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Capital Project Success: Stories from the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery
and Streetcar Crowsnest

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>> ALEX GLASS: We will get started in about five minutes. We'll get started promptly at 12:00 p.m. Thank you.

Just another reminder. He will be getting started right at 12:00. We see people filtering into the meeting room. So feel free to type in any questions you may have in the chat box, but we will be getting started in a couple minutes at 12:00. Thank you.

Hi, Jackie. It's Alex, I'm not talking -- we're going to get started right at 12:00.

>> ALEX GLASS: All right. It's 12:00. Welcome, everyone. To our capital projects webinar featuring stories from the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery based in Sarnia and Streetcar Crowsnest in Crowsnest theater in Toronto.

Before we dive in, I would like to cover a few reminders. First of all, we will be offering closed captioning throughout the webinar today. The closed captioning will be happening at the bottom of the screen where participants can change the font type, the size, and the color. A record of the closed captioning will be sent to participants following the webinar and made available on our website.

We will also be recording the session. And we will be emailing out a quick survey following the webinar tomorrow along with the recording. So we kindly ask that you complete the survey so we can continue to improve our Learning Series for arts facilities across Ontario and beyond. You can hear us. But we can't hear you. Your microphones have been disabled for this webinar. But you can use your speakers or head phones to listen in. You can adjust the sound by clicking on the speaker icon at the top of the meeting as well.

We will have roughly 10 to 15 minutes at the end of both presentations to answer questions. Please use the chat box to type in your questions and we will get to as many as possible. We covered all of those. The agenda for the day, so introductions as well. My name is Alex Glass. I'm the Program Manager at ArtsBuild Ontario. We're a non-profit arts service organization that provides tools and resources and learning materials to help arts facilities be more sustainable. We're going to hear from Lisa Daniels who is the curator and director of the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery and Monica Esteves who is the managing director of Crows Theatre. We'll start with Lisa and follow with Monica's presentation. Each will be roughly 20 minutes. We'll take questions from participants. Again, the chat box on the bottom right is where you can type in any questions you might have.

Some background on the Judith and Norman Alix Art Gallery.

It is a mid-sized regional public Art Gallery with a national mandate that encompasses all forms of visual arts. The Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery is originally known as the Sarnia Public Library from 1961 to 1991. They became a part of the county of Lambton and became known as Gallery Lambton when it was located to the bayside center in 1994. They built a Category A facility to house their permanent collection and house their contemporary and new media exhibitions. Following a feasibility study it was an ideal opportunity for redevelopment and the wheels were set in motion. Construction began. A fundraising Drive was coordinated. 92 years after the first exhibition the new facility opened on the weekend of October 5, 2012. The Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery is a free public Art Gallery located in downtown Sarnia, Ontario. Rooted in community, the exhibitions are curatorial projects based on the regional community within the framework of the larger provincial and arts community. With more than 200 members over 1300 works of Canadian works in collection and the important key team of 80 volunteers. They serve an immediate community of 128,000 people across Lambton County. After that introduction, I will now turn things over to Lisa Daniels to share her story about the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery's capital project. Over to you, Lisa.

>> LISA DANIELS: Thank you. Can everybody hear me? Can you hear me, Alex?

>> ALEX GLASS: Yes, I can hear you, Lisa.

>> LISA DANIELS: Thanks to the ArtsBuild team and inviting me to be part of the presentation. It is a real pleasure to share our community's process and my perspective as someone who has managed through a community capital project to build a Category A regional public Art Gallery from start to finish. By sharing our story with you, I hope to offer a glimpse into how we navigated the divergent public and institutional interests and goals and how we were able to bring the community, the funders, the politicians, the decision makers, and the nay-sayers along with us on the journey.

Before I get into the meat of things, I would like to get a bit of a context about our community and how it fits -- how the gallery fits into it. Lambton County is a rural urban community in south western Ontario. I'll try not to duplicate what Alex introduced us. We are a part of the cooperation of the county of Lambton which is responsible for the provision of cultural services to the residents of the county. And included in the department is the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery, 26 libraries and the Museum.

Since 1961 when the gallery opened on the second floor of the Sarnia public Art Gallery the collection has grown over 1300 works and includes a wide range of national, provincial and regionally significant artists. It offers historical and contemporary art exhibitions, ex--le services, community classes. Like many communities, Lambton County has a rich diverse

community of arts activities including a multitude of festivals, Art Walk, Canada Food Day, Fusion, Cornfest, am Powwow celebrations and so on. We have three performing arts centers in the county. I mentioned a number of museums.

The Gallery serves a broad demographic and that expansive mandate, the historical to the contemporary and includes every artistic medium from paint to photography to video installation, sound and performance art. Offering a balance of in-house and touring exhibitions the Gallery remains relevant by presenting many styles of art and experimenting with different forms of engagement and partnerships to both stimulate and entertain our audience. The emphasis of my presentation today will be on the two things that for us made our project possible and continues to ensure that the Gallery is robust and sustainable as we move into the future.

Those two things are the programming and keeping promises.

I'm going to start our story with the Masterworks from the Beaverbrook Art Gallery exhibition that opened at the JNAAG -- JNAAG is short for Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery on October 22, 2013. Approximately three years after we opened the doors of our new Gallery to the public. The reason I'm starting here because what this exhibition embodied one of the key elements as to why I believe our project was a success. That is, we delivered on the promises that were made during the campaign. Within our first three years of being open.

The Masterworks exhibition was organized by the Beaverbrook Museum in New Brunswick and was across Canada and the United States. The JNAAG was the only stop in central Canada. Until it went to the Audain Art Museum in Whistler we were the only Gallery in which it was mounted.

The exhibition included 75 Masterworks from the permanent collection of the Beaverbrook Art Gallery from the Georgian and modern period and featured historical works of art including Gainsborough, Delacroix, Freud and Dali and by prominent historical such as Kreighoff, Morrice and Carr. These are works never brought to the community before. And many members of our community would never had an opportunity to see artwork of this caliber before.

The original visitor goal of 10,000 approximate people was considered by many to be ambitious for our community. By the exhibition's close we had 21,435 visitors come through the doors representing 214% increase of the goal. The exhibitions broad visitor demographic reach is note worthy. We brought in visitors from the GTA and across various provinces as well as from the U.S.

It is the social impact on the community that was dominant. Data shows that 65% of the exhibition attendees came from Lambton County. Of which 50% of those were first time visitors to the Gallery even though we had been open and very active for three years. Still 50% of the attendees

to this exhibition had never been there before.

The economic impact from the Beaverbrook Art Gallery exhibition generated between 740,000 and \$1.6 million depending on what methodology you choose to make that calculation. During the preparation and exhibition period totaled just under \$300,000 impacting 85 local businesses and independent artists. It also presented us with numerous opportunities for building new community partnerships from, as you see here, barbershops to local breweries. Volunteers logged an impressive 2,400 hours in the four 1/2 months this exhibition was opened. This doesn't take into account the full year's worth of planning, researching and training that they participated in. Social media platforms experienced a high level of engagement with Twitter and Facebook audiences growing between 25% and 35% respectfully.

Perhaps the most important decision that we made was keeping admission to the exhibition free. This was a promise we made during the capital campaign, that art should be accessible to all regardless of economic status. And that wouldn't change whether we were presenting local artists or exhibitions such as the Masterworks. Gallery staff continues to work hard to keep this our promise.

And it was especially difficult for our decision makers to accept that an exhibition of this caliber did not have an admission fee attached to it. We were convinced that if we put a strong effort into marketing, developed a relevant program and partnerships some of which would have a fee and some of which would be free and had a clear and somewhat aggressive ask program at the door, we would raise more revenue than if we had an admission fee and our attendance, including repeat visits, would not be hindered but in fact enhanced. Visitors were able to make donations while booking their ticket online through the Masterworks site or in person using the donation boxes placed throughout the Gallery. Over the 4 and a half months of the exhibition the Gallery collected \$60,000 in donations. Our target was \$10,000.

While these stats are for us impressive and very critical politically, optically and financially, the sustained community value, the good will we fostered toward the Gallery is that we delivered on key promises made throughout the capital campaign.

Some of those were we brought -- that we would be able to bring in a major exhibition, that we would not have been able to ever bring in had we not had a new Gallery that was Category A designated, that our admission would be free. And that we would produce robust educational and community programming, that there would be something for everyone and that the Gallery could contribute to a revitalization of the community. We would attract visitors by extension would shift perceptions about our community. That it would generate a sense of community pride which it did and there would be contribution to spin off economies. We kept the promises we made during the campaign. And that, I think, is one of the

key things. Do not make promises that you are 100% positive that you can't deliver on within a very defined and short period of time. For us, it was three years that we were able to tick off all the promises we made during the campaign.

At the time we started selling the idea for our new Category A public Gallery in Sarnia which was around 2007 and 2008 Canada was at the start of an economic recession which hit Sarnia hard as many industries reduced in size or packed up and left. Local businesses were going bankrupt. There was significant unemployment and hardship. It's very difficult for a regional community to wrap their heads around the logic of investing millions in an Art Gallery when a growing number of people were losing their jobs, were struggling putting food on the table.

On top of that selling the need for a Category A public Art Gallery with its increased construction and operating costs was even harder.

So now I would like to go back to 2007 when I received in Lambton. Kind of walk us through the journey to the Masterworks. When I came on the Gallery was at a cross-roads. We were under growing pressure to prove to county council that it was relevant and vital to the community. This is images of the mall location where we were prior to the new build.

It was widely recognized that their current location in the mall was problematic on a number of levels. Attendance dropping and disengaged public it was becoming increasingly difficult to justify its existence. I was told during the interview I would have a window of about three years to prove that art and the Art Gallery was something the community wanted. If successful the process of moving to a new purpose building would be considered. If unsuccessful the Gallery would become an archive with a small space to display the work that was in the collection.

What was immediately apparent was that there were two very detrimental assumptions that were being made. The first was that the feeling was that the problem of our growing disengaged public and alienated local arts community would be fixed if we were out of the mall and had our own building, that the awful location and declining facility was why weren't getting people in the door. The second assumption was that the local community and the capacity to engage with and understand contemporary art practices was limited and was very underestimated.

We took the position that if we developed programming in a relevant and exciting way for our community, they would come regardless of the space.

I just want to give a little bit of an example of what I mean. I think most of us are familiar with the ROM exterior which was around 2003. There was an incredible emphasis on the facility, on the facade. This was during the time during the big super builds and outdoing the design being one of the key things of the expansion project.

However, it was done at the detriment of the programming. Within short order after it opened in 2010, the ROM hired a new CEO and their mandate was to focus -- refocus the emphasis from the building and the site to the programming, to what was inside.

This is the second key take away that I would like to share and I believe is key to the success of our project and our continued success. Don't be seduced by the build it and they will come trap. Focus on investing community programming that is relevant to your community now and moving forward. And don't underestimate your community and their interest in art, whether they -- yeah.

We made the strategic decision to put a considerable amount of effort and resources into revitalizing the artistic programming and to have fun while at the same time doing the feasibility studies and other background work necessary to move the capital project like this forward. And those efforts happen simultaneously.

This turned out to be critical as the stimulus funding which was announced in 2009, we were eligible for because the feasibility study and the strat plan having been completed, we were able to be shovel ready. But if we could not show the community support and that the engagement with the Gallery and building our own local county council would not have allowed us to go after the stimulus funding.

The first thing we did was rework the artistic vision and to make it more accessible. While there are many critical points that have to be successful, we realized in a project like this -- again, I really want to emphasize that for us an emphasis on programming and rebuilding our programming was key because through this programming a wide range of different activities, we started building relationship with community.

Basically when I arrived there had been no contemporary art practices being presented in about 20 years. By that I mean video, performance, sound, anything technology or media-based. And it was pretty apparent that if we didn't bring the community into a relationship with these contemporary practices which by this time many of them were historic, we wouldn't stand a chance of meeting our institutional obligation of supporting artists and building a collection or in addressing the needs of our current or future public.

So a curatorial strategy was developed that would expose our public to what had been going on in the art world since the '60s in a respectful and accessible way. Breaking free of an old framework in terms of fixed dollars and location, we set out to bring art to the community versus making the community come to art. This was very critical in the early days. We developed the Fast Forward project. This was a project designed to introduce video performance, installation and expound art to the community. We believed that if we could engage and challenge the public on multiple levels and nudge them toward the contemporary, we could foster and

expand their relationship to art. In this way we would bring the diverging institutional and public views, ideas, and attitudes into momentary alignment. And the process of doing that would generate relevance and vitality. We didn't expect that there would be a watershed of alignment and engagement with art. We were looking for those moments of alignment.

Throughout this time, while we were introducing contemporary art, we continued working with historic collection and we wanted to -- bring historical art into a dynamic relationship with contemporary voices. We did not ignore the historical while doing this. Very quickly within two years our first Friday events were bringing in between 300 and 500 people every month within a three hour time period. With some fluctuations we continued to meet those targets. The attendees that came represented a broad demographic, young people, seniors, families, kids, homeless people, rich people, blue collar workers, the gamut.

These little ladies, I was walking out of the Gallery behind them, and as they were leaving, they were sitting here watching Paul Couillard a film art with a block of melting ice in his mouth for 45 minutes. One of them said, what the heck was that. The other answered, I don't know but at least it was interesting. For us that was a moment of alignment. We can't underestimate our audience. These women sat there and watched Paul Couillard for over an hour and it was wonderful.

This little guy spent the entire night in the Gallery. His parents asked if they could leave him there and come back and pick him up. This little kid had momentary alignment with the activities of the Gallery.

Each program in Fast Forward built an audience for contemporary and new media practice and demonstrated capacity if not a hunger for challenging a complex artistic ideas within our community. Equally important, each program revealed a small but talented group of artists in our community who were practicing video performance and sound and had never considered that what they were doing was art.

Paying attention and building community in my view pays off. When the decision about whether or not to move forward with the new Gallery was to be made at county council, there was record attendance, standing room only. Downtown businesses actually closed their doors and set up car pools to get people to the council chambers and to attend. And there was a 2 and a half hours spent where members of the community, all ages and economic backgrounds, spoke in support of the Gallery.

There were only two nay-sayers. When it was time to vote on the project only one council member voted against the new Gallery. Within our first three years by working with our public and meeting our public by removing barriers to art, both physically and psychologically and by focusing on artistic programming that was relevant and challenging to our community and presented in a way that was accessible, respectful, and fun, we were able to address the sometimes divergent public, these institutional and

artistic interests around art.

Three years later the new purpose built Gallery opened and within our first three year cycle we had delivered on all our promises that we made while achieving a balanced and dynamic program that continues to build and sustain our audience.

What I haven't touched on here was the importance for our community to insist on having a Category A facility. This is what allowed us to keep some of our key promises and makes it possible to build a permanent collection. Like smaller Galleries we have no new budget to acquire art but because of the programming that a Category A Gallery has allowed us to do we have seen an increase in significant donations of art since the Gallery opened.

So just in summary, really quickly, some of the key learning that I want to emphasize. Bring the community along with you on the journey. It will ensure that the community's engaged with and excited about art before you launch a campaign. Don't get sucked into the build it and they will come trap. And connected to that, don't overbuild your facility.

Invest in a robust artistic program with exhibitions, community, and education. Don't underestimate your community. And I feel that integrating the location of the physical building is critical. For my view in a community like ours, integrating it into the community was key. We chose the adaptive reuse of a community historical building that was right at the main intersection of downtown. We saved the historical facade, just the two sides of it. Even though it added considerably to the cost, it significantly increased and broadened our community support. This is because an Art Gallery is more than a vessel to display art. A Gallery is a key contributor to the establishment of a community hub. I would say make the Gallery easy to visit and remove as many barriers as possible. We did that by keeping the admission free, the location, people don't have to make a decision to drive out to the Gallery. They can be walking downtown and pop in for five minutes. And keep the entrance welcoming and the facade welcoming. Don't make promises you can't keep within a short -- relatively short period of time.

And don't underestimate the value and importance of marketing. In addition to investing in programming, you need to invest in marketing. And get a project manager who understands both the construction world and the way they think and the artistic world and the way we think. I would also say if you're going -- regardless whether you're going for Category A or not, I would work with the Canadian Conservation Institute from start to finish. We did that. Do whatever it takes to implement their suggestions.

That's really the end of my presentation. I just have a few slides I'll scroll through really, really quickly in order to give you a -- these are architectural pictures of the inside of the building. The front lobby, which changes -- we continually paint and build walls so it's never the same.

Again, that's the lobby. You can see the full floor to ceiling windows keeping it wide-open to the public. We saved the heritage stairs that were in the building. Again, added cost, but added endearment to the community. We have a conference room. This is the second floor as you come up the heritage stairs, the permanent collection gallery. You can see the entrance in here and the lecture space. That's the lecture space which is totally smart and also can be used as a presentation space. The ramp up to the administration. That's the interior view of the ramp that joins the Gallery to the administration. That's the exterior. Administration area. We have three storage collection storage areas. This is the two dimensional storage and the art studio. We were able to get a research library which was key.

And our main Gallery space is our upstairs on the third floor. There are two Galleries up there. This is the main Gallery space. The same space. You can see we instruct walls. We don't have temporary walls. That's the same space. That's the same space. That's the smaller Gallery on the third floor. That's the same smaller gallery on the third floor. So we put a lot of energy and emphasis in designing exhibitions as well, making the experience different every time for the public which brings them back over and over. And the permanent collection Gallery.

And I think that's it. I hope I -- it looks like I went over a little bit. I apologize.

>> ALEX GLASS: That's great, Lisa. Thank you so much. That was fantastic. I'm looking at the comment box in the chat box. A lot of people are really thrilled about your project, a lot of congratulations. Russell is going to share it with his Board of Directors up in the Sault. Thank you for sharing our story with us. All fantastic stuff. Yes, we will be sharing slides at the end of the presentation and be sending them out tomorrow. We can expect to see those as well. Please share internally to help make similar projects.

We'll switch gears now and move on to Monica Esteves who is going to tell us about their recent build of Streetcar Crowsnest. Some background on Streetcar with before we turn it over to Monica. Streetcar Crowsnest is the first permanent home for Crow's Theatre since 1983. Crow's is a leading force recognized for provocative award winning theater works which is nationally and internationally. In January 2017 following the completion of an \$11.5 million capital campaign, Crow's opened the door to Streetcar Crowsnest. As the first performing arts facility in Toronto's east end home to 1.3 million residents. It has affordable contemporary theater all ages for events. Wide ranging community programming and partnerships. In the early days of the capital campaign and facility planning, a collaboration between Crow's Theatre and Streetcar developments resulted in two catalyst contributions, initially \$1.5 million contribution through Section 37 followed by a generous and game changing \$1.25 million lead gift to the new facility. The new and beautiful Streetcar Crowsnest has multiple venues for programming and events. And the Guloien theater please correct my

pronunciation, the Scotiabank Community Studio for performances, rehearsals, and community activities, a stunning lobby bar and adjacent full service Gare De L'est. I'm going to switch over to the presentation for you Monica. But if you could just start introducing yourself and I'll get things going on the text side.

>> MONICA ESTEVES: You bet. Thanks, everyone. I also want to thank you Alex and ArtsBuild for a great forum for us to discuss and share our experiences.

So in the presentation portion, folks, I'm going to first walk through some of the -- a bit more of the history behind Crow's particularly we were at eight years ago in 2010 and what the instigating circumstances that initiated our thinking about a facility and a change in the way that we operate. I'll walk through our phases of planning, what we were -- key areas of focus in the seven years from blue sky to reality to the completion of the facility. And those challenges and opportunities along the way.

And then I'll show you some photos as Lisa, what the finished project looks like of the facility what are some of the final numbers of the capital campaign hand how we got there. How we're doing in operations now, and areas of focus in the coming years. . Just waiting for the presentation.

>> ALEX GLASS: Should be good to go in at least a minute. Sorry about this.

>> MONICA ESTEVES: No problem. We'll just hang tight.

>> ALEX GLASS: Should be good to go now, Monica. Thanks for your patience.

>> MONICA ESTEVES: Great. Do I have control here? Can I change -- move -- I can do that? Okay. Great. Got it. Thank you. Okay. So some history and context very quickly. So as Alex mentioned Crow's Theatre was founded in 1983 primarily over the course of the first 25 years of existence focused on new play development. Usually doing about one to three productions per year, a lot of mostly new Canadian work. In the '90s and particularly in the 2,000s touring nationally and internationally to some degree was also a primary activity for the organization. Obviously in that time Crow's had never had its own space. So we were primarily when we were doing productions in the city in Toronto, we were renting or partnering with other venues across the city.

So why change? Why did we want to stir the pot? What were the catalysts for change? So to step back, prior to 2010, Chris Abraham our artistic director took over as AD from the founding artistic director in 2007. He asked me to join the company in the summer of 2010. We had actually gone -- known each other since theater school, a couple decades ago. And he brought me to the company because we wanted to do something big together. So I said, yes, joined him at the company in the summer. The

first thing we did in the summer of 2010 was embark on a strategic review of the company. It was fairly substantial but it included a few key pieces. We reviewed and acknowledged the artistic strength of the company, some challenges and threats to Crow's sustainability. Many of those were shared by other theater companies and other organizations in the city and across the country and probably the world.

We also were looking at Crow's connection or lack of with a local audience base and connected to that, we were looking at our local catchment area of Toronto's east end as Alex mentioned, 1.3 million people east of the Don Valley Parkway and a movie theater was about the extent of the cultural infrastructure at that time. For both Chris and I one of the other things we had in common we were both east enders and glaringly aware of that lack of infrastructure. I would say in this review, before moving forward, that this strategic review didn't take us years to do. It didn't even take us months. We knew we wanted to do something big and we needed to get cracking, time was of the essence. We acted quickly in this review. It took about a month with various stakeholders. The outcome of that directly resulted in the four guiding principles that would end up functioning as the north star for us during the business plan development, during the years of planning, design, community consultation, et cetera.

Moving on to those. So our four guiding principles that came out of that first month at Crow's Theatre was that our plan, whatever our plan would be we needed something that would enable us to nurture and further fortify the creative process at Crow's. We knew that we needed a plan that would enable Crow's to be financially viable and sustainable. We knew that -- determined that whatever the plan was, it needed to enable audience growth and not only audience growth but a particular audience growth. We wanted an adventurous appetite in our audiences, particularly for new work. And we wanted a business model, a plan for the future that could fortify the roles of the arts and culturally underserved neighborhoods and of course specifically to us, we mentioned Toronto's east end. To dig in quickly on each of those -- we'll go fairly quickly. In terms of the nurture and fortification of the creation process, it's to note in the '90s particularly in 2000s Crows was increasingly in demand on the touring network in Canada. Increasingly by the time Chris got there in 2007 the touring fees and development contributions were declining. We weren't seeing that as a viable path for the future.

We also knew that if in a case that the big thing that we did together would be a facility of the kind -- a facility of some kind that we couldn't create a new facility and have that compromise the -- our investment in new Canadian theater. In fact, the business model or facility plan if that was the case needed to increase those resources.

And we also determined at that time in terms of benchmarking potential plans that ideally we wanted to be able to support two to three productions per year.

In terms of financial viability, very quickly, I mean, I think the bullets here in terms of our review of what the current realities were, was that we -- any kind of plan for Crow's in the future. Crow's at that time was relatively small -- would require an increase to the annual operations, its revenues. Given the current realities everywhere we felt it in Toronto, we couldn't look at meaningful growth or count on any kind of meaningful increase to our government funding to operating funding. We already were experiencing a very congested fundraising market particularly in Toronto and were worried about looking at that revenue for a source of long-term sustainability. We were seeing and experiencing aging audiences at many of the venued theater companies across the country and needed to address that. Of course, as discussed, the lack of cultural infrastructure outside of the downtown core of Toronto on the west end.

So to the second bullet there, fairly quickly, we started talking about social enterprise and what that meant and exploring avenues, models that could potentially cover not all -- we weren't being unrealistic but not covering all of the revenues but a meaningful part of the yearly revenues to cover the overhead of a facility. If in fact we ended up going toward a facility.

With enabling audience growth, changing the conditions, a 21-century theater going experience. Much of this language about a 21st century theater experience, Alex mentioned we have a restaurant on site. We have a really cool bar. This early work about audiences helped us and really informed the design of the facility and the purchase of additional square feet in order to have a restaurant. I'm getting ahead of myself.

And last, but not least, we wanted to be in the east end. In order to deliver on this principle, we would need to have the conditions to support and expand a mandate in order to be relative to a community. Just a little interesting fact about our local catchment area. Crow's local catchment area if you're familiar with Toronto is Leslieville, Riverdale, Danforth and the Beach has the highest percentage of households with children under the age of six in all of Toronto. So a lot of young families. So when we were noting there in the third bullet about and their families, we knew that in order to do this, we needed a facility and a business plan that could support programming for young audiences.

So easy to do crow puns we do it all the time, as the crow flies. When I started in the summer of 2010, between -- about six and a half years from the first -- our first initial review and when we opened the facility. I wanted to walk you through this process with this little chart.

Each of the planning lines had its own structured phases that were very complicated in our plans like the capital campaign facility design and instruction. What I tried to do in this chart is to summarize the primary activities that were happening each year. I'll take you through that in a moment. I would also add, it's important concurrently to this we also were

focusing every year on increasing the organizational capacity of the organization so that when we arrived to 2017 we would be able to actually run the facility. So quickly starting on the left there with 2010, it's a half year, we started working in the summer. The primary area of focus was research. One of the key areas in there was focused on after the review we had creation of the guiding principles was looking at social enterprises and researching existing models that either be viable for us or inspire our thinking. That included travel to the U.S. where they historically have had less government funding. So we spent a bit of time in the fall and winter of 2010 in the U.S., particularly in New York. And it was during that fall, winter research trips and work that we selected the business model. We had three that we did quick feasibility studies on and identified our lead horse and then continued to move -- dig into a bit deeper and that took us to continued planning in 2011. Once we identified our lead horse or what seemed to be -- had the most potential for us, we embarked on business plan development.

So we completed and developed our business plan internally. We did that on our own. And we internally conducted an initial feasibility assessment and hired a third party consultant to test our feasibility and do a feasibility test. We also conducted capital campaign round tables with philanthropists and corporations in the city, testing our business model, presenting it to them to get a sense of whether they found it interesting and whether they thought we had any chance of raising multiple millions of dollars in the private sector.

At this time notably in 2011 in the summer of 2011, one of the people that we had reached out to was our local city council Paula Fletcher to give her a heads up that we had our eyes on potentially building a performing arts facility in her ward. Quite serendipitously it was Paula that suggested that we sit with Les Mallins, president of Streetcar Developments, a mid sized condo developer in Toronto. They have a few west end properties but primarily in Toronto's east end which is unique to Streetcar developments. That summer, we met with Streetcar and I can speak later on. In looking at this seven years, eight years, it looks like a long time, but candidly we were not ready for that meeting with the developer. We had this opportunity with a condo they were building in Leslieville that they were two years away from breaking ground. We had to make a decision very quickly about whether we could catch up, whether we could accelerate our plans or what our preliminary plans were at that time in order to take advantage of this opportunity. Obviously we decided to do so.

In 2012, we were focused on working with Streetcar and with the city. Alex mentioned Section 37 for those of you who may not be familiar with Section 37, it's essentially in the planning act for Toronto. In brief, developers are able to access additional density or height in exchange for that they make contributions for community benefit. Sometimes that community benefit is a cash contribution to parks or street benches or a charity or sometimes it's land or something similar to what we've done.

So in our case we knew that the Section 37 with this facility wasn't going to be enough, the square footage that was gifted to us through the Section 37 and the developer in the city was 5,000 square feet which was nowhere near what we needed to build a mid-size performing arts facility but it was a really good head start. Much of 2012 was focused on getting that nailed down, which we did by October of 2012. It was approved unanimously at city council, which my understanding from the city was that that was very fast. And credit that to our -- the work of our stakeholders and the city counselor and supporters of one preliminary phase of community consultation that enabled, I think -- enabled us to make a really strong case for support in the city.

At that time once we had that on hand, we knew that -- we had essentially committed ourselves. It wasn't an if about having a facility. It was a when. We began a very quick four month quiet phase of the capital campaign where we focused on securing a few substantial six figure donations from philanthropists in the city, which we did.

Early in 2013 we publicly announced the facility. Again, much earlier than the industry standard is. Usually from what I understand you want to secure 40% or so of your fundraising before announcing to the public. Because of the Section 37 approval it was going to be announced. It was going to be broadly known so we needed to get ahead it. It further committed ourselves to getting this project realized.

In 2013 -- I'm just seeing the comment, Crow's puns are great. In 2013 then we had to race. We were getting architects in place, completing the phase 1 of design. We had to understand and secure key contracts, architects, construction manager. We needed to get a costing on the facility which meant we needed to complete the first phase of design and we needed to put our heads down with public sector fundraising, which we did.

And then to blow through the next pieces, it's probably self-explanatory we spent a lot of 2014 and '15 focusing on the capital campaign. We had a lot of money to raise. We'll get into a little bit later on. I have a little bit of diagram of where those funds came from.

And trying to catch up with the condo, which actually in late 2015 the construction of the actual condo was completed. The lower base of it was completed to our specification. And that's it. I guess, 2016 was construction and a very, very busy year. We opened in mid-January 2017. The doors to our lobby were installed the same day we had our first public performance. So we squeezed through but we did it in about six and a half years which is -- felt like a really long time, but I think candidly looking backwards we kept it at a good clip.

So just to take a moment -- I know time is it getting on me. I'll blow through this quickly. Lemons to lemonade transforming our challenges into opportunities. We were not an organization in 2010 that would have been identified as being able to accomplish this. In 2010 we had 2.5 full time

employees which meant myself, Chris, the artistic director, and an intern. And the office was in Chris' basement. We knew that we needed to keep up programming at the existing level while undertaking everything. And at that time in 2010 a relatively low fundraising threshold each year just under \$200,000 back in 2010.

We did have a lot of opportunities, though, which identified which put a lot of wind in our sails. We were both committed to each other to seeing this through. We had an evolving and growing Board of Directors who evolved with us. Each year the fundraising minimum for board members increased and board members were very committed to the organization. And when they were unable to grow with Crow's as our fundraising threshold grew, we had a lot of board members continue to support but step off the board when we needed more heavy hitters on the board.

We had four really great hooks in our case for support, the business model, which I can get to later being the first theater of its kind east of the DVP. The mandate, the quality of the work and Chris' reputation as well.

I think really importantly in terms of our success that because we were a small team, it was a challenge, but it was also an opportunity. We were quick. We were agile. We didn't -- we weren't a big ship trying to move. We could be really quick and agile. We could really reinvent Crow's, mandate, it's purpose which could be a challenge but we saw it as an opportunity. In that first couple years the work that we did in the first year and a half of round tables, et cetera, enabled us to get some several key major supporters early on in the process and they were absolutely instrumental to the success of the capital campaign.

So our venue. And we did it on time and on budget which we're of course very proud of. So Streetcar Crowsnest is our venue. Streetcar developments was a naming sponsor hence the name Streetcar Crowsnest for the name of the facility. Inside is a 2 hundred seat called the Guloien theater. I'll show you photos in a moment. Just to touch on our business model for a moment, for -- we have a theater season and an event season. From early October to mid-April each year for roughly 26 weeks of the year we are primarily a theatre venue -- theater, music, opera, et cetera in both spaces. In our event season from mid-April to the beginning of October, we are primarily but not exclusively a social and corporate and wedding event venue. So the flexibility of the space was paramount in the design. And you can see at the bottom there -- it doesn't have the -- all the tables. It looks really beautiful for weddings. We've had a number of weddings already in the first year and are hitting those revenue targets. But just to get a sense of the bare room.

For theater just some photos of some of the shows that we had in the space in 2017. Up at the top that's a photo of A&R Angels which was the co-founder of Broken Social Scene which was a successful show we had last November. The Scotiabank Community Studio is a 90 seat studio. There it is in the empty form at the bottom. Running theme, flexibility,

multi-configurational. Works well for performances, cabarets, also for events and meetings and workshops. We had a number of really great shows there in 2017. Anecdotally early on in our planning we were thinking that the studio would be more rehearsal space. As our thinking evolved and demand grew, we realized we needed to make adjustments in the phases of facility design to enable it to be a performance space because it seemed to be in demand from our own artists from smaller theater companies who were eager to work with us in our first year and wanted to get in a space that was in that kind of 90 seat capacity.

My favorite place, the bar, the lobby bar is beautiful. We -- early on -- hang on. Going to my notes. We knew it was important on multiple fronts because our business lines that the lobby was really attractive for the adventurous audience we wanted a space that was cool and hip. For the social and corporate events we wanted a space that photographed really well and could sell itself in some ways. Up at the top there and on the left of the bottom photo you'll see an art installation that is really beautiful, particularly from the exterior, looking at it from the outside. Some more photos of our lobby bar.

Adjacent, directly adjacent to the lobby you can walk right from the lobby into the restaurant. We lease it out to an operator. And the restaurant is Gare De L'est which is a French brasserie which opened last May. It's a 60 seat restaurant maybe 65. The operators had three existing restaurants in the Leslieville area so they absolutely understood and committed to the neighborhood. They knew what they were doing. They're doing really, really well. They're jam packed from 5:30 to 8:00. It's very difficult to get a seat.

Just to quickly give you some numbers on our capital campaign, so the -- I think you'll have access I believe to this PowerPoint afterwards and you can read the copy here. But in brief, 29% of the capital campaign revenues came from the public sector, a combination of the Canadian Heritage Cultural Spaces program primarily, the city of Toronto Section 37 which I referred to and Ontario Trillium Foundation. And then the balance of the capital campaign came from the private sector. The private sector individual and corporately. Contributing 71% of the fundraising of the funds for the capital campaign. Pretty much an even split between individuals and corporate.

Just quickly to ArtsBuild talking about builds. Our team, small and agile, nevertheless we had one individual from the Board of Directors who had construction experience who was our board build of one person. We didn't have to manage a big complicated committee. I had one person that I dealt with on the board with all things construction. Our architect DTAH was our principal architect. Below the architects were the engineers, structural, mechanical, electrical, et cetera. Early on in the process we selected our construction management team, Brown Daniels and associates who were fantastic and they contracted out to all of the subtrades. We engaged theoretical consultants and all FF and E, AV. In terms of project

manager, just a note about learnings. Initially we didn't think that we needed a project manager. It was about six months prior to beginning construction I think we were submitting our construction permits that we realized that we needed this type of support. I, in particular, needed it. And so at the time we had to rustle up additional funds to pay for it. We came up with enough to keep a part-time project manager on the project, part, part time about one and a half days per week over an 18-month period. If I could go back in time, I would have, A) contracted a production manager full time and had that production manager start -- project management -- I think they've been acquired by a larger company at this point. Peter Man was our guy. He's amazing. I would have brought them on earlier.

I think the -- there were issues that came up in construction that were costly that could have been avoided if we had a PM in place a bit earlier. I can -- if there's time for questions, I can get over to that. So, lastly, very quickly, how are we doing? Benchmarking against our guiding principles. We've had a huge increase to the amount of shows and programming that we're doing. Way more than we initially anticipated. And increased our annual budget significantly. We've quadrupled our annual investment in play development which is -- we're really pleased that we were able to do.

In terms of the business model, it's working really well. It's -- we didn't expect to get out of the gates our plan is a growth plan, a four year plan. We're hitting our year one target. Audience growth, so important. And that audience we were just thrilled with the attendance in the first year in 2017. With almost all of the shows really, really surpassing their box office targets which is so encouraging. I would agree with Lisa's caution in her presentation about the build it and they will come attitude.

We didn't have that attitude. And I think that that's what -- that's what enabled us to have strong audience attendance in the first year. I think inevitably having bricks and mortar helped. People walked by and wondered what was going on. The lion's share of our audience growth came from the multiple stages of community consultation we did in the previous years, an incredible amount of outreach to the maximum bandwidth and a really aggressive marketing campaign in the year prior to opening.

And lastly, connected to that, we did a study last year, kind of the first six months of operations postal code survey study that depending upon the production but most productions fell in about 40% of our audience came from the local catchment area. By Toronto terms, local is really small. It's our ward. That surprised us. That really surpassed our expectations. So we're really pleased about that.

And you can look at this later because we're back on time. These are a list of some of the things that we did in 2017 and some of the recognition that we received by the press in the new year. That's it for me.

You'll get the slide and my contact information is there if you have any

questions after this. Please feel free to reach out.

>> ALEX GLASS: Thank you so much, Monica. A tall order to summarize your entire capital project and journey in just 25 minutes. I appreciate everything that you've shared with us today and I'm sure our participants have lots of great feedback in the chat box. We have gone over, everyone. I think it's well worth it because there was great information shared from both Lisa and Monica from the organizations. What I would like to do is invite anybody who has a question to type it in the chat box. I do have a couple and I think they're addressed to you, Monica. The first one is might it be possible to get the wedding fee schedule for your venue?

>> MONICA ESTEVES: Most of the information's available on our website. If you go to Crow's Theatre.com, we have a whole section at the top there. We have a whole section on weddings and that is available there.

>> ALEX GLASS: We can share that link in the follow-up that we share with participants. We can throw that in there for sure. Eleethea, who I assume is from Sudbury based on Eleethea and Demetra talking about Place des Arts want to know, when the Guloien theater is in theater mode, what is the seating? is it theater seating?

>> MONICA ESTEVES: It's raked – it's completely multi-configurational. We've rarely in the 23 shows we've in the last 15 months most of those in the Guloien. We haven't had many duplications of the seating configuration. Generally it's about 200 seats, theater in the round, landscape, thrust. It's very multi-configurational.

>> ALEX GLASS: Thank you. Yolanda is typing and a couple more are coming in. I'll wait for those -- there they are. Those are thank yous, always appreciate it. Anyone else have any questions they would like to ask Lisa or Monica while we have them here. Feel free to type in the chat box and I will read it out for the group. All right. It looks like no more questions at this time. I will share the contact information of -- here we are, more information. One more question from Yolanda. Where and how do you store the seating and how many hours and hands does it take to reconfigure.

>> MONICA ESTEVES: Great question. We store most of the seating on site. It's a game of Tetris. Because if we had -- if I could go back in time and purchase more real estate, more land in order to have more storage space, I would do that. I think everybody experiences that there's not enough storage. In the summer months in our event season from April to the beginning of October, we actually store the seating off site just to free up space. It takes -- the time that it takes to reconfigure really depends on what's the state A to B, if you're going from proscenium or in the round, they take a bit more time. I would say roughly four to eight hours but the

configuration makes a big difference.

>> ALEX GLASS: Great, thanks Monica and Yolanda. I will wrap things up. Thank you both to Lisa Daniels and Monica Esteves sharing with us more information and details about your capital projects, very different projects but valuable to learn from. As we've mentioned, these slides will be provided to all participants as well as a link to the recording. We will provide a link to resources as well that were brought up here today. I would also like to invite you to complete a survey that we send out at the end of every Learning Series webinar that we present at ArtsBuild Ontario. That will be coming your way tomorrow morning. Lastly, I would like to our funders for supporting the Learning Series, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Ontario Arts Council. Thank you all of you for joining us this afternoon. If you would like to learn more about the learning series at ArtsBuildOntario.CA. Thank you and have a great rest of your afternoon.

(Webinar concluded at 1:10 p.m. EST)

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