

DATE OF MEETING NOVEMBER 26, 2018

AUTHORED BY CHRIS SHOLBERG, CULTURE & HERITAGE PLANNER

SUBJECT PORT THEATRE COMMUNITY PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
(CPAC) UPDATE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide an update to Council on the status and background of the Port Theatre Community Performing Arts Centre (CPAC) project.

Recommendation

That the "Port Theatre Community Performing Arts Centre (CPAC) Update", report dated 2018-NOV-26, be received for information.

BACKGROUND

A new infrastructure funding program was announced in the Fall of 2018 by the Provincial Government called the "Community, Culture and Recreation Program". The program allows for applications of up to 73.33% of the cost of a capital asset that will improve access to and/or community infrastructure for Canadians, including Indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations.

At the upcoming Finance and Audit Committee meeting of 2018-DEC-04, Staff will be providing a presentation on the infrastructure funding program and potential eligible projects. Council, at their regular meeting of 2018-DEC-17, will receive a Staff report on this item. At that time, Council direction will be sought regarding the grant and what, if any, capital project Council may wish to pursue through this program.

One of the projects that will be included for Council's consideration within the program is the Port Theatre Community Performing Arts Centre (CPAC). The purpose of this report is to provide Council with further information and background regarding the CPAC project in advance of Council's consideration of the grant report on 2018-DEC-17

In April 2016, the estimated cost for construction of the CPAC was \$13.2 million. In preparation for the report on 2018-DEC-04, Staff are working with the Port Theatre Society to provide an updated project cost estimate.

DISCUSSION

The proposed Community Performing Arts Centre will be approximately 15,000 square feet in area on three levels. It will include a flexible seat studio (50-240 seats), two rehearsal spaces with production capabilities, audience services, and technical support areas. The flexible seat studio will be acoustically tunable as a concert hall, have classic black-box theatre seating, and retractable seating for flat floor use. The three rehearsal spaces will be fully equipped with production capabilities. These spaces will be available for workshops, master classes, and

other uses. There will be sprung floors suitable for dance, and one space at main stage level that can be used in conjunction with the Port Theatre for events.

The Society believes that the Community Performing Arts Centre will be beneficial to the city in a number of ways including:

1. Increasing accessibility to professional community and touring performances;
2. Increasing Nanaimo's arts and culture profile provincially and nationally;
3. Access to intimate purpose-built performance space in downtown Nanaimo;
4. Increased economic activity in the downtown core;
5. Fostering an environment nurturing creative professionals in Nanaimo;
6. Access to affordable rehearsal space;
7. Increased opportunity to reach new audiences;
8. Access to alternative spaces for workshops, meetings or alternative activities;
9. Creation of local jobs during construction phase and beyond;
10. Greater activation of Diana Krall Plaza;
11. Implementation of environmentally-conscious building practices; and
12. Creation of critical performance space mass within the downtown Arts District.

Support for such a facility has been identified in City policy for many years, including general reference to the project in the City's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan Update under the Community Vitality community value. Additional general policy support is found in the Arts, Culture and Recreation section of the Official Community Plan and through specific support for the project in the City's 2014-2020 Cultural Plan.

First identified as a community need back in 1988, a studio theatre and rehearsal space was also considered as part of the construction of the Port Theatre in the mid-1990s, but was removed from the project scope due to budget constraints. Since the Port Theatre opened in 1998, Nanaimo's cultural sector has recognized and expressed the need for this type of space. Most recently, this need was underscored at a cultural gathering hosted by the City's Community Vitality Committee in 2017.

In 2014, the Port Theatre Society initiated a community consultation process specifically focused on the demand for a studio theatre and associated rehearsal space. This process included three engagement events (involving over 300 attendees) as well as a survey of over 800 community members with over 82% indicating support for the project.

Council received the results of the community consultation process on 2014-SEP-08, and passed a motion to partner with the Port Theatre Society to move the project forward. This support included a \$4.6 million funding commitment conditional on the society securing the remaining funds needed (estimated at \$8.6 million). Council also committed at this time to co-signing a \$2 million line of credit to accommodate the necessary design and engineering work.

Throughout 2015 and early 2016, design work proceeded on the Community Performing Arts Centre. In addition, funding opportunities at the Federal and Provincial government levels were explored by the Port Theatre Society in partnership with the City of Nanaimo. An application was made for funding through the Federal Government's New Building Canada Fund, but was ultimately not successful.

On 2016-APR-18, Council reconfirmed the City's 2014 commitment to the project, including a renewed commitment to continue to explore funding opportunities together at the Federal and Provincial levels.

For Council's reference, a brief chronology of events related to the Community Performing Arts Centre has been attached (Attachment A).

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Port Theatre Society would like to make a joint application with the City of Nanaimo for funding to construct a Community Performing Arts Centre under a new Provincial Government infrastructure funding program.
- Support for the Community Performing Arts Centre has been identified in City policy (2016-2019 Strategic Plan, Official Community Plan, and Culture Plan) for many years.
- First identified as a community need back in 1988, Nanaimo's culture sector has advocated for construction of the Community Performing Arts Centre over the ensuing three decades, with Council funding support (\$4.6 million, and \$2 million line of credit) for the project committed in 2014 and renewed in 2016.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Port Theatre Community Performing Arts Centre (Chronology)

Submitted by:

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Manager, Community & Cultural Planning

Concurrence by:

Dale Lindsay
Director, Community Development