

Engagement Summary: Renaming Fort Calgary

Prepared by The Fort Calgary Preservation Society

Acknowledging our place on a long journey

The Fort Calgary Preservation Society (the Society) is committed to building relationships with community members with diverse stories about this land. In 2015, we launched the Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Council, comprised of representatives from the Treaty 7 Nations. With their input, and guidance from former Society leaders, we set a new direction and began discussions about renaming this historical site.

Formal Engagement Process

In 2023, the Society partnered with Stormy Lake Consulting (Stormy Lake) on a formal engagement project. We sought to gain understanding about what the Fort Calgary site means to Calgarians and how it can evolve to better meet community needs. Through surveys, dialogic sessions, cocreation sessions, one-to-one conversations and group discussions, Stormy Lake gathered valuable information from a broad swath of the community about how the Society and Fort Calgary can become a more relevant part of the community.

Activity	Engaged individuals	Timeframe
One-on-one conversations with Indigenous community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troy Patenaude, former director of Indigenous Relations, the Society • Hal Eagletail, member of Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee, and member of the Northern Dene TsuuT'ina Nation • Fred Powderface, member of Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee and Stoney/Chiniki Band elder • Kent Ayoungman, member of Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee, ceremonial knowledge keeper and member of the Siksika Nation • Tobias Provost, member of Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee and member of the Piikani Nation • Matthew Hiltermann, member of Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee, historian and member of the Metis Nation of Alberta • Paula Smith, Communications Officer, Blackfoot Confederacy 	May-August 2023
Group conversations with members of the Alberta RCMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kimberly Mueller, Proactive Recruiting & Indigenous Policing, Alberta RCMP. • Vernon Hagen, Metis Community Liaison Officer, Alberta RCMP • Irwin McAdam, Indigenous Relations, Alberta RCMP • Trevor Daroux, Assistant Commissioner, Alberta RCMP 	July 2023

Activity	Engaged individuals	Timeframe
Group conversations with members of the RCMP Veterans' Association, Calgary Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Ellergodt, Treasurer Executive, RCMP Veterans Association Calgary Division (and Former Society Board Member) • Lance Saunders, Memorial Executive, RCMP Veterans Association Calgary Division (and Former Society Board Member) 	July 2023
Online surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Fort Calgary community (i.e., employees, volunteers, past-event attendees, social media followers) – 443 respondents – • Calgary residents — 1,026 respondents from a representative sample of Calgarians 	May 15- June 13, 2023
7-hour, In-person workshop with 9 of the Society's Board of Directors and two executives on June 11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Beck, Board Chair • James Melnyk, Treasurer • Georgine Ulmer, Director • Carol AE Mason, Director • Janet Hutchinson, Director • Susan Reckseidler, Director • Paul Wright, Director • Alyssa Berry, Director • Jen Thompson, President • Rebekah Jarvis, Director of Community Engagement 	June 11, 2023
Three-hour, in-person Dialogic workshop with 57 diverse Calgary community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from the Society staff and leadership • Tourism • Government • Linguistics, arts & accommodations industry 	June 28, 2023
Six-hour, in-person co-creation workshop with eight select individuals representing Fort Calgary, Indigenous communities, marketing or tourism industries in Calgary. In addition to this workshop, participants gathered for a 60-minute briefing ahead of the meeting and for 90-minutes after the workshop provided additional feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasha Komery, Project Specialist, Arts Commons • Cynthia Chang-Christison, Director of External Relations, The Glenbow Museum • Emma Stevens, Director of Communications and External Relations, CMLC • Heather Black, Indigenous entrepreneur and business owner, Buffalo Stone Woman • Jeff Hessel, Senior Vice President of Marketing, Tourism Calgary • Diane Din Ebongue, Multidisciplinary artist, Ethnik Festivals • Jen Thompson, President, The Fort Calgary Preservation Society • Rebekah Jarvis, Director of Community Engagement, The Fort Calgary Preservation Society • Chris Wharton, Principal, GOOD Company 	August 17, 2023
Indigenous Youth Roundtable with three Indigenous youth (under	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imajyn Cardinal • Tawny Zerkee • Nikki Freeman 	November 29, 2023

30). Stormy Lake moderated discussion without representatives from the Society in the room to promote openness and honesty.		
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Informal Engagement Process

In addition to the formal engagement process led by Stormy Lake Consulting outlined above, the Society’s president Jennifer Thomson and her team have also met strategically with different community members and groups to discuss Fort Calgary’s direction and potential name change.

Activity	Engaged individuals	Timeframe
Indigenous Community		
Gather feedback from Indigenous Advisory Council Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hal Eagletail, member of Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee, and member of the Northern Dene TsuuT'ina Nation • Fred Powderface, member of Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee and Stoney/Chiniki Band elder • Kent Ayoungman, member of Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee, ceremonial knowledge keeper and member of the Siksika Nation. • Tobias Provost, member of the Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee and member of the Piikani Nation • Matthew Hiltermann, member of the Fort Calgary Indigenous Advisory Committee, historian and member of the Metis Nation of Alberta 	November 2023
Feedback from the Blackfoot Confederacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirby Smith, Protocol Coordinator • Jack Royal, CEO • Paula Smith, Former Executive Assistant 	November 2023
Feedback from Blackfoot Women’s Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paula Smith, Indigenous Engagement Manager, The Fort Calgary Preservation Society • Lucille Wright, Museum Operations, Blackfoot Crossing • Mona Royal, Co-owner, Boy Chief Trading Post • Carol Mason, Director of Operations, Confederacy Chiefs Society 	November 2023

Activity	Engaged individuals	Timeframe
Gather feedback from The City of Calgary Indigenous Relations Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terry Poucette, Former Indigenous Relations Office Lead, The City of Calgary • Harold Horsefall, Issue Strategist, The City of Calgary • Sherri Kerlock, Indigenous Relations Consultant, The City of Calgary • Sharon Goulet, Indigenous Issue Strategist, The City of Calgary 	November 2023
Elders Knowledge Keepers Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Kaquitts, Stoney Nakoda Elder • Adrian Wolfleg, Siksika Elder • Doreen Bergum, Métis Elder • Marina Crane, Tsuut'ina Elder 	February 7, 2024
Gather feedback from Métis District 5 & 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carmen Lasanté, District 6 Captain • Jason Chernow, District 6 Community Rep • Nelson Anthony Lussier, District 5 Captain 	February 8, 2024
Gather feedback from Calgary Police Services' Indigenous Relations Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sargent, Julian Klyne, Indigenous Relations Team • Inspector, Avril Martin, Racial Equity Office Lead • Sherry Elliott, Indigenous Community Mobilizer Team • Kirsten Lindley, Indigenous Relations Team • Christina Tobias, Indigenous Community Mobilizer Team • Brooke Plews, Indigenous Relations Team 	February 8, 2024
Gather feedback from University of Calgary's Indigenous Engagement Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reg and Rose Crowshoe, Traditional Knowledge Keepers from Piikani First Nation • Shawna Cunningham, Acting Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement) • Norma Jeremick'ca, Manager, Community Outreach & Program • Gerald Ratt, Specialist, Indigenous Intercultural Initiatives 	January 2024
Future of Fort Calgary information session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruby Eagle Child, Kainai • Shayla Eagle Child, Kainai • Garret Smith, Piikani 	April 4, 2024
Political Community		
Activity	Engaged individuals	Timeframe
The City of Calgary Partnerships Business Unit representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Chase, Director, Partnerships • Franca Gualtieri, Manager, Arts & Culture • Lori Kerr, Manager, Major Partners • Kim Mustard, Team Lead, Strategy & Service Delivery Partners 	November – December 2023

Activity	Engaged individuals	Timeframe
The City of Calgary, Calgary Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyle Ripley, Director, Calgary Parks & Open Spaces • Carmen Hindson, Manager, Parks Downtown and Centre City Operations • Michelle Reid, Cultural Landscape Management Lead • Lauren Bryant, Cultural Landscape Planner 	November 2023 – January 2024
Informed Provincial Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanya Fir, Minister of Arts, Culture and the Status of Women • Rick Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations • Joe Ceci, MLA, Calgary Buffalo • Samir Kayande, MLA Calgary Elbow 	January - February 2024
Informed Federal Members of Parliament (MP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg McLean, MP, Calgary Centre 	February 2024
Internal Community		
Gather feedback from the Society's full and part-time staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 17 staff members 	November – December 2023
Gather feedback from the Society's Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 12 Board members 	November – December 2023
Informed Community Partners		
Downtown Champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts Commons • City Administration – Outside the Partnerships Business Unit • CMLC • Calgary Public Library 	November 2023 - January 2024
Inglewood Business Improvement Area (BIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebecca O'Brien, Executive Director, Inglewood BIA 	December 2023
East Village Community Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ken Peach, President, East Village Community Association 	December 2023
National Music Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Mosker, President and CEO 	December 2023
Calgary Hotel Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sol Zia, Executive Director 	January 2024
Tourism Calgary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Hessel, Senior Vice President of Marketing 	January 2024
Calgary Stampede	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs Team 	February 2024
RCMP Veterans Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Ellergodt, Treasurer Executive, RCMP Veterans Association Calgary Division (and Former Society Board Member) 	February 23, 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lance Saunders, Memorial Executive, RCMP Veterans Association Calgary Division (and Former Society Board Member) 	
Calgary Post Secondaries		
Calgary Post Secondaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Calgary Alberta University of the Arts 	January-February 2024

What We heard

Summary of Survey Feedback

- 380,000 people think Fort Calgary is important (extrapolated from collected data).
- Calgarians want varied histories from Fort Calgary.
- The history of Indigenous peoples is the most popular emphasis across generations.
- Fort Calgary is more than the building — only half of visitors to Fort Calgary see the inside of the museum. Whether or not they entered the building, they consider themselves to have visited “Fort Calgary.”
- Calgarians want Fort Calgary to do more:
 - Tell more than one story
 - Advance Truth and Reconciliation
 - Reconnect to the land
 - Go deeper with Calgary’s story
 - Build community
 - Make history relevant today
 - Elevate the experience
 - Be a gathering space and a gathering place

Session, Workshop and Conversation Feedback

Sample of qualitative feedback from the 2023 Fort Calgary Engagement Project:

“If you leave the name as is, you are living in the past.”

“I like The Confluence – the confluence of people coming together, the confluence of ideas.”

“I think the name is good – I googled confluence and it means the merging of two things together and I think that is perfect for what Fort Calgary is trying to do.”

“[The Confluence is] definitely a more welcoming and feminine shift.”

“There’s so many labels and separations and things that divide us, so what can connect us? And that’s the love for the rivers.”

“Confluence is about the coming together of separate entities, separate energies. It’s about exchange and, ultimately, unification.”

“Where the rivers come together is kind of a tangled mess for a while, and then it comes together and unites. That’s like the history that’s messy.”

“I remember coming in here over the years as a young person, and it always reminded me of that song ‘Which One Doesn’t Belong?’ and I always felt like I was the part that didn’t belong. I didn’t want other kids to come here and feel that way.”

“My first impression walking in as somebody that had no idea what the history was, it did seem to be an Indigenized space that I felt comfortable being in.”

“I feel like it’s haunted here. It has a very violent history and was very unwelcoming towards Indigenous people.... There’s a lot of reclamation that has to be done in these types of places.”

“Fort Calgary needs to become more relevant to today than it has ever been. It needs to connect the past with the present and, in doing so, lead us into a better future.”

“When I came last summer, there was a room with a shovel and the exhibits were still very creepy and outdated. I saw that Ahkoinnima Star Crop Eared Wolf is now a curator here so that’s really interesting. She’s one of my favourite artists. So, I’ve seen that there’s lots of shifts happening within this short time that’s changing a lot.”

“Fort Calgary can provide the missing context that communities need to reconcile the truth of other experiences beyond their own.”

“There is a desire for Fort Calgary to be more engaging and energetic – emotionally, physically, mentally.”

“Fort Calgary will need to build credibility as the place where these stories are shared, which it can do by being transparent with its process of investigating and showcasing many voices.”

“Fort Calgary’s role is to share the truth, offer hope and create intentions to move forward in a good way.”

“As a student, a lot of people I know who aren’t Indigenous don’t know the full story. For example, there’s a lot of people from other countries who live here but don’t know anything about Indigenous culture and history. I feel like we really need to get a bigger voice and share the bigger story to everyone because what I’m learning in social studies is the same thing I’ve learned since I was a little kid — it’s always the same story that was written by a white person.”

“I think this place should be fun in the sense that there’s heavy material, but there’s also [safety], which creates a sense of fun to it. You can play with the information and feel not overwhelmed.”

“I firmly believe kids as young as five aren’t ready for the stories of Indigenous people, they need to fall in love with Indigenous people first and their cultures. And then at the age of nine, tell them. And then you’re ready to process the challenges out there.”

“There’s this myth that Calgary was born of ranchers. There’s a myth of identity.”

“There’s just so much masculine energy here. I always noticed it’s not a circle. They created walls for their forts while we were in circles. We based our life off circles.”

“I don’t want my story told by anyone but me. Even if there are interesting and rich stories but if it’s not our story to tell we have to recognize that.”