

Frequently Asked Questions

Performing Arts Facilities Service AAP

Capital Regional District | February 2026

Why is a Performing Arts Facilities Service needed?

- The proposed Performing Arts Facilities Service aims to address several long-standing challenges:
 - Current funding framework for regional theatres, created in late 1990s, is outdated and has significant limitations hindering the maintenance and operation of these facilities;
 - Lack of regional coordination in planning and funding regional theatres has resulted in unequal access to high-quality performing arts experiences across the region;
 - High theatre rental costs limit access for local arts groups, creating affordability barriers that prevent full usage despite high demand;
 - Unequal cost-sharing among jurisdictions despite widespread benefits across the region; and
 - Absence of a regional theatre in the rapidly growing West Shore area.
- The proposed new service addresses the above challenges with a new funding model that balances inclusivity, financial sustainability, and responsiveness to community needs.

What would the new service do?

- The proposed Performing Arts Facilities Service is designed to provide operating and capital funding to the capital region's three regional theatres: the Charlie White Theatre (located in the Mary Winspear Centre), the Royal Theatre, and the McPherson Playhouse. It will also help to develop a new regional theatre on the West Shore, which has been identified as a gap in the region's arts ecosystem.
- If approved, the new service will provide support to each facility through three core functions:
 - **Plan:** grant funding for feasibility studies, consultation, business plans, design work, and construction planning related to the development of future regional theatres
 - **Develop:** funding for maintenance and renovation of regional theatres, and additional resources dedicated to securing infrastructure funding from the provincial and federal governments
 - **Fund:** funding to support ongoing operations of regional theatres, and Theatre Rental Grants, which are subsidies for non-profit local arts groups to present their work at regional theatres

How much will this new service cost?

- The estimated cost of the new service is \$2.3 million, absorbing the \$1.35 million budget of the current services (Royal Theatre Service and McPherson Playhouse Service), and adding approximately \$1 million in scaled up support through new and expanded functionality, including Planning Grants, Theatre Rental

Grants and support for operating and maintenance of the Charlie White Theatre in the Mary Winspear Centre. The median cost per household of the new service is estimated at \$12.43 when it would be launched in 2027.

- Costs would grow gradually to support the operations and maintenance of performing arts facilities with regional impact, as determined by the criteria in the bylaw.
- Any costs related to this service would go through the CRD's annual planning process and must be approved by the CRD Board as part of the CRD Financial Plan Bylaw.

What is the maximum amount which can be requisitioned for this service?

- The service establishment bylaw sets the maximum amount that can be collected by requisition annually as either a fixed amount (\$3 million) or a property value tax amount (\$0.0171 per \$1,000). This amount represents the long-term capacity for the service, not the proposed budget.
- The proposed budget in 2027 totals \$2.3 million (including the existing and approved costs of \$1.35 million for the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse).
- The remaining requisition amount is for long-term service growth at the discretion of the CRD Board, and there are no plans to reach the proposed maximum requisition.

What services would be moved into the Performing Arts Facilities Service?

- The bylaw enables the new service to absorb all the costs and functions of two existing CRD services: the Royal Theatre Service and the McPherson Playhouse Service. This includes the operating, funding, equipping, and maintaining of the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse.
- The CRD will continue to be the steward of both the Royal Theatre (owned by the CRD) and the McPherson Playhouse (owned by the City of Victoria). The Saanich Peninsula Memorial Park Society will continue to own and operate the Charlie White Theatre in the Mary Winspear Centre and will receive support from the new service through a contribution agreement.

Who has been engaged in the development of the service?

- In 2019, the CRD Board launched the Regional Arts Facilities Select Committee to facilitate a discussion of the region's art facility needs. This committee held several public meetings and hired a consultant firm to engage interest holders across the region in gathering input about the current state of arts facilities as well as possible ways forward.
 - The consultant conducted 17 consultation sessions with the public and interest holders, as well as an online survey that received over 600 responses.
 - In December 2020, the report "A Public Conversation about Performing Arts Facilities in the CRD" was published along with all the collected data.
 - In 2021-22, the CRD Board examined the recommendation and referred the issue to the strategic planning sessions of the next term.

- In 2024, the CRD Board relaunched the Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee with a mandate to hold discussions on the region's performing arts facilities and provide options related to scaling up regional support for performing arts facilities.
 - The select committee reviewed five options for scaling up support and hired a consultant to engage the public and interest holders in a cost-benefit analysis of these options.
 - From January – May 2025 the consultant undertook extensive community engagement, including roundtable meetings with theatre operators, local arts groups, commercial presenters, educational groups, and other key interest holders.
- Staff will continue to engage with the local arts community, local government partners, the non-profit organizations that operate the regional theatres, groups that are looking to develop new regional theatres, and other interested and affected parties to implement new or expanded services successfully.

What is an Alternative Approval Process (AAP)?

- An Alternative Approval Process is a form of approval that allows electors to indicate whether they are against a local government proposal moving forward. Electors do this by submitting a completed elector response form to the CRD. If 10% or more of the eligible electors submit response forms in opposition, the CRD must either proceed to assent voting (referendum) within 80 days or reconsider the proposed action.

Who would participate in the service? To which residents does this AAP apply?

- The proposed sub-regional service area applies to the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area and all municipalities of the Capital Regional District, including Central Saanich, Colwood, Esquimalt, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, North Saanich, Oak Bay, Saanich, Sidney, Sooke, Victoria, and View Royal. The Alternative Approval Process applies to electors within those jurisdictions.
- The service area does not include the Salt Spring Island or Juan de Fuca electoral areas, and therefore the AAP does not apply to electors in those two jurisdictions either.

Why does the CRD need elector approval?

- As per the Local Government Act, the CRD must receive the electors' approval before it can adopt a bylaw to establish a service levy or incur long-term debt.

What is the expected approval timeline? When would the AAP start? When would the service be established?

- The anticipated timing for the Performing Arts Facilities Service AAP is as follows:
 - October 8, 2025 – 1st, 2nd, 3rd reading of Bylaw 4704 by the CRD Board, with direction to proceed towards an AAP
 - January 21, 2026 – Bylaw received approval of Inspector of Municipalities
 - February 11, 2026 – AAP requirements reviewed by the CRD Board
 - February 17, 2026 – AAP response period begins
 - March 30, 2026 – AAP response period ends
 - April 2026 – AAP results delivered and final adoption of bylaw (if applicable)

What if elector approval is not obtained?

- If 10% or more of the eligible electors submit elector response forms by the AAP deadline, the CRD Board will have two choices. It may proceed with assent voting (referendum) within 80 days or put the matter on hold and consider alternatives.

Where can I find more information on the AAP?

- For more information on the Alternative Approval Process (AAP), who can participate, where to find a response form, and how forms may be submitted, please visit www.crd.ca/theatres-aap.
- Learn more about the Alternate Approval Process for local government on the Government of British Columbia's website: www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/governance-powers/consent-approval-electors/approval-of-the-electors/alternative-approval-process.