

# **Regional Arts Facilities: A Framework**

December 2016

BUILDING OUR  
**#ArtsFuture**  
TOGETHER  
CRD ARTS  
STRATEGY

The CRD Arts Development Service acknowledges the First Nations whose traditional territories span the Capital Region: Pacheedaht First Nation, Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation, T'Sou-ke Nation, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, WJOLELP (Tsartlip) First Nation, BOKÉCEN (Pauquachin) First Nation, SÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nation, WSÍKEM (Tseycum) First Nation, MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) First Nation, Stz'uminus (Chemainus) First Nation, Quw'utsun (Cowichan) Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Lake Cowichan First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Tsawwassen First Nation, SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) First Nation.

This Regional Arts Facilities Framework was commissioned by the CRD Arts Development Service as part of its Arts Strategy and was prepared by:

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This aspect of the public consultation process, under the banner of *Building our #ArtsFuture Together*, was designed to understand the role of key arts facilities, including publicly-owned regional arts facilities, with a view of identifying future needs.

It was not intended to provide answers or recommendations for specific arts facility projects.

## CURRENT AUTHORITY FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

The CRD Arts Development Service (Arts Service) **does not** have jurisdictional responsibility or authority over any capital projects at present. Specifically, the Arts Service is **not able to fund capital** projects within its existing bylaws.

Individual municipalities are in charge of zoning decisions as well as the building permit process. The Arts Service and, except in isolated instances, the CRD itself, does not have a role in that regard.

Any theatre, in particular the Royal Theatre, that has been transferred to the CRD as owner, is not run by, funded by or reporting through the Arts Service. For example, the Royal Theatre is managed by a separate not-for-profit society and receives its CRD funding by way of a Service Agreement that is not a part of the Arts Service.

Similarly where funding arrangements have been struck via referendum, such as the tax levies on Salt Spring Island that supports two local arts organizations or in Sooke for the Sooke Regional Museum, the funding mechanisms are part of Service Agreements that are not a part of the Arts Service.

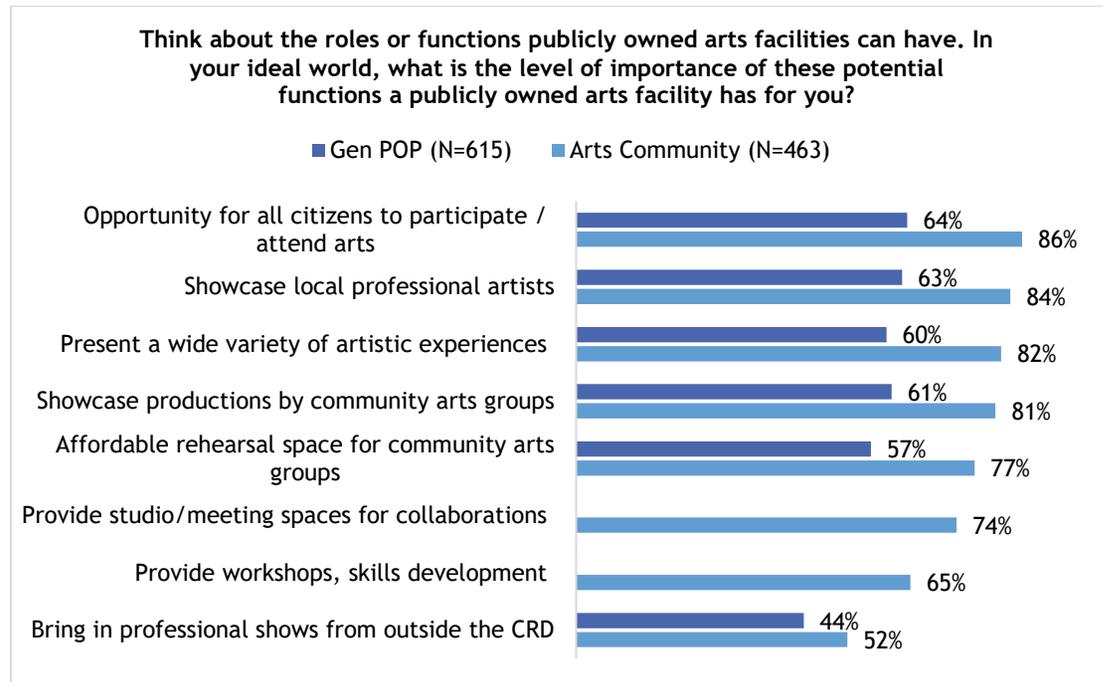
## SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

The Arts Service can:

- **Convene regional conversations** that bring stakeholders from the arts sector and municipalities together to develop a common, regional vision and establish needs- and opportunity-based priorities for concerted action.
- **Champion** renovations or new arts centres or arts hubs/arts district to the **CRD Board of Directors** for funding decisions.
- **Advance specific process and approaches** to regionally assess arts facility capital projects.
- **Contemplate** to spend a portion of its funds to undertake **regional needs assessments and feasibility studies** for future arts facility development in close collaboration with stakeholders and communities.

## IDENTIFYING NEEDS

Priorities identified by the general public in the CRD and the arts community are broad and should be considered by decision-makers and decision influencers.



The key gaps identified revolved around **affordable spaces** for working and living, rehearsal, performance, exhibits and so on. There was a recognition that there is some unused capacity within existing theatres and other facilities, like those in schools. The obstacles cited by arts organizations were two-fold: 1) not being able to afford the rental fees, and 2) not being able to access and use a facility as necessary to mount their work.

### Artists expressed the need for affordable work and living spaces.

There was a strong interest among some stakeholders to build new, iconic arts centres both inside and outside the core for use by residents from across the whole CRD as well as by visitors.

Other participants were focussed on finding or creating spaces to work and present art. They see this as critical for sustainable growth of and improved access to the arts in the CRD.

The development of multi-use, mixed zoning arts hubs (single building) and arts districts (city blocks) appealed to many participants. Creating new creative spaces where artists and arts organizations can locate long-term in affordable living and working spaces (including for young and emerging artists) and that feature various related retail, restaurants and community spaces was an often discussed idea.

## FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN REGIONAL ARTS FACILITIES

- **Needs assessment:** Evaluate current asset utilization, i.e. what is the level of unused capacity available for arts organizations across the CRD and whether they can access them to meet their needs. Where gaps exist, identify the specific range of needs from a regional perspective and evaluate whether a multi-purpose arts space can be considered as a solution.
- **Feasibility study:** Evaluate the required user base and/or population to support a particular new facility desired or the need for extensive renovations for existing facilities. In other words, how do new facilities/renovated facilities complement and enhance the existing infrastructure and provide value for money in terms of the multiple bottom lines of artistic output, economic activity, social outcomes, and environmental stewardship, given existing facilities in the CRD.
- **Financial management:** New facilities and major renovations need to develop a detailed capital budget, annual operating budget and a 20-year infrastructure maintenance budget to demonstrate financial feasibility given the proposed user base, projected regional population development and the arts and culture ecosystem in the CRD.
  - Affordability of facilities for rehearsal, presentation, exhibition, as well as affordable places to live is the most critical factor for artists and arts groups.
  - Affordability in terms of user/rental fees has to be addressed pro-actively.
- **Access:** Favour multi-purpose facilities located in areas with easy access via public transit, a sufficiently large local walking distance population, services like restaurants and shops should be favoured over single-purpose facilities.
- **Technology:** Ensure that multi-purpose facilities have the technical capabilities necessary to present professional, multi-disciplinary work effectively.

1. The CRD adopts the attitude that **arts facilities are essential** infrastructure that support cultural, social, economic and environmental aims.
2. The CRD treats arts infrastructure with the same level of **financial support** in terms of capital and operations it provides to other essential public infrastructure such as libraries.
3. The Arts Committee will work with the CRD Board of Directors to secure financial support for detailed **needs assessments and feasibility studies on a regional basis** for new facilities/major renovations, including proposed theatres, multi-purpose arts hubs and complete arts districts.
4. Consider **long-term** feasibility of ownership and operator models.
5. Favour **existing** arts facilities for renovations rather than building new structures as long as cost-effectiveness is proven.

## PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL FUNDING FOR FACILITIES

The federal and provincial governments recognize the importance of arts and cultural infrastructure to realizing important benefits for communities in terms of quality of life, healthy communities as well as their cultural, social and economic benefits.

They are making efforts to reduce the cultural infrastructure deficit by investing significant infrastructure funding in arts and culture spaces:

- The **Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF)** at Canadian Heritage supports the improvement of physical conditions for artistic creativity and innovation. In the 2016 budget the federal government announced that over the next two years, it will be investing an additional \$168.2 million in cultural infrastructure. Not-for profit organizations, Indigenous organizations as well as municipal governments can apply for funding. <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1455203896312/1455204007503>.
- The BC government launched a three-year program in February 2016 that targets \$1.5 million over three years towards collaborative spaces, as part of its **Creative Economy Strategy**. Arts and cultural organizations can apply for funding. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016CSCD0003-000146>