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As per the 'Vision' of the Arts & Culture Master Plan:

“Victoria radiates creativity and thrives as a home to creative people and everyday artistic experiences.”

We can all agree Victoria is a city potent with creativity.

Where we see divide is in question:

Are we truly offering stable opportunities that best showcase these abilities?

2

Zoning & Infrastructure

Zoning and venue closures have crippled many artistic experiences. The statements made in the master plan do not reflect current events.

Leaving those who call Victoria home, living, working and playing - without the much needed stability of the Arts, the deeply profound sense of Community and Freedom of Expression in a Safe, Diverse and Inclusive manner.

Is there room for compromise?

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Innovation

“Victoria values artists, cultural practitioners, arts organizations, creative producers, and recognizes their role as central to innovation.”

Yet, if you ask any Artist, Arts Organization, or Creative Producer if they feel recognized and/or valued as central innovators, they will tell you they do not. Many are struggling and we are here today to address and find solutions that satisfy all parties.

“The Arts, Culture, and Events Office is proposed to be repositioned as a Cultural Hub to ‘roll out the red carpet,’ instead of red tape, and continue to build its collaborative community partnerships.”

Venue closures do not signal innovation or determine the above statements true.

As Mayor and Council, what is preventing the operation of Safe, Accessible and Necessary Entertainment Venues located in Victoria? How can we roll out the red carpet and put away the tape?

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Culture

Our industry is one of the most culturally diverse and accepting communities that exists to date. When we come together to celebrate life, forget about our problems and our differences, we create a deeply profound sense of unity and belonging. Electronic Dance Music is the glue that holds our world together. It may not be your cup of tea, although I'm sure you've felt the joyful feelings when listening to your favourite song or music. It is a staple in our existence. All that we ask is that we are able to grow, create, play and come together safely to benefit culture, community and humanity as a whole.

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Psychology of EDM

EDM plays a significant role in identity formation and self-expression, particularly among young people. The various subgenres allow individuals to align themselves with specific musical tribes, each with its own fashion, values and social norms. This process of identifying with a particular scene can be an important part of personal development and social identity formation.

EDM has shown a remarkable ability to transcend cultural boundaries. Its largely non-verbal nature allows it to communicate emotions and experiences across language barriers. EDM festivals and events attract attendees from all over the world, creating unique opportunities for cross-cultural communication and understanding. In this way, EDM serves not just as entertainment, as a form of global cultural exchange.

<https://neurolaunch.com/edm-music-psychology>

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Interdisciplinary Efforts

Collaborations between Artists, Technologists, and Cultural Institutions are leading to new forms of creative expression. Governments and Organizations are providing funding for Arts & Culture innovation projects, such as the Culture Innovation Fund in Nova Scotia, which supports non-profit societies and co-operatives in using creativity and culture to address social issues.

The global economic value of the EDM industry in 2016 was \$7.1 Billion dollars. In 2019 there was a 20% decline and in 2021 it was valued at \$6 Billion. If Artists, Government and Organizations in Victoria came to an agreement we will see exponential growth, not only in numbers monetarily, increases in Tourism, Culture and Community, as well as Economic growth would exist simultaneously.

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Data

In a small poll created to establish understanding of the effects on community, 150% of participants agreed that the EDM scene in Victoria played a significant role in their livelihood and sense of self. Participants agreed that these events had a positive, lasting and meaningful influence on their life. I believe with the right steps and agreements we can create safe, accessible and enjoyable venues and events in Victoria that showcase local and international talents, expanding on Victoria's culturally rich, diverse and accepting community.

The economical growth and attraction of this sector for tourism is invaluable. Our goal is to have Victoria on the map as one of Canada's best in Arts & Entertainment. Mayor and Council we have small asks for your approval and workability. Will you consider working with us to improve and implement the promised strategies that enable Victoria and the Arts to flourish?

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Testimonials

“I have been a full time DJ for the last 10 years, focusing on EDM. It is how I feed my family and formative to this career and life path has been the ever struggling dance music culture of Victoria, B.C. Where I own a home and have a wife and daughter. I have always attempted to live by the motto: “Cultivate culture that sustains you.” Victoria has been a constant battle with by-laws concerning liquor, hours of operation, and zoning. I no longer promote shows due to the financial risk and strain on my family. 4 of my weekly residencies see me playing dance music in venues that DO NOT allow dancing?! New York recently lifted these laws. I dream of a B.C that allows businesses the flexibility to allow their clients the freedom to dance, amongst a host of other possibilities.” – Jeff L.

“In the EDM community social status, race and sexual orientation are not under scope. It is love, support and positive energy. Music is my therapy. It’s the only place I feel where I belong.” – Danielle S.

“I find it completely necessary to be in community and find catharsis on the dancefloor.”
– Jen K.

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Testimonials Continued

“Dance provides for me a trifecta of spiritual connection, community connection and exercise. It is downright necessary for my physical and mental health. It is not “just” a scene, it is a culture. We particularly need dance spaces that don’t generate their revenue from alcohol sales. These kinds of spaces enhance urban life.” – Shiraz D.

“It’s an essential part of my existence and I can’t imagine my life without the EDM community, now or even when I’m 80. Less focus on alcohol, more focus on dance, connection and building relationships. People get to know each other and watch out for each other. They’re into the music, not just there to party.” – Melissa O.

“Without this dance community my life would have remained empty and disconnected! As a now senior I have witnessed and experienced so much love, acceptance, fun, inclusion, and growth. It has saddened me to see so many venues disappearing.” – Stephanie M.

There are many more testimonials I would be happy to share if given the opportunity.

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Conclusion

There is a bright future for Victoria and the Province. I hope that we can work together to envision, create more positive experiences, enhance creative innovations and generate economic and cultural growth while also addressing social issues through Arts & Entertainment initiatives.

Mayor and Council I thank you for your time today and your attention on this subject.