



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** Members of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee

**From:** Karen Rennie, Manager of Arts, Culture and Heritage Division

**Meeting Date:** October 14, 2021

**Subject:** Report ACHAC21-031  
Municipal Cultural Plan Next Steps

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## **Purpose**

A report to update the Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee on the review of the current Municipal Cultural Plan and future directions.

## **Recommendation**

That the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee approve the recommendation outlined in Report ACHAC21-031, dated October 14, 2021, of the Manager of Arts, Culture and Heritage as follows:

- a) That the report be received for information;
- b) That the planning horizon of a new Municipal Cultural Plan be shortened to 3 to 5 years, and that there be a reduced number of Strategic Directions;
- c) That a new working group be established to work with staff to develop a plan for completing the work;
- d) That a consultant be hired to assist in the preparation of a new Municipal Cultural Plan including community consultation with respect to the needs in the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sector currently and projected needs over the next 5 years;
- e) That initiatives for Recovery and Resiliency be incorporated into the new plan, and;

- f) That an assessment report schedule be prepared for both ACHAC and Council as part of new Municipal Cultural Plan process.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

The consultation expenses are proposed in the 2022 budget but are subject to council approval. The cost of creating a new Municipal Culture Plan will become a proposed 2023 budget item once the scope of work is determined.

## **Background**

On April 23, 2012 Peterborough City Council adopted Peterborough's first Municipal Cultural Plan. In doing so, Council recognized the important role that the City's cultural assets play in building Peterborough's future prosperity.

A municipal cultural plan is a municipally led process with the goal of establishing culture as an important pillar of city-building, touching on the work of all City departments. It integrates culture into formal policies, plans, and investments by local government, and engages the participation of key partners throughout the process.

### **The 7 Strategic Directions**

- 1) Celebrate and Strengthen our Waterways, Cultural and Natural Heritage
- 2) Strengthen the Arts
- 3) Strengthen Heritage
- 4) Strengthen Downtown as a Cultural Hub
- 5) Incorporate Culture in all Neighbourhoods
- 6) Encourage Inclusivity and Facilitate Diversity
- 7) Build Capacity of the ACH Division

Starting in 2009, resources were made available to municipalities on how to initiate a culture plan, including how to make the case for culture as the fourth pillar of sustainability. The City of Peterborough undertook the process of establishing a plan in 2010 which was passed by City Council in 2012.

Ontario is now seeing the second generation of culture plans emerge, but without the dedicated provincial resources provided to the early adopters. In general, early culture plans were ambitious in scope and thought to have an aspirational quality.

The following specific insights have been shared by the Town of Whitby, from their recently completed a Municipal Cultural Plan and their research on these first-generation culture plans and processes:

- Meaningful engagement with cultural communities is key: Engagement activities associated with the cultural planning process can draw skepticism from the arts and culture community. Artists and creative workers often see culture as an organic process, not one to be planned by municipal staff. Planning may inadvertently trivialize existing cultural activity by lumping cultural forms together or overlooking the forces and energy through a narrow vision. Similarly, having too predetermined of a vision for culture plans can turn people off from participating, making it challenging to get buy-in from key stakeholders. Engagement processes must therefore follow community planning principles where municipal staff and planners ask questions, listen and facilitate conversation, aware not to impose their own biases of culture.
- Streamline arts, culture, and creativity: Some first-generation culture plans have been criticized as traditional arts policy (e.g. focused on performing arts, galleries, etc.) with a different name. There is a need to better define the different aspects associated with a culture plan, including both tangible and intangible cultural resources as well as creative economies.

The City of Peterborough MCP is the result of an extensive process that included significant consultation with cultural producers, residents, stakeholders, and City staff. It outlines a vision of Peterborough as a culturally rich city that uses the creativity of its people to make a place that will prosper. The plan recognizes the fundamental importance of culture as one of the four pillars of sustainability. This MCP provided a framework for:

- Leveraging and nurturing Peterborough's significant cultural assets
- Building the capacity of Peterborough's cultural sector
- More fully integrating culture into all facets of municipal planning and decision making
- Ultimately enabling greater long-term sustainability and prosperity

The review of the existing MCP demonstrates that we have used this framework to leverage and nurture our cultural assets, built capacity and are working towards greater sustainability. The plan was ambitious in scope and many items were completed with a small sample shown below:

- Creation of Culture Council
- New infrastructure for ACH division such as facility upgrades (Museum/Library) and staff enhancements (Public Art/Manager of ACH)
- The Avenues Heritage Conservation District
- Community Partnerships

- Hiring of Diversity and Inclusion Officer
- Interdepartmental working groups
- Library Commons and Hunter Street Public Art Projects

The MCP was intended as a living document and as such it was anticipated that initiatives would evolve over the life the plan as priorities, needs and opportunities change. This is can be seen in many of the strategic directions whereas items will continue to be ongoing such as creation of Heritage Districts, Facility/infrastructure improvements such as the Art Gallery, building of partnerships, policy development, diversity and inclusion. One gap identified is the Economic Impact of Arts, Culture and Heritage and work has begun to provide this information as the MCP reaches it 10 year mark in 2022.

The Covid pandemic hit the sector hard turning the health crisis into an economic crisis. The pandemic is an unforeseen crisis that has diverted focus away from the plan for close to two years and it is anticipated that the effectives of the pandemic will be felt for years to come. Recovery and Resiliency initiatives must be a part of any plan moving forward to ensure sustainability. The committee has heard from many groups within the sector throughout Covid and concerns continue as vaccine passports, ventilation concerns and capacity limits affect reopening plans.

## Summary

In summary the ambitious City of Peterborough Plan has achieved some important goals over the last nine years. This MCP provided a framework for:

- Leveraging and nurturing Peterborough's significant cultural assets
- Building the capacity of Peterborough's cultural sector
- More fully integrating culture into all facets of municipal planning and decision making
- Ultimately enabling greater long-term sustainability and prosperity

The plan has provided a strong foundation to build on as a community and continue to work to strengthen the long-term sustainability and prosperity of the arts, culture and heritage sector in Peterborough. As the current plan highlights, Peterborough is rich in cultural assests and as a community we have begun to capitalize on the benefits of culture as a key component of city building. Promoting, nurturing and growing these assets will be vital to ensuring a high quality of life for the people of Peterborough and continued economic propersity for the city.

The recommendations in this report support the importance of a cultural plan for the City of Peterborough and identify what next steps are necessary to evolve the living document (MCP 2012) into a new plan for the next five years.

Submitted by,

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