

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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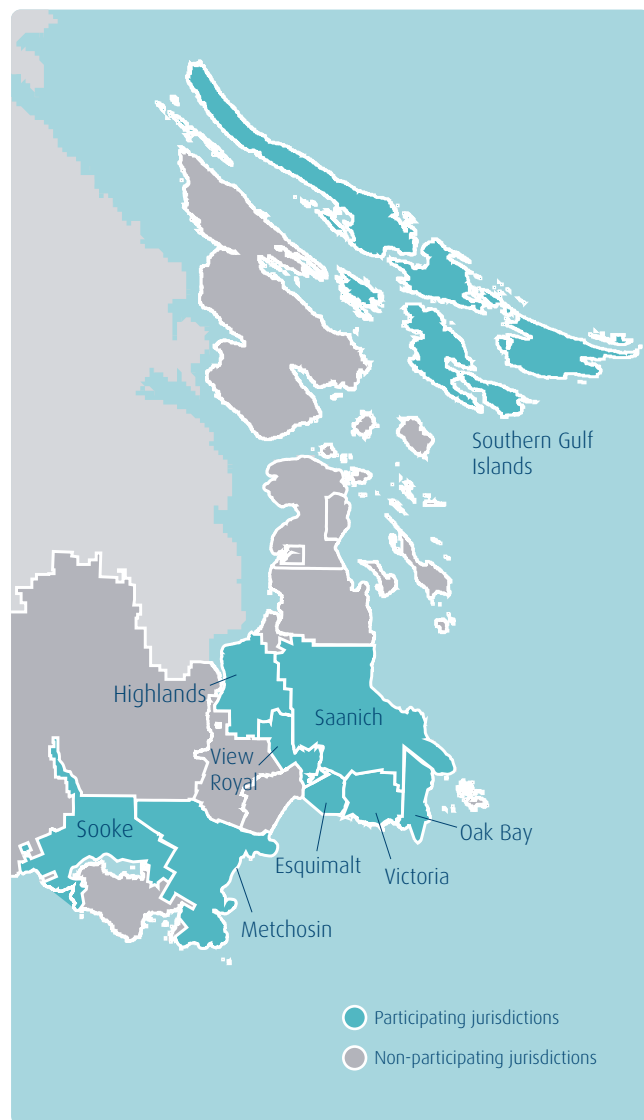
Background

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



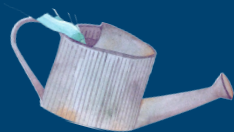
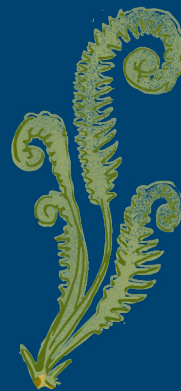
2015 Pacific Opera Victoria's Baumann Centre opens

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.

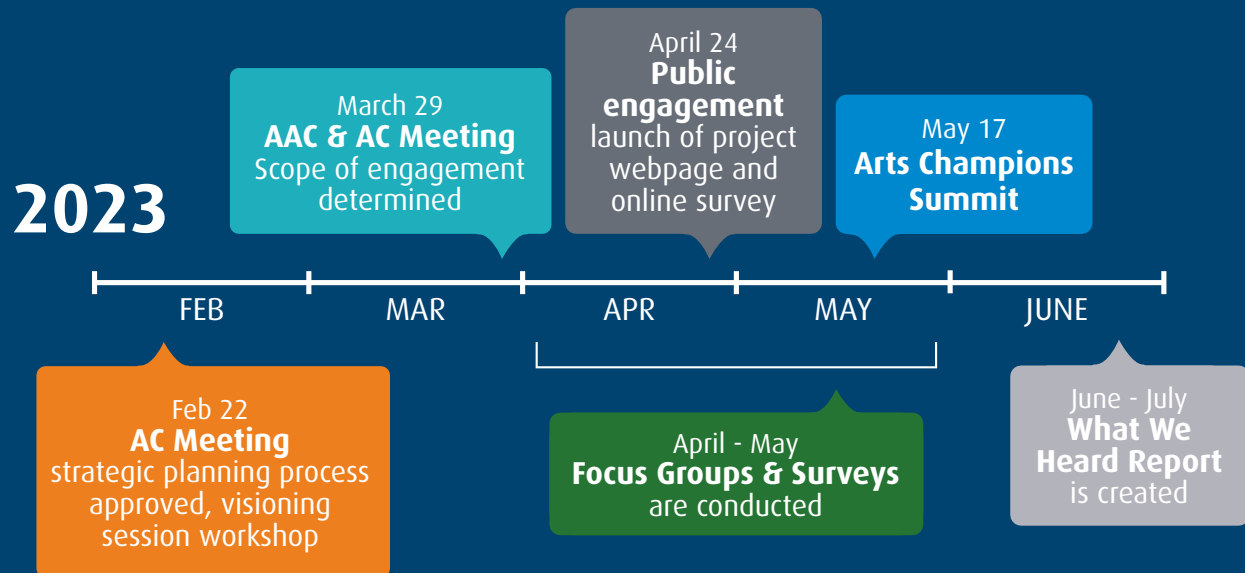


Arts Champions Summit table group. Photo: Dan Russek

THANK YOU

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

ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW



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

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

Engagement exercises in action. Photo: Dan Russek





Arts Champions
Summit promotional
artwork by Leya Tess



Mission, Vision & Commitment to Equity

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

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

MISSION

Support, champion & develop the arts.

VISION

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

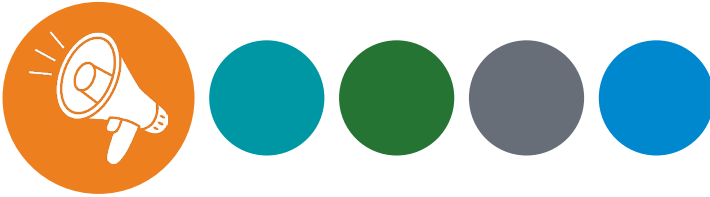
Commitment to Equity

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

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

Our 2024–2027 Strategic Priority Areas:

-  **Champion** | Advocating for the arts
-  **Connect** | Enhancing collaboration
-  **Cultivate** | Developing the arts ecosystem
-  **Extend** | 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.

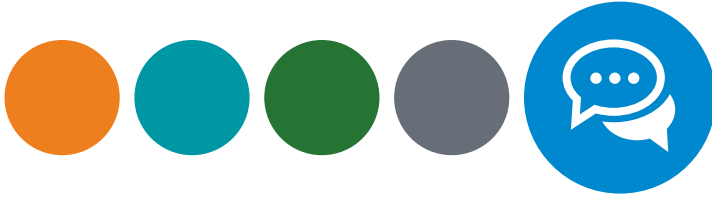
Goal 8:

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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