Inside the Room

An Analysis of a Failed Olympic and Paralympic Games Bid Exploration Process

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ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

This is a study on the ultimately failed Olympic and Paralympic Games bid exploration process adopted by Calgary, Canada between 2016-2017. The goal of this research is to isolate the strengths and weaknesses of the process to offer guidance for other cities that may bid for future Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We would like to thank the nineteen individuals who were interviewed for this study. Their openness offered the researchers critical insight into the Bid Exploration process. We would also like to also thank the Mount Royal University’s Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the financial support provided for this study.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scope

The Olympic and Paralympic Games (OPG) are the largest multi-sport events in the world. Historically, the bidding process to host the Games has been highly competitive, with cities bidding multiple times for the right to host. In the last decade, however, the bid process has come under scrutiny with many countries and cities opting not to bid or to withdraw from the bid process following citizen protests, negative plebiscite votes, and/or concerns about long-term tax burdens. In response, some cities have implemented bid exploration processes to determine if their city and all relevant stakeholders are prepared to proceed with a bid. One such city was Calgary, Canada which had already hosted the 1988 Olympic Winter Games and was assessing whether to bid to host the 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (OPWG). This research thus seeks to assess the effectiveness of the bid exploration process (BEP) using a qualitative approach with specific research questions centered on the structural design, funding model and stakeholder engagement outcomes.

Methodology

The researchers completed 19 in-depth one-on-one interviews with board members, staff and municipal government stakeholders associated with the Calgary Bid Exploration Committee (CBEC). The interviews were conducted between May and July 2018.

Findings

The study identified the following ten composite themes:

1. **Why pursue an OPWG?** The City of Calgary did not have an easily understood overall strategic vision. This emerged as a challenge when exploring how an OPWG could be leveraged to deliver on the city’s vision. In hindsight, the City had (or could develop) policies (e.g., sport policy, tourism policy, arts policy) that could have formed the basis for a unified vision. Similarly, the provincial and federal governments likely possessed visions against which an OPWG could be judged but these were not clearly articulated or at least understood.

2. **Weakly integrated:** CBEC was an isolated exercise lacking clarity about how CBEC was to be integrated into a larger potential bid and city planning process.

3. **Abstract mandate:** CBEC was provided with terms of reference, but was not given a clearly defined mandate, outcomes or measures against which it could be evaluated. Many interviewees understood that CBEC was required to frame its own mandate. This lack of clearly defined outcomes created incongruence between City Administration, City Council and CBEC.

4. **Objective and balanced:** CBEC was an independent body of citizen volunteers with diverse skills. While every member of CBEC possessed an open mind and no entrenched or preconceived position, members felt this was not the perception of other stakeholders.

5. **Legitimacy challenge:** The recruitment of members in CBEC was not publicly transparent and did not follow publicly available City of Calgary board recruitment strategies. Although the recruitment process for board members resulted in a highly qualified and diverse group being chosen, the perceived lack of transparency further contributed to the narrative from critics that the “fix was in” and this led to a legitimacy challenge.

6. **Single funder challenge:** The City of Calgary, as the exclusive funder, created a situation where neither the provincial nor federal governments had any vested interest in CBEC. The result was that CBEC represented the views of a single funder and lacked the direction required to engage the other orders of government, particularly the province, in later discussion around funding. Interviewees commented that the approach to 2026 differed a great deal from 1988, which was viewed (still) as a community and volunteer-led initiative.
7. **Weak political oversight:** Although interviewees confirmed that there were informal discussions between CBEC and individual members of City Council, CBEC had no direct and structured oversight by City Council. Rather, the day to day relationship was limited to City staff. This gap enabled opposing City Councillors, who chose not to attend informal sessions, to claim that they were not engaged in the process and once again the perception was that the “fix was in” by OPWG insiders.

8. **Inability to negotiate:** CBEC was not mandated to negotiate with all potential capital and operating funding OPWG sources including governments, the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and sponsors. Although CBEC did have general guidelines from the federal government and knowledge from the Vancouver 2010 OPWG, this impacted their ability to prepare for future negotiations with funders.

9. **Public engagement challenge:** The limited timeframe and budget of CBEC challenged meaningful (both broad and deep) public engagement. As a result, consultation was limited to principles, rather than specific options for the public input. By many, this was perceived as one of the most significant breakdowns in the CBEC process.

10. **Consumable outcomes:** The final 5,400-page CBEC Report, was comprised of a 300 page core report, appendices, and a PowerPoint presentation. It was perceived as being in a format that was not consumable by the general public or City Council.

**Recommendations for Future Cities**

A refined BEP model is incorporated in this study. This refined model is based on the following eleven recommendations:

1. **OPG as a means to an end:** Prior to the establishment of a BEP, a potential host city (and associated jurisdictions) should possess a unified and approved strategic vision and associated key performance indicators. This enables a BEP to explore how the OPG may contribute (or not) to delivering this vision. In parallel, a municipality must evaluate alternative scenarios for the application of public resources and the associated costs and benefits to a community.

2. **Clear pathway:** The BEP should be integrated into a larger potential OPG bid process, including a clear timeline on a decision to proceed to a full bid and the potential need for a formal public vote.

3. **Citizen oversight:** To be perceived as legitimate, a BEP should incorporate a diverse oversight body and include representatives of key stakeholder groups including private citizens.

4. **Transparency and legitimacy:** The oversight body must be representative of the community, and possess adequate skills and knowledge to evaluate both the costs and intangible value of an OPG. The appointment of the board should be open and transparent and follow a regular and accepted public nomination process.

5. **Inter-governmental BEP:** All three levels of government should have a vested interest in the process. Therefore, the BEP funding model should mirror the typical funding model for any future OPG bid.

6. **Clear measurable mandate:** A BEP should possess clear and well-defined outcomes and associated performance measures.

7. **Ongoing oversight:** There should be ongoing oversight of the BEP, including well defined program gates for when to decide whether a city pursues a bid.

8. **Clarity of roles:** A BEP should clearly define the role of both elected officials and bureaucracy in both the development and decision-making process.

9. **Funder negotiations:** A BEP should be mandated to engage and negotiate basic funding frameworks across all funding sources including, government, National Olympic and Paralympic Committees, International Olympic and Paralympic Committees and sponsors.
10. **Meaningful public engagement:** A BEP must have meaningful public engagement (not only stakeholder engagement), but only once there are meaningful options for public consultation and evaluation. This public consultation must incorporate the alternative scenarios for the allocation of public resources if a municipality chooses not to proceed with a bid.

11. **Strategic public communications:** The outcomes of the BEP should be presented in multimedia formats that are relevant and easily digestible for the various stakeholder audiences, decision-makers, and the public. The board should be given the opportunity to present their findings broadly and publicly upon completion of their work.
Inside the Room:
An Analysis of a Failed Olympic and Paralympic Games Bid Exploration Process

The Olympic and Paralympic Games (OPG) are the largest multi-sport events in the world and, up until the 2012 OPG in London, the cities bidding to host them have been described as participating in a sport unto itself (Hautbois, Parent & Séguin, 2012). Since 2012, however, the OPG bid process has changed with many cities withdrawing either before the actual bidding begins or prior to the completion of the process.

Today’s bid process is thus characterized by debate over the value of hosting versus the long-term financial risks. Maese (2018) notes that the “costs are exorbitant, economic benefits are dubious, and fewer and fewer cities bother even throwing their hats in the ring.” Promoters of hosting OPG and other mega-events, meanwhile, contend that the benefits to a host city are multi-dimensional including economic investment, enhancing city brand and promoting tourism (e.g. Bennett, 2013; Kim, Kang, & Kim, 2014; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996; Zhang & Zhao, 2009). Critics, conversely identify a series of issues, including a lack of transparency and citizen representation (Henne, 2015; Transparency International Global Corruption Report: Sport, 2016), bid funding (Shoemaker, 2016), political oversight and governance (Mason, Thibault & Misener, 2006; Transparency International, 2016), and lack of engagement with bid stakeholders (Hautbois, Parent & Séguin, 2012), and poor public stakeholder engagement (Ponsford & Williams, 2010).

This ongoing debate has resulted in the consistent decline of the number of cities pursuing an OPG and an increasing number of cities withdrawing during the bid process (see Figure 1).

As noted in Figure 1, a significant decline has been observed and in recognizing this threat, the rights holder of the Olympic Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and supported by the rights holder of the Paralympic Games, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), in an unprecedented move, awarded two Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games (OPSG) simultaneously; Paris for the 2024 OPSG and Los Angeles for the 2028 OPSG (IOC, 2017). This followed a process whereby all other cities who had indicated an interest had withdrawn at different stages from the bid process. The 2022 OPWG bid race, meanwhile

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1 At one point, 33 cities had shown a preliminary interest in hosting the 2024 Games. However, all but two withdrew at different stages due to a variety of pressures, including a plebiscite loss in Hamburg and a petition in Budapest.
“was the most volatile in recent history. Six cities applied but four European cities dropped out, one-by-one, leaving only Beijing to defeat Almaty in Kazakhstan in a close final vote” (Livingston, 2018).

In an effort to address this decline and create a more cost-effective and transparent bid process for the OPG, the IOC passed Agenda 2020 (IOC, n.d.), a policy that incorporated a series of major reforms to the process. The approval of Agenda 2020 was met with cautious optimism by policymakers and other OPG stakeholder groups (MacAloon, 2016). Critics, however, remained skeptical whether the reforms would be operationalized in any meaningful way (Boykoff & Mascarenhas, 2016; MacAloon, 2016). This dichotomy is reflective of city bidding behaviour in recent years but has been on public display during the bidding process for the 2026 OPWG, the context for this research as this bid is the first that falls under the new 2020 Agenda. In particular, this paper adopts stakeholder identification and salience as a framework to improve our understanding of the current bid process situation and to provide direction for future research, policy and practical decisions (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 2017; Parent & Deephouse, 2007). Stakeholder identification and salience is an appropriate framework in a sporting event context due to the competing objectives, interests and priorities of different stakeholder groups (Parent & Deephouse, 2007).

In this study, we focus on the bid exploration process (BEP) adopted by Calgary, Canada which hosted the Olympic Winter Games in 1988 and explored a bid to host the 2026 OPWG. The precedent of hosting both Olympic and Paralympic Games did not occur until the Summer of 1988 in Seoul. Since then, every Olympic host city for both Summer and Winter Games has also hosted the Paralympic Games with the 2008 OPG being the first where a city officially bid to host both Games. Though other cities have established different BEPs, in our opinion no city has invested in such a comprehensive approach as Calgary. The BEP Calgary adopted was due to the varying stakeholder views to its funding, governance and the board representation. The specific goal of this study, therefore, is to use stakeholder identification and salience as a framework to examine Calgary’s bid exploration structure, process and merit. In doing so, our hope is to then provide guidance to future cities interested in establishing a BEP, future research on the topic, and potential policy developments for the IOC, IPC and other rights holders of major events.

Conceptual Framework

In the past two decades, the interest in bidding for an OPG or OPWG as well as staying in a bid process has declined (Boykoff & Mascarenhas, 2016). This caution for bidding, particularly in western democracies, is rooted in the perceived political and economic risks (Baade & Matheson, 2016). This has ebbed and flowed depending on the success of prior Games. Montreal 1976 for instance was condemned as a financial disaster while Los Angeles 1984 demonstrated the potential financial windfall of hosting (although it is worth noting that it was the only city bidding at that time). Corruption scandals hit the IOC in the late 1990s, and the highly visible financial disasters associated with Athens 2004 and Rio 2016, and the enormous perceived costs associated with Sochi 2014, then led to political reticence and increased caution of hosting future Games. The allure, even if brief, of hosting the Games, however, seems to remain with many political and community leaders with many at least indicating an interest in pursuing a bid to host future Games.

For those still interested in bidding and hosting the OPG, a new approach to bidding has been observed due to the increasing skepticism of the benefits of hosting the Games. Thus, cities have begun approaching bidding with far more caution and a variety of different approaches to explore the feasibility, prior to allocating the significant resources required for a full OPG bid. In this study, we define this feasibility stage as a bid exploration process. Cities who have pursued formal BEPs include, Denver (Denver and Colorado Olympic and Paralympic Exploratory Committee, 2018), Geneva and Calgary. Though numerous researchers have examined the OPG bidding processes (e.g. De Nooij, 2014; Hautbois, Parent & Séguin, 2012; Atkinson, Mourato, Szymanski & Ozdemiroglu, 2008), no studies have examined the BEP that a city can use to decide if they should proceed to the formal bid stage.
Herein, we apply, Mitchell, Agle, and Wood’s (1997) stakeholder identification and salience framework to explore the BEP. Within this study, we define a stakeholder as any actor, direct or indirect, that possesses a tangible or intangible resource that an organization requires to meet its defined strategic objectives (Freeman, 1994; Finch, Deephouse & Varella, 2015). In bidding for an OPG, this includes politicians at different levels of government, citizens of the host city, athletes, media, economic development groups, and public and private sector facility owners and operators (Hautbois, Parent & Séguin, 2012). In many cases, these stakeholders possess competing interests, requiring a potential bid city to prioritize these interests as they evaluate pursuing a bid.

Scholars argue that the evaluation and ultimate prioritization of stakeholders can be framed by three stakeholder dimensions – power, legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 2017; Parent & Deephouse, 2007). Power is the ability of a stakeholder to impose their will on a relational partner. Power is further broken down between utilitarian (threats to provide or withhold tangible resources), normative (threats to publicize displeasure) or coercive (threats of enforcement). Legitimacy is a stakeholder who has an appropriate claim within the context of a social system (Suchman, 1995; Finch, Deephouse & Varella, 2015). Finally, urgency reflects the time sensitivity to a stakeholder claim. Parent and Deephouse (2008) in their study of mega-sporting event organizing processes, determined that power was the more influential stakeholder dimension, followed by urgency and legitimacy. This finding is important as the general public was defined as possessing high legitimacy, but limited power.

We contend that the broad introduction of plebiscites into OPG bidding in western democracies over the past two decades, elevated the role of the citizens of the host city as it provided this group a utilitarian power that previously did not exist. Moreover, the explosive growth of social media amplified the normative power of the general public (Labrecque, vor dem Esche, Mathwick, Novak, & Hofacker, 2013). Finally, plebiscites established an urgency to OPG bidding, as organizing committees had to define and communicate the value of an OPG to citizens of a host city up to a decade in advance, so that the general public would support proceeding with a bid. In the next section, we will provide an overview of the unique BEP used in Calgary. Following this, we will define a series of research questions that we address.

**Background: The 2026 Calgary Bid Exploration Committee**

The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games were perceived by many as a tremendous success and the Games have been lauded as one that provided a significant financial and infrastructure legacy to the city and region. Specific examples include Canada Olympic Park (now WinSport), Calgary Saddledome, Canmore Nordic Centre, the Olympic Oval and Nakiska Ski Resort all of which continue to be used today (XV Olympic Winter Games Organizing Committee, 1988). Many stakeholders were also impacted by legacy funding from the 1988 Games that supported the ongoing reinvestment in these facilities (WinSport, 2018). Following 1988, Calgary became the central training facility for Canadian winter athletes, with 77% of the 2018 OPG Team Canada athletes having trained or competed in the Calgary region (WinSport, 2018). Based on this, members of a range of Calgary non-governmental organizations, including Sport Calgary, Tourism Calgary and Calgary Sport Tourism Authority, began informal discussions about Calgary potential bidding to host a future OPG. Calgary, Vancouver and Quebec City all submitted proposals to the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) with the hopes of hosting the 2010 OPWG with the COC ultimately selecting Vancouver, which was then chosen by the IOC as the host city.

Starting in 2014, Calgary community leaders then informally discussed the merits of bidding to host the 2026 Games. However, the municipal government was unprepared to commit the estimated $30M required to support a full OPWG bid (City of Calgary, 2018, 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games City Secretariat Update). Instead, the municipal government established a BEP to evaluate the feasibility of Calgary pursuing a bid and as a result, in September 2016, Calgary City Council (CCC), in conjunction with several non-governmental organizations, established the Calgary Bid Exploration Committee (CBEC). CBEC focused on answering two inter-related questions:
1. Is it feasible for Calgary to host the 2026 OPWG?
2. Is it prudent for Calgary to bid and seek to host the 2026 OPWG?

CBEC was provided a CDN$4.7 million operating budget by the CCC, with the City of Calgary owning 75% of CBEC, and Calgary Tourism owning the remaining 25% (City of Calgary, 2017). CCC established a volunteer board of directors comprised of 17 senior civic leaders from a diverse range of backgrounds. Board members included three former Olympic and Paralympic athletes, a former member of the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), and thirteen senior business and community leaders (i.e., chief executive officers, partners in professional service firms, and leaders from civic institutions, the indigenous community, and arts and culture organizations). CBEC was chaired by a retired chief of police from the Calgary Police Services. A critical requirement of the CBEC mandate was that the board and staff be objective and balanced throughout the process. The CBEC Chair, Rick Hanson stated with the introduction of CBEC:

Today, we begin our fact-focused exploration. Our goal is to collect all the best possible information, in collaboration with the community, to see if it makes good sense to bid on the 2026 Games. Once we present our findings to City Council, Council will make a decision to proceed with an Olympic and Paralympic bid or not. Through this exploration, we want to see if a uniquely-Calgary Games is possible: a model that is focused on building community and supporting athletes while also being very cost effective. Our next steps will include developing working relationships with key stakeholders, including facility owners, neighbouring communities, sports federations, and others (City of Calgary, 2016).

The board was supported by staff with expertise in sport, operations, security, public engagement, communications, finance and project management. Figure 2 presents a summary of the model adopted by Calgary (referred to herein as the Calgary Model).

**Figure 2: Calgary BEP Model**

The structure noted in Figure 2 is based on the board focusing on five work streams including public engagement and community impact, master facilities plan, stakeholder and government relations, security and risk, and finance and investment. Table 1 presents a summary of the five CBEC workstreams.
Table 1: Calgary Model Workstreams

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<th>Workstream</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public Engagement</td>
<td>Managed a public engagement process to identify the public position on a potential OPG bid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters Facilities Plan</td>
<td>Conducted an in-depth review and audit of all existing legacy venues and assessed the potential venue options required to meet the needs of an OPG. It included an analysis of the field of play, operational space and the long-term plans, including sustainability, of the venues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security &amp; Risk</td>
<td>Developed an overall OPG security plan including a budget framework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial &amp; Investment</td>
<td>Developed an economic evaluation of a potential bid, focusing on net economic impact resulting from the construction, staging and operations associated with bidding and hosting the OPG.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholder &amp; Government Relations</td>
<td>Assessed the levels of support from directly affected stakeholders, such as national sport organizations, and reviewed the issues that may affect their levels of support for a bid.</td>
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CBEC completed their work between September 2016 and July 2017. In May 2017, CBEC submitted a 5400-page report to CCC that concluded that it was feasible for Calgary to host the 2026 OPWG. However, CBEC was far less decisive in whether it was prudent for Calgary to bid for the OPWG. Their final report identified six areas (See Appendix A) that required further exploration before the City was in a position to decide on whether to pursue a full bid for the 2026 OPWG or not. In November 2018, in a plebiscite the city of Calgary voted 56% against proceeding to a full bid.

Methodology

Mitchell’s (1997) stakeholder identification and salience framework offers an optimal lens to examine the effectiveness of the Calgary Model. Based on this, two research questions were defined to guide our study:

1. Does the Calgary Model sufficiently recognize the power, legitimacy and urgency dimensions that host city’s citizens possess in the modern OPG bidding process?
2. Does the Calgary Model sufficiently recognize the power, legitimacy and urgency dimensions possessed by other OPG stakeholders?

To respond to these two questions, we conducted 19 in-depth one-on-one interviews with a sample of CBEC board members, staff and municipal government stakeholders. A qualitative research design was implemented to follow with previous research on stakeholders in major sport events (Parent, 2008; Hautbois, Parent & Séguin, 2012; Séguin, Parent & O’Reilly, 2010) and to deconstruct and analyze the Calgary Model to respond to the research questions. In identifying the interviewees, we adopted a purposeful sampling approach and assured participation by a diverse range of constituents (Creswell, 2012). In total, 16 board members were invited and a total of 12 accepted our invitation. The final sample included twelve board members, four CBEC staff and three City of Calgary staff directly engaged in CBEC (both

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2 The spouse of the lead author was a member of the CBEC board. Due to this conflict, she did not participate in this study.
elected and appointed). The sample included ten male and nine females. Eight interviewees can from a sporting background; eleven were can from a non-sporting background.

A phenomenological interview protocol was implemented for the interviews which took place at locations of the participant’s choice. Interviews were standardized, semi-structured, and based on an open-ended protocol. This format was chosen to provide sufficient structure to explore major themes, while maximizing objectivity and ensuring spontaneous reflection on relevant issues (Trevino, 1986). This approach was also commonly used in stakeholder theory studies in major sporting events (Parent, 2008). The interview protocol was designed not to be leading, but rather, the protocol explored the processes and outcomes associated with the CBEC process. Interviewees were asked to provide details about their professional background and role in CBEC. Questions were designed to be open-ended to provide maximum opportunity for the participant to provide his or her own perceptions and interpretations of the subject under study. The interview protocol is presented as Appendix B.

Each interview was conducted in a private location and was digitally recorded. The interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in duration. Each researcher reviewed the audio tapes of each interview and the transcripts in their entirety to provide a holistic perspective of each interviewee’s responses. To maximize objectivity, each interview was independently coded by two researchers (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This process enabled the researchers to independently code major themes at the interviewee-level. The next stage engaged two additional researchers, to consolidate overlapping themes. This reduction process was completed in a manner that identified composite themes without losing the integrity of each interviewee’s contribution (Moustakas, 1994). To mitigate this risk during the reduction process, a separate document was maintained by the researchers of all interviewee content removed during the analysis.

Results

During the first phase of the coding process, a total of 31 major themes were independently identified by the two coders. The second stage had all four researchers consolidate these into ten composite themes as noted in Table 2.

Table 2: Composite Themes

<table>
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<th>Theme</th>
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<td><strong>Theme 1 - Why pursue an OPWG?</strong> The City of Calgary did not have an easily understood overall strategic vision. This emerged as a challenge when exploring how an OPWG could be leveraged to deliver on the city’s vision. In hindsight, the City had (or could develop) policies (e.g., sport policy, tourism policy, arts policy) that could have formed the basis for a unified vision. Similarly, the provincial and federal governments likely possessed visions against which an OPWG could be judged but these were not clearly articulated or at least understood.</td>
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<td><strong>Theme 2 - Weakly integrated:</strong> CBEC was an isolated exercise lacking clarity about how CBEC was to be integrated into a larger potential bid process.</td>
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<td><strong>Theme 3 - Abstract mandate:</strong> CBEC was provided with terms of reference, but was not given a clearly defined mandate, outcomes or measures against which it could be evaluated. Many interviewees understood that CBEC was required to frame its own mandate. This lack of clearly defined outcomes created incongruence between City Administration, City Council and CBEC.</td>
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**Theme 4 - Objective and balanced:** CBEC was an independent body of citizen volunteers with diverse skills. While every member of CBEC possessed an open mind and no entrenched or preconceived position, members felt this was not the perception of other stakeholders.

**Theme 5 - Legitimacy challenge:** The recruitment of members in CBEC was not publicly transparent and did not follow publicly available City of Calgary board recruitment strategies. Although the recruitment process for board members resulted in a highly qualified and diverse group being chosen, the perceived lack of transparency further contributed to the narrative from critics that the “fix was in” and this led to a legitimacy challenge.

**Theme 6 - Single funder challenge:** The City of Calgary, as the exclusive funder, created a situation where neither the provincial nor federal governments had any vested interest in CBEC. The result was that CBEC represented the views of a single funder and lacked the direction required to engage the other orders of government, particularly the province, in later discussion around funding. Interviewees commented that the approach to 2026 differed a great deal from 1988, which was viewed (still) as a community and volunteer-led initiative.

**Theme 7 - Weak political oversight:** Although interviewees confirmed that there were informal discussions between CBEC and individual members of City Council, CBEC had no direct and structured oversight by City Council. Rather, the day to day relationship was limited to City staff. This gap enabled opposing City Councillors, who choose not to attend informal sessions, to claim that they were not engaged in the process and once again the perception was that the “fix was in” by OPWG insiders.

**Theme 8 - Inability to negotiate:** CBEC was not mandated to negotiate with all potential capital and operating funding OPWG sources including governments, the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and sponsors. Although CBEC did have general guidelines from the federal government and knowledge from the Vancouver 2010 OPWG, this impacted their ability to prepare for future negotiations with funders.

**Theme 9 - Public engagement challenge:** The limited timeframe and budget of CBEC challenged meaningful (both broad and deep) public engagement. As a result, consultation was limited to principles, rather than specific options for the public input. By many, this was perceived as one of the most significant breakdowns in the CBEC process.

**Theme 10 - Consumable outcomes:** The final 5,400-page CBEC Report, was comprised of a 300 page core report, appendices, and a PowerPoint presentation. It was perceived as being in a format that was not consumable by the general public or City Council.
Research Question 1: Does the Calgary Model sufficiently recognize the power, legitimacy and urgency dimensions that host city citizens possess in the modern OPG bidding process?

In analyzing this research question, several composite themes emerged.

The Establishment of a Citizen-Driven Board

The establishment of the CBEC board, composed of diverse citizens, arms-length from politics, was a tangible recognition that the general public now possessed a new power and legitimacy in defining the value of an OPG to a community. As one interviewee stated: “It’s important to have an independent, community group of people saying how (a Games) might meet the city’s needs. This removes it from the politicians.”

However, interviewees identified that it was how the City decided to operationalize this committee that diluted its legitimacy and influence. First, interviewees discussed the lack of transparency about who and why members of CBEC were appointed. There was a general presumption that members were appointed to represent specific constituencies (e.g. indigenous communities), perspectives (e.g. Paralympics) or area of expertise (e.g. finance). Yet, several members remained unclear how they were selected to sit on CBEC and whether the committee was truly representative of such a diverse city:

It was an impressive group in terms of sport, finance, business, arts and those touchstones of the city, but was it truly representative of what the city looks right now? I’m not sure it was, in terms of visible minorities, and social demographics. Most of the board was upper middle class.

Some interviewees suggested that this could have been easily avoided by using the nomination process required for most City committees and boards with citizen representation. It was widely acknowledged by the interviewees that the perceived lack of transparency of the CBEC board appointments (and later the hiring of staff) became a liability that enabled critics to delegitimize the process from the outset. Consistent with this threat to legitimacy, several interviewees highlighted that the appointment to CBEC of well known OPG athletes created an external perception that the board was not citizen-driven, but rather was ‘rigged’ to create a perception of legitimacy, when in fact, a decision had already been made by the political elites. As one interviewee noted: “The [public] thought it was a done deal, that it was stacked with sport people and cheerleaders.” Another stated: “There was a perception from many that CBEC was sugar coating on an already done deal.”

Objectivity of Board Members

As a working group, CBEC board members stated they were impressed by how open-minded, objective and balanced other members of the board were. Many stated that even though some entered the process clearly leaning one way or the other, once they agreed to participate on CBEC, not a single member took an entrenched position. As one interviewee noted:

...there were some people that started on the no side. I remember a couple of conversations when I talked to board members [prior to the first meeting] and they said, “look, I want you to know, I’m not for this, so if you think this is a white wash, get somebody else” and I said no to be honest with you we’re going to stick to the mandate we are going to be objective and we are going to do this right.

Each and every board member interviewed emphasized that their final position was driven by evidence and what they perceived to be in the best interest of the city as a whole. This evidence included detailed financial modelling conducted by third parties and a comprehensive facilities plan and capital budget to revitalize the existing facilities from the 1998 Olympic Winter Games or build new ones where required. One interviewee stated:
The sport world members looked at it from a social and economic perspective. The economically inclined members looked at it from a sport and community building perspective. But not a single member came in with a preconceived notion.

Another stated: “We came at it from a position of neutrality and landed where we landed, and I think it was fair to say we ended up not neutral (positive) in the end because we had the facts.”

However, some interviewees discussed the grey area between being ‘objective’ and ‘neutral’. One interviewee explained:

*I kept hearing the message that we need to ensure neutrality. Ensuring objectivity and balance is different than neutrality. CBEC could not compromise its objectivity and balance, but no one was demanding an overarching need for neutrality on issues that they either fundamentally support or oppose."

As another interviewee noted, “In our quest for neutrality we gave up the ability to advocate....”

Numerous board members noted that though they took their mandate of being objective and open-minded, it became clear that several City of Calgary Councillors had deeply entrenched positions. This contradiction of demanding objectivity from a volunteer board of citizens, while simultaneously, not demanding this on themselves, raised questions around the ultimate purpose of CBEC. As one interviewee stated, “the political opposition from the outset undermined the entire process.”

**Public Engagement Activities**

One of the core mandates of CBEC was to evaluate general public interest in pursuing an OPWG bid. This recognized that the general public now possessed significant power and legitimacy in any bid process. In an attempt to deliver on this mandate, CBEC invested heavily in public consultation including over 100 interviews and surveying a representative sample of 2000 Calgarians and 15,000 citizens via an online engagement tool (CBEC, June 19, 2017). However, interviewees discussed the problem of consulting the general public on a vague question such as: *would you support Calgary bidding for the 2026 OPWG?* This question would lead to the inevitable response – “maybe, tell me more”.

The challenge was CBEC had no additional information at such an early stage to share. In addition, interviewees discussed how the vision and value of an OPG is ultimately linked to the vision of a community. However, many interviewees suggested that Calgary’s lack of a unified vision did not allow CBEC to engage the public on how a Games may or may not contribute to the vision. As one interviewee noted: “It’s important that you make sure you have a good vision for the city, and how this big event might help the city and help move that vision forward.”

Public engagement was perhaps limited by a fear that CBEC would be perceived as advocating for a specific position. As a result, the public engagement remained limited to the survey and online forum. As one member stated, “*CBEC was a missed opportunity to engage the public. What’s worse is that the entire process probably led to a loss of trust with the public, when we were supposed to be building it.*” Another interviewee noted: “The whole CBEC process was designed to have lots of off-ramps for Council, but they didn’t really design enough on-ramps to get the public involved in contributing to the vision”.

**Research Question 2: Does the Calgary Model sufficiently recognize the power, legitimacy and urgency dimensions possessed by other OPG stakeholders?**

Results here are considered from two perspectives. The first considers the influence of the CBEC funding model on the power, legitimacy and urgency dynamics, while the second considers the influence of the CBEC governance model.
The Calgary Funding Model

The City of Calgary provided 100% of the funding for CBEC. Several interviewees provided historical context to the formation of CBEC and the funding model adopted. The early discussions for the OPWG involved non-governmental organizations related to sport and tourism. These groups started early discussions with the City and a decision was made to establish an independent organization (CBEC) that would be funded fully by the City. On one side, this sole funding model eliminated a need to secure funding from other levels of governments (provincial and federal) or the private sector. However, many interviewees argued that the funding model may have been the greatest weakness to the Calgary Model.

The funding model did not recognize the power and legitimacy of the other levels of government that would be responsible for the majority of the funding for any bid or actually hosting the Games. In Canada, based on the 1976 and 1988 Olympics and the 2010 OPWG, the majority (normally about 2/3rds) of public funding for OPG are provided by provincial and federal governments. As one interviewee said, “The City wanted to have the golden chair because they were actually putting up the money.” The incongruence between this reality and the funding of CBEC was further amplified by a condition that CBEC was not authorized to represent the City in any discussions with the provincial or federal governments. As one interviewee noted, “originally the City said they would handle all communication with other governments, but about three-quarters of the way through the process they said no, you need to do something...”

The result was a final CBEC report that was acknowledged as deficient because it only represented assumptions about the level of provincial or federal involvement, rather than the outcome of a dialogue between the three levels of government. In addition, interviewees noted that the lack of investment by other levels of government, meant they did not have a political stake in the outcome. This lack of stake in the outcome, created significant barriers as the City attempted to proceed to a full bid based on the CBEC findings. In fact, many interviewees identified the ten-month lag between the submission of the final CBEC report and the establishment of a Bid Organizing Committee (BidCo) that was equally funded by all three levels of government as evidence of the flawed CBEC funding model.

Finally, several interviewees expressed regret at using government funding at all to support the CBEC process. They reflected on the grassroots nature of the 1988 bid and the legitimacy this created. Their recollection was that this citizen-driven process was rooted in a progressive vision for both the city and the province, unencumbered by short-term politics. Moreover, several interviewees felt it would have been feasible for CBEC to secure private sector funding to support the CBEC process. However, there was an acknowledgement that this private sector funding could also then delegitimize the perception that CBEC was a citizen-driven process, and not one driven by vested interests.

The Calgary Governance Model

The issue of independence and oversight was a dominant topic expressed by all interviewees. One interviewee stated: “The City established CBEC but didn’t really want to give them any autonomy. At the same time, the City didn’t take leadership of the project, they took ownership, but not leadership.” Many board members reflected on the lack of clearly defined measurable outcomes for CBEC at the outset as a challenge. In addition, many reported they also did not know exactly who they reported to. The design of the board composed of independent and non-political individuals meant few had any experience working with the City of Calgary Administration (CCA) or CCC. Many board members noted that this governance model emerged as a challenge. Private sector board members spoke of being familiar and comfortable with an efficient and concise evidence-based, decision-making process with clearly defined key performance indicators (KPIs), but that was not experienced with CBEC.

The lack of clear KPIs provided by CCC led to CBEC having to define the scope, the process and ultimately their own final deliverable. As an interviewee stated: “It [the mandate] was grey at the beginning, we kind of made it what we wanted.” What became apparent to both CBEC staff and board member
interviewees was that the lack of clear KPIs and deliverables was the result of a lack of consensus of the purpose of CBEC by CCC. One interviewee suggested that the City could say that it had given a "mandate" (or deliverables) to CBEC by way of the terms of the agreement between the City and Tourism Calgary but that perhaps they did not provide the yardstick against which CBEC's work would be measured. The vague mandate provided to CBEC, enabled different Councillors to interpret its scope and purpose based on their own lens. Therefore, they could support its establishment, but it was only following the submission of the CBEC final report, that City of Calgary Councillors questioned its mandate, outcomes and the inevitable "what happens next" question. As one interviewee stated: “There was no real consideration of what should be next…”

The interviews rooted out this confusion at several levels. First, and as noted above, it became clear from the interviewees that there was a lack of consensus by CCC on the expected outcomes of CBEC and how CBEC fit within a larger OPG decision making framework. Second, many interviewees identified that there was a clear disconnect between CCA and CCC. CCA was actively involved in “supporting” CBEC on a day to day basis. In addition, CCA was represented on CBEC with an ex officio non-voting member. Board and staff discussed the frustration of both the pace and the political nature of working with CCA. They used examples of how CCA started to try to control the narrative and recommendations in the final CBEC report. Some viewed this as a dilution of the independent mandate of CBEC, whereas others viewed it as the political reality of working on a project where the ultimate stakeholders were politicians.

According to many interviewees, the lack of direct CBEC access to CCC became problematic. The CBEC chair and general manager would meet informally with CCC but there was a consensus among interviewees that there was not sufficient direct oversight by CCC of CBEC’s work. For example, as one interviewee recalled: “there was a lack of understanding on our part for knowing how the City’s reporting structure functioned…. this led to some struggles with both the City Administration and Council.” As another interviewee said, “If you give anyone 5400 pages today, do they read it? If you give them a 325-page summary report, how many people are going to read that…in comparison, the Swiss handed in a 40-page report which was far more digestible.”

As a result, according to many interviewees, several City of Calgary Councillors appeared dismayed to receive a 5400-page report that they were expected to read prior to a CCC meeting. Moreover, many CBEC members became frustrated when it became apparent that several members of CCC held deeply entrenched a priori “no bid” position and that they had no intention of reading the full report, let alone supporting its recommendations. As one interviewee stated: “To this day, I don’t even know who got a copy of our report, who actually read it and who actually understood it.” Another noted that some members of CCC complained during the summary presentation to Council that the report was not sufficiently detailed enough, demonstrating they hadn’t reviewed the full CBEC Report prior to the meeting.

Many interviewees reported that they were dismayed that the “what happens next” question could not be answered by CCA or CCC. Several interviewees referred to the entire process as being one that no one had thought through end to end. Interviewees were also shocked that CCC committed millions of dollars of funding and recruited diverse community leaders but could not answer the simple “what happens next” question. The result was that CBEC was forced to make some assumptions about the City process following the submission of their final report. This issue was compounded by the fact that their final report recommended additional work in areas CBEC was not permitted to adequately explore in their mandate (e.g., revenue/ cost sharing across governments and with the IOC).

In addition, interviewees brought forth that the political realities became apparent as CCC was only a few months from an election in October 2017 and therefore, no councillor was prepared to make significant commitments. The result is that the report and next steps were taken over by CCA and CBEC was disbanded. Since the interviewees were conducted 12 months after the submission of the final CBEC report, interviewees recalled and shared their frustration with the pace of progress by CCA in the
intervening year. Some viewed this delay by CCA as trying to not only control the bid process, but as an intentional sabotaging of it. As one interviewee recalled:

> There was a real divide between the board and City Administration, I think from the CBEC board perspective, it felt like there was a little bit of an agenda. We didn’t trust them, and they didn’t trust us.

Several board members also expressed a belief that CCC should have established a formal sub-committee to directly oversee CBEC. This sub-committee would have provided a clear and direct oversight of CBEC, including aligning on specific CBEC KPIs, deliverables, timelines and next steps. Moreover, they recommended that direct oversight by this committee would have ensured CBEC could maintain independence from CCA, rather than a perception that the CCA was filtering CBEC work in an attempt to minimize its independence and control the OPG agenda.

Similar to the CCC and CCA engagement challenge, board member interviewees reported that the stakeholder relationships between different levels of government, the NOC and NPC and the IOC and IPC was a fundamental flaw of the Calgary Model. First, as CBEC was not empowered to engage in meaningful dialogue with other levels of governments about the scope of their potential commitment to an OPG. This lack of meaningful engagement or shared interest by the other levels of government became very political. As one interviewee stated:

> …everybody is playing their cards really close to their chest so if I were to characterize it, I would say that the province doesn’t really want the Olympics and are humouring us [CBEC and the City] and the feds really want the Olympics but don’t want to do anything to piss off the province.

The result of this lack of direct engagement with other levels of government, was suggested by interviewees to have led to CBEC being required to use the Vancouver 2010 funding model as a proxy for provincial and federal support. CBEC interviewees further recognized that this removed both the financial and the political realities from the final CBEC report. As one interviewee stated, this constraint meant, “we really could only do half of the job.” This was further amplified by the fact that IOC did not provide clear revenue projections in a post-Agenda 2020 OPG. As another interviewee stated, “after all the ink was dry on our fundamental report, the IOC changed the rules, they changed the bidding process, were going to change a whole bunch of things that would affect the estimates we came up with.” In fact, the IOC released a statement shortly after the release of the CBEC final report, noting that both the cost and revenue assumptions based on Vancouver 2010, were incorrect (City of Calgary, 2017).

Finally, several interviewees noted that both the COC and IOC did not understand that CBEC was an exploratory committee and not a BidCo. In fact, several interviewees noted instances where the COC and IOC referred to them as a BidCo. This was suggested as significant by some interviewees as a BidCo assumes that a City is committed to hosting an OPG and as a result, the COC assumes a level of control of the bid. As one interviewee stated:

> If I put myself in the shoes of the COC, I might not like CBEC. The COC is essentially the national franchise holder of the IOC brand….and COC made it very clear that a home games is a big deal to them. If the CBEC exercise said No, it would be a problem for them. They wanted to get in (on) the process and make sure it went in a certain direction.

Related to this lack of understanding was a second theme where some interviewees perceived an arrogance with the broader OPG movement. As one interviewee said, “The reality is the COC and IOC needs Calgary, a lot more than Calgary needs them. At the time, we were a long way from committing to a bid. They never got that.”
Recommendations for Future Bid Exploration Committees

As discussed earlier, the Calgary Model, did not acknowledge the stakeholder power, legitimacy and urgency dimensions discussed by Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997). The ultimate defeat in the plebiscite arguably can be rooted in this flaw. This study identified that this model did not sufficiently recognize the power and legitimacy of the general public and the two other levels of government essential for proceeding forward with an OPG bid. Moreover, the model did not recognize the power shift, that made an OPG plebiscite inevitable, creating increased urgency on the process. In fact, the CCC, voted down a proposal in July 2017, to host a plebiscite. The lack of recognition of this power shift is clear as one City of Calgary Councillor noted, "You can't just hide behind a plebiscite whenever it's controversial or difficult or you don't really want to put your name on the line and upset somebody," (CBC, 2017, July 24). In fact, it was not until the Spring 2018, when the provincial government made a plebiscite a requirement for funding, that the City proceeded to a vote (CBC, 2018, April 5). Based on the results of our study, our recommendations reflect a synthesis of the composite themes and approaches to build on the strengths of the Calgary Model, while hopefully overcoming the observed deficiencies (see Table 3).

Table 3: BEP Recommendations

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<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation 1 - OPG as a means to an end:</strong> Prior to the establishment of a BEP, a potential host city (and associated jurisdictions) should possess a unified and approved strategic vision and associated key performance indicators. This enables a BEP to explore how the OPG may contribute (or not) to delivering this vision. In parallel, a municipality must evaluate alternative scenarios for the application of public resources and the associated costs and benefits to a community.</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 2 - Clear pathway:</strong> The BEP should be integrated into a larger potential OPG bid process, including a clear timeline for when to decide whether to proceed.</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 3 - Citizen oversight:</strong> To be perceived as legitimate, a BEP should incorporate a diverse oversight body and include representatives of key stakeholder groups including private citizens.</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 4 - Transparency and legitimacy:</strong> The oversight body must be representative of the community and possess adequate skills and knowledge to evaluate both the costs and intangible value of an OPG. The appointment of the board should be open and transparent and follow a regular and accepted public nomination process.</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 5 - Inter-governmental BEP:</strong> All three levels of government should have a vested interest in the process. Therefore, the BEP funding model should mirror the typical funding model for any future OPG bid.</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 6 - Clear measurable mandate:</strong> A BEP should possess clear and well-defined outcomes and associated performance measures.</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 7 - Ongoing oversight:</strong> There should be ongoing oversight of the BEP, including well defined program gates for when to decide whether a city pursues a bid.</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendation 8 - Clarity of roles:</strong> A BEP should clearly define the role of both elected officials and bureaucracy in both the development and decision-making process.</td>
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**Recommendation 9 - Funder negotiations:** A BEP should be mandated to engage and negotiate basic funding frameworks across all funding sources including, government, National Olympic and Paralympic Committees, International Olympic and Paralympic Committees and sponsors.

**Recommendation 10 - Meaningful public engagement:** A BEP must have meaningful public engagement (not only stakeholder engagement), but only once there are meaningful options for public consultation and evaluation. This public consultation must incorporate the alternative scenarios for the allocation of public resources if a municipality chooses not to proceed with a bid.

**Recommendation 11 - Strategic public communications:** The outcomes of the BEP should be presented in multi-media formats that are relevant and easily digestible for the various stakeholder audiences, decision-makers, and the public. The board should be given the opportunity to present their findings broadly and publicly upon completion of their work.

Our 11 recommendations include the establishment of a vision of why the city, region, province or country would want to host the OPG and what stakeholders want to achieve through it. The second recommendation is to have a clear project management pathway with clear go/no go points, including a time where all stakeholders agree to support a full bid process. The third recommendation is to have a citizen led oversight body that is representative of the community. The fourth recommendation is to ensure that both the oversight group, just noted, along with the Bid Exploration group, be appointed in a transparent way. Other recommendations include those related to government, oversight, assessment, and public engagement. Combined, these 11 recommendations then allowed us to develop a revised bid exploration process. Based on the results, Figure 3 reflects our refined BEP model.

**Figure 3: Refined BEP Model**

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- **BEP Established**
  - National Government
  - Provincial/State Government
  - Municipal Government
  - NOC & NPC
  - Athletes
  - Business
  - Other

- **Phase 1: BETC**
  - Facility Plan
  - Operations Plan
  - Approve facilities and operations options

- **Phase 2: BEVC**
  - Intangible Valuation
  - Public Engagement
  - Build on Phase 1 options but focuses on “Should We?”
  - Independent
  - Citizen Members
  - Staffed by technical experts

- **BEB Gove 1**
  - Define mandate
  - Define budget
  - Articulate vision for the city
  - Appoint BETC and BEVC

- **BEB Gove 2**
  - Final bid/ no bid recommendations by BEB
  - If bid recommended, municipal govt must frame alternative scenarios for public consideration.
The revised model is designed as a template for cities who are at an early exploratory stage in terms of evaluating the merits of bidding to host an OPG. In illustrating how it can be used, we return to the Calgary Model and the questions of ‘could’ and ‘should.’ Importantly, and as outlined in Figure 3, these questions need to be answered sequentially, with the ‘could’ (aka feasibility study) being asked first and including sub-questions to acquire the evidence needed to respond to the questions. This would include responding to several specific questions related to the city’s current infrastructure (e.g. venues, transportation, hotels, technology, security, financial capacity etc.) and the ability to temporarily construct or permanently build infrastructure where they are deficient. This stage also addresses the options to find infrastructure outside of the host city/region, operational costs to host the OPG, capital investments required to host, and the legacies that will remain post-Games that would replace/respond to city needs. Clear answers here would then answer the ‘could’ question.

The ‘could’ or feasibility case is based on technical, operational and financial information. If this case is made, then the decision moves to the ‘should’ question. This stage is perhaps more challenging, as interviewees clearly explained, in that fewer objective criteria come to play, such as city branding, indirect benefits, allocation (or re-allocation) of tax dollars from federal, provincial and local government, and long-term tourism growth. For example, interviewees suggested that one of the most difficult challenges facing Calgary was associated with the ski jump competition. Although the venues from the 1988 Olympic Winter Games in Calgary remain, the sport evolved dramatically and as a result, the infrastructure is now substandard. This led the CBEC members to consider three potential options for the 2026 OPWG: build new facilities, build temporary facilities or host ski jumping 900 km away at facilities built for the Vancouver 2010 OPWG. All these options had varying costs, brand and operational challenges and opportunities. The fact that the long-term use/value of the Calgary 1988 ski jumping facilities was uncertain complicated the decision and was illustrative of the challenges in the ‘should’ aspect of the refined model.

The ‘should’ phase of the refined model, meanwhile, is less about objective and tangible facts, and more about understanding the role, intangible benefits and indirect outcomes (sport development, city brand, etc.) that an OPG might play in delivering on a city/region, province, and country’s vision. This is versus the operating costs and capital investment required. Inevitably, such decisions become political with polarized views. For instance, in extending the ski jumping example, how would building a new ski jump tower(s) in Calgary Olympic Park contribute to the vision of the city, region or province? What are the direct (construction jobs) and indirect (future event hosting) benefits? What about social issues such as the push to include women’s ski jumping? Finally, bid exploration committee members needed to ask who is paying for it? Is it from Games operations, the municipal government, the province or the federal government?

As the ski jumping example and our results illustrate, the evaluation of ‘should’ is rarely objective, but rather, it is based on community values and priorities. Linking back to the findings of the research and the resulting recommended process, the approach we promote to answer ‘should’ is characterized by our 11 recommendations. Space does not permit us to review each recommendation but instead we will focus on a few and how can be applied within this refined model.

First, prior to initiating a BEP, all government funders must possess respective strategic visions that are perceived as legitimate by their constituents. In the Calgary context, this is the municipality, province and country. These visions will offer a legitimate framework to guide the outcomes (such as investing in a ski jumping venue). As an independent process, the BEP does not possess the required legitimacy to define the vision for a city, province or country. This lack of legitimate vision by any of the core funders, made it impossible for CBEC to legitimize the value of the Games. Consequently, a municipality must prepare alternative scenarios for the use of public resources in a no bid scenario. This was an obvious flaw in the Calgary Model, as the electorate was ultimately asked to make a single investment (Games or no Games) without informing Calgarians of the alternative scenarios for the use of scarce public funding and the associated costs and benefits to a community. As one interviewee explained:
I think we should have done a better job talking about the values and benefits and how it fits into a city plan and say what are the values, what the benefits, what’s the risk, how does this fit in with City’s priorities and what are the costs, and then you make a decision.

The second recommendation is that a BEP must reflect a similar funding model as a full bid, including all levels of government and the NOC. A clear agreement of the investment from each stakeholder needs to be agreed upon at the outset. The lack of such an agreement was noted by interviewees to be a major challenge for CBEC as it did not formally recognize the power and legitimacy that the provincial and federal governments possess in proceeding with an OPG bid.

Thirdly, we recommend that the BEP is overseen by a Bid Exploration Board (BEB). This BEB would recognize the legitimacy and power of broad range of OPG stakeholders including representatives from the all levels of government, tourism boards, Olympic and Paralympic Committees, relevant indigenous communities, the city’s economic development organization, facilities and athlete groups. The BEB is ultimately responsible to ensure that the respective working groups possess the legitimacy and power to complete their jobs. As a result, there must be a transparent, merit-based appointment of members, with the appropriate skills and backgrounds, to two suggested BEP working groups: The Bid Exploration Technical Committee (BETC) and the Bid Exploration Value Committee (BEVC). Both working groups would then include a combination of technical staff, and citizen representatives with the required technical expertise for each working group. The BETC would be composed of individuals with the technical, operational and financial skills with the ability to deliver a detailed technical report that includes a master facilities plan, and a master operations plan. The BEVC would then be composed of individuals who are mandated to evaluate the outcome of the BETC relative to the value of the benefit to the city, province and country in the context of the approved strategic vision.

The final stages of the refined process outline the political nature of the ‘should’ question. If each of the 11 recommendations is followed, the process would incorporate numerous consultations and approval steps with the goal of recognizing the respective stakeholder power, legitimacy and urgency. A final recommendation clarifies the need for ongoing consultation with the public to ensure the BEP maintains the power and legitimacy it would require if the BEB recommends proceeding to a bid. The revised BEP process suggests a phased process, where public engagement is the mandate of the BEVC, enabling the BEVC to evaluate the direct and indirect impacts and associated intangible values of the technical and operational options provided by the BETC. For example, in reflecting on the Calgary Ski Jump dilemma, BEVC could consult the public to evaluate the cost/ benefit of the three technical options provided by BETC. This phase must also present the alternative scenarios for the use of public funding and the associated costs and benefits to a community. This will enable the public to fully evaluate the trade-offs associated with hosting a Games.

Conclusion

The bidding for and hosting of an OPG has changed dramatically, particularly in the past two decades. In the late 1970’s, in a period of Olympic boycotts, Los Angeles was the only city bidding for the 1984 Olympic Games. This changed following LA’s financial success, with numerous cities initiating a preliminary pre Games feasibility process. Today, although cities continue to demonstrate a preliminary interest, fewer and fewer cities follow through from interest to a complete bid. As a result, some cities began creating exploration committees to adjudicate whether a bid is feasible and prudent. Calgary’s evaluation of bidding for the 2026 OPWG is an example and the focus of this study.

In this paper, we adopted the framework used by Mitchell, Agle, & Wood (2017) that evaluates stakeholders based on three dimension – power, legitimacy and urgency. Through a process of interviews with a number of key stakeholders, the goal for this study was to better understand the Calgary Model through the lens of stakeholder power, legitimacy and urgency. The results identified the strengths and
systematic deficiencies of the Calgary Model, noting the failure to recognize the legitimacy and power of critical stakeholders such as the different levels of government and the general public. The Calgary Model also failed to recognize that for a bid to be legitimized, it must engage the public in a meaningful dialogue. The result, the proposed Calgary bid for the 2026 Games was defeated decisively in a city wide plebiscite.

Building on the results from our research, we offer a refined model that offers future cities a framework to consider the dynamic legitimacy, power and urgency of the diverse range of OPG stakeholders when engaging in a bid process for an OPG. The hope is that future cities can better understand the Calgary context and learn from that to implement a strong organizational framework and process that is transparent, effective and efficient.

All studies have limitations. This study is based on qualitative data focussed on the experiences of one city in developing and executing a BEP. This sample of one is an acknowledged limitation and thus the generalizability to other cities is unknown. Both place and time are likely a significant factor. In addition, we recognize that many of the issues identified in the results extend beyond the OPG bidding process and are more fundamental management and stakeholder relation issues.
References


Appendix A: CBEC Conditions

Their final CBEC report identified six areas that required further exploration before the City was in a position to decide on whether to pursue a full bid for the 2026 OPWG.

1. Will the IOC's Agenda 2020 have a meaningful influence on a bidding city’s revenues and costs?
2. Will the three levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) support a bid?
3. Can the OPWG generate a positive return and provide meaningful value to Calgary, Alberta and Canada?
4. How will the City’s future capital investments impact a facilities plan?
5. Would the OPWG fit into the future vision for Calgary and region and is there a broad coalition of support for the OPG?
6. Is there a valid expectation a bid to host the OPWG would be successful?
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Background Questions: Interviewee Expertise

1. Please state your name and title.
2. Please describe your background as it relates to the Calgary Bid Exploration Committee (CBEC).

CBEC Experience

The Calgary Model was a very unique approach. In this interview, we are focusing on the process of CBEC, rather than whether Calgary should bid (or not) for the 2026 Olympic and Paralympic OPG. The goal of this study is to provide guidance to future Cities which may be evaluating following a similar process to CBEC.

1. Did the CBEC process meet your expectations? Why? Why not?
2. How did CBEC define and measure the concept of “success” in delivering against its mandate?
3. What were the strengths of the CBEC process?
4. What were the weakness of the CBEC process?
5. Did you find the composition of the committee to be reflective of a diverse perspectives and skills required to effectively deliver on the CBEC mandate? If not, what perspectives or skills were under-represented.
6. How effective was the interaction between CBEC and the CCA and political leadership? One of the goals of the Calgary Model was a level of citizen independence to evaluate the merits of the 2026 OPWG. Did you feel that CBEC had this independence?
7. How effective was the interaction between CBEC and the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC)?
8. How effective was the interaction between CBEC and the provincial and federal governments?
9. How effective was the interaction between CBEC and the International Olympic Committee (IOC)?
10. What recommendation would you give another city that was considering pursuing a bid “exploration” type process.
11. Going into the CBEC process, did you have position on whether Calgary should host the 2026 OPWG? Please explain.
12. Did your involvement on CBEC change your opinion on whether the City should bid on the OPWG? Please explain.

Closing

I would like to thank you for your time today. Do you have any final comments or suggestions for future research in this area?