



To: COUNCIL
Meeting Date: 5/28/2024
Subject: 2024 Arts and Culture Action Plan Approval
Submitted By: Lesley Head, Director of Recreation
Prepared By: Rachel Fraser, Manager of Recreation, Sports and Culture
Report No.: 24-033-CD
File No.: C-1101
Wards Affected: All Wards

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Report 24-033-CD 2024 Arts and Culture Action Plan Approval be received;

AND THAT the Arts and Culture Action Plan outline Cambridge's vision, strategic priorities and recommendations for developing and enhancing arts and culture services, facilities and programming for the City of Cambridge;

AND THAT the implementation plan including projected timelines and associated budget be received and brought forward for consideration during the appropriate annual budget process;

AND THAT the annual operating budget allocation for Special Events be increased by \$25,000 to support the Cambridge Celebration of the Arts, to be considered as part of the 2025 budget process;

AND THAT both the Canada Day and Cambridge Santa Clause Parade annual events become directly sanctioned city-lead events with an operating budget increase of \$57,000 to be considered as part of the 2025 budget process;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the 2024 Arts and Culture Action Plan as presented in 24-033-CD Appendix A – City of Cambridge 2024 Arts and Culture Action Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval for the 2024 Arts and Culture Action Plan and authorize the launch and implementation to begin in mid to late Fall.

Key Findings

The Arts and Culture Action Plan (Action Plan) will outline priorities and provide direction for arts and culture in the City of Cambridge. This strategic document will outline the City's vision, strategic priorities and recommendations for developing and enhancing arts and culture services, facilities, programming and events. The Recreation and Culture Division, and related City Departments, will be guided by this document for the next ten years.

Incorporated in the Action Plan are two other key guiding documents: the revisioning of the Public Art Process (Pillar Three) and the Special Events Strategy (Pillar Five).

Also included in the Action Plan are the results of the Collaborative Plan Project Charter between the Region of Waterloo and the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo with a focus on regional connectivity and the cultural sector networks between municipal boundaries. The purpose of the collaboration was not to produce an amalgamated Arts and Culture Action Plan, but rather a clear direction on a vision, values and priorities for culture enabling each municipality to continue to engage in our own unique plans and initiatives. The planning approach outlined a clear, shared vision across municipalities that supports this growth industry.

Working jointly to connect with the sector was a proactive approach that resulted in a more fulsome engagement to better enable the City's ability to identify the cultural community's existing networks and working partnerships that highlight strengths, duplications and gaps. The results of this engagement further support the pillars and are included as Appendix F in the Action Plan.

The City of Cambridge Arts and Culture Action Plan is important because it:

- Integrates the perspectives of the people who live, work and play in Cambridge
- Helps direct tax dollars to community priorities as they relate to Arts and Culture
- Guides decision-making and allocation of resources
- Provides measurable indicators that allow the community to assess and monitor progress on action items

Staff worked closely with the consultant (Nordicity) engaging key internal and external stakeholders to contribute to the development of the Action Plan as outlined in detail in the background section of this report.

Council approval will authorize the launch and implementation of the Action Plan which is scheduled to begin in mid to late Fall. The creative community is excited and engaged to see the delivery of the actionable items.

Financial Implications

Funding for the development of the 2024 Arts and Culture Action Plan in the amount of \$101,500 was approved as part of the 2022 Capital Budget (A/00863-20). The project is on target to be completed within the allocated budget.

The operational budget request for existing events such as the Cambridge Celebration of the Arts is recommended to be increased by \$25,000 during the 2025 operating budget process to ensure that required equipment can be provided and creatives are appropriately compensated.

In addition, the recommendation to move the Cambridge Canada Day Event and Cambridge Santa Clause Parade to directly sanctioned City-led events with an increase of \$57,000 will be made as part of the 2025 operating budget request.

The Action Plan will be used to guide the preparation of the annual budget and business plan through to 2034 to ensure the financial and human resources are available to deliver on the goals of the Action Plan.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Strategic Action

Objective(s): WELLBEING - Connect people to services that support individual and community wellbeing

Strategic Action: Create and activate spaces that offer things for people to do

OR

Core Service

Program: Not Applicable

Core Service: Not Applicable

BACKGROUND:

In March of 2022 a Request for Proposal was released to partner with the Recreation and Culture Division to complete the Arts and Culture Action Plan.

Nordicity was the successful consultant in the bid. Nordicity is a leading global consulting firm specializing in policy, strategy, and economic analysis for the arts, culture, and digital media sectors. Nordicity has developed cultural plans for a range of cities in many different jurisdictions.

The Action Plan includes several components: a vision for arts and culture; strategic goals (or pillars); objectives to help achieve the pillars; and specific actions linked to each objective. The pillars, objectives, and actions were directly informed by trends research, engagement findings and a strategic planning session with representatives from across multiple City departments, as well as supported by a review of other existing strategies and priorities for the City of Cambridge. This Action Plan aligns with and bolsters existing City-wide priorities, as identified in the City of Cambridge's Strategic Plan – Cambridge Connected (2024-2026); recognizing these can be advanced through arts and culture:

- **People:** Foster a community with heart, where everyone belongs and is cared for
- **Place:** Embrace and celebrate our city's unique character while enhancing the spaces where people connect
- **Prosperity:** Build a vibrant and resilient city where current and future generations will live well

The goal of the plan is to make Cambridge a thriving center of creative and cultural development – by making it a destination for artists and creatives, developing new and leveraging existing partnership structures to grow the local cultural network, enhancing how local cultural spaces are used, and clarifying the City's role in arts and culture within Cambridge.

ANALYSIS:

Implementation & Monitoring

To develop the Action Plan, a five-phase process was utilized. The first three phases involved extensive research to understand Cambridge's unique arts and culture context. It included a background review of key policy documents such as the Cambridge Connected Strategic Plan, Stronger Together; Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Action Plan, Core Area Transformation Fund (CATF) Framework and previous Public Art Policy and Special Events Policy, cultural asset mapping, internal consultations with City staff, external consultations with arts and culture stakeholders, as well as engagement with the broader Cambridge public.

Included in the Action Plan are the following:

- Various Approaches of Interest highlighting successful examples of how certain recommendations have been adopted in municipalities across our Region, Province and Country.
- A Prioritization model has been proposed, divided into short-term (1-3 years),

medium-term (3-5 years), and long-term (8-10 years) actions.

- In total fifty-one (51) recommendations exist across the five pillars. Thirty-one of the recommendations can be implemented with existing resources (but may be less fulsome should additional staff resources not be approved).
- Proposed budgetary impacts are provided for all short-term recommendations. With the adoption of the plan, these will have to be approved through the regular capital and operating budget process.

Recommendations outline partner organizations to help implement and support actionable items. Some key drivers include:

- Arts and Culture Advisory Committee (ACAC) – advisory committee of council that has a broad representation of arts and culture genres.
- Business Improvement Area (BIA) - an association of property owners and businesses within a specified area who organize, finance and carry out physical improvements and promote economic development in their district with the support of the municipality. The BIA area is defined by the Council approved by-laws.
- Cambridge Arts Guild (CAG) - an advocacy group and a fundraising body for the Cambridge Centre for the Arts (CCA). Their initiatives expand and improve the diversity and quality of the CCA's programs and events. The CAG also supports community arts initiatives.
- Neighbourhood Association (NA) - provides a variety of recreational, athletic, and social programs in a defined geographic area.

Pillar One: Highlight Cambridge's Uniqueness and Artistic and Cultural Diversity

Goal Statement: Celebrate the richness and diversity of Cambridge's arts and culture scene, and embrace the experiences and cultures of those who live, work, and play in Cambridge. The five recommendations in this pillar achieve the purpose of the plan by:

- Celebrating Cambridge's plethora of arts, culture, and heritage assets and opportunities.
- Using arts and culture to cultivate a sense of community, wellbeing, and belonging and encourage creative activity and expression.
- Ensuring there are diverse, inclusive, accessible cultural offerings that resonate with Cambridge's community across all ages, abilities, identities, and experiences.
- Celebrating new or historically hidden stories and cultures in Cambridge while continuing to celebrate the stories that are already being told.

The Action Plan recommends increasing the operational budget to existing events such

as the Cambridge Celebration of the Arts by \$25,000 to ensure that required equipment can be provided and creatives are appropriately compensated.

Pillar Two: Amplify Municipal Support for an Arts-Friendly City

Goal Statement: Solidify the City's role in supporting and incubating a strong, vibrant, and sustainable arts and culture sector in Cambridge. This pillar achieves the purpose of the plan by:

- Clarifying the City's role as a key supporter (rather than a driver) of arts and culture.
- Building capacity and creating the conditions for a richer, more diverse, strengthened and thriving arts and culture community in Cambridge.

The eleven recommendations housed in this pillar address capacity needs at the City while supporting the arts and culture sector; enhance internal sightlines and inter-departmental collaboration to better advance City priorities through arts and culture and leverage existing supports and infrastructure to create a stronger, more vibrant, arts and culture scene.

Pillar Three: Activate Public Spaces through Creative Placemaking and Public Art

Goal Statement: Leverage placemaking and public art to enhance and celebrate Cambridge's heritage and natural assets, create visible indicators of arts and culture throughout the city, and increase vibrancy of the downtown cores and neighbourhoods across the city. This pillar achieves the purpose of the plan by:

- Improving quality of life for Cambridge's community and encourage creative activity and expression.
- Cultivating opportunities for public art and placemaking to increase the attractiveness and vibrancy of neighbourhoods.
- Creating a more cohesive public realm and a shared identity of place.
- Highlighting Cambridge's natural, historical, and (built) cultural assets.
- Creating and promoting a wide range of inviting and engaging destinations across the city.
- Bolstering downtown revitalization efforts in the three cores (Downtown Cambridge, Preston Towne Centre, Hespeler Village).
- Supporting tourism attraction by enhancing the visitor experience in neighbourhoods across the city.

The ten recommendations outlined in this pillar enhance the capacity to support growth and investment in public art and placemaking; incorporate arts and culture space needs within urban and park development plans and ensure that City controlled public art

remains open, accessible, inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Pillar Four: Enhance Community Connection, Communication, and Collaboration

Goal Statement: Create stronger community connections through shared experiences, connect audiences to arts and culture opportunities across Cambridge, and build a stronger, more connected local arts and culture sector. This pillar achieves the purpose of the plan by:

- Building community awareness and engagement with culture offerings to enhance community life across Cambridge.
- Fostering civic engagement through increased engagement with arts and culture and volunteerism.
- Creating a strong, thriving arts and culture sector that feels supported, connected, and informed.

The eight recommendations proposed in this pillar enhance communications around arts and culture in Cambridge to grow community engagement; support career advancement for local talent; and increase connections among the arts and culture community.

Pillar Five: Strengthen Special Events

Goal statement: Allow for all special events in Cambridge to thrive and contribute to the vibrancy of the city. This pillar achieves the purpose of the plan by:

- Creating the conditions for more vibrant and supported special events in the City of Cambridge, as events offer the most common point of community engagement with arts and culture.
- Building community connections through shared experiences to cultivate a sense of community, wellbeing, and belonging.

The seventeen recommendations outlined in this pillar ensure balanced opportunities for special events; build capacity for events organizers and support for special events; enhance data collection, monitoring, and reporting for evidence-based decision making and optimize outdoor spaces for events usage.

In alignment with the City of Cambridge Strategic Plan - Cambridge Connected, events bring the community together to foster a shared sense of understanding, wellbeing, and belonging. Events also ignite interest among community members and visitors alike, helping to increase foot traffic throughout the city, animate the downtown cores and other neighbourhoods, and lift the profile of local businesses.

At present, Cambridge provides varying levels of services and in-kind support to the following four categories of events, distinguished based on leadership and operation responsibilities:

- **Directly Sanctioned Special Events** – Events for which the budget is included in the City’s operating budget and city staff are primarily responsible. The success of Directly Sanctioned Special Events is dependent upon volunteer utilization (committee and/or day of event).
- **Schedule A Events** – Events that are led by a volunteer committee with City support and municipal insurance coverage.
- **Special Interest Events** – Events that are run for a specific interest group which typically have a historic relationship (ie. Fall Fair, Art Attic, Kin Carnvial).
- **Independent Events** – Events organized and implemented by individuals and organizations with no affiliation to the City of Cambridge.

To ensure balanced opportunities for special events and build capacity for event organizers the Action Plan is recommending transitioning Schedule A and Special Interest Events to an Affiliate Agreement model. This proactive approach will clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of both the event organizer and each department within the City of Cambridge. Due to the municipal importance, it is being suggested that the Cambridge Santa Clause Parade and Cambridge Celebrates Canada Day Event and Parade be moved to a directly sanctioned City-led special event.

Also included in this pillar is the recommendation to create outdoor dedicated event space to:

- Alleviate the challenge between sport user groups and event organizers.
- Offer design-built amenities to attract event organizers to the City of Cambridge.
- To create a significant gathering space for large placemaking opportunities.

Implementation of the Plan will be a continuous process of engagement and involvement with staff, advisory committees, boards, community partners and citizens. Ongoing monitoring of the overall Plan is critical to measuring progress and addressing community priorities. Annual reporting based on each recommendation’s measurable indicators will also be established as part of ongoing implementation. Specific initiatives to support each action will be identified as part of the annual budget and business planning cycle to progress the strategy.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):

C-10.080 Public Art Policy

C-80.040 Special Events Policy

Pillars three and five reference the need to review and revise the policies listed above.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funding for the development of the 2024 Arts and Culture Action Plan in the amount of \$101,500 was approved as part of the 2022 Capital Budget (A/00863-20). The project is on target to be completed within the allocated budget.

The operational budget request for existing events (such as the Cambridge Celebration of the Arts) will be increased by \$25,000, to be considered during the 2025 operating budget process, to ensure that required equipment can be provided and creatives are appropriately compensated.

To move the Cambridge Canada Day Event and Cambridge Santa Clause Parade to directly sanctioned City-led events, an increase of \$57,000 will be recommended as part of the 2025 operating budget request.

Proposed budgetary impacts for short-term action items (within the 1-3 year time frame) have been included in the plan to provide Council with a comprehensive overview. With the adoption of the plan, these identified costs would still have to be approved through the City's annual capital and operating budget process. Highlights include funding of the Public Art reserve, staff positions to support the recommendations, artists directory and lending inventory.

As outlined in the Action Plan, whenever possible alternate funding sources are identified including accessing grant funding, alternative tax revenues and reallocation of current budgets. Sixty percent (60%) of the recommendations can be implemented using existing resources. It should be noted some may be less fulsome should staff capacity not be addressed.

The Plan will be used to guide both the preparation of the annual budget and business plans through to 2034 to ensure the financial and human resources are available to deliver on the goals of the Action Plan.

PUBLIC VALUE:

The Action Plan provides the Recreation and Culture Division the framework to identify priorities, make progress and evaluate outcomes. The strategic planning process allows for all stakeholders to contribute to, understand and play a role in achieving the vision expressed by our community.

The Action Plan contributes to the following public values principles:

- **Sustainability** – by providing a strategic perspective, the Action Plan helps the organization align internal and external priorities, resources and planning activities. This includes financial resources and staff time.
- **Collaboration** – the Action Plan speaks to enhancing internal sightlines, the creation of interdepartmental working groups, improved communication with and between creatives in order to accomplish common goals. It also can help us define how we can be most effective as part of partnerships and collaborative efforts.
- **Transparency** – the Action Plan provides clear direction that the community and department can use to measure progress; including measurable indicators for each recommendation. This will ensure accountability of the organization.
- **Engagement** – continuing to have touchpoints and reporting on the progress of the Action Plan with our community, stakeholders and partners at regular intervals is an important part of keeping the Action Plan relevant and impactful.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

The Arts and Culture Advisory Committee has been engaged and consulted throughout the project from the first stages of the Request for Proposal through to a detailed examination of the draft plan, providing extensive feedback. A final touchpoint was organized to ensure feedback was correctly incorporated in the final draft.

The Youth Advisory Committee was engaged and helped to support the Youth Symposium held at WG Johnson Centre during a successful monthly drop-in program.

Advisory Committees were invited during focus group consultations and will continue to be consulted during implementation as applicable.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Public consultation included three open houses (two in person and one virtual), a youth symposium, a newcomer focus survey which collectively provided 89 individual responses. Members of Council were engaged in the open houses and newcomer events.

An EngageCambridge survey took place for a one month period starting mid-January 2023. To promote the survey road signs, newspaper ads, social media and post cards

targeting recreation centre participants were utilized. In total 472 responses were received, of which 25% identified as being equity deserving groups.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Internal Consultation

Three staff round tables including a curated list of 18 staff from departments across the City including members of the Corporate Leadership Team, Clerks, Risk, Transportations, Parks, Communications, Planning, Equity/Diversity/Inclusion/Accessibility (EDIA), By-Law, Service Cambridge, Economic Development and Recreation & Culture.

An interdepartmental steering committee was formed consisting of key stakeholders including Parks Operations, Economic Development, Planning and Recreation and Culture Staff met bi-weekly throughout the Action Plan process.

External Consultation

Seven (7) interviews and eleven (11) creative industry workshops and roundtables took place engaging over one hundred and twenty (120) external stakeholders including invitees from:

- Cultural Institutions
- Key Creatives
- Performing, Literary and Visual Artists
- Public, Separate and Post Secondary Education Institutions
- Event Organizers
- BIAs, Neighbourhood Associations, Advisory Committees
- First Nations Indigenous Communities representing Cambridge and Waterloo Region

A final touchpoint with the following key stakeholders was organized to ensure feedback was correctly incorporated in the final draft:

- Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
- Cambridge Arts Guild and Key Creatives
- Event Organizers
- Corporate Leadership Team
- Interdepartmental Staff Representatives
 - EDIA
 - Older Adult Services
 - Parks Operations
 - Economic Development

- Clerks
- Planning
- Communications
- Recreation and Culture
- Idea Exchange
- Council Workshop

CONCLUSION:

The Action Plan identifies current and emerging priorities for the Recreation and Culture Division. Consultation and involvement of key stakeholder groups, including Council and staff have informed all stages of the Plan's development. The strategy will provide a framework for decision-making and resource allocation. Ongoing engagement and communication about the Plan during its life cycle will be important for ensuring that the Plan is supported and adopted. Enhancements made to our performance management framework will ensure transparent progression towards achievable goals and measures of success. This will be completed through a variety of actions including:

- Ongoing business plan development (in coordination with our budgeting process)
- The application and continuous monitoring of performance metrics; and
- Continued consultation with key internal and external stakeholders

The above will demonstrate where we have seen success and where performance gaps exist to ensure we are meeting the needs of our community.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **Yes**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

Deputy City Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 24-033-CD Appendix A – City of Cambridge Arts & Culture Action Plan