

Calgary is Changing!

Everyone knows that the City of Calgary is growing, that the ethno-cultural mix is dynamic and that transportation is the issue of the day. But the question is what does this mean to our "quality of life" and the future of our communities. Calgary growth in five years from 1996-2001 was 15.8 % and further growth by 2004. In 2001, 17.5% of Calgarians identify themselves as a visible minority. By 2005 the self identified visible minority is expected to be 25%. The "Calgary Growth Monitor, 2003, by Cameron Strategy Inc is an interesting read.

Here are some other interesting statistics:

- Calgary is the 4th most ethnically diverse centre in Canada
- It has the 4th largest foreign born population
- Of the Calgary population, one in five speak a language other than English or French
- Calgary has the fourth largest proportion in Canada of undergraduates degrees or higher
- It has the fifth highest incidence in Canada of individuals in artistic/creative occupations
- Calgary is ranked fifth in Canada in terms of its share of employment in high-tech employment
- The Epcor Centre for the Performing Arts is one of three major art centres in Canada and the largest one of its kind in Western Canada.
- Calgary has the fourth highest average level of earnings (\$36,851)
- The city has the highest incidence (4.9%) of earners making \$100,000 or more per year
- The Average price of a home is over \$200,000, one of the pricier cities behind Vancouver and Toronto.
- One in five Calgarians has been a resident for five years or less
- Calgary has one of the lowest average age at 34 years
- Calgary has had a 31% increase in the number of dwellings from 1991-2001
- 79% of commuters use a private vehicle to go to work
- When public transit is considered, 13% of Calgarians use this mode to travel

From the report:

"In tracking attitudes toward the city rate of growth across Canada's key urban centres, Calgary was the only city where the majority of its residents felt that their city was growing too fast for its good. Urban sprawl has been a growing concern for Calgary. With increased suburban development in the suburbs, where many of the City's newest residents reside, comes increased commuting time, leading to less undertaking of community activities and social inter-action.

Longer term residents feel that the friendliness and spirit of the city has been in decline and affecting Calgary's quality of life. As noted in the Calgary Herald's "Soul of the City" survey, "neighbourhood activities" ranks eight out of eleven ways residents network with each other. The study found that over three quarters (77%) of Calgarians rarely or never got involved in neighbourhood activities, with only five percent (5%) who did get involved.

Calgary often prides itself on the extent of civic and community engagement among its citizens. Signs are emerging that continued growth may increase the challenges of sustaining the spirit of civic involvement, which is arguably one of the most fundamental facets of Calgary's identity."

What does this story mean for Community Associations? The purpose of the Associations is to provide needed programs/ services, engage the residents in community related concerns, develop and celebrate the communities' uniqueness, and strengthen pride of community. Community Associations have identified their most critical challenge to be the recruitment and retention of volunteers, program/service/event participation and CA membership.

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Cameron Strategy Inc*



FEDERATION OF CALGARY COMMUNITIES
#301, 1609 14 Street SW, Calgary, AB T3C 1E4
Tel: 244 4111 Fax: 244 4129
Website: www.calgarycommunities.com