

## Building the HeART of the West Shore: **Colwood Place and the Emily Carr Centre for the Arts**

Project Backgrounder  
October 2020

### **An Exciting Vision**

Colwood Place and the Emily Carr Centre for the Arts is a bold creative vision developed and nurtured over many years by dozens of dedicated community organizations, educators and business leaders.

Colwood Place will be [located at the gateway to Colwood and the West Shore](#). It will become a landmark gathering place for community, and a catalyst for social impact and innovation. It will be an accessible inter-generational hub, where people of all ages and abilities can explore and grow their love of the arts and culture, and where talented professional and amateur artists and performers will entertain and inspire audiences from near and far.

### **Colwood Place will:**

- Create a business and social enterprise 'hub', with boutique hotel, a variety of commercial uses (retail/banking/restaurants), residential accommodation (live/work, condominiums, apartments)
- Feature the **Emily Carr Centre for the Arts** (performance venues, art gallery, classrooms/workshops/maker spaces, rehearsal spaces, and more!)
- Provide community amenities and public open space

Colwood Place and the Emily Carr Centre will be the perfect complement to a host of existing world-class amenities located nearby ... the Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre (one of the largest in North America), the Q Centre, Colwood Transit Exchange, the Galloping Goose Regional Trail, and important cultural assets like Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites, Esquimalt Lagoon Migratory Bird Sanctuary, and Royal Roads University.

On June 22, 2020, the Colwood City Council passed a motion directing staff to work with the Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society (JdFPACS) and their consulting team to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that:

- Sets out the conditions relating to a long-term lease on the Park and Ride site on Old Island Highway that would enable the Society to construct a mixed-use development that includes an arts centre,
- Identifies the net benefits to the City provided by the project, and
- Includes mutually acceptable risk mitigation strategies.

The draft MOU is expected to come back to Colwood City Council for further discussion and action in early 2021.

## **Ambitious and Achievable**

Our Society has created a sustainable business approach that includes innovative revenue streams to offset the operating costs of the community arts centre. This is consistent with the society's goal to create and operate an arts and cultural centre without reliance on financial support from local municipalities.

## **A Home for Arts, Culture and Community Wellbeing**

The Emily Carr Centre for the Arts will include:

- A theatre (approximately 350 seats, with options for future expansion) and smaller black box theatre
- Rehearsal and teaching space for drama, music, dance, and fine art and craft
- An art gallery/exhibition space
- Office and storage spaces for arts and cultural organizations
- Community spaces for public gatherings

## **How We Got Here**

Colwood Place and the Emily Carr Centre for the Arts is a project with deep community roots ...

### **2002**

The Capital Regional District's Regional Arts Strategic Plan, after significant public consultation, acknowledged an arts infrastructure deficit on the rapidly growing West Shore of British Columbia's Capital Regional District, encompassing the five municipalities of Colwood, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin and View Royal.

### **2005**

The West Shore Arts Council conducted extensive public consultation on the arts, and through their West Shore Arts Strategy, affirmed the need for facilities and increased support for arts programming on the West Shore.

### **2007**

The West Shore Cultural Collaboratory (a partnership between the West Shore Chamber of Commerce and the West Shore Arts Council) brought together over 50 community arts organizations serving the community from throughout the Capital Regional District, to detail facility/programming needs on the West Shore. The work was done strategically to produce robust public arts and culture inputs for the 2008 Official Community Plans (OCPs) of the cities of Colwood and Langford. The Collaboratory's activism was catalytic in enshrining core arts and cultural planning objectives within the Official Community Plans.

## 2007 to 2010

A West Shore Chamber of Commerce collaboration with the City of Colwood championed eco-cultural tourism along the Pacific Circle Route with the Emily Carr Festival of the Arts and Ecology (May 2008 and May 2010). The festivals wove together a remarkable tapestry of events, and presented an integrated eco-cultural tourism marketing program, which highlighted the region's wealth of creative events and enterprises. The festivals both received federal funding and strong community sponsorship support.

## 2011

The West Shore Chamber of Commerce sponsored an MBA student of Royal Roads University who produced an Organizational Management Project (equivalent to a master's thesis) investigating the need for a performing arts and education centre in the City of Colwood at Royal Bay (where Emily Carr painted one of her seminal works, "Above the Gravel Pit"). The Calabrese Needs Assessment specifically looked at the need for a theatre in the community, within the context of its inclusion as part of a Neighborhood Learning Centre (NLC), which the Sooke School District (SD62) was planning. The assessment confirmed the level of need, and project advocates embarked upon a rigorous campaign of support, under the banner of the Emily Carr WestShore Performing Arts and Education Centre. Today we are fortunate to have the Teechamitsa Theatre at Royal Bay Secondary School, which is almost exclusively booked by the school district itself, still leaving the West Shore without a community theatre to provide the true jewel in the crown of our other world-class regional amenities.

## 2012 to 2013

The West Shore Arts Task Force, an informal body of dedicated project supporters keeping interested cultural stakeholders connected, worked with the City of Colwood to develop a project scope of work to evaluate the opportunity for building an arts centre at Colwood's Royal Bay. This culminated in the municipality's hiring of noted theatre consultant Richard Schick of Schick Shiner & Associates to produce the West Shore Centre for the Performing Arts and Royal Bay Theatre Development Study, a comprehensive report on the centre's feasibility, the types of spaces such a centre should include, an architectural concept, and a business plan. The report did not reflect the potential of incorporating an air space parcel into the development, which limited revenue-generating options.

### *The Schick Shiner Report's Recommendations*

The Schick Shiner report painted a detailed picture of the business case in support of a theatre and mixed-use arts, education and wellness complex that would serve the cultural needs of a growing community and diversify sustainable economic development within the region.

Core facilities would include:

- Theatre, with seating on two levels, and fully equipped with state-of-the-art technical equipment;

- Black Box theatre/multi-purpose space, equipped with lighting grid and other facilities required to support small performances;
- Dance/theatre studios with high ceilings, natural light, sprung floors and the appropriate acoustics and acoustical separation between spaces;
- The potential for boutique retail and office spaces;
- Restaurant and event catering operation;
- Coffee house;
- Gallery/gift shop;
- Community house/resource information centre; and
- Exhibition space for community heritage/archive displays.

Capital costs and projected economic impact:

- Est. \$35 million - Capital cost in 2013 dollars (excluding the cost of land)
- Est. \$16 million - Construction job creation
- Est. \$3.2 million - Annual economic spin-offs

### *Funding the 2013 Capital Development*

The funding model recommended for this project was integrated and adaptive. In the right location, a theatre and performing arts hub like the one proposed for Colwood and the growing West Shore would deliver a landmark win/win/win for community, culture and commerce.

The funding model recommended for the capitalization of the community infrastructure project would be a mix of traditional arts facility capital funding (involving federal, provincial, regional and municipal governments), combined with foundation grants, community fundraising and non-traditional funding through partnerships with commercial developers.

### *Operational Business Case*

The report's Business Plan indicated it would cost approximately \$750,000 per year to operate the theatre and performing arts centre at Royal Bay, and would require about 44% of that in municipal support. That's where the 2013 project model hit an economic impasse for the Colwood community of less than 20,000 people. There needed to be a better way to fund facility operations and a capital endowment for the long-term maintenance and future development of the arts on the West Shore. The report's recommendations were not actioned and the task force went back to the drawing board.

### **2014 to 2016**

The West Shore Arts Task Force continued to carry the project vision forward, including a comprehensive review/assessment of eleven potential West Shore project sites, involving both privately and publicly held lands. The group maintained project awareness and momentum, and in 2016 evolved into the Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society.

## 2017

The Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society attained Registered Charity status, which enhanced the organization's level of readiness to act on its development plans when the right location becomes available and the organization has a sustainable business plan in hand.

## 2018/2019

The municipalities of Colwood, View Royal, Metchosin and Highlands continued to support the work of the Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society, as the group worked diligently behind the scenes to build an innovative business plan that addresses the operating costs of arts infrastructure, is financially sound for investment, and capable of producing a win/win/win for the City of Colwood and the broader West Shore community, culture and commerce.

## 2020

The Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society is presently working with the City of Colwood to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for the project, which will continue into FY 2021.

## Local Action/Global Reach - Our Sustainable Development Goals

There are a wide variety of ways that the Juan de Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society aims to embody sustainability into the building of Colwood Place and Emily Carr Centre for the Arts, as we do our part to take local action on some of the [Sustainable Development Goals set forth by the United Nations](#).

**Health** – The Emily Carr Centre for the Arts will provide a vital focal point for the arts and its many health benefits in a rapidly growing and changing region. With the creation of the centre, people of all ages and abilities will benefit from the purposeful promotion of the arts as a central part of healthy lifestyle. A [2019 World Health Organization report on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being](#) synthesizes the global evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being. In our country, the arts and culture play an important role in [at least seven of the twelve determinants of health defined by Health Canada](#), including personal confidence, control, social connectedness, education, and supportive physical environments. For example:

*In creative arts therapies:* Visual arts, dance, drama, music and poetry have been used to reduce anxiety and tension in cardiac and surgery patients, reduce pain and discomfort, provide better physical surroundings for patients and their families, and enhance the development of critically ill newborn children.

*Youth-at-risk, the elderly and connecting the generations:* Some results of using the arts and culture to engage marginalized groups and the elderly include higher academic achievement, better “life success”, and the ability to address difficult social issues.

*The arts and health care professionals:* The arts can help reduce tension and stress among healthcare practitioners and can help increase the speed and completion rate of a variety of medical interventions.

**Social** – It starts at the very beginning of the vision, as one that 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, Military Family Housing at Belmont Park, Pacific Centre Family Services Association, nearby schools, and 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).

*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.

Please see our project infographic on the following page.

## The Emily Carr Centre Development ... *Building the HeART of Community While Demonstrating Action on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*



### Economic

With a capital investment of approx. \$56M, our social enterprise project team of community arts organizations, business leaders and educators, along with various levels of government, will build a new centre for excellence and innovation that integrates the arts and community wellness to stimulate and diversify our local economy.

**The Colwood Place development is envisioned to:**

- ① Fill an economic development gap, by attracting unique opportunities (from corporate and condominiums, to seniors' independent living spaces through end of life care facilities), and live/work units to hotel accommodation, each able to capitalize on the marketing value of co-location with arts and creative living amenities
- ② Create a landmark community cultural precinct ... the jewel in the crown of a sports and recreational facilities-rich region, where people of all ages and abilities will gather to enjoy memorable experiences
- ③ Attract inter-generational and multi-cultural support and long-term, sustainable market share

The arts have a vital role to play in our community. Arts, culture and heritage help to define us, and foster creativity and innovation that will help our country remain competitive in a global marketplace.

The West Shore is one of the fastest growing regions of Canada, yet after almost two decades of hard work at the grassroots, our communities still lack basic cultural infrastructure to serve growing regional needs. The absence of a cultural precinct to anchor destinations like nearby national heritage sites means we are also missing out on economic development opportunities associated with cultural tourism, estimated to generate 8 times the economic impact of sport tourism ... really!

### Cultural

### Health and Social

Engaging in the arts at any age is a powerful way to maintain and enhance one's physical, mental and social health; to speed recovery from illness; and to help manage pain and other chronic conditions.

For seniors, it can reduce their use of medications and doctor visits, and postpone the need for institutional care.

For youth-at-risk, the arts provide an effective way to keep them in school and out of trouble, and to teach job/relationship skills and creative problem-solving.

**This development will enrich quality of life by:**

- ① Serving as a community destination accessible for people of all ages and abilities
- ② Serving as a "Community House", helping to build and support community connections
- ③ Supporting the region's social planning capacity-building
- ④ Using proven arts & health protocols to respond to a variety of health and social planning priorities

## Emily Carr Centre *The HeART of the West Shore and the Pride of Colwood*

Future generations are watching.

Throughout history, culture has been deeply linked to the natural environment. A centre for the arts, wellness and life-long learning also provides a unique platform for showcasing environmental leadership.

A community gathering place also provides an ideal destination for demonstrating sustainable living practices. Community arts and education together can enable the cultural changes needed to help our growing communities adapt to climate change, and succeed as resilient places where families can live, love, work, grow, play and prosper.

**The Colwood Place development will:**

- ① Demonstrate environmental building techniques
- ② Provide a "Community House" where sustainable living programs can be anchored for the region
- ③ Create memorable experiences which link the arts and culture with parks and outdoor spaces (particularly valuable to children/youth and elders).

### Environmental