

February 2024

RE: City of London Multi-Year Budget 2024-2027

To Mayor and City Council,

We fully recognize that Londoners, City Council, and the Mayor face difficult choices at present, with many pressing demands from the community and finite resources. While we are grateful for your ongoing support, the budget as it stands presents significant challenges for arts, culture, heritage and library services at a time when we are being called upon to transform our operations and offerings, to engage a growing diverse population in new ways, and become increasingly accessible, inclusive, equitable and sustainable. Now, while still in a period of recovery after the pandemic, and facing new pressures and constraints given the challenging conditions where we operate in downtown London, we need to collaborate across sectors and we need support and participation from the City of London as much as possible.

Working in different ways but with similar purpose, our organizations create and share stories and open conversations that matter to Londoners. Together, we serve hundreds of thousands of people each year, including families, newcomers, and those from equity-deserving communities, providing resources and dynamic opportunities for learning and skill development, as well as employment, volunteer and mentorship opportunities for next generations. We facilitate opportunities that ignite creativity, critical thinking, and dialogue. We foster a sense of community connection and belonging at a time when people need it. Our work helps to define London's unique identity and provides many different opportunities to bring Londoners together.

The City's strategic plan recognizes that investment in arts, culture, heritage, and libraries is tied to economic prosperity, the revitalization of the core area, attracting and retaining talent, and contributing to quality of life. Research also links arts and culture activities to positive physical and mental health outcomes for people at all stages. Our work plays a critical role in advancing goals around reconciliation, inclusion, anti-racism and anti-oppression. As cultural and learning organizations, Museum London, the Grand Theatre, the London Arts Council and London Public Library take our roles and responsibilities in this work seriously.

To rise to the opportunities and challenges of this critical moment for the continued recovery of our organizations and our sector we need to find new ways to work together. Understanding that budget decisions are in final stages, we respectfully ask that the following actions be considered to support our work for the community:

- That Mayor and Council direct staff to undertake a report to explore options for shared or in-kind services to support Museum London, the Grand Theatre, the London Arts Council, and the London Public Library;
- That Mayor and Council direct staff to ensure that our organizations are meaningfully engaged in the implementation of City of London's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan;
- That Mayor and Council direct staff to ensure our organizations are meaningfully included in the forthcoming update of the Cultural Prosperity Plan, the Downtown Master plan, and other relevant plans that will help strengthen the arts, culture, heritage and library services eco-system;
- That Mayor and Council consider striking a standing committee that works to strengthen the arts, culture, heritage and library services eco-system and inform City plans and processes.

We are grateful for the support of the City of London and are aware of the extent of the investment in arts, culture, heritage and library services through the decades. As London grows, to realize its full potential as a safe, thriving City and destination of choice, and a place where our children want to make their homes and raise future generations, the City of London needs to meaningfully invest in its existing arts, cultural, heritage and library assets and recognize that these too are essential ingredients for a safe, healthy, inclusive and vibrant community. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with you to realize shared goals.

Sincerely,

**GRAND**THEATRE



**MUSEUM  
LONDON**

Evan Klassen  
Executive Director  
Grand Theatre

Eunju Yi  
Executive Director  
London Arts Council

Michael Ciccone  
CEO and Chief Librarian  
London Public Library

Julie Bevan  
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Museum London

Rachel Peake  
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Allyson Vanstone  
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Brian Gibson  
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London Public Library

Sarah Padfield  
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Museum London

George Kerhoulas  
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