



Social Wellbeing

Your sense of wellness in your community and wider society

CITY SERVICE AREAS

Social programs

Social programs are services designed to make sure people's basic needs are being met. They can be divided into income based (social security, AISH, unemployment insurance etc), and service based (health care, education, settlement, seniors' services etc.)

Social programs include: Calgary AfterSchool, Calgary Youth Employment Centre, Fair Entry – Programs and services for low income Calgarians, Property Tax, Assistance Program Seniors Programs & Services, Login to Fair Entry Application.

Recreation

Recreation and leisure are another type of human need. They are strongly tied to non-medical factors that impact our health outcomes. Although recreation is a key part of overall wellbeing, making sure access to recreational and leisure activities is available for everyone remains a low priority across Canada.

Our preference of leisure and recreation activities are often shaped by income, class, geography, culture and history.

Recreation opportunities in Calgary include: Check the status of a field, Day camps, Glenmore Reservoir, Golf Courses, My Recreation Guide, Public skating & shinny hockey schedule, Recreation facilities, Register for programs.

Arts and culture

Arts and culture are also important human needs that improve our overall wellbeing.

Art and culture can serve many functions for society such as: learning about the past, sharing meanings (through speech, in writing, through images, etc.), helping to build unity, and casting light on less tangible parts of life such as inequality. It also provides people with ways of making a living and being part of society in different ways than just ways outside of paid employment.

Arts and culture also give people room to challenge the way we see the world and can help to encourage social movements.

Art & Culture include: Public Art, Festivals, Events, Art centres & programs (Wildflower & North Mount Pleasant), Calgary Zoo.

Things that make up your social wellbeing:



- Income, food and housing
- How you feel about yourself and your community
- Your surroundings and friendships

Things that can help your social wellbeing:



- Feeling good about where you live
- Feeling welcome in your city and neighbourhood
- Feeling like you can fully be part of society

Factors that shape your social wellbeing:



- Feeling like you belong
- Feeling safe and welcome
- All of these things can make your mental and physical health better or make it worse.

Eight themes have emerged through research into City of Calgary service areas. These highlight the systemic and interconnected nature of racism across municipal services, and the need for a strategy that tackles these themes while also homing in on specific policy, service, and practice areas. A summary of themes and examples and how they connect to wellbeing can be found below.

1

ACCESS

Includes a wide range of factors that limit access. Recreational programming costs can limit access, geography can also limit access as geographic communities with a high proportion of racialized residents are often underserved by recreation facilities, park space, etc. This is where we often see intersecting impacts of stratification.

2

LACK OF REPRESENTATION

Lack of people with lived experience in decision making and planning positions can lead to social programs and recreational programming that is culturally inappropriate or inaccessible. Another example is the model of public art framed around art consumption that limits local arts based initiatives with limited grant streams and a focus on events.

5

PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

Includes projects such as allowing citizens to get involved in budgeting and planning. How public consultations are created and delivered shapes who gets to be heard – who can take time off work or leave family responsibilities? Who can travel to participate? Which voices are given priority? Getting involvement from the community to help plan and budget needs to move to meaningful involvement and challenging deeply rooted power dynamics and systemic racism.

6

UNDER / OVER INVESTMENT

Under funding certain neighbourhoods or services, in particular more diverse and lower household income areas. Until recently public art would be placed in areas with higher levels of investment, so these areas were given more public art. In public engagement for the installation of a turf field at the Genesis Centre (2021), some respondents expressed frustration the City was spending on recreation projects when other City services are more essential. However, the northeast only received 1% of City funding of the overall allocation of citywide Athletic Parks and fields.

SAFETY

Includes experience of racism from law enforcement/bylaw/security. Over policing and monitoring of certain groups in public spaces. Under-policing and lack of safety funding in certain neighbourhoods (lack of streetlights, low response to resident calls etc.). Hyper-surveillance and policing of Indigenous and racialized community members can lead to them avoiding certain public spaces or not enrolling in recreational programming because they do not feel welcome.

ZONING

Zoning policies that exclude and limit the development of single family homes, or parking, can slow down or stop the development of services such as day-care spaces, mental health and addiction supports, or programs to support the homeless. This often pushes these services to the outskirts of neighbourhoods and limits its accessibility.

CULTURAL RELEVANCE / APPROPRIATENESS

A lack of diverse recreational and sporting opportunities, especially Indigenous sport and recreation opportunities offered at the City level. Culturally appropriate spaces are key to feeling a sense of belonging in your community, and can vary depending on who lives in a neighbourhood. E.g. Symons Valley project feedback included requests for a multi-faith centre so the large number of Muslim residents could pray. Meaningful and accessible planning that allows all community members have a voice is key.

LACK OF DATA

This includes data that has been broken down by detailed sub-categories, e.g. by gender, region, or level of education etc. Lack of detailed broken down data makes it hard to target programming or funding. It also makes it difficult to measure the impact and success of equity and anti-racism actions. This type of data allows planners and service providers to see where certain groups' wellbeing is being impacted and start to address it.

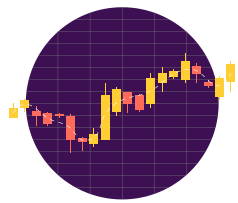
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EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS ALREADY TAKEN BY THE CITY OF CALGARY



The City of Calgary has adopted an Equity Index to help with planning and decision-making. The index is a planning and decision-making tool designed to measure equity in Calgary based on non-medical factors that influence health outcomes.

The Fair Entry Program was created to improve access to recreation, transit, and other city services with fees, with one single application that can be made yearly. However its processes and documentation needs can make it challenging to access.



As part of The City of Calgary's Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) Strategy, their Human Resources has been reviewing policies to address unconscious bias* in hiring in order to increase diversity in the workforce. (*attitudes and stereotypes people have about other types of people or groups).

The City is currently reviewing feedback for the Northeast Public Art project where there will be more opportunities and funding for art and artists in the Northeast. In October 2020, City Council directed The City to “explore public art opportunities in Ward 5 and surrounding Northeast communities” in order to replace a removed art piece at the Genesis Centre and “further compensating for a historically inequitable distribution of public art funds in these communities”.



EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TAKEN IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

This section gives a number of examples from other jurisdictions in North America who are working on addressing systemic racism and inequity in areas related to social wellbeing.

The City of Toronto: Confronting Anti Black Racism Unit

Has created a program analysis tool with key questions to use as a screen to make sure social programming is responsive to racialized peoples needs. While the focus is on Covid-19 responses, the principles can be applied to create and evaluate broader social programs, and racism for all racialized residents.

More info: https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/903d-ABR-COVID-19-Analysis-Toolkit_Final.pdf

King Country - Seattle, WA: Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan

The plan assess the impacts of policies and programs with a focus on race issues. An example of this plan in action is King County's Department of Transportation use of their Equity Impact Review toolkit to train staff on how to use equity tools, and maintaining youth recreation programs in diverse and low-income areas of the county. This is also supported by the department's decision to allocate funding towards this.

City of Toronto Public Health

Detailed and broken down data (disaggregated data) for Covid-19 clearly showed that Covid-19 had a greater impact on communities that already faced health and income inequities before the pandemic. The detailed data related to race, household size, and income informs more responsive, targeted, adaptable public health responses. More info: COVID 19: Ethno-Racial Identity & Income – City of Toronto

Casino Woodbine, Toronto Recreation Facilities and Funding

A funding formula targeted towards the needs of the Rexdale community and equity-seeking groups resulted in new revenues and a shift in current revenue streams. The result was investing in needed programs, such as local child care centres. A similar program between casinos and the city could be considered to address funding gaps in recreation facilities for Calgary (e.g. the recent closing of the Calgary Beltline pool which serves low-income and racialized Calgarians), and promote more targeted equity in funding.

City of Vancouver: The VanPlay plan

This includes the Environmental Justice Framework for Parks which says that all people and communities, regardless of their background are entitled to an equal amount of environmental amenities, and no group should be affected more by environmental hazards [e.g., pollution, impacts of climate change]. Including environmental amenities allows the plan to move beyond parks and recreation to include things such as transit and traffic calming measures in their analysis. Using an equity index to identify Equity Initiative zones, planners and decision makers are able to identify areas that have been underfunded and make appropriate funding decisions.

More info: <https://planh.ca/success-stories/vanplay-planning-equity-vancouvers-parks-and-recreation-services>