



1 October 2025

Xchanges Gallery and Studios

2333 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4P4

Dear Heidi Bergstrom, Board Chair

I write with enthusiasm about your bold vision for the future of a sustainable arts sector in our city through the creation and eventual management of a shared arts service hub at 722 Johnson Street.

With this letter I commit, on behalf of the Victoria Arts Council, that we will join your efforts on Johnson Street by subleasing a gallery space for our main exhibition program (that includes public lectures, educational workshops, and more), as well as an administrative office for our day-to-day operations. By your calculations this amounts to \$38,050 per annum (\$20 sq ft) to start.

This exciting venture puts the Victoria Arts Council back to a place of strength within the local arts ecology after having to forego our lease in Old Town last year due to continued increased rent, and by taking these next steps together, this reinforces our mandate of **connecting artists with audiences.**

Furthermore, as sister organizations with shared histories (having both established operations in the late 1960s), it is about time we come together to envision a prosperous and sustainable model for the future of arts, where community can congregate, learn, be challenged through, and appreciate art in an accessible, professional, and sustainable milieu.

I applaud you, and thank you for your partnership.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kegan McFadden", written over a horizontal line.

Kegan McFadden
Executive Director

VICTORIA ARTS COUNCIL
Traditional Territories of the lək'wəŋən-Speaking People
PO BOX 8453 Station Central | Victoria, BC V8W 3S1

Xchanges Gallery and Studios
2333 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4P4



Dear Heidi Bergstrom, Board Chair

With this letter I commit, on behalf of Flux Media Gallery, that we will sublease an administrative office space (155 sq ft) for our daily activities and gear storage, and a studio (233 sq ft) for our programming, which includes media art workshops, film screenings, community talks, and artist residencies. According to the rates provided the annual rent would equal \$7800 (\$20 sq ft). We would also like to express interest in use of the Flex Community Gallery Space for larger media art exhibitions and community events.

This venue will provide Flux Media Gallery with much needed stability after many years of frequent moves due to developments causing forced relocation and rent increases. Access to the Flex Community Gallery Space is also an exciting development, as we have not had a large dedicated gallery space in recent years.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this initiative.
With appreciation,

Marina Glassford (she/her)
Co-Executive Director, Flux Media Gallery



Xchanges Gallery and Studios
2333 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4P4

Dear Heidi Bergstrom, Board Chair

Congratulations on your pivotal role in vitalizing the art community in Victoria by taking the initiative in creating a community arts centre at 722 Johnson Street.

As Executive Director of the Vancouver Island School of Art (VISA), which is located at 733 Johnson St, directly across the street from 722 Johnson St, I am immensely excited to support this project in whatever way we can. VISA would like to start by committing to renting one studio space at a rate of \$20/sqft, @111 sq ft resulting in an annual rent of \$2,200 to be used for an Artist-in-Residence program facilitated by the school.

VISA would also love the opportunity to rent the Flex Community Gallery space for student-initiated community curatorial projects, Diploma of Fine Arts exhibitions, as well as presentations of the work of our artists-in-residence.

I started VISA over 20 years ago because I had a strong belief that artists can make a city better. Since its establishment, the school has been in four different locations from Rock Bay to the Quadra Village, to Downtown Victoria. VISA has been on Johnston St since 2021. It has been my dream to have a school located in the downtown area. I grew up in Montreal, a city that has three English post-secondary institutions and a Francophones one in the city's downtown. I have witnessed firsthand how having schools in the downtown section brings a special vitality to the city. I believe that the more arts organizations locating downtown, the better it is for the city.

Historically the arts have often played a critical role in revitalizing urban centres. With Xchanges, the Victoria Arts Council, and other arts organizations in the same area as the Vancouver Island School of Art, we will bring a new vitality to the arts in Victoria, but also to local businesses and the downtown area as whole by bringing more people to the heart of the city.

The Vancouver Island School is excited to support and to be part of this fantastic addition to downtown Victoria.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendy Welch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Wendy" being more prominent than the last name "Welch".

Wendy Welch, Executive Director

Vancouver Island School of Art, 302-733 Johnson St. V8V 1C7



Xchanges Gallery and Studios
2333 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4P4

4th November 2025

Dear Heidi,

I am writing to express my commitment to the inclusion of errant artSpace as part of the proposed arts hub at 722 Johnson Street, Victoria.

As you are aware, Richard Pawley and I have been passionate, dedicated and enthusiastic patrons of working artists for many years and have a rich history of managing successful gallery spaces and working studios in Victoria.

With this letter I give written commitment, on behalf of errant artSpace, to sub-lease gallery and studio spaces at 722 Johnson Street. This will provide a venue for our main exhibition program, in addition to studio work spaces for artists aligned to the errant Collective.

At our previous location, the facility consisted of seven studios at varying price points which ranged from 115 to 230 sq ft, attached to a dedicated gallery space exhibiting a monthly rotation of diverse creative work by professional artists.

This is an exciting venture and provides an opportunity to honour the legacy of Richard's work and desire to provide affordable and accessible creative spaces, in tandem with the continuation of errant artSpace as a contributing member to a growing downtown vibrant arts community.

Thank you for all the work you are doing to develop this invaluable and much needed arts initiative in Victoria, and I am delighted to commit to both the long term rental of the identified space under the terms agreed, and to continue to provide support for this project's successful development in whatever way necessary.

Sincerely,

Sue McArthur, Manager, errant artSpace.
Phone: 250-217-0048
Mailing Address: 480 Victoria Avenue, Victoria BC V8S4M6
email: errantartspace@shaw.ca
Web: errantSpace.com
Instagram : [@errantartspace](https://www.instagram.com/errantartspace)
Facebook: [facebook.com/errantartspaceace](https://www.facebook.com/errantartspaceace)



SUDDENLY DANCE THEATRE

P . O . B o x 8 1 8 4
Victoria, British Columbia
C a n a d a V 8 W 3 R 8
Tel: (250) 389 - 6059
E: info@suddenlydance.ca
www.suddenlydance.ca

Board of Directors:

Maleea Acker
M. A. Garcia Barrera
Christine Fletcher
Glen Peers
Dennett Woodland

Artistic co-Directors

David Ferguson
Miles Lowry

"The purposes of the Society are: To educate and provide opportunities for dancers and choreographers to improve in their craft; and, To educate and increase the public's understanding and appreciation of dance by providing performances of an artistic nature in public places."

To:
Heidi Bergstrom, Board Chair
Xchanges Gallery and Studios
2333 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4P4

Kegan McFadden, Executive Director
Victoria Arts Council
Curator, Pat Martin Bates Gallery
670 Fort Street, V8W 3V2

Re: **Letter of Commitment**
Project: **722 Johnson Street - Office Rental**
From: **Suddenly Dance Theatre Society**
Rep: **David Ferguson**

Date: Nov 1, 2025

Dear Heidi and Kegan,

I am writing this Letter of Commitment on behalf of Suddenly Dance Theatre Society to become a full-time renter at your new 722 Johnson Street venue.

The opportunity of renting an office at 722 Johnson Street is timely: In late 2023, we had to move out of our office at Dance Victoria for their expanding administration. This office was small but served as an important work place, storage, and archive. While we continue to rehearse at DV, the loss of office has created administrative upheaval. In search of solution, in 2025 we received support from the Victoria Foundation to re-establish an office space.

We are excited that 722 Johnson Street will solve our need for a permanent administrative hub, especially as it is close to many of our performance venues downtown.

As presenters of dance-media, we are inspired at the possibilities of having access to the Flex Community Gallery Space, which will support workshops for our Fountain of Youth Program; video presentations from our local and international collaborators; and networking for artists. The shared Boardroom is another beneficial amenity, as it will allow us to host meetings once again in the privacy and neutrality of a workspace.

Suddenly Dance Theatre will rent 1 office space (of 155-173 sqft) at a rate of \$20/sqft resulting in an annual rent of approximately \$3100-\$3500.

As a 'Home for Dance', this new office and access to space will allow our charitable non-profit to continue to achieve its mandate and vision. This essential new space will sustain artists, administrators, designers, editors - a whole web of creative professionals - for years to come. As a reliable company known for working locally and internationally in a variety of media for 33 years, we feel we can contribute to a collective community spirit.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need more information. For more about the company, please visit www.suddenlydance.ca

David Ferguson
Artistic co- Director
Suddenly Dance Theatre Society



December 7, 2025

Xchanges Gallery and Studios
2333 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4P4
Heidi Bergstrom, Board Chair
Re: Victoria Arts Sustainability Coalition

Dear Heidi,

On behalf of the Victoria Downtown Residents Association (VDRA), I am writing this letter in support of your application for a Cultural Infrastructure Grant from the City of Victoria. James Davis, Executive Director of the VDRA, and I were so pleased to have the opportunity to tour the site at 722 Johnson Street and to hear about the exciting plans you have for creating a cultural space in the heart of our neighbourhood. This clearly aligns with our own vision of "a sustainable, inclusive and diverse Downtown Victoria where all residents feel welcomed, valued and connected with their neighbours."

The ongoing revitalization of the 700 block of Johnson is a positive development for Downtown. Your proposed operation at 722 Johnson will help to enliven the block by bringing people there weekly. It will provide desperately needed affordable space for creatives to work and will result in positive ripple effects both for local businesses and residents. We are especially pleased with your proposal for cultural and educational initiatives in the space and look forward to participating in those events.

Please keep us in the loop as your plans firm up. We look forward to opportunities for collaboration in the future.

Regards,

Sandra Severs
President
Victoria Downtown Residents Association



February 27, 2024

TO: Victoria Foundation attn: Investment Team

Dear Members of the Victoria Foundation,

We would like to share our enthusiasm at the prospect of a Johnson Street Arts Hub receiving support from the Victoria Foundation.

The Odd Fellows of Victoria have occupied the corner of Johnson and Douglas streets since the late 1800s and are a continued part of the Victoria community. We pride ourselves on being good landlords to our four commercial tenants and good neighbours to our fellow Victorians, be it through volunteering at community events or handing out hot meals in the neighbourhood.

A core Odd Fellows tenet is to “educate the orphan” which in our modern day times translates to activities like raising money for youth dance teams and school computers or offering educational bursaries to young adults. A robust arts community benefits all ages and facilitates more positive activity downtown for families and youth.

We are in the process of finding a new tenant for our current vacancy and appreciate the challenges that come with empty storefronts. Having an engaged, vibrant and community-minded group added to the street will uplift the area and fill a need for additional arts capacity in the City of Victoria. We appreciate that there are many asks of the Foundation's resources but this investment will support both downtown vitality and our local arts community.

Please help the corner of Johnson and Douglas Street to become an attractive hub that people will want to visit through the day and evening.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tara Zajac on behalf of
Odd Fellows of Victoria, Board of the Union
1315 Douglas Street
oddfellowsBOU@gmail.com

February 28, 2025

Re: Support for Victoria Arts Sustainability Coalition

To whom it may concern,

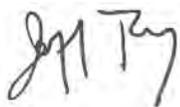
I am writing in support of the Victoria Arts Sustainability Coalition and their proposal to create a multifunctional space for practicing artists. The proposal would allow many different artists with varying disciplines to share expenses, optimizing their limited funding. As rents have increased, many small and medium-sized arts organizations have faced uncertainty and lack of stability, along with fewer spaces that suit the needs of the organizations. This has led to burnout, fatigue, anxiety, and declining participation; a terrible situation as the arts are essential to the well-being of a community.

As noted by the Coalition, the City plan includes an ‘Arts and Innovation District’, but has not identified or provided space for small to medium artist-run organizations. If physical infrastructure exists, allowing groups to work on their craft instead of fighting to pay multiple and varying leases, the arts community will have considerably more capital to invest in beautification, in supporting diverse productions, and in building a more equitable community where a wide range of voices are heard. The Coalition’s suggestion – to purchase a building within this area where many different arts organizations can collaborate and reduce overhead costs – is a plan which would largely address this growing issue of space for artists to create.

The Coalition plans to work together once this space is identified and secured to acquire alternative sources of funding, and the various groups have committed to investing a portion of their current rents into a legacy fund with the Victoria Foundation. Most of the groups within the Coalition are well-established arts organizations who have already contributed greatly to Victoria’s cultural development; this plan would ensure that they are able to do so well into the future, and to bring emerging groups on board as time goes on.

I believe their arts hub proposal is a clever approach to an ongoing issue, and that it will provide great value to the wider community. Please do consider their application seriously.

Sincerely,



Jeff Bray
DVBA CEO

December 16, 2025

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Re: Support for Victoria Arts Sustainability Coalition

Dear Mayor Alto and Council,

On behalf of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our support for revitalizing areas of the city that help support businesses and add vibrancy to our community. The Victoria Sustainability Arts Coalition hopes to attract much needed investment by revitalizing 722 Johnson St. to create multifunctional space.

The Coalition's proposal for a grand arts space will uplift the entire block and benefit neighbouring businesses by drawing people to that area. The plan is for the facility to include presentation space as well as classrooms, studios, production suites and public galleries. These creative enterprises will add life to this area and help make the block safer for all.

Since our founding in 1863, The Chamber has supported arts and culture in the City of Victoria as a key element for attracting investment and encouraging working families and entrepreneurs to choose our region to make their home.

Thank you for your consideration of the proposal from Victoria Sustainability Arts Coalition, a member in good standing with The Chamber, to invest in needed renovations that will lead to further business growth downtown.

Sincerely,



John Wilson
CEO, Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce



AVI.org

where harm reduction works

21st November 2025

To Whom It May Concern

On behalf of AVI Health and Community Services Society (AVI), I am happy to offer our enthusiastic support for the Victoria Arts Sustainability Coalition's initiative to revitalise 722 Johnson Street as a dynamic destination for cultural activity in Victoria.

AVI has been a long-time resident of the 700 block of Johnson St, first moving into 733 in 1991. We moved back to the block in 2010 after purchasing and renovating 713 Johnson in partnership with the Cool Aid Society. Along with more than 200 AVI and Cool Aid staff, the Access Health Centre also houses an Island Health outreach team.

We recognise the immense value that the collaborative efforts of VAC, Xchanges Gallery, MediaNet, Vancouver Island School of Art, Suddenly Dance, and Errant Art Space will bring to our city. The vision for transforming over 13,000 square feet across two floors into public art galleries, production studios, community workshops, classrooms, and specialised creative facilities speaks deeply to our own commitment to fostering health, well-being, and community engagement.

We are especially encouraged to see that this project will unite multiple organisations with decades-long roots in Victoria, and that it has already received strong positive feedback from both the Victoria Downtown Neighbourhood Association and the Downtown Victoria Business Association. The potential for this space to bring added community connections to Johnson Street aligns closely with our values at AVI.

AVI has a long history of working in partnership with the arts community. We recognise that the arts play a crucial role in strengthening the fabric of our community, offering opportunities for education and expression. By providing accessible venues for creativity and collaboration, this coalition's work will enrich the lives of countless residents and visitors alike.

As a direct neighbour of the project, AVI is proud to stand alongside and offer support of this endeavour. We hope our endorsement will help demonstrate to funders and decision-makers the appeal and lasting benefit of this project for Victoria's future.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can be of further assistance,

Kind regards,

Katrina Jensen

Executive Director, AVI Health and Community Services Society

3rd Floor - Access Health Centre, 713 Johnson St, Victoria BC V8W 1M8

Phone: 250-384-2366 | Fax: 250-380-9411 | Toll-free: 1-800-665-2437

Email: info@avi.org | www.avi.org



THE VICIOUS POODLE

726 Johnson Street Victoria, BC V8W 1N1 250.388.5975
www.viciouspoodle.com info@viciouspoodle.com

21/11/2025

Re: Support for Victoria Arts Sustainability Coalition

To whom it may concern,

I am the owner of The Vicious Poodle on Johnson Street. In 2020 we opened as pioneers on a very difficult block in Victoria. Over the years since, the 700 block on Johnson remains underdeveloped. Many storefronts are vacant and there are stretches of the block with no possibility of life on the street; the parkade, the backside of the Odeon theatre. 722 Johnson Street, right next door, has been vacant since we opened and the mirrored storefront might as well be a brick wall. We have often felt alone policing activity on the street and adding vitality.

With this in mind, I am writing with enthusiasm to support the Victoria Sustainability Arts Coalition in their effort to add to the revitalization of this block through arts and culture by renovating 722 Johnson Street into a grand arts space.

The Vicious Poodle regularly supports performing arts as a venue for drag and other performances and provides a platform for local arts entrepreneurs through our pop-up seasonal markets. We have even partnered with Victoria Arts Council on a special presentation of video art by HIV+ artists for World AIDS Day last December. I look forward to future cross-over opportunities with the Coalition once they are in place and creating a desperately needed arts centre of gravity in Victoria.

The Victoria Arts Sustainability Coalition's proposal to create a multifunctional space for arts education, production, and presentation that encompasses community classrooms, studios, production suites, and public galleries will add a real incentive for Victorians to visit downtown. The downtown has never fully recovered from Covid and this seems an excellent use of funds to add a unique draw to the city's core. More life on the street is truly the only way to create a safer and more vibrant downtown; a council priority.

I write this letter to encourage the City Council to approve the full request of funding from the Cultural Infrastructure Grant program so that the needed renovations can take place, recognizing the arts are essential to the well-being of a community.

Sincerely,

Socrates Diamant