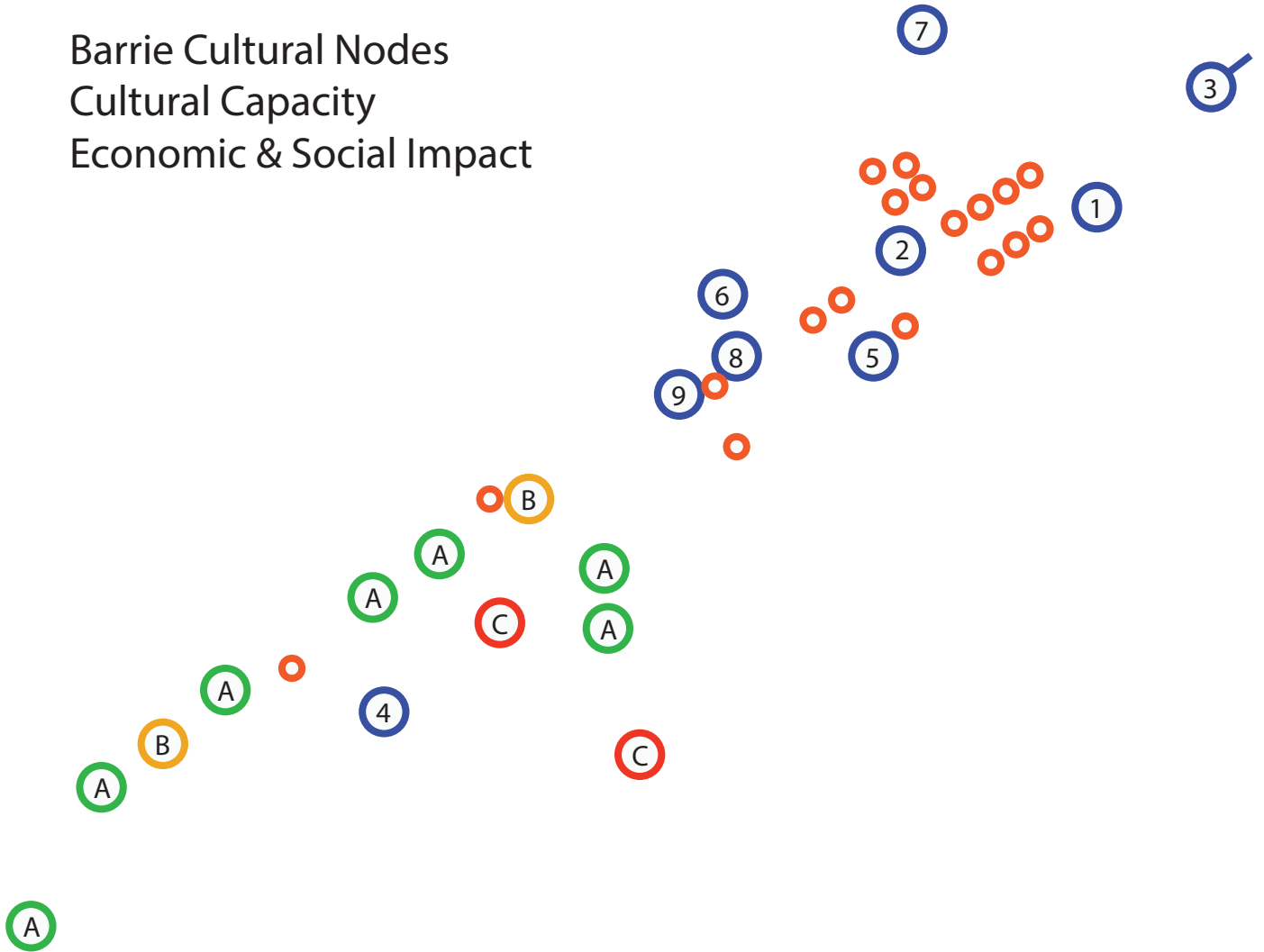


W.A. Fisher Auditorium Study

Barrie Cultural Nodes
Cultural Capacity
Economic & Social Impact



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Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	01
1.1	About Cobalt Connects	02
2.0	Cultural Sector Engagement	02
2.1	Drop-In Session	02
2.2	One-On-One Interviews	06
2.3	Online Survey	10
3.0	Expressing Vibrancy Neighbourhood Analysis	11
4.0	W.A. Fisher Development Improvements	15
4.1	Building Design Assessment	15
5.0	Comparable Facility Review	19
5.1	Mission	19
5.2	Rental Rates	20
5.3	Capacity	21
5.4	Labour	21
5.5	Partnerships	22
5.6	Marketing and Promotion	22
6.0	Economic Impact	23
6.1	Current Sales Review	23
6.2	Geographic Trends	25
6.3	Programming and Curation	26
6.4	TREIM	26
6.5	Development Opportunity	29
7.0	Social Impact	30
8.0	Summary and Recommendations	31
8.1	W.A. Fisher Auditorium Design	31
8.2	Operation	32
8.3	Mady Centre	33
8.4	Public Realm Investment	34

Appendices

1	Cultural Asset Map
2	Opportunity Map
3	Funding Scan

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1.0 Introduction

In June of 2016, Barrie Central Collegiate (BCC) closed and the send-off event organized by Celebrate BCC clearly struck a chord with the community. The pride and enthusiasm that seems to permeate the character of the school's past brought forward the idea of saving the auditorium within the new development plan.

The City of Barrie's Culture Department was tasked with assessing the concept of saving the W.A. Fisher Auditorium in short order as HIP Developments was already on site and beginning their demolition effort. The City hired LETT Architects to assess and develop the plan for the physical space, while Cobalt Connects was hired to consider the cultural community capacity and economic benefit of the proposed project.

Cobalt Connects began its study on July 7th, 2017 and was given 6 weeks to complete as full an analysis as possible of the potential development. While this process would normally take 6 months, we feel our assessment has been thorough and that the combined skills of LETT and Cobalt Connects have served the project well.

The W.A. Fisher Auditorium assessment included:

- Interviews with key cultural leaders and producers
- A drop-in session and online survey for the broader arts community
- A site visit to the W.A. Fisher facility and Mady Centre for the Performing Arts
- Neighbourhood assessment of Dunlop Street using Cobalt's *Expressing Vibrancy* methodology
- Review the architectural plans for the facility
- Review of comparable facilities and communities for best practices
- Economic Impact Analysis via Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model

We trust that the City of Barrie will find this report informative and hope it aids staff and Council in their decision-making process.

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cobaltconnects.ca

1.1 About Cobalt Connects

Cobalt Connects is a non-profit arts service organization based in Hamilton, Ontario. Since 2003, Cobalt has played a leadership role in the development of upwards of 200,000 square feet of cultural space. From industrial adaptive re-use studio projects to the restoration of a now heritage designated art deco theatre, Cobalt’s experience spans multiple disciplines and scales. In addition to facility development, we lead cultural planning projects for municipalities across Ontario, major public art programs with large institutions, and several municipal partnerships throughout Ontario.

2.0 Cultural Sector Engagement

Part of the consultation process for the W.A. Fisher Auditorium Project was to engage leaders in the cultural community and learn about their organizations, programming and future aspirations as they relate to the creation of a cultural hub and large-scale theatre. This was accomplished through a series of one-on-one interviews, a drop-in information session held at City Hall on July 27, 2017, and an online survey.

Below is a summary of the information gathered from the engagement process:

2.1 Drop-In Session

The following representatives from local organizations attended the drop-in session. In addition to the individuals listed below, five individuals who were volunteers for organizations, and preferred to remain anonymous, also attended the session.

Attendee	Organization
Sue-Ellen Boyes	MacLaren Art Centre
Dorothy McCallion	Kempfenfelt Community Players
Paul Sullivan and Catherine Turgeon	King Edward Choir
Wendy Wood	Dance Inc.
Greg Rushton	Mulvey & Banani (Consultants)
Alex Dault	Theatre By The Bay
Betty Lillow	Barrie Concert Band
Bruce Owen	Barrie Concerts

Process

The session was designed as a drop-in, so guests came and went freely throughout the designated period of time. Jeremy Freiburger from Cobalt Connects was present and engaged the participants as they arrived. Each participant was engaged in a basic conversation about his or her creative practice, business or volunteer effort. Participants were then given a set of four worksheets designed by Cobalt Connects.

The worksheets were designed for business/cultural group engagement and focused on four areas: audience location, resource management, use of space, and community partnerships. With many participants, the worksheets spurred conversation with the consultant or fellow participants. This led to more meaningful engagement within the group setting.

Worksheet Review

Audience:

The audience worksheet was a simple exercise designed to help gather information about the scale and geographic location of each participant's audience.

Based on the completed sheets for this exercise, 65% of the groups have an audience that is 100% based in Barrie, and nearly all are paid attendance. Two groups reported significant audience from outside Barrie with a focus on Midland, Innisfil, Collingwood and Orillia. For one participant, the geographic diversity was achieved by touring to those communities – not by attracting an audience to visit Barrie.

This information will later be compared against the box office records of Barrie's Mady Centre and Georgian Theatre to determine a more comprehensive understanding of audience reach and tourism spending potential.

Space:

This activity was meant to give participants an opportunity to define their dream space, either visually or through words, in an effort to help us understand the physical space requirements of each participant.

The participating groups represented two cultural producer categories: performing arts and music. Within each category there is variation between the companies but the basic principles and desired attributes remain comparable.

Performing Arts Groups	Music Groups
Theatre	
600 – 700 capacity One participant requested a 1000+ seat space	Less uniform responses: 3-400; 650-900; 1000+
Stage	
40' x 60' (stage needs to be deeper than W A. Fisher) Crossover backstage Orchestra pit Wing space	40' x 60' (stage needs to be deeper than W A. Fisher) Crossover backstage Orchestra pit Wing space
Lighting	
Professional lighting, board, FX Video projection (cinema quality – DCP Compliant)	Professional lighting, board, FX Video projection (cinema quality)
Sound	
High quality sound system	High quality sound system
Seating Style	
Very high priority – permanent, comfortable	Very high priority – permanent, comfortable
Aux	
Dressing rooms Large scale dressing area for dance Set-/Prop Storage	Dressing rooms Day-of storage (cases, crates, etc. while in production)
Front of House	
Lobby, Ticket sales, Offices	Lobby, Ticket sales, Offices
Rate	
Affordable rental rates for rehearsal and presentation	Affordable rental rates for rehearsal and presentation
Parking	
Free or affordable parking for patrons	Free or affordable parking for patrons

Partnerships:

This worksheet was designed to give us a sense of the connectedness of the cultural sector in Barrie, and to examine whether the cultural sector is reaching out to other sectors (i.e., health, business, education, etc.) to develop audience and/or professional capacity.

Arts Partners Mentioned:

- Funders – ArtsVest, Trillium, City of Barrie
- Barrie Arts Committee (Social Media Group)
- Professional Associations – CDTA, RAD, Acro Arts, BATD
- Other Organizations - Talk is Free Theatre, Kempenfelt Community Players, Moving Art

Non-Art Partners Mentioned:

- Local business (i.e., program ads, small sponsorships)
- Friends and Family
- School Board
- City of Barrie – Culture Department
- Major Sponsors - TD Bank, Pratt Homes, Barrie Ford and Chrysler
- Downtown BIA
- Ticketing & Promoting Partners – Tourism Barrie, Rogers Cable, Barrie Examiner, Barrie Advance Community Listings, Rhubarb Media, Barrie 101 Radio, various small businesses

As we can see from the short list above, the feedback was rather sparse for this worksheet, including three participants who had no data to contribute. This can be an indication of a number of conditions:

- a) The cultural sector hasn't developed the capacity for creating and managing effective partnerships.
- b) The organizations are somewhat insular, primarily producing for themselves and a directly connected audience (i.e., parents, grandparents, long-time members), which requires less outreach.
- c) A lack of resources has driven the community to focus on producing work and not building capacity (i.e., no arts council connecting partners, no Chamber of Commerce Committee on Culture, etc.).
- d) Participants lack the willingness to complete the task either due to consultation weariness (i.e., been asked too many times), protectionism (i.e., afraid to share information), or a fear of their answers reflecting poorly on the organization.

Based on our assessment of the participants in the drop-in session, we feel that some or all of these would be true with each participant. Two organizations, Theatre by the Bay and Barrie Concert Series, stood out as participants with a full understanding of the exercise and a willingness to complete the task.

Time / Talent / Treasure / Tactics (4T):

This exercise is focused on understanding the resources and operational strategies each participant brings to their practice or organization. If the partnerships from the earlier exercise are weak, we may see stronger internal skills through the 4T approach. Below is a summary of the information learned through this activity:

Time:

- Peak Seasons (May, June, November)
- Mixed approach to volunteers, some struggling to recruit
- Very few paid staff

Talent:

- Mix of artistic, entrepreneurial and management skills
- Board development is needed
- Fundraising is constant gap and needs development

Treasure:

- No participating organizations have reserve funds
- Budgeting occurs on a year-to-year rather than long term basis
- No mention of multi-year funding
- Discipline-specific assets (percussion instruments, music library, risers)

Tactics:

- Some partnership programming (i.e., Choral Fest)
- “Working Lean” (i.e., doing a lot with little)
- Marketing knowledge minimal

Similar to the partnership activity, we see a lack of sophistication with respect to the organizations’ capital or asset reserves and holdings. The groups are working with very sparse resources, which in some cases breeds great art and in others, wears down volunteers, staff and patrons.

2.2 One-On-One Interviews

Through Onalee Groves of the City of Barrie Culture Department, Cobalt Connects was introduced to leadership from Barrie’s principle cultural producers, as well as leaders in the community who support the cultural sector. One-on-one interviews were set up with seven individuals, plus an onsite visit to the W.A. Fisher Auditorium with City staff and a representative from HIP Developments.

The interview participants represented the following organizations:

- Huronia Symphony
- Barrie Film Festival
- Liberty North Conference Centre

- Talk is Free Theatre
- Tourism Barrie
- Individuals engaged in visual arts community
- Individuals engaged in cultural development and fundraising

The conversations with each participant were each unique. Some focused the conversation on their internal needs and growth plan, others were more interested in talking about the broader cultural community, and some had very specific information based on their role in the community. Below we'll explore themes of information that came to light in these conversations:

Barrie Cultural Market

Almost all participants discussed the capacity and cultural engagement of the public audience in Barrie. While all organizations feel that their audiences are slowly growing, they questioned the room for growth. Some of this apprehension comes from their own lack of resources and ability to engage in meaningful outreach as opposed to just event-based advertising. Those engaged in more populist and affordable art forms are certainly seeing larger audiences, and multiple participants mentioned that they had the desire to produce more artistically challenging work but worried the local audience wouldn't engage, thereby risking their sustainability.

Cultural Sector Capacity

All of the organizations interviewed had a firm understanding of their cultural practice and would be viewed as professional peers in other communities. Their work is being recognized by essential local and provincial funders, attracts quality talent, and is aiming to build the local cultural scene. However, these organizations are facing challenges relating to a lack of well supported, paid administrative leaders who can champion audience development, fund development, and sector capacity to promote further growth and artistic excellence. In some cases, this has resulted in entirely volunteer-run organizations, and others where administrative staff are only part-time and therefore strapped for time beyond immediate operations to focus on development and growth.

Disconnects exist between the City's Culture Division, Barrie Tourism, local venues and cultural producers that likely result in lost opportunity. Failure to promote cultural offerings to their best, lack of data sharing, lack of sector planning, and technological misalignments mean that the sector is not as efficient as one would like.

Current venues

While all participants expressed gratitude for the existing venues, they each recognized a number of challenges and faults of these venues. Most of these faults are being ignored or worked around due to the lack of other options, or in the case some non-City venues; the affordability outweighs all other metrics as it enables continued production.

This feedback is summarized as follows:

Mady Centre for the Arts

- Poor seating
- Limited technical abilities
- Limited backstage/wings
- Mixed reviews on staffing
- Lack of box office reporting

Georgian Theatre

- Expensive
- High cost of parking to audience
- Slowly losing aesthetic and technical abilities
- Not close to other audience amenities; low economic spin-off
- Lack of box office reporting

Barrie Uptown Theatre

- Commercially owned (lack of control)
- Degrading facilities
- Owner likely to develop property in 2-5 years

Local Churches (various)

- Limited schedule; blocked out prime days/months
- Limited willingness to present challenging content
- Venue can be barrier to some audiences
- Low on 'experience' and aesthetics that align with work produced

Essentially the interview participants felt that the existing venues were not “**creating an experience**” that aided in their cultural growth. As a result, audience members have a sub-par outing and thus were less likely to return for future offerings.

Another major gap that we heard, and hear in most communities where the City manages the principle venue(s), is that there is disconnect between the administration of the theatre and the user groups on marketing and audience development. Without direct access to the detailed ticket sales data from the box office, cultural producers lose connections to donors and sponsors, and cannot make evidence-based decisions surrounding marketing and audience development.

Multi-Use Concept

Participants were asked directly if they felt that a multi-use space was required or the best approach. Across this range of participants, the answers varied but there were some common concerns that are essential to the operational model of the W.A. Fisher Auditorium.

- Not all participants would move their programming to the W.A. Fisher Auditorium as their current spaces offer more control, even if it is a compromised venue / space.
- Groups who could offer substantial equipment partnerships would require some control (i.e., equipment, preferred dates, etc.) and equipment use policies that may prove challenging.
- Some concern that being too multi-use would eventually lead to economics based decision-making that would push our smaller users (i.e., conferences generate more profit so they get preferential date selection).
- Some concern that technically equipping a multi-use venue properly is expensive and that budget would mean a compromised venue for all instead of a really great venue for a narrow mix of uses.

Space as Identity

The participants from the Barrie Film Festival were the first to raise this concept (i.e., the idea of a space being central to an organization's identity), but certainly not the last. This concept was also reiterated in the other interviews and the drop-in session.

Essentially what participants are talking about is the root of place making. The notion that a space that is representative of you, your work, your ethics and your culture will resonate more with your audience and likely empower you to produce better work. As such, it is essential that the audience's impression of the exterior align with the presentation of the interior. With this in mind, the development of the W.A. Fisher Auditorium cannot simply be a 'coat of paint' approach. If the space is not indicative of the new users coming forward to animate the space, it will not attract the increased audience required to meet success. The auditorium must be placed within a development that inspires both audience and artists to experience together.

Operation

Key to the success of the W.A. Fisher Auditorium will be its operational model. Most participants were reluctant to declare any interest in the operational side of the project, as it is still too conceptual at this stage. That said a number of interview participants stated that they had no interest in participating in venue operations as they felt this activity would distract from their organization's artistic mission.

2.3 Online Survey

In an effort to gain further insight into the cultural producing community, and more direct information from those who attended the drop-in session, an online survey was created by Cobalt Connects and distributed to a list of cultural organizations and artists by City of Barrie Culture Department staff.

The survey consisted of up to 24 questions depending on how a respondent answered along the way. The survey had no mandatory questions since the turn-around time was incredibly tight and we felt this would simply cause a barrier to inclusion.

After being open for one week the survey received 71 responses, which was later narrowed down to 8 cultural organizations, 1 support organization and 21 individual artists due to incomplete surveys and multiple individuals responding from the same organization.

Organization Responses

- 87.5% music organizations, 12.5% performing arts
- Average budget of \$45,000 per year, corrected to \$27,000 with \$150,000 outlier excluded
- 75% currently renting office / studio space for operations
- Concentration of activity in May and December
- Very few paid staff
- Desired ancillary spaces: café, rehearsal space, storage
- Desired technical amenities rated 5 (highest priority) by 50% of more respondents: lighting, sound (PA, acoustic treatment of space, recording ability), film projection, sprung floor, loading door,
- Desired shared services: marketing, ticketing system, administrative technology (printers, copier, etc.)
- 90% of respondents said they would be interested in renting a new facility that met the above noted specifications
- Respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay a rental rate of \$750 per day for the theatre space and \$100 for the rehearsal hall (average)

It bears noting that there were multiple organizations that had multiple respondents. In every case, the responses given varied widely from one another, making the validity of the data questionable. This follows our earlier observations regarding a lack of professional administrative capacity in many of the participating organizations.

Individual Responses

- 25% musicians, 20% literary, 15% theatre, 15% visual art
- 50/50 split on rented use of other facilities for events
- 15% do not rent space as they cannot afford it, 15% own space, and 15% cannot find suitable space for the practice in Barrie
- Desired technical amenities rated 5 (highest priority) by 50% of more respondents: lighting, sound (PA, acoustic treatment of space, recording ability)
- Desired rental rates set as hourly rates \$15 and lower

The majority of the individual responses were from artists who would not be considered the core audience of the W.A. Fisher Auditorium project but form part of the scene that would make the larger cultural centre concept genuine.

3.0 Expressing Vibrancy Evaluation

There are a number of significant motivators for taking on an infrastructure project like the W.A. Fisher Auditorium, not the least of which is generating economic spin-off and developing public space that improves neighbourhoods for residents and visitors.

As an organization actively engaged in cultural planning and producing, and physical neighbourhood development through facility creation, Cobalt Connects is interested in developing models that allow a wide range of factors into the conversation about the public realm. Through funding provided by the Province of Ontario, Cobalt developed the *Expressing Vibrancy* research process along with researchers at McMaster University. The full process analyses a neighbourhood by gathering quantitative, qualitative and biometric feedback from study participants. The resulting data is analyzed to assess how assets in a neighbourhood interact and contribute or detract from the overall vibrancy of an area.

For the W.A. Fisher Project we employed only the first stage of Expressing Vibrancy: Taking Stock. This phase is an on-the-ground, block-by-block review of 30 tangible asset types over a study area.

Assumptions:

- W.A. Fisher development will not include a parking structure or surface level lot large enough to accommodate the demand of residential, commercial and entertainment uses of the development. Off-site parking must be analyzed and developed accordingly.
- W.A. Fisher development has minimal commercial frontage (approximately 5000 square feet) which means the majority of the economic spin-off from

the residential and entertainment audience will spill into the downtown district if encouraged to do so.

Based on these simple assumptions Cobalt used Taking Stock to review the public realm (i.e., pedestrian, cycling and vehicular) amenities in the stretches of Dunlop Street leading to and from the W.A. Fisher site in order to assess the readiness of the existing space, and to consider future development opportunities should the project move forward.

The Taking Stock process breaks assets down into 5 primary categories:

- Natural Elements
- Diversity
- Creative Engagement
- Access to Information
- Urban Design

Each category has a number of assets, which are illustrated and itemized, in the chart below. We count each asset type block-by-block so the information is actionable and focused, and so we can see where specific assets improve or decline over a distance.

	Downtown Centre	Bayfield to Maple	Maple to Mary	Mary to Toronto	Toronto to High	High to Parkside	W.A. Fisher Auditorium	Parkside to Eccles	Eccles to Frances	TOTAL	AVERAGE
		NATURAL ELEMENTS									
Trees		7	4	12	12	0		18	20	73	10.4
Hanging baskets		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0.0
Planters or pots		4	1	2	1	0		0	0	8	1.1
Flowerbeds/shrubbery/lawns		1	2	7	1	2		4	19	36	5.1
DIVERSITY											
Ethnic businesses/restaurants/ indicators		1	1	2	0	1		0	0	5	0.7
Ethnic cultural centres		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0.0
Places of worship		0	0	1	0	0		0	0	1	0.1

CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Art in public spaces	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.1
Public cultural Facilities	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0.4
Creative businesses	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.9

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Billboards	1	3	1	1	1	5	4	16	2.3
BIA/community signage	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	5	0.7
Community safety signs/pedestrian safety	2	0	4	2	0	1	1	10	1.4
Newspaper/publication distribution	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Menu/food prices at street level	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
No washroom available	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.3
Wi-Fi availability	15	5	10	0	0	1	0	31	4.4
Opening/closing hours posted	2	3	2	1	0	2	2	12	1.7
Different styles of street name signage	2	3	2	1	0	2	2	12	1.7
Storefront w/ cultural info	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.4
Poles (or other) w/ cultural info	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.3

URBAN DESIGN													
Street parking spaces	13	12	8	0	0	0	0	33	4.7				
Parking lot spaces	0	7	78	14	40	140	3	282	40.3				
Bus stops	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0				
Bike locks/bike lanes	3	6	9	0	0	0	0	18	2.6				
Benches	2	0	0	6	0	4	0	12	1.7				
Tables & chairs/patios	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0				
Garbage	3	4	3	2	0	1	0	13	1.9				
Recycling	3	4	3	2	0	1	0	13	1.9				

	At or above average for study area
	Critically low asset class

By colour coding the assets that are critically low, we immediately see that the public realm infrastructure begins to erode once we reach Mary Street and Dunlop, and only gets progressively less welcoming as we move through to Frances and Dunlop. In the stretch from Toronto and Dunlop to the W.A. Fisher site a visitor would encounter either none, or critically low numbers of the follow:

- Garbage and recycling receptacles
- Tables, chairs, patios or public benches
- Transit stops
- Curb-side parking
- Poles, storefront displays or public posting stations with local information
- BIA signage
- Community safety signage
- Public art
- Cultural facilities or creative industry spaces
- Ethnic centres or restaurants
- Places of worship

In addition to the stark count above, there would be a significant reduction in encountering any natural elements in this same stretch if it were not for a few parquetted on the South side and the residential spaces having lawns and shrubbery.

The Taking Stock data presents the reality of the stretch of Dunlop Street that one would need to traverse if heading to off-site parking, a pre-show dinner downtown, or a trip to do some shopping while spouse or child is engaged in a performance or class. For the economic spin-off of the development to come to fruition, this stretch must undergo a significant planning and investment process by both the public and private sector.

4.0 W.A. Fisher Development Improvements

In the process of reviewing the W.A. Fisher Auditorium and full HIP Development proposal, City staff has begun developing plans for the full site bound by Dunlop, Bradford, Eccles and a T.B.D. new street. This plan takes into consideration both City and HIP owned property, a possible YMCA facility development, the W.A. Fisher Auditorium, former Prince of Wales School, and the HIP residential and commercial development.

The plans presented as the preferred City option (Design Option Alternative 02) for the development include a number of assets that allow the site to become a destination and undoubtedly a hub for Taking Stock assets including:

- a softened street-side approach on Dunlop and Bradford
- cascading set-back to residential towers along Bradford
- a significant addition of trees along Dunlop, High and Bradford Street, as well as throughout the street of the development
- water feature at the “activated park”
- trails and public patios
- retention of the Prince of Wales historic façade

Based on these improvements and assumed addition of standard municipal amenities (street lights, garbage and recycling receptacles, benches, etc.) the new development would be an exemplary urban environment and experience for residents of the site and its guests.

4.1 Building Design Assessment

Working with LETT Architects, the City of Barrie has developed a conceptual renovation plan for the W.A. Fisher Auditorium. Cobalt Connects has reviewed those plans with an eye for ensuring that the technical, capacity and flexibility of uses has been met to ensure a viable and successful facility for both local and touring producers. Below is a review of specific components of the renovation plan and how they align with future use.

Acoustics

One of the primary issues with the current layout of W.A. Fisher is that sound from the street and lobby bleeds directly into the back of the auditorium. LETT has addressed this by creating a ‘sound and light lock’. This will have a major impact on the quality of the space.

Additional consideration should be given to adding either fabric sound panels or 24 oz. double hung velour curtains on the sidewalls, and a baffle along the exterior wall of the tech room. There has also been some preliminary consideration of adding an acoustic and visual barrier laterally between the upper and lower deck of seating. Double hung

24oz. velour curtains could also be considered for this purpose.

Beyond the acoustic treatment, the facility should be rigged for both concert and cinema sound (this is often achieved using independent systems) and give serious consideration to the stage for optimal acoustic set-up for orchestral performances. At present, there is no sound treatment on the up-stage or sidewalls, not in the ceiling of the stage area. The appropriate treatment should be developed in consultation with an acoustic specialist.

Finally, as a new venue, the City of Barrie should strongly consider adding an infrared hearing loop system. This is an assistive audio system consisting of an audio source, infrared transmitter and listening receivers that will allow the facility to accommodate the widest possible audience and best AODA provisions possible.

Lighting and Video

The current lighting infrastructure (i.e., catwalk and permanent overhead bars) is sufficient for very basic productions, but will not attract larger touring shows or allow local producers to impress an audience.

The W.A. Fisher Auditorium must shift to having some of the best in theatrical and stage lighting within the tight technical budget and building envelope available. This would include adding a false proscenium to the stage, enabling the functionality of a fly gallery without piercing the building envelope. This allows simple scenic fly work, but importantly from our perspective, allows for 9-12 mechanized overhead bars or truss lines that would provide full lighting capabilities. Pair this stage system with the catwalks already in place, a wireless DMX control system, and a professional array of Source Four LED, mirror and controlled lights and the venue would be able to handle a wide variety of productions.

Video should be considered from two perspectives – presentation and recording. For presentation, the venue can have no less and a 4K – DCP compliant projection system with cinema sound. This will allow everyone from the Barrie Film Festival and TIFF, to students from Laurentian to present film without compliance or quality issues. Partnership with Barrie Film Festival could bring a significant amount of this equipment to the venue in partnership, but usage and capital replacement plans would need to be addressed on both sides.

In addition to presentation, the venue should be fully wired for a broadcast quality production in house. This would entail pre-wiring CAT6, HDMI and XLR input points through the venue that are run back to a position in the tech room allowing a plug and play approach to video mixing and recording on-site.

Stage

The stage design by LETT has expanded the footprint to allow a wide range of presentation options while accommodating three major improvements: a cross-over and the ability to create soft wing space, and an expanded apron. These features enable full orchestral use, potential for greater theatre and dance presentation, and far better flow for cast, technical staff and scenic elements. This configuration could be improved by adding a full freight door loading dock off the upstage right side of the auditorium, allowing easy access for larger productions. At present, not enough is known about the building or road developments outside the building envelope to assume this would be possible.

Fly Gallery

As mentioned earlier, we do not feel an overhead full fly system is required. An extension of the proscenium would allow all the fly operation needed for 95% of productions landing in the venue outside of a major ballet or opera presentation. The added cost of a fly gallery would be better directed at high-level lighting and sound technology and create design in the proscenium as conceptualized by LETT.

Lobby & Lounge

The proposed lobby and lounge design allows for large audiences to move freely through the space during pre-show and intermission. The current design allows the lobby or lounge to be separated from the remainder of the venue for exhibitions, small presentations, meetings and events. Given the space limitations, this design fulfills the necessary element while giving the venue sufficient space for overflow. The prep room should be equipped with standard hot/cold catering equipment to allow a host of service providers ease-of-use

Greenroom / Dressing Rooms / Washrooms

The addition of a true green room, dressing rooms and washrooms accessible only to performers will make working in the space more professional and versatile. This also allows for the large volume of dance recitals, which require larger than average accommodations in these areas.

Rehearsal Space

The addition of a significant rehearsal space on-site is incredible. This large, open space can be used for a variety of purposes including: additional touring storage, large cast productions and dance recitals, summer camps and workshops, and local in-house company rehearsal without the full cost of the stage. Its size allows for almost 1:1 scale rehearsal to the stage, which is highly valuable to local companies in the final days of rehearsal before a major production.

Storage

Storage was one of the larger functional concerns with the existing building envelope. The space carved out by LETT meets all expectations. This room would accommodate both in-house storage of table, chairs and other operational items, while providing lockable space adjacent to the stage for additional equipment, road cases and the like. The storage is on grade with the cross over and stage level.

Seating Capacity

After reviewing the ticket sales records of the Georgian and Mady venues, alongside the figures from local producing companies, the 650-seat design is ample seating for the Barrie market. This size, paired with the ability to divide the space laterally, allows local producers to expand and contract, while giving touring producers plenty of capacity to bring their best to Barrie. Our primary cautions on seating are the limited number and position of AODA compliant wheelchair spaces, a lack of companion seating for those spaces, and that the seat selection include an acoustically neutral choice to aid in optimal acoustic design.

Exterior Design

While we understand the design elements are very conceptual at this stage, the current lobby has wonderful light and the period ceiling treatment is unique enough to save and build upon. The added glass feature to accommodate the entrance and elevator will add a transparent façade and glow to the space desperately needed on Dunlop Street. We would encourage the budget to include a significant line for a permanent public art piece, or location for rotating temporary works selected by the Barrie Public Art Committee. Finally, with parking being somewhat unclear at this stage, we would encourage the development to retain the drop-off circle at the front of the building to allow for taxi drop off, easy front door drop off / access for guests with limited mobility parents dropping off children for events, and pop-in ticket pick up.

5.0 Comparable Facility Review

In an effort to understand the operational models to explore for the W.A. Fisher project and to set a benchmark for the project, Cobalt reviewed a number of facilities in comparable communities and venues that staff and stakeholders mentioned throughout the process.

Below is a breakdown of key learning from this process:

Comparable Facilities:

- Kingston, Grand Theatre
- Brantford, Sanderson Centre
- Midland, Midland Cultural Centre
- Burlington, Burlington Performing Art Centre
- Guelph, River Run Centre
- Kelowna, Kelowna Community Theatre
- St. Catherine's, First Ontario Performing Arts Centre

5.1 Mission

Setting a mission and vision for a venue is essential. Understanding the motivations behind building a venue will give clarity to building choices, technical purchases and most importantly local stakeholder engagement. Misalignment can lead to high staff turnover, poor performance (i.e. poor ticket sales, misalignment of social objectives, etc.) and audience confusion.

The Grand Theatre in Kingston presented the clearest mission:

The Grand Theatre is a community-based, professionally managed civic asset that builds and fosters cultural vitality in Kingston. It creates a partnership between the City of Kingston and the community that sees arts and culture as an important component of everyday life in the City of Kingston. The Grand Theatre also facilitates and supports presentation and production, community development, artist support and the creation of partnerships and collaborations. The Grand Theatre will be governed to:

- *Be inclusive and culturally responsive — people see themselves in the Grand.*
- *Be community driven/developed and City-supported.*
- *Integrate with other Kingston attractions and initiatives.*
- *Increase civic participation through cultural celebration and presentation.*
- *Promote stewardship of place.*
- *Facilitate social, economic and cultural capacity.*

- *Engage people in public spaces through art and collective cultural experiences.*
- *Strengthen the connections between residents/people through cultural celebrations — engages the voice of the community.*
- *Elevate the community's sense of what it is capable of being.*

We would strongly encourage the City of Barrie to develop a similar mission statement that is endorsed by Council so all future engagement is focused on meeting clear objectives. As the project progresses, each element of the mission should be tied to key performance indicators that can be measure and reported on over time.

5.2 Rental Rates

Establishing sustainable rental rates for a venue both sets in motion the budget development for operations, and draws a line in the sand for users. With the tenuous nature of the local productions companies, choosing the wrong rate could mean limited use or growth in presentation.

Politically this can be a delicate area as well, as all too often we see local cultural producers utilized to champion a new venue only to find out they cannot afford the new development. This can snowball into local tension that doesn't serve to foster a strong cultural community.

Rental rates in every venue were to one degree or another tiered to the nature of the user. Differing rates for local non-profit/charitable arts groups, corporate rentals, conferences and other cultural producers a2-re common to every venue with a clear discount for local users.

Similarly, rehearsal rates versus production rates are typically 50% lower.

The Sanderson Centre in Brantford Ontario presented the most diversified rate card which list the following rates:

Day Rental	
Standard	\$2500 +12% of sales to a maximum of \$4000
If tickets are less than \$10	\$2000 flat
Non-Profit	\$1500
Charitable	\$900
Rehearsal	40% discount
 Additional Charges	 \$3.00 CIF, labour, ticketing services

Other Charges

Beyond the venue rental rate, theatres often have countless other embedded mandatory charges which add up quickly for uses. Based on reviewing the aforementioned theatres, the following list covers the typical charges and rates:

- Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) – between \$2-3 per ticket, typically charged to the ticket buyer, which goes to the venue for on-going upgrades and maintenance
- Box office Percentage – upwards of 12% of total ticket sales can be applied on top of the rental rate to reach a cap rate
- Box office and Technical labour – all venues except one is IATSE and CUPE managed, labour rates ranged from \$30-\$45 per hour with minimum calls times and durations

5.3 Capacity

All of the other venues reviewed contained multiple performance spaces. Typically, they contained a mainstage with between 275 and 850 seats, a second stage with 200 seats or fewer, and a combination of rehearsal spaces, purpose built spaces, lobby, etc.

The closest comparison to the size under consideration is the Burlington Performing Arts Centre (BPAC) at 718 seats in the main auditorium. BPAC was formed with a mission combining local and regional producers in an effort to create “meaningful arts experiences, animating the community and enriching people’s lives”. Knowing this community very well, Cobalt is confident in saying the size of the theatre did not match any local producer’s capacity at the time of its creation from an audience perspective. Barrie is further ahead in terms of having local cultural groups and individuals capable or presenting work at this scale.

5.4 Labour

Labour in a theatrical venue is likely the highest single cost for a production outside of marketing. In many cases the venue staffing was unionized with both the **International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)** and the **Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)**. In union houses, there are professional standards and professional fees which can be cost prohibitive to some, while be reassuring to others. Local productions would likely be seriously impacted by adopting a full IATSE stage complement, especially if a fly gallery were installed. A fly gallery carries a requisite 4-person call at all times – instead of simpler stage allowing a single operator if the production is simple. This can take a day in theatre from \$300 in labour to \$1200 in labour.

From our discussions with local and regional producers, we do not see any reason to demand the W.A. Fisher venue become an IATSE venue, and no one felt that this would deter major bookings. Non-union houses can allow IATSE members to run the venue,

where the same is not true in reverse. **This exclusion would make community partnerships challenging as local producers could not operate or maintain the equipment.**

5.5 Partnerships

Each venue has different relationships with community producers. In some cases they were simply renters of the facility, others embedded in the season's offerings. Kingston however reached a different level of integration that we feel aligns with the Barrie concept, which were 'resident companies'.

Resident companies in the Grand Theatre include: Grand OnStage, Kingston Symphony, Blue Canoe Productions, Bottle Tree Productions and Kick & Push Festival.

“Resident companies are separate, independently operated nonprofit organizations that call the Grand Theatre their home. To achieve Resident Company status at the Grand Theatre, an organization must be:

- *Recognized as a tax-exempt non-profit organization*
- *A local performing arts presenting or producing organization*
- *Presenting or producing a minimum of 15 paid days per year inclusive of rehearsal and performances at the Grand Theatre.*
- *Able to schedule the season/series of events a minimum of 12-24 months in advance.”*

Cobalt likes this model for residency as the definition brings together a number of core issues: ownership and governance, status, capacity, professionalism, and minimum booking standards. This gives the partners clear measures for success and security.

5.6 Marketing and Promotion

Any producer will tell you that they will take a compromised venue with amazing staff over a perfect venue with a partner that doesn't care. Not just in Barrie, but almost every community we've worked in, we hear the frustration of local producers with municipal staff. The general sentiment is that municipal staff, who have no ownership in the venue, are less motivated to sell tickets as it doesn't directly affect their wage. We know this isn't always true, and it was rarely mentioned in our Barrie consultation.

This is all to say that every successful venue has stellar marketing and understands how to work with a partner producer. How does the local venue leverage its local media pricing and relationships? Do they have package deal with restaurants and hotel packages? Do they have a robust social media presence and professional website?

From our review, we would say that the Barrie theatres' web and social media presence is below a professional standard. For the new venue, there will need to be a better designed website that has improved functionality, independence from the City website, and far better integration with social media. Other venues have far more modern and clear sites, appear in online searches more readily, and have a greater sense of curation to the offerings, even if they are from multiple producers.

6.0 Economic Impact Analysis

To understand the theatre's value to the community, we need to assess it from multiple perspectives. Earlier we discussed the cultural capacity and ability for this development to improve the sense of vibrancy and cohesion in the downtown core. Now we'll turn our attention to the economic impact of the project by reviewing current practices, future sales, and direct and indirect spending with respect to the W.A. Fisher development.

6.1 Current Sales Review

Understanding the sales trends of Barrie's existing venues helps understand the capacity of local producers, the viability of existing venues, and the potential increase in economic spin-off should the W.A. Fisher project move forward.

City staff have provided Cobalt Connects with the following data for the Georgian Theatre and the Mady Centre:

- Total ticket sales by venue, production and date
- Postal codes of ticket sales by venue and year

This information has been used to form the basis of the following findings:

Georgian Theatre Sales Trends

	2014	2015	2016
Average house percentage	48%	50%	53%
Percent reaching annual average	41%	40%	49%
Percent reaching 75% house or greater	18%	15%	15%
Number of productions	101	95	93
Average attendance	290	344	360

Based on the figures above, there are very few producers who are using the Georgian Theatre for its full audience capacity. With **only 15% of productions reaching a 75% house**, the point at which producers are making significant profits (in most cases), its no surprise that producers like **Paquin Entertainment** are pulling out of the Georgian Theatre. It also means that the economic spin-off of having a theatre is not performing to capacity for the entire community.

Based on the ticket sales from 2014 through 2016 the top producing (highest gross ticket sales) users of the Georgian Theatre are: Paquin Entertainment, Kempenfelt Community Players, Education Art, AEG LIVE, and Inside the Music. In addition to these regular productions, there are a number of one-off events by local producers that achieve quality box office results including Talk is Free Theatre, Theatre by the Bay and the City of Barrie.

While these users do well, it's extremely important to notes that **the dance community is the largest collective user of the facility**. With upwards of 20 presentations per year, almost all of which achieve higher than average ticket sales, the dance community is the most significant user of the space. From a facility development perspective, this means Barrie needs to be **seriously considering the physical and technical needs of this community**, as well as the experience-oriented approach to dance recitals.

To further understand the needs of the larger producer community, the level of producer that the City of Barrie wants to attract, Cobalt Connects interviewed Mike Renaud of **Hidden Pony Records**, Steve Butler of **Paquin Entertainment** and local producer/promoter **Chas Hay**. Renaud manages talent such as Jeremy Fisher, Rah Rah and Said the Whale, manages international music tours and is an IATSE 129 Representative. Butler is an agent with Paquin Entertainment, one of the largest agencies in Toronto. Paquin books everything from the wildly successful children's show Toopy and Binoo, to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Hay produces and promotes content in a range of mediums including film, television, music and comedy all in the Barrie market.

Renaud, Hay and Butler all said that Barrie should be a primary market for music, dance, theatre, stand-up comedy and guests speakers. Unfortunately, the audience experience and technical abilities of the Georgian have left them both passing over the community for the most part. **For their work, audience experience is key ad often outweighs seating capacity and technical ability of a venue**. Both noted the high cost of parking, inability to sell alcohol, and poor connection to the city as the reasons they're looking less and less at Barrie and bookings in the Georgian Theatre. From a technical perspective, the venue is simply out-dated, which costs them money in rentals and technician time.

Mady Centre Sales Trends

	2014	2015	2016
Average house percentage	37%	26%	31%
Percent reaching annual average	20%	7%	42%
Percent reaching 75% house or greater	6%	2%	4%
Number of productions	162	122	138
Average attendance	69	58	62

The sales figures from the Mady Centre are not encouraging. With average houses hovering around 30%, producers are likely barely covering costs. Only those with significant grant funding, low artist wages, and near philanthropic production values are surviving on the tickets sales presented in these figures. This typically creates a scenario where producers start doing one of two things: (a) charging more for ticket which drives audience away if the production values and experience are low, or (b) cutting costs which typically means less paid promotion and declining audiences.

From our perspective, the Mady Centre is a challenging venue. It's not technically outstanding. The poor seating makes the audience experience frustrating (this was mentioned by almost every user of the space). Combine this with high rental rates and unionized staff wages and it makes the venue a disappointment.

We would rather see the **Mady become the non-profit run home of challenging contemporary work, workshops, rehearsals, professional development and artist-driven content in Barrie**. It should be the downtown hub used by Theatre by the Bay, Talk is Free, one-off smaller events, music promoters and niche community events. In essence it should be the **cultural incubator** for Barrie's growing cultural community.

6.2 Geographic Trends

Using the postal code data from ticket sales at the Mady Centre and Georgian Theatre, we've modelled the locations of ticket buyers from 2014 through 2016. This data can assist greatly in defining tourism trends, economic spin-off to area businesses, and play an enormous role in understanding the marketing reach of current operations.

At present, **93% and 91% of audiences at the Mady Centre and Georgian Theatre respectively are from within a 100km radius**. This means that of the average annual combined audience of 37,200, only 3545 are coming from beyond 100km away. Audience members within a 100km radius are **far less likely to spend money on food, retail and accommodation** – the top three economic spin-off categories for cultural participants

This lack of tourism audience speaks directly to the capacity building and partnership disconnect that we've noted in our interview processes. Tourism Barrie isn't able to leverage cultural opportunities into packages with hotels because the marketing planning isn't present in the sector. Package sales to day-trippers falls in the same category. **With 380,000 hotel stays a year in Barrie and yet only 3500 visitors from beyond 100km making it to cultural events, it's clear that the tourism market is not playing a strong role in the viability of the cultural facilities in Barrie.** This presents both a challenge and an opportunity with respect to a new downtown facility.

6.3 Programming and Curation

Curation and identity are vital to promoting cultural experiences. Festival, events and venues primarily build their brand and identity through programming. Not even the best marketing and design can disguise poor curatorial oversight.

It is our opinion that part of the issue with box office development at both venues is the lack of identity expressed through the programming. The line-up seems formulaic and isn't presented in a way that makes one feel like they are a part of something special.

With effective programming, curation and cohesive marketing, even a similar line-up bringing together multiple presenters, could feel more cohesive and intentional than the current practice.

6.4 Ontario Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM)

The Province of Ontario developed the TREIM tool to enable cultural producers to better analyze the economic impact of their operations on a community in an effort to show the incredible strength of cultural spending in the province. TREIM is used by hundreds of facilities and festivals across the province.

TREIM is a site-specific tool that outputs more accurate numbers when a user provides more detail into the tool. In this case, we could be specific about the size and location of origin of our audience thanks to the City box office data, but we could not provide sample spending data (i.e. a survey done of residents about their spending when attending cultural events). In this case, the tool uses Statistics Canada's Travel Survey of Residents of Canada data on cultural spending to form its categories and spending levels in the analysis.

Using TREIM, Cobalt Connects ran a number of scenarios on the existing theatres and the potential addition of the W.A. Fisher Auditorium. From here, we extracted the numbers we feel are most influential on the development and its ability to solidify a new node in the south-east corner of the Downtown BIA.

Attendance

We based our attendance numbers on the sales records trends provided by the City for the Georgian Theatre, as it most closely resembles the potential new theatre. For the Georgian we used the 2016 numbers, as they were the best over the 3-year sample provided. For the new theatre we've modelled sales expectations for various classes of events (i.e., local non-profit, corporate, touring, etc.) based on the sales trends of the Georgian. By creating a hypothetical season of programming plugging in local users and expectations for touring productions we've created audience projections for the new theatre.

With respect to overnight visits, we've set the Georgian Theatre at a rate of 13% (based on its postal code sales data) and the new theatre at a rate of 20% with the assumption that increased touring productions and a stronger alliance with Barrie Tourism will bring increased overnight stays.

TREIM Figures

Below are the key figures output by the TREIM process for both the Georgian Theatre based on its 2016 figures, and the projected new W.A. Fisher Auditorium. Since our audience expectations are based on the ability of local producers to attract an audience, the figures would not change substantially if the theatre were 650 seats or 750 seats. This analysis is based on 650 seats:

Spending Category	Current Georgian Impact	New W.A. Fisher Impact
Public Transportation	\$97,698	\$194,108
Private Transportation - Rental	\$1,251	\$1,447
Accommodation	\$58,921	\$124,412
Food & Beverage - At Stores	\$98,524	\$204,020
Food & Beverage - At Restaurants/Bars	\$720,032	\$1,169,164
Recreation & Entertainment	\$751,444	\$1,793,640
Retail	\$477,300	\$656,625
TOTAL	\$2,205,170.00	\$4,143,416.00
Total Audience	31,820	43,775

Accommodation Growth

Based on the CBRE Hotel Trends Report, the impact of the new venue brings 790 stay nights to the local tourism market with the W.A. Fisher venue, while the Georgian's current performance attracts approximately 375. This increase in occupancy should be strong motivation to fuel partnerships with Barrie Tourism, venues and cultural producers in the community.

Restaurant Sales, Employment and Investment

Significant increases in food sales are projected with the W.A. Fisher development and we would argue that the numbers in the current Georgian model are likely not being realized due to the location of the theatre. Lack of walkable restaurants and retail, and the close proximity to the highway encourages patrons to leave the immediate area. With a high local concentration to the audience this can often lead to missed opportunity.

Based on the food category spending the new facility would create upwards of 32,000 hours of food service employment based on \$12.00 per hour.

Recreation and Entertainment Spending

This category accounts for all recreation and entertainment spending done by guests connected to their visit to the cultural experience. That means this figure includes their tickets purchased at the theatre as well as other opportunities they seek out while in Barrie. If assets (hotels, restaurants and venues) are more closely packed together in districts, enticing guests from one asset to the next is far more likely.

Direct and Induced Spending

The TREIM system accounts for both direct and induced spending, which means some of the impact we're seeing is re-investment by commercial operators in their growing business and direct spend by guests and residents in each category.

6.5 Development Opportunity

While the numbers from TREIM provide a picture into the economic spin-off driven by consumers of the new W.A. Fisher Auditorium, there is also significant opportunity for commercial development along Dunlop Street, which the project could catalyse.

The attached maps (Cultural Asset Map, Opportunity Map, Appendix 1 and 2) give a visual overview of the stretch of Dunlop likely to be most affected by spin-off development. As noted in the Expressing Vibrancy section of this report, the infrastructure from the Five Points to the development site must be improved to maximize the opportunity. This presents a number of sites adjacent to and within 250m of the development that should become the focus of a masterplan study.

In particular, the Knights Inn location and the Dunlop-facing office and residential uses from High Street to Eccles should be considered for new development or change in use to more public opportunities. The concept of **Laurentian College** moving its Fine Arts and Media Programs to the downtown has been explored locally and either the Knights Inn location or the mixed-use property at High and Dunlop should be strongly considered. **Adding Laurentian to the overall concept for the cultural hub would solidify a major change in pedestrian traffic, enhance programming, capacity and income at the W.A. Fisher Auditorium and bring a sense of vibrancy and diversity to this corner of downtown that would amplify the impact of the core development.**

Precinct Development

At the onset of this project, City staff directed Cobalt to consider how the W.A. Fisher project would play into developing a precinct or district like approach to the Downtown core. Initially Cobalt felt this would be key to the project, but with a limited window to explore all the factors at play in a precinct as large as the core we spent more time considering the overall development as a node along a string.

Nodes:

W.A. Fisher > Five Points/Mady > Memorial Square > Heritage Park > McLaren

The string that links these nodes are the retailers and restaurants of Dunlop Street. W.A. Fisher becomes the pearl at one end, McLaren the other, and Heritage Park is the pendant in the middle. Along this stretch we're also envisioning co-working and innovation hubs, upper floor residential, possible development at the UpTown site, artist studios and boutique accommodations.

Focusing the energy on linking this path instead of larger zone, like the full BIA, is far more strategic and likely to succeed. With low vacancy along this string the impact will begin to spread off the path within 2-3 years of launching the effort.

To spur the string, the City should consider incentives focused on professional signage, heritage preservation, commercial façade design, restaurant infrastructure, public art and accessibility features. These features enhance the public experience and focus on visually linking the nodes.

7.0 Social Impact

Aside from the economic impact of a cultural sector, significant research has been done on the social and health benefits of the arts. The City of Barrie would be progressive in including these metrics in its process for considering the W.A. Fisher Development.

In Hill Strategies Volume 16, Issue 3 of the Arts Research Monitor, they review four articles from researchers focused on social and health benefits.

The first by the **Community Foundations of Canada** asserts that “participations builds belonging” citing a 2012 Statistics Canada Survey that notes **“77% of Canadians agree or strongly agree that arts and heritage experiences help them feel part of their local community”**. Following these lines the survey also found that “92% of Canadians believe arts experiences are a valuable way of bringing together people from different languages and cultural traditions”.

The report concludes with a number of innovative recommendations:

- “Support high-quality arts experiences
- Promote early, affordable and frequent exposure to the arts
- Explore intergenerational arts opportunities
- Explore art as a vehicle for reconciliation
- Improve accessibility for people with disabilities
- Collaborate with “newcomer and settlement service providers to identify opportunities and programs to help newcomers feel welcome and comfortable” in arts spaces
- Increase opportunities for arts-related learning and interactions
- Improve research linking the arts and belonging”

Source: Hill Strategies, Arts Research Monitor, Volume 16, Issue 3

Another report, published in Createquity in 2016 focused on physical and mental health. The American research team concludes the following:

- “Participatory arts activities improve older adults’ mental and physical health, and in some cases, lessen the likelihood of developing dementia later in life.
- Arts therapies contribute to positive clinical outcomes, such as reduction in anxiety, stress, and pain for patients.
- Beyond hospital settings, “community arts activities probably contribute to healthy living habits and improved understanding of health.
- The strongest and most consistent evidence for the health impacts of the arts relate specifically to mental health: in particular, reductions in depression and anxiety.
- While causal attribution remains difficult to pin down, arts and cultural participation probably improves self-reported happiness or life satisfaction.”

Linking a strong sense of **belonging**, improved **physical and mental health**, **economic growth** and **enhanced public realm**, the City of Barrie would be approaching the W.A. Fisher development with its collective benefit in mind. This could be further developed in the overall development with the connections made previously: linking the CAMH programming, Laurentian College Arts Campus and YMCA philosophy into a truly **interdisciplinary campus of experience and engagement**.

8.0 Summary and Recommendations

After spending an intense period diving into the Barrie cultural community and the W.A. Fisher site concept, Cobalt Connects is eager to see the City of Barrie commit to this development based on a number of conditions. As with other cultural property developments, if done poorly the facility can become more of an albatross than a gift, and do more harm than good. Below we outline a number of conditions or concepts that we feel are essential to moving forward related to the property and cultural community.

8.1 W.A. Fisher Auditorium Design

The W.A. Fisher site must become a **650-seat multipurpose venue with superior technical capabilities**, with the exception of a fly gallery. The venue should further explore LETTs concept of a mechanized false fly. Technically the theatre needs stellar acoustics, cinema quality video projection, and concert sound. The addition of an **at-stage grade loading dock is essential** to future success.

Cobalt Connects fully endorses the LETT proposed design with the above conditions.

8.2 Operation

The facility should become a joint venture project between the City of Barrie and a coalition of producers including the **Barrie Film Festival** and **Chas Hayes**. The coalition would incorporate as a separate non-profit making it grant and donor eligible beyond the City, and independent of the capital asset (see Appendix 3 – Funding Scan). This coalition must be led by a professional artistic and administrative body with experience including: a Managing Producer, Marketing Director, Technical Director and Community Outreach & Partnership staff. It should remain a non-union house for ease of operation to empower local cultural producers to build capacity, be self-determining and focus on sustainability.

Resident cultural producing organizations should include: **Huronia Symphony, Kempenfelt Community Players, Barrie Film Festival, City of Barrie programming**, and a number of local dance companies. It would be beneficial for the dance companies in the community to form a local umbrella organization that can handle the scheduling and fair-play use of the facility on behalf of a collective, instead of having one-off relationships with each company.

A focus on working with producers like Paquin Entertainment, Education in Art and AEG LIVE to develop a program for touring productions should become an early focus of the development team on this project going forward. With producers like this making up **upwards of 20% of a season in the facility**, they are essential to long-term viability. The City of Barrie should immediately begin conversations with producers of this level, which could be accomplished through local contacts like Chas Hayes. To give shape to what a season could look like Cobalt Connects has proposed a breakdown below of a hypothetical season and associated fees:

Presentation Partner / Level	Space	Total	Rate
Rental Revenue - Commercial Presentations	Main Hall	30,000	1500
Rental Revenue - Local Production Dates	Main Hall	86,000	1000
Rental Revenue - City Event usage	Main Hall	8000	1000
Rental Revenue - Rehearsal / Tech Days	Main Hall	18,000	450
Rental Revenue - Summer Camps	Rehearsal Hall	8000	200
Rental Revenue - Corporate Events	Main Hall	9000	1500
Lobby Rentals - Stand Alone event	Lobby	4500	450
Lobby Rentals - Stand Reception	Lobby	2500	250
CIF Ticket Charge		87,555	2
Concessions		131,333	3
Alcohol Sales		41,291	5
Admissions		963,105	22
Total Revenue		\$1,389,284	

Presentation Partner / Level	Rehearsal / Tech Days	Presentation Days	Attendance Expectation	Actual Attendance
Touring Commercial Presentations	20	20	75%	9750
Dance Recital Dates	5	20	60%	7800
Local presenter events	2	10	60%	3900
Kempenfelt Players	4	15	60%	5850
Monthly Film Nights - Barrie Film Festival	0	24	40%	6240
Barrie Film Festival	1	10	75%	4875
Barrie Short Festival	0	3	75%	1463
2 seasonal - City presented productions/events	4	8	50%	2600
Huronia Symphony	4	4	50%	1300
TOTALS	40	114		43,778

8.3 Mady Centre

The Mady Centre is still a vital piece of the cultural nodes concept as a venue in the continuum of spaces required by Barrie cultural community. We would recommend that the Mady Centre become a **performing arts incubator** with all of the supports and programs required to make it successful. The Mady should become the launching pad for programming and artists who graduate to the W.A. Fisher as they reach their potential.

This would mean that organizations such as Talk is Free Theatre and Theatre by the Bay become the resident companies of the Mady Centre. A capital investment should be made in replacing the seating, paired with a reduction in seating to 100. The venue and its programming should be positioned as artist-driven, affordable, and challenging. Add to this a complement of professional development programming for the broader arts community, events such as Black History Month and other cultural appropriate content, and local music to build a full calendar.

To reduce costs, we would again suggest a joint venture model where the venue is run by a non-profit arts service organization with non-unionized staff focused more on capacity building.

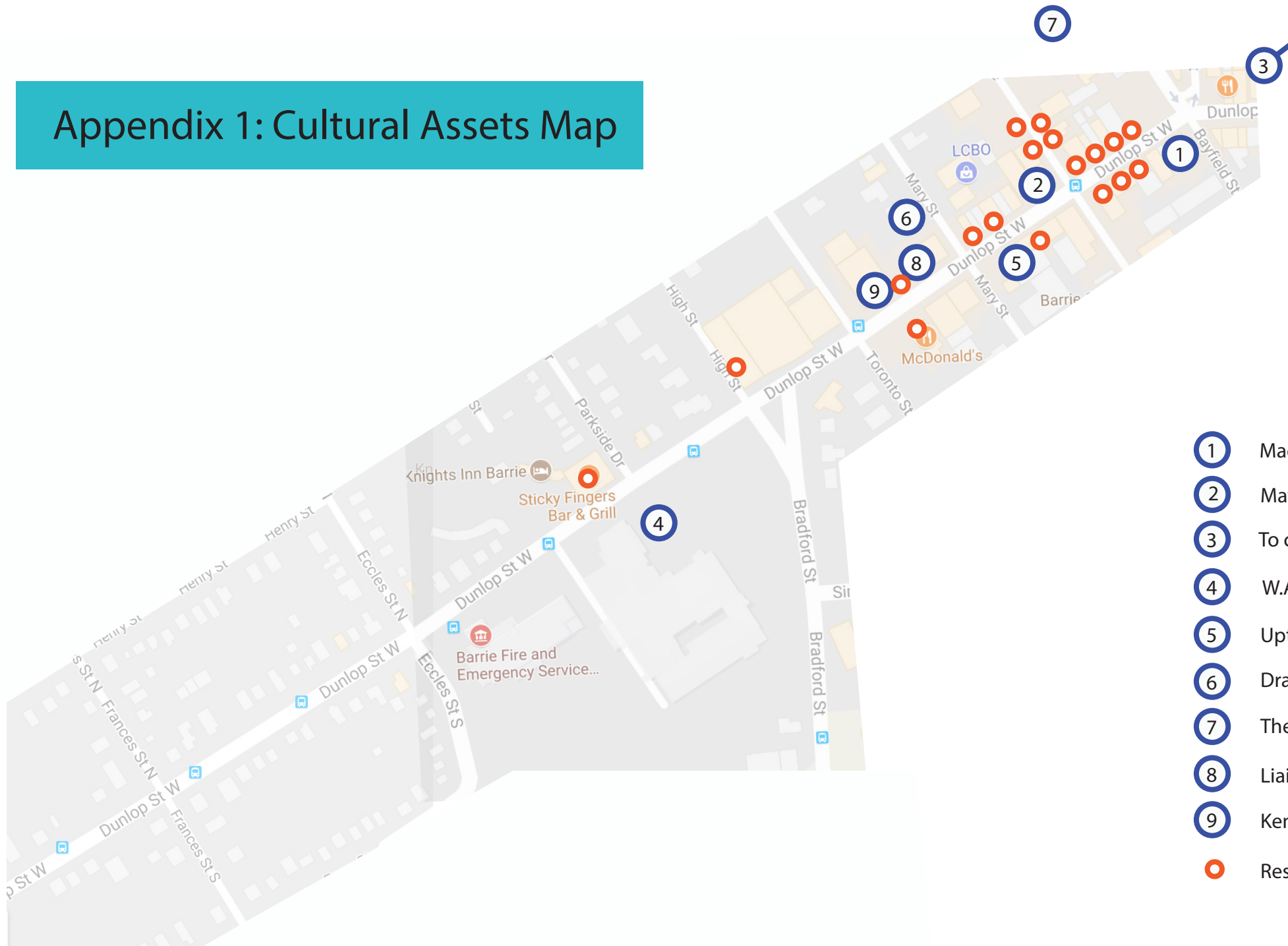
We see the City of Barrie’s investment in this concept as vital to the success of the W.A. Fisher project, the cultural nodes concept and the health and wellbeing of the overall cultural sector in Barrie.

8.4 Public Realm Investment

Investing in the envelope of the W.A. Fisher building and the mission re-alignment of the Mady Centre will be major catalysts if linked with appropriate public infrastructure to bring the two facilities together. The proposed design for the overall W.A. Fisher site is heading in the right direction but needs to be followed through for the course of Dunlop. Bike lanes, public seating, trees and quality storefronts must connect from end to end. Following the Taking Stock process will give the City a clear benchmark to measure against.

Similarly, the precinct concept will be greatly enhanced with the addition of a **post-secondary arts campus** either across the street or where the YMCA complex is proposed. Regardless, space within an adjacent building should be sought for cultural programming that cannot fit within the tight envelope of the W.A. Fisher building. Linking the social programming and a **strong community arts practice** between the **YMCA and CAMH**, along with the proposed park amenities would make this an exemplary accessible cultural hub that ties in the **social, physical and mental health benefits** of arts and culture in the downtown core.

Appendix 1: Cultural Assets Map



- ① Mady Centre
- ② Maverick Music Hall
- ③ To commerical district
- ④ W.A. Fisher Development
- ⑤ Uptown Movie Theatre
- ⑥ Drawing House Studio
- ⑦ The Ranch
- ⑧ Liaison Culinary College
- ⑨ Kempenfelt Bay School
- Restaurants

Appendix 2: Opportunity Map

A Opportunity for intensified commercial use by converting office uses to restaurant, commercial or service uses.

B Opportunity to signature development of either hotel or educational use (ie. Laurentian Arts Campus)

C Opportunity for social cohesion development linking YMCA and CMHA



- ① Mady Centre
- ② Maverick Music Hall
- ③ To commerical district
- ④ W.A. Fisher Development
- ⑤ Uptown Movie Theatre
- ⑥ Drawing House Studio
- ⑦ The Ranch
- ⑧ Liaison Culinary College
- ⑨ Kempenfelt Bay School
- Restaurants

Appendix 3: Funding Scan

Canadian Heritage

Canada Arts Presentation Fund - Professional Arts Festivals and Performing Arts Series Presenters

Description:

The Professional Arts Festivals and Performing Arts Series Presenters sub-component of the Canada Arts Presentation Fund (CAPF) supports existing professional arts festivals and performing arts series presenters to offer activities that connect artists with Canadians in their communities. This is primarily achieved through performances, as well as through audience development and outreach initiatives such as pre- or post-show panel discussions, public lectures and workshops, residencies, demonstrations, public rehearsals, and other forms of community engagement activities.

Eligibility:

- Not-for-profit organizations;
- Provincial, territorial or municipal institution (including agencies and public educational institutions that organize presentation activities for the public); or
- Aboriginal peoples institution or organization (Aboriginal peoples include Inuit, Métis, Status and Non-Status people).

Deadline: April 1st and October 1st

Available Funding:

- Festivals: up to 25% of eligible expenses or a maximum of \$100,000 per fiscal year in the case of grants and 25% of eligible expenses or \$500,000 per year in the case of contributions. In exceptional circumstances, support of up to \$1,000,000 may be available for festivals with total eligible expenses over \$5,000,000.
- Performing Arts Series Presenters: up to 25% of eligible expenses, or a maximum of \$100,000 in the case of grants and \$200,000 in the case of contributions

More Information: <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1452622307640>

Canada Arts Presentation Fund - The Presenter Support Organizations

Description:

The Presenter Support Organizations sub-component of the Canada Arts Presentation Fund (CAPF) provides financial assistance to organizations that offer activities and services to arts presenters (professional arts festivals and performing arts series presenters), in order to strengthen the arts presentation sector. Through strategic and focused support to presenter support organizations, arts presenters are better prepared to meet the CAPF objective and continue to evolve professionally in their field.

Eligibility:

- Not-for-profit organizations;
- Provincial, territorial or municipal institution (including agencies and public educational institutions that organize presentation activities for the public); or
- Aboriginal peoples institution or organization (Aboriginal peoples include Inuit, Métis, Status and Non-Status people).
- Have been in existence for at least one year and have as their core focus the strengthening of arts presentation in Canada;
- Offer activities and services that meet the following goals:
 - provide arts presenters with access to a variety of artistic choices;
 - provide artists with access to arts presenters (specialized and multidisciplinary);
 - reinforce the Canadian arts presentation circuits; and
 - further practical arts presentation knowledge.

Deadline: April 1st

Available Funding:

- Up to 25% of eligible expenses or a maximum of \$100,000 per fiscal year in the case of grants or \$200,000 per year in the case of contributions.
- Provided that the need is clearly demonstrated and validated by the program, on rare occasions may fund up to 50% of eligible expenses for projects offered in communities facing unusual barriers that cannot be overcome without substantial assistance, or for artistic disciplines that are underserved.
- Average level of support ranges from 7% to 17% of eligible expenses, depending on your region.

More Information: <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1489674375979>

Canada Cultural Investment Fund – Endowment Incentives

Description:

Canada Cultural Investment Fund – Endowment Incentives component encourages private donors to contribute to endowment funds for not-for-profit professional arts organizations, so they can access new sources of funding in the future. Raising capital and creating endowments gives these organizations greater capacity for realizing artistic expression by supporting their long-term stability. The government provides matching funds – of up to one dollar for every dollar raised from private donors – to create endowment funds or to increase existing ones.

Eligibility:

- Application must be submitted jointly by a not-for-profit professional arts organization and an associated public foundation. Both parties must meet specific eligibility criteria.
- Heritage organizations, competitions and federal agencies; Crown corporations; provinces, territories and municipalities, and their agencies, **are not** eligible under this component.
- Non-profit must have either received funding in last 5 years from Canada Council for the Arts; or Department of Canadian Heritage OR provide documentation that it operates on a professional level (i.e. paid artistic director, professional artist fees, etc.)

Deadline: December 1st

Available Funding:

- Matching funds; the maximum amount of funding that can benefit any one arts organization from the Endowment Incentives component is \$15,000,000 over the life of this program.
- For each arts organization, the maximum amount that can be requested for matching in each fiscal year is the lesser of:
 - \$2,000,000; or
 - 50% of the average total revenues for your organization's past three completed fiscal years.
- Once an arts organization has benefited from funding totalling \$10,000,000, the maximum amount that can be requested for matching in a fiscal year is the lesser of:
 - \$1,000,000; or
 - 50% of the average total revenues for your organization's past three completed fiscal years.

More Information: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/cultural-investment-fund/endowment-incentives/application-guidelines.html>

Canada Cultural Space Fund

Description:

The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF) supports the improvement of physical conditions for artistic creativity and innovation. The fund supports the improvement, renovation and construction of arts and heritage facilities, as well as the acquisition of specialized equipment.

By supporting improvements to our country's cultural spaces, the CCSF increases access for Canadians to performing arts, visual arts, media arts, museum collections and heritage displays.

Eligibility:

- Not-for-profit arts and heritage organizations;
- Provincial/territorial governments, municipal or regional governments and their agencies; and
- Aboriginal people's institutions or organizations.

Deadline: Ongoing

Funding Available:

- Up to 50% of eligible project.
- Exceptional cases (i.e. underserved communities, etc.) may exceed 50%; average contribution is 37%

More Information: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/cultural-spaces-fund.html>

Canada Council for the Arts

Explore and Create: Artist-Driven Organizations

Description:

The Artist-Driven Organizations component of Explore and Create supports the development of artistic activities, from research, creation, and production through to dissemination, by Canadian arts organizations that are driven by the vision of artistic leaders. Grants fund the activities of organizations mandated to support the creative process of artists, stimulating the emergence of new artistic voices and offering a range of artistic experiences to the public.

Eligibility:

- Artistic organizations lead by an artistic director or group of artists
- Receive core operating support through Canada Council or non-profit that has received Canada Council project funding in past 5 years with 5 years continuous operation and revenues exceeding \$75,000 in past 3 years

Deadline: Early July (applicants must register with portal minimum of 30 days in advance of deadline)

Funding Available:

- Up to 60% of your total annual revenues, averaged over the last 3 years

More Information: <http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/explore-and-create/artist-driven-organizations>

Engage and Sustain: Artistic Catalyst**Description:**

The Artistic Catalysts component of Engage and Sustain funds Canadian arts organizations that play a pivotal role in nurturing artistic practices and respond to the evolution of creative communities across Canada. Grants support the activities of organizations that facilitate interactions among artists and connections with the public.

Eligibility:

- Artistic organizations offering at least 1 public presentation, exhibition, program, etc. annually
- Receive core operating support through Canada Council or non-profit that has received Canada Council project funding in past 5 years with 5 years continuous operation and revenues exceeding \$75,000 in past 3 years

Deadline: Early July (applicants must register with portal minimum of 30 days in advance of deadline)

Funding Available:

- Up to 50% of total annual revenues, averaged over the last 3 years

More information: <http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/engage-and-sustain/artistic-catalysts>

Supporting Artistic Practice: Sector Innovation and Development

Description:

The Sector Innovation and Development component of Supporting Artistic Practice funds Canadian cultural connectors and sector builders (Equity arts sector), groups and organizations for projects targeted towards growing and improving the arts sector. Grants encourage initiatives that strengthen and develop support for Canadian artists.

Eligibility:

- cultural connectors and sector builders (Equity arts sector)
- artistic groups and collectives
- architectural groups and collectives
- artistic organizations
- national arts service organizations
- support groups, organizations and shared platforms
- festivals, presenters and touring networks
- book and magazine publishers
- agencies and management service organizations
- Note - To be eligible for a composite grant, you must have received at least 2 Canada Council project grants in the last 5 years

Deadline: mid-June and mid-December (applicants must register with portal minimum of 30 days in advance of deadline)

Funding Available:

- Project Requests – up to \$100,000
- Composite Requests – up to \$100,000 per year, 3 year maximum

More Information: <http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/supporting-artistic-practice/sector-innovation-and-development>

Arts Across Canada: Public Outreach

Description:

The Public Outreach component of Arts Across Canada supports activities of Canadian professionals in architecture, groups and organizations, that contribute to the public appreciation and enjoyment of the arts. Grants fund a wide range of live events, publications and other initiatives that build connections between artists and diverse audiences.

Eligibility:

- artistic groups and collectives
- artistic organizations
- support groups, organizations and shared platforms
- national arts service organizations
- festivals, presenters and touring networks
- book and magazine publishers
- architects, architectural professionals, groups, collectives and firms
- Note - To be eligible for a composite grant, you must have received at least 2 Canada Council project grants in the last 5 years

Deadline:

- Composite – late May
- Project – mid-June
- Composite and Project – mid-November
- (applicants must register with portal minimum of 30 days in advance of deadline)

Funding Available:

- Project Requests – up to \$100,000
- Composite Requests – up to \$100,000 per year, 3 year maximum
- Majority of requests receive \$30,000 or less

More Information: <http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/arts-across-canada/public-outreach>

Arts Festivals and Presenters

Description:

The Arts Festivals and Presenters component of Arts Across Canada encourages Canadian arts organizations to present and exhibit quality art and literary works to Canadian audiences. Grants support festivals and presenters to showcase important artistic work, strengthen artistic practice, and build bridges between artists and audiences.

Eligibility:

- Festivals, presenters and touring networks that present Canadian work
- Presently receive core (operating) support as a festival or presenter through Canada Council OR;
 - have received at least 3 Canada Council project grants in the last 5 years. This excludes grants from Leadership for Change: Grants for Organizational Development, Flying Squad, Visiting Foreign Artists, and travel programs
 - be an incorporated not-for-profit arts organization
 - work with a professional staff
 - have at least 5 years of continuous professional programming that is accessible to the public

Deadline: Early July (applicants must register with portal minimum of 30 days in advance of deadline)

Funding Available:

- 60% of total annual revenues over last 3 years

More Information: <http://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/arts-across-canada/arts-festivals-and-presenters>

Ontario Arts Council

Art Service Organization: Operating**Description:**

The program supports the ongoing operations of not-for-profit, professional arts service organizations in Ontario. Arts service organizations may have provincial, national, regional or local mandates. There are two categories: arts service organizations and community arts councils

Eligibility:

- Ontario-based, not-for-profit corporations, or national not-for-profit corporations with the head office in Ontario.
- Organizations must have:
 - at least \$75,000 in total revenues for the last fiscal year, and in projected revenues for the current and requested years (for applicants not currently receiving funding from this program);
 - at least two years of sustained, regular, ongoing programming, as of the application date. If your organization does not meet this requirement, consider applying for project funding;
 - a range of revenue sources; and

- an active board of directors/governing body.
- Arts Service Organizations must:
 - have a primary mandate to provide services to artists and/or arts organizations;
 - serve professional artists, arts professionals and/or arts organizations. The arts professionals and arts organizations you serve must be eligible to apply to another OAC program;
 - have at least one (full- or half-time) paid staff member. If your organization does not currently have any paid staff, a written plan proposing how the organization will move toward having paid staff within the next year or two is required.
- Municipalities, colleges and/or universities **are not** eligible

Deadline: Mid-March. This program is in year three of a three-year cycle – new applicants eligible to apply in 2018

Funding Available:

- Variable; 2 evaluation streams – under \$30,000 and over \$30,000

More Information: <http://www.arts.on.ca/grants/arts-service-organizations-operating>

Arts Service Projects

Description:

The program supports collaborative projects, led by Ontario-based ad hoc arts groups/arts collectives or arts organizations that develop or provide unique services for professional arts communities in Ontario.

Eligibility:

- Ad hoc groups/collectives of professional artists or arts professionals with a permanent physical address in Ontario.
- Ontario-based not-for-profit arts organizations.
- Organizations must serve professional artists, arts professionals and/or arts organizations eligible to apply to another OAC program
- Important: Applications to this program must include at least one confirmed collaborator
- Municipalities, colleges and/or universities **are not** eligible to apply

Deadline: Early April

Funding Available:

- \$10,000 maximum

More Information: <http://www.arts.on.ca/grants/arts-service-projects>

Compass**Description:**

This program assists arts managers with professional development projects, and assists arts organizations with development projects intended to build administrative and management capacity in the arts. There are four categories:

- Category 1 – Organizational Development: to help cover the costs of planning for organizations in any area of organizational capacity-building
- Category 2 – Professional Development for Arts Managers: to help cover the costs of activity that builds capacity of individual arts managers in any area of arts management
- Category 3 – Micro Grants: Professional Advancement for Arts Managers: to help cover the costs of courses, seminars, workshops and conferences in any area of arts management
- Category 4 – Arts Management Internships: to help cover the costs of internships for arts managers who are Indigenous, of colour, Deaf, and/or with a disability

Eligibility:

- Category 1 – Organizational Development:
 - Ontario-based arts organizations and ad hoc group/collectives with a permanent physical address in Ontario that are eligible to apply to another OAC program.
 - Collaborative projects by two or more eligible ad hoc groups/collectives or organizations.
- Category 2 – Professional Development for Arts Managers:
 - Ontario-based arts organizations and ad hoc groups/collectives with a permanent physical address in Ontario that are eligible to apply to another OAC program.
 - Individual arts managers or collectives of arts managers who work for eligible organizations. Individuals must be Ontario residents with a permanent physical address in Ontario.
- Category 3 – Micro-Grants: Professional Advancement for Arts Managers:
 - Individual arts managers who work for organizations eligible in Categories 1 and 2. Individuals must be Ontario residents with a permanent physical address in Ontario.

- Category 4 – Arts Management Internships:
 - Recipients of OAC operating funding.

Deadline: Early March and Early November (Categories 1, 2 and 3);
Early July (Categories 1, 2 and 4)

Funding Available:

- Category 1 – Organizational Development: maximum \$15,000
- Category 2 – Professional Development for Arts Managers: maximum \$7,500
- Category 3 – Micro-Grants: Professional Advancement for Arts Managers: maximum \$1,000, with a potential travel supplement of up to \$500 for Northern applicants
- Category 4 – Arts Management Internships: maximum \$30,00

More Information: <http://www.arts.on.ca/grants/compass>

Ontario Arts Presenters

Description:

The program supports the presentation of arts events or series in Ontario that contribute to the development of appreciative and knowledgeable audiences for the arts in Ontario. There are two categories: Volunteer collectives, groups or organizations and Municipalities, colleges and universities.

The program’s priorities are to support:

- presentation/exhibition of Ontario artists/arts organizations eligible for support from OAC granting programs;
- presentation of arts events or series in underserved or remote communities in Ontario;
- outreach and audience engagement activities;
- collaborations among touring and local artists/arts organizations and local communities; and
- activities that contribute to arts education, public participation and community involvement in the arts in Ontario.

Eligibility:

- be Ontario-based volunteer-led ad hoc groups/collectives or not-for-profit organizations, with a permanent physical address in Ontario; or
- be Ontario municipalities, colleges or universities

and:

- present or produce professional Ontario artists, arts professionals, arts groups, collectives or organizations; and
- select artistic programming for public presentation in their local community; and
- select their programming guided by an artistic vision

Deadline: Mid February and Mid September

Funding Available: up to \$10,000

More information: <http://www.arts.on.ca/grants/ontario-arts-presenters-projects>

Ontario Trillium Foundation

Seed Investment Stream

Description:

Activities funded include:

- Conducting new research or feasibility studies
- Testing new approaches
- Hosting discussions about emerging issues or new opportunities
- Developing a new idea
- Launching a new event
- Convening people together

Eligibility:

- A charitable organization or foundation registered as a charity with the Canada Revenue Agency
- An organization incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation without share capital in a Canadian jurisdiction
- A First Nation
- A Metis, Inuit or other Indigenous community
- A municipality with a population of 20,000 or less, or their cultural and recreational agencies for initiatives in the Inspired or Active People action areas
- A collaboration of two or more organizations, where the lead organization is an eligible organization
- Municipalities of 20,000 or more may participate in a collaboration, where the lead applicant adheres to above-mentioned criteria

Deadline: February 21, 2018

Funding Available: \$5,000 - \$75,000

More Information: <http://www.otf.ca/what-we-fund/investment-streams/seed-grants>

Grow Grants

Description:

OTF recognizes that building healthy and vibrant communities takes time and resources. The Grow Investment Stream supports projects that are based on evidence and deliver on specific Grant Results in order to contribute to the longer-term goal of the related Priority Outcome. Projects funded in the Grow Investment Stream are based on robust planning, and deliver positive change, which is achieved by replicating, adapting, or scaling existing proven programs.

Eligibility: As listed above

Deadline: Late-June (2018 date not announced)

Funding Available:

- \$50,000 - \$200,000 per year (3 year maximum); must include at least \$50,000/year for non-capital items. Once your project meets the minimum requirements, you may add up to a total of \$150,000 for capital costs associated with and necessary for the success of the project.

More information:

http://otf.ca/sites/default/files/grow_stream_web_bkgrounder_may_1_.pdf

Capital Grants

Description:

OTF provides capital funding to improve the infrastructure required for communities to thrive. Funding is delivered through a process that allows OTF to respond flexibly and effectively to the broad and deep need for community oriented capital funding across Ontario. Types of projects funded include: equipment, new construction, renovations or repairs to community spaces, and purchase of land or buildings.

Eligibility: As listed above

Deadline: October 25, 2017

Funding Available:

- \$5,000 - \$150,000; development costs (i.e. development of plans, legal fees, surveys, etc.) can be a maximum of 20% of total grant request

More Information: http://otf.ca/sites/default/files/capital_stream.pdf

JP Bickell Foundation

General Charities Grant

Eligibility:

- Registered charities operating solely in Ontario
- Annual operating budget must be + \$100,000

Deadline: Rolling deadline

Available Funding: Undefined

Details:

- Private foundation managed by Scotia Bank Wealth Management
- Funds cannot be used to support salaries, conferences or seminars
- Primarily fund hospital / medical but has supported theatre and educational opportunities in the past (i.e. Stratford Shakespearean Festival)

More Information: <http://www.scotiabank.com/swm/en/0,,9771,00.html>