



CreativeCITY:  
Prosperity through the  
Creative Economy

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Photo Credit: Neil Zeller  
Chinook Blast (2022), courtesy of Tourism Calgary



# Land Acknowledgement

These rolling hills. These winding rivers. That sighing wind.

We are only the latest to walk this land's well worn trails. We acknowledge that the land we discuss in this report, sometimes called Calgary, but for a greater time called Mohkínsstsi, is the ancestral territory of the Siksikaitsitapi—the Blackfoot peoples—comprising the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani Nations, as well as Treaty 7 signatories, the Tsuut'ina Nation, and the Íyàxe Nakoda Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley First Nations. Today this land is home to the Métis Nation of region 3 as well as many First Nations and Inuit peoples from across Turtle Island.

Brilliant sunshine, silent snow, night's dark shadows—they fall on all of us alike as we make and tell our stories here, as they have for millenia. Art, music, dance, storytelling, creating, and ceremony have been here since time immemorial. We hope our work contributes to the valuing of traditional creative forms as well as greater appreciation of and opportunity for the creative Indigenous talent who walk these lands today.

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# Executive Summary



Photo Credit: Benjamin Laird  
King Eddy, CCMA Launch (2022), courtesy of Tourism Calgary

# The Problem and the Potential

Despite its significant economic, social, human and environmental contributions to our region, Calgary's creative economy is underleveraged and overlooked due to a creative ecosystem that is fragmented and inefficient. Despite this, the creative economy also offers incredible potential for positive economic, human, social and environmental impacts. In response, CreativeCITY developed a strategic framework. This framework was workshoped and reviewed by over 500 Calgarians, resulting in an updated four pillar strategic framework.

Changes to the formal strategic framework are relatively small, reflecting that overwhelmingly, feedback is supportive of the strategic framework and creative Calgarians see their concerns reflected in the goals and priorities. Crucially, the community engagement also allowed for critical counterpoints and minority perspectives to be integrated.

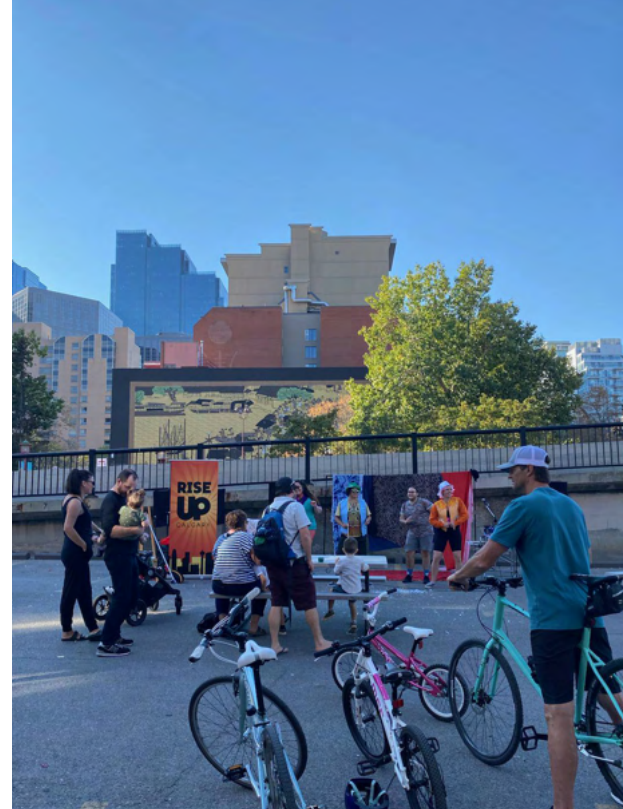


Photo Credit: Amelie Patterson  
Rise UP Children's Day (2022)



Photo Credit: Samantha Mendoza  
Beakerhead (2022)

# Updated Strategic Framework



## PILLAR 1: Embed audacious creativity into our city's DNA

To fully leverage the robust, growing creative economy in Calgary, creativity needs to be at the heart of everything we do as a city. This includes embedding considerations for the creative economy into our decision-making processes, creating the conditions for success for local creative enterprises, and building a renewed, unified civic identity around creativity.



## PILLAR 2: Incubate creative collisions

Unifying our creative economy under one identity requires creating conditions for collaboration, cross-sector partnerships, knowledge transfer, and resource sharing. This will require a shift in how our creative economy operates by digitizing our ecosystem; utilizing our existing spaces and institutions to facilitate collisions; and identifying, acknowledging and fostering creativity across industries.



## PILLAR 3: Mobilize Calgary's creative capacity

To develop and retain Calgary's exceptional creative talent, we must work to ensure creative professionals, new or seasoned, have the knowledge, skills and resources required to succeed. This means we need to adapt how we educate to create a more dynamic workforce; create opportunities for skill building in areas like business management and marketing; and work in partnership with cultural institutions, private sector leaders, and civic organizations to ensure creative education aligns with the needs of future employers and customers.



## PILLAR 4: Value the diversity of Calgary's creativity

As an incredibly diverse city, Calgary has an opportunity to tap into the unique perspectives and experiences of our diverse creative class to build something new, authentic, and meaningful for everyone in the city. By creating new, unique experiences, and by ensuring every creative, regardless of their backgrounds or identities, has the skills, resources, and sense of value to succeed, Calgary can bring something different to the global creative economy.

# Highlights from the community engagement summaries

CreativeCITY employed three community engagement methods to solicit feedback on the proposed four pillar strategic framework: small experiments, workshops, and a survey. Given that the target audience was Calgarians within the creative economy, it could reasonably be expected they would support a strategic framework that promotes their livelihoods and passions. This support, however, is significant as it indicates that the four pillar strategic framework resonates across creative sectors and identifies goals and priorities with strong buy-in from the community. Over 500 Calgarians participated across the three engagement methods.

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## SMALL EXPERIMENTS

Small experiments with radical intent took place in various Calgary creative communities. Each experiment was paired with one of the four strategic pillars, exploring or questioning an aspect of that pillar and its possibilities. In-depth descriptions are provided in this report, but initial results suggest:



Photo Credit: Benjamin Laird  
CCMA Off Country Seminars (2022), courtesy of Tourism Calgary

## EXPERIMENT ONE

An impact investment fund, offering funding to nonprofits and for-profits, could be a renewable funding model whereby loan repayments go back into a fund that becomes new loans or grants for other initiatives, with the intention of a stable fund that replenishes itself over time.

## EXPERIMENT THREE

Integrating public and private sector perspectives into educational planning can result in impactful programs that develop career-enhancing skills.

## EXPERIMENT TWO

Despite the excitement surrounding new technology, many barriers and complex issues face creative talent integrating innovative tech into their work and processes. Creative talent, however, can play an important role in navigating novel and unknown problems and situations.

## EXPERIMENT FOUR

Existing and upcoming creative programs, spaces and structures need to be reviewed with a lens to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility if they are to develop the breadth of Calgary's creative talent.

## CREATIVECITY WORKSHOPS

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CreativeCITY held seven online workshops. Each targeted a different sector of the creative economy, but asked each crowd the same questions. Discussions were transcribed, coded and analyzed to identify common themes as well as unique perspectives and feedback. Based on an analysis of 370 quotes pulled from over 18 hours of discussion, the eight most common themes arising were:

### APPRECIATE THE IMPACTS OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

These quotes share a common thread around getting Calgarians to appreciate both the creative economy's current contributions and its future potential (e.g., drawing internal and external visitors into Calgary, driving business and activities in the spaces around events, bringing beauty and a sense of excitement to local neighbourhoods, and developing talent with skills valuable across economic areas).

### AUDIENCE ACTIVATION

Calgary's suburbs are seen as both an untapped market and an underserved population, with better public transit needed to bring participants into the core, and increased infrastructure needed to host performances and programs in the suburbs. Early exposure to creativity is seen as a key step to developing appreciation for creative experiences later in life. A subgroup pointed to ineffective information distribution (e.g., promotion, marketing) as a major barrier to audience engagement.

### CHOOSING ABUNDANCE

This theme title reflects a collection of quotes that extol the positive value of collaborating and sharing. Participants argue that the creative ecosystem has more when information, contacts, tools, and knowledge are shared (especially via mentorship)—creating abundance for all.

### CREATIVE COLLISIONS

A majority of these quotes describe creative hubs as the ideal infrastructure for creative collisions where connection and collaboration can occur organically and spontaneously, not only between creative talent, but also with businesses and the general public.



## CULTIVATING AND RETAINING CREATIVE TALENT

Introducing creativity in schools is a popular suggestion in terms of cultivating creative talent, however, participants also pointed to the importance of informal learning opportunities. Creative skills are described as valuable across many industries. Growth in creative and cultural industries are seen as a boon to talent retention as jobs and opportunity make Calgary a viable option for longterm careers. Two major challenges identified include a lack of affordable space for artists, performers and makers as well as an ongoing failure to address issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, jeopardizing the cultivation and retention of diverse talent.

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, ACCESSIBILITY & CREATIVITY

Quotes address various diversities and position creative and cultural programs as catalysts for compassion and understanding as they expose communities to diverse perspectives and stories. Quotes also address institutions and practices that create barriers for diverse creative talent, calling on organizations and individuals with power and influence to take an active role in creating change.

## MAKING A LIVING

While careers in the creative fields of film, music, and technology are described as viable, a majority of quotes spoke to the challenges of earning a living as an independent operator in the creative economy. A lot of time and labour goes unpaid, creative talent are often underpaid even when remuneration is offered, and it is difficult to find grant opportunities or long-term funding sources.

## PLAYING WELL WITH OTHERS

These quotes focus on how participants see “other” economic areas or partners influencing the creative economy. The top three identified are: food and beverage businesses, the City of Calgary, and technology and innovation. Food and beverage businesses are generally seen as allies, providing venues and important performance opportunities. Municipally, planning (e.g., transit routes and limited hours, lack of performance/event infrastructure) negatively impacts the creative economy. Technology is generally seen as a helpful tool, but a few quotes position technology and innovation within the creative economy, pointing to the creative occupations and skills within the field.

## CREATIVECITY SURVEY

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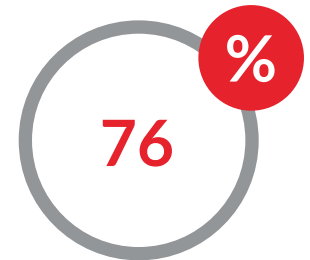
The survey was aimed at anyone connected to Calgary's creative economy. Running from May to August 2022, the survey captured feedback from 300 Calgarians:



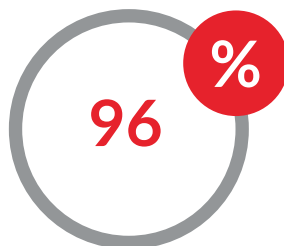
of respondents see themselves and their community reflected (in part or in full) in the priorities identified in the existing strategic plan



of respondents could envision a way that their community could play an active role in making Calgary a more creative, and more livable city by the year 2030



of respondents "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that Calgary is already a thriving creative community



of respondents "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that creativity is an important or essential component of a thriving community



of respondents "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that the City should be investing more to provide increased opportunities for the creative community





nord stage 2

Photo Credit: Sebastian Buzzalino  
NMC AB Spotlight 2019, Copperhead

# Introduction



Photo Credit: Courtesy of Casa Mexico  
Celebrating Life (2022), Wakefield Brewster

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## THE PROBLEM

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Despite its significant economic, social, human, and environmental contributions to our region, Calgary's creative economy is underleveraged and overlooked due to a creative ecosystem that is fragmented and inefficient.

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## THE POTENTIAL

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### ECONOMIC

#### Current Status:

- » 12,000 enterprises
- » 32,000 employees
- » Annual direct impact of \$2.1 billion

#### Underleveraged areas:

- » A city identity built around creativity
- » Diverse forms of arts and culture
- » Talent acquisition
- » Talent retention
- » Talent development

### HUMAN

- » Higher educational achievement
- » Improved mental health and overall well-being
- » Creativity in the workplace increases workers' sense of value and accomplishment

### SOCIAL

- » Over 49,000 volunteers in arts and culture, totalling nearly 7.3 million hours or 3,670 full-time job equivalents
- » Improves social cohesion and sense of community
- » Increases civic participation
- » Supports urban revitalization and community building

### ENVIRONMENT

- » Acts as an important mechanism for education and awareness-raising about environmental issues, including climate change
- » Improves energy efficiency and emissions reduction through sustainable design
- » Developing creative solutions to environmental problems

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## THE VISION

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Calgary is Canada's most livable city

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## THE MISSION

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Calgary's creative economy is recognized as a global leader through a sustained, collaborative commitment to the city's prosperity.

# What is the Creative Economy?

The creative economy looks at creativity as an output that intersects job fields, rather than isolated to particular industries. Adopting an ecosystem lens, the creative economy recognizes the connections between fields such as education, arts, culture and innovation, rather than viewing them in isolation. This is especially important given the fragmented, siloed nature of Calgary's creative economy. It maps the interdependence of these as unique drivers of direct and indirect economic outputs. Adopting this lens leads to a more accurate understanding of the economic role creativity plays, permeating every industry.

CreativeCITY uses the Four-Sector Nesta Model\* to identify the largest sectors of the creative economy. This model combines research and models from the European Commission, Canadian Heritage, Conference Board of Canada and particularly from the UK's National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta).<sup>1</sup> Nesta's research looks at creativity at the occupational level, rather than the industry level. By tracking the creative intensity of occupations, Nesta effectively shows how creative talent transcends industry lines.<sup>2</sup> The model reflects this by loosely mapping the creative economy across four economic sectors with a high density of creative occupations and outputs: culture, cultural industries, creative industries and transversal industries.

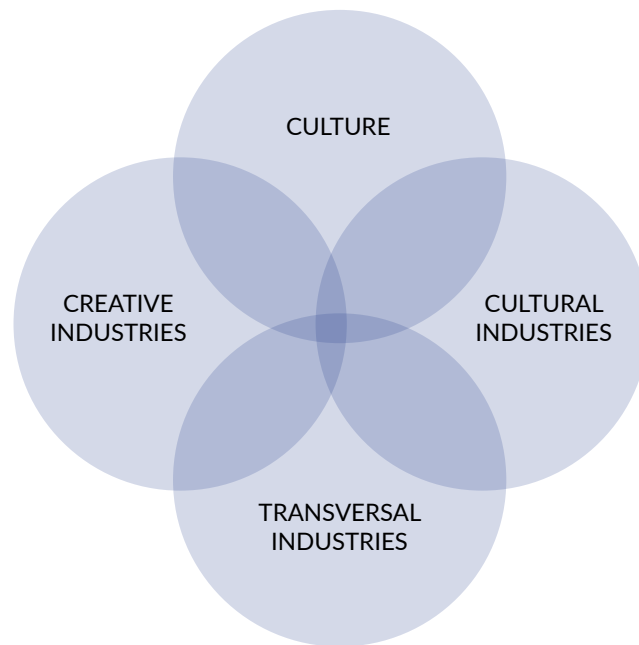
## The Four-Sector Nesta Model

### CULTURE

- Visual arts
- Performing arts
- Heritage
- Museums
- Libraries

### CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

- Design
- Architecture
- Photography
- Advertising
- Fashion/accessories



### CULTURE INDUSTRIES

- Film & video
- Broadcasting
- Gaming
- Music
- Publishing
- Interactive media

### TRANSVERSAL INDUSTRIES

- Cultural tourism
- Creative education
- Computer system design

For those intending to use this strategic plan, this model offers a helpful visual reminder of the breadth of the creative economy, potentially suggesting new partners or areas of alignment. Importantly, the Four-Sector Nesta Model focuses on where creativity is most intense—this does not exclude the value nor roles of creativity across other industries and economic sectors. In CreativeCITY documents, references to “creative sectors” or “creative clusters” refer to the four main categories of the Nesta model.

This model allows CreativeCITY to address both the problem and the potential described at the beginning while pushing toward the vision of Calgary as Canada's most livable city.

\* Sometimes referred to as “four-cluster” or “four-quadrant”, we have opted to use the term “four-sector” and refer to them as “creative sectors” to avoid confusion with “creative clusters” which has been used in other municipal plans to refer to geographical concentrations of creative activities and businesses and “quadrant” which has particular geographical connotations within Calgary. Colloquial usage of ‘sector’ such as in ‘music sector’ or ‘live entertainment sector’ generally refers to a subdomain of the four overarching Nesta sectors (see the diagram above).

# CreativeCITY Phases

September 2020

## CREATIVE ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM REVIEW

Starting with our steering committee, CreativeCITY gathered local creative leaders' insights, identified successes and case studies in other jurisdictions, and reviewed extensive research and data. This provided the foundation for the four pillar strategic framework. This phase ended with the publication of an in-depth [Ecosystem Report](#) that laid out the current status of Calgary's creative economy and introduced the public to the strategic framework.

Phase 1



May 2021



Phase 2

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CreativeCITY engaged creative economy members on the four pillar strategic framework. Feedback was obtained through four small experiments with radical intent, seven online workshops, and a public survey. The various methods captured feedback from 500+ Calgarians.

September 2021

August 2022

September 2022

## CreativeCITY STRATEGIC GUIDEBOOK

Results from the experiments, workshops and the survey were analyzed, summarized and integrated to complete this Engagement Summary and update the four pillar strategic framework (coming up next). This phase comes to a tentative close with the publication of the CreativeCITY Strategic Guidebook.

Phase 3



The Future



# Strategic Framework

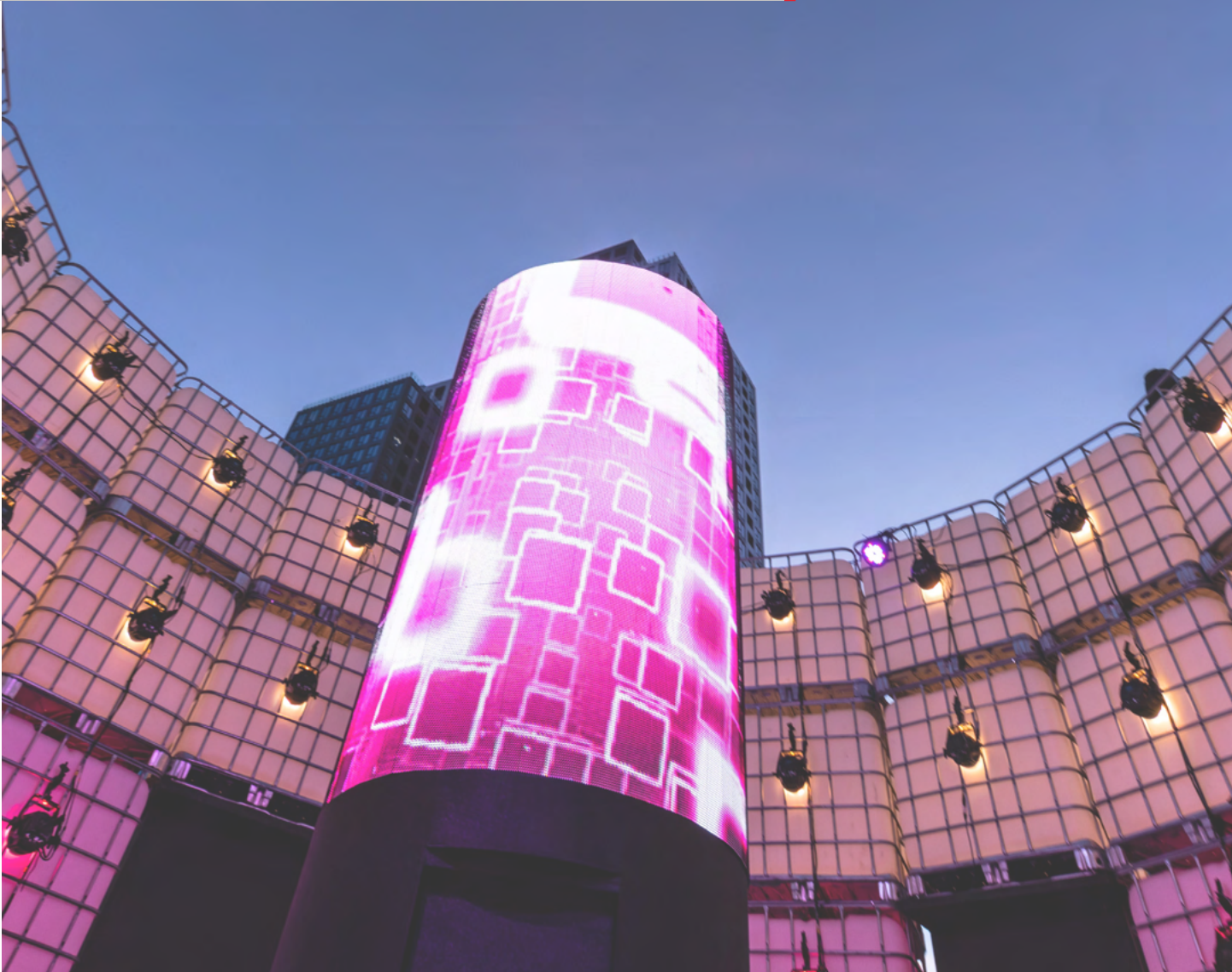


Photo Credit: Neil Zeller  
Chinook Blast (2022), Courtesy of Tourism Calgary



# Updated Strategic Framework: 4 Pillar Approach



## PILLAR 1: Embed audacious creativity into our city's DNA

To fully leverage the robust, growing creative economy in Calgary, creativity needs to be at the heart of everything we do as a city. This includes embedding considerations for the creative economy into our decision-making processes, creating the conditions for success for local creative enterprises, and building a renewed, unified civic identity around creativity.

### Goals

- By 2030, Calgary shows its transformation into a creative city via specific achievements and industry growth.
- By 2030, Calgary will recognize itself for its culture and creativity.

### Priorities

- Leverage the existing momentum of Calgary's growing cultural industries to embed creativity into our city's brand and identity.
- Model the success of Calgary's film industry and extend to music and other creative economy sectors.

### What change might look like

- Calgary is a more vibrant and resilient city.
- Calgary is known around the world as a hub for creativity.
- The creative economy drives Calgary's economy.
- Calgarians are engaged in and celebrate creative experiences.
- Calgary has a unified sense of identity.
- Entrepreneurship is celebrated and rewarded.



## PILLAR 2: Incubate creative collisions

Unifying our creative economy under one identity requires creating conditions for collaboration, cross-sector partnerships, knowledge transfer, and resource sharing. This will require a shift in how our creative economy operates by digitizing our ecosystem; utilizing our existing spaces and institutions to facilitate collisions; and identifying, acknowledging and fostering creativity across industries.

### Goals

- By 2030, Calgary will lead Canada in creative economy businesses per capita.
- By 2030, Calgary is recognized as a global leader for the high level of collaboration between its creative sectors and other economic sectors.

### Priorities

- Leverage our digital capacity to connect and strengthen Calgary's creative economy.
- Purposefully facilitate and encourage the collaboration of the creative economy across creative sectors.
- Establish an implementing body to oversee the coordination and implementation of a creative economy strategy.
- Encourage play and exploration without fear of failure.

### What change might look like

- Sectors, industries and occupations solve problems together.
- Occupations growing in demand make up most of Calgary's workforce.
- Calgary is resilient and future-proof.
- Calgary is no longer a pure energy town.
- Creative industries have well-established connections with other industries.
- Top talent from around the world moves to Calgary.



## PILLAR 3: Mobilize Calgary's creative capacity

To develop and retain Calgary's exceptional creative talent, we must work to ensure creative professionals, new or seasoned, have the knowledge, skills and resources required to succeed. This means we need to adapt how we educate to create a more dynamic workforce; create opportunities for skill building in areas like business management and marketing; and work in partnership with cultural institutions, private sector leaders, and civic organizations to ensure creative education aligns with the needs of future employers and customers.

### Goals

- By 2030, the Calgary region leads Canada in the integration of arts and experiential learning into our K-12 classrooms.
- By 2030, Calgary's post-secondary creative programs have the highest graduate employment rates in Canada.
- By 2030, Calgary leads Canada in the number of creative economy workers per capita.

### Priorities

- Adapt educational programs to create a more dynamic workforce.
- Foster creativity by building programs in a way that layers career knowledge, skills building, and access to opportunities in a scaffolded approach.
- Embed experiential learning and arts into formal and informal curricula.

### What change might look like

- Successful post-graduation outcomes are achieved by considering both public and private sector human resource needs in education, from primary to post-secondary.
- Arts education is accessible to all.
- Creative thinking and cultural experiences are essential components of Alberta's education system.
- Calgarians are equipped with the resources, skills and knowledge to thrive in the creative economy.
- New graduate employment rates are the highest in the country.



## PILLAR 4: Value the diversity of Calgary's creativity

As an incredibly diverse city, Calgary has an opportunity to tap into the unique perspectives and experiences of our diverse creative class to build something new, authentic, and meaningful for everyone in the city. By creating new, unique experiences, and by ensuring every creative, regardless of their backgrounds or identities, has the skills, resources, and sense of value to succeed, Calgary can bring something different to the global creative economy.

### Goals

- By 2030, the make up of Calgary's creative economy workforce is at minimum representative of the city's population.
- By 2030, equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are prioritized and embedded into creative economy workplaces and programming.
- By 2030, creative economy enterprises and organizations celebrate their board-level diversity with pride and encourage other organizations to follow suit.

### Priorities

- Develop and adopt programs and policies to ensure diverse individuals have the knowledge, skills and tools to succeed.
- Embed principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility into the creative economy strategy.
- Choose new faces and new voices to lead change.

### What change might look like

- Diversity is the creative economy's greatest asset.
- Calgary attracts creative talent from all over the world.
- Calgary is known world-wide for its uniqueness and authenticity.
- Diverse creative talent have the tools, resources, and platforms needed to succeed.
- Calgary's creative economy is steered by more voices and is more representative of the community.
- All Calgarians feel a collective sense of pride, value, and empowerment in our city.

## WHY ISN'T EVERYTHING DIFFERENT?

On the whole, feedback suggests that CreativeCITY hit the mark. The vast majority of survey comments and workshop participant quotes indicate support for the existing strategic framework. Despite these affirming findings, there is great value in the reflections and questions expressed in the community engagement process. Crucially, the community engagement allowed for critical counterpoints and minority perspectives to be brought up. While pleasing everyone is not a goal of this process, being able to honestly reflect on and integrate a diversity of perspectives and views is a goal of the CreativeCITY team. This document reflects dedication to ensuring that the CreativeCITY Strategic Guidebook is not a top-down academic exercise but a community-vetted playbook for everyone.

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93% of survey respondents see themselves and their community reflected (in part or in full) in the priorities identified in the original strategic framework.



# Findings Integration

Below, the four strategic pillars are re-examined in light of questions, themes, and ideas arising in the small experiments, the community workshops, and the survey. Alongside engagement results, this integration section informed the writing of the tactics for the Strategic Guidebook. Detailed descriptions and results from the engagement methods are provided in the Community Engagement Results section.

## PILLAR 1: Embed audacious creativity into our city's DNA

Interestingly, the three items that survey respondents most often ranked in the bottom three spots under pillar one all speak to specific areas of the creative economy (i.e., film and music). Based on written feedback on the survey as well as discussion in the workshops, Calgarians are excited about growth in the film industry and plans to expand the music industry. The concern appears to be that this focus may leave other creative areas out, or as one survey respondent put it, "Why are we only talking film and music?" This indicated an opportunity to change language in pillar one to better communicate the overall goal of building the whole economy by leveraging the lessons and successes of growing industries for other areas of the creative economy. This also aligns with the [experiment one](#) conclusion that to embed creativity into our city's DNA, the whole ecosystem needs to be considered in policy writing and program planning.

The three items most often ranked in the top three spots by survey respondents focus on Calgary itself: its culture, vibrancy, resiliency and the engagement of Calgarians in creative experiences. Combining this with workshop feedback, participants identify a few major challenges to these items. Transit routes and hours are a potential barrier to folks attending or working late night or suburban creative experiences. They discuss a lack of suburban infrastructure to support creative activities in those areas. There was also a revealing subtheme around audience activation that pointed to the need to address cost in some way. Not only as a matter of accessibility for audience members, but as a matter of livelihood for artists to earn a viable wage and be seen as a valuable way to spend money in the city.



Photo Credit: Marc Tran  
Celebrating Life (2022), D Rhythm Soul Dance Experience

Workshop discussions touched on Calgary's identity or image, most often in terms of broadening beyond oil, gas, and cowboys to encompass more diverse stories. Interestingly, this is tied to pillar three as well through a report that shows how perception of place can influence youth retention and attraction. Interviewing youth within Alberta and other major Canadian centres, the report found youth "perceive that Alberta does not offer a breadth of career choices, that the province lacks vibrancy and that there is a lack of inclusion of diversity".<sup>3</sup> For youth who are attracted by both job opportunity and quality of life, this results in many feeling they must leave (or not come to) Alberta in order to build their chosen future. This is an important argument in favour of expanding Calgary's identity to include the creative economy. A few participants touched on the importance of recognizing our economic history and in particular the role of the oil field in growing Calgary.

There were a minority of quotes voicing concern about the idea of a unified creative identity, critical of creatives being presented as a homogeneous monolith. CreativeCITY does not aim to make all creatives the same—as hopefully pillar four clearly demonstrates. Rather, they intend that where intentional collaboration and connection can strengthen the creative economy (and thereby the people within it) that Calgary creatives have a sense of being part of the proverbial 'something bigger' wherein their unique person and talents are recognized, supported, and valued. With more voices at the table the strategic framework becomes whole. From there, local concerns, local desires, local hopes gain strength by being shared, and advocated for, across creative communities. This is the CreativeCITY idea of a united creative identity.

## PILLAR 2: Incubate creative collisions

Workshop feedback is very supportive of this pillar as is. The importance or positive direct experience of collaboration and/or coordination is frequently extolled. Using the language of the framework, participants and respondents describe “hubs” as a powerful infrastructure for creative collisions, while also hopefully addressing issues of affordable studio/rehearsal space, isolation of independent workers, and poor information sharing. Comments about the importance of networking and connecting align well with the [experiment two](#) experience, in which early collaborations gave #T7NFT a heightened platform (i.e., Chinook Blast) and then new connections actively sought them out. In line with this, experiment two also points to the unique role that creative talent can play in burgeoning or changing industries. As industries seek new ways forward under changing economic circumstances and social realities, they need people with the skill of workshopping solutions to previously unseen challenges and the ability to innovate both products and processes. They need creative talent. This suggests another possibility for hubs and their design or locations. Hubs may have an even bigger impact where they bring creative talent into contact with private and public business interests as well as the public. This also resonates with survey feedback in which “Creative industries have well established connections with other industries.” was ranked in the top three spots under pillar two by 66% of respondents.

A small minority of quotes in the workshops question the assumed inherent goodness of collaborations. Importantly, these suggest that CreativeCITY’s Strategic Guidebook should include some context in terms of what makes for positive collaborations. This may be derived from comments and feedback that describe meaningful collaborations as mutually beneficial, increasing sharing of information, opportunities and resources across the creative economy.

In the survey ranking exercise, the three items most often ranked in the bottom three spots offer some interesting reflection. The generally low ranking of “Calgary is recognized as a global leader for its sustained commitment to collaboration” appears the result of oversaturation as four other related items addressing collaboration or coordination under pillar two all ranked higher.

The low ranking of “Calgary leads Canada in creative economy start-ups per capita” may reflect that some creatives do not want their work reduced to only economic value—a perspective raised in the workshops. This tendency among some creative talent to look for

value and motive beyond the economic also reflects the words of #T7NFT contributing artist, Uii Savage, who pointed out that artists should be involved in asking complex questions around innovation, especially where such questions are overlooked because they do not produce direct profit. Even more people, however, spoke to the hard grind of independent creative careers. A recent random survey found that 61% of Calgarians think Calgary is a good place to be an artist today<sup>4</sup>, but their perception juxtaposes that of actual artists. In the 2022 Calgary Arts Professionals Survey, only 30% of arts professionals agree that Calgary is a good place to be an artist.<sup>5</sup> CreativeCITY workshop discussions revealed many challenges to making an independent living including lack of funding for start-ups, low pay for gig work, difficulty identifying funding opportunities, a lack of affordable work/performance space and a struggle to address the business concerns (e.g., booking, space, networking, etc.) while still actively engaging in the creative process. Given that the majority of those employed in Calgary’s creative economy are self-employed or gig workers<sup>6</sup>, the idea of start-ups may be associated with negative connotations. In both cases, CreativeCITY’s Strategic Guidebook aims to address the practical needs of creative economy workers and organizations to support their success, whether they see themselves as entrepreneurial or not.

Finally, “We leverage our digital capacity to connect and strengthen Calgary’s creative economy” was frequently ranked in the bottom three spots by respondents. This does not entirely align with workshop feedback in which technology and innovation was frequently mentioned as a means of gaining greater reach, working remotely, and augmenting creative shows/experiences. The expanding digital realm poses some risks. For example, experiment two (#T7NFT) had to address this with artists exploring non-fungible tokens. They deliberately used funding to onboard artists for free to reduce the initial risk, creating an opportunity for play and exploration. Identifying actions that connect digital capacity to specific needs may improve support and interest in this particular area. For example, workshop feedback frequently pointed to difficulty disseminating information across creative communities.

There is the added fact that applying the Nesta’s research reveals a subset (11%) of tech and digital jobs as creative occupations<sup>7</sup>, firmly connecting this realm to the creative economy. This may point to an overarching need to help Calgarians understand the breadth and value of the creative economy.

## PILLAR 3: Mobilize Calgary's creative capacity

Pillar three addresses the issues of cultivating and retaining creative talent in Calgary. Workshop discussions are very supportive of integrating creativity into education to cultivate future talent. Speaking about primary to secondary, feedback focuses on exposure to creativity building curiosity and appreciation for creativity later in life, while helping children develop valuable skills now. In terms of creative education at the post-secondary level, the three sub-themes arising were: provide programming that attracts students, connect graduates to employment opportunities and show that creative skills are transferable skills. These workshop findings align well with the survey items most often ranked in the top three spots under pillar three: "Arts education is accessible to all", "The Calgary region leads Canada in the integration of arts and experiential learning into our K-12 classrooms" and "Creative thinking and cultural experiences are essential components of Alberta's education system".

While some participants point to funding from the provincial government being the decisive factor for the above, others argue that creative education must reach beyond formal classroom settings. A local example of this is Beakerhead, which brings arts, science and math together in a celebratory September festival—a family-friendly event that successfully reaches (and teaches) across age groups. At an individual level, workshop participants frequently mention a desire for more mentorship opportunities.

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"I want to pepper people with questions and that is definitely something that I like, I share your sentiment, that like having that mentorship of just like let me just get that knowledge from someone who's done it, would be huge." (Makers Workshop Participant).

They also suggest internships, a creative economy equivalent of [Alberta Open Farm Days](#), shared working spaces, and community classes as methods for helping people develop their creative skills. Importantly, these skills are seen as valuable across many industries and economic areas as well as fostering a person's individual wellbeing and personal growth. [Experiment three's](#) early results from AUArts' workshops suggest attendees from various backgrounds appreciate creative education and see its applicability in many industries. In terms of shared spaces, there was an ongoing subtheme around the variety of venues and spaces needed to mobilize creative talent. Across creative disciplines and sectors, it is imperative that creative talent has access to spaces to create, show and market their work at affordable rates.

Pillar three has the distinction of the item that is most frequently listed as #10. "The private sector's human resource needs are actively considered in education from primary to post-secondary" is ranked as #10 by 62% of respondents. This is perhaps unsurprising given conflicting public discourse around Alberta's new K-12 curriculum and longstanding concerns about the private sectors' influence over public education. This is challenged, in a sense, by workshop participants who see a lack of connection between education and viable employment, "you come out of that education stream realizing that you don't have what's required for jobs" (Digital Workshop Participant). Experiment three offers a bridge here. The topics AUArts chose to teach in their workshops were identified by a combination of research in the field, self-reflection on the part of the institution ("what are we not teaching?") and discussion with experts in business to help identify which topics would be most important to cover. In this example, private sector representatives do not dictate the educational priorities, rather they are invited into a discussion alongside students, faculty, and course designers. The primary goal is about meeting student needs. This appears successful in the experiment given that when AUArts opened registration up to their continuing education students, there was a 132% uptick in registrations, showing that people already in their respective fields saw these as valuable topics of study. Wording of this goal was changed to better reflect that CreativeCITY sees private sector perspectives as one of many that need to be at the table in order to assure that student needs are being met (e.g., finding viable work or running a business independently after graduating).

Another note arising from discussion was around the importance of intentionally addressing issues of equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. Although this is discussed at greater length under pillar four, these themes were connected to the issues of cultivation and retention in that, where they are not purposefully addressed, there is a real risk of alienating entire groups of creative talent and/or continuing to implement practices that marginalize certain groups.



## PILLAR 4: Value the diversity of Calgary's creativity

The first change is to the pillar description. In the work following the writing of the [Ecosystem Report](#) it became clear that defining Calgary as the "third most diverse city in Canada" relied too narrowly on Statistics Canada's definition of visible minorities.<sup>8</sup> While recognizing such diversity is valuable, workshop quotes point to many more diversities to be valued. Therefore, the language was changed to address diversity in a broad sense (e.g., sexual, ethnic, cultural, age, gender, abilities, socioeconomic status, etc.), so that action items under this pillar might address a broader range of issues for Calgarians.

The three items most often ranked in the top three spots under pillar four are "Calgary's creative economy workforce is representative of the population", "Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are prioritized and embedded into creative economy workplaces and programming" and "Diverse creatives have the tools, resources, and platforms needed to succeed." While laudable, the workshop feedback reflects the aspirational quality of these items. Discussions indicate there remains a lot of work to make this pillar a reality. Quotes argue that the onus for this transformation needs to be on institutions, organizations and individuals with power and influence, rather than on groups already facing additional barriers. A particular action recommended is addressing booking and hiring practices that favour familiar faces, which would help address the top ranked goal.

The three items most often ranked in the lowest three spots by respondents are "Calgary is known world-wide for its uniqueness and authenticity", "Calgary attracts creatives from all over the world", and "We choose new faces and new voices to lead change." The low ranking of those first two items follows a tendency across the survey responses for priorities and goals that mentioned Calgary on the global stage to be ranked lower. This may reflect greater concern for what is happening close to home, rather than a disinterest in these particular items. CreativeCITY suspects the low ranking of "We choose new faces and new voices to lead change" may be the result of a similar and more tangible item being available ("Creative economy enterprises and organizations celebrate their board level diversity with pride and encourage other organizations to follow suit"). This similar item is consistently ranked higher. This interpretation is supported by quotes from workshop discussions that specifically point to the need for more diverse voices in leadership and positions of power.

Despite the work that remains, workshop participants also point to multiple examples of how the creative economy already creates spaces and opportunities for diverse perspectives and stories to be told across Calgary, especially around cultural centres and celebrations.

Discussions of the initial three pillars identified challenges for creative talent in general (e.g., lack of access to affordable work/performance spaces, low pay, poor communication around funding opportunities, lack of networking opportunities, etc.). Workshop quotes reveal how these common struggles take on uncommon weight when issues of equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are not taken into account. This reality is also reflected in [experiment four](#) in which partners planned and programmed three artist residencies from a disabilities perspective. Although artist residencies are a well-established and long-standing practice, most do not intentionally address physical barriers to participation or offer sufficient flexibility to work around fluctuating health. This makes many residency programs inaccessible for artists with disabilities. Barriers can exist even within artistic communities:

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"I found that there is a barrier between disabled musicians and the rest of the music community. Often, we are assumed to not provide "quality work" because of our limitations, but at the same time, we are told everything we write is amazing and wonderful. We aren't given the privilege of hearing any feedback."

(Dyllan Mills-Harten, Experiment 4 Participant)

The above example points to the need to examine existing and upcoming programming carefully. This relates to an important subtheme brought up in the workshops. EDIA cannot be achieved through tick-boxes. Although lists offer a starting point, enterprises and organizations need to intentionally and critically review their internal and external processes and programs on an ongoing basis.

# Overarching Insights

The preceding sections explored themes and issues as they arose by pillar. This final section deals with issues that reach across pillars.

## Creativity Leads Us Through the Unknown

Creative talent is needed in organizations and, more broadly, within all economic areas. As Calgarians face changing social circumstances, a push toward sustainable practices, accelerating technological changes, and stiff competition for labour, there is an increased need for individuals who can manoeuvre through the unknown. This ability is at the core of creative talent, “creativity consists in devising an original way of achieving an effect that is not expressed in precise terms.”<sup>9</sup> That is, creative talent may know the intended effect, but they work without directions or instructions. Recalling experiment one, a creative approach literally allowed public performances to take place when they were largely shut down across the country owing to COVID-19. Experiment two wrestled with the complexities of digital innovation, pointing to the role creative talent can play in burgeoning or changing industries. As various economic industries seek new ways forward, creative talents can support not only identifying the change needed, but how to adapt to and thrive within those transformations.

## Diversity is Foundational

Although all four pillars offer critical areas of focus for growing a thriving creative economy, it is important to emphasize pillar four. This is not to raise it above the other pillars, rather to recognize the reality that the workshop discussions and survey responses communicated: EDIA is challenging and often implemented in haphazard and even harmful ways (i.e., tokenism). Whether it is ensuring creative hubs are accessible to all, harnessing digital power in favour of underserved groups, or cultivating the breadth of local talent, it is critical that valuing diversity is not a strategic pillar to be sought *after* a thriving creative economy is achieved. Rather, EDIA principles must be hammered into the foundation of the future. Calgary’s diversity is a strength that will enhance the impact of creativity across industries.

## Our Reputation Matters

There was a tendency in survey responses to rank items that discussed Calgary on the global stage, lower. This may reflect a greater concern for what is happening close to home. As one survey respondent said, “Creative people [...] don’t care if you’re the leading city for anything. What does it feel like to live there? How much effort does it require to attract new business? Is the creative community respected and supported? These are things we care about.” As addressed under pillar one, however, how Calgary is perceived locally and abroad influences talent retention and attraction, hence CreativeCITY’s inclusion of such measures in the strategy. This is especially important in light of some creative sectors losing ground in this area. According to the 2020 Calgary Arts Professional Survey only 37% of respondents describe Calgary’s arts and culture offerings as being of world-class calibre, down from 55% in 2017.<sup>10</sup> CreativeCITY’s reputational or branding goals aim to create the perception, based on a hard earned reality, that Calgary is a vibrant place for outside talent and business to come to and where diverse local talent and business can thrive.

## The Creative Economy is Bigger Than You Think

Workshop discussions and survey comments reveal that for some Calgarians the ‘creative economy’ remains a fairly narrow and specific economic field. CreativeCITY and partners need to actively work to dispel this misunderstanding. A narrow view of the creative economy artificially diminishes its impact and role, while a wider view, such as the Four-Sector Nesta Model, offers a more accurate understanding of the breadth of impact a thriving creative economy and its talented workers can have across the wider economy.







Photo Credit: Dana Zuk Photography  
The Starlite Room, Edmonton

# Community Engagement Results



Photo Credit: Benjamin Laird  
CCMA Off Country (2022), Lindsay Ell

# Small Experiments Summary

In Phase 2, CreativeCITY followed the progress of 'small experiments with radical intent'. Each one of these creative projects was aligned with one of the strategic pillars and touched on a different area of Calgary's local creative economy. Following is a description of each small experiment and outcomes to date.

## Experiment 1: Impact Investment

Matched with

### PILLAR 1: Embed audacious creativity into our city's DNA

#### Experiment 1 Summary: Impact investing to inspire creativity and encourage and reward entrepreneurship

The absence of live events was felt all over the city during the pandemic. As venues sat silent and COVID-19 reached another peak, audiences and performers alike were separated, each missing the inspiration and connection of live experiences. However, when creativity is truly in your DNA, changing parameters become opportunities. Creative problem solver and Calgary-born owner operator of Live Star Entertainment, Rob Czynowski, pivoted his work to present 'Hotels Live', one of the first hotel concert experiences that popped up during the pandemic.

Hotels Live was a concert experience that allowed Calgarians to safely view live entertainment from the comfort of their hotel room, along with members of their cohort. With only a few cancellations and delays, Hotels Live was able to operate relatively free from interruption from 2020 onward, despite changing restrictions that accompanied the pandemic. Calgarians again had access to live music, circus, and comedy shows.

Finding alignment with Rob and his team's creative and entrepreneurial approach, RISE UP provided a combined impact investment loan and sponsorship for a series of three New Years celebration concerts in winter 2020-21. By combining funding types, RISE UP reduced the overall financial risk to Hotels Live, while still ensuring some return on investment and creating opportunities for performers, show techs, hotel staff and audience members—all at a time when live shows, hospitality and audiences were struggling the most. RISE UP saw a return of 15% which was reinvested into other creative initiatives, both nonprofit and for-profit operations in Calgary's creative economy.

#### Key learning and takeaways:

Prior to the pandemic, creative industry entrepreneurs operating in the for-profit space had little access to funding support beyond traditional investment models. Specifically, funding support considered free from risk is typically reserved for nonprofit organizations. This funding gap became glaringly apparent early in the pandemic as live entertainment businesses were struggling, but unable to qualify for most existing funding dollars they needed to stay afloat.

CreativeCITY's combined impact investment loan and sponsorship of Hotels Live is an example of working differently, taking the broader creative economy into account. This approach recognized the importance of both nonprofit and for-profit organizations to the health of the city's creative economy ecosystem. To embed creativity into Calgary's DNA, consideration of the whole ecosystem in policies and programs is needed. In addition, the return on investment was immediately invested back into other creative initiatives, suggesting a funding model whereby loan repayments go back into a fund that becomes new loans or grants for other initiatives, with the intention of a stable fund that replenishes itself over time.

A similar, large-scale impact fund was formed in the UK, called [Arts Impact Fund](#). With a combination of public, private and charitable funding, they provided £150,000-£600,000 loans repayable over 3-5 years. Interestingly, they also included funding conditions around social impact, ensuring they supported arts and cultural organizations that contributed to positive social impact on people and communities. This relates to RISE UP's funding, which was focused on creating paid work for local performers and providing safe, live entertainment opportunities for Calgarians at a time when both of these were incredibly rare.

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## Experiment 2: #T7NFT (Treaty 7 Non-Fungible Tokens)

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Matched with

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### PILLAR 2: Incubate Creative Collisions

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#### Experiment 2 Summary: Bringing together creatives to leverage our digital capacity, encourage play, experimentation, and minimize fear of failure

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs). Cryptocurrency (Crypto). Metaverse. Ethereum and gas prices. That last one is not as obvious as it seems. NFTs saw a huge jump in popularity over the beginning of the pandemic. NF, or “non-fungible”, refers to the unique, irreplaceable nature of the tokens. Even if another NFT is created from the same digital file, blockchain technology tracks them separately, forever aware of which came first and the chain of ownership. While any digital file can become an NFT, there are artists finding financial success turning their artwork into NFTs. Like traditional art, NFTs will generate money for artists at their initial sale. Unlike traditional art, NFTs are uniquely identifiable and trackable so that, if written into the “smart contract”, an artist automatically receives a percentage each time their NFT is subsequently sold (a.k.a., NFT royalties).

For all the explanation above, there is so much more to navigating digital spaces, which is where this project took root. On the micro level, #T7NFT aimed at building the capacity of local artists in the NFT/crypto/Metaverse space by creating a low-risk entry point and providing promotional support. The primary focus was to create buzz around the featured artists in the #T7NFT art collection and build a solid foundation for the NFT community in the Treaty 7 region. From a macro view, this project explored utilizing Blockchain technology to boost the local creative economy and the artists in it.

Project partners [Cowboy Smithx](#) (community organizer, curator and producer), [Jennifer Armand](#) (entrepreneur specializing in onboarding artists into the NFT space) and [BLKWTR Creative](#) (all-in-one, in-house marketing team) combined their talents and knowledge to recruit

24 diverse artists from the Treaty 7 region for a one year period. For the majority of artists, this was their first venture into the metaverse. Artists submitted up to two works each that Armand minted into NFTs, researching sales and cryptocurrency options for the project. Onboarding costs were covered by funding from CreativeCITY, mitigating any cost to the artists and allowing them to explore a new market for their work. BLKWTR Creative produced high-quality original promotional material and built the #T7NFT website. Smithx secured several online, radio, and in-person opportunities to promote the #T7NFT artists and engage potential investors on how and why to invest in NFTs. The entire collection was also displayed in two digital galleries (Elbow Gallery and Bow Gallery) using the Spatial platform. Visitors' avatars can walk around the gallery space to enjoy the art and interact with other visitors via audio.

This particular project faced a number of challenges. Partners were constantly balancing interest in the new project alongside uncertainty and doubt triggered by cryptocurrency market volatility and even some major crypto project collapses. The in-person launch event was postponed twice as new health restrictions shifted owing to the Omicron variant, making marketing and filling seats challenging. Finally, project partners also had independent projects and business commitments, making it a challenge to find time for each other and project tasks. A major support, alongside funding, came in the form of administrative help from Bird Creatives (the project managers of CreativeCITY) consultants who provided contacts, meeting support, and a sounding board for the project partners.

## Key learning and takeaways:

To date, very few of the project NFTs have sold. Partners see this related to the continuing volatility of many cryptocurrency markets as well as a severe gap in knowledge for local NFT artists and potential investors, reflecting a need for ongoing capacity building. So far, there have been 679 views of the online Bow Gallery and 917 views of the online Elbow Gallery. Despite the low sales, this experiment has yielded rich learning for the project partners.

**Diverse leadership reaches diverse communities.** Smithx wrote some introductory text, to ground the beginning of the project:

“The Treaty 7 genesis story is the key element that connects everyone in Calgary to this initiative. The true spirit and intent of the Treaty was ratified in a sacred pipe ceremony that was facilitated by the leaders of the Blackfoot Confederacy. The spirit and intent of that ceremony was to pursue peace and harmony between the settlers, the crown, the Indigenous peoples, the land, the animals, the water, the universe and the creator (pretty amazing inception story!).”

The partners decided to make this project open to any interested artist—intentionally embracing the spirit and intent of Treaty 7. As with a lot of programs, however, it was up to the existing team to put word out and recruit artists. With Smithx at the helm of recruitment, this project reached a number of Indigenous artists who were totally unknown to the other project partners. While Armand was able to identify and approach well-known Calgary-based artists and the project’s administrative helpers suggested reaching out to the National accessArts Centre (NaAC) and the Immigrant Council for Arts Innovation (ICAI), this recruitment experience really highlighted why it is so important to have diverse voices in positions of leadership—over half the artists joined as a result of Smithx’s relationships with various communities—relationships missing from the other partners’ networks.

**The exponential impact of connections.** Through the project’s connection with CreativeCITY, #T7NFT was on the radar of the 2022 Chinook Blast winter festival event producers. Seeing the opportunity for a collaborative project, Chinook Blast hired Smithx as a guest curator, providing funds to support Smithx’s recruitment of artists and curatorial work as well as a month long display of the #T7NFT collection in Calgary’s Central Library during the winter festival. This exposure drew the attention of Inventure\$, an innovation conference in Calgary, and the University of Calgary’s Advisor for NFT Technologies, both of whom reached out to the project partners. Smithx was invited to be a panelist for a University of Calgary [community webinar](#). Smithx and Armand were invited to host an information booth and join a panel at the Inventure\$ 2022 conference. Backstage, Smithx

was interviewed for [Shift](#) by Alberta Innovates. As early collaborations gave them a heightened platform (i.e., Chinook Blast), new connections actively sought them out.

**Innovation and complex questions.** The project hit an early fork in the road around environmental concerns with NFTs. There are two methods to ensure the validity of transactions on the blockchain: proof of stake and proof of work. The latter is considered environmentally harmful for requiring extremely fast computers using significant energy. The project partners decided to go with the most popular platform for NFTs that had announced plans to change over to proof of stake in 2022. There were also a number of discussions between partners and artists attempting to decipher NFT pricing. Although NFTs are digital images of original works, the original pieces remain with the creator, complicating the pricing process and begging the question, “how is digital art valued?” Between partners, there was discussion about the metaverse as a new type of frontier and yet recognition that barriers were already present for some people (e.g., no/poor internet access, lack of computer literacy, etc.). How might #T7NFT reduce those barriers for local artists? These are comparatively tame discussions, but represent an ongoing reality—where there is innovation there are also new, complex questions arising. As one #T7NFT contributing artist, Uii Savage, describes it: “My concern is policy making and laws protecting people’s privacy, digital workers rights, and foregrounding ethics on data harvesting consent have not been thoroughly addressed because it is not a profit-oriented path.” Savage suggests a way forward, “develop a solid team of inquirers, technologists, artists, an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how to leverage the ability to develop technology in the arts that would be equitable and ethical while also profitable.” Creative talent, with the skill and ability to seek unknown solutions to novel problems, may offer very important skills in these types of discussions.

This project will continue into fall 2022 and possibly beyond as the partners continue to refine and develop their plans for the #T7NFT collection. Armand’s business was chosen as an [Alberta Catalyzer](#) for 2022 and she continues to research and consider new ways to bring the artists’ work to market, including changing sales platforms, making the NFTs available for purchase by credit card (a new development in cryptocurrency), and using a mix of “1 of 1” and runs of multiples in different price ranges.\*

\* While the online galleries are open you can click [here](#) to enter their galleries’ lobby. You may be initially greeted by a Spatial.io page asking you to join. If you continue, it should redirect you to the aforementioned lobby.

## Experiment 3: Entrepreneurship Workshops

Matched with

### PILLAR 3: Mobilize Calgary's creative capacity

#### Experiment 3 Summary: Reimagine creative economy professional development programs

In the CreativeCITY Ecosystem Report, it was shown that upwards of 67 percent of the nearly 12,000 creative economy enterprises in Calgary do not have employees—revealing a predominance of gig, freelance, and self-employed workers.<sup>11</sup> This echoes Calgary's entrepreneurial reputation, with the second-highest number per capita of small businesses (less than 50 employees) of major Canadian cities.<sup>12</sup> Over 95% of businesses in Calgary are small businesses and 65% of those small businesses have between 1 and 4 employees—reflecting a high level of self-employment.<sup>13</sup> Such a shift in workforce make-up has required corresponding shifts at the post-secondary level where programs that traditionally aim at preparing students for work as employees are now seeking ways to supplement arts and creative knowledge with entrepreneurial skills.

The AUArts' School of Continuing Education and Professional Development (SCEPD) proposed an experiment wherein funding would allow them to run a series of 1-2 day entrepreneurship workshops on topics/skills missing from traditional curriculum. These topics were identified in pertinent literature<sup>14</sup> as well as by an AUArts advisory committee consisting of external business experts, faculty, alumni, students, and SCEPD employees.

Workshop Topics:  
Grant & Proposal Writing  
Inspiring Creativity & Managing Creatives  
Introduction to Copyright  
Navigating the Art World  
Understanding and Negotiating Contracts

Through winter/spring 2022, AUArts secured industry leading professionals to present these content rich workshops at no cost to students and alumni, and at a reduced cost to the public. Workshop participants were requested to complete a pre- and post-workshop survey. The pre-survey was integrated into the registration, allowing them to collect 146 initial responses. However, attendance was a challenge, only 63 registrants attended the workshops, 40 of whom filled out the post-survey.

#### Key learning and takeaways:

AUArts worked hard to align their workshops with CreativeCITY's third pillar, organizing their results under the related pillar text. These are their findings based on the survey results (results reflect 146 responses where questions were only asked once, or they reflect 40 responses where they looked at before and after measures or post-workshop perceptions).

*Pillar 3 Description: To develop and retain Calgary's exceptional creative talent, we must work to ensure creative professionals, new or seasoned, have the knowledge, skills and resources required to succeed.*

- Of post workshop respondents, 90% 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that workshops enabled learners from a variety of backgrounds to learn new skills and that workshops provided useful information that is relevant to them now or would be in the future.
- Further, 95% of post workshop survey respondents 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that their workshop provided them skills that will enhance their employability.

*Pillar 3 Priority: Adapt educational programs to create a more dynamic workforce.*

- AUArts' workshops provided an opportunity for professionals seeking to enhance their creative potential to develop skills and knowledge. This meant providing art students hands on experience with specific business-related activities while providing non-arts students with opportunities to develop artistic and creative skills.
- The workshops focused on essential skills often overlooked in traditional training and education. Post workshop survey feedback showed over 85% of students 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that their individual workshop provided knowledge and skills that had not been covered in their previous education experiences. This indicates AUArts was able to identify topics missed for participants of various levels of academic achievement (e.g. diploma, bachelors, masters) and from numerous industries.

- AUArts confirmed their ability to design and deliver education programs that actively consider the private sector's human resource needs with 70% of post survey respondents saying they 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that their workshop expanded the skills needed in their current or desired positions of employment.
- Knowing creative skills exist across industries, workshop content was presented in a general context to keep it relevant to diverse participants; 83% of post survey respondents 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that employees in many industries would benefit from taking these workshops.
- A majority, 90%, of post workshop survey respondents 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that participating in this workshop improved their ability to contribute to an organization in a meaningful way.

*Pillar 3 Priority: Foster creativity by building programs in a way that layers career knowledge, skills building, and access to opportunities in a scaffolded approach.*

- Workshop activities presented real-world scenarios, providing students a chance to see how the specific workshop topics can and will affect their careers in various ways, while introducing knowledge, skills, and tools to overcome obstacles and create opportunities, surrounding the topic of workshops.
- The workshops exist within a program structure where these credits could be applied to other AUArts programs including Art & Business Certificates in Entrepreneurship and Management & Enterprise, as well as micro-credentials.
- 90% of post survey respondents 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' workshop activities were engaging and motivated them to pursue further learning of the topics.
- Participant survey information indicates these workshops inspire an interest in professional growth as 90% of respondents 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that the workshops encouraged them to continue to build their skill sets through similar educational programs.
- Over 80% of post survey respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that their workshop enhanced their creative skills and ability to apply them.

*Pillar 3 Priority: Embed experiential learning and arts into formal and informal education programs.*

- Workshops provided hands-on experience, team-building activities and workplace simulations to expose participants to real-world challenges regarding the specific topics of the workshops.
- Owing to continuing COVID-19 concerns most

workshops were held online. One exception, however, took place in the Esker Foundation's Inglewood gallery. For two days, students learned how exhibitions come together surrounded by the outcome of that very process. Interestingly, this workshop had the highest post-survey participation (87%) likely as a result of being held in-person and participants developed a greater connection to the topic and facilitator.

Outside of the workshops, participation was a major issue to contend with throughout the pandemic. These workshops were originally aimed at AUArts students and alumni. When AUArts opened them up to the continuing education community there was a 132% increase in total registrations with continuing education students representing 75% of actual participants. This may reflect that continuing education students were more likely to be in their careers and value these particular topics. Of the 146 registrants, only 45% attended their chosen workshop. The greatest group of absent registrants was the AUArts degree student cohort with only 15% of this group's registrants participating. The organizers believe this was due to the timing of the sessions in April and May—a particularly busy time for degree students writing and preparing for final exams. Further, external participants from the continuing education community may have found it difficult to follow through with their registration when it requires them to commit 7-hours on a Saturday. Student feedback suggests teaching these topics has value to future AUArts degree students and the continuing learning community. Having confirmed the value of these topics, AUArts will re-imagine how to deliver these workshops with a cost recovery component and deliver them again in Fall and Winter 2022.



## Experiment 4: Accessible Artist Residencies

Matched with

### PILLAR 4: Value the diversity of Calgary's creativity

#### Experiment 4 Summary: Create unique and targeted professional opportunities for diverse individuals

Guided by a disability-led model, [CAMIN](#) is a collaboration between four Canadian universities (including the University of Calgary) and a Montreal-based not-for-profit organization that specializes in accessible musical instrument design. Combining music, education, technology, and research, CAMIN's core goals are to:

- Make accessible musical instruments
- Mentor disability-led music-making communities
- Manifest disability perspectives

Very intentionally, nondisabled members and members with disabilities strive to work from disability perspectives, rather than trying to adapt people to the ableist infrastructures of music.

For their small experiment, the Calgary chapter of CAMIN proposed an artist in residence program that launched a pilot of three short-term residencies (2-3 months). They had identified a need for artist residencies that were inclusive of artists with disabilities. This initiative was designed to create professional development pathways for artists with disabilities at different stages of their careers by providing the opportunity, time, support, and budget needed to develop an artistic project in collaboration with the CAMIN team.

The CAMIN Calgary Artist Residency Program supported three artists: [Dyllan Mills-Harten](#) (Calgary-based artist), [Chandra Melting Tallow](#) (B.C. based artist with ancestral roots in the Siksika Nation), and [Kathy Austin](#) (Calgary-based artist). All artists had support from the University of Calgary based CAMIN team and some additional support from the National accessArts Centre (NaAC). Mills-Harten composed a multimedia piece for orchestra themed on celebrity ("I Wanna Be Famous"), Melting Tallow created a synth-based song that tells the story of her great, great, great, grandmother ("Isolde"), and Austin created three sound art and poetry works ("Alphabetical Nonsensical," "Spin Cycle," and "Untitled"). The works produced in the residencies were premiered on February 26, 2022 at the CAMIN Artist Residency Showcase, hosted by the University of Calgary via Zoom.

#### Key learning and takeaways:

In consultation with CreativeCITY, experimenters devised a method for assessing this residency program. First, they [interviewed the artists](#) to better understand their respective relationships with the broader performing arts community as persons with disabilities. Second, each artist responded to a pre-program survey followed by an exit interview at the residency's end.

Artists rated their ability to gain work in their creative field from fair to very poor. All three said they had never encountered this type of opportunity previously. They all described various barriers to growing their careers. One artist was unable to apply to the University of Calgary School of Music because of the physical requirements of the audition process. One artist with visual impairments described attending a drawing class in which the instructor expected her to draw like sighted students. One artist pointed out the difficulties of playing shows and being on tour with a physical disability. Two of them pointed to the need for connection and networking opportunities. As one artist described, "it can be very isolating, especially with chronic illness. It's kind of hard to have natural ways of meeting each other." For the two Calgary-based artists, connecting with local organizations NaAC and CAMIN has been hugely impactful in terms of opening opportunities and expanding their networks. These two organizations are unique in their intentional work within the disability arts field. Taken together, these experiences point to the importance of reviewing existing and upcoming creative programs/spaces/structures with an equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility lens, if they are to develop the fullness of Calgary's creative talent.

Overall, the surveys and interview responses show that all artists were appreciative of this program and generally had a positive experience. Their suggestions for improvement included increased funding to support longer and/or more in-depth residencies and improved facilitation of social and networking opportunities.

There were 20 attendees on zoom for the final showcase. It is hard to determine if this is lack of interest from the wider community, zoom fatigue caused by the pandemic (as the February showcase would have coincided with another spike in COVID-19 cases throughout the city of Calgary, or even the challenge of effectively promoting the online event.





Photo Credit: Leslie Cyrynowski, LC Photography  
Hotel Balconies, courtesy of Hotels Live



Photo Credit: Samantha Mendoza  
Beakerhead (2022)



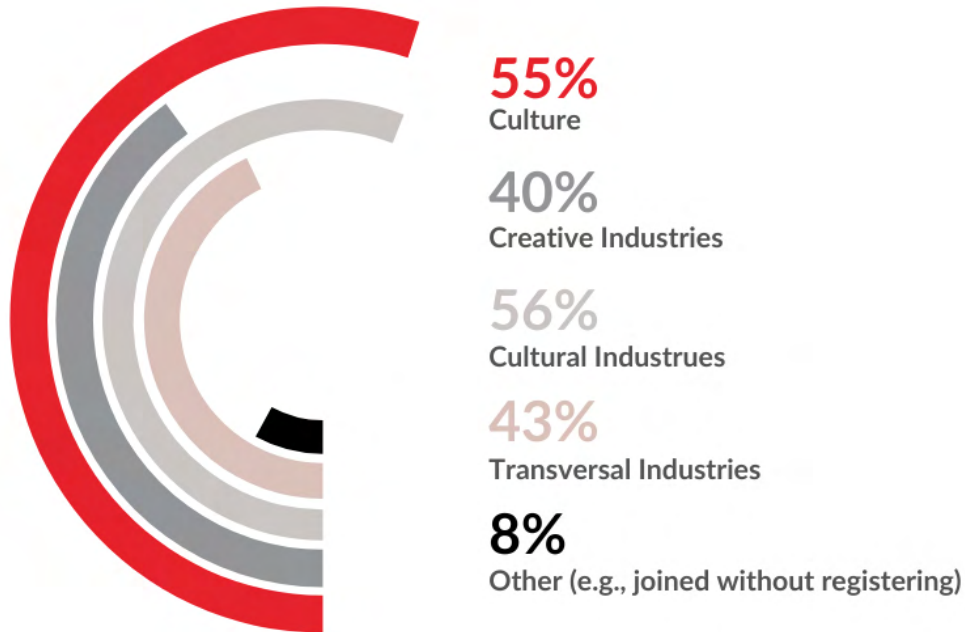
Photo Credit: Neil Zeller  
Chinook Blast (2022), Courtesy of Tourism Calgary

# CreativeCITY Workshops Summary

## WORKSHOPS OVERVIEW

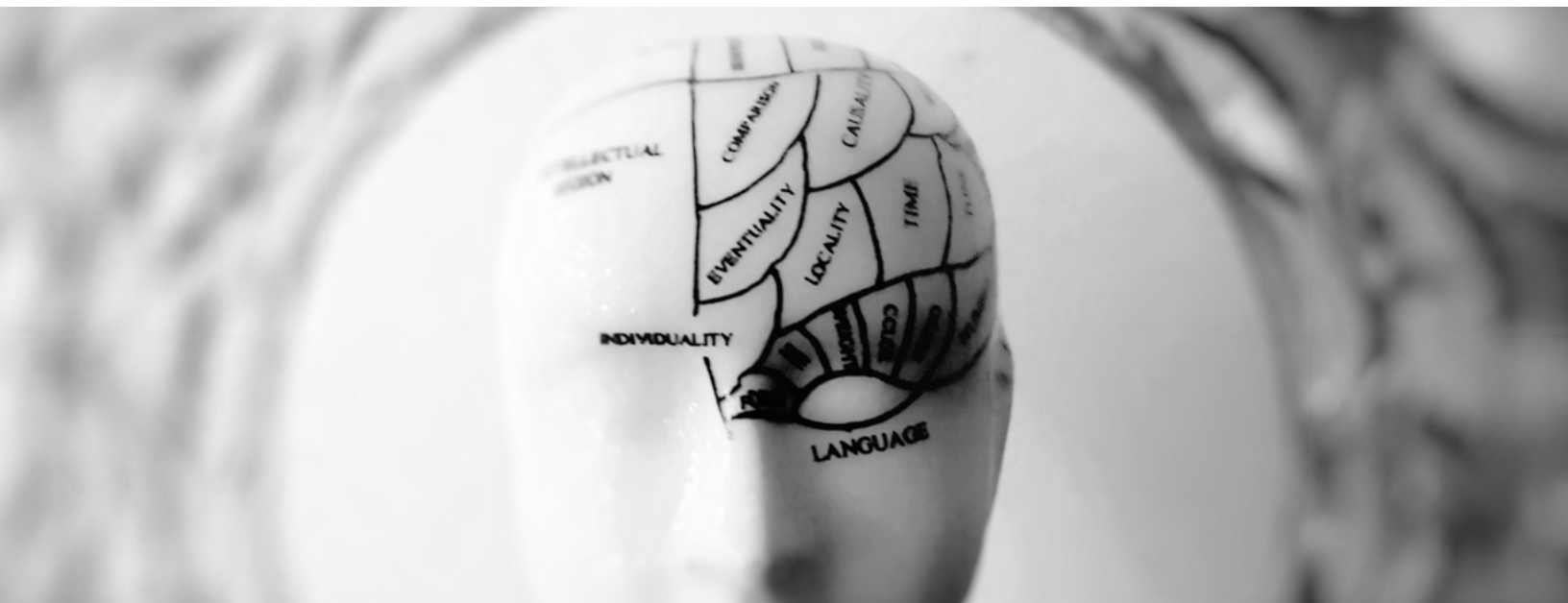
From February to June 2022, CreativeCITY hosted seven workshops led by Bird Creatives in partnership with Mount Royal University's CityXLab. There were 132 individual participants.

Participants indicated what creative sectors apply to their lives:



These workshops aimed to surface new areas of possibility and identify areas in need of refinement within the proposed strategic pillars. The workshops targeted various areas of the creative economy, with at least one workshop for each of the four sectors in the Four-Sector Nesta Model. Each workshop had a champion who invited a diverse group of experts and leaders to participate in a panel discussion to spur the conversation of all participants that followed in breakout rooms.

\* Participants could choose all that applied so the total equals more than 100%.



## TARGETED CREATIVE ECONOMY COMMUNITIES<sup>1</sup>

<b>Arts</b> (Culture)	<b>Cultural Tourism</b> (Transversal)	<b>Creative Education</b> (Transversal)	<b>Digital</b> (Transversal and Cultural Industries)	<b>Makers</b> (Creative Industries and Cultural Industries)	<b>Film</b> (Cultural Industries)	<b>Music</b> (Cultural Industries)
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### CHAMPIONS

<b>Alex Sarian</b> President & CEO of Arts Commons	<b>Cassandra McAuley</b> Tourism Strategy and Destination Development Executive	<b>Leah Naicken</b> AUArts Student and Graphic Design Consultant	<b>Meghan Donohoe</b> Associate Director of Digital Transformation at SAIT	<b>Maria Elena Hoover</b> Co-founder and Event director of MakeFashion & Co-founder of Fuse33 Makerspace	<b>Luke Azevedo</b> Vice President Creative Industries, Operations and Film Commissioner for CED	<b>Lisa Jacobs</b> Musician & Music Therapist
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### PANELISTS

<b>Haema Sivanesan</b> Chief Curator at Glenbow Museum	<b>Lanre Ajayi</b> Multidisciplinary Artist, Artistic & Creative Director of Ethnik Festivals Association	<b>Brad Mahon</b> Dean, Faculty of Continuing Education at Mount Royal University	<b>Danielle Gifford</b> Senior Manager at Applied Artificial Intelligence Lab, AltaML	<b>Fredy Rivas</b> Director and Co-Founder of SpanicArts & Multidisciplinary Artist	<b>Julian Black Antelope</b> Actor, Writer, Director & Producer	<b>Beni Johnson</b> Entrepreneur, Artist & Creative Consultant
<b>Jae Stirling</b> Artist	<b>Mathew Stone</b> Co-Founder of Stone-Olafson	<b>Cristina Lanz</b> Theatre School Coordinator at StoryBook Theatre Society	<b>Jim Gibson</b> Chief Catalyst at SAIT	<b>Paula Timm</b> Visual Artist, Facilitator & Community Builder	<b>Tom Cox</b> Executive Producer and Managing Partner at SEVEN24 Films	<b>Kate Stevens</b> Musician & Radio Host
<b>Maya Choldin</b> Executive Director at Theatre Calgary	<b>Sol Zia</b> Executive Director of the Calgary Hotel Association	<b>Ryan Von Hagen</b> Programming Director at Quickdraw Animation Society & Sessional Instructor at Alberta University of the Arts	<b>Neeraj Gupta</b> Chief Strategy Officer at Attabotics & Angel Investor			<b>Tricia Edwards</b> Freelance Musician and Secretary-Treasurer of the Calgary Musicians Association
			<b>Uii Savage</b> Emerging Artist & Writer			

<sup>1</sup> based on the Four-Sector Nesta Model

After the panel discussion, participants were split into breakout rooms of 3-7 people where they were asked five questions:

- Does this plan fit your vision for a creative Calgary in 2030? Why or why not?
- What should we amplify that we're already touching on?
- What should change in or disappear from these pillars?
- What in these pillars resonates with you?
- What are we missing from these pillars?

All breakout rooms were recorded. Transcripts and written feedback were reviewed by research assistants seeking salient quotes that answered the above questions. Initial analysis proved challenging as there were such diverse points made under each question. A second round of analysis was conducted using an inductive approach in which common themes were identified as the data was reviewed in detail, with themes developing iteratively as more data was reviewed. This identified themes that elicited greater conversation and points repeated across breakout rooms, workshops, and creative sectors. Of the 370 quotes\* pulled, they fell into eight main themes. The themes below include a count of related quotes to offer a sense of how many quotes helped flesh out the creation of individual themes. This is not an indication of importance nor order of priority.

\* Quotes ranged from single sentences up to multiple paragraphs. Quotes that touched on multiple themes were counted and incorporated into each theme to which they applied.

## DISCUSSION THEMES

---

# 1

### Appreciate the Impacts of the Creative Economy

(69 Related Quotes)

“

that book that you read, that you enjoy, [...] that TV show that you watch and enjoy, [...] the house that you live in, you know, the clothes that you wear on your back, the car that you drive, someone actually had to create that and design that.

(Digital Workshop Participant)

”

These quotes share a common thread around getting Calgarians (both people working inside and outside creative occupations) to appreciate and understand both the creative economy's current contributions and its future potential. They speak of how creative endeavours impact many other economic areas—drawing internal and external visitors into Calgary, driving business and activities in the spaces around events, and bringing beauty and a sense of belonging to local neighbourhoods. Creative education and experiences build skills valuable across economic areas (e.g., creative problem solving in tech, new perspective taking in education, promoting honest self-expression in mental health) while also developing spaces and experiences that make people want to stay in Calgary.

“

we were looking at how to best create large software solutions, we would look for the absence of things, taking inspiration from jazz and other things where you don't necessarily look at what was done, you look at what isn't there yet.

(Digital Workshop Participant)

”



# 2

## Audience Activation

(54 Related Quotes)

In speaking of audiences or customers, quotes point to the generally untapped market in Calgary's suburbs. They see a need to make it easier to travel to the core as well as push programming and performances out into the suburbs.

“

One thing that I wrestle with as well is I think there's a real disconnect between the core and the burbs in terms of the audience awareness. There's many Calgarians that are clueless about how cool the scope of cultural activities are that are taking place in our city.

(Tourism Workshop Participant)

”

Quotes speak of developing audiences starting in K-12, where exposure to creativity can spark interest and passion in creativity, even for students who do not pursue creative careers. A small number mention the challenge of promoting/marketing and successfully getting information to potential audience members, but saw existing networks and spaces as helpful (e.g., via community associations).

# 3

## Choosing Abundance

(80 Related Quotes)

“

we can share knowledge and share resources in non-extractive ways, in ways that are abundant and sort of amplifying for everyone.

(Arts Workshop Participant)

”

Despite the apparent funding scarcity and competition in many creative fields, a large portion of quotes reflect the positive value of collaboration and sharing. Instead of seeking to protect their own resources, participants argue that the creative ecosystem has more when information (e.g., about events, programs, jobs, projects, funding, etc.), contacts, tools, and knowledge (e.g., skills, how to navigate the creative economy in Calgary, etc.) are shared—creating abundance. Collaboration and coordination between creative economy players (and with partners outside the creative economy) is suggested as the means to support sharing across the ecosystem. Twelve quotes specify mentorship as a method for knowledge and skill transfer between new and more experienced artists.

# 4

## Creative Collisions

(61 Related Quotes)

A majority of quotes describe creative hubs as the ideal infrastructure for creative collisions. These are generally understood as multi-disciplinary, multi-organizational, physical spaces (e.g., cSpace, Fuse33, Platform Innovation Centre) where connection and collaboration can occur organically and spontaneously between creative talent, but also with businesses and the general public. Many speak to personal positive experiences within creative hubs as ideal spaces for networking, finding resources and addressing the issue of siloing within the creative economy.

“

I was one of the first tenants in [cSPACE]. And I had a space you know, based on sharing my studio space with others doing workshops and events and team building and all the things and so that was an amazing intersection of disciplines and meeting the public as well as, you know, having my own platform [...] it's carried me for sure, into where I am at in this stage of my career.

(Makers Workshop Participant)

”



# 5

## Cultivating and Retaining Creative Talent

(109 Related Quotes)

Although not the same, cultivating and retaining are closely related. The programs, practices and opportunities that help develop new talent are in line with those needed to help talent grow their skills, audience, and careers over the long term—all reasons for creative talent to stay in Calgary. Plus, as a few participants note, there is a great lifestyle available in Calgary.

With 37 quotes, creativity in schools is a popular topic in terms of cultivation. Speaking about primary to secondary, the focus is on exposure to creativity building curiosity and appreciation for creativity later in life, while helping children develop valuable skills now. In terms of creative education at the post-secondary level, the three sub-themes arising were: provide programming that attracts students, connect graduates to employment opportunities (e.g., internships) and show that creative skills are transferable skills.

In the context of talent cultivation, quotes argue that where the creative economy fails to address issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, it leaves entire swathes of creative talent untapped and creates a barrier-laden environment for the diverse talent already present.

There is particular attention on growth industries (i.e., film), as the increased business leads to more jobs and opportunities which, in turn, draws more people to the field and bolsters the capabilities of the industry as a whole. In particular, there is a call for better communication about existing career opportunities so that more talent see staying in Calgary as an option.

“

there's opportunity, it's amazing how things start to happen, you know, facilities get made, people get jobs, experience happens, talent grows.

(Film & Broadcast Workshop Participant)

”

In discussing infrastructure for cultivating and retaining talent, the focus is on the availability of rehearsal, work, and performance spaces. In particular, the affordability and variety of said spaces. Participants want spaces to meet the need of the creative economy while also reflecting their hopes for it: spaces for a diverse collection of creatives and creative pursuits at various career levels to practice, showcase, and monetize their work.

“

That, to me is how you really retain people because if you can't find your venue in a city, then you go to another city.

(Music Workshop Participant)

”

# 6

## Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility & Creativity (73 Related Quotes)

Quotes address a variety of personal diversities (e.g., sexual, ethnic, cultural, age, gender, abilities, socioeconomic status, etc.) as well as creative diversity in the form of artistic disciplines and genres. They give examples of how creative and cultural programs can be catalysts for compassion, empathy, and understanding as they expose communities to diverse perspectives and stories. In general, it was agreed that the onus for welcoming diversity into creative spaces is on the organizations and individuals in power—the burden of overcoming additional hurdles to enter the creative economy should not fall on groups that experience marginalization. Organizations that, possibly unintentionally, exclude entire groups as artists, performers, or creatives, have not asked “Who is not at our table and how are we keeping them away?” This same question should be applied to the creative ecosystem as a whole.

“

I also hear sometimes, like, hey, we did put a call out for people, but they didn't show up. It's like, well, if no one that looks like them is doing the call out, how do they feel comfortable coming to you?

(Music Workshop Participant)

”

# 7

## Making A Living (60 Related Quotes)

A number of participants point to viable creative occupations in film, music, and technology. A majority, however, spoke to challenges to earning a living, mostly reflecting the perspective of performers/individual and independent entrepreneurs. The most common challenges: for the self-employed, a lot of time and labour can go unpaid; for venues, it can be difficult to pay artists fair rates and still make a profit (especially notable in COVID-19 with smaller audiences); for both, it's a challenge to find grant opportunities or funding streams to support their activities when times are tough.

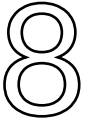
“

I think we're seeing a lot of times with the music scene connecting with the film scene right now we have a huge, huge film scene that's coming into Calgary, same thing with like the gaming industry [...] we're seeing that you can, your song can get picked up on a Netflix show, and you can be living off your mailbox. And that's so so nice to see that that's an actual viable career option now.

(Music Workshop Participant)

”





## Playing Well with Others

(46 Related Quotes)

These quotes focus on how participants see other economic sectors or partners influencing the creative economy. The most frequent mentions were food and beverage businesses, the City of Calgary, and technology and innovation. Food and beverage businesses are, unsurprisingly, part of a symbiotic partnership, often forming formal and informal venues and providing important performance opportunities for local artists. At the city level, quotes touch on how municipal planning impacts the creative economy. For example, transit hours and routes play a huge role in accessibility for late night event goers as well as the workers who keep those places open. Technology and innovation are most often described as an important tool connecting creative enterprises with broader audiences, for working remotely, and allowing performers to elevate shows and events. A few quotes break down the distinction between the creative economy and the digital realm—tech and innovation employ a lot of creative talent, produce a lot of creative products and form an important part of the creative economy.

“

digital is an important art form that somehow because of Calgary's history, somehow isn't perceived as part of the creative economy.

(Education Workshop Participant)

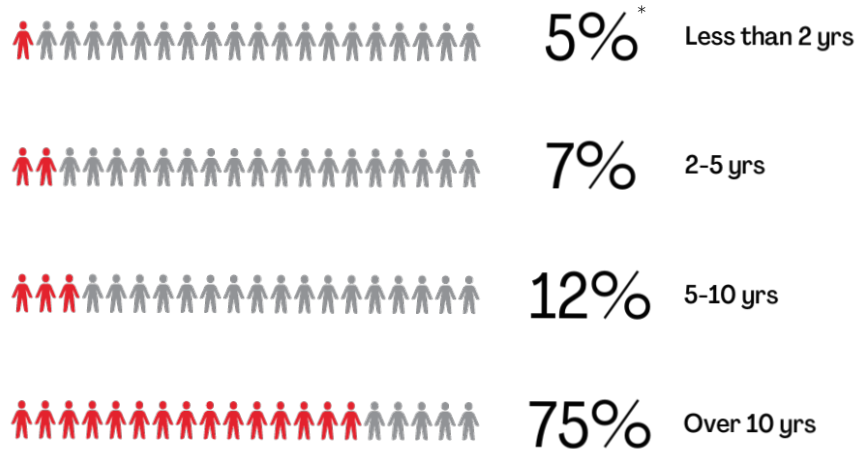
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# Survey Results Summary

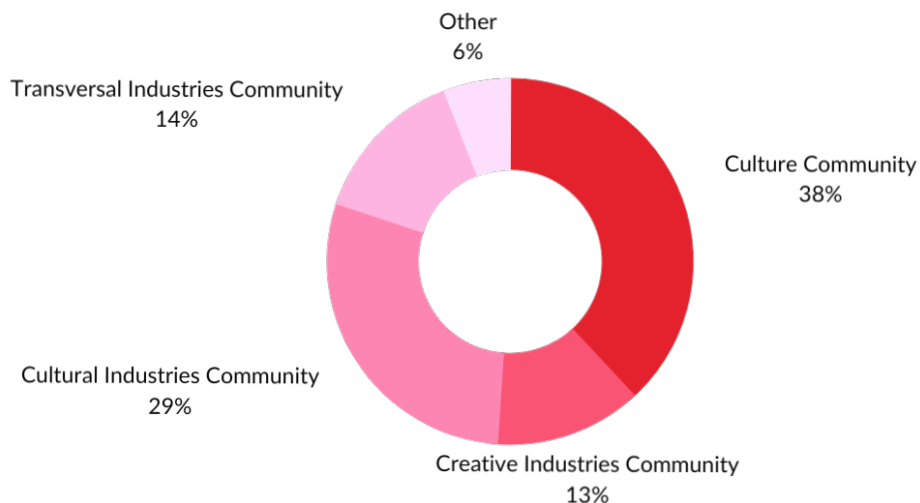
From May 1–August 30, 2022 a survey aimed at Calgary’s wider creative community received 300 responses.

## RESPONDENTS HAVE LIVED IN, OR BEEN STRONGLY CONNECTED TO, THE CALGARY AREA FOR...



Findings from the survey represent the thoughts of long-term Calgarians with a rich history in the community. This shapes the survey results as the voices of new Calgarians are relatively underrepresented.

## RESPONDENTS ARE MEMBERS OF CALGARY’S...



Higher participation from culture and cultural industries may reflect the CreativeCITY team’s numerous personal connections and active networks in those sectors (i.e., Arts Commons, Calgary Economic Development, Calgary Arts Development, etc.). Those survey invitations may have been taken more seriously or more likely distributed further than the “cold” invitations sent to pertinent, but new contacts.

\* Rounded to the nearest whole number.

## WHAT DO CALGARIANS IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY FEEL ABOUT THEIR CURRENT CREATIVE CITY?

A total of **76% of respondents “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that Calgary has a thriving creative community.** This is likely due to the fact that those sampled self-identify as being part of Calgary’s creative community, but it is nonetheless encouraging. Respondents who felt Calgary does not have a thriving creative community (“somewhat disagree” or “strongly disagree”), represent 13%.

76%

34%

Nearly half of the Calgarians surveyed “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” that Calgary offers sufficient opportunities for emerging artists and creative community members (42%). Interestingly, 25% of respondents were neutral on this question, despite their active participation in the creative economy. Given the challenges faced by the creative and cultural communities of any city, especially during the pandemic, it is not surprising to see that **34% of respondents felt that there are not enough opportunities available for their success.**

The overwhelming majority (**91% of respondents “strongly agree” that creativity is an important or essential component of a thriving community** (another 5% somewhat agree). This is unsurprising given this survey targeted those most invested in creativity and creative work, and their heartfelt belief that this is important for a thriving community reflects their values and practices. A very slim 2% of respondents “somewhat disagree” or “strongly disagree” with creativity’s importance.

91%

92%

Many respondents “strongly agree” (72%) or “somewhat agree” (20%) that the City **should be investing more to provide increased opportunities for the creative community.** Again, this likely reflects that such opportunities would be of benefit to respondents. This also indicates a strong mandate for Calgary Arts Development, Calgary Economic Development, CreativeCITY and others to advocate for increased funding. There were also high levels of support from respondents for City initiatives focused on creativity and the creative economy. Again, only a very slim 3% of respondents “somewhat disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the City investing more in increased opportunities for creativity.

## RANKING EXERCISE

Goals, priorities and “what change may look like” statements identified for each strategic pillar in the CreativeCITY Ecosystem Report were presented to survey respondents to rank according to their perceived order of importance. A list of ten was presented for each pillar.

Below, CreativeCITY shares those items that were ranked in either the top three spots or bottom three spots by over 50% of respondents, offering a sense of where the creative winds are blowing and how strongly. Items consistently ranked higher reveal what aspects of the four pillar framework garner local buy-in and items consistently ranked lower indicate what needs changing or greater context to be meaningful. Greater context is provided in the Findings Integration section ([p. 16](#)).

ITEMS RANKED IN THE <b>TOP</b> THREE POSITIONS BY OVER 50% OF RESPONDENTS		
Creative industries have well established connections with other industries	66% ranked this in their top three (17% ranked this as #1)	<b>Pillar 2</b>
Calgary is resilient and future-proof	51% ranked this in their top three (31% ranked this as #1)	<b>Pillar 2</b>
The Calgary region leads Canada in the integration of arts and experiential learning into our K-12 classrooms	51% ranked this in their top three (19% ranked this as #1)	<b>Pillar 3</b>
Calgary's creative economy workforce is representative of the population	58% ranked this in their top three (29% ranked this as #1)	<b>Pillar 4</b>
Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are prioritized and embedded into creative economy workplaces and programming	54% ranked this in their top three (15% ranked this as #1)	<b>Pillar 4</b>
ITEMS RANKED IN THE <b>BOTTOM</b> THREE POSITIONS BY OVER 50% OF RESPONDENTS		
Calgary is recognized as a global leader for its sustained commitment to collaboration	57% ranked this in the bottom three (18% ranked this as #10)	<b>Pillar 2</b>
We leverage our digital capacity to connect and strengthen Calgary's creative economy	52% ranked this in the bottom three (12% ranked this as #10)	<b>Pillar 2</b>
Calgary leads Canada in creative economy start-ups per capita	52% ranked this in the bottom three (30% ranked this as #10)	<b>Pillar 2</b>
The private sector's human resource needs are actively considered in education from primary to post-secondary	76% ranked this in their bottom three (62% ranked this as #10)	<b>Pillar 3</b>
Calgary attracts creatives from all over the world.	65% ranked this in their bottom three (12% ranked this as #10)	<b>Pillar 4</b>
Calgary is known world-wide for its uniqueness and authenticity	57% ranked this in their bottom three (28% ranked this as #10)	<b>Pillar 4</b>

## SURVEY INSIGHTS

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Although none of the pillar one items were ranked in the top three or bottom three positions by more than 50% of participants, those that proved least popular all addressed specific areas of the creative economy (e.g., film and music). This appears to align with the above table as well in that pillar items that mention specific aspects of the creative economy (e.g., private sector, digital capacity, start-ups) show up frequently in the bottom three positions. CreativeCITY interprets this, in part, as concern among respondents that the strategic framework may leave some creative sectors behind.

Priorities and goals that speak to Calgary on the world stage were generally ranked lower. This may reflect greater concern for what is happening close to home. As one survey respondent commented, “Creative people [...] don’t care if you’re the leading city for anything. What does it feel like to live there? How much effort does it require to attract new business? Is the creative community respected and supported? These are things we care about.”



Photo Credit: Marc Tran  
Celebrating Life (2022), Vykrutas Ukrainian Dance Ensemble



Photo Credit: Marc Tran  
Celebrating Life (2022), Paloma Negra

There were five items under pillar two that identified collaboration/coordination and working together. The fact that “Calgary is recognized as a global leader for its sustained commitment to collaboration” was ranked in the bottom three positions by 57% of respondents seems the result of oversaturation given that the other related items ranked higher.

“Creative industries have well established connections with other industries” was not only ranked in the top three positions by 66% of respondents, it is also the only item that was never ranked at #10.

# Conclusion

Bringing together the findings from phase one and phase two, phase three is tentatively complete with the publication of this Community Engagement Summary and the CreativeCITY Strategic Guidebook. Between the CreativeCITY steering committee, small experiments, community workshop participants and survey respondents, over 500 Calgarians within the creative economy contributed their insights, experiences and energy to this process and plan. While feedback on the initial proposed strategic framework was incredibly supportive, the engagement allowed for critical counterpoints and minority perspectives to be brought up, strengthening the final framework and guidebook.

It is hoped the Strategic Guidebook will be used in conversation with city, provincial, and federal partners by Calgary Arts Development, Calgary Economic Development and others looking to grow Calgary's creative economy. It can also form the basis for new relationships between existing creative economy players—a basis for alignment of intentions, purposes and activities. It provides formal recommendations for actions, policies, and community and industry interventions to support human, environmental, social and economic prosperity through the creative economy

We invite you to explore the actions suggested by our participants in the CreativeCITY Prosperity through the Creative Economy Strategic Guidebook.



Photo Credit: Peter Stone  
TD Play the Parks (2022), Tzadeka

# Endnotes

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# Credits

## Steering Committee

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Dr. David Finch – *Mount Royal University*

Luke Azevedo – *Calgary Economic Development*

Kaley Beisiegel – *Bird Creatives*

Dr. Daniel Doz – *Alberta University of the Arts*

Lisa Jacobs – *Musician, Certified Music Therapist*

Russell Broom – *Producer, Composer, Musician*

Alice Lam – *Vollyapp.com*

Alex Sarian – *Arts Commons*

Evan Hu – *AltoSante, Digital Health Venture Studio*

Maria Elena Hoover – *MakeFashion, Fuse33 Makerspace*

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Another big thank you to all our generous champions and panelists who volunteered to make our workshops engaging and enlightening. See their names again on [page 30](#). Finally, thanks to Arts Commons, Calgary Folk Fest, One Yellow Rabbit, and Stampede Entertainment for sharing some sweet prizes for our survey participants. The many forms of support our work has received from our creative community is incredible and it only makes us more hopeful about what the future holds for Calgary's creative economy.