

CRD REGIONAL ARTS STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT OF THE OBJECTIVES WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTION

As one of the early steps in this planning process, a 2½ hour workshop was held on April 25 for key stakeholders from CRD, including its Arts and Facility Committees, its Arts Advisory Council, its Regional Arts Strategic Plan Steering Committee, its staff, community arts councils, and ProArts. Labelled as “Objectives Workshop: An Opportunity for Input” the workshop was intended to offer those parties a chance to articulate their perspective on this planning project.

The session began with a presentation by the consultant team on the project: roles and responsibilities, overall purpose, description of components, community consultation process, and timelines. Following that, a facilitated discussion occurred about 1) what the participants thought the project title meant, and 2) what they wanted see included in each of the project’s three components. Following is a synthesis of the comments, using the flip chart record of the participants’ words as much as possible. The dots within sections separate individual comments.

DISSECTING THE TITLE “REGIONAL ARTS STRATEGIC PLAN”

WHAT DOES “REGIONAL” MEAN?

Participants defined both a geographic or spatial and a non-spatial aspect to the term “regional.”

GEOGRAPHIC ASPECT • includes all the municipalities in the CRD, as well as • areas outside the municipalities

NON-SPATIAL ASPECT • be inclusive and recognize contributions even by municipalities not participating in the CRD function in order to realize the synergy created in bringing the arts together, i.e., more than the sum of the parts • working together cohesive, as one community • attend to organisations that function regionally

WHAT DOES “ARTS” MEAN?

Defining “art” or “culture” sometimes consumes much time and energy in such planning projects. Participants here didn’t do that, but did call the consultant team’s attention to some important distinctions that define the diversity within art. As well, they directed attention to the political economy of the arts.

WHAT’S INCLUDED, WHAT’S NOT INCLUDED • art concerns and enhances the quality of life through • creativity & human expression • production & dissemination, but not including museums and heritage • arts, not arts & culture (which would include sports) • does it include film? • don’t include the commercial • hard to draw the line between profit/non-profit, commercial/ noncommercial include both, but distinguish between them

- avoid terms “amateur” and “professional.” Perhaps paid vs volunteer instead? It’s all a continuum

ART’S ROLE WITHIN ECONOMY & GOVERNMENT • focus of the plan is on public funding

- roles & responsibilities of governmental agencies • arts as a catalyst for growth of the GDP & as catalyst for urban regeneration • art’s role in bringing new money into the region
- look at consumption data • include comparisons of sports and arts - comparison of investment levels

WHAT DOES “STRATEGIC” MEAN?

The group defined “strategic” in terms of a long term timeframe, a broad scope, and a political dimension to plan implementation:

TIME FRAME • long-term, decade vision • foresight • implement incrementally • measuring stick for evaluating progress

SCOPE • vision-based not issue-based • all-encompassing • capital & operating costs • recognition of diversity: 3-legged stool (operating, capital, capacity building) • “tactics get you through the day; strategy through the decade” and a long-term vision determines today’s tactics working with all partners & disciplines • different needs of different agencies

- entry level, education, growth of the arts from community up • SWOT (internal & external), inc. linking to regional economic development, tourism, major institutions

POLITICAL DIMENSION • recognition of funding cycles & political cycles • about policy: i.e., formal adoption, legislative power • provides consistency of values across all municipalities

- putting arts on a par with other public services • creating cohesiveness among all players (inc. UVic)

WHAT DOES “PLAN” IN THE TITLE RASP MEAN?

Two themes emerged from this discussion: producing a plan that can be implemented as well as one that can change over time to capture opportunities and avert threats without losing sight of the original visions and what needs to be done to make the vision happen:

IMPLEMENTABLE • making the vision happen • action oriented • presents case for getting other municipalities to buy into the arts function • public education as part of the document

- engage partners in the community

NOT STATIC • working plan • also needs to be flexible to respond to opportunities or threats, i.e., a changing environment

EXAMINING THE THREE COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT

THOUGHTS ON COMPONENT I: THE DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY & ANALYSIS

Comments here were generally of two kinds: particular data that participants wanted to see included in the economic analysis, and connecting the arts to other events and planning processes

in the community, such as the Regional Growth Strategy:

SOME DATA TO INCLUDE • clear statement of demographics of arts by municipality, to enhance municipal buy-in • include demographics of arts institutions themselves: age of performers, development of young artists, impact of technology • look at who is not an arts consumer today & extend that into the future • school boards & universities and their numbers and changes • visitors and incoming patrons of the arts

PROVIDING A CONTEXT FOR ECONOMIC ANALYSIS • 20-25 year horizon • look at impact of regional growth strategy and its impact on art: where will people be living • link to high tech and the needs of those in that category • using the arts to draw people into the region: the arts as a magnet for new residents • understanding philanthropic patterns: local & links to (non-local) corporations

THOUGHTS ON COMPONENT II: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT COMPONENT

Distinctions noted earlier received more attention here as additional context for the economic impact work. Other comments identified important data not to neglect:

IMPORTANT DISTINCTIONS • distinguish profit/non-profit, while recognizing the flows between sectors • identify economic flows that link sectors & generate synergies • there are several important continua:

- profit <----> non-profit (Symbiotic relationship)
- commercial <----> non-commercial (of public & private)
- paid <----> volunteer (value of...)
- shareholder withdrawal <----> no investment

BE SURE TO INCLUDE • crafts/artists; • would like to see sectoral breakdowns • municipal investment in the arts (the hidden investment in the arts: funds, tax considerations, etc) • contributions of schools and universities • film: what facilities are required? Do we want to focus on specific sectors of creativity? • link to new VI TV

THOUGHTS ON COMPONENT III: THE PLAN

The discussion here identified two important groups not to be neglected in the planning, examined the facility issue as a part of an arts master plan, made note of public art and public education and support of the arts, as well as scattered other issues:

IMPORTANT COMMUNITIES • Aboriginal linkages (needs, opportunities for collaboration, access to federal funding for this aspect of arts development) • inclusive of Islands which have a different set of issues, cultures, approaches. What's in it for me? • arts and the islands: new national park represents an opportunity

THE FACILITY ISSUE • infrastructure and capital needs, not a listing of projects to be funded through the CRD - where the money comes from is another issue • plan must provide context for facility planning across the region • build on the previous facility studies • not a turf war over facilities • the RASP is to create the context for facility development, not

vice-versa

- focus on convincing municipalities to invest in the arts
- provide the framework for doing so
- robust enough to deal with political & other threats & opportunities

PUBLIC ART • role of CRD and municipalities • regional scale as well • jurying process on fee-for-service basis

PUBLIC EDUCATION & SUPPORT • access to the arts by general population (cf. Oregon benchmarks project) • communication of the plan to its constituents: they need to know how it is going to support them, what they can expect in the terms of support • quality of life & how it is enhanced by the arts • tools for municipal investment in the arts

OTHER ISSUES

- include schools
 - arts development for children and youth
 - who picks up the ball? (What about an arts development legacy fund?)
- a 'building' outcome. multifaceted
- governance - need for an arms-length agency
- the elements of the "arts engine".
 - what are they?
 - the value of 3P partnerships