



Committee of the Whole Report **For the Meeting of January 27, 2022**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** 2022-01-26
From: Councillor Loveday
Subject: Support for Non-Profit Arts & Culture

BACKGROUND

Non-profit arts venues and performance spaces have suffered greatly during the pandemic. With the latest restrictions due to Covid19, non-profit arts venues have once again had to cancel shows which were set to bring in much needed funding. Currently, there are no avenues for performance spaces to receive operating funding from the City of Victoria. The Cultural Infrastructure Grant Program offers much needed funding towards infrastructure upgrades, but operating expenses are not an eligible expense under that grant program.

Even before the pandemic, arts and performance spaces were under threat from the pressures of high land values and real estate development. The pandemic has brought an era of unprecedented challenges for the arts and cultural sector. Funding is urgently needed to allow Victoria's venues and performance spaces to survive the pandemic and ensure their financial sustainability.

The Public Art Reserve currently holds \$495,000 of unallocated funds. The Accessibility Reserve Fund currently has a balance of approximately \$1.5 million. Since 2018, approximately \$265,000 from Accessibility Reserve Fund has funded capital projects including truncated domes, accessible/audible pedestrian signals, elevator lifts at the Victoria Conference Centre and bicycle master plan implementation accessibility-related improvements. As city staff have outlined, many more accessibility projects have been completed during this time and have been part of overall project budgets with other funding sources.

City Staff are currently working on bringing a comprehensive report to council on arts and cultural spaces and an update report on the Cultural Spaces Roadmap is expected in March. This work will guide the city's longer-term investments and support of arts and cultural spaces. In the immediate term, the following actions are recommended to provide immediate support and help non-profit arts venues and performance spaces survive the pandemic and ensure they come back more accessible and inclusive than before.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council reallocate \$120,000 from the scheduled 2022 contribution to the Public Art Reserve fund into a 1-time emergency granting stream for non-profit arts venues and performance spaces, excluding the RMTS.
2. And that Council reallocate \$150,000 from the scheduled 2022 transfer to the Accessibility Reserve Fund into a 1-time granting stream for non-profit arts venues and performance spaces specifically for the completion of accessibility upgrades, to allow people of all abilities to enjoy and experience arts and cultural events.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Councillor Loveday