



Mapping Northern Creative Spaces

Timmins

Community Report

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Acknowledgments

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

TIMMINS



Steering Committee for an Independent Arts Council for 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

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

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

Surveys found the creative space in 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. Individual respondents indicated their practice areas include visual arts, followed by a particular focus on music, craft arts and multi-disciplinary arts. No individuals indicated what they currently offer; however, individuals' and organizations' priority future activities include music, theatre, visual arts and community arts.

Participants, specifically 51% of total participants (18 of 35), identified a need for more creative space, and provided direction regarding operational structures, type/purpose of desired spaces, programming they wish to deliver and audiences they wish to reach. Twenty-four have creative space and seven do not have space. The majority of respondents would like the space to be open to the public, leased rather than owned and located in a city/town rather than a rural site. **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.

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 some cultural infrastructure in the past, but more is needed. Those engaged in the arts demonstrate expertise, commitment and perseverance; however, sector investment (financial, in-kind support, and leadership) would advance community health and wellbeing and foster the skills for ongoing innovation and renewal in response to the dynamic knowledge economy. It is recommended that a dedicated full-time, limited term person be hired to create a development plan to address the needs identified in this study. The person would 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.

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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).

Mapping Northern Creative Spaces: Timmins, Community Report

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

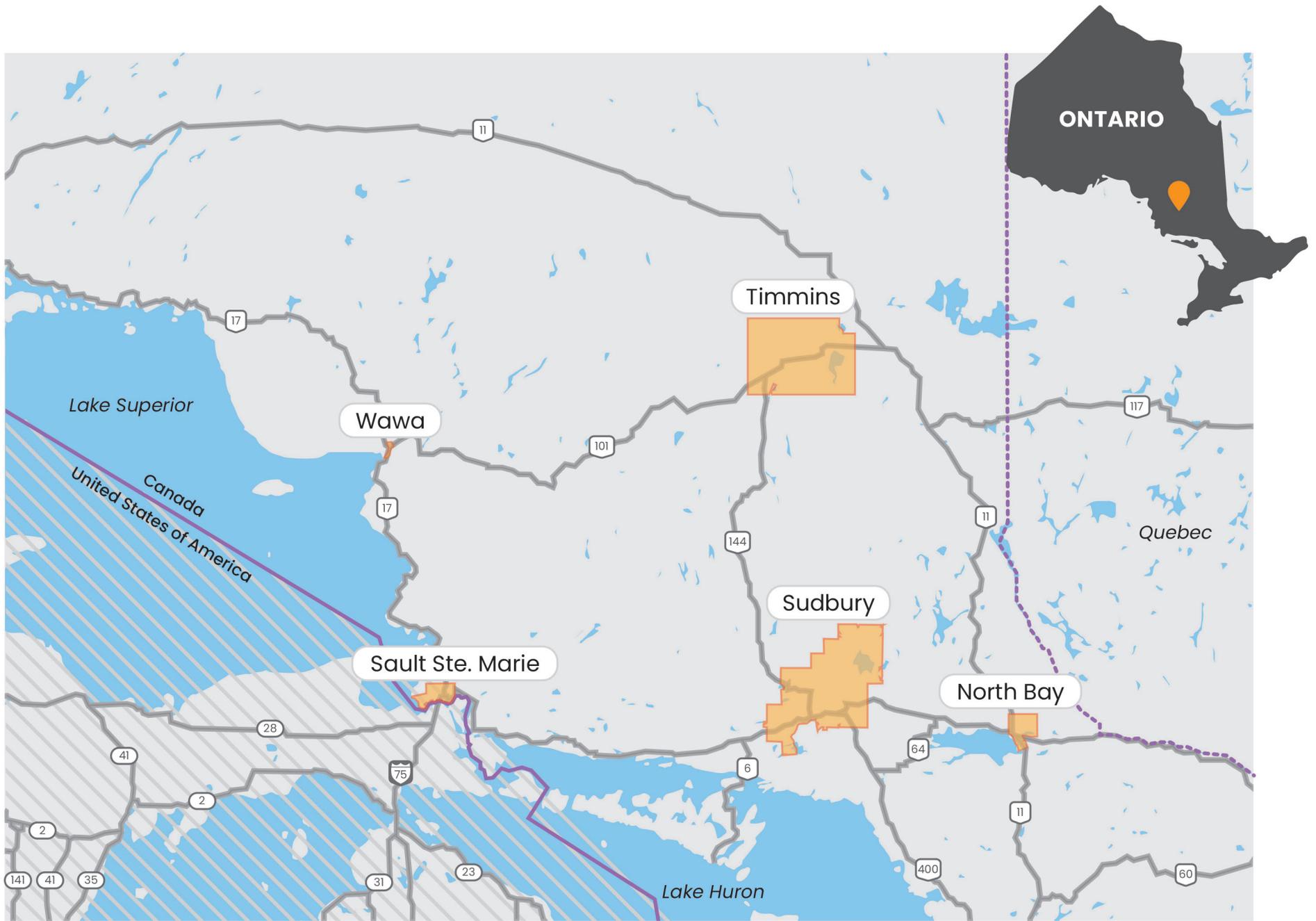
Timmins is located in the boreal forest of Northern Ontario, in Treaty 9 Territory on what are the traditional lands of the Mattagami First Nation. It is accessible by road, rail, and air transportation networks; the airport connects with many major centres in 90 minutes. Timmins is approximately 450 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

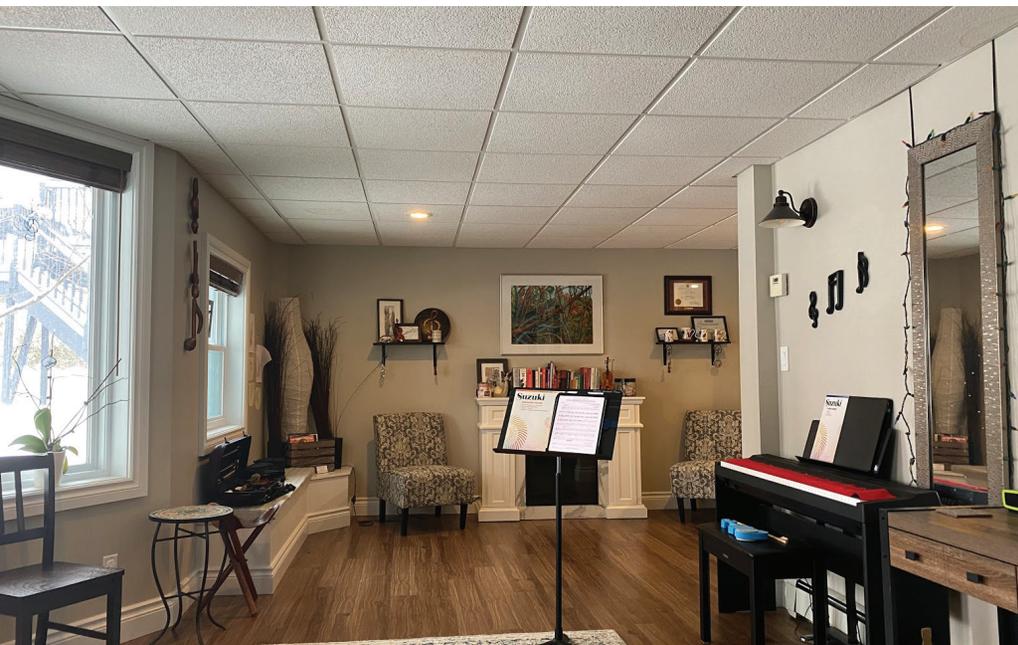


Figure 3: Violin Studio (Photo: A. Garwood-Touw)

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

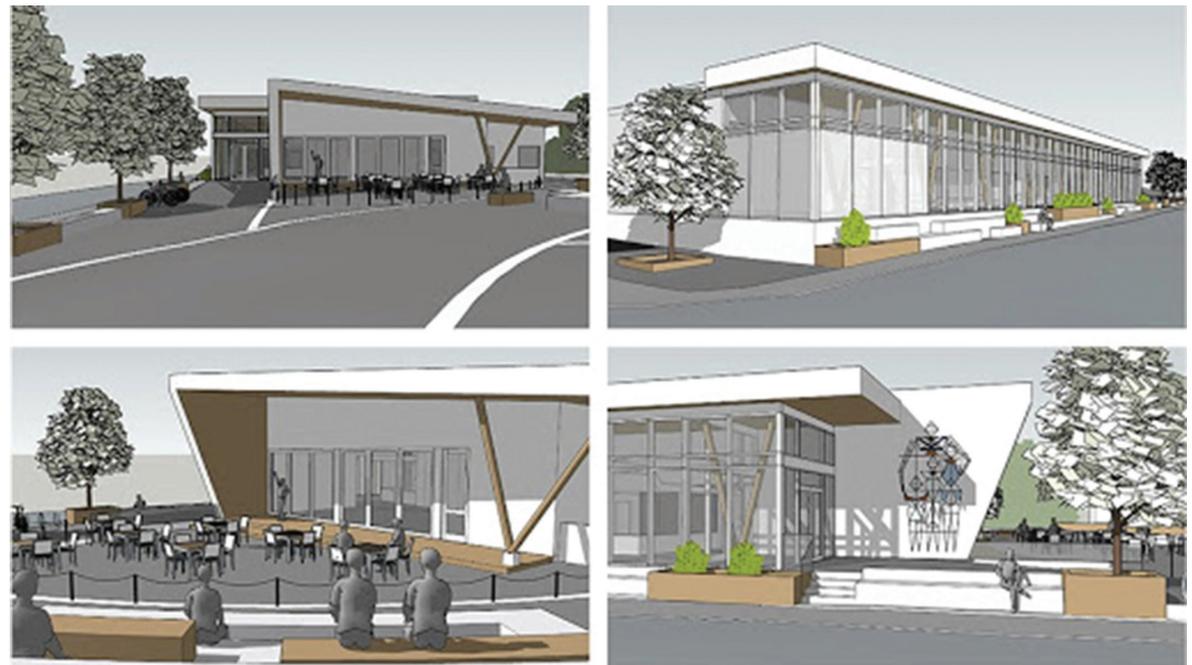


Figure 6: Centre culturel La Ronde capital project concept drawings

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 49](#).

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 60](#). 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... //

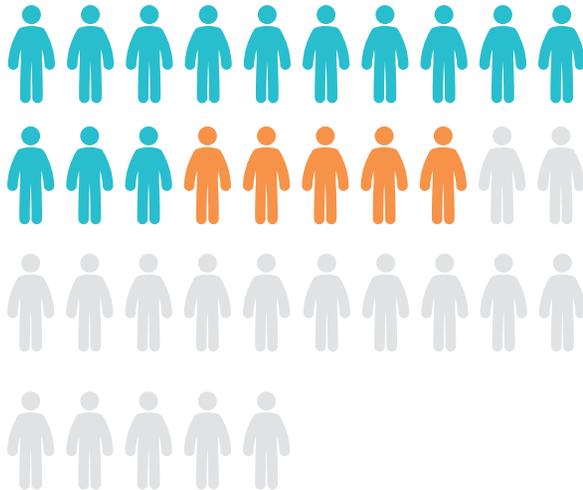
– (Community Forum participant)

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 26](#).

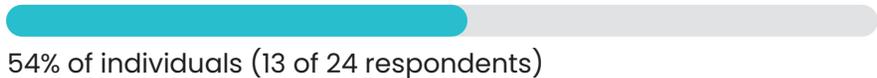
NEED FOR MORE CREATIVE SPACE:

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 53](#) 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, and 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 60](#).

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.

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 25](#)).

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 83](#) 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 54](#).

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



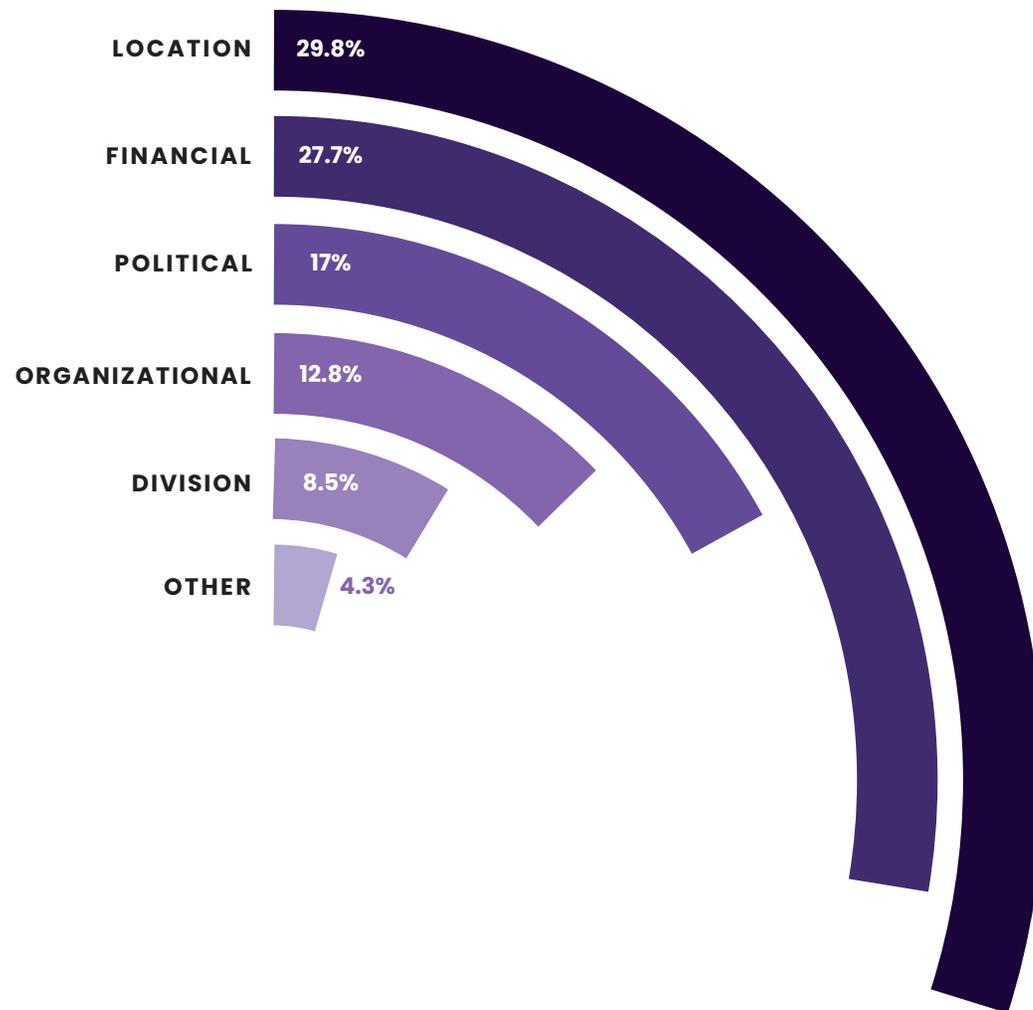
Figure 19: McIntyre Community Building (Photo: N. Alexander)

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 83](#) 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 83](#).

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 68](#) 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.

