



Making a difference...together

REPORT TO REGIONAL ARTS FACILITIES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021

SUBJECT Report and Recommendations, December 2020: Stage One – A Public Conversation about Performing Arts Facilities in the CRD

ISSUE SUMMARY

At their meeting of January 29, 2020, and in response to Board Priority 12a-1 to “facilitate a discussion on regional arts facilities”, the Regional Arts Facilities Select Committee approved the hiring of a consultant to engage the public in a discussion on regional arts facilities and to make recommendations based on their findings. The final report was completed and submitted in December 2020 and is circulated with this staff report.

BACKGROUND

The scope of the work to be considered in the regional arts facilities discussion included:

- a current inventory and oversight of performing art facilities, their functions and roles within the current ecosystem
- gap analysis
- consideration of equity including demographic and geographic equity
- considerations related to the intersection of local and regional interests
- funding and sustainability
- challenges
- suggested modifications and improvements (short and long term)
- partnerships
- other relevant issues as may arise

Due to restrictions on public gatherings the Select Committee made a decision to proceed with the community engagement virtually. The original engagement plan was re-designed to take place online and over the telephone. Sessions were promoted throughout the term of the engagement on the CRD corporate and Arts & Culture website and via the latter’s social media: three group emails to a 602 person list; 11 Facebook posts, 16 Tweets and four Instagram posts. Subsequent sharing and reposting took place and partner organizations were encouraged to share with their networks.

The consultant provided summary reports at each stage of the engagement process and published them on a dedicated PlaceSpeak site at <https://www.placespeak.com/en/topic/6357-stage-one/#/overview>.

Sixteen individual interviews were conducted representing various performing arts organizations and artists, First Nations and visible minorities as well as arts and culture staff of regional districts and other local government staff.

Group engagement activities took place according to an approved work plan on the following schedule:

June - Initial community contact with an open invitation for members of the public to discuss the scope of work, review and publicise the project schedule, introduce the consulting team and identify issues of concern. Four sessions: 98 people registered/ 75 attended.

July - Discussion on an extensive facility inventory recording over 200 venues of all types with information on ownership, accessibility, cost, etc. The inventory was partially crowdsourced and the results were subjected to community review. Three sessions: 76 registered/67 attended.

August - Discussion of the consultant's 20 year projected modeling of venue needs based on population growth and changing demographics as well as maps based on the facility inventory. Also provided was a discussion of jurisdictional authority for local and regional governments. Three sessions: 33 registered/25 attended.

September - Results of an open (not general population) survey on gaps, needs and opportunities held through the summer. Main data points were residency, travel time to venues, perception of unmet needs, roles for CRD. Survey participation: 654 starts/555 completes. The survey results were reviewed in three sessions/34 participants.

October - sessions to review initial findings and to consider feedback. Based on trends in public input the consultants adopted the lenses of "availability, affordability, accessibility and adequacy". Four sessions/27 participants.

Significant time was spent on: building an inventory of performing arts venues (the majority serve discrete local audiences and are not "regional" in scope or purpose); gathering data on whether current venues met the needs of the artistic community (gaps exist due to lack of development and changing demographics); and conveying jurisdictional and governance issues to participants. The report broadly sums up the issues as "availability, adequacy, affordability, and accessibility (equity)". The inventory of venues is on file with the CRD Arts & Culture Support Service.

Since 2000 the population of the CRD has increased by 21%. The demographics of the region have also changed along with the desire to broaden access and implement practices related to equity, diversity and inclusion. 2000 was also the year of the last study on regional arts facilities. While the region has changed significantly in the last 20 years, most of the challenges in advancing regional arts facilities remain the same. A copy of the last report can be made available through staff.

Through the consultant, in this year's report, recommendation 1 is to "Establish a new region-wide Service Agreement and funding mechanism for performing arts facilities that have regional impact". Speaking to the need for a fully regional service the reports states "Proliferating ad hoc facility arrangements is not going to provide the strategic and coordinated service that will help the arts community grow and develop its work" (p. 36).

Recommendation 2 assumes the desire to move forward with Recommendation 1. The establishment of a new service can take six to eight months and the rationale states that "this recommendation seeks to enable work to move forward immediately while the CRD works towards a longer-term objective of adopting a new service establishing bylaw."

Recommendations 3 and 4 identifies the work that could be done in the time between adoption of Recommendation 1 and the formal establishment of the proposed service through bylaw adoption.

The work of the Regional Arts Facilities Select Committee had four desired outcomes:

1. Work within the CRD Procurement policy to engage a consultant to design and facilitate a process for public and stakeholder input.
2. Hold discussions on the region's arts facilities needs.
3. Define the scope and parameters of jurisdictional responsibilities related to regional versus local arts facilities.
4. Work to create consensus for the CRD to be the lead on regional arts facilities.

Outcomes #1 and #2 have been met by virtue of having engaged the consultant and completed the work plan for community engagement. #3 has been met through the creation of the Facilities Inventory. The end result for #4 lies within the political realm as proposed in Recommendation 1 of the consultant's report.

CONCLUSION

Upon making its findings and recommendations known to the Board, the Regional Arts Facilities Select Committee will have completed its purpose. The activities of the Select Committee are in fulfillment of Initiative 12a-1 of the CRD 2019-2022 Corporate Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Arts Facilities Select Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the "Report and Recommendations, December 2020: Stage One – A Public Conversation about Performing Arts Facilities in the CRD" report be received for information.

Submitted by:	James Lam, Manager, Arts & Culture Support Service
Concurrence:	Nelson Chan, MBA, FCPA, FCMA, Chief Financial Officer
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., Acting Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: Report and Recommendations, December 2020: Stage One - A Public Conversation About Performing Arts Facilities in the CRD