



PROGRESS ON CONNECTIONS & EXCHANGES: A 10-YEAR PLAN TO TRANSFORM ARTS & HERITAGE IN EDMONTON - 2024 ANNUAL UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That the June 17, 2024, Edmonton Arts Council report EXT02503, be received for information.

Report Purpose

Information only.

Executive Summary

- The implementation of *Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan to Transform Arts & Heritage In Edmonton* is at its halfway point.
- Major accomplishments in the first five years of the plan include:
 - Progress made on all eight aims of the 10-year plan, with a demonstrated impact on over three-quarters of the 35 actions assigned to the EAC.
 - Development and implementation of a new portfolio of grant programs for artists and arts organizations, resulting in the investment of more than \$14 million in grant funding per year into the local arts ecosystem, including increased investment in equity-seeking artists via our Equity & Access grant program, to a new record of more than \$800,000 in 2023.
 - Reorganization of the Edmonton Arts Council (EAC) staff teams to support a rapidly changing arts ecosystem, including the development of new positions in the areas of Research & Impact to ensure evidence-based decision making, an Indigenous Relations Advisor and a manager of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA), and expansion of the operational team, all while maintaining annual management and administration costs under 10% over the last five years.
 - Rapid response to Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions, resulting in new programs and opportunities for artists and widespread community-based arts programming through both the EAC (Green Shack Shows, Festival in a Box parades) and the Arts Presentation Fund for Covid Recovery.

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- Implementation of new technology systems to streamline granting and public art applications (SmartSimple).
- Launch of a new edmontonarts.ca website, allowing for improved access to EAC services, better navigation, and increased engagement with local arts events and the public art collection.
- Creation of a longitudinal survey project to assess and respond to the needs of the arts community and the general public.
- Development of a revised Public Art Policy (C458D) which emphasizes the principles of public visibility and accessibility, diversity and inclusion, public art appreciation, and city-wide impact.
- Improved services for artists and arts organizations via the Edmonton Arts Council (EAC) Shop & Services in Churchill Square, including expanded pop-ups and events in collaboration with community groups, and online ticketing newly integrated into edmontonarts.ca.

REPORT

Background

The EAC is the City of Edmonton's primary partner in arts and culture. Since 1995, we have supported, promoted and inspired the arts in our city. With an annual investment of over \$14 million in more than 305 artists, including 46 collectives (representing more than 140 additional artists), 194 organizations, and the greater arts community, the EAC raises the profile of Edmonton arts and culture and brings the arts to everyday life. The EAC welcomes the contributions of artists from multiple communities, backgrounds and traditions, serving as a springboard for emerging and established artists alike – while showcasing the endless variety and value of art in Edmonton.

The work we do includes:

- Events – supporting, presenting, and promoting events and festivals in the city.
- Public Art – transforming our urban landscape with engaging and vibrant art pieces for the enjoyment of all.
- Shop & Services – formerly known as TIX on the Square, our box office and art shop in Churchill Square connects Edmontonians and visitors to the local arts community.
- Investments – inspiring and funding artistic work of all sizes and scopes, with grants, calls to artists, and other opportunities available to individuals and organizations.
- Special projects – promoting a diverse and thriving arts community with our artists in residence, community programming, and City of Edmonton Poet Laureate.
- Research & Impact – fostering a culture of evidence-informed decision-making and demonstrating short and long-term change in Edmonton's arts ecology.

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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. The plan consists of three Ambitions or visions for Edmonton to achieve by 2029. The Ambitions are further articulated with a series of eight Aims – tangible outcomes or changes that the plan strives to generate. Each of those outcomes is driven by the plan's 55 strategic Actions to guide implementation efforts. Of the 55 Actions, the EAC has sole responsibility for 24 Actions and shares responsibility for 11 Actions

In 2021, 2022, and 2023, the EAC reported to City Council about our progress on 25 Actions. Since our last update to Council, we have made further progress on 22 of those 25 reported Actions, as well as activating an additional three Actions this reporting period. Since the start of the 10-Year Plan, the EAC has made progress on 28 of the 35 Actions that it has sole and shared responsibilities for.

Connections & Exchanges was developed at the same time as *ConnectEdmonton*. The Ambitions, Aims and Actions that make up *Connections & Exchanges* align with the vision, principles and goals emerging from that process, in particular the goals around Healthy City, Urban Places, and Regional Prosperity. Likewise, *The City Plan* acknowledges the importance of art and heritage in making Edmonton a city that fosters wellbeing and connection as people celebrate unique cultures and heritage in the outcomes:

- I want to BELONG and contribute
- I want to LIVE in a place that feels like home
- I want opportunities to THRIVE
- I want to be able to CREATE and innovate

Implementation in 2023 and 2024

Ambition One: Alive with Arts and Heritage

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

Actions:

- **(1.1)** *Conduct surveys to map local demographics, cultural events and participation to effectively deploy resources.*
 - The EAC survey project is ongoing and helps the EAC 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.
 - Results of each annual survey are posted to <https://www.edmontonarts.ca/about/research-impact> and are shared with the community via the EAC newsletter and other communications platforms.

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- **(1.2)** *Digitally promote and amplify neighbourhood arts activities to connect and celebrate cultural diversity.*
 - In June 2023, the EAC launched the new edmontonarts.ca website and rebrand. The website includes a community calendar, where artists and organizations can submit their upcoming events to be promoted by the EAC. On average, the EAC receives 45 submissions a month to the community calendar, along with featuring EAC events and events ticketed by EAC Shop & Services. The calendar has been one of the top-visited pages on the website and has contributed to community awareness of arts and culture events, in particular culturally diverse and free programming in Edmonton.
 - In 2024, Winter City Weekend programming and skate rentals were expanded. Skate rentals were available daily at the City Hall rink, and more than 2600 rentals were managed from December to the end of January (not including New Year's Eve). Weekends were supposed to feature partnerships with cultural groups and DJs such as Bollywood on Ice, Cariwest, 5 Artists 1 Love, and more, until the end of February. While these events were ongoing, approximately 150 individuals attended each event, bringing families, art communities and newcomers to downtown Edmonton on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons. However, due to the incident at City Hall on January 23, 2024, and subsequent security revisions, access to City Hall was limited and our team pivoted to reschedule winter programming in alignment with community events, including at Westmount Community League, West Jasper Sherwood Community League, and in the Arts District on Family Day.
 - The EAC's Family Day Extravaganza in the Arts District was extremely successful at bringing families downtown for arts and entertainment. At the Winspear, more than 300 people learned about drumming with Rhythm Rhythm Rhythm. In the AGA lobby more than 100 attendees enjoyed Hula Hoop Circus. Lineups stretched down the block at the AGA for their free admission day and over 2600 people attended the gallery throughout the day. At the Citadel, two showings of Cinderella presented by Alberta Musical Theatre Company were over capacity, with more than 350 attendees each. Churchill Square was lively with more than 1200 people enjoying pop up games and activities, DJs, and an additional performance by Hula Hoop Circus.
- **(1.3)** *Work with City Administration, local networks and businesses to cultivate, and support community-based artistic activities.*
 - On December 7, 2023, the EAC hosted Councilor Jennifer Rice, and the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Heritage Council, to present an info session to community members about funding available for community-based artistic activities.

Ambition One: Alive with Arts and Heritage

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

Actions:

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- **(2.1) Engage with organizations that support community-based artistic programming and cultural expression and engage youth through local arts and learning activities.**
 - In partnership with McNally High School, EAC Shop & Services hosted an exhibition and sale of works by grade 11 and 12 students from the school's art and ceramics programs. Approximately 300 visitors viewed the two-week show, including over 120 friends, family and community members who came to celebrate at the closing event on April 15, 2023.
 - In 2023, the EAC committed \$100,000 to support "A Threaded Mural". This investment will pay the artistic costs of creating four interconnected, community-engaged murals commissioned and managed by the Islamic Family & Social Services Association (IFSSA). The commitment is based on the strength of the partnership led by IFSSA with their collaborators, The Africa Centre, Bent Arrow Indigenous Healing Society, and the Mennonite Central Committee. This partnership brings Indigenous and equity-seeking communities together to work directly with professional artists to create four community-engaged murals representing diverse worldviews.
 - Throughout July and August, EAC's Community Animation and Creative Partnerships hosted 129 Green Shack Shows in neighbourhoods across Edmonton. Attendance varied depending on the location and the weather, with more than 3200 attendees overall. Feedback for the events was excellent, with many grandparents and parents emailing us to say that their children enjoyed the events: *"Today we were fortunate to find a French horn quartet at Riverdale community. They were amazing! It is so great for people to have access to the arts in unexpected places. It was the first time our grandchildren heard live music. The quartet played to the audience, and it was very enjoyable."*
 - *Untouchable Chinatown* was an art exhibit curated by Jordan Hon, presented by the Chinatown Greetings collective, featuring the work of 11 local artists. The collective partnered with the EAC's Shop & Services to present the exhibit and activations in the space from October 27 - November 13, 2023. Activations included two community art events and walking tours of Chinatown, Chinese tea tastings and storytelling.
 - EAC Shop & Services also partnered with the University of Alberta's student design association once again for "Built" which features artwork and design objects created by 51 participating student artists and designers. More than 230 people attended the opening event on December 1, including Mayor Sohi and Councillor Stevenson.
- **(2.2) Enhance citizen engagement of the public art collection with artist led events and presentations.**
 - On June 25, 2023, a new public artwork was unveiled at a community celebration in Churchill Square. The artwork, *A Mischief of Could-be(s)*, was created by local artists Erin Pankratz and Christian Pérès Gibaut through consultation and engagement with children, as part of the Child-Friendly Edmonton initiative. The event was geared

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towards children and included a colourful unveiling of the artwork, a short talk by the artists, live music, ice cream, crafts with the AGA Art Cart, and greetings from the City. Since installation, the artwork has been popular with children, providing an interactive play opportunity in Churchill Square at festivals, civic events, and throughout the shoulder season. The second component of the artwork, *UGO*, was installed on the south side of the Stanley Milner Library in May 2024 and is not yet accessible to the public.

- On October 6, 2023, the EAC hosted a celebration for another new piece of public art, *Play It By Ear* by Calgary artists Caitlind r.c. Brown & Wayne Garrett. The artwork features colourful telephones which allow the user to make short-distance phone calls within the park. The work is an interactive sound sculpture inviting a neighbourhood into conversation. The EAC welcomed Councillor Knack at the event, which featured a short talk and activity led by the artists, as well as refreshments available for the community in attendance.
- **(2.3) Contribute actively to placemaking that includes cultural landscape, natural history, built history, object, language, and story.**
 - On August 11, 2023, community members attended a mural unveiling and artist talk by Cree-Métis artist Michelle Sound. The joint event, organized in partnership with the Ociciwan Contemporary Art Centre, celebrated the addition of *Sipikiskisiw (Remembers Far Back)* to the City of Edmonton Public Art Collection, and Michelle's new mural at Ociciwan. The event brought together members of the Indigenous, Chinatown and broader arts communities, enhancing citizen engagement with the public art collection with an artist-led presentation. The program began with a ceremony and teaching by Lloyd Cardinal and greetings from Councillor Wright, followed by a feast and Q&A with the artist.
 - In October 2023, *Invisible Gate* by artists Studio F Minus was installed in Kinistinâw Park. The work returns an iconic symbol of Chinatown back to the community. *Invisible Gate* is comprised of two contemporary acrylic guardian lions that expand a traditional symbol to contain the histories of multiple communities who have gathered in the area. Through a series of workshops with the local community, Studio F Minus worked alongside Edmonton-based community organizer Shawn Tse to gather scans of personal objects or “artifacts” to be incorporated within the work. The artwork preserves 93 objects contributed by community members by embedding them in the layers of this permanent sculpture.
 - In 2024, the EAC commissioned a video about the untitled buffalo sculpture by Lloyd Pinay, in Dr. Anne Anderson Park. The video explores the legacy of Dr. Anne Anderson and her work to preserve the Cree language, and highlights the work that the EAC’s conservation team has undertaken to preserve and care for the artwork, which is beloved by the neighbouring community. The video has been well-received with close to 10,000 views across platforms and more than 50 re-shares.

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- **(2.4)** *Indigenous peoples are supported in revitalizing and participating in cultural traditions locally that reflect their connections to ancestors, the land and living traditions.*
 - In honour of Orange Shirt Day and National Truth and Reconciliation week, the EAC held several events and activities in collaboration with Indigenous artists and the community, including a print-your-own orange shirt day and a craft activity to create orange shirt pins (both at EAC Shop & Services), and performances by Indigenous artists in Churchill Square. Donations to the Edmonton Aboriginal Seniors Centre, which serves many seniors impacted by Residential Schools, were accepted at the events. The EAC also hosted two workshops on Land Acknowledgements, one for staff and one for the public. The EAC's Indigenous Relations Advisor led a tour of the ᐃᑦᑦᑦ (ÎNÎW) River Lot 11 Indigenous Art Park for Neighbourhood Services staff at the City of Edmonton.
 - In December 2023, the EAC Board approved a funding commitment of \$300,000 over three years to IAM Collective (Indigenous Artists' Market Collective). Aligning to both the City's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) call to action and the Indigenous Implementation Principle in *Connection & Exchanges*, the EAC will work with the IAM Board to determine their priorities over the next three years and create a medium to long term sustainable business plan.

Ambition One: Alive with Arts and Heritage

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

Actions:

- **(3.1)** *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.*
 - EAC staff have partnered with City administration to contribute to projects such as the Indigenous Framework, the CCMA legacy and advisory committees, Festival and Event round tables, Community Safety and Well-Being Strategy meetings, and the Ortona and the Orange Hub. The EAC also represented the arts community on the Explore Edmonton board.
- **(3.2)** *Work with City Administration to incorporate arts into city strategies and planning, such as neighbourhood revitalization initiatives and special projects.*
 - Within the implementation of the new Public Art Policy (C458D: Public Art to Enhance Edmonton's Public Realm), the EAC and City Administration have created a new Public Art Advisory Group (PAAG), which is responsible for City-wide public art planning. PAAG is working to integrate public art into new capital infrastructure projects, open spaces, neighbourhood renewal and revitalization initiatives. From this, EAC is working on a plan that could see new public art included in over 40 neighbourhoods in the next 10 years.
- **(3.3)** *Work with City Administration and cultural agencies to research, develop, build and seek approval from City Council for the City of Edmonton's first Cultural Infrastructure Plan.*

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- The EAC is supporting ArtsHab as they develop the Edmonton Cultural Infrastructure Project. The EAC has attended initial meetings and provided grassroots community engagement network information.
- **(3.5) Encourage active civic engagement and participation in cultural activities.**
 - The new edmontonarts.ca website includes an interactive “build your own public art tour” functionality that allows citizens and community groups to create their own tours and explore the collection. To raise awareness of the newly launched functionality, the EAC partnered with local influencers, content creators and arts leaders to highlight their favorite artworks in the collection.

Ambition One: Alive with Arts and Heritage

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

Actions:

- **(4.1) Work with public and private partners, arts organizations and festivals to improve access by: Piloting ticketing and transportation programs to diversify audiences; Expanding arts experiences for young people; Supporting partnerships with culturally-specific media to engage newcomers; Supporting partnerships with cultural associations, and human and social services.**
 - The Connections & Exchanges Initiatives program enacts the collective responsibility of the arts community in the implementation of the *Connections & Exchanges* plan. Arts organizations are supported for projects that create cascading, long-term impacts for the cultural ecosystem. Examples of eligible activities include skills development in any arts practice or arts administration field, advancement of ensemble development, community and audience engagement, or creation and revision of artistic work.
 - In 2023, the EAC invested in 38 organizations for a total of \$810,178 in support through the Connections & Exchanges Initiatives program. The program saw an increase of 118% in applications from the 2022 deadline.
 - Many of the projects pertain to IDEA and Indigenous arts, embedding Indigenous and equity-seeking artists within mainstream arts organizations, offering them platforms or performance opportunities with existing audiences or building skills within underrepresented artist groups. For example, funding supported workshops for artists traditionally underrepresented in recording/engineering, workshops exploring the experiences of Muslim women in Edmonton, artist residencies and mentorships within arts organizations, and more.
- **(4.2) Stand alongside Indigenous leaders in cultural work, organizations and projects.**
 - The EAC supported funding for organizations to work with IBPOC artists, for example, a 2023 Connections & Exchanges project grant supported Alberta Playwrights Network in creating an IBPOC Writers in Residence Program. Through this program, theatre artist

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Shyanne Duquette is receiving mentorship, dramaturgy and a commission for a new play.

- **(4.3)** *Resource Indigenous-led activities that support the reclamation of Indigeneity.*
 - In 2023, EAC provided \$388,057 to 21 artists and collectives who self-identified as Indigenous.
 - Projects included mentorship in Indigenous pottery techniques, recording, mixing and mastering of *Bear Grease* the musical, the filming of a supernatural thriller, a poetry project about reclamation of Indigenous identity, an Indigenous fashion week, and more.

Ambition Two: A Hub for Extraordinary Creation and Reputation

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

Actions:

- **(5.1)** *Work with City Administration to lead the development of arts networks with cities across the globe to foster artistic exchanges, collaborations and projects.*
 - Through Stream 2 grants for Individuals & Collectives and Equity & Access, the EAC funded interprovincial and international travel opportunities for 29 artists and collectives. Of these, eight were to residencies, including destinations across Canada and internationally in Trinidad, Germany, and the United States.
- **(5.2)** *Work with federal and provincial arts agencies to support Edmonton artists and arts organizations to develop new markets nationally and internationally.*
 - The EAC is a regular participant in the Alberta Tri-Level meetings of arts funders, including multiple federal and provincial agencies.
 - The EAC was among five municipalities invited to participate in the Canadian Public Arts Funders annual gathering in Saskatoon, in October 2023. The event was a national discussion on equity.
 - The EAC is participating in national CARFAC (Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens) stakeholder consultations about public art funding across Canada.
- **(5.3)** *Work with City Administration to foster the study and enjoyment of the public art collection through its conservation, documentation and connection to a diverse range of publics.*
 - Two recent public art projects were recognized at the City of Edmonton Urban Design Awards. *If the Drumming Stops* (Mill Woods transit stop) by Tania Willard, Peter Morin and Cheryl L'Hirondelle received the Award of Excellence in the Urban Fragments category, and the Award of Merit in the Community Projects category went to *Tawatinâ Bridge* by David Garneau.

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- The EAC distributed free maps of the Valley Line South East LRT public artworks to community groups and partners to raise awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the 13 works along the new LRT line.
- The EAC Conservation department works directly with the City of Edmonton and artists and project teams to consult on care and maintenance, materials research and testing, and fabrication and installation documentation. They oversee the care of all 292 artworks in the Public Art Collection and are an integral part of planning, commissioning, and growing the collection.
- **(5.4) Partner with public agencies and private sector organizations to host conferences, symposia and industry events.**
 - On July 21, 2023, EAC Executive Director Sanjay Shahani brought greetings to the Coffee with the Chamber: Arts Edition, presented by the Citadel Theatre. Hundreds of Chamber members from all industries experienced some of the best that Edmonton's Arts District has to offer.
 - The EAC partnered with the Edmonton Heritage Council to co-host the Alberta Museums Association Spring Symposium Cross-Sectoral Networking Event at the Prince of Wales Armories on Friday, April 26, 2024 along with the Archives Society of Alberta, and City of Edmonton Archives. Delegates from arts, culture, heritage, archives and libraries attended a reception intended to create cross-sector connections, nurture relationships, and establish networks of collaborative practice.

Ambition Two: A Hub for Extraordinary Creation and Reputation

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

Actions:

- **(6.3) Convene the arts community to share expertise, promote collaboration and networking.**
 - A revised recruitment process for potential grant assessors was developed in January 2023. More than 700 Individuals who had signaled their interest through SmartSimple and/or directly with the staff were invited to participate in the recruitment by providing information about their background and availability. Through this process, new assessors were identified and the visibility and transparency of the assessment process was improved.
 - In 2023, the EAC hosted eight drop-in sessions and spoke at 14 external engagements to increase awareness and access to our grant programs. The communications strategy for the drop-in sessions included direct outreach to cultural groups, community groups, social service agencies, and digital promotion. The sessions expanded the audience of the EAC, with many attendees who were new to the granting process and/or spoke English as a second language. An added benefit to the drop-in sessions was a collaborative environment, in which artists networked and shared information with

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each other to increase shared understanding of the application process. In early 2024, the drop-in sessions have expanded to include sessions provided specifically for Indigenous and equity-seeking artists.

- **(6.4)** *Build a digital framework to mobilize critical discourse and arts impact documentation, arts information and public awareness campaigns.*
 - The new edmontonarts.ca website highlights the latest in EAC research and impact documentation, including survey results and reporting, case studies, annual reports and an interactive arts ecology map.
 - The website also features conversations with artists via the EAC blog. In 2023, the EAC featured 32 artists on the EAC blog. In early 2023 the EAC developed a partnership with CBC Radio to feature blog artists on Radio Active, thus increasing the profile of the artists and their work on a mainstream media platform. Throughout 2023, profiled artists were also featured on Daybreak Alberta and in the Mill Woods Mosaic, as relevant.

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

Aim Seven: Arts and heritage practitioners are economically resilient.

Actions:

- **(7.1)** *Increase investment in artists working in a wide range of art forms and practices to foster experimentation, creative collaborations with community and public presentations.*
 - In 2023, in honour of the 25th anniversary of the Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund awards, the EAC and Edmonton Community Foundation distributed awards of \$15,000 to 25 exceptional and diverse artists in the Edmonton arts community. On November 20, over 250 members of Edmonton's arts community joined the EAC to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the EATF awards, pay homage to the 200 recipients since the award's inception, and recognize this year's recipients.
 - Demand for EAC grants grew by 30% for individuals and collectives in 2023 to a total of 1108 applications, 314 of which were awarded. Increases in awareness and application rates are attributed to long-term outreach strategies, dedicated roles in Indigenous relations and Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA), and focused inclusion practices. With an increase in applications and a fixed budget, the success rate dropped from 35% in 2022 to 28% in 2023. For the first application deadline of 2024 (Individuals & Collectives Winter 2024), the success rate was 21.2%.
- **(7.2)** *Increase investment in artists and arts professionals from equity seeking groups.*
 - In 2023, the EAC hired a Manager, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA). The portfolio has been evaluating the current programming and grants to identify gaps and opportunities within the organization and enhance internal capacity and understanding around IDEA. The portfolio worked to introduce drop-in services specifically for equity

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seeking groups and was able to directly support artists of Indigenous and African, Caribbean, and Black descent.

- The Equity & Access program budget has steadily increased since 2018. For 2023, \$600,000 was originally budgeted. An additional \$200,000 was allocated in response to the two-fold increase in applications from the year prior. Funds were allocated between streams proportionately to the amount of the funding requests, which allowed for a success rate of 27%. Fifty-nine grants were successful for a total investment of \$801,854 in 2023.
- Out of 314 project grants awarded to individuals and collectives in 2023, 47% were to applicants that self-identify as Indigenous or from equity-seeking groups, totaling an investment of \$2,139,805.
- In every grant assessment process and report to the EAC Board, equity and inclusion considerations are addressed. 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 participates on the panels.
- **(7.3) Build funding mechanisms with an emphasis on: multi-year projects, mentorships, residencies, professional development.**
 - Through grants for Individuals & Collectives (stream two), the EAC supports projects that pertain to skills and career development, including mentorship, attending a residency, or other forms of professional development for artists and arts professionals. In 2023, 49 artists were supported for these types of professional development projects for a total of \$384,829.

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

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

Actions:

- **(8.3) Establish and nurture a partnership framework with arts funders to co-ordinate investments, shared measurement and promotion of the public value of the arts.**
 - In 2023, EAC staff participated in several meetings with other funders. The EAC's Research Analyst travelled to Ottawa in June 2023 as part of a meeting of research staff from arts funding agencies. Topics included the application of research and data to inform funding choices. The EAC's Measurement, Evaluation and Learning activities were well received.
 - In 2023 and 2024, EAC hosted the Alberta Tri-Level arts funder meetings, including a meeting with the new CEO of the Canada Council, Michelle Chawla. These meetings have been a decades-long, nation-wide practice to bring funders together to share learnings, explore new trends and innovations, improve understanding and processes,

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and network. These community building exercises have, in the past, informed the development of shared policy, investment, and programming.

- **(8.5)** *Provide change capital to cultural organizations to retool and reorganize to meet the needs of a rapidly changing city.*
 - In 2023, the EAC invested \$261,780 in nine Invent & Adapt projects, which provide a flexible path for the EAC to support and participate in focused development of organizational capacities, through strategic investments to promote sustainable operations.
 - Projects supported funding included:
 - Common Ground Arts Society undertook a comprehensive rebranding and policy revision, creating a new website in partnership with Pixel Designs, which unified three sub-sites into a single, user-friendly domain.
 - Edmonton Folk Music Festival developed a fully accessible website and a 5-year implementation plan for improving on-site accessibility, including signage, landmarks, and lighting enhancements.
 - The demand for this program in 2023 exceeded expectations, and the program is being reevaluated to support the evolving needs of organizations in the arts ecosystem.

Covid recovery and the Arts Presentation Fund

In 2022, the Arts Presentation Fund for Covid Recovery grant program supported artist fees at events produced by 148 applicant organizations, of which 71 were new relationships for the Edmonton Arts Council. Those presenters reported more than 2400 artist payments. EAC analysis shows more than 1100 of those are unique recipients (individuals or collective groups such as bands). Venues and presenters reported audiences of more than 500,000 Edmontonians who attended more than 800 events in all parts of the city.

The Edmonton Arts Council's direct spending also engaged artists to perform in community events and in partnership with the City of Edmonton's Green Shack program to bring performances to 205 neighbourhoods in the summer months of 2022 and 2023.

Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Framework

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 strategic aims. Below is the breakdown of the eight aims with sample measures that construct the performance measurement system. The survey data reports with all measures will be produced on an annual basis.

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Ambition 1: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim 1: Edmonton’s neighborhoods come alive with meaningful and relevant opportunities for participation and engagement.

The measures of Aim 1 directly align with the City Plan’s Intention 1.2.3, 6.1.2, and 6.2.1.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2022	2023
Edmonton offers great arts and cultural experiences	Artists survey	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	79%	82%
Edmonton offers great arts and cultural experiences	Organization survey	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	93%	97%
Edmonton offers great arts and cultural experiences	Public survey	Biennial	% strongly agree or agree	69%*	70%

*This figure reflects the 2021 Public Survey, as this survey is only conducted every 2 years.

Ambition 1: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim 2: Edmontonians feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to peoples, places and stories.

The measures of Aim 2 directly align with the City Plan’s Intention 1.2.3 and 6.2.1.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2022	2023
Agreement on “participating in arts and cultural activities builds a shared sense of community identity.”	Public survey	Biennial	% strongly agree + agree	85%	85%
Agreement on “arts and cultural experiences help bring people from diverse backgrounds together as a community.”	Public survey	Biennial	% strongly agree + agree	87%	85%
In the past 12 months, has your feeling of being connected to the arts become stronger, weaker, or stayed about the same	Public survey	Biennial	% become stronger + stayed about the same	50%	68%

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Ambition 1: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim 3: Arts and Heritage leaders are actively engaged in civic planning and implementation.

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

Ambition 1: Alive with Arts and Heritage

Aim 4: Conditions are in place to remove barriers for all Edmontonians to participate in cultural experiences.

The measures of Aim 4 directly align with the City Plan’s Intention 1.2.3 and 6.2.1.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2022	2023
Rating on “easy access to arts and cultural events, festivals, activities, and facilities”	Public survey	Biennial	% very good + good	65%	65%
Rating on “number of different platforms or channels that make you aware of arts and cultural events, festivals, activities, and facilities”	Public survey	Biennial	% very good + good	49%	51%
Percentage of public saying “nothing has prevented me from taking part arts and cultural opportunities in Edmonton.”	Public survey	Biennial	% no barriers	6%	20%

Note: 2021 figures were influenced by COVID-19 restrictions.

Ambition 2: 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.

The measures of Aim 5 directly align with the City Plan’s Intention 6.1.2 and 6.2.1.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2022	2023
Agreement on “Edmonton offers great opportunities for artists to exchange ideas and expertise	Artist survey	Annual	% strongly agree + agree	31%	38%

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nationally and internationally.”					
Edmonton’s arts and culture has a great international reputation	Artist survey	Annual	% strongly agree + agree	31%	36%

Ambition 2: A Hub for Extraordinary Creation and Reputation

Aim 6: Diverse platforms for collaboration exist within Edmonton that allow artistic and heritage communities to connect, create and collaborate.

The measures of Aim 6 directly align with the City Plan’s Intention 1.2.3 and 6.2.1.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2022	2023
You had sufficient opportunities to interact, gather, share ideas, and learn from the local arts community	Artist survey	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	56%	59%
Agreement on “you had sufficient opportunities to receive knowledgeable, constructive feedback about your artistic work”	Artist survey	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	47%	51%

Ambition 3: A Thriving and Well-Funded Arts and Heritage Ecosystem

Aim 7: Arts and heritage practitioners are economically resilient.

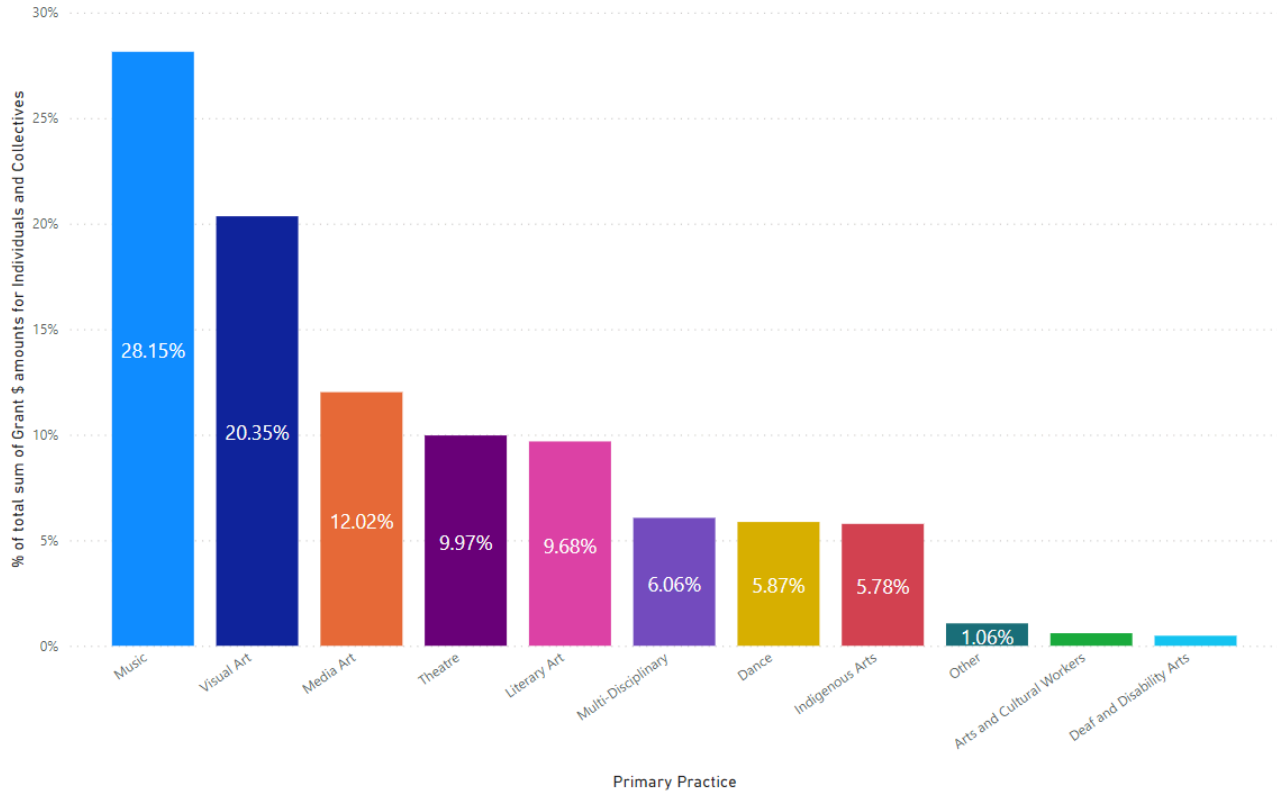
The measures of Aim 7 directly align with the City Plan’s Intention 6.1.2 and 6.2.1.

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2022	2023
Total dollar amount provided to Individuals and Collectives through grants.	EAC system data	Annual	\$ amount % distribution	\$3,286,927	\$4,196,553
Percentage of gross personal income from artistic practice	2022 Artists survey Q3	Annual	Mean %	43%	45%

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Grant distribution to individuals and collectives by primary artistic discipline in 2023

% of total sum of Grant \$ amounts for Individuals and Collectives by Primary Practice and Primary Practice



Ambition 3: A Thriving and Well-Funded Arts and Heritage Ecosystem

Aim 8: New and existing arts and heritage organizational capacity enables innovation and builds resilience in the sector.

The measures of Aim 8 directly align with the City Plan’s Intention 6.1.2 and 6.2.1

Sample Measures	Source	Frequency	Calculation	2022	2023
Total dollar amount provided to Arts and festival organizations through grants.	EAC system data	Annual	\$ amount	\$10,764,272	\$11,012,233
Funding from the Edmonton Arts Council supported your organization’s capacity to build economic resilience.	2022 Organization survey Q1	Annual	% strongly agree or agree	73%	76%
Municipal proportion of provincial cultural GDP	Creative City Network of	Annual	% municipal proportion *	32.8%	32.2%

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*Data is available up to year 2020: we received an update for 2019 in 2021, and an update for 2020 in 2022.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan to Transform Arts & Heritage In Edmonton
2. Supporting Artists and Presenters in COVID Recovery