

SOCIAL POLICY

COLLABORATIVE

Mayor Jyoti Gondek
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB T2P 2M5
themayor@calgary.ca

December 2nd, 2021

Re: An Indigenous Gathering Place for Calgary

Dear Mayor Gondek,

The Social Policy Collaborative is a group of community organizations committed to working together to inform the development of public policy that improves the economic and social wellbeing of Albertans. We believe Calgary needs an Indigenous Gathering Place (IGP) to showcase and reaffirm the continued presence and value of Indigenous culture in Calgary, in the heart of Treaty 7 Territory. The IGP is supported by 16 member organizations including: The Calgary Counselling Centre, The Calgary Food Bank, Carya Society of Calgary, Catholic Family Service, CUPS, The University of Calgary, Momentum, United Way of Calgary and Area, Vibrant Communities Calgary, The Women's Centre of Calgary, YW Calgary, The Alex, Inn From The Cold, Calgary Drop In Centre, Trellis, and McMan.

Although many of us provide vital cultural supports and programming to Indigenous peoples, many of these programs are targeted towards individuals who require other supports and so are not accessible by all. Many Elders and knowledge keepers in our city are challenged to find appropriate spaces large enough for ceremonies and other cultural activities that require large gatherings. Many of us serve vulnerable populations and we know that struggles faced by urban Indigenous People who have left their home communities are exacerbated because they feel far away from their families and support networks. The IGP would provide a place for these individuals to reconnect or continue to connect with their Indigenous heritage in a safe and welcoming environment. The IGP will address many gaps and reduce pressure in the social service sector, while providing the necessary space to protect traditional Indigenous practices, languages, Elders' wisdom, and oral and written teachings. The Indigenous Gathering Place is more than just a building, it's a physical expression of reconciliation, and a place to bring people together to learn about the history of Calgary in a more authentic way, directly from Indigenous Peoples.

For further information, visit <https://indigenousgatheringplace.ca/>. We are hopeful that your leadership and commitment to reconciliation will make an Indigenous Gathering Place a reality.

On behalf of Calgary's Social Policy Collaborative,



Meaghon Reid,
Executive Director, Vibrant Communities Calgary



Joy Bowen-Eyre,
Executive Director, The Alex

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