



**INSPIRE**

**ST. CATHARINES**

**CULTURE PLAN 2020**



A special event at Market Square,  
Downtown St. Catharines

Cover image: Band Concert in the Walter Ostanek Pavilion, Montebello Park

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This is a project of the  
City of St. Catharines



In collaboration with



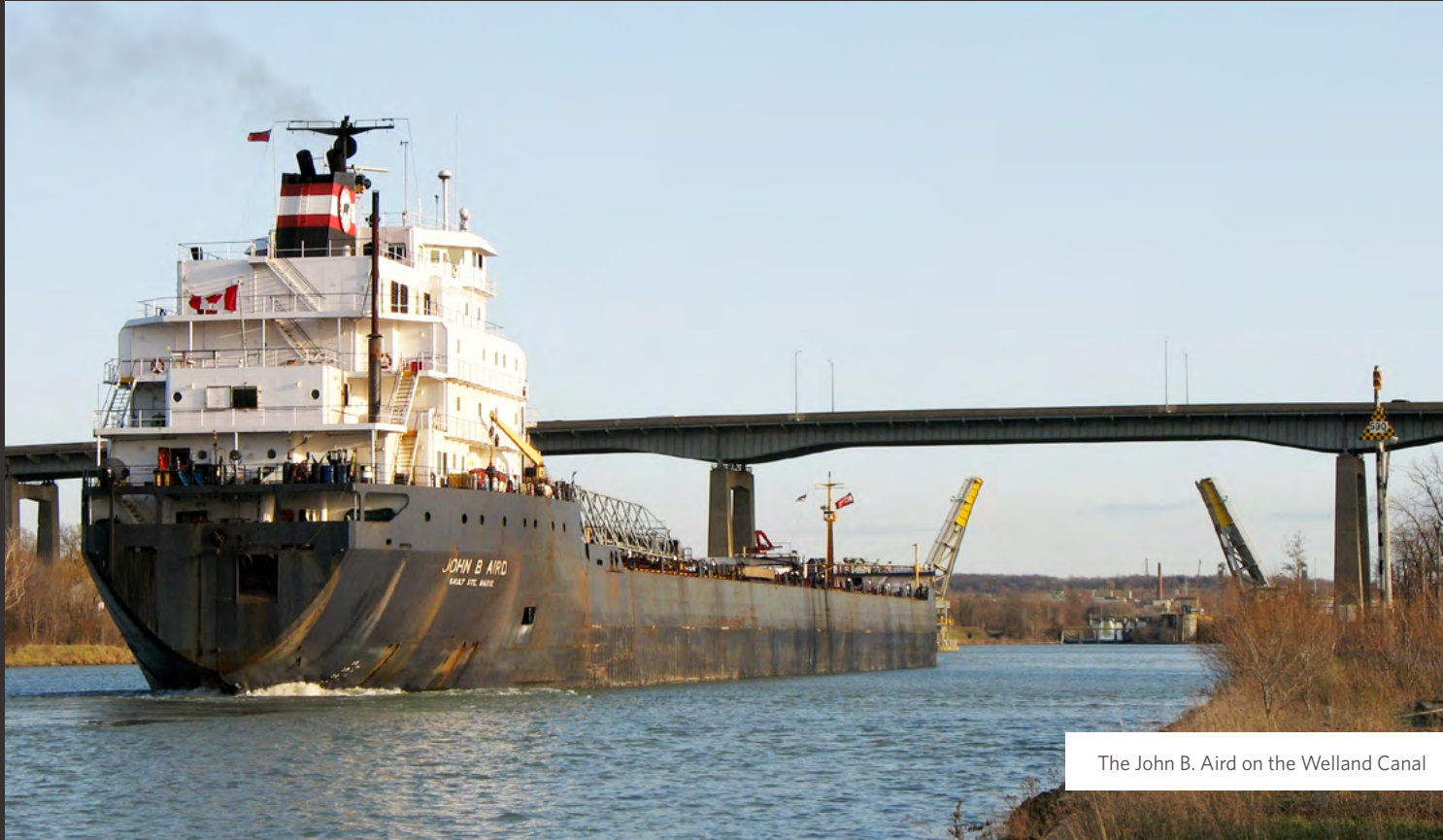
This project has been made possible with the  
support of the Government of Ontario





Morningstar Mill at Decew Falls

# Introduction



The John B. Aird on the Welland Canal

The Welland Canal was born here. The Underground Railroad ended here. Known as “The Garden City,” St. Catharines grew through industry and entrepreneurialism and today is celebrated by residents as a warm and friendly place with the amenities of a large city and the heart of a small town. St. Catharines is in economic transition and its cultural diversity, resources and opportunities are poised to contribute to the re-emergence of St. Catharines as a thriving, vital community.

St. Catharines is on the southern shores of Lake Ontario, within the region of Niagara in south-central Ontario. Proud of its history, with extensive built heritage, the city’s gardens, parks, trails, waterways and the Niagara escarpment contribute to a rich natural landscape. Originally incorporated as a town in 1845 and as a city in 1876, today St. Catharines has a population of 131,400 and is the largest municipality in Niagara. One of twelve lower-tier municipalities, the City of St. Catharines serves nearly a third of Niagara’s 431,346 residents. It is 134 km from Toronto in one direction and 50 km from Buffalo in the other, and is surrounded by Canada’s premier tourism attractions, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Niagara Wine Region.

St. Catharines is in a time of transition. The economy in St. Catharines is undergoing seismic changes with the loss of manufacturing jobs and an increased focus on creative and green economic opportunities; the municipal boundary, surrounded by the Provincial Greenbelt, is nearly “built out”; and local social service agencies are working hard to address homelessness, poverty and education levels.

During this flux, the City of St. Catharines has recognized the strength of its cultural sector. Over the past 12 years the City has increased its cultural asset portfolio and begun direct investment into the creative sector, with positive results. In 2008 City Council committed to a major new investment: the anticipated St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre, a partnership project with Brock University, and the first purpose-built arts facility developed by the municipality. The Arts Centre will open in 2015 and represents an unprecedented three-tier government investment of \$60.7 million into its construction. In 2012 the City committed to another key capital project: the \$50m Meridian Centre opened downtown in late 2014.

With major cultural projects on the horizon, the time is ripe for the municipality to link its cultural assets, and its cultural investment, to serve cultural, economic, environmental and social priorities.

Wordle generated from one-word descriptions of St. Catharines - from the General Population Survey on Cultural Participation



# What is a Municipal Culture Plan?

The Province of Ontario describes cultural planning as “a place-based approach to planning and development. It is a process for identifying and leveraging a community’s cultural resources, strengthening the management of those resources, and integrating those resources across all facets of local planning and decision making<sup>1</sup>.”

This plan provides a framework to integrate culture into municipal priorities and decision-making, and aims to build a shared language across sectors and a common understanding of how culture can serve diverse priorities. The Inspire St. Catharines: Culture Plan 2020 is a tool for the City to respond to the challenges facing the community. It identifies issues in the planning, organization and delivery of culture, explores the links between culture and sustainability, and defines cultural priorities and initiatives for the City and its community partners to implement. The success of the plan relies on the City working with cultural groups and organizations, service providers, the business community and the community at large. This plan will nurture a healthy and vibrant community for now and for years to come and reinforce **cultural sustainability** as one of the four major pillars of the community’s sustainable future.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Province of Ontario



Chorus Niagara -  
Photo Credit: Kevin Argue

## Acknowledgements

This plan was developed in partnership between Lord Cultural Resources and staff and volunteers at the City of St. Catharines. The Culture Plan Cross-Sectoral Committee advised on the development of the Culture Plan throughout the process. Its members represented a variety of agencies and perspectives:

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The City of St. Catharines is grateful for funding from the Province of Ontario which made the planning process possible.

It is essential to acknowledge the hundreds of St. Catharines' residents who participated in the development of this plan, through surveys, social media, meetings, on-the-street interviews, "what is culture?" postcards, six-word stories and more. This contribution of thought and perspective informs the heart of the plan.



# Defining Culture

In early consultations, the question “what is culture?” emerged again and again. Culture can be defined and interpreted in many different ways. Culture takes on many forms and means different things to different people in different contexts. For the purpose of this plan, culture has been defined as follows:

*Culture is the collective identity of St. Catharines - its people, places, and expressions. It is the shared experiences that bind us as a community - our traditions, memories, values, vision, creations and legacies.*

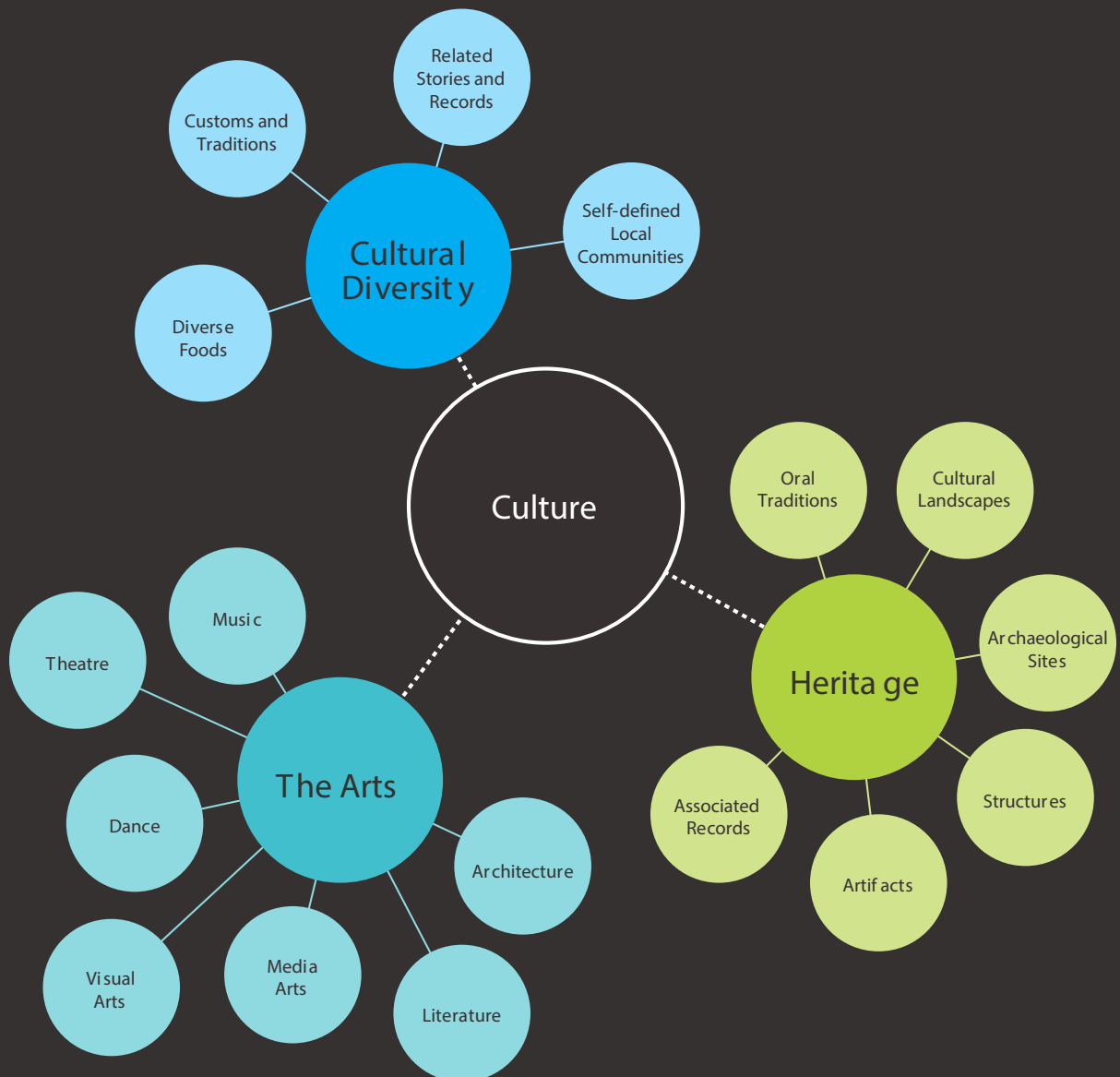
*Our residents engage in culture through the arts, heritage and recreation, in their connections to community roots and our built and natural environment, and by seeking access to knowledge.*

*Culture is constantly negotiated and, dynamic, and is experienced in all connections between people.*

From top (clockwise):  
In the Soil Festival  
Niagara Folk Arts Festival  
Summer Band Concerts in  
Montebello Park



Within this document the terms arts, heritage and cultural diversity, are frequently used. The word “culture” embraces all of these concepts. Each of these three “areas” shapes community identity. They reflect shared experiences through the celebration of traditions, collective memories and values, new ideas and creations, and through the preservation of all forms of legacy.



# Planning Process

The City of St. Catharines engaged Lord Cultural Resources to facilitate a process towards a Culture Plan. The Culture Plan was commissioned to assess the key issues facing the municipality and to develop a set of actionable, implementable and measurable key priorities. The process was directed by Parks, Recreation and Culture Services and guided by the City appointed Cross-Sectoral Committee comprised of community leaders.

The planning process progressed along four streams: Internal Review and Analysis, Public Consultation and Engagement, Community Scan and Final Culture Plan. The tasks for each of these streams are described in the appendices.

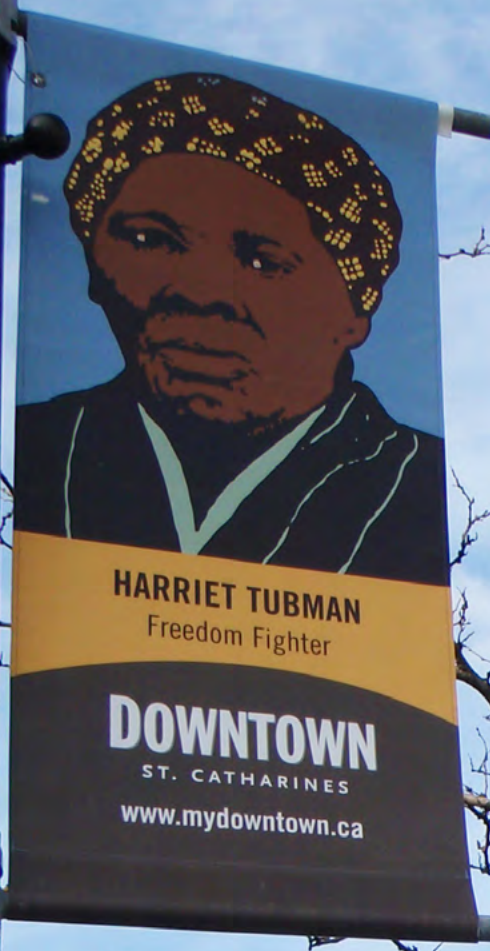
Two reports were developed under separate cover that are referenced throughout the plan. The Internal Analysis undertook a review of departmental functions, city plans and policies, Committees of Council and financial investment – all as they relate to cultural service delivery, asset management, community development and planning. The State of Culture Report provides substantial information on: the affect of City investment into the cultural sector through the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program (SCCIP) attendance and participation at selected cultural sites; the results of two surveys, one to local artists and one to the general population; and it includes maps that were developed in the cultural asset mapping process.



Impressions of Culture: Residents submitted their ideas of culture on postcards which contributed to an exhibit at City Hall.

# Vision Statement

The City of St. Catharines boasts a dynamic and robust cultural sector, and values the arts, heritage and culture as essential to community building and sustainability. St. Catharines supports and promotes culture to enrich the lives of its residents, attract new people and ideas, bolster economic development and social inclusion and celebrate its unique identity. The City will nurture, support and celebrate St. Catharines distinct identity, creativity and diversity through the promotion and advancement of a wide range of cultural activities, events, facilities, programs and services that serve all citizens of St. Catharines regardless of age, ethnicity or income.



Downtown, St. Catharines

# Culture Plan Priorities

Seven priorities are identified in this plan to leverage the opportunities culture offers the City of St. Catharines and its community partners. The priorities are intended to inform and direct future decision-making within the City and are not presented in order of priority. The priorities and their initiatives are intended as a guide, since future change is inevitable and new opportunities will emerge.



Carousel Players and Friends



Student volunteers with Amy Keating in the Carousel Players/ Castlemoon Theatre production of *Water Under the Bridge*

## Priority 1. Communicate the experiences and value of culture to St. Catharines' residents.

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St. Catharines offers a cultural richness to residents and visitors alike. Theatre, music, dance and visual arts, heritage districts, historic sites and museums, festivals and special events are all available in St. Catharines for people's enjoyment and to enrich their lives. While the future Performing Arts Centre has increased local awareness of culture as a significant component of the community's future, there are still many who don't know how to find out what's going on in the cultural sector. The opening of the PAC will help change this, but in the meantime, there is much cultural activity taking place now that needs audiences and participation.

The diversity of St. Catharines' cultural experiences remains relatively hidden from public view, and few local cultural organizations have the resources to market to tourists. Collective marketing and promotion of the cultural sector has been supported by the City over the past decade,

and on-line tools are being more effectively used than ever before. The City supports promotion of arts, heritage and festivals through their main website ([www.stcatharines.ca](http://www.stcatharines.ca)), through their tourism website ([www.tourismstcatharines.ca](http://www.tourismstcatharines.ca)) and City Guide, and through the Recreation Leisure Guide. In the fall of 2012 the City led the launch of [www.cNiagara.ca](http://www.cNiagara.ca), a website promoting cultural events across Niagara.

While this marketing work has been strong, the Culture Plan consultation process revealed opportunities for improving the local information-sharing system that can improve overall awareness of what St. Catharines has to offer. For example, Brock University students and new employees at the City could benefit from a City Guide and/or Leisure Guide when they arrive. The Economic Development and Customer Service department regularly provides information to tourists and prospective businesses, and City information could also

be offered to new Canadians arriving in St. Catharines, as well as other newcomers who would benefit from a City or Leisure Guide.

General awareness is only part of the sector's communication needs. The value of culture in all aspects of community planning and development is often overlooked. Actively participating in culture – arts, heritage or local festivals – can positively affect individual development and social cohesion.

### IMPERATIVE

By cultivating awareness of the diversity of cultural experiences available in St. Catharines the City will support: downtown revitalization efforts; the success of the future Performing Arts Centre; and the *Tending Our Garden City Plan*.

Communicating the value of culture in all aspects of City programs and planning will encourage more residents to participate in cultural experiences and foster civic pride. Deepening awareness of the many ways culture can help build a community will open eyes and subsequently new doors for future partnerships and development.

### INITIATIVES

1. Facilitate and support collective marketing initiatives, including cross-promotion, for all cultural organizations and events in the community.
2. Assess the City's marketing and interpretive materials and develop a plan to strengthen the promotion and awareness of municipal cultural assets.
3. Evaluate the City's protocols for welcoming and providing information to newcomers. Consider the distinct needs of new Canadians, Brock University and Niagara College students, new businesses and new municipal employees.
4. Identify strategies for celebrating local cultural success stories and the contributions of cultural workers and businesses.





Strumming at the Cicada Festival.  
Photo Credit: Cicada Festival on Henley Island

## Priority 2. Foster participation in arts, heritage and cultural experiences.

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In St. Catharines there are many opportunities to participate in heritage and arts experiences, through the City's recreation programs, in workshops and activities led by local arts organizations, volunteer experiences at the St. Catharines Museum, with the Friends of Morningstar Mill or Friends of the Carousel, and more. There are also more passive ways to experience culture: the city's many memorials, historic buildings and sites; St. Catharines' four heritage districts; and the City's parks and trails offer some of the best examples of the region's built and natural heritage and opportunities for cultural discovery.

In St. Catharines<sup>2</sup> local participation in festivals is high, which suggests a strong interest in coming together as a community to celebrate and enjoy cultural experiences.

Yet participation in hands-on programming is often low. Recreation programs have been cancelled due to lack of registrations, and local arts organizations often struggle to reach youth and adult participants, often offering low or no-cost activities to ensure access.

In community consultations it was suggested that many residents of St. Catharines do not partake in cultural activities because of real or perceived barriers. Financial access, lack of public transportation to venues and sites, broad interests and a diverse demographic were all cited as contributing to less than optimal cultural participation.

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<sup>2</sup> See State of Culture Report for General Survey and Participation Statistics

## IMPERATIVE

The City has a role to play in promoting all aspects of cultural participation. Local arts and heritage organizations tell local stories, express local ideas and concerns, and celebrate local achievements. Participatory experiences that are locally-inspired can be instrumental in growing healthy individuals and helping them make powerful connections to their environment. Cultural participation can have a positive influence on people's lives, deepen their relationship with the local community and contribute to community building.

## INITIATIVES

1. Review and strengthen the support and development of existing and emerging festivals, celebrations and events, taking into consideration equitable access, transparency and efficiency.
2. Further develop opportunities to experience arts and heritage through direct programming, in partnership, and through investment in the cultural sector.
3. Investigate barriers to cultural access and identify strategies to increase participation.
4. Develop a comprehensive municipal volunteer policy that includes recruitment, management and recognition of volunteers, taking into consideration the current role of volunteers across the corporation.



Suitcase in Point Theatre Company

### Priority 3. Cultivate the growth and development of the creative sector.

As the St. Catharines economy changes, the creative sector grows in importance. It is a source of entrepreneurs and new businesses, a contributor to making the city more attractive for new businesses, workers and doctors, and a component of a youth retention strategy. The Downtown Creative Cluster Master Plan identified the future St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre and the Marilyn I Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts as cornerstones in the strategy to revitalize downtown St. Catharines and return it to its glory days as a bustling, vibrant community heart.

In cultural asset mapping<sup>3</sup> undertaken for this plan, downtown St. Catharines has the largest cluster of cultural businesses and organizations. What was perhaps more surprising was the consistent spread of cultural assets across most of the city. Cultural workers and businesses populate all corners of St. Catharines and thus affect every neighbourhood in the city.

The City of St. Catharines has recognized that cultural investment is a contributor to economic renewal: the investment in the future arts centre is the most recent example. The past decade has seen the emergence of the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program (SCCIP) and initiatives such as nGen (now part of Innovate Niagara), the new media incubator that continues to thrive since it opened in 2008. SCCIP has stimulated significant growth in the not for profit arts sector and fostered new arts facilities, more jobs, more private sector and upper-level government investment, and a more vibrant, engaged sector<sup>4</sup>. This was an important factor in the feasibility of the arts centre, as was the renewed commitment and interest by Brock University in a partnership with the City. Attracting the creative sector matters to the future of St. Catharines.

Yet despite the City's investment, and the development of an arts centre, many local arts organizations struggle with

<sup>3</sup> State of Culture Report, Cultural Asset Mapping

<sup>4</sup> State of Culture Report, St Catharines Cultural Investment Program Economic Impact

organizational capacity, sustainable funding levels and infrastructure issues. There is a recent perception of vitality and success within the arts sector, yet organizations are laying off staff, struggling with cash flow and worrying about the rental rates of the future arts centre. Further work is required to analyze how the City can further its investment in this sector, creatively and strategically. An evaluation of soft infrastructure, sustainability issues, resource sharing and strategies for motivating investment from other sectors will all be part of the solution.

### **IMPERATIVE**

A creative community attracts creative sector workers. A strong and vibrant creative sector, both for and not-for profit, need to be part of the City's long-term strategy for economic renewal. Organizational growth, professional development and revenue and business-development strategies are essential for the creative sector to be a viable partner in the future growth and sustainability of St. Catharines.

### **INITIATIVES**

1. Build on the success of the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program to further strengthen organizational capacity, revenue development and market-readiness within the local cultural sector.
2. Investigate the development and resourcing of an arms-length or independent umbrella arts authority.
3. Engage the private sector with arts and heritage organizations, with particular attention to deeper involvement in governance, partnerships and skills development.
4. Evaluate the availability of sufficient and appropriate facilities for arts development and presentation, taking into consideration the future changes in downtown and their potential effect on pre-existing artist studios and shared creative spaces.



Grist Mill at Morningstar Mill site

## Priority 4. Further develop the planning, management and coordination of heritage assets and historical services.

St. Catharines' history spans four centuries and is reflected in the many heritage assets within the city. Historic sites and museums, private homes, attractions, cemeteries, memorials and cenotaphs all represent the community's storied past. The first-rate St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre preserves and interprets the city's history; the Lakeside Park Carousel, Morningstar Mill and the British Methodist Episcopal Church- Salem Chapel are some of the many beloved and significant heritage sites in St. Catharines. As well, remnants of the first three Welland Canals can be found in many of the City's parks, and the natural heritage of St. Catharines is a prevalent and valued feature of The Garden City.

During focus groups, local residents spoke of the lost historic landmarks that have disappeared over the years: the Russell Hotel, The Downtown YMCA, the Opera House, the Carnegie Library and more. Heritage preservation must be a priority if

St. Catharines' built heritage is to remain. These cultural assets represent not only the people and stories of St. Catharines, they provide unique landmarks for community and contribute to the distinctiveness of our built environment.

Heritage preservation is a responsibility for both the public and private sector. The City has a leadership role to play in how it maintains and manages the heritage properties it owns, and it can develop strategies to encourage private sector responsiveness to preservation goals as well. The City's Adaptive Heritage Re-Use Policy and its Heritage Façade Grants program are tools that serve this end, and more can be done.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Services Department at the City is primarily responsible for Historical Services in the community. Planning and Building Services tends to the city's heritage planning matters.

While both departments manage these services very well, there are still some areas that can be improved by coordination. How can these departments work together to ensure that resources and information are shared, that all heritage assets are managed and cared for appropriately, and that the community is engaged in decision-making related to these assets when appropriate?

### **IMPERATIVE**

Heritage preservation in the private and public sector must be a priority for the City as part of cultivating a distinct sense of place and a connected community. Built heritage adds meaning to local landscape and fosters a stronger sense of civic identity for local neighbourhoods. Coordinated effort and further development of preservation efforts, private sector support, education and promotion will serve to pass these legacies on to future generations.

### **INITIATIVES**

1. Build on existing incentives for heritage preservation and encourage growth of single building heritage designations. Consider establishing a dedicated Heritage Planner position within the City's complement of staff to build on the opportunities identified.
2. Preserve, maintain and promote access and interpretation of the remnants of the first three Welland Canals.
3. Recognize the significant role of Black History in our community, and continue to evaluate strategies for preserving, interpreting and promoting that history.
4. Evaluate the success of Doors Open in St. Catharines and consider options for the presentation of same or similar programs and strategies to celebrate the community's built heritage.



Performer at the Niagara Folk Arts Festival

## Priority 5. Recognize and embrace the city's cultural diversity as a cornerstone for civic engagement.

Diversity goes beyond where a person is born. St. Catharines is a mix of different religions, abilities, sexual orientations, ethnicities, ages, genders etc. Diversity is generally perceived as an asset for a community. It increases attractiveness for culturally diverse businesses and workers, it is a sign of a progressive and tolerant community that welcomes new people, ideas and perspectives, and it can serve to further community development goals. Diverse perspectives in decision-making will foster strategies that consider a broader range of opinion, skill set and experience. An inclusive community embraces grass-roots initiatives and encourages the emergence of new ideas.

St. Catharines' cultural diversity was first formally recognized with the creation of the Niagara Folk Arts Festival in 1968, a festival

that continues to be celebrated in local neighbourhoods each May/June. The Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines is the centre of local cultural diversity as it provides services to new Canadians and offers language classes (English, Spanish, Mandarin), local awareness and interaction between residents and new Canadians, and the annual festival.

In the instance of inclusivity and diversity, "the cart must follow the horse." Individuals from diverse backgrounds may not feel included if they do not see themselves reflected in diverse facets of community life. In community consultations<sup>5</sup> for this plan youth, women and people of visible minorities noted that representation reflective of them was rare in the City's leadership and committees. They observed that cultural diversity was a topic relegated to one committee which is no longer

<sup>5</sup> See Culture Café on Diversity and Inclusivity, available on Facebook

operating. Others at the session described youth volunteers aging-out of the Youth Advisory Committee and unsuccessfully applying to other City committees. Questions were asked about the City's formal practices and policies as they pertain to inclusiveness and diversity. Simultaneously, community members applauded recent efforts to develop a grocery co-op in downtown and the Niagara Car Share program as positive signs that the community and its leadership are ready to embrace new ideas.

### **IMPERATIVE**

The City can play a leadership role in Niagara, as inclusivity is an issue in most sectors. The City should apply itself to reflect the community's diversity and develop broader representation of all kinds within the municipality's processes.

### **INITIATIVES**

1. Recognize the importance of representing the diversity of our community consistently in all City marketing and communication materials and develop communications policy as appropriate.
2. Recognize the importance of engaging youth with cultural initiatives, as a means of strengthening their civic and community engagement in the future, and develop strategies to deepen youth engagement with local culture.
3. Continue to support the development of grass roots initiatives that serve local community, reflect our distinct culture and foster distinct place-making.
4. Evaluate all forms of diversity in City Committees, consider the adoption of language in all committee Terms of Reference to address the value of inclusivity, and actively recruit diverse representation for all committees.





Screenshots from one of four Roving Camera videos, an outreach initiative of the Culture Plan. Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0ImXun1zGE>

## Priority 6. Leverage culture to strengthen St. Catharines' distinct sense of place and community.

There are areas of great beauty in St. Catharines and there are other areas that reflect the “geography of nowhere”<sup>6</sup> that is bemoaned across North America by people seeking to live in communities that are distinct and authentic. Most often, those people are the creative workers sought for a changing economy.

Architecture, built heritage, urban design, parks, parkettes and landscaping are elements in the City’s public realm that can reflect what is unique in a community. Arts, history, people and their stories can also influence public realm development. Public art, outdoor festivals and events, parades and celebrations – when developed and invested in, these contribute to vitality and meaning in our public realm and generate a sense of community. A community’s shared culture – what is distinct in its environment,

and its self-expression and history – can be expressed in the public realm in real and influential ways. The City’s Urban Design Guidelines and The Garden City Plan recognize the value of culture in the public realm, laying important groundwork for the inclusion of culture.

For example, Henry of Pelham Winery is historically named, and the Speck Family owners understand the role culture plays in their contemporary wine producing business. The historic property includes public art on their grounds and original art on their walls, and there is a heritage plaque commemorating an abandoned family cemetery on their property. Another business that understands the value of placemaking is the Pen Centre, Niagara’s largest retail mall, which recently changed its roadway sign to incorporate green and purple grape leaves.

<sup>6</sup> The Geography Of Nowhere: The Rise And Decline of America’s Man-Made Landscape by James Howard Kunstler explores the effects of suburban sprawl, civil planning and the automobile on American society.

Local residents understand the significance of the leaves; a visitor simply sees a sign that is unexpected and beautiful, surprisingly, and appreciates the Pen Centre as a slightly more distinct place than other malls.

Working with artists, historians, designers and architects, as well as with local community residents, the City can foster the development of authentic, more attractive neighbourhoods and local pride of place. Public improvements that are meaningful to residents, that reflect local stories and experiences, will strengthen the identity of St. Catharines and local civic pride. The addition of gardens, public art and programs that draw people out of their homes will increase civic engagement and sense of community.

### **IMPERATIVE**

The public realm will be positively influenced when it is developed with culture as a lens, considering both contemporary cultural realities as well as historic. St. Catharines must leverage its cultural resources in strategies and programs that shape the local

built and natural landscape. The result will be greater pride of place and a stronger sense of community.

### **INITIATIVES**

1. Foster an environment to attract cultural and creative sector workers and businesses to St. Catharines and develop strategies for the development of creative mixed use spaces, including live/work space for artists.
2. Develop, resource and implement a public art plan, recognizing the role of public art in urban design and in cultivating a distinct sense of place at a neighbourhood level.
3. Maximize City-owned heritage buildings and structures as cornerstones of local community and civic pride when considering programs, rental opportunities or other plans for the future.
4. Identify key cultural assets across the city and develop strategies to maximize their use for local residents at a neighbourhood level. Include consideration of cultural neighbourhood identification through street signage and special promotions.



Rodman Hall Art Centre, Brock University

## Priority 7. Foster the cross-departmental management and delivery of arts and heritage service delivery, planning and community development.

Culture in all its forms is primarily managed within three distinct City departments / divisions: the Parks, Recreation and Culture Services department, home to Programs and Cultural Services, and the Performing Arts Centre; Economic Development and Tourism, within the CAO's office; and the Planning and Building Services department. Approximately one third of City Council's citizen committees are involved in cultural service delivery directly or indirectly. Communication and coordination are challenging when it comes to cultural service delivery and development.

This plan sought feedback from every City department, often on multiple occasions, and the connections between culture and many aspects of municipal management were clearly identified. Recommendations stemming from the Internal Analysis were picked up by the Citizens-First Evaluation; Human Resources found value in the

cultural asset mapping; and ideas for sharing construction information with the public emerged from a cultural asset mapping project on the horizon.

How can the City best utilize and manage all of its culture-related resources effectively, including its volunteer committees, to deliver cultural services efficiently to the residents of St. Catharines? This plan recommends that culture-specific initiatives be guided by an Internal Advisory Culture Team. As well, it is expected that this team will serve the municipality as a resource for other City plans, as it will offer a kaleidoscopic perspective with a cultural lens.

The development of this plan has identified a number of areas for immediate attention, but there are other initiatives that will emerge in the future that a cross-departmental committee will be well-suited to evaluate and support.

## IMPERATIVE

The City should encourage regular intra-departmental communication and facilitate more collaboration amongst City staff. While the City's breadth of committees may require review, they continue to be an important contributor to help guide City staff and Council on cultural matters.

## INITIATIVES

1. Build on Phase 1 of the Cultural Asset Mapping initiative, addressing maintenance, function and cross-departmental planning and promotional needs.
2. Evaluate the breadth of City Committees engaged in culture-related initiatives and identify communication strategies and efficiencies amongst them.
3. Evaluate collections within the municipality and identify efficiencies and policy and procedural clarifications, i.e. civic art, archives, Museum etc.
4. Develop a cross-departmental working group to address cultural service delivery, communication and community development. Develop Cultural Success Indicators that address all pillars of sustainability and that contribute to the implementation of this plan.

# Plans for the Future: A Context for Culture

Cultural investment and service delivery in the City of St. Catharines must respond to multiple municipal plans. This section of the Inspire Plan draws links between the many facets of culture, three major City plans and current City priorities. Culture's relationship to economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainability is considered here because the influence of culture can be powerful if understood and leveraged by other sectors. Future municipal plans and priorities can utilize the "cultural lens" described here to strengthen their goals and to help achieve success.

## CULTURE'S ROLE IN SUSTAINABILITY

St. Catharines approved its first sustainability plan in 2011 and it is the City of St. Catharines' strategic plan. *Tending Our Garden City* confirms the municipality's commitment to the four pillars of sustainability: economic, environment, social and culture. The vision states:

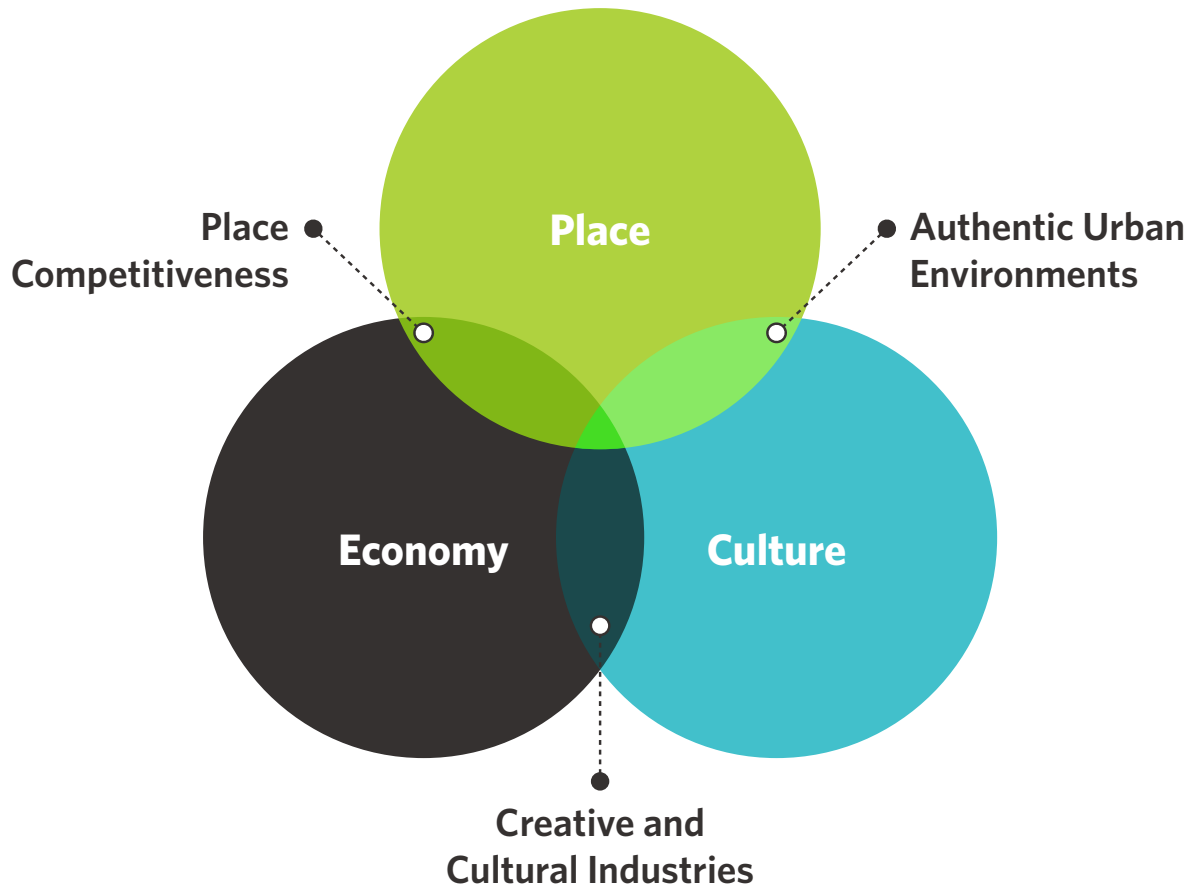
*"A sustainable community works together to take on the challenges ahead."*



Cicada Fest on Henley Island

The focus of the plan is on working together, across sectors, to find solutions to six challenges that can negatively affect our community's future:

1. The Global Economy
2. Rising Energy Prices
3. Climate Change
4. Infrastructure
5. Poverty
6. Natural Resource Scarcity



As the Province's designated urban growth centre in Niagara, St. Catharines is destined to become denser and the relationship between economy, place and culture will become more and more pronounced. Quality of life in a dense environment requires cultural assets: sensitive architecture, built heritage, urban design and public art will make the built and street environments attractive and distinctive; festivals and events offer opportunities to gather and share experiences with neighbours; theatres, galleries, restaurants and clubs provide vibrant experiences that make a dense urban environment exciting and chic. A diverse nightlife equates with more pedestrian activity, lower crime rates, a sense of safety and higher property values<sup>7</sup>. Artists will gentrify neighbourhoods that are perceived as sketchy by others. Thus, culture directly influences the environmental pillar of sustainability.

St. Catharines will benefit by attracting the "creative class" -- those increasingly involved in the arts & knowledge-based economies, including digital & interactive media businesses. The City has committed to this concept with municipal investments in the future St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre and in the development of nGen, Niagara's Interactive Media Generator, the city's hub for innovation, incubation and business development. As described later in this plan, direct municipal investment in the cultural sector has increased the number of jobs in the arts, and generated more activity, new optimism and a sector ready to work with its community. The cultural sector is working with the new hospital, with education partners, with youth and with the business community on initiatives that will contribute to this changing economy. Culture influences the economic pillar of sustainability through all of these initiatives and more.

Culture can have an influence on the social pillar, as well. A European Study entitled *The Role of Culture in Reducing and Preventing Poverty and Social Exclusion*<sup>8</sup>, notes:

*"There are many different ways in which access to and participation in cultural activities can be very important in promoting greater social inclusion. These include:*

- *Building skills and self-confidence*
- *Enhancing self-esteem and identity*
- *Overcoming cultural diversity and discrimination*
- *Creating employment opportunities*
- *Promoting social integration"*

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<sup>7</sup> Beyond Anecdotal Evidence: The Spillover Effects of Investment in Cultural Facilities, Ryerson University, Toronto Artscape, 2003

<sup>8</sup> *The Role of Culture in Reducing and Preventing Poverty and Social Exclusion*, Commissioned by the European Commission from the Centre for Public Policy at Northumbria University, 2011, Policy Study Findings, pages 2 - 3. Note: "Cultural activities" include the arts, sports, media, theatre, museums, libraries, although the study notes a broader definition of culture would be beneficial.

Social outcome analysis is not a part of this plan, however, culture does have a role to play in the social health of the community. Across Canada there are examples of initiatives and organizations that utilize the expertise and assets found in the cultural sector to change the socio-demographic realities of those caught in the poverty cycle: murals are painted by high-risk youth through job creation programs; community art centres bring people together in low-income neighbourhoods; dance programs offer spark to seniors in residential homes. Cultural activities in theatre, galleries, museums and libraries can provide a positive influence at a local neighbourhood level.

In St. Catharines an under-resourced cultural sector and a two-tier local government system that separates social services from cultural services affect the neighbourhood experience of culture, in particular the kind of programming that can attract residents who have not traditionally engaged in cultural activity. The future social health of St. Catharines will be better-served when culture is better understood as an influential, community-building partner.

## CULTURAL VITALITY

Cultural vitality is a pillar of community sustainability that is as essential and distinctive as the pillars of economic, social and environmental health. But it is the least understood by community leaders. If a community wants to attract business, knowledge-economy workers, doctors and youth it must have a strong sense of community identity, and be a place that is culturally vibrant.

So what is “cultural vitality” and how does a community get it? It is often described as being present in a community that has a sense of self and purpose. Perhaps it is a blend: a distinct sense of place; the shared experiences of a community that build a collective sense of identity; and the inclusion of distinct peoples, voices and stories that reflect all of the community. Self-expression, inclusion and creativity are essential to vitality, as is respect and preservation of heritage for future generations.

**Cultural assets, the arts, heritage, and our cultural diversity are fuel for the community’s cultural vitality. Building on the community’s cultural strengths is essential to serve this fourth pillar of a sustainable future.**





Artist Rendering of Performing Arts Centre, downtown St Catharines, opening Fall 2015.

# City Priorities

The City of St. Catharines has many objectives and must take into consideration a wide range of community needs and interests. Culture has become a high-profile priority as a result of the future St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre. The City is simultaneously building the Meridian Centre, and has recently opened the Kiwanis Aquatics Centre and a new parking garage in downtown.

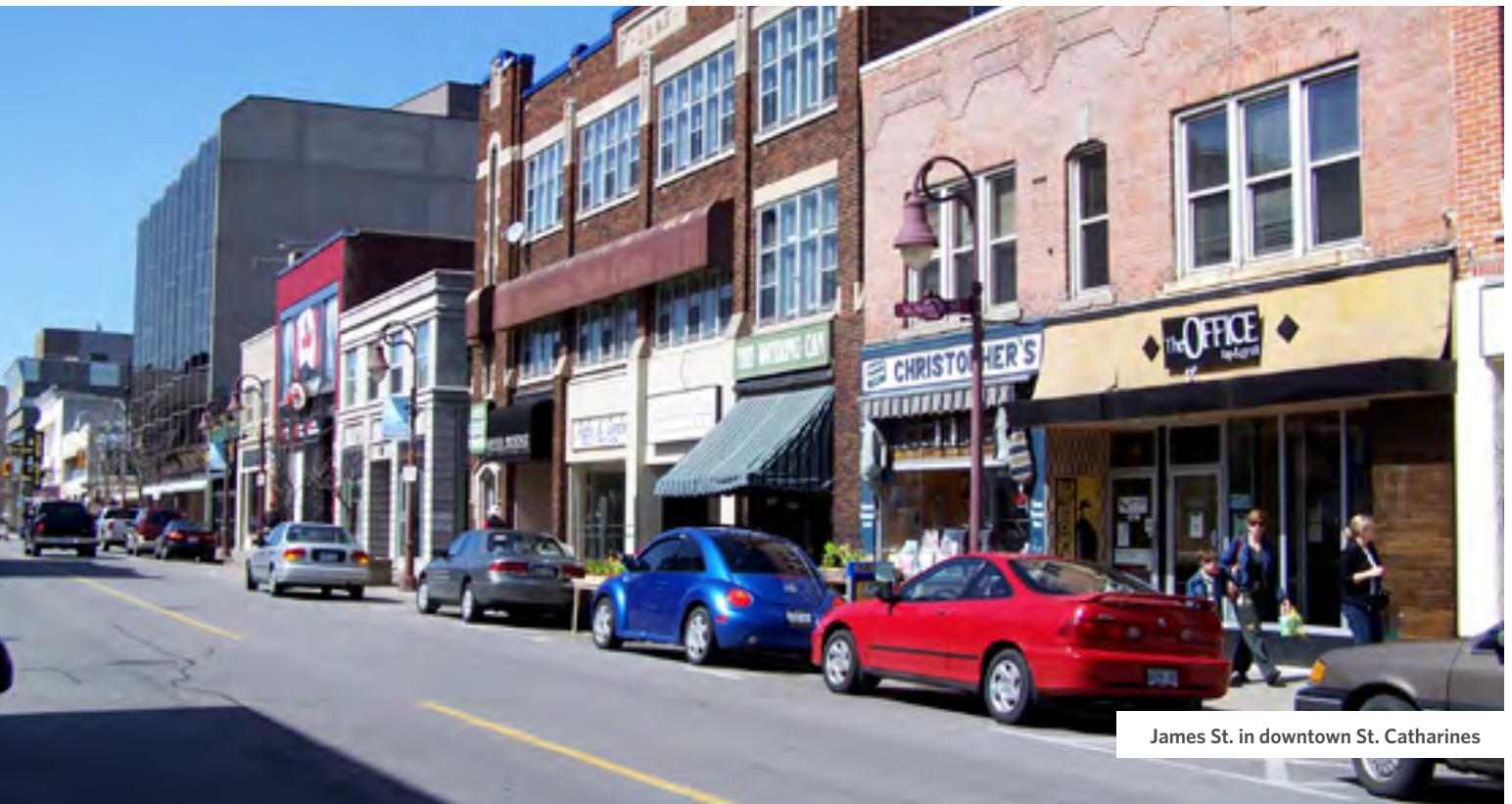
## DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

In the mid 2000's, the City of St. Catharines initiated plans to encourage growth and vitality in the once vibrant urban centre. The City recognized the value of a strong downtown as part of its overall economic growth strategy and the role of culture as a driver for downtown revitalization and a new creative economy. With the development of the Downtown Creative Cluster Master Plan in 2008 and the support of the City's Downtown Development and Revitalization Committee the City of St. Catharines seeks to:

- create a safe and attractive downtown that will attract both investment and tourists;
- redefine the downtown as a desirable place to live, shop and do business;
- encourage people to walk through the downtown, day and night.

The Creative Cluster Master Plan integrates economic development and land-use planning. The plan recognizes the creative sector will contribute to economic renewal, and identifies the cultural academic partnership of the City of St. Catharines and Brock University as a cornerstone of the strategy.

Execution of the plan is well underway. The City has implemented the conversion of one-way arteries to allow two-way traffic through the downtown core. This change puts downtown St. Catharines on the Niagara Wine Route, redirecting regional tourists through the core. The Carlisle St. Parking Garage opened in 2012, the Meridian Centre opened in the fall of 2014, and other initiatives are underway to further contribute to the downtown's growth and revitalization.



Downtown was a significant topic of conversation in the course of community consultation for this plan. Culture and downtown are inextricably linked: the health of one influences the health of the other. The St. Catharines Culture Plan 2020 will serve downtown revitalization and its many cultural assets through the plan's recommended priorities and initiatives.

## ST. CATHARINES PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

The largest cultural project within St. Catharines is the development of the future Performing Arts Centre, set to open in late 2015 at the corner of Carlisle and St. Paul Streets in downtown St. Catharines. Three levels of government are contributing to this new \$60.7 million purpose-built arts facility which is designed by the award-winning architectural firm of Diamond & Schmitt of Toronto: the Province of Ontario and the Government of Ontario are each contributing \$18 million in recognition of the role the future facility will play in downtown renewal. The St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre (PAC) will include four distinct performance venues including a 775-seat concert hall, a 210-seat dance/theatre venue, a 300-seat recital hall and a 187-seat film venue.

The project is being developed in partnership with Brock University. The university is relocating the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts to the former Canada Hair Cloth Building adjacent to the PAC. The university will actively use two of the PAC's venues on a shared basis. It is a unique project in the province of Ontario, if not in Canada, for its size, and partnership.

The Feasibility Study undertaken in 2008 for the project outlines the economic impact these joint projects will have on downtown. The study had some significant recommendations to make to the City's policy on future arts development:

*"The (PAC) Centre should not seek to meet all the space needs of the St. Catharines arts community, but rather should catalyze initiatives City-wide. The Centre will be at the core of the City's artistic life, but the cultural and economic goals of the project demand that an approach be adopted that encourages development of new arts initiatives and stabilizes existing ones outside the walls of the Centre, to form a downtown cultural district that extends from Rodman Hall to the Centre and beyond. Public policy tools should encourage the establishment and viability of non-profit performance and rehearsal spaces, non-profit and commercial galleries, programs for arts education, and residential space for artists downtown. The cultural economy cannot be defined by a single building. And though the downtown focus is essential, public policy must also extend to promotion of arts activity and arts education in residential neighbourhoods that are not downtown."*<sup>9</sup>

The document reiterates that the City must "preserve the ability of other arts activity to flourish downtown."<sup>10</sup> Strategies for this include growing audiences and revenue generating abilities for arts organizations that are planning on using the facility -- work that is now underway with leadership from Arts Centre staff -- and ensuring that other arts facilities in the community are supported and encouraged, including existing performing arts space that functions as necessary development space. The PAC will not meet all of the facility needs of the arts sector in its final design - shared office space for local arts organizations, rehearsal and production space, community art space and a smaller theatre venue for emerging activity were all items that did not make it to the final design table. These are needs in the arts sector that are also not currently addressed in City planning.

The St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre will have an important role to play in the future cultural and economic landscape in St. Catharines. It will become the primary provider of arts experiences in St. Catharines; its programming will embrace the professional arts sector of St. Catharines and as such it will build relationships with those companies, and provide resources, support and perspective on the needs of the sector. The PAC will need to find ways to serve all of St. Catharines residents, through diverse programming that accommodates both populist and niche interests, accessible ticket prices, and inclusivity in all of its policies. It will also be the largest arts investment, per annum, that the City makes in culture.

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<sup>9</sup> Academic and Cultural Arts Centre for Downtown St. Catharines, Levitt Goodman Architects and Martin Vinik Planning for the Arts, p19.

<sup>10</sup> Academic and Cultural Arts Centre for Downtown St. Catharines, Levitt Goodman Architects and Martin Vinik Planning for the Arts, p117.

## THE MERIDIAN CENTRE

City Council approved a \$50m investment in a new spectator facility in December 2011. The Meridian Centre opened in October of 2014. The facility's site is adjacent to the Canada Hair Cloth Building, the future home of Brock University's Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts. The 6,000 seat venue will provide a new home for St. Catharines-based OHL team, the Niagara IceDogs, as well as serve as a venue for other sports and entertainment events such as rock concerts, monster truck shows and Ice Capades. The Meridian Centre promises growth in the choice of home-based entertainment opportunities for local residents as it will offer entertainment experiences for St. Catharines residents that cannot be accommodated in the smaller PAC.

There may be opportunities for the two venues to cross-promote and cultivate audiences for a variety of programs, thus furthering the priorities of this plan. Plans are also underway to develop a Sports Hall of Fame Museum within the Meridian Centre, thus celebrating local sports heritage and inductees within its walls.

## PLACEMAKING IN ST. CATHARINES

The Garden City Plan governs the City's land use and physical development and aims to:

*"... reflect, integrate and balance the collective aims and aspirations of the citizens of St. Catharines as to the quality of life to be preserved and fostered with respect to health, social, economic, cultural, natural and built environments, and towards the promotion and achievement of sustainable community planning and growth, and the essence of the Garden City."<sup>11</sup>*

Reviewed and approved by City Council in 2010, the plan recognizes that cultural vitality and identity are part of our sustainable future. The Garden City Plan includes guidance for cultural heritage, urban design, green space and public art. The plan also includes references to the value of Heritage Lists, Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments, and an Archaeological Management Plan.

Cultural vitality includes ensuring that the local environment is as St. Catharines-specific as possible - what some call an "authenticity of place." When a site, landscape or neighbourhood has features that are unique to St. Catharines, its unique or "authentic" qualities offer the city

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<sup>11</sup> [The Garden City Plan](#), p1.



Left: Merritton Cenotaph  
Right: Farmers Market at Market Square



a competitive edge. Knowledge-based workers looking for a community to set up a business, live in, or retire to, are looking for somewhere that is distinct.

A distinct sense of place can emerge from local history, cultural businesses and organizations, diverse populations, and built heritage and all of these can be used to strengthen the sense of community, engage residents and stimulate civic pride. This sense of place can encompass an area as large as downtown or as modest as the Facer St. area. St. Catharines has many neighbourhoods that have a spirit or character that is founded in their history, such as Merritton, Western Hill and Port Dalhousie. Preserving what is physically unique, and encouraging the promotion of their particular characteristics as communities is part of the domain of cultural planning.

Homogenization, of people, businesses, landscapes and built environments does not offer the same competitive edge. In fact, just as inclusiveness of people from all backgrounds and with all abilities is critical to a community's health, so, too, is inclusiveness of the special places and sites that make St. Catharines distinct. It could be argued that "homogenization" is just as important a challenge to our community's future, as the other six challenges identified in the *Tending our Garden City Plan*.

**PRIORITY: Leverage culture to strengthen St. Catharines' distinct sense of place and community.**



The Outer Range Lighthouse  
in Port Dalhousie

# Culture in St. Catharines: A Thriving Eco-System

Understanding where culture is, who manages cultural assets, who provides cultural experiences, and why they do so, is part of cultural planning. Tangible cultural assets are everywhere, and are owned and managed by a great number of people, businesses and agencies in St. Catharines:

<b>Private Individuals</b>	<b>Private Sector Businesses</b>	<b>Not-for-Profit Sector</b>	<b>Public Sector</b>
Private individuals own: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ heritage properties,</li> <li>▪ works of art,</li> <li>▪ family heirlooms</li> <li>▪ and stories</li> </ul>	Private sector businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ operate cultural industries,</li> <li>▪ own and develop cultural properties, both physical and intellectual</li> <li>▪ can create festivals and events</li> </ul>	The not-for-profit sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ manages facilities and collections,</li> <li>▪ creates festivals and events,</li> <li>▪ develops locally created works of art,</li> <li>▪ preserves and promotes local history with artefacts, stories and information</li> </ul>	The public sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ owns built and collected cultural properties,</li> <li>▪ operates cultural facilities,</li> <li>▪ manages natural heritage properties,</li> <li>▪ produces cultural programs for the community's benefit</li> </ul>

The City of St. Catharines influences each of the four areas above, and of course has specific responsibility associated with the cultural assets it owns and manages. An understanding of how for-profit and not-for-profit agencies develop and deliver cultural services and products will help maximize the value of the City's investment into culture.



## COMMUNITY CULTURAL DELIVERY

Artists, arts organizations, arts facilities and museums are the primary “providers of culture” in a community. Ethnocultural organizations serve the community with the promotion and sharing of specific cultural legacies. While the word “culture” describes them all, there are strategic differences. Terms used in the cultural sector to describe organizations and businesses include: for-profit, not-for-profit, professional, semi-professional, emerging, amateur, community art, and recreation. These branches make contributions to the local community in different ways:

<b>“Branches” of Culture</b>	<b>Focus/Priorities</b>
For profit	Profit, job creation
Not-for-Profit	Community improvement through the following categories
Professional	Excellence, community voice, sector and worker development
Amateur (Community)	Participation, for fun, physical, emotional and mental health, personal growth, sense of community and/or accomplishment
Recreation	Fun, learning, personal growth, health etc.
Community Art <sup>12</sup>	Social inclusion, local community connectivity and personal growth and development

Often within the sector, the different branches appear to be in conflict, simply by virtue of their different priorities. For example, “excellence” does not always support “inclusion” – a choir looking for the best vocalists will not welcome all interested singers. Most people think that not-for-profit equates with “no profit,” when in fact, many not-for-profit cultural organizations are high-functioning businesses.

A healthy cultural eco system has all of these branches working well, as they influence each other and the community around them simultaneously. The for-profit sector requires highly skilled, motivated and creative workers. The creative sector workers of tomorrow depend on recreation and amateur cultural experiences to provide early life experiences that stimulate interest and skills in a creative career. Those recreation and amateur experiences are often led by emerging cultural workers, or established professionals. The professional not-for-profit sector is an important training ground and place of mentorship. It offers ongoing stimulus for all creative sector workers : some of the most innovative and challenging programming,

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<sup>12</sup> Community art projects provide opportunities for non-arts community members to work with a professional artist on a project that culminates in a public presentation or work of art expressing community interests and issues - definition from the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program – Culture Builds Community.

whether arts or historic, is developed by professionals who work in a not-for-profit environment that supports risk-taking. Community art relates to this aspect of arts activity: it uses the artistic expertise of a professional artist to stimulate dialogue and collective self-expression at a local community level. Community art is a process-focused endeavour that prioritizes working together over the development of an end-product. Audiences and patrons of all cultural events and businesses are often engaged and inspired by any of these branches of the eco-system, a fact that is expanded on in the section on participation (pages 62-72).

Similar to an ecosystem in nature, all branches of the cultural community are essential to maintain a healthy, functioning system. Professional artists, cultural managers, and heritage workers are the cornerstones of a healthy cultural eco-system and directly affect our community's ability to serve the social, economic and environmental priorities of St. Catharines.



Gallery Players -  
Photo Credit: Chris Beard Photography

## THE MUNICIPAL ROLE IN THE ECO-SYSTEM

The City of St. Catharines approved its first Municipal Cultural Policy in March 2000 and since then it has been transforming its relationship to culture. The past decade has seen an increase in the cultural assets owned by the City; the City's cultural investment has grown; and there is more direct delivery of culture-related services and programs. The Internal Analysis undertaken for this plan confirmed that culture-related initiatives are led by multiple departments and divisions. Three distinct municipal areas are responsible for the majority of cultural planning, management and service delivery as follows:

### Parks, Recreation and Culture Services

- **Programs and Cultural Services Division**
  - Historical Services: includes the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre and Morningstar Mill
  - Cultural Services: civic art collection, public art, cultural and festival grants and community development
  - Recreation Programming: Lakeside Park Carousel and recreation programming
- **St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre**
- **Market Square and Corporate Events**
- **Some special event support through Enterprise Division and Parks Division**
- **Oversight of programming and management of some heritage facilities**

### Economic Development and Tourism Division

- **Economic Development Office**
- **Tourism Services**
- **Small Business Enterprise Centre**

### Planning and Building Services

- **Heritage Planning - built heritage designation, heritage grants**
- **Urban Design**
- **Civic Square planning and programming (new)**

Not a municipal department, but a significant arms-length municipal agency when evaluating cultural service delivery, is the St. Catharines Public Library. The St. Catharines library system has four branches, with its central location downtown. The City's investment in the library is significant, and the library has been active in supporting the cultural sector, developing culture-specific programs, and participating in cultural planning and program development. Currently the library's only formal connection to the municipality's cultural activity has been on the Council-appointed Culture Committee.

The Internal Analysis provides a great deal of detailed analysis and outlines the breadth of opportunity that more coordination across departments will offer. A cross-departmental Internal Cultural Advisory Team including representation from the above departments and divisions as well as the Public Library can facilitate this coordination.

## CITY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Over time, the City has developed multiple Council-appointed committees involved in providing advice and service related to culture. The Internal Analysis identified eight, not including the Library Board:

- Mayor's Advisory Committee for Black History
- Culture Committee
- Green Committee
- Heritage Committee
- Museum Advisory Committee
- Performing Arts Centre User Group Committee
- Port Dalhousie Heritage Committee
- Public Art Advisory Committee

Each of these committees was formed with a specific mandate and purpose. Merging some of them may improve communication and coordination, as well as efficiency and transparency. For the past 12 years the Culture Committee has included City staff representation from Parks, Recreation and Culture Services, Economic Development and Tourism Services, Planning and Building Services, the Library, the St. Catharines Museum and the Performing Arts Centre. This structure was in place in an effort to bridge the many internal branches of culture within the municipality. This plan recommends the majority of this staff step down from the volunteer committee and become the core of an Internal Cultural Advisory Team.

**PRIORITY: Foster the cross-departmental management and delivery of arts and heritage service delivery, planning and community development.**



Left: The Lakeside Park Carousel in Port Dalhousie  
Right: Garden City Productions performance of South Pacific (photo by Kevin Argue)

## FINDING CULTURE IN ST. CATHARINES

If culture is to be a contributor to St. Catharines' future vitality and prosperity, it must be identified and shared. St. Catharines has more than a thousand identified cultural resources, and many more that were not formally identified in this process. This section of the plan provides detailed maps of where culture lives in St. Catharines and discusses cultural participation habits of residents.

### Cultural Asset Mapping

Cultural Asset Mapping is the process of developing a database of information that categorizes cultural assets, collects basic information about those assets, and then utilizes Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to put assets on maps. Included in the database are physical assets – such as galleries and cenotaphs – as well as businesses and industries – such as graphic designers, architects and theatre companies. This plan does not attempt to address the process of mapping intangible assets, ie the stories, values and traditions that influence day-to-day life in St. Catharines. This form of asset mapping is often seen within museums and original arts creations, as they use local content to be relevant to local patrons.

Cultural Asset Mapping can:

- help municipal staff and decision makers adopt new ways of thinking about how to use cultural resources to achieve the municipality's broad strategic objectives
- support the local cultural sector by giving residents and visitors access to information about arts and heritage activity
- create a strong base of information about cultural resources that supports evidence based decision-making and can be integrated into municipal plans (e.g. land use, tourism, economic development)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [Cultural Resource Mapping: A Guide for Municipalities](#), 2010, Canadian Urban Institute for Municipal Cultural Planning Inc, p3

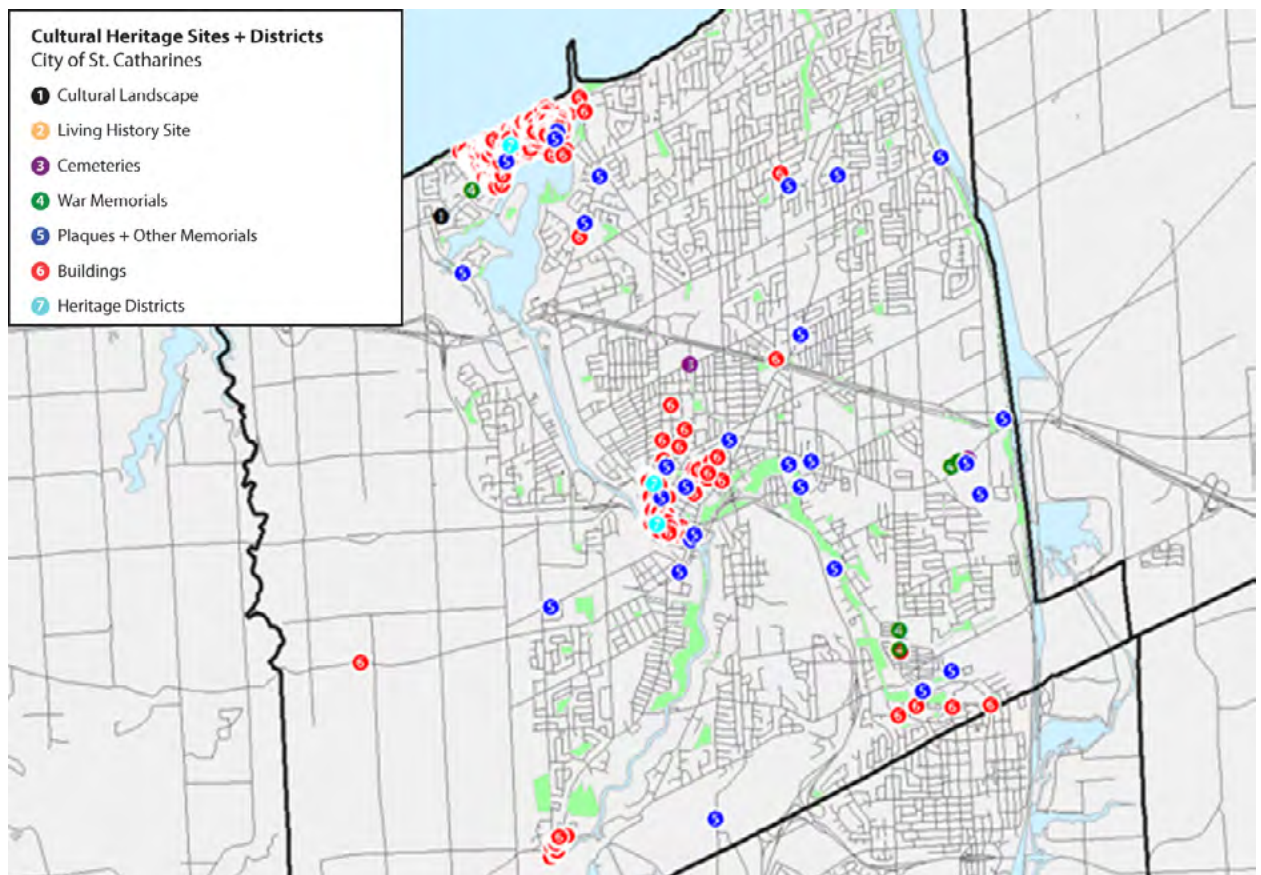
The City developed a cultural asset database and Lord Cultural Resources used this information to create a series of visual maps and charts. Information was gathered in late 2011 and is organized in the following categories:

Category and No. of Records	For Example
<p><b>Cultural Heritage (882):</b> Built heritage, cemeteries, heritage districts, recognition plaques and war memorials</p>	<p>Morningstar Mill St. Catharines Cenotaph Mayholme Foundation Lakeside Park Carousel</p>
<p><b>Cultural Industries (237):</b> Advertising, bookstores, dance studios, ethnocultural groups, art dealers, interior, graphic and industrial designers, newspapers, radio and broadcasting, publishers, music stores, schools and groups, printing, visual arts instruction, theatre companies, photographers and more.</p>	<p>Hannelore Headley's MacDonald Zuberec Ensslen (Architects) Niagara Symphony Orchestra Chimpanzee Marketing Niagara Conservatory of Music Brian Yungblut Photography Next Company Theatre Niagara Dance Company</p>
<p><b>Natural Heritage:</b> Parks and trails, waterways, unique landscapes and features. Natural Heritage was not included in the current mapping exercise although plans are underway to develop this component of the cultural mapping.</p>	<p>Montebello Park Niagara Escarpment Happy Rolph's Twelve Mile Creek The Welland Canals Short Hills Provincial Park Merritt Trail</p>
<p><b>Spaces and Facilities (56):</b> Art galleries, theatres, cinemas, libraries and archives, museums, sound recording studios, rehearsal studios, theatres, bars with live entertainment, non-traditional venues that exhibit, and more.</p>	<p>Empire 8 Theatre Rodman Hall Art Centre The Red Hot Chili Pepper St. Catharines Public Library Centre for the Arts, Brock U The Harris (rehearsal studio)</p>
<p><b>Community Groups (30):</b> Ethnocultural groups, municipal advisory committees and miscellaneous arts groups.</p>	<p>The Greek Community of Niagara St. Catharines Heritage Committee Public Art Advisory Committee</p>
<p><b>Festivals and Celebrations (29):</b> Festivals, celebrations and interpretive programs such as walking tours.</p>	<p>VegFest Niagara Folk Arts Festival St. Catharines Busker Festival</p>
<p><b>Public Art (27):</b> Owned by the City, Brock University and the Province of Ontario, as well as privately owned art or cultural property.</p>	<p>Spirit of St. Catharines (in Rennie Park) Flight into the Future (back of old post office building – Church St.) Doug Cranmer Totem Pole, Centennial Park</p>

## Cultural Heritage

St. Catharines has a robust collection of cultural assets, and by far the largest category of cultural resource in St. Catharines is cultural heritage. The majority of these cultural heritage assets reside in the private sector, primarily in the city's four heritage districts: Port Dalhousie, Power Glen, Queen Street and Yates Street. The map below illustrates the breadth of St. Catharines' built heritage sites: over 800 properties reside in these four districts. These areas are powerful attractors for businesses, re-locating workers and retirees, and the history and sense of community they embody, strengthen the identity of local neighbourhoods. Almost all of the buildings within these districts are privately owned - the process of developing these districts was a significant community-building initiative and reflects a commitment on the part of residents to preserve and promote St. Catharines' built heritage.

There are 40 buildings in St. Catharines that are designated as individual properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Individual designations can provide greater protection to a property as specific elements are identified and thus protected, whereas the preservation priority in a district designation is the overall character of a district. Thus, single buildings are still vulnerable to demolition or significant change if not designated as an individual property.



Given the breadth of heritage properties in St. Catharines, and the value they offer the community's future, further promotion of individual heritage designation is warranted, and a review of municipal tools and mechanisms to support these designations is recommended.

This work would require full-time heritage planning staff, which St. Catharines currently does not have despite its significant collection of cultural heritage assets. The City offers heritage grants, and tax incentives strength designation and preservation efforts, along with ongoing promotion of the value and benefits of built heritage.

Below is a chart comparing St. Catharines with other communities and their designation numbers. Communities known for their heritage character, such as Kingston, have done the work required to preserve it and it shows in these numbers.

Municipality/Region	Population	Heritage Cons. Districts	Designated Historic Buildings (PT. IV - Heritage Act)
Prince Edward	24,901	0	83
Cornwall	45,640	0	18
Belleville	46,029	0	38
Peterborough	77,583	0	115
Barrie	103,710	0	16
Thunder Bay	109,016	1	60
Kingston	114,195	2	593
<b>St. Catharines</b>	<b>131,400</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40</b>
Vaughan	182,022	4	47
Hamilton	490,260	7	241
Toronto	2,481,494	20	4500
Sources	Statistics Canada	Ministry of Tourism & Culture	Primary Research

Source: Peterborough Municipal Culture Plan, Cultural Facilities Comparison Chart (Adapted from Creative Together: A Cultural Plan for the City of Vaughan), pg. 35

A discussion of cultural heritage in St. Catharines would be incomplete without noting the changes taking place in Port Dalhousie. The centre of this historic lakeside neighbourhood in St. Catharines has undergone renewal in the past and it is again in a state of transition. In 2004 a development company began work with the City on plans to renew the popular retail heart of Port. A collection of warehouse buildings that had been rehabilitated to support retail, bar, and a small dinner theatre, is being replaced with a hotel, condominium and retail plaza, as well as a larger theatre underground. The sought-after result would include the loss of some heritage fabric, but provide significant economic gain for the community.



The public response to this development was an emotionally fraught debate about local community, environment, culture, and economy. These are not simple decisions to make, with no one perfect solution for this type of evolution as community needs are constantly changing. What this plan hopes to provide is a new lens to investigate the connections between past, present and future, and shed light on how potentially diverse interests, like heritage and economy, can actually serve one another.

### ***City-Owned Heritage Buildings***

The City of St. Catharines owns and manages the following heritage buildings and structures:

- *Port Dalhousie Inner Range Lighthouse*
- *Lakeside Park Carousel*
- *Morningstar Mill and the Miller's House*
- *City Hall*
- *Former Lincoln County Courthouse*
- *85 Church St. & Robertson Hall*
- *The Walter Ostanek Pavilion*
- *Roy T. Adams Bandshell*
- *Dalhousie House (Port Dalhousie)*
- *Merritton Town Hall*
- *Buchanan House*

The City has made capital investments in all of these assets over the past decade, most recently completing major renovations at 85 Church St., the home of St. Catharines Folk Arts-Multicultural Centre. The City's capital budget regularly invests in these properties. What is less measured, but no less valued, is the investment made by volunteers from the community. The Lakeside Park Carousel and Morningstar Mill are heavily supported by volunteers, and without their efforts these historic gems would likely not be open to the public today.

The Friends of the Carousel have been fundraising and restoring the animals on the Lakeside Park Carousel since 2000. The Charles I. D. Loeff historic amusement ride has 69 animals and four chariots and the Friends have restored every animal at least once, have carved two new ones, and have been intimately involved in other restoration efforts on the carousel. After completing one full cycle of restoration, they have begun a new cycle, as this highly beloved summer experience sees thousands of riders each year, and thus sees significant wear and tear on its components.

Morningstar Mill is located at Decew Falls along the Bruce Trail atop of the Niagara Escarpment and is made up of a number of buildings including the original gristmill, a turbine shed, a sawmill, the millers house, a blacksmith and carpentry shops. The Friends of Morningstar Mill have been working on this historic site since approximately 1992, rehabilitating and re-building the Grist Mill, Turbine Shed and accompanying buildings. They provide support and upkeep of all aspects of the operations at the Mill site, including milling, interpretation, maintenance and collections management. Over the years these two groups of volunteers have saved the City hundreds of thousands of dollars and ensured these heritage jewels are preserved for future generations.



The Miller's House on the site of Morningstar Mill

The Former Lincoln County Courthouse is a significant property to the arts community. It houses a children's theatre company, Carousel Players, the Arts Mosh Pit (AMP) a creative cluster of shared arts offices, and the Niagara Symphony Orchestra offices. In 2001 Carousel Players converted the upstairs into a small theatre and rehearsal studio and these spaces have been instrumental in the development of an exploding theatre community. The City has plans to undertake an End-Use Study of this building, offering an opportunity to review its role as a primary incubator in the development of the arts community.

At present, three City-owned heritage buildings are closed and in search of a use: the Merritton Town Hall, Dalhousie House and Buchanan House. In addition, the Port Dalhousie Inner Range Lighthouse is rarely open to the public, although it is used annually by the Niagara College Sailing School. Planning for these assets is challenging as they were built for different times and purposes. They each reflect, however, a legacy from St. Catharines' past and represent stories and people that are unique to St. Catharines.



Volunteer at the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre

### *Museums and Archives*

The St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre (WCC) is the municipality's primary Museum and Archives, and a popular destination to explore St. Catharines storied past. In 2004, the museum came under the jurisdiction of the City and with it came a secured stream of operating funding. Under the stewardship of its curator the St. Catharines Museum and WCC has demonstrated exemplary practices of archiving and artifact preservation, a rarity for community museums of this size and scope. As a collecting institution, the museum has become the main repository and caretaker of the city's primary historic assets and a key player in celebrating the diverse history of the community.

The St. Catharines Museum and WCC collects, preserves and archives material of local historical significance with a focus on St. Catharines and the four Welland Canals. Its permanent galleries interpret and present a wide array of stories from St. Catharines past including the engineering feats of the famed canal systems, the legacies of the Underground Railroad and the industries that fueled economic prosperity. Both the St. Catharines Museum and WCC and Morningstar Mill are managed by the Historical Services section of the City's Parks, Recreation and Culture Services Department. The Morningstar Mill site came under the supervision of Museum staff in 2011, and a Feasibility Study and End Use Plan was finalized in 2012. The development of this site's potential to provide residents and visitors with a living history experience is a positive addition to St. Catharines landscape.

The only other facility classified as a museum in St. Catharines is the Mayholme Foundation and Geneological Centre. The geneological library amassed by dedicated volunteers is open to the public by appointment, and the house museum is carefully furnished and described, and opened only for special events. The Mayholme Foundation was established through a private donor intent on preserving a significant loyalist asset and cultivating awareness of the deep roots to be found in the Niagara region.



Entrance to the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre

Other archival collections can be found at the Brock University Special Collections and Archives, the St. Catharines Public Library Special Collections and the St. Catharines Museum Archives – these four significant archival collections in St. Catharines provide depth to the public’s ability to access their heritage.

The St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre is flourishing, and engaging more and more members of the community in new exhibits and special initiatives. Future plans for Morningstar Mill are moving forward, as are plans to undertake a feasibility study for a Black History Museum. There are future opportunities to link the initiatives and successes of the City’s built heritage planning and management and museum and historical services section.

### ***Other Cultural Heritage Assets***

Other cultural heritage assets owned and managed by the City of St. Catharines include memorials, cenotaphs and the historic Victoria Lawn Cemetery (VLC), which is operated under the Cemetery Act. The VLC staff are conscientious of the legacy they manage, and have been successful at addressing preservation and restoration issues when they arise. The municipality is also responsible for eight War Memorials, the legacy of past amalgamations, with the oldest erected in 1886. The City has undertaken considerable effort to research, assess and begin restoration of these assets over the past 4 years. This work has garnered positive public support, including monetary donations by local Legions and members of the community.



Left: Roy T. Adams  
Bandshell  
Right: Walter Ostanek  
Pavilion, Montebello Park

## Natural Heritage

Natural Heritage is not represented on the maps contained in this plan but it is an important cultural asset in St. Catharines. The “Garden City” name is not only a reference to St. Catharines’ agricultural past but refers to the more than 1,000 acres of parks, gardens and trails within its boundaries. The Garden City ethos serves as a municipal directive to encourage more greening initiatives, both public and private.

The City of St. Catharines is responsible for over 100 municipal parks and many kilometres of trails are governed by the Parks Policy Plan and The Garden City Plan. This system plays an important role in residents’ healthy living and in neighbourhood life, with sports fields and amenities, events and outdoor art, and as a place to experience much of St. Catharines’ culture. One of the most significant parks is Montebello Park, which was designed in 1887 by Frederick Law Olmstead, best known for designing New York’s famed Central Park. Montebello Park is in the heart of downtown, contains two designated historic structures<sup>14</sup>, and hosts multiple festivals and events each year. Other City parks contain remnants of the first three Welland Canals and other historic assets. The City’s parks are a key resource for residents to experience local culture in many forms but graffiti, vandalism, aging infrastructure and untamed growth are the first priority of the parks division. There are opportunities for interpretive signage, public art and other culture-specific strategies to share the local stories these parks contain. Cross-departmental cooperation is needed to coordinate preservation, program and land-use planning, interpretation, promotion and resourcing strategies to truly leverage these assets.

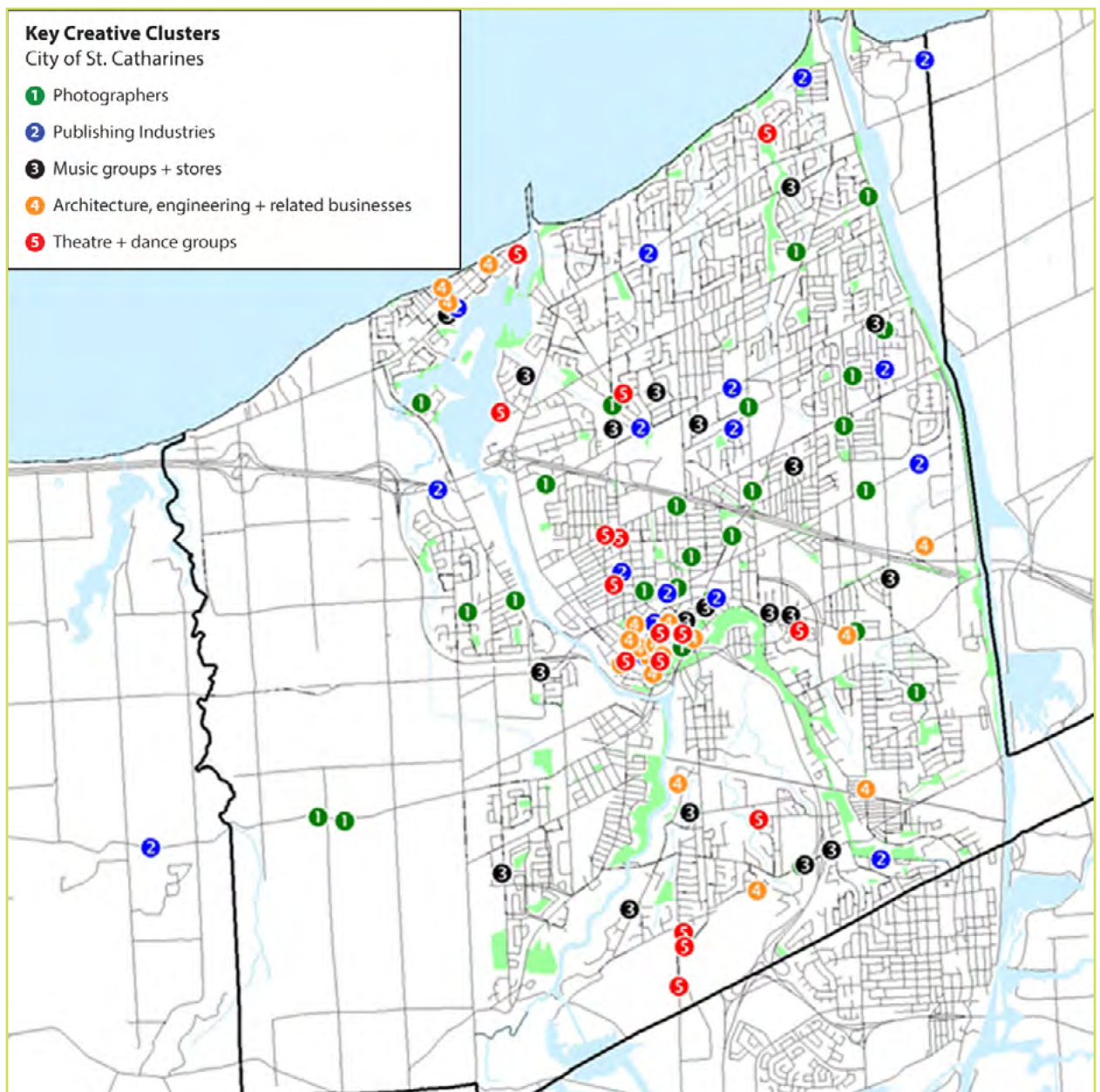
**PRIORITY: Further develop the planning, management and coordination of heritage assets and historical services.**

<sup>14</sup> The Roy T. Adams Bandshell and the Walter Ostanek Pavilion.

## Creative Cultural Industries

Creative cultural industries encompass a broad range of the creative workforce in St. Catharines from architecture to performing arts to advertising agencies.

Creative industries encompass both for-profit businesses and not-for-profit cultural organizations. A sampling of creative industries can be seen on the next map. Photographers, publishers, architects and engineers, music stores and groups and theatre groups are represented. Most neighbourhoods in St. Catharines have creative sector workers within their boundaries, with a cluster in downtown.



## *New Media*

The City of St. Catharines' Economic Development Strategy<sup>15</sup> has identified new media as an important focus for development within the creative sector. When Ontario's economy faltered in 2008, the City of St. Catharines took a proactive approach, working closely with industry stakeholders to identify key sectors that offered the most potential and could play a role in the city's economic revitalization. One example is the City's investment in nGen, the Niagara Interactive Digital Media Generator, developed in partnership with several public/private partners including Brock University and Niagara College. nGen is an investment in the region's emerging technology sector and leverages the success of recent local university and college graduates. A hub for innovation, incubation and business development in Niagara, nGen is Niagara's Regional Innovation Centre, connecting technology-based business, entrepreneurs and researchers with services and programs to help innovate and gain a competitive advantage. The site houses' world-class technology, talent and experience and provides innovative entrepreneurs with training programs, tools and resources, and advisory services to enable them to successfully commercialize their ideas. It is now part of a larger consortium, Innovate Niagara, as the cultivation of this sector continues.

nGen exemplifies how the City's investment can in turn stimulate more investment, more jobs and more dynamism within the creative sector. St. Catharines is cultivating its emerging innovators in the for-profit sector to grow economic opportunity. What is unexplored are the intersections between for-profit and not-for-profit creative sectors in St. Catharines. Cultural Asset Mapping may be a starting point for future investigation of local synergies, and cross-departmental work will further the dialogue required to identify opportunity.

**PRIORITY: Cultivate the growth and development of the creative sector.**

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<sup>15</sup> City of St. Catharines Economic Development Strategy



## *The Arts Sector*

The list of arts organizations in St. Catharines is long, and their activities are diverse, so a list is not provided. The not-for-profit arts community of St. Catharines has grown substantially in the past ten years, and the City's direct investment into this sector, through the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program (SCCIP), is an important factor in this growth. The theatre community has exploded, and there are new arts facilities and arts organizations active in our downtown and elsewhere. The St. Catharines' arts community offers contemporary and traditional arts experiences, as well as membership and participation opportunities. Programming options exist for children, youth and adults, free or low-cost events are frequently available, and the arts community is filled with artists interested in collaborating and partnering with other agencies to create new opportunities for the community. More importantly, the community is fostering young, emerging artists and made-in-Niagara art is becoming more and more prevalent – plays, poetry, music, whether indie, choral or symphonic, paintings, sculpture, and media art – all of these art forms are being generated by the local arts sector and are reflecting the stories, perspectives and voices of St. Catharines.

The professional arts sector is actively working together as a community. The Downtown Alliance of Performing Arts is a group of ten organizations undertaking cross-promotion; the Niagara Performing Arts Educators Network is a region-wide network promoting arts experiences for children and youth in the local school systems; ArtsVote Niagara evaluates political candidates on their support and understanding of the arts sector; the eyeGo to the Arts program, led by the Centre for the Arts at Brock University, has 15 arts organizations participating, and offers \$5 tickets to high school students for arts performances. Most recently, the arts community stepped forward to work with the City of St. Catharines on the planning and design of the future St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre. In support of this major initiative, Carousel Players and the Centre for the Arts formed a partnership with the City of St. Catharines to apply for federal funding and undertake three capacity-building projects for the arts of Niagara, including the Inspire: Niagara Arts in Niagara Schools DVD and Resource Guide for Educators and Parents<sup>16</sup>, and the [www.cNiagara.ca](http://www.cNiagara.ca) website of cultural events.

Many of the professional arts organizations in St. Catharines have a region-wide mandate. Rodman Hall Art Centre, the Niagara Artists Centre, the Centre for the Arts, Carousel Players, the Niagara Symphony and Chorus Niagara provide services to residents both in and beyond St. Catharines. There is some "tourism-ready" cultural 'product' in St. Catharines but most organizations focus first and foremost on the local market, and very few have the resources to market themselves beyond Niagara. Nevertheless, these organizations all play a key role in the development of the sector and its workers and thus some of their "economic impact" is hidden.

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<sup>16</sup> Inspire! Niagara Arts in Niagara Schools





Left: Drum Workshop during the Niagara Night of Arts  
Right: Niagara Dance Company Artistic Director, Mary Jo Mullins in Past Hereafter,  
Photo Credit: Eric Sherping

St. Catharines also has participatory arts experiences for those interested in “doing,” no matter the level of experience or expertise. Garden City Productions, the St. Catharines Art Association, Chorus Niagara and their Children’s Chorus, Mercredi Musique, the Royal Scottish Country Dance Company and more – these are organizations that provide performance or exhibit experience, learning and networking opportunities, and a home for artists who may be amateur, emerging, semi-professional or professional, but who all share a love for the arts.

The City of St. Catharines’ Parks, Recreation and Culture Services Department provides recreation-based arts activity for children, adults and older adults at recreation and older adult centres, but does not operate facilities designed or purposed for the arts. The future St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre will fill this gap for the performing arts and film presentation.

With such a robust arts sector, the City has recognized that arts programming is best undertaken by the community. The City simply cannot afford to provide the quality, depth and variety of arts services offered by these organizations, but it can collaborate with the community to facilitate all forms of participation in cultural activity.

An important future role for the City will be in the development of an arts service organization. The arts of St. Catharines were served by the St. Catharines and Area Arts Council from 2001 until it ceased operations in 2011. It is traditionally assumed that an arts council has an important role to play in the cultural eco-system, and the loss of this Arts Council continues to be a point of debate within the community. Arts Councils operate as a sector facilitator, partnership broker, marketing agent and advocate, and can help identify and serve the needs of the arts community. In some communities arts councils operate grant programs and provide other services on a fee-for-service basis to the municipality. The professional arts organizations of St. Catharines are presently sharing the coordinating role of an arts council with City staff, but this is an interim solution in a sector that is preparing for a new performing arts centre. Community dialogue, research and a review of the City’s cultural services office are recommended to maximize options for success.

## Heritage Organizations

There are very few incorporated heritage organizations in St. Catharines: what exists can be found in the cultural industries listings:

- *Friends of the Lighthouse*
- *Canadian Canal Society*
- *Central Ontario Network for Black History*
- *Friends of the Carousel*
- *Heritage Niagara, Inc.*
- *Friends of Morningstar Mill*
- *Welland Canals Foundation*
- *Historical Society of St. Catharines*

The Historical Society has been a leader in telling the stories of the City's past and their monthly lecture series is a popular activity for heritage enthusiasts. The "friends" groups are all connected to City-owned assets. Aside from the two friends groups already described, the organizations on this list provide sporadic public programming.

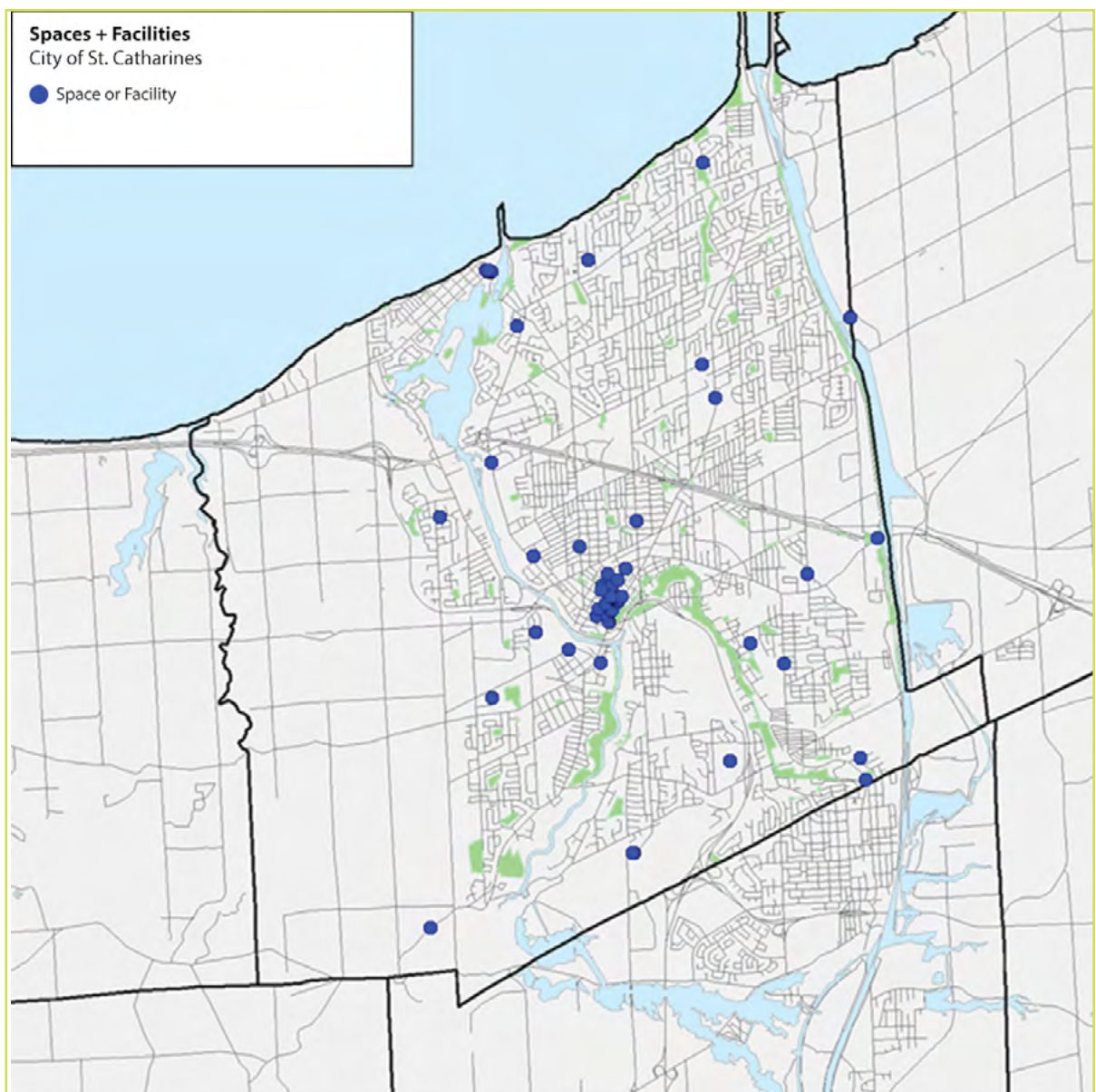
Outside of the City of St. Catharines there is no agency with the resources to broaden the interest and participation of residents in their local history. All of the above organizations are run by volunteers. Further dialogue is required with this community to determine whether there are future needs for collaboration, cross-organizational engagement or information-sharing, and collective marketing. Communities like London, Ontario have developed state of the art web portals to make it easy to access local heritage assets and opportunities. St. Catharines has nothing like this, despite its rich history.



Young visitor at the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre

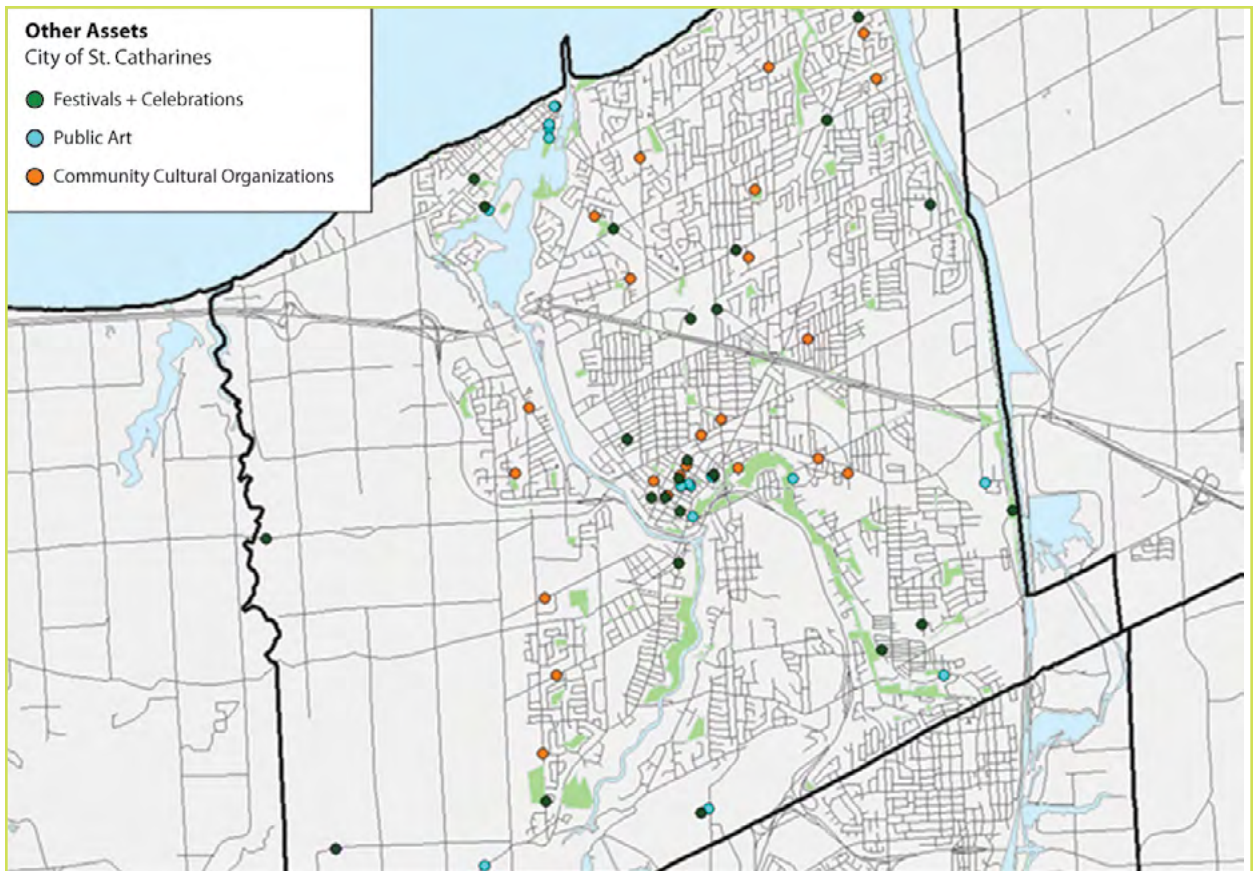
## Spaces and Facilities

Visibility is a major issue for the the arts and heritage sector since the majority of its sites are tucked away in unusual corners of the city or have modest or no street presence. There is a significant cluster of cultural spaces and facilities in downtown, and a relatively even smattering of facilities across most of the city's neighbourhoods. Cultural activity and facilities can be partners in neighbourhood engagement, encouraging people to participate in community-building experiences, and support conversations and self-expression relevant to local community. Addressing issues of visibility, through information sharing and new strategies of outreach, can foster cultural awareness and participation.



## Other Cultural Assets

The final three categories of cultural assets also have significant community impact: festivals, public art and community cultural organizations are contained in this category. The map below includes all three, although it should be noted that festivals and events do not always take place in one location (for example, Doors Open Niagara or the Niagara Wine Festival). The physical affect of an event is not truly represented on the map and this could be useful information when considering the affect and opportunities of culture on a by-neighbourhood basis.





Niagara Icewine Festival

### *Festivals and Events*

St. Catharines is home to a healthy number and array of festivals, from major tourism events to small neighbourhood celebrations. A partial list includes:

*Niagara Grape and Wine Festival*

*Ice Wine Festival*

*New Vintage Wine Festival*

*S.C.E.N.E. – St. Catharines Event for New Music and Entertainment*

*Niagara Folk Arts Festival*

*In the Soil Festival*

*Ti Amo Festival*

*Niagara Greek Festival*

*Niagara VegFest*

*Harvest Festival*

*Pride Niagara*

*Rotary Ribfest*

*Strutt: Wearable Art Show*

*Garden City Kiwanis Music Festival*

*St. Catharines Busker Festival*

*Port Dalhousie Lions Canada Day Carnival*

*Merritton Labour Day Parade*

*Downtown Classic Car Show*

*Spring Arts Festival (Brock U.)*

*Doors Open Niagara*

The Niagara Wine Festival is the most significant local festival in scale and is an economic generator for the city. This festival and the Niagara Folk Arts Festival receive ongoing direct investment from the City. The City's Tourism staff work closely with these festivals to maximize their economic value to the community.

Within the Parks, Recreation and Culture Services Department there are multiple staff from several divisions involved in festival funding, permitting, coordination, promotion and actual festival and event operations:

### **Economic Development and Tourism Division**

- Fee-for-Service contracts for three major festivals
- New Festivals and Events grants program, for tourism-ready events (now working with Programs and Cultural Services Division to administer)

### **Programs and Cultural Services Division**

- SCCIP - grants available for new and emerging festivals and events
- New Festival and Events grants program - (see above)
- Special Events guide currently in development
- Recreation special events
- Summer in the Park programming
- Historical and Cultural Services special events
- Also within RCS: Parks permitting and management

### **Planning and Building Services**

- Civic Square programming

### **Transportation and Environmental Services**

- Road closures, parking requirements and banner permits

The Internal Analysis identified this complexity within municipal operations and recommended further coordination to serve the development of community events as well as the City's direct investment into festivals. The importance of festivals as a community-builder cannot be under-estimated, particularly when their popularity is considered, as noted on page 71.



Emblemata, a poster exhibit in Centennial Park Gardens

## **Public Art**

Public art can be found on City property, on Brock University's main campus and at the Rodman Hall Art Centre, and on Provincial and Federal government buildings. The occasional work of public art is located on private property, both residential and business.

While the City has owned artwork for decades, the commissioning and formal management of Public Art is a relatively new undertaking. City Council approved the City's first Public Art Policy in 2003 to provide a vision, purpose and goals for the procurement of public art in the city. The document addresses management guidelines for the City's existing art collection and new acquisitions, and established the Public Art Advisory Committee to advise Council and staff on related matters.

An inventory of the City's Art Collection in 2012 identified a significant collection of fine art, memorials, plaques and sculptures, and more unusual elements such as the animals, band organ and rounding board paintings on the Lakeside Park Carousel. As of 2013, the collection has over 200 items, as well as additional photographs and reproductions on display. The Public Art Policy was a significant stepping stone to developing appropriate standards of management and care for this diverse collection. Deferred maintenance issues have been identified and are being addressed, such as the recent restoration undertaken on the St. Catharines Cenotaph.

2012 saw the City's first-ever public art commission with the unveiling of a mural titled *Jeux D'Eau / Games of Water* by Naoko Matsubara in the City's newly completed Kiwanis Aquatics Centre. More public art is on the horizon, for the Arts Centre and Spectator Facility, projects that will be developed through the Public Art Advisory Committee. Site-specific public art projects like these will serve the community by contributing to distinct placemaking, visibly celebrating arts and culture, and ensuring free and equitable access to art for all community members.



The many faces of the Niagara Folk Arts Festival organizers

### *Community Cultural Organizations*

This category of cultural asset primarily represents organizations that exist to preserve the traditions and arts of specific cultures. The tradition of engaging local cultures in clubs is strong in St. Catharines, and is supported by the St. Catharines Folk Arts Council, which is also responsible for the Niagara Folk Arts Festival. Local cultural organizations range in size and prosperity, from very small groups meeting in private homes, to the Club Roma and Black Sea Hall ventures that are significant businesses and community centres in their neighbourhoods. The City supports the Niagara Folk Arts Festival each year with a fee-for-service contract. As well, since its start in 2004 the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program (SCCIP) has been available for ethnocultural groups. As seen on the previous map, these organizations are scattered throughout the City's neighbourhoods so they may be a resource in future neighbourhood-based culture plan implementation as well as strategies to improve inclusive practices.

St. Catharines is not as culturally diverse a community as many in the 905 region, although Niagara is a portal for immigrants to Canada and this affects local diversity. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of visible minorities living in the region grew 52.1% compared with 27.5% in Ontario. The Niagara Immigrant Employment Council was created to enhance Niagara's diversity and economic prosperity by strengthening its capacity to attract, recruit and retain internationally trained immigrants who have chosen Canada as their destination. The Council represents 30 - 50 agencies and businesses, and includes three levels of government. While the City of St. Catharines does not play a direct role in the provision of services to new Canadians, it's economic growth and cultural vitality are affected by the success of initiatives such as these. Embracing the practice of including diverse voices in all aspects of City services will contribute to the welcoming environment so essential to attracting newcomers of all kinds to the community.

**PRIORITY: Recognize and embrace the city's cultural diversity as a cornerstone for civic engagement.**





Juliet Dunn of Shea D Duo

## THE UN-MAPPED ASSET – ARTISTS AND CULTURAL WORKERS

The cultural sector exists because of its workers, paid and unpaid. These include artists, historians, cultural managers, technicians of all kinds, and business owners with a diverse range of skills and educational backgrounds. Evaluating the breadth of this sector is beyond the scope of this plan, however, some pre-existing information is available about artists in St. Catharines, and a direct survey was undertaken with 165 responses.

Why are artists the focus of study? Professional artists are the foundation of most creative industry activity. They are a source of talent, innovation and entrepreneurship, and they can positively influence the social and environmental fabric around them: their reputation as gentrifiers of depressed neighbourhoods is well-documented. The community's attitude towards artists and their work can be an indicator of openness to diverse perspectives as art can be vocal in its observations of society.

In a survey<sup>17</sup>, St. Catharines-based artists were asked how much time they spent on their art practice, what the biggest challenges to their practice were, and whether they worked at home or in studios or spaces outside of their residence. When asked whether they sell or practice their art outside of St. Catharines, **92% of respondents** confirmed they did. Additionally, 25% of respondents sell or practice their art outside of Ontario. In other words, **arts are an export industry in St. Catharines.**

The top three challenges identified by artists are linked:

Financial resources and income	<b>60%</b>
Another occupation/employment	<b>44%</b>
Lack of time	<b>41%</b>



Members of the Niagara Symphony Orchestra

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<sup>17</sup> State of Culture Report, Artists Survey Findings



Monica Dufault in *Saving Lonesome George* by Gail Bowen presented by Carousel Players. Photo Credit: Joe Lapinski

These issues are confirmed in a study that identified the arts as a growth sector in St. Catharines. A study by Hill Strategies Research, based on the 2001 Census, states that the artist labour force in St. Catharines increased between 1991 and 2001, while the rest of the labour force decreased, a phenomena that took place in only 4 other Canadian cities of the 92 studied. Further,

*In Canada, the number of artists grew by 29% between 1991 and 2001, close to three times the rate of growth of the overall labour force (10%). In 60 of the 92 large Canadian cities, the growth in the arts labour force exceeded that of the overall labour force. This shows that the arts are a growth sector in many Canadian cities.<sup>18</sup>*

According to the study, St. Catharines had 495 artists<sup>19</sup> within its population in 2001, making up 0.7% of the labour force, slightly below the provincial average of 0.8%. When compared to other similar cities, local artists are paid less, and *paid less compared to other local wage earners.*

City	Artists	Overall Labour Force	Artists as %	Artists average earnings	Earnings Gap
Niagara Falls	280	42,255	0.70%	\$16,200	44%
Peterborough	285	35,090	0.80%	n.r.	n.r.
Barrie	340	57,755	0.60%	\$23,400	28%
Guelph	410	62,390	0.70%	\$21,400	36%
St. Catharines	495	66,800	0.70%	\$16,400	48%
Waterloo	500	52,045	1.00%	\$29,700	26%
Kingston	520	60,755	0.90%	\$18,400	41%
Windsor	535	106,455	0.50%	\$25,300	28%
Oakville	700	83,620	0.80%	\$28,300	46%

<sup>18</sup> Artists in Large Ontario Cities, Hill Strategies Research Inc, 2006, p4.

<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that “the census captures information about the occupation at which a person worked the most hours between May 6 and 12, 2001. Overall, census estimates of artists may be somewhat low because of the frequency of multiple job-holding among artists and the May timing of the census.” p2.



Submission in the Niagara Artists Centre's Strutt: Niagara's Wearable Art Weekend  
Photo by Brian Yungblut

So while there was growth in the number of artists in St. Catharines, their wage earnings were extremely low. In consultations for this plan, some local artists suggested that perhaps their value is not as appreciated in St. Catharines as it is in other communities. They are often asked to donate their artwork and time, often as a “marketing opportunity.”

The arts were a growth sector ten years ago, and the past decade has seen a stronger presence and more activity emerging from the arts. As the arts become more valued in the region, individual artists could further influence economy, local neighbourhoods and social and cultural vitality.

**PRIORITY: Communicate the experiences and value of culture to all St. Catharines' residents.**



Brock students during the Niagara Wine Festival Parade

## CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

The State of Culture Report evaluates participation in culture-specific recreational opportunities offered by the City as well as audience attendance at St. Catharines' largest cultural facilities and festivals. Audience development for the arts is critically important to the future St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre. Cultural participation develops future audiences and patrons, and fosters civic engagement and inclusivity. Patrons and participants are both vital to the sector's health.

### Attendance

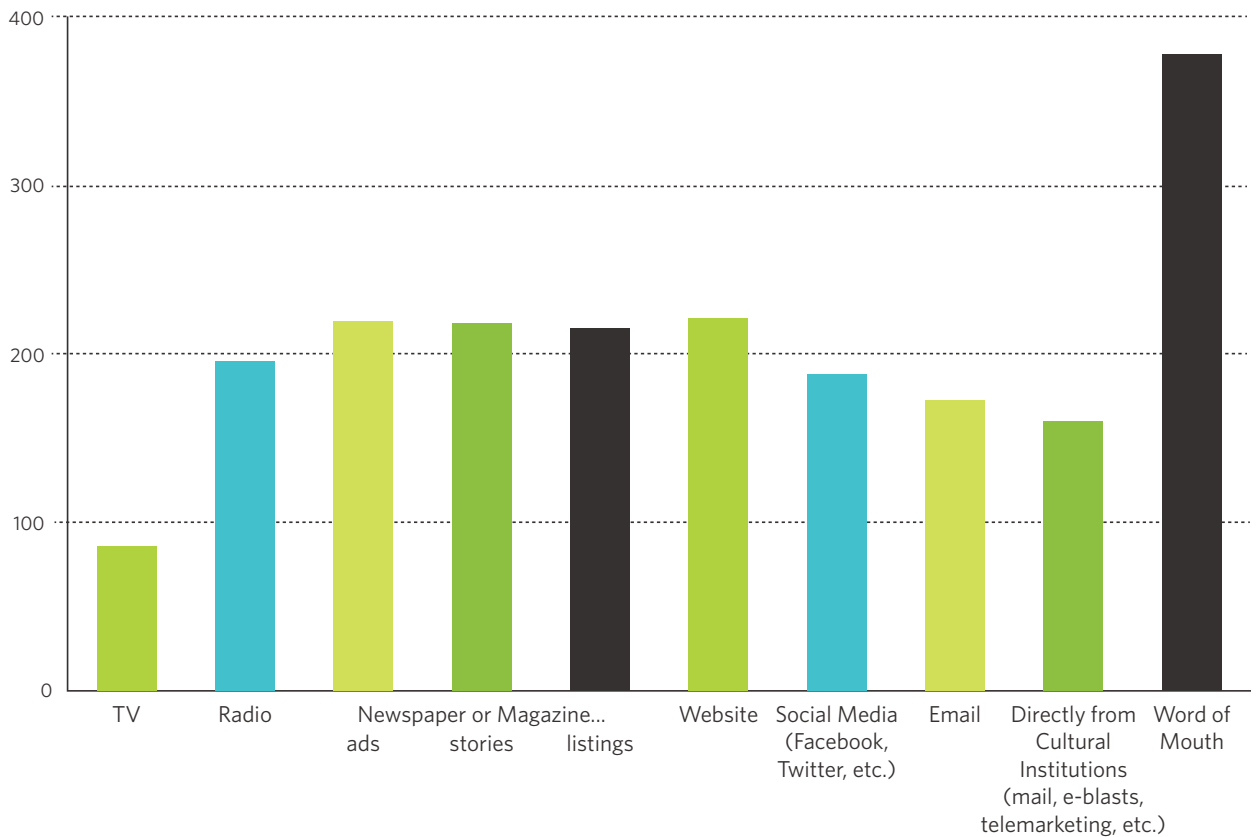
The local arts community also works hard to make attendance at arts events accessible – all local art galleries are free admission, ticket prices for most downtown performing arts activity range from \$12 to \$25, often cheaper for children and students. Some organizations offer pay-what-you-can performances, 2 tickets for the price of one, or discounts for the under-employed. And of course the eyeGo to the Arts program offers \$5 tickets to high school students. Financial access is something the arts sector is keenly sensitive to, and it strives to be accessible in creative ways.

The City plays its part: the St. Catharines Museum and WCC's new policy is admission by donation; the Lakeside Park Carousel is 5¢ a

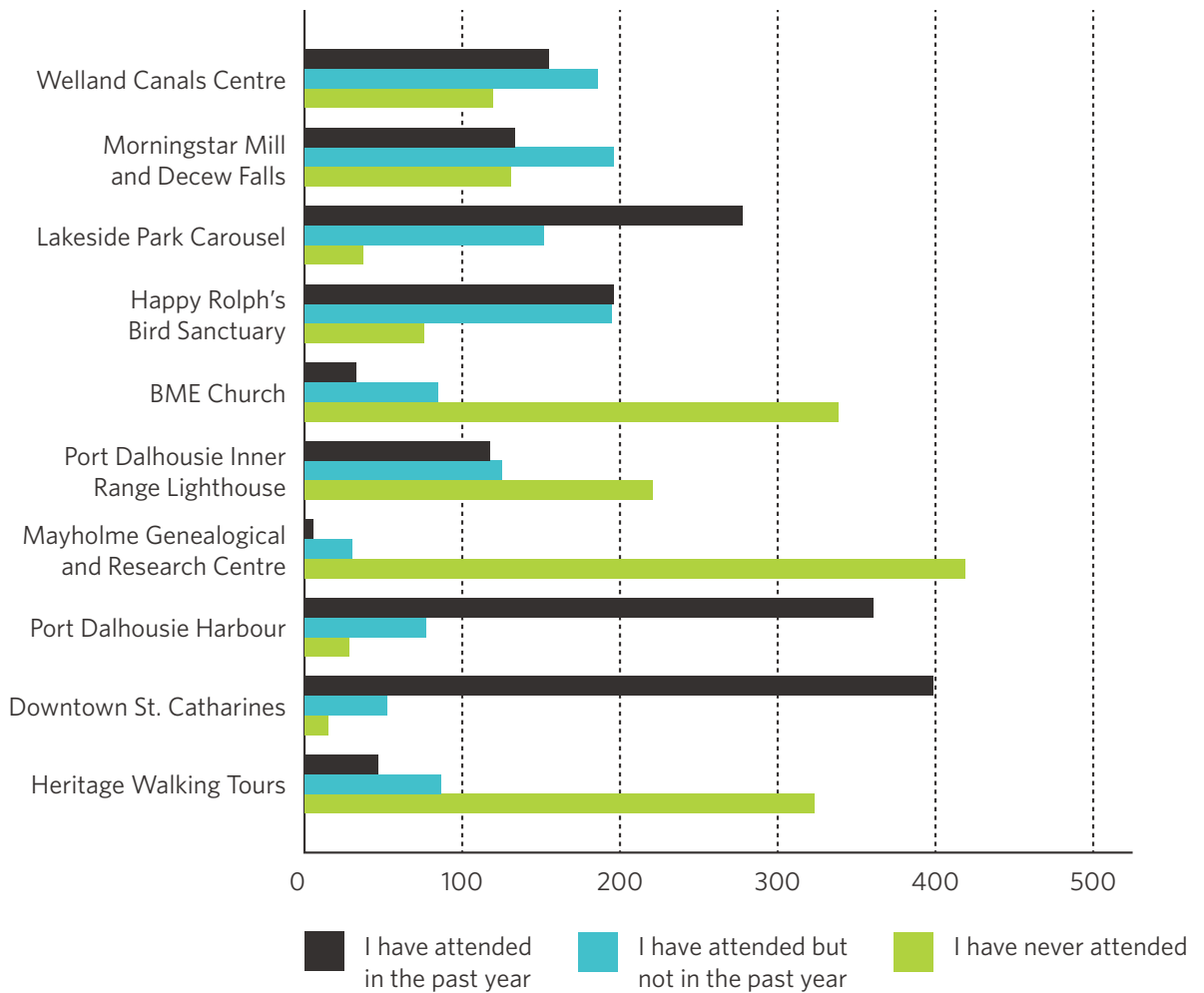
ride, and the Morningstar Mill is also open by donation. The Museum's preliminary statistics suggest that the new policy has resulted in more attendance, which suggests that cost has been a barrier to local residents.

As part of this plan's research, a survey was sent out to the general population of St. Catharines to evaluate participation in leisure-based cultural activities. 450 surveys were completed in full and the following results, and more, can be found in the State of Culture Report<sup>20</sup>.

The majority of people found information about culture by word of mouth, although the chart below suggests that multiple channels need to be utilized to share information about culture. This is a resource-intensive issue for organizations with few staff resources or marketing dollars.



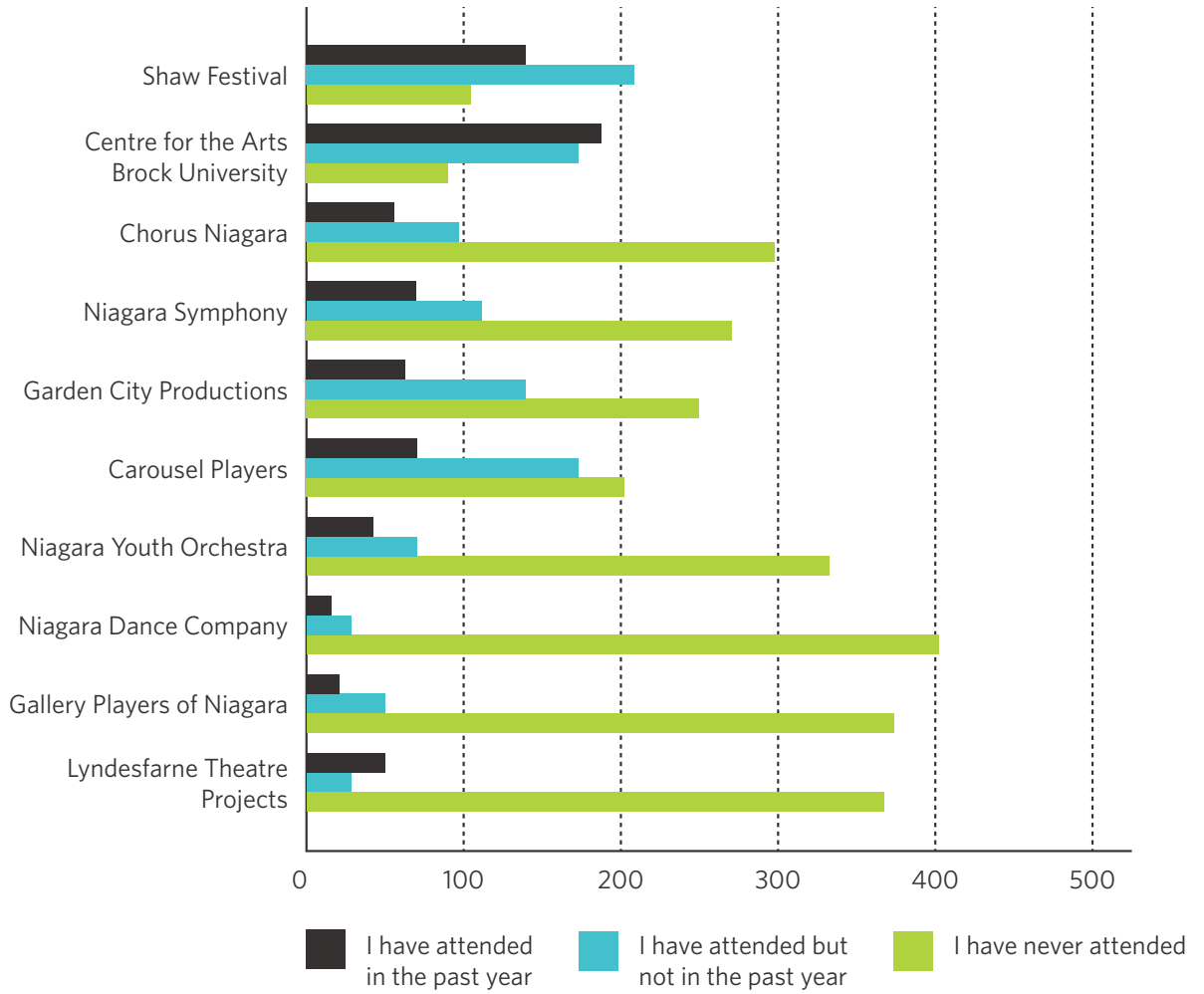
<sup>20</sup> Charts in this section can be found in the State of Culture Report, slides 131 to 140

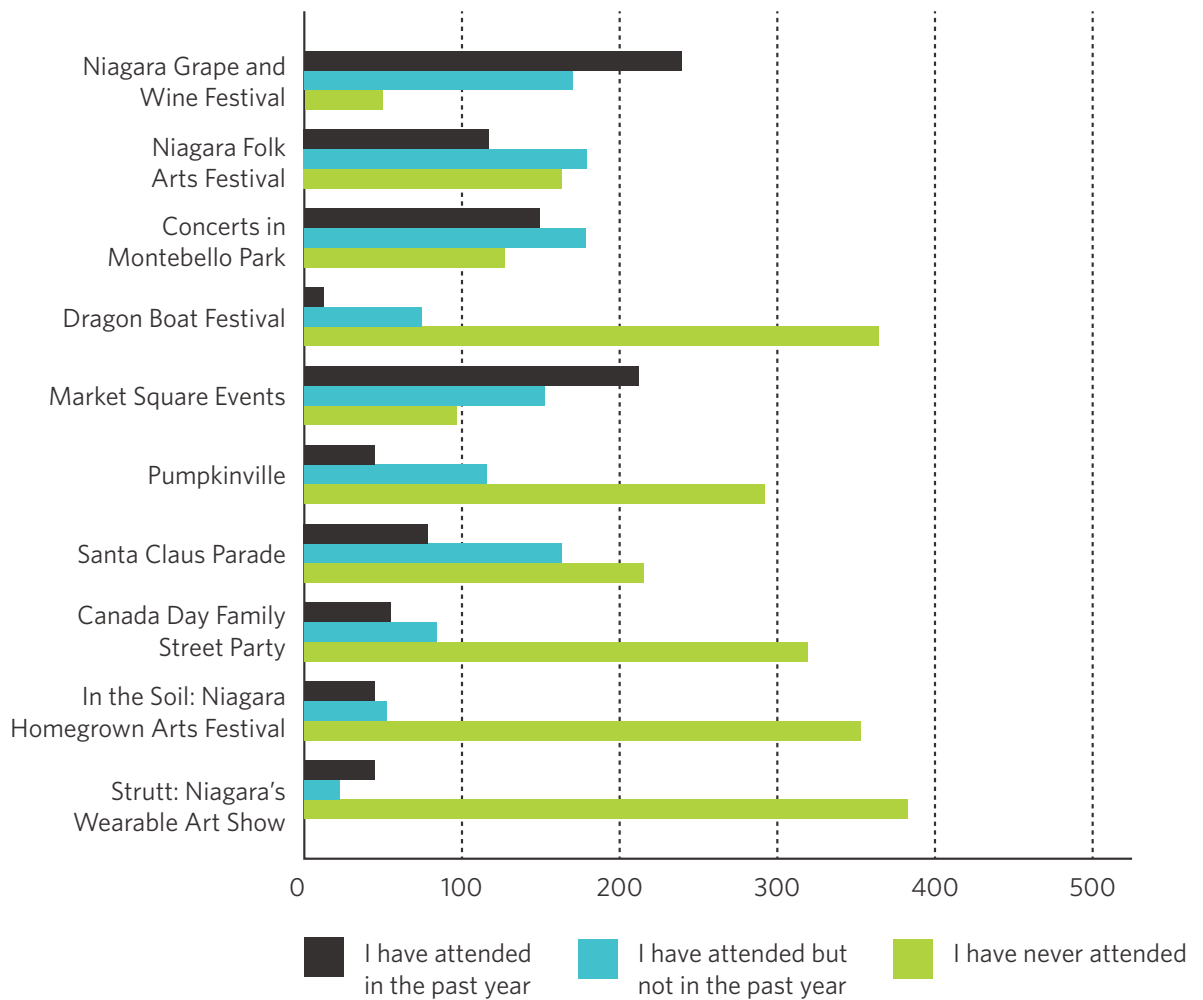


Respondents were asked whether they attend heritage attractions, arts events and festivals. The Lakeside Park Carousel had 50% attendance in respondents, while the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre and Morningstar Mill both had considerable visitation. Less visited were the British Methodist Episcopal Church-Salem Chapel, the Mayholme Foundation and St. Catharines Heritage Walking Tours. The BME Church has international significance as a site associated with Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, yet fewer than 10% of survey respondents had experienced its charm.

The performing arts, seen in the above chart, are less frequented by local residents, and many of the professional arts events available have never been attended. The Shaw Festival and the Centre for the Arts are the most popular arts activities: it is worth noting that the local arts centre is more popular than the world-renowned Shaw Festival. Fewer than 25% of respondents had attended Chorus Niagara, Carousel Players, the Niagara Symphony and Garden City Productions, all long-standing arts producers in the community.

Local arts organizations have consistently indicated they have challenges with promotion and “visibility” and arts patrons have noted it is difficult to find their information. If residents are interested in arts activity but not inclined to hunt for information, there is potential for growing local audiences and participants.





The most interesting feedback from respondents was related to festival attendance, clearly a very popular activity in St. Catharines. Niagara Grape & Wine Festival and events at Market Square received the highest respondent participation in the last year. Among others, Niagara Folk Arts Festival, the Montebello Park Summer Concerts, and the Santa Claus Parade have been popular among respondents.

Festival attendance levels suggest St. Catharines' residents are keen for community gatherings that celebrate local culture. This popularity could offer many opportunities for engaging citizens further in experiencing their local culture. Work has begun to address improved marketing for the arts. The Marketing the Arts of St. Catharines-Niagara partnership undertook three initiatives to promote arts and cultural opportunities: a professional development series to improve skills in the sector, the Inspire: Niagara Arts in Niagara Schools DVD and resource guide for teachers and educators, to promote arts for children and youth, and the [www.cNiagara.ca](http://www.cNiagara.ca) website. This newly launched website promotes cultural events from across Niagara and is the first online tool that facilitates the cultural sector to actively share information for an interested audience. Access to cultural information is improving, and

the future arts centre will be a highly visible beacon for the arts, but strategies for collective marketing can be further developed to promote the breadth of cultural experiences St. Catharines has to offer – to both residents and visitors.

## Participation

Participation in culture goes beyond the act of watching: it is about doing something active, most often for the pleasure of the experience, whether it's performing in a theatre production or choir, doing research in a museum, or taking photography or pottery lessons.

A recent arts engagement study undertaken by the Ontario Arts Council discovered that 98% of Ontarians engage at least once a year in music activities; 98% engage in visual arts, crafts or film activities; and 64% of Ontarians participate at least once a year in theatre activities<sup>21</sup>. The study's findings state:

- Involvement in participatory activities is linked to attendance at audience-based activities;
- Interest in cultural heritage correlates strongly with higher levels of (arts) engagement;
- Opportunities exist for increasing the engagement among those who are interested but participate infrequently in the arts, and has economic benefits, too.

The study indicates that in order to cultivate audiences for the arts, one must first cultivate arts participation, at home, at school, in church and in the community. In other words, cultural participation is necessary to attract and grow local audiences. Further participants in cultural activity experience personal benefits and their sense of belonging to community is improved. Cultural participation serves social inclusion and civic engagement and has economic benefits too.

In St. Catharines there are many opportunities to participate in heritage and arts experiences, through the City's recreation programs, in workshops and activities led by local arts organizations, in volunteer experiences at the St. Catharines Museum, with the Friends of Morningstar Mill or Friends of the Carousel, and more. The City also offers Fee Assistance in recreation (FAIR) to reduce barriers to access. While some of the City's participatory programs have significant levels of participation, such as the cultural activities provided at the City's Older Adult Centres: others are not as successful. If cultural participation is important to the health of the sector, and the social health of our community, strategies for growing participation are required.

**PRIORITY: Foster participation in arts, heritage and cultural experiences.**

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<sup>21</sup> The Ontario Arts Engagement Study, WolfBrown, October 2011, <http://www.arts.on.ca/page4400.aspx>





Niagara Dance Company performs Dissolve,  
concept and choreography by Elizabeth Chitty.  
Photo by The Brain Farm

# Cultural Investment

Each year the City of St. Catharines invests in culture in three ways: in its own cultural assets and programs, in departmental priorities, and directly into the cultural sector. Cultural expenditures and revenues were identified across departmental budgets for a four year period and are summarized below.

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Heritage	1,338,627	1,652,548	1,611,615	1,554,671
Cultural Services	185,884	250,157	223,428	159,449
Special Events	179,316	162,198	181,006	179,283
Cultural Industries	105,359	130,476	133,614	146,236
SCCIP	124,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Public Art	7,174	5,050	21,521	11,441
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,940,360</b>	<b>2,350,429</b>	<b>2,321,184</b>	<b>2,201,080</b>
% of Annual City Budget	1.32%	1.55%	1.91%	1.75%
Less Revenues	720,504	779,448	571,931	699,719
City Tax Investment <sup>22</sup>	1,219,856	1,570,981	1,749,253	1,501,361

Over a four-year period, less than 2% of the City's total budget is invested in arts, heritage and related programming and development. Approximately 70% of the City's cultural investment is in heritage – this line includes the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre, Morningstar Mill, operations for the Lakeside Park Carousel, Heritage planning staff and grants, and cenotaph maintenance. No capital investments are included, although regular capital investments have been made into City-owned heritage buildings and structures. The operating and program investment in heritage is appropriate given the scope of the City's heritage assets.

<sup>22</sup> At the time of writing, the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program (SCCIP) was funded through the Civic Project Fund and was thus not a direct expense to taxpayers. This Fund is to be spent in the next 2 to 3 years and SCCIP is expected to return to a departmental budget line item.

Another 22% - 24% is spent on cultural services staff, programs and initiatives, special events, including those at Market Square and within recreation, and cultural industries<sup>23</sup>. The latter represents investments in nGen and Market Square.

That leaves 6% - 7% for direct investment in the cultural community<sup>24</sup> and into public art. In the Municipal Cultural Policy 2000 several recommendations related to the development of public art, including the establishment of a percent for art policy, and commitment of a percentage of all municipal capital investments to public art. The Garden City Plan, the City's land-use plan, reiterates the need for this investment, as public art can be important addition to the urban environment. Its influence will be limited unless investment is increased.

In December 2008 City Council approved in principle an \$18 million investment in the future Performing Arts Centre. Council recognized the economic value of the project, its role in downtown revitalization and the importance of investing in its first purpose-built arts facility. The City's capital commitment has since grown, and will be matched by other government commitment and community fundraising to achieve its capital investment goals. Once the St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre is operating, it will require an annual investment from the City. In the 2008 Feasibility Study the operating costs of the arts centre were estimated at \$4.5 million. The study outlined a business plan that generated revenue of \$3 million, and confirmed the future facility would need a tax investment of approximately \$1.5 million annually. The partnership with Brock University will reduce the City's investment in the arts centre, but ongoing investment is required to achieve the anticipated economic return.

What is that return? An economic impact analysis details **a \$16 million per year return on investment**<sup>25</sup> to the businesses and residents of St. Catharines. When the City invests \$1.5 million per year, the community will see a return on that investment ten-fold.

In consultations with the arts community, support for the PAC is strong, but there is concern about the future rental costs and the potential for the City to reduce or eliminate direct investment to currently-supported organizations. The PAC should not be the project that reduces other arts investment by the City, particularly since future programming and audiences at the facility are dependent on a healthy local arts sector. The PAC is an enormous investment that can make or break the local cultural sector: the City will need to foster the health of the arts community to ensure that its economic - and cultural - goals of the PAC are achieved.

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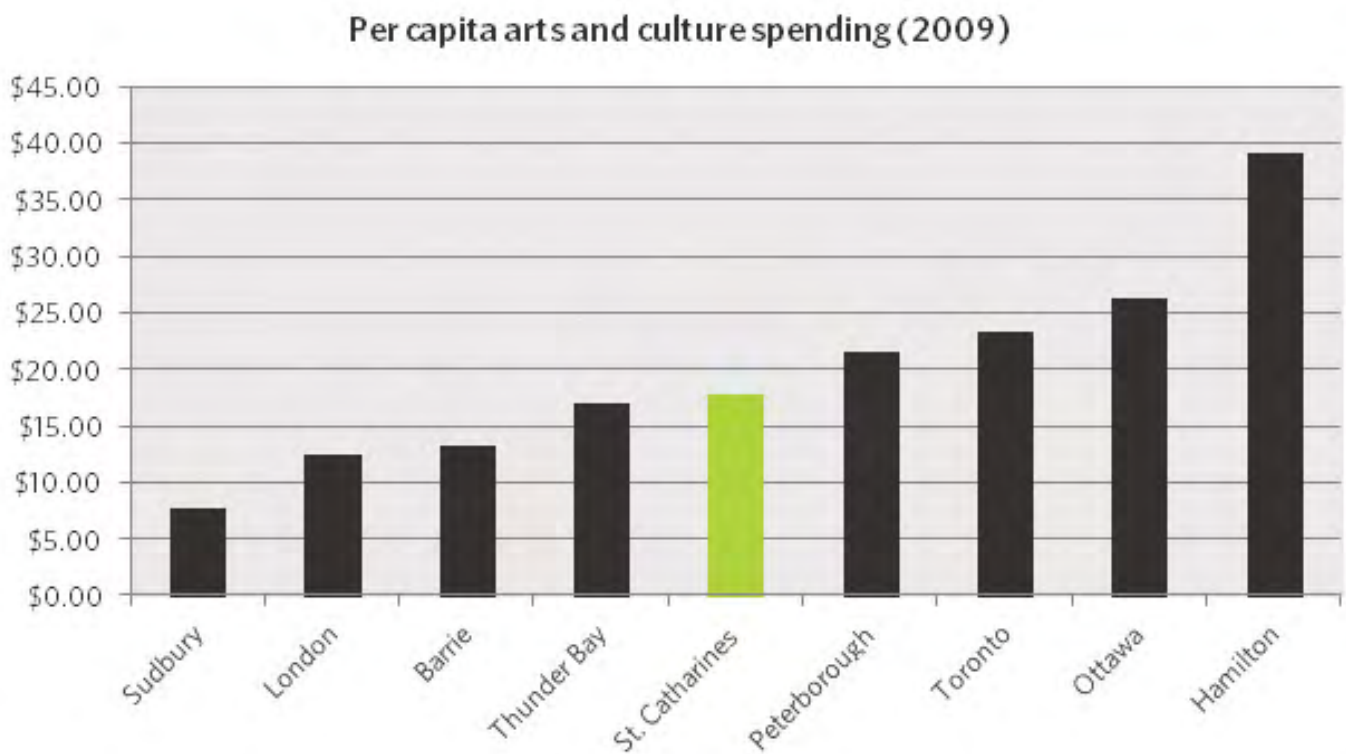
<sup>23</sup> Staffing and operating costs of recreation staff and programs, and the Small Business Enterprise Centre, were not included in this analysis, as it was too difficult to quantify the percentage each spent on culture-specific service provision.

<sup>24</sup> Fee-for-service investments were made each year to two independent, long-standing festivals - the Niagara Wine Festival and the Niagara Folk Arts Festival. These amounts are included in the special events line item.

<sup>25</sup> A Feasibility Study for an Academic and Cultural Arts Development in Downtown St. Catharines. Levitt Goodman Architects and Martin Vinik Planning for the Arts

## HOW DOES ST. CATHARINES' INVESTMENT COMPARE?

Currently the only source of comparative information on municipal cultural investment is the Ontario Municipal Benchmark Indicators (OMBI) and St. Catharines does not participate in this benchmarking initiative. It is still worth reviewing OMBI data: the chart below suggests that St. Catharines' 2009 per capita investment of 17.67% is higher than London, Barrie and Thunder Bay, but lower than Peterborough and the larger cities of Hamilton, Ottawa and Toronto. What is unclear in this information is the division of investment between heritage, arts, facility operations and sector investment.



Were the City of St. Catharines to further investigate how other municipalities invest in culture, new revenue development or investment strategies may be identified, for example, the recent billboard tax that was approved by the City of Toronto specifically for arts investment.

It is easier to evaluate cultural investment programs, grants provided to the cultural sector to strengthen their ability to engage residents in cultural experiences. The chart below includes the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program (SCCIP) at \$1.14 per capita in 2008, the last year the program received an increase to its budget. The City's level of investment is in the bottom 5 of 16 cities. This, and the issues identified in the arts sector, would indicate that St. Catharines needs to increase its direct investment to the cultural community.

<b>Ontario Cities: per capita spending on culture</b>		
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Population (2006)</b>	<b>Spending on Cultural Grants per capita (2008)</b>
Thunder Bay	109,140	\$10.46
Barrie	128,430	\$2.06
<b>St. Catharines</b>	<b>131,400 (2012)</b>	<b>\$1.14 (2012)</b>
Sudbury	157,857	\$3.00
Kingston	159,561	\$2.73
Richmond Hill	162,704	\$0.08
Oakville	165,613	\$1.09
Kitchener	204,668	\$5.50 (2008 estimate) \$6.30 (2010)
Windsor	216,473	\$3.53
Vaughan	238,866	\$0.01 (SIK)
Markham	261,573	\$0.46
London	352,395	\$3.24
Brampton	433,806	\$1.58
Hamilton	504,559	\$2.70
Mississauga	668,549	\$1.57
Ottawa	812,129	\$4.65
Toronto	2,503,281	\$6.27

Source: Vaughan Cultural Plan  
SIK - Services in Kind

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT - THE SCCIP RESULTS

The City of St. Catharines began the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program (SCCIP) in 2004 and the results in the arts community are visible. St. Catharines has a vibrant professional arts community as well as proud community arts organizations. Some of its long-

standing arts organizations are 40, 50 or more than 60 years old and they acknowledge SCCIP is an important contributor to their sustainability. The program has: helped them leverage more money from other levels of government and from the private sector; it has encouraged recent graduates to stay in St. Catharines and create jobs in the arts for themselves; and it has helped create new arts facilities, new festivals and more activity and outreach programs.

The return on SCCIP investment was evaluated over a three year period (2008 - 2010) as part of this plan's research and the following conclusions were reached<sup>26</sup>:

- SCCIP recipients are generating more revenue - total revenue went up by approximately 27%, or \$600,000 in a three-year period.
- Funding from the private sector nearly doubled, growing from 23% of all revenue to 36% of total revenue.
- In 2010, the average SCCIP grant recipient supported double the full-time equivalent jobs than in 2008.
- Between 2008 and 2010 the number of artists and curators employed by SCCIP recipients increased by over 30 percent.
- Between 2008 and 2010 the number of artist contracts increased by 50%, amounting to nearly 600 total artist contracts.
- The majority of grants were under \$7,500K.

An economic impact analysis was undertaken which confirmed that SCCIP recipients are creating jobs, generating revenue and stimulating spin-off spending in St. Catharines.<sup>27</sup>

<b>Impact of SCCIP Grantee Spending on Ontario</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Expenditures (Direct Impact of Grantees + Audiences)</b>	<b>Outputs (Indirect Impact)</b>	<b>Employment (Jobs)</b>
2009	\$2,297,889	\$3,398,435	33.17
2010	\$2,359,899	\$3,476,195	33.65
2011	\$2,549,402	\$3,768,426	36.25

<sup>26</sup> See State of Culture Report, Economic Impact of SCCIP Recipients, Slides 19 - 28

<sup>27</sup> See State of Culture Report, Economic Impact of SCCIP Recipients, Slides 19 - 28b



Yet, there are signs of trouble in the arts sector. In early 2013 there were temporary and permanent layoffs taking place in the sector. Much available funding is project-based, released in cycles that can negatively affect smaller organizations' ongoing operations and ability to support sufficient staff levels. Simultaneously, the arts community saw City funding levels drop in the 2012 SCCIP approvals<sup>28</sup>. A new program stream, the Culture Builds Community Program, has expanded the focus of the program's investment and tapped into funding previously focused on the professional arts sector. The result is less funding for arts organizations trying to grow their capacity in readiness for the Arts Centre, and more concern about the future cost of renting the St. Catharines Performing Arts Centre for their performances.

## THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

The two-tier municipal system in Niagara poses both opportunities and challenges for the City. Not all local services are provided by the City, and some are shared between two levels of government. Coordination between the two is not always achieved, and St. Catharines, as the biggest municipality amongst twelve, is often perceived as being the "want-it-all" community by others in Niagara.

The Regional Municipality of Niagara recognizes cultural vitality as an essential "fourth pillar" of municipal sustainability along with economic prosperity, environmental responsibility and social equity. In 2010, the Region developed a Culture Plan - "Creative Niagara: Economy, Places, People, Identity" - which reinforces culture's relevance and importance in people's everyday lives. With the adoption of the Culture Plan, Niagara became one of the first regions in Ontario to "embrace the integration of culture into the Region's land use planning objectives."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Some of the funding cuts were reinstated in 2013, although not all, and the return to 2011 rates was at the expense of funding more project grants.

<sup>29</sup> Niagara Region Culture Plan

In 2013, the Region approved amendments to embed culture in its Official Plan. The amendments establish a policy framework to implement the key strategic directions of the Culture Plan as follows:

1. "Build a diverse economy by strengthening cultural resources and the creative cultural sector to maximize their contribution to economic development."
2. "Encourage analysis and inclusion of cultural places, spaces and activities in land-use planning, infrastructure development and programming to preserve and develop distinct and unique places in Niagara."
3. "Support professional development and information sharing for the creative cultural sector, and encourage participation in culture across the Niagara community to stimulate innovation, creativity and community engagement.<sup>30</sup>"
4. "Promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of culture and its contribution to the ongoing development of vibrant, unique communities and a shared sense of identity as Niagara."

The amendments, will guide and support cultural planning for both the Region and its municipalities, including St. Catharines. The inclusion of culture in Niagara's Official Plan should influence regional decision-makers and lead to investment in the cultural sector, and into municipally-led cultural initiatives such as the Arts Centre. Many of the arts organizations supported by the City's SCCIP program serve the wider Niagara area, yet only the City of St. Catharines consistently invests in them.

In its revised Official Plan the Region clearly embraces the role culture has to play in building a creative economy. The amendments note that zoning amendments need to consider culture, cultural asset mapping is identified as a useful resource, the value of culture in landscape and public realm is incorporated, and the amendments contain a Cultural Expression Policy, which is a strong addition to local policy. Despite the fact that social services and public health are under the umbrella of Regional government, no links are identified between culture and these two responsibilities. There are several areas where the work of each level of local government could be duplicated: public art, sector training and education, cultural asset mapping and plaquing are all areas where cross-over of responsibility exists. Ideally, the Niagara Region will work closely with the City of St. Catharines when moving forward initiatives that can be improved by building St. Catharines' experience.

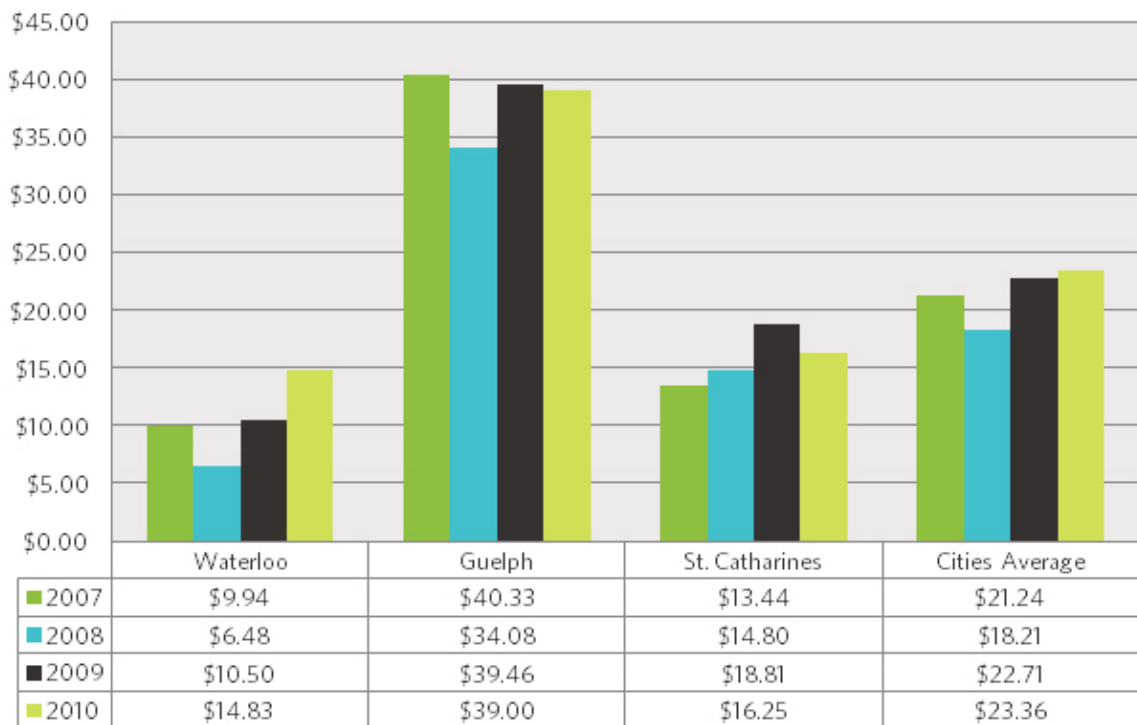


## REGIONAL INVESTMENT IN CULTURE

Prior to 2012, there has been virtually no direct investment into the cultural sector by the Region of Niagara. In 2012 the Niagara Region was successful in its bid as a Cultural Capital of Canada. Approximately \$2.1 million was invested into cultural activities across the region, a shared investment from the federal government and the Niagara Region. Several St. Catharines-based arts organizations participated in the program as did the City's cultural services office. The funding was project-specific, and to date the Region has yet to commit to continuing continue direct investment in the cultural sector.

In 2012 City staff participated in a study led by the City of Waterloo that compared cultural investment in Waterloo, St. Catharines and Guelph. A comparison to two other cities does not provide sufficient breadth of information, although the study posed an unexpected question about the affect of regional investment in culture.

**Per Capita Municipal Cultural Expenditures 2007 - 2010**



The chart above includes operating, grant and capital expenditures over four years. It shows significantly different levels of investment in culture between the three municipalities, with St. Catharines in the middle. The report notes "there are differences in municipal government and budgeting structures that partially explains the contrasts between each municipality's per

capita operating expenditure.<sup>31</sup> Those differences are between one-tier and two-tier systems. Guelph is a one-tier government and therefore is responsible for all cultural funding; Waterloo is within a two-tier system and their regional government provides considerable ongoing investment into cultural facilities and organizations (they have a grant program for culture, for example). St. Catharines also operates in a two-tier system but without the additional support of regional investment into culture, the City spends considerably more than the City of Waterloo. At the time of this plan's release, the Niagara Region had released its first-ever applications to the Niagara Cultural Investment Program, a positive addition to the landscape.

The report did not formally evaluate the nature of cultural investment in a two-tier structure, but this information is highly suggestive. Is St. Catharines' investment higher than Waterloo's **because of the difference in Regional cultural investment**? The one-time investment through the Cultural Capital of Canada Program did not address the issues of a sector plagued with project-only funding. Can St. Catharines encourage future regional investment into the health of the cultural eco-system in Niagara?

Further municipal comparative analysis of cultural investment is recommended given the evidence of need in the community and the comparatively low level of municipal investment into the arts sector. Neither the City nor the Region can offer the direct programming provided by this sector and successfully achieve the diversity of activity, programs and engagement. Nor should they as it is programming handled far more successfully, and economically, by cultural professionals. The Creative Capital Gains Plan from the City of Toronto estimated that \$17.75 is generated for every dollar invested into cultural initiatives. This, coupled with the evidence of SCCIP's ability to support revenue generation and have a positive economic return, is further proof that investment in the cultural sector provides numerous benefits.

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<sup>31</sup> Report on Municipal Cultural Investment in the City of Waterloo. A study prepared by the Wilfrid Laurier University MBA Project Team, 2012, as commissioned by the City of Waterloo

CULTURE  
SIX WORDS  
OR LESS  
STORIES



“My home,  
past, present  
and future”

Poster from the Six-word contest, an outreach initiative of the Culture Plan (see appendices for responses)

*Bones, Niagara Ice Dogs*

# Priorities and Implementation

After fourteen months of consultation, research and analysis seven priorities were identified that all stakeholders felt would respond to the opportunities on St. Catharines' cultural horizon. While there was a long list of initiatives under each priority initially, they were slowly whittled down to a more feasible list. Still, there are 28 action items within this plan to be addressed over the next eight years.

The Culture Plan priorities have been shaped to allow for future opportunities that may emerge. They are:

- 1. Communicate the experiences and value of culture to all St. Catharines' residents.**
- 2. Foster participation in arts, heritage and cultural experiences.**
- 3. Cultivate the growth and development of the creative sector.**
- 4. Further develop the planning, management and coordination of heritage assets and historical services.**
- 5. Recognize and embrace the city's cultural diversity as a cornerstone for civic engagement.**
- 6. Leverage culture to strengthen St. Catharines' distinct sense of place and community.**
- 7. Foster the cross-departmental management and delivery of arts and heritage service delivery, planning and community development.**

## IMPLEMENTATION

The priorities and their initiatives are to be implemented by multiple City departments, City committees and potential partners in the community. Over the next five pages a matrix identifies some of these collaborators as well as broad timelines, complexity levels and a preliminary evaluation of cost level; these are offered as a starting point for implementation. This structure is flexible, to allow for responsiveness to future priorities and opportunities as they arise.

Collaboration and reporting are important to the plan's success. The Internal Cultural Advisory Team should be tasked with developing success indicators or measurements and developing reports and communication strategies for City Council and the community. While this is a plan for municipal government, the Inspire St. Catharines: Culture Plan 2020 has emerged with the community's active participation and support. Transparent reporting will serve to further engage St. Catharines' citizens in the future sustainability of the community.

## Legend

Short term - 1-2 years	PCS - Programs and Cultural Services Division	FMS - Financial Management Services
Medium-term - 3-4 years	EDT - Economic Development and Tourism Services Division	Library - St. Catharines Public Library
Medium-long term - 5-6 years	PBS - Planning and Building Services	
Long-term - 7-8 years	CSS - Corporate Support Services	

Initiative	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Estimated Complexity	City Dept.	City Committees	Outside Agencies
<b>Priority 1. Communicate the experiences and value of culture to St. Catharines' residents.</b>						
Facilitate and support collective marketing initiatives, including cross-promotion, for all cultural organizations and events in the community.	ongoing	low to medium	low to medium	PCS; EDT; Library		
Assess the City's marketing and interpretive materials and develop a plan to strengthen the promotion and awareness of municipal cultural assets.	short-term	low	low	PCS; EDT; PBS	Heritage Committee, Museum Advisory Committee, Culture Committee	
Evaluate the City's protocols for welcoming and providing information to newcomers. Consider the distinct needs of new Canadians, Brock University and Niagara College students, new businesses and new municipal employees.	short-term	low to medium	low	PCS; EDT; CSS		Niagara Region; Folk Arts, Brock U; Niagara C; Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce
Identify strategies for celebrating local cultural success stories and the contributions of cultural workers and businesses.	ongoing	medium	low to medium	PCS; EDT; Library	Culture Committee; Museum Advisory Committee	

Initiative	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Estimated Complexity	City Dept.	City Committees	Outside Agencies
<b>Priority 2. Foster participation in arts, heritage and cultural experiences.</b>						
Review and strengthen the support and development of existing and emerging festivals, celebrations and events, taking into consideration equitable access, transparency and efficiency.	short to medium-term		medium	PCS; EDT	Culture Committee	Downtown Association
Further develop opportunities to experience arts and heritage through direct programming, in partnership, and through investment in the cultural sector.	ongoing	medium to high	medium	PCS; EDT; Library	Museum Advisory Committee; Culture Committee	
Investigate barriers to cultural access and identify strategies to increase participation.	short to medium term / ongoing		medium	Internal Cultural Advisory Committee	Culture Committee	
Develop a comprehensive municipal volunteer policy that includes recruitment, management and recognition of volunteers, taking into consideration the current role of volunteers across the corporation.	short to medium term		medium	PCS; EDT		

<b>Priority 3. Cultivate the growth and development of the creative sector.</b>						
Build on the success of the St. Catharines Cultural Investment Program to further strengthen organizational capacity, revenue development and market-readiness within the local cultural sector.	ongoing	medium	low	PCS	Culture Committee	
Investigate the development and resourcing of an arms-length or independent umbrella arts authority.	short to medium term	low to medium	medium to high	PCS; EDT	Culture Committee	Arts Alliance
Engage the private sector with arts and heritage organizations, with particular attention to deeper involvement in governance, partnerships and skills development.	medium term	low	medium	PCS; EDT	Culture Committee	Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association

Initiative	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Estimated Complexity	City Dept.	City Committees	Outside Agencies
Evaluate the availability of sufficient and appropriate facilities for arts development and presentation, taking into consideration the future changes in downtown and their potential effect on pre-existing artist studios and shared creative spaces.	medium to medium-long term	low to high	high	PCS; EDT; PBS	Culture Committee	Arts Alliance

**Priority 4. Further develop the planning, management and coordination of heritage assets and historical services.**

Build on existing incentives for heritage preservation and encourage growth of single building heritage designations.  Consider establishing a dedicated Heritage Planner position within the City's complement of staff to build on the opportunities identified.	ongoing	low to medium	medium	PBS		
Preserve, maintain and promote access and interpretation of the remnants of the first three Welland Canals.	medium term		medium to high	PCS; EDT; PBS	Heritage Committee; Museum Advisory Committee	Niagara Region
Recognize the significant role of Black History in our community, and continue to evaluate strategies for preserving, interpreting and promoting that history.	ongoing	low to high	low to high	PCS; EDT	Black History Advisory Committee	
Evaluate the success of Doors Open in St. Catharines and consider options for the presentation of same or similar programs and strategies to celebrate the community's built heritage.	short term	low	medium	PCS; PBS	Museum Advisory Committee	Niagara Region; Binational Tourism Alliance



Initiative	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Estimated Complexity	City Dept.	City Committees	Outside Agencies
<b>Priority 5. Recognize and embrace the city's cultural diversity as a cornerstone for civic engagement.</b>						
Recognize the importance of representing the diversity of our community consistently in all City marketing and communication materials and develop communications policy as appropriate.	short-term	low	low	PCS; EDT	Culture Committee	
Recognize the importance of engaging youth with cultural initiatives, as a means of strengthening their civic and community engagement in the future, and develop strategies to deepen youth engagement with local culture.	short to medium-term	low to medium	medium	PCS; EDT; Library	Youth Advisory Committee; Culture Committee	Next Niagara
Continue to support the development of grass roots initiatives that serve local community, reflect our distinct culture and foster distinct place-making.	ongoing	low to medium	medium	PCS; EDT	Museum Advisory Committee; Sustainability Committee; Culture Committee	
Evaluate all forms of diversity in City Committees, consider the adoption of language in all committee Terms of Reference to address the value of inclusivity, and actively recruit diverse representation for all committees.	short-term	low	low to medium	All Departments	All City Committees	

<b>Priority 6. Leverage culture to strengthen St. Catharines' distinct sense of place and community.</b>						
Foster an environment to attract cultural and creative sector workers and businesses to St. Catharines and develop strategies for the development of creative mixed use spaces, including live/work space for artists.	medium to long-term	medium to high	high	PCS; EDT; PBS	Internal Advisory Committee	Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce; Downtown Association



Initiative	Estimated Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Estimated Complexity	City Dept.	City Committees	Outside Agencies
Develop, resource and implement a public art plan, recognizing the role of public art in urban design and in cultivating a distinct sense of place at a neighbourhood level.	medium term	medium	high	PCS; PBS	Public Art Advisory Committee	
Maximize City-owned heritage buildings and structures as cornerstones of local community and civic pride when considering programs, rental opportunities or other plans for the future.	short to long term		medium to high	PCS; EDT; FMS		
Identify key cultural assets across the city and develop strategies to maximize their use for local residents at a neighbourhood level. Include consideration of cultural neighbourhood identification through street signage and special promotions.	medium to long term	low to medium	medium to high	PCS; EDT; PBS	Culture Committee; Museum Advisory Committee	Neighbourhood Associations

**Priority 7. Foster the cross-departmental management and delivery of arts and heritage service delivery, planning and community development.**

Build on Phase 1 of the Cultural Asset Mapping initiative, addressing maintenance, function and cross-departmental planning and promotional needs.	short to medium-term		medium to high	PCS; EDT; PBS; CSS		
Evaluate the breadth of City Committees engaged in culture-related initiatives and identify communication strategies and efficiencies amongst them.	short-term	low	low	PCS; EDT; PBS	All connected Committees	
Evaluate collections within the municipality and identify efficiencies and policy and procedural clarifications, i.e. civic art, archives, Museum etc.	short to medium-term	low	medium	PCS; EDT	Museum Advisory Committee; Public Art Advisory Committee	
Develop cross-departmental working group to address cultural service delivery, communication and community development. Develop Cultural Success Indicators that address all pillars of sustainability and that contribute to the implementation of this plan.	short term	low	medium to high	PCS; EDT; PBS		

# Conclusion



S.C.E.N.E. - The St. Catharines Event for new Music and Entertainment - live performance at Market Square

In the municipal arena, culture is no longer simply about delivering arts programming. It is an economic strategy, a social imperative and an environmental investment. Culture, when identified and leveraged, can be a significant contributor to a community's future vitality and prosperity. The *Inspire St. Catharines: Culture Plan 2020* aims to inspire government, business and residents to maximize the opportunities that culture affords.

St. Catharines is changing. The people, landscapes and expressions of St. Catharines are seeds, soil and sunshine for the future. With sufficient support, they can help St. Catharines grow and flourish, and make The Garden City fertile again.



IT CAME FROM THE WELLAND CANAL  
By Rob Elliott and Christine Cosby (Swizzle Studio)  
Performed by Tracy Duru. Photo by Brian Yungblut.

# Appendix A: Planning Process

## Internal Review and Analysis

- **Background Review & Analysis:** review and analysis of all background documents related to culture and heritage including policies, studies and other planning documents
- **Assessment of Existing Cultural Assets and Cultural Service Delivery:** review of existing cultural assets cultural service delivery across departments, City Committees
- **Policy and Plan Analysis and Assessment:** examination of existing City policies and plans, and identify opportunities for integrating culture
- **Internal Analysis:** interim report synthesizing all of the previous findings

## Public Consultation and Engagement

- **Cultural/Creative Sector Focus Groups:** gather information about level of participation in cultural events, opportunities for collaboration, and perceived gaps in access, services and incentives
- **Neighbourhood Meetings:** conducted in diverse locations around St. Catharines with a focus different constituencies
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** one-on-one interviews conducted to further engage in specific issues facing St. Catharines
- **ONLINE SURVEY:** two online municipal-wide surveys were administered: one to evaluate participation patterns of residents; the second surveyed artists and evaluated their space needs, income sources and opportunities for improved service

## Community Scan

- **Cultural Participation Analysis:** analysis of participation for cultural events and activities
- **Performing Arts Centre Governance Analysis:** review of existing governance and operating plans for the new Performing Arts Centre
- **Cultural Mapping Update:** expansion of cultural asset data and mapping of cultural asset characteristics to understand proximity and relationships to one another and accessibility to transportation and key populations
- **Best Practices Analysis:** review of select Canadian municipalities exhibiting best practices in cultural service delivery
- **State of Culture Report:** synthesis of findings above and top-line priorities

## Final Culture Plan

- **Stakeholder Charrette:** review and testing of key issues, strategic direction and top line priorities and development of initiatives to achieve priorities
- **Draft Culture Plan:** findings, analysis, and final initiatives for implementation are included in this Draft Cultural Plan. Draft is presented to cross-sectoral committee and the public have had opportunities to provide feedback, communicate needs and aspirations, and outline their preferences for their City's Culture Plan
- **Final Culture Plan:** final revisions based on feedback from cross-sectoral and public are incorporated into Final plan and is presented to the City as a dynamic, working document

# Appendix B:

## State of Culture – Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. SCCIP Impact
3. Cultural Participation Analysis
4. Performing Arts Centre Analysis
5. Cultural Mapping & Demographic Analysis
6. Artists Survey
7. Community Perceptions
8. Top-Line Priorities
9. Next Steps

Appendix 1. Source Charts for SCCIP Impact

Appendix 2. Stakeholders Interview List

# Appendix C:

## Internal Analysis – Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary
  - a. Cultural Planning Process
  - b. Content
  - c. Key Findings
2. People
  - a. How City Departments are Involved in Cultural Service Delivery: Key Findings and Recommendations
  - b. How City Committees are Involved in Cultural Service Delivery: Key Findings and Recommendations
3. Policies and Plans Audit
  - a. Recreation Facility Master Plan (2008)
  - b. Downtown Creative Cluster Master Plan (2008)
  - c. The Garden City: City of St. Catharines Official Plan (2010)
  - d. Tourism Strategy (2009)
  - e. Tending our Garden City: The City of St. Catharines Sustainability Strategy (2011)
  - f. Economic Development Strategy (2009)
  - g. Public Art Policy (2003)
  - h. Cultural Investment Policy (2004)
  - i. Municipal Cultural Policy (2000)
  - j. The St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre Strategic Plan 2008-2012
  - k. St. Catharines Public Library strategic planning documents, including: “Strategic Agenda 2007-2010: Door Onto the World”, “Memo and Goals 2011”, and “Operational Goals Update 2012”
4. Programming and Asset Management
5. Funding

Appendix: Culture-related Revenues and Expenses Figures



## Appendix D: Glossary of Terms

**Artist:** creator in any art form or discipline

**Arts:** include, but are not limited to, music, theatre, dance, visual art, media arts and literature

**Celebrations:** cultural events organized for the purpose of building and celebrating a sense of community in response to a desire that is best addressed through celebration. Often a celebration marks a civic or national holiday, a special day, or a noteworthy event.

**Community Art:** an experience in which non-arts community members work with a professional artist on a project that ends in a public presentation or work of art expressing community interests and issues

**Cultural diversity:** the breadth of ancestral heritages reflected in any part of society.

**Cultural landscape:** any geographical area that has been modified, influenced, or given special cultural meaning by people

**Cultural workers:** personnel involved directly or in support functions in the production, presentation and distribution of culture

**Event:** any cultural presentation in any medium such as literary reading, storytelling, music concert, play, visual art opening, dance concert, public talk, heritage re-enactment, etc.

**Festival:** a series of theme-related events, predominantly cultural in nature, held annually for two or more consecutive days and possessing city-wide and regional appeal

**Heritage:** set of things, places and ideas inherited from the past, both natural and man-made

**Heritage resources:** include, but are not limited to, cultural landscapes, archeological sites, structures, artifacts and associated records

**Inclusivity:** the process of engaging as many diverse people within the community as possible, and fairly representing gender, culture, race, religion, age, ability, sexual orientation etc.

**Local Community:** a group of people brought together by geography, tradition, culture, lifestyle, common experience or spirit

**Professional:** (pertaining to artists and other cultural workers) persons making all or part of their living from their cultural practice, and/or identified by their peers and/or themselves as primarily committed to their practice over other income-producing and life activities

**Living arts:** arts made by living artists

**Non-professional:** (pertaining to artists and other cultural workers) persons engaged in cultural practices as a leisure pursuit and not receiving financial compensation

**Semi-professional:** (pertaining to artists and other cultural workers) persons making part of their living from their cultural practice and/or committed to their practice as a significant part of their activities

## Appendix E: Bibliography

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Cultural Resource Mapping: A Guide for Municipalities, 2010, Canadian Urban Institute for Municipal Cultural Planning Inc

Inspire! Niagara Arts in Niagara Schools: A Resource Guide for Parents and Teachers, 2012

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Peterborough Municipal Culture Plan

Report on Municipal Cultural Investment in the City of Waterloo. A study prepared by the Wilfrid Laurier University MBA Project Team, 2012, commissioned by the City of Waterloo

The Geography Of Nowhere: The Rise And Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape by James Howard Kunstler

The Ontario Arts Engagement Study, WolfBrown, October 2011, <http://www.arts.on.ca/page4400.aspx>

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# Appendix F: The Last Word

**We asked St. Catharines to “tell the story” of St. Catharines in six words. The winners of our contest were:**

*“Put St. Catharines in yourself” ~ from J.Pizzati*

*“Sea-ewe-Elle-tea-you-are-E!” ~from G.Redden*

*“An interpersonal community of culturaldiversity” ~ K.Briggs*

**Here are the rest of the entries in our Six Word Story of St. Catharines Contest. Thank you to those of you who participated!!!**

“Family, fun, history, culture, jobs,.....HOME !!!!”  
~ D.N.

“The Paris of the Niagara Peninsula”  
~ J.H.

“St.Petrie, Dish of Culture, Grows here”  
~ A.W.

“Where perseverance and natural beauty meet”  
~ C.G.

“Culture was at 110 James Street”  
~ J.V.

“St Catharines offers something for everyone!”  
~ C.H.

“Loyalist blood, seafaring spirit, industrial heart.”  
~ D.P.

“HIDDEN TREASURES TRANSFORM INTO  
PRECIOUS MEMORIES”  
~ G.M.

“Experience cultural diversity and interpersonal  
community”  
~ K.B.

“LIVING IN THE GARDEN OF CULTURE”  
~ R.R.

“Close to everything you can imagine”  
~A.M.

“Give us free parking. It’s windy.”  
~ A.S.

“Our diversity is our greatest strength”  
~ M.M.

“Come and see for yourself”  
~ A.O.A

“Big city dreams small city money”  
~ T.D.

“Over spending Council small town justice”  
~ C.D.

“University city, wine country, regattas, gardens”  
~ J.R.

“Old, retired, change fearing senior citizens.”  
~ J.R.

"Big city , small town charm"

~ CKTB

"Where complex intersections make living dynamic"

~ R.C.

"St. Catharines the hub of Niagara"

~ L.P.

"City where I created amazing memories"

~ L.M.

"My Home, My Garden City"

~ M.C.

"Hub of Niagara; City of Possibilities"

~ M.P.

"Small town feeling, Big city attitude!"

~ C.M.

"Stoic brickwork nods to flourishing gardens."

- L.V.

"We're the best of all worlds"

~ L.C.

"It's where you want to be."

~B.J.

"Accomplished beauty with a young heart!"

~ B.G.

"Expansive with aged growth and grace"

~ B.G.

"Historical Brilliant Breezy beautiful water's edge"

~ B.G.

"Rich history, challenging present, bright future!"

~ J.

"Learn, work and play"

~ D.W.

"Henley city, home of the great!"

~ B.D.

"Vibrant, engaging, ethnocultural, diversified, strategic, spiritual"

~A.H.

"St. Catharines: a spectacular, diverse, progressive jewel"

~ F.L.

"Plays are only found in Thorold"

~ A.S.

"From Lakeside Park to Brock University"

~ C.V.

"The Park & Market are alive"

~ J.

"Laid-off suburbanite, white consumer pop."

~ D.F.

"Vibrant. Alive. Misunderstood. Superlative soul food."

~ A.W.

"St. Petrie, Dish of Culture, grows here."

~ A.W.

"St. Catharines, St. Paul, St. Timmy's."

~ J.C.



*For more information contact the Parks, Recreation and Culture Services  
Department 905-688-5601 ext 5232.*

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