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—
Chair

Ms. Julie Dabrusin

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• (0850)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC)): I'm going to call the meeting to order.

We have four witnesses in each frame, which will be tight, and I'm told that there was a pre-arrangement for seven-minute rounds for the witnesses. That will be extraordinarily short.

We have with us New Dawn Enterprises, with Erika Shea; Quartier des Spectacles Partnership, with Pierre Fortin and Jacques Primeau; Music Canada, with Amy Terrill; and Akin, with Oliver Pauk and Michael Vickers.

We will start with New Dawn Enterprises and Ms. Shea.

Ms. Erika Shea (Vice-President, Development, New Dawn Enterprises): Thank you for the invitation to be here today.

New Dawn was founded in 1976. Through its work in a number of sectors, it's focused on creating a vibrant, self-reliant Unama'ki/Cape Breton Island.

The Cape Breton Centre for Arts and Culture, a cultural hub in industrial Cape Breton, is still in the process of becoming. With the support of the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada, New Dawn began restoring a 40,000-square-foot 130-year-old convent in September 2017. The centre, which will focus primarily on the provision of affordable workspaces for artists, is set to open in May of 2019.

As I thought about what I wanted to share with you today, I settled on three facets of our journey over the last five years as they relate to the work of Canadian Heritage: first, the importance of investing in the creation of cultural hubs in non-metropolitan communities; second, the efficacy and professionalism of Canadian Heritage staff from the perspective of a non-profit organization; and third, as has been highlighted by several other recent witnesses, the importance of operational funding.

Our experiences in bringing the Cape Breton Centre for Arts and Culture to life are very much rooted in the place in which they have unfolded, an Atlantic Canadian community that has struggled for the past four decades to reinvent itself after the rapid decline of its primary industries: coal and steel. This historical context is important. It continues to influence the lives we live in Cape Breton today, and it connects us to, rather than separates us from, many other communities in Canada.

The creation of a sizable cultural hub against this backdrop is transformational. It is a project that stands out today in Sydney, and one that will stand out for years to come, for a number of reasons.

The Cape Breton Centre for Arts and Culture is the largest investment in downtown Sydney in the last eight years. It will open in an area largely characterized by empty buildings, for sale signs, and deteriorating public infrastructure. It will offer people a reason to come back to our downtown and will offer our downtown a critical mass of people to shop at its shops and dine in its restaurants. It will also, as it already has, give people in the community something to be hopeful for, to take as tangible evidence of the corner that many of us are longing to turn.

Bringing the Centre for Arts and Culture to life in this context has meant having to do so with the support of two levels of government, rather than three. In 2018-19, our municipality will repair only one of 60 local roads, will spend less this year than last on street lights, recreation, parks, buildings, and libraries, and has had to turn down more than \$3 million in requests for capital investments from community organizations. To say that our municipality is poor would be an understatement.

Your investments in non-metropolitan communities and economically struggling communities are transformational.

I will note that making these kinds of investments will require ongoing sensitivity to the differences that will arise in bringing these kinds of cultural hubs to life. Arts organizations in these communities may look different: they may not be as big; they may not be as long-standing; and they may not be as well-resourced as organizations in larger cities. I say this knowing that the struggle for resources typifies this sector all across the country.

Cultural hubs themselves may also look very different in these communities. They may have to make space for volunteer-run arts organizations alongside professional arts organizations. They may have to be multi-use spaces where a critical mass of users in the arts sector does not yet exist to fill the cultural hubs. They will likely and perhaps almost exclusively have to be able to provide affordable spaces to artists as defined in relation to the local market and income levels of artists. Local governments, despite their strong philosophical support, may not be able to come to the table with financial resources of any kind. These governments, as was the case with ours, may be struggling to meet even their most basic infrastructure obligations.

Cape Breton has a long history of artistic excellence, and many on the island are committed to reinvention through these means.

My two next comments on the efficacy and professionalism of Canadian Heritage staff and the importance of operational funding will be brief.

As a non-profit organization, it has been incredibly uplifting to work with a department that is professional, efficient, and empowering. This has been our experience with Canadian Heritage staff. From the outset, it has been our sense that they believe—beyond the rhetoric—in the importance of cultural hubs. They have remained focused on the end goal and have been flexible, reasonable, and committed advocates as we've worked through the challenges that are inevitable in a project of this size.

I will close by underlining the importance of operational funds for cultural hubs. For us, our objective remains: creating affordable spaces for artists to work in.

The operational costs of a centre providing affordable space to artists are no less than the operational costs of a building providing space to entrepreneurs or lawyers or the civil service. We have done our best to create and refine a strong and sustainable operational plan for our centre, but even modest periodic supports are helpful in easing the tension between the competing pressures in such a case: the pressure to keep the cost of space as low as possible and the pressure to provide a warm, safe, comfortable, and accessible environment in which to work.

Thank you.

●(0855)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much.

At the clerk's request, we're going to switch up the order for technological reasons. We're going to move to Akin, with Oliver Pauk and Michael Vickers.

Mr. Michael Vickers (Co-Director, Akin): Hello, everyone. I'm Michael Vickers and I'm here with Oliver Pauk.

Thank you very much for the invitation to be here to speak today. As co-directors of the arts organization Akin, we'll provide a brief history and explanation of our model, followed by a series of recommendations centred around support through policy changes rather than requests for funding. Additional details can be found in our brief, and we'd love to meet with you individually to expand on any of our ideas.

Akin was founded 10 years ago by a group of artist friends in a modest 600-square-foot loft in Toronto. Still entirely artist-run, Akin is now the largest provider of affordable studio space in Canada, providing nearly 35,000 square feet of space to over 300 creators of all types across eight locations in the Toronto area, along with a year-long calendar of roughly 60 free or low-cost programs across three streams: professional development opportunities for practising artists, creative workshops and programs, and community engagement projects with marginalized groups.

We've doubled lease space and renters in the last 18 months due to an acute need for affordable space and supportive programs, and we function without any operational funding. Studio affordability is maintained by negotiating short and medium rental durations in properties transitioning into redevelopment. Our leases have ranged from six months to 10 years. Landlords and developers lease their properties to us on favourable terms before development can begin, enabling Akin to create social and economic value from buildings that would otherwise sit vacant. In many instances, our members are newcomers to Canada as well as young businesses operating in the cultural realm.

We pursue two often overlooked realities of real estate development in our country. Firstly, there comes a time in every building's life when the need for rehabilitation or redevelopment drives leasing rates down to levels that creative or social enterprises can afford. Secondly, the interval between the decision to redevelop and the actual start of construction often takes three to five years or more. The Akin model is beneficial not only for artists but also for property owners and developers, neighbourhoods, and Toronto's prosperity and quality of life.

In short, we have a formula that works: discounted interim real estate, plus refurbishment for artists, plus management, maintenance, and programming and professional opportunities equals inspiring affordable space for artists and vulnerable groups otherwise priced out of workspace, and the creation of supportive, creative, thriving, and interesting communities. One example is Akin's King Street studios, which operate in a beautiful heritage building owned by Allied Properties REIT, one of the country's largest property owners. It's being leased to us in Toronto's expensive entertainment district at far below market rent so that Akin can provide studios to over 100 artists in this in-between period before the site is developed.

As a different example, we do not only occupy buildings at the end of their life cycle. Akin's newest location will inhabit half of the fourth floor of the Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto, creating affordable space for 25 artists in an important cultural neighbourhood from which many artists have recently been forced out by way of rising rents.

Mr. Oliver Pauk (Co-Director, Akin): How can cultural hubs and organizations such as Akin be supported at the federal level? By changing the rules and focusing on leasing incentives, questioning tax benefits, and facilitating access to unused government-owned property.

We have three suggestions for serious consideration.

The first is “meanwhile leases”. In the U.K., a government-led initiative of meanwhile leases has been promoted since 2009. These are leases of dormant commercial spaces that accommodate non-profit renters at cost, in return for significant property tax breaks or other considerations to the owners. In the U.K., non-profit users typically do not pay rent at all and are simply responsible for covering the cost of utilities and any improvements to the space. This creates more available space for artists, creatives, and entrepreneurs and also a reward for developers, building owners, and realtors: to have their buildings utilized and activated. Both sides benefit and are incentivized.

Secondly, we would like to address the recent development of a “creative co-location property tax” subclass being rolled out across Ontario. We recognize that this change is a step in the right direction, but fewer than 20 buildings in Toronto actually will qualify for the 50% tax break to property owners, which is not passed down—nor does it directly benefit—the actual creative class itself. Additional barriers include requirements such as the necessity of a minimum of 10,000 square feet of space or a list of more than 40 tenants, as well as an undefined below-market rent. Could a new tax subclass be developed at the federal level that attaches the funding and financial assistance not only to building owners and landlords but to their tenants, as in the U.K.?

Thirdly, we would like to advocate for the government to facilitate more effective processes for the use of vacant government-owned property through the below-market rent policy. The current rules in Toronto make it more difficult than ever for non-profits to access these spaces, including mystery around which spaces are in fact available. Like many others, as a non-profit affiliated with a for-profit, we are automatically barred from access. Even before this, it was nearly impossible for small non-profits to be considered for city-owned properties.

As an example, there is a condo building at 61 Heintzman Street in Toronto that created a city-administered rental space as part of a section 37 agreement mandating that the space would be used to benefit the local community. What happened instead was that a storefront space was created and sat dormant and unused for five years, and, after Akin was deemed ineligible by the city's legal department, it has continued to sit vacant for an additional two years, completely unused. New regulations created at the federal level could require more concrete, useful awarding of budget and space from developments to artists or community groups. City staff could work to facilitate the communication and successful usage of these types of spaces so as not to squander the opportunities they offer.

Finally, there is a lack of cultural policy to support these initiatives and a need for more gatherings with the purpose of sharing information on this subject. Government should help bring organizations in this field together and facilitate sharing of

knowledge and the building of community at local, provincial, and national levels.

We ask for revisions of current legislation to enable Akin not only to flourish in the arts, but to assist individuals and groups across a broader spectrum and to protect, assist, and foster cultural hubs and districts across Canada.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here today.

● (0900)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much.

We'll now move on to Music Canada, with Amy Terrill, who I suspect will come back for a repeat performance when we do our copyright review.

Ms. Amy Terrill (Executive Vice-President, Music Canada): I hope so, given the opportunity.

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I'd like to commend you on your study, as currently this is a really active topic of conversation across the country.

My interest stems from my work on “music cities”, which we began at Music Canada in 2011. We define a music city as “a municipality of any size that has a vibrant music economy which is intentionally supported and promoted”. Since 2014, I've led our study of over 30 cities around the world and have become one of the world's leading thinkers on the topic. I've advised cities on every continent and have spoken at countless events. I'm an active member of music city committees in Toronto and Vancouver.

Music Canada published a road map for the development of a music city in 2015. Since then, about a dozen Canadian cities or regions have taken up that road map as well as other independent work and have begun to develop music strategies, including most recently Ottawa, which released a strategy two weeks ago.

One of the most important components of a music city is the availability of spaces and places for rehearsal, recording, and performance, as well as education. It's also likely the top issue identified in Canadian communities.

Some of the common concerns that arise in public surveys and focus groups relating to music are as follows. The first is the lack of affordable rehearsal spaces and live-work spaces, and really the affordability of housing in general. The second is the pressure on small grassroots venues, as well as affordability pressures and the pressures that come from mixed-use areas, with venue closures creating gaps in what we call the “venue ladder”, which is needed to adequately incubate artists. Third, heavy red tape has often been cited as a concern. The fourth is the need for greater audience engagement. Fifth, there is a need for greater opportunities to collaborate and to connect with other professionals, both within music and across the cultural sectors.

Creative hubs in cultural districts can respond in their own ways to these community-identified needs and in so doing can accomplish larger policy, economic, and cultural goals. In our music city investigation, we've identified three typical formats for creative hubs.

There are hubs that are artist-centric, with recording facilities, rehearsal and performance spaces, workshops, and access to the professional services of lawyers and accountants, for instance; hubs that are music business incubators, like you might see for other industries, providing hot desks, networking events, business development, support and training; or, some combination of the two. There are examples in each of those formats. Cultural districts, on the other hand, allow municipalities in particular the flexibility to design rules and regulations that can be used to nurture creative activities in organizations in a set geographic area.

Both of these tools are ultimately about creating spaces and places for cultural uses. As you consider this topic and how best the federal government can support them, there are two things I'd like you to consider.

Number one, music spaces are sometimes not what you might expect. A large portion are not buildings specifically built for a music purpose. Likely half of the inventory is made up of multi-use repurposed or unused spaces: bars, restaurants, coffee shops, libraries, retail spaces, microbreweries, and repurposed industrial properties, to name just a few. A recent economic impact study done in the province of B.C. will soon be released, and indeed, half of the music spaces in the province were not originally identified as music venues. In large cities and small towns, places for musical creation and performance are emerging from unique raw materials. Similarly, creative hubs do not fit a tight definition. I encourage you to think in broad terms about what qualifies as a creative hub.

Second, this network of cultural spaces is composed of a mix of for-profit and not-for-profit, and both are critical for the sustenance of our cultural sector. The same artists—I'm speaking specifically here of music—who perform at not-for-profit venues also perform at for-profit venues. It really makes no difference to the artist.

Our cultural districts are also made up of this mix. Commercial entities—as an example, music venues and music studios—are important tenants in cultural districts and struggle with some of the same challenges facing their non-profit cousins, but typically do not qualify for federal funding programs. Federal funding for non-profit—let me be clear—is really important, so I'm not suggesting diverting in any way.

● (0905)

Let me give you an example. Queen Street West was mentioned in the department's testimony. One of Queen West's most iconic and longest-serving operators, the Horseshoe Tavern, is only able to maintain its space thanks to the generosity of the building's owners. Should the landlords choose to charge market rent, the Horseshoe Tavern could not remain in that space.

Other jurisdictions have recognized the important contributions of the commercial sector and that they too face affordability pressures and heightened demands from nearby residents—for instance, to mitigate sound—and they have made loans or grants available to venues to upgrade their facilities or to acquire specialized equipment. This is something that could be considered in an enhanced funding program.

I applaud you for your study. I commend all of my fellow presenters. I'm learning a lot here this morning. Thank you. I look forward to expanding on this in the Qs and As.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much, Ms. Terrill.

[*Translation*]

We will now hear from Mr. Pierre Fortin and Mr. Jacques Primeau, from the Quartier des spectacles partnership.

Mr. Jacques Primeau (Chair, Quartier des Spectacles Partnership): Good morning. I am Jacques Primeau, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Quartier des spectacles Partnership. I am accompanied by Mr. Pierre Fortin, who is our Executive Director.

We thank you for having accepted the brief we tabled, and for this opportunity to submit a few potential avenues for reflexion.

The Quartier des spectacles de Montréal has now become a world-class cultural hub. It was born about 20 years ago from a desire to build a cultural, new-generation space to support a variety of cultural and civic events. It was built thanks to the concerted action of dynamic cultural actors in the downtown area, and thanks to the support of the City of Montreal and the governments of Canada and Quebec. More than \$200 million was invested in the public spaces, for instance.

A quarter of all show tickets sold in Quebec are sold in the Quartier des spectacles. That means more than 1.5 million performance tickets, in one of the most concentrated cultural spaces in North America. In this neighbourhood, there are multiple summer festivals, in seven public areas. One obvious example is the Festival international de Jazz de Montréal, but there are also around 40 other festivals that take place in these public spaces, and they remain active throughout the year.

It is the partnership's responsibility to bring about a dynamic balance between the residents, the retailers, the business community and the cultural actors, all of whom benefit from the increased foot traffic generated by this cultural crossroads. The challenge consists in maintaining the residents' quality of life despite all of this effervescent activity.

Public investments in the Quartier des spectacles have also attracted private real estate projects. Over the past 10 years, these projects generated economic real estate spinoffs of more than \$2.2 billion.

This development has created major pressure on real estate values and on the cost of establishing households and cultural organizations in the area. Ultimately, if nothing is done, the Quartier des spectacles could become an unaffordable area for many of its creators and its most dynamic venues.

The additional number of visitors drawn to the downtown area by the cultural crossroads that is the Quartier des spectacles benefits all of the economic actors of the metropolis, and that regularly raises questions about the equitable sharing of costs and benefits.

• (0910)

Mr. Pierre Fortin (Executive Director, Quartier des Spectacles Partnership): There are other challenges, such as the challenge of producing French-language cultural performances or events, an issue that affects Montreal particularly.

Over the past 10 years, we have seen the emergence of cultural hubs on the periphery of Montreal. Several production and outreach activities left the downtown core and migrated toward the suburbs and these new hubs. This move runs the risk of eroding francophone production, as these peripheral hubs do not have a sufficient critical mass, and don't have enough synergy to sustain the type of production and the scope of activities that is made possible by the central location of the Quartier des spectacles.

The Global Cultural Districts Network was created in 2013. It is a group of cultural neighbourhoods in the great cities of the world and the partnership has been a member from the beginning. The GCDN sponsors research on topics such as the development and animation of public spaces, or governance models in cultural neighbourhoods. It also funds an international network of public artwork exchanges between neighbourhoods, which allowed the *Impulse* installation, which is normally located in the Quartier des spectacles, to travel to about 10 cities throughout the world since 2016.

It would be interesting if the Canadian cultural hubs could get together in a network like the GCDN. The Government of Canada could be a catalyst by actively supporting the creation and operation of such a network.

The dynamism of a cultural hub is not only of benefit to the city it is in. The Montreal example is interesting in that regard; the metropolis benefits from the influx of talents and the expertise of the regions, while serving as a showcase and springboard for the creativity and innovation of those same regions.

The expertise we have acquired over the past years allows us to better define the many contributions culture makes to the vitality of cities and to their international outreach. The main challenge is twofold: we must allow the city to act as an incubator and as a space where all forms of culture can be expressed, while optimizing the very important contribution culture makes to the city and to Canada's presence abroad.

That is why the partnership is very favourable to your committee's initiative and hopes to make a positive contribution to it. We make eight recommendations in our brief, and I invite you to read them. I will mention them briefly here.

Mr. Jacques Primeau: First of all, we must recognize the importance of cultural hubs and neighbourhoods, and we need public policies and mechanisms for financial or fiscal support.

• (0915)

Mr. Pierre Fortin: Secondly, we recommend that a process be put in place to add to the knowledge we have, and to plan research on cultural hubs and neighbourhoods.

Mr. Jacques Primeau: Next, we recommend that a program be developed and put in place to encourage creators, artists and cultural dissemination spaces to remain in the cultural neighbourhoods and hubs.

Mr. Pierre Fortin: In addition, we recommend that there be specific measures to encourage affordable housing in the cultural hubs and neighbourhoods.

Mr. Jacques Primeau: In fifth place, we recommend that you actively support the creation of a Canadian network of cultural hubs and neighbourhoods, and that you support the exchange of works and expertise, as well as innovation.

Mr. Pierre Fortin: We also recommend that you develop and implement a program to increase the international outreach of the cultural hubs and neighbourhoods of Canadian cities.

Mr. Jacques Primeau: Our seventh recommendation is to put in place financial and fiscal measures to support innovation in the animation, use and development of urban cultural spaces.

Mr. Pierre Fortin: Our eighth and last recommendation is that you take note of the analyses carried out by the Partenariat sur la gestion et la mutualisation des risques, the partnership on management and risk-sharing, concerning the risks involved in the funding of venues and producers.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much for your presentation.

[English]

We will now go to the rounds where we get to ask questions, which you'll find are also incredibly short. Each is seven minutes, and we will have four sets, switching between parties.

The first seven minutes are for the Liberals. We will begin with Mr. Hogg.

Mr. Gordie Hogg (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Thank you.

A number of you have made reference to both business and non-profits and looking at ways in which the government can assist you, whether it's reducing taxation or assisting with other types of relief. Are there references between non-profits and business...? Are there other models around the world that we might learn from that would address some of those concerns?

What I'm thinking of is that in England they have community interest corporations and different models for blending non-profit and business models. Have those been explored? Do you have anything you could advise us on around how that might assist and support your projects' programs as well as cultural hubs?

Mr. Oliver Pauk: I don't have any specific examples, but in terms of structures that might be of interest, co-ops could be worth investigating more. That's something we've started to do on our end very recently.

Ms. Amy Terrill: We're seeing in music that because of the pressure on grassroots venues in particular it's become a topic of great concern around the world. It's primarily because of the growing residential component within downtowns, which is putting pressure on music venues in particular.

We're starting to see some programs, in Sydney, Australia, for instance, and in Austin, Texas, through which they've made public funds available for sound mitigation in particular so that there are fewer complaints. There's a public service component of that, but it's also to sustain those venues so they can remain in place. That's something we've seen both in grants and in non-interest loans.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Fortin: The Quartier des spectacles Partnership is a non-profit organization. However, its board of directors is made up of representatives from institutions, but also of owners of venues and festivals, which are for the most part for-profit organizations.

There are various partnership models all over the planet. The study done by the Global Cultural Districts Network on the governance of cultural hubs in the world is rife with information on this subject. I invite you to read it. We have appended it to our file.

[English]

Ms. Erika Shea: We've recently introduced community interest corporations in Nova Scotia so an entity can incorporate in that way. I think it remains to be seen how provincial and municipal governments are going to interpret that structure and how flexible and innovative they'll be in opening up different tax concessions and, typically, non-profit-oriented funding programs to those new entities.

Mr. Gordie Hogg: What is your expectation when you look at that and as you understand the legislation in Nova Scotia, which is relatively new? Have there been many experiences with it? Do you see some opportunity or potential with respect to them?

Ms. Erika Shea: My sense is that at the provincial level there is a great deal of interest in and optimism about the possibility of bringing together the ability to generate a profit and the mandate to have positive social community impact.

Speaking from the perspective of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, where we work, I would say that the conversations around any type of tax concession for a for-profit or not-for-profit entity are incredibly constrained because of the economic circumstances in the community. I think that certainly in the CBRM it's not going to make much of a difference in supporting cultural hubs or the creation of cultural districts.

• (0920)

Mr. Gordie Hogg: Is there a role that you see the federal government being able to play within that framework?

Ms. Erika Shea: Within the framework of the CICs, nothing comes to mind.

Mr. Gordie Hogg: Thank you.

There have been references to them as hubs and/or districts. Is there a meaningful difference between "hub" and "district"? Is there something tangible or is it just two words being used to reflect the same entity?

Ms. Amy Terrill: I see a distinction. A cultural hub tends to be multi-tenancy specific and something that's not necessarily within four walls. It might have multiple buildings, but it tends to be under one governance structure, and there would be programming within that hub. The cultural district is more a geographic area and so would have multiple entities and organizations, with a mix of for-profit and non-profit but all within a district.

In music, of course, we deal with a lot of municipal regulations. There are, for instance, noise bylaws, etc., and a municipality can designate specific regulations and bylaws just for that district in order to encourage more of those cultural uses. That, to me, would be the distinction between the two.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Primeau: A difference needs to be made also in that a cultural neighbourhood is not necessarily a neighbourhood where creation takes place. You may have a neighbourhood that disseminates creative works, but a cultural hub or pole implies creation, or a type of living environment where people help each other out and there is interaction among the artists. To create a cultural hub, you have to have that in mind, that is to say be concerned with getting creators together in a neighbourhood like ours.

The Quartier des spectacles has the advantage of being both at once. It is a neighbourhood where there are 30 venues containing a total of 30,000 seats, as well as public spaces that can host hundreds of thousands of people; but there are also creative spaces, and small rehearsal spaces for music or any other artistic medium.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much.

[English]

We will move to the next round and hear from the Conservatives.

Mr. Shields, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate the witnesses and the expertise they're bringing today.

There's one issue I'd like to go back to, and that's the municipal issue in the sense of tax changes or tax.... I'm not sure whether I have it right, but if you get a municipal tax break or advantage, that means the property taxpayer is going to have to pick it up. Is that what you're talking about? Or are you talking about equalling it out by some other way? If you're talking about municipalities having to give one sector a break on taxes, somebody has to pick it up, and that's usually the property taxpayer.

Let's start with you, Mr. Pauk, because I think you were saying something about it. Let's see if we can clarify that.

Mr. Oliver Pauk: I was referring to the creative co-location tax subclass, which was created at the provincial level. I'm not sure whether it was rolled out fully in Ontario, but it was in Toronto. They set it so that it began January 1.

In that example, property owners who own buildings that fit the criteria—there's a long list of criteria—receive a 50% discount on their property tax bill. As I mentioned, an issue we see is that there are very few property owners who own sites that fit the criteria. I believe the final number was between 12 and 15.

That would be coming from the taxpayer, I suppose, in that this revenue is forgone.

• (0925)

Mr. Martin Shields: Right: there's only one taxpayer.

Mr. Oliver Pauk: That's right.

Mr. Martin Shields: It all comes out of one pocket.

Mr. Oliver Pauk: Yes.

Mr. Martin Shields: That can be an issue in the sense that if you're looking for an advantage for one, then it has to come out of some other pocket. In the sense of the pool, it's coming from one.

Mr. Oliver Pauk: That makes sense. We're just pointing out some of the issues that we see with what has already been done.

Mr. Martin Shields: Yes.

Mr. Oliver Pauk: Also, as you've alluded to, there has already been some sort of backlash from other sectors. For instance, those working in social welfare have pointed it out and have said, "Hey, how can you just give this property tax break for artists and creatives and not for us and the important work that we're also doing?" I completely see that.

At the very least, this subclass for taxation in Toronto is a step in the right direction, as we pointed out, but it certainly has its flaws. The main one we wanted to point out is that it doesn't actually go to the creative producers themselves, which is problematic.

Mr. Martin Shields: I saw that. Thank you.

Music Canada, you have a world of expertise on this one.

Ms. Amy Terrill: In terms of tax classes? Yes, on the Toronto music advisory council, we were also concerned about the impact we were seeing, particularly with respect to the building in Toronto that raised the concern, which was 401 Richmond, where the municipal property assessment had been ever-increasing. I think it's the challenge in cities like Toronto where there's a "real estate issue" is the way we describe it. It's the rising cost of real estate. It's assessed at the highest use, so that's why we're seeing the condo developments, etc., starting to squeeze out so many other uses. It's not about just creative uses. It's about small businesses as well. It's tough to put those things back in the bottle.

I think there have been some suggestions around section 37—that was referenced earlier—as well as broadening the use of section 37 so that some of those investments can be put back into creating creative spaces. Those are from the developers. There are some really interesting conversations happening around the world, particularly around the music cities and development communities. They are starting to come together to try to start a conversation to reinforce the importance of creative activity or place-making as well as development. Maybe that's where we find our solutions.

Mr. Martin Shields: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): You have two minutes left.

Monsieur Fortin.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Fortin: We are currently studying a model in the Quartier des spectacles in Montreal, where real estate prices are increasing very rapidly. That model consists in granting builders advantages, such as the authorization to build higher buildings than normally permitted, on condition that the builder place the less coveted floors of the future building at the disposal of artists and other creators. Montreal is studying that model at this time, but it has not been tested and proven yet.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): We have a minute and 20 seconds, Ms. Shea.

Ms. Erika Shea: Well, I think that if a municipality decides that it wants to provide tax concessions to a cultural hub or a cultural district, that's a tool that is available to that municipality to realize its vision of a more grand, more solid creative economy. The tax concession is a tool to realize a vision that a municipality has around the creative economy and its positive, long-term financial impact on that community.

As for our experience, we purchased our property in 2012 and we occupied the property immediately. We paid municipal taxes of \$27,000, based on the assessment of the building. After our construction, the assessment of the building will mean that we're paying \$650,000 a year in municipal taxes, but because we've been occupying the building at the same density for the last five years, we're not consuming any more municipal services or any more water, and we're not asking the municipality to plow any additional roads, it's somewhat arbitrary in terms of that increase in assessment based on the monies we've invested.

● (0930)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much. [Translation]

We will now hear from Mr. Nantel of the NDP.

Mr. Nantel, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think you've seen how vast this topic is. That is why, to some degree, the government asked us to do the groundwork to determine how the \$300 million that was announced in last fall's cultural policy should be invested.

I thank all the witnesses for their presentations this morning. They were all very different, but very complementary.

We take it for granted that Music Canada represents Canada's musicians. Let's say that we posit that hypothesis. There are artists who would like a spot in a community like the one Ms. Shea is trying to develop through New Dawn Enterprises. Indeed I see that as a community. I think that that enterprise could present arguments in the same way as a Nova Scotia city or region. It could potentially get together with the Akin Collective to put together a technical resource group comparable to what is done in the social housing sector. How could we build something like that to make room for Canadian musicians?

Ultimately, time passes and we wind up with a neighbourhood like the one that preceded the Quartier des spectacles. Before it was called the Quartier des spectacles, there was the Wilder Building, and the building above, opposite Sainte-Catherine Street, opposite MusiquePlus. The cultural crossroads was there, and it became professionalized. As we have been able to see in the presentations of the Quartier des spectacles team, there has been enormous success and professionalization. A creative space was created, a space where everyone can practice an instrument and rehearse. We all remember the glory years of Spectrum, or when the Société des arts technologiques, the SAT, appeared. When the lady from SAT came to meet with us, she said that SAT had settled in a former bank opposite the Spectrum space. Today, the Quartier des spectacles presents somewhat like a completed cultural hub, and it is becoming a cultural district. I am taking pains to present this synthesis, because it is our duty to clarify and do the groundwork on the issues.

What interests me here are the two ends of the equation. Either Mr. Primeau or Mr. Fortin—I don't remember which—said today that we have to make sure that we still have affordable spaces where people can practise various artistic disciplines. That is a big issue.

However, if someday you have the opportunity of going to Montreal and to the Jardins Gamelin, you will see as I did that it presents much more as a cultural crossroads than a cultural district. We really see the emergence of all sorts of talents there, and the space is very appropriate for it. The La Patrie building, which is quite close to the Fougounes Électriques, also has enormous potential. It's a magnificent building, and its very name evokes all of Quebec's cultural heritage.

Gentlemen from the Quartier des spectacles Partnership, you mentioned in your recommendations that we need to adopt measures to support cultural crossroads. You also spoke about risk-sharing. I'd like you to provide some further explanations about what you meant.

Mr. Jacques Primeau: It's a project that began about three years ago. When we talk about co-operation between for-profit organizations and not-for-profit organizations, this a good example. We managed to gather data on all of the Quartier des spectacles venues and their operations. Over time, we were able to create a set of pooled data, thanks to a private intervention by the firm Aimia, which does philanthropic data work. They lent us about a hundred specialists to analyze the behaviour of spectators in the Quartier des spectacles, that is to say to find out at what time, where, and when they purchase their tickets, whether they are men or women, and whether they live in the suburbs or close to Montreal. Thanks to that information we have a much clearer idea of where we are going. None of these venues would have had the means to obtain that data on its own.

This gave us a second idea, which was to share risks. In fact, our purpose is to increase the quality and scope of the shows offered in the Quartier. In summary, all of the venues collect a certain amount of money in various ways and place it in a common fund. That money, either through interest-free loans or subsidies, is used to increase production budgets for those companies. In this way, the risk is shouldered by the entire community, which allows each of the venues to present more elaborate performances, hire more actors, more musicians, have more lighting, in short to offer better shows.

● (0935)

Mr. Pierre Nantel: My next question is for all five of you. What are the pitfalls we should avoid? If the federal government could do one thing to multiply the number of cultural hubs, what would that be? Conversely, what should we not be doing? For instance, it is obvious that we should not standardize the process throughout the country and build beautiful buildings in the shape of maple leaves. We need an approach that is adapted to the respective communities.

Ms. Terrill, should we discuss the equal opportunity of men and women to access these art rehearsal and creation spaces? What criteria should the federal government establish in order to create a sort of "cultural hub" label?

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): In about a minute, please.

Ms. Amy Terrill: I hadn't expected the connection between gender equality and cultural hubs, but it's an issue of great importance to the cultural communities right now. I understand that you're studying that issue as well, which is really important.

I think we all have to challenge the status quo. We can take actions individually as well as more broadly as organizations or in our sector. Whether we're talking about cultural hubs, cultural associations, or our industry in general, we need to be looking at inclusion and diversity as a prime issue of importance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you, Mr. Nantel.

[*English*]

Now we will go to Monsieur Breton.

[*Translation*]

You have seven minutes.

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I thank all of the witnesses for being here with us today. Their vast expertise is helpful to us in our study.

Mr. Chair, I want to tell you that I will be sharing my time with Ms. Dzerowicz. One of the organizations here is from her riding, and I understand very well that she would like to exchange a few words with its representatives.

For my part, I want to hear from you mostly about the impact of this on tourism. That is primarily addressed to Mr. Primeau and Mr. Fortin.

I am from a rural riding in the greater Granby area. I make a point every year of going to the Quartier des spectacles or to one of the arts centres to see a show. You have made this an extraordinary success, and it is ongoing.

Earlier you said that the construction of the Quartier des spectacles and the effervescence that created generated spinoffs of \$2.2 billion in the real estate sector. Have you done any studies on the collateral financial benefits of all of the shows and of the neighbourhood itself? That is extremely important.

Personally, I see the Quartier des spectacles as a model. We often say back home that a dollar invested in culture generates six dollars. I don't know if you did that calculation for yourselves. Is it more, is it less? Tell me about the impact that neighbourhood has on tourism.

Mr. Pierre Fortin: We have done several studies on economic benefits. They are quite easy to measure, in fact. For instance, someone who comes to see a show in the Quartier des spectacles spends on average between \$50 and \$60 elsewhere, either in a bar or a restaurant. The culture or cultural offering thus attracts people to the downtown area.

How many new restaurants are there?

• (0940)

Mr. Jacques Primeau: There are about fifty.

Mr. Pierre Fortin: Those restaurants opened in the last year and none of them have closed.

We create an intense cultural experience in the downtown, and people come for the experience. In the past, people would park their car, come in to see the show and then leave. Now, something is being

offered in the public space so that people stay and have a drink, for instance. All of that, of course, generates economic spinoffs.

There is also a night economy being created, like what you see in Berlin or Paris. Because of smoking bans, people go outside of buildings more often, and they speak louder at the end of the evening than in the beginning. Our work is to manage the balance between those things and see to it that it remains a space where all of the downtown activities and residents can co-exist.

Mr. Jacques Primeau: At the initiative of the city of Montreal, governments made a \$200-million investment in public places. It was a risky investment. We promised governments that an increase in activity would generate additional revenues—because of the GST, among other things—that would allow us to reimburse them in 15 years; we did it in 7. This means that that investment was profitable for the city, the Government of Quebec and for the Government of Canada, and this is ongoing.

However, there are sometimes some unintended effects. For instance, the fact that there are 50 restaurants and that it is now very easy to go to eat outside of the festival site has caused a decline in the festivals' independent revenues. Previously, the festivals sold the food and drink. Now, they have more spectators but less independent revenue.

That is in fact the issue that concerns me the most for the next few years. Very often, we focus on the vehicle and all of the economic spinoffs and we are happy about them, but the fact is that there is less money left for the stage, the artists and the creators. Even if the situation and events grow in scope, the federal government could look into that aspect and be more concerned about the money allocated to creation and to artists.

In passing, there is something excellent that happens in your area. The Festival international de la chanson de Granby is quite a major event.

Mr. Pierre Breton: Thank you very much.

I am going to give the floor to Ms. Dzerowicz.

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Thank you.

How much time do I have, Chair?

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): You have about two minutes.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Great.

Thanks to all of you for your outstanding presentations. I've really learned a lot today.

I'm very proud to have Akin Collective in my riding and doing a lot of work there. Thank you for your presentation.

I used to book bands when I was at McGill University, so I'm a very big supporter of live music and would really like to see things like Hugh's Room and the Horseshoe stay alive and be very active. They really are the heart and soul of the live music industry in Toronto and the GTA.

For the Akin Collective, can you expand a bit more on your last recommendation about bringing organizations together, or all three levels of government coming together for best practices? Can you talk to that for a minute? Then I'll have a question for Amy.

Mr. Oliver Pauk: As an example on a much smaller scale, in Toronto there's an organization called "Toronto Studio Commons". It's basically a way for organizations in our line of work to provide either studio space or visual arts space for production or for an exhibition of work. It's a way for us to stay in touch, share knowledge, and help each other out if someone's having concerns about something in the field. We meet every couple of months to speak about a different topic.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: I thought your recommendation was to bring all three levels of government together, or representatives from all levels, to share and come together to do something.

Mr. Oliver Pauk: The recommendation we were making was actually to foster relationships among organizations that are in this line of work with cultural hubs. For instance, we're meeting these fine folks today, but without anything to really foster a relationship, or without someone taking the initiative to go and visit or call them up or that sort of thing, there's a missed opportunity for us to stay in touch and to share knowledge and benefit from one another's past experiences. It's about bringing together groups, whether it's digitally and connecting, but allowing people to be in contact.

• (0945)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much.

I want to thank all the witnesses this morning.

We are going to suspend for a few moments as we ready ourselves for the next panel.

Thank you again for coming.

• _____ (Pause) _____

•

• (0950)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): I will call the meeting back to order.

On this panel, we again have four witnesses.

We have here in studio, as they might say, Jacquie Thomas and Michael Spence from Theatre Gargantua. We also have with us Sarah Douglas-Murray from the Creative City Network of Canada. By video conference from Vancouver, we have Judith Marcuse of the International Centre of Art for Social Change. Finally, by something that we haven't done before in this committee, I believe, by teleconference from the Jasper Community Habitat for the Arts we have Marianne Garrah.

We will start with Theatre Gargantua and Ms. Thomas and Mr. Spence.

I'm told that everyone understands that you have seven minutes for your presentations.

Ms. Jacquie Thomas (Artistic Director, Theatre Gargantua): Thank you very much, and good morning.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the cultural hubs in Canada.

I started a small company 25 years ago. With a considerable cheekiness, I called it Theatre Gargantua. We may not actually have been gargantuan, but our vision was. We struggled to pay our phone bills, but we made art that was noticed: highly physical, actors suspended in air, live music, and designs that transported our audiences and won awards. It's clear to us now that the success was fundamental to the long-term survival of our company.

There's one key factor in that early success that cannot be overstated. We had space. The arts-friendly congregation of an inner-city church in Toronto, the Church of St. Stephen's-in-the-Fields, allowed us to develop our process of creation and perform our work in their beautiful space. With 40-foot vaulted ceilings, raised wooden floors, and exposed beams for us to swing on, it was an ideal place for a young company with big ideas to thrive.

As we grew and artistically matured, our technical needs went well beyond the capacity of that small church. Our first work was lit entirely with candles, but now we incorporate more sophisticated media into our works, and we use multiple projectors, moving lights, and large-scale set pieces. Our vision is as gargantuan as it ever was.

There's really only one thing holding it back. There just isn't a space for it. Appropriate and affordable space is a challenge for artists across the country and, after 25 years, I can speak with a degree of expertise to the challenges we face in Toronto. Where once theatre companies could create performance spaces in abandoned warehouses, the incredible challenges in the real estate market have virtually eliminated these possibilities in our urban centres. The pressure on real estate in Toronto has been well documented, and there's a need for a solution for the loss of these cultural spaces. The need for dedicated, affordable, and appropriate space for the creation and performance of live arts is at a point of crisis.

Gargantua, along with our partners, the Théâtre français de Toronto and the Obsidian Theatre Company—respectively, Ontario's largest French-language theatre and Canada's largest black theatre company—is launching an ambitious project to create a new cultural hub in Toronto. We are three award-winning companies that present diverse practices for multi-generational audiences in both official languages, and we are determined to address the critical need for space for ourselves and other artists in the community.

Our hub will welcome our combined audience of close to 20,000 each year, including 6,500 school-age children. Our programming is open to the larger public and runs from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. on most days. These include workshops, student matinees, weekend matinees, summer camps, and weekend writing camps for teenagers, on top of our regular evening performances.

Guided by our shared values of accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity, our vision includes a creative hub that houses two flexible performance spaces equipped to support artistic and technical innovation and two rehearsal halls, as well as other public gathering spaces. This will be a purpose-built complex on a main street accessible to all by subway.

It will support diverse artistic and cultural innovation. It will be an activated community hub where there is always something happening and something being created, taught, or presented. It will be a place to gather and tell stories, a practice that is at the root of all cultural manifestations.

• (0955)

Mr. Michael Spence (Associate Artistic Director and Performer, Theatre Gargantua): Culture is no accident. It always is the result of effort. It emerges from the efforts that people make to live, from the struggles we face and the unique strategies that we come up with to survive them, and from the ways that we celebrate when we are successful and the ways that all these things are transformed into stories. As artists, we feel the responsibility and privilege of being part of this transformation.

Cultural hubs are where we gather to hear and tell stories. They are local, they are alive, and they are activated with authentic conversations. A well-designed hub will be inviting and vital: a place that focuses on the community that houses it and gives energy back to that community. It will provide space for local voices and also for hosting opportunities for work from other communities, both nationally and internationally.

As cultural workers, we can bear witness to the profound impact of these spaces. We know that hubs can be cultural engines that spur economic development and that the federal government can play a big part in their success. Here are our recommendations on how you can help, some of which echo those of our colleagues who have previously spoken here.

The first is brokering relationships. Help us assemble partnerships so that federal, provincial, and municipal participation can provide a substantial base to leverage corporate, private, and even international stakeholders.

Next, make it attractive to be philanthropic. Encouraging philanthropy doesn't just mean tax incentives. It is about actively promoting it as an ethos for the nation.

The next one is public land. Create policy whereby public lands cannot be disposed of without first assessing their potential for, and making them available as, cultural hubs.

Finally, there is operating funding. Currently there is no place where cultural hubs can go for ongoing operating costs. This significant gap in the system has put cultural hubs, once built, in a position of competing with their own cultural programming for use of funds from the Canada Council for the Arts. There needs to be funding through the Department of Canadian Heritage for the not very sexy operations of hub spaces, since that's not something that sponsors and donors are really keen to contribute to.

We thank you very much for the opportunity to speak at committee today.

• (1000)

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much.

We will now move to the video conference with Ms. Marcuse from the International Centre of Art for Social Change.

Ms. Judith Marcuse (Founder and Co-Director, International Centre of Art for Social Change): Good morning, everyone.

[*Translation*]

I'm sorry, but since I only speak French once a year, I am going to speak English.

[*English*]

I'm delighted to share perspectives and ideas about how arts and culture can become more truly integrated into the fabric of our country and to relate this to the creation of arts and cultural hubs or centres.

An artist myself, best known previously as a producer and choreographer, I presently lead a \$3-million, six-year national study on art for social change, or ASC, involving six universities across the country, 45 scholars, artists, and community-based organizations. It's the first study of its kind in Canada and concludes in December. We've already made public over 100 results of this work, including information on the impact for individuals and communities and for systems change.

I work all over the world and am off to South Africa in a few days, and I know from experience that Canada is considered a leader in the field of art for social change.

What do I mean by ASC? We define it as "artmaking made collectively by groups of people about things that matter to them, this process facilitated by a specialized artist or group of artists".

This work involves every discipline—performing, visual, literary, digital, and urban arts—very often in partnership with local change organizations: community-based non-arts organizations in a wide swath of diverse sectors, from health and justice, immigrant settlement, and economic development to cross-cultural, cross-generational, and reconciliation work and conflict resolution with youth and elders, as well as strategic planning in corporate situations and the creation of public policy.

At its centre is the artmaking. ASC is a form of art with its own unique goals, pedagogy, methods, and scholarship. It's a form of cultural democracy. It's about our own voices: the imaginative way we have to understand and address often complex problems.

There are over 400 organizations currently working in Canada in this sector, with a history of over 50 years in our country. The field is growing exponentially as organizations, artists, and change-makers from every sector are seeing the profound impact of this work. It brings the right brain into action. Creative innovation is at the heart of these arts-based forms of dialogue, as well as the resulting action for positive change.

How does this sector relate to arts and cultural community hubs? I will get to that very soon, but first I am going to offer you an image. It is an image of the ecology of arts in Canada.

At the top, we see the high arts, such as museums, art galleries, ballet companies, and opera companies, and we see cutting-edge artists. At the bottom, we see our granddaughter singing in the bathtub about her dog. In between, we have community arts: pottery classes, Sunday painting, and all kinds of other arts activities that involve the community. What I like to do is to make all of this into a circle where every element of that circle is connected to every other element. If we are to create a healthier, more innovative and imaginative, creative, cohesive, and engaged society, we need to be inclusive when thinking about policies that enrich our experience of the arts. It's not about just consuming the arts but about making art with others about what matters to them and making visible the diverse voices of our country.

Soon you'll be receiving a policy report that is a summation of all our work over the past five years.

There are specific policy recommendations for the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council. After decades of inclusion, the council has eliminated community-engaged arts as its own field of practice. The sector is basically not present on the council's website. The absence of experienced artists on juries and the absence of criteria for assessment are problematic as well. Despite two years of attempting dialogue, our national working group has not been able to engage in productive dialogue about these issues.

- (1005)

The second set of recommendations, which you are to receive in both languages soon, are calls for action across federal departments, based on meetings I've had with some 34 federal officials in Ottawa over the last year. Our research reveals that the federal government is far behind municipalities, provinces, and foundations in its recognition and support for the arts sector, with only some 8% of the total. We are under the radar in Ottawa. In fact, many other jurisdictions have increased their support for this work as they see its profound, sustainable, and positive impacts. The social innovation and social enterprise community is just the latest to integrate these arts practices into their work.

Given all these realities, I offer positive possible approaches to the question of arts centres, cultural centres, hubs, or whatever they turn out to be. I very much endorse the perspectives of the Canadian Arts Coalition and those of the McConnell Foundation, which truly represent attainable and positive directions for future hubs and centres. I propose that Canadian Heritage mandate that community-engaged ASC activities be integrated into the policies, planning, and programs of new centres. One could even use an arts-infused

dialogue process to create the policies for these new bricks-and-mortar—and perhaps virtual—hubs.

My experience is that the majority of many arts and cultural activities in this country presently take place outside of existing arts centres. Often, the centres are too expensive for small and medium-sized organizations. In particular, community-engaged arts tend to be isolated from the mainstream and are constantly in search of places to do their work in the community.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you. We are now past the time. We may be able to have an opportunity to hear a bit more from you in the questions and answers.

We will now move to Ms. Sarah Douglas-Murray from the Creative City Network of Canada.

Ms. Sarah Douglas-Murray (Vice-President, Creative City Network of Canada): Thank you for the opportunity to speak about cultural hubs and districts in Canada.

I'm here today as vice-president of the Creative City Network of Canada. The network is a national non-profit organization that facilitates collaboration, knowledge sharing, research, and professional development for the cultural sector at the local level through the development of cultural policy, planning, and professional practice. Our membership is primarily made up of municipalities and regional governments, with members from over 178 communities across the country ranging in size from 3,000 to 2.8 million and representing over 16 million Canadians.

The network's vision is that culture is a core pillar of sustainability, facilitating positive change through creativity and innovation and creating healthy, vibrant, and engaging communities across Canada. Through its work, the network helps build the capacity of local cultural planning professionals and, by extension, their local governments to nurture and support cultural development in their communities. By doing so, our organization aims to improve the operating climate and conditions of artists, arts, heritage, and cultural organizations and the quality of life in communities of all sizes.

Upon being invited to speak here today, we reached out to our members in asking them to define cultural hubs and districts and identify whether they currently have or are working towards having them in their communities. We learned that they exist or are in development in many of our member municipalities, and while we heard a consistent message in support of the development and benefits of cultural hubs and districts, it also became apparent to us that every member community was unique and that the type, scope, scale, and definition of each community's assets was extremely diverse.

As our communities are unique and varied, we must be creative and innovative in the development of the program and how we support the development of the sector and individual communities across the country. It is also important that the approach in terms of how we define and support cultural hubs is flexible.

While each community's definition varies, cultural hubs tended to be identified as specific spaces or a building where multiple creative and cultural service organizations and disciplines came together in one location to deliver programs, services, and opportunities. Cultural districts were identified as a series of cultural assets that are located in close proximity to each other, creating a sense of place geographically. When speaking about cultural districts, our members talked about the places between the spaces also being important in defining the district.

It is important to note that both cultural hubs and districts are happening in our communities organically and intentionally. They happen intentionally as a tool for community development, such as the regeneration of downtowns, to promote tourism, and to enhance engagement in community well-being.

In looking at similarities between hubs and districts, they both offer a high volume of facilities and activities that attract people. They enable a cross-pollination of ideas, sectors, and projects; they're dynamic, flexible, welcoming, and accessible; and, they serve a diverse community of artists, performers, creative entrepreneurs, and the public.

We also asked our members to tell us what role the government can play to help hubs and districts. We heard that municipalities are already playing an important and growing role in facilitating, delivering, and ensuring cultural activity at the local level. They're already supporting cultural hubs in a number of ways, including: inclusion in official planning documents; the development and enhancement of infrastructure and public spaces; funding and granting, both to existing hubs and not-for-profit organizations; and, amendments to zoning, bylaws, licensing, and permitting, as spoken about earlier today.

Our members feel strongly that culture is the fourth pillar of sustainability, and many municipalities have worked through extensive community consultation to develop cultural plans and policies. The cultural planning documents in many cases identified the development of districts or hubs within the communities.

Often, the ongoing challenge is funding for development, operations, and programming. In this regard, coordination between levels of government needs to be improved. We were very pleased to hear the statement to this committee by the director general of the arts policy branch that it is important for the Department of Canadian Heritage to have the opportunity to establish partnerships with municipalities and the provinces, and that they are looking to see how the department can support these centres.

We very much agree that municipalities, the provinces, and the department should be working together to develop funding agreements and frameworks for the development and renewal of cultural infrastructure. This recommendation was also made by the Canadian Arts Coalition in their statement to this committee when they requested that future provincial bilateral agreements be required

to include a broad consideration of cultural projects. They correctly pointed out that at the provincial level there is a significant absence of programs parallel to the Canada cultural spaces fund and that organizations and municipalities are often left in a compromised position of lobbying provincial governments for discretionary matching funds.

● (1010)

We also heard from our members that funding is needed to support operations, programming, and ongoing activity within hubs and districts. As was mentioned earlier, they are by their very nature diverse and often do not fit neatly into the existing funding streams that are focused on single disciplines, such as performing or visual arts, or on very specific outcomes often identified through economic development programs.

Creative and cultural industries have a positive impact on our communities. They nurture the soul of our country. We encourage embracing culture as a fourth pillar of sustainability.

In closing, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today and would encourage future collaboration with the Creative City Network and our membership in the development of your programs.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much.

Now we will do something that we haven't done in this committee yet and have a teleconference with the Jasper Community Habitat for the Arts. Marianne Garrah is with us by telephone, and I'm told there might be some others.

Perhaps you could introduce them as well, Ms. Garrah. You have seven minutes.

Ms. Marianne Garrah (Director, Jasper Community Habitat for the Arts): Thank you for contacting us.

I am Marianne Garrah. I will be passing this over to David Baker, who speaks for Habitat for the Arts.

● (1015)

Mr. David Baker (Director, Jasper Community Habitat for the Arts): Good morning. Thanks for the invitation to talk to you guys today.

I'm going to tell you a bit about our little arts centre that we have going on here in Jasper, the Habitat for the Arts. It was designed to provide a unique and meaningful opportunity for creative partnership arts programming. Programming ranges from studio space for the community and visiting artists to classroom space and after-school programs, and post-secondary accredited outreach education. It's also a venue for small music, theatre, and film presentations. It's a home for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts travelling exhibition. It's a volunteer-based centre and a hub of information on cultural events in the community as a comprehensive guide, and it's a resource centre for the arts and artists.

The plan is to develop a place where artists and cultural organizations can engage with each other, educate the public, and interact with the community. It is intended to be a space to be enjoyed by all demographics, whether it be for presentations or engagements with Jasper's cultural offerings.

I'll give you a little history now. In 2010 we opened Habitat 1.0. It was a vacated provincial courthouse, and we were financially viable in about 18 months, meaning that we could pay our bills with a little bit left over. We are a non-profit organization or, as I like to say, a for-purpose organization. That caught the attention of the municipal government here in Jasper.

They invited us in 2012 to come in with the architects and design a purpose-built dedicated space for the arts. In 2016 they opened the new facility and we have been programming since then. We are an effective centre of activity for our region and the centre of a network for all disciplines and everything that is related to arts and culture.

As a result of our being here, we have renewed the theatre community. We have a theatre club here.

We have established a pottery facility here at the centre, with a kiln to fire pottery. Classes are taught by professionally trained potters. There's a tremendous interest in that.

Music-wise, we have regular events. Artists who we know travel through here to perform concerts. They are well attended.

We also gained the trust of the municipal government to initiate a project to put buskers on the streets of Jasper. That was a project we started as a result of the Rozsa Foundation and arts management here in the province. We have also established Jasper's first-ever film festival, and the arts centre has a new media lab and recording studio for sound and for music.

We have the full support of our council, in that we have established events such as the Mayors Poetry Challenge. If you remember, Mayor Naheed Nenshi from Calgary was the first to start that. Our mayor picked up the baton and in fact is a poet himself.

We have annual events that the community looks forward to, such as the Bowls with Soul, where we have a local potter make and sell bowls. Local restaurants are partnering with us to provide soup to go in those bowls. We have entertainers who entertain while people dine.

We are part of the National Canadian Film Day and have multiple venues in our town. We also have Raven About the Arts, the mayor's award that celebrates local arts. As well, we are part of Culture Days, the national event of Culture Days. We've been involved in that for about 10 years.

Jasper is on the world stage. We are on the world's radar with mountains, moose, and maple syrup, but we go beyond that. We have partnered and have put our arts centre into the minds and the places that discuss these things. We have been part of the creative cities conferences and have built networks there. We also have strong connections to the Banff Centre, which is our neighbour to the south.

"Technology, tolerance, and talent" is something that is quoted in the creative philosophy. We've always had the philosophy of people,

place, and process. This means people who are put into a place that's properly equipped and who are allowed to take part in a process that produces meaningful outcomes both socially and in terms of the actual product. The product of that process is really secondary to the connections that are built socially. We call it "proactive inclusion".

Now, we are a national park in the province of Alberta and the municipality of Jasper. We are an 18-year-old town, which is kind of unique. I moved here in 2001. That's the year that Jasper became a town. The two events are not related. However, we have since established something that has never existed here, which is the arts centre. We have collaborated with the community outreach services and the family community services here in Jasper, to provide activities for staff, residents and visitors.

• (1020)

That's relevant because Jasper has a population of 5,000 souls year-round, but that goes up to about 30,000 a day in the summer months and now in the winter, with the skiing, to the tune of about 2.35 million visitors to Jasper National Park each year. We act locally, and we connect globally. The world comes to Jasper.

Our transient population is a bit of a challenge, but I would challenge anyone to get involved with theatre production and not come away after the production is over with a new set of connections and possibly the weirdest extended family you've ever experienced.

Socio-economics are what we talk about. We believe the arts are a viable career choice for people to apply their energies to. We believe this is a very meaningful addition to Jasper's offering to our visitors. It's also a place where we can grow. We see ourselves as a cultural hub because we exist to simply unify what is already here as well as expand upon what we can do. We have some challenges here in terms of support for the administration of the centre, as well as the edifice complex.

We would like to also talk about a quote from a friend of the Habitat. Tommy Banks, God rest his soul, said once in an interview that you can get a loan for a field full of pipe in Alberta, but you can't get a loan to put a play on, and we've taken that—

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to interrupt. You're well over the seven minutes. We're now going to go to our seven-minute rounds of questions. Perhaps someone can come back to you on Tommy Banks and the pipes.

Mr. David Baker: Thank you so much.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): We will go first to Ms. Dzerowicz from the Liberals for seven minutes.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

I want to say thanks for all of the presentations today. They were excellent.

I appreciate the patience of the Jasper Community Habitat for the Arts on the phone, as well as you, Ms. Marcuse, for joining us by video conference.

My first question is directed to Theatre Gargantua. A number of people have recommended tax incentives to make it more attractive to invest in cultural hubs. Typically when there's investment in the arts community, there's usually a mixture between the private sector and government, as well as the public in some way.

I think it was you, Mr. Spence, who mentioned that. Could you elaborate a little more on any specific ideas for the federal level in terms of what we can do around these tax incentives?

Either one of you is fine.

Mr. Michael Spence: I'll give that to Jacquie.

Ms. Jacquie Thomas: I think what Michael was talking about in terms of... I mean, certainly from the perspective of donations, one of the best ways we can raise funds is to allow tax incentives for people who are supporting not-for-profits, which I believe is already in the tax code. The code could be written to specifically talk about cultural assets. There could be a way for the tax code to support a little more strongly these cultural hubs that are being proposed and the ones that already exist, so that when somebody comes forward and supports new creative centres, they will be able to gain some benefit from tax savings from their donations.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: You mentioned that you're in the process of creating a hub with three key groups: Obsidian Theatre Company, Théâtre français de Toronto, and Theatre Gargantua. What are the main challenges you're facing in terms of creating that hub right now?

Ms. Jacquie Thomas: The greatest challenge right now is finding a space, because it's extremely expensive. It's also about finding a space that's located somewhere that's accessible to transit. We're committed to doing that. We're committed to having something that's either on a subway line or very accessible, not just as an asset for that community and not just as a hub for that immediate community, but as something that can also be an asset for other artists in the community who can come to that hub to practise their work or for other audience members from all across the city who can come to practise there and view shows there.

Because of the huge difficulties and challenges in Toronto due to the price of real estate, we're really being priced out of a lot of these properties. We're focused right now on trying to find space that is a new build and is purpose-built. We have enough spaces that are not necessarily well equipped or well suited for art space, or for theatres in particular. What we really need is something that's purpose-built and that can house a variety of contemporary practices. All our companies are contemporary companies.

• (1025)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: That probably gets into my next question, just because we've had a number of people talk about how expensive this is, particularly in urban centres. The thing is, whether you look at Paris, or Sydney, Australia, or New York, all of them have very high rents, but somehow they manage to find spaces for their artists. I'm not quite sure if there are some lessons we can learn from some of the other bigger city centres in the world.

As well, we've been getting recommendations about more effectively using federal government space. Maybe I can have you dig in a bit and give me a more specific recommendation, and then anybody else who wants to can jump in on that. This is an area I'd like to focus on a bit to see what more we can do around this at the federal level. If you could draw on any international example or on what someone else is doing that has been highly effective, that would be good.

Maybe I'll start with you, Ms. Thomas, and then move over to you, Ms. Marcuse, on our video conference.

Mr. Michael Spence: One example I can give you is that in Sydney, Australia, there's a company called "Legs On The Wall". They have a very specific oeuvre. They do their choreography on the sides of buildings, so they have very specific needs. They were initially given an old paratroop hangar to do their choreography. Eventually, they were given a purpose-built facility, the Red Box, specifically for their style of theatre. That's one example of a really successful arts group being supported by their government to create their specific work, which is now internationally renowned.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

Ms. Marcuse, do you have anything to add on that?

Ms. Judith Marcuse: Yes, I have two examples to offer. One is in Melbourne, where they have designated laneways and other areas in the centre of the city for visual artists. It has enlivened that part of the city immeasurably. They're quite wonderful. This is integrated with shops and restaurants. The other is in Quito, where a social circus organization was given a hangar by the federal government. They reconstituted the hangar, and it has become a major centre for the practise of social circus in that city.

I'd like to add that we really need to think about rural centres, which have particular needs. I'm sure you've heard a lot about that diversity. The rural-urban divide is quite profound right now.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): You have 10 seconds left.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Thank you, everyone.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): We will now move for seven minutes to Mr. Eglinski for the Conservatives.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chair.

I'd like to thank all the witnesses this morning, with a special thank you to Ms. Marcuse, who is video conferencing.

Of course, to two of my constituents, Marianne and David, thank you for joining us via a new system that was never used before. I am going to start with you. I'm going to let you finish your comment on Tommy Banks, but then I'd like you to comment on the fact that you are using a former government building, I believe, for your facility in the town of Jasper. It's very well located, and people who are visiting the community can easily walk to it from most hotels and motels in the area.

I'd like you to elaborate on the difficulties you have in trying to serve both a community and an international visiting community with a very limited amount of funding opportunities. I wonder if you could explain where you think we as government can help—whether it's the municipal, the provincial, or the federal government—in assisting small community organizations like yours that are a hub for art, etc. Go ahead, please.

• (1030)

Mr. David Baker: Thank you. It's good to hear your voice again. I remember when we talked to you; it was on the same day that we talked to Tommy Banks.

Tommy Banks was a good friend to us. In our initial stages, he said to us that in Alberta you can get a loan through the bank for anything if it's for a field full of pipe, but it's hard to get a play funded. You'd be laughed out of the bank.

We started this project in a vacated provincial courthouse. It was a cold call to the province, and the guy was either just about to go on vacation or to retire, but he said yes and we moved in there. We were financially viable in 18 months. That was a location right downtown—if you ever come to Jasper, you're all invited to come see us—where people can access the centre. After 18 months, we proved ourselves financially viable, and that got the attention of the municipal government.

Jasper was about to revamp our municipal library, so they invited us to come in and sit down with the architects to help design and build Jasper's first dedicated and purpose-built centre for arts and culture. We sat down with them. There were some construction delays. We lost a little momentum in the four years while we were waiting for the centre to open. We also lost about \$20,000, because we were going to be a featured site of Alberta Culture Days. When the centre opened, they were going to come and shine the spotlight on us.

We have since opened the centre, and we are blessed enough to have a green space right out in front of the centre. We have about 2,000 square feet of space. We are still accessible. We are still able to have people access us and we're more or less in the downtown. The challenges we have are, first, that this has never been done before, and, second, the astronomical rents in Jasper, which has only been a town for 18 years. This means that we have quite a responsibility to the municipality to make this swing.

As to something the government could do to help us, in Lethbridge there is a arts centre, Casa, and the operating costs and rents are paid through the department of culture. For us in the town of Jasper, it would be good to have something to cover those costs, as well as to make it possible for us to pay administrative costs. It's the edifice complex, where we build the buildings and then no one wants to pay for the cleaning or their operation. If there's any

assistance we need, it would be for the day-to-day costs of running the centre, as well as perhaps a living wage for the operation, the programming, the maintaining of events, and the planning of curriculum, and also for just keeping the doors open. That's our major financial challenge. We believe in this enough that we sacrifice to make it happen, but these things I've mentioned would be the greatest alleviations we could have.

Does that begin to answer your question?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Yes, thank you.

I want to move on to another group now. I'll go to Theatre Gargantua.

We heard from a lot of the larger communities, such as the GTA and Montreal, where you have a whole network of groups, arts facilities, and cultural centres. How do you think we deal with the competitiveness there? Everyone is trying to grab their little chunk of change from the community. Is there a fairly good network where people get together and work together? Or are there a lot of individuals trying to grab as much as they can?

• (1035)

Ms. Jacquie Thomas: No, I would describe our community, and certainly the theatre community, as very collaborative. There are many different organizations, with TAPA, the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts, being the main one in Toronto. We strategize on how to assist one another, how to make our community stronger, and how to find ways to enhance our audiences and do cross-pollination of our audiences. We have much more collaboration and crossover right now between the disciplines, with more and more contemporary performance. Dance companies are becoming more theatrical, and theatre companies are becoming a little more physical in their work.

I would say that in the larger centres we certainly have the population to support the performing arts organizations that we have. I believe that in TAPA's membership there are 154 professional theatre companies in Toronto. Sometimes it is a challenge, especially with smaller companies that are forced to find space on some out-of-the-way back street just because they can't afford space in a regular theatre. Sometimes it's challenging to get audiences out there. One of the ways we could improve this situation would be through some kind of promotional campaign.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: I'm out of time.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much. Yes, you're out of time.

[Translation]

We now go to Mr. Nantel of the NDP.

Mr. Nantel, you have the floor for seven minutes.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you very much.

[English]

I will speak in English.

[Translation]

Mr. Spence and Ms. Thomas, thank you for your presentation.

I also want to thank the representatives of the Jasper Community Habitat for the Arts.

[English]

Ms. Douglas-Murray, can I say that there is a parallel between Les Arts et la Ville in Quebec and your organization? Are projects like the Jasper Community Habitat for the Arts or The Guild in Charlottetown examples of what you're trying to do?

Ms. Sarah Douglas-Murray: Yes. The majority of our members are municipalities and regional organizations, but we also open up our membership to—

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Cultural organizations?

Ms. Sarah Douglas-Murray: —cultural organizations and groups.

We have an annual summit every year that moves from province to province. We do find when we are in a local area we have a much higher participation from those local non-profits. Certainly, we know from our member municipalities that the municipalities themselves are in very close contact with all of the not-for-profit cultural organizations in their communities. The majority of them do have some form of cultural granting process. Many of them are operating hubs or districts, or providing space to these organizations. Almost all of our member municipalities have undergone an extensive cultural planning process where they have identified with their community what the needs are and what the specific direction is of their community.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you very much for this very precise answer.

What's obvious with the witnesses who we have had the chance to hear from is that the cultural milieu wants to have access to better audiences, to mediation with the clientele. We want to create these communities, but what we hear as a principle, but not as accurately and concretely, is the social impact on the clientele, on the citizens.

This is why I want to speak to you, Ms. Marcuse. Would you be interested in advising these cultural arts projects so that the social impact is always effective and accurate?

Ms. Judith Marcuse: I think there is a strong place for consultation from this perspective, through this lens. For example, I would recommend that there be community consultations in the planning process for these cultural centres, because so often they are beautifully designed but are not used by the full community, particularly by people who are newer to the community, new immigrants, and by youth and seniors.

It feels to me that there are convening possibilities for Heritage to not only do that convening with local inhabitants but to also look at research, which really proves the impact of social arts in various ways and how to integrate that better into a hub, which is usually about people consuming art or making art for sale.

I also really endorse the notion that Sarah Douglas-Murray just expressed to your committee—and others have too—that there needs to be profound consultation, despite all of the vicissitudes of doing

that, with the city, the province, and also with private foundations, which are increasingly involved in social practice arts. Universities as well are doing enormous amounts of outreach, not only in their arts, but in connecting arts and health, reconciliation, and the settlement of new Canadians and working with isolated seniors and with street-involved youth.

The range of the work of the arts needs to be extended so that we see its full range and the integration of citizens into making art—not just consuming it.

• (1040)

Mr. Pierre Nantel: In the notes you sent us, you referred to Wapikoni mobile and to *la cité des arts, les arts de la rue, or le cirque de rue*. Please tell us more about these examples. I think that even though you were not necessarily involved, you found them to be very good examples of the impact of art on people, on people practising art, which is the difference here.

Ms. Judith Marcuse: Absolutely. Yes, exactly, Monsieur Nantel.

As I said, we've done six years of research looking into the impact of these forms of artmaking and what it does for people. We see, for example, an organization called “Cirque Hors Piste” in Montreal, a program that works with street-involved youth. What we see from our research is that a very high percentage of them report back to us on returning to school or learning job skills or just on being more socially included and returning to or going to a state of better well-being.

We see a group of breast cancer patients in a hospital in Ontario, unhappy with their treatment, creating a play with an art-for-social-change playwright. They performed it for the whole hospital and, as a result of that, policy was changed for the better.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Would you see it appropriate to have the intervention and support from other ministers' departments?

Ms. Judith Marcuse: Absolutely. In all my conversations in Ottawa over the last year, I keep hearing the words “lateral integration”. I can't stress largely enough how important it is that there be connection between the silos.

If we're going to address really complex problems in our country, we really need to bring artists together with health practitioners and with people who are doing cross-cultural work and building consensus around how best to use the arts to make Canada a healthier, more integrated, and more creative place. So often, these policies that come down reflect only a certain lens. If we have these conversations across disciplines and sectors, we stand a much better chance for sustainable resources and also just basically for inclusion of more people who are telling their own stories and, in doing that, creating policies and approaches for positive change.

I hope I'm making sense.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Absolutely. I'm sure the health ministers would see very good positive impacts on the health of these cancer patients through the arts. Am I right in saying that?

Ms. Judith Marcuse: Absolutely.

The Vice-Chair (Hon. Peter Van Loan): Thank you very much, Mr. Nantel.

Thank you to all the witnesses. Although Monsieur Hébert was supposed to go next, we are unfortunately out of time. We will have to bring this session to a close.

This meeting is adjourned on the motion of Mr. Shields. Thank you.

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