

Staff will bring back a comprehensive cultural spaces report in T3 which will outline the tools available to local governments to support cultural space development and staff initiatives related to cultural space action items outlined in Create Victoria.

PURPOSE

To provide Council a progress report on implementation of Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan. This is also an opportunity to check in with Council on any issues, opportunities and considerations for cultural service delivery in the community.

BACKGROUND

Annually, the City invests approximately \$1.6 million dollars in arts, culture and events including public art, festivals, special events, City of Victoria Butler Book Prize, Indigenous Artist in Residence and Poet Laureate programs. This includes providing over 208 free City organized concerts and programs, permitting 249 films and events in public space and commissioning 25 temporary public art projects.

Arts, Culture and Events Office aims to enhance neighbourhoods, foster arts and culture, and work to create a city that is a natural draw for festivals and events. This Division funds arts, culture and events initiatives to support community vibrancy and economic impact through tourism. The total economic contribution of culture to Victoria's economy is \$382.2 million, employing 5,216 people in the cultural industries. (Source: Statistics Canada, Cultural Satellite 2016)

The Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan includes a vision, cultural policy, and four key strategic priority areas with goals, objectives and action items attached to each key strategic area. The four strategic areas: Connecting People and Spaces, Building Cultural Leadership, Telling Our Story, Being Future-Ready, align with the City's cultural vision, values and guiding principles.

By focusing energy, resources and investment into these key focus areas, the City of Victoria can foster a thriving cultural ecosystem where creativity, innovation and artistic excellence can flourish, where all citizens and visitors can participate in the cultural life in the city and diversity is celebrated reflecting a shared authentic identity.

Cultural planning can be defined as a process of inclusive community consultation and decision making that helps local government identify cultural resources and think strategically about how these resources can help a community to achieve civic goals. It's a strategic approach that integrates the community's cultural resources into a wide range of municipal planning initiatives to fulfil strategic objectives including social cohesion and economic prosperity.

Cultural planning looks at the benefits these cultural resources could bring to a community if planned for strategically. By looking at the community through a cultural lens it can provide fresh perspective in finding ways to:

- Combat social exclusion.
- Provide community-driven design opportunities to develop pride of place and civic identity.
- Support community empowerment through involvement and ownership of community initiatives.
- Review, assess and improve current programs and services and develop new initiatives in response to identified community needs.
- Improve communication and cooperation among stakeholders.

- Integrate culture into a larger policy and planning documents to meet strategic objectives.
- Improve visibility of artists, cultural workers and organizations.
- Improve access and participation in Victoria's arts community.
- Improve cultural facilities.
- Review, assess and improve funding models to meet the needs of the community.

The Implementation Framework accompanies the Master Plan to ensure the plan is action- oriented and provides a road map for future investment, resource allocation and priorities for the City of Victoria, stakeholders and the community.

Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan won the 2018 Award of Excellence - Cultural Planning Award from the Creative City Network of Canada. The Awards of Excellence Program recognizes and celebrates the outstanding achievements of Canadian municipalities and encourages excellence in the development and delivery of cultural policy, planning and practice.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The Plan includes four goals and strategic priorities, 18 objectives and 79 action items. Since adoption in 2017, staff have implemented or partly implement 29 action items. A number of action items are directly aligned with other Council priorities, including Indigenous relations, economic development and prosperity, as well as diversity, equity and inclusion.

For further details on actions implemented to date, please refer to Appendix A Implementation Framework.

Council has approved the following new investments to achieve Create Victoria action items:

- An increase of \$125,000 in the annual Festival Investment Grant program since 2018. (\$50,000 in both the 2018 and 2019 Financial Plan)
- Continuation of the Indigenous Artist in Resident program to ensure Indigenous voices and stories are shared and that we continue to support Indigenous artist roles and opportunities at the City.
- Additional \$1,000 in project funding annually for the poet laureate and youth poet laureate positions.
- \$5,000 ongoing support to the City of Victoria Children's Book Prize.
- New staff position to accelerate implementation of Create Victoria.
- \$25,000 to complete a Cultural Spaces Roadmap.
- \$100,000 to establish a new Cultural Infrastructure Fund

Staff have created operational efficiencies to complete a number of action items within current operational workplans and budget allocations.

This includes:

- Mural toolkit and mural roster to assist with facilitating requests and projects as well as connecting artists with wall spaces on private buildings.
- Creating simplified processes and streamlined approaches for community requests, including fillable PDF for grant programs, special events and online submissions for public art calls.

- Keeping ‘culture is at the table’ operating at a strategic level and integrating creativity into projects such as embedding artists on project teams.
- Incorporating outdoor art projects and programs in parks and open spaces through existing Artist in Resident program. A recent example includes Luke Ramsey collaborating with artists on three murals located on parks washrooms throughout the city.
- Updating the public art policy and establishing a public art maintenance reserve fund.
- Additional pop up and temporary exhibition opportunities for artists, including the new *Commute* bus shelter program and vacant storefronts program, *Storefront Victoria*.
- Facilitating community conversations and business planning to re-envision the transformation of 28 Bastion Square into a creative hub.
- Joining the Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative and the Rent/Lease/Own Study to understand the real estate challenges affecting the not-for-profit sector.
- Increased inventory within our festival equipment program for cable mats and wheelchair ramps to improve accessibility at outdoor events.
- More diverse, free family-friendly programming at Canada Day, Centennial Square and Cameron Bandshell.
- Hosted community conversations and gatherings, including Indigenous roundtables and the annual art symposium, philanthropic arts funding roundtables, artist talk and mixers, two grant workshops and several information sessions on our artist in residence programs and vacant storefront programs.
- Creating inclusive platforms to facilitate social inclusion including working with youth in the square and hosting community meetings with social service agencies to support vulnerable youth in the community.
- Music Strategy project including appointment of the Music Advisory Committee, securing a consultant and engaging the music community and audiences via focus groups and survey.

These operational efficiencies were found by looking strategically at the role and function of culture within the City. For example, transferring the Arts Victoria website from a city function to a community function provided a more grassroots approach to connecting artists, arts organizations and audiences to the cultural life of the city. Staff time and resources could then be refocused on new priorities, such as cultural spaces. As well, using social capital and social media assets, rather than paid promotional expenses, provides cost savings to maximize cultural investment in the best and most strategic way.

The main challenges in the first two years of implementation of the plan have included lack of dedicated staff resources and new investment to complete action items. Given the 2020 investments for culture spaces and a new staff position, staff are well-positioned to accelerate the implementation of the plan in 2020.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Accessibility Impact Statement

The Master Plan contains a number of directions that will make public spaces and cultural facilities more accessible to people of all abilities and is detailed under Objective 1.4 in the Plan “Facilitate social inclusion, promote diversity, community wellness and accessibility in cultural spaces”. Accessibility of cultural facilities will be within scope of the Cultural Spaces Roadmap.

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

Implementation of Create Victoria helps the City achieve the following strategic objectives:

- #4 Prosperity and Economic Inclusion
- #5 Health, Well-being and a Welcoming City

Staff have implemented a new *Victoria Storefront* program based on Council direction to “encourage pop-up business and art exhibitions in vacant retail and office space” and “to work with the DVBA on rotating mural artists to beautify empty storefronts and large windows.”

Staff also continue to facilitate and host community discussions regarding a need for a creative hub for the arts in Victoria.

Impacts to Financial Plan

There are no impacts to the 2020 Financial Plan.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The proposed Arts and Culture Master Plan is consistent with the direction in OCP Chapter 16 Arts and Culture.

16.9 Provide direction for cultural planning through the development and regular update of a Cultural Plan, that:

16.9.1 Establishes a vision and action plan for arts and culture in Victoria;

16.9.2 Seeks opportunities for partnership with the public, private and non-profit sectors;

16.9.3 Maintains, develops and enhances the delivery of City arts and culture programs;

16.9.4 Enhances support to local, non-profit groups engaged in arts or culture programs;

16.9.5 Sets targets for future cultural spaces, including new or upgraded civic, institutional and private facilities; and,

16.9.6 Identifies tools to secure new cultural spaces, including senior government funding; land donations; developer contributions, private donations; and, changes to regulations.

16.10 Maintain and regularly update an inventory of cultural resources.

CONCLUSIONS

Two years on, the Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan has delivered a number of action items tied to both the Council’s Strategic Plan and action items within Create Victoria. Staff look forward to working closely with partners and the community to realize the vision and goals set out in the plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Nichola Reddington
Senior Cultural Planner



Kerri Moore
Head of Business and Community Relations



Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager: _____

Date: June 2nd, 2020

List of Attachments

Appendix A: Implementation Progress Report

Appendix B: Arts, Culture and Events Infographic and Progress Report