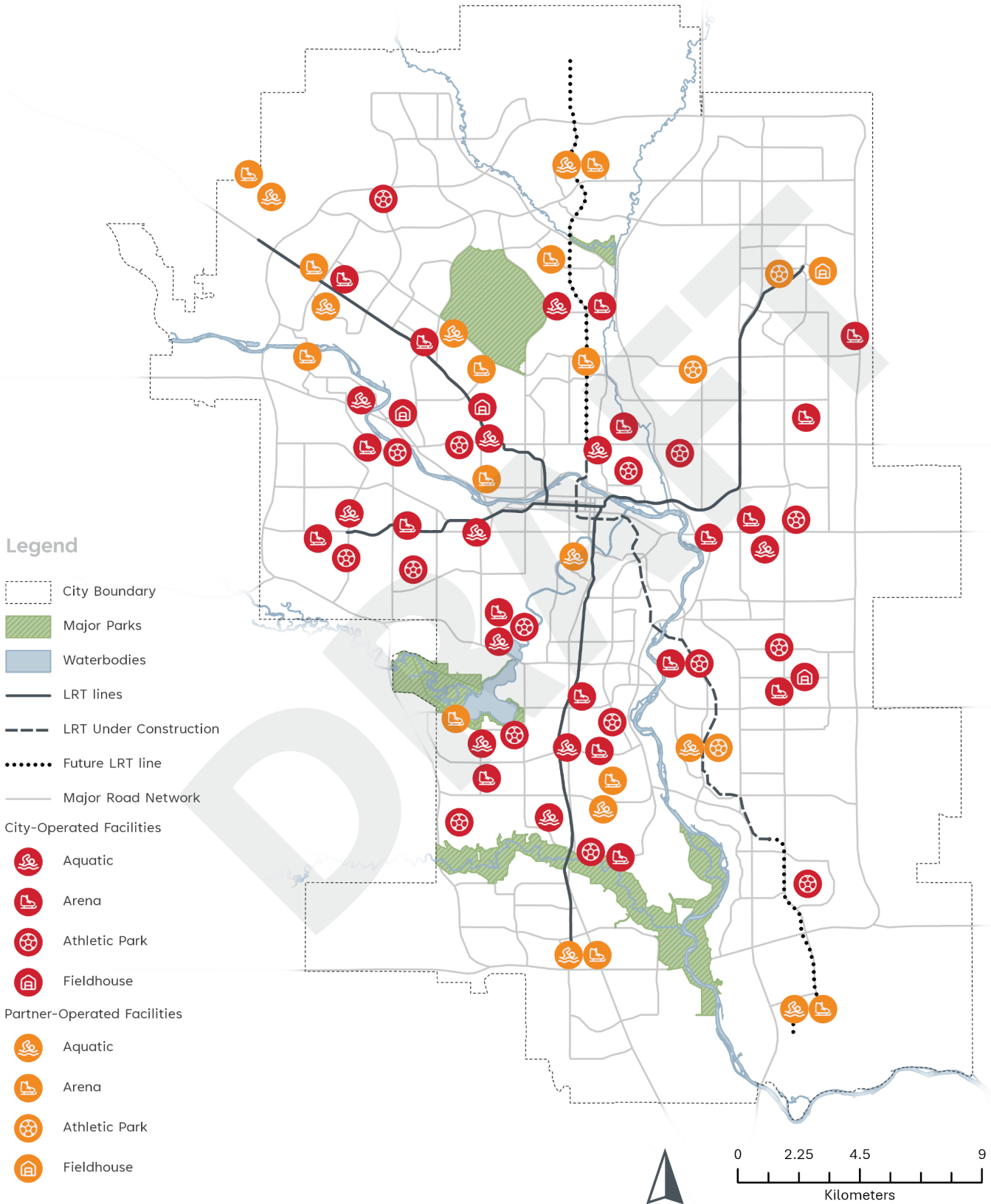
All of these facilities are owned by The City and located on City land. For the purpose of GamePLAN, analysis focuses on **four facility types:**

- **aquatic and fitness facilities,**
- **arenas,**
- **athletic parks and**
- **fieldhouses.**

Although these don't represent every possible recreation amenity, they make up the majority of The City's capital asset value and cover all the sports and activities that take place in water, on ice, in a gymnasium and on a field - indoor or outdoor (*see Section 5: A closer look at recreation infrastructure*).

Service planning for other facility types will be addressed through periodically reviewing and refining GamePLAN in conjunction with ongoing needs analysis (*see section 5, a closer look at recreation infrastructure*).

Current Facilities



3.4. Partnerships

Partnerships play an integral role in creating a high quality of life through public recreation.

The Investing in Partnerships Policy defines “Partnership” as:

“The working relationships between The City and one or more partners to deliver positive results for Calgarians. It is characterized by the investment of City resources; and mutually agreed upon results, responsibilities and accountabilities” (Investing in Partnerships Policy, CP2017-01).

The City is engaged in nearly 200 recreation-focused partner relationships involving City land and buildings, operating and/or capital funding. Since 1990, The City has invested more than \$550 million (2024 dollars) to build facilities that are operated by partners. Council has also directed more than \$220 million in Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) funding to develop these facilities. Additional municipal funding in the form of annual operating and capital grants also contributes to The City's partnered service model. Partnerships with regional recreation centres like YMCA, Vivo for Healthier Generations, Westside Recreation Centre, MNP Community and Sport Centre, Trico Centre for Family Wellness, Cardel Rec South, Vecova and the Genesis Centre are how The City provides recreation opportunities in those areas. Other City-owned facilities are leased to partners to provide more localized, community-based services, including several outdoor pools operated by the Calgary Outdoor Swimming Pool Association. Many other recreation facilities are operated by community associations and social recreation organizations on City-owned land.

Partners contribute extensive financial and volunteer resources each year. Partners are uniquely positioned to access private funding and secure grants from other orders of government towards public recreation. Engaging in partnerships also allows The City to leverage broad recreation sector knowledge and resources to provide a greater customization and diversity of services. These partnerships represent significant investment by The City to extend services to communities that need it.

Sport Sector

Calgary's sport sector is an important part of the public recreation system. In alignment with the Sport for Life Policy (CP2018-03), The City partners with the sport sector to create opportunities for people to experience and enjoy sports.

Regional Recreation

A regional recreation centre is a community hub that serves the needs of multiple communities and sport organizations. It is a multi-use complex that combines amenities to support a range of activities. Typically, regional recreation centres combine aquatic and leisure amenities, gyms, fitness area, studios, multipurpose rooms and gathering spaces open to the public. It could also be co-located with other facilities such as an arena, athletic park, fieldhouse or a library. Other ancillary services such as childcare, physiotherapy and food services may also be included.

City Partners

The City partners with charities like Canadian Tire Jumpstart to extend access for at-risk children and youth and people experiencing vulnerabilities.

3.5.

Private Providers

Recreation opportunities exist outside the public recreation system, such as gyms in condominiums, for-profit-private operators and hotel amenities.

They provide an important and valued service and address specific needs outside the scope of GamePLAN.

4



Reimagining Public Recreation

GamePLAN recognizes that recreation does not mean the same thing to everyone and that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach does not meet the diverse needs of Calgary's communities.

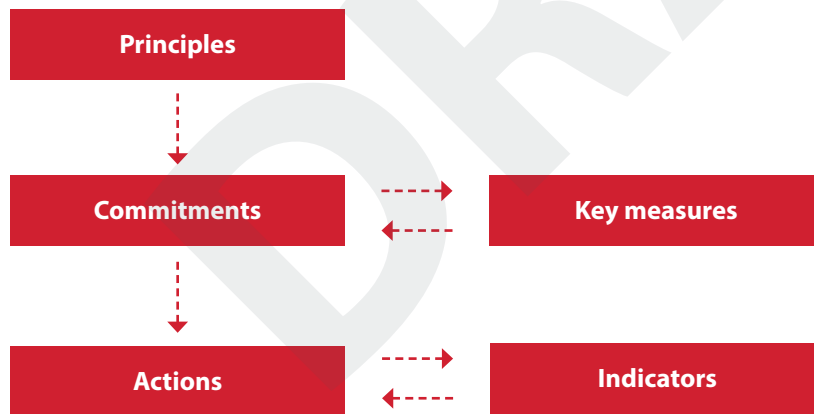
Historically, public recreation in Calgary has included facilities like pools, arenas, athletic parks and arts centres, and programs such as swim lessons, art instruction, learn to skate and fitness classes.

Since 1912, The City has provided recreation services that encourage healthy, active living, promote creativity and inspire feelings of civic pride, community and belonging. Recreation is broadly accepted as a positive public service that generates significant social and economic value.

GamePLAN challenges historical definitions of recreation and promotes new ways of thinking about the role of public recreation in civic life. It acknowledges there are barriers preventing some people from experiencing the benefits of recreation and seeks to level the playing field through applying an equity lens to public recreation service and infrastructure planning.

Chapter Structure

GamePLAN flows from Principles to Commitments to Actions to ensure efforts are focused on outcomes. Key Measures and Indicators track the impact of this work.



Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing (*Framework for Recreation in Canada, Framework Update: March 2024*).

Public recreation is about more than physical fitness

Public recreation contributes to Calgary's quality of life, influencing peoples' decisions about where to live and raise a family. It fosters feelings of connection with our neighbours, is a reprieve from the hustle and bustle of daily life and a source of physical fitness and fun for our children. It is both preventative, resulting in cost savings to judicial and health care systems and curative, helping people recover from illness or injury. It plays a key role in reducing social isolation and provides for foundational skill development, including physical literacy, social literacy and drowning prevention. It contributes to feelings of belonging, civic responsibility and community pride.

4.1. Commitments

To reimagine public recreation and bring focus to our efforts, commitments associated with each principle have been developed that respond to and address input received through research and engagement. Commitments are measurable and will help track progress towards desired outcomes.

Level the Playing Field

- Increase access for children and youth.
- Create safe and welcoming spaces.
- Increase affordability for those who need it.

It Takes a Team

- Develop a system-wide framework to guide how we work together toward shared service goals.
- Enhance facility and amenity availability, performance and access.
- Partner and engage with the sport sector to increase access to sport opportunities in alignment with the Sport For Life Policy.

Change the Game

- Elevate recreation in City planning decisions
- Improve customer access and experiences using technology in alignment with The City's Digital Equity Strategy.
- Develop a recruitment and retention strategy to grow and diversify the sector.
- Improve public access to information and services.
- Introduce new programming to respond to public interest and demand.
- Introduce transportation initiatives to increase access.
- Respond to impacts of climate change.

4.2.

Key Measures

The primary goal of GamePLAN is to increase access to and participation in public recreation so more people can experience the benefits these opportunities provide.

Key measures are system-wide measures that track progress towards increasing the reach of the public recreation system. They are quantitative indicators of how well the sector is responding to the needs and interests of the people living in Calgary.

Examples of keys measures are:

- number of unique visitors,
- share of new users or participants as a percentage of the total, including retention and
- system-wide customer satisfaction.

Key measures are broad enough to understand uptake in different activities (*e.g., sports to art classes*) and allow for disaggregated data analysis (*e.g., socio-economic status, geography, race*) to identify how well programs and services are meeting needs and priorities.

4.3.

Actions and Indicators

Actions have been developed for their potential to achieve outcomes under each of the commitments.

Actions will be further explored for implementation based on which will drive the desired results. Implementation will seek to leverage existing partnerships and revenue frameworks to the greatest extent possible, though some actions may require new funding to develop and implement.

Indicators have been developed for each commitment to measure progress. They provide medium- to long-term insight into GamePLAN's cumulative effects on the health of the public recreation system. Indicators help assess whether changes are having the intended impact and moving the system toward desired outcomes.

Level the playing field

This principle focuses on removing barriers to participation, especially for children and youth. It seeks to create the conditions for anyone living in Calgary to experience the benefits of public recreation.

short term = 0-5 years | medium term = 5-10 years | long term = +10 years

Commitments <i>What's changing?</i>	Indicators <i>How are we going to measure progress?</i>	Actions <i>How are we going to do it?</i>	How long will it take?
Increase access for children and youth	Shorter waitlists for child and youth skill development programs	a. Work with local organizations and boards to make 'learn to swim' programs highly accessible to children and youth.	Medium-term
	Rate of change in drop-in utilization for children and youth	b. Support physical education curriculum by providing weekday scheduling in facilities.	Medium-term
	Reduced gap in skills development for children and youth	c. Expand free drop-in opportunities for children and youth.	Short-term
	Reduced gap in skills development for children and youth	d. Expand existing programming and develop additional dedicated programming for at-risk youth.	Medium-term

Commitments <i>What's changing?</i>	Indicators <i>How are we going to measure progress?</i>	Actions <i>How are we going to do it?</i>	How long will it take?
Create safe and welcoming spaces.	Public recreation users' reported perceptions of services and facilities Reduce gap in participation between equity denied persons and the overall population	a. Provide all staff with foundational training in equity, diversity, inclusion, cultural sensitivity, anti-racism, reconciliation and trauma informed practices.	Short-term
		b. Revise booking allocation framework to advance fairness in accessing spaces (<i>for example, bookings/registrations reserved for equity-denied groups, reviewing and amending booking guidelines, including historical rights, etc.</i>).	Medium-term
		c. As stewards of the public recreation system and in consultation with sector partners, The City will incorporate EDIB (<i>Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging</i>) considerations into operational practices, program design and processes to access programs and spaces.	Short-term
		d. Establish an external Indigenous Working Group or Advisory Committee to inform the development of programs and spaces that reflect Indigenous culture, background and identity and improve Indigenous Peoples' access to and participation in public recreation.	Medium-term
		e. Develop a strategy for activating shared spaces for unstructured/ non-programming opportunities, including social, spiritual and community gathering.	Medium-term
		f. Introduce new and expanded programming for adapted recreation, newcomer introductory programs, Indigenous traditional games and teachings and 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion.	Short-term
Increase affordability for those who need it	Public recreation users reporting affordability as a barrier to participation	a. Establish and/or expand subsidy programs for specialized equipment required to participate in sports for children and youth.	Short-term
		b. Establish a pricing strategy to expand low and no-cost programs availability.	Medium-term
		c. Remove admission/participation costs for support workers/ caregivers system-wide.	Short-term
		d. Review the Recreation Fee Assistance program within Fair Entry to improve accessibility. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. increase awareness for the benefits of recreation and availability services, ii. identify gaps related to access and participation, iii. align with the Enough for all Strategy (<i>e.g., physical and mental health</i>), iv. increase eligibility threshold or implement a sliding scale, v. implement consistent pricing for fee assistance through Fair Entry among recreation partners and The City. 	Medium-term

It Takes a Team

This principle explores opportunities to elevate the role of partnerships and sector collaboration to improve service planning and performance measurement. Ensuring the health, growth and long-term sustainability of the sector is a team effort and will ensure we provide the right services now and in the future.

short term = 0-5 years | medium term = 5-10 years | long term = 10+ years

Commitments <i>What's changing?</i>	Indicators <i>How are we going to measure progress?</i>	Actions <i>How are we going to do it?</i>	How long will it take?
Develop a system-wide framework to guide how we work together toward shared service goals	Increase in awareness of public recreation (<i>perception rating</i>)	a. Develop a programs and services framework that promotes collaboration and mutual support towards achieving shared outcomes. The framework should reflect the service needs of multiple partners, including operating and community partners and should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. expand culturally relevant and inclusive programming opportunities closer to where people live, ii. customize opportunities to unique community needs, and iii. include a system-wide space utilization strategy to create a greater availability of programmable space. 	Short-term
		b. Develop "Community Programming Plans" to create and promote opportunities tailored to underserved communities, including leisure and/or culture-based programming. Plans will be developed in consultation with community partners.	Medium-term
		c. Implement performance metrics and a shared data base for enhanced knowledge sharing, service planning and information management.	Short-term
		d. Develop a system-wide public education and awareness-raising strategy to promote opportunities and the benefits of participation in recreation (<i>including integrated marketing</i>).	Short-term
		e. Extend City programming to non-city facilities (<i>i.e., community associations</i>).	Short-term

Commitments <i>What's changing?</i>	Indicators <i>How are we going to measure progress?</i>	Actions <i>How are we going to do it?</i>	How long will it take?
Enhance facility and amenity availability, performance and access	Per cent of the public who are within 5km of the four fundamental types of facilities/amenities	a. Develop a Capital Project Prioritization list that includes partner facilities.	Long-term
		b. Establish a dedicated and stable funding model for investing in recreation infrastructure.	Medium-term
	# of additional operating hours	c. Develop an advocacy strategy for public recreation facilities in Calgary.	Medium-term
		d. Implement a set of facility investment principles and standards to guide investment and design decisions for new developments and redevelopment projects.	Medium-term
		e. Develop and implement a service evaluation methodology to determine the best operating model for new recreation facilities.	Short-term
Partner and engage with the sport sector to increase access to sport opportunities in alignment with the Sport For Life Policy	Improved alignment between sports participation needs/preferences and amenity bookings/actual utilization	a. Work with sport sector partners to increase the success rate of grant applications aimed at improving programs and access.	Short-term
		b. Develop minimum standards for safe sport and apply to all sport bookings at public recreation facilities.	Short-term
	Improved alignment between sports participation needs/preferences and amenity design and locations	c. Update the Sport for Life Policy to include service level and infrastructure targets.	Short-term
		d. Develop programming and positive environments to foster girls' participation in sport.	Medium-term
		e. Continue to evaluate sport needs in the city (<i>from first involvement to high performance sport</i>) to inform infrastructure planning.	Short-term
		f. Expand introduction to sport programming for children and youth.	Short-term
		g. Revise allocation processes and booking guidelines to provide access to a variety of sports.	Short-term

Change the Game

This principle introduces approaches to improve existing practices and services and identifies areas to adapt or grow services that better respond to changes in the sector. It challenges historical definitions of recreation and promotes a new way of thinking about the role of public recreation in civic life.

short term = 0-5 years | medium term = 5-10 years | long term = +10 years

Commitments <i>What's changing?</i>	<i>Indicators</i> <i>How are we going to measure progress?</i>	Actions <i>How are we going to do it?</i>	How long will it take?
Elevate recreation in City planning decisions	Improved alignment between user needs / preferences and amenity design and locations	a. Incorporate recreation policies into municipal and intermunicipal plans to guide future development.	Medium-term
		b. Develop a strategy for engaging with relevant City of Calgary Boards, Commissions and Committees to help gather information, promote opportunities and identify needs.	Short-term
		c. Work in partnership with residents and City services to ensure recreation is integrated into growth and development planning to create a city that is not only functional and efficient, but also engaging, fun and enriching for all residents.	Short-term
Improve customer access and experiences using technology in alignment with The City's Digital Equity Strategy	Frequency of interactions through digital system Public recreation users reporting favourably with level of technology	a. Incorporate enhanced technology to better serve residents and support positive user experiences (e.g., City of Calgary's AI chatbot, drowning prevention system, digital wayfinding, generate 'recreation guides' of walks and activities for communities, etc.).	Medium-term
		b. Incorporate livestreaming technology for youth sport games.	Short-term
Develop a recruitment and retention strategy to grow and diversify the sector	Share of staff from Indigenous and equity-denied backgrounds	a. Develop Indigenous youth training programs for all levels of employment.	Medium-term
	Increased awareness of opportunities among equity denied individuals	b. Review programs, training, hiring and retention practices to increase the number of staff from Indigenous and equity-denied backgrounds in all positions (including leadership development programs and qualification certifications).	Medium-term

Commitments <i>What's changing?</i>	<i>Indicators</i> <i>How are we going to measure progress?</i>	Actions <i>How are we going to do it?</i>	How long will it take?
Improve public access to information and services	Web traffic volume through City portal for public recreation Reduction in average waitlist time (or number of people on a waitlist) Increased awareness of recreation opportunities among the public	a. Streamline public-facing information and registration services (<i>online information hub</i>) for system-wide opportunities. b. Broaden reach of programs in partnership with health service agencies, providing free admission to participating facilities. Ensure program benefits and eligibility extend to social and mental health outcomes, not just physical health outcomes.	Short-term Medium-term
Introduce new programming to respond to public interest and demand	Improved service alignment to the needs and interests of all residents Increased participation rates for new offerings	a. Leveraging spaces for expanded programming (e.g., <i>'How to', STEM programming, tutoring, life skills, etc.</i>). b. Pilot new community-led cultural programs (e.g., <i>traditional Indigenous games, cultural events, and gatherings, etc.</i>).	Short-term Short-term
Introduce transportation initiatives to increase access	Decrease in residents identifying transportation as a barrier to public recreation Increase in transit services (<i>stops, route frequency and scheduling, etc.</i>) and bike lanes that support access to amenities	a. Charter buses to bring both urban and on-reserve Indigenous youth to public recreation facilities for recreation programming and opportunities. b. Complete transit accessibility studies of each facility and amenity to identify and address gaps in active modes of travel.	Medium-term Medium-term
Respond to impacts of climate change	Total carbon footprint of recreational infrastructure Change in total interrupted hours to programs and activities due to extreme weather events	a. Develop and implement a long-term climate action plan for public recreation programs and services. b. Develop a plan to retrofit buildings for greater environmental sustainability.	Medium-term Medium-term

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5



A Closer Look at Recreation Infrastructure

Calgary's public recreation facilities are cornerstones of complete communities. They provide services and amenities that bring people together to create active living opportunities, foster healthy and dynamic neighbourhoods, contribute to a sense of belonging and add to the cultural vitality of our communities. They also stimulate the economy through sport tourism, community development and revitalization and job creation.

Investment in public recreation by provincial and federal governments has ebbed and flowed over the past half a century
(see Appendix 1: History of Investment).

The unpredictability of funding has challenged long-term service planning efforts. Limited and inconsistent funding over the years has not met investment needs, resulting in infrastructure gaps in Calgary.

Through extensive research and analysis, GamePLAN establishes the first system-wide service standards for public recreation provision in Calgary. The next section describes how service standards were developed using indicators, which are unique to each of the **four facility types**:

- **aquatic and fitness facilities,**
- **arenas,**
- **athletic parks and**
- **fieldhouses.**

Emerging and evolving sports

Calgary’s population growth and diversification have influenced the sport and recreation sector, leading to the emergence and growth of new sports and increased demand for practice and play space. The evolution of indoor soccer away from a boarded format and the rise of sports like pickleball have put pressure on existing sport infrastructure. Amateur sport organizations are struggling to access practice and play spaces due to this increased demand.

The Emerging and Evolving Sport Study that The City has underway aims to integrate emerging sports into current processes, leveraging existing assets to ensure equitable access for all sports. The study will inform decisions related to facility upgrades, land requests and broader sport development processes to create a more flexible and responsive system.



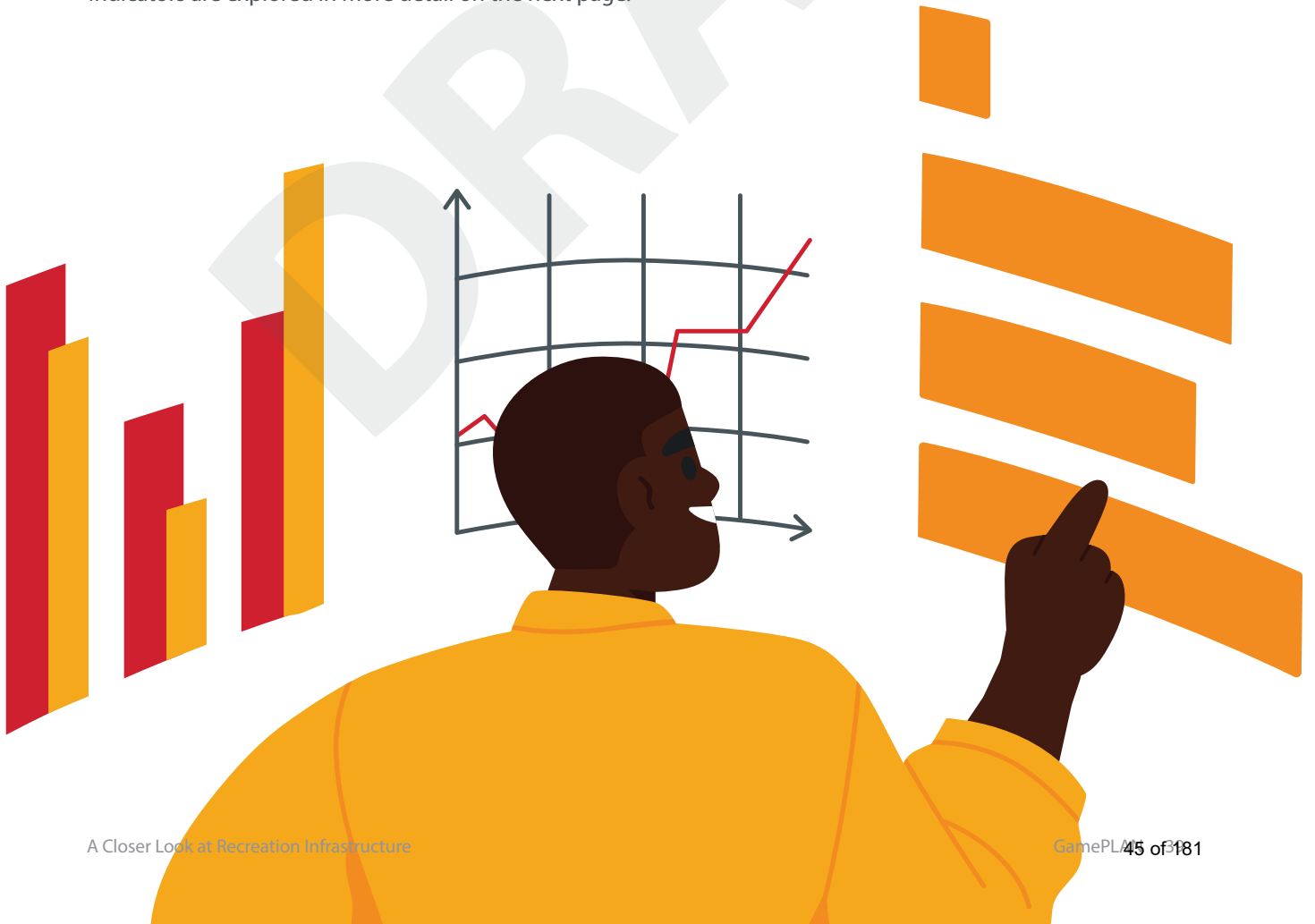
5.1. Service Indicators

Robust prioritizing criteria exist to help direct investment in a limited funding environment. Three primary indicators are used to identify gaps and overlaps on a city-wide basis.

These **three primary indicators** are:

- per capita provision,
- travel distance and
- facility suitability.

Indicators are explored in more detail on the next page.



5.1.1. Per capita provision

Most of Calgary’s population growth occurs in new communities. The rest occurs in established communities. New communities rely on public amenities and infrastructure to grow and thrive. At the same time, established communities continue to densify, leading to increased pressure on existing infrastructure.

A lack of suitable facilities (see section 5.1.3: Facility suitability) in established areas also puts pressure on facilities in new communities. This has led to increased demand for new recreation facilities where service gaps exist and the need to update existing facilities in established communities.

The City uses population ratios (per capita planning) to inform the total number of facilities needed and to identify areas of over or under supply. The below table identifies per capita service standards based on the optimal service population for each facility type.

A rapidly growing city

Understanding how Calgary has developed over time and the types of communities that exist within the city is important when planning for the future. In the last three decades, Calgary has experienced steady population growth and diversification and has nearly doubled in size since 1996. In 2023, Calgary’s population grew by approximately 75,000 (or 5.6 per cent of the total population). That’s equivalent to the population of Medicine Hat. Despite efforts to balance growth between established and new communities, 80 per cent of growth is occurring in Calgary’s new communities located around the periphery of the city.

Off-site levies (a charge paid by developers when building a new community) currently provide partial funding for the construction of new aquatic and fitness facilities in these areas. However, there is currently no sustained funding source to locate and construct new arenas, athletic parks or fieldhouses in these communities. As a result, only a limited number have been built, leading to service gaps and inequity.

Established communities are without a source of funding to improve or replace aging facilities. Without new and updated recreation facilities, there is a growing gap in services and amenities in established communities.

Facility type	Per capita service standard*
Aquatics	1:75,000
Ice Sheets	1:32,000
Fieldhouses	1:150,000
Athletic Parks	1:22,000**

*Ratios are based on the number of recreation facilities per service population.

**Class A/B & artificial turf fields.

5.1.2. Travel distance

Travel distance is a major factor influencing peoples' decisions about where, when or if to participate in recreation. Service standards use geospatial analysis to understand where facilities are located and identify service populations (*or catchments*). Catchments are based on travel distances from facilities along the road network. Facilities were mapped and travel was extended out along the road network.

Through data analysis, including cellphone geolocation data, two catchment areas were identified based on peoples' willingness to travel:

- a 5-kilometre catchment representing preferred travel distance and
- a 10-kilometre catchment representing the typical maximum distance people are willing to travel.

As an indicator, travel distance is unique to the facility type. For example, aquatic and fitness centres serve an important community function. They provide amenities and services geared towards the general public and support the surrounding population catchment (*or community*) on a local basis. Aquatic and fitness centres contain key amenities that bring people together to swim, workout or attend a program. For these facilities, travel distance is the most crucial indicator of whether or not service standards are being met.

Arenas, athletic parks and fieldhouses primarily serve the sport community through practices, games and tournaments. They typically accommodate sport groups for whom travel is a requirement for league games and competition. Geographical distance as an indicator is less significant for these facility types than the total number of facilities available across Calgary.

5.1.3. Facility suitability

A suitable facility is one that is still within its useful life (<50 years) and meets current needs and standards. For example, modern aquatic facilities include multiple amenities (e.g., pools, gymnasia, fitness, etc.). In general, suitable facilities support a range of uses, provide for barrier-free access, are inclusive and welcoming (e.g., universal change rooms, gathering spaces, etc.) and include flexible spaces for ancillary programming (e.g., multipurpose rooms, physiotherapy, child care, etc.).

In addition to their limited functionality, extensive critical maintenance is required to keep aging facilities open and does not solve the problem of dwindling demand for smaller, single-use facilities. Constrained due to their small sizes and aging spaces, they are not adaptable to changing demand.

For example, older, single ice sheet arenas lack the flexibility to accommodate tournaments and are operationally less efficient than multi-rink facilities.

Facility Lifespan

Recreation operating environments can be harsh (*humid, high traffic and high impact*) and facilities have a typical lifespan of around 50 years. Based on this lifespan, many public recreation facilities are nearing or past the end of their useful life. They are costly to operate and maintain and do not meet present day service, accessibility nor energy standards.

5.1.3. Facility suitability cont.

Aging facilities

Aging facilities also have limited capacity, resulting in long waitlists for programs. For example, many older aquatic facilities have a single swim basin that can only accommodate one activity at a time. New aquatic facilities have multiple basins to allow different activities (e.g., swim lessons, leisure swim, aqua-fit, etc.) to occur simultaneously. Aging facilities are also not adaptable to provide universal, barrier-free access (e.g., zero-entry, adaptive programming).

In 2024, there were more than 24 thousand waitlisted swim lesson registrations at City-operated facilities (Note: a participant can be on more than one waitlist). This means The City would have to increase swim lessons by 50 per cent to meet current demand. As a result of their limited functionality and capacity constraints, these facilities can be underutilized as people move to newer facilities that can better meet their needs. This puts pressure on newer recreation facilities that are quickly finding themselves at capacity.

Value for tax dollars

Larger, integrated facilities are more cost-effective and operationally efficient than smaller, single-use facilities. For example, the cost per square foot to operate a flatwater pool is approximately double that of a full-service leisure centre built in the 1980s. Facilities built to modern standards, such as Remington YMCA at Quarry Park that has efficient building and operating systems, can be four times less expensive to operate than a single-use facility.



Facilities built to modern standards can be 4x less expensive per square foot to operate than a single-use facility



5.2. Service Standards

Service standards provide a baseline to measure current service levels in Calgary.

In addition to the primary indicators above, service standards consider multiple other factors, including:

- community planning considerations,
- previous studies on amenity access, participation trends and market demands (e.g., *Arenas Facilities Study, 2021*) and
- existing policies (e.g., *Sport for Life Policy, CP2018-03*).

For the purpose of GamePLAN, service standards use the most universally applicable and understandable indicator to propose service level scenarios to which Calgary should aspire: per capita service provision.

Facility type	Per capita service standard*
Aquatics	1:75,000
Ice Sheets	1:32,000
Fieldhouses	1:150,000
Athletic Parks	1:22,000**

*Ratios are based on the number of recreation facilities per service population.

**Class A/B & artificial turf fields.

5.2.1. Facility investment principles

Understanding how many of which facilities are needed is one piece of the puzzle. GamePLAN can only be achieved with the right infrastructure in place to support it. The way facilities are designed and distributed is also important. The following principles have been developed to support achievement of service standards.

Equity

Recreation facilities will be designed to be welcoming and inclusive. They will be located strategically to remove barriers and enhance access. Facilities will include universal, accessible and barrier-free design elements, creating physical and developmental disability-friendly spaces.

They will allow for flexible uses, including community, cultural, social, educational and support services.

27 per cent of people living in Calgary identify as having a disability.

In 2024, Vecova, Calgary's only therapeutic warm water pool, announced its pending closure due to a lack of capital funding.

Efficiency

Recreation facilities will be planned and designed to optimize operational efficiency and co-located with community amenities and infrastructure. The City and partners will work together to ensure facilities, amenities and services are complementary and to eliminate redundancies in the public recreation system.

Sustainability

Recommendations for capital investments will be based on sound evidence of where re/development will have the greatest impact and The City's ability to maintain assets. Revenue opportunities will be pursued to the greatest extent possible while maintaining affordability and financial sustainability. Re/development of facilities will align with Calgary's Climate Action Strategy to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Community

Recreation will be a cornerstone of complete communities. New and retrofitted facilities will invite participation from the communities they serve. They will be avenues for participation in civic life and encourage social, mental and physical well-being. They will be community hubs where people can gather and feel fulfilled through participation in their community, social and cultural events, sport and athleticism, leisure and fun.

Adaptability

Facilities will be re/developed to be future-focused and adaptable to changing demand. Spaces will be designed to be flexible to accommodate multi-sport and recreation uses, including evolving and emerging sport requirements. An emphasis on versatile, adaptable design will ensure facilities are resilient in the long-term.

5.3. Understanding Current State

The below table shows how Calgary’s current per capita facility provision compares to other municipalities.

With respect to aquatic facilities, Calgary has a higher provision ratio with more people being served by a single facility, therefore at a lower service level, than other cities.

While Calgary has a higher number of ice sheets per capita than both Edmonton and Toronto, it provides lower levels of service for aquatics, fields and fieldhouses. Calgary has fewer fieldhouses and premium fields (Class A, Class B and artificial turf) compared to other similar cities.

Amenities	Calgary <i>population* 1,491,900</i>		Edmonton <i>population 1,010,899</i>		Toronto <i>population 2,794,356</i>		Medicine Hat <i>population 63,271</i>	
	Number	Provision	Number	Provision	Number	Provision	Number	Provision
Indoor Aquatics Facilities	23	1:65,000	21	1:48,000	59	1:47,000	3	1:21,000
Ice Sheets	54	1:28,000	31	1:32,000	65	1:43,000	5	1:13,000
Fieldhouses (Open Span Facilities)	5	1:298,000	9	1:112,000	9	1:310,000	2	1:32,000
Athletic Parks (Class A/B or AT Field)	30	1:50,000	39	1:25,000	119	1:23,000	1	1:63,000

*Based City of Calgary 2024 Mid-Year Progress update Estimate

5.4. Service Level Scenarios

Service level scenarios have been developed to allow Council to select a service level for Calgary for the next 25 years.

The service level scenarios below (Going Under, Staying Afloat and Making Waves) show what people living in Calgary will experience in terms of facility access and program availability based on different levels of investment.



5.4.1. Going Under

GamePLAN predicts that with no dedicated funding for recreation infrastructure (besides Off-Site Levies, which are committed to new aquatic facilities in growth communities) there will be a stark decline in service in the next 25 years.

The oldest facilities will be forced to close without the ability to add or replace services elsewhere, significantly impacting program availability. Service gaps in new communities will continue to widen as the population grows and existing facilities will not be able to compensate for increased demand from inner city closures.

The table below shows how continued underinvestment in public recreation will impact provision rates as a percentage of the Service Standard.

The next page shows how current levels of funding will impact Calgary’s public recreation facility inventory and the implications this has for booking availability, programming and access. Some service impacts include:

- Decrease in annual swim lesson availability by 10 per cent compared to current state, and by 30 per cent when factoring in population growth
- 41 per cent decrease in ice sheets
- Bookable hours for fieldhouses and athletic parks remain the same as the population continues to grow, bringing service levels down over time

Facility Type	Service Standard	Current State	Going Under	
		per cent of Service Standard	Provision	per cent of Service Standard
Aquatics	1:75,000	115 per cent	1:150,000	55 per cent
Ice Sheets	1:32,000	115 per cent	1:64,000	50 per cent
Fieldhouses	1:150,000	60 per cent	1:340,000	45 per cent
Athletic Parks	1:22,000 (Class A/B or AT fields)	45 per cent	1:55,000	40 per cent

Going Under

+ New builds

★ Upgrades

× Closures

🔧 Maintained

Aquatics

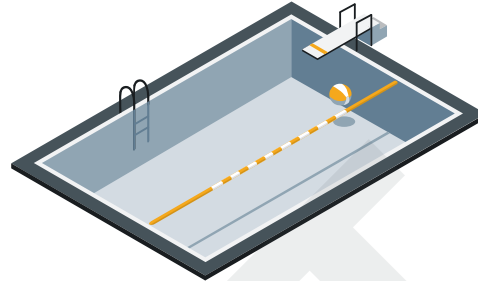
55 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

15

+ 3

★ 0



12 🔧

11 ×

Ice Sheets

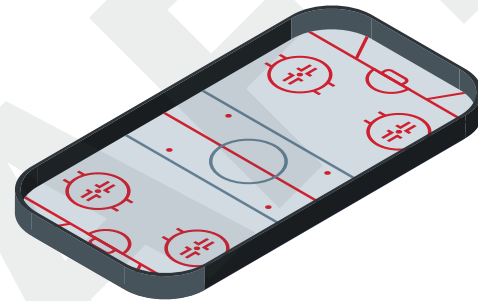
50 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

32

+ 0

★ 0



32 🔧

22 ×

Fieldhouses

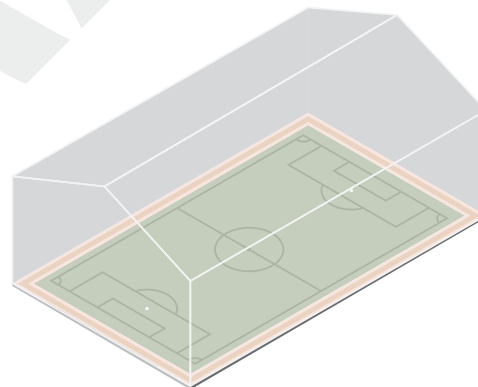
40 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

5

+ 1

★ 0



4 🔧

2 ×

Athletic Park Fields

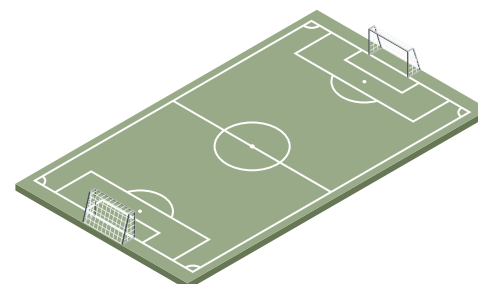
40 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

38

+ 0

★ 0



38 🔧

0 ×

5.4.2. Staying Afloat

The Staying Afloat scenario targets investment to address gaps in new communities while renewing some facilities in established areas. While this scenario will not achieve service standards nor keep pace with population growth, progress will be made towards delivering more equitable service throughout the city.

Staying Afloat assumes an increased capital investment to be allocated on a priority basis to reduce gaps and minimize service disruptions. New facilities will be built and older, operationally costly facilities will be decommissioned.

Several existing facilities will be upgraded and several more will be maintained as is.

The result will be a slight decrease in the total number of facilities in the city with the consolidation of some older, single-use facilities into fewer, larger integrated facilities. Integrated facilities are more cost-effective to operate and respond to broader public interests.

This service level prioritizes areas where service gaps exist, however, will not eliminate gaps entirely. It will maintain an equivalent level of service as today by modernizing facilities and improving capacity.

Some service impacts include:

- better facility distribution across the city
- 10 per cent more swim lessons
- same capacity for ice sheets
- 2x bookable hours at fieldhouses and athletic parks
- overall service levels are maintained as population grows

Staying Afloat

+ New builds

★ Upgrades

× Closures

🔧 Maintained

Aquatics

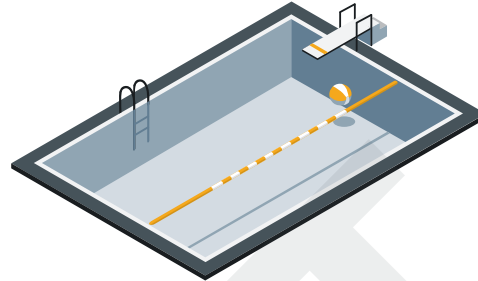
80 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

22

+ 4

★ 9



9 🔧

5 ×

Ice Sheets

85 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

54

+ 4

★ 36



14 🔧

10 ×

Fieldhouses

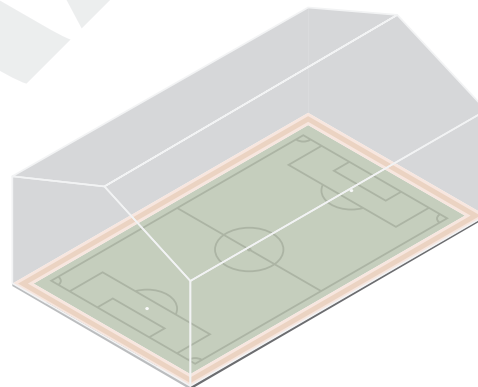
75 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

10

+ 5

★ 3



2 🔧

1 ×

Athletic Park Fields

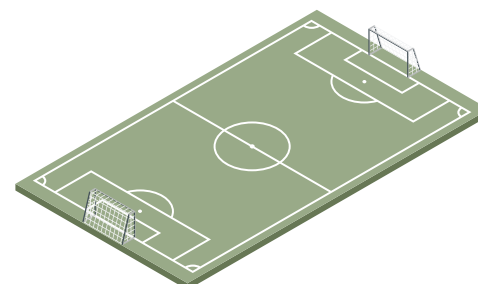
75 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

71

+ 25

★ 26



20 🔧

1 ×

5.4.3. Making Waves

Making Waves strives to achieve service standards for each facility type. The scenario will keep pace with population growth while providing equitable levels of service in both established and new communities.

The scenario assumes an increased capital investment to be allocated on a priority basis to reduce gaps and minimize service disruptions. New facilities will be built and older, operationally costly facilities will be decommissioned. Several existing facilities will be upgraded and several more will be maintained as is.

Under this service level, facilities and services are responsive to the expressed needs of people living in Calgary (captured through public research) and located equitably throughout the city. Service standards will be met or exceeded with increased access to prime time and reduced waitlists for programs and services.

Some service impacts include:

- equitable facility distribution across the city
- 40 per cent more swim lessons
- 25 per cent more ice sheets
- 2.5X bookable hours at fieldhouses and athletic parks
- service increases to match population growth

Making Waves

+ New builds

★ Upgrades

✕ Closures

🔧 Maintained

Aquatics

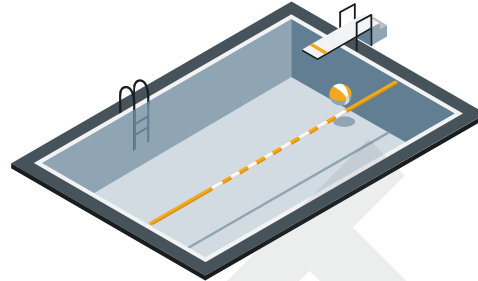
95 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

26

+ 8

★ 12



6 🔧

5 ✕

Ice Sheets

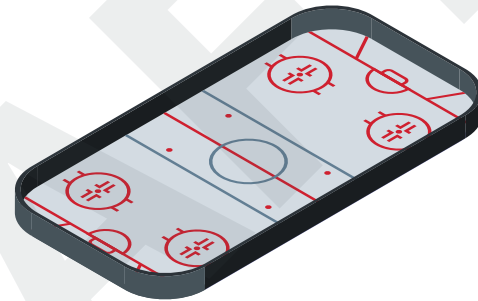
100 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

67

+ 16

★ 41



10 🔧

9 ✕

Fieldhouses

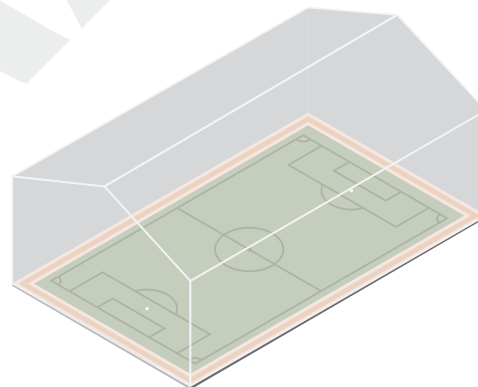
100 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

13

+ 8

★ 3



2 🔧

1 ✕

Athletic Park Fields

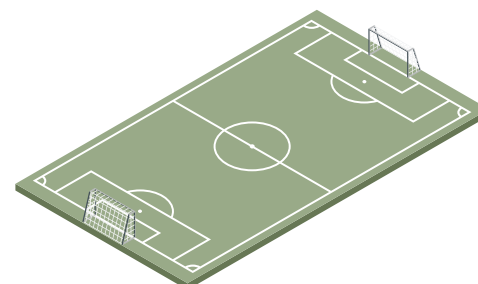
95 per cent of service standard achieved

Total Inventory

89

+ 43

★ 35



11 🔧

1 ✕

5.4.4. Service level scenarios summary

The table below summarizes outcomes of investment in each service level (*Going Under, Staying Afloat or Making Waves*). It measures current state against achievement of the service standard, which uses per capita facility provision as a baseline. For example, currently the public recreation system is achieving 115 percent provision against the standard of one pool for every 75,000 people. If current funding levels are maintained, provision will decline to 55 percent of the standard by 2050.

Facility Type	Service Standard	Measure	Current State	Going Under	Service Level Scenarios	
					Staying Afloat	Making Waves
Aquatics	1:75,000	per cent achieved of standard	115 per cent	55 per cent	80 per cent*	95 per cent
Ice Sheets	1:32,000	per cent achieved of standard	115 per cent	50 per cent	85 per cent	100 per cent
Fieldhouses	1:150,000	per cent achieved of standard	50 per cent	45 per cent	70 per cent	95 per cent
Athletic Parks	1:22,000 (Class A/B or AT fields)	per cent achieved of standard	45 per cent	40 per cent	75 per cent	95 per cent
Annual Capital Investment (in millions)**				\$0-\$30 M	\$100-\$150 M	\$200-\$250 M

*While achieving only 80 per cent of the service standard, this scenario will include increased capacity due to upgraded and expanded aquatic facilities that have additional swim lanes and leisure water.

** 2024 dollars, not adjusted for inflation. Order of magnitude costs for estimation purposes only.

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Closing

GamePLAN reflects feedback from thousands of touch points with partners and the public. Alongside data and research, it tells some hard truths about the current state of public recreation in Calgary. It tells a story about how investments in infrastructure are misaligned with the value public recreation holds for individuals, families and communities.

Public recreation is more than just arenas, pools and playfields. It's every part of our community reflected in and represented by the spaces, places and services that touch their lives in a significant, personal way.

It is a tool for advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging. That is the vision for public recreation in Calgary – where every person can play, connect and create in active, affordable and safe spaces they helped to create.

The public recreation system in Calgary is at a crossroads. More than 70 per cent of public recreation facilities were built more than 35 years ago in established areas. They reflect a different era and a different city than exists today – one that has grown and changed significantly. Most older facilities have limited capacity to reflect that change while investment in public recreation infrastructure in new communities has not kept pace with growth.

This has left many residents without access to play, connect and create in public recreation spaces. Without significant investment, the system will degrade. Facilities will close and service levels will drastically reduce.



GamePLAN considers the journey of public recreation over the last half-century. Investment by other orders of government has ebbed and flowed and, finally, stagnated.

The unpredictability of funding has made it difficult to plan strategically for growth and change. Without additional and consistent investment in the public recreation system, Calgary will experience a rapid decline in recreation service. Facilities will close – several in the next few years – without the ability to replace or add services elsewhere.

As the first system-wide look at public recreation in Calgary, GamePLAN strives to create a foundation for improved collaboration and information sharing among partners to ensure programs, services, policies and processes respond to the evolving needs of Calgary’s diverse communities. The vision, principles and commitments that underpin GamePLAN will help guide service decisions into the future so we can keep the health and well-being of people living in Calgary front and centre. It will help to inform policy, strengthen partnerships and introduce innovation to strengthen the system’s collective impact.

GamePLAN also provides critical context to inform future investments in public recreation infrastructure. It presents three infrastructure service levels based on different scales of investment. The difficulty is both the Staying Afloat and Making Waves service levels represent a period of catching up from decades of underinvestment.

GamePLAN considers where we have been (*as a city and as a public service*), where we are now and where we are going. It is not a point in time assessment of the needs and values of our city but a thoughtful, forward-looking strategy that sets Calgary out as a livable city with a high quality of life, now and in the future. It is both a foundational document and a living strategy that will be updated at regular intervals to ensure it consistently reflects the values, interests and needs of the public.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who helped reimagine public recreation in Calgary! We hope you will continue to advocate for this important public service by sharing your perspectives, experiences and desires for the future of public recreation.

Appendix 1.

History of Investments

Investment in public recreation infrastructure has ebbed and flowed over several decades. While funding programs by other orders of government have been unpredictable, The City of Calgary has consistently invested in providing public benefit through recreation.

1960s

- South Calgary Outdoor Pool
- Highwood Outdoor Pool
- Inglewood Aquatic
- Killarney Aquatic
- Father David Bauer Arena
- Stu Peppard Arena
- Stanley Park Outdoor Pool
- Forest Lawn Outdoor Pool
- Foothills Athletic Park
- Renfrew Athletic Park
- Glenmore Athletic Park
- Renfrew Aquatic
- Shouldice Pool
- Stew Henry Arena
- Rose Kohn Arena
- Shouldice Athletic Park
- Vecova
- Shouldice Arena
- Ernie Starr Arena
- Acadia Aquatic
- Foothills Aquatic

Calgary’s public recreation system as we know it today began to take shape in the 1960s. With funding support from the provincial and federal governments through the Municipal Winter Works Incentive Program, The City opened its first three indoor arenas (Stu Peppard Arena, Father David Bauer Arena, and Stew Hendry Arena) and four indoor pools (Killarney Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Foothills Aquatic Centre, Acadia Aquatic and Fitness Centre and Inglewood Aquatic Centre).

In 1968, the Alberta Government launched its first recreation-specific capital grant program, the Recreation Development Act: Regulation 198/68. This five-year per-capita based grant assisted municipalities with capital expenditures related to recreation. The City applied for and received all five years of funding as a lump sum to help build Rose Kohn Arena and the Renfrew Aquatic & Recreation Centre, with about half of the funding coming from the grant. Having exhausted grant funding from this source by 1969, The City scaled back on plans to construct Ernie Starr and Shouldice Arenas. The City funded the two arenas without grant support by having less spectator seating and fewer dressing rooms than The City’s previously constructed arenas.

1970s

- Thornhill Aquatic
- Frank McCool Arena
- Canyon Meadows Aquatic
- Forest Lawn Athletic Park
- Triwood Arena
- Glenmore Aquatic
- Optimist Arena
- Murray Copot Arena
- Kinsmen Arena
- West Hillhurst Arena
- Fairview Arena
- Bob Bahan Aquatic
- Sir Winston Churchill Aquatic
- Jack Setters Arena
- Norma Bush Arena
- W. Mount Pleasant Arena
- Silver Springs Outdoor Pool

In the early 1970s, with no provincial or federal funding support, The City continued to construct pools and arenas to meet the needs of a growing city. Three pools (Canyon Meadows Aquatic and Fitness Centre, Glenmore Aquatic Centre and Thornhill Aquatic and Recreation Centre) and one arena (Optimist Arena) were opened in 1971.

In 1972, nationwide unemployment hit 7.1 per cent and the Federal government announced a revival of the Winter Works grant program. A total of \$500 million was committed to projects across Canada. The City was allocated funds to aid in the construction of Murray Copot Arena (1972), Bob Bahan Aquatic and Fitness Centre, Sir Winston Churchill Aquatic and Recreation Centre (1974) and Norma Bush Arena (1975).

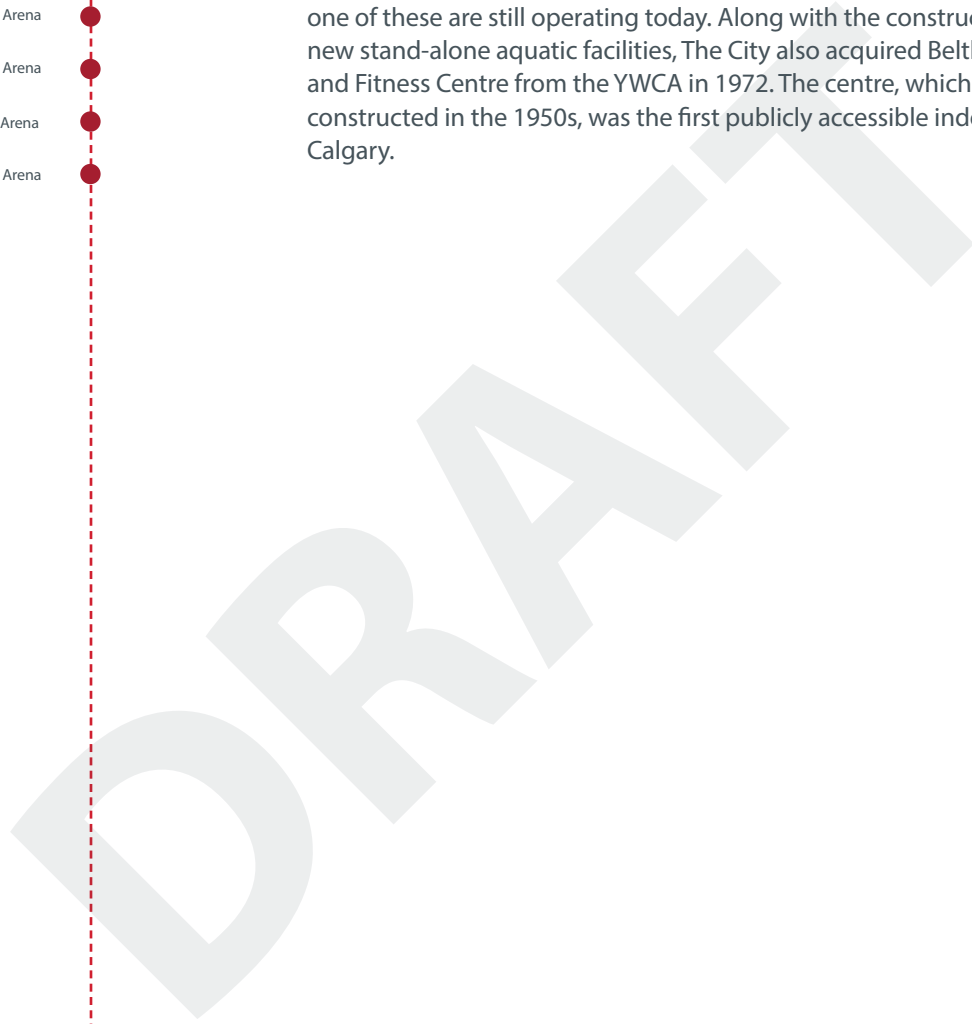
In 1975, the Province launched a financial grant program for the construction of recreation facilities and amenities: the Major Cultural Recreation Facility Grant or MC/R. The program was another per capita funding model but introduced a higher level of assistance than was provided by the Recreation Development Act. Horst Schmid, Alberta’s Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation at the time called the program “the most significant step ever taken in Canada towards the development of recreation.” The program supported the construction of more than 15 new publicly accessible recreation facilities in Calgary with eleven being constructed in partnership with community associations.

Also in the 1970s, The City invested in its first partnerships with community groups to build and operate recreation facilities. In 1971, The City entered into a dollar-for-dollar cost sharing agreement with the Triwood Community Association to develop the Triwood Arena. In 1972, two more community arenas, West Hillhurst Community Association Arena and Fairview Arena, were built using the dollar-for-dollar cost sharing structure.

- Deerfoot Athletic Park
- Henry Viney Arena
- Brentwood Arena
- Ken Bracko/Max Bell Arena
- Lake Bonavista Arena
- Oakridge Arena
- Thornclyffe Arena
- Huntington Hills Arena
- Frank McCool Arena
- Bowness Arena

Beginning in 1970 and occurring annually until 1977, the Stampede City Kinsmen were actively fundraising to help build City of Calgary arenas. Two years into fundraising, the Kinsmen Arena was opened in southwest Calgary with contributions from the Kinsmen Club. In 1974, the Jack Setters Arena became the second public arena to receive funding from the Kinsmen's fundraising efforts. This was followed by Henry Viney Arena in 1977.

A total of 23 facilities were constructed between 1970 and 1979. Twenty-one of these are still operating today. Along with the construction of five new stand-alone aquatic facilities, The City also acquired Beltline Aquatic and Fitness Centre from the YWCA in 1972. The centre, which had been constructed in the 1950s, was the first publicly accessible indoor pool in Calgary.



**1980s
and 1990s**

The 1980s saw a downturn in the global economy and Calgary experienced its first population decrease in more than 20 years. As the Major Cultural Recreation Facility Grant was a per capita based grant, funding severely diminished and capital development had to be restrained. The opening of Village Square and Southland Leisure Centres in 1983 marked the end of an era of significant investment in recreation infrastructure in Calgary when then Mayor Ralph Klein declared that “no more of these facilities will be built in Calgary for a long time because we simply don’t have the dollars”. The collapse of the Kinsmen Arena in 1983 reinforced public thinking that investment in recreation should be deprioritized.

Throughout the 1980s and 90s, funding for recreation infrastructure was reduced drastically by all levels of government. Only three new indoor public recreation facilities were developed in Calgary during this time: the Calgary Soccer Centre in 1992 and Don Hartman North East Sportsplex in 1995, while Melcor YMCA at Crowfoot was redeveloped in 1997. During the same timeframe, Calgary grew by almost 30 per cent, with the population jumping from just under 600,000 in 1981 to more than 765,000 in 1996.

- MNP Centre
- Trico Leisure
- Southland Leisure
- Village Square
- Acadia Athletic Complex
- Jimmie Condon Arena
- E. Calgary Twin Arena
- Acadia Athletic Park
- Crowchild Twin Arena
- Optimist Athletic Park
- George Blunden Arena
- Woodbine Athletic Park
- Pop Davies Athletic Park
- Tom Brook Athletic Park
- Calgary Soccer Centre
- Don Hartman Arena
- Crowfoot Recreation Centre
- Calgary Soccer Centre Athletic Park
- Melcor YMCA
- Calgary Soccer Dome Centre
- Calgary Rugby Union

2000s

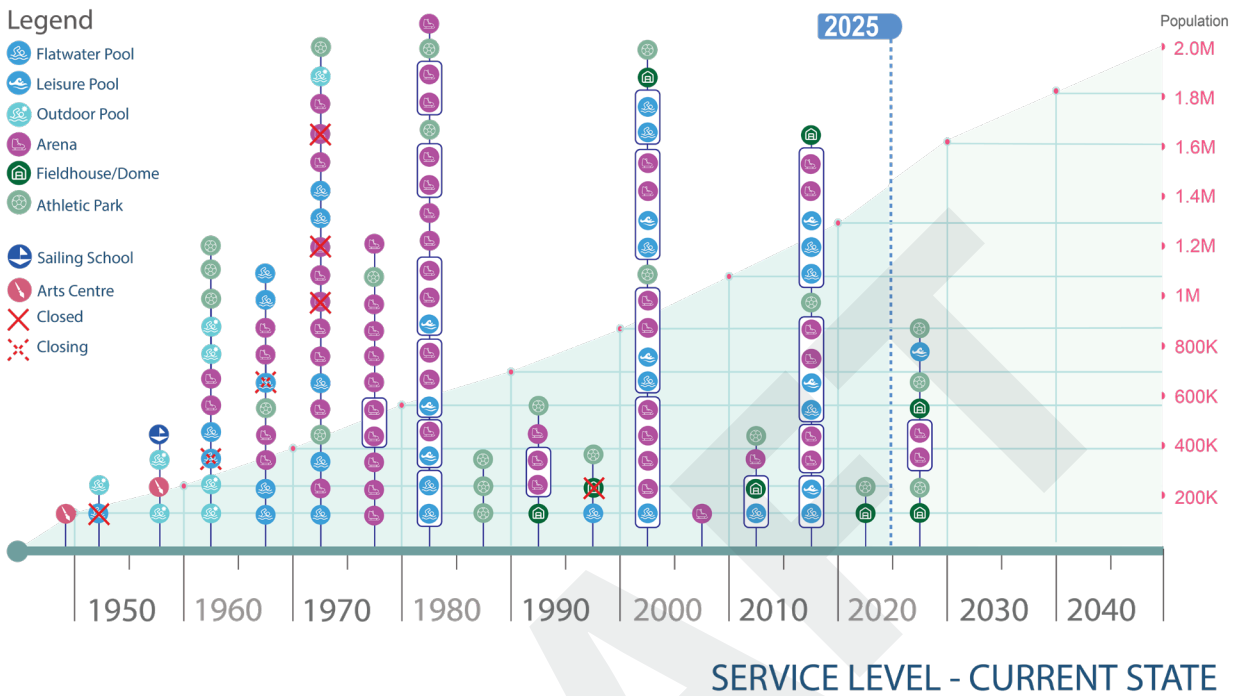
As a part of The City’s 1999 capital budget, without support from the provincial or federal governments, Council approved \$75 million toward three new regional recreation centres to address the challenge of providing an adequate number of recreation facilities for a growing city. Westside Recreation Centre opened in 2000, the Cardel Rec South and Shawnessy YMCA site opened in 2001 and Vivo for Healthier Generations opened in 2003. Each facility received \$25 million for construction from The City with community fundraising and corporate donations supplementing costs.

Provincial funding for municipal infrastructure would not become available again until 2007 with the launch of the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI). Designed to help support local infrastructure priorities, the program allocated more than \$15.2 billion to local Alberta governments between 2007 and 2023, including more than \$230 million for the construction of new recreation facilities in Calgary.

With this renewed provincial support, The City was able to build three new recreation facilities, including Great Plains Recreation Centre, Brookfield Residential YMCA at Seton Remington YMCA in QUarry Park and Shane Homes YMCA at Rocky Ridge. A second ice sheet was also added at the Trico Centre for Family Wellness. Funding from MSI added more than one-million square feet of recreation facilities and amenities to the city.

- Cardel Recreation
- Vivo
- Inland Athletic Park
- Westside Recreation
- MNP Centre
- Calgary W. Soccer
- Jaycee Slowpitch Calgary Irish Athletic Park
- Perry Cavanaugh Arena
- Genesis/Saddletowne YMCA
- Trico Centre
- Ernest Manning Athletic Park
- Remington YMCA
- Great Plains YMCA
- Shane Homes Rocky Ridge YMCA
- New Brighton Centre
- Brookfield YMCA Seton
- Calgary Soccer Centre Renovation
- Shouldice Dome
- Genesis Centre Athletic Park
- Calgary Soccer Dome
- Rocky Ridge Athletic Park
- Glenmore Arena
- Belmont Fieldhouse
- Saddleridge Athletic Park
- MNP Centre Expansion
- Northeast Athletic Park

Public Recreation Infrastructure Construction Dates



Appendix 2. **Research Summary**

Research Overview

GamePLAN is supported by a robust research program to better understand public perceptions, behaviours and motivations for attending public recreation facilities and amenities.

Research includes:

- primary research with recreation customers and non-customers,
- municipal benchmarking,
- a review of sport and recreation participation trends,
- a review of planning and design best practices and
- a review of existing policies, plans, studies and strategies.

Research provides insights, data and context needed to understand current state and inform decisions about the future of public recreation service in Calgary. Findings were used to develop a strategic direction for GamePLAN that accounts for current trends, opportunities and risks.

Primary Research

Purpose

The purpose of primary research is to assess demand for and usage of recreation facilities and amenities, understand perspectives on recreation facility and amenity design and how they impact customer experience.

Methodology

Component 1: General Population Telephone Survey (August 2023)

The general population telephone survey assessed demand for recreation facilities and amenities among people living in Calgary and provided insight into recreation behaviours. A total of 700 adults (18+ years) participated in the survey. Note: results are statistically significant and can be generalized for Calgary's population.

Component 2: Online Customer Survey (August 2023)

The online customer survey asked current City of Calgary recreation customers for their perspectives on recreation facility design and improvements. Respondents were recruited on site at City recreation facilities. A total of 931 people participated in the survey.

Component 3: Online Recreation Amenity Prioritization Survey (August 2023)

A Maximum Difference Scaling exercise was conducted to understand how people living in Calgary prioritize recreation amenities and services. A list of amenities and services was ranked from most to least important. A total of 1,043 City recreation customers (539) and non-customers (504) participated in the survey.

Component 4: Online Focus Groups (February 2024)

Focus groups were conducted to further explore feedback from previous research. A total of 33 people participated in one of five 90-minute focus groups.

Appendix 2: Research Summary

Themes and Findings

The City gathered feedback about participants' personal use, experiences with and perceptions of recreation facilities and amenities. Data is summarized into six themes described below.

Recreation Behaviours

- Recreation is important to people living in Calgary and they want to see it continue to grow and improve as a public service.
- Differences in recreation behaviours exist across groups and locations.
- More than half of people living in Calgary have attended a recreation facility in the past year (City-operated, partner-operated or private) and about one-in-five have used a City-operated recreation facility.
- Half of customers surveyed reported visiting recreation facilities with their children or other dependents.

Travel Patterns

- The majority of people living in Calgary who use recreation facilities will travel for less than 20 minutes to reach a facility (public or private) and would be willing to spend up to half an hour commuting if it were necessary.
- People living in Calgary spend more time traveling to recreation facilities for organized sports and registered programs and less time traveling for drop-in, instructor-led classes. Participants of organized sports are willing to travel further compared to other recreation users.
- Most people who visit a recreation facility drive there. Fewer than one-in-five people who visit a recreation facility walk, and one-in-10 use public transit.

Satisfaction with City of Calgary Recreation Facilities and Amenities

- Overall satisfaction with The City’s recreation facilities is high. Participants reported high levels of satisfaction with facility locations, family-friendliness and atmosphere and lower satisfaction with the availability and variety of programs.
- The four key satisfaction drivers for City of Calgary recreation facilities and amenities are:
 - facility layout,
 - atmosphere,
 - cleanliness and
 - condition of equipment.

Barriers and Motivators

Participants identified barriers and motivators for attending recreation facilities or participating in sport.

Barriers

- lack of time
- work commitments
- affordability
- physically unable to participate

Motivators

- improving physical health
- improving mental health
- spending time with family

Facility Selection

- When deciding which recreation facility to use, people indicated a preference for facilities that are clean and well maintained, convenient to get to with friendly, helpful staff. Providing a welcoming environment and value for money were also important motivators for facility selection.
- City of Calgary recreation users place a higher importance on free parking than users of other recreation facilities.

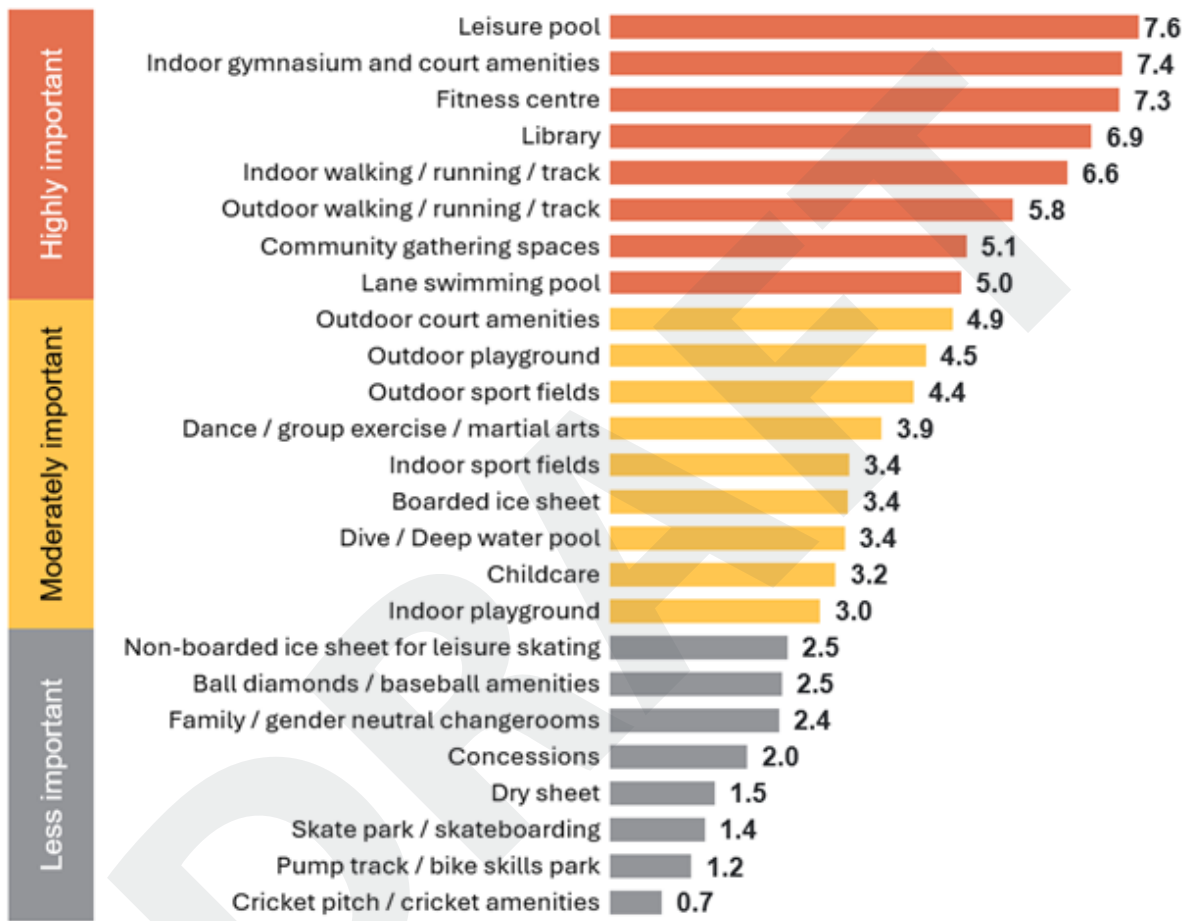
Facility/Amenities Priorities

- Ensuring facilities are physically accessible for all participants is considered a top priority for The City by most people living in Calgary.
- Offering a variety of available programs is also a priority.

Amenity Prioritization

- Research participants indicated that leisure pools, indoor gymnasiums and courts and fitness centres are the top three most important features for recreation facilities.
- More specialized amenities, such as cricket pitches, skate parks and pump tracks are viewed as less important in comparison to more general amenities such as libraries, tracks and fields, gathering spaces and swimming pools.
- In general, City of Calgary recreation customers are more likely than non-customers to place importance on facility-based recreation amenities like indoor pools, courts, fitness centres, sport fields and ice sheets. Non-customers place greater importance on lower impact or play-based amenities like libraries, walking or running tracks, outdoor courts and playgrounds.

MaxDiff Analysis



Phase 3: Prioritization Survey
 QB2. Which of the following do you consider "most important" and "least important" in having a positive experience at a recreation facility? Base: All respondents (Total: n=1,043)

Municipal Benchmarking

Purpose

GamePLAN compared Calgary’s per capita service provision with comparable Canadian municipalities:

- Edmonton,
- Medicine Hat and
- Kamloops.

Edmonton is similar in size to Calgary and the best proxy for comparison. Edmonton is facing similar challenges as Calgary with respect to aging infrastructure and population growth. Conversely, the populations of Medicine Hat and Kamloops are relatively equal to Calgary’s annual population growth, offering perspective about per capita provision.

There is currently no nationally recognized service standard for public recreation in Canada. When used in conjunction with local research, public engagement and supply and demand analyses, benchmarking provides valuable insight into other municipalities’ approaches and standards.

Methodology

Data was gathered from municipal and regional district websites, master plans and studies. While the cities selected for benchmarking are those for which relatively accurate data is available, some margin of error likely exists, especially for a high-volume amenity type like sports fields.

Benchmarking is based on the number of facilities per capita and does not take into consideration the quality and functionality of those assets.

Themes and Findings

Across Canada, most major cities appear to provide a high level of service for most recreation facility types. However, many of these facilities are aging and require major renewal or reconstruction. Compared to Edmonton, Medicine Hat and Kamloops, Calgary currently provides a lower level of service for almost all facility types, with the exception of having more ice sheets per capita compared Edmonton.

Amenities	Service Standard	Calgary <i>population* 1,491,900</i>		Edmonton <i>population 1,010,899</i>		Medicine Hat <i>population 63,271</i>		Kamloops <i>population 97,902</i>	
		Number	Provision	Number	Provision	Number	Provision	Number	Provision
Indoor Aquatics Facilities	1:75,000	23	1:65,000	21	1:48,000	3	1:21,000	3	1:33,000
Ice Sheets	1:32,000	54	1:28,000	31	1:32,000	5	1:13,000	6	1:16,000
Fieldhouses (Open Span Facilities)	1:150,000	5	1:298,000	9	1:112,000	2	1:32,000	1	1:97,000
Athletic Parks (Class A/B or AT Field)	1:22,000	30	1:50,000	39	1:25,000	1	1:63,000	12	1:7,000

Sports and Recreation Participation Trends

Purpose

Shifting activity participation rates and uses put pressure on existing facilities and results in increased demand for new facilities to accommodate growth. Consideration of these trends ensures local recreation infrastructure is positioned to respond to both traditional and emerging activity preferences.

Methodology

GamePLAN considers current sport sector research as well as City of Calgary admission and registration data to understand current demand for recreation facilities and amenities.

Themes and Findings

Changing Participation Trends

- Participation and activity trends are dynamic and can change quickly in response to major events like the Olympics or the success of local professional sports teams or individual athletes. However, these fluctuations may not lead to sustained increased demand (Rowe, 2019, p. 35). This poses challenges for long-term planning efforts.
- The introduction, evolution or growth of a sport can increase demand for suitable recreation facilities and amenities. One example is the emergence and growth of pickleball. Between 2019 and 2022, the number of youth in the United States who play pickleball increased by more than 75 per cent (Project Play: Aspen Institute, 2022, p. 20). In Alberta, nearly one in 10 households played pickleball in 2022. (Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, 2022, p. 73)

- Global events can also impact sport and recreation trends. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a reduction in program registration and the growth of self-directed facility use like individual fitness. (Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2022, p. 49).
- Immigration is another factor contributing to increased demand for sport amenities, such as cricket pitches. Newcomers to Canada have reported having more meaningful social interactions while playing and watching sports than in other settings, like the workplace (Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2022, p. 34). However, newcomers are less likely to participate in recreational activities when compared to others who were born in Canada (Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, 2022, p. 61). Providing amenities like cricket pitches that are affordable, locally accessible and designed with cultural customs in mind can help promote sport participation among newcomers (Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2022, p. 35).

Physical Activity Targets

- Recent research suggests Canadian youth are not meeting physical activity targets needed to combat sedentary lifestyles. In 2024, only two-in-five children in Canada met the recommendation of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity per day (Participation Youth, 2024, p. 7).
- The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative impact on sport and activity participation trends in Canada, particularly in team sports. Many parents report their child's participation in sport has been impacted by the pandemic (Jumpstart, 2022, p. 10).

Participation Research

Canadian Women & Sport. (2022). Rally Report. <https://womenandsport.ca/rally-report-2022> Jumpstart. (2022). State of Sport Report. <https://jumpstart.canadiantire.ca/pages/the-state-of-sport-in-canada>

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Participation. (2021) Adult Report Card. <https://www.participation.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-ParticipACTION-Report-Card-on-Physical-Activity-for-Adults.pdf>

Alberta Recreation & Parks Association. (2022). 2022 Alberta Recreation Survey Report. https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.arpaonline.ca/Final_Alberta+Recreation+Provincial+Report_08_09_23.pdf

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Observatory for Sport in Scotland. (2019). Sports Participation in Scotland: Trends and future prospects. <https://oss.scot/category/research-library/sport-participation-research/>

Facility Planning and Amenity Design Leading Practices

Purpose

GamePLAN considers leading national and international practices within the recreation and sport sectors to align GamePLAN recommendations and approaches with industry best practices.

Methodology

GamePLAN reviewed leading practices related to the planning and development of recreation facilities and amenities to understand current and potential future trends in recreation and sport facility design.

Themes and Findings

Accessible facilities for all abilities

An important aspect of inclusion and participation is the physical accessibility of the built environment. Many recreation facility design plans now focus on exceeding the minimum accessibility standards set out in codes or bylaws and pursue external certifications from organizations like the Rick Hansen Foundation, a charitable organization advocating for innovation in removing barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities. The City of Calgary will prioritize physical and cognitive accessibility in the planning and development of new and renovated recreation spaces.

Equity in facility design

Publicly funded facilities are being designed to be accessible, available and inclusive. Consideration is given to groups that may face higher levels of isolation like seniors, people with diverse abilities, Indigenous Peoples and newcomers. Equity is a key tenet of The City's strategic priorities and is reflected in GamePLAN's approaches and recommendations.

Applying a physical literacy lens to facility design

Facilities, equipment and programs should be 'right sized' to fit all ages, abilities and development levels. Amenities should be scalable to promote participant confidence and reinforce skill development. Facility recommendations are rooted in industry best practices for physical literacy.

Community hubs

In many communities, recreation facilities function as community hubs, providing gathering spaces and services that support meaningful connections. Future recreation facilities will recognize and elevate the role of recreation facilities and amenities as cornerstones of complete communities.

Climate ready, sustainable facilities

Climate change will have significant implications for water and energy consumption. The impact to our natural environment, including extreme weather events will amplify the need for indoor sport and recreation spaces. As The City strives to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change, sustainable practices will be incorporated into recreation facility and program design and operations.

Facilities as emergency infrastructure

Recreation facilities function as emergency hubs in times of crisis related to climate events (and more recently for pandemic support as treatment spaces and vaccine centres). This alternate function will be weighted into facility planning and design.

Multi-use facilities

Modern indoor recreation facilities are designed to accommodate multiple activities and user groups simultaneously. The construction of single-use facilities that characterized previous generations of development is rare. The benefits of multi-use spaces include:

- operational efficiencies,
- customer attraction and
- revenue procurement.

As a best practice, recreation facilities should be adaptable and accommodate multiple, simultaneous activities, including spontaneous drop-ins, structured uses, formal and informal gatherings. They should function as 'one stop shops' for a range of municipal services, including libraries and other community or social services.

Incorporating outdoor spaces in facility planning

There is a growing trend towards the integration of indoor and outdoor environments in a single location. This can include spaces such as public event spaces, walking trails and corridors and children play areas. Incorporating outdoor spaces in the planning of indoor facilities can enhance community engagement and create event hosting opportunities.

Technology demands

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the relevance and acceptance of technology in facility and program design. The trend is expected to gain momentum as participants require increased interaction with technology to access sport and recreation, including amateur sport broadcasting and virtual fitness and activities.

Integrating revenue generating spaces

Municipalities operating indoor recreation facilities are finding increasingly creative and innovative ways to generate revenue to sustain operations or fund future expansions. In a limited funding environment with many competing priorities, it is critical to find alternative revenue streams to support cost-recovery and the long-term viability of the public service.

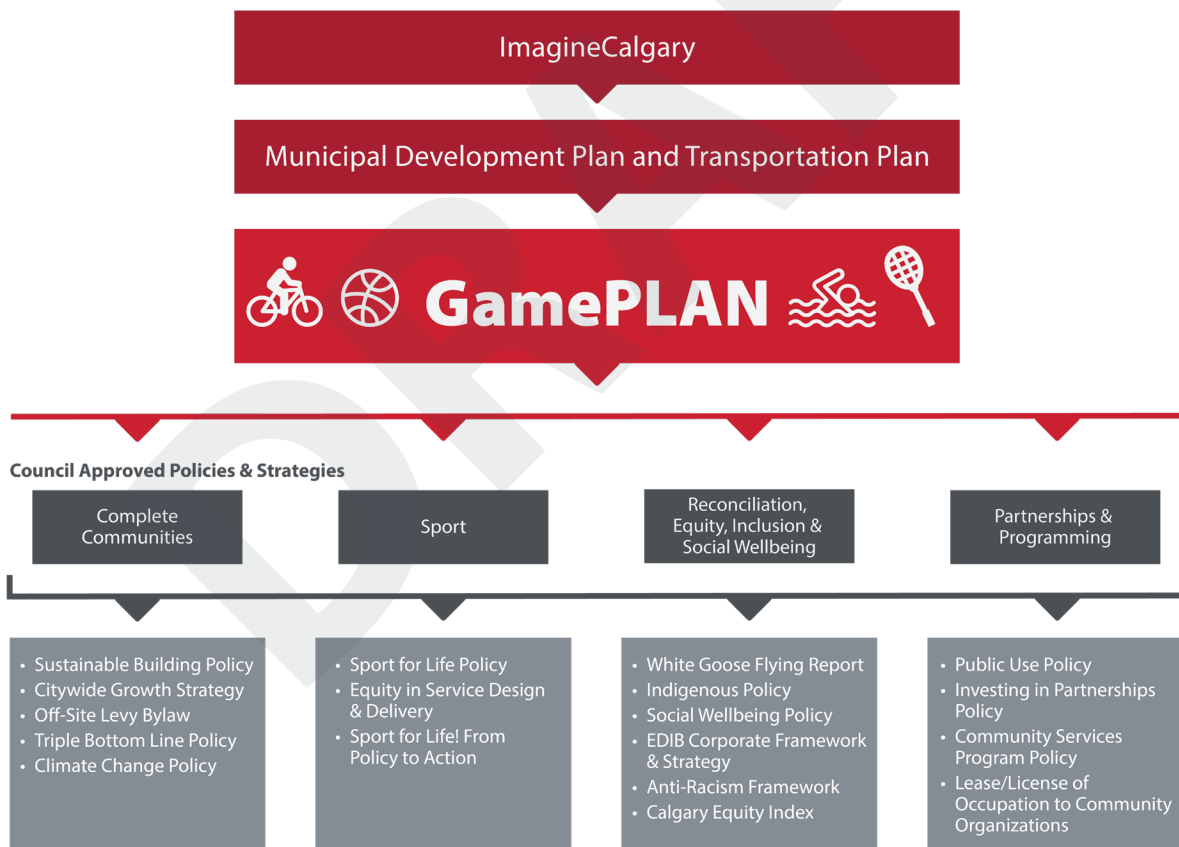
Policy Review

Purpose

The purpose of the policy review was to provide an overview of recreation related plans, studies, strategies, policies and other planning literature that inform GamePLAN's recommendations. The City of Calgary has extensive planning and strategic guidance related to recreation facilities, as does the Government of Alberta, Government of Canada and various sport and recreation organizations.

Methodology

More than 40 City of Calgary policy and planning documents were reviewed based on their ability to influence or be influenced by GamePLAN. Several more provincial, national or partner documents provide additional context.



Themes

Public Health

The provision of public recreation facilities, spaces and services is essential to public health and wellness. These facilities and spaces are critical municipal infrastructure and indicators of quality of life.

Equity

A priority of municipal investment is the promotion of equitable access to recreation facilities and spaces and the respectful inclusion and representation of diverse cultures, including those of Indigenous, Metis and Inuit Peoples who live and work in Calgary.

Community

Community partnerships are essential to delivering recreation opportunities that foster health and well-being.

Evidence Driven Decision Making

Evidence-based decision-making supports the efficient and responsible use of City resources.

Climate and the Environment

The planning and design of recreation facilities and spaces should include conservation practices and climate mitigation strategies to build a city that is livable in future climate conditions.

Sustainable facility management protocols are needed to minimize the environmental footprint of recreation facilities, spaces and associated services.

Economy

Recreation stimulates the economy through sport tourism, community development and revitalization and job creation. It is part of broader strategies to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Appendix 3.

What We Heard

GamePLAN: Reimagining Public Recreation

What We Heard Report

May 2024 | Final

Executive Summary

The City of Calgary is reimagining how public recreation is delivered and will soon put GamePLAN into play as a key strategic document in Calgary. GamePLAN is a long-term vision to shape The City's approach to delivering inclusive, accessible and financially responsible recreation services for the next 10 to 30 years. It will guide future business planning and investment, shape policy and The City's approach to service delivery.

From November 2023 to February 2024, The City engaged with the public to better understand their experiences with and expectations for public recreation in Calgary. Partners (Civic and operating Partners, Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations) were engaged to better understand public recreation's collective impact, and to improve problem-solving capacity and resiliency. This report describes The City's approach to engagement and summarizes feedback according to emergent themes. Engagement with each group revealed distinct perspectives that have been categorized according to the following themes:

Themes from Civic and Operating Partners

- **Service Outcomes:** There is interest among Partners related to shared performance measures and data-tracking, but successful implementation rests on addressing current challenges.
- **Relationship Building:** Partners differ in their needs around their relationship with The City, but there is an overall willingness to collaborate more effectively to support the public recreation sector.
- **Recreation Calgarians Want:** The public recreation sector reaches a broad range of Calgarians through services and there is interest in further supporting equity-denied groups.
- **Operational Needs:** Partners raised their current challenges related to aging facilities, staffing and volunteers, and increased operational expenses.

Themes from Community Partners

- **Supporting Community and Being Active:** Community Partners have common roles they play around building community and promoting physical health and active living.
- **Addressing High Demand:** There is currently a high demand for programming through Community Partners relative to their capacity.
- **Collaborating with The City to Address Challenges:** Community Partners look to The City for support and collaboration around funding, infrastructure, and programming.

Themes from the public

- **Value for Money:** Recreation users value variety, affordability, and the quality of programs and facilities. Respondents shared how they recreate and what aspects of the public recreation system they like.
- **Removing Barriers:** There are opportunities for the public recreation system to better serve new and existing users. Respondents identified barriers to participating in recreation and current challenges for existing users.
- **Embracing Change:** Recreational interests are dynamic and shifting. Respondents suggested a range of ideas for how the public recreation system could be more responsive to the way they prefer to participate in recreation.

Feedback will inform service strategies to ensure the public recreation system is responsive to current and future needs.

Key objectives of GamePLAN:

- Understand current and future recreation needs,
- Formally establish The City's role as a steward of the public recreation system in Calgary, and,
- Identify performance measures to better assess the success of service strategies.

The City heard from:

- Over 2,000 members of the public through pop-up events and a public survey,
- 9 Civic and operating Partners through facilitated sessions, and
- 36 Community Partners through an online survey.

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Appendix C: Detailed Community Partner Engagement Results

DRAFT

Engagement Overview

The City conducted a series of public and Partner engagement activities between November 18, 2023 and February 2, 2024. The purpose of engagement was to understand recreation needs, preferences, and priorities, as well as barriers to accessing the public recreation system.

GamePLAN engaged with three groups:

- Public
- Civic and operating Partners
- Community Associations & Social Recreation Organizations

Public Engagement

Public engagement activities were devised to be highly accessible and promoted to a broad audience through a multi-lingual, multi-media marketing campaign. Intercepts and events were conducted in various locations to meet people where they are and to capture a diversity of perspectives and experiences.

Feedback mechanisms included:

- A digital survey (collected online and through 'intercepts'),
- Pop-up events at third-party locations (markets, libraries, recreation facilities, shopping malls, etc.),
- In-person 'Post-It' boards for sharing feedback about the impacts of public recreation, and
- In-person conversations with members of the project team.

The survey was housed on The City's Engage Portal and optimized for accessibility, including the use of translation software and screen reader capability. More than 1,800 responses were received with 36% of respondents identifying as belonging to one more equity-denied group.

Results highlight challenges and opportunities for improving public recreation services in Calgary (**see *Public Engagement Findings*, page 14**).

Partner Engagement

The City facilitated workshops with Partners in spring 2023 to establish a baseline understanding for how The City and Partners can work better together to develop a long-term vision and strategy for public recreation in Calgary. Four themes emerged from these workshops: *service outcomes, relationship building, recreation people want, and operational needs*.

The City facilitated a second phase of discussions in the fall of 2023, which included one-on-one sessions with Partners to brainstorm and troubleshoot topics within each of the themes.

The City also distributed a closed digital survey to Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations (**see *Partner Engagement Findings*, Page 16**).

Engagement Approach

Purpose

The purpose of engagement is to understand:

- Barriers to accessing public recreation.
- Recreation needs and wants.
- Public and Partner expectations for the The City's role as a public service provider and sector leader.

Strategy

Engaged groups have varying levels of influence in decision-making based on The City's Spectrum of Strategies and Promises. The public has been **consulted** to identify themes that will inform future strategies and approaches, while Partners have the opportunity to **collaborate** in decision-making.

Commitment

In alignment with The City's Engage Framework, the project team delivered on the mandatory Inform/Communicate tasks:

- Provide information that is timely, accurate, balanced, objective, and easily understood.
- Respond to questions for clarification and direct members of the public and interested parties to sources of additional information.
- Share with interested parties what we heard from them.
- Share with interested parties if the input cannot be used in making the decision and the reasoning for why it may not be used.
- Share how the input was factored into the decision.

Engagement was guided by The City's Engage Policy and incorporated commitments to:

Accountability

Inclusiveness

Transparency

Commitment

Responsiveness

Who We Engaged

GamePLAN engaged with three groups through various tactics tailored to the interest and involvement of each (see *How We Engaged*, page 7).

Public

The public includes those who are not members of a particular organization or who do not have any specific subject matter expertise. For the purpose of engagement, this group is divided into recreation users and recreation non-users.

Over
2,000 Members of the public participated in GamePLAN

- 36 locations (8 pop-ups; 24 additional intercept locations)
- Public survey

Civic and Operating Partners

The public recreation system in Calgary is a network of service providers, facilities and operators. The City's Civic Partners are defined under the Investing in Partnerships Policy. The City invests in these organizations to deliver effective programs and services in targeted areas, develop and advance strategies, and construct and manage assets.

9 Civic and operating Partners participated in GamePLAN

- Partner engagement sessions

Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations

The City partners with many community groups, clubs, associations and organizations to deliver public recreation opportunities.

36 Community Partners participated in GamePLAN

- Online survey for Community Partners and social recreation organizations

Public Survey Respondent Demographics

97.1% of responses came from Calgary residents

2.3% from non-residents

0.7% prefer not to answer

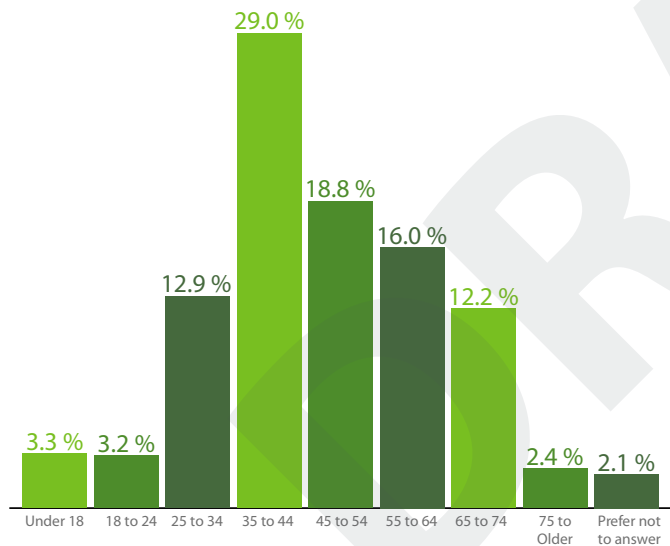
Equity-Denied Respondents

- 3% Indigenous persons (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
- 6% New Canadians
- 17% Immigrants
- 1% Refugees
- 9% Racialized people, visible minorities
- 5% 2SLGBTQ+
- 6% Persons with disabilities
- 7% Neurodiverse individuals

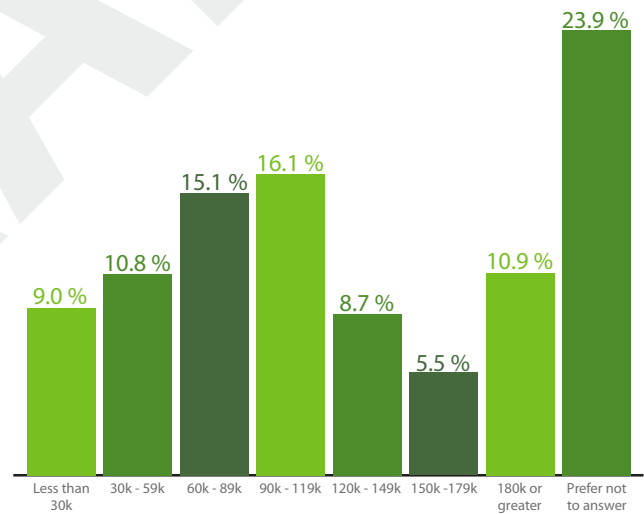
36%
Equity-denied respondents*

*The total number of respondents belonging to one or more equity-denied groups.

Age of Survey Respondents







Household Income of Survey Respondents








How We Engaged

A city-wide marketing campaign raised awareness for engagement opportunities with the goal of reaching as many members of the public as possible. The City engaged directly with Partners.

RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION	STATS	AUDIENCE	
Communications Tactics				
	Project webpage	Project information and the survey were available at: www.calgary.ca/gameplan	13,054 unique webpage visits	Public
	Digital media	Posts on Facebook, Twitter and newsletters directed people to the public events and online survey.	7,650 clicked links	Public
	Direct contact	Partners were engaged through direct contact.	N/A	All Partners
	Radio, print media, and posters	Posters were installed across the city at recreation centres and Community Associations.	N/A	Public

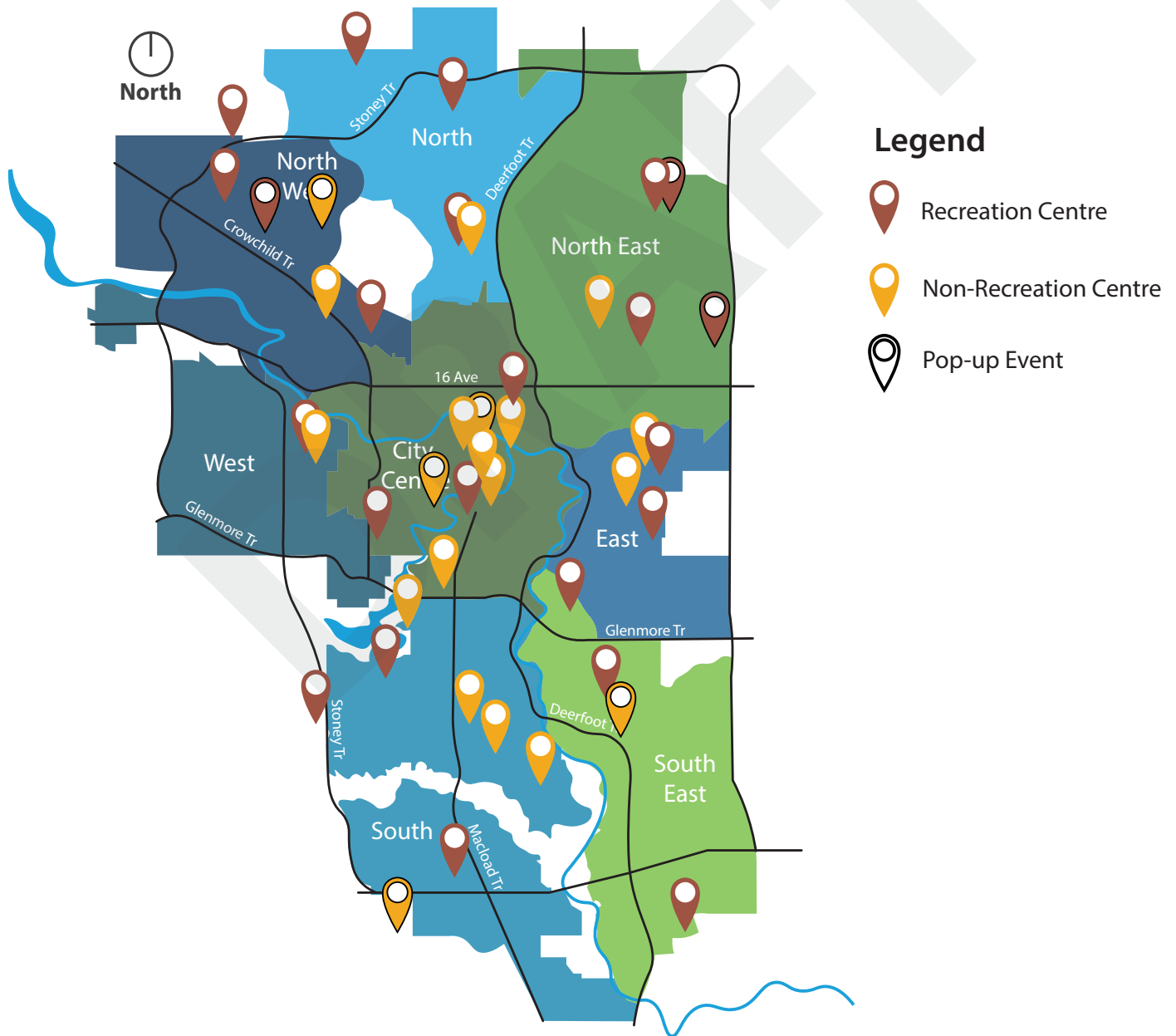
GamePLAN engagement took place between November 13, 2023 and February 2, 2024 and included both in-person and online opportunities to ensure participation was convenient and accessible. The engagement opportunities and their impact are summarized below.

RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION	STATS	AUDIENCE	
Engagement Opportunities				
	Intercept survey	Digital intercept surveys were collected across Calgary using tablets.	27 locations 326 survey responses	Public
	Online survey	The survey was housed on The City’s Engage Portal and optimized for accessibility, including the use of translation software and screen reader capability.	1,526 survey responses	Public
	Pop-up events	The project team attended eight events across Calgary (two in each quadrant) to conduct surveys and engage in conversations with the public. Pop-up booths included free snacks and stickers for kids, mini golf and cornhole.	8 events 210 survey responses	Public
	Community Partners survey	A survey was distributed to Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations. Organizations were invited to meet with the project team and The City to discuss challenges, opportunities, and strategies.	36 responses	Community Partners
	Partner workshops	Partners met with the project team and City personnel to discuss service outcomes, relationship building, recreation people want and operational needs.	Representatives from 9 organizations	Civic and Operating Partners

Where We Engaged

In-person public engagement activities occurred in locations across Calgary, including recreation locations (e.g., community arenas, swimming pools, and large recreation facilities) and non-recreation locations (e.g., libraries, malls, and community events). At some locations, the project team set up a table as part of a community event (i.e., pop-up event) along with display boards, in addition to the intercept survey.

This approach was used to ensure both recreation users and non-users from each area of the city had an opportunity to participate in GamePLAN engagement.



Engagement Methodology

Public Survey

Over 1,800 respondents shared their thoughts on the future of public recreation in Calgary by completing an online or intercept survey. Based on the sample size, the survey should be considered statistically significant.

Promotion

The GamePLAN survey was promoted through the following:

- The City of Calgary webpage: The survey was live on the Engage Calgary GamePLAN webpage.
- Social Media and Marketing Campaign: The City launched a marketing campaign to direct respondents to the project webpage and to invite them to complete the survey online.
- Pop-ups: During each pop-up, the project team conducted intercept surveys and directed people to the project webpage to complete the survey on their own time.
- Intercept surveys: The project team conducted intercept surveys with respondents at key locations throughout the city.

Methodology

The survey used responsive design and a combination of open and closed question formats to help categorize feedback according to those who currently use public recreation services and those who do not.

Five (5) optional questions were asked at the end of the survey to understand participant socio-demographics. This data is used to understand how respondents' multiple and intersecting identities influence if and how they access and experience Calgary's recreation programs and facilities.

Respondents were also asked standard questions about their demographics, including place of residence, income, and age. For a summary of participant demographics, refer to the section *Who We Engaged*.

For close-ended responses (multiple choice questions), a bar graph has been provided with detailed results. For open-ended responses (open text comment field), a qualitative summary of the common themes and points is provided.

What does the future of public recreation look like to you?

Survey participants were asked to respond to a series of questions across four topic areas, each related to the overarching question "What does the future of public recreation look like to you?"

Definition of recreation

Question 1; Asked to all respondents.

Recreation patterns and preferences

Questions 2-4; Only asked to those who identified as recreation users).

Barriers to participation

Questions 5-6; Only asked to those who identified as recreation non-users).

Future program and service priorities

Questions 7-10; Asked to all respondents.

Methodology for Cross Tabulation Insight

Cross tabulation refers to comparing how different demographics answered a question versus total responses. As an example, the share of participation in recreation may vary by age and level of income. The results of this exercise are visualized through bar graphs to show the comparison across demographics.

Insight (under dark purple text headings) highlights statistically significant differences, which were tested through statistical exercises. The bar graphs highlight far more variations in responses than the selected insight, but not all of the differences in the former are statistically valid (e.g., not enough responses within the sub-group).

Public Survey Questions

Definition of Recreation

Q #1: What does recreation mean to you?

Q #2: Do you, or your family, currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?

YES

NO

Recreation users

Recreation patterns and preferences

Q #3: Which of the following do you or someone in your household attend or participate in?

Q #4: What do you feel The City and Partners do well?

Q #5: What do you feel The City and Partners could do to improve services?

Recreation non-users

Barriers to participation

Q #6: Why don't you or your family currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?

Q #7: Please tell us more about why you or your family don't currently attend a recreation program, facility, or participate in sport.

Future program and service priorities

Q #8: What recreational programs and services would you like to see more of?

Q #9: What should the public recreation system - The City and Partners - prioritize?

Q #10: What do you think The City's role should be in public recreation?

Q #11: Do you think there are enough public recreation opportunities from The City and Partners for the following groups of Calgarians?

Pop-up Events

The project team hosted pop-ups at a variety of third-party events and locations like markets, libraries, and recreation facilities. At these pop-ups respondents shared their thoughts on the future of public recreation in Calgary by talking with GamePLAN team members and filling out the online survey using tablets.

Methodology

Pop-up events provided additional opportunities for respondents to share their thoughts and feedback depending on their interest level and time available to participate. A poster board was included as a passive activity for respondents to share their feedback.

Project team members provided information about the project and offered respondents the option to:

- engage in conversation about the current state and future of recreation in Calgary,
- place sticky notes with feedback on the engagement panels (poster board), and/or
- complete a survey with a member of the project team or on their own.

Promotion

The GamePLAN pop-up events were promoted through the following:

- The City of Calgary Webpage: The pop-up event information was live on the Engage Calgary GamePLAN webpage.
- Social Media and Marketing Campaign: The City launched a marketing campaign to direct respondents to the project webpage and to invite them to attend a pop-up event.

LOCATIONS

Edgemont Christmas Market

Calgary Justice Film Festival

Crowfoot Library

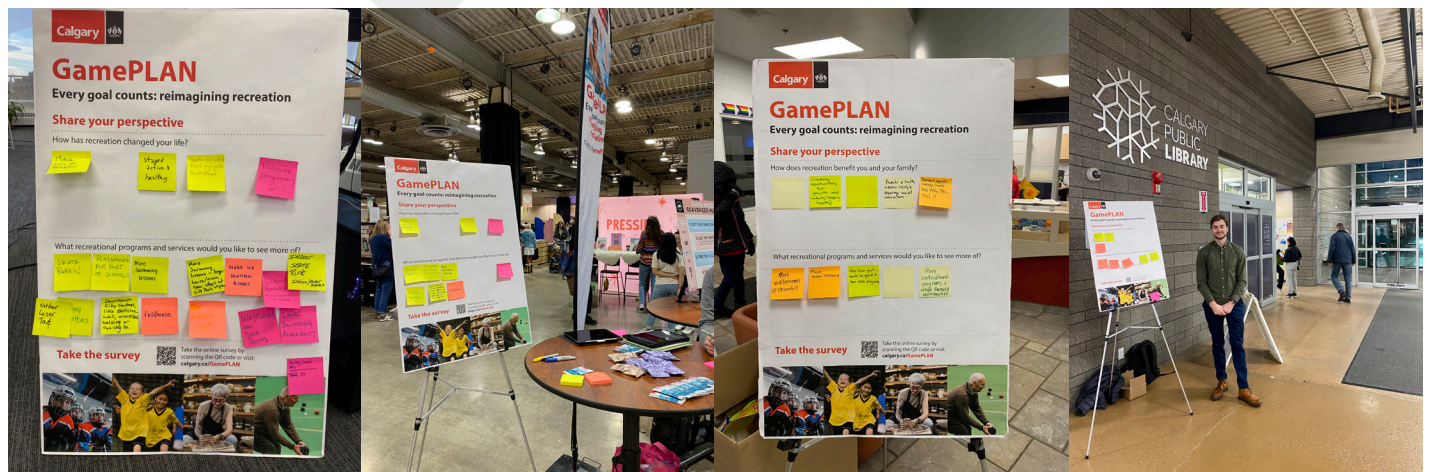
Holiday Market at Deerfoot Inn

Don Hartman North East Sportsplex

Christmas Lights at Spruce Meadows

Genesis Centre

Chinook Blast



Civic and Operating Partner Workshops

Facilitated workshops and interviews conducted by The City's Innovation Lab in spring 2023 helped establish a baseline understanding for how The City and Partners can work better together to develop a long-term vision and strategy for public recreation in Calgary.

The following four (4) themes emerged from these sessions:

- **Service Outcomes:** Shared outcomes define service benefits and provide a basis for measuring success and understanding impact. The public recreation system does not currently have a framework for understanding its mandate or progress through shared outcomes.
- **Relationship Building:** Roles are loosely defined, lack clarity and consistency.
- **Recreation People Want:** Residents' needs continue to evolve and diversify. How do recreational providers keep pace?
- **Operational Needs:** The public recreation system faces revenue pressures that can conflict with desired service benefits.

The City facilitated a second phase of discussions in the fall 2023, which included one-on-one sessions with Partners to brainstorm and troubleshoot topics within the four themes above.

These discussions are described in the *Partner Findings Section* on Page 16, and were facilitated with a focus on:

- Brainstorming shared outcomes
- Troubleshooting challenges
- Exploring emerging trends
- Discussing roles and perspectives

Representatives
from
9
Organizations

participated in the Civic and operating Partner workshops

Civic and operating Partners that participated in workshops with The City:

Calgary Outdoor Swimming Pools Association (COPSA)

Cardel Recreation South

Genesis Centre

MNP Community and Sport Centre

Trico Centre for Family Wellness

Vecova Centre for Disability Services and Research

Vivo For Healthier Generations

Westside Recreation Centre

YMCA Calgary

Community Partner Survey

Community Partners, consisting of Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations, were invited to participate in a short, invitation-only survey about their experience as part of the public recreation system.

The survey was designed to better understand Community Partners' organizational and operational challenges and aspirations, as well as to identify areas for improved collaboration with The City.

Methodology

The survey was comprised of six questions:

- Two open field questions
- Four closed field questions

The City distributed the survey directly to Community Partners via The City's Partnership network. The survey was open from October, 2023 to January, 2024 and in-person meetings with City personnel were also offered.

**Representatives
from
36
Organizations**

participated in the
Community Partner survey

Community Partner Survey Questions

Q #1: How many Calgarians does your organization reach or serve annually?

Q #2: How can we improve collaboration between The City and your organization?

Q #3: How would your organization like to grow or change its service over the next five years?

Q #4: What is your organization trying to achieve with your public recreation services?

Q #6: Has your organization observed changing demands or emerging trends that impact service delivery? If so, what priorities has your organization identified to respond to Calgarians' changing needs?

Q #7: How can the public recreation system better serve or remove barriers for the following demographics? Your response can address one or multiple groups: Preschool (0-5), Children (6-12), Youth (13-17), Adults (18-64), Older Seniors (65+), New Canadians (all ages), Equity-denied Calgarians (all ages)

Q #5a: How is your organization measuring success towards your outcomes?

Q #5b: If there are opportunities your organization would like to explore or discuss with The City to improve your recreation services, please share them with us.

Public Engagement Themes

The following section summarizes the results, themes and key takeaways from GamePLAN public engagement activities (pop-up events and public survey). **See Appendix A for Detailed Public Survey Results.**

Public Engagement

Throughout public engagement activities, the project team listened to respondents' experiences of Calgary's public recreation system. These experiences are summarized into three (3) themes and eight (8) sub-themes below.

These themes point to how respondents view the current state of the public recreation system and identify priority areas for The City to improve service delivery. These themes will be a key reference when developing strategic actions for GamePLAN.

1. Value for Money: Recreation users wish to see enhanced variety and quality of facilities and programs, while maintaining affordability for all.

Respondents indicated they place value on recreation as a tool for personal development, health and well-being. Current recreation users consider the strengths of the current public recreation system to be the variety, quality, and affordability of facilities and programs. However, users and non-users alike suggest opportunities for The City to prioritize and make public recreation more attractive to all residents.

1a. The way people define recreation is broad and diverse.

When asked what recreation means to them, most respondents indicated recreation is about sport and physical activity. For others, recreation extends to leisure, arts and culture, and community. In open-ended question responses and conversations at pop-ups, participants expressed a perception that Calgary's recreation system favours active recreation over leisure, arts, culture, and community programming.

Respondents shared ways recreation benefits them and their families. Many reported that participation in recreation contributes to their physical and mental health and well-being, as well as a sense of connection to their community.

In conversations with project team members, participants who are parents expressed how recreation promotes skills development and physical activity among children. Older adult participants describe how it can assist them in recovery from illness or injury and supports aging with dignity and grace.

1b. Recreation users value variety, affordability and quality

When asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the public recreation system in Calgary, respondents who identified as being current recreation users noted variety as a top strength. This perception of variety includes the range of facility types (e.g., parks, gymnasiums, pools, etc.) to the variety of programs available (e.g., sports, art classes, fitness, etc.). The quality of facilities (e.g., cleanliness, renovations, etc.) and the low cost of memberships and registration are considered strengths by recreation users.

In contrast, non-recreation users are more likely to consider variety, affordability and facility upgrades as areas for improvement.

1c. Priorities for The City's role in recreation

When asked about The City's role in recreation, many respondents shared three main areas of focus:

- Investment in community facilities and amenities, including renovating existing facilities and building new facilities to meet demand.
- Providing quality programs and spaces for residents of all ages and abilities to be active and creative.
- Providing low and no-cost or subsidized opportunities for residents experiencing vulnerability.

2. Removing Barriers: There are opportunities for the public recreation system to better serve new and existing users.

Recreation and non-recreation users shared feedback about the barriers they experience in accessing the public recreation system, and changes that would better serve their needs and wants. This feedback provides a better understanding of the opportunities for service improvement that would enable The City to draw in new users, while maintaining or improving satisfaction to retain existing users.

2a. Affordability is a barrier

Cost as a barrier to accessing programs and facilities is a common theme that varies between current users and non-users. For example, cost is a common barrier to participation cited by non-users while current users identified affordability as a strength of the public recreation system.

When asked what The City and Partners should prioritize, the most common response among all respondents (both users and non-users) was “providing low- and no-cost or subsidized opportunities for Calgarians experiencing vulnerability.”

Affordability is a complex concept, since admission pricing vary by facility and activity. There can also be additional costs associated with participation (e.g., transportation, equipment, childcare). The engagement analysis is limited to the details provided by respondents, and therefore unable to clearly separate admission pricing from other costs.

2b. Frustration with program availability and registration

A lack of program availability is the second most common barrier among non-users while current users expressed frustration with existing program capacity. Respondents consider this is a result of availability not matching demand, program times not meeting their needs, as well as a challenging registration process that is frustrating for many respondents and prevents equitable access to programs. Respondents described that swimming lessons have very high demand and competition for available time slots.

Current recreation users proposed increased hours of operation as one solution to increase program and facility availability.

2c. Lack of awareness about programs and services

Respondents listed a lack of awareness as the third most common barrier to participation. When asked what The City and Partners could do to improve services, respondents cite a lack of awareness about programs and services, where to find information and how to register for opportunities.

3. Embracing Change: Recreation interests are dynamic and shifting.

Respondents shared feedback about the types of amenities and programming that is currently available across the public recreation system. The public survey revealed that while there is still demand for established activities like basketball and swimming, respondents would like to see emerging activities (like pickleball and disc golf), as well as new approaches to how programs and services are delivered.

3a. Demand for a mix of established and emerging activities

The survey asked respondents what they would like to see more of in the public recreation system, allowing for open-ended responses. Respondents also provided feedback through conversations with project team members at pop-up events.

Feedback indicates a need to increase the availability of existing active programming (e.g., swimming, basketball, soccer, etc.) and provide more spaces to accommodate emerging sports (i.e., disc golf and pickleball). Feedback also indicates a desire for increased leisure, arts and community programming (e.g., walking groups, dance classes, cooking classes, nutritional programming, etc.).

3b. Requests for new approaches to program delivery

When asked what they would like to see more of, respondents provided suggestions for how programming is delivered. This included more drop-in and alternative programming times (daytime and evening programs). Another idea is to expand opportunities to provide trials where people can sample programming before committing to full registration. There is also demand for more “Learn to” programs.

Increasing programming for women and girls is frequently cited, as is programming tailored to seniors, teens, and people with disabilities.

When asked if they felt there is sufficient programming in place for different demographic groups, respondents indicated there are not currently enough opportunities for seniors (65+), youth (13-17), and people living with low income. This survey question did not include closed field options for women/girls or people with disabilities.

Partner Engagement Themes

Civic and Operating Partner Workshops

The following four (4) themes and ten (10) key takeaways were generated from the Civic and Operating Partner Workshops.

1. Service outcomes

1a. Interest in shared performance measures and data-tracking

All Partners have some form of tracking to measure performance and operational data, including registration and user numbers, demographics, Fair Entry program uptake, etc. This data is currently collected in various formats using different software. Terminology for reporting is also inconsistent across the system. Partners recognize the importance and benefits of sector-wide data tracking, especially the ability to demonstrate the value and impact of recreation.

There was a specific request for The City to provide a standardized 'apples-to-apples' template for data entry and records. While there is interest in shared performance measurement, The City and Partners recognize steps need to be taken to protect business information and customer privacy. Some organizations raised concerns for standardized performance measurement due to the uniqueness of programming and operational requirements from one facility to another.

Overall, Partners indicated a willingness to share, but raised important considerations to preserve and value their unique mandates and visions.

2. Relationship building

2a. Willingness to collaborate

Partners expressed a willingness to collaborate in a variety of ways. One example is sharing operational and demographic data to better understand sector needs, and promoting storytelling around the benefits of public recreation in Calgary. Many organizations currently participate and benefit from the existing 'Recreation Leaders Network' and a recurring meeting between arena managers.

There is interest in sharing information and operational system processes and software; and several hope The City can initiate this work. Some Partners are especially interested in increased communications and collaboration with The City for strategy and program planning to reduce competing or overlapping services.

Partners also expressed they are keen to work with The City to advance advocacy efforts for recreation funding from provincial and federal governments.

As an area for future exploration, some organizations expressed a willingness to explore centralized online registration or point-of-sale interface across all organizations for consistency and simplicity. However, this discussion did not thoroughly assess levels of support or details around implementation.

2b. Organizational brand identity

Partners shared that many members of the public are unaware of Calgary's unique partnership and funding model (City-run and Partner-run). This observation is confirmed by public engagement. For many Partners, this means the public may have misconceptions or misunderstanding about an organization's brand or unique brand identity.

Partners are aware of this gap in public knowledge, but their assessment of this gap varies. While some organizations expressed frustration with the misunderstanding, some indicated they receive positive benefits and additional credibility by 'borrowing' City identity.

Others recognize that an improved public understanding of funding models may encourage support around recreation funding.

2c. Variety of funding and revenue models

Partners shared their overall approaches to funding and revenue. All Partners indicated that they rely on:

1. Admissions and memberships
2. Rentals and events
3. Class registrations

Some Partners also talked about the importance of funding campaigns, private donors, and perspectives on sponsorships. Most Partners have explored federal, provincial and other grant opportunities.

2d. Variety of requests to The City

Some organizations expressed a desire for financial assistance to upgrade aging infrastructure or address rising operational costs. Some Partners also suggested The City could help in providing programming templates, support with marketing, or engage in more sector strategy discussions.

In contrast, other Partners noted their satisfaction with the current system, acknowledged the ease of communication with The City, and were comfortable operating independently.

3. Recreation people want

3a. Diverse sector-wide offerings and demographics

Partners offer diverse programs and services to a growing and changing client base. Some Partners focus on serving specific demographics city-wide, while other Partners focus effort on serving surrounding communities.

There are also variations in offerings, including different combinations of aquatic facilities, arenas, gyms, event spaces, playgrounds, and sport fields. Partners emphasize different values driving their work such as creating community, promoting health and wellbeing, and serving a broad range of recreational and sporting interests.

3b. Interest in supporting equity-denied groups

While inclusion is a priority for Partners, the need for customized programming for specific groups is dependent on current and future demand, which can be difficult to measure and predict.

Currently, there is no consistent approach for collecting demographic data on gender, income, ability, ethnicity, or other intersectional/overlapping social identities.

4. Operational needs

4a. Aging facilities and infrastructure

Nearly every Partner identified aging buildings and infrastructure as a significant challenge. In general, many recreation facilities in Calgary are reaching the later phase of their life cycle and require significant capital investment to maintain, upgrade, renovate, or replace. While revenue from memberships, programs, and rentals may cover the cost of regular operations, capital investments for renovations and repairs are not always possible without outside grants or investment.

4b. Staffing and volunteers

Partners are experiencing challenges with staff and volunteer recruitment and retention. The COVID-19 pandemic had significant labour impacts across all sectors and organizations are still recovering from staff shortages and burnout. A common theme among organizations is staff wages; providing competitive and fair wages is a challenge, especially with unionized wages available to City employees.

4c. Increased operational expenses

Many Partners indicated that operational expenses had significantly increased in the last five years, including for insurance fees and energy utility costs. This has created an additional financial burden and is a growing concern as Partners look to the future.

Community Partner Survey

Between November 18, 2023 to February 2, 2024, 36 Community Partners shared their thoughts on the future of public recreation in Calgary by completing an invitation-only online survey. The following three (3) themes were generated from the Community Partner Survey.

1. Supporting Community and Being Active

While there were unique and varied experiences between Community Partners, there is a common thread in how respondents see their role. When asked what they are trying to achieve based on a set of options, Community Partners most commonly answered that they are supporting community belonging and community cohesion. In open field responses, some respondents identified goals around reaching new members in the community as well as promoting a sense of community (from programming to representation on boards).

The next highest response is encouraging physical health and active living. In open field responses, Community Partners noted goals around promoting active living or retention in a sport (e.g., getting kids outside or seniors to be active).

2. Collaborating with The City to Address Challenges

Community Partners described ways The City could better support their work. Requests for support included:

- Financial support including capital funding for new and improved facilities and amenities (e.g., accessibility of buildings to skateboard parks) as well as to support programming.
- Access to space to support new and expanded programming in the community.
- Increased collaboration between Community Partners and The City. When asked how to improve collaboration, Community Partners most commonly suggested increased networking between other organizations, followed by improved communication channels for specific topics, and greater data sharing. Open field comments include suggestions such as shared planning and decision making).

Respondents also noted that volunteer retention is a significant challenge, though these comments are not generally tied to issues around collaboration with The City.

3. Addressing Demand

2a. Demand is at an all-time high

Partners noted that, especially after the pandemic, demand for recreation programs and services has increased significantly. Some Community Partners point to COVID impacts while others point to changing demographics and added density as factors. Examples of changes in demand include:

- Demand for facilities for active sports (e.g., pickleball, soccer, and basketball).
- Requests for more availability (e.g., online programming and longer hours).

When describing changing demand, some Community Partners do not feel they are able to meet demand for services with current funding. However, some Community Partners want to increase memberships and increase programmings in the next five years.

2b. Targeted programming to match changing demographics

Community Partners indicated the demographics they serve have changed with an influx of young families, immigrants and new Canadians. As a result, they wish to provide more targeted programs and offerings that support these groups and encourage them to participate in recreation.

Community Partners are often unable to meet demand due to increased financial pressures related to changing demographics.

Concluding Remarks

Engagement provided many avenues for discovery and highlighted areas for further exploration. In general, engagement with both Partners and the public helped the GamePLAN team better understand the environment in which public recreation exists and identify areas for growth, adaptation or overall improvement.

Calgary's population is rapidly growing and changing. Public engagement confirmed that recreation doesn't mean the same thing to all people, and not all people are on the same footing when it comes to accessing public recreation opportunities. Reducing barriers to participation underpins GamePLAN's foundation, which is that recreation is a right.

The public benefit derived from recreation is well known and the value of the sector is reinforced in several related studies, policies and guiding documents at the local (*Sport for Life Policy*), provincial (*Active Alberta: 2011-2021*) and federal (*A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing*) levels.

However, despite that public recreation is broadly accepted as a positive force in society, it is currently underinvested, and many providers are struggling to meet demand. Ensuring recreation opportunities are accessible, inclusive and sustainable in the long-term requires a thoughtful, intentional and innovative approach. This requires decision-makers to better understand gaps and explore system-wide solutions. The experiences and perspectives of service delivery Partners are critical for informing how the sector works together in the future to strengthen its collective impact and resilience.

Feedback from engagement will inform the GamePLAN vision and associated strategies. It will help The City and Partners better understand barriers and opportunities for creating positive outcomes for Calgarians. Working with service delivery Partners, The City hopes to find new ways to help individuals and communities meet their goals through public recreation.



Appendix A: Detailed Public Engagement Results

Pop-Up Event Results

For those who did not complete the survey, comments were recorded on stickies or captured in interceptor's notes. Respondents were asked to describe the value that recreation provides and what types of recreation programs and services they would like to see more of.

Responses from these conversations have been summarized below and are included in key themes and takeaways, alongside public survey results.

- Recreation promotes physical, mental, and emotional well-being for both individuals and families.
- Recreation encourages healthy lifestyles and positive attitude in families.
- Social benefits of recreation include making friends, accessing a community hub, and getting out of the house.
- Physical health benefits of recreation include staying active and healthy, and boosting energy.
- Seniors appreciate how recreation helps them stay mobile as they age and restore their health after an illness.
- Youth have productive activities to do after school, which helps them learn new skills and keeps them engaged.
- The City and Partners should provide more recreation options for seniors, youth, women, parents and other demographic groups (e.g., art programs for young adults, strength classes for seniors, nutrition classes for parents, and women's self-defense classes).
- The City and Partners should improve outreach to seniors and residents living with low income.
- The City and Partners should improve accessibility of facilities (e.g., accessible to those with mobility challenges and/or seniors).
- The City and Partners should support transportation to recreation facilities with improved bus service and better wayfinding on bike paths.

Public Survey Results



Definition of Recreation

Respondents indicated what recreation means to them and the types of activities they consider to be “recreation.”

Survey Question #1: What does recreation mean to you?



Physical Health and Wellbeing

For most respondents, their concept of recreation is centred around physical health and wellbeing, with 20.4% indicating that recreation includes participating in sport or other physical activity and 18.8% indicating recreation includes advancing physical health and wellbeing.

Skills Development

For some respondents, recreation means pursuing hobbies and interests (17.4%) or developing new skills (13.8%). Arts programming and lessons were of particular interest throughout the survey.

Connection with Others

Recreation is also seen as a way to build connection with community, friends and family. 14.9% of respondents indicated that spending time with others is part of their recreation experience, as well as experiences that contribute to their family's sense of wellness (13.9%).

Throughout the survey, respondents indicated they do not have access to enough opportunities to practice recreation in a way that is meaningful to them, with some asking for less emphasis on sport and physical activity and others asking for less emphasis on arts and passive recreation.

Recreation Users Vs. Non-Users

Survey respondents indicated whether they attend recreation activities, including physical activity and/or arts programming. A facility includes City- and Partner-operated or privately-run. Sport can include organized sports, individual sports, or self-directed.

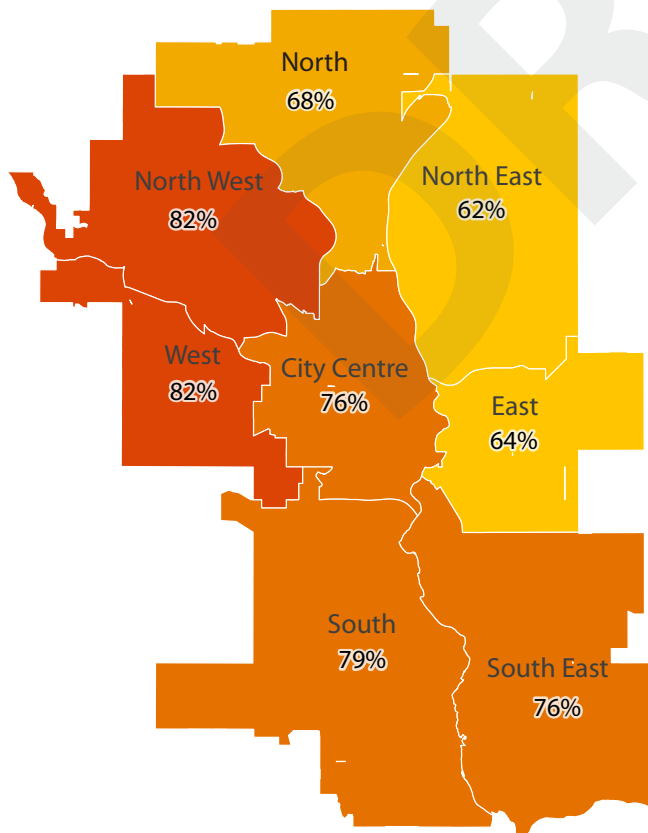
Survey Question #2: Do you, or your family, currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?



1.2% said prefer not to say

Recreation Users by Location

The map shows zones of Calgary, and the percentage of respondents in each zone who participate in recreation.



Cross Tabulation Insight

See Engagement Methodology for how these insights were generated.

More Likely

>\$120,000 income households



Household incomes

Less likely

>\$60,000 income households



Equity-deserving respondents

Less likely overall

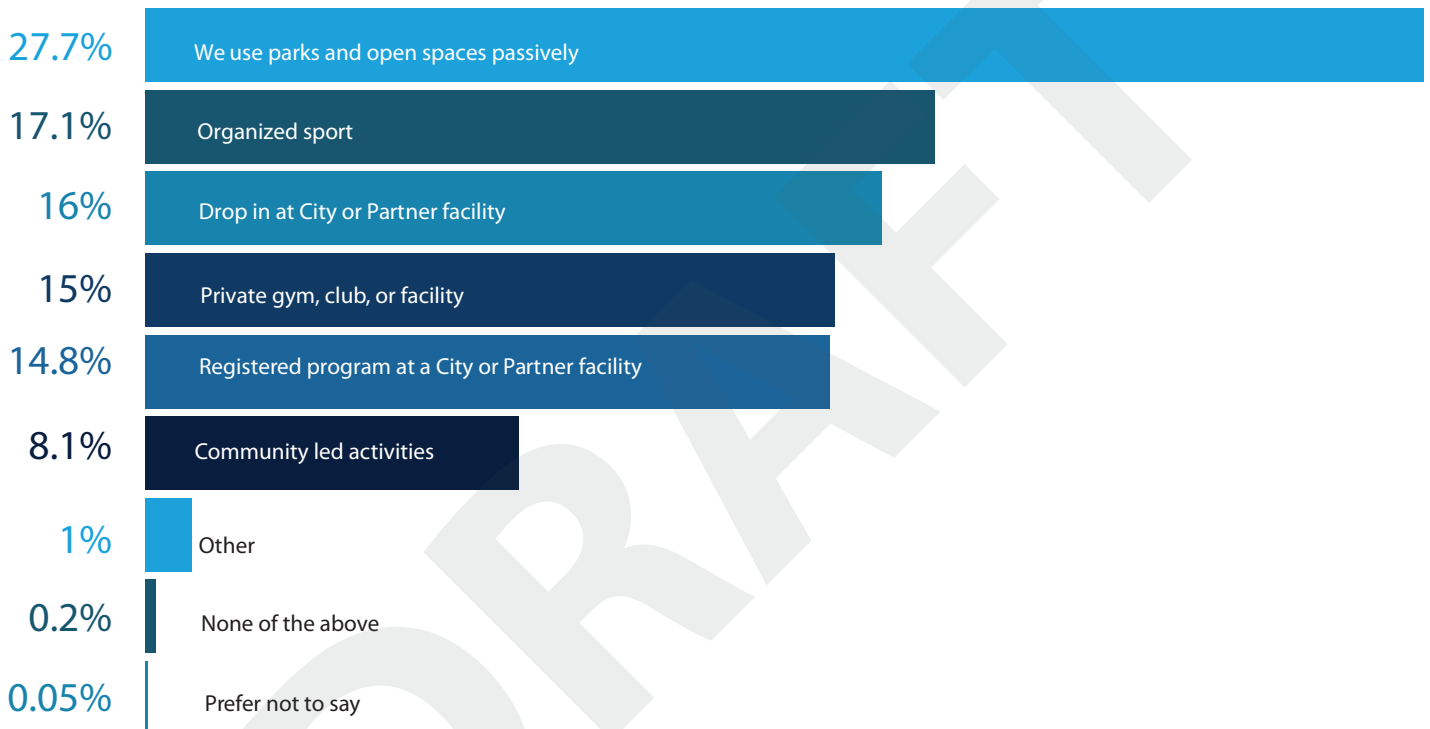
Recreation Patterns and Preferences

Current Recreation Attendance and Participation

Respondents who are recreation users specified which recreation programs or facilities they currently attend.

Survey Question #3: Which of the following do you or someone in your household attend or participate in?

*This question was only asked to those who identified as recreation users.



Spending Time in Parks and Open Spaces

Many survey respondents are passive users of parks and open spaces (27.7%). While many of the comments provided throughout the survey emphasize the role of recreation facilities, respondents garner significant value from The City’s network of parks and open spaces. The management and stewarding of parks and recreation facilities by different City departments may not be well understood by respondents.

Organized Sport

17.1% of respondents indicated they (or someone in their household) currently participate in organized sport.

Accessing Facilities

Generally, respondents are equally likely to have indicated they drop-in at a City or Partner facility (15.9%), participate in a registered program at a City or Partner facility (14.9%) or access a private gym, club or facility (14.8%).

Participation Across Identity, Income and Age

Survey Question #3: Which of the following do you or someone in your household attend or participate in?

Cross Tabulation Insight

For more information on how these findings were identified, refer to the section *Methodology for Cross Tabulation Key Takeaways* on page 8.

More likely

18-64 year olds

>\$120,000 income households



Organized Sport

Less likely

Equity-deserving respondents

<\$60,000 income households

>65 year olds

\$60,000-120,000 income households

<\$60,000 income households

>65 year olds



Drop-in

>\$120,000 income households

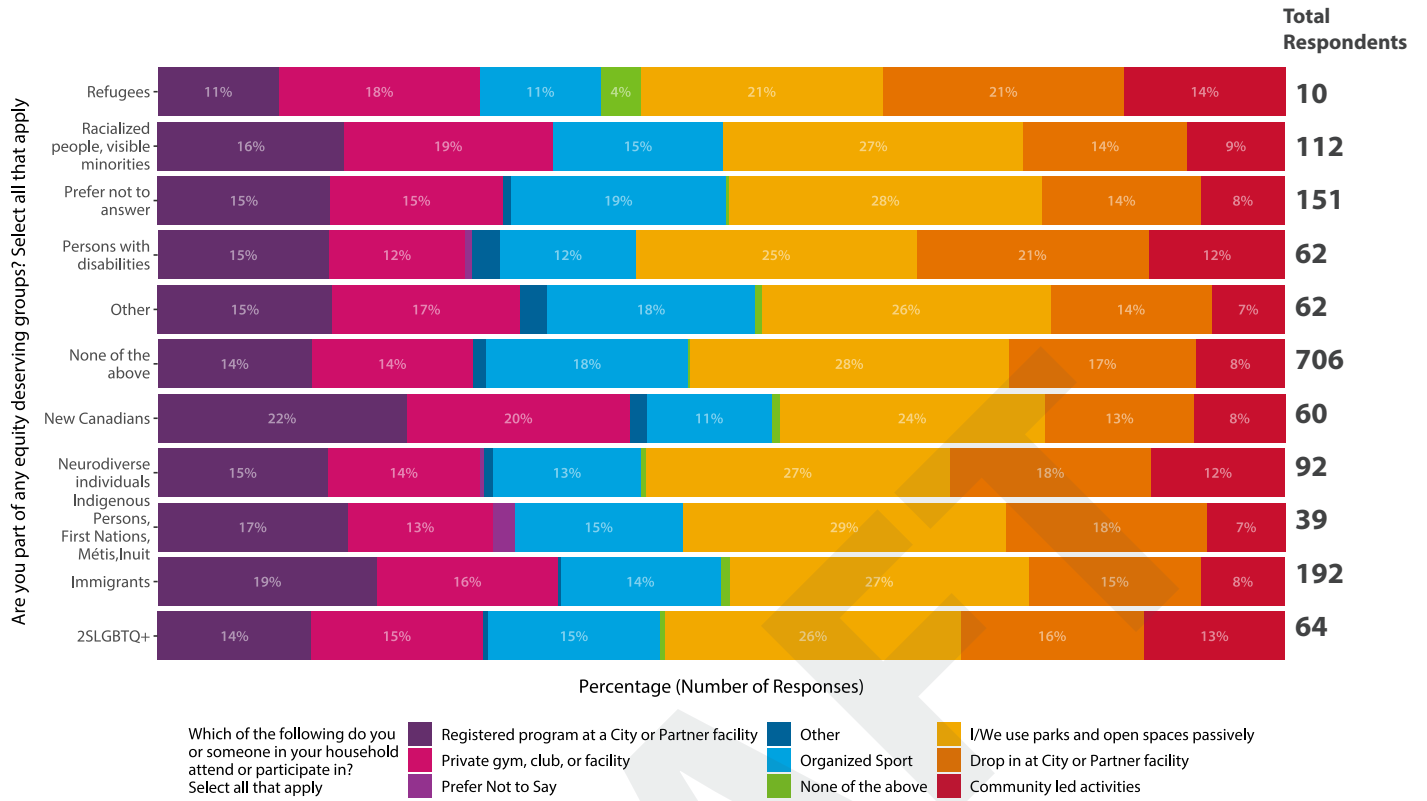
18-64 year olds

Equity-deserving respondents

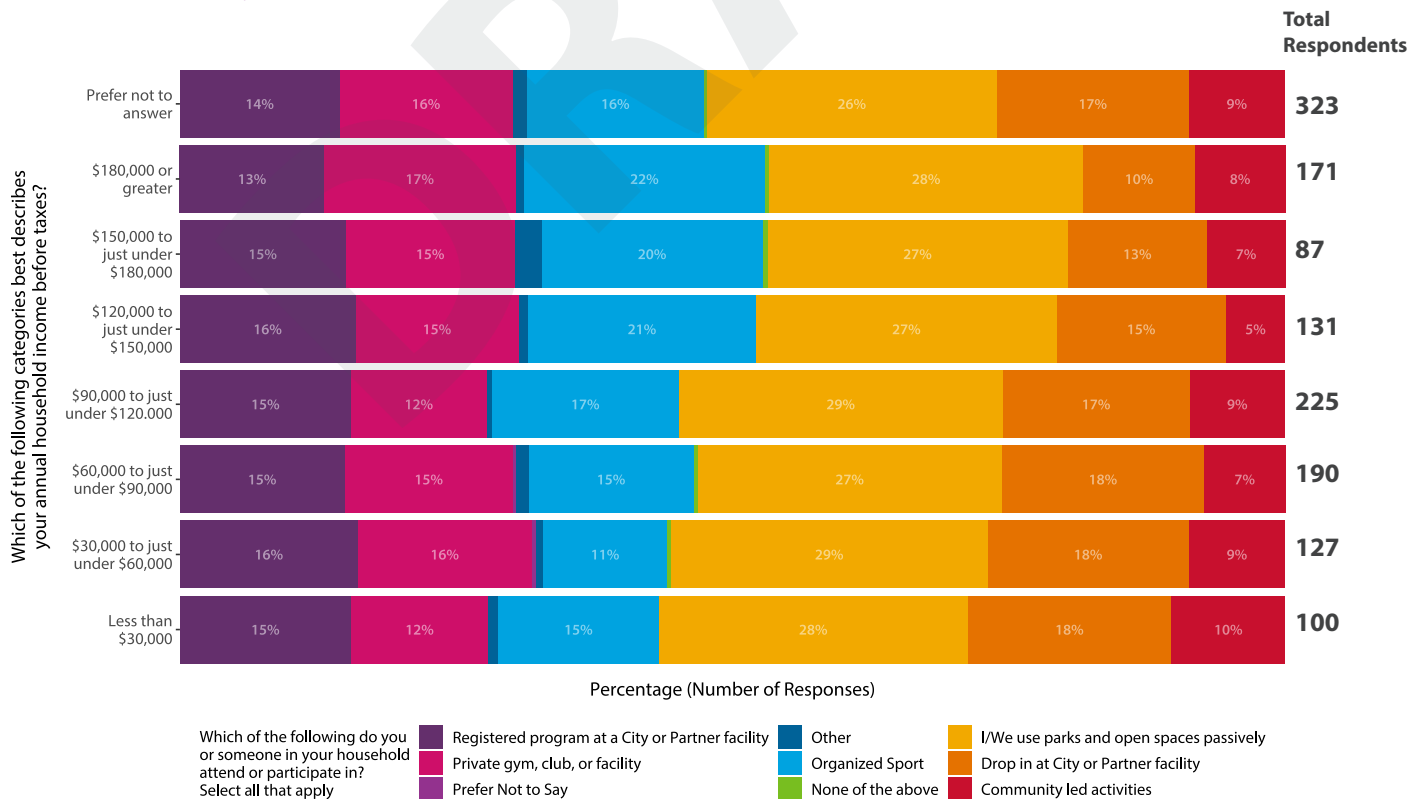


Registered Programs

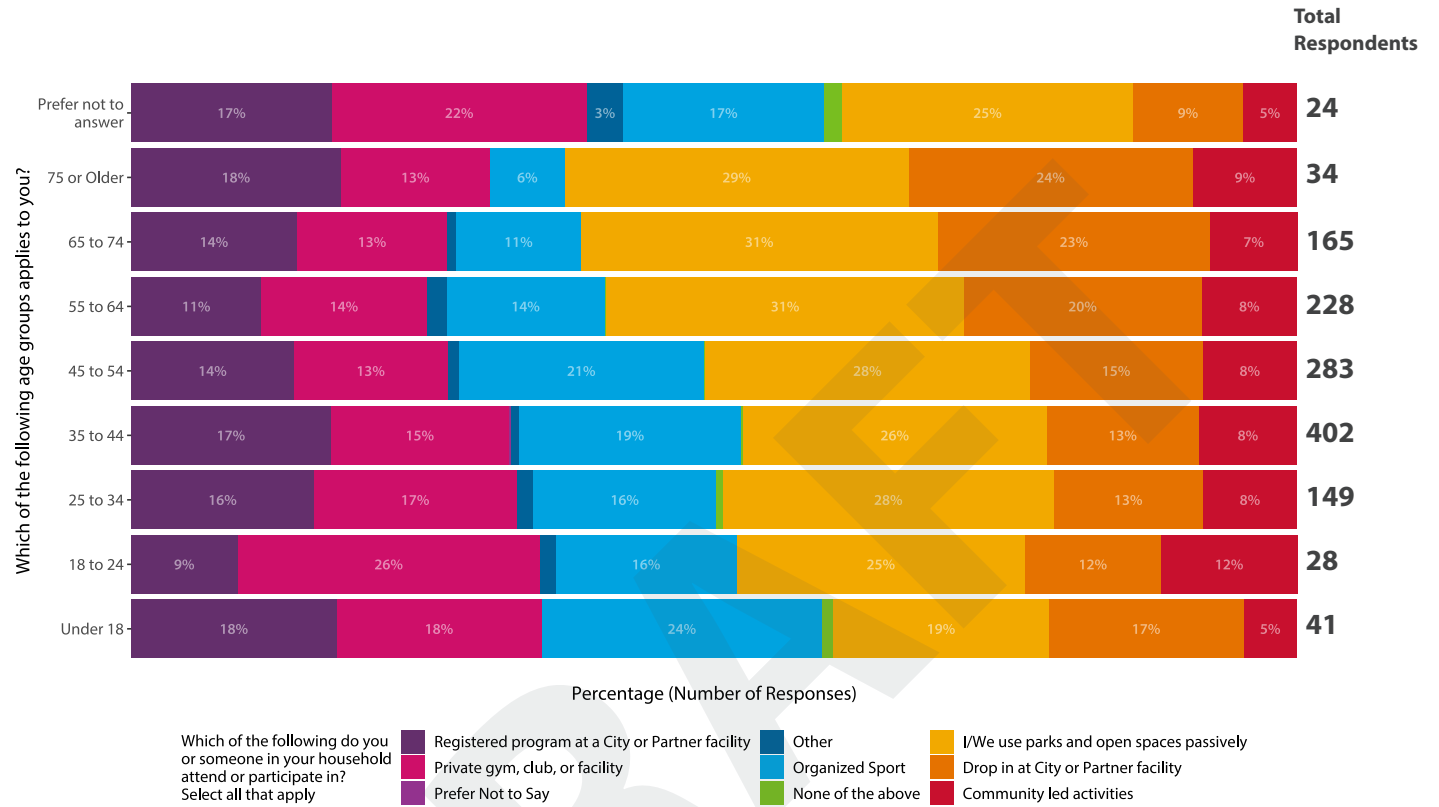
Participation by Equity-Denied Group



Participation by Income



Participation by Age



Strengths of The City and Partners

Respondents who are recreation users described what they feel The City and Partners are doing well.

Survey Question #4: What do you feel The City and Partners do well?*

*This question was only asked to those who identified as recreation users.

The strengths of The City and Partners may conflict with the challenges and barriers reported by non-recreation users. In general, respondents who currently use programs and facilities consider programming variety, value for money, and quality facilities to be areas that The City and Partners do well.

Some respondents also indicated areas where The City and Partners do not do well through this question. For clarity, these responses are combined with responses from *Survey Question #5: What do you feel The City and Partners could do to improve services?*

Program Offerings

Respondents who are users of recreation programs and services in Calgary feel there is a broad variety of programs available to them.

Affordability

Programs, lessons and facilities are considered reasonably priced or affordable by those who are using them. Some respondents appreciate that there are subsidized opportunities provided to individuals and families living with low incomes.

Quality Facilities

For most recreation users, recreation facilities are regarded as clean and well-maintained. These responses are generally limited in detail, though some responses specifically note parks, pools, and gyms.

Some respondents also noted that staff are friendly, welcoming and knowledgeable.

“Great parks, great bike paths, drop-in and registered programs are reasonably priced.”

“The Fair Entry Program makes programs very accessible for low income Calgarians.”

“Provide quality facilities in neighbourhoods at reasonable rates.”

“I think The City has done a great job of creating facilities that offer families and individuals the opportunity to engage in physical activities.”

“Variety, multiple locations, inclusivity.”



Opportunities for The City of Calgary and Partners

Respondents who are recreation users described what they wish to see improved at public recreation facilities.

Survey Question #5: What do you feel The City and Partners could do to improve services?*

*This question was only asked to those who identified as recreation users.

Improve Operations and Administration

Frustrations around operations and administrative practices and procedures (at both City-run and Partner-run facilities) are evident through responses to this question. Respondents described an inability to register for programs they would like to participate in, with the registration and booking system preventing some respondents from having access to recreation. They described the current registration system as frustrating to use and difficult to navigate.

Increase Affordability

Respondents request improvements to the pricing structure of recreation facilities, including Partner facilities. Requests are made for lower costs or “freezing” costs for a few years, as well as more subsidized membership options.

Improved affordability is often referenced in connection to certain demographic groups, including seniors, families and residents living with low income.

Enhance Communications

Respondents do not always feel they have enough information, or the right information, to access all that the public recreation system has to offer. They wish to see better communication so they are aware of the programs and facilities they can access. Marketing campaigns, including additional messaging around healthy living, were suggested as a way to facilitate information exchange.

Increase Capacity

Program Capacity

The capacity of certain programs appears to prevent many from accessing Calgary's recreation offerings. Respondents negatively described the process of waking up at 6am to sign up for in-demand programs. Challenges around accessing swimming lessons for kids was raised often.

Funding

There are mixed feelings around investment in recreation facilities and programs. On the one hand, respondents express wanting better facilities, more program availability, and affordable membership options; on the other hand, some respondents wish to see The City spend less taxpayer dollars on recreation.

Hours of Operation

Some respondents wish to see facilities open earlier and stay open later, with some responses referencing pre-pandemic service levels that may not have returned.

Barriers to Participation

Challenges for Recreation Non-Users

Respondents who do not currently use recreation facilities and programs cited the barriers and challenges they experience at City- or Partner-operated facilities.

Survey Question #6: Why don't you or your family currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?*

*This question was only asked to those who identified as non-recreation users.



Lack of affordability

25.8% of respondents indicated they do not attend recreation programs or facilities, or participate in sport, because it is too expensive.

Lack of awareness

Many respondents indicated they were not aware of opportunities (14.2%) available to them.

Lack of availability

16% of respondents indicated there is not enough program availability. This theme is reiterated by respondents throughout the survey as a core frustration with current service levels.

12.6% indicated they have no time to participate or recreation is too far away from where they live or work (12.9%).

Barriers Across Identity, Age and Income

Survey Question #6: Why don't you or your family currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?*

Cross Tabulation Insights

For more information on how these findings were identified, refer to the section *Methodology for Cross Tabulation Key Takeaways* on page 8.

More likely to respond,

Less likely to respond,

Too far away from where I live or work



Prefer to recreate at home

Equity-deserving respondents

No time



No opportunities that interest me

Not enough program availability

Prefer to recreate at home

18-64 year olds

Too expensive



Not enough program availability

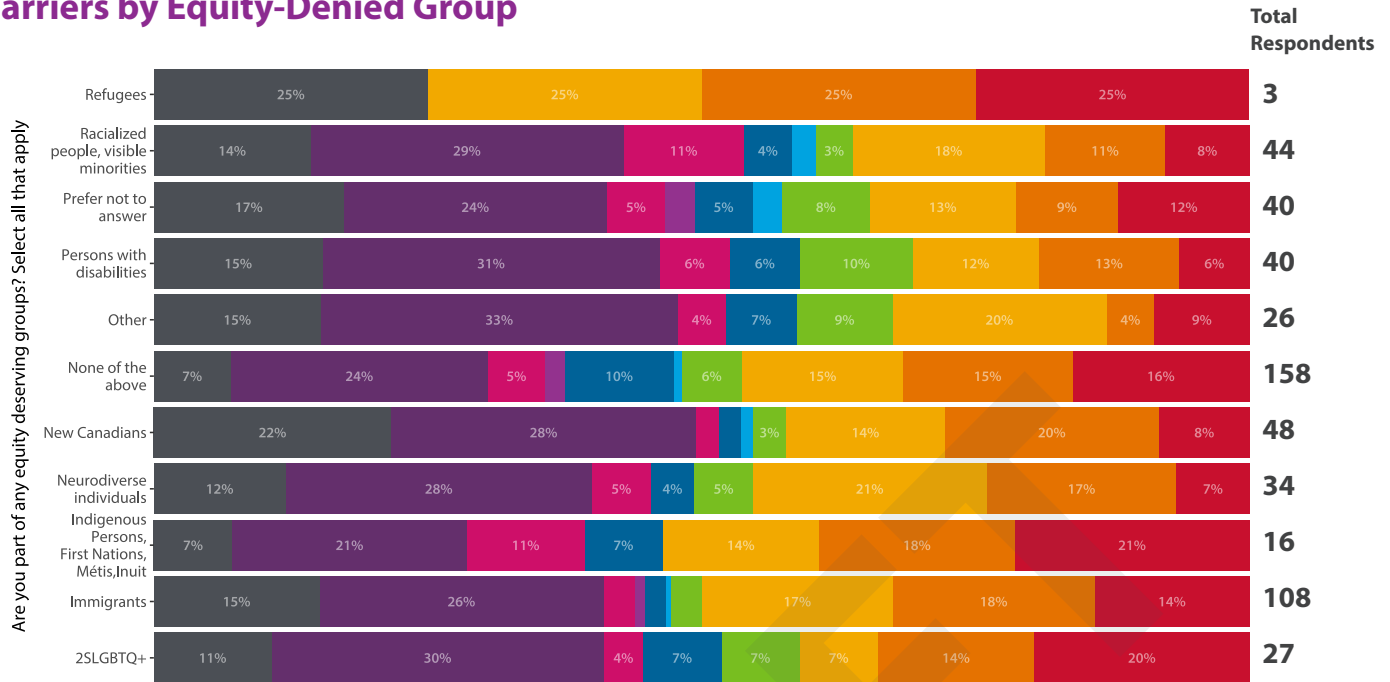
No opportunities that interest me

No time

Prefer to recreate at home

>65 year olds

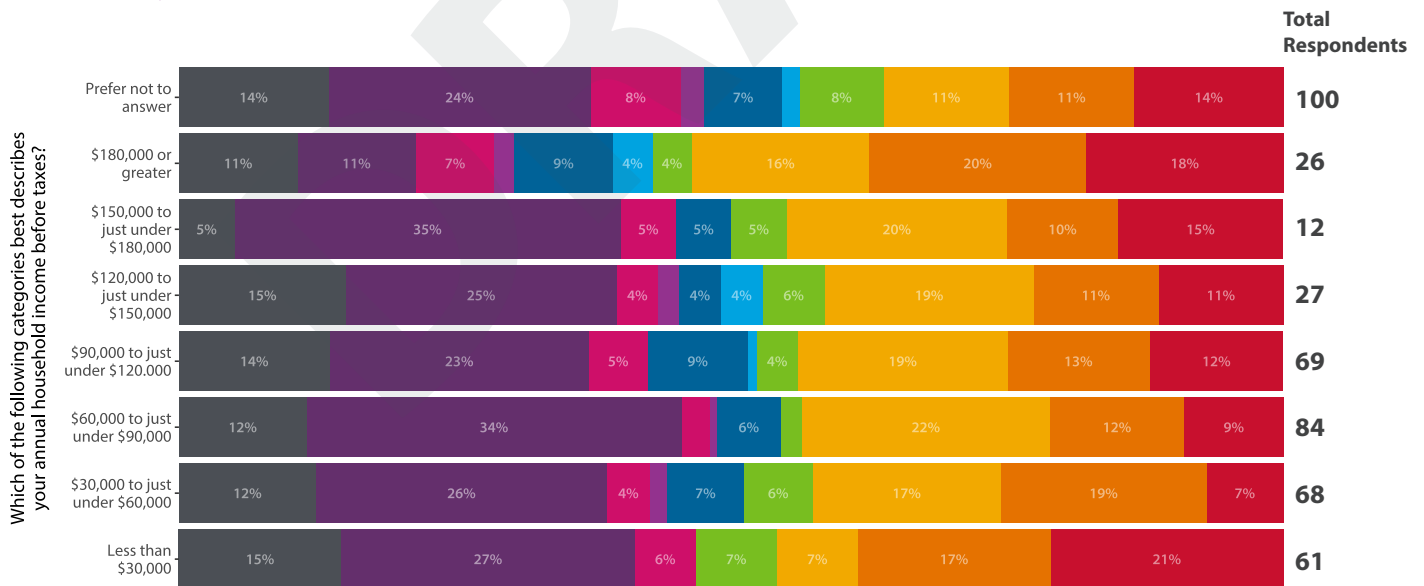
Barriers by Equity-Denied Group



Percentage (Number of Responses)

- Why don't you or your family currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport? Select all that apply.
- Too far away from where I live or work
 - Too expensive
 - There are no opportunities that interest me or my family
 - Recreation means something different to me or my family
 - Prefer to recreate at home or in private
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Other
 - Not enough program availability
 - Not aware of opportunities
 - No Time

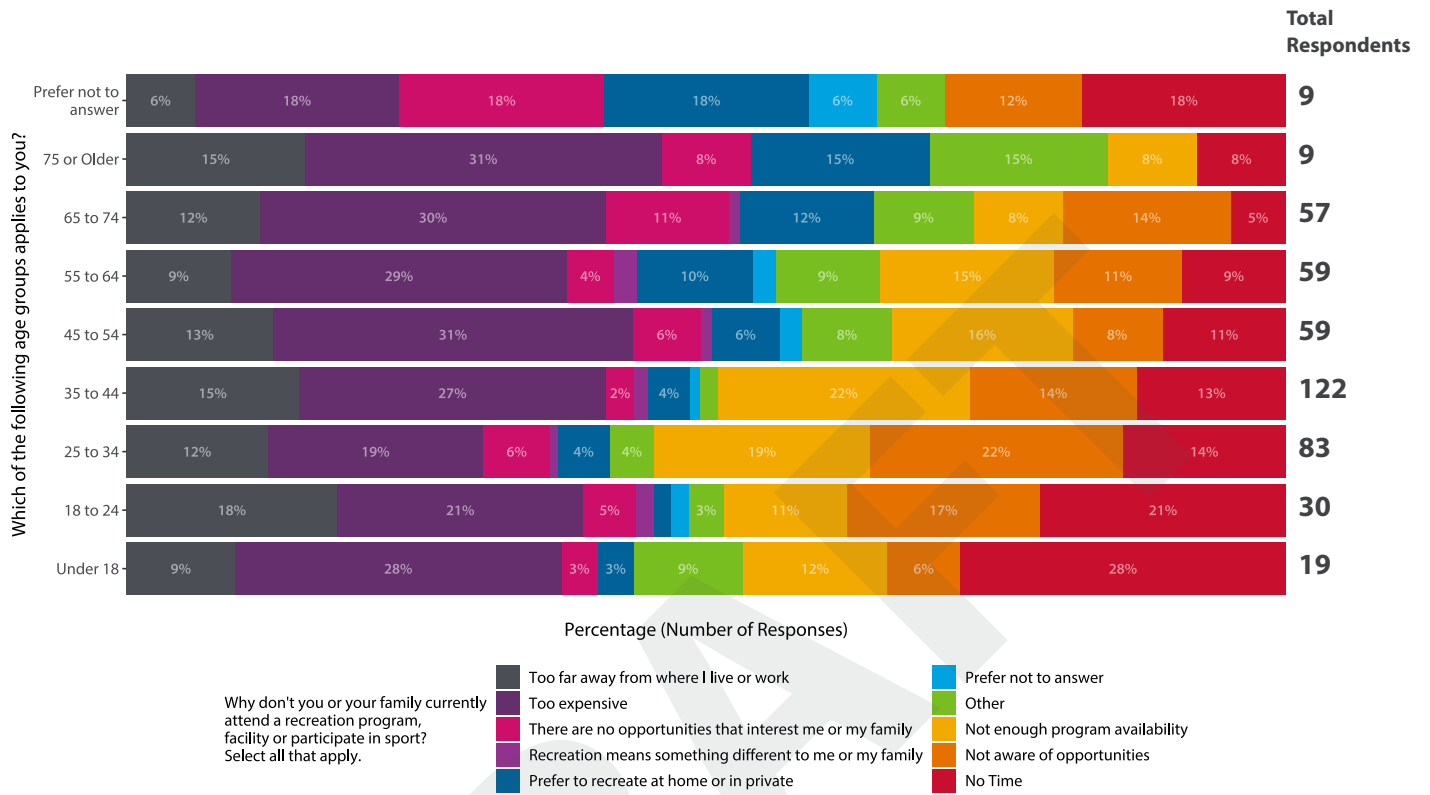
Barriers by Income



Percentage (Number of Responses)

- Why don't you or your family currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport? Select all that apply.
- Too far away from where I live or work
 - Too expensive
 - There are no opportunities that interest me or my family
 - Recreation means something different to me or my family
 - Prefer to recreate at home or in private
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Other
 - Not enough program availability
 - Not aware of opportunities
 - No Time

Barriers by Age



Factors Preventing Participation

Respondents elaborated on elements of their experience and circumstances that prevent them from participating in Calgary's recreation system, with most comments closely aligned with key themes from the previous question.

Survey Question #7: Please tell us more about why you or your family don't currently attend a recreation program, facility, or participate in sport.*

*This question was only asked to those who identified as non-recreation users.

- There are no facilities nearby / I'm not sure of where my nearest facility is located / Facilities are not accessible without a car
- Facilities are too busy / Programs are full
- Programs are too limited / They do not have what I would like to participate in / I'm not sure what programs are available
- Programming does not meet the needs of me and/or my family (e.g., seniors, children with disabilities)
- Membership options are too expensive
- Registration is difficult
- I do not have enough time to participate
- I am experiencing an injury / I have a disability
- I prefer to workout at a private gym
- Cost of living is too high



Future Program and Service Priorities

Recreational Program and Service Ideas

Respondents specified which recreation programs or facilities they would like to see more of in public recreation facilities.

Survey Question #8: What recreational programs and services would you like to see more of?

This question was asked to all respondents. The most frequently mentioned requests are provided below.

Active Recreation Programs

- Swimming (including alternative programs like aquafit or diving)
- Yoga
- Dance (including Zumba)
- Soccer
- Skating
- Pickleball
- Walking groups

Other active recreation programs include: basketball, volleyball, tennis, cricket, hockey, martial arts, spinning, pilates, golf, rock climbing and more.

Active Recreation Facilities and Amenities

- Pools (additional swimming facilities, including outdoor pools)
- Skating rinks (additional arenas, including outdoor rinks)
- Running tracks (allow for running and walking indoors)

Other active recreation facilities include: tennis courts, pickleball courts, gyms and weightlifting amenities, fieldhouses, outdoor exercise equipment, golf courses and more.

Leisure, Arts, and Community Programming

- Arts classes (such as pottery and painting)
- Cooking classes (including nutrition programming)
- Drama / musical theatre
- Music classes

Other leisure programs include: woodworking, paint nights, and community events.

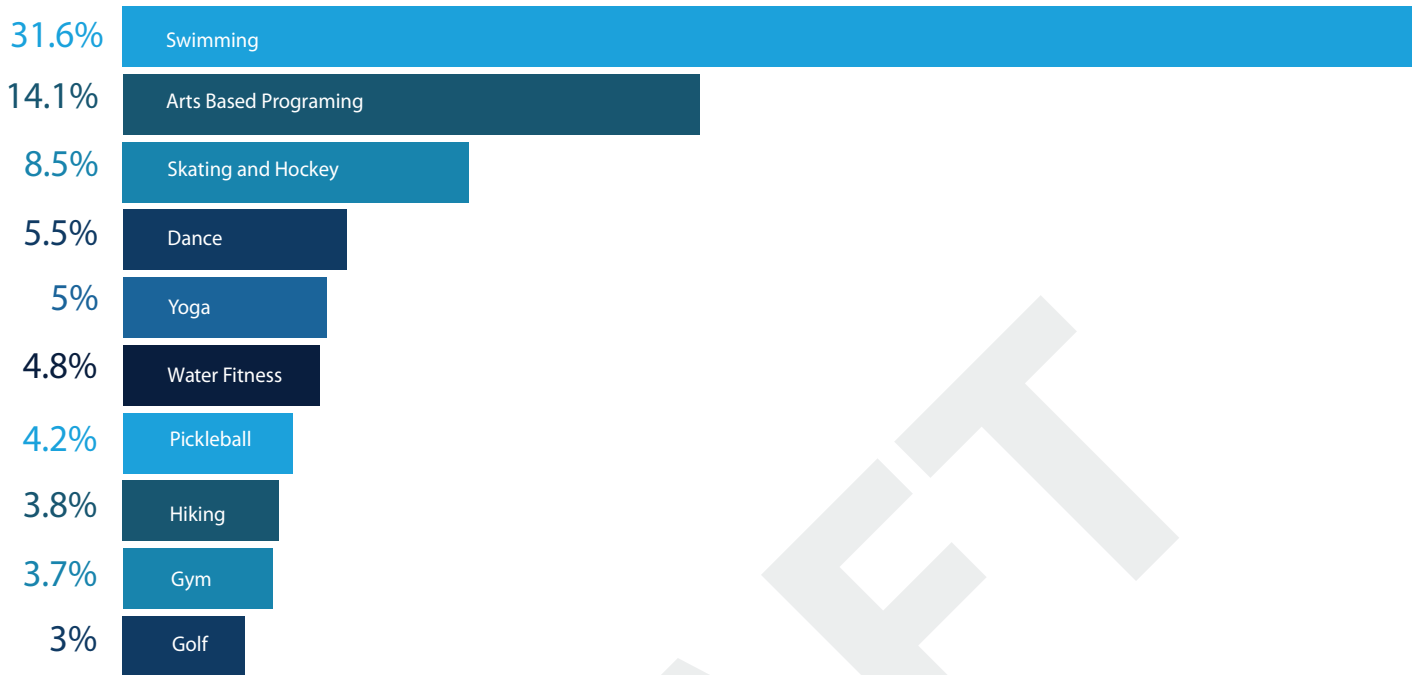
Program Types

- Drop-in program slots (to alleviate challenges with registration and booking)
- Alternative program times (daytime programs, outside of 9-5 hours, evening programs)
- Outdoor programming (sports and active recreation provided outdoors, as well as nature education and outdoor skills)
- Women-only / girls-only programs
- Seniors programs (including older adults, e.g., 50+)
- Teen programs (e.g., learn to lift weights, sport-specific and social activities)
- Disability-friendly programs (including sensory-friendly or physical limitations)
- “Learn to” programs to learn a new sport or skill, including programs for seniors and adults (e.g., learn to swim, learn to skate)
- Trial classes (opportunity to try a class or activity once before deciding whether to commit to a full program)

While many of these programs are currently available, respondents’ lack of awareness and difficulty with registration platforms may be contributing to the overlap in existing recreation opportunities and future program requests.

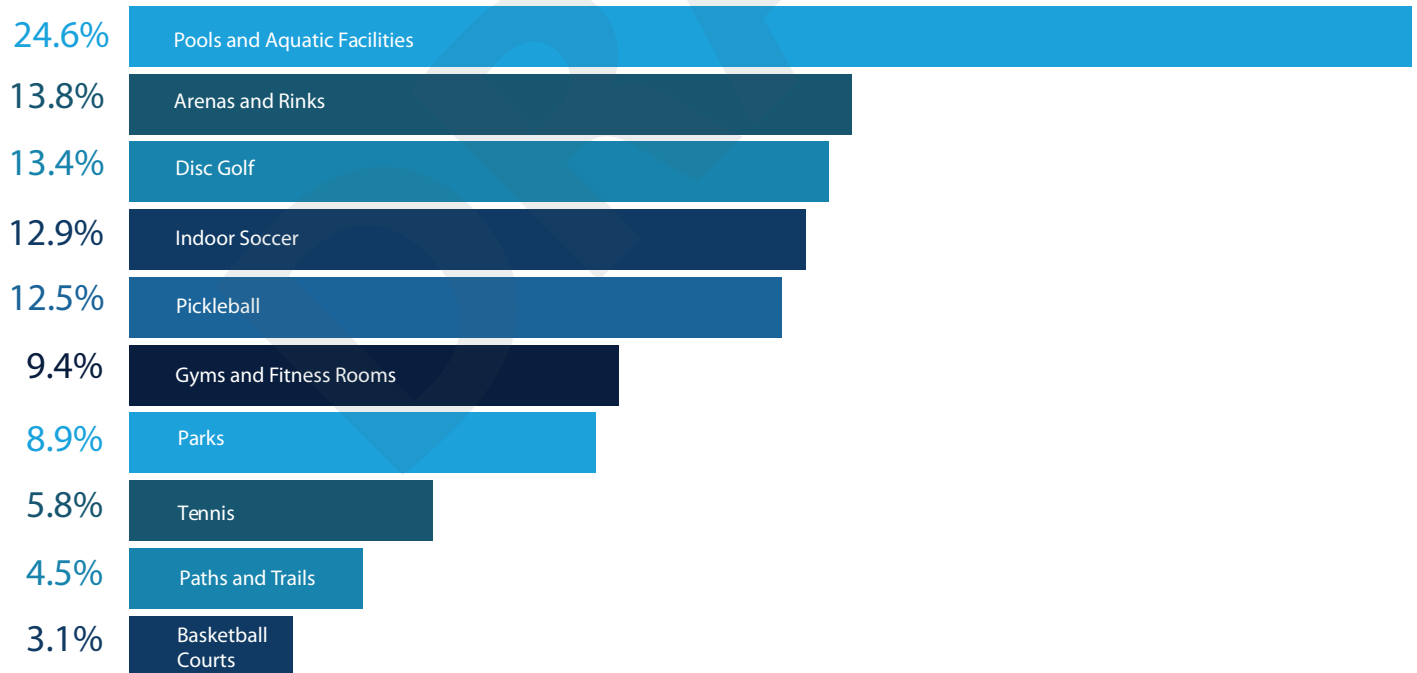
Programming and Activities

Programming and activities mentioned most frequently by respondents.



Facilities and Amenities

Facilities and amenities mentioned most frequently by respondents.



Throughout the public survey, respondents provided ideas for programs and services they would like to see. **The figures above show the types of programs and services respondents would like to see more of, based on their response to Question #8 only.** A comprehensive list of all programs and services mentioned throughout the survey and at pop-up events is provided in Appendix B.

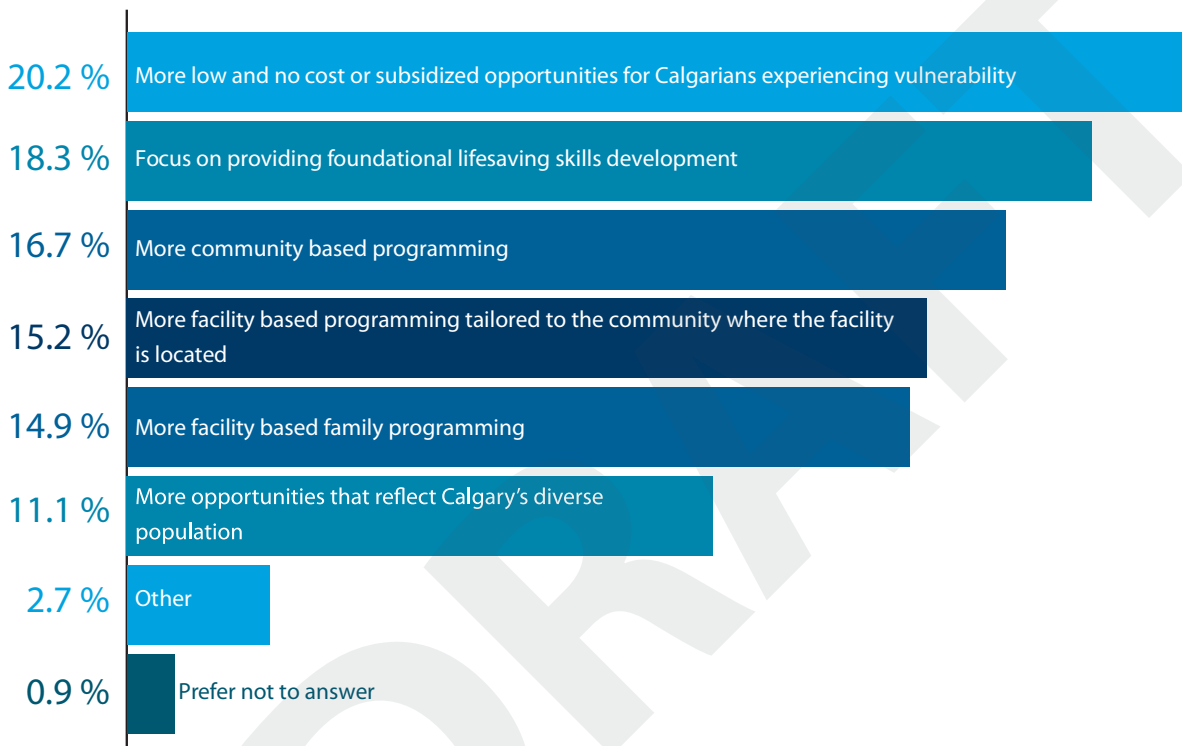


Priorities for the Public Recreation System

Respondents indicated which areas of focus they would like to see the public recreation system prioritize.

Survey Question #9: What should the public recreation system - The City and Partners - prioritize?

This question was asked to all respondents.



Affordable Opportunities

20.2% of respondents indicated that more low and no-cost or subsidized opportunities for members of the public experiencing vulnerability is a priority.

Skill Development Opportunities

18.3% feel that The City and Partners should focus on providing foundational lifesaving skills development, such as swimming, as a core program area.

Programming Opportunities

Respondents would like to see more community-based programming (16.7%), programming tailored to the local community (15.2%), and facility-based family programming (14.9%).

Priorities Across Identity, Age and Income

Survey Question #9: What should the public recreation system - The City and Partners - prioritize?

Cross Tabulation Insight

For more information on how these findings were identified, refer to the section *Methodology for Cross Tabulation Key Takeaways* on page 8.



Equity-deserving respondents

More likely to respond that the recreation system should prioritize opportunities to reflect Calgary's diverse population.



<\$60,000 income households

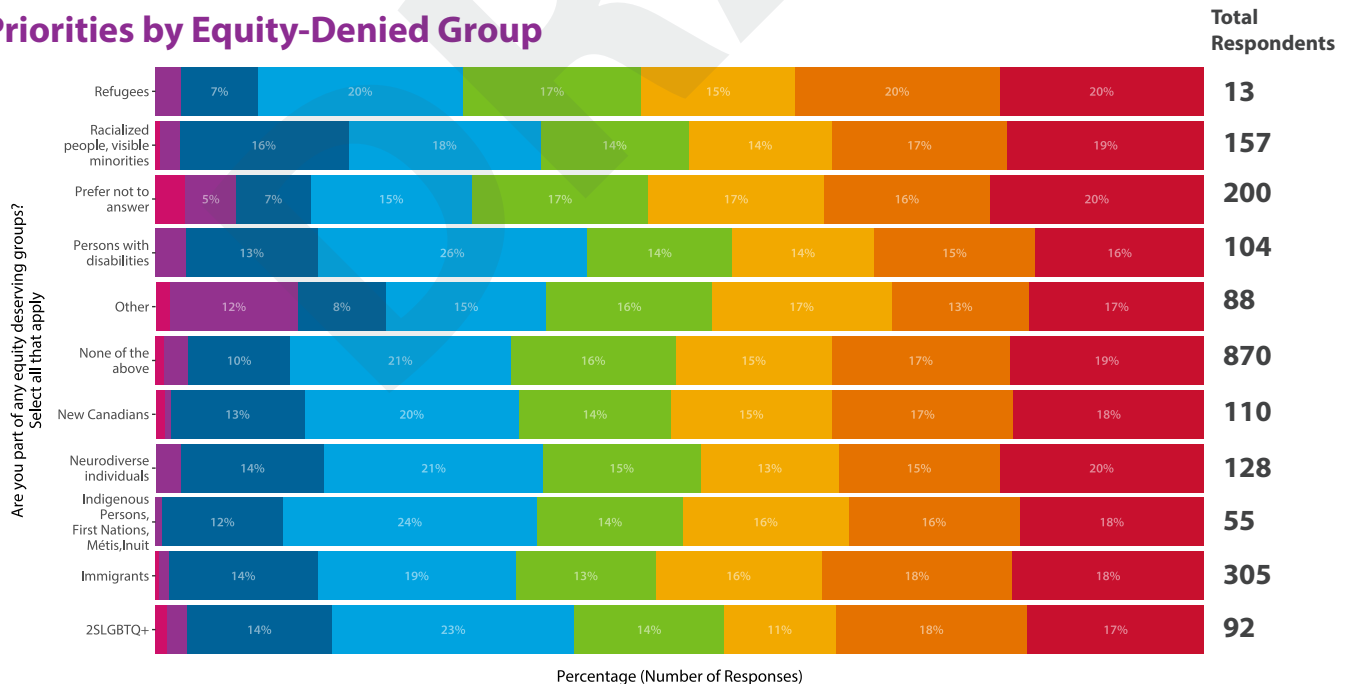
More likely to respond that the recreation system should prioritize more low cost and no cost or subsidized opportunities.



>65 year olds

More likely to respond that the recreation system should prioritize more low cost and no cost or subsidized opportunities and programming tailored to the community.

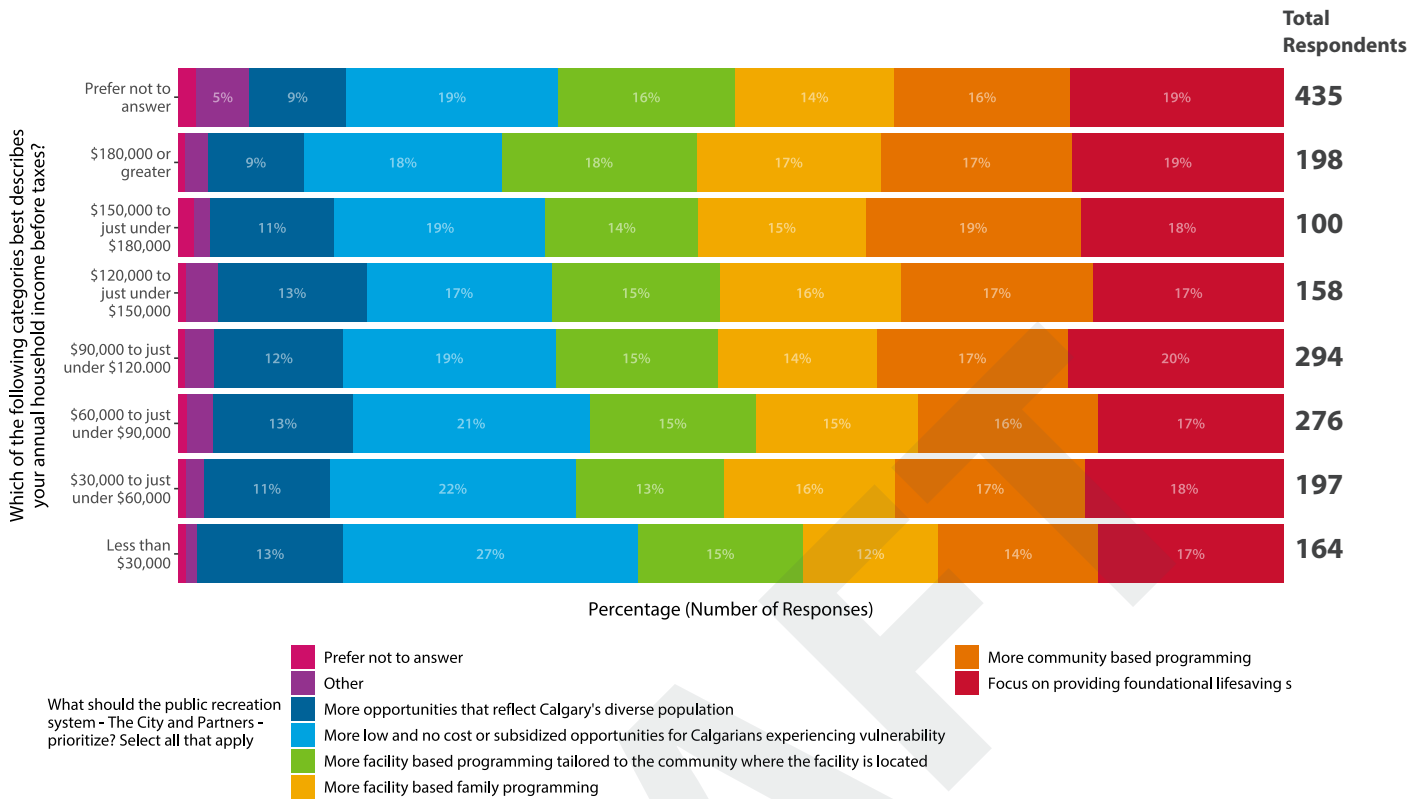
Priorities by Equity-Denied Group



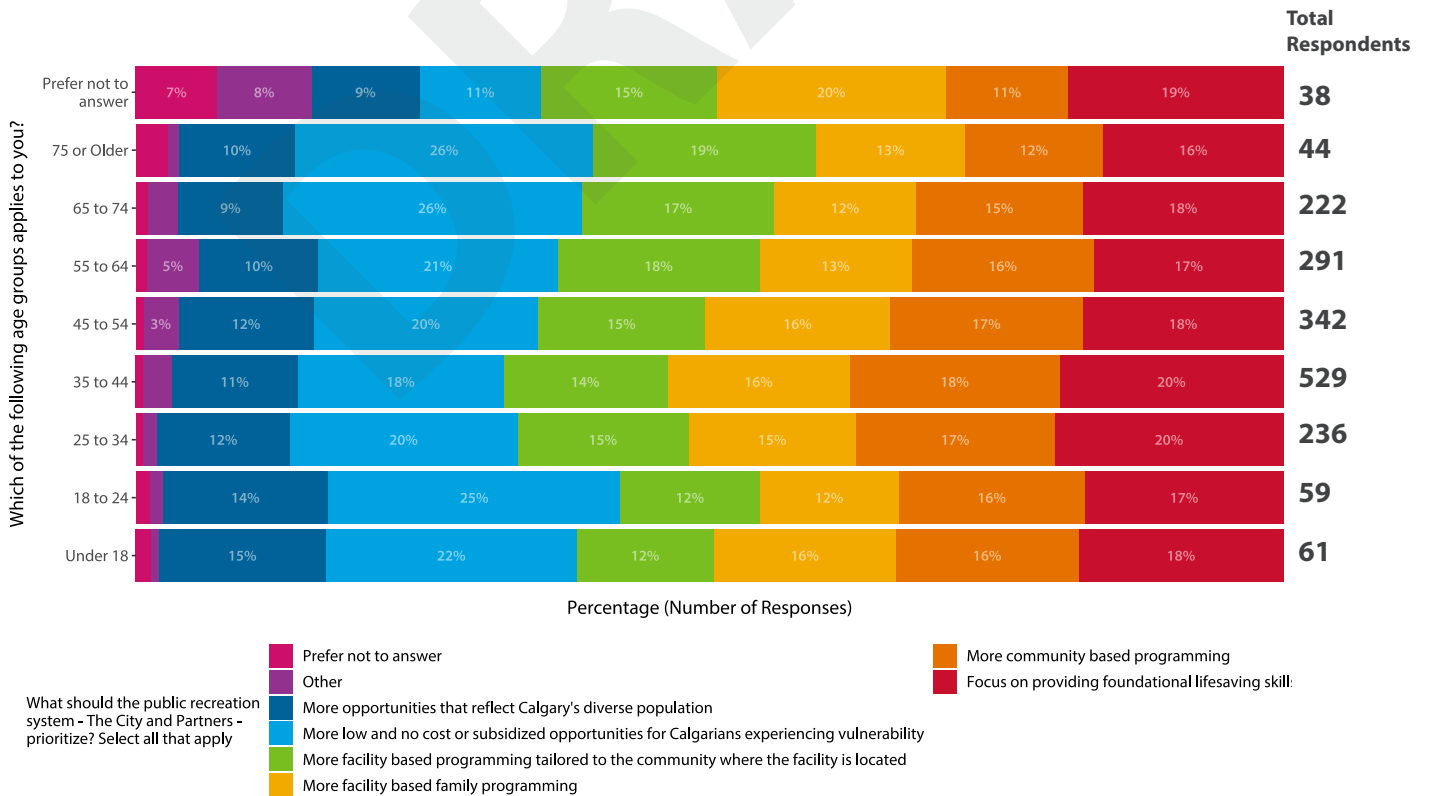
What should the public recreation system - The City and Partners - prioritize? Select all that apply

- Prefer not to answer
- Other
- More opportunities that reflect Calgary's diverse population
- More low and no cost or subsidized opportunities for Calgarians experiencing vulnerability
- More facility based programming tailored to the community where the facility is located
- More facility based family programming
- More community based programming
- Focus on providing foundational lifesaving skills development

Priorities by Income



Priorities by Age



The City's Role in Public Recreation

Respondents indicated what they believe The City's role should be in the public recreation system.

Survey Question #10: What do you think The City's role should be in public recreation?

This question was asked to all respondents.



Make Investments

16.6% feel The City should invest in facilities and amenities. In responses to other questions in the survey, this sentiment is expressed as a need to renovate some existing facilities and build new facilities to meet increasing demand.

Offer Quality Programs and Spaces

16.2% of respondents indicated The City should directly provide quality programs and spaces for residents of all ages and abilities to be active and creative.

Provide Affordable Opportunities for All


14.1% of respondents believe The City should play a role in providing low and no-cost opportunities for members of the public experiencing vulnerability and 13.9% believe The City should play a role in providing affordable life saving skill development.

City's Role Across Identity, Age and Income

Survey Question #10: What do you think The City's role should be in public recreation?


Cross Tabulation Insight

For more information on how these findings were identified, refer to the section *Methodology for Cross Tabulation Key Takeaways* on page 8.




Equity-deserving respondents

More likely to respond that The City should focus on low cost and no cost or subsidized opportunities and opportunities to reflect Calgary's diverse population.



<\$60,000 income households

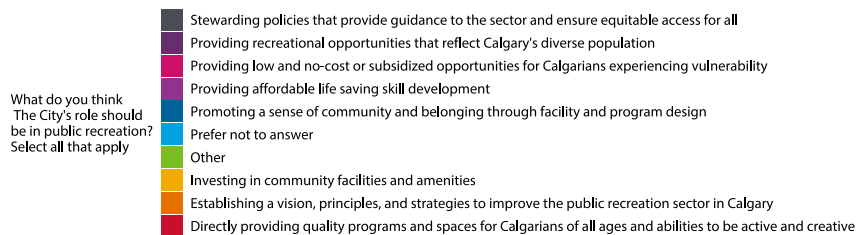
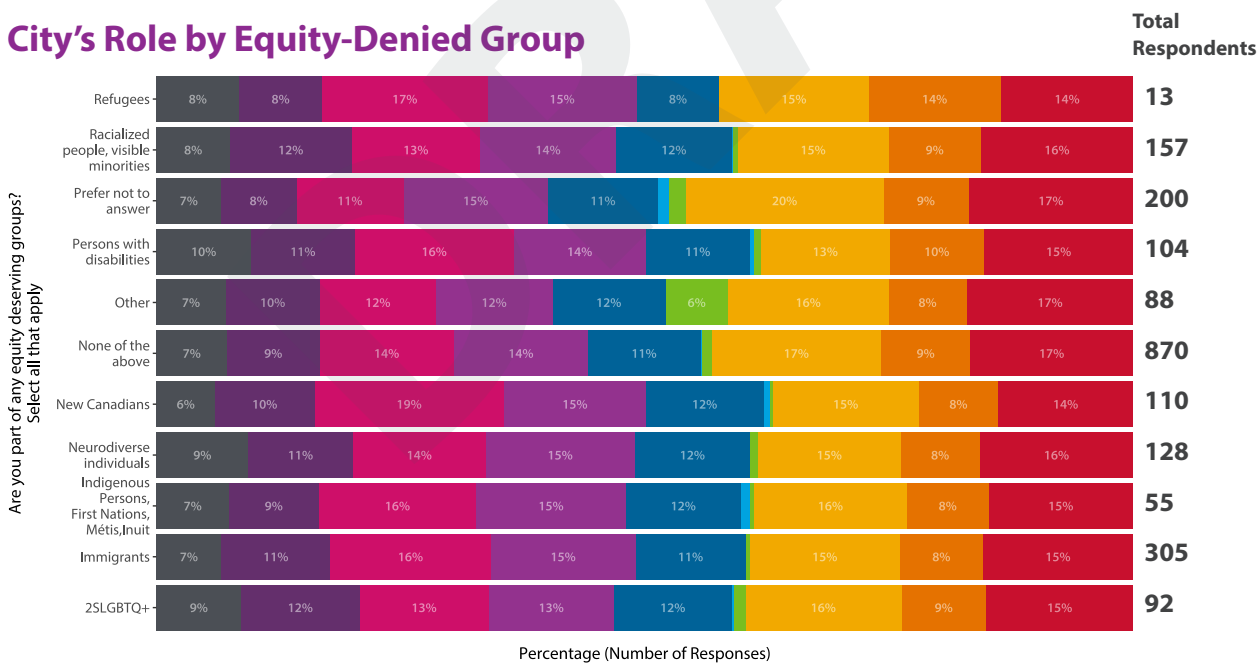
More likely to respond that The City should focus on low cost and no cost or subsidized opportunities.



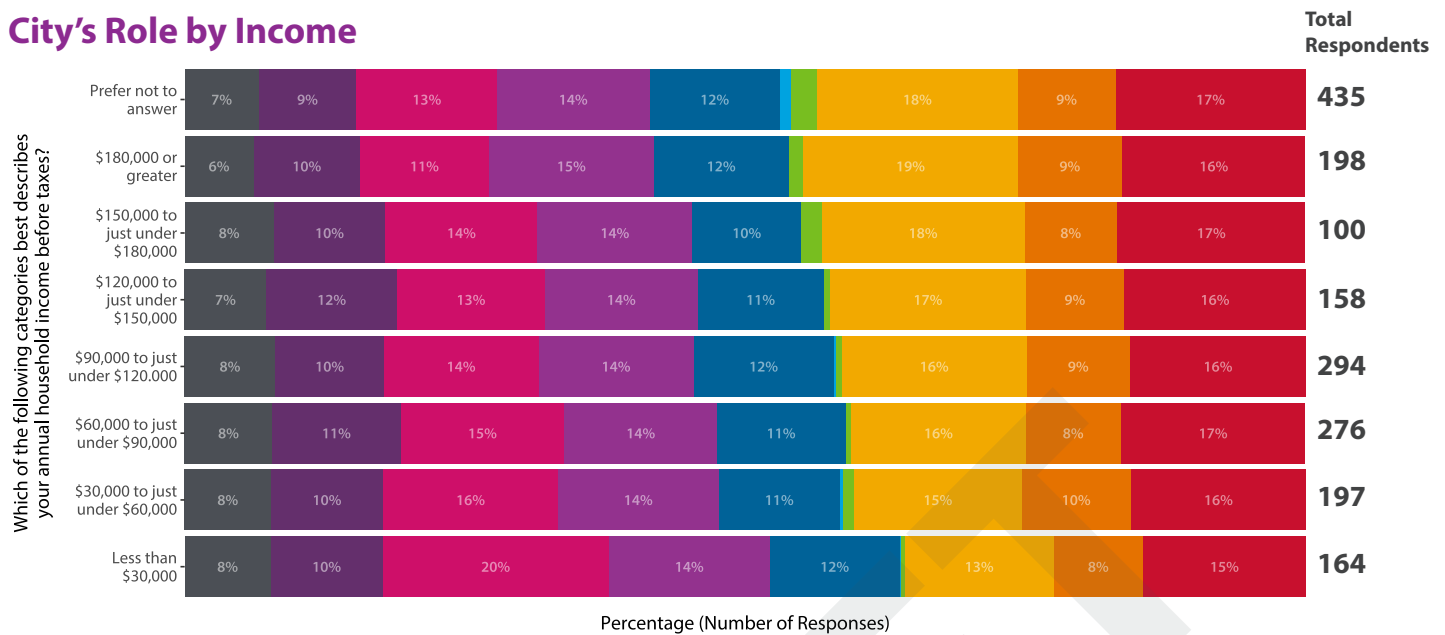
>\$120,000 income households

More likely to respond that The City should invest in community facilities and amenities.

City's Role by Equity-Denied Group

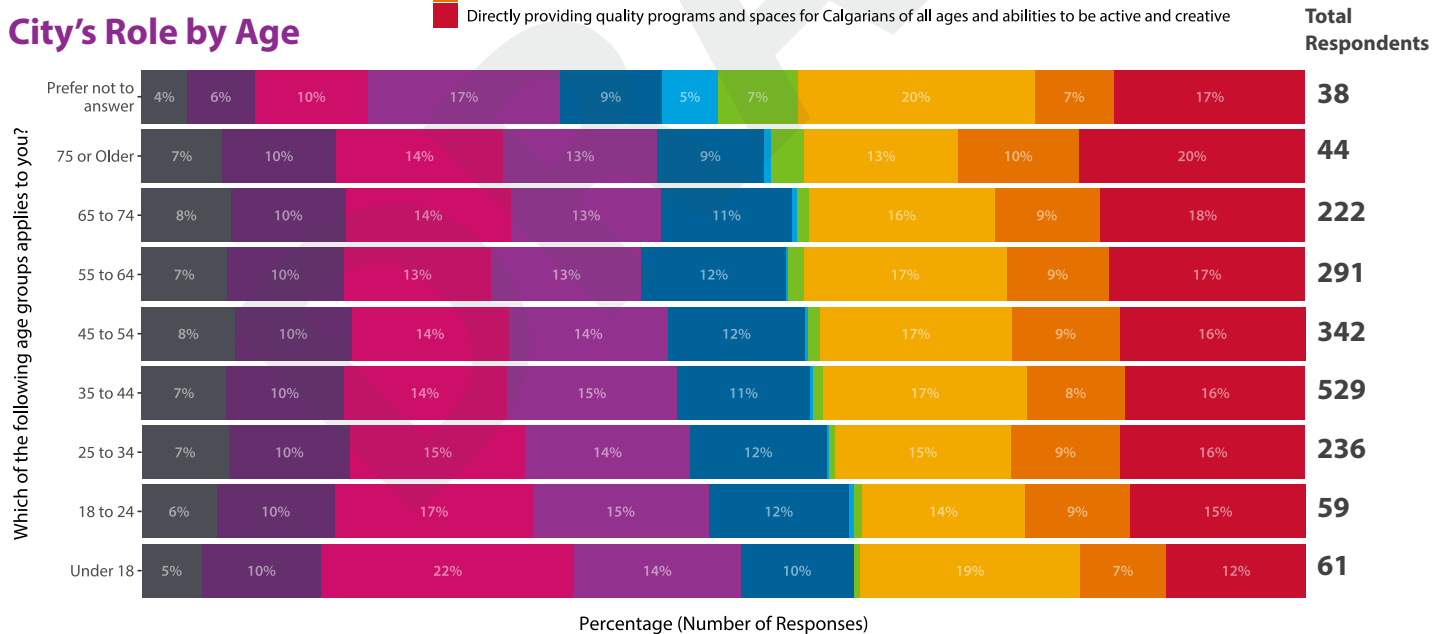


City's Role by Income



What do you think
The City's role should
be in public recreation?
Select all that apply

City's Role by Age



What do you think
The City's role should
be in public recreation?
Select all that apply



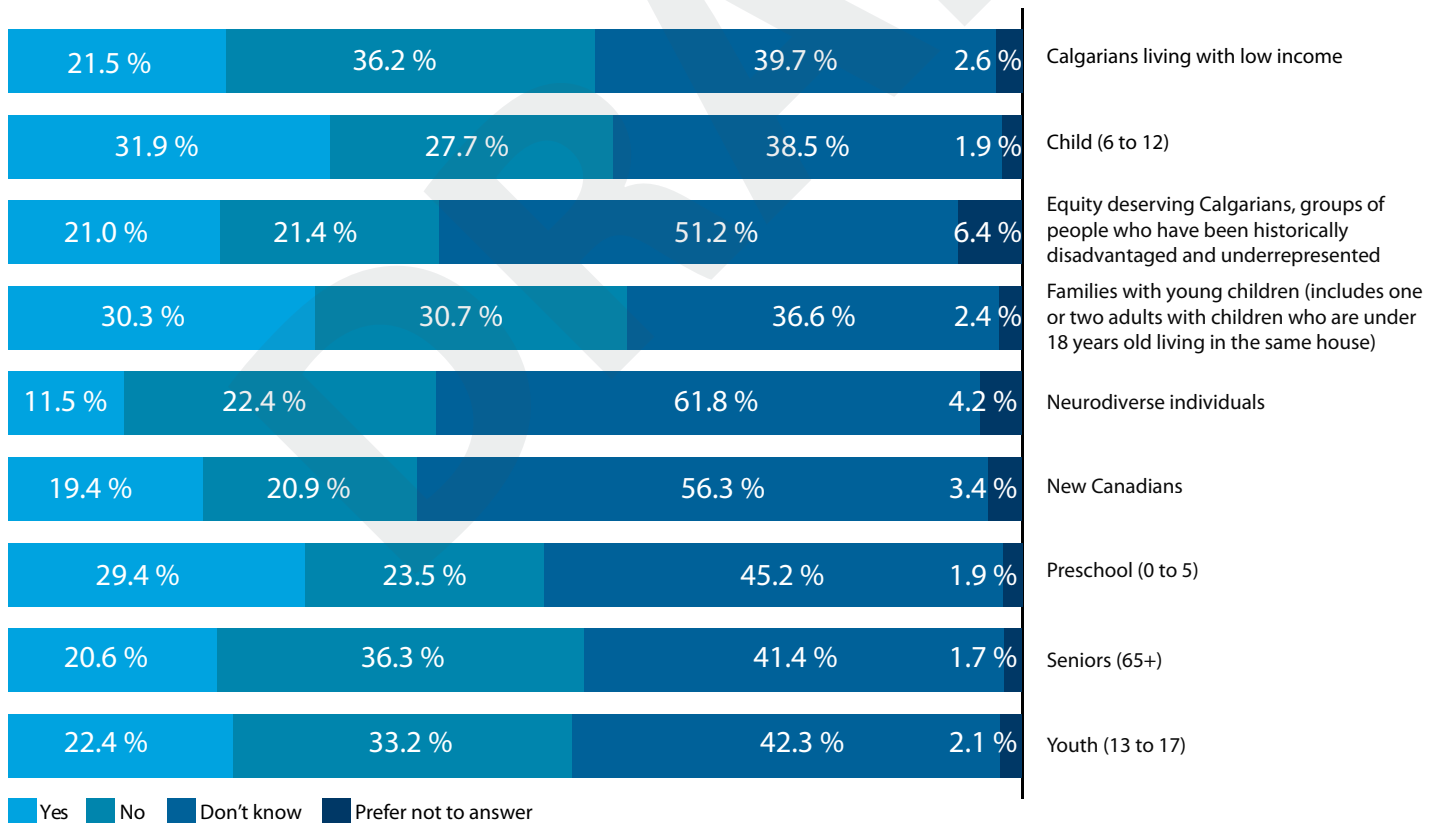
Perceived Service Provision for Key Demographic Groups

In general, respondents wish to see programs, services, facilities and amenities that support a range of user types, including families, seniors, and residents living with low income. When asked about the level of service currently provided to key demographic groups by The City and Partners, respondents indicated there are not enough public recreation opportunities for the following groups:

- Youth (13 to 17)
- Seniors (65+)
- Neurodiverse individuals
- Residents living with low income

Survey Question #11: Do you think there are enough public recreation opportunities from The City and Partners for the following groups of Calgarians?

This question was asked to all respondents.



Appendix B: List of Requests for Programs, Amenities and Facilities

List of Requests for Programs, Amenities and Facilities

The following is a comprehensive list of programs, amenities and facilities requested by survey respondents and pop-up event respondents. The list is not ordered by frequency of comment or mention.

Active Recreation Programs

- Swimming (including lessons and lane swim)
- Yoga
- Dance (including Zumba)
- Soccer (including classes)
- Skating
- Pickleball
- Walking groups
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Tennis
- Cricket (including classes)
- Hockey
- Martial arts (e.g., karate, tai chi)
- Spinning / cycling
- Pilates
- Golf
- Disc golf
- Rock climbing
- Water sports
- Diving
- Aquafit
- Hiking
- Outdoor laser tag
- Inline/roller skating lessons
- Sailing
- Rowing
- Kayaking
- Football
- Curling
- Badminton
- Kickboxing

Active Recreation Facilities

- Pools (additional swimming facilities, including outdoor pools)
- Skating rinks (additional arenas, including outdoor rinks)
- Running Tracks (allow for running and walking indoors)
- Tennis courts
- Pickleball courts
- Squash courts
- Basketball courts
- Lacrosse fields
- Gyms and weightlifting facilities
- Accessible gym facilities
- Cardio machines
- Field houses
- Outdoor exercise equipment
- Skate parks
- Golf courses
- Disc golf courses
- Parks
- Paths and trails
- Bike paths
- Playgrounds that are not part of schools

Leisure, Arts, and Community Programming

- Arts classes (such as pottery and painting)
- Cooking classes (including nutrition programming)
- Horticultural programs and urban farming opportunities
- Drama / musical theatre
- Music classes
- Woodworking
- Paint nights
- Community events
- Community groups
- Animal visits (e.g., dogs, cats, rabbits, goats)
- Life skills

Program Types

- Drop-in program slots (to alleviate challenges with registration and booking).
- Alternative program times (daytime programs, outside of 9am-5pm hours, evening programs).
- Outdoor programming (sports and active recreation provided outdoors, as well as nature education and outdoor skills)
- Women-only / girls-only programs.
- Seniors programs (e.g., 50+).
- Teen programs (e.g., learn to lift weights, sport-specific and social activities).
- “Learn to” programs (opportunity to learn a new sport or skill, including programs for seniors and adults such as Learn to Swim, Learn to Skate).
- Trial classes (opportunity to try a class or activity once before deciding whether to commit to a full program).
- Disability-friendly programs (including sensory-friendly or physical limitations).
- After-school programs.
- Family programs.

DRAFT

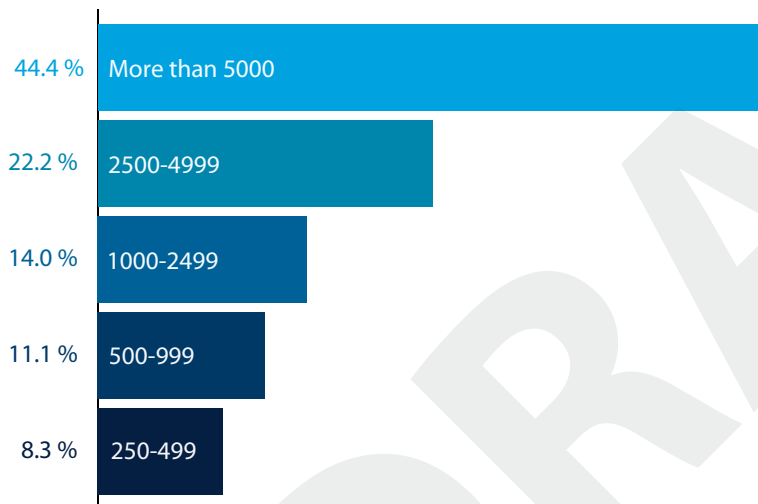
Appendix C: Community Partner Detailed Survey Results



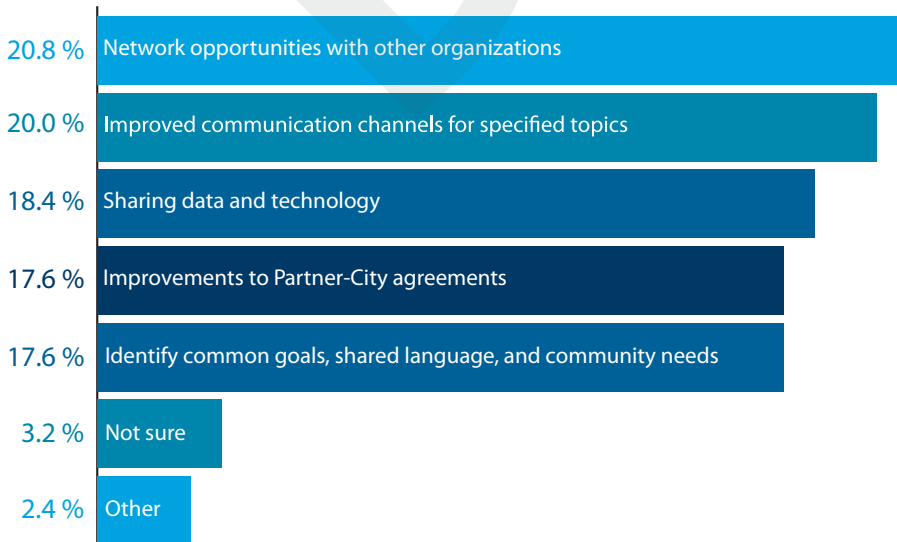
Community Partner Survey Responses

There are two types of questions in the Community Partner Survey: close-ended responses (multiple choice questions) and open-ended responses (open text comment field). For close-ended responses, a bar graph has been provided with detailed results. For open-ended responses, the feedback is summarized in point-form.

Survey Question #1: How many Calgarians does your organization reach or serve annually?



Survey Question #2: How can we improve collaboration between The City and your organization?



Survey Question #3: How would your organization like to grow or change its services over the next five years?

Targeted Programming

- Providing programs for seniors, cultural groups, youth, young families, and more.

Changes to Facilities

- Facility expansions or enhancements.

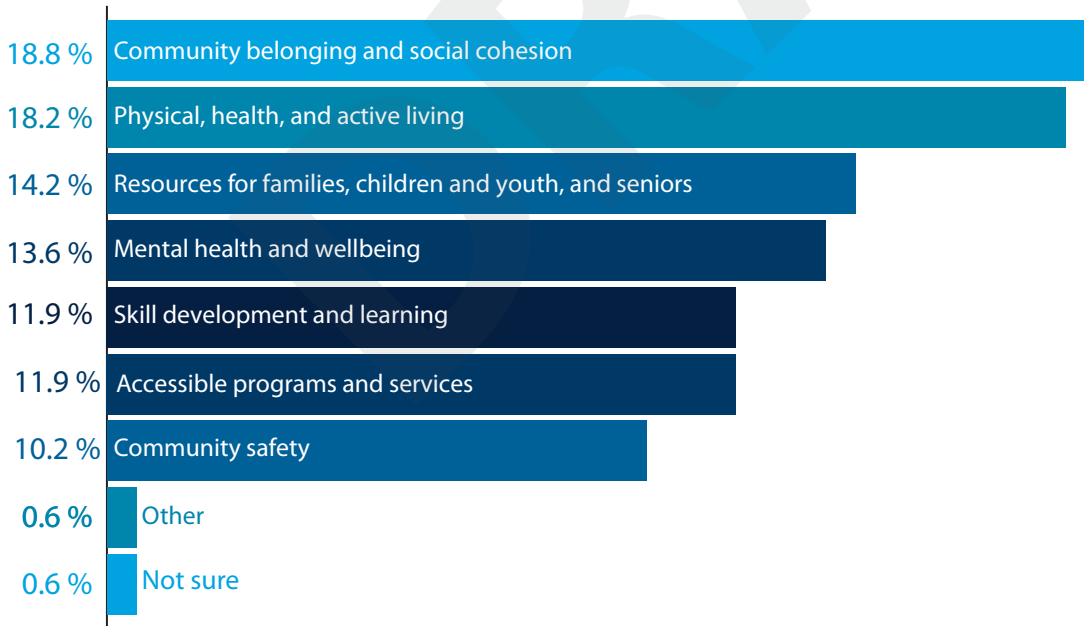
Changes to Operations

- Improvements to membership experience.
- Improved outreach to community members.

New Initiatives

- Develop social programs.
- Increase volunteer base.
- Participate in community events.

Survey Question #4: What is your organization trying to achieve with your public recreation services?



Survey Question #5A: How is your organization measuring success towards your outcomes?



Survey Question #5B: If there are opportunities your organization would like to explore or discuss with The City to improve your recreation services, please share them with us.

Request for New or Improved Amenities and Facilities

- Examples include playgrounds, skateparks, and soccer facilities.
- City to invest in recreation facilities and programs.

Support and Collaboration

- Partnerships and collaboration to support programs.
- Cost-sharing with The City.
- Grant and funding opportunities.
- Exchanging of ideas and best practices between partners.
- Access to space for groups that do not have a physical building.
- Involving Partners in planning conversation.
- Support with volunteer engagement.

Survey Question #6: Has your organization observed changing demands or emerging trends that impact service delivery? If so, what priorities has your organization identified to respond to Calgarians' changing needs?

Changing Demographics

- Influx of young families with children and teenagers.
- More diverse community members.
- More demand for programs overall.

Changing Recreation Trends

- Increased interest in sports like pickleball and cricket.
- Increased demand for recreation post-COVID.
- Increased demand for sports including: watersports, soccer, accessible sailing program.
- Increased participation by girls and women.

Financial Challenges

- Respondents prefer events that are free.
- Food insecurity is prevalent.
- Cuts to funded programs.

Survey Question #7: How can the public recreation system better serve or remove barriers for the following demographics? Your response can address one or multiple groups:

Preschool (0-5)

- Parent and tot groups.

Children (6-12) + Youth (13-17)

- Basketball and cricket.

Adults (18-64)

- Cricket and pickleball.
- Walking paths and skating trails for families.

Older Seniors (65+)

- Plenty of seating options.

New Canadians (all ages)

- Attracting new Canadians who may not feel comfortable.

Equity-denied residents (all ages)

- Accessible playgrounds and sports surfaces.
- Wheelchair accessible activities.
- Low cost activities for seniors.

Other

- Help people find programs, even if they are not offered by The City.
- Conduct surveys and engagement activities regularly to gather feedback.
- Allow organizations to have low- or no-cost access to facilities to host programs.
- Higher fees charged to for-profit service providers.



Indigenous Wisdom Seeking What We Heard Report

Land Acknowledgment

In the City of Calgary, all recreational activities are experienced and enjoyed on the ancestral and traditional territories of the Siksikaitapî, also known as the Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika, Piikani, Amskaapiikani and Kainai First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, within Métis Nation Battle River Territory (Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6). We acknowledge all Indigenous Peoples who have made Calgary their home. Okî, Dadanast'ada, Âba wathtech, Taanishi, Thank you for allowing Calgarians to experience and enjoy recreational activities on your lands.

Giving Thanks

Thank you to Miskanawah Community Services Association, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY), and McMan Youth Family and Community Services Association of Calgary & Area. Thank you to all Indigenous Peoples including Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and youth who led us in blessings and/or smudge, and shared their perspectives, experiences, and wisdom to shape the long-term vision for GamePLAN. Your participation in the Wisdom Seeking Engagement will inform how to increase access and improve recreational services for Indigenous Peoples living in and around Calgary.

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Indigenous Wisdom Seeking & GamePLAN

Indigenous Peoples have practiced recreational activities since time immemorial.

Participants who engaged with the City of Calgary (The City) for the GamePLAN Indigenous Wisdom Seeking shared that these recreational activities include powwow dancing, hunting, fishing, picking medicines, cooking Indigenous foods, playing traditional games, sports, art, Elder-led teachings, and other leisure activities that promote Indigenous knowledge, holistic health, and intergenerational transfer of knowledge. Indigenous Peoples understand recreation as a diverse expression of activities that expand upon The City's current delivery of recreational activities and services.

Historically, The City has conducted little research to understand Indigenous Peoples' recreational experiences. In 2006, The City of Calgary researched and wrote the Pimatswin Recreation Report that noted Indigenous Peoples in Calgary face barriers accessing recreation due to lack of transportation options, lack of available childcare, and high program costs. The Pimatswin Recreation Report also found that Indigenous Peoples had a different interpretation of recreation than The City had been offering.

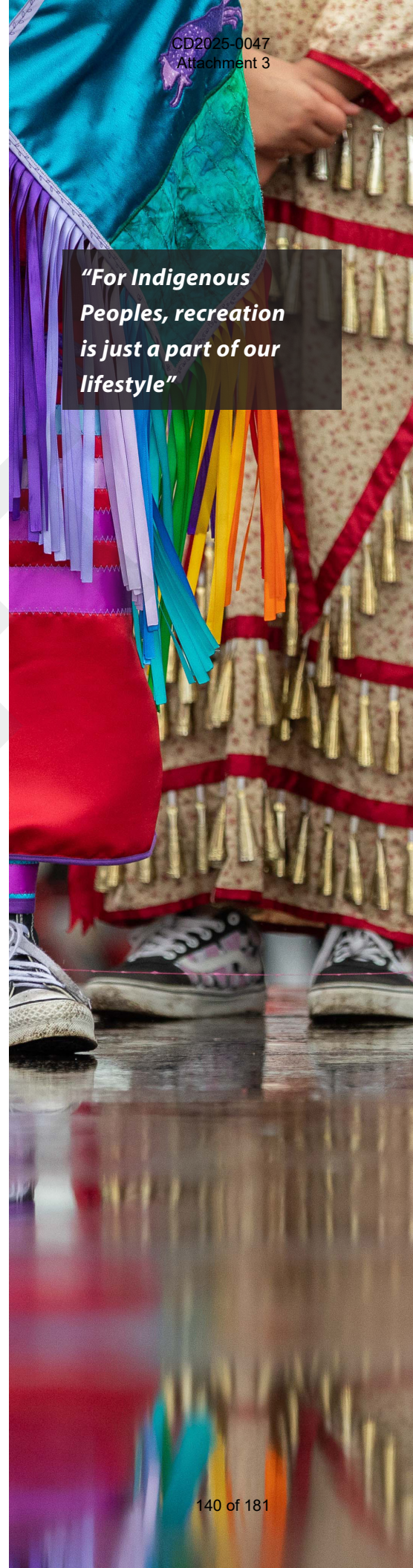
The City acknowledges that it needs to better serve Indigenous Peoples in public recreation. The City's first step was to listen and learn directly from Indigenous Peoples to ensure their needs and perspectives are reflected in The City's recreational services and programs.

The City initiated an Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement strategy with Indigenous serving organizations and Indigenous Peoples to:

- » Meaningfully build relationships and support reconciliation,
- » Better understand what recreation means to them,
- » Encourage participation in public recreation services by increasing access, reducing barriers and improving recreation services and
- » Contribute to the reimagining of the public recreation system that would honour and be inclusive of all Indigenous Peoples.

The feedback provided by Indigenous Peoples is contained within this report and has contributed to GamePLAN: Reimagining Public Recreation, The City's long-term vision and strategy to shape the approach to delivering inclusive, accessible and sustainable recreation services for the next 10 to 30 years.

"For Indigenous Peoples, recreation is just a part of our lifestyle"



About GamePLAN

GamePLAN is aimed at establishing a vision and actionable strategy for public recreation in Calgary.

Our strategy focuses on the:

- » Types of programs and services The City and Partners offer,
- » Infrastructure that enables The City and Partners to offer those programs and services and
- » How programs and services are offered.

GamePLAN is rooted in three Guiding Principles:

Level the playing field:

This principle focuses on 'levelling the playing field' for underserved, underrepresented or vulnerable individuals. It is about removing barriers so that all people living in and around the city have access to the benefits of public recreation.

Change the game:

The City acknowledges the current recreation system does not adequately serve the needs of Indigenous Peoples. The City is looking to implement solutions and actions to create a more inclusive and impactful service model.

It takes a team:

The City understands there are already many organizations, agencies and communities providing opportunities that support Indigenous Peoples' health and wellness. How can The City collaborate and expand on these opportunities to ensure equitable access and improved programming for public recreation?

Foundational to GamePLAN and the Indigenous Wisdom Seeking What We Heard Report is the White Goose Flying Report (2016). The White Goose Flying Report outlines specific Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action (2015) for the City to address. The City aims to repair relationships with Indigenous Peoples and ensure their needs and perspectives are reflected in public recreational programs and services.

Indigenous Wisdom Seeking Engagement Overview

The City approached Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement with the goals of being community oriented, collaborative, Elder-led, youth-led, and honouring Indigenous protocols, ways of knowing and gathering.

Participants were asked to reflect on their perspectives, experiences and share wisdom on:

- » "Recreation," discussed in the most general way to understand what recreation means to Indigenous Peoples and why it matters,
- » Barriers faced when accessing recreation and
- » Potential solutions to overcoming those barriers.

Engagement was held from February 2024 until August 2024. A total of three sharing circles were facilitated with Indigenous serving organizations including Miskanawah Community Services Association, USAY, and McMan Youth Family & Community Services.

Indigenous Wisdom

Indigenous Peoples in and around Calgary represent diverse communities rich in history, lands, language, ways of being and recreational practices. The feedback provided represents these vast perspectives, experiences and wisdom gained throughout the Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement process. While some participants had limited opportunities to participate in recreation, almost all participants agreed that recreation is important to enhancing their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. The linkage between recreation and holistic health is critical to a person's wellbeing and quality of life.

Three themes emerged from engagement, including:

- » (1) why recreation matters
- » (2) barriers to accessing recreation and
- » (3) ways to improve recreation for Indigenous Peoples.

Participants at Sharing Circles

22 people

Miskanawah Community Services Association

12 people

Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth

7 people

Mc Man Youth, Family and Community Services Association of Calgary & Area

27 Indigenous youth

(ages 9-28) participated in the anonymous online survey

“What saved me in being in foster care was recreation. I played basketball all the time. I made sure I was active. It saved me from that part of life.”

“Recreation is amazing. I remember being involved in a baseball team in grade six and that was the highlight of my childhood...It was my friends’ parents who made it possible for me to go.”

1. Why Recreation Matters

Connecting to Culture

Recreational activities that honour indigenous culture were described as important and promote positive self-identity. No single definition of “culture” was offered, however, participants described cultural activities such as powwow dancing, hunting, fishing, picking medicines, cooking traditional foods, playing traditional games, sports, art, and Elder-led teachings. Indigenous youth want more cultural activities as recreation.

Holistic Health, Healing and Reconciliation

Recreation promotes positive mental health, especially for those experiencing anxiety and depression. It provides a positive outlet and coping mechanisms for dealing with challenging circumstances and life experiences. Participants shared stories of overcoming challenges, such as intergenerational poverty, the Sixties Scoop and the Child and Family Services system, through recreation. Indigenous Peoples continue to face traumatic impacts, as a result of colonization, which can be mitigated by recreation.

Youth Support

Participants shared that recreation helps keep youth engaged with their peers and in their communities. This acts as a deterrent to “getting into trouble”. Without dedicated spaces and programs, youth noted they may become involved in gangs or crime as a means of releasing energy. Recreation keeps youth included, active and engaged.

Community Connections

Recreation provides pathways to making friendships, connecting with new community members, and being in relationship with the land. Recreation brings families and friends together and contributes to community building and belonging.

“...I had that space and bandwidth to lift weights, but it was also a priority for me. Some folks have groceries as their priorities for them”

2. Barriers

Participants shared that many Indigenous Peoples are challenged to meet their basic needs, making recreation a lower priority. This provides critical context for the barriers below:

Essential Needs

Participants shared that accessing recreation is not a top priority compared to ensuring their essential needs are met. Many Indigenous Peoples talked about struggles with food insecurity, poverty, and the time and resources it takes working to survive, leaving them tired and without the ability to participate in recreation.

Racism, Safety, and Exclusion


Participants described how racism impacts all areas of their lives, including when they access recreation. Indigenous Peoples encounter racism from staff and other recreation facility and transit users making them feel unwelcome and unsafe. Most physical spaces do not have land acknowledgements. Indigenous Peoples want to see themselves visibly reflected in recreational facility signage, art and architecture, staff representation, and in program development.

Affordability & Transportation

Financial costs of recreation programs, sports clubs and facility use is inaccessible. Recreation facilities require fees for day, monthly, and annual passes, which can make a simple outing to the gym or pool unaffordable. The rising costs of living have impacted Indigenous People's ability to pay and have made choices difficult between paying for necessities or paying for recreation and the transportation required to get to a facility. Participants noted facilities are not equitably located throughout the city and cited transportation as a barrier (e.g., cost of fuel, parking availability, cost of transit passes, travel time).

Fair Entry

The thresholds for the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) are artificially low because they do not take into account personal circumstances, inflation, and the rising cost of living. Participants shared that having to apply annually for Fair Entry is burdensome to the point of deterring application. Participants also described literacy and language, interfacing with social workers and eligibility requirements as barriers impacting application accessibility.

A photograph of a person's arm and hand playing a drum. In the background, a rainbow flag is visible. The text is overlaid on a dark, semi-transparent box.

“...We are hit with racism right at the door, you can feel it and see it in how they talk to you. You can fight or walk away and lose that opportunity.”

Programming

Indigenous Peoples want culturally based programming that affirms their identities. For example, land-based programming, powwow dancing, beading, traditional cooking, arts, and Elder-led teachings. Youth highlighted gaps in programming for youth aged 12-17 years old; Two-Spirit Individuals; Elders and older adults; and mothers and families, specifically single mothers. They described a lack of access to public spaces and age-appropriate programs to gather.

Operations and Smudging

Participants described numerous challenges related to operations including limited recreation facility hours, underutilized spaces, poor conditions of facilities and equipment, and lack of cleanliness especially in bathrooms. Many facilities have not been adapted to serve those with disabilities. Many Indigenous Peoples are prevented from smudging or using smoke in ceremony because of facility design. Allowing Indigenous Peoples to smudge and participate in spiritual practices is an inherent right as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2021).

Advertising

The City of Calgary's marketing strategies are not reaching Indigenous Peoples. Many participants are unaware of what recreation opportunities exist. Participants said The City does not use Indigenous channels to share information. Youth want social media advertisements that are video and image based and on emerging social media platforms. Several participants also noted The City's website is difficult to navigate.

3. Ways to Improve

When asked about ways to improve the public recreation system, participants provided creative, insightful, and practical solutions:

Relationships

The City should build strong relationships with Indigenous-serving organizations, Indigenous Peoples, and Nations. Indigenous Peoples want opportunities to partner on events, programming and services that support Indigenous communities, families and youth. Indigenous Peoples need access to recreation facilities and other spaces to encourage participation and meaningful involvement.

Culturally Safe Environments

Participants highlighted the need for culturally safe and anti-racist training among all levels of staff. They described how facilities could provide accommodations for traditional activities and practices, including cultural education, smudging, art, and the provision of Indigenous language signage. Indigenous Peoples expressed a desire to see meaningful land acknowledgements within facilities and suggested The City explore partnerships to facilitate Indigenous naming of facilities. All participants expressed a desire to see more Indigenous Peoples represented among facility staff.

Fair Entry

Participants proposed several changes to the Fair Entry Program, including increasing the Fair Entry threshold above LICO, developing Indigenous-specific positions to support Indigenous Fair Entry applicants who may experience language or technology barriers and adding new Fair Entry application locations. Indigenous Peoples also suggested allowing families to continue accessing Fair Entry for five years after surpassing the threshold to ensure they have financial stability before losing Fair Entry benefits.

Affordability

Indigenous Peoples want recreation services for all age groups at low cost or free of cost. One suggestion was establishing an Indigenous specific grant for Indigenous groups to access and develop recreation programs. Another suggestion included no-cost recreation equipment through vouchers, facilitated trading groups/swaps, free rentals, and/or donations. Buddy passes specifically for Indigenous youth would engage more Indigenous youth in recreation. Participants shared that providing childcare for Indigenous families would increase participation.

“The bar for Fair Entry is too low for funding. I was a single mom with two kids, and because I had a decent job I still couldn’t get any support for my kids.”



“Build relationships by partnering and offering programs to the community... relationships are important and without them it’s not possible.”

Effective Marketing Strategies

Participants want to access information on social media platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, Discord or Snapchat with video-based advertisement. Because The City website is considered difficult to navigate, one central website targeted to Indigenous youth was requested. Participants encouraged The City to leverage Community Associations and Indigenous-serving organizations to market recreation opportunities. Participants would like to be made aware of no-cost and free-play recreation opportunities and locations such as parks, courts, and other unused spaces where youth can gather safely.

Programming

Indigenous Peoples want programming and events that are: Indigenous led, culturally-responsive, multi-generational and land-based for all age groups. Programming that brings families together and re-enforces Indigenous kinship is desired. Programming was requested specifically for Indigenous youth ages 12 to 17, mothers, single mothers, caregivers, Two Spirit and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, older Indigenous adults and Elders, and people with disabilities. Participants want recreation opportunities that support mental health and holistic wellness, and emerging leisure activities like video gaming and mentorship programs. Participants recommended establishing an Indigenous Youth Council to guide program development.

Operations and Maintenance

Participants stated they would welcome improvements to the conditions and cleanliness of The City’s recreation facilities, and the ability to smudge in facilities. Participants recommended expanding the geographical reach of Indigenous-specific programming and extending operating hours to increase accessibility of facilities and programming after work and school.

Transportation

Transportation was described as a barrier (travel time, costs, transit crowding, and safety). Participants suggested providing free public transportation (chartered buses, bus tickets) or compensation for travel to and from recreation opportunities.

Conclusion

Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement provided The City with perspectives, experiences and wisdom to better understand recreation from Indigenous Peoples, build relationships, support reconciliation, encourage participation in recreation services, and reimagine recreational service delivery in ways that honour and are inclusive of Indigenous Peoples.

The feedback provided from this process will inform GamePLAN and be reflected in the final recommendations. Once again, The City thanks Miskanawah Community Services Association, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth, McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association of Calgary & Area and all Indigenous Peoples who participated in the Indigenous Wisdom Seeking engagement.

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"I have a 16.5 year old and I want him one day to be able to take his children to a facility in Calgary or any municipality and be like "we are going to go for a swim, or do this, or smudge, or hear an Elder speak""



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Appendix

Appendix I – Indigenous Wisdom Seeking

Feedback from three Sharing Circles and the Indigenous Youth Survey were coded using NVivo and validated to ensure themes were accurate. The Indigenous Wisdom Seeking What We Heard Report was reviewed by the Indigenous Relations Office, and participants were offered an opportunity to review and validate.

Note: All feedback has been anonymized to protect the privacy of participants.

Overview of Wisdom Seeking Process

Event	Date/Location	Host	Participants
GamePLAN Indigenous-Serving Organizations Wisdom Seeking Sharing Circle 1	Feb 15, 2024 Miskanawah East	Miskanawah Community Services Association	21 Indigenous-serving organizations 1 Elder 1 Knowledge Keeper
GamePLAN Indigenous Youth Wisdom Seeking Sharing Circle 2	May 28, 2024 Marlborough Park Community Association	Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth	9 Youth 1 Elder 2 USAY staff
GamePLAN Indigenous Youth Wisdom Seeking Sharing Circle 3	July 30, 2024 The James House, McMan Calgary	McMan Youth Family & Community Services	3 Youth 1 Elder 1 Knowledge Keeper 2 McMan staff
GamePLAN Indigenous Youth Wisdom Seeking Survey	May 22-August 19, 2024	https://engage.calgary.ca/gameplanyouth	27 anonymous survey respondents
GamePLAN Indigenous Games Event	June 21, 2024	Southland Leisure Centre	City project team (including consultants)

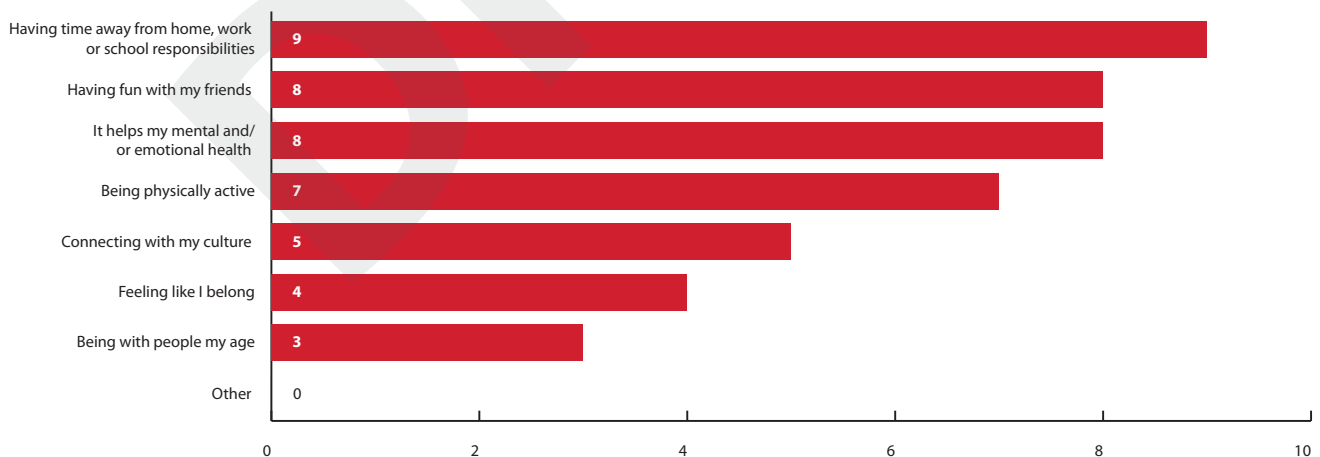
Appendix II- Indigenous Youth Wisdom Seeking Survey Results

In addition to the Sharing Circles, The City collected wisdom from Indigenous youth (ages 9-28) via a digital survey on Calgary.ca/gameplan. In total, the survey received 27 responses from May 22 to August 19, 2024. The survey was shared via the Native Information Exchange, Cultural Advisor Networks, and to relatives of YMCA Calgary, the Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY), and McMan Youth Family & Community Services.

27 Indigenous youth responded to the survey ranging from ages 9-28. Many (15) respondents identified as Status First Nations, followed by 5 with a combination of Status First Nations, Treaty First Nations, and/or Mixed Indigenous background, 4 Métis, and 3 Non-Status First Nations. Survey participants came from a variety of backgrounds, including Blackfoot, Cree, Métis, Stoney Nakoda, Secwépemc, Oneida, Anishinaabe, and others. This survey is not representative of all Indigenous populations in Calgary, but only of those who participated.

Participants were asked the following questions:

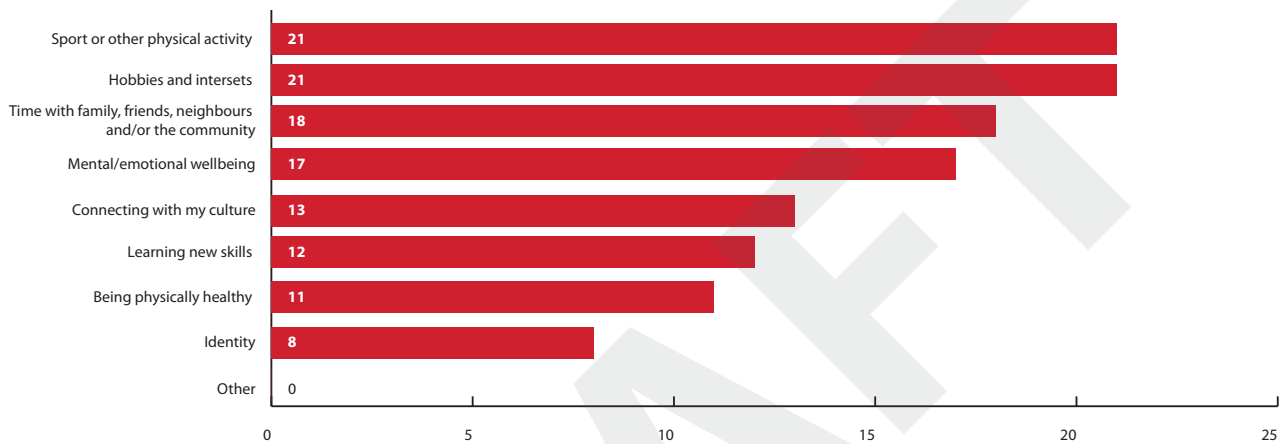
Question 1: What does recreation mean to you? [select all that apply]



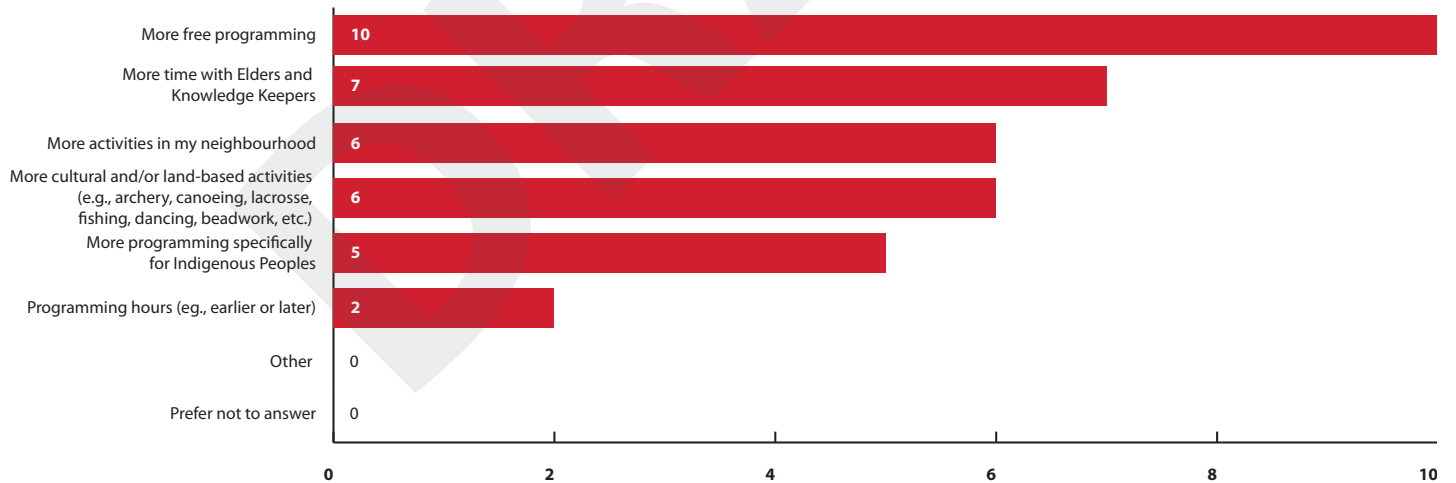
Question 2: Do you currently attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport (for example, sport, skating, swimming, art classes, dance, or other)? It does not have to be a City offered program. [Yes or No]

For those who answered "Yes" to Question 2:

Question 2a: What do you enjoy about sport or recreation? [select all that apply]



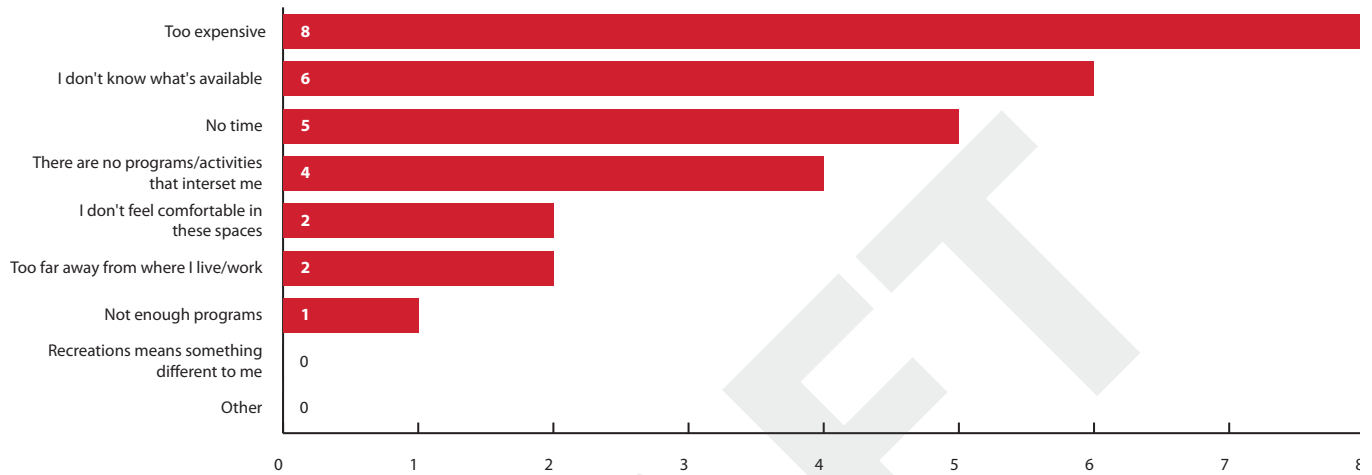
Question 2b: What would make it better? [select all that apply]



For those who answered “No” to Question 2:

Question 2b: Why don't you attend a recreation program, facility or participate in sport?

[select all that apply]



Question 2c.i: Please tell us more about why you don't participate in or attend public recreation. [short answer]

- » The information isn't easily accessible I feel, you have to dig around to find niche recreations.
- » I work full time and I can't find anything that interests me.
- » Motivation, a friendly invite or something to catch my attention or the attention of those who unaware or more so "shy".
- » Because not many programs interest me or there's an age limit.
- » Broke.
- » A lot of public recreation that is available on my side of the city (SW) requires money. Unfortunately money that I don't have due to how expensive everything is in this day and age.
- » Not enough time. I do sports elsewhere.
- » At the moment I have a broken leg so I am mobile limited.
- » Lack of funding and comfortability asking for this information. Often times the direction to find support is unclear and through this process I am sharing personal information with strangers and it can be humiliating. I'd like to include additional comments as there is no other field to add. I think the City of Calgary needs to have a partnership with Jordans Principle and directly work together on behalf of Indigenous children and youth who want to participate in sports. We need advocacy and support to ensure our kids are able to access sports and wellness programs before it is too late for them. This is extremely urgent and important!

Question 3: What recreational programs would you like to see more of (for example, art, cooking, sport, swimming, skating, basketball, other)? [open field]

- » Writing. Art. Gaming development.
- » Indigenous Focused sports initiatives.
- » Everything so everybody has something to do.
- » Rock climbing, swimming, lacrosse, skating, gym access
- » Yoga, books clubs, cultural learning activities (ribbon skirt making, beading, etc.)
- » More programming for indigenous people and youth, and more public programs like learning to garden.
- » More indigenous basketball teams.
- » Football, There isn't many football clubs or teams around Calgary.
- » Swimming.
- » Powwow dancing, Indigenous volleyball teams, lacrosse, caber toss.
- » Indigenous art, cooking, and other knowledgeable classes.
- » More indigenous based programs.
- » I wish there was more community food ball teams for people who do not attend high school or university.
- » I would like to see more programs with onsite childcare!



GamePLAN Integrated Strategy Focus Groups

What We Heard Report

Final Summary Report | August 2024

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Background and Methodology

Background

The City of Calgary is currently developing Recreation GamePLAN, a document that will guide the evolution of Calgary's recreation facilities during the next five decades. The City wished to understand how recreation users and non-users feel about the goals and principles of this strategy, as well as what they prioritize as being most critical to the success of this plan.

Methodology

Probe Research conducted a total of four (4) in-person focus group sessions with Calgary adults aged 18 and over. As the table on the following page shows, participants were segmented into different groups based on their age and usage of public recreation facilities and programs.

These sessions were conducted at Stone-Olafson in Calgary. Each session was approximately 105 to 115 minutes in length. The sessions were moderated by Curtis Brown of Probe Research, with observers from The City of Calgary in attendance for all groups.

A total of eight (8) participants were recruited for each session, with seven (7) to eight (8) participants taking part in each group. Prior to each session, participants were asked to review background material on Calgary's Recreation GamePLAN and to answer two discussion questions:

- How well do you think the documents you just read reflect your needs and priorities when it comes to recreation in Calgary?
- Do you have any other feedback or feelings to share about what you just read – or anything else you know about this topic?

Participants in these sessions received an honorarium of \$125 in exchange for their time and participation.

Group	Date	Time	User Group	Age Category	Children at Home	Other Specifications
1	Monday, August 12, 2024	5:15pm	User	Younger Adults ages 18-44	No Children at home	Split Gender
2		7:30pm	User	Mixed Age (will skew <50)	Children <18 at home	Mixed Education
3	Tuesday, August 13, 2024	5:15pm	Non-User	Mixed Age	Mixed	Mixed Household Income
4		7:30pm	User	Older Adults Ages 45+	No Children at Home	Min.two (2) Radicalized participants/groups

Please note: The following findings are qualitative in nature. The work is exploratory as a result of the number of participants and the method by which the sample was drawn. The results should be regarded as directional and may not necessarily be projected to the larger population without further quantitative research.

Research Summary

Views on GamePLAN

Calgarians in the focus groups tended to view GamePLAN as being...



Inspirational and forward-thinking



Inclusive



Too Vague

Imagining the Ideal Recreation Experience

Focus group Participants Imagined their ideal recreation experience as being...



Enhanced

with new facilities and programs



Accessible

including for people from all walks of life and in terms of how people get to and from recreation facilities



Holistic

encompassing physical and mental health more socialization

Facility Preferences



Many participants really liked the goal of ensuring a public pool and arena are located within five kilometers of every Calgary resident



...but had mixed feelings about whether to pay more in property tax for these new facilities. Residents are more open to this idea if the amount dedicated to these facilities is shown on their property tax bills

Key Findings

Participants viewed recreation as being vital to their physical and mental health and their quality of life but agreed that Calgary's current facilities do not quite meet their needs.

- When asked to describe what recreation means to them, most participants thought of these services as being critical to their overall wellbeing and something they deeply enjoy.
- When they were asked to describe recreation facilities in Calgary, most described them as being aging and relatively basic. While some spoke about how newer and refurbished facilities meet their needs, several described the existing facilities as being relatively out-of date, crowded and not always available at times that are convenient for them.

Participants tended to be quite optimistic and hopeful about Recreation GamePLAN; however, many viewed it as being too vague and not clear enough about when and how facilities will be improved.

- Several participants expressed hope for the plan and its three key principles, giving The City credit for developing a long-term vision for improving recreation services in Calgary. They thought the approach The City is taking is good, as it will focus on ensuring people from all walks of life have access to recreation facilities.
- However, a number of participants indicated the plan is somewhat vague and does not provide enough details about which facilities will be improved and when these investments will take place. Because the plan covers a very long period of time, participants saw a potential disconnect occurring between The City's stated goals and both short-term and long-term decisions about funding. Some pointed to the Green Line as an example of changing scope and the final product being more expensive than what was initially proposed.
- Participants also hoped that once GamePLAN is in place, facilities will remain relatively affordable and that The City adds extra capacity so that more residents can access programs that are relatively popular and even over-subscribed, such as swimming lessons.

Many participants imagined that in the future, recreation facilities in Calgary will offer a wider array of programs, be easier to get to and provide more opportunities for people from all walks of life to access recreation.

- When participants imagined their ideal recreation experience in the future, they tended to think about new and relatively modern facilities that offer a wide array of recreation options. They thought about multipurpose spaces that are busy community hubs, offering not only physical recreation programs, but also other types of classes and community gathering spaces. As part of this, participants imagined these spaces targeting the needs of specific underserved groups in the community, including seniors, at-risk youth, Indigenous peoples, etc.
- Participants also wanted to see these facilities be more accessible and better connected. They imagined these as places that are easy to visit through several different transportation modes, including private vehicles, transit, cycling and walking. Some also imagined that these multi-purpose facilities will be relatively easy for people to navigate once they arrive, with staff on hand to assist and features to make the facilities more accessible.

The three proposed principles and their associated commitments for Recreation GamePLAN were quite well received. However, some had concerns as to whether the rhetoric of these promises will match the eventual reality.

- Several participants, especially younger recreation users, liked the notion of recreation being "a right" as they agreed barriers to facilities and programs need to be removed. However, they cautioned that if The City uses this language to describe the ability to access recreation programs, The City needs to ensure it provides sufficient funding over the length of the project to make this truly the case.
- Most participants also liked the principle of it "taking a team" to improve recreation facilities, although some wondered what exactly The City's role in this team should be. Many felt The City will play a key role in providing funding and facilities and coordinating services, but some worried about whether more private sector involvement would increase costs for recreation users. Others felt that a team approach could help ensure that The City better reflects the evolving needs of citizens, particularly if community-based organizations are involved.

Key Findings Continued

- Although some felt The City is not really “changing the game” by enhancing what it is already doing through GamePLAN, many liked the larger number of related commitments associated with improving recreation in Calgary, with some describing this approach as ambitious

Most participants really liked the goal of having a public pool and arena within five kilometres of every Calgarian, but they were torn on whether they would be willing to pay more for this benefit.

- The goal of ensuring that every Calgary resident will have a public aquatic facility and arena within five kilometres of where they live had a great deal of appeal when it was presented. Many agreed this would be beneficial, especially as existing facilities get older and some areas are at risk of not having a public pool or arena nearby. Most participants expressed more interest in having a pool close to them rather than an arena.
- The appeal of facilities within proximity of residents was especially important for participants who noted accessibility issues related to personal transportation and public transit connections to existing infrastructure. Several participants also noted that the size of these facilities should be a consideration – large centres were seen as difficult to navigate, particularly for seniors and those with physical disabilities.
- Even as they saw a clear benefit to closer and improved facilities, some participants were not willing to pay more in their property taxes to meet this goal. They indicated that as other costs in their household budgets have increased, they were increasingly reluctant to add to their tax burden. Older recreation facility users, especially, were more willing to travel further to get to recreation facilities rather than having property taxes increase to pay for new facilities.
- If The City showed exactly how much of their property taxes are being used to fund new facilities, residents indicated they would be more in favour of such a tax increase – and potentially more likely to use these facilities.



Conclusions

Move away from high-level language and, to the greatest extent possible, describe the specific and tangible facility improvements that will result from GamePLAN – with as much detail as possible.

- One of the main issues participants had with the background information on Recreation GamePLAN was that the language used to describe this initiative seemed to be somewhat vague and high-level, containing little detail on the processes for improving recreation facilities in Calgary. Participants wanted to see a more tangible plan – to know exactly which facilities will be improved, as well as the timeframe for making these improvements.
- With a long-term plan such as this, The City needs to strike a difficult balance. By laying out the long-term vision, key principles and overall goals, inevitably the specifics that go into such a plan will be elided. At the same time, participants were correct to point out that even if The City has an overall plan and vision for improving recreation facilities, the specifics of this plan still require short-term Council approval and could be subject to significant change. Having said that, The City will likely have more success obtaining public buy-in for Recreation GamePLAN if it shifts its communication towards using more pointed language and being as clear as possible about the tangible improvements that will be made if this plan comes to pass.
- In a somewhat low-trust environment, residents seem to express a natural degree of skepticism about how The City outlines its goals and principles for improving recreation. By being clearer about what The City wants to improve and when it wants to do it – and by including the important caveat that these plans are potentially subject to change – The City can start to build more trust and excitement among citizens when it comes to the future of recreation in Calgary

Be as transparent as possible about how additional revenue for new recreation facilities will be spent.

- Not surprisingly, the idea of increasing property taxes to pay for new recreation facilities was not universally welcomed by participants. With many households facing cost pressures, some Calgarians will be very reluctant to pay higher property taxes to fund proposed improvements to existing facilities and to build new ones. Several, especially older residents, are likely to argue The City can make do with the facilities it has, even if it means some people have to travel further to access recreation programs.
- The idea of showing residents exactly what proportion of their property taxes will be used to fund improvements to recreation facilities may help build more support for this idea. At the end of the day, residents want to see the value in what they pay in taxes, and if they know that a certain proportion of what they pay The City each year funds a specific type of improvement, they are more likely to be supportive than if they think their tax revenue goes to general revenue to fund a variety of programs and initiatives that they do not use themselves, or that they do not personally support. By drawing a clear line between additional money and specific improvements to recreation facilities, The City is likely to get more buy-in for a potential tax increase.
- For example, The City may want to give the fund used to pay for GamePLAN-related improvements a specific name and show this on property tax bills, as well as on signage and related communications about specific facility improvements.



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GamePLAN

What We Heard Summary

Phase 2

December 2024

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Engagement Overview

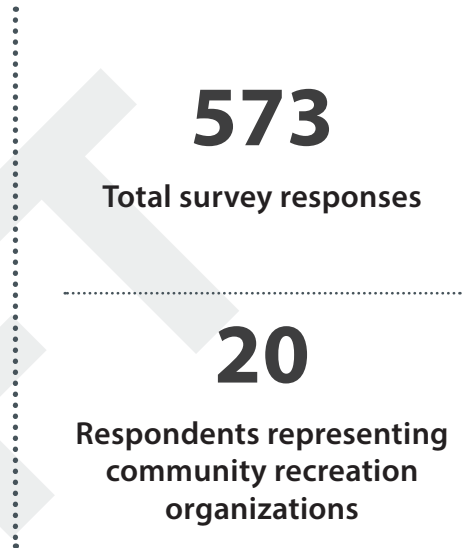
Engagement sought to validate GamePLAN’s proposed Principles, Commitments and Actions as well as solicit feedback on the Facility Investment Principles that will guide future development.

The survey was hosted on The City’s Engage Portal from October 15 to 29, 2024, and was optimized for accessibility, including the use of translation software and screen reader capability. The City promoted awareness of the survey through targeted emails and social media channels. This engagement builds on previous touchpoints with members of the public, as well as community associations and social recreation organizations, who provided their input on needs, preferences, priorities, and barriers related to Calgary’s public recreation system throughout 2023 and 2024.

Themes

- » **Let’s get started!**
 - » Respondents want to see actionable steps for implementation of GamePLAN.
- » **Expanding offerings.**
 - » Respondents want to see a broader definition of equity.
 - » Respondents want more programming types reflected in GamePLAN Actions.
- » **Breaking down barriers.**
 - » Respondents continue to experience financial barriers to participating in recreation.
 - » Respondents want to see resources allocated to spaces and places that need them most.

Feedback was used to assess how well GamePLAN aligns with public perspectives and those of community associations and social recreation organizations. Results will support refinement of GamePLAN’s strategic direction.



Survey Questions

Review GamePLAN Principles, Commitments and Actions

Q #1: What (if anything) do you like about the Actions listed in the tables above?

Q #2: What concerns (if any) do you have about the Actions?

Q #3: What (if anything) do you think is missing from the Actions?

Review Facility Investment Principles

Q #4: What (if anything) do you like about the Facility Investment Principles described in the table above?

Q #5: What concerns (if any) do you have about the Facility Investment Principles?

Q #6: What (if anything) do you think is missing from the Facility Investment Principles?

Engagement Themes

1. Let's get started!

Respondents want to see actionable steps for implementation of GamePLAN.

Respondents expressed a desire to see actionable steps taken to improve the public recreation system. While there is general agreement with GamePLAN Principles, Commitments and Actions, respondents wondered how and when the Actions will be implemented. Respondents indicate that they wish to see clear commitments to improving access to facilities through the renovation of existing facilities and development of new facilities to serve both existing and future populations in Calgary.

2. Expanding our offerings.

Respondents want to see a broader definition of equity.

Respondents appreciate GamePLAN's commitment to accessibility, inclusion and equity. Respondents indicated they would like to see more support for adults, seniors, newcomers and people with disabilities.

Respondents want more programming types reflected in GamePLAN Actions.

Respondents support focused improvement of Learn-to-Swim programming. They also advocate for additional programs, services, and facilities, such as soccer and competitive swimming.



3. Breaking down barriers

Respondents continue to experience financial barriers to participating in recreation.

While GamePLAN Commitments include increased affordability for those who need it, respondents expressed they feel access to public recreation in Calgary is too expensive. Respondents described a need for expanded criteria for subsidy eligibility. For example, respondents indicated cost is still a barrier for those above the low-income threshold.

Respondents want to see resources allocated to spaces and places that need them most.

Based on the information provided, respondents were unclear if GamePLAN would result in additional funding being allocated to facility redevelopment, or if new facility development would be prioritized. With recent facility closures, respondents expressed the need for more equitable service distribution throughout Calgary.

Concluding Remarks

Engagement sought to further align GamePLAN's strategic direction with public values and aspirations for the public recreation system in Calgary. This engagement validates the overall direction of the GamePLAN and Facility Investment Plan and confirms there is similar recurring feedback as previous touchpoints with members of the public, and community associations and social recreation organizations.

In general, respondents expressed a desire for greater specificity to understand the implications of GamePLAN for facilities, programs and services. Responses from the online public survey re-affirm the desire to see the expansion of the recreation system to support diverse programming opportunities and increase equitable access to recreation.

Feedback will be used to refine the strategy and inform how GamePLAN will be implemented (through initiatives, partnerships, and capital investments) as well as how the public will be informed of this work.



Appendix

Survey Results

Appendix - Survey Results



After reviewing the GamePLAN Principles, Commitments and Actions, respondents were asked to share feedback on what they like, their concerns, and what's missing.

Survey Question #1: What (if anything) do you like about the Actions listed in the tables above?

Improving Access

Respondents shared that they appreciated Actions to support improved access to and availability of recreation programs, particularly for children and youth. In particular, respondents highlighted Actions targeting drop-in access for youth under 18, programming for at-risk youth and "Introduction to Sport" as providing significant value.

Increasing Affordability

Respondents showed agreement with Actions aimed at improving affordability for low-income Calgarians, youth and families.

Closing the Gap

Previous engagement raised swim lesson availability as a concern. Respondents expressed appreciation for Actions aimed at improving access to Learn-to-Swim programs.

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Survey Question #2: What concerns (if any) do you have about Actions?

Facility Investment

Respondents raised concerns about the absence of specific Actions around facility investment. Respondents indicated a need for certain facilities, such as additional pools and soccer fields, to improve access to recreation programming.

Concerns Around Specificity

Respondents expressed they felt Actions were either too specific (i.e., Learn-to-Swim, staff training and artificial intelligence) or not specific enough (i.e., facility investments).

Broader Definition of Equity

Respondents expressed frustration that certain groups were identified through the GamePLAN Actions (e.g., youth, girls, Indigenous communities), while others were not (e.g., adults, seniors, newcomers, etc.). Respondents expressed they feel the addition of culturally-specific programming may be exclusionary and could limit opportunities for the broader public.

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Survey Question #3: What (if anything) do you think is missing from the Actions?

Increasing Capacity

Respondents expressed they feel the Actions do not prioritize the growth of the public recreation system and increasing system capacity over time. Comments highlight the need for additional facilities to meet demand, as well as a desire to reduce gaps between facilities to ensure equitable access to public recreation closer to home, particularly in areas of The City that are currently underserved.

Expanding Program Offerings

Respondents indicated a desire for additional programming beyond the noted programming types (i.e., Learn-to-Swim and youth-focused programs) to include programs for equity-deserving groups, such as people with disabilities or those experiencing houselessness.

Actionable Plans

Respondents expressed they feel the Actions are not concrete or tangible. They indicated a desire for more specificity around timelines, budgets and goals. Feedback revealed general concern that Actions will not translate into meaningful results, with respondents requesting clarity on The City's short-term plans to improve elements like programming capacity and opportunities, and long-term plans to expand and build new facilities.

Facility Investment Principles

After reviewing the Facility Investment Principles, respondents were asked to share feedback on what they like, their concerns, and what's missing.

Survey Question #4: What (if anything) do you like about the Facility Investment Principles described in the table above?

Community

Respondents expressed support for the community principle and the idea of community hubs, highlighting that this principle will promote health and wellness at a local level. Respondents expressed appreciation for the proposed co-location of amenities as a way of improving access to recreation and other services such as childcare or libraries.

Adaptability

Respondents indicated their agreement with the principle of adaptability for addressing new and evolving demands for space. They expressed support for the redevelopment of facilities with a future-focused approach that prioritizes flexible designs to ensure long-term resilience and functionality.

Equity

Respondents expressed support for the equitable distribution of facilities across The City and for barrier-free design. Respondents expressed they felt gender-inclusive washrooms and changerooms will support equity and inclusion in facilities.

Survey Question #5: What concerns (if any) do you have about the Facility Investment Principles?

Distribution of Facilities and Access

Respondents raised concerns regarding the closure of older facilities without replacement facilities to service the area. Specifically, respondents expressed they feel inner-city recreation facility closures limit access to recreation for people who live in those areas. Respondents also raised concerns regarding service needs in new communities.

Implementation

Respondents raised concerns regarding implementation of the Principles. Specifically, respondents expressed a desire to better understand how and when the Principles will be applied.

Investment in Sport

Respondents expressed they feel more focus should be placed on investment in facilities for high-demand sports, such as soccer and swimming.

Funding, Cost and Affordability

Respondents raised concerns that investments in new facilities may come at the expense of existing facilities. They feel that existing facilities need investment to maintain service in existing areas. Respondents also raised concerns for potential taxpayer costs associated with the Facility Investment Principles. Consistent with previous engagement feedback, many respondents raised concerns about affordability. Specifically, respondents expressed concern that access to public recreation facilities will become more unaffordable as a result of the cost of building new facilities and retrofitting existing facilities.

Survey Question #6: What (if anything) do you think is missing from the Facility Investment Principles?

Space for Sport Programming

Respondents noted that investment in sport facilities should be a priority included in the Facility Investment Principles, including facilities to accommodate multiple levels of sport (from introductory to high-performance and competition) and different sports (e.g., soccer, swimming, etc.).

Facility Access and Accessibility

Respondents indicated a desire for improved access to facilities using a variety of mobility options (e.g., walking, wheeling and transit). Respondents also noted that proximity to facilities is a barrier that should be considered in the Facility Investment Principles.

Respondents emphasized the importance of facility design to enable access and participation by all ages and abilities, and that the Facility Investment Principles should support the enhancement of physical accessibility in public recreation facilities.

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Appendix 4. **Glossary**

Access	Services align with the ability for individuals to participate. This is often achieved through the removal of barriers impeding access, which may include: social, financial, language, cultural, geographic and physical barriers. The result is everyone is given the opportunity to participate in all aspects of society (Social Wellbeing Policy, CP2019-01).
Accessible	The City of Calgary is committed to removing barriers to provide equitable access to City infrastructure, buildings, public spaces & services for persons with physical, sensory, cognitive, and mental health disabilities. Making spaces accessible for all (Accessible Design Standards, 2016).
Accessibility	Accessibility is analogous with universal accessibility, which is the design of products, building features and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialized design. It is the integration of usability and accessibility methods that enable public interaction.
Allocation	Effectively managing participant demand by maximizing use of facilities supported by efficient access to bookings data, scheduling processes, a reliable tracking system and accurate facility utilization data (Sport for Life Policy, CP2018-03).
Athletic park	Athletic parks comprise of groupings of outdoor recreation and sport amenities for organized single or multi-sport play, leagues, tournaments, and special events. Although not their primary use, athletic parks may also accommodate drop in or unstructured play. Athletic parks may include a range of field amenities such as natural grass or artificial turf fields, baseball and/or softball diamonds, cricket pitches, field hockey and multi-sport fields, all available for booking.
Aquatics	Aquatics encompasses a variety of functional areas designed to cater to diverse swimming and water recreation needs. These areas typically include leisure pools, lap pools, dive tanks, therapy pools, and whirlpools. Support spaces including storage, lifeguard stations, and classrooms are also included.
Arena	Arenas are multi-use spaces containing ice pads, In some cases they may accommodate multiple uses including off-season dry pad use to ensure maximum utilization year-round.
Climate change	A long-term change in the average weather patterns that have come to define earth's local, regional, and global climates due to the increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases caused by human activities.

Community	A specific population or catchment with similar characteristics that could be geographical, demographic or cultural.
Community Hub	Welcoming and inclusive spaces where residents go to make friends, pursue common interests, and find support when they need it. They can be formal or informal, loose, or structured. Community hubs provide a different mix of resources that address area-specific needs. In this way, hubs reflect and strengthen the communities that create them. In keeping with the Enough for All poverty reduction strategy, everyone should have at least three people to call on in a time of need, and hubs forge these vitally important social connections (United Way, Community Hub Initiative, 2024).
Complete communities	A community that is fully developed and meets the needs of residents through an entire lifetime. Complete communities include a full range of housing, commerce, recreational, institutional, and public spaces. A complete community provides a physical and social environment where residents and visitors can live, learn, work and play
Culture	The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize an institution, organization, or group of people.
Diversity	Refers to the variety of characteristics that make people different from one another. These include social, economic, cultural, physical characteristics, as well as ideas, perspectives, and values (Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy, 2019).
Equity	When conditions are adjusted to meet people's diverse needs, strengths, and social realities. It requires recognition that different barriers, often systemic, exist for diverse groups (Social Wellbeing Policy, CP2019-01).
Equity-denied groups	(also people experiencing vulnerabilities and underrepresented groups or individuals) Groups of people who do not benefit equally from City services due to intersecting identity factors, demographics, and geographic location. Equity-denied groups include Indigenous, Black, and diverse Racialized communities, women, gender and sexually diverse communities, people with disability, people living in risk of or in poverty, visible minorities and ethnic, cultural, linguistically diverse communities that have faced historic systemic oppression or discrimination.

Engagement	Purposeful dialogue between The City and interested parties to gather information to influence decision-making (2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets).
Facility	A building or complex accommodating one or more core amenities.
Fair Entry	Is an application process for subsidized City of Calgary programs and services, including recreation opportunities. The process assesses applicant income eligibility for multiple City programs with a single application. A subsidy is a form of financial support that offers a fee reduction.
Fieldhouse	Indoor multi-use practice and play fields that includes both permanent and air-supported dome structures. Typically, one fieldhouse is considered one, indoor, FIFA-sized play surface.
First involvement	Refers to the positive and welcoming first experiences potential participants have in sport (Sport for Life Policy, CP2018-03).
High performance sport	Means residents are systematically achieving worldclass results at the highest levels of competition through fair and ethical means (Sport for Life Policy, CP2018-03).
Inclusion	Refers to a culture of belonging where everyone is valued and respected for their differing individualities, opinions, thoughts, and ideas (Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy, 2019).
Indigenous Peoples	A collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants (including, but not limited to Aboriginal peoples of Canada that includes First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples under Section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982). These are distinct peoples each with their own set of unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.
Measure	Indicators used to track progress in achieving objectives and outcomes.
Partner	An independent organization that agrees to collaborate with The City to deliver positive results for the public (Investing in Partnerships Policy, CP2017-01).
Physical literacy	Physical literacy is the foundation for an active lifestyle and is a life-long journey. It is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. Greater physical literacy results in more opportunities for physical activity. Like literacy and numeracy, the acquisition of movement skills early on is easier and lasts longer (Public Health Agency of Canada, Let's Get Moving, 2018).

Programs	A structured set of activities designed to provide physical exercise, leisure, creative opportunities and social engagement to individuals or communities with the goal of promoting health, wellbeing, skill development and community interaction.
Public recreation	A network of facilities, programs, amenities and services operated by The City and partners, including facility partners, sport leagues and social recreational organizations. As a system, it provides the people of Calgary with opportunities for health, fitness, recreation, leisure, socialization and sport.
Recreation	The experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community well-being (Public Health Agency of Canada, Let's Get Moving, 2018).
Recreation Opportunities	City of Calgary service line that leads and invests in Calgary's publicly funded recreation sector, creating, planning, and delivering spaces, programs, and services to help the public thrive. We provide accessible and equitable recreation opportunities that improve quality of life, contribute to inclusive communities, and promote social, mental, and physical wellbeing. We develop strategies to increase equitable access to year-round indoor and outdoor active living and play opportunities that meet the evolving and diverse needs of the public (2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets).
Redevelopment	The creation of new units, uses or lots on previously developed land in built-out areas.
Regional recreation centre	A community hub, is a multi-use, multi amenities recreation facility to serve the various needs of the community and sport organizations. Typically, it combines aquatic and leisure amenities, gyms, fitness area, studios, multipurpose rooms and gathering spaces open to the public. It could also include other amenities such as an arena, a fieldhouse or a library. Other ancillary services such as childcare, physiotherapy and food services may also be included in the facility.
Resilience	Ability to adapt to change in social, technological, economic and climatic conditions.
Services	The commitment to deliver outputs that meet the needs of customers and contribute to outcomes (Quality of Life results). (2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets).

Service level:	A measurable level of performance that a customer can expect from a service, under normal circumstances (2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets).
Service standard	A measurable level of performance based on evidence-based indicators (per capita provision, travel distance and facility suitability).
Single use facility	A structure or space designed and built for one purpose or function, with limited flexibility for adaptation or other uses. These facilities are often designed to meet standards specific to its purpose or tailored to a specific function and are often difficult or expensive to repurpose for other activities without significant modifications.
Sport	<p>Consists of Organized Sport and Unstructured Sport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Organized Sport” refers to activities which involve training or competition with some level of physical intensity or organization. It does not include activities in which the performance of a motorized vehicle is the primary determinant of the competitive outcome. Games of skill such as billiards board games, and electronic games are not included. • “Unstructured Sport” refers to sport-like activities that are often spontaneous in nature and participant led with a low level of organization and may include games with rules. Unstructured Sport provides participants with numerous learning opportunities and a context to be physically active while having fun, usually without a formal club structure. (Sport for Life Policy, CP2018-03)
Sport sector	The members of the community indirectly or directly involved in Sport, how they interact, and their contributions to the development and delivery of Sport. The Sport Sector includes local sport organizations, community organizations, other sectors such as health, recreation, education, and the private sector. It also includes other orders of government, provincial sport organizations national sport organizations, and multi-sport organizations. (Sport for Life Policy, CP2018-03)
Social literacy	The ability to interact with others, communicate and understand social norms and cues. It is made up of social perception, social cognition, and social performance.
Underserved	People who are not provided with enough services or are not given high-quality services. They often face systemic and historical barriers to accessing services that include ethnicity, age, language, geography, gender identify, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion, physical and/or cognitive ability.