

# City of Guelph

## Drill Hall Feasibility Study

February 28, 2025



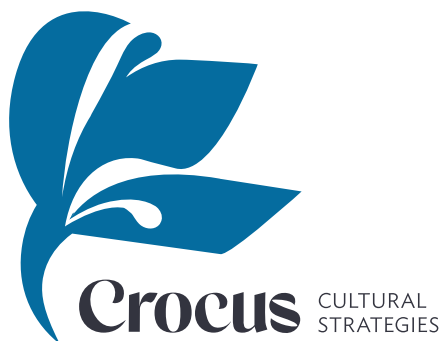
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# Territorial Acknowledgment

This place we call Guelph has served as traditional lands and a place of refuge for many peoples over time, but more specifically the Attiwonderonk, and the Haudenosaunee. This land is held as the treaty lands and territory with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Guelph lies directly adjacent to the Haldimand Tract and is part of a long-established traditional hunting ground for the Six Nations of the Grand River. Many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples who have come from across Turtle Island call Guelph home today.

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# Table of Contents

Territorial Acknowledgment .....	1
Report Prepared By: .....	1
Introduction .....	4
Alignment to Guelph’s Key Priorities.....	5
Indigenous Relations in the Arts Sector .....	7
Key Questions to be Addressed .....	7
Historic, Cultural, and Local Context .....	8
Historic.....	8
Cultural.....	8
Local Context.....	10
Stakeholder Interviews .....	11
City-led engagement October 2024 .....	11
Consultant-led engagement December 2024 .....	11
Building Characteristics .....	12
Physical characteristics .....	12
Utilities and services .....	12
Zoning bylaws.....	13
Possible layout and space configurations .....	13
Accessibility and Equity .....	13
Parking, Transit and Walkability.....	14
Benchmarking Research .....	15
CityScape Community ArtSpace, North Vancouver, BC .....	15
Western Front, Vancouver, BC.....	15
Elora Centre for the Arts, ON .....	15
Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, ON .....	15
Analysis and Recommendations .....	18
Advance the Vision of a Must-See Destination .....	18
A Community Art Space.....	18
Arts Facility Function or Activity: .....	19
Recognize Complex Challenges .....	20
A Catalyst for a Vibrant and Prosperous Community .....	22
A Catalyst for a Vibrant and Prosperous Community Continued. ....	23

**Guelph Drill Hall | Feasibility Study**

Build a Community of Support ..... 24

Invest in Sustainability ..... 25

Operating Estimate ..... 27

Notes: Revenues ..... 28

Notes: Expenses..... 29

Capital Cost Estimates ..... 30

Facilities Construction and Fit-Out: ..... 30

Conclusion ..... 31

Appendices..... 33

Appendix A: City of Guelph Key Priorities & Decisions ..... 33

Appendix B: Existing Art & Culture Spaces in Guelph ..... 36

Municipal Recreation & Culture Facilities..... 41

Appendix C: Physical Description, Heritage Attributes, and Statement of  
Significance ..... 44

Appendix D: Organizational Chart..... 47

# Introduction

The City of Guelph Museums and Culture team commissioned this report to explore future arts and culture uses for the historic Guelph Drill Hall and examine their feasibility. Situated on a prominent corner of Guelph's downtown centre at Farquhar Street and Wyndham Street South, the Drill Hall, originally constructed in 1866, is protected as a designated heritage building under the Ontario Heritage Act. The building has undergone recent stabilization work to restore it to an acceptable base building condition.

The City-owned building has been vacant since 2006, and the City of Guelph has conducted numerous studies, including a request for expressions of interest for the adaptive reuse of the heritage building. These initiatives yielded limited responses and has prompted further work by City staff to engage the community more broadly and examine the potential of the Drill Hall as a community arts space through this Feasibility Study Report.

In 2023, the City of Guelph completed Culture Plan 2030, which articulates a long-term municipal and community strategy to stabilize and advance arts, heritage, and creative industry in Guelph. Guelph's vision is to create a cultural landscape that will "foster a sense of belonging, contribute to a collective identity, and spark inspiration, connection, comfort, and joy". A key element of the Plan's Case for Culture is the assertion that "creating an engaging and welcoming destination gives visitors opportunity to experience a city's unique features and provides a glimpse at local heritage, art, traditions, and aspirations." Expanding on this vision, in exploring the Drill Hall as an arts hub, the potential for Guelph to become the premiere destination for contemporary visual arts in Southwestern Ontario emerged.

The Plan identifies conditions and opportunities for the local culture sector to survive and thrive and recognizes the Drill Hall's potential to support this objective. The Culture Plan acknowledges that "while there is a solid foundation for culture in Guelph, members of the creative community have expressed concerns about the lack of affordable studio, rehearsal, exhibition, and performance space; limited representation and opportunities for equity-deserving community members; difficulties attracting community support and audiences; and low income and inflated cost of living driving artists from the community." (Guelph Culture Plan 2030)



## Alignment to Guelph's Key Priorities

Guelph has a robust set of official guiding documents that sets its path for the future, prioritizing sustainable population growth and economic development, and recognizing the vital contributions that various initiatives, including arts and culture, make to a vibrant, prosperous community, a flourishing tourism sector, and social connections that foster wellbeing.

The Official Community Plan, Culture Plan 2030, Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Shaping Guelph Growth Management Strategy, and the Downtown Renewal program have informed this examination of the Drill Hall's potential to help the City of Guelph serve its community in useful ways. [Appendix A](#) describes each plan's priorities as they relate to the Drill Hall and arts and culture services.

Guelph is growing from a population of about 132,000 in 2024 to a target of 203,000 by 2051. With City planning efforts driving sustainable density into the downtown core, opportunities to create "third spaces"<sup>1</sup> and connect significant cultural services will become more critical. The Shaping Guelph Growth Management Strategy is projecting the Downtown area to reach a density of 200 people and jobs per hectare by 2051 (up from 100 in 2020), marking significant growth.

The [Guelph Community Plan](#) priorities align with the development of the Drill Hall as a community arts centre. The vision expressed in the Plan's "We Are Home" section that "social connections in neighbourhoods are strong, with many activities and community assets" and to "have access to good-quality core amenities and retail options" support the Drill Hall as a key asset.

The Community Plan articulates the importance of creating value by offering learning opportunities "that inspire exploration, discovery and solutions for the future of our city and world, and to recognize and support the value of our arts and cultural sector, attracting more visitors and artistic talent." Concrete actions and investments will be needed to ensure "more artistic/cultural businesses can get the help and investment they need to be self-sustaining," and that Guelph's "Downtown continues to grow as a destination hub of historic beauty and character, with unique retail opportunities, entertainment and tourist attractions."

[Economic Development and Tourism Strategy](#) goals are to "build a must-see visitor destination in Ontario" and "enhance Guelph's unique brand for business, talent and visitors." Data from the [Ontario Arts Council](#) shows how arts and culture contribute to a strong economy, revitalize communities, help communities attract and retain

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<sup>1</sup> A "third place" or "third space" is a public spot where individuals regularly connect over shared interests or activities, contributing to a sense of community and belonging.

workers, and drive tourism across Ontario, and contribute to overall quality of life. Cultural attractions and activities also contribute to economic development by increasing linger-time<sup>2</sup>. These impacts and data will be discussed in the report.

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<sup>2</sup> "Linger time" is defined as how long visitors stayed or 'lingered' in a certain area.

## Indigenous Relations in the Arts Sector

The Arts, Culture and Heritage sector in Canada and around the world has been examining its role in the community and central to this work is strong collaboration with First Nations and Indigenous communities. Ensuring authentic representation, language and culture are woven through a cultural organization's values and activities uphold core principles which guide the arts sector today: the concepts of right relations, Indigenous self-determination, and reconciliation.

The City of Guelph adopted an [Indigenous Relations Framework](#) in 2024 that aims to advance reconciliation and strengthen connections with Indigenous communities. Developed with input from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River and Grand River Métis Council, and urban Indigenous Peoples and organizations, the five areas of focus are: Indigenous representation and participation; Learning together; Safe spaces and supports; Employment and economic reconciliation; and Protecting our environment for future generations.

Major Canadian arts and heritage organizations such as the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage supports Indigenous culture through programs that preserve and present Indigenous heritage, promote public understanding, and revitalize languages, promoting an approach that respects Indigenous arts, culture, language, rights and worldviews.

This report recommends recommitting to this thoughtful approach to build strengthened partnerships and shared understanding with Indigenous and First Nations communities, and create new opportunities that improve the visibility and contributions of Indigenous Cultural Heritage. Prioritizing a staff position leading Indigenous programs and outreach and strong relationships with Indigenous communities to inform the planning of a potential community arts centre will advance the principles of reconciliation and foster "unity, respect, and shared prosperity."

## Key Questions to be Addressed

- What are the characteristics of a facility that would address the community's need for arts and culture spaces?
- To what extent does the Drill Hall address those needs?
- What is the right organizational structure and operating model to for the Drill Hall to operate in an economically sustainable manner?



# Historic, Cultural, and Local Context

## Historic

The Drill Hall in Guelph is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act for its design, historical, and contextual value. Built in 1866, it served Guelph's militia units and hosted county agricultural shows and community events. The Hall holds historical significance due to its connection to Guelph's first militia units and the early development of the Canadian army. Its construction was funded by local and county councils, as well as agricultural societies.

By the late 1800s, Guelph refitted the Drill Hall for industrial use, attracting various manufacturers that contributed to the city's industrial growth. The Drill Hall's architecture, though modified, retains its heavy timber structure and embodies its original purpose. It forms part of Guelph's historic downtown core, alongside other civic landmarks. Finally, the hall's orientation links to the historic Fair Ground and the 1856 Grand Trunk Railway alignment.

## Cultural

Guelph's arts and culture community has expressed, through multiple engagements between 2021 and 2024, that the City of Guelph is lacking art exhibition spaces specifically, and arts and culture spaces broadly. Many community arts groups lost their gathering spaces during the pandemic and have not been restored to previous service levels.

The majority of feedback provided from community members and groups to the 2021 Market Sounding Study and 2024 Community Engagement identified community service, cultural, educational and institutional uses for the Drill Hall. These studies reveal the building is widely recognized as having strong potential to be a new, central community arts location that could support these uses.

Currently, community visual arts spaces in Guelph are a mix of private, not-for-profit and membership organizations, offering studio access and/or small exhibition opportunities for members. Many studio facilities are at capacity with waitlists, and low turnover. This creates a significant barrier for emerging local artists, new residents, and graduates from the University of Guelph's Fine Arts program, forcing some to leave the City seeking opportunities.

Guelph has an arts ecosystem that is diverse and grassroots. Local artists' collectives and private non-profits are contributing vital arts education programming and arts services, including studio access. Printmaking, makerspaces, wet studios, collaborative exhibitions with opportunities for art sales, all of these are incredibly important contributors to a functioning and vibrant arts community.

## **Guelph Drill Hall | Feasibility Study**

The exhibition spaces available are small, including a number of spaces that are made up of only one wall within a café, bookstore, or multi-purpose cultural space, such as The Bookshelf, 10C, Necessary Arts Collective, and the artBar, among others. A list of existing art & culture spaces with descriptions is found in [Appendix B](#).

## Local Context

The Drill Hall's heritage character and location is perceived by the City of Guelph and its residents as a potentially integral contributor to Guelph's future vision. The location of the Drill Hall, at the intersection of Farquhar and Wyndham, is considered a "Gateway" to the downtown core and Heritage Conservation District. Gateways are points that mark a sense of entry and give special meaning to what is beyond—Guelph's downtown. As the City of Guelph has outlined in its Official Plan, "many of the jobs Downtown and much of its vibrancy depend on its role as a civic and cultural hub." At this significant Gateway, the Drill Hall is a prominent marker of the City's historic core, communicating the story of Guelph's heritage and cultural vibrancy.

The Plan recognizes that "as Downtown's population grows, other community facilities will be needed to meet the needs for meeting and recreation space. Downtown's historically and architecturally significant buildings, as well as its other cultural heritage elements, are something to conserve and celebrate. As Downtown evolves it will be important to ensure that significant cultural buildings are protected, maintained and sensitively repurposed."

The Ontario arts and culture sector directly contributes \$27.5 billion annually to the provincial economy, representing 3.3% of Ontario's GDP, with over 270,000 direct jobs supported by the sector in Ontario alone – more than the combined jobs in real estate, auto manufacturing, forestry and mining. For every dollar invested in arts and cultural organizations, \$25 is generated in other sources of revenue. The City's Economic Strategy identified in 2020 that the percentage of Guelph residents employed in the arts and culture sector is 10 percent lower than the national average, but that number grew almost 8 times faster than the provincial level<sup>3</sup>.

According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "arts, culture and heritage improve the ability of municipal governments to influence local economic development by attracting and retaining a skilled and talented workforce." The majority of Ontario business leaders say that a thriving arts and culture scene is something that would make it easier to attract top talent to their community; skilled workers agree that a thriving arts and cultural scene is something they would look for when considering moving to a new community.

While visiting Ontario, 9.5 million overnight tourists participate in arts and culture activities, generating \$3.7 billion in GDP, with the average tourist traveling for cultural experiences spending twice as much per trip as a typical tourist and staying more than one night longer.

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<sup>3</sup> [Guelph Economic Development and Tourism Strategy](#), 2022-2026

## Stakeholder Interviews

### City-led engagement October 2024

In October 2024, 18 leaders in Guelph's culture community toured the Drill Hall and provided input. There was a strong sense that as an arts hub, the Drill Hall would serve the community as an economic driver, a community arts campus in the core of the City, and a place to connect.

Gaps in Guelph's cultural spaces and services were identified as including artist studio space that can accommodate a variety of art forms, including large scale artmaking, rehearsal and performances space, non-commercial gallery spaces with appropriate lighting and facilities to exhibit a variety of works not bound by collections or curatorial mandates, affordable cultural sector office and collaborative space, and creative, cross-disciplinary gathering spaces

Community leaders identified opportunities for the Drill Hall's role in integrating the Guelph's art, history, and food culture, high visibility of culture in the downtown core with public access, exhibition space, and audience-friendly space; cultural celebrations, ceremonies, and events. Studios, workshop spaces for art creation and display, communal spaces for artists to innovate, a café and a gift shop, and tourism attraction. Challenges include significant renovations required, competition for resources leading to a sense that limited financial support would be better directed to existing cultural organizations, and concern about duplication with existing arts and cultural operators.

### Consultant-led engagement December 2024

In December 2024, interviews with 14 residents and community members who participate or work in the arts and culture sector took place. Key themes emerged including broad concerns about the complex challenges facing Guelph: increasing homelessness, affordability crisis, lack of economic opportunities, insufficient resources from government and service providers, mental health and addiction issues, and a downtown core that many people are not comfortable visiting due to safety concerns. There is a sense that the specific rights and needs of the Indigenous community require greater consideration within the planning and resourcing of community and social services.

Artists and arts educators in Guelph feel their work to maintain a thriving arts community is undervalued and unsupported by the City. Despite small spaces being used as "art hubs" and studios in the City, and a Guelph Arts Council in place for decades, there is no significant unifying entity or facility for artists that can champion and represent the arts sector. Some arts spaces and operations closed or significantly altered during the pandemic and have not recovered to meet the needs and expectations of the community.

Local artists currently exhibit their art in small coffee shops or bookstores – the galleries are out of reach due to mandates and collections that result in barriers to inclusion for local artists. Many local artists have launched small businesses and private, non-profits to serve the needs of the residents of Guelph. These organizations are competing for scarce funding, and in general do not receive stable operating support from government and arts service organizations.

The Study revealed that, although the City of Guelph has long been known for its reputation as a supporter of the arts, attracting new residents and businesses in response to that reputation, it is critical that the City, in collaboration with other levels of government and arts organizations, take actions to sustain that reputation.

## Building Characteristics

### Physical characteristics

The Drill Hall, a 12,850 square foot (gross area), two-and-a-half storey, timber-frame building originally constructed in 1866, is located at 72 Farquhar Street. The building footprint occupies almost the entire lot area, with minimal setbacks.

The recent \$5million stabilization work includes a new foundation, which resulted in elevating the main door threshold well above ground level, as well as a large concrete slab which forms a loggia on the east side of the building designed to be used as the primary, accessible entrance. The heritage elements required to be maintained include original building form and gable roof of main block and extended centre bay in west elevation; original arrangement of window openings on the north, south and west elevations; large segmentally arched, 2-light window on second floor of west elevation; heavy timber, post and beam construction elements. The building interior has been taken back to studs, joists, posts and beams; the main floor was excavated for stabilization work and will require grading and concrete placement.

### Utilities and services

The Drill Hall has been vacant since 2006. The building is connected to electricity and natural gas services. The improvements to bring the building up to basic occupancy standards have previously been estimated at a minimum of \$5million (or \$370/sf) and include connecting to municipal water and sanitary services; installing a new roof, siding, windows, interior framing, flooring, interior finishing, elevator and staircases, fire suppression and security systems, and a permanent plumbing and HVAC system.

## Zoning bylaws

The property is currently [zoned](#) Downtown 3a (D.3a). The purpose of this zone is to permit various components of Guelph Central Station and accessory uses. Current zoning allows for potential uses of the property as an agricultural Produce Market, Retail Establishment, Restaurant, Service Establishment, or Transit Terminal. Community and Service Uses such as Art Gallery, Artisan studio, Community Centre, Public hall would require rezoning to D.3. The zoning bylaw regulations for building (height and floor space index), setbacks and lot area are equivalent for both D.3 and D.3a. It should be noted again that the Drill Hall building has been excluded from residential use due to its proximity to the Metrolinx line and the setbacks for sensitive use.

## Possible layout and space configurations

The main floor of the Drill Hall is approximately 6,100 sf, which would permit an exhibition gallery space of 4000-4500 sf, with a lobby that includes a small café and shop carrying local arts, crafts and products. The second floor of the Drill Hall has 6,000 sf of floor space and would house a combination of individual and shared studio spaces, workshop, and storage. The 1,400 sf third floor requires at least half the floor space for mechanical and electrical equipment, allowing approximately 600 sf for administrative office space.

Engaging a designer and architect well-versed in the design concepts that lead to effective and successful community spaces and visual arts centres will be of primary importance. Exploring forward-looking, green building design standards (LEED or Passive House) and innovative solutions such as maintaining the interior heritage character by placing insulation and utilities on the exterior, will further preserve and enhance the community's experience of the Drill Hall's heritage and history. See [Capital Cost](#) Estimates for details on possible functional spaces and [Appendix C](#) for a detailed description of the Drill Hall's building data and heritage characteristics.

## Accessibility and Equity

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act establishes guidelines and principles for accessible public spaces with a goal of making Ontario accessible to people of all abilities. Its principles are dignity and having respect for self and others; independence or the ability to do things without unnecessary help; integration, meaning the same service, provided in the same way; and equal opportunity or the same options, chances, and benefits provided to all. The City of Guelph's work to date to bring the Drill Hall to occupancy standards has been well-grounded in accessibility considerations.



Future planning to create an equitable space that is welcoming, accessible, and meets the needs of its users will require thoughtful design best suited to a designer well-versed in accessibility concepts for visitor-serving organizations and arts centres.

## Parking, Transit and Walkability

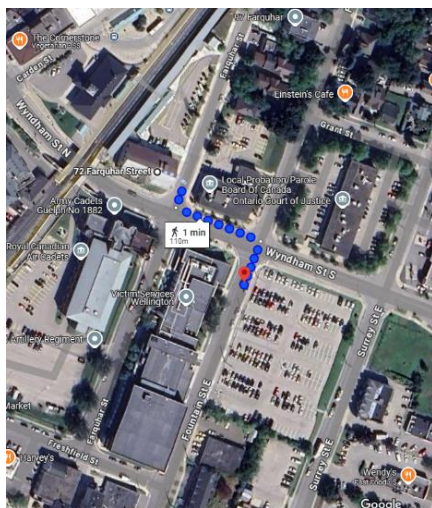
The Drill Hall has no dedicated parking on the property and the loading bay may partially block the sidewalk when in use. The loading bay is an important aspect of usability for arts groups.

For users and visitors to the Drill Hall, the large accessible parking lot on Wyndham Street South (Fountain Lot, image at right) would be suitable. To improve user accessibility, wayfinding signage must be installed along relevant streets, branded lot signage erected to build public awareness and a marked crosswalk across Wyndham Street South will be required.

While the vehicle and pedestrian underpass on Wyndham Street is clean and well-lit, activating the underpass with Public Art or Heritage Interpretation linked to the Drill Hall's history and new purpose combined with wayfinding would be beneficial. Studies have shown that 400 metres is often an acceptable walking distance from parking to a destination, factors such as the nature of the route as well as visibility or sight lines play a role in a visitor's comfort level.

Good access to the Drill Hall via public transportation is noteworthy, as the building is adjacent to the Guelph Central GO Station which is a transit hub connecting local, regional, and national buses and trains. The Drill Hall is highly visible from the GO Station, with a number of buses passing directly in front of the location on Wyndham Street South.

Figure 1: Drill Hall Site



## Benchmarking Research

Buildings elsewhere in Ontario and Canada provide inspiration and information about what might be made to happen at the Drill Hall.

### [CityScape Community ArtSpace, North Vancouver, BC](#)

CityScape Community ArtSpace is a contemporary, interactive gallery dedicated to offering quality programming for the community while giving an opportunity for both emerging and established artists to exhibit and promote their work. The office of North Van Arts (North Vancouver Community Arts Council) and the Art Rental Salon are co-located within the space. CityScape is an art space and exhibition gallery owned by the City of North Vancouver and programmed and managed by North Van Arts. Exhibitions are group based, themed and have an interactive component to engage the broader community. Ideas for exhibitions come from artists and community and are adjudicated by a submissions committee.

### [Western Front, Vancouver, BC](#)

Western Front is a non-profit artist-run centre offering a multidisciplinary program that provides opportunities to artists working across music, media art, visual art, performance, and literature to create and present work. Through commissions, exhibitions, performances, concerts, publishing, residencies, and workshops, Western Front promotes public exchange at a local, national and international level. Exhibitions, artist residencies, cultural programs and lectures, venue rentals, events, and performances are delivered at the City of Vancouver-owned community heritage asset.

### [Elora Centre for the Arts, ON](#)

The Elora Centre for the Arts is a not-for-profit charity, run by a Board of community volunteers and a small staff team. The Elora Centre for the Arts is located in a restored, three-story limestone schoolhouse. The building consists of 10 large, former classrooms that provide over 10,000 square feet of space, now repurposed into gallery space, an artisan shop, a classroom, artist studios and homes to various organizations that support the arts. It is the vision of the ECFTA to provide a facility that enhances cultural life in the region, and is a hub of connection and creativity.

### [Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, ON](#)

The Visual Arts Centre of Clarington is a not-for-profit public art gallery and art education centre located in Bowmanville, ON. The organization was incorporated in 1976 to deliver contemporary art to the Clarington Community, the wider Durham Region, and beyond. The VAC has a 47-year history of community engagement, connecting people of all ages and backgrounds in a creative place for artmaking

and learning. The VAC centers collaboration to deliver dynamic and inspiring contemporary art exhibitions and educational programs within an environment that champions equity and inclusion. The Visual Arts Centre of Clarington has been included as a comparable, but it should be noted that the organization does not have a rental program to generate revenues, instead focusing on art education programs and exhibitions, the resulting lower revenues reflected in their operating statement.

Following is a table outlining statement of operations for the above comparable arts organizations, for the most recent year available (2023 or 2024):

Table 1: Statement of Operations for comparable buildings.

Line	REVENUES	North Vancouver Community Arts Council - CityScape Gallery	The Western Front	Elora Centre for the Arts	Visual Arts Centre of Clarington
	<b>Government Contributions</b>				
R1	Municipal Contribution	\$310,507	\$46,000	\$20,825	\$230,222
R2	Provincial Contribution	\$254,702	\$326,464	\$237,052	\$40,398
R3	Federal Contribution	\$83,337	\$354,190	\$51,868	\$89,024
R4	Subtotal Government Contributions	\$648,546	\$726,654	\$309,745	\$359,644
	<b>Annual Campaign</b>				
R5	Grants & Project Funding			\$74,603	\$16,098
R6	Annual Campaign Donations & Sponsorships	\$41,300	\$128,386	\$115,138	\$14,102
R7	Philanthropic Memberships & Annual Passes			\$3,081	\$4,154
R8	Subtotal Donations and Sponsorships	\$41,300	\$128,386	\$192,822	\$34,354
	<b>Earned Income</b>				
R9	Admissions		\$9,049		
R10	Programs & Exhibits	\$340,245	\$111,387	\$284,616	\$114,118
R11	Member & Rental Fees		\$123,923	\$120,875	
R12	Gift Shop Revenue (Net of expenses)		\$20,055		
R13	Subtotal Earned Income	\$340,245	\$264,414	\$405,491	\$114,118
R14	TOTAL INCOME	\$1,030,091	\$1,119,454	\$908,058	\$508,116

## Guelph Drill Hall | Feasibility Study

Table 2: Operating Expenses for comparable buildings.

Line	EXPENSES	North Vancouver Community Arts Council - CityScape Gallery	The Western Front	Elora Centre for the Arts	Visual Arts Centre of Clarington
	<b>Operating Expenses</b>				
E1	Salaries and Benefits	\$637,238	\$402,513	\$220,487	\$304,678
E2	Artistic & Program expenses	\$170,624	\$384,657	\$324,410	\$112,217
E3	Artist-in-Residence Program				
E4	Facilities & Admin.	\$194,528	\$327,247	\$359,014	\$91,221
E5	Fundraising, Volunteers and Grant awards				
E6	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,002,390	\$1,114,417	\$903,911	\$508,116
N1	NET INCOME & RISK MANAGEMENT RESERVE	\$27,701	\$5,037	\$4,147	\$ -

# Analysis and Recommendations

## Advance the Vision of a Must-See Destination

In evaluating the feasibility of the Drill Hall as an arts hub, the potential for Guelph to position itself as the premiere destination for contemporary visual arts in Southwestern Ontario became increasingly apparent. We take inspiration from examples such as Stratford, which has made itself the centre for performing arts, and Kleinberg as the centre for Canadian visual arts with the McMichael Canadian Collection, particularly as it pertains to the Group of Seven.

As a coordinating initiative, the Drill Hall has the potential to create a must-see destination for artists and art enthusiasts alongside Guelph Museums, Art Gallery of Guelph, University of Guelph's Fine Arts programs, and a strengthened grassroots network of artists and arts collectives centred around this dynamic community asset: The Drill Hall. Advancing this vision requires a cohesive approach to building the profile of artists and of Guelph as an incubator and accelerator of modern contemporary visual arts in the region. With reasonable investments starting with the Drill Hall, the City of Guelph has the potential to realize that vision.

## A Community Art Space

There is a significant gap and a need for creation and exhibition spaces in Guelph for local, professional and early career visual artists, particularly within a milieu that encourages collaboration and broad community participation. The arts community has organically established a loose network of support for visual artists, with private, not-for-profit studios and makerspaces offering specific classes and programs, often geared to community-based art-making.

Despite a network of small, privately-run, for-profit and not-for-profit arts studios and spaces clustered within the downtown core, the artist-run organizations have indicated there is a strong need for an adequately-funded, coordinating entity that represents and advocates for arts and culture in the community, the sector's interests and its essential contributions, both economic and social. In response to this gap, the City of Guelph's Culture department has been generating a positive early response from the recent introduction of its Culture Quarterlies meetings.

The analysis considered options such as a small performing arts space, creative industries co-working space, and other production studios, however, due to the unique characteristics of the Drill Hall's construction and location, as well as data showing a significant gap in adequately-funded visual arts creation and exhibition spaces, the recommendation is for a community visual arts centre.

The characteristics of a facility that would address this need are as follows, based upon observations of numerous artist-based venues. It should be noted that these venues are typically highly rent sensitive, and many provide subsidized rents at

much lower rates than adjacent commercial or office spaces. One model is for a facility to be owned by a level of government and managed by a non-profit that pays a nominal annual lease fee.

### Arts Facility Function or Activity:

- An art gallery operated by a community arts non-profit organization whose mandate is based around a gallery or galleries where artists are juried in or invited to present.
- Typically includes offices for the arts organization and may include teaching studios and spaces for workshops. Typically includes a gift shop or a sales gallery.
- May be one large room or set of rooms with areas devoted to the participating artists. May have booths or studios for each artist ranging from about 60 sq. ft. upwards.
- Must include a feature gallery and events space, typically a central hub with the artist spaces opening onto it. Having frequent, well publicized events is a critical success factor.
- Typically has a single sales desk at the entry so as few as one or two individuals, often volunteers, are required to keep the gallery open.
- Public washrooms.

Table 3: Minimum Access Requirements

Minimum Access Requirements	Does Drill Hall meet requirement?
<b>Location:</b>	
• Accessible and visible from arterial roads.	Yes
• Perceived as a safe location.	Yes, with qualification*
• Co-located within metres of other venues that attract casual pedestrian traffic – recreational shopping and dining.	Yes
• Location and accessibility sensitive for success. Proximity to casual shopping, restaurants, and shops can make the difference between success and struggling.	Yes
<b>Loading:</b>	
• Vehicle loading location at building.	Yes, but limited space
• Sufficient for size of artwork contemplated.	Yes



Minimum Access Requirements	Does Drill Hall meet requirement?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double access doors with no central mullion.</li> </ul>	Yes, according to conceptual plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate from public front door required. The catering truck will be at the loading door when the public is coming in the front.</li> </ul>	Yes, according to conceptual plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trash and recycling completely screened from public view.</li> </ul>	Not in current state
<b>Parking:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visible, accessible parking. Success is parking or access sensitive.</li> </ul>	Yes, across the street (Fountain Lot)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some dedicated parking within sight of public entrance required.</li> </ul>	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted to gallery customers.</li> </ul>	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest minimum of 12 stalls (subject to further study.) More required for a high critical-mass facility.</li> </ul>	Yes, across the street (Fountain Lot)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional obvious, easy parking available nearby on evenings and weekends for events</li> </ul>	Yes, across the street (Fountain Lot and others)

\*The qualification to “perceived as a safe location” is that many people feel the Downtown area is currently experiencing safety issues. The Drill Hall’s proximity to the police department has also been raised as concerns for those in racialized or vulnerable communities. With effort from the municipality, and other initiatives that provide welcoming public spaces operating through the evening hours, these concerns and incidents may be lessened.

In considering the question “Does the Drill Hall sufficiently address those needs?” we can answer, based on the table above and the available data, that yes, in most respects, the Drill Hall will meet those needs. However, some of the challenges will be discussed further below.

### Recognize Complex Challenges

There are challenges that exist with the Drill Hall property, including its need for significant restoration work, its protection under the Heritage Act which limits its commercial value, and the documented lack of interest from the development sector. In a 2021 report, it was “concluded that there was no private market interest to acquire and repurpose the building”; a further call for proposals in 2023 drew limited response and resulted in no successful proponent. The stabilization of

## Guelph Drill Hall | Feasibility Study

the building required a \$5million investment and there is still considerable work that needs to be completed in order bring the building to occupancy.

This feasibility study considers the high rate of projected growth in the City of Guelph, shaped by municipal strategies<sup>4</sup> and policies that will include Downtown renewal and densification. This high rate of growth and change can be challenging when its is perceived to contribute to the affordability crisis, and to negative impacts on how residents view and use the Downtown. However, research shows that businesses are better able to attract and retain employees, and a municipality can attract and retain long-term residents, when elements such as educational, cultural and recreational opportunities – the things that create a vibrant and liveable city – are accessible<sup>5</sup>. Investments that provide for community connection and creativity are vital to supporting a growing, healthy population.

The wellbeing of a community is also a complex question. Understanding that one entity cannot be everything to everyone, there are nevertheless significant contributions to be made by the arts and culture sector to the overall quality of life experienced within an evolving city such as Guelph. International research has shown clearly that participating in the Arts has a significantly positive impact on mental health, wellbeing and sense of belonging experienced by community members. Canadian and European programs exist where doctors prescribe<sup>6</sup> visits to museums and galleries, reinforcing the important role our cultural institutions play in the delivery of community services.

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<sup>4</sup> Council set to decide how Guelph grows ... up?, [Guelph Today](#), 2022

<sup>5</sup> How Arts and Cultural Strategies Can Revitalize Downtowns, [Spur](#), 2025

<sup>6</sup> What Do We Know About Doctor-Prescribed Museum Visits?, [Forbes Magazine](#), Science, 2021

## A Catalyst for a Vibrant and Prosperous Community

The Drill Hall has been identified by the City of Guelph in many of its guiding documents and Council discussions as an important asset, with significant heritage, cultural and community value, and with strong potential as a community gathering space in keeping with its historic uses, including as the location of Guelph's first art show in 1867.

The Drill Hall's adaptive reuse as a community visual arts centre provides an opportunity to complement Guelph's desire to grow its population, and its tourism, cultural and creative industries, by aligning the Drill Hall as a catalyst for the creative thinking and artistic environment needed to grow a burgeoning creative economy<sup>7</sup>.

In considering the importance of the Drill Hall to the City of Guelph, existing programs and facilities were analysed. The map below of existing and new municipal facilities offering recreational programs shows a high proportion of facilities in the suburbs of Guelph: West End, South End, Victoria Road (VRCC), Evergreen Seniors. These municipal community centres focus the majority of programming on recreational sport and exercise, with Creative and Performing Arts programs held at VRCC and the Pottery Centre on Edinburgh, soon to be relocated to West End.

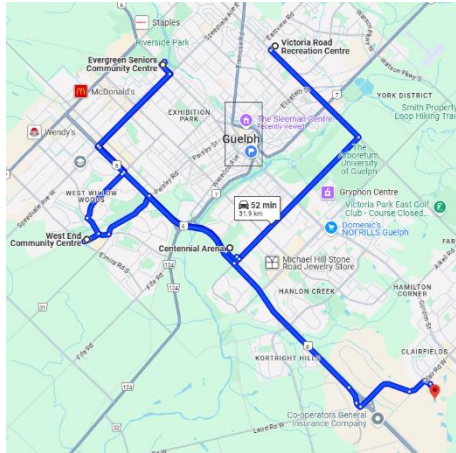
Guelph Recreation and Culture community centres are primarily located away from the Downtown core (shown within the dark rectangle within map below), with the exception of facilities such as the Sleeman Centre, a large-scale sports arena; River Run Centre, the major performing arts venue; and the Guelph Civic Museums. The future Guelph Public Library within the Baker District will also be located in the Downtown area.

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<sup>7</sup> "At the heart of the creative economy are the creative industries which can be defined as the cycles of creation, production and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs", [United Nations Economist Network](#).

## A Catalyst for a Vibrant and Prosperous Community Continued.

Figure 2: Locations of Recreation Facilities



While the community has expressed a desire to access cultural programming in their neighbourhoods throughout the city, concentrating municipally-owned community recreation facilities outside the City centre may have the effect of entrenching an over-reliance on private arts and art education delivery organizations within the Downtown core. These arts organizations report that they are struggling to operate, with insufficient ad-hoc or project-based funding and an expectation to provide affordable, low user fees contributing to their instability. If conditions are not improved and stabilized, through support for arts organizations or municipal investments, there is the potential for a negative impact on Downtown revitalization, with people pursuing lifestyle activities that send them outside the City Centre.

## Build a Community of Support

The third question to be answered in this study is “What would provide the right organizational structure and operations to provide sustainability?”

The analysis leads to the recommendation that the Drill Hall has the greatest opportunity for success within the following structure: a municipally-owned building operated by an entity that would provide management and coordination, and act as a convener for visual artists and arts educators in and around Guelph.

The entity could either be a newly formed, not-for-profit organization or could be drawn from among existing Guelph-based organizations that have the potential to offer the requisite experience, capacity, strategic thinking, diplomacy, and credibility for a project and operation of this size and complexity.

The qualifications for this entity would be:

- Strong, dynamic, entrepreneurial leadership (an Executive Director, management team, and a volunteer governing board of community members that are representative of major stakeholders and rights holders, specifically Indigenous communities, and University, College, Municipal and community leaders);
- A fund development capable organization supported by a professional fund development staff built around a dedicated and knowledgeable philanthropic culture;
- An inclusive and collaborative community approach to working with residents and emerging artists.

Some of the possible existing options for a lead entity include the City of Guelph’s Culture Department, specifically within Guelph Museums management; the Guelph Arts Council; or other not-for-profit community arts organizations that could represent a broad community of visual artists and art educators. The entity that ultimately enters into an agreement with the municipality to undertake this capital project and operation would require some level of ongoing municipal funding and support through annual operating contributions and start-up funding for salary and capital campaign fundraising. Any of these entities would require capacity-building in order to undertake a project and operation of this scope. See [Operating Estimate](#) for more detail.

The following activities would contribute greatly to the economic impact of the Drill Hall as a regional draw for tourists and program users:

- The Drill Hall community arts centre would house a gallery, artists’ shop or co-op, studios, gathering spaces, and learning spaces. Programs to support a vibrant and sustainable operation would include classes and workshops, artist residencies, mentorship and early career support, group exhibitions, event hosting and venue rentals, community partnership development, and

significant fund development initiatives. No permanent collection should be considered for reasons of space, funds, and focus; visual arts organizations without collections focus on outward facing programming and short-term exhibitions rather than long-term care of objects.

- Establishing an Artist Co-op or Art Shop would provide real economic opportunities for local and emerging artists. This model would provide an additional stream of earned revenue for the organization and would provide a direct connection and benefit to local artists and artisans, including Indigenous creators, thereby building and strengthening the type of reconciliation and reciprocal relationship that is at the core of cultural work in Canada today.
- Strategic partnerships with the local University, College, Museum, Art Gallery, and provincial and national arts service organizations would need to be developed or strengthened, providing cross-marketing and collaboration to keep the organization relevant and effective. Guelph's existing arts ecosystem, its local artists' collectives and private non-profits must continue to exist and be supported as vital contributors to a functioning and vibrant arts community.
- During the initial phase of organizational development, it will be essential to work closely with the Indigenous community to foster trust and respect. Integrating into the organizational culture the intentional learning and cultural sharing opportunities from inception to public launch will provide the time and dedication required for this much-needed work.

## Invest in Sustainability

Currently, the City of Guelph maintains the Drill Hall building with an annual budget of approximately \$125,000. It has invested over \$5million in building improvements to date. However, the building remains vacant and not in a state suitable for occupancy.

Based on data from the Ontario Arts Council, an annual operating contribution of \$200,000 (or \$1.28 per resident) would have an impact of \$5million generated in other sources of revenue from the operation<sup>8</sup>. Further economic impacts would include the creation of 9 fulltime equivalent staff roles with a living wage or better<sup>9</sup>, enabling arts workers to contribute to the local economy by increasing consumer spending, productivity and narrowing the wage to rent gap<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> *Arts Across Ontario preliminary results*, [Ontario Arts Council](#) 2024

<sup>9</sup> *Guelph-Wellington's living wage now set at \$21.30*, [Guelph Today](#), 2024

<sup>10</sup> [Ontario Living Wage](#), 2024



A \$7-10 million, professional Capital Campaign would be required to raise the necessary financial resources for the improvements, increasing awareness, effectively building a community of support for the Drill Hall as a community visual arts centre, communicating its strategic vision, and inspiring supporters. A fundraising feasibility study would be effectively outline this work.

The following outlines a potential capital funding scenario, based on previous research and experience:

- City of Guelph municipal contribution: \$2,500,000 (\$2 million over the course of the campaign toward capital improvements and \$500,000 in the first 2 years toward establishing the organization which will manage the capital project and ongoing operation and funding the capital campaign);
- Government of Canada and Government of Ontario: combined \$3-5 million in contributions toward capital improvements and organizational capacity-building;
- Professional fundraising campaign: \$2-\$5 million in donations and sponsorships targeting major private donors, the business community, foundations, etc.

Annual operating funding is outlined in greater detail in the Operating Estimate. A typical operating structure for a not-for-profit arts organization would include the following contributed and public sector income in the form of grants, donations, and sponsorships:

- Municipal government operating contribution for key salaries, core operations, facilities maintenance and repairs;
- Provincial government operating contribution from Ontario Arts Council;
- Federal government grants and subsidies for wages, projects and capacity-building;
- Canada Council for the Arts grants;
- Annual fundraising targeting private donors, business community, foundations, etc.

The lead entity would need to develop and strengthen relationships during the planning and Capital Campaign phase with agencies and funders (governments, foundations and philanthropic individuals) that will fund capital and capacity-building expenditures, as well as ongoing annual support and strategic partnerships that may include: [Canada Cultural Spaces Fund](#); [Legacy Fund – Building Communities through Arts and Heritage](#); [Capital Grant, Ontario Trillium Foundation](#); [Cultural Investment Fund](#); [Guelph Community Foundation](#); [ArtsBuild Ontario](#); [Infrastructure Ontario](#); [Ontario Arts Council](#); [Canada Council for the Arts](#); [Enabling Accessibility Fund](#); [University of Guelph](#)

## Operating Estimate

The operating estimate on the following page is for the entire organization. A spreadsheet calculator was constructed to investigate the impacts of different utilization scenarios and helps answer some important questions, particularly, “What happens when we examine different levels of fund development, public sector contributions, and program participation? Where should we direct our attention to maximize income and minimize expenditures?”

In examining this budget, consider that management needs the flexibility and authority to make adjustments to particular budget lines in response to ongoing analysis, current economic conditions, and the need to operate with a balanced budget. A fuller discussion of the budget follows the statements on the next pages.

### **Estimation for planning purposes, a potential- not a prediction.**

The estimations in this report are referred to as “potential” estimations because they represent the potential to achieve a certain attendance range and economic outcome, assuming:

- The facilities (capital investment) needed to achieve the potential are completed at full scope
- The launch and on-going marketing investments are adequate
- Management assures consistently high-quality guest service and guest experience
- Management executes its staff recruitment and onboarding processes in alignment with strategies outlined in this report
- Market and economic conditions remain reasonably constant

This estimation is just that – a range estimate for planning purposes. It is designed to provide a useful framework for decision making and for establishing initial budgets and service levels. At this stage of planning many items have not been developed. Instead, reasonable allowances have been allocated, which may be adjusted within the ranges as plans are finalized. Similarly, revenues can only be estimated within a range. More definitive budgets will be prepared as planning progresses.

Throughout this document, Scenarios A, B, and C represent low-, mid-, and high-range projections, approximately +/- 15% around a mid-point. Another way to look at the Scenarios is as the Good, Better, and Best options. It will be a leadership decision to determine which scenario to shoot for.

Table 4: Revenues for Scenarios A, B and C.

Line	REVENUES	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
	<b>Government Contributions</b>			
R1	Municipal Contribution	\$170,000	\$200,000	\$230,000
R2	Provincial Contribution	\$106,300	\$125,000	\$143,750
R3	Federal Contribution	\$85,000	\$100,000	\$115,000
R4	Subtotal Government Contributions	\$361,300	\$425,000	\$488,750
	<b>Annual Campaign</b>			
R5	Grants & Project Funding	\$127,500	\$150,000	\$172,500
R6	Annual Campaign Donations & Sponsorships	\$0\$127,500	\$0\$150,000	\$0\$172,500
R7	Philanthropic Memberships & Annual Passes	\$25,500	\$30,000	\$34,500
R8	Subtotal Donations and Sponsorships	\$280,500	\$330,000	\$379,500
	<b>Earned Income</b>			
R9	Admission by Donation	\$15,100	\$20,100	\$23,100
R10	Programs & Exhibits	\$165,800	\$195,000	\$224,300
R11	Member & Rental Fees	\$112,200	\$132,000	\$151,800
R12	Gift Shop Revenue (Net of expenses)	\$28,500	\$35,500	\$38,500
R13	Subtotal Earned Income	\$321,600	\$380,600	\$437,700
R14	TOTAL INCOME	\$963,400	\$1,135,600	\$1,305,950

## Notes: Revenues

**R4 Government Contributions:** The projections foresee public sector financial support at a level that is reasonable for a jurisdiction the size of Guelph, based on information available on arts and culture centres and initiatives in similar communities.

**R8 Donations and Sponsorships:** The estimates for the annual level of grants, fundraising and sponsorships are based on averages of similar organizations, and to be achievable, will require dedicated Fund Development staff and annual budget, as outlined in the operating estimates.

**R9 Admission by Donation:** To address concerns around affordability and access, the recommendation is to have an Admission by Donation model for gate attendance, as opposed to a paid admission fee. Courses, programs and specialized activities on site and in the community are fee for service. The annual estimated attendance is based on a review of comparable organizations and uses a modest figure of 18,000 visitors annually, with a small proportion of those donating.

**R10 Programs & Exhibits:** The revenues are based on a review of similar programs where facilitators present a variety of art-related programs and lectures, and include summer and after-school programs (such as [Artists for Kids](#)). Camps and after-school programs offer the potential for meaningful earned income.

Research has shown that well-run, high-quality programs and camps attract repeat participants. This estimate is net of direct staff costs to deliver these programs.

**R11 Members & Rental Fees:** Artist studio monthly rental and member-based models (distinct from philanthropic memberships) contribute significantly to the sustainability of organizations. Based on a monthly fee structure with a variety of benefits, allows studio members to access equipment and facilities on a regular or occasional basis. This line also includes a modest projection for venue rentals for special events, boardroom rentals, and large studio and classroom rentals for third-party classes and workshops. Given the scarcity of open artist studio spaces in Guelph, 50% of the studios are ideally made available for drop-in or daily use, with the other 50% available as monthly, private studio rentals.

**R12 Gift Shop Revenue:** Modest projections are based on a per capita average spend and are net of inventory costs. The Shop can play a particularly important role in mission delivery in community arts as it provides local artists and artisans economic opportunities and a sense of value, community and belonging. The Gift Shop can play a valuable role in partnering with local Urban Indigenous and First Nations artists, as well as supporting diverse community members and early-career professionals emerging from the University of Guelph’s Fine Arts programs. Showcasing artists through special “Meet the Artist” events and initiatives like [“Museum Store Sunday”](#) boosts the exposure of both artists and galleries.

Table 5: Operating Expenses for the three scenarios.

Line	EXPENSES	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C
	<b>Operating Expenses</b>			
E1	Salaries and Benefits	\$497,300	\$585,100	\$672,900
E2	Artistic & Program expenses	\$190,700	\$224,300	\$257,900
E3	Artist-in-Residence Program	\$38,300	\$45,000	\$51,800
E4	Facilities & Admin.	\$137,700	\$162,000	\$186,300
E5	Fundraising, Volunteers, and Marketing expenses	\$85,000	\$100,000	\$115,000
E6	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$949,000	\$1,116,400	\$1,284,000
N1	NET INCOME & RISK MANAGEMENT RESERVE	\$14,000	\$19,200	\$22,000

All figures rounded to .00

## Notes: Expenses

**E1 Salaries and Benefits:** These are discussed in more detail in [Appendix D:](#) Organizational Chart. Salaries are based on a scan of staff positions within comparable organizations.

**E2 Artistic and Program expenses:** Supplies, materials, exhibition costs, and an allocation to marketing exhibits are included. No salaries are included, however, honoraria and artist fees are included in this estimate.

**E3 Artist-in-Residence Program costs:** An annual program to build the profile and reach of the Centre and organization beyond the local community, the Artist-in-Residence Program provides funding, studio space, and presentation opportunities to a jury-selected artist. Artist residencies can help artists develop their skills, gain exposure, and build their networks. They can also provide a supportive environment where artists can focus on their work without distraction. Collaborating with other institutions, including the University and Guelph Art Gallery, would be beneficial. The amount includes an allocation to marketing and communications.

**E4 Facilities and Administration costs:** Advertising, Facility occupancy fees, Insurance, Cleaning, Utilities, Maintenance, Security, Office and Technology. No salaries are included, however, contracted services are included in this estimate.

**E5 Fundraising, Volunteer, and Marketing expenses:** These expenses are in addition to salaries, and include recognition events, marketing collateral and media partnerships, and administrative costs including specialized donor management software subscriptions and supplies.

**N1 Contribution to Risk Management Reserve:** A risk management tool, the Reserve should grow to a reasonable fraction of the total annual revenues of the organization, about 15% of annual operating costs is recommended. Note that having a significant risk management reserve enables the organization to have high insurance deductibles, reducing the annual cost of insurance.

## Capital Cost Estimates

### Facilities Construction and Fit-Out:

The following table provides a potential concept for the functional spaces, square footage, and construction and fit-out costs for the Drill Hall. Details are provided in the Notes below.

Table 6: Drill Hall Conceptual Facility Program

Description	Size - SF	Cost / SF	SCENARIO A	SCENARIO B	SCENARIO C
<b>Main Floor - Gallery and Public Spaces</b>					
Reception Area/Gift Shop	500				
Café	400				
Exhibition Gallery	4,200				
Gross up factor (walls, washrooms, corridors, etc)	1,000				
<b>Subtotal Main Floor</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>\$655</b>	<b>\$3,396,200</b>	<b>\$3,995,500</b>	<b>\$4,594,800</b>
<b>Second Floor - Studios and Workspaces</b>					
Boardroom (1)	600				
Private Studios (5)	1,000				
Flexible Access Studios (3)	600				
Large studio (3)	1,200				
Classroom/Workshop (1)	1,200				

## Guelph Drill Hall | Feasibility Study

Description	Size - SF	Cost / SF	SCENARIO A	SCENARIO B	SCENARIO C
Storage	200				
Shared flex area with sinks	200				
Gross up factor (walls, washrooms, corridors, etc), sf	1,000				
<b>Subtotal Second Floor</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>\$655</b>	<b>\$3,340,500</b>	<b>\$3,930,000</b>	<b>\$4,519,500</b>
<b>Third Floor - Administration</b>					
Administration Offices & Storage	600				
Building Systems (Mech/Elec)	600				
Gross up factor (walls, washrooms, corridors, etc), sf	150				
<b>Subtotal Third Floor</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>\$655</b>	<b>\$751,700</b>	<b>\$884,300</b>	<b>\$1,016,900</b>
Landscaping, (sf allowance)			\$20,700	\$24,400	\$28,100
Outdoor graphics, (unit allowance)			\$8,500	\$10,000	\$11,500
<b>Total Facility Fit-out and Grounds Allowance (ROM*)</b>	<b>13,450</b>	<b>\$655</b>	<b>\$7,517,600</b>	<b>\$8,844,200</b>	<b>\$10,170,800</b>
*Rough order of magnitude (ROM)					

Note 1: Throughout this document, Scenarios A, B, and C represent low-, mid-, and high- range projections, approximately +/- 15% around a mid-point.

Note 2: Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM): A "rough order of magnitude" is a very initial, high-level estimate of a project's cost or effort, typically used in the early stages of planning when detailed information is limited, providing a general idea of the project's scale and potential budget without precise accuracy.

Note 3: The costs per square foot are drawn from the 2024 Altus Group Canadian Construction Cost Guide and are specific to the region and type of construction (i.e., Greater Toronto Area; Public Sector Gallery) and adjusted to reflect recent sector experience.

One-time Costs: One-time costs, not included in these estimates, relate to typical start-up costs for a visitor-serving organization and must be provided for out of the Capital Budget. Capital in the context of this project includes everything that is not in the annual operating budget. Therefore, the costs of the capital campaign are paid for out of the capital budget.

## Conclusion

The Guelph Drill Hall presents the City of Guelph with an opportunity to invest in culture and in its community. The City of Guelph has developed clear guiding principles for its future built on sustainable growth, a prosperous community, and creating vibrant shared spaces.

In considering the questions this study has sought to address, we conclude that the Drill Hall has most if not all of the characteristics required to address the community's need for arts and culture spaces, and that with support from government, community and business, and a diverse range of programs for residents and visitors to participate in, a community visual arts centre would be sustainable.

In our experience, projects such as these are typically planned and executed over a number of years. Recommended next steps for projects of this nature include the development of both a Strategic Master Plan (to articulate in more detail the programmatic response, physical components, organizational plan, and concept-level architecture) and a Fundraising Feasibility Study.

The benefits to current and future residents of preserving and enhancing this valued heritage building as a public asset which contributes to a vibrant cultural sector with renewed economic, social and educational opportunities, ultimately outweigh the complexity of a well-planned adaptive reuse of heritage project. Expanding upon the vision and goals of Guelph's Culture Plan 2030, the Drill Hall presents the City of Guelph with the potential to become a premiere destination for contemporary visual arts.



# Appendices

## Appendix A:

### City of Guelph Key Priorities & Decisions

#### Key relevant objectives from Culture Plan 2030:

##### Invest in Culture.

- By 2030, be among the top two comparator municipalities in total per capita spending on culture, and be above median in per capita spending on culture grants.
- Adequately fund anchor culture sites and service organizations, including Guelph Museums, River Run Centre, Art Gallery of Guelph, Guelph Public Library, and Guelph Arts Council, with expectation that anchor sites will uplift the broader culture community.

Increase access to affordable space for artists to create, rehearse, perform, and exhibit.

- Identify potential new culture spaces, including performance spaces for audiences of 100 to 600 people and rehearsal, studio, and exhibition spaces, and consider public-private partnerships for development opportunities.
- Support culture uses for the Drill Hall and Ontario Reformatory lands.  
"Ontario's arts and culture sectors are vital pillars of our economy, contributing tens of billions of dollars to our GDP annually and supporting nearly 300,000 jobs – and the Ontario Arts Council's unwavering support has been instrumental in that success," said Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.

#### [Heritage Conservation District Study:](#)

Market Street has evolved, from a large open space in 1827 with civic functions, to a mixed area of open space and buildings. Notwithstanding this evolution, this corridor within the downtown has had a continuous early civic character, defined by buildings such as the Guelph Armoury, Drill Hall, and Guelph Police Services." "The downtown's historical buildings, streetscapes, and landscape features convey important stories about the community's past and actively create a sense of place and ambience. These qualities are valued by the local community.

#### [Downtown Renewal program:](#)

The Downtown Renewal program is a massive undertaking by the City to transform how Downtown Guelph looks, feels, and functions, while also preserving its unique cultural heritage.

Figure 3: Renewal Efforts Timeline



[Guelph Community Plan \(2022\):](#)

**Principle 1. Celebrate What We’ve Got** – Downtown Guelph has many assets, not least of which is its rich inventory of historic limestone buildings. The buildings, streets and open spaces give Downtown a unique and attractive character. Downtown also overlaps with historic neighbourhoods whose unique characteristics should be protected.

**Principle 4. We Come Together Here** – Many of the jobs Downtown and much of its vibrancy depend on its role as a civic and cultural hub. Being the accessible heart of Guelph and the surrounding area, Downtown is the natural place for City Hall, courthouses, school board offices, a range of social services, and educational institutions.

Events at the River Run Centre and the Sleeman Centre draw many visitors to Downtown, but opportunities to expand the core’s cultural infrastructure exist, including the central library under development.

As Downtown’s population grows, other community facilities will be needed to meet the needs for gathering and recreation space. Downtown’s historically and architecturally significant buildings, as well as its other cultural heritage elements, are something to conserve and celebrate. As Downtown evolves it will be important to ensure that significant cultural buildings are protected, maintained and sensitively repurposed.

Table 7: Summary of Key Drill Hall Decisions

Year	Decision
2013	Expansion of “two-way, all day GO” by Metrolinx and related commitment that benefiting municipalities would contribute to the cost of this expansion (Report to Council “ <a href="#">Metrolinx Contribution Agreement</a> ”)
2017	Land transfer from Metrolinx to City of Guelph to satisfy financial contribution in 2013 agreement. Drill Hall seen as having historic and cultural value.
2018	Drill Hall became designated heritage building pursuant to Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act through By-law
2021	Drill Hall stabilization work begun by City of Guelph. Significant work undertaken to improve the building (asbestos abatement; foundation; columns and beams; new utilities; structural reinforcement). \$5million invested; additional work required to bring to habitable state.
2021	<a href="#">Market Sounding Study</a> showed strong community interest but that it is not a marketable property for developers or private market use.
2023	City of Guelph releases the Drill Hall Reuse Request for Expressions of Interest, stipulating proposal must be financially viable without City financial support.
2023	Completion of initial stabilization/restoration work.
2024	Request for Expressions of Interest submissions: two submissions received but one withdrawn.
2024	<a href="#">June 4 Staff Report recommends sale</a> of Drill Hall as proposal did not meet the criteria that no project require no funding from City of Guelph.
2024	At the June 25 meeting, <a href="#">Council voted to retain the Drill Hall</a> and explore potential future arts and culture uses of the Drill Hall.

## Appendix B: Existing Art & Culture Spaces in Guelph

### [Art Gallery of Guelph](#)

Housed in a 31,000-square-foot former school owned by the Upper Grand District School Board, the gallery manages and oversees four distinct collections. The Art Gallery of Guelph is a professional public art gallery, engaging the public as well as partners such as the University of Guelph, the City of Guelph, and the Upper Grand District School Board through an ambitious and dynamic mandate. With a collection of over 10,000 works, ranging from historical to contemporary, the artistic program features work by leading visual artists locally, nationally, and internationally.

### [Guelph Arts Council's artBar](#)

The artBar serves as the office and headquarters of Guelph Arts Council, one of Canada's oldest art councils, and acts as a venue that hosts meetings and small events. Housed in a former bar, the space can hold about 60 seated or 180 standing guests and has hosted the Downtown Theatre Project, Guelph Jazz Festival, Guelph Film Festival, Vocamus Writers' Group, and performances from local performers.

### [10C](#)

10C is the hub for community activators and changemakers in the City of Guelph. Its mission is to model and create the conditions for collaborative approaches to social, environmental, cultural, and economic wellness that strengthen community resilience and sustainability. 10C uses placemaking, social enterprise, social finance, social innovation – and food – to create new ways to connect, collaborate and share resources. The environment is creative, ideas focused and welcoming. 10C programming includes Placemaking, Community Engagement, Social Finance, Social Enterprise, Sustainable Food Systems, and Sustainable Development Goals.

### [404 York Road \(Artworks Gallery, Ed Video\)](#)

Located East of Ward, the Artworks Gallery Guelph has a paid membership model, showcasing the art of its members and featuring guest artists at special exhibits. They host artist talks, panel discussions, small workshops and community events.

Ed Video Media Arts Centre is a charitable artist-run centre, supporting the art of cinema, sound art, installation, and new media for nearly five decades. Education is a key program, reflecting a commitment to providing accessible media arts resources to a wide range of community members—from emerging artists and youth to professional filmmakers, media artists, and local organizations. Access to equipment, training, skill-building programs, exhibition space, and space rentals are available to members.

### [Silence](#)

Silence is a venue and not-for-profit organization in Guelph that hosts concerts, workshops, and other events. Founded in 2012 to provide an outlet for the new, creative music, it's a space for musicians to perform and share ideas. With a goal to present a concert a month, and expanding into workshops, improvisation sessions and beyond, interest in the project has been growing. Community venue rentals are also available and support music in downtown Guelph.

### [Necessary Arts](#)

Necessary Arts Collective is an arts hub and artist collective located in downtown Guelph, providing 1300 sf of rentable, shared and individual, semi-private studios for artists and creatives through a membership model. Located in Downtown Guelph, it is home to 12-15 local artists. Necessary Arts Collective hosts small exhibitions on its gallery wall in addition to the online NEXT Interview speaker series, with a goal of promoting emerging artists.

### [Otherwise Studios](#)

Otherwise Studios offers flexible space that can be used as studio, classroom, stage, and gallery space. Otherwise has a focus on accessibility in the arts and working with community partners and members to provide equitable access to creative expression.

Housing Guelph's first public print shop, the studio has a range of printmaking equipment and materials accessible to the public through membership and rental models. Otherwise Studios undertakes collaborative projects and artist features, interdisciplinary collaborations, and unique creative programs.

### [Art Not Shame](#)

Art Not Shame is a community-engaged, multidisciplinary arts organization serving youth and adults, with a new, fully accessible space located in downtown Guelph serving Guelph's equity-deserving population. Founded in 2017, it recognizes accessible, creative, community-based arts practices as fundamental to well-being, belonging, and providing possibilities for a just future. The core belief of Art Not Shame is that everyone is creative, and while there are employment opportunities for professional artists to work with the community, the registered charitable organization offers experiences for those with no formal art training to engage in programs.

### [DIYode](#)

The Diyode community workshop is a 2500 square foot makerspace, with tools and supplies for wood working, metal working, electronics, prototyping and crafting. Diyode is a non-profit organization, offering a monthly membership structure, with

a mandate to foster an enthusiasm for do-it-yourself projects, and to advocate for sustainable practices such as building rather than buying items and repairing rather than throwing away. A board of directors is responsible for governing the organization and members contribute to maintaining the workshop.

### [Heritage Hall](#)

The Guelph Black Heritage Society's Heritage Hall is located in downtown Guelph, is used for rentals to the general public, and is fully accessible. The theatre is used for concerts, performances, workshops, meetings, and events, with a stage and a maximum occupancy of 75 people. The basement has a kitchenette and a rehearsal room. The Heritage Hall is used by the Guelph Black Heritage Society to host community activities, cultural events, and education programs.

### [Guelph Youth Music Centre](#)

The Guelph Youth Music Centre is a registered charity dedicated to education, enrichment and fostering the development of youth through music and the arts. The 14,000 sf Centre is located in a renovated former seed mill operated by the charity in the City-owned facility close to downtown Guelph. It is one of the City's anchor culture facilities. The Centre offers low-cost, high-quality meeting, rehearsal, teaching and event space to many community groups and individuals. The Centre includes a recital hall, a reception space with kitchenette, fifteen rehearsal and teaching studios, and a dance studio. Rental space is open to the community.

### [Guelph Community Pottery Centre](#)

The Guelph Community Pottery Centre is a City-run facility that offers pottery classes and workshops. It's a good place for both beginners and experienced potters. With a wide range of programs, the Guelph Community Pottery Centre is a great place for both novice and expert potters. Featuring 8 pottery wheels, a hand building area, two kilns and a large outdoor space, the Pottery Centre is set up to be an ideal learning environment. All programs take place at the Guelph Community Pottery Centre, located at 14 Edinburgh Road South in Guelph. It will move to the West End Community Centre in Fall 2025.





## Municipal Recreation & Culture Facilities

[Centennial Park Arena](#): Indoor Rink.

[David E. Hastings Stadium](#): Baseball stadium.

[Evergreen Seniors Community Centre](#): The Evergreen Seniors Community Centre is operated by the City of Guelph Recreation Department.

Operating programs within the Evergreen community centre is the [Guelph Wellington Seniors Association](#) (GWSA) is a charitable organization that empowers 55+ seniors to lead active, healthy, fulfilling lives. The GWSA coordinates activity groups that are based on the interests of members and are led by GWSA volunteers. Activity groups charge a small 'pay as you play' or set an annual fee. Arts activities include: studio art workshops, embroidery, crafting, quilting, photography, choral and instrumental groups, and art clubs, open to seniors who are members.

[Exhibition Park Arena](#): Seasonal rink.

[Guelph Civic Museum](#): Guelph Museums has three sites: the Guelph Civic Museum, McCrae House, and Locomotive 6167. They offer educational programs, designed to support the learning objectives of the Ontario curriculum through inquiry-based learning practices. They deliver group tours and programs at McCrae House, the Civic Museum, Historic Bus and Walking Tours, and provide outreach presentations to schools and community groups.

[Guelph Farmers' Market](#): The Guelph Farmers' Market has been a community cornerstone in Guelph since 1827. One of Guelph's oldest and well-loved community spaces offers fresh local food, artisanal products and a friendly, welcoming atmosphere year -round. The Guelph Farmers' Market continues a tradition of pride and community building supporting the local economy, sustainability and entrepreneurship. As of March 1st, 2022, 10C Shared Space has assumed the operations and activation of the Farmers' Market building, grounds and events.

[Market Square](#): Guelph's newest downtown public square is an attractive destination for visitors and a dynamic community gathering space for families and neighbours to enjoy skating, wading, performances, summer movies, dancing and more

[River Run Centre](#): River Run Centre is a multi-purpose performing arts venue – overlooking the picturesque Speed River in the heart of historic downtown Guelph.

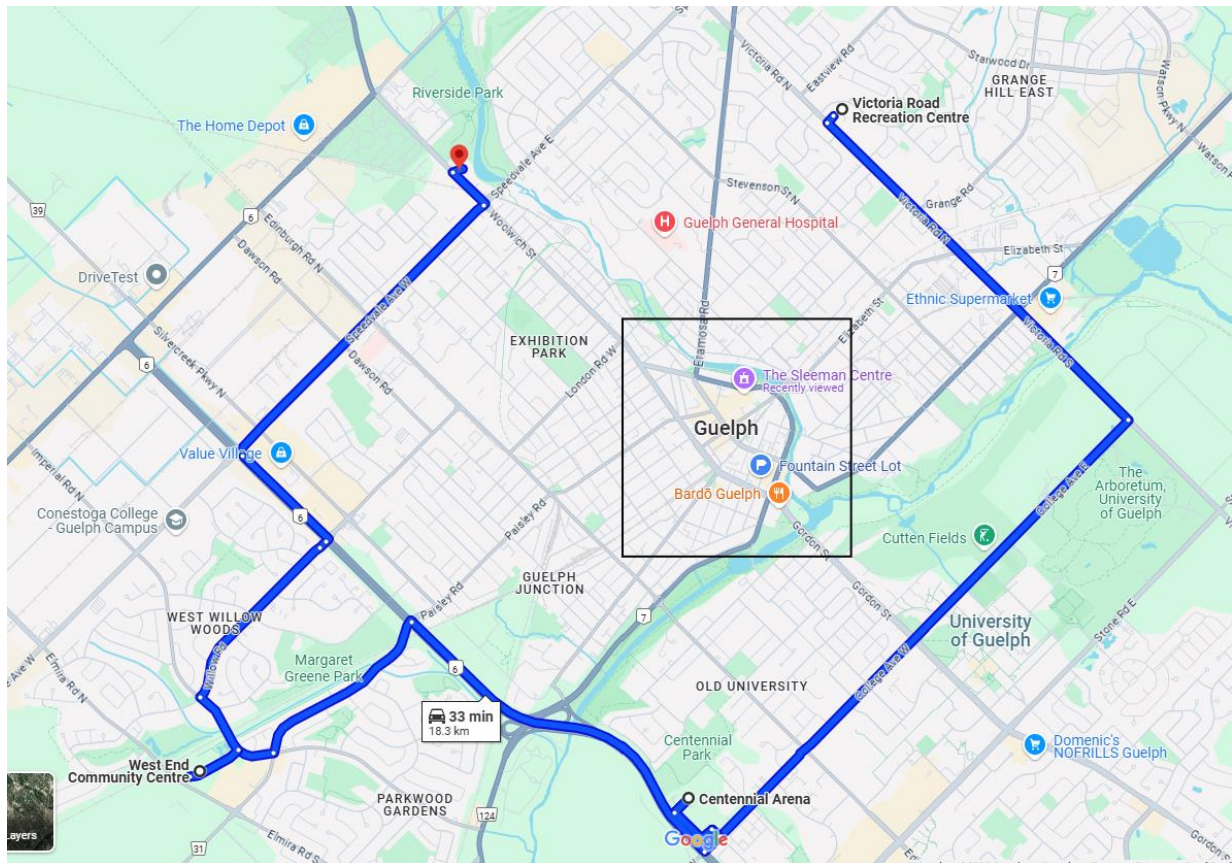
[Silvercreek Skatepark](#): The concrete, plaza-style skateboard facility, located in Silvercreek Park (142 Edinburgh Road South), features a variety of elements to challenge novice through expert riders.

[Sleeman Centre](#): The Sleeman Centre is the premiere location for sports and entertainment in Guelph. This modern, well equipped facility features a seating capacity of 4,500 for an ice event and 5,000 for a concert or seminar, and is an ideal place to host concerts, sporting and family events, trade shows and conferences.

[Victoria Road Recreation Centre](#): The Victoria Road Recreation Centre is a fully accessible, multi-purpose community centre that has a full range of facilities ranging from an aquatic facility to a single-pad arena to community meeting rooms. Three Community Rooms (Maple, Cedar and Oak) available for rent are appropriate for arts and culture programs and workshops. Creative and Performing Programs are delivered at this centre.

[West End Community Centre](#): The West End Community Centre is a fully accessible, multi-purpose community centre that has a full range of facilities ranging from an aquatic facility to a twin-pad arena to a gymnasium to community meeting rooms, and a library to complement the facility and provide a variety of additional services to users and customers. Later in 2025, the Guelph Community Pottery Centre will move to the West End Community Centre.

Figure 5: Location of Municipal Recreation and Culture Facilities



## Future Municipal Community Centres (in development)

[South End Community Centre](#) (opens Fall 2026): The South End Community Centre (SECC) is a 160,000 square foot facility with twin ice pads, aquatic center with a lap and teaching pool, double gymnasium, walking track and multi-purpose rooms, all connected by a central lobby. The community centre will be built on existing City-owned lands immediately south of Bishop Macdonell Catholic High School on Poppy Drive connecting with the existing South End Community Park and Larry Pearson baseball diamonds. Includes a program room and small dance rehearsal studio (similar to Victoria Road Recreation Centre Maple Room).

[Guelph Library New Main Branch](#) (Opens Summer 2026): The Baker District Redevelopment which includes the new Main Library is a City of Guelph development project aimed at transforming an existing surface parking lot into a unique mixed-use development. Includes a multipurpose room, available for rent by community groups.



## Appendix C: Physical Description, Heritage Attributes, and Statement of Significance

Address: 72 Farquhar Street

Current use: No current use

Current zoning: D3a: allows for potential uses of the property as an agricultural produce market, retail establishment, restaurant, service establishment or transit terminal.

Known limitations:

- Designated Heritage status
- Potential zoning limitations
- No parking lot (Access to nearby public parking is available <1 minute walk)

Lot area: 8,969.6 square feet (833.3 square metres)

Front setback: 3.13 metre minimum

Side setback: 0.51 metre minimum

Rear setback: 0.40 metre minimum

Building area: 6,650 square feet (617.8 square metres)

Existing ground floor area (GFA): 12,850 square feet. (1,194 square metres)

Building height: 38.4 feet. (11.7 metres); 2.5 storeys (one level in the roof trusses)

Ground floor gross area: 6,100 square feet (566.7 square metres)

Second floor gross area: 6,020 square feet (560 square metres)

Third floor gross area: 1,451 square feet (134.8 square metres)

## Description of Heritage Attributes

- original building form and gable roof of main block and extended centre bay in west elevation;
- original arrangement of window openings on the north, south and west elevations;
- large segmentally arched, 2-light window on second floor of west elevation;
- heavy timber, post and beam construction elements.

It is intended that non-original features may be returned to documented earlier designs or to their documented original without requiring City Council permission for an alteration to the designation.

## Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The heritage attributes of the Drill Hall display: design or physical, historical or associative and contextual value.

The Drill Hall was constructed in 1866 for the use of Guelph's voluntary militia units and for county agricultural shows. It also functioned as a general purpose community hall, hosting various private and public meetings and events. The building's historical value lies in its association with the first active militia units in Guelph and more broadly with development of the Canadian army at the time of Confederation.

The Drill Hall is also associated with the development of Guelph as a regional centre for agriculture and stock breeding. The building was designed by Thomas W. Cooper, a local Civil Engineer and Provincial Land Surveyor. The building's construction was originally initiated by a petition from local ratepayers, with funds provided by Wellington County Council, Guelph Town Council, and the Wellington County Agricultural Societies. In the late nineteenth century, the City of Guelph refitted the Drill Hall and lent it to private companies for industrial and commercial uses, thereby supporting the development of Guelph as an important regional centre for manufacturing. The Drill Hall has important historical associations with a number of manufacturers, including: Williams, Greene and Rome Company (1889-1893), Loudon Machinery Co (1903- 1908), Aspinwall Manufacturing Company (1908-1923), Zephyr Looms & Textiles I Textiles Industries Limited (1945-1981), and J. P. Hammill & Son Ltd (1981-2010).

The Drill Hall supports the historic character of Guelph's downtown district, forming part of the core of landmark civic buildings established in the original Market Grounds in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, including the original City Hall, the Winter Fair building, the Armoury, and the Railway Station. The position and orientation of the Drill Hall is historically linked to the location of Guelph's original Fair Ground, and the 1856 alignment of the Grand Trunk Railway.

The Drill Hall is a rare and representative example of a mid-nineteenth century community hall in Guelph. The design is plain, and much of the original fabric of the building has been replaced or modified; however, the imposing form and mass of the original heavy timber frame building is readily apparent, and its historic function can be interpreted, as a local community hall designed for military drills and agricultural shows.



## Appendix D: Organizational Chart

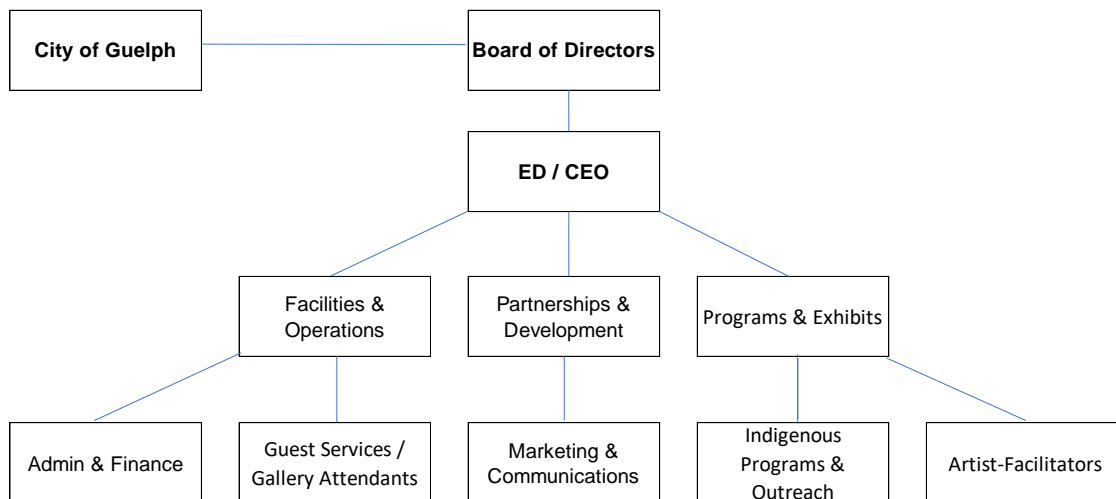
The recommended optimal organizational chart outlines a management structure that allows the Executive Director to focus primarily on strategic development of the organization, as opposed to operational management. This role would help advance the City of Guelph’s goal to become a leader in arts and culture, and its strategic themes to “Cultivate, Connect, and Champion.” Key staff positions include senior leadership roles overseeing Facilities & Operations, Partnerships & Development, and Programs & Exhibits.

**Facilities & Operations Department:** Encompasses facilities, rentals, guest services, gallery attendants, retail, administration and finance functions.

**Partnerships & Development Department:** Encompasses community relations, grant, fundraising, and marketing. These roles work with the Executive Director to plan and implement the communications and fundraising strategies which will support the organization’s financial sustainability.

**Programs & Exhibits Department:** Encompasses programming, Indigenous outreach, artist-facilitators and educators.

Figure 6: Organizational Hierarchy.





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