# WEST VANCOUVER arts cuture strategy update

westvancouver

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process to develop this *Arts & Culture Strategy Update* was led by the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee. As community ambassadors, committee members actively promoted involvement from arts groups and individuals in the planning process and acted as a focus group to assist staff during the engagement phase of the project.

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### THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING GROUPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY UPDATE:

Ambleside Dundarave Business Improvement Association Artmania Ambleside Orchestra Art Museum Advisory Panel Arts & Culture Advisory Committee **Blackout Art Society** Capilano University Music Program Community Grants Advisory Panel Espiritu Vocal Ensemble Ferry Building Gallery Advisory Panel Horseshoe Bay Business Association Kay Meek Arts Centre Mascall Dance North Shore Artists' Guild North Shore Celtic Ensemble North Shore Light Opera Society

North Shore Needle Arts Guild North Shore Writers' Association Pacific Spirit Choir Public Art Advisory Panel Seacoast Theatre Centre Laudate Singers Lionsgate Sinfonia Theatre West Vancouver Vetta Chamber Music West Vancouver Community Arts Council West Vancouver Memorial Library West Vancouver Art Museum Advisory Panel West Vancouver Schools West Vancouver Historical Society West Vancouver Youth Advisory Committee Individual artists, artisans, musicians, performers, and cultural workers

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## WEST VANCOUVER arts culture strategy update

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### LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), səĺílwətat (Tsleil-Waututh Nation), and x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əýəm (Musqueam Nation). We recognize and respect them as nations in this territory, as well as their historic connection to the lands and waters around us since time immemorial.

# ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY UPDATE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

West Vancouver's unique landscape has long inspired a thriving arts and culture community. The District recognizes the importance of arts and culture as part of its identity, and investing in programs, facilities, and partnerships that support creativity and collaboration.

This Arts & Culture Strategy Update (2025-2029) builds on the previous Arts & Culture Strategy (2018-2023) by reconvening arts and culture groups, reaffirming their vision and values, addressing current challenges and opportunities, and setting priorities for the next five years. This Arts & Culture Strategy Update is a collaborative document that the arts sector and the District of West Vancouver (the District) will be responsible for implementing. The purpose of this Arts & Culture Strategy Update is to:

- confirm the vision and values for West Vancouver's arts and culture community
- ensure collaboration among the arts and culture groups to achieve common goals
- set directions for the long-term sustainability of arts and culture
- guide and support decision-making by Council and the integration of arts and culture into District-wide planning processes
- propose roles for the arts sector and the District in collaboratively implementing the Strategy

This Update was developed through an engagement with arts organizations, individual artists and several key community organizations including the West Vancouver Memorial Library Board, West Vancouver Schools, and business associations.



### LIKE THE PREVIOUS ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY, THIS UPDATE IS BUILT ON TOUR GOALS THAT RELATE TO PEOPLE, PROGRAMS, PLACES, AND PROCESSES.

### **GOAL 1: PEOPLE | enable leadership & collaboration**

Enable leadership, encourage collaboration, build capacity, and enhance decision making.

### PRIORITIES ARE:

- Develop an independent umbrella group which will connect, support, and provide services for community arts groups and individual artists in West Vancouver
- Create opportunities for arts groups to convene with, learn from, and recognize funders to expand the community of funding partnerships
- Offer meetings for arts groups across the North Shore on a regular basis to encourage relationship building, develop alliances, and create collaborations across the sector
- Define the scope of roles and responsibilities of the District versus the arts and culture groups

### GOAL 2: PROGRAMS | enhance opportunities

Strengthen existing opportunities, increase inclusion and diversity, and expand attractions for residents and visitors. PRIORITIES ARE:

- Initiate a pilot program for busking in parks and business areas in the summer season
- Support professional development opportunities for the arts and culture sector
- Develop a pilot Artist in Residence Program
- Collaborate with Indigenous Nations and organizations

### GOAL 3: PLACES | enhance spaces & places

### Enhance West Vancouver's quality and supply of spaces that enhance arts and culture opportunities.

PRIORITIES ARE:

- Confirm a location for a purpose-built arts facility that is reflective of the Arts & Culture Facilities Plan (2019)
- Ensure that the existing multi-purpose arts spaces are prioritized for dedicated arts use
- Develop spaces for the arts that are functional, affordable, and available for artists and arts groups
- Install electrical infrastructure in Horseshoe Bay and Ambleside Park to enable arts activities
- Create a publicly accessible database of indoor, outdoor, and semi-outdoor spaces for arts uses

### **GOAL 4: PROCESS | improve processes**

Improve processes to increase awareness and investment and allow arts and culture to flourish.

### PRIORITIES ARE:

- Develop coordinated marketing
- Develop an engaging vibrant marketing campaign for the Culture Compass
- Review District regulations and zoning bylaws to enable increased outdoor arts activities and events
- Allow placement of kiosks dedicated to the promotion of arts events and programs
- Revise the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee Terms of Reference to include youth representation

Further details of these goals are offered on page 9.



# HISTORY

West Vancouver is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), səlílwətat (Tsleil-Waututh Nation), and x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əýəm (Musqueam Nation).

Inspired by the stunning landscape, many creative professionals moved to West Vancouver in the early 1950s and helped to establish West Coast architecture. They were attracted to live and create in a community close to an urban centre, yet still with the qualities and access to nature of a smaller neighbourhood. Over the last several decades, West Vancouver has been home to world-renowned architects, artists, and writers.

### **ARTS & CULTURE IN WEST VANCOUVER TODAY**

West Vancouver's breathtaking marine to mountain landscape inspires a vibrant arts and culture scene with cultural assets, events and festivals, and Indigenous culture that is supported by a dedicated community of participants and advocates. Residents of all ages engage in creative opportunities, often tied to West Vancouver's natural environment, with older adults, families, and children contributing through unique activities and interests.

### CULTURAL ASSETS:

District-run facilities, including a community art gallery, art museum, workshop spaces, archives, and a library, along with repurposed buildings, schools, faith-based groups, and private spaces provide a variety of venues for cultural activities.

### EVENTS & FESTIVALS:

Annual events attract over 250,000 participants to celebrate live music, theatre, visual arts and other unique cultural experiences. As the community becomes more culturally diverse, new festivals and programs celebrate its rich diversity.

The Squamish Nation's rich cultural and artistic traditions remain a defining part of the community's identity, with renowned artists producing works that honour both traditional and contemporary art forms.

### **CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES**

### CHALLENGES:

Along with the history and great successes described above, arts and culture in West Vancouver is also experiencing challenges.

- Changing demographics and socio-economic conditions affect arts and culture such as high housing costs, transportation issues and an aging population, among others.
- Older adults form an increasing proportion of the community, requiring attention to their needs and limited incomes of some.
- The very high land values limit options for development of new facilities.
- Statistics Canada shows that there are increasingly more wealthy and more poor households in the District, and affordability of arts and culture is a concern for the latter.
- Many arts and culture organizations depend on funding from public and private sources and are challenged by capacity
  issues to realize their potential in program and service delivery, organizational development, and revenue diversification
  and expansion. With so many charitable groups and worthy causes seeking donors, this is a common challenge for many
  organizations.

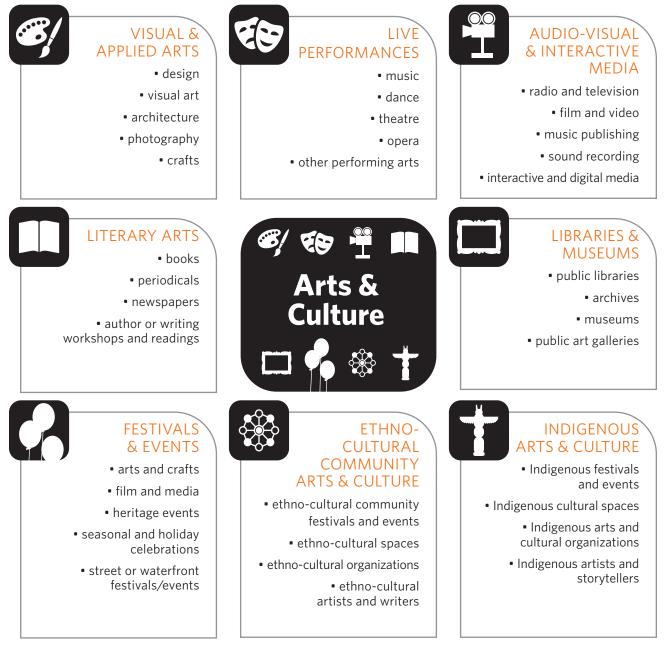
### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Demographic and cultural changes in the community require changes in the approach to planning, funding, and programming for arts and culture.
- Opportunity to build on West Vancouver's roots and the uniqueness of its culture. The challenge is to find new ways of doing this in an environment of increased competition from surrounding jurisdictions and broader issues such as high cost for land and housing and transportation limitations.
- Opportunity to be proactive and to creatively address the future of arts and culture in the community.

### WEST VANCOUVER ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY UPDATE 2025-2029

# WHAT IS ARTS & CULTURE?

### **ARTS & CULTURE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:**



Adapted from Statistics Canada Cultural Framework

# **VISION & VALUES**

### **VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

As reaffirmed from the previous *Arts & Culture Strategy*, West Vancouver's arts and culture is characterized by:

- a culture of collaboration among arts and culture groups, community partners, and the District of West Vancouver
- diverse and creative programming reflecting and serving the rich diversity of the community
- widespread recognition of arts and culture's contributions to West Vancouver as a resilient community that attracts residents and visitors
- appealing public spaces animated and enriched by arts and culture assets and activities
- an integrated network of accessible and suitable facilities across the community

VALŲES	The following community values will continue to guide the implementation of the <i>Arts &amp; Culture Strategy</i> through this Update:
COLLABORATION:	Arts and culture providers, community supporters, and the District work collaboratively and build partnerships across sectors, generations, departments, geographic borders, and disciplines, engaging community members on major initiatives.
ACCESS:	Arts and culture facilities and experiences are accessible, affordable, and welcoming, widely communicated, and provide everyone an opportunity to participate or engage.
INCLUSION:	Arts and culture opportunities embrace the community's diversity in all its forms, including Indigenous, ethno-cultural, gender, sexual orientation, income, socio-economic status, age, and all abilities. Support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action that relate to arts and culture is integral.
INNOVATION:	Innovation in arts and culture promotes creativity, inspires participation, and enhances organizational sustainability.
RESILIENCE:	Arts and culture facilities, programs, and activities further West Vancouver's efforts towards becoming a resilient community. This includes a diversity of programs for all ages across a range of ethnic groups. The arts and culture sector continues to be valued in troubled economic times.

# **BENEFITS OF ARTS & CULTURE**

WEST VANCOUVER NEEDS A STRATEGY TO GUIDE THE DISTRICT AND THE COMMUNITY BECAUSE ARTS AND CULTURE CREATES THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:



## CREATING THIS UPDATE

The process of creating this Arts & Culture Strategy Update (2025-2029) began in 2024 under the direction and guidance of the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee (ACAC). The previous Arts & Culture Strategy (2018-2023) was developed through a comprehensive community engagement process that is outlined in the previous document.

This Update was developed with input from arts groups and individual artists who participated in completing questionnaires and attending workshops to arrive at a set of priorities for the next five years. The questionnaire developed by the ACAC was sent to 220 individual artists and 38 arts groups that represent approximately 2,500 individuals. Workshops were held in June 2024 to review the results of the questionnaires and to identify and confirm emerging priorities. Further feedback was received from West Vancouver Schools and the West Vancouver Memorial Library Board.

Members of the business community also provided input into opportunities for collaboration between the arts and business sectors. District staff also met with a small group of artists from the Squamish Nation to discuss opportunities for collaborative programming.

WEST VANCOUVER ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY UPDATE 2025-20

## GOALS, STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES FOR 2025-2029

The Arts & Culture Strategy (2018–2023) and this Update (2025–2029) are built on four goals that relate to people, programs, places and processes. This Strategy Update is intended to be dynamic and will respond to changing needs and opportunities. Implementation of the Strategy Update will be the responsibility of community arts groups and the District of West Vancouver.

 $\bigcirc$  = Responsibility of the District of West Vancouver  $| \bigcirc$  = Responsibility of the District & arts groups

### **GOAL 1: PEOPLE** | enable leadership and collaboration

Collaboration in the arts and culture sector will enable creative partnerships, effective sharing of resources, and the growth of opportunities. It will also raise the profile and impact of arts and culture when initiatives reach broader audiences and engage more funders, donors, and partners. This goal focuses on enabling leadership and the collaboration required to achieve productive partnerships.

### STRATEGIES:

- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration
- Build District capacity in arts and culture planning and decision-making
- Build local capacity

### PRIORITIES FOR 2025-2029:

- Develop an independent umbrella group which will connect, support, and provide services for community arts groups and individual artists in West Vancouver. This organization's fundamental priority will be to advocate for and amplify the voices of the arts sector.
- 2. Create opportunities for arts groups to convene with, learn from, and recognize funders to expand the community of funding partnerships.
- Offer meetings for arts groups across the North Shore on a regular basis to encourage relationship building, develop alliances and collaborations across the sector (including the District of West Vancouver, North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission, and community arts groups).

 $\mathbf{\overline{4}}$ Define the scope of roles and responsibilities of the District versus the arts and culture groups.

### GOAL 2: PROGRAMS | enhance opportunities

Within West Vancouver, arts and culture programming is provided directly by community groups and organizations as well as the District to meet a wide range of needs and reflect the diversity of the community. This goal focuses on strengthening existing opportunities, increasing inclusion and diversity, and expanding attractions for residents and visitors.

### STRATEGIES:

- Promote diversity and inclusion in programs and events
- Promote the visibility of Indigenous arts and culture
- Increase local activities

### PRIORITIES FOR 2025-2029:

Initiate a pilot program for busking in parks and business areas in summer season when bylaw changes have been reviewed and changed.

2. Continue to offer professional development opportunities for the arts and culture sector including opportunities for youth and teachers.

OB Develop a pilot artist in residence program utilizing available municipal parks buildings, arts facilities, and empty storefronts.

Continue to collaborate with Indigenous Nations and organizations on an ongoing basis to recognize, encourage, and promote Indigenous arts and culture.

### GOAL 3: PLACES | enhance spaces and places

Spaces are necessary for the creation, production, and presentation of visual and performing arts. Multiple types of indoor spaces are needed to support different ages and abilities of participants and audiences, and there has been a loss of indoor arts spaces in West Vancouver.

Public spaces and the public realm are strengthened by place-making strategies to draw residents and visitors to commercial areas to boost the local economy. These spaces also provide important anchors for community-based activities, destination events, and arts creation, exhibition, and performances.

STRATEGIES:

- Manage existing District facilities
- Explore the use of additional existing facilities for arts and culture
- Provide new facilities for arts and culture
- Enhance public spaces and support place-making

### PRIORITIES FOR 2025-2029:

- Council to confirm a location for a purpose-built arts facility that is reflective of the Arts & Culture Facilities Plan (2019) so that staff can develop a business plan and fundraising plan to ensure it is affordable for taxpayers.
- Centre) are prioritized for dedicated arts use by both the District and independent arts groups.
- OB Develop spaces for the arts that are functional, affordable, and available for artists and arts groups.
- OPInstall electrical infrastructure in Horseshoe Bay and Ambleside Park to enable arts activities and special events.
- SIdentify and create a publicly accessible database of indoor, outdoor, and semi-outdoor spaces for arts meetings, rehearsals, workshops, performances and/or installations available across West Vancouver (include places of worship, schools, businesses, pop-up venues such as Cypress Park pop-up village, laneways, storefronts).

### **GOAL 4: PROCESS | improve processes**

There are many processes used at the District to market, plan, approve, finance, build, program, and implement arts and culture strategies. This goal focuses on improving District processes to increase awareness of arts and culture opportunities, to increase investment in artists, programs, and events; and to make it easier for artists and creative industries to flourish in West Vancouver.

### STRATEGIES:

- Increase awareness of arts and culture
- Increase investment in arts and culture
- Support and establish policies to advance arts and culture

### PRIORITIES FOR 2025-2029:

**1** Develop coordinated marketing that can be done without onerous privacy issues.

Work with North Van Arts to develop an engaging vibrant marketing campaign for the *Culture Compass* on social media, newsletters, and websites.

- Review District regulations and zoning bylaws to enable increased outdoor arts activities and events on streets and sidewalks (e.g. busking bylaw; review costing for operational implications to close streets for festivals such as installing bollards for ease of road closures in key festival areas).
- Allow placement of kiosks dedicated to the promotion of arts events and programs in busy public areas.
- SRevise the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee Terms of Reference to include a representative from the Youth Advisory Committee or other youth group.



# **NEXT STEPS**

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Arts & Culture Advisory Committee will provide oversight and work with District staff and community groups to develop an implementation plan for the Arts & Culture Strategy Update with community partners, including:

- identify the lead responsibility and contributing parties for each action
- review progress towards the actions annually, and adjust the actions and responsibilities as needed, potentially adding, deleting or modifying actions
- monitor initiatives during their delivery

Some initiatives in this Strategy were previously approved by District Council on October 7, 2024 to enable District staff and the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee to develop their 2025 work plans. Previously approved initiatives include:

- District staff work with the arts community to develop an independent umbrella group for the arts in West Vancouver
- Council to confirm a location for a purpose-built arts facility that is reflective of the Arts & Culture Facilities Plan (2019)
- implement District of West Vancouver zoning and bylaw changes to facilitate arts activities in West Vancouver including review of the busking bylaw, ensure the recipients of Permissive Tax Exemptions provide affordable access to community groups when spaces are available as outlined in the Permissive Tax Exemption Policy, and review zoning and other regulations to encourage property owners to provide spaces to animate when they are empty
- ensure the availability of a variety of suitable indoor and outdoor arts spaces that are dedicated to or can accommodate arts activities including an Artist in Residence Program for District-owned available buildings
- develop a publicly accessible database of all spaces suitable for arts activity available across West Vancouver
- install electrical infrastructure in Horseshoe Bay Park and Ambleside Park to enable outdoor events
- obtain approval of resources, including staffing and funding, to assist the arts community with a coordinated marketing campaign for the arts and culture sector that builds upon current infrastructure

Resources for new projects will come through grants and partnerships or future budget allocations. It will be up to the arts and culture groups and the District and its partners to prepare strategies for acquiring funding.

### **EVALUATION**

Measuring the success of the Arts & Culture Strategy Update will be important for making adjustments and as a basis for seeking funding. The following are potential measures that could be used by the District and arts groups:

- number of residents participating in arts and culture activities and programs
- number of people employed in the creative sector
- number of attendees at community arts and culture events
- satisfaction with arts and culture as measured through surveys, focus groups, and interviews
- increased social media activity and registrations to coordinated marketing channels
- · increases in funds raised, sponsorships, and grants

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### **ROLE OF THE DISTRICT:**

- create policy, zoning and bylaw changes
- support certain arts and culture events; funding, permits, services, and research grants and subsidies
- develop, manage, program and operate District-owned arts and culture assets/ facilities/spaces

### **SHARED ROLES:**

- foster relationships with artists, networks, tiers of government
- deliver arts and culture programs and services
- support marketing, communications, databases
- evaluate the Arts & Culture Strategy Update
- collaborate on certain programming; Artist in Residence, Indigenous inclusion

### **ROLE OF ARTS GROUPS:**

- regularly convene, meet and celebrate our arts and culture community
- manage, program and operate certain community-owned arts and culture assets
- provide professional development opportunities for artists



## ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY 2018–2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

*The Arts & Culture Strategy (2018–2023)* was approved by Council in June 2018. Immediately thereafter the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee (ACAC) was created to oversee the implementation of the Strategy and the Arts Facilities Advisory Committee (AFAC) was created to develop a comprehensive arts and culture facilities plan. The COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 had an immediate effect on the implementation of a number of planned initiatives by closing facilities and public programming. However, the arts community in West Vancouver and across Canada pivoted quickly to provide on-line programming to audiences that were isolated in their homes to offer local programming and a sense of belonging and connection. In addition, committees of Council related to arts and culture continued to meet online to advance their work including public art projects, community grants, arts facilities development and the ACAC. The following initiatives were initiated or completed from the previous Strategy:

- Established the ACAC & AFAC
- Expanded District's participation in regional networks and initiatives
- Convened regular meetings of arts groups across North Shore to develop partnerships and collaborations
- Engaged the Youth Advisory Committee to review funding applications for Youth Initiatives through the Community Grants Program
- Created capacity building opportunities for arts sector (e.g. North Shore Arts Summit (2019 & 2023); Community Grants Committee workshop for not for profits on how to access grants
- Supported opportunities for local business associations working more closely with Ambleside Dundarave Business Improvement Association and Horseshoe Bay Business Association on arts opportunities
- West Vancouver Cultural Fest was created in 2019 and features an international pavilion of culture to engage a greater diversity of artists to reflect the community's international character
- Expanded Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations in partnership with the Squamish Nation
- Prepared a comprehensive plan for arts and culture facilities, including:
  - District of West Vancouver Arts & Culture Strategy: Facility Needs Assessment Final Report (2018)
  - District of West Vancouver Arts & Culture Facilities Plan (2019)
  - Arts Facilities Site Identification Analysis (February 2020)
  - West Vancouver Arts & Culture Centre Vision & Governance Study (2023)
- Maintained existing facilities by restoring the Ferry Building and completing minor repairs to the Music Box, Silk Purse, and Gertrude Lawson House
- Enhanced public spaces with new public art projects including Municipal Hall (*Succession*); West Vancouver Community Centre (*Small World*; with Enhance West Van); Navvy Jack Point Park (*Singsong*) & Weston Park (*Interchange*) with Parks Department; Horseshoe Bay light shades created by artists from the Squamish Nation with Parks Department
- Created and maintained monthly artsWEST newsletter for all cultural offerings in West Vancouver
- Expanded the District's investment in arts and culture with Community Grants Program funding increase for the arts and culture stream
- Maintained arms-length oversight of the West Vancouver Art Museum to ensure eligibility for funding from BC Arts Council and Canada Council; created Ferry Building Gallery Advisory Panel
- Supported and provided input to policies and plans such as the Official Community Plan and Economic Development Plan to encourage the expansion of arts and culture opportunities
- Worked with District's Planning & Development Services to implement policies supportive of arts and culture (e.g. bylaw changes to enable sale of artwork from home-based studios with Planning Department)

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

A number of planning processes for arts and culture have been conducted over the years with significant contributions of time and resources by community members, artists, architects and District staff. The previous planning documents provided a framework for the previous Arts & Culture Strategy (2018-2023) and the Arts & Culture Facilities Report (2019) as well as the current Arts & Culture Strategy Update. For more information on previous planning documents, please refer to the Arts & Culture Strategy (2018-2023) at westvancouver.ca/arts-culture-strategy.

