

CIVIC PARTNER 2021 ANNUAL REPORT SNAPSHOT- ARTS COMMONS

ISC:UNRESTRICTED

**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.

**One Calgary Line of Service: Arts and Culture**

Registered Charity

**2021 City Investment**

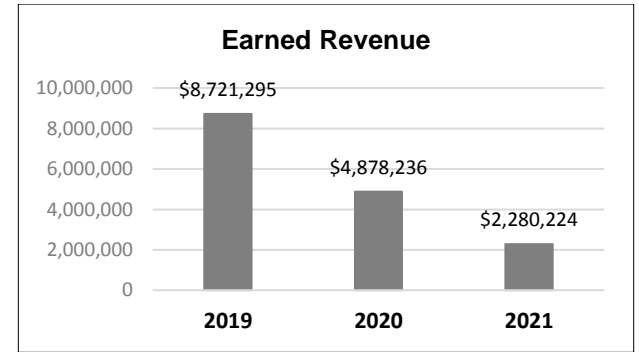
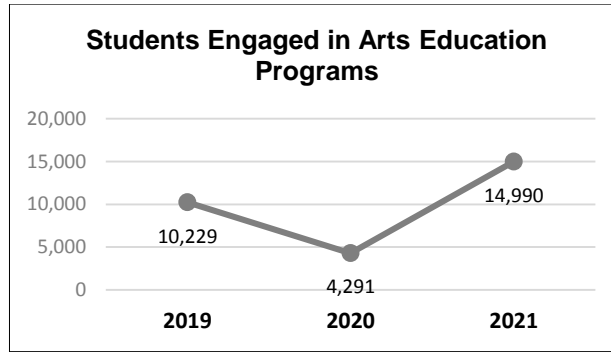
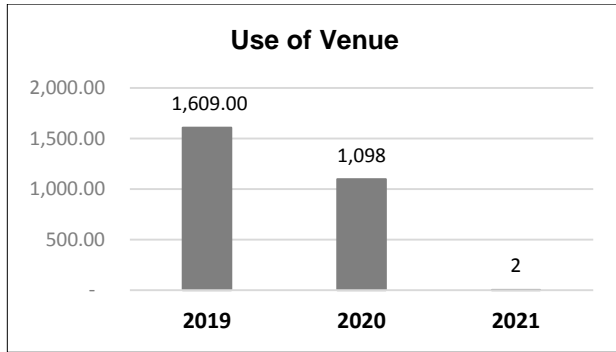
**Operating Grant:** \$2,546,350

**Capital Grant:** \$1,182,120

**Economic Resiliency Fund:** \$439,000

City owned asset

**2021 Results**



**The story behind the numbers**

- Due to public health measures, Arts Commons was closed for in-person live experiences for most of the 2020-21 season.
- Arts Commons pivoted and worked with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District to bring high-quality online learning experiences to Calgary students and educators.
- The closure of Arts Commons through most of the 2020-21 season negatively impacted all earned revenue generation.

**Impact of COVID-19:**

The facility remained closed to the public in 2021, and the venue used the opportunity for upgrades and repairs. Funding was secured from all levels of government to support operations including the Canadian Heritage's *Support for Workers in Live Arts and Music Sectors Fund*; Infrastructure Canada's *Healthy Communities Initiative*; and Canadian Association for the Performing Arts' Presenters Capacity Building Program.

**Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:**

Arts Commons launched a blog that included a Guest Writer series that elevated Calgary's BIPOC and LGBTQ+ voices; and its new Incubator Program has been showcased for helping build opportunities for racialized artists. The organization continued to build an Indigenous Strategy and worked with Elders from the Piikani Nation.



## 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.

**Our Values:**

- Do the right thing - behave with integrity, apply professionalism, be honest, and err on the side of grace.
- Be our best always - in service, in leadership, in professionalism, and in providing a quality experience.
- Open our minds, hearts, arms - through empathy, openness, trust, and collaboration.

## 2021 RESULTS

2. **What key results did your organization achieve in 2021 that contributed to one or more of the [One Calgary Citizen Priorities](#), or contributed to Council-approved strategies such as *Calgary in the New Economy: An economic strategy for Calgary*, *Calgary Heritage Strategy*, *Cultural Plan for Calgary*, *Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy*, or other strategy.**

In a season with unprecedented challenges and course-corrections, the Arts Commons family also faced a personal challenge: losing one of the brightest stars of the Canadian arts community, Alberta Theatre Projects Executive & Artistic Director Darcy Evans. To continue Darcy's powerful legacy, Alberta Theatre Projects announced the Darcy Evans Legacy Fund, a three-month mentorship program for emerging professionals to gain executive experience in the theatre industry. Darcy inspired a new generation of cultural leaders, and this important initiative by Alberta Theatre Projects and the family of Darcy Evans will pave the way for that work to continue. The program's fundraising efforts earned over \$100,000 in the 2020-21 Season.

Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra has always known the value of shared music experiences, or what one audience member this season called "powerful beacons in the darkness." During the COVID-19 pandemic, Calgary Phil launched All Access, a virtual portal to performances showcasing everything from Johann Sebastian Bach to Indigenous and JUNO Award winning composer Tanya Tagaq. Thanks to the support of their community, Calgary Phil was also able to move their Education Concerts online, reaching 52 schools and over 4,200 students.

Taking the challenge of the virtual pivot head on, Downstage presented *Deer Woman*, an undeniably powerful one-woman show that successfully blended the media of film and stage for a story of strength and righteous vengeance. After its premiere, it was picked up and streamed by the National Arts Centre Indigenous Theatre in Ottawa, Chinook Festival in partnership with Azimuth Theatre here in Calgary, and the Kia Mau Festival in New Zealand.

In recognition of the 35<sup>th</sup> High Performance Rodeo, One Yellow Rabbit – as they always do – found a singular way to celebrate Calgary’s longest standing theatre festival. For 35 days, 35 artists from past and future High Performance Rodeos took over the @HPRodeo social media channels with new works lasting one to three minutes. Each artist answered the question “Who Are You Now?” through song, dance, new music, and performances. This free, online, bite-sized festival spread through word of mouth, drastically increasing the festival’s social engagement and followers. Its structure allowed audiences from around the world to engage in works from local, national, and international artists. Instagram followers alone grew from approximately 1,000 to over 5,000 in 35 days. The videos created by the artists continue to be the most viewed content on the @HPRodeo social media platforms, receiving continuous engagement nearly a year later.

In November of 2020, Theatre Calgary welcomed their new Executive Director Maya Choldin who brings with her an extensive and diversified theatre and arts background. She arrived just in time to celebrate the long-time beloved audience tradition, *A Christmas Carol*, in a very different incarnation from seasons past. The virtual presentation of *A Christmas Carol* premiered in December 2020 and was viewed by an estimated 20,000 people, including people from every Canadian province as well as 20 other countries like Mexico, the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, Qatar, Japan, Kenya, the United States and more. The production was also honoured with six Alberta Media Production Industries Association (AMPIA) Rosie Award nominations for best Directing, Acting, Score, Writing, Scripted Feature, and Production Reflecting Cultural Diversity.

Also, over the summer, Theatre Calgary packed up their performance mentorship program for young artists and brought it on the road with Shakespeare on the Go! Presenting three different casts and scripts of Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors*, Theatre Calgary popped up in 41 locations all over Calgary.

While the COVID-19 pandemic was full of challenges, it also created opportunities for completely new ways to engage with our community. Arts Commons Presents’ wildly successful *National Geographic Live* series found a new home online, expanding our audience to over twice as many people as could fit in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. Building on the success of *Nat Geo Live: Backstage* from the 2019-20 Season, *National Geographic Live Virtual* brought the beloved speaker series to 59,573 viewers across Alberta. Without the support of ConocoPhillips Canada, Keyera Corp., Enbridge Inc. and Saskatchewan Mining and Minerals Inc., Arts Commons would not have been able to offer *National Geographic Live Virtual* for free to our entire Calgary community.

Arts Commons Presents’ TD Amplify Cabarets also made the jump online this season, taking themes of love, cultural learning and understanding, celebration of identity, and personal acceptance to both the stage and screen. Filmed in the Engineered Air Theatre, the series invited patrons back into our building, albeit virtually, to witness four hosts and their casts of artists express their truths through dance, music, spoken word, and dialogue. For the *Braving Beauty Cabaret*, Marshall Vielle and Toyin Lamas illuminated the connections between artists from the African diaspora and the Indigenous Nations of Treaty 7, with Indigenous dancers and singers alongside African musicians and performers in an impactful evening of art, dialogue, and critical conversations.

Taking the plunge into using the new state-of-the-art Canon gear unveiled in February 2021, TD Jazz invited the Alberta Jazz All-Stars supergroup and songwriter and jazz vocalist Laila Biali to be the first to perform on the Jack Singer Concert Hall stage after nearly 17 months of darkness. Limited, socially distanced audiences experienced the live performances, and virtual audiences later viewed the online recordings for free. These virtual performances reached 195 households, with an estimated 480 individual patrons.

Arts Commons Presents also celebrated the summer months with a brand-new season of ArtsXpeditions, which launched in June and energized neighbourhoods all over Calgary right up until the end of September 2021.

And to bring the summer to a triumphant close, Arts Commons Presents reenergized Calgary's downtown cultural district with *Showtime: A Live Music Celebration*, a free, one-night-only outdoor celebration of food, drink, and live music to thank Calgarians for their support of the arts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The historic Olympic Plaza hosted 1,500 socially distanced friends, patrons, and donors for two spellbinding performances: local gem Amelie Patterson, who serenaded us with her folk-pop melodies, and Classic Albums Live, who rocked the plaza with their recreation of the iconic album: Creedence Clearwater Revival's *Chronicle, Vol. 1*. The event was a huge success. Audience members danced the night away under the stars and even the sky applauded Classic Albums Live's final song by downpouring all over the Plaza! In all senses of the word, it was a splashy return to live performance at Arts Commons.

**3. Using the chart below, please report your 2021 performance measures that demonstrate: how much you did, how well you did it, and how Calgarians are better off.**

	<b>Performance Measure Name</b>	<b>2019 results</b>	<b>2020 results</b>	<b>2021 results</b>	<b>What story does this measure tell about your work?</b>
<b>How much did you do?</b>	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	1,609 performances concerts or events held by 200 community organizations	1,098 performances concerts or events held by 82 community organizations	2 performances concerts with live audience presented by Arts Commons Presents in August 2021	Due to public health measures, Arts Commons was closed for in-person live experiences for most of the 2020-21 Season.
	Number of students engaged in arts education programming, including participation in the <i>National Geographic Live</i> Student Matinees Series, ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning, One Day Arts School, and Artist-in-Residence.	10,229 students attended youth-oriented programs performances or events.	4,291 students attended youth-oriented programs performances or events.	14,990 students and educators that participated in live streamed online educational programming.	Because of the pandemic, Arts Commons was unable to deliver in-person programming, so we pivoted and worked with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District to bring high-quality online learning experiences to Calgary students and educators.
<b>How well did you do it?</b>	Earned Revenue (venue operations, programming, ticket services, facility)	\$8,721,295	\$4,878,236	\$2,280,224	The closure of Arts Commons through most of the 2020-21 Season negatively impacted all Earned Revenue generation.
	Contributed Revenue (public & private sectors)	\$4,323,502	\$4,205,379	\$6,482,903	Contributed Revenues grew dramatically during the 2020-21 Season, reflecting the high value our community places on the Arts Commons ecosystem and its contribution to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and wellbeing of Calgarians.
<b>How are Calgarians better off?</b>	We collectively created connections in a time of profound isolation. Everyone is now keenly aware of the negative impacts of prolonged isolation on physical and mental health. Whether it's participating in a craft or enjoying a live concert, the arts have a well-documented positive effect on our well-being, especially in its ability to alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation. Arts Commons took every opportunity to reach out and keep our community connected. When we announced the 2020-21 Season of PCL				

Blues, we invited our subscribers to an online announcement with a surprise live performance by beloved local blues performer Tim Williams. Subscribers were moved by this authentically candid performance from Tim's own living room, inviting us all into a beautifully intimate moment of artistic expression and sharing. It's opportunities like these, created for our patrons, staff, artists, and greater community, that make all the difference.

No greater was this impact felt than through our beloved *National Geographic Live* series. The move to an online format did not at all diminish the powerful stories shared by the Explorers. The struggles of Velamfundo Primary School in Johannesburg, South Africa shared during the *Women and Migration* presentation with Explorers Saiyna Bashir, Miora Rajaonary, and Danielle Villasana was so poignant that our generous Explorers Circle members made the financial commitment necessary to keep the doors of the school open. Judith Manjoro, a high school teacher, founded the school to provide support to some of South Africa's most vulnerable migrant students and give them the education that they so desperately need in order to build a brighter future for themselves and their families. Because of the support of these Calgary donors, she can continue to do so. This is just one example of how the work of Arts Commons Presents gave members of our community an opportunity to reach out, and in this case create lasting change halfway around the world.

As soon as the weather warmed and people began to venture outside, Arts Commons Presents launched a second season of Arts Xpeditions, a series of pop-up concerts that animated neighbourhoods in all of Calgary's four quadrants. From folk, salsa, pop, and electronica, to drag queens for kids and queer cowboys, Arts Xpeditions demonstrated the incredible spectrum of talent of our local musicians while brightening the days of so many Calgarians. With 78 performances in 30 unique locations, engaging 129 artists, many for multiple engagements, the 2021 edition of Arts Xpeditions more than doubled the impact of the previous year. Over \$36,000 was paid to artists, and over \$20,000 to technicians during a time when the gig economy was unreliable. This significant community initiative was made possible by the generous support of Canadian Heritage through the Support for Workers in Live Arts and Music Sector Fund, and Infrastructure Canada – Healthy Communities Initiative.

For Arts Commons Presents' PCL Blues season, we embarked on a new partnership with CKUA Radio Network. The advanced sound equipment in the Jack Singer Concert Hall, optimized to work with the new Canon camera gear, captured high-quality live performances of PCL Blues performers Tim Williams, Miss Emily, and Rooster Davis, to air on CKUA's Friday Night Blues Party – the first time the series had ever been broadcast in this way. Recorded in August 2021 and shared through CKUA in September, this newfound application of our sound equipment was only made possible by this unprecedented time to think innovatively and create efficiencies provided by the shutdown of the Arts Commons building.

#### **4. Briefly describe the any key impacts of COVID-19 on your operations in 2021.**

As the pandemic stretched into our 2020-21 fiscal year, Arts Commons remained closed to the public. Many Arts Commons and resident company staff worked remotely, embracing the technologies which allowed us to stay connected, even if just on a screen. A building of our size cannot remain empty though and our security, facility, and production teams stayed to make sure the building was safe. This time was used to do much-needed repairs and, using grants from all three levels of government, complete significant venue upgrades.

Keeping our staff was a primary focus when the pandemic started in 2019-20 Season and remained a focus throughout the 2020-21 Season. Significant effort was put into investigating all opportunities for funding to ensure our team remained whole. Critical to this was our ability to access the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy, receiving over \$1.8M in support.

We were also successful in recovering some of the resident company venue occupancy fees forgiven in the prior fiscal year, receiving \$299K through the Canadian Emergency Commercial Rent Subsidy Assistance before that program ended in September 2021. Additionally, our application to the Emergency Resiliency Fund program through the City of Calgary was well-received and resulted in us being awarded \$523K.

We were also faced with the challenge of what we could do with the opportunity of time, something a very busy performing arts centre rarely has. We knew it would not be enough to just survive, we had to emerge stronger, safer, and ready to tackle a new future which would be different — not necessarily better or worse, but different.

Our programming and marketing teams used this time to embrace what a post-pandemic world might look like and to prepare to get back to the business of bringing people together with a new lens of how to do that in person and digitally.

With massive reductions in earned revenues, our development team worked tirelessly to earn grants from Canadian Heritage's Support for Workers in Live Arts and Music Sectors Fund; Infrastructure Canada's Healthy Communities Initiative; Canadian Association for the Performing Arts' Presenters Capacity Building Program, and Canada Council's Strategic Funds & Initiatives. This support allowed us to not only weather the pandemic but to explore new ways of operating as we look to the future.

Another example of a deep, ongoing relationship is the one we have with our generous and loyal sponsors. Even though we were only able to present a very limited 2020-21 Season, we are so grateful to all our sponsors who chose to continue with over \$544K in support and \$198K in gifts-in-kind throughout a year where nothing was as it should be.

Our Board of Directors kickstarted our philanthropic efforts, committing \$552K. This significant level of leadership allowed us to launch a matching program to which our Founders Circle and Explorers Circle members responded enthusiastically pledging another \$176K.

In addition to this unprecedented level of giving, we received another \$67K from over 359 generous supporters through individual and ticket donations.

We could not have gotten through another pandemic-impacted season without the help of our community. We are so grateful for all the support we have received this year. We must also mention our staff who remained focused and open to doing things differently, for their hard work in keeping our home safe, for allowing us to reopen safely and for their enthusiasm for envisioning a future filled with opportunity.

**5. Briefly describe any quality improvement changes or operational efficiencies your organization was able to achieve in 2021.**

Facing a widespread lack of ticket revenue and entering our second season negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Arts Commons recognized that, more than ever before, it was essential that the members of the arts community come together to ensure the survival of the cultural institutions that are vital to the well-being of Calgary.

Within the Arts Commons ecosystem, the resident companies – Alberta Theatre Projects, Arts Commons Presents, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, One Yellow Rabbit, and Theatre Calgary – all navigated the challenges of reaching our community while our venues remained closed.

Thanks to the naming sponsorship and long-term partnership of the Royal Bank of Canada, Arts Commons was able to continue the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program, running a full season of exhibitions in the building that were shared virtually through 3D digital scans of the galleries. The virtual galleries also offered the benefit of a new level of accessibility as anyone could access them anytime from their own personal computer or device. In total, the galleries received 1,520 views.

In addition, the mentorship programs, panels, and workshops that are offered as part of the program moved to an online format as well, allowing all 61 artists to continue to benefit from both the social and professional development initiatives of the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program.

**6. Did your organization implement any strategies or approaches in 2021 that supported racial equity in the delivery of programs or services?**

Launched at the beginning of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, the Arts Commons blog gave Arts Commons a new way to share stories from our resident companies, inspire creative learning, and provide readers with artistic experiences and insights while isolated at home. In the spring of 2021, Arts Commons took this editorial outreach a step further by launching the Guest Writer Series. Focusing on elevating BIPOC and LGBTQ+ voices from the Calgary arts community, the Guest Writer Series encourages empathy and exploration of different perspectives through thoughtful,

personal editorials on the topics of art, culture, visual arts, and live performance. The first article in the series, written by local artist Nabila Walji, is among the top five stories ever shared on the blog with over 680 views.

A year in the making, Arts Commons announced the Arts Commons Incubator program (now TD Incubator), a first-of-its-kind professional interdisciplinary artist development program focused on providing its cohort with a season of engagements under four themes: networking; professional development; mentorship; and paid live performance, exhibition, and teaching opportunities within Arts Commons programming. Featured in the September 2021 issue of Avenue Magazine, in an article titled "Racial Equity in the Arts in Calgary," Avenue calls the Arts Commons Incubator Program "a glimmer of hope" toward "building a scene in which racialized artists can thrive."

For the inaugural season 2021-22 Season, Jae Sterling and Contra were selected to guide the program. As Incubator Fellows, they will select the first cohort, curate public engagements with Incubator artists through exhibitions and performances, and receive direct support, including exposure to audiences during the 2021-22 Season.

**7. Did your organization implement any further changes to strategies, programs or services in 2021 to address equity, diversity or inclusion?**

In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, Arts Commons has continued to build our Indigenous Strategy, working with community Elders Dr. Reg and Dr. Rose Crowshoe of the Piikani Nation. Following in the footsteps of organizations such as the United Way of Calgary, Arts Commons recognizes that this is a path that we must forge together, finding parallels between Indigenous and Western practices and discovering new ways of thinking. As we continue to develop our strategy, we are focused on three key components: sanctified kindness and respect for all existence; all my relations and the importance of "building relatives" for lasting, authentic relationships; and the commitment to operating a "social business," balancing our social objectives with our primary business and mission of bringing the arts to life.

Our commitment to inclusivity was also reflected in our hiring processes, as we have taken steps to begin to invite and cultivate a more diverse workforce in the arts. As job postings are one of the front-facing communications from our organization, Arts Commons Human Resources staff updated them to feature more inclusive language and to highlight our workplace values and culture. We also made the decision to include salary ranges, as many members of BIPOC communities have noted concerns of unclear salaries as a barrier. We expanded our posting platforms and shared postings with organizations such as Immigrants Council for Arts Innovation (ICAI) and Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS). These changes resulted in higher quality candidates and a more diverse applicant pool and internally aligned with Arts Commons' commitment to I.D.E.A. – Inclusivity, Diversity, Equality, and Accessibility.

Our venues are also transforming to allow for greater accessibility to the backstage areas of Jack Singer Concert Hall as well as the Max Bell and Martha Cohen Theatres. The scope of this project includes creating accessible dressing rooms and washrooms. These changes will make it possible for actors, staff, and stage crew of any mobility to equally use the backstage areas of Arts Commons' largest and most prominent venues.

**8. Briefly describe how your organization worked in partnership with other community, private or public organizations to achieve shared results for Calgary and Calgarians in 2021.**

Since the onset of the pandemic, Arts Commons has worked closely with the resident companies to align on pivotal policies and procedures that err on the side of caution and safety while still allowing for rehearsals and artistic activities. Arts Commons and the resident companies believe that keeping our community safe is a shared responsibility. As we began to move towards an increase in internal and public-facing activities, we jointly prioritized maintaining open and active lines of communication and collaborated on policies that would ensure the safety and well-being of our fellow coworkers, artists, and guests.

In April 2020, prior to the Federal Government's launch of the Canadian Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program, Arts Commons implemented venue occupancy fee reductions of up to 89%; which made us eligible to apply for the CECRA. In the end, Arts Commons absorbed a total of \$584,740 of risk to support our resident companies.

Arts Commons is deeply connected to our surrounding community, situated in the heart of downtown, steps away from City Hall and sharing Stephen Avenue with Olympic Plaza. As we move into the future, embarking on Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan, we look to continue to do our part to re-energize and revitalize downtown. Through collaboration in city-initiated events such as Calgary Culture Days and Chinook Blast, we will elevate the arts and bring a better quality of life to our city.

Last August, Arts Commons announced Season of Gratitude. This program gives back to our essential workers who have sacrificed so much to get us safely through the pandemic by offering up to 10,000 free tickets to performances programmed by our resident companies including: Alberta Theatre Projects, Arts Commons Presents, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, One Yellow Rabbit, and Theatre Calgary.

Currently, over 3,000 families have signed up for the program with more still to come. Season of Gratitude would not be possible without the remarkable support of long-time Arts Commons patrons and arts fans, Rodney and Karen McCann along with their children, Brandon, Connor, Andrew, and Meghan, as well as the support of Arts Commons Founders Circle and Explorers Circle members.

Arts Commons has begun to explore opportunities for resource sharing and cost savings with our resident companies. By collaborating we hope to find efficiencies within shared operational needs such as ticketing, customer service and administrative functions. Not only will this benefit our individual organizations from a financial perspective but will also ensure the best patron experience possible for anyone interacting with our organizations.

The Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project has been identified as a pivotal project for downtown's revitalization. On April 26, 2021, Calgary City Council approved \$80 million for Phase 1 of ACT - the expansion of Arts Commons - as part of a \$200 million investment in Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan. Funding was supported by the Federal Government's Canada Community-Building Fund, formerly the Gas Tax Fund, renamed to demonstrate their commitment to local infrastructure priorities. This investment in ACT was the single largest budget item and the only project named in the City's Plan, recognizing ACT as a catalyst for downtown redevelopment and vibrancy.

In addition to the funding commitments by government, this past year brought excitement as we started to assemble the team that would be responsible for the success of this critical project.

In late 2020, the first two members of the project team were brought on. Colliers' locally based team will help guide project management and Fisher Dachs Associates, specialized theatre consultants, will be planning the performance, audience, and support spaces to deliver a truly modern and fully customized facility.

In spring 2021, Venue Consulting, in association with A.W. Hooker, were brought on as Cost Consultants and Entuitive was enlisted as Building Conditioning Assessment (BCA) Consultants to assess the building's structure and systems.

The Prime Design Consultant Team was also selected and announced at our 2021 Annual General Meeting. KPMB is a Canadian, female led, internationally recognized architectural firm with over 400 respected awards, including 16 Governor General's Medals, Canada's highest honour.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought greater urgency to forge ahead on the development of ACT with our partners at the City of Calgary and Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC). The Phase 1 expansion of Arts Commons will be one of the first performing arts centres to be designed since the COVID-19 pandemic shifted our perspective on how buildings, arts venues, and cultural experiences are designed.



Our commitment to being radically inclusive will also impact the design, taking into consideration the diversity of our community and our relationship with nature. KPMB will partner with Tawaw’s Wanda Dalla Costa to advance Indigenous architectural practices and ensure that an Indigenous viewpoint is weaved into the design process. SLA from Denmark, one of the world’s leading urban designers and landscape architects, will ensure that nature, technology, and sustainability are central to our design. And Calgary-based Hindle Architects will provide local expertise to ensure that Arts Commons remains of and for Calgary.

Our vision is to re-imagine the traditional model of a performing arts centre and to give Calgary a world-class venue that reflects the diverse perspectives of our citizens, provides a sense of belonging for every Calgarian, welcomes visitors, and attracts talent – both artistically and to our workforce. Our vision also includes our commitment to create an ecosystem of arts organizations that collaborate and complement each other in order to bring the best in artistic programming to our audiences. ACT will enrich and expand the diverse cultural ecosystem that exists in Calgary today, for generations to come.

Yes, the future is bold. The future of Calgary is a future that is vibrant, that understands and values the positive impact that the arts have on our economy and our collective well-being.

## RESOURCES

9. Please estimate how The City’s operating funding was allocated in 2021. Mark all areas that apply by approximate percentage. For example, 45% allocated to staffing costs, 10% to evaluation or research, etc.

%	Advertising and promotion
10%	Programs or services
%	Office supplies and expenses
%	Professional and consulting fees
%	Staff compensation, development and training
%	Fund development
10%	Purchased supplies and assets
80%	Facility maintenance
%	Evaluation or Research
%	Other, please name:

10. Did volunteers support your operations in 2021? If yes:

How many volunteers?	22
Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:	700

11. What resources or funding sources did your organization leverage to support operations in 2021?

Arts Commons received an operating grant of \$2,546,276 from The City of Calgary to assist in the fulfillment of its mandate to care for the facility and to foster and promote the arts. Arts Commons leveraged The City’s operating grant to generate an additional \$6,216,851 in earned revenues such as venue utilization and parkade fees; contributions from other levels of government; and community support through corporate sponsorships, foundation partnerships, and philanthropic gifts from corporations and individuals in support of Arts Commons’ operations (ratio of 1:2.4 in spite of the complex being shut down for most of the season because of the pandemic).

12. Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2021 that you want to highlight?

Arts Commons did not receive any awards or recognition in 2021.

### **13. CAPITAL AND ASSET MANAGEMENT (for Civic Partners managing City-owned assets)**

**Asset:** Arts Commons

**a) Provide a summary of your organization’s 2021 capital work, including specific lifecycle/maintenance projects or capital projects.**

Arts Commons undertook an ambitious project to transform the air handling system throughout the building, further supporting a safe reopening for our artists, patrons, and staff. Arts Commons installed hospital grade, energy-efficient MERV-14A air filters (with an upgrade to MERV-15A slated for the 2021-22 Season) trapping everything from common dust to bacteria/virus carriers and micro allergens. We also implemented an Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) solution, providing effective air sterilization through short wavelength light that destroys bacteria, molds, and viruses—including COVID-19. This level of air sterilization ensures that air exhausted from the building is also sterilized, meaning that not only is the air within Arts Commons cleaner than many other downtown office buildings, but the air leaving the building is also cleaner than when it comes in!

To optimally integrate these ventilation upgrades, it was recommended that the HVAC systems in the Max Bell Theatre and Martha Cohen Theatre receive new calibration and upgrades. With these changes, we have maximized the air distribution in these spaces, and now they are among the most controllable theatre spaces in North America. The Martha Cohen Theatre now has a custom air distribution system that can be used for multiple effects including injecting confetti, bubbles, snow, and even balloons into the air stream of the theatre for multiple visual effects.

Arts Commons also worked with Level Playing Field Inc. (LPF), a leader in accessibility in Canada that provides innovative Universal Design solutions based on the social model of disability. LPF undertook an audit of our facility and made best practice recommendations for a body of work to improve accessibility throughout our built environment.

Arts Commons made infrastructure alterations throughout the 560,665 square foot facility to remove barriers for wheelchair access to rehearsal halls, theatres, dressing rooms, green rooms, washrooms, offices, and pathways throughout the facility to improve usability for patrons, staff, and artists. These alterations will allow resident companies to implement new hiring practices for artists, crew, and volunteers that are inclusive of persons with disabilities, and to live their principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility.

**b) What funding did your organization leverage to support capital activities in 2021?**

This work was made possible with the generous support of the City of Calgary through the Civic Partner Infrastructure Grant Program (\$421,200), the City of Calgary through the Municipal Stimulus Program (\$1,093,500), and the Calgary Foundation through the Pandemic Recovery Program, Phase 3 for the Arts Commons Accessibility Enhancement Project (\$150,000).