

**To:** Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** June 2, 2025  
**From:** Mark Haney, Manager of Arts and Culture  
**Subject:** **Clarke Theatre – Seat Sales, Anniversary and Programming**

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### **Recommendation(s)**

1. That Council approve the naming sponsorship of individual seats when the Clarke Theatre seats are replaced with revenues going towards Clarke Theatre general capital improvements;
2. That Council approve staff spending up to \$250,000 for special and gala performances in 2026 to celebrate the Theatre's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary;
3. That the Gaming Reserve be used to finance the upfront costs and to fund any revenue shortfall; and
4. That the 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan be amended accordingly.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the proposed fundraising project for the new seats in the Clarke Theatre and plans for gala and special performances in 2026 to celebrate the Clarke's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, to seek approval for spending to secure A-list BC talent, and to provide Council with an overview of the 25/26 Clarke Theatre Presents series.

### **Background**

The replacement of the seating in the Clarke Theatre, scheduled for August 2025, offers the opportunity to give the community a chance to sponsor a seat. This project was funded through the Growing Communities Fund. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Clarke Theatre in 2026 creates the opportunity for one of a kind, special concerts for the community. Staff continue to expand City produced programming, and for the 2025/2026 arts season staff have created a comprehensive Clarke Theatre Presents series.

### **Discussion and Analysis**

As part of the upgrades that Council has approved for the Clarke Theatre, this August all the audience seating will be replaced. When the theatre was first built, the community was given the opportunity to sponsor and have their name on a seat, and staff are seeking approval to launch a new fundraising campaign through the similar seat sponsorship.

When the current seats are removed the armrests with names of previous donors will be saved and attached to the back wall of the theatre interior to ensure the original donors continue to be recognized. Naming for the new seats is proposed to cost \$250 and will be in place for a minimum of 10 years or until the seats are replaced again.

Staff recommend the revenues from seat sales go to a Clarke Theatre general capital improvements account, with the following projects designated as priorities:

Outdoor canopy: Sign replacement - \$20,000

Outdoor canopy: Festoon lights - \$20,000

Lobby – Colour changing lights - \$20,000

Theatre interior – cedar panels on walls - \$20,000

These projects are designated as priorities for the funds raised through community sponsorship since they are all directly related to the audience experience.

The opportunity to sponsor a name on a seat will be available on an ongoing basis, with an active campaign running from summer 2025 through the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the fall of 2026.

The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Theatre creates the opportunity for gala and special performances. In order to pursue A-list BC talent staff require approval and funding to book special performances. Staff intend for these events to be revenue neutral and to replace the funding used to secure the talent, but there is always an inherent risk in event production. The Finance Department has suggested the Gaming Reserve as a funding source, as it has adequate resources to absorb a shortfall should that situation arise.

Staff would like to offer the community once-in-a-lifetime performances to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Clarke Theatre. Performances at a level not always available in Mission, that will give the community an opportunity to show the great pride they have in this cultural institution. Part of the vision for these performances would be a number of tickets set aside for dignitaries as well as made available to local charities as it is important to ensure that access to a potential “big name” event is not dictated entirely by financial means.

Staff are requesting approval to spend up to \$250,000 to produce 2 or 3 events involving BC's highest-level talent. Although the events will take place in 2026, contracts will have to be committed in 2025 to secure talent for the fall of 2026. Staff will also pursue private sponsorship once the talent has been contracted.

Over the last two years staff have been working to widen the performing arts offerings in Mission by growing the Theatre's presentation and production capacity. For the 2025-2026 performing arts season, the Clarke Theatre Presents is a fully developed series offering the community provocative, innovative performing arts at the Clarke Theatre.

The season includes Indigenous theatre for children, a Clarke produced musical, an acclaimed musician from the East coast, contemporary dance, an operatic and dance tribute to Leonard Cohen, an enhanced film experience, a Shakespearean ballet, a Canadian legend, and more.

The growth in Clarke-produced and presented professional arts will qualify the City to apply for Canada Heritage's Canadian Arts Presentation Fund at the next application intake, and was a factor in the City qualifying for the \$250,000 Canadian Cultural Spaces grant for lighting and sound replacement.

### **Financial Implications**

Up to \$250,000 in spending will need to be approved from the Gaming Reserve. While the intention is for the funded events to be revenue neutral and for the funding to be repaid, there is always an inherent risk in event production. Finance advises there is adequate funding in the Gaming Reserve to absorb a shortfall.

## **Communication**

No communication action is needed at this time, once the campaign for seat naming begins staff will work with the Communications department to ensure the community is made aware of the initiative.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

Capital improvements continue at the Clarke, and the seat replacement offers an opportunity for the community to sponsor their names to be part of the theatre. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary creates the possibilities for large, one-time performances at the Theatre, and the Clarke Theatre Presents offers Mission an incredible array of performing arts.

**Report Prepared by:** Mark Haney, Manager of Arts and Culture

**Reviewed by:** Andrew Crowe, Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture

**Approved for Inclusion:** Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer