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City of Dryden

# Municipal Cultural Strategy

Commissioned by the City of Dryden Community Services

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# Table of Contents

## **The Purpose for a Municipal Cultural Strategy**

Rationale and Need	4
Benefits	6
Vision	7

## **The City of Dryden’s Municipal Cultural Strategy**

Structure	8
Preamble	9
Purpose	10
Scope	11
The City of Dryden: Roles and Responsibilities	12
The Cultural Roundtable: Roles and Responsibilities	13
Reporting and Communication Structure	14
Recommendations	15

## **Appendices**

1. History of the Dryden Area Cultural Partnership	17
2. Accomplishments and Champions	19
3. Dryden’s Municipal Cultural Planning Development Process	21
4. The Cultural Strategic Plan	22
5. The Cultural Strategic Plan – Goals and Objectives	23

6. The Municipal Cultural Strategy – Definitions 25

7. The Municipal Cultural Strategy – Guiding Principals 26

8. Municipal Cultural Planning Overview 27

9. Cultural Roundtable Sample Terms of Reference 31

**Acknowledgements 36**



## **Rationale and Need for a Municipal Cultural Strategy**

For years now, cities and municipalities across the world and now North America are recognizing that culture is a crucial aspect of a community's economic and social status. It is within the last ten years that municipalities in Canada and Ontario have made a more determined effort to play a leadership role in celebrating, promoting, and supporting culture through strategic planning combined with a package of programs and services.

Quality of life is very quickly replacing physical proximity to resources and markets as an essential ingredient for economic growth, competitiveness and prosperity. Although a sense of place, local character and diversity of amenities may be viewed as less tangible than roads, they are equally important factors that help municipalities and cities create their own competitive niche and become appealing places to live and work. More and more people are considering these factors to be part of a community's quality of life and will take them into account when making decisions on where to live, raise their families and carry on business. Quality of life has been identified as a significant factor which directly impacts the economic prosperity of a city.

There are many varied aspects of a community (such as the arts, community spirit, recreation, wide range of affordable services, green space, demographics, local history, local history in a regional context and heritages sites) which contribute to the quality of life that citizens experience. Many of the aspects can be grouped into one very recognizable element of communities: culture. Culture is quality of place for many people.

On a regular and consistent basis the Municipal Council is called upon to make significant strategic decisions which directly impact the quality of place which citizens enjoy, however, there are no existing municipal principles, policies or plans to guide or inform the decision making process. Decisions made by Council and Management in relation to other aspects of the City's operations, such as land development, can impact the City's culture.

At present the Municipality has not clearly identified its leadership mandate and role in the delivery of cultural services. This results in poor co-ordination, co-operation and communication within the cultural community, as well as between the Municipality, the public and the cultural community.

A Municipal Cultural Strategy is required for the Municipality to establish its appropriate mandate concerning the planning and delivery of cultural services and to develop a statement of the related goals, objectives and strategies which reflect this mandate. This Municipal Cultural Strategy will provide a planning context relating to all of the essential components of a healthy, vibrant, and growing community. The creation of a Municipal Cultural Strategy and Policy is the first step towards integrating culture into all aspects of community planning and development.

Many municipalities have proven that this level of leadership is key in cultural development. Cities like Dryden have the ability to tailor programs and services to suit their unique circumstances, to rationalize the use of space for cultural purposes and to engage the various communities of interest: arts, recreation, business and education among them in their planning efforts. The development of a Municipal Cultural Strategy is a proven strategic mechanism to give legitimacy to the actions of a municipality with respect to its culture, and to make official its relationship with these communities of interest.



## **Benefits of a Municipal Cultural Strategy**

The benefits of a Municipal Cultural Strategy for the City of Dryden are tremendous. There is a significant return on investment for the City of Dryden.

Some of the expected benefits are listed below:

- Creation and full implementation of a Municipal Cultural Policy
- Combat the fear of job and industry losses
- Recognition of our culturally rich community
- Creative enhancement of natural resources
- Better coordination of fragmented community groups and cultural groups now working in isolation
- Rejuvenate community pride and spirit
- Economic development through Municipal Cultural Planning
- Enriching the education of our youth
- Population retention by building “A Sense of Place”
- Dryden has the potential to regain its past strengths, move beyond them and create a better future
- Meets the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan



## **Vision for the City of Dryden Municipal Cultural Strategy**

The City of Dryden Municipal Cultural Strategy is comprised of the following areas:

### **Vision**

Celebrate Dryden's unique culture which fosters creative opportunities, partnerships, big ideas and growth.

### **Motto**

Do it, Measure it, and Celebrate it!

### **Dryden's Definition of Culture**

"A sense of place. Who we are, where we come from and what we will become."



## The Structure of the Municipal Cultural Strategy

The Municipal Cultural Strategy is structured as follows:

- Preamble
- Purpose
- Scope
- The City of Dryden: Roles and Responsibilities
- The Cultural Roundtable: Roles and Responsibilities
- Reporting and Communication Structure
- Recommendations



## Preamble

Dryden, Ontario is centrally located in the southern half of the Patricia Region, for which it serves as a hub. Dryden's position midway between Winnipeg and Thunder Bay has resulted in a very large commercial sector serving local citizens and visitors. Dryden is known as the home of "Max the Moose", Dryden's 5.6 m high mascot on the Trans-Canada Highway. Nestled between Eagle Lake First Nation, Lac Seul First Nation and Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, the City of Dryden is fortunate to have the rich facet of Aboriginal cultural opportunities available.

The creation of this Municipal Cultural Strategy builds upon these and so many more existing strengths of Dryden's cultural resources. This establishes a Municipal Cultural Planning process formally linked with the Community Strategic Plan and the City's governance, management and administrative process.

The Municipal Cultural Strategy formalizes the City's interest in the cultural resources of the community. Through the adoption and implementation of this Strategy the City of Dryden recognizes the importance of the local culture, arts and heritage in the lifeblood of the community. This indicates the City's recognition that culture builds social cohesion through the flow of energy and ideas, affirms the community's sense of pride and identity, and contributes to economic prosperity through direct and indirect benefits.

The City of Dryden understands that the quality of life and economic prosperity are linked and is best built on community assets and by investing in place. Many people take such factors as a sense of place, local character and diversity of amenities into account when making decisions on where to live and carry on business. Culture is one of the key building blocks of a healthy and sustainable community.



## Purpose of the Municipal Cultural Strategy

The Municipal Cultural Strategy governs the actions of the City of Dryden with respect to culture. The actions of the municipality, including those policies and procedures subsequently developed, will be filtered through a cultural lens and be aligned to the values, vision and guiding principles included in this strategy. The Municipal Cultural Strategy sets out the City of Dryden's commitments to culture and cultural development.

The Municipal Cultural Strategy Will:

- Formally establish the place of culture in the life of the Dryden community, and as such, acknowledge culture as one of the means by which the City is able to respond to the ***“Linking Quality of Life and Economic Prosperity, Building Quality of Life with Community Assets and Building Our Community by Investing in Place”***
- Provide direction for the future of culture in Dryden providing an impetus, motivation, stimulus and momentum to the process; unify City of Dryden departments and groups (external) around the common vision
- Provide a mechanism for the wider engagement of community, business and citizens in towards leading the community as a whole in identifying the connection between culture and quality of place

When adopted by Council, the Municipal Cultural Strategy is intended to move forward the City of Dryden's commitment to develop a Municipal Cultural Policy. Some elements of the Municipal Cultural Strategy will exist as operating policies with corresponding procedures administered by relevant divisions in the Municipal structure.



## **Scope of the Municipal Cultural Strategy**

The Municipal Cultural Strategy will build upon the existing strengths of the City of Dryden's cultural services, such as the museum and library and establish guidelines and a framework to assist the Dryden Council and Administration with its decision-making with respect to the planning, provision, support and development of culture in the community.

Municipal Cultural Strategies assist municipalities move away from the traditional 'culture plus' approach where arts, heritage and history are seen as something we do after we have taken care of the 'important things' such as: roads, land use planning, and sewers. The latter approach takes a very narrow approach to cultural matters and continues to keep them marginalized.

The scope of this Municipal Cultural Strategy requires that culture be viewed in the broadest perspective, where all City of Dryden departments look at the related area of responsibility through a cultural lens. This requires Municipal Cultural Policies to govern activities and decisions of those connected to the City of Dryden. These policies may indirectly influence the activities and decisions of others within the Dryden area.

It is expected that upon adoption of the Municipal Cultural Strategy, the Dryden Development Corporation will be asked to take a lead role in developing the Municipal Cultural Policy as Municipal Cultural Planning is primarily focused on economic growth and diversification.



## The City of Dryden: Roles and Responsibilities

The City of Dryden's role is to provide leadership and support to advance cultural development in the Municipality for the purposes of economic and broader community development. Much of this role is delegated to the DDC who are the City's economic development delivery agents. The responsibilities associated with this include playing a stronger role by providing strategic policy, planning leadership and the development of corporate policies and plans which support cultural development. The City should play a stronger role in heritage planning and supporting the role of community Heritage projects.

The City has many tools at its disposal. These tools have been named "Cultural Levers" and are listed below.

- Planning and Policy
- Investment and Resource Development
- Capacity Building
- Partnerships and Collaboration
- Leadership Development
- Research and Information
- Marketing and Audience Development

Cultural planning and development must be approached with a 'whole of government' approach requiring collaboration and shared responsibility across many departments. Defining the City's role in culture requires an appropriate balance between policy and planning functions, program and service delivery and facility management.

Achieving long-term success in cultural development will require the ongoing engagement with all partners and stakeholders making use of the Cultural Levers. Partners and stakeholders include elected officials, municipal staff, local cultural leaders, business leaders and the education sector.

City Council and the DDC will receive and consider all recommendations put forward by the Cultural Roundtable.



## **The Cultural Roundtable: Roles and Responsibilities**

The Cultural Roundtable is a permanent committee mandated by the City of Dryden Council. The Cultural Roundtable is responsible for acting as a catalyst to strengthen cultural development by supporting collaboration across community, business and municipal departments and interest groups. The Cultural Roundtable will serve the community of Dryden by using the collective diversity and wisdom of its members to support the evolution of the Municipal Cultural Policy to fulfill the Municipal Cultural Strategy. The long range broad goal of the Cultural Roundtable is to carry out its Terms of Reference. Once the Municipal Cultural Strategy is approved, the Cultural Roundtable should be established by the City of Dryden.

### City Council Actions

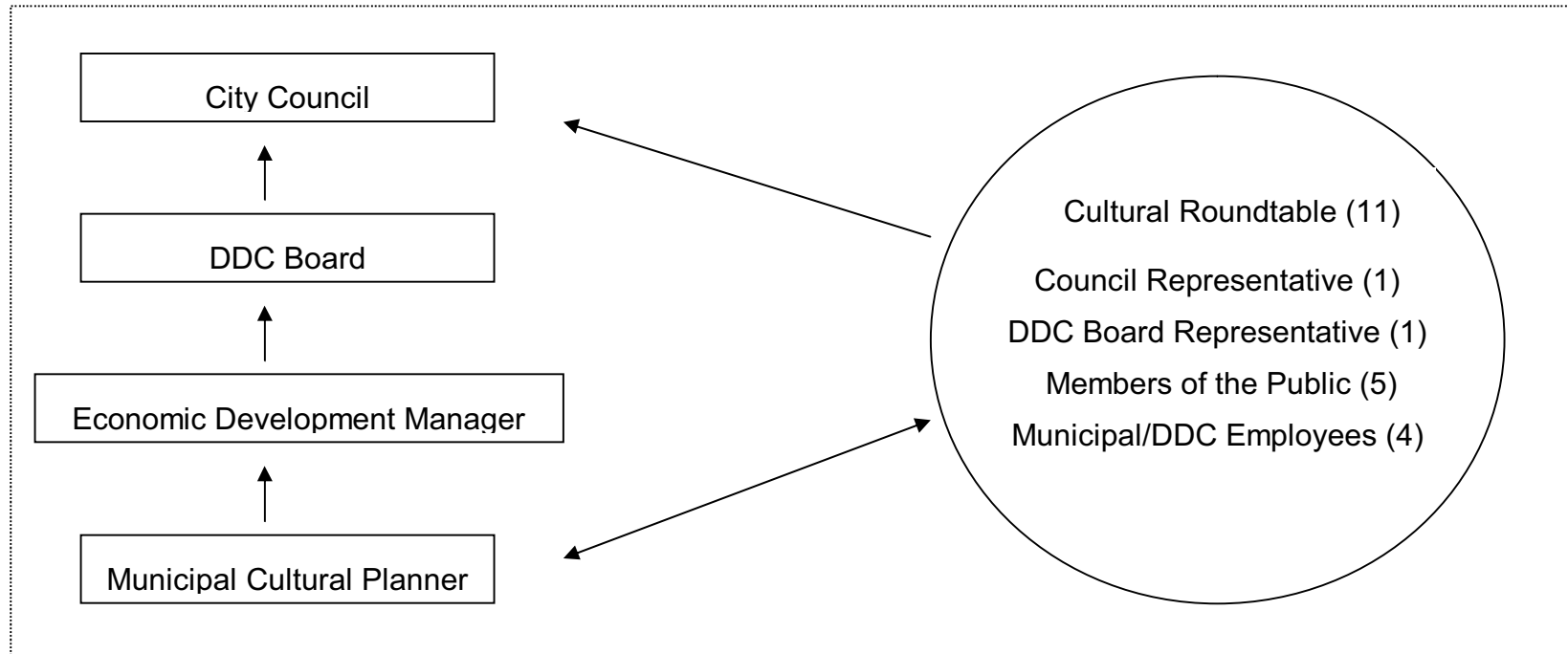
- Establish the Cultural Roundtable
- Bring the Municipal Cultural Roundtable up to date

### Cultural Roundtable Actions

- Finalize the Cultural Roundtable Terms of Reference
- Contribute to the development of Municipal Cultural Policies
- Submission of annual operational and capital requests to the City staff
- Identify funding opportunities for a Municipal Cultural Planner
- Continue with Cultural Mapping exercise as an ongoing process
- Identify opportunities to leverage resources for larger economic and community benefit
- Identify and review all arts, cultural industries and heritage functions within all City departments to facilitate communication and rationalize service if appropriate



## Reporting and Communication Structure



### Lines of Communication

- **Chair of Cultural Roundtable reports annually to City Council**
- **Chair of Cultural Roundtable communicates with the Municipal Cultural Planner**
- **Municipal Cultural Planner communicates with the Cultural Roundtable and champions cultural activities and initiatives**



## Recommendations

It is recommended that the City of Dryden:

1. Adopt the Vision
2. Adopt the Goals
3. Adopt the Definition of Culture
4. Adopt the Guiding Principles
5. Adopt the Municipal Cultural Strategy
6. When adopted by Council reference the Municipal Cultural Strategy in the City of Dryden Community Strategic Plan
7. Refer the Municipal Cultural Strategy to the DDC for prioritization and implementation
8. Establish and support the Cultural Roundtable as per the suggested Terms of Reference
9. Pursue opportunities and move towards hiring a Municipal Cultural Planner