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# Cultural-Creative Infrastructure

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**“ The one great possibility of integrating all of the arts with the life of our people, of evoking the creative spirit in our people into a rewarding life, is through the establishment of community centres for the arts all across Canada. In these, each community and region can be brought into living contact with the arts and thus be inspired to initiate its own cultural form, realize and individualize its regional environment and life and achieve a measure of inner freedom without which its life would have but little meaning. Herein we can have the essential complement to whatever regimentation the trend toward uniformity may impose upon us. ”**

Lawren Harris, “Community Art Centres – Growing Movement,”  
*Canadian Art*, 1944 –1945

**1944-45**

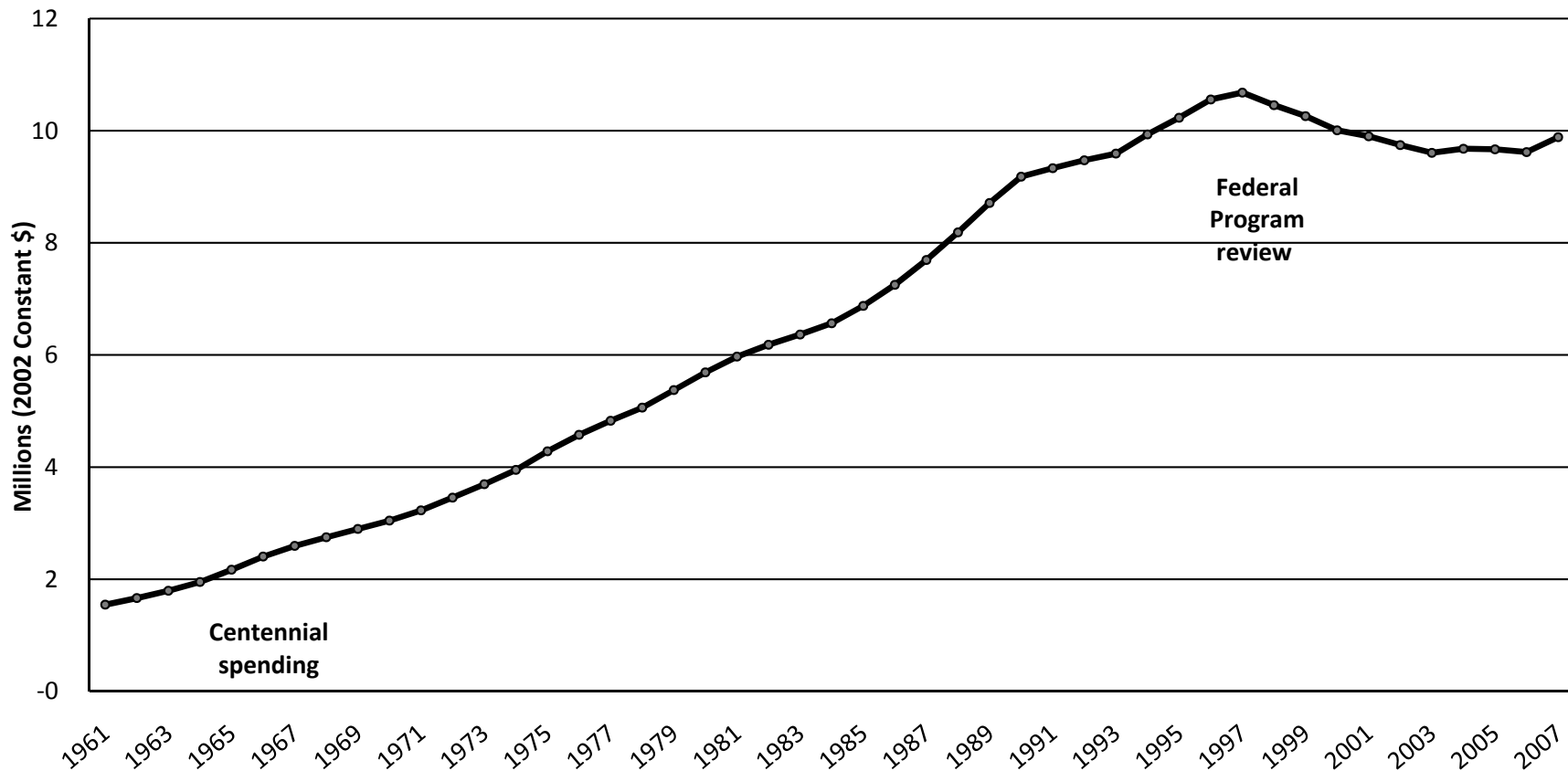
# Canada's Centennial 1967

**A “once in a century chance to create conditions for the growth and flowering of Canadian talents in the performing arts. A century ago our forefathers were building the CPR to bind this country together economically and politically. We have an opportunity now of building a chain of concert halls and theatres to bind our country together culturally and socially.”**

John W. Fisher, Commissioner, Centennial Commission, 1964

**Average annual rise of 9% in the value of facilities between 1961 and 1967**

# Change in the total value of cultural infrastructure (net capital stock) between 1961 and 2006



- Community, recreation, cultural, social infrastructure = **\$40.2 billion deficit**, one-third of total municipal infrastructure deficit [existing only]
- Many facilities in this category are in **poor condition**, have **inadequate capacity**, are **strained by aging and accumulated deterioration**, and “**need immediate attention**”

FCM 2007



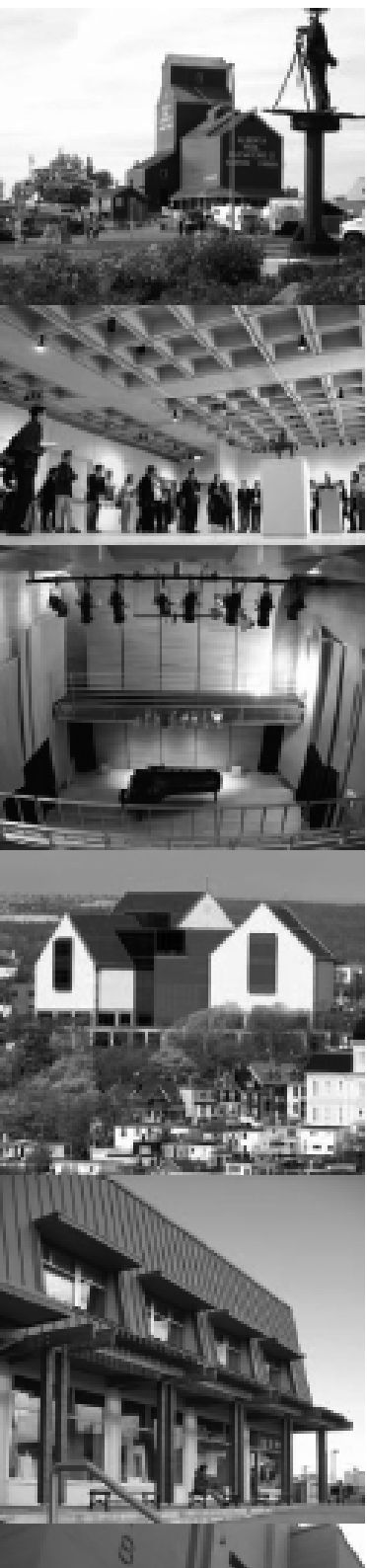
The big infrastructure issue is the ability to both sustain and look after what we have (maintenance, rehabilitation) and to **build to meet new needs** (expansion).

The Ross Creek Centre for the Arts  
Canning, Nova Scotia



# Presentation Outline

- What is cultural-creative infrastructure?
- Key issues
- The state of **policy-funding frameworks** to support cultural-creative infrastructure
- Observations on **local/regional planning approaches** for cultural-creative infrastructure



# What is cultural infrastructure?

Cultural infrastructure: Physical assets and spaces whether they are full time or part time, single purpose or multi-purpose, historic or contemporary that have cultural products and accommodate and satisfy the requirements of cultural activities and cultural industry.

Both highly visible spaces for public interaction and 'background' support spaces (e.g., creation/rehearsal/production, live/work, storage/preservation space for collections/artifacts)



# City of Vancouver / Toronto Artscape (2008)

## 7 categories of cultural infrastructure:

1. Presentation space
2. Creation/production space
3. Live-work space
4. Multi-functional space
5. Preservation/collection space
6. Education/training space
7. Office/ancillary space



# 6 Emerging models – cultural-creative infrastructure

1. Multi-use hubs
2. Incubators
3. Multi-sectoral convergence centres
4. Artist live/work complexes
5. Creative habitats
6. Integrated projects  
(Social/Cultural/Economic/Environment/Community)

Not  
mutually  
exclusive



# The state of cultural infrastructure: Key issues

1. Aging infrastructure / condition issues
2. Emerging space needs, changing cultural practices, and gaps
3. (In)stability of accommodation
4. Refurbishing and re-purposing community resources
5. Maximizing productivity of public investment
6. The state of knowledge
7. Fragmented policy-funding frameworks for cultural infrastructure



# Policy-funding framework

- **Federal:** DCH, INFR + others
  - **Provincial/territorial:** Variations/inconsistency
  - **Municipal:** Very active but limited resources
  - **Partnerships:** Private / non-profits
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\$543 MILLION invested in 987 cultural infrastructure projects by DCH (CSC) and INFR (2001-Apr 2008) - 2/3 from INFC

# Policy-funding framework: **Key issues**

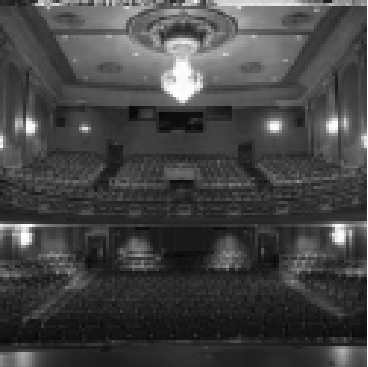
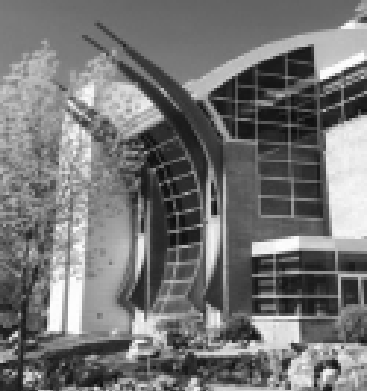
- Very weak long-term policy framework
- In general, there is a lack of multi-level coordination when several levels of government are involved, and consultation appears to be more ad hoc than formalized
- Explicit reference to municipal plans and priorities is not a formalized part of the process
- Federal programs require matching funds from other govt levels – when there is no provincial cultural capital program applicants are forced to follow a “piecemeal approach” to locating provincial funding
- Lack of policy-grounded programs > politically based funding decisions

## Policy-funding framework: **Key issues**

- Cultural policies and programs at federal and provincial levels are seldom sustained over a long enough period for adequate planning + program changes, instability
- The “vicious circle” – one funding party must commit to the program before the others will come into it – often an issue between a province and the federal government with municipalities and cultural entrepreneurs caught in between
- Evaluation criteria – different agencies, different perspectives, different evaluation criteria which may conflict

**“ The multilevel governance system in Canada can be characterized as ad hoc and often vertically and horizontally uncoordinated, with significant regional variation across the country. Lack of coherence and coordination can be found at the federal level, but also at the provincial level of government. ”**

Dr. Monica Gattinger 2008



# Cultural-creative space planning?

- Cultural-creative space development – traditionally situated within cultural and community planning
- Site-specific ad hoc development
- Systematic approaches to planning for cultural facilities on a municipal or regional scale have been rare
- A number of initiatives are now in play to move from ad hoc or opportunistic practices to more systematic planning approaches



# U.K. city-wide planning strategies for cultural facilities

- **Standards of provision** – allotting several square metres of cultural space per percentage of population (i.e., 30 m<sup>2</sup> per 1,000 people)
- Developing **special tariffs** for Special Planning Guidance (i.e., \$92.13/person for new housing for local cultural spaces)
- **Hierarchy / minimum standards** – number and types of facilities every town should have (Evans, 2008)

# Cultural-creative space planning approaches: Canada and U.S.

Various **planning tools** – project-by-project

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+ **Targetted programs** (e.g., Boston Artist Space Initiative)

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+ **Comprehensive strategies/plans** designed to be superimposed or integrated into other local planning processes

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+ City-specific **central resource hubs** – facilitate connections and build capacity

# Challenges for cultural-creative space planning

1. **Balance** the rigidity of 'must have' prescriptive approaches with the need to embed cultural-creative facilities within broader planning processes
2. **Facilitate and enable** collaborative/decentralized development spurred by grassroots cultural vitality and capacity
3. **Build in flexibility** to the changing needs of the creative activity that animates the physical spaces, and emerging multi-sectoral and blended operational models.





# Toward a Comprehensive Planning Approach to Cultural Infrastructure

Composite of 5 leading practices observed across Canada:

- 1. Collective/community prioritization framework** (vs. “list of projects” approach) – City of Vancouver
- 2. Tiered service delivery model:** neighbourhoods, districts, city-wide levels (modeled on recreation, library services) – City of Ottawa (proposed)
- 3. Shared decision-making table** for 3 levels of government to discuss and make decisions on investments in cultural infrastructure – City of Montreal
- 4. “Cross-sectoral convergence”** – Culture and non-culture sectors brought together – Toronto (e.g., Artscape Wychwood Barns, Evergreen at the BrickWorks)
- 5. Horizontal coordination mechanism** to make best use of resources through coordination – e.g., City of Montreal – Les Maisons de la culture (all City-owned and -operated); Other model – different owners?

# Closing

Changing field of action:

- **The local** as focus of planning and action
- Changing the policy paradigm to an **(eco)systems approach**

There is an urgent need to:

- **Recognize and plan** for cultural infrastructure as an integral component of infrastructure for 21st-century cities and communities
- **Rethink our approach** to cultural infrastructure, with greater attention to issues of lifecycle, the interaction of social and built infrastructure, and long-term sustainability



# **Centre for Policy Studies on Culture and Communities**

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