A New Arts & Cultural Centre for Regent Park
Case for Support

March 2009
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development of a new arts and cultural centre as part of the ongoing revitalization of Regent Park is a long standing ambition for Toronto’s east downtown and a long held aspiration of the Regent Park community.

The project presents a unique opportunity to anchor culture as a primary driver in the community’s revitalization, both physically and symbolically. The integration and celebration of Regent Park’s cultural richness in the revitalization will play a central role in its success and in the creation of a socially inclusive, livable, healthy, safe and vibrant neighbourhood.

Toronto Community Housing’s lead gift of a 30,000 square foot site with an estimated value of $9 million reflects the importance of the project to the revitalization and creates a window of opportunity in which the vision can become a reality.

Building on the extensive research and community consultation process which informed the overall revitalization program, Toronto Community Housing, The Daniels Corporation, Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative and the City of Toronto have now completed a Feasibility Study, funded by Canadian Heritage, and an Implementation Strategy, funded by Toronto Community Housing and The Daniels Corporation.

Drawing on the considerable expertise of Lord Cultural Resources, who carried out the Feasibility Study, and Artscape, who developed the Implementation Strategy a vision and viable business model for the project have been completed.

- This Case for Support sets out the potential to respond to a long standing community desire to see the arts and culture at the heart of the revitalization of Toronto’s Regent Park neighbourhood;

- The Case for Support identifies a dynamic vision for a major new arts and cultural facility serving a unique and evolving community but open to the world;

- It identifies the extraordinarily strong partnership that will develop and build the project as well as the potential arts and cultural organizations who may call the centre home.
• It sets out a building program and business model that has evolved over a number of consultative feasibility and implementation studies, and which has been finalized through a Request for Expressions of Interest managed by Artscape.

• onal funding model that is viable without core operational funding, once built.
What is Regent Park Arts & Cultural Centre?

Regent Park arts and cultural centre is a platform for cultural exchange and collaboration rooted in Regent Park and open to the world. It is a place where people come to be inspired, to learn, to share, to create.

The Centre is:
- A showcase for artistic talent
- An incubator of creative people and organizations
- A workshop for new artistic creations
- The social heart of Regent Park

What happens at Regent Park Arts & Cultural Centre?

Regent Park arts and cultural centre will foster and support:
- Performances, celebrations, festivals, public and community events
- Creation and production of a wide range of arts activities with a focus on the performing and visual arts
- Learning, skills development, participation and creation with a special commitment to young people
- Collaboration, exchange and dialogue between individuals, communities and organizations
- A sense of community, well-being and social engagement

Shared Values

The Centre and the arts and cultural organizations and individuals working there are guided by a set of shared values which support the Vision, inform programming and underpin the way we work together and with the community:
- Excellence in artistic creation
- Inclusivity, participation and learning
- Celebrating and serving our diverse community
- Collaboration, dialogue and social engagement
- A healthy, sustainable community

A quadruple bottom line

The new arts and cultural centre and the arts and cultural organizations working there will generate a quadruple bottom line:
- A diverse, dynamic cultural environment
- A richer, inclusive social fabric
- A stronger local economy
- A cleaner, greener environment
COMMUNITY: CULTURE: REVITALIZATION: Putting the arts and culture at the heart of the new Regent Park

“The vision is one of vibrancy, diversity and sustainability— in building types, designs and heights, incomes, uses, community services, recreation spaces, learning facilities and activities. In short, a healthy community shaped by the residents of this community. The vision sees the community infrastructure renewed alongside the housing infrastructure. Redevelopment offers a unique opportunity to take a new and inclusive approach to building a vibrant, healthy community.”

("Regent Park – A Place to Call Home", Toronto Community Housing)

Building the new Regent Park

Regent Park is one of the oldest publicly funded housing communities in Canada. It was built over 50 years ago in two phases on 69 acres bordered by Parliament, Shuter, Gerrard and River Streets in the east end of Toronto. The thinking at the time was to create a “garden city” – a place where buildings sit in park-like settings, streets are removed and the community is set apart from the fabric of the city. However, the design of the community, coupled with its aging infrastructure, has created isolation and lack of opportunity for its residents.

Regent Park was identified in 2004 by The United Way as Toronto’s poorest neighbourhood. This diverse community has an especially high number of new immigrants with over 50% of recent new immigrants coming from mainland China and Bangladesh. Other communities include the Sri Lankan, Jamaican, Somalian and Vietnamese communities and 47 languages are spoken in the area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Regent Park</th>
<th>City of Toronto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Immigrants (1991 – 2000)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty rate</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income</td>
<td>$22,901</td>
<td>$54,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 24s as % of population</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Parent families</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</table>
The revitalization of Regent Park had its beginnings in 2002, when Toronto Community Housing shaped a vision of opportunity and inclusion for the residents of Regent Park. Planning the new community has taken much time, effort and resources. It has been successful to date because of a key guiding principle: community participation in all aspects of the planning and implementation. Literally thousands of residents, neighbours and community stakeholders have been involved in the project, and they will continue to be involved as the new community takes shape over the next several years.

The Social Development Plan prepared by Toronto Community Housing is the critical driver of the Regent Park revitalization, establishing the principles and strategies for transition, and community building in the new Regent Park. The plan puts "planning for people" at the heart of the process of redevelopment and revitalization and achieving social inclusion as the “critical priority”. The revitalization will see the densification of the neighborhood and its re-integration with the east downtown and city as a whole. The population is predicted to grow by 5,000 from 7,500 to approximately 12,500, a 40% increase. Ownership housing, represented in freehold and condominium homes, is expected to house over 5,000 people, significantly altering the social, demographic and economic make up of the community over the 6 phases of revitalization.

- Regent Park Revitalization will be done in six phases over 12 years with an expected investment of about $1 billion.
- More than 2,000 residents and community stakeholders have been consulted in Revitalization planning.
- Once complete, the new Regent Park will be a mixed residential community for 12,500 people in 5,115 units.
- Revitalization will replace all existing 2083 units of social housing and will contribute at least 700 additional affordable housing units, some of which will be off-site in the surrounding community.
- Toronto Community Housing has targeted building 300 affordable ownership homes over the six phases, of which up to 150 of those homes could be available to Regent Park residents.
- All residents who are relocated to make way for demolition and construction have the right to return to a new building that is being built as part of the Revitalization.
**Community: Culture: Revitalization**

**Community Aspiration**

The development of a new arts and cultural centre as part of the ongoing revitalization of Regent Park is a long standing ambition for Toronto’s east downtown and a long held aspiration of the Regent Park community.

Regent Park already has a vibrant, diverse and ever-growing cultural community – a “soft infrastructure” of significant size and scope. As an ethnically diverse neighbourhood, this has been expressed by different communities’ desire to celebrate and sustain their cultural traditions both for each other and the larger community.

A number of not-for profit arts and cultural organizations are also based within or adjacent to Regent Park and a number of these have been active for many years in developing and providing arts and cultural programs which explicitly serve – and reflect – the local community. These include Dixon Hall Music School, Regent Park School of Music, Art Heart Community Art Centre, Cabbagetown–Regent Park Museum, Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre and Regent Park Film Festival among others.

To date, however, there has been no “hard infrastructure” within which to focus this large body of work and to create the milieu within which collaboration and cross-pollination naturally happen.

From the outset key studies, strategic plans and community engagement processes undertaken by Toronto Community Housing, the Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative (RPNI) and others have identified significant community desire to see the arts and culture play a central role in the new Regent Park and a lack of secure, stable and affordable facilities for arts and cultural organizations and activities.

> “The community planning process identified the need for a dedicated facility that could address multiple space requirements through mixed-use and purpose built spaces. Ideally, an arts and cultural centre would house a variety of arts and cultural based initiatives, providing space for existing arts/cultural groups, but would also establish and nurture new groups/initiatives and provide a central meeting place for residents of the Regent Park neighbourhood in the years to come”

(Embracing a Changing Landscape; a Community Effort in Planning for a New Regent Park, RPNI, 2007)
In 2007, RPNI’s Community Plan, *Embracing a Changing Landscape*, based on extensive community consultation, identified the need for a dedicated facility that could address multiple space requirements through mixed use and purpose built space.

“Finding appropriate space ... especially for large cultural events like Eid and Diwali, is difficult in Regent Park. An arts and cultural centre could be a place that provides adequate space for different cultural groups to celebrate and share their culture and to celebrate and share in the cultural activities of neighbours”

(Regent Park Social Development Plan, Toronto Community Housing, 2007)

Arts and culture was one of the six community-defined priority action plans. 35% of residents rated the development of a dedicated arts and cultural facility a priority and 32% of residents identified the “promotion and sharing of culture” as a priority for the new Regent Park.

**Contributing to a socially inclusive, healthy and sustainable community**

“Arts and culture has been identified as a mechanism that supports RPNI’s goal to create strong, healthy, cohesive and inclusive communities.”

(Embracing a Changing Landscape; a Community Effort in Planning for a New Regent Park, RPNI, 2007)

There is a significant body of international and national research, policy and best practice which clearly identifies the multiple contributions that arts and culture can make to the development of socially inclusive, healthy and sustainable communities.

The achievement of a socially inclusive Regent Park will be the most significant achievement of the revitalization program, and a new arts and cultural centre will have an important role to play in this. The arts and culture engage and build the capacity of communities by facilitating public dialogue, inspiring creative learning, building healthy communities, providing a focus for community activism, building community leadership and breaking down barriers between diverse cultures and communities iii.

“Residents also advocate for increased opportunities for community gatherings; cultural exchanges; the integration of cultural learning and exchange activities into community events and programs ......Such opportunities can lead to the development of local networks and foster socialization.”

(Regent Park Social Development Plan, Toronto Community Housing, 2007)
Participation in cultural activities for many, perhaps most, people is focused on the pure personal pleasure derived from their solitary or collective involvement as audience or creator, amateur or professional. The “value” dimension of arts and culture, one that addresses the intrinsic rather than the instrumental benefits of culture and creativity, and their contribution to individual and community “well-being” has been described as “Relationships, shared identity. Shared memories, shared experience. Standards, beliefs. What we consider valuable to pass on to future generations”[Ⅷ]. These will all be essential in the long term success of a new, socially inclusive Regent Park.

The opportunity to celebrate and share community cultural events and activities has also been identified as an important tool for bridging social and economic difference through shared cultural engagement.

“Community residents have raised the importance of safe spaces that allow people to “celebrate and share” their cultures in arts, and cultural activities....”
(Regent Park Revitalization Study, Submitted to Toronto Community Housing, 2002)

In Regent Park support for young people and education were among the community’s top three priorities. With a large population of children and young people significant strides have been made in recent years through the Pathways to Education Project in building effective routes for local young people to remain in education. Access to high quality arts education and participation in arts related programming is increasingly understood to increase self esteem and confidence, improve a sense of belonging or community attachment and improve human capital: building skills and creative abilities. A three year study by Queen’s University concluded that students involved in the arts achieved as much as 11 percentile points higher in math than their peers and that 90% of parents reported that their children were more motivated to learn due to their involvement in arts programs. Young people involved in arts programs have been found to be less likely to enter the legal system and participation in arts and culture enables children young people and adults to develop a range of transferable skills attractive to employers[Ⅶ].

The arts and culture are increasingly understood to have a central role to play in the development of economically and environmentally sustainable cities and investment in arts and cultural facilities, activities and training has been employed strategically across the US, Europe and the UK as a key tool in the regeneration of physically declining and socially and economically deprived communities. Arts and cultural facilities can play a critical role in bringing places back to life, creating vibrant, distinct and authentic places where people
want to live, work and play. They are a central piece of the evening economy, bringing life, economic activity and a sense of safety to places once deserted after dark.

A number of notable arts and cultural interventions and activities have emerged from within Regent Park over the years. These include the work of The Dreamers Anti-Violence and Peace Garden Group, the Black Perspectives arts and culture program and perhaps best known the emergence of the acclaimed Regent Park Focus Youth Arts Media Centre as a project funded by the Ministry of Health to address substance abuse and youth at risk.

All three examples point to the transformative role that arts and cultural activities can have in the lives and life choices of individuals and communities when they are properly connected to culture, individual and community experience and place.

**Engaging with community groups**

In addition to more established projects many small community and community cultural groups play an important role in the social fabric of this diverse neighborhood providing activities, social events and festivals which range from regular Chinese community picnics to African drumming and quilt making. However, as noted by Dixon Hall , the area’s most significant social services charity, there is “horizontal growth or mushrooming of organizations and community groups , but very few are growing vertically, that is enhancing their resource base, their participants and their influence on the community and larger decision-making bodies.” These groups have much to offer to and gain from access to the resources of an arts and cultural centre. Their lack of capacity to take a leadership role in such a major project will, however, need to be mediated by key local service organizations, especially RPNI which has played a central role in bridging the community and agencies and which has been the driving force behind the arts and cultural centre project.

Capacity building with smaller local groups will need to go hand in hand with a project communications and community engagement strategy which continues to seek and enable the broadest level of community engagement. Governance structures for both the planning, development and operation of an arts and cultural centre will equally need to ensure appropriate levels of community involvement and engagement.

**Contributing to Toronto’s creative ecology**

The City of Toronto will continue to be a key partner in taking this strategically significant project forward. Toronto’s *Culture Plan* clearly establishes the principle that a vibrant and
inclusive cultural environment is essential to its success as a creative, diverse and economically and socially sustainable city\textsuperscript{vi}. More recently Toronto’s Creative City Planning Framework sets out the broad range of contributions the arts, culture and creativity make to the city’s prosperity at various scales across the city\textsuperscript{vii}. An arts and cultural centre in Regent Park will form part of the broad ecology of city, district and community based cultural infrastructure and as such will need to integrate effectively with, and complement, rather than duplicate, the services and programs offered in existing and planned social facilities in the neighbourhood.

The opportunity of creating a dynamic arts and cultural centre in the Regent Park neighbourhood will require an innovative approach – one that is fluid, engaging, viable and visionary and which leverages the potential of the intersection of community, culture and revitalization:

**Culture**

Toronto’s east downtown comprises one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse areas of Toronto – it enjoys a complex mosaic of traditions, values and practices. Diversity and cultural expression are mutually reinforcing - diverse neighbourhoods support an environment in which creativity can flourish and, at the same time, cultural engagement provides a means through which diverse communities are strengthened. The arts and cultural centre has the potential to become a creative nucleus for the city – a place where intercultural exchange, artistic experimentation and idea generation are fundamental to its purpose.

**Community**

Toronto’s downtown and central neighbourhoods are undergoing tremendous change as the city evolves in response to broad economic and social forces. The new arts and cultural centre will need to be adaptable in this shifting context, responding to the opportunities and aspirations of many communities - of culture, geography and practice - to deliver an innovative approach to nurturing and enabling creativity.

**Revitalization**

The redevelopment process underway in Regent Park is rooted in a commitment to create a more livable, healthy, safe and vibrant community, which is woven into the fabric of the broader city. The arts and cultural centre presents a significant opportunity to anchor culture as a primary driver in the community’s revitalization, both physically and symbolically.
A Once in a Lifetime Opportunity: SITE IDENTIFICATION

Toronto Community Housing and The Daniels Corporation have recognized the significant contribution an arts and cultural centre could make to developing a socially inclusive, open and culturally rich neighbourhood. As a result Toronto Community Housing and Daniels have taken the bold step of identifying a prime potential site for development within Phase II as the preferred location for the new arts and cultural centre.

The 30,000 square foot site is owned by Toronto Community Housing and has an estimated land value of $9million. Subject to planning approvals and the identification of partnership funding for capital costs Toronto Community Housing will contribute the land as the lead gift for the development of the Centre.

The preferred location for the Centre is on Dundas Street East between Sumach Street and Sackville Street. The Centre is proposed for development in Phase II of the revitalization plan, with planning and design commencing in 2009 with construction to occupancy phases estimated between 2010 to 2012.

In light of the overall revitalization program and with Phase II already under way there is a short window of opportunity when this site can be held for the arts and cultural centre.
With direct public transit access via the Dundas Street streetcar the site is located opposite both a major new City Park and the new Aquatic Centre at the corner of Dundas Street and Sumach Street, both of which are being developed in Phase II of the revitalization. This will create significant critical mass and a new focus for arts and culture, leisure, recreation and sport at the heart of the new Regent Park. It is important to note that the Aquatic Centre will serve the wider east downtown, including the emerging new residential districts in the East Donlands and the East Bayfront. As such, the Aquatic Centre, as well as the proposed arts and cultural centre, will re-connect Regent Park with the broader city, breaking down historical barriers that have separated this neighbourhood from the rest of the city for generations.

The site is also close to some of the city’s most important cultural, community and entertainment assets. The arts and cultural centre will be ideally situated in close proximity to established areas such as Cabbagetown, Riverdale, Corktown, and Distillery District.
DEVELOPING
THE
VISION
From Ambition to Reality: DEVELOPING THE VISION

Building on community based demand for an arts and cultural centre within the Regent Park revitalization RPNI applied for and received funding from Heritage Canada to commission a feasibility study for an arts and cultural centre for Regent Park in 2007.

A steering committee comprising the Executive Director, RPNI, the City of Toronto’s Senior Cultural Affairs Officer and Toronto Community Housing’s Project Director, Regent Park Revitalization determined that the purpose of the study was to identify ways that the proposed centre could meet both existing and future needs and contribute to the development of a healthier community. The study was also intended to assess the financial sustainability of such a project.

Feasibility Study: Needs Assessment and Concept Development

The Feasibility Study was conceived and conducted in two parts. Lord Cultural Resources was awarded the contract for the first two phases, Needs Assessment and Concept Development, and completed their study in July 2008\textsuperscript{i}.

The Feasibility Study: Preliminary Vision and Concept report:

- Identified strong demand from within the Regent Park community for the development of an arts and cultural centre as a priority within the revitalization.
- Identified the broad city-wide policy and planning context for such a development.
- Identified trends in understanding the role and impact of Arts and culture on Community.
- Assessed existing arts and cultural activity in Regent Park including both community based and professional activity.
- Reviewed existing material to assess the market context.
- Reviewed a range of existing organizational models and structures.
- Established a broad vision and concept for further development.
Feasibility Study: Implementation Strategy

While a great deal of thought, community engagement, needs analysis, case study research and impact assessment had been completed the feasibility process revealed that leadership with the capacity to take forward a project of this scale had not emerged from within the community.

With a narrow window of opportunity to determine the viability of an arts and cultural centre in Phase II of the redevelopment, Toronto Community Housing and Daniels commissioned Artscape in June 2008 to undertake ‘Phase II’ of the feasibility study. Artscape’s mandate was as follows:

- Develop a compelling vision for the project
- Construct a business and governance model for the project
- Manage a process to elicit expressions of interest from prospective tenants and users of the facility
- Prepare a building program that identified the size and usage of space
- Articulate a case for support suitable for attracting public and private donors
- Provide third party analysis of the viability of the project
- Draft a report that encompasses all of the above

Artscape reported to a Steering Group comprising:

- Liz Root, Project Director Regent Park Revitalization, Toronto Community Housing
- Mitchell Cohen, President, The Daniels Corporation
- Catherine Goulet, Executive Director, Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative
- Lori Martin, City of Toronto, Cultural Services
- Kate Stark, Executive Director, Dixon Hall*

Artscape also worked collaboratively with community stakeholders to ensure their continued input and engagement with the project:

- Art Heart Community Arts Centre
- Cabbagetown-Regent Park Museum
- Coleman Lemieux & Compagnie
- Regent Park Film Festival
- Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre
• Regent Park School of Music  
• Cabbagetown Community Arts Centre  
• Cabbagetown Short Film and Video Festival  
• Dixon Hall

**Request for Expressions of Interest**

Building on the detailed needs assessment and early stage vision conceptualization undertaken by Lord Cultural Resources and working collaboratively with both the Steering Group and Community Stakeholders a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) was released in October 2008 through Toronto Arts Council and the Creative Trust*. 

The objective of the REOI was to stimulate and assess interest in the new arts and cultural centre’s potential development and programming from a broad range of Toronto’s arts and cultural community. The document set out the different types of opportunities available and respondents were asked to consider how they might fulfill one or a combination of the following roles:

**Program Provider:** not-for-profit arts and cultural organization offering regular or temporary programming in the facility but not based full-time from the building as a Tenant.

**Tenants:** not-for-profit arts and cultural organization and/or individuals who are leaseholders of space within the building.

**Facility Operator:** not-for-profit organization with established capacity to operate a facility of this size for the purpose of an arts and cultural centre. The Operator may own the building or have a master lease with the owner, and may or may not utilize space in the building for its own operations/programming.

**Development Partner:** not-for-profit organization with responsibility to raise significant capital funding to develop the building, either solely or in partnership. The Development Partner may or may not utilize space in the building for its own operations/programming.
An expert advisory committee was recruited to assess responses to the REOI. Members were recruited to include representatives from the local Regent Park arts community; the broader Toronto cultural community; representatives from the Regent Park community as a whole and arts facilities technical advisors.

**Advisory Committee Membership:**
- Tonya Surman, Executive Director, Centre for Social Innovation
- Jini Stolk, Executive Director, Creative Trust
- Adonis Huggins, Regent Park Focus
- Catherine Goulet, Executive Director, Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative
- Leslie Lester, Executive Director, Soul Pepper Theatre Company
- Nancy Webster, Executive Director, Loraine Kilmsa Theatre for Young People
- Aisha Wickham Thomas, Executive Director Canadian Independent Recording Artists’ Association (CIRAA) and Executive Director Ngoma productions.

A total of 29 responses to the REOI were received, including 9 from locally based arts and cultural organizations. The Advisory Committee reviewed submissions based on evaluation of their response to the assessment criteria set out in the REOI document:

**VISION**
Is the proposal rooted in a strong, organizational vision?

**CAPACITY**
Does the Respondent demonstrate the necessary level of leadership, effective project management and fundraising capacity to deliver the proposal?

**SUSTAINABILITY**
Is the Respondent able to demonstrate its financial stability and sustainability?

Does the proposal respond to the social and cultural diversity of the community and the wider city in relation to its operations, program proposals and approaches to community development / outreach?

(Where appropriate only) Does the proposal make a positive contribution to environmental sustainability?
**IMPACT**

Will the proposal make a substantial contribution towards:

- Providing and / or facilitating excellence in a wide range of arts forms and cultural/artistic expression
- Providing a gathering / connecting place
- Celebrating and learning about community
- Contributing to a socially inclusive Regent Park
- Nurturing exchange and dialogue among individuals exploring creativity

In addition, the Advisory Committee assessed each respondent for “fit” and for their capacity to deliver on all or some parts of their proposed “Role” (i.e. Facility Operator, Development Partner, and Tenant).

The Advisory Committee also reviewed the overall total identified space requirement identified in Expressions of Interest (EOIs) which was broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Space by Type and size</th>
<th>Recording Studios or Studio Space</th>
<th>Performance Space</th>
<th>Exhibition Space / gallery</th>
<th>Storage</th>
<th>Office/Admin</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identified Space Requirements</td>
<td>51,200 s.f</td>
<td>13,450 s.f</td>
<td>41,400 s.f</td>
<td>5,150 s.f</td>
<td>23,380 s.f</td>
<td>134,580 s.f</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Parameters for Vision, Building Program and Business Plan Development**

Based on a review of the submissions the Advisory Committee set out the following parameters for vision, building program and business model development for the new arts and cultural centre:

- A multi-tenant centre with performance space, managed workspaces (office) and participatory spaces / studios / teaching rooms and rehearsal space with street level animation.
- Home to a number of professional and community arts organizations and not to a single professional arts organization.
- Accommodating, where possible, important, existing locally based professional arts and community arts and cultural organizations.
• Children and young people will be a priority – although by no means exclusively – target audience and participant.

• Home to a significant number of professional artists/arts organizations working with the community and creating opportunities for engagement in participation, training and learning as well as performance.

• The Centre should not be isolated (in terms of development and operation) from the business hubs, community facilities existing and / or planned for the area - and should add to and complement rather than duplicate activity.

• The performing and visual arts emerged as priorities for the centre.

• The development of a hub of managed office /administration space and facilities for arts-organizations as part of the facility would serve space demand while bringing additional critical mass of professional arts organizations into the area.

**Assessment of Organizational Capacity and Fit**

Based on their review of each EOI submission the Advisory Committee reached the following broad conclusions about actual and potential capacity and fit:

• A significant number of organizations submitting EOI’s had the capacity (or in some case potential) to become a major tenant in the arts and cultural centre, with the potential to lease and operate spaces in the region 1-4,000s.f. and 4,000+s.f. This included:
  
  • All but one of the locally based arts and cultural organizations seeking a major role in the development of the facility.
  
  • A number of significant, professional Toronto based arts organizations demonstrating capacity (or potential capacity) and ‘fit” seeking to play a major role in the facility.

• All locally based arts and cultural organizations submitting an EOI effectively demonstrated their potential role in the facility.

• Demand for administrative / office space for arts and cultural organizations submitting EOI’s was notable.

• Organizations who were not identified as having the capacity to become a major leaseholder could still have their office space needs accommodated.

• Capacity building to support tenants taking on new or enhanced activities would be an important feature of pre-occupation activity.

• None of the organizations submitting EOI’s expressing an interest in taking on the critically important role of Development Partner and / or Facility Operator
demonstrated the necessary combination of capacity and “fit” to deliver the funding, development and / or successful operation of a new arts and cultural centre.
THE
VISION
A New Arts and Cultural Centre in Regent Park: VISION

The vision for the Regent Park arts and cultural centre has evolved over a period of years from the identification of community aspiration to becoming a key component of the revitalization, through the emerging vision identified in the Feasibility Study which was then tested, further refined and developed through the development and assessment of responses to the Request For Expressions of Interest.

What is Regent Park Arts & Cultural Centre?

Regent Park arts and cultural centre is a platform for cultural exchange and collaboration rooted in Regent Park and open to the world. It is a place where people come to be inspired, to learn, to share, to create.

The Centre is:

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- An incubator of creative people and organizations
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- A sense of community, well-being and social engagement

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The Centre and the arts and cultural organizations and individuals working there are guided by a set of shared values which support the Vision, inform programming and underpin the way we work together and with the community:

- Excellence in artistic creation
- Inclusivity, participation and learning
- Celebrating and serving our diverse community
- Collaboration, dialogue and social engagement
- A healthy, sustainable community

**A quadruple bottom line**

The new arts and cultural centre and the arts and cultural organizations working there will generate a quadruple bottom line:

- A diverse, dynamic cultural environment
- A richer, inclusive social fabric
- A stronger local economy
- A cleaner, greener environment

This ambitious vision will be delivered within an iconic three story 50,000 square foot purpose built arts and cultural centre fronting onto Dundas Street designed to serve this vision and based on the following building components:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Square Feet</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event / Performance Space</td>
<td>10,000s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio Operators</td>
<td>7,500s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workspace Hub</td>
<td>10,000s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Space and Facilities</td>
<td>6,500s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total space</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,000s.f.</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Building Program

Anchor Tenants

16,000 square feet of the interior space of the arts and cultural centre will be allocated to one to three anchor tenants, not-for-profit arts or cultural organizations leasing and operating at least 4,000 square feet. The following organizations who responded to the REOI are a sample of those identified by the Advisory Committee as having the potential to make a significant contribution to the project:

Locally Based organizations

- **Dixon Hall Music School**
  Dixon Hall Music School offers an after school and Saturday classical music school for children. The school, which currently runs out of 6 studios at Dixon Hall’s Sumach Street building, offers very low cost lessons ($3 per half hour) to some 220 children every week. The school has a waiting list of 130 and has developed a strong relationship with the Royal Conservatory of Music.
  Space requirement: 7,500 – 10,000s.f.

- **Coleman Lemieux Dance Company**
  Formed in 2000 by Bill Coleman and Laurence Lemieux, Coleman Lemieux is a professional contemporary dance organization that creates, produces and presents works on a local, national and international scale.
  Space requirement: up to 8,000s.f.

- **Art Heart Community Art Centre**
  Art Heart is the only visual arts organization in the Regent Park community to focus on creative skills development & offers hands on visual arts programs to children, youth and adult year round & free of charge. Art Heart currently serves about 350 children from the Regent Park neighbourhood a year (85% are new immigrants) and about 150 adult, including homeless and unemployed people, from across the city.
  Space requirement: up to 4,500s.f.

- **Regent Park School of Music**
  Established in 1999, Regent Park School of Music provides young people in and near Regent Park with high quality, affordable music lessons, and access to diverse musical experiences for showcasing and performance. The school provides 200 students with after school and weekend lessons. The school has a long waiting list and has partnerships with the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Toronto District School Board.
  Space requirement: 5,000 – 8,000s.f.
Other organizations

- **COBA (Collective of Black Artists)**
  Founded in 1993, COBA has a mission to preserve the cultural traditions of Africa and the African Diaspora through education, research and performance. This acclaimed company presents traditional West African dance, music and folklore; Caribbean indigenous folkdance, music and rituals in their purest form possible for the theatrical stage.
  
  Space requirement: 5,000 – 6,000s.f.

- **Music Gallery**
  The Music Gallery is a centre for promoting and presenting innovation and experimentation in all forms of music, and for encouraging cross-pollination between genres, disciplines and audience. Based at St George the Martyr Church since 2001, the Music Gallery presents or co-presents more than 50 concerts per year including five streams of programming, including contemporary classical, chamber and electro-acoustic music; free jazz and improve; avant-rock, pop, folk and electronic music and musics from the non-Western world.
  
  Space requirement: 8,500 – 15,000s.f.

- **Sketch**
  Sketch creates opportunities for street involved and homeless people ages 15-29, to engage in the arts in a cross-discipline studio environment or in the community. Sketch’s award winning program includes; space for self-expression and skill-building through self-directed time in studio or instructional workshops; art making out in the community; exhibition and sale of artwork; and connections to mentorship and apprenticeships in the arts industry.
  
  Space requirement: 6,500 – 8,500s.f.

**Total (maximum) space demand from potential Anchor Tenants (identified above)**

60,000s.f.

In many cases potential Anchor Tenants also require administrative office space. They may therefore also become organizational tenants located in a managed workspace hub.
Large Scale events and performance space
The centerpiece of the facility will be a 10,000s.f. flexible, multi-purpose events and performance space operated and programmed by the Facility Operator.

A “gathering place”
The space will serve as a “community commons”, town square or “agora” and will be able to accommodate a wide variety of performances, festivals, celebrations and events.

The space is designed to become the “gathering place” cited throughout the community consultation and research and development process as a critical need and important component of a new arts and cultural centre in this community. The space will serve the clearly stated need of local community based cultural organizations to have a facility capable of hosting major cultural, religious and other festivals and celebrations.

The overall objective of the business plan is to support free access for local community and community cultural organizations to the space throughout the year.

High specification performance space
In addition the space will be designed with sufficient flexibility to accommodate a wide range of performing arts events. The space will have the volume and the necessary technical specification to accommodate large scale performing arts commissions, events and installations in addition to creating opportunities to showcase tenants’ work. As such it is expected that the arts and cultural centre will raise the profile of the neighborhood as a location for many of Toronto’s major annual arts events including Luminato and Nuit Blanche while also raising the profile of locally based festivals (i.e. the Regent Park Short Film and Video Festival).

The space may also provide one of a number of locations within the facility for the display of archives and artifacts from the Cabbagetown-Regent Park Museum’s collection which stretches back to the area’s earliest days. The stewardship of the community’s history and its manifestation in the new arts and cultural centre will help build a strong sense of local identity and continuity in this evolving neighbourhood.
A wide range of local community and cultural organizations are expected to use this space for events, celebrations, festivals, performances and screenings, for example:

- Regent Park Film Festival
- Cabbagetown Short Film and Video festival
- Regent Park Somali Community Organization
- Regent Park Grassroots Support Network
- Regent Park Women and Family
- Cabbagetown Regent Park Museum
- The Dreamers
- The Francophone Centre
- Regent Park Focus
**Studio Operators**

7,500s.f. of the facility will be allocated to more than one Studio Operator, not-for-profit arts or cultural organizations leasing a studio and or rehearsal facility space within the centre. In line with the vision it is expected that Studio Operators will provide access to their spaces for creation / rehearsal, teaching, training and participatory events and potentially for small scale public performances and other events.

The following organizations who responded to the REOI are a sample of those identified by the Advisory Committee as having the potential to make a significant contribution to the project:

**Locally Based Organizations**

- **Toronto School of Dance Theatre (TSDT)**
  For forty years, TSDT has been committed to the training and education of young dancers in the art of contemporary dance. The School serves the art form of contemporary dance by providing well-trained and educated dance artists; supports the professional development of faculty and guest artists. The School would extend the scope and range of its training and education programs within the arts and cultural centre.
  
  Space requirement: 1,350 – 1600s.f.

- **Canadian Children’s Dance Theatre (CCDT)**
  CCDT has devoted 28 years to introducing children and youth to the art of dance as audiences, students and practicing artists. CCDT would expect to offer a range of music and movement and urban, contemporary, ballet, jazz and musical theatre classes as well as developing workshops in traditional dance relevant to the diverse communities that make up the Regent Park community.
  
  Space requirement: 1,200-1,300s.f.
Other Organizations

- **Soundstreams**
  Soundstreams is a not-for-profit organization presenting new music, music by contemporary Canadian composers and international ensembles. Programming focuses on living composers and Soundstreams regularly commissions new works from Canadian and international composers for world premier adding some 155 works to the global repertoire since 1982. In addition to programming workshops, lectures and performances Soundstreams would develop its outreach and education work in the new the new arts and cultural centre.

  Space requirement: 1,200 -3,000s.f.

- **Dance Umbrella of Ontario (DUO)**
  DUO is a service organization that provides quality management and administrative support to professional dance artists in Ontario and actively works to facilitate their success. DUO has expressed an interest in expanding its role as a studio manager and programmer; in facilitating education and community outreach and in supporting dance and artists programs alongside providing training and mentorship opportunities.

  Space requirement: 1,600 -2,000s.f.

- **Korean Dance Studies Society of Canada (KDSSC)**
  KDSSC is dedicated to educating and training young people the rich Korean dance heritage, and to spreading awareness of traditional Korean dance among the Canadian public by staging dynamic performances and all over the world. KDSSC affiliates Miyoung Kim Dance Company and The School of Korean Dance and Drum. Miyoung Kim Dance Company is a professional dance company of KDSSC with professional dancers. The School of Korean Dance and Drum is running a Youth Program and a Pre-Professional Training Program.

  Space requirement: 1,000 – 2,000s.f.

Total Maximum space requirement (above) 9,900s.f.

In many cases potential Studio Operators also require administrative office space. They may therefore also become organizational tenants located in a managed workspace hub.
Managed workspace “hub”

10,000s.f. of the building will be leased to a not for profit organization to develop and operate as a managed workspace “hub”. The operator will provide managed 'shared' office space with a primary focus on arts and cultural organizations, creative media organizations, youth and individual creative entrepreneurs.

The workspace “hub” will offer:

- Individual office units of a range of sizes, desks and "hot desks"/"touchdown stations"
- Shared board/meeting room(s)
- Shared services and facilities & common areas

The workspace operator will be expected to:

- Build synergies, creative collaborations and a sense of community within the “hub” tenant community and between “hub” tenants, all tenants and the wider community
- Manage and provide centralized business services, room bookings etc.
- Create cost efficiencies for tenants through bulk ordering etc

The workspace “hub” will build on best practice in the development and operation of managed workspace exemplified in Toronto by 401 Richmond in the arts and cultural sector and the Centre for Social Innovation in the social entrepreneurship sector.

Potential “Hub” Tenants

Arts and cultural organizations responding to the REOI expressed considerable demand for affordable, secure office facilities. The majority also identified the need for additional meeting and /or Board room facilities and business services facilities and recognized the financial benefits of shared access to these sorts of facilities.

In total respondents to the REOI identified the need for over 23,000s.f. of administrative and related office space.

The workspace hub will provide facilities, if desired, for both Anchor Tenants and Studio Operators. In addition, Office and Administrative space was sought by a range of organizations, partnerships and individuals including:

- Regent Park Film Festival
- African Theatre Ensemble
- Rasik Arts
- My Little Story
- Shakespeare in Action
**Common space**

6,500s.f of the internal space will be allocated to common areas, mechanical / technical areas and on-site facility management offices.

This is expected to include:

- A publicly accessible lobby or reception area
- A public café with kitchen facilities
- Washrooms
- Dressing / changing rooms
- Green room
- Loading bay and facilities
- On-site facility management staff office
- Mechanical rooms
- Storage
MARKET ASSESSMENT
Market Assessment

Research undertaken through the Feasibility Study process indicates a growing and increasingly socially and economically diverse market for the proposed arts and cultural centre:

Un-met local demand
Evidence from community consultative and engagement processes over a number of years indicate a clear demand from within the local community for access to arts and cultural facilities and activities as outlined earlier in this report.

Locally based arts organizations also point to high levels of demand especially for participatory arts activities, education and training particularly (though by no means exclusively) for children and young people. For example;

- Dixon Hall Music School and Regent Park School of Music together serve over 400 children every week and both have extensive waiting lists.
- Art Heart Community Arts serves 500 people from the local communities, 350 of whom are children, and have identified the potential to extend their activity.
- Cabbage Town – Regent Park Museum is driven by the commitment of its local volunteer Board and workforce.
- Regent Park Focus Media Arts Centre has provided training to hundreds of culturally marginalized youth living in and around the community for over 17 years.

Re-integration of the Regent Park neighbourhood
Revitalization is predicated on the principle of re-integrating Regent Park with Toronto’s downtown east and the city as a whole.

- Focus groups and survey data conducted in 2006 concluded that residents in neighbouring communities would participate in events and use facilities in Regent Park.
- Lord Cultural Resources’ research on other Toronto cultural centres indicated that they attract audiences from both local, surrounding and city wide communities.
- Lord Cultural Resources’ research also indicates that culturally specific events and celebrations have the potential to attract audiences from some considerable distance.
- The creation of a new cultural, recreation and leisure destination at the heart of the revitalized Regent Park – including the arts and cultural centre, aquatic centre and park – will serve the wider and growing downtown east community.
Growing residential market
A large and increasing residential population creates a substantial residential market in Regent Park and the downtown east from which to draw:
- A 40% increase in the Regent Park neighbourhood over the course of the revitalization
- 5,800 new residential units developed by Waterfront Toronto in the West Donlands
- 7,100 new residential units developed by Waterfront Toronto in the East Bayfront

Diversifying residential market
The residential market within Regent Park and across the east downtown is diversifying due to the planned increase in market units in new developments:
- Over 5,000 new Regent Park residents occupying market housing predicted to be young adult singles, couples and some empty nesters – a strong potential market for arts, cultural and leisure activity.
- East Bayfront new residential units include 1,400 affordable rental units, the remaining 5,700 market units.
- West Donlands new residential units include 4,600 sold at market value.

Schools and Young People
Research by Lord Cultural Resources for the Phase I study indicated that children and young people, and their families will be a key market for the centre:
- Although changing demographics indicate that there will not be any net increase in the Youth Population, the area will remain home to a significant population of children and young people – currently 44% of the community is under 24 as compared to 29% of Toronto as a whole.
- 2,700 students are currently enrolled in schools within Regent Park. In addition to existing schools in neighbouring communities a new elementary school is also planned for the new West Donlands community.
- The key determinants for schools to attend field trips are the size of the student population, relationship to curriculum, student enjoyment and proximity.
- Evidence suggests that children brought as part of a field trip often convince their parents to take them again.
- Evidence from existing unmet demand for extra curricular arts education and participation within the community points to the existing commitment of Regent Park’s diverse community to providing a wide range of educational opportunities for their children.
PROJECT GOVERNANCE

Regent Park arts and cultural centre will be owned or held on a long-term lease by the Facility Operator to ensure its long-term viability. Whether in the short-term or long-term, the Facility Operator will need to leverage the asset to secure financing. It is very common in capital projects to receive charitable pledges that are collected over 5 to 10 years. Over the life of the building, it may also be necessary to borrow funds to complete capital upgrades. By having a secure position, the Facility Operator will be in a strong position to secure financing for these scenarios and ensure the long-term success of the project to partners and funders.

Governance and Community Stewardship

The governance model for the Regent Park arts and cultural centre has been designed to balance public interest, community engagement, risk and responsibility. An independent not-for-profit organization with strong ties to the arts community would be best placed to serve and protect the public interest this project represents. Placing this trust in the hands of an independent Facility Operator will help to ensure that the facility is managed professionally without being overly institutional or bureaucratic.

Toronto and other major urban centres have spawned intermediary organizations to manage multi-tenant arts buildings because many of the small organizations which populate them generally:

- lack the capacity to develop and manage real estate
- need an independent third party to manage their collective interest
- benefit from shared resources and services
- do not want or are unable to carry the legal and financial responsibility for facilities
- want assurance that their long-term interests are protected

While the tenants and users of the Regent Park arts and cultural centre may not have the capacity or interest in managing the building, they will have an important input on its design, operations, and the policies that govern it. The mechanisms to ensure community engagement and stewardship will evolve as the project progresses from design and construction to operations.
Community Advisory Committee and Community Association

The Facility Operator will be mandated to appoint and liaise with a Community Advisory Committee that includes representatives from the local and arts community. The Community Advisory Committee will be consulted on issues related to community engagement and tenant programming.

Prior to the projected completion of the project a formal Regent Park arts and cultural centre Community Association will be constituted. This group will advise the Facility Operator on facility policy and operations. It will be comprised of representatives that reflect the interests of the tenants and broader community. It may also play important roles in programming the facility, such as choosing which groups are granted free use of performance/exhibition space.

Development Partnership

During the design development and construction process, the project will be led by a Development Partnership comprised of:

Builder: The Daniels Corporation and Toronto Community Housing
The site will be donated by Toronto Community Housing. The facility will be built by The Daniels Corporation and Toronto Community Housing under contract to the Facility Operator.

Toronto Community Housing
Toronto Community Housing is the largest social housing provider in Canada and the second largest in North America. The Toronto Community Housing portfolio includes more than 360 high-rise and low-rise apartment buildings throughout the city. The mandate of Toronto Community Housing is to provide quality housing for low and moderate income households and to create community conditions that minimize risk and promote resiliency.

The Daniels Corporation
Founded in 1982, The Daniels Corporation has developed and built over 18,000 homes and apartments in a diverse range of award winning communities. The Daniels Corporation has
received numerous industry awards including the prestigious Highrise Builder of the Year Award by the Ontario New Home Warranty Program. Company founder and CEO John Daniels has been a leader in the North American building industry for the past 50 years.

City of Toronto
While not a City of Toronto owned or managed facility, the City of Toronto will continue to play a critical role in supporting the development of this facility.

Facility Operator: to be identified through RFP
The Facility Operator will be a not-for-profit organization with established capacity to develop and operate a facility of this size for the purpose of an arts and cultural centre.

The Facility Operator will own or lease the building and may or may not utilize space in the building for its own operations.

The Facility Operator will manage the large scale events and performance space and may also operate the workspace “hub”.

The Facility Operator will have the capacity and responsibility for raising significant capital funding to develop the building, either solely or in partnership.

- To be identified through a formal Request for Proposals to be released by Toronto Community Housing and The Daniels Corporation in spring 2009.

Anchor Tenants
Not-for-profit arts or cultural organization(s) who are leaseholders of and operate a substantial space within the building (4,000s.f. +).

- To be finalized through a formal Request for Proposals to be issued by the Facility Operator, once selected.
Taking the project forward
Building on extensive research and community consultation exercises which have informed the overall revitalization program Toronto Community Housing, The Daniels Corporation, Regent Park Neighbourhood Initiative and the City of Toronto have now completed a two-phase Feasibility Study and Implementation Strategy project funded by Canadian Heritage (Phase I) and The Daniels Corporation and Toronto Community Housing (Phase II, Implementation Strategy).

Drawing on the expertise of Lord Cultural Resources and Artscape a vision and viable business model for the project have been completed.

The identification by Toronto Community Housing and The Daniels Corporation of a prime site in the heart of Regent Park for the arts and cultural centre development creates a brief window of opportunity in which this long standing ambition for Toronto’s east downtown and long held aspiration of the Regent Park community can become a reality.

Toronto Community Housing’s exceptional offer to gift the land as the lead contribution to kick start this important project creates a once in a lifetime opportunity for the Regent Park neighbourhood, Toronto’s east downtown and the city as a whole.

Critical Next Steps
With a target for demolition and construction to commence in mid 2010 the critical next steps required to drive this project forward are:

- Presenting the Regent Park Arts and Cultural Centre Case for Support for preliminary consideration by provincial and federal governments
- Identifying pre-project development resources
- Issuing a Request for Proposals for and selecting a Facility Operator
- Negotiating and finalizing the Development Agreement
- Soliciting Funds from public and private sources
- Issuing a Request for Proposals for and selecting major arts and cultural centre tenants
- Establishing a Community Advisory Committee and implementing a local community communications strategy.

Critical Path
The provisional critical path to project completion is set out in the following section:
Endnotes

1 All data Lord Cultural Resources, 2008
2 Regent Park Social Development Plan, Toronto Community Housing, 2007
3 Canadian Creative City Network, www.creativecity.ca
4 www.culture.gov.uk
6 Cultural Mapping of Regent Park, Dixon Hall, 2007
7 Culture Plan for a Creative City, City of Toronto, 2003
8 Creative City Planning Framework, City of Toronto, 2008
9 Attached as Supporting Document
10 Dixon Hall temporarily withdrew from the Steering Group on submission of an Expression of Interest.
11 See full REOI document attached as Supporting Document
12 A summary of EOs is attached as a supporting document
13 As previously stated Toronto Community Housing will provide the land at a value of $9million as the lead contribution subject to additional partnership funding being identified and to planning approvals.