



Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive P.O. Box 328,
Newmarket, Ontario, L3Y 4X7

Email: info@newmarket.ca | Website: newmarket.ca | Phone: 905-895-5193

Cultural Master Plan Update Information Report to Council

Report Number: INFO-2020-33

Department(s): Recreation and Culture

Author(s): Colin Service, Rob Wilson

Distribution Date: October 15, 2020

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the final status of the 10 year Cultural Master Plan 2009-2019. Interim status reports were previously published under the titles of *Edition 1 - September 2009 to June 2011* and *Edition 2 - September 2011 to December 2014*.

Background

Council adopted a 10 year Cultural Master Plan in 2009, a strategy that outlined a vision to provide for an enriched community life, to build a sense of pride and belonging in Newmarket, and to bring about positive changes in physical, social, economic and community development. A total of 56 recommendations were identified to be implemented over the next 10 years. They fell under 8 key themes: Awareness and Advocacy; Cultural Sector Development; Cultural Sites and Facilities; Financing Cultural Development; Integrated Planning; Cultural Industries; Historic Core as Cultural Centre; and Cultural Outreach.

Discussion

At the conclusion of the 10-year period, we have completed 93% of the 56 initiatives identified. Cultural activities and participation have grown exponentially within our community especially since 2005. Our investments in renovating our facilities, marketing

and human resources have yielded incredible results and made significant improvements in the quality of life for our residents.

The following are highlights of our key accomplishments. Please refer to APPENDIX A for full details and status updates to the action plan.

(1) Increased Public awareness and participation in Cultural Activities

Public awareness and participation in Cultural programs and events has grown significantly, thanks to concerted efforts across multiple areas: increased physical capacity, more enticing course offering and experiences, closer collaboration with community partners and suppliers, and effective integrated marketing communication. From 2009 to 2019, enrollment in Arts and Culture programs grew +149% while the number of completed courses offered expanded by 120. Incremental resources on the Culture team also allowed for more focus, frequency, and reach to our audiences in our communication across print, web and social media. Launched in September of 2018, the Arts & Culture eNewsletter with a subscriber base of +11,000 is one example our continued efforts to cultivate our audience for the long term and to drive top-of-mind awareness to our cultural offerings.

Animating the Historic Core as a Cultural centre to Newmarket

The renovated Newmarket Old Town Hall (OTH) has offered much needed programming capacity and has become an anchor for the historic Main Street district along with Riverwalk Commons for many activities and events such as Splash of Culture, Buskerfest, Newmarket National 10 Minute Play Festival, Music Series and the nationwide Culture Days. In particular, the Newmarket National 10 Minute Play Festival (NNPF) is a homegrown, grassroots initiative led by Artistic Director Michael Halfin, a local retired drama teacher connected to Newmarket and the national theatre scene.

The Old Town Hall is now a gathering place for amateur and professional groups to showcase their talents. The flexibility in multi-use is a special asset to the Town, which allows us to be very responsive in meeting the diverse needs of public and private users from Newmarket, York Region and beyond. Since reopening in 2016, OTH has mounted 24 exhibitions, welcomed over 15,480 guests through our doors, generated \$291,092 gross revenue from rental bookings, and \$44,685 from course fees. Moving forward, our goal is to optimize the use of this asset, balancing revenue opportunities with free public access and usage by not-for-profit groups.

(2) Putting our Public Art Policy in practice

A Public Art Policy was developed and completed through the joint efforts between the Town's Recreation and Culture, and Planning Departments. Since the Public Art Policy has been in effect in 2013, a number of Public Art pieces have been installed:

- *Trail markers*: 10 Totems as kilometre markers stand along the Tom Taylor Trail from the borders of Aurora to East Gwillimbury. These Ojibwa-inspired animal forms celebrate our First Nations heritage and connect with the natural surroundings. Local artists Don Chretien and Jim Menken collaborated on these metal and wood creations.
- *A New Market on the Holland River*: a custom mural painting by GTA artist John Kuna to mark the place at Holland River where the Quakers and First Nations met and traded.
- *The Community Living Room*: a sculpture at Riverwalk Commons due to officially unveil in 2020.

Discussion about other future installations is underway for the York Region Administrative Annex along Yonge Street and at the Rose Corporation historic downtown development. A potential acquisition of an outdoor sculpture by Canadian Artist Ted Fullerton at OTH is also under review for consideration and approval.

(3) Building relationships that makes for a more diverse and inclusive community

The Town has also formed a Diversity Inclusivity Working Group (DIWG), which aims to educate, promote, and lead changes from within the organization.

To ensure families with financial needs have equitable access to fee-based programs, we have introduced Creating Accessible Recreation for Everyone (CARE) program in 2018 where qualified applicants can enrol at discounted prices, including cultural programs.

In terms of Cultural content development and curation, staff have worked closely with schools, youth, dance, artists, and other groups to co-produce meaningful experiences and highlight social issues that matter to our community. Project examples include: a photography exhibition of the **Homeless** by Leah Denbok; a celebration of Black History Month (2019) with Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association (NACCA); art exhibition during Indigenous Month (2019) with artist Clayton Samuel King, Nin Nos Kom Tin, Sacred Heart Catholica Secondary School and film viewing and talk with Indigenous Cultural Consultant Kim Wheately, Director Morningstar Mecredi and Environmental Activist and Cree Lieutenant Nipawi Mahihkan Misit Kakinoosit; and Mental Wellness art exhibits *Beam On* (2018), *Roots|Routes* (2019) with The Mindful Project and Canadian Mental Health Association.

In our fee-based program delivery, we are committed to work with suitable independent service providers and local businesses to innovate and better deliver quality services and user experiences to the changing needs of our community.

Go-Forward Plan: Strategic Direction & Approach

We will approach our Cultural Master Plan for 2021-2031 to have broad representation from a complete cross section of municipal departments, as well as, the entire community in an effort to encourage a shared sense of ownership and pride in working together to realize our shared vision. Ultimately, we want people from all walks of life to feel at home in Newmarket by building a welcoming environment that offers meaningful and enriching cultural experiences that matter. We also want to create an enhanced connection between all physical spaces within our community and put an 'arts and culture lens' in the pre-design stages through a collective municipal effort by all Town departments. The goal will be to create unique and distinct place making in all we strive to achieve across the Town. Along those lines, place making can be more than just arts and culture facilities and public art. The goal in the new Master Plan will be to establish a culture of encouraging cross-corporate challenging of the status quo in all pre-design stages so as to maximize the opportunity to create places and spaces people talk about and are proud to experience. This coordinated, expanded thinking can be as granular as to how we may view road painting, garbage cans, park benches, playground structures, trail signage, grant coverings, etc.

First, we will start by rebranding our Cultural Master Plan process to Community Canvas. The new name emphasizes our community as the author of our future. We also hope to challenge the conventional thinking of what Culture stands for. We would like people to consider culture more broadly, and that it is a necessary part of our everyday wellbeing. With the help of technology and other meeting opportunities, our canvassing process will offer more ways to connect and engage for both Town staff across departments and reaching out to external audiences. By involving a broader audience, we hope the process will foster a sense of shared ownership and pride in the final plan.

Rather than an identified list of actions as recommendations in our final report, we expect to establish a shortlist of communal priorities of what really matters to our people. We believe this format will provide goal-clarity for a long-term vision for cultural life while allowing the flexibility to pivot and respond to changing conditions around us, as we have learnt through the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We expect the final *Community Canvas* Report to become a roadmap that binds and guides all internal and external stakeholders. It can encourage us to lean on each other's resources, relationships and expertise as we co-author the best solutions to achieve our communal priorities over the next 10 years.

Conclusion

We will soon be embarking on the planning and development of a new 10 year Cultural Strategic Plan, as guided by the **Council's Strategic Priorities** (2018 to 2022). We will be presenting our proposed project plan to Council and the public in Q2 of 2021, with consideration for the COVID-19 situation at that time.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Providing an update on the outgoing Cultural Master Plan aligns with our vision of being Well-Equipped and Managed as well as our corporate value of Accountability and Accessibility. The development of each cultural master plan, including the upcoming Community Canvas contribute to the strategic priority of Extraordinary Places and Spaces as well as our vision for Living Well.

Consultation

Throughout the outgoing Cultural Master Plan as well as the next, the Community Canvas, both staff and public will be thoroughly engaged through a variety of consultation methods.

Human Resource Considerations

There are no Human Resource considerations related to this information report.

Budget Impact

There are no Budget impacts at the time of this report. A Budget will be made available when engagement and drafting of the Community Canvas begin.

Attachments

Appendix 1 - 2009-2019 CMP Final Status Report Simplified Format.pdf

Contact

Colin Service

Director, Recreation & Culture

905 895 5193 ext. 2601

cservice@newmarket.ca

Approval

Ian McDougall, Commissioner, Community Services

Colin Service, Director, Recreation & Culture

2009 - 2019 Cultural Master Plan: Final Status Report

93% Completion on 56 Initiatives Identified Overall Score: 52/56			
#	Initiatives	Completed	Explanation
Awareness and Advocacy Score: 16/18			
1	Develop a two-year internal and external communications strategy and plan to build awareness and foster pride	✓	
2	Work with the York Region Arts Council to support their creation of a self-managed directory of artists, places and meeting spaces in Newmarket.	✓	
3	Make direct contact with all private program provider and cultural industries, encourage them to see themselves collectively as a resource with connections to community economic development	✓	
4	Provide marketing coordination of all activities year round. Make the residents of Newmarket the first tier of all marketing.	✓	
5	Offer Cultural Master Plan updates to the public quarterly on website to inform public; updated quarterly.	✓	
6	Enhance arts and culture web presence via the Town of Newmarket website complete with links to local arts and culture organizations	✓	
7	Support the Mayor and Council Celebrates the Arts Gala and/or coordinate with other such regional initiatives.	✓	
8	Incorporate culture into New Residents' Guide	✓	
9	In collaboration with the Region, develop a strategy for marketing the historic core to the GTA and central Ontario tourists.	✓	
10	Review graphic communications program and branding for the historic core include signage; coordinate with both culture graphic identity and new Town branding.	✓	
11	Develop a longer-term external communications strategy. Create specific communications program to manage public perception and experience. Consider an "outpost" for culture at Upper Canada Mall.	✓	
12	Create an information and interpretation program in the Holland River corridor along the trail system	✓	
13	Create unified thoughtfully designed signage program (interior and exterior) for all cultural facilities	x	Over the span of the last 10 years, various updates to municipal signage has been undertaken. The Town of Newmarket will be undertaking a digital signage review in 2020. The results of this initiative will be incorporated into the next Cultural Master Plan.
14	Initiate a museum master plan intended to review current operations, suggest simple design solutions to increase its presence on Main Street, and position the facility to meet future needs	x	The museum is undergoing physical interior improvements and better outdoor signage is underway. Although we have yet to initiate a Museum Master Plan development, a number of innovations in programming, community outreach and off-site exhibitions have already been implemented to better anticipate and respond to changing needs of our diverse audiences.
15	Complete cultural mapping exercise for use as baseline comparison regarding future comparisons/development.	✓	
16	Ensure that all Town departments understand how their mandates fit into the cultural development picture	✓	
17	Ensure that NEDAC is consulted regarding cultural planning issues with an economic development component as per current Council policy. Ensure consultation of cultural industries in any economic development planning processes.	✓	
18	Actively recruit and promote a wide and diversified range of uses in all indoor public spaces (Old Town Hall, Old Fire Hall, Community Centre). Provide regular animation for all outdoor public spaces; provide evening activities in the summer (e.g. Moonlight Movies, Music on the Move	✓	
Cultural Sector Development Score: 6/6			

#	Initiatives	Completed	Explanation
19	Develop a municipal oversight process for cultural development for the purposes of reporting to Council on an interim basis.	✓	
20	Initiate a broadly based group of community cultural representatives to provide support for the cultural sector, which will evolve into a self directed arts council.	✓	
21	Ensure ongoing focus on the role, importance and development of culture within all municipal planning, programming and communications via all commissions and department activities.	✓	
22	Explore consolidating heritage interests in Newmarket, working with the community to determine an appropriate model.	✓	
23	Utilize the arts council as the umbrella organization to collaborate on outreach and arts and culture community development with directly linked structures to support semi-annual Mayors Leadership Council discussions and planning for the annual Mayor and Council Celebrates the Arts Gala.	✓	
24	Explore possibility of providing shared and common administrative space for community arts as a means of sectoral consolidation.	✓	
Cultural Sites and Facilities Score 8/8			
25	Bring the Old Town Hall up to current building standards as a dedicated facility for cultural programming; Consider Old Town Hall's potential role as a public space for exchange of ideas (i.e. pottery, water colours, literary arts, oil painting, quilting, digital & urban arts, etc.)	✓	
26	Establish the community gardens for community programming at the Fernbank Farm site.	✓	
27	Create a public art program based upon accepted practice in municipal public art.	✓	
28	Consider Market Square as an integral part of redevelopment of the Old Town Hall.	✓	
29	Determine the future use and associated remedial work to support specific uses of the Fernbank Farmhouse.	✓	
30	Review the need for a dressing room/staging area expansion to the existing building envelope of Newmarket Theatre (subject to updated partnership agreement with York Region District School Board).	✓	
31	Following the completion and initial programming of a renovated Old Town Hall, review options and determine future use of the Old Fire Hall.	✓	
32	Study feasibility of establishing a public art gallery based on Library and Town collections.	✓	
Financing Cultural Development Score 4/5			
33	Initiate a review of the Community Grants Program.	✓	
34	Establish a Town of Newmarket funding mechanism for arts and culture development/initiatives.	✓	
35	Examine feasibility of instituting a developer contribution towards culture and / or public art as a part of the site approval process.	✓	
36	Consider development of "Endowment for Culture" through donor directed funds managed by the Town; find a keystone donor to kick it off; publicize the existence of the fund and solicit actively; provide clear goals for use of funds.	✗	Establishing an "Endowment Fund for Culture" with a keynote donor was a concept explored but deemed not feasible. However, this concept does exist specifically for the Museum (EC Trust). At present, we will continue with the Celebrate The Arts program, while staying open to other funding opportunities.
37	Convene a "Mayor's Leadership Council on Culture" to promote understanding of all forms of culture and the social and economic value to the community; recruit exceptional leaders for high level advocacy and endorsement function; connect with arts celebration.	✓	
Integrated Planning Score 3/4			
38	Develop guidelines for coordinated enhancement of public realm (civic arts) as extension of Official Plan and other goals; and for oversight and promotion of built heritage as community asset.	✓	

#	Initiatives	Completed	Explanation
39	Develop goals and guidelines for cultural spaces. Pay attention to areas of intensification; develop policies for funds collected through Section 37 of the Planning Act.	✓	
40	Integrate cultural places, activities and events with trails at every opportunity; provide directional signage, information boards and interpretation.	✗	Interpretation boards along trails have not been implemented. However, cultural markers around the historic downtown and Riverwalk Commons area have been installed. Cultural markers or displays around the Stickwood Walker Trail system are also planned. Staff will continue to evaluate opportunities to mark local stories.
41	Work with Downtown BIA and property owners regarding participation and integration in cultural initiatives and events as well as “pride of place”; integrate economic development into cultural planning and determine best relationship between signature events and culture.	✓	
Cultural Industries Score 5/5			
42	Through Economic Development, develop a recruitment program for cultural industries.	✓	
43	Develop a strategy for engaging cultural workers in Toronto who live in Newmarket to participate in their community.	✓	
44	Explore applicability of youth entrepreneurship model for funding cultural initiatives (e.g. Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF) Loan Program; Government of Ontario’s Summer Company Program).	✓	
45	Explore the potential for artists’ live-work accommodations in the downtown core; explore possibility of incentives for building owners who provide space for artists.	✓	
46	Foster connections with York University and Seneca College. Recruit recent arts graduates, build creative industries, and promote live/work spaces in Newmarket.	✓	
Historic Core as Cultural Centre Score 4/4			
47	Treat Main Street, Fairy Lake and proposed Heritage Conservation District as a single entity for cultural planning purposes. Develop a strategy to make accessibility easy (transit, parking).	✓	
48	Develop a program for the public realm amenities in the historic core geared to walkability and easy access	✓	
49	Ensure that new design of Community Centre Lands is sensitively integrated into existing urban form including scale, uses at grade, pedestrian connections and related spaces, provide animation at edges and create capacity for large events	✓	
50	Make strong pedestrian links to trails and natural heritage; create safe crossings of major streets.	✓	
Cultural Outreach Score 5/5			
51	Conduct a resource analysis (i.e.: quantity of dedicated cultural staff, finance strategies, etc.) with respect to meeting cultural programming and community infrastructure support opportunities associated with implementation of the Cultural Master Plan	✓	
52	Coordinate with findings of “Building Bridges to Tomorrow” research project currently underway (Older Adult Centres’ Association of Ontario) regarding changes in older adult centres’ orientation and programming. Consider engaging seniors in helping deliver programs for early years and elementary children.	✓	
53	Promote accessibility of all cultural programs and events; consider means of subsidizing participant fees for the disadvantaged (e.g. student ticketing system); and promote accessibility initiatives for youth (i.e. Eye Go	✓	
54	Take an integrated approach to program planning at the neighbourhood level; involve the Library, school boards and councils, private music, dance, teachers, social agencies, youth, etc. Focus on shared use facilities and community halls	✓	

#	Initiatives	Completed	Explanation
55	The aboriginal community will be consulted on an ongoing basis regarding programs, activities, and events that relate to aboriginal heritage and celebration.	✓	
56	The Town will identify and implement processes to recognize and celebrate cultural diversity through programs, activities, and events.	✓	