

# Haldimand County



## Public Arts & Culture Strategy

Presentation to Council in Committee  
April 29, 2025

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# Report Overview – Creativity, Community, Everywhere

Arts and cultural pursuits can define a community: its history, creativity, aspirations and civic values.

Working in collaboration with community partners and stakeholders, the **Public Arts and Culture Strategy** reflects a vision for arts and culture in Haldimand County, outlines priorities and actions that are achievable and supports the needs of a growing and diverse community. A supporting **Policy** provides structure to decision-making and resource allocation.



# Report Overview – Creativity, Community, Everywhere

Through community engagement, it was made clear that a “made in Haldimand County” strategy had to include both public art and public culture.

**Public art** refers to art that is in the public realm: indoors or outdoors; on public or private property; purchased with either public or private funds.

**Public culture** refers to the values, customs, heritage and traditions which characterize Haldimand’s communities. Culture is inclusive and reflects the elements and traits of:

- Peoples of historical and contemporary settlement;
- Popular culture;
- The places, physical amenities, events, products and creations that contribute to such values, customs and traditions.





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# Report Overview – Creativity, Community, Everywhere

In the context of public art, public culture strategies use art to foster community engagement, cultural expression and civic dialogue, often through participatory processes and by integrating art into urban planning and development.

With this Public Arts & Culture Strategy—and associated Policy—Haldimand County is reinforcing a long-term commitment to its creative communities, everywhere.



# Purpose and Objectives

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The purpose of the Public Arts & Culture Strategy is to help Haldimand County understand the external factors impacting the sector, including action plans to reach our goals, managing challenges, adjusting plans as needed and using resources wisely.

The Strategy is informed by the recommendations of the recent Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy (2024), the Haldimand County Strategic Plan (2025-2045) and the Resident Satisfaction Survey (2024).





# Guiding Principles

The following aspirational and directional principles are intended to guide the future-facing development and implementation of the Public Arts & Culture Strategy and Policy:

1. Innovative and Open-Minded
2. Collaborative and Engaging
3. Diverse and Inclusive
4. Accessible and Equitable
5. Sustainable and Resilient





# Local Context

Since 2010, with the creation of the Community Development & Partnerships Division and its partnership approach, there has been a growing interest in and appreciation for arts and culture to create 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 has supported many innovative public arts and culture activities.





# Local Context

In 2018, the Heritage & Culture Unit initiated the development of its first Public Arts Policy. More than twenty participants identified six key priorities in the resulting **Open Spaces Gathering** report.

In February 2024, the Mayor put forth a motion directing staff to report back regarding options for an arts and culture policy. This report now delivers on that direction.





# Local Context

In 2024-2025, staff revisited the 2018 work as part of developing a Public Arts & Culture Strategy and Policy:

- Four staff-facilitated community engagement sessions took place (two each in October 2024 and January 2025) and an online survey was made available to the public;
- In total, 45 participants engaged in the two-hour in-person sessions, including discussions and small-table exercises, and ten residents provided online input.





# A Vision for the Arts in Haldimand County

Nearly all of the participants agreed the sector would like Haldimand's help in facilitating networking and other partnership activities to help it grow. Key priorities include:

- Preservation of cultural legacies (digitization, living archives, oral histories);
- Creation of cultural hubs (one or more; start small and at the grassroots);
- Expand cultural programming (dance, music, theatre, photography, festivals);
- Expand art installations in public spaces (murals, storyboards, photography);
- Investigate the potential for an artists' cooperative;
- Develop more programming for children;
- Create local opportunities for more networking and information-sharing meetings within the sector to build support and capacity for artists/creators;
- Identify roles/responsibilities of the community/sector and Haldimand.



# How else can Haldimand support the sector?

- Facilitate more partnership projects like the Paddle Art Tour Haldimand;
- Work with the sector to develop strategies for sustainability of the arts and culture in Haldimand County;
- Explore the possibility of a dedicated arts and culture facility to support programming, making and creating, teaching and mentoring, meeting and networking;
- Assist with promotion of the activities of the sector;
- Identify opportunities to work with under-represented communities, emerging artists and marginalized community members to create more diverse and exclusive experiences;





# How else can Haldimand support the sector?

- Be a professional development resource to artists/creators/makers;
- Collaborate with the sector to host a major festival;
- Use the Grand River and Haldimand's natural environment for more innovative programming and events;
- More intergenerational opportunities;
- Host regular (bi-annual) open meetings where all artists, creators and makers are welcome to network and collaborate;
- More opportunities to include children/youth in the sector.



# Recommendations

Eleven recommendations came out of the research and consultation:

1. Implement the Public Arts & Culture Policy;
2. Continue using the Community Partnership Program to consider requests for public arts/culture initiatives on County/County-adjacent property;
3. Incorporate a Public Art Development Program;
4. Create a restricted Capital Grant Fund—much like the CPP Reserve—dedicated to public arts and culture requests;
5. Create a Public Art Program Reserve Fund to accept donations and third-party contributions;





# Recommendations

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6. Investigate the possibility of an under-utilized County facility becoming a centralized Public Arts & Culture Centre/Cooperative;
  7. Identify current and future Programming Partnership Opportunities within the sector;
  8. Develop a Guest Curators Program within the Heritage & Culture Unit;
  9. Create a County-wide Arts & Culture Festival;
  10. Identify opportunities to support business with the costs of creating public art (e.g. EDT's Community Improvement Program)
  11. Create Resources (materials, workshops) to support the business side of being an artist, creator, maker.



# Next Steps & Implementation

Although some of the identified recommendations require additional resources, there is an opportunity to continue building momentum for the interest in Haldimand County's public arts and culture initiatives:

- Council to approve the Public Arts & Culture Strategy and Policy;
- Heritage & Culture staff to continue engaging with consultation participants and others in the sector;
- Potential sequencing of the recommendations in the Strategy within existing policies, processes and resources;
- Engage with Council-approved Committees and internal Divisions to identify opportunities for collaboration and support;
- Prepare a financial plan that identifies and leverages existing and potential sources of revenue.





# Thank you!

## Questions

