

MEDIA RELEASE: CITY HONOURED FOR COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET INNER CITY SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL NEEDS

(no placeline - Sept. 14, 2021) The City of Calgary's collaborative work with three inner-city communities on the long-term future of two recreation facilities has earned "Honourable Mention" from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Canada. The project, "Understanding the Social and Recreational Needs of Beltline, Inglewood and Ramsay" received the award for "Extending the Practice through Creativity, Contribution and Innovation in the Field". The award was announced last night at a virtual Core Values Awards Ceremony.

Calgary City Council initiated the project to explore the future of the pools by building an understanding of the evolving needs of community members. Success would hinge on ensuring those most affected were able to provide input which would inform The City's recommendations.

Recognizing that this may be more than a binary "pools open or closed" question, the City of Calgary project team dove deep into the larger social and recreational needs of the communities to explore solutions to best meet those needs. Among other forms of engagement, the project team developed Neighbourhood Inquiry Kits, which helped to humanize the process, provide residents an opportunity to share their stories, and foster collaborative solutions. As a result of this work, The City was able to identify service alternatives and targeted investments to maximize community and social benefits in these neighbourhoods.

"This was a difficult task that Council set for us," says Program Manager Heather Johnson. "It was only through this remarkable group of people, each bringing their individual knowledge and expertise and deploying that in a highly collaborative, problem solving, future-focused manner that we managed to chart a course through this. We pushed some boundaries, tried new things, got some wins and made some mistakes ... this program kept reminding me what exceptional, talented and genuinely passionate public servants this organization is made up of."

Making sure that people affected by a decision have input in the decision and know how their input influenced the decision is central to the concept of Public Participation (P2), and the judges were impressed with the way this project accomplished that. Said one, "The focus of the engagement was on those most affected by the decision, so the engagement process was designed around their needs, interests and habits. Relationships with community groups was also an important way to involve specific groups of interest."

All of the 2021 IAP2 Canada Core Values Award winners can be viewed online, at <https://www.iap2canada.ca/cva-2021>.

About Calgary: As the third largest municipality in Canada, The City of Calgary serves a city that 1.3 million people call home, a population that is young-with an average age of 37 years, diverse-with 34% visible minorities, and growing-with thousands of new people arriving each year from across Canada-and the world. An excellent quality of life, low taxes, proximity to nature and cleanliness make Calgary one of the most liveable cities on the planet! The City of Calgary is part of that success story - serving the city we live in, the city we love.

About IAP2 Canada: IAP2 Canada is the country's preeminent organization dedicated to promoting, supporting and improving the practice of Public Participation. Its nearly 1100 members in all thirteen provinces and territories, working in all levels of government as well as industries and academia, seek to ensure that people affected by a decision are consulted in the making of that decision and are informed of the way their input affected the outcome. IAP2 Canada is part of a worldwide organization, with regional affiliates in Australasia, Indonesia, the USA, Southern Africa, and individual members in Italy and Latin America.