

Cultural Services

2023 REPORT CARD

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Cultural
Newsletter

HIGHLIGHTS

St. Albert celebrates its heritage, promotes the arts and provides residents and visitors with opportunities for cultural enrichment. In 2023, Community Services' Cultural Services branch programming supported community well-being and contributed to fostering a vibrant downtown.

- ✓ In 2023, the community's hourly utilization of the Arden Theatre increased by 23% compared to 2022. The theatre hosted 309 events in 2023, including an outdoor Plaza Series, and attendance at these events totaled 74,648.

- ✓ The Children's Festival extended its hours into the evenings on Friday and Saturday in Lions Park to accommodate the expansive Architects of Air's luminarium, Daedalum – an interactive art installation - and broaden reach to beyond the traditional Festival demographic. Ticket sales surged by 78% compared to 2022, driven by schools returning in full force for weekday programming and attendees of all ages enjoying the luminarium.

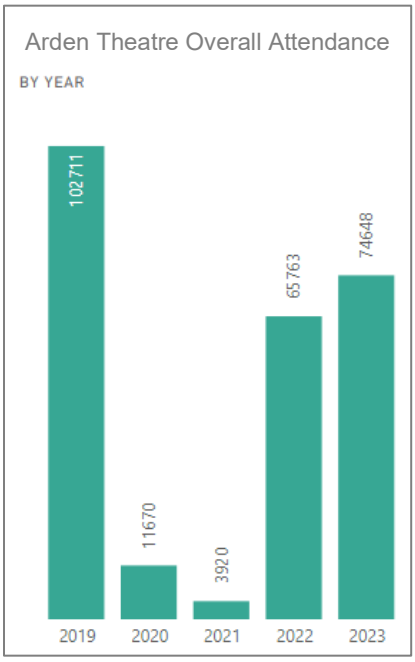
- ✓ Performing Arts class registrations increased by 15% in 2023, marking the return to full programming for St. Albert Children's Theatre. They presented seven performances of Seussical Jr. at the Arden during the spring Children's Festival and 11 performances of Elf the Musical in winter. All performances, both in spring and winter, were sold out.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report card highlights the accomplishments of dedicated employees, community partners and volunteers that bring passion and creativity to the arts and culture community. These achievements contribute to positive social and economic impact that benefits our community and residents.

CULTURAL RICHNESS AND PROGRAMMING

St. Albert celebrates its heritage, promotes the arts and provides residents and visitors with opportunities for cultural enrichment through its cultural programming.



STATUS: INCREASED PARTICIPATION

PROGRESS UPDATE

A vibrant arts community, embraced by all residents, inspires inclusion, innovation and creativity. Participation in the arts contributes to quality of life and benefits our community.

The Arden Theatre Presenters Series

- In 2023, the City's Presenter Series sold a total of 7,145 tickets.
- The Presenter Series included multiple SOLD OUT performances.
- St. Albert artists shine: Aaron Goodvin/Hailey Benedict drew nearly 400 people (both went to Paul Kane!).
- A Dinosaur Tale drew a large crowd of over 350 attendees for our Children/Family event.
- City Arts Space hosted several up-close and intimate concerts.
- The Arden Theatre Plaza Series continues to contribute to the vibrant atmosphere of downtown during the summer.

International Children's Festival of the Arts

The 42nd Children's Festival returned June 1-4, 2023. Feature performances, workshops and free site activities were available and ensured there was something for everyone who attended, with over 18,000 tickets sold.

Performing Arts Classes & St. Albert Children's Theatre

- Sold out performances (7) of *Seussical Jr.* at the Children's Festival and (11) of *Elf* in November
- SACT cast members performed for nearly 9,000 people in 2023.
- Productions and classes generated over $207,000 in revenue.
- 435 students and cast members were involved in 2023 classes and productions.
- Classes and programming were tailored to engage and enrich our community including a Technical Theatre Production program and supporting Block Party Karaoke.



Amplify 10th Anniversary Album Cover

Amplify

This year, Amplify, St. Albert's youth arts development program, engaged over 125 young artists in diverse creative activities spanning poetry, art, music and photography. Celebrating its 10th Anniversary, Amplify launched its inaugural album! Artists representing each year of Amplify were selected and embarked on a studio journey to record standout original tracks from the past decade. This initiative not only preserved cherished Amplify moments, but also empowered young artists in St. Albert by providing them with a professional recording experience, elevating their work to a new height.

Arts Exchange

In 2023 we hosted two sold-out arts exchanges (Elevating Women in the Arts and Grants 101). Arts Exchange is a program designed to support and connect our artistic community through networking and information sharing aimed at building capacity.

Service Delivery Highlights

309 **Arden Theatre** Events — **18%** Increase over 2022

9 **Outdoor Plaza Series** Performances

74,648 **Arden Theatre** Patrons — **14%** Increase over 2022

18,248 **Children's Festival** Tickets Sold — **78%** Increase over 2022

22 **St. Albert Children's Theatre** Performances

8,657 **St. Albert Children's Theatre** Tickets Sold — **306%** Increase over 2022

PARTNERSHIPS

Seek out and leverage cultural service delivery through its many partnerships, collaboration agreements, facility use agreements and cultural committees.

STATUS: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIVES PROMOTE DIVERSE CULTURAL COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS

PROGRESS UPDATE

Partnerships, collaborations, and community committees have encouraged residents to discover, experience and celebrate local artists. The Arts Development Advisory Committee (ADAC) continued to work to support the development of the arts and artists in our community, and the St. Albert Cultivates the Arts Society hosted St. Albert Culture Days.

Lauren Seal expanded the role of Poet Laureate, attending over 17 events over her two-year tenure with the City including, the State of the City, STARfest, the Suicide Awareness Vigil, St. Albert's Mental Health Walk, Amplify Poetry, Canada Day and more.

This was honestly a life-changing opportunity for me. I believe the role helped me get my foot in the door of the publishing industry and see my lifelong dream of at least one book getting published.

– Lauren Seal, St. Albert's 3rd Poet Laureate

List of active partnerships:

- St. Albert Public Library
- Arts & Heritage Foundation
- St. Albert Place Visual Arts Council
- St. Albert Cultivates the Arts Society
- 3 Friends Organizations- Arden Theatre, Children's Festival, and St. Albert Children's Theatre
- Arts Development Advisory Committee

ESTABLISH SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Community Services relies on funding from other levels of government, corporate partners and private donors to sustain many of our current Cultural programming and service levels.

STATUS: FUNDING SOURCES STABILIZE

PROGRESS UPDATE

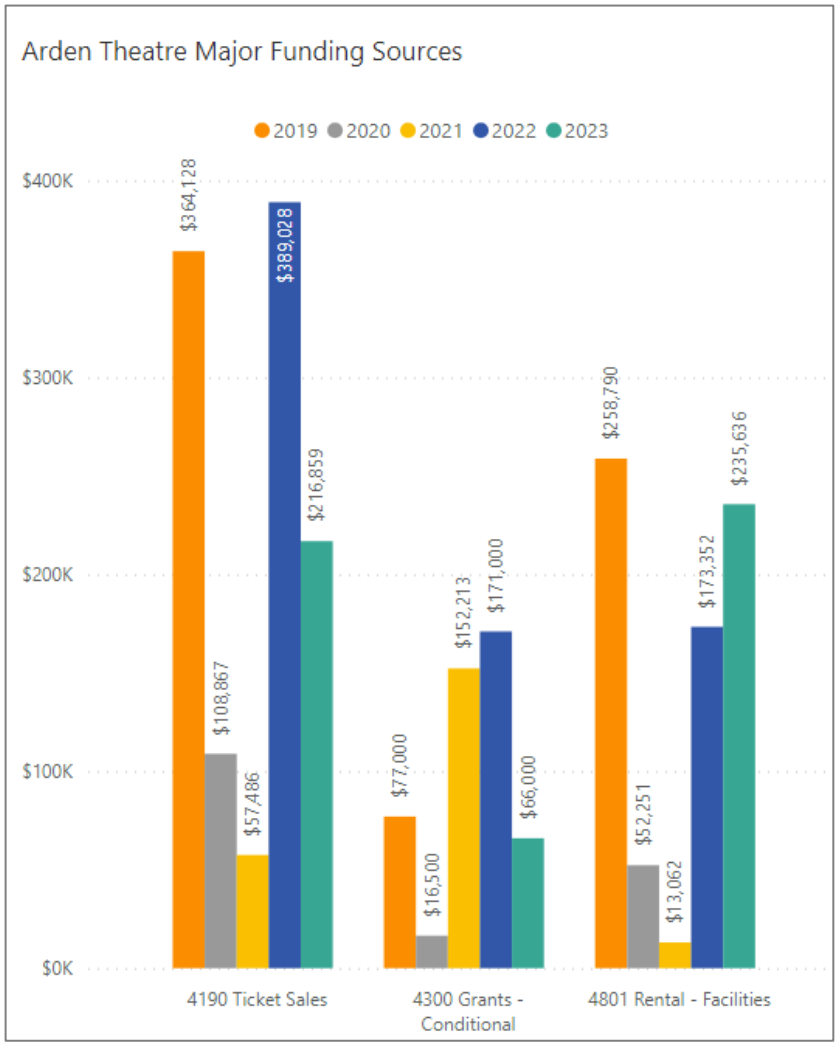
Sustainable funding is a vital component of ensuring ongoing cultural amenities, programming and assets. In addition to working closely with our Friends organizations to seek funding, the Arden Theatre received notice of two successful grant applications that received from provincial and federal sources.

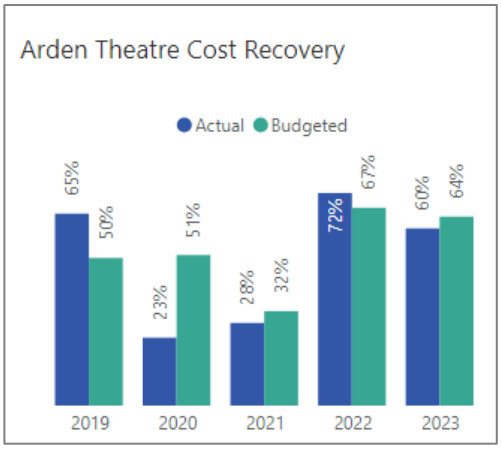
Arden Cost Recovery

Despite lower than expected ticket sales and reduced grant funding, the commitment to sustainable operation remained unwavering with cost recovery exceeding or closely aligning with pre-pandemic years. Rental revenue increased by 36% over 2022.

Festival Sponsorship

Corporate sponsorship increased by 21% over 2022.







PUBLIC ART

Celebrate cultures, instill civic pride and support placemaking by increasing the prominence of public art in the city.

STATUS: PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION CREATES PLAY SPACE

PROGRESS UPDATE

Public Art Interactive Installation: Daedalum Luminarium

This Public Art initiative, supported by the Arts Development Advisory Committee saw the installation of a 15,452-square-foot inflatable structure, by the UK design team Architects of Air, in Lion's Park. Children's Festival hours were extended to accommodate the more than 5000 people who walked through and experienced this immersive, unique maze of colour, shape and light.

GREAT PLACES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

St. Albert cherishes a sense of place and community, designing built environments that create lively spaces and instill civic pride. Community venues support social connectively and personal well-being through community facilities and gathering places that respond to community needs.

STATUS: INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTAINED

PROGRESS UPDATE

Ensuring infrastructure integrity enables long-term development and growth in the cultural sector. City staff focused on restoration, renovation and maintenance projects aimed at ensuring infrastructure integrity to support long-term development and growth.

In 2023, the **St. Albert Place Visual Arts Studios' Gas Kiln** project was completed. The installation of a Bailey Shuttle Pro 40, with associated mechanical and safety upgrades and controls took place. This City asset received funding in 2021 and saw its first test firings in December of 2023.

SOCIAL IMPACT FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

Research shows that when people participate in the arts, society and the community benefit. Participation in arts and culture programming helped promote inclusion, improved mental health and wellness, boosted self-esteem and confidence, and created a sense of community and belonging.

WHAT OUR PATRONS ARE SAYING

96% Participation in arts and cultural activities contributed to improved mental health and wellbeing	**82%** Participation in arts and cultural events help me to connect with others and be engaged in community	**93%** Felt welcomed and included while attending the Plaza Series
99% Felt the Children's Festival contributed to creating a vibrant downtown atmosphere in St. Albert	**91%** Felt the Children's Festival made them feel proud of their local area.	**92%** Participation in the Arts Exchange makes me feel more connected to the artistic community in St. Albert

TO LEARN MORE CONTACT: Community Services-Culture Branch
Phone: 780-495-1600 or Email: culture@stalbert.ca