

YORK REGION



**CREATIVE
SPACE
FEASIBILITY
STUDY**

REPORT & ACTION PLAN

Research and Report prepared by:



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Chapter 1: Introduction



ABOUT

This report and action plan is the culmination of 12 months of research referred to as the York Region Creative Space Feasibility Study. This study was funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) and was conducted in collaboration between two independent non-profit charitable organizations, Shadowpath Theatre Productions and the York Region Arts Council (YRAC), who have a mandate to serve York Region artists and engage citizens in local arts experiences. The intention of the study is to explore potential solutions to gaps in creation and presentation spaces that local arts professionals currently face.

The long term goal of this project is to establish multi-functional, sustainable spaces for York Region artists. Shadowpath and YRAC researched 17 existing creative facilities and analyzed the regional community's unique needs through several stakeholder input sessions. The spaces that are recommended in this report will serve individual artists and arts and culture organizations and act as a collective creative home base. It would be a place for collaboration and cross pollination that would connect the region's creative community, and promote arts and culture in York Region.



“The ultimate vision is to shift the community’s overall artistic landscape and provide a centre for artists of all disciplines to develop and present their craft to their fullest potential.”

BACKGROUND

Shadowpath Theatre Productions and the York Region Arts Council received a 12 month (September 2017 through August 2018) \$57,200 Seed Grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to conduct a feasibility study as a first step to create an arts centre in York Region. The need for this study was born out of years of stakeholder input regarding the lack of accessible creative facilities to produce and present work. As such, many York Region creatives move away, practice outside of the Region or develop insular methods for creating. Shadowpath and YRAC have experienced overwhelming feedback about the need for cooperative and cross-functional artistic space. The ultimate vision is to shift the community's overall artistic landscape and provide a centre for artists of all disciplines to develop and present their craft to their fullest potential.

WHY

Local artists and creative entrepreneurs experience a lack of sufficient working space that meets their creative development needs. Many artists work in isolation in basements and garages - an environment that inhibits Creatives' capacity to thrive and reach their full potential. Without access to professional equipment, adequate storage and an inspired environment of like-minded people, York Region is losing their artists to other communities that can better support a creative career. Cultural establishments that currently operate in York Region are run by municipalities rather than artists or people in creative industries. This top down approach to space has resulted in facilities that do not meet the needs of a creative community.



Alex Karolyi



Samantha Wainberg

WHO

This study was led by Alex Karolyi, Founder and Artistic Director of Shadowpath Theatre Productions and Samantha Wainberg, Executive Director of the York Region Arts Council.

About Shadowpath Theatre Productions

Shadowpath is a registered charitable organization and has been turning everyday spaces into creative places since 2002. Shadowpath is the recipient of Newmarket's Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award for Innovation, 2016 and Richmond Hill's Creativity Connected Award for Best Innovation for their Café Cruise project in 2016.

About York Region Arts Council

The York Region Arts Council (YRAC) is the only York Region-wide non-profit charitable arts service organization focused on capacity building, creative placemaking and community engagement in support of artists, arts organizations and creative entrepreneurs.

About Alex Karolyi

Alex Karolyi is a creative entrepreneur who founded a grassroots organization called Shadowpath in 2002 in York Region. Shadowpath was a result of little to no opportunities for professional performing artists across York Region. Today the company has raised over 1 million dollars of support from the community and government funded programs. Shadowpath receives funds from all levels of government and is supported extensively by local businesses and community members through fundraisers, sponsorships and donation campaigns.

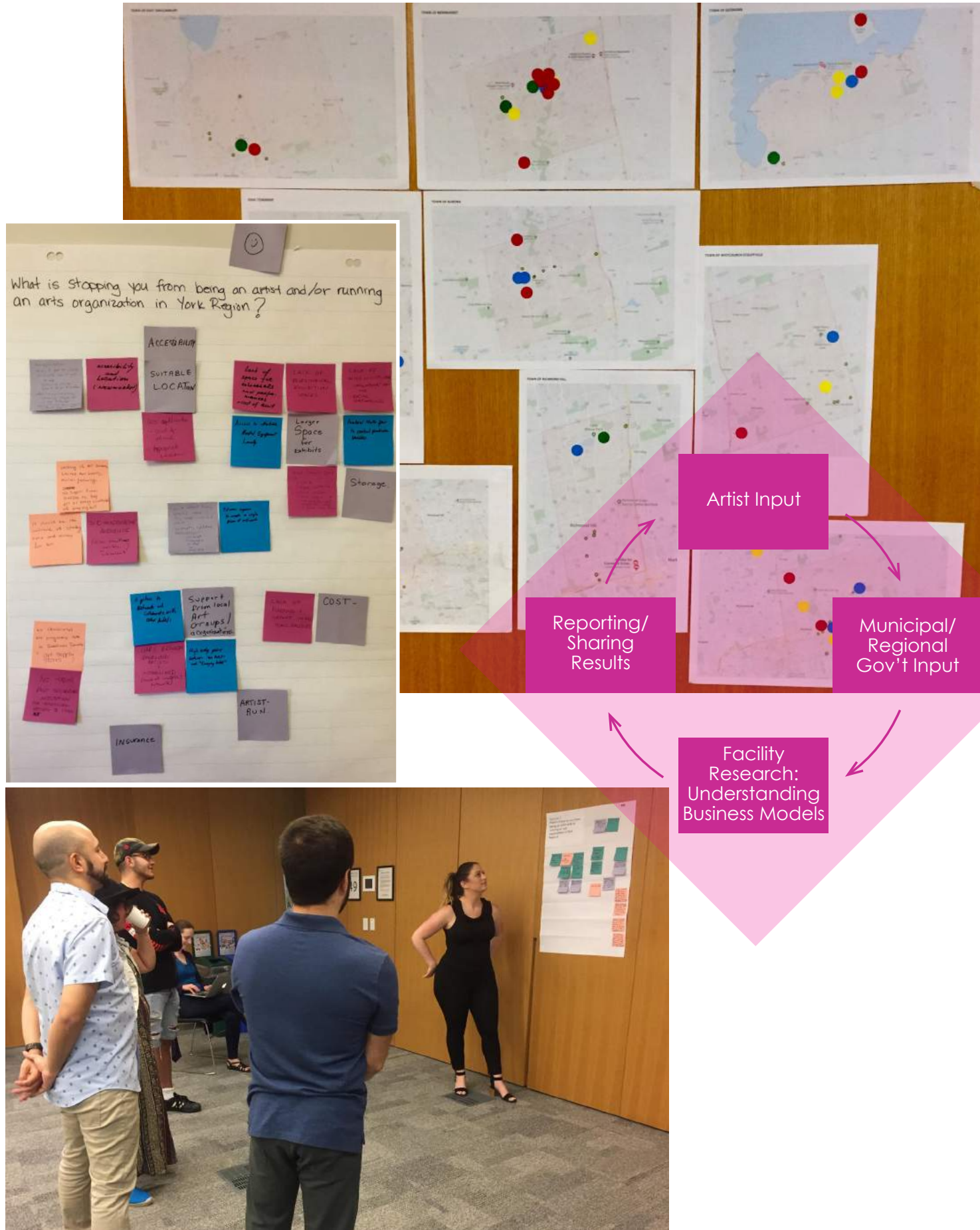
Alex provides a strong foundation of leadership, experience and originality in her programming and has balanced the worlds of creativity and commerce. She has forged partnerships with venue owners who donate their space in exchange for innovative programming. She has arts administrative certificates from Charity Village's Budgeting, Corporate Sponsorship and Proposal Writing programs and has successfully completed training with the York Entrepreneurship Development Institute and Second City's Writing Program in addition to her performing arts education at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts, York University and The Randolph Performing Arts Academy.

Alex has sat as a board member on various local arts organizations and developed community initiatives focused on advancing the arts sector in York Region. Alex has a solid understanding of the York Region community, and is strongly connected to the arts and entrepreneur sector. She has a proven track record of success and fully comprehends the arts and business aspect of community development.

About Samantha Wainberg

Samantha Wainberg is an arts and administrative professional and Executive Director of the York Region Arts Council, an organization she has been with since 2011. Over the past few years, Samantha has led the Arts Council to unprecedented growth by almost doubling the organization's annual operating budget and expanding the number of staff positions. During her tenure, Samantha has developed strategic plans that address priorities and action items for furthering the development of York Region as a thriving arts and culture community. She has extensive experience working with municipal and regional governments, specifically with economic development and culture departments, through collaborative projects and service agreements related to arts, culture and tourism development. She specializes in bringing diverse people and groups together to accomplish shared goals resulting in positive community impact.

Samantha is personally invested in the development of new arts and cultural spaces in this community as she is a life-long York Region resident, grew up in Vaughan and deeply understands the needs of artists, residents and businesses located in the City and the Region. She is a graduate of York University's Bachelor of Fine Arts program. In addition to her BFA from York University, she holds a certificate from the Toronto School of Art's Independent Studio Program and a joint certificate with the York Entrepreneurship Development Institute and Schulich Executive Education Centre where she began exploring new models for sustainable multi-use arts spaces in growing suburban areas.



APPROACH

The 12-month feasibility study was conducted in three phases:

Phase 1: Creative Space Site Visits

Several diverse creative and cultural facilities were visited over the course of eight months with the intention of gaining a deeper understanding of functional business models and partnerships that enable these spaces to exist and thrive. At each facility, owners, managers and facility operators were consulted and responded to a series of questions about the development and current operation of their space. Most spaces visited were in Ontario (Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener, Alliston, Alton Mills and Mississauga), a handful were in Vancouver, British Columbia, and two were in Budapest, Hungary.

Phase 2: Local Stakeholder Input

Over the course of three months, stakeholders from across York Region were consulted to assess needs, cultural priorities, readiness and consider viable model(s). Three artist input sessions were held in Newmarket, Markham and Vaughan and an online survey was distributed for those who could not attend in person.

Similarly, input sessions with municipal councillors and staff were held in the same three communities and an online survey was made available to those unable to attend.

Local, York Region organizations that own and/or operate facilities were also consulted to assess the viability of leveraging or repurposing spaces for use by artists and arts groups that were not originally intended for this purpose but have significant potential to be used in new ways.

Phase 3: Report/ Action Plan

The final phase of this study was the creation of this report and action plan. This document is intended to function as a first step and guide to creating spaces that will have a primary mandate of serving the needs of the local arts community.

Despite the phased approach, it is important to note that the process for developing sustainable creative spaces for artists in York Region is holistic and cyclical.

Chapter 2: Artist Stories

Considering the intention of this study is to address the real needs of arts professionals in York Region, three artists who participated in the artist input sessions were asked to provide their personal stories to further illustrate what they experience on a day-to-day basis that reaches beyond statistics which are reflected later in this report. Below are stories from Scott Jarvie (Aurora), Mahtab Abdollahi (Newmarket) and Joanna Grace (Richmond Hill).



SCOTT JARVIE

Scott is a digital media producer from Aurora who works with storytellers to develop their brands and skills. He's worked on projects that have screened world wide and has won eight awards for film producing and scriptwriting. Here's Scott's story:

Living and working in the region has challenges for filmmakers. Our craft is very expensive which reduces the amount of productions regional filmmakers can create. Production expenses such as equipment rentals, add an additional cost due to the time it takes to transport the equipment from Toronto to the York Region set. This can often double the cost of the rental, resulting in York Region filmmakers moving to a more convenient location, outside of the region that provides the services and equipment they require.



There is a perception that York Region doesn't have any digital media producers. However, when talking with colleagues on set, there is always a contingent from the region working in every department, who have travelled further to pursue their craft. While most networking events in Toronto are filled with local talent, York Region's cast and crew are not present, and there aren't any similar events north of the city.

Having a Creative Space in York Region would create opportunities for members to access affordable equipment locally, as a place for workshops, one on one skill development, networking and developing collaborative productions, as well as create a location to launch a new media festival in the region.

Education is fundamental to increase digital media production in the region since most new filmmakers are people who have spent decades working in a non-creative field and are looking to explore their creative sides. It's also important for new artists to practice, build their portfolios, make mistakes and learn from more experienced creators.



MAHTAB ABDOLLAHI

Mahtab is a visual artist living in Newmarket who works in a variety of mediums using the canvas as her playground. She has participated in numerous group and nine solo exhibitions, including the National Gallery of Canadian Drawings online. Here's Mahtab's story:

When I immigrated to Toronto, as a newcomer finding the right network and artist friends was a big challenge for me. After I moved to Newmarket I was honoured to join the Newmarket Group of Artists (NGA) which has opened the doors to my art adventure. I created a very good artist network. When I joined the Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA) I started to learn about different art lectures and was able to attend workshops, and meet and learn from guest artists. This created a huge influence on me.



I have struggled as a Newmarket artist. All art supply stores are located far away. There are a couple of art stores which are either very expensive or don't carry all the art supplies I require.

There is also a very low level of art awareness in Newmarket. There is no art gallery to create and develop an art culture in the town. There is a low desire to buy original art. How can we create art appreciation in our town? I believe we should have a community that supports local artists to grow, a place that kids, youth and adults can go to learn, express and experience their art interests. A place like an artist house or an art gallery would be extremely helpful for my professional artistic pursuits.

Why do we need an art gallery?

Art is the base of any culture. Like language and laughter, art is a fundamental human behavior. It is a part of who we are. Like language, art is a medium to express ideas and to share information. It is a method to communicate, express and share our thoughts, ideas and visions. Experiencing art will increase our cultural awareness and will inspire our inner selves. An art gallery or arts centre provides a place for all these interactions.

We need a space to share our experience, a reason to come together and connect. Art classes can be merged with a gallery to create an interactive environment which will allow artists to exhibit their artwork. This could be a place that artists can use to engage with the community and make strong connections in order to increase awareness towards local artists and creative activities.





JOANNA GRACE

Joanna is a classical musician who lives and works in Richmond Hill. She has developed unique concert experiences in her home and has won several awards and grants to continue her work in the community. Here's Joanna's story:

As a musician, living and working in Richmond Hill, I teach piano and (French) horn lessons to students of all ages and also perform on both instruments. I moved to York Region seven years ago and have since received four awards for my work and two grants to share music and further my presence in the community. Two years ago I founded Clearly Musical Home Concerts which bridge the gap between audiences and performers. After the performance, attendees ask questions of the performing musicians and a dialogue enhances connections among everyone present.

These living room concerts provide up-close, musical experiences that cannot be matched in large concert halls. Featured local musicians normally perform as part of a large ensemble or in the background for an event. At my intimate concerts, performers have a captive, attentive audience and attendees receive a unique experience. These concerts enable me to facilitate creative programming and collaboration that wouldn't happen otherwise.



I have a grand piano that I've moved from rental to rental property as I cannot afford to purchase the kind of fully-detached home that would enable me to teach students and practice my instruments without restrictions. To own the Richmond Hill home I currently rent, I would need a \$200K annual salary, consistently over three years and an equivalent down payment, neither of which is in my foreseeable future.

I'm interested in the potential for a live/work space in York Region. Having a space to teach, practice and perform is essential for running my business. Also, I would like to be part of a community that thrives on the accessibility for artists of all disciplines to practice their art and easily share it with each other and the public. I am not currently allowed to sublease my home, however I can see its potential as rental space for other private lessons, concerts, rehearsals, educational demonstrations and even a small gallery of visual art.

In a shared multi-purpose space for arts, there is huge potential to share resources, equipment, knowledge and ideas with other artists. Such a place can attract audiences for one artistic genre and introduce them to something different as well. A family with one child in visual art classes could have another child in music classes at the same time. A dancer might join up with a musician for a collaborative piece. My grand piano could also be shared or rented. It might be used sometimes for music lessons and other times as the instrument to accompany a choir rehearsal or for other collaborative music-making.

I'm excited to see what conversations develop for a multi-arts hub in York Region. I've chosen to make York Region my home and I certainly hope I can continue to live, work and share my music with the greater community here.

Chapter 3: Summary of Key Insights

Over the course of three months, stakeholders from across York Region were consulted to assess needs, cultural priorities, readiness and consider what viable model(s) can work in York Region. Stakeholders included artists, arts administrators, representatives of community organizations as well as municipal staff and politicians.

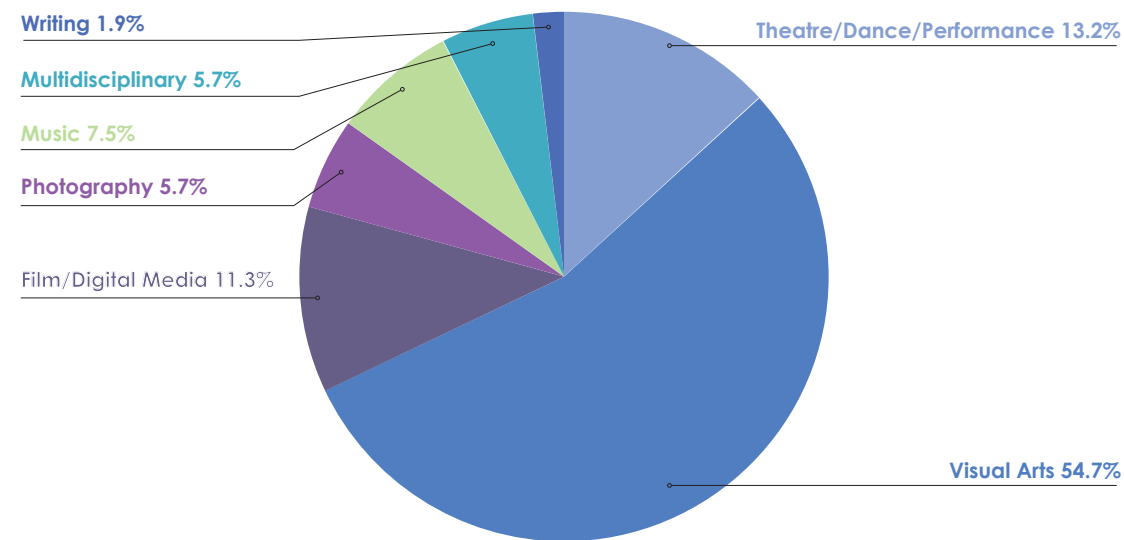
ARTIST INPUT SESSIONS

Three artist input sessions were held in Newmarket, Markham and Vaughan and an online survey was distributed for those who could not attend in person.

In addition to gathering information about what local artists want and need, it was important to understand who they are and where they are coming from.

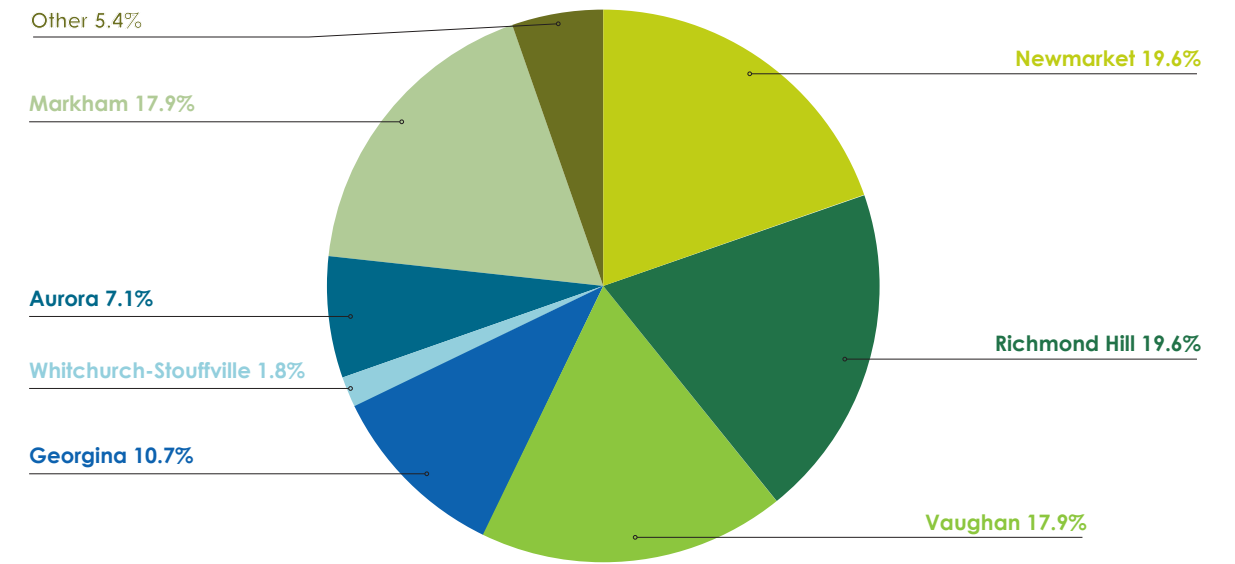
PROFILE OF ARTIST RESPONDENTS IN YORK REGION

Artistic Disciplines

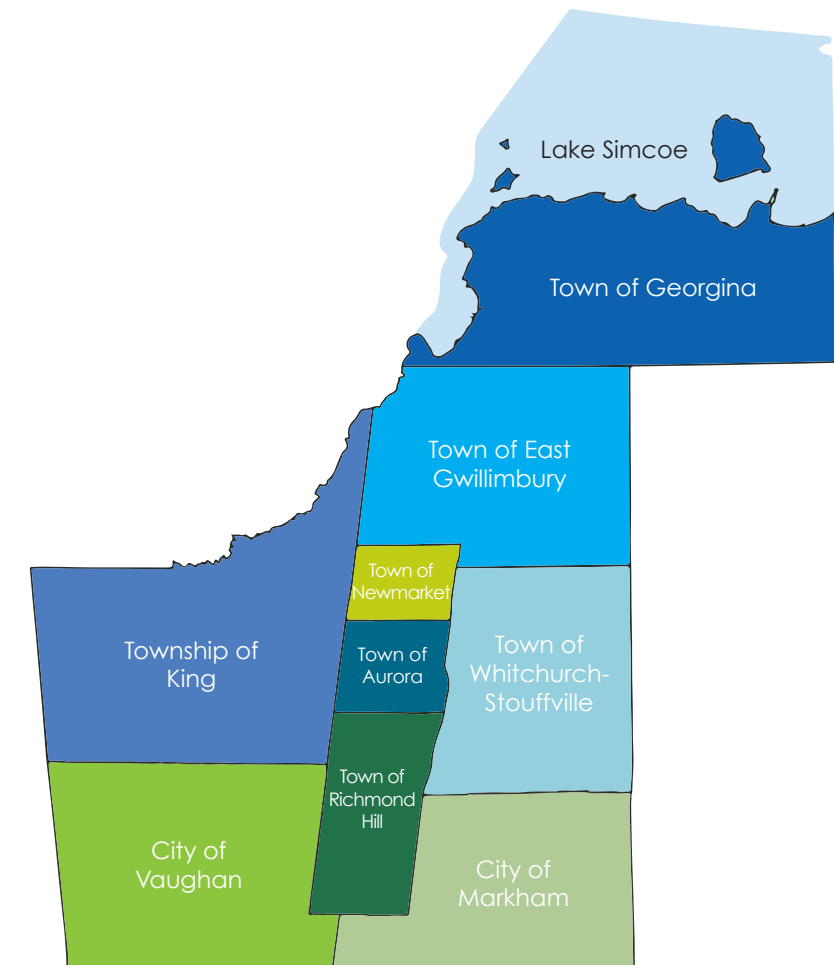


***Note:** dance as a stand-alone discipline yielded 0 respondents.

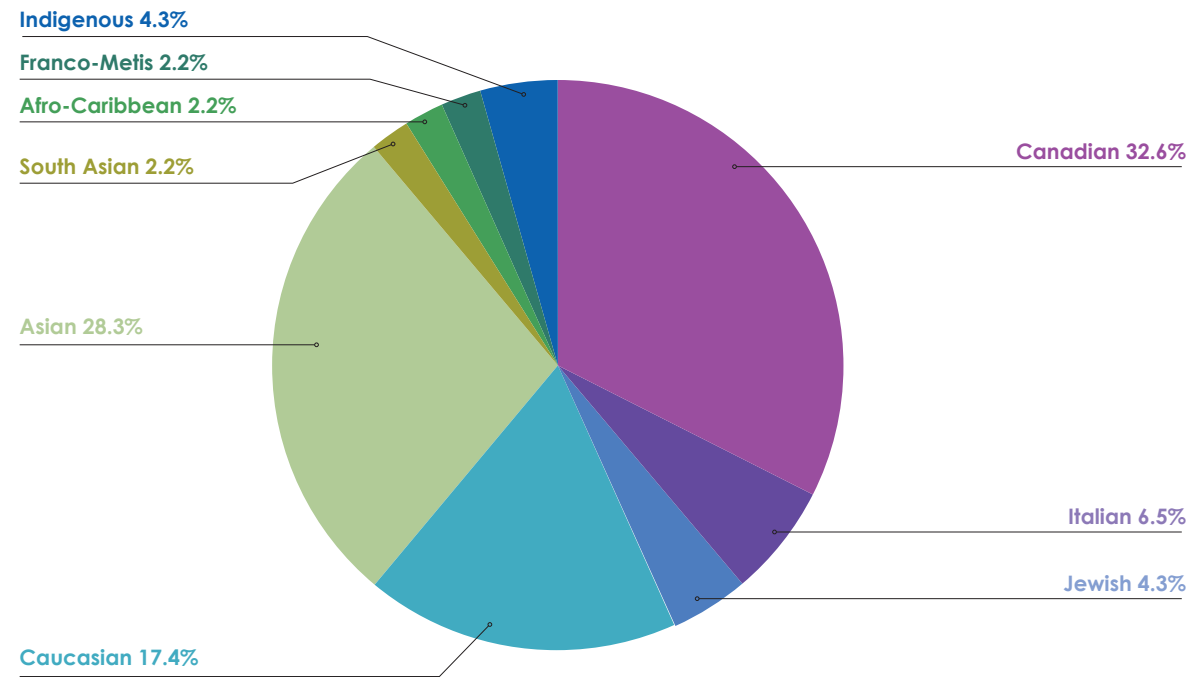
Artists' Municipality of Residence



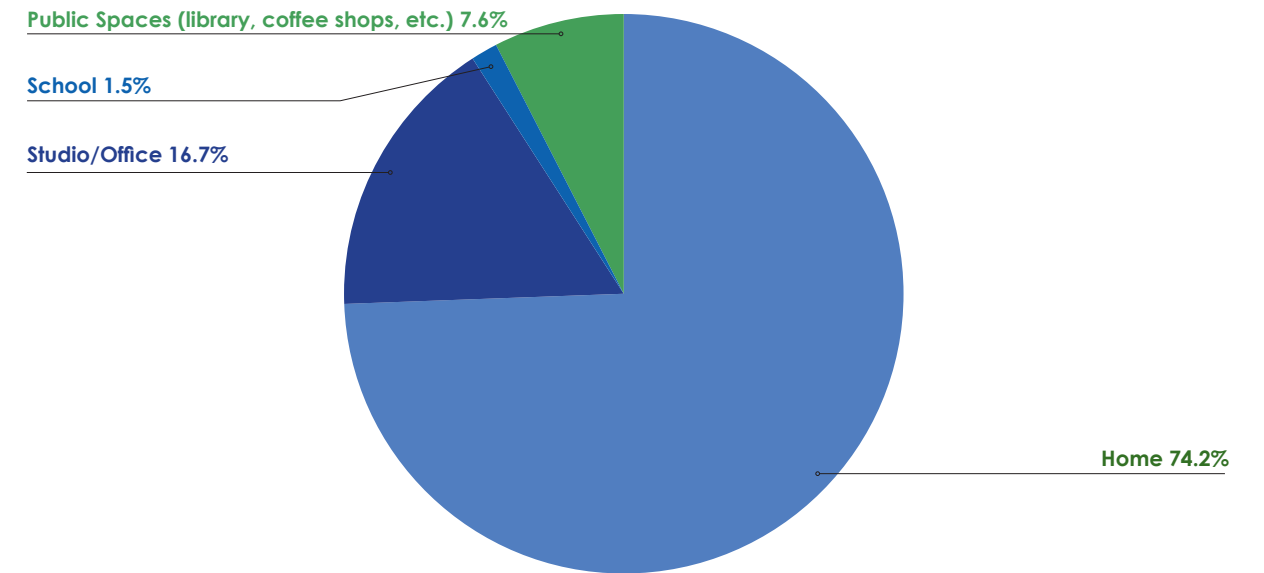
***Note:** 0 respondents from King and East Gwillimbury.



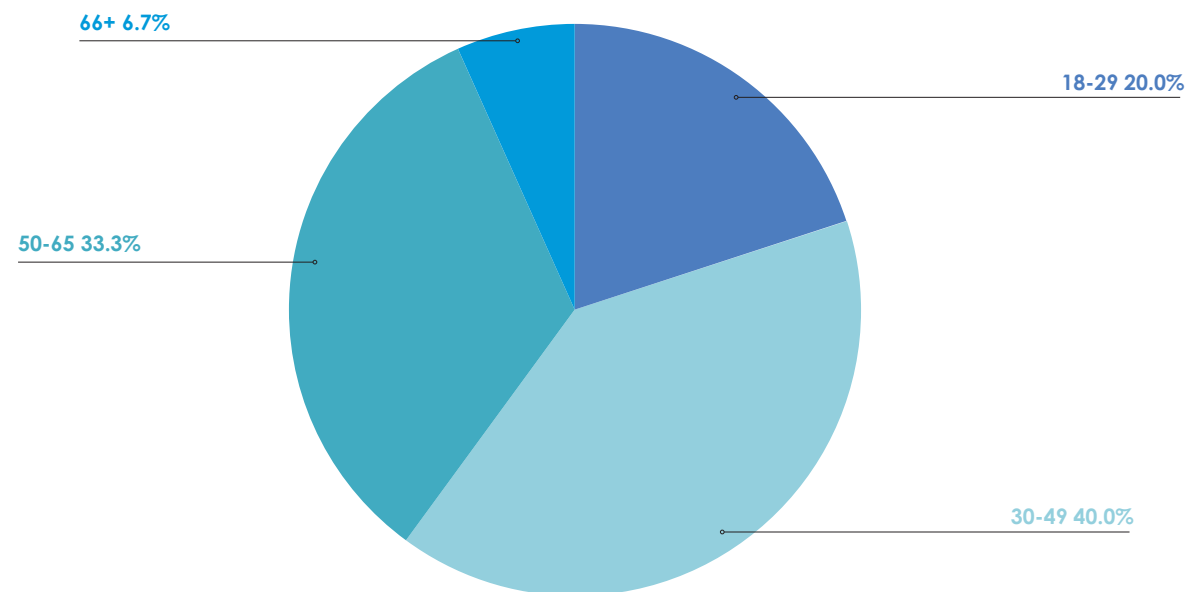
Cultural Groups (Self-Identified)



Current Office/Studio Location (type of space)



Age:



SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

Out of 100 respondents, 55% identified as visual artists, 74% reported that they work from home, and over 73% are 30 years of age and older. The four municipalities where the majority of respondents live are; Vaughan, Markham, Richmond Hill and Newmarket, which are also the four most populated municipalities in York Region. Zero artists who responded to the in-person and online surveys were from the Township of King or East Gwillimbury, or identified as being part of the dance discipline.

ARTIST INPUT

Artists were asked three main questions:

1. What is stopping you from being an artist and/or running an arts organization in York Region?
2. What does your “promised land” look like?
3. What is your ideal location?

The following is a summary of responses to each question:

1. What is stopping you from being an artist and/or running an arts organization in York Region?

Out of 100 respondents, five main themes emerged:

PHYSICAL SPACE

Artists who responded to the survey and attended the input sessions strongly expressed that a lack of physical creation and presentation space is hindering their success. More specifically, they cited the following aspects as the primary deterrents:

- Lack of space to create work in (all arts forms)
- Available spaces have limited operating hours, (artists require 24 hour access, seven days a week)
- Lack of professional exhibition space for visual artists
- Lack of storage space for work and materials

COMMUNITY

Respondents expressed negative sentiment surrounding their sense of community as a barrier. The following are the most prominent community roadblocks:

- Feeling disconnected from and not having a place to interact with local groups of artists and/or arts organizations
- A feeling that artists are not wanted or needed in York Region
- Feeling that artists are not adequately consulted or considered in the creation and use of existing cultural facilities
- Lack of awareness of local artists

FINANCIAL

Financial barriers were a main challenge for most respondents. The following monetary related concerns were cited frequently:

- Low incomes and limited financial resources
- Lack of affordable space to rent for creation and presentation of all arts disciplines
- Limited access to affordable equipment (for rent or purchase)
- Lack of funding support from municipalities
- High insurance costs that are often associated with renting facilities

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility can mean several different things, though respondents primarily cited physical location and proximity to transportation as barriers to access:

- Limited transportation that makes it challenging for clients to reach artists and vice versa
- Locations that artists are currently working out of, are far from pedestrian traffic, public transit, transportation hubs and are often considered hidden
- Perception that most arts education programs are located in downtown Toronto and can not be accessed in York Region

RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to physical space, respondents said that a lack of the following resources is deterring their success as arts professionals:

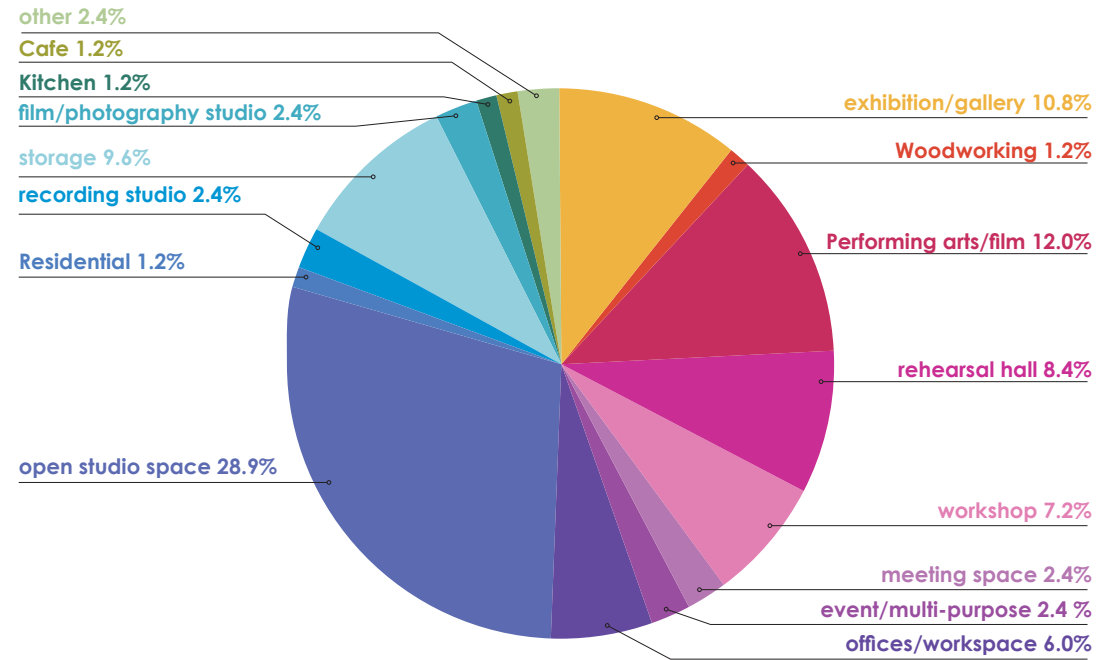
- Administrative support and obtaining insurance
- Resources that will help emerging artists become professional artists
- Major post-secondary institutions with arts programs and/or resources to strengthen artistic abilities
- Commission based work opportunities
- Press coverage and opportunities to inform the public

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

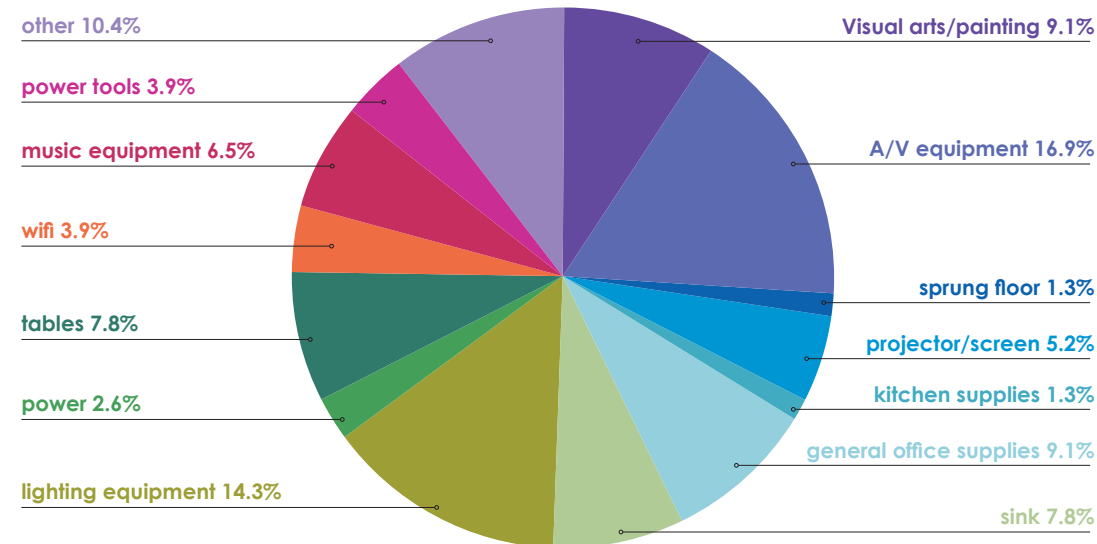
Artists highlighted a complete lack of space to create and present work of different disciplines. Available spaces were noted as unaffordable. Respondents expressed a deep feeling of not being wanted or valued in York Region and that working out of locations that are not easily accessed by public transit and pedestrian traffic is a barrier to their success.

2. What does your “promised land” look like?

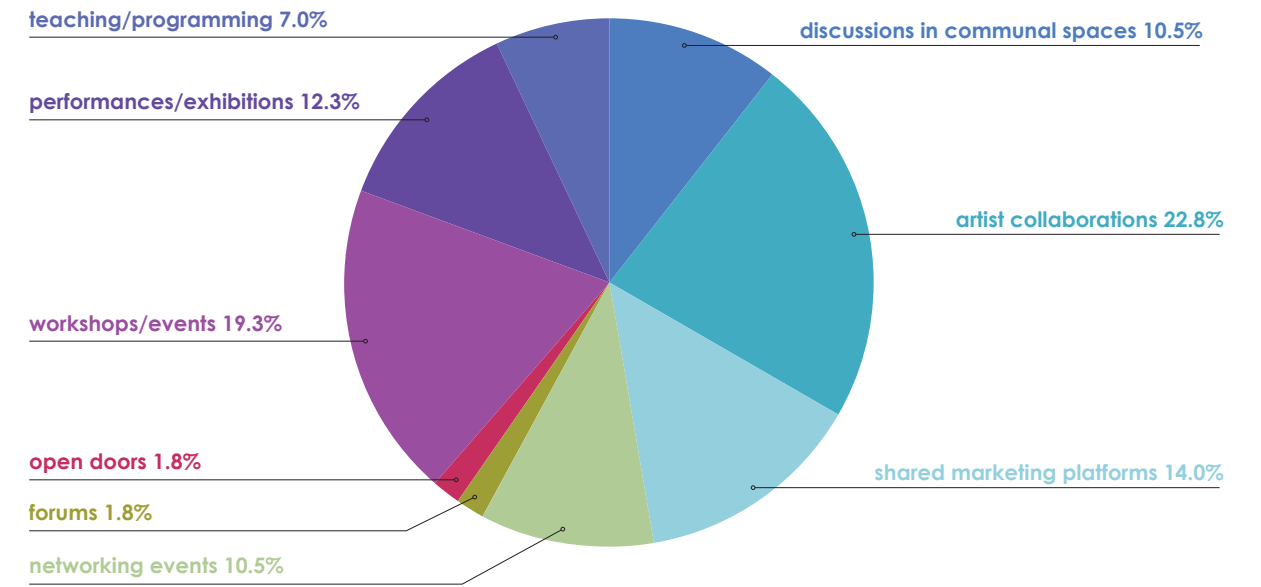
What type of space(s) do you need?



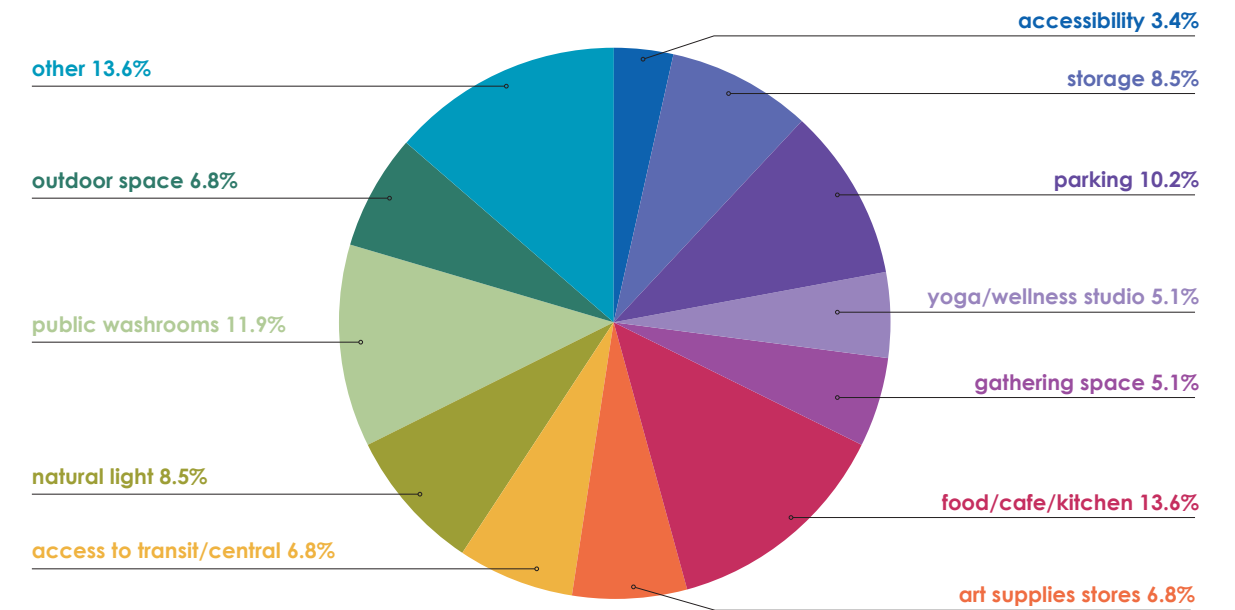
What types of utilities do you need?



How would you engage with other artists and your community?



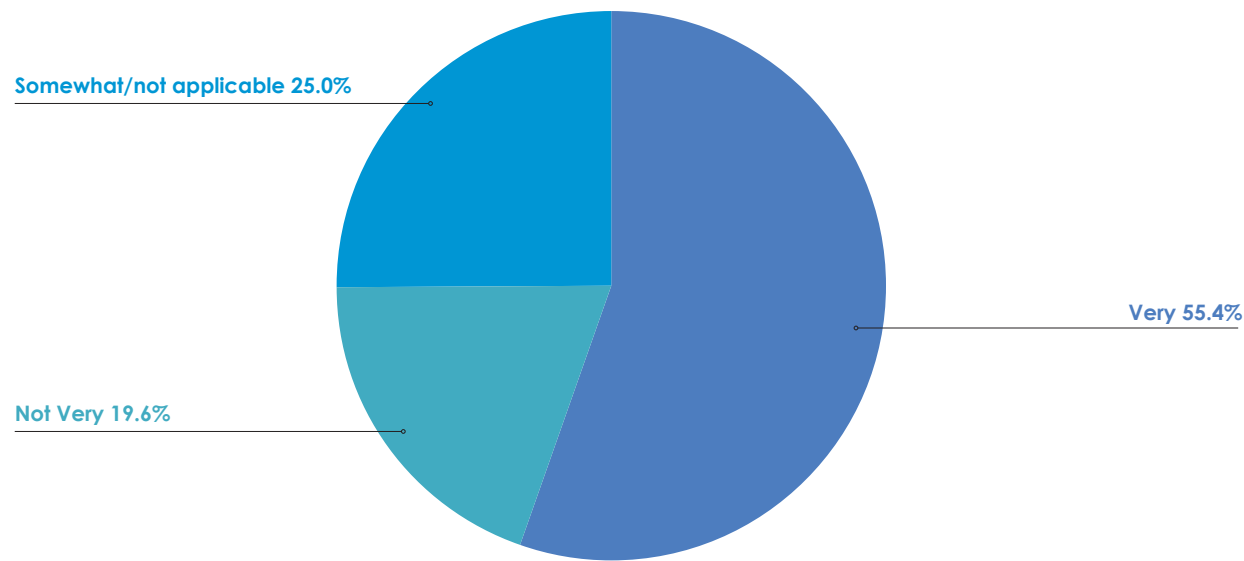
What other amenities do you want/need?



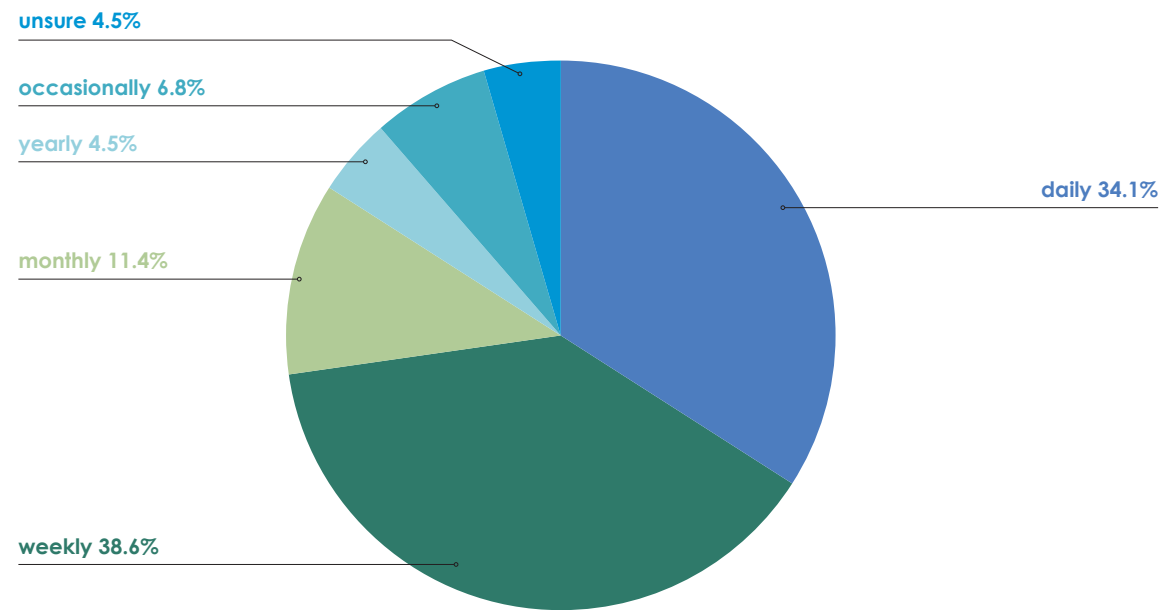
Other amenity related considerations that were mentioned include:

- Built in display fixtures
- Personal access
- White wall spaces
- Collaborative marketing opportunities
- Collaborative space
- Sound proofing
- Wellness
- Food and alcohol
- Green space
- Childcare
- Consideration for low income folks
- Ventilation
- Parking
- Accessibility
- Pets allowed

How important is outdoor space to you?



How often would you use these spaces?



Related to frequency of space use, the top two consideration respondents mentioned were:

- 24-hour access
- To be close to public transit

How much would you pay for these spaces?

- ▶ Monthly rate: 39% of people would pay between \$100-400/month to use this space
- ▶ Hourly rate: 11% of people would pay between \$10-25/hr to use this space (or a portion of the space)
- ▶ 30% of people claimed that they require further information and more specific details regarding what the space is, what is included, etc. before commenting on what they are willing to pay.
- ▶ 20% suggested other amounts including: pay-in-kind, less than \$100/month, more than \$500/month

Depending on the type of space that is developed, a deeper analysis of how much artists and arts organizations would be willing to pay for specific spaces and amenities would need to be conducted.

What type of community vibe do you want?

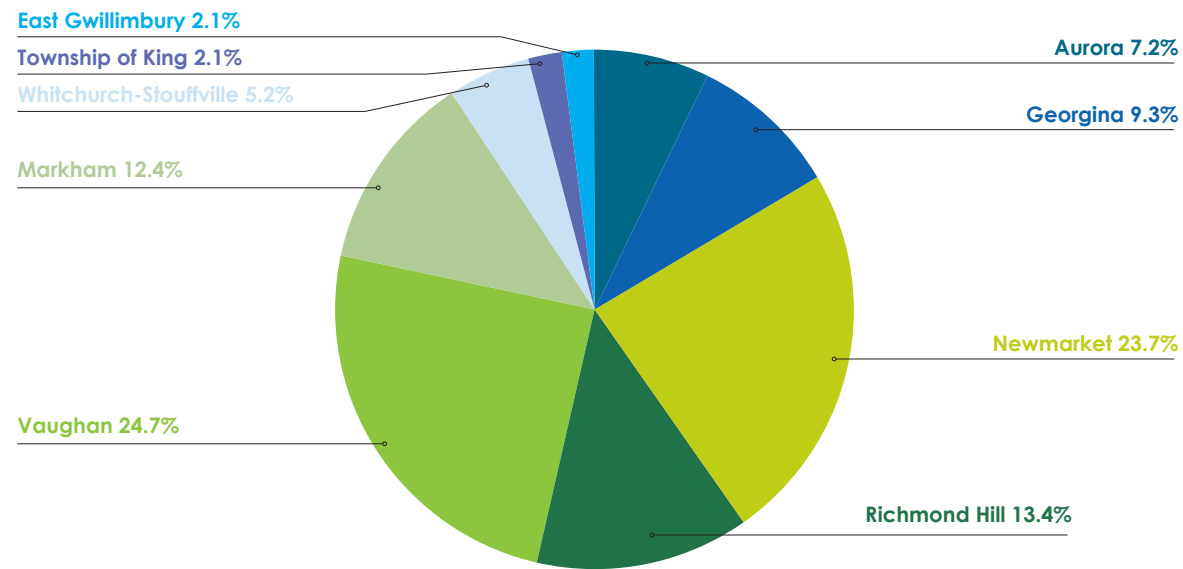
SUPPORTIVE Accessible **STORYTELLING** **WELCOMING** **Connection**
 Creative **Diverse** **EXCITEMENT** **Togetherness** Inclusive **FUN**
Love **VALUED** Collaborative **ENTHUSIASM** Progressive **Maker** **Mentality**
VIBRANT **FRIENDLINESS** **Safe Space** **PASSIONATE** Motivated
 Interdisciplinary **Teaching** **SHARING** Family-Oriented **Flexibility**
HONESTY **Clarity** Eco-Friendly **Sociable** **ECLECTIC**

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

Due to a majority of respondents identifying as visual artists, it comes as no surprise that open studio space was cited as the most needed type of space at almost 30%. This was followed by performing arts and film production space at 12%, exhibition and gallery space at almost 11% and storage at almost 10%. There was a diverse range of utilities requested, though the top two were audio visual equipment at almost 17% and lighting equipment at over 14%. Artists said they would predominantly engage with the broader community through collaborating with other artists, hosting public workshops and events, collaborating on marketing campaigns and hosting performances and exhibitions. The top three amenities artists expressed a need for are food services at almost 14%, public washrooms at almost 12% and parking at over 10%. More than 55% of artists said that outdoor space is very important to their work. Almost 39% of respondents said they would use their ideal arts space on a weekly basis while just over 34% said they would use it on a daily basis. This means that artists are craving access to space to produce and present work consistently and frequently.

3. What is your ideal location?

Ideal Location Summary by Municipality:



Town of Aurora

- Bayview/Wellington - 16.7%
- Bayview/St. John's - 16.7%
- Yonge/Golf Links - 16.7%
- Yonge/St. John's - 33.3%
- Yonge/Wellington - 16.7%

Town of Newmarket

- Gormley/404 - 5.0%
- Main Street Newmarket - 15.0%
- Leslie/Green Lane - 5.0%
- Bayview/Mulock - 5.0%
- Leslie/Gorham - 5.0%
- Yonge/Eagle - 15.0%
- Yonge/St. John's - 10.0%
- Yonge/Davis - 5.0%
- Bayview/Davis - 35.0%

Town of Georgina

- Glenwoods Ave/The Queensway - 14.3%
- Georgina Island - 14.3%
- Black River Rd/48 - 28.6%
- 48/Hadden Rd - 14.3%
- 48/Park Rd - 28.6%

Richmond Hill

- 404/Major Mackenzie - 11.1%
- 404/Elgin Mills - 11.1%
- Bayview/North Lake - 11.1%
- Yonge/North Lake Rd - 11.1%
- Yonge/Major Mackenzie - 5.0%

Township of King

- Hwy 27/King Rd - 50.0%
- Bathurst/King Rd - 50.0%

City of Vaughan

- Dufferin/Centre - 4.5%
- Yonge/Centre - 4.5%
- Bathurst/Centre - 9.1%
- Keele/Kirby - 4.5%
- Keele/Rutherford - 4.5%
- Islington/Rutherford - 4.5%
- Islington/Teston Rd - 4.5%
- Pine Valley/Teston Rd - 4.5%
- Hwy 400/Teston - 4.5%
- Weston Rd/Teston - 9.1%
- Weston Rd/Major Mackenzie - 9.1%
- Hwy 7/27 - 4.5%
- Hwy 7/400 - 27.3%
- Hwy 7/Jane - 4.5%

Town of East Gwillimbury

- Leslie/Green Lane - 50.0%
- 404/Green Lane - 50.0%

City of Markham

- Hwy 7/404 - 10.0%
- Markham/16th - 10.0%
- Woodbine/16th - 10.0%
- Woodbine/19th - 10.0%
- Ninth Line/Major Mackenzie - 10.0%
- 407/Kennedy - 20.0%
- Hwy 7/Kennedy - 20.0%
- Warden/Major Mackenzie - 10.0%

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

- Ninth Line/Aurora Rd - 33.3%
- Leslie/Woodbine - 33.3%
- Ninth Line and Bethesda - 33.3%

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

Artists said their ideal location for an arts centre are in: Vaughan (24.7%), Newmarket (23.7%), Richmond Hill (13.4%) and Markham (12.4%). Two main attributes of spaces emerged when artists were asked to plot where exactly they would like these spaces to exist:

1. In downtown cores where there is or will be significant pedestrian traffic and more access to public transit. Examples of this are the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre along Highway 7 between Jane Street and Highway 400, the historic Newmarket downtown core located near Main Street and Water Street Bayview Avenue and Davis Drive as well as at Yonge Street and Major Mackenzie Drive, which is considered downtown Richmond Hill.
2. In natural environments and green spaces such as near the Kortright Centre for Conservation in Vaughan and several locations near Lake Simcoe in Georgina.

MUNICIPAL INPUT SESSIONS

Similar to the artist input sessions, three municipal input sessions were held in Newmarket, Markham and Vaughan and an online survey was distributed for those who could not attend in person. Respondents were staff and councillors from all nine York Region Municipalities; City of Markham, City of Vaughan, Town of Richmond Hill, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Township of King, Town of Aurora, Town of Newmarket, Town of East Gwillimbury and Town of Georgina.

All municipalities have developed culture plans and are in various phases of implementation. What was noted is that culture plans and economic development plans recognize the importance of supporting artists and cultural groups, though the development of spaces to support local arts is not specifically identified. Most of the municipalities that operate professional theatres and galleries reported that over 70% of performances/exhibitions are part of professional program series that bring national and international artistic talent to York Region while 30% or less is used by local artists and arts groups. Spaces that are occupied 100% by independent local arts groups mostly serve one group per location and other artists and organizations never to rarely access these spaces.

MUNICIPAL INPUT

Municipal representatives were asked three questions:

1. Do you think there is a need for artist-driven, creative hubs in your community in the near future? What is the specific need(s) you have identified?
2. Is your municipality planning to develop new arts and cultural spaces? What are they?
3. What role(s) do you think your municipality should/can play in the development of arts and cultural spaces?

The following is a summary of responses to each question:

1. Do you think there is a need for artist-driven, creative hubs in your community in the near future? What is the specific need(s) you have identified?

Most respondents from York Region's nine municipalities agreed that these types of spaces are needed. They identified the following needs, specific to their municipality:

Markham

- Storage for music equipment, theatre sets on the same site as the performance facility
- Performance spaces for 50-150 people (theatre, dance)
- Outdoor performance space with washrooms and parking
- Product mixes that contribute to sustainable spaces
- The building itself being a work of art and design excellence

Newmarket

- Landing space for artist businesses - support, tools and space
- Hubs where equipment is shared

King

- Cannot identify specific space needs at this time due to being in the early phases of cultural mapping and identifying pockets of where artists are currently located

East Gwillimbury

- Identified there is a need for arts spaces though specific facility needs have yet to be identified

Whitchurch-Stouffville

- None at this time

Vaughan

- Creative spaces and hubs: culinary, film, arts, entrepreneurs
- Expansion or repurposing spaces such as heritage homes
- Support services offered by local businesses
- Central, easy access location (i.e. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre)
- Performing arts centre at the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre due to dense population and tourist attraction
- Outdoor staging, lighting, storage and a covered roof for weather conditions
- Multi-purpose space (music, recording, dance, performance, art gallery, art studio, hub)
- Flexible municipal zoning for arts spaces
- Incubation centres for community based programs

Richmond Hill

- Exhibit space for visual artists
- Makerspaces for creative industries
- Smaller facilities that are discipline specific
- A multi-disciplinary hub with storage and theatre space

Aurora

- Performance, creation, and presentation space
- A culture hub to bring creative cultural groups together
- More purpose built, affordable space

Georgina

- Visual and performing artist space
- More and/or improved outdoor performing arts spaces

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

Most common amongst York Region municipalities was a need for arts storage spaces and mixed-use facilities for smaller scale performances, creation and exhibition space. Outdoor space in large parking lots and parks was frequently referenced.

2. Is your municipality planning to develop new arts and cultural spaces? What are they?

Markham

- Plan for new 2,000 seat theatre
- Re-positioning the Rehearsal Hall at the Cornell Community Centre
- Launching new Destination Marketing Organization and implementing the Municipal Accommodation Tax that has the potential to be leveraged for arts spaces that incite tourism

Vaughan

- RFP distributed for a feasibility study to build a large performing arts centre
- Programming for organizations and artists at heritage homes
- Introducing more arts programming at the YMCA

King

- Relocation and rebranding of a heritage building into performing arts space, located beside the King Heritage and Cultural Centre, alongside a new outdoor amphitheatre
- Continued transformation and renovation of the museum into a heritage and cultural centre

Georgina

- Potential for artists and arts groups to use space at The Link and future multi-use recreation complex

East Gwillimbury

- The Town is developing a Health and Active Living Plaza in the community of Queensville in East Gwillimbury. This facility is bringing together many organizations and activities to create a central gathering place and facility in the Town. This facility could potentially incorporate some cultural and art space.
- The Town has also been working on developing a vision for the lands surrounding the Civic Centre which have been referred to as the Civic Precinct. Some of the components which have been discussed in this vision included a potential cultural facility or theatre as well as an art walk and creative connections to the Sharon Temple which is a National Historic Site.

Newmarket

- No specific plans proposed or confirmed, though looking at the Evergreen Brickworks to see how that model may work in Newmarket
- Reviewing uses of Town owned spaces to identify if arts and cultural groups may be appropriate occupants. Such spaces include the Tannery, Clock Tower and Fire Hall

Richmond Hill

- Recent opening of the David Dunlap Observatory
- Renovations to the Heritage Centre
- Expanded uses of facilities such as the Eyer Homestead
- Civic Precinct Project at the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Major Mackenzie Drive
- Expansion of library
- Implementation of Master Plan for town park behind Elgin Barrow Arena

Whitchurch-Stouffville

- Completed new community centre that houses a new library facility and the Latcham Art Centre
- No specific plans proposed or confirmed, though looking at food oriented hub

Aurora

- Council approved initial plans for a Cultural Precinct that will include a new 3-storey facility beside the Aurora Cultural Centre and across from the library, which will house a 250 seat theatre, dance studio, visual art space, programming rooms and museum storage as well as an outdoor square between these three facilities
- Historic armory bought by the town in 2014 is currently being renovated and will be leased to a culinary arts institute that will incorporate community programming

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

All municipalities are at different stages of implementing culture plans and economic development strategies, which often support the development of new arts and cultural spaces. It is important to note that municipalities such as Markham and Vaughan, who are planning to develop large scale event and performance spaces, are doing so through the lens of driving tourism and attracting international talent. Several municipalities noted the renovation and/or repurposing of heritage spaces as well as exploration of other municipally owned properties as potential sites for arts spaces, though this is at a very early stage. To move forward with development of mixed-use arts spaces, most municipalities were clear that they are looking for an arts organization or collective of artists to come forward with a specific request and proposal.

3. What role(s) do you think your municipality should/can play in the development of arts and cultural spaces?

Markham

- Leverage funds from the Municipal Accommodation Tax
- Provide use of outdoor spaces, such as parking lots of government buildings after hours and on weekends
- Educate people on how to appreciate arts and culture and architectural design
- Act as a partner and facilitator to others that are interested in building new facilities
- Support the development of business plans and secure governance
- Grant writing support

Vaughan

- Provide staff representation/liasion on Board of Directors of a non-profit arts organization operating a facility
- Support through marketing and communications to increase public awareness
- Initiate the project and communicate the needs to stakeholders
- Convey and communicate a model that is cohesively bringing audiences together
- Provide some funding
- Zoning assistance
- Provide outdoor park space
- Build a performing arts centre
- Partner with developers to encourage donation of land and buildings
- Support through grants and in-kind space

Aurora

- Facilitate promotion
- Outwardly communicate the value of the arts so citizens understand its importance and become supporters
- Provision of affordable cultural spaces to be managed by arts organizations
- Know who the cultural players are to determine needs and foster relationships

King

- Develop and maintain a cultural asset and industries inventory
- Develop and implement a Cultural Master Plan – refresh and update regularly (every 5 years)
- Facilitate the process of measurement, monitoring and reporting on impacts and metrics
- Celebrate collective successes
- Assess public/private partnership opportunities

Whitchurch-Stouffville

- Zero-dollar lease of Town owned facility

East Gwillimbury

- Partner with local arts organizations
- Help to understand what spaces are needed for artists
- Help with planning and visioning

Georgina

- Potential for artists and arts groups to use space at The Link and future multi-use recreation complex

Newmarket

- Financial support and/or in-kind space
- Municipality has a clear role to play in advocacy for funding
- Share innovative ideas
- Staff support
- Assistance getting through municipal requirements
- Tax breaks and non-profit discounts
- Support with marketing and promotion
- Business development assistance
- Mentoring
- Working more collectively to address real needs
- Help educate key decision makers if needed
- Help to educate the community
- Setting policies to guide the process
- Helping connect the dots between potential locations and organizations

Richmond Hill

- Include in economic development strategy
- Ensure artists and cultural groups are included in consultations and plan development
- Act as a conduit for infrastructure development
- Cultural Plan goal #1 is “demonstrated leadership” which supports cross-departmental alignment to ensure projects, such as potential arts spaces, are supported in the larger context of cultural planning that the Town has committed to
- Help establish relationships and connections

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

With regards to what role(s) municipalities should/can play in the development of arts and cultural spaces, municipal respondents most consistently cited the provision of subsidized spaces for arts organizations to use/operate, marketing, promotion and community engagement support, staff support to navigate through zoning and permits, and in some cases, additional funding and/or partner development support. Ultimately, the municipalities have positioned themselves, not as leads, but as willing partners of mixed-use arts hubs.

CREATIVE SPACE SITE VISITS

Several diverse creative and cultural facilities were visited over the course of eight months with the intention of gaining a deeper understanding of functional business models and partnerships that enable these spaces to exist and thrive. At each facility, owners, managers and facility operators were consulted and responded to a series of questions about the development and current operation of their space.

Facilities Visited

ARTSCAPE TRIANGLE LOFTS, TORONTO Artscape Youngplace, Toronto
 Akin Collective Dupont Studios, Toronto **401 RICHMOND, TORONTO**
 Toronto Media Arts Centre, Toronto **Alton Mill Arts Centre, Alton**
CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION ANNEX, TORONTO
THE COTTON FACTORY, HAMILTON **44 GAUKEL, KITCHENER**
 Living Arts Centre, Mississauga **The Arts Factory, Vancouver**
Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre, Vancouver
 Canadian Music Centre BC Creative Hub, Vancouver
THE GIBSON CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY ARTS AND CULTURE, ALLISTON
ARTS QUARTER BUDAPEST, BUDAPEST Bakelit Multi Art Centre, Budapest



FEATURED CASE STUDIES

The Cotton Factory, Hamilton, ON

This former cotton mill built in 1900 is a prime example of adaptive reuse. The former site of the Imperial Cotton Co. has been transformed into a creative industries complex, with space for workshops, studios for artists and office space for creative professionals.

FAST FACTS

- ▶ 165,000 square feet
- ▶ For-profit
- ▶ Building privately owned by operators
- ▶ Purchased in 2014
- ▶ Over 100 tenants
- ▶ Tenants include independent visual artists and creative industry businesses
- ▶ Operating at capacity with a waiting list

WHAT WORKS WELL

- ▶ Large property with a lot of character and history in an area already populated by creative people
- ▶ Great balance of private and open concept visual artist studios, small, medium and large private office spaces as well as co-working spaces, large multi-purpose event space and smaller event spaces
- ▶ Free Parking and Freight elevator
- ▶ International Artist in Residence Program in partnership with local arts council
- ▶ Communal kitchen featuring meals for purchase from local caterers and food entrepreneurs on a rotational basis
- ▶ Open houses/markets for tenants to sell their work and interact with the public four to five times per year
- ▶ 24-hour access

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Issues with zoning for current use
- ▶ Significant property tax increases each year make it hard to keep rental rates down
- ▶ High cost of utilities and maintenance
- ▶ Renovations and maintenance are ongoing due to scale and age of the facility

Akin Collective, Toronto, ON



Akin Collective provides affordable studio space and arts-based programming. Their studios provide a working environment that maintains a friendly and inspiring atmosphere where people can work on creative endeavors and entrepreneurial undertakings. They build community through monthly art critiques, workshops, open studio events, gallery tours, exhibitions, and various other art projects.

FAST FACTS

- ▶ 30,000 square feet (total footprint)
- ▶ 8 locations in Toronto
- ▶ Mixed non-profit and for-profit model
- ▶ Buildings privately owned
- ▶ Opened first location in 2008
- ▶ Operating at 99% capacity
- ▶ 300 members

WHAT WORKS WELL

- ▶ Below market rentals and occupation of vacant spaces. In most cases, they work with property owners to cover taxes of otherwise vacant spaces before projected demolition.
- ▶ Minimal, simple and effective approach to maximizing studio space
- ▶ Insurance is included in rental fees and agreements
- ▶ Some tenants share equipment that they may not use 100% of the time (i.e. kilns)
- ▶ New partnership with Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) that offers studio space within an established and recognized art institution

- ▶ Nomadic approach: due to short-term leases that allow for below market rental rates, there is knowledge that artists will be forced to relocate and that space is not permanent
- ▶ Works well for visual artists and designers but not performing artists due to open concept
- ▶ Not currently able to generate enough revenue to sustain core operating costs such as staff salaries

Toronto Media Arts Centre (TMAC), Toronto, ON



In the heart of Toronto's Art and Design District, TMAC is creating a diverse and collaborative environment where everyone can engage meaningfully with art and technology. TMAC integrates creation, production, presentation, education, conservation and dissemination practices with a focus on community building and inclusivity.

FAST FACTS

- ▶ Facility located within a condominium as a result of a Section 37 Agreement
- ▶ 20,000 square feet
- ▶ Non-profit charitable organization with a collaborative governance model comprised of four independent organizations who are voting members
- ▶ Opening in 2018

WHAT WORKS WELL

- ▶ Innovative and collaborative governance model
- ▶ Professional, purpose-built spaces and resources for the media arts sector
- ▶ Focus on inclusivity and accessibility
- ▶ Located beside Artscape Triangle Lofts and in an established arts community

- ▶ Major legal battle between TMAC and the City of Toronto due to bankruptcy of Urbancorp in the middle of the project which reduced the intended space from 40,000 to 20,000
- ▶ Due to history of disputes, the relationship between TMAC and the City became transactional
- ▶ Though occupied, there is significant ongoing construction so the space is yet to be used at its full capacity

Artscape Triangle Lofts, Toronto, ON



Artscape Triangle Lofts provides live/work space for artists and arts professionals in the Queen West Triangle. Propeller Gallery, a member-run gallery with deep roots in the neighbourhood, moved in to the gallery space on the main floor of the building in 2015.

FAST FACTS

- ▶ Privately owned building with condominium board oversight
- ▶ 55,000 square feet (inclusive of all live/work units in this building)
- ▶ 68 live/work units and one ground-floor gallery within the larger Westside Gallery Lofts
- ▶ Of the 68 live/work units, 48 were purchased through Artscape's innovative affordable ownership program, and the rest are owned by Artscape and rented as affordable housing

WHAT WORKS WELL

- ▶ Innovative partnership model that provides affordable housing for arts professionals
- ▶ A single building where creative, like-minded people are living and working together
- ▶ Located in an area that has an established community of artists
- ▶ Access to Propeller Gallery on the main floor

- ▶ Prior to developing a win-win-win partnership between the City of Toronto, Urbancorp, Artscape and Active 18, there were intense disputes and frustration on all sides
- ▶ The common spaces, such as foyer and hallways, lack character that would be expected of a place where artists live
- ▶ There is no programming that brings residents together and there are no shared amenities
- ▶ Limited number of parking spaces (8) compared to the number of units (68)

Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre, Vancouver, BC



The Roundhouse intentionally converges arts spaces and community centre amenities in a dense and diverse urban area with the intention of serving the needs of widely divergent communities. The facility holds a 200 seat auditorium, rehearsal studio, large gallery, a pottery studio and full woodshop, program, training and meeting rooms and a fully wired public plaza in addition to other recreation facilities.

FAST FACTS

- ▶ Over 20,000 square feet
- ▶ Owned by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
- ▶ Operated in partnership between the Park Board and The Roundhouse Society, a non-profit organization
- ▶ Significant history dating back to the 1800's

WHAT WORKS WELL

- ▶ A unique facility dedicated to community development through arts and culture
- ▶ Innovate funding model: 50% of the annual operating budget is covered by the Park Board and the other 50% is the result of revenue from recreation fee for service programs and rentals that cover costs of arts spaces and programs
- ▶ Park Board staff manages programming while the Roundhouse Society manages production and technical aspects of arts spaces
- ▶ Strong partnership with 40 to 50 arts organizations who use the spaces annually
- ▶ Provide in-kind partnerships in exchange for arts organizations adding a community engagement component to their work (blurring the space between artists and audiences)

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Initially figuring out how arts and recreation functioned together in an unprecedented model; understanding specialized arts knowledge and programming crossover
- ▶ The structure in the outdoor plaza that acts as a cover does not function as originally intended

Canadian Music Centre BC, Creative Hub, Vancouver, BC



Through two Creative Hubs in Vancouver and Victoria, CMC BC offers extensive public lending libraries of Canadian music to an exclusive music print and bind service to a thought-through range of composition, educational and appreciation programs as well as providing creative services and facilities to leading performing arts organizations, orchestras, choirs, teachers, universities, music schools, ensembles, performing artists and conductors. In Vancouver, they also offer a subscription concert series in the new Murray Adaskin Salon. Both the Salon and their upgraded CREATE Board Room are available to rent.

FAST FACTS

- ▶ 2,000 square feet (Vancouver location)
- ▶ Non-profit charity part of a national network
- ▶ Facility owned by a private development company, leased by the City of Vancouver and designated as a cultural amenities space
- ▶ CMC BC rents from the City and manages all operations and programs within the space

WHAT WORKS WELL

- ▶ Space located in an area where there are composition schools close by and an existing community of composers
- ▶ Offset rental costs by renting part of the space to another music organization
- ▶ Small versatile rehearsal and performance space (the Salon) rented out at very affordable rates during the day and after hours
- ▶ Services for composers such as print and bind
- ▶ Below market rent due to effective partnership between a developer, city and an arts organization

- ▶ Initially funding and permitting were obstacles
- ▶ Organization responsible for some renovations and improvements; the current phase has been under construction for two years due to availability of funding

TRENDS

Though the majority of facilities visited were extremely different in their operating models and visions, there were a handful of trends that arose throughout the process of speaking with facility owners and operators. The following were notable trends:

Physical Attributes

- ▶ Little to no storage space compared to the need for storage – the result of storage not being considered properly during development
- ▶ Very few places offer accessible daycare or wellness amenities
- ▶ Multi-purpose spaces try to serve everyone and end up serving no one well – there is a need for more purpose-built spaces

Size and Location of Facilities

- ▶ Most mixed-use spaces are well over 20,000 square feet and located in more densely populated urban areas with significant pedestrian access, public transit and parking options
- ▶ Spaces targeted at very specific art forms or uses are often 2,000 to 8,000 square feet and are located in both dense urban areas as well as areas outside the “core” of a community

Financial Sustainability and Business Models

- ▶ For-profit creative space ventures are often a labour of love and are not always financially sustainable or profitable without the owner/operators’ investment
- ▶ Partnership between public, private and non-profit entities tend to be more financially sustainable
- ▶ The inclusion of for-profit industries, fee-for-service community programs and/or a café/restaurant tend to offset costs of arts spaces and programs that are not profitable
- ▶ A wide mix of revenue streams that include funding from all levels of government, sponsors, donors, rentals and membership fees are effective
- ▶ Personnel, rent/mortgage and utilities make up majority of all annual expenses. Marketing and Programming tend to be the lowest expenses.

Other

- ▶ Zoning tends to be an issue for adaptive re-use spaces
- ▶ Most independently operated spaces averaged between one and six full and part-time staff members, while municipally run spaces ranged from 20 to over 70 full and part time staff positions

FURTHER INSIGHTS

In addition to receiving input from municipal and artist stakeholders, other organizations and agencies were consulted about their models, plans, policies and programs that currently promote, and have the potential to stimulate vibrant communities through arts and culture.

Organizations in York Region

NewMakelt

NewMakelt is a non-profit makerspace in Newmarket, Ontario. As the only industrial and digital workshop and training facility of its kind in York Region. As the only industrial and digital workshops, training, and co-working facility of its kind in York Region, they help inventors, visionaries, and innovators across York Region, in Toronto, and throughout the Greater Toronto Area achieve their goals while changing the way people work. NewMakelt has openly expressed an interest and intent to provide space and services to artists and crafters. They will be expanding to a new location in 2019 and plan to add new space and equipment on top of their current offerings. They currently work closely with the York Region Arts Council through programming partnerships such as hosting an Artist-In-Residence.

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

TRCA is one of 36 Conservation Authorities in Ontario. Working with municipalities and other partners to look after the watersheds of the Toronto region and its Lake Ontario waterfront, they help people understand, enjoy and look after the natural environment. Both YRAC and Shadowpath have worked closely with TRCA's education, training and outreach teams as well as facility managers on programming that support both creation and presentation of local artists' work. They have expressed a keen interest in making their properties more accessible to artists of all disciplines in many different ways year-round. Shorter term options include intentionally reaching out to and partnering with arts groups to produce public programming on TRCA properties as well as continue to provide short-term day-time artist residencies in partnership with YRAC. There are seasons in which the Kortright Centre for Conservation is underutilized therefore an assessment can determine maximizing the use of this facility. Longer term options can include renovating the Lake St. George dormitories and barn, providing live/work spaces in stand-alone houses and occupying the second floor of the Swan Lake facility when current tenants leave.

Aurora Cultural Centre

The Aurora Cultural Centre is an arms-length non-profit charitable organization in Aurora, Ontario. Since 2010, the Centre has welcomed the community to create and participate in diverse experiences for all ages. Located in a restored 1886 schoolhouse, they program four gallery exhibition spaces, a range of instructional classes for children, teens and adults, an eclectic live music series, special family events, summer arts camps, and offer rental spaces for unique experiences. Partnerships with the community, businesses, schools and more are at the heart of their operations, and vital to their success. The Cultural Centre is an independent organization funded in part by the Town of Aurora through a Provision of Cultural Services Agreement to deliver cultural programming on behalf of the Town. The Town of Aurora owns the building, covers utility costs and provides maintenance services. This is one of the few models of its kind in York Region and a good example of how a municipality can work with a non-profit arts organization to develop a sustainable space for the arts.

The Regional Municipality of York

Over the last five years, the Regional Municipality of York has begun to recognize the importance of investing in arts and culture in their Economic Development Action Plan. After further discussions, there is a possibility for the Region to play a role in setting a foundation that will encourage the development of grassroots artist-driven spaces through policy, marketing and partnership initiatives. There is an opportunity for the Region to support further discussions around housing affordability by encouraging builders to provide a community benefit with reduced fees alongside municipalities, which will likely result in Section 37 Agreements. York Region's Vision 2051 is in the process of being updated and there is an opportunity for research and recommendations related to affordable creative space development to be incorporated into this plan and other official plans and strategies. Ultimately, the Region sees the development of creative spaces as falling under priorities that address placemaking and innovation.

Organizations Outside of York Region

Victoria BIA

In Victoria, BC, the Business Improvement Association (BIA) collaborated with the City to conduct a feasibility study and culture plan needs assessment to determine how to best utilize an empty courthouse owned by the province. The Victoria BIA is acting as the project manager and is continuing to work with the City of Victoria to develop a governance structure while the province is assessing what is needed and how much it would cost to bring the building up to code. As part of the community engagement and feasibility assessment, those working on the project are considering ways to offset future operating costs, and have considered working with the tech sector and/or introducing a restaurant/café. This is an interesting example of a collaborative effort between a province (who owns the facility), a city and a BIA.

City of Vancouver

The City of Vancouver has a large and vibrant arts and culture scene which is recognized as an integral contributor to the liveability of the city. The City released their 2018 Cultural Infrastructure Plan, which focuses on spaces where artists and cultural workers can live, work, and share their work, and supports Vancouver's cultural sector at a time when nearly two-thirds of artists in the city live below the poverty line. City-wide targets for arts and cultural spaces will be developed to reflect the needs of the community. Policies, zoning, regulatory, and other tools, will also be explored to secure and develop such spaces and hubs. The City itself is the largest owner and primary lease-holder of arts spaces in the city. Though the City of Vancouver is very different than the Regional Municipality of York and each of its nine municipalities, there are several excellent references and models for making spaces for arts and culture through partnerships as well as programs and policies that lessen barriers for artists and arts organizations to access space.

ArtsBuild Ontario (ABO)

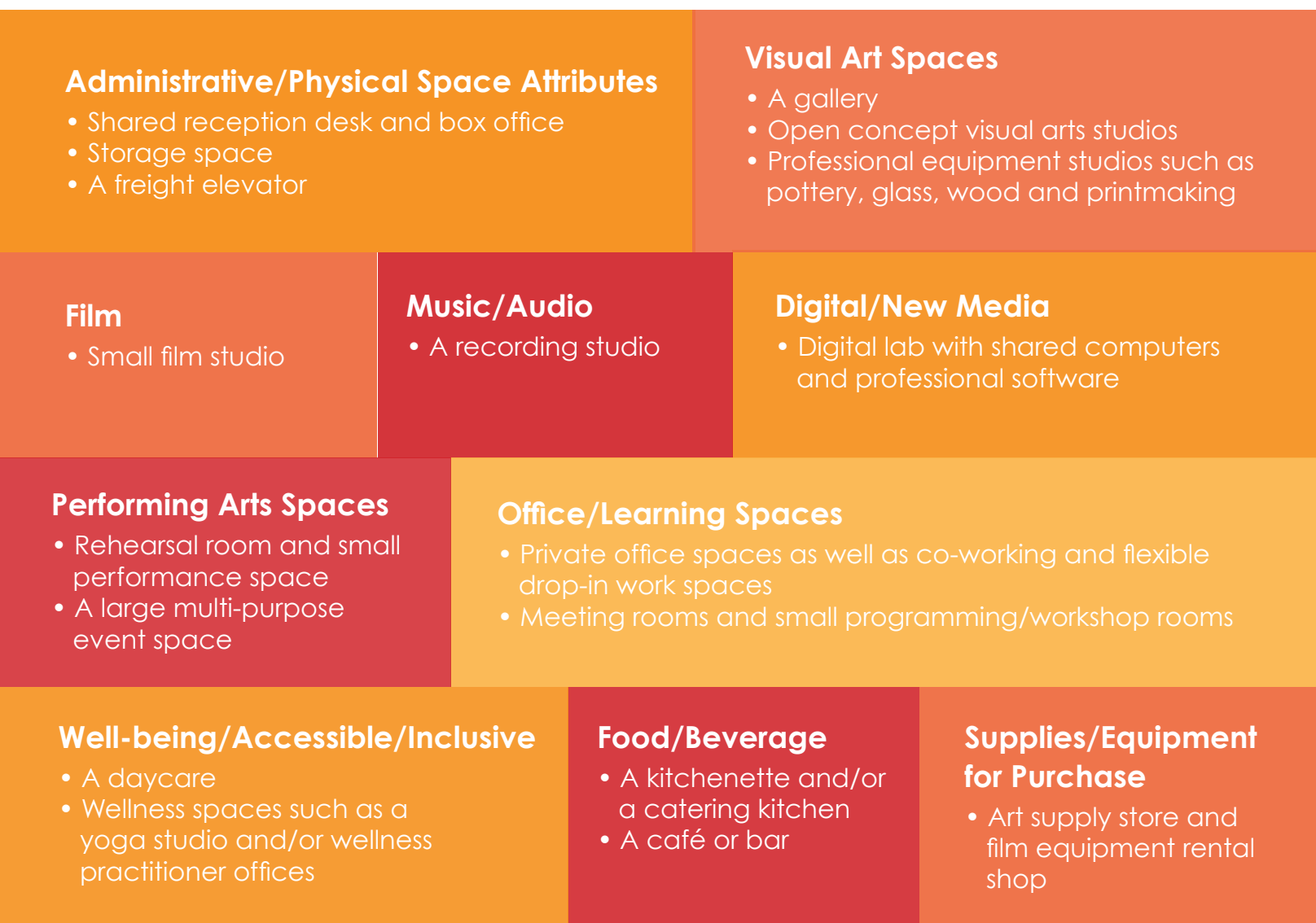
ArtsBuild Ontario is the only organization in Ontario dedicated to realizing long-term solutions to building, managing and financing the sustainable arts facilities needed in Ontario communities. In 2016, ABO released the JM Drama Report - Strategic Review of Needs and Space that aimed to answer key questions around JM Drama's theatre operations based on needs from the Kitchener performing arts community and in the context of other Kitchener performing arts facilities. One standout point this report shed light on was the meaning of "affordable space." The term below-market is often used to promote that a space is affordable for artists and arts groups, though affordability is impossible to define and means different things to different people/groups at different points in time. In essence, it is important to examine if below-market rates are truly affordable for audiences.

Chapter 4: Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION #1: THE MOTHERSHIP

The “Mothership” would be a large scale, interdisciplinary and multi-purpose space that would offer a variety of amenities for artists, arts organizations and the public and promote collaboration and cross-sectoral exchanges. The size of the facility should be no smaller than 25,000 square feet.

Specific spaces and amenities within the facility would ideally include:



Business Model Options:

- ▶ **Public/private partnership operated by a single non-profit organization**
 - The municipality where the facility will be located can contribute to the physical building and its maintenance by:
 - › Leveraging funds from Section 37 and/or the Municipal Accommodation Tax to help fund the construction and/or renovation of the physical building
 - › Own the facility or be the primary lease-holder, potentially covering utilities and maintenance personnel and provide the space in-kind to a non-profit organization to operate and sub-lease
 - › Develop partnerships with land owners, developers and builders to donate space or provide space at a highly reduced rate
- ▶ **Co-operative model**
 - Another option to a non-profit organization leading the operation of the facility is to develop a co-operative model where multiple organizations form a governance structure with designated voting and management rights
 - A public/private partnership between the municipality and land owners and developers can also support the development and maintenance of this model
- ▶ **Capital project**
 - An organization or co-operative of organizations may decide to purchase their own facility and secure financing through capital grants, banks or private investors
- ▶ **Revenue from the café/bar to contribute to operating costs**
 - The organization operating the facility can either run a café or bar inside the building and use revenue generated from food and beverage sales towards operating expenses
 - Alternatively, the organization can lease a space to an external café or bar, generating revenue from the rental unit and potentially retaining a percentage of food and beverage sales
- ▶ **Membership fees and rental units**
 - Artists and arts groups using flexible space can purchase memberships to access space and recourses
 - Artists, arts organizations and creative industry businesses who need private and/or permanent space can rent units
- ▶ **Sponsorships and donations**
 - Corporations, foundations and individual donors are important contributors to building, renovating and maintaining arts spaces
 - They can also contribute to funding specific programs and events
- ▶ **Grants**
 - There are many grants at all levels of government that can support several phases of the project, such as federal cultural infrastructure grants and provincial operating as well as project grants
- ▶ **Fees from ticket sales and artwork sales**
 - A small percentage of revenue can be generated by ticket sales at the box office and sales of artwork in the gallery
 - Funds from this would go towards advertising and artist fees

Ideal Locations:

- ▶ City of Vaughan near the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre
- ▶ City of Markham near Downtown Markham and the new York University Campus
- ▶ Why these locations: Both Vaughan and Markham are the most densely populated municipalities and are in the process of building their own respective downtown cores that are close to central public transit hubs, major highways and have ample parking. They are also working to promote pedestrian traffic and there are other amenities close by that already contribute to a “hub,” such as restaurants, shops, residential units, office towers as well as a highly credible post secondary institution. These are ideal attributes for a large multi-disciplinary space that would be accessed by many people daily.

Potential Timeline:

- ▶ Five to ten years until fully operational.

Recommended Lead(s):

- ▶ Initially, the York Region Arts Council and Shadowpath Theatre Productions will collaboratively take the lead in exploring options to move this project forward
- ▶ Depending on further research and recommendations, a new non-profit organization may be established specifically to run the facility or a collaborative of organizations may agree to form a co-operative model

RECOMMENDATION #2: THE AKIN MODEL

It's not always about reinventing the wheel. Akin Collective has established a great reputation and very unique and innovative model that has positively impacted hundreds of artists throughout Toronto. They are already exploring partnerships in other suburban and rural communities so there is an opportunity to work with them to expand into York Region. This would address many visual artists needs for open studio space.

Specific spaces and amenities within the facility would ideally include:

- ▶ Open concept space with floor or moveable wall demarcations to define each artists' space
- ▶ Storage
- ▶ Small gallery space
- ▶ Insurance coverage imbedded in rental contract

Business Model Options:

- ▶ **Meanwhile lease :**
 - Temporary occupation of a vacant business property by non-commercial entities
 - Sublet units of space to creatives

▶ Partnership with existing facilities:

- Develop a partnership with an arts or other facility interested in leveraging under-used space for artist studios
- Akin or another organization modeled after Akin can occupy and operate a section of this facility's space, similar to the Akin Studio Program at MOCA

▶ Partnership between municipality and non-profit organization:

- Similar to what was mentioned in the “Mothership” model, a municipality can provide under-used space they own in-kind to Akin or a similar organization
- The municipality can also be instrumental in securing private land owner/builder partners and leverage funds from Section 37 and/or the Municipal Accommodation Tax

Ideal Locations:

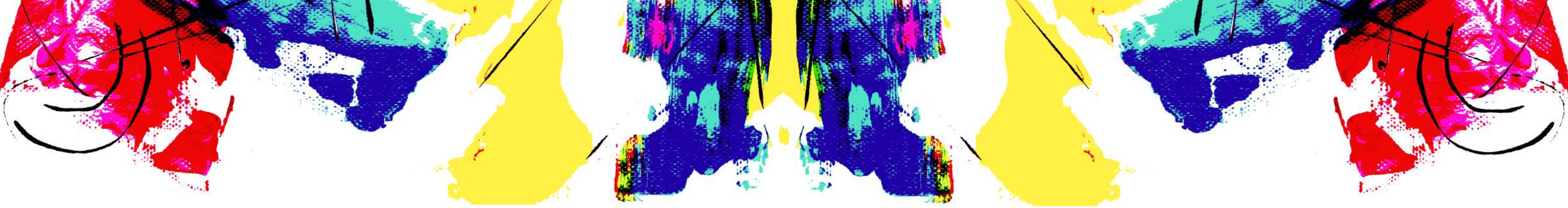
- ▶ Newmarket, on or near Main Street
- ▶ Downtown Richmond Hill
- ▶ Thornhill, near Bathurst Street and Centre Street
- ▶ Georgina, south of Sibbald Point Provincial Park between Highway 48 and Black River Road on Park Road
- ▶ On or near Main Street Unionville or Markham Main Street
- ▶ Why these locations: Most of these locations are in relatively populated areas with pedestrian traffic, and several are historic main streets that host quaint shops, cafés, restaurants and other local businesses. There are often units along these main streets that are boarded up and not being used. There are often larger industrial spaces, decommissioned schools, fire stations and other vacant spaces close to these main streets or main intersections that can be leveraged for non-commercial use. The “Mothership” model would not necessarily work in these locations due to sheer size, though the Akin model can function on a smaller scale. For example, it can range from approximately 2,000 to 5,000 square feet and provide an ample amount of space for multiple artists

Potential Timeline:

- ▶ One to three years for one space to be fully operational

Recommended Lead(s):

- ▶ **York Region Arts Council in collaboration with Shadowpath Theatre Productions will reach out to Akin Collective. There are two possible avenues:**
 - Akin Collective takes the lead, expanding their number of locations to include one in York Region. YRAC and Shadowpath can act as liaisons and make recommendations where appropriate.
 - YRAC and Shadowpath work with Akin who would act as a consultant to assist with setting up a similar type of facility and operating model that would function as an independent brand under different management.



RECOMMENDATION #3: LIVE-WORK WITH COMMON AMENITIES AND SPACE

One of the biggest challenges artists and cultural workers in York Region face is the high cost of living. This study explored a few models where regions, cities, independent non-profit housing corporations and condo corporations have worked together to provide below market housing units for arts professionals. In some cases, these residential buildings did not include common amenities and shared spaces for its tenants, which is something that would be important to include to promote collaboration rather than isolation.

Specific spaces and amenities within the facility would ideally include:

- ▶ Individual residential apartment/condominium units, ideally clustered in one or more building
- ▶ Shared studio and event space(s)
- ▶ Gallery space on the ground floor
- ▶ Storage
- ▶ Parking spaces

Business Model Options:

- ▶ **Public/private/non-profit partnership**
 - Municipality can agree to grant a developer additional height and density through a Section 37 agreement
 - Non-profit organization (be it a non-profit housing corporation or other entity) can purchase or lease units within a larger condominium to rent and/or sell to artists, arts administrators and professionals in the creative industries
 - Depending on the relationship between the developer and non-profit organization, there can be affordable rental units and/or below-market ownership suites
 - There is potential for another non-profit organization to lease and manage the common/shared spaces



Ideal Locations:

- ▶ Vaughan Metropolitan Centre
- ▶ Downtown Markham
- ▶ Richmond Hill, near Highway 7 and Yonge Street and/or Major Mackenzie Drive and Yonge Street
- ▶ Yonge Street & Davis Drive in Newmarket
- ▶ Why these locations: The above locations are areas in which there is significant new development of condominiums with the potential for the municipality and a developer to enter into a Section 37 agreement to provision the use of affordable units for artists and shared arts spaces in new buildings. Similar to what was mentioned in the “Mothership” recommendation, these places are already considered major hubs and corridors due to their population density (current and/or projected), access to public transit, pedestrian traffic and proximity to shops, restaurants and other important amenities.

Potential Timeline:

- ▶ Three to seven years to develop partnerships and agreements, secure financing and list units for rent and/or sale
- ▶ Four to ten years until occupancy

Recommended Lead(s):

- ▶ York Region Arts Council and Shadowpath Theatre Productions to lead initial conversations with identified municipalities and the Regional Municipality of York planning, economic development as well as culture departments
- ▶ Future project leads would be determined based on outcomes from these meetings

RECOMMENDATION #4: BUILDING ON EXISTING MODELS

NewMakelt and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) are two organizations which own and/or operate spaces that are ripe for artists and cultural workers to inhabit more regularly. They have equipment and natural spaces that are already available to use and are very open to introducing new features, facilities and services that can further serve the needs of the local arts community.

Specific spaces and amenities within the facility would ideally include:

► At NewMakelt:

- Professional machinery and studios for wood, metal, spray painting, laser cutting, 3D printing, vinyl cutting, textiles, jewellery, printmaking pottery
- Shared computers with professional grade design software
- Meeting rooms
- Program/workshop rooms
- Storage

► At TRCA properties:

- Outdoor performance space
- Open concept studios
- Office space
- Meeting rooms
- Program/workshop rooms
- Temporary live/work space (in Lake St. George dormitories or in houses)



Business Model Options:

► NewMakelt:

- Membership: currently NewMakelt has a membership structure in place for makers to share equipment and space. NewMakelt can continue to leverage the same membership model that includes new arts specific spaces and amenities.
- Partnership: NewMakelt can develop an agreement with a non-profit arts organization to manage select members, space and equipment designated for artists and crafters. They would also be responsible for programming.

► Toronto and Region Conservation Authority:

- Partnership: TRCA can develop a partnership agreement with one or more non-profit organizations to create and manage spaces, programming and equipment for artists and art groups.
- Membership: If an artist studio program is setup and made available year-round, a membership program can be created for artists to use the space. This can be managed by TRCA staff or through a partnership agreement with an external organization.
- Short and long term rentals: artists and arts groups can rent outdoor spaces, office and program/meeting rooms on a one-off basis or consistently year-round. This too can be managed by TRCA staff or in partnership with another organization.

Ideal Locations:

- NewMakelt in Newmarket
- Lake St. George
- Swan Lake
- Kortright Centre for Conservation
- TRCA owned residential houses

Potential Timeline:

- NewMakelt: Six months to two years with specific amenities being launched in phases over time.
- TRCA: One year to 10 years depending on ease of a project. If major funding needs to be secured for renovation projects, this may take several years. For use of outdoor spaces and any houses that may not be occupied, it may be possible to have a program in place within one year.

Recommended Lead(s):

- York Region Arts Council would work with NewMakelt and TRCA separately to develop proposals
- Depending on further conversations, NewMakelt and TRCA may choose to operate these facilities as an expanded part of their core business or they may choose to lease a portion of their spaces to a non-profit organization to operate and manage members and programming.



MUNICIPAL POLICY AND PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

In addition to creating new purpose-built spaces for artists, arts organizations and creative industry businesses, it's important that municipalities consider implementing other policies and programs that make it easier for creativity to flourish in their community. The following are recommendations for specific policies and programs for York Region municipalities:

Theatre Rental Grant Program

An in-kind grant program where non-profit performing arts organizations can apply to a municipality to use professional theatre space, receive box office, concession, marketing and tech support free of charge. This would make current theatre venues in York Region more accessible to performing arts organizations operating on a small budget.

Cultural Infrastructure Grant Program

Grant funding to help non-profit organizations buy, build, renovate, or expand a cultural space.

Permit Fee Assistance for Cultural Spaces

Grant funding to help pay for permit fees associated with renovating, constructing or adapting the use of a non-profit cultural space. Permit fee assistance grants can extend to obtaining permits to use public spaces, such as parks, for arts and culture activities.

Critical Assistance Grant for Cultural Spaces

A grant program for arts organizations who own or lease space facing a critical situation as a result of a facility emergency or urgent life-safety issue. Grant funds can cover emergency repairs or safety upgrades.

New Tax Class for Arts Spaces

A new tax class can be created for designated arts spaces and/or creative co-location facilities to increase the affordability of rental spaces for artists and arts organizations.

Grant Programs for Artists and Arts Organizations

Operating and project grant programs designed for independent artists and arts organizations. These grants can support community engaged art practices, diversity and inclusion as well as support projects and organizations that contribute to making their municipality a more vibrant place and/or offer important services to the community.

Activation of Underutilized Civic Spaces Grant

A grant program to promote the use and activation of underutilized civic spaces by artists and arts groups.

Neighbourhood Matching Fund

A matching fund provided to BIAs and neighbourhood groups to make creative improvements to local public lands.

Commission Opportunities

Create commission-based opportunities for local artists to create work for their municipality, such as for marketing campaigns, beautification of temporary construction site barricades or other projects. This can also be developed through public/private partnerships with developers and other corporations.

Chapter 5: Next Steps and Action Items

This feasibility study shed light on the creative facility needs of approximately 100 artists and arts organizations in York Region, the position of municipalities on grass-roots arts facilities, and viable business models that currently exist. The recommendations in this report are the first steps towards realizing creative spaces that support local artists. The following action items will guide future phases of work:

1. Follow up on recommendations by furthering conversations with the municipalities and organizations mentioned in this report.
2. Identify possible sites and spaces and develop an operational plan and budget for use of specific facilities
3. Cultivate and secure partnerships
4. Continue artist engagement and introduce community input forums around the development of specific sites
5. Research and apply for funding as needed
6. Work with architects and specialists to render designs of the space, and develop programming as well as a prospect list of potential members
7. Create and release follow up podcasts with updates
8. Involve local media to let the public know about plans and progress as well as use this study as an educational tool to highlight the importance of arts spaces in a community

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Endnotes:

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Image Citations

p. 35 The Cotton Factory

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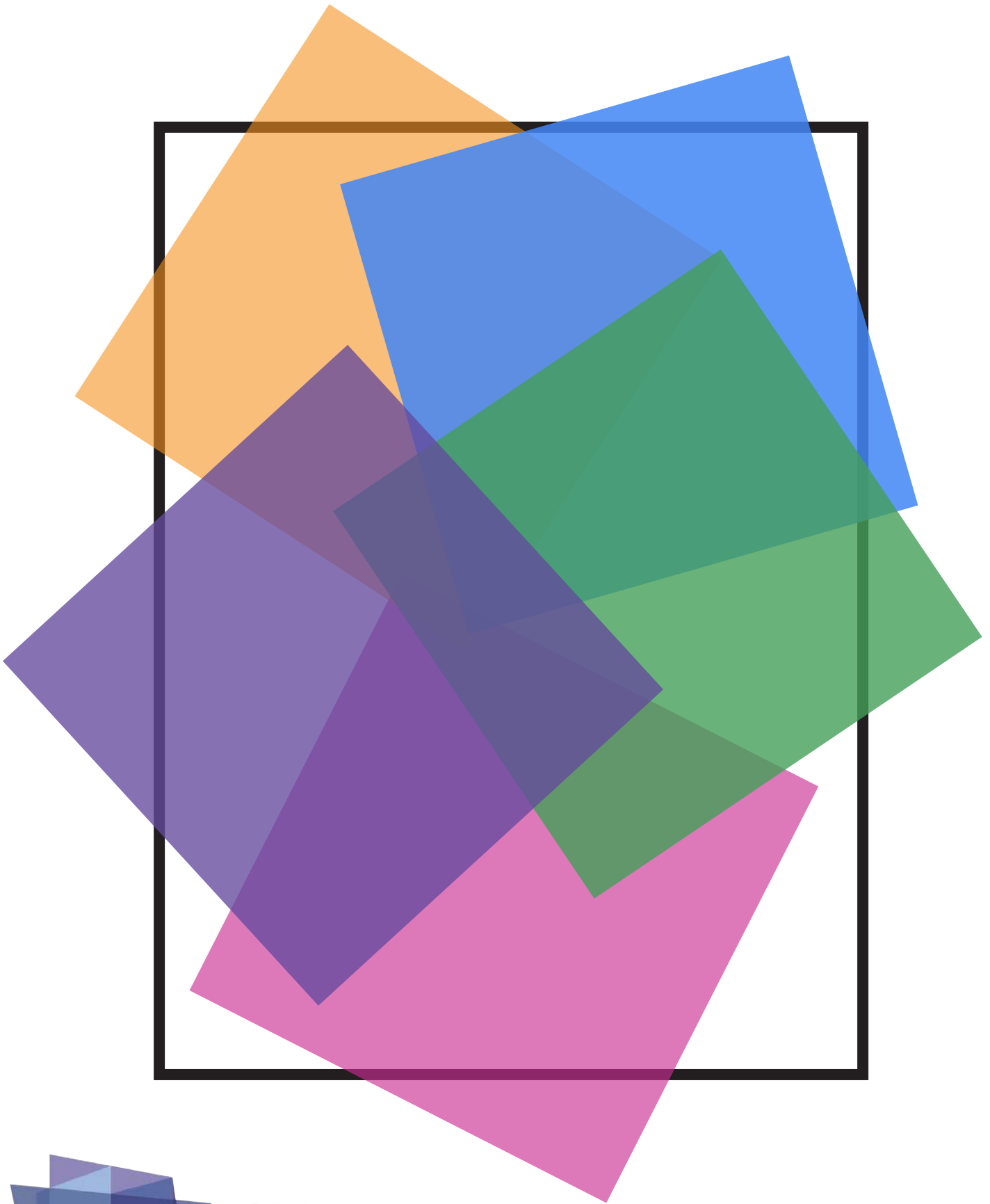
p.36 Akin Collective, sourced from <http://www.akincollective.com/info/>

p. 37 Toronto Media Arts Centre, sourced from <https://www.facebook.com/TOMediaArts/>

p. 38 Artscape Triangle Lofts, sourced from <https://www.artscape.ca/portfolio-item/artscape-triangle-lofts/>

p. 39 Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre, sourced from https://www.tripadvisor.com.sg/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g154943-d184659-i219930364-Roundhouse_Community_Arts_Recreation_Centre-Vancouver_British_Columbia.html

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