

CIVIC PARTNER 2019 ANNUAL REPORT SNAPSHOT- CALGARY CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS (ARTS COMMONS)

CPS2020-1051 Attachment 17
ISC:INRSTRCTFN

CALGARY CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS (ARTS COMMONS)

Mission: To bring the arts...to life.

Mandate: To foster, present and promote the arts; to provide and care for our assets; to ensure optimal utilization of our assets.

Registered Charity

One Calgary Line of Service: Economic Development and Tourism

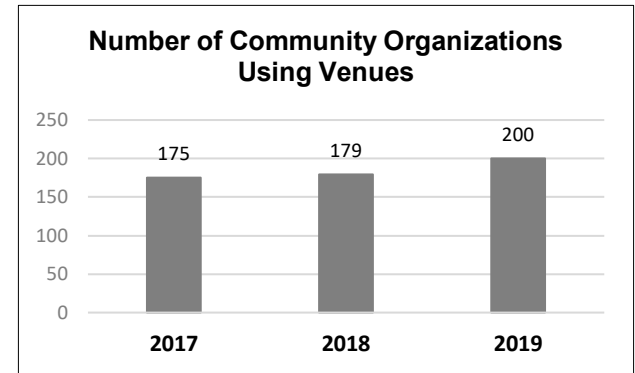
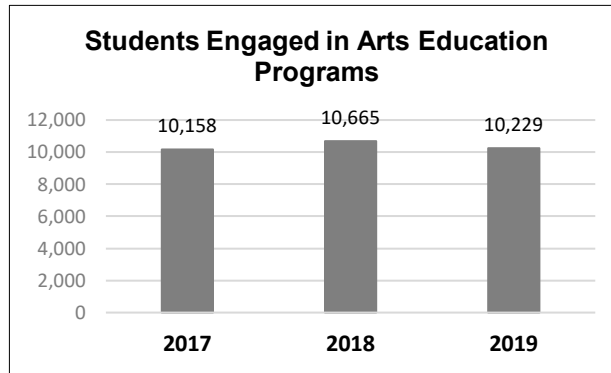
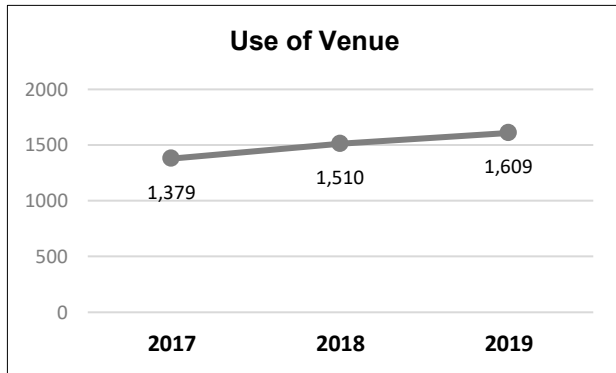
2019 City Investment

Operating Grant:\$2,479,738

Capital Grant:\$1,555,993

City owned asset? Yes

2019 Results



The story behind the numbers

- Arts Commons is a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and wellbeing of Calgarians and visitors.
- Arts Commons works collaboratively with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District to bring high-quality and immersive learning experiences to Calgary students and their teachers.
- Arts Commons maintains meaningful relationships with the public and private sectors that support provision of programs and services for the benefit of the community.

Current state 2020: COVID-19 impact

- All venues closed on March 12, and the full facility closed on March 23.
- To support the sustainability of resident companies, Arts Commons waived \$487,057 in venue occupancy fees through to August 2020, and continues to work with them to navigate a very uncertain 2020/21 season.
- Implemented a robust process to analyze expenses to reduce expenses including direct costs, contracts with vendors, elimination everything but essential maintenance, moved to emergency lighting and limited air flow to reduce utility costs.

Service impact: Severe

Current demand for services: Demand has decreased notably.

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Organizational Structure: Independent External Organization

Fiscal Year: August 31, 2018

Manage/Operate City Owned Asset: Arts Commons

City 2019 Operating Grant: \$2,479,738

City 2019 Capital Grant: \$1,555,993

STRUCTURE

1. Vision, Mission and Mandate:

Vision Statement: A creative and compassionate society, inspired through the arts.

Mission Statement: To bring the arts...to life.

Mandate:

- To foster, present and promote the arts.
- To provide and care for our assets.
- To ensure optimal utilization of our assets.

2019 RESULTS

2. What key results did your organization achieve in 2019 that contributed to one or more of the One Calgary Citizen Priorities? (*A Prosperous City, A City of Safe & Inspiring Neighbourhoods, A Healthy and Green City, A Well Run City*)

- Arts Commons played a critical role in the sustainability of 200 organizations (resident companies, not-for-profit and others) by maintaining the complex's 560,665 gross square feet of space that houses six performance venues, rehearsal halls, shops, a variety of public engagement spaces and administrative spaces.
- Arts Commons subsidized the cost of venues and facility utilization for its resident companies: Alberta Theatre Projects, Arts Commons Presents, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, One Yellow Rabbit and Theatre Calgary, and numerous community user groups; serving as incubator and facilitator and increasing access to venues and services to numerous communities.
- Arts Commons completed an extensive program of lifecycle maintenance initiatives to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the complex, and to improve accessibility. Please refer to question 12 regarding Arts Commons capital and asset management accomplishments.
- Arts Commons consulted with representatives from a number of organizations and community groups who have yet to experience Arts Commons as a gathering or presentation space, in an effort to understand how to more effectively allocate existing internal resources to assist these groups access our venues and programs. An example of this work is a unique first, we collaborated with Youth PLACE Performance, to give space and resources to a group of racialized youth to create and perform a show in the Engineered Air Theatre at Arts Commons, based on their life experiences. The show was such a success that there are future plans to remount it in the Martha Cohen Theatre to a larger audience.
- Arts Commons is a major presenter of the performing arts in Canada. Under the banner of 'Arts Commons Presents', Arts Commons presented the award-winning BD&P World Stage, Classic



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Albums Live, *National Geographic Live*, PCL Blues, TD Jazz, and a number of other single engagements, welcoming 50,609 audience members.

- Arts Commons is a significant employer of performing and visual artists; engaging 815 artists to support our artistic, education, and community engagement programs.
- Arts Commons, in partnership with RBC Foundation, created the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program to provide an exceptional opportunity for emerging visual artists to develop their artistic practice, to showcase their work to the public through exhibitions, open studio and speaking engagements, and hone their professional skills in order to build a solid foundation for a successful career. With the advent of this program, Arts Commons now provides a safe space to take risks, and benefit from one-on-one mentorship opportunities, professional development sessions, networking social events, and exhibition opportunities. Becoming a successful artist is about more than innate ability; it is a purposeful combination of support, opportunity, meaningful hard work, and mentorship.
- Arts Commons played a key role in fostering and promoting the development and delivery of educational programs by partnering with the Calgary Board of Education, the Calgary Catholic School District. During 2019, 10,665 students and educators participated in the *National Geographic Live* student matinee series, One Day Art School, Artist-in-Residence, and the ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning.

3. What quality improvement changes did you make, or operational efficiencies did you find in 2019?

Arts Commons upgraded its security and access systems and replaced failing doors and hardware. We replaced the previous i-disc system with a modern card access system which allows for greater security and tracking through the facility. We moved to the Milestone CCTV system and upgraded 64 existing cameras and added 59 more so there are now 123 cameras throughout the facility. The new system gives better detail, footage can be easily exported (especially helpful for Police reports and requests), and alarms can be set for when high risk areas are accessed so there can be an instant review.

Arts Commons reviewed and improved our Occupational Health and Safety documents and procedures. We invested in professional training through AASP (Alberta Association of Safety Partnerships) for the Co-Chairs of our OH&S Committee, increased the number of committee members, the frequency of the meetings, and the frequency of site inspections. We updated the Front of House and Production Emergency Training protocols and increased training frequency.

4. What program, service or initiative was most successful in 2019? What lessons learned from this experience can inform future work?

Arts Commons' commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) is embedded in our vision of a "creative and compassionate society inspired through the arts". We work to remove barriers in collaboration with a broad range of voices, and as our community evolves, so too did our approach to IDEA during 2019.

As a member of Calgary's diverse arts community, Arts Commons recognizes the vital role we play in shaping the narrative through the stories we tell—and those we choose not to tell. Arts Commons made a commitment, long ago: to champion more artists of colour by providing a safe space for their expression, actively inviting them to create, perform, gather, and share their stories; to reflect the diversity of our communities on- and off-stage; and to use our leadership positions to demonstrate and embody our values – Do the Right Thing, Be Our Best Always, Be Open - Hearts, Minds, Arms.



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In 2019, we embarked on a partnership with Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society - Mokinstsis and Gathering Spaces Today, to support two Indigenous artists in residency. They exhibited their thought-provoking works in the +15 galleries, while facilitating the creation of new works with artist consultation of Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers. The result – powerful art and insight into how to address our role in truth and reconciliation, using this contemporary gathering space in a way that respects the original caretakers of this land.

We also saw the launch of our Amplify Cabarets, a series of cabaret style performances featuring artists that highlight inclusivity and diversity through artistic expression, comedy, and commentary. During our Black History Month cabaret entitled *We Gon Be Alright*, the curator – Mel Vee, brought together black women and queer black folks to give another perspective on Black History Month, from the viewpoint of people in our community whose voices are not heard often enough.

Arts Commons has a role to play in making the world a better, more just place for all. In the immediate, we are going to take the time needed to engage with our community partners, to educate ourselves as much as possible in order to learn what we are certain we do not know, and to thoughtfully consider how we can contribute to this necessary change. We will keep our community informed of our progress and our initiatives and hope our community will take this journey with us – a journey towards our vision of a “creative and compassionate society inspired through the arts”.

5. What is one success story from 2019 that demonstrates how you worked in partnership with other community, private or public organizations to achieve shared results for Calgary and Calgarians?

With all the fantastically talented musicians who come through our doors, we sometimes have the opportunity to connect these musicians with students for unique learning and mentorship interactions. When the legendary Bobby McFerrin came to perform as part of our TD Jazz series, one such opportunity came up. We partnered with CADME (Calgary Association for the Development of Music Education) for a special, sold out engagement of “circle-singing” with McFerrin, featuring young singers from our local high schools and universities. These young artists were beaming throughout and after the performance and many claimed the experience to be “life changing”.

RESOURCES

6. Please estimate how The City’s operating funding was allocated in 2019. Mark all areas that apply by approximate percentage. For example, 45% allocated to staffing costs, 10% to evaluation or research, etc.

%	Advertising and promotion
5%	Programs or services
%	Office supplies and expenses
%	Professional and consulting fees
%	Staff compensation, development and training
%	Fund development
10%	Purchased supplies and assets
85%	Facility maintenance
%	Evaluation or Research
%	Other, please name:

7. Did volunteers support your operations in 2019? If yes:

How many volunteers?	100
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Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:	1500
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8. What resources did your organization leverage to support operations in 2019?

Arts Commons received an operating grant of \$2,480,000 from The City of Calgary to assist in the fulfillment of its mandate to care for the facility and to foster, present and promote the arts. Arts Commons leveraged The City’s operating grant to generate an additional \$10,564,797 in ticket sales and other earned revenues; contributions from other levels of government; and community support through corporate sponsorship, foundation partnerships, and philanthropic gifts from corporations and individuals in support of Arts Commons’ operations (ratio of 1:4).

9. Using the chart below, please report your 2019 performance measures that demonstrate: how much you did, how well you did it, and how Calgarians are better off. Please identify through BOLD font, 1-2 measures that are most significant and could be presented in a chart.

	Performance Measure Name	2017 results	2018 results	2019 results	What story does this measure tell about your work?
How much did you do?	Use of Arts Commons’ venues (Arts Learning Centre, Big Secret Theatre, Engineered Air Theatre, Jack Singer Concert Hall, Martha Cohen Theatre, Max Bell Theatre, Motel, and The Hub.	1,379 performances concerts or events held by 175 community organizations	1,510 performances concerts or events held by 179 community organizations	1,609 performances concerts or events held by 200 community organizations	Arts Commons is a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and wellbeing of Calgarians and visitors.
	Number of students engaged in arts education programming, including participation in the <i>National Geographic Live</i> Student Matinees Series, ConocoPhillips Canada Hub for Inspired Learning, One Day Arts School, and Artist-in-Residence.	10,158 students attended youth-oriented programs performances or events.	10,665 students attended youth-oriented programs performances or events.	10,229 students attended youth-oriented programs performances or events.	Arts Commons works collaboratively with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District to bring high-quality and immersive learning experiences to Calgary students and their teachers.
How well did you do it?	Revenue Generation as a result of venue monetization.	\$5,369,567	\$6,085,909	\$5,781,544	Arts Commons successfully monetizes the asset (venues) to



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					support the economic resiliency and sustainability of the 560,665 square foot facility.
	Revenue generation from the public and private sectors in alignment with Arts Commons' operating priorities.	\$4,394,059	\$4,407,263	\$4,323,502	Arts Commons maintains meaningful relationships with the public and private sectors that support provision of programs and services by Arts Commons for the benefit of the community.
How are Calgarians better off?	<p>As a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians, the lives of hundreds of thousands are enriched having benefited from the artistic, education, and community engagement programs produced and presented annually at Arts Commons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Commons worked with several of Calgary's equity-seeking communities to build trust and meaningful relationships that help strengthen our community. During 2019, Arts Commons Presents committed to and invested in a new stream of community and artist development, dedicated to traditionally underserved communities. The Amplify Cabaret series, including: <i>We Gon Be Alright</i> during Black History Month, <i>Love Notes & Coffee</i>, and the <i>Sissy Fit Queer Cabaret</i>, are events curated by diverse artists at the edge of their practice. Bringing new perspectives, connections, and collaborations, these cabaret style performances were received with phenomenal enthusiasm by audience members who described them as 'spectacular' and 'incredible'. <i>"The art performances were incredible, I was very moved, literally to tears."</i> Patron, Amplify Cabaret series. Arts Commons also partnered with several Indigenous communities, engaging a total of 29 Indigenous artists, and invested over \$45K in Indigenous arts, through education, visual arts, and community engagement programs. Arts Commons and the resident companies' annual operations resulted in annual expenditures of \$46.6M. Accounting for the direct, indirect and induced effects, the annual operations contributed \$55M in GDP, supported 686 jobs and generated \$35M in labour income.¹ <i>"We look forward to continuing our sponsorship of the National Geographic Live program from the perspectives of the quality, and especially the extraordinary success that Arts Commons continues to make with its student outreach program."</i> Explorers Circle, Engagement Sponsors In addition to bringing world renowned artists and award-winning productions to our stages, we continued to create accessible opportunities for our community by hosting free public events and providing complimentary tickets to those who would otherwise be unable to attend. During the 2018/19 Season, 372,284 tickets were purchased for performances at Arts Commons, and 13,353 people attended free of charge. 				

¹ Economic Contribution Study of Arts Commons, Deloitte, 2019



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	<p><i>“Arts Commons does an amazing job of creating an experience...with them, you don’t just attend a show, you go out for an evening.”</i> Arts Commons Presents Patron</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arts are tied to mental wellness. Studies have found that engaging with the arts alleviates anxiety, depression, and stress². The arts provide opportunities for people to come together in a setting that encourages personal interaction, promoting a sense of belonging and community. The arts also offer a safe environment to express or reflect on difficult emotions. <p><i>“One student that has always struggled with regular school attendance due to high anxiety was engaged and cheerful each day with no physical pain. He actively participated throughout the entire week. Thank you for this.”</i> Educator, Calgary Catholic School District</p>
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10. Briefly describe how your key results in 2019 contributed to Council approved strategies (As applicable.) For example: Calgary in the new economy: An economic strategy for Calgary; Calgary Heritage Strategy; Climate Resiliency Strategy; Resilient Calgary; Enough for All poverty reduction strategy; Cultural Plan for Calgary; Downtown Strategy; Foundations for Hope: Calgary’s Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy; Open Spaces Plan; Recreation Master Plan; Sport for Life Policy.

Calgary in the new economy: An economic strategy for Calgary - The strategy is intended to align The City of Calgary, its civic partners, the private sector, educators, and other community stakeholders to achieve economic competitiveness while building long-term prosperity and a stronger community. To become the most livable city in Canada, we intend to expand and enhance tourism, cultural and recreational assets.

The existing facility has been enormously successful, but after 34 years, all major infrastructure is at the end (and beyond) of its life.

In partnership with the resident companies, Arts Commons has been in discussions with all three levels of government about the Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project for almost 12 years. ACT will both expand capacity in an adjoining new building and renew the existing facility, not only bringing it up to today’s standards, but developing a business model that positions us and our resident companies for economic sustainability.

This season, we hit some major milestones.

In December 2018, the provincial government announced that they would extend the Rivers District Community Revitalization Levy (CRL) for 20 years in order to fund major municipal infrastructure projects, including the BMO Expansion and ACT.

In March 2019, City Council approved the creation of the Arts Commons Advisory Committee (ACAC) tasked with advancing ACT.

In July 2019, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) completed their review of the ACT Functional Program and validated the original findings, confirming the order of magnitude project cost for Phase One of ACT.

In August 2019, at an event held at Arts Commons' Jack Singer Concert Hall, the Honourable Kent Hehr announced the Government of Canada’s support of ACT by providing conditional approval of \$80M in funding for Phase One.

² <https://www.ucalgary.ca/news/brain-research-shows-arts-promote-mental-health>



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With these successes, our commitment to ACT is stronger than ever and we look forward to continuing our discussions with all three levels of government to move ACT forward in full alignment with Calgary's economic strategy entitled *Calgary in the New Economy*.

Climate Resiliency Strategy - The Climate Resilience Strategy outlines The City's strategies and actions to:

- **Reduce our contributions to climate change by improving energy management and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation); and**
- **Respond to a changing climate by implementing risk management measures to reduce the impact of extreme weather events and climatic changes on infrastructure and services (climate change adaptation).**

Arts Commons installed a state-of-the-art humidification system – the first of its kind in Western Canada. This adiabatic ultrasonic humidification system uses purified water through a reverse osmosis deionization process, which eliminates the use of chemicals, reducing our environmental footprint and allowing us to simultaneously humidify the building.

To keep this air moving efficiently through the building, we replaced the eight variable frequency drives, and installed a further 13 drives. The new drives consume 70 per cent less energy by slowly ramping up the fans in the HVAC system, and modulating their speed and performance throughout the day and night.

Resilient Calgary - Pillar 2: Inclusive Futures - The goal of this pillar is that Calgary institutions (including public, private, not for profit, etc.) have trusted and informed relationships with Calgary's equity-seeking communities.

Arts Commons is a shared space for all members of our community to come together to share different viewpoints, experience a variety of art forms, and have impactful experiences.

Continuing our partnership with Action Dignity and the Philippine Festival Council of Alberta (PFCA), Arts Commons Presents hosted the monthly, multi-day Youth Empowerment Program workshops, which provides Filipino-Canadian youth an opportunity to develop their personal, social, and professional skills. These workshops are ongoing and inspire and empower youth to be more active, lead, and contribute positively to the community.

A very different set of connections was made during National Indigenous Peoples Day. In the spirit of participation and understanding, Arts Commons invited dancers from throughout Treaty 7 territory to come and perform. Completely led by Indigenous Peoples, the event also featured Cree, Ojibway, and Metis artist Chantal Chagnon, who hosted a three-day drum workshop. Said Chagnon, "*You learn so much not only about the culture, not only about the history, but also about yourself.*" Other artists included Anders Hunter, lead singer for Eya-Hey Nakoda; Richard Sparvier, programmer and emcee for the Pow Wow; and Shirly Hill, Indigenous Dance and Workshop lead.

Cultural Plan for Calgary - The Cultural Plan for Calgary is a roadmap for the planning and use of cultural resources to strengthen our economy and improve the quality of life for our residents.

From show stopping dance numbers to heart-wrenching personal drama to a real-life Disney princess, Arts Commons had it all.

Alberta Theatre Projects swept up the crowd with the fun, relatable, and inspiring story of a group of unlikely athletes who face off against local prejudice in *The New Canadian Curling Club*. A review in the Calgary Herald described the experience as "*so exciting and rewarding to hear so much spontaneous, heartfelt laughter*", and the full house each night proved it to be a fan favourite.



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The Arts Commons Presents audience was blown away by both the music and the confetti cannons during OK Go's science experiment meshed with musical innovation gone wild. The quirky and experimental band performed an off-the wall, multi-media arts and science mashup to an enthusiastic and sold out crowd

The Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra beautifully collaborated with the likes of Inuit Throat Singer Tanya Tagaq, Canadian singer-songwriter Hawksley Workman, and Celtic-Canadian powerhouse Heather Rankin. Of their entire season, however, *Provocative: Percussion + Tchaikovsky* definitely stood out. The evening, led by Principal Percussionist Josh Jones, featured an incredible 31 percussion instruments on the stage. But the most inspiring aspect of the performance was the fact that Jones had only three months prior undergone surgery for cancer and was returning to give attendees a triumphant concert performance.

Downstage continued to impress and provoke rich discussion with their innovative, heart-warming, and thoughtful productions including the World Premiere presentation of *Smoke* by Alberta playwright Elena Belyea. Tackling the emotional issue of assault within a romantic relationship, *Smoke* featured the main couple portraying both an opposite-sex and same-sex couple on alternate nights.

One Yellow Rabbit's High Performance Rodeo kept us warm in January, with a line-up of exceptional and thoroughly unexpected works to keep us energized and engaged. Shane Koyczan, who stole hearts at the opening ceremonies of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, and had his poem *To This Day* go viral on YouTube in 2013, filled the Jack Singer Concert Hall as the HPR headliner, and the exceptionally unique *COW LOVE* by La Société Protectrice de Petites Idées impressed audiences with a performance full of fresh humour and virtuosic style.

Theatre Calgary's production of *Billy Elliot The Musical* was an inspiring and moving tale reminding us to pursue our dreams with pride and determination. Choreographed by former Alberta Ballet principal dancer Yukichi Hattori and directed by Artistic Director, Stafford Arima, this Tony Award-winning musical featured some of the best and brightest of Calgary's dance community

***Downtown Strategy* - Downtown is the economic and cultural heart of Calgary, and when our Downtown thrives, so does the rest of the city. It's vitally important for The City and the community to invest its support in planning and creating a livable, thriving and caring core. To help support Calgary's economic recovery, we've created a downtown strategy that brings together our civic and community partners through coordinated and collaborative work. We are committed to making life better every day for citizens, customers, residents and businesses through our focus on the following four pillars.**

Arts Commons, located in the heart of downtown Calgary, offers beautiful and purposeful venues for every kind of event, from weddings to corporate retreats, and concerts to graduations. This season, our venues were filled by the resident companies and 200 community organizations looking for the perfect space to host their event, in a central location with a variety of amenities and access points nearby.

We are always thrilled to host a diverse array of events in our spaces. This season was no exception, with a wide variety of events, including: 6 Degrees Calgary, which gathered a panel of local changemakers along with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship Co-Chairs to discuss how communities and societies can be more resilient, inclusive, and cohesive; Crescendo, a one-of-a-kind musical event that included awesome light projections, amazing performances, and inspiring stories shared in order to raise funds for the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation; the awe inspiring Chris Hadfield, who celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing; the uproarious and unapologetic Hater's Roast, which featured the best in drag performers; the hilarious John Cleese, who shared his humorous



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insights on life; and YouTube sensation, Scott Bradlee's Post Modern Jukebox, who had the audience dancing in the aisles.

Arts Commons continued to support our community through sponsorship of popular events such as the Top 40 Under 40 gala, which honoured: Col Cseke, a former ensemble member of resident company, Downstage, and the current Artistic Director of Inside Out Theatre, for his work in making theatre more accessible for artists and audience members with disabilities; and artist, author, musician, and Assistant Professor, Vivek Shraya, who graced the cover of the last issue of our Arts Commons Magazine and was featured in our +15 Soundscape with her brother, Shamik Bilgi, who is also her artistic partner in the musical group Too Attached.

Sadly, we still had to turn hundreds of events away due to limited space and availability and we look forward to when our Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project becomes a reality, increasing our available space and securing a more sustainable future for Arts.

11. Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2019 that you want to highlight?

Arts Commons did not receive any awards in 2019.

12. CAPITAL AND ASSET MANAGEMENT (for Civic Partners managing City-owned assets)

Asset: Arts Commons (Plan A Calgary - Block 61 - Lots 8 to 16 and 21 to 40)

a) Provide a summary of your organization's 2019 capital work, including specific lifecycle/maintenance projects or new capital projects.

Apart from what you see on stage, the singers, the actors, the sets and costumes, there is so much more that you do not see at Arts Commons. From the air circulation systems that keep the theatres cool or warm, humid or dry, to the flooring under your feet as you walk to your seat, it all has a purpose, and a lifespan.

One of the most significant projects we embarked on in the 2018/19 Season was to assess and replace many of the air systems and supporting system hardware in the building including the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning) system and building automation system. This complex automation system tracks all the heating, cooling, humidification, and air return systems in the building. Not only has the new system made for huge energy savings, but it also allows us to detect problems in the system before they become major issues.

The HVAC system in Arts Commons is over 30 years old, and tied in with the replacement of the building automation system was the complete replacement of the air distribution systems for the Engineered Air Theatre, Max Bell and Martha Cohen Rehearsal Halls, and the Founders Room (adjacent to the Jack Singer Concert Hall lobby). Hundreds of feet of ducting had to be torn out and replaced to allow for even distribution of air circulation in these spaces. Now both patrons and artists can breathe easier and be more comfortable.

When it comes to visible changes, the Max Bell and Jack Singer Concert Hall lobbies both received a much-needed carpet replacement and the Martha Cohen Theatre received a new wheelchair lift, providing accessibility to all levels of the lobby. The Jack Singer Concert Hall also received new acoustic banners throughout the hall and backstage area, both improving the sound quality in the hall and the appearance of the previous threadbare banners. The Jack Singer Concert Hall hoists were replaced as well. The four hoists had reached their end of life long ago and two of the hoists had previously been disassembled and used for parts to keep the remaining two hoists operational.



All these improvements are just a small glimpse into the moving parts of what goes on behind-the-scenes in the hardworking Arts Commons building.

b) What funding did your organization leverage to support capital activities in 2019?

In addition to the grant of \$1,556,250.00 provided by The City of Calgary through Civic Partner Infrastructure Grant Program (CPIGP), Arts Commons invested \$1,261,169.00 through the Capital Replacement Fund (CRF).

COVID-19 UPDATE

13. Briefly describe the key impacts of COVID-19 on your operations to date.

This unprecedented global health crisis has negatively impacted the wellbeing of all of us, ravaged our economy, and created a way of life that has each of us in various stages of adjustment.

Our decision-making throughout this extraordinary public health emergency has been guided by our values.

Recognizing Arts Commons has an important role to play in limiting the spread of COVID-19, we have adhered to all directives issued by the Government of Alberta. We closed all venues on March 12, 2020, and subsequently closed the 560,000 square foot facility on March 23, 2020 - vowing to resume operations only when it is safe to do so.

In addition to the enriching our lives, the arts are an economic driver and are essential to economic recovery. Prior to the pandemic, in Calgary alone, arts organizations contributed \$128 million to Alberta's GDP, supported almost 1,750 full-time-equivalent jobs, and generated an estimated \$18.7 million in revenues that were contributed directly to the Alberta government.³

Arts and culture institutions are particularly vulnerable as the bulk of our revenue generating capacity has been shut down to reduce the spread of the virus. Arts Commons' revenue losses for the period of March to August 2020 are significant - \$3.2 million or 57% of our forecasted revenues.

We plan for a future with all the resident companies (Alberta Theatre Projects, Arts Commons Presents, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, One Yellow Rabbit and Theatre Calgary) continuing to do amazing work in Arts Commons. In an effort to ensure that they remain viable and survive the pandemic, we took the decision to waive \$487,057 in their venue occupancy fees through to August 2020, and we continue to work with them to navigate a very uncertain 2020/21 Season.

The magnitude of the financial impact that the COVID-19 crisis and physical distancing directives have had on arts organizations of all sizes and individual artists is staggering. Overnight revenues from ticket sales due to cancelled programming, school bookings, venue rentals, and special events were lost, and the countless event cancellations have also translated into lost income for artists, musicians, and cultural workers.

With the assistance of a grant of \$20,000 from the Rozsa Foundation, and \$27,355 donated to Arts Commons by 190 ticket buyers who took the decision to donate the value of their tickets to cancelled performances due to the pandemic, Arts Commons was able to pay all Alberta-based artists for services, rendered or not, through to the end of the 2019/20 Season. One impacted artist wrote, *"I cannot thank Arts Commons, their public funders and all the donors who have chosen*

³ Economic Impact Assessment of the Annual Operations of Calgary Arts Organizations, KPMG, 2018 & Economic Contribution Study of Arts Commons, Deloitte, 2019



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to support artists during this unprecedented and difficult time. This pandemic has been incredibly challenging on artists because many of us rely on multiple sources of income with little to no benefits. This touches my heart so much.”

Like many other organizations, one of our largest expense lines are people – about 45% of our budget each year. In March 2020, we took the necessary decision to lay off most of our casual staff and provided one additional week of pay. With the generous support of our Board, we were also able to create a Hardship Response Fund, through which we’ve been able to provide casual employees with unlimited access to our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) that will provide them with free, confidential services on a wide range of topics such as health and wellness, financial planning, elder care, parenting, mental health wellness, and counselling.

As the closure of our building continues, we want to ensure our casual employees know that we are thinking of them and miss seeing them in our venues. In June, our management team wrote the first of a series of personal cards to those employees and enclosed a gift card for groceries to help support them during this difficult time.

The response from this initiative has been heartwarming. Here is one of many messages we have received in response to the initiative:

I thank you all for your genuine love, care and kindly concern, in different ways, for everyone who are connected with Arts Commons, especially for employees like myself. To let us know we matter and are not forgotten is over and above the responsibilities of the employer during this COVID-19 pandemic, so thank you once again. Thank you also for the enclosed gift card, which is so unexpected but received with a grateful heart!

I also miss my community of extended family – stay safe, healthy and happy.

We will continue to monitor the wellbeing of our casual employees, and because of the Board’s generosity, we are grateful to be able to lend a helping hand.

For our salaried staff, we did not want to make any quick decisions out of fear, decisions that would negatively impact staff or their families. Because despite all that is going on in the world, we do have a future and it is a strong and bright one.

The program that has been a bright light in the darkness, is the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). This program provided Arts Commons with the necessary support to keep our salaried staff employed, most working from home, and focused on ensuring we are able to resume delivery of our artistic, educational, and community engagement programs, once the authorities deem that we’re able to do so safely.

It is not a matter of ‘if’ we come back, but ‘when’. When that day comes, we will need to be a huge part of healing society through community building and providing shared experiences. When we look back a year or two from now, we need to be able to say that we were able to use this time to stay focused on the right priorities, helping keep our community and people safe, and preparing for a future that will need the arts more than ever.

14. What operational efficiencies did you implement to address the impact of COVID-19 up to September 1, 2020?

We undertook a very robust process of analyzing expenses to find ways of cutting as many expenses as possible, including:

- direct costs (those linked to the generation of our earned revenues)



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- reaching out to our vendors to pull back on services we no longer require
- eliminating everything but essential maintenance
- upon closure of the building to the public we have moved to emergency lighting and limited air flow where possible to save on utilities
- eliminating equipment purchases and administrative costs

15. Were there any program or service changes made during the response to COVID-19 that you plan to integrate into longer term operations? For example, shifting some programming online, or modifications to your delivery model or operations.

While Arts Commons continues to remain closed, our facilities and production teams have been hard at work with summer maintenance and critical life-cycle projects. Arts Commons was able to pivot quickly when COVID-19 first hit, and capital projects that were originally slated to take place in July and August began in April; most notably the replacement of stage lighting and audio systems with state-of-the-art technology in the Jack Singer Concert Hall, numerous venue and stage improvements are also being tackled. The arrival of new equipment has also allowed us to relocate audio gear to the Engineered Air Theatre and the Martha Cohen Theatre, providing significant upgrades to their inventories.

In response to an increased hunger for in-person arts experiences, on July 22nd, Arts Commons launched **ArtsXpeditions**, a series of free, outdoor performances for Calgarians of all ages. By announcing the location and time of these pop-up concerts an hour before start-time on our social media channels, we help prevent unsafe crowds by ensuring that the only people attending are those who were already in close proximity to the performance. Once there, our staff ensures that artists and audience members keep a safe physical distance while enjoying the performance. ArtsXpeditions is also providing much needed engagement and income to our local artist community, many of whom have been facing financial hardships since live performances were banned due to COVID-19.

**COVID-19 Service and Impact Demand Update
Reporting for September 2020**

The following information is collected to align with City of Calgary report to Council on the current impact of COVID-19 on delivery of services and programs and may be shared with Council separately from the previous Civic Partner Annual Report Template content.

Service Impact

Please choose the one option below that best describes the impact of COVID-19 on your programs or service in the month of September 2020.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Negligible	Minimal to no impact on service. Service is currently operating close to normal.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor	Continuing to provide programs and services but some coping strategies required – able to be addressed with existing strategies and resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	Some challenges on ability to achieve objectives. Some delay. Some aspects of the programs or service are only being met in part.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Significant	Difficulties to achieve objectives. Delays or notable aspects of objectives not completed. Falling well-short of normal operations.



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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Severe	Unable to meet normal objectives due to serious extended disruption. (e.g. full facility closure, major decrease in users)
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Service Impact Narrative:

Please briefly describe the impact of COVID-19 on your service for the month of September. You may want to include any major issues/events you experienced.

Though we are working towards a resumption of operations during 2020/21 Season, there is still a great deal of uncertainty, and realistically we do not expect operations to return to normal for some time yet. Research points to the arts and culture sector being one of the last to resume, thus taking longer to recover. Many arts organizations have needed to cancel their summer festivals and some performing arts organizations have decided to forgo their 2020/21 Season in their entirety, or at least delay them until 2021. This is not only because of the uncertainty around how to manage reopening safely, but also because of the reduced capacity that would be required for physical distancing, making reopening unviable from a financial perspective.

While the loss of a portion of the 2019/20 Season, and now a portion of the 2020/21 Season, is proving to be difficult for many of us, we're grateful for the opportunity to start thinking about reopening when it's safe to do so. We recognize the essential role that the arts will play in rebuilding our community and celebrating Calgary's resilience.

The arts are also tied to mental wellness. Studies have found that engaging with the arts alleviates anxiety, depression, and stress. The arts provide opportunities for people to come together in a setting that encourages personal interaction, promoting a sense of belonging and community. The arts also offer a safe environment to express or reflect on difficult emotions. If there was ever a time that we needed to leverage all that we have at our disposal to ensure the wellbeing of our communities, the time would be now.

Our main priority throughout this process continues to be the health and wellbeing of our community, our staff members and volunteers, and the artists we are privileged to welcome on our stages.

While there is still a great deal of uncertainty on what the future entails, "Business as Usual" is now "Business Unusual" and we will have to be incredibly diligent to ensure we have appropriate plans and the right capacity to move forward in a fiscally responsible manner. Of course, all while striving to taking care of our people and helping our community heal through the arts.

As COVID-19 continues to evolve and impact our day-to-day lives, we also want to extend our gratitude to The City of Calgary for remaining committed to the success of Canada, our province, The City, and Calgary's artistic community.

Current Demand for Service:

At this point in time, based on what you know right now, what is your best estimate of the current demand for your service compared to typical demand?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Demand is steady, largely business as usual.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demand has increased notably.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demand has decreased notably.

Service Demand Narrative:



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Please provide a supporting narrative that describes how COVID-19 has impacted the demand on your programs or services for September 2020. This may include any new program or service impacts that your organization has faced in the past month.

Arts Commons will remain closed throughout September 2020. Arts Commons, in partnership with the resident companies, are in discussions to determine how and when we can resume operations later this season while adhering to Alberta Health Services (AHS) guidelines.