

Report to Council



Date: March 1, 2021
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Central Okanagan Music Strategy
Department: Active Living and Culture

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Cultural Services Department dated March 1, 2021, with respect to the Central Okanagan Music Strategy project.

Purpose:

To provide Council with an update on the Central Okanagan Music Strategy project.

Background:

In response to the 2020-2025 Cultural Plan, a group of dedicated, like-minded community members have come together in a consultant-led process to develop the Central Okanagan Music Strategy (COMS). The COMS is intended to advance several areas of the 2020-2025 Cultural Plan, however it has the most relevance to *Strategy 6.1 to expand live music venues and local live music opportunities*, and *Strategy 10.4 to facilitate networking between cultural stakeholders across the Okanagan region*.

The purpose of the Music Strategy is to advance the sustainability of the music industry in the Central Okanagan through:

- connecting people with similar interests, towards collective action;
- developing community support toward music;
- increasing support to live music;
- creating an understanding of the current music landscape; and
- setting priorities for the future development of music in the Central Okanagan.

Central Okanagan Music Strategy

Development Process

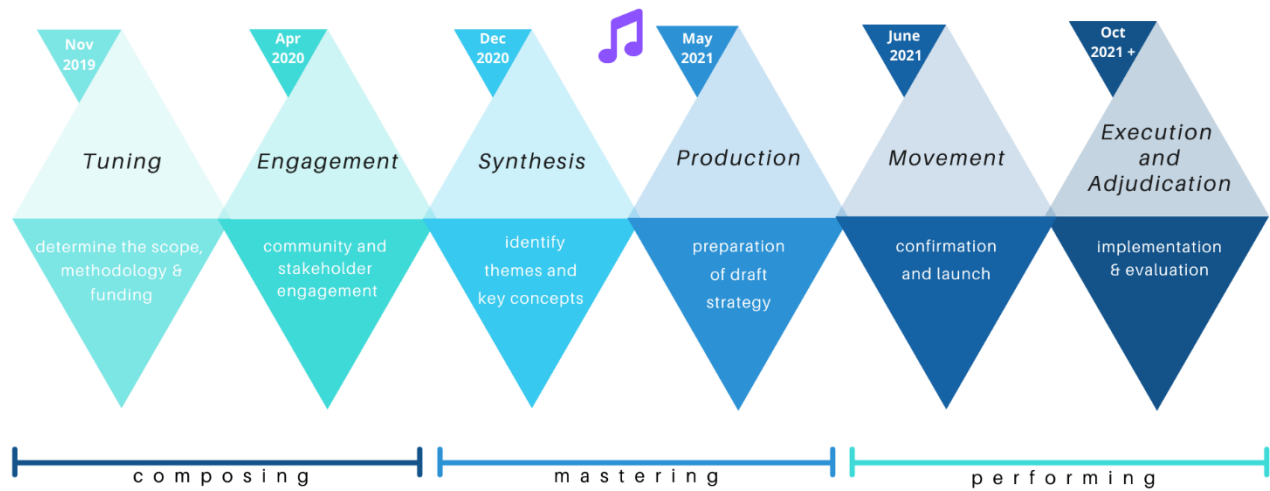


Figure 1: Central Okanagan Music Strategy Development Process

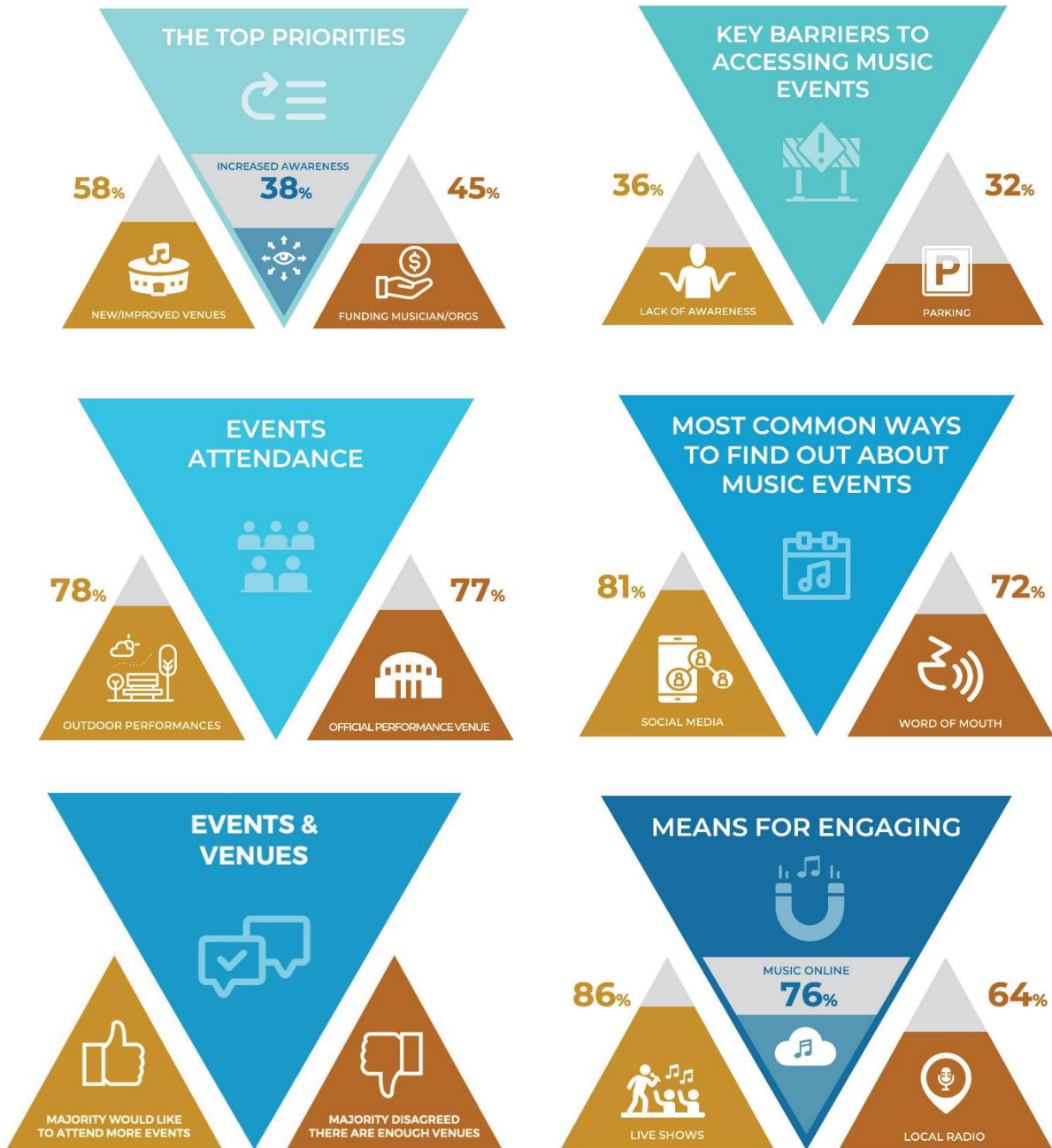
The COMS project is being led by Creative Okanagan (local nonprofit organization that creates accessible performing arts opportunities that connect audiences with artists in the Okanagan region), with the support of the Leadership Ensemble and an external Advisory Group committee. The City's role in supporting this project has been through participation in the Leadership Ensemble, as well as through financial and administrative support.

Additional funding for this project has been received from FACTOR (the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent on Recordings) and Creative BC. Along with the financial support that this project has received, there has been an immense amount of community support and volunteerism from the Central Okanagan region to support the projects activities.

Discussion:

A major milestone for the COMS is the completion of the Music Industry Sector Profile and Public Engagement Summary (Attachment 1), which provides an overview of the Central Okanagan's music industry and analysis of the data obtained from public engagement efforts. This report establishes an understanding of the Central Okanagan music ecosystem, some key considerations from the conducted public engagement and the next steps for the project. Public engagement was conducted for the Okanagan region and included an online survey, yielding over 1,100 responses, 41 personal interviews with key industry stakeholders and 9 focus groups with key sub-industries of the local music industry.

This report sets the foundation for the future development of strategies that will make up the final Central Okanagan Music Strategy. The full report contains a detailed analysis; however, some highlights are outlined below and shown in the Central Okanagan Music Strategy Infographic (Attachment 2):



Some key considerations identified by the public consultation process will support unpacking the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to the Central Okanagan’s music industry. The considerations fall into 10 categories:

1. The Central Okanagan is ripe for growth within the music industry, in part because of the **attractive lifestyle** of the region.
2. A unique opportunity lies in **engaging youth in music** from a young age and retaining engaged and educated citizens locally.
3. There are too **few purpose-built venues** or **spaces for rehearsal and collaboration** in the Central Okanagan.

4. **Audiences have an appetite for more live shows** but want inexpensive and convenient entertainment options.
5. **Lack of awareness** is a key barrier experienced by stakeholders in accessing music events in the Central Okanagan.
6. **Innovation and collaborative partnerships** across organizations are also key to strengthening the music economy.
7. The **importance of community** is a cornerstone to the Central Okanagan, kept strong by well-connected groups of creatives and longstanding, established organizations.
8. There is a need for **more accessible, streamlined, and flexible funding** designed to facilitate partnerships and support artists.
9. The music industry in the Central Okanagan is **largely seasonal**, with many events running from May-October but occurring sparsely in the winter months, due to the lack of indoor venues.
10. Music industry stakeholders recognize that **more diversity, equity and inclusion in the music industry** is a key priority moving forward.

From these key considerations, four preliminary directions have been identified. These directions will serve as a starting point for upcoming conversations, future engagement and strategy development. Each of the directions are outlined below:

1. **Space for Music:** The need for spaces was illustrated throughout the findings including a purpose-built venue, as well as spaces that are affordable and accessible for a wide range of activities (e.g., education, jamming, etc.)
2. **Audience Development & Retention:** Support for the Central Okanagan's vibrant ecosystem of musicians and industry professionals was noted as a key foundation for sustainable growth in the industry.
3. **Diverse Artistic & Industry Growth:** In view of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery, ensuring audiences value music and feel safe enjoying it will be an important foundation to growing the industry.
4. **Partnership & Collaborations:** It was noted throughout engagement that there was a strong foundation of talented and passionate music industry stakeholders and artists in the Central Okanagan with a growing appetite to collaborate.

While these preliminary directions were evident through public engagement efforts, there is still a need for further exploration. These preliminary directions will be discussed at the upcoming Music Summit events and through additional public engagement efforts for confirmation that they accurately describe the intended future direction of the Central Okanagan music industry.

Conclusion:

The Music Industry Profile and Public Engagement Summary sets the stage for an evidence-based and context-driven Music Strategy for the region to be completed by December 2021. Next steps for the project include a community Music Summit event, final confirmation engagement and the Strategy launch and implementation. When launched, the Central Okanagan Music Strategy will set the course for the entire region, from music industry professionals to music lovers, to support the growth and sustainability of the music industry moving forward.

Cultural Services will continue to support the project through to implementation through participation in the Leadership Ensemble and administrative support as needed.

Internal Circulation:

Divisional Director, Active Living and Culture
Communications Advisor, Communications Department

Considerations applicable to this report:

N/A

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations
Existing Policy
External Agency/Public Comments
Communications Comments
Legal/Statutory Authority
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements

Submitted by: Christine McWillis, Cultural Services Manager

Approved for inclusion: Jim Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living and Culture

cc:

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Central Okanagan Music Strategy – Music Industry Sector Profile and Public Engagement Summary

Attachment 2: Central Okanagan Music Strategy Infographic