

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026





Cover images:

Background: Mariah Plant – *Unlocking Inspiration*

Michele Dupas – *Strawberry Flower*

Laurie Crawford

Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre

Bavin Studios – *Ryan Bavin at Work*

Kimberley Arts Council – *Centre 64*



Introduction

The arts and culture sector in the Kootenays has faced, and embraced, so many changes since the founding of the West Kootenay Regional Arts Council (WKRAC) in the 1980s. The years 2020 to 2022 alone presented unprecedented challenges to audience development and the fiscal sustainability of arts organizations, and threats to the very livelihood of individual artists.

While we know that full recovery in the sector continues to be a long way off on the horizon, artists and cultural professionals also have new opportunities. Digital transformation in our daily work routines have made the Kootenays an increasingly popular destination from which to work remotely, and artists throughout the region have new ways to connect and collaborate with colleagues many miles away.

In this ever-shifting context, it was critical to look with fresh eyes at the ways in which WKRAC supports the regional sector. This strategic planning process provided an opportunity to connect with local arts councils, cultural organizations and independent artists about their greatest needs and the ways in which they most desire to work together.

WKRAC acknowledges that the “status quo” of unequal resource and capacity distribution was not the place we wanted to return to. A future that nurtures historically marginalized communities of artists and makers requires new models of collaboration and service. To that end, this plan is simply a starting point for our path forward in 2023 and beyond. It provides a clarity of purpose, with the necessary flexibility to continue adapting to the needs of our incredible artists and cultural organizations here in the Kootenays.

Sincerely,



Laura White
President, WKRAC



Kallee Lins
Executive Director, WKRAC



Our Vision

The West Kootenay Regional Arts Council acts as a catalyst to build capacity in the creative ecology so that arts, culture and heritage thrive throughout the region.

We do this by assisting those involved in arts, culture and heritage so they can carry out their activities more effectively through support like training, consultation and communication about resources available throughout the region and province.

Our Values

Adaptability

We are prepared to respond to emerging needs within the sector and react flexibly to changing operational contexts.

Collaboration

We seek to support other actors in the cultural community where possible, and acknowledge our own work is made stronger by the contributions of artists and cultural organizations in the region.

Connection

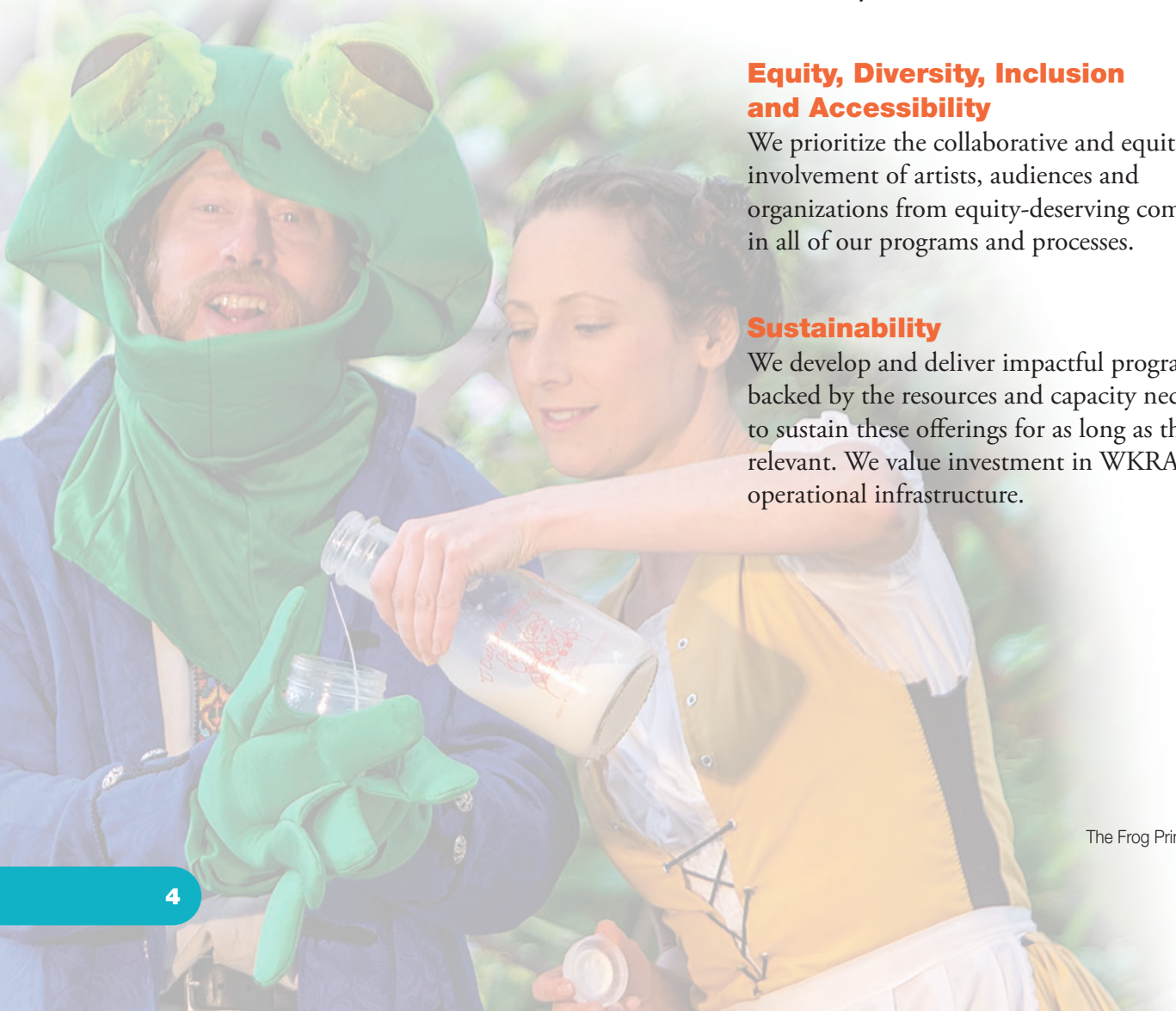
We undertake our work in close relationship and dialogue with our partners in the cultural community.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility

We prioritize the collaborative and equitable involvement of artists, audiences and organizations from equity-deserving communities in all of our programs and processes.

Sustainability

We develop and deliver impactful programming, backed by the resources and capacity necessary to sustain these offerings for as long as they are relevant. We value investment in WKRAC's operational infrastructure.



The Frog Prince

Our Plan

Our strategic plan contains three tiers:

Ambitions

A set of three statements that we look to in terms of a long-term future for arts, culture and heritage in the Kootenays. While complementary to one another, each individual statement stands on its own to give strong direction as to what the future could look like.

Aims

One or more statements related to a specific ambition and designed to be achievable by the end of the plan. These statements are what will be monitored for meaningful change over the life of the plan.

Actions

A set of specific actions in service of a particular aim. These are interventions, initiatives, programs and activities that will come to life in the operational plan of WKRCAC and will drive the progress of the plan in the near and medium terms.

The three ambitions call us to begin the work of transformational change as we move through the lifespan of the plan. At the same time, we acknowledge that these ambitions demand that we focus well into the future. Because strategic plans exist in a continuum, there is no doubt that these ambitions will guide us along a path for some time after the end of this plan.



Arts Revelstoke – Entagados

Ambition 1

WKRAC is the convenor/connector for the regional cultural sector.

Aim

Foster the conditions that build ever-more-collaborative and inclusive relationships with partners, arts organizations and artists.

Action	Indicator	Approach	Frequency
Target communications to extend reach and profile and establish greater dialogue to support community-based artistic activity	Increasing level of engagement with electronic communications materials	Relying on readily available analytics from website / social channels / newsletter	Quarterly review, benchmarking
Nurture connection among and between local arts councils and cultural organizations	One in-person regional event	Number of attendees / number of different communities represented	Baseline 2023, evaluate need thereafter
Collaborate with other values-aligned organizations to support inclusive community cultural development	A plan to strengthen equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility commitments within the organization	Consolidate ongoing goals and initiatives across WKRAC and the Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance	Baseline 2023, quarterly review, benchmarking thereafter
Create a clear value proposition for joining WKRAC as a member	Increasing interest in membership	Number of individual and organizational members	Use 2022 numbers as a baseline, evaluate annually
Increase capacity for in-person staff outreach to communities in the region	Number of in-person visits to communities and number of people attending the in-person visits	In-person outreach to local communities	Establish baseline in 2023
Enhance connection with local arts councils to strengthen networks between them and us, and each other	Number of contacts and number of people involved	Conversations and meetings with local arts councils across multiple communication channels	Establish baseline, quarterly thereafter

Ambition 2

WKRAC offers a comprehensive suite of programs and services that strengthen the regional arts community.

Aims

Strengthen the sustainability of the organization to ensure flexibility and adaptability in programming.

Establish WKRAC as a widely recognized and sought-after cultural sector partner.

Action	Indicator	Approach	Frequency
Identify new potential funding streams to increase the organization's financial capacity	Number of funding applications associated with WKRAC programs Application success rate Increased funding envelope	Internal review of fund development efforts	Quarterly
Monitor constituents' critical and essential capacity-building needs	Visible trends in the expression of capacity-building needs	Survey	Semi-annually
Recognize and invest in Kootenay-based arts organizations and artists through a broad range of programs and granting streams	A program portfolio that serves multiple stakeholder groups (e.g. organizations, individual artists, the general public)	Survey	Semi-annually
Seek opportunities to contribute to the continued evolution of arts service organizations across the province	Number of regional, provincial and national convenings participated in	Tracking of opportunities to represent WKRAC externally	Baseline 2023, semi-annually thereafter
Recognize and invest in WKRAC staff, volunteers and board members	Number of professional development opportunities provided	Setting goals related to performance and professional development and monitoring progress	Semi-annually

Ambition 3

The Kootenay region is a source of world-class arts and culture.

Aim

Foster an adaptable and thriving arts and culture sector in the Kootenay region.

Action	Indicator	Approach	Frequency
Map the composition of the sector	Number and breadth of arts and culture organizations	Commission a consultant to create custom data sets	Initial established baseline, every five years thereafter
Identify needs and formulate the development of professional practices for arts managers, arts leaders and artists	Expression of gaps and satisfaction Number of offerings and number of participants	Survey tracking professional development program offerings	Establish baseline, yearly thereafter
Advocate for and educate about the need for greater resources for the arts and culture sector	Increased resources Number of actors participating in campaigns	Program and policy audits Track emails, phone calls, in-person and virtual meetings, social media discussions	Establish baseline, thereafter benchmark for what is offered
Leverage technology to create a repository of resource material for local arts councils, organizations and artists to draw upon, as desired	Awareness and use of platforms	Data analysis of digital platforms Track inbound requests	Establish baseline, bi-monthly thereafter
Direct financial support to the arts community	Amount of financial support directed to local arts councils directly and/or through partnerships	Number of organizations receiving funds and cumulative funds	Annually

Monitoring Impact

As we monitor our aims for meaningful change over the life of the plan, we will keep in mind these principles of measurement:

- We value data for the purposes of learning to do our work better.
- We seek to collect only the most relevant, powerful and important data.
- A decision can be measurably improved with even a small amount of data.
- We will make every effort to streamline and simplify the data we collect so it is reflective of the importance and scale of what is being measured and our ability to measure it.
- Consideration will be given to as many measurement methods as possible, including community-driven methods.

Background: Strategic Planning Context and Approach

The strategic planning process began with community consultation, which took place in 2022 and was led by an external consultant. Community consultation took the form of a series of one-on-one depth interviews and an online survey.

A cross-section of leaders from the region's arts, culture and heritage community were invited to participate in the depth interviews. There were three main areas of focus:

- Vision and core purpose: What do you see as the core purpose of the West Kootenay Regional Arts Council? What is the core purpose of your organization?
- Impact: What are some of the ways in which WKRAC's programs, services and supports have made a positive difference for the regional arts community? What are some of the areas WKRAC should focus on going forward to have the greatest positive impact for arts and culture in the region?
- Relationships: What does it mean to be engaged with WKRAC? What might we focus on together? What members of the community do you feel remain under-represented in WKRAC's programs, services or other efforts?

At the same time as the interviews, an online survey was sent to individuals and organizations connected with WKRAC in order to hear from as many individuals as possible on subjects of importance to the strategic planning conversation. Survey questions explored emergent needs, satisfaction with programs and services, and the vision for the future of WKRAC.

Engaging these communities early in the strategic planning process impacted and informed an externally facilitated two-day strategic planning retreat for board and staff held in October 2022. Here, participants considered essential questions particularly focused on purpose and ambition. This provided the framework of the plan and will also support both driving and evaluating the strategy as it unfolds in a complex context.

A summary of the ambitions, aims and actions was shared with the board in January 2023 to ensure consensus.

Implementation of the strategic plan is the responsibility of staff. Specific steps to support achievement of the aims of the strategic plan are detailed in the organization's operational plan.

Acknowledgements

This plan is the result of reflection, consultation and ideation by many people. A huge thank you is due to the present and past board members who led and informed the development of this plan: Laura White (President), Carol Palladino (Past President), Margaret Pacaud (Treasurer), Vicky Jones, Maggie Shirley and Peter Vogelaar.

Thank you to the staff of WKRAC for the groundwork required to complete this process and the eagerness to implement the vision laid out here: Kallee Lins (Executive Director), Lily Andersen (Grants Officer and Operations Manager), Susan Bernhardt (Bookkeeper) and Galadriel Watson (Communications Coordinator).

The board and staff are incredibly grateful for the expertise and skilful facilitation provided by consultant Mary Blais. Despite the inevitable twists and turns, she kept everyone in motion toward greater clarity.

Many members of the arts and culture sector across the West and East Kootenays fed into this planning process through stakeholder interviews and a community survey. These community contributions lent integrity to this process and continue to provide relevance to this plan.

This work would not be possible without generous financial support for WKRAC's activities. We acknowledge the Province of British Columbia, the BC Arts Council and Columbia Basin Trust for its ongoing partnership in support of the Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance.

WKRAC is grateful to carry out its work upon the traditional and unceded territories of the Sinixt, Ktunaxa, Sylix, Lheidli T'enneh and Secwepemc people. The board and staff are committed to the preservation, revitalization and strengthening of Indigenous cultural practices and will prioritize this work through the implementation of this strategic plan.

Katherine Russell Glass – *Over Reacted Series*





Back cover images:
Lainey Benson – *Nelson Dawns*
Golden Farmers Market
TR By Hand
Castlegar Sculpturewalk
Chris Rookwood Pottery

Design: Guy Hobbs



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