

Mapping Northern
Creative Spaces

Final Project Report

Executive Summary and Community Reports

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Thank you to the project partners for their time and energy in promoting the project, participating in the virtual forums and their insights into the arts, culture and heritage sector in their communities.

Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls



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Sault Ste. Marie



Future SSM

Todd Fleet



Sault Ste. Marie Museum

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Timmins



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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

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 throughout the region.

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). 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) (Ortiz, 2017).

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.

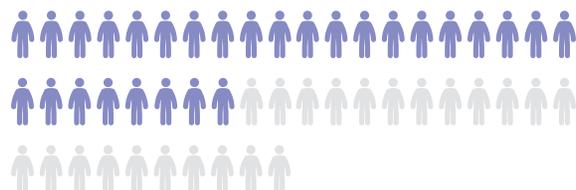
An ethics review was conducted by Algoma University's Research Ethics Board, with Dr. Jude Ortiz as principal investigator. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the project design pivoted from drawing on in-person gatherings in each community to online surveys as the primary data collection method. With unique 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. Although the surveys did not attract a large number of participants, community partners considered the responses to be representative of their understanding of the sector and a valuable tool to advance the sector. Each community was presented with an initial analysis of the data at a virtual community forum, followed by a draft report for their review. A 4-Community Virtual Forum was held on March 25, 2021 to collectively gather the partners to share learnings and mobilize knowledge. Finalized Community Reports are available online at www.artsbuildontario.ca.

Surveys found the creative space 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, and in some cases, provincially and nationally. It is engaging a wide range of ages, illustrating the importance of art in one's life over time. Current activities are attracting local and seasonal residents as well as tourists. Within the four communities there are at least 16 organizations that have been operating for at least 20 years, including at least three for more than 50 years. They have a variety of management structures, drawing on paid employment, volunteer labour, and combinations thereof.

The study identifies the need for space (percentage of those who have it and those who do not); disciplines of underutilized artistic capacity (e.g. music, theatre, heritage, visual; multi-disciplinary); the type of space needed (e.g. retail, discipline-specific studio; exhibition, performance, multi-disciplinary); and preferences for space, (for example, whether or not the space was public/private; leased or owned; located in the city/town or rural; the number of respondents willing or interested in partnering to purchase rent and/or build space; and if some rental/leased space is currently available).

Kenora and Sioux Narrows – Nestor Falls

NEED FOR SPACE:

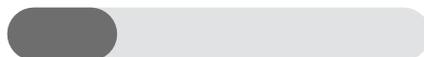


56%

28/50 respondents



30 have space



13 do not have space

UNDERUTILIZED ARTISTIC CAPACITY:

Music, theatre, film, performance, heritage, mixed-media, multi-disciplinary

TYPE OF SPACE NEEDED:

Retail and discipline-specific studio space, exhibition, performance, and rehearsal space, multi-disciplinary hubs

- Most want public space
- Lease or own: majority no preference
- City/town rather than rural
- 13/50 respondents are willing or interested in partnering to purchase, rent and/or build space
- Some rental/lease space available in existing space

Timmins

NEED FOR SPACE:

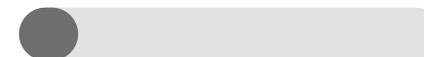


51%

18/35 respondents



24 have space



5 do not have space

UNDERUTILIZED ARTISTIC CAPACITY:

Music, craft arts and multi-disciplinary arts

TYPE OF SPACE NEEDED:

Exhibition, discipline-specific studio space, retail space, multi-disciplinary hubs

- Most want public space, rather than private
- Lease or own: majority lease
- City/town rather than rural
- 6/50 respondents are willing or interested in partnering to purchase, rent and/or build space
- Some rental/lease space available in existing space

Sault Ste. Marie

NEED FOR SPACE:



24/33 respondents

72%



17 have space

13 do not have space

UNDERUTILIZED ARTISTIC CAPACITY:

Heritage, literary, multi-disciplinary, visual arts

TYPE OF SPACE NEEDED:

Private discipline-specific studio space exhibition space, multi-disciplinary hubs, rehearsal, performance, administrative space

- Most want public space
- Lease or own: no preference
- City/town rather than rural
- 6/33 respondents are willing or interested in partnering to purchase, rent and/or build space
- Some rental/lease space available in existing space

Wawa

NEED FOR SPACE:



18/37 respondents

49%



13 have space

14 do not have space

UNDERUTILIZED ARTISTIC CAPACITY:

Theatre, dance, craft arts

TYPE OF SPACE NEEDED:

Exhibition, multi-disciplinary hubs, private discipline-specific studio space, rehearsal and performance space

- Most want public space
- Lease or own: no preference
- City/town rather than rural
- 14/37 respondents are willing or interested in partnering to purchase, rent and/or build space

Similarities across communities are summarized as:

- Need for space, especially that which is suitable for specific art forms and activities
- Have a variety of underutilized capacities/disciplines
- Interest in expanding operations
- Have expertise in the community
- Seeking skill development, connections, relationship, communications
- Need for sector advocacy
- Development needs are connected to various municipal and/or community plans.

Many of the key pieces to build capacity and spark growth currently exist; however, the missing 'dots' inhibit sustainability. Themes emerging from the research revolve around connectivity, viability, and innovation and are organized into three interconnected categories:

- i) Link Artists and Organizations to Existing Resources;
- ii) Leverage Capacity; and,
- iii) Lead by Developing Models of Sustainability.

In each community the municipal government has invested in the cultural sector. Many of the areas where the sector is seeking resources directly connect to culture sector development plans, and/or community planning documents. Identifying where arts, culture and heritage sector development gaps link to community planning documents is not intended to imply the municipalities

are solely responsible for its development. Rather it serves to illustrate the identified areas of need, their alignment with broader local priorities, and advocate for sufficient resources to enable the communities to meet their stated objectives. Those in the arts, culture and heritage sector 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.

Moving forward, it is recommended that a dedicated full-time, limited term contract be hired in each community to create a development plan to address the creative space needs identified in this study. The person would collaborate with their respective project partners and local government representatives to:

1. Ensure diverse voices, particularly 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 player.

An overview of the creative space needs follows.

LINK ARTISTS AND 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 may not have the time or resources to individually source or gain the necessary tools to sustain or advance certain operations.

Key areas include: Facility management; Business training and education; Coaching, mentoring and/or training and education in specific areas of concern; And access to capital.

LEVERAGE 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. The process involves determining the scope of work; assessing the feasibility; and developing a pathway to meet goals.

Key areas include: Improve functionality of existing physical space; Increase future activities; Increase operating hours; Increase demographic engagement; Increase accessibility to creative space; Increase recurring engagement; Increase building utilization; Increase partnerships and collaborative efforts; And increase micro-businesses.

LEAD WITH DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE MODELS

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 maintenance. 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).

Key areas include: Raise the profile of the arts, culture and heritage sector; Marketing and online presence; Advocacy; Investment and sustainable funding models; Acquiring or developing Creative space; Social enterprise models; And peer lending circles.

The 4-Community Virtual Forum engaged representatives from the study's partners and interested citizens for a total of 26 participants. ABO presented a comparative overview of the four communities' creative spaces and a summary of the recommendations. The community partners unanimously agreed that a dedicated person was critical in addressing sector needs. Potential human resource funding options were highlighted as well as ABOs' continued support for plan implementation. NORDIK noted that they could support further research, if needed. There were shared perspectives regarding the importance of hiring a local person, or at least someone from Northern Ontario who understands the community context, is able to bridge silos, and who respects local knowledge and lived experience. Participants noted it may be challenging to find someone to lead the development of the project's plan, or be its 'legs', however, investing in community and building on existing capacity was seen as a principled cornerstone to supporting the sector. Concern was expressed regarding one person's ability to coordinate diverse sector disciplines as well as having to navigate silos and nuanced community histories. A more collaborative, team approach was proposed. The job description, level of experience, and the person's role may vary between communities.

Community partners raised questions and shared their current strategies for sector development which generated a lively discussion around staffing, relationship building and connectivity (i.e., Linking Artists and Arts Organizations to Existing Resources). Partners from Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls will be gathering to continue investigating ways to support the plan. Lake of the Woods Artists Community (LOWAC) representative promoted the 'amazing success' of their Arts@Home program being delivered throughout COVID-19. The representative

from Wawa expressed an interest in adapting such a model and the two are planning to connect. In Wawa, the Economic Development Corporation is leading a community effort to build local capacity through the formation of a cultural circle. Recognizing the need to start with who is in the community, it is taking a strengths-based approach in gathering together people who want to learn and grow and engaging them in different projects to gain practical experience. Over time, they acquire the skills and experience to take on bigger projects to grow a larger arts, culture and heritage hub.

FutureSSM's model that provides a dedicated arts and culture coordinator position was envied, as was their collaborative approach to connecting with the business sector. A number of activities mentioned support the study's Leveraging Capacity recommendation. They conduct 'cold calls' to identify what type of engagement may be of benefit to the owner, pitching it, and then being open to wherever dialogue may lead. For example, if the business has a storefront where art work could hang, or a wall for a mural that would draw attention to their business, FutureSSM staff create a plan to move it forward. Another approach in their toolbox is relationship building with other organizations, within or outside the sector, to identify parallel mandates or events that could be 'piggy-backed' to create a larger event, or cost savings, etc. Concerns were expressed about the longevity of FutureSSM's Arts and Culture Coordinator position and its dismantling now that the original funding is expiring, and the consequences should it not continue. Council, however, has recently extended the current contract until 2022, and moving forward has approved the creation of a new permanent position within the Recreation and Culture Department.

The Independent Arts Council of Timmins Steering Committee representative commented that the potential municipal partners are ready to work with the artists. The missing piece in Timmins right now, the outstanding work, is getting key arts organizations and artists to organize themselves, which would facilitate the hired coordinator person's ability to work with both groups; one that is driven by the artists and one driven by the potential partners.

These points led to a robust discussion regarding the burgeoning success of the northern film industry, due in part, to its network that connects resource people in various communities. A participant from the Timmins Economic Development Corporation mentioned she speaks with film colleagues in Sault Ste. Marie and North Bay on at least a weekly basis. It was suggested a similar network for the arts, culture and heritage sector be developed. Past efforts to create a northern arts network have been challenging. Factors include limited funding for personnel to lead the initiative; the dearth of paid arts administrators who would have time to take this up; the volunteer and/or part-time employment of artists engaged in the sector; and lack of internet infrastructure. Participants pointed out the internet connections and peoples' technological capacity have improved, garnering enthusiasm for a network with a suggestion the conversation continue between partners to explore how it might evolve. Caution was also expressed in relation to workload capacity and ensuring strong local connections were in place to support broader networks. A representative of the Sault Ste. Marie Museum stated that the network "... should be community-based, equitable, grassroots, collaborative and (of course) asset-based." Overall, participants seemed quite eager to meet again to discuss the potential regional network.

The Mapping Northern Creative Spaces research indicates each community has considerable assets upon which to further enliven and strengthen the arts and culture sector. Municipal government has invested in cultural infrastructure in both locales in the past. Individual community reports provide statistics, trends, and identified needs that 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. 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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Kenora and Sioux Narrows– Nestor Falls



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 has 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 operate 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 Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls included the City of Kenora, Lake of the Woods Museum and Douglas Family Art Centre, Lake of the Woods Arts Community, Northwest Business Centre, Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, and Sioux Narrows Arts Council. 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. This final report is available in English and French, as well as in large text formats. Audio recordings of the final report are available in both English and French on ABO's website.

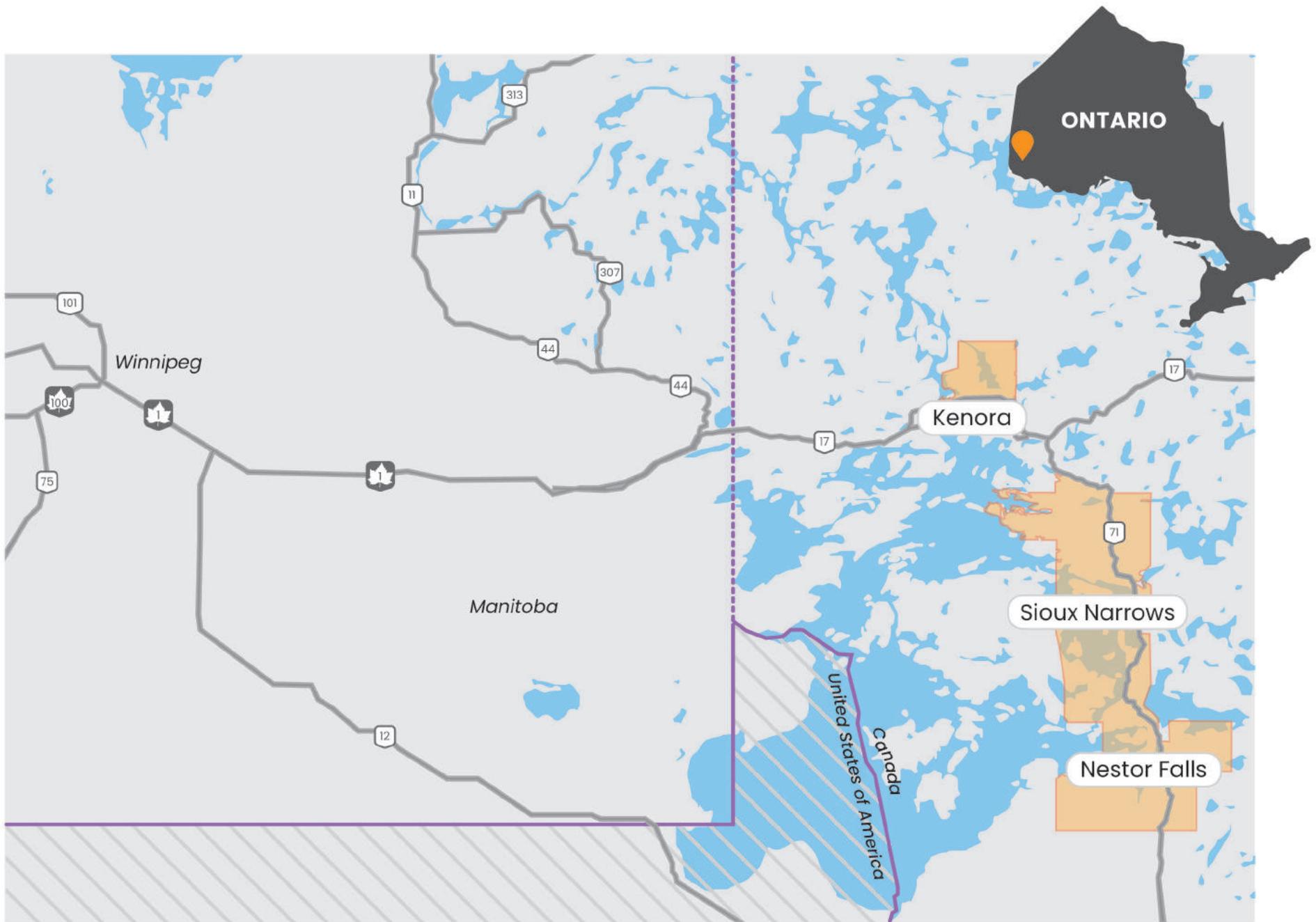
There were some limitations to the project, especially from the impact of COVID-19. The project was designed to conduct an in-person focus group in each community to map their assets, followed by a 4-community online forum. Due to COVID-19 restrictions it was redesigned to collect data through a survey 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

Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls are located in Northwestern Ontario in the Treaty 3 area, on the shores of Lake of the Woods, one of the world's largest inland, freshwater lakes with over 14,000 islands and 65,000 miles of shoreline. They are approximately one hour apart by car, and share many of the same realities. Both have an engaged arts and culture sector, and are impacted annually by tourism, i.e. a high number of seasonal residents and tourists visiting from Manitoba, other parts of Ontario, and the United States who enjoy countless summer and winter activities. The communities are approximately 500 kilometres west of Thunder Bay, and approximately 200 kilometres east of Winnipeg, thus they have strong connections to Manitoba. The Trans-Canada Highway runs directly through Kenora, and Highway 71 provides access to Minnesota. The area is well-served by Kenora's regional airport.

The Town of Kenora (then called Rat Portage) was incorporated in 1882. In 1905, its name was changed from Rat Portage to Kenora by combining the first two letters of the communities of Keewatin, Norman and Rat Portage (Barnes 1955, 22). The communities were not amalgamated/merged at that time. In 2000, Kenora, Keewatin and Jaffray Melick were amalgamated into the City of Kenora. In 2016 the City of Kenora had a population of 15,096 and the wider Kenora District, which spans all the way to the Hudson Bay, had a population of 65,533.¹ Kenora immediately abuts three Ojibwe–Anishinaabe First Nation Reserves, including Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation (Dalles No. 38C) to the northwest, Obashkaandagaang Bay First Nation (Rat Portage No. 38A) to the southwest, and the Anishinaabe of Wauzhushk Onigum (Kenora No. 38B) to the southeast, and the local Métis population is represented by the Kenora Métis Council, a charter member of the Métis Nation of Ontario. Nearly 2,700 people, close to 18 percent of the City's population identify as being of Indigenous descent.

¹ Kenora Community Profile 2018, City of Kenora Economic Development, pg.10



20km

Figure 1: Location of Kenora/Sioux Lookout-Nestor Falls



Figure 2: Lake of the Woods Arts Community – Art Fest 2017

The dominant language spoken in Kenora is English, with 14,780 residents reporting English as their language spoken most often at home, with only 35 reporting French and 180 listing non-official languages, primarily Ojibwe.²

Kenora has historically been known for its dominant forestry industry; however with the sector’s decline in the mid-2000s, it focused on diversifying its economy stimulated through major investments in public sector infrastructure projects including a multi-phase downtown revitalization initiative. A central feature is the Whitecap Pavilion which Great Places in Canada describes as “... a state of the art tensile structure... All year the tent hosts a variety of shows, markets, festivals, competitions, expos, fundraisers and acts as a general ‘let’s get together’ space ...”.³ The City is now in the process of developing a new destination brand.⁴

Kenora has a long history as a crossroads of cultures and as a trading place. There are numerous sites of archaeological value including pictographs and petroglyphs as well as built heritage sites. The city is home to a variety of artists, arts groups, creative businesses, heritage sites, libraries, museums, a visual art centre, a community arts hub, pow-wows, summer music festivals and concert series, and special events. Notably, Lake of the Woods Arts Community, the Kenora District Festival of the Arts, and Lake of the Woods Concert Group. Arts, culture, and heritage activities in Kenora are created, rehearsed, presented, and exhibited through a combination of private studios, purpose-built buildings, land-based and public space activation, and repurposing non-arts-specific spaces. For example, Kenora is known for its Heritage Townscape Murals, a collection of 21 murals around the city painted by a variety of Canadian artists.

² Statistics Canada, 2012

³ https://greatplacesincanada.ca/gpic_places/the-whitecap-pavilion

⁴ Kenora Community Profile 2018, City of Kenora Economic Development, pg. 6

The City has directly invested in two important pieces of cultural infrastructure – the Lake of the Woods Museum (est. 1964, with new facility built in 1986) and the Douglas Family Art Centre (est. and built 2019). Federal, provincial and private sector capital investment built the Douglas Family Art Centre with the City providing operational financial support. In terms of planning, there is a 2007 Performing Arts Conference Centre and Downtown Opportunities Study (City of Kenora) and a 2011 Municipal Cultural Plan for the City of Kenora. The 2019 Harbourfront Business Development Plan, a master plan for the harbourfront, is designed to be a festival destination through collaboration with local artists and cultural institutions. In particular, it outlines a future Gathering Circle and Picnic area, a place where “... we celebrate the twenty-eight First Nations of Treaty 3 and the Métis Nation, who signed an adhesion to the treaty in 1874-75.”⁵

Indirect support includes incentives in the form of grants and incremental tax incentives for a number of business improvement and housing development areas in three Community Improvement Plans (CIPs). The CIPs affect the arts and culture sector through the promotion of revitalization and place-making to attract tourism, business investment, and economic development opportunities, enhancement of streetscapes and building façades, and effective use of community infrastructure.

Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls has approximately 1,000 residents in the winter months and more than 5,000 in the summer. The main industry is tourism and there are over sixty customer service facilities offering a wide range of retail, hospitality, personal, financial, emergency and other services.⁶ There is a library with branches in each community that acts as a community hub.

5 Kenora Harbourfront Business Development Plan Final 2019, pg. 24

6 2015 Community Profile, Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, pg. 6

There are four First Nations communities that closely neighbour or are immediately adjacent to Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls: Naotkamegwaning, Ojibways of Onigaming, Animakee Wa Zhing #37, and Northwest Angle #33. There are both Métis and First Nations residents of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls. Seventy people, close to 13 percent of the Township’s population identify as being of Indigenous ancestry.⁷ The dominant language spoken in Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls is English, with 525 residents reporting English as their language spoken most often at home, with only 10 reporting French and 30 listing non-official languages, primarily various Indo-European languages.⁸

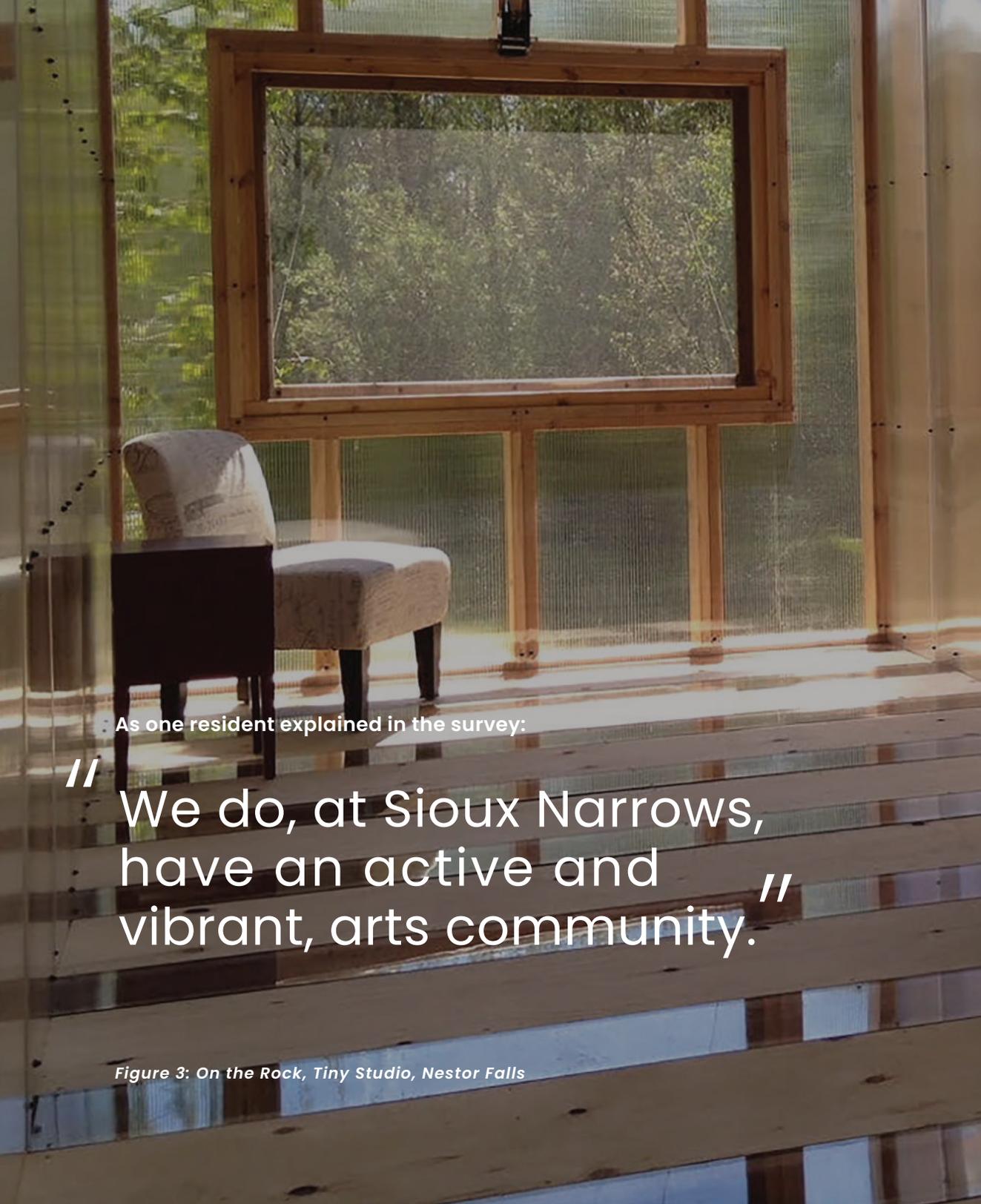
The area, originally home to Objwe and Cree nations, became part of the fur trade route between Kenora and Rainy River. The surrounding area was mined for gold between 1895 and 1900 on a full time basis and then intermittently, followed by the boom-bust cycle of logging camps and mining. Accessible initially by boats or winter roads, the area became more densely populated once Highway 71 was built, fueling the outdoor tourism industry.⁹

The Township’s Strategic Plan 2019-2023 and Community Improvement Plan (2020) outline continued municipal investment in the arts and culture sector through financial incentives for property improvements and heritage buildings, and support for programs such as the Moose n’ Fiddle music festival at Caliper Lake Provincial Park, the Bridge and Falls Creative Residency, a six day, self-guided artist in residence program housed in tiny studios, and the publication of the Bridge & Falls Summer Visitors Guide.

7 Statistics Canada, 2016

8 Statistics Canada, 2016

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sioux_Narrows-Nestor_Falls.



“There too is strong support from [the] local municipal government. Though financial resources are limited, much has already been developed as far as creative spaces and opportunities for creatives to enjoy our local community.

We do have two permanent ‘tiny studios’ that are available on a juried art residency program managed by the Township [Bridge & Falls Creative Residency], as well as opportunities to exhibit at the Northern Ontario Sportfishing Centre public cultural space. The 50 plus Centre with and without partnerships through the Sioux Narrows Arts Council offers multi-disciplinary arts and crafts workshops year-round. There is also a small private, but open to the public, space where local art is both displayed and for sale, at the Vilij Well/Iron & Clay Coffee Shop. The art community here, as said, is strong and active, and the municipality is highly supportive of activities and events, but there is [a] limit to what the municipality can both offer and afford. Where the municipality leaves off, volunteerism takes over (and, really, drives the initiatives).”

– (Survey Participant)

As one resident explained in the survey:

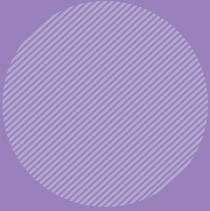
“ We do, at Sioux Narrows, have an active and vibrant, arts community. ”

Figure 3: On the Rock, Tiny Studio, Nestor Falls



2.0

Community Profile



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

2.1 Respondents

The survey respondents are from the combined area of Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls. 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.

Total number of respondents: 39 individuals, 11 organizations

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Age	Individuals	Organizational Representatives
16-20	1	0
21-30	3	0
31-40	3	2
41-50	7	2
51-60	3	3
61-70	13	2
71+	5	0

35 of 39 individuals responded / 9 of 11 organizations responded

As typical in the arts, culture and heritage sector, individual respondents in the Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls area represent a wide range of ages indicating interest in the sector across various life stages. Those completing the survey on behalf of an organization represent a slightly older demographic, which is also common in the sector. The data does not mean that younger people are not playing a significant role individually and/or within organizations through and a range of capacities inducing leadership (volunteer or employed), but rather only that no one in these age brackets participated in the survey.



“ [Our space] is the cultural heart of our community. It provides much needed visual art & heritage exhibition space. It unites the diverse groups within our community.”

– (survey participant)

Figure 4: Lake of the Woods Museum, Kenora

2.2 Community Contributions

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 to the circulation of goods (e.g. for personal use, gifts to others, or for selling in 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 resilience-related characteristics including increased complex problem-solving 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 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 draws 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 existing creative spaces are providing the Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls area. It is followed by two subsections focused on formalized recognition: acknowledgements, recognition and certifications; and, media coverage.

2.2.1 Engagement, Learning, Connectivity and Development

// *My space fills a creative niche within the community, allowing people to participate in a craft they may otherwise not have access to. My space adds creative value to the culture of my community, making it more attractive to locals/visitors/tourists. My space is community building, in that it is a place to gather, learn and create //*

– (Survey participant)

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 can host teaching and learning activities, are currently suitable for the chosen art form, and have some technology and equipment for rent or use. This provides an earned revenue stream and practical support to the creative community.

Organizational creative spaces are currently supporting more activities than individual spaces, especially in the areas of affordable use of space, co-production opportunities, access to discipline-based mentors, physical accessibility, networking, innovative use, visioning/experimentation, and Indigenous knowledge.

The data indicates 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	0	3
Affordable use of space	0	4
Co-production opportunities	0	3
Incubator space for visioning or experimentation	0	2
Innovative use of space	0	2
Networking	0	2
Physically accessible space	0	2
Suitable space for a particular art form	3	3
Teaching and learning opportunities	3	3
Technology and equipment to rent or use	1	1
Understanding of Indigenous knowledge in artistic craft/space	0	2

3 of 39 individuals responded / 5 of 11 organizations responded



Figure 5: Fence painting activity, Sioux Narrows Arts Council

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 mentor other artists, teach, and perform
- Enables me to provide workshops in a variety of visual mediums
- Provides opportunities for dialogue with other artists, share and produce art, and instruct
- Space that provides camaraderie, inspires and opportunities to learn with others
- Provides workshops, tools and materials, allowing people to participate without a significant investment in tools and equipment
- Engages tourists in art, and raises awareness of the environment
- Enables me to create paintings of this area to be shipped worldwide as well sold locally

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:

- Creates a welcoming space... A non-judgmental approach... a place where assumptions and stigmas are deconstructed
- Supports community development and cultural tourism
- Provides incubator spaces
- Provides affordable retail space for regional artists
- Provides consumers and those interested in viewing regional art with free opportunities to engage
- Provides access to instructional materials and professional artists
- Provides dance education, physical activity, arts and expression



Figure 6: Adult painting activity, Sioux Narrows Arts Council

2.2.2 Community Recognition

“ I think it is important that Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls is recognized for its outstanding artistic community. The volunteer and municipal groups should be recognized and receive more support. Individual artists, cooperatives and organizations all contribute time and money to deliver health and wellness, financial, social, emotional and lifelong learning opportunities to residents of all ages through the arts programming. Home of the longest running Arts Festival of its kind in Northwestern Ontario, run by over 100 volunteers. Hundreds of artists in our little community. Check us out. ”

– Survey participant

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.

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

GEOGRAPHIC REACH

- Local: 2 individuals; 2 organizations
- Regional: 2 individuals; 2 organizations
- Provincial: 1 individual; 1 organization
- National: 1 organization

Six individuals and two organizations indicate that this category is not applicable.

SECTOR

- Arts: 2 individuals; 1 organization
- Community Development: 1 individual; 1 organization
- Culture: 1 individual; 2 organizations
- Business: 1 individual
- Black, People of Colour: 1 organization
- Environment: 1 individual

2.2.4

Media Coverage

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, 24% of respondents indicated yes. Specifically, six individuals and two organizations received media coverage at least once in the past five years, and one individual and two organizations were featured more than twice within the same time period.

This media coverage was not limited to the local Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls area. In fact, both individuals and organizations noted that their creative spaces received community recognition at provincial, national, and international levels, as well as in the Indigenous community which transcends colonial borders.

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 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)	0	1
International	1	0
Local	5	4
National	1	1
Provincial	1	1
Regional	2	3

7 of 39 individuals responded / 5 of 11 organizations responded

2.3 Current Space and Identified Needs

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, one of the survey provided five scenarios asking respondents to identify which one best suited their situation.

Table 4: Current Space Scenarios

Respondent Scenarios	Individuals	Organizations
Owens, operates and/or manages creative space	24	6
Audience	Individuals	Organizations
For private or organizational needs	21	1
Open to the public	3	5
Alignment of Needs & Assets	Individuals	Organizations
Open to the public and could or does have short term renters and/or tenants	3	5
Do not have creative space but want it	10	3

35 of 39 individuals responded / 9 of 11 organizations responded

While 24 (or 62%) individual respondents and 6 (or 55%) 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 the section titled [Acquiring and Developing Creative Space, page 41](#)).

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.

2.3.2 Disciplines and Activities

// The Douglas Art Centre, Arts Hub and Inglenook Studio are three great creative spaces in Kenora. //

– (Survey participant)

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			Organizations	
	Practice	Current	Future	Current	Future
Circus	0	0	2	1	2
Community Arts	4	1	5	3	5
Craft Arts	2	2	4	4	4
Dance	0	0	3	1	5
Film	1	0	0	0	0
Heritage	1	0	4	2	4
Literary	0	1	3	4	5
Mixed-media	2	0	3	2	4
Multi-disciplinary	1	0	3	3	5
Music	4	0	5	3	5
Performance	3	0	4	2	5
Theatre	4	0	4	2	5
Visual Arts	8	3	5	5	4

Disciplines - 18 of 39 individuals responded

Current - 14 of 39 individuals responded / Future - 23 of 39 individuals responded

Current - 6 of 11 organizations responded / Future - 7 of 11 organizations responded

Table 5.b: Current Practice and Future Activities

Activities	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
Cafe	0	0	0	0
Classes, Mentoring	5	0	1	0
Client meeting space	0	0	2	0
Creative collaborative space	0	0	3	0
Cultural activities	0	0	2	0
Exhibition space	2	0	2	0
Gathering, public educational space	5	0	2	0
Retail space	3	0	3	0
Other: art camps and workshops	0	0	0	0
Other: creation space, online communication	1	0	0	0
Other: vocal; outdoor artisan and craft market, spring to fall	0	0	0	2

Disciplines - 18 of 39 individuals responded

Current - 14 of 39 individuals responded / Future - 23 of 39 individuals responded

Current - 6 of 11 organizations responded / Future - 7 of 11 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 community arts, music, theatre and performance. When compared to what programming they are currently offering in their creative spaces, however, considerably fewer disciplines are cited. The disciplines and activities they identify offering in the future show a more parallel vision of fulfilling their artistic capacity.

The gap between current practices and current offerings may be due to a number of factors such as space, teacher training, and /or business development skills that could include marketing, registration and payment gateways, time restrictions that limit many Northern artists (Ortiz, 2017). Some of Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls artistic challenges are identified in section [2.6.1 Capacity and Advancement, page 47](#).

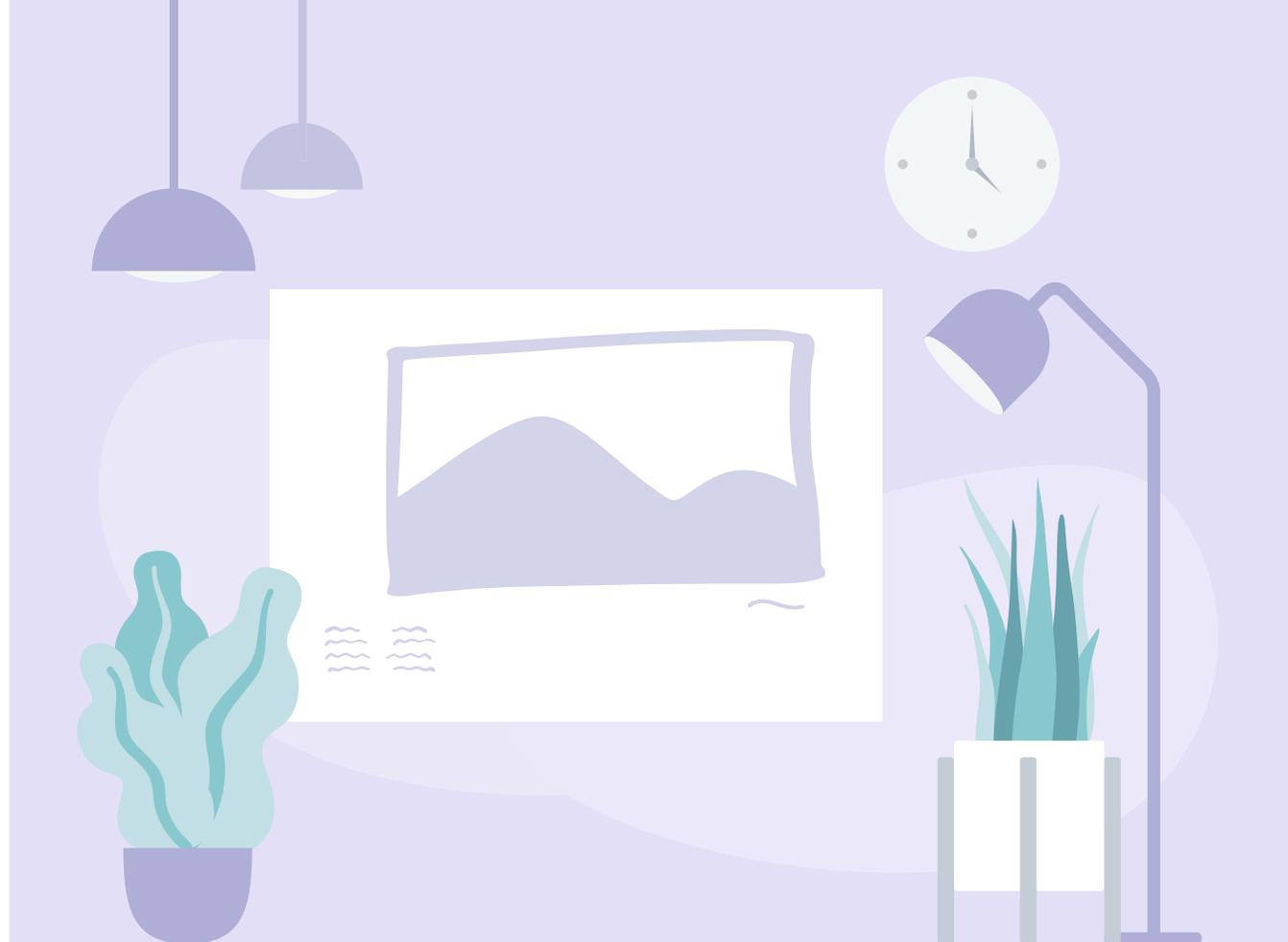


The current activities of existing creative spaces in Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls are slightly different depending on if it is an individual creative space or one operated by an organization. Individual creative spaces function primarily as places for gathering, teaching, mentoring, retail, and exhibition for those working in the visual or craft arts. Organizational creative spaces function primarily as places for collaboration, gathering, meeting, retail, and exhibition for a variety of disciplines. These include visual arts, craft arts, literary, music, theatre, dance, heritage, and mixed-media. There is also more of an emphasis on community arts among organizational creative spaces.

Individual and organizational respondents have similar responses regarding the activities of future creative spaces. Both groups note the need for spaces that function as places for community and multi-disciplinary arts activities, specifically in the performing arts (music, theatre, dance). Respondents also want to see creative spaces offer more activities in the areas of visual arts, craft arts, literary, heritage, and mixed-media.

Figure 7. Community Performance, Lake of the Woods Museum

2.3.3 Creative Space Needs



Although the existing creative spaces are positively contributing to Kenora’s and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls’ 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 [Disciplines and Activities, page 22](#).

NEED FOR MORE CREATIVE SPACE:

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



56% or 28 of 50 total respondents indicated a need for more creative spaces in the Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls area.



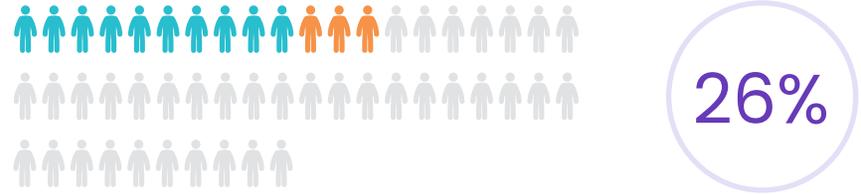
54% of individuals (21 of 39 respondents)



64% of organizations (7 of 11 respondents)

DO NOT HAVE CREATIVE SPACE:

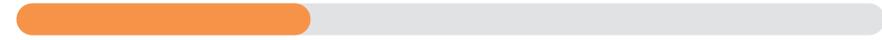
A number of respondents indicate they do not have creative space, and noted their preference for private or public space, leased or owned, and within a city or town rather than rural location.



26% or 13 of 50 total respondents say that they do not currently have a creative space.



26% of individuals (10 of 39 respondents)



27% of organizations (3 of 11 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: 0
 - » Public: 3

LEASED OR OWNED SPACE

- Individuals:
 - » Lease: 1
 - » Own: 0
 - » No Preference: 6
- Organizations:
 - » Lease: 3
 - » Own: 0
 - » No Preference: 0

CITY/ TOWN OR RURAL LOCATION

- Individuals:
 - » City/Town: 4
 - » Rural: 0
- Organizations:
 - » City/Town: 3
 - » Rural: 0

TYPE OF SPACE NEEDED

Both respondents — 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 particular needs. The priority area is retail space, followed by private studios suitable for specific disciplines, with a strong need for performance and exhibition spaces and multi-disciplinary hubs, as well as rehearsal and administrative spaces, and a drop-in arts space for youth.

Table 6: Type of Space Needed

Space	Individuals	Organizations
Administrative space	5	1
Exhibition/Gallery space	11	2
Multi-Disciplinary Hubs	12	4
Performance space	12	7
Private studio suitable for specific disciplines	13	5
Rehearsal space	8	5
Retail space	20	5
Other: Outdoor spaces amphitheatre, event tent, market stands; all of these need to be affordable	2	0
Other: Youth drop in for arts and music	N/A	2

20 of 39 individuals responded / 8 of 11 organizations responded

Specific survey participants comments regarding the need for places for young people to gather include:

// We need a place open to meet. Lots of young professionals and business owners want to get together for art and music but there's no designated gathering spot for it. //

// There is no place in [Sioux Narrows] for younger artists to get together any more. [I] went to [an] arts workshop at the senior's centre. [At] night after work nothing is open in the town except the bar... the town needs to do more to support the locals with [an] art hub. //

One respondent indicated the need for gallery space dedicated to specific media:

// We need a gallery space exclusive to photographers where people can see and purchase one's work. //

2.3.4 Creative Space

Not Meeting Needs

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

Two key areas of improvement include:

- Upgrading size (larger, more space to hold more participants), and
- Functionality (more shelves, storage, natural light; better plumbing; improved organization of space/ layout; better equipment).

No organization responded to this question.

The study did not seek to determine whether or not the respondents intend to undertake any action to address these shortcomings.

Please see the section on [Developing Creative Space: Capital Plans, page 43](#).

2.3.5 Creative Space Meeting Needs

A few individuals and one organization 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 participant needs, but does include a few key benchmarks.

Table 7: Creative Space Meeting Needs

Needs	Individuals	Organizations
Affordability	7	1
Ease of Access	7	1
Size	5	0
Suitability	5	0
Other: home contains needed equipment	2	N/A

9 of 39 individuals responded / 1 of 11 organizations responded

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 desire and need for more space to utilize artists current creative capacity and to meet individual and organizational goals of furthering participation. They also identify the type of new space they are seeking and preferences for such in terms of leasing or owning. A few respondents noted there is space within their building that could potentially be rented or leased.

2.4 Operations



Figure 8: Douglas Family Art Centre, Kenora

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 Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls. The study includes organizational lifespan, management structure, facility management, revenue, operating hours, demographic engagement, recurring engagement, and barriers to accessing creative space.

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	5-9	10-14	20-29	40-49	50+
Number of Organizations	1	1	2	2	3

9 of 11 organizations responded

The data indicates Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls are 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. Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls have organizations that have many years of operating experience, seven have 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.

2.4.2

Management Structure

Although none of the respondents indicated their management structure is a collective or Ad-Hoc Group, 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 41](#)).

The study also reveals that these creative spaces are run by a mix of staff, volunteers or a mix of both, highlighting again the variety of community experience to operate creative spaces. The survey did not identify the number of employment or volunteer opportunities or the reasons for operating with such. No individuals responded to this question.

Those responding to the survey indicated their creative spaces are privately owned, rather than leased. It is unknown if there is a lack of leasing opportunities or if people simply did not respond.

Table 9: Management Structure

Governance Structure	Individuals	Organizations
Charitable Corporation	N/A	1
Co-operative	N/A	1
Collective or Ad-Hoc Group	N/A	N/A
Not-For-Profit Corporation	N/A	1
Personnel	Individuals	Organizations
Staff-run	N/A	3
Volunteer-run	N/A	1
Mix of Volunteer and Staff-Run	N/A	1
Ownership	Individuals	Organizations
Privately Owned (Sole Proprietorship or Partnership)	3	1
Tenant	0	0

3 of 39 individuals responded / 5 of 11 organizations responded

2.4.3 Facility Management Experience

Of the few people who responded, the data shows there are individuals and organizations with experience owning, leasing, or managing a creative space in Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, 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.

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

	Individuals	Organizations
Less than 1 year	0	0
1-4 years	0	0
5-10 years	2	2
More than 10 years	1	3

3 of 39 individual responded / 5 of 11 organizations responded

2.4.4

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	2
Bank Loan	0	0
Donations	0	2
Facility or equipment rental	1	1
Federal government operating grant	0	1
Federal government project grant	0	1
Food/beverage	0	0
Fundraising	0	2
Government loan	0	0
Indigenous government loan	0	1
Membership fees	0	1
Municipal government operating grant	0	2
Municipal government project grant	0	2
Provincial government operating grant	0	1
Provincial government project grant	1	2
Registration fees (classes, instruction, etc.)	2	1
Retail	3	3
Social enterprise	0	0
Ticket Sales	0	0
Other Loan	0	0

3 of 39 individuals responded / 4 of 11 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; funding criteria; awareness of opportunities; and/or capacity (time or skill) to apply/access them. A few areas that would contribute to increasing revenue generating opportunities are identified in the section titled [Capacity and Advancement, page 47](#).

It is important to note, research indicates that funding models do not particularly favor northern artists (Ortiz, 2017, p.253). 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. Longer-term 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.253).

2.4.5

Operating Hours

For this study, full-time hours were defined as over 20 hours per week. The chart illustrates many of the 31 individuals and 9 organizations who responded to this question are interested in increasing their hours.

Table 12: Weekly Operating Hours and Future Goals

Operating Hours	Individuals Current	Individuals Goal	Organizations Current	Organizations Goal
Less than 10 hours	4	6	1	3
10-20 hours	10	9	0	1
21-40 hours	5	10	3	3
41-60 hours	2	4	2	3
More than 60 hours	0	0	0	1

31 of 39 individuals responded / 9 of 11 organizations responded



**2.4.6
Demographic
Engagement**

“ We are ‘cottage country’ ...
cottagers from all over
the world... many are artists. ”

– (Survey participant)

Figure 9: Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls Moose N' Fiddle Festival

In recent years the tourism sector has seen a significant growth in cultural tourism, particularly experiential activities. A couple of respondents identified the important role the surrounding environment impacts their practice – one received recognition in the field, and another noted it as a community benefit, i.e. the engagement of tourists in art, raises the awareness of the environment. The area is home to a number of Indigenous communities that have strong cultural traditions that retain, preserve and promote traditional values and cultural distinctiveness. Immigration, including returning residents or citizens from within Canada, and people new to Canada, offer a diversity of perspectives and cultural norms. The arts sector is recognized for being an intercultural cultural 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.

Table 13: Increasing Demographic Engagement

Engagement	Individuals	Organizations
Local and/or nearby residents	2	4
Seasonal area residents (in the area for a length of time, but not year-round)	1	3
Tourists (short stay or passing through)	1	2

3 of 39 individual responded / 4 of 11 organizations responded

2.4.7

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

When survey participants were asked if they thought there were transportation or physical barriers to accessing creative spaces in their community, few people answered the question. Three individuals stated they did not think there were accessibility barriers in their community; one organization noted there was a lack of personal and/or public transit and travel times/distances; and one organization indicated that their space did not accommodate people with disabilities.

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.

In the Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls area survey participants indicate there are three individual and four organizational creative spaces designed for recurring engagement. One organization

notes they would like to attract repeat users in the future and can do so without any physical changes to the facility.

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).

In sum, this 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 over a period of time, some with more than ten years experience. For those who responded to the questions, few revenue streams 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. Whether or not there are barriers to accessing creative space remains somewhat undetermined. Local transportation may be an issue, and older buildings may not meet current code. There is 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 tourists and to a lesser degree, tourists (those who are in the area for a length of time) and to a lesser degree, tourists described as those stay for a short period of time or are passing through. This speaks to an interest and commitment to the community.

2.5 Acquiring or Developing Creative Space

// Kenora is a great community with a rich art community. The community needs more opportunities to expand either together or as separate ventures. //

– (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.

2.5.1

Acquiring 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.

PLANS TO ACQUIRE OR DEVELOP CREATIVE SPACE:

- 18% of respondents (9 of 50) 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.

- 13% of individual respondents (5 of 39) see being located in a creative space with others as a collaborative solution to their space needs.
- 26% of all respondents (13 of 50) are willing or at least interested in partnering with others to purchase, rent, and/or build a creative space.

This indicates there are a number of individuals and organizations open to exploring collective management structure options which could include cooperatives and creative hubs.

One survey respondent expressed their interest stating,

"I believe it would be beneficial to have many creative disciplines under one roof. This serves to inspire all in their endeavors."

Participants could potentially connect with those organizations that indicated they have space for lease or rent. (See [Current Space Scenarios, page 21](#)).

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."*¹⁰ 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 [Appendix I: Resources, page 68](#) for examples in Toronto and Hearst.

¹⁰ <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/cultural-spaces-fund/application-guidelines.html#a25>

2.5.2

Developing Creative 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.

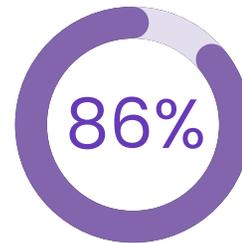
Creative space capital projects can be complicated, require significant financial and time investment, and are especially daunting if you have no experience with one. However, capital projects are an integral part of the life cycle of creative spaces, whether they develop the space in the first place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

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

1. Larger space (to accommodate more teaching opportunities and participants)
2. Better organized and equipped space (light, shelving, amenities, separation)
3. Exhibition and retail 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:



of respondents (43 of 50)
are not planning for a creative
space capital project.



of respondents (23 of 50)
are not 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 local capital and real estate. One organization felt that their creative space already meets their needs, and one organization recently completed a capital project. The reasons cited align with the following section that identifies areas that contribute to difficulties in developing or maintaining creative space.

2.5.3 Developing Creative Space: Considerations

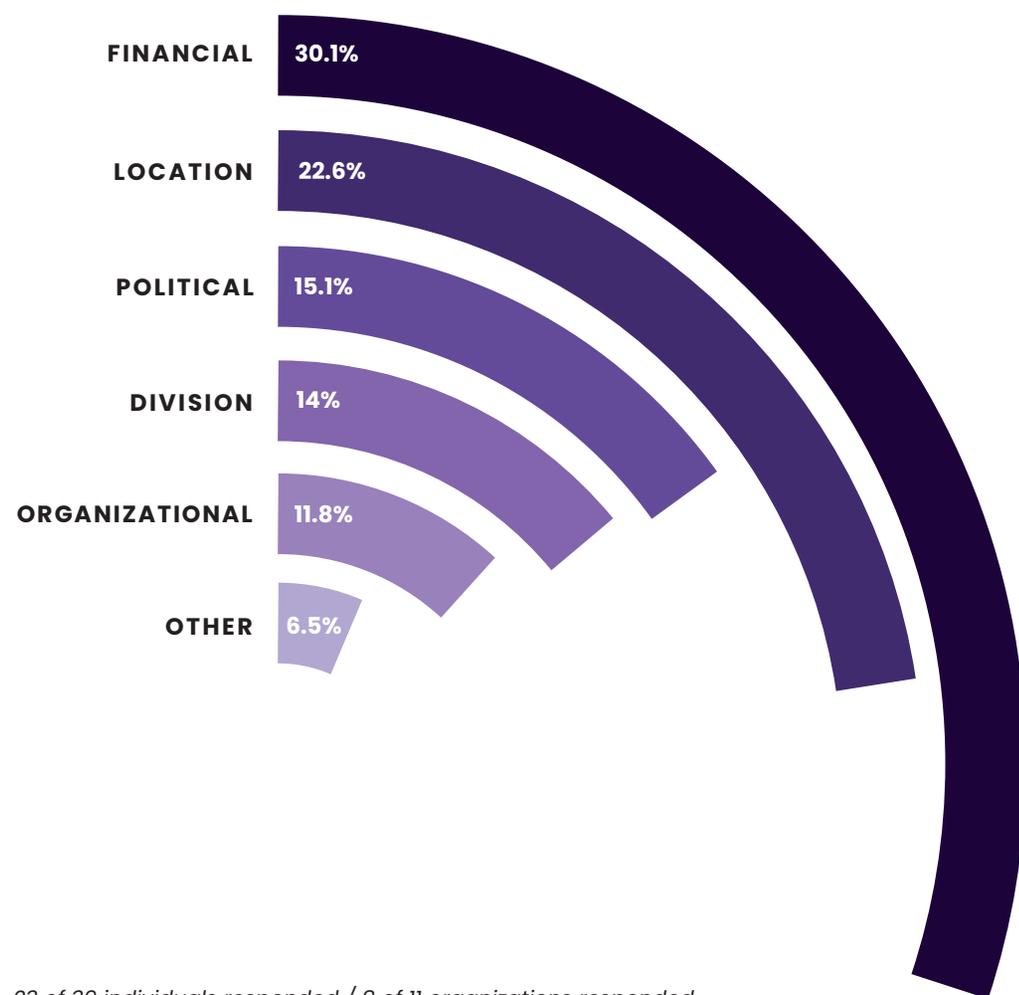
// *Being an artist in an isolated area is easier than in 1986 with the internet, but it is still a challenge with contact, space, shipping costs, small populations and information.* //

– (Survey participant)

There are numerous factors to consider when acquiring or developing a creative space, some are common across communities such as a building’s physical location, organizational capacity, financial health, and political influences, while other circumstances are more place-based, for example, geographical 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”.

Figure 10: Circumstances that make a creative space difficult to develop and maintain



23 of 39 individuals responded / 8 of 11 organizations responded

COVID-19

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 and its long-lasting 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 seasonal regional tourist economy.

FINANCIAL

Funding, access to capital, and operational costs.

LOCATION

Space factors (the physical building) include: availability of proper space/land; size; permanent options that are accessible and affordable; suitability for artistic needs (creation, performance, exhibition); retail location suitable for locals and tourists.

Place factors (the geographical context) include: remote, rural environment; growth potential within a smaller rural setting due to limited audience; challenge of developing relationships with artists in remote Northwestern Ontario communities.

POLITICAL

Refers to limited government support, etc. with one respondent identifying “The economy and lack of support from various levels of government”.

DIVISION

Diverse visions of needs to be considered when selecting a viable path forward: community buy-in and/or broader community cooperation, including “Competition with other community interests.”

ORGANIZATIONAL

No existing organization to support development; limited management capacity including concerns about their ability to run creative spaces, whether it be lack of time, knowledge and skill and/or priorities recognizing they are artists first and foremost.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Other category is where topics unique to Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls were cited. They include: seasonal residents and tourism; winter closures; insufficient of parking; living in isolation and/or off the grid; old infrastructure; and various social issues.



Figure 11: Douglas Family Art Centre, Kenora

2.6 Sustaining Creative Space

This section provides information regarding areas in which the participants from Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls’ are seeking to build capacity through developing skills and accessing resources; the types of current and future partnerships, and the purposes of such.

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 (intersector, 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.

Respondents in Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls 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. Advocacy capability and marketing support top the list for all respondents. Additionally, business acumen and knowledge pertaining to social advancement (accessibility, inclusion, equity) are priorities for individuals, while operational and financial skills are also key for organizations. One organization cited visioning, which is critical to ensuring ongoing accountability in meeting its mandate while responding to changing circumstances such as demographics, economic climate, and more recently COVID-19.

Participant comments regarding these topic include:

BUSINESS PLANNING

- How to involve community government, lease space, and run a co-operative gallery
- Pivoting: Money needed for pivot to online instruction, equipment and expertise (filming, editing, etc.)
- Expansion: I have lots of ideas and would like to do [teaching online]...to do so requires an outlay of money to hire videographers, knowledge, training, etc.

MARKETING

- Build a literal map/listing/directory of the arts spaces in Kenora, especially for tourists and seasonal residents.
- Arts entrepreneurs need publicity support, in addition to credit/funding.
- Use Instagram as a place to share and connect with results and the arts.

ADVOCACY

- I'm just hoping to be part of the conversation about creative spaces in my community. Creative endeavours like mine need support in order to flourish.

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 decision-makers toward investment and support)	6	3
Business (planning, strategy, HR)	3	1
Financial (how to diversify revenues, regular management)	2	2
Marketing (online presence, etc.)	6	3
Operational (facility management, asset management, maintenance, etc.)	1	2
Social/Cultural (accessibility, inclusion, diversity, equity, etc.)	4	1
Space audit/plan	1	1
Other: visioning	N/A	1

Individuals: 10 of 39 responded / Organizations: 5 of 11 responded

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. It could also include ways to attain business infrastructure (advertising, registration and payment gateways) that would facilitate teaching workshops and or selling products and services. 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 example, the Northwest Business Centre (NWBC), located in Kenora, provides the region with small business resources and support services tailored to their individual needs. They have offered the arts sector business development programming and during the virtual forum, reiterated their commitment to responding to identified needs. A number of participants were not aware of these opportunities and intend to raise the awareness with their members.

NWBC is currently promoting the Digital Main Street platform, a free 'how to' guide to help grow businesses. In partnership with NORDIK Institute's Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (SEE) initiative, the NWBC is encouraging the development of social enterprises—businesses with a social, cultural, or environmental concern—which the arts and culture sector falls. In the North, there is increasing awareness of the concept of social enterprises. The federal and provincial governments are providing various investment opportunities for such enterprises and some creative spaces are seeking opportunities under this revenue envelope.

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 68](#) for a list of additional organizations dedicated to arts and culture sector capacity and advancement development.

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 Conclusions and Next Steps, page 53](#) offer pathways for navigating these challenges.

2.6.2

Partnerships and Collaboration

In the Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls 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.

Participants in the community forum noted some specific examples of partnerships in action in Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls.

- Churches - a theatre company and others use it for performance
- School auditoriums used for performances
- Unique Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls event was held in the provincial park in summer 2020

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 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 the Northwest Business Centre. 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 sectorsector, (e.g. linking business-minded entrepreneurs artists could lead to new hybrid models of operating micro businesses, allowing them time to focus on their core capacities).

Table 15: Types of Partnerships

	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
BIPOC communities	1	1	1	4
Businesses	1	3	2	1
Faith-based organizations	0	0	0	0
Federal government	0	1	1	1
Immigrant communities	1	0	0	3
Indigenous government	0	2	1	1
Legions or service clubs	1	1	0	2
LGBTQ2S+ communities	1	1	1	3
Municipal government	1	3	2	1
Museums or heritage organizations	3	4	3	3
Non-profit organizations	3	4	3	2
Provincial government	0	3	2	1
Sports/Recreation clubs or facilities	1	1	2	2
Other - Lake of the Woods Art Community, professional artists, universities, colleges, high schools	2	1	2	N/A

Current: 5 of 39 individuals responded / Future: 13 of 39 individuals responded
 Current: 3 of 11 organizations responded / Future: 4 of 11 organizations responded

Table 16: Purpose of Partnerships

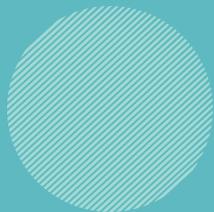
	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
Audience Development	3	3	2	4
Expertise	3	5	1	3
Financial	3	5	3	1
Marketing	3	7	2	2
Operations	0	0	1	0
Physical Building/Space	2	4	2	0
Programming	1	2	2	4
Staffing/Volunteers	2	0	2	2
Supplies	1	3	0	0
Not Applicable	5	6	0	1
Other - working with other artists, supplying product;-research, kindred interests for personal development, design/build	3	N/A	1	N/A

*Current: 11 of 39 individuals responded / Future: 16 of 39 individuals responded
 Current: 3 of 11 organizations responded / Future: 5 of 11 organizations responded*



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, Elkhuisen, 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. Surveys found creative space in Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls 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. It is engaging people that range in age from 16 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 five 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, volunteer labour, and combinations thereof. Individual respondents indicated their practice disciplines are diverse with a very strong emphasis on visual arts, followed by a particular focus on community arts, music, theatre and performance. When compared to what programming is currently offered, there appear to be underutilized capacities (i.e. music, theatre, film, performance, heritage, mixed-media, multi-disciplinary) and a desire to increase engagement in these areas as well as other disciplines. Individual respondents indicated their practice disciplines are diverse with a very strong emphasis on visual arts, followed by a particular focus on community arts, music, theatre and performance. When compared to what programming is currently offered, there appear to be underutilized capacities (i.e. music, theatre, film, performance, heritage, mixed-media, multi-disciplinary) and a desire to increase engagement in these areas as well as other disciplines.

Participants, specifically 56% of the total respondents (28 of 50), 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. Thirty have creative space; 13 do not have space; and, three individuals want the space for their private needs, while the rest would like the space open to the public. The majority of individuals have no preference between leased or owned space; however, organizations prefer to lease. All respondents preferred a city/town location to a rural site. **The primary type of space individual participants are seeking is retail and discipline-specific studio space, followed by exhibition, performance and multi-disciplinary hubs. Organizations’ indicated performance, followed by discipline-specific studio space, rehearsal and performance space.** In terms of acquiring creative space, **13 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.

The study indicates Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls has a solid base upon which to further develop a vibrant arts, culture and heritage sector that would reap broader community benefits. Many of the key pieces to build capacity and advance the sector currently exist; however, the missing ‘dots’ that would greatly increase the sector’s sustainability and expedite growth largely revolve around human resources and a coordinated plan to that would:

- i) Link Artists and Organizations to Existing Resources;
- ii) Leverage Capacity; and,
- iii) Lead by Developing Models of Sustainability.

A number of areas where the sector is seeking resources are identified in Kenora's 2011 [Municipal Cultural Plan](#) (MCP), specifically:

- Strategy #1: Raising the Profile of Culture
- Strategy #3: Improving Communication and Promotion
- Strategy #4: Increasing Coordination, Support and Partnerships with Community Organizations
- Strategy #5: Addressing Cultural Facility and Gathering Space Needs
- Strategy #7: Expanding Lifelong Learning and Professional Development Opportunities
- Strategy #8: Fostering and Attracting Cultural Industries
- Strategy #9: Building Cultural and Environmental Tourism
- Strategy #10: Investing in Cultural Development

The Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls Community Improvement Plan (2012) and the Strategic Plan 2019–2023 indicates a continued commitment to arts, culture and heritage, with three key foci:

- (i) Moose n' Fiddle Music Festival at Caliper Lake Provincial Park;
- (ii) Artist in Residence program at Tiny Studios; and
- (iii) the Bridge and Falls Visitors Guide (p. 6).

Identifying where arts, culture and heritage sector development gaps link to community planning documents is not intended to imply the municipalities are solely responsible for its development, but rather to illustrate the identified areas and advocate for sufficient resources to enable the sector to meet their stated objectives. In Kenora's MCP culture is seen as: (i) a driver for community reinvention and economic development; (ii) a community unifier and source of personal enrichment; (iii) a world-class four-season destination; (iv) a place that has spaces to gather, network, and partner and are welcoming to youth (p.15–16). Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls Strategic Plan 2019–2023's vision continues to value cultural events and the arts and will support community involvement and community pride; will reflect a positive attitude and take a proactive role in community development; and, will practice sustainable economic development and balance business opportunities with the environmental health of the community (p. 4).

3.1 Recommendations

3.1.1

Moving Forward

Hire a dedicated, full-time limited term position to create a development plan to address the creative space needs identified in this study. The person would work in collaboration with the project partners and others dedicated to advancing arts and culture in the area, for example, Kenora's Community Service Department personnel, and an identified personnel of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls. The person would:

1. Ensure diverse voices, particularly 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 player.

3.1.2

Link Sector to 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. Key is creating the critical connections 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 area 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 Northwest Business Centre, 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. (Kenora MCP: 8.4; SN-NF Strategic Plan: i; ii; iii)

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 Northwest Business Centre, 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).
- The arts sector may have pre-existing relationships with organizations in Manitoba that could support strategic planning as well.

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. (Kenora MCP: 4.3; 7.3; SN-NF Strategic Plan: i; ii; iii)

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 municipalities 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. (MCP: 7.3; 8.4)

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

- Training workshops and coaching to prepare investment pitches
- Connect with Northwest Business Centre and/or investors to facilitate workshops or provide coaching (MCP: 8.4; 10.1)

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. (MCP: 5.4; 8.4)

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. (MCP: 5.4; 8.4; 9.2)

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. (Kenora MCP: Strategy #5; 10.1; 10.3; 10.4; SN-NF Strategic Plan: i; ii)

III. INCREASE OPERATING HOURS

- Determine if the goal to extend hours of operation is seasonal or year-round, and feasibility and/or support necessary to achieve goals. (MCP: 9.2; 8.4)

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. (Kenora MCP: Strategy #3; 4.5; 7.3; 8.1; 9.2; 9.5; SN-NF Strategic Plan: i; ii)

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 programming interest for recurring engagement; determine if space needs renovating; assess feasibility and identify ways to support transitioning to recurring engagement. (MCP: 4.5; 8.4; 9.2)

VII. INCREASE BUILDING UTILIZATION

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

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 co-located or operating separately. (MCP: 4.1; 4.2)

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. (Kenora MCP: 8.4)

It is also relevant to Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls' Strategic Plan for arts and culture development.

3.1.4

Lead With Sustainable Models

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's development into the City of Kenora and Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls' plans, the study suggests it remains undervalued and underdeveloped. There is notable need to increase understanding of the sector's importance to individual and collective health, 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 the Northwest Business Centre to develop business plans. The digital Main Street online store platform may suit individual operators. Northwest Business Centre and arts organizations such as Lake of the Woods Arts Community (LOWAC) may also provide links to other dedicated service providers. (Kenora MCP: 8.4; 9.1)
- 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 Kenora MCP: 1.7 and Strategy #3; and the Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls Strategic Plan regarding marketing and publication of the Bridge and Falls Summer Visitors Guide).

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. (Kenora MCP: 1.3; 1.4; 1.8; 2.1; 2.5; 4.3; SN-NF Strategic Plan, Vision)

IV. INVESTMENT AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MODELS

- Develop a locally viable sustainable funding model incorporating both public and private support to further develop creative spaces. Investigate reallocating existing development resources to the arts sector; resource sharing across sectors; and investment incentives for private and/or public/private partnerships. (MCP: 2.4)

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. (Kenora MCP: Strategy #5; #10)

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 Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls, 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 Kenora and Sioux Narrows–Nestor Falls area has considerable assets upon which to further enliven and strengthen the arts and culture sector. Municipal government has invested in cultural infrastructure in both locales in the past. Those engaged in the arts demonstrate expertise, commitment and perseverance; however, further 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 [case studies](#), [tools](#) and [resources](#), 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 [Canada Cultural Spaces Fund](#) 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.
- [Economic Development Initiative \(EDI\)](#) - 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: [Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie](#) (2007); [Breathing Northwinds](#) (2011); [Growing Ontario's Crafts North](#) (2012); [Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Mentoring Networks](#) (2013); [Valuing Northern Libraries Toolkit](#) (2018); and [Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Building Northern Ontario's Resilience](#) (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 [Community Enhancement Program](#) 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 [Cultural Supports Program](#) 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 [People and Talent Program](#) 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.

Timmins



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 operate 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 Steering Committee for an Independent Arts Council for Timmins was the project partner for Timmins. 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. 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

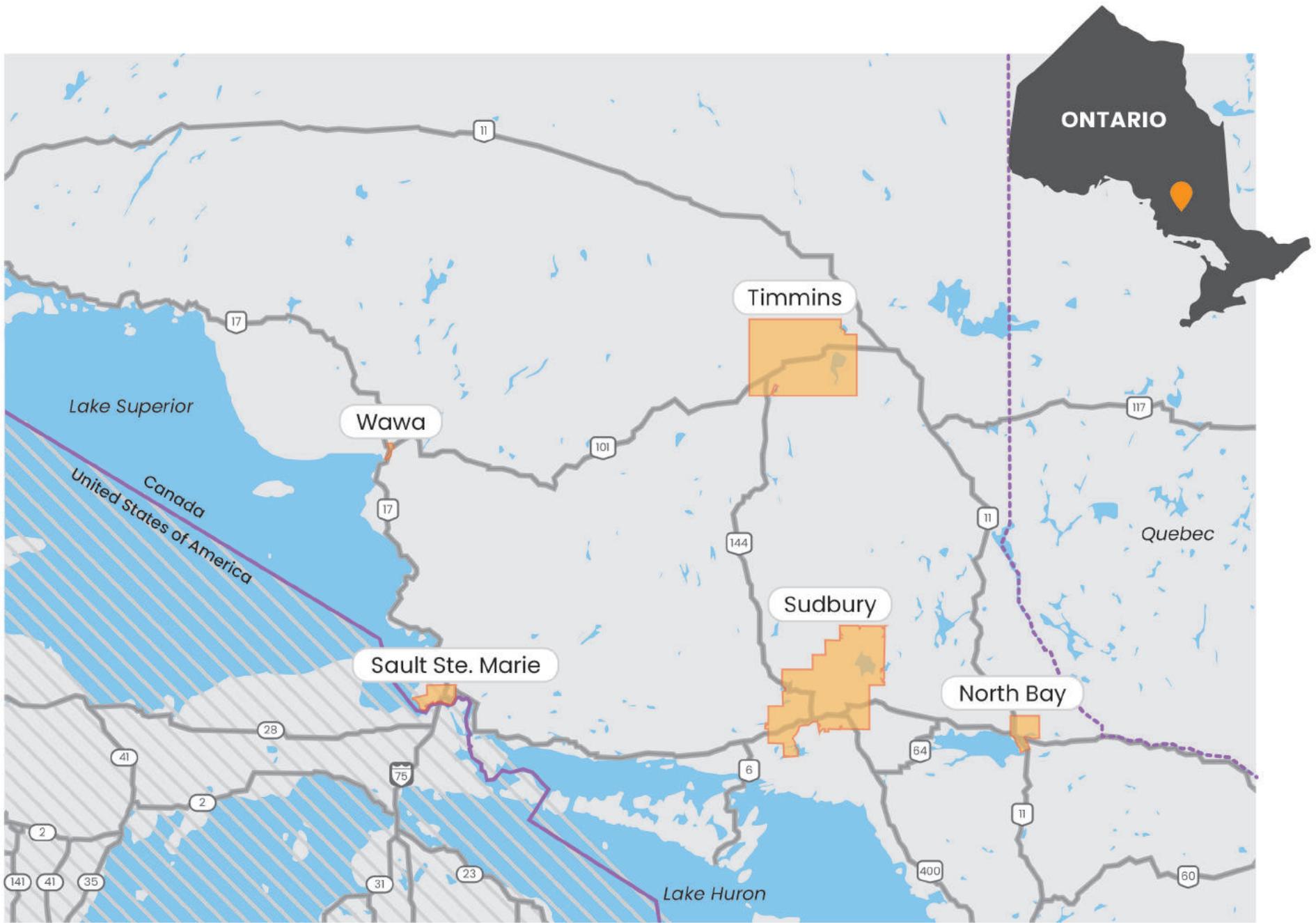
Timmins is located in the boreal forest of Northern Ontario, in Treaty 9 Territory on what are the traditional lands of the Mattagami First Nation. It is accessible by road, rail, and air transportation networks; the airport connects with many major centres in 90 minutes. Timmins is approximately 450 km northeast of Sault Ste. Marie, 300 km north of Sudbury, and 200 km east of Quebec.¹ Timmins is dominated by the natural resource sector, but it has an engaged arts and culture sector with tourism as a growing part of the economy.

In 2016 Timmins had a population of 41,788, with 68% of the population aged 15–64². The operational office of the Wabun Tribal Council is located in Timmins. Wabun serves the neighbouring communities of Brunswick House First Nation, Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation, Flying Post First Nation, Matachewan First Nation, Mattagami First Nation, and Beaverhouse First Nation. The local Métis population is represented by the Timmins Council, a member of the Métis Nation of Ontario. The dominant language spoken in Timmins is English, with 23,655 residents (57%) reporting English as their first language. However, Timmins is home to a strong Francophone community, as 14,885 (36%) residents speak French as their first language. Many residents speak Indigenous languages such as Cree, Ojibwe, Dene, Mohawk, and Michif. In addition to Indigenous people living in the city, Timmins also has a diverse settler & immigrant population, with larger communities from India, Nigeria, and the Philippines³.

¹ *Timmins Community Profile, Timmins Economic Development Corporation, pg. 5.*

² *Statistics Canada, 2016.*

³ *Timmins Community Profile, Timmins Economic Development Corporation, pg. 8.*



└─ 20km

Figure 1: Location of Timmins

Northern College is a post-secondary institution with four campuses across northern Ontario, including in Timmins. Northern College's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 has three key directions that will impact the community over the next several years: Indigenous Education and Empowerment, Innovative Approaches to Access, and Invigorating Northern Experience. As is the case with many resource-based communities, Northern College emphasizes engineering and trades programs, along with health and emergency/community services and veterinary sciences. Although Northern College hosts the annual Northern College Powwow, the campus does not include arts facilities and overall there is a lack of post-secondary arts training in Timmins.



Figure 2: Porcupine Art Club

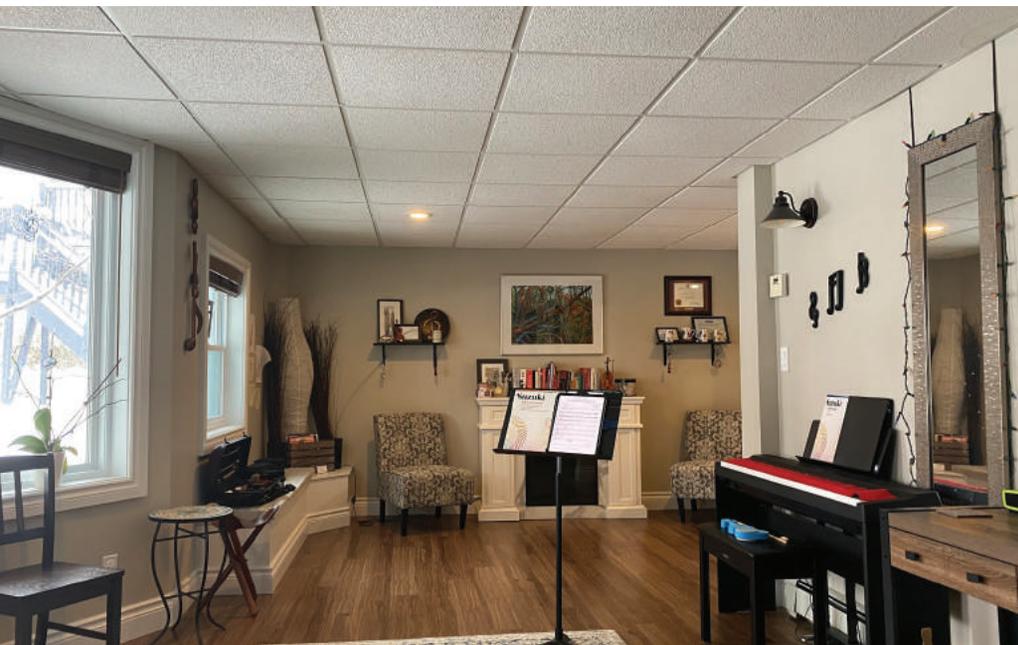


Figure 3: Violin Studio (Photo: A. Garwood-Touw)

Timmins is home to a wide variety of artists, arts organizations, and cultural groups. These include: groups and member-based organizations/non-profits in music, theatre, visual arts, writing, and crafts; community art programs specifically aimed at youth that include digital arts, murals, art therapy; five independent dance schools; film companies; several music businesses including schools, retail, and a recording studio; as well as visual arts/crafts shops, galleries, and/or studios. Timmins' literary community includes the Silverleaf Writing Guild; comic book series Auric of the Great White North, which is drawn and written by Great North Comics (Dewsbury, Thomas and Gauthier), and published author Paul Toffanello (Popchuk Ghost Series).



Figure 4: Timmins Public Library

Existing community facilities and/or cultural centres are the Timmins Museum: National Exhibition Center, Timmins Public Library/Bibliothèque Municipale de Timmins and C.M.Shields Centennial Library, Centre Culturel La Ronde, Timmins Native Friendship Centre, and the Ojibway & Cree Cultural Centre. The Timmins Museum: National Exhibition Center is a public resource dedicated to the presentation, promotion and preservation of

heritage and culture through exhibitions, community education and public programs. It is city-owned and operated. The museum has a program room and art studio which are both used for a variety of public programming. In addition to the aforementioned purpose-built spaces, the community relies on halls such as the McIntyre Community Building, as well as churches, a cinema, clubhouses, community halls, taverns, and school auditoriums.

[Centre Culturel La Ronde](http://www.larondetimmins.ca/) was established in 1968, to promote, stimulate and animate French life within the Timmins community. It provides Francophones a space to come together to preserve and develop their identity and culture.⁴ They are currently rebuilding the Centre on their former site.

Timmins is home to several festivals and events each year, hosted by a combination of municipal, non-profit, and arts/ community/cultural groups. These include music festivals and concert series, a film festival, Culture Days, a multi-cultural festival, various holiday celebrations throughout the year, winter carnivals, a powwow, and retail opportunities such as a pop up shop, urban market, and a craft show.



Figure 5: Centre culturel La Ronde capital project campaign



Figure 6: Centre culturel La Ronde capital project concept drawings

⁴ <https://www.larondetimmins.ca/>

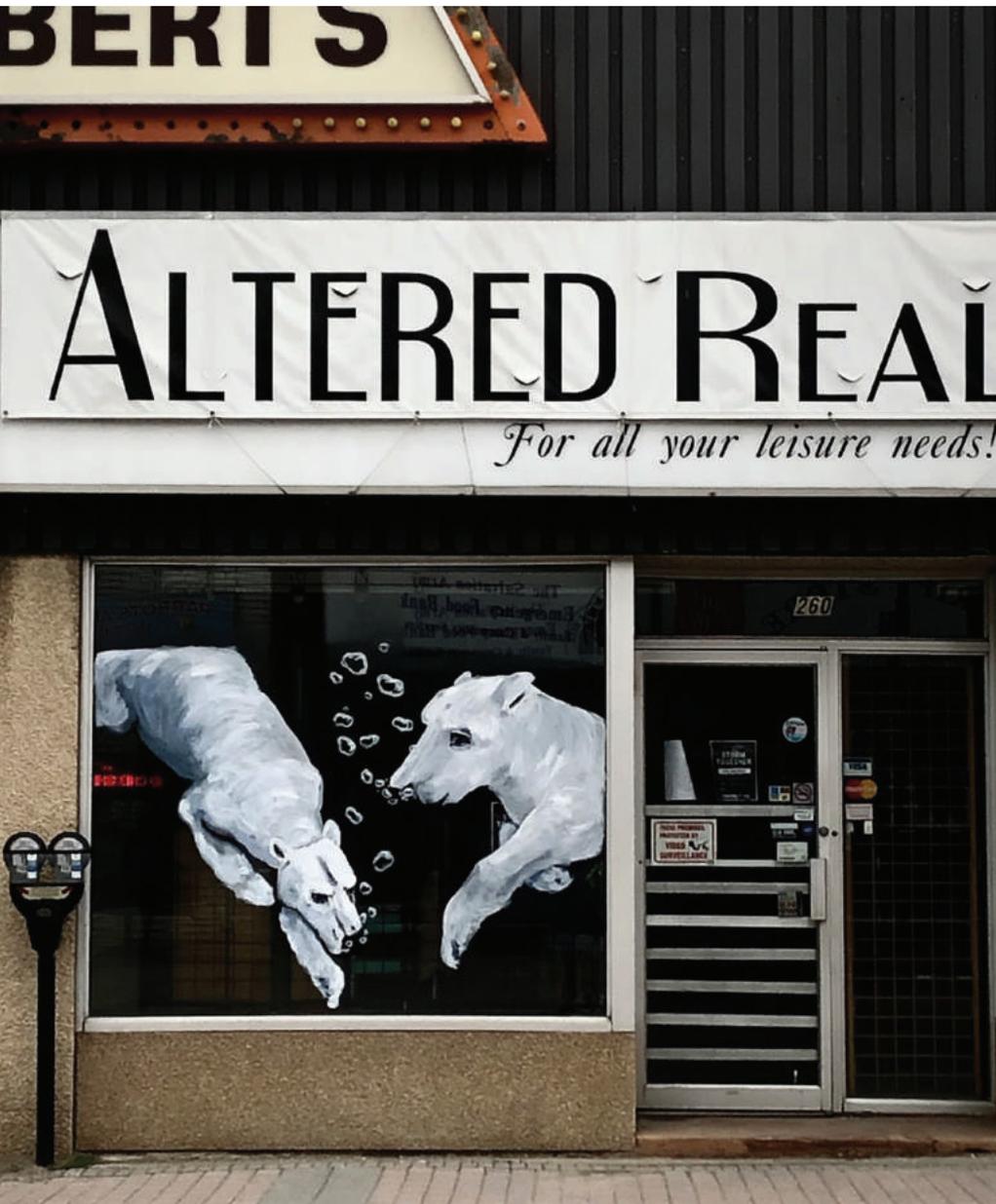


Figure 7: Downtown Timmins BIA Splash Windows project, artist T. Racicot

[The Timmins Economic Development Corporation](http://www.timminsedc.com/)⁵ has a Community Economic Development team that works with organizations, non-profit groups and funders to facilitate quality of life projects that make Timmins more attractive to potential residents and investors. [Timmins Downtown BIA](https://www.downtowntimmins.com/)⁶ is planning to issue a new five year strategic plan in 2021. Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA) hosts retail events during the year, and commissioned a beautification engagement project in 2020, Splash Window Project, which featured original works painted on storefronts.

The City has two major plans guiding its relationship to the arts, culture, and heritage sector in Timmins. The Timmins 2020 Community Vision and Strategic Plan⁷ was released in 2011 out of which came the recommendation to establish a Municipal Cultural Plan (MCP) (p.20), resulting in the City of Timmins Culture Master Plan⁸ which was released in 2015. The Culture Plan is “... a means of leveraging and strengthening local cultural assets for resident attraction, business retention and expansion, enhanced quality of life and community vibrancy over the long-term.” The long-term vision for culture is: “A vibrant City showcasing our shared community heritage and pride through self-expression and the arts, unearthing local talent and positioning Timmins as a leader in Northern Ontario” (p.1). The Municipality’s role is identified as being one of facilitation rather than a driver for sector development. They, however, played a foundational role in the establishment of a Cultural Roundtable, (a consultative roundtable), to enhance partnerships and investment in arts and heritage. It functions as a local-level partnership committee for cultural development and a forum to address and explore opportunities for stakeholder coordination of

5 <http://www.timminsedc.com/>

6 <https://www.downtowntimmins.com/>

7 <http://www.timmins2020.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/T2020-FULL-Final-Report.pdf>

8 <http://www.timmins2020.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Final-Culture-Master-Plan-September-2015.pdf>

resources and activities (p. 27). Another organizational structure identified in the Culture Master Plan is the development of an Arts Council. It is to be privately-driven, with Municipality support as an important partner which may offer strategic support and in-kind resources to facilitate the establishment of such a body (p. 28). Development work was started by the Timmins Economic Development Corporation, hosting roundtable discussions in May and June 2018 – out of which the need for an Arts Council was identified. In turn, the Steering Committee was tasked with reviewing the proposed Terms of Reference and to determine the critical roles and objectives for the proposed Arts Council. The Steering Committee conducted extensive work in 2020 to develop a comprehensive inventory of the artists, arts organizations, and cultural groups in Timmins, in addition to coordinating a survey of these stakeholders to determine the priorities of I:ACT, should it be formalized as an organization.⁹ The survey determined that the priorities are: promotion, funding, training, networking, and space/makerspace.¹⁰ At the time of this report publication, the Steering Committee was engaging with the community to present the survey findings and determine if they should proceed with the establishment of an Arts Council for Timmins, specifically one that is independent of the municipal government.

Indirect municipal support includes incentives in the form of grants and incremental tax incentives for a number of business improvement and housing development areas in two Community Improvement Plans (CIPs). The CIPs affect the arts and culture sector through the promotion of revitalization and place-making to attract tourism, business investment, and economic development opportunities, enhancement of streetscapes and building façades, and effective use of community infrastructure.

⁹ artscounciltimmins@gmail.com I:ACT Steering Committee Report, 2021, p.1.

¹⁰ artscounciltimmins@gmail.com I:ACT Steering Committee Report, 2021, p.3.



2.0

Community Profile



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

2.1 Respondents

The survey respondents are from the Timmins 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.

Total number of respondents: 24 individuals, 11 organizations

Table 1: Age of respondents

Age	Individuals	Organizational Representatives
16-20	0	0
21-30	0	0
31-40	3	1
41-50	6	2
51-60	6	2
61-70	5	2
71+	3	1

23 of 24 individuals responded / 8 of 11 organizations responded

Individuals responding to the survey represent a range of ages that is typical in the arts, culture, and heritage sector. While individuals in the younger age brackets did not participate in the study, it does not necessarily indicate that youth are not engaged in the arts. Factors that may have contributed to the underrepresentation of youth may include the limited duration of the survey, or the formal structure of a survey in contrast to in-person gatherings.

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 including 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 8: Studio Space at Timmins Museum: National Exhibition Centre (Photo: M. Sinclair)

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 to the circulation of goods (e.g. for personal use, gifts to others, or for selling in 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.



Figure 9: Mural at Porcupine Advance Printers by Mique Michelle



Figure 10: St. Matthews Anglican Cathedral

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 resilience-related characteristics including increased complex problem-solving 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 fields, sectors and 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 Timmins area. It is followed by two subsections focused on formalized recognition: acknowledgements, recognition and certifications; and, media coverage.

2.2.1 Engagement, learning, connectivity and development

// *There's definitely a sort of brain drain in terms of the arts. And I wonder if having a sort of centralized hub would provide some opportunity to those people. And maybe prevent them from leaving. Or maybe at least give them an outlet while they are here ... I don't know if it's just like a chicken-egg thing where the reason why we see so little demand and desire for it is because they all left. And maybe it's a matter of giving them a reason to stick around and giving them somewhere to actually improve their skill set.* //

– (Community Forum participant)

Organizational creative spaces are supporting the sector in the areas of affordable use of space, space suitable for a particular art form, and teaching and learning opportunities, as well access to discipline-based mentors, co-production opportunities, networking, and technology and equipment use for rent. This provides an earned revenue stream and practical support to the creative community. No individual participants provided data.

The data indicates organizational space is playing a key role in fostering creative skills, artistic capacity, and community development – important contributions to health and well-being, identity and belonging, and localized creative economies, each of which contributes to resilience.

Table 2: Engagement, Learning, Connectivity and Development

	Individuals	Organizational Representatives
Access to discipline-based mentors	0	1
Affordable use of space	0	2
Co-production opportunities	0	1
Incubator space for visioning or experimentation	0	0
Innovative use of space	0	0
Networking	0	1
Physically accessible space	0	0
Suitable space for a particular art form	0	2
Teaching and learning opportunities	0	2
Technology and equipment to rent or use	0	1
Understanding of Indigenous knowledge in artistic craft/space	0	0

0 of 24 individuals responded / 5 of 11 organizations responded

Figure 11: Mural at The Brick by Kalkidan Asefa



When asked to identify the three greatest contributions 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:

- Adds uniqueness and variety
- A place to prepare for my performances, concerts and house gigs
- Provides indoor livestream entertainment, e.g. at retirement centres
- Space to produce unique art/photography; preserve history; hold knowledge
- Without it, no one knows I'm here
- Contributes to the local visual arts community
- Production space for fine art
- Space to mentoring others
- Reviving of hand printing art that is mostly lost in modern world
- Clean, safe and quiet space to take music lessons
- Provides entertainment
- A place for people to visit, shop and learn about an art that not too many people do anymore
- Enables me to share artwork and heritage work with the community
- Provides for self-employment, feeding into local economy

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, a range of engagement opportunities and cultural tourism.

Organizations noted:

- Space for members to create art for community shows and exhibitions
- Space for workshops that is accessible
- A place that is open to exploring new uses for the space
- Location for education, entertainment, and a creative outlet for performers
- A space for members to create art, which I turn can be exhibited within the community
- Professional exhibition space;
- Retail opportunities for artists
- Programme space opportunities for workshops

2.2.2 Community Recognition



Figure 12: Indigenous Teaching Mural Project,
Artist: Mique Michelle (Photo: N. Alexander)

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.

In the last five years, individuals have received local to international acknowledgments, recognition, or certifications within a variety of sectors. No organizations responded to this question.

GEOGRAPHIC REACH:

- Local: 3 individuals
- Regional: 1 individuals
- Provincial: 1 individual
- National: 1 individual
- International: 1 individual

Five individuals indicate that this category is not applicable.

SECTOR:

- Tourism: 1 individual
- Arts: 1 individual
- Municipal: 1 individual
- Environment: 1 individual

2.2.4

Media Coverage

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, 17% of respondents said yes. Specifically, one individual and one organization received media coverage at least once in the past five years, and two individuals and two organizations were featured more than twice within the same time period.

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

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 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)	0	0
International	0	0
Local	3	3
National	0	0
Provincial	1	1
Regional	2	2

3 of 24 individuals responded / 3 of 11 organizations responded

2.3 Current Space and Identified Needs

// In our small community some of our arts are firmly established and well rooted in the community yet they all face challenges with regard to space. For example: the Orchestra, the Handweavers and Spinners Guild and the Porcupine Art Club are all to a degree in a space of uncertainty in terms of the future long-term affordability of their spaces . . . you are talking of four decades of rooted organisations . . . we have the organisations . . . we have the people . . . how can we support them with better access to space? //

- (Community Forum participant)

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.

Figure 13: Porcupine Handweavers and Spinners Guild

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 19 (or 79%) individual respondents and 5 (or 46%) organizations have creative space, 4 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 120](#).

Of the respondents who own, lease and/or manage creative space, two individuals and three 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	19	5
Audience	Individuals	Organizations
For private or organizational needs	17	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	2	3
Do not have creative space but want it	4	3

23 of 24 individuals responded / 8 of 11 organizations responded

2.3.2

Disciplines and Activities



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		Organizations		
	Practice	Current	Future	Current	Future
Circus	0	0	1	0	1
Community Arts	2	0	9	0	3
Craft Arts	3	0	7	1	2
Dance	0	0	4	0	3
Film	0	0	6	0	3
Heritage	2	0	5	0	2
Literary	0	0	5	0	1
Mixed-media	2	0	7	0	1
Multi-disciplinary	3	0	5	0	1
Music	6	0	10	1	2
Performance	0	0	7	1	2
Theatre	1	0	10	0	3
Visual Arts	10	0	9	0	3
Other: Wood carving with a dremel; weaving studio	2	0	0	0	0

Practice - 16 of 24 individuals responded / 5 of 11 organizations responded

Current - 9 of 24 individuals responded / Future - 14 of 24 individuals responded

Current - 2 of 11 organizations responded / Future - 5 of 11 organizations responded

Table 5.b: Current practice and future activities

Activities	Individuals			Organizations	
	Practice	Current	Future	Current	Future
Cafe	0	0	0	0	0
Classes, Mentoring	0	3	0	0	0
Client meeting space	0	0	0	0	0
Creative collaborative space	0	0	0	1	0
Cultural activities	0	0	0	0	0
Exhibition space	0	0	0	0	0
Gathering, public educational space	0	2	0	0	0
Retail space	0	1	6	1	1
Current Other Activities: A space to create art	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
Current Other Activities: Due to covid-19 no meetings may take place in this space; recording and practice space; creative space; Personal work space; administrative, personal professional work/development; Art Studio and Home Office; Work space	0	7	0	0	0
Future Other Activities: Digital arts; digitization of heritage materials	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Future Other Activities: Printing press for lino printing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1

Practice - 16 of 24 individuals responded / 5 of 11 organizations responded

Current - 9 of 24 individuals responded / Future - 14 of 24 individuals responded

Current - 2 of 11 organizations responded / Future - 5 of 11 organizations responded

Individuals were first asked to indicate the areas or disciplines in which they engage, revealing a diversity of practices with a very strong emphasis on visual arts and music, followed by craft arts, multi-disciplinary work, community arts, mixed media, and heritage. No participants indicated the current focus of their creative space, thus, a comparison cannot be made between the variety and discipline capacity of the respondents and what is currently being offered in their space. If there are gaps between the two it may be due to a number of factors such as space, teacher training, and/or business development skills that could include marketing, registration and payment gateways, or time restrictions that limit many Northern artists (Ortiz, 2017). Some of Timmins' artistic challenges are identified in the section titled [Capacity and Advancement, page 131](#). Data for future activities indicates individuals would like to leverage their current practice areas as well as expand into performance, film, literary, dance, and circus.

Organizations are focused on visual and community arts, as well as craft arts, performance, heritage, and mixed media. When compared to what they are currently offering in their creative spaces, however, considerably fewer disciplines are cited. The disciplines and activities they identify offering in the future show a more parallel vision of fulfilling their artistic capacity as well as venturing into new disciplines with an emphasis on performance and film, followed by dance and circus.

The current activities of existing creative spaces in Timmins 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 creating/working, teaching, mentoring, gathering, and retail, and for those working in the visual and craft arts and music. Future use of space includes digital arts and digitization of heritage materials. Organizational creative spaces function primarily as places for creation, collaboration, and retail for craft arts, music, and performance. There is interest in expanding operations to include retail space and space to accommodate lino printing activities.

2.3.3 Creative Space Needs

// Timmins lacks a flagship or recognizable arts space that lives on its own. It's clearly reflected in the need here. We've been leveraging a lot of multi-purpose recreational arts, even educational institutions to fulfill our theaters or wants and needs on that front. And so it makes perfect sense to recognize that having a stand-alone building, a recognizable beacon for arts excellence here in Timmins was a high priority... //

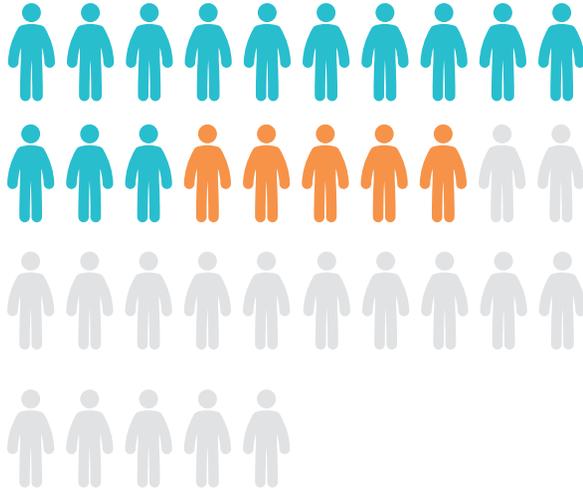
– (Community Forum participant)

Although the existing creative spaces are positively contributing to Timmins' 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 [Disciplines and Activities, page 97](#).

NEED FOR MORE CREATIVE SPACE:

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



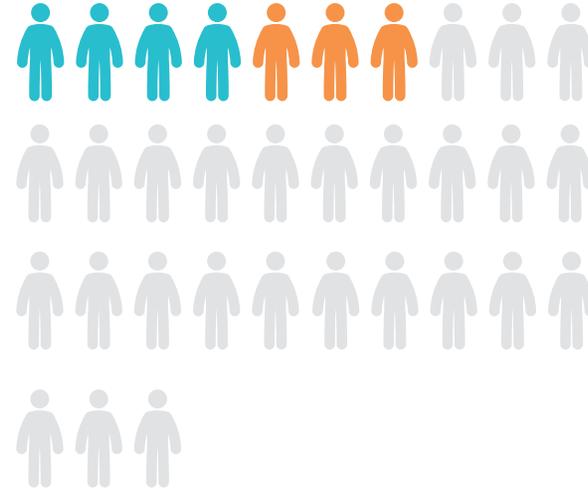
51%

or 18 of 35 total participants indicated a need for more creative spaces in the Timmins area.



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%

7 of 35 total respondents say that they do not currently have a creative space.



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

PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SPACE:

- Individuals:
 - » Private: 1
 - » Public: 1
- Organizations:
 - » Private: 0
 - » Public: 3

LEASED OR OWNED SPACE

- Individuals:
 - » Lease: 1
 - » Own: 0
 - » No preference: 0
- Organizations:
 - » Lease 2
 - » Own: 0
 - » No preference: 1

CITY/ TOWN OR RURAL LOCATION

- Individuals:
 - » City/town: 0
 - » Rural: 1
- Organizations:
 - » City/town: 3
 - » Rural: 0



Figure 14: Timmins Museum

TYPE OF SPACE NEEDED

“At present there is only one venue where art exhibitions can be shown – The Timmins Museum and National Exhibition Center.” (Survey participant).

Respondents - 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. The priority area is exhibition/gallery space, followed by private studios suitable for specific disciplines, with a strong need for rehearsal and performance space, as well as retail locations and multi-disciplinary hubs.

Comments regarding the type of space needed gleaned from the survey and community forum participants include:

- Film projects in area are asking for a production building
- A space where one could see others' work
- Centre Culturel La Ronde is supposedly going to have an art gallery

Table 6: Type of Space Needed

Space	Individuals	Organizations
Administrative space	1	2
Exhibition/Gallery space	11	6
Multi-Disciplinary Hubs	5	3
Performance space	4	3
Private studio suitable for specific disciplines	8	4
Rehearsal space	4	4
Retail space	7	2
Other: Safe, accessible spaces dedicated to a specific type of art pursuit, rather than shared and “make-do” non-prioritized venues (e.g. a pottery studio in a hockey rink)	1	N/A

14 of 24 individuals responded / 6 of 11 organizations responded

More specific examples of creative space needs were provided during a partner conversation after the community forum include:

Bars (small neighbourhood drinking holes) support and promote local musicians. eg. the Moneta and the Victory - both were established in the early days of the mining community and remain part of northern culture. There have been losses to the live music venue environment eg. the Maple Leaf where Stompin' Tom found initial fame was demolished, and the Windsor Tavern burnt down 2013/14.



Figure 15: Mural Project in the Program Room of the Timmins Museum: National Exhibition Center by Shaun Hedican

2.3.4 Creative Space Not 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 (larger, more space to hold more participants and/or even allow to open it for public use); and,
- Functionality (soundproofing, better lighting, heating, parking)

One respondent noted that their creative space would better meet their needs if it was an area outside of home with safe access. Another stated *"My studio is a personal studio only because of the space that I have available. I would love to offer workshops here but don't have the space to do so."* No organization indicated their current creative space is not meeting their needs.

The study did not seek to determine whether or not the respondents intend to undertake any action to address these shortcomings. Please see [Developing Creative Space: Capital Projects, page 124](#) for more information.

Survey participants also noted a number of concerns regarding the way current space is not meeting specific organizations' needs. For example,

- **Take Two Theatre (founded ca. 1985)** rents a room at the local CTV station. Plays are staged at Timmins High and Vocational School or École Secondaire Catholique Thériault. *Concerns noted by participants:* School theatres provide limited access in terms of time for rehearsal and preparation, content/props must be deemed acceptable, and alcohol may not be sold at concessions.
- **Pottery classes** are housed on the third floor, inside the McIntyre Arena. *Concerns noted by participants:* The venue is not wheelchair accessible and the compatibility of shared uses, eg. one respondent remarked that “when there is a hockey game on, students (adults) have to negotiate a hockey audience (where alcohol is served) to put their items in their lockers, move projects to and from the kiln room, and walk over an elaborate system of wiring for spotlights and sound systems”.
- **Timmins Police Pipes and Drums Band (founded 2000)** uses the McIntyre Arena auditorium, below the pottery studio, prior to which, they practiced in a church basement. *Concerns noted by participants:* Acoustics and availability of venue.
- **The Porcupine Art Club** rents the Roy Nicholson Clubhouse located in a public park. *Concerns noted by participants:* Although heated, the room was designed to serve as a change room and is maintained because, according to a respondent, “it supplies heat to keep the water for the hockey rinks flowing”.
- **The Timmins Symphony Orchestra (founded 1979)** rehearses at St. Anthony’s Cathedral or the Anglican Church Hall. Concerts are performed at St. Anthony’s or the theatre at École Secondaire Catholique Thériault. *Concerns noted by participants:* The school theatre is costly to rent while the Cathedral, located in the Timmins Downtown, raises safety concerns for patrons parking nearby. School and church functions take precedence, so access is limited in terms of time for rehearsal and preparation.
- **The Geoffrey James Lee School of Music** rents the second floor of an historic building in the Timmins Downtown, above a coffee shop. *Concerns noted by participants:* The building was recently sold and the coffee shop has closed. The school is not wheelchair accessible and there is no fire escape.
- **The Timmins Public Library (founded 1921)** and Timmins Museum: National Exhibition Centre (founded 1975 and located originally in South Porcupine) are housed in relatively new buildings but a respondent notes that the City does not own these buildings. Eg. “The Canadian Mental Health Association is landlord to the Timmins Public Library, and Hinduja Global Solutions owns the combined Museum/ Tourism/TEDC and Timmins and District Multicultural Centre building”. *Concerns noted by participants:* The buildings are not 100% dedicated to their respective facilities and they are located downtown where safety is becoming more of a concern. Eg. As one respondent remarked, “a sharps disposal bin was added recently to the library parking lot”.

2.3.5

Creative Space Meeting Needs

A number of individuals and two organizations indicate their current space is meeting their needs as listed in Table 7. 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 desire and need for more space to utilize artists current creative capacity and to meet individual and organizational goals of furthering participation as identified. It also indicates that a number of organizational spaces, although occupied for long periods of time, are not meeting their needs in very basic ways. Participants also identify the type of new space they are seeking and preferences for such in terms of leasing or owning. A few respondents noted there is space within their building that could potentially be rented or leased.

Table 7: Creative Space Meeting Needs

Need Met	Individuals	Organizations
Affordability	12	0
Ease of Access	13	1
Size	8	1
Suitability	7	0
Individual Other: built to suit my needs	1	0
Organization Other: We don't own, we rent	0	1

14 of 24 individuals responded / 2 of 11 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 Timmins. The study includes organizational lifespan, management structure, facility management, revenue, operating hours, demographic engagement, recurring engagement, and barriers to accessing creative space.

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.

The data indicates Timmins 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. Timmins has organizations that have many years of operating experience, six have 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.



Figure 16: Timmins Symphony Orchestra virtual performance in St. Anthony's Cathedral

Table 8: Organizational Lifespan

Years in Operation	1-4	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Number of Organizations	2	2	1	2	1

8 of 11 organizations responded

2.4.2

Management Structure

Two organizations responded to the question about management structures. No individuals provided information. One operates as a charitable corporation, and one's space is privately owned. No data was provided for the staffing section.

Table 9: Management structure

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

0 of 24 individuals responded / 2 of 11 organizations responded

2.4.3

Facility Management Experience

Of the people who responded, the data shows there is a mix of experience between individuals and organizations with owning, leasing, or managing a creative space in Timmins, an a number of them have more than ten years experience 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.

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

	Individuals	Organizations
Less than 1 year	1	0
1-4 years	6	0
5-10 years	2	1
More than 10 years	6	1

15 of 24 individual responded / 2 of 11 organizations responded

2.4.4

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

0 of 24 individuals responded / 2 of 11 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; funding 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 [Capacity and Advancement](#) section, [page 131](#).

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. Longer-term 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).

2.4.5

Operating Hours

For this study, full-time hours were defined as over 20 hours per week. The chart illustrates many of the 15 individuals and three organizations who responded to this question are interested in maintaining or increasing their hours.

There was considerable forum dialogue around the data indicating goals to move to increased hours and questions about the sustainability of such. It was noted that there are few full-time artists in Timmins and the transition from part-time to full-time is challenging. Local factors include high paying positions they may need to leave behind, and the national situation of few, if any, employment support mechanisms enabling part-timers to scale up to full-time.

Table 12: Weekly Operating Hours and Future Goals

Operating Hours	Individuals Current	Individuals Goal	Organizations Current	Organizations Goal
Less than 10 hours	4	2	1	3
10-20 hours	7	2	0	1
21-40 hours	3	9	1	1
41-60 hours	1	1	1	0
More than 60 hours	0	0	1	2

15 of 24 individuals responded / 3 of 11 organizations responded

In terms of operations, one person indicated:

"It is ... not just staff capability or capacity or funding but a lot of it was, again, space-wise. Is the space even feasible or appropriate as to be used for 40 plus hours a week? ... You would have to find a way of making it sustainable in the daytime. Does that come from retail? Or does that come from another aspect of it? But if you're looking at classes or anything else, that's tough, people are working, kids are in school."

The comments also raise questions regarding ways artists can increase the percentage of family income derived from cultural activities if space is not available.

2.4.6 Demographic Engagement



Figure 17: Youth Mural Project, Timmins Airport

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 and/or need assistance in developing business plans, is beyond the scope of this study.

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

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.

Table 13: Increasing Demographic Engagement

Engagement	Individuals	Organizations
Local and/or nearby residents	0	1
Seasonal area residents (in the area for a length of time, but not year-round)	0	1
Tourists (short stay or passing through)	0	1

0 of 24 individual responded / 2 of 11 organizations responded

2.4.7

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.

Few people answered the question about their awareness of transportation or physical barriers to accessing creative spaces in their community. Two organizations stated they think there are accessibility barriers. Both noted parking issues and that their spaces did not accommodate people with disabilities. One individual said that their creative space is not wheelchair accessible but that they did not think it has been an issue so far. One individual said that their creative space is not wheelchair accessible but that they did not think it has been an issue so far. Another survey participant noted concern that the Geoffrey James Lee School of Music is not wheelchair accessible and that the building does not have a fire escape.

This is an area where further investigation would be beneficial.

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.

In the Timmins area survey participants indicate there are two organizational creative spaces designed for recurring engagement. One organization notes they would like to attract repeat users in the future but cannot do so without physical changes to the facility.

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



In sum, this 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 a operation through multiple organizational life cycles and shifting community contexts. There is at least one organization operating with charitable status. Staffing, whether or not it is paid, volunteer or a combination thereof, is unknown. At least one organization's space is privately owned. For those who responded to the questions, few revenue streams 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. Many of the respondents are interested in maintaining or increasing their hours, and organizations indicated an interest in increasing the engagement of seasonal area residents and tourists, as well as local and/or nearby residents, which speaks to a commitment to the community. Whether or not there are barriers to accessing creative space remains somewhat undetermined. Parking may be an issue, and some of the spaces may not meet current building code requirements.

2.5 Acquiring or Developing Creative Space

// We are sort of a natural resource driven town and a lot of the prioritization for economic drivers or especially economic prioritization lies with sort of the natural resource infrastructure projects. We also have a lot of aging infrastructure. And so it seems as though, as a side effect, arts community has been largely left to their own devices. //

– (Community Forum 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.

2.5.1 Acquiring Creative Space



Figure 18: Studio space at Artsie Custom Framing

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.

PLANS TO ACQUIRE OR DEVELOP CREATIVE SPACE:

- 13% of individuals (3 of 24) 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
- 8% of individuals (2 of 24) are willing or at least interested in partnering with others to purchase, rent, and/or build a creative space

The study indicates there are a number of individuals open to exploring options of collective management structure which could include cooperatives and creative hubs. It also suggests that participants could potentially connect with those organizations that indicated they have space for lease or rent (see [Current Space Scenarios, page 96](#)).

In a post-forum discussion, one project partner noted *"...the challenges are focused on the feasibility of privately-owned space and finding a business model that will better ensure their success, for example cooperative, social enterprise or shared space."*

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."*¹¹ 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 [Appendix I: Resources, page 154](#) for examples in Toronto and Hearst.

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

The forum brought forward the following six quotes regarding potential partnerships or collaborations in acquiring or developing creative space:

"I think for a community our size, it's always likely more feasible to understand how we can consolidate these into one multi-purpose arts and even recreational facility... We have a lot of pre-existing mine infrastructure... And so understanding how we can leverage these existing buildings, of which there are many... We're noting that especially when we seek Government funding, is that partnerships are king... if we seek to understand how music theatre, film performance, art gallery, dance space, makerspace can live all within one roof, then the viability and likelihood of this actually coming to fruition is far more successful in terms of actually understanding how those partnerships can form."

"Culturel La Ronde has been in a state of rebuilding after losing their building to fire in 2017. They are presently housed in an empty school building but are well on their way with plans / fundraising to build a new francophone cultural centre in Timmins on the site of the previous building. They are planning to rebuild on the original site ... It is not a municipal project but will contribute to Timmins' cultural infrastructure with direct benefit, but not exclusive to, the city's francophone community. "

"... what I found when I was dealing with the artists with the pop-up shops, there's some that are not ready to be in a dedicated space all the time ... I think that creatively finding temporary space sometimes works ... looking for spaces and finding that partnership and networking in the community I think it expands [space options] quite a bit ..."

"We do have those dance schools and they are all privately owned but what happens to the dance schools the rest of the week? It's empty. They have made a business plan that works for them that makes it sustainable but it's a shame that those big beautiful buildings are not being used Monday to Friday."

"There are two different films being done here this week ... one of the things they are constantly asking for is a production building so maybe down the road maybe that's some way we could look at something that could be used in the daytime and when it's not being used for film it can be used by the community maybe there's a way of doing that."

"Another one I'm looking at for the very first time is the possibility of a social enterprise ... I never thought of an arts center as a social enterprise ... It might be a way of looking at it differently than we have before ... I thought that it might be a funding source we have never thought of before. "

A post-forum conversation with a partner brought forward the following reflection:

"I have often wondered why the Municipal Museum/Library is not more readily identified by the community as able (and ready) to fill that role? ...we do have community-oriented creative spaces but maybe the arts community needs to reflect more on their role they may play in supporting or activating those spaces?"

For further insight into participants' thoughts regarding acquiring space please see [Developing Creative Space: Considerations, page 125](#).

2.5.2

Developing Creative 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 renovations 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.

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

1. Larger space (to accommodate more teaching opportunities and participants)
2. Exhibition/display and retail 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 results show that when looking at the next five years:



of respondents (18 of 35) are not planning for a creative space capital project.



of respondents (15 of 35) 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 real estate. Respondents are also concerned about winter construction logistics, disruption caused by the project, and for individuals particularly, their age. One organization recently completed a capital project and another noted that they are a renter, not the owner. The reasons cited align with the following section that identifies areas that contribute to difficulties in developing or maintaining creative space.

2.5.3 Developing Creative Space: Considerations

// We might not have a lot of dedicated spaces for creativity but we are very good at using spaces in innovative ways.... those pop up craft markets ... take place in empty shop fronts ... in a brewery, inside a city-owned Community Center, church hall. And that is the same for our performance spaces. Sometimes a church becomes a recording studio or a church will become something else ... In the absence of dedicated space, you end up with these very kind of flexible fluid type spaces where on a Saturday morning it might be one thing and then it turns into something else so it's very hard to pin them down and identify them as such. //

– (Community Forum participant)

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. Comments captured from the survey and community forum centered around the viability of having a “*viable and dedicated creative space in a safe area*” in Timmins.

LOCATION

Space factors (the physical building) include:

- Timmins Film Society: space availability (space monopoly) and cost of cinema rental
- Loss of music performance venues
- No public interface/street frontage when private space is in homes
- Availability of space for long and longer-term use
- A lot of aging infrastructure
- Museum was the only dedicated space for a while

Place factors (the geographical context) include:

- Winter, frozen water line, piles of snow around workshop
- Safety – high incidences of theft, vandalism, rampant drug abuse, a massive number of persons experiencing chronic homelessness with no constructive prospects at coming off the streets

The concern regarding safety is underscored by a survey participant: Over the last 5 years several organizations have had to enter into new lease agreements with the City of Timmins and, due to introduction of new by-laws, and in doing so it was found that the rental for existing spaces increased dramatically, in some cases by as much as 500%. (Post-community forum conversation with a partner).

FINANCIAL

- Being able to afford rent increases when operating as a nonprofit
- Timmins has cheap commercial rents
- Tough to make a living as an artist. Public galleries are not as likely as they were in the past to show paintings, or artwork that hangs on a wall
- Financial instability in the entertainment industry

A financial concern provided by a survey participant reveals the precarious situation organizations may find themselves in a very short period of time with no advance warning.

“Porcupine Art Club, whose studio for almost 40 years has been a disused former change room in a municipal park next to outdoor hockey rinks (only recently did the City put a mesh over our back door in order to lessen the gunshot-like bangs of hockey pucks slamming our door). We have had our lease on that building increased by around 500% when a KPMG audit of City expenses determined the nominal rate we paid to the City was appallingly low.”

ORGANIZATIONAL

Considerations in this category include:

- Time
- Organization/administration
- Time management; work full-time outside of creative space

POLITICAL

Political considerations refer to limited government support, etc.

- Timmins doesn't understand or want creative spaces
- In the past, the cultural center in town had creative spaces available but that all seems to have taken second place to sports
- Timmins lacks a flagship independent arts space
- Demolition of historical sites in the City of Timmins means less available space
- Municipal infrastructure focuses on natural resources
- Everything has to drive tourism in Timmins; it is a big factor in supporting spaces
- Multiple strategic plans, roundtables, and applications that seem never to be accepted

DIVISION

Division refers to the diverse visions of needs to be considered when selecting a viable path forward:

- Community apathy
- Competition
- Need better networks and lines of communication, a shared vision for creative space
- Need to reach out to other artists (working in isolation)
- Lack of community and cohesion
 - » Silos
 - » Duplication of services
 - » People feel they have to do everything themselves
 - » Not wanting to work with each other
 - » Perhaps a fear of investment in things and themselves
 - » Bridging gaps = community development

A survey participant expressed the challenge of moving projects forward "... I am skeptical about any surveys on Arts, Culture, and Heritage anymore... The end result is always to 'form partnerships' and make do with what you have."

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

This category is where topics unique to Timmins were mentioned, or other comments were noted.

- Production volumes: how much can artists produce, and is it sufficient to sustain an operation 365 days?
- Pop-up shop selling your art sometimes is a better business model for an independent artist than having to be in a shop every single day and paying for rent
- Artists could rotate to meet their availability of time and production volumes; provide consumers with variety



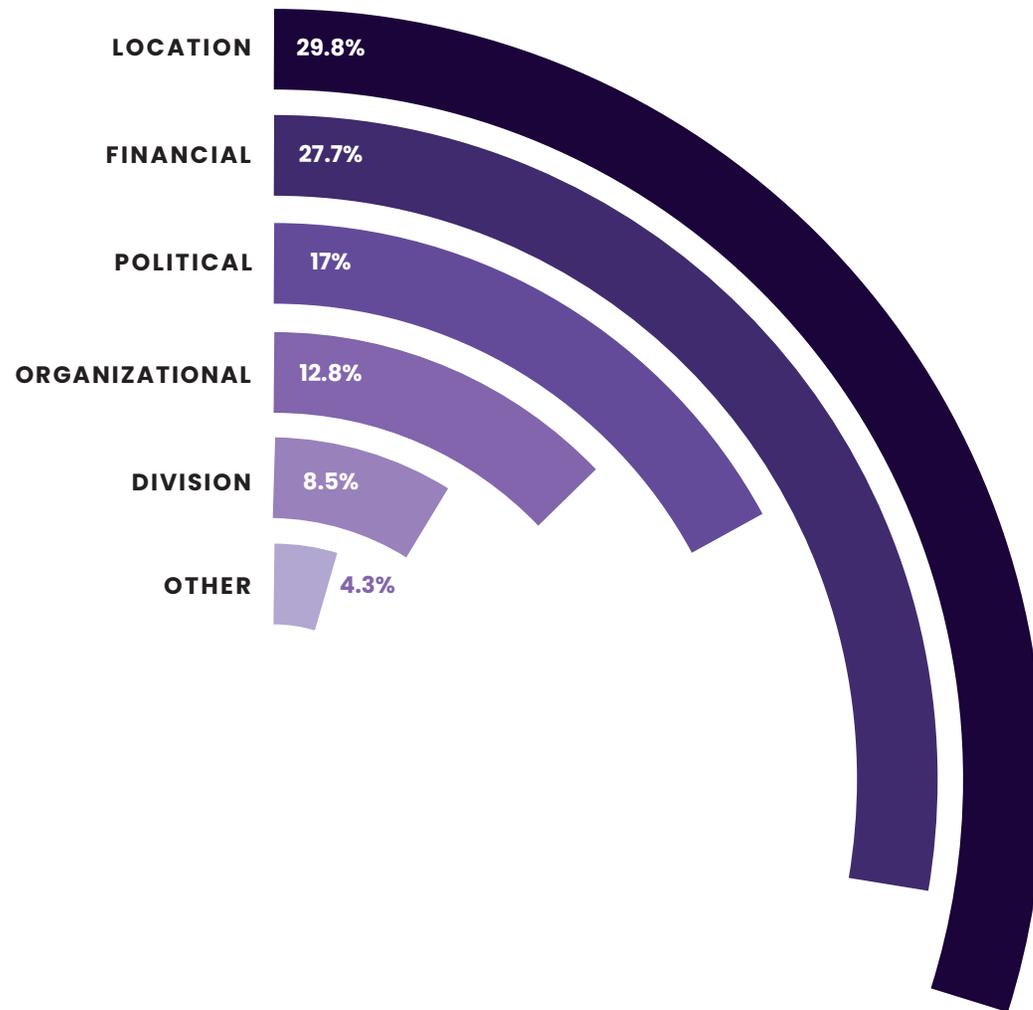
Figure 19: McIntyre Community Building (Photo: N. Alexander)

COVID-19

"We have four School Boards in Timmins, each School Board has their own theatre auditorium. Artists have been finding themselves increasingly locked out of those spaces with the onset of COVID because the School Boards are trying to protect themselves. So for example, the orchestra using the theatre is no longer an option." (Community forum participant)

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 and its long-lasting 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 20: Circumstances that make a creative space difficult to develop and maintain



11 of 24 individuals responded / 6 of 11 organizations responded

2.6 Sustaining Creative Space

“When you think of the pop-up shops and the fact that they had to turn away ... artists because they just don’t have the space ... and they did very well from an economic point of view ... I would love to see a business plan done up for the weekends. And I think that would be very sustainable...”

– (Community Forum participant)

This section provides information regarding areas in which the participants from Timmins are seeking to build capacity through developing skills and accessing resources; the types of current and future partnerships, and the purposes of such.

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 (intersector, 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 154](#) for a list of additional organizations dedicated to arts and culture sector capacity and advancement development.

Respondents in Timmins 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 is a priority for individuals followed by advocacy tools, business acumen and space planning. Organizational priority is advocacy. Respondents are also seeking knowledge of social advancement (accessibility, inclusion, equity), space planning, and financial and operational management.

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 decision-makers toward investment and support)	4	2
Business (planning, strategy, HR)	4	0
Financial (how to diversify revenues, regular management)	2	1
Marketing (online presence, etc.)	6	1
Operational (facility management, asset management, maintenance, etc.)	1	1
Social/Cultural (accessibility, inclusion, diversity, equity, etc.)	3	1
Space audit/plan	3	1
Organizations Other: Having venues to exhibit our members artwork	1	1

9 of 24 individuals responded / 3 of 11 organizations responded

Participant comments regarding these topic include:

BUSINESS PLANNING:

- Balancing personal and life work/space
- Develop business plans, and create an online presence that enables me to market / sell work while still having time to pursue creative objectives

ADVOCACY

- Individuals/organizations play an important role in bringing people together to maximize spaces and activities - i.e., IACT as the champion and connector
- We are in Iroquois Falls, one hour north of Timmins. We want our community to embrace the arts and think of the arts as an economic driver for the community

The role of an Arts Council as an organizing champion, bringing people together through partnerships within a building(s) to create a hub of activities was discussed during the community forum. It was noted that without a lead, each individual and organization has to do it themselves. The necessity for a paid position to champion the effort was underscored. A post-forum discussion with a partner commented *“A local Arts Council can get the governments to help fund the arts within Timmins and the area.”*

Each category in the table 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 suiting 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. Additionally, a number of sector organizations are listed [Appendix I: Resources, page 154](#).

For business development including diversifying revenue streams, incubation, training and mentorships the City’s [Business Enterprise Centre](#) may be of assistance.

The federal government is providing investment opportunities for the development of social enterprises—businesses with a social, cultural, or environmental concern—which the arts and culture sector fall into. 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 Conclusions and Next Steps, page 139](#) offer pathways for navigating these challenges.

2.6.2 Partnerships and Collaboration



Figure 21: Porcupine Art Club

In the Timmins area the study indicated there are currently various working relationships between artists, arts organizations, varied communities, the non-profit and museum/heritage sectors, businesses, service clubs, and governments. These partnerships exist to leverage financial resources, space, marketing and audience development, expertise, and programming.

Individual respondents envision continued, increased, and future partnerships with governments, businesses, museums/heritage sector, recreation facilities, as well as Black/Indigenous/People of Colour (BIPOC), Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Trans/Queer/2 Spirit/+ (LGBTQ2S+), and immigrant communities. These would be financial, space, expertise, marketing, audience development, and operations reasons.

Organizational respondents want to put their efforts into continued and future partnerships with government, the museum/heritage and non-profit sector, businesses, service clubs, as well as Black/Indigenous/People of Colour (BIPOC) and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Trans/Queer/2 Spirit/+ (LGBTQ2S+) communities. These would be for financial, audience development, marketing, space, and programming reasons.

Table 15: Types of Partnerships

	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
BIPOC communities	0	2	1	1
Businesses	2	3	2	1
Faith-based organizations	0	0	1	0
Federal government	0	2	1	0
Immigrant communities	0	2	1	0
Indigenous government	1	1	0	1
Legions or service clubs	0	1	2	1
LGBTQ2S+ communities	1	1	1	1
Municipal government	1	3	1	1
Museums or heritage organizations	3	2	2	1
Non-profit organizations	2	1	2	1
Provincial government	0	2	1	0
Sports/Recreation clubs or facilities	0	1	1	0
Current Other: corporation; I have worked with other artists on themed exhibitions	2	1	N/A	N/A
Future Other: unsure				
None	0	1	0	0

Current: 6 of 24 individuals responded / Future: 8 of 24 individuals responded
 Current: 3 of 11 organizations responded / Future: 3 of 11 organizations responded

Table 16: Purpose of Partnerships

	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
Audience Development	0	4	3	2
Expertise	2	4	1	0
Financial	2	4	3	2
Marketing	2	4	1	1
Operations	0	1	1	0
Physical Building/Space	2	2	0	1
Programming	1	1	2	1
Staffing/Volunteers	0	0	0	0
Supplies	0	1	0	0
Not Applicable	4	4	1	1
Current Other: travelling exhibitions; socialize	2	N/A	N/A	N/A

Current: 10 of 24 individuals responded / Future: 10 of 24 individuals responded
 Current: 4 of 11 organizations responded / Future: 4 of 11 organizations responded



Figure 22: Entrance to the Porcupine Art Club, Roy Nicholson Park

Participants in the community forum noted some specific examples of partnerships in action in Timmins that help to mitigate the gap in dedicated creative space, and suggested collaboration to host events.

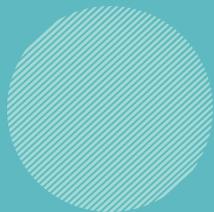
- Community uses empty storefronts, brewery, churches/ church halls, community centres
- The Northern Ontario Handmade Market which was set up at the McIntyre Community Building.
- People are good at using other space in innovative ways
- Coming together for discussion and display, even three times year to start; people could show a few things each and pay towards renting

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 marketing, advocacy, 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 the Business Enterprise Centre. Participants have identified existing partnerships, relationships and networks that enable sharing information and linking 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 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, Elkhuisen, 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 creative space in Timmins 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. Creative space is of key concern for people ranging from their 30s to their 70s, illustrating the importance of art during their professional years. Six organizations have operated for more than 20 years, including one for more than 50 years. There is at least one organization operating with charitable status. **The primary type of space participants are seeking is exhibition space, followed by discipline-specific studio space and retail space, and then rehearsal and multi-disciplinary hubs.** At least **six participants stated they would be 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.

The study indicates Timmins has a solid base upon which to further develop a vibrant arts, culture and heritage sector that would reap broader community benefits. Many of the key pieces to build capacity and advance the sector currently exist; however, the missing 'dots' that would greatly increase the sector's sustainability and expedite growth largely revolve around human resources and a coordinated plan to that would:

- i) Link Artists and Organizations to Existing Resources;
- ii) Leverage Capacity; and,
- iii) Lead by Developing Models of Sustainability.

A number of areas where the sector is seeking resources directly align with the six Strategic Goals and Objectives of the City of Timmins Culture Master Plan (p. 11-12):

- Goal 1: Foster and Ensure Alignment of Municipal Planning for Culture, Tourism and Recreation
- Goal 2: Develop Creative Spaces for Cultural Activity through Urban Development & Use of Existing Resources
- Goal 3: Foster Multi-Sectoral Partnerships for Cultural Development
- Goal 4: Foster Community Pride, Awareness and Engagement in Culture
- Goal 5: Expand and Enhance Cultural (Tourism) Opportunities
- Goal 6: Enhance and Strengthen the Cultural Economy

Action item 3.1.2 of the CMP is "Support the development Timmins Arts Council as an advocacy body for local culture." (p. 28). The Steering Committee for an Independent Arts Council for Timmins (I:ACT) has been guiding this process. [The Independent Arts Council for Timmins Final Report](#)¹² recommends "proceeding with the establishment of an Arts Council with the mission to strengthen the Timmins' arts landscape with a focus on the benefit of the community – over business and individual interests – by pulling together existing art organizations with a community mandate shared concerns and the authority to act in the interest of members." (p. 3). The key areas where I:ACT would provide sector support are: promotion; funding, networking and space and makerspace. The Steering Committee is planning the 'handover/first meeting' for September 2021, for the community to take over establishing I:ACT.

¹² *Independent Arts Council for Timmins, Final Report*
artscounciltimmins@gmail.com

Identifying where arts, culture and heritage sector development gaps link to community planning documents is not intended to imply the municipality is solely responsible for its development, but rather to illustrate the identified areas and advocate for sufficient resources to enable the sector to meet their stated objectives. The [Culture Master Plan](#) (CMP), "... aims to continue to develop capacity within the local cultural sector and to enhance the local environment for culture planning" (p.1). The long term vision for culture is: "A vibrant City showcasing our shared community heritage and pride through self-expression and the arts, unearthing local talent and positioning Timmins as a leader in Northern Ontario" (p. 1). The CMP also acknowledges:

"The City of Timmins has laid a supportive foundation for cultural prosperity within its existing Official Plan (2010), policies of which aim to capitalize on the development of social and cultural services as a longstanding community benefit. Additionally, priorities of the Timmins 2020 Community Strategic Action Plan serve to ensure culture and social development are strategically framed within Council priorities over the long-term. In conjunction with these provisions, this Master Plan recognizes the primary role of the Municipality as a facilitator of culture ... (p. 19)."

Following are the recommendations that offer a pathway forward.

3.1 Recommendations

3.1.1

Moving Forward

- Hire a dedicated full-time, limited term position to work in collaboration with the City's Community and Development Services Department, TEDC (Director of Community Development), Timmins Museum: NEC (Director/Curator) and Timmins Tourism and/or in consultation with the Independent Art Council for Timmins (I:ACT) upon its establishment. The person would:

1. Ensure diverse voices, particularly 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. Key is creating the critical connections 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 Business Enterprise Centre, 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. (CMP: 6.2; 6.3; 6.4; 6.5)

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 Business Enterprise Centre, 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).

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. (CMP: 1.2; 4.1; 4.2; 6.2; 6.3)

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. (CMP: 4.2)

- IV b. Fundraising and investment readiness: to increase applicant success.
- » Training workshops and coaching to prepare investment pitches.
 - » Connect with Business Enterprise Centre and/or investors to facilitate workshops or provide coaching. (CMP: 6.2; 6.4; 6.5)

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 scope of functionality upgrades (larger size; public access; better lighting; storage; exhibition/display; retail space); Assess feasibility and, if needed, secure a project manager to undertake the work.. (CMP: 1.2; 2.3; 5.2; 6.1)

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. (CMP: 1.2; 5.1; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 6.1)

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. (CMP: 1.2; 1.9; 6.1)

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. (CMP: 4.4; 6.2)

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. (CMP: 4.4; 6.2)

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 programming interest for recurring engagement; determine if space needs renovating; assess feasibility and identify ways to support transitioning to recurring engagement. (CMP: 1.2; 4.4; 5.1; 6.1; 6.2)

VII. INCREASE BUILDING UTILIZATION

- Determine programming interest for recurring engagement; determine if space needs renovating; assess feasibility and identify ways to support transitioning to recurring engagement. (CMP: 5.1; 6.2)

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 co-located or operating separately. (CMP: 5.3; 5.5; 6.2; 6.3)

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. (CMP: 6.2; 6.3)

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 progress in integrating the sector's development into the City of Timmins plans, the study suggests it remains undervalued and underdeveloped. There is notable need to increase understanding of the sector's importance to individual and collective health, 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 the Business Enterprise Centre to develop business plans. The digital Main Street online store platform may suit individual operators. Business Enterprise Centre and arts organizations may also provide links to other dedicated service providers. (CMP: 3.2)
- Sector-wide marketing strategy including a map or database of art spaces and activities for seasonal residents and tourists. The local municipality could play a lead role in developing this strategy (particularly as it connects to the CMP Goal 1, development and administration of a community-based marketing strategy to promote local culture; and specifically, 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6; 5.2).

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. (CMP: 3.2)

IV. INVESTMENT AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MODELS

- Develop a locally viable sustainable funding model incorporating both public and private support to further develop creative spaces. Investigate reallocating existing development resources to the arts sector; resource sharing across sectors; and investment incentives for private and/or public/private partnerships. (CMP: 3.1; 6.1; 6.7)

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. (CMP: 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4)

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 Timmins, 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 Timmins area has considerable assets upon which to further enliven and strengthen the arts and culture sector. Municipal government has invested in cultural infrastructure in both locales in the past. 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 [case studies](#), [tools](#) and [resources](#), 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 [Canada Cultural Spaces Fund](#) 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.

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

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

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND (NOHFC)

- The [Community Enhancement Program](#) 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 [Cultural Supports Program](#) 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 [People and Talent Program](#) 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 seed grants, grow grants, and capital grants)

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 will be announced in Spring 2021.

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.

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.

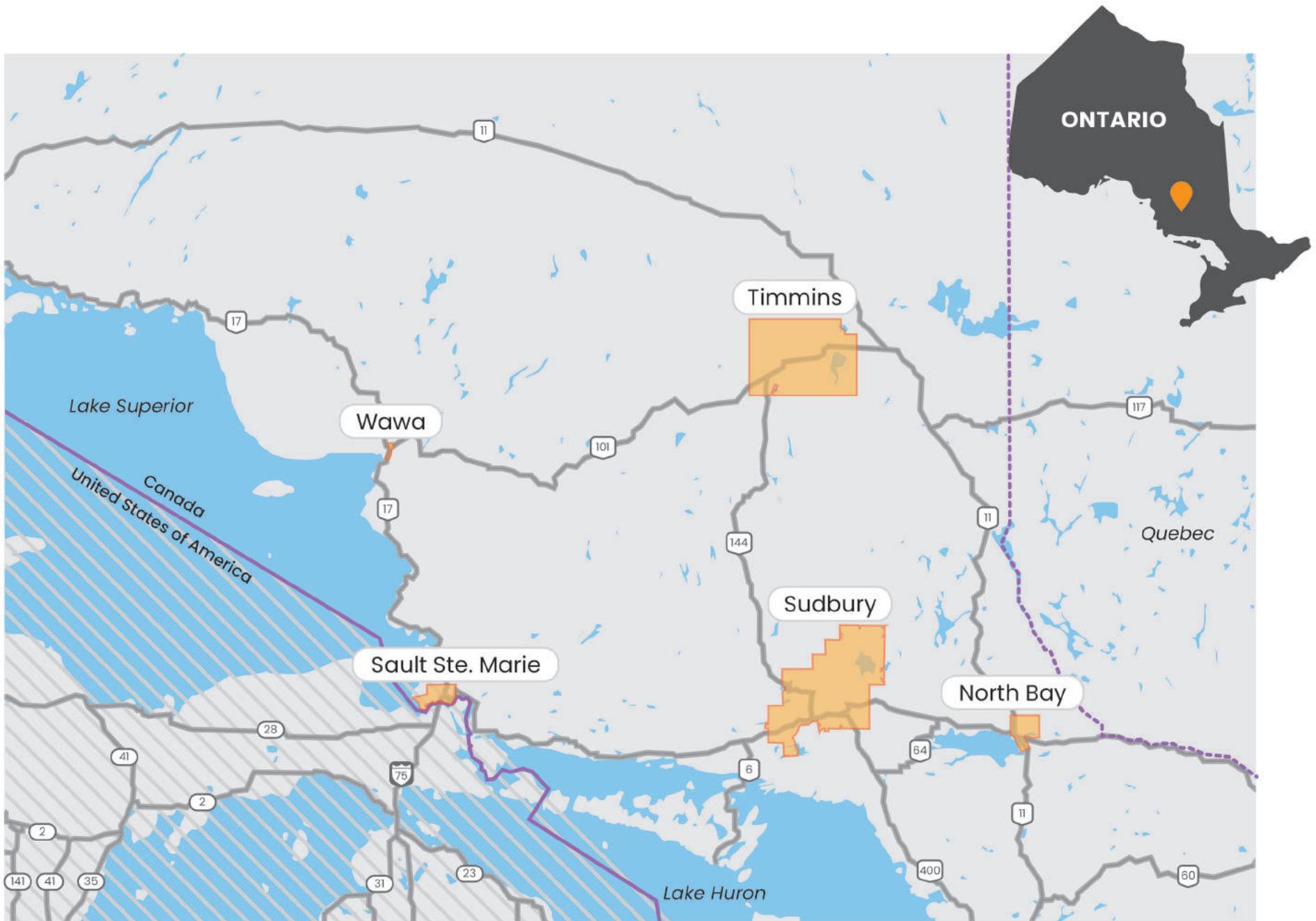
1.2 Community Context

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.¹ 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

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*



Figure 2: The Bondar Pavilion, Tourism SSM



Figure 3: Jingle Dress regalia, Tourism SSM

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 Toronto-based 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.

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

5 <http://www.kendanbyart.ca/>

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.

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.

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



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

⁹ Statistics Canada. 2017. Statistics Canada. 2017. Sault Ste. Marie, CY [Census subdivision], Ontario and Algoma.

¹⁰ 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.

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 city-gathered information and aligns with the data gathered in the development of the Community Culture Plan.

Total number of respondents: 24 individuals, 9 organizations

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 resilience-related characteristics including increased complex problem-solving 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 Indigenous 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 Indigenous 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 self-esteem 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

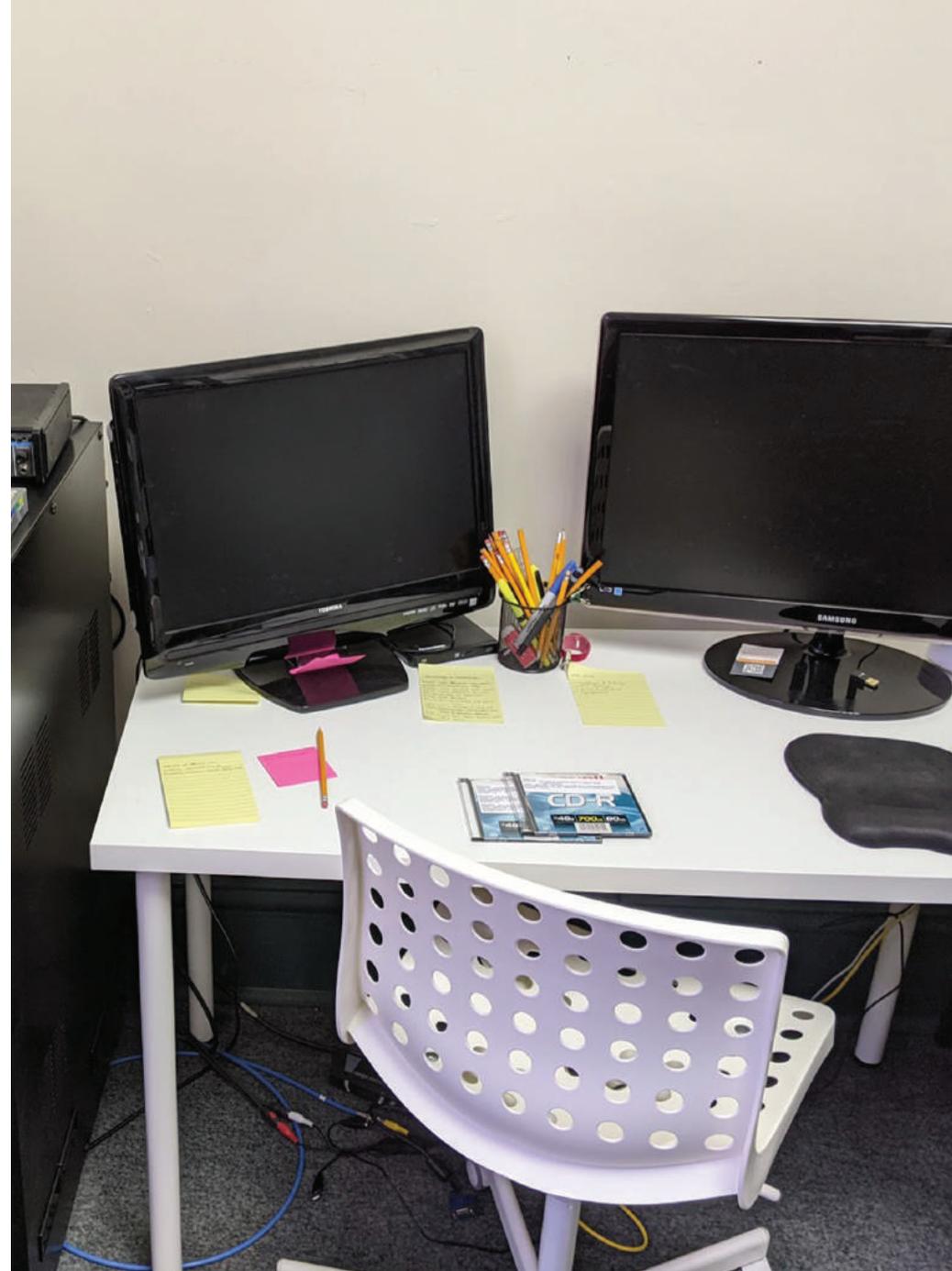


Figure 10: Sault Ste. Marie Museum

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 204](#)).

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			Organizations	
	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	11	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	Individuals		Organizations	
	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 disciplines.



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... //*

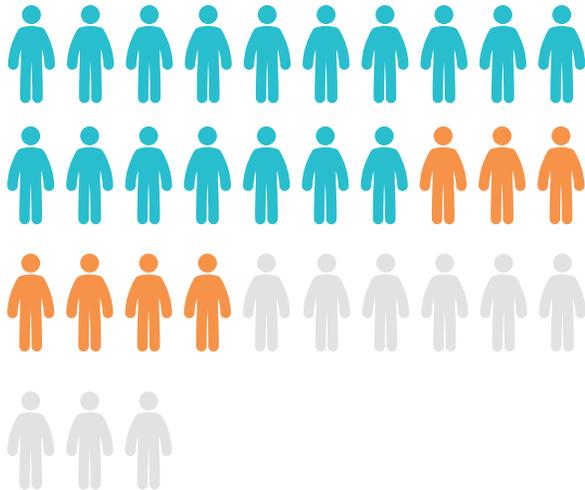
– (Survey participant)

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 [Disciplines and Activities, page 180](#).

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.

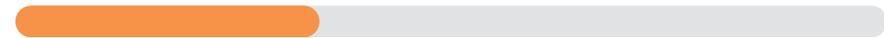


39%

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 image shows a room dedicated to weaving, likely a museum or workshop. Several wooden looms are arranged in the room, some with threads already set up. A window on the left side provides a view of the outside world. On the right wall, there is a colorful tapestry. The room is well-lit, and the equipment is organized and ready for use.

//

It is a constant challenge to find appropriate rehearsal and performance venues for theatre that don't charge exorbitant fees (which then inflate ticket prices and hurt attendance). The community is lacking a good mid-sized theatrical venue - a 300-400 seat theatre, like the former St. Mary's theatre on Wellington St. //

- (Survey participant)

Figure 18: Sault Ste. Marie Museum

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. Marie 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

2.3.4 Creative Space Not 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 [Developing Creative Space: Capital Projects, page 208](#).

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.

2.4.2

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 204](#)).

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

2.4.3

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

2.4.4

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 [Capacity and Advancement, page 215](#).

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. Longer-term 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).

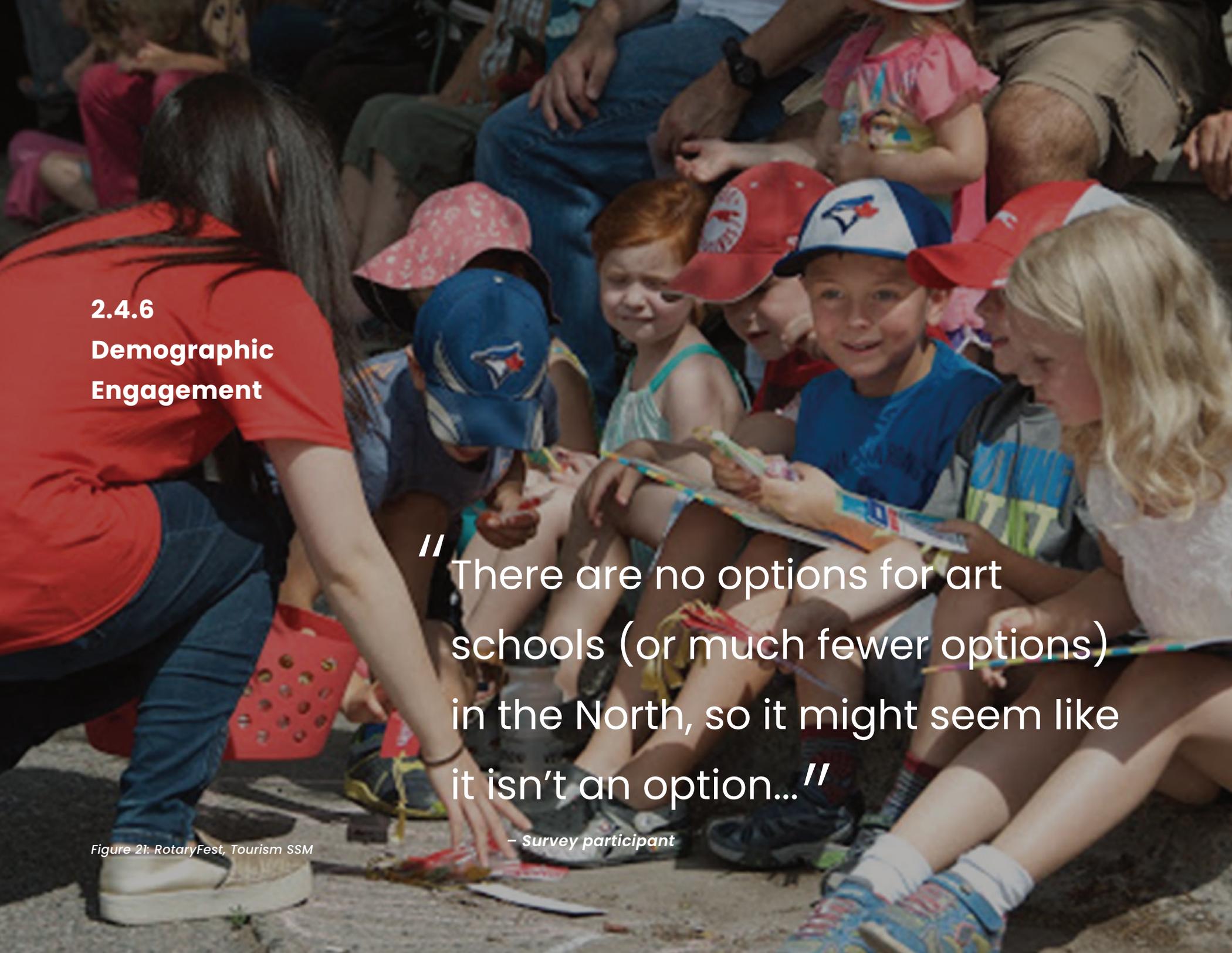
2.4.5 Operating Hours

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

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red t-shirt and blue jeans, is crouching on the ground. She is interacting with a group of children who are sitting on the ground. The children are wearing various hats, including Toronto Blue Jays caps and red baseball caps. One child is holding a colorful drawing. The woman is holding a red plastic basket. The background shows other people sitting on the ground, suggesting an outdoor event or festival.

2.4.6 Demographic Engagement

“ There are no options for art schools (or much fewer options) in the North, so it might seem like it isn’t an option...”

– Survey participant

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, establishing 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.

2.4.7

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 [Developing Creative Space: Capital Projects, page 208](#) 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.

2.5.1 Acquiring 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.

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 [Current Space Scenarios, page 179](#)). 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.*”¹¹ Communities can uniquely define what their creative hub includes and provides, which can range from co-working, studio spaces,

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

performance, or supporting creative entrepreneurship. Please see [Appendix I: Resources, page 237](#) 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”.

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)

2.5.2 Developing Creative 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:

1. 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:



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

2.5.3 Developing Creative 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 COVID-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 identifying 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

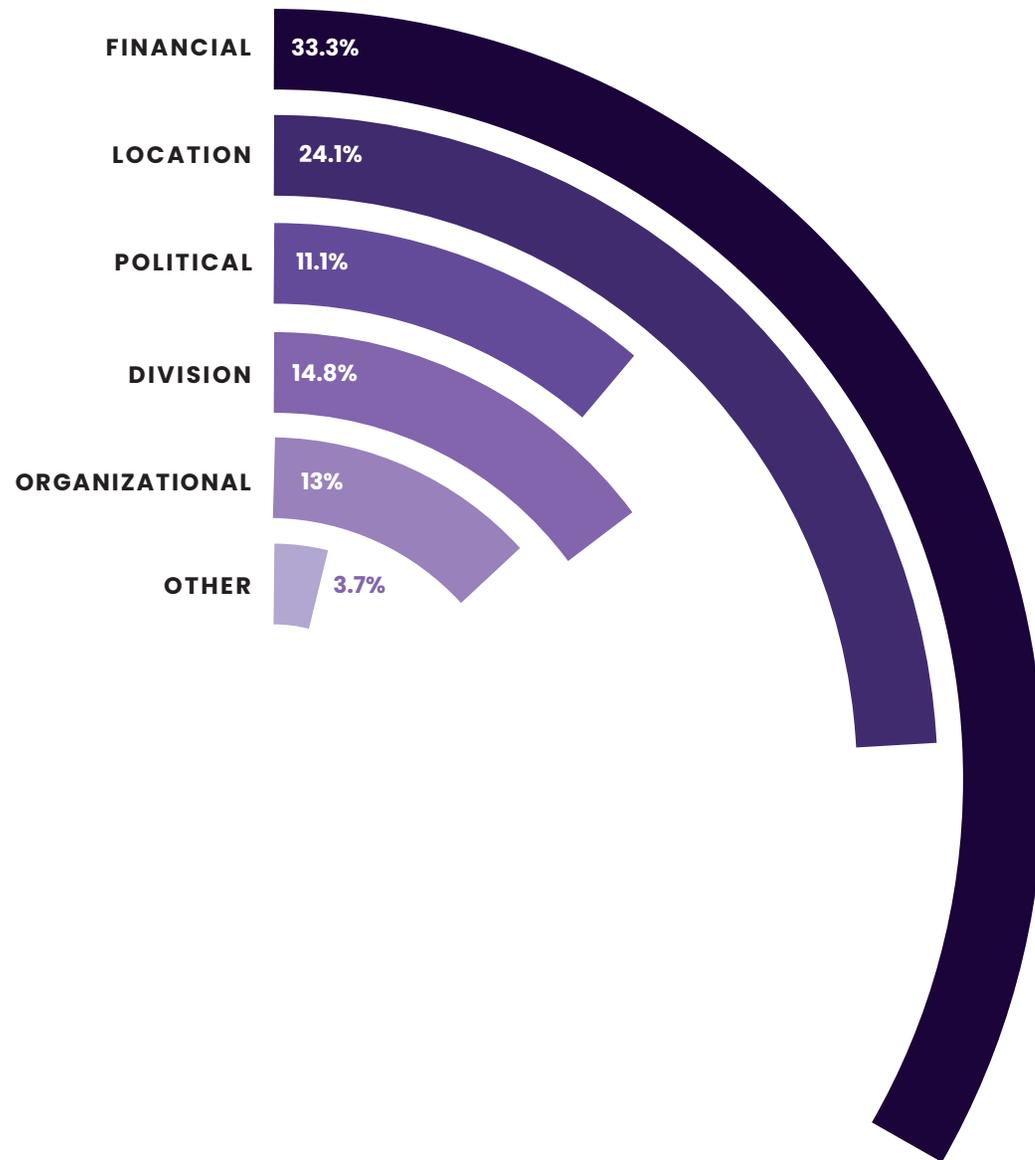
This category notes topics unique to Sault Ste. Marie. Participants were concerned with the size of the population – do we have enough to support the arts? During the forum questions arose around education, or more specifically, the lack thereof, and the need for an educational bridge that would support 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 long-lasting 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



Figure 26: Art Gallery of Algoma, Sault Ste. Marie

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, intra-sector; 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 237](#) 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 decision-makers 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 223](#) 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	3	1	1	2
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.				
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	2	1	0	0
Future other: networking				

*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:

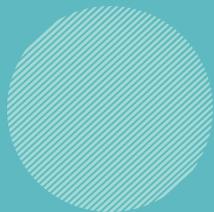
- We are a public library and love opportunities to partner with others!
- What we can do to assist in developing creative spaces in the community.
- How to assist others and provide services where there are service gaps.
- Learning about what everyone in our community is doing in creative spaces, and 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, Elkhuisen, 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 disciplines.

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, broad-based, 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:

1. 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 programming 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 co-located 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 facilitates 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 [case studies](#), [tools](#) and [resources](#), 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 [Canada Cultural Spaces Fund](#) 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.
- [Economic Development Initiative \(EDI\)](#) - 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: [Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie](#) (2007); [Breathing Northwinds](#) (2011); [Growing Ontario's Crafts North](#) (2012); [Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Mentoring Networks](#) (2013); [Valuing Northern Libraries Toolkit](#) (2018); and [Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Building Northern Ontario's Resilience](#) (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 [Community Enhancement Program](#) 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 [Cultural Supports Program](#) 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 [People and Talent Program](#) 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.

Wawa



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 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 operate 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. Economic Development Corporation of Wawa was the local project partner. 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. 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

Wawa is located 225 kilometers north of Sault Ste. Marie and 470 kilometers east of Thunder Bay. The journey between Sault Ste. Marie and Wawa follows the shoreline of Lake Superior and is considered one of the top-ten drives in Canada. The town's Welcome Centre and famous Wawa Goose statue is located at the junction of the Trans Canada Highway 17, and Highway 101 that leads to Chapelu and points east. The Municipality of Wawa stretches from Wawa Lake to Lake Superior and includes the communities of Wawa, Michipicoten River Village (Mission) and Michipicoten Harbour, occupying a total land area of 420 square kilometers.¹ Wawa is at the geographical centre of Ontario and is accessible by water, air, land and rail.²

The municipality provides services to several communities in Northeastern Ontario. The Wawa Region covers 90,000 km² (35,000 square miles) and encompasses 6,500 people living in: Chapleau, White River, Dubreuilville, and six First Nation communities including the nearby Michipicoten First Nation.³

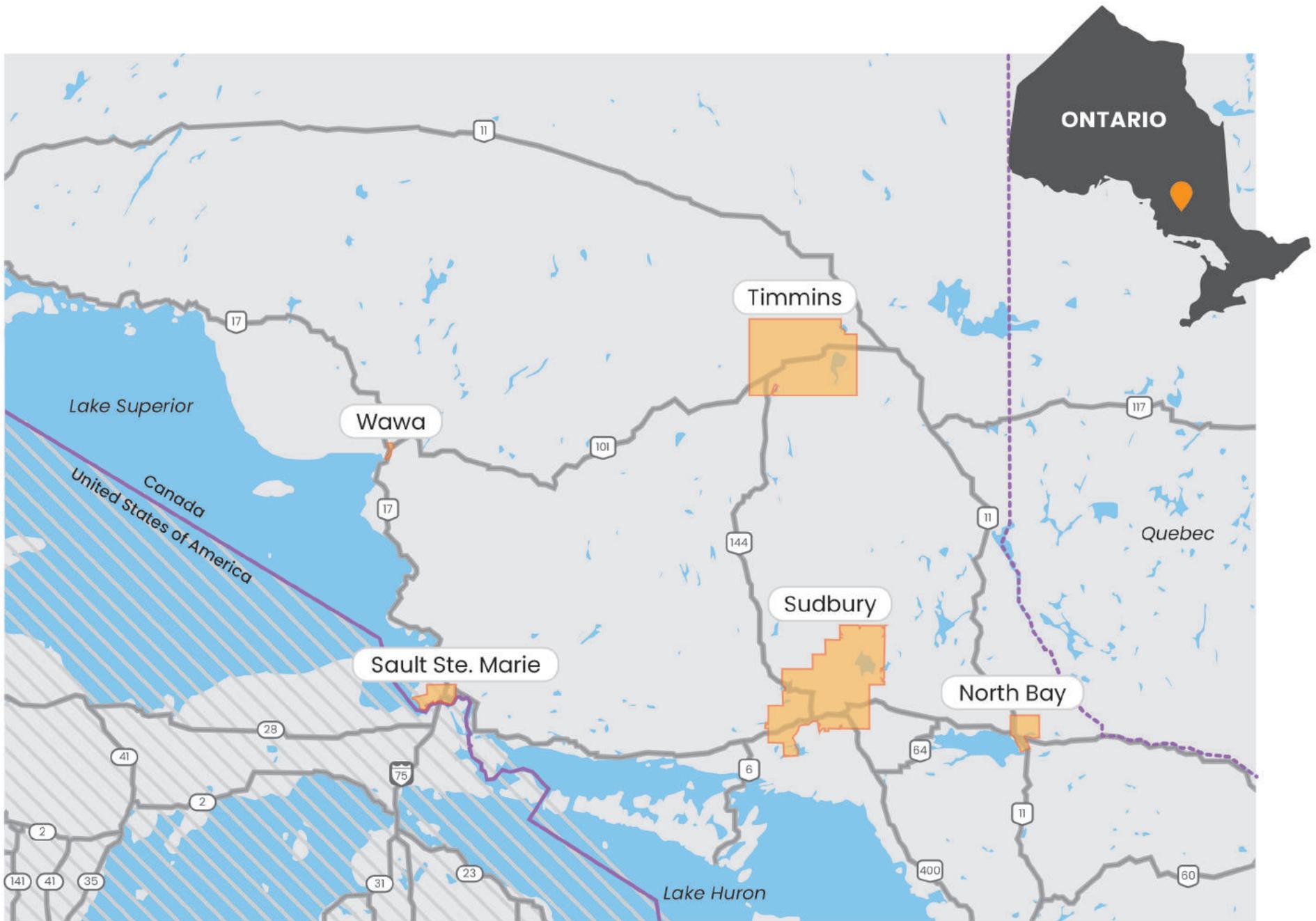
The Town of Wawa proper has approximately 3,000 residents. Its population has steadily decreased from 1986 through 2011, and between 2001 and 2006, the population fell by over 23%. This substantial change in Wawa's population can be attributed, in part, to the 1989 closure of Algoma Ore Division (AOD), an iron ore mine of Algoma Steel, and the downturn of the forestry sector.⁴

¹ <https://wawa.cc/>

² [Wawa Community Profile \(2013\)](#), p.7.

³ [Wawa Community Profile \(2013\)](#), p.3.

⁴ [Wawa Community Profile \(2013\)](#), p.9.



└─ 20km

Figure 1: Location of Wawa



Figure 2: Tourist Information Centre. Photo image courtesy of the Town of Wawa

There is a higher concentration of tradespeople in Wawa and the Superior East region compared to the rest of Ontario (Wawa: 12%; Ontario: 8%) which is highly indicative of the economic base of the community.⁵ The primary industries in Wawa and the surrounding area include mining, tourism and regional services such as retail, health and education. Industries in the service sector have continued to grow while jobs in the primary manufacturing and forestry sector have declined in recent years. Gold mining and ore extraction in the area is strong.⁶

The dominant language spoken in Wawa is English, however many people also speak French, Ojibway, and several European and South Asian languages.⁷

Wawa boasts a number of activities, year-round, on an annual basis. A few notable ones include snowmobiling, snowshoeing and ice fishing, with the town being named the Ice Fishing Capital of Ontario (2021).⁸ In the summer blueberries abound and Salmon Derby draws crowds from beyond the region. The arts are alive in the community. Two examples of major local arts events are the Wawa Music Festival, which showcases highly respected local musicians such as Don Charbonneau, as well as other recognized regional and Canadian artists, and the long standing arts and artisan By Hand Festival. Exceptional outdoor summer activities include swimming, paddling, and hiking on nearby trails and in Lake Superior Provincial Park.

⁵ [Wawa Community Profile \(2013\)](#), p.10.

⁶ [Wawa Community Profile \(2013\)](#), p.14.

⁷ [Statistics Canada \(2016\)](#).

⁸ <https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/wawa-crowned-ice-fishing-capital-of-ontario-3552730>

The area's rugged natural environment has attracted important artists for many years. [The Group of Seven](#), the Toronto-based painter collective instrumental in defining a distinctive 'Canadian style' of landscape painting as the first Canadian genre setting themselves apart from American/European approach, created a number of their most iconic works in the surrounding area. A.Y. Jackson in particular regularly visited nearby Sandy Beach. The Canadian classical pianist, Glenn Gould, also spent time composing in the area. A tourism initiative launched by the [Coalition of Algoma Passenger Rail](#) (CAPT) based on the Group of Seven's and Glenn Gould's historical connection to Wawa offered participants a rail ride along the Algoma Central Railway from Sault Ste. Marie to Hawk Junction, followed by coach bus service providing a variety of cultural activities as it travelled back to the Sault. in Wawa, Soul of Superior Tours organized a weekend event in 2012 celebrating Glenn Gould's 80th birthday. The culture and history of the area remains a keen interest for many, for example, Johanna Rowe's wawahistory.com steadfastly promotes opportunities for such.



Figure 3: High Falls Heritage Doors – Glenn Gould



Figure 4: Heritage Walk; Photo image courtesy of the Town of Wawa



Figure 5: Tourist Information Centre Heritage Door - Alex Ross and Joe Ball.
Photo by Jude Ortiz

The Municipality of Wawa completed the [Wawa Cultural Mapping Project](#)⁹ in 2012, winning the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Community Leadership award. There has been no further work on creating or adopting a municipal cultural plan as a next step. Municipal investment in the culture sector includes the Heritage Committee, Community Development Committee, Wawa Business Improvement Area (BIA), Economic Development Corporation, and the Library. The Town has engaged the community in several projects over recent years that highlight the area's unique culture and heritage. These include [Heritage Doors](#)¹⁰, new heritage panels at the Tourist Information Centre and Scenic High Falls, and a waterfront revitalization that includes the Wawa Boreal Gateway Beachfront boardwalk complete with bioswales, benches, playground equipment, and interpretive signage in English, French, and Ojibway. In 2020, the EDC supported the establishment of the Wawa Arts Council to advance the arts, culture, and heritage sector in Wawa, especially with a mind to creative space.

9 <https://wawaculture.ca>

10 <https://www.wawahistory.com/wawa-heritage-doors.html>



Figure 6: Rehearsal studio. Photo provided by the Economic Development Corporation of Wawa



2.0

Community Profile



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

2.1 Respondents

Although the survey results are not a comprehensive representation of the artistic and creative community with regards to creative space, the partners have advised that a lot of good information was gathered and the virtual community engaged a number of people and generated a healthy conversation, indicating residents are interested in this project.

Total number of respondents: 31 individuals, 6 organizations

Table 1: Age of respondents

Age	Individuals	Organizational Representatives
16-20	1	0
21-30	5	0
31-40	11	0
41-50	5	1
51-60	5	2
61-70	3	0
71+	0	0

30 of 31 individuals responded / 3 of 6 organizations responded

Individual respondents in the Wawa 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. The data does not mean that younger people are not playing a significant role individually, and/or within organizations through a range of capacities including leadership (volunteer or employed), but rather only that no one in these age brackets participated in the survey.

2.2 Community Contributions



*Figure 7: Outdoor artisan market.
Photo provided by Economic Development Corporation of Wawa*

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 to the circulation of goods (e.g. for personal use, gifts to others, or for selling in 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.



Figure 8: Outdoor dance performance.
Photo provided by Economic Development Corporation of Wawa



Figure 9: Indoor performance.
Photo provided by Economic Development Corporation of Wawa

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 resilience-related characteristics including increased complex problem-solving 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 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 Wawa area. It is followed by two subsections focused on formalized recognition: acknowledgements, recognition and certifications; and, media coverage.

2.2.1

Engagement, learning, connectivity and development

// Creative spaces foster connection, which fosters positive ways to move in the world. In these uncertain times, we need to be building bridges, not walls. //

– (Survey participant)

Participants were asked to identify ways the creative space in their community contributes to specific activities and benefits itemized in Table 2. No individuals or organizations responded to this question. A participant in the virtual community forum suggested the “*low response [is] perhaps from a general lack of communication in the community of what spaces do exist.*”

Table 2: Engagement, Learning, Connectivity and Development

	Individuals	Organizational Representatives
Access to discipline-based mentors	0	0
Affordable use of space	0	0
Co-production opportunities	0	0
Incubator space for visioning or experimentation	0	0
Innovative use of space	0	0
Networking	0	0
Physically accessible space	0	0
Suitable space for a particular art form	0	0
Teaching and learning opportunities	0	0
Technology and equipment to rent or use	0	0
Understanding of Indigenous knowledge in artistic craft/space	0	0

0 of 31 individuals responded / 0 of 6 organizations responded

In contrast, 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. Following is a sampling of individuals' responses underscoring the role creative spaces play in shaping identity and creating a sense of place.

Individuals noted:

- Originality, inclusivity and plain joy
- An escape from town where you can create in the wilderness
- Helping to alleviate symptoms of depression
- Creates a social gathering with others who can relate to you
- Offers space for music lessons to all ages
- Gives students the opportunity to showcase their talents to the community
- Gives the opportunity to experience performing in group performances and the opportunity to further their studies in the arts in university or college



Figure 10: Outdoor performance.

Photo provided by Economic Development Corporation of Wawa



Figure 11: Outdoor art market. Photo provided by the Economic Development Corporation of Wawa

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).

No organizations offered examples of the community contributions their creative spaces are providing.

Figure 12: The Wawa Goose.
Photo image courtesy of the Town of Wawa

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.

Wawa was awarded the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Community Leadership in 2012 for the Cultural Mapping Project. This award is presented for outstanding contributions to the identification, preservation, protection and promotion of Ontario's heritage.



Figure 13: Ontario Heritage Trust

In the last five years, one individual has received acknowledgements, recognition, or certifications at the local municipal level in the tourism and arts, business, and accessibility sectors. No organizations responded.

GEOGRAPHIC REACH:

- Local: 1 individual, 0 organization
- Regional: 0 individual, 0 organization
- Provincial: 0 individual, 0 organization
- National: 0 individual, 0 organization
- International: 0 individual, 0 organization

SECTOR:

- Tourism: 1 individual, 0 organization
- Arts: 1 individual, 0 organization
- Municipal: 1 individual, 0 organization
- Community Development: 0 individual, 0 organization
- Culture: 0 individual, 0 organization
- Business: 1 individual
- Economic: 0 individual, 0 organization
- Construction: 0 individual, 0 organization
- Black, Indigenous, People of Colour: 0 individual, 0 organization
- Accessibility: 1 individual, 0 organization
- LGBT2SQ+: 0 individual, 0 organization
- Human Rights, Inclusion or Equity: 0 individual, 0 organization
- Environment: 0 individual, 0 organization

2.2.4 Media Coverage



Figure 14: Live music performance. Photo provided by the Economic Development Corporation of Wawa

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, three individual respondents said yes. Specifically, one individual received media coverage at least once in the past five years, and two individuals were featured more than twice within the same time period. This media coverage was local to the Wawa area.

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

Table 3: Media Coverage Reach

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

3 of 31 individuals responded / 0 of 6 organizations responded



2.3 Current Space and Identified Needs

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.

Figure 15: Outdoor music performance. Photo provided by the Economic Development Corporation of Wawa.

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 13 (or 35%) individual respondents have creative space, 12 individuals and 2 organizations indicate they do not have creative space and that they want it. For further information about respondents' space preferences see [Acquiring or Developing Creative Space, page 287](#).

Of the respondents who own, lease and/or manage creative space, two individuals 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
Owens, operates and/or manages creative space	13	0
Audience	Individuals	Organizations
For private or organizational needs	11	0
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	2	0
Do not have creative space but want it	12	2

30 of 31 individuals responded / 3 of 6 organizations responded



Figure 16: Indoor artisan market. Photo image courtesy of the Town of Wawa

2.3.2 Disciplines and Activities



Figure 17: Performance at an outdoor market. Photo provided by Economic Development Corporation of Wawa.

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		Organizations		
	Practice	Current	Future	Current	Future
Circus	0	0	2	0	0
Community Arts	4	0	13	0	2
Craft Arts	5	0	12	0	0
Dance	3	0	9	0	1
Film	1	0	7	0	0
Heritage	3	0	10	0	1
Literary	4	0	10	0	1
Mixed-media	5	0	11	0	1
Multi-disciplinary	1	0	11	0	1
Music	8	1	12	0	1
Performance	5	0	9	0	2
Theatre	5	0	12	0	1
Visual Arts	9	0	12	0	2
Other: finger weaving	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

Practice - 18 of 31 individuals responded / 2 of 6 organizations responded
 Current - 1 of 31 individuals responded / Future - 16 of 31 individuals responded
 Current - 0 of 6 organizations responded / Future - 2 of 6 organizations responded

Table 5.b: Current practice and future activities

Activities	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
Cafe	0	0	0	0
Classes, Mentoring	0	0	0	0
Client meeting space	0	0	0	0
Creative collaborative space	0	0	0	0
Cultural activities	0	0	0	0
Exhibition space	2	0	0	0
Gathering, public educational space	0	0	0	0
Retail space	0	8	0	1

Practice - 18 of 31 individuals responded / 2 of 6 organizations responded
 Current - 1 of 31 individuals responded / Future - 16 of 31 individuals responded
 Current - 0 of 6 organizations responded / Future - 2 of 6 organizations responded



Figure 18: String musicians performance. Photo provided by the Economic Development Corporation of Wawa

Wawa Foto

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 and music, followed by a particular focus on theatre, performance, literary work, community arts, dance, mixed media, and heritage. While few people provided information regarding what programming they are currently offering in their spaces, many indicated disciplines that they would like to offer in the future. This suggests there is an underutilization of capacity (i.e., theatre, dance, craft arts) and a desire to increase engagement in these areas as well as other disciplines.

The survey provided limited data regarding the current activities of existing creative spaces in Wawa. Individual creative spaces function primarily as places for visual and craft arts, mixed media, music, and multi-disciplinary work. There are limited exhibition and performance activities at these spaces. No organizations noted their current creative space activities.

Individuals and organizations are focused on seeking retail space in the future. In fact, in this survey, it was the only type of future activity space indicated.

// I would like to have group or private sessions with young kids or adolescents to show them how art can be a gateway to a better you. If you struggle with mental issues such as depression, anxiety and PTSD. Creating is a good way to address your feelings. //

– (Survey participant)

2.3.3 Creative Space Needs

// The possibility of renting a better space that would meet my teaching needs and the students' needs ... more accessible to the community. How to get the funds and help I need ... so that I can do more for the community? //

– (Survey participant)

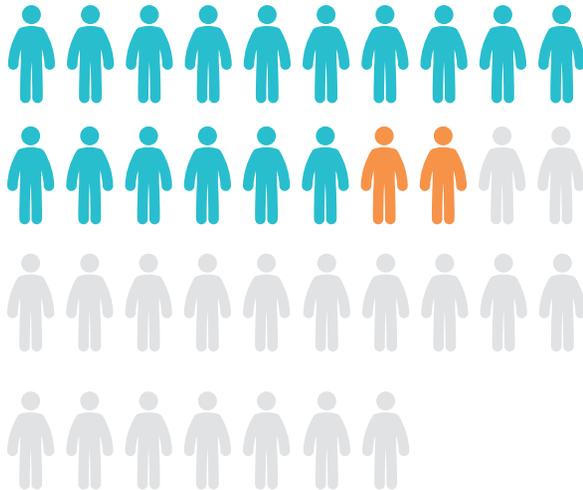
Although the existing creative spaces are positively contributing to Wawa's quality of life and community economic well-being, study participants identified a need for more and/or upgraded creative space, and the type that is needed to further strengthen the community. Space needs fall into two categories: (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 [Disciplines and Activities, page 267](#).

Space needs fall into two categories: those who do not have space and those whose space is not meeting current needs.

NEED FOR MORE CREATIVE SPACE:

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



49%

or 18 of 37 total respondents indicated a need for more creative spaces in the Wawa area.



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.



38%

14 of 37 total respondents say that they do not currently have a creative space.



The respondents who do not have space and want it provided their following preferences.

PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SPACE:

- Individuals:
 - » Private: 0
 - » Public: 11
- Organizations:
 - » Private: 0
 - » Public: 2

LEASED OR OWNED SPACE

- Individuals:
 - » Own: 1
 - » Lease: 2
 - » No preference: 8
- Organizations:
 - » Own: 0
 - » Lease: 0
 - » No preference: 2

CITY/ TOWN OR RURAL LOCATION

- Individuals:
 - » City/town: 9
 - » Rural: 5
- Organizations:
 - » City/town: 2
 - » Rural: 0



Figure 19: Indoor artisan market. Photo image courtesy of the Town of Wawa

TYPE OF SPACE NEEDED

Respondents—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. Priority areas are exhibition/gallery spaces and multidisciplinary hubs, with a strong need for private studios suitable for specific disciplines, as well as rehearsal and performance spaces. Retail space and administrative space were also noted.

Table 6: Type of Space Needed

Space	Individuals	Organizations
Administrative space	5	1
Exhibition/Gallery space	13	1
Multi-Disciplinary Hubs	11	1
Performance space	7	1
Private studio suitable for specific disciplines	7	1
Rehearsal space	8	1
Retail space	5	1
Other: Café with Art display, studio, live music, yoga/ dance studio	1	N/A

16 of 31 individuals responded / 2 of 6 organizations responded

2.3.4

Creative Space Not Meeting Needs

“Space too small to hold group practices, limited in access to my studio as its in a school with strict boundaries, rent is expensive, can’t hold recitals or concerts” (Survey participant).

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

Two key areas of improvement include:

- Upgrading size and accessibility, and;
- Functionality (lighting, ventilation, privacy)

No organizations responded to this question.

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 [Developing Creative Space: Capital Projects, page 289](#).



Figure 20: James Sanders pottery.
Photo images courtesy of the Town of Wawa

2.3.5

Creative Space Meeting Needs

Six of individuals 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. No organizations responded to this question.

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 areas of exhibition/gallery space and multidisciplinary hubs. 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

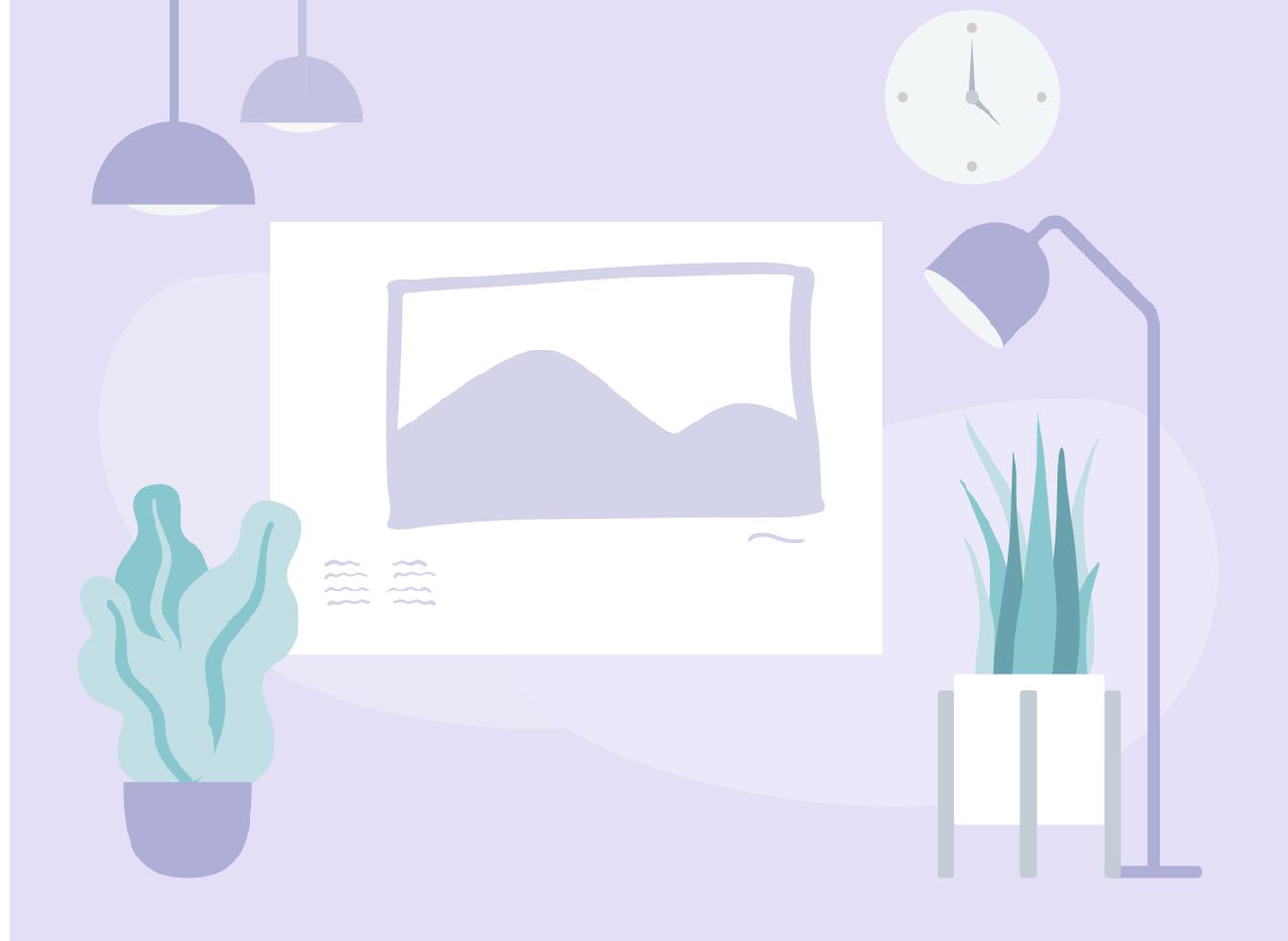
Need Met	Individuals	Organizations
Affordability	3	0
Ease of Access	3	0
Size	2	0
Suitability	3	0

6 of 24 individuals responded / 1 of 9 organizations responded



Figure 21: Don Charbonneau candles. Photo courtesy of the Town of Wawa

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 Wawa. The study includes organizational lifespan, management structure, facility management, revenue, operating hours, demographic engagement, recurring engagement, and barriers to accessing creative space.

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.

When a community is home to several long-operating artistic/creative organizations, it is a testament to the on-going importance of creative expression bolstered by collective passion, perseverance and community engagement. In Wawa, there are at least two organizations that have been in existence for more than 10 years, illustrating significant experience in engaging the community as well as administrative capacity that has continued through societal changes. They can be considered anchor organizations in the community.



Figure 22: Outdoor night market. Photo by Economic Development Corporation of Wawa

Table 8: Organizational Lifespan

Years in Operation	Less than 1	10-14	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Number of Organizations	1	1	0	1	0	0	0

3 of 6 organizations responded

2.4.2 Management Structure

// *Because we've always traditionally depended on the municipality to take a lead and organize us and get the funding ... we had a tourism person that was really engaged in what was going on and what was the latest trend ... she was part of the travel association, and she was going to the most up to date forums, and she would lead us in some of this stuff. But without that engagement, and leadership from the municipal standpoint... their capacity to do this kind of stuff is dwindling every decade or every couple of years with their challenges. So it's up to us, people.*

– (Survey participant) //

The survey asked respondents to describe their management structure, including governance, personnel, and ownership. One individual responded that they are a tenant. No organizations provided information. The virtual forum discussed the limited information solicited from the management structure and revenue questions. One person spoke of relying heavily on the municipality, implying that this may have resulted in less need to create formal structures and secure funds.

Forum participants also noted the important role volunteers play in providing opportunities to engage in arts and culture, citing a volunteer-led entertainment series that brought events to Wawa and developed local talent. For example one person stated *"I just wanted to make that point that there are some amazing volunteers that take the lead on things."*

Table 9: Management structure

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

1 of 31 individuals responded / 0 of 6 organizations responded

2.4.3 Facility Management Experience

Of the people who responded, the data shows there are individuals with experience owning, leasing, or managing a creative space in Wawa, 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 23: Outdoor artisan market. Photo by Economic Development Corporation of Wawa

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

	Individuals	Organizations
Less than 1 year	1	0
1-4 years	2	0
5-10 years	3	0
More than 10 years	1	0

7 of 31 individual responded / 0 of 6 organizations responded

2.4.4 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. No one responded to this question. This could be that many people are uncomfortable discussing specific financial topics such as revenue. Participants in the virtual forum discussed the possibility that there were no responses due to the community's reliance on the municipality to lead initiatives, hence revenue generation was not something the community focused on, suggesting it is a newer way of thinking. Participants also raised the point that the sector does not have to be dependent just on government grants; there are various business structures such as nonprofits, cooperatives, social enterprises that the community can utilize to generate revenue.

It is important to note, research indicates that funding models do not particularly favor northern artists. Current structures and funding 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. Longer-term 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).

2.4.5

Operating Hours

For this study, full-time hours were defined as over 20 hours per week. The chart illustrates that many of the 25 individuals and two organizations who responded to this question are interested in increasing their hours to a full-time schedule.

Table 11: Weekly Operating Hours and Future Goals

Operating Hours	Individuals Current	Individuals Goal	Organizations Current	Organizations Goal
Less than 10 hours	2	9	0	0
10-20 hours	3	4	0	0
21-40 hours	2	3	0	0
41-60 hours	1	1	0	1
More than 60 hours	0	0	0	1

25 of 31 individuals responded / 2 of 6 organizations responded

2.4.6 Demographic Engagement

In recent years the tourism sector has seen a significant growth in cultural tourism, particularly experiential activities. A couple of respondents identified the important role the surrounding environment impacts their practice – one received recognition in the field, and another noted it as a community benefit, i.e. the engagement of tourists in art, raises the awareness of the environment. The area is home to a number of Indigenous communities that have strong cultural traditions as well as a diversity of other cultures that have come to the region through immigration (returning residents or citizens from within Canada). The arts sector is recognized as being an intercultural bridge which can both strengthen these communities and foster connections between them.

The one person who responded indicated an interest engaging more local and/or nearby residents indicating a commitment to the community.

Table 12: Increasing Demographic Engagement

Engagement	Individuals	Organizations
Local and/or nearby residents	1	0
Seasonal area residents (in the area for a length of time, but not year-round)	0	0
Tourists (short stay or passing through)	0	0

1 of 31 individual responded / 0 of 6 organizations responded

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/or 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 and/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 and/or organizational unique building or equipment needs or repairs.

2.4.7

Barriers to Accessing Creative Spaces

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

The study asked participants what barriers limit public access to creative spaces (e.g. lack of personal or public transit, no or poor road access, travel times/distances, barriers for people living with disabilities, and parking issues, etc.). No one answered this question.

This is an area where further investigation would be beneficial.

2.4.8

Recurring Engagement

// *Should have flexibility for artist/studio space and common areas that could be opened to the public (exhibit/performance + café/food/bar)* //

– (Survey participant)

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.

One individual indicated that their creative space is designed for recurring engagement, and another noted that physical changes to their space is necessary to attract repeat users in the future. Please see the section on [Developing Creative Space: Capital Projects, page 289](#) for more information regarding building upgrades.

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.

In sum, this section provides very limited data about key aspects of operating creative spaces.

2.5 Acquiring or Developing Creative Space

// I would love to see a space that is diverse & easily accessible to creators, artists and the general public. I envision a cafe with local art being displayed and an attached studio for art workshops, dance and yoga classes //

– (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.

2.5.1

Acquiring Creative Space

// *Looking for a physical building to be a safe, inclusive haven for the arts in our community.* //

– (Survey participant)

Acquiring creative space, especially on a longer-term base 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.

PLANS TO ACQUIRE OR DEVELOP CREATIVE SPACE:

- 27% of respondents (10 of 37) 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.

- 1 individual would consider being located in a creative space with others as a collaborative solution to their space needs
- 38% of respondents (14 of 37) are willing or at least interested in partnering with others to purchase, rent, and/or build a creative space

Fourteen participants are open to exploring collective management structures 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”*¹¹; 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 [Appendix I: Resources, page 315](#) for examples in Toronto and Hearst.

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

2.5.2

Developing Creative 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.

When asked to identify three main improvement that would help their existing creative spaces better meet community needs, one individual noted:

1. Larger space that is closer to downtown
2. Better parking

No organizations responded to this question.

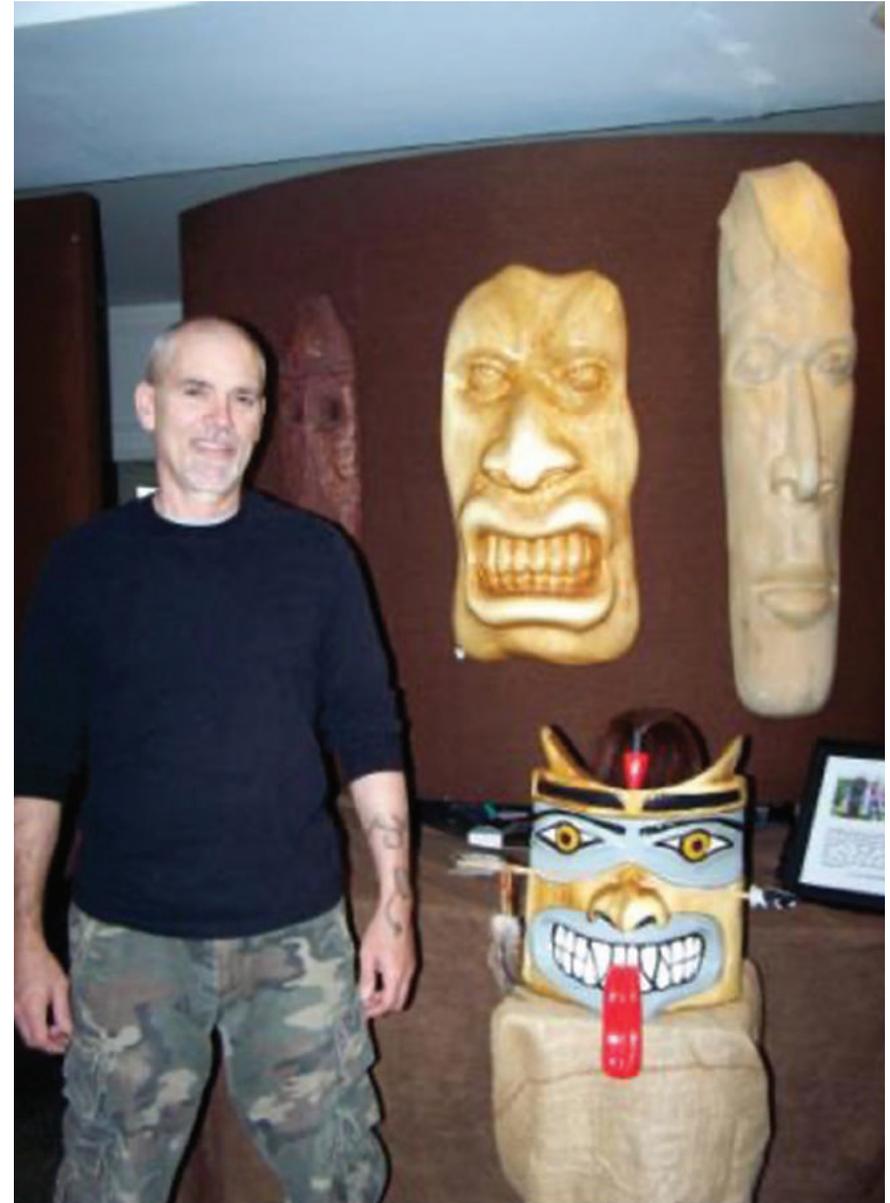


Figure 24: Artist Spike Mills. Photo image courtesy of the Town of Wawa

The survey demonstrates in the next five years:



of individual respondents (3 of 31) are not planning for a capital project



of respondents (8 of 31) are not even planning to develop or acquire a creative space.

Reasons survey participants cited for not planning for capital projects included the time, cost, and the effect of COVID-19. For one respondent in particular, technological and artistic supplies are their immediate priorities. A participant in the virtual community forum underscored that “... *capital projects take time, usually years of multiple phases, and people don’t want to do it if it’s longer than one year—who is going to be around for three years?*” A few of these concerns are echoed in the following section that identifies areas that contribute to difficulties in developing or maintaining creative space.

2.5.3 Developing Creative Space: Considerations

“Losing my space at any time and not being able to offer my services. Finding an easily accessible space to perform and teach and the space to be affordable. Having the support of the community to organize bigger productions as plays and musicals..”

– (Survey participant)

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 geographical 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.

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 the north many of these considerations are interconnected.

- Respondents are concerned about access to available and suitable space at a reasonable cost, including on a part-time basis.

FINANCIAL

A primary factor in acquiring space access to capital. In the north there are 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.

- A respondent is particularly concerned about the work of fundraising.

ORGANIZATIONAL

- Respondents are concerned about the need to establish a nonprofit organization, and volunteer capacity.

POLITICAL

Political considerations refer to limited government support, etc.

- One respondent is concerned about the buy-in from the municipality.

DIVISION

Division refers to the diverse visions of needs to be considered when selecting a viable path forward:

- There is concern about a current lack of vision from community, public and corporate buy in.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

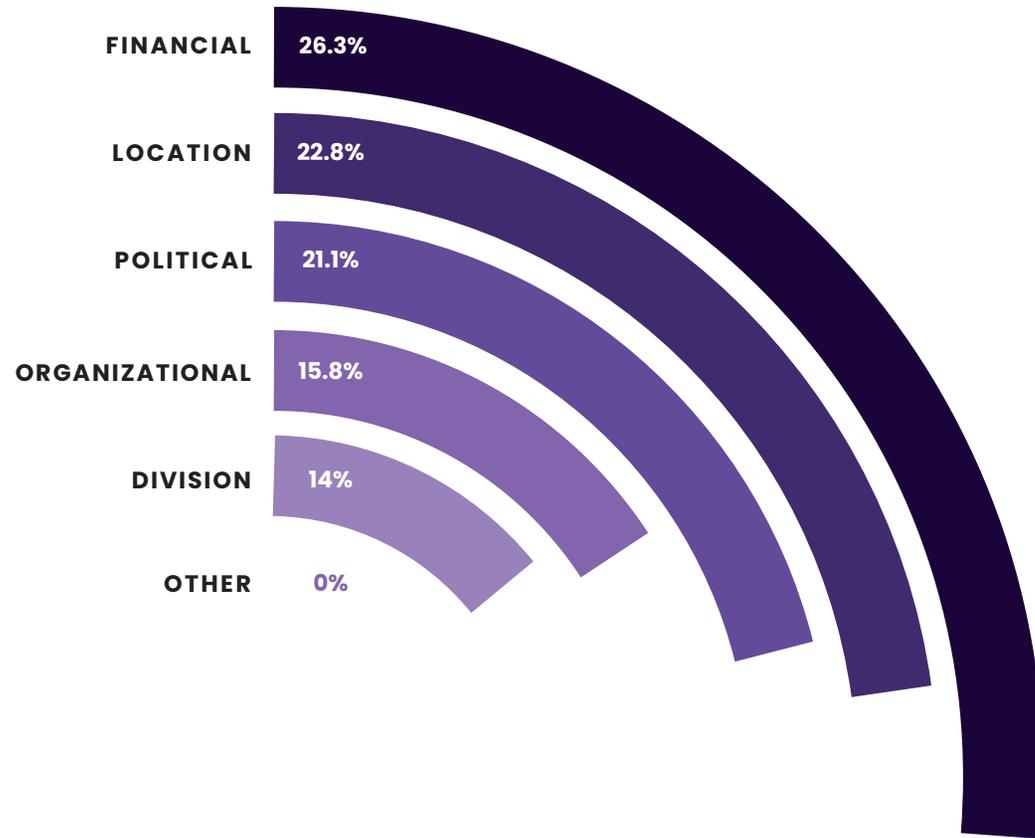
- There is risk in having creative space. A survey participant succinctly expressed this as “Not sure what to anticipate.” Another concern was dealing with COVID-19 restrictions.

The virtual community forum included thoughtful responses regarding the considerations, and positive and negative aspects of acquiring creative space demonstrating a realistic understanding of the challenges of the organizational and financial challenges of obtaining creative space.

COVID-19

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 and its long-lasting 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



15 of 31 individuals responded / 2 of 6 organizations responded

2.6 Sustaining Creative Space



Figure 26: Cultural Mapping project. Photo image courtesy of the Town of Wawa

This section provides information regarding areas in which the participants from Wawa are seeking to build capacity through developing skills and accessing resources; the types of current and future partnerships, and the purposes of such.

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 (intersector, 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

“ I have a waiting list of over 30 students wanting music lessons. Lacking the help in order to take on more students. The studio is too far for kids that dont have rides to the studio. After school hour lesson spots are overbooked. ”

– (Survey participant)

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.

Individual respondents in Wawa 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. Business planning, operation knowledge, financial management, and advocacy are the top priorities, followed by space planning and marketing capability. No organizations provided data.

Table 13: 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 decision-makers toward investment and support)	3	0
Business (planning, strategy, HR)	3	0
Financial (how to diversify revenues, regular management)	3	0
Marketing (online presence, etc.)	2	0
Operational (facility management, asset management, maintenance, etc.)	3	0
Social/Cultural (accessibility, inclusion, diversity, equity, etc.)	1	0
Space audit/plan	2	0
Other	N/A	N/A

4 of 31 individuals responded / 0 of 6 organizations responded

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 suiting 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. Additionally, a number of sector organizations are listed [Appendix I: Resources, page 315](#).

Communication between residents and awareness of what is available was discussed during the virtual community forum. A participant suggested *"... if they knew more of what was available, not just locally, but from other organizations or places or communities, that would help."* Following this thread, a survey participant underscored *"a full inventory of Wawa's assets is overdue and will compliment Wawa's cultural map."* Another survey participant's question lends support for the idea of cultural mapping stating *"Where are there existing creative spaces in Wawa? What does the arts network look like spatially and also in terms of social connection."* The need for linking artists and arts organizations to each other and local resources appears to be a recurring theme, tying back to participants' comments regarding the historical support the Town has provided as a potential reason for not necessarily being aware of the opportunities and/or available resources.

The federal government is providing investment opportunities for the development of social enterprises – businesses with a social, cultural, or environmental concern – which the arts and culture sector fall into. 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 301](#), offer pathways for navigating these challenges.

2.6.2 Partnerships and Collaboration

Survey data indicate there are currently some working relationships between individuals and municipal and Indigenous governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, sports/recreation clubs or facilities, legions or service clubs, as well as Black/Indigenous/People of Colour (BIPOC), Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Trans/Queer/2 Spirit/+ (LGBTQ2S+), and immigrant communities. These partnerships exist to leverage financial resources, space, and audience development.

Individual respondents envision increased and future partnerships with non-profit organizations, businesses, sports/recreation clubs or facilities, and BIPOC communities, as well as all levels of government, businesses, faith-based groups, legions or service clubs, LGBTQ2S+, and immigrant communities. These would be for increased financial resources, space, marketing and audience development, as well as staffing/volunteers and programming. No organizations responded to this question.

"The EDC is leading the creation of a NFP [not for profit organization] to champion arts and an arts space in Wawa. We see ArtsBuild and potentially Arts Scape as potential partners in bringing the communities vision to life." (Survey participant)

"The Heritage Committee has traditionally had a good relationship with the Tourism and Rec department at the Town ... and new funding, tourism initiatives and upgrades have often included a consultation with us to provide feedback and ideas ... as well as text, old photos etc." (Survey participant)

The Sustaining Creative Space section reveals that there are a number of key areas where respondents would like assistance to strengthen their individual operations. Areas include advocacy, marketing, business, operations, 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 the Wawa Economic Development Corporation. Participants have identified a number of existing partnerships, relationships and networks that enable sharing information and 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 artists could lead to new hybrid models of operating micro businesses, allowing them time to focus on their core capacities.

Table 14: Types of Partnerships

	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
BIPOC communities	1	2	0	0
Businesses	1	2	0	0
Faith-based organizations	0	1	0	0
Federal government	0	1	0	0
Immigrant communities	1	1	0	0
Indigenous government	1	1	0	0
Legions or service clubs	1	1	0	0
LGBTQ2S+ communities	1	1	0	0
Municipal government	1	1	0	0
Museums or heritage organizations	0	0	0	0
Non-profit organizations	1	2	0	0
Provincial government	0	1	0	0
Sports/Recreation clubs or facilities	1	2	0	0
None	0	1	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

Current: 1 of 31 individuals responded / Future: 4 of 31 individuals responded
Current: 0 of 6 organizations responded / Future: 0 of 6 organizations responded

Table 15: Purpose of Partnerships

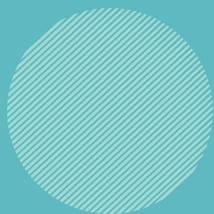
	Individuals		Organizations	
	Current	Future	Current	Future
Audience Development	1	2	0	0
Expertise	0	0	0	0
Financial	1	2	0	0
Marketing	0	2	0	0
Operations	0	0	0	0
Physical Building/Space	1	2	0	0
Programming	0	1	0	0
Staffing/Volunteers	0	1	0	0
Supplies	0	0	0	0
Not Applicable	2	1	0	0
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Current: 3 of 31 individuals responded / Future: 4 of 31 individuals responded
Current: 0 of 6 organizations responded / Future: 0 of 6 organizations responded



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, Elkhuisen, 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 Wawa area's creative space and its animation is contributing to identity and belonging, and has received national recognition for the development of innovative, unique products. It is engaging people that range in age from 16 years old to 70 years, illustrating the importance of art in one's life over time. At least two organizations have operated for more than 10 years. Respondents indicated their areas of practice include visual arts and music, followed by a particular focus on theatre, performance, literary work, community arts, dance, mixed media, and heritage. Individual respondents indicated their areas of practice include visual arts and music, followed by a particular focus on theatre, performance, literary work, community arts, dance, mixed media, and heritage arts. When compared to what programming is currently offered, there appear to be underutilized capacity (i.e., theatre, dance, craft arts) and a desire to increase engagement in these areas as well as other disciplines.

Many participants, specifically 49% or 18 of the 37 total respondents, 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. Thirteen participants have space, 14 do not have space, and the respondents want space that is open to the public. The majority have no preference between leased or owned space and there was no consensus on whether such spaces should be in city/town or rural settings. **The primary type of space participants are seeking is exhibition, followed closely by multi-**

disciplinary hubs, then private discipline-specific studio space, rehearsal and performance space. In terms of acquiring creative space, **14 respondents are willing or at least 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.

Although the Wawa area has limited dedicated creative space buildings, local artists have taken a leadership role in organizing events and animating other spaces, whether it be within community buildings or public places. For example, a small group of artists self-organized the By Hand Arts and Craft Festival in the early 1980s, first beside the Wawa Goose, which later became a bi-annual event that fills the Michipicoten Memorial Community Centre. Many artists hosted exhibitions at the Royal Canadian Legion Hall. The Entertainment Series that was run by volunteers was very popular as well. In 2011, artists organized a cooperative retail space at the Lakeview Hotel for a couple of summers. Spike Mills currently has a retail space at the Lakeview where he exhibits others' work as well. Broadway Avenue's Red Canoe Cooperative that operated for a number of years recently relocated to the property of Don Charbonneau and is now the Red Canoe Studio and Gift Shop. Don, too, features others' artwork.

While the Town of Wawa does not have a cultural policy or plan, it has supported the sector over a number of years through, for example, the establishment of a Heritage Committee, the Community Development Committee, Wawa Business Improvement Area (BIA), and Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Notable large scale community engagement projects have included the [200 Grandmother Doors](#) (2008) that evolved into the [Wawa Heritage Doors](#) (2013)¹² and the [Wawa Cultural Mapping](#) (2012)¹³ project which was awarded the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Community Leadership. A recent EDC investment has been the [Goose Nest Market](#), the log cabins that serve as summer pop-up retail space for local artisans at the end of Broadway Ave. They are now championing the creation of a nonprofit organization, the Wawa Boreal Arts and Crafts Association, to lead the development of an arts space. The Superior East Community Futures Development Corporation has also invested in sector development.

During the virtual community forum participants acknowledged the lead role the municipality has played in sector development, and expressed concern that the community has perhaps relied too heavily upon them. This sparked discussion around artists' capacity, particularly around organizational structures, business planning and revenue generation, essentially the business side of the arts, that appears to be undeveloped as a result. Despite these challenges, people expressed a strong commitment to increasing opportunities to further engage in their practices and reach out to others. To this end the Wawa Arts Council has recently formed.

The study did not attract a large number of participants; however, it does portray a community with interest, perseverance, and cultural assets upon which to further develop a vibrant sector that would reap broader community benefits. The limited data necessitate additional research to determine specific needs, assess the feasibility of the goals and plans to meet such. Many of the key pieces to build capacity and advance the sector currently exist; however, the missing 'dots' that would greatly increase the sector's sustainability and expedite growth largely revolve around human resources and a coordinated plan that would:

- i) Link Artists and Organizations to Existing Resources;
- ii) Leverage Capacity; and,
- iii) Lead by Developing Models of Sustainability.

¹² <https://www.wawahistory.com/wawa-heritage-doors.html>

¹³ <https://wawaculture.ca/>

3.1 Recommendations

3.1.1

Moving Forward

- Hire a dedicated full-time, limited term position to create a creative space development plan to address the needs identified in this study and implement the priorities determined through the plan's creation process. The person would work in collaboration with the municipality's Economic Development Corporation and local arts organizations such as the Wawa Arts Council to:
 1. Ensure diverse voices, particularly 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 player.

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. Key is creating the critical connections 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 Superior East Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC), Millworks Centre for Entrepreneurship (which serves the Algoma region), 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.

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 the Superior East CFDC, 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).

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.

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 municipalities 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.

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

- » Training workshops and coaching to prepare investment pitches.
- » Connect with Millworks and/or investors to facilitate workshops or provide coaching.

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 scope of functionality upgrades (larger size; lighting, ventilation, privacy, accessibility). Assess feasibility and, if needed, secure a project manager to undertake the work.

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 a pathway to meet goals.

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 synergies, 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.

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 programming 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 co-located 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.

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 the Town has been supportive and has invested in the sector, participants have a sense that there are considerably more assets that could be integrated into planning to meet community interest, suggesting the arts remain undervalued and underdeveloped. There is a need to increase understanding of the sector's importance to individual and collective health, 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 MillworksCentre 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 other dedicated service providers.
- Sector-wide marketing strategy including a map or database of art spaces and activities for seasonal residents and tourists. Update the Cultural Mapping database. The municipality could again play a lead role in developing this strategy.

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.

IV. INVESTMENT AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MODELS

- Develop a locally viable sustainable funding model incorporating both public and private support to further develop creative spaces. Investigate reallocating existing development resources to the arts sector; resource sharing across sectors; and investment incentives for private and/or public/private partnerships.

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 required 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.

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 Wawa, 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 Wawa area has considerable assets upon which to further enliven and strengthen the arts and culture sector. Municipal government has invested in cultural infrastructure in the past, and is currently leading an initiative to provide space. Those engaged in the arts demonstrate expertise, commitment and perseverance; however, further 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 [case studies](#), [tools](#) and [resources](#), 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.

CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK OF CANADA

Creative Cities Network of Canada is a network of dedicated municipal cultural leaders to whose work ignites communities and contributes to a vibrant, creative Canada. Research reports and a newsletter are available.

CREATOUR

CREATOUR is a national three-year project (2016–2020) to develop and pilot an integrated approach for creative tourism in small cities and rural areas in Portugal, combining multidisciplinary research with the development of a network of creative tourism pilots.

www.creatour.pt

DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

Federal department with many grant programs, the [Canada Cultural Spaces Fund](#) 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.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (EDI)

Economic Development Initiative for the Northern Ontario Francophone community.

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.

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

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

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND (NOHFC)

- The [Community Enhancement Program](#) 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 [Cultural Supports Program](#) 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 [People and Talent Program](#) 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 seed grants, grow grants, and capital grants)

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 will be announced in Spring 2021.

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.

