



The Centre

STRATFORD ARTS AND CULTURE COLLECTIVE

APRIL 20, 2026



The Centre

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Opportunity

Stratford lacks a modern, affordable, mid-sized, multi-use venue to support a range of community needs. “The Centre” (performance space working name) will be a shared facility developed by the Stratford Arts and Culture Collective, the Stratford Public Library, YMCA of Three Rivers, and the City of Stratford. It will deliver a cost-effective, high-impact solution to a well-documented infrastructure gap.

The Cultural Economy

A mid-sized venue strengthens Stratford’s cultural economy by supporting over 20 local arts organizations, plus independent artists and touring productions. It is projected to host 160 – 200 events annually (a healthy, but realistic utilization rate¹), drawing 35,000 – 40,000 attendees and generating \$3M – \$4.5M in annual economic activity, including increased downtown spending and off-season tourism.

Lifelong Learning

The Centre will significantly expand access to a wide spectrum of educational, cultural, and civic programming for all ages and demographics. It will enable author talks, lectures, school events, and leadership development while providing safe, inspiring spaces for learning, celebrating and creating — activities which are currently constrained by limited facilities.

Health, Wellness & Inclusion

The shared space will support wellness programming, community connection, and inclusive participation. It will provide a neutral, accessible venue for diverse audiences, multicultural events, and intergenerational programming, aligning with community health and equity goals.

Attractiveness and Economic Growth

A community-focused arts and culture centre strengthens economic growth by attracting businesses and skilled workers. In Canada, the sector contributes over \$130 billion to GDP (Canada Council for the Arts) and supports strong local economies. Cultural amenities enhance quality of life, foster belonging, and help retain workers. This makes cities like Stratford more competitive and appealing to employers and workers seeking vibrant, livable communities.

Civic Life & Collaboration

As a year-round community focal point, The Centre will enable forums, town halls, conferences, and community dialogue. The collaborative model maximizes utilization, reduces duplication, and aligns with municipal priorities, strengthening Stratford's capacity to deliver services efficiently.

Conclusion

Comparable Ontario municipalities provide similar venues. Because Stratford is an outlier with two to three times the number of arts and culture groups and therefore much higher demand, a shared, mid-sized performance space fills this “missing middle” with a financially responsible model and strong long-term returns. This model will serve the community's needs and attract visitors.

RECOMMENDATION

The City of Stratford should proceed with detailed planning and development of a shared, mid-sized performance venue which fulfills Stratford's Strategic and Cultural plans through a collaborative, cost-effective model to respond to demonstrated community needs and to deliver significant economic impact.

¹ River Run Centre. Programming and annual reports indicate approximately 180–200 events annually, including professional touring acts, community performances, and rentals. Available at: <https://riverrun.ca>

Arden Theatre. Municipal reporting and venue data indicate 150–200 events annually across presenting series, rentals, and community use. Available at: <https://stalbert.ca>

PART ONE: The Project

A shared, multiuse space with the working title “The Centre” allows the Stratford Public Library, the YMCA of Three Rivers, the City of Stratford, and the Stratford arts community to expand their ability to serve Stratford and area residents. While each group currently delivers a wide range of cultural, educational, civic, wellness and youth programming, the community lacks a state of the art, mid-sized venue to host a wide variety of events. By bringing together the programs of four partners under one roof, the facility will create a dynamic, central civic gathering place that addresses the community’s needs.



What is “The Centre”?

“The Centre” has an identify that aligns with the concept of a shared space and a clear focus. With four partners -- The Stratford Public Library, the YMCA of Three Rivers, the Stratford Arts and Culture Collective and The City of Stratford -- this kind of shared space can become a civic “engine room”, a place where arts, lifelong learning, health and wellness, and civic life are complementary and overlapping. Each organization will have a strong stake in its success, as outlined in the examples of uses, programs and activities tailored to each partner organization.

The Vision

The vision for The Centre is built on four pillars:

- The Cultural Economy
- Lifelong Learning
- Health, Wellness and Inclusion
- Civic Life and Collaboration

The facility addresses the City of Stratford’s Strategic Priorities 2024 – 2027 through collaborative investment in community infrastructure. See Part Three for details. As Stratford prepares to celebrate the 200th anniversary of its founding in 2032, this investment in the future builds momentum while serving the community.

PART TWO: The Need

Stratford's strength as a cultural destination is undeniable, yet critical gaps remain in accessible, year-round community space. "The Centre" responds to this need with a practical, collaborative solution: bringing together arts, education, wellness and community services under one roof. By sharing resources, the project enhances cultural infrastructure, supports economic growth, and expands opportunities for residents of all ages, ensuring Stratford's creative and civic life continues to thrive sustainably and inclusively.

1. To Strengthen the Community's Cultural Infrastructure

Stratford is recognized internationally for its cultural identity, anchored by the renowned Stratford Festival. Ironically, the community lacks an affordable, mid-sized, multi-use space for year-round local cultural activity, lifelong learning programming, and community gatherings. Building separate structures to serve each need is unaffordable. The realistic and financially responsible alternative is to build in collaboration.

2. To Expand Economic Opportunities

Cultural infrastructure is a recognized driver of economic activity. A mid-sized venue can:

- Increase restaurant and retail spending downtown
- Support conferences, conventions and cultural tourism
- Attract visitors during shoulder and off seasons
- Create employment opportunities in the arts sector

3. To Support Local Artists and Organizations

Most local community-focused arts groups are challenged by limited access to affordable performance venues, spaces that lack modern technical equipment and appropriate audience amenities and have scheduling conflicts with larger, unaffordable professional venues. A shared facility would support:

- Local arts and culture organizations: theatre, music, dance, film, etc.
- Youth arts development
- Community cultural programming

4. To Attract and Retain Businesses and Skilled Workers

A community-focused arts and culture centre strengthens Stratford's ability to attract business investment and retain skilled workers by enhancing both economic performance and quality of life. Arts participation also strengthens community belonging, social cohesion, and overall well-being -- factors that research shows are critical to attracting and retaining highly skilled talent. In a national context where Canada actively competes for global talent to fuel innovation and growth, vibrant, livable communities with strong cultural infrastructure are a key differentiator.

These impacts, delivered through arts and culture facilities, are strategic assets. They enhance place-based identity, support creative and entrepreneurial ecosystems, and make smaller cities such as Stratford more attractive to businesses seeking talent, and to workers seeking a high quality of life where they will choose to stay.

5. To Access an Indoor Public Gathering Space

The Stratford Public Library, the YMCA of Three Rivers and the arts and culture community regularly host programs that cannot be accommodated in their current facilities.

A 400-person venue for community use is needed for conferences, major public events, community meetings, celebrations, lectures, and forums and other activities and events that cannot be held outdoors.

6. To Develop Lifelong Learning Opportunities

The YMCA and Stratford Public Library are focal points for lifelong learning.

YMCA of Three Rivers	Stratford Public Library
A shared venue will support health and wellness programming such as • Health information for newcomers • Wellness education for seniors • Family and community learning programs	A shared venue will support cultural and intellectual programming for local and regional audiences • Author lectures and literary festivals • Family literacy workshops • Documentary screenings • Community education events • Cultural and historical presentations

7. To Encourage Youth Engagement

The proposed participating organizations serve large numbers of children and youth with activities that build confidence, creativity and leadership skills. A shared venue will support a safe, inspiring environment for youth expression, learning and leadership development.

- Children and youth theatre performance programs
- Youth leadership conferences
- Youth arts festivals
- Public speaking and debate events
- Arts camps

8. To Encourage Inclusivity

A multiuse shared venue will support diverse audiences and community participation. It strengthens community creativity and cultural participation with access to a high-quality performance and presentation space.

- Multicultural celebrations
- Community dialogues
- Public forums
- Programs for newcomers
- Spoken-word events
- Cultural storytelling
- Dance and movement programs
- Film screenings
- Regional touring productions: music, comedy, magic, children's shows
- Job training in various sectors

9. To Grow Collaborative Capacity

Shared space encourages cross-sector collaboration. A shared venue will support

- Library lecture series with YMCA youth leadership participation
- Community arts programs, including local and regional competitions and performances supported by the Stratford Arts and Culture Collective
- Civic dialogues hosted by the City of Stratford and a service club
- Youth cultural festivals in collaboration with a school board

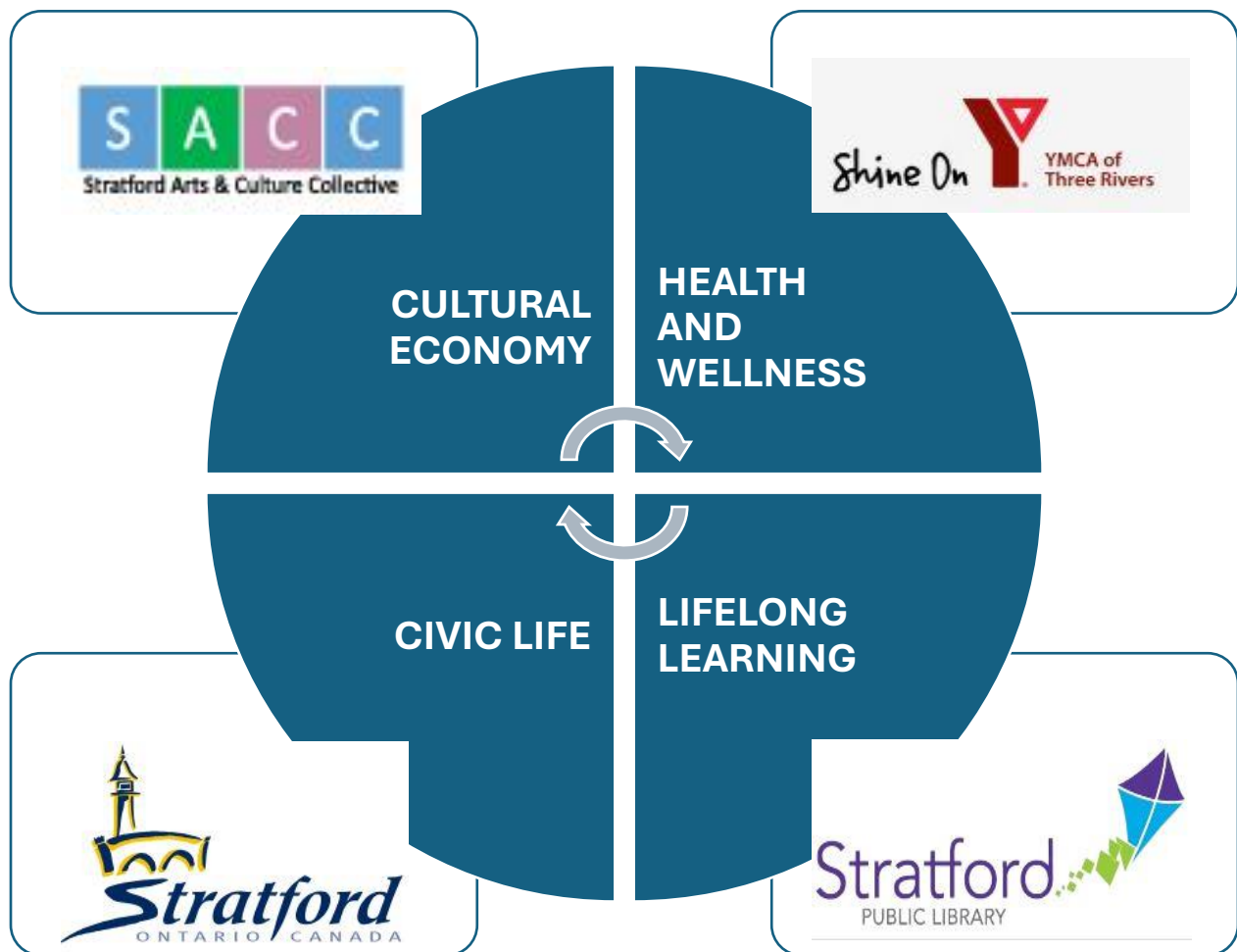
10. To Be Sustainable through Year-Round Community Activity

The venue is more sustainable with activity throughout the year.

- Winter lecture series
- Spring youth festivals
- Summer camps and performances
- Fall and winter conferences and community forums

PART THREE: Collaboration and Alignment

The Centre represents a collaborative investment in community infrastructure with four collaborators.



Project and Collaborator Alignment

Items which are highly aligned are bolded. City of Stratford on next page.

			
Mission	To use our resources effectively to create meaningful arts and culture experiences in Stratford for our community and surrounding areas.	Our purpose as a charity is to make our diverse communities healthier and more vibrant . With dignity and respect, our programs and services inspire individuals to reach their full potential .	We are an equitable, safe, and welcoming community where everyone can explore, learn, create, connect, and be inspired.
Vision & Values	• Honouring and enhancing the city's artistic and cultural life • Collaborating with other like-minded organizations • Including all Stratford citizens in our planning, regardless of their age, income, religious or ethnic origins, or any other visible or invisible identifier.	We aspire to build connected and resilient communities. We are working to be a leader in challenging systemic bias and barriers by creating and providing equitable access to individuals and communities to support their emotional, mental and physical health, and overall well-being. • Equity • Inclusiveness • Advocacy • Health & Wellness • Accountability • Empathy • Respect	We are a place where hope and wonder fly. We envision a library which connects people; inspires learning, literacy, and curiosity; and sparks change for a better community.

Alignment with the City of Stratford

Strategic Priorities 2024 – 2027

- ✓ Vision And Theme: "Thoughtfully Develop Our City"



Strategic Priorities And Objectives

- ✓ Enhance Our Infrastructure: **energy, transportation, infrastructure**
- ✓ Build Housing Stability: approvals, affordable housing, safety & stability
- ✓ Work Together For Greater Impact: **Grand Trunk renewal, meaningful partnerships to address community needs**, sports tourism
- ✓ Intentionally Change To Support The Future: **economic growth & diversification**, service standards, **Municipal Cultural Plan**

PART FOUR: Benchmarking Comparable Community Performance Venues in Ontario

Benchmarking demonstrates that many municipalities with comparable populations provide a dedicated civic or community performance venue. These venues support a mix of professional touring performances, local arts organizations, festivals, schools, and community events.

Municipalities with populations between roughly 11,000 and 34,000 residents commonly operate at least one performance space in the 250 – 400 seat range, with some larger facilities exceeding 600 seats.

Municipality	Population (approx.)	Arts groups	Venue	Seats	Ownership Model
Fort Erie	~ 34,000	6 - 10	The Sanctuary – Centre for the Arts	~ 300	Non-profit
Stratford	33,232	~ 20	City Hall Auditorium	~ 230	Municipal venue
Orillia	~ 33,000	15 - 20	Orillia Opera House	677	Municipal venue
Centre Wellington	~ 31,000	8 - 12	Fergus Grand Theatre	~ 252	Municipal venue
Orangeville	~ 30,000	10 - 15	Town Hall Opera House	273	Municipal / Resident Theatre Company

Municipality	Population (approx.)	Arts groups	Venue	Seats	Ownership Model
Grimsby	~ 28,000	6 - 10	Carnegie / gallery performance spaces	~ 100 – 200	Municipal cultural facilities
Woolwich	~ 26,000	5 - 8	None dedicated	--	Performances often occur in Waterloo or regional venues
Wasaga Beach	~ 25,000	4 - 7	None dedicated	--	Festival / outdoor venues
Collingwood	~ 24,000	8 - 12	Gayety Theatre	~ 300	Private historic theatre
Thorold	~ 23,000	5 - 8	Thorold Community theatre venues	~ 200 - 400	Community theatre company; uses shared spaces such as community halls
Port Hope	~ 17,000	8 - 12	Capitol Theatre	~ 400	Non-profit
Meaford	~ 11,000	4 - 6	Meaford Hall	330	Municipal venue

NOTES:

- Exact counts of arts groups are difficult because many performance groups are volunteer organizations without formal registries (choirs, bands, theatre troupes, dance companies, improv groups, youth theatre, etc.). However, using arts directories, municipal listings, websites, and known organizations, this table estimates the approximate number of active performance-based arts groups in each community.
- These counts include concert bands, choirs, orchestras, dance, film, theatre programs and other music organizations such as festival-related ensembles.
- Municipalities with a population between 11,000 – 34,000 have a typical range of:
 - 8 – 15 performance groups in most municipalities
 - 20+ groups exist only in communities with a strong arts focal point
Stratford is a major exception, with 20+ performing arts organizations participating in the local arts ecosystem, supporting a strong argument that in Stratford, community performance activity is unusually high relative to population.
- A mid-sized, flexible performance space typically supports 10 – 15 local performance groups in comparable towns. Stratford likely has at least double that

number, meaning a shared community venue needs more seats and would likely see high utilization.

This benchmark comparison highlights that communities across Ontario invest in performance venues that support both **local participation and visiting performances**. Stratford, despite its international reputation as an “arts city”, currently lacks a flexible mid-size community performance venue comparable to those in peer municipalities.

We offer no comparisons with sports and recreational participation and civic infrastructure.

PART FIVE: Economic and Community Impact

Community-focused performance venues generate a range of economic and social benefits for municipalities.

General Economic impacts of Cultural Infrastructure

- Cultural industries contribute over \$25 billion annually to Ontario’s economy.
- Arts and culture employment in Ontario supports more than 270,000 jobs.
- Studies consistently show that audience members attending cultural events spend additional money in nearby restaurants, retail shops, and parking, strengthening downtown business districts.

Local Economic Impacts of Cultural Infrastructure

✓ Downtown Economic Activity

Audiences attending performances often dine, shop, or stay overnight, generating significant spending for local restaurants, retail businesses, and hospitality providers.

✓ Cultural Tourism

Smaller performing arts venues allow communities to host touring artists, festivals, and regional events that attract visitors from surrounding areas.

✓ Community Participation

Local theatre companies, choirs, music ensembles, dance groups, and schools gain access to affordable performance space that supports participation in the arts.

✓ **Youth and Education Opportunities**

Flexible venues support school performances, youth theatre programs, workshops, lectures, and educational programming that strengthen creative learning opportunities.

✓ **Civic Gathering Space**

Performance venues frequently function as gathering places for lectures, community celebrations, film screenings, and public discussions.

✓ **Business and Industry**

Municipalities with high quality cultural amenities and organizations tend to attract businesses and industries whose workforces appreciate them.

Category	Estimated Impact	Note
Local audience spending	\$1.2M – \$1.8M	Total Annual Economic Activity: ~ \$3M – \$4.5M
Visitor spending	\$1.0M – \$1.5M	
Indirect economic activity	\$0.8M – \$1.2M	

This table uses conservative visitor spending assumptions commonly used in Ontario cultural studies which align with research on cultural venues contributing to downtown vitality and visitor spending in communities like Stratford.

PART SIX: What Success Looks Like After Five Years

Within five years of opening, perhaps to celebrate Stratford's bicentennial in 2032, a shared community performance space at the Grand Trunk site will demonstrate measurable community impact.

✓ **An Expanded, Vibrant Community Arts and Culture Ecology**

Local theatre companies, music ensembles, choirs, dance schools, and cultural organizations regularly use the venue for performances and events.

✓ **Economic Benefits for Downtown Businesses**

Audience members attending events contribute to restaurant, retail, and hospitality activity in Stratford's downtown.

✓ **Expanded Youth and Education Programming**

Schools, youth theatre programs, and educational partners host performances, workshops, and community learning events.

✓ **Year-Round Programming**

The space supports concerts lectures film screenings, classes, workshops, conferences, conventions and festivals, and community celebrations throughout the year, with an emphasis on fall, winter and spring.

✓ **Stronger Cultural Ecosystem**

The venue complements Stratford's internationally recognized theatre sector by providing accessible space for community participation in the arts while strengthening connections among cultural organizations, civic institutions, and residents.

PART SEVEN: What the SACC Brings to the Project

The Stratford Arts and Culture Collective (SACC) is positioned well to be a strong collaborative partner. The SACC is a registered not for profit without share capital. The organization is governed by ONCA-compliant by-laws and a Board of Directors. The SACC is totally volunteer driven and has no employees and no office. The SACC brings:

- ✓ Commitment of its full resources to the project including the use of the Stratford-specific work it has done through consultants:
 - Feasibility Study (2019)
 - Planning Study (2025)
 - Research Study (2026)
- ✓ Collaboration, planning and implementation skills regarding fair and equitable Development, Ownership, Governance and Operations structures.
 - ✓ Ownership, Governance and Operations – Discussion draft (2025);
- ✓ Access to appropriate professionals
 - ✓ Performance space architects and designers
 - ✓ Technical specialists including lighting, media, sound and acoustics
- ✓ Commitment to co-creating and co-implementing a capital funding strategy for The Centre
- ✓ Renewal of SACC's internal infrastructures
 - ✓ Reconstituted Board of Directors
 - ✓ Website, newsletter and other communication streams

SUMMARY

Stratford lacks a modern, affordable, mid-sized, multi-use venue with good acoustics and audience amenities to support year-round community, cultural, and civic activity that is currently constrained by inadequate and/or unaffordable spaces. A shared facility founded on four strong pillars will address and fill the “missing middle” gap efficiently and affordably. It will expand Stratford’s cultural infrastructure, support over 20 local arts groups, and enable 160 – 200 events annually with 35,000 – 40,000 attendees. It will also expand economic activity (estimated \$3M – \$4.5M annually), boost downtown spending, and attract shoulder and off-season tourism. The space will support youth development, lifelong learning, wellness programming, and inclusive community engagement. The shared model will maximize utilization, reduce infrastructure duplication, and align with municipal priorities and collaborator missions.

RECOMMENDATION

The City of Stratford should proceed with detailed planning and development of a shared, mid-sized performance venue which fulfills Stratford’s Strategic and Cultural Plans through a collaborative, cost-effective model to respond to demonstrated community needs and to deliver significant economic impact.

APPENDIX A: Sample Program Opportunities

The following table is a detailed list of activities and events that a shared venue can host, organized under general headings.

Performing Arts	Creative Development
• Community theatre productions • Touring theatre productions • Chamber orchestra concerts • Choral concerts and festivals • Dance performances, recitals and competitions • Musical theatre productions • Contemporary music concerts • Folk and roots music performances • Jazz series • Multicultural arts showcases • Open-mic nights and variety shows • Multidisciplinary arts festivals • Puppet shows and other programming for children • Off-season performance series • Collaborative arts performances • Arts residencies	• New play staged readings and workshops • Artist residencies, workshops and creative labs • Fringe and experimental theatre events • Youth theatre training programs • Community choir rehearsals and performances • Dance workshops and masterclasses • Professional development seminars for artists • Cultural conferences, conventions and symposia • Entrepreneurship seminars • Business gatherings • Cultural conferences, conventions and symposia
Lifelong Learning	Youth and Education
• Author readings and book launches • Literary festivals and author readings • Poetry slams and spoken word events • Academic symposia and conferences • Lectures on history, science, technology, and culture • School partnerships and student presentations • Media literacy and digital storytelling workshops • Documentary screenings with panel discussions	• School concerts and drama productions • Youth and teen talent showcases • Student public speaking competitions • Youth leadership conferences • Arts camps culminating performances • School graduations and recognition ceremonies • National Theatre School drama festival • Community dance recitals • Music recitals • Youth bands

Community and Civic Engagement	Health, Wellness and Social Programming
• Town halls, community information sessions and consultations • Staff training • Regional municipal meetings • Cultural celebrations and heritage events • Official celebrations and commemorations • Public lectures, debates, visiting speaker and civic dialogue forums • Volunteer recognition events • Community award events • Multicultural storytelling events • Community conversation series • Debates and civic dialogue forums	• Mindfulness and wellness seminars • Health forums • Senior engagement programming • Dance-fitness workshops and demonstrations • Yoga sessions • Parent and child programming • Intergenerational arts programs • Community celebrations and seasonal events • Community health forums and education events • Senior wellness seminars
Film and Media	Economic Development
• Community film screenings • Film festivals • Local filmmaker showcases • Documentary premieres • Spoken word workshops and presentations	• Cultural tourism events • Regional conferences, workshops and symposia • Professional training workshops • Visiting speaker events • Tourism season launch events
Community Building	
• Cultural celebrations and intercultural showcases • Volunteer recognition events • Family events and seasonal celebrations • Youth mentorship and leadership graduations • Charity galas and benefit concerts • Holiday concerts and seasonal programming • Cultural festivals • Community milestone celebrations	

APPENDIX B: Sample Annual Programming Calendar

See Appendix A for a more detailed list of sample activities and events.

The Centre will create a vibrant, accessible gathering place where creativity, learning, and community life intersect. The key strength of a shared facility is its use of each group's resources, matched with a variety of demographics and citizen groups to operate almost continuously: daytime educational use, afternoon youth programs, evening performances, and weekend festivals, creating a true multi-use civic asset.

The sample annual programming calendar below illustrates how a shared venue could operate with participation from the Stratford Public Library, YMCA of Three Rivers, Stratford Arts and Culture Collective, and the City of Stratford.

Winter (January–March)

Programming Focus: indoor cultural programming, learning events

- Winter chamber music series (SACC groups)
- Author lecture series (Library)
- Youth leadership summit (YMCA)
- Health and wellness lecture series (YMCA)
- Civic town hall meetings (City)
- Documentary film weekend (Library + SACC groups)

Spring (April–June)

Programming Focus: festivals, youth performance, school programs

- Regional choral festival (SACC groups)
- Youth dance recital weekend (YMCA, SACC groups)
- Literary festival (Library)
- High school drama festival (City + schools)
- Spring community theatre production (SACC group)
- Volunteer recognition ceremony (City)
- Community debate and civic dialogue series (Library, City)

Programming at The Centre will complement seasonal tourism activities.

Summer (July–September)

Programming Focus: tourism, cultural visitors, festivals, camps

- Summer music concert series (SACC groups)
- Touring theatre performances (SACC)
- Multicultural arts festival (City, YMCA, SACC, Library)

- Youth arts camps and showcase performances (YMCA)
- Documentary and independent film festival (Library, SACC group)
- Regional nonprofit conference (City)

Fall (October–December)

Programming Focus: community gathering and major performances

- Fall theatre production (SACC group)
- Author talks and book launches (Library)
- Community theatre production (SACC groups)
- Regional arts conference (City, SACC groups)
- Youth theatre showcase (YMCA, SACC groups)
- Remembrance and civic commemorations (City)
- Holiday choral concerts (SACC groups)

APPENDIX C: Conceptual Building Program

Typical modern community performance spaces of this audience capacity require 30,000 – 36,000 sq ft depending on amenities, with the caveat that substantial space would be used by the collaborator groups: the YMCA, the City of Stratford and the Stratford Public Library.

The figures below are consistent with cultural facility planning studies for similar 400-seat performance spaces which typically range from 30,000 to 36,000 square feet including shared spaces.

1. Performance and Audience Spaces (estimates)

Space	Approximate Size
Stage (proscenium or flexible thrust)	3,000 sq ft
Main auditorium (400 seats)	7,500 sq ft
Orchestra pit (optional)	400 sq ft
Dressing rooms (3 – 4 rooms)	1,000 sq ft
Storage (sets, props, instruments)	1,200 sq ft
Control booth (sound / lighting)	200 sq ft
Artist green room	400 sq ft
Administrative offices	600 sq ft
Subtotal	~ 14,300 sq ft

2. Shared and Support Spaces (estimates)

Space	Approximate Size
Lobby / multi-purpose space	3,500 – 5,000 sq ft
Rehearsal hall / multi-purpose space	1,800 – 2,500 sq ft
Coat check / circulation	500 sq ft
Public washrooms	1,200 – 1,500 sq ft
Loading dock / stage access	500 sq ft
Wardrobe / laundry (optional)	400 – 600 sq ft
Box office	200 sq ft
Scene shop / workshop (optional)	1,200 – 1,500 sq ft
Concessions / bar	400 – 600 sq ft
Meeting / classroom spaces	1,000 – 1,500 sq ft
Subtotal	~ 10,700 – 14,400 sq ft

3. Building Operations (estimates)

Space	Approx. Size
Mechanical / electrical	1,500 – 2,000 sq ft
Circulation (corridors, stairs, elevators)	3,000 – 4,000 sq ft
Subtotal	~ 4,500 – 6,000 sq ft

Estimated Total Building Size

Capacity	Estimated Size	Note
400 seats	29,500 – 34,700 sq ft	These ranges align with performance space planning studies showing an average of 31,568 sq ft for a 400-seat performance space.

APPENDIX D: Estimated Costs

Integrating The Centre within a shared facility alongside key partners creates substantial cost savings. By combining resources and sharing essential spaces such as lobbies, washrooms, mechanical systems, and multi-purpose rooms, capital costs for the performance and audience areas can be reduced by up to 30% (see below). In addition to these initial savings, ongoing operational efficiencies such as shared staffing, utility expenses, and maintenance offer great long-term value. This collaborative approach ensures a high-quality performance venue while maximizing economic benefits for the community.

Capital Cost Advantages of a Shared Facility Model

1.0 Purpose

This appendix summarizes evidence supporting the capital cost efficiencies associated with delivering a performing arts space as part of an integrated, multi-use community facility rather than as a standalone building.

2.0 Overview of Cost Efficiencies

In a standalone performance space, all building components (front-of-house, back-of-house, administrative, and building systems) must be fully dedicated to a single use. In contrast, a shared facility enables multiple partners (e.g., public library, recreation services, community organizations) to utilize common spaces and systems.

This integration reduces capital costs through:

- Elimination of duplicate spaces (lobbies, washrooms, circulation)
- Consolidation of mechanical and electrical systems
- More efficient building footprint and gross floor area
- Shared programming and support spaces

These efficiencies result in a lower overall cost per square foot and reduced total project cost.

3.0 Canadian Case Study Evidence

3.1 Co-location and Reduced Building Size

A municipal study for the Town of Georgina Civic Centre project determined that a co-located facility could be approximately 20% smaller than alternative standalone configurations due to shared spaces and optimized design. This reduction in gross floor area directly correlates to capital cost savings.

3.2 Integrated Community Hub Models

A feasibility study conducted by the District of Lake Country (British Columbia) evaluated a combined facility including library, cultural, and recreation uses. The study demonstrated that integrating these functions avoids duplication of entrances, support spaces, and building systems, resulting in measurable capital efficiencies at the project planning stage.

3.3 Shared Infrastructure and Lifecycle Efficiency

Case studies supported by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities through its Green Municipal Fund program show that shared civic facilities benefit from centralized building systems, leading to reduced energy consumption and lower lifecycle operating costs. While primarily operational, these efficiencies are directly linked to integrated system design established during construction.

4.0 Cost Reduction Range

Based on:

- Documented reductions in building size ($\approx 20\%$)
- Elimination of duplicated infrastructure
- Economies of scale in construction and systems

Public-sector planning practice in Canada typically identifies capital cost reductions in the range of 15% to 30% for fully integrated multi-use facilities compared to standalone developments.

The magnitude of savings depends on the degree of integration achieved, with the highest efficiencies realized when facilities are co-designed from the outset.

5.0 Conclusion

Canadian municipal evidence demonstrates that shared-use facility models provide measurable capital cost advantages through reduced building size, elimination of redundant infrastructure, and integrated systems design.

For a proposed 400-seat performance space, adopting a shared facility approach represents a credible and evidence-based strategy to reduce capital costs while enhancing long-term operational sustainability and community value.

References

Town of Georgina. Capital Initiatives Report – Georgina Civic Centre. Available at: https://www.georgina.ca/sites/default/files/page_assets/capital_initiatives_report_-_georgina_civic_centre.pdf

District of Lake Country. Community Centre Feasibility Study. Available at:
<https://letstalk.lakecountry.bc.ca/community-centre-feasibility-study-9718-bottom-wood-lake-rd-property>

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Green Municipal Fund Case Studies. Available at:
<https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/case-studies>

APPENDIX E: Possible Funding (Capital, Operations) Sources

These sources do not include local fundraising campaigns.

(TCI Management Consultants, April 2026)

Federal Funding Sources

Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF)

- Funds construction, renovation, and equipment for cultural facilities
- Typical contribution range: \$500K to \$15M
- Requirements: Non-profit or municipal applicant; demonstrated cultural use; public access; governance capacity
- Limitations: Highly competitive; new builds often restricted or require strong justification; matching funding required
- Precedents: Fergus Grand Theatre upgrades; Capitol Theatre Moncton renovation

Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP)

- Funds community and cultural infrastructure through federal-provincial-municipal partnerships
- Requirements: Municipal leadership; alignment with infrastructure priorities; shovel ready project
- Limitations: Periodic intake; requires political alignment
- Precedent: Rose Theatre Brampton expansion (federal and provincial contributions)

Canada Cultural Investment Fund (CCIF)

- Supports fundraising capacity and partnerships rather than construction
- Useful to strengthen private fundraising efforts

Canada Council for the Arts

- Supports programming and operations, not capital construction

Provincial Funding Sources

Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF)

- Funds community infrastructure and capital improvements
- Typical grants: \$100K–\$500K
- Limitations: Not sufficient for full builds; requires strong community impact

Ontario Arts Council (OAC)

- Funds programming and arts activities, not capital construction

3) Provincial Infrastructure Funding

- Typically paired with federal programs such as ICIP
- May contribute 30–40% of project costs
- Requires municipal sponsorship and alignment with provincial priorities

Foundations and Corporate Prospects (Southwestern Ontario)

Five foundations and corporations were identified in the report, with comments.

APPENDIX F: Notes re. Development and Capital Funding of Selected Community Performing Arts Facilities

(TCI Management Consultants, April 2026)

Meadowvale Theatre, Mississauga (1989) 395 seats

Meadowvale Theatre was built by the City of Mississauga during a period of rapid suburban growth in the late 1980s. The project was funded through municipal capital investment as part of the development of the Meadowvale Town Centre civic district. Designed primarily as a flexible community theatre, the venue operates as a municipally run rental facility that supports local arts groups, schools, and touring productions. The Stratford Arts and Culture Collective are using this theatre as a model for design purposes. See page 26.

Evan Hazell Theatre, Calgary (2019) ~ 250 seats

The Evan Hazell Theatre was constructed as part of the Brookfield Residential YMCA at Seton, a large civic recreation complex in southeast Calgary. The overall facility was funded primarily through capital investment by the City of Calgary, supplemented by developer contributions and philanthropic donations. The YMCA operates the facility under a long-term partnership with the city (who owns it), and the theatre forms part of a broader strategy to integrate arts, recreation, and library services within a single civic hub.

BMO Theatre, Calgary (2018) ~ 220 seats

BMO Theatre is located inside the Shane Homes YMCA at Rocky Ridge recreation complex. The facility was developed by the City of Calgary using municipal capital funding, along with corporate sponsorship and philanthropic contributions. The YMCA operates the recreation complex on behalf of the city, and the performance space serves as a flexible community performance venue integrated within a larger civic recreation facility.

Wolf Performance Hall, London (2002) 369 seats

Wolf Performance Hall was developed as part of the expansion and renovation of the London Central Library. The performance space was created without direct municipal capital funding. Instead, the project relied on a major philanthropic gift from Don and Mary Lou Wolf, contributions from London Public Library trust funds, and a substantial community fundraising campaign. By embedding the performance hall inside the public library building, the project leveraged existing civic infrastructure while demonstrating how private philanthropy and community support can finance cultural facilities.

Theatre Orangeville, Orangeville (renovation 1994, 2013) ~ 273 seats

Theatre Orangeville was created when the Town of Orangeville renovated part of its historic Town Hall / Opera House complex to accommodate a professional theatre company. The municipality invested in renovating the building and established the theatre infrastructure, while a newly formed non-profit professional theatre company was created to operate and program the venue. Over time, additional improvements have been financed through municipal contributions, fundraising campaigns, and provincial and federal arts funding programs.

Market Centre Theatre, Woodstock (2001) ~ 249 seats

Market Centre Theatre emerged through the adaptive reuse of Woodstock's historic municipal market building in the downtown core. The City of Woodstock funded the redevelopment of the structure as part of a broader downtown revitalization initiative. While the municipality owns the facility and financed the capital redevelopment, operations and programming were delegated to the Woodstock Ingersoll Theatre Company, a local non-profit arts organization.

Capitol Arts Centre, Port Hope (restoration 1995, 2002) ~ 380 seats

Originally constructed as a movie theatre in 1930, the Capitol Theatre in Port Hope was restored and reopened in the mid-1990s after a community-driven campaign to save the deteriorating building. Capital funding for the restoration came from a combination of municipal contributions, provincial and federal heritage grants, philanthropic donations, and an extensive local fundraising campaign. Subsequent expansions were financed through similar blended funding sources and continue to rely on community support.

Town Hall 1873 Theatre, Port Perry (conversion 1973) 233 seats

Town Hall Theatre occupies the historic 1873 municipal town hall building in Port Perry. In the early 1970s, local theatre advocates worked with the municipality to convert the upper hall into a functioning community theatre. The project relied heavily on volunteer labour, community fundraising, and modest municipal support. The building remains municipally owned while the theatre is operated by a not-for-profit community organization.

Midland Cultural Centre / Rotary Hall, Midland (2008) ~ 274 seats

The Midland Cultural Centre was developed by the Town of Midland as a major cultural and economic development project for the downtown waterfront area. Capital funding was assembled through municipal investment, a significant community fundraising campaign, corporate sponsorships, service club contributions (including the Rotary Club), and grants from provincial and federal programs. The resulting facility includes Rotary Hall, a mid-sized performing arts space, along with gallery and cultural programming spaces.

Stockey Centre for the Performing Arts, Parry Sound (2003) ~ 400 seats

The Stockey Centre for the Performing Arts was developed by the Town of Parry Sound as part of the town's waterfront redevelopment and to be the permanent home for the Festival of the Sound. Funding for the facility was assembled through municipal capital investment, substantial provincial and federal infrastructure grants, and philanthropic donations from individuals and corporations. The theatre now serves both the festival and year-round community cultural programming.

Algonquin Theatre, Huntsville (2005: renovation 2009) ~ 408 seats

The Algonquin Theatre was created through the restoration of a historic cinema building in downtown Huntsville. The Town of Huntsville led the redevelopment project, financing construction through municipal capital funding combined with grants from senior levels of government. Community fundraising and local support also played a role in restoring the building and adapting it into a modern performing arts venue.

Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion, Haliburton (2007) ~ 226 seats

The Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion is located inside Haliburton Highlands Secondary School. It was developed by the Township of Minden Hills in partnership with the Haliburton School of Art and Design and the broader community. Capital funding was assembled through municipal investment, provincial and federal infrastructure grants, and community fundraising. The venue supports concerts, theatre, and cultural events during the summer season.

Gravenhurst Opera House, Gravenhurst (renovation 1998) ~ 305 seats

The Gravenhurst Opera House, originally built in 1901, underwent major restoration and modernization in the late 1990s led by the Town of Gravenhurst. Capital funding for the project came from municipal investment, heritage and cultural grants from provincial and federal governments, and local fundraising initiatives. The restored building now serves as the town's primary performing arts venue and community cultural hub.

APPENDIX G: A Model for The Centre

Meadowvale Theatre in Mississauga is a good example of a mid-sized performance space that is well-designed and adaptable for use by a wide range of community groups.

