



Proposal to City of Markham for Sustainable Annual Operating Funds

1. Background

The Markham Arts Council (MAC) was founded in 2004 to address the need for greater support for local artists and arts organizations. For nearly two decades, MAC has been dedicated to fostering connections within the arts community, nurturing diverse artistic expression, and enhancing public engagement with cultural events. Through programs like Art Therapy for Seniors, Markham Talent Open Casting Call and Showcase and Music on the Street, MAC has provided valuable platforms for artists and cultural contributors, strengthening Markham's cultural fabric.

Despite these successes, challenges remain. Recent surveys and community consultations have shown that artists often struggle with limited infrastructure, insufficient funding, and lack of awareness of existing opportunities, hindering their potential. The Draft Action Plan for Economic Development and Culture (2023-2027) emphasizes the importance of addressing these challenges through increased support for the arts sector, improved communication, and the development of arts infrastructure.

2. Outline and Scope

This proposal seeks an annual operating budget of \$150,000 (2FTE's) over four years, with the potential for renewal based on performance and future needs. The funding will enable MAC to implement initiatives that align with the City of Markham's objectives as outlined in the Draft Action Plan, particularly those related to arts and culture development:

- **Objective 1: Build Community and Joint Mission in the Arts Sector:** MAC will create artist-focused networks, facilitate peer mentorships, and strengthen collaboration among arts organizations.
- **Objective 2: Grow Arts and Culture Awareness:** By developing comprehensive marketing strategies, MAC will raise public awareness of cultural activities, ensuring that arts and culture are recognized as city priorities.
- **Objective 3: Increase Cultural Density:** MAC will advocate for new and enhanced infrastructure, providing much-needed space for rehearsals, exhibitions, and performances.

3. Why MAC?



MAC's extensive experience and established relationships within the arts community make it uniquely positioned to lead these initiatives. Acting as an independent, arm's-length organization, MAC can administer funding and deliver programs efficiently, without the perception of political influence. Highlights of MAC's role include:

- **Sector Expertise and Responsiveness:** MAC has a deep understanding of the local arts ecosystem, which enables it to tailor programs and support in a way that aligns with community needs.
- **Proven Track Record:** From facilitating events to providing workshops and mentorships, MAC has consistently met its mission of promoting and sustaining the arts.
- **Inclusive Programming:** MAC's initiatives cater to all sectors of the community, emphasizing opportunities for underrepresented groups and fostering diversity.

4. The Proposal

MAC seeks a four-year funding agreement with an annual budget of \$150,000 to support the following key initiatives:

- **Celebrate Markham Fund Administration:** Implement an unbiased, juried process for fund disbursement to ensure fair and equitable support for local arts initiatives.
- **Infrastructure Advocacy and Development:** Collaborate with the city and external partners to secure additional funding and develop cultural spaces that address the needs of local artists, aligning with the Draft Action Plan's call for infrastructure investments.
- **Artist Support and Development:** Expand educational workshops, mentorship programs, and networking events to build artists' skills and career sustainability.
- **Flagship Events and Festivals:** Organize unique cultural events, such as the Markham International Film Festival, which supports tourism and economic development by positioning Markham as a cultural destination.

5. The Rationale

The proposed funding directly supports the objectives outlined in the Draft Action Plan for Economic Development and Culture:

- **Community Building:** By nurturing an inclusive and collaborative arts environment, MAC will help achieve the goal of building a unified cultural community that reflects Markham's diversity.



- **Enhanced Awareness and Engagement:** The development of strategic marketing campaigns and public programming will promote arts and culture as city priorities and engage a wider audience.
- **Economic and Tourism Impact:** Cultural events foster local economic growth by attracting visitors and stimulating spending in Markham. Events like the Markham Talent Open Casting Call and Showcase, Gold Rush and eSports Festival will serve as key drivers for cultural tourism.
- **Streamlined Resource Allocation:** Partnering with MAC allows the City of Markham to optimize its resources, as the Council can independently manage specific functions related to arts and culture.

Investing in MAC ensures the sustainability and growth of Markham's cultural sector, aligning with the city's long-term objectives for a vibrant and economically thriving community. This strategic partnership will empower MAC to bolster its programming, cultivate partnerships, and drive cultural development that benefits all residents.

Markham Arts Council ❖ Where Arts and Culture Live