

**PARKS FOUNDATION, CALGARY**

**Mission:** We exist so all Calgarians can enjoy a healthy lifestyle by providing easily accessible and unique, sport and green spaces.

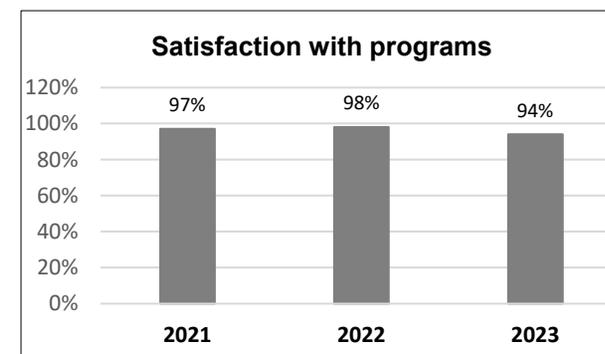
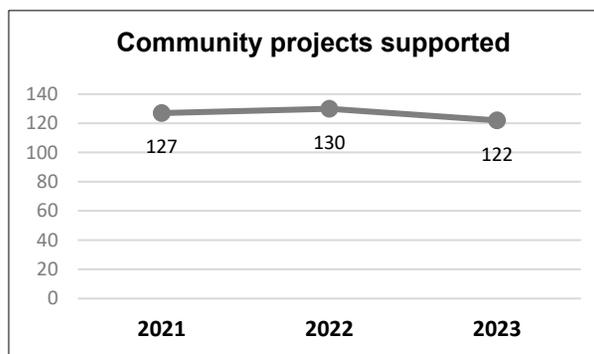
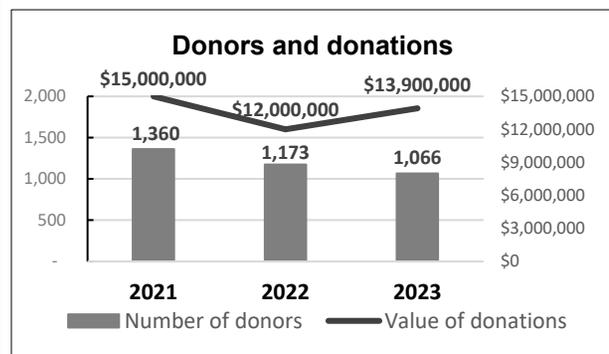
**One Calgary Line of Service: Parks and Open Spaces**

**2023 City Investment**

**Operating Grant: \$201,000**

**Operating Grant: \$375,000 (one time)**

**2023 Results**



**The story behind the numbers**

- Contributions to The Parks Foundation in 2023 were strong at \$13.9 million with 1,066 donors contributing. Funds were used for programs, park projects and sport amenities.
- Parks Foundation continues to support 122 new and ongoing community and sport organization-led projects that include playgrounds, rink projects and pump tracks.
- Satisfaction rates with The Parks Foundation’s programs and services remains consistently high.

**Benchmarks**

To support continuous improvement including upgrading programs, The Parks Foundation measures its performance in a number of areas including program satisfaction, number of new community project supported and value of contributions including donations and grants.

**Looking ahead: 2024 highlights**

- In 2024, Parks Foundation will construct and open a number of parks including a revitalization of George Moss Park and Forest Lawn Community Park, the creation of an art mural at VIVO and the development of the Saddle Ridge Play Park and Applewood Play Park.
- Fundraising and partnership work will move ahead to create Canada’s first public park designed for people with dementia and their caregivers in Dover. Construction is planned for 2025.



**PARKS FOUNDATION, CALGARY  
2023 Civic Partner Annual Report**

**Civic Partner Name:** Parks Foundation, Calgary  
**Legal Structure:** Non-profit entity (Part 9 Companies Act)  
**Fiscal Year End:** December 31  
**Manage/operate a City-owned asset:** no

**Mission:** We exist so all Calgarians can enjoy a healthy lifestyle by providing easily accessible and unique, sport and green spaces.

**1. What 3-5 key results did your organization achieve in 2023 that contributed to:  
a) one or more Council Strategic Directions- economic resilience, social resilience, climate resilience?**

**Social resilience**

In collaboration with The City of Calgary and local communities, the Parks Foundation completed park and sport projects with inclusivity in mind. This involved ensuring that park amenities and facilities were accessible to people of all abilities and backgrounds. By creating spaces where everyone feels welcome and valued, the Parks Foundation contributed to building a vibrant and inclusive city where people can come together to live, work, and play. In total, 29 new community projects were initiated in 2023, and 27 sport and community organizations received grants to complete their work.

Inclusivity was showcased at **Brawn Family Foundation Rotary Park** in the community of Briar Hill-Hounsfield Heights. Alberta's first park tailored to support mental health recovery in youth, the space significantly enhanced social resilience in Calgary by integrating unique features aimed at fostering emotional well-being and community support. The park's incorporation of meditative elements such as a walking labyrinth and shaded gathering area provided a tranquil space for mindfulness practices, while recreational features like outdoor exercise equipment and sports courts promoted physical activity known to alleviate stress and anxiety. Art installation and therapy integration offered creative outlets for expression and healing, fostering resilience among visitors. Moreover, the park served as a supportive area ideal for hosting peer support groups, counseling sessions, and mental health awareness events, reducing stigma and fostering connections among youth facing mental health challenges. Through its comprehensive approach blending therapeutic elements, community support, and mental health education, Brawn Family Foundation Rotary Park played a pivotal role in promoting social resilience and supporting mental health recovery in Calgary's youth population.

**b) Your own organization's strategy?**

The Parks Foundation's strategic focus is to play a key role in leveraging financial and volunteer resources into the park and sport sectors. The organization channels its resources to bolster support for projects that are both innovative and inclusive, addressing social equity. In 2023, notable progress was achieved in advancing projects and fundraising efforts, particularly focusing on equity-seeking communities. Improving equity in the development of park and sport spaces is crucial for enhancing the overall quality of life for all Calgary residents. Our experience is that communities with lower socioeconomic status or fewer privileges often encounter significant challenges in fundraising and project completion.

Thanks to generous one-time funding from The City of Calgary, we've been able to allocate additional staff resources to support these equity-seeking communities. Our emphasis lies in directing resources towards enhancing capacity in areas of Calgary that frequently face prolonged timelines or lack the necessary resources to manage projects effectively.

We extended our support by offering fundraising assistance, including grant writing and budget completion, and have dedicated extra project management services to these underserved areas. In 2023, 47% of the projects supported by the Parks Foundation aimed to address equity disparities.

A notable project worth highlighting is the revitalization of **George Moss Park** in Ogden, which commenced construction in 2023 and is set to open in 2024. Situated in an equity-seeking area, this park also serves as the inaugural "Green Line Public Garden" project and is located within 500 meters of a future Green Line LRT station. We collaborated closely with local groups, such as the Youth Centres of Calgary (YCC), to develop an inclusive sport, play, and gathering area with artistic elements.

**2. Performance measures help demonstrate the return on The City's investment in a partner's operations, and support continuous improvement for Partners. What performance measures reflect your organization's impact in 2023?**

	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2021 results</b>	<b>2022 results</b>	<b>2023 results</b>	<b>What story does this measure tell about your work?</b>
<b>How much did you do?</b>	# Building Communities grants awarded	18	13	11	Demand for Parks Foundation grants was strong in 2023. Communities and sport groups organized volunteer-led park and sport amenity projects.
	# Amateur Sport grants awarded	22	15	16	
	# <u>new</u> community projects supported by the Project Support	46	29	30	Parks Foundation continues to support over one hundred community and sport organization-led projects that include playgrounds, rink projects and pump tracks.
	Program (PSP) # <u>ongoing</u> PSP projects	127	130	122	
	Total disbursements to projects	\$11.6M	\$11.5M	\$8.6M	
<b>How well did you do it?</b>	# Donors/contributors	1,360	1,173	1,066	In 2023, contributions to the Parks Foundation were strong at \$13.9 million. These funds were used for programs, park projects and sport amenities. Contributions come from donors, foundations, corporations, and government.
	\$ Value of contributions	\$15.0M	\$12.0M	\$13.9M	
	Return on Investment of City dollars (city dollars compared to total disbursements to projects)	\$1 to \$5.5	\$1 to \$7.2	\$1 to \$3.9	Satisfaction rate with Parks Foundation remains consistently high.
	*Satisfaction rate of program partners and users	97%	98%	94%	

<b>How are Calgarians better off?</b>	Number of youth impacted by park and playground grants and supports given (Building Communities Program)	52,000	20,500	31,075	Through Parks Foundation’s grant and support programs, new playgrounds and parks are created, giving thousands of Calgarians places to enjoy and be active.
	% of our clients who said their project improved access to nature and active lifestyle close to home*	88%	84%	73%	Projects such as playgrounds, parks and sport facilities are improving access to health and nature in local neighbourhoods. In 2023, there was a higher proportion of playgrounds compared to nature-based projects.
	% of our community volunteers who said they gained new skills*	85%	85%	81%	Community groups are learning new skills that they can use to create future projects and initiatives. In 2023, there were fewer volunteer-constructed playground projects than the previous year.

\*Based on annual survey of program participants (grant recipients, program clients and users of Project Support Program)

**3. Are there any additional stories or information you wanted to share beyond performance measures that demonstrate the impact of your organization’s programs or services?**

**Willow Ridge Playground Upgrade Testimonial – opened in 2023**

“We had just moved into the neighbourhood. I had a newborn daughter and I looked at all the playgrounds in our neighbourhood and they were so old. I said, ‘we can do something about this.’ So, I reached out across our community. We had a whole bunch of volunteers step up and we started a green team and for the last three years we’ve been undertaking this initiative to revitalize our green spaces. Our project is revitalizing one of our oldest and most used community playgrounds. Parks Foundation has been a key partner in funding, managing, coordinating, and making this project a success. You want to be partnering with the Parks Foundation. They’re going to offer a lot of different services that, as a community association, you might not have. It makes everything easy.”

**Jason Carling**  
*President of Willow Ridge Community Association*

**Brawn Family Foundation Rotary Park Testimonial - opened in 2023**

“Since the park opened on July 6th it has already become a valuable resource to the community and to the Summit. Every day kids from the Summit access the park before or after their programming or as a part of their ongoing treatment accompanied by the summit staff. I pass the park before and after work each day and see toddlers with their parents, young kids and teens on the climbing wall, groups of youth and adults playing basketball, as well as groups of seniors sitting in the pavilion together or on the swinging benches often watching their grandkids play. Our staff regularly eat lunch and take their breaks in the park, and it has become a semi regular “meeting” spot for our staff when they want to connect with each other. Every tour I give, I take people through the park space and share with them the valuable input the youth and family

advisors provided to the Parks Foundation, and how the space reflects that vision. The responses to the park space and the thoughtful detail of how it integrates with the Summit have inspired many and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.”

**Ryan Clements**  
*Program Manager, The Summit, a new youth mental health support centre in Calgary*

**George Moss Park Testimonial – construction in 2023; opening in 2024**

“From the time that we came up with the idea to build this park, we had constant contact with Parks Foundation. We met once or twice a month for two years. I felt like it was a true team. Without Parks Foundation there’s no way this project would have gotten off the ground. It will be the pride and joy of the community. We will have kids here from the time they get up in the morning to the time the sun goes down. We’ll run programs out of this park and other communities will do the same. It’s going to be one of the most exciting things that’s ever happened to the community of Ogden.”

**Jane Wachowich**  
*Executive Director, Youth Centres of Calgary*

**4. Does your organization use benchmarks to evaluate and improve performance and operations, and increase your organization’s impact?**

**a) Examples of benchmarks:**

Parks Foundation benchmarks performance in several areas:

- Satisfaction Rate with Parks Foundation’s Programs –
  - This information is used to gain valued insights into how programs can be improved. Feedback has led Parks Foundation to revise its website, change communication processes and upgrade granting forms.
- Number of new community projects helped by the Project Support Program –
  - This information is used to ensure that a target number of communities are being helped with Parks Foundation’s support services and grants. By tracking this information, we can understand the obstacles facing communities, and how to help address issues.
- Value of Contributions to Parks Foundation (grants, donations, etc.) –
  - This information is used to understand the current fundraising landscape, to track success with fundraising efforts, and to revise our methods and practices.

**b) What is your current and targeted performance in comparison to these benchmarks?**

Benchmark	2023 Target	2023 Actual
Satisfaction Rate with Parks Foundation Programs	85%	94%
# New community projects helped by the Project Support Program (PSP)	20	29
Value of Contributions to Parks Foundation (donations, grants, etc.)	\$9M	\$13.9M

**c) How this information is being used to support continuous improvement?**

Information from the survey is used to upgrade programs. For example, we heard that communities wanted to receive more information on available funding. As a result, we implemented a monthly

newsletter that shows upcoming grants and other funding sources. This will be a valued resource for groups fundraising for parks, playgrounds, and sport amenities. The number of new community projects and value of contributions are predictive indicators that ensure we are supporting projects at a sufficient level to deliver continued impact.

**5. How does your organization address equity, diversity or inclusion, or support racial equity?**

Enhancing equity in the development of park and sport spaces is key to enhancing the overall quality of life for all residents of Calgary. In our experience, communities with lower socioeconomic status or fewer privileges encounter greater challenges in fundraising and completing projects. Thanks to generous one-time funding from The City of Calgary, we have been able to allocate additional staff resources to support equity-seeking communities. Our focus lies in directing resources towards bolstering capacity in areas of Calgary that often face prolonged timelines or lack the necessary resources to fundraise and manage projects effectively.

For instance, we've expanded our support by providing fundraising assistance, such as grant writing and budget completion, and have dedicated extra project management services to these underserved areas. In 2023, 47% of the projects backed by the Parks Foundation were aimed at addressing equity disparities.

**6. How is your organization advancing Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation? (For example addressing specific calls to action in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) report or [The City's White Goose Flying Report](#))**

Parks Foundation's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan included recommendations related to indigenous people, including making land acknowledgement a standard practice, engaging with indigenous people on community projects, and working towards projects with Nations surrounding Calgary.

**RESOURCES**

**7. Please estimate how The City's operating funding was allocated in 2023.**

2%	Advertising and promotion
0%	Programs or services
9%	Office supplies and expenses
4%	Professional and consulting fees
77%	Staff compensation, development and training
0%	Fund development
1%	Purchased supplies and assets
4%	Facility maintenance
0%	Evaluation or Research
3%	<i>Other, please name: travel, conferences, memberships and board of directors expense</i>

**8. Did volunteers support your operations in 2023? (including board and committee members)**

How many volunteers?	82
Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:	1,353

**9. Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2023, or have any client or participant feedback that you want to highlight?**

Parks Foundation conducts an annual Program Evaluation Survey with its community partners. The survey revealed that 85% of projects that Parks Foundation supported in 2023 addressed a key community need. 73% of the respondents reported the completion of their project improved public

spaces or provided opportunities for Calgarians to connect, providing them with an opportunity to be active within a 5-minute walk.

Partner organizations that utilize Parks Foundation's programs promote volunteerism within the community; 90% of projects reported the use of volunteers. The best forms of referral for Parks Foundation are via web search, word of mouth, or come directly from The City of Calgary.

**10. How did your organization address climate change in 2023, for example, operational or program changes that reduced green house gas emissions (GHG), air/water pollution, or waste that aligned with [The City's Climate Change Program](#) including Council's Climate Emergency Declaration?**

Parks Foundation's mandate involves creating sustainable outdoor landscapes. Park designs include biodiversity of plant materials, storm water management, tree planting, and make efforts to utilize native species that adapt well to our local environment. We encourage and support communities to follow best practices in sustainable landscape design.

**11. Are there any projects, initiatives or plans for 2024 that you want to briefly highlight?**

The Parks Foundation plays a crucial role in supporting community development through its diverse range of programs. We help create park and sport projects by helping communities at every stage of the process. These projects encompass various amenities such as playgrounds, pathways, community gardens, ice rinks, bicycle pump tracks, and more.

The comprehensive support offered by the Parks Foundation through the **Project Support Program** (PSP) is instrumental in driving community-building projects forward. This support often proves pivotal in determining whether projects proceed or stall. Successful initiatives like playgrounds, parks, and pathways ensure that Calgarians have access to nature and opportunities for healthy, active lifestyles.

In collaboration with The City of Calgary and the Saddledome Foundation, the Parks Foundation's **Amateur Sport Grant Program** allocates grants to local amateur sport organizations. These grants contribute to the enhancement of non-profit sport organizations by funding capital elements, thereby improving equipment and supplies. This initiative facilitates increased participation in healthy sporting activities among residents.

The **Building Communities Program** stands as a cornerstone of the Parks Foundation's commitment to fostering community cohesion and resilience. Through this initiative, the Foundation provides funding, resources, and support to create much needed park projects such as playgrounds, community gardens and naturalizations.

The **Stella Conceptual Drawing Grant Program** supports community organizations by providing \$5,000 in seed money to complete professional project drawings. These drawings aim to enhance Calgary's park spaces and foster community engagement by offering opportunities for volunteer groups to improve their surroundings.

Supported by funding from The City of Calgary, the **Embrace the Outdoors Program** provides grants of up to \$5,000 to support capital costs associated with activating outdoor spaces during the winter. Projects funded under this program include outdoor space enhancements, art installations like murals, and the purchase of winter equipment beneficial to the community. The program aims to

encourage outdoor activities during colder months and welcomes applications from local non-profit organizations.

Looking ahead to 2024, the Parks Foundation is excited to highlight **several projects** that have been fundraised for and are slated for construction and opening. These projects include the revitalization of George Moss Park and Forest Lawn Community Park, the creation of the VIVO art mural, and the development of Saddle Ridge Play Park and Applewood Play Park.

Another noteworthy fundraising and partnership effort is the creation of **Canada's first public park designed for people with dementia and their caregivers**. Located in Dover and planned for 2025 construction, this park will serve as a valuable resource and support system for individuals living with dementia. With an estimated 20,000 Calgarians currently living with dementia—a number expected to rise to 34,000 by 2030—the park aims to combat stigma and provide a safe, inclusive environment for both individuals with dementia and their caregivers. Fundraising and engagement are underway.

**THE FOLLOWING SECTION IS FOR CIVIC PARTNERS MANAGING CITY-OWNED ASSETS**

**12. CAPITAL PROJECTS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

**Asset:** *n/a*

**a) How did you use The City’s capital funding in 2023?**

*The following projects were completed in conjunction with community organizations and donors. They opened to the public in 2023.*

<b>Project</b>	<b>City Funding (2023)</b>	<b>Benefit (service improvement, efficiency, improved condition)</b>
McHugh Bluff Outdoor Fitness Park  Community: Crescent Heights	\$50,000	Total project cost \$176,000 Supplementary fitness equipment for individuals who use the Rotary Park stairs as a popular exercise location.
Marda Loop Bike Park  Community: Marda Loop; Bankview	\$30,000	Total project cost \$325,000 A bike park that includes skills track and pump track to improve the skills of Calgarians of all ages. A unique hub that appeals to a wide range of interests.
Royal Sunalta Park Olmstead Elm Playground  Community: Scarborough; Sunalta	\$50,000 (\$35,000 in-kind)	Total project cost \$350,000 Two playgrounds were consolidated into one. It was a project that provided one larger playground with a more accessible and increased footprint for play.
Mid-Sun Sunlake Playground  Community: Sundance	\$50,000 (\$35,000 in-kind)	Total project cost \$120,000 Replacement of a 31-year-old playground. Included inclusive and accessible elements.
Evanston Community Park	\$400,000	Total project cost \$978,000

Community: Evanston		Transformed a centrally located, underutilized space into a community hub. It is a multi-generational space to represent all residents.
Century Garden 3X3 Sport Court  Community: Calgary Downtown	\$300,000	Total project cost \$350,000 Partnership with City of Calgary, Calgary Surge and Parks Foundation. The innovative circular 3X3 new sport court helps revitalize and transform Calgary's downtown.