

# Community Arts & Culture Framework



**FORT ST. JOHN**  
*The Energetic City*



July 2023

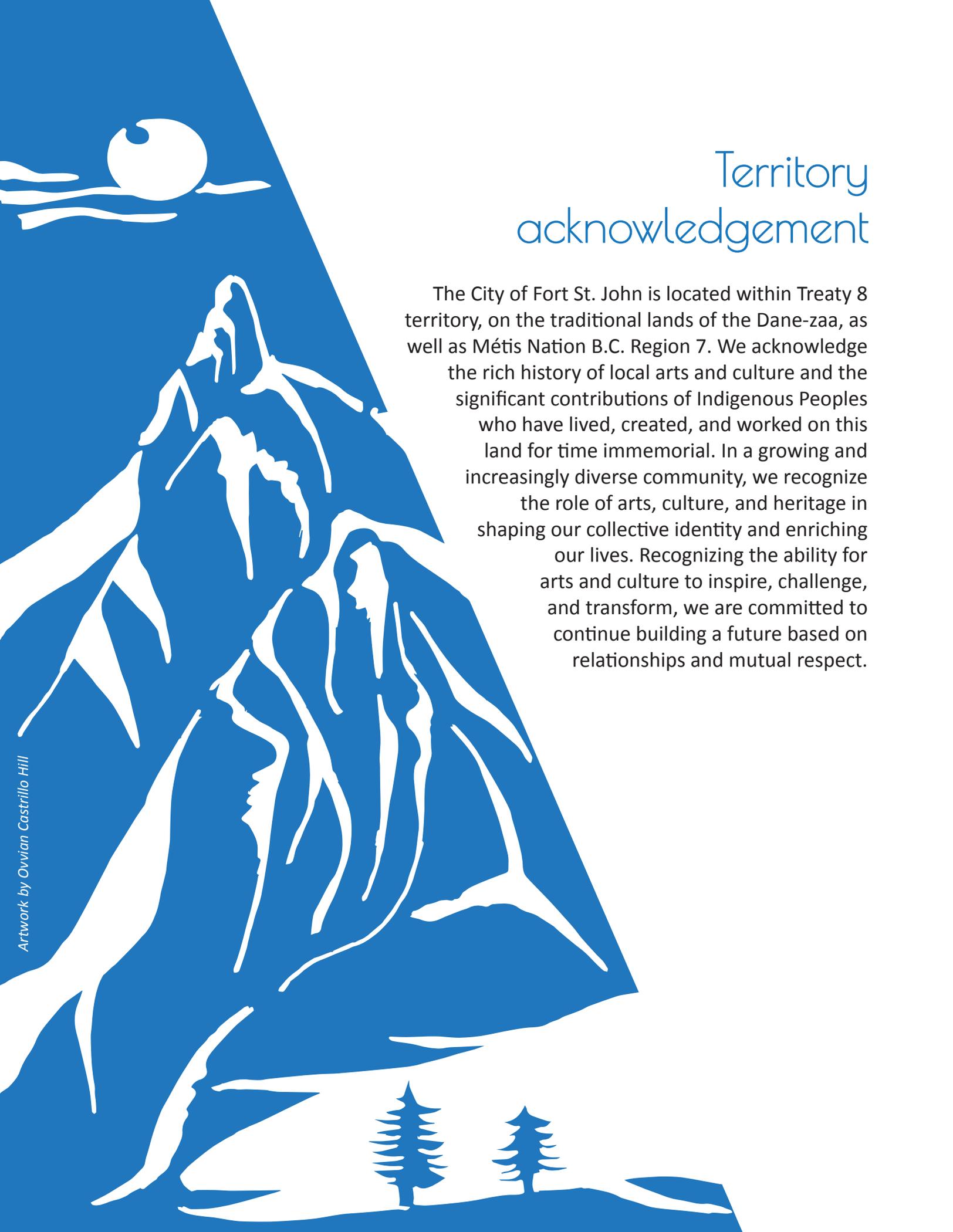
 Happy Cities

 QUANTUM  
RECREATION

*Cover artwork by Kirstyn Kerr.*

*Artwork on this page by Joely Percival.*





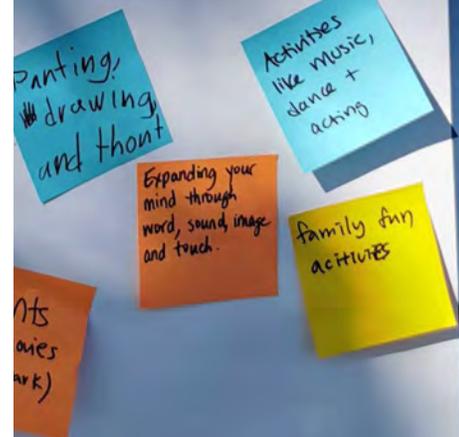
# Territory acknowledgement

The City of Fort St. John is located within Treaty 8 territory, on the traditional lands of the Dane-zaa, as well as Métis Nation B.C. Region 7. We acknowledge the rich history of local arts and culture and the significant contributions of Indigenous Peoples who have lived, created, and worked on this land for time immemorial. In a growing and increasingly diverse community, we recognize the role of arts, culture, and heritage in shaping our collective identity and enriching our lives. Recognizing the ability for arts and culture to inspire, challenge, and transform, we are committed to continue building a future based on relationships and mutual respect.

# Community acknowledgements

First and foremost the Community Arts & Culture Framework is inspired by the creative energy, talent, and community of Fort St. John. Members of the community generously gave their time and insight to help shape each strategy and recommended action—taking part in numerous engagement events and activities. We are grateful for the talented artists, guild members, cultural groups, and many more who shared their expertise, aspirations, and needs. We are equally grateful for the countless members of the public who shared their dream for the future of arts and culture in Fort St. John, for themselves and the next generation. We are also grateful to the community leaders, current and who came before—including Sue Popesku—who set the stage for arts and culture today and who helped to open up the creative scene to create an inclusive, creative space for all. The devotion and energy of these many individuals is recognized and celebrated through this Framework—through its strategic direction and practical resources alike. The creativity, passion for the arts, and dedication to the process all contributed to the creation of a made-in-Fort St. John Community Arts & Culture Framework, by the City and the community.

## FRAMEWORK!



# What is arts and culture?

## UNESCO definitions

According to the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, cultures are “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs.”

Regarding arts and artists, UNESCO “recognizes creativity as a precious resource with a potential to generate economic benefits while also enhancing our overall wellbeing.”

## Arts and culture in Fort St. John

To identify a shared definition encompassing both arts and culture, we asked the Fort St. John community, “What does ‘arts and culture’ mean to you?”

The community defined arts and culture in their own words: Arts and culture encompasses creative expression, new and shared experiences, and opportunities for connection.



# Table of contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
Vision .....	7
Guiding principles .....	8
Arts and culture overview .....	9
Community context .....	11
<b>Community learnings</b>	<b>17</b>
Process .....	18
Community engagement .....	19
<b>Implementing the Framework</b>	<b>23</b>
City roles .....	24
Strategies and actions .....	25
Next steps .....	53
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>56</b>



*These beaded artworks are the masterpieces of Tsaa Dane (Beaver People) women from the community of Doig River First Nation. Each bead was handstitched one bead at a time to create these amazingly intricate art works. Traditional beaded art works are a symbol of resiliency, a true reflection of beauty, cultural heritage and pride.*



# Executive summary

The Community Arts & Culture Framework aims to uplift local arts and culture, as a guide for the City of Fort St. John to foster opportunities for collaboration and initiative with the creative community.

As a “made in Fort St. John” plan, the Community Arts & Culture Framework was shaped by community input as well as best practices in arts and culture planning (specifically within the context of winter cities). Community input included opportunities for the public to share their priorities, as well as discussion with key arts and culture groups and their members.

The Framework builds on the past success and work of the City of Fort St. John and—equally—on the community’s creativity, talent and initiative over the years. This Framework is dedicated to supporting the arts and culture community.

*For further information about the Community Arts & Culture Framework, please contact the City of Fort St. John’s Arts & Culture Department at [arts-culture@fortstjohn.ca](mailto:arts-culture@fortstjohn.ca)*

# Process overview

Through two rounds of engagement, the community shared input on their priorities for arts and culture in Fort St. John, identifying and refining four guiding principles. Together, these guiding principles informed the direction of the Community Arts & Culture Framework, with each principle inspiring several strategies. A list of all the strategies and actions in this Framework is included on the following pages.

## Vision for arts and culture in Fort St. John

*An inclusive arts and culture community that enhances quality of life, identity, and the local economy in Fort St. John by supporting creativity, reconciliation, social connection, and opportunities to participate in the arts.*

# Guiding principles

**Celebrate diversity**

**Build community capacity**



**Strengthen partnerships and connection**

**Animate the city**



## Who should use this Framework?

The Framework will be useful for community groups and residents interested in new creative initiatives and partnerships. The Framework is also intended as a strategic guide for the City of Fort St. John, particularly for City staff working to support local arts and culture.

# Summary table of strategies and actions

The Framework’s nine strategies are listed below. See the “Strategies and actions” section (pages 25-52) for more details, examples, and practical tools to demonstrate how the City may achieve each strategy. Actions show a timeframe and identify the most likely role for the City’s Arts & Culture Department.

The City’s roles include:

- **Initiate:** Start and pass over to another organization
- **Support:** Provide support for delivery by another organization
- **Facilitate:** Share resources and enable connections
- **Implement:** Fund and direct delivery

Strategies and actions	Timeframe	City role
<b>1. Increase community access to diverse arts and culture offerings</b>		
1.1. Increase youth-focused and intergenerational opportunities	3-5 years	Support
1.2. Increase cross-cultural opportunities for collaboration	3-5 years	Support
1.3. Explore direct delivery of arts and culture programming	6+ years	Implement
1.4. Offer low-barrier art activities at City facilities	3-5 years	Implement
1.5. Adopt a Leisure Access Program that includes programming for arts and culture	3-5 years	Implement
1.6. Develop interactive and community-led art projects	1-2 years	Initiate or support
<b>2. Prioritize opportunities for Indigenous representation and participation in decision making within arts and culture</b>		
2.1. Develop an Event Welcome Protocol for City-led arts and culture events	3-5 years	Implement
2.2. Develop an Agreement of Understanding for for City-led arts and culture events	3-5 years	Implement
2.3. Formalize a territory acknowledgement for City arts and culture events	1-2 years	Support
2.4. Provide cross-cultural training for City staff and creative community	1-2 years	Support
2.5. Redefine heritage in Fort St. John by recognizing Indigenous place and meaning	3-5 years	Implement
<b>3. Strengthen existing partnerships and facilitate new connections across the creative community</b>		
3.1. Explore opportunity to co-locate the City’s Arts & Culture Department	1-2 years	Implement
3.2. Provide ongoing channels for communication through the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee	1-2 years	Facilitate
3.3. Enhance marketing opportunities for the creative community	3-5 years	Initiate or facilitate



Strategies and actions (continued)	Timeframe	City role
<b>4. Animate public spaces and enhance sense of place through art and creative projects</b>		
4.1. Develop a mural program	3-5 years	Implement
4.2. Prioritize new public art and placemaking projects downtown	3-5 years	Support
4.3. Explore lease and funding options for temporary public art installations	1-2 years	Implement
4.4. Consider commissioning public art celebrating Fort St. John	3-5 years	Implement
4.5. Expand on music offerings through use of City facilities	3-5 years	Support
<b>5. Explore creative initiatives in collaboration with Economic Development to enhance a vibrant downtown core</b>		
5.1. Coordinate implementation of the Community Arts & Culture Framework and the Economic Development Strategy	1-2 years	Implement
5.2. Explore option to align Arts & Culture with Economic Development through organizational structure	6+ years	Implement
5.3. Identify opportunities to complement recreation with arts and culture	3-5 years	Initiate or support
5.4. Ensure business representation within arts and culture	1-2 years	Support
5.5. Explore B.C.'s MRDT tax to support tourism-related arts and culture initiatives	6+ years	Implement
<b>6. Develop tools to evaluate and assess arts and culture programs, facilities, and initiatives</b>		
6.1. Conduct a gap analysis of current programming and use of City facilities	3-5 years	Implement
6.2. Explore parity between arts and culture and sports and recreation offerings	3-5 years	Implement
6.3. Assess the viability of new arts and culture facilities	6+ years	Initiate or support
6.4. Explore the feasibility of a creative maker space	6+ years	Initiate or support
6.5. Formalize a clear Program Planning & Evaluation Package	1-2 years	Implement



Strategies and actions (continued)	Timeframe	City role
<b>7. Develop tools to evaluate and strengthen city policy and operations to support arts and culture</b>		
7.1. Establish an Arts & Culture Advisory Committee to represent the diverse creative community	1-2 years	Initiate or support
7.2. Develop a formal selection process for public art through a Public Art Policy	1-2 years	Implement
7.3. Investigate sustainable funding models to support the creative community	6+ years	Implement
7.4. Explore a new City Arts & Culture Department position	1-2 years	Implement
7.5. Assess Partnership Policy to support arts and culture	1-2 years	Implement
7.6. Translate City arts and culture resources into multiple languages	3-5 years	Implement
7.7. Provide interpretation services at City events and programs	3-5 years	Facilitate or support
<b>8. Offer practical resources to support capacity building across the creative community</b>		
8.1. Provide or support a shared community arts and culture events platform	3-5 years	Support or implement
8.2. Encourage arts and culture through a Placemaking Small Grant	1-2 years	Implement
8.3. Host ongoing capacity-building workshops for the creative community	1-2 years	Implement
8.4. Support an annual arts and culture conference	3-5 years	Support
8.5. Provide tailored support for equity-seeking arts and culture groups	1-2 years	Implement
8.6. Establish an Artist in Residence program	1-2 years	Initiate
<b>9. Reduce barriers to accessing spaces for creative uses</b>		
9.1. Create an inventory of spaces interested in accommodating arts and culture groups	1-2 years	Facilitate
9.2. Support arts and culture groups in accessing spaces from other sectors	3-5 years	Facilitate
9.3. Connect businesses with artists	1-2 years	Support
9.4. Showcase art at City facilities	1-2 years	Implement
9.5. Explore City management of space for arts and culture groups	3-5 years	Implement
9.6. Explore collaboration with North Peace Community Foundation to subsidize lease space	3-5 years	Support
9.7. Consider adopting a Community Event Grant program	3-5 years	Implement

# Introduction



# Vision

An inclusive arts and culture community that enhances quality of life, identity, and the local economy in Fort St. John by supporting creativity, reconciliation, social connection, and opportunities to participate in the arts.



# Guiding principles

The Community Arts & Culture Framework is built on guiding principles to ensure that arts and culture serve a growing and increasingly diverse community. These principles have guided

the Framework's planning process and will continue to direct art and culture decisions in Fort St. John over the next five years and beyond.

## Celebrate diversity

Ensure that all community members can appreciate, participate in, and shape arts and culture, and that arts and culture continues to advance reconciliation.



## Build community capacity

Build up organizational capacity among community groups to support and enhance the quality and quantity of arts and culture offerings.



## Strengthen partnerships and connections

Strengthen arts and culture through formal and informal partnerships within the arts and culture community and to the wider community.



## Animate the city

Elevate the array of public art, events, activities, and placemaking to support sense of place, sociability, and a lively downtown.



# Arts and culture overview

Arts and culture are essential to a vibrant, inclusive, and liveable community. By building on what is unique to Fort St. John, arts and culture can strengthen a sense of meaning and belonging for long-time residents, newcomers, and visitors alike. A thriving, culturally diverse, creative community offers more than just economic value to the city—it creates opportunities for connection and capacity building among all residents, celebrating our unique backgrounds, strengths, and talents.

**79%**

of people surveyed said arts and culture are essential to a thriving Fort St. John community

## What do we mean by arts and culture?

*Through the first round of engagement for the Framework, the community defined arts and culture in their own words: Arts and culture encompasses creative expression, new and shared experiences, and opportunities for connection.*

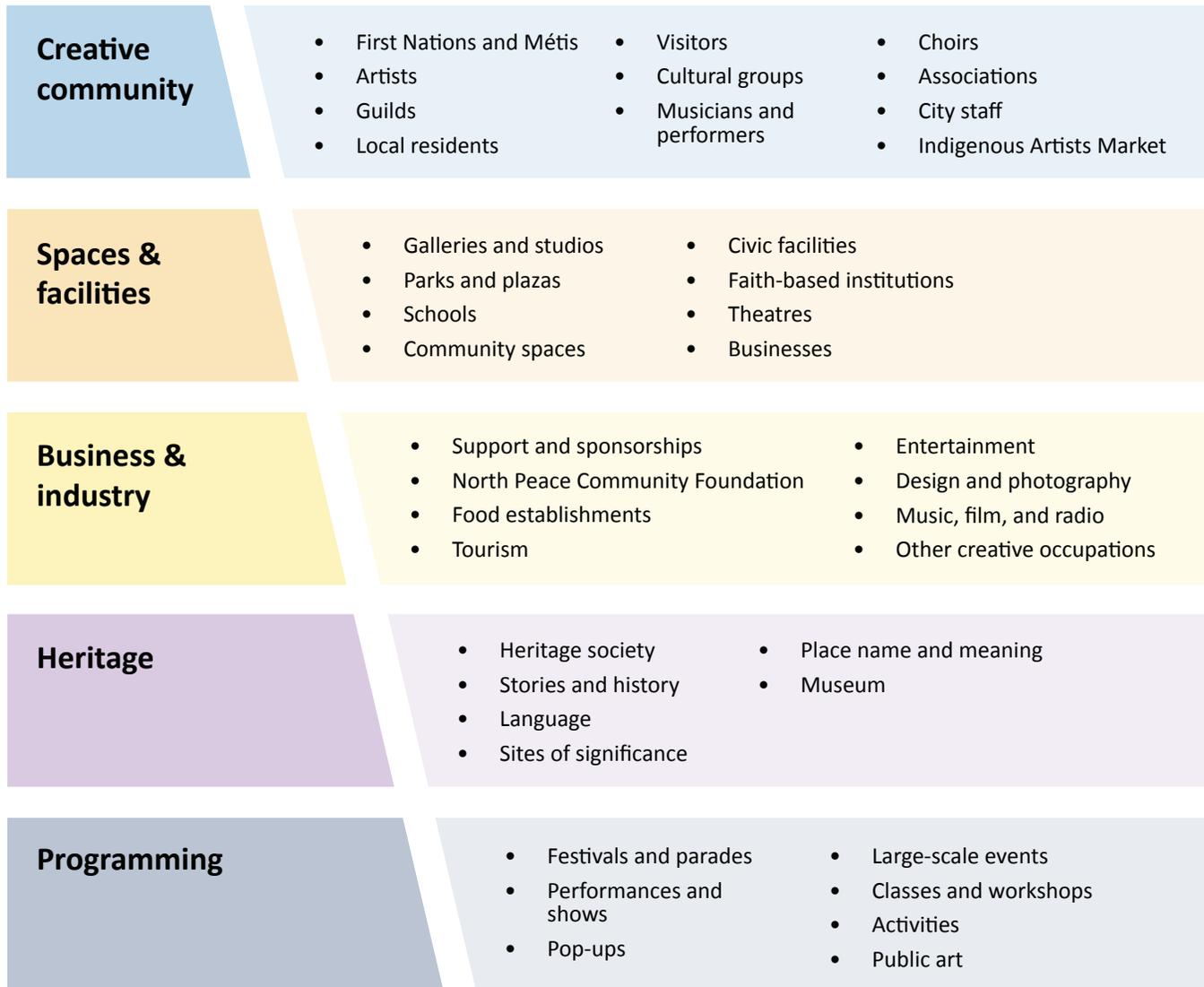
While developing the Framework, we heard from hundreds of community members and 23 local arts and culture groups. Throughout this engagement, residents emphasized that the community's creativity, energy, and talent is one of the greatest strengths of Fort St. John.

Through the Framework, the City of Fort St. John will support the talent and energy of the creative community. The City is committed to strengthening a welcoming and creative identity, so that Fort St. John can be known across the region for its artistic opportunity and vibrant culture (as much as it is known for its other strengths, including sports and recreation).

Fort St. John Festival Plaza.



## Snapshot of arts and culture in Fort St. John



## Wellbeing benefits of arts and culture

Arts, culture, and community wellbeing are closely intertwined. Interaction with arts and culture encourages social ties, promotes lifelong learning, and reduces isolation—all of which help foster an inclusive and tolerant community. Research shows that visiting cultural venues can boost happiness and mental health<sup>1</sup>, and increase life expectancy in older adults<sup>2</sup>. Wellbeing is a key outcome of arts and culture efforts, just as closely as physical health is supported through sports and recreation.

A robust creative community can also help address challenges that impact the community at large. Arts and culture help retain professional talent and provide outlets for expression and connection among younger generations. By providing opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds, arts and culture can support the wellbeing of Fort St. John residents for years to come.

<sup>1</sup>Davies, C., Knuiman, M., & Rosenberg, M. (2015). *The art of being mentally healthy: a study to quantify the relationship between recreational arts engagement and mental well-being in the general population*. *BMC Public Health*, 16(1), 15.

<sup>2</sup>Fancourt, D., & Steptoe, A. (2019). *The art of life and death: 14-year follow-up analyses of associations between arts engagement and mortality in the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing*. *BMJ*, 367.

# Community context

## Physical context

Fort St. John is the heart of the North Peace River Region, a hub for the seven towns and smaller cities in the area, as well as four electoral areas. The city is located along the Alaska Highway in northern B.C. The landscape is defined by rolling hills, agricultural land, and the winding Peace River.

The city spans 22 square kilometres, with a central downtown core. A renewal to the heart of downtown—at 100 Avenue and 100 Street—

**75%**

of people said arts and culture are as important to quality of life in Fort St. John as sports and recreation

includes streetscape upgrades and new public spaces. The revitalization of the downtown is a priority for the City. Creative initiatives, such as public art and cultural events, will be key in supporting downtown to reach its full potential.

The seasonal impact of weather in the region is significant, with long winters broken up by hot, short summers. Both winter and summer are characterized by regionally unique social, recreational, and cultural activities.

---

*In the summer, indoor spaces are quieter, as residents may be found road tripping, enjoying festivals around the region, and spending time outdoors at the parks.*

---

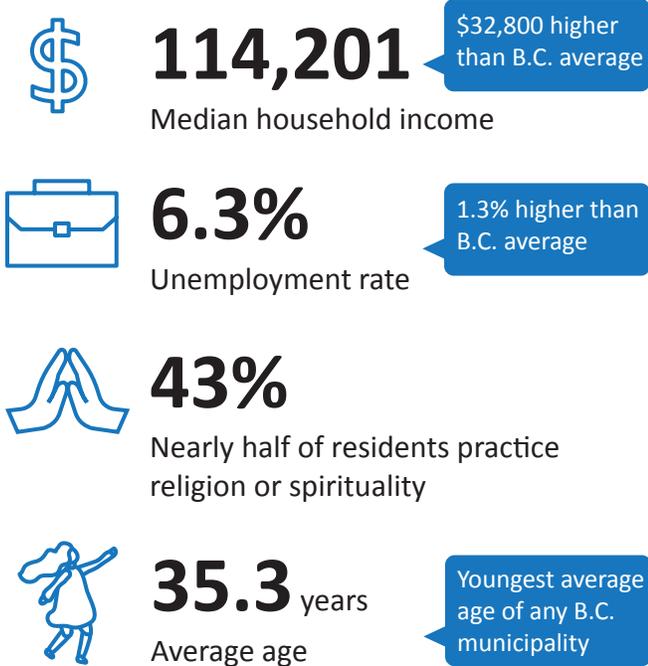
*In the winter, residents remain active—participating in snow sports, indoor food and social activities, and the popular High On Ice festival.*



## Demographic context

Fort St. John is located on the traditional territory of the Dane-zaa and Treaty 8 signatories who have lived on the land for millennia, and home to the Métis Nation. The establishment of Fort St. John as a trading post dates back to the late 1700s, when the first European settlers arrived in the area. Treaty 8 was signed between the local First Nations and the Canadian government in the late 1890s and early 1900s, marking a significant chapter in the region's history. Today, First Nation and Métis residents make up 9.9 per cent of the population—key voices in the story of place and heritage.

## Community profile



Gender\*:



\*Given the small non-binary population in many cities, Statistics Canada aggregates gender data to protect confidentiality. Non-binary persons are denoted by the + symbol and distributed among both gender categories.

## A growing population

**+5.5%**

Increase in population from 2016 to 2021



## A diverse population

**9.9%**

Are First Nations or Métis

**12.6%**

Identify as a person of colour

**4.7%**

Identify as Filipino

75% increase from 2016-2021

## A moving population

Many people move to and from Fort St. John each year, notably for work in natural resources, construction, and trades.

**29.6%**

Are new to Fort St. John in 2016-2021

**4.9%**

Are new to both Fort St. John and Canada in 2016-2021

Data sources: Statistics Canada, Census 2021; B.C. Statistics, April 2023; WorkBC, [www.workbc.ca](http://www.workbc.ca).

## Policy context

The Community Arts & Culture Framework supports a range of City policies. Specifically, the Strategic Plan, the Official Community Plan, and the Social & Economic Development Framework demonstrate commitment to an inclusive, vibrant, and liveable city. The Community Arts & Culture Framework responds to these goals, with several strategies and actions addressing multiple goals simultaneously.

Key goals from these policies are highlighted below.

*Additionally, the Community Arts & Culture Framework aims to unlock creative potential of the downtown core, helping to fulfill goals from the City's 2015 Downtown Action Plan, 2017 Winter City Micro-Project Strategy, and 2017 Vacant No More Strategic Plan.*

## 2017 Official Community Plan (OCP)

### 8.4.1 Art: Goal

Develop Fort St. John into a hub for the arts

### 8.4.2 Culture: Goal

Have a rich and culturally diverse community

### 8.4.3 Heritage: Goal

Preserve, protect, enhance, and celebrate Fort St. John's history and heritage

## 2023 Strategic Plan

### Vibrant community

Foster community pride and sense of belonging.

Develop, celebrate and promote arts and the culturally diverse history and heritage of the community.

### Relationships and advocacy

Strengthen relationships with First Nations and Métis communities

### Managing assets

Invest in building, improving, and maintaining physical and digital assets

## 2020 Social and Economic Development Framework

Develop an arts and culture strategy for Fort St. John

Invest in facilities to create, exhibit, sell, learn, and inspire

Invest in organizations that deliver arts and culture programs and opportunities

Grow the economic potential of arts and culture

Support the bridging capacity of arts and culture in the community

## Arts and culture context

Fort St. John is a city of creative energy. The community itself was regularly noted as the city's greatest arts and culture strength, a reservoir of local talent and capacity. A variety of well-established groups pursue performance art, craftwork, visual art, cultural programs, heritage events, and more. These groups are foundational

in offering programming, activities, and events to the wider community.

Additional community groups may not have arts and culture as a central mandate, but are still strong advocates and supporters. These groups offer a range of services and programs to the community, supporting education, health, families, youth, seniors, new immigrants, local industry, and more.

### Snapshot of current limitations for local arts and culture:

**Time and resources:** Limited time, especially for those with multiple paid or volunteer roles.

**Space:** Current space challenges include cost (of venue rental and insurance), lack of secured long-term space to set up equipment, the need for facilities with amenities (such as storage and sinks), and lack of flexible or multi-use spaces available on a temporary basis.

**Inclusion:** Established groups may not be readily advertised or are too full for new members.

**Distance:** Fort St. John's geographic location presents a barrier to visiting professional artists and exhibits. The city falls outside of typical circuits, creating additional travel costs.

**Community-led programming:** In a smaller city, gaps in community-led programming include offerings that fluctuate based on local talent. For example, if a community member teaching guitar leaves town, it is not guaranteed that someone will fill their shoes.

**City-led programming:** The capacity of a smaller city comes with limitations. For example, the City does not offer creative drop-in or regular classes as a core service.

# 47+

Active arts & culture organizations and groups in Fort St. John

# 11

Outdoor public art installations

# 29

Spaces dedicated to serving the arts and culture community

# 3

Annual City-led community events, in addition to ongoing events and programs (such as Music in the Park)

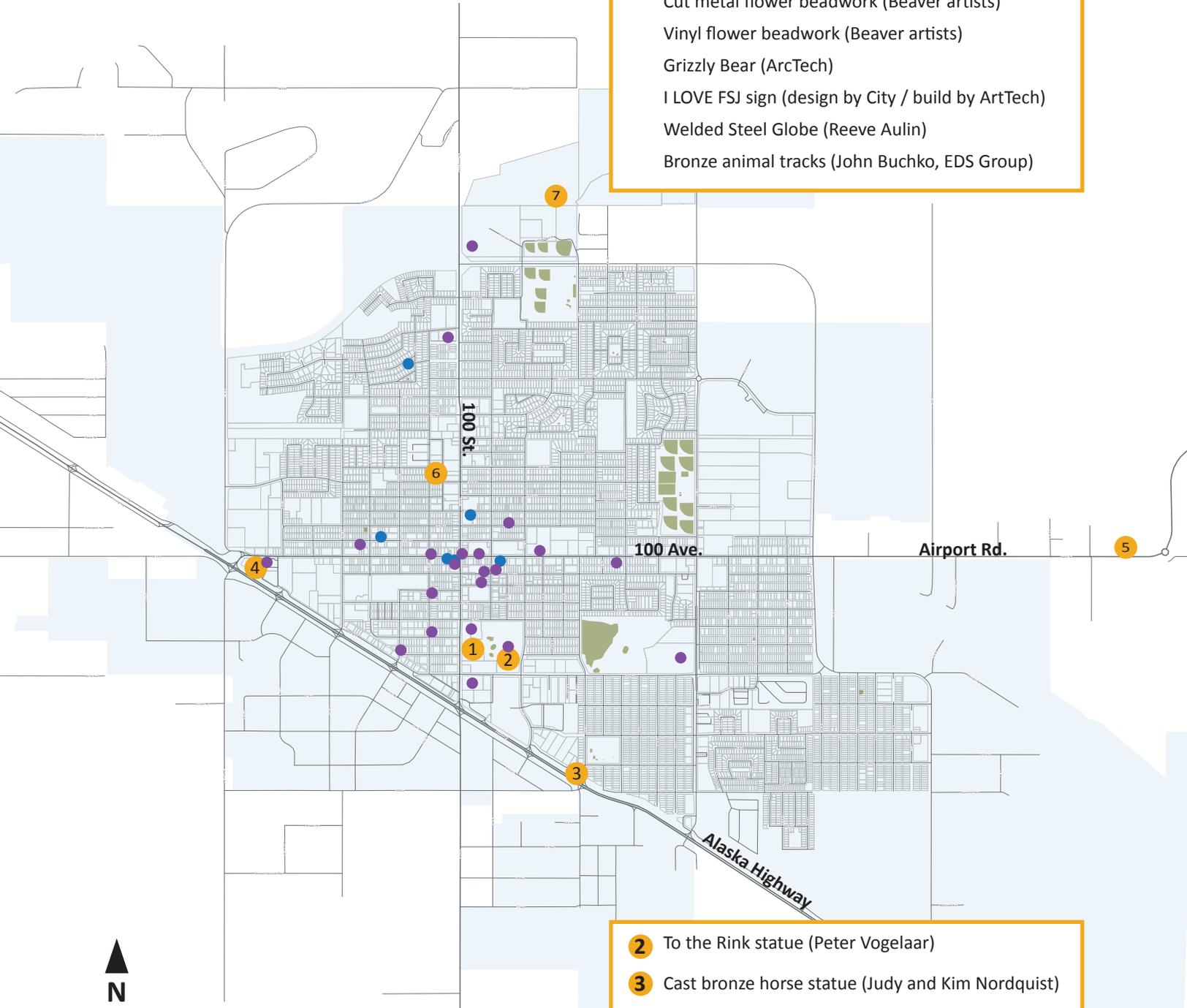
- High on Ice
- Canada Day
- Santa Claus Parade



## Existing arts and culture assets in Fort St. John

### List of outdoor public artworks:

- 1** Festival Plaza Fire Obelisks (Ovvia Castrillo Hill, Kirstyn Kerr, Alison Newth, Joely Percival)
- Cut metal flower beadwork (Beaver artists)
- Vinyl flower beadwork (Beaver artists)
- Grizzly Bear (ArcTech)
- I LOVE FSJ sign (design by City / build by ArtTech)
- Welded Steel Globe (Reeve Aulin)
- Bronze animal tracks (John Buchko, EDS Group)



- Culture, community, and performance spaces
- Gallery, exhibit, and studio spaces
- Outdoor public art

- 2** To the Rink statue (Peter Vogelaar)
- 3** Cast bronze horse statue (Judy and Kim Nordquist)
- 4** Blue bell tower (ArcTech)
- 5** Core samples (Peter Vogelaar)
- 6** Burden of Time (ArcTech - Chris Ferris, Jason Dufis, Chris Bigras)
- 7** Big Bear (unknown artist) and Little Bear (John Lambert)

*“In Fort St. John, there are some very committed individuals who give their life, heart, and soul to promoting the arts in the community. People who don’t give up.”*

*— Peace River Chapter of FCA*



# Community learnings



Artwork by Alison Newth

# Process

Throughout the development of the Community Arts & Culture Framework, the community had opportunities to:

- Learn about the purpose of the Framework, including how it builds on past efforts and supports the City’s policy goals toward a vibrant local arts and culture scene.
- Share priorities for the future of arts and culture, especially related to programming, physical spaces, and opportunities for new initiatives, such as public art.

*“Arts and culture brings life to a community. It is needed to show the talents of individuals and groups, and gives our community depth so that we can be known for more than our industry.”*

— Survey respondent

## Engagement outcomes

Engagement round 1 presented draft guiding principles that—with support from the community—evolved and carried through to engagement round 2 and the final Framework. The first round of engagement also highlighted many of the detailed outcomes that people would like to see, such as more music offerings.

These many ideas and details laid the foundation for the draft Framework and set the stage for developing strategies. The strategies provide high-level direction for the City to achieve many of the identified outcomes. Engagement round 2 shared the draft strategies with the community, receiving support that the direction of the draft was well on track.

## Timeline



*The following pages summarize key findings from the two rounds of engagement that informed the development of the Community Arts & Culture Framework. See Appendix F and G for the full What We Heard Reports.*

# Engagement round 1

## What we heard

### Strengths

- Commitment, talent, and energy in the local community contributes to a vibrant arts and culture scene with creative offerings and participation in a variety of activities.
- Arts and culture play a role in supporting inclusion and social connections.

### Challenges and opportunities

- Limited awareness of events and activities (and the need for a central place to go to for news and information).
- Limited time and capacity among people who are involved or would like to be involved in arts and culture.
- A need to build organizational capacity, including in pursuing funding opportunities and creating partnerships.

### Programming

- A need for more community-facing programming and for a broad range of audiences (for families, youth, and beginners). The community would like to see more classes and workshops (for visual art and craft), performances and shows (music, in particular), and creative activations of spaces (including through performances and public art).

### Physical spaces

- A need for additional spaces and facilities, notably rental spaces (affordable, small, and flexible), venue spaces, and collaborative spaces. Many arts and culture groups voiced the need for space to host classes or workshops and to store craft equipment.

## Participation

**12,000+**

Social media views

**204**

Website visits

**43**

Community members and groups directly invited

**23**

People participated in focus groups and interviews

**100+**

Pop-up participants

**237**

Survey respondents

## Activities

Pop-up events



Online survey



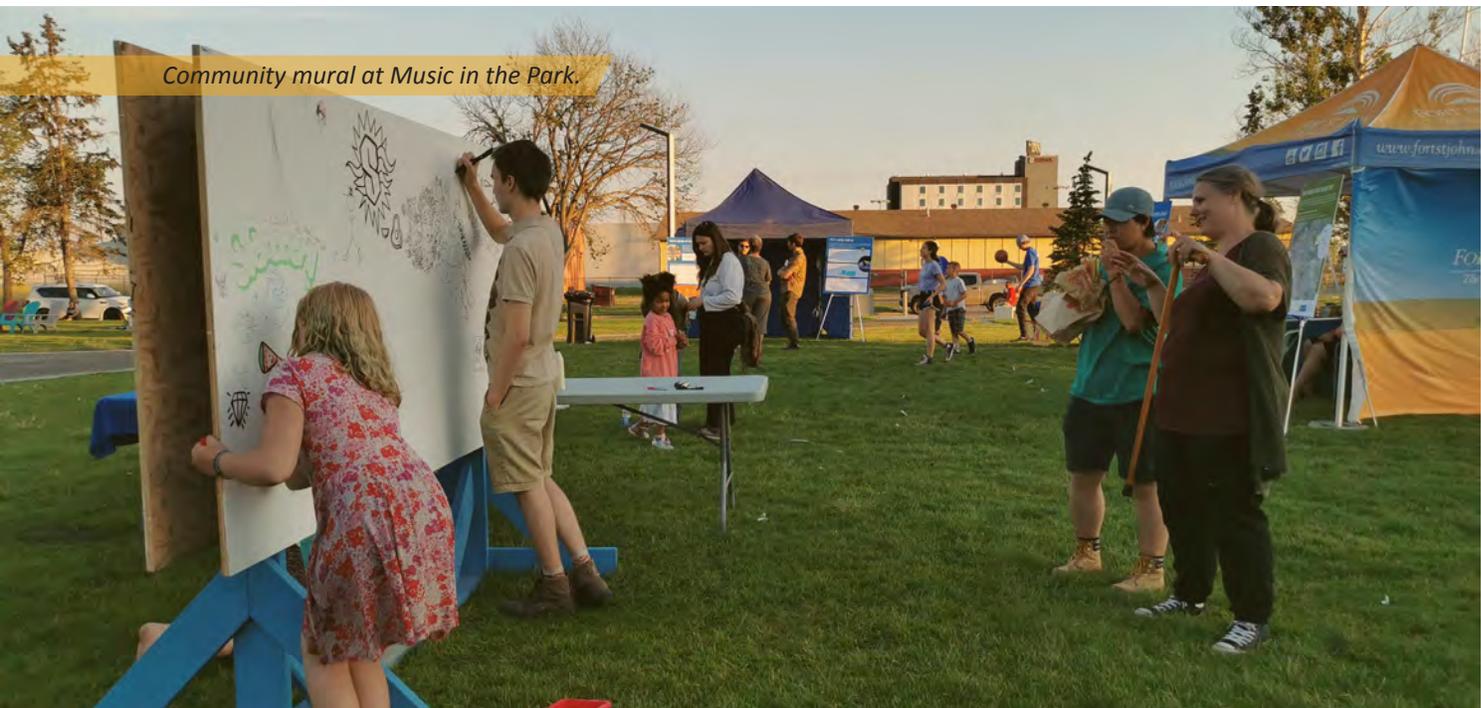
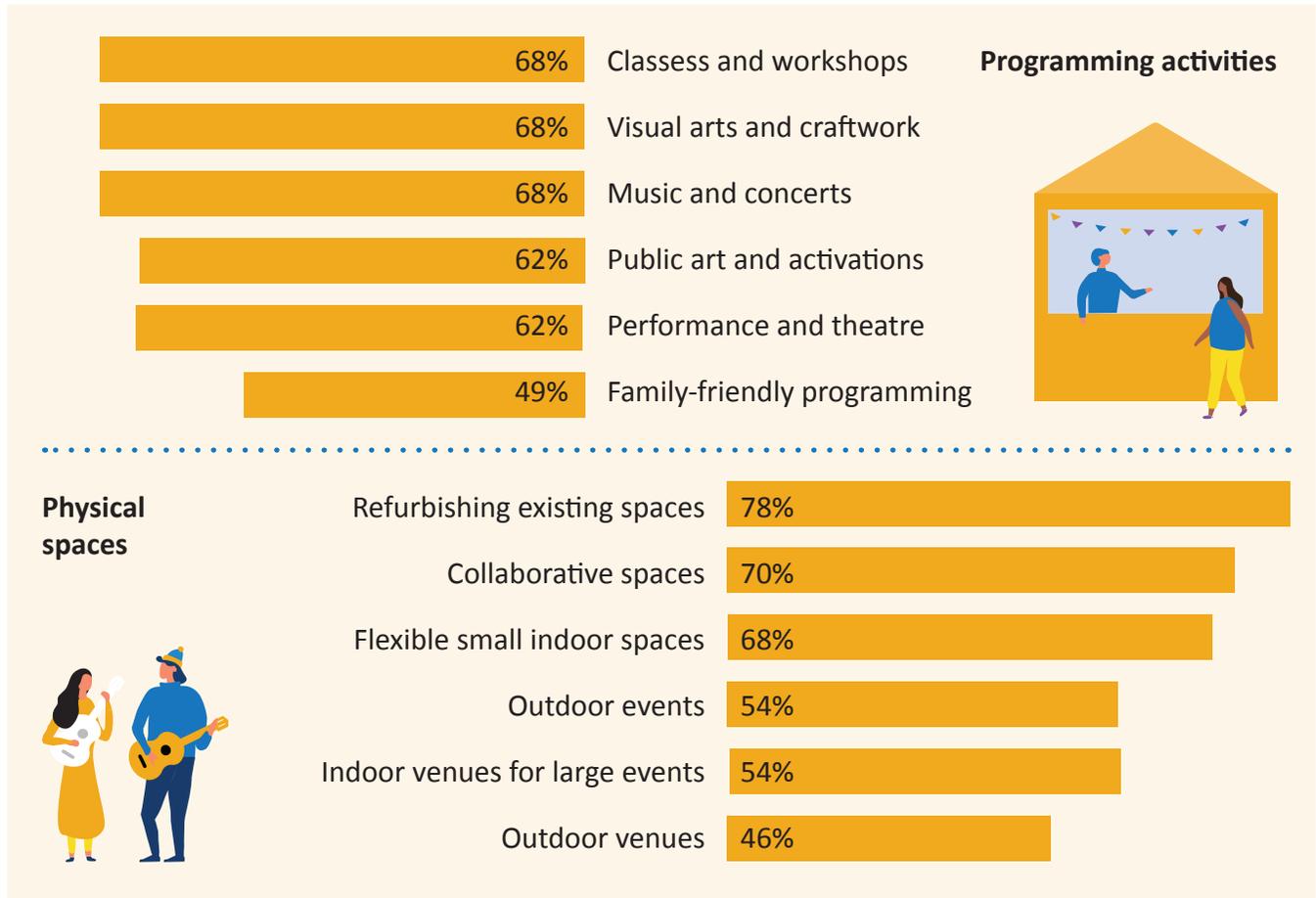
Representative phone survey



Interviews and workshops with key arts and culture stakeholders



Online survey respondents shared the following priorities for physical spaces and programming activities:



# Engagement round 2

## What we heard

The community respond positively to the draft vision, guiding principles, and strategies of the Community Arts & Culture Framework:

- Each of the draft strategies received 130-226 votes of support (compared to only 1-59 votes of concern)
- Each draft guiding principle received strong support (ranging from 72-87%)

There was strong alignment with engagement round 1 in terms of support for more music, family-friendly events, large-scale events, information about what’s going on around town, and murals—with people indicating that they would visit downtown more often for these reasons.

## Participation

**10,000+**

Social media views

**205+**

Pop-up attendees

**207**

Survey responses

Community pop-up at High on Ice.



## Activities

Pop-up events



Online survey



*“Most people come up here to work. The community activities are really cool and the free stuff is very important—things like High on the Ice and the concerts at the park in the summer.”*

— Pop-up participant



Community members voted on their top locations and features for future public art in Fort St. John:



Community pop-up at High on Ice.

# Implementing the Framework



# City roles

The City of Fort St. John champions the Community Arts & Culture Framework and its vision by identifying its role as an initiator, supporter, facilitator, and implementer. In each of these roles, the City aims to support the creative community and build local capacity.

## Initiate:

*Start and pass over to another organization*

- The City may initiate a program, event, or other creative initiative with the intent of training another organization to implement it.

## Support:

*Provide support for delivery by another organization*

- The City encourages the creative community (individuals, artists, and community groups across sectors) to develop and deliver new programming through formal partnerships and informal collaborations.
- The City strives to provide barrier-free and affordable spaces to increase accessibility when appropriate.

## Facilitate:

*Share resources and enable connections*

- The City plays a key role in sharing information and resources, and creating opportunities for connection and learning, across the Fort St. John community (between artists, businesses, and industry).
- The City shares funding opportunities for organizations to develop and deliver their own programming, events, and other creative initiatives that align with City-wide strategic goals and values.
- The City promotes programs, events, and opportunities to raise awareness and encourage participation in arts and culture.
- The City invites the community to creatively program and activate civic facilities and public spaces.

## Implement:

*Fund and deliver directly*

- The City adopts policies and incentives that encourage and uplift local arts and culture (and reduce red tape), including formalizing processes for collaboration with the First Nations and Métis community.
- The City directly funds the creative community through annual support (for example, to the Fort St. John Arts Council, the North Peace Cultural Society, and Fort St. John Public Library) and as an owner and operator of existing facilities.
- The City directly funds and delivers core services, including special events (such as High on Ice) and regular programming (like Music in the Park).

# Strategies & actions

The Community Arts & Culture Framework organizes recommendations into nine strategies. These strategies were shaped by the arts and culture community's voices, in alignment with the City's goals for the Framework, building practically on the Framework's vision and guiding principles.

Each strategy is outlined in more detail, and includes a series of illustrative actions. The actions highlight practical ways for the City of Fort St. John to fulfill the strategies, informed by local context and community input. The actions are also based on innovative best practices in arts and culture planning—building on success from cities across B.C. and northern Canada.

The strategies and actions are designed to build on the talent and energy of the creative community, while reflecting the Arts & Culture Department's current size and capacity. These proposed actions are intended to provide the City with a decision-making guide to best support the community over the next five years and beyond.

1. Increase community access to diverse arts and culture offerings

2. Prioritize opportunities for Indigenous representation and participation in decision making within arts and culture

3. Strengthen existing partnerships and facilitate new connections across the creative community

4. Animate public spaces and enhance sense of place through art and creative projects

5. Explore creative initiatives in collaboration with Economic Development to enhance a vibrant downtown core

6. Develop tools to evaluate and assess arts and culture programs, facilities, and initiatives

7. Develop tools to evaluate and strengthen city policy and operations to support arts and culture

8. Offer practical resources to support capacity building across the creative community

9. Reduce barriers to accessing spaces for creative uses



Photo by Ovvian Castrillo Hill

# Strategy 1

## Increase community access to diverse arts and culture offerings

While the Energetic City and creative community offer many remarkable arts and culture programs, the City recognizes that various barriers may impact the accessibility of arts and culture to all. Challenges include lack of time, expensive costs, high barriers to entry, and—at times—limited teachers and spaces available within the community. The City is committed to increasing access to diverse arts and culture offerings—both by removing barriers and by enhancing existing programming opportunities across the community.

1.1 Support | 3-5 years | \$\$

### Increase youth-focused and intergenerational opportunities

Prioritize opportunities to expand existing arts and culture offerings—and explore new offerings—that cater to youth or create intergenerational connections. City support can take the form of updating existing policy, creating new policy, and informal opportunities to support community-led initiatives as they arise.

The City’s StoryWalks program, in collaboration with the Fort St. John Public Library and School District 60, features children’s books that encourage learning, movement and play across the city. StoryWalks has had huge success as a year-round program for families.

1.2 Support | 3-5 years | \$\$

### Increase cross-cultural opportunities for collaboration

Prioritize opportunities to expand existing arts and culture offerings—and explore new offerings—that increase opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration. City support can take the form of updating existing policy, creating new policy, and informal opportunities to support community-led initiatives as they arise.

1.3 Implement | 6+ years | \$\$\$

### Explore direct delivery of arts and culture programming

As a longer term vision, the City will explore building the capacity to offer arts and culture programming as a core service offering (such as classes, workshops, and drop-ins). Arts and culture programming will be delivered in partnership between the City and local community groups (mirroring the City’s provision of sports and recreation offerings through the Pomeroy Sports Centre). Early exploration of arts and culture programming will be informed by community needs through the gap analysis.

1.4 Implement | 3-5 years | \$

### Offer low-barrier art activities at City facilities

Consider low-maintenance arts and culture offerings to complement sport events and high-use times at city facilities. The City can explore opportunities to activate meeting rooms and underutilized lobby areas—making use of free or reduced-cost space—and invite community groups to offer classes and drop-in activities. Low-cost and low-barrier art activities will cater to children and youth and encourage families to spend more time at events.



1.5

Implement | 3-5 years | \$\$

## Adopt a Leisure Access Program that includes programming for arts and culture

Explore the opportunity for support from the North Peace Community Foundation to provide access to City and community-led arts and culture programming (including classes, workshops and events).

In Alberta, the [City of Fort Saskatchewan's Access for Everyone program](#) removes barriers for low income residents to access sports and cultural programs alike. Qualified individuals and families receive a 100% subsidy for facility membership and programs. The program covers drop-in classes, heritage courses, drama camp, paint night for kids, access to rental rooms, and more. A simple and straightforward application process is key to the success of the program.

1.6

Initiate or support | 1-2 years | \$\$

## Develop interactive and community-led art projects

Develop interactive and community-led art projects, such as co-created public art or a permanent graffiti wall. The City can support by considering use of civic facilities for the creation and installation of art projects on a temporary or permanent basis. The City and the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee can also support the promotion and establishment of community-led art projects.



The Town of Okotoks and the Okotoks Art Council launched a [public art wall](#) in 2022 to showcase graffiti and temporary community art. See locations of legal graffiti walls popping up across the country and the globe, including Sudbury, Ontario (featured in the photo), at [Legal-Walls.net](#)



## Strategy 2

Prioritize opportunities for Indigenous representation and participation in decision making within arts and culture

Arts and culture present a powerful opportunity to bring people together and share Indigenous stories and experiences. This strategy harnesses arts and culture to support the City's commitment to advancing reconciliation—strengthening relationships with the First Nations and Métis community, uplifting Indigenous artists, and connecting the community at large to celebrate Indigenous heritage. These are early steps. The City welcomes and will actively seek additional opportunities to continue to advance reconciliation.

2.1 Implement | 3-5 years | \$

## Develop an Event Welcome Protocol for City-led arts and culture events

Explore developing an Event Welcome Protocol in collaboration with the First Nations and Métis community. The Event Welcome Protocol can provide the City with a formal approach to recognizing Indigenous land and history at arts and culture events—for example, through a territory acknowledgement.

2.2 Implement | 3-5 years | \$

## Develop an Agreement of Understanding for City-led arts and culture events

Explore developing an Agreement of Understanding in collaboration with the First Nations and Métis community. The Agreement of Understanding can help determine which arts and culture events will be led by the City or by First Nations; which events require collaboration or discussion with Indigenous partners; and which events are not typically of interest to the First Nations. The Agreement of Understanding will help create a shared vision for the City and First Nations and Métis partners—strengthening the foundation for communication and collaboration moving forward.

2.3 Support | 1-2 years | \$

## Formalize a territory acknowledgement for City arts and culture events

Formalize a territory acknowledgement to be shared at the beginning of all artistic or cultural events hosted or co-hosted by the City of Fort St. John. This territory acknowledgement must be developed with collaboration from the First Nations and Métis community and reviewed regularly—for example, annually.

2.4 Support | 1-2 years | \$\$

## Provide cross-cultural training for City staff and creative community

Explore offering Doig River First Nation's cross-cultural training program to the City's leadership, Arts & Culture Department staff, and the creative community at large (financed by the City). For more information, see:

[www.doigriverfn.com/cross-cultural-training/](http://www.doigriverfn.com/cross-cultural-training/)

2.5 Implement | 3-5 years | \$\$

## Redefine heritage in Fort St. John by recognizing Indigenous place and meaning

Consider sharing traditional names and meaning of place with the wider community. This could take the form of territory acknowledgment signs at City facilities, featuring Dane-zaa language through a permanent outdoor story installation, or partnering to name trails and parks. This endeavour will require collaboration with the First Nations and Métis community. The City can spearhead this conversation and offer funding to support project outcomes.



A collaboration between the [University of British Columbia and the Musqueam First Nation](#) renamed core campus street signs, highlighting the history of the land and teaching traditional place names.



## Strategy 3

Strengthen existing partnerships  
and facilitate new connections  
across the creative community

The City recognizes the strength of connections across the creative community and with the wider community as well. These relationships are key in any healthy industry—especially so within arts and culture, where access to spaces, resources, and funding often requires collaboration. Connections spark new ideas, lead to innovative programs and projects, and allow the creative community to be resilient in the face of change and challenges.

**3.1** Implement | 1-2 years | \$\$\$

### Explore opportunity to co-locate the City’s Arts & Culture Department

Consider co-locating the City’s Arts & Culture Department to share space with the creative community (for example, with the Arts Council, the North Peace Cultural Centre, a future maker space, or other groups). Shared spaces allow for organic relationships and new opportunities for collaboration to develop. City spaces and resources can also be made available to the creative community (such as equipment and bookable meeting rooms with reduced or waived fees for arts and culture groups).

The City of North Vancouver’s waterfront team is located at the iconic Shipyards. While separate from City Hall, the team is visible and able to interact with the space and community.

**3.2** Facilitate | 1-2 years | \$\$

### Provide ongoing channels for communication through the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee

Ensure ongoing outreach channels are available for the City to hear from the community—equally from arts and culture groups as from community organizations that support social development—to ensure that all are aware of arts and culture opportunities and access to funding. These groups offer a range of services and programs to the community, supporting education, health, families, youth, seniors, new immigrants, local industry, and more. The Arts & Culture Advisory Committee will play a key role in ongoing outreach (“meeting people where they are”) and sharing feedback on how the City can better meet the needs of the community. Additional tools, such as a website, calendar, or office hours, can help achieve this goal.

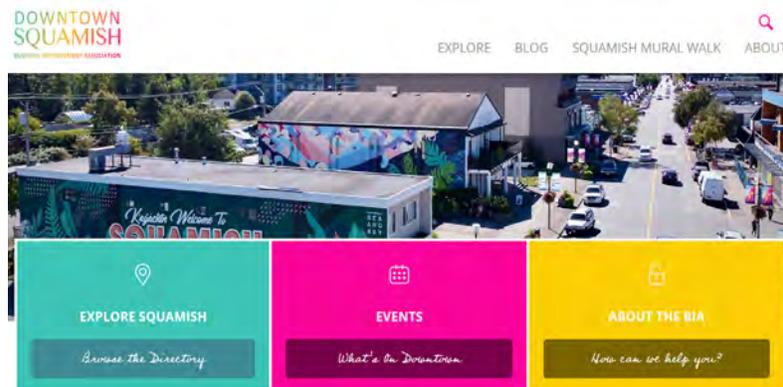
**3.3** Initiate or facilitate | 3-5 years | \$\$

### Enhance marketing opportunities for the creative community

Explore new promotional and marketing opportunities to support community groups and individuals who wish to share or access information on arts and culture programs and events. Community groups and individuals receive information in different ways. The City can consider the unique needs within the community.

A majority of survey respondents shared that they regularly look at Facebook, but are also willing to visit the City’s website. Engagement with the Doig River First Nation highlighted that Elders frequently visit the Doig River Band Office to learn about what is going on in the community through printed posters. To accommodate different needs, the City can explore a variety of promotional opportunities, including online, print, and digital display boards at key locations in the community.

In cities across B.C., the local Chamber of Commerce or Business Improvement Association (BIA) take on this role. Information about arts and culture offerings is most often shared on websites (including an up-to-date artist and local business directory, an events calendar, and information on funding opportunities), on social media, and through newsletter emails.





# Strategy 4

Animate public spaces and enhance sense of place through art and creative projects

Fort St. John aims to be a place that is welcoming of all—envisioned in the 2023 Strategic Plan as “a flourishing community, where nature lives, businesses prosper, families are active, and diversity is celebrated.” Creative initiatives can support this goal, especially by helping to shape spaces and experiences. These can take the form of new public art, performance art, placemaking in the downtown core, or special community-led events. By initiating new creative projects and supporting community-led art and initiatives, the City aims to animate public spaces and give voice to the diverse and vibrant experiences of living in Fort St. John.

4.1 Implement | 3-5 years | \$\$

### Develop a mural program

Explore developing a mural program with a practical guide (or community toolkit) that includes a vision for new murals, identifies appropriate locations for murals, details lifespan and maintenance considerations, and shares information on access to funding. A mural program can integrate with both existing City resources (including the Downtown Beautification and Storefront Grant) and new ones (such as a Placemaking Small Grant). The City can identify appropriate and visible walls for beautification and facilitate connections between artists and interested property owners.

Mural installations can take place during the summer, and culminate in a weekend painting festival. City social media channels can provide updates, showcasing new murals and artists. Recognizing that maintenance costs may be prohibitive to the City, murals will have a specified lifespan. For example, walls can be repainted on a two- to three-year cycle. Artwork can also be rendered digitally and printed on vinyl sheets, or painted on a panel and installed on the exterior of a building (e.g., birch wood panels).

The City of Edmonton provides [Community Mural Grant Guidelines](#) to community groups for the installation of murals on private property in conjunction with a community mural grant of \$8,000. Murals require a highly visible location as well as an anti-graffiti coating that helps extend the lifespan of the art.

4.2 Support | 3-5 years | \$\$

### Prioritize new public art and placemaking projects downtown

Explore opportunities to prioritize new public art and placemaking projects within the downtown core (including along 100 St and 100 Ave) to indicate the downtown centre and to welcome visitors and residents alike. New public art and placemaking projects can be encouraged by the City by identifying appropriate locations, facilitating conversations between private businesses and artists, or through public art call outs.

The City of Fort St. John was awarded grant funding from the Government of Canada to host Impulse—an international exhibit of light and sound, featuring over a dozen seesaws. The opening night of the exhibit drew over 500 people to 100 St and 100 Ave. Over the course of 11 days, the installation was regularly busy, generating social media buzz and overwhelmingly positive feedback.

4.3 Implement | 1-2 years | \$\$

### Explore lease and funding options for temporary public art installations

The City can explore lease and funding options for temporary public art and interactive installations. Temporary installations provide opportunities to connect communities across B.C. and the continent, featuring high-profile work and sparking dialogue on contemporary issues.

4.4

Implement | 3-5 years | \$\$\$

### Consider commissioning public art celebrating Fort St. John

Consider commissioning a series of nature-based art pieces that highlight beloved local features, such as wildlife, the winding Peace River, or the northern lights. This art series can be strategically located to welcome visitors into the city at key entry points, for example along 100 Ave from the airport and along 100 St off the Alaska Highway. New commissioned art meets the Community Art & Culture Framework goal of making arts and culture more visible across the city, enhancing a Fort St. John identity for residents and visitors, and increasing the number of public art pieces in the city.



4.5

Support | 3-5 years | \$

### Expand on music offerings through use of City facilities

In response to high demand for more music offerings, the City can explore opportunities to expand on existing programs and support new initiatives, ranging from small shows to large performances. The City will evaluate and monitor the Music in the Park program and explore opportunities to feature local musicians, such as through a busking program (at Festival Plaza over the summer or the North Peace Cultural Centre throughout the winter). The City can support the musical scene by reducing barriers (such as fees and permits) for community organizations to organize events, and providing access to spaces (including Centennial Park, Festival Plaza, and other indoor and outdoor venues).

The [City of Nelson](#) has adopted a Street Performers & Entertainment policy that welcomes performance artists to the downtown core (designated a licensed performance area). Performers obtain a permit and complete a liability waiver, accompanied by an annual fee of \$30. Performances are allowed between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m., to a maximum time limit, and cannot be amplified.



# Strategy 5

Explore creative initiatives in collaboration with Economic Development to enhance a vibrant downtown core

Arts and culture can boost the local economy and overall quality of life, contributing to tangible outcomes like talent retention and social ties—especially in a northern context. The City’s Arts & Culture Department and Economic Development Department have a unique opportunity to collaborate. Shared goals between the two departments will allow arts and culture to activate downtown as a vibrant place to be and enhance the city as a livable hub in the region. From engagement, it was clear that the community is excited to see more music, large-scale and family-friendly events, and public art. Many people shared that they would visit downtown Fort St. John more often for these reasons. Creative initiatives—to support programs, spaces, and funding opportunities alike—will be key in enabling downtown to reach its full potential.

5.1

Implement | 1-2 years | \$

### **Coordinate implementation of the Community Arts & Culture Framework and the Economic Development Strategy**

Ensure close alignment and coordinated implementation of the Community Arts & Culture Framework and the Economic Development Strategy. Where suitable, the City can identify actions to implement concurrently. These two policies are complementary and create mutually reinforcing outcomes, particularly regarding downtown activation and placemaking.

5.2

Implement | 6+ years | \$

### **Explore option to align Arts & Culture with Economic Development through organizational structure**

Explore the opportunity for a future organizational shift within the City to more closely align Arts & Culture with Economic Development. Cities across Canada often align their Arts & Culture Departments within Community & Economic Development. This structure recognizes the synergy between social, cultural, and economic wellbeing. This allows for arts and culture offerings to be viewed as key contributions—with strong economic and social benefits—that require operation in distinct ways from sports and recreation programs and facilities (which are more likely to be financially self-sustaining). Many large centres across Canada have made a similar organizational shift.



5.3 Initiate or support | 3-5 years | \$\$

### Identify opportunities to complement recreation with arts and culture

Consider opportunities to coordinate and complement recreational offerings with arts and culture. This can happen through the co-location of facilities and coordination of events. Arts and culture and sports and recreation will be viewed as complementary offerings in Fort St. John that, together, can meet a diverse range of family and community interests. For example, it may be appropriate to coordinate an art festival to overlap partially with a sports tournament, providing activities of interest for the entire family and community at large (within Fort St. John and across the region).

5.4 Support | 1-2 years | \$

### Ensure business representation within arts and culture

Strengthen relationships and opportunities for collaboration between local businesses and the creative community, to broaden arts and culture opportunities. The City can consider ways to facilitate new connections, including by encouraging representation of local business on the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee.

5.5 Implement | 6+ years | \$

### Explore B.C.'s MRDT tax to support tourism-related arts and culture initiatives

Conduct a scoping analysis and consider applying to the Province to adopt the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) to the sale of short-term accommodation. The MRDT tax is intended to augment funding towards tourism and contribute to an increase in visitation and economic benefits. The tax can be applicable to the municipality, the regional district, or a combination of municipalities. It is implemented on a five-year basis, and is eligible to fund tourism marketing, programs, and projects that are supported by both local government and tourism industry stakeholders. In Fort St. John, the MRDT tax can provide a consistent source of funding for collaborations between the tourism industry and the community—for example, commissioning public art to celebrate Fort St. John at city entrances; welcome signs; Dane-zaa language and story signs; a website directory of local artists and events; and more. The tax can start at 1% for a two-year span, before increasing to 2% for an additional two years, and then aligning with maximum rates.

The [City of Prince George](#) implemented the MRDT tax at 2% in 2014, which was increased to 3% in 2017. In 2022, Prince George projected \$1.6 million revenue from the hotel tax, supported by local leisure travel and industry related work, including construction. Funding from the tax went toward Tourism Prince George to promote the city as a tourism destination.



# Strategy 6

Develop tools to evaluate and assess arts and culture programs, facilities, and initiatives

The Community Arts & Culture Framework aims to provide direction to the City on decision making. A standardized and equitable approach is required in all City decisions, including when allocating support and resources towards arts and culture (such as grant funding, staff time, or low-barrier access to city facilities). This is true for new and existing programs, facilities, and initiatives. Assessment tools are key to achieving this outcome for two primary reasons. First, these tools will allow the City to better understand the current context and needs of the community. Second, these tools allow the City to clearly, objectively, and transparently evaluate programs, facilities, and other creative initiatives in order to assess their operation—including achievement of key performance indicators and alignment with the guiding principles from this Framework.

6.1 Implement | 3-5 years | \$\$

## Conduct a gap analysis of current programming and use of City facilities

Conduct a gap analysis of current arts and culture programming and use of civic facilities. This gap analysis can be led by the City and collect data on programming across all departments in order to compare facility type, use, community interest, and offered programming (including recreational offerings). This gap analysis will inform future decisions about the expansion of facilities, events, and programming to meet diverse community interests and needs (including age and cultural background). It is recommended to conduct a gap analysis every 3-5 years as the context of arts and culture in the city changes.

6.2 Implement | 3-5 years | \$\$

## Explore parity between arts and culture and sports and recreation offerings

Explore the parity between sports and recreation and arts and culture to understand community need, use, and access to City facilities (including subsidy of programs and facilities). This early analysis can culminate in a report to complement the gap analysis and better understand community needs. In doing so, the City will address barriers to accessing and offering creative programs and events.

6.3 Initiate or support | 6+ years | \$-\$\$\$\$

## Assess the viability of new arts and culture facilities

Assess the viability of new civic facilities to provide much-needed space to support the creative community. The gap analysis will be key in understanding existing spaces and anticipating future needs (including expansion of existing facilities or addition of new facilities). The City can explore the conversation around potential future spaces and clearly define its role in securing, operating, partnering, or otherwise supporting such a space. For example, a new space may be City-initiated, or run in partnership between the City and a partner (e.g., the Arts Council or an interested First Nation). Potential spaces identified through the development of the Community Arts & Culture Framework include the RCMP station at 10648 100 St, the vacant Canadian Tire building, and other commercial or light-industrial spaces (especially in the downtown core) available for purchase or lease. A clear mandate and key performance indicators will be necessary to understand the value of any new space and ensure equitable access and use that aligns with the Community Arts & Culture guiding principles.

*“Arts and culture brings people together, across generations (from toddlers to older adults), and everyone can be involved and share their skills and connect in those ways, a way of bringing people together and expressing our thoughts.”*

—FilCan workshop participant

6.4 Initiate or support | 6+ years | \$-\$\$\$\$

### Explore the feasibility of a creative maker space

Explore the feasibility of an interim or permanent creative maker space available to the creative community and general public. This space can be City-initiated (and then handed off to a community group) or the City can support a community group in initiating the space. The maker space business model can be membership-based or sponsored (with discounted rates for nonprofit, not for profit, and youth-serving groups). A maker space would be suitably located within the future Creative Hub or other future City facilities.

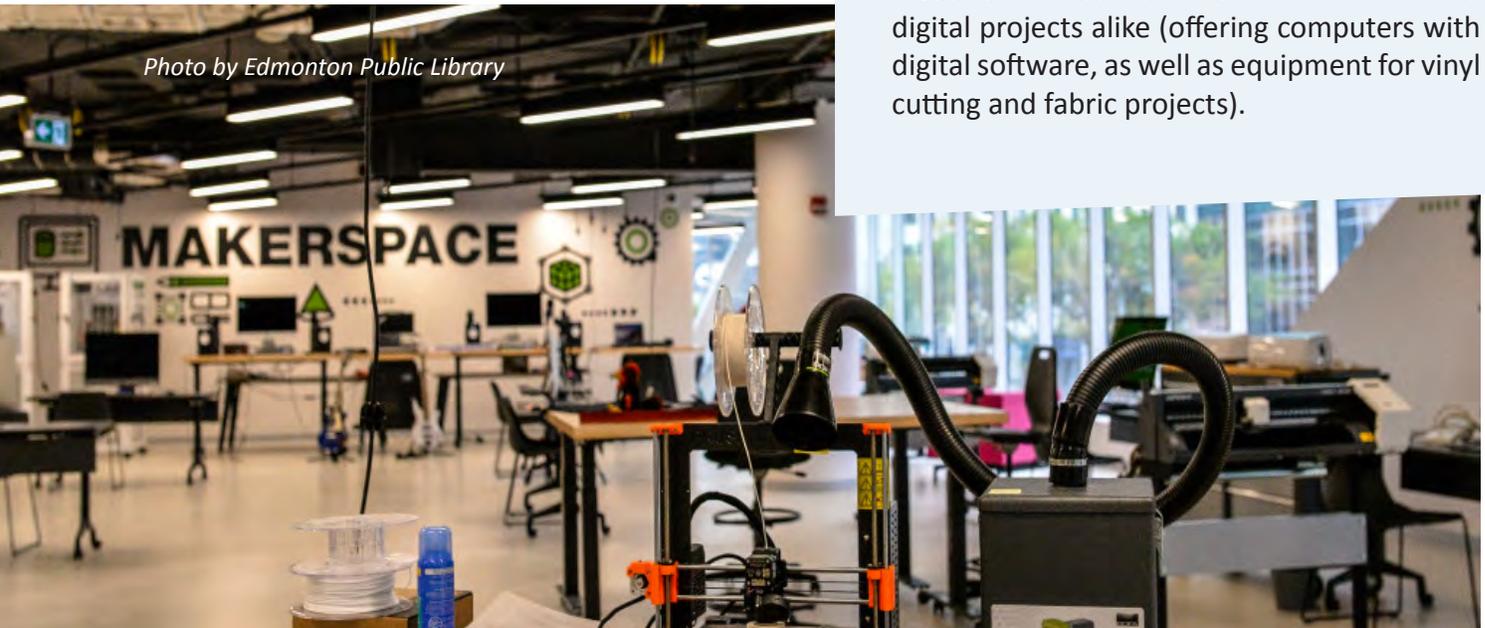
6.5 Implement | 1-2 years | \$

### Formalize a clear Program Planning & Evaluation Package

Formalize and regularly assess a clear Program Planning & Evaluation Package, with the purpose of encouraging strong and self-sufficient arts and culture programming to be delivered by the City and in partnership with the community. Ensure simplicity in the document through straightforward and concise sections. The evaluation form for program and event partners can include budget, expected revenue, participant feedback, and other supportive information. This document should be reassessed every two years to ensure that it meets the Arts & Culture Department’s needs and remains aligned with City policy.

In Alberta, the [Edmonton Public Library](#) provides maker spaces available to the public, offering resources such as recording studios, 3D printing, laser cutting, and creative workstations for craft work and digital projects alike (offering computers with digital software, as well as equipment for vinyl cutting and fabric projects).

Photo by Edmonton Public Library





# Strategy 7

Develop tools to evaluate and strengthen city policy and operations to support arts and culture

Strong policy sets the stage for all City operations, including both the delivery of creative initiatives and support for arts and culture across the community. As City policy is evaluated and strengthened, the Arts & Culture Department will be able to move toward financially sustainable models of operation and formalize its support for creative initiatives like public art. Further, the City will continue to deepen its own capacity to better support the creative community, allowing for stronger ties with the creative community and meeting the diverse needs of a growing population.

**7.1** Initiate or support | 1-2 years | \$\$

### **Establish an Arts & Culture Advisory Committee to represent the diverse creative community**

The Arts & Culture Advisory Committee can oversee public art and advise on new and ongoing creative initiatives and programs across the community, such as the Artist in Residence program. The Committee will be guided by a clear and inclusive mandate (see Appendix E for draft Terms of Reference).

**7.2** Implement | 1-2 years | \$

### **Develop a formal selection process for public art through a Public Art Policy**

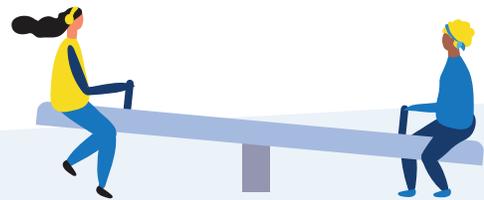
Adopt and implement a Public Art Policy for the ongoing management, funding, and expansion of a public art program that represents diverse local voices. A simple selection process can be developed in conjunction with the City's Arts & Culture Department and the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee. This selection process will provide clear criteria for public art callouts and consistent rubrics for grading selection criteria (to reduce bias in the selection process while encouraging representation of a diversity of voices and backgrounds through public art).

**7.3** Implement | 6+ years | \$

### **Investigate sustainable funding models to support the creative community**

Move towards sustainable funding for all initiatives led and supported by the Arts & Culture Department. A sustainable funding model can be a high-level approach to securing and allocating funding to provide programming and support for the creative community.

A sustainable funding model in Fort St. John may include a combination of: long-term sponsorships with business and local industry; ongoing and secured funding through City Council; a destination tax; or a percentage of fees for municipal services (such as building permits or subdivision applications).



Playing on a unique local opportunity, Squamish, B.C. strives to close the loop on its arts and culture funding by allocating filming application fees toward arts and culture initiatives. [Revenue from the filming industry successfully covers half of the City's annual budget towards arts and culture.](#)

7.4

Implement | 1-2 years | \$\$\$

## Explore a new City Arts & Culture Department position

Consider introducing a new 1.0 full time equivalent arts and culture position, aligned between the City's Arts & Culture Department and the creative community. This role may support the creative community through new resources and tools, facilitation of new connections and conversations, ongoing outreach, assistance in locating and securing funding opportunities, special events, and economic development. A clear mandate and set of key performance indicators that align with the guiding principles of the Community Arts & Culture Framework will be critical.

7.5

Implement | 1-2 years | \$

## Assess Partnership Policy to support arts and culture

Assess the Partnership Policy to ensure alignment with guiding principles from the Community Arts & Culture Framework, so that it can best support the needs of the creative community and the Arts & Culture Department.

7.6

Implement | 3-5 years | \$\$

## Translate City arts and culture resources into multiple languages

Consider translation of the City's existing and future arts and culture resources into multiple languages to welcome and include newcomers and visitors. As per Census Canada 2021, Filipino and Punjabi are the most common languages spoken at home in Fort St. John aside from English.

7.7

Facilitate or support | 3-5 years | \$

## Provide interpretation services at City events and programs

Consider providing interpretation services (for example, to Filipino and Punjabi) at major arts and culture events hosted by the City and in programs with uptake from newcomers to Canada. Interpretation can be either a paid position, a partnership with a cultural group, or a volunteer position with the City providing perks to volunteers (such as recreation access passes).





# Strategy 8

## Offer practical resources to support capacity building across the creative community

The City recognizes that gaps exist in terms of practical tools to support capacity building across the community, such as the need for one central platform—a calendar or events hub. Practical resources are required in order to support a vibrant and creative scene that extends across artists and groups, that welcomes the wider community, and that builds capacity. In some cases, the City may be open to initiating new resources. In other cases, it may play a support role. This may take the form of creating opportunities and sharing resources to build capacity in operations, marketing and communications, fundraising and grant writing, and other professional development skills. This approach will allow for the development of new opportunities, in addition to support for existing initiatives across the community.

8.1 Implement or support | 3-5 years | \$\$

## Provide or support a shared community arts and culture events platform

The need for a community-wide events platform or calendar was heard loud and clear through both rounds of engagement—equally with the public as with the creative community. This resource can share arts, culture, and heritage events and programs (both regular and one-off) as well as up-to-date grant deadlines, workshop dates, and other relevant information. This shared platform will be key to the success of new arts and culture initiatives as well as supporting existing programs across the creative community.

The City can initiate such a platform to hand off to a local group (with ongoing support from the Arts & Culture Department and Arts & Culture Advisory Committee). The City will play a key role in linking to any new shared platform from the Arts & Culture page, community calendar page and other relevant resources such as newsletters.

In municipalities across B.C., shared arts and culture calendars are maintained by community groups, including arts councils, chambers of commerce, business improvement associations, and tourism organizations. Such groups are strongly positioned to maintain a calendar (as part of a volunteer or paid role) and are easily accessible to the general public as well as the creative community. The Salt Spring Community Arts Council maintains an arts events calendar featured prominently on their website, complementing a directory of local artists.

The [Salt Spring Community Arts Council](#) maintains an arts events calendar featured prominently on their website, complementing a directory of local artists.



Smithers Events is a simple online calendar that shares social happenings and events across the region (with categories that include arts and culture, business, concerts and festivals, courses and workshops, and more). Events are submitted directly by the public through a simple online event form or via email. The Smithers Events website is complemented by digital posters across town, including at the airport, a cafe, and the visitor centre. Smithers Events is run in partnership through the Smithers Visitor Info Centre, Tourism Smithers, and a local coffee shop.

Source: [www.smithersevents.com](http://www.smithersevents.com)

# Smithers Events

a modern community bulletin board

8.2

Implement | 1-2 years | \$\$

### Encourage arts and culture through a Placemaking Small Grant

Explore provision of a Placemaking Small Grant (\$1,000-2,000) available to individuals and community groups specifically to fund arts and culture initiatives and temporary public art installations. The City can implement the Placemaking Small Grant program, with applications to be reviewed through the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee (with eligibility for the program based on criteria from the Committee’s Terms of Reference for an inclusive and equitable mandate). The City—and partners within the creative community, such as the North Peace Cultural Centre and the Arts Council—will play a key role in promoting the new grant.

8.3

Implement | 1-2 years | \$

### Host ongoing capacity-building workshops for creative community

Building on past workshops that the City has offered to develop practical skills, the City can assess and explore the formalization of an arts and culture workshop series, with sessions offered quarterly. Workshop topics will rotate based on demand, such as on grant writing, business development, strategic visions, sustainable funding models, and more. Regular workshops fill an important gap as the creative community evolves and new voices get involved.

8.4

Support | 3-5 years | \$

### Support an annual arts and culture conference

Advocate for and support the implementation of an annual arts and culture conference, for example, as part of Bright Nights in June hosted by the Arts Council. This can take the form of a full- or half-day session with a variety of offerings, including a workshop session hosted by the City and an Arts & Culture Department staff member readily available to hear from the community. The conference can be open to all and well-advertised (requiring support from the City and key groups across the creative community).

8.5

Implement | 1-2 years | \$\$

### Provide tailored support for equity-seeking arts and culture groups

Prioritize support in securing grants and sharing opportunities specifically with equity-seeking arts and culture groups, including Indigenous, newcomer and new immigrant, and youth-serving community groups. This can take the form of a catered workshop session, ongoing office hours by the Arts & Culture Department, and hands-on writing support from the City towards grants.

8.6

Initiate | 1-2 years | \$\$

## Establish an Artist in Residence program

Support the ongoing development of the pilot Artist in Residence program towards a formal program. Monitor and evaluate the success of the program to continue to meet the needs of local artists and to ensure alignment with guiding principles from the Community Arts & Culture Framework.



In Queensland, Australia, [Metro Arts supported an artist collective](#) in preparing and presenting two new works over the span of 2022—an immersive theatre experience that invited audience members to help tell the story and a digital theatre experience. Metro Arts aims to build professional capacity in artists of all ages and backgrounds by providing secure employment opportunities and critical resources (including access to space and equipment). A project by Counterpilot, the 2022 company in residence with Metro Arts, is shown below.

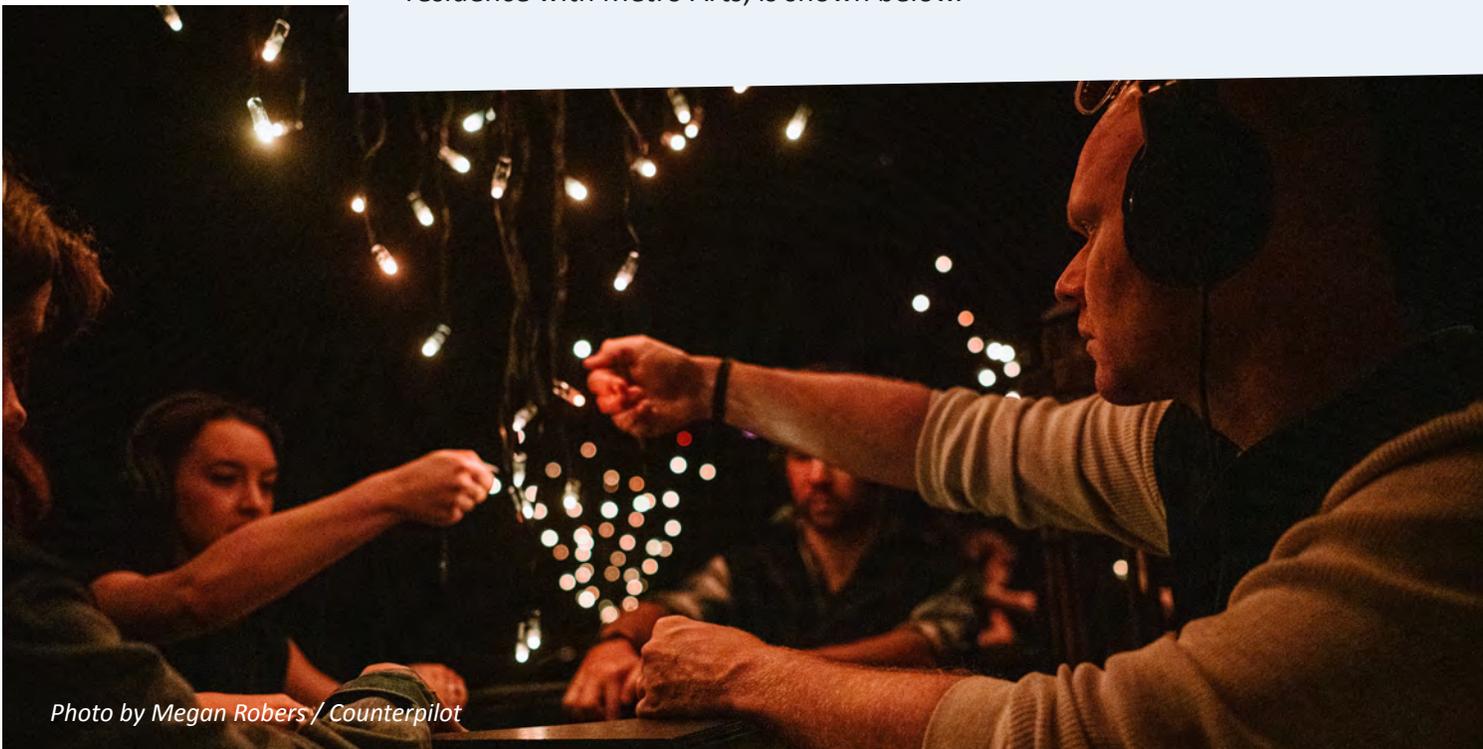


Photo by Megan Roberts / Counterpilot



# Strategy 9

## Reduce barriers to accessing spaces for creative uses

A thriving creative community requires regular and low-barrier access to spaces for activities, events, and weekly programming. Physical spaces are key for creative groups to become well-established and financially self-sustaining—for instance, to be able to offer classes and host fundraisers. To meet the needs of the creative community, spaces must be low barrier (for example, through provision of affordable rates, insurance coverage, and guidance on health and safety matters) and provide access to amenities, including storage and sinks. Flexible or multi-use spaces are beneficial for short-term and temporary use, while secured, long-term spaces are important for groups and guilds that need to set up equipment. The City is committed to reducing barriers so that the community can access spaces for creative use, and is interested in exploring opportunities to support new creative spaces in the future.

9.1

Facilitate | 1-2 years | \$\$

## Create an inventory of spaces interested in accommodating arts and culture groups

Create an inventory of private spaces so that the City and community can understand current availability (both interim and permanent). This inventory will be foundational to solving the challenge of limited space for arts and culture groups, and identifying the types of spaces needed in the creative community (for example, access to long-term space and storage). This inventory will allow the City to connect arts and culture groups with organizations and businesses that have permanent space to offer. For example, a business space used solely during daytime hours may be suitable to rent at a reduced rate for creative programming on evenings or weekends.

Live music and paint nights at cafes and restaurants in Fort St. John are a popular example of a creative collaboration—with mutual benefit for local businesses, residents, artists, and musicians. The opportunity to co-locate and co-organize events can multiply the reach and number of visitors. For example, the North Peace Cultural Centre received over 500 walk-ins by remaining open past its usual hours on the opening night of the Impulse art exhibit in February 2023.

9.2

Facilitate | 3-5 years | \$

## Support arts and culture groups in accessing spaces from other sectors

Building on the inventory of potential private spaces, the City can support by facilitating conversation around space use and connecting arts and culture groups with businesses where synergy has been identified.

For 2022 Pride Week, the North Peace Pride Society partnered with the Ramada Northern Grand Hotel & Conference Centre to put on a community art show—a well-attended temporary exhibit open to all. The North Peace Pride Society had access to an available storefront space adjacent to the hotel and was responsible for all preparation and post-event cleaning, covering only the cost of utilities for the week. This partnership was made possible with support from the City in facilitating the initial connection, covering the cost of utilities, and providing food at the opening reception, as well as Urban Systems—whose volunteers were instrumental in preparing the space. Over 22 artists participated in the Pride Week art show—from a 10 year-old boy to two professional artists. The exhibit was considered a huge success, showcasing paintings, a photography display, a crocheted rainbow unicorn, and a costumed mannequin.

*Photo and details from Lyle Goldie and the North Peace Pride Society*



**9.3** Implement or support | 1-2 years | \$

### Connect businesses with artists

The City is well positioned to identify and facilitate new connections. For example, the City can support the Arts Council to develop a rotating mini gallery program with interested businesses; share invitations to businesses and local artists; and formalize the Creative Storefront Program pilot to fund art supplies and installation costs to feature art in shop windows. Connections between local businesses and artists are a win-win: Businesses receive more visitors, and artists are able to display and sell work. Both businesses and artists are featured online for their efforts.

[RISER](#) is a collaborative production model started within the theatre community, minimizing risk for new and emerging artists by providing access to established networks and resources (including promotional channels and insured spaces). RISER was originally started in Edmonton and has now expanded to cities across Canada, with financial support from the Canada Cultural Investment Fund and the RBC Foundation.

**9.4** Implement | 1-2 years | \$\$

### Showcase art at City facilities

Building on existing initiatives, the City can offer indoor space at city facilities free of charge to artists for installations. These community gallery spaces can be organized on a rotating basis (i.e., quarterly or yearly), based on demand. A community gallery space will be mutually beneficial for artists and for the City, by beautifying and activating walls, hallways, entrances, and nooks at existing facilities. Local artists who participate in the program will be featured by the City (through newsletters and on social media).

**9.5** Implement | 3-5 years | \$-\$\$\$

### Explore City management of space for arts and culture groups

Explore managing an event and studio space to support the creative community. In this way, the City will remove key barriers that creative groups face in accessing space and covering logistics (such as insurance). This action will help the City understand how it can support future arts and culture facilities, and share learnings to the community on costs and operations.

The City can manage a space and offer discounted rates to share access among creative groups. The City's Arts & Culture Department can be co-located in the space to create greater opportunities for ongoing relationship building.

As a second approach, the City can explore a pilot program to co-sign commercial leases with arts and culture groups. Eligibility for community groups can be established through a clear and consistent mandate and application process, aligned with the guiding principles of the Community Arts & Culture Framework.

Fraser Valley Regional Library branches across B.C.'s Lower Mainland [regularly exhibit work from Indigenous and local artists](#). This program has made art experiences more accessible to library users, and expanded the definition of what a civic facility can offer residents.

9.6

Support | 3-5 years | \$\$

## Explore collaboration with North Peace Community Foundation to subsidize lease space

Explore a collaboration with the North Peace Community Foundation to subsidize interim space for community arts and culture groups, which can be leased at intervals of one to three years. The City will initiate an application process for the subsidy, while review can be overseen by the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee. Access to rental space at a reduced rate will support arts and culture groups in creating self-sustaining operations, such as securing regular revenue by hosting fundraising events and classes. Leased spaces can be shared between more than one eligible group to further reduce barriers to access.

9.7

Implement | 3-5 years | \$\$\$

## Consider adopting a Community Event Grant program

Explore the feasibility of implementing a Community Event Grant program, operated by the City, to allow qualified arts and culture groups to access ongoing facilities (for regular operations and programming) or temporary facilities (for one-off events). The City will initiate the Community Event Grant program, while review can be overseen by the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee (with eligibility for the program to be based on criteria from the Committee's Terms of Reference for an inclusive and equitable mandate).

The [City of Vancouver's Cultural Spaces Grant Program](#) provides funding for eligible arts and culture groups and Indigenous groups. Funding can be allocated to acquisition or renovation, space planning, accessibility upgrades, mentorship and capacity building related to cultural space, and general facility operating costs (for nonprofit operators that subsidize space for artists). The City provides financial and informational support to groups that require help with the application.



## Next steps

Grounded in the aspirations of the community and broader City goals, the Community Arts & Culture Framework provides both strategic direction and potential actions and tools that Fort St. John can implement to support arts and culture. In the short and long term, the Framework aims to provide a consistent standard for decision making, ensure equitable and representative opportunities across the creative community, and allow the City to support a range of new creative initiatives at short- and mid-term timeframes.

This standardized and equitable approach—aligned with the guiding principles of the Framework—is illustrated in action through the Decision & Implementation Matrix (Appendix B) and draft Arts & Culture Advisory Committee Terms of Reference (Appendix E). This approach will be reflected in future work that the City’s Arts & Culture Department undertakes, such as the adoption of a Public Art Policy to select, fund, maintain, and manage new and existing public art.

The Framework itself is intended to guide the next five to 10 years of arts and culture development in Fort St. John. After five years, it is anticipated that the Framework will be reviewed and updated as needed. This will ensure that the Framework continues to meet the needs of a changing community, highlight best practices in arts and culture, and reflect the City Arts & Culture Department’s growing capacity. As the City moves toward sustainable funding models within arts and culture, additional opportunities—for programs and facilities alike—may be considered.

### Success metrics

- An annual progress reporting matrix is recommended for the City’s Arts & Culture Department to track the development of actions toward achieving the nine strategies in this Framework. Actions can be categorized for the short, medium, and long term.
- In some cases, the action identified in the Framework may not be the final outcome, as the City may pursue a comparable action to achieve the goal of the overarching strategy.

### Quick wins

The one- to two-year action items in this Framework can be considered quick wins for Fort St. John. Many of these are low-barrier for the City to pursue, including in their cost of implementation. Several proposed actions may already be underway, while others may be achieved and then supported in an ongoing manner.



**FORT ST. JOHN**  
*The Energetic City*

# Project contributors



**Happy Cities is an urban planning and design consultancy and certified B Corp. We turn evidence into action for happier, healthier and more inclusive communities.**

At Happy Cities, we learn and play across disciplines. We know that happier cities reflect not just evidence, but also the experience and hopes of unique and diverse communities. We use this approach to build scientific recipes for urban wellbeing—conducting research in psychology, neuroscience, sociology, public health, behavioral economics and other disciplines to understand the connection between urban design and wellbeing.

We use these insights to empower clients to design wellbeing into cities and communities—for example, through arts and culture. We work with clients in BC and across the world on:

- Urban policies and strategies
- Immersive community engagement
- Collaborative master planning
- Public space design and assessment
- Research and experiments



**QUANTUM  
RECREATION**  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE

**Quantum Recreation works hand in hand with residents and cities to create great places through recreation and culture planning.**

Quantum Recreation is a boutique consultancy that creates usable and sustainable strategies to build communities using recreation, parks, and culture. Empowered by a bold mindset combined with unique planning, engagement, and assessment techniques, Quantum creates safe, accessible, and sustainable places that cater to community needs and enhance quality of life for all.

# Appendices



Artwork by Alison Newth

# Appendix A.

## Definitions

**Art**, or artwork, refers to a creative outcome by an artist. Art encompasses a diverse range of individual and community activities and tangible and intangible modes of expression. For the purpose of this Framework and to better reflect the art community in Fort St. John, art is further categorized:

**Craftwork** includes quilting, weaving, spinning, knitting, fashion, woodwork, leatherwork, ceramics, metalwork, jewelry making, beadwork, papercraft, and more.

**Fine and visual art** includes painting, sketching, digital art, photography, printmaking, sculpting, and more.

**Performance art** includes music, dance, theatre, storytelling, poetry, film, choir, spoken word, puppetry, and more.

**Artists** are individuals who design or create art. In their artistic field, artists have a combination of formal training (for example, education or apprenticeship) or experience (for example, exhibitions, installations, or other artistic offerings).

**Emerging artists** are individuals early on in their career who demonstrate creative promise and potential. Emerging artists may have some, or limited, formal training or experience.

**Local artists** reside in—or otherwise have roots in—Fort St. John and the North Peace River Region.

**Professional artists** are individuals with over five years of professional artistic experience and may have completed formal training in their field.

The **creative community** encompasses the individuals, groups and institutions with ties to arts and culture in Fort St. John. This diverse community includes (but is not limited to) professional and emerging artists, creative producers and cultural practitioners, community groups and organizations, schools, theatres, businesses, and families and individuals who attend events and activities.

**Culture** is often used as an overarching term for activities, industries, artifacts, and sites that can be classified as artistic or historically-significant to a population or location. Culture can be tangible (like a painting or building) or experiential (such as an event or performance). Culture is all around Fort St. John, from place names and festivals, to public art and experiences.

**Direct delivery** refers to programming or facilities that are funded and implemented by the City to the community. See also **indirect delivery**.

**Facilities**, or arts and culture facilities, consist of physical spaces that accommodate and satisfy the needs of the creative community (workshops, galleries, theatres, museums, studios, outdoor plazas and stages, and more). Arts and culture infrastructure may be purpose-built, multipurpose, or adapted for reuse, and encompasses the administrative needs of the creative community (for example, for office space and storage).

**Heritage** consists of assets that reflect the history of people and places. Heritage is not limited to the celebration and preservation of tangible artifacts or structures, but can also include cultural (language, stories) and natural assets (places). We heard clearly from the community that heritage in Fort St. John encompasses increasingly diverse backgrounds, including First Nations and newcomers to Canada and the region.

**Indirect delivery** refers to programming or facilities that are funded and implemented by the community. These programs or facilities may be supported in various ways by the City and as aligned with the Community Arts & Culture Framework. See also **direct delivery**.

**Programming**, or arts and culture programming, refers to creative events and activities in Fort St. John (classes, workshops, training, guided walks, festivals, and more). Programming allows residents to learn, participate and experience the arts. Programming may be provided by the City, by private businesses, or spearheaded by the creative community.

**Public art** refers to physical, visual, or experiential art designed for permanent or long-term installation on public property with the goal of enhancing the public realm for everyone. For the purpose of this Framework, public art does not include art on private property.

**Temporary public art** refers to physical, visual, or experiential art designed for pop-up, seasonal, or otherwise non-permanent installation on public property with the goal of enhancing the public realm for everyone. For example, temporary public art may be leased by the City or lent. Temporary installations have an anticipated date for removal.

## What does “arts and culture” mean to you?

The community defined arts and culture in their own words—sharing that arts and culture encompasses creative expression, new and shared experiences, and opportunities for connection. This community definition was created through the first round of engagement for the Arts & Culture Framework.

# Appendix B.

## Decision and implementation matrix

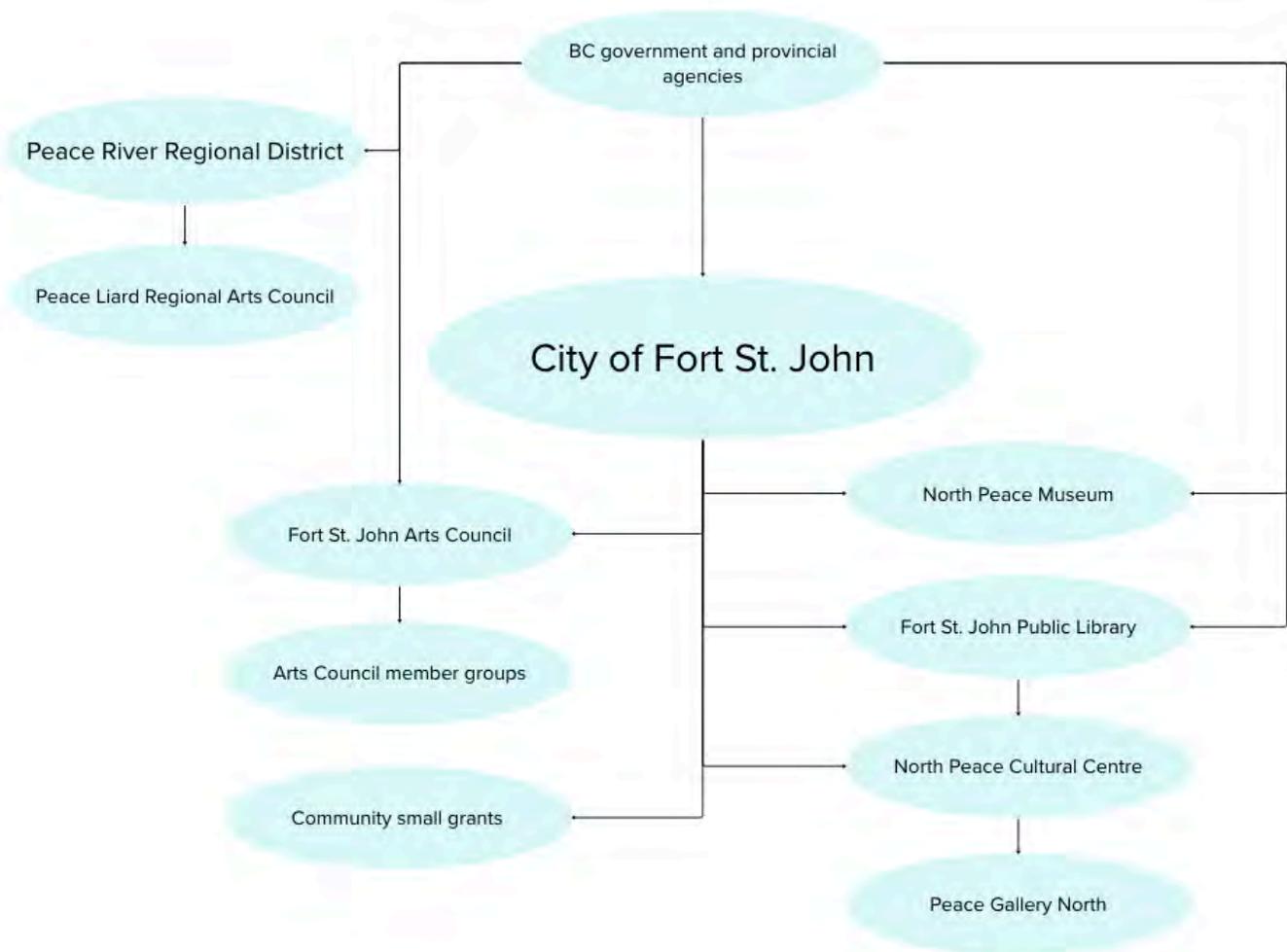


This investment decision-making tool aims to align new arts and culture opportunities with the Community Arts & Culture Framework. These opportunities may include programming, partnerships, public art, and other creative City or Community led initiatives.

# Appendix C.

## Budget flow into arts and culture

This budget flow snapshot aims to illustrate how funding flows through Fort St. John to support arts and culture, and the creative community.



# Appendix D.

## Benchmarking trends in arts and culture

Happy Cities and Quantum Recreation conducted benchmarking research to capture the context of arts and culture offerings across the province of British Columbia and to understand how the City of Fort St. John's arts and culture services compared to other local municipalities.

The researched municipalities included the City of Nelson, the District of Squamish, and the City of North Vancouver. These cities were chosen based on 1) size and geography, 2) similar governance structures, 3) presence of community-supported arts and culture scenes, and 4) alignment with the City of Fort St. John's Benchmarking Policy.

Through this exercise, the following items were assessed:

- Spending on arts and culture per capita;
- Measurable benefits of arts and culture in each community;
- Efforts to support diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation through arts and culture
- Relevant and notable findings from each municipality.

A brief summary of each municipality is provided, followed by a table of findings.



*North Vancouver bear statue by Ken Clarke*

## City of Nelson

*Arts and culture summary: A small city providing a variety of well-established, robust offerings that exceed small city expectations.*

With a population of over 11,000 residents, the City of Nelson is known for its vibrant and well-developed arts and culture offerings. This city was selected because, despite its relatively small size, it has developed a reputation across the province for being a hub for arts and culture. Nelson has been called the number one small art town in Canada<sup>1</sup>.

Key guiding documents from the City include the Comprehensive Cultural Policy (2013), the Cultural Tourism Strategy (2010), and the Art in Public Places Policy (2014).

Culture is one of the four strategic pillars at the City of Nelson. However, within the municipality, there are no dedicated arts and culture employees. One contract-based, part-time Cultural Development Officer (CDO) works with the Cultural Development Committee (CDC) to support City Council in strategic planning and development of Nelson's cultural life. The CDC was created to unite the City's arts and culture efforts, and guide the City's direction on cultural offerings. Members of the committee include representatives from key city-supported organizations including: the Nelson District Arts Council, local theatre and museum groups, and other arts organizations that receive funding from the City. The hiring of a CDO came upon recommendation from this committee.

In 2022, the City of Nelson had an operating budget of approximately \$38 million, and 9% of this budget was dedicated to recreation and culture overall. However, the majority of this funding went to institutions like the Capitol Theatre and Touchstones Museum, as well as ongoing maintenance costs.

<sup>1</sup> [www.hellobc.com/stories/nelson-bc-canadas-best-small-art-town/](http://www.hellobc.com/stories/nelson-bc-canadas-best-small-art-town/)

The Nelson and District Arts Council<sup>2</sup> (NDAC), a non-profit committed to promoting cultural activities through accessing project funding, is a key provider of arts and culture programming. NDAC hosts several large-scale annual events, including the Nelson International Mural Festival and the ArtWalk, both of which draw locals and visitors alike. NDAC receives \$2,500 annually from the City towards operations and \$25,000 annually specifically towards the Mural Festival. NDAC leverages these funds to raise almost \$250,000 to co-present the mural festival together with the City.

A portion of the City's arts budget comes from revenue (3% of development permit fees from the previous year are allocated to the Public Art Reserve Fund) and the City matches this amount. Otherwise, the majority of arts & culture funding comes from grant sources; the Columbia Basin Trust is one of the City's key sources of funding, and most arts and culture initiatives rely on this funding. This way, the City leverages strong relationships with local organizations to prioritize the arts, without dedicating large amounts of budget to arts and culture directly.

The impacts of these efforts have been recorded: a recent study<sup>3</sup> presented to City Council estimates that arts, culture and heritage contributed between \$14.2 and \$24.4 million dollars to local GDP in 2020. This shows the importance of the creative sector to Nelson's local economy.

<sup>2</sup> [www.ndac.ca/](http://www.ndac.ca/)

<sup>3</sup> [www.nelson.civicweb.net/document/102145/AGENDA%20RFD%20Community%20Future,%20Selkirk,%20NDAC%20-%20Arts%20.pdf?handle=4C-042289F4E24846A61553C6D9B48213](http://www.nelson.civicweb.net/document/102145/AGENDA%20RFD%20Community%20Future,%20Selkirk,%20NDAC%20-%20Arts%20.pdf?handle=4C-042289F4E24846A61553C6D9B48213)

## District of Squamish

*Arts and culture summary: A fast-growing community that is newly prioritizing the incorporation of arts into an existing outdoor sports and recreation landscape.*

Nestled along the Sea-to-Sky Highway (Highway 99), Squamish is a town of over 23,000 people. It is known for its natural attractions, including hiking, climbing and mountain bike trails and waterfalls—drawing both residents and visitors for its outdoor recreation offerings. The average age of residents is 37 years old which, together with a 22% growth rate between 2016 and 2021, shows a growing, younger-than-average population. According to the 2016 census, 19.8% of its population was between the ages of 0 and 14, similar to Fort St. John's 21.2%.

Squamish has a rich Indigenous history that is highlighted through arts, culture and heritage initiatives. Squamish Nation traditions, arts, artists, dancers and musicians are regularly celebrated. To establish a meaningful and long-term relationship, the District of Squamish and the Squamish Nation entered into a Co-operation Protocol<sup>1</sup> in 2007 and an Intergovernmental Co-operation Accord<sup>2</sup> in 2011.

Some of the District's key policies include: Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy (2020) and the Squamish Public Art Policy (2020).

In 2022, the District of Squamish projected \$6.5 million in expenses for all Parks, Recreation & Culture. Approximately \$250,000 per year goes towards the Arts & Culture Department, which includes the Arts & Culture Manager's salary. The majority of arts and culture services are funded through arts and culture revenue, instead of taxes. This requires planning for potential budget inconsistencies, since funding is not guaranteed. Typically, film permitting funds nearly half the arts and culture budget annually (approximately \$100,000), making the film industry vital for arts and culture in Squamish.

Squamish Arts (formerly the Squamish Arts Council) is a community non-profit that promotes Squamish's arts and culture scene through advocacy, funding resources and local art initiatives. Squamish Arts hosts several large-scale annual events, including Squamish Arts Festival, Amped in the Park, and the Squamish ArtWalk. In 2020, the District allocated \$45,000 towards Squamish Arts.

Currently, with daily events in the summertime, the District itself is somewhat limited in the additional classes and programming they can deliver directly to residents through their recreation centres. Therefore, the District tends to outsource this work and contract instructors who run programming for the community (through the recreation budget).

In recent years, the Arts & Culture Manager position evolved from the original Film & Events Manager, once public art and community grants were added. The purpose of this shift was to grow this division further, noting the potential for revenue generation and economic growth. Overall, the arts and culture division is fairly new at the District of Squamish, but is a growing priority for City Council. In 2022, special projects include banner replacement and music festival support. "Recreation & Culture" is a highlighted navigation tab on their website's home page.

1 [www.squamish.ca/assets/9d240a944b/SqNation-Cooperation-Protocol-2007.pdf](http://www.squamish.ca/assets/9d240a944b/SqNation-Cooperation-Protocol-2007.pdf)

2 [www.squamish.ca/assets/934038122d/SqNation-Cooperation-Accord-2011.pdf](http://www.squamish.ca/assets/934038122d/SqNation-Cooperation-Accord-2011.pdf)

## City of North Vancouver

*Arts and culture summary: A small but well-developed arts and culture-focused city that has the budget, support and resources to continue to expand its offerings.*

With a population of just over 58,000 residents, the City of North Vancouver is the most populated city selected, and it is continuing to grow with many major developments underway. From 2016-2021, the City saw a 9.9% growth rate. Notably, the City of North Vancouver is distinct and more urban than the neighbouring District of North Vancouver, although the City and District often collaborate on recreation and cultural offerings.

The City of North Vancouver has long prioritized arts and culture. Since the implementation of the first Cultural Plan for the North Shore in 1988, the City has sought to create communities with distinctive cultural identities where citizens can experience art in their daily lives. In 2002, an updated North Vancouver Cultural Plan<sup>1</sup> was adopted, providing a framework for arts and culture decision making for both the City and District. This Plan emphasizes the social and economic value of culture in the community.

In 2014, the North Vancouver Recreation & Culture Commission (NVRC) was formed. A key player for arts and culture delivery, NVRC is a bi-municipal organization that provides programming for both the City and the District of North Vancouver. NVRC was formed from a consolidation of the Office of Cultural Affairs, and the North Vancouver Recreation Commission to bring municipal cultural expertise together and enhance arts and culture programming. In addition to programs, they oversee the Centennial Theatre, and coordinate public art and grant programs. In 2022, NVRC was budgeted to receive over \$6 million in funding from the City (approximately a third of total recreation services).

1 [www.nvrc.ca/sites/default/files/docs/Arts-Culture/cultural\\_plan\\_phase\\_one.pdf](http://www.nvrc.ca/sites/default/files/docs/Arts-Culture/cultural_plan_phase_one.pdf)

The City's public art program is also quite robust, with \$85,000 dedicated to public art annually from the City. There are over 150 public art installations across North Vancouver and numerous galleries and studios available to the public<sup>2</sup>.

Although much smaller in scale, the North Van Community Arts Council<sup>3</sup> is another key partner in arts and culture dedicated to supporting emerging artists and building healthy communities through the arts. Recently, the community arts council developed the North Shore Culture Compass<sup>4</sup>, which highlights cultural assets—including public art and galleries, together with the several large-scale Signature Events<sup>5</sup> hosted by the City annually, and many community events programmed daily, to map the cultural resources available locally.

2 [www.nvrc.ca/arts-culture/public-art/art-collection](http://www.nvrc.ca/arts-culture/public-art/art-collection)

3 [www.northvanarts.ca/](http://www.northvanarts.ca/)

4 [www.northshoreculturecompass.ca/](http://www.northshoreculturecompass.ca/)

5 [www.cnv.org/Parks-Recreation-and-Culture/Signature-Events](http://www.cnv.org/Parks-Recreation-and-Culture/Signature-Events)

Overview	City of Nelson	District of Squamish	City of North Vancouver
Population	11,106 (2021)	23,819 (2021)	58,120
Population growth	1% (annual)	22% (2016-2021)	9.9% (2016-2021)
Average age	43	37.4	42.7
Operational revenue	\$53M (2021)	\$78.5M (2022)	\$85,082,500 (2021) & 89,382,200 (2022)
Operational expenses	\$38M (2021)	\$61.2 M (2022)	\$85,082,500 (2021) & 89,382,200 (2022)
Capital budget	\$23.4 M (2022)	\$40.6 M (2022)	\$215M (2022)
Tax revenue	\$10,978,921 (2021 tax revenue) \$59, 249,000 (2021 total)	\$34.2M (2022)	\$72,735,000 (property value tax revenue 2021)
Key documents	Comprehensive Cultural Policy (2013), Cultural Tourism Strategy (2010), Art in Public Places Policy (2014)	Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy (2020), Squamish Public Art Policy (2020)	North Vancouver Cultural Plan (2002), Public Art Policy and Procedures (2009), Section C-N Public Arts Procedures Manual (2009); Section B North Vancouver Community Arts Council Strategic Plan 2021-2024
Strategic goals and objectives	<p>Guiding principles (from Comprehensive Cultural Policy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creative environment,</li> <li>- freedom of expression,</li> <li>- community economic development,</li> <li>- inclusion and accessibility,</li> <li>- excellence,</li> <li>- respect for our heritage,</li> <li>- collaboration,</li> <li>- sustainability,</li> <li>- omnipresence,</li> <li>- strategy</li> </ul>	<p>Cultivate vitality</p> <p>Nourish connectivity</p> <p>Optimize space</p> <p>The Arts, Culture, and Heritage Strategy includes short, medium, and long-term goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Objectives, actions, and tactics for different parts of the community.</li> <li>- What the business sector can do to promote arts and culture</li> <li>- Full community effort</li> </ul>	<p>Guiding Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflecting the diversity of various art disciplines</li> <li>- Building on the values, strength, knowledge and resources of the community</li> <li>- Recommending achievable, sustainable and measurable strategies</li> <li>- Articulating a clear role for municipal leadership and community partnerships</li> <li>- Ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits</li> </ul>

	<b>City of Nelson</b>	<b>District of Squamish</b>	<b>City of North Vancouver</b>
<b>Spending</b>			
Arts and culture annual budget	Approx 9% of annual budget going to recreation & culture in 2022. In 2021, 2.25M in expenses for parks, recreation and culture (from interview discussion, this was noted to be mostly for institutions, parks maintenance, etc). Capitol Theatre receives 50-100k annually; - NDAC gets 2,500 annually; Mural Fest gets 25,000 annually	250,000 (including manager salary) for Arts & Culture Department  6.5M projected expenses for 2022 for all Parks, Recreation & Culture  1.4 M towards Library (2022)	243,000 to North Van Community Arts Council; 85,000 to Public Art from Capital Plan. 2022 Expenses: 6.1 M to North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission (NVRC) --> approx 34% of total recreation services; 600k to Museum and Archives; 4.6M to City Library 8,500 to Arts & Culture Grants via NVRC (represents 50% of total)"
Sports and recreation annual budget	RDCK Annual Budget 2022 for Nelson and adjacent electoral areas: \$5.48 M total expenses; \$161k on repairs and maintenance; \$417k on utilities. Interview: RDCK doesn't have any specific arts funding, but take similar approach as City by giving out Columbia Basin Trust funding + have some discretionary funding to be used for arts	Expenses Budgeted 2022:  Recreation Services: \$3,016,795 Parks & Trails: \$2,005,308	From Capital Plan 2022 NVRC Budget: \$55k to John Braithwaite Community Centre; \$300k to Harry Jerome Centre; \$15k to Memorial Community Rec Centre ; \$120k to sports field renovations, play equipment replacements, greenway resurfacing; \$51k to facility/venue plan update. For next two years 2023-2024: \$850k to Spirit Trail Extension; \$400k to Green Necklace Outdoor Fitness Equipment"
Funding source	3% of building permit fees from previous year are credited to Public Art Reserve Fund & the City matches this amount. Majority of funding comes from Columbia Basin Trust (CBT), not the City	Mainly funded through arts & culture revenue (approx \$100k from film permits), not taxes, therefore inconsistent.  Revenue from Parks, Rec and Culture Total (2022 Projection) \$1,162,600"	The City contributes funding towards various arts and culture initiatives (including NVRC, MONOVA, Centennial Theatre, and city-led programming and installations) through the Capital Plan and Operating Budget - with revenue provided by property taxes, sales of services, grants, licenses and permits, and developer contributions
Grants offered	In 2023, the City of Nelson encourages interested community members to apply for Columbia Basin Trust Resident Directed Grants (ReDi Grants) which include project related to arts, culture, and heritage. The City does not offer any grants directly to the community for arts and culture.	Community Enhancement Grant Program managed by Arts Council (arts and culture grant: \$35k + public art grant: 2 x \$12k projects)  More community-focused grants outsourced to Squamish Community Foundation (\$22k awarded in 2022)	NVRC offers over \$750K annually across 4 grant programs: operating assistance, programming & project assistance, celebrations & events; community public art (\$15k from CNV for this specifically)
Municipal structure	Cultural Development Officer (CDO) works with Cultural Development Committee	1 Arts & culture manager who reports to Arts and Recreation Director -- includes permitting for films Also have non-profit Arts Council	Public Art Coordinator -- reports to Director of Cultural Affairs; City also has Placemaking team on activating public spaces; NVRC -- 260 FTE Staff (recreation and culture combined)"
City Staff FTE	1 Contractor (CDO)	1 for Arts & Culture department (44 FTE staff for all of Parks, Recreation and Culture)	The NVRC has three full time staff (who report to both the City and the District) and oversees approximately 260 full-time, auxiliary, and contract employees. These employees support a range of recreation and culture offerings, including parks, multiple community centres, the civic Centennial Theatre, and more.

Service offerings	City of Nelson	District of Squamish	City of North Vancouver
Public art installations	56 mural (46 murals through NDAC) + numerous artisanal installations: mosaic tiles, railings, rotating sculptures + 10+ private/publicly purchased sculpture	36 (murals - publicly and privately maintained)	150+ (art on public property maintained by City)
Theatre/music and performing arts venues	2 theatre, 6 other music venues	1 theatre (run by school district) 1 outdoor pavilion	5 (with Centennial Theatre receiving financial support from the City)
Museums	3	4	1 (in the City of North Vancouver proper)
Visual arts spaces (art galleries, etc)	5	8	11
Recreation centres (with room to host A&C activities)	2	3	3
Arts learning spaces (schools or educational centres)	4	2	8
Arts & culture programs	"Many classes and events at Oxygen Arts Centre Through RDCK: 4+ programs involving arts for pre-school age"	"Adults: drawing/painting, dance Youth/kids: music, dance **note: programs offered by contract instructors, not through municipality directly"	Numerous classes for all ages through NVRC in addition to those offered through educational centres in cell above
Community-led arts and culture groups		35+ represented by Arts Council	18

	<b>City of Nelson</b>	<b>District of Squamish</b>	<b>City of North Vancouver</b>
<b>Misc</b>			
Key partnerships	Nelson District Arts Council; Capitol Theatre; Touchstones Museum; Oxygen Arts Centre; Columbia Basin Trust	School district (co-manage theatre); Squamish Arts (Arts Council)	District of North Vancouver --> co-run recreation and library; North Vancouver Museum and Archives (Commission); NVRC (Commission); City Library (Board)
Events calendar	Yes, via Chamber of Commerce (www.discovernelson.com/discover-nelson/bc/annual-events/)	Yes, via Explore Squamish (www.exploresquamish.com/events)	Yes, via City (www.cnv.org/Parks-Recreation-and-Culture/Community-Events)
Calendar activity	High (76 events on the go during review)	Mid, multiple community events per week	High, multiple community events daily
Arts & culture directory	Yes, via NDAC (www.ndac.ca/posts-and-listings/)	Yes, via Squamish Arts Council (www.squamisharts.com/members-gallery/)	Yes, via NVRC (www.nvrc.ca/arts-culture/arts-directory)
Efforts to support equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation through arts and culture	From interview: reconciliation work is beginning, several projects on-the-go now including collaborations with Selkirk College and Capitol Theatre. More government support would be beneficial to continue this work. City is in a challenging area – no band structure within 100km. “A very white community”: in the 2016 census 89% caucasian, and 4% Indigenous”	7 Squamish Nation reserves in the District of Squamish. Squamish Nation and the District of Squamish entered into a Co-operation Protocol in 2007 and an Intergovernmental Co-operation Accord in 2011. The Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre showcases the two First Nations communities that lived in the Whistler area. Squamish Nation also has a Cultural Division. They work to provide opportunities to learn about the Squamish ways, including sessions led by Knowledge Keepers. They partner with others to support museum exhibits, artists, and ceremonies. The cultural division also answers inquiries related to Squamish Nation. www.squamish.net/language-cultural-affairs/	“First Nations” as a category on Culture Compass; with place names in Squamish language; Scrolling bar allows to wipe the street names on the map to reflect original First Nations place names.
Additional best practices	City initiatives with wider region; strong relationship with City development services (with art opportunities in new developments and infrastructure); City art rental program with \$4-5k budgetting annually to rent out artists’ work, funded through the Public Art Reserve Fund; the Reserve Fund has 3% taken from development permit applications that the City matches; City Council meetings start with a 5 minutes presentation from local artists to raise awareness and celebrate art.	Aiming for a sustainable funding model with almost half of arts & culture funding (approx \$100,000) from film permits. The current City Council is pro- arts and culture, placing culture third on the capital projects priority list. “Recreation and Culture” is one of the main high-level tabs on the Squamish website.	The City/District of North Van have been prioritizing arts and culture for the past few decades, starting with the first Cultural Plan for the North Shore in 1988 (https://www.nvrc.ca/cultural-planning). North Shore Culture Compass -- digital navigation tool for arts and culture on the North Shore.

# Appendix E.

## Arts & Culture Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

### **Vision**

The Arts & Culture Advisory Committee (AC2) acts as a voice for the diverse needs of the creative community to advance arts, culture and heritage in Fort St. John for the benefit of all. The Committee recognizes the unique strengths of arts and culture in contributing to a vibrant community and in advancing representation and reconciliation.

### **Mandate and overview**

- Encourage a vibrant and inclusive arts and culture scene in Fort St. John by increasing awareness and opportunities for artist and community involvement.
- Act as a direct connection to the community, to share and represent broad needs of the creative community and general public, with the City.
- Provide recommendations and advice on City initiatives and new public art, including through the Public Art Policy and the Artist in Residence program.

### **Operation**

- Open positions to serve as a Committee Member will be widely advertised to the community by the City to ensure interested community members may apply.
- Terms of service will be two years and will be staggered so that half the members of each Committee are replaced or renewed each year
- At a minimum, the Committee will meet quarterly (four times per year) with additional meetings to be scheduled as required

- Committee Members must attend a minimum of three meetings per year to retain membership on the Committee
- A Chair shall be designated at the first meeting of the year.
- Quorum shall consist of a majority of the Committee Members and must be maintained during all Committee Meetings.
- Committee Members must declare conflict of interest and remove themselves from the deliberation of any such project in which they are otherwise involved

### **Membership**

- The AC2 will be composed of a minimum of five voting members. A maximum of nine voting positions will be open to the community as outlined below.
- A Council liaison, consisting of one sitting Councillor, will participate and attend AC2 meetings to serve as a direct conduit for communication with City Council.
- A City liaison, such as a staff member of the Arts & Culture Department, will participate and attend AC2 meetings to facilitate connection

between the City and the Committee. Additional City staff may be invited to attend Committee Meetings to provide advice on an as-needed basis.

- If five committee members are unable to be confirmed and the above positions remain unfilled (following City-led promotion), then additional positions may be filled by a general community Committee Member\* (until a committee of five is established).
- The Committee will be composed of the following voting Committee Member positions to ensure diversity of culture, socioeconomic background, lived experience, resources, and skills:
  - a. A professional artist\*
  - b. An artist under the age of 30\*
  - c. A member of the Blueberry River First Nations\*
  - d. A member of the Doig River First Nation\*
  - e. A member of the Metis Society\*
  - f. A newcomer, immigrant, or otherwise non-settler cultural representative\*
  - g. A member of the local business community or Chamber of Commerce
  - h. A member of School Board District 60 or local teacher\*
  - i. A board member of the Fort St. John Arts Council
- Committee Members indicated with asterisks above (\*) will be awarded honoraria for their attendance (at a provision of \$100 per Committee Meeting to a maximum of eight meetings per year) to remove barriers for individual participation on the Committee.

## Responsibilities

1. The Committee will provide expert and community input on the public art selection and management process, as detailed in the Public Art Policy, including:
  - Advise of City acquisition of new public art, including providing input on call outs
  - Review proposed Public Art Plans and advise on the selection and siting of public art with value at or above \$7,500
  - Advise and consult on public art related issues, including maintenance and deaccessioning.
  - Provide input to City staff and City Council on the implementation of the Public Art Policy.
2. The Committee will support implementation of the Artist in Residence Program, including:
  - Provide input on the call-out for artist in residence applications.
  - Consult and adjudicate on artist in residence applications.
  - Responsibilities are anticipated to evolve as the Artist in Residence Program is further established.
3. Other responsibilities of the Committee are anticipated to evolve and may include:
  - Advise and consult with the City's Arts & Culture Department and developers on the opportunity to incorporate new public art into private development.
  - Share advice and resources to support community art and placemaking projects (encouraging and ensuring low barrier processes for artistic initiatives that fall outside the scope of the Public Art Policy).
  - Bring suggestions and opportunities forward to the City to support City mandates around arts and culture, particularly focused on building capacity in the creative community and advancing representation of diverse voices.

Appendix F.

What We Heard Report – Round 1



# Community Arts & Culture Framework **What We Heard Report 1**

**Prepared for the City of Fort St. John**

Updated December 2022

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Purpose of round 1 engagement	4
<b>2. Outreach</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Participation</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. What we heard</b>	
3.1 Focused engagement	7
3.2 Pop-ups	10
3.3 Online survey	15
3.4 Representative phone survey	19
<b>4. Conclusion</b>	<b>20</b>

# Introduction

The City of Fort St. John is collaborating with Happy Cities to develop a Community Arts & Culture Framework. With the understanding that arts and culture is for everyone, the Framework provides a long-range plan to guide the development of arts, culture and heritage in Fort St. John. Specifically, the purpose of the Framework is to establish a framework for future policies, actions, resources, and strategies for effective implementation of the Strategic Goals and the Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John and to strengthen opportunities for collaboration and capacity building. Furthermore, the Framework recognizes the existing energy of an active and vibrant local arts community.

The Community Arts & Culture Framework takes direction from the vision set in City of Fort St. John policies, including key goals of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan (Section 5.0) and the 2017 Official Community Plan (Section 8.4). Further, the City's Social & Economic Development Framework (2020) action areas identify the need to create a new arts and culture plan. This current project aims to implement the findings from the Social & Economic Development Framework, which called for the development of an arts and culture strategy — a plan for how the City can support facilities and programming, while complementing the existing strengths and energy of the local arts and culture community.

Building on the City's past efforts, the project team worked to meaningfully engage the community and provide inclusive opportunities for key stakeholders and the public to provide input on the new Framework. During Summer, 2022, Happy Cities conducted focused engagement (both in-person and digital), three community pop-ups, and an online survey. An additional phone survey was included during Fall 2022. This report captures feedback and summarizes key findings from the first round of engagement for the Framework. Findings from this report will inform the development of the draft Framework. A second round of engagement will take place February 2023 for the community to provide input on the draft prior to finalization.



# Purpose of round 1 engagement

The first round of engagement for the Community Arts & Culture Framework was held from August 8th to September 7th, 2022. During this time, the project team facilitated an array of online and in-person activities. These included community pop-ups, an online survey, a representative phone survey, and a comprehensive series of interviews and workshops with key arts and culture stakeholders.

Specifically, this first round of engagement focused on:



**Sharing** the purpose of the new Community Arts & Culture Framework, including how it builds on past efforts and supports the City's policy goals toward a vibrant local arts and culture scene.



**Hearing** from a range of Fort St. John residents on their priorities for the future of arts and culture, especially related to their favourite programming, physical spaces, and opportunities for new capacity building initiatives.



**Identifying** changing needs and emerging trends around programming, spaces, and capacity building from key arts and culture community groups and organizations.

# Outreach

## Promotion

To spread awareness of the project and encourage community and stakeholder engagement, the project was promoted through a variety of digital and printed means. These included the City's Let's Talk page, posters, local media and through the City and Happy Cities' social media channels. Each of the stakeholder invitations for focused engagement included a link to survey with encouragement to participate and share with their respective group members. The pop-up events were strategically planned to complement summer community events, including Music in the Park and Open Mic at the Plaza.

In total, over 12,000 people viewed the 11 promotional social media posts; over 204 people visited the City's Let's Talk page during the engagement period; over 75 community members and groups were reached via email or phone; four active arts and culture Facebook groups were invited to participate in the survey and attend focused workshops; and an estimated 125 people dropped by or attended the community events co-located with the pop-ups.



75 printed posters with QR codes distributed across Fort St. John



Social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram



Stakeholder invites to workshops and interviews (both in-person and digital)



On-site meetings and tours with stakeholders

# Participation

## Focused engagement

The project team identified and contacted **43 key stakeholders** with an invitation to participate in a focused engagement session to share their priorities for the Community Arts & Culture Framework (representing or sharing expertise on behalf of a group, organization, or initiative). These meetings were offered both in-person — during Happy Cities’ first visit to Fort St. John — as well as in a digital format. They followed a semi-structured format, where a standard series of questions were asked, allowing for some variation to delve into specific areas of interest. These interviews and focus groups were an opportunity to further strengthen understanding of the stakeholder ecosystem and to build new connections between stakeholders and the City. Follow-up emails or phone calls were made to stakeholders who did not respond.

## Pop-ups

The project team conducted three public pop-ups: two held concurrent with community events (Thursday, August 11th for Music in the Park at Centennial Park, and Friday, August 12th for Open Mic in the Plaza at Festival Plaza) and a third at the splash pad at Centennial Park to engage with families on a sunny Friday afternoon. Over the course of six hours at these pop-ups, **we engaged 101 people**. To create an inviting and fun space, each pop-up offered carnival games, a participatory mural wall to paint, and healthy free snacks.

## Online survey

An online survey was hosted via the City’s Let’s Talk platform ([letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/](https://letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/)) for a total of three weeks (from August 8th until August 29th, slightly longer than normal to account for summer schedules and vacations). The survey was promoted through the City’s social media channels as well as at the pop-up events, by QR code, and by posters distributed across the city (including at NPCC, the library, the Northern Lights Community College, the casino, and more). The survey was completed by **37 participants**.

## Representative phone survey

To supplement the online survey, Happy Cities worked with Mustel Group Market Research to conduct a representative phone survey to reach 200 City residents between November 1-8, 2022.

43

Key stakeholder groups invited

23

Key stakeholder groups engaged

6

Hours spent at pop-ups

101

Attendees at pop-ups

37

Responses to the online survey

200

Phone survey participants

# What we heard

## 3.1 Focused engagement

### Arts and culture strengths in Fort St. John

During each focused engagement activity, participants were asked to reflect on the strengths of Fort St. John's arts and culture community, and on the ways in which it is performing well. A key sentiment highlighted through our conversations with stakeholders was the **importance of the community** in contributing to Fort St. John's arts and culture. Above all other themes, this was mentioned the most frequently when discussing local strengths. Stakeholders noted the **commitment, talent and energy that the community brings to arts and culture** as a key contributor to its successes. The community was described as 'generous' when it comes to arts and culture — individuals and community members are **shared their time and skills, and local businesses generous with their support and funding**.

Another strength identified was the **vibrancy of the existing creative scene** in Fort St. John. The many artists and local talent in and around the community contribute to a rich diversity of craft and art work. Participants also highlighted the **numerous groups and organizations that together have built an impressive range of arts and culture offerings in Fort St. John**. The year-round nature of this vibrancy also leads to a continued excitement for arts and culture throughout the colder months, which, as some participants noted, helps support a willingness to embrace the winter.

A few key players in the arts and culture community were also highlighted. Several stakeholders pointed to the hiring of Eryn Griffith, Arts & Culture Manager, as a strength for the city's arts context. Since joining the City, **Eryn has brought new energy and increased optimism for arts and culture groups**, particularly in terms of **strengthening their relationships with, and trust in, the City**. Through intentional listening and by providing support to these groups in different ways, this new manager position has slightly shifted the city's perception around their current priorities for arts and culture. (However, some stakeholders noted wariness around whether this Framework will be different from work done in the past, specifying the need for actionable outcomes with lower barriers for implementation.) A number of **interviewees also remembered Sue Popesku** – a former "powerhouse" of Fort St. John's arts and culture community. Since Sue's passing, **she continues to be known for her passion for and contributions to teaching, organizing and energizing within arts and culture**. Her ongoing impact shows how one dedicated person can energize the community.

Among other strengths mentioned, the **arts and culture community was described as a contributor to inclusion and social connection** – as a way of highlighting the diversity in the city, building social ties, and making Fort St. John a welcoming city for newcomers. Several organizations, such as FilCan, Stage North and the North Peace Pride Society, were mentioned as key drivers of equity and inclusion through the arts. More generally, the many different groups that make up the arts and culture community (new immigrants, for example) were also cited as strengths. **Arts and culture is an avenue for social connection in Fort St. John** – by showcasing the diverse backgrounds and skill sets that community members have to offer, arts and culture can bring people together and strengthen relationships across groups. By boosting social connection and contributing to a sense of belonging in this way, the tie between arts and culture and residents' wellbeing was clear.

## Opportunities for improvement and growth

In addition to strengths, participants were asked to reflect on opportunities for improvement within arts and culture in Fort St. John. Firstly, most participants pointed to **a lack of awareness of events and activities** as a key challenge. A recurring theme through conversations was the **need for a central place to go to for arts and culture news and information**. The community expressed limited awareness of when events and classes are happening, where different groups are meeting, and how to get involved. In addition to making it **challenging to participate**, this has also led to **scheduling conflicts between large community events** (overlapping on the same days). In general, a lack of coordination and communication among community groups, and between the City and community groups, remains an ongoing challenge.

Connected to this limited communication, participants noted a **perceived sense of competition among arts and culture groups and events**. This becomes particularly evident when it comes to competing for sources of regular funding from the City or the Arts Council. This perceived competition is less present when applying to external grants.

When discussing grants, participants highlighted a **significant opportunity to expand efforts for pursuing grant funding**. In addition to benefiting from further awareness around funding opportunities, several participants noted they would benefit from additional support in terms of resources and support to pursue grants. **Limited time and capacity** were both highlighted as challenges.

More generally, the interviews suggested a **need for building further organizational capacity** to support their staff and initiatives. This was especially relevant for volunteer-run and not for profit groups. Capacity building around business development, strategic visioning, and grant writing emerged as needs during these sessions. As noted above, more opportunities for sharing and collaboration were also mentioned in terms of ways these organizations could be better supported by the City.

**Volunteer capacity and human resources** also pose a challenge for many arts and culture organizations. Participants noted that many volunteers provide support to more than one organization. This is especially prominent for the more established committees and societies in Fort St. John. While enthusiastic supporters of arts and culture, many volunteers may be limited in their capacity to spearhead new activities.

**Youth participation also arose as an area of weakness**. Many participants highlighted the need to encourage and promote more youth involvement in the arts, for example by providing youth-specific programming, spaces or funding opportunities. Many organizations also appear to consist of a board and membership that are largely from a single generation. When discussing participation demographics, several participants also noted **language barriers** since almost all arts and culture initiatives are offered only in English.

**Arts and culture's ability to increase resident retention was also highlighted** – particularly when it comes to skilled professionals like doctors and teachers, who leave the city for other lifestyles. Participants noted that enhancing arts and culture offerings in Fort St. John could incentivize these much-needed workers to put roots in the community.

Lastly, and unsurprisingly, **the pandemic was cited as a major challenge** for the arts and culture community. Many arts groups were hit particularly hard and struggled to survive periods of lockdown, without a surplus of financial resources. These conversations did contain some optimism however, and many participants noted that they felt a sense of recovery and confidence being restored in 2022.

## Priorities for programming, physical space, and capacity building

During each focused engagement session, participants were asked to expand on their priorities for programming, physical space, and opportunities for capacity building. The **need for more formal information and event sharing resources** was repeatedly highlighted here. Numerous participants underlined the **value of an online calendar or “community bulletin board” for arts and culture events**, noting that this would need to be regularly maintained and updated to be effective, and suggesting the City is well-situated for this responsibility. Regardless of who is responsible, the calendar should be easily accessible for community groups to submit their events.

Several participants suggested **regular meetings among arts and culture groups as a way of fostering collaboration** between groups. During these sessions, members could share upcoming events and opportunities for partnership. Again, the City was identified as being well-situated for spearheading and providing a space to host these conversations. Currently, it is unclear how these would complement the Arts Council’s regular meetings, which representatives of all member groups are invited to attend.

The **need for additional space** was highlighted frequently. Some organizations pointed to a need for dedicated space for their particular craft, noting the challenges with sharing space when materials are difficult to set up, dismantle and move regularly (spinners, potters, printmakers, for example). Almost all participants, regardless of their art form, said they would **benefit from storage space for their materials**. Generally, the **need for cheaper, smaller, and flexible-use spaces** was repeatedly highlighted by all participants, especially by cultural groups.

Participants noted that **space challenges arise partially because existing arts and culture spaces are prohibitively expensive or otherwise difficult to book** (NPCC, City facilities, and private venues). They requested more affordable options, specifically free or at significantly reduced rates for groups without revenue. **Another proposed solution was for community groups to access existing vacant or underutilized spaces and buildings**. While some of these venues (like empty spaces in hotels, for example) have been identified, there is currently no formal process for accessing these spaces and uncertainty about how long spaces would be available (with short term periods being less useful for groups with significant equipment).

Finally, the **need for more community-facing programming** was mentioned in several conversations. Participants noted there is opportunity to create **more entry-level programming that caters to beginners and is more inclusive for a broader audience**. Some suggested that additional grants and funding for these initiatives would be useful in encouraging more organizations to offer programming, as well as encouraging a wider range of programming options more generally.

“Arts and culture is an expression, it’s an outlet for creativity, it adds colour to the community.”  
— North Peace Pride Society

## 3.2 Pop-ups



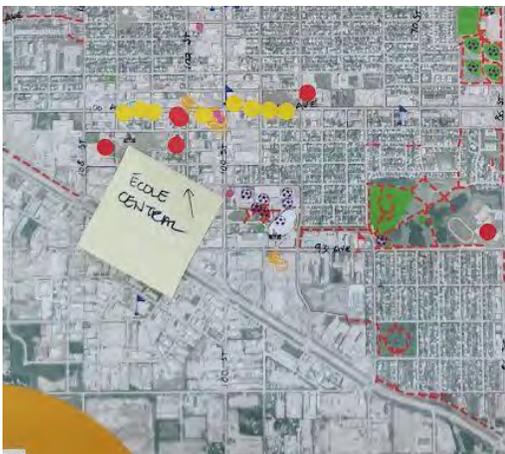
### Three community pop-ups

- Thursday, August 11th at Centennial Park's Music in the Park (55 participants)
- Friday, August 12 at Centennial Park splash pad (40 participants)
- Friday, August 12 at Festival Plaza's Open Mic in the Plaza (6 participants)



### Summary of pop-ups

At each pop-up, members of the public were walked through large engagement boards while the project team answered questions and captured their feedback. Engagement boards were designed to be interactive and spark conversation. From the boards, attendees learned about the project and the purpose of engagement. They were invited to share their priorities for arts and culture (specifically for programming, physical spaces, and opportunities for capacity building), their involvement in the scene, and their favourite creative assets around the city.



### Digitized engagement boards

The following pages showcase the engagement boards and share a digitized summary of what we heard in response to each question that we asked. A fourth engagement board at the pop-ups hosted a large map of the city and residents were invited to pinpoint the location of existing arts and culture assets, as well as where they'd like to see more in the future. This map was digitized separately and is visualized as part of the asset mapping component of this project.

Generally, at all three pop-ups, the Framework was well-received with the public responding either neutrally or positively to the City’s initiative to support local arts and culture. No strong concern or opposition was expressed over the Framework. Over the six hours spent engaging the public, key themes emerged for the Community Arts & Culture Framework.

Community members:

1. Understand the value of arts and culture for human connection through creative means and experiences;
2. Consider themselves to be involved in the arts and culture scene (identifying in the mid-range between “new to the arts and culture scene” and “an arts and culture professional”);
3. Participate in a wide variety of activities within the arts and culture scene each year, including: attending performances at venues such as the LIDO, watching movies or shows, visiting the NPCC and the museum, playing an instrument, taking a creative class, and more;
4. Would like to see more programming and activities, such as: performances and shows (music, in particular), programming for all ages (with children, youth, and seniors highlighted), and activations of public spaces (including through performances and public art);
5. Would like to see more physical spaces, including: enhanced existing spaces, new collaborative spaces, and an array of smaller indoor spaces (to showcase art); and,
6. Would like to see support offered in the form of: small community grants, new opportunities for partnerships and collaborations between creatives, and access to affordable rental space and administrative support.

### **From FSJ families**

At the pop-up at the splash pad at Centennial Park, we engaged with over 40 participants (all families with children) and heard consistently strong support for family-friendly initiatives, specifically creative classes for children as well as spaces and events for families to gather.



# INTRODUCING FORT ST. JOHN'S FIRST-EVER COMMUNITY ARTS & CULTURE FRAMEWORK!

## What is a Community Arts & Culture Framework?

The Community Arts & Culture Framework will act as a long-range planning document to guide the development of arts, culture, and heritage in Fort. St John.

This Framework seeks to strengthen community capacity and bring social, economic, and cultural benefits to the wider region. The City has identified arts and culture as essential to a vibrant and liveable Fort St. John, contributing to economic growth, reconciliation, and community wellbeing. The Framework aims to support both existing arts and culture in Fort St. John and guide the implementation of new efforts, including programming, partnerships and collaborations, physical spaces, and funding opportunities.



## What does arts & culture mean to you?

YOUR  
IDEAS

- Expressing human ideas in a way that makes you happy (4)
- Local play and dance performances (5)
- Family friendly experiences and spaces for families to gather (4)
- Programming more classes: cooking and culture (2), drawing and painting (2)
- Develop and maximize talents and potential of residents, especially youth (3)
- More First Nations and traditional events to teach culture, drumming, storytelling, legends, round dance etc. (3)
- Connecting through music and food! (2)
- Kids/youth art events and low barrier programming for 12-18 year olds (2)
- Festivals: Folk, gospel, storytelling, puppets
- Outdoor events all year round: movie in the park, play pop-ups,
- Music: choirs, jazz and blues,
- Nice downtown area: park, benches for families
- Celebrations and holidays from different cultures
- More collaboration and celebrating/funding arts/artists as much as/equal to sports
- Local artisans
- A lot of pretty things to look at
- Museums, art galleries, spaces to showcase local "flavor" and artists and seeing what the old times looked like
- Expanding your mind through word, sound, image and touch, exploring



Scan  
me!

[letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/](http://letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/)

let's talk  
ARTS & CULTURE

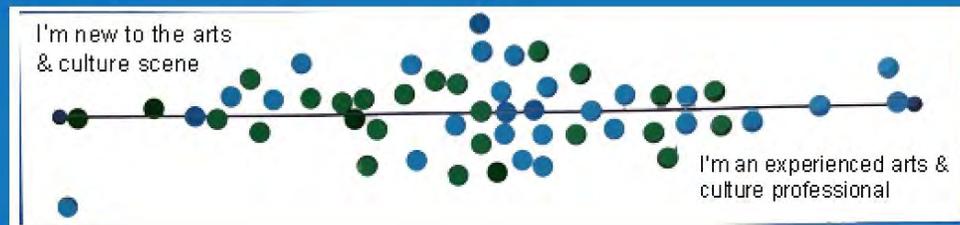
FORT ST JOHN  
The Energetic City

# ARTS & CULTURE IN FORT ST. JOHN



## Arts and culture is for everyone!

The city and region are rich in local arts and culture. We are interested in hearing what you're excited about and what you consider unique to Fort St. John. The Community Arts & Culture Framework will showcase and build on these initiatives—supporting existing and emerging arts and culture efforts, and investing in an inclusive, vibrant, and liveable city. To understand who we're hearing from, we'd love to hear a bit about you.



## Which of the following do you participate in over the course of a typical year?



Attend a live performance at a venue	71	Visit the North Peace Museum	48	Puppet show	9
Watch a live performance at someone's home	20	Visit the Indigenous Artists' Market	30	Dance classes + performances	17
Take an in-person creative class or workshop	39	Visit another art exhibit or gallery	66	Interactive art exhibits	6
Take an online creative class or workshop	26	Watch a movie or screening	65		
Play an instrument	49	Attend an event at the Lido Theatre	45		
Participate in singing, for any audience (at a worship service, in a choir, etc.)	25	Attend an event featuring the work of authors, poets, or storytellers	25		
Visit the North Peace Cultural Centre	67	Write a story, poem, song, or other literary work	27	None	

## Where we're at:



# ARTS & CULTURE PRIORITIES

We're hoping to hear your priorities for these three areas—programming and activities, physical spaces, and capacity building opportunities. Feel free to add your own ideas for how these areas can be supported through the Community Arts & Culture Framework, and be as specific as you'd like!

## What are your priorities for arts & culture in terms of...



### Programming and activities

Arts classes and workshops	37	Public art and other activations in public space	37	Outdoor activities	7
Performances & shows	45	Youth programming	27	Children/youth kiosks	2
Family-friendly programming	48	Shakespeare in the Park (local actors!)	8		
Seniors-focused programming	15	Music shows	31		
Programming in languages other than English	18	Movie at the swimming pool	7		



### Physical spaces

Enhancing existing venue or gallery spaces	30	Openness to all types of music genres	2
Smaller indoor spaces (for pop-ups or exhibits)	25	Weather proof temporary outdoor pop ups, kiosks	3
A large venue space	5	Space to showcase more art/creative hub	4
Collaborative spaces	31	Co-op website	2

### Support and capacity building

Small grants for community members & business owners (\$500-2,000)	26	Administrative support for volunteer arts and culture organizations	16
Support for newcomers & immigrants	13		
Access to venues or rental space	19		
Support for Indigenous artists and creatives	17		
Opportunities for partnerships & collaboration between creatives	22		

## 3.3 Online survey — Overview

# 204

community members visited the Let's Talk page

# 74

community members contributed to the survey

# 37

community members completed the survey

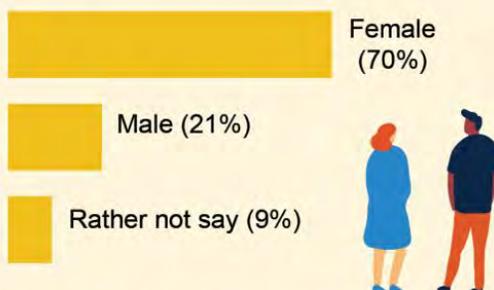
Survey respondents ranged in their creative backgrounds, with a majority identifying as **“a creative or dabbler in arts & culture”** or **“an observer or appreciator of arts and culture”**. Respondents noted that they participate in a wide array of arts and culture activities, with more than 50% indicating that when they have time they partake in indoor entertainment, craft work, food-related activities, hosting or attending social activities, performance arts, visual art, and reading or writing.

A majority of respondents (57%) said they are interested in being more involved in the arts and culture scene, for example taking on a more active role in organizing, supporting, or volunteering with a project or event. The top three barriers identified to accessing art and culture were lack of time, not knowing anyone else involved, and not knowing about current possibilities.

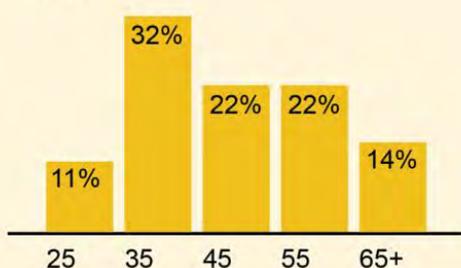
### Survey respondents noted that they live in

- 1 Fort St. John (81%)
- 2 Charlie Lake (10%)
- 3 Other communities: Area C (3%), Area B (3%), and Taylor (3%)

### Respondents identified as



### Respondents ranged in age from



### Respondents shared that they

- Feel connected to culture (62%)
- Were born in Canada (62%)
- Were born in the Peace Region (32%)
- Have young children (35%)
- Live with family (16%)





### 3.3 Online survey — Interests

Respondents are active and interested in attending a wide array of creative and cultural events and spaces. Respondents believe, above all, the Community Arts & Culture Framework should contribute to an inclusive and welcoming arts and culture scene.

#### Ranked in order of priority, the Community Arts & Culture Framework should support

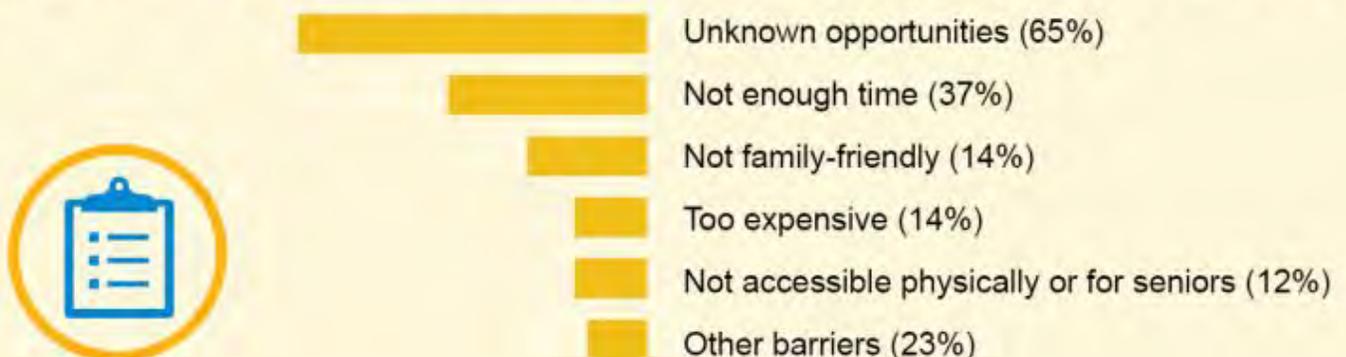
- 1 An inclusive and welcoming arts and culture scene
- 2 Opportunities to collaborate (between artists or community members)
- 3 New initiatives that require financial support
- 4 A more lively Fort St. John
- 5 Indoor activities and spaces during winter
- 6 Reconciliation and celebration of Indigenous culture

#### When they have time and over the course of a typical year, a majority of respondents enjoy

- Creative craftwork and artistic activities
- Food-related activities
- Social activities
- Visiting art exhibits & galleries
- Visiting the NPCC
- Attending live performances
- Going to the movies
- Outdoor recreation
- Performance arts
- Reading or writing
- Visual art

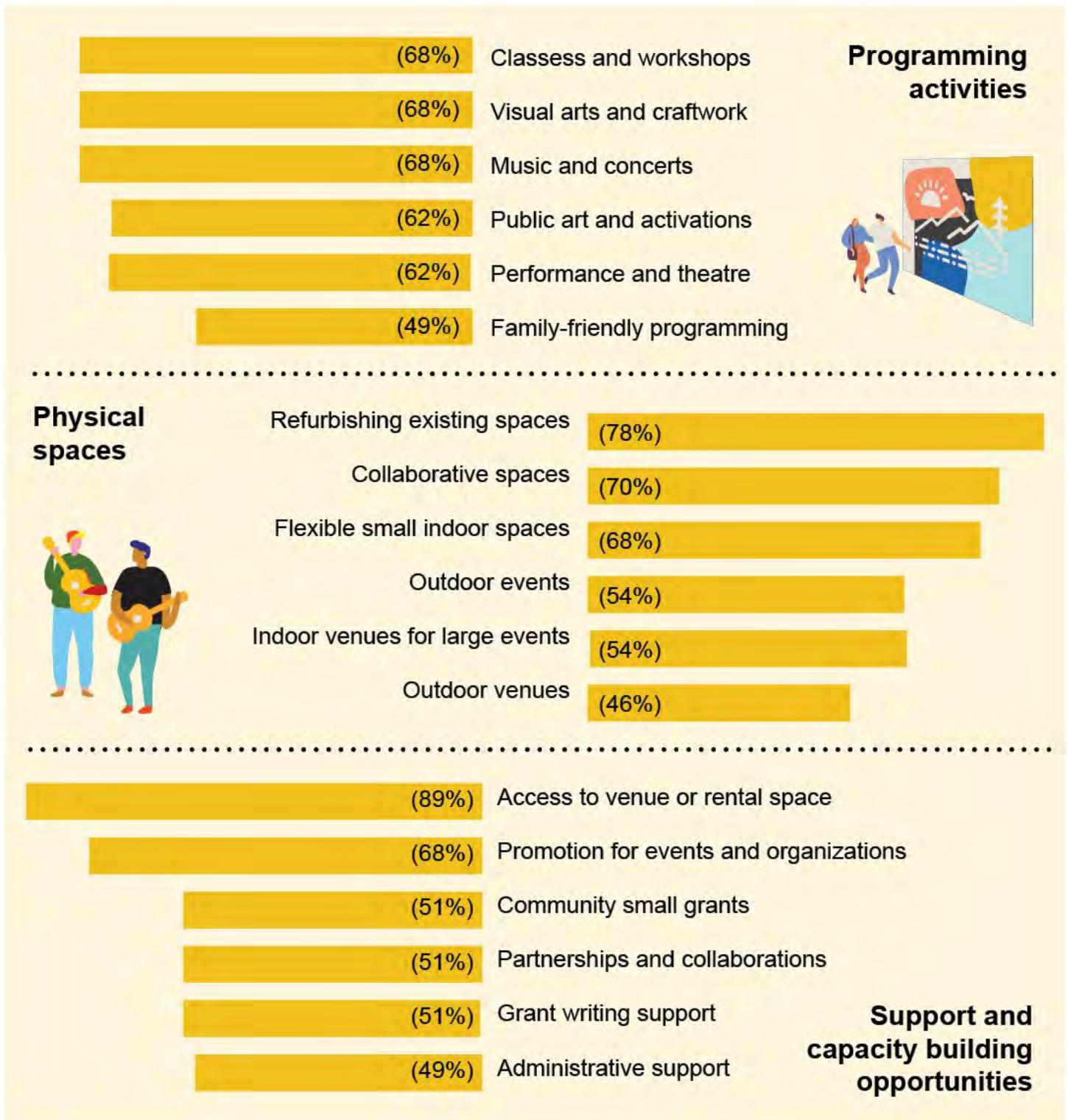


#### Respondents identified key barriers to accessing arts and culture, notably



### 3.3 Online survey — Priorities

When respondents were asked about their priorities for physical spaces, programming opportunities, and capacity building initiatives, the following items rose to the top.



## 3.4 Representative phone survey

To supplement the online survey, Happy Cities worked with Mustel Group Market Research to conduct a representative phone survey to reach 200 Fort St. John residents between November 1-8, 2022. Steps were taken to ensure a representative sample, including that the final sample was weighted by gender and age to match census data for the community.

When asked about their awareness of local arts and culture events and activities, approximately three-quarters are aware at least sometimes, (78%), including one-third who are aware “most of the time” and one-in-twenty who are “always” aware (5%).

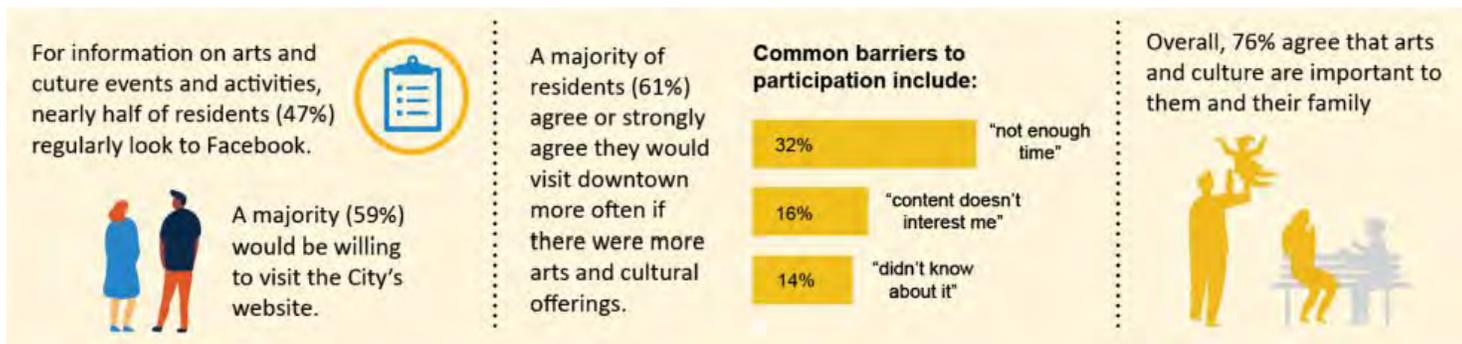
Residents were asked about the types of arts and culture activities or programs they or their households regularly participate in. Findings included:

- Fully one-half mention taking part in arts and crafts (53%) with performance arts being the most common activity (41%), followed by visual art (16%).
- Among the arts and culture programs, events, and activities residents would like to participate in more often, the topmost mention is music (64%).

Overall, three-quarters of residents agree that arts and culture are equally as important to the quality of life in Fort St. John as sports and recreation (75%), including more than half who strongly agree (55%). The majority of residents agree that arts and culture are an essential component to a thriving Fort St. John community (79%), including approximately half who strongly agree (52%).

Notably, 79% of residents see arts and culture as essential to a thriving community, and 75% agree that arts and culture are equally as important to quality of life in Fort St. John as sports and recreation.

Overall, seven-in-ten agree the City should be investing more to provide increased opportunity for arts and culture (72%), including approximately one-third who agree strongly with this statement (35%). Notably, the majority of residents, more than eight-in-ten in all, would like to see the City further support local arts and culture through programming, spaces and facilities, and through workshops, educational resources, or funding opportunities for community groups and individuals.



# Conclusion

Across the board — from focused engagement interviews and workshops, to the community pop-ups, and the online survey — we heard consistently that the Community Arts & Culture Framework will be successful...

- If the communities needs are heard (especially for dedicated creative spaces);
- If the City is able to commit to arts and culture in the same way it has done so successfully for sports and recreation;
- If it fosters collaboration and opportunities for partnership between City and community groups, and;
- If it is actionable.



Appendix G.

What We Heard Report – Round 2



# Community Arts & Culture Framework

## **What We Heard Report 2**

**Prepared for the City of Fort St. John**

April 2023

# Contents

<b>Overview of round 2 engagement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Outreach</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Digitized pop-up boards</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>What we heard</b>	<b>10</b>
Draft strategies	10
Public art	11
Additional survey questions	12
What else?	13
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>14</b>

# Overview of round 2 engagement

With the understanding that arts and culture is for everyone, the Community Arts & Culture Framework provides a 5+ year plan to support and strengthen arts, culture and heritage in Fort St. John. The second round of engagement (February 15-March 15, 2023) overlapped with the High on Ice Festival as a visible opportunity for all community members to provide input on the draft Framework. The second round built on the City's past efforts as well as a first round of community engagement held August-September 2022.

This second round of engagement included two pop-up events and an online survey. Everyone was invited to participate—including the general public, the creative community, and key arts and culture stakeholders.

The engagement activities shared an overview of what we heard through round one, asked questions to understand public art priorities, and presented the draft vision, guiding principles and strategies of the Framework for feedback prior to finalization.



# Outreach

The pop-up events and online survey were promoted through a variety of digital and printed means. Outreach efforts and outcomes included:



## Let's Talk

The City updated the arts and culture page on Let's Talk, directing people interested in taking the survey to the page ([www.letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/](http://www.letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/)). Over XXX people visited the City's Let's Talk page during the engagement period.

## Printed posters

The City distributed XXX posters with QR codes at key locations (including the NPCC, the library, the Northern Lights Community College, and the casino).



## e-Momentum newsletter

The City invited the public to participate in engagement activities through its newsletter. Over 943 people opened the City's e-Momentum newsletter to learn more.

## Email invitations

Happy Cities shared email invitations with over 35 individuals and organizations who were engaged through the first round of engagement. Invitations encouraged individuals and groups to participate in engagement activities and to share information with their members.



## Social media

The City promoted engagement activities through its social media channels with three social media posts, two of which were boosted ads. Happy Cities posted in two active arts and culture Facebook groups and two active community Facebook groups. In total, there were over 10,000 social media impressions across Facebook and Instagram.



## On site

Both pop-up events were planned to complement the popular winter High On Ice festival themed "Explore the Folklore" and hosted at visible and warm locations across Centennial Park and Festival Plaza.

# Participation

7.5

Hours at High  
on Ice

205

Pop-up  
participants

207

Survey  
responses

4

Weeks of survey  
promotion

## Online survey participation

An online survey was hosted via the City's Let's Talk platform for four weeks (February 15th to March 15, 2023). The survey was completed by 207 participants.

Printed surveys were also available at the in-person pop-ups; four copies were completed. These surveys are included in the total count.

## Pop-up participation

The project team conducted two public-facing pop-up events concurrent with High on Ice winter festival activities at Centennial Park. Over the course of these pop-ups, over 205 people were engaged.

- Saturday, February 18, 2023 from 4-7:00 pm (101 participants)
- Sunday, February 19, 2023 from noon-4:30 pm (104 participants)

Pop-up participants included a range of families, young adults, students, and seniors. Similar participation and interest was noted from male- and female-presenting community members. To create an inviting and fun space, each pop-up offered a craft activity, healthy free snacks, and hot chocolate.

## Pop-up boards

At each pop-up, members of the public were walked through four large engagement boards while the project team answered questions and captured their feedback. Engagement boards were designed to be interactive and spark conversation. From the boards, attendees learned about the project purpose and timeline (board 1), an overview of what we heard during the first round of engagement (board 2), and were invited to share feedback on the Framework's draft vision, guiding principles, and strategies (board 3) and priorities for public art (board 4).

The following pages showcase the engagement boards and share a digitized summary of what we heard in response to each question.



# FORT ST. JOHN'S NEW

# COMMUNITY ARTS & CULTURE FRAMEWORK

## IS NEARING COMPLETION!

The Community Arts & Culture Framework will act as a document to guide the development of arts, culture, and heritage in Fort. St John over the next five years and beyond.

The Community Arts & Culture Framework aims to uplift local arts and culture, as an action-oriented guide for the City of Fort St. John to foster opportunities for collaboration and build capacity with the creative community. When completed, the Framework will support existing arts and culture in Fort St. John, and provide direction on future initiatives. We invite you to learn about the Framework's drafted vision, guiding principles, and strategies and to share your feedback!

### Project timeline



### What does arts and culture mean in Fort St. John?

We posed this question to the community during the first round of engagement, and heard...

- Lots of visible art work while wandering through town, plays and concerts put on locally
- The community's expression of its identity.
- Enjoying and participating in the life and growth of my community.
- It means the heart and soul of a community. Without it we would be just a collection of buildings.
- Things that enhance day to day life and broaden experiences.
- Adult life is so purpose-driven, and art lets you take a step back.
- Understanding and embracing each and every background
- Bringing people and different cultures together.
- The energy when people come together
- It's an expression, it builds and adds to the vibrancy of a community, it's an outlet for creativity, it adds colour to the community
- A pillar to tourism
- Arts and culture is what brings life to a community. It is needed to show the talents of individuals and groups, and to what gives our community the spirit it needs so that we can be known for more than just industry
- Arts and Culture weave community together through music, visual, dance, storytelling, history, architecture and so much more!
- In order to bring people together you need practical things, like sports and work, and arts and culture is equally as essential
- Performances, art galleries, cultural festivals and events
- A vibrant arts and culture scene sends the message that FSJ is a safe and welcoming city.

Take the survey



[letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/](http://letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/)



# SO FAR, WE'VE HEARD...

During the first round of engagement we learned about the community's priorities for arts and culture, especially around activities and events, spaces, and capacity building opportunities (including funding). Many local strengths were highlighted, including the commitment, talent, and energy that the community brings to a vibrant arts and culture scene—both in creative offerings and participation in a variety of activities.

12,000

People viewed invites on social media

204

People visited the City's page to learn more

23

Focus groups and interviews

100+

Over 100 people attended pop-up events

237

People responded to the surveys

## What we heard

### The Community Arts & Culture Framework should support...

-  An inclusive and welcoming arts and culture scene
-  Opportunities to collaborate (between artists or community members)
-  New arts and culture initiatives (e.g., through financial or admin support)
-  A more lively Fort St. John
-  Indoor activities and spaces during winter
-  Reconciliation and celebration of Indigenous culture



Overall, a large majority agree that arts and culture are important to them and their family

### Over the course of a typical year, a majority of respondents enjoy

- Creative craftwork and artistic activities
- Food-related activities
- Social activities
- Visiting art exhibits & galleries
- Visiting the North Peace Cultural Centre
- Attending live performances
- Going to the movies
- Outdoor recreation
- Performance arts
- Reading or writing
- Visual art



A majority of residents see arts and culture as essential to a thriving community, and agree that arts and culture are equally as important to quality of life as sports and recreation



From families, we heard strong support for creative classes for children as well as spaces and events for families to gather

### Barriers to accessing arts and culture include

- 1 Didn't know about it
- 2 Not enough time
- 3 Content doesn't interest me
- 4 Not family-friendly / too expensive



### Programming activities



### Physical spaces



### Other support



# CREATING THE FRAMEWORK TOGETHER

Priorities from the first round of engagement led to a draft vision and four guiding principles. These will direct City support towards events and activities, access to facilities and spaces, and other capacity building initiatives across the community (including administrative support and funding opportunities).

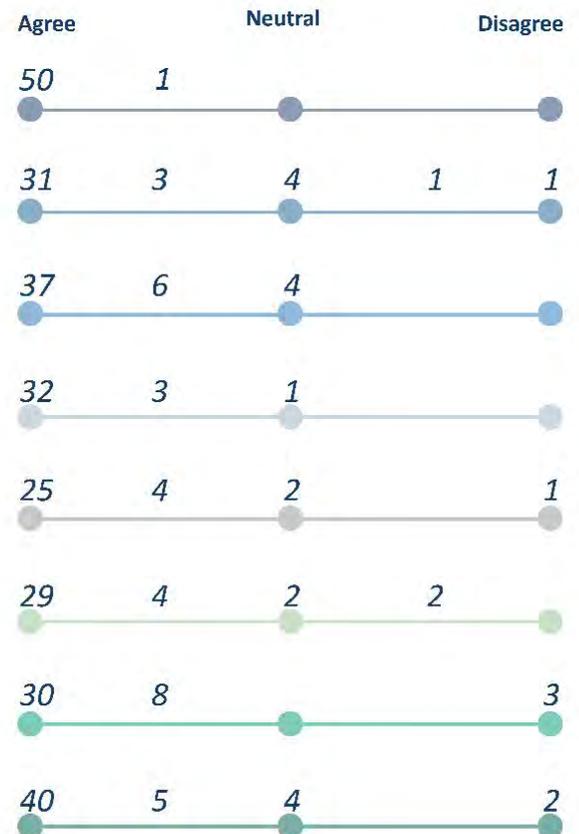
## Vision statement

An inclusive arts and culture community that enhances quality of life, identity, and the local economy in Fort St. John by supporting creativity, reconciliation, social connection and opportunities to participate in the arts.

## Guiding principles

Each of the four guiding principles has inspired several strategies, that will be detailed with example actions and tools for the City and community. For instance, an action under Strategy 7 might be a shared events platform or calendar.

What do you think of the guiding principles and strategies? *Share your thoughts on each, indicating your level of support with a dot and adding sticky notes.*





Public art is one of the ways the Community Arts & Culture Framework aims to animate Fort St. John—and strengthen local identity.

Where would you like to see more public art?  
Use dots to indicate your top three choices.

Downtown core (100 & 100)	34
Alleys or hidden spots	20
Key city entrances (e.g., from the airport)	11
Schools	30
Civic facilities	14
Residential neighbourhoods	19
Parks and trails	40
Other	3
Other	Airport - 6      Indoor spaces - 3

What Fort St. John characteristics should be highlighted through public art? Use dots to indicate your top three choices.

Indigenous culture & knowledge	34
Diverse backgrounds & cultures	29
Natural features (e.g., Peace River)	27
Regional animals	29
Winter features (e.g., Northern Lights)	29
Children's art	35
Interactive art (e.g., Impulse)	34
Other	2

What do you think of the Impulse exhibit?

Homeless people made us feel uncomfortable at Impulse

We loved Impulse! Well done!

Need more parking at Impulse



[letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/](http://letstalk.fortstjohn.ca/engage/arts-culture/)



What else?

We'd love to hear anything else that's come to mind!

See page 13 'What else?'

# What we heard

The direction of the Framework was generally well-received. The public and stakeholders from the creative community responded positively to the draft vision, guiding principles, and strategies. The following pages detail what was heard through the pop-up events and online survey.

## Draft strategies

All eight draft strategies were well supported at the pop-up and through the online survey. Each strategy received between 131-226 votes of support, with generally minimal concern expressed over any of the strategies. The following table indicates support heard from community members (combining 'agree' and 'strongly agree' to show total support, and combining 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' to show opposition).

Strategy	Support	Concern
Increase community access to diverse arts and culture offerings	226	5
Prioritize Indigenous representation and participation in decision making	131	59
Support connections across the creative community	224	2
Offer practical tools and resources to support community capacity building	214	1
Develop tools to evaluate and access programs, facilities, and initiatives	198	5
Develop tools to evaluate and strengthen city policy and operations	184	11
Explore creative initiatives in collaboration with Economic Development to enhance a vibrant downtown core	217	8
Animate public space and enhance a sense of place through art and creative projects	199	6

# Public art

At the pop-up and through the online survey, public art was generally well supported. A few participants were neutral about public art, while only one person opposed new public art. When asked where they would like to see more public art, and what new art should feature, participants responded with the following top five responses.



## About Impulse

A majority of survey respondents (55%) had visited the temporary Impulse installation located at 100 St and 100 Ave. A similar percent of pop-up participants had heard about Impulse and had visited the installation or were planning to do so.



# Additional survey questions

## Through the online survey, guiding principles ranked:

- 1 Celebrate diversity (73%)
- 2 Build community capacity (87%)
- 3 Strengthen partnerships and connections (87%)
- 4 Animate the city (72%)

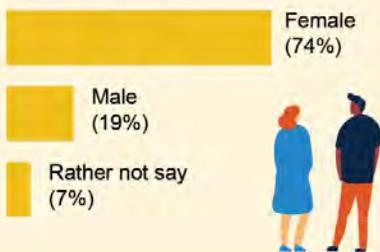


## Participants noted that they would visit downtown for:

- Outdoor events (69%)
- Live performances (62%)
- A creative class or workshop (60%)
- An exhibit or gallery (59%)
- An event at a cafe or restaurant (41%)
- An after hours event at a business (30%)

Four write-in responses want to see streets animated through festivals, markets, and street art. Another four noted that downtown is not an attractive place and/or they will not visit for any reason.

## Respondents identified as:

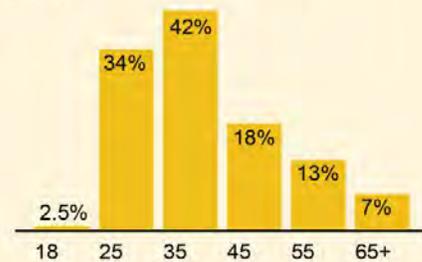


## Many respondents...

- Were born in the Peace Region (30%)
- Have children under the age of 18 in Fort St. John (37%)
- Are Indigenous (9%)



## Respondents ranged in age from:



## What else?

When asked what else came to mind (without any particular prompt), participants shared support for the following (in strong alignment with what was heard through the first round of engagement:

- Music offerings
- Activities and events for all ages (especially families)
- Indoor spaces for activities, classes, co-creation, and collaboration
- Large-scale events (parades and festivals)
- Information about arts and culture offerings
- Funding opportunities to uplift local talent
- Murals

### From families

The High On Ice winter festival drew a high number of families with children. From families, we heard consistently strong support for the the project, for the four guiding principles, and for the eight draft strategies. In particular, a majority of families voted to see more public art at schools, parks and trails, and to see public art features children’s art, regional animals, and interactive installations like Impulse.

“Most people come up here to work, you kind of understand what you’re getting into. The community activities are really cool and the free stuff is very important—things like High on the Ice and the concerts at the park in the summer.”

— Pop-up participant and mom, on what would make the city a better place to live



# Conclusion

Across the board, we heard support for the direction that the Community Arts & Culture Framework is taking. Community members and stakeholders alike noted their support towards the draft Framework’s vision, guiding principles, and strategies. Similar enthusiasm was noted toward public art, highlighting the opportunity for new installations to reflect the local landscape and to celebrate the diverse experiences of living in the energetic city.

Both rounds of engagement have been key to understanding the place of arts and culture in the hearts of Fort St. John residents. To many, arts and culture is an important part of a well-rounded and meaningful life—a reason to call Fort St. John a long term, and family-friendly, home.

