



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of Thursday, November 4, 2021

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** October 21, 2021
From: Kerri Moore, Head of Business and Community Relations
Subject: City of Victoria Music Strategy (2022 – 2026)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve the Victoria Music Strategy and consider allocating one-time funding of \$75,000 as part of the 2022 Financial Planning process to fund first year implementation action items related to COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts for the music sector.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Music Strategy provided an opportunity for the music sector to dream big, share ideas, talk through issues, and find solutions. City staff worked alongside the Music Advisory Committee and consultants at Sound Diplomacy, a Berlin-based strategic consultancy, to complete an in-depth assessment of Victoria's music ecosystem. It is the result of many months of research, engagement, analysis and policy development.

Over 1500 people provided input and feedback on the Music Strategy through an online survey, roundtable discussions and online and in-person interviews. The key takeaways from the engagement included the need for greater and more affordable access to mid-sized venues for performance and rehearsal space, and to create more spaces for underrepresented voices.

An Economic Impact Assessment was also conducted to measure the economic output of the music sector. In 2017, the music ecosystem created 3,630 direct jobs in Victoria contributing \$223.61 million (GDP) and a direct output of \$463.21 million to the local economy.

Music has a unique and innate ability to bring people together by sharing stories, experiences, and heritages that contribute to the overall wellbeing and sustainability of Victoria's culture, nighttime economy and tourism. We are home to world class musicians and organizations that punch well above their weight for a city and region of our size. While we are known for our classical and independent folk genres, we are also home to a diverse collection of festival organizers and do-it-yourself style producers across every genre.

First year implementation action items and funding allocation would be prioritized towards music programming in public spaces including the continuation of Build Back Victoria programming on Government Street, key transit and tourism locations and increased programming at the Cameron

Bandshell and Centennial Square. Additionally, the City will host a Music Symposium to convene the music sector for networking, education and capacity building workshops. The priorities identified will support COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts for musicians and music organizations and position Victoria as a vibrant, thriving City with a strong music scene.

The global pandemic continued to impact the ability for City staff to deliver existing culture programs and issuing event permits due to public health orders. The investment in 2022 will be prioritized towards COVID recovery efforts for the music sector including increased opportunities for musicians to play in community and civic owned public spaces, tourism and transit hubs, producing a Music Symposium to provide professional development and capacity building workshops and integrating music across City programs and initiatives such as music at summer camps and protocol events.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval on the proposed Music Strategy and staff recommendations.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, Council adopted the Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan. Create Victoria aligns ideas, people, and resources around a shared vision and a set of goals, strategies, and actions to realize Victoria's creative potential and guide investment. The Master Plan identified the need to build on Victoria's diverse and active music scene by positioning Victoria as a Music City. The Victoria Music Strategy is nestled under the Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan.

In early 2019, Council approved the appointment of the Music Advisory Committee to oversee the development of the Victoria Music Strategy. The Advisory Committee has also served as community ambassadors to actively promote public involvement in the planning process and act as a sounding board to assist staff during the engagement phase of the project.

The City partnered with Music BC to contract Sound Diplomacy in 2019, a globally recognized consultant specializing in music ecosystem analysis, to identify gaps, analyze the data, engage the local music sector and present recommendations for implementation. The full Sound Diplomacy Music Ecosystem Study is attached as Appendix B to this report.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis through asset mapping, economic impact analysis and data collection through survey and focus groups the following issues were identified.

- Victoria's venue ladder is lacking in mid-sized live music venues with emphasis on the need for 200 capacity and 700-1000 capacity venues.
- Lack of accessible and welcoming spaces for underrepresented groups (all-ages, differently abled patrons, LGBTQ2S+ community, Indigenous musicians).
- Liquor licensing processes are inadequate and confusing.
- There is a lack of a centralized source of information on music events in Victoria that is easy to access for both event producers/musicians and consumers/fans.
- There are few ride-sharing services and very few late-night dining options in Victoria, and many businesses have cut hours.
- Participation and representation of diversified groups and equity-seeking communities are lacking within the music ecosystem.

- There needs to be better education on rate-setting to improve fair pay for music makers across the board, like the standards set for visual artists by CARFAC.

Engagement Summary

Between March and April of 2020, 1,498 respondents participated in an online survey, and conducted 16 roundtables and 20 online and in-person interviews, with over 100 music industry and policy representatives.

The roundtables also included a virtual Indigenous Roundtable discussion with a group of professionals from the music sector who also identify as members of BIPOC communities. The roundtable sought to ensure that local BIPOC artists and those in the cultural industries could discuss their perspectives, concerns and views on the local music industry in Victoria.

The input and ideas from the Engagement phase informed the Music Advisory Committee and Staff in the development of the Music Strategy

From September 3 to 17, 2021, the City of Victoria asked local musicians, music businesses and music fans to provide feedback on the draft Music Strategy's strategic priorities.

A total of 430 people submitted a survey and approximately 40 people attended an in-person Open House Info Session. Most of the survey respondents said all statements under the five strategic priorities, are important. Top common feedback themes from survey respondents include supporting existing venues and building new affordable spaces for performances and rehearsals.

More details of the Engagement Summary can be found in Appendix C.

Strategic Priorities and Action Items

Based on the data gathering, analysis and engagement phase, five broad priority areas and 27 Action Items emerged for the City of Victoria to implement.

1. Connecting People and Spaces: Create space for music

This action item focuses on creating spaces for music production, rehearsal and performance. Work will be done to ensure that underrepresented communities, such as youth, women, LGBTQ2S+, and Indigenous people have access to spaces and resources that support the development of music and build capacity for artistic talent within these communities. The highest priority action items based on the engagement feedback include:

- *Support community proposals for a Performance Hub concept.*
- *Prioritize the Ship Point Master Plan and Centennial Square Action Plan.*
- *Maximize underutilized spaces to provide affordable and accessible rehearsal, performance and recording space.*

2. Nurture the Talent: Support musicians and music organizations

This strategic area focuses on greater support and resources for musicians and music organizations and festivals. The focus in this area is to create opportunities to educate, share, and build networks in the music sector. The highest priority action items based on the engagement feedback include:

- *Expand opportunities for Indigenous-led music programs, all age and youth programming in publicly accessible spaces.*
- *Establish a Victoria Music Fund to support Victoria-based musicians, with particular emphasis on Indigenous Peoples and Equity-Seeking Communities.*
- *Dedicate staff resources to implement the Victoria Music Strategy and establish a one-stop shop for Music inquiries. Position existing staff as the go to for music related inquiries, navigate City processes, act as an internal ambassador for music within the City.*

3. Grow the Audience: Everyday Musical Encounters

Audience development is a key consideration for a growing and thriving music sector. This priority area focuses on expanding access to music for citizens and visitors. The highest priority action items based on the engagement feedback include:

- *Increase music programming budget and the busker licensing program to expand music in publicly accessible places.*
- *Develop a City of Victoria Arts, Culture and Events E-Newsletter to promote opportunities, events and celebrate the arts scene.*
- *Work with business and tourism partners to program music in retail, transit hubs (airport, ferry terminal, bus terminal) and key attractions to showcase local talent.*

4. Creative License: Create Music-Friendly Policy and Regulations

The City of Victoria has a major role to play in thoughtfully considering a regulatory landscape that supports not just the live music ecosystem, but the creation of innovative music businesses and the smart integration of music into solving urban problems from public health and safety to education and social cohesion. The highest priority action items based on the engagement feedback include:

- *Continue to explore initiatives to maintain the Downtown Core Area as the primary centre for entertainment and hospitality within Greater Victoria, to enable a thriving live music scene. Key initiatives may include:*
 - *Agent of Change principal*
 - *Enhanced business license*
 - *Streamline permits and licenses for music activity to reduce barriers for live music venues to operate*
 - *Explore the development of a Musician Loading Parking Permit*
 - *Review current Noise Bylaw.*
- *Review licensing, zoning, permitting and venue policies at City, community and commercially-owned spaces to find ways to increase opportunities for all age shows.*
- *Advance Late Night Economy policy directions that improve Live Music Systems and enhance vibrancy in the core. This may include, but not limited to, the review of liquor and business licensing, extended venue hours and other public safety measures that can support the music sector. It may also include advocating BC Transit to expand late night bus service.*

5. Be Future-Ready: Music Innovation and The Creative Economy

This priority area focuses on inclusive growth, while also exploring what is possible when smart supports are in place to fuel a competitive and innovative music industry and build a future-ready city through investment in the creative economy.

This area will harness the power of the creative economy to drive prosperity and take steps to support and empower music businesses small and large making the city an ideal place to start and grow a music business. The music industry is considered in any conversation around economic development, job creation and talent attraction, and the City is proactive about building a business-friendly environment for music entrepreneurs. The highest priority action items based on the engagement feedback include:

- *Explore a Music Innovation Hub including accelerators, incubators, and labs as part of the Arts and Innovation District that could include production, artist development, mentorship and financing to drive growth in the music sector.*
- *Incorporate a Music Export Program as part of the Accelerator concept to assist musicians with skill and business development opportunities.*
- *Host a series of presentations to community and industry leaders to advance the Victoria Music Report to build new partnerships and collaborations.*

Economic Impact Assessment

The economy of music can be understood as a segment of the overall economy of culture. The analysis of the music ecosystem from an economic impact lens addresses the interdependency of various stakeholders that would otherwise not exist if not for the music industry.

The majority of the economic value in Victoria's music ecosystem is created by the broadcasting domain (defined as broadcasting, music education, granting activities, equipment and instrument rental and sales), which creates 64% of the GDP of the music sector. The live music and sound recording domains contributed 31% and 5% of the sector's GDP respectively. Looking at the provincial landscape, Victoria produced 22% of British Columbia's music ecosystem GDP.

In 2017, the music ecosystem created 3,630 direct jobs in Victoria contributing \$223.61 million (GDP) and a direct output of \$463.21 million to the local economy.

- Live Music produces 2,620 jobs and a \$312 million output
- Supporting and Broadcasting produces 729 jobs and a \$125 million output
- Sound Recording produces 281 jobs and a \$26 million output

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1: That Council approves the Victoria Music Strategy and consider allocating one-time funding of \$75,000 as part of the 2022 Financial Planning process to fund priority action items related to COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts for the music sector. (Recommended)

Option 2: Adopt the Music Strategy in principle.

Option 3: Send back Music Strategy for revisions and report back to Council with amendments.

Accessibility Impact Statement

The Victoria Music Strategy contains several action items that seek to improve accessibility including:

- Action Item #3 “Maximize underutilized spaces to provide affordable and accessible rehearsal, performance and recording space.”
- Action Item #5 “Increase access for underrepresented communities at City venues including but not limited to the McPherson Playhouse, Centennial Square and the Cameron Bandshell in Beacon Hill Park.”
- Action Item #6 “Remove operational policy barriers from the Cameron Bandshell permit application process.”
- Action Item #10 “Expand opportunities for Indigenous People’s led music programs, all age and youth programming in publicly accessible spaces.”
- Action Item #11 “Establish a Victoria Music Fund to support Victoria-based musicians, with particular emphasis on Indigenous Peoples and Equity-Seeking Communities.”
- Action Item #13 “Improve access to information through City communication channels including web and social media for music related inquiries including streamlining event permits and information about available public spaces for events.”
- Action Item #22 “Review licensing, zoning, permitting and venue policies at City, community and commercially owned spaces to find ways to increase opportunities for all age shows.”

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

Strategic Objective 4: Prosperity and Economic Inclusion

- 9. Continue ongoing support efforts to launch a Creative Hub for Arts
- 10. Support arts, culture and innovation venues and spaces

Strategic Objective 8: Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods

- 6. Review the Noise Bylaw

Impacts to Financial Plan

The proposed one-time funding of \$75,000 is not part of the 2022 Draft Financial Plan and is recommended to be considered as part of the 2022 Financial Planning process.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The proposed Victoria Music Strategy is consistent with the direction in the Official Community Plan Section 16 Arts & Culture, and more specifically aligns with the following objectives:

Creative City Objectives

- 16.4 Continue to support artists, organizations and community partners through City cultural policies, planning and regulatory processes.
- 16.6 Encourage broad access to arts and culture facilities, events and activities for people of all ages, incomes, backgrounds and lifestyles.
- 16.7 Encourage education, training and informal learning opportunities in the arts, design and culture.

Cultural Planning Objectives

- 16.10.5 Sets targets for future cultural spaces, including new or upgraded civic, institutional and private facilities; and,
- 16.10.6 Identifies tools to secure new cultural spaces, including senior government funding; land donations; developer contributions, private donations; and changes to regulations.

Facilities Objectives

- 16.15 Consider opportunities for new arts and culture facilities as part of a capital plan for visitor destination development in partnership with senior governments, organizations and private developers.
- 16.16 Maintain and enhance performance space in the Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse.

Outdoor Venues Objectives

- 16.19 Work with partners to develop a performance location for major outdoor events in a permanent and highly accessible public space.
- 16.22 Increase the use of parks for festivals, celebrations and special events.

Commercial Space Objectives

- 16.26 Consider innovative ways to increase the supply of live/workspace that is affordable for artists, and work/live space for industrial design and related activities that are normally not permitted in residential zones.
- 16.27 Consider the use of City property for clustering of arts organizations through shared spaces for visual art and rehearsal studios, exhibitions and offices

Downtown Core Area Plan

The proposed Victoria Music Strategy is consistent with the direction in the Downtown Core Area Plan – Chapter 9 Community Vitality, and more specifically aligns with the following objectives:

Entertainment and Special Events

- 9.27. Establish a management strategy to support and enhance the downtown evening and late night economy that addresses:
 - 9.27.1. Initiatives to maintain downtown as the primary entertainment district for Greater Victoria.
 - 9.27.3. Locational criteria and development standards for new entertainment-related uses.
 - 9.27.4. Strategies to encourage the provision of a broader range of entertainment venues for varying ages and interests.
- 9.28. Continue to support special events, celebrations and festivals at major public open spaces – including Centennial Square, along the Inner Harbour waterfront and in other existing and proposed public open spaces – through programming and by providing on-site infrastructure and equipment.
- 9.29. Work with community partners to investigate the feasibility and need for a permanent and dedicated location for major outdoor events and festivals within the Downtown Core Area.

CONCLUSIONS

Victoria's music community should be celebrated and supported, not only for what has already been accomplished, but for the dedication to building an even stronger future. Each area of the music sector is much more likely to grow when being developed in conjunction with one another and with

the intent of serving the greater good of the community. Staff look forward to working closely with partners and the community to realize the vision and priorities set out in the strategy.

Respectfully submitted,

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Arts, Culture and Events Liaison

Kerri Moore
Head of Business and Community Relations

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.

List of Attachments

Appendix A - Victoria Music Strategy
Appendix B - Victoria Music Ecosystem Study, Sound Diplomacy
Appendix C - Engagement Summary Report
Appendix D - Implementation Framework