

# Neighbourhood Support

Led by: Director of Community Strategies

## Service Description

Neighbourhood Support builds the capacity of Calgarians to maintain neighbourhoods that foster social inclusion, economic participation, and sense of belonging. We work to understand and meet the specific needs of neighbourhoods so that no resident or neighbourhood is left behind. We support community associations and social recreation organizations by contributing funding to activate local spaces and support a variety of local programming to develop social connections among neighbours. By supporting residents and community leaders in navigating and aligning City resources, we increase the social wellbeing of Calgarians.

## Service Updates

### Key Service Results

Twenty-five Community Associations received over \$135,000 funding in 2023 from the Inspiring Neighbourhoods Grant (ING) program for community-led projects and initiatives. These include gathering spaces, community gardens, recreational programming and community engagement.

The Community Social Work program received funding from the Government of Alberta to support the Home-Based Business Network and to employ additional Community Connectors, who work alongside Community Social Workers to develop residents' capacity, build their social connections and increase their economic participation. In 2023 this added resource has enabled city employees to support residents in developing business plans and launching home-based businesses.

The organizational health of 96 per cent of Community Associations are rated as "low risk", and 85 per cent are "low risk" when it comes to financial health.

### Service Challenges

Consumer price inflation is expected to flatten out within the current Service Plans and Budget cycle. This will not undo the price gains of 2021-2023, and prices will stay at a relatively elevated level compared to two years ago. Vulnerable residents of Calgary struggle to meet basic needs. When this is the case, they do not have authentic and sustainable access to inclusion and participation.

Some community partners face ongoing financial uncertainty, staffing and volunteer challenges, resulting in a high risk that some community partners may not have the capacity to work with The City in achieving service outcomes.

The number of community groups competing for the same funding is increasing. Rising costs (utilities, insurance, required audits) and the time required to look after ageing infrastructure takes attention away from programming. The City will continue to convene partners to build capacity, share knowledge and amplify sector results to maximize the use of each dollar.

### Trends & Potential Uncertainties

The number of neighbourhood volunteers declined during the pandemic but has begun to turn the curve in 2023. The percentage of volunteers who agree that, 'their sense of belonging has increased,' rose from 79 per cent to 87 per cent since 2021, illustrating the social inclusion benefits that volunteering offers.

Resources are being developed for a Connected Communities program to complement the existing Community Social Work and Neighbourhood Partnership programs and they will help to build the capacity of organizations and residents for Asset Based Community Development.



# Measuring Our Performance

## Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

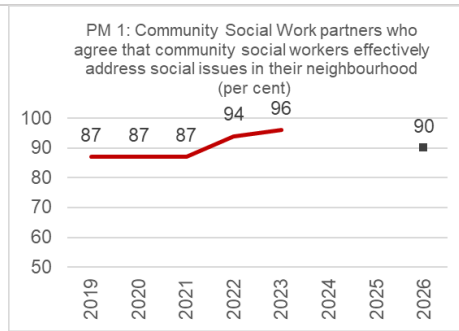
→ Progressing as planned

⊖ Not progressing as planned

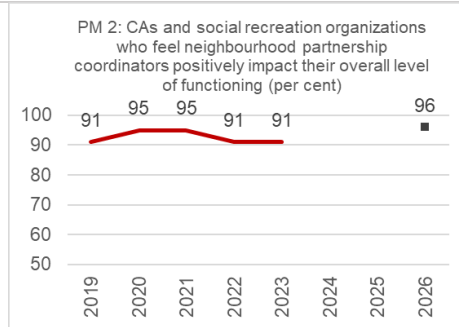
## Performance Measures

## Story behind the numbers

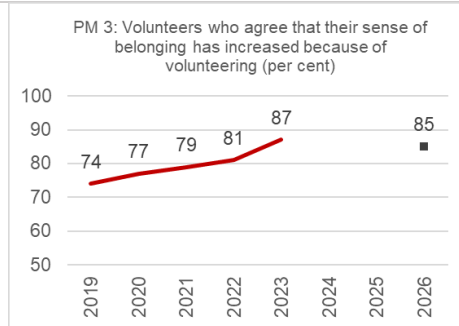
## Status



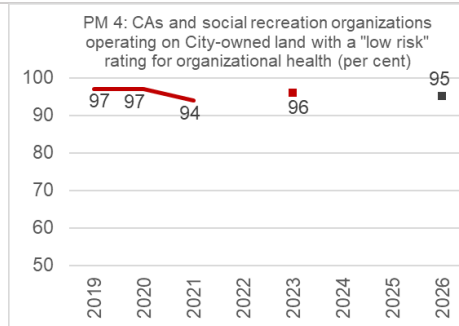
Working with partners is essential when aiming to make a difference in communities. Compared to the last few years that were impacted by Covid-19, this year has allowed for a more stable work environment with no restrictions on gatherings. Relaxation of this restriction has helped to strengthen relationships and our partners' belief that Community Social Workers are effectively addressing social issues in their neighbourhood.



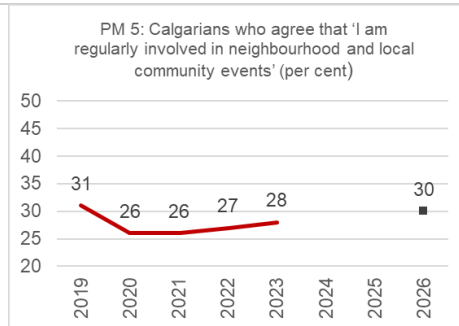
Measuring the positive impact of Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators on the overall level of functioning of Community Associations and Social Recreation Groups is key in assessing the quality of support provided to these organizations by The City. In 2023 this number remains high with 91 per cent of participating groups reporting that their Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator positively impacts their organization's level of functioning. This in turn allows community associations and recreation organizations to continue to offer a variety of high-quality local programming to develop social connections among neighbours.



Helping Calgarians create neighbourhoods which foster a sense of belonging is one of the primary goals of the Community Social Work program. Involving residents as volunteers is one way of achieving this goal. Increased effort in 2023 has been made by Community Social Workers to provide formal volunteer and learning opportunities. There is now an online volunteer request form as well as a formalized official City volunteer program, both of which may be helping to connect people with volunteering they find meaningful, finding a deeper connection to their community and therefore increasing their sense of belonging.

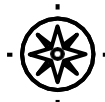


Measuring organizational health is part of an annual review process for Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations that operate on City-owned land, to evaluate the overall wellness of community-led organizations supported by Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators. The negative financial impact of the pandemic on these groups is continuing to lessen as groups recover over time, with 96 per cent of groups reporting a "low risk" organizational health rating.



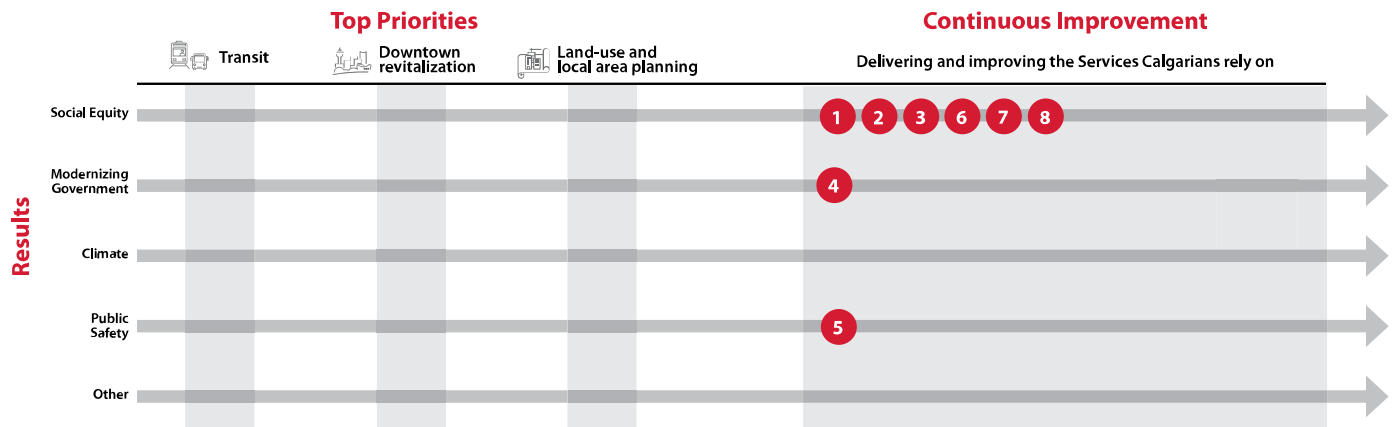
The Citizen Satisfaction Survey is administered annually to citizens and collects information on their opinions and overall approval of the work The City is doing on their behalf and to improve the lives of all Calgarians. In 2023, 28 per cent of Calgarians agree that they are regularly involved in local events in their communities, this is up slightly from 2022 (27 per cent).









# Progress on Service Delivery

## Alignment with Council Refined Priorities and Result Areas



- Legend**
- Completed
  - Progressing as planned
  - Not progressing as planned
  - Not started
  - Initiative number

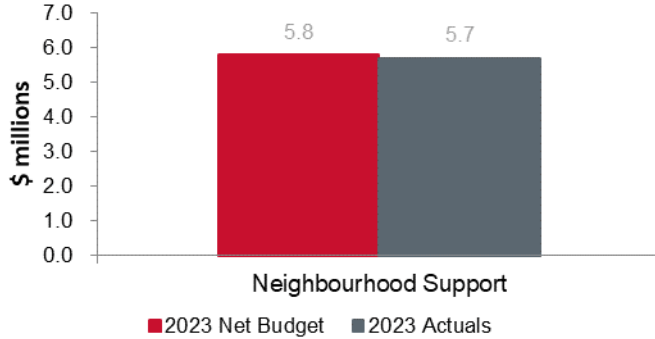
Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
1 Increase the social inclusion and economic participation of residents in neighbourhoods experiencing high levels of inequity through intentional community development including neighbourhood assessments and community-led initiatives.	<p>The Calgary Equity Index is used to identify geographic areas in Calgary where equity is lowest. Community assessments in four new areas with low equity indices were completed in 2023.</p> <p>The number of communities supported by Community Social Workers has increased from 23 to 24, with a resourcing decision pending on three more.</p> <p>Twenty Community Connectors have been employed to support the increased economic participation of residents.</p> <p>Twelve Calgarians in 10 communities have joined the Home-Based Business Network and six of them have created budgets for their business ideas.</p>	
2 Foster vibrant and connected communities by strategically investing in community-based organizations and projects through micro-grants and the Inspiring Neighbourhoods Grant.	<p>'Small grants' funding process improvements have been made in 2023. Greater representation on advisory committees and better support for neighbourhood-based initiatives of Indigenous and Racialized Calgarians is nearly complete.</p> <p>The Inspiring Neighbourhoods Grant program supported 25 community associations with funding for community-led projects.</p> <p>A new decision matrix/assessment tool was piloted in 2023 which allows greater flexibility when a community project requires greater than 50 per cent of total project costs to be funded.</p>	
3 Engage with community partners to help address and meet the changing needs of their residents by providing information, advice, and support in navigating City and community resources.	<p>The Community Social Work program continues to act as the backbone for the Native Information Network.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators act as a conduit for Community Associations, linking these organizations to resources and information from across the Corporation. An online Community Association Toolkit has been created on Calgary.ca to enable Community Associations and residents to guide themselves more easily through resources when they desire.</p>	
4 Increase the financial health and organizational resilience of community associations and social recreation organizations by providing in-depth and tailored guidance to strengthen their structure and processes, as well as overseeing compliance of the conditions within the lease or license of occupation.	<p>The Status of Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations assessment process is used annually to identify potential organizational or financial weaknesses.</p> <p>The assessment is used to focus City resourcing, and liaisons work through identified mitigation strategies to support and strengthen organizations.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators and Community Social Workers share and co-develop strategies and business planning resources to support Community Associations and Social Recreation Organizations.</p>	

Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
<p>5 Improve a sense of community belonging and safety by supporting and advocating the activation of safe and inclusive spaces in collaboration with community residents, and internal and external partners.</p>	<p>In 2023, the Inspiring Neighbourhoods Grant supported 25 Community Associations with over \$135,000 in funding for community-led projects and initiatives.</p> <p>Thirteen of the 25 projects were specifically placemaking and beautification initiatives, including gathering spaces, community gardens, recreational programming and community engagement.</p>	
<p>6 Increase a sense of belonging for local residents, particularly those experiencing vulnerabilities, by creating opportunities for them to connect through community hubs.</p>	<p>Five Community Hub sites received grants of \$5000 each to achieve common goals including creating opportunities for residents to be active participants and leaders in shaping the social and economic fabric of their community.</p> <p>Twenty-four youth completed the Matched Savings program in 2023. Participants learned skills to build their financial capacity and achieved a total savings of \$1000 each. Most participants identified that they will use their savings for their educational goals. Cohort graduates often become facilitators for future cohorts, further strengthening their financial skill.</p>	
<p>7 Increase social inclusion of populations experiencing vulnerabilities by engaging with, and facilitating the input of residents and other community groups into the development and implementation of strategies and practices that contribute to social well-being.</p>	<p>The Community Social Work program partners with the Calgary Community Development Learning Initiative to provide education on a range of community development tools and approaches. In 2023, support was provided to Calgarians to increase neighbourhood input into the policy process. This training was also championed across other City business units that deliver community services.</p> <p>Encouraging resident input into issues of inequity is a particular focus (For example, the mental health and addiction strategy, the experiences of new Canadians and anti-poverty initiatives).</p>	
<p>8 Support the social resilience of Calgarians by implementing social wellbeing strategies at the local level such as poverty reduction and Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy, and through the consideration and inclusion of the needs of diverse populations such as Indigenous and Racialized people.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood grant application processes have been updated to remove barriers for, and promote uptake by, Indigenous and Racialized residents.</p> <p>The application process for residents to become City of Calgary volunteers has been simplified. Often one opportunity (volunteering) can increase a resident's access to other opportunities (i.e., employment, education).</p>	



## Service Updates on Financial Performance

### Net Operating Budget and Actuals as of December 31, 2023



### Operating Budget Updates - 2023 net operating budget vs actuals:

Neighbourhood Support Service has a favourable operating variance of \$0.1 million.

In 2023, Neighbourhood Support Service operating spending was slightly less than budgeted due to vacancy savings, with all initiatives and measures on track.

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### Capital Budget Updates - 2023 total capital budget vs 2023 spend:

Neighbourhood Support Service does not have a capital budget in 2023.