

# Prince George Civic Plaza [Re]Development

*A united vision for the future based upon economic development*



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## Executive Summary

During the summer of 2022, a series of meetings were held with diverse groups and concerned citizens to discuss the potential redevelopment of the Prince George Civic Plaza. Although these groups may be considered diverse in terms of their primary mission, the overarching connection lies in the potential for all groups to utilize and benefit from the Civic Plaza redevelopment.

The citizen group identified eleven primary partners<sup>1</sup> based on the potential impact that any redevelopment would and will have to these organizations. The intent of these meetings was to develop a united vision for the future redevelopment of the Civic Plaza, in essence to engage ‘local people for a local solution’.

At the time of these meetings, and subsequent to them, it was believed that the City of Prince George is being presented with an opportunity to create significant economic development through a vibrant and accessible downtown space for conventions, sports, cultural, artistic, and business purposes. It was also strongly believed that this opportunity will require a commitment to completing the redevelopment as a singular project, specifically ‘one and done’.

The citizen group consultation was centered on the premise that new facilities would be focused on a Convention and Cultural Centre that would serve as a multi-purpose complex and that the redevelopment would include a new Coliseum. The Coliseum or Arena would also be a multi-use facility, integral to economic development and as a component to supporting conventions. Buildings would be structurally connected around the central plaza.

Partners were provided with opportunities to express their respective visions for the future of this development and to elaborate on additional concerns related to the project. As a result of these meetings, six themes emerged that were then addressed in further detail. Identified themes included:

- Economic Benefit
- Partnership and Collaboration
- Individual Organizational Needs
- Activated Community Space
- Parking and Transportation
- Operations and Initiatives

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<sup>1</sup> These partners are identified in the Methodology section of this document

This analysis enabled the groups to come to a united vision on the potential for the Civic Plaza. The shared aims among the groups highlighted a desire to eliminate silos and to work towards a common goal.

The clear vision and key initiatives in the form of recommended next steps were designed to be shared more broadly with each group's users and with members of the community.

### **The Clear Vision:**

#### **That the Civic Plaza Redevelopment be based upon economic development.**

The recommended next steps:

That this report be provided to the City of Prince George staff responsible for oversight of the Civic Plaza Redevelopment in advance of the official consultation taking place;

That the Consultant and the City of Prince George give special consideration to the individual organizational needs identified in this report;

That each of the organizations participating in the citizen group consultations present and confirm their support for this 'one and done' approach;

That the Civic Plaza Redevelopment as presented will be included in the City of Prince George 2024 Five Year Capital Plan as funded;

That a clear communication plan be established to ensure that the identified user groups are consulted throughout the development process.

It is worth noting that including this project in the City of Prince George 2024 Five Year Capital Plan is imperative. The urgency comes with the current 'end of life' state of the three buildings identified (Coliseum, Playhouse, Studio 2880) as needing to be replaced expeditiously.

This consultative approach provided the opportunity for local organizations to be heard by fellow citizens and colleagues, and to share their respective views with each other. It resulted in local people employing local solutions so that all members of the community may benefit from an enhanced and vibrant Civic Plaza redevelopment.

Respectfully submitted by members of the citizen group:

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## Thematic Analysis Summary

The citizen group maintained the clear vision of economic development during the course of engaging with the eleven identified partners. Building upon what presently exists was seen as an essential first step. There was open discussion regarding the current limitations of civic facilities, particularly the existing Civic and Convention Centre, which can host up to 1,000 people for a sit-down meal but is constrained in providing additional event space (break out/multi-purpose rooms) for a convention of the same size or greater.

The following salient elements were synthesized from the consultation thematic record:

- The foundational piece is a Convention and Arts Space
  - Used for presentations, shows, theatre, concerts, etc.
  - Able to have 1,000 people seated in attendance
  - A lobby/reception area that can hold 1,000 people
  - A second hall able to host 200 people
  - Back stage space the same size as the stage
  - Multiple multi-use shared space
- A new 2,000 seat Coliseum that can be used as space for Convention trade shows and is attached via a common translucent atrium that will facilitate active engagement between the public, and the entirety of the complex, including artisans, retail outlets, restaurants, and services, all within a natural setting
- The outside perimeter of the Coliseum and the Convention and Arts Space to be used for Studio 2880, arts space, and retail thus ensuring that there is no 'dead space'
- Includes 30,000 square feet for the Community Arts Council
- A Tourism Centre culturally supported by the Lheidli T'enneh
- An open design with visibility, accessibility, and safety as essential elements
- An outdoor community stage with built in seating
- An organization to manage the complex and space (Prince George Library style)
- Must meet the needs of all Partners with long term affordability for users
- 'One and Done' – Project must be built in a single phase

## Background

In late March of 2022, the City of Prince George approved hiring a consultant to create a Civic Core Plan for the Canada Games Plaza area. It was noted that a clear action plan and roadmap was needed to guide land use and infrastructure decisions for this space.

The Civic Core Plan includes the demolition of the original Firehall #1 and the Four Seasons Pool. The City of Prince George has also acknowledged that the Prince George Coliseum, Studio 2880, and the Prince George Playhouse have reached the point where they are now considered to be at or past their end of life. It was also noted by the City of Prince George that the roads directly south (Dominion Street) and east (7<sup>th</sup> Avenue) of the Plaza area could be closed to form part of the redevelopment.

The citizen group was established during the late Spring and early Summer of 2022, made up of six individuals of varying backgrounds and a collective interest in the future of this space in particular and Prince George overall.

Notice of the engagement of an outside consulting firm prompted the citizen group to meet with a broad range of interested organizations in advance of the official consultation, with the intent to develop a united vision for the redevelopment of the Civic Plaza, in essence 'local people for a local solution'. The approach was that any redevelopment should include a focus on economic development for the City of Prince George.

The work of the citizen group is not intended to replace the City of Prince George consultation on the Civic Core Plan, but to enhance the possibilities by working collaboratively, building a consensus among all groups and citizens in support of the proposed redevelopment.

Further to this understood need for inclusivity, it was noted that although a relatively limited number of groups participated in these initial consultations, there is a need, especially with growing and aging demographics, to provide opportunities for seniors to make full use of enhanced facilities.

During the period of the citizen group consultation, it was also widely reported that a venue supporting musical talent was in development for the existing Trinity United Church building located downtown at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Brunswick Street. This space is being developed to host up to 200 people in a setting that will accommodate emerging artists and community groups. It is the view of the citizen group, and was noted during consultation, that this facility is not an alternative to a concert hall but in addition to an 800-1000 seat venue.

It was the belief of the citizen group that Prince George is being presented with an opportunity to create a vibrant and accessible downtown space for cultural, artistic, and business purposes that will accommodate all users. The engagement of those groups directly impacted by the proposed redevelopment was an essential element in determining whether this belief had merit.

Indeed, it was stated by more than one of the interviewees that *“this is a wonderful opportunity to transform a part of the community that we all enjoy so much and to create something unique for Prince George and the region”*.

## Methodology

The first step in the work of the citizen group was to identify a high-level view of primary partners that would be impacted and involved in any redevelopment of the Civic Plaza. The following user groups were identified (in alphabetical order):

- Community Arts Council/Studio 2880
- Downtown Prince George
- Lheidli T'enneh First Nation<sup>2</sup>
- Miracle Theatre
- Prince George Airport Authority
- Prince George Chamber of Commerce
- Prince George Spruce Kings
- Prince George Symphony Orchestra
- Russell Productions
- Theatre Northwest
- Tourism Prince George

Secondly, the citizen group developed a series of questions that would be asked of each of the identified organizations, ensuring consistency of data.

1. How do you see your organization fitting in the Civic Plaza redevelopment?
2. What are your primary concerns regarding development of the Civic Plaza?
3. What kinds of facilities are uppermost in the view of your organization?
4. What sort of enhancements do you think could support Civic Plaza redevelopment?
5. How do you see parking being addressed?
6. What other businesses or groups do you think could fit well in the Civic Plaza?
7. How do you see public support for a redevelopment of this potential scale?
8. Given 'Blue Sky' opportunities, what are your organization's hopes for this redevelopment?

A public meeting space was set at the Prince George Golf & Curling Club, for which the citizen group is deeply grateful.

The citizen group then met with representatives of these organizations for an initial discussion or consultation. Following these initial meetings, the interviewees were provided with notes from the meeting and an opportunity to review and correct any errors or inconsistencies.

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<sup>2</sup> The citizen group reached out to the Lheidli T'enneh through a liaison to provide an opportunity to participate in this consultation and to reinforce the understanding that the Lheidli T'enneh are an important partner in the community.



The nature of these consultations was based on qualitative research using Thematic Analysis. Key themes were extracted from these initial consultations and coding was developed to summarize and interpret the identified themes. Additional work was completed by the citizen group in reviewing the themes and consolidating the information. Key phrases or commonalities formed the basis of the coding of the data.

After each organization's Thematic Analysis was complete, interviewees were provided with this information and once again asked to review the 'themed' data and provide feedback. A second meeting was originally scheduled to discuss the themes and to present the interviewees with a summary of the data obtained from each of the individual sessions. It was determined that this second meeting could be conducted by electronic means to provide the information without the undue burden of scheduling additional meetings. At this time, permission was requested to share each group's Thematic Analysis electronically within the appendices of this report.

It is worth noting that the informal nature of this research precluded ethical approvals that would necessarily have applied in an academic setting. This meant that the level of trust among the participants was determined to be high.

A final meeting for all participants was held on Wednesday, November 9, with an expanded invitation to additional administrative and board members from each of the organizations. The meeting furthered the united vision of the participants by providing time to socialize in person and by including a presentation based on the findings of the consultation. All attendees were given opportunities to provide feedback, which is included in the appendices of this report.



## Findings

The Thematic Analyses provided the basis for grouping commonalities among the responses. These commonalities were reflected in the following themes:

1. Economic Benefit
2. Partnership and Collaboration
3. Individual Organizational Needs
4. Activated Community Space
5. Parking and Transportation
6. Operations and Initiatives

### Economic Benefit

Economic benefit was seen as the most notable requirement of the Civic Plaza development. There was consensus that revenue generation is key to sustaining and growing operations, as well as to enhancing the profile of the City of Prince George as a place to live and to visit.

Components of economic benefit included gift shops, retail space, for-profit and not-for-profit businesses, leasable space for independent business owners, and meeting space for larger conventions with the ability to host up to 1000 attendees. The benefit of a 2000 seat arena would be in addition to the Spruce Kings Hockey Team, with potential space for physiotherapists, cross-purpose use of the arena, and indoor and outdoor concession space.



The ability to host larger scale events was seen to provide economic benefit with additional people travelling through the airport, staying in hotels, enjoying local restaurants, and exploring activities in and around Prince George. These benefits would then translate to long-term economic success with an increased profile for the community to attract and retain new families.

As a driver of economic growth, respect for private sector businesses was emphasized as were concerns related to ensuring market rent was supported. The possibility of competition between a large-scale Convention and Cultural Centre was somewhat mitigated by the suggestion of hosting smaller events in existing private facilities.

Leasable space was noted as a revenue off-set for the City of Prince George. It was also noted that the Arts are an economic driver and a viable investment for the city. The Arts were seen to be keeping the Plaza active seven days a week, providing potential economic growth for tourism and diversification of the economy.

*“Retail opportunities would animate the whole space and provide economic benefit”*

A Tourism Centre culturally supported by the Lheidli T’enneh was suggested as another essential component of economic development.

There was also the benefit of the community being able to enjoy nationally known touring performers who look for single evenings in large soft seat venues.

## **Partnership and Collaboration**

Concepts of partnership extended from non-profit organizations to potential sponsors to the Lheidli T’enneh as an overarching partner in support of the development. Collaboration as a theme was seen as key to energizing support from the community at large.

The potential for a Hub and spoke model as was originally developed for the BMO building proposal was also noted with some interviewees indicating that collaboration could occur without physically shifting offices to the redeveloped Plaza.

Other proposed collaborative initiatives included utilizing Lobby space in a Convention and Cultural Centre for meeting space, art displays, retail opportunities, and ensuring that the Lobby itself was a walk-through space that was not behind closed doors to the general public.

Collaboration would require scheduling that would necessitate a designated facility manager. The possibility of 24-hour activation was mentioned with some user groups taking advantage of daytime hours and others being primarily activated at night. Additional collaboration could occur with scheduling spaces within the Plaza, such as the rehearsal hall or arena when not in use. This would be dependent on certain other spaces being dedicated, including arena dressing rooms, storage space, and some offices.



*“There are potentially ways for theatrical and music groups to use the same space; the concert hall could be used for other things such as meeting space”*

Benefits of collaboration also extended to economic spin off with merged operations. The shared space was also noted as a good opportunity to have sports and arts together. The themes of collaboration and community were related through centralized sports and arts facilities making activities accessible for everyone.

A permanent home for the Farmer’s Market was suggested and the concept of having a common vision for all user groups was said to be ‘amazing’.

## **Individual Organizational Needs**

There was some overlap in specific organizational needs and with the potential for combining these requirements among various groups. That said, there was also concern that a multi-use development may result in the final product not fully considering individual organizational requirements so that the end use is not sufficient for anyone.

It was noted that the biggest issue is ensuring that everything is done ‘correctly and well’. The specific needs of each organization are captured in the Thematic Analyses. High level needs include the following:

- A 2000 seat arena with an open concourse and designated spaces for defined activities
- A Convention space to host events of up to 1000 participants
- An opportunity to be a part of the planning and implementation of the Civic Plaza
- A potential Visitor Centre with the full team in one location
- Dedicated space of 30,000 square feet for Artists Guilds, studios, and workshops
- A certified kitchen for use by community groups





- A full-size adaptable Concert Hall with seating for 800-1000 people
- A smaller space within the larger Hall to accommodate performances of 150-200 people
- A rehearsal hall at least the size of the footprint of the stage
- An orchestra pit underneath the stage
- Audio/visual infrastructure
- Dedicated space of several thousand square feet for a music library and storage space
- The floor of the performance area would need to be stage carpentry/stagecraft friendly and paintable as a scenic element
- A lobby that is large enough to manage all the people in the entertainment portion of the facility
- Backstage space for storage, change rooms, a green room of 2000 square feet
- A 40' stage with a fly and raked audience seating
- Scheduled access to the facilities as required by each group
- Parking (noted in separate section)



## Activated Community Space

All interviewees identified the need for 'activated' space. Primary characterizations of this theme were the need for outdoor green space that would be accessible multi-season with common areas for families. The importance of embracing a connection to nature and ensuring the safety of all who choose to utilize the space was also emphasized.

In addition to the safety aspect of the outdoor space, the need to make this area become a destination for all citizens was stated. The desire for gardens amid a bustling area akin to the Granville Island Public Market, with special events such as artist workshops, family festivals, and music or theatre hosted outside.



The attention to architecture matching current facilities such as the WIDEC building was noted as was the overarching need to ensure that the architectural design elements would be integrated with the concept of 'Placemaking' to strengthen the connections between people and places. An agora-style theatre was suggested in lieu of a traditional elevated outdoor stage. Audio/visual infrastructure required for outdoor activities was also emphasized.

Enhancements to the area included the prospect of residential development with the potential for outdoor licensed areas in addition to family activities. A playground was a suggestion by one of the interviewees.

It was given that the more people that would come downtown to utilize this community space would enhance business for everyone.

Concerns regarding the outdoor space were primarily related to the safety, both in and around the buildings, including safe parking areas. Safety was further clarified in terms of personal safety and safe 'Healthwise'<sup>3</sup>.

*"There needs to be beautification so it's not just concrete walls; an outdoor stage or agora would be a possible enhancement"*

## Parking and Transportation

The general consensus on parking was that there is some residual sensitivity to the issue based on recent projects. This will need to be addressed and would form part of the operations and requirements for the development.



A few interviewees suggested that the land where the existing Coliseum is located would be optimal for a parkade. The size of the parkade would need to facilitate parking for a 2000 seat arena. It was also suggested that above ground parking should be made to integrate with the facilities so that it looks like another building. Connectivity between the parking deck and buildings through an enclosed Pedway was seen as a possibility.

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<sup>3</sup> The term 'Healthwise' was intended to refer to personal health in light of recent global Covid 19 challenges.

The parking area could also be a shared facility, with spaces being utilized during the day for certain groups and on evenings and weekends for separate events. Whatever arrangement is ultimately decided upon, there was a firm belief that everyone should pay for parking and that it should be convenient to pay.

A few interviewees also noted that walking is always a possibility and that opportunities to work with transportation to enhance public transport should be explored. Some interviewees also felt that parking may be one of those things that might not be as big an issue as people make it out to be. There was an understanding that there are many parking spaces currently available within three blocks of the existing Civic Centre.

A caveat of any parking structure is that it be safe and attractive. There was an estimate given of 1.5 to two people per vehicle necessitating accommodation of 500 or more vehicles for the parking space. This number could fluctuate given the suggestion related to improved transit.

## **Operations and Initiatives**

The theme of Operations was consolidated with Initiatives as these topics both related to ongoing requirements and future needs. Of the eleven interviewees comprising the initial consultations, all but one cited a general concern with initial capital costs for the project. It was felt that transparent communication would be an essential component during the proposal and consultation stage and that the community would have elevated receptivity to the project in line with the level of transparency that would be provided.

When asked about the 'one and done' approach to this redevelopment there was a resounding 'yes' if there can be enough momentum, hope, belief, and buy-in of the concept. Public education was mentioned as a critical piece for helping constituents understand the plan and the benefits.

Despite the potential scale of the investment, there were references to previous consultations and proposals of similar scale having been missed opportunities, most notable perhaps going back to the 1980's with the proposed Discovery Place project. This led to interviewees stating that the biggest concern was that the project actually gets built.

With many civic facilities approaching end-of-life, it is perhaps more essential now than ever before that the Civic Plaza be developed so that all facets of community engagement and success may have a chance to thrive. The opportunity to combine sport and arts in a Civic Plaza was seen to be an optimal way of garnering public support.

Requirements related to ongoing operations would become clear as a functional plan was developed to include the individual organizational needs. One interviewee recalled a comment that 'at some point the community has to make investments to attract new private investment'. This comment was followed by a question: 'where are we going?' This is a question that many people will be asking for our community.



## Facility Usage

In addition to the above noted themes, the findings identified that significant numbers of Prince George's citizens are currently making use of the civic facilities that are at 'end-of-life'. The groups that are currently using the Coliseum include (in alphabetical order):

Northern BC Centre for Skating  
Prince George Figure Skating Club  
Prince George Minor Hockey Association  
Prince George Minor Lacrosse  
Prince George Mohawk Oldtimers  
Prince George Ringette Association  
Prince George Senior Lacrosse  
School District #57 - many schools use the Coliseum regularly

The groups that are currently using Studio 2880 include (in alphabetical order):

Arts North Digital Media Centre  
Community Arts Council Artist-in-Residence  
Delgado Strings  
Northern Indigenous Arts Council  
Prince George Fibre Arts Guild  
Prince George Potters' Guild  
Prince George Stitchery Guild  
Prince George Symphony Orchestra administrative offices  
Prince George Woodturner's Guild  
Studio 2880 Gallery and Gift Shop

This tells us that redevelopment will impact a broad section of the population, perhaps much broader than previously realized. It also tells us that the need for combined sport and cultural facilities is significant and reaches across the demographic continuum. In order to serve the citizens of Prince George, all facets of recreational activity must be considered.

The citizen group captured the numbers of organizations involved, however further investigation would provide additional data with respect to economic benefit and public use of facilities. It is suggested that this data would be useful, indeed essential in the future consultation phase by the City of Prince George.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the citizen group support the deductive reasoning that a 'one and done' approach is optimal for redevelopment of the Civic Plaza. This was reflected in the initial conversations with the identified user groups and was further cemented in the thematic analyses. Given this opportunity now, while many civic facilities are approaching end of life, is seen as fortuitous. There was a sense among all participants that 'if not now, when?'

## Appendices – Participant Feedback

- It is important to include the Farmer's Market in the next round of consultations as they are a significant economic driver that should be contributing to this project
- A key component that was overlooked in the initial thematic summaries is the need for on-site laundry facilities to accommodate travelling productions
- An unanswered question remains on how to communicate the results of this consultation more broadly to secondary/affiliated groups
- Though not originally mentioned in the initial consultation, user groups are concerned that Vanier Hall is not a city-owned facility and usage is provided at the discretion of School District 57
- A second round of consultations would need to include associated groups such as the Prince George Public Library, Two Rivers Art Gallery, the Exploration Place, and potentially the Prince George Cougars
- Impact on existing downtown businesses needs to be considered, as it relates to facility usage and safety
- The proposed smaller theatre space is not intended to compete with existing smaller performance venues and this needs to be carefully considered
- A feasibility study is an integral component of the next phase of the consultation
- The economics of the proposal must be clearly demonstrated and reliable

## **Appendices – Thematic Analyses**

### **Community Arts Council/Studio 2880**

#### **Economic Benefit**

- The Arts component would keep the Plaza active 7 days a week
- Economic development needs to note that buildings draw people as much as what's inside them
- Emerging artists need to be able to display and sell their work
- Revenue generation increases membership in the CAC which can enhance tourism
- A day care and restaurants may be additional compatible businesses

#### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- We are willing to be a part of Civic Plaza consultations
- BMO relocation was to be a hub and spoke operation
- The hub and spoke model could work but it would be lovely to be under one roof
- We want to be a part of the Civic Plaza even if not physically located there
- We could share resources in a collaborative environment
- We could share audio/visual equipment
- If the entire area is connected there would be a lot of display space available
- We may not need a separate space to host 'shows'
- Meeting space can be shared
- We would benefit from partnerships with Conventions and the Library

#### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- Our current position is a preference to remain on 15th Avenue and redevelop the site
- We estimate a need for 30,000 square feet
- We want a certified kitchen for food prep
- Dedicated space is required for the Guilds, Federation Artists studio space, commercial space, display space, workshop space, performing arts space
- Each of our groups have specific equipment needs
- CAC needs revenue generators within the building
- There is potential for a cultural incubator

#### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- It would be great to have outdoor space in a secure environment
  - Kids camps are always a challenge
  - Special events could be hosted outside such as workshops
  - Covered, outdoor, heated space could be as large as the current plaza
  - Architectural design elements that are pleasing is another concern
-

- Aesthetics should encourage people to utilize the space
- Including a lovely, accessible outdoor space is important
- It is important to note the people flow from one area to another
- Gardens and natural light are important
- Local buskers would be interesting
- We want to capture the feeling of community that is evident at Studio Fair
- Keeping the space accessible for all ages with a welcome atmosphere is essential
- Street art such as light standards and sidewalk murals could



- enhance this community space (images included are from outside a European concert hall and Howe Street in Vancouver)
- A space that people will be excited to go to, a Centre to meet, a bustling place like Granville Island
- Safety is really important, especially after hours
- Safety is a primary concern, safe parking, and safety in and around the buildings
- Safety can have different meanings depending on gender identity
- Spaces that are safe 'healthwise' as well as from the perspective of personal safety



### **Parking and Transportation**

- We can share parking
- Parking has to be attractive and safe

### **Operations and Initiatives** (transparency, communication)

- We are building facilities for emerging artists that can easily be priced out of the rental market
- How do we divide proceeds from combined net revenue sales?
- How do we pay for communal space?
- Any involvement needs to make crystal clear how revenue and costs are to be determined

- The capital cost of new construction is only one element in the discussion
- Our apprehension about 'one and done' is that we may miss some groups or not leave enough room for growth
- We are unsure about public support
- If we tie in as many groups as possible and approach the development from all aspects of the community that may be a way to move this forward
- We need to envision what is needed in the future for the Arts
- Flexibility to ensure there is room to shift and grow is essential
- We hope that this development happens in a timely manner, that everyone is invested, that City Hall is invested and in a good partnership with all the groups, and that it remains relevant for 30 plus years

## **Downtown Prince George**

### **Economic Benefit**

- Hotels have had concerns with Convention Centres competing for catering and meeting space
- Events in the larger facilities would benefit our members directly
- Cafes and restaurants as long as they are market rent as well as other retail opportunities
- It will be necessary to explain the economic benefit to the community
- Meaningful engagement with the business community downtown
- A Tourism Centre culturally supported by the Lheidli T'enneh would be another essential part

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- A permanent home for the Farmer's Market is needed
- Respect for private sector business
- Partnerships for programming
- A good opportunity to have sports and arts together
- A multi-faceted space will be key to its success
- Space for performing arts of various sizes and options for permanent space for user groups
- An arena for the Spruce Kings needs to be multi-purpose
- A playhouse-like facility would be in addition to the arena
- Businesses such as the Farmers Market, Studio 2880, Arts Council, Spruce Kings, youth organizations
- Providing a common vision for all user groups to support would be amazing

### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- It would not necessarily entail a move of DPG offices
- We would like to be part of the planning and implementation

### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- Civic core that is friendly and easy to use for all the user groups
- Active day and night on a daily basis
- Utilizing the concept of 'Placemaking' to strengthen connections between people and places
- Permanent infrastructure for potential entertainment such as a stage or Amphitheatre outside
- Outdoor facilities equipped to activate (audio/visual)
- Combining residential development could be helpful

- DPG has a goal of more people living downtown
- A well-designed facility that lends itself to being activated day and night
- Consider principles of CEPTED that create safer spaces
- A true public market like Granville Island, not just a Farmer's Market
- Look at what is currently happening downtown before planning for other spaces
- Social issues need to be discussed

#### **Parking and Transportation**

- A parkade or underground parking will need to be built
- Above ground parking would be more reasonable
- Monday to Friday 9-5 parking spaces that can be utilized on evenings and weekends for events
- Everyone should pay for parking, and it should be convenient to pay

#### **Operations and Initiatives (transparency, communication)**

- We would support a development
- Public support will be polarizing with the budget being the main factor
- Provide direct and indirect benefit statistics
- We support the 'one and done' concept
- A concern with the remainder of downtown being left as a ghost town
- Facilities for growers to process things to support local agriculture
- Space for a proper food-safe facility as a Public Market component
- Space to create value-added components such as creating baked goods in a licensed kitchen



## **Miracle Theatre**

### **Economic Benefit**

- Including a smaller theatre component of 150-200 seats within the larger Centre would give an opportunity for a longer run with the benefits of aggregate increased attendance and revenues for the production
- Having the convention ability is key
- If Studio 2880 had a “stand alone” building, there could potentially be residences built above
- Retail opportunities would animate the whole space and provide economic benefit
- The needs for conventions could take away from the arts but would be an economic benefit for the City of Prince George
- The Centre will absolutely be used by the community if it’s made affordable and bookable
- There is also the benefit of the community being able to enjoy nationally known touring performers who look for single evenings in large soft seat venues

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- Affordability is an ongoing concern for all community users of these facilities
- A significantly staggered two-tiered rate structure is needed
- Make it possible for various user groups to have a sense of privacy or containment
- The facility must be subsidized at a rate equal to or greater than sports facilities to provide for very low rental rates
- Users need to be able to control or limit access to serve their individual needs
- All the performing arts would have synergy with our organization
- Locals must be permitted to use volunteers to prepare and run their events, so city labour costs do not preclude use of facilities
- Studio 2880 could have a potter's studio, gift shop, gallery space, etc.
- A large Convention auditorium is likely to be able to accommodate the Symphony as its usage can be especially short

### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- A facility of 150-200 seats would meet our requirements
  - Non-proscenium arch (no separation for the audience and the performers)
  - We require 4-5 weeks of continuous access for fit-up & finish, hang, tech, and then dress rehearsals, previews, performances of 7-8 per week
  - Best to have approximately 22' to the grid
  - Two dressing rooms at least 150 sq. ft. each
  - Loading area large enough to load in a set and large scenic elements
  - For the larger venue, a raised loading dock
-

- The floor of the performance area would need to be stage carpentry/stagecraft friendly and paintable as a scenic element (eg. a “screwable” surface of GOS plywood or replaceable masonite)
- A smaller performing space should have its own cozy lobby
- People can feel lost in a huge communal lobby two venues breaking and starting at different times in a shared lobby is often chaotic

#### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- The facility itself would be an enhancement
- The design needs to be made as open as possible from the street level
- There should be visibility from the outside looking in with lots of windows
- Engage the outside world with the excitement of what's going on inside
- Don't over enhance it or make it grand, consider who the facility is for
- Make it comfortable for a wide range of our city's demographics, 'inviting' rather than 'formal'
- Make the scale 'human', not massive
- Use attractive building materials and pay attention to the colours
- Have an architect that puts function before form
- People should remember the experience of the performance more than the space itself

#### **Parking and Transportation**

- Parking is an obvious concern with potential for increased congestion with the Library and rebuilt Coliseum
- People should get used to the idea of walking more or taking public transit
- We do need to take care of people with mobility needs

#### **Operations and Initiatives** (transparency, communication)

- Accessibility and 'bookability' would be a challenge
- The Centre will absolutely be used if it's affordable and bookable
- Two-tier pricing is a substantive concern that must be dealt with if the Centre is to be accessible to the majority of our community's artists and arts groups
- From a total of 9 in 1995, there are now only 5 remaining Regional Theatres in B.C.
- The defunct Regional Theatres were attempting to operate without their own venues, however the additional expenses and insurmountable inefficiencies of being itinerate tenants in civic facilities made these organizations unsustainable

### **Prince George Airport Authority**

#### **Economic Benefit**

- Anything that brings more people to Prince George will benefit the Airport and is certainly something that we will support

- Anything that improves downtown and drives economic activity results in a spin off for the Airport
- A Convention Centre is important
- There are many conferences that could be hosted here with the proper facility
- The Convention and Arts Centre would benefit the Airport Authority

#### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- A Food Truck Court?
- Arts and Tourism enhancements along with restaurants
- Bringing Tourism, Playhouse, Studio 2880 and other Arts and Sports facilities centralizes everything and makes things accessible for everyone

#### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- We don't have needs specific to the development area itself

#### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- A playground could also be a draw
- First need to make sure that the area is safe and welcoming
- The primary concern to redevelopment is the safety side

#### **Parking and Transportation**

- There is a concern about bus service between the Airport and downtown
- A shuttle with remote parking would be something worth looking at
- There may be a need to look at covered parking using the footprint more effectively

#### **Operations and Initiatives** (transparency, communication)

- People will be concerned about cost and transparency
- Making sure that constituents understand the plan and the benefits
- As long as the community is informed of how the money is being spent and how the process can be trusted
- Public education is a critical piece
- Really engaging strong communication in advance is very important
- A lot of our business is built on Tourism so we would want to draw both Tourists and local people
- A Gastronomy site with local restaurants featured
- Local, sustainable goods and services are very appealing to younger people in particular

### **Prince George Chamber of Commerce**

#### **Economic Benefit**

- Leasable space for independent business owners to provide revenue offsets
- Gymnastics may attract physiotherapy offices, orthotic doctors, medical businesses

- Adding user groups is important as is interconnectivity
- A revenue piece attached to the development is very important

#### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- Good, lettable business space
- Light retail, food and beverage, tourism, Community Futures, PG Community Foundation, DPG
- Other economic development organizations
- Co-working and co-branding spaces is a great opportunity
- Cross marketing is important between sports and the arts

#### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- More Convention space to grow the C3 Resource Forum
- More breakout space, trade show space and meeting room space

#### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- Family friendly facilities such as skating areas
- A Centre for the Arts, Convention space, low retail, parking deck
- This development should have happened with the building of the new pool
- Outdoor venues also need to include licensed areas in addition to family activities
- Safe spaces, the social and safety aspects are top of mind

#### **Parking and Transportation**

- Above ground parking deck made to integrate with the facilities so it looks like another building
- Connectivity between the parking deck and buildings through an enclosed Pedway
- Parking space for user groups

#### **Operations and Initiatives** (transparency, communication)

- Primary concerns include cost overruns
- Who will be the General Contractor and where will responsibility lie?
- We believe that this is the type of development that is important to move forward
- Potential pushback from the general population can occur in spending any money
- Recent history of cost overruns with other projects can impact trust
- It will be important to address the cost
- A Casino is a 'blue sky' opportunity for entertainment following a hockey game

## **Prince George Spruce Kings**

### **Economic Benefit**

- Shopping and restaurants would need to be a part of the plan
- There needs to be a better facility for theatre and music
- A Farmer's Market could be a part of the new facility
- A Convention Centre could be connected as well
- Some kind of retail, maybe physiotherapists, maybe an art store

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- Space for volunteer groups to set up during games
- Naming rights are helpful, and this would need to be considered (the current naming rights deal we have with the city is ideal and we would need this to continue with a new facility)
- Sponsorships can be investigated
- We partner with the City allowing some sponsorship funds to come directly to us (currently we receive all advertising/sponsorship funding in the building, this would need to continue)
- We have a really good working relationship with Lheidli T'enneh
- There could be plywood sheets put over the ice for other events

### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- We want to be a big part of the Civic Plaza development
- We want to stay downtown
- The facility would have to have a minimum of 1500 seats to meet our league standard
- We need a minimum of 6 dressing rooms, a lounge, work out room, physio room and storage
- We need an office for day-to-day activities
- Ideally the facility would seat 2000 with seats around the entire arena and an open concourse (2500 seats would be ideal)
- The concourse would have concessions, a beer garden and souvenir store
- We need a Press Box and corporate boxes or suites above the concourse
- The ice would need to be available to us whenever we need it
- We need exclusive rights to food and beverage which is a current agreement with the City of Prince George

### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- There are concerns related to potentially closing 7th and Dominion Streets for a park
- The more people that come downtown may enhance business for everyone
- We have concerns about potential for additional security with current issues downtown

**Parking and Transportation**

- The vacant land from the Coliseum could be utilized for parking
- A parkade of some kind is needed to facilitate parking for a 2000 seat arena

**Operations and Initiatives** (transparency, communication)

- If all groups are supportive then there would be more support if a referendum were to be held
- If it is a combined sport and convention arts facility, we would have public support
- 'Blue Sky' opportunities would have the arena happen 'now'
- 1-4 years is the time frame that we would like; we need to move quickly
- Ideally, we would like the Spruce Kings playing in another arena in the next 4-5 years

## **Prince George Symphony Orchestra**

### **Economic Benefit**

- A gift shop that could be shared with other groups
- Box office and bar in the lobby
- The arts are an economic driver
- The arts are a viable investment for the City of Prince George
- Arts are a proven way to revitalize downtown areas

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- The concert hall could be used for other things such as meeting space, community choirs, school bands, convention key-note speeches, town hall meetings, etc.
- Lobby space needs to hold the same number of people as the concert hall
- Community groups could rent the rehearsal hall (maybe cheaper than the main hall)
- Operation model needs to be considered to make the concert hall useful for community/non-profit groups
- There are potentially ways for theatrical and music groups to use the same space
- Much more lighting equipment is required to stage theatre
- Acoustic shells are made by Wenger
- You have to make sure the scheduling will work
- There could be cafes, restaurants, a walkable area
- Activating the lobby space with art is a possibility
- Retail space would make it a destination
- Offering something for a lot of groups would garner a lot of public support
- It's important to consider what is on either side of the Centre

### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- It would be ideal to have a medium-size concert hall at the Civic Plaza that could be adapted to other purposes
- Seating for 800-1000 people
- There should be rehearsal room, at least the size of the footprint of the stage, on the same floor
- High ceilings for acoustics (both rehearsal hall and main hall)
- Rooms should be designed by acoustic engineer as a design priority
- The multi-use space could make it not quite good enough for anyone
- A theatrical space and a concert hall are very different
- An acoustic concert hall is one room (contrast to a proscenium theatre)
- An orchestra pit underneath the stage is ideal for theatrical productions (would require a large elevator, possibly built into the front of the pit/stage)

- General lighting is required
- A main floor/balcony split is approximately 60/40 (wrap-around balcony)
- PGSO has to be a part of the development from the beginning
- PGSO needs to have access to the hall which could be scheduled well in advance (eg certain weekends every year blacked out for PGSO use)
- We need office space, including a music library
- Storage for percussion equipment, a grand piano, chairs, and music stands should be next to the rehearsal hall/stage
- Green room and dressing rooms backstage (with shower)
- The lobby needs to be a part of the city, not behind locked doors

#### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- We have to find a way for the space to become a destination
- A way to make the space a part of people's lives

#### **Parking and Transportation**

- The more the parking can be stacked up the better – large parking lots can isolate buildings
- An average of two people per vehicle would mean 500 vehicles would need to be accommodated
- Symphony events are mostly evening/weekend, so parking would be usable for other events during the day – likewise, other nearby parking could be usable, as long as the approach is walkable

#### **Operations and Initiatives** (transparency, communication)

- It is more challenging cost-wise to reconfigure a stage for both music and theatre, but not impossible
- Having a separate rehearsal space of about 2000 square feet is a way to keep operating costs down and accessibility to the facility high
- The rehearsal hall could be a non-union space
- The 'one and done' concept means that the space needs to be convertible
- Our biggest concern is that it gets done
- Adequate washroom space is another requirement
- The facility would be useful for keynote addresses for conventions
- One way to make it feel lived in is for people to actually be living there



## **Russell Productions**

### **Economic Benefit**

- We believe the City of Prince George has to market itself as a place to live
- We believe the concept has merit and is a great strategy
- The local community needs to be able to afford the facility and not end up having to charge so much that it becomes a white elephant
- If we could embrace a connection to nature, it would be a good move to reconciliation

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- Nothing is unattainable as long as we have the backing of a universal cross-section of our community
- We need to stress the inclusion of all members of the arts community
- We don't know how to have a facility work for all users
- A Hub situation is a good idea with offices, rehearsal space, artist studios
- We could see bistros, coffee shops, a good bar, a lobby display and practicing art
- Green rooms can be used for break-out rooms for conferences
- We could accept a new ice rink if in addition we would have purpose-built arts facilities

### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- Conventions paint a picture using custom lighting and custom displays from a blank canvas
- A multi-use facility may mean it is not super good for any particular group
- Arenas that have flooring overtop for other events don't work well
- The biggest issue is that if we want to do it right, everything has to be done correctly and well
- Unless there is a commitment to purpose-built facilities then it won't work
- An excellent lobby is hugely important
- The lobby has to be able to manage all the people within the entertainment portion of the facility
- The lobby should be open with commercial space, good natural light and lots of wood
- There needs to be enough backstage space for 120 people involved with a musical theatre production
- A green room with 60 people will need to be 2000 square feet for safety
- Backstage space includes storage, wing space, change rooms for people, and room for costumes
- Backstage can be multilevel

- The performance space has to have height
- The Wenger option is a possibility
- Smaller Theatre companies need to have audience seating transformed to be closer to the stage

#### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- An opportunity to develop the area to include outdoor presentations would be an exciting component
- Include multi-season use
- A community stage that is covered and has the infrastructure (audio/visual) would help
- An Athens-style agora may be a great space 30x40'
- The space could be used to display art, make art, dance, picnics
- Green space is important, not just a concrete jungle
- Outdoor space should include common areas for impromptu performances
- There should be green space for picnics, plantings that don't need much water, environmental considerations
- Embrace a connection to nature
- There is a concern regarding being attractive to those who may not be utilizing the space as expected

#### **Parking and Transportation**

- An average of 2 people per car would mean required parking of 100's of stalls
- Light rapid transit and weather are issues

#### **Operations and Initiatives** (transparency, communication)

- Going forward to complete everything 'one and done' is the right approach
- The price tag may be at a level where it may not be palatable to the general public
- The crunch is the capital investment requirements
- If there can be enough momentum, hope, belief, and buy-in before talking about price
- The next generation will need to weigh in on these things as well
- Many people are not interested in attending conventions in Prince George
- Efforts should be made to design the project with an idea of the future
- Younger taxpayers will want to know that this development is forward thinking

## **Theatre Northwest**

### **Economic Benefit**

- Our site activation is approximately 300 days per year
- We are a very busy facility, and we see continued demand in our business operations
- A cafe, a bar inside the facility, a concession stand, merchandise stores
- It would be a really positive thing to move some of these venues into downtown
- It would be a real shot in the arm for business and the community

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- Organizations utilizing our current space include a church group, UNBC musical club, Nechako Theatre Society, Fraser Lyric Opera Society
- The facility would be busy 24 hours a day with various groups using different time slots
- High school students could potentially use the facility during the day
- Other organizations like a yoga group
- We recognize we are one of many interested groups and are not in a position to monopolize a venue such as a 1000 seat theatre
- We aren't sure how a 1000 seat Convention and Arts Centre would work for various production companies

### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- We could use either a black box or a stage with a raked audience
- A performance and lobby space, a shop to build, a rehearsal hall, storage facility, a costume department, and office space
- A 40' x 40' stage with a fly and a house size between 200-300 would be ideal
- The rehearsal hall needs to be at least the same size as the stage, it can double with the lobby
- The lobby would need to be a minimum of 60' x 60'
- Office space to accommodate 5-10 staff, a costume facility for 1-5 people
- Depending on the number of plays we host would determine the time required for these spaces
- The three most critical pieces are performance, rehearsal, and build
- Office space could be located elsewhere

### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- The building itself would be an enhancement to the area
- Site activation of an arts community in a multi-use facility would do a lot to enhance the area
- There is concern about the downtown which may not be an insurmountable issue, but it is something that would have to be considered

### **Parking and Transportation**

- Parking must seat the number of people in the house
- Based on 1.5 people per car, something like 200+ parking spaces would be needed
- We understand there are currently 1400 parking spots within 3 blocks of the Civic Centre
- A redevelopment will likely require a place for additional parking however it may not be as big an issue as anticipated

### **Operations and Initiatives** (transparency, communication)

- We are at a crisis with many civic facilities coming to end of life at the same time
- We think it may be an uphill battle for this development
- If there is a connection to the hockey arena that may help in moving this forward
- A Box Office separate from other facilities would be required
- The Box Office could have an inside and outside interface (such as a drive through)
- The Box Office should be managed by the facility manager and all organizations should be required to use the Box office for ticketed events
- Sponsorship and signage is now electronic with digital screens being standard equipment in lobbies

## **Tourism Prince George**

### **Economic Benefit**

- There is a need for a bigger convention space and a Performing Arts Centre
- It will do a lot more for the community in terms of economic development
- Diversify our economy
- The Convention Centre must compete fairly with the hotels in the area
- Ticketable experiences for family friendly adventure attractions
- For-profit business as well as non-profit organizations

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

- We would be interested in promoting the space, supporting operations for the Convention Centre
- A space where visitors could use services such as washrooms, wifi, and gather information
- An opportunity for local chefs to bring in food and beverage
- Craft breweries and local chefs to have an authentic local experience
- Having a hub of local non-profits under one roof, sharing boardrooms and collaborating
- Could help gain traction on projects, enhanced collaboration and reduced costs
- Organizations such as CAC, Community Foundation, Business Development

### **Individual Organizational Needs**

- A physical space for Tourism Prince George Visitor Centre is of interest
- The Visitor Centre would ideally have the full team in one location
- It could be a few hundred square feet with pamphlets or a larger space with offices

### **Activated Community Space** (outdoor space, architecture, enhancements)

- This vision would potentially bring more foot traffic
- We need to care about community and the project needs to include everyone
- We need to build something that will attract new people to the area
- It should be a holistic concept with something for everyone
- An outdoor stage would be a possible enhancement
- A live music area offering a place to activate outside
- There needs to be a hub of activity in the area
- There needs to be beautification so it's not just concrete walls
- An opportunity to embrace our winters
- Christmas/Holiday markets and year-round outdoor possibilities
- Family activities that bring groups of people downtown
- Architecture should match the WIDEC

- Music outside year-round with something always going on
- Social, safety, and security issues are concerning

### **Parking and Transportation**

- Parking is a red flag with the word 'parkade' carrying a negative connotation
- The old police station is a possibility for a parkade or space between the Coast and the Marriott
- A natural solution may be where the existing Coliseum is to build a parkade
- Walking is always a possibility
- Opportunities to work with transportation to enhance public transport

### **Operations and Initiatives (transparency, communication)**

- We believe that 'one and done' makes sense
- We would prefer 'one and done' but are unsure whether it will receive universal support
- A big investment through public entities is required
- Private business will not be building this project
- Public perception of the funding is a big issue to overcome
- We don't see public support for a venture of this size
- A lot of education and marketing will be required to change public perspective prior to a referendum
- More residential housing in the area is important too
- An updated Convention/Arts space, arena, and tie in with Tourism operating within 5 years
- Clean tech renewable energy with architecture tying into existing buildings
- It should look like an attraction and activate the Civic Plaza
- Lumberland is an idea for a way to market the community