

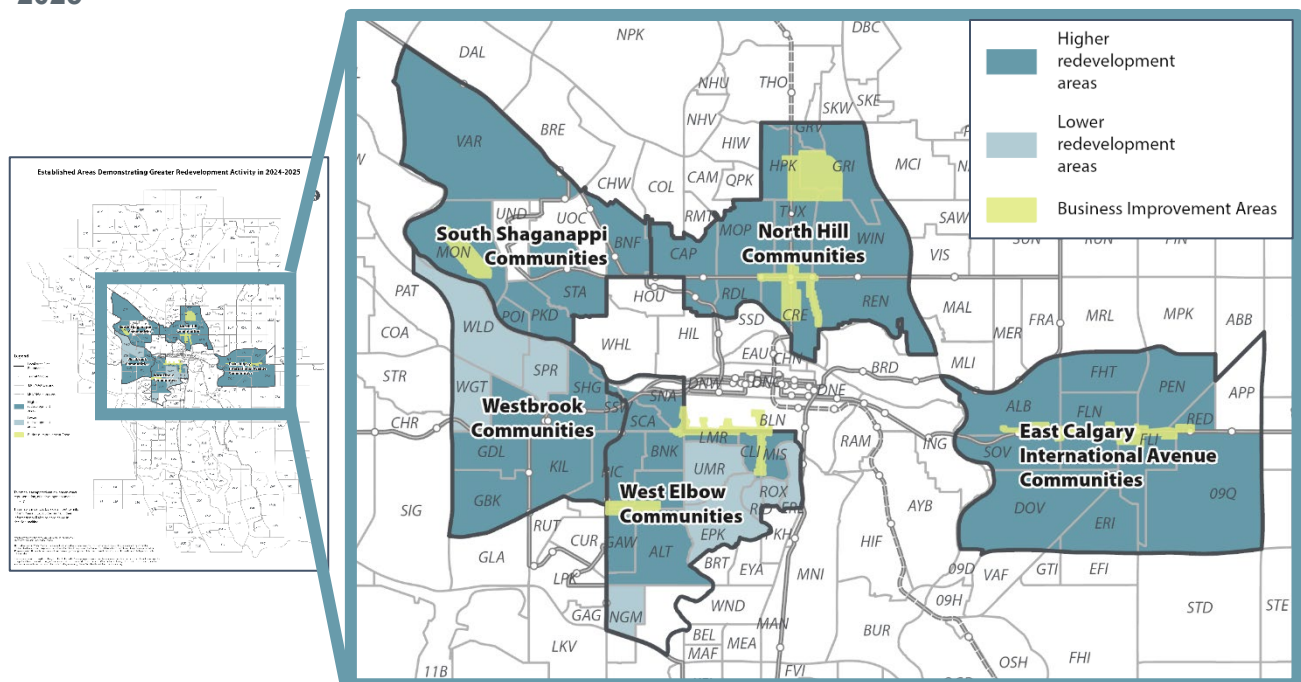
# Growing Spaces Projects & Grants Program Guidelines

## Background

Calgary's established communities are growing and changing. The Growing Spaces Projects & Grants Program funds improvements to public spaces in growing communities. This program is part of The City of Calgary's [Established Area Growth and Change Strategy \(EAGCS\)](#), which invests in growing and changing communities to improve public spaces and networks. The program is a two-year pilot program that will help current and future residents and businesses live, work and play in the communities they love.

The EAGCS identifies Focus Areas experiencing higher degrees of growth and change shown in blue in Map 1, which are the eligible locations for project submissions over the next two years. Projects proposed within areas identified as experiencing higher growth and change (darker blue areas in Map 1) will be given priority. Projects proposed within lower growth areas (lighter blue areas in Map 1) must benefit more than one community. See Attachment 1 for a list of eligible communities.

**Map 1: Map of Established Areas Demonstrating Greater Redevelopment Activity in 2024-2025**





## What is the Growing Spaces Projects & Grants Program?

The Growing Spaces Projects & Grants Program directly supports public space improvement ideas in established communities experiencing higher levels of population growth and change. The program invests in community-identified capital asset projects that increase the capacity of public spaces to accommodate an increase in people and activity. In this context, growth means an increase in the number of homes and businesses, residents and visitors.

## What is the funding amount?

This program has a total of **\$500,000** in funding that will be distributed equally with an annual budgeted allocation of **\$250,000** over two years (2025-2026). The funding allotment per project is up to approximately **\$50,000 every two years**. In order to complete projects across many growing areas, total project funding within the boundary of a single community is limited to approximately **\$50,000 every two years**.

## What type of organizations are eligible?

Community Associations (CAs) and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) who are in good standing with The City of Calgary and within areas experiencing growth and change (see Attachment 1) are eligible to submit project ideas.

Before submitting the Project Submission Form, eligible CAs and BIAs must discuss their project idea with their City Liaison:

- CAs must contact their **Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator**
- BIAs must contact their **Business Improvement Areas Business Strategist**

Individuals, other non-profit organizations, and for-profit and private sector organizations cannot apply alone, but are encouraged to contact their CA or BIA to explore a partnership opportunity.

## What type of projects and expenses are eligible?

Eligible projects must involve the addition of **capital assets** to a public space that permanently improve the space rather than being a one-time event or activity. The program's funding can cover the processes involved in developing the project, including planning, design, permit fees, public engagement, construction, and project finalization.

These projects must create new features/facilities and/or add significant value to public spaces rather than focusing on maintenance or operation of existing spaces. This may include investments to increase the usability of underutilized or overutilized spaces, recreational or play spaces or passive park investments such as benches or firepits. See Attachment 3, and below, for project examples.

## Project Examples:

**Community gardens** are areas gardened by a group of people (10 persons minimum) for the purpose of providing a garden experience/education to local neighbours.



**Community spaces** are places where people within a neighbourhood or defined area can gather, connect, and engage in leisure, social, or educational activities, fostering a sense of belonging and community, whether for active or/and passive time.



**Active play spaces** can include both traditional playgrounds with standardized equipment and natural play spaces utilizing natural elements to encourage active and creative play, as well as inclusive playgrounds designed for children of all abilities. One example is a Gagaball Pit.



**Social outdoor spaces** are places where people can connect socially and can include items such as Picnic Sites, BBQs, and Fire Pits.



The project(s) must:

- Be located on City-owned land within the Focus Areas.
- Be in higher growth areas and/or must benefit more than one community (see Attachment 1).
- Be at least partially within the community boundary covered by the CA or BIA that is proposing the project.
- Demonstrate that they support growth in communities (see Attachment 4).



- Be freely available for the public to use.
- Demonstrate benefit to the community, such as:
  - Enhanced quality of life;
  - Improved connectivity of public spaces;
  - Increasing inclusivity that encourages diverse community participation;
  - Business area vibrancy;
  - Improved accessibility and equitable access to amenities, spaces and services; and/or
  - Improved environmental health, such as the air quality and the health and safety of public spaces.

#### Other considerations:

- The program can fund a portion of larger projects with a budget over \$50,000 and funding sources may be combined if there are no restrictions (e.g. funding from both The City of Calgary funding and other governments or organizations).
- Projects that complement City-delivered projects are eligible (i.e. City-delivered EAGCS projects listed [here](#)).
- Funding can be used for a one-time opening event when the project is complete. This is the only non-capital use of the funds that is allowed.
- Funding is meant to carry projects through to construction, however it can be used for partial project funding, when complemented with other funding sources that fully complete a project.

### Who completes and maintains the projects?

Projects can be completed and maintained either by the applicant or The City. This decision will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, depending on the type, complexity and location of the project. For example, if the project is on CA leased land, it must be completed and maintained by the CA. If the project is on City-owned land that is not CA leased land, it can be completed either by the applicant or The City, depending on the project.

Eligible CAs and BIAs will only receive funding if they are completing the project, otherwise the funds will remain within The City as The City will complete the approved project.

If a project is completed by an applicant, a Funding Agreement between The City and the applicant is required. There may also be permits, operating requirements, and/or other steps involved in the process that must be completed by the applicant.

### What types of projects and expenses are ineligible?

Ineligible expenses include:

- Programming and/or services.
- Annual events.
- Maintenance and operational projects.
- Invoices/proof of payment (including deposits) dated prior to the date of your approval letter from The City are considered ineligible expenses.





- Fundraising for costs not related to the project.
- Contingency, a sum of money set aside at the start of a project to cover increased project costs.
- Direct financial compensation for the Board of Directors, individuals, or families.
- Funding of staff positions or volunteer honorariums
- Deficit or debt repayment
- Projects on private property
- Commercial activities and related costs
- Travel and accommodation costs.
- Additional insurance related to project.
- Equipment not directly related to the program being applied for
- Improvements within an organization's buildings
- Full or partial rebates or recoveries of Good and Services (GST) from the Canada Revenue Agency

### **What's the project submission deadline?**

Project ideas are accepted starting April 22, 2025 through the online Project Submission Form. The program accepts applications for 2025 funding until December 31, 2025 or until the annual budgeted allocation of \$250,000 for 2025 runs out, whichever happens first. Applicants can apply for the \$250,000 available for 2026 starting on January 1, 2026.

### **What's included in the application process?**

After meeting with their City Liaison to review the likelihood of project eligibility, CAs and BIAs must fill out the Project Submission Form. Please refer to Attachment 2 for the full application process details, including the review process and reporting requirements.

### **Other Considerations**

Some other considerations include:

- It is important applicants retain a complete copy of their application for their own records should The City of Calgary have questions regarding the application.
- Incomplete applications will be returned.
- If The City is completing the project, the project can be stopped at any time at the discretion of The City.
- To maintain transparency and accountability, The City will make all funding allocation amounts available publicly.
- Due to limited funds, not all requests meeting the criteria will be approved for funding. Applicants may receive full, reduced or no funding for their project depending on available funds and discretion of the review team.
- All successful applications must credit The City of Calgary's Established Area Growth and Change Strategy as funder of the program and must share at least 5 images of your project attached with the final report.
  - For The City to be able to use any videograph(s)/photograph(s), careful attention is paid to concerns of copyright and consent. To address both concerns, CAs and BIAs



are required to complete both The City's Model Release Form (X626), and Copyright Release Form (X629).

- If a project is applicant-led, the City of Calgary may request the return of Growing Spaces Projects & Grants Program funding if:
  - The project is not complete within the allowable timeframe.
  - For projects with an estimated budget at or below \$5,000, if progress of project is not demonstrated within six months of the date of execution of the Project Funding Agreement or if the project is not completed within one year of the date of execution of the Project Funding Agreement.
  - For projects with an estimated budget above \$5,000, if progress of project is not demonstrated within one year of the date of execution of the Project Funding Agreement or if the project is not completed within two years of the date of execution of the Project Funding Agreement.
  - Funds were not used for the stated purpose of the approved project
  - Funds were used towards ineligible expenses; and/or
  - A CA or BIA fails to submit their reporting, as required under the Project Funding Agreement.