A Vibrant Community
Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan
Final Report
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Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan Prepared By

In Association With

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Executive Summary

Cultural Planning is recognized by the Town of Richmond Hill as an essential cornerstone to the development of a vibrant community. The Richmond Hill Strategic Plan consultation process, which has informed both the development of the Town's Strategic Plan, as well as the long term planning considerations of its new Official Plan, was a two-year long discussion about what kind of town residents and businesses wanted. The community's desire to be a place where people can come together to celebrate natural and cultural diversity, where creativity is fostered and ideas are exchanged, and where the arts are appreciated was a strong message that emerged from this dialogue.

With the goal of achieving a more vibrant Richmond Hill, the development of a Cultural Plan is an important part of a larger strategy for creating a new kind of urban community. A Cultural Plan can ensure that the texture, voices and memories of the community are firmly integrated into the Town's physical and recreational planning, as well as its long-term economic objectives. It also provides for a shared vision of the needs, aspirations and priorities related to cultural development and cultural planning in Richmond Hill over a 10 year time horizon. In emphasizing the role of cultural infrastructure, institutions and other resources, the Plan makes a strong case that culture matters for Richmond Hill if it is to be an attractive, welcoming, and economically prosperous community for years to come.

To that end, primary consideration for the development of Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan has been given to:

- Engaging the community and stakeholders in a broad and ongoing discussion of culture and cultural planning in Richmond Hill;
- Heightening local awareness and increasing community support and recognition of the importance of culture to Richmond Hill's prosperity and the community's liveability;
- Improving access to information on cultural resources and activities in Richmond Hill for residents, visitors, businesses, and organizations;
- Increasing the stability and sustainability of Richmond Hill's cultural organizations and fostering collaboration across a wide cross-section of cultural groups and activities; and
- Understanding and addressing gaps in services and cultural facilities that reflect both Richmond Hill's geography and its cultural diversity.
Richmond Hill's Cultural Ecology

The Cultural Plan reflects the cultural ecology of Richmond Hill - the distinctive histories and patterns of development that have shaped the community, the geography and unique places that enhance the quality of life experience, the mosaic of people and ages that inform cultural development and the economic conditions and fiscal realities that impact the town's economic growth.

Given the growth and complexity of challenges facing Canadian communities, a framework which recognizes the importance of economic prosperity, social equity, environmental responsibility and cultural vitality is essential. To this end, an integrated policy framework underpins the development of the Richmond Hill Cultural Plan. The Richmond Hill Strategic Plan, Official Plan and Economic Development Strategy all identify culture as a strategic priority and set out strategies, actions and policies that will enhance cultural development in Richmond Hill in the years to come.

The Plan reflects and responds to the fact that the community is changing - both in terms of the physical community, but more importantly in terms of its shifting demographics. While the town has a young and well educated population, cultural diversity is a defining characteristic of the Town and one of its greatest strengths for cultural development and economic well-being. Today, more than a quarter (27.5%) of migration to Richmond Hill is through immigration and almost half (45.7%) of Richmond Hill's population is a visible minority⁴.

Richmond Hill is characterized by a growing cultural and creative economy. The increasing level of talent and investment present in the community is evident by the significant number of entrepreneurs and small businesses operations in graphic design services, film and video industries and computer systems design.

In addition, Richmond Hill benefits from a strong base of cultural facilities and programs with many of the Town owned and operated cultural facilities among the community's most important cultural resources. These include the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, the Town's public libraries, the Richmond Hill Heritage Centre, and the Boynton House. The Town also offers a wide array of cultural programs that span all ages (pre-school, children's programs, youth programs, family programs, adult programs and seniors) through its Recreation and Cultural Services Division. Notwithstanding the current commitment, the need to ensure a sustainable level of funding for cultural programming and activities is addressed in the Plan.

¹ SHS Consulting, Socio Economic Study for the Town of Richmond Hill, December 2008.
Summary of Cultural Mapping Findings

Building a stronger base of information on the cultural assets in Richmond Hill was a priority identified during the People Plan process. The Richmond Hill Cultural Mapping Project (CMP) completed in the summer of 2010, is a foundational piece in understanding the current cultural landscape in Richmond Hill, and provides the Cultural Plan with valuable baseline information on the Town's current cultural resources.

Using the Cultural Resource Framework developed by the Province, 1225 assets have been identified as local cultural resources including Cultural Businesses, Creative Industries, Non-profit Cultural Organizations, Cultural Facilities, Cultural Heritage, and Natural Heritage. The concentration of resources has shown where hubs or clusters of cultural activity are occurring and provided an understanding how local neighbourhoods are being served by cultural resources.

Richmond Hill has made a strong start on building a base of information on its cultural assets through the Cultural Mapping Project. However, cultural mapping in any municipality is never complete. The task now is to build on the baseline mapping completed in ways that strengthen the Town's ability to support more informed cultural planning and cultural development.

Summary of Community Engagement

Building on the success of the Town's People Plan Richmond Hill process, an extensive community engagement exercise was undertaken to develop Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan. The consultation took the form of a community launch event, community soundings, targeted focus groups, stakeholder interviews, a community survey, and meetings with the Mayor and representatives of Council. In all, approximately 500 community residents participated in these engagement activities and shared their perspectives, experiences and ideas for cultural planning and development in Richmond Hill.

Theme 1: Emphasize Inclusive Intercultural Opportunities

A common theme in all of the engagement activities was the need to strengthen community inclusion and fully engage Richmond Hill's diverse population in cultural development. The community also suggested that new programs and initiatives were needed in order to achieve the desired intercultural opportunities.

Theme 2: Expand Places and Spaces Where Culture Can Thrive

Another common message emerging from the community engagement process was the success of the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts as a cultural institution. However, the community also felt that the Town needed to move on to the next phase of developing cultural infrastructure in the town by addressing needs such as providing public spaces, dedicated cultural facilities, flexible and affordable space and facilities.
Theme 3: Increase Awareness and Strengthen Marketing and Communications
Community stakeholders described Richmond Hill as offering a rich cultural life consisting of a wide range of cultural organizations, creative enterprises, individual artists, and programs and activities, which lacked awareness at the community level. To overcome this the community did suggest a broad range of media to promote the cultural life of Richmond Hill including non-traditional tools such as flash mobs and social media.

Theme 4: Create Vibrant Cultural Districts and Neighbourhoods in the Community
The community voiced their interest in enhancing their neighbourhoods and downtown districts through the creation of vibrant urban spaces thus enabling more ‘buzz’ about the community. It was suggested that this could be done by utilizing public art and creating walkable places where people can interact. The need for a strong concentration of cultural resources and activities in the Downtown was a consistent theme across all engagement activities.

Theme 5: Broaden Youth Engagement and Support Youth-Led Cultural Activities
Engaging the youth population in Richmond Hill was also a significant theme throughout the engagement process. Community participants felt that youth were not only significant consumers and generators of culture, but that they acted as intercultural connectors as they form social connections in school that enable intercultural sharing and learning. Participants at the engagement activities had a variety of suggestions about youth engagement, including contests and competitions (essay writing, art and design contests), engaging youth through the school system to teach them about the history of the town, the facilitation of stronger links between local artists and schools, and the creation of apprenticeships for youth with local artists and creative professionals.

Theme 6: Enhance Collaboration and Networking Among Cultural Groups
The community engagement process suggested that the cultural community in Richmond Hill is fragmented and does not communicate or collaborate as effectively as it could. It was felt that stronger collaboration and resource sharing could help address these needs. There was discussion about the need for a stronger umbrella organization to act as a single voice and networking mechanism for a wide range of cultural groups in the town.

Theme 7: Strengthen and Diversify Support for Culture
There were a number of supporting activities and initiatives put forth by stakeholders that could underlie cultural development in Richmond Hill. Many of the suggestions focused on how the Town could better support cultural development through: partnership development, helping improve linkages and partnerships with schools and important business and community groups, staff support and access to facilities and spaces, increased funding from the Town, support for networking among cultural groups and support for artists in the community.
Moving Culture Forward - Vision, Goals and Recommendations

The research and analysis, cultural mapping and community engagement process provided key directions for moving a culture agenda forward in Richmond Hill including the need for greater Town leadership to effectively integrate culture in planning and decision making, ongoing and meaningful engagement with the community, innovative approaches to marketing and promotion, and creating and supporting neighbourhoods and districts that are culturally vital. From these key directions, a vision for culture was established for Richmond Hill, along with a set of goals and related recommendations that provide direction over a 10 year period with the end state of a vibrant community.

The following **VISION STATEMENT** captures the anticipated outcome of the 10 year horizon for the cultural plan:

**Vision**

"Richmond Hill is admired as a vibrant community in which culture is a part of all facets of the Town's planning and decision-making; where diversity, gender and age are reflected in all aspects of cultural expression; and where our authentic and distinctive identity inspires a creative spirit."

**Goals**

By definition, the goals seek to build on local strengths, mitigate the weaknesses and convey the desired outcomes of the strategic planning process, while the recommendations set out how this is to be accomplished. The Richmond Hill Cultural Plan is underpinned by five high-level goals that anchor and set a context for a wide range of actions and initiatives that speak to the strategic importance of culture to the town.

The **GOALS** that frame the recommendations in the Cultural Plan include:

1. **DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP**
2. **A DYNAMIC CULTURAL SECTOR**
3. **AN INCLUSIVE CULTURAL COMMUNITY**
4. **PLACES AND SPACES FOR CULTURE**
5. **A CELEBRATED STORY**

While the goals are aspirational in nature, the recommendations should be viewed as a starting point based on community input and research at a point in time. New actions will emerge throughout the 10-year lifespan of the Plan and partnerships will change. It will be critical for effective implementation to monitor how these recommendations contribute to the strengthening of cultural planning and development in the community.
addition to monitoring the progress of the Cultural Plan over time, a strong communications effort will be necessary to promote culture and the success of the Cultural Plan moving forward.

“This [Cultural] Plan should not just tell us how many cultures there are but it should elevate all of us into something that is higher and more meaningful.”

Community Member
1 Introduction

Something important – a ‘cultural turn’ is happening to the world’s town and cities. Building on the idea that creativity and culture can be a generator of economic growth, local governments are directing investment toward new cultural industries and districts, including public spaces whose cultural amenities are intended to harmonize different social interests and improve the quality of urban life.

This reaction is in part a response to the changing nature and role of cities. With a shift towards a service and knowledge based economy; creativity, human capital and the capacity for innovation have become the means to measure whether a community is competitive – both regionally and globally. This in turn is leading many communities to rethink the quality of place in their communities, and assess the urban assets that contribute to sustainable economic growth and their ability to attract the workforce talent associated with this new ‘creative’ economy. For this reason the arts – and a community’s broader cultural resources, amenities and facilities – are coming to be seen as a strategic urban asset with an important role to play in this emerging new economy.

But what is culture? Simply put, culture is both the expression and celebration of the values and aspirations of a community. This is done through all manner of human activities that characterize a community and its people and shape its unique sense of place. It includes the sharing of ideas; learning through individual and locally authentic community expression in the fine, visual, literary, media, material and performing arts; built heritage and natural heritage; and the shared experiences of history. To engage in cultural planning therefore, requires knowing how people live, work, and play and relate to their local environment.

For a community such as Richmond Hill, with its mosaic of people from different cultures, its combination of an urban and rural environment and its strong historical roots, the expression of culture and diversity of experience that is found in the community provides an opportunity to reflect and shape an identity for the town.

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1.1 Purpose of the Plan

Cultural Planning is recognized by the Town of Richmond Hill as an essential cornerstone to the development of a vibrant community. The People Plan Richmond Hill consultation process, which has informed both the development of the Town’s Strategic Plan as well as the long term planning considerations of its new Official Plan, was a two-year long discussion about what kind of town residents and businesses wanted. The community's desire to be a place where people can come together to celebrate natural and cultural diversity, where creativity is fostered and ideas are exchanged, and where the arts are appreciated was a strong message that emerged from this dialogue.

With the goal of achieving a more vibrant Richmond Hill, the development of a Cultural Plan is an important part of a larger strategy for creating a new kind of urban community. A Cultural Plan can ensure that the texture, voices and memories of the community are firmly integrated into the Town's physical and recreational planning, as well as its long-term economic objectives. It also provides for a shared vision of the needs, aspirations and priorities related to cultural development and cultural planning in Richmond Hill over a 10 year time horizon.

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- Improving access to information on cultural resources and activities in Richmond Hill for residents, visitors, businesses, and organizations;
- Increasing the stability and sustainability of Richmond Hill's cultural organizations and fostering collaboration across a wide cross-section of cultural groups and activities; and
- Understanding and addressing gaps in services and cultural facilities that reflect both Richmond Hill's geography and its cultural diversity.

By its nature, a Cultural Plan is a living document, reflecting a ‘big picture’ overview of the community's cultural resources, and comprising the challenges, opportunities and strategic direction based on research, and a community dialogue at a particular point in time. In some instances the actions recommended are concrete and specific, while in other cases they may be more tactical and aspirational in nature. The result, however, provides a lasting framework that will embolden Richmond Hill's community leaders to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise.
1.2 Context

Recognizing that it is the residents and businesses of Richmond Hill who will drive creativity and innovation in the community in the future, it is essential that the Town understand how its recent population and economic growth has and will continue to shape its cultural development.

The town’s strategic location in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and location on a 400 series highway has contributed to the significant business investment, attraction of high value employment, and major transit infrastructure that is evident in the community. This in turn has contributed to the town’s economic diversity and a quality of life, which makes the community popular for both residents and visitors. In fact, people from around the world have chosen to make Richmond Hill home evidenced by the growing mix of cultures, languages and faiths.

As with many communities in Canada, immigration is playing an increasingly important role in both population and labour force growth. The 2006 Census demonstrates the importance of the country’s immigrant population as a key driver in Canada’s population growth. In that year, the proportion of Canada’s foreign born population reached its highest level in 75 years, where one in five (19.8%) of the overall population is foreign born.

This cultural shift is being experienced in Richmond Hill. Whereas other communities across the GTA are often characterized by single ethnic communities, Richmond Hill’s cultural transformation now includes large communities of Chinese, East Indian, Iranian and Russian people, all contributing to an impressive mosaic of people, language, and cultural expression. In fact, Richmond Hill’s population of new Canadians has increased to the point where they have become a significant contributor to the growth of the town’s overall population. In 2006, immigrants comprised a larger share of residents in Richmond Hill (51.5%) than in the entire York Region (42.8%).

Richmond Hill’s ability to attract such a diversity of people is reflected in the 2010 Conference Board of Canada’s report “City Magnets II: Benchmarking the Attractiveness of 50 Canadian Cities”. The report ranked Richmond Hill as the 4th most attractive city in Canada for new immigrants.

Richmond Hill is also a young community with approximately 63.4% of its population under the age of 45 years of age. While youthful, residents are well educated, highly skilled and more likely to be employed in a creative occupation than anywhere else in York Region. The nature and character of the local population speaks to the...
challenge, as well as the opportunity to provide the services, amenities and quality of life experience demanded by residents.

With this backdrop, a Cultural Plan for Richmond Hill is intended to establish a vision and a set of strategies and actions that will guide cultural development and cultural planning in the community over the next ten years. The Plan also provides a framework to work collaboratively and cooperatively with business and community partners to advance a collective cultural agenda.

1.3 Process

Arts, Culture and Heritage was one of nine themes that emerged from the People Plan Richmond Hill consultation process. A subsequent themed roundtable session was hosted by the Town providing staff and stakeholders with further opportunity to learn more from the community with respect to fostering an environment for the exchange of innovation, creativity, cultural ideas, heritage and the arts.

From these discussions, the goal of A More Vibrant Richmond Hill emerged reflecting the community's commitment to cultural development and a consensus of what is important for Richmond Hill today and in years to come.

An extensive community engagement exercise has also been undertaken to develop Richmond Hill's Municipal Cultural Plan. The consultation took the form of a community launch event, community soundings, targeted focus groups, stakeholder interviews, a community survey, and meetings with the Mayor and representatives of Council. In all, approximately 500 community residents participated in these engagement activities and provided input to the development of the Plan.

At the launch event for the Cultural Plan about 100 cultural community leaders were asked to define what they valued about a community as culturally rich as Richmond Hill and to draft a set of principles that would assist with the development of the Town’s Cultural Plan. These principles include:

1. Bringing all cultures to the forefront to respect, engage and encourage the expression and inclusion of all the different cultural communities.
2. Striving to break down cultural barriers across sectors, communities, religions, languages, and ages.
3. Celebrating the past and future, preserving Richmond Hill's heritage and promoting Richmond Hill's future by creating opportunities for us to learn from each other, and share our cultural experiences.

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6 Arts, Culture Heritage – Experiencing the creative environment, revitalizing and managing heritage, programming arts and cultural events and activities.
4. Embracing creativity and the arts to create an attractive town that has soul.

These principles are intrinsically linked to the question of what makes Richmond Hill culturally rich and a strong indication of what Richmond Hill residents' value in the implementation of a municipal cultural plan.

The report that follows sets out a plan to build a vibrant Richmond Hill through an action-oriented approach to cultural planning. As part of this process, Section 2 outlines the current scope of cultural planning and cultural mapping in the town. An assessment of the town’s cultural ecology, including an assessment of the current cultural assets is set out in Section 3. Section 4 captures the voice of the community and sets out the needs, values and aspirations expressed by residents and stakeholders that directly translate to strategic underpinnings of the plan. With the context set, the primary recommendations are set out in Section 5. A detailed implementation plan follows in Section 6 that includes the roles and responsibilities for moving forward and metrics for determining the plan’s successful implementation. The report concludes with a discussion of the means to successfully engage the community and stakeholders on an ongoing basis in the implementation of the Cultural Plan in Section 7.

“Arts, culture and heritage are valued in Richmond Hill and are supported with creativity and innovation. We recognize the importance of our built and cultural heritage and strong and diverse arts and culture climate within an inclusive community”.

*Town of Richmond Hill, People Plan Richmond Hill, Arts, Culture, Heritage Roundtable, 2008*
2 Scope of Cultural Planning

2.1 Major Trends and Implications for City Building

The Cultural Plan will complement the directions of the Town’s Strategic Plan, Official Plan and Economic Development Strategy by providing strategic actions that recognize, promote and invest in culture as an intrinsically valuable pillar of economic and social sustainability. In emphasizing the role of cultural infrastructure, institutions and other resources, the Plan makes a strong case that *culture matters* for Richmond Hill if it is to be an attractive, welcoming, and economically prosperous community for years to come.

The following section identifies and expands upon the significant ways in which culture can directly contribute to both city building and community development efforts in Richmond Hill and provides an understanding of the targeted approach that is emerging in defining the scope of cultural planning in Ontario.

Culture + Urban Revitalization

An important consideration in the development of public spaces and the public realm, arts and culture can play a key role in spurring urban revitalization and renewal. Indeed, some of the most successful urban renewal efforts are often led by representatives of the arts and culture community, who see opportunity in underutilized infrastructure and spaces as an affordable, proactive way to bridge culture, community and economy. Culture-led urban revitalization can also lead to the permanent establishment of new cultural infrastructure – such as artist work and performance space – that increases not only the aesthetic value of the community, but also the economic value and accessibility of culture throughout the community.

While Richmond Hill has recognized the intrinsic value of culture in furthering its urban renewal efforts through provisions in the Official Plan and in strategies and actions outlined in the Strategic Plan and the Economic Development Strategy, research has shown that events and cultural performances can help concentrate a critical mass of diverse economic and civic activities into the Downtown. It is clear that concentrating and enhancing cultural activity in key civic spaces in Richmond Hill will raise the town’s profile as a ‘place to be’ for residents and visitors alike, which will also enhance economic activity and vibrancy by increasing the viability of retail shops, restaurants and other businesses.
Culture + Quality of Place

While culture can lead in the revitalization of specific spaces, it is also instrumental to developing a broader quality of place in the community. Although, ‘quality of place’ can mean different things to different groups, the presence of culture must remain central. The Town recognizes that cultivating unique and vibrant spaces in nodes and neighbourhoods is critical for engaging the residents of Richmond Hill in civic life – and for attracting new residents. However, many communities are also recognizing that the development of cultural amenities, experiences and infrastructure better positions them to attract highly mobile talented workers and the innovative businesses that employ them.

In Richmond Hill the notion of developing cultural assets and places for talent attraction can be taken a step further by focusing on policies and strategies that not only support the aesthetic beauty and visual identity of the town, but also those residents and organizations that celebrate cultural difference and strive for cultural inclusion. In the regional, provincial and global communities of which Richmond Hill is a part, cultivating a quality of place premised on diversity and the celebration and promotion of its unique places and cultural experiences can help distinguish the town and set it apart.

Culture + the Creative Economy

Culture is a key foundation of an economic development approach premised on creativity and knowledge, where the ability to innovate, problem-solve and communicate is valued – and rewarded. In communities like Richmond Hill, the recognition of arts as an economic engine – through stronger connections between arts and business communities, and increased public and private sector support of cultural enterprises and innovations – has been repeatedly demonstrated to aid in attracting human capital and investment to the community.

As shown in the Town's Economic Development Strategy and in this Cultural Plan, the economic value of culture ranges from the original design, creation and performance of new content, to the global production and distribution of media and products. In fact, the Town has begun to embrace the notion, supported by leading researchers and organizations like the Conference Board of Canada, that the culture sector contributes real and direct economic benefits to the community.
Culture + Social Capital

Immigration and ethno-cultural diversity is responsible for much of Richmond Hill's growth and unique vibrancy; the town has been named the 2nd most diverse community in Canada. However, this diversity can also bring challenges in integrating newcomers in a positive and constructive way. Home to diverse communities, the Town of Richmond Hill must recognize the vital role that culture has in ensuring that the future of Richmond Hill is built on shared values, cohesion and cooperation. By creating opportunities for interaction and engagement through culture, the town will generate not only economic returns, but social capital – the element of trust and connectivity that builds meaningful relationships and vibrant communities.

Cultural initiatives that collectively celebrate diversity and cultural difference lead to engagement, community-building and bridging of groups and individuals across cultures. In addition, cultural participation – whether passive or active – is premised on personal expression, and thus represents a low-risk avenue for individuals to engage in their community. By improving the quality, volume and accessibility of culture-related events, spaces and facilities, the Town will demonstrate a commitment to the accessibility of civic life, and an embrace of diversity that will cement its position as the Region's creative centre.

Creating cultural places and spaces for repeated interactions and conversations also helps to build networks between cultural workers and individuals from different communities and backgrounds. This is critical for both the production of cultural goods and enterprises, the creation of city-building cultural initiatives, and the development of stronger relationships with the town's history and future. The more people that the Town can involve and engage in its cultural planning efforts, the greater and richer the outcome will be.

Culture + Youth Engagement

Culture can also play a critical role in the development and engagement of the youth population. Engaging in artistic pursuits contributes to a sense of community and belonging, and the development of self-understanding and leadership skills. There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that incorporating arts, culture and other creative endeavours increases academic performance and aptitude in a wide variety of other areas – from physical education to conflict resolution. Arts groups and cultural programming can also play a critical role in integrating marginalized and at-risk young people, particularly new immigrants, into a community. The ability to be creative – and for the Town to promote programs and educational approaches that encourage creativity - allows youth to engage in unique and personal ways with their own learning process, and ultimately enables them to contribute more effectively to the civic, social and economic development of their community.

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7 Conference Board of Canada, City Magnets II: Benchmarking the Attractiveness of 50 Canadian Cities. January 2010
The Town and its cultural leaders need to challenge each other to engage youth in ways that will resonate with them. This effort can and should include greater school-based programming, and better use of new communication channels (such as social media) for outreach and participation. The productive engagement of youth in culture can contribute to build a stronger cultural community over the long term with more people involved in cultural activities and may also facilitate the growth in creative businesses and enterprises.

2.2 Municipal Cultural Planning Framework

In consideration of the fundamental importance of culture to the future economic and social growth and prosperity of Richmond Hill it becomes clear how, by definition, cultural planning must be strategic, integrated, responsive and comprehensive in scope. As a result, cultural planning in municipalities must not only account for 'traditional' cultural resources and programming, but must also inform – as discussed above – the creation of economic development and tourism strategies, cultural industry development, and urban and streetscape design and issues, as well as local identity, autonomy and a sense of place\(^8\). In recognition of the need to better understand and coordinate cultural resources, a number of communities in Ontario – and indeed, around the world – have begun to undertake cultural planning efforts.

Despite the growing recognition of the value and importance of culture, the concept of 'cultural planning' is relatively new, and as a result there is a limitation of 'best practice' approaches to undertaking cultural planning in a systematic and productive fashion. In response to this a Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP) framework has been developed by the Province of Ontario, which establishes a consistent set of definitions and assumptions to guide municipalities in this work. This approach focuses not only on the process of developing a cultural plan for a municipality, but also the related ongoing effort of integrating culture across all facets of municipal planning and decision-making.

These defining features of MCP – which have in turn guided the development of the Richmond Hill Cultural Plan – include:

- **Cultural resources:** MCP embraces a broad definition of cultural resources that includes creative cultural industries, cultural spaces and facilities, natural and cultural heritage, festivals and events, and community cultural organizations.

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\(^8\) Greg Baeker, *Rediscovering the Wealth of Places*, Municipal Knowledge Series, 2010
- **Cultural mapping**: MCP begins with cultural mapping, a systematic approach to identifying and recording a community's tangible and intangible cultural resources.

- **Adopting a 'cultural lens'**: MCP involves establishing processes to integrate culture as a consideration across all facets of municipal planning and decision-making.

- **Cross-sectoral strategies**: MCP requires new partnerships or shared governance mechanisms (such as Cultural Roundtables) to support ongoing collaboration between the municipality and its community and business partners.

- **Networks and engagement**: MCP involves strengthening networks across the cultural sector and comprehensive and ongoing strategies to support community engagement.

The presence of this MCP framework and its adoption in communities across Ontario, while a valuable and important guide, does not mean that one specific approach to cultural planning will be appropriate for all communities. Given the relatively new state of cultural planning and the limited number of communities that have adopted and successfully implemented cultural plans, the Town of Richmond Hill has a unique opportunity to shape a new model for success in its cultural planning and implementation efforts.

### 2.2.1 Cultural Mapping

As described in the MCP framework, cultural mapping is a foundational undertaking in a cultural planning exercise. It is defined as:

- A systematic approach to identifying, recording and classifying a community's cultural resources. It involves a process of collecting, analyzing and synthesizing information in order to describe and visualize the cultural resources in terms of issues such as links to other civic resources (e.g., transportation, green infrastructure, and public gathering spaces), patterns of usage, and the unique character and identity of a given community.

The ability to enumerate and geographically represent a community's cultural assets and resources is useful both from a planning perspective, in terms of identifying gaps, benchmarks, strategies and linkages for its cultural resources, as well as from a marketing and business development perspective in its ability to more effectively communicate the cultural assets within the community to prospective residents and investors.

The value of this process is such that Municipal Cultural Planning Incorporated, with the support of the Government of Ontario, recently released a Cultural Resource Mapping Guide for municipalities that establishes guidelines for building partnerships, identifying resources, and maintaining databases associated with cultural mapping.
The types of assets that a cultural mapping process identifies fall into two distinct categories:

- **Tangible Cultural Assets**: physical (or tangible) cultural resources.
- **Intangible Cultural Assets**: the stories and traditions that contribute to defining a community’s unique identity and sense of place.\(^9\)

A Cultural Resource Framework (CRF), see Figure 1, has been established to identify and categorize the range of cultural assets in a community. Not every community will have all of these assets, and some communities like Richmond Hill may find that their cultural vibrancy stems from other resources – such as schools, places of worship, or restaurants – not captured by this Framework. However, the CRF provides a useful and extensive basis from which to commence this effort and has been adapted as part of the asset mapping exercise that informs the creation of the Richmond Hill Cultural Plan.

FIGURE 1: CULTURAL RESOURCES FRAMEWORK

- Creative Cultural Industries
- Community Cultural Organizations
- Festival & Events
- Spaces & Facilities
- Natural Heritage
- Intangible Assets

Creative Cultural Occupations
Community Cultural Organizations
Festival & Events
Spaces & Facilities
Natural Heritage
Intangible Assets

Cultural Resources
3 Current State

A range of factors will shape and determine a community's cultural ecology: its unique histories and patterns of development; geography, population size and demographic characteristics; economic conditions and fiscal realities, among others. Moreover, a community's vision of culture and cultural development will evolve over time. For this reason, no two municipalities are ever the same in terms of the number and mix of cultural resources, the range of activities or programming or level of public and private sector investment.

3.1 Richmond Hill's Cultural Ecology

Richmond Hill's unique cultural ecology is defined by its specific mix of non-profit arts and heritage groups and activities, cultural businesses and creative industries, cultural spaces and facilities, and natural and cultural heritage resources. Drawing on the findings from Richmond Hill's Cultural Mapping Project and the Province's Cultural Resources Framework, as discussed earlier in the report, the Town's cultural resources can be reviewed insofar as the opportunity to deliver on a vision of a vibrant community.

While an inventory of assets is fundamental to the development of a Cultural Plan, there is also a need for a deeper understanding of the broader community context that influences cultural planning and development in Richmond Hill. Such understanding can assist in moving forward with a cultural agenda that is more integrated and sustainable over the longer term.

An Integrated Policy Framework that Embraces Culture

Given the growth and complexity of challenges facing Canadian communities, one framework gaining increased acceptance is the four pillar approach to sustainability, which recognizes economic prosperity, social equity, environmental responsibility and cultural vitality. To this end, an integrated policy framework underpins the development of the Richmond Hill Cultural Plan. The Richmond Hill Strategic Plan, Official Plan and Economic Development Strategy all identify culture as a strategic priority and set out strategies, actions and policies that will enhance cultural development in Richmond Hill in the years to come.

The Strategic Plan, under Goal 3: A Vibrant Community sets out three outcomes for the Town, each with accompanying strategies: Respecting the past; A sense of identity and place; and Looking to the future.

The Official Plan focuses on building a complete community that is integrated, vibrant and diverse providing a mix of land uses and a balance of housing, employment, community services, parks and open spaces. A complete community means that growth is directed to built-up areas with existing infrastructure and services in a network of
centres and corridors. Place-making also has a significant role through the creation of a sense of place and enhancing the local identity of urban spaces through initiatives such as public art.

The Economic Development Strategy positions Richmond Hill as a “creative centre” in York Region. Some of the key elements of the strategy that further inform the Cultural Plan include developing the Downtown into a creative hub for the community, and more effectively linking the arts and culture sector to economic opportunities.

While the Strategic Plan, Official Plan and Economic Development Strategy represent a sustainable cultural planning framework on which to build a strategy for culture in the Town of Richmond Hill, it is essential to understand the depth of underlying assets and cultural resources that contribute to making Richmond Hill culturally vibrant. Realizing the opportunities presented by integrated policy frameworks will require new mechanisms and efforts to strengthen cross-departmental understanding and collaboration.

**A Commitment to Place-Making**

In Richmond Hill, the new Official Plan draws attention to place-making as one of its core guiding principles and establishes place-making as a key tool in the conservation of cultural heritage resources, contributing to the Town’s identity, economic potential and quality of life. The Plan also advances the use of design competitions for public projects, as well as the development of a Public Art Master Plan.

During the 2009 Strategic Plan process and more recently during the community engagement that supported the development of the Cultural Plan, residents identified the importance of developing the Civic Precinct lands with a mind to how the community could use this area in the future. While there is no doubt that the Civic Precinct Project has the potential to contribute to the development of a more vibrant Richmond Hill the town must also look for opportunities to better integrate the communities of Oak Ridges and Gormley into the cultural fabric of the town.

Both communities are products of the Town’s diverse history, environment and people. These centres, like the Civic Precinct lands, are envisioned as focal points for place-making and for creating well designed places that have meaning to people, provide enduring patterns of community use and establish memorable physical qualities that instil community pride.10

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10 Richmond Hill Official Plan. Section 3: Building A New Kind of Urban (pg. 3-64)
A Growing and Shifting Population

While growth of the community is anticipated, the population will age and over time to be dominated by residents over 65 years of age. The need to provide services, programs and cultural amenities that reflect the diversity and aging of the town’s population will require careful consideration in the future. Facilities such as the McConaghy Seniors’ Centre are critical pieces of cultural infrastructure, providing programs and services to the senior population.

The town is also a young community, with more than 60 percent (63.4%) of the local population under the age of 45. A further 27 percent of the population is under the age of 20 – higher than either the Region or the Province. Building a vibrant community with strong cultural amenities can both help retain the town’s youth and help keep cultural spending in Richmond Hill. With such a young population, it can be assumed that the town’s residents are also more likely to be at forefront of culture and technology and will expect to be engaged in meaningful ways. This is particularly true of the town’s youth. The Town has engaged youth through events such as the Hollywood in the Hill Youth Film Fest, which challenged youth to create a short film about why Richmond Hill is a great place to live through themes such as honouring the past, celebrating the present, or envisioning the future. This event is a critical example of the Town’s effort to build social capital amongst youth and encourage relationships between them and the creative industries in Richmond Hill.

An Educated, Skilled and Affluent Community

Richmond Hill is also characterized by an educated community, with almost half (49.7%) of the town’s population being university educated, higher than nearby municipalities such as Markham or Vaughan and the Province of Ontario as a whole. Higher than average levels of education and a high percentage of skilled workers has contributed to attracting knowledge-based businesses to the town with much of the labour force concentrated in the professional, scientific and technical services sector and the finance and insurance sector. These findings also point to a high proportion of creative class workers in the community.

Richmond Hill is also an affluent community with an average private household income that is higher than the provincial average. Higher incomes and levels of education relate directly to levels of participation in cultural activity and consumption of cultural products and activities. Providing a high quality of place through a mix of natural heritage, cultural places and spaces and events can enhance Richmond Hill’s ability to attract and retain a creative class and build an inclusive, vibrant community.

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Diversity Provides a Strong Competitive Advantage

Cultural diversity is a defining characteristic of Richmond Hill and one of its greatest strengths. Today, more than a quarter (27.5%) of migration to Richmond Hill is through international immigration and almost half (45.7%) of Richmond Hill’s population is a visible minority\textsuperscript{13}. Additionally residents with Chinese, East Indian, Iranian and Russian origins are increasingly contributing to the larger share of the population\textsuperscript{14}. Residents of Chinese origin represent the largest visible minority group in Richmond Hill. This cultural mix of residents demonstrates a higher proportion of non-native speakers of English than in York Region, Toronto and Ontario (with the exception of Markham). Other predominant languages include Persian (Farsi), Russian, Italian and Korean – which contributes to the significant mosaic of cultural expression in the town.

These residents carry with them stories and traditions from their countries of origin that enrich the town's cultural life. Activities such as the Mayor's Cultural Festivals, and celebrating Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year, Nowruz, among others has contributed to an inclusive and welcoming environment for the celebration of culture. Within the community itself, places of worship, such as the Vishnu Mandir and the Richmond Hill Christian Community Church, provide spaces and programming opportunities for culture. Diversity is one of Richmond Hill's strongest competitive advantages – leveraging the skills, connections and cultural richness of the town’s diverse communities can differentiate Richmond Hill from other communities in the Greater Toronto Area in its efforts to attract residents, visitors and business. The Cultural Plan provides a significant opportunity to build on and better connect all of Richmond Hill's diverse communities through culture.

A Growing Cultural and Creative Economy

Creative cultural occupations represent work where cultural expression and aesthetic value are the driving elements of work produced. By extension, creative cultural industries are those in which cultural expression and aesthetic value drive the output, in terms of products or services, which in turn generate wealth\textsuperscript{15}. In Richmond Hill, the top creative cultural occupations are comprised of graphic designers and illustrators, representing approximately 12% of all culture occupations in the town with many of these jobs concentrated in graphic design services, the film and video industries, and in computer systems design\textsuperscript{16}. The growing level of talent and investment present in the community is also illustrated by the significant number of entrepreneurs and small businesses in the community.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid
\textsuperscript{15} A full analysis of the creative cultural labour force in Richmond Hill can be found in Appendix E.
Richmond Hill's creative cultural industries are primarily concentrated in design, culture support services\textsuperscript{17}, advertising, printing and motion pictures and video industries. While much of the local industry can described as small business operations, Richmond Hill is also home to large global companies such as Open Text, Fairchild Media and Compugen. Supporting the creative industries in Richmond Hill through business development, training, networking services, etc., will further strengthen the creative cultural industries helping to grow small businesses into global players.

A Challenging Environment for the Non-Profit Cultural Sector

A full understanding of the cultural ecology in Richmond Hill is incomplete without recognition of the town’s vibrant not-for-profit cultural sector, which comprises both cultural facilities and organizations. Non-profit cultural facilities in Richmond Hill include such assets as the Curtain Club Theatre and the Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization. There is also expanding range of non-profit organizations that span the performing arts, visual arts and crafts, literary arts, community festivals and local heritage. These groups range from small amateur or community-based groups to semi-professional or professional cultural organizations. Less well known are the non-profit groups that offer cultural programs and activities to specific diverse communities.

An important consideration for all these groups however, is the challenging environment in which they operate. As with other communities, the non-profit cultural sector in Richmond Hill faces a wide range of challenges associated with limited human and financial resources, skill gaps in volunteer and board management, and the need for enhanced revenue generation through fundraising and audience development. The non-profit sector also suffers from a tradition of fragmentation and discipline-based ‘silos’ that inhibit collaboration, networking and resource sharing. In developing a Cultural Plan for the town, attention must be given to addressing these challenges to ensure a strong and sustainable non-profit cultural sector in Richmond Hill.

A Strong Base of Municipal Cultural Facilities and Programs

Town owned and operated cultural facilities are among the community’s most important cultural resources and infrastructure. These include the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, the Town’s public libraries, the Richmond Hill Heritage Centre, the Boynton House, among others. In addition, the Town offers a wide array of cultural programs that span all ages (pre-school, children’s programs, youth programs, family programs, adult programs and seniors) through its Recreation and Cultural Services Division. These programs address a wide

\textsuperscript{17} Culture Support Services is a category defined by Statistics Canada's Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics and includes: Fine art schools, grant-making and giving services, social advocacy organizations, business associations, professional organizations and agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers and other public figures—all vital industry categories to supporting the creation and production of culture.
range of artistic and cultural disciplines such as visual arts, crafts, music, theatre, and dance and reflect a range of cultural traditions, including Indian inspired dancing, hip hop, Latin and international folk dancing. More contemporary forms of creative expressions such as filmmaking are also available.

These programs and services are further complemented by programming delivered through Town-owned or operated facilities including the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, the Town's public libraries, the Richmond Hill Heritage Centre, the Boynton House, among others. The wide range of festivals and events organized by the Town further enrich the range of programs and services available.

Less known are the wide range of cultural programs offered by organizations in diverse communities. If better known, or perhaps better promoted, many of these programs would undoubtedly be of interest to residents. With the array and diversity of programming in the town, a more integrated inventory of cultural programs and services is required, combined with the strategies to communicate the range and availability of programming across the community.

Funding for Culture

The Mayor's Endowment Fund for the Arts was established in 2009 to fund arts activities that take place within the Town of Richmond Hill or serve to enhance activities undertaken by individuals or arts organizations from within Richmond Hill, which promote the community. The Fund supports a wide range of arts disciplines and includes costs related to artist performance fees, commissioning of new works, venue rental, production costs, touring costs, marketing and marketing consultant fees, and material costs (for visual arts). Currently, projects receiving funding must be undertaken within twelve months. Under the Endowment Fund, funding is not available for the following: fundraising expenses or general organization administration costs, grants to cover operating deficits, contributions to existing or new endowment funds, or costs related to conventions or travel. The intention is that once the Fund grows, multi-year funding could be available for projects related to: board/staff organizational development, staff costs related to a specific project, new work commissions and development, and projects that will run for more than one year. Currently, the Mayor's Cultural Events generate revenues for the Mayor's Endowment Fund. Total grants distributed cannot exceed 35% of the total endowment fund. In the first two years of the program, approximately $10,000 per year (or $20,000) was distributed (or approximately $.06 per capita per annum).
While a comparison of per capita cultural funding in other communities could inform a desired level of funding, it is also problematic. The 2009 Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) Report\textsuperscript{18} does provide some comparative data but participation in OMBI is voluntary resulting in a very small sample of municipalities. Municipalities also use different funding models, which further complicates a comparison. For example, some municipalities support essential local cultural institutions (such as local museums or performing arts centres) through external grants programs resulting in very high per capita funding levels. Other communities, such as Richmond Hill fund many of these same core facilities (such as the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts) as direct municipal agencies resulting in a much lower level of per capita funding. Putting aside the question of challenges associated with comparative spending, the move of other municipalities in York Region and Ontario to increase investments in culture in recognition of its role in attracting people and investment, suggests that the Town should consider reviewing the cultural funding by benchmarking against like-size municipalities in Ontario.

3.2 Mapping Richmond Hill’s Cultural Assets

Building a stronger base of information on the cultural assets in Richmond Hill was a priority identified during the Strategic Plan process. The Richmond Hill Cultural Mapping Project (CMP) completed in the spring of 2010, is a foundational piece in understanding the current cultural landscape in Richmond Hill, and provides the Cultural Plan with valuable baseline information on the Town's current cultural resources.

To this end, the Cultural Mapping Project had five goals:

1. Create an accurate inventory of cultural assets in Richmond Hill,
2. Capture that information through a mapping process involving the Town’s Geographic Information Systems (GIS) systems and capabilities,
3. Create maps to support the growth and development of culture within Richmond Hill,
4. Support the economic development of Richmond Hill,
5. Recognize and identify gaps in cultural resources.

In developing the asset inventory, the Town has relied on information drawn from a variety of public sources including Statistics Canada and local Yellow Pages. This information was further enhanced by contacting individuals and agencies in Richmond Hill with additional information to contribute to the mapping project. Having

\textsuperscript{18} http://www.ombi.ca/docs/db2file.asp?fileid=216
gathered all available information, a database of cultural resources was created and subsequently mapped using the Town’s GIS system. This process produced a series of maps that illustrate the spatial distribution of the various types of cultural assets across the town, providing valuable insights into patterns of concentrations and gaps across the community.

3.2.1 Findings from Cultural Mapping Project

It should be noted that the data categories used in the Cultural Mapping Project, while based on the Cultural Resource Framework (CRF) described in Section 2.2 differs in several significant ways. The first was the splitting of the CRF Creative Cultural Industries category into three separate categories - cultural businesses, creative industries and non-profit organizations.

The second significant difference between the CRF and the categories used in the Cultural Mapping Project was the fact that the Town’s mapping included a broader range of assets in two categories:

- **Non-profit Cultural Organizations** – included Religious Organizations and Recreation Groups
- **Cultural Facilities** – included Aquatic Centers, Ice Rinks, and Religious Centers (and places of worship)

Figure 2 provides a summary listing of Richmond Hill's cultural resources resulting from the Cultural Mapping Project and contrasts this to the assets identified using the CRF. For the purposes of this report, the assessment that follows has focused on the results derived from the Province’s Cultural Resources Framework.

A review of the findings produced by the Cultural Mapping Project identifies a range of issues and opportunities connected with each cultural resource category.
3.2.1.1 Cultural Businesses & Creative Industries

The cultural mapping results identified 249 cultural businesses (Figure 2) including art galleries, dance schools and companies, photography studios, music schools and music stores etc. In addition, 265 creative industries (Figure 4) were also mapped including film and video operations, graphic designers, advertising, printing and publishing. Taken together these two categories represent almost half (42%) of all identified cultural resources in the Town. While the cultural businesses and creative industries comprise of a range of operations from small business enterprises with relatively few employees to much larger companies such as the Liberal Newspaper, which employs more than 500 people, the results of the Cultural Mapping Project reinforce the presence of a strong small business community.

The mapping results also suggest that creative industries are concentrated in two areas of town. The first is along the Yonge Street Corridor where there are significant transportation linkages and commercial activity. The second node is the Beaver Creek Business Park. In terms of cultural businesses, the pattern of concentration is focused
on the Yonge Street corridor in proximity to Richmond Hill Centre and the downtown, the Highway 7 corridor in proximity to Beaver Creek Business Park and to a lesser extent Oak Ridges.

The benefit of mapping these types of resources is that it enables an understanding of whether business operations overlap with the town’s business improvement area, business parks and other employment or commercial areas. It can also inform discussions on opportunities to foster collaboration with or between local businesses and where additional services and support may be required.

In promoting the concentration of cultural businesses and creative industries consideration should be given to the broad spectrum of successful companies and businesses that operate in Richmond Hill. Two companies that illustrate the scope and range of local operations include:

- **Mythic Productions** – a small film production company located in Richmond Hill that specializes in pre-production, production and post-production of short or features films, documentaries and television production. A remarkable feature of this company is the effort made to source all actors, designers, equipment and necessary technology locally in Richmond Hill – trying to keep jobs and wealth in the town. Mythic Productions is also involved in youth activities such as judging the Hollywood on the Hill – the first annual Youth Film Festival.

- **Fairchild Media** – The Fairchild Group owns and operates the national television network: Fairchild TV and Talentvision, providing over 300 hours per week of program, mainly in Cantonese and Mandarin. Fairchild broadcasts through cable and satellite across Canada and part of the U.S. Under the leadership of Thomas Fung, Chairman and founder the Fairchild Group has, over the past 25 years, grown into a successful business empire with an investment portfolio of over US$350 million. Its involvement in the community touches the heart and soul of many, in Canada, irrespective of their ethnic background. Fairchild does television broadcasting from the Richmond Hill location. This location is convenient for customers and staff as the transportation connections makes the location very accessible.
FIGURE 4: CULTURAL BUSINESSES MAP
FIGURE 5: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES MAP
3.2.1.2 Non-profit Cultural Organizations

The mapping results identified 64 not-for-profit organizations (Figure 5) in Richmond Hill including two categories of not-for-profit groups (Religious Organizations and Recreational Groups) that fall outside of the Cultural Resources Framework described in section 2.2. When these two categories are excluded from the total, 28 non-profit cultural organizations remain from small community-based groups such as the Richmond Hill Potters Guild and Richmond Hill Historical Society to more established groups such as Arts Richmond Hill, the Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra, among others. As the mapping suggests many of the not-for-profit organizations are currently concentrated south of Elgin Mills and west of Yonge Street. As the northern areas of the community develop further, additional community based resources are likely to emerge in these regions as well.

As cultural mapping and cultural planning moves forward in Richmond Hill, there is a strong argument to be made for considering the inclusion of select religious organizations and places of worship as cultural resources despite them not being identified by the CRF. For many diverse communities these organizations and facilities are both essential expressions of cultural identity and centres of cultural programs and activities. While perspective and attitudes within these communities will inevitably vary, some may well welcome attendance and participation in these cultural programs from residents outside those diverse communities.

To effectively leverage the breadth of community based not-for-profit organizations in the town, it will be essential that the broader community be made more aware of the range of programming and activities that are available from both small neighbourhood based organizations as well as the larger organizations. This spectrum of opportunity is illustrated by:

- **Spinners and Weavers Guild** – The Spinners and Weavers Guild is an organization unique to York Region. Its origins lie in the newly formed Richmond Hill Historical Society urging the Town in 1973 to preserve the Roland Burr House and the surrounding property. Over several years, Burr House became the official home of the Richmond Hill Spinners and Weavers Guild and the Richmond Hill Potters Guild. In 1978, in an effort to provide more meeting and class space, another historical building now known as the Guild Inn was raised from its original location to sit beside Burr House in Woods Park. In 1985, the two guilds formed a partnership with the Historical Society to take over the Burr House converting it to the Burr House Art and Craft Gallery and Tea Room run on a completely volunteer basis by members of the two guilds.

- **Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra** – The Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra is comprised of professional, amateur, and talented university and high school student musicians representing cultures from across the globe. The Orchestra's core purpose is to enrich the lives and the cultural climate of the community.
through the presentation of concerts and educational programs, liaise and collaborate with other arts and community groups and organizations, and provide diverse performing opportunities for musicians from the region. The Orchestra expands traditional models of presentation in ways that concert-goers value. Interactive concerts utilize the magic of theatre, talented guest artists, multimedia, and a mélange of music that finds its way into the hearts of everyone. The production of popular, high profile concerts, at the highest level, with musical and visual appeal, enables the orchestra to resonate with the public, enabling the group to make a genuine impact on, and fortify ties to the community.

“Culture is the most important part of my life. Without it I would be miserable.”

Community Member
3.2.1.3 Cultural Facilities

Figure 6 illustrates the full range of cultural facilities identified in the Cultural Mapping Project including those assets excluded by the CRF (i.e., Community Centres, Aquatic Centres, Ice Rinks, and Religious Centres). It also distinguishes between Town owned and independently owned and operated facilities. The mapping suggests that cultural facilities in the broadest sense are relatively well dispersed throughout the town's neighbourhoods although there are considerably more facilities south of Elgin Mills Road and west of Bayview Avenue. A more detailed review of facilities and spaces would permit a better understanding of the use of these facilities and whether additional facilities are in demand in select neighbourhoods.

However, it is important to note that when consideration is given to cultural facilities as defined by the CRF, Richmond Hill’s cultural facilities include the following:

Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts
Located in the heart of the historic downtown, the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts (RHCPA) is a 4,000 square metre, 631 seat, state of the art cultural facility that offers a full season of professional entertainment celebrating the many cultures of York Region. The Centre is also home to Richmond Hill’s diverse arts community, creating a major venue in the downtown core to bring Canadian and International performers to the area.

Richmond Hill Heritage Centre
Set in picturesque Amos Wright Park, the Richmond Hill Heritage Centre is an 1840’s Regency style cottage, fully restored to reflect this historical period. The house was the original home of Amos Wright, the first Reeve of Markham Township. The Richmond Hill Heritage Centre has been a hub of heritage programming in the community for the last 10 years.

Eyer House
In honour and recognition of its former occupants, the Eyer and Wideman families, the historically designated house is named the Eyer Wideman House. Construction of the house dates back to 1828 and is attributed to David Eyer (1796-1871). The house today is considered one of the Town’s earliest surviving examples of a Pennsylvania-German Mennonite dwelling. The Eyer Wideman House was designated by the Town under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act in February 1994 for its significant cultural heritage value.

This facility has been officially restored for primary use by the youth of Richmond Hill! Through the Recreation & Culture Division of the Community Services Department, youth have a safe place to hang out with their peers and
friends, and participate in activities and programs. It includes both a renovated heritage house (the Eyer Wideman House) and a surrounding 1.75 acre park complete with an outdoor high and low ropes challenge course, a climbing wall and more.

George Forster House and Barns (at Phyllis Rawlinson Park)
At the Phyllis Rawlinson Park there are significant historical structures on the site that include the original farmhouse and barns, known as the George Forster Heritage House. Completely restored to enhance the Town's Outdoor Education Programs, they are York Region's oldest designated buildings and are surrounded by picturesque fields and forest.

Burr House and Guild Hall
Owned by the Town of Richmond Hill, the Burr House and Guild Hall is home to the Burr House Spinners and Weavers. It includes an Art and craft gallery along with a tea room. The gallery presents fine arts and crafts by local artists and is run by volunteers.

Mill Pond Gallery
Located across from the Mill Pond, the Mill Pond Gallery is home to the Richmond Hill Group of Artists. Regular art shows and workshops are hosted by the members of the Richmond Hill Group of Artists at this site.

Robert Holland Interpretive Centre (at Phyllis Rawlinson Park)
The historic “Shaw House” was donated to the Town in 1997 primarily through the efforts of Mr. Robert Holland, a resident of Richmond Hill and a member of the Rouge Valley Foundation. The house, estimated to have been built between 1801 and 1834, has been restored and relocated as a focal point within Phyllis Rawlinson Park, as the Robert Holland Interpretive Centre. The Interpretive Centre now acts as homebase for a new generation of environmentally conscious youngsters who actively explore the natural world as they get involved in environmental activities and outdoor education programs.

Boynton House
The Boynton House dates from circa 1875 and is recognized as a historic site designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. It is a good example of a classic Ontario farmhouse and stands on its original site in the midst of the Richmond Green Park. Currently, the house has been transformed into an art exhibition space. All four rooms on the main floor have been equipped with an art hanging system and new track lighting has been installed.
Richmond Hill Libraries

The Richmond Hill Public Library has served the community for more than 150 years. The Libraries serve a population of approximately 165,000 Richmond Hill residents through its four branches: Central Library, Oak Ridges Moraine Library, Richmond Green Library and Richvale Library.

Each year, over 1.5 million books are borrowed and educational related programs are attended by more than 17,000 people, with the majority being children. On-line services are the fastest growing area of library service with over 350,000 on-line sessions on e-journals, e-books, other databases, the Internet, and the local history/genealogy databases.

In addition to the Town-owned facilities, there are also a number of *independently run cultural facilities* in the community including:

**Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization**

The Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization seeks to preserve and present the dynamic aspects of the ancient civilization of Hinduism, chronicling its birth, evolution and integration into many world cultures. Regardless of their cultural heritage, all visitors will leave with awareness and an appreciation for the splendour of one of world's oldest, civilizations.

**The Curtain Club Theatre**

The Curtain Club Theatre located at 400 Newkirk Road in Richmond Hill is one of the oldest community theatres in Ontario founded in 1954. The volunteer community theatre group is made up of over 150 members, who contribute towards the production of 5 plays during each season. The respect with which the Theatre is held in Ontario is reflected in it playing host to the 2011 Theatre Ontario Festival in May 2011. Another notable achievement is the Theatre first aired the Canadian Air Farce on CBC Radio on December 9th, 1973 from the Curtain Club and it continued there for 3 years.
3.2.1.4 Festivals and Events

A further strength that emerged from the Cultural Mapping Project was the rich array and diversity of festivals and events in the town. A total of 146 events broadly categorized to include arts events, community events, festivals and cultural events have been identified. These range from small community events such as Robbie Burn's Night at St. Matthew's Church and the Richmond Hill United Church Spring Choir Concert to individual performances at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, to recurring arts events such as the Richmond Hill Group of Artists Annual Juried Exhibition and Sale, to larger events such as the Mayor's Cultural Events, Doors Open, Mill Pond Splash, the Oak Ridges Fair, Tastes of the Hill, Studio Tour and Arts Sale, among many others.

Figure 7 illustrates the distribution of these assets across the Town, the largest percentage of which exists along the Yonge Street corridor in proximity to the downtown and larger cultural institutions.

Many of these events serve important needs at a neighbourhood level, while others have appeal that extends beyond Richmond Hill with the potential of becoming significant tourism opportunities for the town. For cultural tourism opportunities to be realized a careful analysis of existing and potential audiences are needed. Festivals and Events Strategies developed in other cities (e.g. Burlington) have undertaken research to gain a better understanding of these issues and to help differentiate events with local community appeal from those with wider tourism potential. Better information on Richmond Hill's festivals and events can be linked to stronger marketing and promotion of cultural resources through tools such as online databases or interactive cultural maps.

Several festival and events illustrate the range of potential to develop greater tourism opportunities in the community and raise the profile of the town as culturally vibrant. These include:

- **Tastes of the Hill** – This annual community event features a multicultural food fair, with over 50-restaurant booths and entertainment. During the community engagement process for the Cultural Plan, a range of suggestions were heard about how the current event could be strengthened and expanded through better marketing and promotion and by drawing on a wider cross-section of cultures and experiences. Given Richmond Hill's diversity, and the common denominator of food that connects all cultures, this event has significant potential for the Town's future cultural development.

- **Heritage Village Festival and Doors Open** - Held the second Saturday in June, this is a street festival during which Yonge Street is closed between Major MacKenzie Drive & Crosby. The event features arts and crafts vendors, performers, food vendors and live entertainment. Beginning in 2009, Doors Open has operated on the same day as the Heritage Village Day with cross-marketing of both events. To date the events have drawn...
4,000-5,000 visitors each year. The combining of these two events present significant opportunities and potential to grow these important community events.

- **Reel Thing Film Festival** - The Town has partnered with Film Circuit, a division of the Toronto International Film Festival Group (TIFFG) to offer a unique cinematography experience for the residents of Richmond Hill at the Richmond Centre for the Performing Arts. These monthly screenings promote Canadian artists and films, as well as international films, and films showcased at the Toronto International Film Festival. Film Circuit is a grassroots initiative that promotes and facilitates screenings of Canadian and International independent films in 175 communities across Canada and has a presence in 35 countries around the world. These screenings generate significant economic benefits for both the Canadian film industry and the local community.

“Harmony comes from understanding and appreciating each other’s culture.”

*Community Member*
FIGURE 8: FESTIVALS AND EVENTS MAP
3.2.1.5 Cultural Heritage

Richmond Hill's early history was closely linked with the development of Yonge Street which led to the settlement of the village in the early 1800s, as commercial activity along Yonge Street emerged. The map of Cultural Heritage properties found in Figure 8 shows a strong cluster of heritage buildings along the Yonge Street in the downtown and to a lesser extent in Oak Ridges and Gormley. There are also a considerable number of properties along Bayview Avenue and Leslie Street that also reflecting the historic pattern of development in community

In total, the Cultural Mapping Project identified 508 registered and listed heritage properties, of which 63 are designated properties. A review of the Town of Richmond Hill's Inventory of Buildings of Historical and Architectural Significance reveals a rich array of properties with a select number that date as far back as the 1830s (e.g., the Joseph Eyer House at 32 Frank Endean Road dates from 1835) and a significant numbers of properties from the 19th century. Many more properties date from the early part of the 20th century prior to 1930 including a range of domestic residences, commercial establishments, places of worship, and a number of individual heritage features such as street fixtures and lamp posts.

A major achievement for the Town of Richmond Hill in the protection of its cultural heritage is the establishment of the Gormley Heritage Conservation District. While Richmond Hill has evolved, grown and changed, the heritage buildings and sites in Richmond Hill and its former communities are a reminder of the town's history and origins. These buildings and sites also carry with them stories of the past that go well beyond Richmond Hill to an era of settlement that is a hallmark of early Canadian history. As in any community with a large number of cultural heritage resources, the Town will be challenged to ensure that these assets are integrated with the urban fabric of the community.

Examples of how cultural heritage resources have contributed to the vibrancy of the community include:

- **Boynton Farm House** – now a facility dedicated to exhibition space for the visual arts, the original Boynton House dates from circa 1875 and is recognized as a historic site designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. It is a good example of a classic Ontario farmhouse, with a steep centre gable decorated with curvilinear bargeboards (gingerbread trim) and a gothic window with interlacing tracery. The exterior of the patterned brick house is slightly altered since T.F. Boynton's time, and includes an Edwardian Classic Style veranda added by his son, Thomas Edward in the early 1900s. The Boynton farmhouse stands on its original site in the midst of the Richmond Green Park, and is a reminder of the site's early history.

- **Richmond Hill Central Library** – One of the challenges in all communities is to evolve the definition of what constitute significant built heritage resources in the community. By any standard, the Central Library is a
significant cultural heritage building. With over 60,000 square feet of public space the building was designed by A.J. Diamond, Donald Schmitt and Company and opened in 1993. The building subsequently won the Governor General's Award for Architecture (1994), the Portland Cement Association Concrete Building Award (1994), and the Financial Post Design Effectiveness Award for Architectural Design (1995).

“Richmond Hill should grow as a good artistic community where you can survive as an artist.”

Community Member
FIGURE 9: CULTURAL HERITAGE MAP
3.2.1.6 Natural Heritage

To this point, the discussion of cultural assets has focused on the Town's built heritage, programs, services, and events in the community. Natural heritage however, is also a primary consideration for cultural planning, particularly as it relates to the idea of place-making.

Richmond Hill is home to a significant number of natural heritage properties (Figure 9) that include the Oak Ridges Moraine, Mill Pond Park, Phyllis Rawlinson Park, and Newberry Park among others. Natural heritage resources are significant assets that represent key quality of life features valued by residents and contribute in a hugely significant way to the 'new kind of urban' vision articulated in the Official Plan with its mix of urban and natural spaces. To date the mapping of natural heritage properties has not included the mapping of all parks (acknowledged as key cultural resources in the CRF). The Richmond Hill Official Plan identifies parks as key focal points within neighbourhoods, centres and corridors or natural employment zones and which may provide settings for public art and the integration of cultural heritage resources appropriate to the context of the area.¹⁹

The results of the Town's Cultural Mapping Project represent only the first step toward building a stronger base of information on local natural heritage properties, which are among the Town's most significant, and defining assets. More consideration should be given to opportunities to provide/create linkages between the urban areas and more rural parts of the community. This could include enhanced public access and trail networks.

In promoting the natural heritage elements of the community a number of assets that should be profiled.

- **Oak Ridges Moraine and Oak Ridges Moraine Community Centre and Park** – Many would consider the Oak Ridges Moraine one of the defining characteristics of Richmond Hill. The Moraine is an environmentally sensitive, geological landform in south central Ontario, covering 190,000 hectares and is an essential component of Ontario's Greenbelt Plan. The new Community Centre and the Waterfront Park are planned to provide needed recreation facilities to better serve the growing community of Oak Ridges. Within the Oak Ridges Community Centre, is a 1000 square foot Ecological Centre. The facility will provide resources as well as space for environmentally focused initiatives and programming based on the natural and cultural history of the Oak Ridges Moraine. The Ecological Centre will serve as a centre point for the site and the surrounding Oak Ridges trail system.

- **Mill Pond Park** - Mill Pond was named in recognition of the sawmill operation that used this pond for power. The sawmill is an important component of Richmond Hill's culture heritage because it was part of what made the heart of Richmond Hill an attractive place to settle in the late 1800s. Mill Pond Park is stage to the popular

¹⁹ Richmond Hill Official Plan. Chapter 3: A New Kind of Urban (pg. 3-79)
summer Concerts in the Park, and is host the annual Winter Carnival and Mill Pond Splash Events. Resident waterfowl is another reason that Mill Pond Park is a favourite for many.

- **Phyllis Rawlinson Park** - Phyllis Rawlinson Park is the Town’s largest Oak Ridges Moraine park. The park land was donated by Phyllis Rawlinson, a long-time resident of the Town, on the condition that it be managed for conservation purposes. Given Phyllis Rawlinson’s request, the park is a fitting site for Celebration Forest®, a unique woodland where trees are planted in tribute of special occasions and to honour the memory of loved ones. Phyllis Rawlinson Park is the only park in the Town equipped with barbeque facilities and fire pits. There are significant historic structures on-site, such as the original farmhouse and barn (York Region’s oldest designated buildings), that help make this park the special place it is.

“Culture protects me from being homesick. Here in Richmond Hill, I go to Iranian stores, and talk in our language, and it makes me feel warm. That's what brings me here. It's about connection.”

Community Member
FIGURE 10: NATURAL HERITAGE MAP
3.2.2 Moving Cultural Mapping Forward

Cultural mapping is a strong tool for understanding a community’s cultural assets. When mapped, the concentration of resources has shown where there are hubs or clusters of cultural activity and provided information on a neighbourhood level – where resources are located and who lives in those neighbourhoods.

Richmond Hill has made a strong start on building a base of information on its cultural assets through the Cultural Mapping Project. However, cultural mapping in any municipality is never complete. The task now is to build on the baseline mapping completed through the Cultural Mapping Project in ways that strengthen the Town’s ability to support more informed cultural planning and cultural development.

The following provide a series of proposals for moving ahead with a cultural mapping agenda in Richmond Hill.

Broader and Deeper Data Gathering

- Combine cultural businesses, creative industries and non-profit cultural organizations, to gain a better understanding of the culture sector, its inter-relationships and inter-dependencies.
- Examine cultural resources against different social, economic and other variables to gain additional insight particularly at a neighbourhood level. Other variables could include proximity to major transportation routes and corridors, which are likely an impact on the distribution of assets.
- Go beyond the basic or ‘tombstone’ data on individual assets to explore issues such as numbers of employees, size of audiences or participants, budgets and finances, governance (public, private or not-for-profit).
- Benchmark data on individual cultural assets to demonstrate how they evolve and compare over time. Until more communities in Ontario undertake cultural mapping, the ability to compare cultural resources data across municipalities remains a challenge.

Enhance the Mapping of Cultural Resources

Various types of maps should be generated to tell a more compelling story of cultural activity in Richmond Hill. This information could be shared through department within the Town and with external cultural businesses and organizations. Different types of maps should be created that:

- **Emphasize Point Data:** To show the location, size and connections between cultural resources.
- **Emphasize Layers:** Overlaying multiple layers of cultural resources for comparison, or demographic layers to understand how these issues interact with cultural resources.
• **Emphasize Clusters:** Maps can be generated that demonstrate clusters of cultural activity, or concentrations of resources. These can be compared over time or with different combinations of cultural resources to show how resources connect to form clusters. An example would be mapping clusters of festivals and events and cultural facilities to show where there may be a cultural hub in the community.

• **Emphasize Linkages:** Use the cultural maps to highlight the corridors and connections between point data. This could have implications for the development of corridors in the community.

Different types of visualizations can also make cultural mapping more compelling:

- Charts and tables illustrating the data can highlight the numbers in the database and subsectors of the cultural resource.
- The use of descriptive text attached to point data can tell the user what the resource is in addition to its location.

### Marketing and Promotion Applications of Mapping

Overall, cultural mapping can have a stronger economic development, tourism and cultural resources management function in Richmond Hill. Cultural mapping is an important tool in Richmond Hill to identify economic development opportunities and barriers and showcase the distinctiveness of the community for investment opportunities. From a tourism perspective, the cultural mapping database can be used to enhance cultural tourism by leveraging Richmond Hill as place with a unique cultural identity that is accessible and interesting. Finally, from a cultural resource management standpoint, having a database of municipal cultural facilities, cultural programs and services can strengthen assessment and decision-making. However, municipal resource commitments and partnerships are necessary to ensure that cultural mapping moves forward and is a tool utilized to its fullest potential.

- Research the range of cultural mapping portals or cultural mapping website currently in use by municipalities in Ontario and other parts of Canada to determine the most appropriate model for use in Richmond Hill.
- Once a cultural mapping portal has been selected, work to expand ‘tombstone’ data to include additional information on individual cultural assets of interest to residents and visitors such as hours of operation, programming, photographs or other images illustrating individual cultural resources, etc.
3.3 SWOT Analysis

Building on the findings of the asset mapping exercise, and the earlier analysis of the Town's cultural framework an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the Town's cultural development provides the basis for the Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan.

In this instance, strengths are the unique or very strong factors that provide a current competitive advantage for Richmond Hill, while the weaknesses are areas of competitive disadvantage. The opportunities suggest the potential for future cultural development in Richmond Hill, while the threats suggest challenges or issues coming from sources external to the community and generally beyond the control of the community (e.g. high Canadian dollar).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Culture is supported through an integrated policy framework, including recognition in the Strategic Plan, Official Plan and Economic Development Strategy.</td>
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<td>- Population growth is anticipated across all age cohorts while those under 45 years of age represent the largest percentage of the population.</td>
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<td>- There is an impressive mosaic of people, language, and cultural expression that contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the community.</td>
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<td>- The population is highly educated with almost half holding a university education.</td>
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<td>- A high concentration of the individuals working in creative occupations.</td>
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<td>- Significantly higher household incomes levels than the provincial average may indicate a greater engagement of or support for cultural programming and activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Provincially significant natural heritage assets such as the Oak Ridges Moraine contribute to quality of place in the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A strong design industry (includes graphic and web design).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A publishing industry that is home to significant multicultural</td>
<td>- A lack of awareness on the part of the community as to the range of existing spaces available for local artists to create and exhibit their work.</td>
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<td>- A perception at the community level that demand for affordable space is not being met by the existing inventory.</td>
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<td>- Lack of comprehensive knowledge of available facilities in Richmond Hill undermining appreciation of Town's current cultural vibrancy</td>
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<td>- Lack of coordination of festivals and events leads to challenges in marketing, promotion and attendance of individual events.</td>
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<td>- There is no central depository of information regarding Richmond Hill's festivals and events.</td>
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<td>- Insufficient shared knowledge and understanding across departments regarding opportunities presented by cultural planning and cultural development.</td>
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<td>- Inadequate staff resources to undertake more ambitious and integrated cultural planning agenda across departments</td>
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<td>- Limited human and financial resources and skill shortages in areas such as fundraising and audience development pose within the Town's non-profit cultural sector.</td>
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</table>
- Media companies that have a national and international reach.
- A strong, small business environment, particularly in the creative cultural industries.
- A concentration of heritage buildings in the historic Downtown, as well as the Yonge, Bayview and Leslie Street corridors.
- Creation of Gormley Heritage Conservation District illustrates the Town's support for local heritage assets and historic character.
- A range of not-for-profit arts and heritage organizations that support cultural activities in the community.
- A diversity of festivals and events that represent the different cultural communities in the town.
- A broad array of cultural programs and services offered by the Town and other cultural facilities and community groups.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Further develop the Town's cultural mapping efforts to deepen understanding of cultural resources in Richmond Hill.</td>
<td>- There is a lack of comparable data between municipalities in Ontario with respect to per capita spending on culture and presence of cultural facilities on which to assess progress in the Town's cultural development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Support and extend current levels of cultural activity through increased Town funding.</td>
<td>- There is growing competition from other municipalities in York Region and the GTA with plans to invest significantly in new cultural facilities and infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Position Richmond Hill as a leader in recognizing the need to expand the Province of Ontario's definition of cultural resources to include religious organizations and places of worship particularly in a community's with high levels of diversity.</td>
<td>- Given fiscal uncertainties, there is a significant level of uncertainty connected with current and future levels of cultural funding from senior levels of government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Capitalize on the concentration of creative industries in Richmond Hill and the Town's position in the GTA to attract entrepreneurs, visitors and investment.</td>
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<td>- Leverage the community's cultural diversity in the attraction of further media and publishing investment.</td>
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<td>- Strengthen relationships between the Town and cultural organizations and cultural businesses to improve collaboration</td>
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and synergies among organizations.
- Build on the success of existing festivals and events to develop Richmond Hill as a festivals and events destination in York Region.
- Take steps to build capacity for non-profit groups in the culture sector.
- Leverage natural and cultural heritage resources in Richmond Hill as a means of connecting the Town's districts.

The SWOT analysis provides one source of insight and direction to inform the vision and recommendations that will form Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan. However, this analysis must now be extended and enriched with the community's ideas and input as gathered through the community engagement process.
4 Community's Voice

4.1 Community Engagement Activities

The broad community engagement process for the development of the Cultural Plan was designed to mirror the highly successful Town of Richmond Hill Strategic Plan process – a process that was open, inviting public participation and enabled civic dialogues through multiple means at many junctures. Building on this success, the Cultural Plan has engaged the community through a variety of channels that included in-depth face-to-face stakeholder interviews, focus groups, a community survey, a community launch event, community soundings and a community forum. In total, nearly 500 participants attended engagement events, sharing their ideas and participating in the development of the Town's first Cultural Plan.

The community soundings in particular are an innovative method in community engagement and time was spent drawing out community leaders and participants from specific cultural communities in Richmond Hill. The community engagement process ran from February to April 2011 attracting a broad range of community cultural leaders, creative industries, residents and youth. A summary of each of the engagement events is set out in Appendix B.

The community's voice that emerged from the consultation describes the needs, values and aspirations of the community communicated during the consultation. The Youth community sounding is broken out here to illustrate the voice of youth that participated in the engagement process. Overall, the community's needs, values and aspirations give shape to the strategic directions that form the foundation of the Cultural Plan.
### 4.1.1 The Community's Needs, Values and Aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Activity</th>
<th>NEEDS</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
<th>ASPIRATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Launch Event</strong></td>
<td>- Promote Richmond Hill’s culture</td>
<td>- Preserving the past, present and future.</td>
<td>- Development of more cultural assets in Richmond Hill</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Support for growing cultural assets by the Town and the community</td>
<td>- Diversity of the community</td>
<td>- Creation of a balance between the past, present and future</td>
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<td>- Flexible space (indoor/outdoor, large/small)</td>
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<td>- A place where everyone can express their culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Culture needs to be accessible (cost, time of day, transportation)</td>
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<td>- Culture will be accessible to all members of the community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Distributed funding by the Town to support cultural and artistic activities of residents</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
<td>- New ideas and approaches to existing events and festivals</td>
<td>- Heritage conservation</td>
<td>- A place where culture lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Better ways to engage youth around culture</td>
<td>- Inclusive events</td>
<td>- Promotion of the famous and historically significant people who lived in Richmond Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increased staff resources to address heritage conservation needs at the Town</td>
<td>- Public space for community interaction</td>
<td>- Communicate a stronger identity and sense of cultural vitality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Supportive services around the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts (café’s galleries, restaurants, retail, etc.)</td>
<td>- Strong quality of place and natural heritage</td>
<td>- Strong recognition of the importance of culture by the Town combined with an expanded leadership role</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Better promotion of cultural events/activities</td>
<td>- Youth engagement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Inventory of spaces/venues for cultural activity</td>
<td>- Libraries as important cultural institutions in the town</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- A cultural advisory committee for Richmond Hill</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- A strong cultural identity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Networking opportunities for creative industries</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Business development and business support mechanisms for the creative industries</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Activity</th>
<th>NEEDS</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
<th>ASPIRATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>• An anchor space or 'hub' for cultural activities</td>
<td>• Heritage conservation</td>
<td>• Use festivals and events for greater intercultural exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A vibrant, walkable public space that allows for interaction and creates “buzz”</td>
<td>• A vibrant Downtown and Civic Precinct project that enhances quality of place</td>
<td>• A new organizational model for culture: A cultural council or other governance structures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Stronger marketing through various channels</td>
<td>• A high quality of life through natural heritage and cultural assets</td>
<td>• A coordinator to lead activities and &quot;pound the pavement&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promotion of heritage, perhaps through a series of plaques</td>
<td>• Recognition of important cultural Institutions such as the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts</td>
<td>• Multiple creative industries symposiums to isolate key issues and ensure ongoing progress</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Creating a cultural database to enhance information sharing and tracking of cultural organizations and activities</td>
<td>• Youth engagement</td>
<td>• Reach wider audiences to promote Richmond Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Networking opportunities, particularly the creative industries</td>
<td>• Intergenerational exchange</td>
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<td>• Mayor’s events need to move forward and break down “cultural silos”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “Hometown Heroes” should be profiled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Survey</td>
<td>• Affordable space, events and activities</td>
<td>• A culturally rich Richmond Hill – with many cultural activities in which to participate in</td>
<td>• Celebrate and connect diverse communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Better promotion of events</td>
<td>• Existing Cultural and Heritage resources (Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, McConaghy Centre, Doors Open)</td>
<td>• Improve and enhance cultural activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A variety of cultural opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The cultural plan should contribute to overall economic prosperity in the Town</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• More support for artists, including space where artists can live and work</td>
<td></td>
<td>• A renowned large scale street festival or event</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Information and publicity about activities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Soundings</td>
<td>• More intercultural activities</td>
<td>• Ability to share their culture with other cultures</td>
<td>• For communities to break out of their “cultural silos” and learn about each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Town leadership in bringing diverse communities together</td>
<td>• Future generations to value what makes them part of the cultural community</td>
<td>• Acknowledge the richness and diversity of each cultural community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More space, flexible space for multiple activities, knowledge of how to access and book space</td>
<td>• Preservation of their culture in the broader community</td>
<td>• Future generations to carry on cultural traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preservation of culture by intercultural exchange</td>
<td>• A culture of inclusion in the community</td>
<td>• For everyone to access what the Town can offer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Large-scale inclusive event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement Activity</td>
<td>NEEDS</td>
<td>VALUES</td>
<td>ASPIRATIONS</td>
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</table>
|                      | - For the Town to have better contact with cultural communities  
|                      | - Town to advertise services better  
|                      | - Desire to learn about Richmond Hill's heritage. | - Building a cohesive community in which people care about each other | - For the Town to reach out to all cultural communities and support their culture where possible |
| **Youth Sounding**   | - Affordable and accessible events and programs  
|                      | - A youth marketing strategy  
|                      | - Events that involve many activities are unique and have a lot of buzz; events where youth can showcase their talent or see friends perform  
|                      | - Safe spaces  
|                      | - Apprenticeship program for youth around the arts | - Feeling included in the community  
|                      | - Ability to participate in events and programs hosted by the Town  
|                      | - Sharing their talents with the community  
|                      | - Having an affordable place to spend time with friends and meet new people | - For all youth to feel included and participate in the Town's cultural activities  
|                      | - For youth to share their talents and meet other youth in the town  
|                      | - Youth want to do something they love and coming out with a marketable skill | - For the whole community to use spaces for culture all year round  
|                      | - The creation of a landmark or space where people can come together which isn't limited to one activity. This will be a place that appeals to residents throughout the GTA  
|                      | - For everyone to express their culture in the community  
|                      | - A cultural council where each community is represented and where all communities can learn from each other, network, collaborate, advocate and plan community events | - For everyone to express their culture in the community  
| **Community Forum**  | - Flexible, year-round space  
|                      | - Historic Downtown to have a hub, or a place where many people can gather with a multi-functional space (such as the Harbourfront Centre, Toronto)  
|                      | - A source of knowledge on culture  
|                      | - Support for arts and culture from the Town  
|                      | - Transparency about the results of the Cultural Plan | - Community space where people can gather  
|                      | - Ability to participate in culture (creation of culture, expression of culture) | - For the whole community to use spaces for culture all year round  
|                      | - The creation of a landmark or space where people can come together which isn't limited to one activity. This will be a place that appeals to residents throughout the GTA | - For everyone to express their culture in the community  
|                      | - A cultural council where each community is represented and where all communities can learn from each other, network, collaborate, advocate and plan community events |
4.2 Key Themes from the Community Engagement

Based on the input from the community seven key themes emerged that best illustrate the needs, values and aspirations that directly inform the development of the Cultural Plan. While no summary can do justice to the wealth of ideas brought forward by the community, these themes have helped crystallize and provide direction in defining the goals and actions set out in the recommendations that follow.

Theme 1: Emphasize Inclusive Intercultural Opportunities

A common theme in all of the engagement activities was the need to strengthen community inclusion and fully engage Richmond Hill's diverse population in cultural development. While culture-specific events welcoming and celebrating individual communities were valuable, the overall sense was that there is a need for a stronger focus on intercultural celebration and exchange perhaps through a signature event for Richmond Hill. The community engagement suggested that existing events including the Mayor's cultural events (i.e. Diwali, Chinese New Year, etc.) and festivals could be expanded or leveraged in ways that focused on intercultural exchange. The community also suggested that new programs and initiatives were needed in order to achieve the desired intercultural opportunities.

Theme 2: Expand Places and Spaces Where Culture Can Thrive

Another common message emerging from the community engagement process was the success of the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts as a cultural institution. However, the community also felt that the Town needed to move on to the next phase of developing cultural infrastructure in the town by addressing the following needs:

- Public spaces for community gatherings, such as a public square;
- Dedicated cultural facilities for specific disciplines (e.g., for the visual arts, expanded space for collecting, exhibiting and interpreting Richmond Hill's heritage, etc.);
- Flexible and affordable indoor space for community gatherings;
- Flexible facilities for all communities to offer cultural programs.

A frequent comment throughout the engagement process was the need to ensure that space was available at affordable rates. While participants were interested in the creation of new cultural spaces, a better inventory of existing spaces and better awareness and promotion of the availability of existing space was also considered essential. There was also a call for a “cultural hub” or facility where groups of all kinds – not-for-profit as well as commercial creative cultural industries - could gather, build relationships and support one another in building a more culturally vibrant Richmond Hill.
Theme 3: Increase Awareness and Strengthen Marketing and Communications

Community stakeholders described Richmond Hill as offering a rich cultural life consisting of a wide range of cultural organizations, creative enterprises, individual artists, and programs and activities, which lacked awareness at the community level. This was also confirmed in the community survey, where over half of respondents felt that the main barrier to participation in cultural activities was a lack of information and publicity about activities. While stronger marketing and communication efforts are desired to draw attention to the level of investment and activity underway in the community, the community survey suggests that a significant number of people in the community still get their information about cultural activities through word of mouth. Despite this, stakeholders suggested that any marketing and promotion efforts make use of a variety of mediums to reach a broad range of community members:

- Traditional print media (e.g., The Liberal Newspaper);
- Multicultural media (e.g., Fairchild Media Group);
- Greater use of web-based and social media tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter);
- Non-traditional activities (e.g., flash mobs).

To support stronger marketing and communication efforts, the cultural community suggested that a central database of groups and activities could be continuously updated. The Cultural Mapping Project began this data collection and could provide the baseline for such a cultural database. In addition, there was recognition that Richmond Hill needs to carve out its identity and market its brand and cultural resources to both York Region and the broader GTA and Ontario markets.

Theme 4: Create Vibrant Cultural Districts and Neighbourhoods in the Community

The community voiced their interest in enhancing their neighbourhoods and downtown districts through the creation of vibrant urban spaces thus enabling more ‘buzz’ about the community. It was suggested that this could be done by utilizing public art and creating walkable places where people can interact. The need for a strong concentration of cultural resources and activities in the Downtown was a consistent theme across all engagement activities. The Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts was recognized as a major anchor in the town, however, the community also recognized the tremendous opportunity to use the Town-owned lands known as the Civic Precinct to further anchor the south end of the Downtown. The community also identified the strong role already being played by the Richmond Hill Central Library.
**Theme 5: Broaden Youth Engagement and Support Youth-Led Cultural Activities**

Engaging the youth population in Richmond Hill was also a significant theme throughout the engagement process. Community participants felt that youth were not only significant consumers and generators of culture, but that they acted as intercultural connectors as they form social connections in school that enable intercultural sharing and learning. Participants at the engagement activities had a variety of suggestions about youth engagement, including contests and competitions (essay writing, art and design contests), engaging youth through the school system to teach them about the history of the town, the facilitation of stronger links between local artists and schools, and the creation of apprenticeships for youth with local artists and creative professionals.

Key messages emerging from the youth community soundings included:

- Events must be youth oriented with a clear role for youth in the shaping and developing the event; youth are most interested in activity-oriented rather than passive listening events,
- The largest predictor of whether youth will attend an event is whether or not their friends are going,
- Word of mouth and ‘buzz’ are important for the success of an event,
- Youth are more likely to text message, use Facebook, Twitter, or Blackberry Messenger along with other types of social media to promote events.

**Theme 6: Enhance Collaboration and Networking Among Cultural Groups**

The community engagement process suggested that the cultural community in Richmond Hill is fragmented and does not communicate or collaborate as effectively as it could. Many similar leadership and organizational challenges faced all cultural organizations, and stronger collaboration and resource sharing could help address these needs. There was discussion about the need for a stronger umbrella organization to act as a single voice and networking mechanism for a wide range of cultural groups in the town. There was a general opinion that Arts Richmond Hill was not fully representative of culture in the town and that a new model was needed that was more encompassing of a broader range of cultural expression. The idea of a Cultural Council was proposed as an inclusive entity to connect the wider range of groups and activities and ideas.
Theme 7: Strengthen and Diversify Support for Culture

There were a number of supporting activities and initiatives put forth by stakeholders that could underlie cultural development in Richmond Hill. Many of the suggestions focused on how the Town could better support cultural development through:

- Partnership development;
- Helping to improve linkages and partnerships with schools, with important business and community groups and other agencies with interests and resources to support culture in Richmond Hill;
- Staff support and access to facilities and spaces to expand community engagement in culture, heritage and diversity;
- Increased funding from the Town to support new initiatives and more sustainable cultural groups and organizations;
- Support for networking and better connections among cultural groups;
- Support for artists through subsidized studio space, storage space, and performance space where people can develop their work, and cultural expression;
- Providing tax incentives to local businesses and creative cultural industries.

Additionally, the engagement process demonstrated recognition that significant time and resources have been invested to date in the development of the Cultural Plan. This commitment has raised an expectation that the Plan will recommend further investment by the Town in a number of forms: increased staff resources; increased project funding (beyond that currently provided through the Mayor’s Endowment Fund for the Arts), new capital investment in cultural spaces and facilities, and enhanced cultural programs and opportunities that reach a wider cross-section of the Richmond Hill community.
5 Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan – Moving Culture Forward

5.1 Key Directions

The research and analysis, cultural mapping and community engagement have been paramount to the development of a Cultural Plan for Richmond Hill. Each engagement events were well-attended and community members expressed their ideas and aspirations for cultural development. The result is a series of strategic themes or directions that are considered foundational to the development of the recommendations in the Cultural Plan.

Town Leadership is required to Move Culture Forward

The Cultural Plan is viewed by the community as an opportunity for the town to build on their strong base of cultural assets and cultural programs and services to move culture forward. One form of leadership required from the Town is increased human and financial resource investments. Increased financial investment could take the form of increased funding for community cultural groups and activities, new capital investment in cultural spaces and facilities, or enhanced cultural programs and opportunities reaching a wider cross-section of the Richmond Hill community. New staff resources and new mechanisms to support cultural development are also necessary, such as the creation of new organizational structures and the integration of culture in planning and decision-making across department in the town.

Networking Equates to Sustainability in the Cultural Sector

There are opportunities to better connect cultural organizations and cultural industries to address the needs of the broader cultural sector. A common issue in the cultural sector are the silos that form between disciplines (e.g. arts groups, heritage groups, and creative enterprises all cluster rather than interact). Forming networks that bridge the various groups within the cultural sector could potentially lead to better allocation of resources and enhanced innovative activity in the town. Additionally, issue-based forums and symposiums are methods of knowledge sharing and networking that can support the on-going development of the cultural sector.

Ongoing Meaningful Engagement of the Community

Building on the strong community engagement started during the cultural planning process, a concerted effort will be required to draw all members of the community into meaningful roles in cultural development. Richmond Hill is
a rich mosaic of cultures and people, making the community a culturally rich place. Meaningful engagement of these diverse communities through leaders from these communities is critical to the implementation of the plan. Involving youth in the development of culture and fostering intergenerational discussions is key to the sustainability and success in building a culturally vibrant community.

**Innovative Approaches to Marketing and Promotion**

The nature of communication is quickly changing. Flash mobs, social media campaigns, contests and competitions, these are all innovative methods of marketing and promotion that the community have voiced as desirable and successful. However, creating ‘buzz’ around events through word of mouth is still critical. Moving culture forward in Richmond Hill will require innovative and imaginative marketing approaches and partnerships between the Town, community cultural organizations and creative industries.

**Creating and Supporting Neighbourhoods & Districts that are Culturally Vital**

Places and spaces for interaction, entertainment and sense of belonging are critical in any community. The Richmond Hill community value their neighbourhoods and districts including key commercial and residential districts in the Downtown, Oak Ridges and Gormley. These districts and neighbourhoods within Richmond Hill can be further supported through the Cultural Plan. The Civic Precinct Project is an opportunity for the Town to develop a community focused space that blends cultural vitality through public art and other opportunities for cultural expressions.

Together, these five strategic directions have evolved into five goals for the Cultural Plan, which aim to achieve a vision for culture for the community. The vision for culture, along with strategic recommendations, goals and measurable actions are presented in the following section.
5.2 Vision

The following vision statement captures the anticipated outcome of the 10 year horizon for the cultural plan.

Vision

“Richmond Hill is admired as a vibrant community in which culture is a part of all facets of the Town’s planning and decision-making; where diversity, gender and age are reflected in all aspects of cultural expression; and where an authentic and distinctive identity inspires a creative spirit.”

The town’s vibrancy is fuelled by a rich and diverse cultural life. A shared sense of place and identity derives from the community’s unique natural and cultural assets. These assets are a source of civic pride that reinforce a commitment to work together to build our community.

Richmond Hill’s strength begins with deep respect for its history and heritage. From these roots has emerged a dynamic place built by the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of all those who have come from all parts of the world to build a life for themselves and their families. Today the town’s vitality is the result of an engaged and diverse community that actively shares, experiences and appreciates the mosaic of cultures that is Richmond Hill.

Richmond Hill understands and values artists and creators as essential sources of new ideas, innovation and technologies important to our future. The Town’s appreciation for culture and design has created beautiful and vibrant places across the community infused with meaning and identity. Opportunities to participate in and celebrate culture are accessible across all parts of the community and relevant throughout all phases of life.

Phyllis Rawlinson Park, Richmond Hill skyline and Youth in Richmond Hill photos courtesy of: Town of Richmond Hill
5.3 Goals

By definition, the goals should seek to build on local strengths, mitigate the weaknesses and convey the desired outcomes of the strategic planning process, while the actions set out how this is to be accomplished.

The Richmond Hill Cultural Plan is underpinned by five high-level goals that anchor and set a context for a wide range of actions and initiatives that speak to the strategic importance of culture to the town. The Plan is not a finished document. Rather, it is a thoughtful starting point based on an assessment of where the community finds itself today together with the needs and aspirations for the future as expressed by the community. The Plan must also be dynamic and continue to respond to changing circumstances and resource requirements.

GOALS

1. **DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP**
2. **A DYNAMIC CULTURAL SECTOR**
3. **AN INCLUSIVE CULTURAL COMMUNITY**
4. **PLACES AND SPACES FOR CULTURE**
5. **A CELEBRATED STORY**

While the goals are aspirational in nature, the corresponding list of recommendations should be viewed as a starting point based on community input and research at a point in time. New actions will emerge throughout the 10-year lifespan of the Plan and partnerships will change. It will be critical for effective implementation to monitor how these recommendations contribute to the strengthening of cultural planning and development in the community.

It should be noted that prioritization of these recommendations is intended to reflect a logical sequence of activities, with each recommendation contributing to a greater level of success as it relates to cultural planning and development in the community. A more detailed implementation plan has been prepared to address the budget, resources and detailed timing of each recommendation.
5.4 Recommendations

GOAL 1: DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP

To be effective, cultural planning has to be seen to be a part of a larger effort for community and urban development. Connections are needed with land use planning, economic development, parks and recreational planning and to a lesser extent public works. At present, the responsibility for cultural policy, planning, programming and management in the Town of Richmond Hill is spread over a number of Town departments. The successful implementation of the Cultural Plan requires better alignment and coordination of these roles and responsibilities internally. It also requires new strategies and mechanisms for broadening community engagement and building community partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review Mandate of Corporate Cultural Resources

In Richmond Hill, Recreation and Cultural Services has to date played a strong cultural leadership role in the Town. Given the broader cross-departmental agenda represented by the Cultural Plan, it is recommended the Town review its mandate in cultural planning and development to:

a) Ensure an integrated approach to implementing recommendations of Cultural Plan;
b) Ensure an integrated approach to planning and development;
c) Ensure culture is considered as a high priority in planning and decisions of the corporation;
d) Ensure financial and human resources are in place to support culture and the recommendations in the culture plan;
e) Ensure programs, services and events continue to grow and develop to meet the needs of the changing community;
f) Ensure the various departments come together on a regular basis to implement the culture plan recommendations;
g) Ensure there is overall coordination and collaboration in supporting and enhancing the cultural groups within the community;
h) Ensure external partnerships are developed with the local business community and with other levels of government.
2. **Establish an Ongoing Interdepartmental Culture Team**

   The Cultural Plan Steering Committee has developed a strong-shared vision and understanding of cultural planning issues and opportunities in the Town. This Committee should form the basis for a permanent Interdepartmental Culture Team with a mandate to build collaborative working relationships across the Corporation, monitor the implementation of the Cultural Plan and provide integrated planning and policy recommendations to Council.

   **a. Convene a Staff Forum on the Cultural Plan**

   Successful implementation of the Cultural Plan and the more integrated vision of cultural planning it represents require a shared vocabulary and common understanding across all departments. One of the first priorities of the Interdepartmental Culture Team once the Cultural Plan is adopted should be to organize a cross-departmental staff forum to present the Plan and introduce core cultural planning definitions and methodologies. This forum should also focus on the important role of culture in ensuring a high quality of life environment for residents and the considerations for planning how the community will interact with their local environment – shopping, playing, and working. One part of this forum could be an invitation to senior staff from one or more Ontario municipalities that have developed and are successfully implementing a municipal cultural plan.

3. **Establish a Cultural Council**

   Together with stronger internal alignment and coordination of efforts and resources, the successful implementation of the cultural plan requires new mechanisms to build collaboration between the municipality and its key cultural, business and community partners. One such mechanism for maintaining contact and input from the community is a Cultural Advisory Committee with a formal reporting relationship to Council. However, there is a growing number of municipalities that are establishing more action-oriented partnership mechanisms such as a Cultural Council. Appendix D describes the range of options and models used in municipalities in Ontario and beyond.

   The concept of a Cultural Council also drew support during the community consultation process. Experience in other communities suggests that each community must define the precise mandate and roles of such a group, in order to meet the unique needs and circumstances of that community. It is recommended that the Interdepartmental Culture Team be tasked with preparing a detailed proposal for the establishment of a Cultural Council. The Culture Team may draw on experience in other communities as summarized below.
Mandate:

To build capacity to advance shared goals in cultural development by supporting collaboration across municipal, community and business interests.

Role:

- Support the implementation of the Cultural Plan, and assist in evaluating progress in its implementation
- Assisting in helping define new actions and initiatives
- Coordinating efforts identifying resources in the implementation of these actions – including increased private sector investment
- Encourage leadership and innovation.
- Facilitate networking and information exchange among cultural groups and across communities.
- Providing ongoing advice to Council

Membership:

- Mayor, Chair
- Municipal Staff
- Cultural Sector Representatives – e.g., Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, Richmond Hill Public Library, Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra, select representatives from the creative cultural industries
- Business Representatives – e.g., Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce, Richmond Hill and Markham Chinese Business Association
- Community Cultural Groups – e.g., representatives and cultural ambassadors* from a wide range of the Town's diverse communities
- Educational Institutions – e.g., representatives from high schools,
- Youth – e.g., representative from the Youth Action Committee

*Cultural ambassadors representing Richmond Hill's diverse communities can play a particularly important role through their participation on the Council. These individuals can help promote intercultural dialogue and ensure the perspectives of all the town's communities inform the implementation of the Cultural Plan. Ambassadors should be drawn from those community cultural leaders that attended community engagement events and others as the Cultural Plan moves forward.
**Best Practices:** Successful cross-sectoral leadership groups similar to the proposed Cultural Council including Orillia, Prince Edward County and Chatham-Kent in Ontario and Austin, Texas are set out in Appendix D.

4. **Convene Issue-Based Community Forums**

A more focused form of community engagement can be achieved through the convening of issue-based forums. For example, a forum could be convened as part of the development of a Festival and Events Strategy for the town, the new Public Art Master Plan, among others. This type of community-based forum provides for continuing input and engagement related to actions and initiatives set out in the Cultural Plan and provides an opportunity to 'dig deeper' on issues. Such forums can help to strengthen the shared vision and consensus as important initiatives move forward. Forums could be co-convened by the Town and the Cultural Council.

**Best Practice:** The Orillia Cultural Roundtable has convened a series of successful community forums on issues such as designation of the downtown as a Historic District, a new Public Art Policy, a proposed new municipal cultural funding program, among others.

5. **Review the Mayor’s Endowment Fund for the Arts with an Permanent Richmond Hill Cultural Funding Program**

The Mayor’s Endowment Fund for the Arts should be replaced by an annual allocation of funds to a permanent Richmond Hill Cultural grants/funding program. In the first several years of the Fund, total applications for funding far exceeded (by 6 or 7 times) the amount available for distribution. Signalling the priority given to culture by the completion of the Cultural Plan, the Town should make an immediate commitment to $50,000 in annual funding and thereafter consider increased allocations over the 10-year term of the Cultural Plan based on demonstrated need.

Eligible applicants should be extended to include worthy projects coming forward from various cultural groups (such as the completion of local histories, or initiatives such as oral history projects recommended in the Plan). An immediate increase to the current level of funding would enable the Town to implement the stated goal of
moving to multi-year project funding in those categories of support currently set out in the Mayor's Endowment Fund Guidelines.

Once established, the Town should seek input from the Cultural Council on projects or funding needs that cannot currently be envisioned but that could respond to important opportunities brought forward by the cross-section of community interests represented on the Council.

**Best Practices:** Among the strongest cultural funding programs currently operating in Ontario municipalities are those operating in St. Catharines, Orillia, Thunder Bay and Peterborough. Each was established based on a significant community consultation led by dedicated working groups or task forces. These programs should be examined for insights by the town as plans for the Cultural Fund evolve.

6. **Strengthen and Expand Cultural Mapping in Richmond Hill**

The Richmond Hill Cultural Mapping Project is a foundational piece in understanding the current cultural landscape in Richmond Hill, and provides the Cultural Plan with valuable baseline information on the Town's current cultural resources. The task now is to build on this work to further inform the Town's cultural planning and development activities. In order to build a sustainable cultural mapping system for the Town, the following steps are recommended. The Interdepartmental Culture Team should assume responsibility for advancing this mapping agenda.

a. **Form a Cultural Mapping Partnership** - Successful cultural mapping systems require partnerships and collaboration internally across departments, and engagement of key community and business agencies with information and contributions that strengthen Richmond Hill’s cultural mapping systems and capacities. One of the most important of these agencies is the Richmond Hill Central Library. Public libraries are proving increasingly important partners in cultural mapping systems in other municipalities. *Cultural Resource Mapping: Guidelines for Municipalities*[^1] produced by the Canadian Urban Institute for Municipal Cultural Planning Inc. provides valuable advice in forming mapping partnerships.

[^1]: http://www.ontariomcp.ca/library
Establish Strategic Cultural Mapping Priorities - A priority of the Cultural Mapping Partnership should be the establishment of a set of strategic mapping priorities. The Cultural Mapping Project focused on collecting baseline or ‘tombstone’ data on cultural assets in the community. The collection of future information must be driven by priorities defined by the Town and suggested in the Cultural Plan. One example proposed below is the need to assemble a comprehensive inventory of cultural spaces in the community. This could serve as an early priority of the Cultural Mapping Partnership.

Best Practice: The completion of the first phase of a new cultural plan for the City of Hamilton resulted in the establishment of a Cultural Mapping Partnership with representation from 7 municipal departments, the Hamilton Public Library, Inform Hamilton (the Community Information Centre), and key representatives from the local cultural sector. The first priority of the Cultural Mapping Partnership was the launch of a cultural portal. Other priorities will be defined to guide efforts and investment as Hamilton's cultural mapping efforts move forward.

GOAL 2: A DYNAMIC CULTURAL SECTOR

Richmond Hill has a vibrant and diverse cultural sector. As in many communities however, parts of the cultural sector have been fragmented and disconnected. Organizations frequently find themselves competing against each other for support, exhausting their own resources and sometimes missing opportunities to collaborate. Strategies to address these challenges can include support for networking and knowledge sharing; leadership and skill development; coordinated marketing and communications; and collaborative use of space and equipment. There is also a need to expand awareness and understanding of a larger cultural sector that encompasses the many and diverse forms of cultural groups and activities, and the critical interdependence between public sector institutions and the commercial and non-profit worlds. All contribute to both cultural vitality and economic prosperity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Host an Annual Cultural Summit

In an effort to sustain the level of community engagement and interest in the Cultural Plan and celebrate the achievements of the past year (both in terms of implementing the Cultural Plan and other cultural successes or achievements), the Cultural Council and the Town should jointly convene an annual Cultural Summit. The
event will provide a forum for networking and relationship building across the community and provide an opportunity for cultural stakeholders and the broader community to participate in annual scan of issues and opportunities in the year ahead. The event could feature facets of the town’s cultural sector (e.g., a focus one year on the music or the broader performing arts, other years on the visual or literary arts). Keynote speakers could be brought in from outside the community, but the primary focus is on engaging the local cultural sector and the broader community.

**Best Practices:** Based on cultural plans adopted in these communities, successful annual cultural summits are held in Orillia and Prince Edward County. In Prince Edward County based both on the size of the community and local sensibilities the event is called an Annual Cultural Rally.

8. **Engage the Small Business Enterprise Centre In Business Development and Technical Assistance for the Cultural Sector**

In addition to the ongoing support the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) provides small business and start-ups in the community, the Centre should explore ways to provide more targeted support to creative cultural industries and the wider cultural sector. Workshops and seminars addressing specific training and development needs of the sector should be organized. The Richmond Hill Economic Development Strategy recommended the creation of a Virtual Incubator to provide entrepreneurs and innovators with services such as coaching and mentoring, peer-to-peer networking, seminars and workshops, and access to research, on a more specialized, ongoing basis. Many of these technical and training support services and programs were identified as needs during the community engagement process and can serve as resources for the cultural sector.

**Best Practice:** The Brampton Arts Council’s Business of the Arts Workshops Series offers up to 12 workshops/sessions annually that address the business and management development needs of individual artists, not-for-profit cultural organizations and creative enterprises. Since the workshops were established in 2009, there have been over 1000 registered participants. A wide range of disciplines participate including: visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, media and heritage. Formal workshop programs are complemented by informal networking opportunities.
9. **Build Private Sector Support for Culture**

Building an understanding of the economic significance of culture in communities, and expanding private sector support for culture is essential to successfully advancing cultural goals in any community. A number of municipalities have made use of an innovative program called artsVest\(^{21}\) as an effective means of 'jump starting' increased private sector support for culture. ArtsVest is a matching incentive and sponsorship training program designed to stimulate business investment in arts and culture, bolster municipal cultural plans, and help develop the creative economy. It is recommended the Town investigate the potential to apply for and to implement an artsVest program.

Another vehicle for building private sector support for culture is through a public arts program. The Town has committed to developing a Public Art Master Plan and the implementation of the Master Plan will require both public and private sector investment. Public art is a highly visible form of cultural development with clear benefits to the community and enhancing quality of place. It can also provide a focused means of reaching out to the business community and promoting a wider understanding of the economic impact of creativity and culture in Richmond Hill. Communicating these messages should form part of the communications strategy to launch the Cultural Plan.

10. **Strengthen Festivals and Events Planning**

One of strengths identified through the Cultural Mapping Project was the number and diversity of festivals and events in the town. Festivals and events are frequently connected to the unique history and traditions of a community and can serve as vehicles for promoting a wider awareness and appreciation for local cultural resources. Cultural festivals and events are also important elements of broader tourism strategies.

It is recommended that the Town:

a. *Develop a Festivals and Events Strategy* – Provide an integrated vision for cultural events and festivals through the development of a Festival and Events Strategy that is focused on:
   - Establishing an overall inclusive vision for festivals and events in the community;

\(^{21}\) The program is run by Business for the Arts with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Government of Ontario and the business members at Business for the Arts. To date, an initial matching investment of $785K has stimulated $1.4M in business investment in arts and culture, flowing a total of over $2M into the arts in 16 municipalities across Ontario.  
   [http://www.businessforthearts.org/artsvest/artsvest](http://www.businessforthearts.org/artsvest/artsvest)
Creating a shared brand and marketing strategy for all events;

Making recommendations related to different, more inclusive and broader intercultural approaches to existing events such as the Mayor’s Cultural Events, Taste of the Hill, etc.

Distinguishing different types of events (i.e., Tourism Events – those with major tourism impacts; Growing and Emerging Events – those with the potential to grow into Tourism Events; and Community-based Events – those with a primary community focus and limited tourism potential);

Recommending priorities for municipal investment;

Consideration of new events related to the strengths of the cultural community e.g. story telling or literary events.

**Best Practice:** The growth of tourism is an economic development priority for the City of Burlington. To further this agenda, a Festivals and Events Strategy was developed. The Strategy established an overall guiding vision, recommended priorities for municipal investment and addressed capacity building issues and strategies for all events (including shared administrative facilities and/or services for festival groups). The Strategy also recommended that shared marketing and promotion campaigns are coordinated for all events. Similar strategies have been undertaken in Hamilton and Calgary.

**b. Build Organizational Capacity for Festivals and Events** - The Town currently plays a strong leadership role in the direct planning and delivery of important events including Door’s Open, Concerts in the Park, the Studio Tour and Art Sale, Taste of the Hill, and the new visual arts exhibition space at the Boynton House. The Town also supports Arts Richmond Hill in the delivery of the Heritage Village Festival, Festival of Lights, and the Music Festival. A challenge facing many communities is the effective management and promotion of significant festivals that run on a largely volunteer basis by committed but under-resourced community groups. The Town should examine opportunities to leverage efficiencies and build capacity among volunteer-based festival groups by providing training and assistance to strengthen planning, management and promotion.

**Best Practice:** The City of Saint John, New Brunswick has helped support a range of important local festivals through the provision of free, shared administrative space and services. The result has been a stabilizing of the finances and operations of these festivals, as well as strengthening synergies and collaboration across festival events.
c. **Establish a Signature Event for Richmond Hill** - There was a strong call for a 'signature' event for Richmond Hill that could help to define the unique 'cultural brand' of the town. Many of the suggestions in this regard (e.g., “Richmond Hill Day” or a “Global Day”) focused on recognizing and celebrating the town’s diversity by showcasing a wider range of cultural expression (e.g., food, music, dance, visual arts) across Richmond Hill’s diverse communities. Another approach to such an event could be to profile the Town’s strengths in creative cultural industries from an intercultural perspective using a model such as the Vancouver International Digital Festival. No comparable event currently exists in the Greater Toronto Area and this could define a unique and contemporary cultural brand for Richmond Hill. The Festivals and Events Strategy would recommend the best new signature event to advance the larger vision and goals defined by the Strategy.

11. **Prepare a Cultural Heritage Strategy**

The Heritage Policy Review and Key Directions Report completed as a background study for the new Official Plan put in place a comprehensive set of heritage policies and procedures that now guide built heritage preservation in the town. The first phase of a two-phase Heritage Services Review made recommendations regarding the acquisition of heritage properties. Phase 2 is addressing how the Town stewards its heritage resources. While these reviews address one specific facet of the Town’s rich cultural heritage, a wider and more integrated approach to cultural heritage in Richmond Hill is needed.

The Town should undertake an overarching Cultural Heritage Strategy that would establish a vision and set of strategies related to all forms of cultural heritage in the town. At the centre of this Cultural Heritage Strategy should be the powerful and unique historical narratives associated with the Town’s history. This should begin with early Aboriginal presence in the area. The Town’s completion of an Archaeological Master Plan involved significant engagement with First Nations and Metis communities and established relationships upon which to build. The Town’s unique stories and narratives continue through early European settlement up to and including recent stories of immigration diversity. Richmond Hill’s more recent history is in many ways the story of Canada and its emergence as one of the most diverse countries in the world. These stories and narratives

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22 The event is aimed at top creative minds working in digital media. It attracts visionaries from games and digital entertainment, Web 2.0, interactive design, animation and mobile applications. The event has included international business matchmaking, ‘big picture’ conference sessions on the latest trends and markets in digital media, a recruiting fair, high-level seminars for creators, designers, and producers, and loads of networking parties.
are the 'glue' that provide meaning and help to interpret the significance of the Town's tangible cultural heritage assets.

The Strategy should address three forms of cultural heritage resources.

- **Immoveable or built heritage** – policies established by the Official Plan combined with the results of Phase Two of the Heritage Services Review will establish a strong foundation for the Town's current vision of built heritage preservation. However, the primary focus of registration and designation to date has focused on the buildings and sites associated with 18th and 19th century European settlement. Future approaches to built heritage preservation must establish a more inclusive assessment of heritage value that acknowledges more recent immigration and built form associated with the Town’s diverse communities.

- **Moveable heritage (collections of artifacts and archives)** - the Town currently manages a collection of over 10,000 artifacts and documents in the Operations Centre. As collections of artifacts and archives increase, there is a need for a longer-term strategy that goes beyond their preservation and management to how they can be better accessed and interpreted thereby telling the story of Richmond Hill. In defining an overall strategy to address these collections, consideration should be given to closer collaboration with the Richmond Hill Central Library and its own historical collections.

- **Intangible heritage and community stories** – the focus of the Cultural Mapping Project was on tangible cultural resources. However, tremendous interest was expressed in extending these mapping efforts to include intangible heritage resources and the many rich stories and traditions of Richmond Hill’s diverse communities. A long-term strategy to collect and share these stories can be a powerful way of building shared identity and civic pride and fostering stronger cross-cultural understanding.

Many Canadian municipalities struggle with rethinking traditional perspectives and approaches to cultural heritage that focus largely on early European settlement in the context of communities’ expanding diversity. Wide engagement of all of Richmond Hill’s communities in the development of a Cultural Heritage Strategy could establish Richmond Hill as a leader in inclusive approaches to cultural heritage in Canada.
**Best Practice:** In September 2010, the City of Kingston adopted a Kingston Cultural Plan (KCP). Among its recommendations was that the City undertake an integrated Cultural Heritage Strategy to address the needs of its extensive inventory of built heritage assets, significant civic collections, the needs of the city’s twenty plus museums, and its natural features. Central to the Cultural Heritage Strategy the KCP identified the opportunity to develop Kingston’s powerful historical narrative and to leverage its intangible heritage and histories. This included its role as Canada’s First Capital but also the stories the First Nations, French, English and American as well as immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries. A central objective is building a fuller and more inclusive narrative and identity for the city.

12. **Build Stronger Leadership and Organizational Capacity Among Non-Profit Cultural Organizations**

Non-profit cultural groups in all communities face leadership and organizational challenges. This includes questions of board governance, volunteer management, quality fundraising and sponsorships, audience development and more effective marketing. The Town should explore strategies to grow private philanthropy in the community through such means as fundraising training, a workplace giving program, recognition for donors and building a stronger more consistent message around the role and value of cultural development.

There are also opportunities to build capacity among non-profits through more effective networking and resource sharing (supported through the proposed Cultural Council), or shared administrative facilities and services as proposed as part of the Cultural Hub creation addressed in Goal 4.

13. **Enhance Partnership with Richmond Hill Public Libraries**

Richmond Hill’s public libraries (Richmond Hill Central Library, Richvale Branch Library, Richmond Green Library and Oak Ridges Moraine Library) are already among the Town’s most important cultural institutions and assets. Collaborative programming connecting Richmond Hill’s public libraries and Recreation and Cultural Services is already occurring and could be further developed through representation from public libraries on the Cultural Council.

As libraries continue to evolve from their traditional roles as book repositories to neighbourhood community centres, information hubs, and centres for cultural expression there may be additional opportunities to expand partnerships in the delivery of cultural programs and services.
**Best Practice:** A strong example of leadership in cultural programming by public libraries can be found in Collingwood. The Collingwood Public Library, working in collaboration with the Town’s Arts and Culture Coordinator, launched a ‘Youth Engagement through Arts and Culture’ program. The goal was to reach teens unlikely to make use of the library. Among the initiatives: moving all teen resources into one section of the library; live music events with local bands (where no one gets paid or pays a fee); visiting authors’ sessions to stimulate interest in creative writing; a ‘paint your own skateboard’ project; events based programming for homework and reading clubs, among others. The project was funded through the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture’s Library Strategic Development Fund.

**GOAL 3: AN INCLUSIVE CULTURAL COMMUNITY**

Richmond Hill enjoys a rich array of cultural programs offered through various channels and agencies. Some are delivered directly by the Town through Recreation and Cultural Services or through facilities directly supported by the Town, including the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, the Richmond Hill Heritage Centre and the Richmond Hill Public Library. Cultural facilities such as The Curtain Club Theatre and many community–based and privately run groups add to the mix of cultural programs and opportunities. Culture-specific programs are offered by agencies representing many of the Town’s diverse communities, many of them not widely known outside those communities. A variety of actions are proposed to strengthen, better profile, and coordinate this rich array of cultural offerings.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

14. Develop an Inclusive Community Programs Calendar

The Town should establish a comprehensive calendar of cultural programs and events. The introduction of a community programs calendar should be supported by an outreach and awareness building campaign to encourage the widest possible range of community groups to contribute to the calendar. Establishing the calendar will have the added benefit of helping groups schedule events by being able to see what events are already planned for a particular date. A community calendar could support and enhance these efforts.
15. Strengthen and Expand Youth Engagement in Culture

The development of the Richmond Hill Cultural Plan gave priority to engaging youth throughout the consultation process. Few cultural plans undertaken in the province have focused consultation on the specific needs and cultural perspectives of this critically important group – a group that will shape the future of all our communities. An overriding message from this engagement was the need to draw youth into more meaningful roles in shaping cultural programs and opportunities in the Town.

- **Connect High School Student Volunteer Requirements to Cultural Sector Development**

  Every student who begins secondary school must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities as a requirement for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The purpose of the community involvement requirement is to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play, and the contribution they can make in supporting and strengthening their communities. The Town, working with local high schools, should examine opportunities for connecting these volunteer requirements to the needs of not-for-profit cultural groups and organizations in the town.

- **Establish Apprenticeship Programs for Youth**

  The Town should take steps to establish programs connecting youth with individual artists, young entrepreneurs and creative professionals. While needing to maintain their autonomy and authenticity, there was a desire expressed by youth to connect with established cultural organizations, creative cultural businesses, and experienced artists, producers and managers. These apprenticeship programs can provide real opportunities to expose youth to potential career options and future employment possibilities. Once launched, the cultural mapping portal can provide a mechanism to help link youth to existing organizations and enterprises in Richmond Hill. The proposed Cultural Council should also support and
facilitate the establishment of apprenticeship programs and opportunities, through the school, cultural groups or businesses represented on the Council.

16. Create a Cultural Fusion Event for Youth

An annual Cultural Fusion event could become an exciting and unique event to engage and involve Richmond Hill's youth in culture. The Town should engage area high schools, school boards and representatives of the town’s creative industries in the development and delivery of such an event. The event could include a number of dimensions:

- **Learning and Education** – programs focused on topics new ‘leading edge’ forms of creative expression (e.g., interactive and digital media)
- **Competitions** – celebrating the results of various forms of artistic expression (e.g., writing, film, music, photography, performance arts, technology, visual arts and public art including murals, chalked based graffiti)
- **Entrepreneurism and Careers** – activities focused on supporting local career pathways, mentorships and apprenticeships opportunities
- **Community Engagement** – involving youth in discussions about needs and opportunities to extend cultural programs and activities that serve their interests.

Consideration could also be given to involving youth from the community in a series of ‘flash mobs’ in the community (e.g., schools and shopping centres) that promote the event.

17. Expand Intergenerational Programming

Richmond Hill is a community of long-time residents and newer arrivals. All communities in the town have seniors with talents to share and stories to tell. The Cultural Plan provides an opportunity to connect senior networks and youth networks in ways that enriches both. A mentoring program connecting senior artists and students or young people interested in developing artistic and creative talents could be established. Another powerful intergenerational activity is oral history projects that connect students to seniors to capture seniors’ memories of the history, experiences and culture of the community.
GOAL 4: PLACES AND SPACES FOR CULTURE

Successful municipalities develop a wide range of places and spaces in which culture thrives. These include cultural districts, often in downtown areas, which offer a concentration of art in public spaces, cultural facilities, commercial cultural enterprises and entertainment venues. They also provide the necessary workspaces for artists and creators that make them an integral part of the cultural fabric of the area. Success in building and/or extending these districts requires visionary place-making expertise found in forward-looking planners, innovative private sector developers, and engaged civic agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

18. Develop and Implement an Integrated Public Art Master Plan

The Official Plan has established policies supporting public art as an essential dimension of the Town’s commitments to place-making and enhancement of the public realm. The public realm refers to spaces in a city that are primarily in public ownership and generally used in everyday life. This includes urban parks, open spaces, downtown public spaces, streetscapes and pedestrian or transit corridors. In the public realm, culture is expressed through the design of place and the enabling of social interactions and exchange. Public art plays a powerful role in public realm enhancements. A strong example of a Public Art Program the Town could examine in proceeding with the development of the Public Art Master Plan is one developed in North Vancouver. In addition to formal commissions, it includes ‘community public art’ that emphasizes the potential participation of all citizens in the creation of a publicly accessible artwork and encourages residents and artists to work collaboratively. Community public art can allow people to express their concerns, diversity, commonality, goals, and values or just create community participation. This method of art making promotes community dialogue and provides an opportunity for local residents to creatively express the unique aspects of their neighbourhoods.

Best Practices: Beyond the North Vancouver Public Art Program already cited, strong public art policies and programs have been established in many municipalities. One of the most widely acknowledged public art policies and programs in North America is the Seattle Public Art and Municipal Art Plan. Seattle was one of the first cities in the United States to adopt a percentage-for-art ordinance in 1973. Since then the program has been expanded and currently includes more than 350 permanently cited and integrated works and 2600 portable works. The core objectives of the program are to integrate artworks and the ideas of artists into a variety of public settings and to advance Seattle’s reputation as a cultural centre for innovation and creativity.
19. Undertake a Comprehensive Inventory of Cultural Spaces and Facilities

The Cultural Mapping Project was the first step in identifying cultural facilities in the town. However, a much broader and more comprehensive inventory of existing cultural spaces and facilities is required prior to considering the need for new facilities. Different types of spaces need to be identified, including indoor and outdoor spaces that are, or could be used for art and cultural expression. While investment in new dedicated cultural spaces and facilities may be required, there is also a need to consider churches, parks, schools, community and recreation centres, and commercial spaces. Once compiled, the Town should take deliberate steps to communicate and raise awareness regarding the availability of these spaces. The inventory of cultural spaces will provide the Town with a fuller understanding of existing places and spaces in the community to support cultural activities.

**Best Practice:** In Oakville, CommUnity Arts Space emerged in response to demands from Oakville’s creative groups to increase public space(s) for arts and culture in our town. CommUnity Arts Space was able to advise the Town in detail of current space needs for creative local community groups and guilds and continues to act as a link between the Town of Oakville and local community groups to ensure that space planning takes a multitude of views and needs into account. In June 2011, CommUnity Arts Space merged with the Oakville Arts Council to pool resources and build capacity to meet the needs of the Town’s arts and culture sector.

20. Address the Gaps in Cultural Facilities

There is a growing trend in cultural infrastructure towards the development of multi-use cultural facilities that integrate arts, culture, heritage, and library facilities to share resources and operation costs, and better leverage strategic partnerships. Based on findings and analysis drawn from the Cultural Mapping Project and the perceived need for more space to showcase and exhibit local history and heritage, additional space for supporting and exhibiting the visual arts, and low-cost small to mid-size performance venues, the Town of Richmond Hill should consider the development of a multi-use cultural facility. These conclusions should be examined against the findings of the Inventory of Cultural Spaces and Facilities. One option might be the establishment of a new multi-use cultural facility in the Civic Precinct lands development.
**Best Practice:** The Vancouver Roundhouse is one of the most admired and successful multi-purpose cultural facilities in the country. The Roundhouse is located in Vancouver's oldest heritage building and has a twofold mandate: to be a centre for community cultural development and a community source for recreational activities for all ages. Its features include a black box Performance Centre, an exhibition hall, woodworking, pottery and dance studios, a full size gymnasium, a cafe area, and various multi-purpose spaces. The Roundhouse most importantly acts as a Connection. It exists to serve the needs of widely divergent communities. It reaches out to the places and situations where those communities feel comfortable.

21. **Ensure Cultural Resources and Opportunities Are Central to the Development of the Civic Precinct Project**

The development of the Civic Precinct will be a major focus of attention and investment in the Town in the next several years. The Civic Precinct Task Force will be convened in the fall of 2011 to develop an overall vision for the Precinct. The timing of the completion of the Cultural Plan should ensure that cultural planning and development is considered as part of the vision for this area of the community. Consideration should be given to including a public square with space for performances, public art, an outdoor art gallery, multi-media installations, and a community radio station. The notion of this area being pedestrian friendly (like the Byward Market in Ottawa) was raised during the community engagement process as a unique opportunity for the Town.

22. **Strengthen Cultural Districts and Corridors in Richmond Hill**

An important application of cultural mapping is the identification of cultural districts and corridors where concentrations of cultural resources exist in the community. These concentrations of cultural resources need to be connected to the town’s urban structure in the form of walkable streets, an attractive public realm, attention to urban design and a mix of uses that cater to a diversity of needs, and strong links to public transit. In Richmond Hill, the Yonge Street corridor, identified as a regional corridor in the Official Plan, physically connects vital cultural districts in Richmond Hill - the Civic Precinct Lands, the Downtown, and Oak Ridges centres, in addition to the concentration of cultural assets in Gormley. A proposed Community Improvement Area includes the Downtown and Oak Ridges centres and aims to engage businesses in improvements to streetscaping, heritage preservation and public art development. Recommendations in the Cultural Plan...
related to strengthening and expanding festivals and events to animate street life, enhanced live-work space for artists, expanded private sector support for culture, and stronger promotion and interpretation of heritage resources can all enhance improvements enabled by the Community Improvement Plan.

23. Develop Affordable and Accessible Spaces for Culture

The Economic Development Strategy recommended that the Town work to ensure an adequate supply of small, high-quality space for start-up businesses. Many creative cultural enterprises are small, independent start-up firms that require affordable and flexible spaces, often with short-term leases and proximity to institutions that provide opportunities for continuous interactions with social and professional networks. Working simultaneously to advance this recommendation through the Economic Development Strategy and the Cultural Plan is an excellent example of the opportunities and synergies that accompany a larger and more integrated vision of Richmond Hill's creative cultural sector.

The availability of additional affordable space may emerge from the inventory of cultural spaces and facilities. Spaces identified in existing cultural facilities, community or recreational centres or commercial spaces may assist in addressing short-term space needs. The development of the Civic Precinct lands provides further opportunities to consider the incorporation of affordable spaces for culture.

Among the needs identified by representatives from the creative cultural industries were tax incentives and financing tools aimed at attracting and retaining small enterprises. The cost of space was identified as a key competitive factor when considering location. Some municipalities that have supported the creation of incubators or creative hubs to provide shared low cost space for creative cultural enterprises have used loan guarantees to help finance these facilities. The Town should explore the demand and feasibility of providing such financing tools to support cultural development.

24. Explore Feasibility of a Creative or Shared Cultural Hub

There was significant demand from the community to have a bricks and mortar location or ‘cultural hub’ that could serve as a place where individuals and/or groups could gather to create and collaborate. There was a variety of different interpretations of what such a hub might be or represent. Many small not-for-profit groups saw it as a source of low cost studio or office space with the potential for shared administrative facilities and services (e.g., access to meeting rooms, photocopiers, computers, etc.). In other discussions, the cultural hub
was viewed more as a creative sector incubator where professional contacts and relationships could be built with the potential to generate new business ideas and products. Toronto Artscape, a Toronto-based not-for-profit real estate developer, is a specialist in the planning and development of such hubs and could be looked to as a resource in considering the feasibility and opportunities connected with such a space.

In considering the feasibility and location of a 'cultural hub' the Town should examine the opportunity to re-use or re-purpose older industrial properties in proximity to the downtown, civic precinct or Oak Ridges centre.

**Best Practice:** In Hamilton, the Imperial Cotton Centre for the Arts (ICCA) is dedicated to providing both a physical space and program connecting business, artistic development, project management and community networking in support of strengthening Hamilton’s creative cultural industries. ICCA describes itself as a ‘feeder space’ for the burgeoning professional arts community in Hamilton and a catalyst for creativity not only in the arts but also in other areas of innovation where creativity is key. ICCA is currently examining the potential to convert a former industrial building in the downtown to house the organization and provide low cost space for the creative community.

**GOAL 5: A CELEBRATED STORY**

Stories have been called the ‘DNA of culture’. Each community has a rich array of stories to tell that express its unique identity and sense of place. Strategies are needed to help the community express and share these stories through a range of different channels. Richmond Hill must promote the stories and cultural resources that contribute to making Richmond Hill a vibrant and exciting community in which to live, work or visit.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

25. Communicate Cultural Success Stories

Telling success stories of cultural organizations and creative cultural industries (both not-for-profit and for-profit) is a powerful way to build profile for the sector, inspire people and organizations, and attract new businesses and interest to the town. Short videos or other forms of multi-media should be created to tell a wide range of success stories involving both individuals and organizations in Richmond Hill. These could include individual artists, a specific festival or event, or an internationally recognized digital media company. The Town
should invest in the creation of a range of these videos or other forms of multi-media and make them available through the Cultural Plan website.

**Best Practice:** Edmontonstories is a joint venture between the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation. The website was created to enable Edmontonians to tell stories about their city to help attract people – new employees and their families, students and tourists – to Edmonton. The campaign is intended to help raise general awareness about Edmonton in the rest of Canada and the world, and correct misperceptions about the type of lifestyle and opportunity the city offers.

26. Profile Cultural “Icons”

One means of building a stronger and more vibrant image of cultural life in Richmond Hill could be profiling interesting and important people and stories affiliated with the town. Examples cited during the community consultation included Farley Mowat’s one-time residency in Richmond Hill; Margaret Atwood’s novel *Alias Grace* having been set in the town; and the ‘birth’ of the Canadian Air Farce at the Curtain Club Theatre. There are also nationally and internationally recognized artists, many drawn from diverse communities in Richmond Hill who go unrecognized. Short videos or other forms of multi-media should be produced profiling these individuals and stories. These videos could be made available through a variety of channels including the Cultural Plan website.

27. Launch a Richmond Hill Cultural Portal

The foundation for any effective marketing and promotion of cultural resources and activities in Richmond Hill is a comprehensive database of assets. The Cultural Mapping Project has made a strong start in this regard but strategies are needed to ensure that this database can be continuously updated and expanded. The current cultural mapping data can serve as the foundation for launching a cultural portal that provides a ‘one-window’ point of access to cultural resources in the community. A range of different models and approaches to cultural portals are being implemented in municipalities in Ontario and other parts of Canada. The best of these portals enable continuous updating by a wide range of groups and stakeholders. The Town should examine different models and choose one best suited to the needs of the community.
**Best Practice: Putting Culture on the Map:** The South Georgian Bay Cultural Mapping Project was a collaborative project by four small municipalities located in the South Georgian Bay area. The project created a portal capturing more than 700 cultural assets based on the Cultural Resource Framework described in Section 2.2. The project made significant progress in the application of GIS tools to create interactive maps. The project's success has led to the cultural mapping system and portal being expanded to all of Simcoe County. The Town of Oakville has also recently launched a cultural portal which emerged as a recommendation in the Town's cultural plan completed in 2009.

28. **Create a Richmond Hill Cultural Brand and Coordinated Marketing Initiative**

One of the most frequent comments heard during the community engagement process was that while Richmond Hill enjoys a rich cultural life with a wide range of cultural resources and activities, these assets were not adequately marketed or promoted. There was a strong call for marketing and promotional programs that make use of a range of different communications channels to reach a wider cross-section of Richmond Hill residents. Building on the brand created for the Cultural Plan process ('A Vibrant Community') a coordinated marketing initiative should be launched to support awareness and audience development. The marketing initiative should make use of both traditional (e.g., newspaper and magazine ads, print based brochures and materials) and non-traditional (i.e., internet, social media) tools and channels. It could also extend to creating uniform signage to support cultural activities in the town.

29. **Expand and Evolve Use of the Cultural Plan Website**

Beyond the launch of the cultural portal, there is an opportunity to continue to develop and evolve the website built to support the development of the Cultural Plan. The website can serve as a 'virtual gathering place' for the wide range of cultural groups and activities in the town to keep up to date on new developments and support networking and knowledge sharing. The website could include a comprehensive calendar of cultural programs and events (identified earlier). It could also provide a place where information on new town initiatives (such as a launch of the Cultural Fund) can be found. Overall, it can evolve and grow into a mechanism to support a more cohesive, coordinated and informed cultural sector. The website should be clearly linked to and accessible from the Town's own website.
30. Review and Update Plan
Upon completion of the implementation of the Cultural Plan over 10-years, Goals and Action Items should be reviewed and a determination made regarding the renewal of the plan for the next 5-10 years.
6 Plan Implementation & Monitoring

6.1 Implementation Plan

A detailed Implementation Plan follows in the charts below. Each action is outlined according to the following:

- **Timing** – whether the action is to be initiated in Year 1 (assumed 2012) or three time horizons: Short term (2-3 years), Medium term (4-6 years) or Long Term (7-10 years);
- **Output Measures** – measures or steps demonstrating the successful implementation of that Action;
- **Lead Responsibility** – the department of agency with lead responsibility for that Action;
- **Potential Partners** – other departments or external groups with contributions to make to effectively implementing that Action;
- **Resource Implications** – indications or estimates of the human and/or financial resource requirements connected to each Action.

As previously noted, the Plan is not envisioned as a static document, but one that will evolve based on new needs and opportunities that will emerge as the Plan moves forward. Many recommendations are initiated in the first 2-3 years of the plan, but will set the stage for follow-up initiatives and ongoing programs. The Cultural Council is intended to provide an ongoing forum for exchanging ideas and for the tabling of potential new actions or initiatives that were not envisioned at the time of developing the Cultural Plan.
## Goal 1: Demonstrated Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Output Measures</th>
<th>Lead Town Responsibility</th>
<th>Partner(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Review Mandate of Corporate Cultural Resources</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Review Completed</td>
<td>Cultural Plan Steering Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Establish an Ongoing Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td></td>
<td>Culture Team struck; Ongoing role supporting implementation of the Plan.</td>
<td>Cultural Plan Steering Committee</td>
<td>Executive Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Convene a Staff Forum on the Cultural Plan</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Forum delivered upon adoption of the Cultural Plan.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Establish a Cultural Council</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop detailed Terms of Reference in Year 1; Recruit members and launch Council in Year 2.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>Community and Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Convene Issue-Based Community Forums</td>
<td></td>
<td>First Forum convened in Year 3; Forums convened based on identified issues and needs.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Team</td>
<td>Partners Defined By Forum Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Review the Mayor's Endowment Fund For The Arts With a Permanent Richmond Hill Cultural Funding Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>Examine the Structure; Secure budget approval in 2013; Launch expanded Fund in Year 3 (2014).</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Team</td>
<td>Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Strengthen and Expand Cultural Mapping in Richmond Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Mapping is an on-going activity.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Establishing a Cultural Mapping Partnership</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership established; Ongoing role building; Extending cultural mapping work and analysis.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>Richmond Hill Public Library, York Region Arts Council, Business Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Establishing Strategic Cultural Mapping Priorities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Initial priorities established; Priorities re-examined annually.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>Cultural Mapping Partnership Members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal 1 Performance Measure:** Richmond Hill is a recognized leader among Ontario municipalities in integrated planning for culture.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Output Measures</th>
<th>Lead Town Responsibility</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2: A Dynamic Cultural Sector</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Host an Annual Cultural Summit</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>First Summit convened Year Two after the adoption of the Cultural Plan.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Engage the Small Business Enterprise Centre in Business Development and Technical Assistance for the Cultural Sector</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Two tailored training sessions convened Year 1; Ongoing engagement.</td>
<td>Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team, York Region Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Build Private Sector Support for Culture</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>artsVest funding proposal submitted in Year 4; Program implemented in Year 4; Continued efforts over the life of the Plan.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>Strategic Initiatives, Business Community, Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Strengthen Approach to Festivals and Events Planning</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Tender consulting contract in Year 2; Complete Strategy in Year 3.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Develop a Festivals and Events Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Festival and Events Strategy provides direction; more visitors and participants in festivals and events in the town.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Interdepartment team, Cultural Council, Business and Community Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Build Organizational Capacity for Festivals and Events</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural organizations are collaborating in the production of festivals and events.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Interdepartment team, Cultural Council, Business and Community Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Establish a Signature Event for Richmond Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td>New event launched in Year 4 based on findings Festivals and Events Strategy recommendation.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Interdepartment team, Cultural Council, Business and Community Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Prepare a Cultural Heritage Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy completed in 2013.</td>
<td>Planning Division</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team, Heritage Richmond Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Build Stronger Leadership and Organizational Capacity Among Non-Profit Cultural Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deliver first targeted training events in Year 2; Continued session based on identified needs.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Expand Partnerships with Richmond Hill Public Libraries</td>
<td></td>
<td>New collaborative programming launched in Year 2; Library representation on Cultural Council and Cultural Mapping Partnership; Expand collaboration over life of the Plan</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Richmond Hill Public Library</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal 2 Performance Measure:** Strong public and private support has created a cohesive cultural sector with vital programs and strong commitments to collaboration and resource sharing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Output Measure</th>
<th>Lead Town Responsibility</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3: An Inclusive Cultural Community</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Develop an Inclusive Community Programs Calendar</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Launch new calendar in Year 2 in conjunction with new Cultural Portal; Monitor increased 'hits' generated over time.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team, IT Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Strengthen and Expand Youth Engagement in Culture</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Youth representative joins Cultural Council in Year 2; Youth needs and perspectives considered in all Council's discussion.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Cultural Council, Richmond Hill Public Library, Interdepartmental Culture Team, Community Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Connect High School Student Volunteer Requirements to Cultural Sector Development</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Initial volunteer placements established in Year 2; Increased number of placements annually.</td>
<td>Community Services and Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>Youth Action Committee, Local Secondary Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Establish Apprenticeship Programs for Youth</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Five apprenticeships established in Year 3; Increased numbers over time.</td>
<td>Community Services and Strategic Initiations</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team, Business, Community, Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Create a Cultural Fusion Event for Youth</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Engage youth in event design beginning in Year 2 (2013); Launch event in Year 3 (2014); Evaluate and refine continuing events.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Youth Action Committee, Local Secondary Schools, Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Expand Intergenerational Programming</td>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Established linkages and engage seniors and youth networks beginning in Year 3; Launch new programs in Year 4</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Youth Action Committee, Local Secondary Schools, Community Organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal 3 Performance Measure:** Diverse cultural opportunities available to meet the needs of all parts of the community relevant through all phases of life.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Output Measure</th>
<th>Lead Town Responsibility</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 4: Places and Spaces for Culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Year 1</strong> <strong>S</strong> <strong>M</strong> <strong>L</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Develop and Implement an Integrated Public Art Master Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Public Art Master Plan completed in Year 1; Program launched in Year 3; Number of installations increase as Program implemented.</td>
<td>Planning Division</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team, Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Undertake a Comprehensive Inventory of Cultural Spaces and Facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inventory completed in Year 2; On-line database created in Year 3.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Planning Division, IT Division, Interdepartmental Culture Team, Asset Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Cultural Facility Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
<td>SWOT analysis in Year 2; New facilities to address gaps developed in Year 4 through 10.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team, Cultural Council, Asset Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Ensure Cultural Resources &amp; Opportunities are Central to the Development of the Civic Centre Precinct Project</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Plan informs development of Civic Precinct Vision by People Plan Task Force in Year 1; New cultural infrastructure and programming implemented in Years 4 through 10.</td>
<td>Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>Task Force Committee, Community Services, Planning Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Strengthen Cultural Districts and Corridors in Richmond Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td>CIP implemented for Cultural Districts in Year 3; 25% of resident businesses in the districts access provision in CIP by year 10.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Develop Affordable and Accessible Spaces for Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify potential spaces and financing tools beginning in Year 3; New spaces identified and increased in Years 4 through 10.</td>
<td>Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team, Business Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Explore Feasibility of a Creative or Shared Cultural Hub</td>
<td></td>
<td>Launch Feasibility Study in Year 3; Establish new Creative Hub.</td>
<td>Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>Planning Division, Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal 4 Performance Measure:** Access to a diverse range of cultural places and spaces across the community to meet a wide range of community and business needs.
## Goal 5: A Celebrated Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Output Measure</th>
<th>Lead Town Responsibility</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 Communicate Cultural Success Stories</td>
<td></td>
<td>Produce five high quality video success stories in Year 2; Extend over the life of the Plan.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>Business and Community Groups, Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Profile Cultural 'Icons'</td>
<td></td>
<td>Produce five videos on 'icons' in year 2; Assess and extend in Years 3 and 4.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>Strategic Initiatives, Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Launch a Richmond Hill Cultural Portal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Examine different models in Year 2; Launch new Portal in year 3; Monitor increased resources and 'hits' each year.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>IT Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Create a Richmond Hill Cultural Brand and Coordinated Marketing Initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contract for development of new brand and collective marketing strategy in Years 2 and 3; Implement strategy in Year 4.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Expand and Evolve Use of the Cultural Plan Website</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evolve existing website and use to support communications strategy in Year 1; Expand and continue use over the life of the Plan.</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Culture Team</td>
<td>IT Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Review and Update Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Review goals and action items. Determine renewal of Plan for next 5 - 10 years</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Team</td>
<td>Cultural Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal 5 Performance Measure:** Broad awareness and appreciation of the depth and breadth of cultural resources available in Richmond Hill.
6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Part of the effective implementation of any plan is putting in place mechanisms to track progress toward the vision and goals identified in the plan. The Implementation Plan set out above has Output Measures to track progress in implementing the recommendations in the next 10 years. These measures will be used to generate an annual report card that will provide an update of progress on the implementation of the plan to Council and the community-at-large.

6.2.1 Annual Report Card

The Cultural Plan Annual Report Card will mirror the format of the Richmond Hill Strategic Plan Implementation Annual Report. This reporting structure will ensure that year to year, the community is well informed of what outcomes have been achieved. Additionally, this reporting structure can ensure that support for cultural development remains a key priority of the Town through demonstrating measurable outcomes.

The Cultural Plan Annual Report Card will be an effective monitoring tool because it provides Council, Town Staff and community stakeholders the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan during year-to-year implementation. The short-term actions identified in the Implementation Plan would be the first to be evaluated based on an annual reporting structure. Since some of these recommendations may be multi-year in nature, the report card can describe the progress to date and address any features of the action that may need additional support or resources. The Cultural Plan Annual Report Card is also a place where the successful implementation of actions can be profiled as case studies or stories in the community – demonstrating direct community impact.

The creation of the Cultural Plan Annual Report Card will be the task of Town staff and the Interdepartmental Culture Team as these bodies will have a significant role in the implementation of the recommendations in the Cultural Plan. Distribution of the Cultural Plan Report Card should be timed for release just prior to the Annual Cultural Summit to provide the broader community an opportunity to engage through questions about the plan implementation process.
7 Communications Plan

A strong commitment to communications and community engagement were defining features of the development of the Cultural Plan. These same commitments must continue to support its implementation. A commitment to ongoing communications should be seen as inseparable from efforts aimed at supporting continuous community engagement.

Successful communications requires an understanding of the targeted audience segment each requiring a different set of tactics and tools. Notwithstanding the audience, the Town must strive to deliver messages that are both authentic and substantive.

7.1 Internal Corporate Communications

Successful implementation of the Cultural Plan and advancement of a cultural agenda in Richmond Hill will require shared vision and collaboration across the Corporation. The Interdepartmental Culture Team is ideally positioned to coordinate these internal communications efforts.

Communication Tools

- **Staff Forum** – one of the first priorities proposed for the Interdepartmental Culture Team is convening a forum for staff across the corporation to present the Cultural Plan and to introduce core cultural planning ideas and methodologies.
- **Cultural Plan Updates** – as the Cultural Plan is implemented and specific actions or initiatives launched, the Culture Team should ensure this information is shared with colleagues across departments.
- **Annual Cultural Report** – will provide an update on all actions and achievements across departments in implementing the Cultural Plan.

Key Messages

- Culture is an important corporate responsibility that must be factored into planning and decision-making across departments.
- Implementation of the Cultural Plan has important contributions to make to advancing core Town planning commitments set out in the Strategic Plan, Official Plan and Economic Development Strategy.
7.2 Community and Cultural Stakeholder Communications

Implementing the Cultural Plan will rely on the focused participation of a wide range of individuals and organizations with direct responsibilities for advancing cultural development in the Town. Responsibility for ongoing communications with these groups will be the responsibility of the Town staff and the Interdepartmental Culture Team. The following recommendations in the Cultural Plan provide vehicles around which ongoing communications efforts can be built.

**Communication Tools**

- **Cultural Council** – each of the groups and constituencies to be represented on the Council will have networks, distribution lists and communication vehicles that can be tapped to communicate information to a wide cross-section of Richmond Hill Residents.
- **Annual Cultural Summit** – communications support for the Summit will maintain profile for the Cultural Plan and broader issues of cultural development in Richmond Hill.
- **Expand and Evolve Use of the Cultural Plan Website** – this will provide a central point of focus for the dissemination and sharing of information as implementation of the Plan moves forward.
- **Annual Cultural Report** – will provide both an update and transparency related to actions and achievements in implementing the Cultural Plan.

**Key Messages**

- Implementation of the Cultural Plan and success in ongoing cultural planning and development relies on the collaboration and contributions of many groups and organizations.
- Diversity, gender and age will be reflected across all levels of cultural planning and development.

7.3 The Wider Community

Ultimately, successful implementation of the Cultural Plan will result in broadened awareness and increased participation in cultural activity across the community. Once again, the Cultural Plan contains recommendations aimed at advancing this goal. Responsibility for communications with this wider audience will be a collaborative effort drawing on the corporate communications resources and capacities of the Town and the Interdepartmental Culture Team. An important consideration will be the effective coordination of communications related to the Cultural Plan and other Town plans and initiatives.
Communication Tools

- The Town's website
- The Cultural Plan website and Cultural Portal
- Traditional print media (e.g., the Liberal Newspaper)
- Multicultural media
- Greater use of web-based and social media tools (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)

Key Messages

- The Cultural Plan is a priority for the town that will bring a wide range of social and economic benefits to our community.
- Diversity, gender and age will be reflected across all levels of cultural planning and development.

“Culture can be about service and sharing - to become a community that serves one another and shares with one another. Character, honesty, civility - I hope all of this will appear in our cultural plan.”

Community Member