



EDMONTON ARTS COUNCIL

Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan to Transform Arts and Heritage Annual Update

RECOMMENDATION

That the May 16, 2022, Edmonton Arts Council report EXT00901, be received for information.

Report Purpose

Information only.

Executive Summary

- In year three of [*Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan to Transform Arts & Heritage In Edmonton*](#), the Edmonton Arts Council (EAC) has continued implementation of the plan with a focus on priority Actions.
- The Actions undertaken have included initiatives, interventions, programs and activities that: brought arts engagement to neighbourhoods across Edmonton; re-envisioned investment programs for organizations with a focus on capacity-building, innovation and resilience; designed and launched the SmartSimple online portal to support the management of grants, including configuring the system to support public art commissioning, to more efficiently and effectively track and measure the impact of investments; finalization and approval by City Council of a new City of Edmonton Public Art Policy, and the completion of an organizational review to more effectively align operations to implement *Connections & Exchanges*.
- *Connections & Exchanges* also contains a Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework, which guides the EAC's research to evaluate these initiatives, interventions, programs and activities, and to measure their impact. In 2021, the EAC developed a Research and Data Plan that aligns with *Connections & Exchanges* and includes both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to conduct the research and measure impact.
- In early 2022, the EAC began to implement the Research and Data Plan including establishing baseline evaluations of perceptions in the community through a survey project,

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understanding community experience through focus group studies, reorganizing historical data, and developing interactive online tools to support planning and reporting.

- Recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 has continued to be an area of focus for the EAC as we have pivoted to adapt to the challenges to artists and arts organizations.
- The response has included our participation in a project to track audience attitudes to gathering and engaging, sustaining funding for arts and festival organizations, and a series of more than 50 COVID-19 safe outdoor events to bring arts engagement and vibrancy to neighbourhoods across Edmonton, and in particular, the downtown core.
- As public health measures began to be lifted and we saw public presentation of work becoming more feasible, we partnered with the City of Edmonton on an Arts Presentation Fund for COVID-19 Recovery, which we launched in spring 2022. We fully expect the impact of this fund over the next year will assist in providing employment to artists, including Indigenous and equity-seeking practitioners, support vibrancy and economic recovery for downtown venues, festivals and presenters, and bring arts activities to diverse Edmonton neighbourhoods.

REPORT

Progress on Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan To Transform Arts & Heritage In Edmonton

Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan To Transform Arts and Heritage In Edmonton is the City of Edmonton's vision and strategy to drive transformation of the arts and heritage sectors. It seeks to infuse culture, arts, and heritage into every aspect of the civic fabric, support cultural makers and interpreters, and grow Edmonton's arts and heritage audiences.

The plan consists of three Ambitions or visions for Edmonton to achieve by 2029. Each Ambition is further articulated as a series of eight Aims – tangible outcomes or changes that the plan strives to generate. Each of those outcomes is backed by the plan's 55 strategic Actions to guide implementation efforts (23 specific Actions are assigned to the Edmonton Arts Council). Together, the plan's Ambitions, Aims, and Actions spell out the vision and destination of the plan, and provide the roadmap that will result in the transformational change of Edmonton's cultural landscape.

At the February 17, 2021, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, the EAC reported to City Council about our progress on eight of the 23 Actions assigned to our organization (see Attachment 2). Since our last update to Council, we have made further progress on these eight Actions, as well as advancing an additional six Actions.

Along with progress on 14 Actions, 2021 was a significant year for public art in Edmonton, building on Edmonton's status as a hub for "Extraordinary Creation and Reputation." Two works in the City of Edmonton Public Art Collection were recognized internationally – *Agent Crystalline* by Marc Fornes

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received a CODAward (Collaboration Of Design + Art), and *À l'ouest (ÎNÎW) River Lot 11* was the only Canadian site included in Destination Art (Art Essentials) by Amy Dempsey, published by renowned art publishers Thames & Hudson. Fourteen new artworks were added to the collection, bringing the total number of public artworks in the City of Edmonton Public Art Collection to 283, with over 30 projects in progress, to be completed in the coming years.

Implementation in 2021 and 2022

Ambition: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim: Edmonton's neighbourhoods come alive with meaningful and relevant opportunities for participation and engagement.

Actions:

- *Conduct surveys to map local demographics, cultural events and participation to effectively deploy resources.*
 - The EAC developed a survey project to understand the perceptions and experiences of three groups of stakeholders: artists, arts and festival organizations, and the general public. The main topics of the survey include participation in the arts, perceptions of the arts ecology, experience, understanding, awareness and satisfaction with the EAC and its programs and services, and demographic information. The surveys will be conducted longitudinally and consistently to inform EAC's business planning and policy development. The surveys were developed in 2021 and fielded in early 2022.
- *Digitally promote and amplify neighbourhood arts activities to connect and celebrate cultural diversity.*
 - In spring, summer and fall 2021, we hosted socially distant, pop-up events in neighbourhoods across the city, which brought arts engagement to a wide range of communities. Festival in a Box parades happened in 11 Edmonton neighbourhoods, as well as additional community parade events hosted by the Street Performers and in Boyle Street, supported by the EAC. Our community box office and store, TIX on the Square, held six pop-up UP on the Square gallery events on their rooftop in Churchill Square, and with the support of the City of Edmonton, EAC hosted 34 Summer City Comeback community concerts, with a focus on downtown revitalization through programming in the downtown core and surrounding areas.
 - In celebration of our 25th anniversary, the EAC hosted a city-wide scavenger hunt, encouraging active civic engagement and participation in cultural activities. More than 1000 Edmontonians shared their experiences at local galleries, public art sites, festivals and other arts events for the opportunity to win art experiences, such as family tickets to the Citadel, membership to the AGA, prize packs from local art collectives, and more.
 - In Q1 2022, we transitioned our popular Swing 'n Skate programming to an outdoor-only, COVID-19-safe event at City Hall Plaza called Ice Grooves. The series featured cultural groups and DJs hosting themed events such as Bollywood on Ice, Soca and Skate with Cariwest and more. On average, approximately 80 individuals attended each event, bringing

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families, arts communities and newcomer groups to downtown Edmonton on Friday and Saturday evenings throughout January, February and March.

- *Work with City Administration, local networks and businesses to cultivate, and support community-based artistic activities*
 - EAC partnered with the City of Edmonton, Downtown Business Association and Explore Edmonton on two transitory public art projects in the downtown core as part of Downtown Spark. These installations drew more than 30,000 people to Downtown Edmonton and sparked discussion, curiosity and excitement.

Ambition: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim: Edmonton's neighbourhoods come alive with meaningful and relevant opportunities for participation and engagement.

Actions:

- *Engage with organizations that support community-based artistic programming and cultural expression and engage youth through local arts and learning activities.*
 - EAC partnered with the Mitchell Art Gallery at MacEwan University, artist duo Big Rock Candy Mountain, and grade six teachers and students from John A. McDougall school to produce *POPOPOPOPOP*, a drinkable publication dedicated to bubbles-as-scores, carbonation-as-percussion and the many other connections between pop and sound. The artists brought in local and international musicians and sound artists to work with the students to study sound, and the students created the flavors. The soda pop was manufactured by the local beverage company Boocho, and all proceeds of sales are returned to arts programming at the school.
- *Enhance citizen engagement of the public art collection with artist led events and presentations.*
 - The EAC presented regularly to elementary school classrooms across the city through City Hall School. Presentations focused on artists and artworks from the Public Art Collection located in neighborhoods near the schools, as well as instructing the students in participatory art interpretation.
- *Contribute actively to placemaking that includes cultural landscape, natural history, built history, object, language, and story.*
 - Within Downtown Spark, the EAC supported a project curated by Latitude 53's Cheyenne Rain LeGrande. The project, *Mamanaw Pekiskwewina | Mother Tongues*, celebrated the ancestral languages of Treaty 6 by visibly embedding seven Indigenous languages from this land throughout downtown amiskwacîwâskahikan, physically reclaiming space for their revitalization.
 - Through the Yorath House Artist in Residence program, the EAC and the City of Edmonton hosted six artists in 2021. In early 2022, artists in residence Adriana Davies and Marlena Wyman focused their residency term on researching, writing and painting stories from Edmonton's history, in particular the history of Yorath House, its architecture and

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surrounding areas. Their research was and will be presented to the public via blog articles and artist talks hosted jointly by EAC and the Edmonton Heritage Council.

Ambition: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim: Arts and heritage leaders are actively engaged in civic planning and implementation.

Actions:

- *Work with City administration to explore the development of a “Cultural Placemaking” policy to support, anchor and celebrate artistic and heritage activity in the public realm.*
- The EAC worked with City administration, specifically with the department of Urban Planning and Economy on the renewal of Council Policy C458D - Public Art to Enhance Edmonton's Public Realm. The revised policy and procedures were approved by Edmonton City Council on August 16, 2021. This policy replaces the previous four policies C458C, C547, C548, and C549 and is in alignment with the Ambitions of *Connections & Exchanges*, *ConnectEdmonton*, and *The City Plan*. The policy commits to comprehensive and sustainable management of the public art program and the collection, providing curatorial and artistic vision, and distributing art throughout the city. It invests in public art to support the local economy and to help build an attractive, healthy, and thriving city where creative spaces emerge and art, design, and culture flourish. The policy is guided by the principles of public visibility and accessibility, diversity and inclusion, public art appreciation, and city-wide impact.
- The EAC advised City administration on revisions to the Statuary Policy (City Policy C459) to approach city-wide planning, care, and management of statuary, monuments, and commemoratives in the public realm, in line with the public art policy, C458D. The aim is to create a policy and procedures to guide relationship-building, decision-making, and lead to impactful outcomes for the City and the citizens.
- The EAC and the City of Edmonton's Indigenous Relations Office formed the Grandin Working Circle that included the Edmonton Heritage Council, Francophonie Jeunesse de L'Alberta, Société historique francophone de l'Alberta, community members, Elders, residential school survivors, leaders from the Indigenous communities, and the original artist, that led to the removal of the Bishop Grandin mural at the former Grandin Station. This work was the beginning of revisioning the LRT station that was recently renamed Government Centre.
- EAC staff have also partnered with City administration to contribute to projects such as the Winter City Strategy, Downtown Vibrancy Strategy, Corporate Climate Leaders, and the Orange Hub. The EAC also represents the arts community on the Explore Edmonton and Downtown Business Association boards.

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Ambition: A Hub for Extraordinary Creation and Reputation

Aim: Dynamic exchanges of ideas and expertise occur between Edmonton's arts and heritage sector and the world.

Actions:

- *Work with federal and provincial arts agencies to support Edmonton artists and arts organizations to develop new markets nationally and internationally.*
 - EAC participated in the Canadian Arts Summit (CAS) which brings together performing arts organizations, service networks, advocacy coalitions and funders to share best practices, advocacy initiatives and networking. The CAS is organized by Business for the Arts in collaboration with the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.
 - The EAC is a regular participant in the Alberta Tri-Level meetings of arts funders, including multiple federal and provincial agencies

Ambition: A Hub for Extraordinary Creation and Reputation

Aim: Diverse platforms for collaboration exist within Edmonton that allow artistic and heritage communities to connect, create and collaborate.

Actions:

- *Convene the arts community to share expertise, promote collaboration and networking.*
 - In 2021, the Edmonton Arts Council held 16 online professional development opportunities, welcoming 870 participants. These sessions focused on topics including the use of Zoom for live performances, taxes for self-employed artists, pricing your visual art, finding revenue streams as a poet, filmmaking with an intersectional understanding, and incorporating other perspectives into your writing. We offer online support and information sessions on grants and public art programs and held more than 100 one-on-one sessions with individual artists.
 - The Yorath House artist residency project encourages collaboration between artist pairs, rather than hosting solo artists. The four pairs hosted in 2021 and early 2022 included theatre artists, visual artists and artists working across disciplines.

Ambition: A Thriving and Well-Funded Arts and Heritage Ecosystem

Aim: Arts and heritage practitioners are economically resilient.

Actions:

- *Increase investment in artists working in a wide range of art forms and practices to foster experimentation, creative collaborations with community and public presentations.*
 - Direct granting budgets in support of individual artists increased three-fold from 2018-2022. Those investments are now budgeted for \$3 million in 2022, or approximately 21.5 per cent of the EAC's overall granting. This supports the economic resiliency of artists by investing in their ability to independently create, which in turn allows them to leverage other investments and partnerships within the ecosystem.

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- The EAC partnered with Pattison Outdoor Advertising and the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts to showcase 41 artworks by artists with developmental disabilities. The artworks were displayed on posters throughout Edmonton's LRT system, turning the city into an art gallery for 24 weeks.
- *Increase investment in artists and arts professionals from equity seeking groups.*
 - The Equity and Access program budget has steadily increased since 2018. In 2021, \$500,500 in funding was committed to 38 projects. In 2022 that commitment is budgeted for \$600,000. These investments support their independent work, which can then be leveraged to future economic resiliency.
 - In 2021, the EAC launched an Access Support Pilot program to assist artists who have issues accessing EAC application processes due to language, disability, or other barriers by providing them with funds to engage support from professionals such as typists, translators or interpreters.
 - In every grant assessment process and report to the EAC Board, equity and inclusion considerations are addressed. As well, every peer assessment panel is recruited and appointed with an emphasis on Indigenous and equity considerations to ensure that expertise on diverse artforms and artistic practices exists on peer assessment panels.

Ambition: A Thriving and Well-Funded Arts and Heritage Ecosystem

Aim: New and existing arts and heritage organizational capacity enables innovation and builds resilience in the sector.

Actions:

- *Build funding mechanisms for arts and festival organizations with an emphasis on multi-year operating grants; annual programming grants; commissions, co-productions and co-presentations of work by artists, ad-hoc groups, collectives and ensembles; dissemination and artistic exchange of work through tours, exhibitions and digital technologies; and, hosting artists and organizations from across Canada and the globe.*
 - The Grants Review and Transitions (GRT) Committee, a Committee of the EAC Board, oversaw the planning, development and recommendation of new investment structures to the EAC Board in alignment with the Aims and Actions outlined in *Connections & Exchanges*. The GRT Committee includes EAC Board members and members from the arts community.
 - Following an extensive series of consultations in the spring and summer of 2021, the first round of new multi-year operating, annual operating, and annual programming streams for organizations launched in the fall. The operating programs represent a significant change from past practice, reducing the emphasis on annual written grant applications and moving to a more relationship-based structure based on impact. The first outcomes of those programs are before City Council in early May 2022, see report EXT01075.
 - Beginning in 2019 as a result of this Action, and re-launching in 2022, the Connections & Exchanges Initiatives program invests in projects that allow Organizations to develop new

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capacities working together with Edmonton artists and arts workers in creation, skill development and other innovation for the sector.

- *Invest in EAC operations to develop staff capabilities and technological infrastructure to manage investments, public art and conservation projects and customize digital platforms to measure and demonstrate the value and impact of the arts.*
 - The EAC's SmartSimple online platform was launched in 2021 and to date has managed more than 500 artist project applications and 180 organizational submissions in support of the suite of new investment programs.
 - The EAC is nearing completion of an organizational review and has redesigned and/or reorganized many existing staff roles and units. We have begun recruitment for several positions, many of which became vacant during COVID-19 and as the work evolved, and a few of which are new, in response to priorities identified by the organizational review process.
 - In 2022, the EAC will undertake development of a new website to better demonstrate the value and impact of the arts, as well as furthering key actions such as digital promotion of the arts and engaging the public with the public art collection. The anticipated launch of this website is Q4 2022.
- *Provide change capital to cultural organizations to retool and reorganize to meet the needs of a rapidly changing city.*
 - In 2021 the EAC piloted work in this area, which has led to the newly launched Invent & Adapt program. Invent & Adapt provides a flexible path for the EAC to support and participate in focused development of organizational capacities, through change capital.

COVID-19 Response

- The EAC worked in partnership with funders in Edmonton and Calgary and the Stone Olafson research group on "The New Experience Economy" project to track Alberta audiences ever-shifting attitudes to gathering and engaging during the COVID-19 pandemic, and hosted virtual sessions with the arts community to share those results. The results are available for arts organizations to use to plan their post-COVID-19 events and seasons. Those organizations who have accessed the results so far have reported high levels of satisfaction.
- The EAC hosted additional taxation workshops for artists that addressed the tax implications of working from home, loss of income and CERB benefits, as well as a session for organizations about arts governance in a pandemic. This sharing of expertise and knowledge helped provide frameworks for future organizational change and capacity, as well as tools to support the economic resiliency of artists.
- In response to the impacts of COVID-19 on the arts sector, the City of Edmonton allocated funds from the 2022 budget for artists to present and perform their work. The Arts Presentation Fund for COVID Recovery will be managed by the Edmonton Arts Council (EAC) in 2022-2023 to support artist fees and payments related to presentation and performance,

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encourage downtown revitalization and neighbourhood vibrancy, provide opportunities for artists from equity seeking groups, and aid in Edmonton’s economic recovery from COVID-19.

- The EAC continues to plan for outdoor events to bring arts engagement to neighborhoods across the city in summer 2022.

Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Framework

Edmonton Arts Council (EAC) introduced its performance measurement system in April 2022 after a series of data collection initiatives were implemented. The intention of introducing the performance measurement system is to monitor progress, demonstrate success, and understand impact as the EAC implements *Connections & Exchanges*.

All data collection initiatives were developed in alignment with *Connections & Exchanges* both operationally and strategically. The data can be pulled directly to measure corporate performance against the goals.

There are a total of nine goals, the first eight are reflective and representative of the eight Aims defined in *Connections & Exchanges* and the ninth goal is stand alone to understand impact. Below is the breakdown of the nine goals with sample measures that construct the performance measurement system. The final report with all measures will be produced on an annual basis.

Note: for all measures, the performance targets and baselines are under development. The total list of measures will evolve while the EAC is implementing, completing or understanding Actions under each Aim.

Ambition: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim: Edmonton’s neighborhoods come alive with meaningful and relevant opportunities for participation and engagement.

Goal 1: Promoting community participation and engagement.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2021	2022
Edmonton offers great arts and cultural experiences	2021 Artists survey Q13	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	79%	n/a
How would you rate the quality of overall arts and cultural events, festival, activities and facilities in the city	2021 Public survey Q14	Biennial	% very good or good	73%	n/a

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Ambition: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim: Edmontonians feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to peoples, places and stories.

Goal 2: Promoting community' sense of belonging and connectedness.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2021	2022
Has your feeling of being connected to the arts become stronger, stayed about the same, or become weaker	2021 Public survey Q8	Biennial	% become stronger or stayed about the same	50%	n/a
How satisfied are you with the variety of ways you can connect with Edmonton's arts and culture	2021 Public survey Q15	Biennial	% very satisfied or somewhat satisfied	56%	n/a

Ambition: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim: Arts and Heritage leaders are actively engaged in civic planning and implementation.

Goal 3: Actively engaging City planning and strategies.

There is no numerical measure for this goal. The measurement will be conducted through qualitative research methods.

Ambition: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim: Conditions are in place to remove barriers for all Edmontonians to participate in cultural experiences.

Goal 4: Removing barriers and promoting accessibility.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2021	2022
How would you rate the easy access to arts and cultural events, festivals, activities, and facilities	2021 Public survey Q14	Biennial	% very good or good	65%	n/a

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While accessing the EAC's resources and services, or applying for EAC's programs and support in the past 12 months, do you feel you faced additional barriers due to your identify	2021 Artists survey Q18	Annual	% no barriers	56%	n/a
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Ambition: A Hub for Extraordinary Creation and Reputation

Aim 5: Dynamic exchanges of ideas and expertise occur between Edmonton's arts and heritage sector and the world.

Goal 5: Promoting international exchanges and reputation.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2021	2022
Edmonton offers great opportunities for organizations to exchange ideas and expertise nationally and internationally	2021 Organization survey Q13	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	49%	n/a
Edmonton's arts and culture has a great international reputation	2021 Artists survey Q13	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	36%	n/a

Ambition: A Hub for Extraordinary Creation and Reputation

Aim: Diverse platforms for collaboration exist within Edmonton that allow artistic and heritage communities to connect, create and collaborate.

Goal 6: Building diverse platforms for collaboration.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2021	2022
Edmonton offers sufficient physical platforms for artistic communication between the arts community and arts audiences	2021 Organization survey Q12	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	50%	n/a

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You had sufficient opportunities to interact, gather, share ideas, and learn from the local arts community	2021 Artists survey Q12	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	42%	n/a
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Ambition: A Thriving and Well-Funded Arts and Heritage Ecosystem

Aim: Arts and heritage practitioners are economically resilient.

Goal 7: Promoting practitioners' economic resilience.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2021	2022
Grants distribution by programs, disciplines, demographic characteristics etc.	EAC system data	Annual	\$ amount % distribution	n/a*	n/a
Percentage of gross personal income from artistic practice	2021 Artists survey Q33	Annual	Mean %	43%	n/a
Percentage of artists' practice spending funded by EAC	2021 Artists survey Q34	Annual	Mean %	12%	n/a

* Data to be pulled in December 2022.

Ambition: A Thriving and Well-Funded Arts and Heritage Ecosystem

Aim: New and existing arts and heritage organizational capacity enables innovation and builds resilience in the sector.

Goal 8: Supporting innovation and resilience building of arts and heritage organizations.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2021	2022
Grants distribution by programs, disciplines etc.	EAC system data	Annual	\$ amount % distribution	n/a*	n/a

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Funding from the Edmonton Arts Council supported your organization's cost with reliable revenue	2021 Organization survey Q1	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	87%	n/a
Municipal proportion of provincial cultural GDP	Creative City Network of Canada	Annual	% municipal proportion	33% **	n/a

*Data to be pulled in December 2022.

**Data is available up to year 2019.

Goal 9: Creating positive changes and impacting the everyday lives of Edmontonians.

This goal is beyond Aims of *Connections & Exchanges* and is stand alone.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2021	2022
Satisfaction with the Edmonton Arts Council's work, programs and services	2021 Public survey Q25	Biennial	% very satisfied or somewhat satisfied	74%	n/a
In general, you believe that the EAC's programs create positive impact and value to the arts community	2021 Artist survey Q1	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	93%	n/a
The EAC can usually recognize and address community needs in a timely manner	2021 Organization survey Q2	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	66%	n/a

ATTACHMENTS

1. *Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan to Transform Arts & Heritage In Edmonton*
2. Edmonton Arts Council report CR_6593