

**REPORT TO PERFORMING ARTS FACILITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2024**

SUBJECT **Options for Full Regional and Sub-Regional Performing Arts Facilities Services**

ISSUE SUMMARY

The Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee has directed staff to generate options for new services, in both full regional and sub-regional models, that could increase support for existing and potential new performing arts facilities with regional impact.

BACKGROUND

On September 4th, 2024, PAFSC passed a motion:

That staff develop options for regional and sub-regional services that would scale up support for existing and potential additional performing arts facilities with regional impact, including options to ensure value for all participating jurisdictions.

Staff are outlining five options for new CRD services that would scale up support for performing arts facilities with regional impact (details on service design in Appendix A).

One option is the Full Regional Performing Arts Facilities Service as developed in 2021, which is feasible and fully designed. The other four options include a new service delivery feature, the Theatre Rental Grants program, that would allow schools and arts groups in participating jurisdictions to have greater access to CRD regional theatres through rental subsidies.

The next step would be to engage an external consultant to compare these five options and evaluate each one in terms of its costs, benefits, sustainability, alignment to community needs, and value proposition for each participating jurisdiction and for the region as a whole.

Conversely, PAFSC could direct staff to develop one of the five options with a detailed costing by jurisdiction and a full service plan. Staff would bring back a comprehensive report on that chosen option, which could then be recommended by PAFSC to the CRD Board.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee recommends to the CRD Board:

1. That staff initiate an RFP to engage a consultant for the purposes of undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of the five proposed service options, in terms of their sustainability and direct value proposition to each participating jurisdiction and to the region as a whole.
2. That the resulting report from this analysis be presented to the CRD Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee in the first half of 2025 with recommendations on next steps.

Alternative 2

That staff develop Option X (one of the five options) with a draft bylaw, service plan and cost for each participating jurisdiction, reporting back to the Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee with a recommendation to advance that option for consideration by the CRD Board.

Alternative 3

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board and Corporate Priorities

In the current CRD Corporate Plan (2023-2026), initiative 10b-2 states the CRD will “Scale up regional support for performing arts facilities within the region.” This could be achieved by new sub-regional or full regional service options or by increased investment in existing services that support performing arts facilities with regional impact.

Financial Implications

Estimates for the proposed new service options are included in Appendix B. These estimates are based on current funding models for existing facilities in Budget 2025, financial statements from the Saanich Peninsula Memorial Park Society (aka Mary Winspear Centre, which includes the Charlie White Theatre) from 2023, and the financial model for the Major Capital Fund and Planning Grants from the 2021 proposed Full Regional Performing Arts Facilities Service.

The estimates for the Theatre Rental Grant program are based on subsidizing 50-75% of the full cost of renting the three regional theatres for local educational and non-profit arts groups with the aim of significantly increasing the usage rate at both facilities.

All new service options include 1.0 FTE in additional staffing. This new position would be dedicated to two areas: external grant-writing and support to the Theatre Rental Grant program. Staff would pursue funding opportunities through provincial and federal grant programs for major infrastructure support in collaboration with local governments and/or non-profit clients. The CRD could access substantially more external funding for regional theatres, especially capital projects, by having additional staffing resources focused on identifying and pursuing these opportunities. In addition, this staff member would support applicants, the adjudication process, and evaluation of outcomes for the Theatre Rental Grant program.

On October 30th, 2024, Initiative Business Case 10b-2.1 was approved as part of the provisional budget. This allocated \$132,000 to a Feasibility Fund to support the work of the PAFSC as part of Budget 2025. Up to \$50,000 of this fund were estimated as necessary to support the work of a consultant for research, analysis, and/or consultation and production of a report.

Service Delivery Implications

Parallel to the work of the PAFSC, the CRD has continued to advance amending bylaws that would scale up support on an incremental basis for existing services that support the service delivery of performing arts facilities with regional impact.

On September 11, 2024, the CRD Board adopted amending Bylaw No. 4560 to modernize the Royal Theatre Service. This amending bylaw came from a 2023 recommendation from the Royal and McPherson Theatres Services Advisory Committee. The adoption of Bylaw No. 4560 will allow for the first funding increase to this facility in 25 years to occur in CRD's Budget 2025.

The City of Victoria continues to review amending Bylaw No. 4561 to modernize the McPherson Playhouse Service bylaw (see Table 1 for current status).

Table 1. Council Consent Status for Amending Bylaws

Bylaw	Saanich	Oak Bay	Victoria	Result
4560 (Royal Theatre)	Approved	Approved	Not yet considered	Adopted
4561 (McPherson Playhouse)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not yet considered	Under review by City of Victoria

These amending bylaws remove the fixed maximum amount for each service, allowing greater budgeting flexibility that will enable the CRD to ensure the long-term sustainability of these facilities. This is another incremental way to scale up support for performing arts facilities. On October 16th, 2024, the Royal and McPherson Theatres Services Advisory Committee endorsed the staff recommendation to increase the budget of the Royal Theatre Service from \$580,000 (for the past 25 years) to \$596,000 in Budget 2025.

CONCLUSION

The Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee directed CRD staff to generate options for new sub-regional and full regional services that could scale up support for performing arts facilities with regional impact in a way that provides value to all participating jurisdictions. CRD staff have proposed five options, three sub-regional and two full regional, for new services as well as recommending that the next step would be to hire an external consultant to undertake a full analysis of these options in terms of their costs, benefits, and sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION

The Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee recommends to the CRD Board:

1. That staff initiate an RFP to engage a consultant for the purposes of undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of the five proposed service options, in terms of their sustainability and direct value proposition to each participating jurisdiction and to the region as a whole.
2. That the resulting report from this analysis be presented to the CRD Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee in the first half of 2025 with recommendations on next steps.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Concept Paper on New Service Options to Support Performing Arts Facilities with Regional Impact

Appendix B: Financial Estimates on New Service Options to Support Performing Arts Facilities with Regional Impact

Appendix C: Presentation on New Service Options