



# City of Niagara Falls Culture Plan

*June 2014*

A report from



**TCI Management Consultants**

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction and Process

In the fall of 2013, the firm of TCI Management Consultants was retained through a tender process to undertake the development of a Culture Plan for the City of Niagara Falls. The purpose of the plan was to develop a road map for the City to guide its future investment in facilities, programs and activities in support of the arts, culture and heritage sector in the municipality. The study process involved a number of data collection activities including interviews with various representatives of arts, culture and heritage organizations; interviews with selected municipal staff and members of Council; a survey of cultural organizations in the city; a widely promoted community survey (to which more than 300 individuals responded, resulting in a very representative and useful database of information); focus group sessions with key arts and heritage sectors; two open houses; a benchmarking assessment of other communities that were successfully investing in their cultural sectors; and two presentations to Council. This Executive Summary reports on the recommendations resulting from the work, and various aspects of the implementation of the plan.

### Recommendations

In total, twenty-four recommendations were made, based upon a synthesis of the major data themes and findings from the various lines of investigation as reported earlier. These are summarized below; Section 3 of the main report contains further details relating to details of the recommendations themselves as well as their rationale.

- 1. Council Approval in Principle:** Council should first approve the Culture Plan in principle, and refer it back to staff to develop a detailed implementation plan, based upon the subsequent recommendations contained within this Report.
- 2. Create Dedicated Cultural Officer Position:** Change the job title of the current Community Development Coordinator to Arts & Culture Coordinator, and revise the job description as required to create a position that is dedicated to working with the arts, culture and heritage sectors. The prime responsibility of this position in the first three years would be the implementation of this Culture Plan.
- 3. Undertake Feasibility Study for Culture Hub:** A key objective of this Culture Plan is the development of a centralized facility for a range of arts and culture activities including a large public art gallery space; a commercial space for local artists; a mid-size affordable performing arts venue primarily for community use; possibly studio space for working artists; and related required office and administrative space. A feasibility study of such a facility should be undertaken (Section 3 of the Report contains further details as to what specifics should be reviewed in such a study).
- 4. Performing Arts Facility:** The surveys and interviews revealed that many residents feel that a small scale and affordable community theatre is needed in the City (preliminary visions are to have an intimate and cost effective facility of on the order of 300 – 500 seats). Accordingly, at the same time as an investigation into the desirability and feasibility of a cultural hub is being explored, an assessment of the potential for the Seneca Queen Street Theatre in this regard should be undertaken.

- 5. Investigate selling CORE building and using proceeds for the cultural hub:** Assuming the cultural organizations contained within the CORE building could be re-housed within the Cultural Hub, or elsewhere, consider the sale of the CORE building to help finance the capital costs of development of the Cultural Hub. This should be part of the feasibility study investigation that is the subject of Recommendation #3.
- 6. Two Local Cultural Precincts:** There are two cultural precincts in Niagara Falls: one is the 'heritage/cultural precinct' around the Museum / Lundy's Lane / Battlefield area and the other is the 'cultural precinct' around the downtown (Queen Street and along the Victoria Street spine west from Queen Street). Each of these has a certain 'critical mass' of facilities and activities and are logical districts that the Culture Plan should attempt to reinforce and further identify. Both precincts are on the WEGO route which positions them well from an accessibility standpoint. As well, the expansion of the Sylvia Place market – a historic function of that area of the City – will reinforce the identity of this as an historic area.
- 7. Gateways:** The Official Plan for the City of Niagara Falls anticipated a number of entrance gateways into the City from various directions. In a manner similar to public art, such gateways can be symbols of the importance of art, culture and heritage to the community. The Culture Plan should support such gateways and encourage them to reflect related themes in their district. Gateways are located in the Lundy's Lane area and Queen Street to reflect the cultural/historical themes.
- 8. Lundy's Lane Battlefield:** Several comments in the interviews and surveys related to the importance of the Lundy's Lane Battlefield and Cemetery site to the history of Canada (some even likening it in terms of national importance to the Gettysburg site in the USA). Recognizing that the Battlefield and Drummond Hill Cemetery does tell a significant and nationally important story, the Culture Plan does recommend a number of initiatives to preserve and further enhance the site. These include: development of appropriate interpretation for the overall site (i.e. prior to the development of the school and seniors' residence) using traditional as well as social media (e.g. apps); creation of an on-line application of what the Battlefield site looked like prior to development (including aerial views), key developments in the battle itself, etc. so that a virtual experience of the battle could be had to convey some feeling as to the significance of the overall site (note: this could be one of the projects sponsored through the 'innovative projects' fund discussed in Recommendation #18).
- 9. Queen Street Revitalization:** The revitalization of Queen Street is a long-term project and one that does not lend itself to an easy or overnight solution. In the past, various schemes such as turning it into an arts incubator or entertainment district have not come to fruition. This Culture Plan by itself is not a downtown revitalization strategy, but there are elements of it that will provide positive support and context to efforts in this regard. The potential for any aspect of implementation of this Culture Plan to support the revitalization of Queen Street should accordingly be a key priority.
- 10. Library Facilities:** The Niagara Falls Public Library is clearly a key player in the cultural life of the community, and was seen through all of the local data collection initiatives (interviews, community survey, organizations survey) as a major asset in the community. The Library has its own strategy, and this Culture Plan is not intended to be a repeat of that process. The overall recommendation made to the City is to reinforce the growth and development of the Library as expressed in its own plan, in particular: the longer-term refurbishment and renovation of the Victoria Street (Main) branch; the expansion or redevelopment (yet to be determined) of the Stamford Branch in order to better serve that community; and the provision of expanded children's and teen programming.

- 11. Linkage to the Tourism Industry:** While this Culture Plan was developed primarily by the community (through the extensive data collection undertaken) and for the community, there are nonetheless elements that may have significant potential to attract additional tourism to the area. One of the roles of the Recreation & Culture Department staff should be to liaise regularly with the tourism-related organizations and agencies in the area (e.g. the Regional Tourism Organization (TPN), Niagara Falls Tourism, etc.) to ensure that they are kept apprised of relevant development and activities on the cultural and heritage front. (And vice versa.)
- 12. Develop a Marketing Campaign for Culture:** Design and implement a marketing plan for Culture programming and events in Niagara Falls that coordinates all community arts, culture, and heritage activities. The program would aim to do the following: promote arts, culture, and heritage as important components of a resident's life and livelihood in the Niagara Falls area; help organizations to promote their special events and activities; provide a portal for arts, culture, and heritage organizations to network, share ideas, coordinate activities, and find information (such as contact information) about each other [see Recommendation #15]; a way for individuals to trade ideas, views, maintain contact, and comment on arising issues; listing of and links to all community arts, culture and heritage groups; links to the mapping database (including the functionality to enable all participating [validated] organizations to update and change their information as required); and continuing to publish the calendar / schedule of events. Social media should be used to establish a two-way conversation with the community and visitors. Possibilities to consider include: Facebook, Twitter for announcements; Pinterest or Instagram pages for visual art; and Myspace (for performing arts) pages.
- 13. A More Effective Web-Site Presence for Culture Should be maintained:** Right now culture has a comparatively low profile on the City's web pages. This should be redeveloped in order to portray a more proactive and inclusive approach to the sector. Included in this makeover should be: direct contact information to the new position of Cultural Coordinator; listing of and links to all community culture groups; links to the mapping database (including the functionality to enable all participating [validated] organizations to update and change their information as required); and continuing to publish the calendar / schedule of events.
- 14. Arts Web Portal:** One of the outputs of this project has been the development of a database of arts organizations in the City (and eventually artists, crafts-persons and private sector suppliers to the cultural sector) to post and update information about their organizations, products, skills, etc. and thus be recognized in the community. One of the roles of the Recreation & Culture staff should be to oversee the currency and accuracy of this information; to encourage organizations to update it from time to time; and to use the information in the development of brochures, maps, contact lists, etc. as required.
- 15. Adopt a Partnership Focus:** Additional partnerships should be forged between the City and other groups in the community and Region that are focused upon providing arts, culture and heritage related opportunities for residents. The most logical potential partners include: the City of St. Catharines (to ensure reciprocal awareness of program and activities, as well as use of facilities); the Niagara Parks Commission: regarding scheduling of events, as well as to ensure that City input is provided in their two upcoming initiatives (planning for an outdoor performing arts venue in 'The Grove' as well as looking for uses for the iconic Canada Niagara Power building); and the owner of the Niagara Centre for the Arts, regarding the main strategic directions contained within this plan, impact upon his own operations, potential partnership initiatives, etc.

- 16. BIAs:** The City of Niagara Falls contains seven distinct BIAs (Downtown [i.e. Queen Street]; Clifton Hill; Fallsview; Lundy's Lane; Main/Ferry; Chippawa; and Victoria Centre). While all of them are host to certain types of cultural and heritage activities (which may be art galleries, dance schools, music stores, unique restaurants, bars and performance venues, etc.) two of these figure prominently in the cultural and historical assets of the City, and in the notion of developing two historical / cultural precinct areas in the City (the historical one at Lundy's Lane / Battlefield area, and the cultural one at Queen Street). As a first step, Recreation and Culture staff should meet with all BIA Managers (ideally, together) to explain this plan, solicit any further input regarding suggestions, assistance with implementation, partnership opportunities, etc.
- 17. Festivals and Events:** The City should consider developing more arts and culture-oriented festivals and events, with the objective of developing a year-round calendar of such activities. To be considered in particular would be a live music event, and a literary festival. More multicultural events should also be considered. Finally, a 'First Thursday or Friday' type event, involving openings and special activities along Main/Ferry Streets and/or Queen Street, could be encouraged as both a cultural event involving the private sector, as well as an initiative contributing to the revitalization of that area.
- 18. Increased Funding for Culture Groups:** The City's current community development policy of not providing cultural programs directly, but rather funding cultural organizations that in turn provide such opportunities, is a good way of ensuring that they are focused on meeting 'market demand' and the real need of the community. This overall approach should continue. (The Public Library and the Museum are the two exceptions to this approach with the Museum directly operated by the City and the Public Library governed by the Public Library Board.) However our review of the relative levels at which other cities fund their cultural sectors – particularly those against which Niagara Falls is benchmarked for the purpose of this study – appears to indicate that Niagara Falls is 'underfunding' its cultural sector to some extent. If the City funded its cultural sector to a comparable level with the other benchmark communities, it would increase its budget for these activities by (conservatively estimated) \$200,000 to \$300,000 per year.

At present, the City only funds two culture groups (Niagara Falls Art Gallery & Niagara Falls Concert Band). In future, consideration should be given to funding more such groups (assuming they meet objective criteria relating to the provision of arts, culture and heritage related programs). Particular components of this recommendation would include: designation of a pool of funds to be allocated to culture

- *articulation of specific criteria for groups to meet in applying for such funds: these may relate to the provision of certain types of programming: children, teens, specialty cultural areas such as writers' workshops*
- *an annual application process, with clear timeframes and deadlines*
- *transparency to the community in terms of funding allocated*
- *clear 'reporting back' requirements so that municipal staff and Council can see the results from funds allocated*
- *provision of feedback to organizations that were unsuccessful in any given year, so that they might be more successful in the following funding round*

**Fund Innovative Arts Projects and Ideas:** Every year, new cultural initiatives and ideas should be encouraged throughout the City. One way to do this would be to allocate a certain amount of new funding (e.g. \$5,000 - \$10,000) to new cultural initiatives and projects. A jury-reviewed process should be set up to review applications and ideas, and award the amount to one or two of the most

innovative projects that have the potential to engage the local community with cultural and heritage-related ideas and activities.

Municipal staff (coordinated through the Cultural Officer position) would have a key role in advising Council on the funding to be allocated and the amounts for each group. This recommendation should be phased in over a 2-3 year period, giving existing funded organizations sufficient lead time to prepare for this new funding regime.

- 19. Capacity-Building Workshops:** One of the key elements of cultural plans elsewhere is that the municipality periodically offers various capacity-building workshops to cultural groups and organizations in the community. These can typically be on a number of topics of relevance to the organizations, including: effective marketing and promotion; audience development techniques; succession planning; financial planning and management; fundraising techniques; commercialization and how to start a business (for individual artisans and crafts-persons); and effective social marketing techniques.
- 20. Encourage Council Representation for MCH and Arts and Culture Advisory Committees:** There are three Committees of Council that are Council's link to the arts, culture and heritage life of Niagara Falls: these are (1) the Municipal Heritage Committee, (2) the Niagara Falls Museum Advisory Board, and (3) the Arts and Culture Committee. None of these Committees has formal Council representation. This sends a very negative message to the entire cultural community regarding the importance of the sector in Council's eyes. While there is no mechanism to make Council participation on these bodies mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that Council shows a more active interest in the business of these Committees by appointing members to at least some of these Committees.
- 21. Reduce Number of Committees:** Ultimately with the new term of Council, the City should consider merging the certain committees of council in order to reduce duplication, enhance committee mandate and encourage efficiencies. An immediate step to this effect would be to merge the Arts & Culture committee with the Museum Advisory committee to form the new **Culture and Museum Committee** (or possibly, simply '**Culture Committee**'). While each Committee has its own area of responsibility, it is felt that there is more to be gained in common cause and information-sharing in a merged Committee than might be lost through a lack of focus on each Committee's current sphere of influence.
- 22. Revised Public Art Policy:** As a visible and tangible symbol of a commitment to public art and arts education, the City should adopt a 'policy' towards the establishment of a fund dedicated for public art. (In other words, earmark a designated amount for public art purposes.) As well, more education of the public on parkland dedication policies and Section 37 provisions of the Planning Act (which enable municipalities to grant certain development concessions in return for community benefits) would be helpful.
- 23. Hold a Niagara Falls Cultural Summit:** A one-day cultural summit devoted to discussing ways and means of implementing this plan should be held soon after Council has endorsed it (see Recommendation #1). This should be a facilitated session including a presentation of the plan and its key recommendations as well as a discussion of how the plan overall can be implemented. All stakeholders contributing input to the plan developed here plus the general public should be invited.
- 24. Accountability Report Card:** Progress made on the implementation of the Culture Plan should be reported back to the community each year. It is recommended that a short (2-3 page) progress report be prepared to be shared with Council as well as with the general public. Also, possibly a

Cultural Summit (see Recommendation #23) could be reprised (approximately) one year after the first Summit to present to the arts, culture and heritage organizations as well as the general public what progress has been made on the Plan, what new opportunities may have presented themselves, and to solicit direction from the community on any new directions that should be pursued.

## **Implementation**

It is recommended that the Plan as outlined here be phased in over a five-year period. There are three suggested phases to implementation. The first is the period up to the municipal election of October 2014, when Council should approve this plan in principle (recommendation #1) and refer it to staff for further assessment regarding implementation. (Those recommendations that are relatively easy to implement without undue pressure on financial resources are the ones that should be undertaken during this initial period.) After the elections, in 2015, implementation of the plan should move into a 'feasibility testing' phase where some of the key recommendations regarding the Cultural Hub, performing arts facility, and funding should be implemented. In 2016 and beyond, the remaining recommendations should be put into place, as resources and staff time permit.



## 1. Background and Context

### 1.1 Purpose and Background to this Study

For residents, visitors and those who know it by name only, the City of Niagara Falls has long enjoyed an enviable position, for its breathtakingly scenic geography, its pivotal role in Canadian history, its colourful heritage and cultural attractions and its wonderful climate and quality of life. The City's key attractions are the Horseshoe and the US American Falls which are best seen from the Canadian side. The City has two casinos, and a recently renovated Museum, and benefits from the Niagara Parks Commission with its golf courses, historic sites, horticulture school, restaurants and butterfly conservatory. The City is home to a thriving private sector tourism and entertainment sector.

The City's Recreation and Culture Department works hard to serve the needs of its 83,000 diverse residents and more than 11 million visitors each year. A variety of sports, parks and recreation facilities have been developed over the years and now admirably serve the community. However, somewhat lagging the development of sports and recreation in the City has been the evolution of arts and cultural amenities and facilities. Accordingly, in early 2013 municipal Council decided to undertake the development of a Culture Plan for the City, to redress this imbalance. After a tender process, the firm of TCI Management Consultants was retained to undertake the work, which began in the fall of that year.

A Culture Plan is a government led process to identify, leverage and strengthen the community's cultural resources. In essence, it acts as a guide to municipal Council and staff regarding investment in facilities, programs, activities, events, public art, etc. that all contribute to and encourage the cultural life of the community. It will result in a better awareness of the City's cultural resources, an improved quality of life for residents, opportunities to recognize and develop the cultural sector as both a cultural asset and an economic engine, as well as create improved opportunities for artists and cultural organizations to network, and to showcase or exhibit their artistic talent. In short, the Culture Plan provides the City an opportunity to think of and plan for its cultural resources on a more strategic level. It is timely for the City to develop a municipal Culture Plan. This project also includes a cultural mapping initiative that will help inform the Culture Plan as well as provide opportunities to bring the cultural sector together to contribute to the formation of the plan.

Particular issues identified in the Terms of Reference for the project include:

- A recent review of the City's 2005 Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan recognized that many of the cultural recommendations either have yet to be recognized or need to be reviewed within the present day context.
- A recent review of the City owned heritage buildings identified issues relating to ongoing capital and operating costs. The Culture Plan will provide an opportunity to review the optimal usage of these facilities by cultural groups, whether new facilities should be built or whether they can be repurposed for cultural activity spaces.
- Given limited resources, determining what are the most appropriate actions and investments that the City can make: (i) to improve the quality of life; (ii) to improve the ability of local artists and cultural organizations to achieve their objectives; (iii) to redress gaps in facilities and cultural services; (iv) to provide educational opportunities related to the arts and culture; and, (v) to grow culture as an important activity with both economic and cultural spinoffs.

- The cultural mapping component of the Plan will provide an opportunity to identify Niagara Falls' cultural resources to plan for and make decisions about cultural facilities including reinvestment in older commercial areas and neighbourhoods, coordinating planning for festivals and events, promoting tourism, attracting new businesses and preserving natural and cultural heritage for the long term.

The Culture Plan and cultural mapping initiative that we propose engages the City of Niagara Falls' cultural organizations and institutions, its artists, its audiences and other community stakeholders to identify how the cultural sector can contribute constructively to this plan. The Culture Plan and cultural mapping initiative also provides an opportunity to cultivate organizational relationships, to formulate cooperative strategies, and to chart a course for the cultural sector to realize its opportunities for sectoral development. Finally, the Plan will forge a shared vision with common values to ensure that artists, cultural organizations and institutions work collaboratively with each other, with the City of Niagara Falls and with the broader community.

The overall objective of the Culture Plan is to define a clear plan of action for the next 5 years. The plan should be concise, to the point, and easily understood. The plan should include the benefits of a Culture Plan and list benefits and the financial implications for the implementation of the recommended actions.

Key deliverables include:

- (a) An executive summary.
- (b) Specific policies to be adopted as part of the City's Official Plan.
- (c) A detailed and realistic implementation strategy including benefits and financial implications of implementation.
- (d) An evaluation plan that allows for easily measured success indicators.
- (e) Supplementary materials, schedules and tables.

The project will include several key components including a cultural mapping exercise, a review of cultural organizations, festivals and events, municipal culture process, City owned culture facilities, and a review of resources and funding of cultural organizations.

It will be important to recognize the Recreation and Culture Department's key role in supporting the cultural sector, in particular, its philosophy of adopting a community development model, which favours supporting community organizations through grants and support rather than providing services directly.

## 1.2 A Definition of Culture

In any culture plan for a community, it is important to be clear as to the scope of the investigation – in particular in terms of what constitutes the definition of 'culture'. The approach taken here was to 'cast the net wide' and adopt an inclusive view as to what would constitute 'culture' for the purposes of the plan.

Accordingly, the investigation embraced:

- ➔ the full spectrum of arts activity: performing, visual, digital media, literary (opera to rap; highbrow to lowbrow)
- ➔ history and heritage
- ➔ the range of services and facilities provided by the Niagara Falls Public Library
- ➔ the full spectrum of competency: beginners, hobbyists, spectators, professionals
- ➔ public and private (commercial) suppliers of culture

➔ ... and the entire Niagara Falls community.

Recognizing this broad scope, a Steering Committee that was representative of several of these community dimensions was established to help guide the consultant through the process. This Steering Committee comprised:

- **Kathy Moldenhauer**, Director, Recreation & Culture
- **Beth Angle**, Community Development Coordinator
- **Clark Bernat**, Museum Manager
- **Dale Morton**, CAO's Office
- **Monika Seymour**, Niagara Falls Public Library
- **Priscilla Brett**, Chair, Arts and Culture Committee

### 1.3 Philosophy of Cultural Planning

TCI Management Consultants' philosophy with regard to municipal cultural planning is predicated upon the following principles, which provided the basis for the approach used to conduct the study as well as to the development of policy.

1. **Everyone has the potential to be a creative individual:** Following from the extensive work of Charles Landry<sup>1</sup> and others, we believe that everyone has within them a creative potential (and beyond that, a basic need and desire to express that creative potential). Cultural activities in communities should be an important and accessible outlet for this potential creativity.
2. **Municipalities (as well as other levels of government) have a responsibility to develop cultural amenities for their residents:** It follows from the foregoing that healthy communities concerned with providing for the full range of needs of their residents will provide a range of opportunities for engagement in culture and creative opportunities, for persons of all ages and backgrounds<sup>2</sup>.
3. **Investment in culture is an economic development strategy:** Beyond providing for the essential needs of residents, investment in culture is an economic development strategy for communities. The work of Richard Florida<sup>3</sup> and others has amply shown that communities with a high quality of life – of which cultural opportunities are an essential component – attract the “Creative Class”, who in turn invest in businesses, create jobs and contribute in myriad other ways to the health and vitality of the community.
4. **Now is the time:** Especially in a time of economic downturn, there is a natural tendency for decision-makers to regard investment in culture as an ‘inessential frill’, something that can easily be deferred in favour of addressing more immediate priorities. We hold that, given the evidence of culture-led regeneration in cities across North American and Europe<sup>4</sup>, and given the scope of opportunities available in Niagara Falls, investment in culture is a vehicle for economic development that can provide a significant return. Moreover, from a purely practical point of view, if monies are to be spent on public infrastructure, recessionary conditions generally offer cost savings in both capital and labour. As such, infrastructure investments can spur the creation of new jobs.
5. **The dual nature of the leadership role of the municipality:** We see the role of the municipality in the development of the cultural life of the community as being twofold: first, it is to demonstrate leadership

<sup>1</sup> See Charles Landry, *The Creative City – A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, Earthscan, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Again Charles Landry, this time *The Art of City Making*, Earthscan, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Basic Books, 2002) and *Who's Your City?* (Random House, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Notable examples are Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; New Haven, Connecticut; Glasgow, Scotland; and Bilbao, Spain.

in consultation and policy development – through assessing what the community is saying it wants and needs by way of cultural facilities and services. (This is leadership in the sense that Charles Block sees it: creating the conditions for, and convening, a *conversation* with the community to identify what is needed<sup>5</sup>.) The second role is then to respond by providing facilities, programs, services, etc., in accord with community needs, tempered by the wisdom of municipal staff and elected officials regarding what is affordable and reasonable at the time.

6. **The community creates its own culture.** Notwithstanding the municipality's essential role as a provider of key cultural facilities and services, ultimately it is community-based organizations and individuals that create the culture of a community; municipalities are "enlightened enablers". Accordingly, municipal politicians and staff must keep their ears to the ground and ensure that new and innovative organizations that reflect areas of emerging need in the community are nurtured and given a chance to grow.
7. **Accountability is fundamental:** Any plan for investment in municipal infrastructure and services must monitor and evaluate progress, and demonstrate the return on investment of the funding and staff time expended. In this regard, one very useful framework is the Triple Bottom Line (TBL framework) that examines benefits in a multidisciplinary context considering social, economic and environmental benefits<sup>6</sup>. We typically use this framework to create a comprehensive and integrated evaluation and accountability plan as a key part of the strategy developed.
8. **Effective community engagement is critical:** Our community engagement philosophy is shaped by the many opportunities we have been given to work with communities and to learn from the community members with whom we engage. In a nutshell, our community engagement process is rooted in the twin concepts of invitation and conversation. We believe that community members should be invited to contribute their thoughts, ideas, and visions to a planning process. To this end, it is essential that every public communication be crafted as an invitation and that residents who respond to the invitation be treated as honoured guests throughout the community engagement process — whether that engagement takes the form of a town hall meeting, a focus group, a one-on-one dialogue, or a written survey. We have always found that fostering genuine conversation uncovers the most useful information while nurturing a group dynamic that yields the most fruitful results.

#### 1.4 Activities Undertaken in the Development of this Plan

Further to the aforementioned approach to 'cast the net wide' in terms of obtaining feedback and input to the plan, a number of data collection activities were undertaken in the development of this Culture Plan. These activities included:

- ➔ interviews with municipal staff, Councillors, and representatives of arts, culture, heritage and multicultural groups
- ➔ review of all relevant background materials
- ➔ a community survey (to which 308 individuals responded)
- ➔ an organization survey (to which 29 organizations responded)

<sup>5</sup> See Charles Block, *Community – The Structure of Belonging*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> See Andrew Savitz, *The Triple Bottom Line*, Jossey-Bass, 2006.

- ➔ a benchmarking assessment of several other comparable communities was undertaken

## **1.5 Current Provision for Arts, Culture and Heritage in the City of Niagara Falls**

The following provides a profile of the current provision of arts, culture and heritage in the City of Niagara Falls including community facilities, festivals and events, staffing and financial support.

### **1.5.1 Community Facilities**

Following is a brief listing of the main community facilities used in Niagara Falls for cultural purposes:

#### ***City owned facilities used by community groups***

The City owns a number of facilities used to varying degrees by community groups including the Fire Hall Theatre, Chippawa Town Hall, Niagara Falls Armoury, CORE Building, Navy League building, St. John Ambulance building and Willoughby Town Hall.

#### ***City owned facilities used by City departments and the Public Library***

##### *Niagara Falls Museums*

The Niagara Falls Museums facilities include the Niagara Falls History Museum on Ferry Street, the Battle Ground Hotel Museum, and the Lundy's Lane Battlefield.

##### *Niagara Falls Public Library*

The Niagara Falls Public Library operates four facilities including the main branch at Victoria Avenue, and branch libraries at Community Centre Branch, Stamford Centre Branch Library and Chippawa Branch Library.

#### ***Privately owned facilities***

The Avalon Ballroom Theatre at Niagara Fallsview Casino seats 1,500 and attracts international talent catering significantly to tourists.

Other key community facilities in the City include the privately owned Seneca Theatre on Queen Street. Until recently, Lyndesfarne Theatre was the sole tenant of this facility and now rents space at Seneca for its performances on an as needed basis.

The Niagara Falls Art Gallery on Oakwood Drive is privately owned and receives a grant from the City to offset its municipal taxes. The Niagara Falls Children's Museum operates at the Niagara Falls Art Gallery's education department on Oakwood Drive.

### 1.5.2 Festivals and Events

The main reoccurring festival supported by the City is the Winter Festival of Lights, which receives a grant from the City which totaled \$342,000 last year. This is the only festival to receive an operating grant from the City. However other festivals receive some level of support.

A sampling of other festivals which take place in Niagara Falls<sup>7</sup> and surrounding Region include:

- Niagara Falls Fireworks and Coca Cola Concert series (May – October)
- RCMP Officer Meet and Greet (June – August)
- Summer of Thrills (June – September)
- Floral Showcase (June – September)
- Canada Day Celebration (July 1)
- The Grove Floral Showhouse (July)
- Museum Thursday Nights
- Botanical Gardens – Parkway Artists Guild – Art in the Gardens (July)
- Battle of Lundy's Lane Commemoration (July)
- Niagara Cricket and Bollywood Festival (August)
- Autumn in the Glen Tour (September)
- Majestic Monarchs Event (September)
- Niagara Wine Festival (September)
- Niagara Falls International Marathon (October)
- Niagara Falls Santa Claus Parade (November)
- New Year's Eve Celebrations (December)
- Niagara Winter Games (January – February)
- Niagara 1814 Campaign Symposium
- Niagara Falls Comic Con (June)
- Springlicious (May - June)
- TD Rink at the Brink (December – February)

### 1.5.3 Staff Resources

Direct staff attributable to the provision of Niagara Falls cultural services are as follows:

The Niagara Falls Museums have 7.5 full time staff with 5 summer students. Further, 50% of one Community Development Officer's time is allocated to cultural services. If we assume that the 5 summer students are approximately 1 FTE, then there are approximately 9 FTEs directly allocated in culture in the City.

Staff have a community development philosophy of providing services to the community meaning that their orientation is to support activities that are initiated by the community rather than generating many of these initiatives directly.

Niagara Falls Public Library employs 53 FTEs.

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<sup>7</sup> Several events listed on <http://visitniagaracanada.com/events> web site.

### 1.5.4 Financial Support to Arts, Culture and Heritage

The following shows a summary of the City's main financial support to arts, culture and heritage in the City from the 2013 Budget, compiled through a review of the City's budget information and discussions with City staff.

Arts and Culture Committee Budget	\$7,525
Museums Operating Budget	\$1,076,144
In Kind Contributions to Culture Groups	
<i>Materials</i>	\$9,465
<i>Hydro</i>	\$12,693
<i>Insurance</i>	\$22,990
<i>Water</i>	\$2,008
Fees for Service (Art Gallery, and NF Concert Band.)	\$33,400
External transfers	\$2,947
Winter Festival of Lights	\$342,000
Other Culture Staffing	
<i>Recreation Culture Management (15%)*</i>	\$43,833
<i>Community Development Coordinator (50%)**</i>	\$44,747
Municipal Culture Budget Total (excluding library)	\$1,597,752
Niagara Falls Library Operating Budget Total	\$3,942,770
<b>Culture and Public Library Combined Total</b>	<b>\$5,540,522</b>

\* based upon estimated proportion of time spent by Director and support staff upon Culture portfolio

\*\* based upon estimated half-time spent on Culture activities

The City budget for culture last year was \$1.6 million, for the Public Library board \$3.9 million and \$5.5 million combined.



## 2. Data Collection and Situation Assessment

### 2.1 Data Collection Activities

This initial section of the Report contains description of the key data collection activities undertaken in the course of the development of the Culture Plan. After an initial review of background documents to understand the key context in which the plan was being developed (see Appendix 1 for a listing of these), a variety of data collection activities were undertaken including: interviews and focus group sessions (see Section 2.1.1); an online community survey (see Section 2.1.2); an online survey of cultural groups and organizations (see Section 2.1.3); two open house sessions (Section 2.1.4); a review of facilities currently being used by arts groups (Section 2.1.5); and a benchmarking review of other communities' activities with respect to the provision of cultural opportunities. Section 2.2 reports on the synthesis of the themes and suggestions gleaned from these data collection activities.

#### 2.1.1 Interviews and Focus Groups with Key Stakeholders

One of the first tasks undertaken was a series of interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders. The emphasis in these initial interviews was to talk to individuals who represented a particular viewpoint of a cultural organization or the municipality. The purpose of these initial interviews was to understand *context*: how the organization contributed to the cultural life of the community; what issues and opportunities they faced; and what sorts of actions they would like to see from the City that would contribute to the cultural life of the community (not just from the perspective of their organization, but overall as well). The meetings were held as focus group sessions in some cases, and individual interviews in others.

In total, some 60 individuals were consulted through this process. A list of individuals consulted can be found in Appendix 2. The findings and themes generated from these interviews and focus group sessions are summarized in Section 2.2.2 of this Report.

#### 2.1.2 Community Survey

In order to provide all residents of the City with an opportunity to provide input to the Culture Plan, an on-line community survey was developed. Appendix 3 to this Report contains the actual questionnaire used. The survey was promoted through an advertisement in the Niagara Falls **Review**, as well as a link being posted on-line on the City website. A prize (iPad kindly donated by Beatties Basics, a local office supply company) was offered as an incentive to participate in the survey. The survey ran through December 2013 and into the first half of January 2014.

In total 305 respondents answered the survey. Most respondents to the survey (approximately 80%) lived in the City of Niagara Falls, with the bulk of the rest being residents of the Region. Good representation was achieved in terms of age (the iPad survey was likely responsible for a larger proportion of 'under thirties' [20%] than is usually the case for a survey of this type); household type; geographical distribution throughout the City; educational attainment; and economic situation.



The top-line survey results were as follows.

### A) Respondent Characteristics

**- gender:**

<i>male</i>	40.7%
<i>female</i>	59.3%

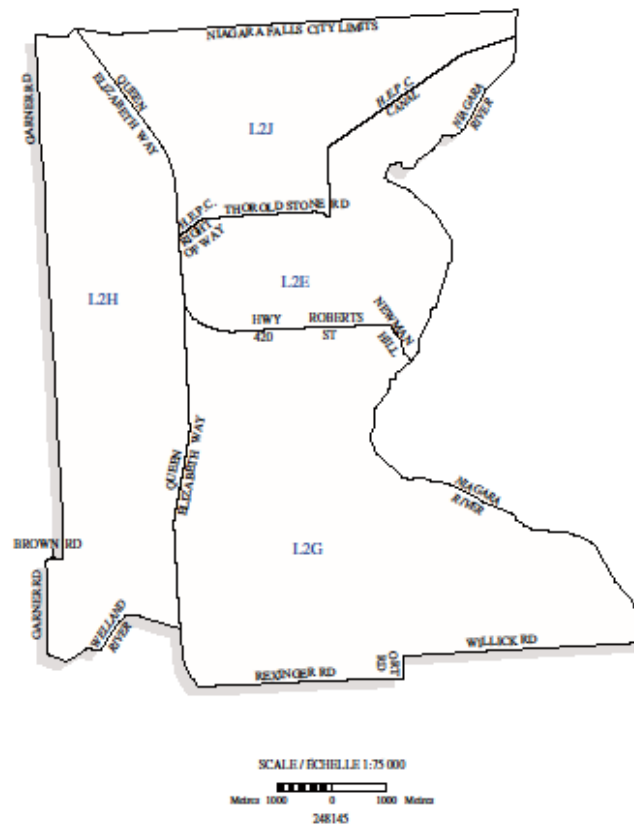
**- age range:**

<i>19 or under</i>	5.2%
<i>20 – 29</i>	15.1%
<i>30 - 39</i>	16.1%
<i>40 – 49</i>	21.6%
<i>50 - 64</i>	32.8%
<i>65 - 79</i>	8.5%
<i>80+</i>	0.7%

**- household situation:**

<i>single</i>	28.3%
<i>couple only</i>	29.7%
<i>3 or more adults living together</i>	14.7%
<i>couple with child or children under 13</i>	16.1%
<i>couple with teens</i>	11.1%

- **place of residence** (note that the map following shows the four Forward Sortation Areas (FSAs) that comprise the City)



L2E	24.0%
L2G	21.4%
L2H	19.7%
L2J	12.8%
In City but not sure of FSA	0.7%
Elsewhere in Region	15.1%
Elsewhere in Ontario	3.9%
Elsewhere in Canada	0.3%
In the USA	1.0%
Elsewhere	1.0%

**- educational status:**

<i>Some high school</i>	6.7%
<i>High school certificate</i>	10.2%
<i>Apprenticeship or trades certificate</i>	4.6%
<i>Some university or college</i>	36.4%
<i>Graduated university or college – bachelor's</i>	28.6%
<i>Graduated university or college – graduate degree</i>	13.4%

**- economic situation:**

<i>I am single wage earner</i>	23.2%
<i>I am one of two or more wage earners</i>	47.5%
<i>I am retired</i>	14.1%
<i>I am currently unemployed</i>	4.4%
<i>I am a student</i>	10.8%

**- personal involvement in arts, culture, heritage:**

<i>I am a user of Niagara Falls Public Library</i>	69.0%
<i>I am a consumer of arts, culture and /or heritage experiences: part of the audience</i>	69.3%
<i>I am a creator: an artist, craftsperson, or maker of cultural products or experiences</i>	28.9%
<i>I am active in the performing arts</i>	15.3%
<i>I am involved in heritage activities and organizations</i>	21.6%
<i>I provide services (e.g. financial, insurance, retail supplies, etc.) to the sector</i>	11.1%

**- use of the library:**

<i>I take out books</i>	85.6%
<i>I use it for research</i>	63.9%
<i>I am a member of a group or organization that uses library space for performance, meetings, etc.</i>	22.2%
<i>I participate in culture and heritage programs put on by the library</i>	29.4%
<i>I use the library for networking and socializing</i>	26.8%
<i>I get community information from the library</i>	55.7%

**- involvement with arts and culture:**

<i>performing arts: music</i>	46.6%
<i>performing arts: dance</i>	20.7%
<i>performing arts: theatre</i>	39.2%
<i>visual arts</i>	40.5%
<i>writing and the literary arts</i>	34.9%
<i>new media / digital arts</i>	29.7%
<i>history and heritage</i>	51.3%
<i>teaching in any of the activities listed above</i>	18.5%

**Which arts, culture and heritage organizations are you a member of or been actively involved with in the City of Niagara Falls? (Please check as many as apply) – TOP 12**

<i>Niagara Falls Public Library</i>	53.4%
<i>YMCA of Niagara</i>	32.0%
<i>Niagara Falls Museums</i>	25.3%
<i>Niagara Concerts</i>	16.9%
<i>Arts &amp; Culture Committee, City of Niagara Falls</i>	15.2%
<i>Lundy's Lane Historical Society</i>	14.0%
<i>Community Artists Niagara (CAn)</i>	10.7%
<i>Friends of Lundy's Lane Battlefield</i>	8.4%
<i>Niagara Falls Camera Club</i>	7.9%
<i>Niagara Falls Music Theatre Society</i>	7.3%
<i>Niagara Literary Arts Festival (NLAF)</i>	6.2%
<i>City of Niagara Falls Heritage Committee</i>	6.2%

**- economic dependency upon the arts, culture:**

<i>Hobby or pastime</i>	71.0%
<i>Derive some part-time income</i>	14.7%
<i>Full-time livelihood</i>	14.3%

**B) Perception of Gaps or Deficiencies in Municipal Offering**

***Do you see any major gaps or deficiencies in what is offered by the City in any of the arts, culture or heritage activities areas listed below?***

	<i>Major Gap or Deficiency</i>	<i>Some Gap / Deficiency</i>	<i>No Gap / Deficiency</i>
- visual arts	35.8%	43.3%	20.9%
- performing arts	36.1%	44.1%	19.8%
- digital arts . multimedia	31.3%	43.2%	25.6%
- literary arts	26.3%	50.0%	23.7%
- other media (pottery, macramé)	12.8%	46.7%	28.1%
- history and heritage	12.8%	49.2%	38.0%
- multicultural	24.9%	49.2%	26.0%

**C) Attitudes**

**To what extent do you agree with the following statements:**

	<b>Definitely Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Mixed Feelings</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Definitely Disagree</b>	<b>Can't Say / Don't Know</b>
<i>arts, culture and heritage opportunities are critically important to a healthy community</i>	79.1%	13.7%	4.3%	0.5%	1.4%	0.9%
<i>demand for arts, culture and heritage opportunities is growing in the City</i>	42.5%	30.2%	15.1%	3.8%	0.9%	7.5%
<i>the City of Niagara Falls should provide more funding for arts, culture and heritage organizations so that they in turn can provide more opportunities for residents</i>	56.6%	20.8%	12.3%	3.3%	4.2%	2.8%
<i>the City of Niagara Falls should do more to promote its arts, culture and heritage assets to tourists and visitors</i>	66.4%	20.4%	6.6%	2.4%	2.4%	1.9%

## Open-Ended Comments

Besides the areas that you have commented upon, are there any other major gaps you see in art, culture and heritage opportunities available in the City of Niagara Falls? (78 responses)

Theme	No. of mentions
No	7
More opportunities for live music	5
More funding for arts groups	5
More diversity and multiculturalism	4
Art gallery space for locals to exhibit	3
Better promotion of events	3
Need one centralized place for the arts	3
Funding for individual artists	2
More incentives for heritage preservation	2
Sylvia Place market has tremendous untapped potential	2
Promotion of Lundy's Lane Battlefield as major historic site	1
Better branding of Niagara Falls as a cultural centre	1
More opportunities for youth	1
More cooperation between Niagara Parks Commission and the City (example: cooperation on a Tesla museum / exhibit)	1
Performing arts facility that is affordable by community groups	1
More activities in the City's north end	1
Too much focus just on Queen St.	1
Busking should be allowed and encouraged	1
Need stronger support from Council	1
Support from local press	1
Lack of public art in the public realm	1
Need an alternative movie theatre or movie festival	1

Do you see any opportunities for new programs or services for the City of Niagara Falls in terms of programs and services that could be offered by existing or new non-profit and community organizations?  
(115 responses)

Theme	No. of mentions
"no" – no further comment provided	11
"yes" – no specific suggestions made	7
Need to support existing ones – ensure they can grow and thrive	7
Should have one art centre / cultural hub	7
More multicultural activities	6
More activities for children & youth	5
More opportunities for younger children	4
More events and activities downtown and in the parks	4
Need more outreach and awareness of what we already have	4
Need affordable venues / cultural hub	4
Need more marketing and promotion of what we already have	3
More contact with tourists	2
Mayor and Council needs to be more supportive	2
City should educate individuals and groups on how to use social media more effectively	1
More multimedia opportunities	1
Should have something for international students	1
Writer in residence program at the library	1
Bring back networking nights (used to be run through Arts Council)	1
Creative (artistic) use of public spaces	1
Literary programs (for emergent authors)	1
More programs for seniors	1
Revamped website showing cultural activities available	1
More First Nations activities	1
More family-oriented activities	1
City should support murals	1
Help younger artists to become professional and commercialize their skills	1
Greater promotion of our heritage	1
Greater encouragement of volunteers	1

Do you see any opportunities for new programs or services for the City of Niagara Falls in terms of new programs and services that could be offered by the private sector? (93 comments)

Theme	No. of mentions
"no" or "not sure" – <i>no further comment provided</i>	14
"yes" – <i>no specific suggestions made</i>	6
More sponsorships for events and other cultural activities should be sought, as well as sponsorship for capital facilities	5
City could partner more with the private sector in the development of new cultural facilities and activities	4
Is a growing demand for small culturally-oriented supply businesses (instruction, supplies, etc.)	4
Encourage private sector through subsidies in using heritage buildings	3
Need more private venues for live music	2
Demand for cooking schools / culinary instruction	1
Co-op studio space, which could be offered through the private sector, is needed	1
Public facilities (e.g. library) could charge more for specific types of services	1

Do existing arts, culture and heritage facilities (theatres, rehearsal spaces, art galleries, etc.) in the City of Niagara Falls need to be improved? If so, please indicate which facilities and what should be done? (115 comments)

Theme	No. of mentions
Niagara Falls Art Gallery – remote, tired facility, needs better exhibition space, new facility	14
Not really sure what improvements are needed (note one comment: <i>we have these??</i> )	11
No – would cost too much	9
Firehall Theatre needs improvement – consider selling it	8
Seneca Theatre needs improvement – consider acquiring	7
All facilities need modernizing	7
NFCVI needs renovation, better use	6
Queen Street still needs work	6
Everything is fine as is	3
Need a central arts facility	4
Need access to a larger concert venue	2
Military Museum – needs maintenance, better utilization	2
Need a space that is larger than the downtown library for large cultural events	1
Stamford Library needs improvement	1
Need proper multicultural Native Centre	1
More parks	1
Senior's Centre should incorporate arts / culture facilities	1
Niagara District Art Association space (Victoria St. library) needs relocation	1



Does the City of Niagara Falls need new arts, culture and heritage facilities of any kind? If so, what kind of facilities and why? (118 comments)

Theme	No. of mentions
No – not at taxpayer expense; should improve what we have	24
Yes – performing arts facility	21
Yes – public art gallery	17
Yes – a Cultural Hub / Arts Centre	11
Yes – centre for interactive media	1
Yes – outdoor amphitheatre	3
Yes, generally	4
Yes, but we should use buildings and facilities we already have	9
Need an arts/heritage district or precinct	1
Should re-visit using Queen St. as a cultural district	2
Facility for artist-in-residence program	2

Do you have any final comments that you would like to provide to assist us with the development of this plan?

Theme	No. of mentions
Comments expressing general support for a Culture Plan	17
Comments expressing hope that Council will back the Culture Plan	4
The Culture Plan needs to be unique to the City; we need to create our own identity	3
The focus should clearly be on residents, not tourist – we are more than just a tourist destination	4
The image of Niagara Falls is tired and needs refreshment	3
Can't forget that tourists are a big market as well for 'local' cultural product	3
Need a central agency or cultural hub	3
More support (better funding for individuals and organizations) for culture is needed	2
More communication and awareness is needed	2
Continue the process of community engagement	1
More facilities and spaces are needed	1
Need to ensure the City is clean and welcoming	1
Need to recognize the excellence of our public library and promote it to a greater extent	1

### 2.1.3 Organizations Survey

Another key data input was a survey of culture and related organizations in the City of Niagara Falls, in order to obtain their perspectives on the kinds of issues and opportunities that should be addressed in the Culture Plan. An on-line survey was developed, mostly consisting of open-ended questions, and notification sent to over 100 community organizations. Of these, 28 responses were obtained (some representing multiple responses from one organization). Those organizations responding were:

- Niagara Falls Art Gallery (NFAG) (multiple responses)
- Niagara Falls Music Theatre Society
- Niagara Falls School of Drama
- Peterson Community Workshop Association
- Niagara Memorial Militaries Alumni Drum and Bugle Corps
- Village of Chippawa Citizen's Committee
- The Carmel Fine Art and Music Festival
- The Friends of Stamford Village
- Niagara Falls Museum Advisory Board
- Niagara Falls Municipal Heritage Committee (multiple responses)
- Niagara Woodcarver's Association
- Niagara Scouting Museum (multiple responses)
- Niagara Falls Concert Band
- Niagara Military Museum (multiple responses)
- Stick 'n Needles Guild
- Niagara Concerts
- Stamford Centre Volunteer Fireman's Association
- Parkway Artists Guild
- City of Niagara Falls Art and Culture Committee
- Friends of Lundy's Lane Battlefield
- Faherty DeMenezes Academy of Irish Dance

Not surprisingly, these organizations were strong advocates for the arts and for the City increasing its support of their group specifically, as well as arts and culture generally throughout the City. Key themes relating to specific topic areas probed in the survey were:

#### Facilities:

- specific comments about deficiencies in specific facilities used (Firehall Theatre, Art Gallery, Armoury)
- strong support expressed for a centralized Cultural Hub where a variety of arts and culture activities could be offered and where there would be a critical mass and presence for the arts – at the same time, a fair degree of skepticism that such a facility could ever be developed was expressed

#### Staffing:

- several strong compliments and appreciation regarding existing City staff support for organizations

- for some, City assistance for maintenance and upgrading of facilities (especially those owned by the City) was desirable
- general comment to the effect that it would be nice if more City staff (and politicians) knew of the programs and activities put on by the various groups
- staff assistance with various aspects of ‘capacity-building’ was mentioned as being desirable: grant-writing; marketing and promotion; audience development; volunteer recruitment; financial management; use of social media
- City staff and resources should assist more actively with promotion of the organizations’ events and activities

### **Funding:**

- existing ‘fee for service’ arrangements were acknowledged and appreciated – however...
- ...additional funding was a desire expressed across the board – NFAG in particular mentioned funding that would give them a net gain so that it could be devoted to additional programs and services (as opposed to just enabling them to pay their property taxes)
- further to this point, there was a general recognition that sport and recreation-related organizations in the City are much better funded than arts, culture and heritage organizations, and a sense that this Culture Plan represented a start at redressing this balance
- assistance with marketing and promotional expenses (or access to City resources to print brochures, etc.) – thus saving the organization money

### **Other:**

- general appreciation of the fact that the City was developing this plan and a guide to its enhanced investment in culture
- the City has a gem in the Kurelek collection and it should be better cared for and promoted than it is – it has the potential to be a significant visitor attraction (several comments to this effect and not all from NFAG respondents)
- some comments reflecting on the fact that many of the offerings of cultural organizations would be of interest to the ‘cultural tourist’ and thus that the City should be marketing its local cultural products to this market as well
- need stronger representation and advocacy for culture and the arts at Council (some mention of the lack of Council interest and representation on Culture and Heritage Advisory Committees)

#### **2.1.4 Open Houses**

Two open houses for the public were held. The first, in March 2014, was held to explain the purpose of the Culture Plan and to solicit input in terms of the main opportunities and ideas that people wanted to see expressed in the Plan. Attendees to the session were also told of the on-line survey and invited to participate through that venue. About 40 individuals came to the session. After an initial presentation,

participants were divided into small break-out discussion sessions and led through a series of questions designed to solicit this input.

In June of 2014 a second open house was held. Here the purpose was to explain the main themes that had been emerging from the research, the likely recommendations implied, and to obtain any feedback in terms of these potential directions. Again, approximately 40 individuals attended and there was good discussion. There was general consensus expressed for the overall direction of the recommendations.

#### **2.1.5 Facilities Review**

One of the key tasks of the project was to review the existing City owned facilities (or those used by City cultural organizations). The City Building Use and Condition Assessment (March 2013) undertaken by City staff and presented to Council was a very useful starting point and provided critical background information. Our assessment of buildings is presented in the following charts.

**City of Niagara Falls Culture Plan: Assessment of Cultural Facilities**

<b>Building</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Present Usage</b>	<b>Suitability for Arts Centre</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Willoughby Town Hall</b> , 11211 Sodom Road, Willoughby	Hall – 2,026 sq. ft. Small garage – 540 sq. ft. Barn garage – 1194 sq. ft. 1 floor, 2 acres	Est. 1877 and is a heritage. Hall includes a large kitchen, accessible washrooms; also includes small garage and barn garage	Serves seniors groups in Willoughby community. Rented once or twice a week for a nominal fee.	No. Not accessible, Willoughby location is too remote and building is not large enough.	Could be sold and revenue re-allocated towards purchase of another more suitable building. There are community rooms available to rent across the street and down the road that can service this small rural area in a similar capacity.
<b>Chippawa Town Hall</b> , 8198 Cummington Square, Chippawa	3,043 sq. feet total; 3 floors	Est. 1842 and is a heritage building. Old Town Hall in downtown Chippawa. Arts and craft retail shop in front. Small art studio on first floor. Large art studio on 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor. Basement presently being used for storage.	Rented by Peterson's Community Workshop group who offer children and adult art and theatre classes. Also, operate arts and craft shop.	No. Location is not central enough and is presently rented.	Could be sold and revenue re-allocated towards purchase of another more suitable building.
<b>Scotiabank Convention Centre</b> , 6815 Stanley Ave., Niagara Falls	200,000+ sq. feet facility; multi-levels	Est. circa 2009. Brand new convention centre with 1000 seat stage, multiple rentable convention area's, administrative space, Port Colborne Lounge etc.	Leased to a management company who secure rentals.	No. Suitable for large conventions, concerts and banquets.	Use for special events, etc. when possible.

<b>Building</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Present Usage</b>	<b>Suitability for Arts Centre</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Niagara Falls Farmers Market</b> 5943 Sylvia Place, Niagara Falls	660 sq. feet; 1 floor	Est. circa 1967. Includes 4 indoor booths; 20 outdoor booths (booth=parking spot); garage doors to open inside and out; situated in large parking lot. Plans for replacement in 2014.	Used as farmer's market on Saturday's only.	No. Very small and is not suitable for the needs of artists. Scheduled for demolition?	Location is very good and could create "cultural precinct" with proximity to Niagara Falls History Museum and new market building. Procurement of additional properties in this area could be beneficial.
<b>Niagara Centre for the Arts,</b> 4770 Epworth Circle, Niagara Falls	? Sq. feet.; 2 floors	Est. 1893 with many subsequent additions. Old high school with 1000 seat theatre; over 100 classrooms; music studio; cafeteria; industrial kitchen; 2 gymnasiums. Has not been operating as a school since the 1980's.	Music studio is functioning. Exchange student program in summer. Presently under renovation to repair extensive flood damage to theatre and main entrance.	Yes but privately owned. Lots of inexpensive space - 100+ classrooms presently vacant that could be used.	Opportunity to discuss usage of space with owner. Lots of suitable empty space that could possibly be inexpensive to rent.
<b>CORE Building,</b> 5017 Victoria Ave., Niagara Falls	5,126 sq. feet; 3 floors	Est. 1910. Historical – former Carnegie Library Building	Presently rented out to several not for profit businesses.	Possible.	Consider selling this building to help finance the cost of the cultural hub.
<b>Armoury Building,</b> 5049 Victoria Ave., Niagara Falls	6,581 sq. feet; 3 floors	Est. ?. Includes many rooms being used to house military collections. Large ballroom with stage; officers lounge with bar	Presently being operated as the Niagara Falls Military Museum.	Not sure. Believe that Council has indicated that the Armoury building retain a military purpose. Does presently have some unused rooms and space available.	Uncertain – possible use for Cultural Hub could be considered in feasibility study

<b>Building</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Present Usage</b>	<b>Suitability for Arts Centre</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Firehall Theatre</b> 4990 Walnut Street, Niagara Falls	9,618 sq. feet; 3 floors	Est. 1917 with later additions. Includes 150 seat theatre, green rooms, rehearsal space upstairs, costume room downstairs and café/seating in front.	The Niagara Falls Music Theatre Society mounts 24 performances per year. It is also rented to the Niagara Falls School of Drama.	No. Presently serving community for community theatre. Not really suitable for arts space.	Possible sale of building to help fund the culture hub if the new hub includes suitable community theatre space.
<b>Seneca Theatre,</b> 4624 Queen Street, Niagara Falls	? sq. feet; 3 floors	300 max. seat theatre; dressing rooms, rehearsal space, large lobby	Rented to Lyndesfarne Players professional theatre group.	No. Not a City owned building. Space is best suited as a theatre.	Consider acquisition.

### 2.1.6 Benchmarking Other Communities

Through discussion and agreement with the Steering Committee, the following communities were reviewed:

- Burlington
- Cambridge
- Guelph
- Orillia
- Peterborough

A first significant finding is that all communities with the exception of Guelph had cultural plans that governed their municipality's expenditures in cultural and heritage activities. Additionally, municipalities have various other policies governing cultural activities:

- Public art policy (all 5)
- Heritage plaque program
- Downtown heritage district
- Partnership program for funding cultural events
- Heritage property tax relief
- Heritage recognition program
- Facility fee waiver grant – waives rent for government owned buildings

All municipalities except Cambridge have a separate department that manages activities in culture and heritage. Generally, arts and culture fall under community services while heritage is a planning responsibility.

Regarding staffing, the review found high variability in FTEs devoted to culture for both library operations as well as other aspects of arts and culture provision. As the table shows, Niagara Falls was approximately in the middle of the set (table below is ranked in terms of arts & culture staff provision).

Benchmark Community	Library Staff per 1000 residents	Arts, culture staff per 1000 residents
Cambridge	0.36	0.04
Burlington	0.64	0.04
<b>Niagara Falls</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.10</b>
Guelph	0.60	0.16
Peterborough	0.40	0.22
Orillia	0.71	0.36

Three of the municipalities blend their arts, culture and heritage activities, whereas 2 keep heritage distinct from culture activities. All municipalities have an advisory group that works with staff and/or Council to advise on arts, culture and heritage activities.

The review found a wide range of activities that were undertaken by municipalities to support arts, culture and heritage activities. Examples include:

- Coordinate Doors Open and Culture Days
- Provide grants or operating funds for many groups
- Run performing arts facilities, museums, art galleries as well as public libraries
- Provide space to groups



- Public art programs
- Help with special events
- Heritage designations
- Heritage property tax relief
- Conservation of city owned heritage resources
- Provide funding to owners of heritage properties
- Operate facilities and provide programming in these facilities
- Undertake heritage conservation districts, CIPs, etc.

Information from the 2013 Municipal Financial Information Returns (FIRs) from the provincial government that shows the expenditure for communities on arts and culture (on a consistent basis) is shown below. It is notable that Niagara Falls' combined per capita expenditure is among the lowest of the group<sup>8</sup>.

Benchmark Community	Resident Population (2012)	Libraries	Museums	Cultural Services	Library per cap	Museums per cap	Cultural services per cap	Combined per cap
Orillia	30,586	\$2,578,074	\$0	\$2,692,939	\$84	\$0	\$88	\$172
Guelph	121,688	\$8,362,397	\$1,377,500	\$4,610,574	\$69	\$11	\$38	\$118
Burlington	175,779	\$9,092,661	\$6,145,268	\$0	\$52	\$35	\$0	\$87
Peterborough	78,698	\$2,531,898	\$723,352	\$2,404,600	\$32	\$9	\$31	\$72
Niagara Falls	82,997	\$4,621,168	\$1,068,474	\$37,821	\$56	\$13	\$0	\$69
Cambridge	126,748	\$5,713,910	\$0	\$1,373,570	\$45	\$0	\$11	\$56

Additional observations are as follows:

- Most municipalities have one-off grants programs to which arts, cultural groups may apply. Process is a formal one. Operating grants are approved by Council.
- All municipalities maintain historic buildings or sites.
- All municipalities have a formal public art policy.
- A wide variety of festivals and events is supported by each municipality. They are usually organized by a combination of the municipality and third parties.

<sup>8</sup> The average weighted per capita expenditure for all other communities was nearly \$100, almost \$30 more than Niagara's current per capita expenditure. If Niagara spent at the same level as this average, it would imply an additional \$250,000 in municipal cultural expenditure.

## 2.2 Situation Assessment

### 2.2.1 Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Assessment

A SWOT assessment can form the basis of a strategic plan in the sense that the plan should protect and capitalize upon **strengths**; fix (where possible) **weaknesses**; recognize and embrace (where appropriate and feasible) **opportunities**; and understand and plan for **threats**. Typically, the kinds of strategic actions resulting from a SWOT assessment would be the following:

<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote areas of advantage and consider using strengths in branding and image development</li> <li>• capitalize upon existing strengths through further development</li> <li>• protect competitive advantages that the community has over others</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• address and strengthen (where possible) areas of weakness</li> <li>• re-frame areas of weakness into 'opportunities for improvement'</li> <li>• where no improvement is possible, downplay significance and importance of weakness</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop plans to mobilize resources to exploit opportunities that are clearly beneficial</li> <li>• undertake feasibility assessments / due diligence / business planning on opportunities where cost/benefit is uncertain</li> </ul>
<b>Threats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• undertake risk assessment analyses for potential threats</li> <li>• develop contingency plans for areas where threats are significant</li> </ul>

Compiling the comments and various points raised in the interviews, surveys and other data collection activities over the course of the project, the following summary analysis presents the SWOT assessment compiled:

<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong base of cultural activity in the community (music, visual and performing arts, literary) – <i>but little understood or recognized: see 'weaknesses'</i></li> <li>• (related to the above) iconic cultural figures (past and present) that come from Niagara Falls who demonstrate the talent base of the City (Deadmau5; James Cameron, Frank Schuster)</li> <li>• extremely significant national and regional history</li> <li>• relatively recent museum development very well regarded</li> <li>• library programs well used, well regarded</li> <li>• fact that City has invested in this Culture Plan is seen to be a strong and positive signal</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of awareness and recognition regarding cultural activity in the community</li> <li>• no 'critical mass' for culture: central place where culture is brought together</li> <li>• (related point) arts activities are dispersed and some are quite inaccessible (NFAG; Wall of Fame)</li> <li>• performing arts activities are not well promoted (due to lack of marketing resources) and consequently audiences are thin and budgets tight</li> <li>• some facilities underutilized</li> <li>• funding model for arts groups not well articulated: only a few groups obtain funding and is on a seemingly ad hoc basis</li> <li>• no strong, well funded public arts program in place</li> <li>• arts organizations, being largely volunteer based, lack certain key professional skills and talents that would help with their overall sustainability</li> <li>• arts organizations themselves not good at sharing information, or connecting for common cause (advocacy)</li> <li>• downtown areas where cultural activities would normally be found (Queen Street, Lundy's Lane) look tired, in need of revitalization</li> <li>• no sense of presence or arrival in culturally significant areas of City</li> </ul>

<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• future casino revenues accruing to municipality could be used (in part) to better fund cultural facilities and programs</li> <li>• opportunity for cultural activities to help revitalize Queen Street and the Lundy's Lane area</li> <li>• opportunity to develop an Arts Hub where a variety of arts activities can be brought together (which would include a public art gallery)</li> <li>• opportunity to develop a strong and funded public arts program to signal importance of art to the community</li> <li>• opportunities for greater range of festivals and events</li> <li>• opportunities to provide a range of skills to cultural organizations ('capacity-building')</li> <li>• opportunities for City to partner more effectively with other organizations for the provision of cultural activities (e.g. Niagara Parks Commission, Niagara Centre for the Arts)</li> <li>• opportunity to create more of a gateway or sense of arrival into key cultural areas of the City</li> </ul>
<b>Threats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skepticism that Council will adopt this Culture Plan</li> <li>• lack of Council interest and enthusiasm for cultural planning</li> <li>• fear that erosion of City's historical resources will be allowed to continue</li> <li>• fear that sports and recreation will continue to 'trump' culture</li> <li>• fear that lure of creating attractions for the benefit of tourists alone will alienate the community and result in facilities that do not primarily meet the needs of residents</li> <li>• lack of cultural opportunities for youth and possibility of young people leaving the community in search of opportunities elsewhere</li> </ul>

### 2.2.2 Inventory and Categorization of Themes Heard in the Analysis

A variety of activities was undertaken in order to collect data to inform the Culture Plan. These included:

- a comprehensive review of all relevant background information and reports
- an interview program with the Mayor and several municipal Councillors, civic staff and key stakeholders
- a survey of the general public (which elicited 308 responses)
- a survey of arts, culture and heritage organizations in the City (to which 29 responses were received)
- a benchmark assessment of five selected other communities (decided in consultation with the Steering Committee for the project) to determine any 'lessons learned' for this Cultural Plan
- a review of the financial investment by the City into the arts, culture and heritage sector
- a review of municipally owned properties in the City (that might be used for arts, culture and heritage purposes)

These data collection activities were undertaken over the period November 2013 to March 2014.

### ***Initiatives Suggested***

From these various data collection activities, a number of themes and suggestions were heard. These related to the following general areas:

- A. **Overall Policy:** A major theme heard from the interviews, as well as seen in the benchmarking assessment of other communities, was the need for a defined policy for the City to guide investment in arts, culture and heritage. This was expressed most frequently as an endorsement of the development of this Culture Plan, and the hope that it would be embraced by Council. The negative or skeptical version of this theme was some fear that the plan would be simply shelved and/or ignored.
- B. **Facilities:** Many comments from all respondents revolved around a need for improved facilities at all levels (performing arts, visual arts, library facilities, etc.) A dominant theme heard by many in the community was that the City lacked, and needed, a focal point around which arts and culture activities could coalesce.
- C. **Programs and Activities:** Some suggestions were made regarding specific arts-related programs and facilities activities that could be put in place. Note: in this context that the long-term philosophy of the City in this regard is to enable arts groups and organizations to put on their own programming, rather than the City doing it directly (this ensuring that the programs would meet a defined market need represented by the membership or constituency of the groups themselves.) Nevertheless, some suggestions were made regarding programs that the City might mount directly.
- D. **Festivals and Events:** The City already supports several festivals and events (e.g. Winter Festival of Lights, Springlicious). Several comments were made to the effect that more such events might be held in order to provide more of a year-round offering to the public (which might also draw upon a tourist market as certain times of the year).
- E. **Public Art:** The maintenance of a public art program is visible and demonstrable evidence of a community's commitment to art and culture. Several respondents wanted to see that a public art program be developed and a specific element of the Culture Plan be developed here.
- F. **Staffing:** A common theme heard was that there should be a staff position dedicated to working with arts, culture and heritage groups in the community and specifically oriented towards implementing and nurturing the plan developed here. In part, this perception was fueled by the knowledge of a similar position in St. Catharines (the Cultural Planning Supervisor) that was thought to be working very well to coordinate and work with cultural organizations.
- G. **Partnerships:** Another theme frequently mentioned was the need and opportunity to connect more effectively with other potential partners in the provision of arts, cultural and heritage opportunities in the community. There can be a number of partners in this regard: neighbouring municipalities (St. Catharines was most frequently mentioned in this regard); regional and provincial agencies such as the Niagara Parks Commission, as well as potential corporate sponsors and foundations.
- H. **Funding:** Likely as a result of the publicity surrounding the additional amounts that would be accruing to Niagara Falls as a result of the revised casino agreement<sup>9</sup> many of those interviewed and surveyed feel that some portion of the additional revenues should be devoted to cultural activities.

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<sup>9</sup> In essence, the City of Niagara Falls will now be receiving a percentage of the casino revenues rather than a fixed fee as had been the case in the past. Previously, the City had been receiving \$3 million annually; now it may be up to \$20 million, a considerable increase (the exact amount will vary according to how much business the casinos do in a given year). However, out of these additional revenues the City will now have to pay the costs of increased policing, estimated to be between \$4 and \$5 million per year. Even so, this is considered to be something of a 'windfall' for the City. While there will be a significant call on these revenues for basic infrastructure improvements and related costs, many in the cultural community feel that a modest proportion of the additional revenues should go towards cultural activity of some sort.

- I. **Improved Awareness, Communications and Coordination:** Yet another common theme articulated was the need for improved communications and coordination among the various groups and organizations involved in cultural activities in Niagara Falls. A related concern related to a lack of awareness as to the size and extent of the cultural community in the City.

These were the major 'clusters' of themes identified in the study. Under each, there are specific suggestions and themes mentioned. The matrix chart below shows each of these themes (under these categories) and shows which source of information (i.e. data collection methodology) the suggestion comes from. (A final source category – 'from the consultants' indicates suggestions that come from the consultants' knowledge of similar communities elsewhere, beyond the 'benchmarked' communities mentioned above.

## Inventory of Themes from the Data Collection

Issue / Theme	From Background Materials	From Interviews	From Community Survey	From Organization Survey	From Benchmarked Communities	From Facilities Reviews	From Financial Analysis	From Consultants Experience
<b>A. Overall Policy and Council Direction</b>								
• need for Council to adopt and implement this Cultural Strategy		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
• opportunity to update and more aggressively use CIPs to effect downtown revitalization				✓	✓			✓
• plan and implement a Cultural Summit (focused upon implementation of this Plan)								✓
• arts, culture and heritage needs to be a strong focus for downtown revitalization			✓		✓			
• greater focus on preservation and re-use of existing historic structures is needed		✓	✓		✓			
• Council support of the arts should be more evident (e.g. Council members coming to events openings, etc.)		✓	✓		✓			
• support the revitalization of the Queen Street area through educational institutions (where history, arts, culture could be part of the curriculum)	✓ <sup>10</sup>	✓	✓					
• ensure Council representation on Municipal Heritage Committee (MHC)				✓				
• ensure Council representation on Arts & Culture Committee (rather than “if there is interest”)	✓			✓				

<sup>10</sup> City of Niagara Falls, 2011 – 2014 Strategic Priorities

Issue / Theme	From Background Materials	From Interviews	From Community Survey	From Organization Survey	From Benchmarked Communities	From Facilities Reviews	From Financial Analysis	From Consultants Experience
<b>B. Facilities (Spaces and Places)</b>								
• need a focal point for arts and culture activities in the City (Cultural Centre)	✓ <sup>11,12</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
• need affordable performing arts venue for community use (300 – 500 seats)	✓ <sup>13</sup>		✓	✓	✓			
• need a place to display local art		✓	✓	✓	✓			
• need a better home for the Niagara Falls Art Gallery and its Kurelek Collection		✓	✓	✓				
• Niagara Children's Museum should continue in existing NFAG space		✓						
• Stamford Library branch is small and inefficient – needs renovation /replacement		✓		✓				
• Victoria Avenue library (main library) needs makeover		✓						
• need a 'store' or artist-run coop for local artists and crafts-persons to sell their goods			✓					
• feasibility of 'arts incubator' should be investigated (incorporating artist studio space)			✓					✓
• consider sale of under-utilized Willoughby Town Hall – proceeds from sale could be used to help finance cultural activities	✓ <sup>14</sup>	✓				✓		
• consider sale of Chippawa Town Hall – proceeds from sale could be used to help finance cultural activities – Peterson Workshop could be relocated, if unable to purchase building themselves	✓ <sup>15</sup>							
• Sylvia Place Market: implement the Sylvia Place plan to expand and diversify the market	✓ <sup>16,17</sup>					✓		
• Niagara Centre for the Arts – retain/develop close working relationship with owner to ensure that he is aware of this Culture Plan and that opportunities for partnerships are realized	✓ <sup>18</sup>	✓				✓		

<sup>11</sup> *Niagara Falls Arts and Culture Committee Business Plan*, January 2013

<sup>12</sup> City of Niagara Falls, *Strategic Plan for the Provision of Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture*, January 2007

<sup>13</sup> City of Niagara Falls, *Strategic Plan for the Provision of Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture*, January 2007

<sup>14</sup> City of Niagara Falls, *City Building Use and Condition Assessment*, March 2013

<sup>15</sup> City of Niagara Falls, *City Building Use and Condition Assessment*, March 2013

<sup>16</sup> Niagara Falls Sylvia Place Farmers Market, *Feasibility Study and Business Plan*, January 2008

<sup>17</sup> City of Niagara Falls, *City Building Use and Condition Assessment*, March 2013

<sup>18</sup> City of Niagara Falls, *City Building Use and Condition Assessment*, March 2013

Issue / Theme	From Background Materials	From Interviews	From Community Survey	From Organization Survey	From Benchmark Communities	From Facilities Reviews	From Financial Analysis	From Consultants Experience
• Proposed Niagara Entertainment Centre – retain/develop close working relationship with owner to ensure that he is aware of this Culture Plan and that opportunities for partnerships are realized		✓				✓		
• CORE Building – continue use as primary location for not-for-profit arts and culture uses – to extent possible focus use on this purpose	✓ <sup>19</sup>	✓		✓		✓		
• Armoury Building (current home of Niagara Falls Military Museum) – consider feasibility of using this as location for an Arts and Culture Centre (retaining Military Museum use)	✓ <sup>20</sup>	✓		✓		✓		
• Firehall Theatre – current home of Niagara Falls Music Theatre Society and Niagara Falls School of Drama – work with users to ensure continuing use and appropriate maintenance <i>or</i> sell and use funds to develop new Arts and Culture Centre (which tenants could use)	✓ <sup>21</sup>	✓		✓		✓		
• Seneca Theatre (current home of Lyndesfarne Theatre; not owned by City) – work with owner to ensure continuing use and availability for community use		✓				✓		
• relocate Niagara Falls Hall of Fame into a larger and more prestigious facility (possibly Arts and Culture Centre)		✓				✓		
• need for a large public square for community events		✓						
• Old Police Station – consider using for cultural purposes (possibly art incubator space?)		✓			✓			
• opportunity to make Lundy's Lane Battlefield a major attraction (similar to Gettysburg in US)	✓ <sup>22,23</sup>	✓	✓	✓				✓
• develop gateways - using public art as appropriate – into major historical and cultural precinct areas into the City	✓ <sup>24</sup>				✓			

<sup>19</sup> City of Niagara Falls, **City Building Use and Condition Assessment**, March 2013

<sup>20</sup> City of Niagara Falls, **City Building Use and Condition Assessment**, March 2013

<sup>21</sup> City of Niagara Falls, **City Building Use and Condition Assessment**, March 2013

<sup>22</sup> City of Niagara Falls, **Official Plan**, March 2013

<sup>23</sup> Niagara Falls, **Heritage Master Plan**, September 2005

<sup>24</sup> These would be Entrance Gateways and 'Landscaped Entry Points' as defined in the **City of Niagara Falls Official Plan**, March 2013



Issue / Theme	From Background Materials	From Interviews	From Community Survey	From Organization Survey	From Benchmarked Communities	From Facilities Reviews	From Financial Analysis	From Consultants Experience
<b>C. Programs and Activities</b>								
• need more programs for young children		✓	✓		✓			
• more teen / young adult programming is needed		✓	✓	✓	✓			
• writers' workshops should be hosted			✓					
• City should support more artists' workshops			✓		✓			✓
• workshops for artists and craftpersons who are on the verge of commercialization ('how to run a business')			✓		✓			✓
• capacity-building workshops for art, culture, heritage organizations		✓		✓				✓
<b>D. Festivals and Events</b>								
• should have a better-promoted year-round calendar of special events	✓ <sup>25</sup>				✓			
• should have a Folk-Arts Festival similar to St. Catharines			✓					✓
• could develop a literary festival to support local / regional authors			✓					
• greater involvement / recognition of multicultural community through events is an important opportunity			✓		✓			
• consider instituting a 'First Friday' type of program to engage public and private sector arts organizations and enterprises								✓
• could develop a film festival in the City (possible building upon the James Cameron connection)		✓	✓					
• could develop a major live music festival in the community			✓					
<b>E. Public Art</b>								
• revise current (2008) Public Art Policy with a dedicated 1% allocation (of construction costs for public buildings) to a public art fund (as other Cities have done)		✓	✓		✓			✓

<sup>25</sup> *Niagara Falls Arts and Culture Committee Business Plan*, January 2013

Issue / Theme	From Background Materials	From Interviews	From Community Survey	From Organization Survey	From Benchmarked Communities	From Facilities Reviews	From Financial Analysis	From Consultants Experience
<b>F. Staffing</b>								
• need a dedicated Cultural Officer position to work with the sector (could involve re-titling and re-vamping job description of existing Community Development Coordinator)	✓ <sup>26</sup>	✓	✓		✓			✓
• need a Heritage Planner on staff to liaise with MHC and general community		✓		✓	✓			
<b>G. Partnerships</b>								
• closer working relationship / partnership should be developed with Niagara Parks Commission		✓	✓					
• closer working relationships with St. Catharines and other municipalities in the Region should be forged to ensure maximum provision and minimal duplication		✓	✓					
<b>H. Funding</b>								
• marketing support (finding) should be provided to support local performing arts (Lyndesfarne and Firehall)		✓	✓					
• should be fund for 'creative projects' by local artists that could be applied for each yeas and awarded through a juried process		✓	✓		✓			✓
• overall budget allocated to arts, culture and heritage activities should be increased		✓	✓		✓		✓	
• some share of incremental casino revenues should be devoted to culture		✓	✓	✓				

<sup>26</sup> City of Niagara Falls, *Strategic Plan for the Provision of Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture*, January 2007

Issue / Theme	From Background Materials	From Interviews	From Community Survey	From Organization Survey	From Benchmarked Communities	From Facilities Reviews	From Financial Analysis	From Consultants Experience
<b>I. Improved Awareness, Communication, Coordination</b>								
• need for information / database on how to find local artists and local events as well as to engage the public	✓ <sup>27</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
• could be GPS-based tour of local history and heritage			✓		✓			
• need for heightened community awareness overall of arts, culture and heritage facilities and activities		✓	✓					
• need for greater coordination, communication between arts groups themselves as well as with City		✓	✓		✓			
• need greater promotion of existing arts awards to encourage greater local recognition (e.g. Barbara Frum award)			✓	✓	✓			
• need for more engaging and informative arts and culture presence of City web site		✓	✓		✓			
• develop portal linkage from website to arts and culture database, with mapping capability					✓			✓

<sup>27</sup> *Niagara Falls Arts and Culture Committee Business Plan*, January 2013

### 3. Culture Plan: Key Recommendations

This section of the Report presents the fundamental recommendations resulting from this assessment (Section 3.1). It also addresses, in Section 3.2, the work undertaken by the consulting team in the development of the database component of the work.

#### 3.1 Recommendations

- 1. Council Approval in Principle:** Council should first approve the Culture Plan in principle, and refer it back to staff to develop a detailed implementation plan, based upon the subsequent recommendations contained within this Report.
- 2. Create Dedicated Cultural Officer Position:** Change the job title of the current Community Development Coordinator to Arts & Culture Coordinator, and revise the job description as required to create a position that is dedicated to working with the arts, culture and heritage sectors. The prime responsibility of this position in the first three years would be the implementation of this Culture Plan.
- 3. Undertake Feasibility Study for Culture Hub:** A key objective of this Culture Plan is the development of a centralized facility for a range of arts and culture activities including a large public gallery art space; a commercial space for local artists; a mid-size affordable performing arts venue primarily for community use; possibly studio space for working artists; and related required office and administrative space. Specific considerations that should be incorporated into this study would be:
  - determination of specific size of spaces and functions to be incorporated within the facility, including:
    - *the desirability of housing a public art gallery function (possibly a relocation of the Niagara Falls Art Gallery collection; possibly housing some of the Niagara District Art Association works currently at the library; possible new space)*
    - *review of specific demand for an arts incubator space and determination as to whether this is sufficient to warrant a separate facility or whether it could be incorporated into an arts and culture centre*
    - *review of specific demand for an artist run (co-op) commercial gallery and, again, whether this should be incorporated into a new culture hub with potential partnerships*
    - *possibility of locating the Wall of Fame into this facility*
    - *possibility of housing other community organizations within the facility (see Recommendation #5).*
  - identification of potential sites and review of potential locations that could accommodate the spaces outlined: with all existing City-owned sites being considered first
  - an overview assessment of the capital / construction costs of a new or renovated facility (which will require architectural expertise)
  - a review of mechanisms to pay for the construction of the facility (grants, public-private partnerships, debenturing, etc.)
  - consideration should be given to repurposing both the Willoughby and Chippawa Town Hall facilities for revenue generation, and relocation of the functions contained within them, to help finance a new Arts and Culture Centre (this ultimately may be a non-starter but at least should be considered)
  - forecast of community utilization of and attendance to the Arts and Culture Centre

- review of the costs and revenues associated with the facility, and the on-going financial implications to the municipality of its operation

**4. Performing Arts Facility:** The surveys and interviews revealed that many residents feel that a small scale and affordable community theatre is needed in the City (preliminary visions are to have an intimate and cost effective facility of on the order of 300 – 500 seats). Several would like to see such a facility incorporated into some sort of community centre or hub while others argue that the existing historic Seneca Queen Street Theatre would be a more appropriate venue for this type of activity. This latter scenario is preferred from the perspective of having the theatre operation in a downtown location and thus contributing to the economic vitality of the area. Accordingly, at the same time as an investigation into the desirability and feasibility of a cultural hub is being explored, an assessment of the potential for the Seneca Queen Theatre in this regard should be undertaken. Part of the scenario might be to explore the potential for joint use of the facility by Lyndesfarne, a relocated Firehall Theatre operation, and community use. If this possibility turns out to be totally unworkable (as it would likely entail acquisition by the City of the Seneca Queen Theatre property and possibly disposal of the Firehall to help with the acquisition of the Seneca - and/or possibly the development of the cultural hub) then having a small performing arts facility as part of the cultural hub should be explored. Alternatively, the existing arrangements (status quo) could conceivably simply continue.

**5. Investigate selling CORE building and using proceeds for the cultural hub:** Assuming the cultural organizations contained within the CORE building could be re-housed within the Cultural Hub, or elsewhere, consider the sale of the CORE building to help finance the capital costs of development of the Cultural Hub. This should be part of the feasibility study investigation that is the subject of Recommendation #3.

**6. Two Local Cultural Precincts:** There are two cultural precincts in Niagara Falls: one is the 'heritage precinct' around the Museum / Lundy's Lane / Battlefield area and the other is the 'cultural precinct' around the downtown (Queen Street and along the Victoria Street spine west from Queen Street). Each of these has a certain 'critical mass' of facilities and activities and are logical districts that the Culture Plan should attempt to reinforce and further identify. Both precincts are on the WEGO route which positions them well from an accessibility standpoint. As well, the expansion of the Niagara Falls Farmers Market – a historic function of that area of the City – will reinforce the identity of this a historic area.

**7. Gateways:** The Official Plan for the City of Niagara Falls anticipated a number of entrance gateways into the City from various directions. In a manner similar to public art, such gateways can be symbols of the importance of art, culture and heritage to the community. The Culture Plan should support such gateways and encourage them to reflect historical-related themes based on their district.

**8. Lundy's Lane Battlefield:** Several comments in the interviews and surveys related to the importance of the Lundy's Lane Battlefield and Graveyard site to the history of Canada (some even likening it in terms of national importance to the Gettysburg site in the USA). There is great concern about the fact that the school property was been acquired by the City but in turn sold the school building portion of the property to the Kiwanis who intend to develop seniors' housing on the site. This decision has now been made and it is not the place of this Plan to recommend reversal of this decision or debate the relative merits of accessible senior's housing vs. heritage preservation after the fact. However, recognizing that the Battlefield and Graveyard does tell a significant and nationally important story, the Culture Plan does recommend a number of initiatives to preserve and further enhance the site. These include:

- development of appropriate interpretation for the overall site (i.e. prior to the development of the school and seniors residence) using traditional as well as social media (e.g. apps) – this could include, for example, downloadable walking tours

- creation of an on-line application of what the Battlefield site looked like prior to development (including aerial views), key developments in the battle itself, etc. so that a virtual experience of the battle could be had to convey some feeling as to the significance of the overall site (note: this could be one of the projects sponsored through the 'innovative projects' fund discussed in Recommendation #18)
- **evolution of a cultural landscape:** the seniors' housing development does provide an opportunity to develop an interpretive display (again, possibly virtual in nature) about the competing social demands for alternative uses for a major site such as this one – including the story of how the original school came to be located on the site

**9. Queen Street Revitalization:** The revitalization of Queen Street is a long-term project and one that does not lend itself to an easy or overnight solution. In the past, various schemes such as turning it into an arts incubator or entertainment district have not come to fruition. The current speculation is that it may become an educational district, with one or more institutions of higher learning becoming involved in a large-scale redevelopment / revitalization effort. This Culture Plan by itself is not a downtown revitalization strategy, but there are elements of it that will provide positive support and context to efforts in this regard. These include the development of the Arts and Culture Centre near or in the downtown; a concentration of cultural organizations in the CORE building near the downtown; events (such as First Friday) that occur in the downtown; and additional support for arts organizations that use facilities there (e.g. the Lyndesfarne Theatre that uses the Seneca Theatre on Queen St.). In addition, culture related subjects that might be part of the program of educational institutions(s) that might locate in the area could be potential partners of the City in terms of cultural activities. The potential for any aspect of implementation of this Culture Plan to support the revitalization of Queen Street should accordingly be a key priority.

**10. Library Facilities:** The Niagara Falls Public Library is clearly a key player in the cultural life of the community, and was seen through all of the local data collection initiatives (interviews, community survey, organizations survey) as a major asset in the community. The Library has its own strategy, and this Culture Plan is not intended to be a repeat of that process. The overall recommendation made to the City is to reinforce the growth and development of the Library as expressed in its own plan, in particular:

- the longer-term refurbishment and renovation of the Victoria Street (Main) branch
- the expansion or redevelopment (yet to be determined) of the Stamford Branch in order to better serve that community
- the provision of expanded children's and teen programming

**11. Linkage to the Tourism Industry:** While this Culture Plan was developed primarily by the community (through the extensive data collection undertaken) and for the community, there are nonetheless elements that may have significant potential to attract additional tourism to the area. One of the roles of the Recreation & Culture Department staff should be to liaise regularly with the tourism-related organizations and agencies in the area (e.g. the Regional Tourism Organization (TPN), Niagara Falls Tourism, etc.) to ensure that they are kept apprised of relevant development and activities on the cultural and heritage front. (And vice versa.)

**12. Develop a Marketing Campaign for Culture:** Design and implement a marketing plan for Culture programming and events in Niagara Falls that coordinates all community arts, culture, and heritage activities: The program would aim to do the following:

- promote arts, culture, and heritage as important components of a resident's life and livelihood in the Niagara Falls area
- help organizations to promote their special events and activities
- a portal for arts, culture, and heritage organizations to network, share ideas, coordinate activities, and find information (such as contact information) about each other
- a way for individuals to trade ideas, views, maintain contact, and comment on raising issues
- listing of and links to all community arts, culture and heritage groups
- links to the mapping database (including the functionality to enable all participating [validated] organizations to update and change their information as required)
- continuing to publish the calendar / schedule of events

Social media should be used to establish a two-way conversation with the community and visitors. Possibilities to consider include: Facebook, Twitter for announcements; Pinterest or Instagram pages for visual art; and Myspace (for performing arts) pages.

**13. A More Effective Web-Site Presence for Culture Should be Maintained:** Right now culture has a comparatively low profile on the City's web pages. This should be redeveloped in order to portray a more proactive and inclusive approach to the sector. Included in this makeover should be:

- direct contact information to the new position of Cultural Coordinator
- listing of and links to all community culture groups
- links to the mapping database (including the functionality to enable all participating [validated] organizations to update and change their information as required)
- continuing to publish the calendar / schedule of events

**14. Arts Web Portal:** One of the outputs of this project has been the development of a database of arts organizations in the City (and eventually artists, crafts-persons and private sector suppliers to the cultural sector) to post and update information about their organizations, products, skills, etc. and thus be recognized in the community. One of the roles of the Recreation & Culture staff should be to oversee the currency and accuracy of this information; to encourage organizations to update it from time to time; and to use the information in the development of brochures, maps, contact lists, etc. as required. Ensure there is no duplication with cniagara.ca.

**15. Adopt a Partnership Focus:** Additional partnerships should be forged with other groups in the community and Region that are focused upon providing arts, culture and heritage related opportunities for residents. These potential partners include:

- the City of St. Catharines (to ensure reciprocal awareness of program and activities, as well as use of facilities)
- the Niagara Parks Commission: regarding scheduling of events, as well as to ensure that City input is provided in their two upcoming initiatives (planning for an outdoor performing arts venue in 'The Gorge' as well as looking for uses for the iconic Canada Niagara Power building)
- the owner of the Niagara Centre for the Arts, regarding the main strategic directions contained within this plan, impact upon his own operations, potential partnership initiatives, etc.

**16. BIAs:** The City of Niagara Falls contains seven distinct BIAs (Downtown [i.e. Queen Street]; Clifton Hill; Fallsview; Lundy's Lane; Main/Ferry; Chippawa; and Victoria Centre). While all of them are host to certain types of cultural and heritage activities (which may be art galleries, dance schools, music stores, unique restaurants, bars and performance venues, etc.) two of these figure prominently in the cultural and historical assets of the City, and in the notion of developing two historical / cultural precinct areas in the City (the historical one at Lundy's Lane / Battlefield area, and the cultural one at Queen Street). As a first step, Recreation and Culture staff should meet with all BIA Managers (ideally, together) to explain this plan, solicit any further input regarding suggestions, assistance with implementation, partnership opportunities, etc.

**17. Festivals and Events:** The City should consider developing more arts and culture-oriented festivals and events, with the objective of developing a year-round calendar of such activities. To be considered in particular would be a live music event, and a literary festival. More multicultural events should also be considered. A major event in the longer-term could be a Film Festival or retrospective, building upon the James Cameron connection as well as other notable entertainment icons. 2014-18 is the centennial of World War I and may present an event or festival programming opportunity. Finally, a 'First Thursday or Friday' type event, involving openings and special activities along Queen Street, could be encouraged as both a cultural event involving the private sector, as well as an initiative contributing to the revitalization of that area. Consider commercial viability as a major criterion for all events and festivals.

**18. Increased Funding for Arts Groups:** The City's current community development policy of not providing cultural programs directly, but rather funding cultural organizations that in turn provide such opportunities, is a good way of ensuring that they are focused on meeting 'market demand' and the real need of the community. This overall approach should continue. (The Public Library and the Museum are the two exceptions to this approach with the Museum directly operated by the City and the Public Library governed by the Public Library Board.) However our review of the relative levels at which other cities fund their cultural sectors – particularly those against which Niagara Falls is benchmarked for the purpose of this study – appears to indicate that Niagara Falls is 'underfunding' its cultural sector to some extent. If the City funded its cultural sector to a comparable level with the other benchmark communities, it would increase its budget for these activities by (conservatively estimated) \$200,000 to \$300,000 per year.

At present, the City only funds two culture groups (Niagara Falls Art Gallery & Niagara Falls Concert Band). In future, consideration should be given to funding more such groups (assuming they meet objective criteria relating to the provision of arts, culture and heritage related programs) and possibly funding existing groups at a somewhat higher level than at present. Particular components of this recommendation would include:

- designation of a pool of funds to be allocated to culture
- articulation of specific criteria for groups to meet in applying for such funds: these may relate to the provision of certain types of programming: children, teens, specialty cultural areas such as writer's workshops
- an annual application process, with clear timeframes and deadlines
- transparency to the community in terms of funding allocated
- clear 'reporting back' requirements so that municipal staff and Council can see the results from funds allocated



- provision of feedback to organizations that were unsuccessful in any given year, so that they might be more successful in the following funding round

Municipal staff (coordinated through the Cultural Officer position) would have a key role in advising Council on the funding to be allocated and the amounts for each group.

This recommendation should be phased in over a 2-3 year period, giving existing funded organizations sufficient lead time to prepare for this new funding regime.

**Fund Innovative Arts Projects and Ideas:** Every year, new cultural initiatives and ideas should be encouraged throughout the City. One way to do this would be to allocate a certain amount of new funding (e.g. \$5,000 - \$10,000) to new cultural initiatives and projects. A jury-reviewed process should be set up to review applications and ideas, and award the amount to one or two of the most innovative projects that have the potential to engage the local community with cultural and heritage-related ideas and activities.

**19. Capacity-Building Workshops:** One of the key elements of cultural plans elsewhere is that the municipality periodically offers various capacity-building workshops to cultural groups and organizations in the community. These can typically be on a number of topics of relevance to the organizations, including:

- effective marketing and promotion
- audience development techniques
- succession planning
- financial planning and management
- fundraising techniques
- commercialization and how to start a business (for individual artisans and crafts-persons)
- effective social marketing techniques

It is recommended that the Recreation & Culture staff canvas the organizations and individual artists in the City for interest in these various topics and, where sufficient interest is demonstrated, arrange a session. Likely third-party expertise would be required for these workshops. A target of 1 – 2 per year, at least initially, would be reasonable.

**20. Encourage Council Representation for MCH and Arts and Culture Advisory Committees:** There are three Committees of Council that are Council's link to the arts, culture and heritage life of Niagara Falls: these are (1) the Municipal Heritage Committee, (2) the Niagara Museum Advisory Board, and (3) the Arts and Culture Committee. None of these Committees has formal Council representation. (In fact, of 27 Committees of Council in the City of Niagara Falls, only four do not have formal Council representation – the aforementioned three and the Mayor's Disability Advisory Committee). This sends a very negative message to the entire cultural community regarding the importance of the sector in Council's eyes. While there is no mechanism to make Council participation on these bodies mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that Council shows a more active interest in the business of these Committees by appointing members to at least some of these Committees.

**21. Reduce Number of Committees:** Ultimately with the new term of Council, the City should consider merging the certain committees of council in order to reduce duplication, enhance committee mandate

and encourage efficiencies. An immediate step to this effect would be to merge the Arts & Culture committee with the Museum Advisory committee to form the new **Culture and Museum Committee** (or possibly, simply '**Culture Committee**'). While each Committee has its own area of responsibility, it is felt that there is more to be gained in common cause and information-sharing in a merged Committee than might be lost through a lack of focus on each Committee's current sphere of influence. In the longer term, a further step which would be a complete merger of the Recreation Committee with the Culture Committee could be contemplated as well. (This however is beyond the purview of this Culture Plan and is only suggested here as a possibility to be assessed in future.)

- 22. Revised Public Art Policy:** As a visible and tangible symbol of a commitment to public art and arts education, the City should adopt a 'policy' towards the establishment of a fund dedicated for public art. (In other words, earmark a designated amount for public art purposes.) As well, more education of the public on parkland dedication policies and Section 37 provisions of the Planning Act (which enable municipalities to grant certain development concessions in return for community benefits) would be helpful.
- 23. Hold a Niagara Falls Cultural Summit:** A one-day cultural summit devoted to discussing ways and means of implementing this plan should be held soon after Council has endorsed it (see Recommendation #1). This should be a facilitated session including a presentation of the plan and its key recommendations as well as a discussion of how the plan overall can be implemented. All stakeholders contributing input to the plan developed here plus the general public should be invited.
- 24. Accountability Report Card:** Progress made on the implementation of the Culture Plan should be reported back to the community each year. It is recommended that a short (2-3 page) progress report be prepared to be shared with Council as well as with the general public. Also, possibly a Cultural Summit (see Recommendation #24) could be reprised (approximately) one year after the first Summit to present to the arts, culture and heritage organizations as well as the general public what progress has been made on the Plan, what new opportunities may have presented themselves, and to solicit direction from the community on any new directions that should be pursued.

### 3.2 Database and Portal

Another key output from this work was the development of a database of current information relevant to arts organizations that could be used as an on-going tool for mapping; the eventual creation of an 'arts portal' for the public to access information on cultural organizations and groups; brochure development; and other purposes. This involved meeting and working closely with the City's GIS/IST team (see Appendix 2 for the individuals involved in this activity) to merge the several excel files that already existed with various items of data. (These were received in a 'master list' that contained some categorization and geo-referencing.) To these files were added fields to track where the data came from and when it was last updated and entered in the spreadsheet. In addition, recommendations relating to new content were also made.

Next, this database was 'opened up' (i.e. rendered viewable) to the various organizations and individuals represented in the database so that they could review the current content and, if necessary, to update the information relevant to their organization. They could also suggest others to be added to the database.

All entries in the database have been geocoded and it is relatively easy to see (and map) where artists and art organizations are located in the City. To date, 145 entries (representing individuals and organizations) are contained in the database. (Appendix 4 shows the current listing of those individuals and organizations

contained in the database.)

At the conclusion of the Culture Plan project, the database will be closed off and given to the City along with a spreadsheet of all data that was compiled. This data will be a very useful contact list for workshops or other art events that the city may conduct as a result of the Culture Plan. The database can also be a very helpful starting point for an arts portal that could developed (see Recommendations #13 and #14) as it is in a sense 'pre-populated' with over 150 profiles. It can also be a good starting point for open data layers that the city may want to add to its open data repository.

## 4. Implementation

### 4.1 Implementation

#### 4.1.1 Framework for Implementation

It is recommended that the Plan as outlined here be phased in over a five-year period. There are three suggested phases to implementation. The first is the period up to the municipal election of October 2014, when Council should approve this plan in principle (recommendation #1) and refer it to staff for further assessment regarding implementation. (Those recommendations that are relatively easy to implement without undue pressure on financial resources are the ones that should be undertaken during this initial period.) After the elections, in 2015, implementation of the plan should move into a 'feasibility testing' phase where some of the key recommendations regarding the Cultural Hub, performing arts facility, and funding should be implemented. In 2016 and beyond, the remaining recommendations should be put into place, as resources and staff time permit.

The 24 recommendations are classified below according to this framework. As well, the body primarily responsible for their implementation is indicated, and the approximate estimated cost (in terms of dollars as well as staff time) indicated.

#### 4.1.2 Implementation Plan

As indicated, the first time period for implementation is from now (June 2014) to the end of the municipal election, in October 2104. (Note that in the table below, the number of the recommendation corresponds to its discussion in the previous section.)

**Phase 1: Immediate Next Steps (Now to October 2014)**

Recommendation	Comment	Responsibility	Resource Requirements	
			Staff Time	Costs
1. Council Approval in Principle	- will send positive signal to community as well as new Council in October, 2014	Council	Staff report to Council – 4 - 6 hours	none
2. Create Dedicated Cultural Officer Position	- position and re-organized duties (to implement this Plan) should be in place prior to new Council	Recreation & Culture Department; Council	none	none
6. Promote Two Local Cultural Precincts	- this should begin immediately and be an on-going effort - no additional costs foreseen beyond signage, brochures, etc. that would be incurred in any event – this recommendation will manifest itself more in terms of policy and planning	all Municipal Departments	none	none
7. Ensure Gateways Reflect Cultural Areas	- as above	all Municipal Departments	none	none
8. Develop Appropriate Interpretive Materials for Lundy's Lane Battlefield	- planning for this on-going initiative should begin in the Fall, 2014	Recreation & Culture Department; Municipal Heritage Committee	Staff time to meet and liaise with volunteers	tbd
9. Queen Street Revitalization	- this should begin immediately and be an on-going effort - no additional costs foreseen beyond signage, brochures, etc. that would be incurred in any event – this recommendation will manifest itself more in terms of policy and planning	all Municipal Departments; Queen Street BIA	Staff time to meet and liaise with Queen Street BIA	tbd
13. Maintain a More Effective Web-Site for Culture	- redesign of City's web pages to reflect stronger cultural orientation (including presentation of this Culture Plan) could begin immediately, and be on-going thereafter	Recreation & Culture Department (through Cultural Officer position); other municipal staff	Staff time to meet with IS Department and implement changes plus maintenance of the site.	tbd
15. Adopt a Partnership Focus	- the adoption of this plan presents a good opportunity for staff of the Recreation and Culture Department to meet with individual culture organizations (individually or collectively) to explain the plan, discuss areas of mutual benefit, etc. - also meetings with other agencies (e.g. Niagara Parks Commission) are desirable	Recreation & Culture Department (through Cultural Officer position);	Staff time to meet and liaise with organizations: suggest 1 hr. / week on average	none
16. Liaise with BIAs	- as above	as above	as above	none

**Phase 2 – November 2014 to December 2015**

Recommendation	Comment	Responsibility	Resource Requirements	
			Staff Time	Costs
3. Undertake Feasibility Study for Cultural Hub	- see Section 4.2.2. for details on areas to be covered by study	Recreation & Culture Department form Steering Committee with other municipal Departments, Advisory Committee members	staff time (Steering Committee) to oversee consultant or to undertake study	\$30,000 - \$40,000 for external study
4. Investigate Feasibility of Performing Arts Space	- as above (performing arts questions should be folded into Cultural Hub study)		as above	as above
5. Investigate Sale of CORE Building (to help finance Culture Hub)	- should take place immediately following Culture Hub feasibility study (or possible be folded into the feasibility assessment itself)	Recreation & Culture Department; Finance Department	Staff time to investigate possibilities, liaise with real estate community and well as groups using building (estimated 20 hours)	none, other than commission if sale effected (note will generate revenue)
10. Implement Library Strategic Plan	- the finalization and implementation of the Library strategic plan should be a priority in 2015	Library staff; Library Board	to be determined	to be determined
11. Promote Greater Linkages to the Tourism Industry	- after initiation (likely through regular meetings) this should be an on-going effort	Recreation & Culture Department (through Cultural Officer position)	none	none
12. Develop a Marketing Campaign for Culture	- after initiation (likely through regular meetings) this should be an on-going effort	Recreation & Culture Department (through Cultural Officer position)	will likely involve some time on part of staff (2-4 hours / week)	possibly some for traditional media buys (suggest budget of \$5,000-\$10,000/ yr.)
14. Maintain Arts Web Portal	- greater promotion of the tool developed over the course of this study (Arts Portal) should be undertaken - also, though, individual arts, culture and heritage organizations must take ownership of the data on the portal as well as responsibility to ensure that it is up-to-date	(1) Recreation & Culture Department (through Cultural Officer position) – to promote tool (2) individual arts organizations to upload information and to ensure its currency and utility	will likely involve some time on part of staff (2-4 hours / week)	possibly some for annual budget amount to maintain Portal (suggest budget of \$5,000/ yr.)

Recommendation	Comment	Responsibility	Resource Requirements	
			Staff Time	Costs
19. Provide Capacity-Building Workshops for Arts Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- as part of the discussions with culture organizations (see Recommendation #15), areas in which additional training and knowledge transfer should be discussed</li> <li>- this on-going initiative would see 1 or 2 such workshops being put in each year, depending upon need as expressed by community groups</li> </ul>	Recreation & Culture Department (through Cultural Officer position)	staff time to arrange and provide (say, 1-2 days per year)	Some out-of-pocket costs if external experts used: suggest budget of \$2,000 / yr.
20. Encourage Council Representation on MCH and Arts & Culture Advisory Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- this should take effect with the new Council at the end of 2014 or early 2015</li> </ul>	Council	Time of Municipal Councillor to attend meetings, events (2-4 hours per month)	none
22. Revised Public Art Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- after the public commitment to the Culture Plan (Recommendation #1), this will be a further tangible sign of the municipal commitment to culture</li> </ul>	Recreation & Culture Department; Council approval	10 – 20 hours (estimated) of staff time to study alternatives (best practices in other communities)	to be determined – will depend upon the specific policy recommendations developed
23. Hold Niagara Falls Cultural Summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- this should be held relatively early in 2015 as a means of demonstrating commitment to the Culture Plan and keeping some momentum underway</li> <li>- if it is seen to be initiated by the Arts and Culture Committee and sponsored by the City, this will demonstrate how the City responds to the needs of the culture sector (a very positive message)</li> </ul>	Arts and Culture Committee; Recreation & Culture Department	20 - 40 hours (estimated) of staff time	to be determined – will depend upon the specific policy recommendations developed
24. Accountability Report Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- this on-going initiative should be initiated in the second phase of implementation, after a number of initiatives (critical mass) are underway</li> </ul>	Recreation & Culture Department	10 - 20 hours (estimated) of staff time	none

**Phase 3 – 2016, and Beyond**

Recommendation	Comment	Responsibility	Resource Requirements	
			Staff Time	Costs
17. Develop More Culturally-Based Festivals and Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the development of more festivals and events in the City will likely evolve through the discussions with community groups &amp; organizations, BIAs, and other strategic partners (see Recommendations 15 and 16)</li> <li>- it is conceivable that new events could occur in Phase 2 of this plan (which would be ideal, if possible) but by Phase 3, the Recreation &amp; Culture Department should be actively planning such activities if they have not naturally occurred before then</li> </ul>	Recreation & Culture Department (through Cultural Officer position) and other community groups and organizations (to be determined)	to be determined	to be determined
18. Increased Funding for Culture Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- by this stage in the evolution of the Culture Plan, there should be sufficient evidence on the part of the City as well as cultural organizations themselves, that there is need for additional funding for enhanced activities, as well as a return on investment to the City for such funding</li> <li>- the pool of funds allocated to culture should be increased starting in this Phase, and being increased each year until Niagara Falls is on par with other benchmark communities (see Section 2.1.6 of this Report)</li> </ul>	Recreation & Culture Department; Council approval	to be determined	to be determined
21. Create Culture and Museum Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the merging of the two committees (if at all) should take place after Council representation has been seen on each Committee individually, in order to obtain Council participants' views on the utility of a merger (as well as that of other Committee members on both Committees)</li> </ul>	Recreation & Culture Department; Council approval	none	none



## 4.2 Further Notes on Various Implementation Details

The following sections provide some further perspective on selected key aspects of implementation.

### 4.2.1 A Note on Staffing

The implementation plan contained in this Report does not require the addition of any staff to the Department of Recreation and Culture over the anticipated period of the plan. While it is conceivable that in the longer term (5+ years) some additional staff may be required to help with the expanded range of initiatives that have resulted from the path this Plan has started, this is not an immediate prerequisite to the plan recommended here.

However, what is required is that the current Community Development Officer position, which is currently devoted to cultural activities for approximately half time, be converted to a dedicated full-time position for this purpose. This assumes that the other duties of the Community Development Officer position can be assumed by other staff in the Department, elsewhere in the municipality, or can be dispensed with altogether. As a signal to the cultural community, it is further suggested that this position be renamed as a **Cultural Development Officer**.

Essentially, the main responsibility of this position would be to focus on the implementation of this Culture Plan. This would entail a number of activities that are outlined in the implementation plan: meeting with community groups and organizations; planning events; assisting with the redevelopment of the web site and establishment of the arts portal; and acting as a clearinghouse of information and knowledge. While most (or all) of these activities are already part of the purview of this job position, it would be useful to redevelop the job description for this position to reflect these priorities. This should probably occur in the first Phase of implementation of the plan, in order that it is clear to all going forward what this key position is, and is not, responsible for.

### 4.2.2 Feasibility Study for Central Arts Facility

A key Phase 2 initiative is the Feasibility Study for a Cultural Hub. The recommendation suggests several critical considerations that should be part of the Terms of Reference for such a study. An expanded list of such considerations would include:

- determination of specific size of spaces and functions to be incorporated within the facility, including:
  - *the desirability of housing a public art gallery function (possibly a relocation of the Niagara Falls Art Gallery collection; possibly housing some of the Niagara District Art Association works currently at the library; possible new space)*
  - *review of specific demand for an arts incubator space and determination as to whether this is sufficient to warrant a separate facility or whether it could be incorporated into an arts and culture centre*
  - *review of specific demand for an artist run (co-op) commercial gallery and, again, whether this should be incorporated into a new culture hub with potential partnerships*
  - *possibility of locating the Wall of Fame into this facility*
  - *possibility of housing other community organizations within the facility*
  - *possibility of small (300 – 500 seat) performing arts facility in the Centre*
- identification of potential sites and review of potential locations that could accommodate the spaces outlined: with all existing City-owned sites being considered first
- an overview assessment of the capital / construction costs of a new or renovated facility (which will require architectural expertise)
- a review of mechanisms to pay for the construction of the facility (grants, public-private partnerships, debenturing, etc.)
- consideration should be given to repurposing both the Willoughby and Chippawa Town Hall facilities for revenue generation, and relocation of the functions contained within them, to help finance a new Arts and Culture Centre (this ultimately may be a non-starter but at least should be considered)

- forecast of community utilization of and attendance to the Arts and Culture Centre: this should include consideration of the potential for tourist usage of the facility
- for any such tourist usage, assessment of the economic impact of any additional time and money that tourists may spend in Niagara Falls as a result of the facility
- review of the costs and revenues associated with the facility, and the on-going financial implications to the municipality of its operation
- a summary assessment of the return on investment (in qualitative as well as quantitative measures) of the development

It is recommended that, for such a complex and important study, that external professionals who have experience in such assessments be retained. As well, a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from several municipal departments as well as the Arts and Culture Committee should be assembled (not unlike the Steering Committee for the Culture Plan itself) to guide the consultant team. Finally, the timeframe for the study should be within Phase 2 of the study (i.e. completed on or before the end of 2015) so that the recommendations can be implemented in Phase 3 and keep the momentum of the Culture Plan going forward.

#### 4.2.3 Comment on the Battlefield Development

Much comment was heard throughout the consultation process of the development of this plan regarding the significance of the Lundy's Lane Battlefield and its importance as a National Historic Site (several describing it as 'Canada's Gettysburg'). Recognizing this significance, the Niagara Falls Museums has developed an excellent tour of the Battlefield and the adjacent Drummond Hill Cemetery (see <https://www.niagarafalls.ca/pdf/heritage/lundys-lane-walking-tour.pdf>) and visitors can experience the entire area more deeply using this resource.

There was also, however, considerable consternation regarding the City's recent decision to allow some development on the site (for a seniors' residence). Some felt that this was anathema, while others more philosophically recognized that this development only occupied a small part of the overall site and did not detract in a major way from its interpretive potential.

Whatever individual feelings one may have regarding this development, it is now a *fait accompli*, and the decision to develop a portion of the site has been made. However, there is an interesting interpretive opportunity to inform visitors to the site about the recent controversy, and about the reasons that the decision to develop a portion of the site in the way that it was, was undertaken. The recognition of the site as a cultural landscape that is itself in the process of evolution and change presents an interesting opportunity to expand upon its current interpretation. It is an opportunity for discussion, dialogue and debate upon the role and function of history relative to the needs of contemporary society. This is an interesting interpretive element for both residents of the City as well as visitors.

Accordingly, this Culture Plan has recommended that the interpretation of the site be augmented to incorporate this more contemporary dimension. As well, however, it is the opinion of the consultants that any further 'hard development' of the site would seriously erode its significance and status as a National Historic Site and therefore that no further encroachment be made<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> This would not preclude of course, development in the form of improved landscaping, interpretive panels, walkways, etc. designed to better interpret the site as a significant historic landscape.

#### **4.2.4 Tourism Potential for Local Arts, Culture and Heritage Activities**

Another comment heard frequently throughout the public consultation process was that Niagara Falls catered too much to tourists, and that this Culture Plan should focus exclusively upon the needs of residents. Accordingly, the orientation that this Culture Plan has undertaken has been to develop a plan that is in the interest of residents as a primary focus (see the 'Philosophy of Cultural Planning', articulated in Section 1.3 of this Report, that shows this approach to be a fundamental principle of the consulting team in any event).

However, it is also recognized that some of the recommendations presented here may, in addition to benefitting City residents (if they didn't they wouldn't be presented as recommendations), act as tourism draws and thus have some benefit to the community in this regard as well. Some of the new festivals and events, for example, may have a tourism draw component. A new Cultural Hub could act as a tourism attraction. Revitalized shopping areas (e.g. Queen Street) could attract tourists.

Accordingly, the recommendations here should not be seen to be in a silo by themselves, divorced from any potential for tourist interest or benefit. This is why one of the recommendations is for the Cultural Development Officer position to maintain an active liaison and dialogue with representatives of the tourism industry and other strategic partners, in order to realize any such opportunities where they may exist. Thus while the Culture Plan developed here is first and foremost for residents, its potential to augment the overall attractiveness of the City as a tourism destination should not be overlooked, and indeed should be actively built upon.

#### **4.2.5 Maintenance of the Arts, Culture, Heritage Database**

As well as this Culture Plan itself (a 'roadmap' to guide the City's investment in culture) this process has resulted in the beginning of a database and 'portal' for individuals and arts organizations themselves to contribute information about the cultural activities and opportunities available throughout the City. This will be a key tool in the overall success of this Culture Plan. Like any database, however, in order to be useful it must be kept accessible, relevant, and up-to-date. Accordingly, one of the key roles of the Cultural Development Coordinator will be to work with the culture community to ensure that this is done.

## Appendix 1. List of Background Materials Reviewed

### City of Niagara Falls

City of Niagara Falls, **Official Plan for the City of Niagara Falls**, Approved October 1993, Amended March , 2013.

City of Niagara Falls, **General Purposes Budget**, for period ending 31 Dec. 2013.

City of Niagara Falls, **Strategic Plan for the Provision of Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture**, dmA Planning and Management Services, January 2007.

Carl Bray and Associates, **Niagara Falls Heritage Master Plan**, September 2005.

City of Niagara Falls, **Art & Culture Committee Member Manual**, May 2011.

City of Niagara Falls, **Recreation Committee Member Manual**, undated.

City of Niagara Falls, **Terms of Reference for Municipal Heritage Committee**, May 2011.

Niagara Falls Museums, **2013 – 2016 Strategic Plan**, 2013.

Niagara Falls Public Library Board, **2010 – 2014 Strategic Plan**, 2010.

City of Niagara Falls, **City Building Use and Condition Assessment**, March 2013.

City of Niagara Falls, **Mycity Guide, Fall & Winter, 2013-14**.

City of Niagara Falls, **Community Profile, 2013**.

City of Niagara Falls, **Development Guide, 2011**.

RCI Consulting, **Downtown Niagara Falls Community Improvement Plan (CIP)**, November 2004.

City of Niagara Falls, **Historic Drummondville Community Improvement Plan (CIP)**, October, 2006.

City of Niagara Falls, Recreation and Culture Department, **Strategic Plan Implementation Update**, 2012.

City of Niagara Falls, **Public Art Policy**, 2008.

Fox Jones, **Niagara Falls Art Gallery Development Study**, April, 1992

### Other

Nordicity, **Economic Impact Assessment of the Cultural Sector in Niagara**, April 2013.

Region of Niagara, **Region of Niagara Culture Plan**, 2009.

Region of Niagara, **Economic Growth Strategy – Report to the Public, 2013 - 2105**, 2013.

## Appendix 2. Individuals and Organizations Consulted

A Steering Committee comprising the following individuals provided guidance and assistance throughout the project:

- *Kathy Moldenhauer, Director, Recreation & Culture*
- *Beth Angle, Community Development Coordinator*
- *Clark Bernat, Museum Manager*
- *Dale Morton, CAO's Office*
- *Monika Seymour, Niagara Falls Public Library*
- *Priscilla Brett, Chair, Arts and Culture Committee*

In addition to these individuals, a number of other key stakeholder representatives were consulted either individually or in a focus group format; these were (listed alphabetically):

- David Adames, Senior Director, Business Development, Niagara Parks Commission
- Ayo Adewumi, City of Niagara Falls, Recreation and Culture Department
- Jock Ainslie, Lundy's Lane Historical Society
- Lori Albanese, City of Niagara Falls, Recreation and Culture Department
- John Anstruther, Niagara Concerts
- Sherri Armstrong, Art and Culture Committee
- Dr. Debra Attenborough, Executive Director, Niagara Falls Art Gallery
- John Barnsley, Manager of Policy Planning, City of Niagara Falls
- Bunnie Brandt, Niagara District Arts Association
- Anne-Louise Branscombe, Branscombe Family Foundation
- Gary Burke, Municipal Heritage Committee
- Laurel Campbell, Municipal Heritage Committee
- Kelly Daniels, Artistic Director, Lyndesfarne Theatre
- Rick Daniels, Lyndesfarne Theatre
- Elizabeth Detlor, President and Artistic Director, Niagara Concerts
- Susan DiBattista, Manager of Public Services, Niagara Falls, Public Library
- Mayor Jim Diodati, City of Niagara Falls
- Dave D'Orsay, Niagara Scouting Museum

- Margaret Dunn, Museums Advisory Board
- Mark Dykstra, Senior Director of Parks, Niagara Parks Commission
- Ed Fantine, Niagara District Arts Association
- Serge Felicetti, Director of Business Development, City of Niagara Falls
- Councillor Shirley Fisher, City of Niagara Falls
- Karen Fraser, Art and Culture Committee
- Jordan Fry, Niagara Literary Arts Festival; Arts and Culture Committee
- Bob Gale, local businessman (Gale's Gas Bars)
- Councillor Wayne Gates, City of Niagara Falls
- Dave Govan, Chair, Downtown Niagara Falls BIA
- Jeff Guarasci, City of Niagara Falls, Recreation and Culture Department
- David Gilbert, Director, Niagara Children's Museum
- Angela Heppner, Executive Director, Peterson Community Workshop
- Jim Hill, Manager, Heritage Operations, Niagara Parks Commission
- Geoff Holman, Director of Public Works, City of Niagara Falls
- Councillor Carolyn Ioannoni, City of Niagara Falls
- David Jovanovic, Project Administrator, Lundy's Lane BIA
- Councillor Vince Kerrio, City of Niagara Falls
- Janet Kuipers, IS Department, City of Niagara Falls
- Nemawja Kuntos, Manager, Downtown – Queen Street BIA
- Corey Larocque, President, Niagara Falls Concert Band and Managing Editor, Niagara Falls Review
- Eve Lauric, German Canadian Club
- Ashleigh Last, Acquisitions and Adult Services Librarian, Niagara Falls, Public Library
- John Lohuis, General Manager, Niagara Parks Commission
- Janice Low, Parkway Artists Guild
- Norma Maguire, Vice-President, Niagara Concerts
- Councillor Bart Maves, City of Niagara Falls
- Philomena McCracken, Art and Culture Committee

- Rich Merlino, Recreation Committee
- Suzanne Moase, Niagara Falls Museums
- Laura Moffat, President, Niagara Falls Music Theatre Society; Secretary, Niagara Falls Firehall Theatre
- Ruth-Ann Nieuwesteeg, Main-Ferry BIA
- Dean Norton, Public Affairs and Property Management Advisor, OPG
- Shawn Oatley, IS Department, City of Niagara Falls
- Councillor Victor Pietrangelo, City of Niagara Falls
- Anna Pierce, Chair, Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce
- Andrew Porteous, Manager of Adult Reference and Information Services, Niagara Falls, Public Library
- Inge Saczkowski, Manager of Children's services, Niagara Falls, Public Library
- Tony Roberts, Niagara Scouting Museum
- Navin Shahani, Municipal Heritage Committee
- Wayne Thompson, Chair, Niagara Falls Tourism Organization
- A.J. Smith, Niagara District Arts Association
- Ken Todd, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Niagara Falls
- Dr. Louis Visentin, Niagara Falls Library Board
- Gord West, Museums Advisory Board
- Vittoria Wikston, Director Business Development, Niagara Falls Tourism Visitor and Convention Bureau
- Molly Yimlei Yep, Parkway Artists Guild
- Sherman Zavitz, Official Historian, City of Niagara Falls
  
- Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC): 15 individuals

## Appendix 3. Community Survey

### City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL

#### Background and Introduction

## COMPLETE OUR CULTURE SURVEY AND YOU COULD WIN AN IPAD 4 (16 GB) !!

The City of Niagara Falls is currently developing a Culture Plan, and we need your help! **All completed responses to our questionnaire will be entered into a draw to win an new iPad 4, 16 GB tablet - all we need is your name and contact information at the end of this survey.** This prize has generously been donated by **BEATTIES BASICS** and we would like to thank them very much for their generous support of the Culture Plan. If you are a resident of the City of Niagara Falls or the Region of Niagara, you are eligible to be entered into the contest if you complete the survey.

You might be a member of a cultural organization or institution, an artist, a patron of the arts, a heritage advocate or preservationist, or a resident who is passionate about culture and its connection to the community. You might be a visitor to the community. Or you might be none of the above. Either way, we need your input to the plan.

The following questionnaire will take you only about 15 minutes to complete, and will provide the City with valuable direction as to what you see to be the priorities for action and initiatives. All responses will be treated as **CONFIDENTIAL** by TCI Management Consultants, a firm specializing in arts, culture and heritage planning that the City of Niagara Falls has retained to assist in the preparation of this plan.

If you have any questions or comments about the Culture Plan itself, please contact **Kathy Moldenhauer**, Director of the Recreation and Culture Department of the City of Niagara Falls, at 905-356-7521 ext. 3348 or [kmoldenhauer@niagarafalls.ca](mailto:kmoldenhauer@niagarafalls.ca).

If you have any questions about this survey specifically, please contact **Jon Linton**, Director of TCI Management Consultants, at 416-515-0815 or [jlinton@consulttci.com](mailto:jlinton@consulttci.com).

Cut off date for responses will be Friday, December 20, 2013.

Thank you very much for your participation!



**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL****About You****1. First we'd like to know your gender:**

- ☐ male  
☐ female

**2. Next, your age range:**

- ☐ 19 or under  
☐ 20 to 29  
☐ 30 to 39  
☐ 40 to 49  
☐ 50 to 64  
☐ 65 to 79  
☐ 80+

**3. Which of the following best describes your family or household situation?**

- ☐ single  
☐ couple only  
☐ 3 or more adults living together  
☐ couple with child / children under 13  
☐ couple with teenager(s)

Other (please specify)

**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL****Where You Live**

**4. Please select whichever postal code (first three digits) or other address, indicates where you live full-time. If you are not sure what postal code area you're in, [click here](#) to see a postal code map of the City, and then simply leave that page to get back to the survey.**

- ☐ in the City of Niagara Falls: postal code L2E
- ☐ in the City of Niagara Falls: postal code L2G
- ☐ in the City of Niagara Falls: postal code L2H
- ☐ in the City of Niagara Falls: postal code L2J
- ☐ in the City of Niagara Falls but not sure of the first 3 digits of my postal code
- ☐ in the Region of Niagara but outside the City of Niagara Falls itself
- ☐ elsewhere in Ontario
- ☐ elsewhere in Canada
- ☐ in the USA
- ☐ elsewhere

**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL****Education and Occupational Status**

**5. Which of the following best describes your educational status (in terms of the highest level of education completed)?**

- ☐ some high school
- ☐ high school certificate
- ☐ apprenticeship or trades certificates
- ☐ some university or college
- ☐ university degree - bachelors
- ☐ university degree - master's or above

Other (please specify)

**6. Which of the following best describes your household's economic situation?**

- ☐ I am the single wage earner in the household
- ☐ I am one of two or more wage earners in the household
- ☐ I am retired
- ☐ I am currently unemployed
- ☐ I am a student

Other (please specify)

**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL****Your Involvement in Arts, Culture and Heritage****7. How would you describe your involvement in arts, culture and heritage? (please check as many as apply)**

- ☐ I am a user of the Niagara Falls Public Library
- ☐ I am a consumer of arts, culture and/ or heritage experiences: part of the audience
- ☐ I am a creator: an artist, craftsperson or maker of cultural products or experiences
- ☐ I am active in the performing arts
- ☐ I am involved in heritage activities and organizations
- ☐ I provide services (e.g. financial, insurance, retail supplies, etc.) to those in the cultural sector

Other (please specify)

**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL****For Users of the Niagara Falls Public Library**

**8. Please describe the ways in which you use the Niagara Falls Public Library. Please check as many as apply**

- ☐ I take out books
- ☐ I use it for research
- ☐ I am a member of a group or organization that uses library space for performance, meetings, etc.
- ☐ I participate in culture and heritage programs put on by the library
- ☐ I use the library for networking and socializing
- ☐ I get community information from the library

Other: what?

**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL****Involvement in Arts, Culture and Heritage Activities**

**9. If you are involved in arts, culture and / or heritage, what sorts of activities are you involved with or interested in? (Again, please check as many as apply)**

- ☐ performing arts: music
- ☐ performing arts: dance
- ☐ performing arts: theatre
- ☐ visual arts
- ☐ writing and the literary arts
- ☐ new media / digital arts
- ☐ history and heritage
- ☐ teaching in any of the activities listed above

Other (please specify)

## City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL

### Involvement in City Arts, Culture & Heritage Organizations

Here we want to know which arts, culture and heritage organizations you may be involved with in both the **City of Niagara Falls** and well as the larger **Region of Niagara**.

**10. Which arts, culture and heritage organizations are you a member of or been actively involved with in the **City of Niagara Falls**? (Please check as many as apply)**

- ☐ Arts and Culture Committee, City of Niagara Falls
- ☐ City of Niagara Falls Heritage Committee
- ☐ Community Artists Niagara (CAn)
- ☐ Friends of Lundy's Lane Battlefield
- ☐ Friends of Stamford Village
- ☐ Lundy's Lane Historical Society
- ☐ Multicultural Network of Niagara Falls
- ☐ Neto Hatinakwe Onkwehowe Native Arts Canada
- ☐ Niagara Antique Power Association
- ☐ Niagara Black History Association
- ☐ Niagara Concerts
- ☐ Niagara District Art Association
- ☐ Niagara Falls Museums (Niagara Falls History Museum, Battle Ground Hotel Museum, Willoughby Historical Museum, Lundy's Lane Battlefield)
- ☐ Niagara Falls Music Theatre Society
- ☐ Niagara Falls Art Gallery & Niagara Children's Museum
- ☐ Niagara Falls Camera Club
- ☐ Niagara Falls Horticultural Society
- ☐ Niagara Falls Military Museum
- ☐ Niagara Falls Nature Club
- ☐ Niagara Falls Public Library
- ☐ Niagara Falls Scouting Museum
- ☐ Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre
- ☐ Niagara Handweavers and Spinners
- ☐ Niagara History and Trivia Facebook Page
- ☐ Niagara Literary Arts Festival (NLAF)

☐

## City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL

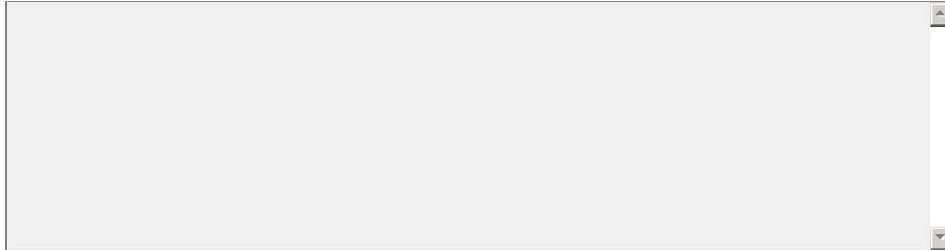
- ☐ Niagara Institute of Music and Arts
- ☐ Niagara Men's Chorus
- ☐ Niagara Peninsula Needle Arts Guild
- ☐ Niagara Region Musician's Association
- ☐ Niagara Woodcarver's Association
- ☐ Village of Chippawa Citizen's Committee
- ☐ Willoughby Community Centre Committee
- ☐ Willoughby Historical Society
- ☐ YMCA of Niagara

Others, in addition to the list above:



**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL****Involvement in Regional Arts, Culture & Heritage Organizations**

**11. Which arts, culture and heritage organizations are you a member of or been actively involved with in the larger **Region of Niagara**? (Please list as many as apply)**



**12. How would you describe your economic dependency upon your arts and cultural activity?**

- ☐ a hobby or pastime only
- ☐ I derive some part-time income from these activities
- ☐ this activity (activities) is / are my full time livelihood

## City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL

### Your Thoughts About Various Aspects of the Plan Being Developed

**13. Do you see any major gaps or deficiencies in what is offered / available in the City of Niagara Falls in terms of the availability of opportunities for arts, culture and heritage activity? Gaps or deficiencies might be in terms of learning or skills development options; performance or participation opportunities; or simply possibilities to be part of an audience or a spectator.**

	Major Gaps	Some Gaps	No Gaps - Adequate Provision of Opportunities
visual arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
performing arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
digital arts / multimedia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
literary arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
other media (e.g. pottery, macrame, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
history and heritage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
multicultural activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please comment on any areas above where you see some deficiency.

**14. Besides the areas that you have commented upon above, are there any other major gaps you see in arts, culture and heritage opportunities available in the City of Niagara Falls ?**

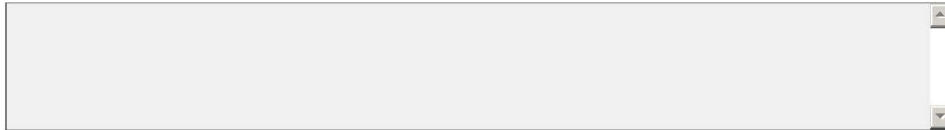
**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL****Opportunities for New Programs and Services**

Note that the approach of the City of Niagara Falls is to work through existing organizations and agencies in the community to provide cultural programs, rather than the City directly providing services by itself. The City assists organizations through the provision of facilities, staff assistance, and funding. Please answer this question with that understanding in mind.

**15. Do you see any opportunities for new programs or services for the City of Niagara Falls in terms of new programs and services that could be offered by **existing or new non-profit and community organizations** ?**

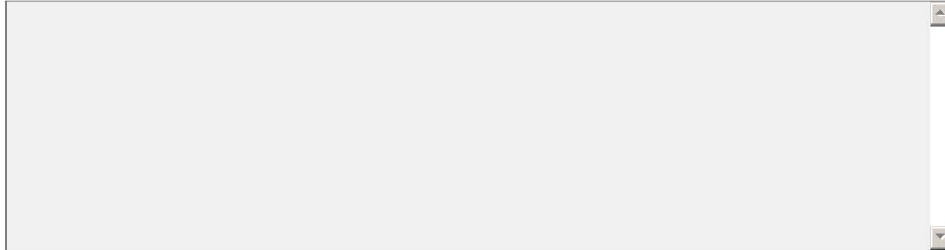
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**16. Do you see any opportunities for new programs or services for the City of Niagara Falls in terms of new programs and services that could be offered by **the private sector**?**

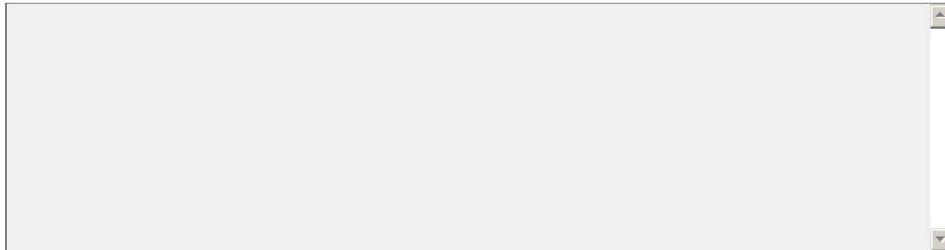
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**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL**

**17. Do *existing* arts, culture and heritage facilities (theatres, rehearsal spaces, art galleries, etc.) in the City of Niagara Falls need to be improved? If so, please indicate which facilities and what should be done.**



**18. Does the City of Niagara Falls need *new* arts, culture and heritage facilities of any kind? If so what type(s) of facilities and why?**



## City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL

### Municipal Role in Arts, Culture & Heritage Development

#### 19. Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements:

	Definitely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Mixed feelings	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree	Can't say / don't know
arts, culture and heritage opportunities are critically important to a healthy community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
demand for arts, culture and heritage opportunities is growing in the City	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the City of Niagara Falls should provide more funding for arts organizations so that they in turn can provide opportunities for residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the City of Niagara Falls should do more to promote its arts, culture and heritage assets to tourists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**City of Niagara Falls Culture Survey - CONFIDENTIAL****Final Comments**

**20. OPTIONAL: What 5 to 10 words best capture the values, customs, traditions, character and identity that define the City of Niagara Falls ?**

**21. OPTIONAL: Do you have any final comments that you would like to provide to assist us with the development of this plan?**

**22. Would you like to be placed on the contest list for the iPad 4 (16 GB), donated by BEATTIES BASICS?**

☐ no

☐ yes

name, e-mail address, or telephone number

**23. Would you like to be placed on an email list for further information about the Culture Plan? *This list would become the property of the City alone, and would be used ONLY for purposes of communicating with you about the Culture Plan.***

☐ no, thanks

☐ yes, please contact me at the email address indicated above, OR:

Please contact me at these coordinates:

**24. Would you like to also be added to the Niagara Falls Museums monthly enewsletter list?**

☐ yes

☐ no

## Appendix 4. Cultural Organizations in the Database

A Tat of Class: Pampered Perfectly  
Absolute Image Photography  
Adam Makk Piano Service  
Age of Aquarius Tattoo Studio  
All That Dance  
All That Dance Niagara  
Angelo Rossi Glassblowing Studio & Galleria  
Angie Humphrey Photographer  
Artistic Impressions Tattooing  
Audrey Watkins Highland Dance Academy  
Baldini and Vandersluys Photographers  
Ballet Plus School of Dance  
Big B Comics  
Blair's Finish Carpentry  
Bobb Barratt Professional Photographer  
Bond School of Music  
Bradley Institute for Music Education Research Ltd  
Brock University Centre for the Arts  
CAn (Community Artists Niagara)  
Canadian Authors Association  
Caroline's Caricatures  
Centre Stage Dance Studio  
Chippawa Branch Library  
City of Niagara Falls Local Historian  
Club Alouette  
Club Italia  
Club Italia Ladies Auxiliary  
Coles  
Colour by Kellie  
Community Centre Branch Library  
Concept Design Studios  
Concordia Steel Fab Inc  
Coro Club Italia  
Corsaro Classic Engraving Inc  
DawgPound Tattoos & Piercing  
Dawn Art Works Niagara  
Digital Attractions  
Dingman Nagy School of Ballet Arts  
Ecko Creative Services  
Faherty Demenezes Academy of Irish Dance  
Feder School of Classical Ballet  
Fiction Addiction  
Friends of Lundy's Lane Battlefield  
Friends of Stamford Village  
G2 Graphics and Photo Editing  
Geoffrey Chapman Model & Talent Agency  
Golchuk Digital Media  
Greg Frewin Theatre

Grey Borders Books  
Hall Ironworks Inc  
Happy Feet Dance  
Harmony Prints Inc  
Hart & Huntington Niagara  
Heads Tattoos  
Heartland Forest  
Highland Dance Academy  
Imagination Dance & Fitness  
Infinite Motion  
Infinity Video Productions  
Info Niagara  
Joe Mayer Photography  
John Newby Gallery  
Joseph Vetrone Photography  
Kreative Kones  
Laurie Ewart's Dance works  
Louis Tussaud's Waxworks  
Lucky 13 Tatto Shop  
Lundy's Lane Historical Society  
Melissa S Photography  
Modern Vision Photography  
Monastery at Mount Carmel - Art Gallery  
Monique's Photography  
More Than Ink  
Multicultural Network of Niagara Falls  
Munkybuns Sock Monkeys  
Murphy's Music  
Music for Young Children  
Musically Inclined  
MYAC  
Needle Magic Sewing School  
Neto Hatinakwe Onkwehowe Native Arts Canada  
Niagara Antique Power Association  
Niagara Arts & Crafts  
Niagara Black History Association  
Niagara Concerts  
Niagara District Art Association  
Niagara Falls Art Gallery & Children's Museum  
Niagara Falls Camera Club  
Niagara Falls Concert Band  
Niagara Falls Museums  
Niagara Falls Music Theater Society  
Niagara Falls Public Library  
Niagara Falls Railway Museum  
Niagara Falls Review  
Niagara Falls School of Drama  
Niagara German Canadian Club  
Niagara Grand Dinner Theater  
Niagara Hand weavers & Spinners Guild  
Niagara Heritage Doll Club  
Niagara Institute of Music & Arts  
Niagara Literary Arts Festival



Niagara Memorial Militaries  
Niagara Men's Chorus  
Niagara Military Museum  
Niagara Peninsula Needle Art Guild  
Niagara Region Musicians Association  
Niagara Scouting Museum  
Niagara Strings Inc  
Niagara Symphony Orchestra  
Niagara Woodcarvers Association  
Norval Johnson Heritage Library at BME Church  
Ochre Gallery of Art  
Ontario Conservatory of Music  
Parkway Artists' Guild  
Patrician Stained Glass Studio  
Peterson Community Workshop  
Photography by Shelly  
Pulp Comics  
Rainbow Country Quilters  
RCM College of Examiners Piano & Theory  
Ross Navarro Culinary Sculptures  
SCVFA Steve Burnside Summer Blues Series - Blues in the Park  
Shawn Taylor Niagara Wedding Photographer  
Sherri's School of Highland Dancing  
Square Dancing  
Stamford Centre Branch Library  
Stamford Kiwanis Music & Dance Festival  
Stick n Needles Knitting Guild  
Sweet Harmony  
The Neutral Zone  
The Tattoo Shop  
Treblaires Ladies Show Choir  
Twilight Tuesdays  
Ukrainian Dunai Dancers  
Urban Art Gallery  
V2N  
Vicki Barrett Photography  
Village of Chippawa Citizens Committee  
Wendy Leard School of Dance  
White Finucci Wedding Photography  
Willoughby Historical Society  
Winter Festival of Lights