



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of November 7, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** October 31, 2019
From: Councillor Loveday and Councillor Isitt
Subject: Protecting and Supporting Arts and Cultural Spaces in the City

BACKGROUND

The City of Victoria adopted the Create Victoria arts and cultural masterplan in 2017. Create Victoria was the result of extensive public consultation with the arts and cultural communities and the broader public. The plan won the 2018 Award of Excellence – Cultural Planning from the Creative City Network of Canada.

Throughout the Create Victoria engagement process, one issue that kept rising to the top was the need for accessible and affordable venues and arts and cultural spaces. There is a clear need for existing arts and cultural spaces to be supported and protected and for the creation of new venues and arts spaces to be cultivated. With partners, the City of Victoria can play an important role in addressing this key issue to our arts and cultural sectors. Council has recently had a few discussions regarding the best approaches to limiting the impact of property taxes and development pressures on cultural spaces. Two motions regarding this issue have been forwarded to the next quarterly update for future consideration and action.

The Create Victoria plan outlines two currently un-actioned items to be undertaken by City staff in this regard, both of which align with actions identified in the City's Strategic Plan 2019-2022. The first is the creation of an Arts Infrastructure Granting Program which arts organizations can leverage to seek investments from higher levels of government. Secondly, Create Victoria calls for the City of Victoria to develop a Cultural Spaces Roadmap to serve as a guide for cultural space planning.

It is important for the City of Victoria to take action now to fight the continued loss of cultural spaces as has occurred in Vancouver and other cities where land values have quickly escalated. Vancouver has perhaps learned the hard way having already lost 100,000 square feet of cultural space between 2014 and 2017. Victoria can look to Vancouver's patterns of growth, land speculation and redevelopment for lessons learned. We are in a strong position to take preventative measures now which will be less costly in the long run.

For this work to be efficient and effective, City efforts should be aligned across departments. Therefore, it is recommended that Council give favourable consideration to the following actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Direct staff to provide an update on implementation of the Create Victoria Master Plan within three months, including Actions Items identified in the Strategic Plan for 2020 and recommendations on providing long-term financial stability for arts and cultural spaces.
2. Allocate \$100,000 dollars in the 2020 Financial Plan toward an Arts and Cultural Spaces Reserve Fund.
3. Direct staff to prepare a draft policy governing the allocation of grants from this fund.
4. Authorize a new staff position in the Arts and Culture division, funded from new assessed revenue, to allow enough staff resources to proactively implement the Create Victoria Plan and the Arts and Cultural Spaces Road Map.
5. That Council direct staff to align all work to protect cultural spaces including the work outlined in the Create Victoria arts and cultural masterplan and the Council motions regarding permissive tax exemptions and downzoning cultural facilities to limit property tax burdens and development pressures.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Loveday



Councillor Isitt

Attachment:

1. Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan, 2018