# Table of Contents

- Executive Summary ................................................ 4
- Introduction .......................................................... 7
- Niagara’s Cultural Assets .......................................... 9
- Vision and Guiding Principles .................................... 11
- Role and Partnerships ............................................. 12
- Strategic Directions and Actions ................................ 14
- Creative Economy ................................................... 16
- Creative Places ....................................................... 20
- Creative People ....................................................... 23
- Creative Identity ...................................................... 26
- Implementation ....................................................... 30
- Acknowledgements ................................................ 31
**Executive Summary**

Niagara is in the midst of an economic and social transformation. It is well poised to succeed under these new circumstances, but it will require a different set of assumptions and new strategies. One strategy adopted by the Region to ensure resilience in these changing times is more integrated forms of planning.

A current priority for the Region is an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) for completion in 2010. These plans are a requirement of municipalities accessing Federal Gas Tax Revenues and require the development of plans connecting economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives. Other major planning commitments to address changing times are the Region's responses to the Province's Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Strategy; the Niagara Economic Growth Strategy aimed at building a diversified creative economy; and major opportunities to be realized by growing Niagara’s cultural tourism offerings.

The Niagara Culture Plan has important contributions to make to these and other planning priorities of the Region.

**Why a Culture Plan?**

The 2007-2011 Regional Council Business Plan acknowledged the importance of the Culture Plan by including it under the strategic objective for Community and Social Well-Being. The purpose of the Culture Plan is to create an overarching policy and planning framework including strategic directions and actions to guide Niagara Region’s support for the creative economy and development of the creative cultural sector. The Culture Plan will support the Region’s existing commitment to integrated planning through the more rigorous integration of culture in existing and future planning and initiatives/actions. It will provide a strategic framework for the Region to work with its municipal, community and business partners to advance shared goals and opportunities which foster greater cultural vitality across the region. A strong focus of the Culture Plan will be on inter-departmental and cross-sectoral collaboration.

**How Was It Developed?**

The Niagara Region Culture Committee initiated the process of developing a Culture Plan in 2005. The first steps in the process involved consultation with the community to identify challenges and opportunities. The Culture Committee also convened a working group to begin to consolidate and record Niagara’s many cultural assets through a process called cultural mapping.

The current Culture Plan was developed over a period of approximately 18 months through extensive community and stakeholder engagement. It has been guided by continuous input from a Culture Plan Advisory Committee with representation drawn from Regional Council, municipal staff, the cultural sector, economic, business and community interests and an Internal Working Group of staff representatives. The process involved an examination of the current planning context in Niagara and a cultural mapping process to document a baseline of data on cultural assets within specific categories. The categories used are consistent with the Provincial cultural mapping system and include: creative cultural industries, spaces and facilities, community organizations, cultural heritage, natural heritage, and festivals and events. Mapping findings revealed almost 1850 of these assets.
Strategic Directions and Actions

The Culture Plan process has produced concrete actions organized in four interconnected Strategic Directions:

Creative Economy - Creativity and culture impact the economy in many ways, from directly employing people to being a component of almost any employment sector. There has been increasing recognition of the powerful role creativity and culture play in economic restructuring and wealth creation in our communities. Actions here in this Strategic Direction are aimed at acknowledging and leveraging Niagara's cultural strengths to diversify the economy.

Creative Places - Quality of place is a powerful economic driver in attracting and retaining talent in a global world. Actions in this Strategic Direction seek to support communities in integrating cultural landscapes, buildings, places and activities in land-use planning, infrastructure development and programming.

Creative People - Creative individuals are at the heart of the creative economy. The ideas and imagination of individuals is what creates economic value. The creative economy requires collaboration and creativity across various sectors. The Actions in this section focus on supporting individuals, organizations and creative industries to nurture and develop creative capacity; unique and distinct enterprises; and activities and products.

Creative Identity - Niagara has a rich history and culture, unique heritage buildings and architecture, and unsurpassed landscapes and natural assets. Cultural resources help define the unique identities of individual communities as well as the shared identity of Niagara as a whole. Actions in this Strategic Direction seek to build shared understanding and promote culture in order to make Niagara a place where people want to live, work, learn, play, visit and invest.

The Region and Its Partners

The Region is poised to take on a strategic leadership role that continues its commitment to integrated planning, enables and facilitates local action, builds cross-sectoral partnerships and helps build capacity across Niagara. Throughout the community engagement process, stakeholders suggested a number of potential partners to collaborate with in the implementation of the Culture Plan. These included organizations or agencies such as: local municipalities; Niagara Community Foundation; Niagara Economic Development Corporation; Brock University and Niagara College; Niagara Workforce Planning Board; creative industry representatives and entrepreneurs; cultural organizations, and Business Improvement Areas to name a few. Many of these organizations are represented on the Culture Plan Advisory Committee.

Leveraging these partnerships will require mechanisms to support ongoing communication and collaboration across sectors and across Niagara. An increased leadership role for the Region in cultural planning will have staff and resource requirements that will need to be addressed as the Culture Plan goes forward.

Reading This Plan

The Niagara Culture Plan is set out as follows:

- Introduction - provides background and context;
- Planning Assumptions - sets out key definitions that underpin the Plan;
- Niagara’s Cultural Assets - reports on the cultural mapping work completed as part of the planning process;
- Vision and Principles - describes the Region’s understanding of the importance of creativity and culture and principles to guide its efforts in supporting cultural development;
- Roles and Partnerships - defines the role of the Region and mechanisms to support collaboration with municipal, business and community partners;
- Strategic Directions and Actions - sets out the concrete actions and initiatives needed to advance the vision and support cultural development; and
- Implementation - establishes the immediate steps needed to launch the Culture Plan and the anticipated process for implementing Actions over time.

Distributed throughout the document are ideas for implementation reflecting leading practices and ideas in cultural planning and cultural development drawn from Niagara, from across Ontario and elsewhere in the world. Further information is available in Appendix III. A glossary of terms is available in Appendix IV.
## Summary of Strategic Directions and Actions

### Strategic Direction 1: Creative Economy

Build a diverse economy by strengthening cultural resources and the creative cultural sector to maximize their contribution to economic development.

1.1 Assess the value of culture on Niagara’s economy using an economic impact assessment and cultural asset mapping to identify strengths and growth potential.

1.2 Develop a Niagara investment strategy and incentives for cultural development.

1.3 Strengthen cultural workforce opportunities, education and training.

1.4 Strengthen cultural clusters which encourage the incubation of ideas, innovation and development of new products.

### Strategic Direction 2: Creative Places

Encourage analysis and inclusion of cultural places, spaces and activities in land-use planning, infrastructure development and programming to preserve and develop distinct and unique places in Niagara.

2.1 Develop and implement policies which support the integration of cultural spaces/facilities and the preservation of cultural assets in planning and infrastructure over the long term.

2.2 Create and strengthen planning tools to support cultural development.

2.3 Encourage the inclusion of art in public places and facilitate public art programs in Niagara.

### Strategic Direction 3: Creative People

Support professional development and information sharing for the creative cultural sector and encourage participation in culture across the Niagara community to stimulate innovation, creativity and community engagement.

3.1 Engage the community in supporting ongoing cultural activities through traditional and non-traditional communication tools.

3.2 Promote the participation of cultural representatives and advocates in Regional and municipal decision making to strengthen awareness of the sector and their role and value in community life and development.

3.3 Refine the role and membership of the Culture Committee to support innovation, collaboration and capacity building across the cultural sector through the implementation of this Plan.

### Strategic Direction 4: Creative Identity

Promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of culture and its contribution to the ongoing development of vibrant, unique communities and a shared sense of identity as Niagara.

4.1 Support initiatives which promote shared identity, unique communities and stories in order to encourage participation and a sense of belonging in Niagara.

4.2 Promote and market Niagara as a cultural destination to both residents and tourists.

4.3 Recognize and celebrate the contribution of culture to the Niagara community.

4.4 Facilitate the integration of cultural learning across various traditional and non-traditional settings and agencies in order to add to quality of life, a greater sense of personal well-being and increased social cohesion.
Introduction

Integrated Planning for Sustainability

The Culture Plan supports the Region’s commitment to integrated planning for sustainability through the more rigorous integration of culture in existing and future planning and initiatives. Consistent with trends provincially, nationally and internationally, the Region recognizes cultural vitality as an essential ‘fourth pillar’ of sustainability alongside economic prosperity, environmental responsibility and social equity.

Toward this end, the Region is working to create an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). The ICSP is a long-term plan, developed in consultation with community members that provides direction for the community to realize sustainability objectives, including environmental, cultural, social and economic. These plans are a requirement for municipalities in accessing Federal gas tax revenues. The Niagara Culture Plan is critical to fully integrating culture in the ICSP and realizing the full potential of culture in contributing to our future.

The Region of Niagara was one of the first municipalities in Ontario to fully embrace culture as the ‘fourth pillar’ or dimension of sustainability in its planning system. The challenge in implementing an integrated ‘systems’ approach to sustainability is strong cross-departmental planning for all four dimensions. Bringing a ‘cultural lens’ to Regional planning will require aligning responsibilities across a two-tier system and building collaborative relationships and mechanisms connecting many different agencies. It will mean building the necessary skills and knowledge within the Region and across the community. Integrated planning for sustainability requires new policies approaches and planning assumptions but it must also focus on action; it must be as much about progressive practice as progressive thinking.

The Planning Process

The Niagara Region Culture Committee initiated the process of developing a policy in 2005. Community forums held in 2006 and 2007 produced an initial assessment of needs and opportunities in cultural development. The Region became one of a number of municipalities in Ontario to undertake a Culture Plan guided by a municipal cultural planning framework. It is one of the first upper tier municipalities in the Province to undertake this work.

Cultural Mapping - A first important step in the planning process was a process called cultural mapping, a systematic approach to identifying and documenting cultural assets using a consistent set of categories of cultural assets that include: creative cultural industries, spaces and facilities, community organizations, cultural heritage, natural heritage, and festivals and events. A summary of the cultural mapping process and findings is set out in the section below with further detail in Appendix I.

The Planning Context - A second step in the process was a review and analysis of existing plans and strategies of Niagara Region and those of partnership agencies. This analysis is set out in Appendix II. This led to the identification of a number of planning themes and priorities which formed the basis of the community consultation process. The themes which evolved through the research and consultation process are: Creative Economy; Creative Places; Creative People; and Creative Identity.

Community Engagement - The engagement process to develop the Culture Plan was designed to generate ideas and build a shared vision across Niagara - from Regional staff across all departments, to local municipalities, the cultural sector, business and community groups, and more. The Culture Plan process has been guided by the Culture Plan Advisory Committee with representation from a wide range of partners and constituencies, by the Niagara Region Culture Committee and by a Niagara Region internal staff Working Group.
What Does Culture Include?

Culture is a multi-dimensional idea and can be defined in many ways. For the purposes of creating the Culture Plan, the Niagara Region Culture Committee has determined that the term culture includes five elements: people, places, history, expression, and play.

As this diagram illustrates, culture is an inclusive term that relates to many aspects of our everyday lives and experiences. The interconnections between each of these elements help to create a sense of community and can enhance our overall quality of life. The cultural mapping process identifies a more finite set of cultural assets that form a foundation for the Cultural Plan.

Why Municipal Cultural Planning?

Municipal cultural planning has been a priority of the Province of Ontario for a number of years and led to the creation of Municipal Cultural Planning Incorporated (MCPI). MCPI is a broad coalition of seven provincial ministries, provincial government agencies, municipalities, cultural service organizations, post-secondary institutions and others dedicated to advancing municipal cultural planning across the province.

Municipal cultural planning is defined as:

A municipally-led process for identifying and leveraging a community’s cultural resources and integrating culture across all facets of planning and decision-making.

Municipal cultural planning is built on two core principles:

1. Developing a cultural mapping system - a systematic approach to identifying and recording cultural assets; and
2. Adopting a cultural lens - bringing cultural considerations into all aspects of Niagara’s planning and decision making.

To date, municipal cultural planning in Ontario has been implemented largely in a single-tier or lower-tier municipal context. The Niagara Culture Plan represents one of the first efforts to apply a municipal cultural planning approach at an upper tier level.
Municipal cultural planning is making new and expanded demands of municipalities, requiring them to rethink what they do as well as how they plan and support the creative economy and cultural development. Culture plans that traditionally focused on facilities and the delivery of arts and heritage services in isolation from other municipal or regional planning functions are no longer the suggested standard practice.

Under the new paradigm of municipal cultural planning these expectations do not disappear, but municipalities and regions are increasingly being called on to play stronger strategic leadership roles including:

• Integrating culture into policies and plans across all departments;
• Working to support and strengthen cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration with business and community partners; and
• Building collective capacity across a wide range of cultural activity and organizations.

The development of a Culture Plan for Niagara will define a new and expanded Regional role and responsibilities for cultural planning and development together with a commitment to resources to fulfill this mandate.

Niagara's Cultural Assets

As noted, cultural mapping is a defining feature and foundation of municipal cultural planning approaches. In Ontario, municipalities building cultural mapping systems include Oakville, Hamilton, Vaughan and Durham Region. The City of Toronto has partnered with the Martin Prosperity Institute to establish Placing Creativity, a group that brings together individuals from academic, government and community organizations to advance thinking and practice in cultural mapping. In August 2009, the Province of Ontario launched the Creative Community Prosperity Fund, a $9 million funding commitment with cultural mapping and municipal cultural planning forming key funding priorities.

Cultural mapping as it is understood and practiced in Ontario has two dimensions - one tangible (or quantitative), the other intangible (or qualitative).

1. Resource Mapping - identifying and recording tangible cultural resources usually making use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools and platforms; and
2. Community Identity Mapping - exploring a community’s ‘intangible cultural resources’ - the unique stories and traditions that define a community’s identity and sense of place.

Resource Mapping Goals

The cultural mapping work undertaken as part of the Culture Plan builds on the strong mapping work completed by the Cultural Asset Mapping Working Group. The Culture Plan mapping process was guided by three goals:

• To establish baseline information on cultural resources in Niagara and to complete initial analysis of these findings;
• To establish the ongoing mapping system that will be used to expand mapping over time; and
• To recommend next steps and opportunities for further mapping work in Niagara.
Resource Mapping Framework and Methodology

The Province of Ontario, through the MCPI group, is moving to adopt a consistent set of categories of cultural assets called a Cultural Resource Framework (CRF) consisting of categories illustrated below.

Another source of data that provides insight into Niagara’s cultural assets is Business Pattern data. This data is gathered by Statistics Canada using surveys of individual organizations and businesses. Based on Business Pattern data, we learn that Niagara’s highest categories of creative cultural industries are:

- Advertising;
- Design;
- Independent Writers and Performers;
- Publishing industries;
- Printing; and
- Independent Artists.

Ongoing Mapping System and Next Steps

The cultural mapping component of the Niagara Culture Plan has provided a snapshot of the Region’s cultural assets, but it has also put in place a mapping system to enable a wide range of stakeholders to update, maintain and continuously expand cultural mapping information. The further development of the mapping system will support the Region’s commitments to integrated data and GIS capabilities that support planning and decision-making across a wide range of planning areas: in economic development and support of the Niagara Growth Strategy including creative cultural industries and cluster development, cultural tourism; in social planning and public health; and in environmental planning, to name a few.
Vision and Guiding Principles

Culture Plan Vision

Niagara is in the midst of a transformation. Our community is facing new economic and social circumstances and will require a different set of assumptions and new strategies to adapt successfully. Central to the Region’s efforts to build resilience in changing times is a more integrated form of planning that strives for economic viability, social equity, environmental responsibility, and cultural vitality. Several decades ago, governments learned they must adopt a green lens to assess the impact of all planning and decision-making on the environment. Today, the same is true of culture.

Niagara Region’s plans and actions in support of cultural development will be guided by the following vision:

• We believe in an integrated vision of sustainability linking cultural vitality, economic viability, social equity, and environmental responsibility;
• We see culture as essential to the quality of life that makes Niagara a place where people want to live, learn, work, play and invest;
• We understand our cultural assets and creative cultural industries are important economic drivers in building a creative economy;
• We believe our culture is the foundation of our identity in each of our unique communities as well as in our shared identity as Niagara; and
• We believe culture is essential in celebrating diversity, fostering inclusion and ensuring community well-being.

Guiding Principles

In advancing this vision, Niagara Region will be guided by the following principles:

• Accessibility - make cultural opportunities available across all parts of Niagara and relevant through all phases of life;
• Diversity - respect for the diversity of our community that includes age, ethno-cultural background, income, language and education all of which are valuable sources of ideas, perspectives and talents;
• Collaboration - working collaboratively and building partnerships with municipalities and our business and community partners to advance shared interests and agendas;
• Engagement - ensuring community aspirations are sought, valued and recognized throughout the planning process; and
• Accountability - making the most efficient and effective use of public resources and striving for continuous innovation in addressing the needs of the community.
Role and Partnerships

Working Together

The Niagara Culture Plan will only succeed through the effective collaboration among a wide range of government, business and community stakeholders and partners. It provides a strategic framework for the Region to work with its municipal, community and business partners to advance shared goals and opportunities which foster greater cultural vitality across Niagara. The following diagram illustrates many of the stakeholders who will be required to be involved in this process.

The Region’s Role

The Culture Plan will support the Region’s existing commitment to integrated planning through the more rigorous integration of culture in existing and future planning and initiatives/actions. A strong focus will be on inter-departmental and cross-sectoral collaboration. Like leading jurisdictions in Canada and internationally, the Region recognizes a shift in the role of government from a traditional “planner-provider-deliverer” model to an increasingly collaborative “enabler-convener-catalyst-broker” model.
In Niagara, implementing the Culture Plan will require aligning responsibilities across a two-tier system and building collaborative relationships and mechanisms connecting many different agencies. Success will mean building the necessary skills and knowledge with Regional staff and Council and among stakeholders across the community. It will require the development of measures and indicators needed to assess progress in building culture into all facets of how the Region plans for its future. While integrated approaches to planning and the implementation of the Culture Plan require new concepts and planning assumptions, it must be as much about progressive practice and action as it is about progressive thinking.

**Partnerships and Collaboration**

There was a strong call in the community engagement process for mechanisms to support networking and collaboration among cultural groups across Niagara as well as cross-sectoral leadership connecting the Region with government, business and community partners across Niagara.

The Niagara Culture Committee has played a strong role in overseeing the creation of the Culture Plan and is well-poised to not only play a critical role in its implementation but also respond to the need for wider community representation. The Niagara Culture Committee plays a critically important advisory role to Council, and can help ensure that essential thread between the implementation of the Plan and the actions of Council are working in parallel.

There will be a need to examine the degree to which its current role can be expanded to address these capacity building needs, and so one of the Strategic Actions, 3.3, directly involves a refining of the Culture Committee role and composition. Just as a Cultural Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) made up of business, social, political, educational and cultural sector representatives was brought together to oversee the development of the Culture Plan, this cross-sectoral type of group may be helpful in the Plan’s implementation. To ensure additional partnerships and collaboration occurs project specific working groups may be established to undertake specific projects or tasks, hold annual cultural summits to discuss issues and celebrate successes, and convene issue-based community forums to discuss specific topics relevant to cultural development.

**Among the important agencies currently represented on CPAC are:**

- Niagara Region Council
- Niagara Region staff from across multiple departments
- Niagara Economic Development Corporation
- Brock University
- Business Improvement Areas and Chambers of Commerce
- Niagara Community Foundation
- Council members, planners, culture and municipal staff
- Representatives from the cultural sector

The refinement of the Culture Committee will be the most important first step in implementing the Plan once it is approved.
How to Read the Strategic Directions and Actions

Each of the four Strategic Directions - Creative Economy, Creative Places, Creative People, Creative Identity - is divided into a series of Actions that are explained using the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Suggested Timeframes</th>
<th>Suggested Tasks</th>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
<th>Resources and Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Suggested Timeframes** - these timeframes are based on the stakeholder engagement process but will need to be assessed as the Culture Plan is moved forward by the Region and the implementation team. Timeframes are characterized as ongoing (currently underway), immediate (year 1), mid-term (years 2-3), and longer-term (years 3 and beyond).

**Suggested Tasks** - these suggested tasks are examples of things that could be done to fulfill the actions that are expected to evolve as further information is gathered.

**Potential Partners** - these potential partners are suggested by participants in the community engagement process who might be involved in collaborating with the Region on various actions. This list is by no means complete and further exploration and discussions will be required once the implementation strategy is determined.

**Resources and Research** - this information is based on insights gathered from the community engagement process and research.

**Ideas for Implementation** - Distributed throughout the Strategic Directions and Actions are leading practices and ideas drawn from Niagara, from across Ontario and elsewhere in the world. Additional information can be found on each of the examples in Appendix III.

---

**Creative Economy**

“A creative economy extends beyond the cultural sector to harness creativity and bring about positive social and economic changes across a broad spectrum of industries, sectors, and social organizations. Leadership is key in all these areas to getting the most from creativity. To do so, leaders work with the “raw materials” of culture - including imagination, attitudes, habits of thought and action, work expectations, talents, and values.”

*The Conference Board of Canada, 2006*

---

**Strategic Direction 1: Build a diverse economy by strengthening cultural resources and the creative cultural sector to maximize their contribution to economic development.**

Culture affects the economy in many ways, from directly employing people to being a component of almost any employment sector. There has been increasing recognition of the powerful role creativity and culture play in economic restructuring and wealth creation in our communities.

The creative economy is a complex phenomenon but one that can be understood as being comprised of several distinct but interrelated dimensions (as illustrated in the diagram below).
In the largest sense, the creative economy is an economy driven by ideas, innovation, knowledge, collaboration and creativity. It is an economy in which people are paid to think. Creative jobs exist across all sectors including the ‘old economy’ of manufacturing and agriculture.

Inside this largest understanding of the creative economy we find a more discrete set of creative industries in which ideas and intellectual property are what produce value and generate wealth. The creative industries include areas such as science and engineering, architecture and design, education, business and finance, law, and health care, to name a few.

Nested inside this broad definition of creative industries we find the creative cultural industries - those sectors in which expressive value - the symbolic, aesthetic or artistic nature of products - is at the core of production. The creative cultural industries are among the fastest growing of all the sectors of the economy. The Conference Board of Canada indicated that the economic footprint of the culture sector was approximately $84.6 billion in 2007, representing 7.4% of Canada’s total real Gross Domestic Product. Further, the culture sector contributed 1.1 million jobs to the Canadian economy.

Niagara Region recognizes the importance of a more diversified and creative economy. The importance of this emerging economy was made clear in Ontario in the Creative Age (April 2009), a report outlining a new economic vision for Ontario commissioned by the Premier and prepared by the Martin Prosperity Institute. Ontario in the Creative Age describes an economy that is expanding rapidly, has higher average annual income and lower rates of unemployment as evidenced in the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Annual Income 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ (thousands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following actions are intended to assess the impact of culture on Niagara’s economy; consider how to further invest in the cultural sector and cultural cluster activity; and identify opportunities for further education and training.

**Action 1.1: Assess the value of culture on Niagara's economy using an economic impact assessment and cultural asset mapping to identify strengths and growth potential.**

Economic impact assessments are designed to determine spending and the cumulative effect of that spending on a community’s economy. According to the Conference Board of Canada, the creative cultural industries are one of the fastest growing sectors in many jurisdictions today. There are several ways of measuring the impact of culture on the economy which would be advantageous to Niagara. These include assessing:

- Cultural worker employment levels and trends;
- The contribution of the creative industries to gross regional product;
- Aggregate wages and salaries of the cultural sector;
- The impact of cultural hubs and clusters on property values;
- The impact on business sales volume or spending; and
- Residents’ sense of well-being and quality of life.

These specific assessments would also be useful in ensuring the creative cultural industries and skills required for sustained employment in the sector are viable and continue to strengthen the economy. While cultural economic impact assessment is an emerging field, there are several municipalities, regions and agencies in the province that have begun to establish measures to assess the impact of cultural resources and activity on the economy.

Cultural asset mapping is a tool for locating cultural resources in the community. It is an essential component of the Culture Plan and includes information about creative cultural industries, facilities and spaces, festivals and events, community cultural organizations, natural heritage and cultural heritage. It will allow Niagara Region to identify patterns of concentration and gaps of cultural assets in order to assess this information against core planning issues (e.g. land use planning, economic development, environmental and social concerns).

**Suggested Timeframe** - Ongoing

**Suggested Tasks**

- Analyze existing cultural asset mapping data to determine clusters of activity and areas of potential for growth or requiring support
- Strengthen cultural asset mapping tools through coordination with others and by developing sustainable systems
- Conduct an economic impact assessment to determine the direct and indirect contribution of cultural assets on the economy

**Potential Partners**

- Niagara Culture Committee; Regional and Local Economic Development; Niagara Region; Niagara Research and Planning Council; Brock University; Niagara College; Local Municipalities

**Resources and Research**

- Niagara Economic Development Corporation; Brock University; Niagara College; Niagara Research and Planning Council; Niagara Business Education Council; Niagara Workforce Planning Board; Information Niagara; Ministry of Culture; Canadian and Ontario Museum Associations; Council for Business and the Arts in Canada; Ontario Arts Council; Conference Board of Canada; Canada Council for the Arts; Creative City Network of Canada; Centre for Expertise on Culture and Communities; Culturescope; other regions and communities who have undertaken economic impact assessments (e.g. Eastern Ontario, Prince Edward County); and Statistics Canada

**Ideas for Implementation**

- The Regional Agricultural Economic Impact Study  
  [www.niagararegion.ca/living/ap/raeis.aspx](http://www.niagararegion.ca/living/ap/raeis.aspx)
- Toronto Artscape Creative Convergence Project  
  [www.torontoartscape.on.ca](http://www.torontoartscape.on.ca)
- Integrated Culture: Libraries, Museums and Galleries Service Delivery - Lambton County Cultural Services Department  
  [www.lambtononline.com](http://www.lambtononline.com)
- City of Toronto Cultural Mapping Partnership Initiative  
  [www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca)
- Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada’s Creative Economy, Conference Board of Canada, 2008  
  [www.conferenceboard.ca](http://www.conferenceboard.ca)
- The New York Creative Economy Project  
  [www.nycultureeconomy.cornell.edu/](http://www.nycultureeconomy.cornell.edu/)
**Action 1.2: Develop a Niagara investment strategy and incentives for cultural development.**

Cultural planning has become a greater focus of attention in municipalities. Some municipalities (e.g. St. Catharines, Kitchener, and Kingston) have established integrated Cultural Investment Strategies supporting cultural organizations and cultural development. These Strategies provide a framework outlining types of funding and investment which address a wide range of opportunities for strengthening the cultural sector. Strategies could include core/operating funding, stabilization funding, fee-for-service models, special project funding, loans and working capital, in-kind support and tax incentives to name a few.

**Suggested Timeframe - immediate (year 1)**

**Suggested Tasks**

- Inventory and assess current funding policies and programs and establish priorities for Niagara Region
- Research other regional and community leading practice investment strategies including structures for disbursement of funding
- Develop investment strategies for cultural industries
- Consider the establishment of pilot funding projects

**Potential Partners**

Niagara Region; Niagara Culture Committee; Niagara Community Foundation; Niagara United Way; Local Municipalities; Chambers of Commerce; Business Improvement Areas; Private Sector

**Resources and Research**

Local investment strategies; Niagara Economic Development Corporation investment strategies; other Ontario Municipal Cultural Investment Strategies; Provincial and Federal Government (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Federal Government Community Adjustment Fund, etc.); Trillium Foundation and other Foundations; Financial Institutions

**Ideas for Implementation**

- The St. Catharines Cultural Investment Policy www.stcatharines.ca
- Creative Industries Loan Guarantee Program - City of Austin Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Austin, TX www.ci.austin.tx.us
- Imagine Iowa 2010: A Cultural Vision www.culturalaffairs.org
Action 1.3: Strengthen cultural workforce opportunities, education and training.

Niagara has an abundance of cultural workers. Many people with cultural talents are underemployed and there is a perceived lack of opportunities. Cultural workers bring a number of creative skills that translate well into existing opportunities in the workforce. The challenge will be to match the skills with the opportunities for the benefit of the cultural sector and the rest of the economy.

Cultural workers will need access and support for ongoing business management, organizational governance and leadership education and training in order to remain sustainable.

Suggested Timeframe - mid-term (year 2-3)

Suggested Tasks
- Determine strengths, abilities and skills of cultural workers
- Identify specific leadership, professional and business management skills required by the cultural sector
- Establish grants, funding and incentives for training, employment and placement of cultural workers
- Assess existing education, training and skill development programs in secondary and post-secondary institutions to determine strengths and opportunities to meet the needs of cultural workers
- Identify potential partners and consider incentives for the development of job placements and internship opportunities for cultural workers
- Coordinate business organizations and enterprise centres to connect cultural workers to education employment opportunities

Potential Partners
Niagara Region; Economic development (Regional and local); Brock University, Niagara College; Niagara Workforce Planning Board; Human Resource Development Centre; social services; Province of Ontario; cultural organizations; creative cultural industry representatives

Resources and Research
Local Business Enterprise Centres; Niagara Workforce Planning Board; Niagara Immigrant Employment Council; Niagara Economic Development Corporation; Brock University; Ontario Ministry of Education; Human Resource Development Centre; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada Ontario Region; and existing or new government programs and incentives that support job creation

Ideas for Implementation
Niagara Labour Market Action Plan
Niagara Workforce Planning Board
www.niagaraworkforceboard.ca

Innovation Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
www.Innovationphiladelphia.org

Creative Entrepreneurship Project, San Jose, CA
www.sanjoseculture.org

Emerging Cultural Leaders Program, Broward County, FL
www.broward.org

Project HEAL, Louisiana
www.acadianaarts council.org
**Action 1.4: Strengthen cultural clusters which encourage the incubation of ideas, innovation and development of new products.**

Cultural clusters are a particular kind of geographically-defined network created by the presence of a density of cultural assets in particular neighbourhoods or areas. These cultural clusters distinguish neighbourhoods and areas from others through groupings of creative cultural industries, cultural organizations, artists, spaces and facilities, heritage resources and cultural events and festivals. Clusters encourage innovation and creativity—a spur to cultural production which has a positive impact on the economy. At the same time, a cluster of cultural assets often pushes a neighborhood to a regeneration tipping-point, attracting new services and residents.

Cultural clusters create stronger working relationships, networking and the incubation of ideas to ensure growth of the sector and attraction of new business investment. By clustering assets and activity together Niagara will foster innovation, economic prosperity, competitiveness and increased efficiency.

**Suggested Timeframe**
- longer-term (year 3 and beyond - related to Action 1)

**Suggested Tasks**
- Identify existing cultural clusters and assess their need for further support
- Encourage the provision of affordable spaces within cultural cluster development
- Evolve strategic partnerships to develop investment opportunities

**Potential Partners**
- Niagara Region; Niagara Culture Committee; Brock University; Creative Industry and Business Entrepreneurs

**Resources and Research**
- Economic Development (Regional and local); Local Prosperity Councils; Niagara Economic Development Corporation; Brock University; Niagara Business Education Council; United Way; Niagara Community Foundation; professionals with expertise in industry cluster development; private enterprise; private investors; corporations; arts and culture organizations; existing cultural clusters.

**Ideas for Implementation**
- Wine Country Investment Strategy
  - [www.niagaracanada.com](http://www.niagaracanada.com)
- Niagara Economic Growth Strategy (NEGS)
  - [www.niagaracanada.com](http://www.niagaracanada.com)
- NGen (Niagara Interactive Media Generator), St. Catharines, ON
  - [www.ngen-niagara.com/](http://www.ngen-niagara.com/)
- A Cultural Strategic Plan for Prince Edward County, Ontario
  - [www pecounty.on.ca](http://www.pecounty.on.ca)
- The Stratford Institute, Stratford, ON
  - [www.city.stratford.on.ca](http://www.city.stratford.on.ca)
- ‘From BIA to CIA’: A District Wealth Creation Strategy for Saint John, Saint John, NB
  - [www.uptownsj.com](http://www.uptownsj.com)
- 20/21 Regional Cultural Plan, Santa Clara County, CA
  - [www.sanjoseculture.org](http://www.sanjoseculture.org)
  - [www.americansforthearts.org](http://www.americansforthearts.org)
Creative Places

“When every place looks the same there is no such thing as place anymore. Part of municipal cultural planning is about combating the geography of nowhere... We know we will have succeeded when Public Works is seen as Public Art.

Glen Murray, Urban Strategist and former Mayor of Winnipeg

Strategic Direction 2: Encourage analysis and inclusion of cultural places, spaces and activities in land-use planning, infrastructure development and programming to preserve and develop distinct and unique places in Niagara.

In a global world, place has become more, not less, important. People want to live in distinctive places with unique characteristics and identities. Authenticity and appeal of place underpin the ability of communities to attract and retain residents, visitors, businesses and creative workers alike. Thus, the attraction of place impacts the diversity and viability of local and regional economies.

In this context Niagara is blessed as an area with great history, unique cultural assets, unrivalled landscapes and natural resources. It has an enviable and unique mix of very different communities and places spread over a largely rural landscape including urban centres with an industrial heritage, tourist centres, small towns and rural areas.

The Actions below are directed at enhancing Niagara’s unique places through further integration of culture in land use, infrastructure planning, urban design and art in public places.

Action 2.1: Develop and implement policies which support the integration of cultural spaces/facilities and the preservation of cultural assets in planning and infrastructure over the long term.

The integration of cultural facilities/spaces and the preservation of cultural assets in Niagara are governed by four levels of government policy: Federal (Heritage Act); Provincial (e.g. Ontario Heritage Act; Provincial Policy Statement), Niagara Region (Regional Policy Plan) and local municipalities (local Official Plans). Within this context, policies can be developed and/or encouraged which consider and integrate cultural spaces and facilities, natural heritage, cultural landscapes, built heritage, live-work spaces, public art and cultural activities in land-use planning, infrastructure planning, and urban design. Cultural assets can be included in new development and redevelopment including: the adaptive reuse of brownfields, bluefields and greyfields sites; development of vacant and/or underutilized sites; the expansion or conversion of existing buildings; and mixed-use development.

Suggested Timeframe - Immediate (year 1)

Suggested Tasks
- Review existing policies and research leading practice
- Evaluate existing cultural assets and assess the need for future policy support, development and partnerships
- Create a policy framework to guide the Region and local municipalities in ensuring the inclusion of cultural assets in land-use and infrastructure planning

Potential Partners
Niagara Region and local municipal planners; consultants

Resources and Research
Municipal Planning, Recreation and Culture Staff; Examples from other Municipalities; Provincial Policy Statement

Ideas for Implementation
Official Plan Review, City of St. Catharines
www.stcatharines.ca

Evergreen Commons at the Brick Works, Toronto, ON
www.evergreen.ca

Creative City Planning Framework (CCPF), Toronto, ON
www.toronto.ca
Action 2.2: Create and strengthen planning tools to support cultural development.

Coordinated planning tools are essential to effectively implement policies that will ensure the development and sustainability of cultural assets. Planning tools could include consideration for culture in Secondary Plans, Community Improvement Plans, design guidelines, environmental assessment criteria, zoning by-laws, development permit systems, site plans and other by-laws (e.g. signage and parking etc.). As examples: a policy could identify a neighbourhood or brownfield site; urban design guidelines or a signage by-law could designate a cultural cluster/district; and/or supportive incentives could revive an area.

Suggested Timeframe - Mid-term (years 2-3)

Suggested Tasks
- Research and create culturally supportive model design guidelines for use in site plans, secondary plans, Community Improvement Plans and zoning
- Create sample implementation tools (e.g. guidelines) to support cultural development
- Strengthen assessment tools for reviewing heritage or cultural assets in technical reviews (e.g. environmental assessments) and infrastructure development
- Develop internal and external education strategies to ensure a broader understanding of planning tools and application

Potential Partners
Niagara Region and local municipal planners; public works and cultural workers; Niagara Culture Committee

Resources and Research
Niagara Region and Municipal Planning, Culture and Recreation staff; Post-secondary Institutions with Urban/Regional Planning Programs; local municipalities; other Cities/Regions including Austin, Barcelona, Glasgow, London, Philadelphia, Portland, Toronto, Vancouver, Waterloo, etc.

Ideas for Implementation
Downtown Grimsby Community Improvement Plan - Downtown Design Pla
www.town.grimsby.on

Crystal Beach Neighbourhood Plan, Fort Erie, ON
www.town.forterie.ca

West Queen West Triangle - Connecting Planning, Zoning and Creativity, Toronto, ON
www.toronto.ca

Brownfields Metamorphosis - From Abandoned Properties to Cultural Celebrations, Environmental Protection Agency, USA
www.epa.gov
**Action 2.3: Encourage the inclusion of art in public places and facilitate public art programs in Niagara.**

In order to create unique places and an enhanced sense of identity, it is important to animate the public realm through the creation and installation of art in conjunction with development on public and private lands throughout Niagara. These works could be of a permanent or temporary nature. This will ensure the enhancement of unique areas of communities, streetscapes, gateways and spaces accessible to the public.

**Suggested Timeframe - ongoing**

**Suggested Tasks**

- Research and assess existing programs in Niagara
- Review other art in public places programs
- Establish guidelines for percentage of costs for public art in public institutions
- Create model program standards and policies for land-use plans
- Create minimum standards for developing art in public places and private developments
- Determine dedicated funding for public art programs

**Potential Partners**

Niagara Region; Niagara Culture Committee; Artists

**Resources and Research**

Local municipal programs and potential areas for inclusion of public art in development, adaptive re-use or redevelopment; other municipal programs and initiatives including Glasgow, Barcelona, Portland, Seattle, Vancouver etc.; Municipal Planning, Recreation and Culture Staff; Developers

**Ideas for Implementation**

artsVest Niagara Public Art Program and Niagara’s Community Improvement Plan Areas, St. Catharines Public Art Policy www.stcatharines.ca

Vancouver Public Art Program, Vancouver, BC www.vancouver.ca

Public Art NEXTI, San José, CA www.sanjoseculture.org
**Creative People**

“In a dynamic environment of global competition, demographic change, and migration, Canada’s culture sector plays a critical role in attracting people, businesses, and investment; stimulating creativity and innovation; and distinguishing Canada as an exciting place where people can celebrate their heritage and achieve personal and professional fulfillment.”

*The Conference Board of Canada (2006)*

**Strategic Direction 3: Support professional development and information sharing for the creative cultural sector, and encourage participation in culture across the Niagara community to stimulate innovation, creativity and community engagement.**

Supporting creativity, innovation, talent and professional development will contribute to the Region’s competitiveness in retaining and attracting creative entrepreneurs and industries.

As Niagara continues to attract a diverse population and support creative people and industries, there will be a need for a coordinating mechanism to ensure increased networking, peer-to-peer learning, professional development and collaboration. The presence of creative people on planning and decision-making bodies will anchor creative input in planning more effectively.

**Action 3.1: Engage the community in supporting ongoing cultural activities through traditional and non-traditional communication tools.**

Building stronger awareness and understanding is important to changing perceptions of the importance of culture to Niagara. Traditional and non-traditional communication tools can be used to engage individuals and whole communities in exploring and defining community identity. Emerging communication tools and engagement techniques including web technologies and social media activities can create a central hub for cultural information and news.

The breadth and versatility of social and interactive engagement tools continues to grow exponentially - from blogs to community-created Google maps. Niagara residents can be invited to offer their own perceptions and stories about what makes a community a unique place to live, work, learn, play, visit and invest. Stories and narratives can be sought that honour the past, profile the present, and envision the future in order to build a unique sense of place and belonging in Niagara.

**Suggested Timeframe**

Immediate (year 1) and ongoing

**Suggested Tasks**

- Develop information and communication tools to promote appreciation of the impact of culture on the vitality of the community
- Implement strategies to develop a coordinated approach to cultural communication and marketing
- Develop annual or semi-annual cultural summits for networking, sharing information and incubation of ideas

**Potential Partners**

Niagara Region; Niagara Culture Committee; cultural organizations; post-secondary educational institutions communications; print and broadcast media, and journalism.

**Resources and Research**

Local municipalities; Cultural Organizations; Arts Councils; nGen; Niagara College; and Social Marketing and Media techniques and tools

**Idea for Implementation**

Toronto [murmur] Project

[www.murmurtoronto.ca](http://www.murmurtoronto.ca)
**Action 3.2:** Promote the participation of cultural representatives and advocates in Regional and municipal decision making to strengthen awareness of the sector and their role and value in community life and development.

Cultural representatives and advocates have creative ideas and skills which are beneficial in planning for creative places. Representation of the cultural sector on boards, agencies, committees and commissions can provide more effective integration of cultural policy and planning across economic development, environmental planning, educational initiatives and community health and social services.

**Suggested Timeframe** - mid-term (years 2-3)

**Suggested Tasks**
- Identify existing and potential opportunities for the inclusion of cultural representatives on various decision making agencies, boards and commissions
- Promote the benefit of including cultural representatives on agencies, boards and commissions
- Encourage cultural representatives and supporters to participate in these decision making bodies

**Potential Partners**
Niagara Region; local municipalities; agencies, boards and commissions; artists; cultural organizations; galleries; museums; community leaders and visionaries; designers; architects

**Resources and Research**
Local municipalities; City of Vancouver – Planning Department; Creative City Network of Canada; other municipalities

**Ideas for Implementation**
City of Vancouver Urban Design Panel + The San Francisco Arts Commission
  - www.vancouver.ca
  - www.sfartscommission.org/programs/

Saskatoon Cultural Network, Saskatoon, SK
  - www.saskatoon.ca

---

Laurie Briggs - Icy Vines
Action 3.3: Refine the role and membership of the Culture Committee to support innovation, collaboration and capacity building across the cultural sector through the implementation of this Plan.

Ensuring the success of the Culture Plan requires aligning responsibilities and building collaborative relationships and systems connecting the cultural sector and other strategic partners.

The Niagara Region Culture Committee is an advisory committee of Regional Council and one of the items in their Terms of Reference was to create a cultural policy / plan. With a hopeful approval by Regional Council of the Niagara Culture Plan this item will be complete. To ensure the Culture Committee is prepared to effectively work towards implementing this Plan a review of the Terms of Reference of the Committee will be required.

With a strengthened Culture Committee it will be better positioned to support cultural development and planning through:

- Communicating the importance of creativity and culture across all sectors and throughout the community
- Strengthening collaborative marketing and promotion for cultural programs and experiences
- Securing funding commitments and undertaking priority initiatives and projects identified in the Culture Plan and new initiatives identified by members

Suggested Timeframe - mid-term (years 2-3)

Suggested Tasks

- Review the mandate of the Culture Committee in relation to implementing the Culture Plan
- Develop criteria for representation, administration, and governance of a Culture Committee
- Compile recommendations and prepare a report for Council approval

Potential Partners
Niagara Culture Committee; Niagara Region

Resources and Research
Arts Councils, Arts Service Organizations involved in similar initiatives in Niagara

Ideas for Implementation
Leadership Model for Integrated Planning for Culture
Municipality of Chatham-Kent, ON
www.chatham-kent.ca
www.chatham-kent.ca

City of London Cultural Strategy Group, London, England
www.london.gov.uk

Kevin Julian - Chardonnay Grapes
Creative Identity

Canadians feel great pride in the places in which they live, a pride that goes beyond economic achievements, social equality and natural wealth... their citizens...need to feel connected with each other and to enjoy a sense of shared community identity. That community identity is the basis of what we mean by culture, and our sense of who we are in our communities is our cultural identity.

The Prime Minister's External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities in Canada, 2006

Strategic Direction 4: Promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of culture and its contribution to the ongoing development of vibrant, unique communities and a shared sense of identity as Niagara.

Niagara has a unique history including events such as the War of 1812, involvement in the Underground Railroad and engineering feats such as the construction of the Welland Canal. These and many other events have fundamentally shaped Niagara’s identity and how it is viewed outside of Canada and within the borders of the country, province and Region.

For tourists and residents alike, Niagara’s abundance of experiences also includes everything from the drama of its great natural heritage - the Falls, rivers, lakes, escarpment and canal - to its casinos, theatres, artists, cultural heritage, wineries and culinary experiences. Continuing to support creative endeavours, people and places creates a sense of cultural vibrancy essential in developing Niagara as a creative cultural destination, promoting individual pride in communities and fostering a shared identity.

It will be important to support initiatives which promote both the uniqueness of individual communities and areas but also those which promote a sense of shared identity and belonging in Niagara. Inspirational life-long cultural learning opportunities will also underpin a sense of shared and unique creative identity.

Action 4.1: Support initiatives which promote shared identity, unique communities and stories in order to encourage participation and a sense of belonging in Niagara.

It is important to ensure that a broad and inclusive definition and support for culture is embraced in Niagara which underscores the values and celebrates diverse cultural traditions, forms of expression and cultural heritage. These actions can build a sense of shared identity across our culturally and geographically diverse area.

Suggested Timeframe - Immediate (years 2-3)

Suggested Tasks
- Build community identity and awareness of the history, strengths and assets of Niagara through social networking and marketing tools
- Build a coordinated and collaborative website as a ‘one-stop’ access to stories, events and activities
- Formalize community-story telling and identity mapping
- Create a ‘Niagara Minute’ and market through website
- Develop a Cultural Charter which reflects individual's rights and the benefits of access to culture across Niagara

Potential Partners
Niagara Region; Niagara Culture Committee

Resources and Research
Niagara Region; Niagara Economic Development Corporation; Niagara Business Education Council; Niagara Research and Planning Council

Idea for Implementation
Online Cultural Portal, Ann Arbor Region, MI
www.a2artsalliance.org
**Action 4.2:** Promote and market Niagara as a cultural destination to both residents and tourists.

Cultural resources and cultural tourism are important in the promotion and marketing of the unique aspects of the area. Niagara has the potential to leverage the abundance of cultural resources to create one of the most recognized destinations. A coordinated approach to promoting and marketing our unique cultural assets will be essential in encouraging local residents and visitors to see and do more.

**Suggested Timeframe** - ongoing

**Suggested Tasks**
- Examine ways in which to advance cultural tourism as part of the Province’s recent regionalization of tourism marketing and promotion
- Build on the brand platform established by the Niagara Originals branding initiative to develop sub-brands built on the unique cultural assets and stories Niagara has to tell the world
- Inventory and capitalize on existing destination marketing and tourism marketing programs
- Develop coordinated marketing and communication strategies
- Capitalize on Bicentennial (1812) Celebrations as a pilot for developing partnerships coordinating cultural tourism products and marketing
- Market ‘be a tourist in your own town’ day

**Potential Partners**
- Niagara Region; destination marketing organizations; cultural tourism organizations; Regional and Local Economic Development; Agri-businesses (wine and food etc.), key community leaders

**Research and Resources**
- Niagara Region; Niagara Economic Development Corporation; Niagara Wine Country; Destination Tourism Marketing Partnership Fund; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Economic Development and Trade; Ministry of Culture

**Ideas for Implementation**
- Niagara Region Tourism Strategy [www.tourismniagara.com](http://www.tourismniagara.com)
- Project Niagara - Niagara on the Lake [www.projectniagara.ca](http://www.projectniagara.ca)
- Proposed Arts Facility - St. Catharines and Brock University [www.inspireniagara.com](http://www.inspireniagara.com)
**Action 4.3: Recognize and celebrate the contribution of culture to the Niagara community.**

Developing awards, recognition, and celebratory events will enhance awareness of the impact of creativity and culture on the Niagara community and the significant contribution of culture to our quality of life. Support for culture will be cultivated by these activities as the community develops greater appreciation and recognition of the sector and its contributors.

**Suggested Timeframe - Mid-term (years 2-3)**

**Suggested Tasks**
- Identify existing awards, recognition, and celebration programs
- Research other Awards and Recognition practices and develop guidelines
- Determine resource requirements and possible partnerships
- Identify opportunities to reference the benefits, unique contribution and importance of culture in other Niagara Region policy planning initiatives

**Potential Partners**
Niagara Region; local municipalities; Niagara Culture Committee; Chambers of Commerce; Business Improvement Associations

**Resources and Research**
Niagara Region; Chambers of Commerce; Canada Council for Business and the Arts; Trillium Foundation; Niagara Community Foundation; Service Clubs; Development and Construction Industry; Ministry of Agriculture and Food

**Idea for Implementation**
New South Wales Local Government Culture Awards
Government Association of NSW.
www.culturalawards2009.lgsa.org.au

Carol Morningstar - New Year's Day 2009 Kayak Paddle
Action 4.4: Facilitate the integration of cultural learning across various traditional and non-traditional settings and agencies in order to add to quality of life, a greater sense of personal well-being and increased social cohesion.

Participation in various forms of arts and culture will contribute to the Niagara residents well-being in many tangible and intangible ways. Cultural experiences, expression and places can:

- Instill self-confidence, pride, and personal well-being;
- Promote social cohesion and reduce isolation;
- Provide creative or therapeutic outlets for individuals;
- Facilitate the expression of individuality, engagement with others, and celebration of diversity;
- Help to improve communication skills and promote creative thinking; and
- Contribute to improved literacy and language development.

Suggested Timeframe
- ongoing and long-term (years 3 and beyond)

Suggested Tasks
- Promote the integration of cultural learning across various traditional and non-traditional education settings and programs
- Ensure the integration of culture in social planning initiatives (poverty, addiction, health, homelessness etc.)
- Identify and/or create networks for peer-to-peer learning, the exchange of information, ideas and resources
- Work collaboratively to ensure the inclusion and/or reintroduction of culture (arts and heritage) in school curriculums and in local cultural institutions (museums and galleries etc.).
- Develop partnerships to create tools to promote cultural activities, events and knowledge-sharing

Potential Partners
Niagara Culture Committee; multi-cultural organizations; cultural organizations

Resources and Research
Ministry of Culture - Creative Communities Prosperity Fund; Brock University; Niagara College; Early Years Niagara Planning Council; Canadian and Ontario Museum Associations; Council for Business and the Arts in Canada; Ontario Arts Council; Canada Council for the Arts; Creative City Network of Canada; Centre for Expertise on Culture and Communities; Culturescope; other communities who have undertaken economic impact assessments (e.g. Prince Edward County); census data; Statistics Canada data; Conference Board of Canada

Ideas for Implementation
Niagara Prosperity Initiative
www.niagararegion.ca

Arts and Culture Wall of Fame, Niagara Falls, ON
www.niagarafalls.ca

Finding Our Voices, Healing Our Wounds
St. Catharines and Area Arts Council, St. Catharines, ON
www.stcartscouncil.ca

Neighbourhood Renewal and Youth Employment Through Creativity, Regent Park Toronto, ON
City of Toronto Employment and Social Services
www.toronto.ca

The Dallas Art Learning Initiative, Dallas, TX
www.annenberginstitute.org

Thriving Minds, Dallas, TX
www.bigthought.org/

Arts Education Partnership Initiative, Seattle, WA
www.seattle.gov

OnHold, Seattle, WA
www.seattle.gov

Montclair Arts Council: Creative Aging Initiative, Montclair, NJ
www.montclairarts.org
The Niagara Culture Plan establishes an overarching policy and planning framework and strategic directions and actions to guide Niagara Region’s support for integrated planning for sustainability and for the development of the creative cultural sector. The strategic directions and actions represent a multi-year agenda for the Region and its partners that will need to be integrated into budgets and work planning. What is essential is that the longer-term agenda be solidly rooted through three initial steps.

1. Approval of the Niagara Culture Plan by Regional Council – to confirm the Region’s commitment to implementation of the plan over time through embracing it as a planning and policy priority.

2. Communication of the Culture Plan – a commitment on the part of the Region working with its municipal and community partners to communicate the vision and recommended actions widely across Niagara.

3. Refining the leadership group to guide and support implementation of the Plan. Two types of leadership groups are needed: a cross-sectoral leadership group like an expanded Culture Committee and a cross-departmental staff group.

Refining the Culture Committee will involve an examination of the existing umbrella leadership groups in Niagara including the Niagara Region Culture Committee and the Culture Plan Advisory Committee to create an appropriate mechanism to support the effective and efficient implementation of the Plan and ongoing cultural development in Niagara.
Acknowledgements

Niagara Region and the Niagara Region Culture Committee would like to thank the tremendous efforts of numerous individuals and various organizations and sectors of the community in realizing the goal of developing a Culture Plan for the Region. These individuals have included both elected officials and voluntary or staff representatives from a broad spectrum of interests including: culture, education, libraries, community services, health, recreation, planning, and economic development to name a few. Without the insights, dedication and support of these individuals the Culture Plan would not have been possible.

In particular we would like to acknowledge the contribution of:

- The Culture Plan Advisory Committee
- The Culture Plan Oversight Committee
- The staff Internal Working Group
- Community Members attending the Community Forum and Open House or participating through Niagara Region’s website
- Participants in the Stakeholder Workshops (Planning, Culture and Recreation staff; Economic Development and Social Services; and Cultural Sector).

Culture Committee
Judy Casselman - Co-Chair, Dr. Rosemary Hale - Co-Chair, David Alexander, Carlos Garcia, Kathy Powell, Lilita Stripnieks, Lynette Fast, Marilyn Hardie, Mark Shoalts, Odette Yazbeck, Pamela Minns, Rebecca Cann, Stephen Bedford

List of Appendices
Appendix I: Cultural Mapping Summary Report
Appendix II: Planning Context Reports
Appendix II: Samples of Leading Practice
Appendix V: Glossary

Endnotes
1 Formerly called the Municipal Cultural Planning Partnership, MCPI includes seven provincial ministries (Culture; Municipal Affairs and Housing; Economic Development; Tourism; Citizenship; Agricultural, Food and Rural Affairs; Northern Development and Mines), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario,
2 http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-595-m/81-595-m2004021-eng.pdf
3 Sources of information are updates from the Statistics Canada survey program and the Business Number registration source collected from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Business pattern data represents more recent data than Statistics Canada data normally based on census returns.

The images in this plan are courtesy of community members who submitted to the myNiagara contest. We thank them for showing what their Niagara looks like.