



FEDERATION OF
CALGARY COMMUNITIES

Placemaking Playbook

A guide to inspire placemaking
projects that shape public
spaces and build community.

goodplaces.calgarycommunities.com

Updated - Fall 2025

About Placemaking

“Placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value.” - *Project for Public Spaces, 2007*

Collaboration with community

Through partnership,
co-creation, and
celebration of identity.



Physical transformation of public spaces

like adding seating,
recreation, or public art.



Programming that keeps them active

such as events and
community gatherings.



What is Good Places Project?

Good Places Project, a program of the Federation of Calgary Communities, is for community leaders who are transforming Calgary’s neighbourhoods by bringing programs, projects, and spaces to life through placemaking. This program, funded by the City of Calgary, is launching a brand new grants program of \$400k a year, along with a support network for community innovators like you to turn bold ideas into projects that deliver long-term change for your neighbourhood.

You’ll be brought together in a supportive network, with expert mentorship, funding, peer-learning opportunities, workshops, and the chance to connect with a growing movement of inspirational community leaders across our city.

This playbook provides ideas and inspiration for placemaking projects. Please note that certain projects may require permitting or special permissions. We encourage you to reach out and discuss project ideas before applying.

About Us

We are community capacity builders!

The Federation of Calgary Communities builds the capacity of volunteer-led non-profits in Calgary and surrounding area by supporting passionate people who give back to their community, no matter the cause. Through our growing network of community-based organizations, we support our members' work in a variety of sectors, including arts, culture, education, environment, sports, recreation, and social services.



Murals & Public Art

Bring vibrancy into our public spaces.

Team up with local artists and creatives to create public art that reflects identity and builds a sense of belonging.



Deer Run CA



Ramsay CA



Renfrew CA



Montgomery BIA

Ideas



- Installations
- Fence Art
- Wall Murals
- Mini-galleries

Wayfinding

Help people navigate safely and efficiently.

Design creative signs, maps, and markers that guide visitors while celebrating local stories, landmarks, and character.



Ranchlands CA



Sustainable Calgary



City Hall



Bonavista Downs CA

Ideas

- Directions
- Information
- Painted Pathways
- Maps
- Landmarks

Greening

Enliven public spaces with nature.

Add trees, plants, and gardens to public spaces to make them more welcoming and connected to the environment.



Crescent Heights



Crossroads



Cliff-Bungalow Mission



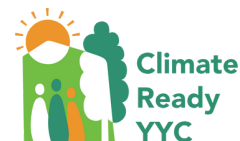
Sunalta



Falconridge

Ideas

- Community Garden
- Pots & Planters
- Planting trees
- Naturalization



Greening projects may also qualify for funding from ClimateReadyYYC Grant Program! Find out more on the grants tab of our website: calgarycommunities.com

Recreation



Get people moving and connecting outdoors.

Create fun and inclusive spaces for play, fitness, and social activity that bring neighbours together and energize public spaces.



Killarney



Bonavista Downs



Cochrane



Meadowlark Park



Killarney-Glengarry



Bridgeland

Ideas



- Basketball
- Skate/Bike park
- Play Areas
- Table games
- Lawn games
- Disc/Mini Golf

Winter Recreation

Embrace the season and make cold days come alive.

Transform snowy spaces into places for skating, sledding, fireside gatherings, and creative winter fun that keeps your community active year-round.



Acadia



Hillhurst



Montgomery

Ideas

- Ice Rinks
- Non-permanent lighting
- Firepits
- Croki-curl (Crokinole + Curling)

Small Structures



Add charm and function to everyday places.

Design small-scale features that provide comfort, spark curiosity, and make shared spaces more welcoming and useful for everyone.



Beltline



Renfrew



Currie



Winston Heights - Mountview

Ideas



- Shades Structures
- Little Free Library
- Sheds/Pantries
- Message Boards

*most small structures will require a development permit (DP), and must be located on a license of occupation (LOC). See index (pages 14-19) for more information.

Seating



Create places for people to pause and connect.

Thoughtfully placed seating invites rest, conversation, and a stronger sense of community in public spaces.



Killarney



Abbeydale



Crescent Heights BIA



Shawnee Evergreen



Killarney-Glengarry

Ideas



- Benches and Chairs
- Picnic Tables
- Parklets
- Gathering spaces

Recurring Programs



Keep public spaces lively all year long.

Regular events and activities build routine, connection, and anticipation—turning public spaces into beloved community gathering places and offering opportunities to learn new skills.



Hillhurst-Sunnyside



Parkdale



Mahogany



Dalhousie

Ideas



- Movies in the Park
- Markets
- Clubs
- Tournaments
- Classes & Workshops

Events

Celebrate community and spark joy together.

Host engaging activities that bring neighbours out to play, explore, and connect, creating memorable experiences in shared spaces.



Millican Ogden



Braeside



Tuxedo Park



Kincora

Ideas

- Soap Box Derby
- Bike Parade
- Scavenger Hunts
- Cultural Events

Music & Performance



Fill public spaces with rhythm and energy.

Encourage live performances that bring people together, spark joy, and create memorable moments in your neighbourhood.



Banff Trail



Downtown Core



The Confluence



Eau Claire

Ideas



- Dance performances
- Jam Sessions/Open Mics
- Outdoor concerts
- Comedy Shows
- Busking
- Plays & Theatre

Mobility & Transportation

Make getting around safe, easy, and enjoyable.

Enhance streets and pathways to support walking, cycling, and other active modes, while creating calmer, more connected neighbourhoods.



Vancouver



Connaught



Millican Ogden



Parkdale

Ideas

- Paint the pavement
- Block Parties
- Parklets
- Traffic Calming



Mobility projects also qualify for funding from ActivateYYC Grant Program!
Find out more on the grants tab of our website: calgarycommunities.com

Key Players

Community Association (CA)

A volunteer-run non-profit organization incorporated under the Laws of Alberta, representing the interests of residents of a specific geographic community, and recognized by the City of Calgary.

Social Rec Organization (SRO)

A social recreation organization is a community group, usually volunteer-led, that provides opportunities for residents to participate in social, cultural, or recreational activities.

Business Improvement Area (BIA)

A defined district where businesses collaborate to improve and promote their area, funded through a levy collected by The City of Calgary on behalf of the BIA. The goal is to enhance vibrancy, beautify streetscapes, and support local economic activity.

Non-Profit

A group that operates for purposes other than generating profit for its members. Its revenues must be used to support its objectives - such as charitable, educational, recreational, or community purposes - rather than distributed to individuals. Most non-profits in Alberta are incorporated under the Societies Act.

Charity

In Canada, a charity is an organization officially registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) that operates exclusively for charitable purposes — such as the relief of poverty, advancement of education, advancement of religion, or other purposes beneficial to the community. Registered charities must use their resources for these purposes and can issue official donation receipts for income tax purposes.

Board

The governing body legally responsible for overseeing the organization's mission, finances, and strategic direction. The board ensures accountability, approves major decisions and budgets, and supports the executive or staff in achieving the organization's charitable or community objectives.

Committee

A group of individuals appointed or elected by a board or organization to focus on a specific task, project, or area of work. Committees provide recommendations, carry out research, or manage activities, but typically do not have the full decision-making authority of the board.



Types of Space

Public (License of Occupation/LOC) - means any publicly accessible amenity space, park, sidewalk or walkway. Public land is owned and operated by the City of Calgary and placemaking projects can happen here with the collaboration and approval from City officials.

Private - Privately owned land (by individuals, companies, developers, institutions, etc.) Placemaking projects can happen on these spaces with approval and partnership with owners of land.

Parks - *Parks* are classified as a type of public land dedicated to recreation, conservation, and community uses. Placemaking projects happening here must have the approval from Parks Community Strategists.

Roads/Right of Way (ROW) - Streets, sidewalks, and boulevard spaces that the city owns, maintains, and operates. Placemaking projects can happen here with the approval and partnership with the mobility/roads team at the City.



City of Calgary

Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators (NPCs)

Liaise with City partners such as Community Associations and social recreation organizations, stewarding and championing these valued relationships. NPC's engage with these community partners to help make neighbourhoods a great place to live, work and play.

Parks Community Strategist (PCS)

A City staff member who acts as a liaison between the community—including residents associations, community associations, and non-profit organizations—and the City's Parks & Open Spaces Department and beyond. The PCS assists with:

- Public park and open-space projects
- Feasibility assessments
- Coordination across City processes

Mobility - This team oversees the approvals and implementation of all projects happening on road right of way. This group will be involved in any project requiring detours, street use permits, closures, or temporary no-parking restrictions.

Sports Coordinators - Liaise with sport and social recreation City partners, stewarding and championing these valued relationships. SC's engage with these community partners to help connect and deliver sport experiences for Calgarians.

Timelines

Pop-up - A short-term, temporary activation that tests ideas and invites community interaction.

Semi-Permanent - An installation designed to last months or years, using durable materials but still adaptable or removable over time.

Permanent - A long-term or lasting improvement integrated into the built environment, often following successful temporary trials.

Infrastructure - The physical and organizational systems that support public space use — including surfaces, lighting, seating, and maintenance frameworks.



Permits and Agreements

License of Occupation (LOC)

Community organizations on lands dedicated “reserve” which are owned by the City are granted a license of occupation (LOC). This type of agreement does not entitle the group to have exclusivity to the land.

Optional Amenities Agreement (OAA)

A legal agreement between The City and an operator, (i.e., residents, homeowners, or Community Association) allowing the group to facilitate a higher level of non-standard infrastructure development in a public park or roads right of way (i.e., Little Library, Community Signs, Flowerpots, etc.). The agreements are up to five years (can be extended as needed), require insurance and when the agreement is terminated the community is responsible for decommissioning.

Street Use Permit (SUP) - A street use permit is required to exclusively use any City road right-of-way, that is, a street, a sidewalk, an alley, a walkway, a back lane, or a boulevard, that may or may not require traffic control set-up.

Greenspace Permit - an issued greenspace permit will provide permission to use the public park and ensure public access and safety are managed. It does not provide permission to sell services within the park, nor does it provide exclusive use of the park space.

Temporary Use Permit - A temporary use permit in Calgary is a permit required for short-term uses of public or private property that are not a part of the permanent zoning.

Development Permit - In Calgary, a development permit (DP) is an official approval from the City that confirms a proposed project aligns with the rules and policies of the Land Use Bylaw and ensures it fits within the community. It is required for projects like new buildings, changes in use for a building, and certain alterations or additions that require a review of land use, zoning, and community impact.

Building Permit - A building permit is official approval to begin construction, ensuring the project complies with safety codes and regulations. It is granted by public authorities after reviewing building plans to ensure they meet codes for structural, electrical, and plumbing work.

**required for projects like pergolas, sheds, or structures.*



Review Types

Technical review - When a project takes place on a Lease/License of Occupation location and meets the threshold for a review (development permit and/or over \$50,000) documents are required to be submitted via the City liaison to the Technical Advisory Services team who will evaluate the project to determine it is safe to be on public land and is aligned with all City requirements (such as access design standards, land use, etc.).

Financial review - When a project takes place on a Lease/License of Occupation location and meets the threshold for a review (development permit and/or over \$50,000) documents are required to be submitted via the City liaison where they are evaluated to ensure the organization has secured the resources to complete the project successfully while maintaining long-term sustainability.



Other Placemaking Funding Opportunities

Grant	Max Amount	What it Funds
Inspiring Neighbourhoods (City of Calgary)	Up to ~\$15K	A matching program for Community Association-led neighbourhood enhancing projects
Arts & Culture Microgrant (City of Calgary)	Tier 1: ~\$5K; Tier 2: ~\$30K	Arts, culture, programming, installations
Building Communities (Parks Foundation)	Up to ~\$50K	Park / playground / greenspace community-led projects
Stella Conceptual Drawing (Parks Foundation)	Up to ~\$5K	Concept design seed-funding for park/pathway/natural area projects
Amateur Sport Grant (Parks Foundation)	Up to ~\$125k	Capital projects that promote sport participation
Community-Run Art Microgrant (Calgary Arts Development)	Up to ~\$15K	Community-led public art projects with local artists
Stepping Stones (Calgary Foundation)*	Up to ~\$1K	Small creative neighbourhood-led projects to build belonging
Neighbour Grants (Calgary Foundation)*	Up to ~\$10K (or ~\$7,5K)	Grassroots projects for community belonging

**Must have charitable status*



We encourage all community members, groups, and organizations—whether you have a fully formed idea or just the seed of one—to apply and get involved. As part of the Federation of Calgary Communities, this placemaking program is more than just funding; it's about empowering residents to lead meaningful change in the spaces they care about. We're here to support you every step of the way, from brainstorming to budgeting. If you have questions or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out.

Together, we can create a more vibrant, connected, and community-driven Calgary—one project at a time.



REACH OUT!

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