

To: Economic and Development Services Committee

From: Anthony Ambra, P.Eng., Commissioner,  
Economic and Development Services Department

Report Number: ED-24-76

Date of Report: May 29, 2024

Date of Meeting: June 3, 2024

Subject: Arts Resource Centre Cultural Hub Feasibility Study

Ward: Ward 4

File: 03-05

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## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to present the Arts Resource Centre (“A.R.C.”) Cultural Hub Feasibility Study and provide recommendations for next steps towards the creation of a Cultural Hub.

Attachment 1 is the A.R.C. Feasibility Study by Nordicity and Giaimo.

## **2.0 Recommendation**

That the Economic and Development Services Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That, pursuant to Report ED-24-76, dated May 29, 2024, the Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study be endorsed; and,
2. That, pursuant to Report ED-24-76, dated May 29, 2024, City staff be directed to develop the parameters for a Cultural Hub Pilot Project, as generally outlined in Section 5.6 of Report ED-24-76 and that staff report back at the September 9, 2024 Economic and Development Services Committee Meeting for direction on implementing the Cultural Hub Pilot Project.

## **3.0 Executive Summary**

In its meeting on February 18, 2014, City Council approved CS-14-16, Culture Counts: Oshawa’s Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan. One of the strategies of this plan is to “Increase Spaces and Facilities in which Cultural Activities Occur” within the strategic direction “Create Vibrant Places and Spaces”. The completion of an Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study responds to the specific action item to “Conduct a feasibility study on converting the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub”.

At its meeting on January 25, 2019 City Council approved “Project Account 40-0031 – A.R.C. Cultural Hub Feasibility Study” for \$100,000, of which \$50,000 was allocated from the Civic Property Development Reserve.

At its meeting on March 18, 2019, City Council approved [CS-19-27](#) which acknowledged that the results of a feasibility study would include recommendations on how to proceed with future use, program and facility needs for the Arts Resource Centre and that these recommendations would directly impact future priorities and action related to Culture Counts.

In 2019, the City applied and was successful with an application to the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund which resulted in a \$50,000 grant to support half of the costs associated with conducting the feasibility study.

In 2021, the City issued a Request for Proposal to retain a consultant to conduct the Feasibility Study, which resulted in Nordicity, in partnership with Giaimo, being selected for services.

On June 20, 2022, City Council approved [Report DS-22-144](#), Plan 20Thirty – Action Plan for Continued Downtown Revitalization. This Plan includes the “Social Experience” pillar and reinforces the development and delivery of an Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study with the action item to “Support the outcomes of the A.R.C. Feasibility Study to effectively position the proposed Cultural hub as an asset in Downtown Oshawa.”

On December 11, 2023, City Council approved [Report ED-23-213](#), Oshawa Economic Development Strategy that includes “Cultural Vitality” as a strategic area of focus. Within this area of focus are action items that relate to the Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study including developing partnerships, creating incubator programs, reducing barriers for community-run programming and increasing diversity of programs offered.

After conducting research, public consultation and assessment, the Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study, prepared by Nordicity, concludes that:

- The Arts Resource Centre is a suitable site for transformation into a Cultural Hub.
- Although the building presents challenges, the architectural foundation and design can be leveraged to create a space that is both functional and embodies design excellence. Transforming this building would be a form of adaptive reuse, which conserves the cultural, architectural, and historic value of the building, and offers an environmentally sustainable option for re-using existing infrastructure.
- The public consultation uncovered substantial need for affordable space and programs covering a wide variety of community needs.
- The existing operations, activities, and services are not currently meeting the community’s needs.
- There is an opportunity for a refreshed and refurbished Arts Resource Centre to become a true cultural hub.

## 4.0 Input From Other Sources

The following have been consulted in the preparation of this Report:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Commissioner, Community and Operations Services Department
- Commissioner, Corporate and Finance Services Department
- Commissioner, Safety and Facilities Services Department
- A.R.C. Feasibility Study Staff Steering Committee

## 5.0 Analysis

### 5.1 Arts Resource Centre Current Context

The A.R.C., located at 45 Queen Street, Oshawa, is a City-owned and operated facility that offers arts programs and rental spaces to the community. The facility was first constructed in 1952 as the Athol Street Police Station with subsequent changes to its purpose, usage and structural modifications between 1972 and 1986. Since that time, it has predominantly hosted arts functions and contains studio spaces for program delivery (including pottery and kilns), a black box amphitheatre-style auditorium, multi-purpose rooms, a workshop area (currently used as storage space) and office spaces (for both City staff and external organizations).

The facility is presently programmed through the Recreation Services branch with both program staff and facility operations staff providing direct administration, oversight and maintenance of the facility. Offered throughout the year is a range of programs for all ages which includes pottery, painting, drawing, theatre and music, as well as March break and summer camp programs with a focus on music, dance, visual arts and theatre. The multi-purpose rooms and auditorium are used by members of the community for a variety of purposes including meetings, performances (such as those from Durham Shoestring Performers) and birthday parties.

### 5.2 Arts Resource Centre Usage, Registration Data and Revenue

#### 5.2.1 2015 to 2019: Usage, Registration Data and Revenue

For the purposes of evaluation and understanding the program strengths and gaps of the A.R.C., staff and Nordicity reviewed facility usage and registration data.

Below is the most recent data, registration numbers and revenue related to the years 2015 to 2019, outlined in Tables 1 through 4.

**Table 1: Total City of Oshawa Program Registrants at the Arts Resource Centre**

	Program Session				Total Registrants
	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	
2015	162	129	459	114	864
2016	185	85	457	95	822

	Program Session				Total Registrants
	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	
<b>2017</b>	121	81	494	133	<b>829</b>
<b>2018</b>	186	189	560	179	<b>1,114</b>
<b>2019</b>	232	167	613	168	<b>1,180</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>2,583</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>4,809</b>

Table 1 outlines the total number of registrants to arts programs at the A.R.C. during 2015-2019. The A.R.C. offered a variety of arts programs, including pottery, theatre, music, drawing, painting and camp from 2015 to 2019. As part of camp delivery, arts camp makes available extended supervision and these numbers above include those participants who registered for extended supervision.

The average number of program registrants per year was 962 from 2015 to 2019.

The overall registrant fill rate for program registrations during 2015 to 2019 has varied. Key highlights include:

- The 2017 Winter session saw the lowest capacity reached for programs offered at 57% registrant fill rate.
- While the 2019 Summer session had the highest number of individual registrants, the 2018 Summer session saw the highest capacity reached for programs offered, reaching a 96% registrant fill rate. The 2018 Summer session offered fewer program options than the 2019 Summer session, resulting in a higher fill rate in 2018 as the available programs filled up.
- Summer is by far the busiest season at the A.R.C. and this can be attributed to summer camps and extended supervision.
- The remainder of program sessions ranged between a 57% to 74% registrant fill rate.

**Table 2: Total Program Revenue Earned from 2015 to 2019**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Total Program Revenue</b>	\$102,771	\$103,857	\$103,513	\$131,583	\$131,203

Table 2 provides the arts program revenue earned at the A.R.C. from 2015-2019. The total for this five-year period was \$572,926.

**Table 3: Total Room Utilization from 2015 to 2019 (Based on Actual Hours of Operation)**

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Hours Booked	%	Hours Booked	%	Hours Booked	%	Hours Booked	%	Hours Booked	%
<b>Hours Available</b>	<b>1,263</b>		<b>1,266</b>		<b>1,268</b>		<b>1,273</b>		<b>1,268</b>	
<b>Auditorium</b>	981	78%	1,266	100%	945	75%	1,013	80%	1,172	92%
<b>Green Room</b>	865	68%	860	68%	863	68%	1,056	83%	1,055	83%
<b>Studio 1</b>	203	16%	174	14%	182	14%	292	23%	357	28%
<b>Studio 2</b>	114	9%	219	17%	185	15%	710	56%	590	46%
<b>Studio 3</b>	508	40%	491	39%	520	41%	629	49%	733	58%
<b>Studio 4</b>	477	38%	491	39%	519	41%	624	49%	659	52%

Table 3 outlines the total room utilization between 2015-2019 based on the A.R.C.’s actual hours of operation. It is important to note that the operating hours for the A.R.C. are primarily based on when programs are offered rather than the facility having set standard hours of operation in which the building is open to the public (as is generally the case for other recreation facilities).

Actual hours of operation were generally as follows:

- Monday to Friday: 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Saturday to Sunday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- The Summer session sees the facility open for weekday daytime hours due to camp programming:
  - Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
  - Tuesday and Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Due to this current model of operations, individuals visiting the A.R.C. will be able to access the facility only if they are attending a program, a City meeting, or a third party event, meeting or performance (generally) during the above stated hours. The hours of operation are flexible and will be extended when a rental is requested outside of these. However, outside of these times the facility remains closed to the public and the public portion of the building is largely empty.

**Table 4: Total Facility Rental Revenue Earned from 2015 to 2019**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Total Rental Revenue</b>	\$29,127	\$36,542	\$34,813	\$37,809	\$26,353

Table 4 provides the total facility rental revenue earned from 2015 to 2019. The total for this five-year period was \$164,645.

It is important to note that rental revenue related to the A.R.C. fluctuated during the 2015 and 2019 time period due to factors such as:

- A motion passed by City Council in 2013 which allows community groups who are using the space for a monthly meeting to also use the space once a month for up to three (3) hours without charge. Therefore, although spaces can see an increase in usage, revenue does not necessarily correlate.
- Administrative changes in how bookings were made in the registration system and how usage was defined.
- Increased usage of spaces does not always translate to increased revenue due to internal City of Oshawa usage that does not generate revenue. For example, usage of the auditorium increased from 2018 (1,013 hours) to 2019 (1,172 hours) but the revenue did not increase from 2018 to 2019. This increased usage of the space was mainly due to an increase of booked time for City of Oshawa programming.
- A long-standing organization who utilized the A.R.C. for their weekly event relocated their event to another location in the City.
- There are two offices used by third party organizations in the facility. Both tenants have agreements with the City of Oshawa with differing arrangements. Full tracking and understanding of the utilization of these spaces is not possible because hours of usage do not reflect actual usage in the City’s booking system.
- During the 2015 to 2019 time period the City of Oshawa, through its own program delivery and meetings, booked a total of 18,735 hours (82%), Durham Shoestring Performers booked a total of 1,444 hours (6%), Life Church Oshawa booked a total of 1,175 hours (5%), Oshawa Folk Arts Council accounted for 185 hours (1%) and Other Groups/Individuals accounted for 1,448 hours (6%).

**5.2.2 2020 to 2023: Usage, Registration Data and Revenue**

Recent data, registration numbers and revenue related to the A.R.C. and arts programs, for the time period between 2020 and 2023, is provided below.

Program and rental revenue data from 2020 and 2021 is significantly lower because the City did not offer registered programs or rental opportunities at the A.R.C. during COVID-

19 due to facility closures and restrictions. The A.R.C. reopened for recreational programs and rentals in February 2022.

**Table 5: Total Registrants and Fill Rate of Programs at the Arts Resource Centre, 2020 to 2023.**

	2020		2021		2022		2023		Total
	Reg.	%	Reg.	%	Reg.	%	Reg.	%	
<b>Arts</b>	70	55%	n/a	n/a	138	83%	40	95%	<b>248</b>
<b>Camps</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	414	95%	354	92%	<b>768</b>
<b>Drama</b>	20	63%	n/a	n/a	81	85%	155	92%	<b>256</b>
<b>Fitness</b>	4	20%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>4</b>
<b>Music</b>	12	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6	27%	<b>18</b>
<b>Pottery</b>	61	75%	n/a	n/a	179	84%	372	92%	<b>612</b>
<b>Preschool</b>	10	100%	n/a	n/a	80	89%	104	95%	<b>194</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>1031</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>2100</b>

Table 5 outlines the total number of program registrants for arts programs at the A.R.C. during 2020-2023 by program type. It is important to note that the total number of programs offered at the A.R.C. has been reduced since the Fall program session in 2022 because a number of arts programs are now being offered at other recreation facilities in Oshawa, including the Civic Recreation Complex, Delpark Homes Centre and Donevan Recreation Complex. This approach has been extremely successful and participation in arts programs has increased because programs are now located at a variety of locations throughout the city, and not solely at the A.R.C. As the number of individuals on waitlists to attend arts programs continues to increase, additional program offerings are being added to the A.R.C. to accommodate the needs of the community.

**Table 6: Total Registrants and Fill Rate of Arts Programs by Program Type at Other Recreation Facilities, 2020-2023**

	2020		2021		2022		2023		Total
	Reg.	%	Reg.	%	Reg.	%	Reg.	%	
<b>Arts</b>	479	84%	306	100%	175	67%	466	89%	<b>1,426</b>
<b>Drama</b>	n/a	n/a	9	90%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>9</b>
<b>Music</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	100%	<b>12</b>
<b>Preschool</b>	57	79%	8	100%	10	83%	168	88%	<b>243</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>1,690</b>

Table 6 outlines the total number of program registrants between 2020-2023 by program type that were offered at recreation facilities other than the Arts Resource Centre. Table 6

shows that these offerings have high program fill rates and have been well received by the community.

**Table 7: Total Program Revenue Earned from 2020 to 2023 at the Arts Resource Centre**

	<b>Arts Programs</b>	<b>Dance Programs</b>	<b>Camp</b>	<b>Preschool</b>	<b>Fitness</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>
<b>2020</b>	\$10,921	\$1,031	\$0.00	\$439	\$131	\$12,523
<b>2021</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>2022</b>	\$33,500	\$5,551	\$54,035	\$4,365	n/a	\$97,452
<b>2023</b>	\$39,013	\$9,359	\$47,582	\$5,663	n/a	\$101,618

Table 7 outlines the program revenue earned at the Arts Resource Centre from 2020-2023. A limited number of programs were offered at the A.R.C. in Winter 2022 due to the closure of recreation facilities in January 2022, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, a number of art and painting programs were relocated from the A.R.C. to other recreation facilities which decreased the total revenue earned at the A.R.C. but increased the total revenue earned at other recreation facilities.

**Table 8: Total Revenue for Arts Programs Earned from 2020 to 2023 at other Recreation Facilities**

	<b>Arts Programs</b>	<b>Drama &amp; Music Programs</b>	<b>Arts Preschool</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>
<b>2020</b>	\$4,080	n/a	\$2,886	\$6,966
<b>2021</b>	\$3,650	\$541	\$390	\$4,581
<b>2022</b>	\$14,635	n/a	\$500	\$15,135
<b>2023</b>	\$53,008	\$1,089	\$8,956	\$63,054

Table 8 outlines the arts program revenue earned at recreation facilities other than the Arts Resource Centre. Upon reopening the A.R.C. in 2022 and introducing art programs to other recreation facilities, total program revenue for art programs offered by the City steadily increased from \$112,587 in 2022 to \$164,672 in 2023 (see Tables 8 and 9, combined).

Similarly to the 2015 to 2019 time period, it is important to note that the operating hours for the A.R.C. are primarily based on when programs are offered rather than the facility having set standard hours of operation in which the building is open to the public (as is generally the case for other recreation facilities). Access to the A.R.C. is only open to those



attending a program, a City meeting or a third party event. The hours of operation are flexible and can be extended when a rental is requested outside of these, however, the facility remains closed to the public at other times.

During the 2022 to 2023 timeframe, actual hours of operation were generally as follows:

- Monday to Friday: 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Sunday: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
  
- During the Summer session the facility was open for weekday daytime hours due to camp programming:
  - Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Table 9: Total Room Utilization from 2020 to 2023 (Based on Actual Hours of Operation)**

	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Hours Booked	%	Hours Booked	%	Hours Booked	%	Hours Booked	%
<b>Hours Available</b>	<b>762</b>		<b>678</b>		<b>1,203</b>		<b>1,296</b>	
<b>Auditorium</b>	407	53%	n/a	n/a	810	67%	1,065	82%
<b>Green Room</b>	136	18%	n/a	n/a	636	53%	715	55%
<b>Studio 1</b>	96	13%	n/a	n/a	703	58%	529	41%
<b>Studio 2</b>	36	5%	n/a	n/a	476	40%	409	32%
<b>Studio 3</b>	72	9%	n/a	n/a	599	50%	451	35%
<b>Studio 4</b>	30	4%	n/a	n/a	504	42%	440	34%

Table 9 outlines the room utilization at the Arts Resource Centre during 2020-2023 based on the actual hours of operation. During the 2020 to 2023 time period, the City of Oshawa through its own program delivery and meetings booked a total of 7,465 hours (86%), Durham Shoestring Performers booked a total of 853 hours (10%), Oshawa Folk Arts Council accounted for 59.5 hours (1%) and other organizations amounted to 278 hours (3%).

**Table 10: Total Facility Rental Revenue Earned from 2020 to 2023.**

	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Total Rental Revenue</b>	\$4,707	n/a	\$11,910	\$20,357

Table 10 shows revenue from facility rentals at the Arts Resource Centre during 2020-2023. Facility rental revenue has not returned to the amounts earned in 2015 to 2019. This may be due to organizations continuing to meet virtually to reduce rental expenses, as well as the result of organizations finding an alternative location during 2021 when the facility remained closed.

### **5.3 Definition of a Cultural Hub**

There are multiple definitions associated with the term “Cultural Hub.” The City of Oshawa defines a Cultural Hub as a combination of the terms “cultural spaces” and “creative hub” as determined by the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund.

- A **cultural space** is a physical space where Canadians gather collectively to experience arts or heritage related activities.
- A **creative hub** is a multi-tenant facility which brings together professionals from a range of arts or heritage sectors and creative disciplines. Creative hubs provide multiple users with shared space, equipment and amenities; opportunities for idea exchange, collaboration and/or professional development; and offer space and programming that is accessible to the public.

A Cultural Hub can be adjusted to reflect many community contexts and needs but ultimately, it aims to advance economic development, social connection, artistic activity and innovation, as well as tourism.

### **5.4 Project Timeline and Context**

In 2021, the City issued a Request for Proposal to retain a consultant to conduct the Feasibility Study, which resulted in Nordicity, in partnership with Giaimo, being selected for services. The project kick off meeting took place in November 2021. In 2022, an A.R.C. Feasibility Study Staff Steering Committee was convened with staff from across the Corporation; staff on the Steering Committee include representatives from Corporate Communications, Business and Economic Development Services, Facilities Management Services, Finance Services, Innovation and Transformation, Planning Services and Recreation Services.

Between 2022 and 2023, Nordicity implemented the project plan, conducted research and investigations and in October 2022 submitted a draft version of the report to City staff.

Although consultation with the public occurred in 2022, staff consider the feedback to still be valid and relevant. Although there have been some new facilities and trends in Oshawa since the consultation was completed, City staff do not believe that there have been significant changes in the Oshawa cultural ecosystem that would result in different findings and new perceptions from the public.

## **5.5 Feasibility Study Overview**

### **5.5.1 Project Approach**

The development of the A.R.C. Feasibility Study was conducted over four phases: Initiation, Research and Assessment, Design and Operations Model and Reporting.

As part of the project plan and phases noted above Nordicity reviewed existing City documents and plans, analyzed current community trends, demographics and statistics, researched comparable facilities and precedents, carried out a site visit at the A.R.C., conducted an assessment report for the facility (including Strengths, Values, Gaps and Challenges) and consolidated all feedback from the public consultation to develop the results and findings identified in Section 5.5 of this Report.

### **5.5.2 Public Consultation**

Beginning in 2022, public and stakeholder consultation was conducted to inform the results of the A.R.C. Feasibility Study.

The consultation process, comprised of various engagement initiatives, included:

- One (1) initial online feedback form through the Connect Oshawa platform to gain general feedback and insight on community needs and gaps;
- Presentations were conducted and feedback collected from ten (10) committees including:
  - Then Community Services Committee;
  - Advisory Committees: Oshawa Animal Care Advisory Committee, Heritage Oshawa, Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee, Oshawa Active Transportation Committee and Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee;
  - Cultural Leadership Council;
  - Public Art Task Force;
  - Community Diversity, Equity Inclusion Committee; and,
  - Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee;
- Three (3) roundtables and feedback sessions with stakeholders from the arts and culture sectors and community organizations (including representatives from the visual arts, heritage, theatre and music sectors, community organizations and post-secondary institutions); and,
- One (1) online feedback form through the Connect Oshawa platform to gain feedback on the draft architectural design concepts.

In total, 220 respondents completed the initial feedback form, 217 of whom filled in the first question, identifying as either a member of the public, an artist, or a culture and creative sector worker, organizational representative or facility owner/operator. Nordicity's data analysis excluded those respondents that did not self-identify. 59% of respondents identified as a member of the public, 25% identified as an artist and 16% of respondents identified as a member of the culture and creative sector.

Other notable results are as follows:

- The majority (75%) of respondents had previously heard of the Arts Resource Centre.
- Over half (67%) of feedback form respondents identified themselves to be Oshawa residents and/or Oshawa business/property owners.
- 40% of respondents had previously used the A.R.C. for their artistic/cultural practices or for their organization/company.
- Most feedback form respondents (77%) said there is not enough activities when it comes to the volume of creative and cultural activities and events in Oshawa (e.g., art exhibitions, musical performances, festivals, etc.).
- Participants were asked to select the top three contributions the A.R.C. provides to the community. The top response was providing affordable arts, culture and community programming (30%), followed by providing arts and culture for the public (20%) and support and resources for artists and arts organizations (18%).
- Respondents were asked to share what they perceived as gaps in programs and services at the A.R.C. Lack of partnerships with wider community/community groups (20%), lack of variety in programming and services (19%) and inconvenient program/event schedules and operating hours (15%) were identified as the top three gaps.
  - A significant portion of respondents selected Other (16%), many adding that the A.R.C.'s major issue is branding, awareness and promotion.
- Cultural sector respondents were asked about the kinds of facilities or spaces they need, and most said they require facilities or space for live performance (19%), space to create/design (17%), space to practice and rehearse (14%) and gallery/exhibition space (14%).
  - Over half (60%) of these feedback respondents indicated that they have not previously used the A.R.C.
  - Of those who have not used the A.R.C. nearly half (49%) said they don't use the space because they were unaware of the A.R.C. and what it offers. Others noted that they don't use the facilities because it lacks available/appropriate space (12%).
- When asked what would motivate them to visit a transformed A.R.C. or future Cultural Hub, respondents indicated that events and live performances were the biggest

motivation for visiting a cultural hub, encompassing 24% of all members of the public and 18% of artists and cultural workers. The second biggest motivation for both groups were accessible price points for programs/activities (17% respectively).

- Respondents were asked what priorities should be considered when developing a Cultural Hub in Oshawa. The top response was affordability to visitors and tenants (20%), followed by arts and cultural programming and space for the public (19%) and support and space for local arts organizations and artists (12%).

A total of 32 individuals and organizational representatives participated in the three (3) arts and culture and community organization stakeholder sessions. Additional participation from the ten (10) committee members was captured.

A total of 117 responses were received on the second feedback form which presented the design concepts. Of respondents, 59% identified as a member of the public, 21% as an artist and 20% of respondents identified as a member of the culture and creative sector, organizational representative or facility owner/operator.

More than half (60%) of respondents chose Concept 3 as the design concept that appeals to them the most. 24% of respondents selected Concept 2 and 15% selected Concept 1. These concepts are referenced in Section 5.5.6 of the Report and within Attachment 1, Section 5.

### **5.5.3 Strengths, Values, Gaps and Challenges**

As a result of the community engagement, site visit, review of A.R.C. utilization data and an architectural evaluation of the site, Nordicity identified numerous strengths, values, gaps and challenges that could be leveraged and/or would need to be addressed as part of a future Cultural Hub located at the A.R.C.

Section 3.2 of the Feasibility Study formed as Attachment 1 to this Report identifies the Strengths and Values as well as the Gaps and Challenges associated to the creation of a future Cultural Hub.

Strengths and Values of a future Cultural hub include:

- Prime Location – the site is located in downtown Oshawa, centrally located in the city and would benefit from, and support, other downtown revitalization efforts, is in close proximity to many other cultural organizations, businesses, parks and trails and multiple modes of transportation access.
- Condition of Existing Building – the existing building is generally in good condition
- Community Asset – the existing offerings are viewed as unique, accessible and affordable by community members.
- General User Satisfaction – the responses from the feedback form indicated that participants of A.R.C. programs and offerings are very satisfied or satisfied with their experience.

- Engaging Auditorium/Performance Space – the responses from the feedback form indicated that the auditorium is a good asset.
- Capacity for Adaptive Reuse – the building is in good condition and adaptive reuse to the physical plan would align with existing policies and goals.
- Future Potential – based on public consultation, cultural and creative community leaders are hopeful for a transformation of the A.R.C. and see great potential for it to serve the community.

Gaps and challenges of a future Cultural Hub include:

- Unclear Purpose – based on public consultation, the A.R.C. lacks a robust mandate, strategic purpose and goals.
- Under Utilization and Lack of Engagement – the A.R.C. has low program registrations and there is minimal engagement with, and use of, the facility by arts organizations.
- Space and Building Limitations – the configuration of the building is not flexible, lacks accessible operating hours and lacks modern technology.
- Lack of Marketing and Promotion – based on public consultation, feedback indicated that many are unaware of the A.R.C. and its offerings and that the A.R.C. lacks a digital presence.
- Access Limitations – based on public consultation, feedback indicated that the operating hours are challenging, not convenient and this presents barriers to inquiring about, and booking, the space.
- Exterior and Surrounding Area Challenges – based on public consultation, respondents felt that signage, lighting and street presence impact physical access to the site and that there is a lack of available parking at the A.R.C.
- Modest Revenue – rental bookings are modest and demonstrate low revenue due to low usage of the rooms, studios and auditorium.

#### **5.5.4 Programming and Service Considerations**

Based on the community feedback received, research conducted and precedents in other municipalities, the Feasibility Study recommends that prioritization and consideration for future programming and services offered in a cultural hub should address the following:

- Partnerships and community involvement to ensure that there is no duplication but that the Cultural Hub offerings would complement and uplift the existing arts and cultural ecosystem.
- Programming and services should not become “stale” or repetitive and that frequent assessments should be made to determine program changes.
- Operating hours need to be increased.

- Programming and services should be kept current and those offerings and resources should be attuned to the community's needs and developing trends.

Specific options, ideas and examples of cultural hub programming and services in other municipalities include classes, workshops and camps that reflect new and emerging digital trends, programs in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics, traditional art forms (e.g. visual arts and theatre) as well as expanded opportunities for these art forms (e.g. recording studios, fashion). Programming should also reflect Oshawa's growing diverse population and equity-serving groups, consider the intersection between arts, wellness and socialization and integrate nature and natural elements.

A Cultural Hub could be a space for City cultural events and external third party events, performances and lecture series as well as offer office and temporary desk rentals for arts, culture and heritage organizations requiring office and administration space. Examples of Cultural Hub services in other municipalities also includes "drop in" or flexible membership programs, mentorship and/or artists in residence programs, school programs, exhibition space, curatorial opportunities and arts/artisan markets.

### **5.5.5 Vision and Guiding Principles**

As a result of research conducted, public consultation and assessment, the following is the proposed vision for a future cultural hub:

"Oshawa's Cultural Hub aspires to be a vibrant, accessible place of creativity and connection for artists and community members. This hub will be a place where all are welcome to actively participate in, explore and innovate cultural and creative pursuits. This hub will enrich Oshawa's cultural landscape and opportunities for its cultural sector and broader community, including becoming a vital node amid the revitalization of the downtown core. Through a wide variety of programming, events and services all residents are invited to interact with and collaborate in this welcoming space" (see page 6 of Attachment 1).

The proposed guiding principles for a future cultural hub include:

- **Accessibility and Affordability** – The Cultural Hub will offer activities, programs, events and services at affordable rates and with no physical or organizational barriers to all Oshawa residents and user groups.
- **Responsiveness to the Community** – The Cultural Hub will consider the needs of the wider Oshawa arts/culture and creative sector and stakeholders in its development and operations.
- **Accountability** – The Cultural Hub will be efficient and transparent in its operations and strive for excellence in the services it offers.
- **Elevation and Collaboration** – The Cultural Hub should act as a resource and partner that enriches the overall cultural ecosystem in the city.

- **Adaptability** – The Cultural Hub will be flexible as the demands and needs of the community change, and will aim to “future-proof” to ensure sustainability and wide-appeal.
- **Engagement** – The Cultural Hub will market and promote itself to the best of its ability to ensure all potential users are aware of its offerings and can access them.
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Sense of Well-being** – The Cultural Hub will embed inclusivity in its governance and operations, and will strive to provide arts programming and services that appeal to and address the needs of equity-deserving groups.

### **5.5.6 Architectural Concepts and Public Consultation**

Gaiimo created three (3) potential concept renderings for a future cultural hub, utilizing the existing structure, with expansion and renovation resulting in options ranging from 12,000 square feet to 25,000 square feet.

Section 5 of the study outlines the specific attributes and programming potential for each example.

Concept 1 includes a renovation of the entire existing building, including the interior and exterior, resulting in a 12,000 square foot facility with a redesigned entrance, new ramp, stairs, open interior lobby, transformed loading driveway to create a new outdoor workshops space, new signage, wayfinding and public art integrated throughout and a new signage tower added to the roof of the building.

Concept 2 includes a renovation of the entire existing building, including the interior and exterior as well as a new addition constructed with rooftop access, creating a 15,000 square foot facility with Concept 1 elements plus new interior space with direct street frontage, flexible lobby space that could include a café or lounge, more studio spaces and a ground-level courtyard.

Concept 3 includes a renovation of the existing building and two new construction additions, creating a 25,000 square foot facility, which would include elements found in Concept 1 and 2 as well as a four-story addition on the west with new foundation and work below grade which would allow for expanded administrative and studio spaces.

As part of the public consultation process, the public was presented with the three design concepts including general floor plans and precedent images from other facilities. The public were not presented with construction costs.

More than half (60%) of respondents chose Concept 3 because of its larger size and the additional amenities provided. Concept 3 would most meet current community needs and allow for program and service delivery growth as Oshawa’s population continues to grow.

### **5.5.7 Estimated Construction Costs**

For each of the three (3) potential concept renderings Gaiimo created for a future cultural hub, Gaiimo also provided a Class D construction cost analysis based on 2022 rates.



The Class D costs were prepared by Giaimo and are reflective of 2022 market rates. These estimates do not include: legal fees and expenses, design or consultant fees, land acquisition or Realtor Fees, artwork, weather conditions and scheduling impacts, construction contingencies, allowance for LEED Building Certifications and/or accreditations, owner administration expenses, emergency generator and temporary power, moving costs, temporary facilities and general conditions, removal of hazardous or contaminated soils, storm water retention or management, disposal of fuel oils and hazardous fluids, labour and material escalation and premiums.

Giaimo indicated that these construction rates would likely be subject to a +/- 20 to 30% variance as the design will be subject to specifications on equipment, finishes and unexpected costs at the time of development. Giaimo's 2022 Construction Cost Range for each concept is:

- Concept 1 (12,000 Total Square Feet): \$4,113,000 - \$5,140,000
- Concept 2 (15,000 Total Square Feet): \$5,246,000 - \$6,556,000
- Concept 3 (25,000 Total Square Feet): \$8,899,000 - \$11,125,000

City staff are advising that, based on the current climate, construction costs are likely subject to an estimated inflationary rate of 6% to 8% per year. Updated construction costs would need to be developed prior to initiating any future construction project.

### **5.5.8 Governance Options and Operations**

In Section 8 of the Feasibility Study, potential governance and operations models for a future cultural hub have been identified. Although the A.R.C. is currently owned and operated by the City, a future cultural hub could be owned and/or operated through a different governance model. Municipal research conducted demonstrates a range of governance models being adopted to govern Cultural Hubs – there is no one size fits all.

The feasibility study identifies seven (7) potential operating models that should be considered and explored in the future:

- City-owned and operated
- City Established and Owned, Non-profit Operated
- City External Agency
- Existing Non-Profit Model
- For-Profit or Public/Private Partnership Model
- Community/Artists Run or Land Trust Model
- Cultural District Model

Regardless of the governance option selected, and in order for a future Cultural Hub to realize a refreshed mandate, the facility would require a clear identity, prioritize trust and transparency, have operational flexibility, balance affordability with financial sustainability, strike a balance between community needs and municipal standards in operation practices, support community partnerships, be inclusive and accessible and undertake branding, outreach and marketing to communicate its unique offerings to the community.

### **5.5.9 Feasibility Study Conclusion**

After conducting research, public consultation and assessment, the A.R.C. Feasibility Study concludes that the A.R.C. is a suitable site for transformation into a Cultural Hub.

Although the building presents challenges, the architectural foundation and design can be leveraged to create a space that is both functional and embodies design excellence. Transforming this building would be a form of adaptive reuse, which conserves the cultural, architectural and historic value of the building, and offers an environmentally sustainable option for re-using existing infrastructure.

The public consultation uncovered substantial need for affordable space and programs covering a wide variety of community needs.

The existing operations, activities and services are not currently meeting the community's needs.

There is an opportunity for a refreshed and refurbished A.R.C. to become a true cultural hub. Nordicity writes:

“This Feasibility Study has resulted in a strong vision for a Cultural Hub but with many potential pathways to pursue implementation. The transformation of the A.R.C. will not simply be a renovation project. It will involve embarking on a journey to build a space that operates efficiently and addresses community needs. To further test the feasibility of the A.R.C. as a Cultural Hub the City may consider developing a pilot project as the next step. Such a pilot, if managed by the City, could aim to expand upon programming at the A.R.C and incorporate more activities and events at the current site. It could also assist in developing a business case for a Cultural Hub and help determine a future governance and operating model. This pilot project may act as an intermediate step between current operations and a future Cultural Hub.” (see page 76 of Attachment 1).

### **5.6 Next Steps and Pilot Project Proposal**

In order to further test the feasibility of the A.R.C. as the site of a future cultural hub, staff are proposing to conduct a multi-year pilot project that would explore the options identified in the A.R.C. Feasibility Study and allow for the introduction of expanded and new programming.

The results of the community consultation, coupled with the research conducted and presented by Nordicity, clearly show the potential of, and need for, expanded arts and culture programming and space in Oshawa. The usage of the A.R.C. is currently light, creating an opportunity to invest further in this facility so it is utilized to its full potential.

In the Feasibility Study, Nordicity recommends the implementation of a pilot as an intermediate step between current operations and a future cultural hub to:

- Test the feasibility of the A.R.C. as a Cultural Hub;

- Build a space that operates efficiently and addresses community needs;
- Expand upon programming at the A.R.C. and incorporate more activities and events at the current site;
- Assist in developing a business case for a Cultural Hub;
- Help determine a future governance and operating model; and,
- Act as an intermediate step between current operations and a future Cultural Hub.

The multi-year pilot project would include:

- Conducting a further audit and assessment of existing City arts and culture programming, and a review of existing contracts and tenancy arrangements and determining their alignment to a Cultural Hub model as defined in the A.R.C. Feasibility Study;
- Reviewing precedents, programming and service examples identified in the Feasibility Study and determining suitability to test those examples in the existing A.R.C.;
- Examining existing fees, policies and practices, including governance models, and making recommendations for suitable adjustments, subject to Council approval, in order to incorporate opportunities that are not currently available to the community;
- Implementing new and enhanced programming and service options, which would not require major renovations to the facility, as outlined in the Feasibility Study, in order to gain more insight from the community on usage and needs that would allow for a business case for a permanent Cultural Hub to be developed in the future; and,
- Reviewing and identifying the applicable Key Performance Indicators outlined in the Feasibility Study and establishing a plan to program and gather community feedback to track the performance of the Cultural Hub Pilot Project.

If approved, Business and Economic Development Services and Recreation Services staff would collaborate to develop a detailed schedule of goals, objectives, programming, key performance indicators and services including timeline and budgetary needs to conduct a pilot and would report back to Council with the Cultural Hub Pilot Project proposal for direction at the September 9, 2024 Economic and Development Services Committee meeting.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications to endorse the A.R.C. Feasibility Study.

A separate report will be presented at the September 9, 2024 Economic and Development Services Committee meeting to provide more information on the pilot project. If Council supports the pilot project then the financial resources required to support the pilot project will be recommended for consideration in the Mayor's 2025 budget.

## **7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan**

This project and the recommendations in this Report advance the Accountable Leadership, Social Equity and Cultural Vitality goals of the Oshawa Strategic Plan.



Hailey Wright, BA Hons, Director,  
Business and Economic Development Services



Anthony Ambra, P.Eng., Commissioner,  
Economic and Development Services Department

# Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study

## Final Report

May 2024

Prepared for  
The City of Oshawa

Prepared by

**Nordicity**

and

**Giaino**



## Land Acknowledgment

The City of Oshawa is situated on lands within the traditional and treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Anishinaabeg and the signatories of the Williams Treaties, which include the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, Hiawatha, Curve Lake, and Alderville First Nations, and the Chippewas of Georgina Island, Rama and Beausoleil First Nations.

We are grateful for the Anishinaabeg who have cared for the land and waters within this territory since time immemorial.

We recognize that Oshawa is steeped in rich Indigenous history and is now present-day home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. We express gratitude for this diverse group of Indigenous Peoples who continue to care for the land and shape and strengthen our community.

'Oshawa' stems from an Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe language) word meaning "a crossing place" and has further translation as "the point at the crossing of the stream where the canoe was exchanged for the trail". When the word Oshawa was chosen as the name of our City, it reflected and recognized the importance of water and land to our community. Our City's name is a reminder of this important and powerful connection between people and place in the past but also of the present and for the future.

As a municipality, we are crossing over. We are committed to understanding the truth of our shared history, acknowledging our role in addressing the negative impacts that colonization continues to have on Indigenous Peoples, developing reciprocal relationships, and taking meaningful action toward reconciliation.

We are all Treaty people.

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## Executive Summary

In November 2021, the City of Oshawa engaged Nordicity and Giaimo Architects to conduct a feasibility study with the specific goal of assessing the possibility of converting the Arts Resource Centre (“A.R.C.”) (45 Queen Street) into a Cultural Hub.

## Project Approach

The project team undertook the majority of its work in 2022. The **Research and Assessment Phase** included reviewing existing municipal plans, A.R.C. operations and other material to confirm that converting the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub aligned with the City of Oshawa’s goals around economic development and revitalizing its city centre. The team also conducted extensive community and stakeholder consultations via:

- **Online Feedback Form** on the Connect Oshawa platform (220 respondents, 217 of whom filled in the first question, identifying as either a member of the public, an artist, or a culture and creative sector worker, organizational representative or facility owner/operator);
- **Presentations to municipal committees (x10)** on the needs and gaps pertaining to a Cultural Hub in Oshawa;
- **Roundtables and feedback sessions (x3)** with stakeholders from Oshawa’s arts and cultural sectors.

These consultations informed the project team’s understanding of the community’s needs and gaps in the cultural sector. Results indicated broad public support and desire for a Cultural Hub in Oshawa.

The **Design and Operations Phase** involved taking synthesized material from the Research and Assessment Phase and designing three feasible design concepts including draft architectural design concepts, conceptual floor plans, square footage allocations, and exterior drawings. These concepts were presented to the public and sector stakeholders for feedback. The project team then identified estimated capital costs for each concept and researched potential high-level governance and operations models.

## Oshawa Demographics and Cultural Context

Oshawa is the largest municipality in the Regional Municipality of Durham. The city had a population of 175,383 as of the 2021 census<sup>1</sup> and is one of the fastest growing regions in Canada. Some facets of Oshawa's growth include its attractiveness to immigrant populations, leading to steadily increasing diversity across the city, alongside existing racialized communities, and the Indigenous and First Nation people. Additionally, growth is occurring especially in senior age brackets and among those under 10 years of age. This growth at "opposite ends of the age spectrum" means Oshawa must plan to accommodate very different needs within the city.<sup>2</sup>

With its steady population growth, increased economic opportunities, diversification, and revitalization, Oshawa's community's needs and demand for services are evolving. For decades governments and funders have increasingly recognized the important role cultural institutions have in shaping the public spaces and the fabric of communities through the programs, services, and valuable spaces they offer. Transitioning the A.R.C. into a better utilized and robust Cultural Hub will ideally 1) support the cultural sector's growth, 2) support public participation in culture, heritage, and the arts and 3) align with the needs of a growing municipality aiming to revitalize its downtown core. Cultural hubs and artistic centres can play a role in rejuvenating neighbourhoods and encouraging residents to return to downtown/central areas.<sup>3</sup> The transformation of the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub can be a tool in the overall renewal efforts of Oshawa's downtown core and in accommodating the growing population.

The A.R.C.'s location is remarkable for its proximity to the Oshawa Public Libraries McLaughlin Branch, City Hall, and The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (R.M.G.) as well as its accessibility by road, public transit and even trail networks. The location presents the potential opportunity to expand the hub's connection

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, "[Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population – Population and dwelling counts](#)," 2022

<sup>2</sup> Alinea Community Development, "2023 Oshawa Community Trends: A review of the data, 2016 to 2021" 2023

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, "[A VISION FOR CULTURAL HUBS AND DISTRICTS IN CANADA](#)" 2018

to and with the **community and expand partnership opportunities to institutions and downtown businesses. There is the potential to create a cultural campus or district from this grouping of cultural organizations.**

This model has seen significant adoption in Canada based on its ability to contribute to sustainable community development. Forging connections between like-minded organizations generates efficiencies that might not be as effectively accessed or leveraged as singular entities. As noted in the Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture (P.R.L.C.) Facility Needs Assessment, “Residents use parks, recreation, library, and culture infrastructure to participate in physical and cultural activities together, interact at a social and personal level, and partake in festivals and special events. All these activities help Oshawa residents feel connected to their neighbourhoods and the broader community.”

### **The A.R.C. Today**

After assessing the A.R.C., the project team determined that the site is indeed suitable and equipped for transformation into a Cultural Hub in downtown Oshawa. The downtown location is ideal as this area is the site of many other cultural and heritage events and assets and will help in accommodating the needs of a growing population in the downtown core. Although the building presents challenges, the architectural foundation and design can be leveraged to create a space that is both functional and embodies design excellence. Transforming this building would be a form of adaptive reuse, which conserves the cultural, architectural, and historic value of the building, and offers an environmentally sustainable option for re-using existing infrastructure.

The current usage of the facility for cultural activities could perhaps be best described as “light.” The public consultation uncovered a substantial need for affordable space and programs covering a wide variety of community needs and should bring all communities in Oshawa into the city’s social and cultural fabric. In conclusion, the existing operations, activities, and services are not currently meeting the community’s needs. There is a clear opportunity for a refreshed and refurbished A.R.C. to become a true cultural hub.

### **Vision for a Cultural Hub**

Oshawa’s Cultural Hub aspires to be a vibrant, accessible place of creativity and connection for artists and community members. This hub will be a place where all are welcome to actively participate in, explore and innovate cultural and creative pursuits. This hub will enrich Oshawa’s cultural landscape and opportunities for its cultural sector and broader community, including

becoming a vital node amid the revitalization of the downtown core. Through a wide variety of programming, events, and services all residents are invited to interact with and collaborate in this welcoming space.

The Cultural Hub will support:

- Artists and creatives with meaningful opportunities, resources, and facilities to develop, incubate, showcase their works, connect with one another and thrive as part of Oshawa's growing arts/culture and creative economy.
- Members of the public, from children to seniors, newcomers, and students to participate in arts, culture and creative expression via programming, performances, events, workshops, and arts/cultural education.

At minimum, the future Cultural Hub will provide:

- Diverse programming and events related to the arts, culture, heritage, and the creative economy.
- Flexible rental space for performances, workshops, classes, meetings, studios etc., as well as space for artists to exhibit and reach audiences.
- Tools, resources and equipment for artists and makers to utilize to further their craft/work while at the Cultural Hub.

Future activities hosted at and provided at the Cultural Hub could include: 1) Classes, Courses, Workshops, and Camps; 2) City Cultural events; 3) Performance and/or Lecture Series; 4) Office/Desk Rentals; 5) Standard Rentals for External Use; 6) "Drop-In"/Flexible Membership Rental Program; 7) Mentorship and/or Artists in Residence Program; 8) School Programs; 9) Exhibition Program and Opportunities; and 10) Arts/Artisan Markets.

### **Proposed Guiding Principles:**

- **Accessibility and Affordability:** The Cultural Hub will offer activities, programs, events, and services at affordable rates and with no physical or organizational barriers to all Oshawa residents and user groups.
- **Responsiveness to the Community:** The Cultural Hub will consider the needs of the wider Oshawa arts/culture and creative sector and stakeholders in its development and operations.
- **Accountability:** The Cultural Hub will be efficient and transparent in its operations and strive for excellence in the services it offers.

- **Elevation and Collaboration:** The Cultural Hub should act as a resource and partner that enriches the overall cultural ecosystem in the city.
- **Adaptability:** The Cultural Hub will be flexible as the demands and needs of the community change and will aim to “future-proof” to ensure sustainability and wide-appeal.
- **Engagement:** The Cultural Hub will market and promote itself to the best of its ability to ensure all potential users are aware of its offerings and can access them.
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Sense of Well-being:** The Cultural Hub will embed inclusivity in its governance and operations and will strive to provide arts programming and services that appeal to and address the needs of equity-deserving groups.

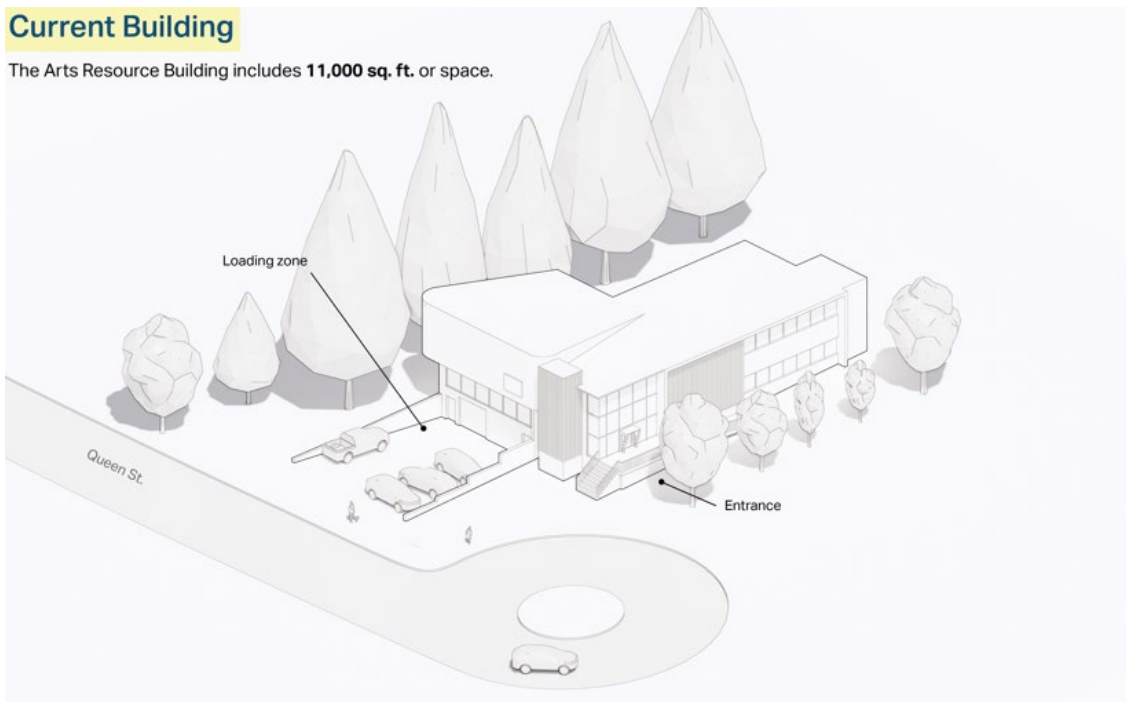
### **Three Potential Concepts**

Giaimo put together three potential concept drawings for a future cultural hub ranging from 12,000 sq. ft. (renovation) to 25,000 sq. ft. (multiple additions). While all three concepts share the same proposed vision and guiding principles, they offer different square footage sizes and thus programming and operations potential at different scales. All three concepts would involve building code upgrades to meet life safety, assembly upgrades, and accessibility/AODA requirements – the details of which would need to be further developed in this project's future.

The following images shows the current building as is, and the three subsequent images show the concepts for consideration with key features labeled.

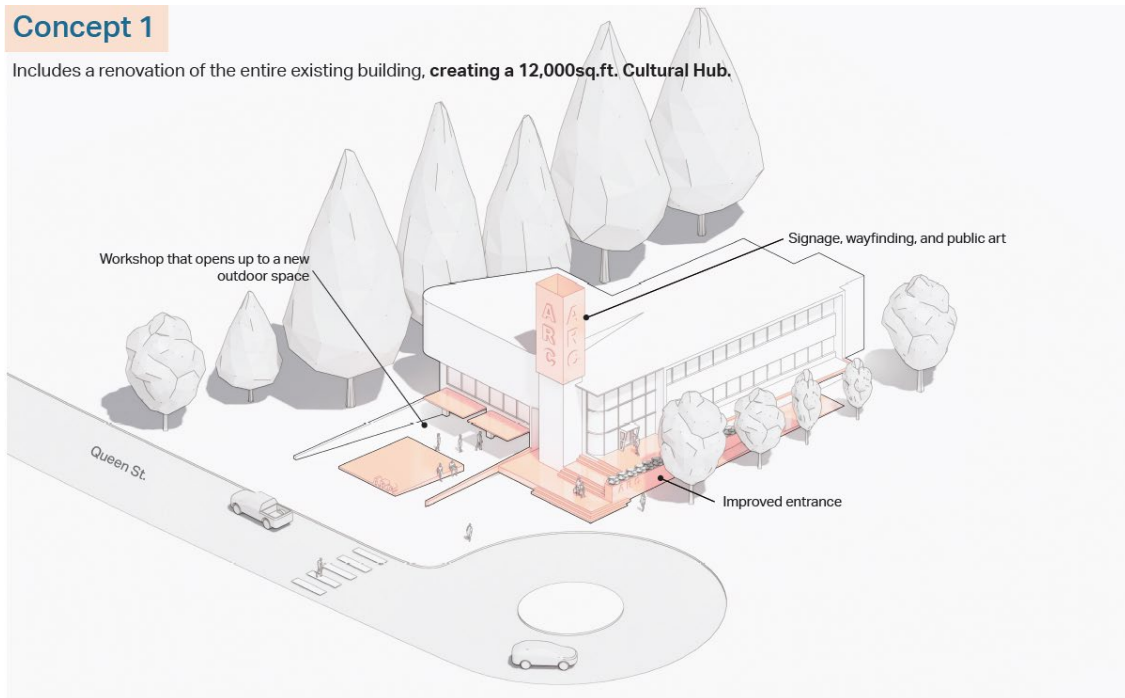
**Current Building**

The Arts Resource Building includes **11,000 sq. ft.** of space.



**Concept 1**

Includes a renovation of the entire existing building, **creating a 12,000sq.ft. Cultural Hub.**

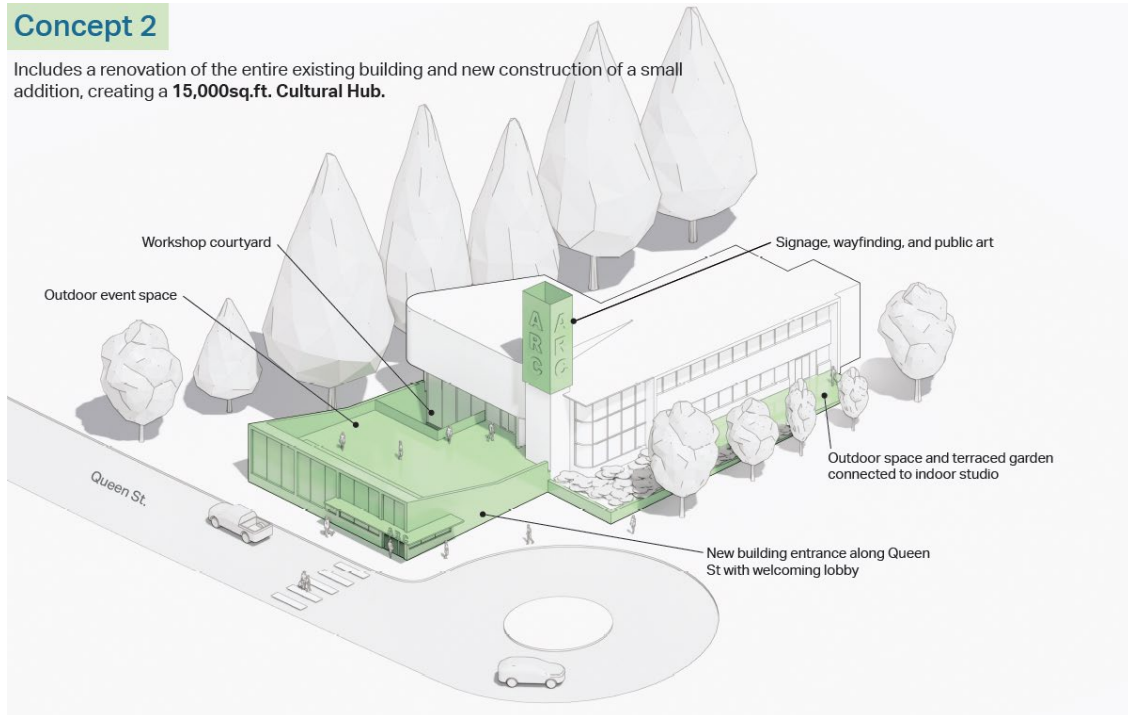


Concept 1 includes a renovation of the entire existing building, creating a 12,000-square-foot Cultural Hub. The building would remain generally the same size but with a revitalized interior and exterior. Areas of significant transformation are highlighted in orange in the concept design diagram above.



**Concept 2**

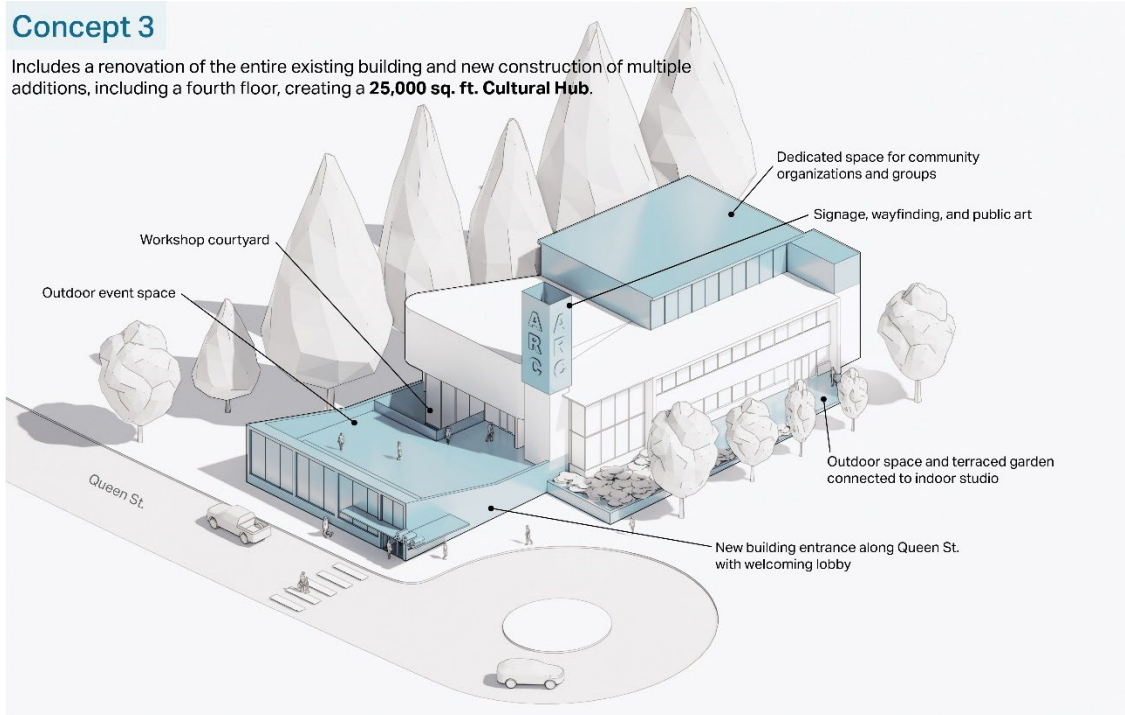
Includes a renovation of the entire existing building and new construction of a small addition, creating a **15,000sq.ft. Cultural Hub**.



Concept 2 includes a renovation of the entire existing building, as well as new construction of an addition, creating a 15,000-square-foot Cultural Hub. It includes much of what is outlined in Concept 1, plus a new construction 3,000-square-foot one-story addition on the east integrated with the existing building. This area of significant transformation is highlighted in green.

### Concept 3

Includes a renovation of the entire existing building and new construction of multiple additions, including a fourth floor, creating a **25,000 sq. ft. Cultural Hub**.



Concept 3 includes a renovation of the existing building and two new-construction additions, creating a 25,000-square-foot Cultural Hub. It includes much of what is outlined in both Concept 1 and 2, plus a new construction 10,000-square-foot four-story addition on the west with new foundation and work below grade. The area of significant transformation is highlighted in blue.

The public was presented with the three design concepts, general floor plans, and precedent images from facilities in other jurisdictions via the Connect Oshawa platform. The public was not presented with capital costs, operating budgets or projected revenues of each of these spaces. More than half (60%) of the respondents chose **Concept 3** as their preferred concept, followed by Concept 2 (24%). According to feedback shared, Concept 3 was the preferred choice because of its larger size and the additional amenities provided. Respondents appreciated that this concept offered the most space and had the potential to meet community needs now and in the future. They also appreciated the addition of the kitchen space or lounge/café and outdoor space, as well as the larger auditorium space and dedicated rehearsal rooms. In addition to being the preferred concept, Concept 3 is also the most pragmatic choice when considering Oshawa’s growing population and anticipating the needs of a more robust city centre. This concept would allow for the most

programming space and would likely have the most potential in attracting sponsorships.

### **Construction Costs**

A range of unit rates and budgets, developed using 2022 estimates, were prepared for each concept based on a list of project requirements and assumptions. These construction costs do not include legal fees, design or consultant fees, or any other fees required as part of the design and implementation process. Because they are based on figures from 2022, revised budgets will be needed before the construction is initiated. These figures can be found in Appendix A.

### **Funding and Governance**

In transforming the A.R.C. into a future Cultural Hub, there should be consideration of pursuing funding opportunities that will help offset construction and possibly operations costs. Competition for all funding is increasing but this project may be a strong contender for, The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, and Green and/or Sustainable Building Funds such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund. The Cultural Hub may also be attractive to potential corporate sponsors seeking positive affiliations and even naming rights. Donations and philanthropic sources may be viable from the private sector, affluent donors/patrons, or many residents through issuing Community Bonds, for example. More extensive use of social finance investment is expected in coming years in Canada for the arts.

There are multiple options for the City of Oshawa to consider concerning the governance of a future Cultural Hub including:

- City-Owned and Operated
- City Established and Owned, Non-Profit
- City External Agency
- Existing Non-Profit
- For-Profit or Public/Private Partnership
- Community/Artists-Run or Land Trust
- Cultural District

It is recommended that staff dedicated to outreach, community development and marketing are considered when staffing, to align with priorities mentioned previously. No specific model is recommended, as governance decisions are an iterative process and basic models may be combined or adapted as conditions change.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

This Feasibility Study has resulted in a strong vision for a Cultural Hub but with many potential pathways to pursue implementation. The transformation of the A.R.C. will not simply be a renovation project. It will involve embarking on a journey to build a space that operates efficiently and addresses community needs. To further test the feasibility of the A.R.C. as a Cultural Hub the City may consider developing a pilot project as the next step. This pilot, managed by the City, would aim to expand upon programming at the A.R.C and incorporate more activities and events at the current site. It could also assist in developing a business case for a Cultural Hub and help determine a future governance and operating model. This pilot project may act as an intermediate step between current operations and a future Cultural Hub. There are many decisions to be made, however this study provides guidance for the City to draw upon.

## 1. Context for this Feasibility Study

This section includes an overview of the context for this report, its objectives, and the approach.

### 1.1 Context and Objectives for this Feasibility Assessment

In November 2021, the City of Oshawa engaged Nordicity and Giaimo Architects to conduct a feasibility study with the specific goal of assessing the Arts Resource Centre (“A.R.C.”) (45 Queen Street) and its operations to determine the possibility of converting the facility into a Cultural Hub. The need to assess the feasibility for a Cultural Hub emerged in 2014 when the City of Oshawa adopted the *Culture Counts: Oshawa’s Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan*. The plan suggests a Feasibility Study to convert the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub as an action item under the strategic direction to “Create Vibrant Places and Spaces.”<sup>4</sup>

Feasibility studies can be initiated at varying stages of planning, and therefore can represent a wide range of expected activities and outcomes. The project team understood that this report acts as an important preliminary step for the City of Oshawa in converting the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub, and many details of this potential space have not yet been confirmed or finalized.

There are multiple definitions associated with the term “Cultural Hub.” The City of Oshawa defines a Cultural Hub as a combination of the terms “cultural spaces” and “creative hub” as determined by the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund:<sup>5</sup>

- **Cultural space** - *A physical space where Canadians gather collectively to experience arts or heritage related activities*
- **Creative hub** - *A creative hub is a multi-tenant facility which brings together professionals from a range of arts or heritage sectors and creative disciplines. Creative hubs feature diverse business models, such as not-for-profit and for-profit organizations and self-employed creative workers. Creative hubs provide multiple users with shared space, equipment and amenities; opportunities for idea exchange, collaboration and/or*

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<sup>4</sup> City of Oshawa, [“Culture Counts: Oshawa Arts, Culture & Heritage Plan,”](#) 2014

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada, [“Application Guidelines – Canada Cultural Spaces Fund,”](#) 2018

*professional development; and offer space and programming that is accessible to the public.*

The description by the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund is simply one means of understanding the term “Cultural Hub.” The term is not rigid and can adjust to many community contexts and needs. **At its core, a Cultural Hub can be a physical or virtual place where people, residents, artists, cultural entrepreneurs and organizations converge to encourage any number of artistic or cultural activities, programming, and resources.**<sup>6</sup> These hubs may take many forms, but ultimately, they aim to advance economic development, social connection, artistic activity and innovation, as well as tourism.

The scope of this project involved evaluating the A.R.C.’s current operations (e.g., programs and facilities), identifying options for a new operating model, facility and building enhancements, including design concepts, drawings and directions, as well as preliminary capital cost estimates.

This report represents the findings, options and recommendations based on the research, consultations and analysis conducted between January and November 2022. The City of Oshawa received funding through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund for this study.

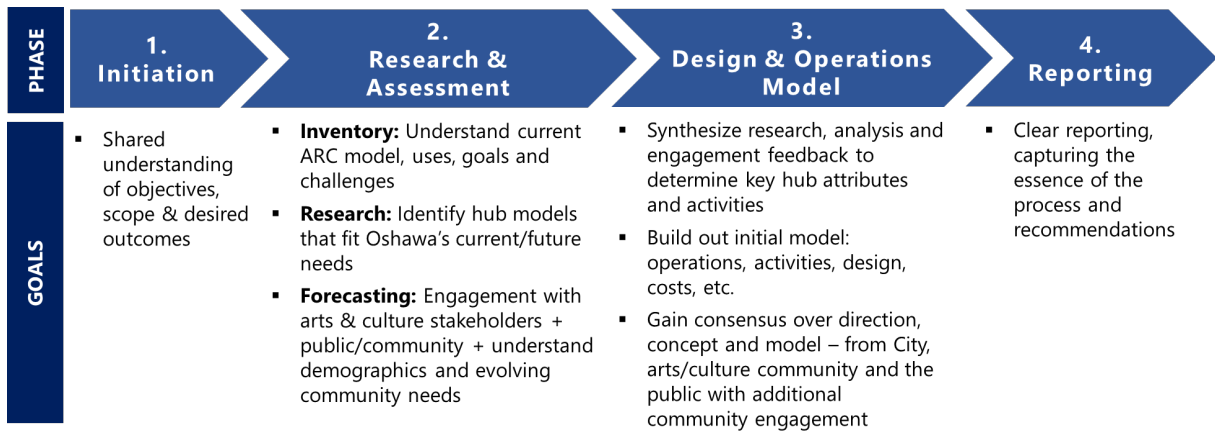
### **1.1.1 Project Approach**

The project approach included four phases as shown in the visual below.

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<sup>6</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, [“A VISION FOR CULTURAL HUBS AND DISTRICTS IN CANADA”](#) 2018

**Figure 1: Project Approach**



**Phase 1 (Initiation)** consisted of a kick-off meeting with the project team and the City coming to a shared understanding of objectives, scope and outcomes.

**Phase 2 (Research & Assessment)** largely involved research and public consultation. To carry out this phase, the project team:

- Reviewed **existing documents and plans**, including those pertaining to the existing facility, its operations, challenges, etc.
- Researched and reviewed the **design and operations of comparable facilities** in other jurisdictions.
- Carried out a **site visit** in Oshawa to assess the A.R.C., other City recreational facilities, and other assets in the downtown area.
- Delivered an **A.R.C. assessment report**, evaluating the physical properties of the building and performing a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) of the building and its operations (See Appendix B).
- Designed and analyzed an **initial Feedback Form** to the public and arts, cultural and creative sector.
  - The Feedback Form was launched on March 23, 2022, on the Connect Oshawa platform and was open until April 25, 2022. The Feedback Form was promoted by the City of Oshawa through social media, newsletters, print ads, Curbex signs and through its various networks of cultural groups. There were 220 respondents to the initial feedback form, 217 of whom filled in the first question, identifying as either a member of the public, an artist, or a culture and creative sector worker, organizational representative

or facility owner/operator. These 217 responses from the public and arts/cultural sector informed Nordicity's understanding of the community's needs and gaps in the sector. Results indicated a broad public support and desire for a Cultural Hub in Oshawa. The Feedback Form results are presented in Appendix C.

- Presented project to and collected feedback on needs and gaps pertaining to a Cultural Hub in Oshawa from **10 committees** including:
  - Standing Committee: Community Services Committee
  - Advisory Committees: Oshawa Animal Care Advisory Committee, Heritage Oshawa, Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee, Oshawa Active Transportation Committee, Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee,
  - Other: Cultural Leadership Council, Public Art Task Force, Community Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and Plan 20Thirty Steering Committee.
- Conducted **3 roundtables and feedback sessions** with various stakeholders from Oshawa's arts and cultural sectors on the needs of a future Cultural Hub, including representatives from the visual arts and heritage sectors, the theatre and music sectors, community organizations and post-secondary institutions.
- Reviewed **direct feedback from sector stakeholders** sent via email regarding feedback on the A.R.C. and a future Cultural Hub
- Synthesized the results of feedback sessions, presentations, and feedback form results, as well as additional research, to determine **needs and aspirations for a future Cultural Hub** and presented an interim report.

**Phase 3 (Design and Operations)** involved taking synthesized material from Phase 2 and designing three feasible potential design concepts. To carry out this phase, the project team:

- Developed **three draft architectural design concepts**, at various scales, which each included a conceptual floor plan, square footage allocation, exterior drawing, and precedents.
- Designed and analyzed a **second public feedback form**. This form presented the three design concepts to the public and sector



stakeholders and asked them to provide comments and indicate which one they preferred.

- The Feedback Form was launched on August 15, 2022, via the Connect Oshawa platform and was open until September 12, 2022. The ~117 responses were informative in relaying the preferred concept of the community and the aspects of the concepts the public enjoyed. The results are presented in Appendix D.
- Researched **potential governance and operations** models.
- Estimated **capital costs associated with each of the three design concepts**.

**Phase 4 (Reporting) involved further analysis as the basis for design, programming, and governance options.**

## 1.2 Policy and Planning Context in Oshawa

Exploring the feasibility of converting the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub aligns with the importance the City of Oshawa places on its arts, culture, and heritage assets, as well its goals around economic development and revitalizing its city centre. The development of this hub builds on a strong foundation of policy and planning and should ultimately reflect the collective ideas, aspirations and evolution of the City of Oshawa’s creative and cultural sector and residents.

The table below describes goals, initiatives, and recommendations from existing City studies, decisions, and plans that provide the policy context for the development of the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub.

**Table 1: Planning Context**

City Plan	Description
<b>Culture Counts - Oshawa’s Arts, Culture &amp; Heritage Plan (2014)</b> <sup>7</sup>	This plan recommends a feasibility study to convert the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub as an action item under the strategic direction to “Create Vibrant Places and Spaces”. Additionally, the transformation of the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub aligns with the identified needs to improve cultural

<sup>7</sup> City of Oshawa, [“Culture Counts: Oshawa’s Arts, Culture & Heritage Plan,”](#) 2014

City Plan	Description
	<p>spaces and places. Revitalizing the A.R.C. also aligns with its recommendation for prioritized strategies that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) celebrate, promote, nurture and grow the arts, culture and heritage sector;</li> <li>(ii) build partnerships and strengthen collective engagement and collaboration within the arts, culture and heritage sector and with the municipality;</li> <li>(iii) connect the arts, culture and heritage sector to key business and community groups and initiatives in support of mutual objectives including the delivery of arts, culture and heritage services;</li> <li>(iv) strengthen the promotion and use of key arts, culture, and heritage facilities (both public and private); and</li> <li>(v) strengthen the engagement and participation of the community in arts, culture and heritage programs and services.</li> </ul>
<b>Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment (2015) (+2024 Draft)</b>	<p>The 2015 Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment (the “P.R.L.C. Assessment”) contains key Culture Facility Provisioning Strategy outcomes. These outcomes align directly with the goals of this feasibility report, including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Engage the cultural community to define how the Arts Resource Centre can become an incubator for the creative and cultural sector, and function as the City’s premier ‘cultural campus’ and aligning with other cultural assets located in and around the downtown core. As part of this process, initiate a business plan to explore the feasibility for a performing arts facility based on the same recommendation contained in the Culture Counts Plan.</li> </ul> <p>A 2024 draft update to the P.R.L.C. Assessment is underway. The City considers the P.R.L.C. when planning and designing new builds or major renovations to existing facilities, to</p>

City Plan	Description
	<p>respond to the needs of people living in Oshawa. The Cultural Facility Assessment within the updated P.R.L.C. Assessment should be consulted as part of future Cultural Hub planning.</p>
<p><b>City of Oshawa’s Strategic Plan (2020)</b><sup>8</sup></p>	<p>The Strategic Plan focuses on culture as one of its core strategic goals and aims to support arts, culture and heritage that engage and inspire. Success in achieving this goal is measured in working with the community to implement the Culture Counts plan, which, as previously mentioned, aims to “create vibrant places and spaces.”</p> <p>The Strategic Plan specifically cites protecting and encouraging the community’s arts and culture sector as a recommended strategy. The rationale for the conversion of the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub is that it would provide an innovative, inclusive, creative space for members of the creative community in the City of Oshawa and the region at large.</p>
<p><b>Public Art Master Plan (P.A.M.P.) (2018)</b><sup>9</sup></p>	<p>The P.A.M.P. is an extension of the Public Art Policy framework and aims for the City to incorporate Public Art projects in city beautification and creative placemaking strategically. The P.A.M.P. also cites Oshawa’s downtown as a priority area for Public Art and the A.R.C. as a notable building that is municipally owned and operated that could be enhanced through the installation of Public Art.</p>
<p><b>Plan 20Thirty (2022)</b><sup>10</sup></p>	<p>This action plan builds on the previous Plan 20Twenty and upholds the City’s goal to create a vibrant, attractive and animated downtown where people come together to live, work, shop, meet and engage. A potential Cultural Hub was viewed as a way to provide an opportunity for the City to deliver specific results, including supporting some of Plan 20Thirty’s key objectives:</p>

<sup>8</sup> City of Oshawa, [“Oshawa Strategic Plan,”](#) 2020

<sup>9</sup> City of Oshawa, [“Public Art Master Plan \(P.A.M.P.\),”](#) 2018

<sup>10</sup> City of Oshawa, [“Plan 20Thirty – Action Plan for Continued Downtown Revitalization,”](#) 2022

City Plan	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhancing, leveraging, and marketing the downtown’s strengths and assets.</li> <li>▪ Enhancing, leveraging, and marketing the retail, personal service, culinary, arts, culture, and entertainment sectors.</li> <li>▪ Strengthening partnerships with organizations such as the Universities and College, the Spark Centre, Business Advisory Centre of Durham, and social agencies.</li> </ul> <p>In June 2022, Oshawa City Council approved Plan20Thirty.</p>
<b>Oshawa Economic Development Strategy (2023)<sup>11</sup></b>	<p>The transformation of the A.R.C. aligns with the strategic framework of Oshawa’s Economic Development Strategy. Strategy 5A prioritizes creating “a vibrant community for people to live, work, learn and play.” Actions within this strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aligning Oshawa’s key arts, culture and heritage goals and projects.</li> <li>▪ Expanding financially sustainable local art, cultural events, music festivals and theatre productions.</li> <li>▪ Promoting heritage preservation and cultural infrastructure districts.</li> <li>▪ Supporting cultural programming and education.</li> <li>▪ Mitigating social issues impacting the business environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Region of Durham Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (2017-2021)<sup>12</sup></b>	<p>The transformation of the A.R.C. aligns with the goals set out in Durham Region’s Economic Development Strategy, which is committed to economic growth through strategic activities that enhance job growth and create investment opportunities in the city. As such, the Strategy lists seven activities that will be leveraged to achieve this mandate, three of which correlate with the potential process and</p>

<sup>11</sup> City of Oshawa, “[Oshawa Economic Development Strategy](#),” 2023

<sup>12</sup> Durham Regional Council, “[Durham Region Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan](#),” 2017

City Plan	Description
	outcomes related to the conversion of the A.R.C. into a cultural hub.
<b>Region of Durham Ready Set Future: A PLACE Blueprint for Durham (2023 - 2027)</b>	<p>This element of the Region of Durham’s Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Action Plan names Arts, Culture and Creative as one of its key clusters. The plan commits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate to influence major advances to the region’s Quality of Place through bold and transformative tourism and placemaking initiatives. Growth in the arts, cultural, and creative industries contributes to the magnetism of a community. In order to lay the foundation for a magnetic, sociable and prosperous community and economy.</li> </ul>
<b>City of Oshawa Diversity and Inclusion Plan (2017)<sup>13</sup></b>	<p>The proposed vision for a Cultural Hub is aligned with Oshawa’s Diversity and Inclusion Plan and the commitments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifying and addressing forms of discrimination that create barriers to service access and community engagement and inhibit flexibility and participation.</li> <li>▪ Work with marginalized groups to counter historical, attitudinal, structural, and institutional practices that inhibit inclusivity, and</li> <li>▪ Implementing programs and initiatives and providing services that recognize the full range of human differences and realize the goals of fairness, justice and non-discrimination.</li> </ul>

## 2. Oshawa Context: A Growing Community

Oshawa is the largest municipality in the Regional Municipality of Durham. It is on the shoreline of Lake Ontario, firmly in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) about 60km east of Downtown Toronto. The city had a population of 175,383 as of the

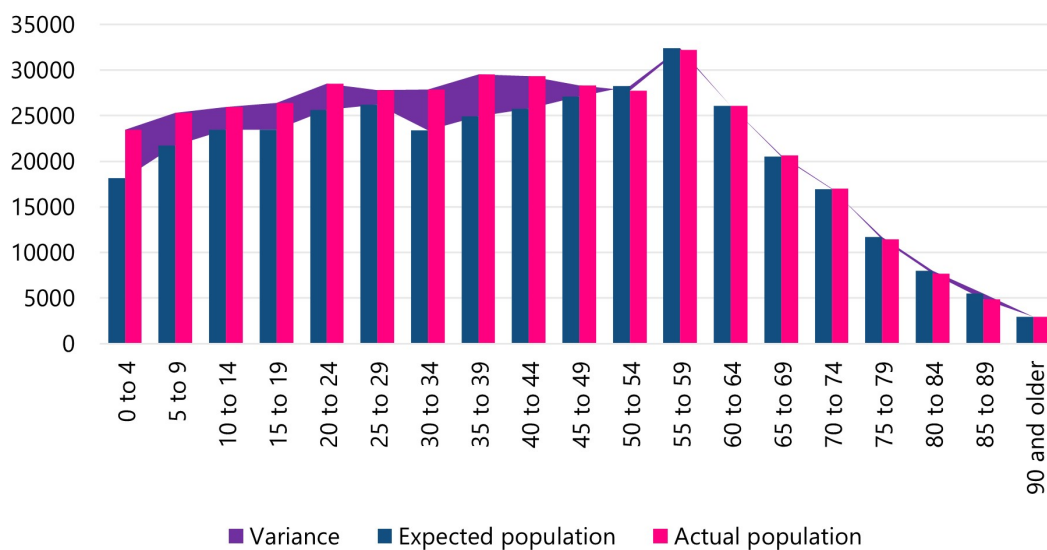
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<sup>13</sup> City of Oshawa, "[City of Oshawa Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#)," 2017

2021 census<sup>14</sup> and is in one of the fastest growing regions in Canada.<sup>15</sup> Oshawa’s population grew at a compound annual growth rate of 1.2% from 2015 to 2020. For context, over the same period, the population in Ontario grew at a compound annual rate of 1.5%. Looking ahead, the population of Oshawa is projected to reach 197,000 by 2031.

Within the GTA, housing in the Durham Region has remained relatively more affordable through the recent real estate boom as compared to other regions. As a result, Oshawa has been an **attractive value proposition for migrating residents**.<sup>16</sup> Many with young families who are looking for larger homes and green space have been drawn to Oshawa, especially during and following the pandemic. As we see in Figure 2 below, net migration and fertility rate analysis affirms that Oshawa’s growth is bolstered by the migration of families.

**Figure 2: Net Migration Analysis of Oshawa (CMA), 2015-2020**



Source: Statistics Canada Tables 17-10-0135-01, 13-10-0114-01, 13-10-0418-01

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada, [“Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population – Population and dwelling counts,”](#) 2022

<sup>15</sup> Global News, [“Oshawa, Ont., one of the fastest-growing areas in the country, according to Statistics Canada,”](#) 2021

<sup>16</sup> The Star, [“Durham homebuyer rides the rate increase, home value decrease wave to success,”](#) 2022

The figure above shows that the ages 0-4 demographic in Oshawa's actual population (in pink) notably exceeds – by 29% - what was predicted based on typical fertility rates (in blue). This variance is likely a result of young families moving to Oshawa, especially those with children under 4. Oshawa's population has a greater share of children ages 0-14 than the rest of Canada.<sup>17</sup> Oshawa's population is simultaneously experiencing growth among younger adults under 35 years of age, children under the age of 10 years and people over the age of 55 years, including a high rate of growth among those over age 70 years.<sup>18</sup> According to the 2023 Oshawa Community Trends report, "the shifting age profile in Oshawa presents some unique challenges as there is ongoing growth at opposite ends of the age spectrum with little growth in the middle. This means that populations with different needs and desires are both growing significantly in the city. As the population of older adults and seniors increases, there will be a need to continue to develop an Age Friendly Community and ensure that there are programs, services, and infrastructure in place to support residents as they age. At the same time, as more young families emerge in the city, there will be a need to ensure that programming, services, and infrastructure are available to support families as they raise children in Oshawa."<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, the city is becoming much more diverse. Population growth is partly driven by immigrants and racialized groups. The GTA has become home to roughly half of all new immigrants in Canada, and Oshawa specifically has seen a 43% increase in immigrants from 2016 to 2021.<sup>20</sup> The city's Indigenous population has grown as well, increasing from 4,645 residents in 2016 to 5,325 residents in 2021.<sup>21</sup>

### **Changes in the Industrial Base**

The young population growth in Oshawa is reinforced by the city's economic transformations, which has attracted students and skilled young workers. Once

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<sup>17</sup> Statistics Canada, "[Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population – Age, sex at birth and gender](#)" 2022

<sup>18</sup> Alinea Community Development, "2023 Oshawa Community Trends: A review of the data, 2016 to 2021" 2023

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

dubbed “Canada’s Motor City,” Oshawa had traditionally relied on a robust auto manufacturing sector as the engine of its local economy, headlined by the General Motors of Canada headquarters first established over a century ago. However, in recent decades the makeup of the economy has undergone rapid diversification. **Health, education, clean energy, and information technology** have become key employment areas. The demand for new industrial and commercial space saw building activity pre-COVID increasing to the tune of 55 percent year-over-year.<sup>22</sup> Between 1988 and 2017, the proportion of local employment in manufacturing shrank from 30 percent down to less than 10 percent, while employment in healthcare and education has nearly doubled since 2000.<sup>23</sup>

### **Growth of the Educational Base and Student Population**

Students and young adults are drawn to the city, as it is home to several leading post-secondary institutions, including **Trent University Durham GTA, Ontario Tech University** and **Durham College** – which includes the Durham College School of Media, Arts and Design. The city is also home to the state-of-the-art Lakeridge Health Education and Research Network facility and the Queen’s University Lakeridge Health MD Family Medicine Program, bringing in healthcare students and practitioners from all over southern Ontario. Attraction to Oshawa will further increase because regional connectivity is expected to improve as GO Transit plans to add several stops in the area, linking Oshawa more seamlessly to the Toronto market. All of this, compounded with signs of modest recovery in the still-critical auto sector, have contributed to Oshawa’s attractiveness for young people, and general attraction to new residents.

### **The Role of a Cultural Hub in a Modern Oshawa**

With the steady population growth, increased economic opportunities and diversification, and revitalization, the community’s needs, and demand for services, including those surrounding the arts, culture and creative sectors are evolving. Cultural institutions are vital destinations for residents, and in maintaining well-being and encouraging community engagement. For decades governments and funders have increasingly recognized the important role

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<sup>22</sup> Financial Post, “[The Region of Durham experiences economic boom with their new big investors](#),” 2021

<sup>23</sup> The Globe and Mail, “[An Ontario success story, Oshawa bounces back from factory losses](#),” 2017



cultural institutions have in shaping the public spaces and the fabric of communities through the programs, services, and valuable spaces they offer.

Transitioning the A.R.C. into a better utilized and robust Cultural Hub will ideally 1) support the cultural sector's growth, 2) support public participation in culture, heritage, and the arts and 3) align with the needs of a growing municipality aiming to revitalize its downtown core. Indeed, developing artistic and cultural infrastructure has been a key strategy in city-building for decades. Several examples in Ontario illustrate this approach:

- The **MaLaren Art Centre** in **Barrie**, an example of adaptive reuse which combines a renovated 1917 Carnegie library with a contemporary addition designed by Hariri Pontarini Architects, opened in 2001. MaLaren's mission page states: "As a cultural and architectural landmark in downtown Barrie and a cornerstone of culture for the city, the MaLaren works in partnership with the City of Barrie and community organizations to foster a prosperous, creative economy and a vibrant, livable city, developing programs that support downtown revitalization and the master plan for culture."<sup>24</sup>
- **Place des Arts, a cultural centre opened in 2022, is on a former municipal parking lot in downtown Sudbury.** The hub identifies itself as a gathering place for Francophones and the whole community and was identified as a project to promote transformation in the 2012 Downtown Sudbury Master Plan.
- **The Ideas Exchange in Cambridge**, an example of adaptive reuse by RDHA opened in 2019. While combined with a digital library, the hub also includes arts and crafts workshops for all ages, maker spaces, audio video recording rooms, visual arts exhibits, and other cultural programming, serving as a cultural hub. The project lies in the heart of the City of Cambridge's effort to revitalize its downtown area.

Cultural Hubs can play a role in rejuvenating downtown communities, as vibrant arts, and cultural activity draw residents back into central neighbourhoods.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> MaLaren Arts Centre, "[Mission, Values, Vision](#)"

<sup>25</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, "[A VISION FOR CULTURAL HUBS AND DISTRICTS IN CANADA](#)" 2018

### **3. Current Site (The Arts Resource Centre)**

#### **3.1 Description and History**

The A.R.C. is at 45 Queen Street in downtown Oshawa. It is a two-story building with a partial basement and is approximately 11,500 sq. ft. The A.R.C. is the site of much of the City's cultural programming and offers rental space to individuals and community organizations. The facility offers amenities such as meeting rooms, a pottery studio, a kiln room, art studios, an auditorium, a coat room, offices, storage area, and lunchroom.

The A.R.C. was originally constructed in 1952 as the Athol Street police station. It served as a building for the Oshawa police and as a courtroom. The building was used for this initial purpose until 1972 when it was re-purposed by social service groups. During this time spaces within the building began to be modified to serve as artist studios and the building was renamed to the Oshawa Arts Resource Centre.

The original building was composed of three defining materials and volumes: concrete, glass, and masonry brick. These materials are used to break up and define elements of the building. The building was designed in a modernist style with distinguishing elements such as large, banded windows, a curtain wall entrance atrium, and curved concrete volumetric expressions of internal programmatic spaces. Each element was used to create an asymmetric but balanced composition typical of this architecture period. With the original lot on the corner of Queen Street and Athol Street, the entrance lobby was prominent from both streets. The curtain wall windows of the lobby were broken into segments carefully spaced to complement the strong horizontal datum lines of banded windows of the two-street elevation. The large windows and openness of the entrance signifies a public-facing and civic-oriented space. The banded windows on the Queen and Athol Street Elevations were placed in a varying pattern with alternation between top and bottom operable openings. This playful expression brings attention to the windows and is a unique and defining characteristic of the elevations.

Various renovations have occurred to the building over time. The most notable transformations occurred to the building in 1986 with the support of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, and the City of Oshawa. These modifications by David A.G. Mills Associates Limited Architect included an elevator in the main entrance atrium, a new washroom core, and an accessibility ramp. Alterations were made to the original interior

layout, as well as the exterior design, to accommodate the introduction of these elements. The new ramp involved removing the existing stairs and raised planter boxes, altering the relationship between the entrance and street level. On the south facade, windows were blocked up in the new washrooms.

Later, as part of different renovations, the sculptural concrete entrance canopy was clad over in light gauge steel to match the metal cladding on the elevator and at the washroom core. The original curtain wall has been replaced with brown anodized aluminum and tinted glazing units. Areas underneath the window and the retaining wall that had previously been brick have been parged over.

Since the original construction of the building in 1952, significant modifications have been made to the surrounding context and public realm.<sup>26</sup> Most notable of these was the removal of a portion of Athol Street which previously extended to Oshawa Creek. What was a previous thoroughfare has been replaced by parking and cul-de-sacs making the access disjointed from the city fabric. Additionally, the connection between the site and the creek has been severed by the addition of new parking lots in recent decades.

The history of the A.R.C. and its main function is one of evolution, leading to its current role as a place for arts programming. Oshawa has grown and changed, and so has society. It's timely to assess the feasibility of transforming the building and its operations into a new Cultural Hub.

### **3.2 Assessment for a Cultural Hub**

This section presents an assessment of the A.R.C. and its potential for transformation into a Cultural Hub. This assessment is based on an architectural evaluation, a site visit, review of a utilization data provided by the City of Oshawa on the A.R.C. (2015-2019),<sup>27</sup> Feedback Form results, and substantial community and stakeholder consultations. A more detailed Design Assessment

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<sup>26</sup> The "public realm" is defined as the publicly owned places and spaces that belong to and are accessible by everyone. These can include municipal streets, lanes, squares, plazas, sidewalks, trails, parks, open spaces, waterfronts, public transit systems, conservation areas, and civic buildings and institutions.

<sup>27</sup> Since the A.R.C. was closed for much of the pandemic period, data from 2019 is the most current and the most representative of standard activities at the A.R.C.

report was also completed by the project team, submitted to the City of Oshawa. Appendix B of this report contains more in-depth material about the history of the building and its current condition.

### **3.2.1 Strengths and Values**

The A.R.C. exhibits several values and strengths, many of which can be leveraged for a future Cultural Hub, including:

#### **Prime Location**

- The A.R.C. is positioned in Downtown Oshawa – an ideal and central location for a Cultural Hub:
  - Presence of community events (e.g., Kars on King, Fiesta Week Parade, Bright & Merry Market) and near The Robert McLaughlin Gallery (R.M.G.), the Oshawa Public Library (McLaughlin Branch), Oshawa City Hall, and various post-secondary institutional campuses (e.g., Ontario Tech, Trent University Durham GTA Advanced Learning Centre).
  - Proximity to many important and significant arts, culture, and entertainment assets, including the Canadian Automotive Museum, Ontario Philharmonic Orchestra, Oshawa Sports Hall of Fame and Regent Theatre Ontario Tech, in addition to many independent events and entertainment venues.
  - Near shops, restaurants, cafes, and social services.
- Central location is an asset as the A.R.C will benefit from other downtown revitalization efforts and align with community needs amid population growth:
  - The residential population in the area is growing, and many apartment buildings have recently been built or are planned for construction.
  - Downtown Oshawa’s residential base is growing with students, young professionals, retirees, and small families.
- The proximity to natural elements, such as bike paths, trails, the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens, Memorial Park, and the Oshawa Creek is seen as an asset that can be leveraged.
- The site is accessible by multiple modes of transportation, including public transportation, active transportation, and driving.

- Given the site's evolution and context, the A.R.C has both cultural and historic value.

### **Condition of Existing Building**

- The existing building is in generally good condition; it has already been through the process of transformation and adaptive reuse once and can again accommodate transformation while leveraging the existing infrastructure.
- Several major accessibility upgrades were completed in the 1980s.

### **Community Asset**

- Consultations indicated that the A.R.C. is unique in its offerings, in that it is the only centre of its type in Oshawa; it is a recognized asset for the community.
- Stakeholders and the community specifically mentioned that the accessible and affordable programming provided by the A.R.C. is a value, especially for those with families and children or those who face socio-economic barriers.
  - According to programming data the most popular type of programming are children's camps, followed by arts-specific programming.
- The A.R.C. offers affordable administrative, studio, and rehearsal space to arts organizations that might otherwise face cost barriers when trying to access space.

### **General User Satisfaction**

- In the first Feedback Form, the community, artists or culture/creative sector workers, organizational representatives and facility owners/operators were asked to rate their experience at the A.R.C.
  - Of the 36 respondents who had previously been to the A.R.C., 84% rated their experience as either "very satisfying" or "satisfying."

### **Engaging Auditorium/Performance Space**

- Stakeholders and the wider community shared that the auditorium space is a good asset. Participants noted that some of the best events at the A.R.C. have been held in the auditorium, many especially mentioning the

space in relation to the opportunity it presents as a venue for local performers.

### **Capacity for Adaptive Reuse**

- Given that the building is in good condition, it is a candidate for adaptive reuse. There is an opportunity for several design improvements to address identified weaknesses.
- Adaptive reuse of an existing facility would align with several City policies, goals, and guidelines, including those stated in:
  - Culture Counts: Oshawa’s Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan
  - Our Plan for Success: Oshawa Strategic Plan 2020-2023

### **Future Potential**

- Based on consultations, cultural and creative community leaders in Oshawa are hopeful for the transformation of the A.R.C. and see it as a space with great potential to serve the community.

### **3.2.2 Gaps and Challenges**

Despite its many strengths and potential, there are nonetheless gaps and challenges that exist at the A.R.C. that prevent the facility from functioning efficiently today. These challenges and gaps should be addressed during the process of transformation, and include:

#### **Unclear Purpose**

- From consultations (including Feedback Form results), the sense is that the A.R.C. lacks a robust mandate and set of goals appropriate to today’s needs. This confusion may stem in part from challenges in effectively communicating what the A.R.C. does, but likely reflects the need to review and re-energize its role. Many stakeholders consulted noted that there is no apparent focus regarding the A.R.C. strategic purpose.
- The A.R.C. offers the community the opportunity to participate in recreational arts programming, as well as an opportunity to rent space to host events, including theatre performances, piano recitals, celebrations of life’s milestones, meetings, presentations, corporate training, and workshops. The A.R.C. has low program registration and participants:

- According to documentation provided by the City of Oshawa, the A.R.C. had 4,809 program registrants from 2015 to 2019. Over this pre-pandemic period, there was an average of 962 program participants a year.
- The facility is not well attended by arts organizations and there currently is a lack of engagement with the arts sector regarding the use of the facility.
  - From 2015 to 2019, the City of Oshawa was the A.R.C.'s biggest user in terms of booked hours, which was comprised of 82%. This high usage rate is a result of the A.R.C. being used for City-run programming and various City department meetings. Secondary user groups include the Durham Shoestring Performers (6%), Other Groups/Individuals (6%), Life Church Oshawa (5%) and the Oshawa Folk Arts Council (1%).

### **Space and Building Limitations**

- The current layout includes tight public spaces and corridors, which do not allow for flexible and accessible spaces.
- In the initial Feedback Form artists and culture/creative sector workers, organizational representatives and facility owners were specifically asked about the gaps they perceived while working at or using the A.R.C. Respondents said that their top gaps were lack of available/appropriate space (21%) and lack of/outdated built-in technology (17%). Stakeholders shared similar sentiments during consultations.
  - This lack of open space and built-in technology impacts the A.R.C.'s ability to host various events (e.g., exhibitions and social gatherings) and to expand and improve programming.
- Other aspects of the building that result in a poor user and visitor experience include:
  - Small and underwhelming entrance lobby, which negatively impacts the immediate sense of placemaking.
  - The vertical staircase circulation between floors is convoluted and indirect.
  - Poor wayfinding, which was described by some as "maze-like".

- The placement of the elevator and washroom are unfavourable to the original layout and design as they block windows and limit natural light throughout.
  - An “uninspiring” design aesthetic that many noted needs a refresh to be a place where people would like to visit.
  - Although much appreciated, the auditorium has poor acoustics, inadequate lighting/audio controls and has uncomfortable/inaccessible seating.
  - Low usage of spaces (e.g., Studios 1 and 2) are associated with being located in the basement, which is an undesirable space and seen as unappealing by many.
- There are currently administrative/office space limitations at the A.R.C. Administrative space is required for staff who will run the A.R.C. and arts and culture programming.

#### **Lack of Marketing and Promotion**

- In the initial Feedback Form, artists and culture/creative sector workers who indicated that they had not ever used the A.R.C. said that the primary reason for not using the space was that they were unaware of the A.R.C. and what it offers (49%). The lack of awareness of the A.R.C. underscored the comments shared in consultations that there are persistent issues with marketing and communications.
- Stakeholders mentioned that there is no compelling reason to go to the A.R.C. unless to participate in programming or attend a performance.
- The A.R.C. has a minimal digital presence, which makes it challenging to access information about programming and services. Additionally, the lack of digital presence creates barriers in conveying the A.R.C.’s function and its offerings.

#### **Access Limitations**

- Stakeholders noted issues in the A.R.C.’s booking process, which they said presents barriers in attempting to rent space or inquire about other services.
- Stakeholders and form respondents noted that there were some challenges concerning the A.R.C.’s operating hours.



- Feedback Form respondents (15%) noted the A.R.C.'s "inconvenient program/event schedules and operating hours" as a major gap in access.
- The A.R.C. currently/primarily offers programming on evenings and weekends when there is greater demand. However, program timing/scheduling isn't convenient for some users e.g., respondents noted that the schedule for children's programming is limited (for example, limited weekend opening hours).
- Similarly, according to the A.R.C. utilization data, the building sits empty when there is not active programming or rentals. There may be potential for the A.R.C. to expand programming hours and to be more accessible to the public or artists even when not in use for active programming.

### **Exterior and Surrounding Area Challenges**

- Physical access to the A.R.C. is hindered in some ways and contributes to the A.R.C.'s usability.
  - Feedback Form respondents were asked what physical alterations they think are most pressing for the current A.R.C. Respondents identified the most critical physical issues as the building's exterior (e.g., signage, lighting, street presence). This was expanded upon in consultations where participants and stakeholders shared that the building feels difficult to access and is "hidden", many adding that the front entrance is "tucked away". This weakness can be attributed to the lack of street frontage and visible presence caused by the removal of a portion of Athol Street in the 1970s.
  - Many noted there is a lack of available parking at the A.R.C.
- The current social atmosphere of downtown Oshawa is considered by many people as a deterrent to participating in arts activities that would be centered in the hub. While the downtown is very active for students attending Oshawa's educational institutions, there is a perception that families have become less inclined to frequent the downtown core. Through and post-pandemic, this challenge is certainly not unique to Oshawa. Many towns and cities in Southern Ontario and elsewhere are coping with the need to revitalize the downtown area for myriad reasons.

### Modest Revenue

- The average revenue from rental bookings between 2015 to 2019 was roughly \$26,000. The average revenue from programming in that same period was approximately \$90,000. This revenue is relatively modest compared to what the A.R.C could potentially have earned, for example, the A.R.C.'s studios were booked 34% of their available hours (based on actual hours of operation), indicating that there is potential for more bookings and therefore higher revenue.

### 3.2.3 Conclusion

Following this assessment, the project team determined that the A.R.C. is a suitable site and is equipped for transformation into a Cultural Hub in downtown Oshawa. The downtown location is ideal as this area is the site for many other cultural and heritage events and assets and will help in accommodating the needs of a growing population in the downtown core. Although the building presents challenges, the architectural foundation and design can be leveraged to create a space that is both functional and embodies design excellence. Transforming this building would be a form of **adaptive reuse**, which conserves the cultural, architectural, and historic value of the building, and offers an environmentally sustainable option for re-using existing infrastructure.

The current usage of the facility for cultural activities could perhaps be best described as "light." The public consultation uncovered substantial need for affordable space and programs covering a wide variety of community needs and should bring all communities in Oshawa into the city's social and cultural fabric. **In conclusion, the existing operations, activities, and services are not fully meeting the community's needs. There is clearly an opportunity for a refreshed and refurbished A.R.C. to become a true cultural hub.**

## 4. The Vision for the Cultural Hub

### 4.1 Oshawa's Need for a Cultural Hub

The A.R.C. today is not realizing its potential to serve the needs of Oshawa's arts, culture, and creative sector – nor the public's. These communities' needs are broad, but with investment, the A.R.C. could be transformed and well-positioned to support them.

#### **General needs of Oshawa's artistic, cultural, and creative community:**

During consultations, the project team asked and heard about the overall arts and culture sector in Oshawa and its needs. Stakeholders shared that the Oshawa cultural scene is interconnected and thriving for some. A challenge they faced however, was that they felt overlooked and that there was a lack of awareness and appreciation of arts and culture from the wider community in Oshawa. Stakeholders noted a need for more dedicated space for artistic practice alongside stronger celebration and promotion of Oshawa's artistic scene.

Consultants heard from stakeholders working in performing arts (music, theatre, etc.) that there is a significant **lack of affordable and appropriate auditorium and theater space**, especially in the **under 500-seat range**. Community groups and non-profits could not acquire or afford space for performances or rehearsals, especially in the winter months, when outdoor performance spaces are not an option. Additionally, stakeholders raised the issue that many of the existing performance or rehearsal spaces in Oshawa are churches or religious buildings and banquet halls. Having to use religious spaces may not be ideal as some people prefer hosting public events in non-denominational venues. Furthermore, **some of the spaces currently used as rehearsal or performance space are not properly equipped for performances and lack proper acoustics, seating, and AV and built-in technology**. Therefore, there is a strong need for performance and rehearsal space that is secular, especially for the many choirs and performing groups in Oshawa.

**Visual artists** noted that there are very **few spaces** in Oshawa where they can work on their art, either independently or collaboratively, that are affordable and accommodating to their flexible work needs. Broadly speaking, stakeholders noted that **Oshawa generally lacks space to host workshops, classes, events and gatherings, and there is an absence of multipurpose/flexible** spaces throughout the city that can accommodate medium to large groups of people.

Although it is not possible for one facility to address all the concerns in Oshawa's arts and cultural community, a Cultural Hub with flexible space could remedy some of the barriers and challenges.

### **Demand for more culture and cultural spaces:**

Beyond addressing the specific needs shared by the artistic and cultural community, a Cultural Hub can contribute to the well-being of Oshawa's overall population and its development as a dynamic, growing community. This is especially important for a community that is attracting families with children and has a growing youth population. In consultation with the public, there was a strong indication that there is a **desire for more cultural and arts investment in Oshawa**. In the Feedback Form, respondents were asked what they thought about the volume of cultural activities in Oshawa. Most (77%) respondents said there were **not enough cultural activities**. The remaining 23% said there was an appropriate number of activities. Open-text form responses suggested that many would like to see **Oshawa prioritize arts and culture and generally would like to see more space and programming available locally**. The project team gathered further community feedback from the Secondary Feedback Form on Concepts, which was designed to validate the design concepts for a Cultural Hub (in Section 5). Respondents were asked if they can see themselves or their families using the space presented in the concept they selected as their favourite. Most (88%) said that they would indeed use the space, further indicating a demand for cultural spaces in Oshawa.

### **Social and economic benefits:**

There are many potential social benefits to cultural hubs, from fostering a sense of community and belonging, to teaching soft skills (e.g., problem-solving, critical thinking, etc.) and improving general quality of life and wellbeing. Additionally, cultural hubs and artistic centres can **play a role in rejuvenating neighborhoods and encouraging residents to return to downtown/central areas**.<sup>28</sup> The transformation of the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub can be a tool in the overall renewal efforts of Oshawa's downtown core and in accommodating the growing population.

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<sup>28</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, "[A VISION FOR CULTURAL HUBS AND DISTRICTS IN CANADA](#)" 2018

The hub's proximity to the Oshawa Public Libraries McLaughlin Branch and The R.M.G. presents the potential opportunity to expand the hub's connection to/with the **community and expand partnership opportunities. There is the potential to create a cultural campus or district from this grouping of cultural organizations.** This model has seen significant adoption in Canada based on its ability to contribute to sustainable community development. Forging connections between like-minded organizations generates efficiencies that might not be as effectively accessed or leveraged as singular entities.

These spaces also **create economic opportunities**, as artists and creatives can improve and develop their artistic practice, and access materials and/or equipment, that can contribute to increasing their income and creative output. Having space to exhibit art and/or perform also stimulates the economy and drives spending at local businesses. There is also the possibility of more talent retention, which was expressed as a priority throughout the consultation. With more dedicated space for artistic practice, artists and creatives will not feel the pull of larger urban centers and will continue to work and live in their communities.

A Cultural Hub in Oshawa could have a positive economic impact on the city, at a local level, in terms of an increase in workforce development, job creation, investment attraction, and tourism. **The creative and cultural sector is a key driver of economic growth and development.** According to Statistics Canada and Ontario Arts Council, Ontario's arts and culture sector economic impact is notable and growing.<sup>29</sup> At \$28 billion, the arts and culture sector accounted for some 4% of the Province's gross domestic product (G.D.P.) and was responsible for 269,000 jobs in 2020. Hill Strategies also observes, "a developing body of research about the role of culture in climate change resiliency. In short, the value of arts and culture can be demonstrated through health, place-making, the environment and the economy"<sup>30</sup> In a recent tourism profile of Ontario's arts and culture sector, the Ontario Arts Council found that arts and culture tourism in the province results in \$5.7 billion in direct value-added.<sup>31</sup> The

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<sup>29</sup> Ontario Arts Council. [Economic Contribution of Arts and Culture in Ontario](#). 2022

<sup>30</sup> Hill Strategies, "[Canadians' Arts Participation, Health and Wellbeing](#)" 2021

<sup>31</sup> Ontario Arts Council, "[New report: Arts and culture tourism in Ontario has triple the economic impact](#)" 2023

Federation of Canadian Municipalities states that arts, culture, and heritage improve municipal governments to “influence local economic development by attracting and retaining a skilled and talented workforce.”<sup>32</sup>

Arts and culture facilities and events have an **indirect economic impact** as well. When people participate in arts/culture events or activities they may dine out at nearby restaurants, cafes, or bars, pay for transportation (parking, ride share, public transportation), pay for childcare, or spend at local shops and businesses.<sup>33</sup> Oshawa residents may decide to go downtown for the day or evening for cultural activities, instead of going out of town. A further indirect impact is that arts and culture naturally foster a sense of creativity, innovation, problem-solving and other critical skills. Employers and business leaders cite creativity as a skill of high importance when hiring.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, institutions that offer arts and creative education and programming are helping to shape fundamental employment skills for the future.

#### **Trends in other municipalities:**

Of course, Oshawa is a unique municipality with its own set of needs and concerns, however it is important to consider trends and actions in other municipalities to see how they are meeting demands and prioritizing cultural spaces. Several jurisdictions have recently embarked upon developing cultural spaces and investing in the arts. Some examples include:

- **Niagara Falls, ON** – In 2020, Niagara Falls City Council approved funding for the **Niagara Falls Exchange, a cultural hub and market space**. The space officially opened in February 2024 and provides shared spaces for artists, musicians, food vendors, patrons, and local businesses. While not all features are live yet, it will feature a large culture and market hall, café, arts studios, creative workshops, etc.
- **Vernon, BC** – **Following a successful referendum approving public funding, the Regional District of North Okanagan is fundraising and applying for grants to build a Greater Vernon Cultural Centre in downtown Vernon**. This proposed space will aim to house a museum, an art gallery, a performing arts space and provide residents with

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<sup>32</sup> Ontario Arts Council, [“Impact of the Arts in Ontario”](#)

<sup>33</sup> Forbes, [“The Economic Impact Of Local Arts And Culture Businesses”](#) 2023

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

exhibitions, programming, and presentations and aims to open in the Fall of 2027.

- **Vaughan, ON** - As part of the development of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, the City of Vaughan is in the process of determining the feasibility of developing a **cultural and performing arts centre**. As of Spring 2024, plans for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre appear to be advancing in possible partnership with developers QuadReal.
- **Brantford, ON – Wilfrid Laurier University is converting a former shopping mall into a downtown Community Cultural Hub**. The proposed space will include a gallery space, art-house movie theatre, and mid-sized performance space.

## 4.2 Key Qualities of a Cultural Hub

This section summarizes the themes that emerged when arts and culture stakeholders and the wider community were asked about their vision for a future Cultural Hub. Due to the existence of the A.R.C., many of the desires and wants for this envisioned space were expressed within the context of what the A.R.C. is not currently providing.

- **Affordability:** Accessible pricing emerged as a major priority for stakeholders and the wider community. There is a demand for various price models and tiers to account for the different kinds of users at the Cultural Hub, regarding both rental space and programming.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** The community noted that partnerships will be crucial to the success of this space. They would like to see a future Cultural Hub act as a collaborator and ally to various organizations and institutions throughout Oshawa, including post-secondary institutions, arts/culture organizations, community groups, charities, etc.
- **Outreach and Engagement:** Feedback indicates that strong and consistent marketing and outreach should be a priority to maximize community engagement and increase accessibility. There is a desire for a centralized online presence, current and dedicated event calendars, and social media efforts that provide the community with accessible information. There was also emphasis on having clear branding and expressly communicating who and what the Cultural Hub is for.

- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Sense of Welcoming:** There was emphasis put on ensuring that a future Cultural Hub should be a space free of barriers to inclusion and discrimination. There is a need for staff to have an enhanced understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion practices and policies. Furthermore, the Cultural Hub should act as a community liaison and welcome communities and organizations to use the space and participate in programming. The community also hopes to see a Cultural Hub act as a tool to improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations.
- **Tool in Revitalizing the Downtown:** The community would hope to see a Cultural Hub act as a tool to support revitalization in the downtown, by making the area more vibrant and culturally rich in offering new programming, public art, events, and attractions.
- **Variety of Programming:** The community would like to see a wide variety of programming and services provided by the City, and also would like to have the opportunity for arts organizations and community groups to run programming out of the Cultural Hub.
- **Increased and Improved Space:** Generally, stakeholders and community respondents would like to see more space dedicated to artists and the public (e.g. studios, workshops, etc.), and higher quality space with more functional features. Stakeholders noted that they would like spaces for artists/creators to work independently or collaboratively.
- **Ease of Access:** The community hopes for reduced obstacles when trying to access this space, both physically and operationally. They would like to see improved wayfinding, more intuitive booking processes, and clear and open lines of communications with Cultural Hub staff. There is also hope for increased and more accommodation for hours of operation.
- **Opportunities for Community Engagement and Socialization:** Many would like to see a Cultural Hub where people in Oshawa can come together for special events, and where large groups of people can gather. There is also a desire for opportunities for socialization and collaboration amongst the arts community.
- **Showcase Opportunities for Artists:** Feedback indicated that there is a need for this future space to offer increased showcase and exhibition



space and opportunities for artists, in the form of more performances, gallery space, opportunities to sell works, etc.

- **Design and Aesthetics:** There is hope that this space will be visually appealing and designed in such a way that will inspire creativity.

### 4.3 Programming and Services

In this section, future Cultural Hub programming and services considerations and suggestions are outlined.

#### 4.3.1 Programming and Services Considerations

Regardless of the specific programming and services provided at the future Cultural Hub, the following should be considered and prioritized:

1. **Partnerships and community involvement should be a primary consideration when developing programming and services** – not only to ensure that there is no duplication but, in the spirit of a Cultural Hub, to act as a space that uplifts Oshawa’s arts and cultural ecosystem.
2. **Programming and services should not become “stale” or repetitive.** Stakeholders urged the importance of frequent assessments to determine the need for changes in programming, thus there are opportunities for a Cultural Hub to offer new and exciting programming and to continually draw participants/users in.
3. **Operating hours need to be increased** so that this space is fully maximized, does not sit idle, and more of the community’s needs can be met.
4. **Programming and services should be kept current** and the Cultural Hub staff should be attuned to the community’s needs and trends as they develop.
5. **Programming should be developed in unison with City plans and strategies**, including Culture Counts - Oshawa’s Arts, Culture & Heritage Plan, (including a potential Festivals & Special Events Strategy) and the forthcoming 2024 Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment once it has received Council endorsement.

#### 4.3.2 Programming and Services Suggestions

The project team has provided suggested programming, services, and activities that a future Cultural Hub in Oshawa could host, based on community consultation and examples in other arts centres/culture hubs in different

jurisdictions. **It should be noted that a future Cultural Hub may not be able to accommodate all the programming and services, and instead is fully dependent on selected design concepts, governance model, and decisions in future phases of development decided by the City of Oshawa.**

With some of the programming and services suggested in this section, local organizations or institutions have been listed as potential consultants or partners in developing programming. These lists are in no way exhaustive and are simply potential starting points to consider. Additionally in this section, in some instances, precedents of suggested programming or services in other jurisdictions have been included.

### **1. Classes, Courses, Workshops, and Camps**

In developing future programming, the City should consider examining programming at the A.R.C. and evaluate City-run programs (classes, camps, etc.) that are most popular and profitable.

As part of this feasibility study, Nordicity heard from stakeholders and the community about the new and additional programming they would like to see in this space. This programming need not be solely facilitated by the City and can be delivered through partnerships with other groups and entities throughout Oshawa.

#### **Programming that considers digital arts and the wider creative economy:**

Stakeholders emphasized that in order to stay relevant and innovative, a future Cultural Hub should provide classes, courses and spaces that consider a wider variety of artistic practices and go beyond what is traditionally considered “the arts” (e.g., painting, pottery, drawing, theatre, dance, etc.). **Traditional arts programming should be included in a future Cultural Hub**, however, there should also be a **consideration of other arts forms**, which may include fibre art (embroidery, tufting, weaving, macrame, etc.), music (music production, recording, DJing), literary art/poetry/creative writing, jewelry making, fashion design/sewing, improv/sketch comedy, woodworking, glasswork, etc.

Stakeholders also emphasized the inclusion of classes and facilities that intersect **digital technology and the arts, culture, and creative sector**. This consideration is especially important when thinking about developing children/youth programming but is generally relevant to all age groups. This programming may include classes that include the use of creative software (e.g., Adobe Creative Suite, etc.), the broader creative economy (e.g., filmmaking,

graphic design, video game design, interactive digital media, etc.), or classes that incorporate **S.T.E.A.M.**

It is important to consider programming like those outlined previously with the rise of the digital gig economy, freelancing/creative side jobs and entrepreneurship, where many are creating and selling creative works, products, and services and running independent businesses online as a result. There is more demand for artistic services and programming that consider the entrepreneurial nature of our current economy.

Partnerships or consultation to consider for this kind of programming include: **Communications and Digital Media Studies, Ontario Tech University, Faculty of Media, Art & Design, Durham College, TeachingCity, Oshawa Arts Association, and Living Room Community Arts Studio.**

### Precedents in Other Jurisdictions

- As part of their school programming, the **FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton** (Milton, ON) offers S.T.E.A.M. classes including Artful Music Makers, Geometry in Arts Collages, etc.
- **Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre** (Oakville, ON) offers classes in fibre arts, woodworking, improvisation, crafting, etc. They also offer digital arts workshop and classes for children/youth and adults such as 3D printing, drawing with digital tablets, digital photography, Pro Tools (music software), Adobe Photoshop, YouTube Master classes, etc.
- The **Richmond Art Centre** (Richmond, BC) has a Media Lab where they offer workshops and classes in animation, digital illustration, digital storytelling, video editing/filmmaking, graphic design, etc.
- The **ACT Arts Centre** (Maple Ridge, BC) offers children/youth programming such as Computer Animation, Computer Visual Arts, Game Creation: Video Sensing, etc.
- **Button Factory Arts** (Waterloo, ON) offers classes in knitting, crocheting, glass design, etc.
- **The Roundhouse** (Vancouver, BC) offers classes in improv comedy, poetry writing, etc.

**Programming that reflects Oshawa/Durham’s growing diverse population and equity-deserving groups.**

This programming could include classes and workshops that take into consideration: non-Western artistic practices; celebration of other cultures; programming for Oshawa’s vulnerable and unsheltered population; programs taught in other languages to non-English speakers; the needs of older adults/seniors; and different kinds of learners/sensory-sensitive participants. These kinds of programs are especially important to consider as Oshawa’s population grows and becomes more diverse and multicultural.

**Precedents from Other Jurisdictions**

- The **Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning** (Kingston, ON) hosted an Indigenous Arts Series, which consists of workshops developed and facilitated by local Indigenous artists (e.g., dreamcatcher making, Métis Sash weaving, etc.)
- The **Vernon Community Arts Centre** (Vernon, BC) offers the Joining Hands program for adults with diverse abilities.
- Through their school program, the **FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton** offers arts programming for children that introduces a variety of cultures, global communities, and geographic regions.
- **The Roundhouse** (Vancouver, BC) offers classes such as Introduction to Ikebana, Traditional Hand Drum Making Workshops, Chinese Calligraphy, etc.
- The **Elora Centre for the Arts** (Elora, ON) offers a youth addiction and recovery program called The Healing Power of Arts and Creative Expression, with community partners.

**Programming that considers the intersection of the arts, wellness, and socialization/social activities.**

There were suggestions around “paint and sip,” art therapy, and, generally, workshops that are conducive to social activities for adults and seniors. Stakeholders also suggested that there should be programming or events that are created alongside or in consideration of other activities in downtown Oshawa, for example, an exhibition at the R.M.G. is packaged with and informs a related class at the Cultural Hub, etc.

### **Precedents from Other Jurisdictions**

- **The Roundhouse** (Vancouver, BC) offers classes such as Mindful Artist and offers Arts & Health: Improv Theatre for Older Adults in collaboration with the Arts & Health: Healthy Aging Through the Arts
- The **Vernon Community Arts Centre** (Vernon, BC) offers Clay & Cabernet and Paint & Sip classes.
- **ACT Arts Centre's** (Maple Ridge, BC) artBAR program has been very successful and allows participants to try art activities over a glass of wine.
- **The Visual Arts Mississauga at Riverwood** offers Magic Mondays, a program for adults that presents new activities weekly and is designed for participants to socialize and meet new people through art.

### **Programming that takes place in and/or incorporates the outdoors, nature, and natural elements.**

Some stakeholders mentioned that they would like to see more events, and programs that incorporate natural heritage and the outdoors. Additionally, incorporating programming that considers the importance of the environment and sustainability can be considered.

### **Precedents in Other Jurisdictions**

- Many arts centres such as the **Clark Centre for the Arts** (Toronto, ON) and the **ACT Arts Centre** offer visual arts classes and courses that intersect arts and nature, such as Exploring Nature: Mixed Media for Beginners, Connect with Nature: Drawing & Watercolour, Plein Air Acrylics, Crafts and Critters, etc.
- **Evergreen Brick Works** and **Artscape Wychwood Barns**, both in Toronto, have open-air sheltered spaces where outdoor experiences and programming are offered.

## **2. City Cultural Events**

The Cultural Hub can also be the site of City-run cultural festivals and events currently offered or offered in the future. Additionally, user groups/renters can use the space to organize their own community events.

**Precedents in Other Jurisdictions**

- Many arts/culture centres and hubs host both independent and City-run events, including but not limited to the **Living Arts Centre**, the **Lemington Arts Centre**, and the **FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre**.

### **3. Performance and/or Lecture Series**

The Cultural Hub could frequently host performances or events in the auditorium from local or regional artists or groups, including plays, live comedy, musical performances, dance performances, lectures/talks, etc.

**Precedents in Other Jurisdictions**

- The **Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre** (Southampton, ON) provides a range of educational and cultural programs, including lecture series on historical and cultural topics, alongside regular exhibitions and workshops. The museum also hosts occasional music and film events to celebrate the region's heritage.
- The **Midland Cultural Centre** (Midland, ON) offers live music, theater productions, and comedy shows. It also hosts the Huronia Players, a community theatre group based in Midland. The group provides education and workshops for theatre arts and produces three major productions each year.

### **4. Office/Desk Rentals**

There are several arts, cultural and heritage organizations in Oshawa who require office/administrative subsidized space or space at below market rate. Expanding upon the A.R.C.'s existing service, the Cultural Hub may also provide rentals or leases to a select few community organizations that require more permanent office space.

Alternatively, hot desks can be offered to individuals or arts organizations that can be rented for shorter periods of time. This would allow for a greater number of individuals and/or organizations to access much needed administrative space and resources. Small storage lockers can be provided so that users can safely store personal items.

### Precedents in Other Jurisdictions

- **The Arts Factory** (Vancouver, BC) offers flexible boardroom and desk rentals to artists, designers, and cultural entrepreneurs, as well as other shared amenities.
- **The Cotton Factory** (Hamilton, ON) offers office space to those in the creative industries.
- **The Daniels Spectrum Cultural Hub** (Toronto, ON) offers a variety of spaces, including offices and studios, to local artists and cultural organizations at subsidized rates. It aims to be a hub for artistic activity in the Regent Park area and to help foster community engagement.

## 5. Standard Rentals for External Use

Space for arts and cultural providers in Oshawa is in high demand. Like the A.R.C. today, a future Cultural Hub should offer rental space to the public and community organizations; however, current space and hours of operations should be expanded. Individuals or organizations can rent office/meeting rooms, the auditorium, studios/workshops, gallery/flexible event spaces, and outdoor spaces, for a range of purposes. There should be multiple tiers of pricing (e.g., non-profit price, commercial price, etc.).

### Precedents in Other Jurisdictions

- **The Tett Centre** (Kingston, ON) has four multi-use rental spaces where community members are welcome to host meetings, theatrical performances, gallery exhibitions, art-making workshops, weddings, or other special events. They offer reduced rental rates to artists and for art-focused events, to fellow registered not-for-profit organizations, and to post-secondary student groups. A portion of every rental goes towards supporting its not-for-profit's community arts programming.
- The **Maury Young Arts Centre** (Whistler, BC) offers a range of spaces for rent, including a theatre, an art gallery, meeting rooms, and multi-purpose rooms. It provides discounted rates for non-profits and community groups, as well as standard rates for commercial events. This centre serves as a vibrant cultural hub for the arts, supporting local artists and community activities.

## 6. “Drop-In”/Flexible Membership Rental Program

Acknowledging that ownership or access to studio space is a challenge for many artists and those in the creative sectors, the Cultural Hub could offer “drop-in” or flexible studio space that can be rented short-term (e.g., by the hour, by the day, or by the month). Stakeholders expressed that this kind of studio space would be a major draw to the Cultural Hub and are a need in Oshawa. These spaces can help contribute to artists’ and makers’ output and economic viability and would also provide artists and makers with opportunities to collaborate and share. One option to consider could be that local artists/creatives apply for membership which grants them access to use the flexible workspace. For access and affordability reasons, users should not be charged for their memberships, but be offered pay-as-you-go access so that users are not paying for space that they are not using.

Like facilities in other jurisdictions, an application process would be put in place (with equity, inclusion, and diversity principles in mind), and a code of conduct would need to be established for users to follow.

### Precedents in Other Jurisdictions

- The **Living Arts Centre** (Mississauga, ON) Resident Artist Program offers studio spaces and support across nine artistic disciplines for recent graduates (of arts and design institutions), emerging and mid-career artists.
- The **Niagara Falls Exchange** (Niagara Falls, ON) will offer studio spaces at competitive rates for artists and makers. Tenants/member artists participate in a Value Exchange Program, where artists contribute to the community in exchange for access to below market rate rental space.
- The **Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre** (Oakville, ON) offers Culture Studio membership to artists working independently or without a technician onsite in ceramics or woodworking.
- **Artscape Youngplace** (Toronto, ON) offers Flex Studios, which are membership-as-you-go services that provide pay-as-you-go access to workspace for artists and creatives.



## 7. Mentorship and/or Artists in Residence Program

In order to strengthen Oshawa’s cultural and creative community and facilitate learning/knowledge-sharing opportunities for those in the arts and creative sector, the Cultural Hub could consider becoming a site for mentorship and/or artists in residency programs. Mentors and mentees can be paired or connected (via Culture Counts or a community group) and use the spaces and equipment at the Cultural Hub to learn or work on specific projects. Additionally, the Cultural Hub can act as a site/facility for existing artists in residency programs at institutions like The R.M.G.

### Precedents in Other Jurisdictions

- The **Yukon Arts Centre** (Whitehorse, YT) offers the Yukon Emerging Artists Program which supports professional development by creating meaningful mentorship opportunities between emerging and established artists.
- The **Vernon Community Arts Centre** (Vernon, BC) has a Youth Artist in Residence program for aspiring artists ages 16-18 and provides access to studio space, support, and equipment.

## 8. School Programs

The Cultural Hub can provide programming and/or learning opportunities to local school boards, which may include workshops/classes and/or performances.

### Precedents in Other Jurisdictions

- **FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton’s** ArtSpark program (funded by FirstOntario) provides elementary school children the opportunity to experience performances free of charge, removing socioeconomic barriers. Additionally, for a fee, the centre offers art workshops for elementary and high school classes.
- The Kaleidoscope in the Schools (KITS) at the **Aurora Cultural Centre** (Aurora, ON) is a school-based program that fully subsidized in-school performances and workshops by professional performing artists. Performances are uniquely tied to Ontario Ministry of Education’s Elementary Curriculum.

## 9. Exhibition Program and Opportunities

The Cultural Hub could display and showcase the work of local artists and/or students at post-secondary institutions. The Hub could have dedicated exhibition space throughout the building and/or could host specific exhibitions or art shows to highlight and celebrate the art of community members. These kinds of opportunities can help artists and students gain recognition as creators and further encourage the development of their skills.

### Precedents in Other Jurisdictions

- The **Aurora Cultural Centre** (Aurora, ON) offers galleries that exhibit works from local artists and students. It provides a platform for emerging artists and runs educational programs and community-engaging arts events that encourage local cultural development.
- **Leighton Art Centre** (Calgary, AB) displays works primarily by local artists and offers educational programs and workshops focusing on visual arts, crafts, and the preservation of Alberta’s artistic heritage.

## 10. Arts/Artisan Markets

Throughout the community and stakeholder engagement, there were comments that there were few opportunities for artists, artisans, and creators to share and sell their work in Oshawa. The Cultural Hub could be a site for seasonal or frequent arts markets aimed to showcase local artists and give them economic opportunities. Some partnerships or consultations to consider include **North Oshawa Farmer’s Market and Oshawa Centre Farmers’ Market**.

### Precedents in Other Jurisdictions

- The Lakeview Artisan Market occurs bi-weekly on Sundays between June and October in the **Small Arms Inspection Building** (Mississauga, ON). This market is designed to complement the farmer’s market.
- In 2022, Brampton, ON’s Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Development Agency hosted the first Summer Arts Market in the **Rose Theatre** lobby, organized in consideration of the local farmers’ market in a nearby park.

#### 4.4 Vision and Guiding Principles

Based on the findings in Phase 2 of this project, a proposed overarching vision and guiding principles have been developed. This vision and these principles can be applied to the three building designs outlined in Section 5 but may be adapted as plans for a Cultural Hub progress.

##### **Proposed Overarching Vision:**

Oshawa's Cultural Hub aspires to be a vibrant, accessible place of creativity and connection for artists and community members. This hub will be a place where all are welcome to actively participate in, explore and innovate cultural and creative pursuits. This hub will enrich Oshawa's cultural landscape and opportunities for its cultural sector and broader community, including becoming a vital node amid the revitalization of the downtown core. Through a wide variety of programming, events, and services all residents are invited to interact with and collaborate in this welcoming space.

The Cultural Hub will support:

- Artists and creatives with meaningful opportunities, resources, and facilities to develop, incubate, showcase their works, connect with one another, and thrive as part of Oshawa's growing arts/culture and creative economy.
- Members of the public, from children to seniors, newcomers, and students to participate in arts, culture and creative expression via programming, performances, events, workshops, and arts/cultural education.

At minimum, the future Cultural Hub will provide:

- Diverse programming and events related to the arts, culture, heritage, and the creative economy.
- Flexible rental space for performances, workshops, classes, meetings, studios etc. and space for artists to exhibit and reach audiences.
- Tools, resources and equipment for artists and makers to utilize to further their craft/work while at the Cultural Hub.

##### **Proposed Guiding Principles:**

- **Accessibility and Affordability:** The Cultural Hub will offer activities, programs, events, and services at affordable price points, and with no

physical or organizational barriers to all Oshawa residents and user groups.

- **Responsiveness to the Community:** The Cultural Hub will consider the needs of the wider Oshawa arts/culture and creative sector and stakeholders in its development and operations.
- **Accountability:** The Cultural Hub will be efficient and transparent in its operations and strive for excellence in the services it offers.
- **Elevation and Collaboration:** The Cultural Hub should act as a resource and partner that enriches the overall cultural ecosystem in the city.
- **Adaptability:** The Cultural Hub will be flexible as the demands and needs of the community change and will aim to “future-proof” to ensure sustainability and wide-appeal.
- **Engagement:** The Cultural Hub will market and promote itself to the best of its ability to ensure all potential users are aware of its offerings and can access them.
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Sense of Well-being:** The Cultural Hub will embed inclusivity in its governance and operations and will strive to provide arts programming and services that appeal to and address the needs of equity-deserving groups.

## 5. Cultural Hub Concept Options

For this Feasibility Study, the architecture partner, Giaimo, created **three potential design concepts** to be considered when transforming the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub. These design concepts were informed by key themes that emerged from consultations, a prioritization exercise categorizing physical/architectural needs for a Cultural Hub (see Appendix E), architectural best practices, and the existing features of the A.R.C. In addition to the designs themselves, the project team prepared estimated capital costs for all three concepts. Construction cost estimates, based on 2022 data, for all three concepts can be found in Appendix A.

While all three concepts share the vision and guiding principles outlined in Section 4, they offer different square footage sizes and thus programming and operations at different scales. All three concepts would involve building code upgrades to meet life safety, assembly upgrades, and accessibility/AODA

requirements – the details of which would need to be further developed in this project's future.

As concepts, it is important to note that these options serve as an opportunity to explore general ideas of how the existing building could accommodate potential programming through a transformative redesign. Ultimately each option would require significantly more detail and development before moving ahead with construction. As such, it should be assumed that these concepts would likely change and evolve in response to more detailed assessment and review in the following phases of this project, such as Schematic Design and Detailed Design, which were not undertaken in this Feasibility Study. Similarly, specialized sub-consultants such as structural engineers, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, civil engineers, and landscape architects were not engaged at this early stage of work and their later inputs would result in revisions to any selected concept design.

In addition to embodying the vision and principles outlined in Section 4, all three concepts also align with Design Guidelines and Principles outlined in Section 6 and include the following features:

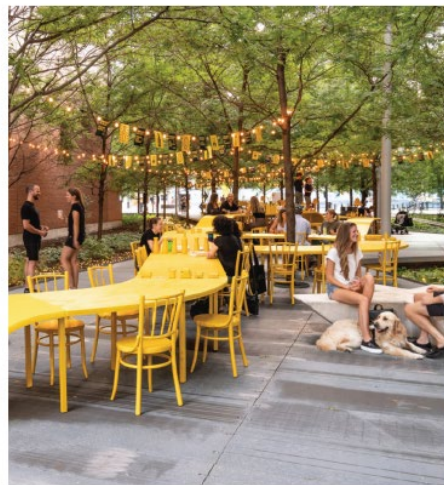
- Auditorium for performances, talks, and other cultural events
- New outdoor spaces for expanded arts activities
- Sustainable design through adaptive reuse and green building principals
- Light-filled studios and gallery that offer welcoming programming

**Auditorium for performances, talks, and other cultural events**



Precedent image: Crow's Theatre, Toronto

**New outdoor spaces for expanded arts activities**



Precedent image: Parc Hydro-Quebec, Montreal

Sustainable design through adaptive reuse and green building principals



Precedent image: MASS MoCA, Massachusetts

Light-filled studios and gallery that offer welcoming programming

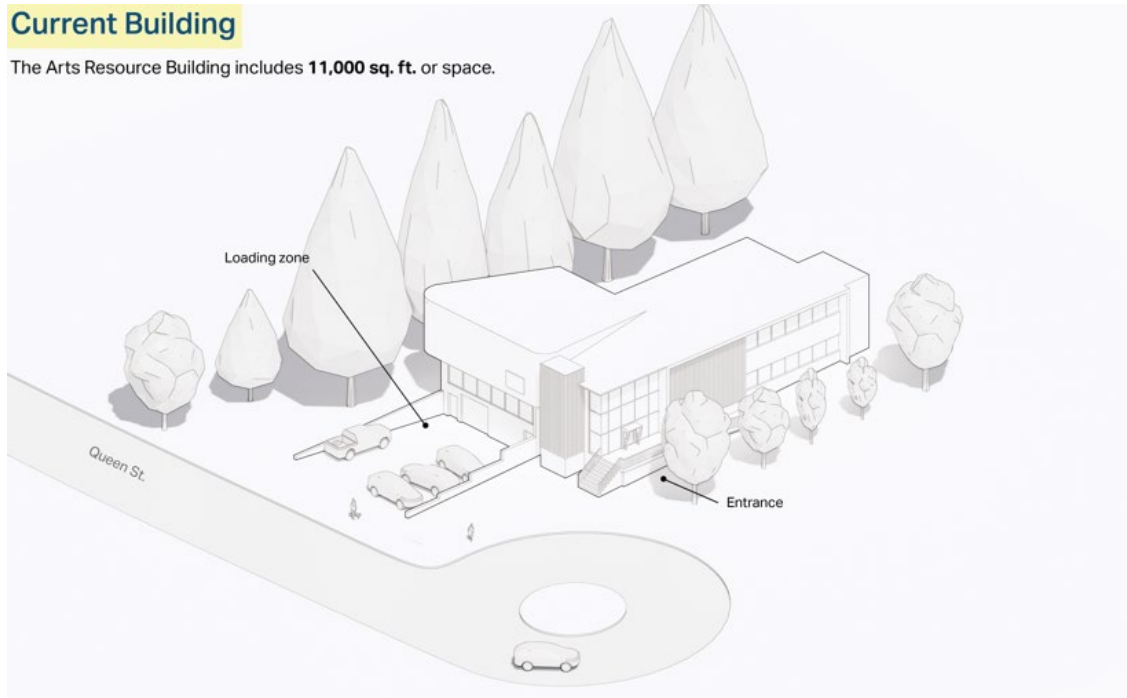


Precedent image: Artscape Youngplace, Toronto

The following diagram shows the current building as it is, and the three subsequent images show the concepts for consideration with key features labeled.

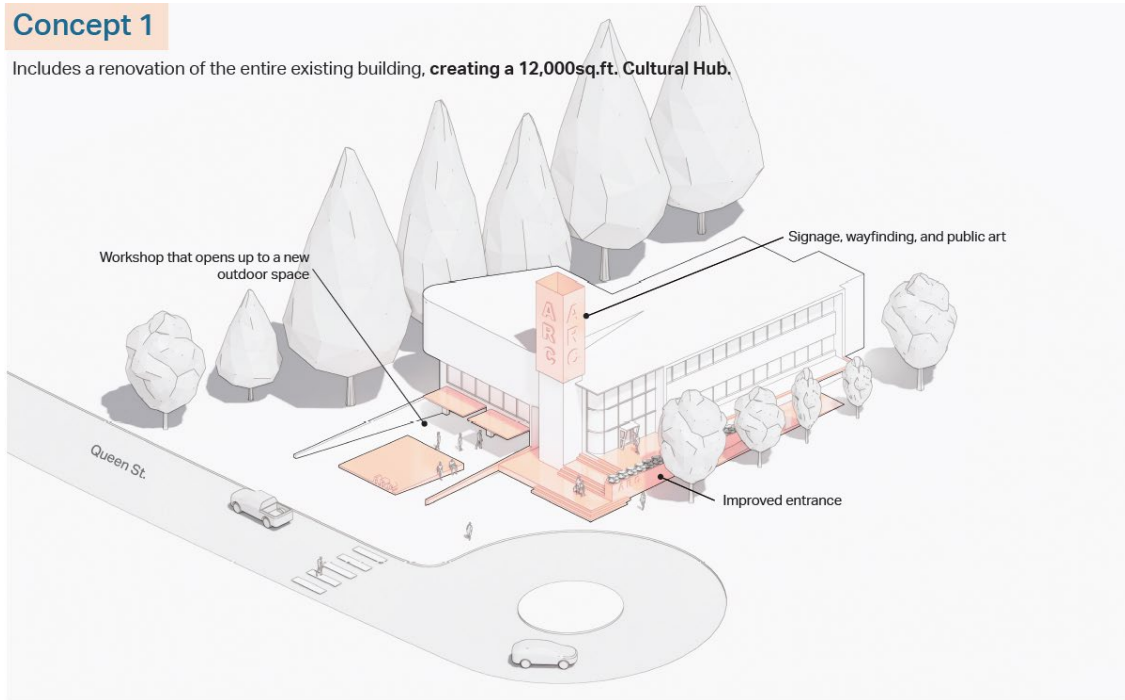
**Current Building**

The Arts Resource Building includes **11,000 sq. ft.** or space.



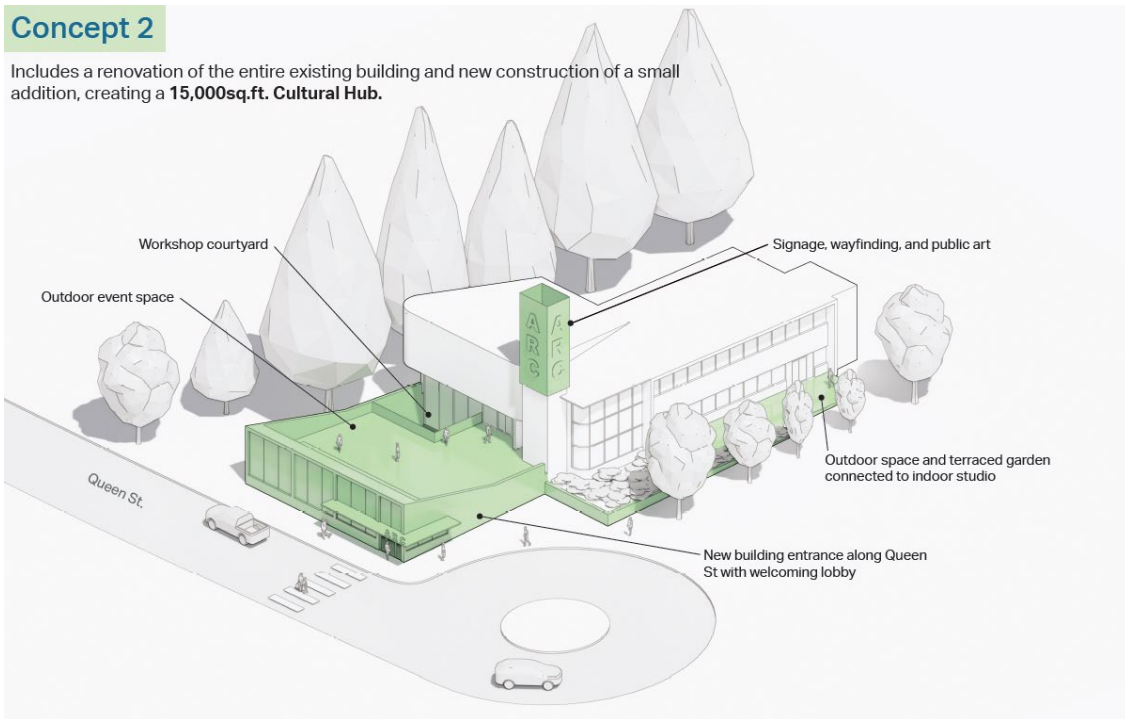
### Concept 1

Includes a renovation of the entire existing building, creating a 12,000sq.ft. Cultural Hub.



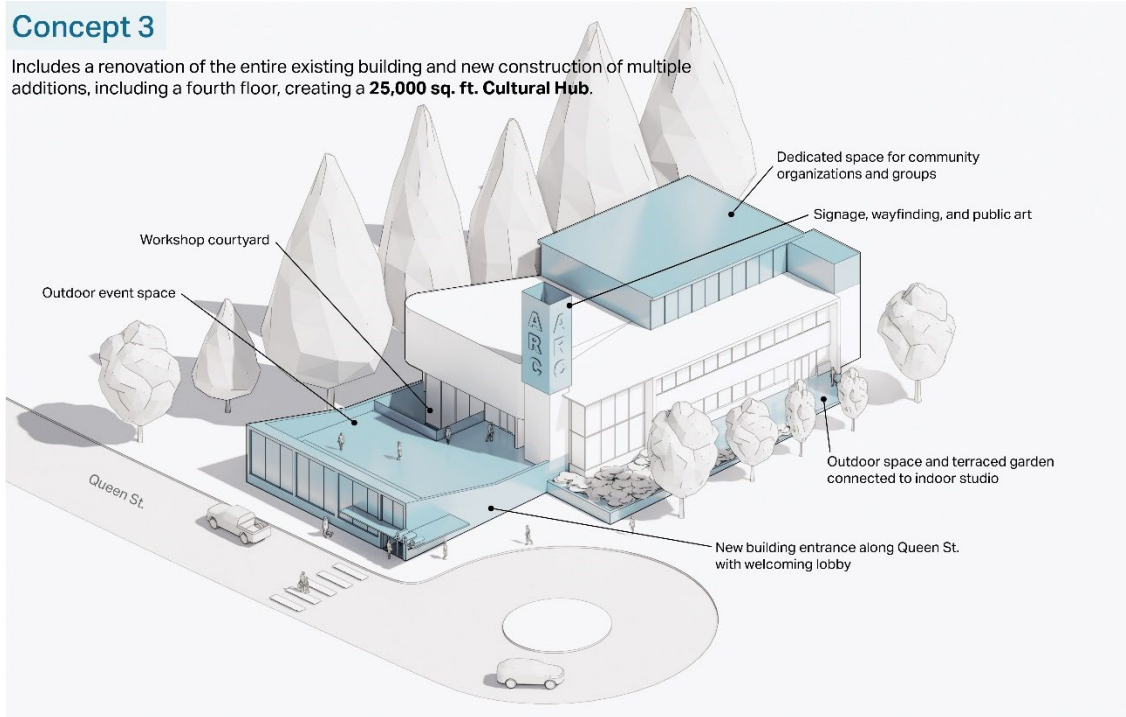
### Concept 2

Includes a renovation of the entire existing building and new construction of a small addition, creating a 15,000sq.ft. Cultural Hub.



### Concept 3

Includes a renovation of the entire existing building and new construction of multiple additions, including a fourth floor, creating a **25,000 sq. ft. Cultural Hub**.



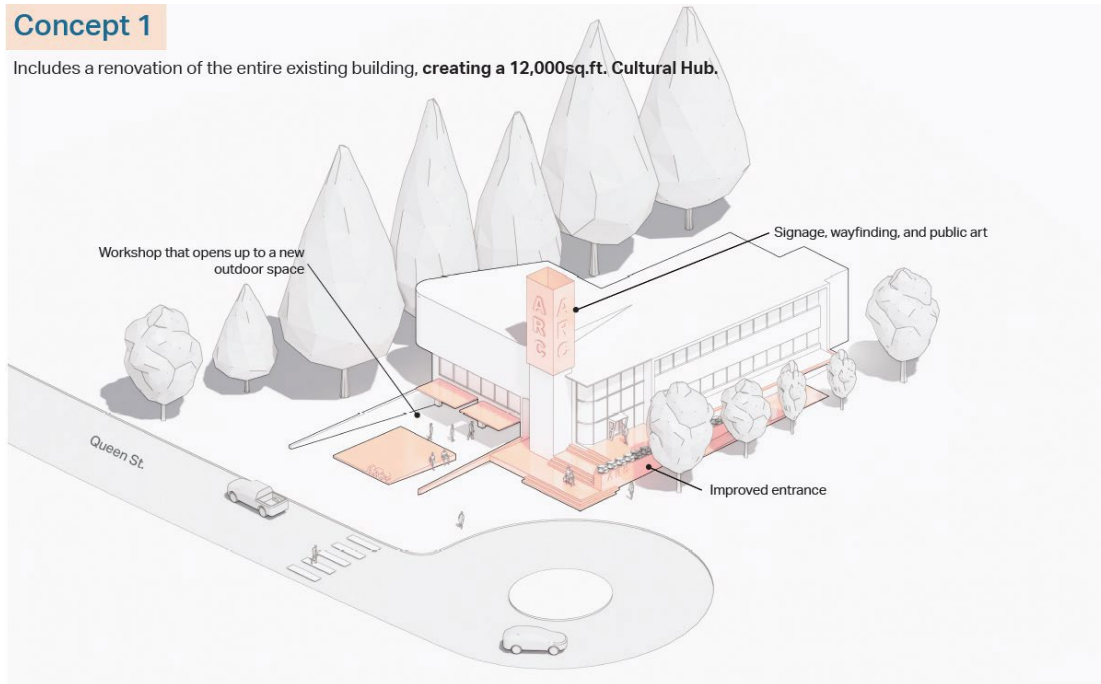
Sections 5.1 to 5.3 dive deeper into each of the concepts presented.



## 5.1 Concept 1

### Concept 1

Includes a renovation of the entire existing building, **creating a 12,000sq.ft. Cultural Hub.**



Concept 1 includes a renovation of the entire existing building, creating a 12,000-square-foot Cultural Hub. The building would remain generally the same size but with a revitalized interior and exterior. Areas of significant transformation are highlighted in orange in the concept design diagram above. These include:

- A redesigned entrance with the inclusion of a new ramp, stairs, and open interior lobby to create a more welcoming environment, as well as upgrades to the landscape and public realm;
- Transformation of the loading driveway to create a new outdoor workshop space that connects to the interior through large garage-style doors; and
- New signage, wayfinding, and public art integrated throughout, with a new signage tower added to the roof of the building.

The reimagined exterior would include upgrades to the envelope with added windows to provide more natural light and would also likely require replacement or upgrades to approximately 70% of the cladding as well as new signage. A new fire stair would also be added to the building footprint to meet code requirements.

The interior would include a reconfiguration of rooms to meet the needs of the desired programming, offer more open and flexible spaces, and provide more natural lighting, though the overall structural grid of the existing building would remain the same. While many well-used spaces will remain intact, such as the auditorium, overall interior upgrades of the finishes, materials, and design would also be made throughout the building to improve the quality of these spaces. These upgrades also would include considerations such as acoustics, lighting, and AV. Washrooms would remain in the same general location, but with an increase in fixture count to bring the building up to current code requirements. Mechanical equipment and the elevator would remain in the same general location, though some mechanical upgrades may be required to meet new programming needs.

**A restored and refreshed exterior with an improved entrance**



Image: Original building design of 45 Queen St. Oshawa

**New interior spaces with an open lobby and expanded corridors**



Precedent image: Daniels Spectrum, Toronto

**Flexible and adaptable studios for visual arts programming**



Precedent image: NB20°5 indoor/outdoor studio, New Brunswick

**An open multi-use gallery that doubles as shared event space**

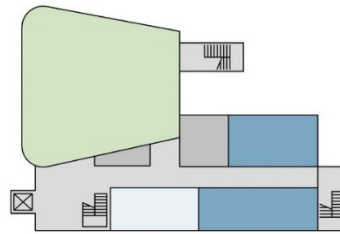


Precedent image: Small Arms Inspection Building, Mississauga

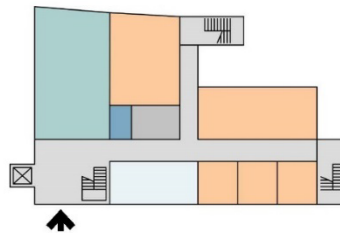
The diagram below is a conceptual floor plan showing potential layout of various programming features. A breakdown of estimated square footage per programming feature is provided in Appendix F.

**Concept 1 Floor Plans**

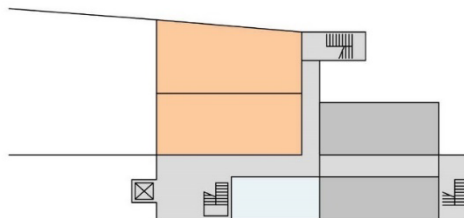
- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Auditorium (150 Seats)         |  Service Spaces |
|  Gallery / Flexible Event Space |  Corridor       |
|  Studios / Workshops            |  Washroom       |
|  Admin / Offices                |  Café/Lounge    |
|  Outdoor Amenity                |  Entrance       |



Third Floor



Second Floor

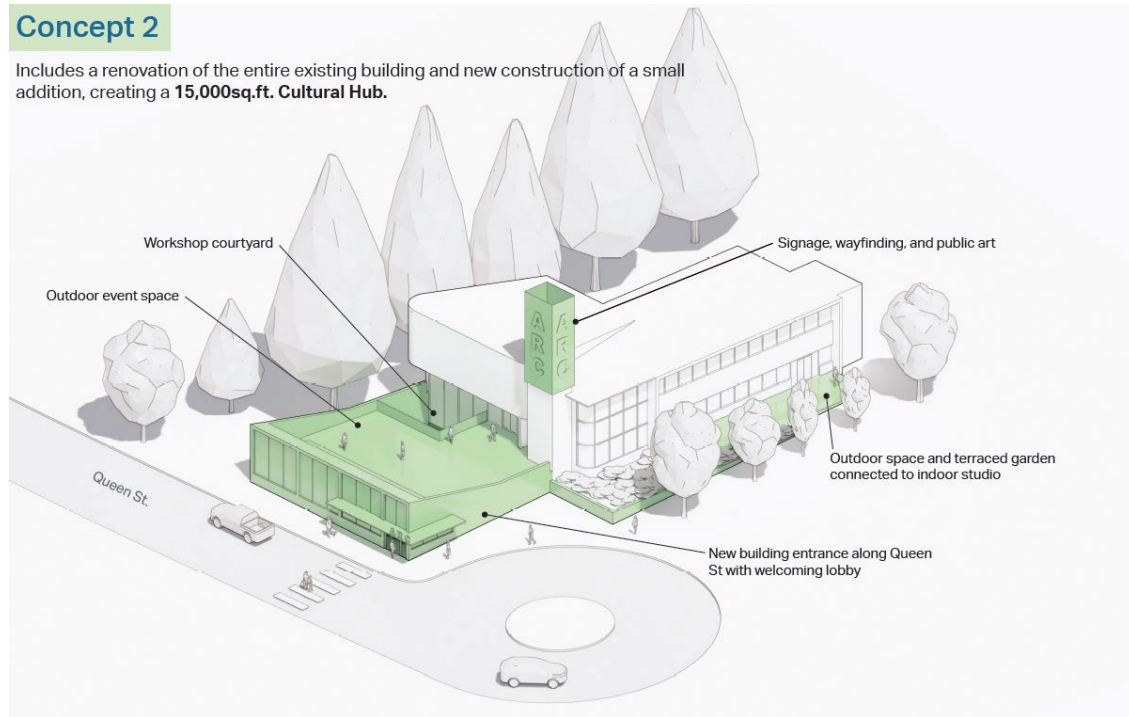


Ground Floor

## 5.2 Concept 2

### Concept 2

Includes a renovation of the entire existing building and new construction of a small addition, creating a **15,000sq.ft. Cultural Hub**.



Concept 2 includes a renovation of the entire existing building, as well as new construction of an addition, creating a 15,000-square-foot Cultural Hub. It includes much of what is outlined in Concept 1, plus a new construction 3,000-square-foot one-story addition on the east integrated with the existing building. This area of significant transformation is highlighted in green and includes:

- Expanded new interior space with direct street frontage along Queen St, which will allow for more open, flexible lobby space that could include a cafe or lounge as well as more studio spaces;
- Creation of a small ground-level, outdoor courtyard, and a large outdoor space on the roof of the addition, which could be used for workshops and/or events and would be accessed internally through the Cultural Hub; and
- New signage, wayfinding, and public art integrated throughout the design, with a new signage tower added to the roof of the building.

For the existing building, a reimagined exterior would include upgrades to the envelope with added windows to provide more natural light and would also likely require replacement or upgrades to approximately 70% of the cladding. A

new fire stair would also be added to the building footprint to meet code requirements.

The interior would include a reconfiguration of rooms to meet the needs of the desired programming, offer more open and flexible spaces, and provide more natural lighting, though the overall structural grid of the existing building would remain the same. Overall interior upgrades of the finishes, materials, and design would also be made throughout the building to improve quality of these spaces. These upgrades also would include considerations such as acoustics, lighting, and AV. Washrooms would remain in the same general location, but with an increase in fixture count to bring the building up to current code requirements. Mechanical equipment and the elevator would remain in the same general location, though some mechanical upgrades may be required to meet the new programming needs.

**Various sizes of studios for a greater range of artist opportunities**



Precedent Image: Pottery at Workshop Studios, Calgary

**Flexible gallery and market hall for community events**



Precedent image: Tett Centre Gallery, Kingston

**Bookable shared co-working workshops and meeting rooms**



Precedent image: Artscape Launchpad, Toronto

**Welcoming lobby with cafe and drop-in lounge area**

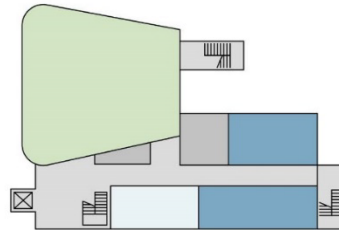


Precedent image: WOW Lieven Cultural Hub, Netherlands

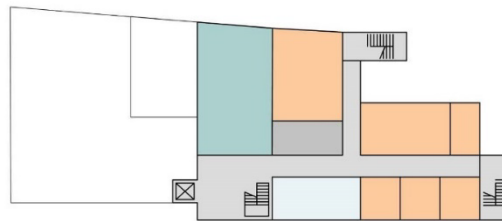
The diagram below is a conceptual floor plan showing potential layout of various programming features. A breakdown of estimated square footage per programming feature is provided in Appendix F.

**Concept 2 Floor Plans**

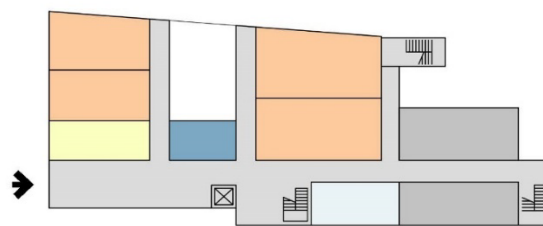
- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Auditorium (150 Seats)         |  Service Spaces |
|  Gallery / Flexible Event Space |  Corridor       |
|  Studios / Workshops            |  Washroom       |
|  Admin / Offices                |  Café/Lounge    |
|  Outdoor Amenity                |  Entrance       |



Third Floor



Second Floor



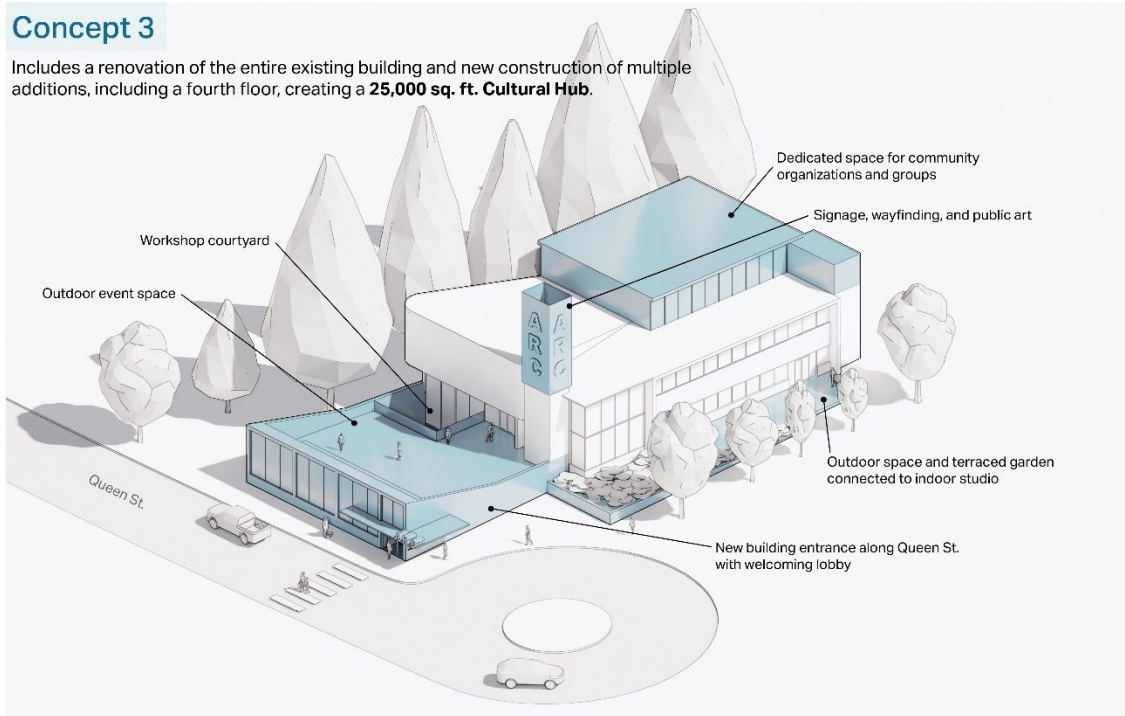
Ground Floor



### 5.3 Concept 3

#### Concept 3

Includes a renovation of the entire existing building and new construction of multiple additions, including a fourth floor, creating a **25,000 sq. ft. Cultural Hub**.



Concept 3 includes a renovation of the existing building and two new-construction additions, creating a 25,000-square-foot Cultural Hub. It includes much of what is outlined in both Concept 1 and 2, plus a new construction 10,000-square-foot four-story addition on the west with new foundation and work below grade. The area of significant transformation is highlighted in blue and includes:

- All significant transformation features outlined in Concept 2; and
- Expanded square footage making room for more administrative, office, and studio spaces, such as dedicated space for community organizations and groups to occupy the Cultural Hub.

For the existing building, a reimagined exterior would include upgrades to the envelope with added windows to provide more natural light and would also likely require replacement or upgrades to approximately 70% of the cladding. A new fire stair would also be added to the building footprint to meet code requirements.

Due to the significant increase in square footage provided by the two additions, the overall renovation of the existing building would also include a significant

redesign. Key service spaces and infrastructure, like the washrooms, elevator, staircases, and mechanical room, would all need to be increased, relocated, and redesigned. All programming spaces would also be enlarged; in particular, the auditorium would be expanded to fit larger audience seating (which would require structural modifications) and have a dedicated rehearsal room. Overall interior upgrades of the finishes, materials, and design would also be made throughout the building to improve quality of these spaces. These upgrades also would include considerations such as acoustics, lighting, and AV.

**Larger dedicated gallery, studios, and event space for diverse programming**



Precedent: Jewellery Workshop at Studio KW, Kitchener

**Expanded auditorium theatre with new dedicated rehearsal room**



Precedent image: K'Allende' Performance Hall, France

**Permanent spaces for community arts and culture organizations**



Precedent image: 401 Richmond, Toronto

**Welcoming lobby with cafe and lounge area for collaborative activities**

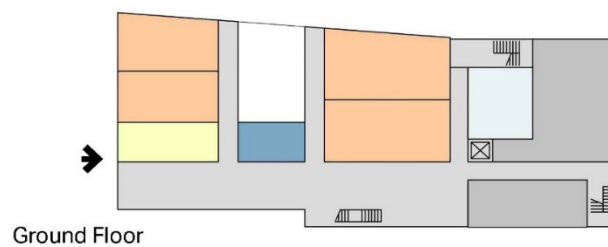
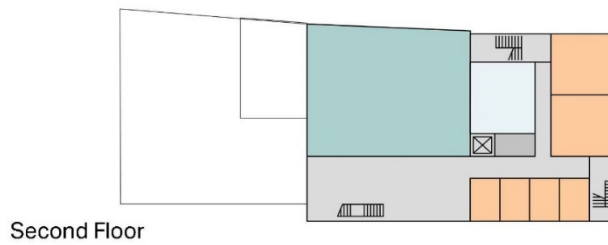


Precedent image: North Loop Gallery, Minnesota

The diagram below is a conceptual floor plan showing potential layout of various programming features. A breakdown of estimated square footage per programming feature is provided in Appendix F.

**Concept 3 Floor Plans**

- |   |                                |   |                |
|---|--------------------------------|---|----------------|
|  | Auditorium (200 Seats)         |  | Service Spaces |
|  | Gallery / Flexible Event Space |  | Corridor       |
|  | Studios / Workshops            |  | Washroom       |
|  | Admin / Offices                |  | Café/Lounge    |
|  | Outdoor Amenity                |  | Entrance       |



**5.4 Concept Comparison and Discussion**

The three design concepts were presented to the public for feedback as a crucial step in transforming the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub. The project team

issued a Secondary Feedback Form on Concepts via the Connect Oshawa platform from August 15 to September 12, 2022, to the public and stakeholders to help validate the design concepts. The purpose of this Secondary Feedback Form on Concepts was to have the public vote on their favourite concepts, to obtain feedback on preferred features, and to help the project team refine the concepts, if required. The public was presented with the three design concepts, general floor plans, and precedent images from facilities in other jurisdictions. It should be noted that the public was not presented with capital costs, operating budgets, or projected revenues of each of these spaces.

More than half (60%) of the respondents chose **Concept 3** as their preferred concept, followed by Concept 2 (24%). According to feedback shared, Concept 3 was the preferred choice because of its larger size and the additional amenities provided. Respondents appreciated that this concept offered the most space and had the potential to meet community needs now and in the future. They also appreciated the addition of the kitchen space or lounge/café and outdoor space, as well as the larger auditorium space and dedicated rehearsal rooms. In addition to being the preferred concept, Concept 3 is also the most pragmatic choice when considering Oshawa's growing population and anticipating the needs of a more robust city centre. This concept would allow for the most programming space and would likely have the most potential in attracting sponsorships.

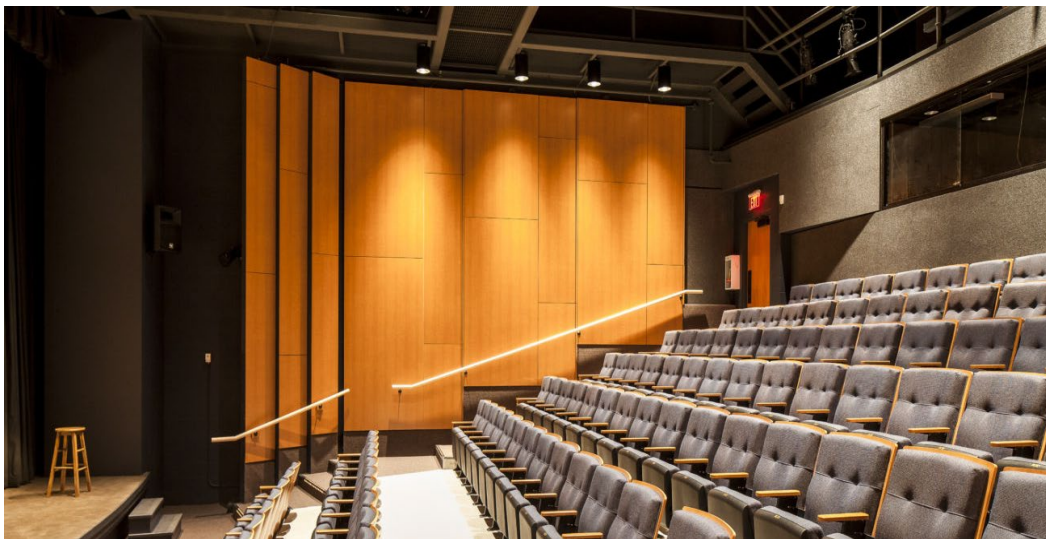
Although less favourable to the public, **Concept 2** has many of the features that were noted as prime assets in Concept 3. It also includes a kitchen space or lounge/cafe, new welcoming entry, and outdoor spaces, which were the most prominently noted features by the 60% of participants that preferred Concept 3. Like Concept 3 it would also provide substantial space to increase programming and services. As such, Concept 2 has the potential to meet many of the desired community needs, while also offering a more financially sustainable avenue.

**Concept 1** was the least favourable among the community in the Secondary Feedback Form on Concepts. Based on construction cost estimates, Concept 1 is the most affordable in terms of total construction cost and price per square foot. However, the range between the price per square foot of all three concepts is minimal and thus somewhat comparable.

## 6. Design Guidelines and Principles

Regardless of which concept option moves forward, the Oshawa Cultural Hub should align with the following design guidelines and principles:

### 6.1 Quality Space for Cultural Activities

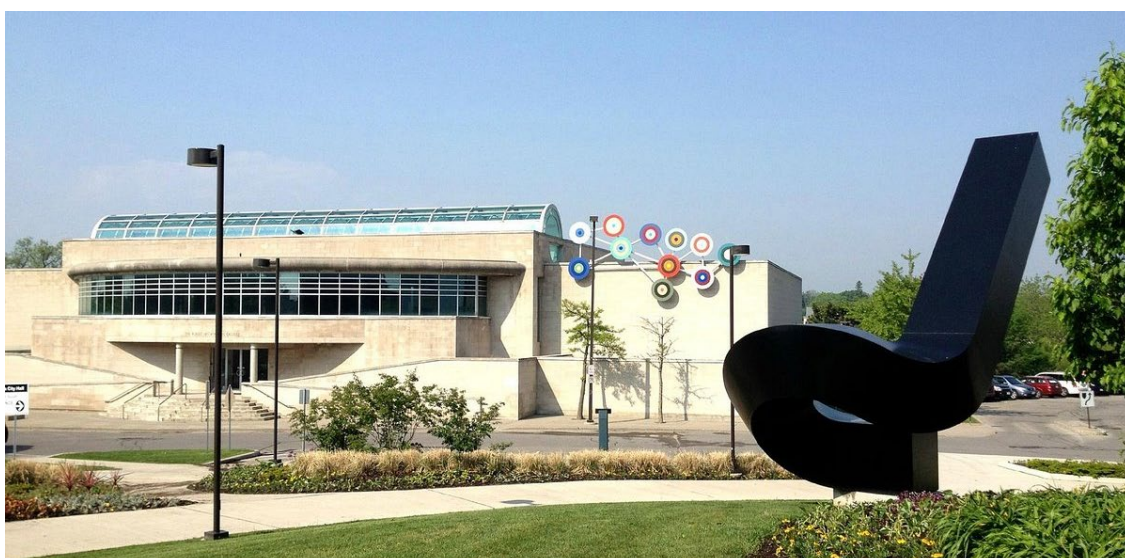


*Images: MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA, precedent showing adaptive re-use flexible open arts space that can be used for a gallery, exhibit, performances, and other diverse cultural programming. Huronia Players Theatre in Midland Cultural*

*Centre, ON, precedent showing an approximately 120 seat intimate theatre auditorium space with sound booth.*

- Architectural elements should have careful detailing, consistency in material and design, and be of high quality to contribute to a rich visual composition.
- Regardless of scale, design excellence should be pursued in all aspects of design, including architecture, wayfinding and signage, landscape architecture, and public realm, to reflect the quality of space required for a vibrant cultural hub.
- Materials shall be selected for their durability, environmental sustainability, and visual compatibility with the existing building as well as with nearby buildings and the public realm.
- Ensure flexible spaces consider the diverse programming needs of the community and can be designed to accommodate these; for example, if flexible event space is intended to be shared between displaying visual arts and hosting performances, ensure lighting, seating, storage, and other needs are adjustable and adaptable.
- AV and other technological requirements should be determined based on programming needs of the community and should be seamlessly integrated into the design of the building.
- Consider solar access and shadows on open spaces, interior courtyards, and the public realm when arranging and orienting the Cultural Hub, as well as when orienting the building to leverage wind and thermal comfort and lighting requirements to provide adequate day lighting in public spaces within the building.
- Align with relevant and updated City policies, goals, and guidelines, including *Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan* and *Our Plan for Success: Oshawa Strategic Plan 2020-2023*.

## 6.2 Placemaking and Connectivity



*Images: MoMA PS1, Long Island City USA, precedent showing an art gallery with large exterior signage and public art. The R.M.G. across from the existing A.R.C. building.*

- Emphasis should be given to the design of wayfinding, branding, and signage to improve user experience navigating both the interior and exterior of the hub. Signage should be used in a variety of ways to communicate function and location, as well as to activate space, with options including integrated signage, animated signage, directional signage, interpretive signage, and/or program signage.
- Ensure the architectural design is context-specific and of appropriate scale and massing to the adjacent and surrounding built environment.
- Establish a sense of place, creatively expressing the history, landscape, and identity of downtown Oshawa and intentionally connecting to and supporting nearby cultural and civic amenities including gallery, library, city hall, square, and garden.
- Leverage the integration of architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, signage and wayfinding, public art, and other design components to create a visual anchor and a place of community gathering and activity.
- Provide opportunities for temporary and permanent integrated public art, both within the hub as well as in the public realm and landscape which can act as a gateway feature to the site and improve street frontage. Public art should align with the *City of Oshawa Public Art Master Plan 2018-2028*.
- Massing, scale, and other architectural details should be complementary to downtown Oshawa.

### **6.3 Social, Economic, and Environmental Sustainability**





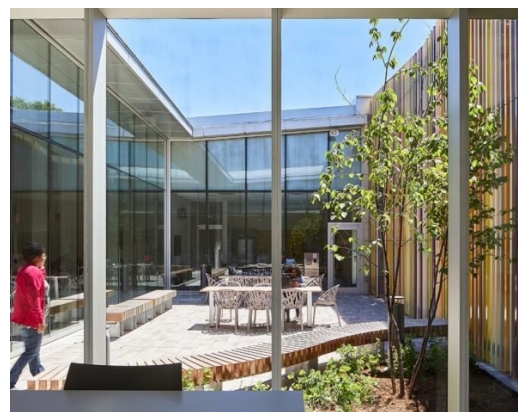
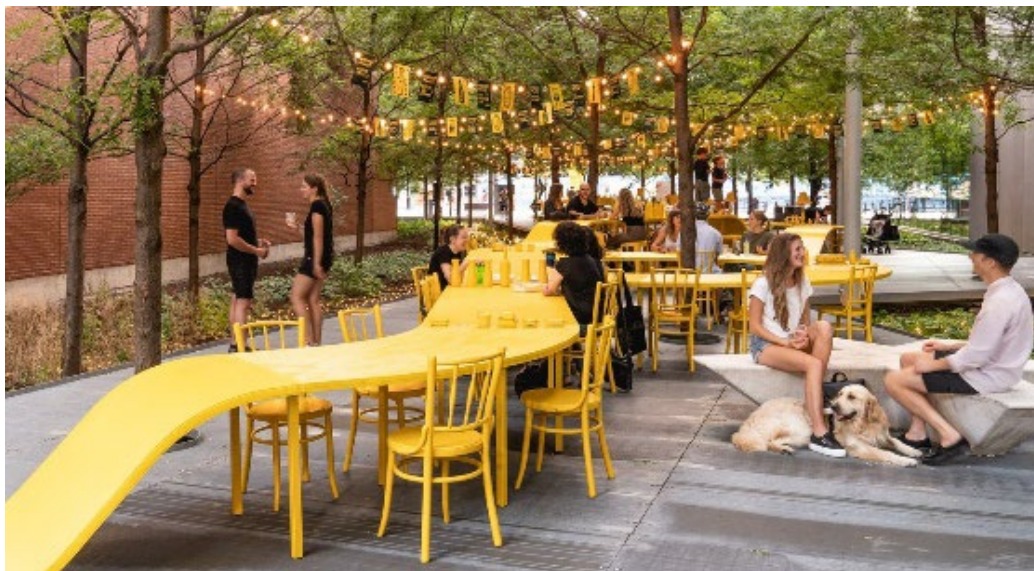
*Images: Tett Centre, Kingston, Ontario, precedent showing design of an addition above and adjacent to an existing building, combining new construction additions with adaptive reuse that leverages the embodied carbon and energy of an existing building to create a new cultural centre. TTC Subway Station, Toronto, ON, precedent showing an Urban Forest Demonstration Garden with educational signage about the native planting. San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, precedent image showing bike parking with integrated public art mural.*

- The design shall support both social and economic sustainability for the communities, considering diverse user needs as well as accessibility and inclusivity.
- Where possible, the design should allow for the creation of flexible, versatile, and adaptable spaces, prioritizing durability, and resilience so that the Cultural Hub is long-lasting and can respond to changing demographics and evolving community needs.
- Adaptive reuse of the existing building, material salvage and reuse, should be undertaken to leverage existing embodied carbon and potential cultural heritage value. Demolition should be avoided when

possible; deconstruction, salvage, and reuse of materials should be considered throughout renovations.

- Aim to achieve best practices and standards in environmentally sustainable architectural design, such as WELL and LEED.
- Incorporate sustainability measures into building design, such as low-energy appliances, local materials and supplies, efficient heating and cooling systems, solar panels, operational windows for natural ventilation, green roofs, and low-flow plumbing equipment.
- Support active transportation by providing bike parking that is conveniently located, well lit, and highly visible. Provide clear signage or information to visitors when possible, about various active transportation and public transportation methods available.
- Where environmental sustainability measures are implemented, consider integrating educational signage to raise awareness and knowledge among the community.
- Reference should be made to Durham’s *Community Climate Adaptation Plan* where relevant.

#### 6.4 Outdoor Spaces and Public Realm



*Images: Hydro-Quebec Park, Montreal, QC, precedent showing temporary public art installation within public realm and urban park space. SHED, Healdsburg, CA showing community space that integrates outdoor space with the indoors to create a larger workshop and event room. Albion Branch Library, Etobicoke, ON, precedent showing internal courtyard for educational programming.*

- Landscape architecture within the building – including potential indoor/outdoor space, courtyard, and gardens – should be given equal design consideration as the architecture and integrated with the overall building design to allow for expanded space for programming.
- The public realm surrounding the building shall be designed to support the Cultural Hub as a welcoming destination, connected to nearby cultural, civic, and community amenities including City Hall and Civic Square, Oshawa Public Library McLaughlin Branch, The R.M.G., Downtown Urban Square, Memorial Park, Oshawa Creek & Trail, North Parkette (King & Centre St.), and downtown area. Connections should include visual, cultural, and programmatic, as well as physical built environment connections for pedestrians traveling between sites.
- Incorporate low-impact development techniques to help in managing stormwater on-site, especially to offset required parking.
- Native plant materials shall be used wherever possible as they require less maintenance, watering, and fertilization.
- Integrate planting into the parking lot where possible to act as both screening and shade and consider how parking can be designed in a flexible way to accommodate festivals, pop-up markets, or other spill-over outdoor special events for the Cultural Hub.

## **6.5 Accessibility and Inclusivity**



*Images: Artscape Wychwood Barns, precedent showing flexible lounge/café space offering a welcoming, light-filled, and casual gathering space for community. Shas Ti Kelly Road Secondary School in Prince George, BC, precedent showing Universal Single-User washrooms that feature inclusive pictograms to help users identify the features and functions of the space.*

- As a community anchor, the design should meet Oshawa Accessible Design Standards which meet and exceed AODA standards, striving for access for all and including features for all ages, from infants/children to seniors.

- The interior and exterior should provide a welcoming atmosphere, as well as accessible and inclusive spaces such as all-gender accessible washrooms and ample pedestrian pathways and internal corridors.
- Ample lighting, both natural and artificial, should be provided to create safe and welcoming spaces.
- Signage should include raised tactile letters and braille for persons with vision impairment or low vision. Consider the use of BlindSquare, a widely used accessible GPS-app developed for the blind, deafblind, and partially sighted.
- Engage an Indigenous designer and/or consultant to ensure appropriate integration of Indigenous design and place-keeping elements within spaces for the inclusion of cultural practices, such as ample ventilation that allows for ceremonial smudging.
- Design interior spaces that are spacious and allow for ground floor activation, such as through flexible event space, kitchen space or lounge/cafe space – dependent on scale of Cultural Hub – that creates a community anchor at the building's entrance.
- Specialized technology, amenities, or features needed to support arts programming should be directly integrated into the building design where possible to ensure the space is accessible and affordable to a diverse range of users.
- Visitor safety and well-being should be of high priority, and design elements such as lighting, visibility, and access should be carefully considered to support public safety.

## 7. Funding Opportunities

In transforming the A.R.C. into a future Cultural Hub, there should be consideration of pursuing funding opportunities that will help offset construction and possibly operations costs. The funding options presented assume that this facility will continue to be City owned and operated, and that there will be provisions for the City's capital budget and operating

expenditures. Note that there is minimal federal infrastructure funding available, at least directed towards municipalities.

### **Canada Cultural Spaces Fund**

The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF) supports renovation and construction projects that improve the physical conditions for arts, heritage, culture and creative innovation. The fund is predicted to remain active until 2028, though the Department of Canadian Heritage cautions that there is high demand for remaining funds. Municipal administrations, or one of their agencies, are eligible to apply. Construction and/or renovation of arts and/or heritage facilities and creative hubs are considered eligible projects.

The CCSF's maximum contribution payable for a construction or renovation project is \$15,000,000 or 50% of total eligible project costs, whichever is less. The average approved contribution is approximately 37% of the total project cost. Projects are assessed on availability and quality of space, access to professional arts and heritage experience, the viability of the facility, and the long-term financial impact on the organization.

There is substantial competition for CCSF funding, as many communities, towns, and cities apply every year. However, the CCSF is a major funder of such spaces, so it should be explored more closely. Generally, the CCSF likes to see strong commitment from the community – from City Council members, to philanthropists, and supporting organizations. A strong mandate to expand the beneficiaries to equity-deserving communities is also important to the CCSF and other public funding sources.

### **Green/Sustainable Funds**

During the planning of the construction process and in retrofitting the existing A.R.C., the City of Oshawa may consider applying for climate targeted funds that will contribute to building upgrades that will help with overall sustainability of the building. For example, the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund** provides loans and grants for municipal capital projects that aim to retrofit or build sustainably.

### **Sponsorships and Naming Rights**

The future Cultural Hub could seek sponsorship opportunities to help offset both capital and operating costs. Sponsorship would involve one or more corporations or organizations providing cash or in-kind contributions in exchange for branding opportunities or naming rights of the whole facility, a

particular space (e.g., the auditorium, a workshop, gallery, etc.) or program (e.g., children’s programming, mentorship program, etc.).

Looking to other jurisdictions, high valued sponsorships and naming agreements for arts and cultural facilities are typically concentrated at performing arts spaces in large centres. However, there are several examples of sponsorships in mid-sized municipalities. For example, in addition to a naming agreement with FirstOntario Credit Union, the FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton (owned and operated by the Town of Milton), has several sponsorships agreements with corporations/organizations that allow for the naming of spaces and programming throughout the centre. Spaces with sponsorships associated include the Mattamy Theatre, MinMaxx Hall, Tim Hortons Childrens Arts Studio, Del Ridge Community Room, Chudleigh's Box Office. etc. The Living Arts Centre (owned and operated by the City of Mississauga) also offers sponsorship and advertising opportunities for various programs and events.

There is already precedent for sponsorship in Oshawa at City-owned recreational facilities and other properties. Sponsorships agreements should aim to be with corporations or organizations that have values aligned with the goals of the future Cultural Hub and its Guiding Principles.

### **Donations and Philanthropy**

The City could seek donations or philanthropic gifts to aid in the development of a Cultural Hub in a way that aligns with municipal policies. Donations may come from the private sector, affluent donors/patrons, or many residents through issuing Community Bonds, for example. More extensive use of social finance investment is expected in coming years in Canada for the arts. Raising significant capital from fundraising for a municipally owned and operated facility is challenging when the facility is not differentiated strongly enough from the municipality. This issue goes to the heart of the case for a governance option that is more tailored toward community stakeholders. Generally, although donors are very important to arts institutions and arts causes, arts and culture does not rank particularly high as a priority among Canadian’s charitable giving.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Rideau Hall Foundation & Imagine Canada, [“30 Years of Giving in Canada: Who gives, how and why?”](#) 2018

## 8. Governance and Operations

In the process of transforming the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub, the City of Oshawa will need to plan a governance and operations model to ensure it can fulfill a refreshed mandate. In this section, we discuss priorities and criteria recommended in setting up the governance and operating infrastructure.

### 8.1 Priorities and Measures for Success

In order to satisfy community needs and achieve a level of sustainability the future Cultural Hub should consider the following key governance and operating priorities. These priorities were developed from the consultation process, and additionally can be considered measures for success to follow in the development of this future facility.

#### **It should have a clear identity:**

Stakeholders and those consulted shared that a primary challenge with the current A.R.C. is it lacks a clear focus concerning its ultimate objective. In the past, many would argue that the A.R.C. had a relatively nondescript identity and ill-defined purpose. The lack of purpose made the A.R.C. susceptible to low utilization and to be used for purposes unrelated to providing resources and services to the arts and culture sector. To ensure effective and sustainable operations and management of a future Cultural Hub there should be the establishment of a clear mandate, purpose, and goals.

#### **It should prioritize trust and transparency:**

Building and maintaining community is essential to delivering the goals of the Cultural Hub. Transparency and frequent community engagement should be prioritized throughout the planning stage and the project's execution.

#### **It should have operational flexibility:**

The City should explore ways to adopt policies that support a level of flexibility. This will especially be needed if a future hub provides services like “drop-in” or hourly rentals of space for artists and makers. There also needs to be consideration of extended or greater operating hours than the current A.R.C. that accommodate a wider range of users. Operating hours should not be limited or centered around City programming or other occasional events.

Some stakeholders and those who provided feedback said that a primary concern with the current A.R.C. is that it functions as a recreational facility and that the future Cultural Hub should not be limited by existing structures that



govern recreational facilities as these are not applicable to the unique needs and consideration of the art/culture and creative sectors.

**Balance affordability with financial sustainability:**

Offering affordable pricing in programs/services i.e., low cost for both the culture and creative community users, not-for-profit organizations, and the boarder public, was a key priority stressed by the community and stakeholders. However, others cautioned that a free-or low-cost model may take away business and opportunities from arts organizations looking to recover costs of programming and possibly compete unfairly with existing facilities. Ultimately, the goal is for the Culture Hub programs and services to complement existing offerings in the city, rather than duplicate them. Staff should undertake careful review of services and program offerings when determining A.R.C. offerings. Collaborations and partnerships with other programming entities may also help to expand the breadth of programming on offer. As for affordability, the Cultural Hub could have pricing tiers to accommodate various user groups, for example, a charitable/non-profit tier, a commercial tier, etc. as has been demonstrated in some culture centres and hubs in other jurisdictions.

While realizing that affordability is a major requirement, stakeholders, citizens, and indeed City officials, also put emphasis on financial sustainability. The community is interested in attracting a range of private funding options, including donors, sponsorships, naming rights, and partnerships with private developers to help offset the cost of redevelopment, operations, and cultural programming services. A future Cultural Hub must aim to strike a balance between providing accessible and affordable resources to the community and being financially sustainable.

**Community needs for flexibility should be balanced with municipal standards in operational practices:**

As stated, engaging the community for input and considering their needs will be important in developing a Cultural Hub. The City should find a balance between considering community input and creating manageable and reasonable goals for this facility that align with what the City can realistically provide. That should also extend to operating practices where the City and the facility work toward mutual acceptability.

The transformation of the A.R.C. will not and cannot solve all challenges within Oshawa's creative and cultural sector. There needs to be management of public expectations of what can be realistically achieved with this future space. For

example, as previously mentioned, the community would like to see “drop-in” or hourly rentals where artists and creators can use private or partially shared space to create independently or collaboratively. To make this possible, there needs to be a recognition of artists’ unique needs, while simultaneously balancing City codes of conduct, staffing, insurance, safety, cleanliness, and maintenance concerns.

**New social and community objective can be furthered through effective community partnerships:**

As mentioned earlier, partnerships will be key to the success of a future Cultural Hub. Many stakeholders stated that without them the proposed visions will not be realized. The future Cultural Hub should not be a siloed facility solely for City programming and resources for a handful of cultural organizations. It should be actively engaging other users of the space to maximize its use.

The City should engage post-secondary institutions, community groups/organizations, arts and culture facilities and organizations, and local artists, makers, and businesses.

**The Cultural Hub should be inclusive and accessible:**

Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility policies should be built into all aspects of the operations of a Cultural Hub, including the annual budget and staffing. Outreach and messaging to diverse community groups should be prioritized to ensure they are aware of this space and that it is a welcoming space for them to use. By making concerted efforts to create a sense of welcome to a wide range of participants, the Cultural Hub will combat the notion felt by some equity-deserving groups that City-run facilities are “not for them.”

To achieve this objective there will need to be diversity training among staff, potential advisory boards, and committees. Most importantly, there will need to be substantial outreach efforts that are consistent and ongoing beyond this space's initial development. To be truly effective, diversity, equity and inclusion principles should extend to all cultural activities, sponsorship agreements, and social programming.

Beyond the physical building and diversity, equity and inclusion policies, accessibility in this context also pertains to the general ease of access to the space and availability, including increased operating hours and the processes in place for users to access rental or “drop-in” space. There should be low barriers

and clear instructions to access the spaces and rentals within the Cultural Hub, in addition to physical accessibility.

### **The Cultural Hub needs branding through outreach and marketing:**

A primary concern with the A.R.C. expressed throughout consultation was that many did not know it existed, what it provided, and that they were welcome to use it. Marketing and outreach need to be prioritized for the future success of this space, with dedicated City resources allocated to these activities, especially early in the re-development of the space. Marketing and promotion should include investment in building an active online presence for the Cultural Hub, including but not limited to, a dedicated website, social media accounts and campaigns, easy-to-use online booking systems, etc. These actions will be crucial in ensuring that the space is used by a wide variety of users and community groups and use of space is maximized.

## **8.2 Governance Model Options**

There are multiple options for the City of Oshawa to consider concerning the governance of a future Cultural Hub. It is recommended that **staff dedicated to outreach, community development and marketing** are considered when staffing, to align with priorities mentioned previously. As described above, the essence of the Culture Hub concept is to create an inclusive, safe, and affordable environment for cultural and community activities as priorities. The following governance models should be considered as future options depending on upcoming decisions made by the City of Oshawa. No specific model is recommended, as governance decisions are an iterative process. The basic governance models presented in this section may be combined or adapted as conditions change. For example, the model may begin as City owned and operated and plan to transition to a non-profit model. Or it may begin as a not-profit within strict financial authorities retained by the City until the external board and operating management meet a certain performance level.

### **8.2.1 City-Owned and Operated**

In a city-owned and operated model, the City of Oshawa would own and operate the Cultural Hub. To align with the priorities for the creation of the Culture Hub above, the City would have to consider making amendments to various bylaws, policies, and procedures to allow for more flexibility and ease of access for potential Cultural Hub users. There would also likely need to be additional policies, such as around “drop-in”/flexible space, etc.

An **advisory committee or even an advisory board** should be established to provide guidance and access to community leaders to animate a future Cultural Hub. That would mean including programming, services, partnerships, fundraising and administration. An advisory body would be comprised of various stakeholders within Oshawa’s arts, heritage, culture, and creative sectors. An advisory body will be a crucial asset in ensuring that connections to the arts, culture, and creative communities – and to community associations - are fostered and considered in the future operations of the Cultural Hub.

There is a sub-alternative to a way forward concerning an advisory body. Rather than creating a new body, the existing Oshawa Cultural Leadership Council’s mandate could be amended to include an advisory role in the operations and activities of a future Cultural Hub. The City would always retain the authority to alter the mandate of the advisory board, and likely to name the members. However, in practice, it could encourage members to apply or be nominated by key community organizations.

Some benefits and challenges of this model are presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Benefits and Challenges for the City-managed Governance Model**

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City can retain full control of the space, and thus ensure accountability for financial, operating, and strategic decisions.</li> <li>▪ Ensures that management and operations are aligned with municipal strategies, priorities, and activities.</li> <li>▪ Greater opportunities to provide affordable/subsidized services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited funding opportunities from provincial and federal funding agencies, and in community fundraising and/or sponsorship.</li> <li>▪ Some inflexibility of City bylaws and internal policies may hinder ability to adapt to community needs.</li> <li>▪ Potential challenges in establishing trust from the community to successful realization of objectives.</li> <li>▪ Less tolerance for risk taking and experimentation in programming and service provided.</li> </ul>

### 8.2.2 City Established and Owned, Non-profit Operated

The City can also continue to own the property but also establish a non-profit, which would have operational responsibilities in managing the Cultural Hub. The City would create a committee to search for board members and chairs, however the City would have ultimate approval. The board should be composed of City employees, arts, cultural and creative sector and community representatives. The City would need to create an agreement to stipulate funding and other support arrangements, while also establishing other governing policies. This non-profit would be more at arms-length and be governed under the terms of a “contribution agreement” type of arrangement between the City and the not-for-profit organization.

An example of this model is The ACT Arts Centre in Maple Ridge (BC), owned by the City of Maple Ridge but managed through an operation and lease agreement with the Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Arts Council. The Arts Council provides programs, performances, and events at the ACT, and receives one third of its funding from the City of Maple Ridge.

Some benefits and challenges of this model are presented in the table below.

**Table 3: Benefits and Challenges of City-Established Non-Profit Governance Model**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to both City funding, provincial or federal funding, and likely to be more successful in fundraising for capital and operating expenditures.</li> <li>▪ Greater independence and flexibility as operations would be separate from the City.</li> <li>▪ Increased potential for establishing long-lasting connections to the wider sector and community, and potentially garners more public trust.</li> <li>▪ More potential for community engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Less municipal oversight over use of space and operational decisions, which would need to be organized around the regular review of the governing contribution agreement.</li> <li>▪ Higher possibility of diverting from serving needs for a Cultural Hub highlighted in this study.</li> <li>▪ Less accountability for the City’s investment in the capital costs and operating deficit.</li> </ul>

### 8.2.3 City External Agency

The City of Oshawa may consider establishing an external agency of the City to manage the facility and manage programming and partnerships. There is precedent within the City of Oshawa concerning these types of relationships that the city may use as a model.

In the case of the Cultural Hub the City can rely on an external agency to manage city cultural programming and/or to manage the operations of a Cultural Hub. In return, the City could provide funding and other support (IT, Finance, HR, etc.), and the City would build in some space requirements to be designated for and allocated to the City for other purposes. Employees of the Cultural Hub could be City employees and abide by City policies and procedures. Or they could be hired directly by the external agency. Regardless, there would likely be more operational flexibility granted than being a solely City owned and operated facility.

The agency would have its own Board of Directors comprising of community members/sector representatives and City managers. There would be a need to establish a Municipal Services Agreement, to ensure that responsibilities and policies are clearly defined, and measures to be set in place to determine if the Cultural Hub was performing in the manner agreed upon. Of course, the City would provide a defined operating budget under this arrangement.

An example of an external agency established to operate cultural facilities is TO Live, an agency of the City of Toronto that manages and operates three civic theatres (St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, Meridian Arts Centre, and Meridian Hall). TO Live is governed by a Board of Directors, appointed by Toronto City Council. The Board is comprised of 10 public members and three City Council members. There is also an Advisory Committee, comprising of representatives from tenants and companies, who convene to provide advice to the Board. The Board is responsible for governance, business affairs, operations, and management, undertaking strategic planning and submits an audited financial statement and annual report to City Council.

Some benefits and challenges of this model are presented in the table below.

**Table 4: Benefits and Challenges of City External Agency Governance Model**

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to both City funding, provincial or federal funding, and more likely to raise funds from</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Less municipal control over operations means increased risk.</li> </ul>

Benefits	Challenges
<p>private/foundation donations and sponsorships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greater autonomy, independence and flexibility in operations enables it to be more responsive to the community.</li> <li>▪ Increased connections to the wider sector and community, and more public trust.</li> <li>▪ Higher tolerance for innovation and experimentation in programming and services.</li> <li>▪ More potential for community engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff being employed by the City may present challenges, for example, City takes on risk if employees violate laws/regulations, hiring needs must be approved by Council, etc.</li> <li>▪ Managing a relationship with the City is more difficult than managing it as another operating division of the City.</li> <li>▪ Creating a board of directors and giving them specific authority can sometimes be difficult and may be politicized.</li> </ul>

### 8.2.4 Existing Non-Profit Model

A governance model that bestows day-to-day operations and management to an existing cultural organizations/non-profit. The City would retain ownership of the building and is responsible for capital improvements. The operating non-profit would be considered the “anchor tenant”, and would contribute significantly to the programming, services, and events at the Cultural Hub. The non-profit would be governed by its own independent board. The City would need to establish an agreement, clarify funding, and support terms. The agreement should also lay out policies that allow for the facility to be used by other organizations and community members to ensure that the space remains accessible. The City may also establish a fee-for-service agreement so that the non-profit receives support for providing services to the wider community.

An example of this model is the Maja Prentice Theater in Mississauga. The venue is owned by the City, but managed by Crane Creations Theatre Company, a not-for profit theatre company.

Some benefits and challenges of this model are presented in the table below.

**Table 5: Benefits and Challenges of Existing Non-Profit Model**

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to both City funding, provincial or federal funding, and more likely to raise funds from fundraising.</li> <li>▪ Greater independence and flexibility.</li> <li>▪ Increased connections to the wider sector and community, and potentially garners more public trust.</li> <li>▪ More potential for community engagement.</li> <li>▪ Less responsibility for the City in establishing a non-profit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Less municipal control over use of space.</li> <li>▪ There may be resistance to outside uses of the space depending on the vision/mission of the existing non-profit.</li> <li>▪ Higher possibility of diverting from serving needs for a Cultural Hub highlighted in this study.</li> <li>▪ Less accountability for the City's investment in the capital costs and operating deficit.</li> <li>▪ Anchor tenant model is best suited for single-discipline facilities (e.g., a performing arts centre or a gallery).</li> <li>▪ Difficult to manage multiple stakeholders using the same space.</li> </ul>

### 8.2.5 For-Profit or Public/Private Partnership Model

The Cultural Hub would be owned and/or managed by a developer, a management group, or another third party. This governance model is commonly used for large performing/entertainment complexes that serve a wider community of presenters and performers. In this case, the City of Oshawa would either sell the property to a for-profit company or, more commonly, lease the space to any of these groups and have them fully manage operations. A public/private partnership can also take the form of a private company coming in as a funding partner and sharing operational and management responsibilities with the City of Oshawa.

An example of a for-profit management model can be seen in Hamilton's three performance venues: FirstOntario Centre, FirstOntario Concert Hall, and The Studio. These facilities are managed by Core Entertainment, which provides



event management, food, and hospitality services to the renters of these venues – delivering high-quality, profitable event experiences.

Some benefits and challenges of this model are presented in the table below.

**Table 6: Benefits and Challenges of For-Profit Governance Model**

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prioritizes economic viability.</li> <li>▪ Less strain on City resources for operation and management.</li> <li>▪ For-profit management may be able to attract large performance acts and high-calibers services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential for the needs of smaller/grassroots organizations to not have their needs met, as larger institutions might be seen as a priority.</li> <li>▪ Increased focus on economic viability, rather than community and artist accessibility.</li> <li>▪ Less municipal control over use of space.</li> <li>▪ Higher possibility of diverting from serving needs for a Cultural Hub highlighted in this study.</li> </ul>

### 8.2.6 Community/Artists Run or Land Trust Model

A “land trust” model has been adopted in many cities across the world, typically concerning the protection of community residential access or for nature conservation. As rents and operational costs increase and artists struggle to access space, more organizations have emerged to adopt this model to the arts and culture. A cultural land trust in Oshawa may involve an organization or entity acquiring the A.R.C. (and potentially other properties) and would allow for artists and cultural organizations to have collective stewardship and ownership. The goal would be to ensure community governance and protection of spaces that are dedicated to arts and culture, through equity ownership or long-term leases. Funds would emerge from government sources, grants, investments, fundraising, and philanthropy. Advocates for this model note that

these trusts de-commodify land, empower artists, leverage investment, and promote reconciliation and equity.<sup>36</sup>

This model has been used in London (UK), San Francisco, Austin and Seattle. In Austin, the City established the Austin Cultural Trust (ACT), run by Austin Economic Development Corporation. The ACT is governed by a board of directors, and a Cultural Trust Advisory Committee. In British Columbia a Cultural Land Trust was established by a non-profit, 221A. The Cultural Land Trust aims to secure 30 properties by 2050 and to operate as an independent organization with 11-person governance.

Some benefits and challenges of this model are presented in the table below.

**Table 7: Benefits and Challenges to Land Trust/Artist or Community Run Governance Model**

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Empowers local artists and organizations, and subsequently encourages equity.</li> <li>▪ Ensures long-standing protection of the facility and protects it from redevelopment.</li> <li>▪ Encourages innovative funding mechanisms and investment options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An untested and novel governance model, that is still in its infancy.</li> <li>▪ Minimal municipal control over the space.</li> <li>▪ Higher possibility of diverting from serving needs for a Cultural Hub highlighted in this study.</li> </ul>

### 8.2.7 Cultural District Model

Due to the site’s context in relation to downtown, the R.M.G., the Oshawa Public Library, City Hall, Ontario Tech, the Downtown Urban Square, the concept of a “Creative” or “Cultural Campus” or “District” came up in consultation. While this concept was out of scope for this study, its repeated mention warrants some exploration. In particular, the need for greater visibility, walkability, and connectivity to improve the user experience of visitors attending multiple sites

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<sup>36</sup> 221a, [“Cultural Land Trust Study”](#)

in succession, as well as the role of the landscape and public spaces between these places, is a concept that requires a holistic approach.

Oshawa could consider formally establishing a “district” in the area around the A.R.C. and capitalizing on the relationships of cultural stakeholders. To do so, an arms-length Community Development Corporation (CDC) would be created to manage the branding and promotion of all of Oshawa’s arts and cultural assets, businesses, and organizations in the area. This may involve a general partnership between the CDC and members of the cultural district. Cultural businesses in the district might pay a small membership fee. There are typically many committees involved in the management of a cultural district, one of which is tasked with managing and attracting events to the area. This committee could then play a role in managing and finding users for a new Cultural Hub – the exact nature of which would be laid out in a municipal framework.

The Quartier des Spectacles in Montreal and Calgary’s Arts Commons are prime examples of Culture District model in effect.

Some benefits and challenges for this model are presented in the table below.

**Table 8: Benefits and Challenges of Cultural District Model**

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourages the development of the Cultural Hub as well as existing arts &amp; cultural spaces and businesses – so ensures the Hub doesn’t detract from existing businesses/organizations.</li> <li>▪ Builds a sense of community among Oshawa’s cultural and creative organizations and businesses.</li> <li>▪ Brands and markets Oshawa’s arts, culture, and creative community.</li> <li>▪ Instils a sense of pride in the arts, culture, and creative communities and the wider locals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requires heavy financial investment, as well as research and investigation from the government.</li> <li>▪ Can potentially be organizationally complex, as it is managed by many different boards, committees, and groups.</li> <li>▪ Would require more feasibility analysis, planning, and strong backing to reach a higher level of consideration.</li> </ul>

### 8.3 Key Performance Indicators

Provided below are a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the operators of the Cultural Hub to track, to ensure sustainability and the realization of the vision for the Cultural Hub. Organizational and strategic decisions that have yet to be made will affect the direction of KPIs. Accordingly, indicators presented here are simply intended as high-level guidelines.

To measure particular KPIs, such as user satisfaction, or progress toward demographic goals, it is suggested that a systematic public feedback mechanism, such as an annual survey be conducted – for the general public and for Cultural Hub users/visitors. Note that tracking some of the KPIs included below may fall under the responsibility of various City Department or branches (e.g., Corporate Communications branch).

**Table 9: Potential Operational KPIs**

Category	KPIs	Ways to Measure
Usage	Utilization - bookings	Calculate utilization rate of individual spaces (e.g., auditorium, workshops, etc.)
	Program registrants	# of City program registrants
	Program users per capita	# of City program registrants / population
	Rental users	# of external rental bookings
	Diversity of rental users	The variety of users renting space by category (e.g., commercial, charity, individual resident, etc.)
	"Drop-in"/Flexible Space Users	# of "drop-in"/flexible space users

Category	KPIs	Ways to Measure
	City administration space usage	# of space bookings for City programming and City use
	Diversity of programming offerings	# of programs and arts disciplines covered
Marketing and Outreach <i>(Having a unique Cultural Hub online presence may allow metrics to be more closely/accurately monitored than if they are part of City accounts).</i>	Campaigns and initiatives	# of campaigns and initiatives
	Participant perception of communications and marketing	In an annual survey to users/visitors, ask questions pertaining to levels of awareness and quality of communications with the Cultural Hub
	Social media engagement and awareness	Measure likes, followers, comments, shares, engagement with posts, impressions, reach, mentions, audience growth, etc.
	Website engagement	Google analytics measures
	Partnerships and variety of partnerships	# of partnerships and types of partners (e.g. community organizations, post-secondary institutions, arts/cultural organizations, etc.)

Category	KPIs	Ways to Measure
Quality and Satisfaction	User/Visitor Satisfaction with quality level events, programs, and services	In an annual survey to users/visitors, ask questions pertaining to their satisfaction with the Cultural Hub and its activities.
	User/Visitor interests and trends	In an annual survey to users/visitors, ask questions pertaining to what they would like to see at the Cultural Hub and future programming and events.
	Sector/Organizational/Business satisfaction	Survey or engage businesses or organizations that rent or use services and survey or engage potential business and/or organizations that could rent or use services at the Cultural Hub.
	Return visitors	# and % of returning users
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Demographics of users/visitors	Develop and implement through iteration self-identification systems to track demographics.
	Advisory board/committee diversity objectives Board representation Community registration and program participation by target groups	# of board or committee members from various sectors, across demographic groups

Category	KPIs	Ways to Measure
	Programming for equity-seeking groups	# of programs for equity-seeking groups
	Staff's understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion best practices	Training initiatives and policies in place for staff
Financial	Operating surplus/deficit meeting expectation	Match against revenue and expense budgets
	Growth	Year-to-year growth
	Sponsorships, other fund-raising initiatives	# and dollar value of sponsorships and advertising engagements
Operations/Governance	Achievement of strategic goals and actions	Measure how effective strategic goals or actions have been met
	Risk and mitigation	# of events that were identified as risks and became so, or identified with mitigation plans/processes to address them

## 8.4 Anticipated Challenges

The project team has identified some potential challenges that might be encountered in developing and operating a Cultural Hub. These challenges are informed by the research of other cultural hubs/arts centres, as well as community feedback and stakeholder consultation. These challenges are applicable to the governance models presented in Section 8.2.

### Drawing Residents and Users Downtown

- Although many think a Cultural Hub in a central location is ideal and view its development as an asset to the overall revitalization of the downtown, some residents and artists expressed safety concerns about going to downtown Oshawa to participate in cultural activities. Attracting some residents to take part in programming and services at the Hub may

be challenging, especially in its early development as actions to revive the downtown core are ongoing.

### **Combating the Perception of Overspending**

- In the Feedback Form, a small share of participants expressed negative sentiments that the City would spend funds on a Cultural Hub, not seeing the need or overall positive impacts it could have on the whole community. There may be some opposition throughout the process of redevelopment and transformation. A centre that is more community focused will be more resilient in facing any opposition along these lines.

### **Funding and Financing:**

- Cultural hubs in other jurisdictions cite lack of funds and investment as a perennial challenge. Under any governance model, funding to operate can have its challenges. Owners/operators of cultural hubs have indicated that raising capital, acquiring sponsors, and conducting philanthropic activities can be a challenge depending on economic climate, local appetite, and trends.

### **Combating the Notion of Universal Remedy**

- Throughout consultation, and in Feedback Form responses, there were some grand ideas shared about what services a Cultural Hub might provide and the issues it could remedy. Some champions for the development may have expectations that are not realistically attainable for a single facility. Such expectations may need to be managed appropriately through the development phases.

### **Allocating and Finding Instructors**

- Finding appropriate teachers and instructors has already been expressed as a challenge in operating the current A.R.C. and it may continue to be at a Cultural Hub. Cultural hubs and arts centres in other jurisdictions also struggle with finding qualified instructors and retaining staff. More effective partnerships with the arts community may ameliorate this problem.

### **Identity and Rebranding**

- When considering sponsorship and the sale of naming rights, it is worth considering other arts venues that have naming rights to improve brand recognition of this venue. For example, consider FirstOntario Credit Union holds naming rights to the FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton,



FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre (St. Catharines, ON), and FirstOntario Centre (Hamilton, ON). Meridian Credit Union holds the naming rights to the Meridian Arts Centre and Meridian Hall, both in Toronto. There is the potential for Oshawa's Cultural Hub to lack a unique identity if the City chooses to partner with a corporation or organization that has existing ties to other cultural spaces.

- Additionally, branding and establishing an identity could be hindered if the name of the space changes every 10-15 years with the introduction of new sponsors and the expiring of naming rights.

### **Managing Flexible Space or Hourly Rentals**

- Other hubs and centres cite flexible, or "drop-in" spaces are difficult to manage and maintain, because they require substantial physical and staff resources, and can be very time-consuming.<sup>37</sup>

### **Need for Revaluation of Existing Contracts at the A.R.C.**

- The future Cultural Hub will need to consider and reassess existing contracts with tenants at the A.R.C. to ensure space is used efficiently and equitably. Tenants occupying spaces on a permanent or semi-permanent basis should be aligned with the goals and mandate of the Cultural Hub.

### **Unforeseen Facility Issues in Adaptive Reuse**

- When working with existing buildings, especially those that have had various renovations over decades there is a possibility of unforeseen challenges during renovation.

### **Challenges with the Public Realm**

- A.R.C improvements may require significant site context, landscape architecture, and public realm changes to reconnect the building better visually to the surrounding built environment. The research into the history of the building reveals that the original surrounding context has been significantly modified: the relationship to the creek has been severed by the addition of multiple parking lots, and the original street frontage has been compromised. The success of the building as a

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<sup>37</sup> Artscape, "[Artscape Youngplace Case Study](#)," 2018

Cultural Hub is directly tied to the surrounding context and success of downtown Oshawa.

## 9. Conclusions and Next Steps

This Feasibility Study has resulted in a strong vision for a Cultural Hub but with many potential pathways to pursue implementation. The transformation of the A.R.C. will not simply be a renovation project. It will involve embarking on a journey to build a space that operates efficiently and addresses community needs. To further test the feasibility of the A.R.C. as a Cultural Hub the City may consider developing a pilot project as the next step. Such a pilot, if managed by the City, could aim to expand upon programming at the A.R.C and incorporate more activities and events at the current site. It could also assist in developing a business case for a Cultural Hub and help determine a future governance and operating model. This pilot project may act as an intermediate step between current operations and a future Cultural Hub.

Such a pilot would need to be careful in managing public expectations. If there is not a meaningful improvement in the A.R.C.'s operations, it could damage the potential community support for a more ambitious step.

There are many decisions to be made, however this study provides guidance for the City to draw upon.

The key takeaways from the study include:

- The A.R.C. is a suitable site and is equipped for transformation into a Cultural Hub in downtown Oshawa. However, it requires alterations and upgrades to the physical building and changes to its operations.
- The development of a Cultural Hub will not only address the deficiencies of the A.R.C. but will provide Oshawa's arts and cultural community with much needed space and services, satisfy demand for more cultural activities, help revitalize the downtown, and deliver social and economic benefits to a city with a growing, diverse population.
- There are many options in terms of programming and services that can be provided at a future Cultural Hub, however developing programming will be an ongoing process based on future findings and decisions made by the City.
- This study provides an overarching vision for a future Cultural Hub and guiding principles that can be applied to any design or operating model.

- The A.R.C. is an ideal candidate for adaptive reuse and this study provides three ways the building can be renovated and reconfigured to be more effective in providing space for programming and in meeting the community's needs. Section 5 provides three concepts to consider, while Appendix A includes estimated capital costs.
  - The Cultural Hub design and construction should follow recommendations in Section 6 (Design Guidelines and Principles), which include a focus on: Quality Space for Cultural Activities, Placemaking and Connectivity, Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability, Outdoor Space and Public Realm, and Accessibility and Inclusivity. These recommendations can be applied to any of the concepts selected.
- Each governance model presented in this report offers unique benefits and challenges that the City should consider when deciding the model that will best work for a future Cultural Hub. Regardless of the governance model chosen, the City should allow for key priorities such as affordability, flexibility in operations, and inclusivity to be integrated.
- Given the outlined considerations the redevelopment of the A.R.C. has the potential to generate momentum in developing a Cultural District or "Campus" in downtown Oshawa, where connections can be made across organizations and facilities with aligned goals in providing creative and cultural experiences.

## Appendix A. Capital Cost Assumptions

A Class D construction cost analysis has been prepared based on proposed recommendations, photos and conceptual schematic drawings provided by Giaimo Architecture. The Class D construction analysis provided is an opinion of probable cost only and is reflective of 2022 market figures and rates based on commercially reasonable conditions; revised budgets will therefore be needed before the construction is initiated. The intent of the Class D construction cost analysis is to support the feasibility study and provide a budget framework within which the project can be developed and managed. Assumptions were made for calculating quantities of work and have been noted in the report.

The construction cost analysis is subject to review, confirmation and/or amendments following revisions to the information stated and discussed. A range of unit rates and budgets have been prepared for each concept based on a list of project requirements and assumptions. As the project is early in the design development and programming stage the construction budget can be expected to have a variance of +/-20-30% as the design develops. Specifications on equipment, finishes and discovering unexpected site conditions with design development can impact the construction budget.

Commercially Reasonable Assumptions were made in calculating quantities of work. The rates used in the development of the Class D construction analysis are inclusive of subcontractor labour, materials, equipment, profit and overhead. Budgeted line items are reflective of our companies and consultant project experience. Each budgeted line item can be taken as a complete budget and is not reflective or dependent on other scopes of work in the breakdown. No subcontractor quotations have been solicited for the development of the Class D construction analysis. Construction contingencies and change directive/order contingencies have not been allowed for. The Class D construction analysis is reflective of 2022 market rates and does not include:

- Legal Fees and Expenses
- Design or Consultant Fees
- Land Acquisition or Realtor Fees
- Artwork
- Weather Conditions and Scheduling Impacts
- Construction Contingencies
- Allowance for LEED Building Certifications and/or Accreditations

- Owner Administration Expenses
- Emergency Generator and Temporary Power
- Moving Costs
- Temporary Facilities and General Conditions
- Removal of Hazardous or Contaminated Soils
- Storm Water Retention or Management
- Disposal of Fuel Oils and Hazardous Fluids
- Labour and Material Escalation and Premiums

A range of unit rates and budgets have been prepared for each concept based on a list of project requirements and assumptions. As the design develops, specifications on equipment, finishes and unexpected site conditions may impact on the construction budget. These construction costs do not include legal fees, design or consultant fees, or any other fees required as part of the design and implementation process.

The following chart provides a summary of the key differences between the three options.

**Table 10: Concept Size and Construction Cost Comparison**

	<b>Total Square Feet</b>	<b>Construction Cost Range</b>	<b>Price Per Square Foot Range</b>
<b>Concept 1</b>	12,000	\$4,113,000-\$5,140,000	\$342.75-\$428.33
<b>Concept 2</b>	15,000	\$5,246,000-\$6,556,000	\$349.73-\$437.07
<b>Concept 3</b>	25,000	\$8,899,000-\$11,125,000	\$355.96-\$445.00

The three tables below provide the detailed construction cost estimates.

**Table 11: Construction Cost, Concept 1**

Construction Assembly			Estimated Construction Cost			
			Concept 1 12,000 Sq.ft			
			Upper Range		Lower Range	
			Subtotal	Unit Cost/S F GFA	Subtotal	Unit Cost/S F GFA
A	SUBSTRUCTURE	A10 - FOUNDATIONS	\$210,000	\$17.50	\$168,000	\$14.00
		A20 - BASEMENT CONSTRUCTION	\$31,000	\$2.58	\$25,000	\$2.08
B	SHELL	B10 - SUPERSTRUCTURE	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		B20 - EXTERIOR CLOSURE	\$512,000	\$42.67	\$410,000	\$34.17
		B30 - ROOFING	\$231,000	\$19.25	\$185,000	\$15.42
C	INTERIORS	C10 - INTERIOR CONSTRUCTION	\$335,000	\$27.92	\$268,000	\$22.33
		C20 - STAIRCASES	\$116,000	\$9.67	\$93,000	\$7.75
		C30 - INTERIOR FINISHES	\$369,000	\$30.75	\$295,000	\$24.58
D	SERVICES	D10 - CONVEYING SYSTEMS	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		D20 - PLUMBING	\$199,000	\$16.58	\$159,000	\$13.25
		D30 - HVAC	\$401,000	\$33.42	\$321,000	\$26.75
		D40 - FIRE PROTECTION	\$144,000	\$12.00	\$115,000	\$9.58
		D50 - ELECTRICAL	\$471,000	\$39.25	\$377,000	\$31.42

E	EQUIPMENT & FURNISHINGS	E10 - EQUIPMENT	\$452,000	\$37.67	\$362,000	\$30.17	
		E20 - FURNISHINGS	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00	
F	SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION	F10 - SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION	\$221,000	\$18.42	\$177,000	\$14.75	
		F20 - SELECTIVE BUILDING DEMOLITION	\$198,000	\$16.50	\$158,000	\$13.17	
G	BUILDING SITE WORK	G10 - SITE PREPARATION	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00	
		G20 - SITE IMPROVEMENTS	\$221,000	\$18.42	\$177,000	\$14.75	
		G30 - SITE CIVIL / MECHANICAL UTILITIES	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00	
		G40 - ELECTRICAL UTILITIES	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00	
		G90 - OTHER SITE CONSTRUCTION	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00	
Z	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS & ALLOWANCES				\$0	\$0.00	
		Z1	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS & FEE	\$213,000	\$17.75	\$170,000	\$14.17
		Z2	ALLOWANCES	\$816,000	\$68.00	\$653,000	\$54.42
		<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:</b>	<b>\$5,140,000</b>	<b>\$428.33</b>	<b>\$4,113,000</b>	<b>\$342.75</b>	

**Table 12: Construction Cost Concept 2**

Construction Assembly			Estimated Construction Cost			
			Concept 2 15,000 Sq.ft			
			Upper Range		Lower Range	
			Subtotal	Unit Cost/S F GFA	Subtotal	Unit Cost/S F GFA
A	SUBSTRUCTURE	A10 - FOUNDATIONS	\$166,000	\$11.07	\$133,000	\$8.87
		A20 - BASEMENT CONSTRUCTION	\$107,000	\$7.13	\$86,000	\$5.73
B	SHELL	B10 - SUPERSTRUCTURE	\$347,000	\$23.13	\$278,000	\$18.53
		B20 - EXTERIOR CLOSURE	\$564,000	\$37.60	\$451,000	\$30.07
		B30 - ROOFING	\$361,000	\$24.07	\$289,000	\$19.27
C	INTERIORS	C10 - INTERIOR CONSTRUCTION	\$393,000	\$26.20	\$314,000	\$20.93
		C20 - STAIRCASES	\$116,000	\$7.73	\$93,000	\$6.20
		C30 - INTERIOR FINISHES	\$493,000	\$32.87	\$394,000	\$26.27
D	SERVICES	D10 - CONVEYING SYSTEMS	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		D20 - PLUMBING	\$211,000	\$14.07	\$169,000	\$11.27
		D30 - HVAC	\$501,000	\$33.40	\$401,000	\$26.73
		D40 - FIRE PROTECTION	\$183,000	\$12.20	\$146,000	\$9.73
		D50 - ELECTRICAL	\$632,000	\$42.13	\$506,000	\$33.73



E	EQUIPMENT & FURNISHINGS	E10 - EQUIPMENT	\$452,000	\$30.13	\$362,000	\$24.13
		E20 - FURNISHINGS	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
F	SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION	F10 - SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION	\$244,000	\$16.27	\$195,000	\$13.00
		F20 - SELECTIVE BUILDING DEMOLITION	\$198,000	\$13.20	\$158,000	\$10.53
G	BUILDING SITE WORK	G10 - SITE PREPARATION	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		G20 - SITE IMPROVEMENTS	\$126,000	\$8.40	\$101,000	\$6.73
		G30 - SITE CIVIL / MECHANICAL UTILITIES	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		G40 - ELECTRICAL UTILITIES	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		G90 - OTHER SITE CONSTRUCTION	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		Z	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS & ALLOWANCES			\$0
	Z1	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS & FEE	\$280,000	\$18.67	\$224,000	\$14.93
	Z2	ALLOWANCES	\$1,182,000	\$78.80	\$946,000	\$63.07

		<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:</b>	<b>\$6,556,0 00</b>	<b>\$437. 07</b>	<b>\$5,246,0 00</b>	<b>\$349. 73</b>
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**Table 13: Construction Costs Concept 3**

Construction Assembly			Estimated Construction Cost			
			Concept 3 25,000 Sq.ft			
			Upper Range		Lower Range	
			Subtotal	Unit Cost/ SF GFA	Subtotal	Unit Cost/ SF GFA
A	SUBSTRUCTURE	A10 - FOUNDATIONS	\$358,000	\$14.32	\$286,000	\$11.44
		A20 - BASEMENT CONSTRUCTION	\$192,000	\$7.68	\$154,000	\$6.16
B	SHELL	B10 - SUPERSTRUCTURE	\$1,720,000	\$68.80	\$1,376,000	\$55.04
		B20 - EXTERIOR CLOSURE	\$1,161,000	\$46.44	\$929,000	\$37.16
		B30 - ROOFING	\$438,000	\$17.52	\$350,000	\$14.00
C	INTERIORS	C10 - INTERIOR CONSTRUCTION	\$466,000	\$18.64	\$373,000	\$14.92
		C20 - STAIRCASES	\$83,000	\$3.32	\$66,000	\$2.64
		C30 - INTERIOR FINISHES	\$656,000	\$26.24	\$525,000	\$21.00
D	SERVICES	D10 - CONVEYING SYSTEMS	\$260,000	\$10.40	\$208,000	\$8.32
		D20 - PLUMBING	\$218,000	\$8.72	\$174,000	\$6.96
		D30 - HVAC	\$835,000	\$33.40	\$668,000	\$26.72
		D40 - FIRE PROTECTION	\$280,000	\$11.20	\$224,000	\$8.96
		D50 - ELECTRICAL	\$895,000	\$35.80	\$716,000	\$28.64

E	EQUIPMENT & FURNISHINGS	E10 - EQUIPMENT	\$514,000	\$20.56	\$411,000	\$16.44
		E20 - FURNISHINGS	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
F	SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION	F10 - SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION	\$244,000	\$9.76	\$195,000	\$7.80
		F20 - SELECTIVE BUILDING DEMOLITION	\$209,000	\$8.36	\$167,000	\$6.68
G	BUILDING SITE WORK	G10 - SITE PREPARATION	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		G20 - SITE IMPROVEMENTS	\$126,000	\$5.04	\$101,000	\$4.04
		G30 - SITE CIVIL / MECHANICAL UTILITIES	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		G40 - ELECTRICAL UTILITIES	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		G90 - OTHER SITE CONSTRUCTION	\$0	\$0.00	\$0	\$0.00
		Z	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS & ALLOWANCES			\$0
	Z1	GENERAL REQUIREMENTS & FEE	\$473,000	\$18.92	\$378,000	\$15.12
	Z2	ALLOWANCES	\$1,997,000	\$79.88	\$1,598,000	\$63.92

		<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:</b>	<b>\$11,125,0 00</b>	<b>\$445. 00</b>	<b>\$8,899,0 00</b>	<b>\$355. 96</b>
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## Appendix B. A.R.C. Assessment Report



**Giaimo**  **Nordicity**

# ARTS RESOURCE CENTRE DESIGN ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **Cultural Hub Feasibility Study**

45 Queen St, Oshawa, ON

Prepared for: City of Oshawa as part of the  
Cultural Hub Feasibility Study

Prepared by: Nordicity and Giaimo

Date: 29 November 2022

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# 1 - INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Arts Resource Centre (A.R.C.) Assessment has been prepared by Nordicity and Giaimo for the City of Oshawa as part of the City's Cultural Hub Feasibility Study. The report focuses on the existing A.R.C. located at 45 Queen St. and provides a high-level overview of the history of the building with archival research, a summary of the current conditions, and observations on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges from a facility and operations perspective. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges considered in this assessment are primarily based on a preliminary site visit in February 2022, usage and utilization information provided by the City of Oshawa, and consultation with the Cultural Leadership Council (CLC) and Public Art Task Force (PATF).

## 1.2 PROJECT SUMMARY

Nordicity and Giaimo have been retained by the City of Oshawa to conduct a Feasibility Study which would address the possibility of converting the A.R.C. into a cultural hub. The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to assess the existing A.R.C. to evaluate current operations (e.g. program and facility), recommend a new operating model (including program delivery and function), facility and building enhancements including design concepts, drawings, and directions, as well as costs associated to recommendations and implementation.



Fig. 1.1. A.R.C. Building

Photo taken on Location, February 02, 2022



## 2 - BUILDING HISTORY

### 2.1 HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Arts Resource Centre (A.R.C), currently located at 45 Queen St., was originally constructed in 1952 as the Athol Street police station. It served as a building for the Oshawa police and as a courtroom. The building was used for this initial purpose until the year 1972 when it was re-purposed by social service groups. During this time spaces within the building began to be modified to serve as artist studios and the building was renamed to the

Oshawa Arts Resource Centre. Throughout its time as the A.R.C., the building has been modified to accommodate the various needs of the Oshawa arts community. The most notable transformations occurred to the building in 1986 with the support of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation and the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture as well as the City of Oshawa. This transformation included modifications to the windows and façade, as well as various accessibility upgrades including the rearrangement of the main entry to accommodate a new ramp and elevator.



Fig. 2.1. 1968 Aerial View of A.R.C.

H. Oakman. "Aerial View City Hall" 1968. Oshawa Public Libraries; McLaughlin Branch 65 Bagot Street, Oshawa Public Libraries, Local History Collection. Annotated by Gaiimo.

## 2.2 ORIGINAL DESIGN INTENT

The original building was composed of three defining materials and volumes: concrete, glass, and masonry brick. These materials are used to break up and define elements of the building. Glass is used at the entrance of the building through the creation of a large light-filled lobby space placed on the most prominent corner of the building. With the original lot on the corner of Queen Street and Athol Street, the entrance lobby was prominent from both streets. The curtain wall windows of the lobby were broken into segments carefully spaced to complement the strong horizontal datum lines of banded windows of the two street elevations. The large

windows and openness of the entrance signifies a public-facing and civic-oriented space. The banded windows on the Queen and Athol Street Elevations were placed in a varying pattern with alternation between top and bottom operable openings. This playful expression brings attention to the windows and is a unique and defining characteristic of the elevations.

Concrete is used on the elevations to define the massing of pragmatic blocks of the building. On the Queen Street elevation, concrete is used to signify the large volume of the interior courtroom. The prominent size of the courtroom expressed on the elevation is softened through the rounding of the exterior corners. Rounding the corners creates a sculptural quality to the space while harnessing the plastic quality of the material. The Athol Street elevation



**Fig. 2.2. A.R.C. Building Original Condition**

Durham Regional Police "Athol Street Police Station" ca. 1960. PHOTO GPC B-008 000501; Oshawa Public Libraries, Local History Collection.

used a concrete frame to define the block of administrative offices. While both uses of concrete are unique and differentiated from each other the two work together in a complimentary manner.

Brick is used on the elevations as an infill contrasting the concrete to help further express these volumes. On the Athol Street elevation brick is used under the banded windows recessed in from the defining concrete frame. On the Queen Street elevation brick is used similarly under the banded windows, but also for the retaining wall. The contrast of the brick on this elevation expresses the mass of the concrete courtroom floating above, while the lower brick extends outwardly into the site as a retaining wall, breaking down the distinction between the building and site.

## 2.3 CHRONOLOGY OF MODIFICATIONS

### 1952

The Athol Street police station opened in September of 1952. The building was designed in a modernist style with distinguishing elements such as large banded windows, a curtain wall entrance atrium, and curved concrete volumetric expressions of internal programmatic spaces. Each of these elements were used to create an asymmetric but balanced composition typical of this period of architecture. The program of the building included a courtroom, holding cells, and administrative offices. The original building was located on a corner lot where the previous

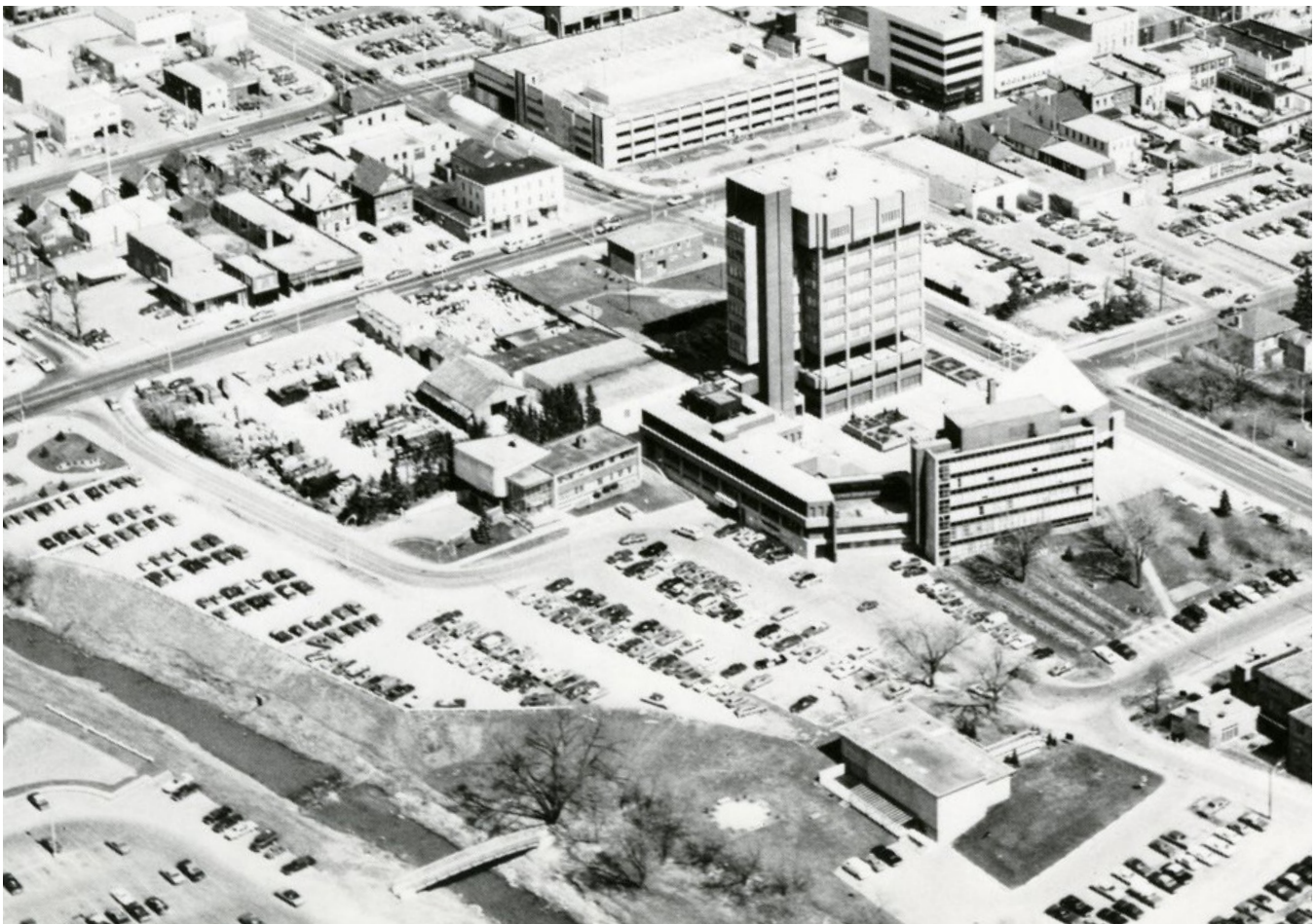


Fig. 2.3. 1970 Aerial View of A.R.C.

Unknown "Oshawa Business District" ca. 1970. PHOTO GPC B-004 000213; Oshawa Public Libraries, Local History Collection. Annotated by Giaimo.

configuration of Athol Street extended down towards Oshawa Creek. On the south facing side of the building windows faced out onto the street with an open glass atrium on the south west where the main entrance is located. On the west the building was stepped back with an area sunken by one-storey for parking and service vehicles, creating a prominent corner elevation.

## 1986

The 1986 modifications by David A.G. Mills Associates Limited Architect included the addition of an elevator in the main entrance atrium, as well as a new washroom core and an accessibility ramp. Alterations were made to the original interior layout, as well as the exterior design, to accommodate the introduction of these elements. The new ramp involved removing the existing stairs and raised planter boxes, altering the relationship between the entrance and street level. On the south facade windows were blocked up in the areas of the new washrooms. From the exterior, the facade was clad over with metal siding, blocking a significant portion of the original designed banded windows. Similarly, at the entrance the original atrium interior space was reduced and the exterior curtain wall was partially clad over with metal siding to accommodate the new elevator. It is also speculated that during this time that windows of the second floor auditorium and offices on the north side of the building were blocked off.

## 2000s

In addition to the significant changes that were made to the building in 1986, a series of incremental changes have been made to the exterior and interior over the last three decades. Most notably, the sculptural concrete entrance canopy has been clad over in light gauge steel to match the metal cladding on the elevator and at the washroom core. The original curtain wall has been replaced with brown anodized aluminum and tinted glazing units. Areas underneath the window and the retaining wall that had previously been brick have been parged over. At the entrance ramp the teared planters were removed further accentuating the separation between street level and the first floor.

A.R.C. Design Assessment Report



a. Entrance ca.1970



b. Entrance ca.1986



c. Entrance ca. 2020

Fig. 2.4. Entrance Conditions of A.R.C.

a. Archive photo, circa 1970s, Doors Open Oshawa

b. Photo taken of hard copy on Location, February 02, 2022

c. ARC Building, <https://www.durhamshoestring.org/>

## 2.4 PUBLIC REALM & SITE MODIFICATIONS

Since the original construction of the building in 1952, significant modifications have been made to the surrounding context and public realm.

Most notable of these was the removal of Athol Street which previously extended to the Oshawa Creek. The removal of the street coincided with the construction of City Hall in 1970. City Hall was placed over the location of the street, blocking off the previous connection of the A.R.C. building to the east side of the city. This modification significantly impacted the building, changing its approach and relationship to the street. The building had been designed to be

entered from Athol street with its main entrance located on this side (see Fig. 2.1.). With the removal of Athol Street, the entrance is now secluded and facing a service entry parking lot for City Hall. What was a previous thoroughfare has been replaced by parking and cul-de-sacs making the access disjointed from the city fabric. Additionally, the connection between the site and the creek has been severed by the addition of new parking lots in recent decades.

The growth and evolution of downtown Oshawa has included a number of large cultural and civic assets, such as the Robert McLaughlin Gallery across from the Oshawa Public Library, and the expanded City Hall, located within close proximity of the A.R.C.



Fig. 2.5. Downtown Oshawa Satellite View of A.R.C.

Google Earth "Latitude: 43.90012, Longitude: -78.84957" ca. 2022. Annotated by Giaimo.

# 3 - EXISTING CONDITIONS

## 3.1 OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

The A.R.C. is where much of the City of Oshawa's art programming takes place. It has unique features such as a pottery kiln room and a theatre-auditorium. The A.R.C. offers a wide variety of rental space that is suitable for any type of meeting, seminar(s), workshop(s), or special event(s).

### Registrant Stats <sup>1</sup>

- 81% of program registrants live in Oshawa.
- 17% of program registrants live in Clarington and Whitby.
- 2% of program registrants live in Scugog and "Other" municipalities.

### Revenue <sup>2</sup>

This is due to an increase/decrease in booking hours:

- 2018 – A.R.C. achieved its highest revenue (\$29k+)
- 2019 – A.R.C. achieved its lowest revenue (\$20k+)

### Booking Hours <sup>3</sup>

- The City of Oshawa is the highest user of the A.R.C. (82%).
- Various community organizations have a lower rate of use

### Seasonal Program Revenue <sup>4</sup>

Seasonal program engagement (in order of revenue generation):

- Summer (\$221k+)
- Winter (\$69k+)
- Fall (\$50k+)
- Spring (\$46k+)

<sup>1</sup> A.R.C. Facility Utilization document – 2015 to 2019

<sup>2</sup> A.R.C. Facility Utilization document – 2015 to 2019

<sup>3</sup> A.R.C. Facility Utilization document – 2015 to 2019

<sup>4</sup> A.R.C. Facility Utilization document – 2015 to 2019

## 3.2 BUILDING OBSERVATIONS

The A.R.C. facility includes approximately 11,500sq.ft. of space across two storeys and a basement (3 levels total).

### Exterior Entrance and Approach

The A.R.C. entrance is on the south side of the building, directly facing the service area parking lot of Oshawa's City Hall. There are multiple ways to approach the A.R.C. building entrance, though no one clear approach is indicated by the surrounding context, public realm design, or wayfinding. When approaching the A.R.C. from the north on Queen St., the most prominent site feature is the A.R.C.'s sunken parking and service area bounded by two retaining walls on the south and north sides, while the entrance door is then found tucked around the southwest corner of this. On this first approach it is not until a visitor has turned the corner that they see any signifier of an entrance. Another approach option is from the City Hall parking lot to the south, which then connects to the rest of Queen St. further south. Nearby cultural facilities are all within a short walking distance of the A.R.C., however travelling from or to them involves walking through the parking lot.

On the exterior, efforts have been made to increase the visibility of the entrance and frontage facade; graphic signage has been placed over the remaining portion of the glazed atrium. While these efforts increase frontage presence and branding for the A.R.C., they also reduce interior natural lighting by blocking windows. The signage and lighting are further limited given the dominance of the elevator core which has been placed in the most prominent corner on the exterior of the building. From the west approach the elevator core overshadows the signage.

Various modifications have been made to the building entrance since originally designed (Section 2.2). As a result, the current natural grading of the site and the main entrance has been further separated and the visual connection between the entrance and street-level is limited.



a. View of exterior entrance and signage



b. View of adjacent service space for City Hall

Fig. 3.1. Exterior Conditions of A.R.C.

a. Photo taken on Location, February 02, 2022

b. Photo taken on Location, February 02, 2022

## Ground Floor

### Interior Entrance

The main entrance of the building opens to a very small public atrium lobby space. Large curtain wall windows oriented on the west receive good natural day lighting. Currently, an office is located adjacent to the entrance with a ticket booth style window which can serve for administrative purposes.

The circulation points stemming from the entrance lobby are sized minimally and the layout of corridors lack wayfinding. The main stair in its positioning, openness, and size is inherently public feeling, though it only provides access to the upper floor of the building. There is no stair access to the lower floor from the entrance lobby. Without prior understanding of the building or being provided direction, it is not obvious or intuitive how to further access any spaces within the building from this main point of entrance.

### Studios

The layout of the ground floor provides three arts studio spaces. Each studio has been placed in proximity to a building elevation with varying levels of natural day lighting. The smallest studio space located on the northeast corner of the building has the poorest quality of natural light. The column placement, as well as the location of radiators, are the same in this studio as they are in other areas of the building where much larger windows are located. Given this placement, it can be assumed that the original windows have been fully and partially blocked in certain locations. The two larger studios still have their original window openings intact and ample natural day lighting.

No distinct connection between the public areas on the ground floor and the studio spaces are made, making the spaces less suitable for use as areas for exhibitions or public gatherings. The general utility of the spaces does not cater to the specific needs of arts groups. As such,

these versatile spaces are equipped with a small counter space with a sink and cupboards. something like: There is limited storage space provided; tables and chairs used for rentals are stored in meeting rooms. Additionally, small freestanding lockers and drawer organizers are used for storage. Since the studios on the upper and lower floors provide space for the more specific needs of theatre and pottery there may be some benefit to leaving the ground floor spaces flexible.

### Circulation and Utility Spaces

The circulation throughout the entire building is generally narrow, has an inefficient layout, and lack wayfinding, resulting in a poor and disorienting user experience within the building. On the ground floor, paths of travel are convoluted with multiple indirect passages and limited sight lines. Minimal widths of hallways and entryways make the circulation of groups of people difficult.

The washrooms have been placed in a prominent location near the core atrium against the south elevation of the building. They have been integrated as a core so that they are placed in the same location on all three floors. This core has no windows and blocks a substantial portion of the original designed banned windows, reducing access to natural light within the building on the ground and second floor.

## Second Floor

### Circulation

A single corridor has been placed centrally with stairs on either end. At the top landing of the elevator and main stair there is a public lobby which acts as an overflow space for the auditorium. Only two of the three staircases in the building access up to the third floor making wayfinding unintuitive from the lower levels. Although the double loaded corridor serves the utility and administration rooms on this floor well, the current configuration takes up a significant



portion of the floorplan. With the minimal width of the corridor, the primary function is circulation. Using the corridor as is for more publicly programed space (e.g., art exhibitions, etc.) would be challenging.

### **Auditorium Space**

The auditorium space is a very successful adaption of the previous courtroom from the original building. The space is currently setup as a black box theatre with fixed amphitheater bleacher seating paired with stackable chairs. The flexibility of its seating allows for versatility in the size and type of performances put on in the space. There is indication on the exterior that the original design had windows places on the northern wall of the room. While the limited daylight in this room works well for the theatre performances, use of the room for general talks or gatherings would benefit from the enhancement natural light windows could bring to the space. The introduction of windows could be paired with blackout shutters accommodating the needs of the black box theatre. Given the apparent size of the room it is recommended that the existing exiting capacity is studied to ensure compliance with the Ontario Building Code.

### **Administrative Offices**

The second floor is where most administrative offices are located in the building. Similarly to the studio space on ground floor of the building, the placement of the existing radiators and columns pulled back from the wall indicate that the original design had larger window openings in this space. The introduction of windows back into these spaces for this reason would too be a feasible option. These administrative offices are paired with the most public room in the building the auditorium. One consideration is to re-locate some or all of these administrative spaces elsewhere in the building to allow for more public spaces or studios near the auditorium.

## **Lower Floor**

### **Circulation**

Similarly to the second floor of the building, the lower floor can only be accessed from two of three staircases, neither of which are near the elevator. As a result of this, overall building circulation between levels is indirect and cannot be navigated intuitively. A significant portion of this floor is used for corridors. These corridors cut through the level creating left over spaces, many of which are only suitable for storage and closets. It is most likely that this level was the location of the holding cells for the courtroom and police station and was designed with that purpose in mind. The utility spaces on this floor are used for the building's mechanical services. The current locations of these utility spaces are appropriate. If there were to be modifications or relocations of these spaces it would be a significant undertaking.

### **Workshop and Studios**

The lower floor of the building has three studio spaces, each of which are setup for different purposes. The largest of the rooms is the workshop space, which is currently being used for storage. The workshop is well situated in the building with access to outside exterior grade through a large service door. There is opportunity to create a stronger relationship between the interior and exterior of the building both visually and programmatically. The current use of the space is underutilizing these opportunities, including using this proximity to bring more natural light into the lower level. The pottery studio is currently broken into two rooms with a large studio space and a kiln room. The pottery studio space is the only studio in the building that has no access to natural light. The kiln room is located adjacent to the workshop in one of the few locations on the lower floor that has potential for direct access to the outside exterior at grade. The kiln room does not require this proximity to grade and would be best

relocated somewhere else in the building; it's relocation should be considered alongside any relocation of the pottery studio. In its current location the kiln is limiting opportunities for other activities to take place that will more effectively utilize this at grade space. The third studio space is used currently as a children's space. Similarly to the ground level studios the space itself is setup with now highly specific function and is flexible in use. This studio has several light wells with large window wells allowing for a significant amount of light considering it is below grade. All three of the studios on the lower level are difficult to navigate from the main level.

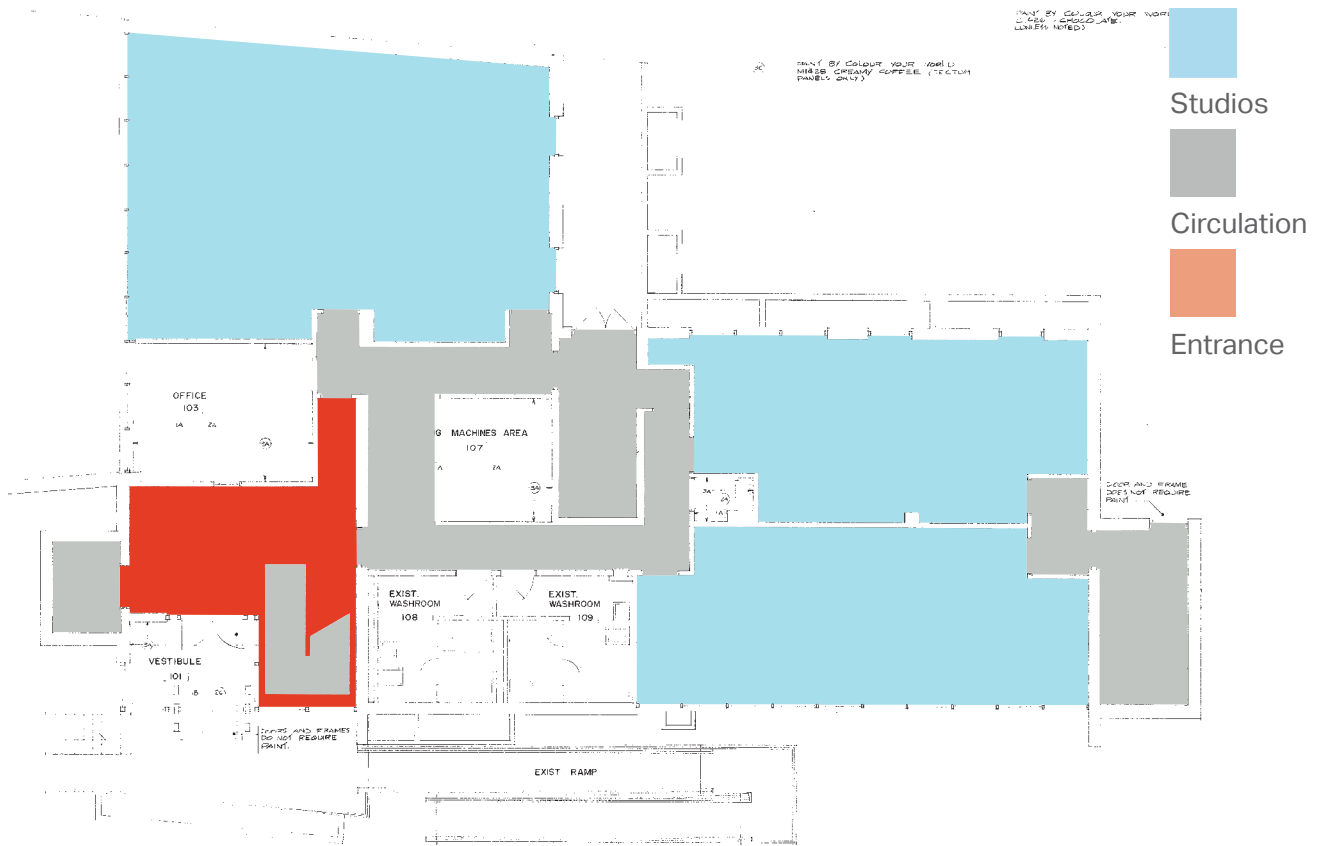


Fig. 3.2. Graphic Overlay of Ground Floor Plan

Image created by Giaimo Architects

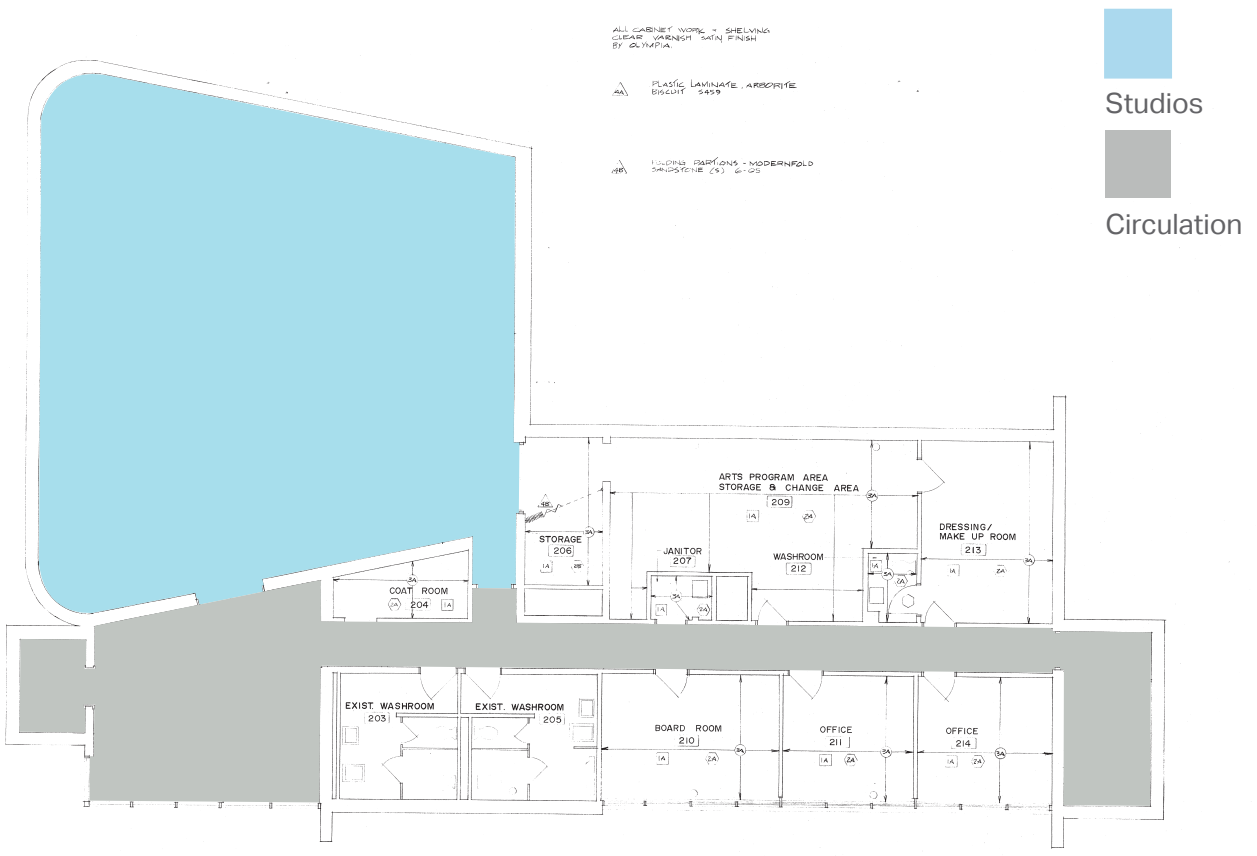


Fig. 3.3. Graphic Overlay of Second Floor Plan

Image created by Giaino Architects

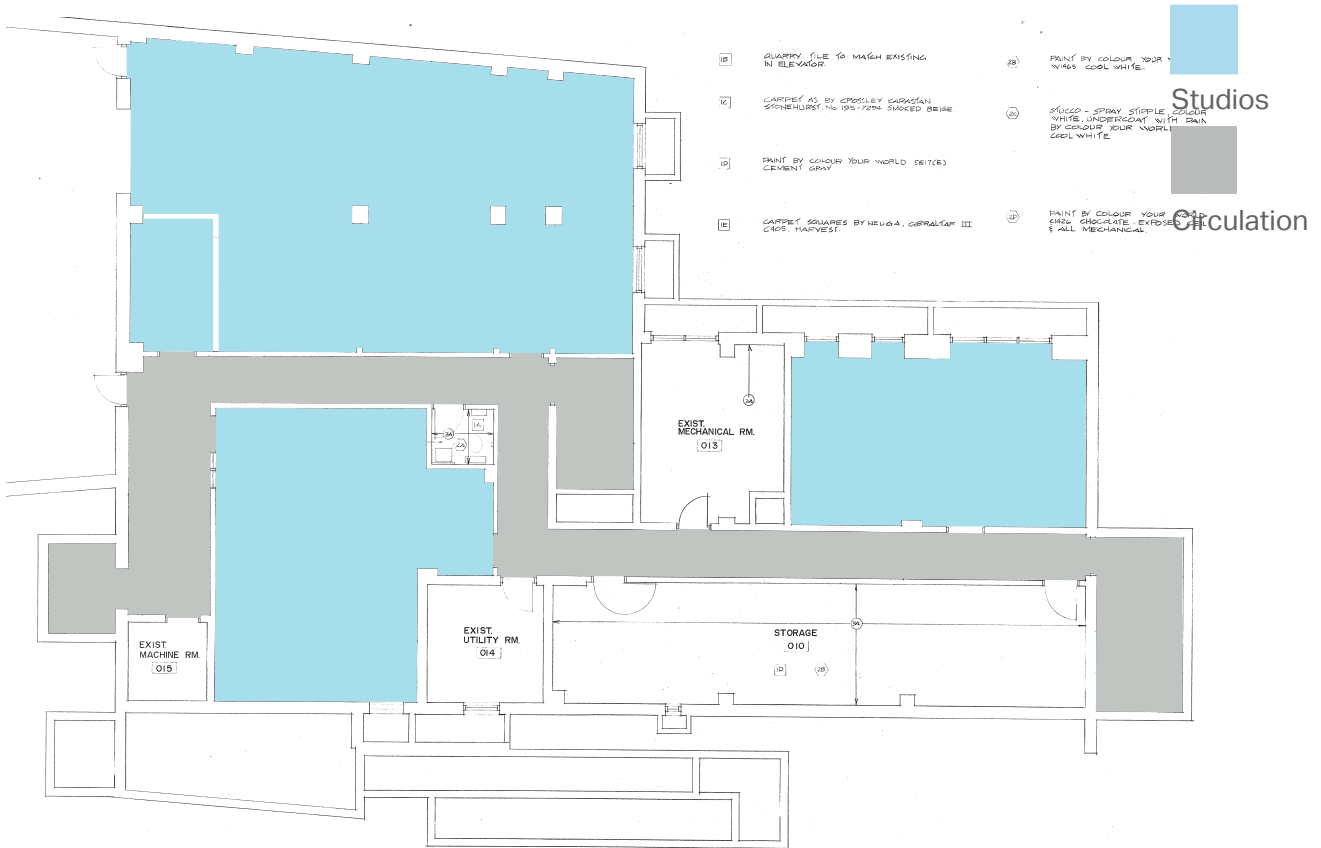


Fig. 3.4. Graphic Overlay of Basement Plan

Image created by Giaimo Architects

### 3.3 ACCESSIBILITY

The current facility has some accessible features, including a ramp which was renovated between 2012-2016, an elevator, and an accessible parking spot. However, given that it is an existing older building, it is possible that the building is not compliant with current AODA and Building Code requirements. An Accessibility Audit would be required to understand the current accessibility compliance of the facility and determine what upgrades need to be made if a renovation is pursued. Upon brief inspection of the current plans of A.R.C. it is recommended that the following be investigated:

- Exterior Ramp
- Elevator
- Interior Corridors and Doors
- Interior Washrooms

### 3.4 INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

#### **Parking Access**

One accessible parking spot is located directly in front of the A.R.C. entrance. There is also a Queen St. round-about in front of the A.R.C. entrance that allows for quick drop-off and pick-ups.

A variety of paid parking lots are near the A.R.C., including one off Queen Street to the west. There is a pay lot next to The Robert McLaughlin Gallery and across from the Oshawa Public Library, as well as off Bagot Street. On-street paid parking is also available downtown, the City of Oshawa provides a convenient option for paying parking; HonkMobile can be used for all on-street and surface lot parking payments. Additional parking can be found in the paid parking garage off King Street W.

While there is a parking lot directly in front of the A.R.C. on the south side, it is not public, it is used for City Hall staff.

#### **Bus Stops**

There are a number of nearby bus stops, making the A.R.C. accessible via public transit:

900 Bond Street West and Arena Street

901 King Street West and Centre Street

902 Westbound off Bond Street West and Arena Street and Eastbound King Street West and Midtown Drive.

#### **Bicycle Access**

There is a bicycle rack located directly in front of the A.R.C. entrance with 9 posts available. The Joseph-Kolodize Oshawa Creek Bike Path runs directly to the west of the building.



Fig. 3.5. Parking Locations near 45 Queen St

Google Earth "Latitude: 43.90012, Longitude: -78.84957" ca. 2022. Annotated by Giaino.

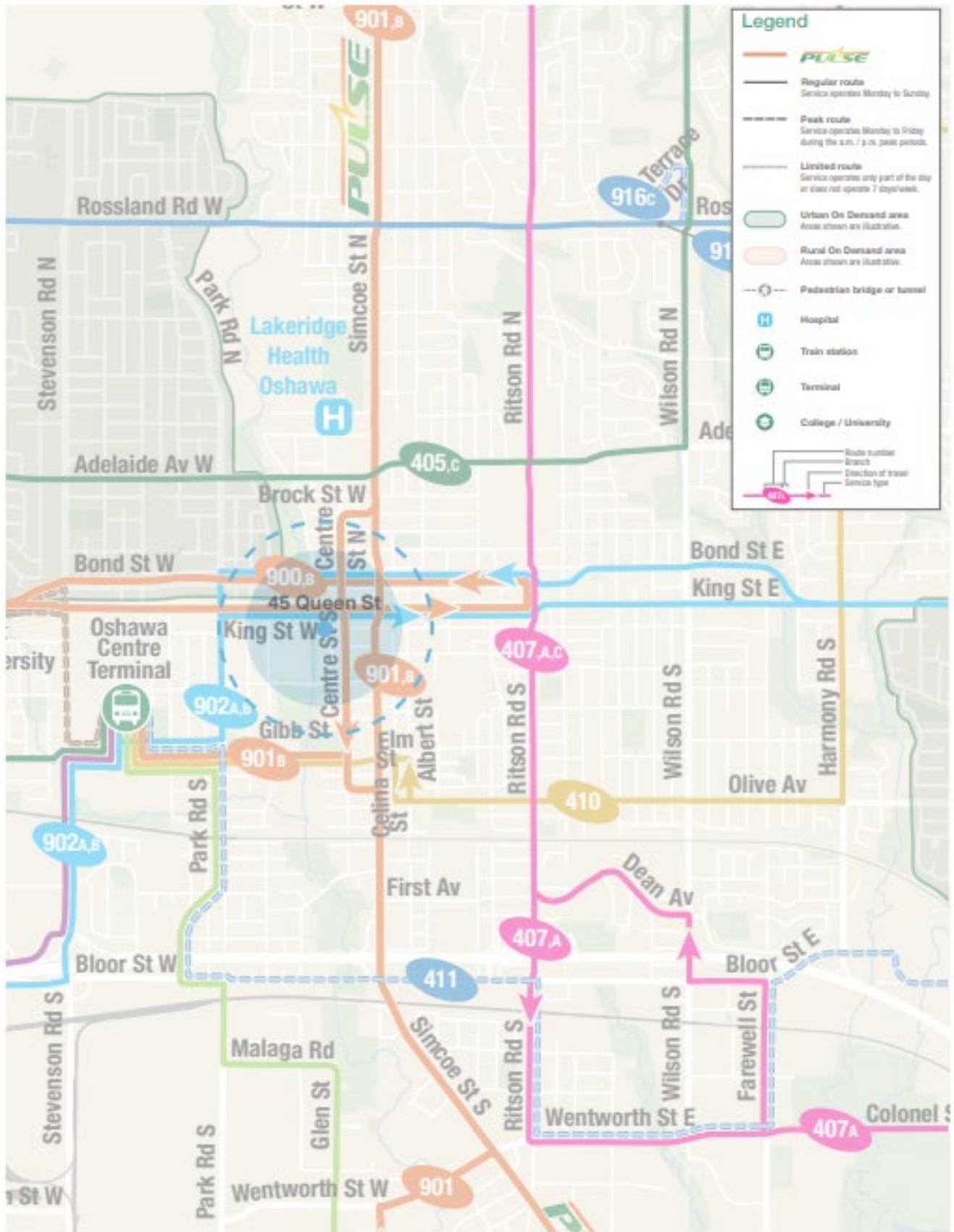


Fig. 3.6. Closeup of South Durham Region Transit Map  
Annotated by Giaino.

# 4 - A.R.C.'S FUTURE AS A CULTURAL HUB

## 4.1 STRENGTHS

### Prime Location

The A.R.C. is positioned within a unique Creative/Cultural "Campus":

- Located in Oshawa's downtown, close to shops, restaurants, and cafes
- In very close proximity to the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, the Oshawa Public Library (McLaughlin Branch), Oshawa City Hall, and numerous post-secondary institutional buildings (Ontario Tech).

The location within downtown Oshawa is an asset because the A.R.C. will benefit from the revitalization efforts that stem from several City plans, including:

- Downtown Oshawa Plan 20Twenty
- City of Oshawa Public Art Master Plan
- The A.R.C. is in close proximity to natural elements, such as bike paths, trails, the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens, and the Oshawa Creek

The site is accessible by multiple modes of transportation, including public transportation, active transportation, and driving.

Given the site's evolution and context, the A.R.C. has both cultural and historic value.

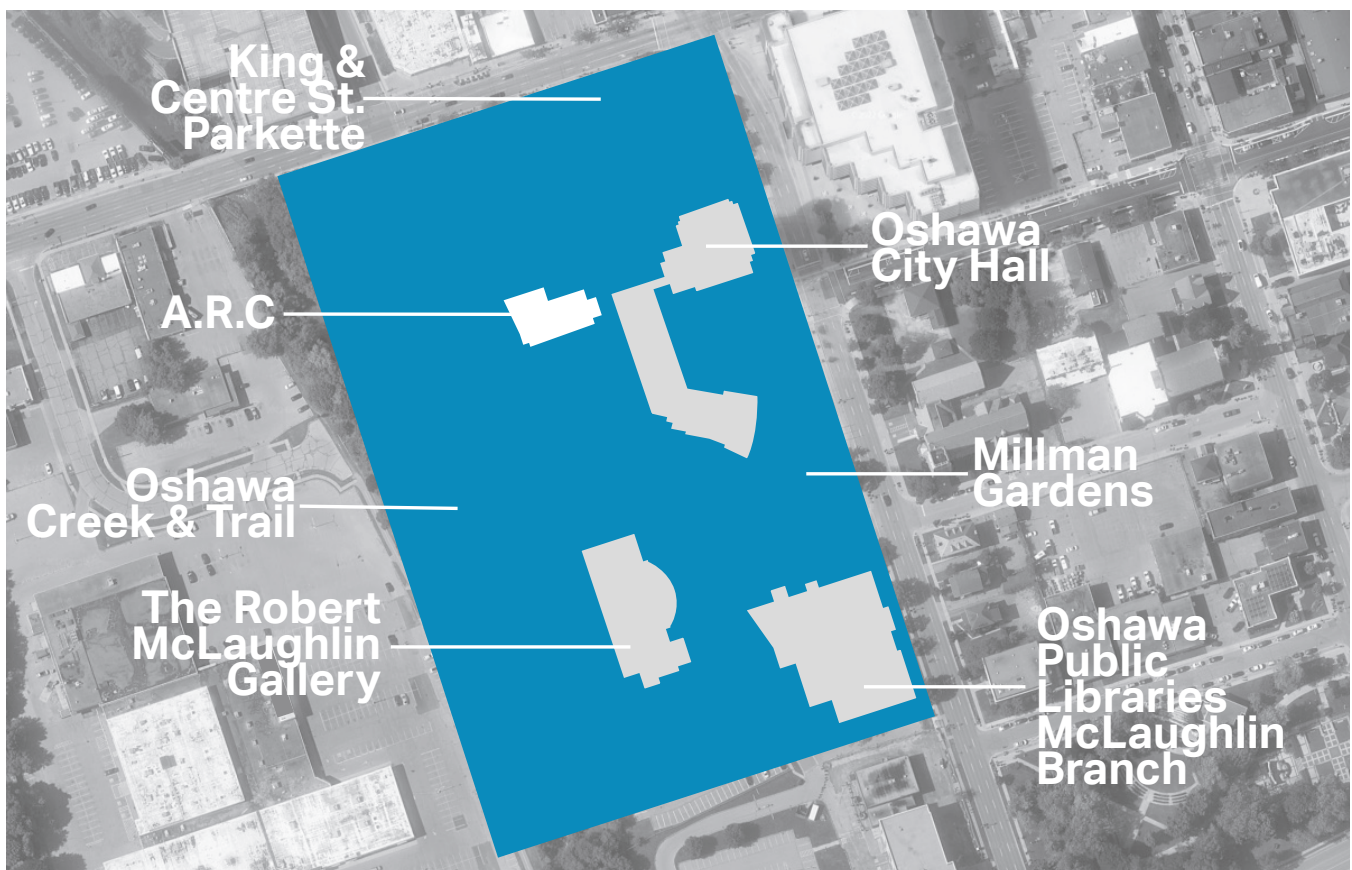


Fig. 4.1. Downtown Oshawa Satellite View of ARC  
Google Earth "Latitude: 43.90012, Longitude: -78.84957" ca. 2022. Annotated by Giaimo.



### **Existing Building**

The existing building is in general good condition; it has already been through the process of transformation and adaptive re-use once and can again accommodate transformation while leveraging the existing infrastructure.

Additionally, a number of major accessibility upgrades have already been completed in the 1980s.

### **Community Asset**

Consultation with the CLC and PATF indicated that the A.R.C. is unique, in that it is the only or its type in Oshawa, and it is a recognized asset for the community.

Based on consultation with stakeholders, the A.R.C. is known for its accessible programming, especially programs geared towards children.

The A.R.C. provides a range of popular arts and culture programs, including a pottery program (running for 40 years), and theatre and drama programs.

### **Affordable Rental Space**

The A.R.C. offers affordable administrative, studio, and rehearsal space to arts organizations that might face cost barriers when trying to access space.

### **Engaging Auditorium/Performance Space**

Members of the CLC and PATF shared that the auditorium space was an excellent asset that allows for meaningful speaking and listening engagements. Participants noted that some of the best events at the A.R.C. have been held in the auditorium.

### **Repeated Use**

The external clients who book meeting space at the A.R.C. often use the space regularly throughout the year, indicating that the space is functional and favourable to clients who are booking the A.R.C. for this purpose.

## **4.2 OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Future Potential**

Based on consultation with the CLC and PATF, the leadership within the cultural and creative community in Oshawa are hopeful for the potential transformation of the A.R.C. and see it as a space with great potential to serve the community.

### **Adaptive Reuse**

Transforming the A.R.C. into a Cultural Hub would be a form of adaptive reuse, which conserves the cultural, architectural, and historic value of the building, as well as offers an environmentally sustainable option for re-using existing infrastructure

Given that the building is in good condition, there is the opportunity for a number of design improvements that address the weaknesses of the building, including increasing natural light within the entire building, adding signage and wayfinding, improving public space, adding outdoor spaces for programming, and more.

Adaptive re-use of an existing facility would align with a number of City policy's, goals, and guidelines, including:

- Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan
- Our Plan for Success: Oshawa Strategic Plan 2020-2023

### **Community Needs**

There is a need in Oshawa for affordable space and programming for the arts and the A.R.C. can be an asset in meeting this need and providing access to the arts to underserved communities.

The City of Oshawa has a very tight-knit cultural and artistic community that could benefit from a centralized hub and space where they can practice and congregate.

The A.R.C. has the potential to be a site where artists can share their work with the wider community, by:

- Providing gallery space for exhibitions
- Becoming a site for artist and public interaction – where the public can be exposed to a range of local emerging and established artists
- Offering workshops where artists can teach and engage the public
- Offering opportunities to musicians and performers to gather, create, and perform

### Partnerships

There is interest in pursuing new partnership opportunities with the wider cultural and creative community. Such partnerships would increase public engagements for the A.R.C.

- The Oshawa Public Library and Robert McLaughlin Gallery can expand their programming/service/events into the A.R.C. (e.g., lecture series, artist in residency, classes, etc.)
- Local school boards and post-secondary institutions can partner with the A.R.C. on arts and cultural programs and initiatives (e.g., student-led workshops, student work exhibitions, etc.)
- Local businesses in the downtown core can facilitate partnerships with the A.R.C. to offer social activities that incorporate the arts (e.g., art and dinner evenings, paint and sip events, etc.).

## 4.3 WEAKNESSES

### Unclear Purpose and Focus

Based on consultation with members of the CLC and PATF, the A.R.C. would benefit from a clarified mission and/or vision.

### Space and Building Limitations

The current layout includes tight public spaces and corridors, which do not allow for flexible, adaptable, welcoming, and accessible spaces if left as is.

This lack of open space impacts the A.R.C.'s ability to host various events (e.g., exhibitions, social gatherings) and to expand and improve programming (e.g., there is a lack of space for the popular pottery program).

Other aspects of the building that result in a poor user and visitor experience include:

- Small and underwhelming entrance lobby, which negatively impacts the immediate sense of placemaking
- The placement of the elevator and washroom, which are unfavorable to the original layout and design as they block windows, limiting natural light throughout
- The vertical staircase circulation between floors, which is convoluted and indirect

### Access Limitations

The A.R.C. has a minimal digital presence which creates barriers for the community because accessing information about services is challenging. Additionally, the lack of digital presence creates barriers in conveying a clear understanding of the A.R.C.'s function and its offerings.

- The A.R.C.'s webpage lacks substantial detail about the facility and programming
- There are no social media accounts specifically for the A.R.C.; though there is a general @OshawaCulture account on Twitter
- No/unclear online booking system for programs/services

Stakeholders consulted noted that there were some scheduling challenges concerning the A.R.C.

- Lack of program engagement during certain times of the day
- Program timing/scheduling isn't convenient e.g., stakeholders noted that children's programming schedule is limited.

Physical access to the A.R.C. is hindered in some

ways and contributes to the A.R.C.'s useability.

- Stakeholders consulted noted that although the A.R.C. is in a prime location, it is somewhat "hidden". This weakness can be attributed to the lack of street frontage and visible presence caused by the removal of Athol Street in the 1970s
- There is a lot of parking in the immediate and surrounding area, but it is paid parking. Additionally, there is a lack of "daytime parking"
- Poor wayfinding and signage, both exterior and interior, makes the building hard to find and navigate within

### **Low Use**

The A.R.C. has somewhat low program registrants and participants:

- According to the City of Oshawa's "A.R.C. Facility Utilization Review" and the 2016 Census, the City of Oshawa has a population of 159,458 and the A.R.C. had a total of 4,163 visitors (2015-2019), as such there is room to increase this level of engagement
- Auditorium usage has been slightly inconsistent between 2015 – 2019

## **4.4 CHALLENGES**

### **Finding Qualified Personnel**

With the potential expansion of programming, the A.R.C. may have issues finding qualified instructors to lead classes and workshops.

### **Need for Revaluation of Existing Contracts and Use of Space**

The A.R.C. may need to reassess and rework existing contracts with tenants at the A.R.C. in order to better utilize space.

### **Define Focus**

Due to the lack of focus expressed by cultural stakeholders, A.R.C. and the City will need to clearly define its core mission, objectives and vision.

### **Need for Experiment**

In order to understand community needs, the A.R.C. and the City may have to embrace experimentation in terms of programs and initiatives. There will need to be a willingness to be nimble and adaptable.

### **Facility Upgrades**

Given the number and range of weaknesses related to the building design, including the overall layout, appearance of spaces, lighting, and wayfinding, the scope of a renovation project can vary significantly, thus impacting costs associated with adaptive re-use. Building code upgrades may also be required.

When working with existing buildings, especially those that have had various renovations over decades, there is a possibility of unforeseen challenges during renovation.

### **Access**

A.R.C improvements may require significant site context, landscape architecture, and public realm changes to better visually reconnect the building to the surrounding built environment. The research into the history of the building (Section 2.2) reveals that the original surrounding context has been significantly modified: the relationship to the creek has been severed by the addition of multiple parking lots, and the original street frontage has been compromised. This lost connection between the A.R.C. and the geographic and urban context has left the building with a poor public-facing presence that is difficult to access and ungrounded.

## 5 - SOURCES

A.R.C. Facility Utilization Review, Recreation & Culture Services, Produced by Business and Information Services Analyst, March 26th, 2021.

H. Oakman. "Aerial View City Hall" 1968. Oshawa Public Libraries; McLaughlin Branch 65 Bagot Street, Oshawa Public Libraries, Local History Collection.

Archive photo, circa 1970s, Doors Open Oshawa

Durham shoestring performers, Community Theatre Oshawa. Durham Shoestring Performers. (2021, December 5). Retrieved March 10, 2022, from <https://www.durhamshoestring.org/>

Unknown "Oshawa Business district" ca. 1970. PHOTO GPC B-004 000213; Oshawa Public Libraries, Local History Collection.

Google Earth "Latitude: 43.90012, Longitude: -78.84957" ca. 2022. Retrieved March 9, 2022, from <https://www.earth.google.com>

Durham Regional Police "Athol Street Police Station" ca. 1960. PHOTO GPC B-008 000501; Oshawa Public Libraries, Local History Collection.

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## **Appendix C. Initial Feedback Form Response (March-April 2022)**

A form was launched on the Connect Oshawa platform from March 23<sup>rd</sup> to April 25<sup>th</sup> 2022. The engagement was promoted on social media, ads, newsletters, Curbex, and through other advertising and networks employed by the City of Oshawa. The Feedback Form gathered 220 respondents, 217 of whom filled in the first question, identifying as either a member of the public, an artist, or a culture and creative sector worker, organizational representative or facility owner/operator. The three responses that did not answer the first question were excluded for not meeting Nordicity's eligibility criteria to be considered valid or complete – resulting in a maximum “n” value of 217 respondents.

### **Respondents Identification**

- 59% members of the public
- 25% artists
- 16% cultural and creative sector workers, organizational representatives, or facility owners/operators.

### **Respondents Demographics**

- Over half (67%) of Feedback Form respondents identified themselves to be Oshawa residents and/or Oshawa business/property owners.
- Within the area of Oshawa, Ward 4 is the most well represented with 40% of the form respondents having indicated that they either live in and/or have their business/property located in Ward 4, followed by Ward 5 (16%) and Ward 3 (14%).
- Most respondents (84%) were over the age of 35, with 37% being within the ages of 35-54 and 47% being over the age of 55. Those under the age of 35 (16%) are not as well represented in contrast.

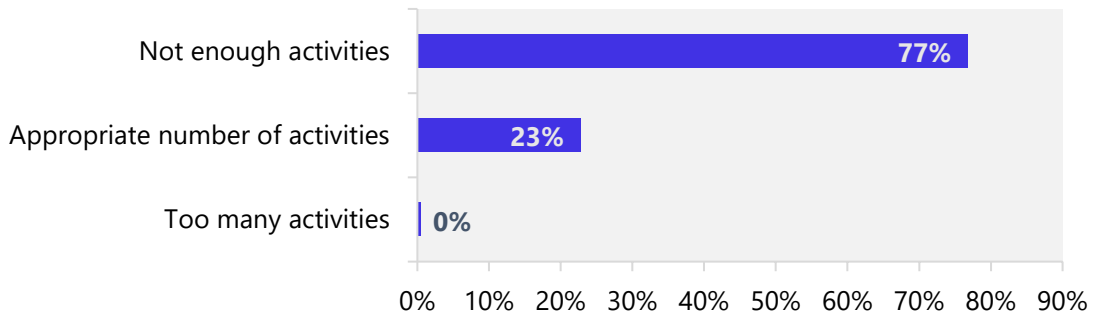
### **Oshawa's Cultural Landscape and Downtown Core**

Feedback Form respondents were asked about their engagement at/with creative and cultural facilities in and around the City of Oshawa, and their interactions with the downtown core.

- Most Feedback Form respondents (77%) said there is not enough activities when it comes to the volume of creative and cultural activities

and events in Oshawa (e.g., art exhibitions, musical performances, festivals, etc.).

**Figure 3: Feedback on the Volume of Creative and Cultural Activities in Oshawa**

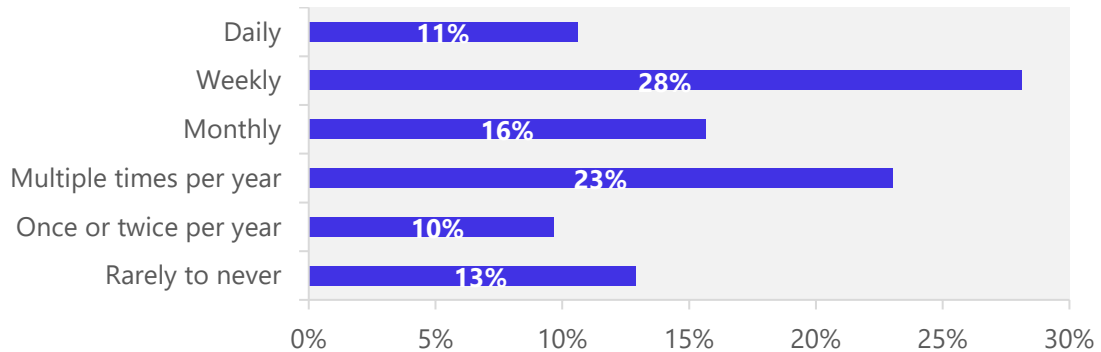


n = 211

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

- Respondents stated that they visit downtown at a frequency of weekly (28%), multiple times per year (23%), and monthly (16%).

**Figure 4: Visit Frequency of Downtown Oshawa**



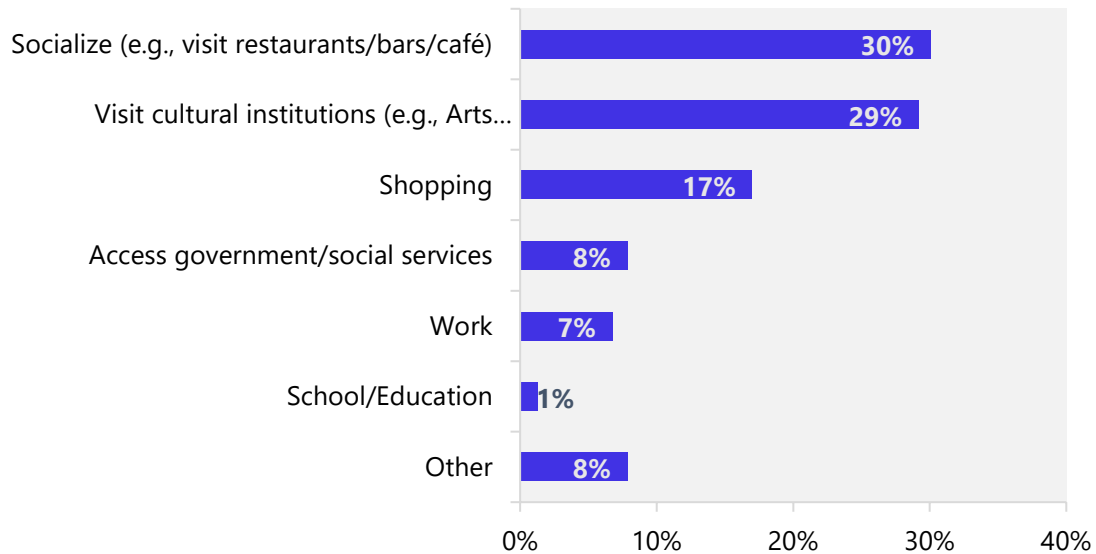
n = 217

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

- Respondents were asked to share their motivations for going to downtown Oshawa. Feedback Form respondents were most likely to go downtown to socialize (30%), visit cultural institutions (29%), and shop (17%).

**Figure 5: Motivations to Visit Downtown Oshawa**

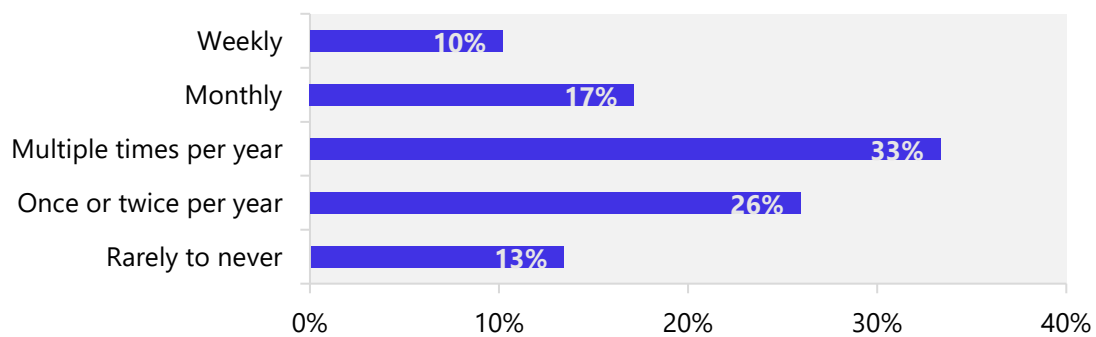


n = 215

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

When asked how often they participated in creative or cultural activities and events in Oshawa, prior to the pandemic and lockdowns, respondents said multiple times per year (33%), once or twice per year (26%), and monthly (17%).

**Figure 6: Frequency in Participation of Creative or Cultural Events**



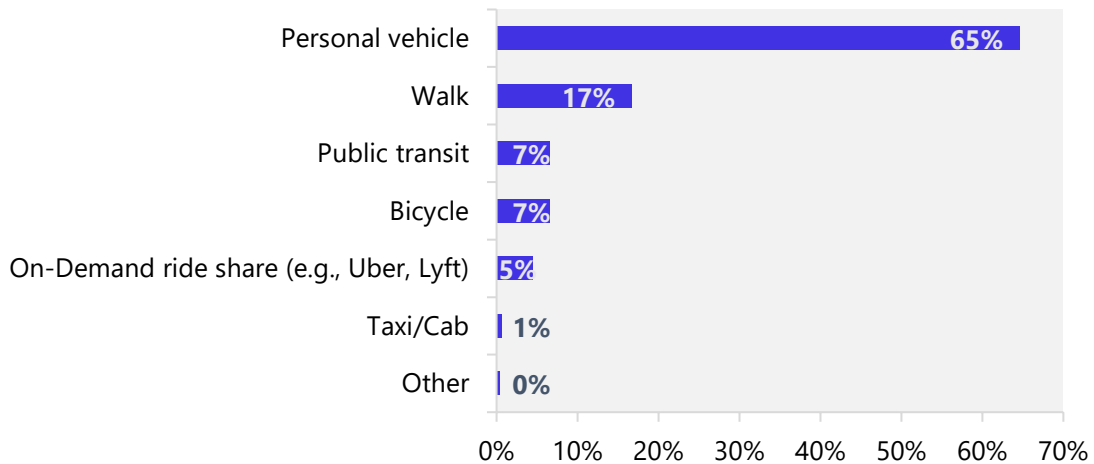
n = 216

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

- The most preferred modes of transportation for travelling to and from downtown is by personal vehicle (65%), walking (17%), public transit (7%) and bicycle (7%).

**Figure 7: Respondent Preferred Mode of Transportation**



n = 213

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Respondents could select more than one response, percentages may not add up to 100.

### **A.R.C. Perception and Use**

Respondents were asked about their experience with the A.R.C. and their perception of the facility and services. Those who identified as members of the public were asked a slightly different set of questions than those who identified either as artists or as cultural and creative sector workers, organizational representatives, or facility owners/operators.

### **Members of the Public Responses**

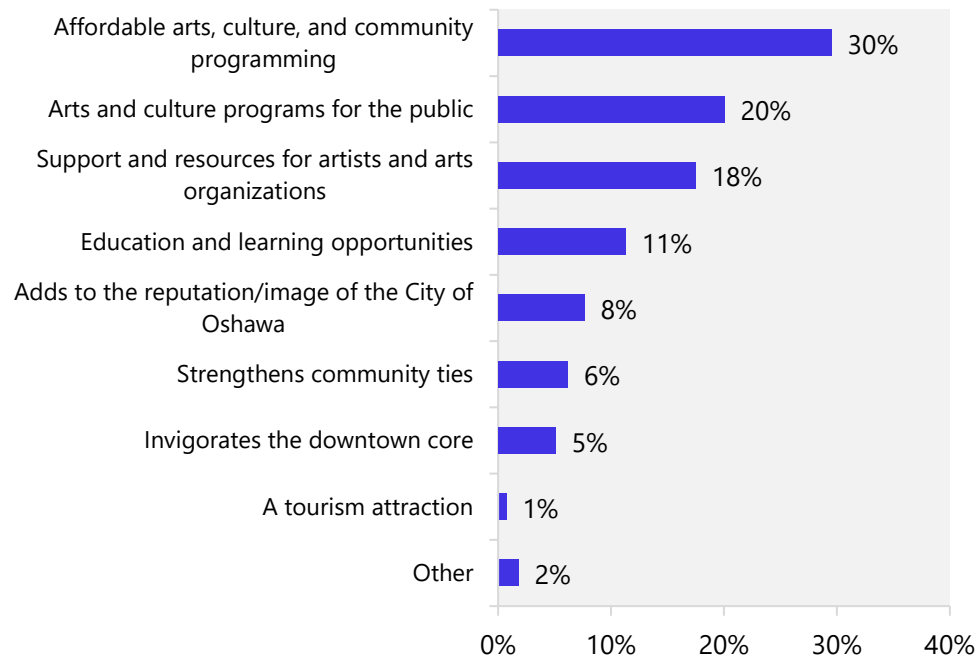
- 76% of Feedback Form respondents indicated that they have previously heard of the A.R.C. Respondents were asked how often they or members of their households visited the A.R.C. most said multiple times per year (44%), rarely to never (29%), and once or twice per year (21%).
- Feedback Form respondents identified the age ranges of individuals from their household that visit the A.R.C. The identified age ranges of members that visit the A.R.C. illustrate that those over the age of 35 (67%) have the highest rate of participation, with 22% being ages 35 to



54 and 45% being over the age of 55. Those under the age of 35 (25%) had the lowest level of participation with 10% being 18 to 34, and 10% being under the age of 17.

- Participants were asked to select the top three contributions the A.R.C. makes to the community. The top response was providing **affordable arts, culture, and community programming** (30%), followed by providing **arts and culture for the public** (20%), and **support and resources for artists and arts organizations** (18%).

**Figure 8: Contribution of Arts Resource Centre to the Oshawa Community (Members of the Public Responses)**



n = 97

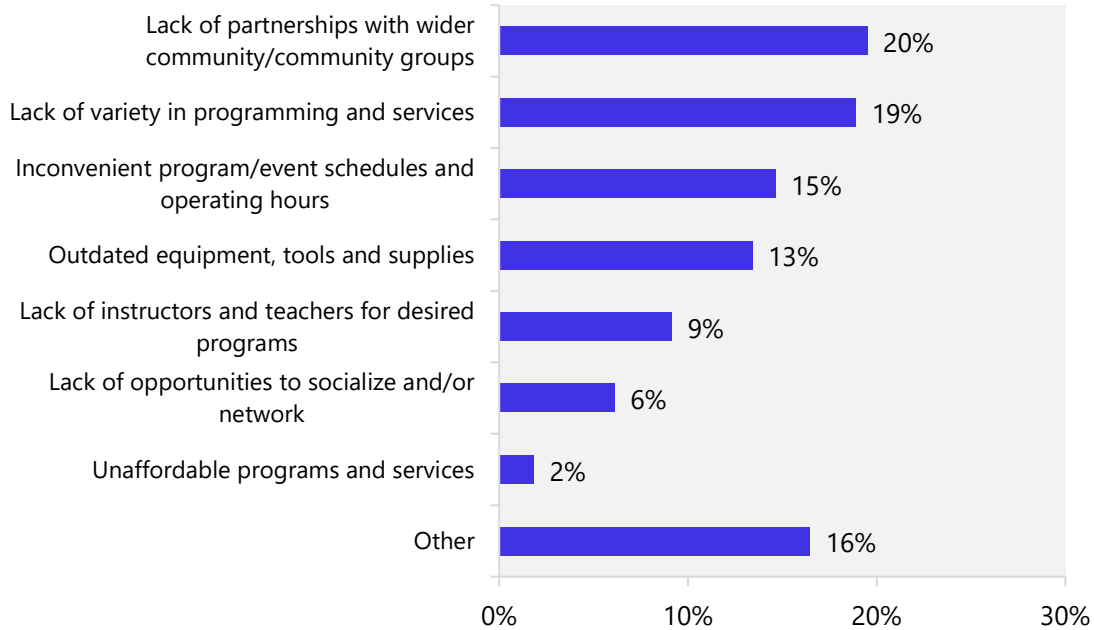
Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Respondents could select more than one response, percentages may not add up to 100.

- Respondents were asked to share what they perceived as gaps in programs and services at the A.R.C. **Lack of partnerships with wider community/community groups** (20%), **lack of variety in programming and services** (19%), and **inconvenient program/event schedules and operating hours** (15%) were identified as the top three

gaps. A significant portion of respondents selected Other (16%), many adding that the A.R.C.'s **major issue is branding, awareness and promotion.**

**Figure 9: Perceived Major Gaps of Arts Resource Centre (Members of the Public Responses)**



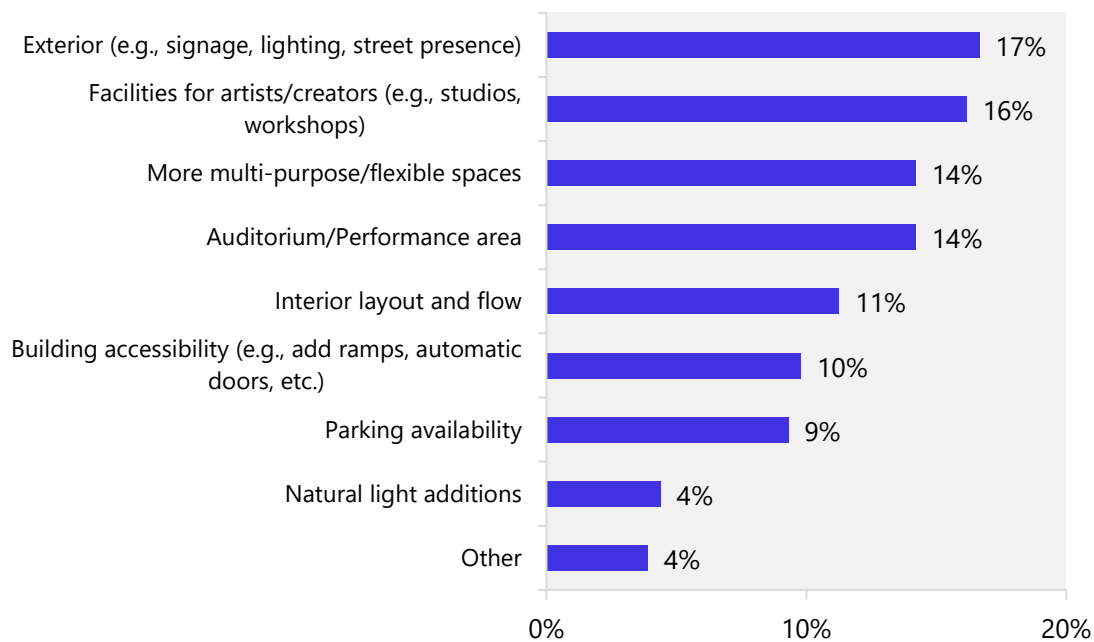
n = 90

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Respondents could select more than one response, percentages may not add up to 100.

- Respondents were asked to select the top three alternations that are required to improve the physical building of the A.R.C. The top alterations selected were those pertaining to the **exterior such as signage, lighting, street presence (17%), facilities for artists/creators (16%),** and the **additional of multi-purpose/flexible spaces (14%),** as well as **improvements to the auditorium/performance area (14%).**

**Figure 10: Alterations Required to Improve the A.R.C. (Members of the Public Responses)**



n = 81

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Respondents could select more than one response, percentages may not add up to 100.

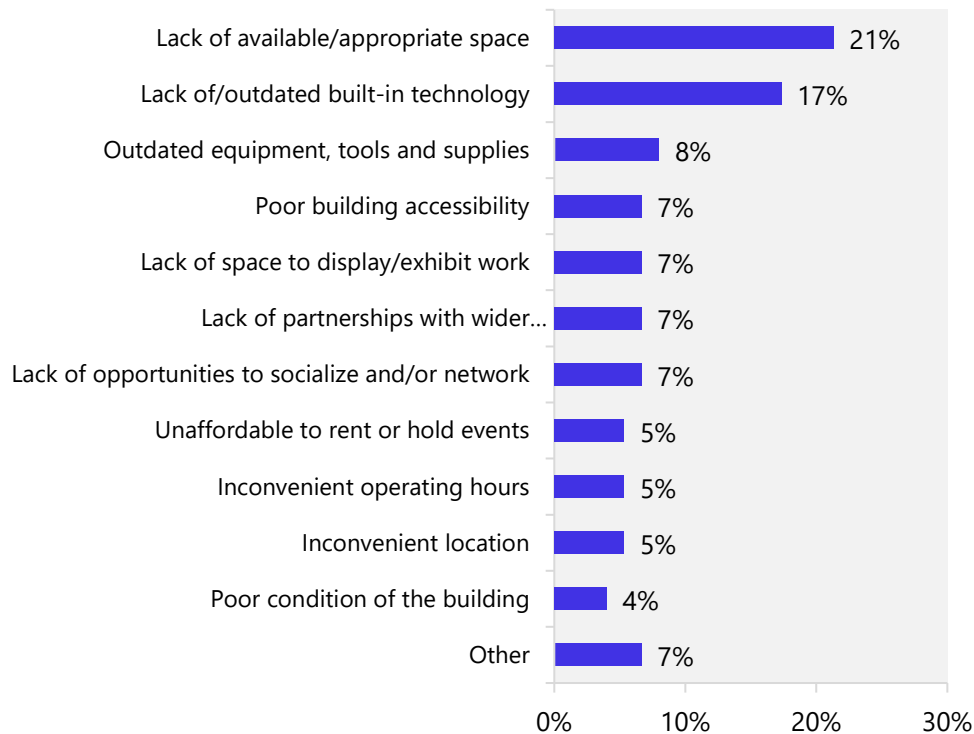
**Artists, Cultural/Creative Workers, Organization Representative or Facility Owners/Operators Responses**

- These respondents noted they were most active in sectors pertaining to **theater and performing arts** (22%), **visual and applied arts** (19%), **music** (10%), and **digital/interactive media** (10%).
- Respondents were asked about the kinds of facilities or spaces they need, and most said they require **facilities or space for live performance** (19%), **space to create/design** (17%), **space to practice and rehearse** (14%), and **gallery/exhibition space** (14%).
- Over half (60%) of these feedback respondents indicated that **they have not previously used the A.R.C.**
  - Of those who have not used the A.R.C. nearly half (49%) said they don't use the space because were **unaware of the A.R.C. and**

**what it offers.** Others noted that they don't use the facilities because it **lacks available/appropriate space** (12%).

- Of those artists or creative and cultural workers who have visited or used the A.R.C., 25% have previously used the space to **perform**, while 18% to **practice and/or rehearse**, and 14% **to learn**.
  - Of the 34 respondents who have used the A.R.C. previously, 84% indicated they had a **positive experience**, while 58% rated their experiences as being satisfying and 26% rating their experience as very satisfying.
- Artists and cultural/creative workers were asked what the top three major gaps at the A.R.C. are. Respondents perceived **lack of available/appropriate space** (21%), **lack of/outdated built-in technology** (17%), and **outdated equipment, tools and, supplies** (8%) as the three major gaps.

**Figure 11: Perceived Major Gaps of the A.R.C. (Artists + Cultural/Creative Workers Responses)**



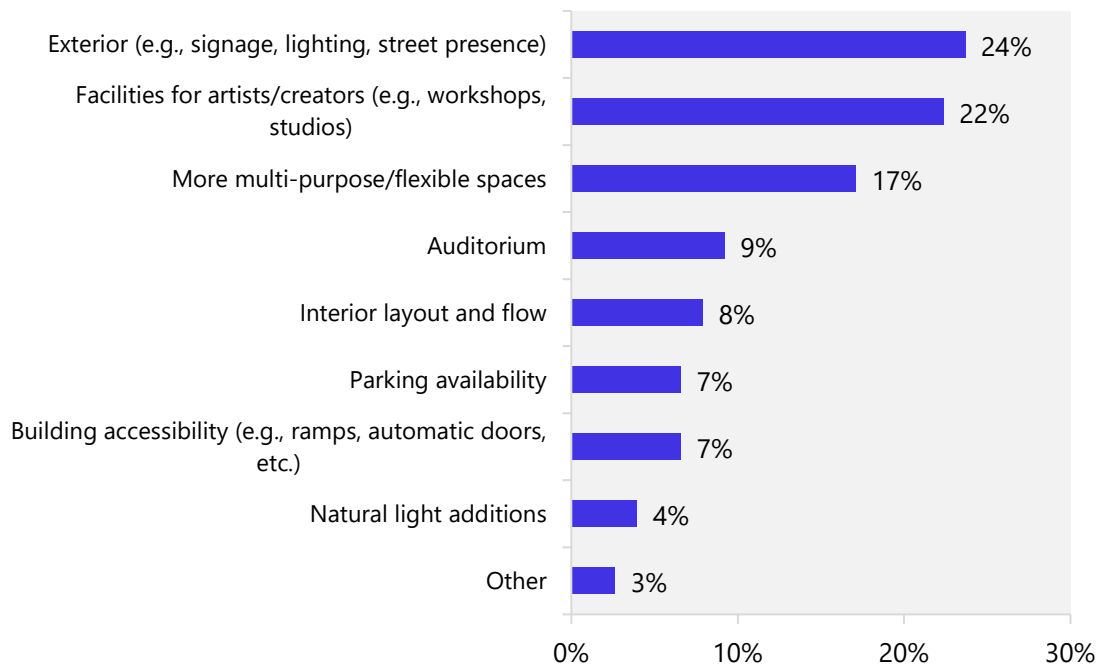
n = 34

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Respondents could select more than one response, percentages may not add up to 100.

Respondents noted that the top alterations required for the physical building to be **exterior alterations (e.g., signage, lighting, street presence)** (24%), **facilities for artists/creators** (22%), and **more multi-purpose/flexible spaces** (17%). These responses align with the alterations that members of the public indicated they would like to see.

**Figure 12: Alternations Required to the A.R.C. (Artists + Cultural/Creative Workers)**



n = 32

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

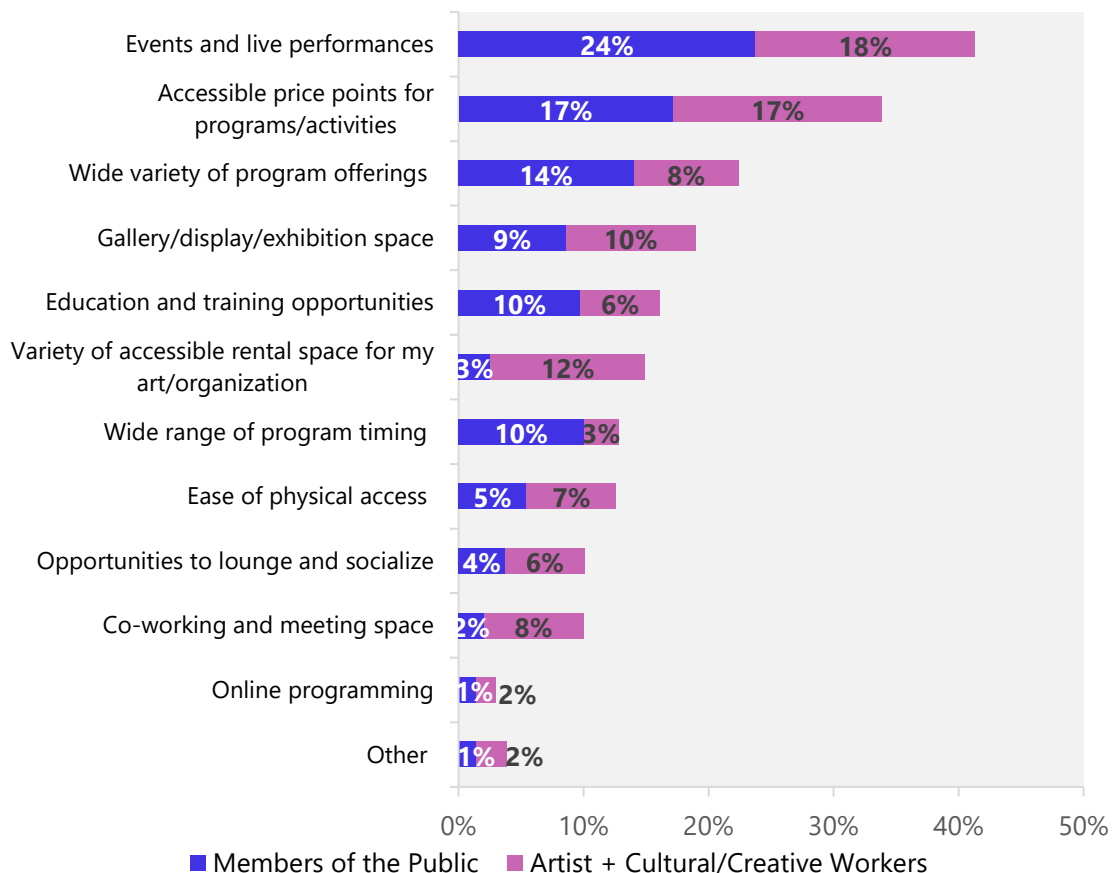
Note: Respondents could select more than one response, percentages may not add up to 100.

### Future of the A.R.C. and Cultural Hub

All respondents, both members of the public and artists/cultural/creative workers, were asked questions pertaining to the future of the A.R.C and the potential for the space.

- When asked what would motivate them to visit a transformed A.R.C. or future Cultural Hub, respondents indicated that **events and live performances** were the biggest motivation for visiting a cultural hub, encompassing 24% of all members of the public and 18% of artists and cultural workers. The second biggest motivation for both groups were **accessible price points for programs/activities** (17% respectively).

Figure 13: Motivation to Visit a Future Cultural Hub



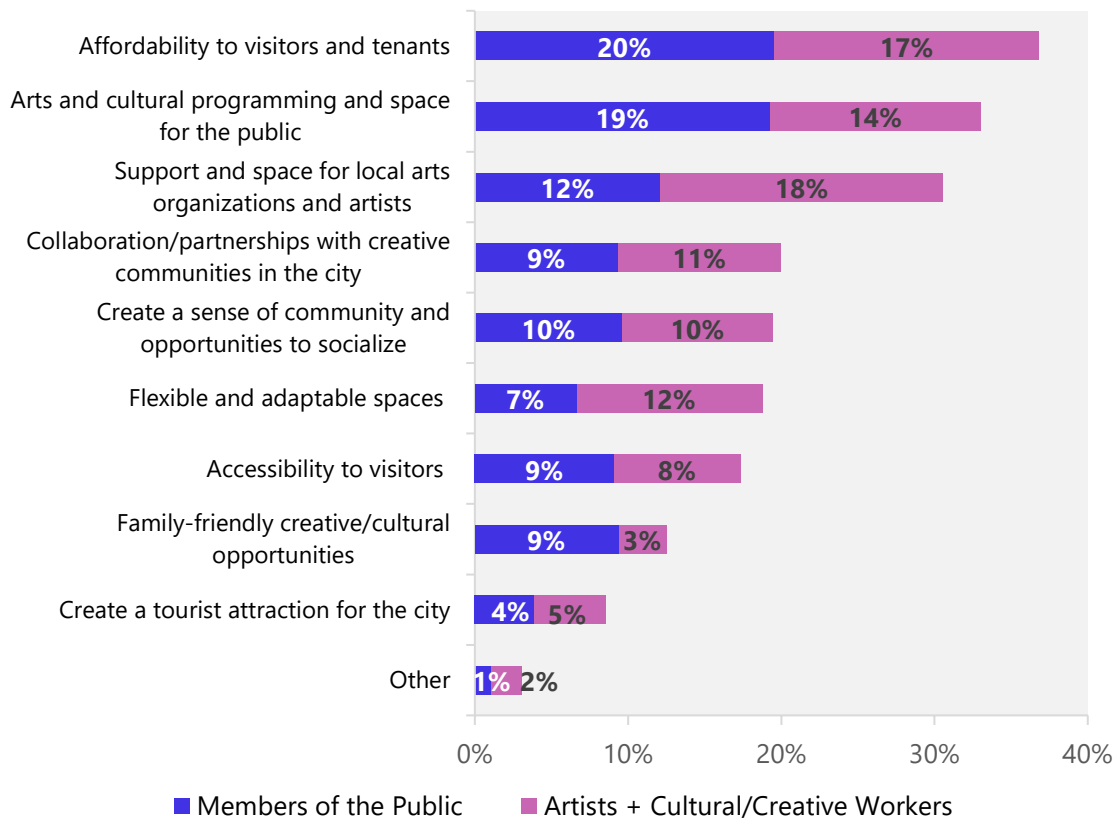
n = 215

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Respondents could select more than one response, percentages may not add up to 100. Percentages may also not add up to 100 due to rounding.

- Respondents were asked what priorities should be considered when developing a Cultural Hub in Oshawa. The top response was **affordability to visitors and tenants** (20%), followed by **arts and cultural programming and space for the public** (19%), and **support and space for local arts organizations and artists** (12%).

**Figure 14: Priorities to Be Considered for the Development of a Cultural Hub**



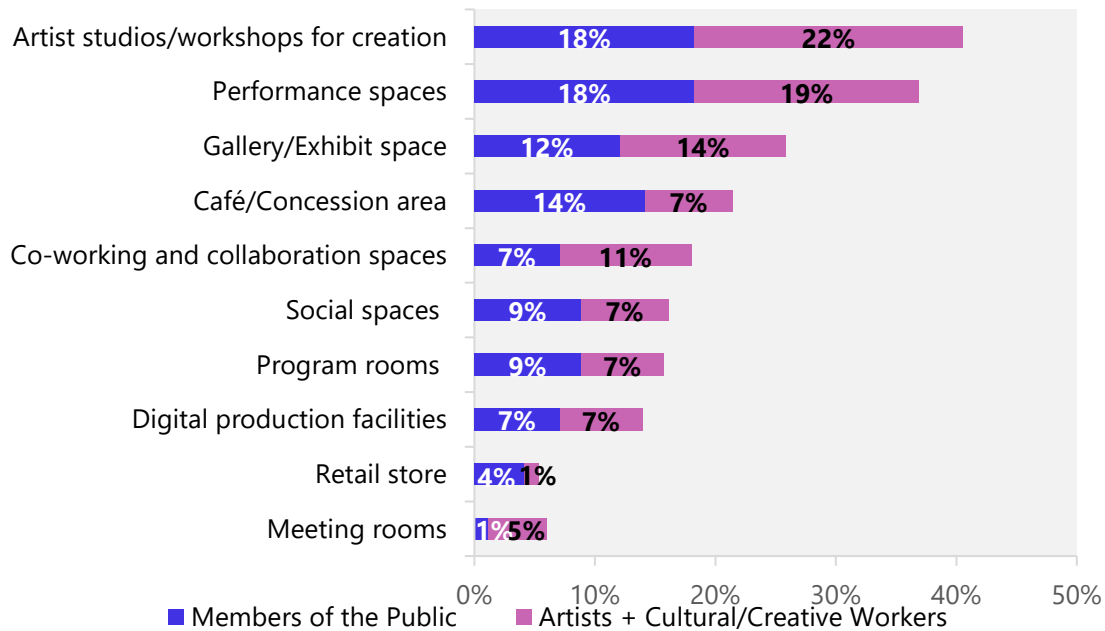
n = 217

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Respondents could select more than one response, percentages may not add up to 100.

- When asked to identify the specific spaces or areas they would like to see expanded or added, respondents selected their top three as **artist studios/workshops for creation** (40%), **performance spaces** (37%), and **gallery/exhibit space** (26%).

**Figure 15: Specific Spaces/Areas Expanded or Added**



n = 209

Source: Phase 1 - Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study Feedback Form ("Initial Feedback Form"), 2022

Note: Respondents could select more than one response, percentages may not add up to 100.



## **Appendix D. Secondary Feedback Form Responses (August-September)**

A second short-form Feedback Form was launched on August 15th via the Connect Oshawa platform and was open for 29 days. This form was referred to as a Secondary Feedback Form on Concepts and it aimed to have the public validate the design concepts that were formed as a result of consultation and research in Phase 2. The Feedback Form had approximately 117 respondents and was promoted on social media and in various news outlets. Additionally, stakeholders consulted in Phase 2 were contacted directly to provide their feedback.

Respondents to this Feedback Form were comprised of:

- 59% identified as members of the public
- 20% as an artist
- 20% as a culture and creative sector worker, organizational representative, or facility owner/operator.

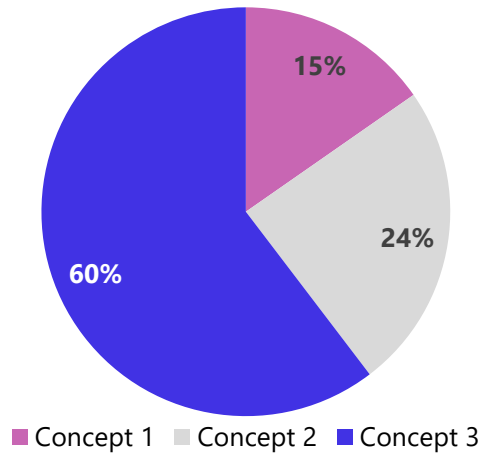
### **Respondents Demographics**

- 85% of respondents identified themselves to be an Oshawa resident, and/or Oshawa business/property owner.
- Secondary Feedback Form on Concepts respondents ages 35-54 were the most represented, making up a combined 43% of all respondents, with 22% being 35-44, and 21% being 45-54. Both the youngest (18-24) and oldest (75+) demographic of respondents were the least represented, making up 4%, respectively.
- Almost half (46%) live in/have their business property located in Ward 4, followed by Ward 3 (16%) and Ward 2 (15%) being the most represented. The least represented ward is Ward 1 (8%) and Ward 5 (7%).

### **Concept Reaction**

- Feedback form respondents were shown three initial concept designs and were asked to select their preference. More than half (60%) of respondents selected Concept 3 as their preferred concept, followed by Concept 2 and Concept 1.

**Figure 16: Preferred Design Concepts of Respondents**



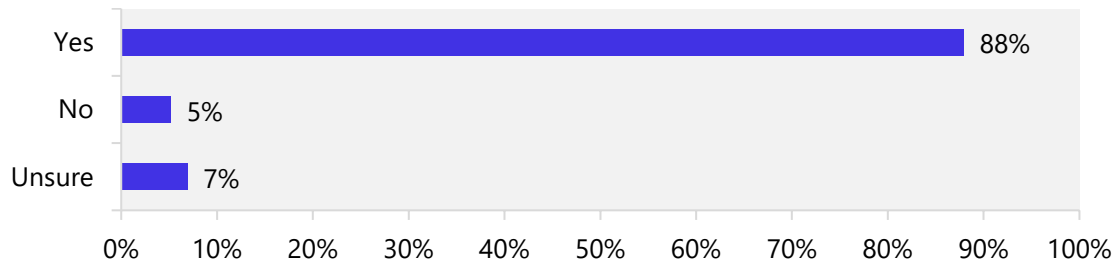
n = 111

Source: Phase 2 – Secondary Feedback Form on Concepts, 2022

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

- Participants were asked if they could see themselves, their families and/or their businesses/organizations using the space of their preferred concepts. Respondents were enthusiastic in that they would use the space they preferred, with nearly nine-tenths (88%) selecting “yes”.
  - Those who said they would not use the space were asked to explain why. Most cited the fact that they disagree with the City spending public funds on this future space, or that they do not feel safe going to the downtown area.

**Figure 17: Likelihood to Visit Preferred Concept**



n = 116

Source: Phase 2 –Secondary Feedback Form on Concepts, 2022

## Appendix E. ABCD Prioritization

Based on the feedback from the first phase of community consultation, as well as Giaimo’s architectural assessment of the current A.R.C., the project team completed a prioritization exercise that groups potential features of the physical space/facility as:

- **A features:** core elements, or features of the facility that if not pursued, would jeopardize the success of the whole endeavour.<sup>38</sup>
- **B features:** important and/or value-added components.
- **C features:** features which would be nice to include if you have the resources but are not strictly necessary for success.
- **D features:** not a priority.

**Table 14: ABCD Prioritizations for Future Cultural Hub**

A Features
<p><b><u>Functional Spaces:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Auditorium (100-200 seats) with a raised stage for live performances and top-notch acoustics configured such that it supports live performance for theatre, music, dance, and other types of shows (needs not perfectly aligned)</li> <li>▪ Backstage Area (behind/off stage) for performers and set-up</li> <li>▪ Exhibition Space for visual arts displays</li> <li>▪ Fit-for-purpose Studios for range of uses including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rehearsal – musician and live performance and other shows (insulated for sound)</li> <li>○ Pottery workshops/classes, visual arts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>38</sup> This assessment does not include elements that will be automatically required within the Ontario Building Code, such as AODA-compliance, Code, Life, and Safety, and Fire Protection compliance. It also does not include elements that would be best practice to include in any facility such as “gender-neutral washrooms”, “security system” etc. These details would be further developed during a future phase (beyond the scope of this project), i.e., schematic design.

### A Features

- Digital media production, makerspace, podcast recordings/workshops
- Flexible Event Space to host small/large gatherings e.g. community festivals (100 – 200 people)
- Box Office/Information Desk
- Kitchenette(s) for staff and public/tenant use

#### **Admin Spaces:**

- Private Studios/Co-Working Space for artists/creatives to design and produce work
- Office Space for arts, culture & heritage groups from the community
- Dedicated Staff Office(s) for City/Hub staff
- Meeting Rooms for community groups to gather

#### **Flow Considerations:**

- Create a prominent and convenient Main Point of Entry
- Improved/more intuitive Floorplan as well as incorporate Community Safety Design Principles
- Open plan, spacious lobby
- Multi-lingual signage and wayfinding (internal/external)
- Notice board or general display areas in the A.R.C. to promote upcoming events.

#### **Exterior/Container Considerations:**

- Revitalization of the façade
- Add/Improve lighting around the building and parking lot e.g., more/larger windows

### B Features

- Lounge Area for socializing with the potential to be retrofitted/expanded as a café in future if usage/demand necessitates
- AV Booth for technicians during performances

### B Features

- Dressing Room and/or green room for performers/talent to prepare for their performance (consider as hybrid or two separate spaces)
- Outdoor space and seating for events/programming either in the form of a patio, garden, or rooftop patio (space and safety depending)
- Storage Space for small scale props and other equipment required by community arts groups
- Accessories/flex/modular set-up available to support selling of art/goods

### C Features

- Balcony added to the theatre (incl. accessible seating)
- Dedicated Quiet Room for sensory-sensitive participants/visitors
- Outdoor workshop area/space(s) for nature-based programming
- Green roof

### D Features

- Orchestra Pit requires further consideration re: competition – not aware that these are readily available but neither does it match stated need for 100-200 seat auditorium.
- Ideally should not compete with or duplicate existing private facilities in Oshawa - must work with organizations with complementary facilities to ensure the A.R.C.'s programs and services complement existing offerings in the city.
- Gift Shop – though will have opportunities to sell works.
- Condominium built on top of the A.R.C. would be unlikely - that said, stakeholders open to many forms of financing/offsetting costs to achieve feasibility, including condos or other solutions

## Appendix F. Concept Square Footage

**Table 15: Concept 1 Estimated Square Feet Breakdown**

<b>Estimated Sq.Ft. for Oshawa Cultural Hub</b>			
<b>Program Requirements - Concept 1 (approx 12,000sqft)</b>			
<i>*These numbers are general estimates based on precedents and/or Building Code requirements. For accuracy, they will require further study in next phase of project once programming needs are actually finalized</i>			
Washroom	Existing + (accessible required)	650	Assumes maximum occupancy is 250 persons (4 Fixtures per OBC Table 3.7.4.3D)
Kitchenette		150	
Offices	4 @ 100sf	400	
Meeting Rooms	1 @ 200sf and 1 @ 100sf	300	
Box Office/Reception		50	
Exhibition Storage	100sf	100	
Exhibition Gallery / Event Space		800	Combine with Flexible Event Space
Theatre Seating Main	130 seats @ 8.07 sf/person	1100	Suggested non-fixed seats for more flexibility in space
Stage	20'x40'	600	
Rear Stage		250	Setup and Storage
Control Room		50	Sound and Lighting Booth
Dedicated/ Private Studios/ Coworking Space	4 @ 150sf	600	
Rehearsal Space		500	
Workshop Spaces	3 @ 500sqft	1500	
Pottery	Existing	600	Including Kiln Room

<b>Net Area of Non Service Spaces</b>		7650	
<b>Outdoor Space</b>			
Outdoor Workshop		1000	
<b>Service Space</b>	factor of sq ft (25% +/-)		
Garbage and Recycling		200	
Circulation	25%	1912.5	
Electrical Room/AV/IT	5%	382.5	
Mechanical Room	10%	765	
Structure & Build-up	10%	765	
Inaccessible Areas	5%	382.5	
<b>Total Services Area</b>		<b>4407.5</b>	
<b>Total Net Building Area</b>		<b>12058</b>	
<b>Total Net Programed Area (Indoor+Outdoor)</b>		<b>13058</b>	

**Table 16: Concept 2 Estimated Square Feet Breakdown**

<b>Estimated Sq.Ft. for Oshawa Cultural Hub</b>			
<b>Program Requirements - Concept 2 (approx 15,000sqft)</b>			
<i>*These numbers are general estimates based on precedents and/or Building Code requirements. For accuracy, they will require further study in next phase of project once programming needs are actually finalized</i>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>sq ft</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Admin</b>			
Washroom	Existing + (accessible required)	700	Assumes maximum occupancy is 300 persons (5 Fixtures per OBC Table 3.7.4.3D)
Kitchenette		150	
Offices	4 @ 100sf	400	
Meeting Rooms	1 @ 200sf and 1 @ 100sf	300	
Box Office/Reception		50	

Storage Space		500	
<b>Exhibition Space</b>			
Exhibition Storage		200	
Exhibition Gallery / Event Space		800	<i>Combine with Flexible Event Space</i>
<b>Auditorium (100-200)</b>			
	Existing		
Theatre Seating Main	130 seats @ 8.07 sf/person	1100	<i>Suggested non-fixed seats for more flexibility in space</i>
Stage	20'x40'	600	
Rear Stage		250	<i>Setup and Storage</i>
Control Room		50	<i>Sound and Lighting Booth</i>
<b>Fit for Purpose Studios</b>			
Dedicated/ Private Studios/ Coworking Space	5 @ 150sf	750	
Rehearsal Space		400	
Workshop Spaces	4 @ 450sqft	1800	
Pottery	Existing	500	<i>Including Kiln Room</i>
<b>Amenity Space</b>			
Lounge / Café		500	
Flex Market Space		500	
<b>Net Area of Non Service Spaces</b>		9550	
<b>Outdoor Space</b>			
Outdoor Workshop		600	
Rooftop Space		2000	
<b>Net Area of Outdoor Space</b>		2000	
<b>Service Space</b>			
	factor of sq ft (25% +/-)		
Garbage and Recycling		200	
Circulation	25%	2387.5	
Electrical Room/AV/IT	5%	477.5	
Mechanical Room	10%	955	
Structure & Build-up	10%	955	
Inaccessible Areas	5%	477.5	



<b>Total Services Area</b>		5452.5	
<b>Total Net Building Area</b>		<b>15002.5</b>	
<b>Total Net Programed Area</b>		17002.5	

**Table 17: Concept 3 Estimated Square Feet Breakdown**

<b>Estimated Sq.Ft. for Oshawa Cultural Hub</b>			
<b>Program Requirements - Concept 3 (approx 25,000sqft)</b>			
<i>*These numbers are general estimates based on precedents and/or Building Code requirements. For accuracy, they will require further study in next phase of project once programming needs are actually finalized</i>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>sq ft</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Admin</b>			
Washroom	Existing + (accessible required)	1200	<i>Assumes maximum occupancy is 500 persons (8 Fixtures per OBC Table 3.7.4.3D)</i>
Kitchen		350	
Offices	10 @ 120sf	1200	
Meeting Rooms	2 @ 200sf and 2 @ 100sf	600	
Box Office/Reception		100	
Quiet Room		100	
Storage Space		600	
<b>Exhibition Space</b>			
Exhibition Storage		200	
Event Space		1000	
Exhibition Gallery		1000	
<b>Auditorium (100-200)</b>	Existing		
Theatre Seating Main	200 seats @ 8.07 sf/person	1700	<i>Suggested non-fixed seats for more flexibility in space</i>
Stage	20'x40	800	
Rear Stage		550	<i>Setup and Storage</i>

Control Room		150	<i>Sound and Lighting Booth</i>
<b>Fit for Purpose Studios</b>			
Dedicated/ Private Studios/ Coworking Space	6 @ 200sf	1200	
Rehearsal Space		600	
Workshop Spaces	6 @ 400sqft	2400	
Pottery		800	<i>Including Kiln Room</i>
<b>Amenity Space</b>			
Lounge / Café		800	
Flex Market Space		500	
<b>Net Area of Non Service Spaces</b>		15850	
<b>Outdoor Space</b>			
Outdoor Workshop		600	
Rooftop Space		2000	
<b>Net Area of Outdoor Space</b>		2600	
<b>Service Space</b>	factor of sq ft (25% +/-)		
Garbage and Recycling		200	
Circulation	25%	3962.5	
Electrical Room/AV/IT	5%	792.5	
Mechanical Room	10%	1585	
Structure & Build-up	10%	1585	
Inaccessible Areas	5%	792.5	
<b>Total Services Area</b>		8917.5	
<b>Total Net Building Area</b>		<b>24768</b>	
<b>Total Net Programed Area</b>		27368	