

Stratford Arts & Culture Collective



Stratford Arts & Culture Centre

Honorary Advisory Committee

Annette av Paul
Peter Mansbridge O.C.
Loreena McKennitt, C.M. O.M.
Scott McKowen
Leslie Watts

October 11, 2024

Dan Mathieson, Chair, GTR Ad-Hoc Committee
Martin Ritsma, Mayor, City of Stratford
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Stratford
Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead, City of Stratford
Joani Gerber, Executive Director, Invest Stratford
Ray Harsant and Alan Kasperski, Working Group Coordinators
Karen Haslam and Herb Klassen, Co-chairs, Partnerships Committee

Dear Colleagues:

As discussed at a recent meeting of the Stratford Arts and Culture Collective's (SACC) Board of Directors, the SACC is submitting this letter as an official expression of our interest to be considered as a partner in the Grand Trunk Renewal process and at the GTR site.

The SACC is an umbrella group which represents the interests of local, community-based arts and culture organizations and their audiences in all disciplines including theatre, music, visual art, dance, media and others. The SACC's long-term plan is to develop a program space that serves local audiences mainly in the fall, winter and spring. City residents lack a performance space that is audience-friendly, well-equipped, flexible, affordable, and located in a central geographic area. This has been an identified need for many years, and the GTR site provides the best opportunity for the need to be met.

While our goal is a performance space with ancillary areas that serves arts and culture groups, we envision the space will be designed to be flexible and multipurpose, so that efficiencies can be found through other groups and organizations using it on a daily basis. To that end, we have been working with the YMCA of Three Rivers and the Stratford Public Library to determine how our programs might be accommodated in the same space. Other groups which may be interested include the Stratford Lakeside Active Adults Association (SLAAA) and the University of Waterloo Stratford campus. Ultimately, the space will be most successful when it serves all community members.

We continue to approach this project seriously and bring these qualities to the discussion:

- Access to grant programs for arts and culture spaces;

- Strong fundraising capabilities;
- Productive working relationships with the YMCA of Three Rivers, the Stratford Public Library and within the arts and culture community;
- Access to experienced, arts-friendly architects and other professionals;
- Strong creative planning skills.

This fall, the SACC will be conducting a feasibility study, led by TCI Consultants (Toronto) to help determine a solid, sustainable path forward for the arts and culture segment of Stratford. The YMCA and the Stratford Public Library may want to participate in the study to determine how their participation may intersect with the Grand Trunk project. The results of the study will be available and shareable in early spring.

In conclusion, the SACC is aware of a clear community need in the arts and culture sector. We are dedicated to addressing that need through strong collaboration with partners. We hope that the GTR Ad-hoc Advisory Committee will consider the SACC as a partner and move forward to create a better community. We look forward to working with the GRT Ad-hoc Committee.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sincerely,



Ron Dodson

Co-chair

On behalf of the SACC Board of Directors



Chris Leberg

Co-chair

Appendix A:

List of organizations represented at the SACC General Meeting, June 2024 and participating in 2024 Feasibility Study

APPENDIX A: ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT THE SACC GENERAL MEETING, JUNE 2024, AND PARTICIPATING IN THE 2024 FEASIBILITY STUDY

Ballinran Entertainment
Festival Sounds Chorus
Gallery Stratford
Infinity Dance
INNERchamber, Inc.
Kiwanis Festival of the Arts
Music and Opera Appreciation
Off the Wall Stratford Artists Alliance
OnStage Dance
PAL Stratford
Perth County Players
Playmakers! Theatre School
Provocation Ideas Festival
Sing for the Joy of It
SpringWorks Festival
Stratford Concert Band
Stratford Concert Choir
Stratford Festival
Stratford Summer Music
Stratford Symphony Orchestra
Stratford Winter Pride

YMCA OF THREE RIVERS

Jay Colquhoun, Operations Manager

STRATFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Michael Corbett, Board Chair
Krista Robinson, CEO
David McKay

INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

Stephen Degenstein
Bob Phillips
Rhonda Stephenson
David Stones
Kelly Walker