







Acknowledgments

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SAULT STE. MARIE



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The final report does not necessarily reflect the views of the funder, ArtsBuild Ontario, NORDIK Institute or Algoma University.

Executive Summary

Key arts organizations and sector representatives from Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie and Wawa partnered with ArtsBuild Ontario (ABO) and NORDIK Institute (NORDIK) to conduct the Mapping Northern Creative Spaces project. The study undertook to map the four communities' existing creative spaces, assess if spaces are meeting current and future needs, and identify the potential demand and feasibility for additional creative spaces within the community. The resulting reports are informational, providing a statistical base for future projects, programs, and advocacy and serve to encourage cross-sector discussion and dialogue to support further development.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the project design pivoted from drawing on in-person gatherings in each community to online surveys as the primary data collection method. With unique versions tailored to individual and organizational respondents, the surveys ran from October-November 2020, and partners were provided promotional materials to encourage participation throughout their networks. Each community was presented with an initial analysis of the data at a virtual community forum, followed by a full report draft for their review. The four communities gathered for a collective forum to share learnings and mobilize knowledge.

Surveys found the creative space in Sault Ste. Marie and its animation is contributing to local identity and belonging, and the development of innovative, unique products and services that are recognized beyond its borders — local, provincial and national. It is engaging people that range in age from 21 to over 70, illustrating the importance of art in one's life over time. Current

activities are attracting local and seasonal residents as well as tourists. At least four organizations have operated for more than 20 years, including one for more than 50 years. They have a variety of management structures, drawing on paid employment and volunteer labour. Individual respondents indicated their areas of practice include visual arts, followed by a particular focus on multi-disciplinary work, craft arts, literary, and heritage. When compared to what programming they currently offer there appears to be underutilized capacities (i.e., heritage, literary, multi-disciplinary and visual arts) and a desire to increase engagement in these areas as well as other disciples.

Participants, specifically, 72% of the total participants (24 of 33), identified a need for more creative space and provided direction regarding operational structures, type/purpose of space, programming they wish to deliver and audiences they wish to reach. Seventeen have space and 13 do not have space. Four respondents want the space for private use and nine want it open to the public. Some prefer to own, some lease and many have no preference, and all want the space located in a city/town rather than a rural site. The primary type of space participants are seeking is private, discipline-specific studio space and exhibition space, followed by retail space and multi-disciplinary hubs, and then rehearsal, performance and administrative space. With respect to acquiring creative space, six respondents are willing or interested in partnering with others to purchase, rent and/or build a creative space. Respondents also noted challenges and considerations around acquiring and developing space, and the skills and resources to assist with achieving their goals and sustaining their operations. In sum, Sault Ste. Marie has considerable assets upon which to further enliven and strengthen the arts and culture sector. Those engaged in the arts demonstrate expertise, commitment and perseverance; however, sector investment (financial, in-kind support, and leadership) would advance community health and wellbeing and foster the skills for ongoing innovation and renewal in response to the dynamic knowledge economy. Themes emerging from the research revolve around connectivity, viability, and innovation and are organized into three interconnected categories: Linking to Resources; Leveraging Capacity; and Exploring Models of Sustainability.

Many of the areas where the sector is seeking support directly connect to the City's Community Culture Plan that aims: To build upon a thriving, liveable and resilient community by connecting people, sharing knowledge and creating experiences through the celebration, support and leveraging of arts, culture and heritage in Sault Ste. Marie (p.25). To meet the City's development goals, it is recommended that one additional dedicated full-time, limited term person be hired to address the creative space needs identified in this study to work. The person would work collaboratively with FutureSSM's Arts & Culture Coordinator responsible for implementing the Community Cultural Plan.

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Sault Ste. Marie

1.0 Background to the Study



Northern Ontario's economy has been based primarily on resource-extraction around forestry and mining which has become precarious in many communities following decades of globalization. Most jurisdictions have made efforts to diversify their economies by developing local assets and resources. This is casting increased attention on the arts and culture sector's potential to redefine community through creative placemaking initiatives, leading to greater quality of life, attractiveness and the emergence of place-based creative economies.

An interdisciplinary international review conducted by Nancy Duxbury summarizes three storylines that describe cultural work in rural and remote locales: (1) cultural vitality, that is, culture as a resource for community development; (2) the 'rural creative class', recently linked to rural innovation; and (3) rural creative economies and creative entrepreneurship in rural and remote areas.(Duxbury, 2020).

These themes are useful in understanding the contributions the sector can make to sustainability and resilience, and the various lenses through which it is perceived. An earlier study by Duxbury and Jeannotte (2012) speaks to the complexity communities face in linking culture to sustainability and integrating it into local plans. Such links necessitate space for citizen participation to articulate divergent perspectives of development that exist between cultures, holistic worldviews, and the reigning dominant privileged economic form of value.

In large urban centres, the arts and culture sector operates through the social milieu, including complex linkages between producers, intermediaries and consumers. Symbiotic relationships are developed through social networking at galleries, institutions, events, cafes, clubs, and restaurants that enable a continual supply of unique cultural goods and services that define a place. The sector's vitality is underpinned by connectivity – a combination of networks, private and public infrastructure (e.g. creative spaces) that facilitate engagement, education, innovation and commercial activity (Currid, 2007a; 2007b).

In Northern Ontario, the sector functions similarly, and as such, is also reliant upon cultural infrastructure to create the social milieu in which the sector can flourish. One significant difference between urban and rural communities, however, is that arts and culture infrastructure in densely populated areas already exists and is typically provided by public and/or private investment. In less densely populated areas, however, there is a dearth of critical components, 'missing links' hindering the ability to engage, share, learn and connect to each other and the public. These limitations are negatively impacting on: maintaining a creative practice; developing a sustainable livelihood; sector and public engagement; and utilizing the arts for community economic and social development. Deficits include governance (policy and planning, human resources, research capacity), networks and organizations, sustainable funding models, education and business development supports (marketing mechanisms, and affordable operating space and live/work accommodations).

Various communities have begun to address these gaps through cultural policies and planning documents, investing in infrastructure and grants, and business development support. It is important to note that artists themselves are playing a critical role in provisioning the region's community infrastructure deficits, creating festivals and events, networks and organizations, and creative spaces, supporting the development of creativity, innovation, artistic capacity, identity and belonging and the 'rural social milieu'—a broader more inclusive version than urban industry-centric milieus—that fosters more public participation, and thus, resilience (Ortiz, 2017).

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of arts and cultural activities to peoples' health and well-being, while simultaneously highlighting the challenge of maintaining creative space for many of these activities to occur. The creative sector has shown great resilience during this time by providing new innovative offerings through a variety of formats.

1.1 Project Overview

The Mapping Northern Creative Spaces Project, led by ArtsBuild Ontario and NORDIK Institute, undertook to map four communities' existing creative spaces, assess if spaces are meeting current and future needs, and identify the potential demand and feasibility for additional creative spaces within these communities. Due to the tight timeline, communities were approached to gauge their interest in the study based on a matrix of factors including geographic location, size, and working relationships with NORDIK. Outreach to key arts and culture sector organizations in Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, and Wawa resulted in the partnerships. The project partners for Sault Ste Marie included FutureSSM, the Sault Ste, Marie Museum and the Sault Ste. Marie Indian Friendship Centre. They promoted the survey and forums in the community, responded to the survey and participated in the forums, and reviewed the report drafts.

The project has the goal of providing a snapshot of the creative spaces in the community – what exists, where there are gaps and needs, what are the concerns, ideas, and hopes for the future. It evaluates each community's inventory of potential artistic places/spaces, reports on each community's practices, and informs recommendations for creative space projects to strengthen the northern arts sector. The project aims to fill a knowledge gap around facility management within the northern arts sector by identifying preliminary means to address the creative space needs of these communities. The resulting report provides an informational and statistical base for future projects, programs, and advocacy and serves to encourage cross-sector discussion and dialogue to support further development.

There are four components to the project:

- i) online survey of each community to collect data;
- ii) online forums for each community to review their survey findings and discuss pathways forward;
- iii) a four-community online forum to share learnings and mobilize knowledge; and
- iv) a final project report comprised of each community report that incorporates the data from the surveys, community forums, and the four-community forum.

NORDIK obtained ethics approval through Algoma University to guide the research in an appropriate manner with Dr. Jude Ortiz as principal investigator. Two online surveys were the primary data collection tools. One survey was designed for individual respondents with or without creative space. The second one was for representatives from organizations with or without creative space. The surveys were hosted by NORDIK through SurveyMonkey and were live in the communities October-November 2020. The partners were provided survey promotional materials to distribute throughout their networks. ABO and NORDIK also sent out a project press release, which resulted in regional news, radio, and television interviews about the project.

Once the surveys closed, ABO and NORDIK presented an initial analysis of the data to the partners at the virtual community forum, providing them an overview of the information and an opportunity to comment and provide feedback, which was incorporated into the project data. Forum registration was through Eventbrite and the meeting was hosted through Zoom. Live captioning was provided in English and the forum was recorded for back-up reference purposes only. All participation in the project was voluntary, survey results were anonymous, and any comments from the community forum are referred to anonymously.

Project results are available through the project partners and the websites of ABO and NORDIK. Each partner community received a tailored report, and the results of the entire project are compiled in one final report that includes all four of the communities.

A findings summary project report is available in English and French, as well as in large text formats. Audio recordings of the findings summary project report are available in both English and French on ABO's website.

There were some limitations to the project, especially from the impact of COVID-19. The project was designed to conduct an in-person focus group in each community to map their assets, followed by a 4-community online forum. Due to COVID-19 restrictions it was redesigned to collect data through a survey tool, which is considerably less engaging. While the response rate was not particularly high, the partners confirmed that the data is reflective of their knowledge of the community. Zoom fatigue also impacted the attendance at the virtual community forum; however, participants did provide insights and feedback thus meeting the event's intent.

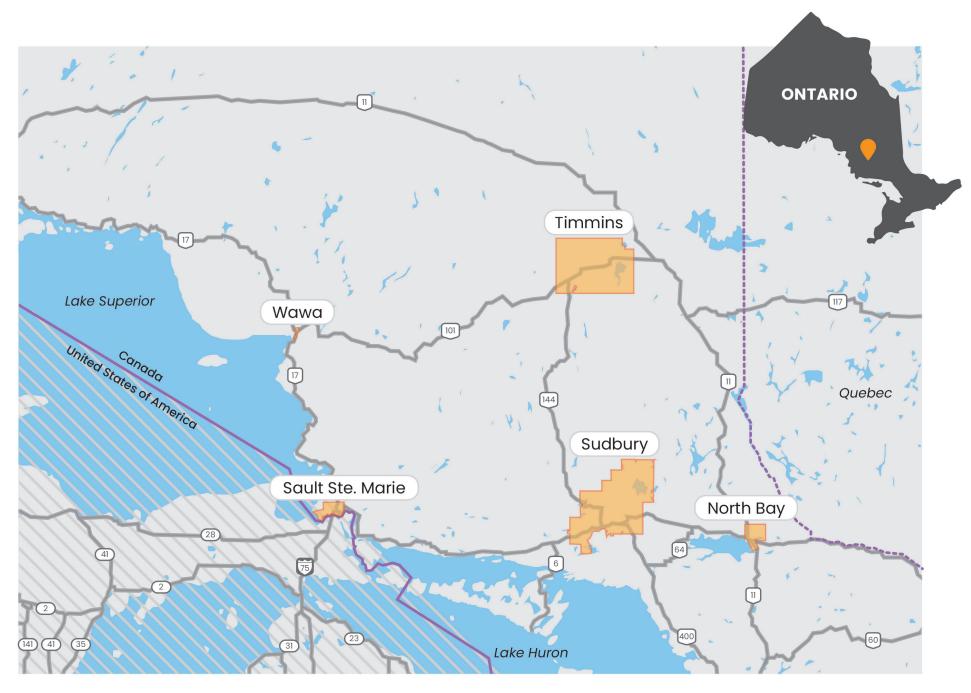
1.2 Community Context

Sault Ste. Marie, a community of approximately 75,000 people is located at the hub of three of the Great Lakes: Superior, Huron, and Michigan on the St. Marys River, which is part of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System that recognizes and protects outstanding human heritage and recreational values. It is a border city with an international bridge to the United States of America (USA) and is accessible by Highway #17, air and water.

The city has four distinct seasons, is surrounded by some of the most pristine wilderness in the world, and is home to two of Canada's leading forest research centres. As with other communities across the North, it has been negatively impacted by the shift from a manufacturing and resource-based economy to a global creative economy with limited restrictions on the movement of capital.

Since the early 2000s the City of Sault Ste. Marie, known primarily for its steel industry, has made efforts to expand its economic base to weather global restructuring of the industries that have provided its historical purpose and the community's prosperity. In 2017 a number of persistent and pressing concerns (Such as Essar Steel Algoma's third restructuring since 1912, a declining aging population, childhood poverty and low high school graduation rates), led to the development of the Community Adjustment Committee tasked with charting a new direction. The Committee reviewed past planning initiatives, undertook research examining best practices from other jurisdictions, and engaged almost 5,000 community members through a variety of formats.

¹ https://futuressm.com/about/background/



___ 20km

Figure 1: Location of Sault Ste. Marie

Early on in the planning process the Committee adopted a Four Pillar Approach to community development and resilience, i.e., cultural vitality, social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic diversity and growth. The Community Adjustment Committee Report, A Common Cause and New Direction for Sault Ste. Marie (2017), outlines commitments to invest in people, celebrate place and create prosperity. A vision statement was articulated for each of the four pillar areas. The statement for cultural vitality reads: Sault Ste. Marie celebrates its history, natural and cultural heritage, and diverse identities, transforming the city into a global centre of cultural excellence through inclusive, broad-based, meaningful participation in the sector with continual renewal and growth of its creative economy (p.11). A number of action teams to drive the sectors were established, with the Arts and Culture Table dedicated to cultural vitality. FutureSSM, a division of the City's Community Economic Development and Enterprise Services Division, was established to serve as the implementation mechanism.² One recommendation of the Community Adjustment Committee report focusing on cultural vitality was to update the cultural policy and create a cultural plan. This led to the development of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Community Culture Plan 2019-2024.3



Figure 2: The Bondar Pavilion, Tourism SSM

² Community Adjustment Committee Report - A Common Cause and New Direction for Sault Ste. Marie

³ Sault Ste. Marie's Community Culture Plan 2019-2024



Sault Ste. Marie is one of the oldest settlements in Canada and has a rich cultural history that could be leveraged to build new economies. It has been a gathering place for Indigenous peoples to trade and fish through the centuries, and later, fur traders established permanent posts to sell wares. In the early 1900s, the ruggedness of the pristine environment attracted the Torontobased painter collective, the Group of Seven⁴ who established the first recognized style of 'Canadian' art, creating their most iconic work in the surrounding area. The city is home to three National Heritage sites — The Candain Bushplane Heritage Centre, the Ermatinger Clergue site and the Sault Ste. Marie Canal. It has a very active arts community and has spawned many national and internationally recognized artists, including Ken Danby⁵ who are typically forced to leave the area in pursuit of a sustainable livelihood.

The city boasts a unique repertoire of festivals and events reflective of its diversity, is home to the Algoma Conservatory of Music⁶ one of the largest music conservatories outside of Toronto, and has one of the highest numbers of community theatre groups per capita in Canada.⁷ Most recently it has invested in the film industry with a very favorable return on its investment resulting in a number of films made in the area. A significant factor contributing to the community's attractiveness as a film location is the number of readily available, intact period heritage buildings and the diversity of local creative skills and talent that is growing through post-secondary educational opportunities. With activities throughout four distinct seasons Sault Ste. Marie would appear to have considerable potential for developing culture as a part of its diversification strategy.

⁴ https://mcmichael.com/seven-art-galleries-to-visit-across-ontario/

⁵ http://www.kendanbyart.ca/

⁶ http://www.algomaconservatory.com/

⁷ http://www.ssmarts.org/

Moreover, the arts have long played an important role in rural subsistence economies by providing critical secondary or supplemental income. Surviving the boom-bust cycle of extractive industries and the seasonal nature of farming, logging, hunting, fishing and tourism frequently depends upon finding ways to bridge the financial gap between jobs. Cultural products (quilts, knitted garments, furniture) are frequently sold or traded for items beyond one's financial reach or skill level (Ortiz, 2017, p.15, p.23).

English is the mother tongue of 86.7% of the city's population, while 95.2% report it as the language spoken most often at home, according to the 2016 Census of Canada.8

Among other languages, 4.4% report Italian as their mother tongue, followed by 3.3% reporting French, while 1.3% and 0.7% report these respectively as their language used most often at home. Only approximately 70 individuals (0.1%) report an Indigenous language as their mother tongue, primarily varieties of Anishinaabemowin and some Cree. However, 165 (0.2%) report these as additional languages spoken regularly at home, demonstrating efforts to acquire and maintain such languages.

Sault Ste. Marie is flanked by two Anishinaabe First Nations, Garden River and Batchewana. The Sault Ste. Marie Historic Métis Council also represents rights-bearing Métis peoples of the area, and the Missanabie Cree First Nation also has an office in Sault Ste. Marie, as many of its members reside in the city, having been historically displaced from their traditional lands farther north.

Figure 4: John Laford, Art Gallery of Algoma

Indigenous peoples make up a substantial proportion of the City's population, at 11.3% of which 6% are First Nation and 5% Métis (the remainder report multiple responses).⁹

Among the population over 15 years of age, 24.6% hold a college, CÉGEP, or non-university certificate or diploma, 3.8% higher than the provincial average. Conversely, 17.2% report attaining a university degree or certificate at or above a bachelor's level, 8.8% lower than the provincial average.¹⁰

⁸ Statistics Canada. 2017. Statistics Canada. 2017. Sault Ste. Marie, CY [Census subdivision], Ontario and Algoma.

Statistics Canada. 2017. Statistics Canada. 2017. Sault Ste. Marie, CY [Census subdivision], Ontario and Algoma.

⁰ Statistics Canada. 2017. Statistics Canada. 2017. Sault Ste. Marie, CY [Census subdivision], Ontario and Algoma.

2.0 Community Profile

The report is organized into three sections: Current Space and Identified Needs, Acquiring or Developing Creative Space and Sustaining Creative Space, followed by a summary which includes recommendations.

Total number of respondents: 24 individuals, 9 organizations

2.1 Respondents

The survey respondents are from the

Sault Ste. Marie area. Although the responses are not a comprehensive representation of the artistic and creative community with regards to creative space, the partners have advised that the responses are reflective of their understanding of the community and thus provide a reasonable snapshot of its current status and perspectives. It reinforces and confirms recent citygathered information and aligns with the data gathered in the development of the Community Culture Plan.

Table 1: Age of respondents

Age	Individuals	Organizational Representatives
16-20	0	0
21-30	4	0
31-40	6	4
41-50	4	1
51-60	3	2
61-70	4	1
71+	1	0

22 of 24 individuals responded / 8 of 9 organizations responded

Individual respondents in the Sault Ste. Marie area represent a wide range of ages as is typical in the arts, culture, and heritage sector.

Those completing the survey on behalf of an organization represent a slightly older demographic, which is also common in the sector. This does not mean that younger people are not playing a significant role in organizations through a range of capacities inducing leadership (volunteer or employed), but rather only that no one in these age brackets participated in the survey on behalf of an organization.

2.2 Community Contributions



Figure 5: Pat Galdu: Three Winds, Art Gallery of Algoma Sculpture Park



Figure 6: Michael Burtch: Swimmers, John Rhodes Centre



Figure 7: Michael Burtch: Wind Chimes (Sound Sculpture)

The existence of cultural infrastructure (e.g., creative spaces) by its very nature provides opportunities to engage in creative expression for pleasure, social connection and/or economic benefit, creating a social milieu. Creative space 'anchors' serve local residents and visitors through employment, resources, and spending, providing the community access points to engage in the arts, meet role models, and exchange goods in a sector that typically otherwise has low visibility. Essentially, creative space is an enabler; a foundational component of the arts and culture ecology. It facilitates engaging in the production of cultural goods for a variety of socioeconomic purposes. As such, it plays an integral role in the sector's functionality and flow in two foundational streams:

- i) the continuum of creative processes and products in the circulation of goods (e.g. for personal use, gifts to others, or for selling the marketplace); and,
- ii) its connectivity: the formation of networks and relationships that build capacity and cohesion, and linkages between producers, consumers, policy and decision-makers, and the general public that underpin a sense of community, foster localized creative economies, and thus, sector sustainability.

Creative spaces support individual, interpersonal, and community development by facilitating life-long learning opportunities, engagement and reflection, and expressions of identity. Engagement in artistic activities build resiliencerelated characteristics including increased complex problemsolving skills, divergent, lateral thinking, and artistic, technical, and business skills that spill over and are incorporated into other aspects of one's life or are transferable to other domains. These spillover benefits increase individual and community level adaptive capacity, and broader community resilience (Brault, 2005; Cooley, 2003; Savory-Gordon, 2003, Sacco, 2011). In the North, given the part-time nature of creative practice there is a potentially large spillover effect into 'day jobs' further generating resilience as artists carry on their daily routines and businesses (Ortiz and Broad, 2007). Arts and culture are also a critical part of fostering youth development and a sense of belonging in their community, and contribute to retaining these youth as they mature, or even draw them back after they finish education somewhere else (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009; Markusen, 2013).

Data from community contributions are divided into three subsections. The first highlights participants' perceptions of the benefits their spaces are providing to the community, and the second, the opportunities that existing creative spaces are providing the Sault Ste. Marie area. It is followed by two subsections focused on formalized recognition: acknowledgements, recognition and certifications; and, media coverage.



Figure 8: Sault Ste. Marie Indian Friendship Centre

2.2.1

Engagement, learning, connectivity and development

Individual respondents noted several ways in which the area's creative space is contributing to a range of activities and thus benefits. Specifically, physical space is hosting teaching and learning activities including opportunities for understanding Indigenious knowledge within the arts/craft field, and access to discipline-based mentors. The space is suitable for the chosen art form, affordable, and can be used for visioning and experimentation. Some spaces have technology and equipment for rent or use. This provides an earned revenue stream and practical support to the creative community.

Similar to individual respondents, organizational creative spaces are hosting teaching and learning opportunities and access to mentors. No respondent indicated there were opportunities for understanding Indigenious knowledge in the arts/crafts field; however, there may be activities of this nature being offered within the community. The space is also contributing to affordable, innovative, visionary or experimentation, and is suitable for particular art forms. There is accessible space as well as providing the sector access to technology and equipment through rental.

The data indicates existing space plays a key role in fostering creative skills, artistic capacity, cross-cultural understanding, and community development—important contributions to health and well-being, identity and belonging, and localized creative economies, and thus resilience.

Table 2: Engagement, Learning, Connectivity and Development

	Individuals	Organizational Representatives
Access to discipline-based mentors	2	1
Affordable use of space	2	2
Co-production opportunities	1	1
Incubator space for visioning or experimentation	2	1
Innovative use of space	1	2
Networking	1	1
Physically accessible space	1	2
Suitable space for a particular art form	3	2
Teaching and learning opportunities	3	2
Technology and equipment to rent or use	1	2
Understanding of Indigenous knowledge in artistic craft/space	2	1

3 of 24 individuals responded / 2 of 9 organizations responded



Figure 9: Public Pianos, Tourism SSM

When asked to identify the three greatest contributions that their creative space provides the community, individual respondents shared a variety of examples of how their spaces are integral to the area's quality of life. They are important places of engagement, learning, and connectivity where artists support each other and the general public, as well as contribute to the economy as tourism products. Following is a sampling of individuals' responses underscoring the role creative spaces play in shaping identity and creating a sense of place.

Individuals noted:

- · Allows me to create works of art
- Supports the arts, well being and self exploration.
- · Inclusive, family-feeling for seniors on their own
- Learning environment, social aspect, and building selfesteem and confidence in people
- Exposure of a heritage craft, beauty of the craft and the peace of creating
- · Place to conduct workshops or meetings
- Contributes to heritage gift shop displays by providing artistic pieces for public enjoyment and necessary items such as masks, slippers, accessories with artistic/creative flair
- Space to host local art and craft shows
- Exhibition space the one artist run centre in Sault provides mentorship and development of alternative governance/ collective operations flexibility and inclusion

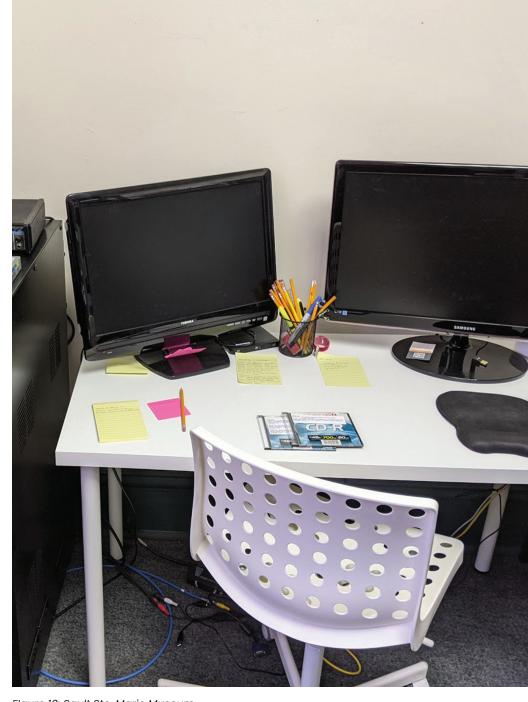
Mentoring is a primary source of knowledge and professional development (artistic, technical and business skills) that is key to maintaining and advancing practice due to the region's limited opportunities for arts education (Ortiz, 2017 p. 175).

Space to meet, share and generate knowledge is a cornerstone of advancement. Mentoring is a primary source of knowledge and professional development (artistic, technical and business skills) that is key to maintaining and advancing practice due to the region's limited opportunities for arts education (Ortiz, 2017 p.178).

When organizations were asked about the three greatest contributions of their creative spaces, they also provided striking examples of how they are places of learning, capacity building affordable space, as well as a range of engagement opportunities and cultural tourism.

Organizations noted:

- Performance space for the community
- Access to regional post-secondary arts degree, providing personalized art education locally
- Skill-based learning, free access to technology, and community engagement
- Involvement & coordination
- Inclusion & diversity



Flgure 10: Sault Ste. Marie Museum

2.2.2

Community Recognition

Community recognition raises awareness of the sector's offerings locally and beyond its borders. It instills pride and a sense of community, playing a role in attracting residents, tourists, and visiting artists, fostering cultural tourism. It highlights the locale's role models and best practices, building capacity in the field.

2.2.3

Acknowledgments, Recognition, or Certifications

Awards, prizes, certifications, memberships, peer recognition, and government recognition are a few examples of the type of recognition included in this section.





Figure 11: Painted Land: In Search of the Group of Seven, Poster Painted Land: In Search for the Group of Seven

In the last five years, individuals and organizations have received acknowledgments, recognition, or certifications.

GEOGRAPHIC REACH:

· Local: 5 individuals

• Regional: 2 individuals, 1 organization

• Provincial: 1 individual, 1 organization

• National: 1 individual

• International: 2 individuals

Four individuals and one organization indicated that this category is not applicable.

SECTOR:

Tourism: 1 individual

• Arts: 5 individuals, 1 organization

• Municipal: 1 individual

• Community Development: 1 individual

• Culture: 4 individuals

• Black, People of Colour: 1 individual, 1 organization

• Accessibility: 1 organization

• Human Rights, Inclusion, or Equity: 1 organization

• Environment: 1 individual



Figure 12: Will Morin, Dis Car Dead Parts, Art Gallery of Algoma Sculpture Park

2.2.4 Media Coverage



Figure 13: Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, Tourism SSM

In many northern communities media attention is increasingly difficult to gain due to the loss of local newspapers and reporters. Social media is replacing some aspects of promotion, however, critical writing and a journalistic approach to coverage is an important component of sector appreciation, professional development and engagement.

When asked if survey participants received any media coverage for their creative space in the past five years, 25% of respondents said yes. Specifically, one individual and one organization received media coverage at least once in the past five years, and four individuals and two organizations were featured more than twice within the same time period.

This media coverage was not limited to the local Sault Ste. Marie area. In fact, individuals and organizations noted that their creative spaces received community recognition at the provincial level and beyond.

The study illustrates that respondents are aware of the community benefits that their creative spaces provide, and are receiving acknowledgements and media attention beyond local and national borders, indicating a high level of programming and quality cultural products.

Table 3: Media Coverage Reach

Media Coverage	Individuals	Organizations
Indigenous Community (including across colonial borders)	1	0
International	1	0
Local	5	3
National	1	0
Provincial	2	1
Regional	3	1

7 of 24 individuals responded / 3 of 9 organizations responded

2.3 Current Space and Identified Needs

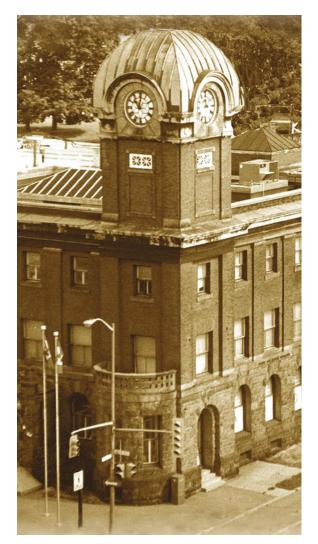




Figure 14: Sault Ste. Marie Museum, historic and recent images

This section reports data gathered from survey participants when asked to provide information regarding their current status in relationship to space from a number of perspectives such as artistic disciplines, disciplines and activities currently offered, future aspirations, and the type of space needed to meet these goals.

2.3.1

Current Space Scenarios

To identify respondents' current situation regarding creative space, the survey provided five scenarios asking respondents to identify which one best suited their situation.

While 12 (or 36%) individual respondents and 5 (or 15%) organizations have creative space, 10 individuals and 3 organizations indicate they do not have creative space and that they want it. For further information about respondents' space preferences see Acquiring and Developing Creative Space, page 48).

Of the respondents who own, lease and/or manage creative space, three individuals and five organizations indicate there is space within their existing buildings that could provide others short term rentals or tenants. This suggests some of existing space could be explored to determine if it meets the needs of those who are currently seeking it and/or others in the community who may become interested in having space once aware of the opportunity.

Table 4: Current Space Scenarios

Respondent Scenarios	Individuals	Organizations
Owns, operates and/or manages creative space	12	5
Audience	Individuals	Organizations
For private or organizational needs	9	2
Open to the public	0	0
Alignment of Needs & Assets	Individuals	Organizations
Open to the public and could or does have short term renters and/or tenants	3	3
Do not have creative space but want it	10	3

22 of 24 individuals responded / 8 of 9 organizations responded

2.3.2 Disciplines and Activities



Figure 15: Downtown Street Party (2019)

This section compares individuals' current creative practice, i.e, the disciplines and activities they currently offer in their creative spaces, and what they would like to offer in the future. From an organizational perspective, it illustrates what disciplines and activities are currently being offered in their spaces and identifies ones they would like to provide in the future.

Table 5.a: Current practice and future activities

Artistic or Cultural Practice	Individuals Orga			Organi	zations
	Practice	Current	Future	Current	Future
Circus	0	0	3	0	3
Community Arts	1	2	14	0	7
Craft Arts	2	3	13	1	6
Dance	1	2	8	1	4
Film	0	1	8	2	5
Heritage	2	1	n	1	5
Literary	2	1	11	2	4
Mixed-media	1	1	10	2	4
Multi-disciplinary	3	2	11	2	5
Music	1	1	10	0	6
Performance	1	2	10	1	6
Theatre	1	1	12	1	4
Visual Arts	5	3	15	0	6
Other: Cooking	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Practice - 10 of 24 individuals responded / 3 of 9 organizations responded

Current - 5 of 24 individuals responded / Future - 18 of 24 individuals responded

Current - 2 of 9 organizations responded / Future - 7 of 9 organizations responded

Table 5.b: Current practice and future activities

Activities the Space Offers	Indiv	ndividuals Orga		nizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future	
Cafe	1	0	0	0	
Classes, Mentoring	2	0	2	0	
Client Meeting Space	2	0	2	0	
Creative Collaborative Space	2	0	2	0	
Cultural Activities	2	0	2	0	
Exhibition Space	1	0	1	0	
Gathering, Public Educational Space	2	0	1	0	
Retail Space	2	10	1	0	
Current Other Activities: 3-D Printing	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	

Practice - 10 of 24 individuals responded / 3 of 9 organizations responded

Current - 5 of 24 individuals responded / Future - 18 of 24 individuals responded

Current - 2 of 9 organizations responded / Future - 7 of 9 organizations responded

Individuals were first asked to indicate the areas of disciplines in which they engage, revealing a diversity of practices with a very strong emphasis on visual arts, followed by a particular focus on multi-disciplinary work, craft arts, literary, and heritage arts. When compared to what programming they are currently offering as

activities in their creative spaces, however, there appears to be an underutilization of discipline capacity (i.e.,heritage, literary multi-disciplinary and visual arts) and a desire to increase engagement in many other disciples.



Figure 16: ArtSpeaks Art Hive Project housed at the Sault Ste. Marie Museum Francophone artist in residence

Considerably more people responded to the question regarding future activities, indicating significant interest in increasing or maintaining the range of activities notably, craft, community arts, heritage, literary, multidisciplinary, visual, and theatre, with some expanding into the circus field. The virtual community forum dialogue suggested that the interest in circus may be related to the past success of Buskerfest that ran for a period of ten years from 2003 – 2013. Originally launched by the Sault Youth Association and later carried on by the Sault Buskerfest Committee it provided free, family orientated entertainment over three days in the downtown core. Of note, is the streamlining of the City's event policy and booking process, which would include busking, making it vastly more efficient for presenters to secure permission and coordinate required department support.



Figure 17: ArtSpeaks Art Hive Project housed at the Sault Ste. Marie Museum

The virtual community forum provided insights into peoples' future interest in heritage assets. Motivations for this interest include, first and foremost, the fact that the Sault Ste. Marie Museum still exists despite limited financial support, and second, they are providing leadership by actively engaging the community in creative ways. For example, provide creative space to The ArtSpeaks Art Hive Project that offers ArtHive sessions to adults and youth impacted by trauma, and hosts an artist residency program and hope to expand the opportunity and draw on it to promote the diversity of the region's culture and heritage. They are in the midst of a research project with a University of Toronto professor to create a cultural archive for further leveraging into various programming options. In partnership with the Sault Ste. Marie Downtown Association and Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, the museum launched a free app for historical walking tours in June of 2020. They are continually reflecting on how to utilize the backlog of artifacts and archives to engage people in the locale's history in general and how to transform it into an art form, in particular. Furthermore, the Oral Histories of Sault Ste. Marie project, housed at the Sault Ste. Marie library, the Living History of Algoma organization dedicated to

bringing history alive through arts and culture, and the three National Heritage sites — The Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site and the Sault Ste. Marie Canal — contribute to the opportunities to respect and value cultural heritage.

The current activities of existing creative spaces in Sault Ste. Marie are slightly different depending on if it is an individual creative space or one operated by an organization. Individual creative spaces function primarily as places for teaching, mentoring, gathering, meeting, collaborating, cultural activities, and retail for those working in the visual, craft, and community arts and dance. Organizational creative spaces function primarily as places for teaching, mentoring, gathering, meeting, collaboration, and retail for multidisciplinary work, film, literary arts, and mixed-media.

Individuals are focused on seeking retail space in the future. In fact, in this survey it was the only type of future activity space indicated. No organization responded to the question regarding future activities they would be interested in offering.

2.3.3 Creative Space Needs

We need spaces for young adults to get creative.

A place for bands to practice and perform. Culture hubs to connect fellow art lovers. If we want to keep people from migrating out of the city, we need to provide arts and culture for them or else they will seek it in other places. Yes, hockey and sports are great and all, but not everyone is athletic or interested. We have so many young talented people in this city who never get to share that with other like-minded individuals...

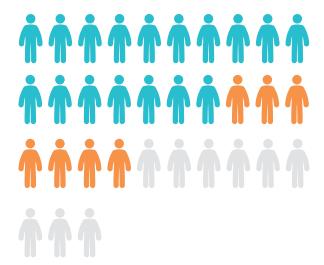
- (Survey participant)

Although the existing creative spaces are positively contributing to Sault Ste. Marie's quality of life and community economic well-being, study participants identified a need for more and/or upgraded creative space, and the type that is needed to further strengthen the community. Space needs fall into two categories: (a) those who do not have space; and (b) those whose space is not meeting current needs.

It is important to note that those who responded to the following questions are not offering to accommodate these unmet needs. This subsection highlights what they would like offered in the future. What they would like to and/or intend to offer is reported in the section titled <u>Disciplines and Activities</u>, page 24.

NEED FOR MORE CREATIVE SPACE:

When specifically asked if respondents thought there is a need for more creative space:



72%

or 24 of 33 total respondents indicated a need for more creative spaces in the Sault Ste. Marie area.

71% of individuals (17 of 24 respondents)

78% of organizations (7 of 9 respondents)

DO NOT HAVE CREATIVE SPACE:

A number of respondents indicate they do not have creative space, and noted their preference for private or public space, leased or owned, and within a city or town rather than rural location.



39%

or 13 of 33 total respondents say that they do not currently have a creative space.

42% of individuals (10 of 24 respondents)

33% of organizations (3 of 9 respondents)

The respondents who do not have space and want it indicated the following preferences.

PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SPACE:

Individuals:

» Private: 3» Public: 7

· Organizations:

» Private: 1

» Public space: 2

LEASED OR OWNED SPACE

Individuals:

» Own: 2

» Lease: 4

» No preference: 4

• Organizations:

» Own: 1

» Lease: 0

» No preference: 2

CITY/ TOWN OR RURAL LOCATION

Individuals:

» City/town: 10

» Rural: 0

• Organizations:

» City/town: 3

» Rural: 0

TYPE OF SPACE NEEDED

Both those with existing space and those who are seeking creative space underscore that any upgraded or new creative space in their communities should be designed to meet specific needs. Respondent priority areas include private studios suitable for specific disciplines and exhibition/gallery space, with a strong need for multi-disciplinary hubs and retail locations, as well as rehearsal and performance spaces. There is however, a very vibrant theatre community in Sault Ste. Marie that has identified needs as captured by a survey participant in the quote following.



The need for community kitchen space was also identified in the survey, which would support gathering and sharing and link into other food security and sovereignty initiatives currently underway in the Sault Ste. Mare area.

Virtual community forum participants raised specific concerns regarding the limitation of existing exhibition space to fulfill visual artist professional show requirements of three exhibitions per year. This status increases opportunities to apply for certain supporting grants. Exhibiting along the North Shore is a possibility, but the artist must also secure two additional locations.

Table 6: Type of Space Needed

Space	Individuals	Organizations
Administrative space	2	4
Exhibition/Gallery space	11	6
Multi-Disciplinary Hubs	9	3
Performance space	4	3
Private studio suitable for specific disciplines	13	5
Rehearsal space	4	4
Retail space	7	1
Other: public art, experimental art; all of the above would be welcomed	2	N/A

18 of 24 individuals responded / 7 of 9 organizations responded

2.3.4Creative SpaceNot Meeting Needs

When asked if their creative space is meeting their needs, four individuals say that their current creative space does not meet their needs.

Two key areas of improvement include:

- Upgrading size and location (larger, public access), and;
- Functionality (better lighting, storage)

One respondent noted, in particular, that their creative space would better meet their needs if it were away from the distractions of home. Another respondent wants a space where they could invite people to view and purchase art.

One organization said that their current creative space does not meet their needs as it is not large enough or publicly accessible.

Other important considerations were raised by a survey participant regarding the necessity of addressing ongoing COVID-19 related when operating space and assessing whether or not current space meets needs. One respondent offered:

"Thinking forward through and past COVID-19, spaces need to allow for safety – plexiglass space dividers, non-recycled air systems, hands free toilet facilities, etc. Epidemics and pandemics have been on the rise for decades—this is the new normal."

The study did not seek to determine whether or not respondents intend to undertake any action to address these shortcomings. There is, however, further data in the section titled <u>Developing Creative Space: Capital Projects, page 52</u>.

2.3.5

Creative Space

Meeting Needs

A number of individuals and two organizations indicate their current space is meeting their needs in the areas listed in the chart below. This is by no means an exhaustive list in determining whether or not the creative space is meeting participants' needs, but does include a few key benchmarks.

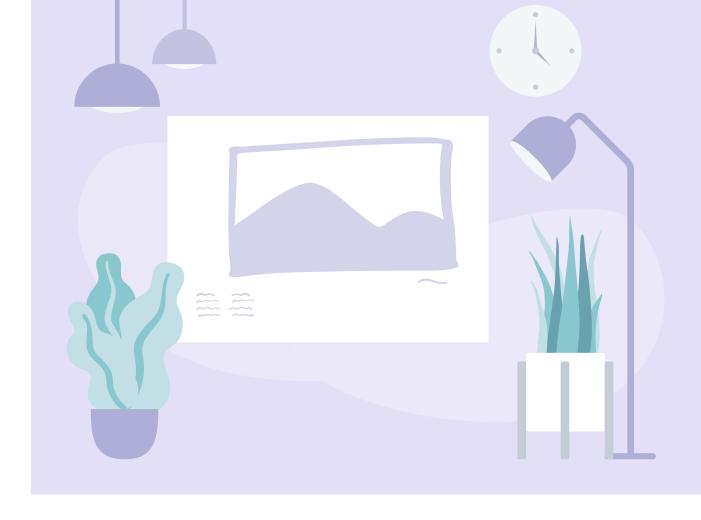
In sum, the study participants indicate that existing creative spaces are providing access and opportunity to engage in the sector, contributing to social cohesion, education and community economic development. There is, however, a strong desire and need for more space to utilize artists current creative capacity, and to meet individual and organizational goals of furthering participation, particularly in the area of private studio space and exhibition/gallery space. Those without space noted preferences for such in terms of leasing or owning. A few respondents mentioned there is space within their building that could potentially be rented or leased.

Table 7: Creative Space Meeting Needs

Needs	Individuals	Organizations
Affordability	3	1
Ease of Access	3	1
Size	1	1
Suitability	1	1

6 of 24 individuals responded / 1 of 9 organizations responded

2.4 Operations



In the arts and culture sector, creative spaces are managed by a variety of operating models, depending on the human resource capacity, location, physical design, and users of the space. How an individual, group, or organization manages its creative space is a unique decision based on the needs and abilities of its people and finances.

This section provides an overview of the operational status and capacity of the existing creative spaces in Sault Ste. Marie. The study includes organizational lifespan, management structure, facility management, revenue, operating hours, demographic engagement, recurring engagement, and barriers to accessing creative space.



Figure 19: Sault Theatre Workshop

2.4.1 Organizational Lifespan

Sustaining a non-profit organization over a long period of time is extremely challenging in all areas of operation (e.g. funding, human resources, volunteers, audience development, marketing, changing demographics and political interests). Long-standing 'anchor' organizations serve as role models, fostering, mentoring and/or advising new groups or individuals as well as providing critical opportunities for citizens and tourists to engage in the arts and culture sector, thus contributing to community identity and quality of life over time.

Table 8: Organizational Lifespan

Years in Operation	Less than 1	1-4	15-19	20-29	30-39	50+
Number of Organizations	1	2	1	1	2	1

8 of 9 organizations responded

The data indicates Sault Ste. Marie is home to several long-operating artistic/creative organizations, a testament to the on-going importance of creative expression bolstered by collective passion, perseverance and community engagement. Sault Ste. Marie has organizations that have many years of operating experience, four having been in existence for more than 20 years. This amount of time indicates that these organizations have operating and community engagement experience as well as administrative capacity that has continued through leadership, generational, and societal changes. They can be considered anchor organizations in the community.

Management Structure

Three individuals and two organizations responded to the question about management structures. The data shows a clear difference between the individual and organizational respondents. The organizations have more formal structures, such as being incorporated as a non-profit or charity and led by staff, while the individuals have less formal structures such as a volunteer-run collective. The survey did not identify the number of employment or volunteer opportunities or the reasons for operating with such.

Although one individual indicated the management structure is a collective, ad-hoc group, or a cooperative, survey participants who do not have space and are seeking such note they would be open to a collaborative solution, and would be willing or at least interested in partnering with others to purchase, rent and/or build a creative space. (See Acquiring or Developing Creative Space, page 48).

Respondents to this survey question noted that staffing creative space is covered by volunteers in individual operations and paid staff in organizations. The study did not inquire if there were business plans to transition to more paid staff.

Table 9: Management structure

Governance Structure	Individuals	Organizations
Charitable Corporation	N/A	1
Co-operative	N/A	0
Collective or Ad-Hoc Group	1	0
Not-For-Profit Corporation	N/A	2
Personnel	Individuals	Organizations
Staff-run	0	1
Volunteer-run	1	0
Mix of Volunteer and Staff-Run	0	0
Ownership	Individuals	Organizations
Privately Owned (Sole Proprietorship or Partnership)	1	0
Tenant	1	0

3 of 24 individuals responded / 2 of 9 organizations responded

Facility Management Experience

Of the people who responded, the data shows there are individuals and organizations with experience owning, leasing, or managing a creative space in Sault Ste. Marie, which is a valuable local capacity and knowledge base for existing spaces as well as those looking to acquire or develop creative space in the future.



Figure 20: Sault Community Theatre Centre

Table 10: Years Owning, Leasing, or Managing a Creative Space

	Individuals	Organizations
Less than 1 year	0	1
1-4 years	0	0
5-10 years	2	0
More than 10 years	1	1

3 of 24 individual responded / 2 of 9 organizations responded

Revenue

Creative spaces can be funded in a variety of ways, and revenue diversification is a key element of sustainability. The following chart lists a number of revenue streams typical in the arts, culture and heritage sectors.

Table 11: Revenue Sources

Revenue Sources	Individuals	Organizations
Admission fees	0	0
Bank Loan	0	0
Donations	0	0
Facility or equipment rental	1	1
Federal government operating grant	0	0
Federal government project grant	0	2
Food/beverage	0	0
Fundraising	0	1
Government loan	0	0
Indigenous government loan	0	0
Membership fees	0	0
Municipal government operating grant	0	1
Municipal government project grant	1	1
Other Loan	0	0
Provincial government operating grant	0	0
Provincial government project grant	0	1
Registration fees (classes, instruction, etc.)	2	0
Retail	2	0
Social enterprise	0	0
Ticket Sales	0	0

3 of 24 individuals responded / 2 of 9 organizations responded

The chart illustrates there are several revenue streams not being accessed by the respondents. This could be due to many factors including people declining to answer the question; availability of suitable opportunities; criteria; awareness of opportunities; and/or capacity (time and skill) to apply/access them. A few areas that would contribute to increasing revenue generating opportunities are identified in the section <u>Capacity and Advancement</u>, page 59.

It is important to note, research indicates that funding models do not particularly favor northern artists (Ortiz, 2017, p.231). Current structures and criteria are developed primarily for southern Ontario's more urban and metropolitan centres and are not applicable and/or feasible given the region's population density, geographic expanse and development needs. Local and regional policies leading to more sustainable funding models responsive to the socioeconomic landscape and changing environment would strengthen creative capacity and sector viability. Longerterm investment enables strategic planning and sustainable practices that support meeting current and future community needs. Investment in the sector from public, private and broader community members would increase opportunities to engage in the arts for various socioeconomic reasons, which would consequently reap resilience benefits (Ortiz, 2017, p.231).

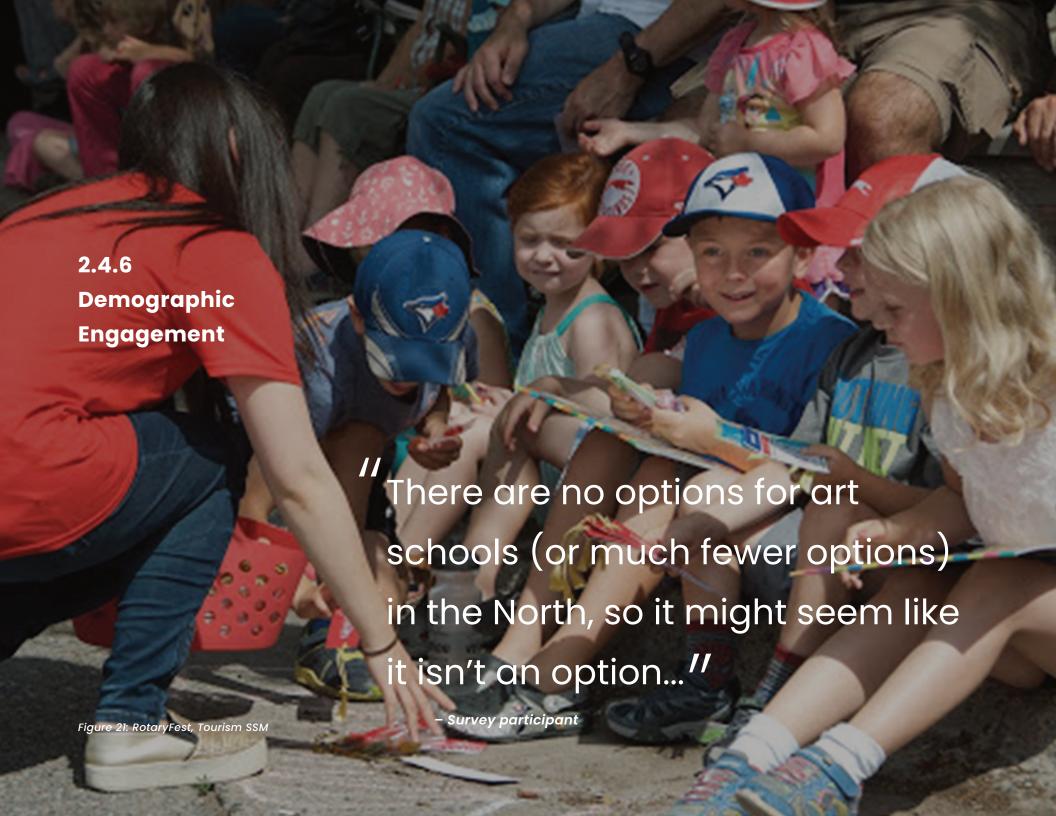
2.4.5Operating Hours

For this study, full-time hours were defined as over 20 hours per week. The chart below illustrates that many of the 20 individuals and 7 organizations who responded to this question are interested in increasing their hours to a full-time schedule.

Table 12: Weekly Operating Hours and Future Goals

Operating Hours	Individuals Current	Individuals Goal	Organizations Current	Organizations Goal
Less than 10 hours	3	3	0	0
10-20 hours	3	7	0	0
21-40 hours	3	9	1	3
41-60 hours	1	3	3	0
More than 60 hours	0	0	0	4

20 of 24 individuals responded / 7 of 9 organizations responded



While there is insufficient survey data to determine the current breakdown of demographic engagement, organizational respondents are concerned with increasing the engagement of seasonal area residents and tourists, as well as local and/or nearby residents. The results indicate a commitment to creating a sense of community with year-round residents and those who spend longer time in the area. Determining whether or not participants have strategic plans to meet these goals is beyond the scope of this study. Specific skill development, business planning and financial management that would support such are identified as a community need in the Capacity and Advancement section, p.59.

In recent years the tourism sector has seen a significant growth in cultural tourism, particularly experiential activities. One respondent who received recognition in the environmental field identified the important role the surrounding environment impacts their practice.

Table 13: Increasing Demographic Engagement

Engagement	Individuals	Organizations
Local and/or nearby residents	3	2
Seasonal area residents (in the area for a length of time, but not year-round)	2	1
Tourists (short stay or passing through)	1	1

³ of 24 individual responded / 2 of 9 organizations responded

The area is home to a number of Indigenous communities that have strong cultural ties, as well as a diversity of other cultures that have come to the region through immigration (returning residents, new to Canada, or from within Canada). The arts sector is recognized for being an intercultural bridge which can both strengthen these communities and foster connections between them.

While there is insufficient survey data to determine the current breakdown of demographic engagement, both individual and organizational respondents are most concerned with increasing the engagement of local and/or nearby residents, followed by seasonal area residents, and then tourists. The results indicate a strong commitment to creating a sense of community with year-round residents and those who spend longer time in the area.

A number of challenges to increasing demographic engagement with nearby communities included transportation; old infrastructure; no physical and/or organizational infrastructure; physical space limitations, identifying and developing key local contacts/partners, and processes for collaborative programming. The lack of a public transportation system beyond Sault Ste. Marie's settlement area inhibits artists and arts organizations from traveling to or from the outlying areas. Those particular to the North Shore Cultural Attraction Network are creating a district wide support network, estainghing collaborative programming and overcoming physical space, including the lack of rental opportunities. A virtual forum participant suggested "... having those shared spaces all along there [the North Shore] so that programming can float, it can be fluid. To me that's the perfect kind of model to have ongoing programming in those communities ... it rotates and it provides all those opportunities."

From the perspective of the sector's capacity, another consideration when planning to increase demographic engagement is the availability of qualified staff and/or artists and organizations to partner with in the delivery of the proposed programming. Their capacity to participate may be dependent upon educational or organizational skills and time. Having opportunities to explore interests and increase proficiency is a critical component of sector growth and vitality, as are sound strategic plans. The limited formal educational offerings in the area underscore the paramount role creative space plays in developing an aesthetic, and gaining skills and/or business capacity to meet one's creative expression interest or goals. The large number of people in the area employed in skilled trades represents a potentially vast opportunity to encourage them to explore other expressions of skills through, for example, welding or woodworking, or leverage them to assist the sector in meeting individual or organizational building or equipment needs or repairs.

Barriers to Accessing Creative Spaces

Barriers to accessibility are a recurring topic related to the development of creative spaces, especially in light of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements. Obstacles to accessibility include geographical distance to spaces; limited transit options; and older infrastructure without accessible features such as ramps, automatic doors, and elevators.

The study indicates that there are existing barriers to accessibility. When asked if they thought there were transportation or physical barriers to accessing creative spaces in their community, five respondents answered the question. Two individuals noted that travel time/distance is a barrier and that their spaces do not accommodate people with disabilities, and a third individual said that security is a barrier to the public accessing their creative space as there are no staff in the building. Two organizations defined their barriers as lacking personal or public transit, travel times/distances, and parking issues.

2.4.8

Recurring Engagement

Creative spaces designed for recurring engagement (i.e., repeat users) are places that can host rotating exhibitions, performances, classes, rehearsals, retail activities, public programming, etc. These spaces usually have an area to engage the public and provide basic services (such as washrooms), often have administrative and storage areas, and could have amenities such as parking. Sometimes they are consistent fixed places and sometimes they are pop-up locations.

The Sault Ste. Marie survey participants indicate there are three individual and two organizational creative spaces designed for recurring engagement. One individual and one organization note they would like to attract repeat users in the future but cannot do so without physical changes to their facilities. Please see the section on <u>Developing Creative Space: Capital Projects</u>, page 52 for more information regarding building upgrades.

Although the response rate to this question was low, it does indicate there is ongoing engagement. This is critical to build communities of practice that deliver opportunities and participants/audiences interested in further engaging in the sector.

The survey did not attempt to determine the type of offering (e.g. series of classes, exhibitions, one-time offerings) that attracted recurring engagement, or their demographics (for example, if they were residents or seasonal tourists, and/or ages).



Figure 22: Ermatinger - Clergue National Historic Site

In sum, the Operations section reveals the area is home to a number of long-standing 'anchor' organizations, illustrating the importance of creative expression coupled with persistence and resilience in sustaining an operation through multiple organizational life cycles and shifting community contexts. The management structures are varied, offering the sector knowledge in these business models, with a number having more than ten years of experience. There is at least one collective or ad hoc organization demonstrating the ability to find shared goals and a commitment to collaborate over the longer term. For those who responded to the questions about revenue streams indicated few are being accessed, which may speak to suitability and/or availability of opportunities or to the need for support to tap into diverse investment streams. There are barriers to accessing creative space. Local transportation was cited as well as building code issues. There is a strong commitment to serving and collaborating with the Sault Ste. Marie community and surrounding areas, evidenced by an interest in expanding the weekly hours that creative spaces are open, as well as increasing demographic engagement, specifically, to attract more local residents, followed by seasonal residents and to a lesser degree, tourists. There are, however, a number of challenges ranging from transportation to and from the outlining communities, a lack of organizational and physical infrastructure or old buildings, underdevelopment networks and, in some areas, access to reliable internet.

2.5 Acquiring or Developing Creative Space

I hope that there is a local plan to develop a suitable arts studio with space to rent.

- (Survey participant)

Creative spaces can be acquired or developed through purchase and improvement, rent/lease and improvement, or through a purpose-built process. This section highlights data related to those interested in acquiring or developing creative space.

Acquiring creative space, especially on a longer-term basis as opposed to short-term rentals, is a major decision for individuals and organizations as it adds a level of administrative management that can be daunting. However, dedicated space is still essential to many in the arts, culture, and heritage sector, and more people are looking for innovative ways to fulfill their space goals. As such, the trend for acquiring creative space as a cooperative venture has been growing across Ontario.

2.5.1 Acquiring Creative Space

PLANS TO ACQUIRE OR DEVELOP CREATIVE SPACE:

• 30% of respondents (10 of 33) are planning to acquire or develop a creative space in the next ten years

OPTIONS FOR ACQUIRING CREATIVE SPACE:

Some respondents want to explore options other than single ownership or single leasing.

- 17% of individual respondents (4 of 24) see being located in a creative space with others as a collaborative solution to their space needs
- 18% of respondents (6 of 33) are willing or at least interested in partnering with others to purchase, rent, and/or build a creative space
- One individual wants to know what types of co-renting are available

Participants seeking space could with others potentially connect with those organizations that indicated they have space for lease or rent (See <u>Current Space Scenarios</u>, <u>page 23</u>). One respondent noted there was space at 180 Projects as well potential options for sharing the main floor. Another stated "... if we had renters in our studio spaces ... more could be done with the rest of the building. It could lead to more volunteer engagement etc. ...". This highlights the necessity for communication and connectivity within the sector, and raises questions of responsibility and capacity for undertaking such. Currently staff with the City of Sault Ste. Marie send out information through their network, while other arts organizations have their own distribution lists. The City of Sault Ste. Marie is currently developing a website for cultural event listings, however it is uncertain whether this will address all of the information sharing needs noted above.

Six participants are open to exploring collective management structure options which could include cooperatives and creative hubs. Collaborative operating models, rather than individual ownership, have been gaining popularity over the past several years. One example of such is the creative hub. Canadian Heritage defines a creative hub as: "a multi-tenant facility which brings together professionals from a range of arts or heritage sectors and creative disciplines. Creative hubs feature diverse business models, such as not-for-profit and for-profit organizations and self-employed creative workers. They provide multiple users with shared space, equipment and amenities; opportunities for idea exchange, collaboration and/or professional development; and offer space and programming that is accessible to the public." Communities can uniquely define what their creative hub includes and provides, which can range from co-working, studio spaces,

performance, or supporting creative entrepreneurship. Please see <u>Appendix I: Resources</u>, <u>page 81</u> for examples in Toronto and Hearst.

During the virtual community forum a participant expressed the need for " ... getting a positive message out about hubs and co-locations ideas", and that having conversations " ... would contribute to bringing down the silos. "The more we keep working together, the more we keep finding ways to do these things. That's the key – don't stop doing things, don't get discouraged."

Another suggested that normalizing hubs and co-location spaces could be advanced through informational meetings providing examples and case studies would encourage people to see it as a viable option, particularly if they were offered by a credible third party, for example ArtsBuild Ontario or NORDIK Institute.

In terms of options for acquiring space centers on accessing underutilized or idle space, there is a growing trend that is shifting cultural norms from ownership of resources to access to them as evidenced by coworking spaces, car sharing and tool libraries. There are logistical challenges to overcome ranging from liability insurance in the case of utilizing vacant buildings to mandates and policies. To better maximize existing space a survey respondent suggested " ... establishing a structure/ process within the university to make it easier to offer public workshops/ studio access to trained artists." As well, a ceramic studio is currently being developed with the hope that it will "pave the way for more access to the space for non-university folks".

¹¹ https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/cultural-spaces-fund/application-guidelines.html#a25

A virtual forum participant noted that FutureSSM is working towards making storefronts available to artists who are requesting them as part of an overall sustainability plan. "If you don't have enough people coming downtown to keep them alive, then they [businesses] will disappear." Continuing on in the same vein:

"One of the main action items in our culture plan is to try to develop spaces wherever they may be and offer tax incentives ... so that people have an opportunity to rent these [spaces] an 'as you go basis' and/or get them for free. The owners get the benefit of a tax break for using those spaces...We're almost starting from ground zero ... at the same time, we're trying to do programming in the community to help pull together all these different groups... it takes time and it seems like it takes forever."

In the past Sault Ste. Marie youth have brokered partnerships with restaurants or other businesses to use the space after hours for shows, jamming, co-creation and practice studio space (Sean Meades, personal communication, May 3, 2021). It would be a dream to access studio space in a local building devoted to the arts.

- (Survey participant)

2.5.2DevelopingCreative Space:Capital Projects

A capital project is a long-term project to build, improve, maintain, or develop a capital asset.

A **capital asset** is a significant piece of property that the owner intends to hold and derive benefits from for a period of more than one year.

A **capital expense** can be a renovation and expense that extends the useful life of your property or improves it beyond its original condition.

Creative space capital projects can be complicated, require significant financial and time investment, and are especially daunting if you have no experience with one. However, capital projects are an integral part of the life cycle of creative spaces, whether they develop the space in the first place or provide needed improvements to increase the efficacy of it.

Individual respondents specifically identified two main improvements that would help their existing creative spaces better meet community needs:

- Larger space: to accommodate teaching and mentorship, as well as larger scale personal work
- 2. Exhibition/display and retail space

Organizational respondents specifically identified three main improvements that would help their existing creative spaces better meet community needs:

- 1. Better public access and affordability
- 2. Exhibition space

These are capital projects of varying degrees of complexity and investment.

It is interesting to note that although respondents recognize areas of improvement, the survey demonstrates that when looking at the next five years:



42%

of respondents (10 of 33) are not planning for a creative space capital project. of respondents (14 of 33) are not even planning to develop or acquire a creative space.

The participants who identified they were not planning to develop or acquire creative space noted financial and time cost, as well as access to available and suitable space, particularly good space at good value. Respondents are also concerned about the effect of COVID-19 on their business model, and for individuals particularly, their age as well as work and family life balance. The reasons cited align with the following section that identifies areas that contribute to difficulties in developing or maintaining creative space.

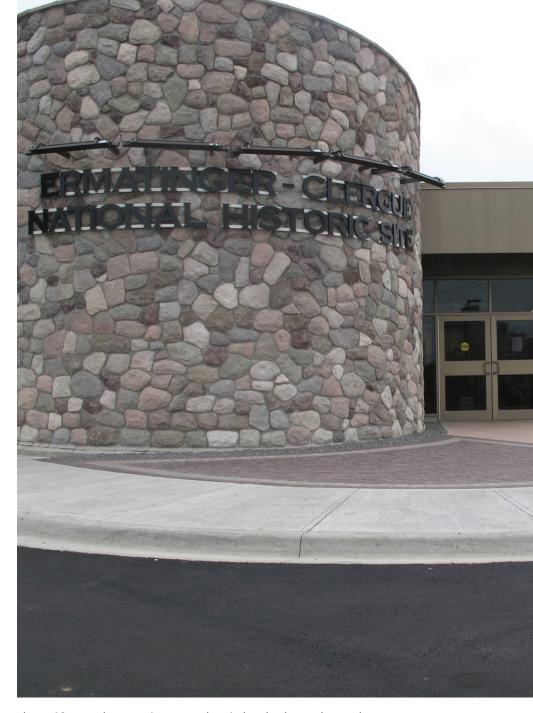


Figure 23: Ermatinger - Clergue National Historic Site, Heritage Discovery Centre

2.5.3DevelopingCreative Space:Considerations



Figure 24: 180 Projects is an alternative art centre based in Sault Ste. Marie

There are numerous factors to consider when acquiring or developing a creative space. Some are common across communities such as organizational capacity, financial health, a building's physical location, and political influences, while other circumstances are more place-based, such as geographic isolation and socioeconomic influences which impact on viability.

When asked to identify some of the circumstances that make a creative space in their area difficult to develop and maintain, respondents cited location, financial, organizational, and political and/or division considerations, as well as a few concerns unique to their communities. The survey captured many comments centered around viability, some specifically referenced the "public's undervaluation of arts and culture."

"I can't even find a studio apartment to work in as an artist. Everything costs over \$750/month and there are no shared spaces available" (Survey participant).

LOCATION

This category includes a number of factors such as the physical building, (e.g. availability, size, cost, suitability, code, accessibility, age, maintenance, renovations) and geographical context of place (e.g. distance to participants and/or market; collaborative culture; aversion to risk taking). In Northern Ontario many of these considerations are interconnected. Unlike larger urban centres, there are few warehouses of a suitable size that could be converted into creative hubs and/or live work space. When buildings do become available individuals and organizations need to be able to respond quickly. Therefore, preexisting relationships, strong partnerships and aligned collaborative efforts are key to securing space. The area's income levels are considerably lower than the provincial average, frequently placing rental properties, if available, beyond what is affordable. The cost of real estate is escalating due in part to COVDI-19 and the trend of moving farther north. Many rental buildings are substandard or not suitable for a particular discipline.

Another space consideration is the individual or organization's mandate. Those who aim to serve a wider geographic area or whose clients are spread across nearby communities are confronted with the challenge of indentifying where, specifically, to locate. One example arose during the virtual community forum.

"Because we serve the District we need to find something or some spaces that allow us to connect across communities, and allows us to be in many places, if not all at once, then sort of concurrently. It's part of the reason why we've taken to creating transient creative spaces and hosting events in different locations across the district as opposed to locating in a program-specific space."

FINANCIAL

"I would love to learn about assets I may not be aware of, or incentives the local government may be able to offer to make renting space to an arts organization more enticing." (Survey participant).

A primary factor in acquiring space is access to capital. Northern Ontario has very limited philanthropic opportunities to fund capital projects or provide seed financing. Investors are located in southern Ontario and have limited exposure to the area. The recently established Algoma Community Foundation may prove to be one avenue to leverage funds for sector development. One virtual community forum participant stated that there is a viable building available on the market right now that would serve as a creative hub but the organization does not have access to sufficient capital. They have been trying to make it happen for a long time.

Other financial related considerations include:

- · Availability of seed capital
- Cash flow challenges including grant application wait times and precarious crowdfunding sources
- · Renovations, maintenance and ongoing operational costs
- Increasing cost of real estate since COVID-19

ORGANIZATIONAL

Considerations in this category include:

- No existing organization to support the space and/or limited management capacity
- Limited available time
- · Work and family life balance
- Age including aging population and changing priorities
- Operational demands including time demands and challenges around managing volunteers

POLITICAL

Political considerations refer to limited government support, etc.

There is a sense that there is limited government support or lack of vision for the development and/or maintenance of creative spaces in Northern Ontario.

DIVISION

Division refers to the diverse visions of needs to be considered when selecting a viable path forward. Participants expressed concern about division of interests and priorities within the community.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

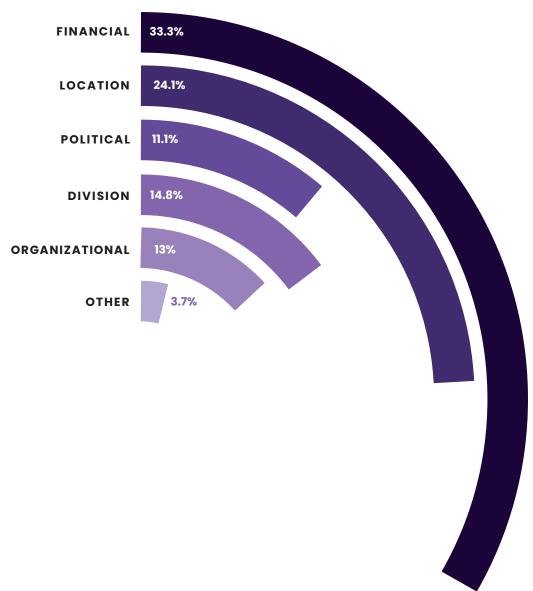
This category notes topics unique to Sault Ste. Marie. Participants were concerned with the size of the population – do we have enough to support the arts? During the forum questions arose around education, or more specifically, the lack thereof, and the need for an educational bridge that would support the development and organizational capacity to support the arts. The loss of White Mountain Academy of the Arts, a dedicated arts institution, was mentioned, while recognizing Algoma University does offer a Visual Art program.

Community culture was discussed in terms of identifying as an artist, or not, and its relation to creative space needs. Many people may not necessarily consider themselves artists, for example, skilled trades people, or those who have dabbled in creative expression over their lifetime. Garages may be serving them well and thus they would not necessarily seek other space given the opportunity. It was also noted that if there were more options for art education in the area a number of them, perhaps, might have explored this avenue or at least had role models for how their craft and expertise could be manifested in the art field.

COVID-19

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 and its longlasting effect on the arts, culture, and heritage sector is also one of the top considerations for respondents. This is an emerging trend across Ontario and is particularly urgent for arts and culture facilities forced to remain closed or on very limited hours and usage. Concerns about physical distancing and other health and safety requirements are top of mind as are the effects it has had on revenue, programming, and participation, and its negative impact on the use of space in general.

Figure 25: Circumstances that make a creative space difficult to develop and maintain



16 of 24 individuals responded / 6 of 9 organizations responded

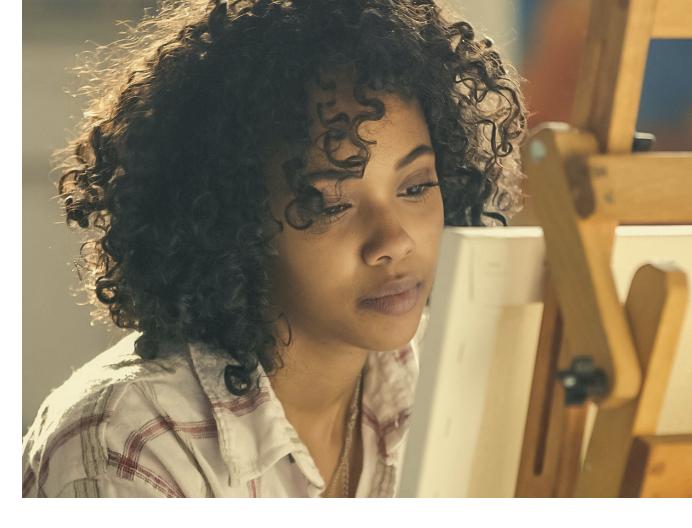


2.6 Sustaining Creative Space

This section provides information regarding areas in which the participants from Sault Ste. Marie are seeking to build capacity through developing skills and accessing resources; the types of current and future partnerships they wish to pursue; and the purposes of these partnerships.

Key factors impacting the sustainability of creative spaces centre on a range of capacities including creating viable and relevant products, operationalizing creation and production, reaching and expanding intended audiences, and conveying the value of such to others, e.g. leaders, decision-makers, investors and the broader public. Relationships and networks (inter-sector, intrasector; local, regional) play a significant role providing critical information flows enabling the sector to increase its sustainability and resilience through access to learning opportunities, information, sharing, and leveraging limited resources. Access to capital and reliable and longer term funding opportunities are essential (Ortiz, 2017).

2.6.1
Capacity and
Advancement



The arts and culture sector, in general, is continually adapting to the needs of its workers, volunteers, and audiences. Various sector support, service, and discipline-specific organizations offer learning opportunities and training, work on policy and advocacy, and connect the varied members of the sector through communication channels. This work is on-going due to human turn-over, changes in technology, audience trends, and research and development findings. For example, ArtsBuild Ontario was created as an arts service organization for arts and cultural infrastructure out of a specific identified need, and continues to serve the sector as the definition of and the spaces themselves evolve. Please refer to Appendix I: Resources, page 81 for a list of additional organizations dedicated to arts and culture sector capacity and advancement development.

Respondents in Sault Ste. Marie point to several key skills and resources they want to develop and access in order to increase their capacity to be successful artists, leaders, and space owners/operators. Marketing and advocacy capability top the list for all respondents. Financial management and knowledge of social advancement (accessibility, inclusion, equity) are priorities for organizations, while business acumen is a need cited by individuals.

Table 14: Skills and Resources to Increase Capacity and Advancement

	Individuals	Organizations
Advocacy (ways to validate investment in the arts, increase political understanding of value of investment in the arts, means of justifying existence in terms that would shift decisionmakers toward investment and support)	3	4
Business (planning, strategy, HR)	2	1
Financial (how to diversify revenues, regular management)	1	4
Marketing (online presence, etc.)	6	4
Operational (facility management, asset management, maintenance, etc.)	1	1
Social/Cultural (accessibility, inclusion, diversity, equity, etc.)	1	2
Space audit/plan	1	1
Other: always something to learn in all areas	1	N/A

8 of 24 individuals responded / 4 of 9 organizations responded

Participant comments and discussion points regarding these topic include:

ADVOCACY

Discussion during the virtual community forum revolved around intersectoral and cross sector collaboration for ongoing advocacy to portray the value and validity of the sector to municipalities and corporations. Participants consider local government responsibilities to extend beyond roads and sports and the culture sector should be front of mind during budgetary discussions. Study participants recognize there are two sides to understanding how the sector perceives itself and how those less engaged view them. There are a variety of frameworks for benchmarking and learning and the Sault could develop networks to support each other in advocacy initiatives. The value of the arts in Sault Ste. Marie are in particular and Northern Ontario in general, needs to be conveyed to provincial and federal funding agencies through letter writing, asking hard questions and formal research such as NORDIK Institute undertakes. One forum participant stated "Research is important because it has currency. It attracts attention and is useful to others in the community, including funders."

Advocacy as with writing funding applications is a skill. The author must be able to craft a strong argument framed with a value proposition and tailored to diverse audiences. Connecting with people who have these high level skills is a challenge, but necessary to amplifying voices in the community, highlighting the skills within the community.

One participant explained:

"There's lots of examples of communities that transitioned from an industrial base to cultural based economies. It's convincing. There are challenges, particularly since we are very blue collar and reserved, but there are many organizations working toward this end and making progress — businesses are partnering with them to expand the opportunities and more citizens are understanding the value and benefits. Initial scepticism is slowly being replaced but optimism and buy-in."

BUSINESS PLANNING:

- · Need to develop grant writing skills
- City's Culture Plan Asset Inventory is creating digital infrastructure mapping cultural assets and information and providing it in one place for others to access
- The City is leading some professional development opportunities through its various Culture Plan implementation initiatives such as the Summer Moon Festival and other collaborations with community partners, for example, the Music City Initiative led by the SSM Chamber of Commerce, as well as other sector and community stakeholders to drive development
- Other educational bridges mentioned were webinars and targeted workshops, i.e. hubs and co-location

MARKETING

 Need better connections between the community and the arts and culture sector

Each chart category is very broad and is intended to provide an overview of the skills and resources participants are seeking. Investigating these areas to determine the specific nature of support best suit them would be very useful. For example, Business (planning, strategy, HR) could include revisioning and branding or employment wage subsidy information. Marketing online might require photographing products, web design, solving shipping solutions and/or product development to meet a new target, and efficiency in creating and managing content. The study shows that there is considerable local knowledge in the community that may be drawn upon to support sector development.

For business development including diversifying revenue streams, incubation, training and mentorships the City's Millworks, Centre for Entrepreneurship may be of assistance. They have also offered the arts sector business development programming in the past.

For those seeking to establish an online presence, Digital Main Street is available for a limited time and locally the Algoma Marketplace may be of interest to general producers and Buy Alomga Buy Fresh may be of interest to the agri-industry sector specifically.

The federal government is providing investment opportunities for the development of social enterprises — businesses with a social, cultural, or environmental concern — into which the arts and culture sector falls. In the north, there is increasing awareness of the concept of social enterprises and some creative spaces are seeking opportunities under this revenue envelope.

Sustaining creative space or operating a micro creative business is extremely demanding requiring a plethora of skill sets firmly rooted in the business world. Recommendations in section 3.0 Summary and Conclusions, page 67 offer pathways for navigating these challenges.

2.6.2
Partnerships
and Collaboration



In the Sault Ste. Marie area the study indicated there are currently various working relationships between artists, arts organizations, the non-profit and museum/heritage sectors, school boards, and faith spaces. These partnerships exist to leverage financial resources, space, staffing/volunteers, marketing and audience development, supplies, expertise, and networking opportunities.

Individual respondents envision increased and future partnerships with the municipal, provincial and Indigenous governments, businesses, and the non-profit and museum/heritage sectors. These would be for increased financial, space, expertise, marketing, and supplies.

Organizational respondents want to put their efforts into increased and future partnerships with the museum/heritage sector, service clubs, as well as Black/Indigenous/People of Colour (BIPOC), Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Trans/Queer/2 Spirit/+ (LGBTQ2S+), and immigrant communities. These would be for increased programming, audience development and marketing, expertise, and staffing/volunteer support.

Table 15: Types of Partnerships

	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
BIPOC communities	1	2	1	3
Businesses	1	2	2	2
Faith-based organizations	2	0	1	0
Federal government	0	1	1	1
Immigrant communities	1	2	1	3
Indigenous government	1	1	0	2
Legions or service clubs	1	0	1	1
LGBTQ2S+ communities	1	2	1	3
Municipal government	1	2	2	2
Museums or heritage organizations	4	3	1	3
Non-profit organizations	2	2	3	3
Provincial government	1	1	1	2
Sports/Recreation clubs or facilities	2	1	1	0
Current Other: Algoma University, NORDIK, Thinking Rock Community Arts, Arts groups in North Bay; National and Provincial organizations; other arts organizations, secondary schools Future Other: all opportunities; Trying to reestablish better relationships with the Art Gallery of Algoma; We have limited use by partners. Perhaps just more involvement and use.	3	1	1	2
None	0	2	0	0

Current: 7 of 24 individuals responded / Future: 8 of 24 individuals responded Current: 4 of 9 organizations responded / Future: 4 of 9 organizations responded

Table 16: Purpose of Partnerships

	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
Audience Development	4	4	4	4
Expertise	2	2	1	2
Financial	2	4	3	3
Marketing	2	1	1	3
Operations	1	2	2	2
Physical Building/Space	3	1	3	1
Programming	3	4	4	4
Staffing/Volunteers	2	1	2	3
Supplies	1	1	1	0
Not Applicable	4	2	0	0
Current Other: 180 Projects provides exhibition space to Algoma University at no cost; space to display/selling Future other: networking	2	1	0	0

Current: 8 of 24 individuals responded / Future: 8 of 24 individuals responded Current: 4 of 9 organizations responded / Future: 4 of 9 organizations responded

Many individuals noted the importance of partnerships to networking, and defined networking as learning about new ideas, future plans, and connecting with others with similar visions. Participants in the virtual community forum noted some specific examples of partnerships in action in Sault Ste. Marie. The decided interest in partnering with the Museum and other heritage organizations is likely because they are organized and ready to go:

- · They bring a lot of stuff to the table
- Museums have established infrastructure so it is easier to jump into partnerships
- · They are 'Hub' organizations

Organizations identified their interest in developing strong partnerships specifically in order to help others as well as themselves:

- We are a public library and love opportunities to partner with others!
- What we can do to assist in developing creative spaces in the community.
- How to assist others and provide services where there are service gaps.
- Learning about what everyone in our community is doing in creative spaces, and where. What we can do to change the way we do business to involve more.
- [learning about] Previously unknown resources.
- What resources are out there for creative art spaces, if any landlord or owners are willing to work with creative spaces etc.

The Sustaining Creative Space section reveals that there are a number of key areas where respondents would like assistance to strengthen their individual and organizational operations. Areas include advocacy, marketing, business, equity and inclusion and garnering more sector support and/or investment. There are a number of knowledgeable local people who could assist with capacity building, as well as business development organizations including Millworks, Centre for Entrepreneurship. Participants have identified a number of existing partnerships, relationships and networks that enable sharing information and lining to consumers. Networks with the business sector could play a significant role in accessing expertise, key resources and training to further sustain the sector, (e.g. linking business–minded entrepreneurs to artists could lead to new hybrid models of operating micro businesses, allowing them time to focus on their core capacities).

3.0

Summary Conclusions and Next Steps Community culture — values and norms — underpin sustainability and resilience. Places that engage diverse communities and develop meaningful connections in the inclusionary and respectful utilization of resources, foster the capacity to innovate, adapt and transition through rapidly changing contexts. The arts and/or other opportunities for civic engagement create networks of dense, diverse relationships that build new knowledge and synergy informing and engendering perseverance to tackle complex personal, community and/or regional issues (Wheatley and Frieze, 2006).

There is considerable evidence of the numerous ways engagement in the arts creates social capital and cohesion, impacting on perceptions and behaviours. Many understand the primary objective of the sector is to give meaning to life and create ways of living together (Gielen, Elkhuizen, van den Hoogen, Lijster, and Otte, 2014, p. 22). Contextualizing the arts within typical economic frameworks, those that focus on the economic return of the product and job creation exclude the significant benefit accrued through the production and exchange of goods and services (i.e. active engagement in the arts). It generates continuous community renewal through the creation of unique products and services, enhances life through learning and sharing, and fosters localized creative economies that link regionally and connect globally.

Research conducted in Northern Ontario's arts sector indicates that artists and arts organizations understand their contribution to resilience, are vibrant with potential, but feel they are largely under-resourced, undervalued, underdeveloped and underutilized; isolated as though they are a separate community within the broader whole. Limited cultural infrastructure spanning the continuum of creation, production, marketing, consumption and financing

are cited as deficits that hinder sector visibility, vitality, and viability. Communities vary in their commitment and investment in the sector for many reasons. There is, however, a wealth of untapped potential in the region that could be developed and leveraged to create healthy resilient people and places (Ortiz, 2017).

A foundational component of cultural infrastructure is creative space. It is an enabler, facilitating engagement in the production and consumption of cultural goods. It plays an integral role in the sector's flow in two foundational streams:

- i) the continuum of creative processes and products to the circulation of goods (e.g. for personal use, gifts to others, or for selling in the marketplace); and,
- ii) connectivity: the formation of networks and relationships that build capacity; and linkages between producers, consumers, the general public, and policy and decision-makers, which impact a sense of community, influence local policy and planning, and foster local creative economies.

When assessing creative space needs, it is important to recognize the two intertwined threads of investigation: the space itself, its existence and suitability; and, the operationalizing of it (i.e. activities that occur within the space). The study served to provide the communities with a snapshot of creative spaces:, what exists, where there are gaps and needs, the concerns, ideas, hopes for the future;, and suggestions regarding ways to move forward. The research indicates the Sault Ste. Marie area's creative space and its animation is contributing to identity and belonging, the development of innovative, unique products and services that are recognized beyond its borders local, provincial and national. It is engaging people that range in age from 21 years old to more than 70 years, illustrating the importance of art in one's life over time. Current activities are attracting local and seasonal residents as well as tourists. At least four organizations have operated for more than 20 years including one for more than 50 years. They have a variety of management structures, and employment includes paid and volunteer positions. Individual respondents indicated their areas of practice include visual arts, followed by a particular focus on multi-disciplinary work, craft arts, literary, and heritage. When compared to what programming they currently offer there appears to be underutilized capacities (i.e., heritage, literary, multi-disciplinary and visual arts) and a desire to increase engagement in these areas as well as other disciples.

Participants, specifically, 72% of the total participants (24 of 33), identified a need for more creative space and provided direction regarding operational structures, type/purpose of space, programming they wish to deliver and audiences they wish to reach. Seventeen have space and 13 do not have space. Four respondents want the space for private use and nine want it open to the public. Some prefer to own, some lease and many have no preference, and all want the space located in a city/town rather than a rural site. The primary type of space participants are seeking is private, discipline-specific studio

space and exhibition space, followed by retail space and multi-disciplinary hubs, and then rehearsal, performance and administrative space. With respect to acquiring creative space, six respondents are willing or interested in partnering with others to purchase, rent and/or build a creative space. Respondents also noted challenges and considerations around acquiring and developing space, and the skills and resources to assist with achieving their goals and sustaining their operations.

Themes emerging from the research revolve connectivity, viability, and innovation and are organized into three interconnected categories:

- 1. Link Artists and Organizations to Existing Resources;
- 2. Leverage Capacity; and
- 3. Explore Models of Sustainability.

Many of the areas where the sector is seeking resources directly connect to the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Community Culture Plan (CCP) (2019) 12. The CCP's goal is: "To build upon a thriving, liveable and resilient community by connecting people, sharing knowledge and creating experiences through the celebration, support and leveraging of arts, culture and heritage in Sault Ste. Marie" (p.25). Connections to three of the six goals are outlined below. It is important to note that the Plan's three other goals – Indigeneity, Youth, and Natural and Built Heritage – are foundational for robust sector development; however, in this study, they did not necessarily surface, which could easily have been due to the limited attractiveness of engaging with a survey tool rather than in-person exploratory meetings.

¹² City of Sault Ste. Marie's Community Culture Plan 2019-2024

Identifying where arts and culture sector development needs link to the City's Community Culture Plan (CCP) is not intended to imply the Corporation is solely responsible for its development, but rather, to illustrate the identified areas and advocate for sufficient resources to enable the sector to meet the City's Community Adjustment Committee's goal of Cultural Vitality: "Sault Ste. Marie celebrates its history, natural and cultural heritage, and diverse identities, transforming the city into a global centre of cultural excellence through inclusive, broadbased, meaningful participation in the sector with continual renewal and growth of its creative economy" (p.11).

Links to the Community Culture Plan's goals:

GOAL #1: MUNICIPAL SUPPORT

This goal emphasizes the municipality taking a greater leadership position in the community not only to implement the Community Culture Plan but also to facilitate the long-term sustainability of arts and culture in the city.

GOAL #2: COMMUNICATIONS

Strengthen lines of communication with Sault Ste. Marie's arts, culture and heritage community, more effectively promote a greater diversity of arts and cultural events to residents and visitors. Facilitate greater dialogue between artists and other creative and cultural workers in the city.

GOAL # 4: DOWNTOWN ACTIVATION

Building on its downtown revitalization efforts and the Downtown Community Improvement Plan, the City should continue with initiatives and investment in live, work and play opportunities, create greater street-level animation, and establish the downtown as a core destination for cultural activity and creative entrepreneurship.

3.1 Recommendations

3.1.1

Moving Forward

The Community Culture Plan item 1.3 calls for installing at least one dedicated full-time position at the City to manage arts, culture and heritage. To meet the City's development goals, it is recommended that one additional dedicated full-time, limited term person be hired to address the creative space needs identified in this study to work. The person would work collaboratively with FutureSSM's Arts & Culture Coordinator responsible for implementing the Community Cultural Plan. The person would:

- Ensure diverse voices, particular youth and Indigenous residents are consulted regarding creative space needs;
- 2. Create a development plan based on the study and additional consultations;
- 3. Liaise with the local project partners in prioritizing action items, funding sources and implementation of the plan;
- 4. Connect with ArtsBuild Ontario as a key partner.

3.1.2

Link Artists & Organizations to Existing Resources

Networks of relationships are critical to utilizing local resources and creating resilient communities. Every locale has people with knowledge and skills that could support development. Creating critical connections to those resources is key to facilitate that development. The sector is composed of individuals and organizations (i.e., micro businesses with limited resources) that may not be aware of, or have the time or resources to individually source or gain the necessary tools to sustain or advance certain operations.

This section outlines areas in need of capacity building for advancement that can be met through connecting the sector individually or collectively to existing local, nearby and/or provincial resources.

The majority of the recommendations should be moved forward by the proposed staff person in Section 3.1.1. If the position is not filled, arts organizations and the municipality are encouraged to work together to identify ways to implement the recommendations.

I. FACILITY MANAGEMENT

This category includes facility management, asset management, maintenance and space audits.

 Connect local artists and arts organizations to local or provincial sector expertise (e.g. ArtsBuild Ontario)

II. BUSINESS TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Business literacy, plan development, human resource management and potentially business infrastructure (advertising, registration and payment gateways) that would facilitate teaching workshops, selling products and services and/or ticketed events to increase revenue streams.

 Connect with Millworks Centre for Entrepreneurship, local expertise and/or development organizations, or provincial organizations with a mandate for arts sector education and training to identify sector needs and more individualized business development support. (CCP: 1.6; 1.7) Strategic Planning (e.g., visioning, increasing social and cultural accessibility, inclusion, diversity, equity). Although each plan is unique the process for developing a plan is similar, thus, a number of organizations could undertake it simultaneously, tailoring their plans by identifying individual pathways forwards and strategic priorities.

 Link to Millworks Centre for Entrepreneurship, local and northeastern Ontario area sector (artists, arts administrators), and those organizations currently working within an equity framework (regionally: NORDIK Institute; Provincially: ArtsBuild Ontario for creative spaces specifically). (CCP:1.6; 1.7)

III. COACHING, MENTORING AND/OR TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN SPECIFIC AREAS OF CONCERN

 Identify local or regional resource people from various sectors who could provide direction. (CCP: 1.6; 1.7; 2.7)

IV. ACCESS TO CAPITAL

- IV a. Grant writing: to increase skills and/or access people with that capacity.
 - » Training workshops could be delivered through business support organizations.
 - » Business development organizations could be approached individually or collectively to guide people through their program applications.
 - » Granting agencies may offer webinars to support the development of particular applications.

» The municipality could include those with grant writing skills in their asset mapping database, identifying if they are available for hire, or paid or volunteer mentorship/ coaching. (CCP: 1.6; 1.7; 2.5; 2.7)

IV b. Fundraising and investment readiness: to increase applicant success.

- » Training workshops and coaching to prepare investment and fundraising pitches.
- » Connect with Millworks and/or investors to facilitate workshops or provide coaching. (CCP: 1.6; 1.7; 2.5; 2.7)

3.1.3

Leverage Sector Capacity

This section identifies areas of existing artistic and space capacity that are underutilized and/or in need of improvement, where further inquiry is needed to determine goals, and resources that could be leveraged to assist in developing strategic pathways and timelines to achieve aspirations and maximize operations.

I. IMPROVE FUNCTIONALITY OF EXISTING PHYSICAL SPACE

Determine specific space needs (i.e., what can be carried out in existing space; space needs renovation; new space needed). Determine if additional educational, business management tools (e.g. registration, payment gateways) or marketing capacity is needed. Assess the feasibility of such and develop pathways to meet goals. (CCP: 1.6; 1.7; 2.5; 2.7)

II. INCREASE FUTURE ACTIVITIES TO FILL CREATIVE SPACE NEEDS

Determine specific space needs (i.e., what can be carried out in existing space; space needs renovation; new space needed). Determine if additional educational, business management tools (e.g. registration, payment gateways) or marketing capacity is needed. Assess the feasibility of such and develop pathways to meet goals. (CCP: 1.6; 1.7; 2.5; 2.7)

Resources for addressing built space needs:

- Skilled Trades: Investigate employment skills programs focusing on construction, or other education related training programs that could provide trades people to advise, assist and/or execute the work.
- In-kind Investment: Bartering opportunities may attract skilled local people and/or seasonal residents interested in keeping active, increasing social networks and/or ways to contribute to the community.
- Capital Projects/Plan implementation: Secure a project
 manager to determine needs and bundle physical space
 requests into a larger project to create occasions for
 cooperation and mutual support, reduce operators' workload
 and cost effectiveness. The project undertakings could be
 framed as a campaign for sector investment.

III. INCREASE OPERATING HOURS

Determine if the goal to extend hours of operation is seasonal or year-round, and the feasibility and/or support necessary to achieve goals.

IV. INCREASE DEMOGRAPHIC ENGAGEMENT

Determine desired audience; assess feasibility; develop business and marketing plans to attract more local and seasonal residents, as well as tourists. (CCP: 1.6)

V. INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY TO CREATIVE SPACE

Obstacles to accessibility include geographical distance to spaces; limited transit options; and older infrastructure without accessible features such as ramps, automatic doors, and elevators.

 Determine barriers to specific spaces and chart a pathway to meeting Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements.

VI. INCREASE RECURRING ENGAGEMENT

 Determine programing interest for recurring engagement; determine if space needs renovating; assess feasibility and identify ways to support transitioning to recurring engagement.

VII. INCREASE BUILDING UTILIZATION

 Develop a strategy to connect those looking for space with those who have space to rent/lease.

VIII. INCREASE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

 Determine where there are shared visions and goals, programming and space needs between and among artists and organizations. This will enable these parties to identify efficiencies of expertise and scale whether they are colocated or operating separately.

IX. INCREASE MICRO-BUSINESSES

One of the greatest challenges of operating a microbusiness or a smaller organization is ensuring there is sufficient time to dedicate to its core purpose, in addition to its operational side.

Regional research indicates there are three categories of artists: i) those genuinely interested in operating a business; ii) those reluctantly learning the business of art but would prefer others handle it; and iii) those not interested in business because their products are gifted to others. The largest category is artists reluctantly participating in business activities out of default. Many cite the need to generate revenue to continue producing but consider time spent on business activities not the best use of their limited resources, preferring business professionals to handle it. A number of artists whose goods are intended for gifting suggest they would be interested in selling their work if others would do it for them (Ortiz, 2017, p. 236).

 Connect business-savvy people, who have an interest in the arts, with operators to develop the business side or provide services that would enable artists to focus on their core competencies, and thus, significantly contribute to the creative sector's sustainability. Explore leveraging existing entrepreneurs with business skills into hybrid models to increase the economic potential of both. (CCP: 1.6)

3.1.4 Lead by Developing Models of Sustainability

Rapidly changing contexts, from the impacts of globalization, technological advancement and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitates revisiting models of sustainability. Attempts to document the sector within traditional economic frameworks exclude a vast amount of transactions — economic, cultural and social — that occur outside of traditional working hours and primary occupations (i.e. the sector is largely unmeasurable).

One significant challenge facing the perception of the sector is the scale of operations. The region remains dominated by mills and mines that privilege large scale operations, from employment incentives, to funding, to models of prosperity. In contrast, the arts is composed of micro operations, individuals or organizations, many with few paid employees, but that provide critical secondary and/or supplemental income, assist in maintaining health and wellbeing and cultural continuance. Surviving the boom-bust cycle of extractive industries and the seasonal nature of farming, logging, hunting, fishing and tourism frequently depends upon finding ways to bridge the financial gap between jobs, particularly at this juncture in time. Notably, as the economy fractures, more people are turning to the arts and culture sector as a means of survival (Ortiz, 2017).

I.RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE SECTOR

While there has been considerable progress in integrating the sector development into the City's plans, the study suggests it remains undervalued and underdeveloped. There is a need to increase its visibility, and understanding of engagement to individual and collective health and wellbeing and prosperity.

 Increase the visibility of the arts, culture and heritage sector. This can be achieved through a number of avenues including promotional tools such as advocacy, technology that markets opportunities and facilities engagement, increasing creative space, and developing sustainable funding models.

II. MARKETING AND ONLINE PRESENCE

Individual and organizational online presence requires a continuum of preparedness in numerous areas including product/service development, pricing, photography, affordable and reliable broadband internet, the capacity to manage the technology, and a marketing strategy.

- Connect with Millworks Centre for Entrepreneurship to develop business plans. The digital Main Street online store platform may suit individual operators. Millworks and other arts organizations may also provide links to dedicated service providers (CCP: Strategy #2).
- Sector-wide marketing strategy including a map or database of art spaces and activities for seasonal residents and tourists.
 Local municipalities could play a lead role in developing this strategy (particularly as it connects to the CCP: Strategy #2).

III. ADVOCACY

With the rapidly changing contexts, centering the sector as a necessity of local resilience and sustainability is a strategic way to communicate the sector's value. It conveys the sector's contributions to health and wellbeing, a culture of creativity and innovation as well as its spillover effects.

- Seek jurisdictions with similar issues; identify the message; tailor it to the target audience; and convey the impact in language familiar and meaningful to the reader. The latter category is where the arts sector faces the most challenge and where working across sectors to translate areas of added value to the broader community would be beneficial.
 - » Create an awareness campaign to document and share the importance of culture on a personal level to individuals in the community, on an economic level, environmental, and social level (CCP:1.6)

IV. INVESTMENT AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MODELS

 Develop a locally viable sustainable funding model incorporating both public and private support to further develop creative spaces. Continue the commitment to include the arts, culture and heritage sectors as viable recipients of development resources; resource sharing across sectors; and investment incentives for private and/or public/private partnerships. (CCP: 1.2; 1.6 and City's Community Adjustment Committee Report, A Common Cause and New Direction for Sault Ste. Marie, p.11).

The majority of barriers to investment are seen as outcomes of cultural values reflected in government policy and community development priorities that frame the arts primarily as an economic product, rather than an integral part of life, of which one part is the economic sphere. Investors favour larger scale operations and formalized business plans. Micro arts businesses are predominated by creative people whose core capacity is producing products and services. Some have business management experience, and the larger operations typically employ professional arts administrators. Individuals may not have business plans, and some disciplines are heavily subscribed by women (Ortiz, 2017). Studies on the impact of the gender gap indicate that women face disparities in access to education, health care, finances and technology, and often predominate in undervalued economic sectors (Kochhar, Jain-Chandra and Newiak, 2017).

Municipal and Indigenous government investment and incentives are seen as leaders for orchestrating longer-term funding models. Strategies include: resource sharing across sectors; reallocating existing development resources to the arts sector; business investment and partnerships through multi-year sponsorships; in-kind support: public and/or private investment in affordable built infrastructure, e.g. space (operating, studio and storage, live/work) housing, cafés and venues that link producers to each other, to the public and to the marketplace (Ortiz, 2017, p. 231).

V. ACQUIRING OR DEVELOPING CREATIVE SPACE

Although the study indicated a need for more creative space, further investigation is needed to determine which individuals and organizations are interested in proceeding (timelines, business- readiness, etc.) and pathways forward. A number of respondents are open to exploring collective management structure options which could include cooperatives and creative hubs or co-location. Models for acquiring and managing creative spaces including accessing idle space need to be determined. Hybrids of municipal-arts sector partnerships or other such collaborations providing capital, organizational and operational leadership, would create mentorships and training opportunities in facility management, and potentially enable the building to become independent over time. (CCP: 4.1; 4.2; 4.4)

VI. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MODELS

While not a legal business structure, the social enterprise model — those with a mandate to address a social, cultural or environmental concern — is gaining traction, resulting in government investment under a variety of envelopes. Explore these funding options.

VII. PEER LENDING CIRCLES

For smaller investments peer lending circles are becoming increasingly popular as alternatives to traditional sources.

They build financial literacy while creating strong professional networks and support systems amongst participants.

3.1.5 Summary

The results of this project provide Sault Ste. Marie, NORDIK, and ArtsBuild Ontario with key information about the local arts, culture, and heritage sector, individual and organizational value and impact, and the important role creative spaces play in the community's quality of life. Respondents participated to provide information, learn from each other, and find active solutions. These statistics, trends, and identified needs can serve as a guide for local resource development and expansion, as well as rallying points for community vision and action. They also show where ArtsBuild Ontario and other regional, provincial or national organizations may offer meaningful learning resources and may be strategic future partners.

In sum, the Sault Ste. Marie area has considerable assets upon which to further enliven and strengthen the arts and culture sector. Municipal government has invested in cultural infrastructure and has recently adopted a Community Culture Plan with Cultural Vitality as a key pillar of resilience and sustainability. Those engaged in the arts demonstrate expertise, commitment and perseverance; however, sector investment (financial, in-kind support, leadership) would advance community health and wellbeing and foster the necessary skills for ongoing innovation and renewal in response to the dynamic knowledge economy.

In closing, it is important to note that although this study's focus is the arts and culture sector (specifically creative space needs and gaps), many of the building and operational concerns raised by survey participants are not exclusive to the arts and culture sector. Non-profit organizations and those operating micro businesses face similar challenges and would benefit from the support, connectivity and further research noted in this section.

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Appendix I: Resources

AKIN

Sourcing and Setting Up Studio Space & Understanding Commercial Leases guide: The Akin team of practicing artists and arts educators has collaborated on this document in the interest of sharing some of their learnings over the past twelve years on how to source, secure and set up art studios and creative spaces in Toronto. These insights could help artists to pursue setting up studios themselves, or with others, but much of this information can apply more generally to anyone entering into a commercial lease.

ARTSBUILD ONTARIO

ArtsBuild Ontario is a non profit arts service organization dedicated to realizing long-term solutions for building, managing, and financing the sustainable arts facilities needed in Ontario communities. ABO provides people with training, tools, and resources that support the development and management of creative spaces. ABO has an extensive online collection of webinars, case studies, reports, and toolkits that are available for people to learn from and utilize.

ARTSCAPEDIY

Artscape's knowledge sharing website for information and inspiration to support creative placemaking in your community. Includes <u>case studies</u>, <u>tools</u> and <u>resources</u>, including downloadable templates and examples, films, guides and articles designed to help people through the often complex and risky business of developing sustainable, affordable space for culture and creativity.

CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

(grants organized into six different programs; includes project, operating, and digital)
The Canada Council for the Arts is Canada's public arts funder, with a mandate to foster and promote the study and enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts.

CONSEIL DE ARTS DE HEARST

Conseil de arts de Hearst, a francophone cultural space model with a gallery and rental opportunities for other community organizations, arts sector and otherwise.

DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

Federal department with many grant programs, the <u>Canada</u> <u>Cultural Spaces Fund</u> is specific to arts and culture infrastructure and is open for applications year-round.

- Valerie Hopper valerie.hopper@canada.ca
- Laura Montgomery laura.montgomery@canada.ca

DISTILLERY DISTRICT

Distillery District is Toronto's pedestrian-only arts and entertainment destination housing many workshops and shopping opportunities.

E-LEARNING FROM WORKINCULTURE

E-Learning from WorkinCulture - courses on project management, financial management, partnership and collaboration.

ENABLING ACCESSIBILITY FUND (EAF)

Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) - provides funding for projects that make Canadian communities and workplaces more accessible for persons with disabilities. EAF aims to create more opportunities for persons with disabilities to take part in community activities, programs and services, or to access employment.

FEDNOR

The Government of Canada's economic development organization for Northern Ontario. Through its programs and services, and through its financial support of projects that lead to job creation and economic growth, FedNor works with businesses and community partners to build a stronger Northern Ontario.

- COVID-19 Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) –
 to help vulnerable businesses and eligible not-for-profit
 organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Regional Economic Growth through Innovation (REGI) supporting the growth of Canadian businesses, their expansion into new markets and their adoption of new technologies and processes.
- Northern Ontario Development Program (NODP) supporting communities' efforts to plan and mobilize their resources, enhance business growth, and exploit new opportunities for economic development and diversification.
- Community Futures Program (CFP) encouraging the growth of small and medium-sized businesses via a network of 24 Community Futures Development Corporations spread out across the region.
- <u>Economic Development Initiative (EDI)</u> enhancing the economic viability of the region's Francophone communities through support for innovation, economic diversification and business growth initiatives.

NORDIK INSTITUTE

NORDIK (Northern Ontario Research, Development, Ideas and Knowledge) Institute is an innovative community-based research hub that has evolved from the Community, Economic, and Social Development (CESD) program and research at Algoma University. It is committed to the practice of holistic community development and has established strong links with other research institutes, universities, and colleges. It works closely with its community partners and provides mentorship to new researchers and community development practitioners. Its areas of experience include arts, culture, heritage sector; tourism; the social economy and social enterprises; and community justice.

Research in the culture sector includes: <u>Culture, Creativity</u> and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and <u>Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie</u> (2007); Breathing Northwinds (2011); <u>Growing Ontario's Crafts North</u> (2012); <u>Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Mentoring Networks</u> (2013); <u>Valuing Northern Libraries Toolkit</u> (2018); and <u>Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Building Northern Ontario's Resilience</u> (2017).

For those reading a print version of this report, the previously mentioned research is available at www.nordikinstitute.com

NORTHWEST BUSINESS CENTRE

Resources for small business in the Kenora/Rainy River District; they offer free and confidential, one-on-one business support through personal consultation, guidance, resource and delivery referrals.

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND (NOHFC)

- The <u>Community Enhancement Program</u> will facilitate upgrades and repairs to vital community assets, such as recreational facilities, community centres and broadband infrastructure that contribute to improved quality of life and support strategic economic development initiatives.
- The <u>Cultural Supports Program</u> will promote and showcase Northern Ontario's culture, geography, and talent through the production of films and television series and by supporting events, such as conferences and festivals that elevate the profile of communities.
- The <u>People and Talent Program</u> will attract, develop, and retain a strong northern workforce by supporting a broader range of internships and apprenticeships and providing more opportunities for Indigenous people to gain job experience.

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

(offers project grants and operating grants)

OAC is an agency that operates at arm's length from the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. The OAC's grants and services to professional, Ontario-based artists and arts organizations support arts education, Indigenous arts, community arts, crafts, dance, Francophone arts, literature, media arts, multidisciplinary arts, music, theatre, touring, and visual arts. Additional COVID recovery funding for individual artists will be announced in Spring 2021.

ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

(offers program/project grants, capital grants, and funding for youth initiatives)

The mission of the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is to build healthy and vibrant communities throughout Ontario by investing in community-based initiatives and strengthening the impact of Ontario's non-profit sector. Additional COVID recovery funding for operations and capital projects are now available through the Community Building Fund.

PARO CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE

(business support start up, growth and networks)

A not-for-profit social enterprise that collaborates to empower women, strengthen small business, and promote community economic development across Ontario. Services include business counselling and support, peer mentoring circles. PARO's three pillars: growing women's companies, accessing new growth opportunities, and expanding access to export markets.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (SEE)

Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (SEE), an initiative of NORDIK Institute, seeks to address Northern Ontario's social and economic challenges by encouraging a movement of social enterprise and entrepreneurship that stresses community resilience, innovation, support and mobilization. The website hosts a number of bilingual business development resources, including a peer mentoring toolkit, and examples of social enterprises in the region.