

## MEMORANDUM

October 10, 2017

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Stephen Chait, Director  
Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship

SUBJECT: Follow-Up Information Regarding Flato Markham Theatre Strategic Plan

### **Purpose**

At the September 25/17 meeting of Development Services Committee (DSC), the Committee discussed the potential for attracting more audiences/shows/rentals to performance facilities (stages and theatres) in Markham, the need for a new or additional theatre venue(s), and the feasibility of adding new theatre infrastructure (larger capacity, fly-tower for sets, etc.). The purpose of this memo is to clarify these matters.

### **Discussion**

The highest priority projects within the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan of the Flato Markham Theatre include the need to explore opportunities for adding theatre venue capacity and availability, growing theatre audience attendance, and increasing facility(ies) competitiveness. The Strategic Plan calls for a feasibility study of a new performing arts facility, to replace or possibly augment the existing Flato Markham Theatre (now 30 years old and operating at effective capacity).

A 2018 capital budget request (\$152,600) has been submitted by staff to commission a study to evaluate the need and demand for new and additional performing arts venue(s). Since the opening of the Markham Theatre in 1985, there has not been any new purpose-built performing arts venues constructed in Markham. With 340 days booked annually, over 350 events and 125,000 people attending and participating, the Flato Markham Theatre is operating at full capacity and is facing increased competition as performers and renters seek larger and more modern facilities (not currently available in Markham).

Staff will prepare a Terms of Reference that addresses the following questions:

- What is the current and forecast demand for performing arts space in Markham?
- What are the categories of user demand (e.g., amateur theatre, touring acts, event planners, educational institutions, meetings and conferences, etc.), what kind of space do they require and when, and how much are they willing to pay?
- What type and size of space is in demand, and with what type of infrastructure and amenities?

- Will York University, Seneca College and the district school boards have a need for performing arts spaces, and are they willing to collaborate in their development or operation?
- Are there private sector plans for building new performing arts or events spaces in Markham, and will the private sector be willing to collaborate in their development or operation?
- What is the existing inventory (supply) of performing arts spaces in and around Markham and will this change in the near future?
- Can existing performing arts venues in Markham be expanded or renovated to meet the anticipated demand?
- What are the funding models (including public-private partnerships) for developing new and/or expanded performing arts spaces?
- What are the preferred locations for new performing arts venues?

This Terms of Reference will be presented to DSC in early 2018 for discussion and approval prior to seeking a qualified consulting firm to conduct the study.