

CULTURALLY VITAL OKOTOKS

CULTURE, HERITAGE + ARTS MASTER PLAN 2010 - 2030



*Image courtesy of
Okotokian Identity High School Student Competition winners
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cultural resources play a key role in enhancing the sense of place, quality of life and the local creative economy. A primary building block of the creative economy is Cultural Resources because these enhance the quality of place as well as generating economic activity. Creative Economy theorists define Cultural Resources as Place + Culture + Economy, and these include:

- Community Cultural Organizations
- Facilities and Spaces
- Natural and Cultural Heritage
- Festivals and Events
- Creative Occupations
- Creative Industries

Municipalities, because of their range of powers and extensive service delivery to ordinary citizens, are the key players in cultural planning. Cultural master plans are, thus, vehicles for the integration of cultural resources with economic and community development.



The Cultural Master Planning Process and Findings

The Town of Okotoks cultural planning process was led by associates Pendergast Nyhoff Collaborative Architecture Inc. and Dr. Adriana A. Davies. The process involved extensive research into current best practices as well as community consultation. Key deliverables included two Discussion Papers; analysis of Town of Okotoks Master Plans; *Town of Okotoks Cultural Inventory: Organizations, Institutions and People*; *Town of Okotoks Facilities Inventory*; and *Town of Okotoks Public Consultation Report*. Inspiration was drawn from various movements including Sustainable and Liveable Cities, Creative Cities and the Creative Economy.

It is clear from the research undertaken as a part of the cultural planning process that the Town of Okotoks has a range of cultural resources that the consultant team would recommend be developed to the next level through development and implementation of the Okotoks Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan (the CHAMP). The Plan addresses the needs of citizens and visitors as well as the requirements of elected officials and senior staff of the Town. The Town requirements of the Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan were outlined to the consulting team as follows:

Because of the consultation with key stakeholders, the Plan should have significant community buy-in and support. In addition, the CHAMP is harmonized with other plans and embeds the following values entrenched in all Town plans:

The CHAMP has been developed based on some over-arching principles relating to Okotoks as a physical place as well as a diverse community of individuals and groups that are passionate about their home. Community stakeholders affirmed "Location and Place" and "Quality of Life" as the over-arching principles to help shape the Plan.

- The Plan duration is to 2030
 - It defines the arts and heritage needs of the community
 - It outlines future services and facilities within a regional, national and international context as necessary
 - It addresses the needs of citizens of different ages and abilities
 - It is future oriented
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- Sustainability
 - Creativity
 - Involvement
 - Connection
 - Safety
 - Caring
 - Vitality
 - Values
 - Harmony
 - Fiscal Responsibility

Community Capacity-Building Issues

Through the research, inventorying and public consultation, the consultants identified some community desires that are really capacity-building issues. These are as follows:

DESIRE

to provide assistance (ranging from financial to leadership training and administrative support) to volunteer-run arts organizations to build capacity

DESIRE

to nurture professionalization of some aspects of the arts, heritage and cultural industries for increased product development and quality

DESIRE

to develop cross-sector marketing and communications tools that link the non-profit and for-profit sectors

DESIRE

to present and interpret the heritage of the community in new ways including the use of new technologies

DESIRE

to strengthen educational programming in the arts and culture at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels

DESIRE

to enhance collaboration and partnerships and break down any silos

DESIRE

to create mentorships, cultural incubators and other vehicles for strengthening the creative industries

DESIRE

to cultivate a new generation of volunteers to replace the aging baby boomers

DESIRE

to determine the cultural needs (from the perspective of the creator and the consumer) of youth and generation-X-ers

DESIRE

to encourage new communications and information technologies to support the creative economy

DESIRE

to build new creative infrastructure, e.g., performing arts centre

DESIRE

to repurpose some existing facilities to better serve existing purposes and to meet new demands of artists/practitioners and the public

DESIRE

to develop usage agreements with the educational sector to enhance community use of school facilities

DESIRE

for the Town to work with the educational sector in new ways e.g., showcase school arts programs and production.

Strategic Directions

In order to address needs/capacity-building issues, a series of strategic directions appeared to fall out of the feedback. These are as follows:

BRIDGING THE PAST AND PRESENT

The Town of Okotoks has a rich history spanning over 100 years; its Aboriginal history spans over 10,000 years. Geography and history give the Town its unique identity, character and spirit.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

It is recommended that the Town create structures for regional cultural collaboration.

NURTURING AND SUPPORTING TALENT

Creative individuals, institutions and organizations, whether for-profit or non-profit, will need assistance to realize their potential to enrich the community.

SHARING AND PROMOTING

Okotoks has a strong talent pool in virtually all areas of artistic creation but there is a major gap in sharing and promoting these activities.

PLACE BRANDING AND MARKETING

To ensure a dynamic and vital image for Creative Okotoks an integrated place branding and marketing initiative is recommended.

DATA CAPTURE AND MANAGEMENT

In order to ensure sustained growth and cultural development, ongoing research is advisable and the Town can play a leadership role.

EDUCATING FOR THE FUTURE

The Town of Okotoks will want to look at the cultivation of elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions as well as arts and heritage training and development. The needs of life-long learners will also be addressed.

DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town will want to ensure that the creative physical infrastructure is available for current and future generations.

DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

It is recommended that the Town help to build the human resources capacity of the community to address the needs of the creative economy.

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Okotoks is part of a global community.

Stakeholders who participated in the public consultation process made over 100 recommendations. The consulting team was able to group these to fit all of the Strategic Directions. These, in turn, were grouped to provide over-arching areas of cultural activity that form the basis of action items within the Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan.

Strategic Directions and Action Plan

Stakeholders who participated in the public consultation process made over 100 recommendations. The consulting team was able to group these to fit all of the Strategic Directions. These, in turn, were grouped to provide over-arching areas of cultural activity that form the basis of action items within the Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan.

The following Action Plan has been designed to guide cultural development for Okotoks from 2010 to 2030. Its implementation will grow Okotoks' cultural resources to the next level of excellence, enhance the quality of life of the community, and further the Creative Economy of the Region. In doing this, Okotoks will become a model of a "culturally vital" community, involving partnerships across all sectors of the cultural community and the Town of Okotoks.

BRIDGING THE PAST AND PRESENT

Okotoks has a rich history spanning over 100 years; its Aboriginal history spans over 10,000 years. Geography and history give the community its unique identity, character and spirit. The town's buildings (public, residential and commercial), streetscapes and landscapes, parks and public places all contribute to the sense of place as well as stimulating social cohesion and pride. The town's heritage is historical, natural, cultural, scientific and technological in nature and it is recommended that it be preserved, studied and interpreted using a range of traditional and new means.

The relevant business centres of the Town of Okotoks, in consultation with the Okotoks and District Historical Society and downtown merchants and residents, will develop strategies and programs to preserve and interpret the community's historical resources.

Action Item 1:

Establish Okotoks as a Living Museum

Action Item 2:

Historic Building Preservation

Action Item 3:

Establish a Historic Downtown Core Precinct

Action Item 4:

Establish a Policy on Collecting and Exhibiting the Past



NURTURING THE ARTS AND CULTURE

The arts are a traditional vehicle for creative expression, and arts disciplines and products play an important role in the Creative Economy. Okotoks has a diverse arts community with particular strengths in the visual and performing arts at the amateur and professional levels.

The Town currently supports visual artists in the community and region through the Okotoks Art Gallery, including exhibiting opportunities, limited studio and teaching facilities, and retailing opportunities at the OAG gift shop. Performing artists receive limited support through Town-operated and subsidized venues such as Rotary Performing Arts Centre.

Largely volunteer-driven and non-profit in nature, the arts and culture sector would benefit from a range of capacity building tools that nurture and support talent. To foster capacity building within the cultural sector, the Town of Okotoks will work with arts and cultural organizations to facilitate new opportunities to showcase arts and culture within the community. Cultural and Historical Services will serve as a resource for finding and applying for arts and cultural funding. The Town, in particular Cultural and Historical Services and Volunteer Services, will work with community organizations to nurture the development of sustainable cultural governance models.

Action Item 5:

Establish an Arts Festival

Action Item 6:

Serve as a Resource for Arts and Cultural Funding

Action Item 7:

Nurture the Development of a Sustainable Cultural Governance Model

SHARING, MARKETING AND PROMOTING

Diversity, whether ethno-cultural, cultural or natural, is a reality of the modern world and a strength that is recommended be developed to serve the needs of citizens and to attract visitors from other parts of the world. Communities have evolved over time and so has their demographic makeup. The past and present can be used to make the community as inclusive as possible.

Through relevant business centres, the Town of Okotoks will collaborate with local cultural organizations to develop local marketing and promotion strategies. This will include the Town of Okotoks establishing a centralized and highly visible information and ticketing hub that has a notable physical presence and a straightforward, user-friendly web presence. The aim would be to get local cultural products and productions accessible to the region.

Action Item 8:

Marketing Culturally Vital Okotoks

Action Item 9:

Establish a Centralized Information and Ticketing Location

EDUCATING FOR THE FUTURE

A well-educated work force is an asset to any community and the level of education of the citizens of Okotoks is higher than the provincial and national average. Instruction in arts and heritage is important not only for the training of future artists and other creators but also for the development of an appreciation of the arts, culture and heritage in the population at large. In addition, the Creative Economy is fuelled by individuals who can think and innovate.

Action Item 10:

Establish Shared Community and Educational Cultural Spaces

Action Item 11:

Pursue Possible Satellite Post-Secondary Institution Campus Development in Okotoks

The development of Okotoks is inextricably bound with the quality of education available in the community and region.

The Plan recommends that the Town of Okotoks endorse educational initiatives from local schools which establish and promote their arts and culture programs. The Town of Okotoks will work with post-secondary institutions in establishing arts and cultural programming in Okotoks at a community and post-secondary level.

DATA CAPTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The 21st century is the Information Age and the World Wide Web is the primary vehicle for information creation and dissemination. Through ongoing research and documentation of community cultural space/cultural program development the Town will be better able to anticipate needs and stay ahead of the curve. This is called "cultural mapping".

The baseline cultural map has been established in the preparation of this Plan. The Master Plan recommends that the cultural map (inventory) be reviewed and updated annually.

Action Item 12:
Cultural Mapping

DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

It is recommended that the Town ensure that the creative physical infrastructure is available for current and future generations. This involves the building of new space as well as the retrofitting and repurposing of existing space. The *Facilities Inventory* and public consultation revealed the need for a multi-use, purpose-built facility to accommodate the performing arts, visual arts and museum exhibition functions. This would address regional needs to ensure maximum use and benefit. Community members recommended a downtown location was recommended to creation of “cultural mass”, recognizing that sufficient land in the downtown core may not exist to accommodate such a facility. A 2009 Rough Order of Magnitude Cost for the Project is estimated at \$22.5 to \$25 million for the basic Cultural Arts Centre components¹. **Appendix 6** outlines the basic assumptions to derive the order of magnitude project costs and operating costs². The Town of Okotoks will seek broad community consultation during in the planning phases.

The Town would endorse the establishment of studio collectives and artist-run centres and work with targeted community groups to enhance the interpretation of the historical downtown core.

¹ Before a construction or project cost estimate can be calculated a functional space program needs developing, a site selected and at least some conceptual design undertaken.

² Before an operating cost estimate can be calculated, some research into similar facilities, a business plan and the above noted design decisions must be made with Council determining the user pay ratio as well.

Action Item 13:

Planning and Development of a Multi-Use, Purpose-Built Arts Centre including:

- *A Performing Arts Centre Component*
- *An Exhibition Centre Component*
- *An Outdoor Performance and Event Landscape*

See Appendix 6 for possible scope

Action Item 14:

Retrofitting of the Centennial Arena as a Concert Venue

Action Item 15:

Retrofit RPAC, Heritage House and Station for More Appropriate Uses

Action Item 16:

Facilitate Establishment of Studio Collectives and Artist-Run Centres

DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The establishment of "Culturally Vital Okotoks" is dependent on human resources, whether paid or unpaid. At present, cultural administrators and other specialists are found solely in the Town administration, specifically, the Cultural/Historical Services Business Centre. With respect to the volunteer-run arts, heritage and other cultural organizations, they are overly-reliant on aging baby boomers. The issue of succession planning is of enormous importance and volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition are challenges. The Plan recommends that the Town look to engage younger Okotokians in cultural planning, programming, and cultural instruction. The Town will also support community organizations by facilitating succession planning and volunteer training.

Action Item 17:
Professional Cultural Staff

EXPANDING HORIZONS: COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

It has become a truism that no organization, institution or municipality can do it alone. Collaboration and partnering have become established vehicles for building capacity since each partner brings an individual agenda to the table and, together, the partners craft a new, mutual agenda. This applies not only within Okotoks but also regionally and beyond. Not only is capacity enhanced but new perspectives and products emerge. The Town will facilitate opportunities for collaboration and partnerships within the cultural sector within the community and with other communities/agencies.

Action Item 18:
Facilitate Regional Structures for Cultural Collaboration and Dissemination

Action Item 19:
Support Creative Exchanges: Acting Locally and Thinking Globally

At the request of the Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan Advisory Committee the consultant team added a short section on Roles and Responsibilities. The Plan also establishes a timeline for the first 10 years of the Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan and outlines the priorities of implementation, yet provides the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Town of Okotoks had the foresight to commission a Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan in 2009. Once it is adopted in 2010, it will need to be implemented by the Town and key community stakeholders to effectively see success. Because of the Town's range of service delivery and its clout as the elected municipal government, it is the Town of Okotoks who is in the best position to take a leadership role in championing the implementation of the Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan---bringing together the plentiful cultural resources in the area with community and economic development. The Town's biggest challenge in championing the implementation of the Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan will be one of connectivity which will include digital, social and business connectivity.

While the Town, including Cultural and Historical Services, Volunteer Services, Economic Development and other relevant business centres, will want to champion the implementation of the Plan, the other participants in the implementation of the plan must include the Non-Profit Cultural Sector, the For-Profit Cultural Sector, Community Professional and Other Service Organizations, the Educational Sector and the Foothills Region. Each has a role to play over the next 10 to 20 years, not least of which is as ambassadors for the Town of Okotoks' Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan but also as connectors across the sectors.

TIMELINE

The considerable research and consultation that went into the Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan has resulted in 19 Action Items. Based on the priorities expressed in the public consultation process, the consulting team prepared a timeline for the Action Items that would allow Town Council to make some of them immediately actionable while others await their turn over the first ten years of the Plan's life. Three principal areas of work were suggested for 2010. The remaining Action Items were set across 2011 to 2013, 2014 to 2016 and 2017 to 2019. These time frames were designed to coincide with Town Council 3- year terms and planning cycles. Implementation of the plan would occur as finances and resources become available.

CULTURAL, HERITAGE + ARTS MASTER PLAN ACTION ITEMS TIMELINE		2010	2011-2013	2014-2016	2017-2019
<u>Action Item 1</u> Establish + Develop Town of Okotoks as a Living Museum		<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>		
<u>Action Item 2</u> Preserve Historical Buildings			<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>	
<u>Action Item 3</u> Develop a Historic Downtown Core Precinct			<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>	
<u>Action Item 4</u> Establish Policy on Collecting and Exhibiting the Past		<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>		
<u>Action Item 5</u> Establish and Sustain an Arts Festival			<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>	
<u>Action Item 6</u> Serve as a Resource for Arts and Culture Funding			<i>Establish</i>	<i>Operate</i>	
<u>Action Item 7</u> Nurture Sustainable Cultural Governance Models			<i>Research</i>	<i>Implement</i>	
<u>Action Item 8</u> Market Culturally Vital Okotoks		<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>		
<u>Action Item 9</u> Establish a Centralized Information and Ticketing Locale		<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>		
<u>Action Item 10</u> Establish Shared Community and Educational Cultural Spaces					
<u>Action Item 11</u> Explore Establishing a Satellite Post-Secondary Institution Campus			<i>Explore</i>	<i>Establish</i>	<i>Expand</i>
<u>Action Item 12</u> Undertake Cultural Mapping					
<u>Action Item 13</u> Plan and Develop a Multi-Use, Purpose Built Cultural Centre		<i>Plan</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>	<i>Operate</i>
<u>Action Item 14</u> Retrofit Centennial Arena as a Concert Venue			<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>	<i>Operate</i>
<u>Action Item 15</u> Retrofit RPAC, HH and the Station for more appropriate uses			<i>Plan</i>	<i>Plan</i>	<i>Implement</i>
<u>Action Item 16</u> Facilitate Studio Collectives and/or Artist-Run Centres				<i>Pilot</i>	<i>Implement</i>
<u>Action Item 17</u> Professional Cultural Staff					
<u>Action Item 18</u> Facilitate a Regional Structure for Cultural Collaboration + Dissemination					
<u>Action Item 19</u> Support Creative Exchanges: Acting Locally and Thinking Globally				<i>National</i>	<i>International</i>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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If we have missed anyone we apologize and thank you sincerely for your contribution to the Town of Okotoks Culture, Heritage + Arts Master Plan.



The Advisory Committee. Absent is Sarah Johnson.