



Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan

What We Heard Update

September 13th, 2023

Delivered to

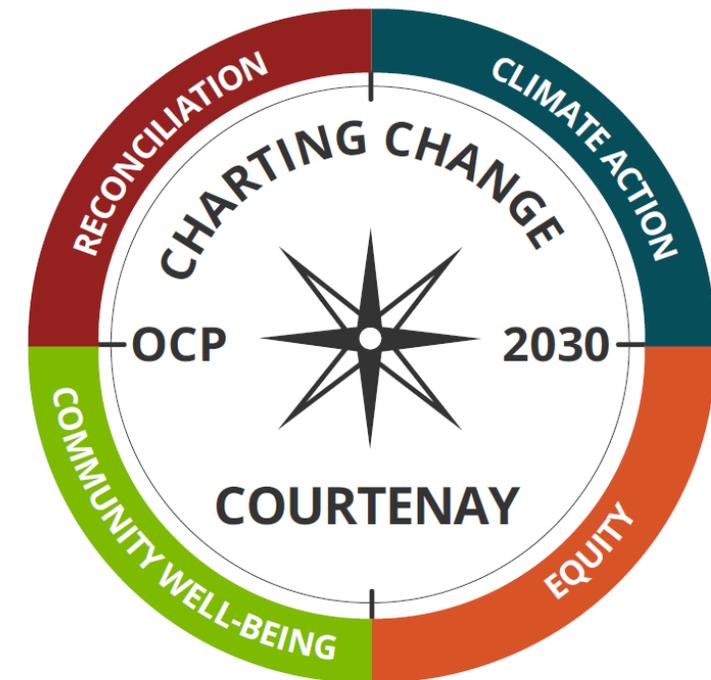
**City of Courtenay
Mayor and Council**



Strategic Cultural Plan | Background and Activities

Background and Context

- Various strategic planning in Courtenay has highlighted the need for a plan to **guide the City's support of culture**:
 - Parks and Recreation Masterplan, 2019 recommendations
 - Cultural Service Review, 2019
 - OCP, 2022
 - Strategic priorities for 2023
- Arts and culture in Courtenay contribute to community wellbeing and economic development – and further strategic focus can help **grow positive impact**.
- Arts and culture can play a profound role in **addressing important issues** like reconciliation, mental health and the toxic drug poisoning crisis.
- The Plan will **guide the City in its relationships** with its residents and neighbours in relation to arts and culture.



“Cardinal Directions”
OCP Update, 2022

Recap | Aims

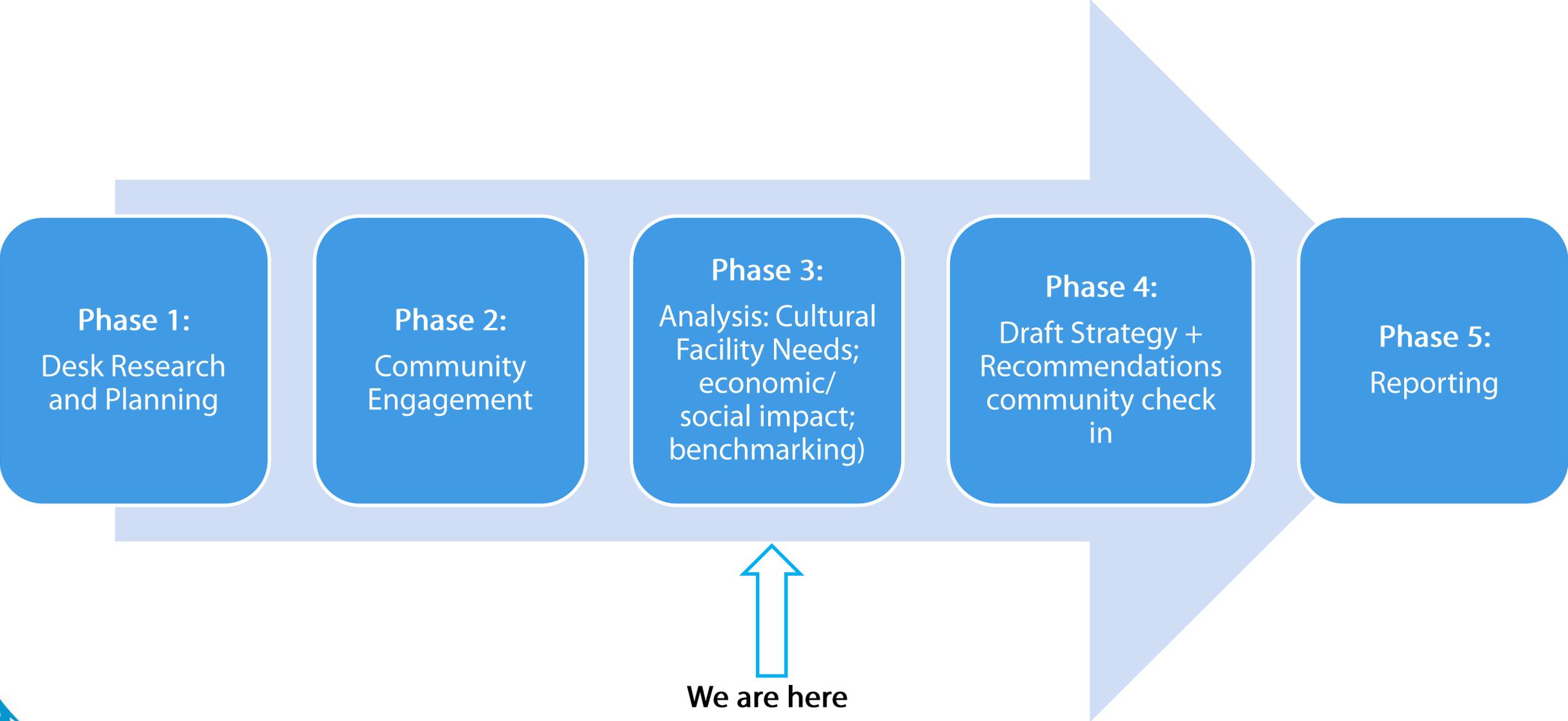
Develop a 10-year Strategic Cultural Plan for the City of Courtenay that includes strategic recommendations for cultural services, and how the city's cultural assets can support those services.

Key Objectives:

- Highlight the importance of cultural services, cultural activities, and cultural awareness in the community
- Evaluate and benchmark impact of the cultural community
 - To build investment and increased promotion of cultural tourism, economic development, and social cohesion
- Identify cultural service needs, and analyze facilities options
- Identify best practices to inform cultural service policies
- Develop a roadmap, timeline, and responsible party for implementation



Project Phases



Community Engagement Approach

<i>Principles</i>				
Human-centred	Respect for Indigenous Nations and People	Trust-based	Privacy	Intersectional
				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People-focused ▪ Respectful sharing environment ▪ Community based research & practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respect stature ▪ Respect time considerations ▪ Respect a mutually-defined process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear communication ▪ Transparent processes ▪ Incorporate feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consent-based ▪ Secure storage and disposal of data ▪ Aggregate data collection and use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Following an equity lens ▪ Cultural competency ▪ Foster safe spaces

Community Engagement



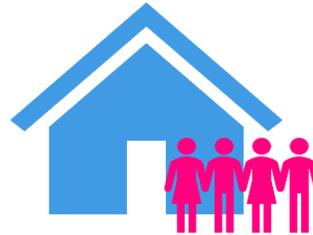
≈700 survey respondents



24 interviews (54 participants)



Arts & culture sector focus group (38 participants)



1 public drop-in engagement event



4 group conversations with equity priority communities (i.e., representatives of / people with lived experience of disabilities, homelessness, being a newcomer, 2SLGBTQIA+ community) led by Nordicity or facilitated by local organizations (28 participants).

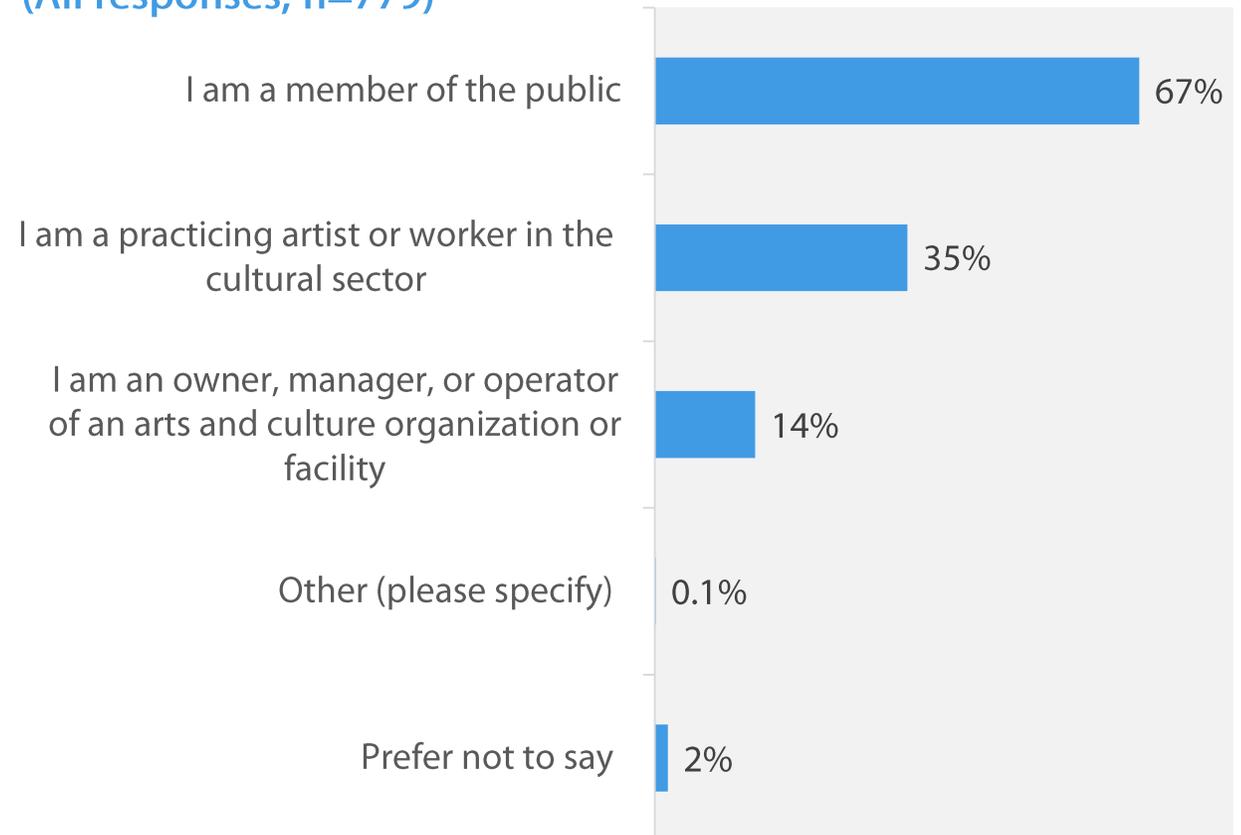


What We Heard | Survey Highlights

Survey Results | Participant Profile

- ~700 participants. The majority (67%) attend or participate in arts and culture as a member of the public.
- 35% work in the arts & culture sector.
- 14% described themselves as an owner, manager, or operator of an arts and culture organization or facility.
- 51% identified as a woman and 40% as a man. 5% preferred not to answer, 3% identify as non-binary and 1% as two-spirit.
- 17% identified as Indigenous; 16% Racialized/Black/Person of Colour; 15% 2SLGBTQIA+; 14% person with a disability; and 9% newcomer.
- 62% live in Courtenay, 20% in the Comox Valley, and 18% outside of the Valley.

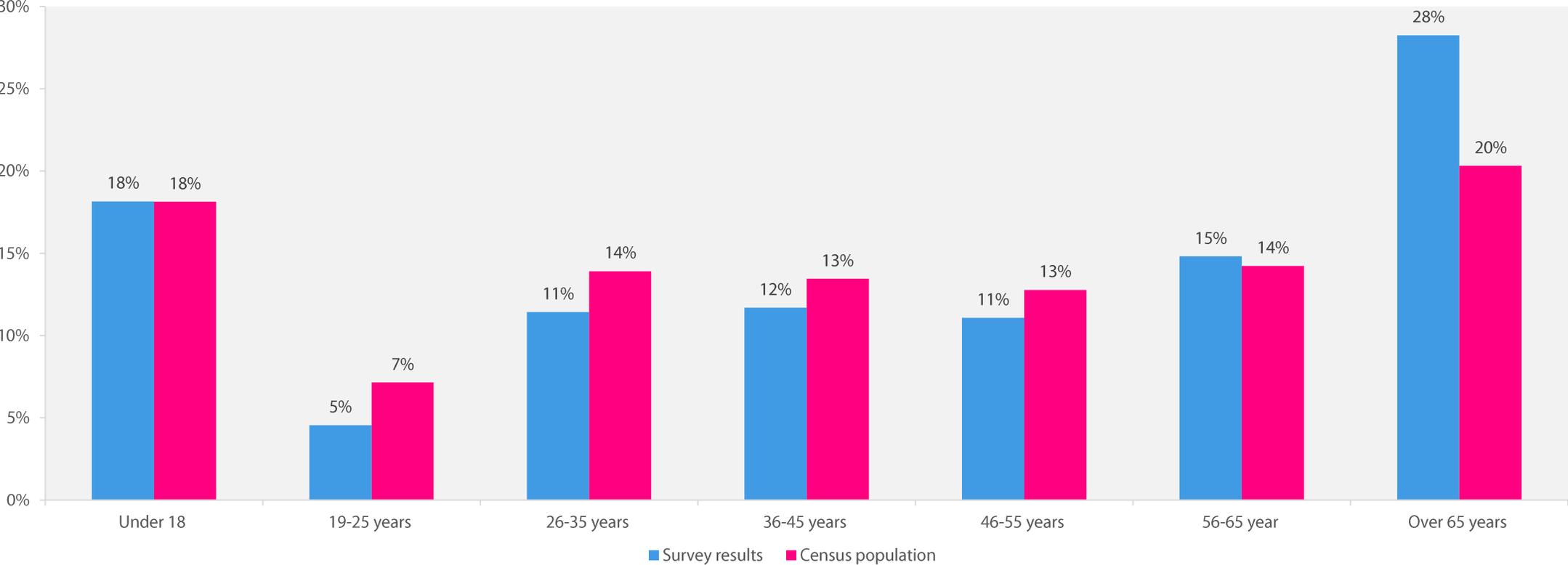
How do you engage with culture in Courtenay? (All responses, n=779)



Survey Results | Participant Profile - Age

In comparison with Census data on Courtenay’s population, the survey garnered a **high portion of responses from young adults (aged 26-35 years)** and a lower portion of those aged 65+.

What age range do you fall into? (all responses, n=686)



Source: City of Courtenay Culture Plan Public Survey and Statistics Canada Census Profile 2021

Survey Results | Highlights



A very high number of respondents are culturally engaged (94%). 47% engage with arts and culture in Courtenay weekly or more.



Performing arts are the most popular way to engage with arts and culture in Courtenay according to survey participants. Cultural sector respondents were also most likely to work in performing arts.



47% said that arts and culture in Courtenay encourage social participation and a sense of belonging. 38% said arts and culture enhance Courtenay as an attractive place to live.

Survey Results | Highlights (Continued)



The average amount spent in the community before and after a cultural event is **\$105 per individual**.



The **main barriers** to accessing culture in Courtenay are limited options nearby (29%), options of interest (21%), and not knowing where to find out about what's on (20%).



Critical needs, according to artists and cultural sector workers, are performance/exhibition space (45%), rehearsal and creation space (36%), and bylaws and policies that support arts and culture (32%).

Survey Results | Highlights (Continued)



When members of the public were asked what **future arts and culture offerings people would like to see more of in Courtenay**, the top response was more live performances (44%). The second most popular response was more special events and festivals (30%).

- Artist and cultural sector responses were very similar – live performances (44%) but followed by more arts education programming and workshops (34%).



The main culture theme that the City should prioritize in the Culture Plan, according to both public and sector participants, is enhancing space for arts and culture (35% of participants in both groups selected this option).

ROSES

STRENGTHS

- RICH • CAPABLE • PEOPLE
- Abundance of skilled + talented
- Strong Performance spaces
- Volunteer support
- Interconnected + Growing
- Grassroots Localism
- Attractive place to Live

- PERFORMING ARTS + EDUCATION
- COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT IS STRONG!
- ESTABLISHED FESTIVALS
- Free and Low Cost events
- PASSION interdisciplinary ARTS 'unsilo'



THORNS

CHALLENGES

- RENTALS rehearsal space
- CONFLICTS event dates
- LACK OF FACILITIES
- SPACES for TEEN AGERS
- LACK of Professionals
- Loss of Volunteers
- CITY OF COURTENAY
- STAFF REPRESENTATION
- LACK of Accomodation
- ELECTRICAL



- NO NIGHT LIFE!
- LACK OF DIVERSITY

ARTS Culture ROUND TABLE SESSION



BUDS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Build RELATIONSHIPS with School DISTRICT
- New musicians arriving!
- BUILD Community through ARTS EDUCATION
- MAINTAIN connections with RETIRING artists' community
- DIVERSE performances and NEW ARTISTS
- TRAINING in Light + Sound SKILLS
- MICRO-GRANT program

- Diversify SPACES
- New OCP openings that support ARTS

HIPS

LEGACY

- PERFORMANCE LIGHTING + SOUND
- RESPECT INTEGRITY + QUALITY of PROGRAMS
- CONFERENCE Centre with TRAINED Staff
- SUCCESSION Planning PROTOCOLS
- "FLAT SPACES" with outlets
- TRANSPORTATION
- ACCESSIBLE



What We Heard | Summary

Strengths

- Beautiful geographic location that provides artistic inspiration
- Strong cultural anchors, collaborative spirit, and cultural capital
- Established municipal support for core arts and culture organizations
- Community support for and interest in arts and culture
- Variety of cultural offerings to attract people year round
- Demonstrated social and economic impact

“For a small town, the Valley has a very vibrant arts scene and many artists!”

- Survey participant

“All the things that tourists buy; they all have some form of art on them”

- Interview participant

What We Heard | Summary

Challenges/Gaps

- Lack of visibility of Indigenous arts, culture, and heritage
- Limited availability and affordability of suitable cultural spaces/facilities
- Need for more municipal support, including at the regional level
- Limited human resources in some areas of the cultural sector
- Accessibility and awareness of cultural spaces and events
- Limited programming and arts and culture opportunities for youth

“How can we support learning about Indigenous cultures, & truth and then moving towards reconciliation together as a community”?

- Interview participant

“There are more things that could be done but we just don't have the people to do it”

- Interview participant



What We Heard | Community-identified Needs

What We Heard | Community-Identified Needs



Engaging K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous communities

- Desire for more Indigenous arts and culture in public spaces
- Working collaboratively with KFN to ensure the plan is representative of Indigenous values and supportive of work towards reconciliation



More cultural spaces/facilities

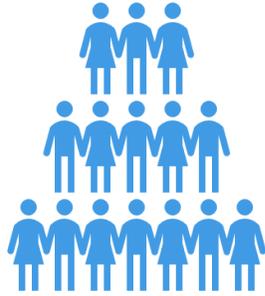
- Need for more equipped and accessible cultural spaces and performance venues to meet various sector needs
- Small, medium, and larger venues, including performance and rehearsals venues



More diverse and affordable cultural programming

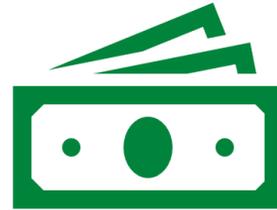
- Desire for more diverse and affordable cultural programming
- Both in terms of services delivered by the City and by local arts and cultural groups

What We Heard | Community-Identified Needs



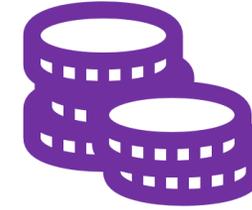
More promotion of community partnerships & collaboration

- Need for more community collaborations and partnerships
- Also need to have avenues for knowledge sharing across the sector, for example through regular gatherings



Increased municipal support – financial and in-kind, local and regional

- Desire for increased City financial support for arts and culture, especially community grants
- Need for regional funding support for arts and culture in Courtenay



Further development of cultural tourism

- Need to leverage events such as gallery exhibitions and festivals to help make Courtenay the cultural hub of the region, to promote cultural tourism

What We Heard | Community-Identified Needs



Attraction and training of technical cultural workers

- Need for more technical expertise in relation to hosting live performances and events
- More sound and lighting technicians, stage management and crowd control specialists are in high demand



Development of a public arts policy

- Desire for a Public Arts Policy to support public arts in the city
- Such a policy could leverage the talent of young artists and involve them in community public arts initiatives

What We Heard | Specific Community Needs

Indigenous Community

- *Feedback specifically from K'ómoks First Nation will be included in later planning stages*
- Need to provide support to create Indigenous cultural spaces such as an urban cultural wellness centre and outdoor spaces for Indigenous gatherings
- Important to ease bureaucratic barriers and decolonize practices so the City can fully respond to requests from Indigenous communities



What We Heard | Specific Community Needs

Newcomers and Immigrants

- More arts and culture programming that welcomes newcomers to the community to help address social isolation – and information about what's on
- More representation of different cultures in cultural programming
- Need to foster collaboration among immigrant groups and organizations, e.g., via facilitated introductions

Unhoused Community Members

- Need for a gathering space that provides opportunities for free drop-in arts and cultural classes/activities
- A wellness centre could respond to individuals' needs, both tangible and intangible – arts participation can be a powerful way of healing
- Need for more listening to people with lived experience, deeper engagement, and imagining new possibilities/solutions – including innovative housing options

What We Heard | Specific Community Needs

People with Disabilities

- People with accessibility needs should be involved in creating solutions
- Need to ensure that cultural activities and events are truly accessible, with venues that follow universal design principles and meet Accessibility Standards Canada
- Need for clearer information on the accessibility of venues and activities to help community members to plan
- Transit to get to arts and culture needs further improvement
- Hybrid programming is desired

2SLGBTQIA+

- Overall lack of visibility of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Courtenay
- There is a need for a central place for the 2SLGBTQIA+ to gather – currently limited opportunities to meet
- Some people are deterred from attending 2SLGBTQIA+ events as they fear attracting attention – need to ensure people are not only welcome, but safe
- There's an opportunity to launch more 2SLGBTQIA+ activities and art shows in Courtenay



Next Steps

Next Steps



- **Ongoing and open dialogue with K'ómoks First Nation** Chief and Council to discuss meaningful engagement
- **Municipal benchmarking** and comparative review
- Assessing the **economic impact** of Courtenay's arts and culture sector
- Analyzing **cultural facilities options**, drawing on the survey and other research engagement findings shared in this report
- **Drafting recommendations**, and seeking community check-in via a public event and online feedback
- Developing the final **Strategic Cultural Plan**, including an implementation strategy

Next Steps | Strategic Planning Framework

The Strategic Cultural Plan will articulate:

- **Vision** for arts and culture in Courtenay
- **Goals**
- **Objectives** – for each goal
- **Actions** – for each objective

+ **Implementation Roadmap**

with target outcomes, roles, responsibilities, timeframe + identifying resources, funding and assets needed



Thank you!
Happy to answer
any questions.



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