

## Creating Economic and Social Benefits for Communities

*Investing in culture will strengthen your economic and tax base, improve quality of life for residents and visitors, and enhance community identity and reputation.*

Whether it's the increasing number of practical examples of success in your own and other communities or the academic research of Dr. Richard Florida (*The Rise of the Creative Class*), the evidence is in: **it pays for a municipality to make a proactive role in arts and cultural development a key part of its core "business."**

Municipalities, large and small, are working with and investing in their creative communities. They are nurturing cultural activities that serve local residents, create and celebrate community identity, facilitate exchange and understanding among socially, economically, and culturally diverse groups, and attract visitors and new businesses.

These activities are contributing noticeably to their economies and their balance sheet both by increasing the tax base (new businesses, new residents, higher property values) and by ameliorating demands on a range of services relating to both the physical and mental fitness of youth, a stressed workforce, and the elderly—all taxpayers, voters, and residents.

Whether it's cultural tourism, the film industry, community celebrations, or high-tech industries that are being targeted, creativity and innovation are the beginning of success.

"One of the things we've forgotten is that cities are communities of people. But what is the glue that holds them together? Common values. Common ideas. In recent years, it's also the growing importance of culture. Our economic well-being is based on our ability to celebrate culture, and celebrate the true identity of our cities."

—Architect Bing Thom

### Municipal Scan

As we look around Canada and the world, we find several common features:

- \* More and more municipalities are taking the lead in cultural economic development to ensure their best competitive position.
- \* Municipal leadership is fostering community participation, identity, and pride through festivals, libraries, museums, public art, local choral and historical societies, and renovated heritage buildings.
- \* Municipal leadership is leveraging both senior government and private sector investments in culture-based enterprises, which creates short-term job stimuli as well as long-term infrastructure development.
- \* Local creative involvement ensures authentic and distinct community attractions known to draw tourists.
- \* Municipal reputation and attractions derived from this creative base deliver value-added returns on investments.

### Successful Strategies

There are many examples to choose from, all proven by experience:

In addition to its other cultural assets, **Quebec City** recently chose to work with its creative community to revitalize an important inner city neighbourhood. Within a decade, the Quartier St. Roch has become a highly desirable place to live, work, and entertain.

Had it not been for a theatre company, **Trinity**, Newfoundland, might well have become a ghost town. Happily, today Trinity is bustling with tourists who want to experience Rising Tide Theatre's historical performances. In 2003, the 25-year-old company produced 13 different plays, plus a historical pageant with actors in period costumes leading hundreds of patrons about the village, offering them a colourful perspective on the area's sometimes tragic past.

**Kelowna** and other communities of British Columbia's Okanagan and Similkameen valleys have not only been developing their distinct communities but are now also collaborating on a cultural tourism corridor including the arts, recreation, and wine industries.

**Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto's** ongoing support for not-for-profit sector actors, dancers, musicians, and technicians helped create the bedrock of skilled talent which now forms the basis of their billion-dollar film, television, and new media industries.

From **St. John's, Charlottetown, Halifax, Fredericton, and Quebec City to Kingston, Winnipeg, Moose Jaw, and Victoria**, cultural heritage activities and architecture have been made the focal points of local celebrations and major tourism attractions.

In all these examples, the authentic assets and creative energies of residents have helped build attractive and vibrant communities, enhancing and expanding economic foundations, and improving quality of life, competitiveness, and distinctiveness.

### Take Action ▶

- \* Approve a Council resolution that your municipality will become more proactive in developing the creative, cultural, and heritage sectors in your community.
- \* Read the articles in this special issue of Creative City News and ensure your staff participate in the Creative City Network. (see back page)
- \* Work with municipal staff to consult with and engage your creative sector and the community-at-large.
- \* Create an arts and culture development policy and a strategic cultural development plan.
- \* With community partners, identify priority programs and initiatives—and act on them.
- \* Make strategic investments in the local creative sector and seek matching funds from senior governments and the private sector.

Read on for **SEVEN** ways **culture** can help you build better communities!

For more information and profiles of cultural projects making a difference in Canadian communities, visit [www.creativecity.ca](http://www.creativecity.ca)

In recognition of the rapidly growing importance of cultural development for communities of all sizes, the **Creative City Network of Canada** is proud to announce a new partnership with the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities** to inform elected officials about the benefits of a strong creative community, and how to build that strength. This is the first of a series of articles and publications highlighting the economic and social returns on cultural investments experienced by Canadian communities.

# 1

# Urban Revitalization and Renewal

*The arts revitalize city neighbourhoods, including the downtown core.*

**A**rts and culture can have a catalyzing role in revitalization and renewal initiatives. Successful downtown renewal efforts frequently use arts and cultural organizations and activities to draw people to the area, animate the space, and create vitality.

**Arts and cultural facilities bring economic development and revitalization to neighbourhoods**, according to a recent study by Ryerson University's Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity.

Including cultural facilities in downtown revitalization strategies also helps meet goals to:

- \* attract additional people and business to the downtown core;
- \* reverse the migration to malls in the outskirts of town;
- \* recycle outmoded buildings for new uses; and
- \* create a more vital 'lived in' downtown area that doesn't shut down at the end of the work day.

New construction is not the only way the arts can bring activity into an area. Arts activities create productive new uses for neighbourhood facilities and under-utilized or abandoned spaces. There are countless examples of new uses for old buildings, blending history and architecture to enliven the retail core of a city.

## Examples of Successful Strategies

Granville Island in **Vancouver**, one of the most vibrant examples of mixed-use planning, exemplifies new uses for obsolete industrial buildings and the success of introducing arts activities into a commercial and industrial setting.

**Saint John** is home to many artists who have national and international audiences. The city's downtown area—Prince William and Canterbury Streets—features 19TH-century buildings with lofts that artists can rent for about \$250 a month. The downtown is kept vital by a mixture of business, arts, and pedestrian traffic.

Development is beginning on the **Port Coquitlam** Leigh Square Community Arts Village, a downtown arts and cultural facility within the city's central plaza, Leigh Square. It will be a grassroots, community-driven focal point for Port Coquitlam. The redevelopment project will result in over 18,000 square feet of dedicated space for arts and culture related activities, including art studios, multi-purpose performing space, a display centre, public archives, and an outlet for work by local artisans.

**Quebec City's** renewal efforts for the Quartier St. Roch place arts,

community, and culture first and foremost. The district has been transformed from what was a depressed and rather dangerous neighbourhood into a creative centre.

As **Edmonton's** Centennial Legacy Project, Sir Winston Churchill Square is in the process of being renovated as a significant historical site and a vibrant place in the city's cultural life. The Square is the heart of the Arts District—a wealth of cultural facilities and activities, shopping, restaurants, and hotels. For its re-opening in October 2004, as part of the City's birthday celebrations, new production infrastructure for outdoor festivals will be in place, with a designated municipal staff person for ongoing management and programming.

The **City of Kingston** is launching an urban renewal of its downtown with culture, building towards a heritage district to anchor the cultural tourism strength of downtown Kingston. Local businesses, which eagerly support the process, recognize it is economically attractive for business, will help build social and cultural cohesion, and will raise the profile of the community through its culture.

## Take Action ▶

- \* Include artists and arts organizations as strategic partners in the revitalization of your downtown and other urban neighbourhoods.
- \* Develop districts and neighbourhoods—Cultural Empowerment Zones—as creative service/cultural/entertainment magnets and breeding grounds for collaboration.
- \* Develop mechanisms and incentives to enable artists to build sweat equity, so they are not priced out of such districts as property values rise.
- \* Develop partnerships with the private and non-profit sectors and with other levels of government to foster culture through renovated, expanded, and new cultural facilities and artist live/work spaces.
- \* Connect communities with artists and arts groups to create people-friendly, art-friendly public spaces.
- \* Use urban spaces in new and different ways, such as closing streets for fairs, festivals, and farmers' markets. Festivals can reflect the diversity of people and thought that makes your community unique and interesting.
- \* Identify municipally owned properties that could be recycled for use by the arts community.
- \* Review the feasibility of developing a City-owned space/property as an arts resource centre and incubator for cultural organizations.
- \* Allow for flexibility in planning. Develop an attitude of encouraging opportunities for creative expression.
- \* Promote the adaptive reuse of buildings to house creative enterprises.
- \* Investigate possible civic initiatives, including zoning and building code provisions, for temporary use of buildings for exhibitions, performances, etc.
- \* Provide financial and facility-planning assistance to cultural organizations involved in the purchase and renovation of properties.
- \* Create design and development guidelines and incentives that spur creativity and leverage the distinctive features of neighbourhoods and communities.
- \* Encourage design processes that explore new solutions to the economics of development and accommodate mixed uses that include the arts and artists.

## BEYOND ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE: The Spillover Effects of Investments in Cultural Facilities

*A major research project by Ryerson University's Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity, 2003*

The development of new cultural facilities has a direct influence on property values (and therefore tax revenue), as well as on employment and change drivers. Key study findings indicate a pattern of growth in new businesses, retail sales, and property values complemented by positive trends in social indicators and attitudes around the cultural facilities.

### Toronto

Near two Artscape buildings on Queen Street West:

- \* Rents increased for 87 per cent of area businesses.
- \* Nearly half of 24 businesses made capital improvements.
- \* Neighbourhood retail sales increased to \$115,500 from \$102,300 between 1997 and 2000, and nine more retail outlets were added.

### Vancouver

Within an 11-block radius of the renovated Stanley Theatre on Granville Street:

- \* The number of new condo units rose to 144 in 2000 from 15 in 1999. From 1996 to 2002, prices doubled to \$404,000.
- \* The number of construction and renovation permits increased to 21 in 2003 from two in 1992.
- \* Retail sales rose to \$216.4-million from \$104.2-million between 1998 and 2000.
- \* All 134 business owners surveyed said their business volume was up since 1998.

*(Reported in "The fine art of land development," The Globe and Mail, February 17, 2004)*

**"Cities that thrive in the twenty-first century will be cities that pay attention to developing a true diversity of human creativity. That means not only more (and more accessible) public art, but a new attention to creative alternatives in development—aging buildings rehabilitated into artists' studios and living spaces, for instance, rather than demolished to make room for a new batch of condos; the creation of multi-purpose cultural meeting places/showcases in the heart of downtown."**

— Max Wyman,  
*The Defiant Imagination, 2004*

# 2

## Cultural Tourism

*People want to visit places that offer exciting things to do as well as interesting ways to express themselves.*

The growth of cultural tourism as an economic force is undeniable. Tourists looking for unique and authentic experiences are increasingly interested in cultural sites and innovative arts programming, and will travel to find these attractions.

Tourism centred around arts events, festivals, museums, art galleries, and heritage attractions is big business. Total domestic spending by Canadian cultural tourists exceeds \$3 billion, according to a recent Canadian Tourism Commission survey. The Travel Industry Association of America finds that two-thirds of all adult U.S. travellers have participated in cultural tourism in recent years.

Cultural tourists are increasingly drawn from the 55+ age category, earn and spend more money, spend more time in an area while vacationing, are likely to stay in hotels and motels, and are far more likely to shop.

Major museum events, such as special one-time exhibitions, are tremendous tourism boosters, while annual events—like the Canmore Folk Music Festival or the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal—generate repeat visitors who plan their vacations in advance to attend the event.

Visitors drawn to a location for a specific cultural activity or event will stay longer to take advantage of other recreational activities, such as camping, hiking, skiing, and trail riding, spending even more in the local economy and the surrounding region.

All sizes of communities benefit from efforts to cultivate and develop cultural offerings for visitors.

### What is cultural tourism?

There is no one, all-encompassing definition. Basically, cultural tourism means experiencing a cultural activity while outside your home community. This simple definition includes a full range of activities, from visiting an art gallery for a few hours between business meetings to spending a week at a major festival.

The Canadian Tourism Commission defines culture and heritage tourism as occurring when participation in a cultural or heritage activity is a significant factor for travelling.

“Clearly the future of cultural tourism is bright for those destinations with a quality, marketable culture and heritage-based tourism experience.”

— Canadian Tourism Commission, *Sharing Manitoba's Culture with the World, 2004*



Trinity: Scenes from Rising Tide Theatre's historically based *The New Founde Lande Trinity Pageant*. Photos: Rising Tide Theatre

### Examples of Successful Strategies

The success of the Rising Tide Theatre initiative in attracting tourists to **Trinity**, Newfoundland, has inspired other communities to invest in the development of authentic, professional, community-rooted theatre reflecting their own histories. For instance, several towns surrounding the **Big Muddy Badlands** area in southeastern Saskatchewan are engaging a theatre artist to develop an arts festival based on local traditions in order to boost tourism in the region.

ArtCity, a joint initiative between the MacLaren Art Centre and the **City of Barrie**, Ontario, will involve both the permanent and temporary placement of art in public spaces throughout Barrie, transforming the entire city into a giant sculpture park. From May 2003 to December 2004 the city will host *Shore/lines*, a major exhibit of environmental art by 14 internationally acclaimed artists, which will be installed at 11 different sites. The installations will raise awareness of the ecologically and historically significant and sensitive shorelines of Lake Simcoe, Little Lake, and Lake Algonquin. An environmental art exhibition is planned as a biennial event.

As part of an initiative to increase tourism in **Summerside**, Prince Edward Island, the Lefurgey Cultural Centre historical building, owned by the City of Summerside, is undergoing a major renovation. This will ensure it continues its important role as a centre for the development of the arts through training and education, and through promotion of local arts and culture.

Tourism revitalization efforts in **Brantford**, Ontario, prominently include investments in the Sander-son Centre for the Performing Arts and the Kanata Native Traditional Village, a 17th-century Iroquoian village and educational centre.

“A major motivator of tourism is learning what is special about a place's culture and heritage.”  
— Canadian Tourism Comm., *Packaging the Potential, 1999*

**Main-à-Dieu**, on Cape Breton Island, is developing the Coastal Discovery Centre as an attraction for tourists and a focal point for the community. The Centre will present the history of the Main-à-Dieu area in the context of its attachment to the sea and the lobster fishery, and also include a credit union, library, Community Access Program (C@P) site, craft enterprises, and other services.

In British Columbia, the **Okanagan Cultural Corridor** is a cultural tourism initiative encompassing three regional districts, over 25 communities, and more than 210 cultural providers. The Kelowna-based organization functions as a regional marketing and development vehicle for cultural tourism, leading initiatives to develop cultural tourism routes in the region.

### In 2001, Canadians took:

- \* 6.5 million trips that included a museum or art gallery
- \* 7.8 million trips that included an historic site
- \* 5.7 million trips that included a cultural event
- \* 6.2 million trips that included a festival or fair

*Cited by the Canadian Tourism Commission in *Sharing Manitoba's Culture with the World, 2004**



Barrie: *The Centre of the World* by Bill Vazan, Sunnidale Park, Barrie. Part of *Shore/lines 2003*, a project of the MacLaren Art Centre. Photo: MacLaren Art Centre

### Take Action ▶

- \* Encourage co-operation between cultural and tourism associations to share information, develop joint strategies, investigate cultural tourism potential, and implement new initiatives.
- \* Create a cultural tourism strategy for your community and region.
- \* Preserve, maintain, and celebrate your community's heritage assets.
- \* Promote the cultural riches of your community—human resources, physical heritage, and intangibles such as myths, legends, and other stories.
- \* Invite visiting dignitaries and corporate visitors to attend art events and galleries.
- \* Commission the work of local artists as civic gifts.
- \* Program local artists at civic events.
- \* Nurture and support both established and emerging artists and cultural organizations to provide vitality and articulate the evolving character of your community.

# 3

## Quality of Place Quality of Life

*Arts, culture, and heritage are cornerstones in developing vibrant, attractive, resilient, competitive, and creative communities.*

**T**he vision of community and city liveability is undergoing radical reassessment. As communities grow and demographics shift, residents are developing different expectations of local programs and services.

Arts and culture are now widely recognized as meaningful and tangible contributors to the life and soul of communities. As the population grows older and activities and interests change, the demand is growing for arts and culture. ‘Urban refugees,’ who bring valued skills and expertise into rural areas, are attracted by the elements that a more rural life offers but are also looking for opportunities to take part in cultural activities. Cultural and social amenities are key components of lifestyle—they matter to people, and they matter to the economy.

The arts are a valuable marketing tool for a community’s economic development strategy. It is now widely accepted that corporate and employee location decisions are significantly influenced by the strength of the local cultural sector. Strong, creative communities attract business and industry, which bring employment opportunities and add to the wealth of the community.

Information-age industries value quality-of-life issues for their employees, and are attracted to communities, regardless of geography, which actively support arts and culture.

**The Esplanade, the new City of Medicine Hat Arts and Heritage Centre, “will take Medicine Hat to the next level of our development as a city, support downtown revitalization and increase our pride in our cultural strengths. It represents a tremendous investment in our future and will serve to further Medicine Hat as a community of choice.”**

— Garth Vallely, Mayor of Medicine Hat, Alberta

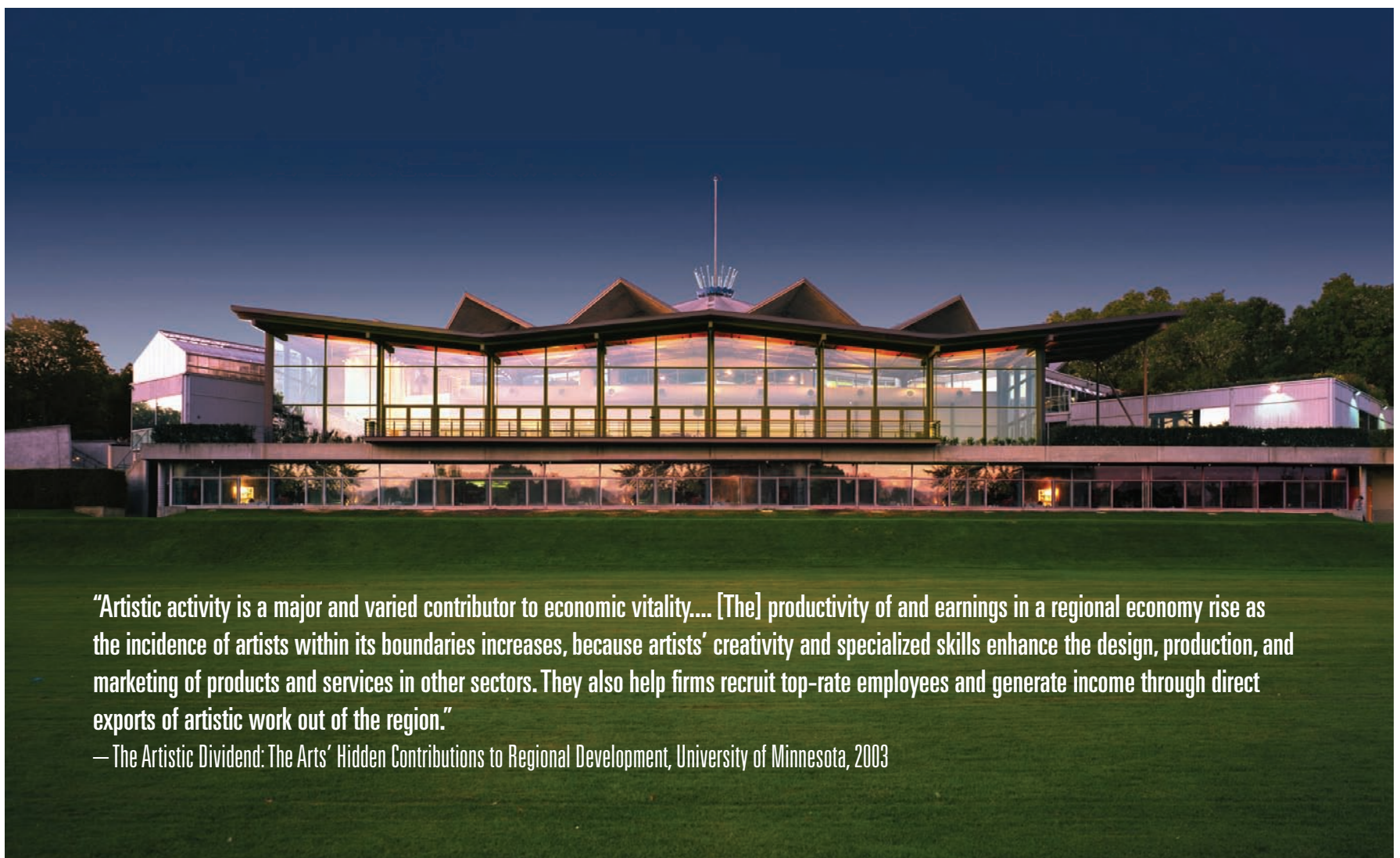
Dr. Richard Florida’s research suggests that the economically successful and vibrant cities of the future are those that engage the creativity of their residents, encourage and welcome immigrants, invest in the work of artists and scientists, and maintain an authentic and environmentally sustainable setting. Like Jane Jacobs, he argues that real economic development is people-oriented, organic, and community-based. He recently reported that entrepreneurship and rates of new firm formation are considerably higher in creative regions.

A city is also strengthened through long-term commitment from industry, business, and residents, and from the professionals who provide public services in health, education, and public safety. After the opening of the **Prince Rupert Performing Arts Centre** in 1987, and the subsequent activities generated by the facility, the positive impacts on the community were evident. The RCMP Standard of Living Scale rose by two points, reducing turnover and increasing stability in the community with resulting five-year, rather than three-year, postings in the community.

As industries downsize and resource markets change, communities look for new solutions to diversify their economic base and reduce their dependence on traditional single industries. Arts and cultural activities can provide the foundation for a new economic base, or can be used to strengthen and meld other new initiatives as communities change, adapt, and grow.

### Take Action ▶

- \* Invest in, develop, and promote local arts and heritage organizations and projects to create a richer cultural fabric that is distinct and reinforces your community’s commitment to place.
- \* Take a balanced approach: invest in a broad range of creative people, not just a few stars, and work collaboratively, not top down.
- \* Invest in the development and ongoing maintenance of spaces where artists live and work to ensure a vibrant community of interaction, creativity, and inclusion.
- \* Involve artists and other creative thinkers in civic decision-making by placing them in leadership positions on a wide variety of civic advisory commissions and boards.
- \* Encourage the Chamber of Commerce, the Tourism Association, Business Improvement Associations, major corporate employers and other business organizations to include an arts representative on their boards and committees.
- \* Incorporate art into the infrastructure of your community: commission public art along bicycle paths, require that art be an integral part of new buildings and urban developments, use sewer covers as surfaces for unique art, and incorporate designs in new sidewalk pavers that evoke historical or environmental elements of the neighbourhood.
- \* Use local arts and culture resources as a key part of your community’s marketing strategies.



*“Artistic activity is a major and varied contributor to economic vitality.... [The] productivity of and earnings in a regional economy rise as the incidence of artists within its boundaries increases, because artists’ creativity and specialized skills enhance the design, production, and marketing of products and services in other sectors. They also help firms recruit top-rate employees and generate income through direct exports of artistic work out of the region.”*

— The Artistic Dividend: The Arts’ Hidden Contributions to Regional Development, University of Minnesota, 2003

## 4

# Culture as an Economic Engine

*Cities will not attract new business or investment, or see job growth, if “creativity” is not a component of their economic and strategic plans. Creativity is the engine of the new economy.*

**A**rts, culture, and heritage organizations and activities are key resources and incubators of creativity. Through their work they create new cultural, intellectual, and economic opportunities and innovations.

Artists and other creative individuals bring a wealth of talent to the communities in which they live and work. The well-educated workforce in the cultural sector is valued for its expertise, skills, and creations. The cultural sector forms an increasingly important part of the Canadian economy, with direct and indirect impacts on local economies and workforces.

The larger business community benefits from the presence of a vibrant arts community, which helps firms recruit skilled workers to the region and provides a pool of talent to draw upon for special design, organizational, and marketing efforts.

Artists help to make companies in the broader economy more successful by working on writing, visual arts, or performance projects for specific products. In some cases, the interaction between artist and supplier, distributor, or corporate client produces innovations.

**“Art is very often about crossing boundaries, because creativity is about seeing things in new ways. Art opens people’s imaginations to a wider world. And creative thinking, risk-taking, and openness to the new are qualities that are valued in many fields besides the arts.”**

— Dr. Shirley L. Thomson, Former Director, Canada Council for the Arts

There is a direct connection between cultural development as it contributes to an improved quality of life and the consequent impact this has on economic development.

The workers required for a knowledge-based economy look to settle in communities that will continue to stimulate their creative interests. A community climate that nurtures and celebrates artistic creation, experimentation, and presentation creates a fertile ground for inspiring innovation on a broader economic, industrial, and social scale.

Arts and culture add much to city life but they need to be nurtured. Local government, with its many resources and connections, has an important role to play in forging partnerships to ensure this happens.

A community that desires to nurture its artistic sector should be thinking about why artists might like to live and work there, just as it studies why businesses prefer to locate there. Local leaders can enhance the artistic pool by working to attract, retain, and ‘home-grow’ artists.

**“A thriving arts scene requires working artists. A key indicator of success ... will be the extent to which artists see our city as a ‘place to be.’ Artists will thrive where there are positive attitudes, energetic peers, a spirit of cooperation, voracious audiences, the resources necessary to do great work, and high profile support.”**

— City of Calgary’s new Civic Arts Policy, 2004

## The Direct Economic Impact of Artistic Activity is Sizable

*Artists amplify their economic significance to a region by generating work for others who supply their materials and service needs, and present and distribute their work.*

“On the supply side, artists rely on a series of suppliers and helpers to finish a work of art and deliver it to patrons, customers and audiences. Material resources for visual artists, for instance, include artists’ supplies, film, photo finishing, frames, sculpting materials, tools, and increasingly, computers and software. Musicians require instruments and sound systems and people to repair and fine tune them. Personnel needs range from highly unique talents such as back-up musicians and craft work ancillary to building sets to more generic service providers such as accountants and photographers.... Authors employ editors to polish their work and illustrators and graphic artists to decorate it. Not only do artists generate incomes for people providing such goods and services; they sometimes induce new product or service designs....

Artists also generate employment in the distribution of their work. They hire people to create stages for their performances and showcases for their paintings and sculpture. They work with galleries and agents in trying to market visual art.... Many performing artists and writers also use impresarios or agents to find them bookings or place their work with publishers. Writers often publish with local presses. Common materials that nearly all artists need include brochures, posters and other printed materials for promotions. Some artists hire people to write press releases or to generate publicity for upcoming shows.”

— Ann Markusen and David King, *The Artistic Dividend: The Arts’ Hidden Contributions to Regional Development*, University of Minnesota, 2003

**“Attracting and retaining precious business resources, gaining access to an enriched pool of intellectual and creative talent, and building robust relationships that lead to new opportunities—these are the reasons why our companies support the arts. And that’s why we believe the City of Ottawa—both as an investor and a partner—must continue to support the arts in our community. It is not simply a nice gesture or a righteous obligation, but an intelligent and enduring investment in Ottawa’s future prosperity.”**

Hubert de Pesquidoux, COO, Alcatel North America; CEO, Alcatel Canada Inc.

Laurier J. Boisvert, President & CEO, Telesat Canada

Lawson A.W. Hunter, Executive Vice-President, BCE & Bell Canada

Don Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Mitel Networks

Janet Yale, EVP-Govt and Regulatory Affairs, TELUS

## Take Action ▶

- \* Listen to youth and to “bohemian” voices, and recognize the connection between those citizens and economic development.
- \* Be open to cultural industries, heritage projects, and tourism initiatives. Be willing to work closely with these groups when they come to City Hall in order to foster the development of creative cities.
- \* Provide financial and other support to artists and cultural organizations in your community.
- \* Integrate cultural planning into your government’s policy and planning processes.
- \* Include cultural considerations in decision-making processes covering everything from the city budget to transportation, and education to urban development.
- \* Create an inventory of the cultural resources and activities in your community, and conduct a needs assessment of what it would take for expansion.
- \* Initiate an economic evaluation of arts and cultural activity and potential in your community and region.
- \* Include the arts and heritage sectors in your community’s economic inventory, strategies, and planning processes.
- \* Encourage professional development for municipal staff, across departments, to build an understanding of partnership potential and the requirements of artists and arts organizations in producing and exhibiting their work.
- \* Include support for City-owned facilities and community-based not-for-profit organizations in annual municipal budgets.
- \* Foster spaces for imaginative play and innovation—environments where individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and walks of life can explore creative possibilities in a welcoming environment.
- \* Provide funding to support artists’ entrepreneurial activities, including collaborations with commercial enterprises and efforts to export work.
- \* Form and/or support creative networks that enable the exchange of information and ideas, training in business practices and marketing, access to capital, and connections between commercial and non-profit enterprises.
- \* Promote international and inter-community exchanges to stimulate creative thinking and build the cultural import/export economy.
- \* Help forge ongoing relationships between institutions of higher learning and the broader community’s cultural ecosystem.

## 5

# Building Community Identity and Pride

*Local arts and heritage give your community vitality and a sense of identity. Cultural activities create and strengthen social connections, drawing diverse citizens together.*

**A**rts and heritage are key to community health and well-being, distinctive identity, and collective pride. They act to preserve the history and identity of our diverse communities, and offer a way to meaningfully evolve these traditions and identities into the future.

Art can create a sense of identity and a unified vision for a city, and for individual neighbourhoods. For example, public art can create a landmark that is a meeting place and a focal point for activity.

As communities grow and demographics shift, arts and cultural activities can be used to find and express shared hopes and values. Arts and culture activities create the potential for generating a sense of belonging and a commitment to working together to build a better future. Festivals bring a sense of celebration to a community. Public art can articulate a community's evolving identity and hopes, and be a reminder of the area's heritage and past traditions.

**Nanaimo's** annual Banner Festival, for example, brings the community into a process of creating public art that is a focal point of local identity and pride.

Museums and galleries have immense potential as 'testing grounds' for new visions of how we live together, new ways to establish shared values, new means to build sustainable communities. Increasingly, theatres and public libraries are meeting places where Canadians from all backgrounds share their stories in an ongoing dialogue with their community. Public art can encompass functional uses, incorporate developmental community processes, and have a humanizing effect on land/cityscapes.

Older neighbourhoods in transition also benefit from arts initiatives, through new business and regenerated property values. This improves the tax base, decreases vandalism, and develops a new-found pride in ownership.

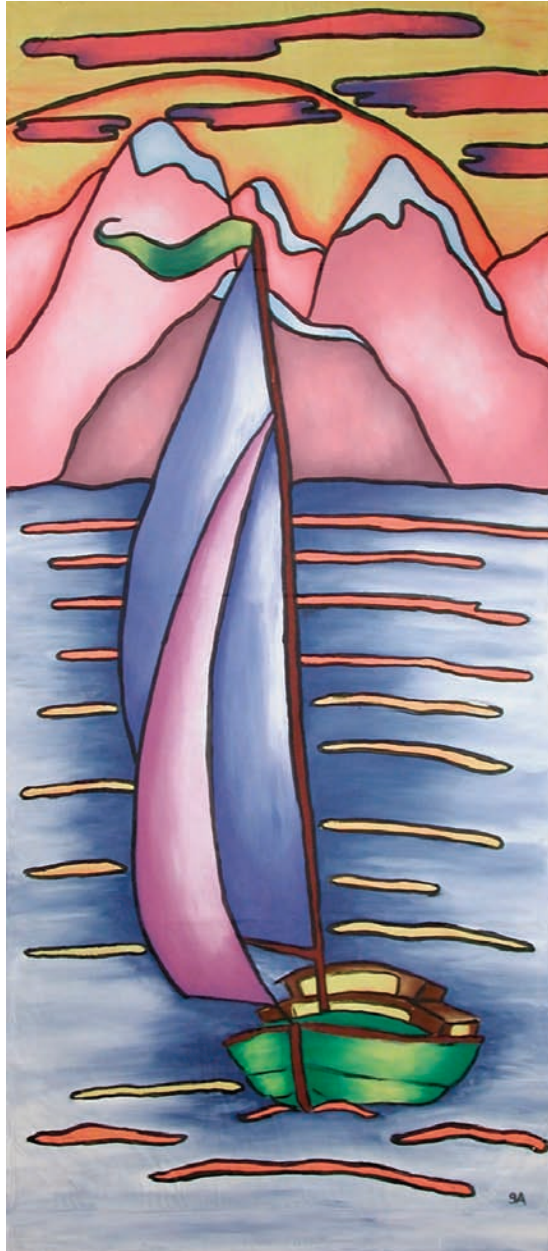
**"Cultural development is what makes our city look and feel the way it does; an attractive, vibrant place to live and visit. It gives the people who live here a pride of place and a sense of home. The most profitable cities in the world are known for their distinct cultural identity, and they don't live in their cultural past but attract young people who are at the forefront of changing our culture. Without a cultural identity we're all simply strip malls along a road."**

— Sheila Dodd, Economic Dev. and Tourism Dept., City of Whitehorse

## Social Cohesion

The arts can also act as an important tool for facilitating social cohesion—a sense of knowing who we are as individuals and as a community. As the demographic makeup of communities continues to shift, arts and cultural activities bring people together, draw newcomers into the community, and provide opportunities for everyone to learn about and understand each other.

Arts activities enable a sense of belonging to a neighbourhood by providing a structure for meaningful social interaction. Arts and heritage activities provide opportunities for public involvement and support through participation, consumption, and volunteerism.



Nanaimo: Nanaimo Banner Festival. Sailboat banner: Gina Swatez.  
Ice cream banner: Delaney Stephens, 10 years old at the time.  
Photos: Nanaimo Art Gallery

A woodcarving mural project in **New Westminster** demonstrates one way in which the arts can contribute to social cohesion. Over 300 community members came together to learn new skills and meet new people, and to bring a sense of history into a new middle school in their neighbourhood. Participants gained a renewed sense of community pride, fellowship, and belonging, and it gave youth an opportunity to take on a leadership role. As Justin, a middle school student, said: "The program meant a lot to me because it gives me a chance to give back to the community something valuable. I have done things in this community I am not proud of. I am not an angel, but this is something I am proud of."

Quality arts activities can lead to a more engaged citizenry and safer neighbourhoods. The arts have always been a pathway to further civic involvement. The arts create bridges to other critical community concerns from urban design and neighbourhood revitalization to youth development, education, and the environment.

**"In these times of increasing economic pressures and social change, the arts provide a source of growth and well-being. The work of volunteers in support of the arts, the sense of fulfillment that people get from participation and appreciation of the arts, and the pleasure and pride gained from facilities, programs and events that enliven the environment, all contribute a sense of vitality and confidence to a community."**

— Creative Connections: Arts and Culture in British Columbia Communities, Union of British Columbia Municipalities, 1997

## Take Action ▶

- \* Invite the arts and cultural sector into the process of developing/updating your Official Community Plan, neighbourhood plans, and other strategies.
- \* Include artists as facilitators and art-making activities where appropriate in neighbourhood planning processes.
- \* Include arts and cultural development objectives in neighbourhood development plans.
- \* Hold a Civic Forum on the State of the Arts in the Community, and have confidence to consider imaginative solutions to community issues.
- \* Establish and build a civic art collection, and display the work of local artists throughout the municipality's public buildings.
- \* Initiate dialogue to develop program partnerships (such as artist-in-residence projects) between schools, community centres, and arts organizations.

# Address Specific Challenges Facing Your Community



*Integrating culture with the delivery of social services can help to address specific social challenges facing communities in innovative and lasting ways.*

It is widely accepted that art programs assist in the delivery of public services, such as education, health/healing, community integration/socialization, and crime prevention. Partnerships between arts organizations and social agencies help discover synergy and maximize resources. Art can also be a catalyst for building innovative partnerships between different sectors of the community, such as police departments, social service agencies, parks and recreation, schools, and businesses.

The artist asks us to look at the world in a different way. Art invites us to be open-minded, to change our familiar positions, even to cross boundaries—personal as well as social.

Arts activities build bridges between different sectors of a neighbourhood by creating a gathering space for local residents of differing socio-economic status, and help establish common ground between generations and cultures.

Art-making activities are one of the most effective means of bringing people of all ages and backgrounds together, and can have a

transformative role in addressing community issues. It is a perfect forum to share ideas and collaborate in finding solutions to issues in a neighbourhood or community.

**“Art also serves as a healing tool ... I deal with issues—with world issues that affect all of us, as well as personal ones. People from different backgrounds and experiences can be touched and brought together by art.”**

—Visual artist George Littlechild

In addressing a social or economic crisis or divisive issue in a community, artists and cultural organizations can contribute innovative processes and mechanisms to developing solutions.

In **Woodstock**, Ontario, an innovative partnership between the library, art gallery, museum, and the City’s social services integrated the delivery of social services with cultural concerns to enable children from an underprivileged neighbourhood to take advantage of cultural resources in their community. Children who had never entered the library before are now cardholders, regular visitors, and on a first name basis with the City’s cultural staff.

Another way in which arts and heritage can contribute to community development is evident in **Waterloo**. The redevelopment of a parkette and installation of commemorative panels about the history of Waterloo’s Scholars’ Green neighbourhood and its significance to the city’s veteran population contributed to reducing tensions between students and long-term residents.

Arts, culture and heritage-based activity plays a significant role in the evolution of Canadian society, and in the social, economic, and spiritual life of communities from coast to coast.

**“Very few things turn on the kids like [world music] does. What we are really doing is promoting an understanding of the diversity that we have. There are lots of prejudices established out of ignorance. This is one way to deal with that ignorance. If we can eliminate prejudicial thought at that level, then we’ve made a major accomplishment.”**

—Sal Ferreras, musician and head of the world music program at Vancouver Community College

## Take Action ▶

- \* Use art-making activities to gather community-planning ideas in a way that bridges generations, languages, and agendas.
- \* Develop opportunities for cultural development through community art projects.
- \* Offer informal and formal programs and other opportunities to develop artistic skills, with both amateur/recreational and professional activities.
- \* Consider the arts as a tool to address specific social challenges.
- \* Provide resources for cultural development from different city departments dealing with social services and infrastructure.
- \* Support projects which build on unique and diverse community attributes and promote community engagement such as:
  - artists-in-residence in the community;
  - projects which document community history and culture such as story/oral history projects and visual chronicles;
  - showcases of local crafts, and of folk and traditional arts;
  - temporary and permanent community-based public art projects;
  - recording and marketing of local music and other cultural expression; and
  - art and civic dialogue projects.

## Leveraging Assets: How Small Budget Arts Activities Benefit Neighbourhoods

This study found that arts activities:

- \* leverage assets to benefit local neighbourhoods;
- \* encourage stability by attracting local and non-local customers to neighbourhood businesses;
- \* create productive new uses for neighbourhood facilities and under-utilized or abandoned spaces;
- \* supplement local educational resources and provide mentorship to local youth;
- \* build social networks in neighbourhoods, enable access to new resources, and contribute to civic dialogue; and
- \* provide unique opportunities to build and incubate social capital, which helps local areas and organizations mobilize resources to improve the quality of life.

—Diane Grams and Michael Warr, *Leveraging Assets: How Small Budget Arts Activities Benefit Neighborhoods*, 2003



Vancouver: *Community Walls/Community Voices*, a community public art project coordinated by Richard Tetrault, Dan Bushnell, and Jerry Whitehead. Phoenix and Dragon mosaic by Gladstone Secondary School students. Photo: Barbara Cole



Photo: M. Otto



Photo: A. Berger



Photo: A. Berger

Toronto: Scenes from *More of the Magic Fish*, a production of Jumbies Theatre and Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre, 2002.



St. John's: Murals by youth in downtown St. John's. Photos: Montgomery Hall

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## Personal and Social Development of Youth

*“Where do people most often look towards for fun, stress relief, peace, personal expression, balance, safe environments and on and on and on? Arts and culture, that’s where.”*

—Jane Cherry, Chuck MacLean Arts Centre, Camrose, Alberta

Communities can and must grow their own creative and innovative citizens. The arts provide opportunities for personal and creative skill development, particularly by children and youth. Artistic activity gives young people a means of self-expression and self-understanding. Involvement with the arts is a way for children to be successful outside the school system. Arts activities provide a safe haven and opportunities to learn new skills. Involvement with the arts builds self-esteem and confidence, develops both the mind and the ability to focus, encourages self-discipline, and motivates independent thinking. Arts activities help develop leadership and decision-making skills, and provide youth with access to technological and entrepreneurial skills.

**“We can’t predict the careers of our children. The only thing we can do is give them the tools to face a changing world: imagination, confidence, courage, the ability to interrelate knowledge and non-linear thinking, and the skills to communicate.”**

—Gary Rupert, educator, University of British Columbia

Families are looking for quality experiences and out-of-school programming in recreation and the arts for their children. Parents of teenagers are concerned about community programming that will challenge and motivate young people. Teenagers, especially those whose learning styles may not work well within the academic setting of the school system, can discover new inspiration and direction through the experiential nature of arts and cultural activities.

Arts and culture is as powerful as sports in providing positive recreation/leisure opportunities to children and youth. Arts activities can provide mentorship; can build knowledge, understanding, leadership, and engagement in democratic processes; and can engage youth as citizens in their communities.

Public recreation is one of the primary vehicles to ensure equity of access. Programs and projects created in partnership with artists and cultural organizations can be particularly powerful and effective.

A wide range of creative partnerships and projects are helping young people learn to make choices, take risks, and act responsibly, and can provide a meaningful alternative to burglary, vandalism, and violence.

In **Winnipeg**, for example, the International Children’s Festival provides a creative alternative to criminal and anti-social behaviour for inner-city youth. Its performing arts program encourages young people to develop skills as instructors and mentors, as well as in performance. Powerhouse Winnipeg’s Youth Art Centre project encouraged participants to express themselves through art as a means of overcoming isolation and loneliness, which built self-identity and self-confidence while reducing criminal behaviour patterns.

Working out of St. Patrick’s Alexandra School in the north end of **Halifax**, Stephen Cross has directed the work of Irondale Ensemble Project towards tackling tough subjects like youth violence, drug addiction, and family abuse. Irondale’s productions and

workshops provide school students with an opportunity for expression and self-discovery while learning new skills and gaining confidence. In 2004, Steven Cross received the first annual Mayor’s Award for Achievement in Theatre from the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Other innovative programs use arts activities to develop leadership skills in youth. Through its Community Arts Program, the **City of Ottawa** provides Arts Leadership Training for youth through workshops with professional artists and a practicum in a local arts group or facility. They not only create art, they also acquire practical skills in program planning, leadership techniques, and child development. The **City of Toronto** is now in year two of its Creative Youth Envoy (CYE) Program. CYE is a special cultural internship that gives young professionals the chance to work with organizations around the world that are leaders in the development of arts and culture. CYE provides a bridging opportunity for youth to launch a career within the arts and cultural sector in an international setting.

**“The root meaning of culture, as every farmer and chemist knows, is ‘preparation for growth’—and in our communities we are ‘growing people.’ If we don’t do that we shall fail our young people, and ultimately fail as communities.”**

—Mavor Moore, CC, in Creative Connections: Arts and Culture in British Columbia Communities, Union of B.C. Municipalities, 1997

### Take Action ▶

- \* Provide youth-friendly spaces and programs—give youth a safe place to hang out and create art.
- \* Give young people a voice. One of the best ways to ensure youth-friendly spaces and programs is significant youth involvement in planning, design, and implementation.
- \* Encourage initiatives proposed by youth, and encourage youth to take on leadership and mentorship roles.
- \* Train artists as facilitators and mentors in youth leadership and empowerment. Provide mutual learning opportunities between generations.
- \* Give youth a reason to stay in your community by promoting creative industries and career ladders for young people, such as internships, job shadows, and training opportunities.
- \* Strengthen and expand in-school arts education both to grow the next generation of creative citizens and to build strong schools that will attract and retain creative families. Magnet schools can make magnet neighbourhoods!
- \* Establish an arts shuttle to ferry students and visitors to local galleries, concerts, and theatres.
- \* Value creative youth expression and artistic forms. Provide prominent spaces for youth to create murals. Exhibit youth art as “serious” art. Establish a graffiti wall to legitimize graffiti art.
- \* Encourage creative ownership and investment by youth in programs, public spaces, and community.

## Take Action ▶ Join the Creative City Network

The Creative City Network is a federally incorporated non-profit organization. Its members are municipal cultural staff working for Canadian municipalities.

Visit [creativecommons.ca](http://creativecommons.ca) for more information and project profiles

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