



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 15.3.2
Halifax Regional Council
February 24, 2026

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Councillor Janet Steele, Chair, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

DATE: February 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Centre for Art Tapes Funding Request

ORIGIN

February 17, 2026 meeting of Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, Item 13.1.3.

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council:

1. approve the provision of a one-time contribution totalling \$225,000 to Centre for Art Tapes to be allocated toward the purchase of the property at 2199 Gottingen Street, Halifax, accommodated in Parks & Recreation's 2025-2026 operating budget; and
2. authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or their delegate, to negotiate and execute the Municipality's standard Contribution Agreement with Centre for Art Tapes, with terms and conditions acceptable to the Chief Administrative Officer.

BACKGROUND

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee received a staff recommendation report dated February 13, 2026 and presentation to consider a one-time funding request for \$225,000 to Centre for Art Tapes and to authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or their delegate, to negotiate and execute the Municipality's standard Contribution Agreement with Centre for Art Tapes.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated February 13, 2026.

DISCUSSION

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee considered the staff report dated February 13, 2026 and approved the recommendation to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated February 13, 2026.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated February 13, 2026.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated February 13, 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated February 13, 2026.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated February 13, 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Staff recommendation report dated February 13, 2026.

Report Prepared by: Krista Vining, Team Lead, Legislative Assistants, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.223.1046

P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 13.1.3
Community Planning and Economic Development Committee
February 17, 2026

TO: Chair and Members of (Name of Community Council or Board)

FROM: Brad Anguish, Commissioner of Operations

DATE: February 13, 2026

SUBJECT: Centre for Art Tapes Funding Request

ORIGIN

October 16, 2025 Community Planning and Economic Development (10.3.1)

MOVED by Councillor Steele, seconded by Councillor St-Amand.

THAT the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to provide a staff report to consider a financial contribution to The Centre For Art Tapes (CFAT) for the purchase of a building and to advance renovations of the acquired building.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report addresses a one-time funding request for \$300,000 from the Society for Art Presentation operating under the business name, The Centre for Art Tapes (CFAT). The funding request is to support the purchase of the property at 2199 Gottingen Street, Halifax, (the property) and provide funds towards the first phase of building renovations.

Founded in 1979, CFAT is a non-profit, artist-run, registered charity that facilitates and supports artists at all levels working with electronic media including video, audio, and new media. CFAT offers facilities, mentorship and equipment rentals to a broad spectrum of the arts sector facilitating work in music, reporting, film, visual arts, media arts, gaming and more. CFAT remains the region's only dedicated media arts production centre, a place where emerging and established artists can develop, produce, and present new work that reflects diverse perspectives and under-represented stories.

This initiative will provide a permanent home for the organization and Halifax's first and only new media art gallery located in the cultural corridor of Halifax's North End with proximity to both the Bus Stop Theatre, RadStorm Community Arts Space, Wonder'Neath Art Society, EyeLevel Art Gallery and The Blue Building. The purchase price and closing costs are estimated to be \$900,000 in total and CFAT has been successful in raising \$70,000 through fundraising and donations and have been pre-approved for a mortgage of \$674,000. CFAT has confirmed that \$225,000 of the requested \$300,000 is required as downpayment to

support the purchase of the property with the remaining funds required for the first phase of renovations. Staff have reviewed the CFAT request against all established evaluation criteria consistently applied for contributions of this kind and have prioritized the downpayment in this recommendation. It is recommended that HRM fund \$225,000 based on budgeted allowances in the 2025-2026 Parks & Recreation operating budget.

As of Quarter 2 Financial Report submitted to Audit & Finance and Regional Council, Parks & Recreation has a year end forecasted deficit of -\$4.7M for period ending September 30, 2025.

While other orders of government can support subsequent stages of the project there are no dedicated funding programs that can support capital costs for the purchase of a property. The funds required for renovations are not recommended at this time due to budget constraints, however CFAT can return to CPED with an additional request once the property is secured.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED) recommend that Regional Council:

1. approve the provision of a one-time contribution totalling \$225,000 to Centre for Art Tapes to be allocated toward the purchase of the property at 2199 Gottingen Street, Halifax, accommodated in Parks & Recreation's 2025-2026 operating budget;
2. authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or their delegate, to negotiate and execute the Municipality's standard Contribution Agreement with Centre for Art Tapes, with terms and conditions acceptable to the Chief Administrative Officer; and,

BACKGROUND

This report originates from a funding request for \$300,000 that CFAT presented to CPED on October 16, 2025 (Attachment 1). CFAT is seeking a one-time contribution to help purchase and begin phase 1 renovations for the property that will become a new and permanent home for the organization, stabilizing long-term programming and organizational capacity and redirecting monthly rental expenses toward permanent capital improvements. During CFAT's presentation, it was identified that the current owner is selling the property and has agreed to complete a below-market-value sale with CFAT.

Organizational Overview

CFAT is a non-profit charitable organization and artist-run-centre that functions as the nervous system of Atlantic-Canadian media art. Founded in 1979 as one of the first artist-run media arts centres in Canada, the Halifax based organization now offers the province's only fully equipped dedicated media-arts production centre. Established during a period of rapid growth in artist-run culture, and drawing on the dynamic Nova Scotia arts ecosystem, CFAT emerged to meet the needs of artists and organizations working with video, audio, and emerging media technologies. At its core, CFAT has always prioritized access: providing affordable equipment rentals, production facilities, and technical support at a time when such resources were otherwise unavailable to most artists in Atlantic Canada. From its earliest years, CFAT positioned itself as a space for experimentation and exchange. Its Media Art Scholarship (MAS), residencies, and mentorship programs have helped shape generations of Canadian media artists, while its exhibition and presentation activities have brought diverse voices and under-represented stories into public dialogue. CFAT's role as both an incubator for new talent and a hub for established practitioners has made it a vital part of Halifax's cultural fabric for over four decades.

CFAT submitted a Business Plan (Attachment 2) that includes details on its users and events as well as an overall Feasibility Study (Attachment 3) for the purchase of the property. CFAT's financial profile reflects

both the vulnerabilities and opportunities typical of small artist-run centres: heavy reliance on government funding, limited reserves, and high rental costs. That said, the organization has a proven track record of financial management, growing fundraising potential, and will be able to stabilize their operations through capital investment. The total capital project is estimated at \$1,930,000 which encompasses the purchase, phased renovations, professional fees and contingencies.

Budgeted Request

CFAT has been in contact with HRM staff since 2023 as they worked towards the funding request, presented to CPED in 2025. Based on funding requests both made and anticipated in 2025-2026, Parks & Recreation requested a service enhancement to increase funding for grants or contributions to various organizations which was approved by Regional Council. An estimated \$200,000 was included to potentially accommodate the CFAT request along with the funding already provided to RadStorm Community Arts Space. In order to secure the funds required for the downpayment which will secure the building, the balance of \$25,000 can be accommodated through the approved and allocated transfer from Reserve Q621, which is used to support similar projects. Therefore, this recommendation can be fully accommodated within the approved Parks & Recreation 2025-2026 operating budget.

DISCUSSION

CFAT's request falls outside of an established municipal grant program. The *Grants to Professional Arts Organizations* program provides funding for operational costs and artistic projects, from which CFAT receives \$18,000 in operating funding, but it does not provide an avenue to support venue purchases or capital investments. The *Community Grants Program* includes a *Capital Grant* category of up to \$25,000 however, the *Community Arts* category supports non-professional arts organizations and art projects undertaken by groups whose mandate is not arts specific.

Although the municipality does not have an established program for CFAT's proposal, ad-hoc funding requests to help a non-profit organization purchase a property are not uncommon. Recent examples of Regional Council-approved capital grants to support property purchases include:

- \$100,000 to RadStorm Community Arts Space (2025)
- \$750,000 to Nova Scotia Nature Trust - Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (2020);
- \$500,000 to Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative (2019);
- \$300,000 to Nova Scotia Nature Trust - 100 Wild Islands (2016); and
- \$2,500,000 to Tennis Canada (2016).

There are also many examples where HRM has supported non-profit organizations through other means, such as contributions of comparable value, building donations, and capital grants to renovate facilities. Some of these examples include:

- \$300,000 to Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame (2025)
- \$1,000,000 to Link Performing Arts Society (2018) (Also known as Light House Arts Centre);
- \$2,000,000 to Discovery Centre (2016); and
- \$500,000 to Citadel Theatre Society (2011).

This request aligns with previously approved municipal contributions towards the purchase of properties to be used as cultural venues, for example, Bus Stop Theatre and RadStorm Community Arts Space. As with other recent capital grant requests specific to the support of cultural facilities, staff have applied criteria to assess the viability of the project. Proposed projects are evaluated under the following categories:

1. Feasibility of the project assessed through a review of the submission documents and proof of concept through a sound business plan and financial proforma,
2. Support from other levels of government or private investment and fundraising; and
3. Measurement against council priority outcomes and mandates.

In considering CFAT's proposal, an internal review team was formed with staff from Parks & Recreation,

Finance, and Legal Services. The team’s evaluation of CFAT’s proposal is outlined below.

Submission Review

Business Plan and Financial Proforma

In 2024 CFAT commissioned a Business Plan (Attachment 2) delivered by *Bespoke Cultural Collective*. The Business Plan charts a clear and sustainable path forward for the purchase of the property. It provides a framework for decision-making, financial planning, and stakeholder engagement, ensuring that the organization’s long-term vision is supported by evidence-based analysis. It articulates the rationale for ownership, outlines the feasibility of the proposed site, and demonstrates how a permanent home will stabilize CFAT’s operations, expand its programming capacity, and ensure its longevity in Halifax’s cultural ecosystem. By translating years of community consultation, architectural feasibility work, and financial modelling into an actionable plan, this Business Plan positions CFAT to successfully attain arts and culture funding, align with funder priorities, and move confidently toward implementation. By purchasing this property, CFAT envisions a thriving media arts community allowing them to stabilize their operations, expand their capacity by 43%, strengthen the sector through shared infrastructure, and advance efforts towards a barrier free and accessible facility.

CFAT’s ten-year proforma demonstrates stable operations and modest surpluses throughout 2026–2035. Ownership will not increase CFAT’s annual costs but will instead build equity, diversify revenue, and position the organization for future reinvestment in programming and staff capacity. The total Class D capital budget for the project is estimated at \$1.93 million. This figure includes the property purchase, two phased building renovations, professional fees, financing costs, and contingencies. CFAT has included a financial model following a proven multi-tiered approach used successfully by other arts organizations both locally and nationally. This model is comprised of:

- Government Grants: \$1.15 million (~60%)
- Mortgage Financing: \$674,000 (25-year amortization) (~34%)
- Donations and Sponsorships: \$120,000 (~6%)

CFAT also outlines the breakdown of the requested investment as well as the full capital project:

- Property Acquisition: \$899,000 purchase price, with \$224,750 (25%) downpayment.
- Phase 1 Renovations (basic interior, accessibility, code upgrades): approx. \$275,793.
- Phase 2 Renovations (specialized suites, gallery fit-up, cultural assembly spaces, façade upgrades): approx. \$485,550.

Annual occupancy costs under ownership are projected to remain comparable to current rent levels. However, ownership converts these costs into equity, adds rental income potential through two upstairs apartments, and positions CFAT to expand programming and resources to members and the surrounding community. CFAT has provided a table in their Business Plan that describes the differences:

Category	Current Rental Model (2024)	Ownership Model (2026+)
Rent / Mortgage	\$51,520 (rent)	\$52,800 (mortgage)
Property Tax	Included in rent	\$4,287 (est. based on \$600k assessed value; less 75% tax relief for NP organizations)
Insurance	\$7,112	\$8,500 (est. at \$1.25/sq.ft. + liability)
Utilities	\$5,333	\$6,000
Maintenance / Repairs	\$1,680	\$2,500 (allowance for building ownership)
Subtotal: Occupancy Costs	\$65,645	\$74,087* (with tax relief, reserve fund)
Rental income (apartments)	NA	-\$21,600
Net Occupancy costs	\$65,645	\$52.487 (with rental income and tax relief)

* This estimate cannot be verified due to reassessment, market value activity which impacts property value, and unconfirmed future municipal tax rates. Further, in 2025 the property is assessed Residential and Commercial and the level of any municipal tax relief cannot be confirmed.

Feasibility Study

In 2024 CFAT commissioned a Feasibility Study (Attachment 3) delivered by *Place Of Work*. In the study, they assessed CFAT's current space needs and noted a lack of appropriate purpose-built presentation space for the exhibition of media art, adequately sized dedicated equipment storage space, and finally, the organization requires private office space for staff separate from accessible member spaces to allow connections and co-creation to happen freely. The current owner of the property has agreed to sell CFAT the property for a competitive less than market value rate of \$899,000. The building offers enough space that would be dedicated to the current core functions and needs of the organization.

CFAT plans to renovate and occupy the ground and lower floors of the existing building. In addition, the rental apartments on the second and third floor can generate passive rental income in the near term. In the long term, these spaces could be renovated to allow for CFAT to expand or diversify should the need arise. The current CFAT space is approximately 1,764 square feet (163 square meters) while the new building would allow for approximately 2,470 square feet (229 square meters) for an increase of 776 square feet (72 square meters) allowing the organization to increase their capacity and programming space by 43%.

The project envisions the renovation and adaptive reuse of the ground and basement levels to create a purpose-built media arts centre including:

- A flexible media arts gallery and storefront window display for public presentation;
- Workshop and multi-purpose spaces adaptable for meetings, screenings, and community events;
- A transfer suite for digitizing and preserving legacy media;
- Audio and video production suites, including Nova Scotia's only publicly accessible 5.1 surround sound suite.
- A welcoming members' area, kitchenette, and accessible staff offices; and
- Fully accessible design with a barrier-free washroom and lift access to the basement.

The benefits of this project extend far beyond CFAT's membership and have the potential to increase community benefits and the cultural infrastructure of Halifax.

The Feasibility Study also notes a few challenges that will be important for CFAT to consider when purchasing this property. These are listed in full in Section 3.5 of their Business Plan along with their risk mitigation plans demonstrating their preparedness to take on this project. Some of these challenges refer to the unknown construction conditions of an existing building, capacity and resource limitations and escalating construction costs. The challenges identified by CFAT underscore the need for prudent planning, strong partnerships, and diversified funding strategies.

There are also clear benefits to CFAT in purchasing this property. Apart from the financial security and sustainability, 2199 Gottingen Street is an ideal location for CFAT. It is centrally located and has street frontage on the vibrant, creative artery that is Gottingen Street located between The Bus Stop Theatre and Radstorm which allows for organizational collaboration, interaction and a further bolstering of this cultural corridor. By anticipating risks and developing mitigation measures, it is evident that CFAT will successfully navigate these obstacles and deliver a sustainable, accessible and vibrant home for media arts in Halifax.

Alignment with Municipal Priorities and Plans

[2026-2030 Strategic Priorities Plan](#)

The municipality recently adopted a new Strategic Priorities Plan outlining the vision, mission and values that will guide HRM's municipal operations between 2026-2030. It identifies five priority areas: Enabling Prosperity, Strengthening Communities, Moving Better, Responsible Administration, and Our People. Of these, the following two areas are particularly relevant:

Enabling Prosperity

CFAT's request aligns with this priority, due to the cultural sector's contributions to economic growth, talent attraction, and retention. According to the Creative Cities Network, cultural industries contributed \$1.1 billion to HRM's GDP in 2022. CFAT is an important cultural incubator that is financially and socially accessible to emerging artists who will make economic contributions and showcase HRM's local talent.

- A prosperous economy depends on HRM’s ability to attract, retain, and develop talent. Specifically, this priority speaks to “skilled people wanting to work and live in the region” (EP-05-R5). This is true for the arts sector as well. Increasingly artists are leaving Halifax for larger cities with more infrastructure and support for their work and the value they bring. CFAT emerged to meet the needs of artists working with video, audio, and emerging media technologies. By prioritizing access and providing affordable equipment rentals, production facilities, and technical support CFAT demonstrates a commitment to the arts and creating a thriving arts scene encourages artists and non-artists alike to stay or move to the municipality.

Strengthening Communities

The request has alignment with this priority, specifically the ability to support involved communities. CFAT has an active membership that supports a broad spectrum of artists and arts organizations and arts organizations annually. Further, CFAT rents their space and equipment at subsidized rates, a value of over \$170,000.

- This priority specifically speaks to “increased investment opportunities for the protection, nurturing and celebration of culture and heritage assets” (SC-04-R4). This project benefits a broad spectrum of sectors including the visual and performing arts, film, audio and recording, podcasting, animation and more. In addition, this priority emphasizes the identification of programs, services, and policies that promote equitable access to community services.
- This priority aims to “increase community well-being initiatives and grants” (SC-04-R1) and “improve access to safe community spaces” (SC-04-R3). CFAT’s project aligns with this priority as they aim to create a barrier free, accessible and inclusive space for the arts community at a time when those spaces are decreasing rapidly without support.

Lastly, the Strategic Plan also includes a priority for *Responsible Administration* outlining that “municipal services and resources are strategically prioritized and optimized based on best practice advice, fiscal responsibility, fiscal sustainability and community needs” (RA-01-R1). As such, staff have evaluated this funding request and adjusted the recommendations with special consideration for the current fiscal challenges the municipality is facing, balanced against growing community need and pressure.

HRM’s Performing & Visual Arts Venues Study

The Performing & Visual Arts Venues Study (Venue Study) was completed in 2024 and identifies that while HRM is the second fastest growing municipality in Canada, the number of professional performing and visual art venues operating here have declined over the past decade. Market analysis and stakeholder engagement indicates that there is a venue shortage in HRM, with increasing pressure due to rising rental costs. It finds that without intervention to secure venues, the arts scene will be constrained, reducing availability to residents of a component of quality of life and an important driver of economic growth.

The Venue Study recommends that HRM explore ways to support non-profit organizations who wish to create, acquire, and renovate venues that benefit the arts community through new supports and/or capital funding programs. It outlines that non-profit organizations who request HRM support to purchase existing venues should be given priority if they serve one or more art clusters, are heavily used, are well positioned near other venues, bars, restaurants, and/or high-frequency transit and address other art needs, such as rehearsal space, arts office space, recording studios, or specialized equipment. CFAT’s project is consistent with these priorities. An excerpt from Table 14 of the Venue Study identifies “Urgent” priorities for the Visual Arts, of which the CFAT proposal helps resolve:

Investment Type	Cost	Priority
Provide funding or financing support to enable arts groups to acquire and renovate buildings to create or protect gallery and studio spaces.	\$\$\$	Urgent
Provide funding for new studio spaces.	\$\$\$	Urgent
Provide funding for new artist-run centres and community galleries.	\$\$\$	Urgent

CFAT’s request is consistent with the venue purchasing criteria. The venue will be heavily used (as their current space is), supporting emerging artists, and providing specialized assets such as audio and editing

suites, recording studios for podcasts and music, a fully equipped media arts gallery and knowledge of both analog and digital technologies that are not readily available in the municipality.

[Halifax Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan \(CHPP\)](#)

The purpose of the CHPP which was adopted in 2024 is to inform decisions regarding culture and heritage in HRM for the next decade. The plan includes three main goals: Express Culture Through Place, Support Cultural Capacity and Value Creativity. CFAT's project directly advances the goals of CHPP, specifically in the Support Culture Capacity stream by providing infrastructure that houses and supports cultural activities. CFAT's project also reflects national trends in cultural facility development, including adaptive reuse, interdisciplinary practice, and collaborative co-location.

Support from Other Orders of Government

When arts and culture organizations, like CFAT, have submitted funding requests to the municipality, contributing funding from the Province of Nova Scotia or the Government of Canada is often included. CFAT has been in contact with each level however neither have specific capital programs that can support the purchase of a property. Provincial and federal funding staff have indicated potential future support for the renovation and accessibility outfit costs associated with the capital project.

Canadian Heritage supported the CFAT in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 with funds from the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund to develop the Feasibility Study and Business Plan. Federal funding staff advised CFAT at the time that they could not support the property acquisition phase as the program has moved away from acquisitions but could potentially support in the renovation phase once acquired.

In 2025, the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund program was identified under the Comprehensive Expenditure Review section of Budget 2025 as being reduced and reoriented to specialized equipment. Therefore, the Fund could potentially consider a future request to support investment in equipment from CFAT under these parameters.

Alternatively, funding staff at Canadian Heritage have suggested that cultural organizations seeking funds towards renovations and new builds will now be directed to the new Build Communities Strong Fund which proposes to provide \$51 billion over 10 years, starting in 2026-2027, and \$3 billion per year ongoing in new and existing funding for this initiative. The existing [Canada Community-Building Fund](#) will be rebranded as the initiative's Community Stream. This stream will, as planned, provide \$27.8 billion over 10 years, starting in 2026-2027, and \$3 billion per year ongoing to support local infrastructure projects.

The Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage have not previously funded the project and does not have a dedicated program for capital requests but rather handle ad-hoc requests through a budget pressures process. Funding staff from this department have indicated that in future years they could support the capital renovations based on budget allowances.

In this instance, based on the amount of funding that CFAT is seeking, and where most of the request is already budgeted in 2025-2026, staff consider that the municipality's contribution should not be contingent on funding from other orders of government.

Risk Mitigation

HRM's contribution to organizations can be a strategic opportunity to support sectors and provide a strong public benefit to citizens linked to HRM's strategic goals and Council priority areas. The municipality has made monetary contributions to community and cultural venues through property leasing, below market sales and grants for capital expenditures. In the absence of a funding program for large capital grants, awards may be issued outside an established municipal grant program under a Contribution Agreement.

The Contribution Agreement with CFAT would be consistent with other funding commitments for capital grant requests that HRM has made. CFAT's Contribution Agreement is anticipated to include the following key conditions:

- Funds are to be used solely for capital costs associated with the property at 2199 Gottingen Street;

- The one-time contribution to be paid in one installment for costs associated with the purchase;
- Any increase in funding from other sources may reduce the Municipality's contribution;
- Repayment schedule should CFAT sell the property or cease the venue's current operations;
- The Municipality will not be liable for any losses, damages, or injury incurred by CFAT in relation to the property's purchase, administration, maintenance and management of the property, or any related components of the purchase; and
- CFAT will indemnify the Municipality.

Conclusion

CFAT's funding request to support the purchase of 2199 Gottingen Street represents a reasonable opportunity to support the local arts sector and provide an accessible venue and cultural programming that is otherwise lacking throughout the Municipality. Staff conclude that CFAT's Business Plan is feasible and that the request is consistent with HRM's strategic priorities and the Venue Study, which was created via engagement with the professional arts sector. Given that the risks to HRM are very low (and mitigated by a standard Contribution Agreement), staff would recommend the contribution of \$300,000 but have right sized the recommendation based on budget direction and allowance. As council provided direction through the 2025-2026 budget, \$225,000 of this request can be accommodated immediately allowing the group more time to secure additional funds to support the renovation phase of the project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Due to the timing of CFAT's request, \$200,000 of this funding has already been budgeted and can be accommodated in the Parks & Recreation's 2025-2026 budget (W707-8004).

Within the 2025–2026 Parks & Recreation operating budget, \$90,000 was approved as a transfer from Reserve Q621 (Community Events Reserve). Annual utilization of this reserve varies based on qualifying project needs, and at this time \$40,000 remains uncommitted. As a result, a portion of these unused funds is available to help offset the variance in the total funding request.

Although this funding is budgeted, from an overall financial perspective Parks & Recreation Business unit is projecting a year end deficit of -\$4.7M, as of Quarter 2, ended September 30, 2025.

If CFAT acquires title to the subject property they will be eligible to make an application to HRM's Tax Relief for Non-Profit and Registered Canadian Charitable Organizations (Administrative Order 2024-001-ADM). The provision of tax relief represents an additional municipal operating grant and is subject to compliance with annual renewal (the program's Confirmation Form must be submitted by the stated deadline to avoid a reduction in the level of tax relief in the applicable fiscal year).

Typically, a property conveyance will trigger a reassessment by Property Valuation Service Corporation ("PVSC") and as such any change in the assessment classification and/or market value would impact annual taxes, including the cost of any future municipal tax relief.

RISK CONSIDERATION

The assessed risk to the Municipality is largely financial and reputational.

Assessment of financial risk rates low. There is a negotiated recourse to recover HRM funding contribution should CFAT not complete the project as deemed in the project summary. If approved by Regional Council, the Contribution Agreement would form a legal contract that ensures the grant funding is used only for the purpose outlined in this staff report.

The assessed risk to the Municipality is low and primarily reputational. Assessment of reputational risk rates minor, insofar as the absence of an open call for submissions, formal policy and evaluation criteria, other qualified non-profit organizations may be denied equitable consideration.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Performing & Visual Arts Venues Study referenced in the Discussion section, was based on a public engagement program with over 150 stakeholders from the region's professional arts community.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee could recommend that Regional Council:

1. Choose to recommend a different amount for funding, if the amount is above the \$225,000 that is budgeted staff will need to come back to address how the additional funds would be funded.
2. Decline funding, resulting in the potential loss for CFAT to acquire this property as a permanent venue.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39:

Section 35

(2) The Chief Administrative Officer may:

- (d) subject to policies adopted by the Council,
 - (i) make or authorize expenditures and enter into contracts on behalf of the Municipality, for anything required for the Municipality where the amount of the expenditure is budgeted or within the amount determined by the Council by policy, and may delegate this authority to employees of the Municipality

Section 79A

- (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if
 - (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;
 - (b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the *Emergency Management Act*; or
 - (c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid.

Administrative Order 1 Respecting Procedures of the Council.

Schedule 2, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference.
Oversight - Community Building Initiatives

5. The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee shall oversee the Municipality's Community building initiatives in the areas of arts, culture, recreation and heritage and related facilities strategies by:

- (a) promoting and enabling an inclusive range of arts, culture, recreation and heritage opportunities in the municipality;
- (b) promoting and enabling access to arts, cultural, recreation.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: CFAT's Funding Presentation to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED) – October 16, 2025
 - Attachment 2: CFAT's Business Plan
 - Attachment 3: CFAT's Feasibility Study
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Report Prepared by: Kellie McIvor, Manager, Culture & Community, Parks & Recreation, 902-579-7342
Lindsay Cory, Community Developer-Public Art, Parks & Recreation, 902-456-8384

ATTACHMENT 1

A New Home for CFAT

Presentation to
Halifax Regional
Municipality

October 2025



Chris Murphy (Sloan) playing guitar at Centre for Art Tapes in January 1988.

**centre
for
art
tapes**

Centre for Art Tapes

- ④ 46 years of media arts in Atlantic Canada
- ④ Only fully equipped media arts centre in Nova Scotia

In 2024 CFAT...

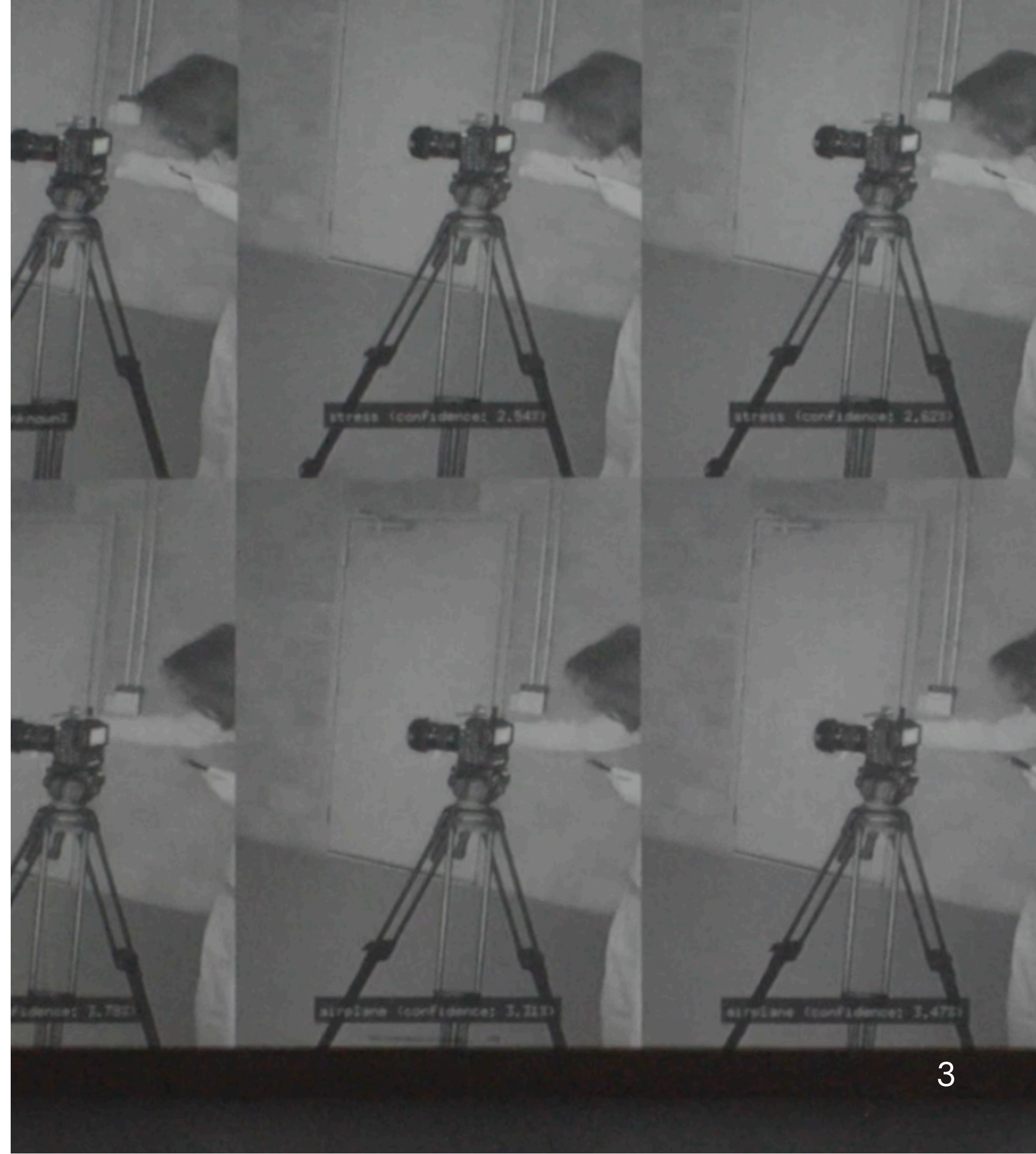
- Supported **50+** projects
- Offset **\$79,830.50** worth of in-kind gear to members
- Paid **\$32,072** towards artist fees*
- Paid **\$18,850** in professional fees to artists (in roles such as mentors, technicians, jurors, and educators)



* this does not include CFAT staff wages

The Challenge

- ⦿ **Rising commercial rents**
- ⦿ **No dedicated gallery space**
- ⦿ **Multiple relocations**
- ⦿ **Location constraints**
- ⦿ **No gathering space: unrealized potential**





**What if
Halifax had a
permanent
home for
media arts?**



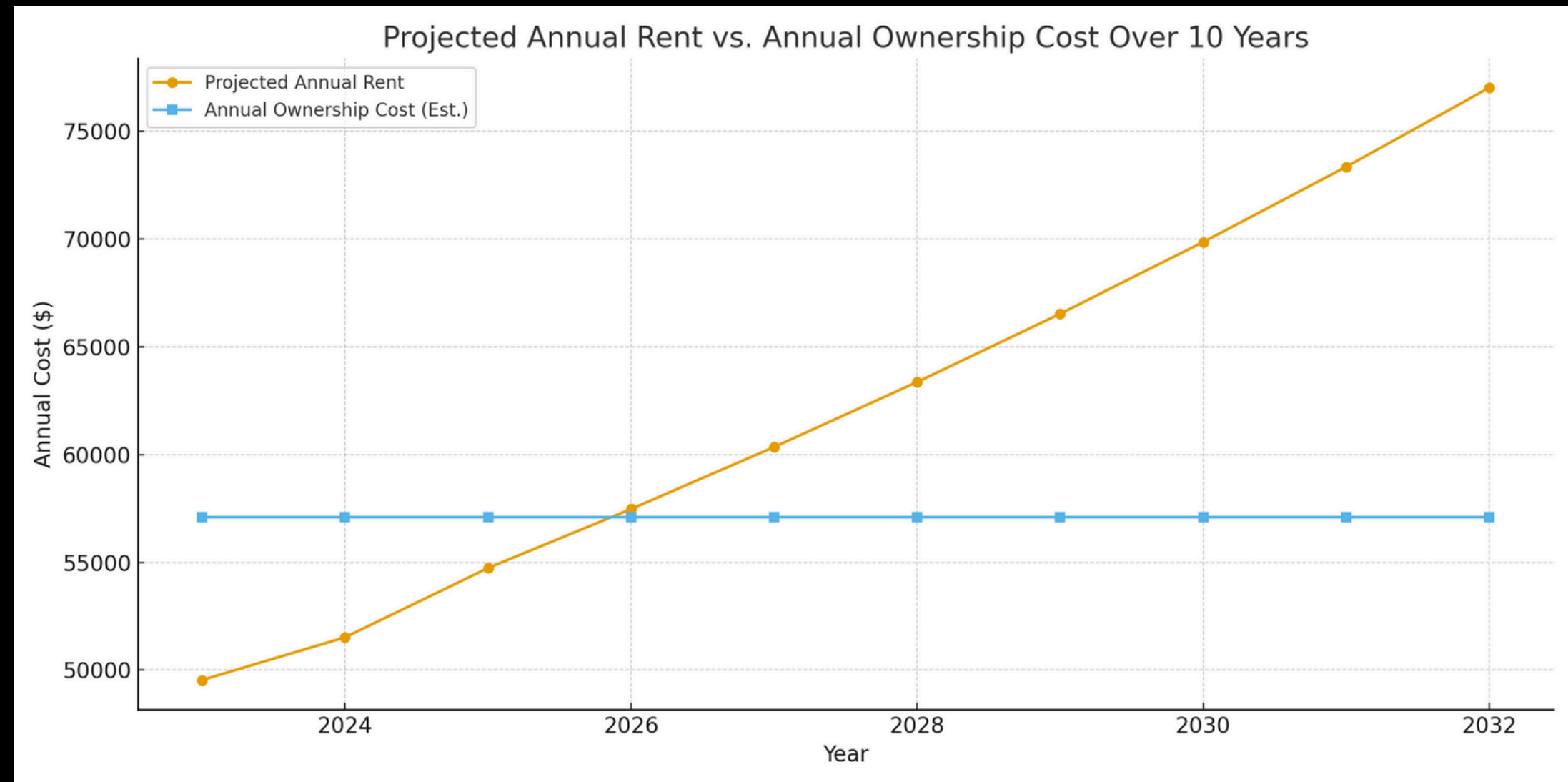


2199 Gottingen Street

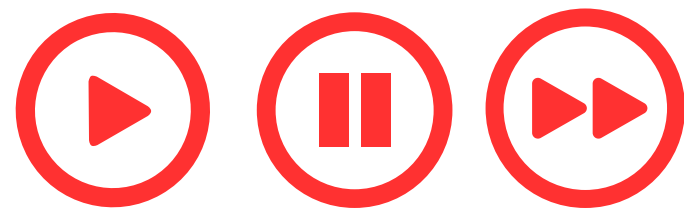
- **Nearly 3x more space**
- **First permanent gallery**
- **Beside Bus Stop Theatre = cultural hub**

Ownership vs Renting

- Rent keeps increasing, mortgage stable
- Ownership stabilizes costs
- Savings reinvested into artist community + staff

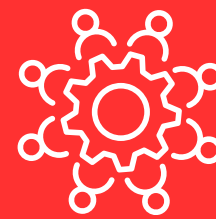


A Stable Future, One Phase at a Time



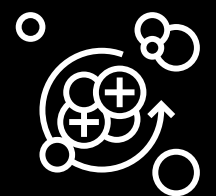
Y1

Purchase + Phase 1
renovations (accessibility, base
interiors, program restart)



Y2

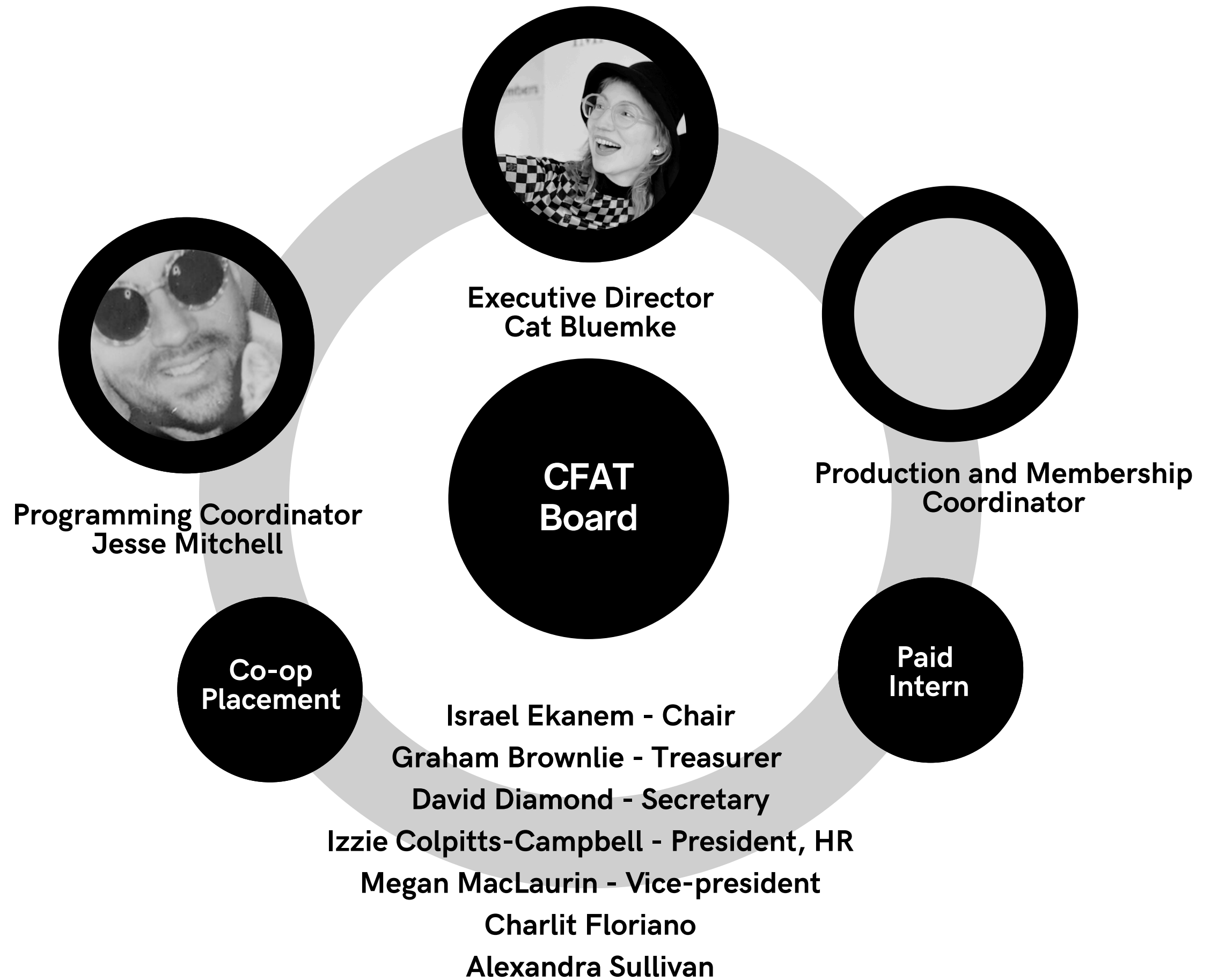
Launch gallery, expand
workshops, grow membership



Y3

Phase 2 renovations
(specialized studios, façade
upgrades, community spaces)

The Team



A Balanced Path to Ownership



INCOME



EXPENSES

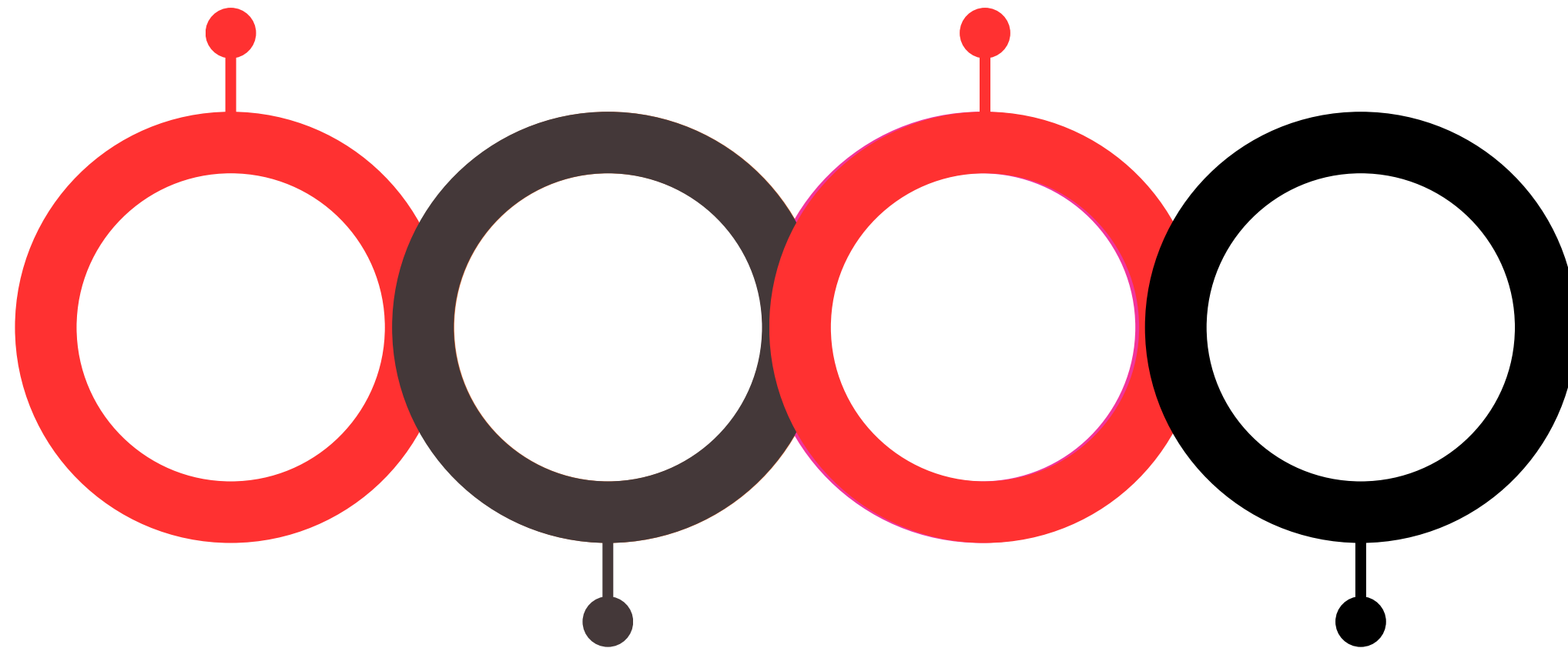


Revenue and Expenses 2026 (Projected)

Community Benefits

Stable home for media arts in Atlantic Canada

Savings flow back into artists + community



Permanent gallery for under-represented voices

Anchor cultural infrastructure in Halifax

Community Support

CFAT's technological expertise and equipment have been of great benefit to both the Bus Stop and many of our members over the years. As a fellow co-operative and arts organization that has undergone a similar campaign, we know a permanent home would guarantee the continued growth of the affordable and accessible support they offer for artists, which so deeply enriches our cultural landscape.

- Audrey Eastwood, Interim Director, Bus Stop Theatre

I would not have been able to continue being a working artist in Halifax were it not for CFAT's support. Beyond the technical assistance, CFAT has for decades now been a community centre, connecting people from various disciplines, backgrounds, and generations together through art.

- Séamus Gallagher, artist, Sobey Award 2023

Securing a permanent home at 2199 Gottingen Street will ensure the sustainability of CFAT's operations and guarantee the continuation of partnerships like ours that are fundamental to Halifax's contemporary arts ecosystem.

... I strongly urge you to support this capital project.

**- Hannah Guinan
Executive Director, The Khyber Centre for the Arts**

CFAT provides the tools, expertise, and supportive environment that makes creative exploration possible. The organization's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility means that artistic expression is not limited by economic barriers or technical intimidation.

... This investment will not only support individual artists, but also strengthen the broader arts and cultural infrastructure.

**- Izzie Colpitts-Campbell
President, Centre for Art Tapes**



\$300,000

Your support will help us secure
a permanent home for Halifax's
media arts community



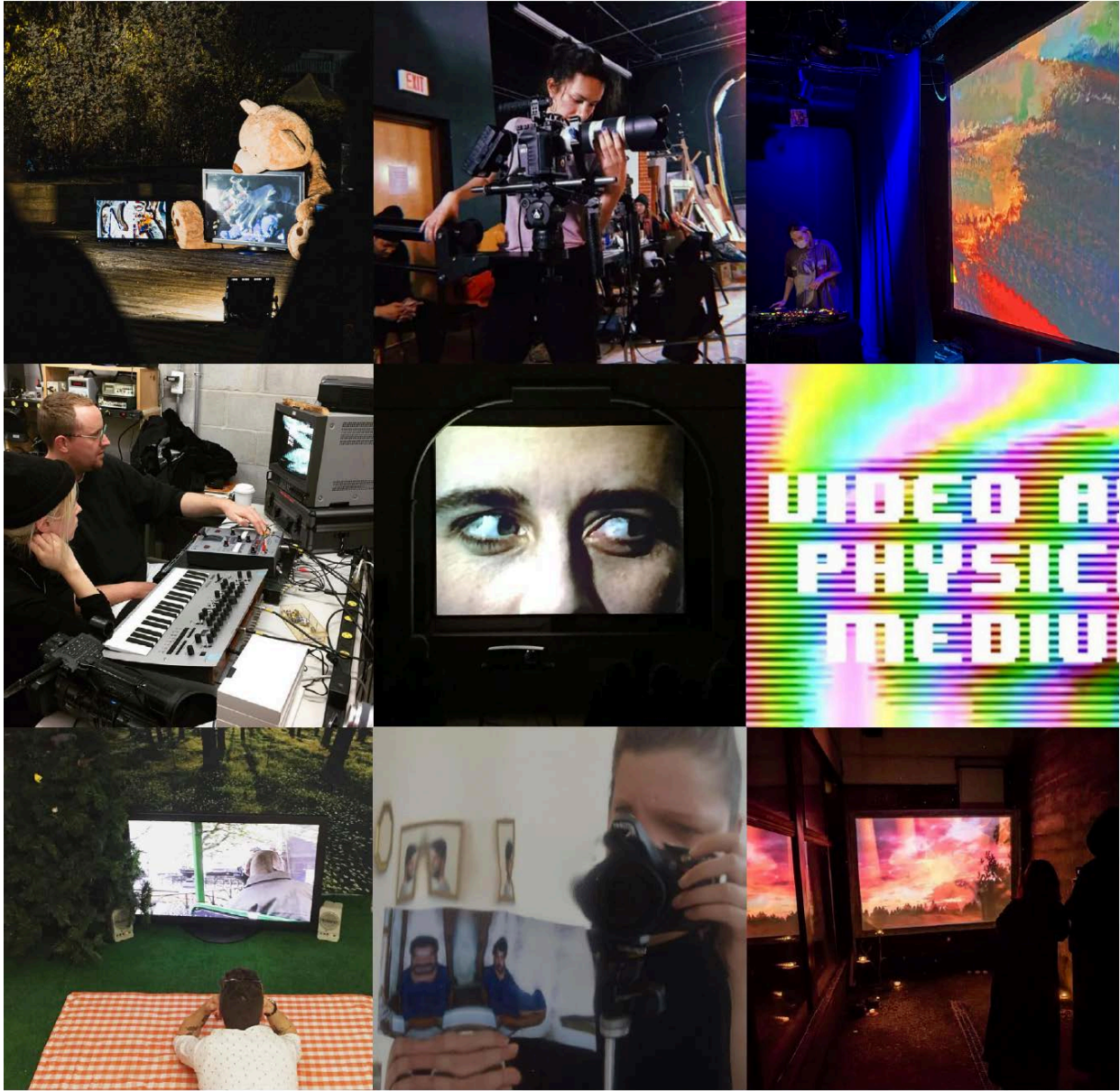
Thank you

www.cfat.ca

executivedirector@cfat.ca

**centre
for
art
tapes**

ATTACHMENT 2



**CFAT
Business Plan
2025-2035**

Prepared By: Sabrina Richard for **Bespoke**
CULTURAL COLLECTIVE

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Land Acknowledgement

The Centre for Art Tapes operates in Kjiptuk (Halifax), in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. Our location in Halifax's Central North End places us in a vibrant community that has historically been home to African Nova Scotians. We recognize that our presence contributes to the ongoing gentrification of this historically African Nova Scotian, low-income, and racialized community. CFAT acknowledges our responsibility towards these communities and aims to honour our neighbours through building long-lasting relationships that prioritize their voices in media arts.

Executive Summary

For over 45 years, the **Centre for Art Tapes (CFAT)** has been a vital part of Atlantic Canada's cultural landscape—providing artists with access to professional equipment, mentorship, and space for experimentation in video, audio, and electronic media. Founded in 1979, CFAT remains the region's only dedicated media arts production centre, a place where emerging and established artists can develop, produce, and present new work that reflects diverse perspectives and under-represented stories. Each year, CFAT supports hundreds of artists through equipment rentals, residencies, mentorships, and public programs that contribute more than \$170,000 in subsidized value to the regional arts economy. Its alumni have gone on to national recognition as artists, educators, and cultural leaders.

Today, CFAT stands at a pivotal moment in its history. Rising commercial rents and redevelopment pressures in Halifax's urban core have created unsustainable conditions for small cultural organizations. To ensure its long-term stability and ability to serve future generations, CFAT is pursuing the **purchase and adaptive reuse of 2199 Gottingen Street**—a property located within the city's vibrant North End cultural corridor adjacent to the Bus Stop Theatre.

This Business Plan has been developed to chart a clear and sustainable path forward for the purchase of 2199 Gottingen Street. The document provides a framework for decision-making, financial planning, and stakeholder engagement, ensuring that the organization's long-term vision is supported by evidence-based analysis. It articulates the rationale for ownership, outlines the feasibility of the proposed site, and demonstrates how a permanent home will stabilize CFAT's operations, expand its programming capacity, and ensure its longevity in Halifax's cultural ecosystem. By translating years of community consultation, architectural feasibility work, and financial modelling into an actionable plan, this Business Plan positions CFAT to successfully attain arts and culture funding, align with funder priorities, and move confidently toward implementation.

Vision and Impact

CFAT envisions a thriving media arts community where access, equity, and experimentation are central to cultural expression in Atlantic Canada. The organization's new home will allow CFAT to:

- **Stabilize operations** by converting rent into equity and ending cycles of relocation.
- **Expand capacity** with a 43% increase in usable space, including new production suites, a flexible gallery, and accessible community areas.
- **Strengthen the sector** through shared infrastructure with neighbouring arts organizations.
- **Advance inclusion and accessibility** with barrier-free design and facilities welcoming to all communities.

Project Overview and Feasibility

A 2024 feasibility study by *Place of Work Architecture Studio* confirmed that 2199 Gottingen Street is well-suited for CFAT's needs. The **total Class D capital budget is estimated at \$1.93 million**, encompassing purchase, phased renovations, professional fees, and contingencies.

The financing model follows a proven hybrid approach used successfully by other Halifax arts organizations:

- **Government Grants** (Federal, Provincial, Municipal): \$1.15 million
- **Mortgage Financing**: \$674,000 (25-year amortization)
- **Donations and Sponsorships**: \$120,000 (\$70,000 confirmed)

Annual occupancy costs under ownership are projected to remain comparable to current rent levels, while also generating new income from two upstairs residential units (approx. \$21,600 per year).

Strategic Alignment

The project aligns with national and municipal cultural priorities emphasizing sustainable, inclusive, and accessible infrastructure. It directly advances the goals of Halifax's *Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan*—preserving heritage, expressing culture through place, and strengthening creative capacity. It also reflects national trends in cultural facility development, including adaptive reuse, interdisciplinary practice, and collaborative co-location.

Community and Sector Support

Letters of support from artists, organizations, and peers—including the Khyber Centre for the Arts, Nocturne: Art at Night, and the Bus Stop Theatre Co-operative—underscore CFAT's indispensable role in the city's cultural ecosystem. These partners highlight CFAT as both a creative catalyst and a collaborator essential to Halifax's artistic vitality.

Financial Sustainability

A ten-year pro forma demonstrates stable operations and modest surpluses throughout 2026–2035. Ownership will not increase CFAT's annual costs but will instead build equity, diversify revenue, and position the organization for future reinvestment in programming and staff capacity.

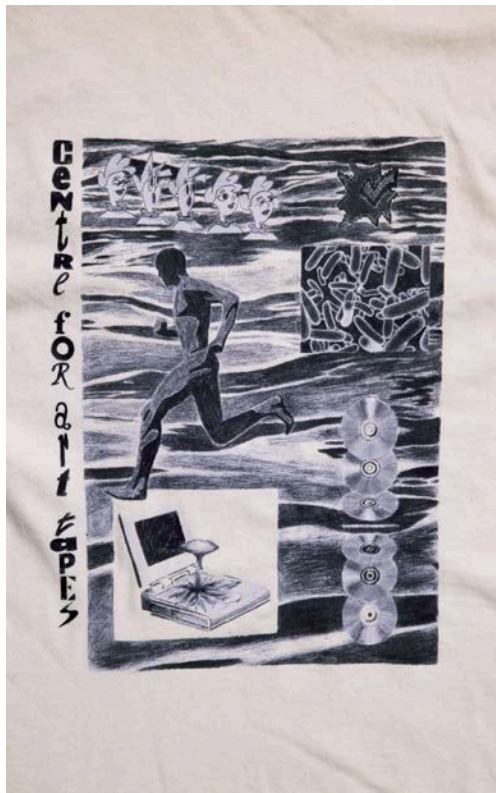
Conclusion

The acquisition of 2199 Gottingen Street represents more than a real estate transaction—it is a generational investment in the future of media arts in Atlantic Canada. With a permanent, purpose-built home, CFAT will safeguard accessibility, foster collaboration, and ensure that artists across the region continue to have the tools, mentorship, and community needed to create and share their stories.

1. Organization Profile

"Spaces like CFAT—combining technical resources with genuine community support and artistic mentorship—are rare and precious."

*Izzie Colpitts-Campbell
President, Centre for Art Tapes*



1.1 Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

The Centre for Art Tapes (CFAT) envisions a media arts community where diverse voices and under-represented stories are centered, supported, and shared. CFAT aims to be a welcoming hub for experimentation, mentorship, and the presentation of new ideas, ensuring media arts remain an accessible and vital part of Atlantic Canada's cultural landscape.

Mission Statement

Founded in 1979, CFAT is an inclusive, artist-run centre that facilitates and supports artists working with video, audio, and electronic media. The organization provides subsidized access to professional equipment, facilities, technical expertise, mentorship, and educational resources. Through its organizational structure and programs, CFAT strives to place marginalized artists at the heart of media art practices, fostering exchange, collaboration, and innovation

1.2 Governance, Staff and Advisors

Governance

CFAT is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, composed of practicing artists, cultural workers, and community representatives, elected from its membership. This governance structure reflects the organization's vision and mission, ensuring that decision-making remains rooted in the needs and perspectives of artists and the broader media arts community. The CFAT Board provides oversight for financial stewardship, strategic direction, and organizational accountability, while empowering staff to manage day-to-day operations. The Board also plays a critical role in supporting fundraising and advocacy, particularly during periods of organizational transition, such as the current capital project.

At the time of this report, the **CFAT Board** includes::

- **Izzie Colpitts-Campbell** - Board Chair
- **Graham Brownlie** - Treasurer
- **David Diamond** - Secretary

- **Charlit Floriano**
- **Alexandra Sullivan**
- **Megan MacLaurin**
- **Israel Ekanem**

Staff

CFAT's small but integrated staff team is responsible for the organization's daily delivery of programs, operations, and member services. At the time of this report CFAT staff includes:

- **Executive Director Cat Bluemke** – a practising artist, Cat provides overall leadership, manages finances, fundraising, and stakeholder relationships, and leads strategic initiatives such as the capital project.
- **Program Coordinator Jesse Mitchell** – a practising artist, Jesse manages artist residencies, workshops, scholarships, and public programming.
- **Production / Member Services Coordinator** (currently vacant) – oversees equipment inventory, technical support, and training for artists.



Advisors and Committees

To support specialized areas, CFAT engages advisors and forms subcommittees of the Board of Directors. As CFAT undergoes the planning for a capital acquisition it has established a **Building Committee** to guide the capital project and bring expertise in real estate, finance, and construction. The committee is comprised of:

- **Cat Bluemke** - Current Executive Director of CFAT
- **Tori Fleming** - Former Executive Director of CFAT
- **Graham Brownlie** - Board Treasurer

CFAT has also engaged **Place of Work Architecture Studio**, to create a feasibility study¹ for the adaptive re-use of 2199 Gottengin and arts consultant and cultural planner **Sabrina Richard**, M.Arch to develop a business plan for the property acquisition and capital project.

¹ See Appendices for the Place of Work Feasibility Study for 2199 Gottengin.

1.3 Organization History

"There is not an equivalent space dedicated to community access to media arts in Atlantic Canada, and I continue to take comfort knowing I can access its resources for future projects."

Quote from D'Arcy Wilson

*Assoc. Professor (Interdisciplinary Studio), School of Fine Arts
Memorial University of Newfoundland*

For 46 years the Centre for Art Tapes (CFAT) has been the nervous system of Atlantic-Canadian media art. Founded in 1979 as one of the **first artist-run media arts centres in Canada**, the Halifax-based,



artist-run charity now offers **the province's only fully equipped dedicated media-arts production centre**.

Established during a period of rapid growth in artist-run culture, and drawing on the dynamic Nova Scotia arts ecosystem, CFAT emerged to meet the needs of artists working with video, audio, and emerging media technologies. At its core, CFAT has always prioritized access: providing affordable equipment rentals, production facilities, and technical support at a time when such resources were otherwise unavailable to most artists in Atlantic Canada.



From its earliest years, CFAT positioned itself as a space for experimentation and exchange. Its Media Art Scholarship (MAS), residencies, and mentorship programs have helped shape generations of Canadian media artists, while its exhibition and presentation activities have brought diverse voices and under-represented stories into public dialogue. **CFAT's role as both an incubator for new talent and a hub for established practitioners has made it a vital part of Halifax's cultural fabric for over four decades.**

Chris Murphy, of the celebrated Halifax Band 'Sloane', rehearsing at CFAT in January 1988.

The organization's history has also been marked by both mobility and resilience. CFAT has occupied several different spaces in Halifax over the years, including early facilities in the former Alexandra School, a location in the former CBC Radio Building on Sackville Street, a stint on Barrington Street and its current base at 2238 Maitland Street. Each relocation has been in response to the pressures of Halifax's real estate and rental market, which has only intensified in recent years. **Rising commercial rents and the redevelopment pressures from Halifax's Centre Plan have increased the vulnerability of arts organizations, placing CFAT and its peers at risk of future displacement.**

These challenges have galvanized CFAT's current pursuit of long-term stability through property ownership. The proposed purchase and renovation of 2199 Gottingen Street represents both a continuation of CFAT's historic mandate and a pivotal moment in its organizational trajectory. Ownership would eliminate the cycle of relocation and create a permanent home, purpose-built for

media arts — a facility that reflects CFAT's history of community-building, its commitment to the arts sector and artists, and its vision for future growth.

1.4 Organizational Finances

CFAT operates as a not-for-profit charitable organization with an annual budget averaging between \$325,000 – \$350,000 in recent years. Similar to the majority of artist-run centres in Canada, the organization relies primarily on a mix of government funding, earned revenues, member and community support to sustain its operations.

Revenue Profile (2024)		
Government Funding	\$314,131	(93% of total revenues)
Federal	\$242,431	
Provincial	\$55,000	
Municipal	\$16,700	
Donations & Fundraising	\$14,773	
Memberships	\$3,863	
Other Revenues	\$9,341	(equipment rentals, fees, interest income, etc.)
Total Revenue	\$342,108	

Expenditures (2024)		
Salaries & Wages	\$171,608	(50% of total expenses)
Artistic Sub-Contracts	\$45,067	
Rental Costs	\$51,520	(15% of annual expenditures)
Administration & Professional Fees	\$26,662	
Utilities, Insurance, Repairs & Office	\$30,147	
Amortization & Other Costs	\$22,314	
Total Expenses	\$342,883	

The 2024 year closed with a small operating deficit of \$775. Net assets at year-end stood at \$78,881, and CFAT holds cash and short-term investments totaling approximately \$64,000.

Financial Characteristics

- **High Dependence on Government Funding:** In 2024, 93% of revenues came from public funders. While very consistent with many artist-run centres, this creates risk exposure to policy or funding shifts in the Canadian arts landscape.
- **Rental Burden:** Nearly 15% of annual expenditures are directed toward rent (\$51,520 in 2024), a cost that delivers no long-term asset value. Rent pressures in Halifax are escalating faster than inflation, compounding this structural challenge.
- **Operating Structure Dedicated to Artists and Free Arts Programming:** Staff salaries, artist contracts and programming expenses account for over 60% of total expenditures, in keeping with the mission and values of CFAT.
- **Growing Community Support:** Although currently a small proportion of revenues, donations and fundraising increased by over 50% between 2023 and 2024, indicating significant growth potential.

Capital Project Implications

A financial analysis demonstrates that property ownership offers a pathway to long-term sustainability. By converting rental payments into equity through a mortgage, CFAT could stabilize operating costs, reduce vulnerability to Halifax's volatile rental market, and re-allocate resources toward programming and staff.

Overall, CFAT's financial profile reflects both the vulnerabilities and opportunities typical of small artist-run centres: heavy reliance on government funding, limited reserves, and high rental costs. At the same time, **the organization has a proven track record of financial management, growing fundraising potential, and a strong case for stabilizing operations through capital investment.**

1.5 Sector and Community Impact

"It is easy for me to say that my career was greatly supported by CFAT — as an emerging artist in 2011, the support of CFAT helped to launch my career, as it has for many others."

Quote from D'Arcy Wilson

*Assoc. Professor (Interdisciplinary Studio), School of Fine Arts
Memorial University of Newfoundland*

"CFAT's subsidized media arts equipment rental program has literally lit up Halifax's art scene for many years, providing projectors, lights, cameras, and AV equipment that make our annual festival possible."

Quote from Megan MacLaurin

Programming Director, Nocturne: Art at Night Society

For more than four decades, the Centre for Art Tapes (CFAT) has been a cornerstone of Halifax's arts ecosystem, shaping the trajectory of media arts in Atlantic Canada while contributing to the national landscape of artist-run centres. Its impact can be seen across multiple dimensions: sector-building, community development, and cultural innovation.

Building the Media Arts Sector

CFAT is the only artist-run centre in Atlantic Canada dedicated to video, audio, and electronic media. Its role in building the regional media arts sector is unmatched: providing subsidized access to professional equipment, in-house facilities, mentorship, and training that artists would otherwise struggle to afford. The **Media Art Scholarship (MAS) has become a cornerstone of Atlantic Canadian media arts development**, challenging emerging artists to work outside their comfort zones while providing intensive mentorship and technical support. Alumni of MAS have gone on to show at national festivals, teach in post-secondary institutions, and contribute to the broader cultural workforce.

The **FORMAT Residency** and the **Digital Archive & Exhibitions Internship** expand this impact. FORMAT offers participants the tools and curatorial support to move from concept to exhibition, while the internship provides early-career cultural workers with skills in digital preservation, an increasingly vital competency for the sector. Together, these programs nurture resilience and adaptability in artists and technicians, ensuring Atlantic Canadian creatives remain connected to national and international conversations.

In 2024 CFAT...

- Supported **50+** projects
- **545** total bookings across facilities and equipment.
- Provided **\$176,394.25** (market-value) worth of studio bookings
- Gave **\$79,830.50** worth of in-kind gear to members
- Paid artists **\$32,072** to work as artists*
- Paid **\$18,850** in professional fees to artists (in roles such as mentors, technicians, jurors, and educators)

* this does not include CFAT staff

Community and Cultural Ecosystem

Beyond artist development, CFAT sustains Halifax's cultural ecosystem by serving as a resource hub and connector. Its **membership program** fosters a sense of belonging and ownership for participants, while providing practical benefits such as access to equipment, facilities, and workshops at subsidized rates. Members range from emerging artists testing their first video projects to established professionals experimenting with new technologies.

CFAT also collaborates with local partners to expand cultural offerings. Co-presentations with organizations such as Nocturne: Art at Night Society and the Khyber Centre for the Arts have produced film screenings, sound installations, and interdisciplinary events. These collaborations extend CFAT's reach while building networks of solidarity across Halifax's arts community.

"The partnership between Nocturne and CFAT exemplifies how artist-run organizations can collaborate to strengthen the entire arts ecosystem."

*Quote from Megan MacLaurin
Programming Director, Nocturne: Art at
Night Society*



Facilities and Equipment Access

At the core of CFAT's impact is its **equipment rental and facilities program**. CFAT maintains one of the most comprehensive collections of media arts equipment in the region, including cameras, sound recorders, editing suites, and **the only publicly accessible 5.1 surround sound audio suite east of Montreal**. Subsidized rentals lower barriers for artists, nonprofits, and ad-hoc community groups to produce media projects ranging from experimental film to activist videos. In-house facilities — such as the transfer suite for digitizing legacy media, workshops, and editing labs — are equally important, allowing artists and organizations to preserve cultural memory and experiment with emerging technologies.



“Without CFAT’s accessible equipment rental program and technical expertise, exhibitions like *Out of Line*—created by and for local trans and gender non-conforming artists—would be significantly more challenging and costly to produce.”

*Quotes from Hannah Guinan
Executive Director, The Khyber Centre for the Arts*

Civic and National Impact

CFAT's impact extends from the community level to civic and national spheres. Locally, its programs increase access to cultural expression, ensuring that historically under-represented communities — including Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, LGBTQ2S+, and newcomer artists — have platforms for creation and presentation. For example, in 2022, CFAT sponsored a production mentorship for African



Nova Scotian Youth with Pineapple Express media to support the creation of **'Issa Scotian Ting'** docuseries about the evolution of Hip Hop music in Nova Scotia.

Nationally, CFAT represents Atlantic Canada in a network of artist-run media arts centres, alongside peers such as OBORO (Montréal), PAVED Arts (Saskatoon), and EMMEDIA (Calgary). Like these organizations, **CFAT plays a critical role in shaping Canada's media arts ecology, while contributing to sector-wide conversations on access, equity, and cultural infrastructure.**

Impact Snapshot

- **45+ years of continuous support for media artists in Atlantic Canada.**
- **Hundreds of artists supported annually through memberships, residencies, and equipment rentals.**
- **Media Art Scholarship: over 80 alumni, many now nationally recognized.**
- **FORMAT Residency & Internships: create professional pathways for emerging artists and cultural workers.**
- **Facilities: Nova Scotia's only public 5.1 audio suite; specialized transfer suite for legacy media; multi-purpose project and workshop space available at reduced costs.**
- **Equipment Rentals: comprehensive, subsidized inventory of cameras, audio gear, lighting, and editing tools.**
- **Membership: 24-hour access for members, fostering continuous creative activity.**
- **Partnerships: collaborations with Bus Stop Theatre, AFSCOOP, Radstorm, Khyber Centre for the Arts, Atlantic Canadian universities, and many community and arts organizations.**
- **Equity & Access: welcoming to Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, LGBTQ2S+, and newcomer artists, disabled, and femme community members; fully wheelchair accessible with non-gendered washrooms.**

2. Capital Project

“Securing a permanent home at 2199 Gottingen Street will ensure the sustainability of CFAT's operations and safeguard its role as a hub for artists and media art production in Halifax.”

*Quote from Israel Ekanem
Chair, Board of Directors – Centre for Art Tapes
Media artist, Founder of Ubuntu Media, and
Festival Director for the Mosaic Film Festival of Arts and Culture*

2.1 Project Overview

The Centre for Art Tapes (CFAT) is pursuing the acquisition of a permanent home to stabilize its operations and expand its capacity to serve the media arts sector in Halifax and Atlantic Canada. After decades of displacement due to rising rents and redevelopment pressures, **the purchase of a dedicated facility is recognized as the most viable long-term strategy to ensure organizational sustainability and community impact.**

The proposed property at **2199 Gottingen Street** was identified through a feasibility study led by *Place of Work Architecture Studio*. The building offers approximately **2,540 square feet of usable space, representing a 43% increase over CFAT's current footprint.** In addition, the upper floors contain residential units that can generate rental income in the near term or be adapted for future expansion. The building's location is especially significant: situated in Halifax's North End, it lies within a cultural corridor that includes the **Bus Stop Theatre** and **Radstorm**, reinforcing an emerging arts hub in one of the city's most diverse and historically rich communities.



“As the interim Executive Director of the Bus Stop Theatre Co-operative in the adjacent building, I am particularly excited about having CFAT as our permanent neighbour..

Having a like-minded not-for-profit neighbour, rather than a developer seeking to demolish the historic structure, ensures long-term preservation of these heritage buildings.”

*Quote from Audrey Eastwood Interim Executive Director,
The Bus Stop Theatre Co-operative*

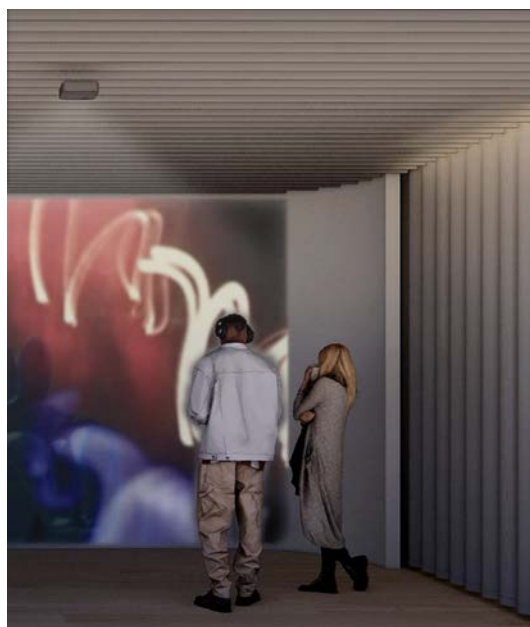
The project envisions the renovation and adaptive reuse of the ground and basement levels to create a purpose-built media arts centre including:

- A flexible **media arts gallery** and storefront window display for public presentation.
- **Workshop and multi-purpose spaces** adaptable for meetings, screenings, and community events.
- A **transfer suite** for digitizing and preserving legacy media.
- **Audio and video production suites**, including Nova Scotia's only publicly accessible **5.1 surround sound suite**.
- A welcoming **"living room" members' area**, kitchenette, and accessible staff offices.
- Fully accessible design with a barrier-free washroom and lift access to the basement.

The benefits of this project extend far beyond CFAT's membership and have the potential to increase community benefits and the cultural infrastructure of Halifax.

"Securing a permanent home at 2199 Gottingen Street will ensure the sustainability of CFAT's operations and safeguard the collaborative infrastructure that allows organizations like the Khyber to present ambitious, socially engaged programming."

*Quote from Hannah Guinan
Executive Director, The Khyber Centre for the Arts*



A permanent, custom-designed facility for CFAT will:

- **Secure stability and longevity** by eliminating rental vulnerability and converting costs into equity.
- **Expand programming capacity** by increasing usable space and improving infrastructure.
- **Reinforce Halifax's cultural cluster** in the Gottingen corridor.
- **Unlock new funding and fundraising opportunities**, including capital grants, philanthropic investment, and long-term donor support.
- **Enhance accessibility and equity**, ensuring the facility is welcoming to BIPOC, LGBTQ2SIA+, disabled, femme, and marginalized artists and communities.

This project represents both a natural evolution of CFAT's 45-year history and a transformative opportunity to secure its future. By investing in a permanent home, CFAT will create a stable foundation for the next generation of media artists while deepening its contributions to Halifax's civic and cultural identity.

Currently, a significant portion of CFAT's annual budget—including government arts grants intended to support artistic creation—is directed toward rent payments. This model not only limits organizational sustainability but also diverts scarce funding away from artists and artistic production.

The timing to address this challenge is critical. The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) has acknowledged the importance of supporting cultural infrastructure and, through its community facility funding programs, has assisted other organizations such as Radstorm and the Bus Stop Theatre Co-op in securing permanent spaces. These precedents demonstrate a civic recognition that independent arts organizations are vital contributors to the city's cultural vibrancy and that ownership or long-term control of space is essential.

2.2 Feasibility Analysis

Space Needs and Program Fit

The feasibility study, conducted by Place of Work Architecture Studio, confirmed that 2199 Gottingen Street meets CFAT's current and future space needs. The building provides 2,540 sq. ft. of usable space (a 43% increase from CFAT's existing 1,764 sq. ft.), along with an additional 1,500 sq. ft. of residential units on the upper floors. The ground floor will be programmed for public-facing uses — including a flexible media arts gallery, storefront display, multi-purpose room, and member “living room” — while a portion of the basement will house audio and video suites, a workshop, and equipment storage.

Accessibility

A core principle for the new location of CFAT is accessibility. Long term planning includes the provision of a **barrier-free path of travel** throughout the building, including a lift to the basement, a wheelchair-accessible entrance, and a non-gendered washroom. While Nova Scotia Building Code does not require accessibility upgrades to the upper residential levels, CFAT is also interested in pursuing above-minimum compliance to ensure the new facility is inclusive.

Building Conditions and Risks

According to Place of Work Architecture Studio, 2199 Gottingen Street is structurally suitable for adaptive reuse, but their feasibility analysis did highlight several challenges typical of older properties:

- **Ceiling Heights:** Portions of the basement have low clearance (5'0"–5'8"), limiting their usability for anything beyond storage unless excavation/underpinning is undertaken.
- **Loading and Access:** Gottingen Street's high traffic and lack of dedicated parking present challenges for equipment loading/unloading. A side entrance partially mitigates this issue, as does a planned partnership with the neighboring Bus Stop Theatre Co-Op to coordinate access via a rear parking lot.

**image of 2199 Gottingen Street*



- **Existing Conditions:** Renovation of an older building carries risks of unforeseen costs, including potential hazardous materials (e.g., asbestos, lead) and structural upgrades.
- **Sprinkler and Fire Separation:** Confirmation of full building sprinkler coverage is required; upgrades may be necessary to meet code for mixed-use occupancy.

Financial Feasibility

To support this Business Plan a 'Class D' cost estimate was conducted in order to support financial planning. **The total Class D capital budget for the project is estimated at \$1.93M².** This figure includes the building purchase, two phased renovations, professional fees, financing costs, and contingencies:

- Property Acquisition: \$899,000 purchase price, with \$224,750 downpayment required.
- Phase 1 Renovations (basic interior, accessibility, code upgrades): approx. \$275,793.
- Phase 2 Renovations (specialized suites, gallery fit-up, cultural assembly spaces, façade upgrades): approx. \$485,550.

Capital Budget (Class D Estimate)

Category	Estimated Cost	Notes
Property Acquisition	\$995,655	\$899,000 Purchase price for 2199 Gottingen Street
Downpayment	\$224,750	25% of purchase price
Mortgage Financing	\$674,250	Commercial mortgage (6.26%, 25-year amortization)
Acquisition Costs	\$96,655	Legal, Due Diligence Inspections, Taxes and Fees
Phase 1 Renovations	\$275,793	Accessibility, code upgrades, base interior improvements
Phase 2 Renovations	\$485,550	Specialized rooms (audio suite, transfer suite), gallery fit-up, façade
Contingency	\$175,700	To account for unforeseen building/renovation risks
TOTAL	\$1,932,698	Class D estimate (+/- 25%)

² Note:

- Estimates based on construction costs for mid-range institutional renovations and Place of Work's feasibility framework.
- A quantity surveyor or cost consultant should refine these figures during the schematic design and design development phases of the capital project
- Residential units on upper floors are assumed to remain in use "as-is" and are not included in this costing. unit rate based on Altus Group – 2024 Canadian Cost Guide which lists \$250-\$375/sf for mid-range renovations of public assembly and cultural use buildings in Atlantic Canada
- Elevator/Lift to basement (not currently included) would cost approx. \$150,000-\$250,000

The financing model advises a hybrid approach that has been successful for comparable arts organizations in Halifax, combining:

- **Government grants:** Canadian Heritage (Canada Cultural Spaces Fund), Nova Scotia Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage, and Halifax Regional Municipality — totaling approx. \$1.15M in proposed asks.
- **Mortgage financing:** approx. \$674,000 commercial loan (6.26% rate, 25-year amortization), generating monthly payments of \$4,513.
- **Philanthropy and sponsorship:** approx. \$120,000 (confirmed to date: \$70,000) raised through an alumni giving campaign and corporate sponsorships.

Financing Overview

	Proposed Ask	Notes
HRM Community Grant	\$300,000	<i>2026 Budget</i>
NS Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage	\$350,000	
Canadian Heritage/ Cultural Spaces	\$500,000	
Donations/ Sponsorship	\$120,000	<i>Currently raised \$70K</i>
Mortgage	\$675,000	
TOTAL	\$1,945,000	

Operational Impact

This financial modeling suggests that mortgage and property tax obligations would be broadly comparable to CFAT’s current rental expenses. For example:

- Current rent (2024): \$51,520 annually.
- Projected mortgage + property tax/insurance (2026): approx. \$57,087 annually.

However, ownership converts these costs into equity, adds rental income potential (two upstairs apartments estimated at \$21,600 annually), and positions CFAT to expand programming and resources to members and the surrounding community.

The overall feasibility analysis demonstrates that 2199 Gottingen Street represents a strong fit for CFAT’s needs and ambitions. While challenges exist around accessibility upgrades, basement usability, and equipment loading, these risks are manageable within a well-structured budget and contingency plan. With renovations, the building can be transformed into a purpose-designed, accessible, and community-serving media arts facility — a permanent home that addresses CFAT’s long-term sustainability challenges.

2.2 Comparables: Lessons from Halifax Arts Organizations

CFAT's capital project is not without precedent. Halifax has seen several artist-run organizations pursue property acquisition in recent years as a response to escalating rents, displacement risk, and the need for stable infrastructure. Two key comparables — the Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative and RadStorm — demonstrate both the challenges and opportunities of this approach.

Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative

The Bus Stop Theatre's path to ownership illustrates the importance of scaling ambitions to available resources. The organization initially pursued a large-scale expansion project with an estimated cost of \$6.5 million, including new rehearsal halls and major facility upgrades. When it became clear that this level of funding was unattainable, the project was re-scoped to focus on core needs: purchasing its existing building and undertaking necessary renovations. This revised budget came in at approximately \$1.2 million, allowing the Cooperative to move forward with confidence.

Bus Stop Theatre's financing relied on a hybrid model similar to CFAT's proposed approach. Halifax Regional Municipality contributed \$250,000 over two years, contingent upon the organization securing other funding sources. The Province of Nova Scotia added approximately \$355,000, and the organization secured a commitment from Canadian Heritage's Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. The project underscores both the necessity of phased planning and the importance of municipal commitment in unlocking larger provincial and federal investments.

RadStorm

RadStorm's experience demonstrates a different but equally relevant model. In 2024, the collective launched a campaign to purchase its building at 2177 Gottingen Street with a budget of approximately \$500,000. Its financing strategy was innovative: rather than relying solely on government grants and private donations, RadStorm issued community bonds — dubbed "RadBonds" — with a goal of raising \$350,000. This approach allowed supporters to invest directly in the future of the organization while earning modest returns. Complementary fundraising included \$50,000 in donations and \$100,000 from government sources, including a one-time \$100,000 contribution from HRM.

RadStorm's model reflects its collective, volunteer-driven ethos and emphasizes community ownership of arts infrastructure. While smaller in scale than CFAT's project, it highlights the potential of non-traditional financing mechanisms and demonstrates how values of accessibility and affordability can be directly aligned with fundraising strategies.

Implications for CFAT

Both cases offer important lessons for CFAT. The Bus Stop Theatre demonstrates the value of phased renovation planning, strong feasibility and business planning documents, and the catalytic effect of municipal funding in securing other grants. RadStorm highlights the potential of community financing tools like bonds, which could complement CFAT's proposed mix of grants, mortgage financing, and philanthropy. Together, these comparables strengthen the case that CFAT's \$1.93 million project is achievable, and that ownership is both a viable and proven strategy for stabilizing Halifax's artist-run sector.

2.3 Sector and Community Support

“CFAT fills an essential gap in our cultural infrastructure, providing resources that would otherwise be financially out of reach for most independent artists, particularly those from marginalized communities.”

*Quote from Israel Ekanem
Chair, Board of Directors – Centre for Art Tapes
Media artist, Founder of Ubuntu Media, and
Festival Director for the Mosaic Film Festival of Arts and Culture*



Since its founding, CFAT has nurtured generations of artists, provided access to professional equipment and training, and fostered an inclusive community where experimentation and innovation thrive. The organization's capital project has drawn **strong endorsements from across the arts sector**, reflecting its deep impact and the collective recognition of the need for a permanent home to sustain its work.

Letters of support from artists, cultural organizations, and institutional partners highlight CFAT's critical role as both a resource and a collaborator. As one of the few centres in Atlantic Canada offering community access to media arts, CFAT fills a vital gap in regional cultural infrastructure. **Artists credit CFAT with launching their careers and providing the technical and creative support that makes new work possible**, particularly for

those who face barriers to accessing specialized media arts tools.

Partner organizations underscore CFAT's importance as a catalyst for collaboration and innovation. The Khyber Centre for the Arts, Nocturne: Art at Night, and the Bus Stop Theatre Co-operative each describe CFAT as essential to their programming and to Halifax's broader cultural ecosystem. Through shared equipment, expertise, and proximity, CFAT enables a network of artist-run organizations to deliver ambitious, community-driven work that centres underrepresented voices and enhances the creative life of the city.

Leaders from across the arts sector also emphasize that building ownership is a crucial step for CFAT's long-term sustainability and will also strengthen the collective cultural infrastructure of Halifax's North End, where CFAT has been an anchor for decades.

The breadth and depth of community and sector support for CFAT's capital project demonstrates that this initiative extends beyond a single organization. Securing a permanent facility represents an investment in the city's cultural ecosystem—one that will preserve accessibility, foster collaboration, and ensure that media artists across Atlantic Canada continue to have the resources, mentorship, and invaluable cultural infrastructure.

Please see the Appendix of this report for a sample of letters of support received by CFAT.

2.4 Project Timelines

Phase 1: Preparation & Fundraising (2025–2026)

- **Q4 2025:** Finalize business plan and present to HRM for capital grant request.
- **Q1 2026:** Secure mortgage provider and finalize financing agreements.
- **Q1–Q2 2026:** Confirm federal and provincial grant applications (Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, Nova Scotia Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage).
- **Q1–Q4 2026:** Launch public capital campaign; secure commitments from alumni, donors, and corporate sponsors.

Phase 2: Acquisition & Renovation – Base Fit-Up (Mid-Late 2026)

- **Q2 2026:** Conduct building inspection and any necessary reviews
- **Q3 2026:** Building purchase and closing (legal, appraisal, title transfer, registration).
- **Q3–Q4 2026:** Undertake Phase 1 renovations (basic interior upgrades, accessibility improvements, fire and building code compliance, cosmetic improvements).
- **Q3 2026:** Move into the new facility for limited programming while renovations continue

Phase 3: Renovation – Specialized Upgrades (2027–2028)

- **Q2–Q3 2027:** Develop schematic designs with architect and cost consultant; refine budget.
- **Q3 2027–Q2 2028:** Complete Phase 2 renovations (audio suite, transfer suite, gallery fit-up, façade improvements, equipment installation).
- **Q2 2028:** Public launch of fully renovated facility with expanded programming and community events.

Phase 4: Long-Term Development (2028+)

- Future potential expansion into upper residential floors (e.g., artist-in-residence units or additional program space).
- Ongoing capital reinvestment through fundraising, sponsorship, and earned revenue.

3. Opportunities and Challenges

“CFAT’s approach to making complex media technologies accessible to artists of all backgrounds and experience levels is exceptional in the cultural landscape.”

*Quote Izzie Colpitts-Campbell
President, Centre for Art Tapes
President of Dames Making Games,
Board Member at Toronto Media Arts Centre*

3.1 Opportunity Statement

The Centre for Art Tapes (CFAT) is at a pivotal moment. After more than 45 years of providing access, mentorship, and innovation in the media arts, the organization faces pressing and multi-pronged challenges: escalating rental costs, the risk of displacement in a rapidly redeveloping Halifax and the need for additional infrastructure to keep pace with the evolving media-arts ecosystem. **Without intervention, CFAT’s long-term stability, and the accessibility it provides for hundreds of artists and community members remains uncertain.**

The opportunity before CFAT is to secure a permanent home — a facility that not only stabilizes its operations but also unlocks new potential for growth. The acquisition and renovation of 2199 Gottingen Street offers:

- **Stability:** ending cycles of relocation and turning rental expenses into equity.
- **Capacity Expansion:** a 43% increase in usable space, enabling purpose-designed studios, audio suites, and a dedicated media-art gallery.
- **Cultural Cluster Impact:** co-location with the Bus Stop Theatre and proximity to RadStorm strengthens Halifax’s cultural corridor and builds a dynamic hub for artists and audiences.
- **Financial Sustainability:** ownership provides opportunities for rental income, long-term reinvestment, and eligibility for capital programs not available to renters.
- **Equity and Access:** a fully accessible, community-centered facility that prioritizes under-represented artists, inclusive programming, and safe, barrier-free participation.

This opportunity is time-sensitive. Halifax currently records one of the lowest office vacancy rates in Canada, with escalating commercial rents and displacement risks for artist-run organizations. At the same time, municipal, provincial, and federal cultural infrastructure programs are aligned to support projects that secure long-term sustainability for the sector.

By seizing this opportunity, CFAT will not only safeguard its future but also contribute to a more resilient, accessible, and vibrant cultural ecosystem in Halifax and beyond.

3.2 Alignment with Sectorial Trends

CFAT's pursuit of a permanent, purpose-built media arts facility is strongly aligned with broader trends in Canada's artist-run and cultural infrastructure sectors. Across the country, organizations are rethinking how space, access, and sustainability intersect in the media arts.

Growing Demand for Interdisciplinary and Media Arts Facilities

Nationally, there is increasing demand for flexible, technologically equipped spaces that support interdisciplinary and new media practices. Organizations such as **OBORO (Montréal)**, **PAVED Arts (Saskatoon)**, and **EMMEDIA (Calgary)** have all invested in upgrading or expanding facilities to better serve artists working at the intersections of video, sound, performance, and digital art. CFAT's proposed facility responds directly to this trend by prioritizing adaptable studios, a media arts gallery, and production suites that can accommodate diverse and emerging practices.

Shared Infrastructure and Co-Location Models

Another defining sector trend is collaboration through shared infrastructure. **PAVED Arts and AKA Artist-Run (Saskatoon)** co-purchased their building in 2005 and also hosts a tenant, **BlackFlash Magazine**, creating a sustainable multi-tenant arts hub. Similarly, **Eastern Edge Gallery (NL)** has co-located with **St. Michael's Printshop** to share resources and strengthen long-term sustainability. CFAT's potential co-location alongside the **Bus Stop Theatre** and in proximity to **RadStorm** positions it within this proven model, amplifying the impact of Halifax's cultural corridor and reducing duplication of resources.

Innovative Financing Models

The financing strategies explored by Canadian artist-run centres also inform CFAT's approach. **RadStorm's "RadBond" campaign** is a recent example of community bonds being used to raise significant capital while reinforcing community ownership of cultural space. Other organizations have leveraged hybrid funding from government grants, mortgages, philanthropy, and in-kind support. CFAT's proposed financing model mirrors these trends, combining traditional funder support with donor engagement and potential for innovative social finance tools.

Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion

There is also a national shift toward embedding equity, accessibility, and inclusion into cultural infrastructure projects. CFAT's commitment to providing barrier-free facilities, non-gendered washrooms, and governance guided by an anti-discrimination Code of Conduct aligns with accessibility targets in Nova Scotia (goal of a fully accessible province by 2030) and with national arts sector priorities around equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Sustainability and Adaptive Reuse

Finally, CFAT's plan to adaptively reuse an existing building aligns with sustainability practices in cultural infrastructure development. The federal **Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program** and municipal cultural priorities emphasize environmentally responsible renovation, reduced carbon footprints, and the reuse of existing stock. This positions CFAT's project as not only artistically and socially necessary, but also environmentally aligned with current best practices.

By pursuing ownership of 2199 Gottingen Street, CFAT is aligning itself with established and emerging trends across the national media arts landscape: growth in interdisciplinary practices, collaborative

space models, innovative financing, and strong commitments to equity and sustainability. These alignments reinforce the project's viability and relevance, strengthening CFAT's case to funders and stakeholders.

3.3 Alignment with Regional Planning

CFAT's proposed building acquisition and renovation strongly advances the goals of Halifax Regional Municipality's **Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan (CHPP)**, which identifies the following priorities:

Express Culture Through Place

The CHPP calls for placemaking initiatives that reinforce identity through heritage buildings, public spaces, and storytelling. CFAT's project does exactly this: by adaptively reusing a heritage property in Halifax's North End, the organization preserves built heritage while reimagining it as a space for new cultural narratives. The facility will include a dedicated media arts gallery and a transfer suite for digitizing legacy media, ensuring that under-represented stories — from African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities to emerging queer and newcomer artists — are recorded, shared, and celebrated. This aligns with HRM's emphasis on using physical space to reflect cultural narratives and create a deeper sense of place.

Support Cultural Capacity

The CHPP highlights the need to strengthen cultural infrastructure, programming, and partnerships. CFAT's permanent home would expand its footprint by 43%, enabling purpose-built production suites, accessible offices, and a gallery space that currently does not exist for media art in Nova Scotia. This investment builds capacity not just for CFAT's members but for Halifax's arts ecosystem, as equipment, facilities, and training are made more accessible to a wide range of community groups. Furthermore, CFAT's location beside the Bus Stop Theatre and near RadStorm enhances Halifax's cultural corridor, amplifying the Plan's call to build networks through collaboration and co-location.

Value Creativity

The CHPP commits to offering platforms and funding that showcase diverse cultural expressions and enhance vibrancy through partnerships. CFAT is uniquely positioned to advance this goal: its programs lower barriers to access by providing in-kind support, subsidized equipment, and mentorship, while centering BIPOC, LGBTQ2SIA+, disabled, and femme artists. The organization's Code of Conduct ensures that participation is safe, inclusive, and accountable, aligning with municipal values of equity and diversity. A permanent facility will expand CFAT's ability to present media art publicly, positioning Halifax as a hub of innovation and experimentation in the cultural sector.

By expressing culture through adaptive reuse, strengthening cultural capacity through new infrastructure, and valuing creativity by uplifting diverse voices, CFAT's capital project directly embodies the priorities of HRM's Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan. The project is not only an organizational milestone for CFAT but also a civic investment that reinforces Halifax's identity as a creative and inclusive city.

3.4 Economic Impact

The economic impact of CFAT extends well beyond its membership. The organization acts as both a cultural incubator and an economic engine: supporting jobs, attracting audiences, subsidizing creation, and contributing to the vitality of Halifax's North End. The capital project at 2199 Gottingen Street will amplify these impacts, transforming CFAT's contributions from precarious to permanent, and ensuring that the benefits to artists, communities, and the local economy are sustained for generations.

Direct Economic Contributions

- In 2024, CFAT supported **545 bookings** and **50+ projects**, representing over **\$176,000 in market-value activity**. Through its subsidy model, CFAT charged artists and community groups only **\$5,000**, effectively investing over **\$170,000 annually** back into the regional cultural sector.
- CFAT directly invested in the cultural economy by paying **\$32,072 to artists** for creative work and **\$18,850 in professional fees** to mentors, technicians, jurors, and educators. These payments contribute to the livelihoods of artists and cultural workers, reinforcing Halifax's creative economy.
- Equipment rentals, facility use, and production support allow small nonprofits and ad hoc groups to realize projects at a fraction of market cost, lowering barriers for community cultural participation.

Indirect and Induced Impacts

- Artists and cultural workers supported by CFAT contribute to Halifax's broader economy through housing, services, and local spending.
- CFAT's public events — screenings, exhibitions, and workshops — attract audiences to the North End, stimulating spending in nearby restaurants, cafes, and shops.
- The development of a permanent cultural hub alongside the Bus Stop Theatre and RadStorm creates a "cultural corridor" in the Gottingen area, supporting local economic vitality and urban vibrancy.

Long-Term Economic Benefits of Ownership

- By converting annual rent into mortgage equity, CFAT will strengthen its financial position, ensuring greater reinvestment into artists and programming in the long term.
- Rental income from upstairs residential units (approx. \$21,600 annually) will generate steady revenue, further diversifying CFAT's financial base.
- The project's construction and renovation phases (approx. **\$1.93M**) will stimulate local economic activity in the design, construction, and trades sectors, generating temporary employment and local procurement.

Civic and Policy Alignment

CFAT's economic contributions align with HRM's **Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan**, which highlights the role of cultural infrastructure in expressing identity, supporting capacity, and enhancing vibrancy. By securing a permanent facility, CFAT will not only stabilize a key arts organization but also reinforce Halifax's reputation as a city that invests in creative industries, equity, and inclusive growth.

3.5 Challenges and Risk Mitigation

While the opportunity to secure a permanent home for CFAT is significant, the project also faces a number of challenges that must be carefully managed to ensure success. These challenges reflect both external pressures and internal organizational capacity.

Escalating Real Estate and Construction Costs

Halifax has one of the lowest office vacancy rates in Canada and rising commercial rents, creating a highly competitive real estate environment. Construction costs in Atlantic Canada have also escalated sharply, with mid-range cultural renovations now averaging \$250–\$375 per square foot. These conditions heighten financial pressure on CFAT's project and require robust contingencies and phased renovation planning.

Capacity and Resource Limitations

As a small artist-run centre, CFAT operates with a lean staff and limited administrative capacity. The additional demands of a capital campaign, mortgage management, and renovation oversight stretch the organization beyond its typical programming responsibilities. This increases the risk of staff burnout and requires careful planning for volunteer and Board engagement, advisory support, and phased implementation.

Reliance on Government Funding

CFAT's operations are heavily dependent on public funding (93% of revenues in 2024). While the capital project aligns with municipal, provincial, and federal priorities, competition for cultural infrastructure funding is intense. Failure to secure one or more anticipated grants would increase reliance on debt financing or delay the project.

Facility Risks and Building Conditions

As with many older buildings, 2199 Gottingen carries potential risks including hazardous materials, accessibility upgrades, and structural unknowns. The basement's limited ceiling heights restrict some uses without costly excavation. Equipment loading and parking access on a busy street present operational challenges. These issues may increase costs or require design compromises.

Fundraising and Community Engagement Challenges

While CFAT has a strong base of alumni, members, and partners, large-scale capital fundraising is new territory for the organization. Building a successful campaign requires cultivating new donor relationships, developing sponsorship strategies, and mobilizing community support in a competitive philanthropic environment where other arts organizations are also raising funds.

Long-Term Operating Pressures

Ownership brings stability but also new responsibilities, including building maintenance, insurance, and property taxes. Securing sufficient reserve funds for future repairs and reinvestments will be essential.

These challenges do not diminish the importance or feasibility of CFAT's capital project, but they do underscore the need for prudent planning, strong partnerships, and diversified funding strategies. By anticipating risks and developing mitigation measures, CFAT can successfully navigate these obstacles and deliver a sustainable, accessible, and vibrant home for media arts in Halifax.

Risk and Mitigation Framework

Challenge	Potential Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Escalating real estate and construction costs	Budget overruns; need for additional fundraising; delays in project timeline	Maintain Class D costing with 10–15% contingency; implement phased renovations; pursue federal/provincial funding tied to inflationary pressures
Limited organizational capacity	Staff burnout; project management gaps; disruption to programming	Resource the CFAT Building Committee with external advisors (finance, real estate, construction); use professional project management support; adjust staffing plan to include dedicated capacity during campaign and renovation phases.
Dependence on government funding	Shortfall in expected grants; increased reliance on debt	Diversify revenue through philanthropy, corporate sponsorships, and alumni fundraising; explore innovative financing (e.g., community bonds); secure early commitments from HRM to leverage provincial/federal support.
Building conditions and heritage risks	Unforeseen costs (hazardous materials, accessibility retrofits, structural repairs)	Conduct full building inspection prior to purchase; set higher contingency allocation; prioritize essential upgrades in Phase 1.
Fundraising competition	Donor fatigue; limited success in meeting campaign targets	Differentiate CFAT's campaign by emphasizing unique role in media arts; leverage strong alumni network; align campaign asks with municipal/provincial priorities around equity, accessibility, and digital innovation.
Long-term operating pressures	Increased financial obligations (mortgage, insurance, taxes, maintenance)	Apply for HRM Non-Profit Tax Relief Program (up to 75% reduction); establish building reserve fund; generate rental income from upstairs apartments and community use of space.

4. Financial Plan

"Securing a permanent home at 2199 Gottingen Street will ensure the sustainability of CFAT's operations and safeguard its role as a hub for artists and media art production in Halifax."

*Quote from Izzie Colpitts-Campbell
President, Centre for Art Tapes
President of Dames Making Games,
Board Member at Toronto Media Arts Centre*

4.1 Financial Strategy

CFAT's financial strategy for the building acquisition and capital project is built on a **hybrid model that balances government support, mortgage financing, philanthropy, and earned revenue**. This approach mirrors successful precedents in Halifax and across Canada while addressing CFAT's unique operating realities.

Key Insights

- **Comparable Costs:** Mortgage, tax, and insurance obligations are broadly comparable to current rental costs.
- **Savings Potential:** With rental income and potential HRM Non-Profit Tax Relief (75% reduction of property tax), CFAT's occupancy costs could be lower under ownership than under rental.
- **Equity Building:** Unlike rent, mortgage payments build equity, converting operational costs into a long-term asset.
- **Program Stability:** Ownership creates predictability in occupancy costs, shielding CFAT from volatile rental increases (4-6% annually in recent years)

Capital Financing Strategy

The total project budget is estimated at **\$1.93M**, covering acquisition, phased renovations, soft costs, and contingency. The financing will be structured as follows:

- **Government Grants (~60%)**
 - **Canadian Heritage – Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF):** up to \$500,000 (confirmed eligibility, supports up to 50% of eligible project costs).
 - **Province of Nova Scotia – Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage (CCTH):** \$350,000 ask, aligned with provincial cultural facility priorities.
 - **Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM):** \$300,000 ask, aligned with the CHPP

Together, these levels of government could contribute approx. \$1.15M toward the project.

- **Mortgage Financing (~35%)**
A commercial mortgage of **\$674,000** (6.26% interest, 25-year amortization) has been modeled. Monthly payments are approx. **\$4,513**, which is comparable to CFAT's current annual rent costs (\$51,520 in 2024).
- **Philanthropy & Community Investment (~5%)**
CFAT has already raised **\$70,000 in savings and donations** and projects an additional **\$50,000** through alumni campaigns, major donor gifts, and corporate sponsorships. Innovative financing mechanisms, such as community bonds, remain under consideration if required.

Operating Impact and Sustainability

Operating budgets have been modeled for both current and future facilities:

- **Current rental model (2024):** \$51,520 annual rent; no long-term equity; improvements to rental space are sunk costs.
- **Ownership model (2026+):** Approx. \$65,587 annual (mortgage + property taxes + insurance), but:
 - Converts costs into equity.
 - Generates approx. **\$21,600 annual rental income** from two upper-floor apartments.
 - Provides access to new funding streams (capital grants, donor investment) unavailable to renters.

Operating Budget Comparison: Rental vs. Ownership

Category	Current Rental Model (2024)	Ownership Model (2026+)
Rent / Mortgage	\$51,520 (rent)	\$52,800 (mortgage)
Property Tax	— (included in rent)	\$4,287 (est., based on \$600K assessed value; less 75% HRM tax relief for NP organizations)
Insurance	\$7,112	\$8,500 (estimated at \$1.25/sq. ft. + liability)
Utilities	\$5,333	\$6,000
Maintenance / Repairs	\$1,680	\$2,500 (allowance for building ownership)
Subtotal: Occupancy Costs	\$65,645	\$74,087 (with tax relief, reserve fund)
Rental Income (apartments)	—	-\$21,600
Net Occupancy Costs	\$65,645	\$52,487 (with rental income and tax relief)

Risk Mitigation

The financial strategy incorporates contingency planning:

- **10–15% contingency** for renovations and building risks.
- **Phased renovation plan:** Phase 1 (basic accessibility and code compliance) and Phase 2 (specialized suites, façade, gallery fit-up) allow flexibility if funding is delayed.
- **Reserve Fund Development:** establish a building reserve fund to cover maintenance, insurance, and unexpected costs, reducing long-term exposure.

Strategic Outcomes

Through this financing approach, CFAT will:

- **Secure a permanent home without significantly increasing annual occupancy costs.**
- **Diversify its revenue sources by adding donor contributions, rental income, and potential social finance tools.**
- **Position itself to reinvest in programming and staff capacity by stabilizing infrastructure costs.**

In summary, CFAT's financial strategy demonstrates both prudence and ambition: balancing government investment, community support, and earned revenues to deliver a transformative cultural facility while managing long-term sustainability.

4.2 Financial Risks and Mitigation

While the financial strategy for CFAT's capital project is robust, several risks could impact its success. By proactively identifying risks and embedding mitigation strategies into both capital and operating planning, CFAT positions itself to manage financial uncertainty while advancing the capital project. A combination of contingency planning, phased renovations, and diversified financing reduces exposure to unforeseen shocks and strengthens long-term sustainability.

Capital Fundraising Shortfalls

- **Risk:** Failure to secure one or more anticipated government grants (federal, provincial, municipal) could create a funding gap. Philanthropic contributions may also fall short in a competitive fundraising environment.
- **Impact:** Increased reliance on mortgage financing, higher long-term debt load, or project delays.
- **Mitigation:**
 - Secure early municipal commitments (HRM) to leverage provincial and federal funding.
 - Diversify fundraising through alumni campaigns, corporate sponsorships, and community contributions.
 - Structure renovations in phases, allowing occupancy with Phase 1 while additional funds are raised for Phase 2.

Construction Cost Inflation & Overruns

- **Risk:** Rising material and labour costs could exceed Class D estimates, or unforeseen building conditions (hazardous materials, accessibility upgrades) could increase expenses.
- **Impact:** Budget overruns, reduced scope, or project delays.
- **Mitigation:**
 - Maintain a 10–15% contingency allowance.
 - Engage professional cost consultants during schematic design.
 - Prioritize only essential upgrades in Phase 1, deferring less critical improvements to Phase 2.
 - Leverage federal programs such as the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program for energy efficiency upgrades.

Long-Term Operating Pressures

- **Risk:** Increased obligations for mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, and maintenance could strain CFAT's operating budget.
- **Impact:** Reduced flexibility for programming, staff support, or reserves.
- **Mitigation:**
 - Apply for HRM's **Non-Profit Tax Relief Program** (potential 75% reduction in property taxes).
 - Generate steady rental income from the two upstairs apartments (~\$21,600 annually).
 - Establish a **Building Reserve Fund** to cover maintenance and unexpected repairs.
 - Reinvest any cost savings from equity-building into staffing and programming.

Reliance on Government Funding for Operations

- **Risk:** Ongoing operating revenues remain highly dependent on government support (93% of receipts in 2024). Any reduction in core grants would threaten sustainability.
- **Impact:** Operating deficits or reduced service levels.
- **Mitigation:**
 - Increase earned revenues from rentals, workshops, and membership.
 - Grow philanthropic base beyond capital campaign (multi-year donors, endowment planning).
 - Partner with peer organizations for cost-sharing and joint programming to reduce expenses.

Fundraising Fatigue in Halifax Arts Community

- **Risk:** Other cultural organizations (e.g., AFSCOOP) are also raising capital funds, creating competition for donor and sponsor attention.
- **Impact:** Slower campaign progress, reduced donor participation.
- **Mitigation:**
 - Differentiate CFAT's campaign by emphasizing its unique role in media arts and long history of developing the Halifax arts sector.
 - Highlight program impacts (e.g., \$170K in subsidized artist support provided in 2024).
 - Engage alumni and national media arts networks for contributions beyond Halifax.

4.5 10-Year Pro Forma

A ten-year financial projection has been prepared to model CFAT's transition from tenant to owner. The pro forma assumes stable government support at 2024 levels, supplemented by steady growth in donations, memberships, and rental income from the upstairs apartments at 2199 Gottingen Street. Both revenues and expenses are modeled to grow at a conservative rate of 2% annually.

Under this scenario, CFAT maintains a balanced operating position throughout the 2026–2035 period, with modest annual surpluses in the range of **\$18,000–\$20,000 per year**. These surpluses, while not large, demonstrate that ownership is financially sustainable and that the organization can meet its ongoing mortgage, property tax, and operating obligations without jeopardizing programming. Importantly, these projections also provide room to establish a **building reserve fund** to cover long-term maintenance and unforeseen costs, further strengthening sustainability.

The pro forma underscores a central finding: ownership does not increase CFAT's financial vulnerability compared to its current rental model. Instead, it stabilizes occupancy costs, converts rent into equity, and creates opportunities for incremental growth in earned and donated revenues. This positions CFAT to reinvest in staff, artists, and programs, ensuring long-term resilience and impact.

10-Year Pro Forma Projections

Year	Projected Revenue	Projected Expenses	Net Yearly Assets
2026	\$371,353	\$353,164	\$18,190
2027	\$378,781	\$360,227	\$18,553
2028	\$386,356	\$367,432	\$18,925
2029	\$394,083	\$374,780	\$19,303
2030	\$401,965	\$382,276	\$19,689
2031	\$410,004	\$389,921	\$20,083
2032	\$418,204	\$397,720	\$20,485
2033	\$426,568	\$405,674	\$20,894
2034	\$435,100	\$413,788	\$21,312
2035	\$443,802	\$422,063	\$21,738

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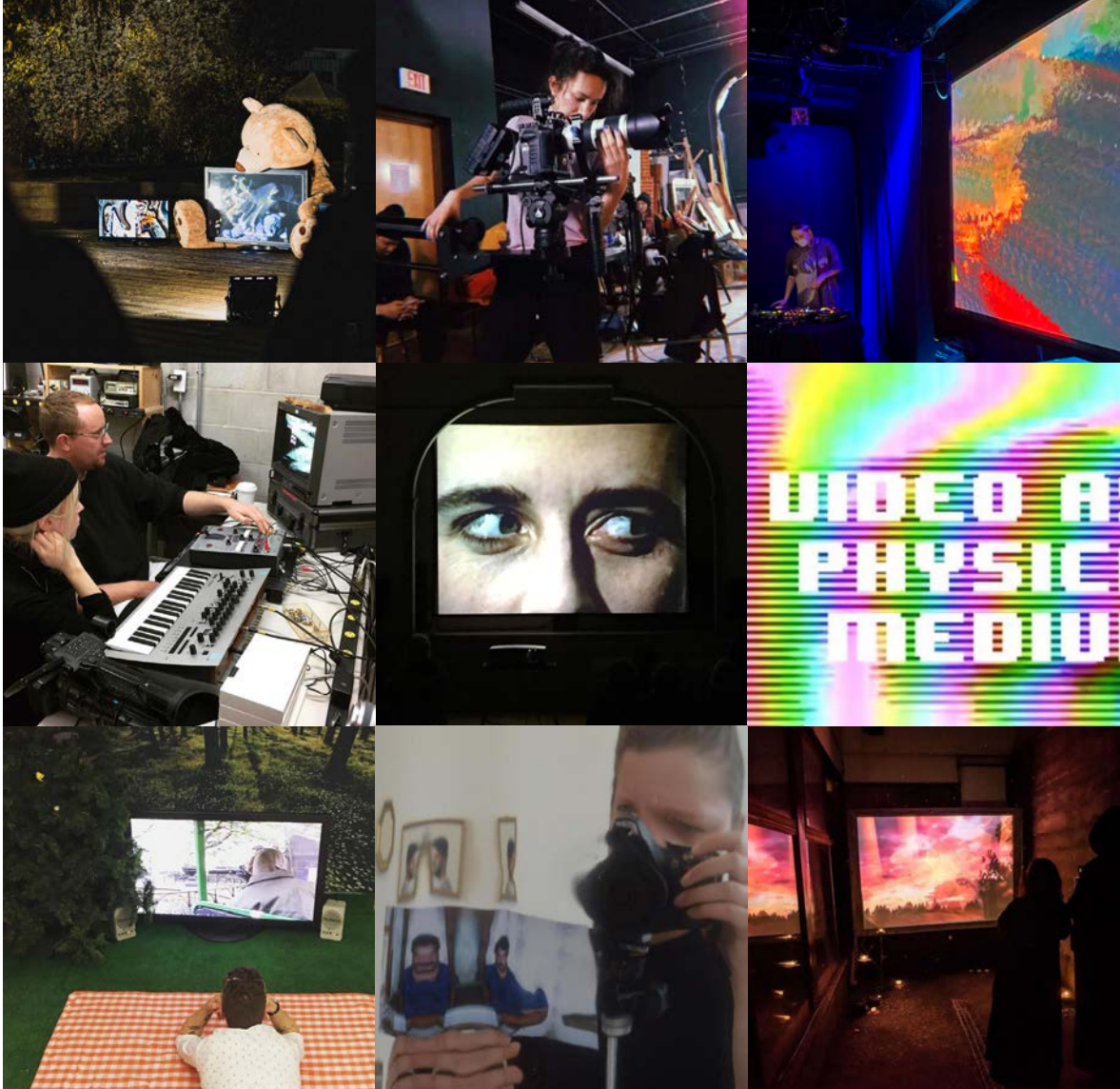
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**A NEW HOME FOR THE
CENTRE FOR ART TAPES:
CASE STUDY REPORT**

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INTRODUCTION



BACKGROUND.

Founded in 1979, The Centre for Art Tapes (CFAT) is a Halifax based, not for profit artist-run, CRA Registered Charitable Organization that facilitates and supports artists at all levels working with electronic and new media. This centre supports artists and the expression of ideas and stories that are under-represented in mainstream culture. CFAT is devoted to the exchange of ideas among diverse artists through experimentation, mentorship, presentation, and research.

CFAT provides subsidized access to professional equipment, facilities, technical expertise, educational resources, mentorship, and other forms of professional and creative support. Through its organizational structure and its activities, CFAT strives to put marginalized artists into the centre of discourses and practices of media art.

OWNERSHIP CASE STUDY.

CFAT currently rents space in Halifax, a city with drastically increasing rental costs. It's current location, while functional, does not allow for a sense of organizational permanency and spatial flexibility. Rent and other costs to run the facility rise every year. Despite growing revenues, these costs increase at a higher rate reducing the funds available for programming, artist fees, and equipment. CFAT has determined that the best way to ensure financial stability and high quality programming is the purchase of their own property.

Place of Work Architecture Studio was asked to help CFAT imagine the future space needs for the organization and test fit those ideas using the building at 2199 Gottingen Street as a case study.

The main goals of this case study are to:

- Determine if 2199 Gottingen adequately meets the space needs of CFAT now and in the future.
- Provide visual assets that can be used in fundraising and stakeholder engagement for the project.
- Identify high-level principles, opportunities, and challenges to guide next steps.
- Provide basic programming information that can be used to establish a rough budget for a renovation (approximately 'Class D').
- Set the stage for broader engagement with CFAT members, stakeholders, and the larger community.

LIMITATIONS.

This case study is preliminary and the design will require further development once more information is available, a realistic budget has been established, and a building is purchased. No detailed or structural investigations of the building were included in the scope of this study. These should be performed as part of any future purchase and sale agreement. CFAT should also engage a qualified professional to assess the building for toxic and hazardous materials.

CURRENT SPACE

Vision Statement

CFAT is an inclusive artist-run centre that supports artists who use video, audio, and electronic media to express ideas and stories that are under-represented in mainstream culture. CFAT is devoted to the exchange of ideas among diverse artists through experimentation, mentorship, presentation, and research.

Mission Statement

CFAT supports artists working with media technologies by providing subsidized public access to professional equipment, facilities, technical expertise, educational resources, mentorship, and other forms of professional and creative support. Through its organizational structure and its activities, CFAT strives to put marginalized artists into the centre of discourses and practices of media art. CFAT is transparent and accountable in its decisions, governance and finances.

CONSULTATION SESSION.

On November 2, 2023 Place of Work met with a small group of staff and volunteers to better understand how the current space is used and how a new space may better serve their needs.

The goal of the consultation session was to:

- Establish guiding principles for the design and development of the new space
- Document the current space use
- Discuss pain-points & challenges associated with the current space
- Understand the organization's goals for future growth
- Attempt to prioritize those goals

The participants were asked to describe ways in which the new space can reinforce specific principles identified in the CFAT Vision and Mission statements; imagine possibilities for the arrangement and adjacencies of key spaces in the new building; and prioritize qualitative and quantitative goals. The appendices attached to this report show the results of this work, which has been distilled into the findings and observations below.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

During the consultation session the following principles emerged as critical forces that will shape the new home of CFAT. Unsurprisingly, they are directly related to the vision and mission of CFAT as an organization. Many of these principles are related to one another.

Welcoming.

One of the main goals is to welcome members into the space. Currently there is no comfortable or suitable space where members can congregate, whether that be for socialization or a place to catch up on emails. This space was often referred to as “the living room”. CFAT would like the new space to be a hub for its members. The gallery spaces should also feel welcoming to the general public.

Presentation.

Currently there are no dedicated media arts galleries in Nova Scotia. The new space should prioritize presentation of artist's work and assist in making it accessible to the public. There should be a main dedicated presentation space, but secondary presentation spaces should also be considered. Windows and multi-use rooms could function as secondary presentation spaces.

Collaborative.

Collaboration and mentorship are core values of CFAT. The current space is not well suited to casual and chance encounters that provide the foundation for collaborative relationships and mentorship. The members area and other spaces should provide space and opportunities for collaborative work, and the ability to share in-process work. An open studio space can be highly productive, but members and staff also need access to spaces for quiet and private work. This should be considered in the design.

Accessible.

CFAT would like to prioritize creating an accessible space so people of all abilities can use the space. This is good practice in any new public space, and there is a new focus on creating accessible spaces in Nova Scotia. Changes to the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations will have more stringent requirements in the coming years as the province works to meet its goal of an accessible province by 2030. Requirements and the approach to the design of accessible spaces is becoming more complex. It may be valuable to consider the services of an accessibility consultant for future design phases.

Community.

CFAT values the community in which they are currently located. The design and development of the new space should include that community. Specifically, the project should explore strategic relationships for collaboration and shared space with the Bus Stop Theatre, of which the case study building shares a wall.

THE CURRENT SPACE.

In preparation for the meeting CFAT prepared a program of the existing spaces which is included below.

Room Name:	Room Dimensions:			Room Description:
	Length (ft)	Width (ft)	Area (sqft)	
Staff + Members Area	16.50	19.50	321.75	Front Entrance
Stairwell Door	7.83	6.83	53.48	Space Next to Fire Exit
Equipment Store Hallway	22.60	4.00	90.40	
Office	9.83	11.17	109.80	Tori's Office
Transfer Suite	8.30	7.50	62.25	Office
Video Editing Suite + New Media Lab	18.30	12.00	220.00	Future Office Space
Video Editing Suite	7.83	11.83	92.67	Main Video Editing
Equipment Storage	6.87	6.67	45.83	Attached to future office space area
Bathroom	5.30	7.12	37.97	
Projects + Workshops	26.75	15.30	410.17	
Audio Suite	15.67	20.50	321.24	
subtotal:			1765.56	

Figure 1. Current CFAT space inventory

What follows are key observations regarding the current space and improvements that could be made based on discussion with the CFAT team.

ANCHOR SPACES.

Lack of presentation space - there is no appropriate, purpose built presentation space for the display of artistic works. The future space will require a high level of flexibility in regards to electrical service, receptacle locations, and access to data ports. A qualified consultant should be engaged in the detailed design of this space.

Equipment Storage - The rental equipment service provided by CFAT is heavily used. It is the source of most visitors to the space. However, the equipment is currently stored in a series of closets that line a hallway. This makes the use and organization of the equipment challenging and impedes movement through the space. The new space should accommodate an equipment storage area that is self contained and away from the highly-public facing spaces. Loading and unloading of equipment should also be considered as parking is limited along Gottingen Street and it has high traffic volume.

Member's Area - In the current space the member's area and the staff working area was combined, which did not permit enough privacy for staff. The member's area should include a kitchen and social space, but its adjacencies need to be carefully considered so as to not impede a suitable work environment. It should be provided with an ample number of electrical receptacles to allow for laptop use.

STAFF SPACES.

Executive Directors Office - The executive directors office has several important functional requirements: large enough for two or three people to meet, privacy, and secure storage of personnel and financial documents.

Staff Offices - Staff require a dedicated work area for three people. This space may be shared but should be able to be secured when members and other people are using the space in off-hours.

CREATIVE SPACES.

Audio Suite - The audio suite is the only publicly accessible space east of Montreal with the ability to mix 5.1 surround sound. It is an important resource offered to members, however the current arrangement could be optimized. While initially built for mixing sound for film, their audio suite is now also used for recording, mixing and podcasts requiring specific audio/acoustic requirements as well as the ability and space to record video. It was suggested that this space could be broken into two rooms: one approximately two-thirds of the current size, and one approximately one-third. The current space utilizes double wall construction to achieve acoustic isolation from the surrounding spaces. At minimum this should be repeated in the new space.

Video Editing Suites - The current space includes a relatively large area that was used as a video editing suite and the 'New Media Lab'. This is being re-purposed into a staff workspace. The remaining enclosed video editing suite is an important function to preserve, but could be made smaller with a more efficient layout.

Transfer Suite - This space houses the equipment used to transfer legacy media formats to digital files. This has been identified as something that could be promoted to develop a more robust revenue stream for CFAT. The equipment is also visually interesting and could be something visible to the public or semi-public areas. The current size is workable. Ample electrical receptacles and data ports are important.

Projects & Workshops Space - This room functions as a multi-purpose space and hosts a variety of activities. It functions as a meeting room, make-shift presentation space, and a rental space for outside groups. CFAT staff indicated that the space is often used for “talking-head” videos and auditions. It is able to be made completely dark, and has tracks in the ceiling for a green screen and similar equipment. A similar space will be required in the new building. It should be designed to accommodate the above activities and to function as a secondary gallery space.

Workshop & Repair.

Discussions with the CFAT staff also revealed a desire for a space in which equipment and electronics can be built and repaired. This could also include tool storage, cleaning supplies, and other secondary storage for equipment, supplies, and furniture.

QUANTITATIVE

MUST HAVE:

- Living room.
- Kitchenette.
- Transfer suite.
- Audio suite.
- Dedicated staff space.
- Equipment rental space.
- Workshop spaces.
- Member lockers.
- Storage.

SHOULD HAVE:

- Window display.
- Permanent video gallery (simple).
- Lobby space / vestibule / waiting room.
- Audio suite (2/3) and podcast suite (1/3).
- Conference room.

COULD HAVE:

- Filming studio (more people would use this if it existed, could be dark).
- Residence/apartment (phased?).

QUALITATIVE

MUST HAVE:

- Visibility as a member, what are members doing?
- Value to members.
- Avoid industrial feel (unfinished/harsh).
- Easy to use gear.
- Professional presentation.
- Clubhouse.
- Casual.
- Inviting people in and to return.
- Display what is being made and what has been made here.
- Sense of history.

SHOULD HAVE:

- Conferencing / presentation space.
- Partnership with Bus Stop Theatre.

COULD HAVE:

Figure 2. Program matrix completed during consultation session

PRIORITIZED NEEDS.

The final task of the consultation was to organize the quantitative and qualitative needs by priority: 'must have', 'should have', and 'could have'. This can be revised, updated, and added to as more consultation is completed with a larger set of stakeholders.

**PROPOSED
SPACE**



THE CASE STUDY BUILDING

2199 & 2197 Gottingen Street.

The building used for this case study is located at 2199 and 2197 Gottingen Street. It is the former home of Seadog's Sauna.

The building is a three-storey structure of combustible construction with a basement. The three-storey section on Gottingen Street appears to be the original structure, with a single storey addition extending back into the lot on the ground level. Two two-bedroom apartments occupy the second and third stories and are currently occupied. They are accessed by a door on Gottingen Street.

During our site visit we were only able to access the ground and lower levels. Only general observations were able to be made as the building is currently occupied and in use by a tenant. The building appears to be sprinklered on the lower and ground level. The presence of sprinklers on the upper levels should be confirmed.

Smarter Spaces was engaged to produce as-built drawings of the space. They 3D scanned the building and produced 2D plans of each floor along with a rudimentary 3D digital model (Revit 2022). The expected level of accuracy is between 2cm - 5cm. The as-built drawings are included in the appendices and the digital models have been provided to CFAT for future use.

Ceiling Heights.

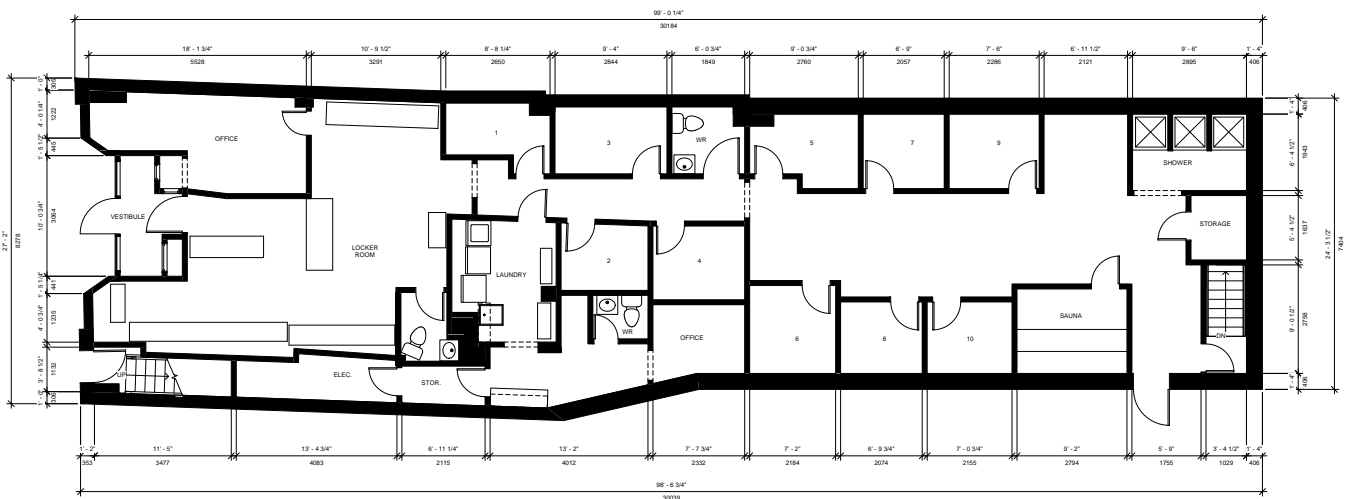
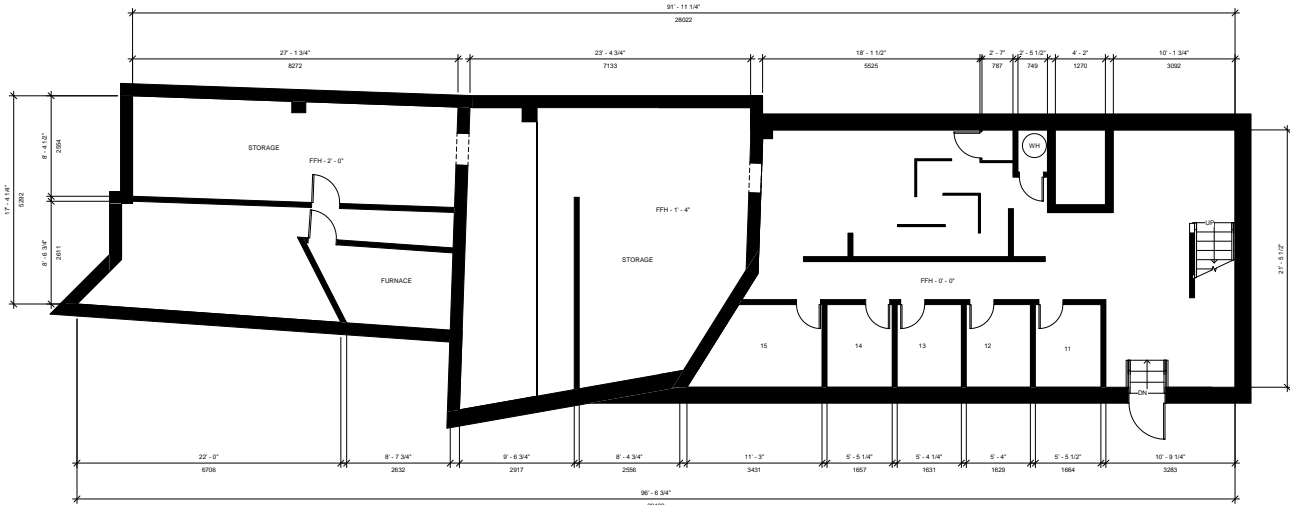
On the ground level, approximate ceiling heights range from 8'-10" in the original section of the building (with three-storeys) and 9'-4" in the single story addition at the back. The rear portion of the basement has ceiling heights of 7'-0", while the areas of reduced height are 5'-8" and 5'-0".

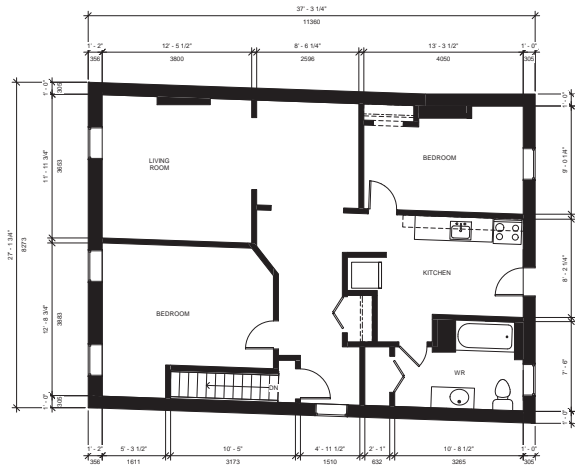
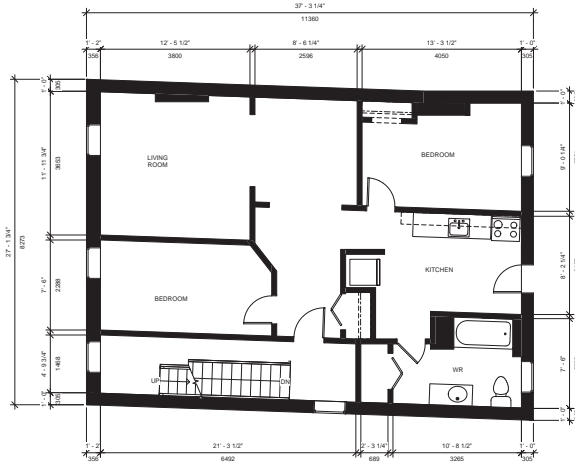
It is possible these heights could be increased but it would require further investigation above the ceiling plane to determine the structure and routing of services (HVAC, Electrical, etc.).

If structure and services are to be exposed the routing of these services and fire-protection of the structure should be considered when developing a construction budget.

The ceiling height in the Project Room at the current CFAT space is approximately 9'-9". In the existing audio suite the ceiling height ranges from 7'-1" to 8'-2".

AS-BUILT DRAWINGS





THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

For decades Gottingen Street has been the backbone of a vibrant and diverse neighbourhood. The abundance of affordable space has attracted artists, non-profits, and other creatives to the area. It has been home to many important spaces to the African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaw, and Queer communities.

The map on the following page attempts to visually capture the current and historical community assets that make up this neighbourhood, along with approximations of the development pressures impacting the area.

The district is diverse and growing. It is home to restaurants, other art spaces, and several historically marginalized communities. While increased growth can provide benefits to galleries and other businesses, it can also lead to the erosion of existing communities and the displacement of the people who currently live and work in the area.

The location of the case study building is significant as it would:

- Secure space in a rapidly changing neighbourhood that is intended to serve the existing communities.
- Maintain affordable space in an area that is increasingly expensive
- Be sustainable. The 'greenest' building is the one that already exists.



LEGEND

Community Assets ● Current ▨ Past

- Dixon Centre
- Halifax North Memorial Public Library
- Community YMCA
- Joseph Howe Elementary School
- Hope Blooms Garden & Greenhouse
- Alteregos Cafe
- New Horizons Baptist Church
- Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Centre
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (past)
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (future)
- Club NRG (closed)
- Vortex (closed)
- Mens & Molly's (closed)
- Seadogs Bathhouse (closed)

Arts Organizations & Performance Spaces ● Current ▨ Past

- Bus stop Theatre
- The Local/The Maquee
- Wormwoods Theatre (original)
- Wormwoods Theatre (permanently closed)
- Radstorm
- Wonder'neath Art Society/The Blue Building Gallery
- Blue Gallery
- St. Georges Round Church
- St. Partick's Catholic Church
- St. Pat's Alexandra School (closed)

Figure 3. Urban/neighbourhood context of North Central Halifax

PROPOSED SPACE USE

CFAT plans to renovate and occupy the ground and lower floors of the existing building. In addition, the rental apartments on the second and third floor can generate passive rental income in the near term. In the long term, these spaces could be renovated to allow for CFAT to expand or diversify should the need arise.

In addition to the information gathered during the stakeholder consultation, two main aspects of the existing building guide the proposed arrangement of spaces.

Public Frontage.

The building has highly visible public frontage on Gottingen Street and therefore the spaces are proposed to be generally arranged for public visitors from the street while private users (such as staff and members) and associated spaces are located towards the rear of the floor plate. Bathrooms and a multi-purpose room are located between these two groupings for shared use if required.

A generously sized, flexible media gallery is located off the main entrance to the building at Gottingen Street (see figure 4). A window gallery is included for the display of artist media to pedestrians (see figure 6).

Natural Light.

Due to the location of the exterior walls relative to the property lines, the existing building does not allow for new openings in the walls of the ground or basement levels. While not required for gallery or media production spaces, natural light is critical for social and office spaces.

The only viable way to provide natural light is through skylights in the roof of the single story addition at the rear. Therefore we have located the 'Living Room', Kitchenette, Staff Offices, Video Transfer Suite and the Lift in this rear portion of the building. These spaces can be accessed through the Gottingen Street entrance as well as the side entrance.

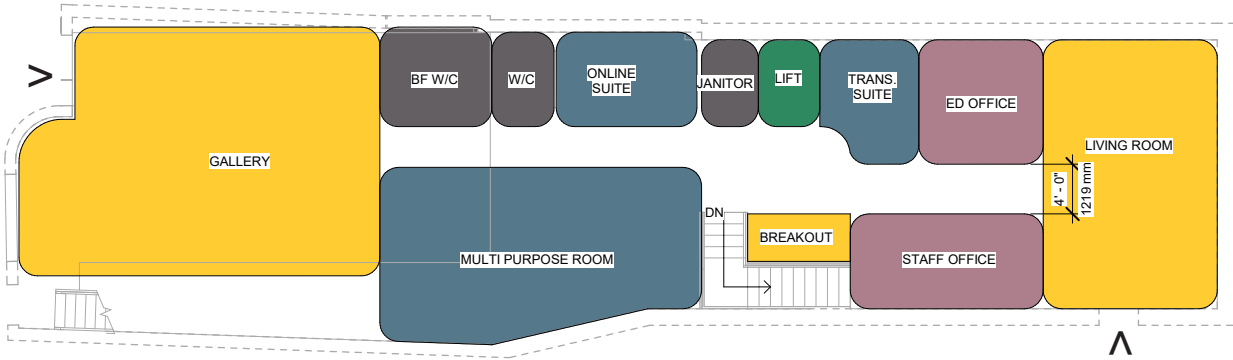


Figure 4. conceptual programming of case study building (ground floor)



Figure 5. conceptual programming of case study building (basement floor)

Lower Level.

This level has no opportunity for natural light and therefore is the ideal floor plate to house video and audio production spaces, a workshop, storage and other functional uses such as mechanical and electrical rooms. Access for users and equipment could be provided with a typical staircase as well as a mechanical lift.

Large areas of the case study building basement have low ceiling heights that make them challenging to use. The ceiling heights are approximately 5'-8" and 5'-0". Storage is possible, but it is difficult for an average person to stand up and move around the space. These heights do not meet code requirements for habitable space. It may be possible to excavate and underpin the foundation to allow for increased ceiling space but this is a costly endeavour.

PROGRAM COMPARISON

The current CFAT space is approximately 1,764 square feet. The case study building would allow for approximately 2,470 square feet for an increase of 776 square feet.

Furthermore, the upper levels represent approximately 1,500 square feet of additional space that can generate rental income, or be converted to other uses in the future.

The reduced height spaces in the lower level represent almost another 1,000 square feet, but as noted above, they come with several challenges.

Room	Approximate Room Dimensions:		
	Length (ft)	Width (ft)	Area (sqft)
Members Area & Lobby	16.50	19.50	321.75
Stairwell Door	7.83	6.83	53.48
Equipment Store Hallway	22.60	4.00	90.40
Executive Director's Office	9.83	11.17	109.80
Transfer Suite	8.30	7.50	62.25
Staff bullpen	18.30	12.00	219.60
Video Editing Suite	7.83	11.83	92.63
Equipment Storage	6.87	6.67	45.82
Bathroom	5.30	7.12	37.74
Multi-purpose room	26.75	15.30	409.28
Audio Suite	15.67	20.50	321.24
TOTAL			1764

Room	Approximate Room Dimensions:		
	Length (ft)	Width (ft)	Area (sqft)
Gallery/Presentation Space	30.00	20.00	542.50
Multi-purpose room	25.00	14.00	335.00
Barrier Free Washroom	9.00	8.00	72.00
Washroom	5.50	8.00	44.00
Online Suite	11.50	8.00	90.00
Janitor Closet	5.00	7.00	35.00
Lift	5.00	7.00	35.00
Transfer Suite	8.00	10.00	71.50
Executive Director's Office	10.00	10.00	100.00
Staff bullpen	7.50	15.50	116.25
The 'Living Room' (Members Area)	14.00	21.50	301.00
Circulation			317.00
Level 1 Subtotal			1742.25
Lift	5.00	7.00	35.00
Main Audio Suite	16.00	10.50	168.00
Workshop	10.00	21.50	215.00
Equipment Storage	7.50	7.00	52.50
Small Audio Suite	8.50	7.50	63.75
Misc. Storage	11.00	3.50	38.50
Circulation			225.50
Lower Level Subtotal			798.25
TOTAL USABLE SPACE			2540.50
Net space increase			776.52
Reduce Height Area (5'-8" Ceilings)			505.00
Reduce Height Area (5'-0" Ceilings)			485.00
Subtotal			990

RENDERINGS



Fig.6 conceptual rendering of street entrance and storefront gallery, with back-lit marquee.



PLACE  WORK



Figure 7. conceptual rendering of gallery space



PLACE & WORK

CONCLUSION

OPPORTUNITIES:

Apart from the obvious opportunities like financial security and sustainability, 2199 Gottingen Street is an ideal location for the CFAT organization. It is centrally located in the city of Halifax and has street frontage on to the vibrant, creative artery that is Gottingen Street. In addition, the building is directly adjacent to the Bus Stop Theatre, a multi-use performance venue, which allows for organizational collaboration, interaction and a further bolstering of this informal arts district.

CHALLENGES:

Working With Existing Buildings

Existing buildings carry the risk of unknown construction conditions. Before purchase CFAT should retain a qualified inspector to thoroughly review the building. If renovating, additional financial contingency should be considered to anticipate unknown existing conditions. Additionally, a qualified professional should be engaged to assess the building for toxic and hazardous materials.

Accessibility

One of CFAT's stated goals for this project is to provide barrier-free paths of travel to as many spaces as possible. This can be particularly challenging with existing buildings. The Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations provide methods for alternative compliance in some areas in recognition of this fact. However, CFAT may choose to go above-and-beyond the minimum code requirements.

We have proposed, at a minimum, a lift that provides easy access to the lower level and would allow people with limited mobility to access all of the CFAT spaces.

While providing a barrier free path of travel (an elevator or lift) to the upper levels is not required by code, CFAT has expressed interest in providing this. There are design, logistical, and cost implications that make this approach challenging and is not considered in this preliminary study. More information and exploration would be required to determine the feasibility of achieving this.

Loading Space

Equipment transportation in and out of this property will be a challenge. While the existing building does allow for two separate entrances (one front entrance and one side entrance), there are no dedicated parking spaces and Gottingen Street is a high-traffic street with several Metro Transit bus lines. The building will likely prove difficult to park in front of for the purpose of loading and unloading equipment.

SUMMARY:

The case study building would provide CFAT with access to 43% more programmable space and 1,500 square feet of leasable space to provide additional revenues.

While working with existing buildings can increase risk, cost, and complexity, at this stage the challenges posed by the existing building are not greater than what would be considered normal. However, more detailed study and exploration is required.

As CFAT progresses plans and fundraising efforts to purchase the new building we would recommend engaging the services of a cost consultant. Construction prices remain unpredictable following the COVID-19 pandemic, and working with existing buildings comes with additional risk.

A cost consultant would assist in preparing a budget with appropriate contingencies. We have structured the information in this report to assist with the preparation of a “Class D” estimate. A Class D estimate is based on a statement of requirements, an outline of potential solutions, and a space program. It is the first class of estimates completed in a construction project, before any design work has been completed, and is considered to have a level of accuracy such that no more than a 20% design contingency is required.

PRELIMINARY CODE REVIEW

Item	National Building Code Data Matrix Parts 3 & 9						NBC Reference				
1	Project Description:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change of use <input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Addition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part 3					
2	Major Occupancy(s)	Art Gallery (Group A2) / Residential (Group C)				3.1.2.1.(1)					
3	Building Area (m ²)	Existing: 232 m2 (2497 sf) New: _____ Total _____				1.4.1.2					
4	Gross Area (m ²)	Existing: 628 m2 (6763 sf) New: _____ Total _____									
5	Number of Storeys	Above grade: <u>3</u> Below grade: <u>1</u>				3.2.1.1 & 3.2.2.15					
6	Height of Building (m)	approx. 31'-0" (9.45m)				1.4.1.2					
7	Number of Streets/Access Routes	1				3.2.2.10 & 3.2.5.5					
8	Building Classification	3.2.2.51 - Group C up to 6 stories, sprinklered				3.2.2.20-.90					
9	Sprinkler System Proposed *assumption is that existing building sprinklered throughout.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entire building <input type="checkbox"/> Basement only <input type="checkbox"/> In lieu of roof rating <input type="checkbox"/> Not required				3.2.2.20-.90 3.2.1.5 3.2.2.17					
10	Standpipe Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No				3.2.5.8					
11	Fire Alarm Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				3.2.4					
12	Water Service/Supply Is Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				3.2.5.7					
13	High Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No				3.2.6					
14	Permitted Construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Combustible <input type="checkbox"/> Non-combustible <input type="checkbox"/> Both				3.2.2.20-.90					
	Actual Construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Combustible <input type="checkbox"/> Non-combustible <input type="checkbox"/> Both									
15	Mezzanine(s) Area (m ²)	N/A				3.2.1.1.(3)-(7)					
16	Occupant load based on	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> m ² /person <input type="checkbox"/> Design of building Basement: Occupancy _____ Load _____ persons 1st Floor Occupancy _____ Load _____ persons 2nd Floor Occupancy <u>4</u> Load _____ persons 3rd Floor Occupancy <u>4</u> Load _____ persons				3.1.17 Occupant Load of Basement and First Floor TBD per future design/layout.					
17	Barrier-free Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Explain)				3.8					
18	Hazardous Substances	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No *TBD				3.3.1.2.(1) & 3.3.1.20					
19	Required Fire Resistance Rating (FRR)	Horizontal Assemblies FRR (Hours)		Listed Design No. or Description (SG-2)		3.2.2.20-.90 & 3.2.1.4 note: 2hr FRR required for floor between first storey and second storey.					
		Floors	<u>1</u> Hours								
		Roof	<u>1</u> Hours								
		Mezzanine	<u>1</u> Hours								
		FRR of Supporting Members									
		Floors	<u>1</u> Hours								
		Roof	<u>1</u> Hours								
		Mezzanine	<u>1</u> Hours								
20	Spatial Separation – Construction of Exterior Walls						3.2.3				
	Wall	Area of EBF (m ²)	L.D. (m)	L/H or H/L	Permitted Max. % of Openings	Proposed % of Openings	FRR (Hours)	Listed Design or Description	Comb. Const	Comb. Constr. Nonc. Cladding	Non-comb. Constr.
	North										
	South										
	East										
	West										
For Additional Walls, add additional rows											
21	Other										

Figure 8. Preliminary Code Review

GENERAL:

This case study proposes an alteration of the existing building at 2199 Gottingen Street. The basement and ground level will require interior renovations with minor renovations to the Gottingen street facade. The occupancy class of the building will be changed to mixed use Group A2 (Art Gallery) and Group C (Residential) as per Part 3 of the National Building Code of Canada.

EXITING AND FIRE PROTECTION:

The existing building has 2 exits on the ground level for egress of the basement and first storey. 1 exit to street is for apartment egress on the second and third level. These exits will be replaced or retained. Fire resistance ratings between occupancies is required to be 1 hour with a 2 hour fire resistance rating required at the Floor between Group A2 and Group C (the Floor between the first and second level). Supporting structures shall have a fire resistant rating not less than that of the supported assembly. This analysis presumes that the entire existing building is sprinklered.

ENERGY CODE:

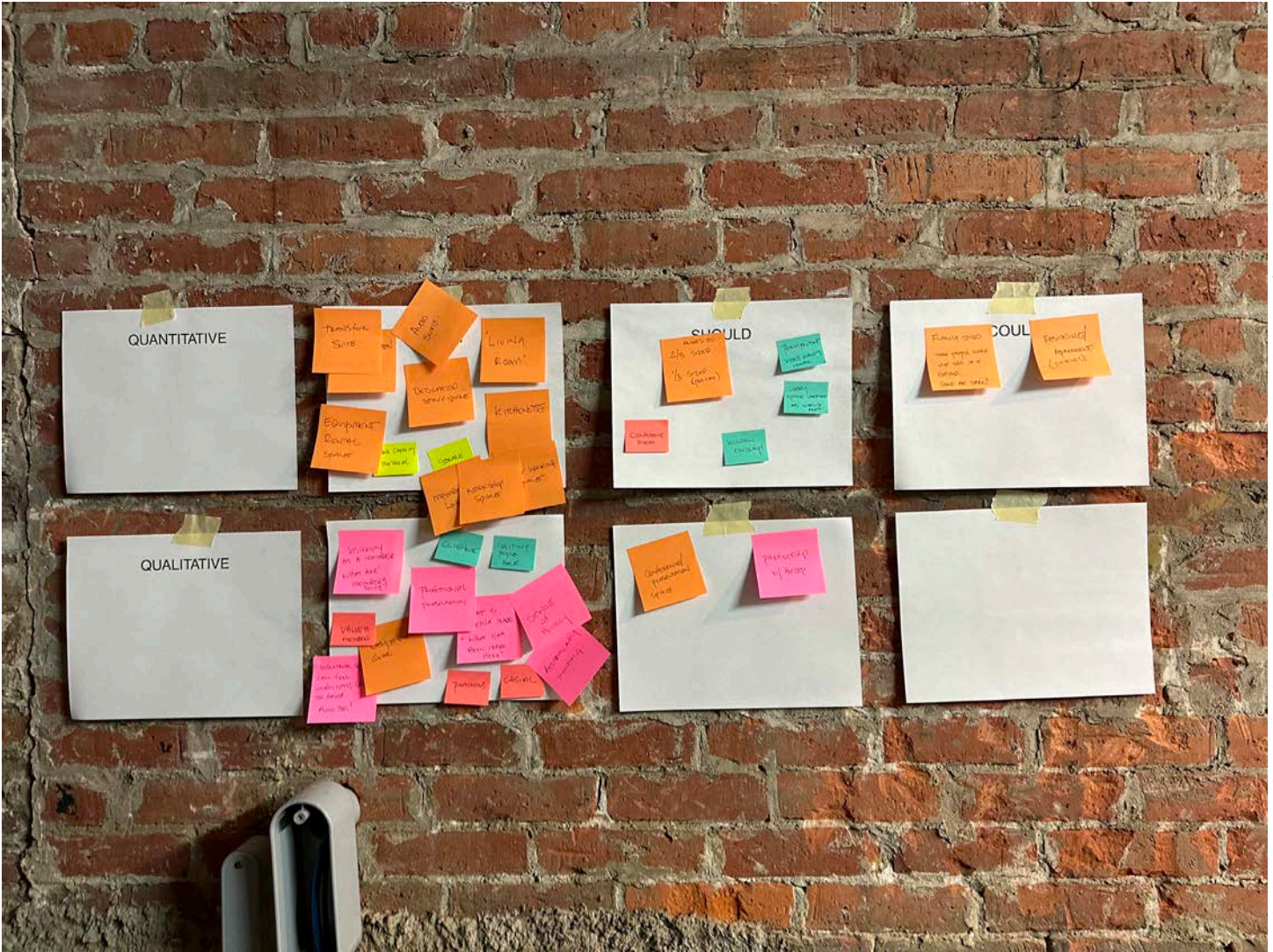
The building renovation will be required to adhere to most currently adopted version of the National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings.

ACCESSIBILITY:

For this change of use, accessibility codes will need to be adhered to. However, due to the changing nature and requirements of accessibility codes, Place of Work recommends that CFAT engage an accessibility consultant to ensure that all requirements are met.

APPENDICES

PARTICIPANT GROUP QUANTITATIVE / QUALITATIVE NEEDS



PARTICIPANT GROUP QUANTITATIVE / QUALITATIVE NEEDS

QUANTITATIVE

MUST HAVE:

- Living room.
- Kitchenette.
- Transfer suite.
- Audio suite.
- Dedicated staff space.
- Equipment rental space.
- Workshop spaces.
- Member lockers.
- Storage.
- ?
- ?
- ?

SHOULD HAVE:

- Window display.
- Permanent video gallery (simple).
- Lobby space / vestibule / waiting room.
- Audio suite (2/3) and podcast suite (1/3).
- Conference room.

COULD HAVE:

- Filming studio (more people would use this if it existed, could be dark).
- Residence/apartment (phased?).

QUALITATIVE

MUST HAVE:

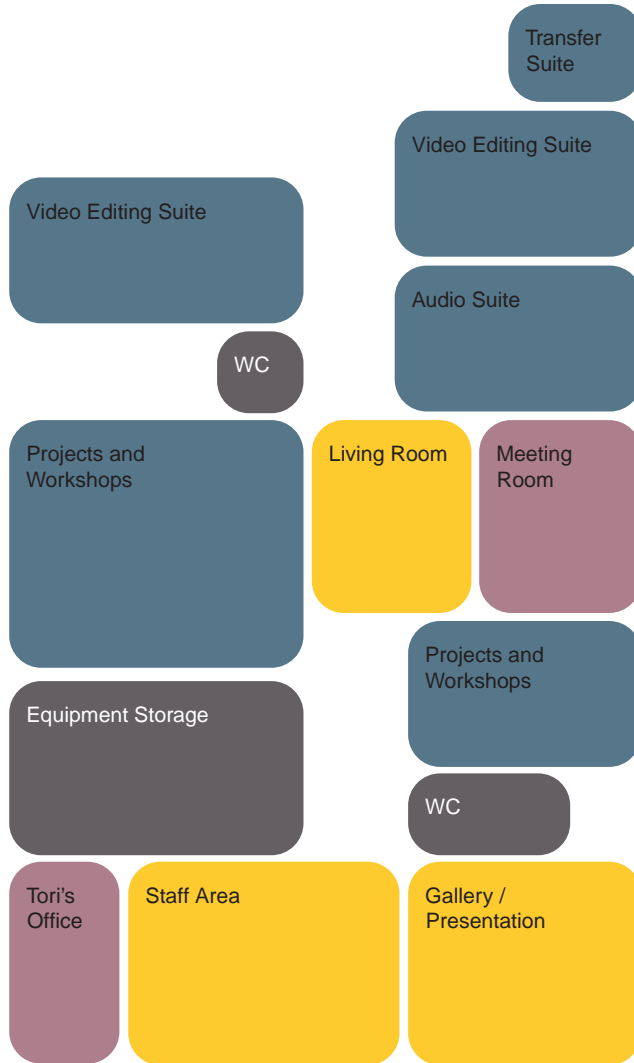
- Visibility as a member, what are members doing?
- Value to members.
- Avoid industrial feel (unfinished/harsh).
- Easy to use gear.
- Professional presentation.
- Clubhouse.
- Casual.
- Inviting people in and to return.
- Display what is being made and what has been made here.
- Sense of history.

SHOULD HAVE:

- Conferencing / presentation space.
- Partnership with Bustop Theatre.

COULD HAVE:

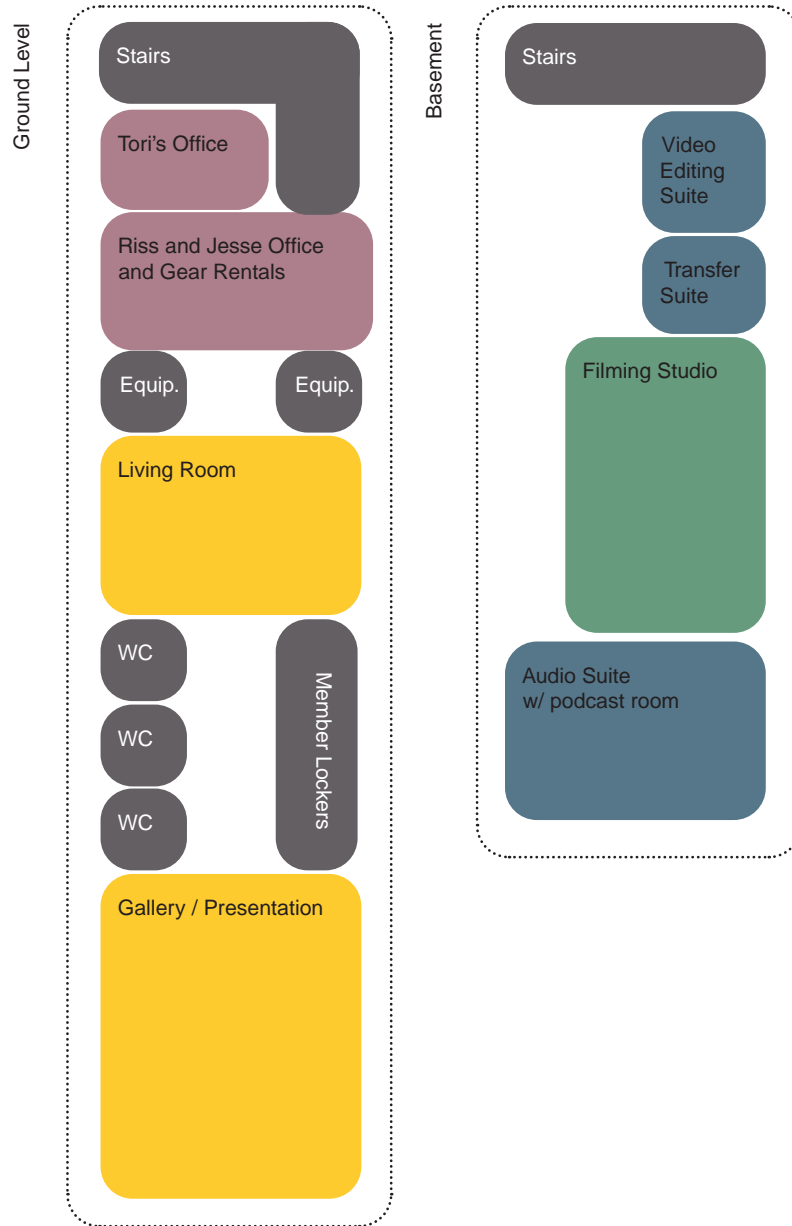
PARTICIPANT PROGRAMMING LAYOUT



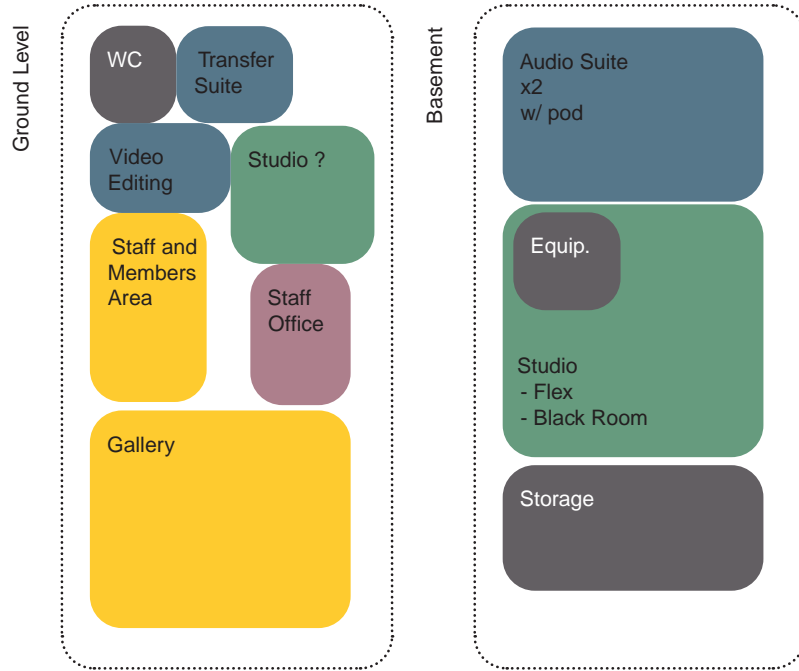
PARTICIPANT PROGRAMMING LAYOUT



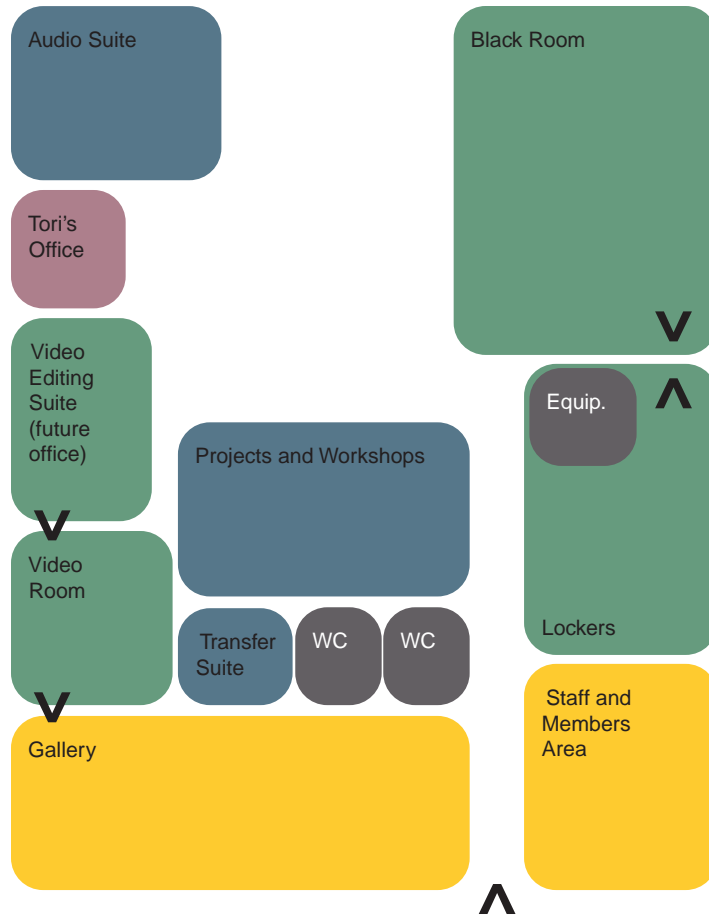
PARTICIPANT PROGRAMMING LAYOUT



PARTICIPANT PROGRAMMING LAYOUT



PARTICIPANT PROGRAMMING LAYOUT







PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

KEY PRINCIPLE	HOW CAN THE NEW SPACE DIRECTLY SUPPORT THIS VISION, PRINCIPLE, OR GOAL?
INCLUSIVE/DIVERSE	<p><i>conversational meeting spaces.</i> <i>Areas that are designed with an open and inviting sitting space.</i></p>
ARTIST-RUN	<p><i>Reflective of the desires / needs of our membership. Accessible. A place where people can have little agenda. Sense of agency.</i> <i>library of "tools". Open studio?</i> <i>↳ space is the biggest hurdle.</i></p>
EXPRESS IDEAS AND STORIES THAT ARE UNDER REPRESENTED IN MAINSTREAM CULTURE	<p><i>Has the ability to store material needed for us to express these ideas.</i> <i>The space should encourage the preservation of Art.</i> <i>Presentation space.</i></p>
MENTORSHIP	<p><i>The building and lobby should have casual meeting spaces.</i></p>
PRESENTATION	<p><i>Better storage for us to keep presentation gear handy.</i> <i>A hybrid space which we can toggle lighting.</i> <i>Good and electrical grid that makes sense with core.</i></p>
RESEARCH/EXPERIMENTATION	<p><i>Better studio work spaces. More storage for gear to "misuse".</i></p>

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

KEY PRINCIPLE	HOW CAN THE NEW SPACE DIRECTLY SUPPORT THIS VISION, PRINCIPLE, OR GOAL?
INCLUSIVE/DIVERSE	physically accessible, clean, welcoming and warm, high technical abilities without being visually intimidating club house feeling
ARTIST-RUN	artist work spaces. Flexible to the changing artistic landscape. Surprising.
EXPRESS IDEAS AND STORIES THAT ARE UNDER REPRESENTED IN MAINSTREAM CULTURE	Presentation space to give opportunities opportunity to under represented artists
MENTORSHIP	cozy meeting spaces where casual exchanges of ideas can happen. Acknowledgement of CFART's history.
PRESENTATION	gallery space. Small screening/artist talk space. More welcoming to public. "demistifying media art"
RESEARCH/EXPERIMENTATION	user friendly / easy to navigate. membership storage (lockers.)

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

KEY PRINCIPLE	HOW CAN THE NEW SPACE DIRECTLY SUPPORT THIS VISION, PRINCIPLE, OR GOAL?
INCLUSIVE/DIVERSE	<p>-POLICIES OF THE SPACE (EXISTING) BUT MORE SO PROGRAMMING DEMOGRAPHICS, ALSO MAYBE LARGER SPACE COULD GIVE US FREEDOM TO PARTNER WITH SMALLER ORGANIZATIONS AND IN A WAY THAT TRULY BENEFITS THEM? COULD ONE MONTH A YEAR IN THE GALLERY BE DESIGNATED FOR EMERGING ARTS? OR SIMILAR?</p> 
ARTIST-RUN	<p>-ARTISTS CAN EASILY BE INVOLVED IN USING THE SPACE / FEEL WELCOME + OWNERSHIP OF THE SPACE. THIS COULD BE STUDIO USAGE / OPEN HOURS TO WORK ON PROJECTS - ESSENTIALLY A SECTION OF THE SPACE THAT CAN FACILITATE A LEVEL OF "CASUAL" USE.</p> 
EXPRESS IDEAS AND STORIES THAT ARE UNDER REPRESENTED IN MAINSTREAM CULTURE	<p>AS MENTIONED EARLIER: COULD A LARGER SPACE PROVIDE US WITH MORE FLEXIBILITY / FREEDOM TO BE GENEROUS WITH ORGS THAT NEED IT? IS ESPECIALLY A TRUE PRESENTATION SPACE / GALLERY WOULD GIVE US THE FREEDOM TO REPRESENT A MUCH LARGER ARRAY OF PEOPLE STORIES</p>
MENTORSHIP	
PRESENTATION	<p>I THINK ITS A GIVE IN THAT HAVING MORE SPACE AND A DESIGNATED EXHIBIT SPACE WOULD MASSIVELY INCREASE OUR PRESENTATION CAPACITY</p>
RESEARCH/EXPERIMENTATION	<p>I THINK HAVING MORE SPACE ALLOWS FOR MORE FLEXIBILITY. I.E. WE CAN HAVE EXHIBITS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HAVE WORKSHOPS. AS WELL WE CAN FLEXIBLE / SMALLER ROOMS + AREAS THAT COULD ALLOW FOR QUICK TURNAROUND FOR STUDIO / FILMING / INSTANT TESTS / etc. various ideas people may have.</p> 

VISIBILITY

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

KEY PRINCIPLE	HOW CAN THE NEW SPACE DIRECTLY SUPPORT THIS VISION, PRINCIPLE, OR GOAL?
INCLUSIVE/DIVERSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People, spaces, & equipment are visible but not exposed • Functions and media feel distinct/familiar
ARTIST-RUN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance the feeling/appearance of it being a workspace & a presentation space. See people working (or evidence) but be presentable & professional
EXPRESS IDEAS AND STORIES THAT ARE UNDER REPRESENTED IN MAINSTREAM CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have permanent gallery and presentation space(s) that are modular to allow for changing (number of) needs
MENTORSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it clear what where staff are and where people can interact w/ them. "Give staff a "untouchable" space so they know they can always work with/for people there"
PRESENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not just think about a single dedicated presentation space but also think about how some other work spaces might have a secondary function for presentation
RESEARCH/EXPERIMENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have workspaces viewable → literally allow for watching others work • Have things turned on and ready • Provide some collaboration tools (whiteboards)

• voluntary public monitor
 • challenge members to create installation that shows off equipment

• staff board, members, work as facilitators

• Visit kids museum and see what they do to give that feel

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

KEY PRINCIPLE	HOW CAN THE NEW SPACE DIRECTLY SUPPORT THIS VISION, PRINCIPLE, OR GOAL?
INCLUSIVE/DIVERSE	
ARTIST-RUN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BLACK BOX - movable walls / flats 12' - HAVE EQUIPMENT - AVAILABLE VIA KEY. -
EXPRESS IDEAS AND STORIES THAT ARE UNDER REPRESENTED IN MAINSTREAM CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PRESENTATION SPACE. - GALLERY FIRST THING YOU SEE.
MENTORSHIP	
PRESENTATION	
RESEARCH/EXPERIMENTATION	