

Relatable!

Good Morning. I am Leslie Evans, Executive Director with the Federation of Calgary Communities. I had the opportunity to sit on the steering committee for the development of Calgary's first ever Cultural Plan. I would like to thank Sarah and Janet for including ~~at~~ us in this process - so relevant & NB to our city.

The plan is the work of many people who were consulted through focus groups, "soundings" and through research. As a steering committee member, the process and consultation felt inspired, inclusive and responsive to feedback. What is impressive it that this framework not only includes the arts but crucial elements like heritage, festivals, foods, ethno-cultural celebrations, urban design; community and neighbourhood initiatives – things that our community associations feel are important. *and actively engage in!*

Throughout the process I attended the neighbourhood focus groups and soundings. People who engaged in these sessions spoke about their want and need to express themselves through creative means that celebrate local histories <sup>cultures</sup> and stories. They spoke of the need to connect across neighbourhoods and cross-culturally. They talked about community associations as being natural vehicles and partners for cultural expressions. They shared many wonderful examples of cultural

activities that are taking place in neighbourhoods across our city – like <sup>Southwest</sup> Temple, <sup>East</sup> Crossroads, <sup>West</sup> Sherwood's, <sup>North</sup> Parkdale, <sup>Central</sup> CBM, <sup>South</sup> Lakewood, <sup>West</sup> Inglewood, <sup>North</sup> HHSS, <sup>South</sup> Saddleridge, <sup>West</sup> Riverbend, <sup>East</sup> Killarney, <sup>South</sup> Glenora, <sup>West</sup> Wildwood, <sup>East</sup> Waterwheel, <sup>South</sup> potlucks, and the like. Community associations and cultural

associations are contributing to the cultural of the city, everyday, but it <sup>their</sup> is like they are the best kept secret. <sup>work is</sup> Are neighbourhoods are rich in cultural in many ways, we just don't tell the story very well! The cultural plan calls for the need to bring more awareness to the cultural activities in our neighbourhoods and across our City. <sup>if we want to</sup>

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OCT 14 2016  
ITEM 3.3 CP52016-0805  
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have a city that is known for our culture then this would be a great investment.

As you know, community associations have a keen interest in urban planning. Using a cultural lens in developing and redeveloping neighbourhoods, could lead to the:

- preservation and celebration of a neighbourhood's uniqueness, history and character,
- encourage partnerships around low cost shared use facilities,
- create more walkable communities that offer diverse housing options where citizens from all walks of life connect, share and engage in community life together.

Designing communities using a cultural framework can help to build a sense of community and belonging; increasing citizen engagement while decreasing social isolation and crime. As a city, we should have urban design guidelines so that cultural sensitivity is part of neighbourhood development and redevelopment.

I think the concept of "planning culturally" is key within this report, not only for City of Calgary but for partners, like our community associations. The Culture Plan is timely and I think it will help to deepen and strengthen cultural life across our city. This plan gives us all an opportunity to think bigger and to work together for a richer Calgary. *as we move towards an implementation plan. of the 10 priority areas.*