



Creative Spaces Case Study Series

Best Practices Report Part 1

October 2019

This Creative Spaces Case Study Series is supported by:



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Introduction

ArtsBuild Ontario

ArtsBuild Ontario (ABO) is the only organization in Ontario dedicated to realizing long-term solutions to building, managing and financing the sustainable arts facilities needed in our communities.

ABO offers tools, resources and programs that support arts organizations with their creative space projects. ABO's core programs include Accessibility in Creative Spaces, SpaceFinder in Canada, Creative Spaces Mentoring Network, and Asset Planner for the Arts.

ABO has published case studies on nine arts organizations who have completed a capital project, as part of our Creative Space Case Study Series. These projects vary in size, scope and operational models. The goal of these case studies is to enable other organizations in understanding best practices as well as providing resources and support they need to develop and sustain their creative space.

About the Best Practice Report – Part 1

This Best Practice Report Part 1 summarizes the key learnings from the first nine case studies in the Creative Space Case Study Series. It is intended for arts managers and organizations taking on a creative space capital projects, so that they may glean common successes and challenges from the organizations highlighted in the case studies.

The report is divided into five sections:

1. **What** (what were organizations building and creating)
2. **Why** (why capital projects were executed)
3. **Who** (who these creative spaces serve and who supported the projects)
4. **How** (how were projects financially supported)
5. **The Ongoing** (How are creative spaces maintained/operated? What lessons were learned?)

Each section will share summaries from each case study and compare similarities and differences across these projects. All individual case studies and related webinars can be found in the resources section of this report, as well as on The Creative Space Case Studies Project page on ABO's website. The Best Practice Report Part 2 will follow in 2020 when all 19 case studies are complete.

We would like to thank the nine organizations that have shared their stories, challenges and successes, so that others may learn from them to sustain stronger cultural infrastructure across Ontario. We look forward to learning even more from the ten spaces we will be interviewing in 19/20!

Case Study Partner Organizations

The following organizations have partnered with ABO in the Creative Space Case Study Series and are included in this best practices summary:

- Carousel Players – St. Catharines
- Dundas Museum and Archives – Dundas
- Gallerie SAW Gallery – Ottawa
- The Lighthouse Festival Theatre – Port Dover
- Ottawa Art Gallery – Ottawa
- Stratford Perth Museum – Stratford
- The Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning – Kingston
- Toronto Centre for the Arts – Toronto
- Trinity-St. Paul's & Tafelmusik: Jeanne Lamon Hall – Toronto

Best Practices Report Part 1

1.0 Project Backgrounds

- **Carousel Players** in St. Catharines moved out of their former space at The Old Courthouse - which served as administrative, rehearsal and performance space - to three new venues. Silver Spire United Church now houses their administrative offices, the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre provides storage, rehearsal and performance space and Brock University provides play development space. The bulk of this move into three spaces consisted of disassembling the stage and moving special equipment from The Old Courthouse and reinstalling it in the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre.
- **Dundas Museum and Archives** took on an expansion/re-design project in 2011-2013. This project included a double-height atrium connecting the museum to the Pirie House (a heritage home on the museum's property, used for programming and rentals), a barrier free entrance, elevator installation as well as a redesign to accommodate a third gallery space and reference room.
- **Gallerie SAW Gallery**, located in Ottawa, undertook a renovation and relocation of their gallery and club space during the Arts Court renovation project with the City of Ottawa. This project allowed SAW Gallery to move into the Ottawa Art Gallery's former space and renovate to accommodate two feature exhibition spaces and provide administrative space. They also renovated the former club space to create a live performance venue and large outdoor patio. A circumpolar artistic research space called the Nordic Lab was also constructed as part of this capital project.
- **The Lighthouse Festival Theatre in Port Dover** has taken on four capital projects within the last 10 years: lobby renovations (installation of an elevator, rejuvenation of lobby/box office, restoration of historic brick walls); the "Room to Roam" expansion project which saw the purchase of the adjoining building to the theatre; Acquisition and renovation of their Rehearsal Hall; and their "Get Cheeky" theatre seating project.
- **The Ottawa Art Gallery** took on a new capital project as part of the Arts Court redevelopment, which involved a private/public partnership model between the gallery, municipality and hotel/condo developers. The project saw the gallery grow from 12,000 to 55,000 square feet allowing for more programming, exhibition, rental and community space.
- **Stratford Perth Museum** purchased, renovated and built an addition to the 4,700 square foot Victorian House for rotating exhibitions and their permanent collection.
- **The Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning** in Kingston saw the rejuvenation of the J.K. Tett Centre into a creative hub. It is now home to 11 arts organizations of varying disciplines.
- **Toronto Centre for the Arts** renovated their mainstage to create two smaller theatre spaces: the Greenwin Theatre (296 seats) and the Lyric Theatre (574 seats).

- **Trinity-St. Paul’s & Tafelmusik** in Toronto renovated the sanctuary space, now Jeanne Lamon Hall, to better serve Tafelmusik and the wider arts community. The project included many aspects including enhanced acoustics, improved seating, and lobby renovations.

1.1 Operating Models and Project Timelines

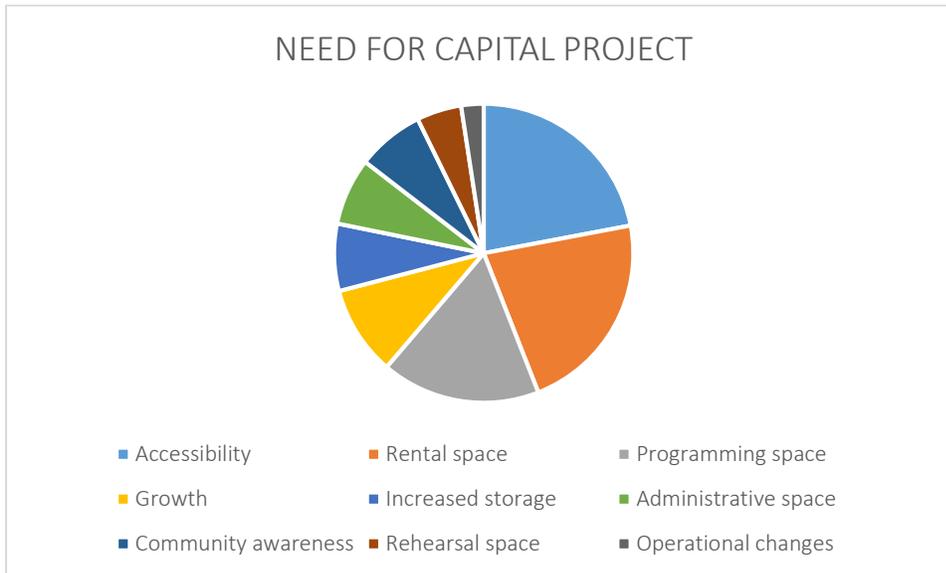
The operating model and scope of a capital project can determine the planning, execution and ongoing maintenance for an arts organization. The capital projects in this case study series cover a wide range of timelines spanning from 2 months to 25 years. On average, projects took 8 years from planning to completion. The timeline of each capital project is dependent on a variety of factors, including leadership, operating models, financial resources, community/stakeholder buy in, and contingencies, making each timeline captured in this project relative to the organization and respective capital project.

ORGANIZATION	PROJECT	PROJECT TIMELINE
Carousel Players Operational Model: Rents space from others and does not operate it.	Moving from one venue to three venues to house programming, office and rehearsal space. Main component was deconstructing and reconstructing stage.	2 Months
Dundas Museum and Archives Operating Model: Owns and operates space. Rents out spaces to arts and community groups.	Expansion and redesign of museum building and historic Pirie House.	2 Years
Gallerie SAW Gallery Operating Model: Rents space from others and operates space. Rents out spaces to arts and community groups.	Moving and renovation of new space within Arts Court for Gallerie SAW Gallery , Club SAW expansion and construction of Nordic Lab.	10 Years
Lighthouse Festival Theatre Operating Model: Owns and operates space. Rents out spaces to arts and community groups.	Series of large and small scale capital projects that involved lobby renovations, expansion, purchase/renovation of a rehearsal hall and seat restoration.	4 Years

<p>Ottawa Art Gallery</p> <p>Operating Model: Municipally owned and independently operated. Rents out spaces to arts and community groups.</p>	<p>Part of the Arts Court redevelopment, the Ottawa Art Gallery built a new facility in partnership with the City of Ottawa and private developers, creating a facility four times its original gallery size.</p>	<p>16 Years</p>
<p>Stratford Perth Museum</p> <p>Operating Model: Owns and operates space. Rents out spaces to arts and community groups.</p>	<p>Purchase and retrofitting of Victorian house and 11,000 square foot addition.</p>	<p>2 Years</p>
<p>The Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning</p> <p>Operating Model: Municipally owned and independently operated. Rents out spaces to arts and community groups.</p>	<p>Renovation of J.K. Tett Centre and redesign as a multidisciplinary creative hub.</p>	<p>10 Years</p>
<p>Toronto Centre for the Arts</p> <p>Operating Model: Municipally owned and independently operated. Rents out spaces to arts and community groups.</p>	<p>Renovation of 1,800 seat Main Stage theatre space into two smaller theatres: the Greenwin Theatre which is 296 seats and the Lyric Theatre which is 574 seats.</p>	<p>3 Years</p>
<p>Trinity St. Paul's Centre for Faith Justice and the Arts</p> <p>Operating Model: Owns and operates space. Rents out spaces to arts and community groups.</p>	<p>Renovation of sanctuary and lobby within Trinity-St. Paul's to improve acoustics, ascetic, seating and congregation/patron experience.</p>	<p>25 Years</p>

2.0 The Need for a Capital Project

The below graph identified the common needs to take on a capital project shared across all nine case studies.



Accessibility and rental space were universal needs highlighted by all nine organizations. Other factors included programming space which 78% of organizations identified along with Growth at 44%, Increased storage, Community awareness and Administrative space at 33%, Rehearsal space at 22% and Operational changes at 11%.

Many organizations conducted studies and issued surveys to stakeholders to validate and shape the needs for their projects. These included feasibility studies, needs assessment, spatial needs assessments, viability analysis and market analysis. Smaller organizations in this case study series did not complete formal feasibility studies; rather they sought out confirmation internally through patron surveys, consultations or observing needs through direct management of their facility. Larger organizations, often municipally owned, completed formal studies with third party consultants, such as Artscape, Lord Cultural Resources, Net Firms and Diamond & Schmitt Architects.

2.1 Accessibility

All projects incorporated accessibility into their capital projects starting in the design phase. City owned projects engaged accessibility advisory committees to review designs and experience their spaces while under construction. Projects incorporated accessible seating (in some cases, accessible seating was spread throughout a theatre space instead of one designated area), elevator lifts, drop off locations, accessible washrooms, all gender washrooms, tactile flooring, adult change tables, and safety considerations such as strobe lights and audio alarms in the event of an alarm. Accessibility was a primary consideration in each project participating in the case study series.

2.2 Energy Efficiency

The majority of organizations completed LED lighting retrofits during major renovations – new builds planned to install energy efficient systems from the start of the project. Municipally owned spaces had more access to energy efficient resources – the Ottawa Art Gallery and the Tett Centre are both LEED certified buildings. Other energy saving aspects included new HVAC systems, insulated doors and combined structures that saved on hydro costs.

2.3 Community Engagement

The majority of organizations credit their community for shaping the vision of their capital projects. Many held community consultations to inform the planning and design of their future creative space. Round tables and one to one interviews during feasibility studies also engaged key stakeholders. These sessions demonstrated organizations were responding to the needs identified by those they serve, often aided organizations in securing community buy-in for their projects and secured support from municipalities.

3.0 Who the Space Serves

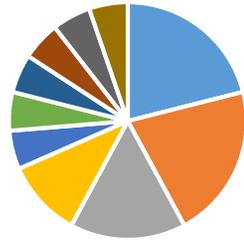
In all cases, the capital project ties directly back to the organizations' mandates and purpose. The arts organizations participating in the case study series were consistent in looking to better serve their existing audiences and reach new ones. The majority of projects were also looking to provide accessible spaces for those who identify as having a disability by including accessible design into their capital projects.

Most organizations wanted to better reach their communities by amplifying their presence with a new capital project; often times introducing or expanding space rentals was top of mind. These include both artist/non-profit rentals and community/corporate rentals. Considerations in capital project plans included discipline specific additions, such as accessible backstage areas, modular storage, additional gallery spaces as well as other amenities like retractable seating, bars and cafes, kitchen access, and outdoor event spaces – all of which would better serve new and existing stakeholders.

3.1 Project Leadership and Partners

Each capital project varied in terms of leadership, as it often reflected the operation models of each respective arts organization and the scope of their capital project.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP



Leadership roles varied for each capital project, but there were common roles shared among organizations. General Managers were involved in 46% of the nine capital projects, with Executive Directors and Board of Directors at 36%; Municipalities at 27%; Board Chair at 18%; and the Curator, Artistic Director, Music Director, Production Manager, City Councillors and Board of Trustees at 9%.

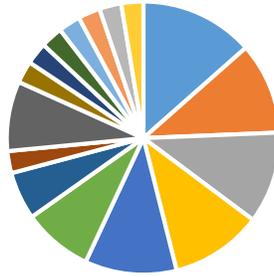
The majority of projects were led by leaders in the organization, which was most often the Executive Director and Board President. In municipally owned buildings, the city took a leadership role, but worked in tandem with their operational partners in overseeing the capital project, often providing support in the form of human resources or funding for increased operations.

Facility owners were a primary partner in capital projects where arts organizations did not own their buildings but were undergoing a capital project. Many recognize their municipalities and funders as key partners and supporters.

3.2 Building Committee and Contractors

These committees were comprised of staff and board members, partners, municipal staff, politicians and key stakeholders invested in the space/organization. Some organizations had existing facility committees that took on the steering of capital projects; but most created building committees solely for the duration of the project. It is worth noting that each building committee brought in the expertise that reflects the specific needs of each project.

BUILDING COMMITTEE COMPOSITION



- Municipal Staff
- Board President
- Board Members
- Architect
- General Manager
- Campaign Manager
- City Councillors
- Artistic Director
- Executive Director
- Production Manager
- Collections Manager
- Curator
- Technical Planner
- Graphic Designer
- Members
- Marketing Director

Out of the nine projects featured in the case studies, Municipal Staff each represents 36% of building committees; the Board President, Board Members, Architects and the General Manager each represent 25%; Campaign Managers and Executive Directors each represent 19%; City Councillors each represent 13%; and Production Managers, Collections Managers, Curators, Technical Planners, Graphic Designers, Members and Marketing Director each represent 6%.

Municipally owned spaces were required to undergo a bidding process through the city to hire contractors for the project, but other organizations also issued RFPs. Smaller organizations would reach out to contractors that had completed projects in the past and were familiar with their facility/operational needs. In addition to the building contractors, others were hired to accommodate specific aspects of a project, such as an acoustician, heritage consultant, or the Canadian Conservation Institute for example.

3.3 Project Opposition

Some of these projects did encounter opposition from neighbouring properties about the consequences of an expansion project, such as excessive noise from special events or obstructed views.

Solutions for these oppositions were aligned across all projects. Keeping lines of communication open with those who opposed their project was key. This included informing municipal staff, neighbours, the local community and the media. Offering tours and keeping others informed about the project and its progress allowed the community to witness the transformation and provided continuous engagement in their capital projects.

4.0 Concept to Construction

All organizations shared two commonalities when it came to the deciding factors that moved their project from the conceptual phase into the building phase. These included having 1) a solid feasibility study that justified the project along with 2) a business plan for organizational sustainability and growth. These studies and plans came hand in hand with funding that allowed the project to move forward, whether a grant, municipal funds, existing capital reserve funds, extended lines of credit or remortgaging a property. For municipal projects, the design and building phases followed council approval to move the project forward. Projects also gained momentum when the right leadership was in place - usually the board chair, executive director/general manager, and or city councillors – and a unified vision was struck between partners and stakeholders.

4.1 Construction Plans

Many projects took on a design-build method to allow for flexibility in the design and building phases for contingencies and value engineering the project budget. Construction plans were developed by the contractor who included architects, engineers and other sub-contractors in the process. These plans were brought back to the organization's building committee for approval. Day-to-day decisions were often made by the project manager (usually part of the contractor team) and the organizational leadership. Some organizations engaged key stakeholders, such as anchor tenants in the building to provide input on the design phase. Some also invited the community to provide feedback on the proposed designs of the new space at town halls.

For larger projects, construction plans were broken down into phases based on the scope of the project. For example, Trinity-St. Paul's and Tafelmusik renovated the sanctuary prior to the lobby to prioritize the space for performances. Toronto Centre for the Arts constructed the Greenwin Theatre, with smaller seating space, to take pressure off the high demand of the Studio Theatre and focus on the more intricate design of the Lyric Theatre.

What is value engineering?

Value Engineer is a creative, organized effort, which analyzes the requirements of a project for the purpose of achieving the essential functions at the lowest total costs (capital, staffing, energy, maintenance) over the life of the project. Through a group investigation, using experienced, multi-disciplinary teams, value and economy are improved through the study of alternate design concepts, materials, and methods without compromising the functional and value objectives of the client. ([Whole Building Design Guide](#))

4.2 Financing

Each project took on a different funding model depending on resources and the scope of the project. The majority of projects secured public funding from federal, provincial and municipal grants. These included Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Toronto Culture Build Investment Program and community foundations.

Some identified that parts of their community criticized that public funds were invested in municipal projects or that the funding landscape proved challenging due to political climate and government priorities at the time.

Multi-partner projects, such as Trinity-St. Paul's/Tafelmusik, Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning/arts tenants, and the Ottawa Art Gallery/Arts Court saw private partners make contributions to the vision of the project. These included private developers, post-secondary institutions, a congregation and future tenants of the space.

The majority of organizations held a capital campaign which covered about 10-20% of the project costs. It is noteworthy that these campaigns had a lower fundraising goal for more attainable results, which in turn raised community momentum and investment in the project.

Organizations that did not use grants had a healthy capital reserve fund and self-funded the projects; one organization extended line of credits/remortgaged their property to support an \$800,000 project.

4.3 Contingencies

Unexpected changes during construction affected the timeline and budget of each project. Performance venues needed to plan or find uninterrupted time in for renovations. Other contingencies responded to problems in the structure of the building – whether a wall was too old to sustain the impact of construction or asbestos remediation was needed before any more construction work was completed. Many managed these by remaining flexible in plans, took advantage of the design build process, and value engineering during the building phase of the project to stay within budget. On average, organizations planned for a 15% contingency in their capital project budgets, but upon reflection, most said they would have set aside 20%.

What is a “design-build” process?

Design-build is a form of project delivery where an owner contracts, under a single contract, with one entity (a design-builder) to provide and take contractual responsibility for both the design services and the construction. – The Canadian Construction Documents Committee

What is “value engineering”?

Value engineering, also known as Value Analysis, is a systemic and function-based approach to improving the value of products, projects, or processes. VE involves a team of people following a structured process. The process helps team members communication across boundaries, understand difference perspectives, innovate and analyze. – Ontario Ministry of Transportation

4.4 Day-to-day Operations

Most organizations that took on a major renovation or new build chose to close their facilities while under construction. Those that were operational before construction needed to account for lost

revenues. Most also offered programming offsite or operated out of alternate locations. This is a major consideration for all organizations as it impacts all levels of their operations.

5.0 Projecting New Financials

Organizations used a combination of a business plan, which in most cases was created ahead of the capital project, outside advisors, and consulted similar venues to form a new budget following their capital project. Each financial plan for the new space(s) included staff, operations and maintenance, and rentals. If the new space was significantly larger or changed the scope of the organization's operations, these extra costs were incorporated in the new budget.

Many organizations who were expanding their rental programs through their capital project underestimated rental revenues in the first year. On the other hand, one organization mentioned that it took three years to see a profit through rentals. This was part of the organization's business plan and was primarily due to outfitting the space specific to the needs of theatre companies ahead of launching a rentals program as well as changing the focus of their rental audience.

In terms of energy costs, some mentioned that they over estimated the expense in the first year, and through retrofits paid the same or significantly less than anticipated.

Staff positions increased or changed to reflect the current needs of the new creative space. Depending on the organization's use of space, staff positions were expanded or added. These included general managers, facility coordinators, custodians, technical support, development staff, front of house, marketing staff, and curatorial staff. Often times, staffing would increase or adjust to respond to the growing needs of the space.

In most cases, municipally owned facilities received an increase in operating for their respective cities to account for a larger footprint or larger operating models. For organizations that are not municipally owned, the increase in operational costs was offset by space rentals.

5.1 Asset Management and a Capital Reserve Fund

Many organizations incorporated asset management into the ongoing operational plans following their capital projects in conjunction with a capital reserve fund. Municipally owned buildings are maintained by their city; however, the non-profits operating the space are responsible for outfitting the space and maintaining rental equipment, and track these assets internally. Organizations with working boards had a member taking on the task of tracking facility assets and managing a capital reserve fund. All organizations are continually building up their capital reserve fund to support repairs and future capital projects.

5.2 Lessons Learned

The lessons learned by each organization is relative to each project. Most organizations that expanded their rentals program were not prepared for the demands on staff, logistics and resources. Spaces also reported that an increase in staff affected the dynamics and roles within the organization, and required an environment of fluidity among roles.

Many shared the importance of onsite verifications towards the end of the project to ensure all aspects of the renovation or capital build are functional. Any deficiencies left unresolved at the end of a building contract leaves the organizations with a future repair cost that is outside the project budget. Testing new assets such as doors, cupboards and lighting well before the end of a building contract was recommended by organizations. All shared that once a project starts, that there is little to no opportunity to save money so ensure cost efficiencies are explored in the planning and design phases of a project.

Another common theme among lessons learned was that community expectations about a capital project could be different than internal expectations. For example, the mandate of one capital project was to provide community arts programming from the tenants in the space – and while tenants needed to schedule program dates in advance, the community expected a drop-in experience for arts programming. Likewise, another organization mentioned patrons in a performance venue were not prepared for unplanned follow up work needed to address deficiencies following their capital project. Both organizations cited that communication and educational messaging can support stakeholders in understanding the goals and realities of their capital project.

Lastly, each organization emphasised that a dedicated and flexible staff was integral to the success of each capital project. Clear communication and frequent meetings were key to undertaking the expanded responsibilities of staff during the project.

Summary

While each aspect of the what, why, how, who and the ongoing remain relative to each organization and their capital projects – there are similarities between them. Every project considered its community as the primary visionaries for their projects. Each considered accessibility as a primary component and worked from the beginning to address these needs. Clear lines of communication are needed between the project leadership, construction teams and staff – and building committees can be comprised of the skills needed to make an organization’s project a well-rounded process. Finally, most had a business plan to guide their new space’s sustainability following the capital project.

We hope arts organizations will use this Best Practice Summary, in addition to the case studies, to support their organizations and individual role in future creative space capital projects.

Resources

Case Studies

Carousel Players (St. Catharines, Ontario)

- [Download the English Case Study HERE](#)
- [Télécharger l'étude de cas en français ICI](#)

Dundas Museum and Archives (Dundas, Ontario)

- [Download the English Case Study HERE](#)
- [Télécharger l'étude de cas en français ICI](#)

Galerie SAW Gallery (Ottawa, Ontario)

- [Download the English Case Study HERE](#)
- [Télécharger l'étude de cas en français ICI](#)

Lighthouse Festival Theatre (Port Dover, Ontario)

- [Download the English Case Study HERE](#)
- [Télécharger l'étude de cas en français ICI](#)

Ottawa Art Gallery | La Galerie d'art d'Ottawa (Ottawa, Ontario)

- [Download the English Case Study HERE](#)
- [Télécharger l'étude de cas en français ICI](#)

Stratford Perth Museum (Stratford, Ontario)

- [Download the English Case Study HERE](#)
- [Télécharger l'étude de cas en français ICI](#)

The Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning (Kingston, Ontario)

- [Download the English Case Study HERE](#)
- [Télécharger l'étude de cas en français ICI](#)

Toronto Centre for the Arts (Toronto, Ontario)

- [Download the English Case Study HERE](#)
- [Télécharger l'étude de cas en français ICI](#)

Trinity St. Paul's & Tafelmusik (Toronto, Ontario)

- [Download the English Case Study HERE](#)
- [Télécharger l'étude de cas en français ICI](#)

Webinars

[Working Together: Multi-Partner Creative Space Projects](#) (Ottawa Art Gallery and SAW Gallery)

[Alternative Creative Spaces and Adaptive Reuse Projects](#) (Trinity St. Paul's/Tafelmusik and Idea Exchange)

[Engaging Community in Municipal Performing Arts Space Projects](#) (Toronto Centre for the Arts and FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre)

[Volunteer Boards & Creative Space Projects](#) (Dundas Museum & Archives and Stratford Perth Museum)

[Capital Project Case Study: The Tett Centre](#)