

# Report to Council



**Date:** May 29, 2017  
**File:** 1200-15  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Sandra Kochan, Cultural Services Manager  
**Subject:** Creative Spaces Update

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives for information the report dated May 29, 2017 from the Cultural Services Manager regarding a Creative Spaces Update.

## **Purpose:**

To provide Council with an update regarding Creative Spaces consultations with the arts community.

## **Background:**

Staff provided a report to Council on April 11, 2016 with information about a survey and series of focus groups which would provide data and information about the space needs of artists and organizations in Kelowna.

The 2016 consultations addressed goals and strategies in the [2012-2017 Cultural Plan](#), in particular Goal 3: 'to identify more and different kinds of affordable spaces devoted to creative production for both visual and performing artists.'

Consultations were conducted through two initiatives:

- a) The Creative Space Needs & Issues Survey was distributed in May 2016 and made available until July 3, 2016. The survey attracted 180 responses. Highlights from the survey are provided within the Findings Report (page 19) and include:
  - 40 per cent of artists are currently working out of home studios, but 68 per cent of them would prefer to have a separate location for their studios. Over 65 per cent of artists would prefer a studio to be in a downtown or central location which offers high visibility and proximity to other cultural amenities.
  - Affordability is the most significant factor in selecting a studio space.
  - Just over 50 per cent of artists are either sharing studio space now, or are interested in shared space for the future.

- Many artists report that creative processes are constrained by spaces that are too small. Many artists are also unable to afford costly renovations or upgrades that would make their spaces and their practice more successful.

b) A series of eight discipline-based Focus Groups was convened between May 25 and June 29.

The discipline categories were based on distinct and unique usage of space:

- Visual Arts
- Theatre
- Screen-Based
- Amplified Music
- Acoustic Music
- Venues/Schools
- Fabricators
- Dance

Each session was two hours in length and was facilitated by Alison Moore of Oomph Consulting. Each session focused on three questions:

- Describe the ideal creative space for your work and for artists working in your discipline. List your ideal discipline related space amenities.
- What is your greatest space related issue or challenge?
- Discuss collaborative space sharing. What would this look like for you and those working in your discipline?

62 professional artists and cultural workers attended the sessions.

### **The Findings Report:**

The findings from the Focus Groups are summarized in the Report attached as Appendix A.

These findings will inform next year's Cultural Plan update and can also be used by staff and the private sector to investigate opportunities for artists' use of new or vacant spaces. The findings provide a baseline understanding of what space characteristics are most important to artists practicing various artforms and what might be required to make a space suitable for artistic practice.

For some practitioners, needs are quite straightforward. For others, such as fabricators using heavy equipment and/or chemical processes, space requirements are quite complex and typically beyond the financial reach of a sole practitioner. A case study included in the report is illustrative of the challenges encountered by a local glass artist seeking to establish a working studio in the downtown area.

Highlights from the report:

- Design considerations for performance venues emphasize configurable staging and seating, a high standard of technical and acoustic excellence, a more visible and enticing public presence, the importance of multiple rehearsal and studio spaces, and back of house amenities which add value to all other spaces;
- Design considerations for fabrication spaces are focused on appropriate utility servicing and engineering and locations which minimize impact from fabrication activity;
- Operating considerations include physical access, affordability, balancing needs to provide equitable allocation, and examining the regulatory environment to more flexibly accommodate where and how artists do their work.

Appendix C of the Findings Report provides a compendium of creative spaces around the world which could serve as models for development of creative spaces in Kelowna. The examples include:

- small to mid-sized performance venues of up to 1,500 seats
- large performance venues with more than 1,500 seats
- venues associated with academic institutions
- unique cultural venues and hubs
- fabrication and makerspaces
- visual arts studios, and
- creative spaces initiatives which have successfully developed spaces and tools for the benefit of the arts community.

### **2017 Creative Spaces Summit:**

On June 6, 2017, Cultural Services is convening a Creative Spaces Summit at the Laurel Packinghouse. The objectives of the event are to:

- Share the findings from last year's consultations;
- Provide information about new resources such as [SpaceFinder BC](#) which may provide some solutions for challenges identified in the findings;
- Stimulate ideas and dialogue about shared spaces through a panel discussion with three successful creative hubs in Vancouver
- Brainstorm 'made-in-Kelowna' solutions that can be implemented in the short to medium term to ease access to creative spaces in Kelowna.

Invitations for the event will be sent to a number of City staff representing various departments, cultural venues, all survey respondents and Focus Group invitees. The event will also be promoted through the City's usual channels.

The invitation which includes more information about presenters is attached as Appendix B.

Following the Summit, staff will look at ideas generated from the community and, where feasible, consider how and when various initiatives might move forward, including the potential for a partnered approach.

### **Internal Circulation:**

Director, Active Living & Culture Division  
Communications Supervisor  
Community Engagement Consultant  
Parks and Buildings Planning Manager

### **Existing Policy:**

This report is submitted pursuant to Council Cultural Policy 274 and Engage Policy 372.

### **Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Legal/Statutory Authority  
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements  
Financial/Budgetary Considerations  
Personnel Implications  
External Agency/Public Comments

Communications Comments  
Alternate Recommendation

Submitted by:

S. Kochan, Cultural Services Manager

**Approved for inclusion:** J. Gabriel, Division Director, Active Living & Culture

Attachments:

Appendix A: Findings Report from 2016 Creative Spaces Consultations

Appendix B: Invitation to 2017 Creative Spaces Summit

cc:

Director, Active Living & Culture Division

Communications Supervisor

Community Engagement Consultant

Parks and Buildings Planning Manager