

ARTS COMMISSION

Notice of Meeting on **Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.**
Room 488, 4th Floor, 625 Fisgard Street, Victoria, BC; and Electronic Participation

M. Alto (Chair)	A. Boardman	S. Epp	C. Plant	C. Smart
J. Bateman	P. Brent	G. Lemon	K. Roessingh	

The public are welcome to attend Arts Commission meetings in-person. Delegations will have the option to participate electronically. Please complete the online application at www.crd.bc.ca/address no later than 4:30 pm two days before the meeting and staff will respond with details.

AGENDA

1. Territorial Acknowledgement
2. Approval of Agenda
Recommendation: That the agenda for the January 22, 2025 Arts Commission meeting be approved.
3. Adoption of Minutes of October 23, 2024
Recommendation: That the minutes of the Arts Commission meeting of October 23, 2024, be adopted.
4. Chair's Remarks
5. Presentations/Delegations
6. Commission Business
 - 6.1 Arts Advisory Council Update
 - 6.1.1. Arts Advisory Council Chair's Report (verbal)
 - 6.1.2. Arts Advisory Council Minutes: January 14, 2024 - for information
 - 6.1.3. Arts Advisory Council *Activities by Council Summary*: January 14, 2024 – for information
 - 6.2. Manager's Report (verbal)
 - 6.2.1 Outreach Report (written)
 - 6.3 2025 Operating Grant Recommendations
Recommendation: The Arts Advisory Council recommends to the Arts Commission:
That the 2025 Operating Grant recommendations be approved as presented.

Attachments: Staff Report: 2025 Operating Grant Recommendations
Appendix A: 2025 Operating Grant Recommendations and Summaries

*Commissioners: To ensure quorum,
please advise Erin Sterling (esterling@crd.bc.ca) if you or your alternate cannot attend.*

6.4 Arts & Culture Support Service Strategic Plan Check-in

Recommendation: No recommendation. This report is for information only.

Attachments: Staff Report: Annual Strategic Plan Check-in
Appendix A: CRD Arts & Culture Support Service Strategic plan 2024-27
Appendix B: 2024-27 Strategic Plan Impementation Timeline
Appendix C: 2024-27 Strategic Plan Impementation Summary

6.5 2025 Arts Commission Meeting Schedule

7. New Business

8. Correspondence November 15, 2024 response re: BC Arts Council's regional areas policy

9. Adjournment

Next Meeting: February 26, 2025



Meeting Minutes Arts Commission

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

4:00 PM

Room 488
625 Fisgard St.
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

PRESENT

Members: M. Alto (Chair), P. Brent (EP), D. Cavens (EP), S. Epp (EP), G. Lemon (EP), C. Plant (EP), K. Roessingh (EP), C. Smart

Staff: C. Gilpin, A. Gibbs, E. Sterling (Recorder)

AAC: J. Verano, Chair (EP)

EP – Electronic Participation

Regrets: Jeff Bateman

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Chair Alto provided a Territorial Acknowledgement and invited the rest of the members online to reflect on the lands that they are on, and the opportunities we enjoy thanks to the stewardship of Indigenous communities.

2. Approval of Agenda

**MOVED by Member Cavens, SECONDED by Member Roessingh,
That the agenda for the October 23, 2024, Arts Commission meeting be
approved. CARRIED**

3. Adoption of Minutes

**MOVED by Member Cavens, SECONDED by Member Brent,
That the minutes of the Arts Commission meeting of September 25, 2024, be
adopted as circulated. CARRIED**

4. Chair's Remarks

Chair Alto was delighted to participate in selecting the upcoming Arts Advisory Council appointments. She noted that the Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee (PAFSC) is meeting next month and will receive a staff report with options for facilities in the region, which is

relevant to the work of this Commission. Chair Alto will ask staff to send a note to the Commission when the PAFSC meeting date is confirmed in case you want to tune in to the meeting, or to check the minutes afterward.

5. Presentations/Delegations – none.

6. Commission Business

6.1 Arts Advisory Council (AAC) Chair's Report (verbal)

J. Verano reported that the AAC met in early October and fully endorsed the proposed Grow Forward granting program. She met with Chair Alto and C. Gilpin to decide on new appointments. Members of the AAC are currently working through two large binders of applications in preparation for the Operating Grant adjudication on November 30th.

6.1.2 Arts Advisory Council Minutes: October 8, 2024, Meeting – received for information.

6.1.3 Arts Advisory Council Activities by Council Summary – received for information.

6.2 Manager's Report (verbal)

C. Gilpin noted that this is the multiyear intake for Operating Grants, so we have our 10 largest clients participating, meaning that the AAC are reviewing 34 and not just 24 applications. The upgrade to the CRD website update is underway. Kudos to A. Gibbs for her hard work, streamlining our pages and making them more accessible. Out in the arts sector: the BC Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts have both given notice that operating funding will be frozen in 2024 and 2025 with no new applicants accepted into those programs. That is difficult for a number of our emerging organizations. Also, there was a sad announcement that the Victoria Event Centre will no longer be operated by the Victoria Multicultural Society. We did not support them directly, but many of our clients rented that space with our grants. Please note that the Commission received a piece of correspondence requesting a letter of support, which staff recommends we send.

6.2.1 Outreach Report (attached)

6.3 Update on Presentation to View Royal Council on October 1, 2024

C. Gilpin and Chair Alto made a presentation on the benefits of being a tier 1 participant in the service. There was a constructive discussion, taking a holistic approach to arts and culture support.

At the last Arts Commission meeting there was an action given to staff, to gather information about what the process would be if a participant wanted to change tiers. C. Gilpin checked with Legal and Legislative Services and provided additional information on the process.

At end of the View Royal presentation – the council passed this amended motion:

THAT, in conjunction with budget discussions, Council review View Royal's group level participation in the Capital Regional District (CRD) Arts, with consideration to also fund a Westshore Arts Centre;

AND THAT the Town work with the CRD Arts to request all Westshore municipalities review their CRD contributions toward a truly regionally funded arts program and infrastructure.

In response to a question, C. Gilpin stated that Langford is planning to release their Arts and Culture master plan in the first quarter of 2025, which will include a report by their staff on Langford's potential participation in the Arts Service.

6.4 Grow Forward Capacity-Building Program

At the last Arts Commission meeting, this new granting program had been presented, and staff had been asked to take it back to the Arts Advisory Council. The AAC had a robust discussion and fully endorsed the program. C. Gilpin explained that this program was a key part of the strategic plan, responding to a need for more funding support for mentorship, planning, and capacity building. Finances have already approved for pilot year 2025. Staff would seek external funding partners/opportunities for an expanded program in 2026.

MOVED by Member Cavens, SECONDED by Member Smart,

- 1. That the Incubator grant program is replaced with a new expanded capacity-building program called *Grow Forward* to be launched as a pilot program in spring 2025.**
- 2. That, starting in 2025, the Projects, Short Series and Extended Programming grant program allow applications from arts non-profit organizations that are incorporated at any time before the grant deadline.**
- 3. That staff actively recruit external funding partners for the full version of *Grow Forward*, which has a tentative launch date of spring 2026.**
- 4. That staff bring a program evaluation of the *Grow Forward* pilot program back to the Arts Commission in fall 2025 along with more details on the launch of a full version of the program informed by the review of the pilot version.**

CARRIED

Members expressed their appreciation for the work of the staff.

6.5 Options for Additional Information in Staff Reports with Grant Funding Recommendations

At the May meeting of the Arts Commission, a motion was passed that staff report back with options for additional feedback to be provided on grant applications. C. Gilpin outlined the areas where more details could be provided, if applicable and relevant.

Member Lemon left the meeting.

MOVED by Member Plant, SECONDED by Member Roessingh,

That staff provide additional information in staff reports regarding grant funding recommendations as presented.

CARRIED

7. New Business: Selection of Commission member to chair the November Commission meeting

Chair Alto asked for a volunteer to chair the meeting if it happens while she is out of the country.

C. Smart agreed to do so.

**MOVED by Member Plant, SECONDED by Member Cavens,
That Carrie Smart be appointed to chair the November 27th Arts Commission meeting, should the
need for that meeting arise. **CARRIED****

Member Smart recused herself from the room to avoid perception of conflict of interest.

8. Correspondence: Letter from Victoria Symphony, requesting a letter of support

**MOVED by Member Plant, SECONDED by Member Cavens,
That the Arts Commission write a letter of support for the Victoria Symphony
to accompany their application to the BC Arts Council's Arts Infrastructure
Fund. **CARRIED****

Staff will work with Chair Alto to create the letter.

9. Motion to Close the Meeting

MOVED by Member Roessingh, SECONDED by Member Cavens,

- 1. That the meeting be closed in accordance with the Community Charter, Part 4, Division 3, 90(1)(a) personal information about an identifiable individual who holds or is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the regional district or another position appointed by the regional district; and**
- 2. That Joanna Verano, Chair, Arts Advisory Council, be allowed into the closed portion of the meeting. **CARRIED****

The Commission moved to the closed session at 4:54 pm.

The Commission rose from the closed session at 5:08 pm with the following report:

That Jedidjah Noomen, Angelica Reid, and Paballo Tsolo each be appointed to the Arts Advisory Council for a term of one year ending on December 31, 2025, and

That Mandart Chan, Eli Mushumanski, and Jill Smillie each be reappointed to the Arts Advisory Council for a term of three years ending on December 31, 2027, and that Rachel Ditor and Christina Haska each be reappointed to the Arts Advisory Council for a term of two years ending on December 31, 2026.

10. Adjournment

**MOVED by Member Smart, SECONDED by Member Cavens,
That the October 23, 2024, Arts Commission meeting be adjourned at 5:09 pm. **CARRIED****

Chair

Recorder

Meeting Minutes Arts Advisory Council

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

5:00 PM

Via Video Conference

PRESENT

Members: M. Chan, R. Ditor, S. Donaldson, R. Gale, C. Haska, J. Noomen, A. Reid, S. Reid, J. Smillie,
P. Tsolo, J. Verano

Staff: C. Gilpin, A. Gibbs, E. Sterling (Recorder)

Regrets: E. Mushumanski

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 by acting Chair Gilpin.

- 1. Territorial Acknowledgement** – Chair Gilpin offered a territorial acknowledgement and recommended members look at The First Peoples’ Map, an interactive map of regions, landmarks, artists, and more, found on the First Peoples’ Cultural Council website here:
<https://fpcc.ca/stories/first-peoples-map/>

- 2. Welcome to New Members/ Introductions**

- 3. Approval of Agenda**

MOVED by R. Gale, SECONDED by C. Haska,

That the agenda for the January 14, 2025 Arts Advisory Council meeting be approved.

CARRIED

- 4. Elections**

- 4.1 Nominations and Election of Chair**

There were three separate calls for nominations. R. Gale nominated S. Reid and she accepted the nomination. S. Reid was acclaimed to the position.

- 4.2 Nominations and Election of Vice-Chair**

There were three separate calls for nominations. J. Verano nominated R. Gale and he accepted the nomination. R. Gale was acclaimed to the position.

- 4.3 Nominations and Election of Funding Chair**

There were three separate calls for nominations. J. Verano nominated S. Donaldson and she accepted the nomination. S. Donaldson was acclaimed to the position.

- 5. Minutes**

- 5.1 Arts Advisory Council Minutes of October 8, 2024**

**MOVED by S. Donaldson, SECONDED by R. Ditor,
That the October 8, 2024 minutes of the Arts Advisory Council be
approved as presented.**

CARRIED

5.2 Arts Commission Minutes of September 25, 2024
-for information

6. Chair's Report

Chair Reid thanked former chair J. Verano for her leadership and all of the time and energy she brought to the role. The AAC end of year dinner at the Drake was a very positive experience, and there has been discussion about having more in-person gathering opportunities.

7. Manager's Report

C. Gilpin thanked all members for giving of their time and talent to the Council. In the four-year cycle of government, there is usually one year of planning, followed by two years of busyness – we are in year three now. C. Gilpin spoke with M. Alto, chair of the Arts Commission, and she has invited the AAC members to attend their next meeting on Wednesday, January 22. On the agenda are the Operating Grant recommendations and an Annual Strategic Plan check-in. S. Donaldson encouraged members to attend in person if possible. The January Project Grant intake has had a lot of interest; the deadline is on Thursday. There will be another Arts Summit this year, on either November 4 or 5 at the Baumann centre.

8. 2025 Operating Grant Recommendations

**MOVED by S. Donaldson, SECONDED by R. Ditor,
That the Arts Advisory Council recommends to the Arts Commission:
That the 2025 Operating Grant recommendations be approved as presented.**

CARRIED

S. Donaldson noted that organization who are given a Notice of Significant Concern (NOSC) do not receive a reduction in funding in their first year. Reminder to all members that they should not try to explain what happened at the plenary adjudication – if any member of the arts sector (or the public) has questions, please direct them to contact the Arts Manager, who can give synthesized and constructive feedback.

9. Draft Language for Operating Grant Notifications

Members discussed the draft notices and there was consensus that they were appropriate. C. Gilpin noted that staff are proactive in reaching out to organizations who receive a NOSC. S. Donaldson suggested adding the sentence, “the specific comments are based on the program evaluation criteria,” which staff agreed would be helpful.

10. 2025 Grant Adjudication Schedule

Members agreed to the updated schedule as distributed.

11. ABCs (Activity by Council Summary) – received for information.

Members discussed highlights of their year’s participation in the arts scene. J. Verano encouraged new members to use any free passes that are given to them.

12. Adjournment

MOVED by S. Donaldson, SECONDED by C. Haska,

That the January 14, 2025 Arts Advisory Council meeting be adjourned at 5:49 pm.

CARRIED

Chair

Recorder

Arts Advisory Council Meeting: Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Activities by Council (ABCs): October 2024 to present

Local:

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria:

Beauty of Mending, Kintsugi & Beyond; From Warhol to Banksy; From Balzar to Hunt;
Miles Lowry opening; Small Works opening

Attitude Theatre: Switzerland

Ballet Victoria: The Gift of the Nutcracker

Belfry Theatre: From Alaska

Bema Productions: A Jewish Christmas singalong

Blue Bridge Theatre: The Shop Around the Corner

Bridge Street Corner Art and Design Sale

Candlelight concerts: Best of Joe Hisaishi

Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives Artist in Residence lecture UVIC: Justin Waddell

Charlie White Theater: concert by Good Lovelies

Cinevic: One Take Super8 Film Festival

Civic Orchestra of Victoria: Sing Along Messiah

Dance Victoria: A.I.M. By Kyle Abraham

Deb Rhymer Band: Sunday Blues Services at Wicket Hall

Ensemble Laude: Stars

Fernwood Makers Party: Winter Bazaar at Gorge Park Pavillion

FLUX Gallery MediaNet: Shō Yamagushiku exhibition and reading from Shima poetry

From Home Fest – online theatre festival

Gallery Merrick: Andrea Simmonds opening; Rande Cooke opening; Deborah Bakos opening

Hapax Theatre: The Drowning Girls

Intrepid Theatre presents: Rat Academy

Mayne Island Little Theatre: “Emily” (musical about Emily Carr)

Mission Dance: Ballet Artístico

Mom’s the Word: Talking Turkey at the Belfry

Newcombe Singers: Songs & Stories from the Polar Night — with VCM Chamber Music Orchestra, Deeandra Mirando

Owl Design Fair in Fernwood

Pacific Opera: La clemenza di Tito; Luminary Series Recital with Barbara Hannigan & Bertrand Chamayou at the McPherson

Paper street Theatre: Piano Man

Phillipine Bayanihan Community Centre: Paghimugso

ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria: Regional Arts Awards

Royal BC Museum: Canadian Modern travelling exhibition; Old Town, New Approach

Sean Drabbit Trio (Charlie Brown Christmas, music by Vince Guaraldi) – Hermann's Jazz Club

SNAFU: Middle Child

St. Luke's Players: Jury Room

St. Michael's University School: Senior Christmas Band Concert

Laura Ramoso: Sit up Straight Tour at Royal Theatre

Theatre Inconnu: This Much I Know by Jonathan Spector

Theatre SKAM: Cowboy's The Seagull and iuvenis Productions' The law of Gravity

Victoria Book Prize Society Gala

Victoria Conservatory of Music: Home for Christmas

Victoria Symphony: Beethoven's 5th symphony, Murdoch mysteries, Mozart and Bartok

Candlelight: Best of Joe Hisaishi

Monkey C Interactive's Arcade

UVic Voices in a Circle Series: The Land Acknowledgment or As You Like It by Cliff Cardinal

Vetta Chamber Music: Land & Sea, Artspring, Salt Spring Island

Victoria Arts Council: "Our Favourite Places," works by Sharon Lam at VPL main branch

Vitaly: An Evening of Wonders

Wonderheads Christmas Carol

Xchanges Gallery: "Room at the Top" by Amber Lomax

Yellowhouse Art Centre: Imer's exhibit

46th Annual Victoria Tuba Christmas Concert in Market Square

Activities by Council (ABCs): October 2024 to present

Out of town:

Vancouver

Art Gallery at Evergreen - Cindy Mochizuki: Stories Best Told at Night solo exhibition & artist's talk with Shizuka Kai

ECUAD Libby Leshgold Gallery - See Min, Seohyo and Yaloo: as above/so below group video exhibition

Equinox Gallery - Shawn Hunt: Dream Season solo exhibition, Hamed Rashtian: Word Sculptures solo exhibition

Grunt Gallery - Stina Baudin: Mapping Ancestry through Sound, Space & Time solo exhibition

Naissance Festival: "Euridyce Fragments"

PXR Canadian VR Conference

UBC Museum of Anthropology- Lisa Reihana: In Pursuit of Venus (infected) video installation

UBC Belkin Gallery - An Opulence of Squander: group exhibition from the permanent collection

Vancouver Art Gallery - Shelley Niro: 500 Year Itch solo exhibition, Monochrome: group exhibition from the permanent collection, Firelei Baez: solo exhibition

Toronto

Titanique - touring cast

Montreal

Ben Caplan – Petit Campus

Seattle

Keith Haring: A Radiant Legacy - Museum of Pop Culture

Los Angeles

Ferryman Collective: "Welcome to Respite" live VR Theatre

Denver

Denver Art Museum – Maurice Sendak exhibit

Meow Wolf Convergence Station Denver

Paris

Arte Povera @ Bourse de Commerce

Kata Yamari @ Galerie Suzanne Tarasieve

Chiffon Thomas + Nikki Maloof @ Gallerie Perrotin Julije Knifer @ Galerie Frank Elbaz Jameson

Green @ Almine Rech Centre Pompidou Musée D'Orsay

OUTREACH REPORT TO THE ARTS COMMISSION MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2025

The following is a summary of recent progress on activities outlined in the Arts & Culture Support Service's 2024-2027 Communications and Outreach Plan:

RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE ARTS

Send quarterly e-newsletters

- Pruning of subscribers list to remove expired consent and invalid recipients
- Nov 2024 e-newsletter
 - Featured: Project Grant intake, funding for regional theatres in the news, regional arts awards
 - Sent to 814 subscribers; 57% open rate; 11.5 % click rate
- Dec 2024 e-newsletter
 - Featured: Project Grant info session, LampPost Victoria spotlight; Grow Forward teaser; UVic informal interview program
 - Sent to 803 subscribers; 59% open rate; 7% click rate
- Jan 2025 e-newsletter
 - Featured: 2025 Spring Grants; Grow Forward Grant highlight; Information sessions
- Preparation for migration to new e-newsletter platform, Constant Contact (CRD-wide initiative)

Foster grassroots sectoral recognition and promotion

- Supported the Greater Victoria Regional Arts Awards
 - Supported promotion, sharing posts to stories and featuring in e-newsletter
 - Sponsored the CRD Regional Impact Award
- Supported the promotion of Monday Magazine Awards

Launch impact story / fast facts series

- Completed posting 2023 Impact Report story series across social media channels
- Preparing for 2024 series
 - Selecting stories from final reports to feature in 2024 Impact Report and in the social media series
 - Exploring options to expand the 2024 series
- Preparing fast facts series for 2025

Collaborate with arts organizations on data sharing

- Joined the National Research Group (network of arts funders interested in research, reporting, and evaluation to inform policymaking and program design)
 - Joined working group focusing on developing and enhancing strategic approaches to funder reporting
- Developed regional impact data-sharing initiative
 - Liaised with CRD Information Technology department to determine desired outcomes and design project methods

- Designed project timeline, participation instructions, data collection tool and potential participant list
- Completed internal Privacy Impact Assessment & obtained legal approval
- Invited 40 leading arts organizations in the region to participate in the initiative
- Conducted information session for 12 participants; gathered feedback
- Worked with IT partners to pivot data collection method based on participant feedback
- Data submission deadline set for January 21, 2025

INCREASE ARTS SECTOR CAREER PATHWAYS REPRESENTATION

Identify needs and select appropriate collaborator(s)

- Reached out to 30 secondary school, post secondary school, and industry career guidance professionals
- Spoke with 8 career guidance professionals to discuss existing resources, gaps in support, and opportunities for future collaboration

PLAN AND HOST A BIENNIAL ARTS CHAMPIONS SUMMIT

Plan summit logistics, content and speakers

- Summit date, time and venue determined, booking process underway

CONTINUE EDI WORK TO ENSURE COMMUNICATIONS ARE ACCESSIBLE

Review of current accessibility and inclusion practices

- Inventory taken of current practices; identified as in need of updating

Liaise with Accessibility/EDI Committee and specialists

- Completed training on plain language writing
- Completed training on creating accessible PDFs
- Completed training on creating accessible web content

EXPANDED PROMOTION OF GRANT INTAKES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Send quarterly e-newsletters (see details above)

Host information sessions

- January Project Grant information session
 - Presented slides via Zoom detailing eligibility, guidelines, and application advice
 - Concluded with 20 minute question and answer period
 - 32 registrants, 16 participants
 - Follow up email with slides in PDF format and relevant links sent to registrants

Website redesign

- Migration stage now complete; beta testing & correction underway

PRODUCE ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Analyze information and determine theme

- Final reports continue to be collected and reviewed for information

Develop report

- Outline and first skeleton design draft complete
- On schedule for review at May Arts Commission meeting



Making a difference...together

REPORT TO ARTS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025

SUBJECT **Review of Arts & Culture 2025 Operating Grant Recommendations**

ISSUE SUMMARY

The 2025 Operating Grant adjudication committee has completed its work and made recommendations for review by the Arts Advisory Council and Arts Commission.

BACKGROUND

The Arts and Culture Support Service acknowledges that the arts require an investment of public sector funds to remain accessible to the region's audiences and participants. The Operating Grant program meets this need by enabling long-term planning in high performing arts organizations. Through an investment in these arts organizations and their activities, the CRD contributes to the development of healthy, diverse, and vibrant communities.

As per Bylaw No. 2973, the Arts Advisory Council (AAC) is responsible for adjudicating funding programs for the Arts & Culture Support Service. Section 5 of the Bylaw states: "The Council shall act as an arm's length adjudicating body for the Arts Development Funding Programs¹." The AAC fulfills this role through its adjudication committees, which are composed of its members and, if necessary, external appointees bringing perspectives or expertise needed for an adjudication.

On November 30, 2024, the adjudication committee met to evaluate 34 applications received at the September deadline for 2025 Operating Grants. Twenty-four applications were part of the annual operating grant stream and ten were from the multi-year grant stream. The multi-year stream has an intake year every three years requiring a full application; on the other two years, they provide an interim report. Applications from both streams are evaluated together in a joint adjudication meeting. There were no new applicants to the 2025 Operating Grants program.

The Operating Grant adjudication committee reviews and assesses applications based on three broad assessment categories: Artistic Contribution & Significance, Organizational Capacity & Governance, and Community Impact & Involvement. The committee provides scores for these categories for each application and conducts a comparative analysis to determine which applicants are high-performing or have areas of concern.

Unsatisfactory year to year performance is tracked by way of the Notice of Significant Concern (NOSC) policy. A NOSC is issued when shortfalls are noted in one or more of the three assessment categories noted above. When an operating client is issued a NOSC – which includes details on the specific areas of concern – they are provided the opportunity in their next application to include an additional letter addressing those concerns. If an applicant does not adequately address the concerns, funding may be reduced, or conditions may be attached to future program eligibility. There were three pre-existing NOSCs from the previous year's adjudication for Deluge Contemporary Art, Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival, and Victoria On Stage.

¹ The Arts & Culture Support Service was originally known as the Arts Development Service.

Recommendations

Eight applicants were assessed in the top of this cohort (Dance Victoria, Impulse Theatre, Intrepid Theatre, Pacific Opera Victoria, Puente Theatre, SNAFU Dance Theatre, Victoria Symphony, and Wonderheads). Their exceptional performance across all three assessment areas merited an increase in funding. These organizations are therefore recommended for a level of Operating Grant funding higher to the previous year (details of amounts in Appendix A).

Seventeen applicants were assessed at or above the satisfactory level and warranted application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. These organizations are therefore recommended for a level of Operating Grant funding equal to the previous year.

Three applicants that had existing NOSC's provided additional letters on their areas of concern. These applications and their additional letters received extensive deliberation and it was determined that the concerns were not adequately addressed. In accordance with the NOSC policy, the AAC designated two of these applicants (Deluge Contemporary Art and Victoria On Stage) for reductions in operating grant funding. The third applicant was not recommended for operating funding in 2025 due to ongoing concerns about their lack of alignment to the program's eligibility criteria and instead has been recommended for referral to possible funding through the project-based granting streams (Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival).

Five additional applicants were assessed as having areas of concern. These organizations (Belfry Theatre, Story Theatre, Theatre Inconnu, Victoria Children's Choir, and Victoria Conservatory of Music,) scored below average in at least one of the assessment categories (details in Appendix A). For each of these organizations, the recommended level of funding is equal to the previous year; however, a NOSC will be issued with areas of concern to be addressed. There will also be an offer for a phone conversation with the Arts Manager to convey feedback from the adjudication discussion for additional context. Two of these organizations were previously in the multi-year stream (Belfry Theatre and Victoria Conservatory of Music). According to the NOSC policy, they will need to provide a full application next year with the opportunity to include an additional letter addressing the areas of concern. They would be eligible to re-apply to the multi-year stream at the next intake if the NOSC were cleared at that time.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Arts Advisory Council recommends to the Arts Commission:
That the 2025 Annual Operating Grant recommendations be approved as presented.

Alternative 2

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The 2025 Annual Operating Grant recommendations align with the Arts & Culture Support Service purpose of providing benefit to the community. The adjudication was conducted through accountable processes with assessment based on application and scoring processes that are

shared with applicants through the program guidelines and information sessions. Adjudication is conducted by the AAC acting in their mandated role.

Financial Implications

Approval of the recommendations attached to this report will allocate \$2,421,070 from the 2025 Operating Grant budget, including \$1,502,880 in multi-year operating grants and \$918,190 in annual operating grants. Subject to future budget approvals and satisfactory interim reports, the eight clients in the multi-year operating grant stream (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Ballet Victoria, Dance Victoria, Intrepid Theatre, Pacific Opera Victoria, Victoria Film Festival, Victoria Jazz Society, and Victoria Symphony) are being recommended for grants in the next two interim years (2026 and 2027) that are equal to the amounts recommended here for 2025.

CONCLUSION

Operating Grants are intended to support organizations that provide benefit to the community, as assessed through a competitive adjudication process. The AAC makes recommendations for Operating Grants in accordance with their mandate as laid out in Bylaw 2973. These recommendations reflect the program goal of supporting high-performing organizations that provide benefits to the region through ongoing programming.

RECOMMENDATION

The Arts Advisory Council recommends to the Arts Commission:
That the 2025 Annual Operating Grant recommendations be approved as presented.

Submitted by:	Chris Gilpin, MPA, Manager, Arts & Culture Support Service
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ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: 2025 Annual Operating Grant Applicants & Recommendations

2025 Operating Grant Recommendations - Annual & MultiYear

Organization	Program	2024 OP Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recom'd
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria	M	448,000	528,600	448,000
Atomic Vaudeville	A	25,000	27,500	25,000
Aventa New Music	A	22,930	22,930	22,930
Ballet Victoria	M	47,700	55,000	47,700
Belfry Theatre	M	229,000	275,000	229,000
Cinevic Society	A	25,000	34,000	25,000
Dance Victoria	M	68,900	73,000	73,000
Deluge/Runnymede (NOSC)	A	38,210	42,000	30,600
Early Music Society	A	12,000	18,000	12,000
GV Performing Arts Festival (NOSC)	A	8,000	20,000	-
GV Youth Orchestra	A	8,000	8,000	8,000
Impulse Theatre	A	12,000	16,000	16,000
Intrepid Theatre	M	112,000	135,000	135,000
Kaleidoscope Theatre	A	59,500	70,000	59,500
MediaNet	A	19,000	25,000	19,000
Open Space Arts	A	87,930	100,000	87,930
Pacific Opera Victoria	M	234,450	280,000	259,150
Ptarmigan Arts	A	19,400	20,000	19,400
Puente Theatre	A	34,500	36,000	36,000
SNAFU Dance Theatre	A	14,500	15,950	15,950
Story Theatre	A	40,000	40,000	40,000
Theatre Inconnu	A	27,500	28,000	27,500
Theatre SKAM	A	40,800	50,000	40,800
Victoria Arts Council	A	37,600	40,000	37,600
Victoria Baroque Players	A	9,550	15,000	9,550
Victoria BC Ska & Reggae	A	25,000	29,000	25,000
Victoria Children's Choir	A	13,930	13,930	13,930
Victoria Conservatory of Music	M	55,000	82,500	55,000
Victoria Film Festival	M	47,170	57,100	47,170
Victoria Jazz Society	M	66,800	78,000	66,800
Victoria On Stage (NOSC)	A	21,500	30,000	17,200
Victoria Shakespeare Society	A	20,000	35,000	20,000
Victoria Symphony	M	407,400	440,870	426,060
Wonderheads Theatre	A	22,000	25,300	25,300
Totals:		\$ 2,360,270	\$ 2,766,680	\$ 2,421,070

2025 Operating Grant Recommendations

Applicant Summaries

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
ART GALLERY OF GREATER VICTORIA	Victoria	448,000	528,600	448,000

Background/Description

The AGGV opened in 1951 with expansions between 1957 and 1988. Collections include the 2nd largest Asian Collection in Canada and works by Emily Carr. The AGGV is the major regional art gallery on Vancouver Island producing and hosting a variety of exhibitions (curated in-house and touring), workshops and other activities typical of a major gallery. It has 10,000 square feet of exhibition space meeting the Canadian Cultural Property Review Board's requirements for traveling exhibitions and has a gift shop, art rentals and sales, and facilities rentals with offices, storage and preparatory areas.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year for 2025, 2026 and 2027 (subject to budget approvals and satisfactory interim reports). As a multiyear operating client, this organization will provide an interim report next year for review by staff.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
ATOMIC VAUDEVILLE	Victoria	25,000	27,500	25,000

Background/Description

Atomic Vaudeville is a dynamic performance alliance rooted in Victoria, committed to supporting and promoting the growth and impact of artist voices through fearless engagement in original creation and sharing our work through live events with diverse audiences. Founded by Jacob Richmond and Britt Small. It produces a four-show season of original theatre aimed at a younger demographic and presents locally as well as touring.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
AVENTA NEW MUSIC	Oak Bay	22,930	22,930	22,930

Background/Description

The Aventa Ensemble produces and performs a series of contemporary new music concerts locally and tours performances in BC, Canada and Europe. It also commissions and premieres performances of new works by Canadian and international composers.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
BALLET VICTORIA	Victoria	47,700	55,000	47,700

Background/Description

Ballet Victoria was founded in 2002 by Jacqueline Sloan. It began as a company that sought to include a wide range of community dance partners. In 2006, Paul Destrooper was introduced as a choreographer and became Artistic/Executive Director in 2007. Since then, it has become focussed on developing as a professional ballet company and promoting emerging talent. BV has 14 dancers and produces four yearly productions that focus on new or re-imagined choreography, as well as running a series of dance classes.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year for 2025, 2026 and 2027 (subject to budget approvals and satisfactory interim reports). As a multiyear operating client, this organization will provide an interim report next year for review by staff.

BELFRY	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
	Victoria	229,000	275,000	229,000

Background/Description

The Belfry Theatre is Vancouver Island’s largest professional theatre company, focused on the presentation of contemporary, mostly Canadian plays. They own a venue developed from a former church, built in 1885. It was renamed “The Belfry” in 1976. In 1990, the Belfry raised \$4.3 million to purchase/renovate the building that includes the 277-seat mainstage and in 1991 opened the 94-seat Studio theatre. In 2002 seismic and technical upgrading were completed and the mortgage was retired in 2011. In addition to presenting, the Belfry also develops new productions and has recently hired an Indigenous Cultural Advisor in an effort to decolonize the organization.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Community Impact and Involvement, but below a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, and Organizational Capacity and Governance. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the bottom cohort. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year with the stipulation of a Notice of Significant Concern that will require additional information in next year’s application on the strategy, vision, and planning of artistic programming and leadership approach by both board and staff around major programming decisions and response to critical community feedback. As part of the NOSC policy, the organization becomes an annual operating client required to submit a full application next year and, if the NOSC is cleared, will have the opportunity to reapply to the Multi-Year stream of Operating Grants in fall 2027.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
CINEVIC	Victoria	25,000	34,000	25,000

Background/Description

CineVic began in 1991 as an equipment co-op and filmmaker mutual aid society. It has evolved into a film and media production centre that produces events, commissions work, hosts visiting artists, and engages organizations and artists of other disciplines in collaborative projects. As an artist-run society, independent filmmakers and media artists in the CRD can access programming, affordable equipment, professional development resources, and cinematic exhibition opportunities. It is one of two funded organizations focussed on media arts, the other being MediaNet/FLUX Gallery.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
DANCE VICTORIA	Victoria	68,900	73,000	73,000

Background/Description

Dance Victoria’s mandate is to cultivate a connection to dance by presenting and supporting diverse local, national, and international artists, and inspiring all communities the magic of dance. DV presents a ballet and contemporary dance series at the Royal and McPherson Theatres and offers subsidized tickets to youth and young adults. Their Artist Residency Program enables choreographers from diverse backgrounds to develop their artistic vision through research, creation, outreach, and performance. The Chrystal Dance Prize supports exceptional dance research and/or creation between a Western Canadian dance artist/collective/company and an international artist.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the top third of annual applicants and, due to this high performance, is recommended for a funding lift of \$4,100 over the level of funding in the previous year for 2025, 2026 and 2027 (subject to budget approvals and satisfactory interim reports). As a multiyear operating client, this organization will provide an interim report next year for review by staff.

DELUGE/RUNNYMEDE	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
		Grant	Request	Recommendation
2024 NOSC	Victoria	38,210	42,000	30,600

Background/Description

The Runnymede Enhancement Society (RES) directs the programming of Deluge Contemporary Art that includes gallery exhibitions, The Antimatter Film Festival (festival of "underground" films) and Foreign Matter (selection of films from Antimatter) which tours to other countries. The Society first operated as the Rogue Gallery in Market Square, moving in 1995 to the Bay Center until 2005, when it then moved to 636 Yates St. with a name change to Deluge Contemporary Art. In 1998-99, Rogue Art produced the first ANTIMATTER Festival of Underground Short Film and Video which became a major focus for future programming, along with FOREIGN MATTER.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization had also received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2024 operating grant. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, but below a satisfactory level in Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, the scores for this application resulted in a rank in the bottom cohort. Due to continuing concerns, this organization is recommended for a funding reduction of \$7,610 and to receive another Notice of Significant Concern. This Notice of Significant Concern will require additional information in next year’s application detailing what actions have been taken to address concerns related to plans for strategic board development and evidence of detailed and effective outreach and audience development strategies.

EARLY MUSIC SOCIETY	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
	Victoria	12,000	18,000	12,000

Background/Description

EMSI is a volunteer-run, presenter of early music. They present approximately 8 concerts annually, featuring original instruments, correct scores and soloists and ensembles from BC, Canada and around the world performing medieval, renaissance, baroque and early classical music. The society fosters the development of early musicianship through workshops, promotional assistance for Early Music soloists and ensembles and the sponsorship of an annual music scholarship/bursary, as well as educational opportunities through pre-concert lectures.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

GREATER VICTORIA PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
2024 NOSC	Saanich	8,000	20,000	0

Background/Description

The Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival Association (GVPAF) is a registered charitable society, incorporated in 1927. Their annual contest, held at various venues in the region, runs for 6 weeks from March to May. It is one of approximately 35 competitions in BC that provide opportunities for performing arts students in a range of disciplines to perform in a public venue and receive a verbal and written critique by music professionals. A selection of student performers advances to public "highlights" concerts in various categories of skill, including provincial and national levels, and some receive awards (e.g. scholarships).

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization had also received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2024 operating grant. The organization was assessed below a satisfactory level in all three categories of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. The scores for this application resulted in a rank in the bottom cohort. Additionally, several responses in this application lacked sufficient information to fully assess and/or warranted

ongoing concern. The program guidelines for CRD Arts operating grants clearly states that contests and competitions are not eligible for support through this program and the most recent application clarifies that the Highlights Concert Series is an extension of the organization’s contests, not a separate presentation program. All activities undertaken by this organization fall under the category of “contests or competitions”. This organization is not recommended for funding through the operating grants program in 2025. Instead, it is recommended that the organization work with CRD staff to explore other funding opportunities in the project-based grant programs.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
GREATER VICTORIA YOUTH ORCHESTRA	Victoria	8,000	8,000	8,000

Background/Description

The GVYO presents 3 concerts per year at the Farquhar Auditorium. The organization provides young musicians with opportunities to participate in an orchestra under the direction of professional conductors and musicians. Sectional instruction is provided by 11 local professional musicians who coach and mentor the players.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
IMPULSE THEATRE	Victoria	12,000	16,000	16,000

Background/Description

Impulse Theatre was founded in the summer of 2010 and became a registered not-for-profit in 2016. Andrew Barrett is the founding Artistic Producer. Impulse has created over twenty new, highly visual and engaging works since inception and have brought work to upintheair's rEvolver Theatre Festival, the Belfry's Spark Festival, Intrepid's Winterlab, UnoFest, and YOU Show series, Theatre SKAM's SKAMpede, the Victoria and Vancouver Fringe Festivals, and the Firehall Arts Centre's BC Buds Festival.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the top third of annual applicants and, due to this high performance, is recommended for a funding lift of \$4,000 over the level of funding in the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
INTREPID THEATRE	Victoria	112,000	135,000	135,000

Background/Description

Intrepid Theatre produces three annual theatre festivals, the Victoria Fringe Festival, OUTstages Festival and Incoming Festival, as well as year-round series. It developed and manages the 200-seat Metro Studio (in space leased from the Conservatory of Music) and the Intrepid Studio in a separate space that also houses Intrepid's offices. These spaces fill a gap for many small and mid-sized performing arts companies. At the end of 2017 the organization's technical staff unionized with IATSE Local 168.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the top third of annual applicants and, due to this high performance, is recommended for a funding lift of \$23,000 over the level of funding in the previous year for 2025, 2026 and 2027 (subject to budget approvals and satisfactory interim reports). As a multiyear operating client, this organization will provide an interim report next year for review by staff.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
KALEIDOSCOPE THEATRE	Victoria	59,500	70,000	59,500

Background/Description

Kaleidoscope Theatre presents a series of productions, creating and producing new work relevant to young people and their families. KYTP also runs a theatre school focussed on the same demographic. In June 2021, all operations were relocated to Victoria's downtown core from their previous location in Saanich due to the imminent redevelopment of the University Heights property. KYTP has secured a long-term lease of a stand-alone heritage building now called The Kaleidoscope Arts Centre.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
MEDIANET	Victoria	19,000	25,000	19,000

Background/Description

MediaNet's original focus was the production of socially relevant documentaries. In 1999 it expanded to include experimental and narrative works, and provides equipment for use by members, including film and video cameras, sound equipment and lighting, as well as new media equipment and access to software for editing. MediaNet hosts presentations, screenings and artists talks. In 2010 it absorbed OPEN CINEMA as the means through which to present screenings and talks on topics of social relevance. It is one of two funded organizations focussed on media arts, the other being Cinevic.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
OPEN SPACE ARTS	Victoria	87,930	100,000	87,930

Background/Description

Open Space is one of Canada’s earliest established artist-run centres presenting and producing exhibitions and events by local, Canadian and international contemporary artists. Programming includes performance, installations, symposia, concerts, residencies, workshops, partnerships, lectures, readings and off-site projects. It owns a two-story building at 510 Fort Street with a revenue tenant on street level. The second floor is a 2,500-square foot multi-use space, for exhibitions, public performances and contains a resource centre. In 2024, the building underwent a major seismic and accessibility upgrade.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
PACIFIC OPERA VICTORIA	Victoria	234,450	280,000	259,150

Background/Description

Pacific Opera Victoria provides opera and a range of other productions with Canadian artists at the forefront. It presents 3 mainstage productions per season at the Royal and the McPherson Theatres. POV developed and manages The Baumann Centre, an acoustically designed space suitable for rehearsals by POV and other community stakeholders, as part of a sustainability strategy to engage other organizations in the community. The space also incorporates the organization's administrative offices. The organization has developed many community partnerships to take advantage of their space.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the top third of annual applicants and, due to this high performance, is recommended for a funding lift of \$24,700 over the level of funding in the previous year for 2025, 2026 and 2027 (subject to budget approvals and satisfactory interim reports). As a multiyear operating client, this organization will provide an interim report next year for review by staff.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
PTARMIGAN ARTS		Grant	Request	Recommendation
	SGI EA	19,400	20,000	19,400

Background/Description

In existence for almost 30 years, Ptarmigan is a charitable arts organization that delivers community arts programs in the Southern Gulf Islands and Greater Victoria. Programming includes concerts, festivals, an art gallery and studio tours to showcase and promote the work of established and emerging community artists, incorporating music, theatre, dance, storytelling, visual and media arts.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
PUEENTE THEATRE		Grant	Request	Recommendation
	Victoria	34,500	36,000	36,000

Background/Description

Puente Theatre was founded in Victoria in 1988 by Chilean-born director Lina de Guevara, who remained Artistic Director until she retired in 2011. It explores social issues including, but not limited to, those relating to race and culture and expresses the immigrant experience to Victoria audiences through plays, workshops, theatrical readings and ‘forum’ performances. It also works to create a multi-ethnic network of immigrant artists and resources designed to attract and engage newcomers and provides opportunities for work and training for immigrant artists.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the top third of annual applicants and, due to this high performance, is recommended for a funding lift of \$1,500 over the level of funding in the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
SNAFU DANCE THEATRE	Victoria	14,500	15,950	15,950

Background/Description

SNAFU creates collaborations with multi-disciplinary artists in dance, theatre, storytelling, puppetry, live music, and visual art. They create innovative shows for theatre venues as well as unexpected spectacles in unusual spaces, including bike trails, public washrooms, theatres, art galleries, fields, heritage sites, parking garages, schools and prisons. SNAFU targets audiences who do not normally watch live theatre.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the top third of annual applicants and, due to this high performance, is recommended for a funding lift of \$1,450 over the level of funding in the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
STORY THEATRE	Victoria	40,000	40,000	40,000

Background/Description

Story Theatre originated in 1980/81 as a Kaleidoscope Theatre summer program and is now a registered non-profit with a mission to inspire imagination and encourage literacy through live theatrical performance and storytelling. The company performs narrative theatre for young people, primarily in schools in BC as well as other parts of Canada, with the goal of making impactful, artistic programming for the public that is educational, accessible, fun, and prioritizes disabled QT2BIPOC.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Community Impact and Involvement, but below satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, and Organizational Capacity and Governance. Additionally, the scores for this application resulted in a rank in the bottom cohort. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year with the stipulation of a Notice of Significant Concern that will require additional information in next year’s application detailing what actions have been taken to address the concerns related to plans to reinvigorate school bookings and tours and/or pivot to other forms of artistic programming and financial planning, projected earned revenues and a sustainable business model.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
		Grant	Request	Recommendation
THEATRE INCONNU	Victoria	27,500	28,000	27,500

Background/Description

Theatre Inconnu was co-founded in 1978. In spring 2004, Theatre Inconnu established itself as the resident theatre company at the Fernwood (Community Association) Little Hall producing 5-7 plays per season. They focus on local production often employing graduating and current students from UVic or the Canadian College of Performing Arts.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Organizational Capacity and Governance, but below satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, the scores for this application resulted in a rank in the bottom cohort. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year with the stipulation of a Notice of Significant Concern that will require additional information in next year’s application detailing what actions have been taken to address the concerns related to clarity around organization’s stated mandate of paying artists professional scale fees vs. their current practice of honorariums and approach to outreach and audience development.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
		Grant	Request	Recommendation
THEATRE SKAM	Victoria	40,800	50,000	40,800

Background/Description

Theatre SKAM began as a collective of Victoria artists creating new work and presented its first production in 1995, incorporating two years later. The company presents alternative, contemporary theatre and is known for its use of unusual performance spaces which have included a café, a loading dock, a pick-up truck, Esquimalt's Macaulay Point Park and the Galloping Goose Trail. Their Pop-Up Theatre, an 8 to 10 seat theatre house in a truck, can accommodate live performance or projections. The primary focus is presenting to Greater Victoria audiences using local artists; however they have also toured to Vancouver, the BC interior and Toronto.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

VICTORIA ARTS COUNCIL	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
	Victoria	37,600	40,000	37,600

Background/Description

The VAC is one of about 70 community arts councils in BC that are funded through the BC Arts Council to support the arts (particularly in rural communities). In 2018, the organization re-branded itself as the Victoria Arts Council and is now based in Victoria on Store Street. It has transitioned from a volunteer-run community group to a professional arts organization. The focus is on supporting the visual arts primarily, with consideration for sponsoring/endorsing performing and literary arts events when possible.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

VICTORIA BAROQUE PLAYERS	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
	Victoria	9,550	15,000	9,550

Background/Description

The Victoria Baroque Music Society, founded in 2011, supports the activities of "Victoria Baroque" which presents high-quality, stylistic and exciting performances of baroque music, played on period instruments. The organization produces main stage performances as well as free outdoor summer concerts. The organization differs from the Early Music Society in that it is an ensemble whose core members live on Vancouver Island. The organization also provides workshops for local students and adults.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
VICTORIA BC SKA & REGGAE	Victoria	25,000	29,000	25,000

Background/Description

Victoria BC Ska Society was incorporated in 2003 and has presented Victoria's Ska & Reggae Festival for over 20 years. The festival features dozens of bands from multiple different countries as well as regional and national talent. There is free programming and ticketed presentations at Ship Point as well as at smaller venues throughout Victoria. The Society works to highlight musical and cultural connections to music that have been influenced by Jamaican rooted music and vice versa.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
VICTORIA CHILDREN'S CHOIR	Victoria	13,930	13,930	13,930

Background/Description

Victoria Children's Choir provides various choral training and performance opportunities for children between the ages of 7 through 20. VCC strives for choral excellence by pursuing a challenging, distinctive and inspiring multicultural repertoire, celebrating the best of Canadian music and original choral repertoire. Choirs perform locally, nationally and internationally including collaborations with the Victoria Symphony and Pacific Opera Victoria.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Organizational Capacity and Governance and Community Impact and Involvement, but below satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance. Additionally, the scores for this application resulted in a rank in the bottom cohort. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year with the stipulation of a Notice of Significant Concern that will require additional information in next year's application detailing what actions have been taken to address the concerns related to the organization's role in the arts ecosystem, development of professional artists, and approach to equity, diversity and inclusion.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
VICTORIA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC		Grant	Request	Recommendation
	Victoria	55,000	82,500	55,000

Background/Description

The Victoria Conservatory of Music is housed in a renovated church with 50,000-square-feet of offices, classrooms, studios and two concert halls used for public presentations. They also have agreements for use of the Metro Theatre which is a space leased to and managed by Intrepid Theatre. VCM has five inter-related, distinct enterprises – a community school, a professional music school, a summer school, a music therapy centre, and a public presentation enterprise (“VCM Presents”). VCM is the only Operating grant recipient that presents only a portion of their overall activities in their application budget. Programming through "VCM Presents" is the only portion eligible for CRD Operating support.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement, but below a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the bottom cohort. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year with the stipulation of a Notice of Significant Concern that will require additional information in next year’s application on which aspects of programming on the facility premises are VCM presentations and which are rentals where other arts groups are the primary presenters, and more background information on its planning, research, and capability to undertake community-engaged theatre.

As part of the NOSC policy, the organization becomes an annual operating client required to submit a full application next year and, if the NOSC is cleared, will have the opportunity to reapply to the Multi-Year stream of Operating Grants in fall 2027.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
VICTORIA FILM FESTIVAL		Grant	Request	Recommendation
	Victoria	47,170	57,100	47,170

Background/Description

Founded in 1995 as part of the Cinevic Society of Independent Filmmakers and incorporated as a separate non-profit society in 1998. Programming decisions and ongoing efforts are guided by: Accessibility, Diversity and Collaboration. The organization presents an annual film festival as well as other similar events that include the free-B Film Festival, the Foodie Film Festival, various youth programming, workshops and school programs. It also runs the Vic Theatre, a movie theatre that acts as a festival venue as well as having year-round operations.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year for 2025, 2026 and 2027 (subject to budget approvals and satisfactory interim reports). As a multiyear operating client, this organization will provide an interim report next year for review by staff.

VICTORIA JAZZ SOCIETY	Jurisdiction	2024 Grant	2025 Request	2025 Recommendation
	Victoria	66,800	78,000	66,800

Background/Description

The society presents an annual jazz festival in late June/early July. Prior to 2009 the festival was called “JazzFest International,” but re-named “TD Victoria International JazzFest” to recognize a long-term sponsor. Since 1995, VJS has also produced the 3-day Vancouver Island Blues Bash on Labour Day weekend however, post COVID, in 2022 this festival was moved one week earlier (last weekend in August) and renamed to Harbour Blues and Roots. A concert series runs from October to April, as well as various workshop/clinics aimed at young musicians.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year for 2025, 2026 and 2027 (subject to budget approvals and satisfactory interim reports). As a multiyear operating client, this organization will provide an interim report next year for review by staff.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
VICTORIA ON STAGE		Grant	Request	Recommendation
2024 NOSC	Esquimalt	21,500	30,000	17,200

Background/Description

VOS is a community-based, and until recently an all-volunteer organization, that has produced and presented a range of musical theatre, focussing in recent years on popular musical theatre including Broadway shows and Gilbert and Sullivan. It began at the Royal Theatre but moved to the McPherson Playhouse in 1965. Typically, two musical theatre productions are presented per year. The organization owns a warehouse space that functions as rehearsal hall, office, storage and scene shop.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization had also received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2024 operating grant. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, but below a satisfactory level in Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, the scores for this application resulted in a rank in the bottom cohort. Due to continuing concerns, this organization is recommended for a funding reduction of \$4,300 and to receive another Notice of Significant Concern. This Notice of Significant Concern will require additional information in next year's application detailing what actions have been taken to address concerns related to plans for strategic board development and policies addressing or clarifying any potential conflicts of interest and evidence of detailed and effective outreach and audience development strategies.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
VICTORIA SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY		Grant	Request	Recommendation
	Victoria	20,000	35,000	20,000

Background/Description

The VSS was formed in 2003 to produce the Greater Victoria Shakespeare Festival, previously produced by Theatre Inconnu. That first year, VSS produced one play in Centennial Square. In 2004 it moved to St. Ann's Academy with two productions and in 2005 moved to the grounds of Camosun College. Since then, it has performed in many outdoor locations around the CRD. The VSS invites audience members of diverse ages, cultures, and economic backgrounds to be inspired every summer by the immortal words of Shakespear under the stars.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and

Involvement. Their scores resulted in a rank in the middle and warranted the application of the principle that consistent performance merited consistent funding. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
VICTORIA SYMPHONY		Grant	Request	Recommendation
	Victoria	407,400	440,870	426,060

Background/Description

A large orchestra presenting an annual program of classical music. Programming includes various components featuring symphonic music in the genres of classical, new music and pops. Since 2017, the Music Director has been Christian Kluxen. In October 2020, Matthew White, previously Executive and Artistic Director of the Early Music Vancouver (EMV), became CEO.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 10 multi-year applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the top third of annual applicants and, due to this high performance, is recommended for a funding lift of \$18,660 over the level of funding in the previous year for 2025, 2026 and 2027 (subject to budget approvals and satisfactory interim reports). As a multiyear operating client, this organization will provide an interim report next year for review by staff.

	Jurisdiction	2024	2025	2025
WONDERHEADS THEATRE		Grant	Request	Recommendation
	Victoria	22,000	25,300	25,300

Background/Description

Wonderheads, formed in 2009, this is a physical theatre company specializing in mask performance and visual storytelling. Kate Braidwood and Andrew Phoenix are co-founders; their work is performed in full-face mask and is wordless. Over the past fourteen years they have developed five original productions: Grim and Fischer, LOON, The Middle of Everywhere, The Wilds, and A WONDERHEADS Christmas Carol, which have toured to festivals and performing arts centres throughout Canada and the United States.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in the three assessment areas of Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. Additionally, their scores resulted in a rank in the top third of annual applicants and, due to this high performance, is recommended for a funding lift of \$3,300 over the level of funding in the previous year.

**REPORT TO ARTS COMMISSION
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2025**

SUBJECT **Annual Strategic Plan Check-In**

ISSUE SUMMARY

As part of the implementation plan, staff provide an annual update on all activities that have advanced the strategic plan in the previous year (2024) and the schedule of activities that will continue to advance the strategic plan in the upcoming year (2025).

BACKGROUND

On September 27, 2023, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Arts Commission approved a new strategic plan to guide the work of strategic initiatives for the Arts and Culture Support Service from 2024 to 2027. The new strategic plan contains 10 goals and 17 initiatives (see Appendix A).

On November 22, 2023, the CRD Arts Commission approved the accompanying Implementation Plan for the strategic plan that laid out the sequencing of how initiatives would be actioned across the four-year timeframe. This included an implementation timeline (Appendix B) and summary of actions with status indicators (Appendix C).

The implementation plan timeline and summary provide a visual guide for the sequencing of initiatives in the strategic plan. Some initiatives are ongoing efforts, others are crosscutting lenses applied to all activities and policy development. For time-limited initiatives, three stages are identified: planning, Arts Advisory Council (AAC) and Arts Commission review, and implementation. Some initiatives have strongly overlapping connections and their development and implementation would be conducted jointly to ensure that synergies between multiple goals and initiatives can be optimized.

The CRD Arts Commission, AAC, and staff all serve important roles in policy development for the Arts and Culture Support Service. The AAC ensure new initiatives are informed by community knowledge. CRD staff bring subject matter expertise, data-based evidence, research, and institutional memory. The Arts Commission has final authority over which initiatives are implemented and the timing of their development.

In 2024, several milestones were accomplished that advanced the strategic plan, including:

- Advanced the planning, design, and approval of the new Grow Forward grant program;
- Conducted full program evaluation and report on the Incubator grant program;
- Adapted case studies from the 2023 Impact Report as social media posts to promote the importance of the arts in building vibrant communities;
- Advocated to the BC Arts Council for a better approach to the Regional Areas policy;
- Launched the research and data gathering phase of a new data strategy initiative focused on the regional impact of arts funding; and,
- Completed research, drafting, and approval of the 2024-27 Communications and Outreach Plan, which will advance multiple strategic plan initiatives.

All of this is in addition to the delivery of the core aspects of the Arts and Culture Support Service, namely the six annual granting intakes and adjudications, as well as the annual Impact report that shows the impact of this funding through statistics and case studies.

In 2025, there are multiple time-limited initiatives that will continue to advance the strategic plan, including:

- Launch of the new Grow Forward grant program (pilot version) and review of results with recommendations to optimize the full version;
- Review Operating grant program, annual and multi-year streams;
- Review of the name and brand of the Arts and Culture Support Service;
- Collaborate with educational institutions and other partners in raising awareness about career pathways in the arts through information-sharing events and initiatives;
- Advance the analysis and presentation of new data strategy initiative focused on the regional impact of arts funding; and
- Host biennial Arts Champions Summit in November 2025 (date TBD).

In 2025, there are equally important ongoing initiatives that will also continue to advance the strategic plan, including:

- Raise awareness of the value of the arts and the impact of CRD arts funding through annual Impact Report and expanded information-sharing initiatives with participating jurisdictions;
- Collaborate with the arts sector in celebrating the arts through initiatives such as the Greater Victoria Regional Arts Awards;
- Increase access to the arts through grant information sessions, application process support, and promotion of funding opportunities on multiple platforms; and
- Support non-participating jurisdictions to understand the benefits of joining the service, financial implications, and the actions necessary to initiate that process.

Staff will continue to be nimble in identifying any fast-moving opportunities throughout the year that may contribute to advancing key strategic goals and bringing them to the Arts Commission's attention, as well as flagging any obstacles or delays that may occur during the implementation process.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

In the 2023-26 CRD Corporate Plan, initiative 10a-1 states the CRD will “[d]esign and implement a revised Arts & Culture Support Service Strategic Plan”. This implementation plan provides the roadmap to advance the implementation component of this initiative.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

This implementation plan complements the newly approved 2024-27 Strategic Plan for the Arts and Culture Support Service by sequencing the advancement of its 10 goals and 17 initiatives.

Service Delivery Implications

At present, the CRD Arts & Culture Division is composed of 3.0 FTE staff who are responsible for

leading the coordination of the implementation plan, as well as the research, planning, and actioning of initiatives. These staff also support other CRD arts services and any special board initiatives related to arts and culture.

The strategic plan does not outline the normal annual operations of the Arts and Culture Support Service, such as the regular delivery of its five grant programs, which continue to be an essential part of the service.

If forced to choose between core operations and policy development, staff will focus on delivering the essential services of the granting programs that the arts sector relies upon for activating arts events. Board-initiated special projects – such as the Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee launched in 2024 – may also take precedence over Arts Service policy development. Both constraints could cause delays in the timeline of this implementation plan, although to date the impact has been minimal. Basically, the current implementation plan has advanced in its first full year on budget and on schedule.

CONCLUSION

The Arts Commission has approved the design of a new strategic plan to guide the development of the Arts and Culture Support Service from 2024 to 2027. An implementation plan has also been approved, which provides a guide for when each strategic initiative will be developed over the next four years. This update outlines progress to date made to advance the implementation plan through 2024 and the major initiatives that are planned for 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

No recommendation. This report is for information only.

Submitted by: Chris Gilpin, MPA, Manager Arts & Culture

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: CRD Arts & Culture Support Service Strategic Plan 2024-27
- Appendix B: 2024-27 Strategic Plan Implementation Timeline
- Appendix C: 2024-27 Strategic Plan Implementation Summary

CRD Arts & Culture Support Service Strategic Plan

2024-2027



TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The CRD conducts its business within the traditional territories of many First Nations, including but not limited to BOKÉCEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), P'a:chi:da?aht (Pacheedaht), Pune'laxutth' (Penelekut), Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), Songhees, SṪÁUTW (Tsawout), T'Sou-ke, WJOLÉŁP (Tsartlip), WSIKEM (Tseycum), and x^wsepsəm (Esquimalt), all of whom have a long-standing relationship with the land and waters from time immemorial that continues to this day.



Organizational Overview

The **Capital Regional District** (CRD) delivers regional, sub-regional and local services to 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Governed by a 24-member Board of Directors, the CRD works collaboratively with First Nations and all levels of government to enable sustainable growth, foster community well-being, and develop cost-effective infrastructure, while continuing to provide core services to residents throughout the region.

The **CRD Arts & Culture Support Service** (“the Arts Service”) is a sub-regional service supported by 9 jurisdictions providing grants to non-profit organizations for the development of local arts programming, creating artistic, social and economic benefits for the region.

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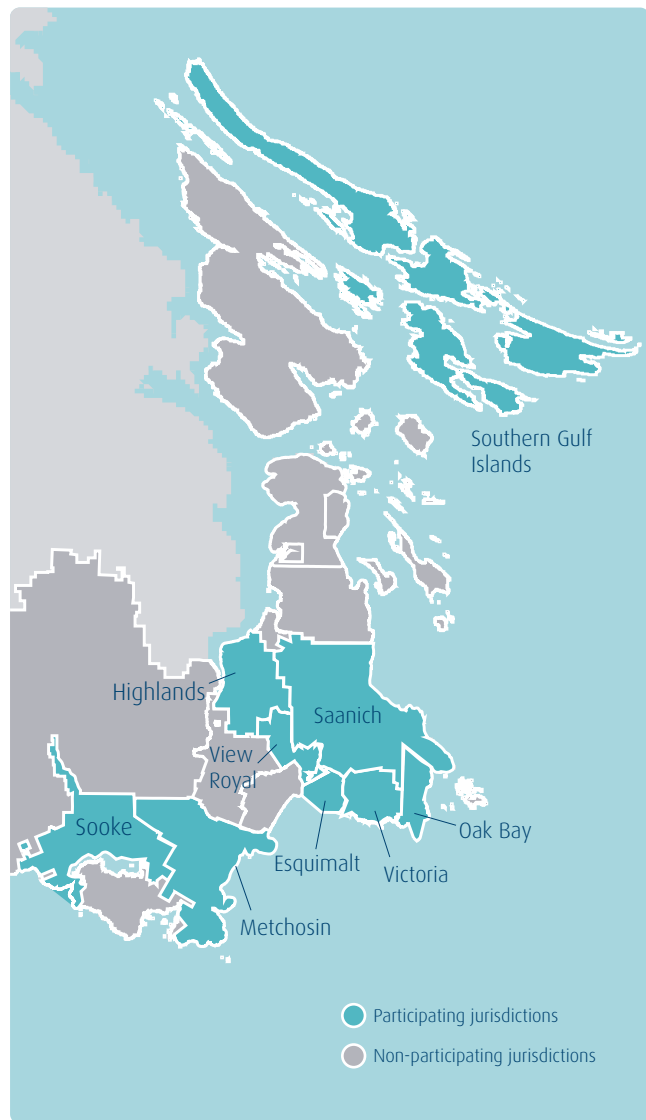
Background

About the CRD Arts & Culture Support Service

The CRD Arts & Culture Support Service (“the Arts Service”) distributes over \$2.5 million to non-profit organizations each year through granting programs. In 2023, at the outset of this strategic plan, the Arts Service is funded by the following participating CRD jurisdictions: Esquimalt, Highlands, Metchosin, Oak Bay, Saanich, Sooke, Southern Gulf Islands, Victoria, and View Royal.

The Arts Service was established in 2001 through Bylaw 2884 for “the provision of assistance in relation to the arts and culture for the purpose of benefiting the community or an aspect of the community.” Bylaw 2884 also gives authority to the Arts Service’s political oversight body, the Arts Commission.

The Arts Commission consists of one elected official from each jurisdiction that is a participating member of the Arts Service. The Arts Commission directs strategy and policy development, makes an annual budget recommendation to the CRD Board, and has delegated financial authority for the Arts Service.



CRD Bylaw 2973 established the Arts Advisory Council as “an independent community-based body to provide advice to the CRD” on matters relating to the Arts Service. The Arts Advisory Council’s mandate is to act as an arm’s length adjudication body for Arts Service funding programs and to advise the Arts Commission on policies that foster and promote:

- Support of the arts in the community;
- Public awareness of and involvement in the arts;
- The creation, exhibition and performance of artistic works;
- The development of artistic and other requisite skills and shall advise the CRD Arts Commission of measures which the Council considers to be conducive to these ends; and
- Other appropriate duties as assigned by the Arts Commission from time to time.

The Arts Service delivers five granting programs:

- 1. Operating Grants** provide annual and multi-year support to organizations for ongoing arts programming and operations.
- 2. Project Grants** support one-time events, short series or extended project-based programming.
- 3. Equity Grants** support arts initiatives by applicants from communities that are at-risk of exclusion or have difficulty accessing support for systemic reasons.
- 4. Incubator Grants** support development or capacity building for emerging or developing organizations.
- 5. IDEA (Innovate, Develop, Experiment, Access) Grants** support arts-based programming by non-arts mandated organizations.

In broad terms, the Operating Grant program provides stable funding to enable long-term operational planning, and the project-based grant programs support time-limited arts events and other activities.

The Arts Service also manages landmarkspublicart.ca, a searchable website dedicated to the presentation of public art in the region for jurisdictions participating; provides outreach and communications activities; produces an annual Impact Report; and hosts convening events of arts leaders and champions.

The staff of the Arts Service is comprised of three positions: a manager, a community outreach coordinator and an administrative assistant. They are responsible for the reporting, analysis, and administration of the funding programs and outreach activities. They also provide support to the Arts Commission and Arts Advisory Council, and liaise with other levels of government, non-profit organizations, and the public in providing information and representing the Arts Service.

Growing Over 22 Years

Since forming in 2001, the CRD Arts & Culture Support Service has grown from six participating municipalities to nine, expanded who receives funding and how it funds the arts sector.



2011

IDEA Grant pilot

Expanding arts funding to non-arts organizations to develop programming, IDEA grants were piloted for six years then reintroduced in 2019.



2012

Defining the mission & vision

The Arts Service's mission "to support, promote and celebrate the arts," and vision "The arts are essential to the fabric of life in our communities," (later amended to "art is central to life in the region,") is supported by goals that included increased access, awareness and funding, sustained growth, and responsive granting.



1950s - 1990s

Emergence of a collaborative, intermunicipal approach to arts

The Greater Victoria Intermunicipal Committee (IMC) formed by four core members: Victoria, Esquimalt, Oak Bay and Saanich, in order to consider cost sharing for a variety of services. The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria seems to be the first arts grant recipient in the mid-1950s. Shared funding was ad-hoc, but over the next 40 years, the need for arts funding grew, as did community support for the arts. Community engagements and reports signalled that the arts sector needed consolidated local funding and sustained support to thrive and fully support the region. This led to a recommendation that CRD take over arts programming and policy development.



6 participating municipalities

Metchosin & Highlands join the four core IMC members in forming the Arts Service

2001

CRD Arts & Culture Support Service established

The CRD Arts & Culture Support Service is established on behalf of Victoria, Oak Bay, Saanich, Esquimalt, Highlands and Metchosin, through Bylaw 2884. Supported by the arts sector, the transfer to CRD, alongside increased membership and funding signalled commitment to a more regional approach to arts policy and funding. Reliable and consistent funding through Operating Grants and Project Grants allowed arts organizations to access funding from a centralized local funder, rather than needing to make individual requests to each municipality.

2016

First Arts Champions Summit

The region's arts sector came together to celebrate achievements and provide input for Arts Service planning, resulting in recommendations through the 'Building our #ArtsFuture Implementation Plan.' This ushered in a new era for the region's arts funding, expanding who could access funding and bolstering outreach.



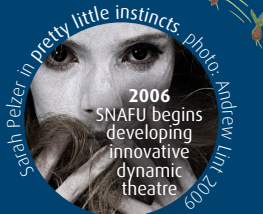
2018

Incubator & Equity Grants introduced

Two new funding streams, tailored to meet the needs of emerging organizations and applicants experiencing systemic barriers, expands the scope and reach of arts funding.

9 participating municipalities

Sooke and Southern Gulf Islands join, while **Sidney** leaves the Arts Service



2021

Developing an 'equity lens'

Informed through the 2021 Arts Champions Summit, the Arts Service applies an 'equity lens' to its operations and granting to ensure funding goes to underserved communities.



2005

Funding boost

After a series of five yearly 250K increases, Arts Service grants to arts organizations reached \$1.78 million annually.

2023

Looking forward

The Arts Commission embarks on developing a new strategic plan to guide the next priorities for the Arts Service.

7 participating municipalities

View Royal joins the Arts service

2007

Launch of Landmarks Public Art

This publicly accessible website provides a mappable database of public art.



8 participating municipalities

Sidney joins the Arts Service

2009





Community Engagement Process

How We Got Here

On February 22, 2023, the Arts Commission approved a process to generate a new strategic plan for 2024-27. This process involved community consultation with the arts sector and arts audiences to ensure that the strategic planning process would be informed by community knowledge.

From February to May 2023, CRD staff gathered feedback and facilitated discussions about community needs and aspirations with artists, arts organizations, the Arts Advisory Council, rural arts leaders, staff from other arts funding agencies, and arts audiences, all of whom brought forward valuable perspectives contributing to a more holistic understanding of the arts sector and its impact on the capital region.

The multipronged consultation approach included focus groups, events, and online surveys. This allowed staff to employ the methods most suitable to engaging the interest holder group in question. A dedicated project webpage was created at getinvolved.crd.bc.ca to ensure the process was open, transparent, and the public could follow its progress. Responses were received through multiple outreach methods designed to engage with the broadest variety of people who are interested in or impacted by arts activities in the capital region.

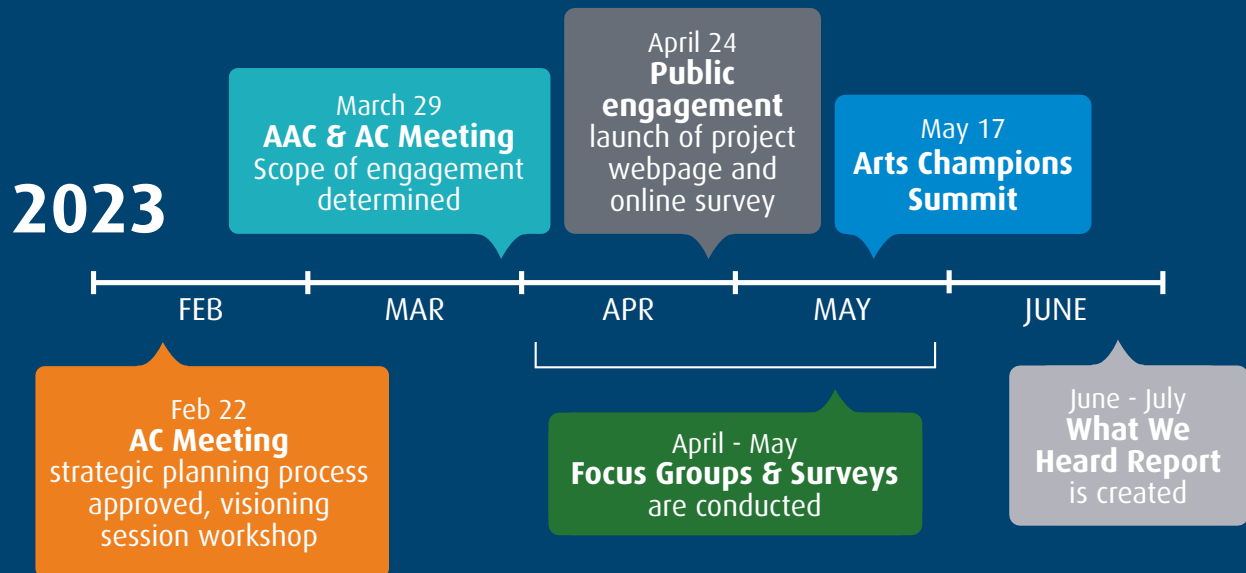


Arts Champions Summit table group. Photo: Dan Russek

THANK YOU

The CRD Arts & Culture Support Service staff, along with the Arts Commission and Arts Advisory Council would like to extend our sincere thanks to the members of the arts community who contributed their knowledge and perspectives throughout the engagement period that shaped this strategic plan. Thank you also to the volunteers and event organizers who made the Arts Champions Summit possible.

ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW



Two of the main consultation methods were the online survey and the Arts Champions Summit. 303 responses were received through the online survey, which asked 30 questions about the arts sector in the capital region and CRD arts funding. The keystone event of the consultation was the Arts Champions Summit held at the Baumann Centre on May 17, 2023, which was attended by over 100 artists, arts administrators, elected officials, and other supporters of the arts. Summit attendees received presentations on innovative arts projects in the region and background on the CRD Arts & Culture Support Service. They participated in two collaborative engagement exercises where they worked together with other attendees to facilitate discussions on key issues and provided feedback on how to build a better arts sector over the next four years.

The feedback from the engagement process was gathered in the What We Heard Report, which was posted to the engagement webpage and distributed back to the community through the e-newsletter and dedicated social media channels. The community feedback drew attention to many key issues in the arts sector, including increasing challenges around affordability and infrastructure. It also indicated that the Arts & Culture Support Service is making a strongly positive impact on the region and benefits from widespread support. Continuity with the previous strategic plan was clearly appropriate in some priority areas. The granting programs are relied upon as key supports by the arts sector and the level of design in the program structure is consistent with a mature and effective service.

Engagement exercises in action. Photo: Dan Russek





Arts Champions
Summit promotional
artwork by Leya Tess



Mission, Vision & Commitment to Equity

In June 2023, the Arts Commission reviewed and approved revised mission and vision statements based on feedback from many sources, including the engagement process.

The mission summarizes what we do. The vision indicates where we are going. The commitment to equity supports how we will get there.

MISSION

Support, champion & develop the arts.

VISION

The arts are key drivers of community vitality, economic sustainability, and quality of life across the region, and artists and arts organizations are thriving, resilient, and well-supported.

Commitment to Equity

The CRD Arts & Culture Support Service is committed to supporting the development of equity in the region's arts sector. We are taking action to embed values of equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and cultural self-determination into our processes and policies, understanding that these concepts are not a static set of goals, but rather an evolving journey.

The aim of our commitment and these actions is to support the full diversity of artistic and cultural expression in the region. Recognizing that persistent and systemic discrimination has prevented equity-seeking groups from accessing resources, we continue to expand access and remove barriers to our funding. Equity-seeking groups include, but are not limited to, First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, those who are racialized, Deaf people, LGBTQ2+ people, and those with disabilities.

Our 2024–2027 Strategic Priority Areas:

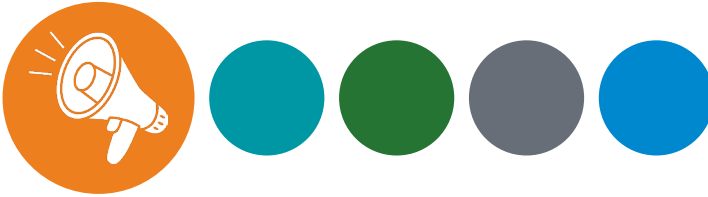
 **Champion** | Advocating for the arts

 **Connect** | Enhancing collaboration

 **Cultivate** | Developing the arts ecosystem

 **Extend** | Broading the scope of impact

 **Engage** | Sharing our story and learning



Champion | Advocating for the arts

Goal 1:

Scale up regional participation in the Arts Service to expand its scope and impact.

Actions:

Advocate for a regional approach to arts funding.

Recruit non-participating jurisdictions to join the Arts Service.

Goal 2:

Raise awareness of the value of the arts to demonstrate how it contributes to economic sustainability, community vitality, and quality of life.

Actions:

Collaborate with arts organizations in celebrating the impact of the arts sector and raising awareness about career pathways in the arts.

Promote the importance of the arts in building livable communities by sharing research and case studies.



Connect | Enhancing collaboration

Goal 3:

Foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing to boost organizational development.

Actions:

Support mentorship opportunities with a focus on small, emerging, and rural organizations.

Enhance networking and convening opportunities for arts professionals.

Goal 4:

Work collaboratively with all levels of government to connect arts organizations with support for arts spaces and other funding.

Actions:

Provide resources to assist the arts sector in navigating provincial and federal grant opportunities with a focus on infrastructure funding.



Cultivate | Developing the arts ecosystem

Goal 5:

Support the region's arts ecosystem to grow sustainably.

Actions:

Expand funding for planning and capacity-building.

Conduct full program evaluation of Incubator Grants.

Expand scope of funding with an emphasis on regional distribution.

Goal 6:

Align funding programs to respond to community needs.

Actions:

Review parameters of project-based grants (Project, IDEA, and Equity Grants).



Extend | Broadening the scope of impact

Goal 7:

Invest in underserved and marginalized communities to support the full artistic and cultural potential of the region.

Actions:

Build on the momentum of applying equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility lenses across granting and operations.

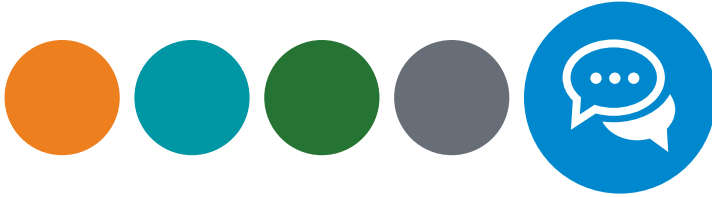
Goal 8:

Reduce barriers to increase access to funding.

Actions:

Enhance support for arts programming by and for youth.

Review eligibility to annual and multi-year Operating Grants.



Engage | Sharing our story and learning

Goal 9:

Diversify educational resources for grant applicants to enhance knowledge base.

Actions:

Design and implement a Communications and Community Engagement Plan.

Make information and grant-writing workshops accessible to applicants throughout the region.

Goal 10:

Enhance the branding of the Arts Service to clarify its focus.

Actions:

Conduct full review of the service name and brand and implement findings.



Evaluation & Reporting

Implementing the Strategic Plan

The Arts Service will be guided by the twin principles of accountability and transparency in its implementation of this strategic plan. Progress on these priorities, goals, and actions will be reported to the Arts Commission, Arts Advisory Council, and arts community in both public meetings and using communications tools, such as media releases, the CRD Arts & Culture e-newsletter, and the dedicated social media channels. Not all goals will be advanced simultaneously. Rather, there will be a phased approach to implementation over the full four years covered by the strategic plan, which starts in 2024 and goes until the end of 2027.

This strategic plan will be supported by evaluation and reporting initiatives:

- As they develop into policy and outreach initiatives, the strategic priorities, goals, and actions will inform the annual Community Needs Summary for CRD Arts & Culture, which is updated each year as part of the budget planning process.
- At each meeting, the Arts Advisory Council and the Arts Commission will receive updates on implementation activities supporting the strategic goals and actions as part of a standing agenda item tasked to the Arts Manager.
- The Arts Advisory Council and the Arts Commission will provide feedback to staff on the timeline of implementation and the sequencing of policy development to support the goals and actions in this plan.
- A Status Tracker document will be created by staff, updated on an on-going basis, and presented on a regular basis to the Arts Advisory Council and Arts Commission to ensure that the implementation of the plan remains on schedule. The document will include key performance indicators and implementation metrics, where appropriate, to measure progress on goals and actions.
- This plan and its priorities, goals, and actions will be reviewed annually, evaluating implementation, and identifying next steps, including any adjustments to capacity that might be necessary to advance the plan to completion.

The Arts Service will continue to be dynamic and accountable in both its vision and implementation actions, recognizing that some steps will be determined by new learnings that are gained through the implementation process. The Arts Service will provide updates to the wider community on our progress and goals regularly through our robust communications tools, inviting feedback on the process throughout. Staff will report out on what has been achieved, what has been learned through the results of previous actions, and which priorities areas require further attention and development.

Conclusion

The Arts Service, as one of many arts funders, plays a crucial role in supporting the arts ecosystem in the capital region and, at the same time, recognizes that it is the artists, administrators, audiences, and volunteers who are the true creators, producers, presenters, and facilitators. They deserve the full credit for activating and advancing the arts. The Arts Service is a supporter of many leaders in many fields of arts practice and wishes to acknowledge their extraordinary work in making the arts flourish in communities across the capital region.



Victoria Flamenco Festival, "For the Love of Flamenco," dancer: Lia Crowe, photo: Amity Skala



Capital Regional District

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www.crd.bc.ca/arts
[@crdartsculture](https://twitter.com/crdartsculture)

2024–2027 Strategic Plan Implementation Timeline

CRD Arts & Culture Support Service | Updated January 2025

PRIORITY:	GOAL:	ACTION:	IMPLEMENTATION:															
			2024				2025				2026				2027			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
CHAMPION	Goal 1: Scale up participation	Action A: Advocate for regional approach	Ongoing															
		Action B: Recruit new participants	Ongoing															
	Goal 2: Value of arts awareness	Action A: Collaborate w/ arts orgs	Research & Planning (Q1-Q2) → AAC & AC Review (Q3) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
		Action B: Share research on arts impact	Research & Planning (Q1-Q2) → AAC & AC Review (Q3) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
CONNECT	Goal 3: Boost org development	Action A: Support mentoring	Research & Planning (Q1-Q2) → AAC & AC Review (Q3) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
		Action B: Enhance networking & convening	Research & Planning (Q1-Q2) → AAC & AC Review (Q3) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
	Goal 4: Connect arts organizations to funding	Action A: Roadmap for infrastructure grants	Implementation (Q1-2026) → AAC & AC Review (Q3-2026) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
CULTIVATE	Goal 5: Support sustainable growth	Action A: Funding for planning and capacity	Research & Planning (Q1-Q2) → AAC & AC Review (Q3) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
		Action B: Review of Incubator Grants	Research & Planning (Q1-Q2) → AAC & AC Review (Q3) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
		Action C: Emphasis on regional distribution	Crosscutting Lens – applied to all initiatives															
	Goal 6: Align funding to community needs	Action A: Review of Equity/IDEA/Projects	Implementation (Q1-2026) → AAC & AC Review (Q3-2026) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
EXTEND	Goal 7: Invest in underserved communities	Action A: Build on EDI momentum	Crosscutting Lens – applied to all initiatives															
	Goal 8: Reduce barriers to access	Action A: Support for youth arts	Implementation (Q1-2026) → AAC & AC Review (Q3-2026) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
		Action B: Review of Operating Grants	Research & Planning (Q1-Q2) → AAC & AC Review (Q3) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
ENGAGE	Goal 9: Resources for grant applicants	Action A: Design Comms & Outreach Plan	Research & Planning (Q1-Q2) → AAC & AC Review (Q3) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
		Action B: Grant-writing workshops	Research & Planning (Q1-Q2) → AAC & AC Review (Q3) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
	Goal 10: Enhance branding of Arts Service	Action A: Review of name and brand	Implementation (Q1-2026) → AAC & AC Review (Q3-2026) → Implementation (Q4-2027)															
PROCESS FOR NEXT STRATEGIC PLAN			Implementation (Q1-2027)															

● Ongoing
 ● Research & Planning
 ● AAC & AC Review
 ● Implementation
 Crosscutting Lens – applied to all initiatives

2024–2027 Strategic Plan Implementation Summary

Appendix C

CRD Arts & Culture Support Service | Updated January 2025

	STATUS:	TIMELINE:	RECENT ACTIVITY IN 2024:	NEXT STEPS IN 2025:	ON SCHEDULE?	ON BUDGET?
CHAMPION						
Goal 1: Scale up participation						
Action A: Advocate for regional approach	Ongoing	2024-2027	Added to new comms plan (9a)	Share results of data-sharing initiative; present to councils	Yes	Yes
Action B: Recruit new participants	Ongoing	2024-2027	Presented to Langford & Colwood councils	Monitor Langford arts and culture master plan & recommendation	Yes	Yes
Goal 2: Value of arts awareness						
Action A: Collaborate w/ arts orgs	In Progress - Developing	Start: Q2 2024 / Implement: Q1 2025-->	Supported 2024 GVRA awards; initiated data-sharing project	Share results of data-sharing initiative	Yes	Yes
Action B: Share research on arts impact	Actioning	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Introduced Impact Stories and facts social media series	Publish 2024 Impact Report and expand Impact Stories series	Yes	Yes
CONNECT						
Goal 3: Boost org development						
Action A: Support mentoring	In Progress - Actioning	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Launched Grow Forward grant pilot	Deliver Grow Forward pilot program	Yes	n/a
Action B: Enhance networking & convening	In Progress - Developing	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Started planning 2025 Arts Champions Summit	Coordinate & host Arts Champions Summit	Yes	Yes
Goal 4: Connect arts organizations to funding						
Action A: Roadmap for infrastructure grants	Not Started	Start: Q1 2026 / Implement: Q3 2026-->	n/a	n/a	Yes	n/a
CULTIVATE						
Goal 5: Support sustainable growth						
Action A: Funding for planning and capacity	In Progress - Actioning	Start: Q2 2024 / Implement: Q1 2025-->	Researched & designed Grow Forward grant pilot	Deliver Grow Forward pilot program	Yes	n/a
Action B: Review of Incubator Grants	Complete	Start: Q2 2024 / Implement: Q1 2025-->	Conducted full program evaluation	Communicate change to clients	Yes	n/a
Action C: Emphasis on regional distribution	Ongoing	2024-2027	Sent advocacy letter re: BC Arts Council Regional Areas policy	Apply regional lens in 2025 adjudications	Yes	Yes
Goal 6: Align funding to community needs						
Action A: Review of Equity/IDEA/Projects	Not Started	Start: Q1 2026 / Implement: Q4 2026-->	n/a	Gather key community feedback	Yes	n/a
EXTEND						
Goal 7: Invest in underserved communities						
Action A: Build on EDI momentum	Ongoing	2024-2027	Trained to develop accessible web content	Apply EDI lens in 2025 adjudications	Yes	Yes
Goal 8: Reduce barriers to access						
Action A: Support for youth arts	In Progress - Developing	Start: Q1 2026 / Implement: Q4 2026-->	Connected with secondary, post secondary & industry partners	Identify gaps in support, synergies and collaboraton opportunities	Yes	n/a
Action B: Review of Operating Grants	In Progress - Developing	Start: Q4 2024 / Implement: Q3 2025-->	Gathered key community feedback	Conduct full program evaluation	Yes	n/a
ENGAGE						
Goal 9: Resources for grant applicants						
Action A: Design Comms & Outreach Plan	Complete	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Approved finalized plan	Deliver multi-pronged plan	Yes	Yes
Action B: Grant-writing workshops	In Progress - Actioning	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Conducted 3 info sessions in 2024	Deliver 3-4 info sessions in 2025	Yes	Yes
Goal 10: Enhance branding of Arts Service						
Action A: Review of name and brand	Not Started	Start: Q2 2025 / Implement: Q4 2025-->	n/a	Gathered key community feedback	Yes	n/a

CRD Arts Commission – 2025 Meeting Schedule

Scheduled for the 4th Wednesday of the month at 4 pm, in Room 488 and on zoom, the following are from the “Board/Hospital Board & Standing Committees 2025 Meeting Schedule” produced by Legislative Services, and found on the website [HERE](#)

January 22

February 26

March 26

April 23

May 28

June 25

No meeting in July or August

September 17 ** This is scheduled one week earlier than usual, as the Union of BC Municipalities 2025 Convention takes place September 22 - 26

October 22

November 26

No meeting in December

Please note:

- Additional meetings may be scheduled at the call of the Chair.
- Meetings may be cancelled if there are a lack of agenda items.
In 2024, the February, April, and November meetings were cancelled.



Ref: 51845

November 15, 2024

Marianne Alto
Chair, CRD Arts Commission
Capital Regional District
Email: artsdevelopment@crd.bc.ca

Dear Marianne Alto:

Thank you for your letter of July 25, 2024, sent to the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sport, referring to the BC Arts Council's regional areas policy. As the Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for Arts and Culture, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Minister and apologize for the delay.

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (Ministry) understands the importance of public sector funding for the sustainability and growth of arts organizations. We recognize that arts and culture are critical to the health and well-being of communities and the Ministry supports significant investments in arts and culture, including through the BC Arts Council. Policy and strategic direction for the BC Arts Council are set by the 15 appointed Council members in alignment with government priorities and mandate commitments.

In 2018, the BC Arts Council committed to a set of objectives in its strategic plan *New Foundations: 2018-2022*. *New Foundations* prioritized regional arts and community arts, with a commitment to focus on the diversity of both professional and community arts practices throughout the province and improve the accessibility and relevance of programs. It is available online at: https://www.bcartscouncil.ca/app/uploads/sites/508/2019/06/2018_22_StratPlan.pdf.

In April 2022, Council extended the timeframe of *New Foundations* and launched *Extending Foundations: Action Plan 2022-2024* to further its implementation, with Regional Arts continuing as a priority and resulting in the inclusion of regional areas within Council's new *Designated Priority Groups* policy. The *Designated Priority Groups* policy is intended to address gaps in support and rebalance historic granting patterns to broaden impact and increase accessibility and equity. *Extending Foundations* is available online at: <http://www.bcartscouncil.ca/app/uploads/sites/508/2022/04/Extending-Foundations-Action-Plan-Final.pdf>.

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The term “regional areas” is defined in the BC Arts Council’s online glossary, for the purposes of BC Arts Council grants and funding priorities, as those outside of the capital region and Greater Vancouver. However, there are exceptions for smaller, more rural communities including Sooke, Metchosin, the Gulf Islands, and the Juan de Fuca electoral area, which are prioritized for funding under the policy.

The rationale for the inclusion of regional areas in the Designated Priority Groups, and the accompanying definitions, is a recognition that, across the province, a significant amount of available funding and programming goes to artists and cultural organizations in urban centres, with limited access to arts and culture funding for those outside those centres. Many communities do not have arts and culture funding opportunities offered through local government sources, or support through foundations, sponsorships, and other philanthropic resources. Due to comparatively limited funding options and lack of proximity to larger urban centres, regional areas are prioritized in BC Arts Council programs.

In keeping with the requirements of the *Arts Council Act* (https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96019_01), the BC Arts Council provides an open, accountable and neutrally administered process for managing funds for arts and culture. All grant applicants are assessed using criteria within publicly posted program guidelines. The Designated Priority Groups policy does not instruct assessors to score applications lower against the program criteria nor does it provide guaranteed funding to specific groups. Rather, the policy provides strategic measures in addition to the robust grant assessment process applied equally to all applicants.

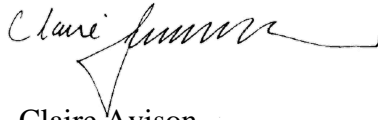
I am pleased to report that the BC Arts Council continues to invest in the capital region. For example, the Accelerate Pilot Program funded nine organizations in the capital region in its inaugural intake, supporting capacity building and operations over a two-year funding period. These organizations received a total of \$201,450 in each of the two fiscal years, equal to 8.1 percent of the \$2.5 M provided each year in the program.

The Ministry has received your suggestions and proposals regarding the BC Arts Council policies, and the Ministry staff supporting the BC Arts Council have taken them forward for review. The BC Arts Council will, however, not be undertaking any significant policy review until after it receives new mandate direction from the incoming government. At that time, staff and Council will then recommence the ongoing work of reviewing policies, incorporating the valuable feedback we receive from communities across the province.

Marianne Alto
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Thank you for your ongoing support and advocacy for a more vibrant and equitable arts sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Claire Avison". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Claire Avison
Assistant Deputy Minister

pc: Office of the Premier