



MEDIA RELEASE

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The arts means business in Calgary

“The return on investment in the arts is clear. We must grow and invest in Calgary’s creative economy.” – Jyoti Gondek

Calgary—Supporting and investing in Calgary’s arts and creative sector is fundamental to our City’s identity, economy and our citizens’ wellbeing. According to Statistics Canada data, the arts and creative sectors represent a growing industry across Canada. In Calgary alone, the creative sector provided 24,000 full-year jobs and contributed over \$2.1 billion in GDP to our economy in 2016.

“An investment in the arts is an investment in Calgary’s economic recovery,” says Mayoral candidate Gondek. “Memorable cities offer a broad range of cultural experiences to both residents and visitors alike. Cities that have future-proofed their economies used arts and creative sector initiatives to play a role in both recovery and prosperity.”

After decades of reliance on private sector support, many artists and arts organizations were hit hard following the oil price collapse as private companies scaled back sponsorships. As well, our provincial government has shown little interest in the economic, education, health and inclusion benefits that flow from an investment in culture. Fewer provincial matching dollars for arts initiatives has not only resulted in capacity gaps within Alberta’s creative sector, cities like Calgary are further unable to tap into federal grant programs.

The current economic situation in our City highlighted that progressive lack of investment in the arts by our municipal government has placed our creative sector well behind any other major metropolitan center in Canada. Municipalities are largely left to fund this important work on their own, with philanthropic efforts from community leaders and the private sector.

To start, the City of Calgary must assemble a recovery fund of at least \$15 million to support artists and arts organizations for programming and other initiatives to support recovery in this sector. Funding will be primarily secured through partnerships with other orders of government, budget savings, and other innovative means.

“The vitality of our creative sector has been threatened by a lack of investment. Now is the time for us to step up, not retreat,” says Gondek. “The arts mean business in Calgary, and it is also the arts that will help reconnect us and rebuild the spirit of our City.”

For more on Gondek’s Investment in the Arts platform visit our [website](#).

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