



**Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of May 14, 2020**

Date: May 7, 2020
From: Councillor Loveday and Mayor Helps
Subject: Supporting the Recovery of the Arts and Culture Sector

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic crisis has had a profoundly negative impact on the arts and cultural sector in the City of Victoria. The impacts have included cancelled events and festivals, lost revenue, layoffs, and uncertainty for organizations and individuals, many of which, rely on successful seasonal events to sustain their yearly operational budgets. This has also resulted in a loss of vibrancy, interaction and connection, and joy for city residents who rely on these events to enhance their quality of life and well-being.

Municipalities play an important role in the landscape as funders, regulators, convenors and supporters of the arts and cultural sector. The City of Victoria has approved and is implementing the award-winning *Create Victoria* arts and cultural masterplan. Many of the *Create Victoria* actions that were scheduled to be undertaken in 2020 have been deferred pending budget review in the summer of 2020. This includes deferring the hiring of a staff person needed to implement *Create Victoria* and the City of Victoria's planned actions to support arts and cultural spaces.

Investment in arts and culture and support to the struggling sector should be a key recovery priority for the City. Restarting the 2020 *Create Victoria* initiatives is important to supporting arts and culture in the city. This will help to drive the recovery of our local economy. It will also provide much-needed opportunities for residents to experience the benefits of engaging with arts and culture opportunities – albeit in new and creative ways – after being cooped up at home during the pandemic. In addition to economic stimulus, investing in arts and culture as part of the City's recovery strategy is also good for the mental health and well-being of our residents.

Recommendations:

1. That Council move forward at this time with the previously approved 2020 *Create Victoria* actions related to the creation of a Cultural Infrastructure Grant fund, Cultural Spaces Roadmap, and the new staff position for implementing *Create Victoria*.
2. That Council direct staff to report back with options for a special round of grants to:
 - A. Encourage events with alternative formats that build community and social connection while allowing for physical distancing
 - B. Once restrictions are lifted, events to bring people back downtown, support arts and culture, and inject economic vibrancy back into the core
3. That the City of Victoria provide a \$5000 grant to the Pro Art Alliance of Greater Victoria for the creation of a City of Victoria sponsored award at the annual Pro Art Regional Arts

Awards, to be aligned with the objectives of Create Victoria, to be funded from the 2020 contingency budget.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Loveday', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Loveday

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helps', written in a cursive style.

Mayor Helps