

Building Community Through the Arts

The Arts Council of New Westminster

Strategic Plan

2015-2018

Building Community Through the Arts

The Arts Council of New Westminster is passionate about promoting the arts as a vital component of the city's culture.

The arts are integral to the quality of life and unique character of our city, thereby making New Westminster a vibrant place to live and work.

We take great pleasure in sharing this
Strategic Plan 2015-2018
with our community,
the artists and arts organizations we serve.
We hope you will join us to ensure its realization.

**The Board of Directors
The Arts Council of New Westminster
Fall 2015**

Executive Summary

The Arts Council of New Westminster (the Arts Council) aims to work with the City and the community to ensure arts have a vibrant and beneficial presence so as to bring community together through the arts. This document is a description of what the Arts Council plans to do over the next three years to work towards this goal.

The Arts Council has a long history of creating a presence for the Arts in our city. The Arts Council was founded 1967 and incorporated in 1969. Over the years, many people have worked tirelessly and passionately to promote the arts within our community. This Board intends to build on the accomplishments of past Boards, Executive Directors, artists, and city and community members.

The Art Council's Board currently has 10 members. Members were selected for their dedication to and passion for the arts, and for their knowledge and expertise in areas the Arts Council wishes to develop. They have demonstrated passion and commitment to this process and to putting in the time and effort necessary to ensure these goals become a reality.

The past year also saw a change in Executive Director, bringing a new energy and vision. The work of the Executive Director will be an integral part of seeing this strategic plan come to fruition.

Recently, there has been an influx of young people, families and cultures to New Westminster. With that has come a new energy, a commitment to community and a desire to take part in creating an inclusive and cohesive community.

In light of this, the Arts Council has reassessed how it fits into and contributes to the vibrancy of the arts, the people who are part of our community, and the culture of our city.

We are proud of the plan that we are bringing forward. It is our deepest desire that the Arts Council become the hub for the arts, artists and community members in our city. We hope to contribute to the bringing together of the community through the arts.

Vision

To ensure the arts have a vibrant and beneficial presence in the city; to be the catalyst that brings people together through the arts, enhancing the lives of its community members.

The Arts Council began the strategic planning process by envisioning our idea of the perfect Arts Council in a perfect world. Words such as 'vibrant', 'connected', 'engaged', and 'empowered membership' were suggested.

We envisioned an Arts Council that was a key influence and guide for the city's arts-brand recognition and as the go-to and hub for artists and arts programming. We saw an Arts Council viewed as a source of information and support for artists and people in our community and for vibrant, relevant programming.

We envisioned an Arts Council interested in exploring how the arts can draw community together in celebration, joy and passion. We saw an Arts Council that wished to connect with people of all ages, families and diverse cultures. We recognized a need to reach out and support our Aboriginal community and its artists through programs that highlight Aboriginal art and culture.

We envisioned an Arts Council responsive to the need for quality arts programming in our city and in which our community views the Arts Council not as an entity separate from themselves, but one of which they are part of.

Mission

To be the hub for the arts and artists in New Westminster.

The Arts Council has developed this Strategic Plan so that we can meet our vision of being this hub through fostering, supporting and promoting arts for all age groups, cultures and Aboriginal community members. We will do this by:

- Acting as an information and resource center for artistic and cultural projects.
- Facilitating arts and cultural events in New Westminster.
- Providing advocacy and representation of the arts at all civic levels.
- Providing opportunities for community to come together through the enjoyment and experience of the arts and arts events.

Core Values

Inspiration and Artistic Excellence

Providing meaningful experiences in a welcoming environment for visitors, participants and volunteers by offering a variety of high-quality artistic experiences for all ages. Creating opportunities to nurture and support our artists, so they may continue to grow and strive for artistic excellence.

Diversity and Recognition

Creating a broad range of programs and gallery exhibitions to reflect the diversity of cultures in our community, being inclusive and respectful of the Aboriginal culture which has influenced both the history and present day culture of New Westminster.

Partnerships

Involving and reaching out to others in formal, informal, new and established projects and working with the City and other like-minded community groups to ensure an arts presence in all celebrations and events.

Support for our Aboriginal community

Seeking out and providing artistic experiences and support for our Aboriginal community and create an awareness and appreciation of the Aboriginal culture within the community in New Westminster.

Governance:

Use fair and transparent processes that adhere to principles of accountability, independence, merit and equity.

The Arts Council of New Westminster has worked over eight months to develop this Strategic Plan. We have provided opportunities for feedback from our members and community to ensure transparency, relevancy and collaboration.

The Arts Council plans to continue to build and strengthen these relationships to seek input from the community, city, artists and arts organizations in order to remain responsive and relevant.

This plan was presented to City Council and to community members through a Community Engagement meeting and to the Arts Council AGM attendees on November 2015 at Centennial Lodge.

Strategic Directions and Goals

The Arts Council has established several overarching strategic directions to guide the activities of the Council over the next three years and to support our Mission:

To define The Arts Council as the hub for the arts in the city through our programming, events and activities both at The Gallery at Queens Park and within our community.

To continue to develop a Governance Committee structure so as to manage its affairs to ensure that the Arts Council is on a firm footing administratively and financially, thereby assuring sustainability and continuity over the long term.

To build strong relationships with First Nations, all stakeholders and interested groups to further the aims of the Arts Council to ensure its unifying and leading role in bringing community together through the arts.*

*(stakeholders: members of the Arts Council, artists, arts groups, supportive partners, the City of New Westminster, the media, academia, etc.; any person or group that has a stake in the success of the Arts Council of New Westminster)

Goals that have emerged from our Strategic Directions:

Goal 1: Establish the Arts Council as a hub for the arts.

Goal 2: Strengthen the Governance structure.

Goal 3: Increase funding from a variety of sources.

Goal 4: Develop and nurture relationships.

**Goal 1: Establish the Arts Council as a hub for the arts
(The work of the Media and Marketing Committee and
Program Committees)**

The Arts Council holds a unique position within our city; its mandate dictates that we reach out to and engage with community in many ways. It seeks to reinforce that the arts contribute significantly to the quality of life in New Westminster and could become an economic driver in tourism and business development.

The Arts Council is interested in exploring ways arts can be used in our city to draw community together in celebration, joy and passion. Developing a solid infrastructure of performance spaces, studios, and galleries and creating programs and a public presence can help the quality of city life and the connections between residents and the arts.

As these connections are made, we hope our community will come to see the Arts Council not as an entity separate from themselves, but one of which they are part of in a very real way. We see each of us as creative citizens and we hope the advantages of a sustainable arts community will be understood and supported by all in our community, both financially and through involvement with the Arts Council and the arts.

PROGRAMMING:

Strategic Objective: To determine relevancy of Arts Council programs to the community.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Complete a core review of Arts Council programming by June 2016.
- Develop and send out a survey to members and the community at large for feedback, to determine relevancy to the community and to drive the creation future programming. This will be ongoing over the life of this strategic plan.
- To reach out to and build relationship with Aboriginal organizations in the city.

2016-2017

- Develop programming in response to the community's needs and desires and within the financial capabilities of the Arts Council, with a particular focus on age groups, culture groups and members of the Aboriginal community which are not yet being addressed.
- Track numbers of the community who take part in events and programs offered.

2017-2018

- Assess the effectiveness of programming developed to determine relevancy and community engagement.
- Continue to develop programming as funding permits.

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Strategic Objective: To increase human resources to support the work of the Executive Director and programming needs.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Strengthen and expand the volunteer base.
- Make a plan to invite community members onto Board committees to expand amount of work that be accomplished on each committee and to further engage community.

2016-2017

- Establish a funded part time Program Coordinator in collaboration with the Finance and Fundraising Committee.
- Invite community members onto committees.

2017-2018

- Establish a funded part time Gallery Coordinator/Curator in collaboration with the Finance and Fundraising Committee.

Strategic Objective: To create opportunities for community to come together to take part in developing the arts in the city.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Create a Cultural Roundtable to start November 2015 and to be held monthly.
- Create an email list of participants ensuring that representatives of all age groups, cultures, city council, city administrators, business and arts groups are included.
- Work in collaboration with the Alliance for the Arts and Culture to provide resources and promote the Cultural Roundtable in our community.

2016-2017

- Expand Cultural Roundtable to include a one day Art Summit.

2017-2018

- Assess the Cultural Roundtable to determine future actions.

Strategic Objective: Develop a directory of performance spaces, studios and galleries.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Using the Cultural Map and other City of New Westminster resources, compile a listing for our website of performance spaces, studios and galleries. Indicate for each the availability for public use.

2016-2017

- Promote the listings on our website, social media, and partner with the City to indicate the listings on the Cultural Map. Have an online contest where people post photographs of their visits to these places, in order to be entered into a prize draw.

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Utilize our existing Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, and introduce Tumblr to our social media repertoire.

2017-2018

- For the annual Cultural Crawl, sponsor an event tour for people to visit as many of these as possible, and offer a prize to the person or team who visit the most.

Strategic Objective: Demonstrate to the community that the Arts Council is a vital part of their lives through advertising and social media.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Engage a volunteer skilled in social media who will work to extend our reach. Track followers, re-posts, likes, friends, and re-tweets at key points during the year, and chart the results. Try to determine which postings have the most responses.

2016-2017

- Using the data from the previous year, create messaging that reflects “best practices” from the data. Continue to track and chart results. Work with the Finance Committee to raise funds to boost our social media and advertising reach.

2017-2018

- Offer workshops to member artists and member groups, sharing our success, and teaching them how they can utilize this strategy in their own social media.

Strategic Objective: Demonstrate both the social benefits and the economic impact of a sustainable arts industry in New Westminster.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Address this objective as two distinct goals: to identify the known social benefits and the economic impact benefits in our community, by researching how art provides these benefits in New Westminster.

2016-2017

- Compile the research into a white paper and promote it on our website in the media. Present the paper to Tourism New West, The New Westminster Chamber of Commerce, and City Council. Seek letters of endorsement from these agencies.

2017-2018

- Include updated versions of the white paper in our annual report. Set up an annual review process that will result in the creation of an updated version in 3 years.

Goal 2: Strengthen the Governance Structure (The work of the Board as a whole)

In order to contribute to the community the way it would like, the Arts Council needs to develop a strong operating base, including staffing, committees, funding and programming.

The Board created a board committee structure in 2012 and 2013. The Arts Council intends to continue building on the work that has been started by the previous Board. The Arts Council plans to draw in more community members to volunteer and sit on various committees to complete the work of this Strategic Plan and to avoid Board and Executive Director burnout.

The proposed committees developed through the previous Board's work are: Finance, Fundraising, Resources, Volunteer Recruitment, Outreach and Marketing.

From this, we have collapsed the committees into just three until our community involvement in these committees increases: Finance and Fundraising, Membership and Volunteer, Media and Marketing.

The proposed programming committees developed to ensure the viability and quality of programs are: Visual and Craft Arts, Literary Arts, and Performing Arts.

Strategic Objective: To continue to develop strong Governance and Programming committees.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Continue with three Governance Committees: Finance and Fundraising, Membership and Volunteer, and Media and Marketing.
- Continue with the Programming Committees: Visual and Craft Arts, Literary Arts, Performing arts.
- Review and update Terms of Reference for each committee by June 2016.
- Work on strategic objectives and actions from this strategic plan.
- Consider ways to include members from the community on these committees.

2016-2017

- Expand committees by inviting members of the community to sit on committees based on their interest and expertise.
- Revisit committee structure to determine if best to remain with three committees or expand to six committees as originally recommended: Finance, Fundraising, Resources, Volunteer Recruitment, Outreach and Marketing.
- Continue to work on objectives and actions from the strategic plan.

2017-2018

- Complete a core review of committee structure and committee work to determine future directions of the Governance structure.

**Goal 3: Increase funding from a variety of sources
(The work of the Finance and Fundraising Committee and the Grant-writing Sub-Committee)**

To meet our Strategic Planning goals, there needs to be robust funding from a variety of sources. Like many volunteer organizations, it currently depends on project grants and volunteers to fund and carry out activities.

The Arts Council intends to seek additional funding to support its work and increase its capacity. To meet this goal, the Board has created a Finance and Fundraising Committee. The committee will help oversee and manage new and existing revenue streams for both operating and program funding. This committee has also created a Grant Writing Subcommittee to search out grant opportunities.

The Arts Council is committed to fair and transparent administrative processes and adhering to the principles of accountability. This is central to the goal of financial sustainability.

Strategic Objective: To seek long-term, sustainable and diverse revenue streams for Arts Council programming.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Review and enhance existing grant applications that support the existing programming of the Arts Council.
- Research new grant opportunities to support new and existing programming of the Arts Council.
- Develop a plan for expanding fundraising to new sources such as corporate and individual donors.

2016-2017

- Expand grant applications based on research completed in 2015/2016.
- Develop collaborative relationships with corporate and business partners to help finance Arts Council programming.
- Identify and seek out individual donors to help fund Arts Council programming.

2017-2018

- Monitor revenue streams and seek to improve, expand and/or adapt fundraising activities to support new and existing programming.

Strategic Objective: To obtain funds to support additional staffing for the daily operations of the Arts Council.

Actions:

2015-2016

- To identify new sources of funding to hire temporary, short-term staff to support the operation of The Gallery in Queen's Park and spring and summer programming.
- Cost out and identify funding sources for hiring a permanent, part-time Programming

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Coordinator to oversee new and ongoing Arts Council programming by 2017.

2016-2017

- Apply for grants and secure funds for hiring of a Programming Coordinator
- Develop a budget and identify funding sources for hiring a permanent, part-time Gallery Coordinator to manage The Gallery in Queen's Park by 2018.

2017-2018

- Obtain funding to hire a Gallery Coordinator to oversee and manage activities in The Gallery in Queen's Park.
- Monitor revenue streams and seek to improve, expand and/or adapt fundraising activities to support staffing needs.

Strategic Objective: To secure funding for new or improving existing Arts Council assets.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Research and apply for grants to support new flooring and new lighting for The Gallery in Queen's Park.
- Identify additional funding for a new logo and signage.
- Identify additional future capital improvements and needs for the Arts Council for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018. (sound system, phone upgrades to include conferencing, computing and printing upgrades).
- Identify grants, individual donors and corporate sponsors to assist with the above and future capital improvements.

2016-2017

- Seek grants and/or donations from individual and corporate donors to complete recommended 2016/2017 capital improvements/needs.

2017-2018

- Seek grants and individual and corporate donations to completed recommended 2017/2018 capital improvements/needs.
- Monitor capital needs and revenue streams and seek to expand and/or adapt fundraising activities to support capital requirements.

Goal 4: Develop and nurture relationships
(The work of the Membership, Outreach and Volunteer Committee)

Key to the sustainability and vibrancy of the Arts Council is the support and involvement of the community and the arts community, including artists and arts groups and organizations in music, theatre, media arts, dance, film, literature and visual arts (including crafts).

The Arts Council needs to meet regularly with the arts community to establish relationships, provide support and advocacy and develop program and events that are relevant and responsive to the community's needs and desires.

In addition, the Arts Council intends to develop and nurture relationships with city employees, organizations and other non-profits (for example, staff at the Anvil Centre, city committees such as the Arts Commission, Tourism, Chamber of Commerce etc.). The Executive Director has successfully taken a lead in developing these relationships and we are anticipating this growing even stronger as we move forward.

Strategic objective: Attract and retain members to enable us to expand our reach better support our community.

Actions:

2015-2016

- Define, finalize and promote membership benefits and tiers by end of 2015
 - Conduct and analyze results of a community survey related to membership benefits by the end of 2015.
 - Identify opportunities for free or low-cost membership benefits.
 - Once benefits have been finalized, promote on website and social media.
- Increase membership by 15% by November 2016 as compared to November 2015.
 - As a Board, talk about membership benefits at networking and community events.
 - Encourage membership renewal through emails, social media and word of mouth.
 - Encourage new memberships through emails, social media and word of mouth.
- Reinforce the membership database/system to allow for easy access to membership statistics by February 2016.
 - Work with Executive Director to understand existing system and identify needs and gaps.
 - Research options and identify next steps.
- By November 2016, explore partnerships with businesses that will offer benefits and discounts as part of a program for ACNW members.
 - Talk to local businesses to determine interest in partnering with the ACNW and the type of offers they'd be willing to provide.
 - Identify at least 10 businesses able to participate.
- By November 2016, research and determine what an annual art summit should involve.
 - Talk to other organizations who have hosted art summits and get advice, feedback and information.

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- Research online to see what similar events there are and what the events are like.
- Talk to ACNW members about what they would like an art summit to include.

2016-2017

- Increase membership numbers by 15% by November 2017 as compared to November 2016.
- Implement a program that offers discounts at participating businesses for members by February 2017.
 - Use research gathered in 2015-2016 to finalize and implement details on this program.
 - Name the program.
 - Develop a package of discounts for members and promote it through email, social media, website and word of mouth.
 - Recognize and thank participating businesses for their contribution to supporting the arts community.
- Host a membership drive or campaign aimed at recognizing existing members and recruiting new ones by December 2016.
 - Determine theme and approach for campaign.
 - Develop key messages.
 - Promote and implement.
- Host an arts summit by February 2017.
 - Use research gathered in 2015-2016 to determine details on what this event will entail.
- Host at least four networking/professional development opportunities for members by May 2017.

2017-2018

- Continue to build on work of previous years to sustain and grow membership by 10%.
- Host a membership drive or campaign aimed at recognizing existing members and recruiting new ones by December 2017.
- Identify and host events for members.
 - Use lessons learned from previous year's arts summit and networking/professional development needs to determine events for 2017-2018.

Strategic objective: Better leverage volunteer efforts to support programming and initiatives.

Actions

2015-2016

- Research options for recruiting volunteers by February 2016.
 - Identify groups that are potential sources of volunteers, the best way to reach them, and what skills and interests they have.
 - Identify and attend events where volunteers might be recruited such as volunteer fairs.
- Develop a system for assigning volunteer opportunities by February 2016.
 - Talk to other organizations to see how they organize and assign volunteer jobs.

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- Evaluate what we're doing now and identify opportunities and challenges.
- Decide on the best option for our needs and implement it.
- Assign a volunteer coordinator by March 2016.
 - Work with Executive Director to define role.
 - Work with Executive Director to identify a volunteer who would do well in this role.
 - Recruit and train volunteer coordinator.

2016-2017

- Develop sustainable continued growth of our membership base, increasing membership numbers by 15% by November 2017 as compared to November 2016.
- Identify new volunteer opportunities in January 2017.
 - Work with Executive Director to reassess any needs and opportunities for support.
- Ensure volunteers feel valued and supported.
 - Develop a system to show appreciation for volunteers by May 2017 such as letters or certificates at various milestones.

2017-2018

- Ensure volunteer efforts are being recognized regularly.
- Continue to assess opportunities to recruit and assign volunteers.