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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Report CDP-15-2024 Heritage and Culture – Public Arts and Culture Strategy Development Update



For Consideration by Council in Committee on December 10, 2024

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### OBJECTIVE:

To provide an update to Council regarding Haldimand County's development of a Public Arts and Culture Strategy and associated policy.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDP-15-2024 Heritage and Culture – Public Arts and Culture Strategy Development Update be received.

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**Reviewed by:** Katrina Schmitz, Manager, Community Development & Partnerships Division

**Respectfully submitted:** Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

**Approved:** Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Arts and culture contribute significantly to Haldimand County's sense of place, well-being and community pride. Arts and culture also inspire, bring communities together and encourage economic growth and tourism opportunities which contribute to a creative and healthy community.

Working in collaboration with community partners and stakeholders, the proposed Public Arts and Culture Strategy will include a vision for arts and culture in Haldimand County, outline priorities and actions that are achievable and support the needs of a growing and diverse community and include a supporting policy to provide structure to decision-making and resource allocation.

The anticipated completion date for the Public Arts and Culture Strategy is the first quarter of 2025.

### BACKGROUND:

Since 2010, with the creation of the Community Development & Partnerships Division (CDP), there has been a growing interest in and appreciation for the need and benefit of arts and culture to creating a vibrant, engaged and diverse community. In that time, Haldimand County has made considerable investments in its heritage, arts and culture facilities and resources and supported many innovative public arts and culture activities.

In 2018, CDP's Heritage & Culture Unit initiated the development of its first Public Arts Policy. At that time, the intention was to build—through community engagement—the County's vision and an associated process to:

- Celebrate the community’s history and culture by developing, managing and preserving an art collection that enhances interior and exterior public spaces;
- Encourage and benefit resident artisans; and
- Show commitment to the value and significance of historic and contemporary art which informs, enlightens and inspires people to look at their community in a new way.

On February 29, 2024, Council passed the following resolution in relation to a public art initiative based upon growing public interest in the matter:

*“THAT staff be directed to report back to a future Council in Committee meeting regarding options for an arts and culture policy.”*

Staff initiated their work in response to this resolution in late summer 2024 and the subject report is intended to overview work completed to date and the timeline for presentation of a draft policy to Council.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Purpose of Cultural Planning:**

Cultural planning is a ‘place-based’ approach to planning and development that begins with identifying and mapping a community’s cultural resources and proceeds to developing a plan for managing those resources. Importantly, the process outlines how cultural resources will be integrated across local government planning and decision-making to achieve the community’s goals, and how culture can support the four essential pillars of sustainability:

- Economic prosperity;
- Social equity;
- Environmental responsibility; and
- Cultural vitality.

### **County Support of Heritage, Arts, Culture:**

Haldimand County has a long history of supporting heritage preservation and its arts/culture community. In the past 15 years, the municipality has:

- Invested considerable capital resources in its three museum sites, including replacing the aging Haldimand County Museum & Archives with the Cayuga Heritage Centre (co-located with the community’s public library), replaced the windows at Edinburgh Square Heritage & Cultural Centre with historically-accurate custom windows and renovated the Wilson MacDonald Memorial School Museum for enhanced accessibility;
- Approved a variety of projects through the County’s Community Partnership Program including: the Port Maitland Cairn; Canfield Black Settlement Marker; the installation of artwork in Dunnville through a collaboration with the provincial Waterlution/Great Art for Great Lakes group; introduced the popular Paddle Art Tour Haldimand (PATH), initially through a provincial grant and now funded by the County; approved of a series of historical storyboards in Port Maitland and Dunnville’s Waterfront and Wingfield Parks; and installed, in the Haldimand County Administration Building (HCAB), two works of art gifted to the County (Frederick Haldimand portrait and The Sinking of the Commerce);
- During construction of the HCAB, created a climate-controlled space for the County’s museum collection to better protect these assets, included display cases in the atrium for heritage and culture exhibits and installed items from the collection throughout the facility; and
- Installed a dedicated screen in HCAB for ‘HCTV’ (Heritage & Culture Television) to showcase the County’s history, arts and culture through film and video.

## **Arts & Culture Strategy and Policy Development:**

The development of an Arts and Culture Strategy and Policy will demonstrate Haldimand County's commitment to local arts and culture and will be established through engagement with local arts and culture participants, residents, and visitors. The work will be completed by the Community Development & Partnerships Division's Heritage & Culture Unit staff and will incorporate stakeholder input, public feedback, background research and best practices. It will include statements of principles, values and intent that outline expectations and provide a basis for consistent decision-making and resource allocation and an action plan for the County's support of the arts and culture over the next ten to twenty years.

### **Work to Date:**

Community engagement sessions held in 2018 and 2024 identified the needs, wants and priorities for arts and culture services, programs, and facilities.

In 2018, a facilitated Open Spaces Gathering process—open to the public and sector stakeholders—was initiated to determine the opportunities for developing a public arts policy in Haldimand County. More than twenty participants identified and discussed key topic areas which eventually resulted in six key priorities:

1. Story-Telling: Working together with Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and art supporters, to tell the history of our community through historical art, landmarks, storyboards, music and more;
2. Creation of a Public Arts & Culture Advisory Committee;
3. Making the Arts Accessible to All: Proactively finding ways to involve citizens of all ages to engage with, foster a love for and appreciate local arts and culture;
4. Connecting Art to the Natural Environment;
5. Sustainability in the Arts: Through government funding; ongoing operations/maintenance;
6. Cultural and Community Mapping.

In October 2024, CDP/Heritage & Culture staff facilitated two public engagement sessions, including discussions and small-table exercises, to continue development of this work. Participants were very supportive of the 2018 priorities/recommendations. Preliminary input from the 23 participants identified the following additional issues for consideration:

- Preservation of cultural legacies (digitization, living archives, oral histories);
- Creation of cultural hubs (one or more; start small and at the grassroots level);
- Expanded cultural programming (dance, music, theatre, photography);
- Expand art installations in public spaces (murals, storyboards, photography);
- Potential for an artists' co-operative;
- Private/public partnerships;
- Increased programming for children; low/no cost and accessible;
- Opportunities for increased communications/networking meetings locally to build support and capacity for artists, creators and makers;
- Roles and responsibilities of the community/sector participants and the County.

### **Next Steps:**

Staff will share and build upon the preliminary consultation results at a second community engagement event in early 2025, focusing on key topic areas including:

- Opportunities to capitalize on the County's existing cultural assets;
- Developing a vision for arts and culture that is inclusive, equitable, diverse, and accessible;
- Increasing capacity and collaboration between the County and its partners; and

- Supporting the integration of arts and culture into County planning and place-making processes.

A final report to Council will be presented before the end of the first quarter 2025.

## **FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The Public Arts and Culture Strategy and Policy is anticipated to introduce opportunities for programs, commissions, installations and/or partnerships that may require the future provision of resources (e.g. staff support, funding, property use, maintenance). While there are no direct financial implications of approving this strategy, any resources required related to these opportunities could impact future capital and operating budgets. Regarding this particular report, there are no financial impacts as it is intended as an update only.

## **STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:**

The development of the Public Arts and Culture Strategy and Policy has been conducted through engagement and collaboration with community stakeholder groups and individuals.

Since 2011, Haldimand County has had a robust Community Partnership Program (CPP) that supports the four pillars of sustainable development—economic prosperity, social equity, environmental responsibility and cultural vitality—and drives the creation of innovative capital projects, civic beautification, festivals and events, heritage and culture, programming and more. The CPP’s principles of engagement, collaboration and accountability, as means to develop meaningful relationships, provides an ideal foundation for a Public Arts & Culture Strategy and policy.

## **REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

## **REFERENCES:**

None.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

None.