

Report to Council



Date: December 9, 2024
To: Council
From: Community Task Force on the Performing Arts
Subject: Recommendations from the Community Task Force on Performing Arts
Department: Office of the City Clerk

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Community Task Force on Performing Arts dated December 9, 2024, with respect to community opportunities to grow performing arts opportunities in Kelowna;

AND THAT Council accepts the recommendations of the Community Task Force on Performing Arts, as outlined in the report dated December 9, 2024;

AND FURTHER THAT Council directs staff to report back to Council on a plan for implementing the Task Force’s recommendations, including stakeholder integration, location analysis, functional space analysis, and planning and design, as appropriate.

Purpose:

To receive and accept the recommendations of the Community Task Force on Performing Arts and advance toward the next steps of implementation.

Council Priority Alignment:

Economic Development

Background:

The Community Task Force on Performing Arts was established on August 14, 2023. The Task Force was tasked with making recommendations to Council with respect to the following objectives:

- Identifying partnership opportunities for the redevelopment of the Kelowna Community Theatre (KCT);
- Engage the public for their vision for KCT redevelopment opportunities;
- Increase integration between all stakeholders involved the Performing Arts; and
- Identifying philanthropic opportunities to fund, in part, a new KCT and to what extent.

The Task Force’s Terms of Reference provide for a 9-10 member body Chaired by the Mayor and include members with relevant expertise in a variety of subject areas. Council appointed the Task

Force's full membership on October 30, 2023. The Terms of Reference provided that the Task Force serves for an initial term of eight months, with the option of extension.

Discussion:

The Task Force began meeting monthly in January, 2024, holding eight meetings in total. The meetings of the Task Force have progressed with the aim of enhancing understanding of the performing arts sector and addressing the community's future needs. Across its eight meetings to date, the Task Force has completed the following milestones:

1. Orientation and idea generation

The Task Force held a brainstorming session during which members shared their ideas on essential items required for progressing the performing arts and enhancing the KCT facility. In advance of this session the Task Force reviewed recent studies on the condition of Kelowna's existing performing arts venues as well as feasibility and market demand studies on a potential new facility.

2. Community & industry profile

The Task Force received a presentation from City staff which provided an overview of the status of performing arts in the community, including pertinent information on the community's demographic profile, challenges in the performing arts sector, as well as an overview of current plans and key initiatives. External consultants presented a review of recent studies on the feasibility of a new performing arts venue.

3. Understanding current operations

The Task Force received a presentation from KCT staff highlighting the Theatre's mandate and current operations.

4. Exploring possibilities

The Task Force received a presentation from the Citizens for a New Performing Arts Centre Society highlighting the Society's analysis of potential possibilities for a new performing arts venue.

5. Learning from the experience of other communities

The Task Force received a presentation from Arts Commons of Calgary and Live Nation highlighting various aspects of a new arts infrastructure project being planned in Calgary.

6. Survey for current local facility users

Two surveys were conducted – one for local event organizers and another for task force members – to obtain comprehensive insights into the services provided and their satisfaction levels. The surveys also aimed to explore the current and future needs of a performing arts space, as well as collect additional feedback from local facility users for the Task Force's consideration.

Recommendations

The Task Force's recommendations are based on multiple sources of information, interviews, and engagements with the community and subject matter experts, and they share a common foundation:

- There is a recognized need within the community for additional performances spaces.
- The KCT, with some improvements to the front of house, would be able to maximize space usage and services to audiences.

- Without additional performance venues, the arts community will face significant limitations on future growth.
- Creating opportunities for additional performances would have a positive economic, cultural and social impact on our community.

Based on the considerations set out above, the Task Force agreed to present the following recommendations to Council:

1. The existing Kelowna Community Theatre Facility should remain in place to serve the community.
2. A new Performing Arts Centre should be constructed at a site to be determined.
3. The existing Kelowna Community Theatre should be renovated to enhance front of house amenities.
4. The Community Task Force should continue to work to advance its remaining objectives in an advisory capacity.

Conclusion:

The Task Force is recommending a series of both medium and long-term initiatives to promote the performing arts within our community. Should Council accept the recommendations, staff will commence work on an implementation plan, including stakeholder integration, location analysis, functional space analysis, and planning and design, as appropriate, and will report back to Council.

Considerations applicable to this report:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Staff will explore the financial implications of the recommendations that are not within existing budgets and report back to Council.

Submitted by:

Mayor Dyas, Chair, Community Task Force on Performing Arts

cc:

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