
TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: BARRIE PERFORMING ARTS AND EVENT CENTRE

WARD: ALL

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: J. DEVROOM, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER, FPD (EXT. 4531),
J. LE, PROJECT MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: R. PEWS, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE FACILITIES

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: D. MCALPINE, GENERAL MANAGER OF COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the *Barrie Performing Arts Centre Programming and Concept Design Final Report* prepared by Hariri Pontarini Architects (HPA) with Novita Interpares and Fisher Dachs Associates attached as Appendix "A" in Staff Report FAC005-24, be received for information purposes.

PURPOSE

2. The purpose of this Staff Report is to:
 - a) Provide members of Council with an overview of the *Barrie Performing Arts Centre Programming and Concept Design Final Report* prepared by HPA with Novita Interpares and Fisher Dachs Associates.
 - b) Provide members of Council with an overview of the City's recent work for the Performing Arts Centre (PAC) project 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.

BACKGROUND

3. The development of a PAC has been a long-standing City of Barrie initiative which was initiated with the purchase of the former Barrie Central Collegiate Institute property. At the time of inception, a review of the feasibility of redeveloping the Fisher Auditorium was undertaken. Further development of the PAC concept was undertaken between 2017 and 2020, highlighting the feasibility of a PAC and completing a conceptual design and cost estimation.
4. On March 22, 2021, a PAC Task Force was established by Council Motion 21-G-062. The overall goal of the PAC Task Force was to develop a complete project plan for a modern performing arts facility in the city's downtown core to replace the Georgian Theatre and Fisher Auditorium.
5. In January 2022 the PAC Task Force submitted a final report to Council. On January 31, 2022, Council issued Direction Memo 22-G-016 that outlines a series of actions to be taken in response

to the recommendations of the PAC Task Force report. The actions reflected additional work needed as the Task Force's recommended PAC programming was beyond that previously contemplated by the City. The memo provides the following directions:

- The reception of the Task Force's recommendations and Council's support for the continued development of the PAC.
 - The engagement of a professional firm with expertise in municipal theatre development to review the Task Force's recommendations and to provide a detailed memorandum to the General Committee, including project timelines, resource requests, and project design scope.
 - The procurement of an architectural firm to develop a concept plan and a Class 'D' cost estimate for the PAC, with the associated funding outlined in the Capital Project FC1138. Following this, a report back to the General Committee is required, detailing the concept plan and including an implementation plan with construction timelines, fundraising program recommendations, a preliminary operating plan, and a proposed budget with Capital and annual operating budget implications.
6. In July 2022, the City of Barrie issued a request for proposal (RFP) for the engagement of a professional firm with expertise in municipal performing arts centres to validate the needs of the community and recommend the program, seating capacity, preliminary design and business case for their planned PAC project. As outlined in the recommendation to award memo issued on August 10, 2022, 4 bids were received with HPA being the successful proponent with a bid of \$228,500.00. A contract was awarded to HPA.
7. Following Direction Memo 22-G-016, staff issued a memo to Council on April 5, 2023. The purpose of the memo provided members of Council with an overview of the recent work conducted for the PAC project in response to motion 22-G-016 and to outline the anticipated next steps. This included reviewing the recommendations of the PAC Task Force, validating the needs of the community, and presenting preliminary design concepts for the preferred business model through community engagement activities. The memo also sets the stage for the submission of a final report, which was to include all relevant analysis, recommendations, and final schematic documents for the General Committee and Council's review and consideration.

ANALYSIS

8. The study conducted by HPA reviewed three distinct concepts for the Barrie PAC. The three concepts are as follows:
- Concept A, termed the "Industry Average Model"
 - Concept B, known as the "Expanded Model"
 - Concept C, which emerged as an alternative approach, termed the "Community Cultural Hub"

As outlined below, each concept was developed to cater to different aspects of Barrie's cultural and civic needs, with varying implications for market capacity, financial sustainability, and community impact.

9. Concept A, referred to as the "Industry Average Model", is a facility concept based on the analysis of 12 municipal theatres in communities similar to Barrie. The defining feature of Concept A is a single, 650-seat public performance room. This model is workable and has demonstrated success in communities like Burlington, Richmond Hill, and Kingston. However, it is limited in its ability to achieve larger civic and cultural development goals. The operational projections for Concept A are considered reliable, as they are based on the operations of comparable existing facilities in similar-

sized communities. The financial viability of this concept is supported by evidence from these facilities, suggesting that the revenue streams from self-presentation and rentals are sustainable within the Barrie market. Concept A is positioned as a conservative approach that aligns with current market demand and ticket sales potential, offering a lower financial and operational risk compared to more ambitious models. It aims to fill the immediate need for a mid-sized performance venue in Barrie and is suitable for the current market and community size.

10. Concept B, termed the "Expanded Model", is a proposal that significantly increases the capacity of the Barrie PAC beyond the scope of Concept A. It is based on the program proposed by the PAC Task Force and includes the following key components:

- An 800-900-seat main public performance room, designed to accommodate a larger audience and a wider variety of touring productions.
- A secondary 350-seat performance room, offering additional space for smaller productions and events.
- A 5,000-square-foot flat floor room, providing a versatile space for various types of events and activities.

Concept B aims to cater to a broader market by providing a facility that can host larger touring productions, which typically require venues with 1,200 seats or more. However, the consulting team's analysis indicates that Concept B presents a significant financial and operational risk to the City of Barrie. The model would require the facility to generate approximately \$6.2 million annually from self-presentation and about \$1.95 million from rentals. These figures are considered unattainable in the Barrie market, as there is no demonstrated use case for the high number of annual event days (estimated at 780) needed to support such revenue. Furthermore, the trend in the performing arts industry is shifting towards hybrid arts, niche markets, and festival formats, which are attended by diverse age groups and suggest a different model that offers a variety of spaces for concurrent programming. Concept B, while ambitious, exceeds the local market's capacity and does not align with these emerging trends.

11. Concept C, designated as the "Community Cultural Hub" is a forward-looking facility concept developed to contribute to the nurturing of the next generation of talent. It is designed to achieve success through diverse and extensive use. The principal components of Concept C include:

- A large central meeting and mingling space known as the "Commons", which serves as the heart of the front of house, doubling as a living room during the day and a performance or event space as needed.
- Multiple public performance spaces, which consist of a 600-seat main public performance room, a secondary 220-seat acoustic hall, and a 140-seat film screening room, catering to a variety of performances and audience sizes.
- Spaces dedicated to preparation, training, and participation, supporting the development of local artistic skills and crafts.
- Administration and tenant offices to manage the facility and support its users.

Concept C is designed to be a hub for entertainment, meaningful participation, learning, and skills development. It aims to serve all interests, ages, abilities, and sectors of the community, ensuring that the facility is active throughout the day and evening. The facility will offer daily public access, distinguishing it from the Retail Entertainment Centre model exemplified by Concepts A and B,

where public access is restricted to performance times only. The concept emphasizes diversity, providing spaces for education, creative development, world-class performance, and community gathering. It is flexible enough to support a wide range of arts and attracts a larger sector of the population, moving away from the exclusivity of traditional theatres and striving for warmth, openness, and excitement.

The Community Cultural Hub's core business revolves around managing a public facility dedicated to cultural development and broad participation, with a business model that relies on a mix of rental income and user fees. The concept is validated through comparative research and is aligned with the mission and vision of the Community Cultural Hub, which is to offer a multiplicity of opportunities and experiences, making it a facility that is busy at all times, as well as welcoming to everyone.

12. The *Barrie Performing Arts Centre Programming and Concept Design Final Report* identifies Concept A as the most risk-adverse option for the Barrie PAC, however Concept C, the "Community Cultural Hub," was recommended over Concept A, the "Industry Average Model," for several reasons:
- **Cultural Development and Engagement:** Concept C aligns with the City's cultural development goals by providing a space that encourages community engagement, learning, and skills development. It is designed to be a place where a diverse community of musicians, actors, and performers can practice their craft and develop the next generation of talent.
 - **Diversity of Use:** The Community Cultural Hub model offers a variety of spaces for a broader range of concurrent programming, supporting hybrid arts, niche markets, and festival formats that are growing and well-attended by diverse age groups. This flexibility ensures that the facility can adapt to changing market trends and audience preferences.
 - **Facility Utilization:** Concept C allows for the facility to be accessible all day, every day, not just during performance times. This maximizes the use of the space and provides more opportunities for community interaction and participation.
 - **Reduced Vulnerability to Market Fluctuations:** The Community Cultural Hub model is less reliant on touring productions, which are vulnerable to market changes. It focuses on local production and presentation, which reduces financial risk and supports the local arts community.
 - **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** The Community Cultural Hub is envisioned as a place for all interests, ages, abilities, and sectors of the community. It is designed to be busy throughout the day and night, offering a multiplicity of opportunities and experiences. The building's design emphasizes accessibility, with clear entry experiences, intuitive wayfinding, and accommodations for larger mobility devices.
 - **Strategic Business Model:** The Community Cultural Hub's business model is based on a wide range of rental income and user fees, which is a more sustainable approach compared to the Retail Entertainment Centre model of Concept A, which relies heavily on self-presentation revenue.
 - **Community Feedback:** The development of Concept C involved community meetings and public open houses, where feedback was collected and integrated into the planning process, ensuring that the project meets the needs and desires of Barrie's residents.

In summary, HPA recommends Concept C because it offers a more sustainable, inclusive, and community-focused approach that aligns with Barrie's cultural and civic aspirations, providing a versatile space that can evolve with the city's needs.

13. The *Barrie Performing Arts Centre Programming and Concept Design Final Report* recommends that the PAC include: a Main Performance Hall, Acoustics Hall and a Film Screening room. It has been recommended that each of these spaces include the following:

Main Performance Hall Recommendation:

- **Performance Hall Size:** The report recommends a medium-sized proscenium hall with approximately 600 seats, designed for a variety of performances including drama, dance, music, and film.
- **Seating Arrangement:** The hall should have 450 seats in the orchestra and a balcony with 150 seats, which can be closed off for smaller performances.
- **Stage Design:** A stage that accommodates large casts and scenery, suitable for concerts and solo acts, without a fly tower but including an orchestra pit lift.
- **Acoustic and Technical Specifications:** Excellent acoustics for live performance, adjustable features for amplified sound and film, and a control booth for production.
- **Operational Flexibility:** The hall is intended to be versatile to support different types of events and audience engagement.

Acoustic Hall Recommendation:

- **Acoustic Hall Size:** A 220-seat venue specifically designed for outstanding room acoustics to cater to unamplified music performances.
- **Stage Requirements:** The stage should be sufficiently large to accommodate small ensembles.
- **Design Considerations:** Further development with an acoustician is recommended to finalize the precise size and acoustics, which may slightly affect the seat count.
- **Versatility:** While primarily for acoustic performances, the hall should also be suitable for other formats such as lectures and stand-up comedy.
- **Market Fit:** The hall is intended to fill a niche market for acoustic performances and complement the existing Five Points Theatre by offering a purpose-built, fully accessible space.

Film Screening Room Recommendation:

- **Film Screening Room Recommendation:** A 140-seat room designed for film screenings with a stage for lectures.
- **Daytime Activation:** The room is a key component for daytime use, and driving activity within the space.
- **Educational Programming:** It allows for educational programming, lectures, and film screenings.
- **Community Groups:** The screening room can draw diverse users and benefit a wide range of community groups.
- **Tenant Potential:** Film organizations could be beneficial tenants, contributing to the centre's vibrancy and financial sustainability.

14. The *Barrie Performing Arts Centre Programming and Concept Design Final Report* provided the below summary of the estimated costs associated with Concept "C":

Capital Costs:

Net Building Cost		\$60,000,000
Net Site Work Cost		\$5,000,000
General Requirements & Fee (16%)		\$10,700,000
Total Building Estimate	(\$1095/square foot)	\$75,000,000
20% Design Contingency		\$15,000,000
Total Construction Estimate	(\$1300/square foot)	\$90,000,000

5% Construction Contingency		\$4,546,000
Design Fees (assumed 10-11%)		\$9,000,000
Permits and Approvals		TBC
Development Costs (breakdown per development plan)		\$5,500,000
Furniture and Equipment		\$1,000,000
Theatre Equipment		\$1,365,000
AV		\$5,944,000
Security		\$ 518,000
Signage		\$ 600,000
Soft Cost Contingency		TBC
Total Project Cost		\$118,473,000

Operational Costs:

Summary of Expenses⁺ for Cultural Hub	
Personnel - 16 full-time employees (FTE) and 15 part-time employees (PTE) = 23 full-time equivalents (FTEE) - Non-recoverable crew costs	\$1,770,000
Occupancy Costs - 50,000 net square feet @ \$26/square feet	\$1,300,000
Operating Contingency (10%)	\$307,000
Total Expense	\$3,337,000

Additional Costs for Increased Capacity:

- If the seat count is increased to match or exceed neighbouring facilities, capital costs would increase minimally, with a slight increase in room rental and operational costs.
- Adding a transformable flat floor system could increase the project by \$15 million and would be impactful for certain types of performances and events.

Potential Cost Savings:

- The report suggests that further development of the design could find optimizations and reductions in complexity to bring the overall cost down.

Comparison with Existing Facilities:

- The annual cost of operating the Community Cultural Hub is compared favourably with the annual cost of operating the City of Barrie's community centres.

These costs are based on 2023 dollar figures, and the information provided in the report and may be subject to change as the project progresses. The report also indicates that financial support from all levels of government and private donors will be necessary to move forward with the design and fundraising for the PAC.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

15. There are no environmental matters related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

16. There are no alternatives presented in the report as it is to be received for information purposes.

FINANCIAL

17. The magnitude of cost of the project would place a significant burden for the City to fund the project solely. Because provincial and federal funding support is not guaranteed, a comprehensive funding plan is needed to make this project a success. The funding approach would have to be multi-faceted, leveraging support from a broad range of stakeholders, including a fundraising campaign to ensure the financial viability of the PAC.
18. In recognition of the city's current financial capacity and the time required to develop a comprehensive funding plan, the City of Barrie has included a forecasted \$167.5 million for the Barrie PAC as part of its capital plan for 2029 to 2033. A concept will need to be confirmed ahead of 2029 to facilitate the execution of this plan.
19. The Theatre Reserve is the main funding source for this project. However, the reserve currently only has a balance of \$7.6 million and the contributions that are forecast to the reserve based on the 2024 Budget will not be sufficient to fund any of the concepts proposed.
20. There are options available to Council, if there is a desire to move forward with this project. Council could choose to:
- redirect funding from another project or
 - approve debt for the amount above the current budget
21. Any approval of debt would need to be considered within the overall debt budget to ensure that debt levels stay within parameters outlined in the Financial Policy Framework.

LINKAGE TO 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

22. The recommendation(s) included in this Staff Report supports the following goals identified in the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan:
- Thriving Communities
 - Infrastructure Investments

Responsible Governance

23. The proposed PAC is strategically designed to be a cornerstone for **thriving communities** by enriching cultural life, driving economic growth, providing educational opportunities, and enhancing social cohesion.
24. The proposed PAC is a strategic **infrastructure investment** that aims to provide benefits ranging from local economic support to contributions to the City's cultural fabric, potentially enhancing residents' quality of life and establishing the City as a regional hub for the arts.
25. The proposal of the PAC reflects aspects of **responsible governance** through strategic planning, community engagement, financial prudence, and a commitment to serving the public interest by contributing to the City's cultural landscape and economic vitality.



APPENDIX "A"

Performing Arts Centre Programming and Concept Design Final Report