



CreativeCITY:
Prosperity through the
Creative Economy

ECOSYSTEM REPORT

Executive Summary

Photo Credit: Emil Agopian
Val Duncan in Klimt's Playthings,
courtesy of Theatre Encounter

AT A GLANCE

THE PROBLEM

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.

THE POTENTIAL

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

THE VISION

Calgary is Canada's most livable city

THE MISSION

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

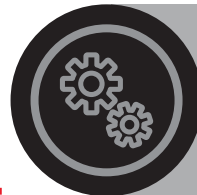
EMBED AUDACIOUS CREATIVITY INTO OUR CITY'S DNA:

To fully leverage the robust, growing creative economy in Calgary, creativity needs to be at the heart of everything we do as a city.



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.



INCUBATE CREATIVE COLLISIONS:

Unifying our creative economy under one identity requires creating conditions for collaboration, cross-sector partnerships, knowledge transfer, and resource sharing.



VALUE THE DIVERSITY OF CALGARY'S CREATIVITY:

As Canada's third most 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.



THE PLAN



Photo Credit: Hero Images
Fuse33 Makerspace Workshop, courtesy of Fuse33



Photo Credit: Kiah Lucero
VR Showcase, courtesy of CSIF

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 ecosystems lens, the creative economy recognizes the connections between fields such as education, arts, culture and innovation, rather than viewing them in isolation. It maps the interdependence of these as unique drivers of direct and indirect economic outputs. Adopting this lens leads to a fundamental reassessment of the role creativity plays in areas ranging from education to industrial design, to organizational theory.

We use the UK's National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta) view of the creative economy, which looks at creativity at the occupational level rather than the industry level. This allows us to gain a more accurate understanding of the economic role creativity plays and allows us to better understand how creativity permeates every industry, whether it is in medicine, oil and gas, or technology.



Photo Credit: Trudie Lee
The cast of *The Louder We Get*, courtesy of Theatre Calgary



The Value of a Creative Economy

The value of the creative economy relates to how it contributes to the prosperity of the community and everyone who lives in it, which can be viewed across four interdependent dimensions: economic prosperity, social prosperity, human prosperity, and environmental prosperity.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Considering creative industries' supply chain impact and wages that are reinvested into the economy, their economic footprint reached \$3.85 billion in Calgary. This impact also resulted in \$48.8 million in municipal tax contributions and \$238.1 million in provincial tax contributions in 2016.¹ These outputs, however, do not consider the economic impact of creativity across other industries. Sectors from oil and gas, to agriculture, to finance all depend on creatives for innovation and enhancing productivity: they are the designers, problem solvers, and communicators that support industries viewed as integral to Calgary's economy. A city's creativity and creative class are also essential for building a resilient economy, attracting and retaining young professional talent, and drawing greater business investment.

SOCIAL PROSPERITY

Creativity and the creative economy help create social value, contributing to overall community prosperity. They are tied to greater levels of civic participation, urban revitalization, community building, and social cohesion, which in turn can improve safety and security and further strengthen the economy.

HUMAN PROSPERITY

At the individual level, creativity is essential to developing personal identities and self expression. It has been tied to greater educational achievement, improved mental health and general health outcomes, and better personal well-being. Within communities, creativity influences how we engage and relate to others through shared experiences, values, and cultural connections. On the job, integrating creative work approaches in the workplace is linked to an increased sense of value and accomplishment.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROSPERITY

There is creativity in how we interact with our environment, and it will be a crucial component in achieving environmental sustainability. Mitigating the effects of climate change and sustaining our natural environment will require investment in research and innovation to find creative solutions. The creative economy and creative occupations contribute the designers, communicators, and problem solvers needed to push development in a direction that balances our impact on the environment.



Photo Credit: Benjamin Laird
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2019), courtesy of Alberta Theatre Projects

Calgary's Creative Economy

Calgary is home to nearly 12,000 creative economy enterprises employing over 32,000 people. This high ratio of enterprises to employees reflects a growing trend towards a gig-oriented economy, where individual creative professionals rely on gigs, freelance work, and temporary contracts to make a living.

CITY PLANS AND POLICIES

We reviewed 43 guiding documents at the municipal level that surfaced shared themes and outcomes to better understand city priorities. All of these documents weave a common thread of building a more resilient, vibrant, diverse, connected, and prosperous city, and all of them have touchpoints to Calgary's creative economy. Seven key areas of alignment were found across these guiding documents:

- Economic Development
- Placemaking (physical experiences and perception of the City)
- Civic Enrichment (incorporation of the arts in daily Calgarian life)
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Arts and Culture (public and private organizations and businesses)
- Education (schools and training)

Most of these guiding documents have strategies which are being implemented in a siloed approach. A strategy that bridges these silos to create a unified approach to community prosperity would unlock the power of the creative economy as a contributor to community prosperity.

RESOURCES AT OUR DISPOSAL

Calgary is well-equipped to fuel the creative economy with resources covering economic development, capacity building, social connection, human development, and natural beauty. If leveraged, these resources can catalyze change and inspire a new creative direction for the city.

Economic Resources:

- At 71.6 percent, Calgary has the highest labour force participation and highest labour force productivity of any major Canadian city.
- Calgary has the highest concentration of high-tech workers, and the second highest number per capita of small businesses and self-employed individuals.
- There are significant public investments being made into culture and cultural industries, with \$18 million allocated to arts and culture spending in the 2020 municipal budget.

Capacity Building Resources:

- Calgary is home to eight public and private post-secondary institutions, offering 82 programs related to the creative economy.
- Post-secondary programs dedicated to creative industries represent the highest proportion of creative programming, with a large number of programs in broadcast media, performing arts, and music.

Social and Structural Resources:

- Roughly 50,000 Calgarians volunteer in the creative economy, amounting to 7.3 million hours of productivity and creative output.
- Calgary has a network of 150 community associations that provide a conduit for building social and structural capital at the neighbourhood level.

Human Resources:

- With 33.7 percent of the population representing visible minorities, Calgary is the third most ethnically diverse city in Canada.
- Though the median age in the city is trending upward, the current median age of Calgarians is 37.2 years, making Calgary the fourth youngest city in Canada.
- Calgary has one of the highest levels of educational attainment in Canada, and the highest proportion of STEM graduates among major cities.

Natural Resources:

- Calgary is 62 km to the Canadian Rocky Mountains.
- It is at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers, both running through densely populated areas of the city with many accessibility points.

Opportunities for Calgary's Creative Economy

SEVEN EMERGING TRENDS SHAPING OUR ENVIRONMENT

1

The Competition for Talent:

There is a need to evolve the current labour force to meet emerging needs, and there is an opportunity to leverage the creative economy to attract talent across all industries.

2

Accelerating Technological Disruption:

The internet, social media, mobile devices, and big data analytics have redefined the way society produces and consumes media, and these are likely to change further.

3

From Consumer to Co-Creator:

Over the next decade, the role of the creative economy for consumers will expand dramatically as the system transitions to a model of innovation that leverages knowledge from individuals and enterprises across an ecosystem, rather than being confined within a single company.

4

Changing Media Consumption:

Story forms, promotional or otherwise, will continue to adapt and evolve from single form to transmedia storytelling, where the consumer is able to seamlessly shift from text to other media.



Photo Credit: Cary Schatz
Ouri (2019), courtesy of Sled Island

5

Social Justice and Change:

There is a deep discontent in Canadian society and a demand for change, resulting in enormous movements which aim towards confronting some of the core injustices in society, ranging from systemic inequality to the growing wealth gap.

6

The COVID-19 Longtail:

The long-term fallout from COVID-19 remains unknown and will largely depend on the real and perceived threat of the pandemic to Calgarians and creative economy consumers. However, there will be operational implications such as the increased demand for sanitation and hygiene, and financial impact through reduced access to private or public funding.

7

Sustainability at the Centre:

The creative economy will continue to have a central role in shaping sustainable development by providing the designers, communicators, and innovators to make fundamental changes to how our economy currently operates.

Being Inspired: Creative Successes in Calgary and Around the World

In reviewing best-in-class creative cities across Canada, the US, and the world, five key themes were identified for which Calgary could utilize and align its own creative economy policies:

- Driving digital creativity
- Building entrepreneurial capacity
- Investing in creative spaces and places
- Integrating through collaboration
- Embedding creativity into decision-making



Photo Credit: Sebastian Buzzalino
Jean-Michel Blais (2018), courtesy of Studio Bell

A Creative Economy Strategy for Calgary

VISION

Calgary is Canada's most livable city

MISSION

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

STRATEGIC PILLARS

To deliver our vision and mission, Calgary's creative economy will be guided by four strategic pillars:



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.

Goals:

- By 2030, Calgary is known as a music city.
- By 2030, the greater Calgary region leads Canada for number of film shoots per capita.
- By 2030, Calgary recognizes itself as a centre for culture and creativity.

Priorities:

- Leverage the existing momentum of Calgary's film and music 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 industries.



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.

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 education programs.



Incubate creative collisions:

Unifying our creative economy under one identity requires creating conditions for collaboration, cross-sector partnerships, knowledge transfer, and resource sharing.

Goals:

- By 2030, Calgary leads Canada in creative economy start-ups per capita.
- By 2030, Calgary is recognized as a global leader for its sustained commitment to collaboration.

Priorities:

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



Value the diversity of Calgary's creativity:

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.

Goals:

- By 2030, the make up of Calgary's creative economy workforce is representative of the 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 are encouraging 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.

MOVING FORWARD

Over the next six months, we will endeavour to refine our understanding and prepare for the release of the *CreativeCITY Strategic Guidebook* by mid-2022, which will outline specific objectives and activities that will be undertaken to make Calgary a world-leading creative city and Canada's most livable city.

In Phase 2, we will follow the progress of 'small experiments with radical intent'. These four creative projects are already underway in Calgary and align with each of our strategic pillars. The outcomes of these experiments will be used to further inform our creative economy strategy. We will also engage in a series of public CreativeCITY round table discussions led by partners at the Mount Royal University CityXLab, with subject matter experts and allies aimed at surfacing new areas of possibility.

In Phase 3, findings from this ecosystem report and our 'small experiments with radical intent' will inform a detailed community consultation. Consultation results will refine our path forward and guide the development of the *CreativeCITY Strategic Guidebook*. The Guidebook will provide formal recommendations for policy, community, and industry interventions to support community prosperity through the creative economy.

Steering Committee

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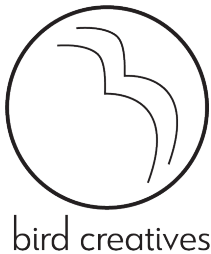
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