

From: "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"

"Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>

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"Henselmann, Branislav" <Branislav.Henselmann@vancouver.ca>

"Dobrovolny, Jerry" <jerry.dobrovolny@vancouver.ca>

Date: 5/8/2019 6:00:22 PM

Subject: Memo - Arts Materials Reuse Hub

Attachments: Memo to Mayor and Council - Arts Materials Reuse Hub RTS 12737.pdf

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

The attached memo from Sandra Singh and Gil Kelley is provided in response to a motion passed last year directing staff to explore the viability of creating an arts' material reuse hub.

In summary:

- ☐ Staff researched arts materials reuse programs operated in other major cities, including the Materials for the Arts facility operated by the City of New York;
- ☐ Staff also spoke with and received written feedback from a number of local arts organizations, particularly theatre and event production groups. Local arts groups expressed interest in sharing and reusing materials, and several do so currently on an ad hoc basis;
- ☐ The biggest challenge with creating a standalone "materials for the arts" facility in Vancouver is the significant level of resources (physical space and staff) that would likely be required, and the relatively small amount of materials diverted;
- ☐ Staff will explore the opportunity of including art materials as part of a deconstruction hub, which Council approved seed funding for in 2018, or to support through a Greenest City Grant should an organization be interested in pursuing this.

Please contact Sandra Singh if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Best,
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

MEMORANDUM

May 8, 2019

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Jerry Dobrovolny, General Manager, Engineering Services
Branislav Henselmann, Managing Director, Cultural Services

FROM: Gil Kelley
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability

Sandra Singh
General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Arts' Materials Reuse Hub - RTS 12737

PURPOSE

The following memorandum is in response to Council's motion on July 24th, 2018, which directed staff to explore the creation of a "materials for the arts" reuse hub program. The motion specifically cited the Materials for the Arts facility operated by New York City and supported by a not-for-profit partner as a potential model. Staff have since interviewed staff at New York City's Materials for the Arts facility and spoken with several local arts organization to gauge the level of interest in an arts' materials reuse program in Vancouver.

BACKGROUND

New York City's Materials for the Arts facility has been operating since 1978 and diverts an estimated 800 tonnes of materials from the landfill every year. The materials are donated primarily by businesses and individuals and are used mostly by arts' groups and schools. The materials include textiles, paints, theatrical lighting and set materials, and a variety of other supplies. The scale of the Materials for the Arts operation is significant: the facility is located in a 35,000 square-foot building that is owned by the City of New York and employs 15 City staff, along with a number of volunteers. Operated by the Department of Cultural Affairs, the annual budget for the Materials for the Arts program is more than \$2M US. The City of New York

also works with a local not-for-profit, Friends of Materials for the Arts, which helps deliver education, fundraising, and community outreach, including professional development for teachers.

Staff also spoke with and received written feedback from a number of local arts organizations, particularly theatre and event production groups.

DISCUSSION

In general, local arts organizations appear to be interested in reusing and sharing materials, particularly those used for stage and set design (plywood, lumber, etc.) and for costumes. The local arts groups' interest in reuse was twofold: firstly, sharing and reusing materials would be a way to be more environmentally sustainable, and secondly, bringing materials to a reuse hub and accessing used materials could reduce their costs. Reuse and sharing currently happens amongst some arts groups on an ad hoc basis. The arts groups we spoke with indicated that a physical space for a reuse hub would be ideal, but that a digital platform might also serve the purpose if it was adequately maintained and updated.


The biggest challenge with creating a "materials for the arts" facility in Vancouver is the significant level of resources that would likely be required and the uncertainty of demand for the materials (i.e., which materials would be used, and how much). Whereas New York's Materials for Arts facility serves more than 2200 art, theatre, and education groups (including more than 150 theatre groups alone), the local arts ecosystem in Vancouver is much smaller and thus may not be able to support a physical facility. Even with a scaled-down version of the NYC model, it would likely still cost several hundred thousand dollars a year to cover a lease and staffing costs (likewise, a digital platform would incur start-up costs and require ongoing staff time for maintenance). From a waste diversion perspective, the amount of materials diverted would be relatively modest.

Given that there is some local interest, however, staff can explore the opportunity of including art materials in the deconstruction hub, which Council approved seed funding for in 2018, once the hub is successfully launched and operating. This might provide a more cost-effective approach, rather than creating a standalone arts' material reuse hub. There might also be an opportunity to support an arts' materials reuse program through the Greenest City Grant program or a cultural services grant, if a local non-profit were interested in leading this initiative.

If you have any further questions on this, please do not hesitate to contact Doug Smith, Director of Sustainability at 604-829-4308.



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