

# Making Space for Arts and Culture

Draft Vancouver Cultural Infrastructure Plan

September 3, 2019



This work is built upon the understanding and recognition that what is now known as Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔɫ (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. Their ancient continuity on these lands is reflected in their oral histories, arts and culture practices, and deep relationships with the lands and waters—and in the archaeological record.

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# Executive Summary

**For culture to thrive, it is essential that there are spaces where artists can live, work, and share their work.**

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Arts and culture is vital to a city's identity, quality of life, economic prosperity, social cohesion, and sustainability. The most critical challenge facing arts and culture is affordability of space. With accelerated development, rapidly rising industrial and commercial land values, Vancouver is facing eminent loss of affordable places for artists to live, work, and share their work.

Artists, the sector, governments, agencies, and the broader community all have essential roles to play in supporting arts and cultural spaces. Cities have a particular responsibility through provision of affordable space, support of local infrastructure projects, land use and zoning, planning and development, and regulatory policies and processes. Other levels of government and agencies supporting cultural spaces look to cities to inform policy directions and essential project funding.

Building on the 2018 report to Vancouver City Council, *Making Space for Arts and Culture*, this report examines in depth the current state of Vancouver's arts and cultural spaces, and lays out the City's long term vision and commitment to address our acute space challenges. Developed to optimize City policies, tools, programs and investment priorities to secure, enhance, and develop vibrant, affordable, and accessible arts, and cultural spaces this report calls for greater collaboration with the community and private sector, other agencies, and levels of government.

## **Culture|Shift and Vancouver Music Strategy**

This report is integrated with Vancouver's new comprehensive plan and vision for arts, culture and creativity, *Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture, Vancouver Cultural Plan 2020-2029*, and informs the space-related actions identified within *Culture|Shift*. It also incorporates and informs the new *Vancouver Music Strategy* space-related recommendations to support a sustainable, resilient, and vibrant music industry for generations to come.

## The City is set to position arts and culture at the centre of city building, reflecting Vancouver’s unique and diverse peoples, histories and futures.

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### New approaches


Ensuring access to appropriate and affordable cultural spaces in a global real estate crisis requires progressive approaches, commitment, perseverance, and taking a long view: envisioning what we want Vancouver to be decades from now.

New approaches in this report include:

- Setting Vancouver’s first arts and cultural space targets. The goal is 800,000 square feet of new, repurposed or expanded, affordable City-owned, non-profit, and private space over the next ten years. This includes: 400 units of affordable artist housing; 650,000 square feet of new or repurposed space; renewal and enhancement of 150,000 square feet of existing space; and a goal to see “no net loss” of Vancouver’s cultural spaces including artist studios and music spaces.
- Prioritizing cultural heritage by incorporating it into the City’s Heritage Program, including: heritage statements, registry and incentives, and other mechanisms to further support preservation of cultural spaces.
- Prioritizing and supporting development of self-determined **x̱w̱məθḵw̱əy̱əm** (Musqueam), **S̱ḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh** (Squamish), and **səlilwətaʔt** (Tsleil-Waututh), and Urban Indigenous spaces.
- Explore and develop mechanisms to support affordable non-profit arts and cultural space in commercial and industrial zones including density bonusing, commercial fees, cultural districts, rental only zones, and ways to lower property tax rates on undeveloped buildings.
- Launching an annual affordable cultural spaces grant stream for non-profit space operators to provide subsidized affordable space for professional artists and cultural organizations. Additionally, this program will include a critical one-time fund to assist arts and cultural nonprofits in crisis due to escalating land values.
- Establishing a Vancouver Cultural Spaces Fund in an interest-bearing reserve to support the development of large-scale community-led cultural space projects to research, plan, develop, and acquire affordable cultural spaces. Launch the fund with \$4.8 million. Future funding to be secured through development contributions with a goal of \$10 million over the next three years as part of the public benefit strategy implementation.
- Exploring ways to support planning and development of a community-led cultural land trust including seed funding, and investigating new ways to partner with the cultural community on development, and—in some cases—shared ownership of amenity facilities secured through development.

Image: Orpheum Theatre

# 1. CONTEXT



**Your chance  
to own SMALL**

MICRO PROPERTIES AS LOW

**\$10/ft<sup>3</sup>**

## Context

Creative and cultural industries in Vancouver and around the world are experiencing rapid growth, yet the majority of artists sustaining this sector are living well below the poverty line.

Vancouver has a deep, prolific arts and cultural scene with a high concentration of artists, many flourishing mid-sized and smaller arts organizations, and an international presence.

With an inventory of over 3.4 million square feet, Vancouver has a thriving spectrum of cultural spaces for art creation, expression and sharing. The City and Park Board own 108 spaces of which many are operated by local nonprofits. An integral part of Vancouver's performing arts sector is the Vancouver Civic Theatres which are City owned and operated.

Vancouver's existing private spaces, however, are extremely vulnerable due to insecure short term rentals. Coupled with an affordability crisis, this has exacerbated the displacement of cultural spaces and artists.

This section provides further context on Vancouver's cultural spaces, delves into research findings, key challenges, and summarizes the City of Vancouver's existing cultural spaces programs.

# VANCOUVER'S CULTURAL SPACES

Vancouver has a broad spectrum of cultural spaces from 100 square foot studios to 170,000 square foot museums.

Everything from artist live/work studios, artist run centres, galleries, pottery studios, and theatres within community centres, shared production and administrative hubs, non-profit cinema and film spaces, large scale shared studio spaces, informal and DIY music spaces, black box performance spaces, theatres, outdoor space, museums, and art galleries.

Currently the City's online, crowd-sourced Cultural Spaces Map has identified over 400 cultural spaces totaling over 3.4 million square feet. The City owns or leases 108 of these spaces and 80 of them totaling over 830,000 square feet are home to approximately 137 artists and non-profit tenants.

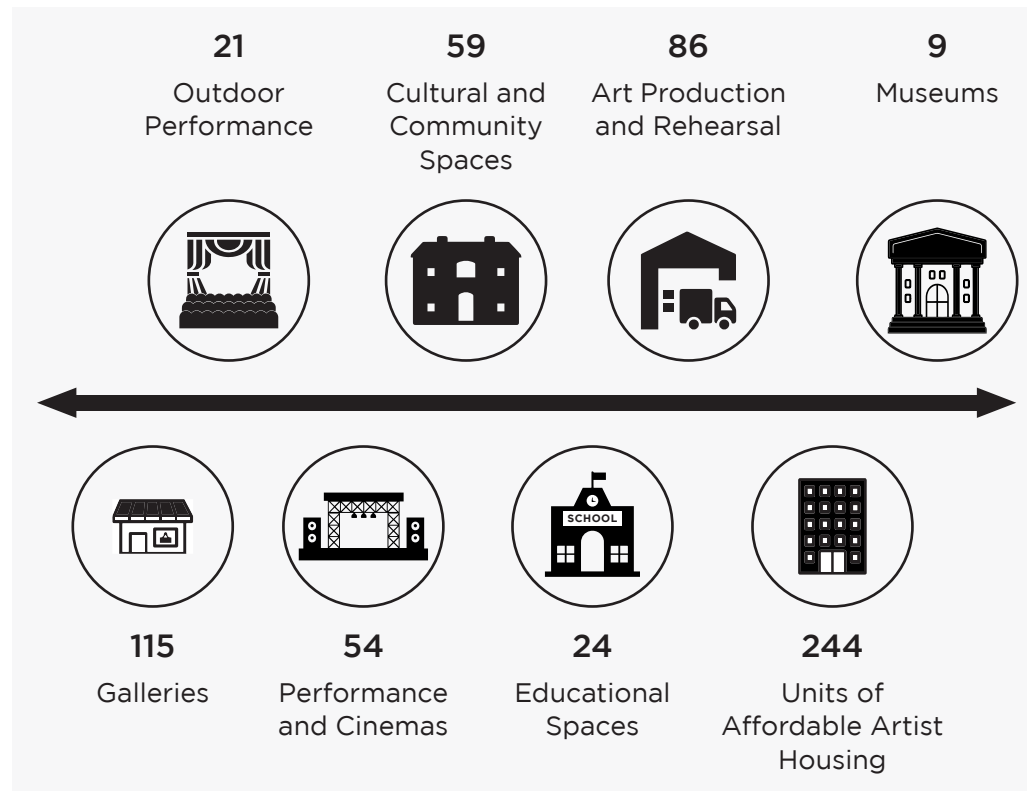


Chart 1. Vancouver's Cultural Space Typologies



# ECONOMIC IMPACT

Investing in local culture cultivates a rich and distinctive sense of place, acting as an antidote to the homogenizing and polarizing effects of globalization.

British Columbia has the highest number of working artists in Canada, and Vancouver has the highest concentration of artists per capita of major cities, yet the majority of artists that this growth relies upon are living under the poverty line with 63% reporting an income of less than \$40,000 per year and a median income of \$22,000 a year.



Image: Le Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver

## Cultural Economy

- Cultural and creative industries have been recognized by the United Nations as one of the world's fastest growing sectors
- Arts and cultural workers contribute to 7.4% of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—more than mining, forestry and fisheries combined. (Conference Board of Canada, 2007)
- B.C. cultural GDP has grown by a billion dollars to a total of \$6.7 billion from 2010 to 2014
- 8,800 professional artists live in Vancouver, the highest concentration of artists per capita among Canada's major cities
- Vancouver artists make up 2.4% of the labour force
- Vancouver cultural workers (including artists) representing 10.7% of the labour force
- Rapid labour force growth in the last five years: 74% for B.C. artists and 79% for cultural workers
- The median income of Vancouver artists is \$22,116, 44% less than all Vancouver workers. (Statistics Canada, 2016 census)

## Music By the Numbers (Source Vancouver Music Strategy)

- The live music sector contributed 6,950 jobs, \$619.3 million in labour income and \$815.8 million in GDP to the B.C. economy in 2017
- B.C. festivals attracted over 7.4 million attendees in 2017, and 78% are predicting increases in attendance in the future
- 14,540 jobs are supported by the Vancouver music ecosystem
- The average income for musicians is \$18,178

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

## While local space collaboration and capacity has grown, the sector is extremely vulnerable.

In 2018, the *Key Gaps in Vancouver's Cultural Infrastructure* report commissioned by the City of Vancouver identified community issues, needs, and space priorities. Detailed results are available online and were included in the *Making Space for Arts and Culture: Cultural Infrastructure Plan* report presented to Vancouver City Council in July, 2018. Utilizing a multi-faceted approach, the report included market scans, best practices, community engagement, and a substantive survey of over 400 Vancouver-based cultural organizations and artists.

Key findings highlighted that, while local space capacity and collaboration has grown significantly with shared hubs and non-profit space providers such as BC Artscape, 221A, The Arts Factory and The Mergatroid, the sector is increasingly vulnerable with precarious short-term rentals, little community ownership, and displacement. This is particularly true for artist studios, private presentation spaces, and live performances spaces such as for music and LGBTQ2+ events.



Image: Franklin Street Studios, 221A

## Vancouver has a deep and prolific arts and cultural scene with many smaller organizations

- 77% with annual budgets under \$500,000
- Half of these (44% overall) have budgets under \$100,000
- An additional 1.3 million square feet of space needs were identified

## Cultural spaces are extremely vulnerable

- Two-thirds of spaces have leases of 5 years or less
- One-third of spaces are in leases of one year or less, and most are month-to-month
- Only five facilities are owned by non-profit arts organizations
- Highest concern is about losing production space
- 73% of organizations have difficulty finding suitable spaces
- 59% find it difficult to rent outdoor spaces
- Artists are the most vulnerable to space loss

## Monthly Rents (2017)

- Range between \$1.19 and \$2.44 per square foot
- Average rent is \$1.98 per square foot per month or \$23.76 per square foot per year

## There are many infrastructure projects underway

- 89% are considering upgrades: accessibility, technology, acoustic, and environmental
- 43 active major projects, one-third are in construction/fit-out
- Two-thirds are undergoing needs assessments or feasibility studies

## Much more diversity and capacity in funding sources since 2008

- Expanded to co-developments, fundraising, federal grants, owner-financed and conventional loans.

# DISPLACEMENT

**Increasing demand for spaces through real estate pressure has resulted in increased land values and displacement of arts and cultural activities.**

In Vancouver over the past year, more than 16 studios in industrial spaces housing approximately 300 artists have either been closed or are under threat of displacement due to dramatic property tax and rent increases, competition with higher-value land uses, and development pressure.

Spaces such as Red Gate, Merge Studios, Propellor, Duplex, Dynamo, Index, White Monkey as well as LGBTQ2+ gathering and performance spaces—venues that regularly host drag shows—have closed or are under threat.

Staff reviewed property taxes for 11 of the studio sites and found an average tax increase of more than 77% over the past five years. For one studio surveyed, that resulted in a rent increase of over \$60,000 per year.

Vancouver is not alone. The World Cities Culture Forum has identified this as an issue in major cities throughout the world. For example, London is set to lose a third of its artists' workspaces and has lost a third of its grassroots music venues, a quarter of its pubs, half its nightclubs, and over half of its LGBTQ2+ venues over ten years.

## World Cities Culture Forum

The World Cities Culture Forum brings together city leaders from 38 global cities to share ideas and knowledge about the role of culture as an organizing principle for the sustainable city of the future. Members include world cities such as Montreal, Toronto, London, New York, Paris, Rome, San Francisco, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Los Angeles.



Image: worldcitiescultureforum.com

# CHALLENGES

“The challenge of making space for culture is inseparable from the broader affordability crisis.”

Justine Simons (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries, London) and Paul Owens (World Cities Culture Forum).

The following table summarizes the key challenges identified by arts and culture spaces in Vancouver.

**Table 1. Arts and Culture Spaces Challenges in Vancouver**

Affordability & Displacement	Financing	Reconciliation & Redress	Equity & Access	Low Priority of Arts and Culture	Regulatory Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of affordable spaces to live, create and present</li> <li>• Rapid pace of development displacing existing spaces in particular, artist studios</li> <li>• Lack of non-profit property ownership and control</li> <li>• Loss of music venues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of space-related operating funding</li> <li>• Sector under-capitalization</li> <li>• Barriers to loans and financing for nonprofits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, and Urban Indigenous visibility and cultural spaces</li> <li>• Lack of redress to cultural communities who have faced racially-based policies of displacement and dispossession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers exist for underrepresented, small and emerging groups, all-ages venues, and LGBTQ2+</li> <li>• Lack of all-ages venues</li> <li>• Facility accessibility barriers for audiences, artists, and cultural workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture not a high profile strategy and arts and culture not currently visible in City decision making</li> <li>• Compartmentalization of City support</li> <li>• High land values impact property taxes and rental rates</li> <li>• Limited incentives to support private spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for support in permit and license navigation</li> <li>• Zoning/licensing/building requirements do not align</li> <li>• Current strata live-work artist studios allowed in some industrial zones do not support long-term affordability or a wider public benefit</li> <li>• Restrictive noise bylaws</li> </ul>

# VANCOUVER'S CULTURAL SERVICES

**The Cultural Spaces team works in partnership with the community to secure, enhance, and develop affordable and accessible spaces where artists and cultural workers can live, work, and share their work.**

Cultural Services is part of the Arts, Culture and Community Services department, and is the City of Vancouver's hub for arts, culture, and creative life. Cultural Services has three primary program areas: Grants and Awards, the Public Art Program, and Cultural Spaces.

## Artist Studio Awards

The Artist Studio Award Program is a critical part of the City of Vancouver's efforts to provide studio spaces to support artists and their work. The program was established in 1995 to provide artist studio

spaces (including live/work) at significantly reduced rental rates. There are currently seven studios in the program. The program is offered once every three years through an open call to emerging professional artists living in the City of Vancouver.

## Cultural Infrastructure Grant

The City has contributed over \$11 million in capital grants to 135 local arts and cultural nonprofits. This funding has supported over 279 projects to plan, buy, build, or renovate both City-owned and community spaces and has leveraged over \$66 million in additional investment through co-developments, fundraising, Federal grants, and owner-financed and conventional loans. Approximately 30 projects are supported each year up to a maximum grant of \$250,000 each.



### City Spaces

- Providing 80 affordable City spaces (830,000 square feet) to approximately 137 artists and non-profit tenants
- Securing 20 affordable arts and cultural space of over 200,000 square feet benefiting more than 35 arts and cultural tenants



### Grants and Awards

- Granting non-profit cultural projects to plan, buy, build and renovate spaces, leveraging over \$66 million in upgrades to local spaces
- Awarding seven subsidized artist studios for three year terms, benefiting 26 artists since inception



### Planning and Policy

- Integrating arts and culture into City planning and public benefits strategies
- Working to assist artists dealing with City regulations
- Developing supportive arts and cultural policy

Chart 2. Culture Spaces Programs and Services

# VANCOUVER CIVIC THEATRES

An integral part of developing and sustaining a healthy arts and culture sector, the Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) play a unique and vital role providing opportunities and essential spaces while working alongside Vancouver's creative community and cultural entrepreneurs.

Championed by an Advisory Board appointed by the City and made up of volunteers with ties to the arts and culture sector within the City of Vancouver, the VCT is the preeminent arts and culture spaces owned and operated by the City of Vancouver. The consortium consists of the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, ʔwɪl'a7shn Plaza, Vancouver Playhouse complex that is at the heart of an arts and culture precinct that boasts the Vancouver Public Library, CBC Vancouver headquarters, Vancouver Community College, and the future home of the Vancouver Art Gallery, as well as the Orpheum theatre, home base of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and the Annex theatre, a multi-disciplinary launch pad for emerging professional performance companies.

These world-class theatres and performance spaces play host to an array of astounding and entertaining festivals, concerts, performances, and productions supporting exceptional presenting companies including the Vancouver Opera, Vancouver International Film Festival, Ballet BC, Dance House, Live Nation Canada, Broadway Across Canada, Vancouver Recital Society, Urban Ink Productions Society, Just for Laughs, Electric Company Theatre, Vancouver Queer Film Festival, PuSh Festival, and Children's Arts Umbrella.

In 2008, when the previous Culture Plan was launched, the VCT assisted 21 local arts and cultural organizations in utilizing venues.

As we embark on the *Culture|Shift*, through the City of Vancouver Theatre Rental Grant along with the VCT Grants program that addresses a more diverse and broader cultural ecology, that number has grown to over 107 for the current season.

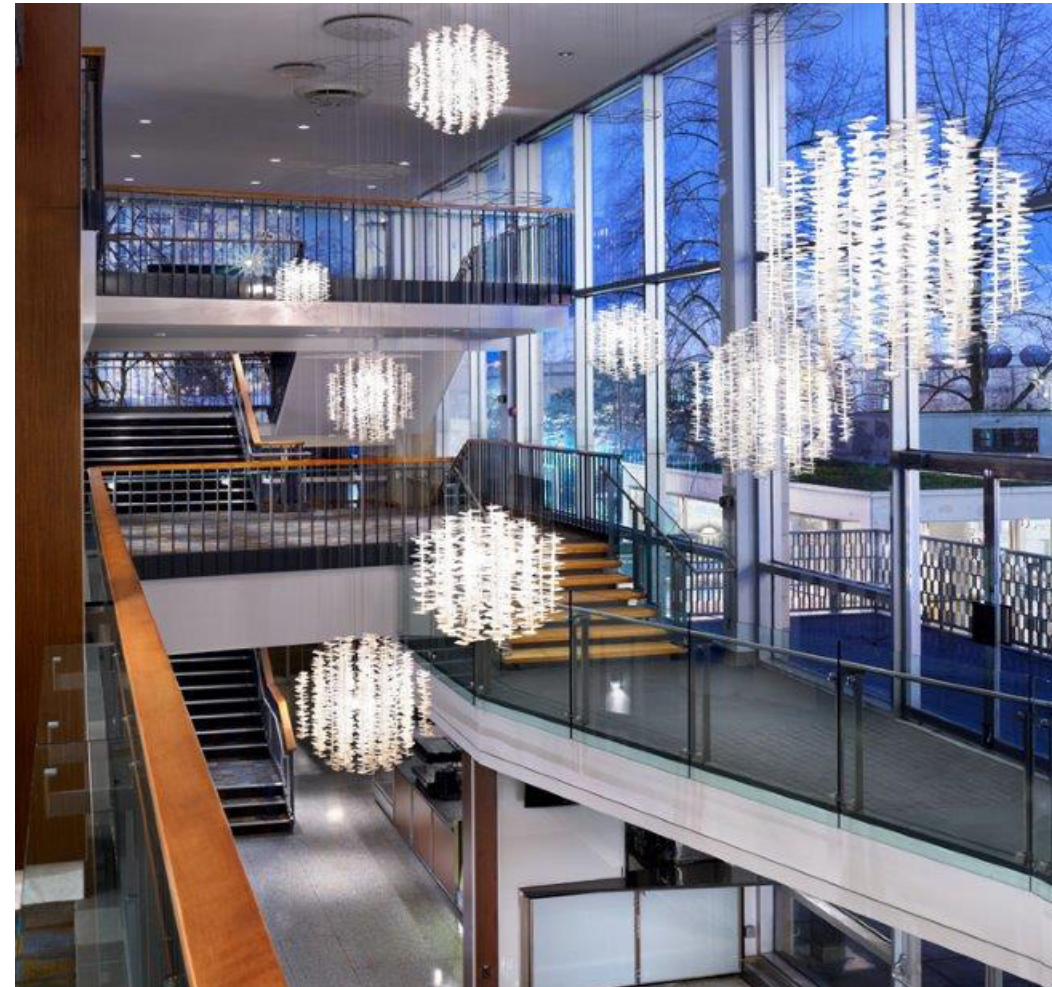


Image: Queen Elizabeth Theatre

Image: Britannia Carving Pavillion. Credit Vancouver School Board

# 2. TARGETS



# Targets

With a vision of cohesive complete communities, cultural space targets should align and be integrated with other City priorities including housing, childcare, sustainability and a healthy city.

A key recommendation in the *Making Space for Arts and Culture 2018* report was to establish ten-year targets for securing, enhancing, and developing affordable and accessible arts and cultural spaces. Drawn from community need and anticipated future growth, the targets are intended to inform City strategies, plans, land use, policy, investment, regulations, partnerships, and advocacy.

The targets are what the goals and actions in this plan work towards. The measurable outcomes this plan aims to achieve are:

**800,000 SQUARE FEET** of affordable, City, non-profit, and private space including:

- 1. GROWTH: 650,000 SQUARE FEET** of new, expanded, or repurposed spaces
- 2. HOUSING: 400 UNITS** of social housing
- 3. PRESERVATION: NO NET LOSS** of cultural space
- 4. RENEWAL: 150,000 SQUARE FEET** enhancement/renewal of existing spaces

This section provides details on the overall target and each individual target.



# OVERALL TARGET

**800,000 square feet of new, repurposed or expanded affordable City, non-profit, and private space over the next ten years**



Image: Howe Street Studios, 221A

This includes: 400 units of affordable artist housing; 650,000 square feet of new or repurposed space; renewal and enhancement of 150,000 square feet of existing space; and, a goal to see “no net loss” of Vancouver’s cultural spaces including artist studios and music spaces.

The targets will be integrated into city plans and public benefit strategies prior to the next capital planning cycle, and will be adjusted to reflect evolving community needs and the pace of development and growth.

## Priorities

- Designated community cultural spaces in community centres, libraries, and other city owned spaces
- Community owned and secured spaces, with a goal of 50% community secured
- Shared production and rehearsal space including artist studios
- Music spaces as per the *Vancouver Music Strategy* including all-ages venues
- Cultural heritage, redress, and equity
- Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous community self-determined cultural spaces
- Accessibility for artists, audiences and cultural workers
- Cultural/social hubs, administration, home-bases, and shared services
- Performance spaces, such as smaller informal spaces integrated into larger facilities, as well as larger spaces that seat 400-800 people
- Exhibition spaces from small to large including a new Vancouver Art Gallery
- Large outdoor spaces with functional infrastructure for performances including both amplified and non-amplified music, particularly capacities from 8,000 to 50,000
- Working towards greening upgrades to meet Greenest City Action Plan 2020, Renewable City, Zero Emission Building Plan

# GROWTH

## 650,000 square feet of new, expanded or repurposed affordable City, non-profit, and private spaces

Over the last several decades, the City has secured close to 20 affordable arts and cultural spaces for over 35 local arts organizations at close to 200,000 square feet using community amenity contributions (CACs) and density-bonusing.

The community has also secured significant space over the past several years. For example, 112,000 square feet of primarily rented production space has been secured by BC Artscape, 221A, and The Arts Factory.

Community centres and other City spaces provide opportunities to secure integrated purpose-built cultural spaces as well as multi-use spaces that provide access to arts and culture for their local communities.

A successful model to consider is the Vancouver Public Library's integration of free arts and culture programs and spaces including dedicated exhibition space, a music lending library, and its digital Inspiration Lab.

### Community Amenity Contributions

In-kind or cash contributions provided by property developers when Vancouver City Council grants development rights through rezoning. CACs are negotiated to support public amenities such as social-serving spaces, housing, childcare, parks, and arts and cultural spaces.

### Plaza Stewardship Strategy

Vancouver's streets and public spaces provide an opportunity for creative expression and enjoyment. The plaza stewardship strategy looks at ways to foster partnerships to lower barriers to using our plazas for programming, which also supports City goals to enable a vibrant and welcoming public realm.

### Priorities

- The priorities for growth are the same as the overall priorities as listed on page 14.

### Underway

- 10,000 square feet of artist studios to be operated by 221A with Malaspina Printmakers at Howe Street Studios
- 21,000 square feet cultural hub at 825 Pacific
- 200 seat community performance space and studios in the new Oakridge community centre
- 20,000 square feet music centre in Northeast False Creek



Image: Inspiration Lab, Vancouver Public Library

# HOUSING

## 400 units of artist social housing and shared production space



Image: PAL Vancouver event, photo credit Terrance Thomas

The Housing Vancouver Strategy identifies a target to increase housing supply by 72,000 new homes in Vancouver in the next ten years, while building more affordable housing, ensuring the right types homes are built, and protecting, and renewing existing affordable rental housing. Of these homes, 12,000 are to be social, supportive, and non-profit co-operative homes.

In partnership with the Housing Vancouver Strategy, the target is three percent (3%) or 400 units of affordable artist housing. This is based on the number of existing professional artists who are living below the poverty line and who are eligible for supportive housing.

The intention is to create artist hubs by integrating housing and shared production space. This would build on successful Vancouver projects such as the Performing Arts Lodge (PAL), which provides performing arts professionals with affordable housing within a creative community setting. This target will increase the City's Artist Studio Award Program by 23 spaces for a total of 30.

### Priorities

- Secure housing in neighbourhoods where artists currently live, such as the Grandview-Woodlands, Strathcona, West End, and Mount Pleasant
- Triple the impact of the Artist Studio Award Program for a total of 30 live/work units
- Explore partnerships with local nonprofits, music-specific spaces, and ways to co-locate Awards studios

### Underway

- 30 units of artist social housing with 4,000 square feet of shared production space at Main Street and Second Avenue, to be operated by BC Artscape, working with the Community Land Trust Foundation

# PRESERVATION

## No net loss of existing space

The *Making Space for Arts and Culture 2018* report recommended:

“The City ... prioritize the preservation of arts and cultural spaces, including production spaces, music and performance spaces that hold or foster specific cultural heritage traditions, intangible cultural assets and industrial land used for art production and other industrial uses. The present gap in preservation efforts may risk the loss of spaces that are sorely needed and heavily utilized.”

It is critical to develop policies and incentives to track and prevent net loss of arts and cultural spaces. This includes policy directions recommended in this report such as preserving community spaces and expanding heritage incentives.

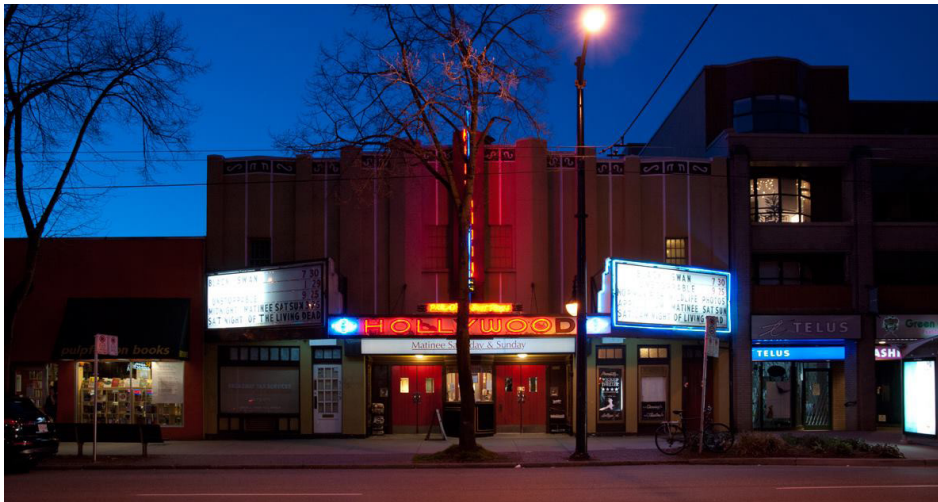


Image: Hollywood Theatre

## Priorities

- Implement policies and incentives to track and prevent net loss of legacy arts and cultural spaces through the redevelopment processes
- Include important cultural spaces in the heritage registry in order to leverage existing heritage incentives including: grants for seismic upgrades, amenity shares, increased density, development cost levy exemptions, and tax abatement as incentives to preserve cultural spaces
- Develop policy to preserve non-profit arts and cultural spaces
- Continue to update and develop Vancouver's Cultural Space Map inventory including through community led research such as the Eastside Culture Crawl's studio survey.

## Underway

- Hollywood Theatre
- Ryerson Dunbar Church Choral Centre

## Eastside Culture Crawl

The Eastside Culture Crawl is an annual festival where art studios are opened up to the public. The organization launched a survey to better understand lost and current studio space and future needs given the difficulty to secure long-term, affordable, and appropriate space for artists. This data in aggregate form will be shared with the City and inform our shared work.

# RENEWAL

## Plan to renew 150,000 square feet

A sustainable approach emphasizes to renewing and enhancing facilities as they age. The City of Vancouver owns or leases over 1.3 million square feet of arts and cultural space. Eighty spaces totaling over 830,000 square feet are provided at below-market or nominal rent to approximately 137 artists and non-profit arts and cultural tenants in both City and Park Board spaces. This includes owning and operating Vancouver Civic Theatres, (Orpheum, Annex, Playhouse, Queen Elizabeth Theatre, and ʂxwʌ́lexən Xwtl'a7shn Plaza) and seven studios that are part of the City's Artist Studios Award Program.

Over the past twelve years, there has been over \$100 million invested in renewal of City-owned cultural spaces. The largest project—which was valued at approximately \$73 million—was the renewal of the Queen Elizabeth Theatre and ʂxwʌ́lexən Xwtl'a7shn Plaza prior to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Other major projects include renovations to the Vancouver East Cultural Centre and the Greenhouse at \$14 million, and work completed at the Museum of Vancouver for \$7 million.

### Priorities

#### Non-Profit Spaces

Most City-owned spaces are operated by nonprofits, who are typically responsible for space maintenance, renovations and upgrades beyond renewal of the “building shell.” It is essential for the City to support improvements by nonprofits, which in turn, leverages other investments. Examples include Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Gardens, Firehall Theatre, and the Chinese Cultural Centre. The Cultural Infrastructure Grant program is one of the ways to address this need by providing assistance to plan, renew, and enhance these cultural spaces. Another important consideration is balancing investment between large and small facilities.



Image: Museum of Vancouver

# RENEWAL

## Firehall Theatre Renewal and Accessibility

The Firehall Arts Centre, a key theatre venue that serves Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside community, requires urgent renewal to improve its functionality and address serious accessibility issues. Funds have been set aside for further renewal planning in collaboration with the adjacent Police Museum, also owned by the City.

## Vanier Park Cultural Hub

Cultural facilities in Vanier Park (Museum of Vancouver, Vancouver Maritime Museum, H.R. McMillan Space Centre, and Vancouver Academy of Music, and the City of Vancouver Archives space) require major renewal. Early research supported by the City is underway to inform master planning with next steps including further engagement with partners and local First Nations.

## Vancouver Civic Theatres (VCT) upgrades

As an integral part of Vancouver's performing arts spaces, upgrades and enhancements to the VCT spaces are essential for Vancouver's creative community and cultural entrepreneurs. Planning studies are underway to explore upgrades to the Playhouse and Orpheum performance spaces, seismic requirements, acoustics, and accessibility.

## PNE Amphitheatre Renewal

The Pacific National Exhibition Amphitheatre, an outdoor performance venue with a capacity of 7,000 is currently undergoing early planning for significant renewal with improved functionality and accessibility.

Other Priorities include:

- Designated cultural Spaces in renewed community and civic centres such as Britannia, West End, Marpole, and Raycam

- Improving accessibility for artists, audiences and cultural workers
- Working towards upgrades to meet Greenest City Action Plan 2020, Renewable City, Zero Emission Building Plan requirements.

It will be important to work with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations on renewal projects, and opportunities for cultural spaces, particularly in Vanier Park.



Image: Firehall Arts Centre

Image: Blue Cabin, Grunt Gallery



# 3. GOALS

ALL  
ARE  
WELCOME  
HERE  
!!!

# Goals

**Ensuring access to appropriate and affordable cultural spaces requires progressive approaches, commitment and perseverance—envisioning what we want Vancouver to be like decades from now.**

Six interconnected goals have been identified with 27 accompanying actions in order to address the space challenges faced by the arts and cultural sector in Vancouver. Goals are what we will do, and actions are how we will do them.

The six goals are:

1. Cultural Heritage, Equity, and Accessibility
2. Self-determined Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh, and Urban Indigenous Spaces
3. Remove Regulatory Barriers
4. Expand Tools to Prevent Displacement and Secure Spaces
5. Expand Community Partnerships
6. Increase Community Ownership and Support a Cultural Land Trust

Implementation requires collaborative action across city departments in partnership with other levels of government, non-profit and community partners, and the private sector.

The following section provides information on each goal, context, and accompanying actions.





# GOAL 1: CULTURAL HERITAGE, EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

**The Canada Council for the Arts recognizes equity as “a principle and process that promotes just conditions for all persons to fully participate in society.”**

Equity involves identifying barriers, removing them and accommodating the differences that people face. An intersectional approach to equity acknowledges that people who face multiple barriers will experience compounding effects of marginalization. Decolonizing traditional approaches to heritage can help to acknowledge the impacts of colonialism and the importance of Indigenous cultural heritage, as well as racialized communities who have experienced discrimination.

## **Prioritize Cultural Heritage, Equity, and Redress**

It is a priority to support the ongoing vitality of cultural heritage and recognition of cultural redress in neighborhoods where communities have suffered from discriminatory policies and actions, including expropriation of land and property.

## **Protect Cultural Heritage**

The City’s Chinatown Transformation Team is working towards designation of Chinatown as a UNESCO World Heritage site by mapping intangible cultural heritage in order to develop a culturally-appropriate long-term plan for the neighbourhood. This new approach is about managing historic places and cultural neighbourhoods in ways that allow for change, yet at the same time reflects, honours, and carries-forward the values of a specific place.

There is an opportunity to expand the current City definition of “heritage” to include broader cultural, place-based, and values-based assessments of built and intangible community assets. In particular, protection efforts should add important cultural spaces to the City’s Heritage Registry in order to leverage existing heritage incentives

including: grants for seismic upgrades, amenity shares, increased density, development cost levy exemptions, and tax abatement as incentives to preserve cultural spaces.

## **Prioritize Accessibility**

It takes more than design to make a space truly accessible, but without a physically accessible space for artists and audiences, disabled artists and audiences are excluded from our cultural spaces. Disabled communities have advocated for higher standards for accessible and universal design into building standards and guidelines.

Universal design can include exterior and interior elements such as ramps, hallways, washrooms, and way-finding. Universal design aims to make each element accessible for a wide variety of physical, sensory, or cognitive abilities. This reduces barriers that differently-abled artists, cultural workers, and audiences face, and benefits all users.

## **City-Wide Work Underway**

- Developing an Equity Framework to provide a unified vision to articulate the City’s commitment to equity through an intersectional lens
- Supporting Vancouver as a City of Reconciliation
- Chinatown Transformation Team following the City’s apology for the historical discrimination against Chinese people
- Addressing past displacement in partnership with Hogan’s Alley Society
- Responding to the recent Council motion regarding Punjabi Market

# GOAL 1: CULTURAL HERITAGE, EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY



Image: Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Gardens



Image: Hogan's Alley Summer Block Party

## Actions

### A1. Protect Cultural and Intangible Heritage

Prioritize cultural heritage by incorporating cultural heritage into the City Heritage Program including heritage statements, registry and incentives, and other mechanisms to further support preservation of cultural spaces.

### A2. Community Stewardship of Hogan's Alley

Advance cultural redress for Black communities and communities of the African diaspora, such as by supporting stewardship of Hogan's Alley site and future cultural centre.

### A3. Chinatown UNESCO Asset Mapping and Preservation

Support Chinatown UNESCO cultural and intangible asset mapping and cultural space preservation, renewal and expansion.

### A4. Celebrate Punjabi Market

Support the work to celebrate the past and plan for the future of the Punjabi Market.

### A5. Japanese Canadian Cultural Heritage

Support the Japanese Canadian community in exploring space opportunities and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

### A6. Develop Accessibility Guidelines

Develop accessibility guidelines to improve access for artists, workers and audiences in cultural spaces.

### A7. Conduct Building Assessments

Conduct building assessments of City-owned cultural spaces and recommend priority upgrades.

### A8. Accessible and Trans-Inclusive Spaces

Promote Cultural Infrastructure Grants to address accessibility and trans-inclusive community building upgrades.

# GOAL 2: SELF-DETERMINED MUSQUEAM, SQUAMISH AND TSLEIL-WAUTUTH, AND URBAN INDIGENOUS SPACES

## Self-determined *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *Sḵwxwú7mesh* (Squamish), and *səlilwətaʔt* (Tsleil-Waututh), and Urban Indigenous spaces

This work is built upon the understanding and recognition that what is now known as Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *Sḵwxwú7mesh* (Squamish), and *səlilwətaʔt* (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Their ancient continuity on these lands is reflected in their oral histories, arts and culture practices, and deep relationships with the lands and waters—and in the archaeological record.

In 2014, Vancouver City Council formally designated Vancouver as a City of Reconciliation to further strengthen the City's services and ongoing relationships with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and the Urban Indigenous community.

The *Making Space for Arts and Culture 2018* report and *Culture|Shift* identified a lack of visibility, voice, and cultural spaces on the traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and few Urban Indigenous cultural spaces.

Recognizing the living culture and history of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and prioritizing support for self-determined Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh, and Urban Indigenous cultural spaces and heritage is a step forward.

## Actions

### A9. Mapping Places of Cultural Significance

Fund Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh representatives to provide cultural significance statements to inform City planning and projects including mapping and identifying places of cultural significance to further support stewardship of the land.

### A10. Access to Existing and New Spaces

Work with Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Urban Indigenous artists and cultural workers to identify opportunities to access existing spaces, and include them in the development of new projects such as Marpole Civic Centre and the renewal of Vanier Park.

### A11. Seed Funding for Space Planning

Provide seed funding to support cultural space planning by Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations as well as the Urban Indigenous community.



Image: Red Fox Drum, Artstarts. Credit August Studios



# GOAL 3: REMOVE REGULATORY BARRIERS

**The affordability crisis coupled with a complex and often inadvertently restrictive regulatory environment can push arts and cultural activities underground or be insurmountable.**

It is clear that both individual assistance and systemic change is required to reduce regulatory barriers for arts and culture.

## **Help with Navigating Regulations**

In 2009, a cultural staff position was created to assist artists and arts and cultural organizations with City of Vancouver regulatory processes and issues. Since that time, staff has provided technical assistance to over 475 inquiries, conducted regulatory reviews, and made systemic changes to City policy and procedures.

Additional help for artists, nonprofits, and event producers to navigate permits, licenses, and regulatory requirements is necessary for successful programming. For instance, providing grants to support independent professional project advice—including building code consultants—would facilitate informed decisions about the suitability of a property or the viability of a proposed renovation. This type of support could be coordinated with the work of the Commercial Renovation Centre, which provides comprehensive direction up-front from experienced City staff.

## **Arts Event Licence**

The City's Arts Events Licence has been successful in supporting arts and cultural organizations to safely host innovative arts programs, performances, and events in unconventional spaces such as in studios, warehouses, factories, offices, shops, and wholesale spaces. Intended for audience sizes of 30-250 people, this license allows up to three days of events per month. Since the program was launched in 2016, 202 licences have been issued to 104 applicants.

Despite its success, limitations of the program have consistently been raised by the community as a barrier to more successful arts programming. Suggested changes to the program include increasing the number of days allowed in a month and changing the program parameters so that audiences under 100 people would not require a licence.

## **Arts Facility Zoning**

Arts and cultural activities typically occur in older buildings and often feature a variety of uses. For example, the Western Front, an artist-run centre in Mount Pleasant, has a dance studio, artist studio space, living spaces, a small gallery, an archive, and a multi-purpose assembly space. These types of multi-use spaces are critical to the success of arts facilities, however they do not align with City's zoning use, bylaws, business licences, or building code, often creating insurmountable barriers to making space for art.

# GOAL 3: REMOVE REGULATORY BARRIERS



Image source: Queers and Beers event at Eastside Studios. Credit Ray McEachern.

## Actions

### A12. Expand Arts Event Licenses

Expand the Arts Event Licence program to allow more frequent arts and cultural events in non-traditional venues.

### A13. Help with Navigating Regulations

Explore ways to help artists, nonprofits and event producers to navigate regulatory requirements in partnership with the Commercial Renovation Center, including support for independent professional advice such as building code consultants.

### A14. Develop an Arts Facility Zoning

Develop a zoning use specific to non-profit arts and cultural facilities in order to simplify and align City policies, licences, permits, bylaws, zoning and other regulatory requirements.

### A15. Review Event Regulations

Review the City's internal licensing and permitting processes for music and other arts events to identify and remove barriers, with a particular focus on reducing internal barriers for all ages venues, liquor licensing and sound and noise restrictions.

### A16. Use Older Buildings and Temporary Spaces

Explore ways to lower costs when reusing older buildings and expand opportunities to support temporary spaces.



# GOAL 4: EXPAND TOOLS TO PREVENT DISPLACEMENT AND SECURE SPACES

Increasing demand for spaces through real estate pressure has resulted in distorted land values and displacement of arts and cultural activities. With new measures in place to cool the residential real estate market, investment focus has shifted to the commercial sector further escalating land values, rents, and development.

Studio spaces are ecosystems in their own right, supporting not just the artists working in them but also the communities around them. Older industrial and commercial building stock may appear under-utilized but, in fact, they house many arts and cultural activities.

## Displacement

Vancouver is experiencing a doubling and tripling of commercial rents leading to an increasing trend in “renovictions.” Unprecedented numbers of studios are currently at risk and being rapidly lost. Over the past year, more than 16 studios in industrial spaces housing approximately 300 artists have either been closed or are under threat of displacement due to dramatic property tax and rent increases, competition with higher-value land uses, and development pressure.

## Industrial Lands

Industrial land is the cultural sector’s “back of house”—preparation and production spaces the public doesn’t see—and it is critical to local arts production and jobs. In Vancouver’s False Creek Flats for example, nearly one-in-five businesses in the area identify as being part of the arts and cultural economy and it is estimated that there is a minimum of 525,000 square feet of artist production and rehearsal studios. There remains zoning barriers for new artist studios in industrial lands. New policy to help alleviate these barriers has been implemented in the False Creek Flats Plan and should be explored in other industrial zones.

## City of London, UK

The Mayor of London has set up a Culture at Risk Office to safeguard these well-loved places and spaces at risk of being lost, ranging from historic sites to nightlife venues. The Culture at Risk Office works with businesses and building owners to mitigate commercial risks. Further, it helps projects through the Mayor’s regeneration funding streams and supports listing applications to protect heritage buildings.

## Competing Uses

Introduction of higher-value, more competitive land uses in industrial zones has unintended, negative ripple effects. For example, residential, office, and uses for “new digital economy” businesses such as Digital Entertainment and Information Communication Technology (DEICT) and Creative Products Manufacturing (CPM) can raise rental rates, land values, and displace lower-value uses such as arts and culture. In many cases, these competing sectors can be accommodated in other uses including residential and office space.

## Commercial Linkage Fees

In 2017, the City adopted a commercial linkage fees policy to allow for fees based on the size of the development for commercial-only rezonings. Currently, these fees support workforce-related childcare and affordable housing.

While childcare and affordable housing should remain top priorities for such fees, arts and cultural spaces should also be considered for commercial fees, particularly when the development is displacing arts and culture space.



# GOAL 4: EXPAND TOOLS TO PREVENT DISPLACEMENT AND SECURE SPACES

## Preservation of Spaces Policy

The City's Arts, Culture, and Community Services department, in partnership with the Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability department, has undertaken a study to inform policies and guidelines seeking to preserve, enhance, and expand social and cultural programming spaces. The first phase of the work focuses on arts and social spaces in sites such as places of worship, legions, cultural centres, and community halls. These spaces are significant because they often house arts and cultural programming and are under pressure to replace aging infrastructure through redevelopment. Examples include a choral hub at Ryerson Dunbar Church, and Holy Trinity Church—home to Pacific Theatre for over 25 years.

As a first step to track and protect against loss of cultural and social spaces, rezoning enquiries are now required to identify existing cultural and social spaces as part of the rezoning process. The next step is to bring forward a policy to preserve and enhance non-profit arts and cultural spaces within places of worship, community centres, community halls, legions, and privately-held spaces

## Property Taxes

Most artists' spaces and arts and cultural spaces are held through monthly rentals or leases. Through triple net leases, landlords pass on the tax burden to tenants. This results in tenants having to pay taxes on the space they rent and taxes on its development potential.

In British Columbia, properties are assessed at "highest and best use" (or full market value) by BC Assessment, and property taxes are allocated based on those values. For underdeveloped properties, the unrealized development potential could result in significant property tax implications. A one-story industrial space may have the development potential of a seven-story building and is assessed for property taxes on that higher value, potential future use.

This issue has become more acute given the active commercial real estate activities experienced in Metro Vancouver in recent years. It is extremely challenging for the arts, cultural, and other non-profit sectors to afford the high rents and taxes, and still remain viable in their neighborhoods.

Staff reviewed property taxes for 11 arts studio sites over the past five years, and found that the average property tax increase for those sites was over 77% due to a combination of factors such as market value escalation, and actual, and perceived development potential. For one studio surveyed, the result was a rent increase of over \$60,000 a year.

The City, with the Province, BC Assessment, and other Metro Vancouver municipalities, has been working to identify viable options to address this issue. The Province is currently considering the Split Assessment through a New Commercial Sub-class approach. This approach allows the splitting of the "development potential" value from the "existing use" value for underdeveloped properties that meet certain eligibility criteria, and capturing the "development potential" value in the new commercial sub-class. Local governments could then set a lower tax rate on "development potential" relative to the current commercial tax rates.

## Density Bonuses

Several cities designate cultural districts using incentives including density bonuses and tax reductions to support cultural spaces. These provisions offer developers extra density—more units for example—up to a limit set in a particular zone, in exchange for a contribution towards civic amenities and affordable space.

In New York City, developments of over 60,000 square feet in a core area of the Special 125th Street District are required to reserve five percent of total floor area for affordable arts and cultural uses. In



# GOAL 4: EXPAND TOOLS TO PREVENT DISPLACEMENT AND SECURE SPACES

In addition, developments receive a four-square-foot bonus per every one-square-foot of arts space.

There are some Vancouver districts with density bonus provisions that have benefited cultural spaces. The False Creek Flats Plan implemented a bonusing provision to support non-profit work spaces, job training programs, rehearsal space, and arts production facilities. The plan also limited certain uses and removed barriers for artist studios by maximizing allowable floor space and allowing new artist studios.

## Limits on Stratification

The ability for municipalities to develop rental only zoning was put in place by the Province in 2018 for residential areas. This allows municipalities to enact zoning requiring new housing in some residential areas be exclusively rental. Limiting stratification in some commercial and industrial areas may be a way, combined with other policies, to increase access and affordability for arts and cultural uses.

## Development Cost Levies

Development Cost Levies (DCLs) are collected from developments, based on square footage, to help pay for facilities and infrastructure made necessary by growth. Facilities and infrastructure eligible for DCL funding include: parks, childcare facilities, replacement housing (social/non-profit housing), and engineering infrastructure. DCL bylaws establish the boundaries, set the rates, and describe how to calculate and pay the levy.

The City currently offers reduced DCL rates for a limited number of uses, which include City-owned facilities such as community centres, libraries, and some cultural and social service facilities that provide public services. For the very few non-profit arts and cultural facilities that are new developments, DCL payment is a major barrier. The City

will be reviewing the appropriateness and eligibility of reduced DCL rates on a broader selection of non-profit arts and cultural facilities.

## City Planning

Integrating arts and culture as a key priority in city building will provide the needed culture shift. City strategies, plans, and policies set City priorities and guide zoning and investments (including public benefits). Increasingly, arts and culture has been represented in these processes.

The Employment Lands & Economy Review is examining Vancouver's employment sectors and job space including office, commercial, retail, and industrial uses. It will seek to understand the impact of the arts and cultural sector on Vancouver's economy and look at issues such as the intensification and densification of our employment lands. It will be important to ensure affordability is a key consideration in this work.



# GOAL 4: EXPAND TOOLS TO PREVENT DISPLACEMENT AND SECURE SPACES



Image: White Monkey Studios

## Actions

### A17. Art and Culture Core in City Building

Integrate arts and culture as a key priority in city building.

### A18. Preservation of Cultural Spaces

Develop policy to preserve and enhance non-profit arts and cultural spaces within places of worship, non City-run community centres, community halls, legions, and other privately held spaces including artist studios and music spaces.

### A19. Support Affordable NPO Space in Commercial and Industrial Lands

Explore mechanisms to support affordable non-profit arts and cultural space in commercial and industrial zones, including density bonusing, commercial linkage fees, cultural districts and in some cases, limits on stratification.

### A20. Remove Barriers in Industrial Zones

Remove existing and new barriers for artist studios and production spaces in industrial zones.

### A21. Reduce Tax Burden

Support work with the Province to develop a new sub class to reduce the tax burden on underdeveloped commercial and industrial spaces.



# GOAL 5: EXPAND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

**In Vancouver over the past decade, there has been notable growth in local collaboration, sharing of spaces and the establishment of non-profit space developers and providers committed to providing affordable and flexible space.**

This has included groups such as 901 Artist Cooperative, 221A, The Arts Factory, and BC Artscape. With this growth there are still significant barriers facing nonprofits and co-ops that are providing affordable space including access to financing and providing ongoing affordability in the context of rising costs.

## **Affordable Cultural Spaces Grants**

A major challenge identified by the sector is that there is currently no funding stream available to augment affordable spaces for artists, cultural workers, and other non-profit organizations. Nor is there funding to address critical cost increases due to escalating rental costs. Traditionally, ongoing grant programs (versus one-time capital grants) have focused on cultural and artistic programming.

Providing support in this area would further support provision of community-led spaces. For example, the City of Austin is directly investing in the stabilization of cultural space by providing funding to organizations seeking to meet code compliance, and rent subsidies to cultural spaces facing sizable rent hikes and displacement.

## **Social Purpose Real Estate Collective**

The City is a founding member of the Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative (SPRE), a group of funders and investors that strategically support social purpose real estate through fostering multi-sector relationships, knowledge sharing, and research.

## **Granville Island**

Granville Island is home to roughly 100 artist and arts and cultural organizations with one-third of the island focused on the arts, including performance venues, galleries, studios, retail, and office spaces. A main objective of Granville Island's 2040 plan is to "build Granville Island's reputation as a leading centre for the arts." Critical to this vision is the redevelopment of the 125,000 square foot site of the former North Building of the Emily Carr University Art and Design into an Arts and Innovation Hub.

## **Actions**

### **A22. Affordable Cultural Spaces Grants Stream**

Launch an annual affordable cultural spaces grant stream to provide support to non-profit space operators that provide subsidized affordable space for professional artists and cultural organizations. This program will also provide critical one-time funding to assist arts and cultural nonprofits in crisis due to escalating land values.

### **A23. Granville Island Mixed-Use Hub**

Explore partnerships with Granville Island, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and other levels of government to secure short term and long term use of the former North Building of the Emily Carr University Art and Design as a mixed-use cultural hub.

### **A24. Community-Led Real Estate Knowledge Sharing**

Support community-led real estate knowledge sharing, including mentorships and research by local non-profit space providers, the Social Purpose Real Estate Collective, VanCity Foundation, and others.

# GOAL 5: EXPAND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

## Local Examples of Space Providers

### 901 Artists Cooperative

A non-profit group of visual artists providing affordable working studio space for artists at Portside Studios, the group came together in 2006 after losing their studio at 901 Main Street to redevelopment.

### Community Impact Real Estate Society

Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES) is a nonprofit in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Owned by B.C. Housing, CIRES operates market spaces to subsidize non-market rentals for non-profit tenants including arts and culture organizations such as Co-op Radio and Gallery Gachet.

### Progress Lab 1422

In 2009, four kindred theatre organizations opened a 7,000-square-foot centre for creation and development in East Vancouver providing a home for several organizations and readily-available, affordable space.

### BC Artscape

In 2014, the City of Vancouver with J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Vancity Community Foundation funded the development of an independent Vancouver-based non-profit development organization with a mandate to develop cultural spaces. In 2017, BC Artscape launched a 50,000-square-foot community cultural hub in Vancouver's Chinatown, now home to over 50 tenants with a diverse mix of artists, cultural producers and community groups.

### 221A

Formed in 2005 as a student-led artist-run centre, this Chinatown-based nonprofit currently operates approximately 50,000 square feet of cultural and artist production space.

### The Arts Factory

This nonprofit rents City of Vancouver space in False Creek Flats and provides 24,000 square feet of artist studios. The Arts Factory is also home to the Great Northern Way Scene Shop.



Image: Sun Wah Centre, BC Artscape



# GOAL 6: INCREASE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND SUPPORT A CULTURAL LAND TRUST

In Vancouver's rapidly escalating real estate market, it is critical for service and program providers to have security of tenure. While long-term rentals provide a measure of security, space ownership is critical.

While the City has been successful in securing City-owned affordable space through major rezonings, only a handful of arts and cultural nonprofits own their space. For those nonprofits, ownership of their spaces has proved to be transformational.

## Support a Community Cultural Land Trust

In an effort to support community ownership, other cities, including Oakland, San Francisco, and London, have developed cultural land trusts to support community-led projects to secure arts and cultural spaces in perpetuity. A leader in this work is the Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST).

221A, an artist-run centre and cultural space provider based in Chinatown, has been working with other community partners to study and inform development of a Vancouver-based "cultural land trust." The *Cultural Land Trust Study* is researching well-established models to support community ownership of land and assets used for cultural purposes to reduce land speculation and to keep property costs affordable in perpetuity.

The success of a community land trust requires:

- Community-led effective governance and a sustainable business model
- Cash to support development, operations and acquisitions over time
- A sound investment strategy and viable real estate holdings

## Community Arts Stabilization Trust

CAST is a non-profit organization based in San Francisco that develops partnerships to purchase real estate property and secure it permanently for arts and culture organizations through various mechanisms including a lease-to-own model.

## Cultural Land Trust Study

Conceptualized as a collective response to escalating real estate prices that have placed severe pressure on security of tenure for artists and arts organizations in Vancouver; a cultural land trust would provide a mechanism for community-held land titles. Buildings would be leased or sold to community organizations or individuals and improvements made to properties would be owned by the leaseholder or property owner. For more information, visit: <https://221a.ca/research-initiatives/cultural-land-trust-study>

## Establish a Cultural Spaces Fund

Throughout the *Making Space for Arts and Culture* engagement process, the arts and cultural community has consistently identified that larger capital investments are required to enable major projects to procure, develop, refit larger shared spaces, and leverage funding.

In 2018, the Council-appointed Arts and Culture Policy Council put forward a motion to increase the Cultural Infrastructure Grant program to \$24 million over four years in order to support the "acquisition



# GOAL 6: INCREASE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND SUPPORT A CULTURAL LAND TRUST

of commercial and industrial properties by qualified non-profit organizations that would ensure the long-term viability of artistic venues and cultural spaces, and increase the economic viability of artists who live and work in the city.” The motion further proposed to expand “land use tools such as density bonusing, inclusionary zoning, and community amenity contributions,” and to “set aside an appropriate level of seed funding and property for the development of a cultural land trust.”

Establishing a City-held cultural spaces fund in an interest-bearing reserve would provide a mechanism to support large-scale cultural space projects including development of a potential future community led cultural land trust. This approach would put the City in the position to partner on substantive capital projects, including securing tenure, acquisition and expansion of cultural spaces, and would also leverage significantly more funding from the private sector, other levels of government, and enable conventional loans and mortgages from financial institutions. The process for supporting community-led projects through this fund will build on the existing Cultural Infrastructure Grant program.

While Vancouver will continue to negotiate new, in-kind cultural spaces through development as community amenity spaces, a cultural spaces fund would allow for a measured shift to secure cash contributions from development and other opportunities, similar to housing and childcare.

## Canada Cultural Spaces Fund

For example, the Government of Canada announced an additional \$300 million over a ten-year period to further support creative and cultural spaces through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund is Vancouver’s most significant and impactful funding partner in local creative space making projects. The fund typically provides more than 50% of the funding to local non-profit infrastructure projects, and has provided \$18 million in funding to Vancouver-based projects since being launched in 2017.

## Actions

### A25. Cultural Spaces Fund

Establish a Vancouver Cultural Spaces Fund in an interest-bearing reserve to support the development of large-scale community-led cultural space projects to research, plan, develop, and acquire affordable cultural spaces. Launch the fund with \$4.8 million. Future funding to be secured through development contributions with a goal of \$10 million over the next three years as part of the public benefit strategy implementation.

### A26. Community-Led Cultural Land Trust

Explore ways to support planning and development of community created and led cultural land trusts including seed funding, and investigating new ways to partner with the cultural community on development and in some cases shared ownership of amenity facilities secured through development.

# GOAL 6: INCREASE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND SUPPORT A CULTURAL LAND TRUST

## Examples of Local Ownership

### Artspeak

In 1999, Artspeak, a non-profit artist-run centre, made its first purchase of an 828-square-foot property at 233 Carrall Street. This space served as the Artspeak Gallery and office “at a time when few cultural groups either considered it necessary or had the means to undertake such a move.” In 2016, Artspeak was able to leverage its first property to purchase a second 356-square-foot satellite space securing that space in perpetuity.

### Western Front

The Western Front is one of Canada’s leading artist-run centres for contemporary art and new music. In 2013, Western Front was able to purchase their historic building when the City of Vancouver provided a cash grant sourced from a community amenity contribution. Support was also provided to three additional spaces—including the grunt gallery—anchoring cultural spaces in the neighbourhood, that would otherwise have been at risk for displacement.

### grunt gallery

In 1994, faced with ever-rising rents, grunt gallery, an artist-run centre, “cemented a deal” in which they allowed the gallery to be used in advertising for a live/work development in exchange for the opportunity to purchase a significantly-discounted space. Outcomes of this strategic approach included increased operational funds that in turn allowed for paid staff, new equipment, more ambitious programming and ultimately national and international collaborations.



Image: Western Front



Image: Grunt Gallery

# SUMMARY OF GOALS AND ACTIONS

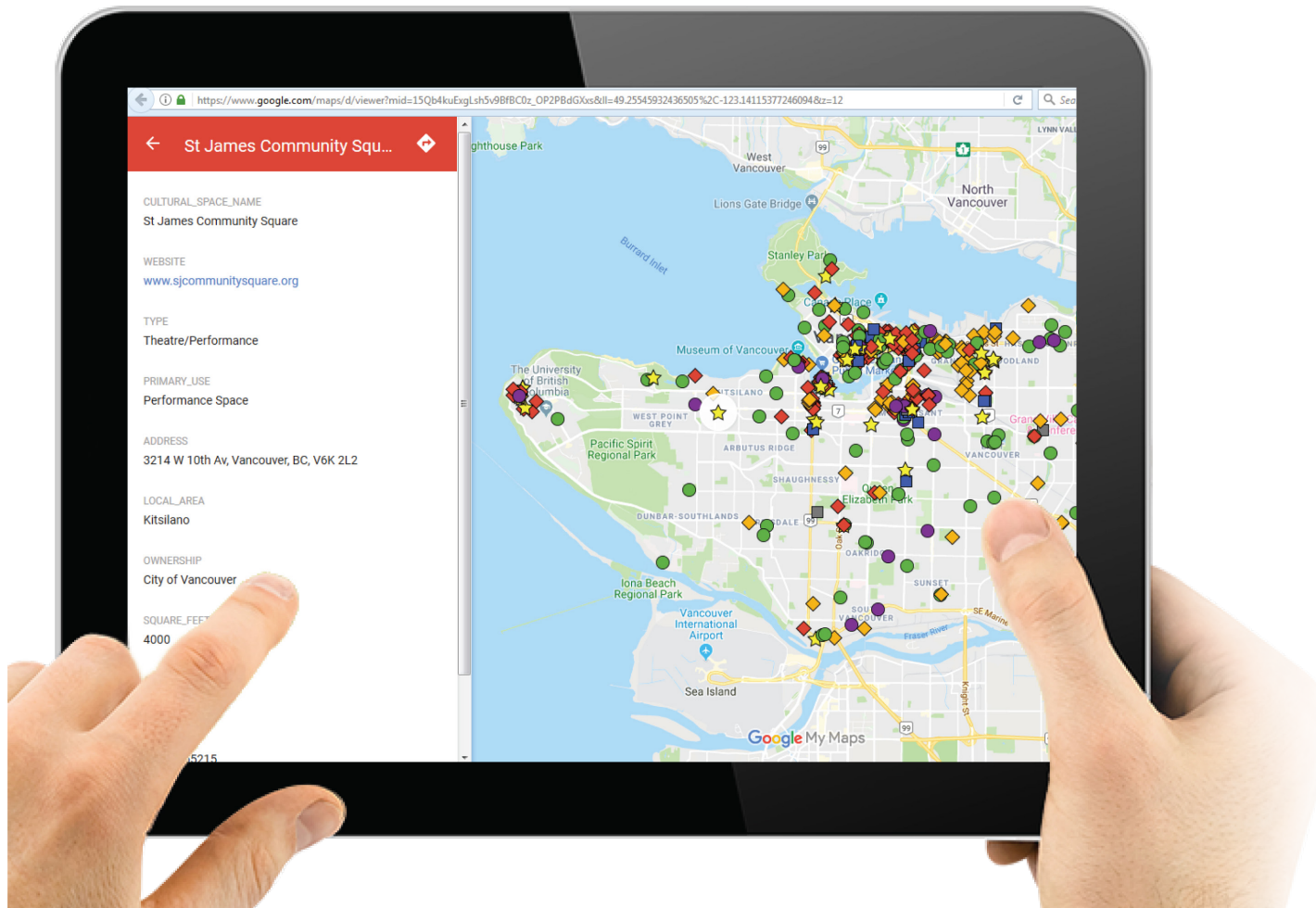
<b>GOAL 1: Cultural Heritage, Equity, and Accessibility</b>	<b>GOAL 2: Self-determined Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh, and Urban Indigenous Spaces</b>	<b>GOAL 3: Remove Regulatory Barriers</b>	<b>GOAL 4: Expand Tools to Prevent Displacement and Secure Spaces</b>	<b>GOAL 5: Expand Community Partnerships</b>	<b>GOAL 6: Increase Community Ownership and Support a Cultural Land Trust</b>
<p>A1. Protect Cultural and Intangible Heritage</p>	<p>A9. Mapping Places of Cultural Significance</p>	<p>A12. Expand Arts Event Licenses</p>	<p>A17. Art and Culture Core in City Building</p>	<p>A22. Affordable Cultural Spaces Grants Stream</p>	<p>A25. Cultural Spaces Fund</p>
<p>A2. Community Stewardship of Hogan's Alley</p>	<p>A10. Access to Existing and New Spaces</p>	<p>A13. Help with Navigating Regulations</p>	<p>A18. Preservation of Cultural Spaces</p>	<p>A23. Granville Island Mixed-Use Hub</p>	<p>A26. Community-Led Cultural Land Trust</p>
<p>A3. Chinatown UNESCO Asset Mapping and Preservation</p>	<p>A11. Seed Funding for Space Planning</p>	<p>A14. Develop an Arts Facility Zoning</p>	<p>A19. Support Affordable NPO Space in Industrial and Commercial Lands</p>	<p>A24. Community-Led Real Estate Knowledge Sharing</p>	
<p>A4. Celebrate Punjabi Market</p>		<p>A15. Review Event Regulations</p>	<p>A20. Remove Barriers in Industrial Zones</p>		
<p>A5. Japanese Canadian Cultural Heritage</p>		<p>A16. Use Older Buildings and Temporary Spaces</p>	<p>A21. Reduce Tax Burden</p>		
<p>A6. Develop Accessibility Guidelines</p>					
<p>A7. Conduct Building Assessments</p>					
<p>A8. Accessible and Trans-Inclusive Spaces</p>					



# 5. RESOURCES



# CITY CULTURAL SPACES



The City's online Cultural Spaces Map was launched in 2014. It includes a comprehensive list of City-owned and City-leased cultural spaces as well as other cultural spaces and is updated annually. The data is published on the City's web page, in VanMap, and is available for the anyone to use as open source data. See the map online at <http://vancouver.ca/cultural-spaces-map>.

# REFERENCES

[NB. This page still to be updated for final version]

## Cultural Space References

Making Space for Arts and Culture: 2018 Cultural Infrastructure Plan

[Insert Link]

[Insert description]

AMS: Update to Key Gaps in Cultural Infrastructure

[Insert Link]

[Insert description]

AMS: Trends and Exemplar Research report

[Insert Link]

[Insert description]

## Other References

Culture|Shift: Vancouver Culture Plan 2020-2029

[Insert link]

[Insert description]

Vancouver Music Strategy

[Insert link]

[Insert description]

Music Strategy Interim Report

[Insert link]

[Insert description]

City of Reconciliation Vision and Goals

<https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/city-of-reconciliation.aspx>

Indigenous Community Resources

<https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/indigenous-communities>

Accessible Events Checklist and Resources

<https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/accessible-events-checklist-and-resources.aspx>

For organizations seeking to make their events more accessible and welcoming to all Vancouverites.

# PROGRAMS

## Grants and Awards

### Arts Event Licence

<http://vancouver.ca/doing-business/arts-event-licence.aspx>

Host pop-up performances in unconventional spaces including: studios, warehouses, factories, shops and wholesale spaces. One application, one desk, one licence, and one low fee.

### Artist Studio Awards

<https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/artist-studio-award-program.aspx>

Provision of low-cost or nominal-rent artist studios for up to three years.

### Cultural Infrastructure Grants

<http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/cultural-infrastructure-grant-program.aspx>

For organizations who are planning for or embarking on facility upgrades, renovations or development, this grant program can support both planning and implementation phases.

### Small Grants for Cultural Spaces

<https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/small-grants-for-cultural-spaces.aspx>

For organizations requesting support for small and time-sensitive projects related to arts and cultural spaces including planning, research, minor capital, mentorships, and capacity building.

### Critical Assistance Grant

<http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/critical-assistance-grant-for-cultural-spaces.aspx>

For arts and cultural organizations facing a critical situation as a result of a facility emergency or urgent life-safety issue, this grant can help pay for costs associated with emergency repairs or safety upgrades.

### Permit Fee Assistance

<http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/permit-fee-assistance-for-cultural-spaces.aspx>

For organizations requiring support towards development and building permit fees for cultural space

projects.

### Regulatory Assistance

Assistance for arts and cultural organizations and artists dealing with City regulations.

Contact:

[cultural.spaces@vancouver.ca](mailto:cultural.spaces@vancouver.ca)