



**CORPORATE FACILITIES
MEMORANDUM**

Page: 1
File: R09
Pending #:

TO: MAYOR A. NUTTALL AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: J. LE, PROJECT MANAGER OF CORPORATE FACILITIES
K. DATEMA, MANAGER OF RECREATION AND CULTURE FACILITIES
S. SCHLICHTER, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

WARD: ALL

NOTED: R. PEWS, P.ENG., DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE FACILITIES
D. BELL, DIRECTOR OF RECREATION & CULTURE SERVICES
D. MCALPINE, GENERAL MANAGER OF COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE SERVICES
B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, P. ENG., PMP, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT
M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE UPDATE

DATE: APRIL 5, 2023

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an overview of the City's recent work for the Performing Arts Centre (PAC) project and anticipated next steps, undertaken in response to motion 22-G-016, approved in 2022. Motion 22-G-016 directed staff to engage the services of a professional firm with expertise in municipal PAC development, design and management to review the recommendations of the PAC Task Force, along with previous reports, studies, business case analysis and stakeholder engagement to validate the needs of the community, users and the overall market.

A series of engagement activities, analysis and subsequent discussions with the project team and stakeholders have been completed. Staff will be undertaking the following remaining activities along with the consulting and design team in Q2 of 2023:

- An upcoming community engagement open house is being scheduled for the consulting and design team to present their preliminary design concepts of the preferred business model. Public feedback will be used to help inform the final recommended PAC project, operational business case and schematic design. Details of the open house are listed below:

Peggy Hill Team Community Centre, 171 Mapleton Ave

Wednesday, April 19, 2023 | 4:00-7:00pm

Thursday, April 20, 2023, | 4:00-7:00pm

- Upon submission of the consultant's report(s) providing their recommendation for the PAC project, Staff will prepare a final report including all relevant analysis, recommendations and final schematic documents for General Committee and Council review and consideration.

This memo provides background information outlining the rationale behind these next steps and a recap of the work to date, including:

- Assessment of all previous studies
- Capital and operating comparisons between initial facility concepts
- Review of capital and operating impact of PAC Task Force recommended model
- Research industry trends
- Interviews with industry representatives and presenters
- Survey of live performance spaces
- Workshops with Barrie Arts Alliance (BAA)
- Research and development of alternate model

BACKGROUND

The vision for a PAC in Barrie is a long-standing vision for the creative and cultural communities of the City. Much investigative work has been completed to articulate the need for, and benefits of, building a cultural beacon for the City, specifically in the City's downtown area. The City needs a rigorous plan to bring this project to fruition. Building on the investigations and work completed to date, the City must first validate the optimal size and design scope for the project based on a review of previous studies and investigations, and recent recommendations provided by the PAC Task Force.

Including engagement with very interested and involved stakeholders, the investigative work will inform the creation of the schematic designs with associated Class D cost estimates, that will result in a complete project proposal to be presented to Council for consideration.

The work of the consulting and design team will be pivotal in establishing the vision and deliverables for a PAC in the City of Barrie.

HISTORY

A PAC in the downtown would enable the vision of a "Creative Corridor" – a vision that includes PAC acting as a western anchor of the corridor, with the Five Points Theatre and Meridian Square in between, and the MacLaren Art Centre as the cultural node on the eastern end of downtown. With the additions of the Sandbox Entrepreneurship Centre and Georgian College's Digital Art and Design campus downtown, the cultural corridor concept has the necessary elements to be a strong economic driver in the future development of the downtown area.



Map: Cultural Corridor

The location of the former W.A. Fisher Auditorium for a new PAC, located at 125 Dunlop Street West at the western end of the downtown core, would represent a significant investment in cultural and tourism amenities contributing to the revitalization of a section of the downtown core which has been identified as a focus area for downtown revitalization efforts. This site also provides a convenient connection to the future Market Precinct being proposed for the Maple Avenue bus terminal location.

The W.A. Fisher Auditorium was located within the former Barrie Central Collegiate which, at the time of its demolition, was the oldest secondary school in Simcoe County. Originally built in 1919 with later additions, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) deemed the school prohibitively expensive to refurbish and closed it at the end of the 2016/2017 academic year. The Fisher Auditorium closed following its final concert in May 2016.

In 2017, HIP Developments purchased Barrie Central Collegiate from the SCDSB with plans for residential development. At the time, there was a great public interest in the City retaining the auditorium/theatre space as a key piece of the City's history and as an opportunity to create a cultural space downtown. During the demolition of the old high school, the auditorium was retained for potential future redevelopment into a downtown cultural space and the City of Barrie officially acquired the auditorium and adjacent lands from HIP Developments in early 2019.

Between 2017 to 2020, two studies were undertaken to investigate the feasibility of constructing a theatre on the property, including two sets of schematic designs; one from Lett Architects and one from Hariri Pontarini Architects (HPA), all based on the need to retain the existing auditorium foundation as part of the design. The concept of including a conference centre as part of the development was also investigated.

As a result of the investigative and design work presented to City Council in late 2020, it was determined that retaining the existing foundation was restricting the development potential of the site and the ability of the City to achieve optimal performance and ancillary spaces, and that the history of the Fisher Auditorium could be honoured in other ways. This allowed the project to be revisited without the development restrictions of previous design concepts and a PAC Task Force was formed to develop a plan for the development of a new PAC.

PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE TASK FORCE (THE "TASK FORCE")

On April 22, 2021, Council directed the creation of a Task Force. The key mandate of the Task Force was to develop a plan to construct a modern performing arts venue in the City's core to replace the Georgian Theatre and Fisher Auditorium. The Task Force members represented major user groups within the City and through consultation developed a thorough list of requirements for a new PAC. A public feedback survey was issued and site visits to four theatres/PACs that the Task Force felt were comparable (located in similar sized communities, maybe similar in size to what would be needed in Barrie, or were considered well designed/functional) also took place to help validate the list of requirements. The Task Force delivered a report and presentation to Council in January 2022 outlining their recommendations. Council supported the continued development of a PAC in downtown Barrie.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

It is paramount that the venue is designed and built to industry standards, as well as to maximize operating revenues to minimize tax-supported operating expenses. Efficiency and affordability remain integral considerations for a municipality, balanced with the need to ensure the project is viable while reflecting the needs of the market, community and user groups. The design requirements must consider and balance the needs and wants of the user groups with functionality, operating expenses and potential revenues.

PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

The successful firm, Hariri Pontarini Architects, was selected through a public procurement process to lead this study and deliver a recommended PAC project, operational business case and schematic design that is optimal for the size of the City (now and with population growth projections), including the following deliverables:

- Space requirement validation
- Building criteria, standards and equipment
- Impacts to management structure and operating model
- Stakeholder engagement & recommendation report
- Scope development
- Project timelines
- Pre-opening plan & associated resources
- Schematic Design and Class D cost estimates
- Final report

PROJECT UPDATES

To date, the consulting and design team has completed several key tasks. The following provides a summary of each activity, as provided by the consultant.

SPACE REQUIREMENT VALIDATION

For the optimal seating and performance size

Testing Options

Initial concept testing and validation examined two facility concepts:

- **Concept A industry average model:** original design with a 650-seat public performance room (maximum 650 attendees); and
- **Concept B expanded model:** recommended by the PAC Task Force with three public performance rooms consisting of an 800-900 seat main theatre, 350 seat second theatre and a 5,000 sf multi-purpose room (maximum 1600 attendees)

Both options are of the Retail Entertainment Centre business models whose main purpose is public entertainment and whose main source of income is derived from purchasing and reselling entertainment products. This model also derives income from rentals to local producers and presenters who also provide entertainment products to the consumer market. Since the main business of the Retail Entertainment Centre is live presentations, public access and use of the facility are restricted to the performance period, leading to under-utilization of the facility in terms of public access.

Risk Factors Associated with the Retail Entertainment Centre Model

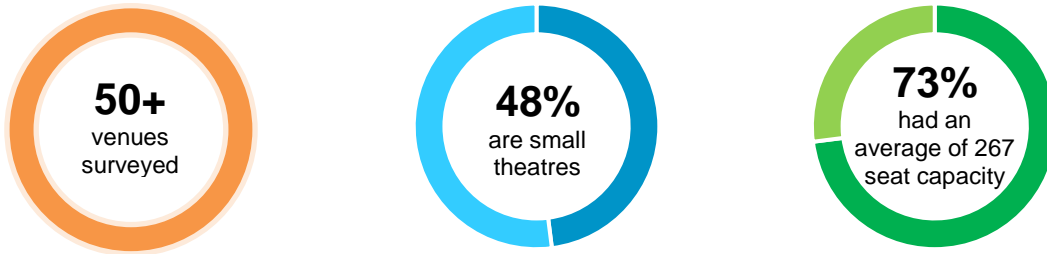
The Retail Entertainment Centre model is associated with two areas of risk. Firstly, the changing touring market which has declined dramatically over the past 30 years, privatization and growing dominance of commercial interests in the pop culture industry, the rise of digital technologies and the change in the nature of the overall market for the live performing arts. Secondly, the capacity of local producers and presenters to generate products and consequent rental income for the facility. Rentals to local producers and presenters generate, on average, 17% of a facility's projected income and any shortfall in this area increases the municipal contribution.

Assessment of Task Force Recommendation – Concept B

Market conditions and business models were reviewed to determine if Concept B proposed by the PAC Task Force is the optimal seating and performance size. The analysis identified that the proposed expanded facility would be more than twice the average municipal PAC, costing approximately two and a half times the average PAC. The level of earned revenue (from self-presentation) required to support the operation is not attainable in the Barrie market. Rental income from the local producer and presenter market is also likely not achievable. Attendance levels required are six to eight times greater than what is projected by the Barrie Arts Alliance and other groups. These key indicators suggest that Concept B is too large for the Barrie market and that work undertaken to date does not support the inclusion of an 800-900 seat performance room as recommended by the PAC Task Force for reasons of product availability, cost to use and operate, economic efficiency, cost to build and more.

Survey of Live Performance Spaces

A survey was conducted of 50+ live performance spaces in Ontario, which revealed that small theatres are both viable and in the majority. Refer to Appendix A for survey results.



Future Role of Five Points Theatre and Sadlon Arena

The role of the Five Points Theatre will be determined in the work going forward and will play an important role in developing the capacity of local producers and presenters in the years leading up to the opening of the new facility.

The Sadlon Arena should continue to be the venue for commercial productions in the Barrie market with its capacity to accommodate more than 1,000 seats.

PREFERRED CONCEPT

Alternative business model

Initial Facility Concepts

Two concept options were considered:

- Concept A - industry average model
- Concept B - expanded model

The industry average model is not offered as a recommendation, but if adopted, it would be workable in the Barrie context as it has been proven to be in similar communities but will have limitations in its ability to achieve larger civic and cultural development goals.

The proposed expanded model by the PAC Task Force is deemed unsuitable for the Barrie market due to various factors, including limited product availability, high operational and usage costs, poor economic efficiency, incompatibility with the site and expensive building costs, among others. Therefore, adopting the proposed model may prove to be financially unfeasible and impractical for the intended purpose. Based on these factors, it is recommended to consider alternative models that align with the specific needs and available resources of the Barrie market. Doing so will ensure a more efficient and cost-effective solution.

Business Model Assessment

For a PAC to achieve success it should have a diversity of use, a place where something is happening every day (morning, noon and night), encouraging everyone in the community to frequent one or more aspects of performing arts. The Retail Entertainment Centre model (that applies to both Concept A and B) is limited in its ability to achieve this goal because it is truly only active when a show is on, and it only caters to entertaining audiences.




On the other hand, a facility can be fully utilized if it serves, in equal measure, broader cultural and civic purposes that are mutually reinforcing:

- Entertainment and appreciation
- Meaningful participation
- Learning and skills development

After careful consideration of the findings, the consulting and design team strongly recommends pursuing an alternative model that prioritizes a diverse range of uses and regular programming, rather than relying solely on a traditional Retail Entertainment Centre model. This approach is likely to yield greater success and better meet the needs of the intended audience.

Preferred Business Model

A Community Cultural Hub is the preferred business model which provides opportunities for entertainment and appreciation like the Retail Entertainment Centre but is more widely accessible as it would operate all day long not just at performance time. It would feature a central commons, a mid-size theatre, recital hall, screening room, multiple teaching and learning spaces and arts offices.

		
PURPOSE	VISION	MISSION
<p>The Cultural Hub will serve several civic purposes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To raise Barrie to the standards and expectations of a mid-size Canadian city in relation to cultural facilities - To provide the resident population with opportunities for recreation, entertainment and career and skills development - To develop Barrie's competitive ability to attract and retain businesses, business leaders, workforces and families 	<p>The Cultural Hub is envisioned as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A place for interests, ages, abilities and sectors of the community - A place that is busy morning, noon and night - A place that provides a multiplicity of opportunities and experiences 	<p>The mission of the Cultural Hub is to provide in equal measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entertainment and appreciation - Meaningful participation - Learning and skills development

This facility meets the PAC Task Force Final Report narrative description:

“ Fundamental to the success of the new PAC will be its ability to engage the community. It will need to be a place where a diverse community of musicians, actors and performers of all kinds can practice their craft and attract and develop the next generation of talent.

It needs to serve as a cultural hub that the community of Barrie, from old to young, wants to come to see, hear, use and enjoy. It needs to be the crossroad and focus of cultural events in the City and serve as a magnet and incubator for up-and-coming talent. ”

PAC Task Force Final Report

BUILDING CRITERIA, STANDARDS AND EQUIPMENT

The Cultural Hub (Concept C) model is presently undergoing significant work to establish its building criteria, standards and equipment. Several tasks are currently in progress to achieve this goal, including:

- Development of a functional programming (refer to Appendix B for preliminary program)
- Creating preliminary blocking diagrams (refer to Appendix C for test fits)
- Outlining the program of systems and equipment
- Establishing a framework for sustainability best practices



IMPACTS TO MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND OPERATING MODEL

As work progresses with the Cultural Hub model, the consulting and design team will assess any impact on the ownership governance model of a City owned and operated venue, as well as the management and staffing model and operating budget.

Cost Savings Comparison (Concept B & C)

It is anticipated that beyond the increased community benefit of Concept C (Community Cultural Hub) over Concept B, there will also be the considerable cost savings it offers. Firstly, the capital cost of the Cultural Hub facility will be substantially lower, resulting in one-time savings of millions of dollars. Secondly, the net operating cost of the Cultural Hub will also be significantly lower than that of Concept B, resulting in annual recurring savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & RECOMMENDATION REPORT

The work to date has involved reviewing of materials provided by local stakeholders, meetings with representatives of local producers and presenters and conducting preliminary interviews to identify community leaders. As the work progresses, stakeholder engagement will continue.

PROGRESS ON ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPTS

The development of the Cultural Hub is currently in the conceptualization phase, with a focus on creating a unique and innovative space for the community. The consulting and design team is working on the schematic design, which will be unveiled to the public during the open house scheduled for April 2023. To provide a glimpse of what is in store, a collection of precedent images showcases the visual style and design elements of the potential future PAC. These images will aid in providing a vivid and comprehensive understanding of the project's scope and vision.



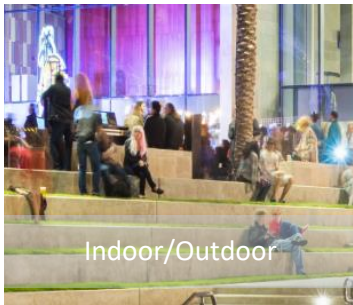
Theatre in a Garden



Indoor/Outdoor



Indoor/Outdoor



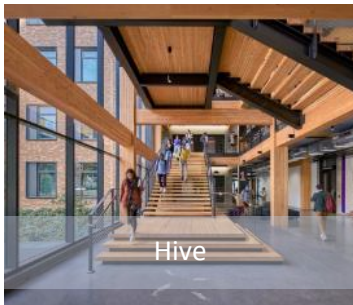
Indoor/Outdoor



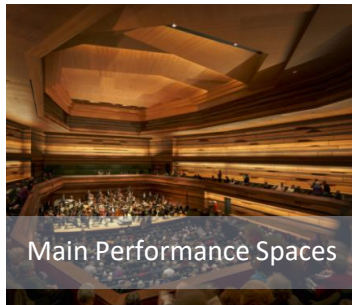
Hive



Hive



Hive



Main Performance Spaces



Main Performance Spaces



Community and Education



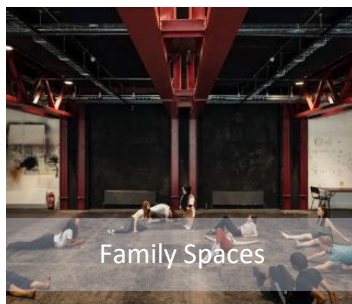
Community and Education



Community and Education



Family Spaces



Family Spaces



Family Spaces



NEXT STEPS

The following outlines the remaining deliverables for this study:

- Scope development.
- Project timelines
- Pre-opening plan & associated resources
- Schematic design and Class D cost estimates
- Schematic design feedback
- Final Submission Report

APPENDIX "A"

SURVEY OF STAND-ALONE THEATRES IN ONTARIO

Selected Small Theatres in Ontario

Algonquin Theatre, Huntsville	408 seats
Country Playhouse, St Jacobs	400 seats
City Playhouse Theatre, Vaughan	386 seats
Drayton Festival Theatre, Drayton	385 seats
Gayety Theatre, Collingwood	325 seats
Hamilton Family Theatre, Cambridge	500 seats
Imperial Theatre Sarnia	613 seats
Lighthouse Theatre, Port Dover	347 seats
Mattamy Theatre, Milton ON	500 seats
Midland Cultural Centre	120 seats
New Roads Theatre, Newmarket	400 seats
Oakville Centre for Performing Arts, Oakville	470 seats
Opera House, Gravenhurst	320 seats
Opera House, Meaford	332 seats
Place des Arts, Sudbury	300 seats
Stockey Centre Theatre, Parry Sound	400 seats
Sudbury Theatre Centre, Sudbury	289 seats
Tett Centre, Kingston	120 seats
Rene Caisse Theatre, Bracebridge	300 seats
<u>Victoria Playhouse, Petrolia</u>	<u>400 seats</u>

20 venues
20 rooms
6,354 total seats
317 average seats

Selected Small Theatres in Toronto

Al Green Theatre	250 seats
Alumnae Theatre	140 seats
Berkeley Street Theatres	244 seats and 167 seats
Betty Oliphant Theatre	260 seats
Buddies in Bad Times	100 seats
Coal Mine Theatre	120 seats
Factory Theatre	200 seats
Fairview Library Theatre	292 seats
Fleck Dance Theatre	446 seats
Greenwin Theatre	296 seats
Harbourfront Theatre	422 seats
Jane Mallett	499 seats
Papermill Theatre	200 seats

Scarborough Village Theatre	256 seats
Streetcar Crowsnest	200 seats
Tarragon Theatre	305 seats
Theatre Passe Muraille	185 seats
York Woods Library Theatre	260 seats
Young Centre Baillie	315 seats
<u>Young People's Theatre</u>	<u>450 seats/115 seats</u>

20 venues
22 rooms
4,640 total seats
236 average seats

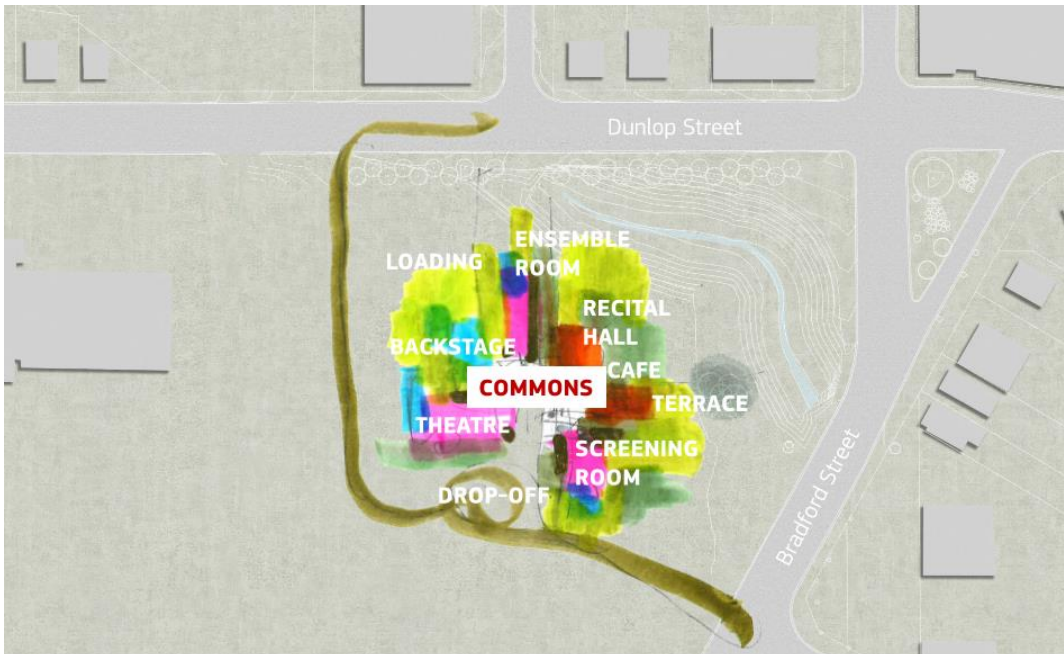
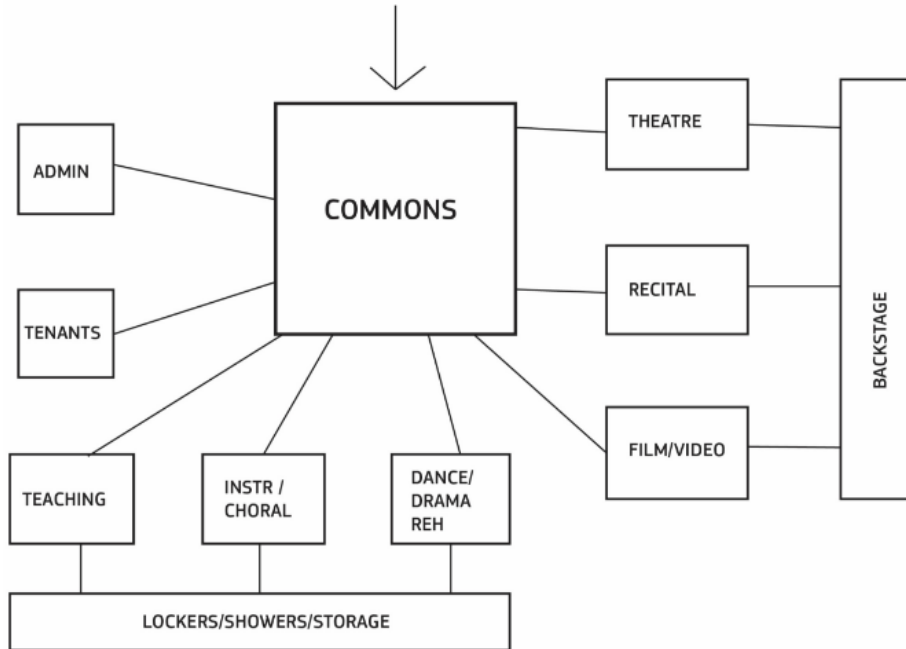
Selected Mid-size Theatres in Ontario

Brockville Arts Centre, Brockville ON	700 seats
Burlington PAC, Burlington ON	720 seats
Capitol Centre North Bay ON	932 seats
Flato Markham, Markham ON	528 seats
Grand Theatre, Kingston ON	776 seats
Grand Theatre, London ON	839 seats
Meridian Centrepointe Theatre, Ottawa ON	954 seats
Meridian Lyric, North York	576 seats
Partridge Hall, St Catharines ON	770 seats
Richmond Hill PAC, Richmond Hill ON	631 seats
River Run Theatre, Guelph ON	785 seats
Rose Theatre, Brampton ON	880 seats
Sanderson Centre, Brantford ON	1,125 seats
<u>Theatre Aquarius, Hamilton ON</u>	<u>700 seats</u>

14 venues
14 rooms
11,529 total seats
823 average seats

APPENDIX "B"

CULTURAL HUB PROGRAM



**HARIRI PONTARINI
ARCHITECTS**

APPENDIX "C"

CULTURAL HUB PRELIMINARY BLOCK DIAGRAM

