

Colwood Place and the Emily Carr Centre for the Arts

Frequently Asked Questions

January 2021

Q1: Is there a need for more performance space in the West Shore?

A1: Yes. Studies over the years continue to note the lack of suitable space for community performances. Most recently, the Stage One report prepared for CRD noted that of 14 (non-school) theatres in the capital region, the only two not downtown are in Sidney and Salt Spring (and none in the West Shore). Regionwide, there is a dearth of performance spaces in the 300-500 seat capacity.

Q2: What will the Colwood Place development include at full build-out?

A2: We use the term “**Colwood Place**” to describe the entire development, which *includes* the **Emily Carr Centre for the Arts** and its theatre. As proposed, Colwood Place includes several components: a multi-storey office tower; a multi-storey hotel; live/work accommodation; commercial spaces, including a restaurant and café; an art gallery; public archives; parking for all of the above, and for Park and Ride users.

Q3: How long has the Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society (PACS) been working on a development proposal for this location?

A3: The initiative to develop an arts and culture centre in the West Shore goes back to the early 2000s, when the CRD noted that the growing West Shore needed its own theatre. Since then, volunteers and community leaders have been seeking the “right time and place” to make this happen. PACS has been interested in this Park and Ride location for many years, because it’s ideally situated to anchor a regional cultural precinct. When eleven West Shore sites were reviewed and assessed for the project in 2015, the Colwood Park and Ride location ranked at the top of the list. A sustainable business plan has been developed. The first public presentation of our proposal took place on June 8, 2020.

Q4: Has the City of Colwood given approval for this project?

A4: Colwood approved a motion for the Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society (PACS) to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and PACS for use of the Park and Ride site. This is currently under review by City staff. When ready, the draft MOU will be presented to Council for their consideration.

Q5: How long will it take to build this project?

A5: If the build-out of this project was to be fully coordinated, with the physical construction of each and every component underway at the same time, it would take about 2 years to complete once construction begins.

Q6: The Schick Shiner Report talks about a 650-seat theatre, now this proposal mentions a 350-seat venue with potential for expansion. Why the difference?

A6: The Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society (PACS) has been conducting additional research since the Report was prepared (2013). A smaller theatre is better for community users, as it is a more affordable option and better sized for their audiences. Many people suggest that the “sweet spot” is really in the audience range of 350 seats, with room to grow. PACS will be reaching out to key cultural stakeholders anew to determine the final numbers.

Q7: How does this project line up with the theatre and maritime museum project announced by the City of Langford?

A7: Our proposals are very different but complementary. We are pleased that Langford could host a large venue that provides space for major performances (~1200 seats). The Emily Carr Centre for the Arts will serve a more local need, a much smaller venue that works well for community groups – more appropriately sized for their audiences and much more affordable to rent. We are very excited about our proposal, which we have been working on for many years and feel is the right option in the right place!

Q8: What will happen to the Park and Ride parking?

A8: PACS is committing to providing park and ride parking as part of the new development. There will be a need to find some alternative options while the project is under development; these will be subject to discussion with the City of Colwood and BC Transit.

Q9: How will COVID affect this project?

A9: The coronavirus pandemic has underscored the importance of the arts and culture to our collective wellbeing. It has also presented both challenges and opportunities as we develop plans for Colwood Place and the Emily Carr Centre for the Arts. There are still many unknowns, but what we DO know is that the spaces we build and the business plans we use to operate this social enterprise must be highly flexible and innovative. The JdFPACS is eager to reconnect with supporters to refresh our programming information as we move forward with our mission to Build the HeART of the West Shore.

Inevitably, the economic situation will make it harder to raise funds from the private sector, but we know that the arts are deeply rooted in our community and still attract significant donations.

Q10: What if Covid 19 is never cured. Will mandatory reduced attendance in a 350-seat theatre pay the bills?

A10: One of the advantages of planning this project at this time is that it gives us an opportunity to look into the different futures, and to build in flexibility to address multiple future challenges, not only other pandemics, but also climate adaptation, perhaps an earthquake. No future is ever certain, we have to move forward based on creative thinking and the best available information.

Q11: Why the Emily Carr Centre for the Arts, isn't she a downtown thing?

A11: We have named our project after trailblazing Canadian artist Emily Carr, who was a regular visitor to the West Shore in her storied "Elephant" (a caravan/trailer she lived in while painting outdoors). Emily was a Renaissance woman who worked in a variety of media. She wrote from the heart, and her every brush stroke echoed the energy-in-motion she observed in nature and the indigenous cultures she came to revere. And like brave Emily, our community will blaze our own trail by building a creative home place for our

community that also serves as a shining example of innovation in sustainable building design and operation.

Learn more about Emily's West Shore connections:

<http://westshorearts.org/projects/emily-carr-guide-and-map/>

Q12: What geographic area will the Arts Centre serve?

A12: Primarily, the Centre will service the West Shore communities including Colwood, View Royal, Langford, Sooke, Metchosin and the Highlands. As with all such centres, it will also reach into surrounding areas including places north of the Malahat, Victoria and the Peninsula.

Q13: What forms of arts and culture will be served by the Arts Centre?

A13: Our aim is to be inclusive to as many forms of art as possible: drama, music, dance, fine arts, literary arts, sculpture and more. We anticipate that the spaces will be used for teaching, for rehearsals, for performances and just for fun. Spaces will also be used for community gatherings of all kinds.

Q14: How will this project be paid for – will my taxes go up?

A14: PACS is deliberately designing the project to enable us to create and operate this facility without reliance on municipal taxation. We will be undertaking significant fundraising to offset the capital costs of construction. In addition, we intend to use rental income from some parts of the development to help balance the budget of the Arts Centre.

Q15: What kind of accessibility features will be incorporated into the project?

A15: The project will be crafted with careful attention to best practices in accessible form and function. We will continue to work with the community to ensure that Colwood Place and the Emily Carr Centre for the Arts provide welcoming spaces for people of all ages and abilities, and look forward to actively engaging the Intermunicipal Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (IACDI) moving forward.

Q16: The project is proposed for a very busy intersection, with traffic already heavy at times. How will this be addressed?

A16: The site has been selected in part because of its excellent access to transportation – frequent bus routes, bike routes as well as being on a major arterial route with good access to the Trans-Canada Highway. Much of the traffic generated by the development will not affect the peak morning traffic flow, and traffic impacts will be subject to further study. Pedestrian and cycling flows in and around the site will also be a priority.

Q17: How does this project embody the principles of sustainable community development?

A17: There are a wide variety of ways that sustainability is embodied in the proposed development of Colwood Place and Emily Carr Centre for the Arts.

Social – It starts at the very beginning of the vision, as one which enables and encourages a sense of community and belonging that leads to resilience and connectivity in society. Places to gather and socialize help to form the heart of a city. The proximity to the Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre, the JdF 55+ Seniors Centre, Royal Roads University, Belmont Park’s DND housing, Pacific Centre Family Services Association, nearby schools, increased residential densification in the core generally allows for multiple opportunities to link and connect programs, places and people. And by definition, we are creating gathering spaces for people to connect.

Environmental –

Reduced transportation emissions: Offering arts and cultural activities close to home reduces the need for people to travel. Locating our project next to a BC Transit exchange allows for local residents and visitors to utilize public transportation. The adjacent Galloping Goose Regional Trail encourages cycling as a transportation option (and will enable us to curate and enliven that portion of the Goose with public cultural programming in the future). Colwood’s proposed overpass that will re-connect the Goose across Island Highway will also help cycling and pedestrian flow to this area.

Ecosystem enhancement: Our project will restore the adjacent wetland which has been over-run by invasive species for years. This can also serve as a

teaching space for learning more about native species and the importance of wetlands.

Sustainable building design and operation: We are a long way from specific building design however, our goal is to reach a high level of energy efficiency and use of low energy/water approaches. We will be looking into leading-edge sustainable building opportunities.

Economic – The Colwood Place project synergizes commercial, recreational, arts/cultural, transportation and accommodation to create a landmark development and innovative economic driver at the gateway to Colwood and the West Shore as the world continues to discover southern Vancouver Island as an incredibly desirable place to live, work, play and visit.

If you have questions or concerns not reflected in the FAQ, please let us know. Contact secretary@building4thearts.com and we will be happy to respond to your questions.