

Facility Development 101

Sue Harvey

Sue Harvey: Hi, and welcome to Facility Development 101. I want to whip through the very simple power point presentation so we can leave lots of time for questions and discussion. I could stop and talk on any one of these slides for hours—it's a very complicated and complex subject but I've tried to do a pretty simple overview. I apologize to any of you who are involved with very complex facility situations because this might be a bit thin for you but I would be happy to spend time with any of you afterwards on the issues that might arise through the presentation.

I've been involved with projects that have been small, where we've rolled up our sleeves—I've painted walls and I've scraped floors—and I've been involved in a significantly larger project, a \$311 million capital project in the city of Toronto. But there are some fundamentals that are key and basic to all sizes and types of facility projects.

What I'll do is run through a couple of things about facility strategic planning from a municipality's perspective, and then really take a facility through what I think are the essential planning steps that are necessary for success.

I like to start with this warning—It's what I call "before you fall in love." I can't tell you how many times groups of people, or Councillors, or Mayors fall in love with a building. (Buildings are great—I love buildings.) But what I mean is that people have fallen in love with a building and then ask "What do I do with this?" When that happens, the "container" drives the content. And you usually get into trouble pretty early on in that situation. That doesn't mean that a great building

that's a resource in your community couldn't end up to be something really useful, but you've got to go through a process to make sure that it's the right building, for the right reason, and for the right use in the community.

So we're going to focus on the need, not the opportunity, and again that's not just about the building, but that's about who gets involved and who drives the project. There are people who have their own agendas who come forward or because they're trying to find another use for a building. For example, heritage communities come forward and say, "I want to save this beautiful heritage building—oh, gee what are we going to do? Let's find some arts group to use it." You just have to be careful about those opportunities, about where they come from, and who controls the agenda, and try to find the best way for everybody to benefit from the opportunities.

Another early warning—you also need to know when to get professional help and what kind of help you need. Whether it's a theatre or a museum or artist live/work, I really urge you to look at the resources in your community, and talk with the people who have experience with arts facilities. If it's a performing arts facility—in my experience, that's the most complex of all of these—they are very expensive facilities and often the drive for a new facility tends to be championed by people who are well meaning board members—usually people who have experience perhaps in office development. And that's great. But building an office or having home construction experience, or building a school is very, very different than building a performing arts

centre. It's important to get the right expertise on your team really early on. And that can be expensive. It takes time and it takes a resource to do the kind of planning that's necessary for success.

Back to the planning process. Facilities are where I really strongly believe in lots of advance planning. Most of the time I'm a cultural "doer," but this is one of those times that I think it really pays to get your plan right. These are very, very expensive mistakes to make and they're very hard to fix and I think we heard a little about that this morning.

What we have had in the City of Vancouver is a ten-year facility strategic plan. It was adopted by our Council in 1991 so it's now expired. As I was typing this last night I was thinking that this is a great reminder that I've got to start in the new year, with a new Council, to start the process to do a new ten-year plan. What's been really helpful about having our facility strategic plan is it provides the context separate from the individual opportunity. So you don't have somebody pounding on the door and saying, "I want this right now." You've actually stepped back and you've worked with the community, and you've worked with your Councillors, you've worked with the arts organizations and the audiences to say, "As a community, what have we got? what do we need? what are our long-term goals?" I'm talking about community involvement. Sometimes these plans tend to focus very exclusively on the artist, and while the artists are critical and they're very important, there's also the audience, and the rest of the community. And there's the future audience—get young people involved in this planning process because these are facilities that will last a generation.

I also encourage people to map out their physical and cultural resources. I was just talking to Terry Nicholson in the hallway: the City of Toronto has just mapped with GIS every cultural asset—private and public—in the city, which I think will be a big asset, just in knowing what you've got. We started to do that in the City of Vancouver a number of years ago and we actually have an on-line inventory that's available for the community to just go in and look geographically or look by the type of facility. It's been really helpful because it reminds you of assets you've already got. And then it's also critical in identifying what I call the "gap analysis." When we went through our performing arts inventory, we found that we had a big gap. We have a lot of theatres in one size range and lots in a much

larger size, but nothing in the middle. And where we thought we had a gap—in the very small size theatre—we really didn't. What we had were the right-sized facilities but for various reasons they were being "dismissed" as they weren't serving the community. And instead of going down a path that said, "We've got to build another 125-seat theatre," what we really need to do is fix the ones we've got. So the gap analysis is really critical in trying to get a grip on exactly what it is that we do and don't have and, of course, recognizing that not every community is going to have everything. But you need to go through the full breadth of your existing capital and cultural resources.

You've got community cultural organizations. You've got professional cultural organizations, perhaps. And you need to look at the ones that have adequate facilities and the ones that don't have adequate facilities and build their needs into your plan.

You need to do some forward thinking and a risk assessment. For us that's been critical around housing artists. Artists live and work in the city of Vancouver. We knew that because of the price of real estate that over a five-, ten-, fifteen-year period of time we were going to have a problem. We didn't have a problem today, perhaps, but we knew we'd have one if real estate continued to escalate in this way. And there may be other risks in other communities where you know a facility is going to be taken away from the asset base.

Then you get to the tough part: the "want versus need" part. This is a really tricky part when you're out in the community because if you're doing a community consultation, especially if you're talking to arts groups, and you ask them "What would you like?," you'll get everybody's hopes and dreams and aspirations because they think this is the one and only moment they're going to get it on the table, which is why I like to do the overall strategic plan because you're not speaking about one facility that is supposed to be seen to solve everybody's needs.

It's important to get everybody's dreams on the table in a realistic fashion. And the fact is it is going to cost money to be part of a facility. You've got a lot of work to do on how to make it a reasonable cost, but there will be costs—capital and operating. So it's a good thing to have that conversation early on and use it to really focus the discussion on need.

And then you've got questions about whether you're going to renovate or whether you're going to do a new facility. And those bring on a whole host of issues and questions.

And also look at partnerships: in the City of Vancouver we're not building stand-alone anything anymore. My task is to look at combinations and what we're calling "hubbing" of facilities, which is basically a buzzword for "we've got limited land so use it more efficiently." We don't have the physical land base to have a stand-alone library and a stand-alone day-care for example. Philosophically, we also believe that the combining of those facilities creates opportunities. I'd encourage you to bring in a really wide range of community to figure out what they are. We're working on an arts-enhanced day-care at the moment, which involves bringing together the performing arts community and the child development community and providing something that's beneficial to both.

Regional context and co-ordination: this is a tough one and my colleagues in the Lower Mainland will recognize this. Not every community can afford to have one of each type of facility. We need to talk to each other. Our audiences, our artists don't stop at the boundary. They don't care. We have to get past our municipal structures, which is what we're charged to do, and really talk with our colleagues and find out if there are ways of sharing across boundaries in an equitable way.

So at this point, having gone through the facilities consultation and planning exercise, you should have a big grab bag of things that are out there. It's got to have some financial reality to it at this stage, in my experience. You can't just say, "We've got this list and we'll worry about what it costs later." On the other hand, I really encourage you to not get too fixed on costs at this point because you can get caught on that later on when you come back over the ten-year period and some counsellor says, "You told me that was going to be \$1.2 million and now it's \$1.3 million." So you have to have some order-of-magnitude capital costs and some reality about operating estimates. I think a big mistake is going to their Council and saying, "It won't cost another penny for operating." Not a chance. If you have an increase in facility capacity, it doesn't matter if it's for a cultural centre or you add a room on your house, it's going to cost more money to operate.

Make your plan, have a ten-year-plus horizon. We plan, in the City of Vancouver, in three-year capital plans. So our facility's strategic plan is a nine-year plan. We roll forward over three capital plans. Again, keep some flexibility. And keep a loose connection of priorities because the priorities need to float together. You can't just go

one, two, three through your list over a ten-year plan. Life's just not that simple. So I would keep some flexibility in your plan, and then I would go and say to Council, "This is the process we went through with the community and this is the plan over time." What this gives you is the context for your Council to then deal with submissions to capital plans, opportunities, inquiries, and submissions from community as well. So that's the first piece of homework—your Ten-year Facilities Strategic Plan. It really does set the table for the conversation about a specific facility.

Now let's look at a single facility planning process. There are a couple of up-front things that I think are really important to get right. First and foremost is a really clearly articulated, shared vision—what is this facility going to be? and for whom? I can't tell you how many times I've talked to board members, arts managers, artists, donors, and politicians, and everybody tells you something slightly different. Isn't this building amazing? It's going to be everything to everybody, but nobody's on the same page. And that's when people, obviously, get disappointed. But you're working on this project over time, and invariably things do change. Some tough decisions will have to be made—and who makes the decision and on what basis is critical. I think that having a clear, strong vision is key. These tough decisions should be driven by the artistic vision. If it's driven by somebody else's vision because they want to use a building or because of some other agenda that is incompatible with the artistic vision, I suggest you're going to fail. You can't change the vision three quarters of the way along although sometimes that does happen. Even when everyone's on the same page, difficult decisions will have to be made along the way, and they have consequences.

Another thing to get clear early on is who is the facility for? A situation one sometimes encounters in municipal government is the City's decision to build a facility where there really is not a clearly defined user. If you're going to do that, then you've really got to also do some community development and product development. I hate to use the word "product," but you've got to have something to put in that building at the end of the day. You can't build a building and then say, "Well, now what?"

Another key factor in planning for a new or expanded facility is operational capacity—I mean artistic as well as financial and managerial capacity. Clara Miller who was invited to the conference but unfortunately was not able to

join us, runs the non-profit finance fund in New York City. She's developed a very common-sense notion I like, that of the "iron triangle." It's pretty obvious, but really helps drive home the importance and the connection between the mission, the organizational capacity, and the building. If you change any one of those things, it's going to have a huge consequence. If you decide you're going to go from being a small municipal gallery to being the "Gallery of the Pacific Rim," you're going to have to have a bigger facility to house that vision and it's going to have consequences on your organization's staffing and budget. In another case, if a group decided to reduce staff in order to save money, there will be a consequence to the artistic mission and you may not be able to use all of the space you used to occupy. If you build a huge new building but don't increase your operating capacity, you can't deliver your mission. So you see the connection of that triangle. It's really important to keep that balance as you're going through a capital project and to make sure, right up front, everybody understands it because, again, it comes down to the moment of tough decision-making. You can't make huge changes to one aspect and pretend that it won't affect the others. It creates an imbalance that will inevitably lead to a problem.

So the organizational capacity assessment is really critical. And the group has to have the ability to manage the process of building. These are extraordinarily time-consuming projects, and it really takes a lot from the board and the staff. You're going to ask your artistic director—who's probably stretched and not paid enough anyway—to go out and, in addition to hanging the show or choreographing the event, to also be your fundraiser and your spokesperson, and to sit on the building committee. You've got to really plan and make the time for everyone to be involved. You can't do this in your spare time. Access to the right kind of expertise is essential. And the ability to grow and change is critical. Things are going to be different when you get into a new facility, and you've got to have a group that's open to that.

At this point I encourage—really strongly encourage—the group to come up with a model program. And this can be really simple. It's, literally, you put the calendar up on the wall and you say, "What are we doing right now? And how much activity are we doing right now? And when do we do it? Let's map that out." Then for whatever it is, whether it is that we currently

have a space that's 1,200 square feet, or we currently have so many exhibitions a year, or whatever we do, plot the number of performances a year—then you can make some reasonable growth assumptions because, of course, we're building this for the long horizon. You want to look at your model program in the first year, the fifth year, and the tenth year. Beyond that you're just kind of guessing.

Then we look at the schedule for significant gaps. If that happened—and it often does in the early years, I'll look for partners to fill the gaps. You have 365 days and nights to fill. Everybody wants Friday night and nobody wants the other nights. Then you've got to ask, "Who else is out there in the community who needs the space for the balance of the time?" I had a group that wanted evenings and weekends, they had no use for a space Monday to Friday, nine to five. So I went out to a completely different sector and said, "Well, you guys need a space Monday to Friday, nine to five. How would you guys like to go and have a conversation and come back and see what the partnership looks like?" And those partnerships can lead to either capital participation or rental participation—just make sure everyone is clear about which it is.

And then the building program. This is where you probably need to get some professional expertise although you can do this yourselves. First, you have to have your overarching vision that you've all agreed to and some fundamental principles that will drive the building design—i.e., "it's got to have excellent acoustics." And then you go room by room by room and you literally fill out a form that you make for each and every room, right to the janitor's closet, the AV closet, the rehearsal studio, the exhibition hall, the pottery studio . . . and room by room by room you have to answer all these questions. What's it for? You really have to know because when you get to the inevitable budget reduction stage, you've got to be able to defend and justify every room.

You've also got to be as clear on the appropriate size of each space as well as the character and function. You have to articulate the finishing, the equipment, and the functional relationships (how one room relates to another—i.e., the connect between dressing rooms and the stage—you'd be surprised that people sometimes get that one wrong)! You must also think about sound and acoustics. You can save yourself a lot of money by thinking very carefully about the noise generation from different activities in each space. If you plan it correctly you should be able

to use all of your building efficiently all at the same time.

At this point, the planning groups often add new types of programs and ancillary services to the building program—things like restaurants and bookstores. This can be great for the public, but I really encourage groups to focus on their core business. If you are experienced and in the business of running a restaurant, that's great but probably you're not. This is a group that's probably in the business of art production or creation of some sort. I really encourage groups not to say no to all of those other auxiliary things, but to go out and get somebody who knows what they're doing. You can go broke and ruin your entire organization over something that's really not core to your business. I would rather have forty cents on the dollar in a profit-sharing scheme with a professional restaurateur than a hundred percent of zero, running a restaurant that I don't know anything about.

At this point in the process, if you've been offered a site or building you can tell if it's going to work or if you say, "Thank you very much. That was a really nice site/building that you offered to us." And now you need to find a new site.

Or if you have done your planning and have no site, now is the time, knowing how big your program is, to figure out what your site selection criteria should be. Each project will have different criteria. Some are obvious ones: Is the site big enough? Is it accessible by transit? Can people see it? Is it going to be a focal point? Are there partnership or growth potentials? What's the zoning? (Let's not try to build, for instance, a performance studio in an industrial zone.) Is the site available? Are there site costs (i.e., soil contamination). And are there implications for the revenue potential? (Obviously that's tied back to accessibility.) If you can't find the right place, chances are you're not going to have a big audience and consequently a limited revenue stream.

Next, I like to go and map public resources. Arts facilities are so expensive you usually can't afford to also buy land. And land is so expensive

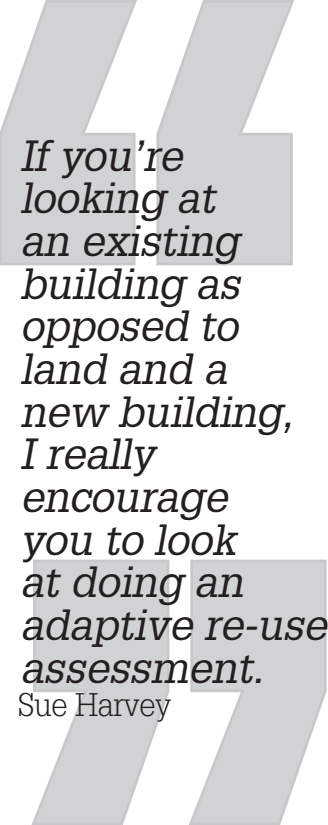
in Vancouver, we don't even try. If you have money to buy land, you are in an extraordinary situation. Mostly, we're out there looking for land that's either held by the public through a municipality, senior level of government, or other kind of public resource. I suggest that at this point you map these out and then you go through all of the sites that are available to you and using your criteria, rank their relative strengths and drawbacks.

Obviously, we're only going to look at available sites. And there may be other ones. We recently did a site study for a maritime museum. I never had to look for a site that had deep-water access before, and I thought, "Well, that limits it really quickly." You want to keep more than one option open. At this point, it's still pretty early in the game. If you really focused on one site and you're not successful in getting it, the group can get demoralised. If you've just got a couple of sites, your perspective is, let's say, "Here are a couple of options; we're going to explore them all a little bit further."

If you're looking at an existing building as opposed to land and a new building, I really encourage you to look at doing an adaptive re-use assessment. You can hire architects to do this, or there may be facility planning staff

within your municipality that can do this. In this situation, you go in and say, "What really makes the most sense to do here?" Yes, it's a wonderful heritage building, and you could make it into a theatre. But it's going to cost you \$10 million. But if you made it into a gallery, it would cost you \$1 million. If you do the adaptive reuse study you should have a really good sense of viable options and you don't focus on trying to make a heritage firehall into an opera house.

Sometimes reusing a heritage building can have real opportunities. In the city of Vancouver, we have bonusing programs for both heritage retention and for cultural facilities. The Stanley Theatre on Granville is an example of an old vaudeville house, a heritage resource. We pooled together all of the resources of our cultural budgets—as limited as they were. Our cultural bonusing capacity together with the heritage



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bonusing and all the heritage dollars we could get actually made the project financially viable. What also happened was that it got all of these people together who didn't care about live theatre but really cared about that building. They launched a campaign "Save our Stanley—S.O.S." It was a really terrific way of coming up with some combined objectives. On the other hand, there are situations where heritage issues can be very complex, and can be very costly, and the cultural group, or the cultural portfolio and budget can end up carrying the can on some very expensive costs. So, I caution people to be careful.

For both bare land and existing buildings there are a whole host of zoning issues. What uses do the zoning district allow? What's the permitted use of the existing building? How hard is it going to be to get from permitted use "A" to desired use "B"? You probably don't want to do a rezoning. You probably just want to do a change of use, or blissfully, find something that's a permitted use. And if I could use your wonderful story, Susan. Susan was desperately trying to create a dance studio/dance school in Vancouver and found herself in an awful spot possibly having to upgrade an entire building just to get permission for her small studio. It was going to be incredibly expensive. On the way to work one day, she saw an empty building that had been a night club. The permitted use was dance hall. Well I don't think we've classified anything as a dance hall in Vancouver for a million years, but there it was and it was perfect. It was serendipity, and it saved the cost and hurdles of having to do the full change of use or a rezoning.

This ties in, of course, to building code issues. If you have to change the use and especially if you are upgrading from warehouse, for example, to public assembly occupancy, you'll also get involved in building code upgrades. Be mindful of these things and get some help early on, before you fall in love with an existing building. Sometimes it can be as expensive and time consuming as new construction.

At this point, you want to get a conceptual design. You don't want to get too fixed, but now you have a site or a couple of site options and you need to have "the picture" to show people and raise some money. They have to see the vision. And you have to have worked it out this far in order to get preliminary capital cost estimates.

Now is the time to hire an architect who has lots of experience in the building type you are looking for. I don't know anybody who would trust somebody without any relevant experience with

\$50 million or even \$1 million. But it happens all the time. There are very few architects in Canada who have experience with good arts facilities. Make sure your architects have experience in that type of building and check their references. Talk to people who are operating the facilities that they've done in the past. Find out what the operating challenges are. It's amazing to me how many times people don't check references and then they find out halfway through their project when they're in trouble that exactly the same thing happened on the architect's previous job but no one bothered to call.

You'll also need to hire a cost consultant (aka quantity surveyor, or "QS"). Some people let the QS be a sub-consultant to the architect—don't do it. You need this advice directly. And, if you are doing a specialised building like a theatre, you need to hire a QS with lots of experience in that building type and you need to hire them NOW. It's very, very different to cost a theatre—and again I keep going to that example because it's the most complex and costly one—than just costing an office building. You could get the quantity surveyor who did the office building to give you a cost on your theatre, and they'll come up with a budget which they defend as being comparable to a school at say \$100 a square foot. Then, when it comes to actually delivering the project, you'll find out as soon as you tender the project that they were wrong—it's \$300 per square foot. It's not that you're actually over budget, it's that your budget was wrong because somebody didn't understand what it was you were trying to accomplish. But your Council or the arts organization board of directors thinks the project has gone "off the rails" and you're way over budget. So you see why it's really important to get the budget right.

Now you have to address issues of governance. Who's building this? Is the City running it? Is the community running it? This is really important to get clear at this point because as soon as you try and go and raise money, somebody wants to know: Whose is this? How are you going to manage this in the future? Who's going to be standing? Who's going to be there when things get tough?

Then you have to work out the issues of management and staffing because you're going to have to write a business plan with an operating budget and you need to know what, realistically, it's going to take to do this. You have to figure out the operating costs—such as the heat and light. It may seem boring but this is really important.

And you must factor in property taxes if you've got them. Programming costs—after all, why are we doing this? If you don't have the resources to deliver the programs or services, then this is all for naught.

You have to look at some realistic revenue potential. I would encourage people not to overestimate revenues, and to look at every possible source you can. And put in a capital replacement fund. You start these buildings, you get a great building, it's fabulous, and ten years later it looks tired and nobody's got any money. And the original fundraising campaign is still fresh in all those donors' minds. It's really hard to go back. You put a little bit of money away every year—this is my RRSP speech—and it will grow and it will be there for you when you need it.

You're bound to have an operating deficit. How are you going to deal with it? In most cases you're not going to be able to deal with it very successfully by either increasing the revenue or decreasing the costs. I would really encourage you to think about an endowment fund. When you're going out to raise capital, raising an endowment fund at the same time makes sense. It's very, very hard to go back after the opening day and say, "Oh, by the way, now we'd like another million dollars for the endowment fund we forgot to tell you about." I would encourage you to think about adding that to the cost of your capital budget and going for it right away. In fact, I don't think our City Council would consider a major capital investment without an endowment fund at this point because they're so nervous that they're going to be the endowment fund.

So you need to do yet another study—a funding feasibility study. Again, there are experts who do this. They help you write your "case statement"—the short, succinct "why we're doing this, who we're doing this for" statement. They help to set the campaign goal—and this is your capital cost plus your endowment costs. And they do an independent assessment of the community's interest in the project—they do this by going out and talking to community leaders. This is not a community consultation. This is one-on-one meetings with leaders in the community, probably including your Council, probably including some discussions with senior funders, and just saying, "Here's the vision. Here's what the group's doing. Do you think that this is feasible?" People are very, very generous with their time. They give you great advice. This is when you identify whether this project is really going to fly in the community.

And you get people networking you on to other resources within the community. So, it's a good thing to do, but I suggest you need to have someone else do it. Because if someone says, "I don't think this is really going to fly," they're not likely to say it face-to-face to whoever's got the emotional connection to it. So you need to get an independent assessment. And you also have to look at the competition. If there are five organizations in your community raising money for capital projects at the same time, I suggest you want to have a chat with them and sequence this and see how it works for everyone. The economic climate and timing are also critical and obviously; if the economy's not doing well, neither will your campaign.

So, these are three prerequisites for a successful capital campaign: 1) a demonstrated need—nobody's going to give you money if they don't get the need. It might be desperately felt in the community, but if there's no perceived need, you won't succeed; 2) you need strong and capable leadership—preferably someone who has made a significant personal commitment; and, 3) a favourable economic climate.

You combine all of this work together—your vision, your program, your preferred site or sites or building, and your business plan that includes the capital and operating costs, and who's going to run it, and how they're going to run it, and how many people will be needed, and what you're going to do. And you've got a funding plan.

Another thing you might consider doing at this point is an economic impact/community benefits analysis. This does not necessarily mean hiring KPMG, although many community groups have access to that kind of organization, or the kind of person who can, on a pro bono basis, do it. Some consider it's a good idea because you're about to go make your case to people who like to hear this kind of argument. Do your homework on what the economic benefits can be. How many dollars are you spending in the community building this facility? How many dollars are you spending in the community running this facility? And talk to other local community groups. For instance, the Stanley Theatre was closed for years. They've opened up again. They've done a wonderful study—some of it's anecdotal and some of it's financial—that says all of the restaurateurs in the neighbourhood have benefited. Many are now donors and supporters! Get that kind of information from your colleagues through this Network and put it together and really articulate what the community benefits

are because you're now going to be looking for capital contributions.

You use this comprehensive plan to garner support. This is just like going to the bank to get a loan. You just don't waltz in and say, "I'd like \$50 million and I don't really have a plan. I have a sketch." You go in there with the business plan or you don't get the money. With this comprehensive approach you've got huge credibility. You've really increased the opportunity for people to say yes by answering all of their questions before they asked.

I want to touch on civic capital funding too. Within the capital plan of the City of Vancouver we have a modest—and I mean modest—capital allocation for cultural facilities. We try to get the community to use the City's support to leverage senior government and private sector funding. The City of Vancouver does not pay 100 percent of any capital costs and hasn't since 1957.

But funding from other levels of government isn't always available and the private sector isn't always enough. You can consider loans and mortgages. Generally, our Council's not interested in providing loans. In the past, groups have over-estimated their ability or willingness to repay the loan. We have a very straight-forward relationship with our council. We tell them what it's really going to cost. I don't feel comfortable going in and saying we'll do a loan if we are not 100 percent sure of the pay back. We prefer to make a capital contribution and work with the group to identify other sources for loans. On the other hand, we do have arts organizations, including some very small arts organizations, that have purchased their own facilities. They've gone out and they've said, "I'm already paying a thousand bucks a month rent. How much of a mortgage could I carry?" We have a very small gallery that built up \$100,000 in equity over the past five years. So it can work in some situations.

Go to senior governments—every province may or may not have access to any capital dollars. Try the Infrastructure Program. It's an obvious case of taking a commitment from a municipality

and a commitment from a community, and leveraging it up through whatever programs that do exist. I know our City Council requires us to have made an effort. We're not always successful in getting senior government funding, but we have always tried.

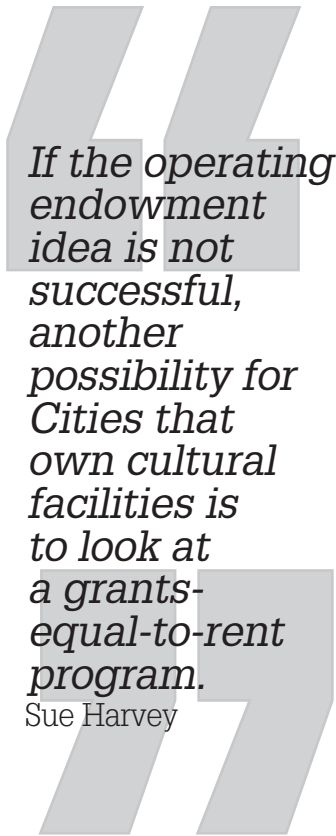
The final topic is zoning incentives. And this one is fairly complex, and I'm happy to spend at least two hours afterward with anybody who's

interested in zoning incentives. In the City of Vancouver we have been very, very fortunate in that we have a hot real estate market and a scarcity of under-developed land. People want to build more. We are also very fortunate that planners and Councils of earlier years had the foresight to set the outright development rights low and make everything conditional zoning. That means that most development in the downtown area is conditional on meeting some public objectives.

We have a provision in the zoning bylaw to increase density on a site in exchange for the provision of cultural, social service, and recreation facilities. In the course of 15 years, we have secured 13 buildings, ranging from the Alliance for Arts and Culture's office on Howe Street, to the Vancouver International Film Centre—a new cinema, a 1,500 square-

foot cinema, and a home for the Vancouver International Film Festival—and an art gallery, the Contemporary Art Gallery. We bonus not only the space fully finished and fit up to our specification, but also a 20-year prepaid operating endowment. The developer gets to build additional density on the site of equal value to the cultural space and operating endowment. It's a very complex process that requires working very closely with our Planning and Real Estate Departments and with City Council to ensure that it can work successfully within the urban fabric. Again, I'll spend time talking to anybody else who's got this type of opportunity. Not a lot of cities have explored this tool for cultural facilities. Some use it for non-market housing.

The other way that we try to assist within the City of Vancouver is to provide technical advice.



If the operating endowment idea is not successful, another possibility for Cities that own cultural facilities is to look at a grants-equal-to-rent program.

Sue Harvey

I work with groups that want to do facilities on a regular basis. That's part of my job. We provide information to the community on how to go about doing this. This is real roll-up-your-sleeves time. See if you've got somebody within your City who could do this. They might be in your Real Estate Department, they might be in Facilities Management, there may be other people that have experience with other kinds of facilities that can offer some kind of assistance to the arts community as they grapple with these tough things.

The City also offers the lease of some City-owned facilities as another way of assisting organizations operationally. This is another way to see if you have an adaptive reuse opportunity. You may have civic assets; maybe it makes more sense not to build a new building, but instead to reuse an existing City building. We have 66 buildings in the City of Vancouver which are leased to not-for-profit organizations for the provision of services. The City is not in the business of providing those services, but we do provide the building and we provide a modest—and I do mean modest—level of maintenance.

The other helpful thing is a capital grants program. And don't exclude access to planning money. It's really hard to get that upfront money needed to do the planning. Everybody talks to you about the capital. But getting the money to answer the questions so you can ask for the capital is the tough one. Cultural Spaces Canada, I believe, is now funding feasibility studies. We have funded feasibility studies as well. I think it's an important way to help.

If the operating endowment idea is not successful, another possibility for Cities that own cultural facilities is to look at a grants-equal-to-rent program. The City provides a grant to the community which then pays an equal amount to the City as rent for the facility. It costs the same to the City but some Councils might feel more comfortable providing this type of grant program than just saying "we are going to underwrite the debt at this facility for years and years to come."

Finally, learn everything you can about facilities and the process. Here are five amazing organizations; one's based in Toronto, four are based in the United States. I think they've just been at it a lot longer than most. They're very smart people and they all have websites.

Artscape in Toronto has developed a number of artist studio buildings and they've also converted a school on Toronto Island into an artist retreat. If any of you get a chance to go have a

look at it, it's really a lovely spot. Arts Spaces in Minneapolis works all over the U.S. and, I think, they are doing some work in Canada now as well. Again, they work a lot on artist live/work visual art studios. Non-Profit Finance Fund of New York (Clara Miller) provides loan programs and technical assistance, as does Work Spaces in San Francisco. Finally, the Technical Development Corporation in Boston provides capacity-building assistance to organizations contemplating capital projects. They have people that can come in—they are from arts organizations, these are not people who speak a different language—they are people who have been through this before. They come in and they sit and work with organizations to help them come to grips with what organizational capacity the group needs so that they can embark on a capital project.

So, very quickly that's it. And now I would just love to have a chat, or answer questions if I can.

Q: Thank you. That was so jam-packed. There are so many ways in. One small question: In your experience in Vancouver, what is the proportion of municipal investment in a new facility? Is it all over the map?

Sue: Tiny. There are many civic facilities, and we also have a capital grant program for non-civic buildings. Our capital grant program was \$600,000 for the three years of the last capital plan. Last year, Council approved \$90,000 in capital grants for \$2.7 million in capital infrastructure improvements, and the balance of the money was raised in the community. The City's money is usually the first money, it's leverage money. We try to provide "added value" by providing other forms of assistance. The value of the bonusing program is extraordinary. There's a real cost to that, too. I mean, there's a density in the sky that the public live with and so while there's a perception that it's free, it's not free at all. There's a cost to the society as a whole, and there's also a cost to the group that then becomes the resident group in that space because they have to fulfil certain obligations.

Q: I am just going to offer one thing in relation to dealing with existing buildings. One of the most important things I learned out of this session was don't let the building drive you. One of the first things you said was that in relation to existing buildings you had zoning-related issues, and a lot of these may relate to heritage buildings. One thing we sometimes come across

is environmental issues in relation to existing buildings. If it turns out to be an environmental problem you might as well bolt the door and find some other place because it's really going to cost a lot. We're facing that in Fredericton right now with one possible facility.

Sue: That's absolutely true. Asbestos abatement can do you in. And there are many other environmental things. In fact, there's one theatre here in Vancouver that turned out to be on an archaeological site. They can't do anything with it now. This illustrates that sometimes you just never know, which is why it is always a good idea to have another site or another option in the wings so that you don't just hit the wall with no other options and then it's perceived as failure.

Q: I heard an architect at a conference a few years ago who said that whatever you pay for your building, you're going to pay ten times that over the lifespan of the building in order to maintain it. Do you think that sounds about right? Do you think that's realistic?

Sue: I don't know about a formulaic answer to that but you need to consider the capital costs, the capital replacement costs, and the operating costs. You can't just make a one-time capital investment in a building. I think that it behoves us to take a fuller look at a project and use full-cost accounting—to look at the actual cost of the systems, to look at the operating implications—in every capital decision that you make. Whether it's what kind of air handling system you put in, to how many seats—to how big the rooms are. Everybody would love to have a big space but it costs more to operate. You have to keep those factors—the operating consequences of a physical decision running in parallel.

Q: You talked about location, etcetera. You said that it should be accessible and so on. I looked at Granville Island in Vancouver. It breaks all the rules. And so, could you talk just a bit about that and where the rules can be broken and so on?

Sue: Well, that's a tough one. It's very interesting because Granville Island, if you looked at an aerial map of Vancouver, looks about as accessible, or inaccessible, as Vanier Park, which is where the museum is sited and where we had our opening night reception. And the perennial debate about the Vancouver Museum is: how do you find it? How do you get there? And Granville Island—no

problem—everybody gets there; everybody's figured it out. So, if you're starting with something that's a known quantity, you probably have got a little more leeway on that site criteria. You're not going to hit every single site criteria, and there's going to be some that are more important to you. But if you're starting with something that is new to the community that doesn't have a well-established reputation, I suggest that accessibility and visibility are highly important criteria for your site. There's no point in starting behind the eight ball.

Q: The other aspect of site specifics, if you could just mention it a bit. We're looking at developing our downtown core where people are already complaining about parking and all of those kinds of things. But it is centrally located and we will hopefully, well, not lose the businesses and so there are so many positives and negatives on that.

Sue: Parking and women's washrooms. Sometimes you'd think that that was the only thing we were in business for, because when you're out talking to the community, they want parking and public washrooms especially women's washrooms. I think it's important to have a parking plan and people understand the facts. So they don't come in and say, "You didn't provide parking." We have really limited parking here, and we're pretty pragmatic about it. Again I'll go back the Stanley Theatre: here's a heritage theatre—not a parking stall on site—we got full parking relaxation. But they knew that this was going to be a big beef for the neighbours and for their patrons—they've got a fairly suburbanish kind of audience that's going to drive their car. And they just made parking part of their advertising. They have a map of Granville Street that's got every parking stall identified. They went out and they made friends with the parking community in advance. They just made it "this is part of our service," and tried to cut it off at the pass.

Q: The community from where I come is small. We have a population of about ten thousand. I've lived there for three years. Twice in those three years there have been referendums—the second referendum is coming up—on how a facility is built. The initial plan was to combine both the arts and the recreational/sports stuff to have this all-encompassing thing that would serve not only the city but the regional district as well. There are

a lot of problems that are inherent in not having a facility and trying to design one when you have divisiveness already existing. But after the last referendum, the divisiveness seemed to increase between the sports rack and the arts/heritage aspects. And what resulted from that, through the tenacity of the citizens, is an effort to see both of those things go forward in spite of the upcoming referendum. So the divisiveness was increased through the last referendum, seemingly. So, we're sitting there now with this great uncertainty as to how to move forward and how to bring the community back together. There have been a number of initiatives to try and attempt to do that, but ... Have you every encountered problems like that?

Sue: Well, you know, it's a tight pie. And that pie's got to get divvied up and it can be really competitive. But I think it's important to work as a community on meeting everybody's objectives. That's why the bigger facility strategic plan is important, even just within the arts community, so that people say, "OK, at this time, I see this other group's opportunity but I also see where my project fits in the plan." I see that kind of jockeying within the community and within the City through our capital planning process. I sit on the City's facilities strategic facilities committee and we work together as colleagues. That's where it starts. Making peace with each other's projects and being supportive of each other's projects, so that when it comes time for your project, you've got your colleagues with you. And it takes a long time, and then you go out from there.

Partnership projects really help as well, so that people start to understand where there's mutual benefit. And a referendum—frankly, I hate them. I think capital from revenue as opposed to borrowing is a better way to go. If you get stuck borrowing and go out and you ask a question, it's a very difficult question to get a yes to, unless you want to combine with a firehall or a police station. But it's very difficult to get a yes on a referendum for a cultural facility unless you've got extraordinary community support.

Q: I have a comment on being flexible. In Regina I have a City Councillor who's much in favour of culture, but he's constantly pushing forward a large arts and culture centre, but no one else is. The community isn't. We have a lot of groups who are already in their spaces and are pretty much taken care of. So I'm constantly fending him off or sending him reports saying, "No one's interested.

No one's interested." It's not that there isn't interest, but not on that scale.

Secondly, in Weyburn there's a mental institution. They're thinking of tearing it down. It's a beautiful, beautiful building with a chequered history, so to speak. This past summer, a group of people from Regina went down and animated that space. They animated this space over two weeks and did performances and site-specific art inside the building just as a project, and involved the community. The old site nurses were the tour guides, and it enlivened the community and brought to the community the possibility of what they could do with that site. And now, the politicians and people in the community are driving a process to keep that site and to do something every summer on that site similar to what was happening. So, it's kind of an interesting marriage of a special event that can kick off a concept. Before, people were just going to trash the building until an art event went in there. It lifted the scales off some eyes, and some important eyes, like the politicians, of what it can do to a community. So I think it's essential 90 percent of the time to go through the planning and come to the end and say, "Can we do it?" But sometimes you need that spark in order to get something going and then maybe go through the planning process.

You mentioned the capital endowment fund. Is there any problem with a theatre facility, for instance, that there's operations and then there's capital. And they often like to enter into a foundation or an endowment to support the operational side. Are there any experiences here, in this area of theatres? How do they embark on a campaign? Is the capital campaign separate from the endowment fund?

Sue: If you're doing a new facility, or a reno, and you've got a new campaign, generally just build it in. And when you, or your fundraisers or your community groups or whatever go out and talk to people, you'll find people that have different passions. You'll find some people want to "buy" capital—the bricks and mortar. And other people really like the endowment idea. There are people in the community that will like that you've done your homework, you've got this great business plan that says we're planning for an endowment. They want to know that their contribution will make the project last. So you will find when you do your fund raising, if you have both opportunities available, that people will choose. Frankly, sometimes you just do the

capital campaign and just keep on going with the endowment. You have to be clear with people that you're doing both. It's very hard to do the endowment fund alone. You need the spark, and the sexy spark, of a capital program.

Q: Yesterday, Cynthia mentioned a new Canadian Heritage program that might match endowments. That was the first time I heard about it. Is that something? Would an endowment qualify?

Sue: I would defer to my colleagues at the federal government. But yes, absolutely. I think they're looking more at stabilization and endowments for operations. But a building is part of an organization's being.

One thing I kind of skated over in my presentation is how to deal with change as you go through a project. I really only got to the point where you've got the money. And now you have to build this thing. If you have set your budget carefully, with good advice, you should be pretty close when you get to this point. You've been setting your budget at a conceptual design phase, and now you're going to confirm how much you can raise. And then you have to tender the project. And this is where the rubber hits the road. This is where you find out that your brother-in-law who did the cost estimates at the beginning didn't know what he was talking about. Suddenly, your project goes from \$5 million to \$12 million. And a lot of people start to point fingers at that point. How could you? You guys have gone crazy. You've doubled the programs. It's really critical to get a kind of a grip on all of that messaging early on: first, to get your budget right, to make sure you've got the best advice that you can; then, if it does go up, to be really clear about why it's gone up, and go back and test things. Make sure you are reacting to real information.

I would like to talk about Mississauga's Living Arts Centre and how that changed over time and use it as an example. I wish Beth were here, but I think she wouldn't mind. Small disclaimer—I wrote one of those early studies she referenced this morning. In the Living Arts Centre case, the vision wasn't clear. Everybody that you talked to in Mississauga told you something else was going to happen in that building. And the vision changed over time as they brought in different consultants and board members and then the City got very involved and it shifted again. They got involved with theatre consultants who just said, "this is what you must do if you're going

to have a world-class facility." And the City, the Mayor and the board were all in love with the idea of being world-class at that time. And the budget went from reasonable to world class too but nobody ever stopped and tested and said, "What does all of this change mean for our mission and mandate? Is this really what we set off to do?" Your mission and mandate might change. This is not to say that you have to drag the consultants right back to 1988. It may be that as a community, over the course of time—and these things take years to develop—that the mission and mandate has really changed. But you have to test that to make sure it's real and that you've got the organizational capacity to deliver up whatever that new vision is. Back to the "iron triangle" idea.

And so with Mississauga things just kind of drifted. The budget drifted. All of these things drifted. Now it's built, and it has a beautiful, beautiful concert hall—I encourage you to visit and listen if you ever get a chance to hear anything in there, it's really lovely acoustics. But the rest of the building has almost nothing to do with what the original vision was because every time it drifted nobody pulled it back and asked the question, "What are we going to do about it? And if we are going to go down that path that we're drifting down, here are the consequences and let's all adjust to the new vision and budget or let's go back to the original viable plan."

Q: Sue, could you talk a little bit about managing political will. This is the situation that I'm in: our Mayor made an announcement last year to the public, without any consultation or knowledge from staff, that a building that the city recently purchased would be converted into an arts centre. Surprise! First time I'd heard of it. So now we're in a situation where the community has been teed up that they're going to get a facility a.s.a.p., and my department was directed by Council to launch into the feasibility study but with the very clear expectation that the result of that study would be positive and that we would be in construction within six months. So, on first glance it sounds good. How exciting that there is a political will to do something, but absolutely none of that front end—who's running it, what's going to be in it—none of that work has been done. And we already have an architect on board.

Sue: Well, it's no good me telling you it's too bad you didn't have a strategic plan, because it really helps you get around those kinds of things.

And this sort of thing happens—it's the nature of the business that we're in. So, telling you that it would be really great to have had this strategic plan isn't going to help you. At this point it sounds like you're going down that path. I think you know what my answer would be: "Isn't it wonderful? Isn't it great? Let's do an adaptive reuse and see what the best possible outcome is." And then, really, I would try and get a hold of the agenda so that you could move it working with the community to the place that is likely to be the most successful for the community. And get as much help as you can, because you have a really short period of time.

The other thing that I didn't mention is that there are really fabulous people across the country who help each other when they get into these kinds of spots. You may not have enough money for a consultant, but Culture-L provides access to all sorts of people who have had experience and are very generous about it. I know the director of our civic theatres, Rae Ackerman, is very generous with his advice. He'll go and sit with people and talk to them. And sometimes bringing one of your colleagues in from the outside is really a helpful way, a pretty inexpensive way, of sitting down with political or board or community folks and having somebody else deliver up the difficult message. I would really encourage anybody who's thinking about a capital project to put together your own, private, "wise men" committee. You're going to have advisory committees, you're going to have user committees, you're going to have all kinds of community inputs, and your Council. But, put together your own private team. That's somebody that you can call up off the record and say, "This is what those idiots have done. Now what do I do?" or, "I don't know what I'm doing." It's fine to admit that you don't know what you're doing to your "wise men" and they'll just help you get back on track.

Q: Do you think all of this is relevant to a community the size of Nelson? Because you're talking large dollars, large resources of expertise and people ... when you live in a community that's small ...

Sue: Yes. Nelson has a fabulous art community. All capital is expensive—it's just a matter of scale; in fact sometimes it can be just as difficult trying

to raise a hundred thousand dollars as a million dollars. The same issues still apply.

Q: No, I recognize that. I just needed to hear somebody say it.

Sue: And I haven't met an arts community that hasn't wanted or hasn't had some kind of physical infrastructure in its ten-year or twenty-year, or thirty-year aspirations. But a facility isn't going to solve all problems. I think one of the interesting things about doing a strategic plan is you find all kinds of spaces, such as the facility you were talking about in Weyburn that isn't being used. A new building does not solve any problems, a new building is not going to help your product or your artistic creation—it can enhance it there is no question, but it's really got to be about what's on the walls and what's on the stage. And there are lots of other ways of doing that.

Q: Could you talk about determining and setting up a capital fund for a City. What are the factors in determining, apart from the availability of the budget, what would be the criteria for determining the size?

Sue: Get as much as you can. One of the reasons that we have been successful at all in the City's capital planning process is that we are one of the few departments that leverage dollars from other places. You'll find when you're at the capital table when everybody else is talking about 100 percent taxpayers' dollars and suddenly you'll pop in and say "thanks very much, I can bring in 66 percent cents more from other sources" that people make way for you really quickly because they can see they get better bang for their buck. You have to do a lot of work. You have to talk about leveraging, you have to talk about the benefits, you have to talk about the importance of being there first. I think that our Council now understands that. And they understand that it's safe money, to be honest with you, because if they approve the project it's still subject to the receipt of funding from the other sources. They look good to the community. If the feds or province or the community fund raising doesn't make it, the City doesn't release the money but they've been seen to be supportive.