

ARTS COMMISSION

Notice of Meeting on **Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.**
CRD Boardroom, 6th Floor, 625 Fisgard Street, Victoria, BC; and Electronic Participation

M. Alto (Chair)
J. Bateman

M. Brame
P. Brent

S. Epp
G. Lemon

C. Plant
K. Roessingh

C. Smart

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 28, 2026 Arts Commission meeting be approved.
3. Adoption of Minutes of October 23, 2024
Recommendation: That the minutes of the Arts Commission meeting of September 17, 2025, 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 13, 2026 - for information
 - 6.1.3. Arts Advisory Council *Activities by Council Summary*: January 13, 2026 – for information
 - 6.2. Manager's Report (verbal)
 - 6.2.1 Outreach Report (written)
 - 6.2.2 CRD Arts Commission 2026 Meeting Schedule
 - 6.3 2026 Operating Grant Recommendations

Recommendation: The Arts Advisory Council recommends to the Arts Commission:
That the 2026 Operating Grant recommendations be approved as presented.

Attachments: Staff Report: 2026 Operating Grant Recommendations
Appendix A: 2026 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. For information.

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 Implementation Timeline
Appendix C: 2024-27 Strategic Plan Implementation Summary

7. New Business

8. Correspondence Letter to Minister Kang re: reconsideration of BC Arts Council's Regional Areas Policy

9. Adjournment

Next Meeting: February 25, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Arts Commission

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

4:00 PM

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

PRESENT

Members: M. Alto (Chair), J. Bateman (EP), P. Brent (EP), S. Epp, G. Lemon (EP), C. Plant,
C. Smart

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

Guest: R. Gale, Arts Advisory Council Vice Chair

EP – Electronic Participation

Regrets: M. Brame, K. Roessingh

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 pm.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Chair Alto welcomed members and invited Member Smart to provide a Territorial Acknowledgement. As we celebrate the importance of the arts in our community and its importance to our wellbeing, we acknowledge that colonialism did a lot of damage to the continuation of arts and culture for our indigenous neighbours. We sit with that and daily lift up our indigenous neighbours on their journey of relearning and rebuilding.

2. Approval of Agenda

**MOVED by Member Smart, SECONDED by Member Bateman,
That the agenda for the September 17, 2025 Arts Commission meeting be
approved. CARRIED**

3. Adoption of Minutes

**MOVED by Member Lemon, SECONDED by Member Bateman,
That the minutes of the Arts Commission meeting of June 25, 2025 be
adopted as circulated. CARRIED**

4. Chair's Remarks

Chair Alto applauded the work of staff in their support of the Performing Arts Facilities Select

Committee which is separate from, but linked to, the work of the Arts Commission. Thank you also to staff and the Arts Advisory Council chair for their work in recruiting and screening applicants to find potential new members of the Council – those recommendations will be brought forward later in the meeting.

5. Presentations/Delegations

6. Commission Business

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

R. Gale, Vice Chair, directed members to the ABCs – the AAC has been attending a lot of events, keeping up-to-date with the activities of local arts organizations. Operating Grant deadline has passed and are being processed. Of the 24 returning organizations, it is worth noting that seven of them were issued a Notice of Significant Concern (NOSC) in the last Operating Grant intake. A NOSC is given based on assessment criteria, and they provide at least one year's notice for organizations to address specific issues before any decrease in funding may occur. If an organization continues to underperform, they may have their funding cut or be transitioned to project grants. If an organization receives a reduction, it is likely they will advocate for themselves. The AAC hopes to have your support when we have to make difficult decisions.

6.1.2 Arts Advisory Council Minutes: September 9, 2025 Meeting – received for information

6.1.3 AAC Activities by Council Summary: September 9, 2025 - received for information

6.2 Manager's Report (verbal)

C. Gilpin provided a brief update on activities of the Arts Support Service:

- From the Outreach report: incredible progress has been made by A. Gibbs on the Arts Champions Summit, being held Nov 4th at the Baumann Centre, 10 am to 3 pm. Attendance by Commission members is optional but welcome.
- The Annual Operating Grant intake closed September 11th, and there were 26 applications, including two new applicants. One existing client did not apply (Aventa) because they have paused operations. Eight Multi-Year clients submitted interim reports for review by staff.
- Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee: in July they received a report on the costs and benefits of five options to create a new Performing Arts Facilities Service. The recommended option would increase support for the three existing regional theatres (Royal, McPherson, Charlie White) as well as providing support for planning a potential fourth theatre in the Westshore. The option also includes funding for Theatre Rental grants that would assist local arts groups. This is coming to the Select Committee on October 1st for further consideration.

C. Gilpin shared that, as a follow up to the letter to the BC Arts Council regarding their Regional Areas Policy, two additional meetings had taken place: one between CRD staff and BC Arts Council staff, and a second between two members of the BCAC itself and a member of the Arts Advisory Council along with staff. Both meetings were genial. At this time there is no anticipated change to their policy, but the advocacy did result in more active and direct communication.

**MOVED by Member Brent, SECONDED by Member Bateman,
That the Chair of the Arts Commission send a letter to the new Minister of
Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, reiterating the impacts of the regional areas
policy, and including any additional information that staff may provide from
the follow-up meetings. CARRIED**

Member Epp arrived at 4:17 pm

6.2.1 Outreach Report (attached)

6.3 2026 Budget for Arts and Culture Support Service

C. Gilpin presented the budget recommendation. The total budgeted costs for 2026 are approximately \$3.4 million – an increase of 2.2% over 2025. CRD financial planning guidelines aim for a 1.8% increase, but 2.2% is close to this and allows for the launch of the expanded version of the Grow Forward grant program which was a direction of the Arts Commission. The budget includes a draw down from the Operating Reserve as well.

CFO N. Chan reminded the Commission that end of the year budget surpluses go into the Operating Reserve and then can be drawn out.

**MOVED by Member Plant, SECONDED by Member Brent,
The Arts Commission recommends the Committee of the Whole Recommend to
the Capital Regional District Board: That the 2026 Arts & Culture Support Service
Budget be approved as presented. CARRIED**

Member Plant introduced the first of two motions arising.

**MOVED by Member Plant, SECONDED by Member Lemon,
The Arts Commission request staff bring an information report on the approved
CRD Service and Financial Planning Guidelines annually to a Commission
meeting in May or June and provide an opportunity for comment on the
Commission's Budget for the following year. CARRIED**

AAC Vice Chair R. Gale arrived at 4:33 pm.

**MOVED by Member Plant, SECONDED by Member Lemon,
The Arts Commission request staff provide the Commission a report with
options on transitioning the funding of all CRD Arts & Culture Support Service
programming from Operating Reserves to Core Budget. And that this report be
based on making potential changes for Budget 2027 and forward. CARRIED**

CFO N. Chan said that there is enough flexibility in the motion to bring a fulsome report back. He noted that, historically, the Arts Service produces a surplus which goes into the reserve, and then

we draw from that reserve in the following year. In the report back we can include some history.

6.4 Arts Training Organizations and Eligibility

C. Gilpin gave some background to this report: in June, the Arts Advisory Council reviewed a discussion paper that included the history of eligibility of Arts Training Organizations to CRD arts granting programs at the direction of the Arts Commission. The AAC provided feedback to staff about how to approach this policy. The main granting programs of Projects, Operating, and Equity function through comparative evaluation focused on the primary mandate of public programming in the arts, and the AAC preferred this approach to continue. Arts Training Organizations are already eligible to apply to Grow Forward grants and IDEA grants. The proposed change would be to allow previously ineligible activities (student shows, contests, and competitions) to become eligible under IDEA grants.

**MOVED by Member Plant, SECONDED by Member Epp,
That the eligible activities for the IDEA Grant Program are expanded to include
arts education activities including contests, competitions, and student shows.**

CARRIED

N. Chan left the meeting at 4:45 pm

6.5 2026 Grant Program and Adjudication Schedule

**MOVED by Member Bateman, SECONDED by Member Plant,
The 2026 grant program intake and adjudication schedule is approved as presented.**

CARRIED

7. New Business – none.

- 8. Correspondence:** Township Community Arts Council (July 9, 2025) – thank you for Project Grant
Wonderheads Theatre Society (August 8, 2025) – thank you for Operating Grant

9. Motion to Close the Meeting

MOVED by Member Plant, SECONDED by Member Brent,

- 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 Richard Gale, Acting Chair, Arts Advisory Council, be allowed into the closed portion of the meeting.**

CARRIED

The Commission moved to the closed session at 4:58 pm.

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

**That Jody Bauche, Dylan Clark, and Terence Wong each be appointed to
the Arts Advisory Council for a term of one year ending on December 31, 2026.**

That Jedidjah Noomen, Angelica Reid, and Paballo Tsolo each be reappointed to the Arts Advisory Council for a term of three years ending on December 31, 2028, and that Richard Gale and Sarah Reid each be reappointed to the Arts Advisory Council for a term of two years ending on December 31, 2027.

10. Adjournment

**MOVED by Member Bateman, SECONDED by Member Plant,
That the September 17, 2025 Arts Commission meeting be adjourned at 5:08
pm. CARRIED**

Chair

Recorder

Meeting Minutes Arts Advisory Council

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

5:00 PM

Via Video Conference

PRESENT

Members: J. Bauche, D. Clark, R. Ditor, C. Haska, E. Mushumanski, J. Noomen, A. Reid, S. Reid, T. Wong

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

Regrets: R. Gale, J. Smillie, P. Tsolo

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm. C. Gilpin welcomed the group, asked new members to introduce themselves, and then asked for round-robin introductions.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

C. Gilpin, standing in for the chair prior to elections, presented a territorial acknowledgement.

2. Welcome to New Members/ Introductions

New members were asked to introduce themselves, followed by each returning member.

3. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by C. Haska, SECONDED by J. Bauche

That the Manager's Report be moved up on the agenda to item 4, and that the agenda be approved as amended. CARRIED.

4. Manager's Report

C. Gilpin reported on the following:

- A new Performing Arts Facilities Service, approved in concept by CRD Board, is moving forward. It still needs approval by the Province, then goes to AAP, then final adoption by the Board.
- A letter sent to Minister Kang regarding the BC Arts Council's Regional Areas Policy is available for reading on the CRD Advocacy Dashboard.
- The January Project Grants deadline is on Thursday. Erin has sent out 43 application packages so far, which is on par with last year.
- This year we are reviewing project-based grants: Equity, IDEA, and Projects, including finances; the Arts Commission has asked to receive more budgetary information earlier in the year.

5. Elections**5.1 Nominations and Election of Chair**

R. Ditor nominated R. Gale as Chair. He was acclaimed in the position. As he was not present at the meeting, this needs to be confirmed at the next meeting.

5.2 Nominations and Election of Vice-Chair

S. Reid nominated J. Noomen as Vice-Chair, and she accepted. She was acclaimed in the position. C. Gilpin asked J. Noomen to take over chairing the meeting, which she did.

5.3 Nominations and Election of Funding Chair

S. Reid nominated R. Ditor as Funding Chair, and she accepted. She was acclaimed in the position.

6. Minutes**6.1 Arts Advisory Council Minutes of September 9, 2025**

**MOVED by C. Haska, SECONDED by A. Reid,
That the September 9, 2025 minutes of the Arts Advisory Council be approved as
presented. CARRIED.**

6.2 Arts Commission Minutes of September 17, 2025

Received for information

7. Chair's Report

Nothing to report.

8. 2026 Operating Grant Recommendations

**MOVED by R. Ditor, SECONDED by J. Bauche,
That the Arts Advisory Council recommends to the Arts Commission:
That the 2026 Operating Grant recommendations be approved as presented.
CARRIED**

Reminder that all adjudication results are confidential and unofficial until after they are ratified by the Arts Commission. 2026 Operating Grant recommendations will be publicized in the Arts Commission agenda package on January 23rd. Any organizations wishing to discuss adjudication results with members should be directed to the Arts Manager.

9. 2026 Grant Adjudication Schedule

Received for information

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

Members shared some of their hits and misses from the previous year.

11. Adjournment

**MOVED by C. Haska, SECONDED by E. Mushumanski,
That the January 13, 2026 Arts Advisory Council meeting be adjourned
at 5:53 pm. CARRIED**

Chair

Recorder

Arts Advisory Council Meeting: Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Activities by Council (ABCs)

Local:

31 Iguanas	High Moon: a Werewolf Western
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria	Winter Small Works Simranpreet Anand “Sheesha ‘che Tharer/ A Crack in the Mirror” Albrecht Durer “Dangerous Beauty” AGGV Collection “Fifty Shades of Grey”
Backyard Boulevard	
Ballet Victoria	Aladdin
The Beaches: No Hard Feelings Tour	
Belfry Theatre	Burning Mom, Little Dickens
Between Words	First Word Vol. 1
Cuarteto Bellas Artes: Music in Motion	
Broken Rhythms Dance	Universal Horrors
Caravan World Rhythms	Seffarine
Dandelion Theatre	A number
Dance Victoria	Hung Dance: Birdy
Mark Farnica/ AFK	
Fernwood NRG	Owl Designer Fair (Local Artists/Designers)
Jeremy Dutcher	
Early Music Society of the Islands	Cantigas de Santa Maria Trio Medieval
Gorge Pavilion	Winter Bazaar (Local Artists/Designers)
Greater Victoria Shakespeare Festival	A Midsummer Nightmare (in collaboration With Alectoria Productions)
Hapax Theatre	The Ugly Duchess Hidden People
Hecklers	Darcy Michael

Hermann's Jazz Club	The Clay Pigeons "A Charlie Brown Christmas: Music by Vince Guaraldi" – Sean Drabbit, Brent Jarvis, Joe Poole
Intrepid Theatre	Monster Theatre's Juliet: A Revenge Comedy
Langham Court Theatre	Unity 1918
Other Guise	Haunted
Madrona Gallery	Alex Colville: Works on Paper Tamara Bond: Plants and Animals Deck the Walls XVI
Mary Winspear	Ichigo-Ichieh New Theatre's Vacant Lot
MRG Live presents: Ben Caplan	
Paper Street Theatre	Murder on Paper Street
Pacific Opera	The Queen in Me (Luminary Series) Turn of the Screw
Phoenix Theatre (UVic)	Our Town
Rifflandia	
Rock Bay Square Arts and Industry Open House	
Southern Gulf Isl Arts Council	"Across the Pass" exhibition
The Strumbellas: Into Dust Tour	
Theatre Inconnu	The Moors Genki Bear (second stage) Armstrong's War
Vancouver Island Visual Arts Society	780 Blanshard Open House
Victoria Arts Council	Still With Us: A Legacy of HIV/AIDS in the Arts
Victoria Book Prizes	Panel Discussion with shortlisted authors, met the DC Reid poetry finalists, Book Prize announcements
Victoria Legacy Gallery	Salish Lines
Victoria On Stage	White Christmas

Victoria Symphony

Beyond Broadway
Kluxen & Leong - Beethoven Violin Concerto

VR

A Christmas Carol

Out of Town:

Nanaimo Atlantic Ballet of Canada: Pisuwin (Port Theatre)

Vancouver Vancouver Fringe Festival
Taylor Tomlinson (comedy)
Signals (immersive digital arts)
Rachel & Vilray

Kelowna Art Gallery:
Seriously? Comedy and Satire in Canadian Art 1970's – Now
Sandeep Johal "To Be Something More"
Jose Luis Torres "Handmade"
Nicola McGarry "Woolscape"

Los Angeles Craxy Ex-Girlfriend Live
Hahahahahahaha
Tracing Performance, Fictions of Display (Museum of Contemporary Art Exhibit)
Celebrando the East Side Sound (LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes)

Singapore LASALLE College of the Arts: 3rd Year Cabaret performance

OUTREACH REPORT TO THE ARTS COMMISSION MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026

The following is a short summary of the outreach initiatives undertaken since the last Arts Commission meeting on September 17, 2025:

RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE ARTS

LandMarks Public Art

- Launched online artwork submission portal
- Connected with all municipal staff and SGI Community Liaisons to build relationships, Landmarks awareness and update collections

RE-EVALUATE THE ARTS & CULTURE SUPPORT SERVICE NAME & BRAND

Analyze findings and develop recommendations

- Project proposal and report in development for delivery in February 2026

PLAN AND DELIVER CAPACITY AND SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOPS

Host workshop

- Workshop invitation sent directly to current and prospective Project Grant clients
- Hosted workshop: presented slides via Zoom detailing eligibility, guidelines, common issues, application advice and 20-minute Q&A period
 - 42 registrants
 - 27 participants
- Follow up email with video recording sent to registrants

EXPANDED PROMOTION OF GRANT INTAKES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Send quarterly e-newsletters

- November 2025 E-newsletter
 - Sent to 971 subscribers, 66.7% open rate, 13% click rate

Develop / update funding resources

- Producing an arts funding infrastructure resource to distribute to community partners
- Updated Grant eligibility matrix resource
- Created new print asset brochure for promotion of the Arts Service's programs

PLAN AND HOST A BIENNIAL ARTS CHAMPIONS SUMMIT

Summary of Event

On November 4th, 2025, at the Baumann Centre, The CRD Arts & Culture Support Service hosted an Arts Summit to convene the region's arts community. This year's theme was Creative Capacity: Growing Forward Together. This theme focused on building organizational & sectoral capacity through collaboration and connection.

Over 80 people registered to attend the event, and over 80 people were in attendance. Among those invited were leaders from arts organizations the Arts Service has repeatedly supported, as well as other key members of the arts community who were identified as important to include. There was more interest in the event than the venue had capacity for, and registration was full.



Figure 1

The Summit began with introductions by the Arts Service Manager, Chris Gilpin, followed by a Territorial Welcome from Melissa Barnhard, Songhees Nation Cultural Carrier, (Figure 1) who shared with us afterward:

"I am so glad everyone felt what I was placing down for them. I really enjoyed being there yesterday, everyone was so nice, and I felt like it was a safe space to share openly."

Arts Commission Chair, Marianne Alto next gave opening remarks and introduced the community presenters (figure 2):

1. *Collaboration, Reconciliation, and De-centered Approaches to Leadership*
By Lindsay Delaronde of Visible Bodies Collective, Gillian Jones of Dance Victoria (figure 3)
2. *Opening Doors*
By Isaac Thomas of Belfry Theatre (figure 4)
3. *United for a Sustainable Future: A Local Coalition for a Cultural Land*
By Heidi Bergstrom, President, Xchanges Art Gallery and Studios, Kegan McFadden, Executive Director, Victoria Arts Council (figure 5)



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Following the community presentations, attendees participated in our engagement activity, *Collaboration Classifieds*, where they worked with their table groups to ideate creative, collaborative solutions to challenges their organizations were facing (figures 6-9)



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

After a lunch full of mingling and networking (figure 10), the ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria gave a presentation titled *Growing Forward Together: What Arts Organizations Want from Arts Funders*, which detailed feedback they received from a survey of the arts community (figure 11).



Figure 10



Figure 11

The last activity of the day was the Arts Funder Round Robin (figures 12-17). Attendees were split into 6 groups which rotated around the room, spending 10 minutes at each of the 6 arts funder tables, learning about grant programs and asking questions. Once the formal activities concluded with final remarks from Chair Alto, guests were encouraged to use the remaining unstructured half hour to network and read the ideas generated during the engagement activity (figures 18-19).



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17

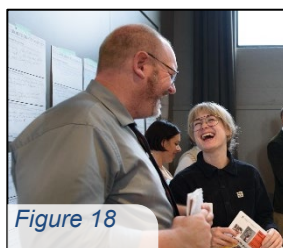
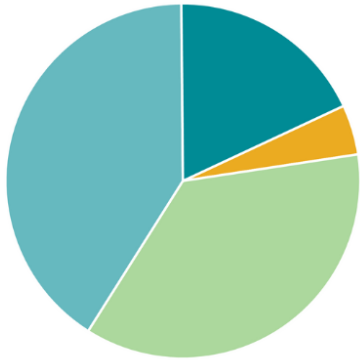
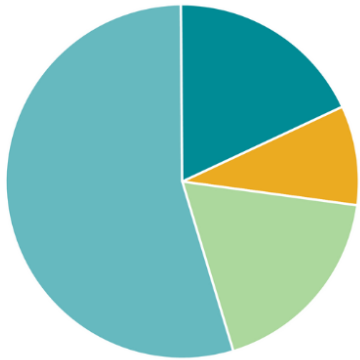


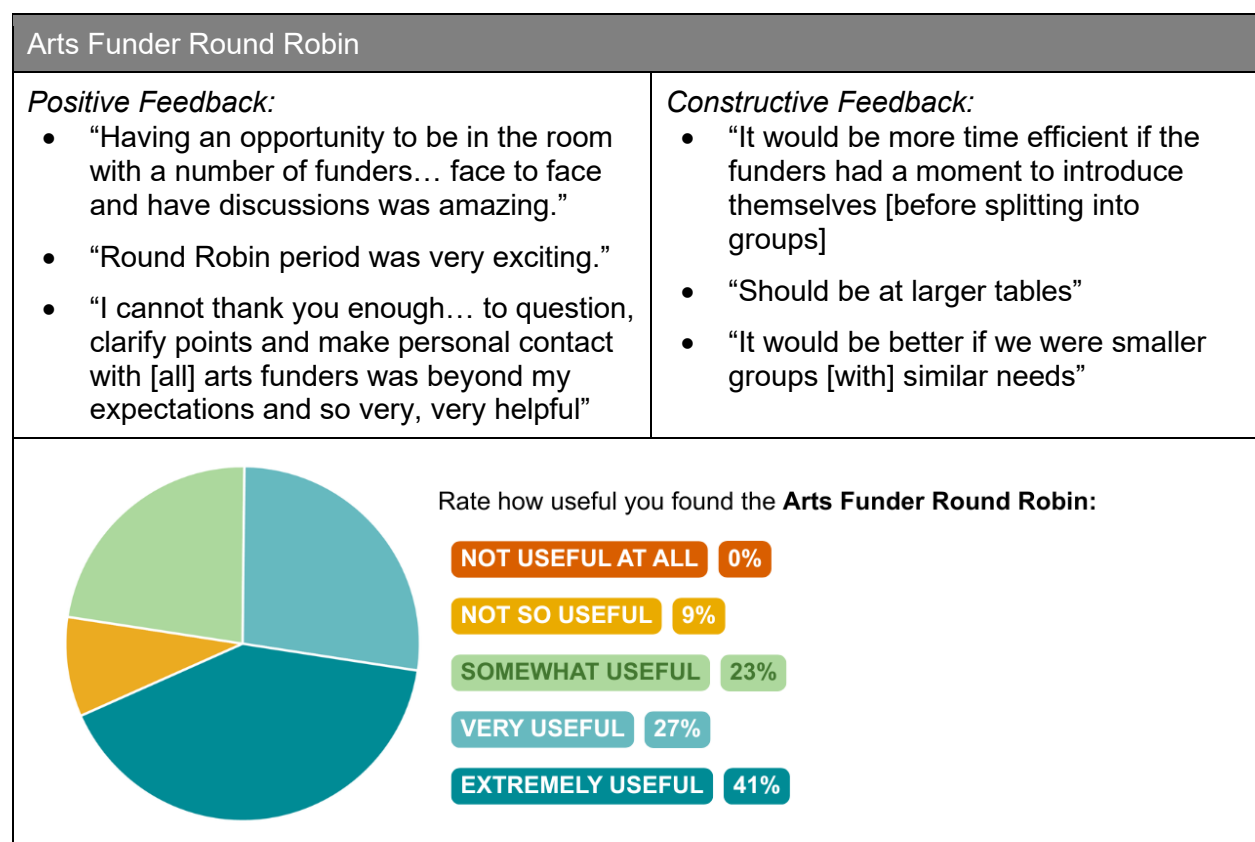
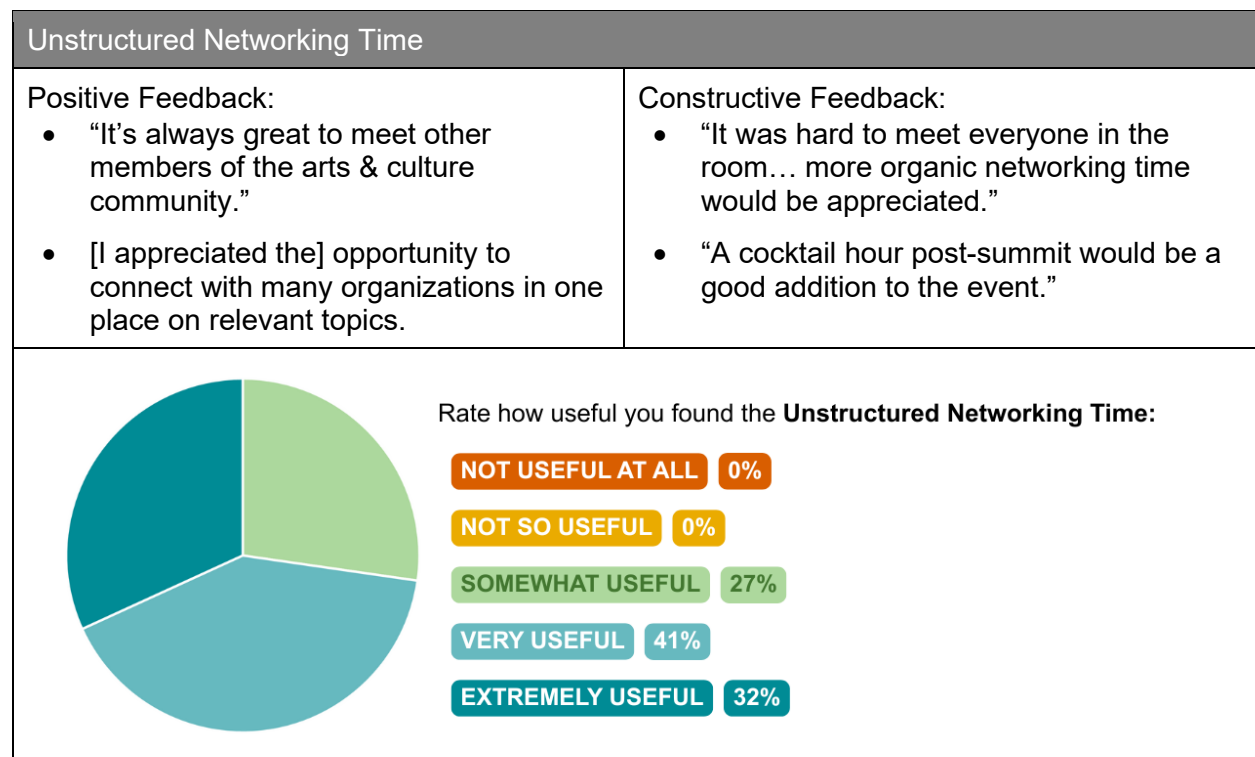
Figure 18

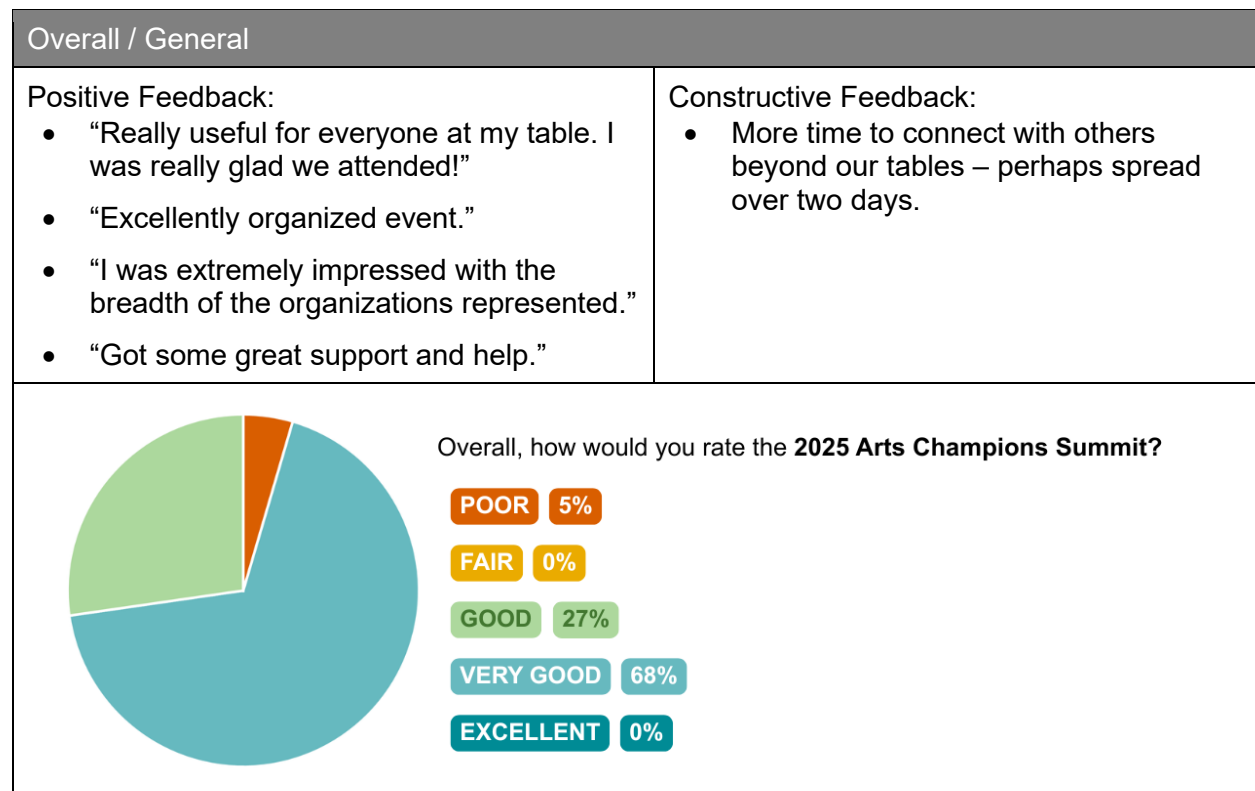
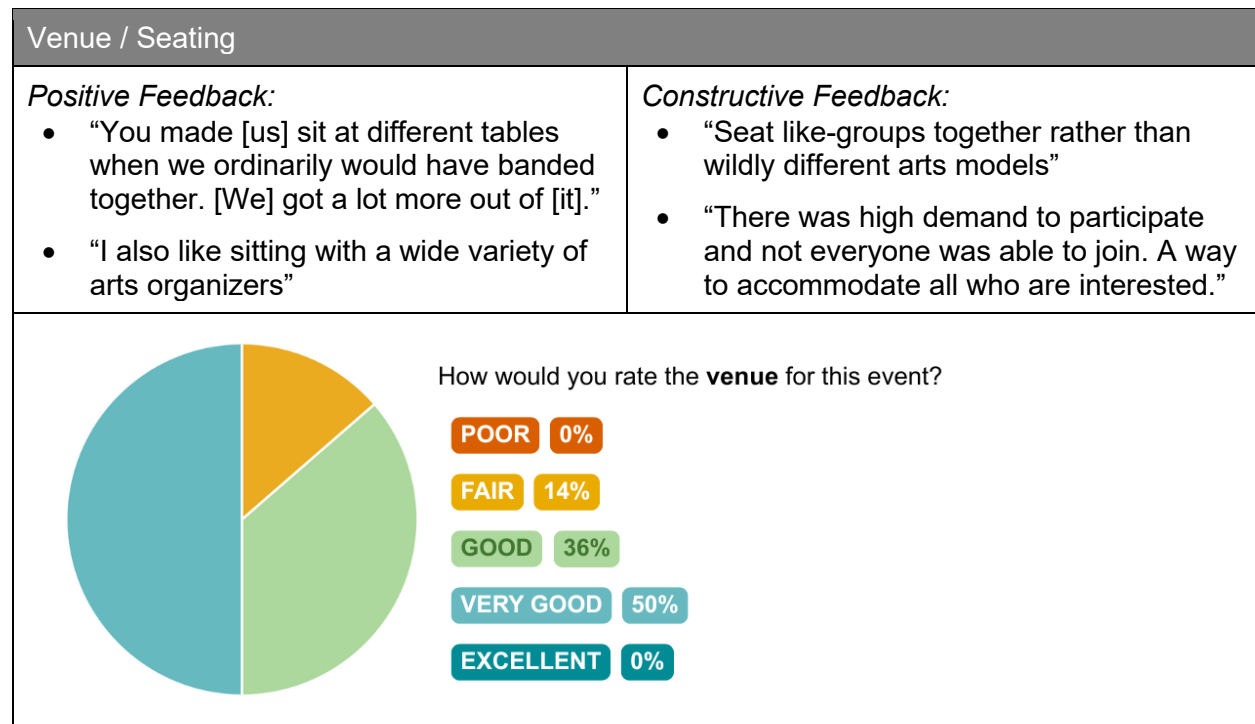


Figure 19

Summary of Event Feedback

Presentations	
<p>Positive Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “These speakers were great, and the content of the whole event was engaging and well presented.” • “I [loved] the presentations.” • “The presentations were excellent.” 	<p>Constructive Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could have one practical presentation that helps us gain skills • The presentation topics should be more diverse and relevant to smaller [orgs].
<div>  <p>Rate how useful you found the Arts Community Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NOT USEFUL AT ALL 0% NOT SO USEFUL 5% SOMEWHAT USEFUL 36% VERY USEFUL 41% EXTREMELY USEFUL 18% </div>	
Engagement Activity	
<p>Positive Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wonderful opportunity to openly discuss our work in a safe environment with people who understand.” • [I appreciated] the collaborative nature of the event... [People] were enthusiastic to hear about each other's projects and very helpful in providing their insights and experiences 	<p>Constructive Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[add] an opportunity to discuss in groups with orgs from related fields” • “[add] more small table engagement... by different groupings.” • “I would have found it very useful to be able to chat with reps from other arts organizations beyond those at my table.”
<div>  <p>Rate how useful you found the Engagement Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NOT USEFUL AT ALL 0% NOT SO USEFUL 9% SOMEWHAT USEFUL 18% VERY USEFUL 55% EXTREMELY USEFUL 18% </div>	





Key Takeaways / Next Steps

The learnings from our 2025 Arts Champions Summit will be used to plan for the next Summit, which will take place in the Spring of 2027, and will focus on community engagement to inform our 2028 – 2031 Strategic Plan.

The following key takeaways are based on the feedback we most frequently received, as well as the level of effectiveness of each element of the event from a staff perspective:

1. *Create intentional activity and seating groups:*

Much feedback referenced a desire for smaller or more specific groupings for both table seating and activities. Certain activities may benefit from like groupings of similar disciplines organizational models, while others may benefit from more diverse groupings. Smaller groups are generally preferable for activities.

2. *Consider a larger venue:*

The demand for this event has become greater than the capacity of the Baumann Centre – registration was completely full and many requests to include more people. Staff does not currently have the capacity to make the event more frequent; however, making the Summit a larger event would be an effective alternative to include more community members.

3. *Include more unstructured networking time:*

This is the most valuable element of the event, with 73% of respondents rating it “very” or “extremely” useful. In written feedback, many respondents asked for more unstructured time or opportunities to continue networking with peers after the event ends.

4. *Continue including interactive or practical elements:*

Community presentations were generally considered useful, but the addition of a practical skill-building or workshop element would be appreciated. The Arts Funder Round Robin was another very highly valued element of the event, with a majority of respondents rating it “very” or “extremely” useful, and written feedback from funders echoing that.

5. *There is not an appetite for a virtual or hybrid element:*

There was no virtual element for this year’s Summit, and we did not receive a single expression of desire for virtual participation prior to or after the event. In feedback, the in-person, face-to-face aspect of the event was repeatedly referenced as what makes this event important.

6. *Face-to-face connection with funders is very valuable:*

Scored “extremely useful” by 41%, and “very useful” by 27% of respondents, the Arts Funder Round Robin was scored the most valuable element of the event. Many respondents commented that being able to meet with representatives from funding bodies in-person was particularly valuable.

CRD Arts Commission – 2026 Meeting Schedule

Scheduled for the 4th Wednesday of the month at 4 pm – with the exception of September 2026 due to election year budget cycle (3rd Wednesday instead) – as hybrid meetings (CRD Boardroom and on zoom) or “electronic meetings” taking place only online (zoom).

January 28 Hybrid (CRD Boardroom and online)

February 25 Hybrid (CRD Boardroom and online)

March 25 Hybrid (CRD Boardroom and online)

April 22 Hybrid (CRD Boardroom and online)

May 27 Hybrid (CRD Boardroom and online)

June 24 Hybrid (CRD Boardroom and online)

July 22 Electronic meeting (online only)

No meeting scheduled in August

September 16 Electronic meeting (online only)

There are no meetings scheduled October – December due to municipal elections and new CRD Board orientation. Normally, it takes until January to receive municipal appointments to reconstitute a new Arts Commission.

Please note:

- Additional meetings may be scheduled at the call of the Chair.
- Meetings may be cancelled if there is a lack of agenda items. In 2025, the February, April, August, October, and November meetings were cancelled.
- In the unlikely event that the committee meeting preceding the Arts Commission in the Boardroom goes past 4pm, the Arts Commission meeting in-person component of a hybrid meeting will be held in Room 488
- The CRD Boardroom is undergoing renovations, starting in the summer of 2026.

REPORT TO ARTS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026

SUBJECT **Review of Arts & Culture 2026 Operating Grant Recommendations**

ISSUE SUMMARY

The 2026 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 29, 2025, the adjudication committee met to evaluate 26 applications received at the September deadline for 2026 Operating Grants. These twenty-six applications were part of the annual operating grant stream. Eight multi-year clients provided an interim report as their next intake is not until fall 2027. There were two new applicants to the 2026 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 assessed 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 seven pre-existing NOSCs from the previous year's adjudication: Belfry Theatre, Deluge Contemporary Art, Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival, Story Theatre, Theatre Inconnu, Victoria Conservatory of Music, and Victoria On Stage.

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

Recommendations

Twelve applicants were assessed in the top of this cohort. Their exceptional performance across all three assessment areas merited an increase in funding; however, the budget did not allow for a lift to all twelve. Based on regional distribution, average rank, and funding history of recent increases, two organizations were recommended for a level of Operating Grant funding higher than the previous year: Cinevic and Ptarmigan Arts. One of the new applicants to the program, Yellowhouse Art Centre, is being recommended for their first operating grant (details on amounts and rationale in Appendix A).

Seven 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.

Seven 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 out of the seven:

- Concerns were adequately addressed by four organizations who had their NOSC's removed (Story Theatre, Theatre Inconnu, Victoria Conservatory of Music and Victoria Children's Choir).
- Concerns were not adequately addressed by three organizations who continue to have a NOSC on file, scoring below average in at least one of the assessment categories (details in Appendix A). For each of these organizations (Deluge Contemporary Art, Victoria on Stage, Belfry Theatre), the recommended level of funding is equal to the previous year; however, a NOSC letter will be issued with areas of concern to be addressed.

One of the two new applications, Other Guise Theatre, scored in the bottom of the cohort and was not recommended for operating funding. Other Guise Theatre will be eligible in 2026 for project-based funding from other CRD arts granting programs.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Arts Advisory Council recommends to the Arts Commission:
That the 2026 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 2026 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 \$2,432,570 from the 2026 Operating Grant budget, including \$1,502,880 in multi-year operating grants and \$929,690 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) have been recommended for grants in both interim years (2026 and 2027) that are equal to the amounts recommended for 2025 (i.e. stable multi-year funding for a three year cycle).

The total requested amount to annual operating grant program in 2026 was \$1,221,430, which exceeded the available budget by \$326,170. The Arts Advisory Council notes that the unmet requests of the top-performing cohort – who the AAC would have awarded additional funds, if such funding were available in the budget – totaled \$91,820.

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 2026 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: 2026 Annual Operating Grant Applicants & Recommendations

2026 Operating Grant Recommendations - Annual Clients

Organization	NOSC*	2025 OP Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recom'd
Atomic Vaudeville	n/a	25,000	27,500	25,000
Belfry Theatre	Ongoing	229,000	300,000	229,000
Cinevic Society	n/a	25,000	37,000	30,830
Deluge/Runnymede	Ongoing	30,600	40,000	30,600
Early Music Society	n/a	12,000	17,000	12,000
GV Youth Orchestra	n/a	8,000	8,000	8,000
Impulse Theatre	n/a	16,000	20,000	16,000
Kaleidoscope Theatre	n/a	59,500	70,000	59,500
MediaNet	n/a	19,000	25,000	19,000
Open Space Arts	n/a	87,930	95,000	87,930
Other Guise Theatre (NEW)	n/a	-	40,000	0
Ptarmigan Arts	n/a	19,400	24,000	24,000
Puente Theatre	n/a	36,000	60,000	36,000
SNAFU Dance Theatre	n/a	15,950	17,000	15,950
Story Theatre	Cleared	40,000	40,000	40,000
Theatre Inconnu	Cleared	27,500	32,000	27,500
Theatre SKAM	n/a	40,800	50,000	40,800
Victoria Arts Council	n/a	37,600	40,000	37,600
Victoria Baroque Players	n/a	9,550	15,000	9,550
Victoria BC Ska & Reggae	n/a	25,000	30,000	25,000
Victoria Children's Choir	Cleared	13,930	13,930	13,930
Victoria Conservatory of Music	Cleared	55,000	70,000	55,000
Victoria On Stage	Ongoing	17,200	30,000	17,200
Victoria Shakespeare Society	n/a	20,000	52,000	20,000
Wonderheads Theatre	n/a	25,300	33,000	25,300
Yellowhouse Art Centre (NEW)	n/a	-	35,000	24,000
Totals:		\$ 895,260	\$ 1,221,430	\$ 929,690

* NOSC = Notice of Significant Concern

2026 Operating Grant Recommendations

Applicant Summaries

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
ATOMIC VAUDEVILLE	Victoria	25,000	27,500	25,000

Background/Description

Atomic Vaudeville (AV) 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 season of original theatre aimed at a younger demographic and presents locally as well as touring. AV offers writing workshops as well as clowning workshops, with Michael Kennard offering leadership in Bouffon clowning.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed well 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 top cohort. While the adjudication committee would have liked to have provided a funding lift, due to budget constraints, this organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

(NOSC = Notice of Significant Concern)

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
BELFRY				
2025 NOSC	Victoria	229,000	300,000	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 1985, the company eliminated a large accumulated deficit by implementing cuts to operations and stabilized under new management beginning in 1987. 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. The current Executive Director, Isaac Thomas, was hired in June 2022.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2025 operating grant. In this intake, the organization was assessed below a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and

Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. This represents a deterioration over the previous year when two areas were of significant concern. The adjudication committee also noted that this organization is undergoing significant transition of its artistic leadership with the recently announced retirement of its current Artistic Director and the recruitment of a new one. Due to continuing concerns in all assessment areas, this organization is recommended 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: clearly articulated artistic vision, more information on play commissioning strategy, relationship building related to marginalized communities, details on outreach and audience development strategies, and demonstrated critical self-reflection (i.e. lessons learned).

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
CINEVIC	Victoria	25,000	37,000	30,830

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 well 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 top three of the top cohort. This organization is recommended for a \$5,830 lift in funding over the previous year.

(NOSC = Notice of Significant Concern)

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
DELUGE/RUNNYMEDE				
2025 NOSC	Victoria	30,600	40,000	30,600

Background/Description

Since 1991, Deluge/Antimatter has presented innovative visual and media arts in the CRD and beyond via 450+ exhibitions and annual festivals featuring the work of over 4,000 artists. It serves and nurtures an international ecosystem linking artists to communities of their peers, enhancing opportunities for exhibition, collaboration and distribution while engaging audiences with notable professional art forms beyond local parameters. Activities include screenings, performances, exhibitions, openings, lectures,

tours and publications accessed for free in person, online and in public. Collaborators include arts organizations, educational institutions, festivals and businesses locally and internationally. Programming is regularly utilized in post-secondary curricula in Canada and abroad.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2024 operating grant and another NOSC with a 20% funding reduction as part of its 2025 operating grant. In this intake, the organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, and Organizational Capacity and Governance, but below a satisfactory level in Community Impact and Involvement. This represents an improvement over the 2025 year when both Organizational Capacity and Governance and Community Impact and Involvement were areas of significant concern. The scores for this application resulted in a rank in the bottom cohort. Due to continuing concerns, this organization is recommended 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: effective outreach and audience development strategies with specific plans and indicators related to broadening community engagement.

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
EARLY MUSIC SOCIETY	Victoria	12,000	17,000	12,000

Background/Description

Early Music Society of the Islands is a volunteer-run, presenter of early music. They present 8-10 concerts annually, featuring original instruments, period 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 at 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 cohort 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	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
GREATER VICTORIA YOUTH ORCHESTRA	Victoria	8,000	8,000	8,000

Background/Description

The Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra (GVYO) presents 3 concerts per year at the Farquar 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. Starting in 2025, the GVYO has begun an annual outreach to schools, presenting a concert followed by an afternoon workshop with their orchestra students, with GVYO players acting as mentors. In 2026, the GVYO will join the Victoria Symphony for two performances.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed at 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 cohort 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	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
IMPULSE THEATRE	Victoria	16,000	20,000	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 creates and presents contemporary interdisciplinary theatre and dance performance.

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 well 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 top cohort. While the adjudication committee would have liked to have provided a funding lift, due to budget constraints, this organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

KALEIDOSCOPE THEATRE	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
	Victoria	59,500	70,000	59,500

Background/Description

Kaleidoscope Theatre for Young People (KTYP) presents a series of productions, creating and producing new work relevant to young people and their families. KTYP 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. KTYP 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 well 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 top cohort. While the adjudication committee would have liked to have provided a funding lift, due to budget constraints, this organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

MEDIANET/ FLUX	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
	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. Their mandate is to promote, teach, and exhibit media art.

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 at 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 cohort 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.

OPEN SPACE ARTS	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
	Victoria	87,930	95,000	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.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed well 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 top cohort. While the adjudication committee would have liked to have provided a funding lift, due to budget constraints, this organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

OTHER GUISE THEATRE	Jurisdiction	2025 Project Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
	Victoria	0	40,000	0

Background/Description

The Other Guys Theatre Society (dba Other Guise Theatre) began life as a project-based company. Over a 20-year period the organization created a dozen new theatre and opera works and often toured these around the Pacific Northwest. In 2022, Matthew Payne took the helm as Artistic and Executive Director and the company purchased a downtown building at 716 Johnson Street, with the support of a private investor. The organization refreshed their mandate, continuing to focus on the creation of new work while also considering sustainability and their new space.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of two new applicants to the Annual Operating Grants program. The organization was assessed below a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. The adjudication committee noted that the Other Guise Theatre was aiming to provide a much-needed service to the arts community by creating a new small and adaptable performing arts venue; however, the focus of the operating grant program is on supporting public programming, not venue operation, and the Other Guise Theatre has not yet established a consistent recent track record of high quality public programming, especially since it has been focused on acquiring and renovating a venue. The organization is not recommended for support at

this time through the Annual Operating Grants program at this time, but would be encouraged to apply to Projects, Short Series, and Extended Programming.

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
PTARMIGAN ARTS	SGI EA	19,400	24,000	24,000

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 well 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 top cohort. They have demonstrated outstanding community benefit in an area of the capital region (Pender Island primarily with extended programming that benefits other southern gulf islands as well) where they are the one of the few producers and presenters of arts experiences. This organization is recommended for a \$4,600 lift in funding over the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
PUENTE THEATRE	Victoria	36,000	60,000	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 and is the only theatre company on Vancouver Island with a mandate for culturally diverse programming.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed well 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 top cohort. While the adjudication committee would have liked to have provided a funding lift, due to budget constraints, this organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
SNAFU DANCE THEATRE	Victoria	15,950	17,000	15,950

Background/Description

SNAFU creates collaborations with multi-disciplinary artists in dance, theatre, storytelling, puppetry, live music, and visual art. They create unexpected spectacles in unusual spaces, including bike trails, public washrooms, theatres, art galleries, fields, heritage sites, parking garages, schools and prisons. Spectators are invited to have an active role in the action as it unfolds. SNAFU premieres new work in Victoria and also tours nationally and internationally.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed well 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 top cohort. While the adjudication committee would have liked to have provided a funding lift, due to budget constraints, this organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

(NOSC = Notice of Significant Concern)

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
STORY THEATRE				
2025 NOSC	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 and theatres 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 received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2025 operating grant. In this intake, the organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. The concerns have been addressed sufficiently and the NOSC has been cleared. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

(NOSC = Notice of Significant Concern)

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
THEATRE INCONNU *2025 NOSC*	Victoria	27,500	32,000	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 and Arts Association's Paul Phillips 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. In 2023, Inconnu initiated a Second Stage series (consisting of four performances of one play per year), dedicated to working with an artist from an under-represented group to tell a story related to their cultural heritage.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2025 operating grant. In this intake, the organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. The concerns have been addressed sufficiently and the NOSC has been cleared. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 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 at 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 cohort 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	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 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 well 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 top cohort. While the adjudication committee would have liked to have provided a funding lift, due to budget constraints, this organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

VICTORIA BAROQUE PLAYERS	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 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 four - five main stage performances as well as free outdoor summer concerts. The organization differs from the Early Music Society (current operating grant recipient) 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 at 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 cohort 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 BC SKA & REGGAE	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
	Victoria	25,000	30,000	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 40 bands from 7 – 9 different countries including regional and national talent. They produce 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 has 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 well 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 top cohort. While the adjudication committee would have liked to have provided a funding lift, due to budget constraints, this organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

(NOSC = Notice of Significant Concern)

VICTORIA CHILDREN'S CHOIR	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
2025 NOSC	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 received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2025 operating grant. In this intake, the organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. The concerns have been addressed sufficiently and the NOSC has been cleared. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

(NOSC = Notice of Significant Concern)

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
VICTORIA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC *2025 NOSC*	Victoria	55,000	70,000	55,000

Background/Description

The Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM) 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, formerly leased to and managed by Intrepid Theatre, which VCM will renovate and rename after Intrepid's departure in the spring. 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 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2025 operating grant. In this intake, the organization was assessed above a satisfactory level in Artistic Contribution and Significance, Organizational Capacity and Governance, and Community Impact and Involvement. The concerns have been addressed sufficiently and the NOSC has been cleared. This organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

(NOSC = Notice of Significant Concern)

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
VICTORIA ON STAGE *2025 NOSC*	Esquimalt	17,200	30,000	17,200

Background/Description

Victoria On Stage (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 as the Victoria Operatic Society moving 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. VOS continues to be enthusiastic about offering Education and Training programs curated for teens (12-17) and kids (7-11).

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization received a Notice of Significant Concern as part of the notification about its 2024 operating grant and another NOSC with a 20% funding reduction as part of its 2025 operating grant. In this intake,

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. This represents the same level of concern as the past two intakes. Due to continuing concerns in one assessment area, this organization is recommended 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 a cohesive strategy and specific actions on how equity, diversity, and inclusion is considered both in terms of representation on stage and integration into the organizational processes.

	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
VICTORIA SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY	Victoria	20,000	52,000	20,000

Background/Description

Victoria Shakespeare Society launched in 2003 with one production 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. For the 2024 summer festival, two new venues were used: Craigdarroch Castle and Lampson School in Esquimalt, and three pay-what-you-can previews were added.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of 24 annual applicants that have received operating support in the previous year. The organization was assessed at 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 cohort 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.

WONDERHEADS THEATRE	Jurisdiction	2025 Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
	Victoria	25,300	33,000	25,300

Background/Description

Wonderheads, formed in 2009, this is a physical theatre company specializing in mask performance and visual storytelling. 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 well 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 top cohort. While the adjudication committee would have liked to have provided a funding lift, due to budget constraints, this organization is recommended for a level of funding equal to the previous year.

YELLOWHOUSE ART CENTRE	Jurisdiction	2025 Project Grant	2026 Request	2026 Recommendation
	SGI	9,600	35,000	24,000

Background/Description

Since its establishment in 2019, Yellowhouse Art Centre, the sole arts centre on Galiano Island, has successfully delivered year-round, diverse, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary arts and culture programming. The rural location and the pandemic presented challenges, but creative solutions enable them to expand the Yellowhouse venue by constructing a new purpose-built arts facility.

Comments on the Recommendation

This is one of two new applicants to the Annual Operating Grants program. The organization was assessed well 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 top cohort. The adjudication committee noted that this organization has a strong track record of high-quality arts programming in multiple artistic disciplines (music, theatre, visual arts, and literary arts). Similar to Ptarmigan Arts, this organization has demonstrated outstanding community benefit in an area of the capital region (Galiano Island primarily with extended programming that benefits other southern gulf islands as well) where they are the one of the few producers and presenters of arts experiences. This organization is recommended for its first operating grant at a funding amount of \$24,000.

**REPORT TO ARTS COMMISSION
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026**

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 (2025) and the schedule of activities that will continue to advance the strategic plan in the upcoming year (2026).

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 ensures 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 2025, several milestones were accomplished that advanced the strategic plan, including:

- Launched the pilot version of the new Grow Forward grant program;
- Coordinated and hosted the Arts Champions Summit “Growing Forward Together,” convening over 80 arts leaders and representatives from six senior government arts funding agencies;
- Conducted a full program evaluation on the Operating grant program and implemented recommended modifications;
- Adapted case studies from the 2024 Impact Report as social media posts to promote the importance of the arts in building vibrant communities;
- Commissioned Hills Strategies for data on the distribution of artists and cultural workers in the municipalities of the capital region, and shared results to the public and the arts

sector;

- Continued to advocate to the BC Arts Council for a better approach to the Regional Areas policy through staff-to-staff, council-to-council, and Chair-to-Minister meetings, as well as through a follow-up letter;
- Supported the Greater Victoria Regional Arts Awards hosted by ProArt Alliance;
- Delivered four online information and grant-writing sessions, including a new session dedicated to Operating grants; and,
- Completed an evaluation, complete redesign and launch of the LandMarks Public Art Database with enhanced usability, content, and accessibility.

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 creation of the annual Impact Report, which shows the impact of this funding through statistics and case studies.

In 2026, there are multiple time-limited initiatives that will continue to advance the strategic plan, including:

- Launch of the full version of the new Grow Forward grant program with expanded budget and higher request amount with a summer deadline;
- Review the name and brand of the Arts and Culture Support Service;
- Collaborate with ProArt Alliance on education about a regional ecosystem model to appreciate the regional nature of the arts in the capital region;
- Convene municipal arts staff to increase connections between arts policy workers at the local government level and discover solutions to shared challenges; and
- Produce and distribute informational materials on funding resources to support arts infrastructure available to local arts groups and municipalities.

In 2026, 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 the annual Impact Report and expanded information-sharing initiatives with participating jurisdictions;
- Collaborate with the arts sector in championing the arts through initiatives such as the Greater Victoria Regional Arts Awards;
- Support non-participating jurisdictions to understand the benefits of joining the service, financial implications, and the actions necessary to initiate that process;
- Apply EDI and regional distribution lenses in grant adjudications;
- Increase access to the arts through grant information sessions, application process support, and promotion of funding opportunities on multiple platforms; and
- Continue to implement the multi-pronged strategies in the approved Communication and Outreach plan to increase awareness of the service and connection to new clients.

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

The final year of the existing strategic plan, 2027, will be focused on the onboarding of a newly appointed Arts Commission, after the local government elections in fall 2026, as well as the

research, consultation, and policy development of the next strategic plan for 2028-31.

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 (Royal Theatre Service and McPherson Playhouse Service) and any special board initiatives related to arts and culture, including the development of the proposed Performing Arts Facilities Service.

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 in the region. Board-initiated special projects may also take precedence over Arts Service policy development. Both constraints could cause delays in the timeline of this implementation plan. In 2025, the significant policy development and meeting support required by the Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee required a reallocation of staff resources and delayed the advancement of some aspects of the Arts Service’s implementation plan, notably action 10a: review of name and brand, which is now scheduled for review in Q1 2026.

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 2025 and the major initiatives that are planned for 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

No recommendation. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Chris Gilpin, MPA, Manager Arts & Culture
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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 BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), P'a:chi:da?aht (Pacheedaht), Pune'laxutth' (Penelekut), Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), Songhees, SṪÁUTW (Tsawout), T'Sou-ke, WJOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), WSIKEM (Tseycum), and xʷsepsəm (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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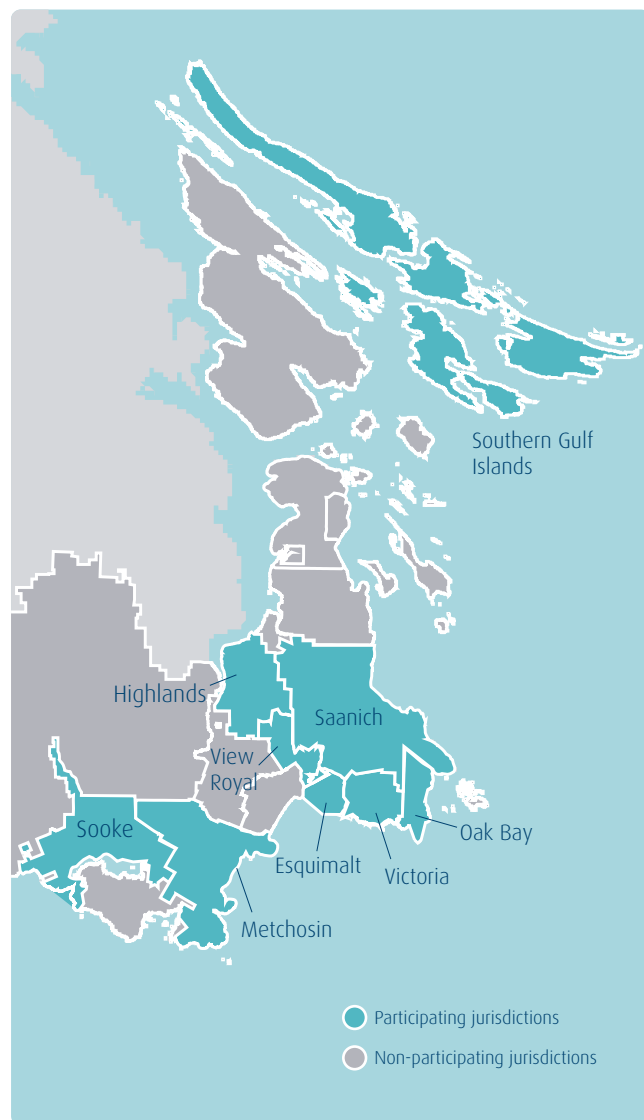
Background

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 landmarkpublicart.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.

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.

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.

2005

Funding boost

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

2007

Launch of Landmarks Public Art

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

2009



Laszlo Gati, conductor of Victoria Symphony Orchestra, 1967-78



2000 First Victoria Ska Festival - now the longest running festival of its kind in North America

6 participating municipalities

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



2006 SNAFU begins developing innovative dynamic theatre

7 participating municipalities

View Royal joins the Arts service

8 participating municipalities

Sidney joins the Arts Service



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.

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.

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.

2023

Looking forward

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



2013 Victoria Flamenco Festival brings Spain to Centennial Square



2015 Launch of Intrepid Theatre's Outstages, the first dedicated queer theatre festival in BC



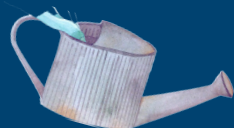
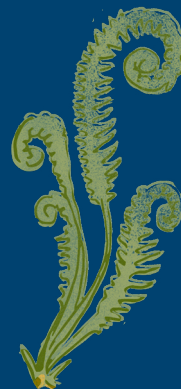
2015 Pacific Opera Victoria's Baumann Centre opens

9 participating municipalities

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



2020 Experimental & ambient music comes to Galiano with the first Active/Passive





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.

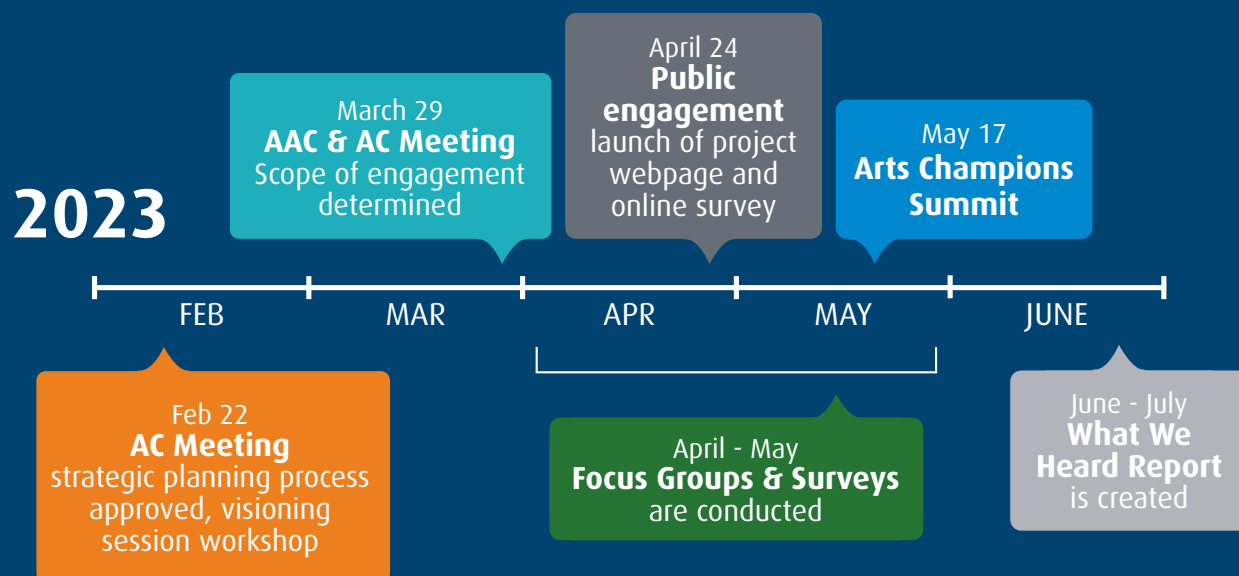
The multipronged consultation approach included focus groups, events, and online surveys. This allowed staff to employ the methods most suitable to engaging the interest holder group in question. A dedicated project webpage was created at getinvolved.crd.bc.ca to ensure the process was open, transparent, 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.



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



1,100+

Unique visits to project webpage



318

Completed surveys



6,808

Reached on Social Media



13

CRD jurisdictions represented in engagement



100+

Arts Summit attendees (online & in-person)



74

Empathy & appreciative inquiry maps generated

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.

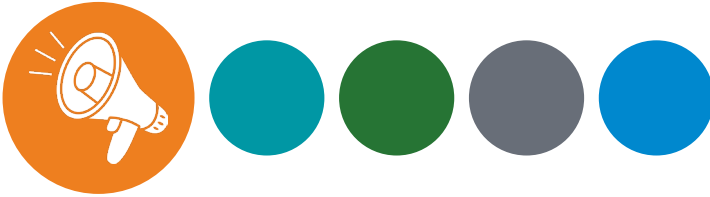
Commitment to Equity

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** | Broadening 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.

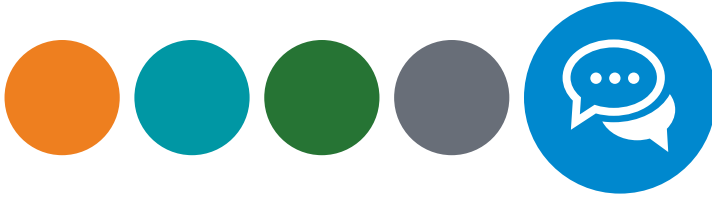
Goal 8:

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



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| **Capital Regional District**

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2024-2027 Strategic Plan Implementation Timeline

CRD Arts & Culture Support Service | Updated January 2026

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																
		Action B: Recruit new participants																
	Goal 2: Value of arts awareness	Action A: Collaborate w/ arts orgs																
		Action B: Share research on arts impact																
CONNECT	Goal 3: Boost org development	Action A: Support mentoring																
		Action B: Enhance networking & convening																
	Goal 4: Connect arts organizations to funding	Action A: Roadmap for infrastructure grants																
CULTIVATE	Goal 5: Support sustainable growth	Action A: Funding for planning and capacity																
		Action B: Review of Incubator Grants																
		Action C: Emphasis on regional distribution																
	Goal 6: Align funding to community needs	Action A: Review of Equity/IDEA/Projects																
EXTEND	Goal 7: Invest in underserved communities	Action A: Build on EDI momentum																
	Goal 8: Reduce barriers to access	Action A: Support for youth arts																
		Action B: Review of Operating Grants																
ENGAGE	Goal 9: Resources for grant applicants	Action A: Design Comms & Outreach Plan																
		Action B: Grant-writing workshops																
	Goal 10: Enhance branding of Arts Service	Action A: Review of name and brand																
PROCESS FOR NEXT STRATEGIC PLAN																		

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

2024–2027 Strategic Plan Implementation Summary

CRD Arts & Culture Support Service | Updated January 2026

STATUS:		TIMELINE:	RECENT ACTIVITY IN 2025:	NEXT STEPS IN 2026:	ON SCHEDULE?	ON BUDGET?
CHAMPION						
Goal 1: Scale up participation						
Action A: Advocate for regional approach	Ongoing	2024-2027	Presented to ProArt Alliance; second advocacy letter sent to TACS Minister	Convene municipal arts staff, connect with municipal comms staff, collaborate with ProArt on education about regional ecosystem model	Yes	Yes
Action B: Recruit new participants	Ongoing	2024-2027	2024 Impact Report sent with letter to non-participating jurisdictions	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 2025 GVRA awards; explored data-mapping initiative	Evaluate alternative data-sharing pathways; support 2026 GVRA awards	Yes	Yes
Action B: Share research on arts impact	Complete - Ongoing	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Impact Report and Stories series; shared commissioned Hills Strategies data	Publish 2025 Impact Report; explore video content avenues	Yes	Yes
CONNECT						
Goal 3: Boost org development						
Action A: Support mentoring	In Progress - Actioning	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Delivered Grow Forward pilot program	Launch & deliver full version of Grow Forward program	Yes	n/a
Action B: Enhance networking & convening	Complete - Ongoing	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Coordinated & hosted “Growing Forward Together” Arts Champions Summit	Evaluate Arts Summit feedback, convene municipal arts staff	Yes	Yes
Goal 4: Connect arts organizations to funding						
Action A: Roadmap for infrastructure grants	In Progress - Developing	Start: Q1 2026 / Implement: Q3 2026-->	Coordinated roundtable event with 6 arts funding bodies at Arts Summit	Produce and distribute grant funding infrastructure informational resource	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-->	Delivered Grow Forward pilot program	Launch & deliver full-version of grow forward program	Yes	n/a
Action B: Review of Incubator Grants	Complete	Start: Q2 2024 / Implement: Q1 2025-->	Communicated change to clients	n/a	Yes	n/a
Action C: Emphasis on regional distribution	Ongoing	2024-2027	Applied regional lens in 2025 adjudications; sent advocacy letter	Apply regional lens in 2026 adjudications	Yes	Yes
Goal 6: Align funding to community needs						
Action A: Review of Equity/IDEA/Projects	In Progress - Developing	Start: Q1 2026 / Implement: Q4 2026-->	Researched, gathered key community feedback	Review recommended changes with AAC / AC	Yes	n/a
EXTEND						
Goal 7: Invest in underserved communities						
Action A: Build on EDI momentum	Ongoing	2024-2027	Applied EDI lens in 2025 adjudications; enhanced web accessibility standards	Apply EDI lens in 2026 adjudications; continue to enhance web and communications accessibility; review of Equity Grant program (as part of 6a)	Yes	Yes
Goal 8: Reduce barriers to access						
Action A: Support for youth arts	In Progress - Developing	Start: Q1 2026 / Implement: Q4 2026-->	Gathered feedback, identified gaps in support and collaboration opportunities	Explore resource-sharing initiatives with educational and community groups	Yes	n/a
Action B: Review of Operating Grants	Complete	Start: Q4 2024 / Implement: Q3 2025-->	Full program evaluation approved and implemented	Continue to gather and review community feedback	Yes	n/a
ENGAGE						
Goal 9: Resources for grant applicants						
Action A: Design Comms & Outreach Plan	Complete - Ongoing	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Delivered and began implementing multi-pronged plan: enhanced LandMarks usability, content and awareness; enhanced web accessibility	Continue implementing plan: arts career resources, skill-building workshops, name and brand updates	Yes	Yes
Action B: Grant-writing workshops	Complete - Ongoing	Start: Q1 2024 / Implement: Q3 2024-->	Delivered 4 info sessions / workshops in 2025; added Operating workshop	Deliver 5 info sessions / workshops in 2026	Yes	Yes
Goal 10: Enhance branding of Arts Service						
Action A: Review of name and brand	In Progress - Developing	Start: Q2 2025 / Implement: Q4 2025-->	Researched & gathered key community feedback	Review options with AAC / AC	Delayed 1 Q	n/a



Making a difference...together

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December 17, 2025

File: 0400-20

The Honourable Anne Kang
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
Via email: TACS.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Kang:

RE: RECONSIDERATION OF BC ARTS COUNCIL'S REGIONAL AREAS POLICY

On behalf of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board, I write to advocate that the provincial government reconsider the BC Arts Council's Regional Areas policy. This policy is creating substantial barriers for the capital region's arts sector. While the name of this policy implies a general goal to treat regions more equally, the policy specifically excludes and deprioritizes applicants from the capital region and greater Vancouver from BC Arts Council funding. The BC Arts Council's website glossary states:

Regional Areas: For the purposes of BC Arts Council grants and funding priorities, regional areas are considered as those outside of the capital region and greater Vancouver.

On July 25, 2024, the CRD wrote to then-Minister Popham to request consideration of a modification to, or repeal of, the BC Arts Council's Regional Areas policy. While we appreciate the subsequent correspondence received from the Assistant Deputy Minister on November 15, 2024, the response did not address the impacts of the policy, nor did it outline potential options for moving forward. As a result, the concerns raised by the CRD remain unresolved.

After the provincial election, the issue was acknowledged and taken up by then-Minister Chandra Herbert and a meeting was arranged with Chair of the CRD Arts Commission, Marianne Alto, on April 1, 2025. This meeting was very constructive, and the minister noted the importance and outsized contribution of the capital region to the impact of arts in BC and he instructed staff to hold follow up meetings.

On June 25, 2025, CRD staff hosted a meeting with members of the BC Arts Council and ministry staff. The CRD presented evidence of much lower funding levels from BC Arts Council in the capital region compared to previous years and cited the sections of the eligibility criteria (in the Accelerate Program) that make applicants from the capital region ineligible, as well as the scoring matrix (in Arts Impact) that penalizes applicants from the capital region by 20 points making them uncompetitive.

The Regional Areas policy is a cross-cutting lens that applies to every BC Arts Council granting program, including grants to organizations and individuals. In every area of support, artists and arts organization from the capital region are being treated differently from those in other areas of BC.

The latest cultural satellite account shows 10,737 people employed in arts and cultural domains in the capital region, with the sector generating \$1.1 billion in regional GDP. Hill Strategies Research likewise confirms the CRD has one of the highest concentrations of artists and cultural workers in Canada, with more than 4,000 professional artists calling our region home. This sector provides a competitive advantage, not only for the capital region, but as a significant economic engine in BC.

The BC Arts Council states that its vision is to "... strive to ensure that artists and cultural organizations in British Columbia are well-supported, thriving and able to reach their full potential under principles of equity, diversity, accessibility, and reconciliation." That goal cannot be achieved by cutting back funding to vibrant clusters of artists and arts organizations, such as those found in the capital region.

Investments by the Province are essential for artists and arts organizations in the capital region to develop as a sector and deliver arts events to the public. At this moment in our history, it is more important than ever to invest in arts and culture, which strengthens our sense of distinct identity, and enhances our pride of place and social purpose.

The CRD Board respectfully requests that you reconsider the Regional Areas policy and place artists and arts organizations from the capital region on a level playing field with artists and art organizations from other regions of BC. so that these investments in arts and culture can be reinstated in an equitable way.

Sincerely,



Cliff McNeil-Smith
Chair, Capital Regional District Board

cc: The Honourable David Eby, Premier and MLA Vancouver - Point Grey
The Honourable Diana Gibson, MLA Oak Bay - Gordon Head
The Honourable Nina Krieger, MLA Victoria - Swan Lake
The Honourable Grace Lore, MLA Victoria - Beacon Hill
The Honourable Ravi Parmar, MLA Langford - Highlands
The Honourable Lana Popham, MLA Saanich South
Darlene Rotchford, MLA Esquimalt – Colwood
Rob Botterell, MLA Saanich North and the Islands
Dana Lajeunesse, MLA Juan de Fuca - Malahat
CRD Board
British Columbia Arts Council
Ted Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD

