

# Vancouver Island Arts + Culture Powerhouse? Strategy Meeting



## SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

On July 25 2019, a webcast was held to discuss positioning Vancouver Island/coastal area as an arts and culture powerhouse. This event was spearheaded by the Ladysmith Arts Council (LAC) and funded by the Canada Council for the Arts' Digital Strategy Fund (DSF).

There were 56 participants, representing a wide variety of organizations, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism and economic development associations, arts councils and arts service organizations, government agencies (local, regional, provincial, federal) and artists.

The LAC received \$26,000 in Phase One funding from the DSF to organize this meeting, and a second webcast taking place on August 8, 2019 (posters below).



The purpose of the July 25 meeting was to spark a conversation, and determine the level of interest in working together to submit proposals for Phase Two DSF funding. There are three DSF streams (see page 2), with funding limits ranging from \$250,000 to \$500,000 per stream.

The overall response from attendees was positive. Participants showed a great deal of engagement and readiness for conversations about deepening collaboration for mutual benefit. See page 3 onward for detailed analysis of meeting, email list of attendees and URL links shared during the meeting.

The deadline to submit proposals for Phase Two funding is September 18, 2019, with funding announcements expected in March 2020.

The next step is to convene some follow-up meetings with organizations/individuals interested in being part of Phase Two DSF funding. The first meeting is scheduled for Thursday August 15, 2019 from 4pm to 5pm.

Here is the link to the August 15 meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/8818947915>

Note: The Ladysmith Arts Council will provide resources/assistance to develop the funding proposals. We have a dedicated proposal writer ready to work on all Phase 2 proposals.

## **DIGITAL STRATEGY FUNDING STREAMS**

### **Stream 1: Digital Literacy**

The purpose of this stream is to support the arts sector in building digital knowledge, skills and capacity. This stream responds to the interest expressed during the July 25 meeting for in-person/hands on digital literacy training. Now we need to identify organization(s) who might be willing to be the lead applicant(s). Funding cannot be used to pay for existing staff, but instead hiring coordinators and trainers to deliver the project(s).

A single organization can apply to organize workshops for the entire Island, or perhaps several organizations (representing the north and south parts of the Island for example)

Maximum; \$250,000 per application

### **Stream 2: Audience engagement, public access to arts**

The goal of this stream is to improve the public's access, engagement and participation in the arts through digital means. It supports innovative digital initiatives that enhance the artistic experience of diverse publics, encourage the participation and engagement of citizens with the art, and increase discoverability and access to the works of Canadian artists, both at home and abroad. Again, a single organization can apply (e.g. artfinds.me), several applications can be developed/submitted, or some combination of the above.

Maximum: \$250,000 single phase or \$500,000 multi-phase.

### **Stream 3: Organizational Transformation**

This stream supports the exploration, development, implementation of new digital initiatives or optimization of existing ones in order to help arts organizations transform the way they work; to address challenges, seize opportunities and adapt to a networked and connected digital environment.

Examples of projects that could be submitted here include: creating and implementing a comprehensive Island/coastal digital strategy, forming a super-region network to continue to activate these conversations, and more.

Maximum: \$250,000 single phase or \$500,000 multi-phase.

Note: Each application must have a different lead applicant.

More info here: <https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/strategic-funds/digital-strategy-fund>

## JULY 25 MEETING STATS/ANALYSIS

This summary uses information from poll questions during the webcast as well as a follow up online survey. In both cases, a portion of participants responded. A response rate of 30% is very good and provides directionally valid information. The specific percentages are less meaningful due to the small sample size, however qualitatively they provide important direction on how to move forward.

### Participants

RSVP: 82

Participants: 56 live and some watched afterwards

All regions were represented with Central Island and Greater Victoria most strongly represented.

Organizations ranged from arts Councils, to funders, to regional and municipal government to arts service organizations and a number of individual artists also participated. Many artistic disciplines were reflected, with many participants representing more than one disciplines.

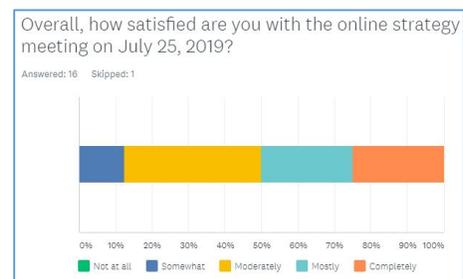
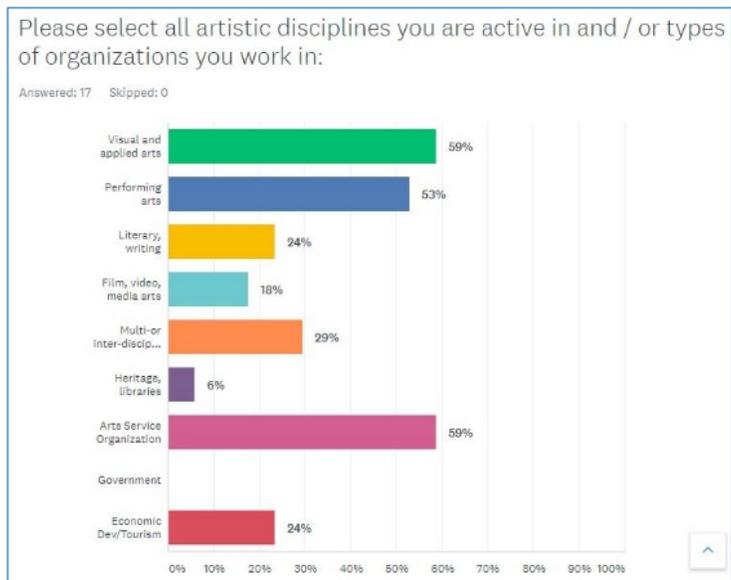
### Overall satisfaction

While all respondents were positive 50% selected top box scores (mostly and completely) and another 38% moderately satisfied.

We also wanted to know how the various meeting components worked for participants. The leading elements were the chat amongst participants as well as the range of people who attended from across Vancouver Island. The limited functionality and few opportunities for participant interaction on the Crowdcast platform made clear that such meetings are more effectively held on other types of platforms where participants can actually speak together such as Zoom, Adobe Connect, WebEx or similar online meeting tools.

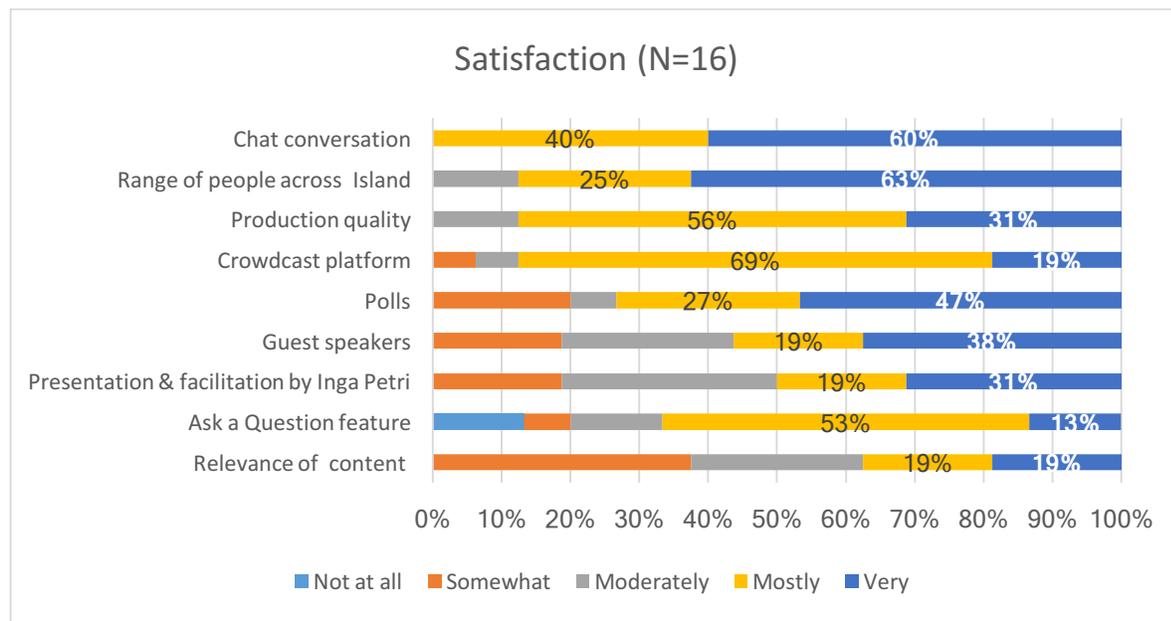
This webcasting format was not as conducive to having a meeting as was hoped. Having a mix of presentation and a high volume of chat activity, that often explored other tangents, created challenges for participants to follow the layers of conversation.

As one survey respondent expressed: “The chat was the best part for me as it allowed spontaneous participation and opportunity to hear from diversity of attendees. To improve,



perhaps a session structure, communicated ahead of time, preparation for what was to come would have been helpful. Presentation was billed as a strategy meeting but was highly content driven. Did not invite active "strategic" participation."

"I loved seeing so many faces at the table, but I would love to have been able to see a running list and also how to contact people if they were amenable to that. There were so many great points brought up by people and I thought there could be a lot of opportunity for cross pollination, but no way for us to all follow up with one another and further discuss the most interesting touching points."



Nonetheless, the quality of chat as well as volume showed a great deal of engagement and readiness for conversations about deepening collaboration for mutual benefit. This included meeting in the digital realm as well as the physical one. There is a recognition that digital tools are not a replacement of working together, meeting and getting to know each other in the physical realm.

Desire and need for creative strategy formulation by those interested

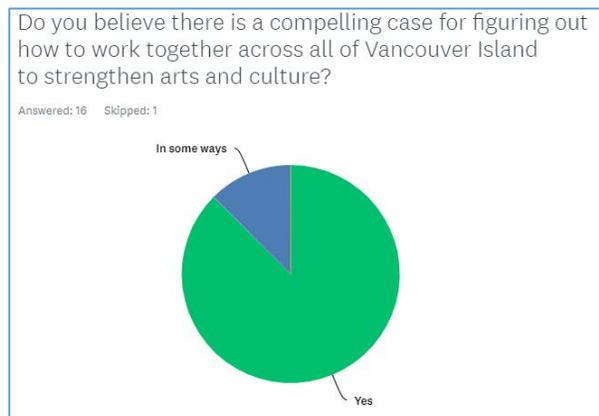
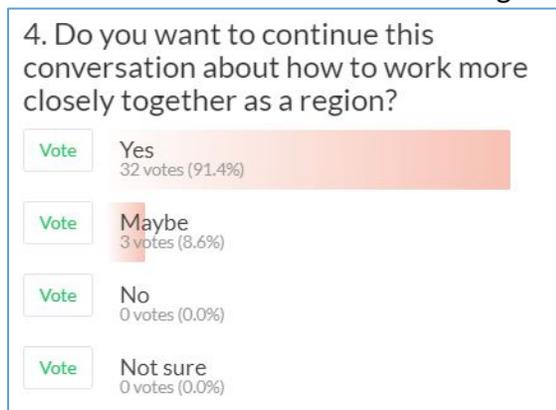
Another participant "found the discussion centered too much on technology... what we can do with the internet, digital media, and so on; and not enough on the basic question of what it means to make Vancouver Island an arts & culture powerhouse and why we would want to do it."

"Highlight: so many voices from across the sector on Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands. What a great opportunity. For improvement: the chat was often so active and engaging, sometimes it was hard to follow the actual presentation. The ability to review the presentation later helps with this. For improvement (and for follow-up): more discussion and idea-generating around actual digital projects and potential partnerships and collaborations."

The polls showed that views on how close Vancouver Island is to realizing its full potential varied, with the majority feeling we have a way to go. Similarly, while some feel they have a good handle on digital tools and ways of working, a majority say they could do much more to take advantage of opportunities.



A large majority said yes, there is a compelling case for figuring out how to work together and to continue the conversation that has begun.



There was great appetite for partnerships to make more happen on Vancouver Island as a whole.

### Physical infrastructure, physical meeting

There was a strong emphasis on the need for facilities to meet and work in many participating communities. This was similar to the idea of needing to come together physically to work together and advance the arts and culture sectors.

“We are engaging the Arts and Culture sector in this process (thanks Kera!). Interesting discussion around bricks and mortar and those regions exploring 'Arts Centres'. We have heard loud and clear from the sector leaders the challenges of a lack performing/arts space(s) as limiting the sectors growth.”

### Connectivity

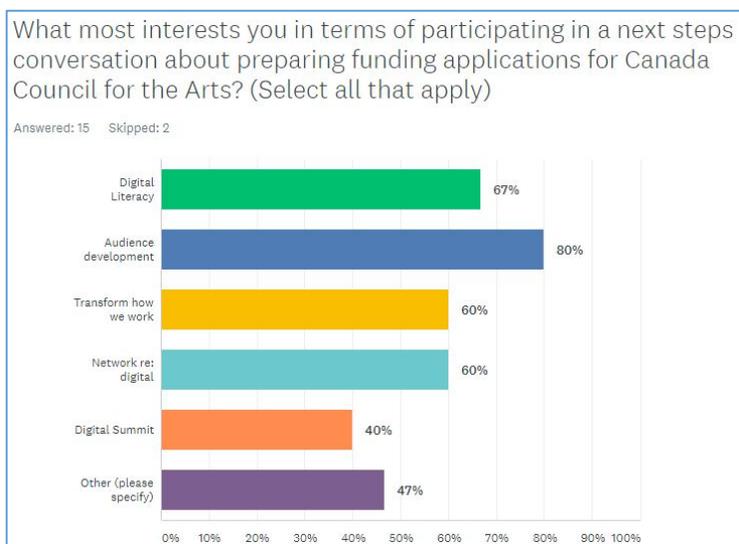
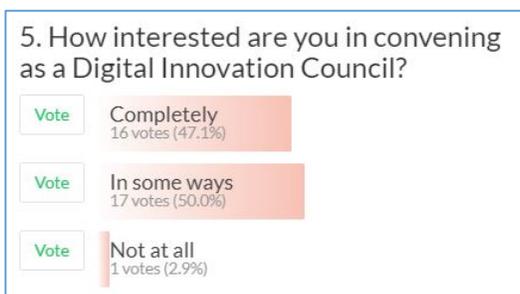
Participants also raised concerns about digital infrastructure disadvantaging rural and remote communities and that this needed to become more equal re: access to the same levels of high speed access.

## Digital Strategy Fund

When it comes to specific Digital opportunities, it is clear that there is broad interest in all dimensions of what Canada Council for the Arts will fund under its Digital Strategy Fund.

However, very significantly, many participants emphasized the need to have space to deal with collaboration, developing a common purpose to advance the local arts scene, find ways to meet in person together.

While the reaction to a proposed idea to create a Digital Innovation Council (either as an actual organization or in some other ad hoc form) was positive, the interest is greater in carrying on conversations, rather than being concerned about forming a formal entity of some sort.



There is appetite for further exploration and leading organizations have to be identified to develop proposals for Canada Council.

“Comox Valley Economic Development & Tourism is undertaking a new regional economic development strategy called Innovate 2030, which looks at a range of sectors and strategies via the lens of innovation and technology - this is really interesting to see the strength of that theme in the discussion and presentations here.”

## LINKS MENTIONED IN WEBCAST CHAT

### Canada Council’s Digital Strategy Fund

<https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/strategic-funds/digital-strategy-fund>

### A snapshot of where the entire province is at, from Arts BC's Digital Strategies Survey in May

[https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ArtsBC\\_DigistARTS\\_Survey\\_Results\\_May\\_2019.pdf](https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ArtsBC_DigistARTS_Survey_Results_May_2019.pdf)

### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

[https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ArtsBC\\_Insights\\_DiversityEquityInclusion.pdf](https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ArtsBC_Insights_DiversityEquityInclusion.pdf)

[https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ArtsBC\\_Advocacy\\_Toolkit.pdf](https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ArtsBC_Advocacy_Toolkit.pdf)

[https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ArtsBC\\_Organizational\\_Tool\\_Kit.pdf](https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ArtsBC_Organizational_Tool_Kit.pdf)

**Arts Council England, Supporting Growth in the Arts Economy**

[https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/digitalrdfundguide\\_business.pdf](https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/digitalrdfundguide_business.pdf)

**Digital toolkit from the UK**

[https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/digi\\_toolkit\\_book.pdf](https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/digi_toolkit_book.pdf)

**Creative Cities Network on Culture as an Economic Engine**

[https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/culture\\_economic\\_engine.pdf](https://artsbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/culture_economic_engine.pdf)

**BC Alliance for Arts and Culture, Digital Ladders program**

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

**Lou Anne Neel, guest speaker**

<http://www.authenticindigenous.com/artists/lou-ann-neel>

[http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/author/rbcm\\_lneel/](http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/author/rbcm_lneel/)

**Campbell River has an exciting arts vs. climate change festival coming up this fall**

<https://crarts.ca/artandearth/>

**Article on the evolving roles of Arts Orgs from ED of Campbell River AC's Ken Blackburn**

<https://www.campbellrivermirror.com/news/ken-blackburn-answers-whats-an-arts-council-for-anyway/>

**Sign up to ICET's enews to get news of upcoming initiative**

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

**The Cowichan Valley Community Arts Centre strategic plan can be obtained here**

<https://mailchi.mp/f6c83e4dfa4a/arts-centre-advocates>

This past spring, the Community Arts Council of Prince George & District supported an inaugural symposium for the new **Northern Indigenous Artists Collective** in cooperation with Carrier Sekani Family Services. For more information, contact Diane Levesque at 250-563-2880 or [niacpg@gmail.com](mailto:niacpg@gmail.com) or Sean Farrell at 250-563-2880 or [executive@studio2880.com](mailto:executive@studio2880.com).

**Arts centre on Hornby Island**

<http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca/search/node/hornby%20island%20arts%20centre>

**Connected Coast Initiative** is a chance to increase the backbone connectivity throughout the island, due to be complete by 2021/22. There is a need to explore the last mile connectivity to take advantage of this upcoming opportunity.

<https://connectedcoast.ca/>

**Island Coastal Economic Trust** has funding available for last mile connectivity planning, to ensure the infrastructure is maximized.

<http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca/project/techbroadband-strategies/strathcona-regional-district-broadband-plan>

**Arts BC's Professional Development Conference: New Voices. Fresh Thinking October 17-19th in Kelowna.** There is a full stream of digital-literacy based programming alongside much more. [www.artsbc.org/conference](http://www.artsbc.org/conference)

**Finland's Vision of 6G ...** let your mind be blown  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4iDnGMQNq0>

### CONTACT INFO FOR REGISTRANTS/INTERESTED PARTIES (in Alphabetical order by name)

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