

City of New Westminster
511 Royal Avenue,
New Westminster, BC
V3L 1H9



November 22, 2024

Dear Mayor Johnstone and Councilors,

We are writing to affirm support for the following recommendations which have been shared with us by the CNW Senior Staff team. The additions to capital renovation scope being considered are essential to the ongoing viability of the theatre, Massey Theatre Society as operating partner, the artistic and cultural organizations who carry out their activities in the complex and other stakeholders including community participants and audience members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the upgraded HVAC system, minimum site needs, and recommended site improvements, as described in December 2, 2024 report to Council entitled "Massey Theatre Renovation – HVAC Upgrades and Public Realm Improvements“, be added to the Massey Theatre Renovation project scope;

THAT staff consult with the Massey Theatre Society and others who deliver programs in the Massey Complex, and conduct further analysis of the capital project sequencing, to update the project schedule and cost estimate based on at least 2 schedule and facility closure scenarios, and report back to Council prior to February 28, 2025; and

THAT an objective third party with experience in performing arts operations and major capital projects be engaged to inform and facilitate the consultation and analysis of schedule and cost estimate scenarios.

We agree and would fully support that a detailed understanding of the costs and impacts of closure and / or phasing should be researched and corroborated. This will help to ensure the improvements planned are implemented in a manner that preserves the stakeholder interests and helps ensure there is a viable community of users and beneficiaries on the other side of the project. Such a consultation would “price in” costs that may arise for the city outside the capital project, in each facility closure scenario.

We believe the City of New Westminster and Massey Theatre Society are better served with a phased plan for renovations and we are encouraged by the recommendations which will bring greater understanding of these dynamics into the project.

The City of New Westminster's 2019 Theatre Strategy recommends that phased renovations are undertaken to mitigate losses to the community and users of the Complex. The appropriate implementation plan is one that fully addresses the sustainability of Massey Theatre Society, and others, throughout the many challenges of planning and remaining viable through the project. Anything short may result in the Society's closure and the addition of high annual operating costs for the City of New Westminster following the renovations.

We support the recommendation to engage a third party to research and articulate the details of how the City of New Westminster should undertake the project with an understanding of impacts of the renovation implementation plan on the community.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Leblanc".

Peter Leblanc
Chair, Massey Theatre Society

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Schneider".

Jessica Schneider
Executive & Programming Director, Massey Theatre Society