



April 25, 2025

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

Attention: Members of the Infrastructure and Planning Committee

Dear Committee members:

RE: Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan

BILD Calgary Region ("BILD") is a non-profit organization representing a broad membership base that includes all aspects of land development, redevelopment, residential homebuilding, and commercial and industrial construction. Our members include builders, renovators, developers, trades, suppliers, engineering firms, landscape architects, and other professionals who contribute to shaping Calgary's built environment. BILD advocates for affordability, choice, quality and innovation for new and established communities.

On behalf of our members, we are pleased to provide this letter of feedback and support for *Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan* (the "Parks Plan"). We appreciate the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft and commend the thoughtful, inclusive process that City Administration undertook with BILD in its development.

We recognize the Parks Plan is a critical, non-statutory document that replaces the 2002 Open Space Plan and will guide The City's decisions related to the development and stewardship of Calgary's park system. The Parks Plan's focus on connecting Calgarians with nature, wellness, and each other—while addressing growth, demographic shifts, and climate priorities—represents an important step forward in building a more resilient and livable city.

BILD would like to specifically acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of City Administration, particularly David Mahalek, Anita O'Driscoll, Michael Rac, Kent Morelli, and the Parks & Open Spaces team. Their commitment to collaboration, transparency, and open dialogue throughout the engagement with BILD was exemplary. The sessions were well-facilitated and demonstrated a genuine willingness to engage meaningfully with BILD and our members, fostering a constructive and respectful environment for discussion.

The inclusive and solution-oriented approach taken by the Parks & Open Spaces team not only strengthened relationships with industry but also ensured that meaningful insights helped shape the final Parks Plan. We believe this collaborative process represents a model for future engagement efforts and reflects best practices in collaborative city-building.

As the collective voice of the building and land development industry in the Calgary Region, BILD recognizes the critical importance of a well-designed, inclusive, and resilient parks system. The Parks Plan reflects a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to advancing park planning over the next 20 years. It balances the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse population with The City's environmental goals and long-term growth plans. The Parks Plan also supports broader objectives related to residents' choice by promoting park spaces that are adaptable to a wide range of communities—from established neighbourhoods to emerging greenfield developments. This flexibility allows park amenities to be delivered efficiently and effectively alongside new housing, helping to manage costs while ensuring Calgarians across the city have access to high-quality parks that reflect their needs and lifestyles.

We commend the Parks Plan's focus on the key action items outlined in Chapter 7, *Implementing Connect* and we look forward to continued engagement between City Administration and BILD in advancing these actions and strategies.

One item we wish to highlight for Council's consideration is the infrastructure funding gap identified in the [2022 Corporate Asset Management Plan](#), which includes parks, pathways, trails, and related infrastructure. We understand this gap is currently estimated at approximately \$793 million, and, as acknowledged in the Parks Plan, there is presently insufficient funding to address it.

From our industry's perspective, it is essential that this funding gap be addressed in a way that supports the sustainability of Calgary's city-owned parks while keeping housing affordability top of mind. We also recommend that Council and City Administration undertake a comprehensive review of service levels, lifecycle maintenance practices, capital project resourcing and execution, and operational cost models. This review should aim to identify practical opportunities to reduce long-term costs, promote best-in-class asset management practices, and enhance economic efficiency—without compromising the quality and accessibility of parks infrastructure. We acknowledge that the Parks Plan outlines several important actions to address gaps.

We also note that, based on The City's 2019 through 2023 ([2019](#), [2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#), and [2023](#)) Progress/Service Updates, capital spending met planned levels only in 2019. From 2020 to 2023, The City underspent its capital budget by a cumulative total of \$64.5 million. In light of the funding gap outlined in the 2022 Corporate Asset Management Plan, BILD's members are interested in understanding which Parks and Open Spaces projects were budgeted for but not completed. In the event that project cost savings/efficiencies were achieved resulting in less capital expenditures than forecasted, BILD members are also interested in understanding whether those savings could be redirected to help close the Parks and Open Spaces infrastructure gap.

Building on these efforts, we encourage the Infrastructure and Planning Committee and Council to consider additional strategies that further improve cost efficiency in delivering parks infrastructure. These may include optimizing cost efficient design standards and specifications, streamlining development and construction approvals, and enhancing coordination across City business units to avoid duplication.

Finally, we encourage early and ongoing engagement with industry partners to help identify practical efficiencies and ensure that new or revised park standards remain financially sustainable and aligned with broader City-building goals, including housing supply and affordability.

We trust that our feedback has been constructive and helpful. In the mutual interest of all parties, BILD supports the work of Administration on the Parks Plan and respectfully requests that Council provide the necessary support and direction to enable the implementation of the Parks Plan.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Deborah Cooper at deborah.cooper@bildcr.com or Mohamad Mohamad at m.mohamad@bildcr.com.

Sincerely,



Brian R. Hahn
CEO, BILD Calgary Region

cc: Deborah Cooper, Director of Policy, Strategic Initiatives & Government Relations, BILDCR
Jackie Stewart, Director, Technical and Economic Initiatives and Government Relations, BILDCR
Mohamad Mohamad, Senior Analyst, Land Development Technical Standards and Specifications, BILDCR

We encourage you to visit bildcr.com for industry updates

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hilary Zaharko, Chair
Michael Henry, Vice Chair
Bronwyn Inkster
Brian MacInnis
Charron Ungar
Collin Campbell
Cynthia Watson
Jeff Booke
Jeff Lawson
Jen Pon
Kyle Ripley
Michael Giuffre
Reilly Penner
Ruth Ramsden-Wood

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Sheila Taylor

November 18, 2024

Dear Doug Morgan, and Stuart Dalglish,

Re: Connect: Calgary's Park's Plan

At the Parks Foundation, we know that parks and public spaces are essential to Calgarians' well-being, and play a crucial role in creating healthy, vibrant, and livable communities. That is why we strongly support Connect: Calgary's Park Plan and the important role it will play in shaping the future of Calgary's parks and green spaces. This updated plan represents a significant step forward in creating a more sustainable, accessible, and multifunctional park system for all Calgarians.

The Connect Plan thoughtfully addresses the evolving needs of our city's residents, focusing on key areas such as park accessibility, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. By emphasizing multifunctional parks that offer spaces for recreation, sports, and natural settings, Connect provides a more holistic approach to park design that can serve a wide range of community needs. We are particularly pleased to see the prioritization of large neighborhood parks, which will act as hubs of activity, and the emphasis on improving park connectivity through linear parks. These improvements will foster greater social cohesion, active lifestyles, and environmental stewardship in our communities.

Additionally, the plan's commitment to improving the ecological network, including the protection of natural areas and the urban forest, is vital for Calgary's long-term climate resilience. As our city continues to grow, it is essential that we integrate nature into urban spaces, not just for aesthetic value, but to support biodiversity, mitigate the urban heat island effect, and ensure access to green spaces for all residents.

Connects focus on equity in park design and maintenance is commendable. Ensuring that all parks meet a standard level of service by 2035 will help address equity disparities in access to quality park spaces, particularly in equity - deserving communities. This commitment to equity and inclusion will have lasting positive effects on the health and well-being of all Calgarians.

In conclusion, we strongly support the approval of Connect: Calgary's Park Plan. This forward-thinking strategy will not only improve the quality and accessibility of our park system but will also create a legacy of environmental stewardship, community building, and social well-being for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheila Taylor".

Sheila Taylor

CEO, Parks Foundation

February 1, 2025

Re: Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan

Dear Doug Morgan, General Manager Operational Services and Stuart Dalglish, Chief Operating Officer:

The Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee with the Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee and the Anti-Racism Action Committee are writing this letter in support of Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan (Connect).

Our committees have the mandate to provide Council and Administration with advice on policies and strategic initiatives that relate to equity and inclusion including protecting cultural landscapes, combat systemic racism, and ensuring accessible park spaces. The committees focus on equity and inclusion due to the disproportionate impacts of climate change experienced by equity-deserving groups. With that in mind, we see an opportunity to provide support for Connect as City of Calgary Administration teams bring the Connect Plan to City Committees and City Council for approval.

The committees provided input on the development of Connect in the fall of 2023 and were pleased to see our comments integrated when Administration brought forward a revised draft of the Connect Plan to the Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee in October 2024. Some of the committees' addressed comments involved how:

- the Connect Plan was ensuring the voices of Calgarians have been heard through engagement by working with leaders from representative community groups, attending school events to specifically connect with youth, and providing in-person and online engagement opportunities through various media avenues and in-person pop-ups in parks (see Connect: Calgary's Park Plan section number: 1.3);
- Connect policies will be implemented through operational actions and metrics that specifically address equity, including increasing the number of inclusive playgrounds city-wide (see section number 7.2), and establishing an equity fund to provide additional maintenance, capital investment and servicing to equity-deserving communities (see Connect: Calgary's Park Plan policy number 4.10.m); and
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) was integrated into the Connect Plan without integrating hostile architectural design that discourages people from visiting Calgary's Parks while still ensuring safety through design elements (see Connect: Calgary's Park Plan policy number: 5.4.d).

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on Connect and look forward to working together to continue advancing action on equity and inclusion in Calgary's park system.

Sincerely,

Joy Bowen-Eyre

Joy Bowen-Eyre
Chair, Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee

Cristi Adams

Cristi Adams
Chair, Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee

Rinad Al Adani & Rebecca Comer

Rinad Al Adani & Rebecca Comer
Co-Chairs, Anti-Racism Action Committee



January 16, 2025
City Council
City of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta

Re: Letter in Support of the CONNECT Plan

Dear City Council Members,

Action Dignity Society is pleased to support the CONNECT Plan.

ActionDignity is a community-based organization dedicated to partnering with racialized, ethnocultural communities and equity-seeking groups to drive transformative changes in our community and society. As a capacity builder and convenor, we work with 171 racialized and ethnocultural member organizations.

We have been at the forefront of numerous anti-racism initiatives, tackling issues such as diversity, human rights, racial inequities, and fostering public participation. Over the years, ActionDignity has collaborated with ethnocultural organizations, mainstream partners, and the City of Calgary in various capacities to advance these goals.

In 2023, ActionDignity and the City of Calgary, through the Engage initiative, conducted in-depth engagement and research with racialized communities, newcomers, low-income individuals, and people living with visible and non-visible disabilities. The purpose of this engagement was to gather input from Calgarians on what they value, what is currently working well, and what improvements are needed in the city's park system to inform the development of the CONNECT Plan. After the engagement, a debriefing process ensured that the findings were analyzed and presented with an ethnocultural lens, with support from ActionDignity's Community Connectors.

ActionDignity is pleased that the engagement and feedback have resulted in updated foundational policy and operational actions to guide the planning, design, and management of Calgary's park system. This milestone is significant given that the Connect Calgary Parks Plan, approved by the Council over two decades ago, needed changes in response to the demographic and geographic changes that have since occurred.

We extend our congratulations to the City of Calgary on the successful development of the CONNECT Plan.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis Boakye', is written over a horizontal line.

Francis Boakye
Executive Director



November 14, 2024

Re: Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan

Dear Doug Morgan, General Manager Operational Services and Stuart Dalglish, Chief Operating Officer:

The Calgary Climate Advisory Committee has the mandate to provide Council and Administration with advice on policies and strategic initiatives that relate to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Climate Advisory Committee also has a focus on Human Resilience and Equity due to the disproportionate impacts of climate experienced by equity-deserving groups. With that in mind, we see an opportunity to provide support for the Connect: Calgary's Park Plan (Connect) as City of Calgary Administration teams bring Connect to City Council for approval. The Climate Advisory Committee supports Connect as it represents a critical step forward in enhancing our community's ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change through guiding future growth and development of Calgary.

The Climate Advisory Committee supports this step as well as the connections made to climate and equity included throughout the Connect Plan. We appreciated the call to actions included in the operational actions that spoke specifically to climate resilience. As we face the growing impacts of climate change, it is crucial that our city's planning processes prioritize climate resilience.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the Connect Plan and look forward to continuing to work together to continue advancing action on climate mitigation and adaptation and improving Calgary's resilience to climate change.

Sincerely,



Pat Letizia
Chair, Calgary Climate Advisory Committee

Cc: Climate Advisory Committee Members:

Taylor Brown
Gabriela da Costa Silva
Dick Ebersohn
Ryan Germaine
Christine Gibson
Meghan Larway
Joanne Perdue
Jennifer Saldana, Vice Chair
Robert Tremblay
Joel Trubilowicz
Jeremy van Loon



255001 Glenbow Road, Cochrane, AB T4C 0B7

E. ceo@grp.f.ca

Jeromy Farkas, Chief Executive Officer

Infrastructure and Planning Committee
The City of Calgary
700 Macleod Trail SE
Calgary, AB T2G 2M3

May 14, 2025

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Planning Committee,

On behalf of the Glenbow Ranch Park Foundation (GRPF), I am writing to express our strong support for *Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan* (IP2025-0132) and to commend the City of Calgary's Parks & Open Spaces team for their leadership in developing this much-needed update.

As the nonprofit steward of Haskayne Legacy Park and Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park, we understand firsthand how thoughtfully planned parks can protect the environment, build community, and support public health.

The *Connect* plan is key to preserving and enhancing Calgary's park spaces. It moves beyond outdated frameworks by prioritizing ecological connectivity, multifunctionality, and equitable maintenance—principles that are aligned with our own conservation and education mission.

By replacing the 2002 *Open Space Plan* with *Connect*, you are taking a major step towards ensuring that every Calgarian, new or long-established, has access to high-quality green spaces.

We urge Council to incorporate public feedback in delivering a more sustainable, inclusive, and future-ready park system. Please approve *Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan* and commit to its timely implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Farkas".

Jeromy Farkas
Chief Executive Officer
Glenbow Ranch Park Foundation



May 1, 2025

City Council
City of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta

Re: Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan

Dear City Council Members,

I would like to offer my enthusiastic support of *Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan*. I am a professor in the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape (SAPL) at the University of Calgary and *Connect* was the topic of one of my classes in 2023. The class, Planning and Public Engagement, serves as a platform for the practice of public engagement, providing students in the Master's of Planning and the Master's of Landscape Architecture programs at SAPL with an introduction to key social and political theories that inform participation and public engagement in the design professions. *Connect* was the perfect engagement exemplar and allowed the students to not only learn about and understand how important public engagement was in the process, but also contribute to the analysis of the several phases of engagement and the results obtained.

The *Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan* represents a pivotal chapter in Calgary's urban development narrative, introducing a contemporary approach to park development by emphasizing fairness, climate adaptiveness, and economic resilience. These efforts align seamlessly with Calgary's broader city planning goals. From both an urbanist and a citizen perspective, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to have a new parks plan for the city.

I strongly recommend the approval of *Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan*. The city's park system will be greatly improved and so will be the quality of life for all Calgarians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseli Macedo".

Joseli Macedo, Ph.D.

Professor, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape
University of Calgary
joseli.macedo@ucalgary.ca

Matthew Rygus
Public Member, BiodiverCity Advisory Committee
Calgary, Alberta

May 6, 2025

Dear Infrastructure and Planning Committee,

My name is Matthew Rygus, and I am a Public Member at the City's BiodiverCity Advisory Committee (BAC). As an Environmental Sustainability professional with a background in Environmental Science and Sustainability Management, I provide scientific and strategic expertise to support BAC's role in advising City Council on matters concerning biodiversity. BAC's mission is to advance the commitments and procedures laid out in the City's biodiversity strategic plan and ensure all non-human species who inhabit or visit Calgary are protected and considered in municipal decision-making. In essence, we speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

It is no secret that parks, natural areas and open spaces are foundational to biodiversity. These are the predominant places in the city where wild plants and animals live, move, eat, play and raise their young. Without protecting and connecting these places, we harm vulnerable species and miss out on the many health, ecological and climate benefits that biodiversity provides to all Calgarians.

As a citizen and environmental professional, and on behalf of the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee, I strongly support the urgent approval of *Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan*. This forward-looking plan elevates biodiversity and environmental protection as core priorities, links open spaces across Calgary through an expanded ecological network and embeds conservation values into city planning. Its collaborative approach with the development industry is commendable and critical to ensuring biodiversity is not sidelined but integrated meaningfully into decision-making. With Council's review of the Calgary Plan delayed until 2026, *Connect* becomes even more vital to protect natural areas, advance ecological restoration and secure the funding and policy support needed to sustain healthy, connected and resilient wild species across our growing city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew Rygus".

Matthew Rygus and the BiodiverCity Advisory Committee



URBAN SOCIETY FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH

1715 36 Street SE
Calgary, Alberta T2A 1C7

April 25, 2025

To: Members of the Infrastructure and Planning Committee, City of Calgary

Subject: Support for Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan (IP2025-0132)

On behalf of the Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY), I am writing to express our strong support for Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan and encourage its adoption by Council.

USAY supports Indigenous youth in Calgary through programs that emphasize culture, community, and creativity. Accessible, inclusive, and well-designed park spaces are essential to our work—whether we are creating IndigiTRAILS, hosting cultural events, or simply encouraging youth to connect with nature in meaningful ways.

Connect introduces much-needed clarity, accountability, and vision. We are particularly encouraged by the following elements of the proposed plan:

- **Equity in Park Access:** The emphasis on improving park infrastructure and investment in underserved areas such as northeast Calgary directly supports many of the youth we serve.
- **Cultural and Recreational Space:** The shift toward building larger, multifunctional parks opens the door to culturally relevant programming and space for storytelling, ceremony, and gathering.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** The commitment to protecting natural areas, expanding the urban tree canopy, and strengthening ecological corridors reflects Indigenous values of land stewardship and interconnection.
- **Standardized Maintenance:** A consistent citywide maintenance standard ensures that all communities—regardless of postal code—can enjoy clean, safe, and vibrant park spaces.

Connect sets the foundation for a park system that is more equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of all Calgarians, especially Indigenous youth. We urge you to advance this plan to Council and give it your full support.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to creating a more inclusive city.

Sincerely,

LeeAnne Ireland
Executive Director

executivedirector@usay.ca

403-690-4004

June 8, 2023

The City of Calgary
Engage Resource Unit
P.O. Box 2100, Stn. M
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2M5

Attn: Rebecca & Catriona

Re: Calgary's Park Plan—health and well-being considerations

Supporting Alberta Health Services' (AHS') vision, *Healthy Albertans. Healthy Communities. Together*, AHS endorses an evidence-based public health approach to designing healthy communities. AHS is a multi-disciplinary team which includes Medical Officers of Health, Safe Healthy Environments (Public Health Inspectors), Health Promotion Facilitators, Population and Public Health Dietitians, and Health Data Analysts. This team aims to strengthen relationships with municipal planners, other external partners, and community organizations to collaborate in the planning and designing of healthier communities. We value our working relationship with the City of Calgary and the opportunity to offer feedback on the Calgary Parks Plan update.

The natural environment is an essential part of our lives and impacts physical and mental health by creating stronger social connections; preventing injuries, chronic diseases, and cancers; and making communities safer and more resilient by holistically promoting health. At AHS we encourage municipalities to prioritize housing, food systems, natural environments, transportation networks, and neighbourhood design, as these factors will improve the health of Calgary residents (see Appendix 1). Additional information regarding healthy communities by design can be found on the [AHS Healthier Together, Building Healthy Communities](#) website.

Many Calgarians are at risk of or live with chronic illness. Protecting and expanding Calgary's natural environment will improve health and reduce the burden of many chronic diseases. The following health realities can be improved by enhanced access to natural environments:

- 75% of Albertans are not meeting the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines' recommended level of physical activity, and some Calgary communities are below this Alberta average (e.g., West Bow: 79.8%). Access to natural areas promotes physical activity.
- The prevalence of type 2 diabetes in some communities exceeds the Alberta average of 8.4% (e.g., Lower Northeast: 14.8%, Southwest: 10.5%, and East: 9%).
- The prevalence of anxiety and depression in some communities exceeds the Alberta average of 42% (e.g., Centre-North: 52.3%, West Bow: 51%, Centre-West: 48%, East: 46.9%, Nose Hill: 45.8%, Centre: 43.9, and Fish Creek: 42.6%).
- Up to 24% of Calgarians in some communities rate their quality of health as fair or poor, which is worse than the Alberta average of 15.4% (e.g., Calgary East: 24.4%, West Bow: 19.7%).
- Elevated weight is a fraught health indicator. That said, it is seemingly of note that the prevalence of overweight and obese Calgarians exceeds the Alberta average of 61.4% in some communities (e.g., East: 64%).
- The prevalence of insufficient fruit and vegetable consumption exceeds the Alberta average of 54.4% in some communities (e.g., Upper Northeast: 64.5%, Lower Northeast: 67%).

The following actions have been shown to improve the physical and mental health of residents:

Preserve and connect open and environmentally sensitive spaces

Diverse ecosystems are more resilient and able to recover from a variety of natural and human-induced-stressors (e.g., climate change, forest fires, urbanization) (Watson et al., 2012).

Preserving environmentally sensitive areas and connecting human populations with natural environments can help protect existing ecosystems and promote healthy human populations.

- Green spaces and natural areas contribute to a healthy urban environment. They filter air and water, absorb stormwater to reduce floods, and help keep cities cool in the summer (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2017).

Maximizing opportunities for access and engagement with the natural environment

Research supports a strong relationship between exposure to the natural environment and human health, including lower levels of stress and chronic disease. Access to green spaces increases social well-being, and may also lead to improved concentration and other cognitive functions (Christian et al., 2015). Even brief interactions, such as a 10-minute walk or a view of green space, can have positive mental health effects (van Oordt et al., 2022).

Parks and greenspaces have been linked to better mental and physical health.

- Residents in environments with visible greenery and vegetation are 3.3 times more likely to adopt frequent physical activity and have reduced levels of stress than those in areas without greenery (Trees Ontario, 2012). For optimal access and use, it is recommended that communities include a park within one mile (1.6 km) from each place of residence (Cohen et al., 2007; Laxer & Janssen, 2013).
- Parks provide areas for social interaction and support community involvement, reducing loneliness and associated health concerns (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2017; Pleson et al., 2014). The inclusion of urban agriculture (e.g., community gardens) can help provide access to fruit and vegetables while supporting social interaction.

Reduce urban air pollution by expanding natural elements across the landscape

Community planning can reduce urban air pollution and human exposure to harmful contaminants.

- Trees and vegetation have co-benefits, including air filtration, reducing temperature (thereby reducing energy use), providing shade, sequestering carbon, and helping to control water runoff (McDonald et al., 2016 & City of Edmonton, 2017).
- According to the International Institute for Sustainable Development (2017), premature death and illness attributable to air pollution in Canada cost an estimated \$36 billion in 2015, with PM2.5 and ground-level ozone having caused 7,712 premature deaths that year.
- The transportation sector is the third largest contributor to climate change in Alberta. Creating accessible, affordable, and safe active transportation options can reduce automobile dependency, greenhouse gas emissions, and other traffic-related air pollutants (Government of Alberta, 2023).

Improving climate resiliency and reducing the urban heat island effect

Urban heat islands occur in areas where the development of buildings, parking lots, roads, and other built infrastructure absorb large quantities of radiant heat from the sun, increasing both surface and air temperatures. The frequency of hot days in Alberta is increasing due to climate change, and it is projected that by 2050, many parts of Canada will experience a doubling in the

annual number of very hot days (i.e., days when the temperature reaches 30°C or higher) (Casati et al., 2013). Expanding natural environments can increase resilience to climate change and reduce the urban heat island effect.

- According to Health Canada, when the daily average temperature in major Canadian cities exceeds 20°C, the relative mortality increases by 2.3% for each degree increase in air temperature. This suggests that an urban heat island intensity of 2-3°C increases the mortality rate by 4-7% (Wang et al., 2016). Protecting and expanding natural environments within built environments can create more livable environments and reduce the health risks of extreme heat (BCCDC, 2018; Health Canada, 2020).
- Extreme heat events are linked to acute heat-related illness (including heat rashes, cramps, and heat stroke) and death. Extreme heat can also worsen chronic conditions and increase susceptibility to infectious diseases (Smoyer-Tomic & Rainham, 2001). Higher air temperatures in cities, particularly at night, limits the body's ability to cool down thus magnifying the risk of adverse health impacts.

As outlined above, parks, outdoor recreational spaces, and natural environments can substantially impact the mental and physical health of residents, thus AHS looks forward to providing support to the City of Calgary as they develop their 20-year Parks Plan. If we can be of any assistance or you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter, please feel free to reach out. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

Sincerely,



David Klassen
Medical Officer of Health
Alberta Health Services, Calgary Zone



David Crowe
Executive Officer/Public Health Inspector
Alberta Health Services
safehealthyenvironments@ahs.ca

References

- Alberta Health Services (AHS). (2023). Alberta Community Health Dashboard.
<https://albertahealthycommunities.healthiertogether.ca/take-action/research-local-data/alberta-community-health-dashboard/>
- B.C. Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). (2018). Healthy Built Environment Linkages. A Toolkit for design, planning, health. http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-publichealth/Documents/HBE_linkages_toolkit_2018.pdf.
- Casati, B., Yagouti, A. & Chaumont, D. (2013). Regional climate projections of extreme heat events in nine pilot Canadian communities for public health planning.
<https://doi.org/10.1175/JAMC-D-12-0341.1>.
- Christian, H., Zubrick, S.R., Foster, S., Giles-Corti, B., Bull, F., Wood, L., Knuiman, M., Brinkman, S., Houghton, S. & Boruff, B. (2015). The influence of the neighbourhood physical environment on early child and development: a review and call for research. *Health & Place*, 33:25-36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2015.01.005>.
- City of Edmonton. (2017). Urban Street Trees Investment Strategy.
https://www.scribd.com/document/365900020/City-of-Edmonton-Tree-ProtectionPlan#from_embed.
- Cohen, D., McKenzie, T.L., Sehgal, A., Williamson, S., Golinelli, D., Lurie, N. (2007). Contributions of Public Parks to Physical Activity. *American Journals of Public Health*.
<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2005.072447>.
- Government of Alberta. (2023). Climate change and transportation.
<https://www.alberta.ca/climate-change-and-transportation.aspx#:~:text=The%20transportation%20sector%20contributes%20approximately,oil%20and%20gas%20and%20electricity>.
- Health Canada. (2020). Reducing Urban Heat Islands to Protect Health in Canada: An Introduction for Public Health Professionals. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/health/publications/healthy-living/reducing-urban-heat-islands-protect-health-canada/Reducing-Urban-Heat-EN.pdf>
- International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2017). Costs of Pollution in Canada. Measuring the impacts on families, businesses and governments.
<https://www.iisd.org/sites/default/files/publications/costs-of-pollution-in-canada.pdf>.
- Laxer and Janssen. (2013). The proportion of youth's physical inactivity attributed to neighbourhood built environment features. *International Journal of Health Geographics*.
<https://ijhealthgeographics.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1476-072X-12-31>
- McDonald, R., Kroeger, T., Boucher, T., Longzhu, W., Salem, R. (2016). Planting Healthy Air. A global analysis of the role of urban trees in addressing particulate matter pollution and extreme heat. The Nature Conservancy.
https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/20160825_PHA_Report_Final.pdf

Pleson, E., Nieuwendyk, L.M., Lee, K.K, Chaddah, A., Nykiforuk, C.I.J., Schopflocher, D. (2014). Understanding older adults' usage of community green spaces in Taipei, Taiwan. *Environmental Research and Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph110201444>.

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2017). The Chief Public Health Officer's report on the state of public health in Canada: Designing healthy living. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/2017-designing-healthy-living.html>

Smoyer-Tomic, K. and Rainham, D. (2001). Beating the heat: development and evaluation of a Canadian hot weather health response plan. <https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.011091241>.

Trees Ontario. (2012). A Healthy Dose of Green. http://www.treesontario.ca/files/Healthy_Dose_of_Green_Publication.pdf.

van Oordt, M., Ouwehand, K., & Paas, F. (2022). Restorative Effects of Observing Natural and Urban Scenery after Working Memory Depletion. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 20(1), 188. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20010188>.

Wang, Y., Berardi, U., & Akbari, H. (2016). Comparing the effects of urban heat island mitigation strategies for Toronto, Canada. *Energy and Buildings*, 114, 2-19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enbuild.2015.06.046>.

Watson, J.E.M., Rao, M., Ai-Li, K., Yan, X. (2012). Climate change adaptation planning for biodiversity conservation: A review. *Advances in Climate Change Research*. 3(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.3724/SP.J.1248.2012.00001>.

Appendix 1

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES BY DESIGN

Healthy Communities by Design is an evidence-based public health approach to municipal planning.



Alberta Health Services Safe Healthy Environments supports

designing complete, compact, and connected communities	transportation options that are active, safe, and accessible for all.	development of diverse and suitable housing options.	local food systems that offer healthy food options for everyone.	natural features and diverse green spaces in community plans.
--	---	--	--	---

For more information, contact your local Public Health Inspector or email
SafeHealthyEnvironments@ahs.ca

* Based on B.C. Centre for Disease Control. Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit. Making the links between design, planning and health. Version 2.0. Vancouver, B.C.: Provincial Health Services Authority, 2018. http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-public-health/Documents/HBE_Linkages_toolkit_2018.pdf