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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **History and background of this project**

Bowen Island is rich in arts and culture, and at least since Einar and Muriel Neilson's Lieben artists' colony of the Forties, Fifties, and Sixties, has been thought of as a place where art and culture flourished. That flourishing occurs, however, without any plan to guide it. Over the years, various analyses and reports have been prepared, focussed primarily on the issue of facilities for the arts, and in 1998 there was a referendum - which was unsuccessful - to fund the construction of a multi-purpose community facility. For some time, the need for an arts facility of one kind or another has been a loudly trumpeted public demand.

The Bowen Island Recreation Commission in 1997 organized a workshop to look at support for the arts, culture, and recreation. One of the recommendations which emerged from that event called for the preparation of a long range arts and culture plan. Following that, funds were set aside by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (of which Bowen Island was then a part) for cultural planning on the island. With the impending incorporation of the island as the province's first island municipality, however, that project was put on hold.

Following the formation in 1999 of Bowen Island Municipality, interest in and calls for local governmental support for the arts became more pronounced as islanders now had an expanded ability to define their own fate. Bowen Island Council has thus far been very supportive of the arts, but called for a cultural master plan "to assist the Municipality in establishing priorities for supporting the island's arts and cultural community and in the development of relationships, programs and facilities" over the next ten years.

### **Steering Committee**

To guide the development of a cultural master plan, in 2001 Council created the Bowen Island Cultural Master Plan Steering Committee, whose purpose is "to aid in the development of a Cultural



*Consultant and Steering Committee members prepare recommendations*

Master Plan for the island by providing input at the various stages of the plan's development/ implementation, by involving arts/culture stakeholders in the process and by providing needed information to the consulting team reflecting Bowen Island's arts/cultural activity." The 13-member committee's role has spanned the entire planning process from attracting a qualified consulting team to co-drafting the plan to assisting with implementation of the plan. The committee's Terms of Reference and roster appear in Appendix A along with the Terms of Reference for the plan.

### **The broader context of this plan**

The purpose of this Plan is to lay out an achievable framework to make arts and cultural expression a fundamental characteristic of Bowen Island life, in the individual lives of residents, in our schools and learning centres, and in commercial and community life as well.

The "arts" in the broadest sense includes all those works of human creation that invoke in us a deeper sense of meaning. We usually group these activities into such categories as the visual, performing, media or literary arts. But the meaning must also include decorative and utilitarian handcraft, architecture, and cottage industry.

"Culture", on the other hand, provides a more basic, yet subtle, structure in community life. For the purpose of this Plan, "culture" refers to the behaviour, beliefs and forms of expression that through time have become characteristic of the Bowen Island community. The survey of residents that accompanies this Plan defined Bowen's culture as "our identity, shared heritage, and aspirations for the future".

More than any other document, the Official Community Plan (OCP), approved in 1996, expresses the values and goals that are integral to Bowen Island's culture. The following are some of those OCP objectives, which the Cultural Plan can help to accomplish:

From OCP Principles:

*Maintenance of the intrinsic attraction, insular rural identity and sense of beauty of the island; and recognition of the desire of existing residents to be independent, self-reliant and able to exhibit local initiative and cooperation.*

From OCP Broad Objectives:

*To foster the creation and maintenance of local employment on the island in island based sustainable activities.*

*To encourage maintenance of a population with varying income levels, lifestyles and age groups.*

From Public Facility Objectives:

*To encourage the development of a facility for the performing arts and multi-use facility for social and community services at a scale in keeping with the island community.*

*To serve the needs of island visitors while maintaining a scale, form and character of development that is in accordance with the broad objectives of the Plan.*

From Environmental Resource Objectives:

*To encourage the human community to become more ecologically sustainable.*

*To educate residents and visitors about the island ecology and importance of understanding cumulative effects of environmental impacts.*

From Heritage Resource Objectives:

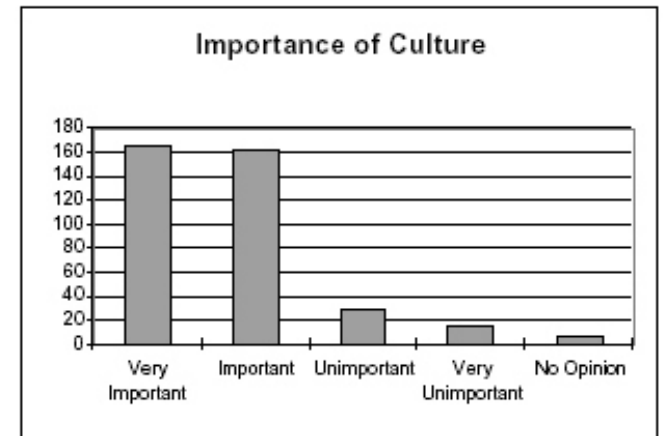
*To protect and encourage the preservation of heritage values on Bowen Island.*

### **Why a cultural plan**

The Cultural Plan survey suggests that Bowen Island is experiencing a general flourishing of the local arts scene. Some of the prominent conclusions of the survey include:

- **85% of respondents indicated that to them personally arts and culture are important or very important.**
- **44% of respondents consider themselves to be artists.**
- **40% of respondents volunteer with one or more arts or cultural organizations.**

How important are culture and the arts to people who live on Bowen? 85% indicated that, to them personally, it was important or very important, with only 12% indicating that it was unimportant. Only 2% had no opinion.



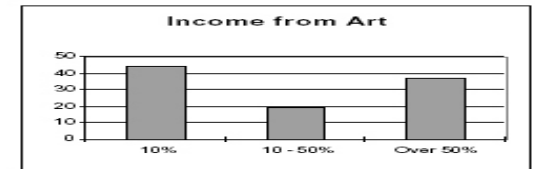
Meanwhile, on a question concerning the condition of Bowen Island’s culture – “our identity, shared heritage, and aspirations for the future” – the answer is more ambivalent. **Sixty-seven percent report that Bowen’s culture is becoming stronger or is stable; while 50% say that it is stable or becoming weaker.** These results no doubt reflect the significant change that the Bowen community is undergoing in direct population growth, and in its demographic structure.

Historically, in its over one hundred years of non-Native settlement, Bowen Island has both thrived and been threatened by its relationship to the “continent.” As a small population in close proximity to Vancouver, residents have often needed to assert themselves in the face of potentially overwhelming influences from outside. The inevitable insularity of island life has encouraged over many years an individual character to community life. A flourishing arts scene with its urge for self-expression, a generous spirit of volunteerism, and an environmentally focused attitude to the land and the sea are no doubt central elements in Bowen’s culture. A heightened concern for the natural environment has been fostered in local civic life through Bowen’s membership in the Islands Trust for 28 years.

In addition to these values, however, perhaps should be included a certain community characteristic of resistance to change, a “conservatism” that borders in some cases, on obstinacy. The responses at community workshops bears out this complex, even contradictory identity within the community. Asked to choose adjectives that best describe Bowen Island, focus group participants most often selected: *individualistic, diverse, beautiful, neighbourly, paradise*. The consultants note that respondents see themselves as *neighbourly*, but *not united*; the island is *historic*, but *not traditional*. An equal number of respondents chose *connected* and *isolated*, which may reflect the dichotomy in the attitude of island residents toward the mainland.

Respondents to the survey report that it is by choice that they live on a culturally rich island, but by necessity many must work on the mainland. Support for a greater contribution to local arts and culture is perhaps connected with this desire to work and live close to home. One of the more significant discoveries from the survey is the extent to which the arts are already an important form of employment and income for many people on Bowen Island:

- **27% of the adult population receives some income from their art.**
- **10% of the adult population – about 250 people - receives over 50% of their total income from creation of art.**



When this is extrapolated to the whole Bowen adult population (assuming 2,500 over age 20), we can estimate that:

- about 250 people earn over 50% of their income from art
- another 400 people earn some income from their art
- another 400 people consider themselves artists, but earn no income from their art

This makes up 1,050 of the adult population, and there are another 1,050 people for whom art is important to them personally.

The remaining 400 people think art unimportant.

- **The Bowen Island Arts and Cultural Directory currently lists over 400 artists, many of whom derive some or all of their income from their art.**

To these survey results it should be added that the Arts Council Gallery sold more than \$19,000 worth of visual art in 2002. The expanded summer Arts Festival of 2002, as well, proved to be a great success, and in its first year of an expanded format produced a small revenue surplus of \$1,400 above expenses totaling over \$44,000. Clearly, the potential economic contribution of arts and culture to the community, through creation and redistribution of income, has strong potential. The arts and culture sector, if properly managed, could become a thriving home-grown, ecologically sustainable economy on Bowen Island.

The answer to “why a cultural plan?” however, must ultimately be considered from a larger historical and geographical perspective. Bowen Island’s position in proximity to Vancouver is perhaps comparable to Canada’s dilemma beside the United States. It is a continual challenge to define and assert those distinctive qualities that confirm our local identity when living next to such a large neighbour. If Bowen’s decision in 1999 to become the province’s first island municipality can be seen as an important assertion of community identity, then adoption of a “made-on-Bowen” Cultural Plan in 2003 would surely be the next step in a commitment to strengthening the distinct character of Bowen’s “island community”.

### **Guiding Principles**

As the Steering Committee engaged in the plan-making process, it started to articulate sentiments that were broader than visions and which seemed to undergird the group’s work; these eventually emerged as a set of Guiding Principles, which are:

- *Art and culture are important to the Bowen Island community because they enhance our quality of life and community health by providing:*
  - Social benefits*
    - *opportunities for enjoyment, self-expression, and personal fulfillment*
    - *opportunities for development of skills*
    - *opportunities for children and youth to develop important skills and attributes*
    - *opportunities for social participation and volunteerism*
    - *means to preserve our cultural heritage*
    - *means to develop our civic identity and address important public issues*

*Economic benefits*

- *direct employment and income for artists*
  - *spin-off employment through local purchasing*
  - *a labour-intensive form of economic activity*
  - *an important tourist attraction, drawing more visitors who stay longer*
  - *a magnet for companies and their employees*
- 
- *We are not planning the arts, but planning for the arts.*
  - *The independent spirit of artists must be respected.*
  - *Arts and culture are the human expression of the Island Trust's 'preserve and protect' mandate.*
  - *The island's art and culture opportunities must be accessible to all.*
  - *The various arts and cultural disciplines must work together if their full value is to be realized.*
  - *The purpose of governmental arts funding is to fund the practice of art not the administration of art, and a maximum percentage of the total arts budget should be set for arts administration.*

## **II. HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED**

(A fuller description and flowchart of this methodology appear in Appendix B)

The planning process was initially oriented around a half-dozen issues defined by the Steering Committee and based on an earlier community workshop:

- Support for arts and culture
- Facilities
- Staffing
- Advocacy for cultural and arts organizations
- Economic development
- Cultural programming and education

Following a January 2002 get-acquainted and orientation meeting between the Steering Committee and consultants, five forms of data gathering occurred during February and March:

- 1) Past documents (local and regional studies, plans, reports, etc.) were reviewed.
- 2) Five focus groups were held - for youth, practicing artists, seniors, teachers, and the general public - to get a sense of how these groups viewed and experienced the arts and culture; over 70 persons in all took part. (See Appendix C for flyers and newspaper articles).
- 3) Two organizational workshops, with a total attendance of 37, provided the opportunity for arts and culture groups and organizations to talk about their needs and ways to meet them.
- 4) A community survey, with 385 responses, tapped the general public's views on the arts and culture.
- 5) Best practices were located in a dozen other cultural plans.

At two plan-making workshops in late March, the Steering Committee reviewed the analysed data, and articulated visions, goals and beginning strategies. Through the spring, summer (with some time off), and fall the Steering Committee drafted recommendations in four re-categorized themes, receiving regular feedback from the consultants along the way. Over 40 people turned out for a November "community validation" session to comment on that draft plan, a summary of which had been published in *The Undercurrent*. The very next day, the Steering Committee began digesting the feedback and refining the draft into the document presented to Council in late January 2003.

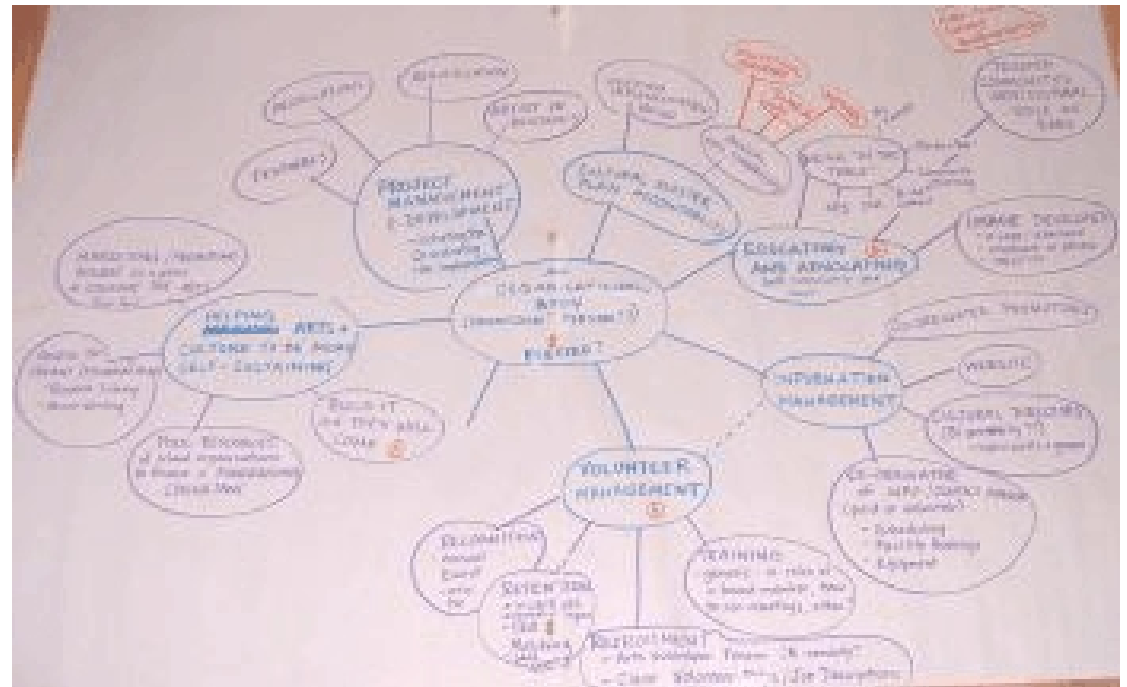


### III. THE PLAN

#### Components of the plan

The plan is organized around four general categories or themes, refashioned from the original six. Within each theme, there is a one or more *Recommendations*, a *Rationale* statement for them, and then a series of *Strategies*, most of which are more specific “check-off-able” targets. (There’s a convenient check-off box in front of each Strategy statement so that progress in implementing them over the next ten years can be recorded). Strategies are of two types: Short and medium term actions (within 1-3 or 1-5 years), and Long term (longer than that).

It should be noted that not every single issue that was brought up during a focus group or organizational workshop, or mentioned on a questionnaire could be - or should be - included in this plan. Some items of apparent great importance to those voicing them, for example, seniors’ transportation needs, are simply beyond the scope of a *cultural* master plan. Other ideas heard contradicted each other. It was the challenging task of the Steering Committee to provide a lens through which all the data were viewed, weighed, and, as completely as possible, synthesized into the following Recommendations and Strategies.



First draft of Bowen Island’s organizational landscape

## **THEME 1: FRAMEWORK FOR ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT**

### **Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** *That the Municipal Council amend the Official Community Plan to formally adopt the Cultural Master Plan as an official planning document.*

**Recommendation 2:** *That the municipal council formally recognize the Bowen Island Arts Council as the leading advisory organization to municipal council for arts and cultural development, with responsibility to direct the implementation of the island's Cultural Master Plan.*

**Recommendation 3:** *That municipal council allocate funding to the Arts Council for administrative staffing to allow it to augment its current role to include directing the implementation of the island's Cultural Master Plan.*

**Recommendation 4:** *That the Bowen Island Arts Council amend its constitution and policies to clearly reflect a broad responsibility to represent and facilitate the Island's arts and cultural development in a manner that is accessible to all people.*

### **Rationale**

Two workshops designed for arts and cultural organizations were held as part of the Cultural Plan survey process. These workshops revealed the rich organizational landscape of arts and culture groups currently existing on the Island (see Appendix D). A strong recurring theme from these groups however, was recognition of their lack of coordination. They expressed a need for greater cooperation in a range of issues from information management, such as event bookings, to more administrative support, such as in grant applications.

After consideration, the Steering Committee came to believe that some sort of formal “umbrella structure” was necessary to respond to these organizational challenges. The Committee soon rejected the notion of an administratively focused “commission” as being too cumbersome to respond to the diverse scope of organizational interests. Consideration was given to forming a “coalition” made up of independent groups, but a coalition was thought to be too weak as an organizational structure. Finally, it was decided that the role of the Arts Council itself should be broadened to allow the Arts Council to act as an umbrella structure to represent the full range of arts and cultural aspirations. This new advisory role would not displace the current activities of the Arts Council (e.g., The Gallery, the summer Arts Festival). Community feedback indicated a concern that the Arts Council not become overly bureaucratic in pursuing this broader mandate. It should still maintain its grass-roots connection to island arts as it has in the past, but now also advocate for broader cultural needs as well.

Supporting the Arts Council to fulfill a broader mandate for arts and culture has the following advantages:

1) The Arts Council already serves an umbrella function for some arts organizations and individual artists. It is a natural progression to extend this service to include culturally oriented groups and cultural resource individuals.

2) Public investment in the Arts Council’s administrative ability, through recent municipal funding, would suggest that the Arts Council should be prepared to take on a broader public mandate to serve the larger community, with commensurate increase in funding.

### **Strategies**

A new role for the Bowen Island Arts Council would develop along the following lines:

- 1) The Arts Council would hold regular consultations with such organizations as Island arts and cultural groups and individuals, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Chamber of Commerce and individual retail shop owners, the Bed and Breakfast Association, the Bowen Island Disability Coalition (BIDC), West Vancouver School District and others, to direct and implement the Cultural Master Plan.
- 2) As a transition step, the currently established Cultural Master Plan Steering Committee would cooperate with the Arts Council board to determine a suitable

amendment to the Arts Council's constitution to encompass its broader responsibility.

- 3) The Arts Council would seek representation on its board of directors from as broad a range of arts and cultural interests as possible, to include, for example, such organizations as the Bowen Island Historians and the Bowen Island Heritage Preservation Association.
- 4) The Arts Council would report to municipal council as requested, and at least once a year on progress in strategies to implement the Cultural Master Plan.
- 5) The Arts Council would become a referral body for municipal council for recommendations on arts and culture related rezoning / subdivision applications; public art commissions; and such arts and culture related issues as new street names, and naming of topographical features etc.
- 6) Individual arts and cultural groups would not become subsumed into the larger umbrella structure – they would retain their own independent identity and initiatives. The Arts Council would not become a “flow through” agency for municipally funded grants to Island arts and cultural groups, but would seek to assist those groups to accomplish objectives that are consistent with the Cultural Master Plan.
- 7) The Arts Council would foster the creation of new arts and cultural organizations that would become administratively independent and economically self-generating over time.

It is envisioned that over a ten-year span, the relationship of the Arts Council with its many collaborative organizations would evolve into an established and effective pattern. It is foreseeable that eventually the Arts Council, the Parks and Recreation Commission arts / cultural programming component, and a community economic development function could naturally mature into some form of Arts and Culture Commission.

## THEME 2: ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

### Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** *That acquiring and expanding arts and cultural facilities that are accessible to all be recognized and actively supported by municipal council as a public priority; and that every form of assistance be considered for arts and cultural facility options, including location on municipally owned land / parkland. (Set aside land for arts/cultural uses when it comes available.)*

**Recommendation 2:** *That municipal council adopt a short-term plan to meet the immediate facilities needs of arts and cultural groups.*

**Recommendation 3:** *That municipal council consider the options recommended below for a medium to long term plan for an arts and cultural facility in Snug Cove.*

### Rationale

The demand for appropriate facility space continues to increase as Bowen's rich cultural community develops. Existing facilities are no longer able to meet this demand, particularly in the area of public assembly and performing arts. BICS Auditorium, built with community funds in partnership with School District 46, Sechelt originally, and now the West Vancouver School District, is no longer able to support both recreation programming and public assembly needs (e.g., community events/performances). Cates Hill Chapel is an appropriate space for short duration musical events and mid-size audiences but not for block-booked, set-up intensive performances. The Gallery at Artisan Square is a relatively small space and is scheduled for multi-use (i.e., art gallery and ongoing arts/recreation programming) which prohibits block-booked, set-up intensive performances. Collins Hall is a relatively small space with limited parking and the Union Steamship Co. building ("the Old General Store") is no longer available.

Most existing facilities are not fully accessible for all islanders. This includes access to and within the facility as well as acoustics (i.e., use of the infrared hearing assistive system). Every effort should be made to make facilities fully accessible to all people, including those with mobility, hearing and sight impairments.

The Cultural Master Plan Survey received strong public response for arts and cultural facilities:

- 63% of the responses indicated that facilities for arts and culture are not adequate.
- 82% agreed that Bowen Island needs a new community building that includes spaces for arts and cultural activities, as well as other uses.

The final question of the survey gave respondents space to write in their most important issue:

- 34%, the largest group of respondents, wrote “we need a new community arts building”. Among these responses, two main ideas were evident: “centrally located” and “a performing arts space”.
- 21% focused on a theatre with a new venue for Tir-na-NOg often mentioned.

### Strategies

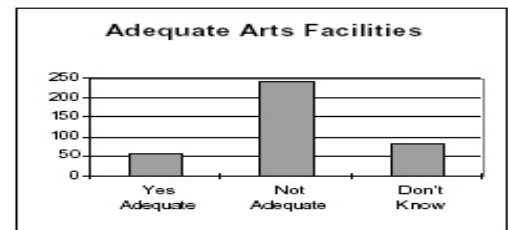
#### *The Immediate and Short Term Need: 1 to 3 years*

Performing arts groups, in particular, have struggled without an appropriate facility for many years, and responses from both the survey and focus group workshops indicate that this is an **immediate need**. The solution to this immediate need is somewhat problematic. Over the course of six months, the Steering Committee carefully considered many variables and facility options, but without land immediately available, short-term options are very limited. The following strategy is therefore recommended:

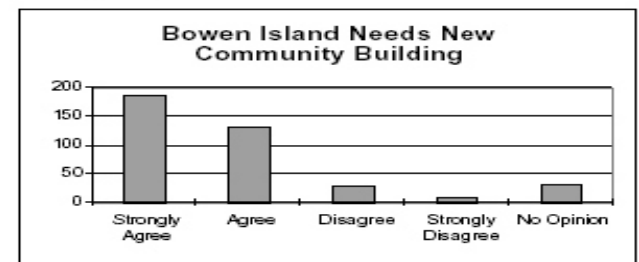
1) Allocate land for arts/cultural facility use as soon as possible. A minimum of one to two acres is recommended and the ideal location is the surplus land area identified in the Snug Cove plan for an arts centre. This allotment would accommodate an interim solution facility (see below) and also allow growth or evolution into the final arts centre. A one-two acre parcel would also accommodate other educational arts groups in need of space such as Tir-na-nOg.

#### *The Need for Facilities*

Questions about facilities received strong responses. When asked whether facilities for the arts and cultural activities on Bowen are adequate, 2 out of 3 (63%) said ‘no’. Only 16% said yes, with the other 22% admitting that they did not know.



Similarly, with regard to the need for a new community building that includes spaces for arts and cultural activities as well as spaces for other community uses, there was agreement from 82%, disagreement from 12%, with the remainder having no opinion.



## 2) Short-term facility options:

In the interim, until a medium to long term facility plan can be enacted, a non-permanent, compromise solution needs to be considered. A simple, moveable, temporary structure (such as a modular space) or a warehouse structure could be adopted to meet the immediate needs of performing arts groups. Private sector funding should be sought as much as possible for both capital costs associated with erecting such a facility and operational costs.

Ideally, an interim facility would be located on the parcel allocated for the medium to long term plan so that it could be eventually incorporated as part of the arts centre vision, possibly as an annex or as workshop/rehearsal space.

However, if the surplus lands do not become available in the short term, the following alternatives should be considered:

### a) Municipal Land on Carter Road (a.k.a. “the Library Lot”)

If this land becomes available in the short term, this could be an ideal location for an interim facility. Potential exists for the making of a “green building” with micro-hydro applications at this site which would translate into specialized grants and foundations being available.

### b) School District Property – North side septic field (a.k.a “the Snake Field”)

Preliminary discussions suggest that the School Board may be amenable to leasing this property. More details regarding a facility on this site are included in Appendix G.

### c) Blackberry Theatre at Artisan Square

This concept for a 2-storey building featuring a 150 seat theatre on the ground floor and commercial / retail / municipal use for the second floor has been proposed by Doug Berry and associates. Building costs would be covered by the developer but operation of the theatre is dependent on municipal funding / municipal use (which could, for example, be a space for Municipal Hall, Parks and Recreation or any other civic need) for a minimum of 5 years. The Steering Committee does not support this as the *best* option due to the need for municipal funding for a building that would not become publicly owned.

The proposal for Blackberry Theatre is attached in Appendix G. It was submitted to Council in

2002 and is still a possibility in the sense that its proponents are flexible and open to variations, but its viability is dependent on the parcel of land remaining available by the developer.

Other short-term considerations:

An art education and / or workshop space is needed for both visual arts (e.g., painting, printmaking) and crafts (e.g., pottery).

Use of some of the Davies Orchard Cottages should be considered for artist-in-residence living quarters and also for arts workshops / exhibits. It is recommended that the Arts Council cooperate with the Heritage Preservation Association to establish an Orchard Cottages Plan with GVRD Parks for this purpose.

Use of municipal land (which could include active parks and rights-of-way) should be considered for cultural events and public art. An application process governing such uses should be developed. A public art policy should also be developed.

### ***The Medium to Long Term Need (3 - 10 years)***

The Steering Committee endorses the concept of a Performing Arts Centre in the Cove, as currently designated in the Official Community Plan (OCP), and as recommended by the Snug Cove Task Force Plan (January 2001). The Bowen Island Arts Council also endorses this plan. The preferred location is in the GVRD Surplus Lands, within Snug Cove (See Appendix G on Multi-use arts centre).

This centrally located multi-use Arts Facility with performance space, including studio and gallery space, office space and kitchen, could supply a variety of uses. The facility could be combined together with some other compatible purpose, such as a Municipal Hall. For example, Port Moody has built a joint arts/municipal use structure that integrates a 190 seat theatre, with a capacity for both indoor and outdoor theatre use. The Steering Committee does not believe however, that a sports oriented recreational centre is a compatible function with the proposed arts facility.

Enlarging the demand for Bowen Island arts and cultural services forms a significant part of this Cultural Plan, as outlined in the Community Economic Development section. Creation of a “theatre in



the woods” within the GVRD Surplus Lands would allow visitors from the mainland to walk from the ferry through Crippen Park to attend cultural events. This low impact access by visitors, plus proximity to restaurants and parking near the Cove, makes the Surplus Lands a prime location for achieving the economic and environmental objectives of the Cultural Plan. Enhanced revenues generated by the on-going economic development strategy would make a significant contribution to the facility’s operating cost.

### ***Funding the Medium to Long Term Plan***

The Steering Committee recommends consideration of two options for funding an Arts Facility in Snug Cove:

1) The first option for an Arts Facility within the GVRD Surplus Lands would involve **cooperative sharing with some other compatible public service institution**, to create for example, a joint municipal hall / arts facility, similar to the one established in Port Moody. The Bowen Island Library could be another potential partner. Land would be acquired for public use as part of a comprehensive development of the GVRD Surplus Lands. Construction costs for the dual purpose public facility could be financed through general tax revenue, via a referendum on the question of capital borrowing for the project.

It is noted that municipal council in the 2002/03 budget continues to create a Capital and Stabilization Fund that could, in part, be directed to construction of a dual purpose Municipal Hall / Arts Facility.

2) **Solicitation of private / foundation funds** could form the basis for construction of a stand alone multi-purpose building dedicated to arts and cultural activities. It would be assumed that land for the building would be provided without cost, from either GVRD Parks or Bowen municipal council, as part of a comprehensive development of the GVRD Surplus Lands. The municipality would also ensure a waiver of fees for water supply, sewer, garbage, taxes, and any other levies into the future. The on-going operational costs of the Facility would be covered by self-generated income, supplemented by a private endowment, dedicated to that purpose.

It is estimated by the Steering Committee that a stand alone Arts Facility, with money raised through private philanthropy, would cost about \$1.4 million to build (See Appendix G).

In addition, it should be noted that under the Federal Department of Heritage Canada, a funding program entitled “Cultural Spaces” may be applied to for up to one third (33.3%) of the capital costs for a community arts/cultural facility. An additional grant may also be applied to for up to one half (50%) of the cost of appointing such a facility (ie. seating, equipment, etc.). Other federal grants and initiatives (e.g., Legacy projects) should also be researched.

### THEME 3: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### Recommendation

**Recommendation I:** That the Arts Council initiate and direct an on-going arts and culture based community economic development strategy; and that this strategy, under municipal council leadership, be integrated as a major component into all aspects of planning and development on the Island.

#### Rationale

Arts and culture based community economic development has the potential to build the Island’s local economy while also strengthening social cohesion and protecting the natural environment.

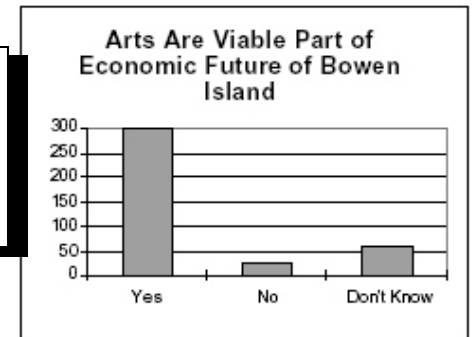
Currently, Bowen’s abundant natural setting inspires artistic and cultural creativity. At the same time, cultivation of arts and culture helps to create the kind of community that lives in harmony with the natural world. A long-term strategy to enhance this relationship would support the objectives of the Official Community Plan (OCP) and help to serve Bowen Island’s mandate within the Islands Trust.

The OCP’s overarching concern is to achieve a sense of social and ecological balance in Island development. One of the OCP’s stated Broad Objectives is:

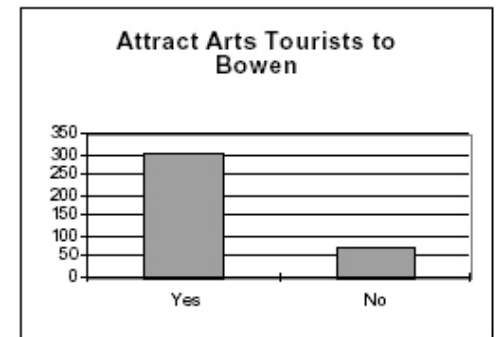
*To foster the creation and maintenance of employment on the Island in island based sustainable activities.*

Arts and culture based community economic development can provide a sound means to achieve this OCP objective. If properly implemented, arts and cultural development would bring greater overall economic self-sufficiency, a more equitable distribution of wealth, and new forms of local ownership of resources. Socially, the benefits would include greater self-expression, personal fulfilment, and a strengthening of the Island’s sense of identity and character.

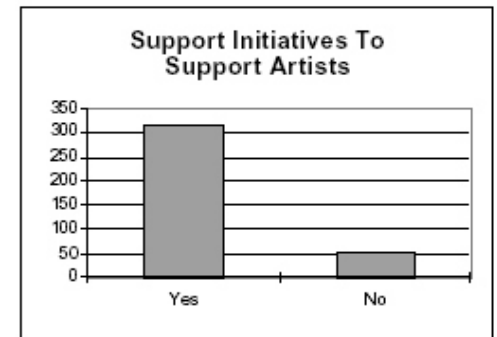
- 78% of respondents said arts are a viable part of the island’s economic future...



- 79% saw arts as a way to attract tourists to the island



- and 83% supported the idea of helping island artists to sell off-island.



“Community economic development” itself is a new discipline that has arisen in recognition of the need for sustainability in all aspects of community development. The term implies a balance between social (non-monetary) values and traditional economic expansion. (See: [www.sfu.ca/cedc](http://www.sfu.ca/cedc)). The values inherent in the definition of community economic development include concerns for local control of resources and shared access, recycling of finances within the community, and preservation of natural capital. Arts and culture based community economic development, from this perspective then, must see art and culture as part of the governance process itself, and not simply as a commodity to be sold.

There are examples in other jurisdictions where culture based economic development has occurred at the expense of community cohesion, or where the environmental impacts outweigh the local economic benefits. These negative impacts have usually been associated with excessive reliance on tourism. When culture becomes simply a commodity for sale and consumption, rather than a genuine sharing of community life, the effect can destroy rather than build community.

For Bowen Island, the important consideration is to develop local arts and culture to an appropriate scale, compatible with the Island’s natural setting, its civic infrastructure, and the community population base. Community economic development within these perimeters should emphasize quality arts and cultural services that feature Bowen Island’s unique heritage and forms of expression. The market focus should begin with the Island population itself, where artistic and cultural events are true community celebrations in which visitors are also encouraged to attend. Cultural tourism, generally, should aim for value-added products that maximize return with minimal impacts. This would suggest such knowledge based activities as arts performance and education, including handcraft courses, and nature appreciation tours.

Art and handcraft exports to Vancouver, through outlets within the city itself, are another important facet of community economic development. Facilities for this type of work would largely be dependent on home-based studios and workshops, although more centralized production of handcrafted textile, furniture, or other products could be viable. Artisan Square will remain an important location for promotion and production of cottage or artisan industry.

The Cultural Plan Survey meanwhile, makes clear that the Bowen Island population is ready to support an arts and culture based development strategy: **Four out of five survey respondents view**

**the arts as a viable part of the island's economic future, see the arts as a way to attract tourists, and support the idea of helping island artists to market their work off-island.**

The Arts Council would initiate new projects for arts and cultural development. Actual implementation of many of these projects however, would involve cooperation with other organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Bed and Breakfast Association and island retreat centres. The following are some recommended community economic development strategies:

### ***Strategies***

#### ***Short and Medium Term Strategies (1 - 5 years)***

- 1) Expand the existing Arts Resource Directory for use by individuals wishing to purchase art or cultural services; for individual artists to market their services; for liaison among cultural groups; and for local schools needing resource persons. Also, administer a centralized calendar of Island cultural events for better inter-group coordination.
- 2) Coordinate with local shops to retail more Bowen-made handcrafts, visual art, publications on Island history and eco-education (identification of Island wildflowers etc.), as well as artisan food items.
- 3) Encourage local visitor accommodations to create an art display/retail system within their guest stay venues; and to develop art education/accommodation partnerships between the visitor accommodation sector and art education providers.
- 4) Foster creation of an open-ended, multi-disciplined craftworkers' association, and to advise the association on market opportunities for various handcrafts.
- 5) Cooperate with the BI Parks and Recreation Commission (BIPRC) to advocate for local management of the Nielson conservation property (former Lieben artists' colony); and develop an arts/eco-tour component as part of the site conservation plan.
- 6) Work with the Historians' archives to encourage local venues to display large photo prints of Bowen's early logging, and settlement history. Advocate for a successor volume to Irene Howard's Bowen Island history to cover the years since 1972.

- 7) Review the current draft policy guidelines for movie companies to receive permission to film on Bowen Island, including provisions on local hiring.
- 8) Facilitate expansion of fibre-arts education, pottery, and other craft classes, in arts workshop facilities situated in an accessible, central location.
- 9) Advocate for and help design a municipal permit system that encourages street theatre and musical performances in public places by local artists.
- 10) Coordinate a year-round cycle of arts and cultural activities including a summer theatre festival, Bowfest, and celebrations of seasonal change, such as the returning herons and migratory songbirds (spring), and coho salmon (fall).
- 11) Work with the existing Design Panel to educate the public about the Island's Arts and Crafts architectural design guidelines; and to help update the Design Panel's terms of reference to include greater use of local materials, and to incorporate "green building" standards.
- 12) Cooperate with the Heritage Preservation Society and others to produce an Island-wide inventory of sites with cultural or natural heritage values, and to advocate for protection of those sites.
- 13) Encourage Bowen-originated designs and products for such uses as public buildings, places, signage, etc.

***Long Term Strategies (6 - 10 years)***

- 1) The Arts Council itself may evolve from being an independent membership based association, into a more formal publicly mandated administration such as an Arts and Culture Commission.
- 2) Coordinate a regular inter-island art and cultural exchange program among Islands Trust and other island communities.

- 3) The proposed craftworkers' association could become a craft producers' co-op that would manage and market its members' products.
- 4) Obtain a community radio license from the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC); and facilitate operation of local community radio broadcasting.

One of the goals of the Cultural Master Plan is for Bowen Island to grow toward becoming a sustainable community because of its cultural wealth and diversity. Working towards this objective, through fostering arts and culture based local development, will require the continuing and organized effort of local government and civic groups.

The Island has already, over many decades, invested wisely in preserving its rich natural heritage. This investment is now helping to generate a social dividend - the Bowen Island advantage - as the community continues to develop into a thriving "arts mecca". A long-term arts and culture based community economic development strategy would build on this effort, as a place where culture and nature converge.

## **THEME 4: CULTURAL EDUCATION, PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS**

### **Recommendation**

**Recommendation 1:** *That a more efficient, collaborative approach to arts & cultural programming and event planning be initiated by Bowen Island Arts Council (BIAC) and Bowen Island Parks and Recreation Commission (BIRPC).*

### **Rationale**

The Cultural Plan survey shows that an impressive number of islanders participate in arts-oriented programs and events:

- 34% of respondents have performed in art events such as music or theatre.
- 28% have practiced a craft, such as fibre arts; 24% have been involved in painting or other visual arts.
- 31% have taken a course, either offered publicly, or through private lessons.

A rich landscape of arts/cultural organizations exists on Bowen Island (see Appendix D). It represents a large and diverse system, quite remarkably so given the island's population.

At the same time however, participants in two workshops that were held to elicit the opinions of local arts and cultural organizations voiced concerns that programming or event planning initiatives often operate in isolation from each other. It was felt that a more comprehensive, collaborative approach would be more efficient for program providers, and be more beneficial for the community. Workshop members also emphasized that education/mentoring/skill development was a key function of their organization, and in some cases, its primary mandate.

Arts and cultural programs offered through BIPRC have potential to become better integrated with the many arts and culture-oriented activities that are now provided separately by community groups, or individuals. Collaboration on promotional efforts (e.g., brochures, fliers) would maximize



exposure and possibly increase participation rates. Other resources, such as the Arts and Cultural Directory, could be better utilized as information tools connecting artists with community. Collaboration with the Bowen Island Disability Coalition (BIDC) would serve to ensure that all events/programs are as accessible as possible.

Arts and cultural events are not limited to indoor facilities. Use of municipal land including active parks needs to be considered. (Please refer to the Cultural Facilities Strategy, Theme 2).

### **Short Term Strategies**

- 1) BIAC would invite all educationally-oriented arts/cultural groups to an annual exploratory meeting to discuss their programming philosophy, current initiatives and future plans. Collaborative initiatives might result. Possible duplication or gaps in programming might be discovered. BIPRC, Community School Association (CSA), Arts Council Gallery, Foxglove Fibre Arts, Tir-na-nOg, Penryhn Academy and other educationally-oriented groups would be encouraged to attend.
- 2) Jointly publish a brochure promoting arts/culture courses offered by a variety of island groups and organizations. BIAC, with support from BIPRC, would work with educationally-oriented arts groups such as Foxglove Fiber Arts, Tir-na-nOg, Penryhn Academy, BIPRC, CSA and individual art teachers, practicing potters and other craft producers to jointly publish a brochure offering courses at regular intervals.
- 3) Encourage island cultural organizations that presently do not offer classes to develop an educational component within their organization. This can be an innovative way to fulfill their organizational mandate, and to provide a new source of funding. There is potential for course development in Island history, Island architecture, music appreciation, Island ecology, and many other areas.
- 4) BIAC would invite organizers of cultural events to an annual exploratory meeting to discuss current initiatives, timing of events and possible collaborative efforts (e.g., promotion, equipment rentals, etc.)

- 5) Develop and maintain an Event Web-site that acts as a clearing house for event planners. Organizations or individuals planning an event would contact BIAC to mark the date of their event and to check on possible double-bookings.
- 6) Continue to develop the Arts & Cultural Directory and market it further as an additional resource for arts/culture education opportunities on the island. BIAC would encourage artists and performers to consider teaching and sharing their expertise through a private or group lesson format.

### **Long Range Strategies**

It is possible, in the ten-year scope of this Plan, to imagine that the promotion and integration of arts and cultural programming could lead to development of a full fledged educational Arts College, where current individual groups could evolve into departments within a larger institutional organization.

### **Recommendation**

**Recommendation 2:** *That BIAC work with Island schools, including the Teen Centre, to strengthen connections with Bowen's artists and to develop local cultural content in school classes; and for BIAC to establish collaborative connections with off-island schools and educational programs that could benefit Bowen Island arts and cultural organizations and individual artists.*

### **Rationale**

Arts/cultural programming within the provincially regulated system is limited on the Island to BICS, IPS, and the preschools. Greater coordination between these schools and island arts/cultural organizations through BIAC would provide more opportunities for individual artists to work with children and youth, either in one-time visits, displays or performances, or through artists-in-residence programs.

Publishing an up-to-date Directory of arts and cultural resource persons on the Island, as recommended elsewhere in this Plan, would be a useful tool for school teachers and administrators.

Incentives should be provided, by way of paid honoraria from the school or by project grants through BIAC, to individuals who provide arts or cultural resources. Such initiatives as the Youth Music Concert, held annually by the Island Classical Concerts' Society, is an excellent model of promotion of musical talent among children, as is the Tir-na-nOg Theatre School's annual "Spring Festival of Plays." which has run in unbroken succession for 14 years, and in the 2001 season presented 120 Bowen youth in ten feature-length plays. The annual exhibit of Young Artists on Bowen at the BIAC Gallery provides a similar service for visual art.

Rich potential exists, as well, for collaborative connections between Island arts and cultural groups, local schools, and off-Island out-reach programs at such places as the Emily Carr School of Art and Capilano College. Individual artists would benefit from opportunities to further develop their skills in collaboration with other artists through specialty workshops, which would nurture Bowen's "artistic resource" and engender mutual support among professionals and amateurs alike.

#### **Short Term Strategies**

- 1) Encourage the CSA to fund and re-instate the "Young Artists of Bowen" annual exhibit at The Gallery.
- 2) Create an "Arts and Culture in the Schools" Committee with teacher representation from BICS, IPS and the preschools and representatives of CSA, BIAC, BIPRC, the Teen Centre and other interested groups.
  - Meet twice a year to plan opportunities for connecting island artists with the schools and to source funding for such initiatives.
  - Research the "Learning through the Arts" program, an international educational initiative dedicated to changing the way the core curriculum is taught and learned in public schools. It is now in place in elementary schools across Canada (specifically in North Vancouver schools such as Westview, Monteray, Braemar and Norgate). Web site reference: [lta.ca](http://lta.ca)

- Develop ideas for lesson plan units that link Bowen's art/culture/heritage with current school curriculum. Work with the Bowen Island Historians to have their Grade 5 lesson plan unit serve as a template for other island cultural groups.
- 3) Research out-reach programs offered by, for example, Emily Carr School of Art and Capilano College. BIAC could work with BIPRC in organizing artist retreats with visiting instructors and guest artists at Bowen's various retreat centres.

#### **IV. IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN**

This Cultural Plan is structured and organized in such a way that the recommendations in its first substantive section - Theme I: Framework for Advocacy and Support - in effect spell out the beginning steps of the implementation process. For any plan, two keys to successful implementation are formal adoption of the plan and clear assignment of implementation to a body that is ready, willing, and able to oversee that task.

The implementation, then, of this Bowen Island Cultural Master Plan would begin with the adoption of the plan by municipal council, and with that body and the Bowen Island Arts Council (BIAC) acting on the other recommendations in that first section. Those actions would:

- 1) establish and legitimize the Cultural Plan as part of Bowen Island Municipality's Official Community Plan,
- 2) charge the Arts Council with its implementation,
- 3) fund the Arts Council to work on implementation, and
- 4) start transforming the Arts Council internally into a vehicle which could oversee the plan's implementation.

Once those steps are taken, BIAC would formalize partnerships with various entities to carry out the plan's recommendations: the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, Bowen Island Historians, Community School Association, Library, and others. For its part, BIAC has already scheduled a February 8 workshop for purposes of reviewing the Cultural Plan and establishing first year priorities and roles, i.e., Who Will Do What By When.