

Sooke and Western Communities Workshop –
June 13, 2002, 7- 9:30 p.m.
Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre Field House

BRAINSTORMING ON THE VISION	3
INCLUSIVE	3
DIVERSITY	3
CONNECTING AND INTEGRATING	3
INNOVATIVE/CREATIVE/EXCELLENT	3
CONTINUUM AND CONTINUITY	3
SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES	3
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/IDENTITY	3
ECONOMIC VALUE	3
OTHER	3
THE VALUE OF THE ARTS	4
QUALITY OF LIFE	4
SELF AWARENESS/PERSONAL GROWTH	4
LEARNING	4
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/IDENTITY	4
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	4
CONTINUITY	4
UNDERSTANDING/COMMUNICATION	4
ARTS DEVELOPMENT	5
EXISTING FACILITIES	5
LOCAL FACILITY NEEDS	5
FACILITY PLANNING –	5
REGIONAL FACILITIES NEEDED	6
FUNDING NEEDS/ISSUES	6
ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS	7
VOLUNTEERS	7
ROLE FOR THE CRD ARTS OFFICE	7
BUSINESS SKILLS TRAINING	7
COOPS	7
OBSTACLES TO ARTS DEVELOPMENT IN THE WESTERN COMMUNITIES	7
PARTNERSHIP/COLLABORATION	8
ARTS EDUCATION	8
BUILDING PARTICIPATION/SUPPORT	8
THE ARTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	9
EVENTS/ACTIVITIES	9
FACILITIES	9
PARTNERSHIPS	9

ARTS DEVELOPMENT	9
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	9
<u>THE ARTS IN THE REGION AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES</u>	<u>10</u>
REGIONAL ROLE	10
LOCAL ROLE	10
SUGGESTED INITIATIVES	10
STRENGTHENING CENTRES THROUGHOUT THE REGION AND THE COMMUNITY	10

Brainstorming on the Vision

"We need to develop a vision statement about the arts in the region – looking ahead to the year 2010. What are some key words and phrases, values and concepts that should be included in a vision statement?"

Inclusive

- cross-fertilization; inclusiveness (co-operation, interdisciplinary, broadmindedness, reflecting different cultural groups, welcoming to all age groups: youth to seniors, tolerance, people with disabilities, respect for individual talents

Diversity

- includes a lot of arts, diverse cultures, societies, multi-disciplinary

Connecting and integrating

- interconnected; 'support for regional partnerships and don't continue to fragment the richness that we have here in the arts already'; complimentary; co-operation between groups; opportunity for being exposed to different art forms; cross-fertilization

Innovative/creative/excellent

- forward looking – artists pushing their art as far as it can go

Continuum and continuity

- continuity

Support and Opportunities

- opportunities for artists to live, train and work here; adequate facilities; well organized; information; that Greater Victoria contributes more money to the arts on a percentage basis than we do now'; 'that we create a sustainable arts community as opposed to a subsidized arts community'; 'that art will one day receive the same emphasis and support in the schools that is now devoted to sports'

Community development/identity

- public awareness; quality of life; expresses local identity and culture; expresses uniqueness of our region

Economic value

- needs an economic component: recognizing the value of arts to our communities;

Other

- who is it for and what is it for; flexibility; strong; essential; minimal bureaucracy (not all accepted this); don't recreate the wheel; reflect the unique nature of our region which is small and green

The Value of the Arts

“Why do you value the arts? What do they contribute to the community, to individuals?”

Quality of life

- provides entertainment and enjoyment; provides pleasure; attracts people to the community to live by adding to the quality of life; improves and enhances the quality of life; to enhance the quality of life in a community, you start by enhancing the quality of life of the individual; nourishing the individual collectively nourishes the community; the arts permeate every aspect of a healthy community including the economics

Self awareness/personal growth

- positive focus for all ages – especially youth

Learning

- supports youth/engages youth/improves ability to learn academically; educates

Community development/identity

- ‘art is the heart, the spirit, and the soul of the community’; the arts add beauty and help identify a community; good for people who live here: develops pride of place; an important part of the community fabric – liken to recreation and how that became a major focus of local government budgets

Economic development

- contributes entrepreneurship/economic development; a clean industry; advantage for tourism/good for tourism – more and more as traditional resources and industrial base goes; provides economic diversity; extremely good tax base (e.g. Wolfville, Nova Scotia)

Continuity

- enrich everyone’s life and experience – share our common heritage

Understanding/communication

- awareness of other people/other cultures and lifestyles

Arts Development

To strengthen the arts in the region, their physical and organizational needs have to be understood. They need to have community participation and support. What are the facility needs (e.g. performing/display areas, storage, meeting space, offices)? What are the organizational needs? (e.g. staff, coordination, funding, volunteer support)? How do you build participation in and support for the arts? Are there particular needs in terms of arts education – in the school system, in the broader community? Who can best meet these needs (e.g. CRD/local municipalities/school districts/recreation departments, the private sector)?

Existing facilities

- **Edward Milne** – a ‘lovely facility’ (350 seats, rehearsal space provided free-of-charge and booked through the community program office); Stage West uses Edward Milne School (feels quality is ‘good’; Sooke Philharmonic – feels acoustics are ‘poor’); community schools are better than regular schools for the arts; Edward Milne may be in jeopardy (the community staff person may not be there in September because of staff cuts at the School District level (it may not continue as a Community Theatre as it is not supported by local arts groups: not seen as economically viable.
- **JDF Rec Centre** – there is nothing
- **Sooke Community Hall** – a ‘barn’ and unsuitable for some arts activities
- **Isabel Reader Theatre** – is not used much now, except occasionally by Blue Moon Theatre – it needs a face lift – it is ‘grubby’
- **Pearson College** – provides some facility space for the Metchosin Summer School of the Arts (need to check this out further)
- **Royal Roads** – has plans (not implemented) for an auditorium/theatre; Convocation Center project – see this in 3 to 5 years
- **Churches** – Church of the Advent (Anglican) in Colwood, churches in Sooke
- **Sooke Arts Show and SEAPARC** – growing in size, reputation, and attendance/ becoming important to have a dedicated space for this event

Local facility needs

- **Dedicated exhibition space** – the library is a start, but very limited; library occasionally hangs work from students; Western Communities has no galleries, (Sooke has two) – new galleries could be private and/or public; local artists provide space now in which to sell local art
- **Teaching space** – for visual arts, dance etc.
- **Rehearsal/class space** – affordable and purpose built – e.g. a sprung floor (wood) for dance; lack of dance performance and rehearsal space in West Shore
- **Performance space** – not a huge theatre, but affordable for our needs
- **Community arts centre** – multi-disciplinary (performance, rehearsal, studio, teaching space) and has its own identity as an ARTS Centre
- **Open bandshell** – Sooke Philharmonic is trying to fundraise for an outdoor performance space – could be portable and move it around the Western Communities
- **Storage** – constantly moving equipment – true for performing arts organizations (e.g. Stage West) and artists; theater groups all need reasonably priced rehearsal and storage space
- **Outdoor space** – limited consideration given to the use and promotion of outdoor space for event and activity arts use

Facility planning

- **Schools** – issues with shared school use (and why the lack of support); union labour costs a major problem/school needs come first
- **Parking and public transportation access** – all facilities created for the arts, or used by the arts, need improvement
- **Libraries** – could become our next new arts resource
- **West Shore Arena** – what consideration of the arts is occurring concerning the proposed West Shore Arena now being discussed and promoted by the Chambers of Commerce
- **Work Point Arts Project** – PPCLI's former Officer's Quarters' are heritage buildings to renovate for artist's studios/ problem is that Ottawa is uncooperative and will not allow for more than a 5-year lease which does not allow for investment security to restore buildings and further develop the site/ the West is again not being listened to by Ottawa
- **Juan de Fuca Rec. Centre** – plans for expansion: they are jammed right now but are considering a new addition; how about dedicated space for a community arts centre
- **Strategies**
 - Inventory of available space in the Western Communities – a role for the arts council; there may be 'more available than you think'; a facility inventory needs to include: Community Hall in Colwood, Juan de Fuca Rec. Centre, Juan de Fuca Seniors Centre, Isabel Reader Theatre (school needs come first, labour costs (union) make it expensive)
 - Incentives for businesses who support the arts – a business tax break
 - Work the demographics and the projected increase in the population – a generation of young families coming up who won't want to take their children into the core for dance theatre music classes
 - Increase awareness and values of local amenities

Regional facilities needed

- a new Art Gallery (downtown) with adequate parking, storage and lighting; Greater Victoria Art Gallery: needs a new, larger location with parking to host traveling road shows, a signature performing arts centre to put Victoria on the map; keep the Royal as well; Victoria's new downtown arena: is it just for sports/if rock groups perform there, will the ticketing be too expensive/ could we have a community art lobby the Gallery

Funding needs/issues

- **Current municipal funding in the Western Communities** – Langford - \$9000 (\$4500 of which is directed to Isabel Reader); Metchosin - \$0; Colwood - \$0; Highlands - \$500; View Royal - \$0
- **Sooke** (first time grant to Sooke CAC from Council of \$2,950; Sooke also obtained a grant-in-aid of \$400 from the CRD, but cancelled this year (?) because Arts Council (the intended recipient) distributed it to other organizations
- **Revenue** – Sooke Philharmonic Orchestra relies on memberships and ticket sales, artists get honoraria; Sooke Philharmonic is playing at All Sooke Days to raise money for the open air performing arts centre; JDF Arts and Crafts Guild do an annual show to raise money; the CACs rely on bingo funding which may be reduced or eliminated;

using volunteers who might be paid customers is a problem for some groups as it can cut revenue; volunteers contribute in-kind SEAPARC has a limited budget to do arts programming; arts budgets need to be a line item on municipal budgets, rather than grants-in-aid

- **Regional issues** – fear that if local municipalities fund the CRD program, the local stuff will not happen; lack funding – little corporate funding, but Victoria is increasingly being viewed as a good place for head offices to locate – option to come to Victoria because of technology base; how do you get the other municipalities on side; use professional presenters and show the impact on the whole community; look at how and what other communities have done to get funding

Organizational needs

- ‘we have the incentive and the passion, we need dollars, we need the tools to convince councils of social and economic benefits, we need to develop the information and learn how to deliver it’

Volunteers

- maxed out and need help; ‘same old horses’ volunteer; Sooke Philharmonic has experienced some volunteer burnout – the Sooke Performing Arts Festival put on for 2 years, will not have a 3rd year because of volunteer burnout; CACs are both suffering from volunteer burnout and have a difficult time recruiting and retaining members who will serve on their Boards; need to limit the amount of time committed so that renewal occurs (new people are brought in); passion attracts volunteers (e.g. Rootsfest); need to recognize the community development aspect of arts activities and designate municipal staff to this work; involve youth more – SEAPARC has 2 youth reps on its Commission/ youths can do such things as design websites for community groups – students need to earn community hours

Role for the CRD arts office

volunteers need technical support and assistance in (co-ordinating volunteers; marketing and promoting the arts to local councils and business groups; demonstrating the pay back (in dollars and in community spirit, educating politicians

Business skills training

- artists and arts groups need course on how to run a business – e.g. how to set up the books; UVIC Student Speakers Forum could maybe provide speakers to help with the business end of being an arts group/artist – their website has a long list of speakers and topics

Coops

- ideal in a small community

Obstacles to arts development in the Western Communities

- **Multi-jurisdictional** – ‘the one organizational issue considered most important and prohibitive for arts development (‘there are 13 municipalities’; Western Communities and Sooke is a very fractured area within the region
- **Maturity** – the West Shore is not artistically mature or developed; ‘retro-art’/conversely, our artists are recognized internationally, but not in their own communities; historically there has been little emphasis place on the arts by the municipalities which is recently changing as tax bases improve due to big-box stores
- **Lack of support** – need to improve the level of education and knowledge of decision makers as they are sometimes void of knowledge and understanding about

the arts/include not just politicians, but municipal staffs and key agencies throughout the region; need to develop an 'arts friendly feeling'; educate the community, but don't make it a chore (use appealing events and activities like the Sooke Fine Arts Show to entice and encourage participation and build community knowledge about the arts

- **Accessibility** (Sooke is not accessible to the rest of the region; 'no one wants to drive that road'
- **Perception** (art is everywhere but it has become elitist'/ art needs to be woken up'
- **Number of groups** – 'do we have too many little theater groups'

Partnership/collaboration

- **Metchosin Summer School of the Arts** has approximate 30 volunteers – 'the friends of'; they also have a part-time person they share with Pearson College
- **Western Communities Arts Council** sponsors the Green Spaces Show (in Metchosin in partnership with the Society for the Preservation of a Rural Metchosin – it has been free, but now that it is well-established they may start to charge
- **Royal Roads** – Rootsfest held there for a couple of years; Garden Show – gaining in reputation; Mothers Day Paint-in

Arts education

- review SD 62 Pace Program; review the First Nation's program currently being developed by the community education center based at Royal Roads; Metchosin Summer School of the Arts – presentations by instructors – an annual event; JDF Recreation – West Shore Summer Festival – 1 day event, includes artists, crafts, stage for youth performances; JDF – offers art classes in Metchosin for both children and adults (students pay for after school lessons); JDF also is part of the regional strings program offered through the Conservatory; JDF – provides space for local artists from the community to hold classes (pottery, painting, drawing)

Building participation/support

- **Locally** – demonstrate to local councils with activities 'in your face' – e.g. Metchosin art show with 800 artists at shows, two years in a row, very close to municipal hall
- **Generally** – consistent message that the arts are a long term investment in all aspects of a community, rather than looking for short term dollar returns; co-ordinate CRD website efforts with Karl Schultz' Cultural Highway website; maintain pursuit of excellence (some local craft fairs with no standards promote themselves as Fine Arts Festivals, tarnishing the integrity of quality; learn from other initiatives, communities: how did they do it, e.g. Salt Spring (pursuit of excellence and no competition (once you are on the island you are part of a captive audience); take the arts into the schools (has a big impact over the long term; marketing/ communication – so people know what is going on; volunteers build support; provide after school art classes – develop an interest in the arts, away from TV; example from England of a woman who would travel from school to school (on appointment) offering art lessons e.g. printmaking, clay work in her van

The Arts and Economic Development

The arts and artists contribute to the economy of the region. What are some practical ways that the arts can make a greater contribution to the region's economy? How can the economic benefits of the arts be spread throughout the region?

Events/activities

- a signature event e.g. the Sooke Fine Arts Show; art reduces crime/focus the graffiti and make a place for it

Facilities

- a signature place e.g. as in Sydney with the Opera House; St. Anne's Academy – build it and they will come – before it was renovated there were no concerts there – now they happen

Partnerships

- need to build co-operation with business: to take artists seriously; the Chambers of Commerce (in the Western Communities) now have no arts representation on their Boards and should have some; display art in private spaces

Arts development

- develop a program/school that can teach the business of the arts – where does Royal Roads fit into this; building a talent pool for festivals, conferences and the movie industry

Economic development

- do we always need to be big, bigger biggest/ size of events and facilities should reflect the community they serve; how will the arts benefit, or how do we bring benefit to the arts (in consideration of a new film studio site being discussed for Colwood/ about 7 days of filming this year will bring @\$5 million US dollars into local economy/Colwood site has been selected but not yet acquired

The Arts in the Region and Local Communities

Some arts organizations play a "region-wide" role; others a more "local area" role. Similarly, public sector support for the arts is both regional and local. What arts organizations/activities play a regional role? What arts organizations/activities are more locally based? What should the role of local government be – at the regional level, at the municipal level? How can the arts play a role in strengthening regional and community centres?

Regional role

- a cost effective service centre for arts organizations (providing photocopying etc.); co-ordinating marketing and communications; encouraging, representing, promoting media coverage; resources that are consistent and reliable so we can plan effectively (operating grants at all levels; CRD needs to review criteria for local funding (need new incentive programs, need to encourage new partnerships; young artists need links/guidance and support in establishing themselves

Local role

- City Hall display space – why not; look at how Saanich does this and deals with issues around security, etc.; integration of the arts into new community development – public art
- Need a part time staff allocation to co-ordinate and REPORT TO COUNCIL ON A REGULAR BASIS; need a mechanism that is accountable to local municipal councils

(**Community Arts Councils** could undertake much of the work that needs to be done BUT need a full time staff person. How about an Arts POD grant to develop a strategic plan to persuade councils of the value of increasing municipal support for the arts, e.g. "Developing our own identity".

Suggested initiatives

- the arts community needs to be more militant and increase awareness; Sussex Building density bonusing – could that be used in the Western Communities

Strengthening centres throughout the region and the community

- THE conundrum: we have lots of artists but no 'facilities'
- two approaches to the creation/distribution of arts activities/events/facilities within the region; 'it would be nice to have/encourage both':

multi-location and multi-use: many small arts facilities/centers located throughout the region to provide very community based programming with an overlay of specialized, one-of-kind arts studios/workshops/programs which cater to unique arts specialties/ example used is Medicine Hat/see 500 seat theater space like Kelowna and Courtney; lets call the model the 'West Shore Arts Center' (locate along Highway #1, perhaps across from Thetis Lake or on the DND lands in Colwood adjacent to the Juan de Fuca Recreation Center/ would incorporate a large gallery, small workshops, about a 100 to 300 seat theater, storage, and affordable studio space

- **one big decent arts center:** in a central location, not necessarily downtown, which is supported by an accessible transportation system/parking/shared between community, non-profit organizations and the larger organizations/built for use by a wide variety of types of art and not-specialized uses/ example cited used is Calgary