



**City of Port Colborne**

Arts and Culture Master Plan – Executive Summary

May 2016



# Acknowledgements

The City of Port Colborne's first Arts and Culture Master Plan is the result of the participation of many individuals. The City of Port Colborne is very appreciative of the role that members of the community played in this process.

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## Photo Credits

Many photos within this document have been provided by Jeff Ballin. As special thank you to Jeff!



# Executive Summary

## Background and Context

The City of Port Colborne joins leading municipalities across Canada in recognizing cultural planning as an essential economic and broader community development tool. Completing an Arts & Culture Master Plan provides the City with a strategy and action plan to leverage its cultural resources. These resources will support a prosperous and sustainable economy, improved quality of life, increased community cohesion and civic pride. Given this broad agenda, the Arts & Culture Master has implications for a range of City departments beyond Community Services. These cross-departmental responsibilities and opportunities must be coordinated if the potential of the Arts and Culture Master Plan for the City of Colborne is to be realized. It is also essential to note that the Master Plan does not only address the needs and opportunities connected to the major urban centre. It also includes the beautiful rural areas and vibrant small towns such as Bethel, Sherkston and others with their cultural activities that are an integral part of Port Colborne.

The planning process was launched in August 2015 and concluded in June 2016. The process involved extensive background research including building an inventory of cultural resources in Port Colborne using a process called cultural mapping. The mapping process identified a total of 208 cultural resources in the following categories: for-profit and not-for-profit cultural organizations and enterprises, cultural festivals and events, significant natural and cultural heritage features, cultural facilities and spaces, and community cultural organizations.

This phase of research was followed by an extensive phase of community consultation involving: a community survey; community forum, high school workshops, stakeholder interviews, and targeted focus groups. The community consultation or engagement process produced a series of strategic themes that produced, together with earlier research findings, formed a framework for the development of the Arts and Culture Master Plan.

## The City of Port Colborne Arts and Culture Master Plan

### Vision

The following vision statement reflects both the culture planning process and the community input received. It will guide Port Colborne's future cultural endeavors:

*“In ten years, Port Colborne will be a more culturally vibrant community, supported by collaborative institutions and organizations. The city’s cultural resources will be widely accessible and inclusive for residents and visitors of all ages.”*



### ***The City of Port Colborne Cultural Mandate***

In the context of this vision, and consistent with leading practice in other Canadian municipalities, it is recommended the City of Port Colborne adopt the following mandate in cultural development.

*Provide leadership and support to build Port Colborne's capacity to realize its full potential as a culturally vibrant community.*

This mandate statement is broken out into a series of responsibilities that include:

- Planning and Policy
- Strategic Partnerships
- Investment and Support
- Facilities and Programs
- Culture Sector Capacity Building

### **Strategic Objectives, Goals and Actions**

The Arts and Culture Master Plan is built on the basis of 4 Strategic Directions

- **Demonstrate leadership in the community by connecting individuals and organizations working towards shared cultural goals.**
- **Celebrate and enact policy to support community vitality by enhancing the city's unique cultural spaces and activities.**
- **Increase local and regional awareness of Port Colborne's depth and range of cultural resources.**
- **Build a strong and collaborative cultural sector to create opportunities and experiences for cultural development that are inclusive and accessible to residents and visitors of all ages.**

Strategic Directions form the basis of over 20 Objectives supported by over 50 tactical Actions. Performance metrics are set out for each Strategic Direction.

Strategic Directions and Objectives are set forward in chart page on the next page.

### **Action Plan and Implementation**

Each Action in the Action Plan has been assigned a specific timeframe.

- Short term – immediately/year one
- Medium term – within three years
- Long term – within four to ten years

However, it will ultimately be the responsibility of City and the Project Steering Committee to determine implementation timeframes for Actions or initiatives set forward in the Arts and Cultural Master Plan based on changing needs and opportunities. The Action Plan must be understood as a flexible document that will continue to evolve as new opportunities arise.

The next page sets out the Strategic Directions and Objectives that underpin the Master Plan.



## Strategic Directions and Action Items

SD1 - Demonstrate Leadership				
#	Action	Timeline		
1.	<p><b>Raise awareness of the Arts and Culture Master Plan in the community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue a media release announcing Council's adoption of the Arts &amp; Cultural Master Plan.</li> <li>Post the Plan to the City website.</li> <li>Convene a community forum to officially launch the Plan. Effectively promoting the forum can help identify volunteers and potential champions to support implementation of the Plan.</li> <li>Incorporate the Arts &amp; Culture Master Plan Vision Statement into media releases, marketing materials and other communications channels.</li> </ul>	S	M	L
2.	<p><b>Investigate potential resources to support implementation of the Arts &amp; Culture Master Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect with representatives at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sport regarding the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund as potential sources of resources to fund specific initiatives identified in this Plan. Consider collaborative initiatives with neighbouring communities to enhance potential for funding.</li> <li>Submit an application to artsVest (artsvest.com) to support the City in its efforts secure resources, increase business sponsorships, build capacity in the cultural sector. Investigate both the training and matching incentive funds components.</li> </ul>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the City's Regional representative, liaise with Niagara Region regarding potential sources of support for specific initiatives. Wherever possible, explore potential project partnerships with other municipalities across the region. Leverage the network of Economic Development Officers across the Region to mobilizing resources for collective gains. (i.e. regional trail network improvements, and promotion).</li> </ul>			



SD1 - Demonstrate Leadership		
#	Action	Timeline
3.	<p><b>Convene an Annual Cultural Summit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize and promote an annual event to report on progress in implementing the Arts &amp; Culture Master Plan. This summit provides a vehicle for continued capacity building and collaborative ‘opportunity citing’. It is also the logical next step towards galvanizing the cultural sector behind shared goals as expressed by this Plan. Depending on uptake and available resources, this may become a bi-annual event.</li> </ul>	<p>S M L</p>
4.	<p><b>Hold an annual Civic Night or “Celebrate Port” night at the Roselawn Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize an annual Civic Night at the Roselawn Centre. “Celebrate Port” could be promoted by the City to highlight Municipal support for culture. An invitation from the Mayor will invite guests to a cultural extravaganza blending performance and displays. Hosting this event in the winter months would combat the perception of limited winter time activities.</li> </ul>	<p>S M L</p>



SD2 - Community Vitality				
#	Action	Timeline		
1.	<b>Examine opportunities to strengthen linkages between cultural and recreational opportunities</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactively examine opportunities to strengthen linkages between local cultural and recreational activities (Increase an arts and performance presence at the Vale Centre etc.)</li> <li>Enhance and promote trails/routes including bicycle and walking trails as both cultural and recreation opportunities.</li> </ul>			
2.	<b>Increase the vibrancy of downtown Port Colborne</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource and implement the outstanding recommended improvements identified by Downtown Central Business District Community Improvement Plan (CIP). Examples of these recommendations include: Establish a Civic Square; Accentuate Clarence Street Bridge; Incorporate Public Art; Enhance Port Promenade.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where empty storefronts exist in downtown areas, use them as temporary display spaces. Beyond the sale of art work, installing art in storefronts will serve to raise the profile and visibility of local artists. The approach also facilitates a faster turnover of the vacant property because it will be 'toured' by more people. The Town of Minto has already adopted this practice. Programs such as Renew Northern Wellington Arts &amp; Business Association will assist with this plan of occupying empty storefront space.</li> </ul>			
3.	<b>Develop and promote a Public Art Policy</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town of Huntsville, Ontario has developed a Public Art Policy which may be used as a model for Port Colborne. Huntsville has a similar population size and similar resources to enforce and promote such a policy. The Town of Huntsville's Public Art Policy includes seven sections ranging from a vision for the Policy to encouraging public art in a larger community context.</li> <li>This policy should specifically encourage the instillation of public art on Main Street.</li> <li>Contact the Town of Huntsville's Manager of Arts, Culture and Heritage for information and guidance for initial steps.</li> </ul>			



SD2 - Community Vitality				
#	Action	Timeline		
		S	M	L
4.	<b>Reimagine and resource the Roselawn Centre to become a creative / cultural incubator</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implement the recommendations in the 2010 Roselawn Centre Condition Study and Renewal Plan.</li> <li>■ Position the Roselawn Centre as a widely accessible community cultural hub.</li> <li>■ Using signage and community promotion change the profile and image of the Roselawn centre as a more welcoming public space.</li> <li>■ Reduce the perceived presence of municipal staff and offices to at the entrance to the Centre entrance to encourage more informal visits and use.</li> <li>■ Erect signage to facilitate public entry into the Centre through the main entrance door for the heritage or historical structure (not the annex or additions to the centre).</li> <li>■ Pursue collaborative arrangements with regional post-secondary institutions to establish a semi-permanent visual or performing arts educational presence at the Centre.</li> <li>■ Explore public-private partnerships to establish an onsite café and public gathering area.</li> <li>■ Invest in surveillance systems to deter vandalism or unwanted activity.</li> <li>■ Explore partnership agreements with local artists to integrate rotating art exhibits throughout the Centre.</li> <li>■ Proactively engage regional musical and event performance promoters to increase the use of the Centre (bolster shoulder season use).</li> </ul>			

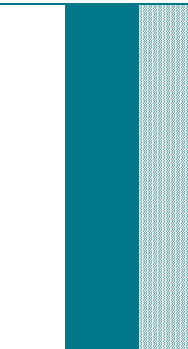




SD2 - Community Vitality				
#	Action	Timeline		
5.	<b>Expand spaces for the visual arts in the community</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete an inventory of spaces in the community suitable for visual arts displays/exhibitions (e.g., Municipal offices, Library, Roselawn Centre, community centres, restaurants, etc.)</li> <li>Coordinate with local artists to have their art displayed, with all relevant purchase information attached. A standard finder's fee may be attached to the sale of each piece. This fee may be pooled to support specific cultural based initiatives.</li> </ul>			
6.	<b>Support and promote local artists across the community</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build an inventory of local artists to support greater visibility and networking. Build the inventory using an open source program to allow and encourage artists to update their own information.</li> </ul>			
7.	<b>Strengthen festivals and events</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a regular date and time each month (or every other month) to deliver a cultural program or event. Other municipalities have used this marketing strategy (e.g., 'First Saturdays') to focus programming and establish expectation in the community and among visitors of a cultural offering or experience of some kind.</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate creative uses and economic opportunities centred on the City's beaches.</li> <li>Engage private sector partners to maximize the economic and cultural potential of the beaches.</li> <li>Investigate partnership opportunities with Vale Inc. to better leverage Nickel Beach.</li> </ul>			
8.	<b>Encourage greater use of public spaces for cultural activities</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a comprehensive user fee policy to determine which audiences or user groups City Council would like to subsidize.</li> </ul>			



## SD2 - Community Vitality

#	Action	Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="272 443 992 474">■ Streamline and reduce barriers to use wherever possible.</li><li data-bbox="272 499 1219 569">■ Educate those individuals who are affiliated with public cultural spaces about the booking procedures and guidelines.</li><li data-bbox="272 594 1166 663">■ Work to publicize the booking procedures and guidelines for the broader public.</li><li data-bbox="272 688 1122 758">■ Consider the use of one scheduling module for all community facility bookings (e.g. the Active Network).</li></ul>	




SD3 - Increase Local and Regional Awareness				
#	Action	Timeline		
1.	<b>Refresh, reorient, or create guides and packages/itineraries to promote Port Colborne’s cultural amenities</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh past guides or develop new ones to create a cultural tourism guide/itinerary for visitors or residents.</li> <li>Develop a ‘Cultural Guide’ (in both print and website versions) that profile a range of prominent local cultural assets. Consider strategic and selective dissemination of segments of the complete guide to capitalize on seasonal trends. Segments distributed electronically should be rotated and refreshed regularly.</li> </ul>			
2.	<b>Facilitate the publication of a local/ regional cultural events calendar and accompanying “volunteer wanted” bulletin board</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a shared electronic calendar that may be incorporated into a series of different, but related, websites (calendar plugin or widget). Ensure the calendar has tiered permissions to encourage publically driven updates. (Timely Calendar etc.)</li> <li>Encourage any and all relevant cultural organizations to embed the calendar and volunteer bulletin board on their website.</li> <li>Weekly print versions of this calendar and volunteer bulletin board should be posted at City Hall and/or select community facilities.</li> </ul>			
3.	<b>Produce a regular stream of short stories about Port Colborne’s culture</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with leaders from the Port Colborne Museum and Archives, Port Colborne Public Library, and Historical Society about preparing short compelling articles celebrating aspects of Port Colborne’s history along with contemporary cultural activities/success stories.</li> <li>Distribute these stories through online/social media channels, and print media where appropriate. Monthly or bi-monthly releases are recommended.</li> <li>Strategically distribute these stories in print form at key locations in the city (e.g. Roselawn Centre, City Hall, Port Colborne Museum and Archives, Port Colborne Public Library, Community Centres, etc.). These handouts could form the basis of story-based walking tours or itineraries linking the story to different locations or cultural/heritage assets in the community.</li> </ul>			



SD3 - Increase Local and Regional Awareness				
#	Action	Timeline		
4.	<b>Sustain and expand cultural mapping activities</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider options for making cultural mapping publically available through an interactive map to profile assets (see best practices in Appendix)</li> <li>Consult with Hastings County, Aurora, and Minto or other communities with established cultural maps. Specifically elicit feedback regarding best practices for updating and maintaining the existing cultural mapping information.</li> <li>Review and promote awareness of the City's heritage guide/ pamphlet to promote significant heritage buildings, historic sites, monuments, and historic plaques within Port Colborne.</li> </ul>			
5.	<b>Emphasize business sponsorship and support for the cultural sector</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In collaboration with the Port Colborne Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce and Local BIAs continue to engage with local businesses to promote the importance of supporting cultural activities.</li> <li>Work to strengthen business support and sponsorships for select cultural events or activities. It is important to alternate or rotate event support to reach different audiences.</li> </ul>			
6.	<b>Formalize and resource a communications strategy designed to promote and support local cultural activities</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralize cultural oriented communications through one department or staff person.</li> <li>Widely promote the contact information for one email address and/or phone number for a designated "one point of contact" staff position for culture in Port Colborne. Use a generic email address which remains with the position in the event of staff turnover e.g. "Culture@portcolborne.ca"</li> <li>In collaboration with local cultural organizations, identify target audiences who are traditionally less engaged with local culture.</li> <li>Examine the viability of in-kind or paid radio based advertising, which is considered the most effective means of reaching new audiences.</li> </ul>			



### SD3 - Increase Local and Regional Awareness

#	Action	Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="272 443 1149 548">■ Review and refresh the City's website to enhance the user experience. Consider the prominent placement of cultural related materials on well trafficked City pages.</li></ul>	



SD4 - Build a Strong and Collaborative Cultural Sector				
#	Action	Timeline		
1.	<b>Cultivate local cultural partnerships and collaboration</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene bi-monthly networking events to supporting ongoing communication and collaboration across Municipal, cultural, community and business groups and interests. Identify topics for possible speakers or individuals from other communities able to speak to leading practices in collaborative community cultural development</li> </ul>			
2.	<b>Support and engage the Port Colborne Museum and Archives and Historical Society</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support these organizations in creating small exhibitions/displays of historical photographs that can travel to different locations in the City (also promoting a stronger sense of shared identity)</li> </ul>			
3.	<b>Engage, activate, and support local youth</b>	S	M	L
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In collaboration with the Planning and Development Department, and the Economic Development Committee, develop a Youth Retention Strategy to retain youth in Port Colborne.</li> <li>Facilitate and participate in semi-annual strategic planning sessions with local High Schools and volunteer driven cultural organizations. The objective is to encourage experiential cultural based learning outside of the class room. The mandate of the Specialist High Skills Majors Program explicitly supports this activity.</li> <li>Pro-actively expose youth to local culture (e.g. facilitate interaction between local schools and local artists, artisans and cultural organizations; establish an annual “art day” where schools invite local artists to share/show their work).</li> <li>Connect high school student volunteer requirements to support cultural groups and activities (High School diploma requirement include 40 hours of community work).</li> <li>Consistently engage and empower the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) to select new youth oriented (cultural) initiatives.</li> <li>Allocate consistent community resources to sponsor such initiatives.</li> <li>Promote the successes and responsibilities of MYAC to encourage greater uptake. For example, the “Algoport” Skate &amp; BMX Park deserves a higher profile.</li> </ul>			



## SD4 - Build a Strong and Collaborative Cultural Sector

#	Action	Timeline		
4.	<b>Engage and support culturally related volunteerism</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>L</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enhance the City's Volunteer Management Strategy and role with community volunteer coordination</li> <li>■ Promote volunteerism as an opportunity for new residents to integrate themselves and feel a sense of belonging in their new community</li> <li>■ Develop a program that will attract, train, supervise, evaluate and reward a volunteer base.</li> </ul>			