

Saskatoon Artist and Arts Spaces 2018

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Saskatchewan Arts Alliance for the City of Saskatoon

Précis

In September 2018, the City of Saskatoon contracted the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance (SAA) to conduct consultations with Saskatoon artists regarding Saskatoon arts spaces. Via focus groups, interviews, meetings, and dialogues SAA consulted a sample of artists from a variety of disciplines and perspectives (including artists of various ages, career-stages, and backgrounds – including newcomer and indigenous voices). Their responses were compared to the Saskatoon artist responses to the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR) Artist Survey of 2014. These consultations coincided with the City of Saskatoon’s *Cultural Facilities Inventory Update 2018*, also referenced herein.

This year the City of Saskatoon released its *Culture Plan Implementation Refresh – 2018-2022*, which indicated three key directions: Build a Resilient Culture Sector; Grow the Creative Cultural Economy; and Foster Creative Placemaking. To follow these directions, the plan identifies four main roles for the City of Saskatoon: *Planning and Policy Maker; Convener and Facilitator; Funder and Provider; and Bridge Between Funders* (City of Saskatoon, 2018a). Artists’ responses have been examined within the context of these four main roles.

While the term “cultural development” is used in the Culture Plan, Saskatoon artists were clear: artists and the arts contribute to Saskatoon not only at the cultural level, but also at the levels of economic development, increased social inclusion, and higher quality-of-life. Connecting and integrating arts and cultural planning across the city’s decision-making processes was considered important. Artists spoke specifically to the importance of opportunities to increase and diversify their networks through greater connections not only to other artists and arts organizations, but also to non-profits, community organizations, and business groups.

In response to the query, “What do you need for your practice to thrive,” artists identified concerns and opportunities. Space and cost were prominent topics. Artists were also keen to mention that the arts in Saskatoon are thriving – despite challenges. With more resources, it was argued, they could play an even bigger part in Saskatoon’s socio-economic development. Discipline-specific observations are included in the full report. Examples include:

- High cost of studio space as well as a lack of professional gallery space for local artists both of which are limiting factors for career development – especially for emerging artists and artists who are newcomers;
- So-called “dirty arts” – e.g. working with stone, metal, clay, ceramics, etc. which require specific equipment for the execution of art in a safe environment and need permanent, specifically equipped spaces.
- Artists were quick to mention groups and organizations in Saskatoon that were working to address the need for arts spaces. The organization most often cited for creating and improving access to arts spaces was The Open Storefront, by On the Boards Staging Company.

1) Planning and Policy Maker: In addition to the role of the city in creating policy that can increase access to space for the arts, it is crucial to connect and integrate arts and cultural planning across the city's decision-making processes. Public education was also important; artists felt any planning or policy development should prioritize educating/informing the public about the value the arts provide. Specifically regarding arts spaces, topics included increasing access to arts and creative spaces via more short-term pilot projects and partnerships as well as tax incentives – with the caveat that arts-based tax-abatements should try to ensure that such savings are passed on to artists to incentivize active use of spaces for the arts.

2) Convener and Facilitator: Given the importance of networks, connections, and collaborations to Saskatoon artists, the role of Convener/Facilitator might have the greatest potential for impactful intervention by the city. Saskatoon artists saw value in connecting to the local business community, whether or not they had successfully done so themselves. Once again, the *Open Storefront* was cited as a working example of artists and businesses collaborating.

Artists called for the City to play a greater role as a facilitator. Those involved in festivals and other events noted that some small adjustments to facilitation and cross-departmental communications could make hosting such events in Saskatoon easier. SAA consultations proved that artists were still enlivened by the possibilities of an online arts registry/planning tool.

3) Funder and Provider: The City of Saskatoon's current [Artists in Place: The Bunkhouse Project](#) pilot program generally inspired enthusiasm: "I love the Bunkhouse Project! Let's have 5 of them!" Generally, artists were enthusiastic about the possibilities of this project, and hoped to see more iterative projects like it (pilot, short-term, learning opportunities).

Suggesting ideas for city-funded spaces, artists also envisioned larger-scale, often multi-purpose arts and community hubs or networks of them, citing examples from Saskatoon as well as Toronto, New York, and even Hazlet, SK.

Artists' were aware of the potential to incorporate arts spaces into the redevelopment of the bus barns in South Caswell Hill. While some artists were cautious, artists directly involved with the [ArtSpaceYXE](#) project were understandably more optimistic. As artists connected their arts practices to Saskatoon's cultural and economic development, so too did artist-supporters of ArtSpaceYXE, citing such hubs as a potential boon to Saskatoon residents, the arts, the education system, tourism, and businesses.

In the short term, it is easier to envision such shared spaces evolving out of the City's efforts as a liaison, facilitator, and bridge to funders rather than as the sole funder and provider of new cultural spaces. Partnerships might be key for utilizing existing spaces, too: the *Saskatoon Cultural Facilities Inventory Update 2018* lists a total 276 facilities (of various type, use, and size). Of these, 21 are municipally owned, while 125 are owned privately, and 70 by not-for-profits (City of Saskatoon, upcoming).

4) Bridge Between Funders: The city's potential in this role is outlined throughout this report – especially regarding facilitation, network-building, connection-making, for example. As previously mentioned, Saskatoon artists were open to, even eager for, greater opportunities to network, partner, and work with various sectors and organizations in Saskatoon and beyond. These included other levels of government (local, provincial, federal, First Nations, and even international); non-profits;

educational institutions; community services and development departments; immigrant settlement organizations; arts funders; and businesses.

Specifically, artists saw the various connections between the city of Saskatoon and local business groups as having great potential for growing their practice, the arts in Saskatoon, as well as the city itself. The City of Saskatoon is well-situated and suited to act as a bridge between artists and such groups to help fulfill the goal of better integrating the arts into all aspects of the community.

Summary of Artist Consultations, 2018

Saskatoon Artist and Arts Spaces 2018

In September 2018, the City of Saskatoon contracted the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance (SAA) to conduct consultations with Saskatoon artists regarding Saskatoon arts spaces. SAA consulted a sample of 20 artists via focus groups, interviews, meetings, and dialogues. These artists came from a variety of disciplines (including artists of various ages, career-stages) and backgrounds (including newcomer and indigenous voices). Unless otherwise specified, all quotations herein are from these consultations (SAA, 2018).

These responses are augmented by responses to the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR) Artist Survey of 2014, which included 116 artists from Saskatoon from a total of 348 Saskatchewan Artists (SPAR, 2016). These artist consultations also coincided with the City of Saskatoon's *Cultural Facilities Inventory Update 2018*, which will also be referred to in this report.

This year the City of Saskatoon released its *Culture Plan Implementation Refresh – 2018-2022* (May 2018), which indicated three key directions:

- Build a Resilient Culture Sector
- Grow the Creative Cultural Economy
- Foster Creative Placemaking (City of Saskatoon, 2018a)

In order to support cultural development, the Culture Plan identifies four main roles for the City of Saskatoon:

- **Planning and Policy Maker:** Develop ongoing municipal cultural plans, policies, and initiatives across departments in response to community need and opportunity.
- **Convener and Facilitator:** Convene individuals and organizations from the cultural sector and the larger community to address important strategic issues and opportunities.
- **Funder and Provider:** Invest in cultural development to help support and sustain the cultural sector and to advance broad City plans and priorities; jointly fund initiatives with private, non-profit, or government agencies
- **Bridge between Funders:** Share local cultural sector knowledge with funding colleagues in other agencies and levels of government in order to strengthen understanding and support for the sector. (City of Saskatoon, 2018a)

Artists' responses will be examined within the context of these four main roles – bearing in mind that some overlap is inescapable. It is important to note that while the term “cultural development” is used in the *Culture Plan*, Saskatoon artists were clear: artists and the arts contribute not only at the cultural level, but also at levels such as economic development, increased social inclusion, and higher quality-of-life.

Art is a social necessity to bring people together and share ideas.

A lot of people still see [arts] funding as black and white but I feel like art is this gray area thing like cultural capital. It brings people in, keeps them in Saskatoon instead of fleeing to Vancouver or wherever. To the general public it's a bright city to live in. It's a source of pride. You want to spend money locally; you want to go downtown.

Generally, the importance of artists making connections with their community was a common theme throughout these consultations. Connecting and integrating arts and cultural planning across the city's decision-making processes was considered important.

With [space] comes community outreach. It's great when artists move in to a community because it's like 'oh you're a person.' But you also have to get out into the community, "This is what I do; Come on in!" Otherwise it becomes "us" against "them."

If we want to change Saskatoon, we have to support the young generations and newcomers. We have to make everyone feel as if "this is my home." This is our land and we are all together. I think art is the best way to do it. Hands-on and working together.

Artists spoke often and specifically about the importance of more opportunities to increase and diversify their networks by increasing their personal connections not only to other artists and arts organizations, but also to non-profits, community organizations, and business groups. One artist noted excitement among non-arts organizations when approached to do arts-based projects:

Saskatoon is ready, ready and open for the arts. They see that the arts are a very peaceful way to make connections and they want to be part of it too.

This same artist's practice involves regularly working with and between local, federal, municipal, provincial, First Nations, and newcomer organizations:

It is easy. I love being with people. In my career, everything is connected. It looks like so many different projects, but the one thing is 'all coming together.'

Artists' desire for rich and diversified networks is consistent with findings of previous studies. In 2014, the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR) surveyed Saskatchewan artists. Their 2016 report, *Reports on SPAR Artist Survey Data, No. 5: Respondents by Location: Regina, Saskatoon, and All Other Locations*, Saskatchewan artist-respondents identified collaboration and networking/informal connections as being important to their evolution as an artist as well as to their ability to create/interpret work. Specifically, Saskatoon artist-respondents gave noticeably more importance to "Informal social gatherings" than did respondents from the rest of Saskatchewan (SPAR, 2016).

Networking was also important to SPAR artist survey respondents. When asked to list any resources necessary for the realization of their creative goals to which they did not currently have access, artist-respondents across Saskatchewan articulated similar basic obstacles and needs relating to access, funding, and space. Saskatoon artist-respondents, however, also took this opportunity to call for more networking opportunities. One respondent from Saskatoon noted, "There needs to be more artist round tables or conferences... to network and gain knowledge. Saskatchewan feels very isolated from these types of resources." Another called for greater "access to a wider national and international arts community for mentorship, development, and collaboration [to put] Saskatchewan's artistic voice in context of wider conversations nationally and internationally" (SPAR, 2016).

The importance of networks to Saskatoon artists is perhaps most keenly felt by artists new to the city, since: “The arts community in Saskatchewan is very much a word-of-mouth, networking community. It is very hard for newcomers to Saskatchewan to break into the arts community successfully without a strong network in place. There is no cohesive place to find opportunities and access to auditions and artist related information. It is very hard to get 'in'” (SPAR, 2016).

As we shall see, this drive to make more connections and establish stronger networks was closely tied to the need for spaces which catalyze and facilitate productive links and nodes of exchange.

Overview: What do you need for your practice to thrive?

First, SAA asked Saskatoon artists: “What do you need for your practice to thrive?” Concerns and opportunities varied depending on types of artistic practice. Space and cost were prominent. So too was the importance of building relationships beyond the arts community.

What we need to thrive? We need allies. You need allies in the business community. You really do. And you have to sell them on it [or] you've got to kind of find those people that are already invested. I didn't do a hard sales pitch to [donor/patron from large corporation]; he was already interested. He knew the value of the arts already—... the cultural capital, the bringing people in. I asked: “Why do you donate?” He said: “Number 1, I like it. I enjoy going to see it and if I have the money to help it thrive why not give it? It's a little self-serving but why not give it to theatre companies because I like it. I like being able to see this work. Number 2, it's very good for business for us to have a vibrant arts scene because when I'm trying to bring people in to work here I want to show them that this is a good place to live. This really helps me two ways.”

The need for increased investment in the arts – by funders, all levels of government, sponsors/patrons, etc. were prominent in artists' discussions. Artists are still creating art, but are often self-subsidizing:

More funding – from, well the Saskatchewan Arts Board has a really limited pool of money; I've sat on the jury, I know there's not near enough to go around. So what ends up happening is artists are subsidizing the work. You make it work with what you can and it's not allowing us to thrive. It isn't producing the highest quality of work. We make it work but we could do so much more if we had the funding to be able to do more and to not have to rely on our own generosity of our family members etc. to be able to support arts practices.

Space and Costs

Artists were also keen to mention that the arts in Saskatoon can and are thriving – despite challenges. With more resources, it was argued, they could play an even bigger part in Saskatoon's socio-economic development, e.g.:

What makes us thrive is our connection with the community, even if there's stuff going on with them, we want to welcome them, if they want to come watch our shows or maybe just a place to warm up... we do quite a lot of work but we're stuck in little offices, so there's like 4 or 5 of us jammed in one place so we can make ourselves thrive I think, we can make ourselves thrive better. The welcoming, sometimes the limited spaces, and we have some pretty good partners who like “well you can come use our space for free” if we need to, if we're really in a bind but again sometimes it's not ideal, we'll have musical stuff that happens or we just need rehearsal space but it's not ideal because the building's not in the greatest shape either so it's about safety too for our audience and our artists.

The rising cost of spaces in Saskatoon and competition for it between artists – in combination with the perceived tightening of arts-funding for artists and arts organizations – can lead to missed opportunities or other frustrations:

I personally believe that we are a thriving artistic community but because we are a growing, thriving, artist community there's a lack of space that all these artists are trying to get to be able to move forward with their art and then it just feels like they're competing for that space now and like you have to work so hard to give a huge backstory of why you really need this for whatever particular reason. Even if it's something small, or something big, there's not much of a balance. I'm now finding that when I'm applying for things [e.g.] we need this space but we need to go through a lot of work just to have that accommodation. Sometimes other companies are also fighting for funding, so they have to charge more if someone needs to come in and use their space when they're not using it. I can tell that it takes a toll on people, for artists it's just the cost. You know that they're not trying to be jerks. It's just that they're struggling themselves and so they have to meet somewhere in between.

Need for community/communal spaces:

Artists also cited the value of spaces for groups of artists to work, collaborate, and even show/display/perform. Conversations involving the topic of shared artists' spaces often included the opportunities for increased community inclusion and outreach involvement, such as providing arts-based community education.

We have to focus on the whole picture. We are always looking at the one, and the one, and the one – but we don't know how to connect it. If you look at it whole, as artists you have to look at the whole picture... life is like that too. Bring some immigrants, bring some artists, bring some cultural traditional arts that we don't even know about. We will engage, we will learn, and we will give good service to Saskatoon.

Working with other artists and artist space is so important... We need some shared artist centres in neighbourhoods. If the city can afford to make these things for the artists, it is going to be long-term help for other citizen's too. Artists can work on their practice, with other artists and open the doors to the public. Engage.

Community is important. A gathering space. Affordable is important. Stability is important. There are lots of micro-hubs of artistic communities – a group of painters, a group of this, a group of that that open their doors once a year... But they keep getting pushed out because they are paying rent, and then markets change, and they can no longer afford it. Collective space helps. Many artists work in isolation. There's a buzz- an energy to working in a collective. It lifts up everyone around. The hive wins every time. There's times when working in isolation is the right thing, but you can also be stifled.

Discipline-Specific Challenges/Opportunities

Artists were eager to point out specific opportunities and challenges they faced in Saskatoon while pursuing their arts practice.

Visual Arts specific feedback

Artists cited the high cost of studio space as well as a lack of professional gallery space for local artists as limiting factors for career development – especially for emerging artists:

For visual artists, I think it's pretty brutal here for displaying and showing work, there's a huge rift. I feel like to be a local artist you have a few chances at being a hobbyist showing work in a cafe or something like

that and then there's nothing until you're a nationally known or an internationally known artist. There's very little chance to attempt professionalism, to be more than a hobbyist. That goes along with what we're calling practice space or studio spaces, because there's no affordable studio spaces so we're working out of spare bedrooms and can only make small little things there that can be packed up... to really be a professional artist you need much more than that, you need that space to work, to have people in, like curators, fellow artists to show your work in a different setting than your kitchen table with all your cats and stuff. And to take documentation for your work, right? That's huge. Then just what do you do with it after? We're a small city; there's not much for consumers. Are consumers buying your art? ... There's places ... catering to a national dialogue so you see artists from around the country and you get to kind of experience that. But for locals to promote that scene I feel like they don't really do that. There's not much nurturing going on.

Lack of space to show art and connect with other artists might be especially acute for artists who are newcomers.

I wish we had a better environment for new artists, especially those coming as immigrants, as they are continuing their traditional arts. I'm supporting those kinds of things right now, trying to help artists, young people, or any artists to help them appreciate what they are, who they are, what they are bringing from their home and how they can engage with the communities. Community engagement is so important for me because we have so many things to learn. If we do not educate ourselves, we cannot engage, we cannot learn from others.

High cost of studio spaces was a topic that leads to the value of artists joining together in group-spaces. Such spaces offer shared costs, as well as higher administrative costs/burdens.

Studio space for an artist – it comes back to also needing to pay for administrators of that space, it's not enough, if it's going to be a shared space.

The need to strike a balance between working “for art’s sake” and working to support your individual practice – or a group of artists’ overhead costs is an ongoing discussion, even among artists, e.g.:

[Artist 1]: *So the way it's organically going then, how do you pay for that space? Commercializing it? Or...*

[Artist 2]: *Well, right now, sometimes they pay out of pocket, but a lot of it is from work I generate that then comes in through the space [commercial work and services], so it's run more like a business...*

[Artist 1]: *So then, where does one go who actually just wants to experiment and actually work towards something? ... A visual art professional that's basically just creating for creation's sake, as opposed to finding ways to commercialize it so you can...*

[Artist 2]: *Sustain...*

[Artist 1]: *... afford your space?*

[Artist 2]: *I think to me, for us, it's kind of a balance, at least for us.*

[Artist 1]: *But not everybody thinks that way.*

[Artist 2]: *That's fair.*

[Artist 1]: *A lot of people are just basically experimental and that's probably 90% of their practice is experimentation.*

[Artist 2]: *So then it becomes how do you pay for that, right? And you do probably need subsidized space at that point. And like I said, I think it would be great to have. But I think the other part that we run into is how do you bring in different groups which we've had conversations with—someone who works with Sask.Abilities and ...bringing in individuals with intellectual disabilities. How do you ..., bring in ...newcomers or other people who are getting into this who don't have any money and very little time? Often people need training, and I think the other part that goes along with this is how do we create better access? ,, That's why I always come back to 'yes, let's create a space but let's also have the staff to help run that space.' That comes hand-in-hand.*

Similar topics and concerns were prominent in SPAR's Saskatoon artist responses in 2014, i.e.: adequate access to sufficiently large, safe, and affordable studio spaces. Artists noted the need for: "More funded communal studio space. Safe buildings, properly ventilated and second hand cast offs. I have known many sick artists from poor working conditions." Rising costs were also noted four years ago, e.g.: "Studio space is getting harder and harder to find for visual artists. It is getting more expensive constantly. Sometimes twice a year now we see raises in our rent" (SPAR, 2016).

Performance-specific feedback

Artists were quick to mention groups and organizations in Saskatoon that were working to address the need for arts spaces. Examples like [Void Gallery](#), [Paved Arts](#), Lauriston Street Studios, the [Albert Community Centre](#), and the [Open Storefront/On the Boards Staging Company](#) were cited by artists with direct connections/experiences with these organizations as well as by artists who did not. The organization most-repeatedly cited for creating and improving access to arts spaces in Saskatoon was [The Open Storefront, by On the Boards Staging Company](#):

I'm thinking of the Open Storefront, that's what it made me think of when you mentioned that. I don't know if you know the Open Storefront. I'd be interested to know how many request[s] they get for that space because I know that it's a juggling act for them to try and accommodate all the requests they do get. It's an awesome space. I mean, it doesn't always meet all your needs but it's awesome that it's available for artists.

As an actor, I/we do rely on ... so much generosity from so many people. Without the Open Storefront, the indie shows would not be able to happen. Even Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan relies on the generosity of the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] for the rehearsal space there.... Another thing that kind of gets in the way for a lot of indie shows is if you want to use the U of S, they have a lot of insurance requirements that we can't necessarily afford to meet.

One thing that became evident to me was that visual artists need the permanence, they need the ventilation. They need—you know working in heat and different things and toxic, and all sorts of stuff—so it has to be a very specific space.... It doesn't have to be that large but it has to be very specific and permanent. Whereas performing arts you need a big empty space and that's where we run into the trouble because you need a big empty space with nothing in it but we are pretty mobile, so people can move in, people can move out.... That's why we've been able to do it with found storefront because I can say "look we can have six folding tables and two fixed chairs and we can be out of here at midnight." We don't need to put things up on the wall. We're in and out ... quietly and you won't even know we were here. They're very different needs, but if we were renting a space the size is what is prohibitive. You need a large size; you need a large size without pillars in

the middle so your dancers don't go [crashing noise]. So they are different, and that was the main thing that I found - performing needs large open space and visual needs permanent space. They're very different that way.

Performance-based arts find specific challenges regarding space since they can typically need space for administration, rehearsal, performance, production (sets, costumes, props, etc.), as well as storage.

Finding a venue to rehearse with [large shows/cast] is extremely difficult. We end up again depending on the generosity of the business community to give us discounted spaces because there's no way we can afford that \$3,000/month. So it is fingers crossed every time, "I hope this is gonna work!" When the Open Storefront moved in to a smaller space it was no longer an option for us because the space shrunk by 1/3rd of what it used to be so we no longer fit in there. The other issue is we also need a workshop... and those spaces are super tough to find... Safety, that's another aspect we really need to consider as well... Another thing is storage... we have a storage space outside of town... but there's this constant struggle too of what do you store, what do you throw away? You're throwing all this stuff away because you can't afford to store it which is sort of tragic actually because a lot of it is reusable, but at the same time you've got nowhere to put it. It's got to go.

From a performance perspective, we don't really have a 200 seat theatre in Saskatoon so that's kind of a bummer, you're either 100, or 400 or how many does TCU hold 4,000- 5,000? What's Persephone -- 400, 420? Broadway is 436 with wheelchair space. Remai is 450, but there's no backstage.

Craft Arts and/or "Dirty Arts" specific feedback

As mentioned above, some arts practices need permanent, specifically equipped spaces. So called "dirty arts" – e.g. working with stone, metal, clay, ceramics, etc. -- require specific equipment for the execution of art in a safe environment. When asked what they needed to thrive, such artists were clear, saying "Simple. A studio." Another artist expanded, saying:

From my point of view as a sculptor, the space compared to dance or music – just take your body or instrument and perform – you need to have a specific place for your tools. Production space... must be kind of permanent... Sculpting in general because it's heavy material, carving stone or even if you just do your project out of clay or plasticine, it's something heavy and can't stay there, you can't work from 8 to 8 and move your stuff because someone has to use the space. I have [studio space]; I rented a small space not far from my house but there's no toilet, water - it's usually storage. Sometimes when I'm teaching I might use that studio but also... because of other classes I have to clean up and move so I don't have a real studio.

The scale of artists' works can be determined – or limited – by their available space. One artist noted sometimes having to turn away large-scale commissions:

I am constrained on space... I'd love to have more space... and more equipment [lays out specifics]. I don't see any individual being able to afford that sort of equipment and space. I don't know a fabricating shop in Saskatoon with that kind of equipment... ten years ago before the price of space skyrocketed, we were looking at spaces. It might be possible for 3 to 4 [craftspeople].

The possibility of a cultural hub along the ArtSpace model (which will arise again later in this report) was most often discussed in connection with craft arts and/or dirty-arts.

A more community based solution would be the ArtSpace concept, a maker space. I envision a metal-making, wood-making, maybe electronics, a few different tailored maker spaces. With [specific shops]

connected to it... That would allow for the community to get involved with a maker space. I'd book my time on specialist equipment... We could teach to subsidize our income. There's a huge interest in craft-making again. Especially with the Forged in Fire (FIF) show on TV – It's doubled the price of equipment! ... It's this huge shift in public perception. The recognition of what I do and some of the tools I have is phenomenal. The WDM [Western Development Museum] used to teach three classes per winter – 10 students each – they went to five [classes] and 200-300 on the waiting lists. With FIF, I think they still teach 50 students each winter and there's a waiting list of between 700 and 800 people.

The need for facilities and training in this area was noted by Saskatoon artists in the SPAR artist survey, as one Saskatoon artist noted their need for a “local arts centre where groups could hold regular meetings, short courses, and store group resources such as their library and equipment. Well-equipped craft educational facilities for promoting hand crafts as a profession pursuit or career. Active promotion of local hand-crafted pursuits and products as an important component of a high quality of life” (SPAR, 2016).

Music-specific feedback

The variety of venues for performances were cited as a strength of the music scene in Saskatoon, while limits for rehearsal space were noted:

I'm finding that a lot of the venue owners are pretty good at cultivating local acts, like at ... the jazz, The Basement, cause they have kind of root series in addition to the jazz thing. So I feel like, at least for myself, when I was getting started in Saskatoon that there was a progression that I could follow and I didn't have to make a huge leap from playing a 20 person venue to a 200 person venue. There was space and accommodation for growth there.

Proper rehearsal spaces. It would have to be equipped with sound gear. I'm thinking of like when I go to other cities... I've had to rehearse with musicians there and they have hourly rates at studios that are all equipped: there's bass amps if you need them, there could be drums if you need them, and they have ... inventory, too and they prep the room for you before you even get there so that everything's ... in place so that you just show up and rent your space. You have 2 hours or an hour and a half and you're just really rehearsing. There's a soundboard and there's a technician on site too. That would be helpful. But we can get by without I guess. We have been going to my parent's basement and renting a sound system.

The opportunity to embrace larger opportunities was discussed, with Winnipeg's The Cube Stage and Old Market Square being cited as one prairie example.

I feel like there are a good variety in Saskatoon of different sizes of venues, places where ... a musician can host their own show or just get ... more experience as opposed to Regina where I feel like it's either small or huge. One thing I think Saskatoon is lacking is a really great outdoor venue ... bigger than the Bessborough, and I think there's something in the works for ... Kinsmen Park or something. There's going to be a new festival or something, but I really feel that would be such a great way to foster community through the arts and having an outdoor place for people to get together and enjoy music or any kind of art or drama or whatever. I know it happens sometimes with parks but there's no big one. Bigger than the Bessborough Gardens. Like an amphitheatre. Winnipeg has the Cube I think they call it; it's sort of downtown and it's like a stage that is ready for a sound system. It's equipped, whereas the Bessborough Gardens you have to set up the stage and bring in the sound all these things.... It would be fun to have this place where big outdoor shows or festivals could happen. Seems like something Saskatoon doesn't have yet.

Revisiting Artists' Networks

As previously stated, throughout conversations with artists, the importance of networking within, and connecting to, community was clearly stated as being important to artists' practices. Winnipeg was cited as a city where greater availability of creative spaces resulted in more interconnected artists, a more vibrant and sustainable arts scene:

There's a bit more of a kind of crossover with the practices in Winnipeg... There's a lot going on: video artists working with musicians, and musicians working with dance artists. It's a bit more of a natural collaborative environment there. I think it has to do with maybe the size of the city; it's not too big but it's not as small as Saskatoon. It's a nice middle ground – around 750 thousand people – so it's big enough that people stick around. It's big enough that the community itself can retain themselves but then can also branch out because they're not so tiny that if someone leaves they basically fall apart, which is something that happens in Saskatoon.

They have the access of spaces because the one thing Saskatoon did that Winnipeg didn't is tear down all their big beautiful warehouse spaces in the 50s and forward. There's a lot of really inexpensive space [in Winnipeg]. There's the entire exchange district that you can rent a space this size for less than \$200 and you're in a building with 20 other artists, and there's no concern that if that one warehouse building in the city closes down that everyone gets booted out. They can just move to another one. So there's all of that going for it.

And it's really inexpensive whereas Saskatoon is expensive. This community is teeny tiny. There's no retention because there's no spaces, so students, for example, graduate and then can't find spaces to actually work out of. There's no studio spaces that people can actually work out of, they don't want to stick around because there's no larger community to sustain the. So it kind of stays at this level where the various communities are disparate and what support there is, is so small that it doesn't enable people to carry on with what they're doing to a certain degree.

Longevity and sustainability are linked. As the previous artist observed, if a program depends upon a single person, or a small group of individuals it might not survive their loss:

I do agree with you because with the visual arts scene (I don't know how the performance and theatre scene is) in Saskatoon we had the Emma Lake workshops. It was this catalyst for all of this art exploration, all of these artists from the prairies rose to this national dialogue and it's just this huge thing and the community, the public, became aware of different artists. Then that died and there's just been this hole, nothing took its place. And people were still riding that thing from however many years ago. The history is really wonderful but there needs to be something next; there isn't and there hasn't been.

Thriving depends upon adequate resilience and sustainability. These topics were prevalent throughout artist consultations.

City of Saskatoon's Role in Supporting Cultural Development

While artists were not specifically asked to respond to Saskatoon's refreshed *Culture Plan*, their feedback can be classified according to the plan's identified "four main roles in support of cultural development" for the City of Saskatoon, i.e.: 1) Planning and Policy Maker, 2) Convener and Facilitator, 3) Funder and Provider, and 4) Bridge Between Funders (City of Saskatoon, 2018a).

1) Planning and Policy Maker: *Develop ongoing municipal cultural plans, policies, and initiatives across departments in response to community need and opportunity.*

Public education figured prominently in artists' discussions. In addition to the role of the city in creating policy that can increase access to space for the arts, it was clear that artists feel any planning or policy development should include educating/informing the public about the value the arts provide. For example, when asked "What do you need for your practice to thrive?" conversations often turned to how it was thriving – and ways it could thrive more with greater public awareness/education:

It's thriving in a different way. It's thriving like growing mushrooms in a basement where you know they might pop up and, "Yay we have them!" But it's not always a professional, well-regarded thing. With public education, maybe advertisements or something, it could be like "Oh! You see these things we're celebrating as a community? This is the arts!" A lot of times people find these joys and what is brightening their lives. It's the arts, but we're not really saying "This is the arts. This is the artist." Support that, y'know? It's just not always the one plus one kind of equation; I think a lot of people are missing that.

Public education. In particular, valuing of the arts, like that's the base to all of this. That's my mission in both my practice and as an educator. Get these kids in kindergarten understanding what we do and how we value it. When you go to a place like New York, they're fighting the same way we are here. It's not like it's any different. It's just that there's more people; you don't have to go through the whole, "I'm an artist, this is what I do." It's much more "I'm an artist, this is what I need." You'll get an answer right away. There's no backstory. There's a valuing that takes place and I think that that's the thing that Saskatoon needs.

The one thing: I feel pretty strongly that if you expect someone to do professional level work you should provide them with a professional level space, access to that. As part of that, it's just an unfair expectation to give them a fraction of the tools they need. Part of it is the understanding of the public or the people ... that don't understand the difference between professional and unprofessional.

Art is a way to bring people together peacefully... What I want to see in Saskatoon is not just big galleries and commercial galleries, and small, tiny galleries. I want to look at more civic galleries for the public. And we could use these civic centres for arts classes – but not for just painting or drawing, but the cultural arts. It could be beading, calligraphies, it could be handcrafts. We have so many immigrants right now and so many retired people – they don't know what to do.

Linking public education and existing programs, festivals, and fairs in Saskatoon could also be useful, especially if artists might be struggling for space in existing events, as these two participants highlighted:

The first time they had artists on the 2nd Ave Sidewalk Sale – and it's their 45th year of doing it, 45th year of selling lulu lemon pants and shoes and jackets and suit jackets and food—and there was an artist. I was there, I didn't do well. The organization engaged me to be there and that was good because they asked me to be there. Also there was a painter artist who I knew. We were set up side by side. She was kind of feeling

the disconnection of being an artist in the 2nd Ave Street Fair feeling like, "I don't know if this was worth it." Had to pay for the tent - I forget how much. 45 years when you're used to shopping for merch that's that. The art can have a harder time.

As an artist it's hard to make your artwork near the food stand or shoe store or whatever. People go there to eat, drink, whatever. That idea where you have this festival and it's specific. Just art, it doesn't matter if it's dance, visual art, or music. You advertise and you let the public know what this is about, and they come for that event. When it's a mash up, as an artist we just look, "Oh did they come for me or for the food?" Your work is not the point. I don't know. There's a city in [artist's original home] where the city provides small studios for this kind of festival, like a tent but they build it. It's not just for a day, it can be for a week but artists can close the studio and come back the next day, so all this is provided by the city, and it's just [an] art festival.

Artists did have specific suggestions regarding the role of planning and policy in increasing access to arts and creative spaces, citing tax incentives, short-term pilot projects, and partnerships, e.g.:

I think it could be done in pieces, though, like having ... project spaces, arts-incubators, that could be subsidized, could be helped by the city, even just tax incentives or something like that if this was a building that's rented out as a designated arts hub.

Could they look into models in other cities?... That could be another task force for the city or whoever's doing this where they ... look at models. There's a place ... we got to use last week: it's a bunch of business owners who need tax write-offs who have all these vacant buildings so they lease them out for a month at a time to artist groups for performances. It's tax incentive based, but it's also like they get something. It brings attention to that space. It's what you were talking about but it's looking to other models.

Without supplementing spaces and making studio spaces available to artists, there's an issue with retention. For example: what [artists are] doing already, finding ways to partner with empty spaces and offering lower prices for those sorts of places to be available to artists for short terms leases, would be a great idea. The idea of this whole bus barn concept, being available to artists at a discounted rate as opposed to it just being available to large organisations, or crafters, or people who have more money than individual artists because what I see, inevitably what would happen with that is that it would just become a sort of art market and wouldn't necessarily actually support or foster individual artists.

Some artists were quick to add that any discussion of arts-based tax-abatements should try to ensure that such savings 1) are passed on to artists, and 2) incentivize the use of spaces for the arts and not just "static-art spaces."

The discussion did not stop at tax incentives, however. It was often linked to the potential value of the City of Saskatoon bringing together artists and business/service communities for the good of socio-economic development generally. This can fit into the city's developmental role of *convener and facilitator*.

2) Convener and Facilitator: *Convene individuals and organizations from the cultural sector and the larger community to address important strategic issues and opportunities.*

Given the importance of networks, connections, and collaborations to Saskatoon artists, the role of Convener/Facilitator might have the greatest potential for impactful intervention by the City of Saskatoon.

Saskatoon artists also saw value in connecting to the local business community, whether or not they had successfully done so themselves:

I really like the idea of merging the funding opportunities to have business meet the arts, so even hosting some kind of ... networking event or something like, I don't know, facilitate those meetings so it's not quite as awkward when you're the only artists in a room full of business people.

Or the building owners ... [with] all these empty spaces downtown. We've got a friend who owns one of the buildings and he's looking for six months to find somebody to fill the space.... I'm like, 'We've got tons of people who could fill the space even if it's just to pay the power bill so you don't have to.' and he's just like 'Yeah but they're artists ... you know the messes that they make and the type of people they bring in.' ...It's this stereotype. They're trying not to be offensive, but ... they say 'type of people' cause that could just be anybody without actually saying something specific.

On the idea of tax incentives for building owners, another thing the city could potentially do is start connecting business owners with these needs. Again there's division between communities. There's the business owners who do the business things, then the artists who do the artist things, but [no one is] bringing those two worlds together. They have all these strategic planning sessions or the Better Business Bureau or whatever it is in Saskatoon. They do business. They have big meetings where business people meet, sure, so why aren't we putting these two people or these two things together so that there's that incentive to hear each others' needs?

Such programs do exist elsewhere. As just one example, Calgary Arts Development (CAD)'s [resources and spaces page](#) links to several programs through which CAD, “enables local artists, groups and businesses by connecting them to information vital to creating art and living creative lives... fostering collaborative relationships and making the arts integral to the lives of Calgarians” (Calgary Arts Development, 2018).

Artists sought better networking/awareness for opportunities within the arts communities in Saskatoon:

Partnerships are the bread and butter of ... a healthy cultural environment, right? [For example there are] spaces like VOID and the spaces like Paved. I think it's a matter of us doing the work on the other end—making people aware that those spaces are there for people... Paved does have a bunch of studio space available and it's for audio and visual and photography. It's there and it's cheap and memberships are inexpensive. [It has] an event space that's a relatively fair size that's available for members, and all of that stuff is there but most of the time as much as we try to ... promote it, it sits empty a lot. It's quite surprising especially when people are complaining that there isn't space in this city for these kinds of practices. It's more like, there aren't the connections there to bridge...

Once again, the *Open Storefront* was cited as a working example of artists and businesses working together. It is cited as a model that could inform the development of greater arts/business ties.

With the Open Storefront project – which is found space, businesses – we take over un-leased empty storefronts. They work with the landlord, provide insurance, everything, and then the space is free to performers who are in the creation phase, so workshops, rehearsals, practice, just practicing their art, whatever it is they need.

So I feel like if we're asking what could exist to help us thrive here, some stability some source of help. I'd be interested to hear from Cynthia at On the Boards because she's the one who's trying to hustle the funding on those free spaces now. That is quite the task for one person so it feels like it should be more than just that. I walk through Market Mall and I'm seeing ... empty store, empty store, empty store, empty store, right?

Creating bridges between artists and other sectors is part of reconnecting the city more generally:

[Artist 1]: There is a disconnection there, and there's... a disconnection in communication between like communities and also even just like our relationship with the university, for instance. There's some sort of division, a literal division, I guess, of the bridges, water, or something, but ... the city is tiny. It doesn't necessarily mean 'ugh it's all the way over on the west side.' It's a psychological thing more than anything, so we're trying and I'm sure I'm not the first executive director ... that's tried to find new ways to ... foster a relationship with ... the visual arts department at the university but... it's the thing that's constantly a job. It's so weird. You don't have profs coming to exhibition openings. How do you expect students to come to openings if you're not even the one, if you're not ... even fostering your community? How do you expect to have another generation fostering a community?

[Artist 2]: See you, it's interesting because you're commenting on two historic issues in the city and one is the disconnect, a disconnect with the university and a disconnect with the east and west side which is just from racist roots... They're not modern problems. They're holdovers and the university has a disconnect in music, theatre; we've made some [in]roads because we work with a lot of graduates from the university department, the Drama Dept., so that has really helped, but music, visual, that has been a fight for a long while.

[Artist 1]: Totally. And that's why people end up in other cities y'know? That's not the only reason people want to move and that makes sense. It's a small city but for the city to maintain and grow this community ... that's ground zero. As you were saying with the children and stuff, it's also the people that are ... actively becoming or identifying as visual artists in their university careers or from their high school years forward. If there's not a community here that's maintained then of course they're going to go elsewhere.

City as Facilitator:

Though artists expressed gratitude for the assistance they have received from the city, those who have run festivals and other large events noted that some small adjustments to facilitation and cross-departmental communications could make hosting such events in Saskatoon easier.

There's multiple levels of admin and ... I know Kathy and Kevin have worked really hard to make it smoother, and it has gotten smoother over the years, but you'll get permissions from one level, but then the next level you run into that. Two years ago where we got permission to turn off lights and then I got a \$1,000 bill from light and power because it's not the city. Saskatoon Light and Power is a separate organization and then they billed us for it. We got that smoothed out but then the police were considering that there would be like a safety [issue]... you need all those departments on board. Kevin and Kathy have been great but there's only 2 or 3 of them.

Even teeny tiny things... just like trying to get a sidewalk permit was a two-day job... Just the amount of red tape to do something as simple as one of the tiniest little parts of the fundraiser — ... [putting] up a fence... we had to get through all this bureaucratic red tape just to do something simple. So you're right, it's basically someone needs to be in... the obstacle course. A way [the city] can support ... events and activities ... that are supporting the quality of life here ... [is to] at least help us get through the red tape and the process, and be a bit more supportive that way. That would be an interesting move for them... There's a way to partner without it becoming a financial thing. Just help us with the city stuff... figure out that we do need to talk to police, and we do need to talk to the power. There's an individual that ... happily takes that on, in order for the arts to thrive. That would be amazing.

Arts & Artist Registry/Calendar

The value of creating an online artist/arts registry was a topic that appeared in focus groups and individual consultations. It is not new. Saskatoon artists envisioned it in 2014. Some mentioned a calendar: “An arts directory of some sort... listings of arts events/happenings going on in the city, province, surrounding areas, all in one place, easily accessible.” Some saw a more expansive role, “we need a clearinghouse for all ethnic/cultural groups and art formats/mediums to list their resources, activities, events, 'calls' and future programs/directives like a 'Craig's List' of ARTS - all arts!”

SAA consultations proved that artists were still excited by the possibilities of an online arts registry/planning tool.

For example, it would be of benefit if they would have my name on a list with my CV, portfolio, and they would know what I can do... [to help earn] a living. Then I could afford my own studio. It doesn't mean the city can/ should give me my own studio. Advertising myself through the city would be wonderful.

That would help festivals too. We put out a call and my only option is to put it out through our existing audience. So if the city had ... a list of artists and we said ok could you put out this call for submissions, we're paying money for artists, to all the artists registered, that would be nice.

There's that longer conversation that's been going [for years]. We were talking about having some sort of ... active arts calendar and really no organization, no one organization was willing to take it on as their main responsibility.

It would be the umbrella catch-all where there'd be ... an arts calendar, and there'd be ... basically a mailing list that would go out. There'd be a way to access individual artists and organizations. ... You could do ... calls for proposals in there... employment opportunities, workshop opportunities ... all that stuff but no one organization was willing to take that on.

It makes me think of City Life, the poster, but specifically the arts, and it becomes as robust and organic as, well it takes on whatever life it needs too, depending on the needs of individuals and organizations.

If the city had an artist roster, so when the arts were something of focus then there's a resource to access artists of all different kinds, but also ... the individual in terms of administrative. Right now I'm having this challenge of ... getting into contact with schools, principals, teachers, to do performances in schools, or workshops. ... How can we make one-off experiences become more permanent and sustaining of having someone in the city, or having someone in school boards or the library -- organizations that ... [are] already established, that are there to be interested in the arts and be connected to the artists. As an artist would it be helpful if there was a resource hub or space for artists?

To me it also just changes the way we interact with the arts – the culture of the arts in the city. You want to come in and do a workshop with a class; there are classes out there that have a small budget for that. But there's also businesses that want team building exercises. If you have someone who's like “hey y'know instead of going to that escape room why don't you go do a dance workshop?”

Saskatoon artists consulted for this report added to such potential functions the idea of a registry of available spaces as well as other resources.

I know we're focused on Saskatoon but part of, like, 20 minutes in any direction from this city there are tons of open spaces that people are willing to share. They just ... [don't know] that the need is there.... So ... do

we start to reach out a bit but do that through Saskatoon's core? Because people are always coming in to Saskatoon and think about all the open farm buildings that are ... there. We have a ton of space here.

In Saskatoon there's so much vacancy... we've been looking for a space for our gallery and a project space for 2 years. I've made ... 100s of emails and phone calls and it's just like "Hey I've noticed this space, this dilapidated building is empty for 5+ years. What's going on with it? We would like to be in it, spruce it up, and there will be value added. People will see it with new eyes." They're not into it. I see it as this thing that's going to rejuvenate the space and it's an investment that they'll maybe sell it later on. But it seems like people are holding on to these properties... They won't take a chance on artists. It's just crazy expensive. They just see it as 'Oh we'll give you a commercial lease' and that's like \$3000 a month per year lease and that's not our language.

Though this is being identified in the “convener and facilitator” section of this report, it could as easily be included within the roles of “funder and provider” and “bridge between funders.” The creation and maintenance of such a tool would require substantial investment – and perhaps be best initiated by a consortium of organizations/funders.

For reference, models do exist in Canada and abroad. In Alberta, for example, [Calgary Arts Development](#) also has online [resources dedicated to helping artists find available arts spaces](#). Similarly, Edmonton is listed in [SpaceFinder Alberta](#). For more examples of programs, organizations, and spaces that were referenced by artists in these consultations, see *Appendix B*.

3) Funder and Provider: Invest in cultural development to help support and sustain the cultural sector and to advance broad City plans and priorities; jointly fund initiatives with private, non-profit, or government agencies.

The City of Saskatoon's current [Artists in Place: The Bunkhouse Project](#) is a pilot program to revitalize the historic Bunkhouse at the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo. The project hopes to, among other goals, “reimagine and redesign the Bunkhouse as an artist space that will serve as an artist laboratory and incubator” (City of Saskatoon, 2018b). Generally, artists were enthusiastic about the possibilities of this project, and hoped to see more iterative projects like it (pilot, short-term, learning opportunities):

I love the Bunkhouse Project! Let's have 5 of them!

It's not super hard but it's these connections and a little bit of convincing. I think the city could help facilitate and also I think there's a lot of, kind of bureaucracy things that it takes a while for wheels to start moving, but I think if you treat it like "Oh this is a city project, this is a two-year project where it's just ... to see what happens – so we give this theatre group, or we subsidize this building, or whatever for two years and see what happens. And treat it like a project where they can study and do whatever happens there, just do a team of 12 artists divided into studio spaces.' It doesn't need to be this massive undertaking, this ... \$5 million project that's this huge thing. It could just ... [be] "let's try this" to start. But I feel like those wheels, it takes so much of a push even just to get it moving and these different projects don't need to have the same model, so you can have like this model here, this model where musicians have a group space here. See how that works. It doesn't have to be this ... big grandiose thing that they have to do this big, crazy study and get all this whatever in. It could just kind of happen and be flexible like it's a project, it's two years whatever.

Not every city-arts-space received unqualified support, however:

TCU is not all that community friendly. There's no community rate, there's no non-profit rate... It doesn't feel like they want us in that venue so even if we were to move to that, even if we could, if we had the numbers to support it, I don't know that we'd be welcome. Which is particularly sad because I believe it's meant to serve the community right?

When suggesting ideas for city-funded spaces, artists also envisioned larger-scale, often multi-purpose facilities or networks of them:

In putting all this together, thinking about this idea of the arts hub, in other centres you see that one building but within that building there's a recording studio, there's a theatre, there's studio spaces, there's a gallery space but more importantly it's a bridge to the rest of the community.

So when you're out of storage space the schools come and get the materials that they need. In New York... they have a thing called Materials for the Arts. You can go in as an artist or as a theatre company or as musicians and go in and get what you need because it's all been donated by the communities around... Whatever your genre is ...you can either donate the material or come and get the material, and so we were able to costume 12 people for nothing. It probably would've cost us \$5,000 to do what we did. Yes, it is a bigger centre that has that history but to have a hub of some kind that would bridge all of those, and then knowing that there's school groups out there that would come in to this and say ok 'well we need this' because we're doing theatre play or whatever.... We've got practical and applied arts teachers that are always looking for their students to build sets so it's ... kind of... bringing all of these together and saying 'ok here it is.' I mean... that's the dream, right? Cause it's about bringing all the communities together... We all live in the same centre and I see this over and over again where we don't communicate with each other.

For the city, too, they can think a little outside of the box like Regina. They have a downtown artist in residence where this artist is just engaging the public, doing performances, workshops, all sorts of things, public art downtown. They also have, and this is in other centres as well, storefront galleries of empty storefronts. You just put a wall in front of the storefront, shine some lights, and it's a little art display that anyone walking downtown, you could walk two blocks out of your way and discover a bunch of shops, just go see a window display.

I love the idea of having an amphitheatre in Saskatoon. In Vancouver they do Theatre Under the Stars in Stanley Park. I know we have a really short summer, but I believe it would be very well used because everyone here loves to make the most of our very short summer so I do love that idea and I know that they have one at [Wanuskewin](#). But it's not the same.

But I do think some rural communities really do embrace the arts. Like this train thing, they actually are farmers who bought it. And so they were like 'we like this' and we have money and we're going to do this. So they did it. Now, artists do things on the train. [Hazlet](#) has an art gallery, the [Bethany project](#), the Bethany church. There's a real willingness to bring in artists to those rural communities, some not all, and I'm always jealous of visual artists. If I was a visual artist I would totally go for this. Like my hometown, the school closed down so now there are all these classrooms that are available for studio spaces and I'm like 'these would be so wonderful' but I don't have anything to bring there.

Artists' were aware of the potential to incorporate arts spaces into the redevelopment of the bus barns in South Caswell Hill. Some artists were cautious:

It's such an ambitious project. It started out as a few places and they were like, "we got to make room for welders, we've got to make room for glass blowers" and it's become this giant thing that ... I don't know will ever happen. So I love that idea for a dream, that would be amazing, because then the community knows this

is a place to drop in. There's this happening and this happening, ties these arts together. I don't know if it's ever going to happen, especially after spending so much money on the new Remai and stuff like that, right? Coming up with tax dollars is tough, right?

Artists directly involved with the [ArtSpaceYXE](#) project were, perhaps understandably more optimistic:

If ArtSpace happens – right now the city has released an RFP for a portion of the City Transit bus barns in South Caswell Hill that ArtSpace will respond to. It's the buildings north of 24th Street. Which is the ideal buildings to start for ArtSpace – the dirty arts: hands-on dirty arts like blacksmithing, pottery, woodturning, all of that. The artisan stuff. We'd sure hope to incorporate in future developments – maybe on the south half of that bus barns property – to build some purpose-built buildings for performing arts and fine arts to really round out – the galleries and arts supplies stores and art organization offices – so we can have an incredibly large package of all things artistic in that zone, on that 5 acre property. That becomes a draw for both locals and visitors. Creative Hubs are all over the world, now, but I've yet to find one that is that all-encompassing. To have art organizations in the offices, the galleries, the retail, the food and drink, the fine arts, the performing arts, and the dirty arts all in one zone. Even Artscape in Toronto in their 18 properties doesn't have it all in one place like we're talking.

As previously-quoted artists connected their arts practices to Saskatoon's cultural and economic development, so too do artist-supporters of ArtSpace:

I see an advantage of a collective artistic hub; I see economic advantages to the city in tourism. Tourism Saskatoon has been the sole funder of ArtSpaceYXE to this point because they recognise that tourism value. They want to attract conferences. They want to offer experiential opportunities to delegates. It will put us on the map, if done grandly enough – like the Remai has. This hands-on component to the arts world is complimentary to the Remai. We're that grassroots, introduction, hands-on at ArtSpace. It can get them through the door to the arts. For locals – not unlike the community centres where people could have a membership to a gym in the community centre, residents of Saskatoon could buy memberships to use the space. I see a connection to the education system. Not everyone is a book learner or a lecture learner. Lots of kids are hands-on learners. I see that as a way to increase our technical skills throughout the school system: from elementary to high schools through to our post-secondary system. I see that as a link that we are missing.

Four years ago, SPAR artist-respondents were also suggesting the need for shared creative spaces, such as “An open, free place for independent artists to share work & training” or on a larger scale:

Local arts centre where groups could hold regular meetings, short courses, and store group resources such as their library and equipment. Well-equipped craft educational facilities for promoting hand crafts as a profession pursuit or career. Active promotion of local hand-crafted pursuits and products as an important component of a high quality of life. (SPAR, 2016)

In the short term, it is easier to envision such shared spaces coming from the City of Saskatoon playing to its strength as a liaison, facilitator, and bridge-between-funder than as sole funder and provider for a capital project. Even when considering existing spaces, the *Saskatoon Cultural Facilities Inventory Update 2018* lists a total of 276 facilities (of various type, use, and size). Of these, 21 are municipally owned, or roughly 1/10th the combined number of facilities (195) that are owned privately (125) or by not-for-profits (70) (City of Saskatoon, upcoming).

4) Bridge Between Funders: *Share local cultural sector knowledge with funding colleagues in other agencies and levels of government in order to strengthen understanding and support for the sector.*

The city's potential to act as a bridge between funders, as discussed by artists in these SAA consultations has been variously covered in previous sections – especially regarding facilitation, network-building, connection-making, etc. As previously mentioned, Saskatoon artists were open to, even eager for, greater opportunities to network, partner, and work with various sectors and organizations with Saskatoon and beyond. These included other levels of government (local, provincial, federal, First Nations, and even international); non-profits, educational institutions; community services and development departments; immigrant settlement agencies; arts funders; and businesses, for example:

So we have Edwards School of Business, I walk by it every day and I think about all the people learning about farming and agriculture and all of those things ... and I also think about where are their arts organizations? That kind of model of 'this is what we do in this province, this is what we have, this is how we bring more people' and it's just like planting those little seeds in different spaces... There's a north side district something where it's like a whole bunch of smaller companies, bigger companies, get together and have a lunch and discuss how they're going to invest in each other and what they're going to spend their money on and it would be really wonderful to see those kinds of orgs do spotlights on artists: "Here's someone, did you know they do this? Find out in their program." It makes a huge difference. But you have to speak the language of money and maybe that's where creatives need to start ... learning the language a little more so that you can present yourself in a way that can be heard by them. It's the language of capital.

Specifically, artists saw the various connections between the city of Saskatoon and local business groups as having great potential for growing their practice, the arts in Saskatoon, as well as the city itself. The City of Saskatoon is well-situated and suited to act as a bridge between artists and such groups to help fulfill the goal of better integrating the arts into all aspects of the community.

Concluding Summary

A summary of specific space requirements are listed below. An over-arching factor relating to these needs was affordability and access. The rising cost and limited availability of space was cited as the cause of missed opportunities and frustrations affecting both artists' creative ambitions and their need reach out to the wider community. Artists recognized, however, that acquisition or access to these spaces would require increased administrative efforts on their part or that of arts administrators or in some cases technicians. In other words they understood that space requirements automatically have associated personnel requirements either for increased administrative hours for the artists or arts organizations themselves or for other organizations or businesses associated with the spaces.

Spaces for Visual Artists and Artisans

- Affordable studio and shared spaces specifically equipped (with appropriate health and safety accommodations) for work in the “dirty arts” (stone, metal, ceramics, etc).
- Affordable, professional studio space,, especially for emerging and newcomer artists, which is appropriate to the scale of work an artist wants to create.
- Maker spaces in the ArtSpace mode with specific studios, shops and public educational space.
- Professional gallery space for local artists at all stages of their careers, including emerging artists and newcomers; store-front galleries.
- Civic galleries/centres providing contemporary and traditional art classes which connect the public with a diversity of cultures.

Spaces for Musicians

- Professional rehearsal space equipped with sound equipment and technician.
- Outdoor amphitheater (larger than the Bessborough Gardens) equipped with stage and sound system.

Spaces for Other Types of Performance

- Affordable, large, unobstructed rehearsal space.
- Production workshops outfitted according to health and safety standards.
- Affordable storage facilities.
- A 200 seat theatre.
- An outdoor amphitheatre.

Space Requirements Common to All Disciplines

Facilities for specific arts organizations that are large enough for sufficient administrative offices and community outreach “to invite the community in.”

- Training/educational spaces.
- Neighbourhood /community arts centers bringing together artists and the public with facilities for meetings, courses, appropriate equipment, storage, etc. for specific groups.
- Incubators for emerging and newcomer artists.
- Multi-purpose, multi-disciplinary shared spaces and creative hubs that would facilitate networking, collaboration, and opportunities for increased community inclusion and outreach involvement, including arts-based community education.
- Common ‘arts store’ for the re-use of materials by all kinds of artists, arts educators, arts organizations, educational institutions.

“Place-Making” Needs Not Tied to a Specific Type of Physical Space

- Replacement for the cross-disciplinary Emma Lade Workshop for professional development.
- Artist-in-Residence/animateurs creating connecting places/events/venues for public engagement.
- Round tables/conferences/networking venues for professional arts, in some cases involving businesses.
- Virtual Arts Hub with info re opportunities and arts related info including a calendar of events/happenings/festivals/workshops; resources and spaces; a directory or ‘Craig’s List’ of the arts; employment opportunities.

In addition to the Saskatoon groups and organizations working to address the need for arts space, models that offer solutions include: Spacefinder Alberta, Artists in the Workplace, Open House (Calgary); Cube Stage and Old Market Square (Winnipeg); Artscape Toronto; and BC Artscape.

Artists identified specific ways in which the City of Saskatoon could assist its arts community in addressing these needs through its role as:

Planning and Policy Maker:

- The City can implement policy to increase access to space for the arts, including through short-term pilot projects and partnerships as well as tax incentives – with the caveat that arts-based tax-abatements should try to ensure that such savings are passed on to artists to incentivize the active use of spaces for the arts.

Convener and Facilitator:

- The City can facilitate connections between artists and the business and university communities. The Open Storefront was cited as a working example of artists and businesses collaborating.
- The City can play a role in facilitating cross-departmental communications to help those involved in hosting festivals and other events meet required rules and regulations.
- The City can develop an online registry and planning tool to support finding space as, for example, Calgary Arts Development which provides links to several space finding initiatives on its website.
- The City can connect artists with communities outside of Saskatoon who have large storage or rehearsal spaces available.

Funder and Provider:

- Provision of city spaces for learning opportunities such as the Artists in Place: The Bunkhouse Project pilot program and other iterative projects are examples of how the city can support artists.
- The City can help to create multi-purpose arts and community hubs or networks such as ArtSpace Toronto. Some artists saw ArtSpace YXE as having potential. In the short term, the city can liaise with partners to provide new spaces and better utilize existing spaces.

Bridge between Funders:

- Specifically regarding arts spaces, topics included increasing access to arts and creative spaces via more short-term pilot projects and partnerships as well as tax incentives – with the caveat that arts-based tax-abatements should ensure that such savings are passed on to artists to incentivise the active use of spaces for the arts.

It was clear that artists saw their spatial needs and the role of the City in addressing those needs as part of a much larger ecological picture in which artists and arts organizations should be situated as essential to the health and well-being of the citizens of Saskatoon and the long term sustainability of the community as a whole. More general key points included:

- The City of Saskatoon is well-situated and suited to act as a bridge between artists and other sectors to help fulfill the goal of better integrating the arts into all aspects of the community. Specifically, artists saw the various connections between the City of Saskatoon and local business groups as having great potential for growing their practice, the arts in Saskatoon, as well as the city itself.
- Artists and the arts contribute to Saskatoon at the cultural level and also at the levels of economic development, increased social inclusion, and higher quality-of-life.
- With more resources, the arts could play an even bigger part in Saskatoon's socio-economic development.

- It is crucial that arts and cultural planning be connected with and integrated across the City's decision-making processes.
- Any planning or policy development should prioritize educating/informing the public about the value the arts provide.

Opportunities for artists to increase and diversify their networks through greater connections not only to other artists and arts organizations, but also to all levels of government, non-profits, community organizations, and business groups are important. The drive to make more connections and establish stronger networks was closely tied to the need for spaces which catalyze and facilitate productive links and nodes of exchange.

- There are currently groups and organizations in Saskatoon that are working to address the need for arts spaces and these could provide models for efforts by the City or other organizations. The organization most often cited for creating and improving access to arts spaces was The Open Storefront, by On the Boards Staging Company.

As envisioned by those consulted by the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, making space for the arts in Saskatoon will require the City's leadership in creating new spaces and better utilizing existing facilities, but this is closely connected with the larger ongoing agenda of making a place—a nurturing environment—for the arts, and place-making in which the arts are fully engaged in building a community that is sustainable and welcoming to all.

Appendix A: Saskatoon Cultural Facilities Inventory Update 2018, by the numbers

276 facilities listed (total)

Ownership includes¹:

- Private (125)
- Not for Profit (70)
- University/College (33)
- Municipal (21)
- Provincial (2)
- School Boards (14)

The 276 facilities include:

- Multi- Functional Commercial Space = 131
Includes various spaces classified as exhibition, performance, etc. within: *Retail; Community Centre/Hall; Bar/ Restaurant/ Cafes; Centres/ Halls; Hospitals; Multi- and Single Tenant Offices; Retail; Hotels; Riverboat; Public Library; Public Park; School/ Church;*
- Education/Training Space (62)
- Exhibition Space (42)
Includes: *Artist Cooperative; Artist- Run Centre; Commercial Gallery; Framing and Art Showcase; Museum/ Collections; Public Archives; Public Gallery; Screening Room/ Art House Cinema*
- Performance Spaces (18)
 - Arena (>3,500) (2)
 - Grand (1,501-3,500) (1)
 - Lower Mid-Sized (151-300) (1)
 - Major (751-1,500) (1)
 - Upper Mid-Sized (301-750) (3)
 - Small (50-150) (4)
 - Intimate (<50) (1)
 - Outdoor Space (6)
 - Administrative Space (5)
 - Creation/Production Space (4)

¹ Some are owned by more than one entity, i.e. the Farmers Market and Square: the square is municipally-owned; the market is not-for-profit.

Additional Cultural spaces list

250 facilities listed (Total)

- Elementary and Secondary Schools (109)
- Religious Organizations (73)
- Fitness and Recreational Sports Centres (16)
- Civic and Social Organizations (15)
- Libraries (9)
- Social Advocacy Organizations (6)
- Child and Youth Services (4)
- Dance Companies (2)
- All other amusement and recreation industries (2)
- Other Membership Organizations (2)
- Educational Support Services (1)
- Full-service restaurants (1)
- Limited-service eating places (1)
- Non-Commercial Art Museums and Galleries (1)
- Other Museums (1)
- Professional Organizations (1)
- Radio Broadcasting (1)
- Recreational vehicle (RV) parks and campgrounds (1)
- Sports teams and clubs performing before a paying audience (1)
- Theatre (except Musical) Companies (1)
- Zoos and Botanical Gardens (1)

Appendix B: Examples of Arts and Artist Spaces and Resources referenced in Artist Consultation Process, 2018

Local:

Albert Community Centre

<http://vvcasaskatoon.com/albert-community-centre-2/albert-community-centre/>

Artists in Place: The Bunkhouse Project (City of Saskatoon)

<https://167.129.248.63/community-culture-heritage/arts-creativity/arts-and-culture-activities>

ArtSpaceYXE

<http://www.artspacesaskatoon.ca/>

Lauriston Street Studios

Open Storefront by On the Boards Staging Company

<https://ontheboards.ca/open-storefront/>

Paved Arts

<https://www.pavedarts.ca/>

The Bethany, Hazlet SK:

<https://www.thebethany.ca/>

Void Gallery

<http://www.creativecommonsyx.com/>

Wanuskewin Heritage Park

<https://wanuskewin.com/>

Extra-provincial:

Artscape Toronto -- <https://www.artscape.ca/>

Creative Placemaking projects:

Artscape is made up of a group of not-for-profit organizations with a mission to make space for creativity and transform communities. To fulfill our mission and vision, we engage in social enterprise in the following fields: real estate development; property management; performance and event services; consulting and knowledge exchange; artistic programming and community animation; and creative entrepreneurship development. Over more than 30 years, Artscape has evolved from a Toronto-based affordable artist studio provider to a global leader in creative placemaking, a practice that leverages arts and culture as a catalyst for community and urban development.

Our development projects are designed to be financially self-sustaining once the front-end capital has been invested. New projects are opened after raising one-time capital investments and are sustained through

planned revenues generated from below-market rents, memberships and user fees. Long-term debt is kept to a minimum.

BC Artscape -- <https://bcartscape.ca/about/>

Our objective is that each of our projects are: An accurate reflection of the community they are located within; Affordable with secure tenure; A supportive home for artists, cultural organizations and community members to collaborate and share resources; A public place to gather and connect across cultures and generations; Self-sustaining.

SpaceFinder Alberta (by Fractured Atlas) <https://alberta.spacefinder.org/>

SpaceFinder Alberta is a free matchmaking tool for renters looking for creative space, and spaces looking to promote their rentals. Venues can market unbooked rental space by creating a listing and uploading a digital calendar, while creatives can discover space based on location, price, amenities, up-to-date availability and more

Funders/sponsors: Calgary Arts Development, Alberta Real Estate Foundation; Arts Habitat Edmonton; Government of Canada; Alberta Foundation for the Arts; Arts Build Ontario; Fractured Atlas

Calgary Arts Development: calgaryartsdevelopment.com/resources/spaces/available-art-spaces/

Artists in the Workplace: *In partnership with the Calgary Chamber, Calgary Arts Development is connecting local businesses that have extra space with local artists and arts organizations who are looking for somewhere to work.”*

The program allows businesses to identify themselves as having space available, and Calgary Arts Development will help match them with an artist or organization to animate their space.

Open Houses: *Calgary Arts Development is pleased to help communicate opportunities for viewing spaces that are available to lease, purchase, rent or share.*

Spaces: *Calgary Arts Development’s arts space activities include seeking opportunities for arts space creation with community stakeholders and The City of Calgary, SpaceFinder Alberta, as well as gathering and sharing knowledge and expertise.*

[SpaceFinder Alberta](#); [Available Art Spaces](#); [Space Wanted Profile](#)

[The Cube Stage and Old Market Square: Winnipeg](#)

Trestle Art Space, Brooklyn, NY <http://trestleartspace.org/the-space>

*Trestle Art Space is an arts organization that provides studio space to contemporary artists. Located in **Sunset Park** and **Gowanus** neighborhoods of Brooklyn, TAS offers the most affordable 24/7 studio space in New York City with [open studio access, semi-private and private studios](#).*

Trestle Art Space also supports [Trestle Gallery](#), a visual arts exhibition space that shows 15-20 exhibitions each year. Trestle also provides figure drawing sessions, art talks, critiques, screenings, performance art events, technique-focused art classes, professional development opportunities, and two studio space residencies: the Trestle Art Space/Trestle Residency, and the Visiting Artist Residency.

MoMA PS1, New York, NY: <https://www.moma.org/about/who-we-are/momaps1-history>

MoMA PS1, one of the oldest and largest nonprofit contemporary art institutions in the United States, was founded in 1971 by Alanna Heiss as the Institute for Art and Urban Resources Inc., an organization devoted to organizing exhibitions in underutilized and abandoned spaces across New York City.

For the next 20 years, the building was used as studio, performance, and exhibition space, in support of artists from around the world. After a building-wide renovation, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (now MoMA PS1) reopened in 1997, confirming its position as the leading contemporary art center in New York. True to the building's history and form, the renovation preserved much of the original architecture, as well as most of its unique classroom-sized galleries.

In 2000, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center became an affiliate of The Museum of Modern Art to extend the reach of both institutions, and combine MoMA PS1's contemporary mission with MoMA's strength as one of the greatest collecting museums of modern art.

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