

**CIVIC PARTNER 2022 ANNUAL REPORT SNAPSHOT- ARTS COMMONS**

**ARTS COMMONS**

**Mission:** To be an inspirational force where artists, community, and organizations celebrate cultural identities, experience the full breadth of human emotions, and ignite positive change.

**Mandate:** To provide and care for artists and arts organizations. To ensure equitable access and utilization of our venues. To foster, promote, and celebrate a vibrant arts community.

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

*Registered Charity*

**2022 City Investment**

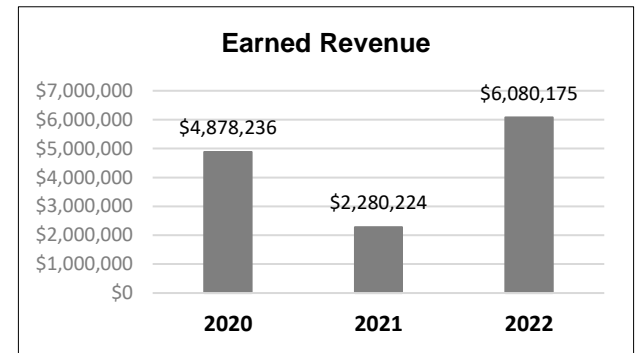
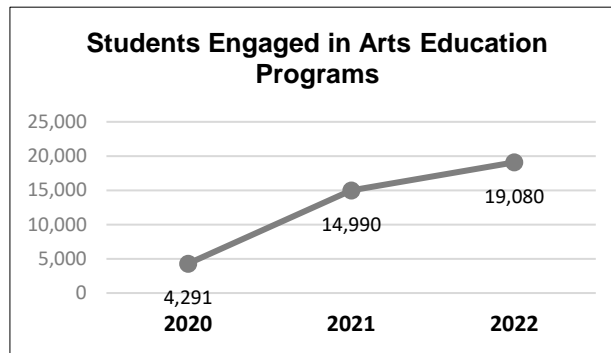
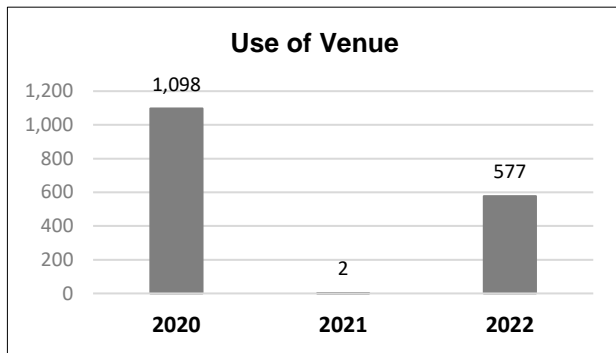
**Operating Grant:** \$2,613,156

**Capital Grant:** \$1,259,000

**Economic Resiliency Fund:** \$212,301

*City owned asset*

**2022 Results**



**The story behind the numbers**

- A rebound in the use of the venues at Arts Commons reflected Calgarian’s desire to return to live in-person experiences.
- Increased student engagement to levels above pre-pandemic numbers reflects the confidence educators with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District have in Arts Commons’ education programs and initiatives.
- Increases in earned revenue supports sustainability of the Arts Commons ecosystem.

**Addressing climate change**

Leveraging existing energy efficient building systems, Arts Commons continued to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and air and water pollution. Thermal energy technology from District Energy supported building operations that were 35 per cent more efficient and reduced annual greenhouse gas emissions by 1,198 metric tonnes. New toilets and faucets throughout the building saved 8,000,000 litres of water during the year.

**Advancing equity, diversity and inclusion; and racial equity**

Initiatives that supported and responded to community needs included *Season of Gratitude* program to recognize essential workers, free tickets for new Canadians through the Institute of Canadian Citizenship’s Canoo program, subsidized access for low income Calgarians through The City’s Fee Assistance program, and accessibility changes in the front of house to support deaf and hard of hearing visitors.



## ARTS COMMONS Civic Partner 2022 Annual Report

**Civic Partner Name:** Arts Commons

**Legal Structure:** Independent External Organization

**Manage/operate a City-owned asset:** Yes

### 1. What is your organization's guiding mission or mandate?

#### **Our Belief:**

That equitable access to the arts is a human right.

#### **Our Responsibility:**

To redefine a bold and adventurous Calgary by championing and investing in creativity.

#### **Our Mission:**

To be an inspirational force where artists, community, and organizations celebrate cultural identities, experience the full breadth of human emotions, and ignite positive change.

#### **Our Mandate:**

- To provide and care for artists and arts organizations.
- To ensure equitable access and utilization of our venues.
- To foster, promote, and celebrate a vibrant arts community.

#### **Our Strategic Priorities:**

The organization's strategic priorities include supporting the artists and arts organizations that call Arts Commons home, including the more than 200 community groups that utilize our venues, to realize their missions, and to foster opportunities for collaboration across our cultural campus.

#### **Our Values:**

- Do the right thing - behaving with integrity, applying professionalism, being honest, and erring on the side of grace.
- Be our best always - in service, in leadership, in professionalism, and in providing a quality experience.
- Be open: minds, hearts, arms - through empathy, openness, trust, and collaboration, seizing opportunities to impact our community in a positive way.

### 2. What top 3-5 key results did your organization achieve in 2022 that contributed to one or more of key City strategies or plans or [Citizen Priorities](#) (a prosperous city, a city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods, a city that moves, a healthy and green city)?

#### **Nurturing Our Ecosystem**

Arts Commons is an arts ecosystem, a community hub, and a home for the arts. Within our walls we house six galleries, five theatres, a concert hall, and some of the most beloved performing arts institutions in our city. As we welcomed Calgarians back into our home after a period of unprecedented disruption, our organization reaffirmed its commitment to artistic community and collaboration in Calgary.

This was no truer than in June of 2022 when a monumental collaboration and world premiere occurred in Arts Commons' most illustrious venue, the Jack Singer Concert Hall – *Ragtime: A Concert Performance*. The project was born out of conversations between Alex Sarian, President and

CEO of Arts Commons, and Stafford Arima, Artistic Director of Theatre Calgary, in the darkest depths of the pandemic. Together, they shared their dreams of the future of performance at Arts Commons when audiences returned to live theatre once again, and one musical piece with a universal message consistently came to mind – *Ragtime*, the four-time Tony Award-winning musical.

*Ragtime: A Concert Performance*, hit the stage to sold-out audiences with a cast of 33 performers backed up by the full power of the Calgary Philharmonic. The award-winning score filled the Jack Singer Concert Hall with exuberant numbers, elegantly performed by the cast and the Calgary Phil. As the final notes faded, the audience leaped to their feet, cheering the performers as they left the stage.

The success of *Ragtime: A Concert Performance* exemplifies the strengths of the Arts Commons ecosystem. Over the past season, all of Arts Commons' resident companies have demonstrated their unflagging dedication to serving the Calgary community, particularly after a difficult, prolonged period of disruption.

Alberta Theatre Projects (ATP) began their 2021-22 season by welcoming Artistic & Executive Director Rohit Chokhani. In his first year, he saw ATP launch an energized season including *Kim's Convenience*. ATP earned 14 nominations and five wins at the 2021-22 Betty Mitchell Awards.

The Calgary Philharmonic returned to in-person concerts, reminding audiences of the awesome power of experiencing a live, full orchestra. In addition, the Calgary Phil continued to release free, high-quality digital projects. *The Bear and the Wild Rose* was an ambitious, collaborative project with much-loved Canadian musician and humanitarian Tom Jackson and multi-disciplinary artists providing original music exploring themes of love, home, dreams, magic, and resilience. Produced in collaboration with Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society and Indigenous artists, the Blackfoot story *Napi and the Rock* saw huge success sharing its uplifting message with Calgary, including seven thousand students.

Downstage celebrated its season back to live performance with the world premiere of *The Green Line*, co-produced by Chromatic Theatre, which was critically praised and received nominations at the Betty Mitchell Awards for Outstanding Production as well as Best Direction. Playwright Makram Ayache won for Outstanding New Play while Filsan Dualeh won for Outstanding Supporting Performance in a Drama. Downstage also embarked on staged readings of *Climate Change Theatre Action* in collaboration with Immigrant Council for Arts Innovation (ICAI), followed by a panel conversation with community leaders Heather Campbell, Chantal Chagnon, and Subashini Thangadurai which was facilitated by Vicki Stroich. It was a stunning display of the forward-thinking city-builders in our community.

One Yellow Rabbit (OYR) creatively struck a balance between the challenges of the global pandemic and optimism for the upcoming festival season. In response to the uncertainty of the COVID pandemic, OYR made the difficult decision to cancel the 36th annual High Performance Rodeo (HPR). Consulting closely with stakeholders, OYR pivoted to create a Spring Edition of the festival, which was a resounding success. Among the many highlights of HPR: Spring Edition, OYR collaborated with Alberta Ballet's Artistic Director, Jean Grand- Maître, to create a one-night-only performance, *The Memory Room*. And OYR's educational initiative, beautifulyoungartists, showcased a new generation of talent in the all-new presentation of *She Sat Down & Wept*.

Theatre Calgary's 2021-22 season saw the Max Bell Theatre stage reignite as they took their audience on a journey from the world premiere of *BOOM YZ*, to the spirit of *A Christmas Carol*, to the heartfelt emotion of *Steel Magnolias*, and ending with the rock-and-roll spectacular *Million Dollar Quartet*. Along the way, Theatre Calgary teamed up with Calgary Pride for *TC Sings for Pride* and re-opened their theatre with a celebration performance called *TC Returns*.

## **Keeping our Community Healthy and Safe**

Calgary's well-being is our top priority and Arts Commons believes that keeping our community safe is a shared responsibility. As we collectively and gradually moved towards welcoming back audiences and lifting restrictions, we approached each milestone with care and stakeholder consultation.

In the first half of the 2021-22 season, we officially reopened our venues, requiring masks and proof-of-vaccination for artists, staff, contractors, and all audience members attending resident company performances. This re-opening strategy required a huge effort from our production, event services, front of house, security, and ticketing teams. This all-hands-on-deck approach ensured a smooth transition in a time of unprecedented disruption. Prior to re-opening our doors, we implemented large-scale ventilation system upgrades, installing hospital-grade MERV-15A filtration and Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation disinfection.

These precautions and upgrades were accompanied by a comprehensive health and safety strategy that included frequent cleaning of high-traffic surfaces, hand sanitization stations, and a relaxed refund policy.

On February 10, 2022, Arts Commons made the decision to extend our mask and vaccination policy in response to the province ending mandated restrictions on public gatherings. This decision was made to honour existing artist contracts and exercise our due diligence in making the best decisions possible for our staff and audiences.

As infection numbers continued to fall through the spring, we kept in close conversation with our resident companies as well as with community stakeholders. On April 8, Arts Commons dropped masking and vaccination mandates for visitors to our venues but maintained those requirements for staff and contractors.

Though they are no longer required, we continue to recommend masking and support patrons in their decision to go with or without. We thank every single one of our community members for their support and understanding as we moved forward through this uncharted territory.

## **Arts Commons Presents Brought Us Back Together**

The 2021-22 season reignited our stages with live performance, sharing the best of the performing arts with cautious, yet eager audiences looking for connection after more than 18 months of dark stages. Keenly aware of the importance of balancing safety with group gatherings, Arts Commons Presents (ACP) launched the first performance in the re-imagined TD Amplify Cabaret series, *Two Doors: Dispatches from the In-Between* in accordance with our Health and Safety Strategy, including a 50% capacity cap on the house.

Led by the artistic vision of TD Incubator Fellows Jae Sterling and Contra, *Two Doors: Dispatches from the In-Between* introduced Calgary to a new cohort of talent: neo-noir singer-songwriter Uyemi, tap dancer and choreographer Lisa La Touche, Jazz drummer Jon McCaslin, and spoken-word artist, poet, and storyteller Wakefield Brewster, who was named Calgary's 2022-24 Poet Laureate. Arts Commons remains incredibly proud to have been a part of these artistic journeys.

Throughout the season, the TD Amplify Cabarets made waves, challenging audiences with inventive expressions of music, dance, projection art, and spoken word. A spectacular highlight from this season was the TD Amplify Cabaret *Now Listen: A Black Poet's Message* on February 26, 2022. Curated by Jae Sterling and featuring a lineup of performers offering their perspectives as Black artists in the Prairies during Black History Month, this sold-out engagement received an unprecedented amount of media attention, earning 13 stories through print, online, and broadcast outlets. The performance was hailed by NEXT magazine as "a night of inspiration and spoken-word magic."

In December of 2021, ACP presented *Timmy's Happy Christmas, 1974* as the first large scale engagement back in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. Headlined by local artist and former CBC host Tim Tamashiro, the concert brought a welcome dose of nostalgia and coziness.

Premiering on April 28, 2022, ACP made history in a ground-breaking collaboration with JazzYYC to launch a first; the Canadian National Jazz Orchestra. Conceived and created by Calgary's own jazz trailblazer, Kodi Hutchinson, Artistic Producer of JazzYYC, this project was three years in the making, inspired by the desire to showcase Canada's exceptional jazz talent on a national level.

Under the artistic direction of JUNO Award-winning and world-renowned big band leader Christine Jensen, the orchestra of musicians selected from across Canada performed a repertoire of entirely Canadian works, including nine original compositions by a roster of top Canadian jazz composers from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia.

The orchestra provided an incredibly rare opportunity for artists from different jazz communities across our country to collaborate, learn from each other, and make amazing music together. When choosing the musicians, particular care was taken to equally represent men and women, as well as the many cultural backgrounds, geographic locations, and instrumentation styles that we share in Canada. Along with the live performance in the Jack Singer Concert Hall, a recording of the Canadian National Jazz Orchestra was created to cement this incredible project in history as well as provide a resource for future touring opportunities.

In a triumphant celebration of the return to live performances, Lea Salonga once again graced the Jack Singer Concert Hall through the BD&P World Stage series with an unmatched vocal performance to a packed house with two ecstatic ovations. An enormous success, *An Evening with Lea Salonga* was Arts Commons' first house sold to capacity without mandatory mask and vaccination restrictions.

The PCL Blues series went through the most dramatic transformation, beginning with live performances on CKUA Radio's Friday Night Blues Party in September, graduating to social-distanced live shows with artists GA-20, Steve Strongman, James "Blood" Ulmer, and JUNO-nominated Sue Foley, to JUNO Award-winning Crystal Shawanda performing to a packed house of exultant blues fans. It was cathartic and deeply moving to welcome these amazing blues artists back to the stage after months of cancelled gigs.

For the 2021-22 season, Classic Albums Live (CAL) didn't disappoint. On April 16, The Beatles' ground-breaking psychedelic album, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band came to life through the skills of CAL's masterful musicians, cheered by a joyous crowd of people who grew up with the album as well as newcomers to the seminal work.

Despite suffering the most cancellations due to COVID-19 and related restrictions on international travel, the BD&P World Stage series featured one of the most powerful and moving moments in our 2021-22 season, a beautiful and mesmerizing performance by Icelandic composer Ólafur Arnalds. Accompanied by his revolutionary self-playing pianos, Arnald's unique atmospheric sound and spellbinding light show filled the Jack Singer Concert Hall with wonder and brought audience members to tears.

The boundary-pushing National Geographic Live series didn't disappoint, igniting passion for our natural world with Joel Sartore and peeling back the veil of time with Dr. Kara Cooney. As a grand finale, the legendary photographer Brian Skerry returned to share his stories about his long-term research project, *Secrets of the Whales*, inspired by his Emmy Award-winning documentary of the same name. As the first National Geographic Explorer when the series launched 11 years ago, Brian Skerry was a welcome return for many series subscribers.

As the 2021-22 season of our signature series came to a close, Arts Commons Presents' outdoor series, ArtsXpeditions, was just gearing up. Launching with an Indigenous-led and curated artist showcase on June 21 for National Indigenous Peoples Day, ArtsXpeditions brought music, theatre,

and creative interactivity to communities across Calgary's four quadrants. In addition to the talented musicians and performing artists of the ArtsXpeditions series, Arts Commons Presents collaborated with Wagonstage to bring Clem Martini's new play for young people, *Bee Betrayal*, to family audiences. Raising awareness about bees and other pollinators, the short play, coupled with carefully designed craft activities, elegantly blended fun and learning for kids and families.

After a season away, the 2021-22 season of Arts Commons Presents had some incredible highs, bearing witness to the love, passion, and delight that audiences and artists share for the live performing arts. Though this return was tempered with a careful, stepped approach to the rescinding of restrictions and audience caps, each step felt like a triumph for everyone involved.

### **Inspiring Learning Through the Arts**

The 2021-22 season gave us the opportunity to reimagine what our approach to arts education and learning could be. We designed a multi-modal approach that integrated the curriculum learnings of the students with the artistic process of live performing artists and that of visual and media artists, customized to the needs of each class. Working alongside Arts Commons experts, students had the opportunity to learn from and create directly with the best creators in their fields. Whether learning about the movement of fish through the ocean by becoming a school of fish themselves through guided choreography or building a 15-foot whale to learn how whales catch and consume their food, students are discovering new paths of hands-on, direct learning that go beyond surface level interactions and create a deeper awareness of community and self.

In addition to this exciting new method of student engagement, we've begun a new era of bringing all the resident companies together to create a comprehensive building-wide strategy for arts education. A significant element of our new arts education strategy was the undertaking of a precedent-setting benchmark survey to understand the needs of our community to help mould the future of learning in the arts in our province. The results will be released in 2023 in conjunction with Arts Commons inaugural Arts Reimagined conference.

Running a classroom out of a multi-disciplinary performing arts centre allows for unique learning experiences directly from stage crew, backstage technicians, local and touring artists as well as working directly with resident companies. One class undertook an in-depth look at how set design and stage rigging can transform a stage into a wintery wonderland using everyday household items. Students took turns cutting small round holes in a fabric sheet, which was then rigged up to two pipes in the Martha Cohen Theatre's fly gallery and filled with shredded paper. Once the sheet was lifted beyond the proscenium, the pipes were manipulated back and forth to cause the paper to fall through the holes. To the overwhelming delight of the students, it became an indoor snowstorm, showcasing the ingenuity of the arts to bring a vision to life.

Being able to interact with artists is fundamental to our ability to deliver innovative learning opportunities through the arts. In February of 2022, 100 high school jazz students participated in an open rehearsal and Q&A with the musicians of Jazz at Lincoln Center. The thoughtful and earnest questions from the students demonstrated why these moments are so crucial to setting future professional musicians up for success. Thousands of students were also welcomed back to Arts Commons for socially distanced student presentations of National Geographic Live.

Select members of the TD Incubator cohort and RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program were also invited to lead classes and share their experiences as professional artists in the field, energizing students with their passion. In turn, the artists discovered new ways to think about their art from the students and practice skills as teaching artists.

This innovative new strategy for Arts Commons Education resulted in the ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning being booked to capacity. For students and teachers, it was a wonderful and engaging way to return to in-person learning. We look forward to exploring new avenues to increase opportunities for students to engage with the arts at Arts Commons in the future.

## Looking Forward

Calgary is changing and along with it, Arts Commons. Our organization is boldly moving into the future with Arts Commons Transformation (ACT), Canada's largest arts and culture infrastructure project and a cornerstone of the City of Calgary's downtown revitalization efforts. This past year, the ACT project took several great strides forward, bringing this momentous project, which will dramatically expand our organization's footprint, that much closer to fruition.

In February, we announced ACT's Prime Design Team — an impressive collection of world-renowned experts in architecture and design who bring a rich variety of perspectives and specialties to this high-profile project. Heading up the team is Toronto-based KPMB, a pedigreed architectural firm with proven expertise in major arts and theatre projects, including Toronto's Massey Hall and the Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity. Working closely with KPMB throughout the design phase is Tawaw Architecture Collective, headed by former Calgarian (and Canada's first female Indigenous architect) Wanda Dalla Costa. Tawaw will ensure Indigenous perspectives are thoughtfully and meaningfully woven into all aspects of the design, strengthening our commitment to Reconciliation, and creating inclusive and accessible spaces for all Calgarians. Rounding out the project team are Calgary-based Hindle Architects, and SLA, an internationally renowned nature-based design studio out of Denmark which will work to integrate our building's footprint with the surrounding outdoor spaces, creating a vibrant and welcoming space for connection and community in our downtown core.

Building on the momentum and enthusiasm for the project displayed by our government partners, the expansion phase of ACT is fully funded, and we are preparing to roll out an innovative capital campaign to mobilize the support of the Calgary community and spread the message of visionary change in our city.

Guiding our efforts to catalyze support for ACT is KCI, Canada's leading fundraising consultants. KCI has worked closely with us to identify strategic fundraising targets and ready our organization for an ambitious, multi-year capital campaign that will fund the modernization of our existing campus and establish a \$50 million endowment that will enable Arts Commons to continue its trajectory of financial sustainability.

A vital part of our capital campaign is community outreach and, after an RFP process that saw several top-line creative agencies compete to work with Arts Commons, Daughter Creative was chosen to develop the brand strategy for the capital campaign. A female-led, Calgary-based firm, Daughter brings a wealth of talent to the project and has led innovative campaigns for Bow Valley College, United Way, and Alberta Cancer Foundation. They continue their daring and courageous work on ACT. Over the past several months, we have been working closely with Daughter to share our inspiring vision and we look forward to launching a fundraising campaign that will generate enthusiasm for a reimagined Arts Commons among the general public.

Daughter is just one of the many exciting partners we have brought on board to support ACT this past year. In September, EllisDon was selected to be the construction manager on ACT. A leader in large-scale construction for more than 70 years, EllisDon has a vast and impressive portfolio of projects across Canada and beyond, including the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and the recently completed Massey Hall in Toronto. EllisDon will work closely with ACT's prime design team to bring the project to life.

As we close out the year, we look forward to seeing the ACT project begin to take shape in a very real, very monumental way. With the designs for Arts Commons Transformation almost finalized, we are that much closer to making this new vision for the arts a reality.

3. Performance measures help demonstrate the return on The City's investment in a partner's operations. Please identify performance measures that reflect your organization's impact in 2022 (how much you did, how well you did it, and how the people you serve are better off).

	Performance Measure Name	2020 results	2021 results	2022 results	How does this measure reflect your organization's impact?
<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	1,098 performances, concerts, or events with a live audience in Arts Commons, inclusive of resident companies and third-party renters	2 performances concerts with live audience presented by Arts Commons Presents in August 2021	577 performances, concerts, or events with a live audience in Arts Commons, inclusive of resident companies and third-party renters	This measure reflects the desire of Calgarians to return to live in-person experiences at Arts Commons.

	Number of students engaged in arts education programming, including participation in the National Geographic Live Student Matinees Series, ConocoPhillips Hub for Inspired Learning, One Day Arts School, and Artist-in-Residence.	4,291 students attended youth-oriented programs performances or events.	14,990 students and educators that participated in live streamed online educational programming.	19,080 students and educators that participated in live in-person educational programming	This measure reflects the confidence that educators with the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District have in our Arts Commons Education programs and initiatives.
<b>How well did you do it?</b>	Earned Revenue (venue operations, programming, ticket services, facility)	\$4,878,236	\$2,280,224	\$6,080,175	This measure reflects our capacity to ensure our assets are well utilized to generate funds to support the sustainability of the Arts Commons ecosystem.
	Contributed Revenue (public & private sectors)	\$4,205,379	\$6,482,903	\$7,062,259	This measure reflects the value and importance that the community (corporations, individuals, foundations and all three levels of government) places on the Arts Commons ecosystem.
<b>How are Calgarians better off?</b>	Arts Commons is a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians and visitors.				



	<p>A key component of our work is sharing our resources to create space for community building, conversation, and learning within our building. This season we continued our longstanding relationship with Chantal Chagnon, making complimentary space available for her to hold Indigenous knowledge sharing workshops. These workshops are open to everyone who wishes to experience her teachings. Also making use of complimentary space in our building is Dwight Farahat and Tribe Artist Society, who hold drop-in freestyle rap nights for the benefit of Indigenous youth, supporting connection, community, and encouraging storytelling through art.</p> <p>Our community extends beyond the boundaries of our city, and, in the New Year, we were thrilled to welcome Joel Sartore back to Calgary to share his 10-year personal mission of creating <i>The Photo Ark</i>, a photo documentation of every species of animal currently in captivity. Arts Commons provided the vital connection to facilitate Joel travelling to the Calgary Zoo to document three species for his photo project, one of which, the sage grouse, could only be documented here.</p> <p>Arts Commons also made connections with the wider arts community this year by playing a key role in bringing the Western Arts Alliance (WAA) conference to Calgary. An important industry conference for the performing arts sector, WAA welcomed a total of 525 arts professionals from across North America and abroad to our city. The conference showcased Calgary and the work we do at Arts Commons on an international stage and was an opportunity to share our world-class facilities with hundreds of engaged arts professionals.</p> <p>A centrepiece during the WAA conference was the free outdoor concert series of Squonk: <i>Hand to Hand</i> that welcomed over two thousand members of our community to Olympic Plaza. Celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Pittsburgh-based performance troupe invited audience members to control two giant purple hands, rigged like sailing ships, as the band played their signature rock music. It was a delightful way to invite all of Calgary to come play with us, as only the performing arts can.</p> <p>Through our efforts, we are not just bringing people back to the arts, but we are bringing people back to our downtown core – and to each other – to help imagine the future of the arts, and the future of Calgary.</p>
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**4. What are examples of benchmarks your organization uses to evaluate and improve performance and operations, and increase your organization’s impact?**

**a) Please provide examples of benchmarks, and how this information is being used to support continuous improvement.**

Arts Commons keeps official records and comprehensive notes and compares this information routinely and systematically against those articulated in its strategic plan and the annual business plan. Arts Commons monitors inputs such as expenditures, and staff time on programs and core operational functions to ensure they are both cost effective and sustainable.

Arts Commons also monitors outputs of programs by measuring performance indicators that are quantitative (numerical) or qualitative (related to participant’s perception or experience). These outputs demonstrate the work completed by Arts Commons and illustrates progress towards meeting its objectives.

Arts Commons is an active member of a multitude of benchmarking peer-to-peer networks that assists in the evaluation and achievement of industry standards. Arts Commons maintains membership with the following associations:

- CAPACOA - Canadian Arts Presenting Association
- APAP - Association of Performing Arts Presenters
- CAS - Canadian Arts Summit
- PACC - Performing Arts Centre Consortium
- ISPA - International Society of Performing Arts

Arts Commons reports annual statistics and evaluates its performance against national and international standards and targets. An annual PACC Stats Report is generated for Arts Commons, which is used to measure performance.

The following are examples of quantitative performance indicators:

- the number of visitors who purchase tickets to attend performances in each venue throughout Arts Commons
- the number of submissions Arts Commons receives from artists to participate in its music and visual arts programming
- the traffic and average length of time spent by visitors to Arts Commons website and social media platforms
- the number of students who participate in Arts Commons Education programs
- the number of teachers who participate the Arts Commons Education teacher training programs
- the number of students from low-income households that participate in any and all Arts Commons programs, free of charge
- the accumulated value of financial support provided by the community in the form of philanthropic gifts from corporate and individual donors, corporate sponsorships, and foundation partnerships
- the accumulated value of financial support generated from governments in the form of operating support and project support
- the accumulated value of financial support generated from governments in the form of grants for capital/lifecycle initiatives

The following are examples of qualitative performance indicators:

- feedback from resident companies
- responses of visitors who attend programming by Arts Commons Presents
- responses of artists participating in Arts Commons Community, Arts Commons Education, Arts Commons Galleries and Arts Commons Presents
- response from members of the community that engage with our various social media platforms
- responses of students who participate in Arts Commons Education programs
- responses of teachers who participate in Arts Commons Education programs
- responses of users who access Arts Commons venues
- feedback from donors (corporate & individual), corporate sponsors and foundation partners to the programs they align with at Arts Commons
- feedback from government funding agencies that provide operating and/or project support

Arts Commons is focused on how performance measure findings can be shared and utilized to learn about and improve service delivery throughout its operations.

**b) Please indicate your current and targeted performance in comparison to these benchmarks**

The 2021-22 Season saw a return to live performance, allowing us to reenergize the revenue side of our business at Arts Commons. The period of building closure in the previous fiscal year gave us the time to rethink many of the ways that we welcome our community and presenting partners into the building and strategize about how we could approach those relationships differently. As we reopened bookings of our venues, we

actively fostered new relationships with communities who hadn't had a strong presence in the building in the past. This directly resulted in sold-out performances from Punjabi musicians Nimrat Khaira & Arjan Dhillon in April, Pakistani performers Atif Aslam & Farhad Darya, and Punjabi Bollywood performer Neha Kakkar in July, all in the Jack Singer Concert Hall. We watched countless graduates from local post secondary schools take their next steps across our stage at more than 10 convocation ceremonies and engaged our Canon equipment to allow friends and family members of those graduates to watch their big moment from anywhere in the world. These performances and events, along with parody performer Weird Al and comedian Chelsea Handler culminated in the busiest spring/summer season ever seen at Arts Commons.

In total, 78 dates were booked between March 1st and August 31st in the Jack Singer Concert Hall which contributed greatly to our earned revenue recovery with venue utilization revenues up 180% over last year. We were able to accomplish this record-breaking late season return because of the time and work invested in building trust with our rental clients and with the members of our Calgary community.

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically effected our organization's ability to maintain our revenue streams. Pre-pandemic, our ratio of earned to contributed revenues averaged 65% (earned) versus 35% (contributed) split. In our 2020-21 season that ratio reversed with earned revenues of 37% and contributed accounting for 63% of revenue. As we've continued along the path to recovery through the 2021-22 season, we have moved to a 50/50 split. The support of all three levels of government continued to be vital during this rebuilding period, allowing us to retain staff and cover operating expenses.

Unfortunately, the lingering impacts of COVID has interrupted PACC's ability to collect, analyze, and share data with member organizations. We are optimistic that the flow of information will resume in 2023.

**5. What key results or progress was achieved in 2022 that reflected your organization's changes to strategies, programs or services to better address equity, diversity, or inclusion, or support racial equity?**

The arts are for everyone, an integral human right. Arts Commons stands by the belief that no individual should be denied access to the arts due to financial constraints or physical ability. During the 2021-22 season, we undertook several initiatives to ease the impacts of COVID-19 on our community and erase the barriers that exist for the patrons and artists that utilize our building.

Arts Commons owes a huge debt of gratitude to our essential workers and, with the generous support of the Rodney & Karen McCann Family and our Arts Commons Founders Circle and Explorers Circle members, we launched the Season of Gratitude program. This ambitious program offered essential workers and their families in Calgary free tickets to any of our resident companies' 2021-22 season shows. Through Season of Gratitude, 13,476 tickets were made available to these crucial members of our community.

In addition to thanking our essential workers through Season of Gratitude, Arts Commons, the Calgary Philharmonic, and Theatre Calgary made 1,500 free tickets available to new Canadians through the Institute for Canadian Citizenship's Canoo program (formerly known as the Cultural Access Pass program); and to low-income Calgarians through The City of Calgary's Fee Assistance Program.

One important investment in the future of accessibility is our new Canon recording system, which captures performances in the Jack Singer Concert Hall in stunning high definition. With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts Digital Now program and an Aspirational Grant through the Rozsa Foundation for Broadcast System Training, we are well on our way to our goal of making performances available for online viewing, which will mitigate some of the barriers that members of our community experience.

In the front of house, the Lightbox Studio was retrofitted to accommodate our first partnership with a Deaf/hard-of-hearing artist, Ebony Gooden. This was done by adding a visible doorbell as well as whiteboards and markers, which facilitated communication between the artist and the audience and reduced the risk of unexpected visitors. Ebony's participation in the TD Incubator cohort, a development and mentorship program designed for interdisciplinary artists, brought an entirely new perspective to the group, one which emphasized compassion and understanding for diverse lived experiences.

As Arts Commons grows in its role as a community leader and arts champion, we realize some of the most important relationships are the ones that start closest to home. Local artists are the lifeblood of Calgary's creative pulse, and Arts Commons made several exciting strides in our support, development, and mentorship of local artists this year.

First, Arts Commons had its inaugural edition of the TD Incubator program — a season-long initiative of professional development and networking events as well as public performances and exhibitions geared towards interdisciplinary, local artists from equity-seeking communities. Led by inaugural Incubator Fellows Jae Sterling and Contra, this season included: four TD Amplify Cabarets; three rotations of the Arts Commons media galleries; and four professional development sessions for a cohort of 19 artists. These professional development sessions took all forms, including a meet-and-greet with the touring artists of Arts Commons Presents' Jazz at Lincoln Center: *Songs We Love*.

In May 2022, Arts Commons announced the next pair of TD Incubator Fellows – the Calgary funk-R&B duo Sargeant x Comrade — and opened the call for the next cohort of artists for another season of networking, exhibition and performance, and learning.

Supporting and elevating local talent can take many forms. Arts Commons provided the newly launched artist mentorship program of Immigrant Council for Arts Innovation (ICAI) their very first paid exhibition opportunity for the visual artists in the program. Once the exhibition period had closed, the artists were invited to be a part of the RBC Emerging Visual Artists Program (RBC EVAP) to continue their mentorship throughout the remainder of the season. The collaboration was so successful that Arts Commons has committed to exhibiting artists from ICAI's artist mentorship program every year so we can continue to showcase the work of newcomer artists and their stories.

One prominent alumna from RBC EVAP, Autumn Whiteway, began her journey with us as a curator for *Mohkinstsis and Gathering Spaces*, an exhibition produced in collaboration with Making Treaty 7. She then went on to curate *Motherhood and Matriarchy* in the fall of 2021, the first Indigenous-led gallery exhibition in the building's history. It has been a wonderful journey to support her as she flourishes as an artist and curator. Now a multi-award winner, we are proud to continue to be able to promote her and her work in the medium of visual arts.

Another incredible talent, Anthony Russell, first shared his art with audiences at Arts Commons in the winter of 2020 in the +15 Galleries through a collaborative program with the Calgary school boards while he was still attending high school. Anthony joined the RBC EVAP and had his first professional exhibition at Arts Commons in the Window Galleries during the 2021-22 season. This exhibition courted the attention of ATB Financial who went on to exhibit his work in their downtown branch. His most recent project, a vibrant video exhibition of his artistic process, launched Arts Commons' partnership with TELUS Sky's Art While You Wait broadcast gallery.

This past season, we lost a shining star, Nabila Walji, who first exhibited in April 2020 with Arts Commons in the Window Galleries, sharing her stunning photography and unique perspective. She went on to write for the Arts Commons Blog's Guest Writer series, penning three moving pieces, one of which received the most views of any piece on our blog. Her passing sent ripples through the arts community, and her vibrant spirit was taken from us far too soon.

**6. What steps did your organization take in 2022 to advance any respective calls to action in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) report or [The City's White Goose Flying Report](#)?**

Ushing in 2022, Arts Commons has been working with Dr. Reg Crowshoe and Elder Rose Crowshoe on the development of our Reconciliation Strategy. Our greatest learning thus far is that the path to reconciliation is an ongoing journey. For non-Indigenous peoples, the journey towards true reconciliation includes a commitment to learn the diverse Indigenous perspectives on our shared history, to listen to their truths, to honour and respect Indigenous ways, and to support individuals on their healing journeys. As honoured and respected Nitstitapi (Blackfoot) Elder Jackie Bromley said, "Truth-telling must occur before reconciliation can happen."

Recently becoming members of the Order of Canada for their commitment to preserving Nitstitapi language and culture, the Crowshoes hold great knowledge and are in high demand. As a result, the Crowshoes recommended Mahegun Tails, Inc., an Indigenous, female-led consulting firm, and an Indigenous circle of Elders, led by Elder Bromley, representing the Treaty 7 Nations in Southern Alberta, as well as one Métis Elder, to guide the process. Through targeted dialogue with Arts Commons staff and each of the resident companies, along with a validation process with the Elders, parallels between Indigenous and non-Indigenous systems, processes and infrastructure are being identified, ultimately informing the larger Reconciliation Strategy.

Arts Commons is a "social business" with the social objective to ensure that we ignite positive change in society by providing equitable access to the transformative power of the arts. The framework by which the Strategy is developed, therefore, considers this important position and approaches the work based on the Indigenous principles of Making Relatives, Ethical Space, and Sanctified Kindness, a reciprocal approach that honors both Western and Indigenous ways of doing and ways of being.

In addition to the development of a Reconciliation Strategy, we are also supporting the Elders Story Project (ESP). The ESP is a project led by the Elders Knowledge Circle Society (EKCS), with Dr. Reg and Elder Rose Crowshoe as the lead Elders. The EKCS is a group of approximately 30 Indigenous Elders who have come together to bridge the gap in cultural understanding, facilitate reconciliation, and allow the transfer of knowledge to the next generation. Supported by the EKCS' Western partners: Arts Commons, Calgary Counselling Centre, Calgary Public Library, EY, University of Calgary, and United Way of Canada, the project includes the development of a book, a healing toolkit, and public events. These components will respectfully carry the stories that the Elders share about their experiences during and after their time in residential schools, for Indigenous youth and non- Indigenous peoples to learn from.

Arts Commons is proud to facilitate the story circles by providing a physical and ethical space for the EKCS members to gather, and ultimately host events to facilitate dialogue and learning. We invite you to join us and start your journey toward reconciliation by reading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports, which can be found at [nctr.ca](http://nctr.ca).

**RESOURCES**

**7. Please outlined how The City's operating funding was allocated in 2022.**

%	Advertising and promotion
<b>3%</b>	Programs or services
%	Office supplies and expenses
%	Professional and consulting fees
%	Staff compensation, development and training
%	Fund development
<b>10%</b>	Purchased supplies and assets
<b>87%</b>	Facility maintenance

%	Evaluation or Research
%	<i>Other, please name:</i>

**8. Did volunteers support your operations in 2022?**

How many volunteers?	33
Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:	1,050

**9. Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2022 that you want to highlight?**

Arts Commons was the only arts centre in a roster of 77 Recipients in 2022 for the NAFA Clear Air Award. The National Air Filtration Association (NAFA) Clean Air Award is presented each year to the building owners and managers who take steps to significantly improve the quality of their indoor air by increasing the level or efficiency of their HVAC air filtration system in 10 specific categories. Candidates are nominated for the award by NAFA members and must submit detailed and specific steps taken toward cleaning the indoor environment through “best air filtration practices” and system hygiene.

**10. What changes did your organization implement in 2022 to address climate change, for example, operational or program changes that reduced green house gas emissions (GHG), air/water pollution, or waste that aligned with [The City’s Climate Change Program](#) including Council’s Climate Emergency Declaration?**

Arts Commons endeavours to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and air/water pollution on an ongoing basis whenever we have the opportunity to undertake lifecycle projects. While no projects of substance were undertaken during our 2021-22 Season, here is a list of substantive projects undertaken in recent years that continue to provide annual benefits:

- Replacement of inefficient and obsolete boiler infrastructure with environmentally responsible thermal energy technology from District Energy that is 35% more efficient, which reduces our annual greenhouse gas emissions by 1,198 metric tonnes. Over the 25 year life expectancy of the new system this is a total reduction of 29,950 metric tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, or equivalent to pulling 6,300 cars off the road.
- Replacement of antiquated theatrical dimmer systems in the Jack Singer Concert Hall and the Max Bell Theatre with new equipment, and replacement of existing incandescent stage lighting in the same venue with more versatile, and energy efficient LED stage lighting. Please note that Arts Commons will undertake replacement of the inefficient theatrical dimming system in the Martha Cohen Theatre during the summer of 2023.
- Replacement of all toilets and faucets throughout the facility, which is saving over 8,000,000 litres of water annually.

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

**Asset:** Arts Commons

**What are 3-5 capital projects undertaken in 2022 that were funded by The City?**

Project	City Funding (2022)	Benefit (service improvement, efficiency, improved condition)
Venue Rigging	\$375,000	In the Martha Cohen Theatre (MCT) and the Max Bell Theatre (MBT), safety work was undertaken with an overhaul of the aging fire curtain system and its supporting control system in the MCT. We also undertook a review which generated a report confirming the structural integrity of the lighting ladder and railings in the backstage area of the MBT.
Max Bell Theatre Audio & Video	\$422,500	Sound and video systems within the Max Bell Theatre also needed attention, with new equipment installed in the back of house and a new in-venue

		<p>speaker cluster replacement currently underway. These changes might seem minor, but they make a huge difference when Jacob Marley's spectral voice booms over the audience, or the infectious beats of a Broadway musical fills the theatre.</p>
Electrical & Mechanical Projects	\$311,250	<p>To keep our building safe, even changing the motor on a smoke exhaust can be an enormous undertaking. In this case, it included shutting down portions of 9th Avenue to crane lift a replacement motor onto the roof. Starting at 6 p.m. on April 1, 2021, Arts Commons facility operations staff began the 8-hour process of removing the old motor and installing and testing the new motor. For patrons of the building, it was a change they would never notice, but it makes all the difference in case of a fire.</p> <p>In the underbelly of our building, our state-of-the-art humidification system, secondary chiller, and electrical system received vital work. The humidification system ensures that there is even humidity throughout our 560,000 square foot building, protecting the sensitive instruments of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and the Calgary Civic Symphony. This humidification system has attracted the attention of other property management companies in the downtown core due to its specialized and efficient technology.</p> <p>And finally, we installed a surge protection system on our electrical plant. When an electrical surge occurs, voltage greatly exceeding accepted peak voltage levels could pass through building circuits to electrical equipment. Without proper protection, this equipment is susceptible to damage or failure. A surge protective device (SPD) can negate these spikes.</p> <p>These are just a few examples of how we continue to bring the best of theatre to the citizens of Calgary and ensure that our assets are provided and cared for.</p>
Consulting for 2023	\$22,500	<p>If you pull back the curtain on the venues of Arts Commons, there's a network of highly specialized systems that support every part of putting on world class stage productions. From the lighting rigs to the ventilation systems, each plays a key role. This season, we took a careful, tiered approach to address the upkeep of the Jack Singer Concert Hall canopy.</p> <p>A marvel of engineering, the all-wooden canopy dramatically frames the Jack Singer Concert Hall stage. Weighing over 56 tonnes, it is supported by a series of hydraulic lifts that allow it to raise and lower based on the needs of performers. This canopy is key to maximizing the acoustic potential of the Jack Singer Concert Hall, whether it's for a single soloist or a wall-rattling rock band. To properly assess the condition of the canopy, our contractors modified the side stage speaker attachment points to swing so that the canopy could descend to six feet above the Jack Singer stage. From there we were able to do a thorough inspection of the woodwork and connection points to address the safety and condition of this amazing feat of engineering.</p>
Accessibility Initiatives	\$34,500	<p>Ensuring that we do everything in our ability to break down barriers to accessibility goes beyond attendance at a performance. During the 2021-22 season we completed a series of upgrades to allow performers, staff and crew with mobility challenges to access backstage areas with ease and comfort including automatic door controls and widened passageways.</p>
Project Management/Site Supervision	\$93,250	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,259,000</b>	